

# Offa's Dyke Journal



A Journal for Linear Monuments,  
Frontiers & Borderlands Research

Volume 5

Edited by Howard Williams

## Aims and Scope

*Offa's Dyke Journal* is a peer-reviewed venue for the publication of high-quality research on the archaeology, history and heritage of linear monuments, frontiers and borderlands. The editors invite submissions that explore dimensions of Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke and the 'short dykes' of western Britain, including their life-histories and landscape contexts. *ODJ* will also consider comparative studies on the material culture and monumentality of land divisions, boundaries, frontiers and borderlands from elsewhere in Britain, Europe and beyond from prehistory to the present day. We accept:

1. Notes and Reviews of up to 3,000 words
2. Interim reports on fieldwork of up to 5,000 words
3. Original discussions, syntheses and analyses of up to 10,000 words

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University of  
Chester

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## Border Culture and Picturing the Dyke

Dan Llywelyn Hall,  
Gillian Clarke, Gladys Mary Coles, Menna Elfyn,  
Oliver Lomax and Robert Minhinnick

with commentaries by Diana Baur, John G. Swogger and Howard Williams

*Dan Llywelyn Hall is a painter who spent three years walking and making paintings inspired by Offa's Dyke. Born in Cardiff 1980, Dan now lives near the border in Llanfyllin where his studio is based. He has recently taken on the role of guest Editor of Borderlands – a revised Newsletter–cum–Journal that is published twice a year in behalf of the Offa's Dyke Association. With a new introduction, the key components of the 2021 Walking with Offa project are reproduced here: nineteenth paintings and English-language versions of five of the original twelve poems. These are joined by three perspectives on the project by an artist (Baur), archaeological illustrator (Swogger) and archaeologist (Williams).*

*Keywords:* art, borderlands, painting, landscape, Offa, poetry

The first question that came to mind was which direction? South to north or vice versa...

I was exploring 177 miles of a path that chases the 1200 year-old earthwork, set out by King Offa. Was it a border, elaborate hedge or a demonstration of bravura?

This project has been on simmer for many years, as I traversed it all my life, getting sightings here and there. But before brushes could be summoned, it started as a path that had to be walked.

I am a painter and needed subject-matter so the route had to be faithfully traced with my own boots in order to unearth the motifs. I acquired every book I could find about Offa's Dyke, and familiarised myself with more questions than answers. As a 'monument' the dyke itself is largely unimpressive and has little glamour to behold. Not a single coin and virtually zero archaeological findings gifted successive generations with a human story. I was to discover that its real life and heartbeat existed in the peripheries of this earthen-serpent.

There is an assumption that artists gather all of their succour for a painting, from the very sights before one's eyes, but for me I need those points of human contact to give any landscape a spirit and its very essence. In some of the many sights that called for my attention along the way I needed to seek those encounters and ghosts lurking; the storytellers along the way have furnished me with images and the impulse to walk and seek.

It became apparent the images were not obvious to define and I set about immersing myself in the dyke culture or more broadly, border culture. Considering Offa's Dyke is the longest

ancient monument in western Europe; there is surprisingly scant writing about it. Given the need for words, I invited poets I respect and had acquainted and invited their poetic responses; what emerged gave me a sense of a ready-formed culture and other highly personal insights that sated my need for 'flesh on the bone'. I needed to know how other creative beings interpret this gargantuan subject and where they might start to tell their own story.

My itinerary would end up being erratic and I would target manageable daily sections and make drawings in reconnaissance missions. Anything warranting my attention would then be examined and explored in sketchbooks and I'd seek out literary references down the ages.

I walked the route with different company; friends and some of the poets in this book and the shared experiences are etched into my memories of each step fading. Our physical lives ebb but I like to think the paintings in this series now embody some of that residual memory. I had originally envisaged walking with all the poets featured in this book but alas, that was dashed by the age of Covid and I only managed to share the vision with a few of these collaborators. Nonetheless, as many walkers have often cited, the great Alfred Wainwright astutely observed that 'walking can promote the true sense of solitude'.

