

Notes on the artist Mark Gibbons

Mark was born in Lyme Regis ,Dorset in 1949 into an R.A.F. family . After a childhood of 'endless' moves (Penang, Aden, Cyprus, etc) and a stint at Loughborough College Boarding School he graduated from Hull University in '72 with a B.A. Hons in Psychology and Philosophy .

Following university he spent several years (more travelling!) in America, Australia, New Zealand, Bali, Malaysia, Japan, and Russia, 'recording' much of what he saw with his watercolours.

On his return to the U.K. he settled in South Devon where he decided to continue his embryonic painting career 'full-time'. And within a few years (and after a great deal of hard work) was exhibiting widely in galleries around Devon as well as demonstrating occasionally in local art societies.

For several years in the mid nineties he also led 'Right Brain Mark Making' workshops in which he was able to combine his twin interests of Art and Psychology often involved with the 'Ways With Words' festival at Dartington .In '95 he was invited to tutor on one of their painting/writing courses in Tuscany and the following year he led a painting course in Alderney.

In 2003 he remarried and 'relocated' with his wife Angela to a 10 acre small-holding at Trewen near Launceston where he continues to paint (and dig and grow and build and keep bees!).

His paintings have been exhibited at the Royal Watercolour Society, he has had work commissioned for (the late) President Mitterrand and in 1994 Devon County commissioned one of his paintings to be given to the French on the anniversary of the D-Day landings. Bossiney Books, Launceston have published two collections of his work 'Mark Gibbons's Dartmoor' and 'The South Devon Coast by Mark Gibbons'

Artist's Statement

As a very studious kid at boarding school I was steered well away from the art room, so painting and I found each other in my attempts to keep a visual diary on my travels .When I began to paint more seriously in the mid seventies watercolour as a medium was hugely unpopular and certainly the technique had long since ceased to be taught at any Art Colleges. Its intrinsic difficulties (controlling uncontrollable water) posed a huge challenge that appealed to my rather obsessive geeky nature and I taught myself by a combination of dogged daily practice and the close study of paintings made by artists who clearly could use the medium brilliantly .Cotman,Turner, Sargent and the like .

Much of my work is done out of doors, simply because I enjoy the experience of 'being there' so much .I've solved the problem of 'shelter and shade'(which is a must for blinding white paper and a rain soluble medium) by using a purpose made fisherman's tent ,so basically I can 'camp out' all day with an uninterrupted view.

One of the beauties of watercolour (besides being very portable) is that it allows for very subtle colour and tonal variations and very subtle differences in 'edge quality' and by using these together one can hunt (though never completely catch) the qualities of light and atmospheric perspective that sometimes (when you are blessed) make 'being there' such an aesthetically thrilling experience.