DEMONSTRATION IN ARTISTS' SOFT PASTELS: EARLY MORNING LIGHT

1. Using a blue-grey emery-surfaced pastel paper called Colourfix, I first sketched out the main elements of the picture from photo reference, with a pastel pencil.
2. I started work on the sky - painting in broad sweeps of pale blue soft pastel, adding slightly darker blue in places and forming the clouds by leaving the paper showing and blending the sky with my finger. I painted the bright, pale orange patch of sky at the horizon on the left.
3. Adding white and a pale lilac along the horizon helped to create the illusion of mist rising. Some pale orange was touched into it, in places, too. I used my finger-tip to lightly soften the edge upwards.
4. Dark turquoise-blue pastel was painted into the area above the horizon on the right, using the side of the pastel to lay the colour on. This was also brought down into the water.
5. The river-bank with its trees and the distant trees and buildings were identified at this point. The colour of the silhouette was constructed by building layers of dark, emerald green with a deep red-violet and some dark blue. These were slightly blended to make the dark shapes of the scenery and its reflection.
6. Much more colour was added to the water and light was introduced in the form of white, cream, pale orange and very light blue (on the water).
7. To add interest and a focal point - I placed a heron on a fallen tree-trunk in the water. The close-up shows how I've used two or three different colours to create his dark shape - picking out the light on the front of the bird in pale orange, also adding this colour to the front edge of the branches to suggest the light catching from the sunrise, here and there.
8. I intensified the colour in the water and then painted the right-hand side foliage with dark, strong silhouette colours, mixed as before.
9. Finally - I returned to some of the areas which needed more emphasis or to identify shapes more clearly. I slightly re-worked some of the trees on the misty horizon.