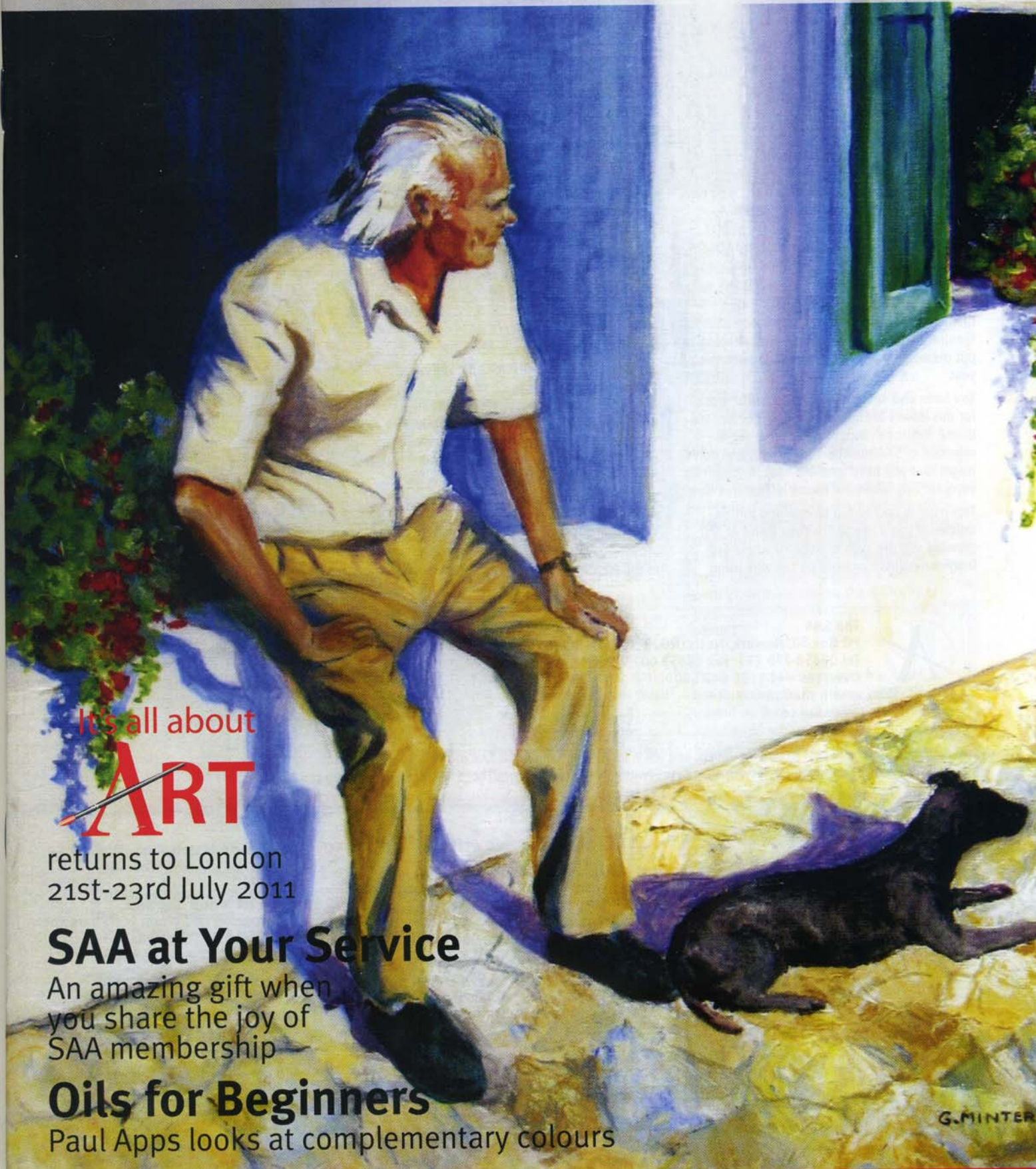




PAINT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SAA



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On Your Bike

From Toulouse to the Mediterranean



PA Allan Kirk set off on his bicycle last September, with sketch book and other basics at the ready

Last September I set off, with my wife and six friends, on a 250 km cycle ride along the towpath of the Canal du Midi from Toulouse to Sete in southern France. Armed with a hard-backed sketch book, water-soluble drawing pens and a waterbrush, I was determined to sketch at every opportunity.

I made sure I had the following items close to hand in my rucksack:

- Pitt Drawing Pens (Faber-Castell)
- Indian ink - Black and Sepia
- Stabilo Fineliner pens - Black and Brown
- Pentel Water Brushes - small and large
- A4 hard bound sketch book (105 gsm)

We averaged 50km per day, and enjoyed great views, good food, one puncture, falling off once (not into the canal), and over a dozen sketches and many more digital photos. All in all it was one of our best holidays and one where the effort of pen, ink and wash sketching added a fantastic extra dimension to the whole experience.

