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OFFA'S DYKE ASSOCIATION

# newsletter

No. 139

Winter 2019



*The ODA's specially commissioned new artwork. © Offa's Dyke Association  
(Artist: Richard O'Neill)*

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CONTRIBUTIONS for Number 140 by 1 March 2020 please to the Editor, Offa's Dyke Association,  
Offa's Dyke Centre, West Street, Knighton, Powys LD7 1EN (editor@offasdyke.org.uk)


## **OFFA'S DYKE ASSOCIATION**

Offa's Dyke Centre, West Street, Knighton, Powys LD7 1EN  
01547 528753. [oda@offasdyke.org.uk](mailto:oda@offasdyke.org.uk)  
Registered Charity No. 503821. Founded by Frank Noble 1969

### **Officers and Executive Committee**

Chairman: David McGlade  
Vice Chairman and Newsletter Editor: Dr Ian Dormor  
Secretary: Bruce Cutts  
Treasurer: Bob Lewis  
Chris Davies, Andy Heaton, Dr Bob Hyde,  
Melanie Roxby-Mackey, Ian Mackey

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The website is designed and maintained by Radnorshire ITT  
The Newsletter is printed in Wales by WPG, Welshpool, Powys

## **2019 subscription rates reminder**

Our current subscription rates for 2019 are: Full member = £20.00;  
Joint/Family = £25.00; Charity, community and not-for-profit = £20;  
Small private tearooms, shops and cafés = £25

If you are not sure when your subscription is due for renewal then please contact the Offa's Dyke Centre, also please check your standing order mandate to ensure that you have paid the correct amount.

If you pay income tax and have not already signed the Gift Aid declaration then please consider doing so. (Note that we can re-claim Gift Aid donations in respect of accommodation members).

***Thank you. We do value your continued membership!***



*The Editor wishes all readers of the  
Newsletter a very happy Christmas and a  
prosperous New Year*



## Sir Simon Gourlay 1934 - 2019

Sir Simon Gourlay, President of the National Farmers' Union 1986 – 1991, farmed near Knighton and was ODA President 1992/93. He was not from a farming family but after his National Service and a short course at the Royal Agricultural College Cirencester he gained experience as a farm manager in Cheshire. He moved to near Knighton in 1958 to farm on the English – Welsh border. An environmentalist, he was an advocate for alternative energy and although he was unsuccessful in making the case for wind turbines on his farm he maintained in his 1993 Presidential address at the Associations' AGM that they were: 'an environmentally friendly form of electricity generation, whatever their other impact'.

ODA Vice President and past Chairman David Freeman remembers the meeting: "I think my recollection was of a much earlier wind turbine scheme, when he was serving President. At the AGM in the Junior School in Ludlow Road there were lots of entry-ist objectors and hence a rowdy meeting, so I was obliged as Chair to move the President out of the Chair!"

DAVE McGLADE

## Editorial

2019 was a landmark year for the Association and it was a great pity that Ernie Kay passed away at the beginning of our 50<sup>th</sup> celebratory year. I am sure he will have been impressed with the way the ODA has moved on from a local government-funded provider of information for walkers and tourists to become an independent conservation body, maintaining its founding focus on Offa's Dyke – the longest archaeological monument in Britain.

The ODA is pretty well unique in what it does – maintaining a visible presence in the Welsh Border country, providing services to its members and visitors whilst liaising with local authorities and government agencies as it has always done. I am sure it is the envy of many voluntary bodies.

As you will read elsewhere in these pages, the Offa's Dyke Centre, which could so easily have been lost to us following the cessation of external funding, is still at the heart of who we are and what we do. It is our identity, and through the sterling efforts of our Chairman and a dedicated staff team, we are optimistic that it has a secure future. There are many challenges ahead, as there have always been, regularly recorded in these pages during my 21

years as *Newsletter* Editor.

For my part I am very pleased with the way in which this little publication has developed into a colourful record of the ODA's activities. WPG, our printers in Welshpool, provide us with an excellent service and I am very glad of their support. I hope you enjoy reading each issue we produce between us.

I also receive great support from Dave, our Chairman, who regularly provides much of the copy for each issue and I am very grateful for his input. My feeling is that the *Newsletter* content should be more than just a record of ODA's principal activities, but somewhere our members can inform us about their involvement with the Association, both near and far. So I would end with a request that you keep us all up to date by sending me short articles and pictures that I can use in future editions.

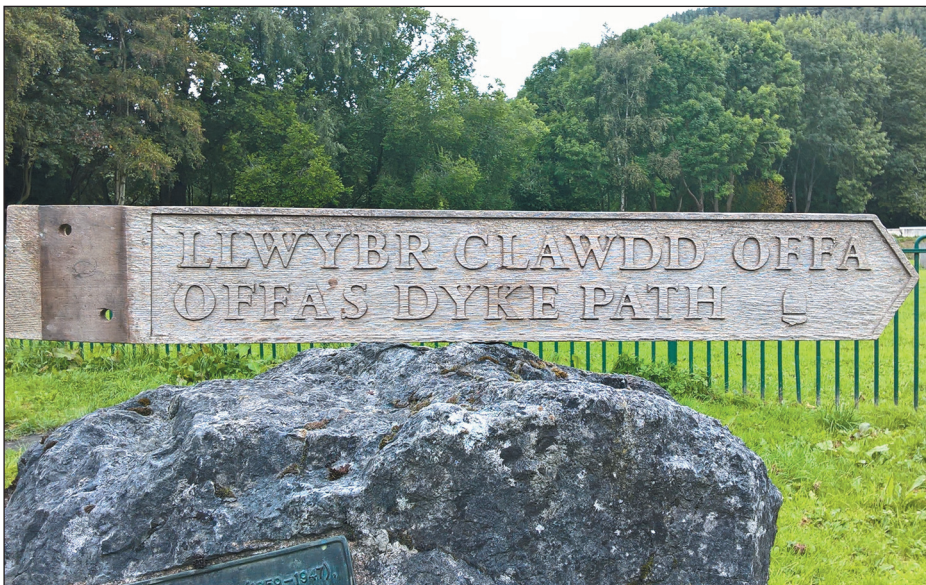
We have another important golden jubilee coming up in 2021 – the anniversary of the opening of the Offa's Dyke Long-Distance Path on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1971. I invite any of you who were involved in those early days and in more recent times to share your memories with us in these pages.

