

# A county on canvas

A new exhibition aims to capture the essence of Yorkshire



Rievaulx Abbey near Helmsley



Clifford at work

Aysgarth Falls, Wensleydale

AWARD-winning artist Clifford William Blakey has always wanted to paint enough images of Yorkshire for a full solo exhibition – and he's finally done it.

His completed work 'A Yorkshire Journey' is on display from August 23rd at Anstey Galleries in Harrogate. Together, the paintings capture the varied landscape of the county.

'My association with the region started when I showed for the first time at the British Watercolour Society shows in Ilkley,' Clifford says. 'I was fascinated by the varied landscape of Yorkshire and immediately began to paint it; it was the start of a love affair I suppose.'

Clifford lives in Whitley Bay and has always been a frequent visitor to the white rose county. 'Yorkshire had everything I was looking for when I planned this exhibition,' he says. 'The coastline, for example, is rich with high cliff tops, rugged seas and small fishing villages and I have witnessed some dramatic skies there that would be the envy of anywhere in the world.'

Born in Newcastle, Clifford has won several awards including the Brian Mosley Memorial Award and the Bockingford Watercolour Prize from the British Watercolour Society. In 2006 he was made a fellow of the society. He has works in private collections in the USA, Belgium, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Australia as well as in Great Britain.

His 'Yorkshire journey' took almost a year to plan, and led him all over the county. He was drawn to many of his subjects by their history, such as Rievaulx Abbey and the ruins at Whitby, and to others by their powerful landscape. ▶

'My association with Yorkshire was the start of a love affair'



Blossom in Harrogate



Gunnerside near Reeth

Runswick Bay



'The Dales, with hilly horizons and stone walls, outcrops of trees and rivers are the stuff of dreams to me, and to follow this round to Penistone and the Brontë Country stirs up all the romantic ideas which flow through my work,' he says.

When working outdoors, Clifford uses small sketchbooks to make colour notes, and takes photographs to record the topography of the landscape. He then translates them into paintings using 100–200 layers of thinly applied acrylic and gouache. 'I apply an underpainting first then scratch, splatter and layer until the image emerges,' he explains. 'I love this way of working as it means I can scratch through to layers underneath revealing the colours which have been put down previously.'

'Who could help but be overwhelmed by the nature of the landscape of Yorkshire?' he says. 'It is compelling, rigorous and blessed with a charm which hides its underlying grittiness. To do justice to this landscape is a truly massive task and I am hoping that this will be the first of many solo projects in Yorkshire.'

'I only hope the good people of Yorkshire will accept an outsider's view of their wonderful homeland.'

'A Yorkshire Journey' is on display from August 23rd – September 28th at Anstey Galleries in Harrogate. Contact 01423 500 102 or see [www.ansteygalleries.co.uk](http://www.ansteygalleries.co.uk)