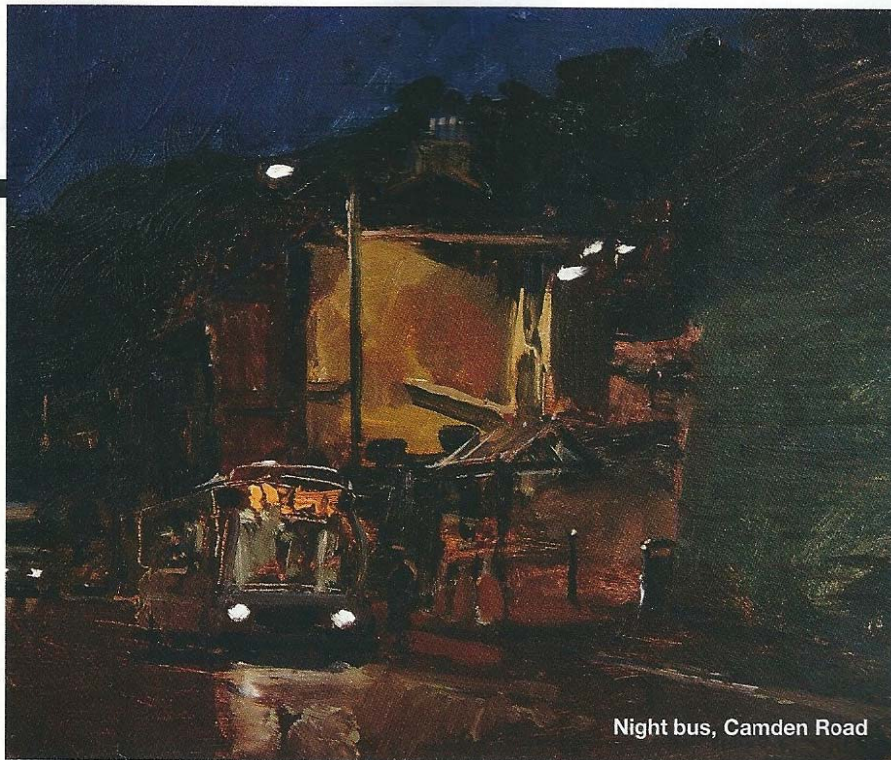


# Pete the Street



Bath is a city of constant surprises and street painter Peter Brown captures these moments, while relishing the variety of the British climate





Night bus, Camden Road

#### What's the appeal of Bath?

After five years of trying desperately to understand modernism at college in Manchester and afterwards, I turned my back on art as I decided I did not really understand it. When we moved to Bath it was the city that got me drawing again. I was inspired by the architecture, the atmosphere, the stone and the light. It sounds melodramatic, but Bath changed my life.

#### What sort of response do you get from passers-by?

Many stop and talk. Many walk straight by either without noticing or just simply uninterested. People say the funniest things. I listen and chat as I paint – it's lovely. I have to say, in my 16 years of painting on the streets I have had only two bad experiences: one from a solicitor's firm in Bath who called the police to have me removed from the pavement outside their offices, and one

**P**aintings, drawings and pastels capturing the streets and hills of Bath in all weathers will be on display at the Victoria Art Gallery. The works have been created by Peter Brown, otherwise known as Pete the Street because of his habit of working outdoors, come rain, sleet or shine.

This is the fifth exhibition by Peter to be shown at Bath's Victoria Art Gallery but is by far the largest to date and will fill the Bridge Street venue's large ground-floor gallery. Entitled 'Bath between the Snows', it will feature work undertaken between the two heavy snowfalls that occurred at the beginning and end of 2010.

Although Peter now enjoys a national reputation and has completed a stint as Painter in Residence at the Savoy Hotel in London, he can still be glimpsed painting around Bath where he lives with his wife Lisa and their five children.