IAN DORMOR, Editor

## Original 1971 Offa's Dyke Path sign for sale

We have one of the original Offa's Dyke Path signs for sale. With the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Path just a year or so away this is an unique opportunity to own a piece of National Trail heritage. We are inviting donations of £500 and above with the proceeds going towards the manufacture of a pair of eye catching street signs to replace the existing twenty year old signs currently outside the Centre. We need to raise £950 and £500 will go a long way towards achieving that. Contact [oda@offasdyke.org.uk](mailto:oda@offasdyke.org.uk) or call 01547 528753.

DAVE McGLADE



## Offa's Dyke Centre winter opening hours

We have decided to experiment until Christmas with extended winter opening hours. The Centre will be open until 4.00pm, seven days a week.





## The Chairman's reflections on 2019

The ODA has not stood still in 2019. Staff changes, the introduction of a Centre Manager, our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary AGM weekend, the second ODA/CPAT Living History event in July and other anniversary events organised by our friends and partners, the launch of the walkers' Passport, the transformation of the Knighton Room into an art gallery, English and Welsh language membership leaflets, new CCTV, our increased involvement with the Conservation Management Plan for the Dyke, not to mention a completely refreshed retail and tea room offering – are but a few of the innovations and changes over the past six months or so.

ODA trustees have also freely given up their time to visit and talk to schools

and we hope to be in a position soon to announce another project at the Centre involving young people. Above all our focus remains on delivering our charitable aims but all of this costs money. We work very hard to generate funds from memberships, the tea room and gift shop *in order* that we might encourage and help people to understand, participate and enjoy the Dyke and Welsh Marches. We also remain focused on our other key aim of being a key player in the conservation of the Dyke. We hope that you enjoy reading this edition of the *Newsletter* and in finding out how we spend your membership subscription. We value every single one of you.

DAVE McGLADE

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## Offa's Dyke Path Walkers' Passport – Year 1 Round Up

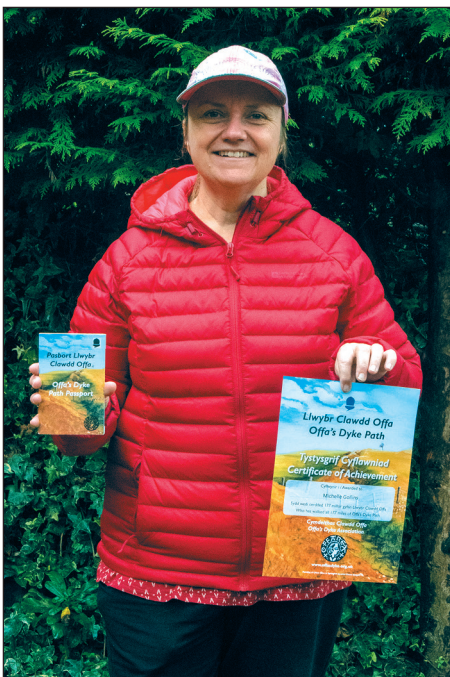
ODA member and the University of Chester's Professor Howard Williams officially launched the Offa's Dyke seasonal Passport scheme at the ODA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM. Almost 12 months in the making, the preparations saw lots of site visits and knocking on doors before finally selecting the stamping stations, designing the Passport itself and translating it into Welsh then manufacturing the stamping station boxes and their stamps before putting them out on site. Everything was in place – we just needed some walkers to set the ball rolling.

We didn't have to wait very long because an excited Chepstow TIC got in touch to claim the accolade of the first walker to stamp their Passport on 1<sup>st</sup> May using their stamping station. The walker was Michelle Gollins who walked the Trail in stages over a six month period, finally arriving at Prestatyn's NOVA Centre in October. Michelle kept us informed via Twitter and her social media

photos of the stamping station boxes very usefully telling us that they were all in good order.

Michelle had already walked the entire the Wales Coast Path in sections over a five year period then decided to complete the circuit by walking Offa's Dyke Path. She explains: "I always walk during British summer time in fair weather so I can appreciate the views along the way. I am also a solo walker so I can set my own pace (I am a slow walker!)."

"It was my husband who spotted on Twitter that the Offa's Dyke Centre was launching the Passport scheme from May 2019 and I sent off for the Passport, hoping that it would arrive in time, and it did. I was lucky that the stamping station had just been installed at Chepstow TIC and I was the first to use it! The following day, I walked from Brockweir to Monmouth; unfortunately I was too early for the stamping station at Redbrook but the post office lady stamped my Passport with the Post Office stamp instead.



