

# Terry Harrison's Watercolour Secrets

A lifetime of painting techniques



OVER  
170  
SECRETS



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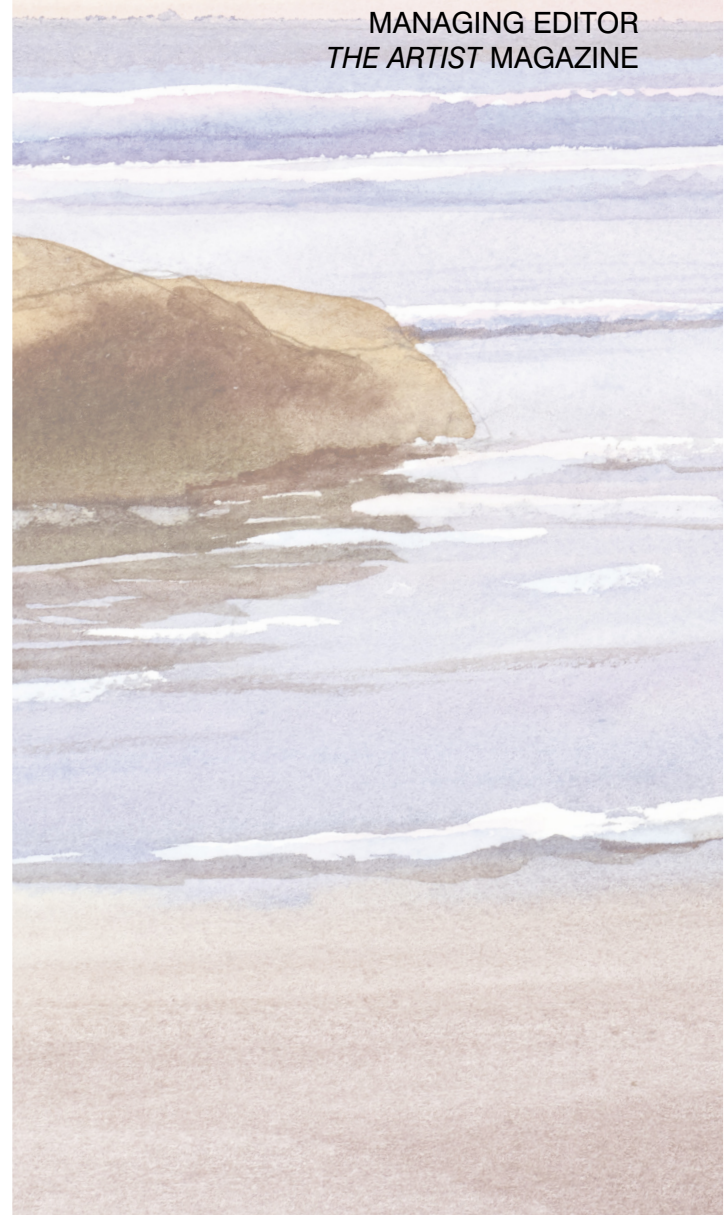
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### Review of **TERRY HARRISON'S WATERCOLOUR SECRETS**

"Just as you think you've moved beyond beginner level and outgrown Terry Harrison, another title by the great master-tutor comes along and you realise how good he is at explaining and demonstrating watercolour techniques that can benefit artists in all stages of their development. If you want to become a better painter, you couldn't ask for a more effective tutor and Terry's 170 tips from a lifetime of painting will go a long way to help you improve your technical abilities. This is one for every aspiring artist's practical art library."