My time in the studio involved decisions as to the grand narrative. Every painting must stand alone and have its own autonomy in the world so I decided to isolate the specific sights and amalgams where needed to call characters out from behind the trees and in the ditches. It amazed me how incredibly varied the landscape along the dyke and as a friend mentioned, if you walk the entire distance, you've climbed the equivalent height of Everest, so it's fair to say there are a few undulations.

As difficult as it is to hold off, I do not want to use words to throw light on specific places. Firstly, there are too many and secondly my first language is paint.

From the outset, I felt a collection of paintings and poetry was needed to help to engage this elusive monument with a wider audience and present emotive and human stories. A line that struck a chord with me by the late founder of the Offa's Dyke Association Frank Noble said of the dyke: 'it remains a dead monument in an empty landscape'. Yet, he devoted a good part of his life to unravelling its mystery; this sentiment provoked in me a need to seek its spirit.

This collection of poetry and paintings, published in 2021 and now re-assembled here is now part of Offa's Dyke culture and hope will endure along with human encounters, paths crossed and feelings felt carried along the dyke.

The aesthetics of Offa's Dyke can be gleaned from the anecdotal and personal or rather first hand accounts of encounters. There is no one Offa's Dyke or indeed one interpretation. It in though – in my mind – the physical incarnation of Border Culture.

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## Offa's Dyke

From here the earth is a green map  
spread out under the sky,  
the dyke a fold between two lands,  
two histories, two tongues, each page,  
recto and verso, scribed in sunlight.

East, west, *dwyrain, gorllewin* -  
its word-music sings on the wind  
between Mercia and Cymru,  
between field and mountain,  
*maes a mynydd*.

To the east lie fields for grazing cattle,  
or sown with gold, grain rippling  
at the wind's hand, and dawn to dusk  
a summer blackbird holds his place  
with song: this land is mine, mine.

West are the high lands, the *hafod* and *hendre*,  
the shepherd's house in unfenced hills  
where sheep know their place, the homing, the heft,  
that secret sense of belonging, *cynefin*,  
passed down from ewe to lamb.

And now, over this ancient earthwork,  
raised from north to south to divide us,  
a red kite flexes the fork of its tail  
and wings, free in the boundless sky,  
and the dyke's no more than a line in the mind.

Gillian Clarke

## On Offa's Dyke

Once a concept, now returned to concept  
except where the mounded soil  
hints of activity, toil,  
scoopings, bendings, craft  
of earthwork unknit by wind-work.

Once a long snake, sinuous over the land,  
over hill heights, above cwms:  
now its disintegrated skin  
is ghosted in the ground,  
buried in its own earth  
yet visible here and there  
like the life of Offa, Mercian King.  
This, in itself, evidence of him, hegemony's power, fear --  
the tangible remains.

Their truths the walls of history hold:  
Hadrian's, Jerusalem's, Berlin's --  
humanity walled in, walled out,  
a wall for weeping on, a wall for execution;  
and all our inner barriers, divisions  
numerous as the species of wild growth  
embedded in this dyke --  
taken by the only natural army.

Gladys Mary Coles

## Two Offa's Dykes

Living as I do, what can I know of borders?  
Shutting gates is the only rule  
on our zigzag pathways...

But there's a wilderness in the sky,  
ditches in the clouds...  
and it's the writers who discover the roads  
leading away from me.

Cynddylan and Hergest and Heledd  
reveal that poetry belongs  
in my ditch too, words hinting

at wisdom and tragedy,  
their legendary breath  
speaking to both sides of my mind.

So here I am, a pilgrim of sorts,  
one foot in grey clay, one in red,  
crossing from this country to the other  
but the two of them failed states.

I might turn away from both  
but I know that grief grows like gorse  
and will always surround us.