*We decided to award Michelle her Certificate of Achievement for being the first walker to carry the Passport*

The next day, my route was from Monmouth to Llangattock Lingoed and I was in luck, the stamping station had only been installed that morning! (one of the local residents told me).

"I have walked the consecutive sections over the summer months, not all in one go, and I have stamped my Passport as I have gone along.

The stamping stations are easy to find but I would advise walkers to download the pdf stamping station guide from the ODA website to check the locations. I would encourage walkers to take part in the Passport scheme. It is a lot of fun and the proceeds go towards important conservation projects along the Dyke so that we can all continue to appreciate this ancient monument".

The season has now drawn to a close and the stamping stations have been taken off site for their winter maintenance in time for next season starting on 1<sup>st</sup> May.

The Passport's first year has been a great success in its raising important income for the Offa's Dyke Conservation Fund. In April 2020 the Cadw / Historic England / ODA led Conservation Management Plan (CMP) project for Offa's Dyke moves to its eagerly awaited implementation phase so the Fund, bolstered by the Passport income, will be used to pay for practical conservation maintenance projects along the Dyke. **The CMP will run for several years so every Passport sold will make a positive difference to the wellbeing of the monument.** Expect to see some exciting announcements in the spring edition of the *Newsletter* about the CMP and the ODA's role in shaping the future wellbeing of Offa's Dyke. Passports are on sale now via our online shop for the 2020 season for £5 plus p&p.

DAVE McGLADE



*Michelle mentioned the pdf stamping station guide. Before you set off download the pdf guide to the 12 stamping stations from the Passport page on the ODA website. It gives clear instructions on where to find the stamping boxes, as shown here for Hay-on-Wye.*

**KNIGHTON TAXIS**  
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LONG - SHORT - DISTANCE  
SPECIAL OCCASIONS  
WALKING HOLIDAY TRANSFERS

24 HOUR AIRPORT TRANSFERS

## Introducing Harriet Webster, our new Centre Manager

Harriet started with us at the beginning of May during AGM week. She brings considerable experience of visitor centre management at Welsh Water's Elan Valley Visitor Centre and in only her first six months has revived the Centre and its customer offering.



*Harriet, our new Centre Manager*

We want the Centre not only to be a must see visitor destination of first choice but also to generate a surplus to support the work of ODA the charity, in particular our conservation interests. The challenge that Harriet has grasped with enthusiasm has many facets. Behind the scenes and out of view of visitors there is the stable of statutory regulations that we must as a business comply with, everything from health and safety to food hygiene, but Harriet has also begun the task of overhauling the critically important front of house visitor experience.

It is still very much work-in-progress but already customers can enjoy a new and extensive range of locally blended quality teas and coffees to compliment our established locally sourced cakes. (Our policy, so far as practicable, is to source our products from suppliers as close to Offa's Dyke and the border as possible). Assuming that we are granted permission, Spring 2020 should see

further improvements to the tea room kitchen and serving area making for a more enjoyable customer experience as well making life easier for staff. Also, but this depends on raising the necessary funds, we would like to see new signage outside the building and a re-presentation of the collection of historic Knighton photographs in a flip display arrangement – hence the decision to invite donations for our 1971 National Trail sign.

In only a short space of time the Centre has established itself as a venue for artists to display their work and Harriet has used her knowledge of the art scene to good effect, refreshing the exhibition almost every month with a new artist or art group. November saw the latest artist, Oswestry's Mick Ward, display his paintings. It was a welcome return for Mick who was the first artist in June 2018 to exhibit at the Centre although he then had to make do with just the one display board.

Harriet has breathed new life into the retail offering with quality cards and giftware designed by local artists, craftsmen and women. There is also the new t-shirt range and she is delighted to show off our new, specially commissioned, Offa's Dyke brand. The artwork by artist Richard O'Neill is redolent of 1930s railway posters and it features on our new range of giftware, all exclusive to the Offa's Dyke Centre and from our online shop. The brief was very careful in specifying an attention grabbing scene of Offa's Dyke with a footpath near to the monument, but not on it. The scene is an idealised one but we believe that it portrays our aspirations for the long term conservation and well being of the monument.

The first six months of Harriet's time as manager have seen tremendous innovation, new ideas and change. Do come along to see for yourselves.