DR SALLY BULGIN  
MANAGING EDITOR  
*THE ARTIST MAGAZINE*



# Terry Harrison's **WATERCOLOUR SECRETS**



## Acknowledgements

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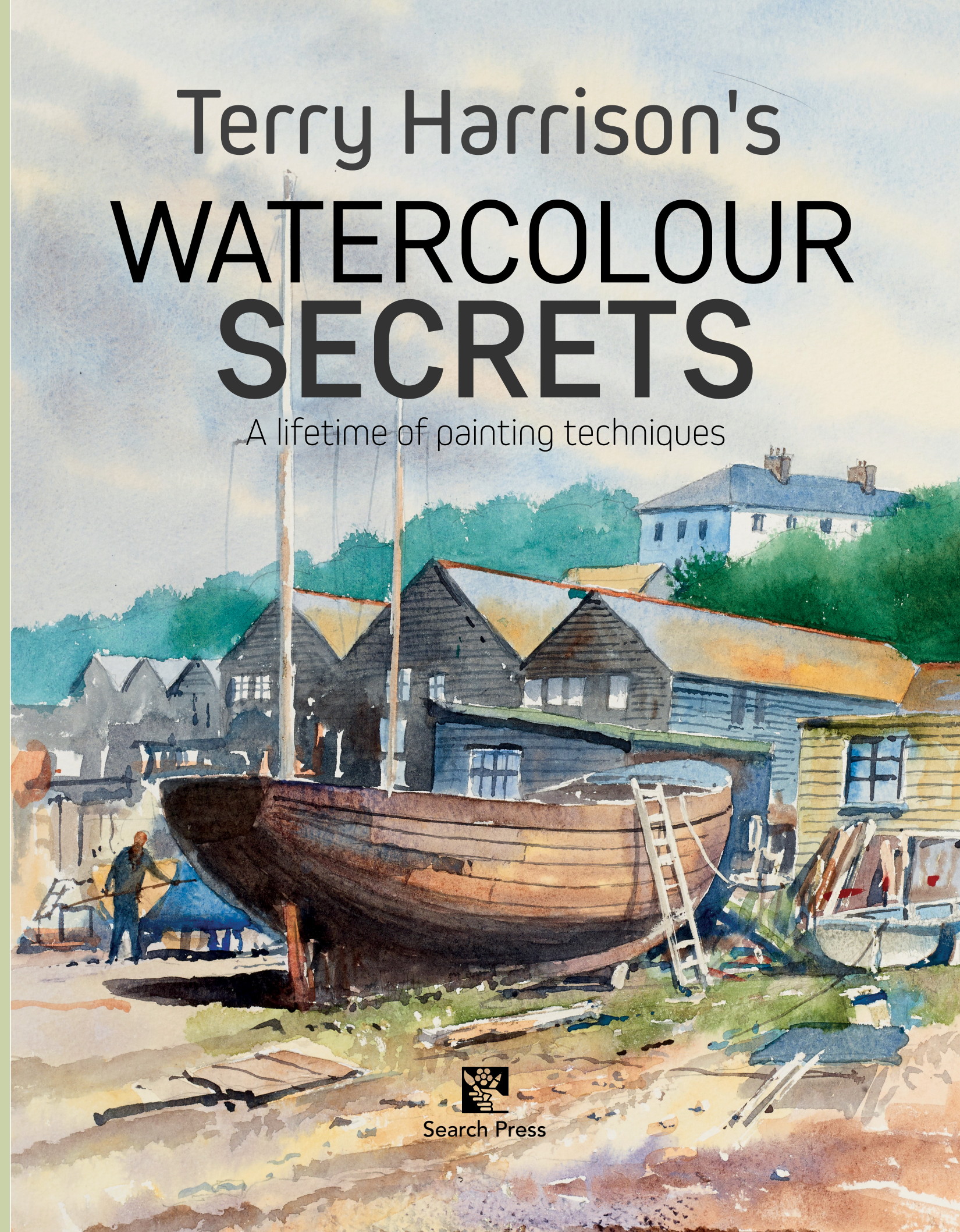
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### Publishers' note

All the step-by-step photographs in this book feature the author, Terry Harrison, demonstrating how to paint with watercolours. No models have been used.

# Terry Harrison's WATERCOLOUR SECRETS

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Terry Harrison grew up in Norfolk. His early art education was basic and he never dreamed that he would become an artist. At fifteen, Terry moved to Hampshire and was inspired by a brilliant art teacher. He took O- and A-levels in art, then won a place at Farnham Art School at the age of sixteen. He became a graphic artist, but continued to paint in his spare time. In 1984 Terry gave up his job to paint full-time. He demonstrates to artists' groups and teaches on painting holidays. He has also developed a range of his own brushes and paints. He is the author of many best-selling books on painting with acrylics and watercolours. Terry now lives in the Cotswolds.

## < Bluebell wood

*This woodland glade has more than a touch of spring about it: there are plenty of spring colours in the foliage and a gorgeous carpet of bluebells. Most of the tree trunks were masked first with masking fluid, not just the silver birches.*



# Introduction

My aim in teaching art has always been to make painting more accessible by helping to make the techniques easier. I have even created my own range of brushes, specially designed to make it easier for the beginner to achieve a variety of effects.

Much of my advice on watercolour techniques is based on common sense: for instance, to achieve wet into wet effects, the paper surface has to be wet, not merely damp or beginning to dry! Years of experience of painting and teaching have meant that I have accumulated a wealth of handy tips for successful painting, and in this book I pass on my secrets, from the ones I first learned to completely new ones.

I have been painting and drawing since I can remember. I used to copy the characters in my weekly comics, and the first watercolour that I can remember doing was a painting of a budgerigar from the front of a packet of Trill birdseed. You can see that I learned from an early age that the use of reference material is very important! Now, with the help of the internet, an artist can source almost any subject or image at the click of a mouse. Before this was an option, I managed to amass a collection of photographs taken on holidays or while travelling, then carefully filed away for future reference. Using your own photographs means you do not have to worry about copyright laws, which few people seem to understand.

In this book I will share with you many secrets, dispel some myths and hopefully take the mystery out of watercolour painting.