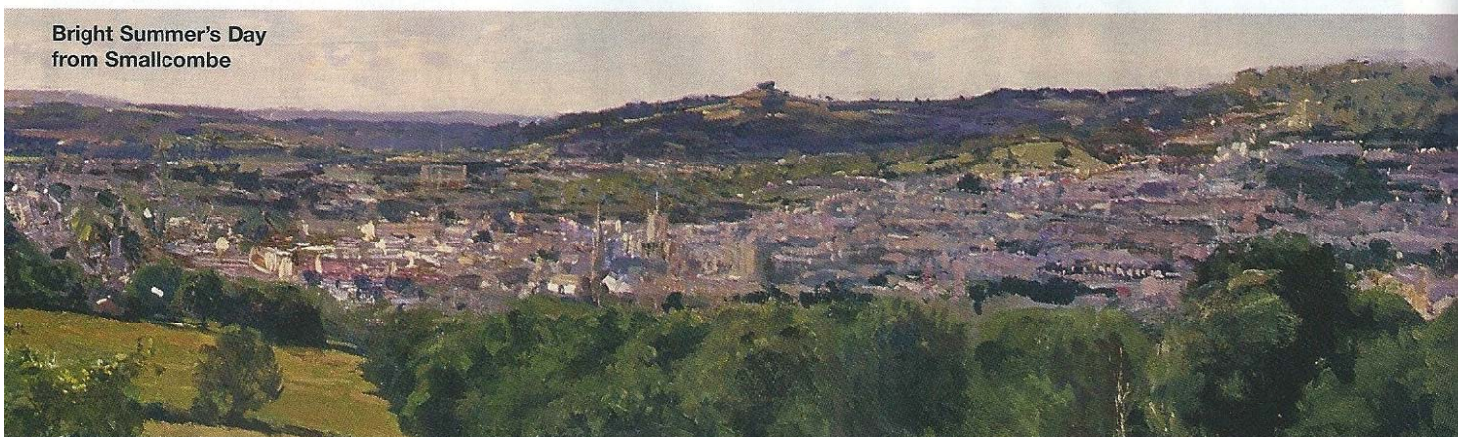
#### Where do you come from?

I was born in sunny Reading and grew up in the middle of a wood a couple of miles from junction 13 of the M4. In fact, we saw the motorway being built. I first came to Bath in 1986 to study an art foundation course. Lisa and I returned in 1993.

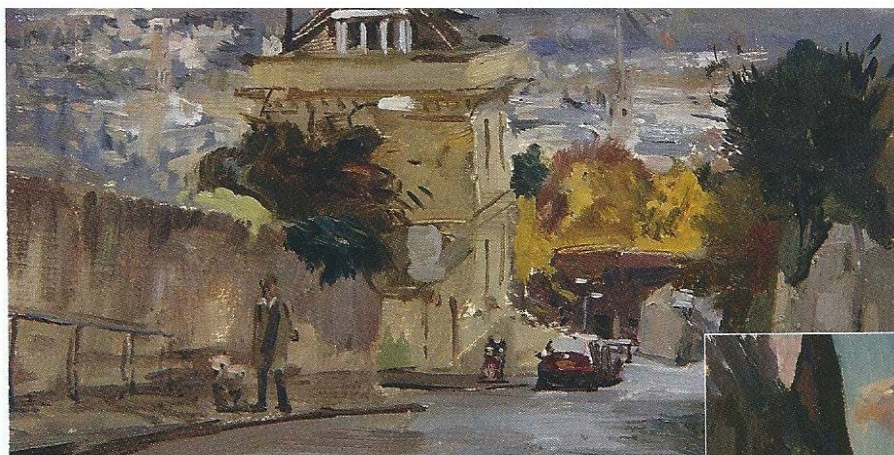


Summer, the bandstand  
Hedgemoor Park

Bright Summer's Day  
from Smallcombe





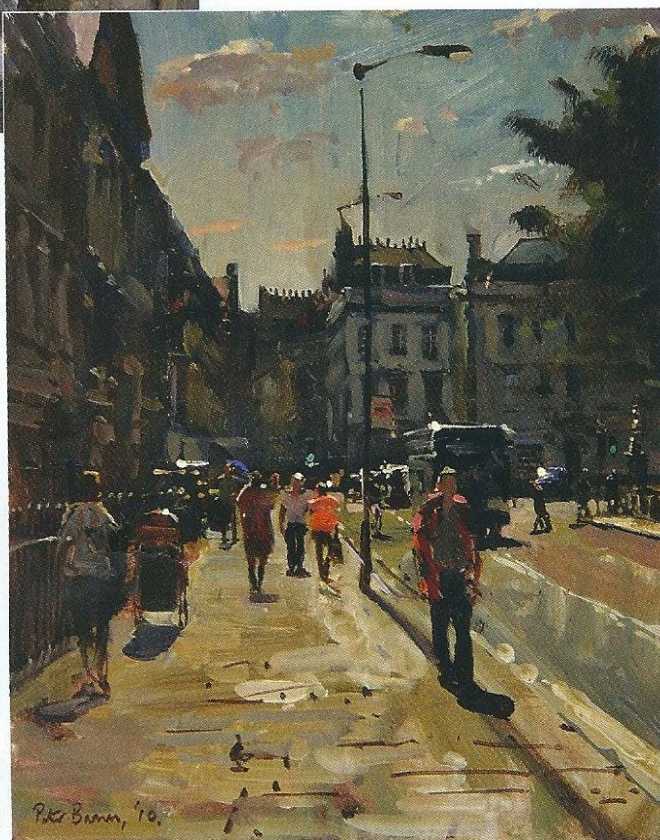
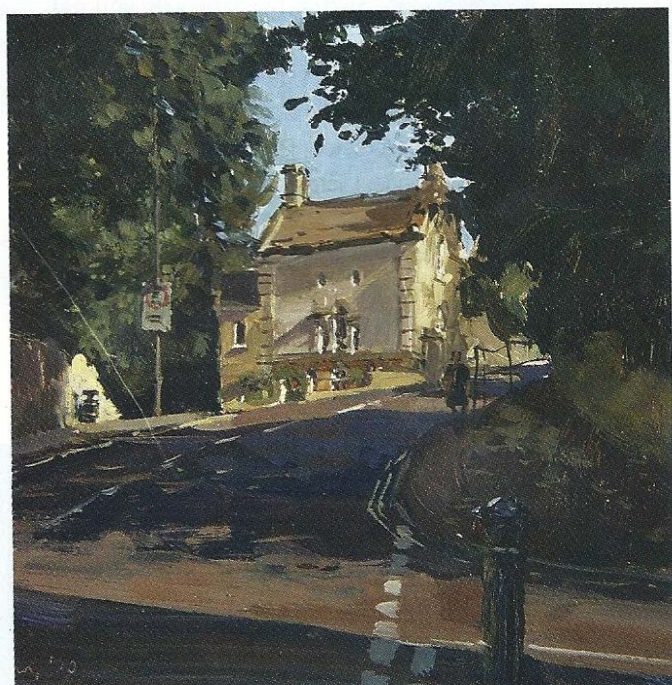