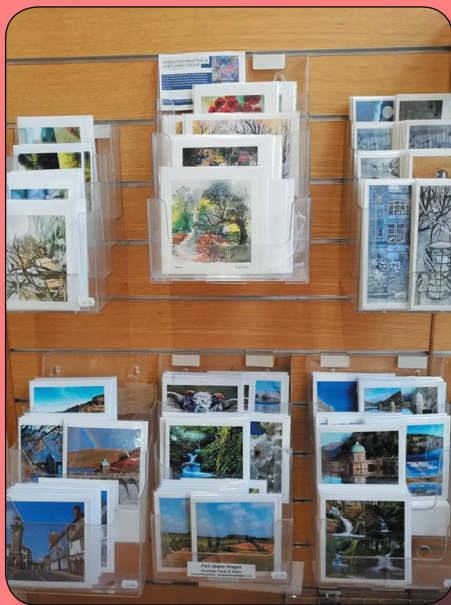
***From our new t-shirt range***



***Love spoons – well we are in Wales***



***Beautiful glassware gifts***



***A customer described us as the best card shop in town***



***We stock a range of Morgan's Brew teas to suit all tastes***



***If you fancy some decent chocolate***



***Harriet's latest merchandise is exclusive to the ODC***





***Our new art gallery in the Knighton Room***



***ODA member Mick Ward is the latest artist to exhibit at the Centre***



***From the collection of Mick Ward***

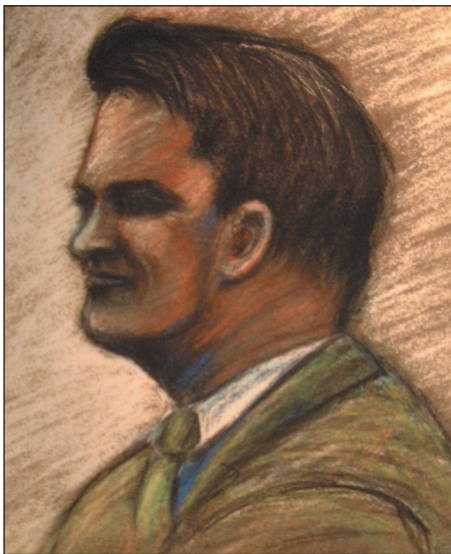


***Mick Ward watercolour***

# Hereford Workers' Education Association AGM

The ODA's links with the Workers' Education Association (WEA) go back to that first meeting in 1959 of the 'Ancient Brits' attending a Youth Hostels Association/WEA study holiday led by ODA founder Frank Noble. In 1960 he was appointed WEA tutor when the WEA became involved with the precursor to the ODA, the Offa's Dyke Action Committee. It was a pleasure, therefore, to be invited to address the Annual General Meeting of the WEA Hereford branch on 16<sup>th</sup> October.

I was asked to talk both about the ODA's origins and our aims and project work today and while I think I broadly achieved that objective there were clearly still a couple of spaces that required colouring in. I was, therefore, especially grateful to audience member Jean O'Donnell, the branch's retiring President, who as a fellow WEA tutor in the 1960s knew Frank well and was able to correct me with a couple of important points of detail. For example, my presentation included a pastel sketch of Frank from the 1960s. It hangs in the Offa's Dyke Centre library but until Jean interrupted me to say: "it's my sketch" – I had no idea who the artist was. Since



the meeting our Vice President and past Chairman David Freeman has shed some more light:

"Beryl remembers Jean as one of Frank Noble's 'Hereford Group'. Preparatory to road widening to form the new bypass, Jean, Beryl, Maureen Heale and others, under Frank's leadership, participated in a dig in Eign St, Hereford, for a couple of Easters in the early 60s. As a base they had use of a soon-to-be demolished shop with flat over. Finds were displayed in the shop window. We used the first floor sitting room fire-place and soon had a fire blazing (with soup on the boil) using the floor boards from the room above. Jean decided that a picture on the mantelpiece would make the place more like home, so she painted the picture of Frank, which was later on display at Offa's Dyke Centre in Knighton for many years."

Perhaps, given the ODA and WEA's shared connections, forged half a century and more ago, the last word for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year should go to Jean with a piece, written in 1964/5, which she read out to the AGM part way through my presentation.

## **Borderlands by Jean O'Donnell**

'Walking from the southern end of the Dyke through the seasons and the shires to the north, the variety of vegetation and diversity of landscape is most apparent. Starting at Chepstow in March, the spring was warm and early and there was an abundance of primroses, and the rarer sweet violet with its lovely fragrance lingering by the banks. In the woods above Tintern the wild garlic was pungent underfoot and the wild flowers and wood sorrel were thick. The fresh green of the larches was showing to advantage along the banks of the Wye when April came, and the white cherry scattered its snowy petals along the path.

Once on the higher lands the lambs were plentiful – a feature of the Monmouthshire farms together with the herds of young black heifers in the meadows. Leaving the richer lands of the

Southern Wye for the bleaker uplands of the hills around Kington, the landscapes and the vegetation merge into a wind-blown starkness. The thorn trees are twisted into fantastic landmarks, and together with the yews on Rushock Hill, give character to the countryside. The gorse blooms yellow throughout the year and the heather dims down to brown drabness by mid-November.

In March again, the Radnor is filled with promise. The land is freshly ploughed and the lambs are small and bleating well. On the Dyke the burrows

grow plentiful; the bare earth revealed as home to rabbits, badgers and foxes. Sometimes, their corpses nailed to a tree is a grim warning of the destructive power of Man. In Radnorshire the broom blows golden on the sunny slopes and by May the hedges are a mass of white blackthorn. The primroses and violets once more dapple the hedge banks, sometimes with the early spotted orchid, to remind us that on this part of the Dyke, spring comes late."

DAVE MCGLADE

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## Offa's Dyke Centre hosts Trail Partnership meeting

On 9<sup>th</sup> October the Offa's Dyke Centre hosted the annual National Trail Partnership meeting. More than 20 representatives from local authorities, the Trail's three AONBs, Cadw, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Historic England and Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust met to discuss the Trail's strategic aims and objectives for the next twelve months.

Topics included the forthcoming roll

out of the Conservation Management Plan and how it will influence the Trail's management and promotion. Chairman Dave McGlade acknowledged and thanked Natural Resources Wales and the local authorities concerned for their support in helping to set up the seasonal Passport scheme which in its first year has raised vital funds for the Offa's Dyke Conservation Fund.



