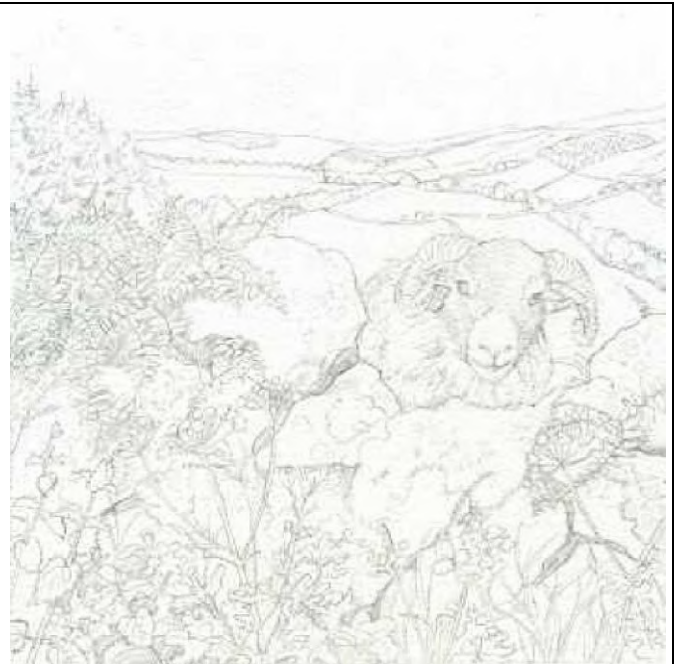


## 'Hello There'

Watercolour

Deciding it was time to paint the textures of a section of drystone wall, I used some of my reference photographs of walls and the Borders countryside, together with the face of a friendly black-face tup, to put together this composition.

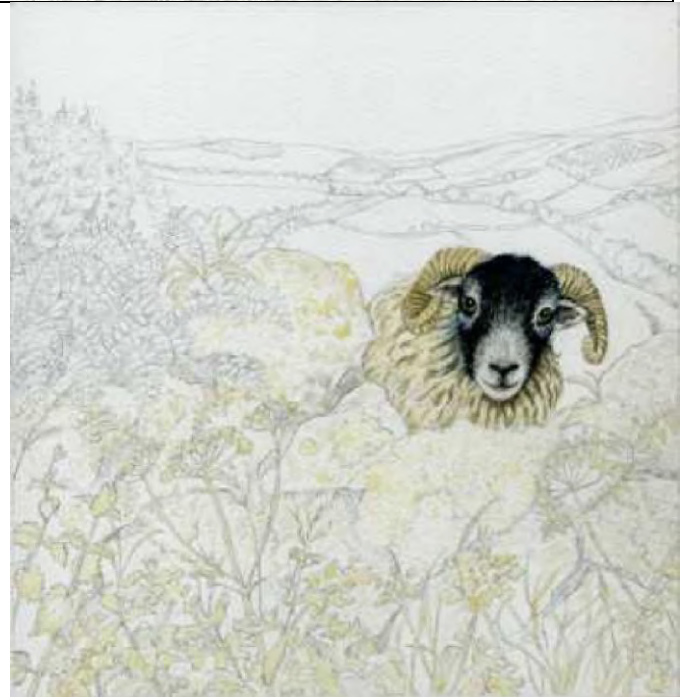
Everything was drawn in detail in pencil first, with selected wild flowers of hogweed, nettles and grasses added into the foreground.



The black-face tup was painted first, starting with the eyes. The friendly look was an important feature for the final painting so I had to get it right.

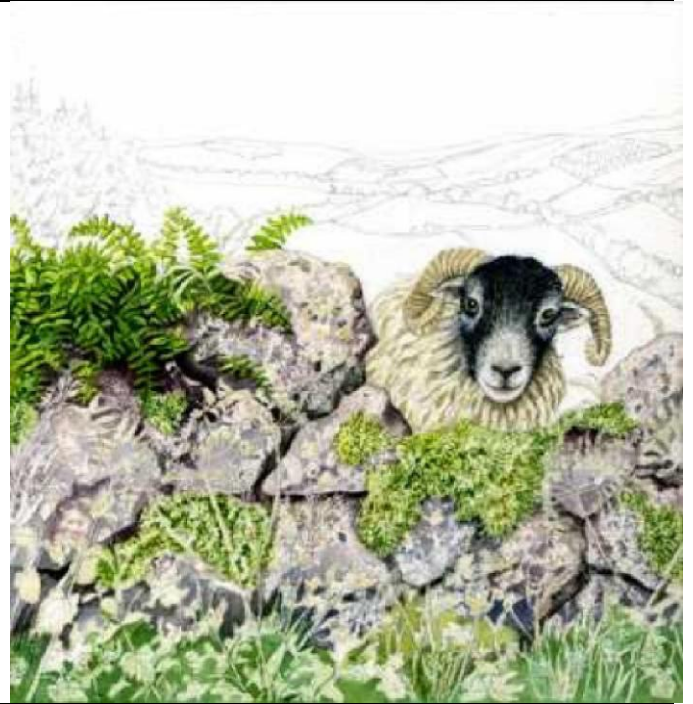
Then I masked all the foreground leaves, flowers, stems, and then the lichen textures on the stones, together with the moss textures, ready for painting all the supporting surfaces in-between.

I used a ruling pen for the masking to save ruining a brush. It's important that the masking fluid be a very runny consistency for this to work well.