Opposite >

### Rocky shoreline

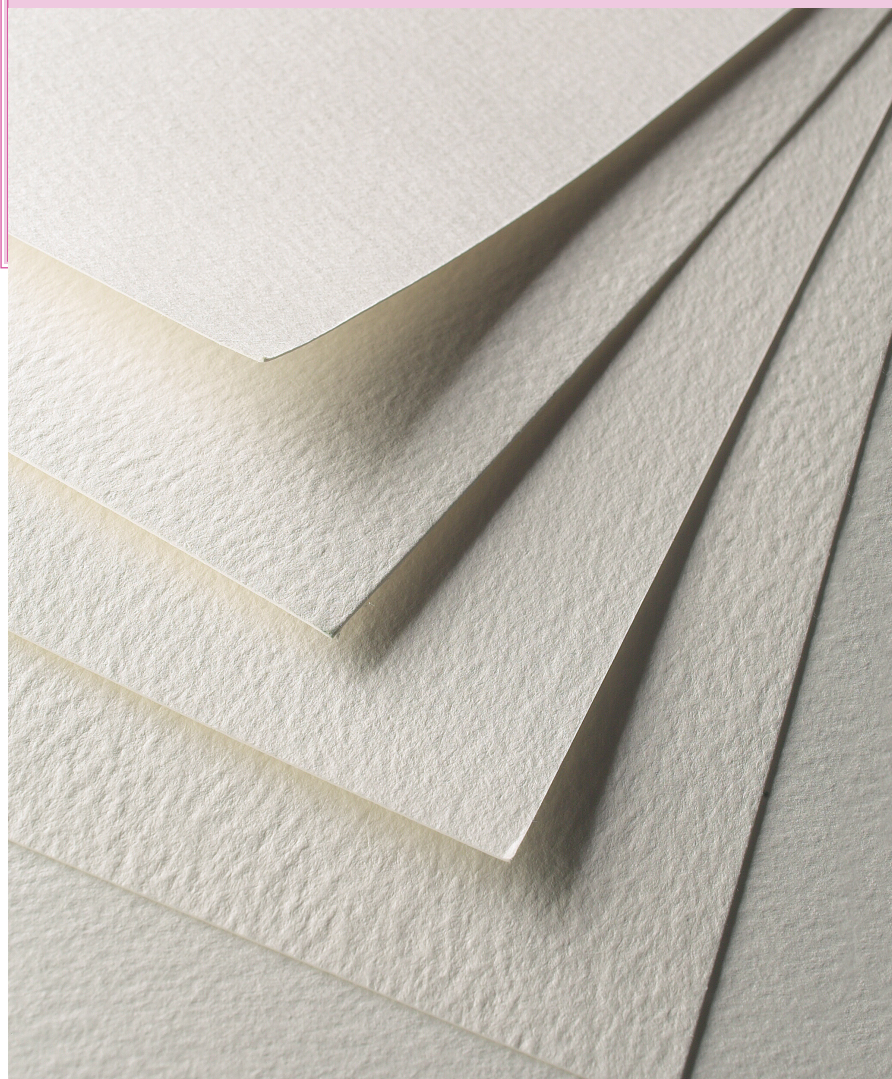
*There is plenty of action on the shoreline in this painting, capturing the moment when a wave crashes into the rocks and beach. All you need is some kitchen paper and masking fluid, a plastic card for the rocks and a spattering of paint for the beach. All the techniques can be found within the pages of this book.*



## Paper

Whatever paper you start painting on will probably be the paper you stay with. The reason for this is that you learn how to paint on a certain surface, and if you change to another surface, you need to adapt your style. For instance, if you paint a wash, it will work perfectly on one surface but will not be right on another. All the paper used in this book is Bockingford, a wood pulp paper which is not too absorbent and is a good surface for masking fluid. It is white as opposed to cream and it is an inexpensive, good quality watercolour paper.

You can also buy tinted papers in colours such as grey, pale blue, cream and oatmeal. By choosing a coloured background to your painting, you can enhance the mood.



## 1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT PAPER

Watercolour paper comes in three surfaces, Hot Pressed (smooth), Not (called this because it is not hot pressed; it is in fact cold pressed) and Rough. The hot pressed paper shown on the right is suitable for botanical and detailed paintings, portraiture and fine detail.



Rough paper is an ideal surface for landscapes and seascapes, as the surface helps give the impression of texture and is particularly useful for the dry brush technique.



## 2 PREVENTING COCKLING

Cockling occurs when you apply a wash to the paper surface. The fibres in the paper soak up the water and expand. If the paper is unevenly wetted, the fibres expand at different rates and cockling occurs. This is why artists are recommended to stretch paper by soaking it, taping it to a drawing board and allowing it to dry. The paper shrinks as it dries, but because it is taped at the edges, it dries fully stretched. I find, however, that although the paper dries almost flat, some cockling will still occur when you apply washes. I also find that stretching paper affects the paper, as some of the size is removed. For these reasons I don't bother to stretch paper.

The simplest way to flatten a painting that has cockled is to turn it face down, wet the back of it (don't over-wet it), allow the water to soak in, and when the paper is fully expanded, put a drawing board over it and weigh it down with a pile of books. Let the painting dry overnight and it will dry completely flat.

Another solution to cockling is to use a heavy paper. I use a 300gsm (140lb) paper, but to avoid cockling altogether, use an even heavier paper.

Finally, you could use the method shown on page 65 to prevent cockling.