*The Trail Partnership gathering outside the Centre*



Looking towards the future organisation and management of National Trails NTO Rob Dingle circulated before the meeting a report: *On the right path: Options for a body to aid future management of the English National Trails*, published by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority on behalf of the National Trails Alliance. The report by Red Kite Environment, in association with Craggatak Consulting was asked to investigate options for setting up a body to aid future management of the trails. The body's aims would be to:

- Improve the long-term management and sustainability of National Trails as national assets
- Adapt to the current and likely future changing and challenging financial circumstances

- Withstand threats better and respond to opportunities more rapidly and in a coordinated manner
- Look at new ideas and test new ways of working as a Family of NTs
- Make National Trails more resilient to changes in government policy

The context behind the commissioning of the report, at least in part, is the reduction in government funding for National Trails in England in recent years including, for financial year 2019/20, another 5% efficiency saving. The report offered several options for establishing the body and the employment of a consultant Project Manager and is now out for discussion and consideration by the English Trails. It can be downloaded from [https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/sites/default/files/otrp\\_report\\_final.pdf](https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/sites/default/files/otrp_report_final.pdf)

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## Offa's Dyke Association Outreach: Ysgol Capelulo, Conwy

After a little email exchange, Dave sent an almost excited "Would you consider ..." message to ask if an Outreach school visit might be on the cards.

"A definite yes – it sounds really good. When and where?" then came the surprise ... Conwy.

Having recently come back from an archaeological dig on Anglesey where I had been staying at Chester University, it was exciting as I knew where it was despite the journey time.

The school had sent a brief:

*"The children are aged 10-11 (Y5&6) and as part of our Welsh topic this term we are looking at why the Anglo-Saxons didn't come to Wales and Why King Offa built the dyke bordering Wales and England."*

So we (Melanie Roxby-Mackey and Ian Mackey MA) put together a presentation, some finds and some plastic swords – as we all have lying around, arranged to borrow some of the Anglo-Saxon attire from the Centre (thanks to Dave) and we were set ... or so we thought.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May we set off in the early

hours and stopped off at the Centre to grab the attire and some anniversary mugs and continued our 2½ hour, rainy and windy journey.

We got to the school to be greeted by a stunning view of the River Conwy that somehow masked the major road we had just driven on and behind us, the view up the hill filled with houses with spoken histories dripping from them.

Warmly greeted by the incredibly cheerful and energetic force of nature that is Dawn Roberts (Deputy Head), we finished our coffees in the postage-stamp sized staffroom and awaited the summoning. It brought back memories of when I used to have to wait the other side of the staffroom door. The staff were all cheerfully focused on their classes, the students (and some characters) with such a positive, energetic, engaged and inquisitive sense that you got from the school in general and we were impressed at the ease with which they switched between Welsh and English mid-sentence.

After a few minutes two smiley little people arrived to escort us to the classroom. Bearing in mind their ages, they were well presented in school uniforms, clearly spoken, polite and enthusiastic.

We entered the (packed) classroom of equally enchanting looking 10-11 year-olds with a few teachers at the back. The room was lined with colourful posters that were part of their ongoing project, and the floor had free-standing displays they had put together.

As we went through the slides and talked to and with them, we realised we had been duped into believing they would be gentle with us. Not even the plastic swords and authentic looking clothes helped. They knew so much! We realised we had given talks to rooms full of academics that were easier on us.

Seriously, they were as enthusiastic and engaged as any adult audience.

Having discussed the effect of the border highlighted by Offa's and Wat's dykes and produced posters, it was apparent that they had a clear understanding of the monuments and the landscape.

So, the questions were wide ranging from "What's the best thing you've found?" and "What's your favourite period and why?" to "What effect do *you* think it had on Welsh princes?" and "Did Offa use two dykes because he could not handle the Welsh even though they were outnumbered?"

I am very much looking forward to more visits – not just there but along the length of the monuments. If you know of other schools, clubs, groups or societies that would like a visit or would like to get involved in studying, monitoring and preserving them, ask them to contact the Association.

IAN MACKEY

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## Ring cairn discovery in the Forest of Dean

A previously unknown Bronze Age monument has been discovered hidden in woodland in the Forest of Dean following an airborne laser scan.

The ritual monument, known as a ring cairn, dates back to about 2,000 BC. It consists of a circular bank with several small limestone standing stones on top.

Archaeologist Jon Hoyle, who found it, said it was the only site of its kind known about in Gloucestershire, and was a "very significant" discovery.

It was identified following a LiDAR (light detection and ranging) survey of the Forest of Dean.

The technique used laser beams fired from an aeroplane to create a 3D record of the land surface, effectively removing the trees from the landscape.

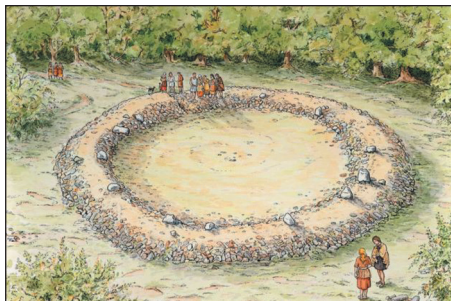
Mr Hoyle said when he studied the data, he spotted an "extremely circular" feature, which he thought initially might be a World War Two gun emplacement.

After visiting the site, at a secret location near the village of Tidenham,

he realised it was much older, dating to between 2,500 BC and 1,500 BC.

"It was very exciting. I was expecting to find quite a lot of new sites with the LiDAR, but nothing as interesting as this."

The ring cairn is about 25m (80ft) in diameter and made up of a 5m-wide (16ft) rubble bank, with at least 10 white limestone standing stones, each no more than 1m (3ft) high, standing on top.



Mr Hoyle said ring cairns were "common in upland areas, in places like



Derbyshire, Northumberland and Wales” but this was the only known one in Gloucestershire.