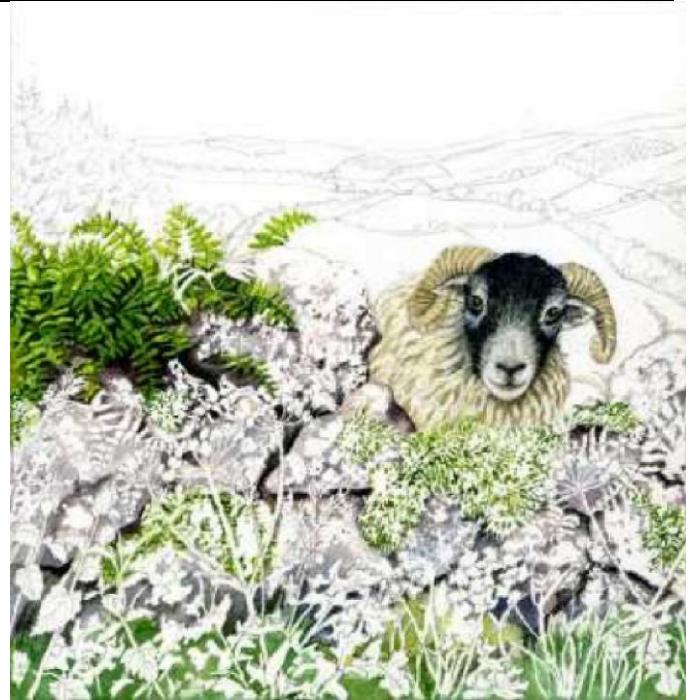


Next I painted the ferns with all their cast shadows, the rocks wet into wet and their crevices, the mediums and darks of the mosses, and the medium and darker tones in the foreground foliage areas.

All the pale cream masked areas you can see were to be the lightest tones of the foreground features after the masking fluids removal.

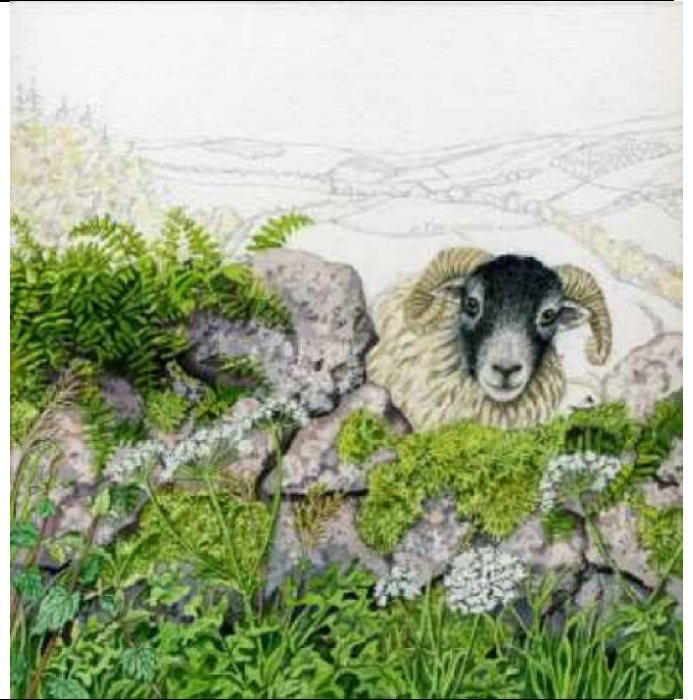


The masking fluid was removed - a lot of preserved white revealed!



All the masked structures and textures were painted in, or in the case of the lichens, tinted in with thin glazes.

The foreground grasses were more time consuming as I developed additional stems and leaves in the shadow areas between those that had just been painted in. It was important for this area of the painting to suggest being in the shade, so blue-greens predominate. The distant fields and tops of the ferns were to be catching the sun.



At the base of the wall behind the foliage there needed to be more shadow development. After that, in this area, gouache was used for some overlapping lighter grasses here and there. And I added some buttercups for colour.

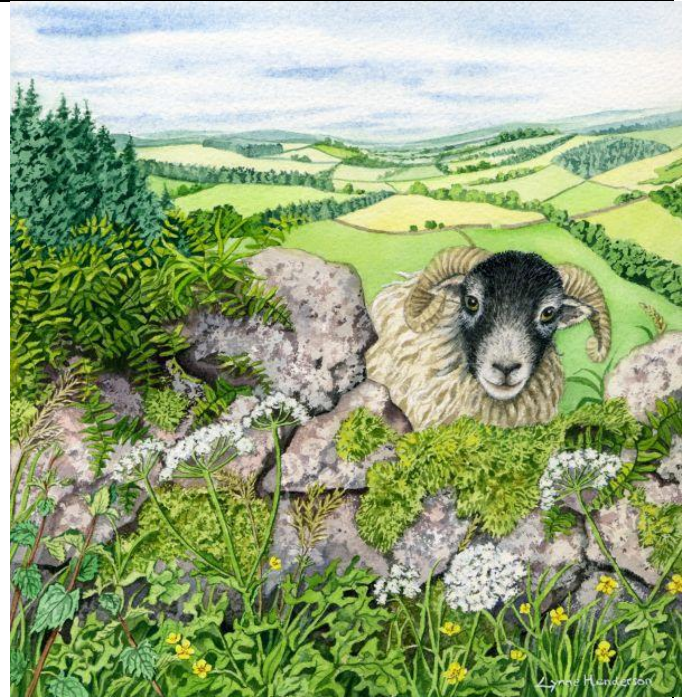
The painting was coming alive now. In pursuit of more masked textural effects, I decided to use it on the bank of conifers on the left and some distant trees on the right, just before they go into the far distance where the crisp edges of masked textures would be inappropriate.





The final stage involved thin washes for the distant fields and some banks of trees, with the sky kept simple so as not to detract from the subject – fluffy white clouds would have drawn the eye too much.

It's always lovely to do the final stage and in this case it really lends scale and perspective to the whole.



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