

A person with long hair, wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, stands on a grassy hillside. They are holding a watercolour pencil and painting a landscape on a white canvas mounted on a tripod. The background is a vast, rolling green landscape under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the distance, there are rolling hills and a small cluster of buildings. A water bottle is on the ground near the tripod.

Quick & Clever

WATERCOLOUR PENCILS

Charles Evans

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my long-suffering mother. She has a saying, 'When they're young they break your bank, and when they're older they break your heart'; I must have done both many times, but still she makes the pilgrimage to my studio to do the catering on all my courses and to generally look after me and my clients. For this and millions of other things, Mother, thank you.

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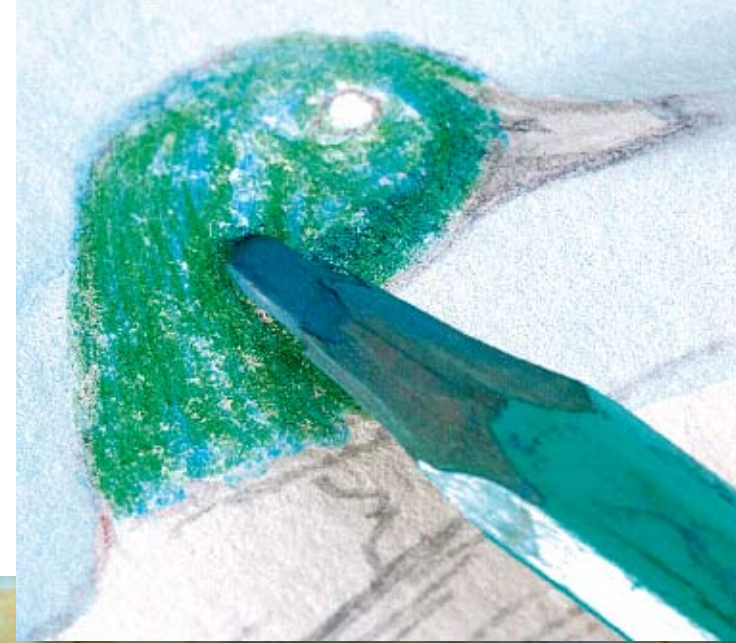
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Introduction



This book is aimed at those of you who've always been a bit scared of painting on location for the simple reason that setting up equipment outdoors is a magnet for people coming up to look at you and, worse, making suggestions or criticizing. Here, with a minimum of equipment – a sketchbook, a tin of watercolour pencils, one brush, a tiny pot of water or the nearest puddle – you can capture the likeness, colour and essence of your subject without needing easels or other such attention-attracting paraphernalia.

In addition, this book is aimed at the person who wants to go and make sketches that can be built up into larger, more finished paintings back in the studio. All too often, people rely purely on photographs, and this has a number of pitfalls – you know how you can take a photo on a nice sunny day with strong shadows, and you make sure to focus in on the main focal point in the scene, such as a building or a tree; but when you get the prints back or look at the picture on your computer, the colours are never as you remember them, and the focal point is an indistinguishable dot somewhere in the distance.

By going outdoors and sketching, you capture what you will remember, and you cut out the excess stuff you don't need in a painting. To make a finished



picture, it's much easier to work from a pared-down sketch than from a photo. Your sketchbook and pencils are light and easy to take on holiday, and will capture really special, personal moments with much more feeling than a quick snap on the camera.

Forget the excuses for not getting out and about, because there really aren't any – nobody's going to come and look over your shoulder when you're happily ensconced in a corner with your sketchbook, memories and thoughts. So get out there, scribble away with those pencils – and have fun!

C.M. EVANS



*Tools and
Techniques*



Materials

Pencils

The pencils I use are Daler-Rowney's range of high-quality watercolour pencils, which use very strong artists'-quality pigments. As you'll see in this book, I don't use a huge amount of different colours, but the pencils aren't expensive and it's nice to have a particular colour for when you need it, even if this is once a year.

A very important thing to remember with watercolour pencils is that if you use a penknife or craft knife to sharpen them – *not* a pencil sharpener – the points don't become brittle or snap easily, and thus last a lot longer.

For sketching outdoors, a useful tip is to wrap a bit of masking tape around the pencil where your fingers hold it: this stops the pencil getting any sweat off your fingers on a hot day or moisture from the atmosphere on a wet one, both of which can make the pencil slip around alarmingly. You can see that I've done this for the projects in this book.

I don't use an eraser, because if you make a mistake in your outline drawing – as I frequently do – remember that the pencil is a watercolour one; all you have to do is stroke water over it, and the offending line vanishes!

Brushes

As I said in the Introduction, one of the great joys of working with watercolour pencils is that you don't need a lot of equipment. My main brush for making sketches on location is a No. 8 round Sapphire, which is a fine blend of best-quality sable and synthetic material. For working on larger projects and more finished pictures I also use a 3/4in (19mm) flat wash brush, also Sapphire.

Paper

Watercolour pencils are versatile and can be used on a variety of surfaces. On the whole I tend to use a hardback sketchbook that contains best-quality acid-free cartridge paper. Even though this paper can buckle a bit



when I add water to the drawings, it ends up perfectly flat when it dries, as you can see from the sketchbook pages dotted throughout this book. These sketchbooks are available in many sizes; I use A4 ones.

In addition to having hardback sketchbooks, I specify that they are string-bound as opposed to glued – the paper is always good in these quality sketchbooks, and you won't lose pages full of memories and sources of reference because they become unglued and fall out. Most of my sketchbooks don't even have covers any more, as they've been bashed around so much on my travels, but the pages are fine and hold the pencil colours perfectly.

You can also use watercolour pencils as a painting medium on all watercolour paper surfaces: I use 300gsm (140lb) Rough-surface Langton paper. As you can see in the projects here, I also use tinted paper for some work; this comes from a pad of Bockingford tinted papers.

Pens

A few pens are useful, and I often use a plain black ballpoint or fine fibre-tip pen; this isn't line and wash work – once the washes are dry, I simply use the pen to make some squiggles here and there to pull out details and firm up some lines.

Water

Most of the time I don't take any water with me on sketching trips – there's always a puddle, a stream or river or the sea, and on early mornings there is dew on leaves and grass: one dip of the brush or pencil, and I'm away! One advantage of staying in most hotels, as I do a lot when touring and giving demonstrations, is the little bottles of cheap shampoo the hotels supply – just pour out the shampoo, rinse out the bottle and fill it, then put it in your pocket and you have a day's worth of water.