“Nobody knows precisely what they were used for. Some have been found in association with burials, and often there

appear to be residues of charcoal in places like this, suggesting rituals that involved fire,” he added.

The discovery is featured in a new book by Mr Hoyle – *Hidden Landscapes of the Forest of Dean*.

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## Offa's and Wat's Dykes at the European Association of Archaeologists Conference 2019

The European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) has an international membership of over 15,000 members from 60 countries worldwide. Typically, with over 2,000 delegates and over 150 sessions, the EAA's annual conferences are the primary means through which colleagues from across Europe come together to discuss the latest issues in archaeological research, heritage management and fieldwork.

Offa's and Wat's Dykes featured in two of the sessions at this year's conference, held in September in Bern, Switzerland. Our Joint Archaeologists-in-Residence, Liam Delaney (University of Chester) and Melanie Roxby-Mackey (University of Birmingham) both presented papers relating to their doctoral research.

Melanie's paper, *Living with Liminality Along the Anglo-Welsh Border: Monuments, Myths and Migration* formed part of the *Life on the Frontier: Frontier Heritages and Living Histories* session. Dedicated to an exploration of how borderworks are portrayed and presented in local, national and international heritage the session included papers on a variety of case studies from across Europe and its near neighbours and addressed the questions of how frontiers were experienced in the past and how they are experienced today. Within this framework Melanie spoke on the work of the Offa's Dyke Association and the opportunities and challenges we meet as an independent, community-based voluntary organisation charged

with protecting and promoting the early medieval heritage of a contemporary border landscape.

The heritage of borders is a growing theme within the discipline as archaeologists seek to place our contemporary world of disappearing and (re-)emerging borders within the context of our collective past. The work of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory and the Offa's Dyke Association's ongoing representation at international conferences such as that of the European Association of Archaeologists ensures that heritage of the Anglo-Welsh border will play a continuing role in informing our global understanding of these liminal landscapes.

It is hoped that the success of these papers could lead to a session at next year's EAA in Budapest, which would focus upon research in medieval linear earthworks, borderlands and frontiers. Further promoting the exciting work that is taking place in the discipline.

### *Further reading*

EAA, 2019. Welcome to the European Association of Archaeologists <https://www.e-a-a.org/>.

EAA, (2019) European Association of Archaeologists Conference Scientific Programme <https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA2019/Programme.aspx?Program=3>.

MELANIE ROXBY-MACKEY AND  
LIAM DELANEY

## Trefonen marks ODA's 50th

The ODA's connections with Trefonen village in north Shropshire go from strength to strength. Another link was forged in September with a community exhibition and walk to celebrate the Association's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event was opened by ODA's Professor Howard Williams whose account of the day can be found on the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory website (<https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com>).

Two solid oak panels on display in the village hall exhibition, clearly designed to make an announcement to the beholder, were later installed in the roadside verge approaches to the village. Paid for by local subscription the panels now welcome Offa's Dyke Path walkers to the Trefonen and immediately convey to the visitor the sense of place and pride felt there in local heritage.



*The panel at the southern approach to Trefonen*

On the 20<sup>th</sup> October I attended the village at the invitation of the Trefonen

Rural Protection Group to see them for myself and I was not disappointed – they will make an impression on the viewer. Standing almost six feet tall the simple orientation map on one of the structures traces the line of the National Trail, from sea-to-sea, with a green glass roundel picking out Trefonen. Look closer to see the ODA's logo set into the glass which captures and then radiates flashes of light when caught by the sun, as does the glass 'Trefonen'.



*Detail of ODA logo in glass roundel*

A great deal of thought went into the brief for the design, construction and installation of the panels; everything was done properly and they were installed by Shropshire Countryside Unit. Throughout the volunteer-led exercise the village used local artists and carpenters and the oak was sourced local to Offa's Dyke.

The ODA would like to thank Trefonen for giving our logo a permanent presence in the village and in furtherance of our charitable aims we have agreed to make a contribution towards the cost of two interpretation panels. The panels will be located on the Trail approaches to the village and will explain and set the context of the settlement in its relationship to the Dyke and other historical features.

DAVE McGLADE





# Living History Festival 2019

The second Living History Festival in July, once again co-organised with our friends from Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust and 50% funded by the ODA, was a great success. An estimated 800 people attended the two day event and engaged with the re-enactors and demonstrators; altogether the perfect platform for delivering our charitable aim.

It reached new audiences both local and far. Students from John Beddoes School in Presteigne presented their *Time Vortex* exhibition in the Centre workshop and we looked after a coach party of visitors from the German Open University. ODA members Professor Howard Williams and Liam Delaney led a walk along a stretch of Offa's Dyke and then delivered a specially arranged lecture for the group. The organiser explained that Knighton had not been on their original itinerary but they felt the lure of the Festival was too great to resist. One of our guest speakers unfortunately had to cancel on the day so we are grateful to ODA member Julian Ravest for stepping into the breach and talking at very short notice on his aerial drone

photography project along Offa's Dyke.

Wrexham based historical re-enactment group Cwmwd Ial once again set up camp in the park behind the Centre and entertained the audience with their weaponry displays and battle scenes. Visitors learned about everyday life in the early medieval period and if the need took them there was the very knowledgeable apothecary who provided a walk-in service on treating their ailments – with no need for an appointment. There was story telling for our younger visitors, demonstrations in bronze casting and making its debut this year was a Viking long boat.