It's the same rain we suffer...  
All of this weather  
together

Menna Elfyn  
Translation by Robert Minhinnick

## Wealas

Slaves? Yes. Yet slavers too.	where they'll never get rich. Let them remain
But strangers, their people always foreign to us.	the wrong side of the dyke in their green desert...
Aboriginal that nation of dark deceivers.	Such people are thieves, a nation of crims
Remember Hadrian and those he tried to keep out?	who will never understand our Mercian hymns.
Yet if you listen carefully despite their alphabet	I'm sick to the teeth of those blue remembered hills,
of stone and thistle wielded like an unwhetted axe	we'll hit them for six with our dark satanic mills.
you'll hear Rome distilled through their dialects.	But stray over here? We'll dock their ears
But no loam in their language as in ours...	because one side or the other is theirs to choose
So, by my decree keep them behind this ditch	I'll make them an offa they can't refuse...

Robert Minhinnick

## Offa's Dyke

And leaving Mercia, with the sun on my back  
I take this ancient path  
a scar cut from sea to sea  
into 9th Century ideology

this sleeping giant's weary spine  
threads the border of time  
it ebbs and flows in discourse, folklore  
shifting in ways only a river would know

and taking a life of its own  
gives up the ghost, for those  
splitting hairs, splitting the difference  
of the past, minding the Anglo-Saxon gaps

I'm crossing you in style  
the low horizon wide as my smile  
neither here nor there  
with the wind in my sails

keeping one foot in England  
one foot in Wales.

Oliver James Lomax





Above: *The Radnor Professional*  
Below: *Defiance at the Pulpit*







Above: *The Borrow & Thurlow Encounter*

Below: *Tref-y-clawdd*







Above: *Gorffwys Tywysogion*

Below: *The Grand Master of Buttington*







Above: *Course of the Ancients*

Below: *Elation at World's End*







*Above: Audience at Arthur's Cave*

*Below: Red Bluff*







Above: *Hergest Puzzle*

Below: *Oak at the Gate of the Dead*







Above: *Exiled Visitor*

Below: *Rebels' Muster at the Skirrid*







Above: *Passion at the Escapment*

Below: *Llantony Spirit Portal*







Above: *Synergy at Ceri Pole*

Below: *Twmpa*







*Above: Quarry of Caractacus*

## Reflections on *Walking with Offa*

Diana Baur

Artists have always borrowed, restructured and invented. Both currently and historically artists use(d) a wide range of materials, both orthodox and, possibly more interestingly, unorthodox, sometimes simply to experiment, sometimes because of cost. Artists play with materials and experiment with colour combinations and mixtures until what is "coming through to them", is being expressed in a way that is pleasing.

In my view the creatively driven are the instrument through which ideas and inspirations flow. They find themselves attempting to express those inspirations. They do not usually set out to find subject matter in order to paint, as Dan claims he did before walking the Offa's Dyke Path.

However, it is obvious from Dan's eloquently stated written account that the Borderlands inspire him greatly. He walked them during a time when creativity for many was stifled by the negativity of Covid years, and his mark making and palette choices reflect this time. A few of his paintings escape this negative cloud to some extent with inspiration and a sense of light coming through to the viewer. In particular in the following three paintings.

### Red Bluff

The colours referencing the importance of red in ancient tribes, linked as it is with survival, the hunt, following the red dots of blood on the ground from a wounded animal, the red handprints in caves, the mark making and immediacy of the work.

### Passion at the Escarpment

Again, like Red Bluff, the rich redness of the earth works very well in this painting creating almost a tapestry like effect, almost drawing a rich warm blanket over us all.

### Quarry of Caractacus

Regardless of the colour range chosen, the depth and sense of travelling back is well expressed in this painting with the leafless tree in the foreground.

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Diana Baur

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## The Past in the Time of Covid: The Art of Dan Llywelyn Hall

John G. Swogger

Art often reveals more than it shows – often tells us more about its creator than its subject or inspiration. Some would argue that this is intrinsic to ‘art’ – to reveal a personal vision, rather than to mechanically reproduce a view. I have argued in the past few years that art gives archaeologists (and archaeology, more generally) a unique lens through which to understand not just how those outside the discipline ‘view’ archaeology and archaeological sites and monuments, but how those outside the discipline ‘feel’ about archaeology and the places, objects and past peoples it studies. I have also argued that, in considering the shortcomings of much of archaeological public outreach, we should start to understand that most people outside of archaeology do not relate to sites and monuments in terms of information and intellectual understanding, but in terms of personal meaning and individual, emotional perspectives.

