

Inspired by her surroundings

The sea has always been a major inspiration for Devon artist Lynda Kettle, who is passionate about the water, she tells TIM SAUNDERS

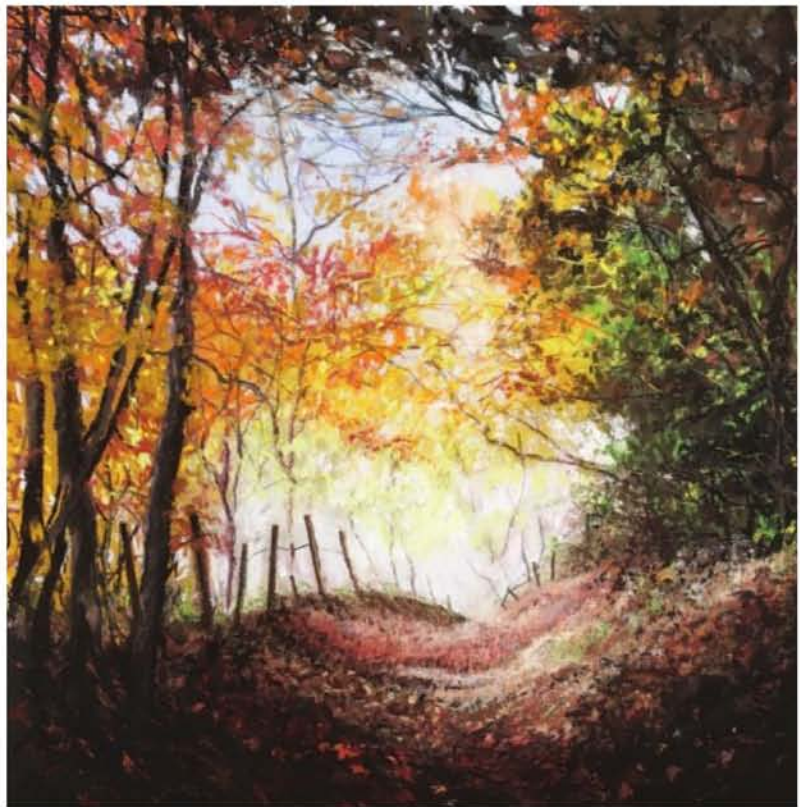
“**T**o me the sea always meant holidays with my family once a year; a wonderful happy time,” recalls established seascape painter Lynda Kettle, also Chair of Sidmouth Society of Artists, and whose star sign happens to be Aquarius. “My favourite colour is blue, too,” she laughs. Her enthusiasm is infectious.

Lynda produces a huge number of seascapes in all mediums, particularly in watercolours and pastels. For the last two years she has also been painting in oils, which she is beginning to love.

An accomplished landscape painter, Lynda has captured a good deal of her local area on canvas, too. Lately, she has also felt the desire to go back to drawing and has been doing a lot of black and white work in charcoal and pastel. “I have been an artist for a long time, and I think it’s good to change mediums and experiment. If you don’t move forward your work becomes too staid.” It is possible to see Lynda at work at Loft Studio in Libra Court, Sidmouth.

She relocated to Devon from the Midlands some years ago with husband Steve, a semi-retired architect and solicitor. They live three miles away from Sidmouth in the village of Tipton St John in a modern detached home overlooking a paddock that leads to the River Otter.

This location is “a great inspiration” for Lynda, who enjoys morning walks along the river, overlooking farmland and woods. “The village is a friendly rural community and a complete contrast to where



Autumn along the paths around Tipton St John, in pastel

PASSIONATE ABOUT ART

“In my house I have a variety of paintings by artists whose style I admire that we have bought over the years,” says Lynda, who also has some of her own paintings on the walls.

Lynda’s favourite scenes are in the immediate area where she lives and has produced a number of pieces celebrating the landscape around Tipton St. John including a pastel of an autumn scene as well as the woods.

Prior to moving to Devon, Lynda was membership secretary for the Birmingham Watercolour Society. She is still a member of the Birmingham and Midland Pastel Society, the Birmingham Watercolour Society and the RBSA. She is a graduate of Birmingham College of Art.



Lynda Kettle at work: ‘I only paint in my studio when I have been inspired by a subject and know what media I am going to use’



Misty morning along the River Otter behind Lynda's house, in oil

I used to live in the city," she says. Lynda finds Devon hugely inspiring. "I love the river valleys and the rolling hills, the verges along the roads with high hedges and wildflowers, the Jurassic coastline with the pebble beaches, rough seas and calm seas as well as the changing colours on the fields and trees as the seasons change. An artist's dream."

In the 1980s she was the production designer for hit BBC television sailing drama *Howard's Way*. "There are many stories about off screen frolics but best not repeated," she reminisces, adding: "My life in TV has influenced my painting style." Lynda exhibits her paintings, runs art courses and gives demonstrations to art societies across the UK.

"I aim to show the effect of light with elements of drama using bold colour."

Lynda grew up in the Midlands and as a youngster would visit exhibitions at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists. "My greatest achievement is to have exhibited my paintings and been voted in by my peers of this society to become one of them," says the former Vice President of the RBSA. "I now have the initials RBSA after my name."

Her favourite time of year is spring and the month of May "when the bluebells appear in the woods and the trees are beginning to come to life" but she concedes that all the seasons are inspiring. "I also love September and the autumn when the leaves change into wonderful colours and the winter when the sea is rough."



A work in progress

When Lynda is inspired she will visit her studio to paint. "A painting day for me is an exciting time," she says. "I do not go to my studio every day; I go about twice a week. I only paint in my studio when I have been inspired by a subject and know what media I am going to use."

"I do not like overworking and I stop after a few hours and walk away to do something else. I often photograph my work and go home to think about the painting and see if I need to change anything next time I return."

lynda-kettle.com

CREATIVE FROM A YOUNG AGE

Aged 11 Lynda decided that she wanted to be a theatre designer. "The magic of the theatre excited me. I have been very lucky to have followed my dream. Qualifying at Birmingham School of Art in theatre design, I became a theatre designer and then into a profession as a production designer in BBC Television. Using my artistic skills I have learnt over the years in a wonderful profession."

It is only now that Lynda is living in Devon that she has been able to concentrate on painting. "I think this is a natural extension of what I did as a career and I am thoroughly enjoying the freedom of painting what inspires me."