I kept to my plan and took every opportunity, including lunch and drink breaks, to quickly sketch what I could see around me. I tried to apply a discipline and method to my work. Firstly, I told myself, be decisive in selecting a subject; don't ponder your surroundings too long. Then, get to work with your pens and water brush, draw what you see, don't think and don't worry about mistakes. Work quickly, keep the pen moving at all times and let the canal, the scenery and the sun be your inspiration. Oh, and don't try to sketch as you cycle, even if you are an experienced rider!

I like off road cycling; my cycle is good, it has suspension, and I have padded shorts, but this offered little protection from the plane tree roots breaking through the canal path. Just as well sketching gave me the excuse to stop regularly. It was not difficult to find subjects:



Gardouche

We ate bread and cheese in the sun on the first day at Gardouche, and for my first sketch I chose pen and wash to record a canal barge that was moored alongside (above).



Trebes
In shop for a coffee

1 Sept. 2011

Trebes

A quick stop for a coffee at Trebes - definitely my quickest sketch done using my Pitt drawing pens as my coffee went cold (above).



Hotel Brassiere Carcassonne

Allan Kirk 20/11/11

Carcassonne - Hotel Brassiere

Using Stabilo Fineliner pens and Pentel Water Brush, I sketched this busy Hotel Brassiere, just over the bridge from the railway station (above).



On the side of the canal Homps

Allan Kirk 21/09/2011

Homps

On the canal side, there were boats at nearly all the mooring places, and the cafés and restaurants were alive with holidaymakers. My Pitt drawing pens came in handy again (above).



Hotel L'Orque Bleue Sete

Allan Kirk 20/11

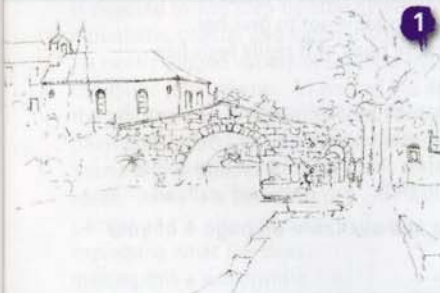
Try it for yourself

Le Somail – Canal Du Midi, Southwest France

This was my favourite canal crossing with a beautiful bridge, church and great café

1 A coffee and a comfortable seat are essential preparation for an outdoor sketch. Using my Stabilo Black fineliner pen I began my sketch with a line drawing. I started with the bridge and worked quickly and loosely outwards.

I 'jump' about the page finding that if I concentrate on one spot I tend to distort the composition and become rigid. I always try to keep the whole drawing in mind. For me, working loosely means holding the pen lightly and not trying to create thick black lines. Holding the pen lightly, I break my lines, and don't mind mistakes, extra lines or drops of ink. Be confident and see 'mistakes' as part of the sketch; do not get distracted.



1

2 Firstly I fixed the darker tones of the view in my mind, then using a large Pentel Water Brush filled with water, and working quickly and freely I washed down the lines of my drawing to create tonal variations.

I always think that the key to this step is not to try to resolve everything or get the absolute tones required (for example under the bridge). This step is a template for later steps where we will increase tonal definition. Do not panic when you see your lines dissolving, it will be alright in the end.



2



3

Materials

- Stabilo fine liner pen
- Pentel Water Brush
- Derwent hard backed spiral bound sketchbook

3 Once my picture was totally dry, using the Stabilo pen I added the lines and shading needed to wash in stronger tones.

Observe how I have chosen darker tonal areas (under the bridge, water reflections, bushes on the left, the cypress tree and the plane trees on the right).

I decided on the strength of shade I needed in each area, and then shaded these areas quickly using the Stabilo pen. My shading is like a quick doodle and for some darker areas I may crosshatch shade (see under bridge).

This step offered the opportunity to reclaim some key lines, especially on the church building and bridge.



4

4 This step is identical to step two. I used the Pentel Water Brush to darken the existing shadows using the shading from the last step. I worked freely, but made sure to use my brush with control, especially under the bridge and on the cypress tree. Next I washed down the water to create tonal reflections, and to add to the tonal variations in the foliage, bridge and buildings.



5

5 I used this stage to re-introduce some of my key drawing lines. Be careful not to overdo this. Look carefully at the differences in my drawings between step four and this step.

Broken lines have been gently added to the bridge, boat, trees and people at the table. I kept my work to a minimum, and glided the pen across the surface, rather than being heavy handed. In this finished work there is a lot of white space, and this adds to the sunny light and lively feel.

Shading has been added to the people in the group at the side of the bridge.

6 In this step I used a small Pentel Water Brush to give me better control to add final shading to the group of people, church, bridge and the house at the back.



6

You can find details of the Pentel Water Brush and Stabilo Fine Liner pens on pages 69 and 120 of the **Annual catalogue** respectively.

Visit www.tarnincolour.com to see more of Allan's paintings and to find out about his painting holidays in France.