

**Phil Biggs**  
**Watercolour Landscape**  
**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**



Phil Biggs began this Zoom demonstration by saying that he is a traditional landscape watercolourist. He went on to name some of the artists that have influenced him such as James Fletcher-Watson, Edward Seago and Ted Wesson as well as some American watercolourists such as Daniel Marshall.

As a traditional watercolourist Phil does not use masking fluid to maintain his whites. He enjoys plein air painting whenever possible. He lives near Spalding in Lincolnshire. This evening he has chosen to paint as scene of Seathwaite near Borrowdale in Cumbria. Phil has visited the Lake District often and he has painted this particular scene a number of times. He likes to begin with a small tonal sketch. He then transfers the sketch onto Arches 300 lb rough paper. He uses Half Imperial which converts to 22 x 15 inches. He uses Winsor & Newton Artists Watercolours from tubes that he squeezes out into his Craig Young artists' palette (<http://www.watercolorpaintboxcompany.com>).

Phil's paint brushes are mainly sable. He also has 3 squirrel brushes and at times he uses a synthetic brush to paint tree branches and fence posts because it gives a strong line. To start he used a squirrel brush to wet the sky area leaving some little dry patches. He already knows he wants the dark clouds at the edges to hold the painting together. The sky is vital and where a painting can often go wrong. He is going to use French Ultra Marine; Burnt Umber and Paynes Grey. A piece of good advice, always put the blue French Ultra Marine in first then mix in the other paints or you find yourself using a lot of the blue to produce the desired grey.





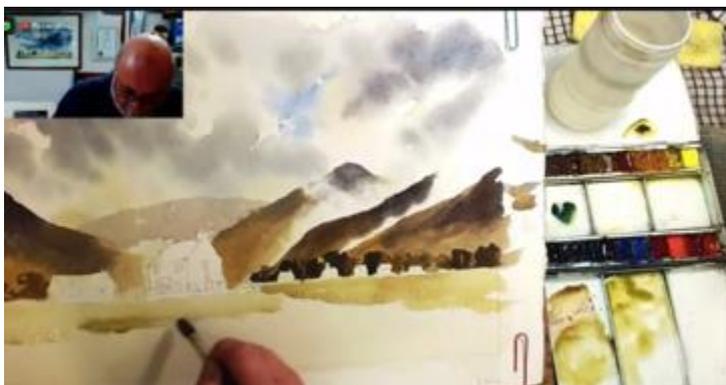
After putting in some dark grey clouds and then some lighter grey ones, Phil used a little Raw Sienna to put under the storm clouds. He also dropped in a patch of pure blue for the break in the clouds. A little Indian Red added to the grey can warm the colour up a little

Next Phil went over the rest of the painting, except the buildings, with a pale yellowish wash to take the white off the paper. He cleans his palette often. Once the yellow wash was dry, Phil began to mix the colour for the hills in the background. He mixes all his green from yellows. For the distant hills he uses Cobalt Blue and Bright Red. Going very carefully around the chimneys of the buildings he admits is when masking fluid would make things easier.



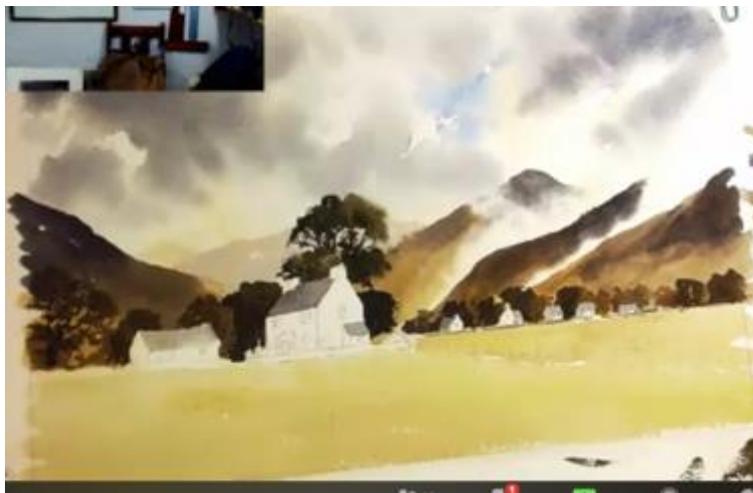
Once the middle-distance hills were in Phil turned his attention to the mountains on the right side and the mists forming between them. He used French Ultra Marine and Indian Red for the dark mountain top and Burnt Umber, Raw Sienna and Winsor Blue Red Shade for the olive yellow below.

Watercolourists have to develop a real understanding of the ratio of paint to water to avoid runbacks and to maintain the clean paper for the mists. After drying the paint again, Phil began to put in the trees and the whitewashed houses of the village of Seathwaite.



To paint trees, he finds painting with the brush on its side works well. He varies the shade of the trees by adding Raw Umber and Indian Red to the mix of Burnt Umber and Winsor Blue. Indian Red and Winsor Blue produces a nice light grey for the slate of the houses' roofs.

It was time to work on the focus of the painting, the house near the centre. Phil mixes a wash of Raw Sienna, Winsor Blue and a touch of Cadmium Yellow for the foreground. Always put darkest colours again the lightest ones. He turned the paper upside down to be able to paint around the chimney carefully. Best not to have the branches of the tree appear to be coming out of the chimney of the house.



shadows on the chimneys first then porch and the barn. Windows need a tiny brush and a very dark colour.

After painting the house and the barn's roof and putting in the windows to the buildings he worked on the shadows on the buildings. This is often what makes the sun appear to come out. He uses French Ultra Marine and Light Red for the shadows on the whitewashed houses, the same colours for snow shadows. He starts with the



After painting in the stone walls around the house and putting in some bushes and flowers there too it was time to deal with the foreground where there will be cloud shadows. First Phil mixed Cadmium Yellow, Raw Sienna and Burnt Umber for the fence that will draw the viewer's eye into the painting.



To paint the tree in the foreground he uses Paynes Grey and Burnt Umber adding some blue to make the foliage a darker green. Now it is time to balance the painting with some dark cloud shadows so that there is not one big slab of green across the front. He uses Burnt Umber, Winsor Blue and Cadmium Yellow to create the green shade.

The painting is almost finished. All it needs now is fence posts and another hedge on the left side. Using a squirrel brush, he mixes a variety of deep greens and very quickly paints in an impression of a fence, recalling how Ted Wesson might have done it like this. A mount around the finished painting set it off beautifully.



This brought another very successful Zoom demonstration to an end. There were 32 participants, and everyone agreed that there were some definite advantages to demonstrations on Zoom, particularly being able to see the palette and the artist mixing the paints clearly. The session was recorded and Phil has offered to give FCSA the finished painting in due course. Our thanks to him for an enthralling evening.