

# As winter approaches

**A**s I write it is a mild early October day. I am of course keen to get out and paint but I have this deadline. Being in the main a plein air painter (painting from life and generally out of doors) you spend your life, if not out there then looking out the window wishing you were. Bright sunny days for an imprisoned painter are annoying. It seems such a waste to be stuck inside. I used to be most relaxed on grey rainy days but as I love painting rain this is now a problem too. The worst however is snow.

It is impossible for me not to paint it. When we have a 'snow day' – that is when the kids sit round BBC Radio Bristol or rather keep refreshing the school closures page on the website to discover their school is closed mine get excited but know that their dad will already be long gone, knee deep in snow on Upper Church Street or Lansdown Road painting the cars skidding and sliding their way up the hill.

Snow is the most incredible phenomenon. It transforms our city in the most wonderful way. For a painter it's a real treat. The white ground becomes lighter than the ochre sky when the snow is falling then when the sun comes out and sparkles across it the colours are lush. The early mornings start quiet. You hear some scraping of cars, creaking of boots compacting the snow. Soon the kids appear (of all ages – from 2 to 80 years old) heading up to their favourite sledding hill – Bathwick, Lansdown, Penn Hill, the Pitch and Put. Everyone is excited even when they are soggy and frozen. You do get the occasional moaner but they're best ignored.

I paint like a nutter all day and then as twilight comes it gets even better. The white snow prolongs the light into the evening so you get an extended window through which to catch it. For this reason I have it as the cover of the Bath book. The day I painted Pulteney Bridge dizzy with the falling snow, was remarkable. I had never seen the bridge and Great Pulteney



Street behind it like that and wonder how any times I will get the chance to see that again.

In 2011 the Victoria Art Gallery put on my biggest show of the city to date. It was painted in the main between those two snowfalls of January and December and we called it 'Bath Between the Snows'. I am travelling more these days and I still say that Bath is one of the most beautiful cities in the world but when it snows it moves up a gear. I have eight or so unfinished snow scenes from earlier this year painted during the Beast from the East which I need to finish. It's 20 degrees outside and a lovely warm Autumnal day but I am sitting here praying for a harsh snow filled winter in Bath.

For more information on Peter visit the website [www.petethestreet.com](http://www.petethestreet.com)

Peter's new Bath Book "Bath Paintings by Peter Brown" is out on 31st October available to buy on his website and at all good bookshops.

FB: petethestreet  
Insta: petethestreet1  
Twitter: petethestreet1



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**Images:** Top Left - 'Morning Sunlight on Crisp Snow, Somerset place, January 2010', oil on canvas, 24 x 36 inches. Bottom Left - 'Twilight, Snow from the Golf Course', Oil on canvas, 20 x 40 inches. This page - 'Snow, the Bottom of Lansdown Road, January 2010', oil on canvas, 20 x 25 inches.



