# ODIHAM ART GROUP DEMONSTRATION REPORT

**Street Scene in Watercolour - demo by Geoff Hunt: 6th January 2018**

It was a return visit for Geoff today and he spoke to an almost full house. Geoff regularly contributes to The Artist magazine and is a member of the Wapping Group (whose next exhibition is at the Mall Gallery at the end of February).

Normally Geoff is a 'plein air' painter and duly warned against slavishly using photo references but, to cheer the mood on a very grey and dull January day, Geoff chose his subject from photos of St Tropez. His main reference was a tonal copy of the scene and only rarely did he refer to the original colour photo. The reference was chosen because the sharp contrasts between the sunlit areas and the shadows led the eye into the composition. Your interest was then held at the focal point by crucial shapes and surfaces on which the light fell.



Throughout the demo, Geoff was continually making decisions, such as:

- Would the painting look better as portrait or landscape
- Getting the right depth of colour for the buildings in the shadows
- Should he use masking fluid? He hates it, but it's useful at times
- Was the street lamp in the right place? No… he moved it to break up a large area with 'nothing going on'

His palette consisted mainly of Light Red, Pompeii Red, Natural Sienna, Yellow Ochre and Ultramarine for the main shadowed area and then he added Ultramarine and Burnt Sienna for the deeper tones. It was amazing to see how a very light glaze of Permanent Rose just added so much more interest to an otherwise ordinary wall. The use of a fountain pen dipped in watercolour enabled Geoff to add some fine details to the architecture and to draw in the figures in more detail, while all the time blending in with the painting in a way that using ink would not achieve.
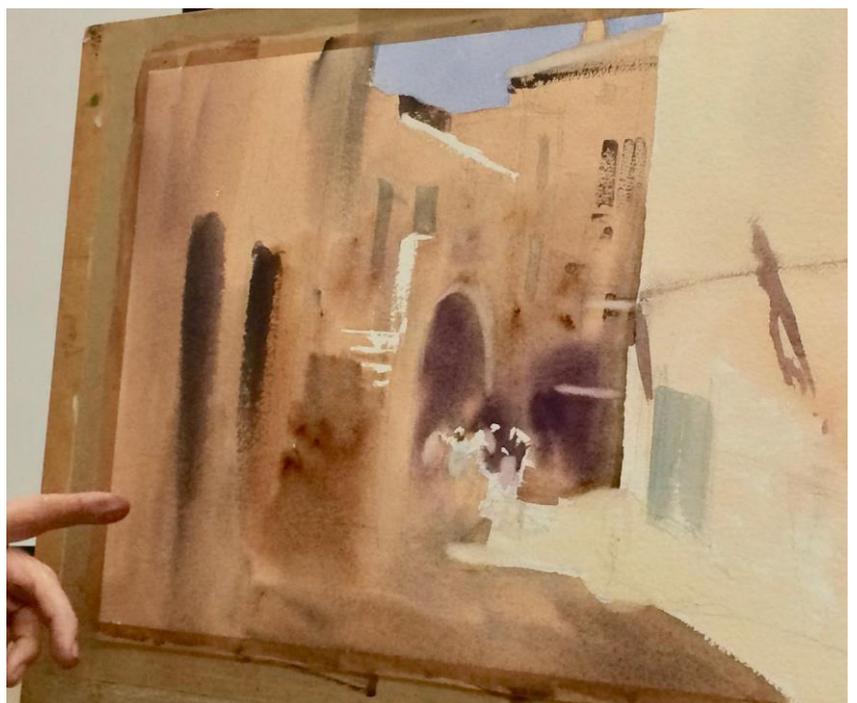
His demo highlighted many of the 'rules' we know about painting:

- Make colours relate across the painting
- Turning the painting upside down will highlight any lines which are not 'true'
- 'Lifting out' colours helps to define architectural shapes
- Using a sharp tool to scratch surface of the paper for highlights
- The use of dark against light is so important
- Decisions made at the start can often be reversed as the painting develops



As the demo progressed from the almost hesitant decision to make a start to putting in the final touches, it was apparent that it was not only the sureness and confidence of his brush strokes and the ability to mix paints accurately but also the ability to add or leave out components of a reference that makes Geoff such an accomplished watercolourist.

Pat Burt
January 2018