**Left**  
 Beautiful grey autumn day from the top of Gays Hill, Bath

**Below left**  
 Ralph Allen's Gate Lodge, 5pm, September

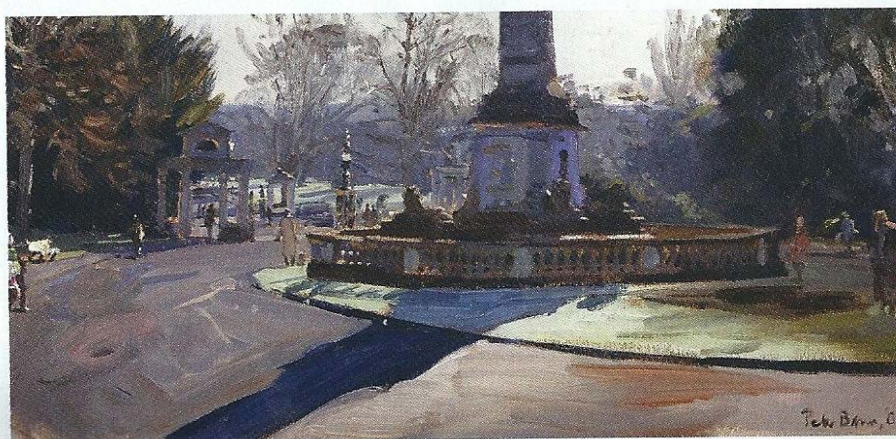
**Below**  
 Late afternoon, North Parade

**Bottom**  
 March morning, heavy dew

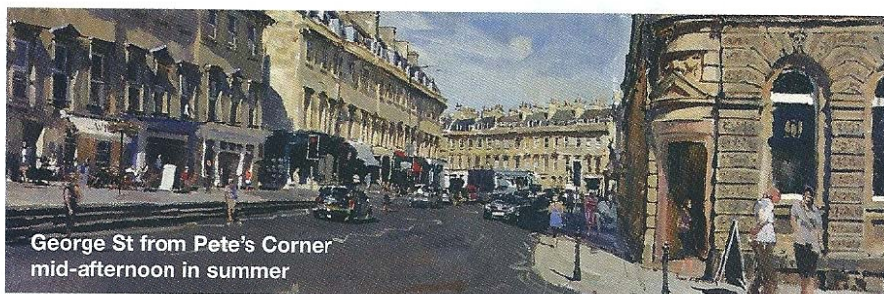


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while drawing with my back to a multi-storey car park in Swindon where I was spat on from the fifth floor. I decided to give chase... what a wally! But my view of the public is so far from that we see on the news – it is 100% positive. They even say "That's lovely, dear" when there is nothing on the canvas. It took me a while to get used to kids in London years ago before the language infected every young person around the country. Eventually I realised that for a superlative you simply employ a negative: 'That's sick', 'bad', 'heavy'. In Pimlico two kids crossed the road, came round to my side of the easel and exclaimed: "Wo! Picasso just got beat up!"