We would like to thank Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust, Cwmwd Ial, Powys County Council, our speakers, volunteers and ODA staff for collectively helping to make the Festival a success. It is now firmly fixed in the calendar and we are delighted to announce that the date has been set for the third annual Living History Festival, the weekend of 3rd – 5th July 2020.

DAVE McGLADE



*The first appearance at the Festival for a Viking long boat*



## Living History 2019 – some views of the event



## Battle scenes







Story telling



Expert talks for all

**Living History 2020  
will take place on  
3rd-5th July**

CONTRIBUTIONS for Number 140 by 1 March 2020 please to the Editor, Offa's Dyke Association,  
Offa's Dyke Centre, West Street, Knighton, Powys LD7 1EN (editor@offasdyke.org.uk)

# Annual Living History Festival 2020

At the time of going to press on 25th November the ODA and Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust held a drop in session at the Offa's Dyke Centre for organisations and individuals interested in finding out more about taking part in the third annual Living History Festival in Knighton over the weekend of 3rd-5th July 2020.

In only two years the Festival has become firmly established as the 'must see' historical event along the Welsh Marches. If you are interested in exhibiting or performing at next year's event then please contact the Community Archaeologist at Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust: Penelope Foreman – [penelope.foreman@cpat.org.uk](mailto:penelope.foreman@cpat.org.uk) 07956 585023/01938 553670 or the ODA at 01547 528753.


Monday November 25th  
1pm - 6pm



**2020 Living History Festival  
Community Planning Day**

Would you like to volunteer at a weekend-long, free and fun Festival of Living History?  
Know of a brilliant local performer who would like a paid spot on our stage?  
Are you a local craftsperson wanting a new venue to showcase your skills and sell your wares?  
Have some ideas for history and archaeology activities you'd like to see happen at the festival?

**Come along to our drop-in Planning Day to find out more!  
Free refreshments - craft activities - chat to archaeologists**

 **Offa's Dyke Association**  
Offa's Dyke Centre, West Street, Knighton, LD7 1EN

**Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust** 

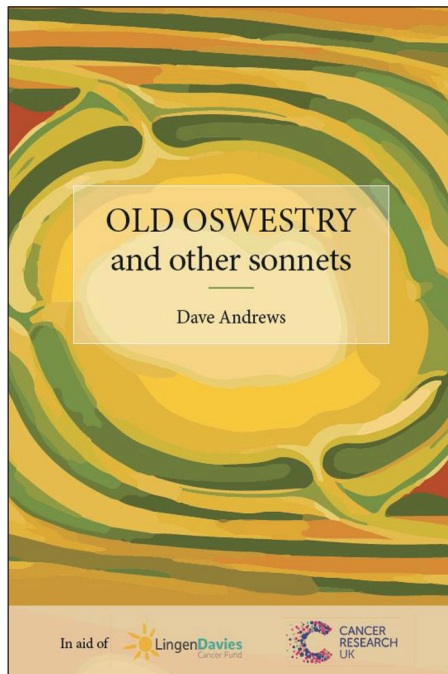


## Bookshelf

### *Old Oswestry and Other Sonnets* – a new book by Dave Andrews

"Twenty-five simple sonnets – some serious, some light-hearted – about Oswestry and about life." This is how Dave Andrews, author of *Wilfred Owen: Poet of Oswestry*, describes his new book *Old Oswestry and other Sonnets*. This is the third book Dave has written to raise money for two charities he supports, Lingen Davies Cancer Fund and Cancer Research UK, the other two books being *Gobowen to Everest* and *The Oswestry Round*.

The sonnets may be simple to read as Dave's style is direct and uncomplicated



but they are also thought-provoking and well-observed, and occasionally funny and entertaining – like his sonnet to *A Pint of Cider*. The sonnets cover a range of issues from the proposed development near Old Oswestry and the threats posed by humans to the environment, to more personal themes such as love, travel, music, nostalgia and reflections on life. Of particular interest to our readers might be Dave's sonnet to *Offa's Dyke* which captures the way the ancient monument has come to define Wales and what it is to be Welsh. But whatever the subject, Dave writes with warmth and sensitivity.

In the foreword Dave offers a short and useful introduction to the history of the sonnet and explains why this form particularly appeals to him. He tells us that he sees the sonnet as a challenge – to see if he can explore a particular subject in the 14 lines available.

"I've been writing poems for many years," explains Dave who once did

a two-week run at Edinburgh Fringe Festival and has published poems in English and Welsh in many magazines.

"I think it was while I was writing my book on Wilfred Owen that I thought it might be fun to write a collection of sonnets. Poetry seems to be popular and fashionable at the moment too."

*Old Oswestry and other Sonnets* is published with financial support from Three Parishes Big Local and the National Lottery as well as Borderland Rotary Club, the Rotary Club of Oswestry and Meraki Colour of Oswestry. It is available in local shops or direct from Dave [dand103750@aol.com](mailto:dand103750@aol.com) or 01691 650293. Price £5. All proceeds to the two cancer charities mentioned above.

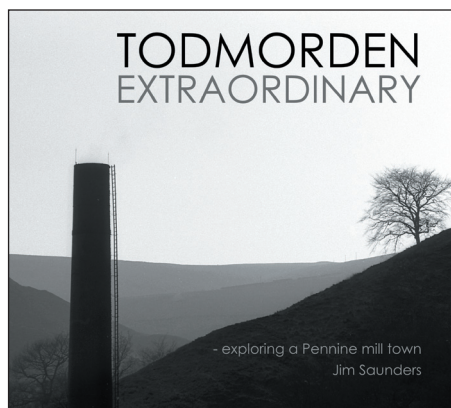
*Editor's note: Dave Andrews translated the original English into the Welsh language version of the ODA membership/Centre leaflet. It is downloadable from the ODA website home page.*

## **TODMORDEN EXTRAORDINARY – exploring a Pennine mill town – by Jim Saunders**

It was a failed heart operation that forced Jim Saunders to finish his new book: *TODMORDEN EXTRAORDINARY*.

