

## BIRDS IN THEIR HABITAT

*Sheila Mannes-Abbott, FLS, FSBA*

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2010**

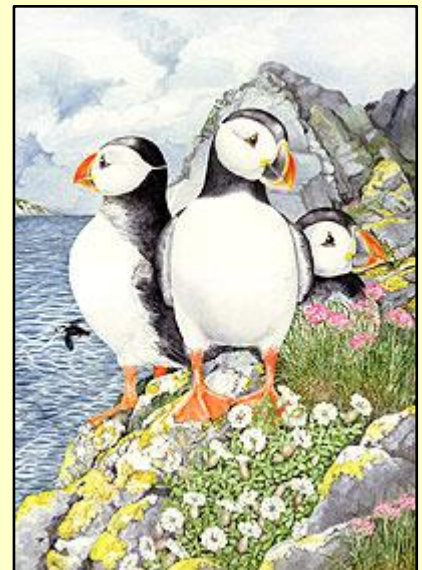
*Resident £350 / \*Non-resident £250*

### Course aims:

- The aim is to illustrate the birds in their own natural setting so that an element of botanical and background painting will be incorporated.
- During the course we will review what reference material can be used: photographs, set specimens and your own sketches. The following set specimens will be available: Woodpecker, Barn Owl, Little Owl, Long Eared Owl and Jay, these will be helpful for developing techniques to deal with painting feathers.
- Books will be available to establish accuracy. There will be some excellent photographs by one of the country's top wildlife photographer, Colin Varndell to aid your study.

### Course outline:

- We all have birds around us; in the garden on country walks and especially in areas like Kingcombe where the surroundings have been preserved.
- I have planted my small garden with habitats in mind, not only for birds but also butterflies, I have a small pond with frogs and newts, the latter somehow survived in the water irises which I moved from my large pond in Berkshire. Where we live, now by the sea, Herring Gulls nest on our chimney pots and the young constantly screech for food, despite this, our garden is still full of birds. In early morning we have Blue Tits, Great Tits, Coal Tits and Long Tailed Tits who come in a small flock announcing their arrival with their "chatter". Later in the day we are lucky enough to see Finches, Robins, Blackbirds and several others. I make sketches from my studio window that overlooks the garden. Later I develop these sketches into finished drawings and paintings. This is an approach which you might find useful.



### What to bring:

- ✓ Paper: the smooth surface of HOT PRESS is best for detailed work. Make sure the paper is thick enough as areas of wash and added washes can make the paper 'cockle' so disappointing! I use Archers Hot Press Block 140lbs (300gsm). They hold 20 sheets, the paper will not cockle. This can be expensive; As you may know they can be obtained from Jackson's



(0870 241 1849 for catalogue). Often less expensive than Art shops, it's a good idea to keep off cuts however small for colour testing etc.

- ✓ Pencils: HB H and an F pencil. A sharpener – I use a scalpel to keep the point sharp and a Mars Staedtler rubber for corrections.
- ✓ Brushes: Winsor and Newton sable series 7 are wonderful; they are expensive, but any good sable brush is advisable. Whatever brush you choose, please make sure it has a good point, no 1 and no 2 are useful, with a no 000 for fine detail and outlining. The larger brushes may be used for the rest of the work. Always use an old brush for colour mixing
- ✓ Paints: watercolour, with its delicacy, fluidity and transparency, is the best medium for detailed work. Artists' colours with a high concentration of pigments and fine grinding are best for wildlife and botanical painting. Bring as wide a range as you can, bearing in mind the title of the course, Bright Red, New Gamboge, Permanent Alizarin Crimson, Quinacridone Gold, Cadmium Yellow, Lemon Yellow, Aureolin (a useful more greeny yellow), Trans. Yellow, Raw Umber, Raw Sienna, Sepia, Olive Green, Sap Green, (a range of greens can be mixed), Permanent Rose, Rose Madder Genuine, Quinacridone Magenta, Permanent Magenta, Winsor Violet, Prussian Blue, French Ultramarine, Cobalt Blue and Paynes Grey are all useful colours, realising that Artist's Water Colours are expensive, bring whatever you can.
- ✓ Finally; some blotting paper (white only) and Ovgall.
- ✓ These are suggestions. Bring what you can and any of your favourite materials!
- ✓ If you have any finished or semi-finished work you would like to bring please do so. It would be helpful to see how you are progressing and where I can be of most help.

#### **About the tutor:**

Sheila has always been concerned about our wildlife heritage, her painting of Warren Copse, published in the Times Sunday Magazine, saved the copse (actually one of the last stands of old Windsor forest) Some 40 acres of ancient woodland full of wildlife, from being obliterated and becoming a motorway service station, the Government moved the plan to a brown field site instead. Sheila's wildlife and bird paintings have been used on collector's plates for "Watch", the junior section of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation. Sheila has also designed stationery and giftware for many leading environmental charities, including the National Trust, World Wildlife Fund and the R.S.P.B. to engage young people in nature conservation, helping them to develop an interest in recognizing the flora and fauna around them.

She has taught botanical drawing and painting at Brunel University as a design tool for surface decoration, she has had a career in adult education for the past 35 yrs, and currently teaches short courses in the southeast as well as from her own studio.

#### **Notes:**

This course starts at 10am on Monday and finished after lunch on Friday. We offer a subsidised bed and breakfast offer at £30 on Sunday night for those wishing to come early. To take advantage of this, participants should book the courses in the usual way, then telephone the Centre to book B&B at the discounted rate. Our food is home-cooked with ingredients sourced locally and organic whenever possible.