As a consequence, archaeology often fails to grasp the ‘point’ of art about, or inspired by, archaeology and heritage. What is such art for (archaeologists ask)? But archaeologists ask that question expecting an archaeological answer, and are often disappointed when the art fails to provide them with archaeological insight. It is judging apples by the standards of oranges. If we, instead, ask the question and look for an artistic answer, then we might potentially be heading in a more interesting, more productive and – ultimately for archaeology – more meaningful direction.

(In attempting such an interrogation with the corpus of art about Old Oswestry hillfort, I not-altogether-jokingly manifested my inner Waldemar Januszczak. A facetious conceit, to be sure, but it proved effective in shifting the way I spoke about what I was looking at – effective in provoking an artistic response to the art first, and leaving the search for an archaeological message until later. Perhaps, then, one should imagine the following paragraphs spoken by him...)

Dan Llywelyn Hall is a man on a journey. A journey, in his own words, of paths crossed and feelings felt, an erratic itinerary of undulations in an attempt to unravel a mystery, unearth motifs and seek out a spirit. Where is Dan going? And why?

It might surprise an archaeologist who specialises in the study of early medieval linear earthworks to learn that Dan is journeying along the length of Offa's Dyke, a monument which has been studied in earnest for more than a century, and about which hundreds of academic papers and meticulously-researched theses, histories, guides, interpretation panels and leaflets have been written.

No archaeologist would describe Offa's Dyke as an elusive mystery, full of lurking ghosts or spirits needing to be sought; no archaeologist would agree with Dan, quoting Frank Noble, the founder of the Offa's Dyke Association, that the dyke is 'a dead monument in an empty landscape'. So why, after acquiring every book on Offa's Dyke and tracing the route with his own boots, does the monument resonate with Dan as 'largely unimpressive', with 'little glamour'? Why does the archaeology in those books leave him with 'more questions than answers'?

There doesn't seem to be much in what Dan says about the monument to justify his decision to spend three years walking and making paintings 'inspired by Offa's Dyke'? Clearly, it wasn't the archaeology of Offa's Dyke that caught Dan's artistic imagination. So, what was it?

These are odd paintings. Thick impasto on cheap canvas panels and slices of chipboard. The representations are universally flat, poorly-rendered and murky – despite the use of vibrant colours, straight from the tube. They seem disconnected from the places in the titles: is that egg-yellow smear really Knighton? Is that bleak plateau actually Chirk? Other titles appear to have nothing to do with the dyke: Temptation from the Pulpit? Passion at the Escarpment? There's something unsettling, dream-like about some of the images: a lurid abbey rises from a morbid green funk, a dead-eyed donkey stares from a monochrome gloom, a view of Dinas Brân(?) as if seen through a First World War battlefield. Weird figures lurk in the landscapes: an electric-green spirit in Arthur's Cave, a circle of mute earth-coloured ghosts at Valle Crucis, the faceless shroud of the Exiled Visitor. What lurks beyond the Llantony Spirit Portal? Are there skulls and half-hidden words in the Rebels Muster at the Skirrid? What on earth is going on in Borrowws (sic?) and Dashing Don Carlos at Chirk?

These are not easy paintings to like; these are not easy paintings to relate to. In fact, if there is a mystery to unravel here, then it is this: how can a painter spend three years travelling up and down Offa's Dyke and produce these as 'the physical incarnation of Border Culture'?

Perhaps we should be prompted by Dan's own mission statement, and see if we can't unearth a series of motifs and seek out the spirit of this erratic itinerary of undulating paint and chipboard.

If there is a common thread to all of these paintings, then it seems to be that of distance and disconnection. These paintings do not show lived-in landscapes; these are not habited places. The structures in them float without scale – cyclopean or microscopic; it is impossible to tell. Where there are inhabitants, they are formless, shapeless and featureless – even dashing Don Carlos. Dan cheerfully states that his paintings are telling 'emotive and human stories', but this is whistling in the dark. Instead, they confirm something bleaker: 'the true sense of solitude' that the painter clearly shares with Alfred



Wainwright. There is a hint of discordance and upset that is more than just a little disturbing. What ‘residual memory’ do these paintings really embody?

