

# Painting is an escape for 80-year-old artist

By KAREN SMITH

## The Champion

Being arrested by military police came as a shock for Marie Clements who always thought of sketching as a peaceful pastime.

The cheerful 80-year-old Milton artist recalls drawing the south coast of England in 1944 — three days before D Day — when she was interrupted by the British military.

Her pictures and demeanour eventually convinced police that she was a harmless artist, not a Second World War spy, she told *The Champion*.

A native of Edmonton, Ms Clements' passion for painting has also taken her to France and Africa.

She realized she had talent when her drawings of plant life, done as a teenager, were submitted by a teacher to the Royal Drawing

Society in England. She won a silver medal at the age of 16.

Today, Ms Clements enjoys sketching as well as painting historical structures and outdoor scenes. Her two latest projects include paintings of the Acorn Tea Room at Main and Martin streets, and a farm.

She finds the art form a relaxing hobby which takes her away from it all.

"It's a wonderful therapeutic thing to do," she said from her Ontario Street apartment. "You concentrate so much, you don't even notice what's going on around you."

Exemplifying the motto that an artist never stops learning, Ms Clements has taken art courses throughout her life.

She credits her oil painting technique to three years of night school classes in Toronto, taken while she

was in her thirties.

Her teacher was a little Italian painter, Ms Clements recalled, who instructed portraiture and walked about the class reminding students to "control the paint."

Most recently, Ms Clements travelled to France for a combined language and watercolour course.

The Canadian Group of Seven and the French Impressionists are notable influences in her style, she said. She especially admires Monet's *Waterlilies*.

To cover expenses, Ms Clements often sells her work. Some of her paintings are currently on display at The Country Gallery on Main Street

East. "It costs \$20 for a tube of white paint, and brushes are expensive, too," she said.

A meteorologist in England during the Second World War, Ms Clements eventually moved to Toronto where she lived most of her life.

She moved to Milton 15 years ago.



The Acorn Tea Room on Martin Street provided the inspiration for one of Marie Clements' most recent paintings. The local artist's work is on display at The Country Gallery on Main Street.



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