

# Artist in lockdown...

Local artist Allie Pottinger runs Watercolour Workshops from her Swettenham studio and at 'Gather' beside the Town Hall in Congleton. Lockdown has changed all of this. Her first online class happened by accident.

Early on in lockdown, a regular client, contacted me to see if could give a virtual demonstration to her Wilmslow WI group. I had only just heard about 'Zoom', but quickly agreed and set about coming to terms with the online platform to see how I could make it work from my kitchen table! I bought a clamp to let me position the camera at the best angle, I changed the lights and started to test the set up on the rest of the family sitting in different rooms in the house. I had to be able to let the group see the artwork, but also to see my palette and to hear me clearly. The event went

well but from what I had thought would be the local Wilmslow group, turned out to be the whole Cheshire Federation of the WI. There were 78 people in the 'virtual' room all painting along with me! It gave me the confidence to know that during lockdown I could still reach my clients and to offer them support for their art even though we could not be together.

I realised how important it was to stay in touch with my clients. Watercolours have a wonderful effect on your mood, you quite easily pass the time and get lost in the moment. The act of starting and

creating a painting can help with giving both escapism and purpose. This has helped some of my clients with managing the mental challenges of isolation. I have been very conscious communicating with my clients regularly to give advice on their projects and running short classes on-line.

I have also taken the opportunity to revamp my web page. This Summer I am in an artists' article edit in House & Garden for my house and dog portraits and I knew that I had to have a good reference point for anyone interested in my style. This precious time has helped me concentrate on the back-end stuff of my business. I have now a mailing list and my students are all in a database rather than my handwritten cards in my address box! They still love a hand painted postcard with seasonal flowers, I find I am constantly trying to think of ways to brighten up the days.

Experience from lockdown for me is that aside from

kindness, you step out of your comfort zone and look at new ways to learn or you just stay still. Despite sharing the kitchen table with your son's home schooling, daughters new baking experiment and my painting commissions, we manage (most days) to get purpose and routine. I am thankful for our little garden,

for pleasing, nurturing jobs like thinning out the radishes in our veg plot!

If you would like to try watercolour painting, why not join one of Allie's Zoom demonstrations.

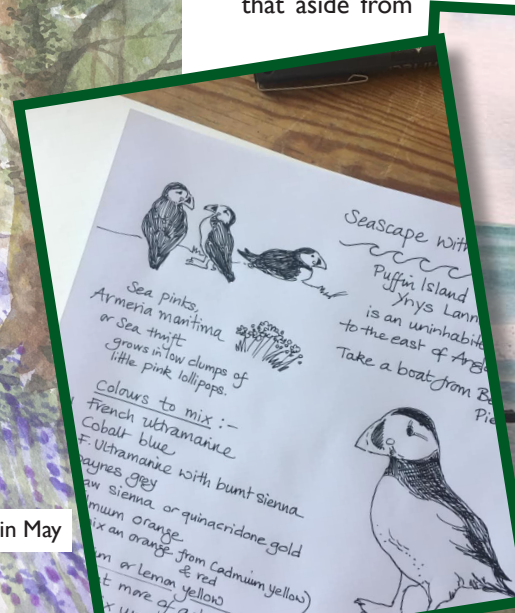
July is colourful 'Summer Blooms' on Thursday 9th July at 2pm or Beginners 'Summer Landscape' Thursday 6th August 2pm. Paint along or just watch.

There are also some free short videos on Allie's Facebook page. For more information email [alison@alliepottinger.com](mailto:alison@alliepottinger.com) or visit [www.alliepottinger.com](http://www.alliepottinger.com)

Allie Pottinger



Windle Bluebell Woods - Zoom Class in May



Seascape with Puffins Zoom demo