Dan claims to have turned away from the dyke itself to ‘the peripheries of this earthen-serpent’ in order to search for the monument’s ‘real life and heartbeat’. It is notable that the dyke itself does not feature in any one of the twenty paintings in this collection. The landscape beyond the dyke is a wasteland devoid of human presence, a place of lonely isolation, blurred as if an only half-remembered dream, populated by faceless ghosts. There is no life here, no heartbeat.

This is not a collection of paintings about the well-known, well-understood and well-defined Offa's Dyke – this is a collection of paintings, as Dan points out, about his journey. He may have walked along Offa's Dyke, he may have rambled every yard of its 177-mile path – but Dan crucially did so in the past three years. In the pandemic. In the time of Covid. Dan walked Offa's Dyke, certainly, but his paintings record the time, not the place. His canvases have captured what his explanatory essay only hinted at: that his plan to explore the monument, to record and capture the ‘flesh on the bone’ of the dyke was ‘dashed by the age of Covid’. His paintings show us that time, palimpsest-ed onto the place. Whatever Dan wanted to see, whatever Dan thought he was going to see, whatever Dan hoped he would see, what he actually saw was a nightmarish vision of the spirit of the times: a dead monument in an empty landscape, empty of people, empty of light, empty of answers.

His paintings serve to remind archaeologists that, no matter what the past of a monument might be, art will always reflect the present. Archaeologists are often guilty of thinking that we can only really understand sites and monuments in terms of what they were – and that it is that which will inform what they are. But, as this collection of paintings reminds us, sites and monuments exist now, and their meanings are constructed as a mirror to the urgent and pressing realities of the present. Dan's paintings may not provide us with any great insight into Offa's Dyke as an archaeological site, as a historic monument, or even as a place – but they do give us insight into Offa's Dyke in a time when disease and death stalked even our ancient landscapes.

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## Art on the March

Howard Williams

Marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Llwybr Clawdd Offa/Offa's Dyke Path, Dan Llwyelyn Hall's exceptional project and published collection *Walking with Offa* celebrated the borderlands landscape under the unexpected and stifling threat of the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant lockdowns when landscapes and places were especially difficult to access and experience (Llwyelyn Hall *et al.* 2021). For the Offa's Dyke Path and the monument itself, this challenge of access, engagement and understanding was accentuated by contrasting and fluctuating lockdown strategies adopted by the UK government for England and the devolved Welsh assembly for Wales (Williams 2020a).

In this challenging public health crisis and volatile political climate, Dan and his collaborating poets together captured something special about the history and landscape of the Welsh Marches. One is afforded a sense of the depth of time experienced whilst one walks along the Offa's Dyke Path both through and beyond its association with Offa's Dyke. This is because the Path's route both follows and diverges from the traces of the early medieval linear earthwork, taking in numerous historic places and ancient landscapes, many dating from before England and Wales existed. Walking and experiencing the Offa's Dyke Path connects the walker to myth, legend, prehistoric and historical times before, during and after Offa's Dyke was constructed as a Mercian frontier work in the late eighth century AD. Yet, of course, the interplay between Path and monument is complicated in relation to a third crucial line and division: the historic Cymric/English borderline fixed in the early sixteenth century (Fox 1955: 290–293). Whilst these three lines do coalesce for some stretches and cohere in the popular imagination, the art project tackled their shared landscape presence and their historical contingency, as well as dimensions of their material presence and their shared intangibility and complexity (Ray 2020; Williams 2020a).