In 144 pages of beautifully printed text and photographs *TODMORDEN EXTRAORDINARY* explores the landscape, buildings, history and people of this fascinating small town rooted in the heart of the Pennines. Todmorden was also at the heart of Britain's Industrial Revolution, and the evidence of this is still to be seen as Jim's photos of the misty, moody, wooded 'cloughs' all around the town show.

Jim took his first photo of Todmorden in 1973, on his dad's Voigtlander bellows camera. Back then, he says, he was wide-eyed teenager from the soft south of England, exploring the Pennines on his bike. But just 10 years later he found himself living in the town, working as Head Ranger for the then West Yorkshire County Council (abolished in 1986) and learning just how extraordinary Todmorden is.



And the heart surgery? *TODMORDEN EXTRAORDINARY* had been a work in progress for 10 years when an unsuccessful operation in February 2019 left Jim casting about for something to keep him busy while stuck indoors. Then he remembered: he had a book to finish.



Jim Saunders is a writer and photographer living in Mid-Wales, where for 18 years he worked on the Offa's Dyke Path. His earlier publications include *Offa's Dyke – a journey in words and pictures*, published with BBC Wales in 2006, and *Hay – Landscape, Literature and the Town of Books*, launched at the 2014 Hay Festival.

Cover price £20.00

ISBN: 978-1-5272-4500-6

ODA members can get their own personalised signed copy of *TODMORDEN EXTRAORDINARY* direct from Jim for £20, post free (in UK). e-mail [sales@jimsaunders.co.uk](mailto:sales@jimsaunders.co.uk) to arrange card payment by phone or send

cheque payable to J Saunders to Burford House, Wylcwm Street, Knighton, Powys, LD7 1AA.

Jim is not yet set up for direct online orders, but *TODMORDEN EXTRAORDINARY* is available from all the usual on-line and high street retailers, including Todmorden Information Centre [www.visittodmorden.co.uk](http://www.visittodmorden.co.uk)

Cllr Ken White, Mayor of Todmorden, said at Todmorden Book Festival: "This is an incredibly good book. It does the town proud."

JIM SAUNDERS

e mail : [jim@jimsaunders.co.uk](mailto:jim@jimsaunders.co.uk)

Web : [www.jimsaunders.co.uk](http://www.jimsaunders.co.uk)

Twitter: @JimFSaunders

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## Rodney's Pillar: 'Huge amount' needed to save landmark

A group is attempting to raise funds to save a damaged 230-year-old landmark near the border between Wales and England.

Cracks have appeared in Rodney's Pillar, which stands at 54ft (16.5m) tall and overlooks the village of Criggion in Powys.

The lightning conductor has also been stolen and locals are concerned it could be vulnerable in a storm.

It is thought the work to repair the pillar will cost about £160,000.

A feasibility study, carried out by local community councils, said the pillar, which pays tribute to Admiral George Brydges Rodney, could collapse within two years without the necessary repairs.

Lucy Roberts, a county councillor for the Llandrinio ward, said: "The pillar is a really important part of the area and it's important that we do what we can to preserve it.

"We've been told that within two years the pillar could significantly deteriorate – so it really is quite urgent. And perhaps

most urgent is the lack of a lightning conductor.

"Its 1,200ft (365m) here [in altitude] and the pillar raised the height even further and makes it more susceptible to damage."

A group of trustees has been formed and begun the application of applying for charity status.

Criggion has another connection to the Royal Navy, as it was formerly home to radio masts used to communicate with ships around the world during World

War Two and the Cold War.

The Grade II listed monument was erected in 1782 to pay tribute to Admiral Rodney, who led campaigns in the American War of Independence and in the Caribbean against the French.

Admiral Rodney was from Surrey, but Bill Lee, from the group of trustees, said Admiral Rodney took oak from the Breidden forest to build his ships.

The monument lies less than 1.4 miles (2.2km) from Shropshire and provides views of Cader Idris in Snowdonia.



# CPAT Winter Lectures 2020

## A series of fascinating talks on archaeology and history in Wales

The Corn Exchange, Town Hall  
Welshpool, SY21 7JQ

### January 10th

Dr Paul Belford, Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Director  
CPAT's 2019 excavations at Beacon Ring Hillfort

### January 24th

Karen Lowery  
The Clwydian Range Archaeology Group

### February 7th

Dr Cy Griffiths, CBA Wales  
Drove Roads in Wales

### February 21st

David McGlade, Offa's Dyke Association  
The Offa's Dyke Management Plan: Caring for an ancient monument

### March 6th

Samantha Jones  
St Dyfnog's Well Restoration Project

### March 20th

Professor Keith Ray, Cardiff University  
Offa's Dyke and the Mercian Frontier with Wales: A Long View

**Doors open at 6:30pm, and the talks run from 7-8pm**

**Talks are FREE to Friends of CPAT - £3 to others**

**Tickets available on the door**

For more information, or to find out how to get involved in other CPAT events and activities,  
please contact Community Archaeologist Penelope Foreman on  
[community@cpat.org.uk](mailto:community@cpat.org.uk) or 01938 553670

## Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust

