

CRAFT CORNER



This month we chat to Russell C., a member of Craft Gin Club who loves sharing his love for painting and gin with others.

Originally from Middlesex, Russell has lived in Milton Keynes for 37 years. For the last six months, he's been a member of Craft Gin Club, an experience that has turned him from a whisky man to a true gin convert.

He says, "The only gins I had ever really drunk were well-known brands from the supermarket shelf, or the more heavily flavoured speciality gins, most of which were a bit too strong for my taste. The contents of the Craft Gin Club boxes opened my eyes (and my taste buds) to the wide variety of craft gins out there."

Gin wasn't the only thing Russell found a taste for later in life – in his youth, art hadn't caught his attention either. Russell says, "I hated art at school, and when I left I never had any interest in painting."

While he would happily visit galleries and was familiar with most major art movements, Russell never considered himself much of an artist.

"That all changed about 10 years ago at a craft fayre in Milton Keynes, where I watched an artist named Paul Bryant turn a 50cm x 100cm blank black canvas into an arctic night scene in 30 minutes. He made it look so easy," smiles Russell.

From then on Russell was hooked, spending his spare time honing his skills. He found that the Bob Ross technique was a great way to gain confidence.

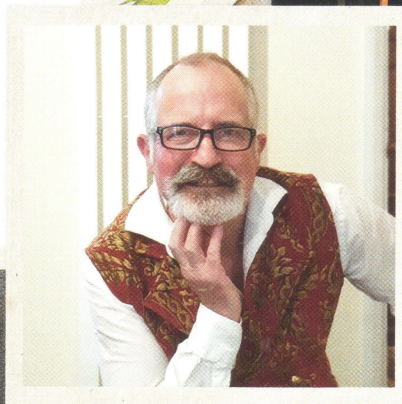
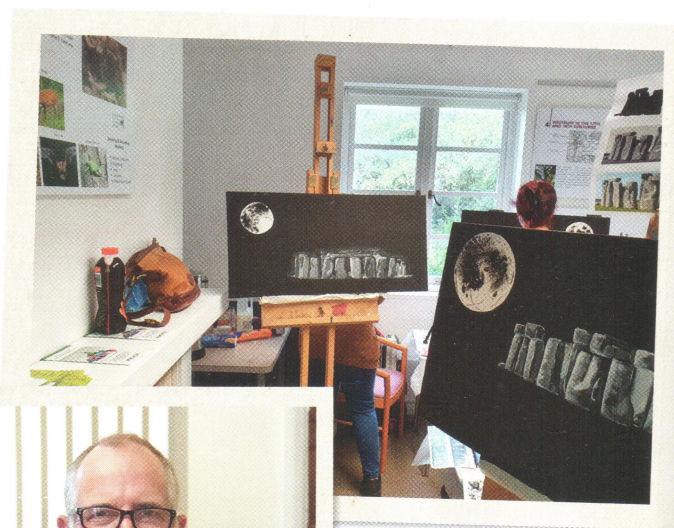
He explains, "The Bob Ross technique is a modern take on a painting method called wet-on-wet, which has been around for a few hundred years. It's also called Alla-Prima (all-in-one) as it allows you to create a painting in one sitting."

Soon enough, Russell began sharing his love of the Bob Ross technique with others, organising painting nights with people in his local area who wanted to flex their creative muscles but weren't sure where to begin.

Russell says, "The Bob Ross technique is a great way to show people that they can paint. They don't need skill, just the desire, and first-time painters are thrilled with what they manage to paint. It's a great method for getting started with painting, because it gives you the confidence to develop further skills and techniques."

Eventually, his passion for art and gin collided, and he started hosting paint-and-sip events at local pubs.

"Art is a creative process, and when I teach a Bob Ross painting session I make it clear that I'm really just showing people how to do it, not telling them what they must do – they can go a bit off-piste. A good G&T helps people to relax a little when painting, and makes them more amenable to trying something different. We do, I hasten to add, drink responsibly," laughs Russell.



Do you have a knack for ginny crafts? If so, we'd love to see! Send an email to members@craftginclub.co.uk with your crafting story for the chance to be featured in **Ginned! Magazine**.