George St from Pete's Corner  
 mid-afternoon in summer

**Do you often see familiar faces when you are out painting?**

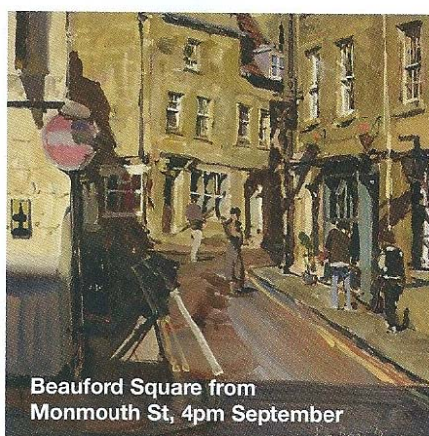
Yes, I am always meeting people from Bath on London bridges!

**Do you have some favourite spots?**

As long as it winks at me I paint it and if something winks once it winks again – maybe in a different light or different time of day, but maybe in a similar light but years on. One particular area that springs to mind for this show is George Street in the summer. I love the atmosphere at the top of the centre – beer on the pavement – ahh!

**What are the hazards of painting outside?**

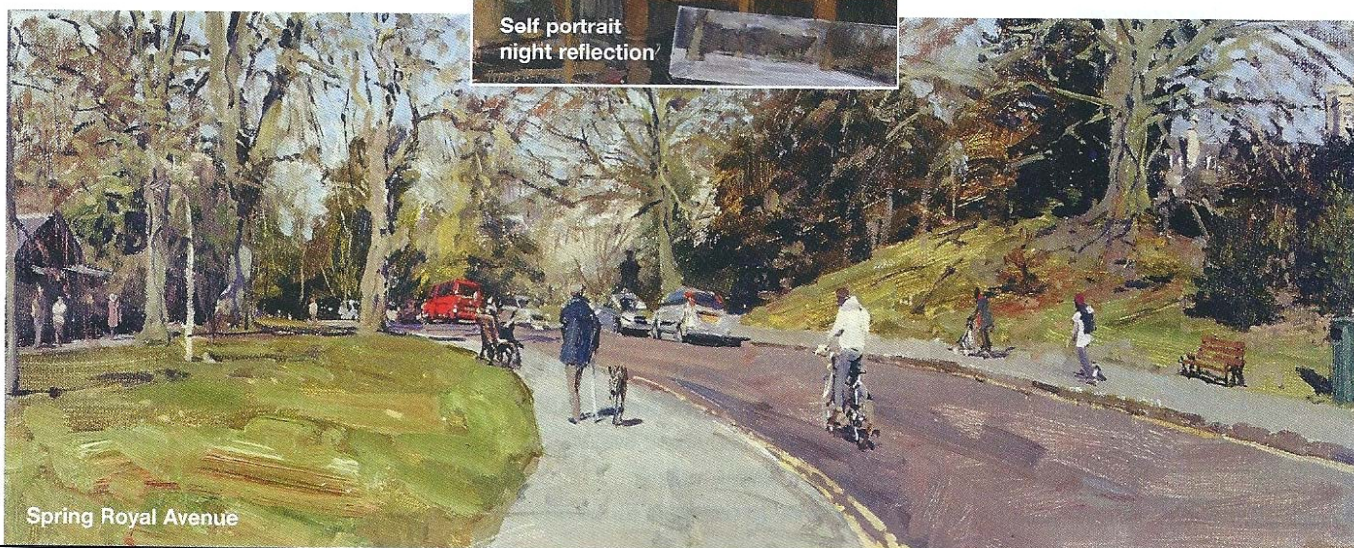
Weather is fine. Temperature is sorted with lots of layers. When I get in I get the kids to guess how many layers I have on top and on bottom. We count as I strip. Rain is fun – oil paint resists it for a time until you can no longer get the paint to stick to the canvas or indeed pick it up from the palette with



Beauford Square from  
 Monmouth St, 4pm September



Self portrait  
 night reflection



Spring Royal Avenue

your brush. Snow is wonderful and sun is glorious. Changeable can be frustrating but can produce some good surprises. The one I really cannot crack, though, is wind – it's a nightmare!

**Have you had any memorable moments while painting?**

Apart from the fights with officials in Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus and Westminster Bridge, the funniest thing which sticks in my mind is when I was painting the Cross Bath early one summer morning. They were still building the new spa and there were workmen I had not noticed across the open cobbled space. One picked up a traffic cone, pointed it in my direction (they really work as loud hailer) and shouted: "Put down the paint brush and step away from the easel!" I jumped a mile and caught them rolling around in fits as I scabbled to pick up my brushes and palette.

*'Bath between the Snows' runs from 9 April to 2 June.*

*Bath's Victoria Art Gallery, near Pulteney Bridge, is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am-5pm, and Sundays, 1.30pm-5pm. Admission is free. For further details call 01225 477233 or visit [victoriagal.org.uk](http://victoriagal.org.uk)*

*For information about Peter Brown visit [peterbrownneac.com](http://peterbrownneac.com)*