This makes it all the more striking that while the few artistic reconstructions of Offa's Dyke that exist have focused upon looking *along* and *over* Offa's Dyke (see Williams 2022), the monument is not at all visually rendered through Dan's paintings. Yet in doing so the *Walking with Offa* questioned fixating on the monument's physical presence, scale and legacy as a grandiose project of an early medieval ruler and an enduring *idea* of a bounded discrete Cymru separated from an homogenous England (see Ray 2020). Furthermore, and crucially, *Walking with Offa* helped foreground what Offa's Dyke and its associated national trail mean in relation to each other and to the borderline in the twenty-first century. For me, through paintings and poetry, *Walking with Offa* tackled the changing nature of the March whilst on the march, helping us to walk the line by moving our feet, inspiring our imaginations and shifting our perspectives on a borderland landscape and its history. The



Figure 1: The closing of the *Walking with Offa* project at Valle Crucis Abbey, with the Offa's Dyke Path fiftieth anniversary logo projected onto the medieval monastic ruins (Photograph: David McGlade)

project operated by looking *out* and speaking *out* from the line of the Offa's Dyke Path at the landscape and painting it, thus visualising striking locales along the long-distance footpath. In this way, *Walking with Offa* is as much about walking before, walking after, an walking around Offa as much as it concerns walking with this historical personage and his eponymous dyke.

To fully appreciate how *Walking with Offa* generated an embodied engagement with landscape history, we must recognise how the project engaged with the landscape during the creation of the art itself. This was clearly conveyed through the associated digital media. Here, we witness the paintings composed in all weathers and the poets speaking to us as they walk and stand in the landscape. Both dimensions interleave in the project's YouTube videos.<sup>1</sup>

The second embodied dimension of the project was the series of in-person gatherings to celebrate the borderlands as a separate space, neither fully England nor Cymru. These involved songs and celebrations as well as the performance of select poems and the display of Dan's paintings. Key moments included 11 July 2021 at the Offa's Dyke Centre in Knighton

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/@studioofdanllywelynhall3345/videos>



Figure 2: 'Cynddylan on the Rocks' by Geraint Jones at Llanymynech (Photograph: Howard Williams)



Figure 3: 'Clawdd Offa' by Oliver James Lomax in the Vale of Montgomery (Photograph: Howard Williams)

which included a memorial walk to Panponton Hill (Williams 2021a; 2021b: 8, 10) and the culmination of the project with a series of talks and performances amidst the evocative ruins of the later medieval Valle Crucis Abbey on 11 December 2021 (Williams 2023).

The third and (for me) most significant way by which the project interacted with the Path and Dyke was by joining the existing complex set of signposts, waymarkers and heritage interpretation panels situated along the footpath. In doing so, the poems and paintings join together with a few significant art installations along the line of Offa's Dyke including the Circle of Legends at Tintern (Williams 2020b) and King Offa at Plas Power (Ray and Bapty 2016: 367). Two examples that I have encountered whilst walking the Dyke in 2022 and early 2023 serve to illustrate this point. At Llanymynech Rocks, on the line of the Path close to the postulated course of the Dyke which encircles Asterley Rocks, one can read affixed a post the poem 'Cynddylan on the Rocks' by Geraint Jones (Figure 2). Where the Vale of Montgomery is divided by the progress of the earthwork, one can read 'Offa's Dyke' by Oliver James Lomax (Figure 3). In this way, each responds to the particular qualities of the place, the modern border, the path and the monument. In the former, Jones is able to reflect on imagined alternative Cymric traditions linked to Llanymynech's Iron Age hillfort and Offa's Dyke (see Fox 1955: 66–67; Ray and Bapty 2016). The latter poem tackles the divide that Offa's Dyke is popularly perceived as manifesting, one between the British lands of Cymru and the 'Saxons' of what was to become



England. Thus, the installation is deftly situated upon one of the few stretches where Offa's Dyke and the modern Cymru/England border coincide and where the Path passes between England and Wales through a gate (it is also notable and saddening to see the Welsh language text has been already defaced).

In summary, the power of this art project, and the precedent it sets for future artistic endeavours, is to offer a compilation of creative responses which offer an inclusive sense of the Welsh Marches and the early medieval monuments that traverse and helped shape it. This is something one cannot capture through traditional maps, driving and/or site visits, or indeed from a single poem or artwork (see also Williams 2022). Thinking of the future, we must consider *Walking with Offa* as a source of inspiration for further ways we can involve the arts alongside new modes of mapping and visualising the monuments and their landscapes (cf. Delaney 2021). This was a challenge John Swogger and I attempted via the comic medium for another linear earthwork in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, Wat's Dyke (Swogger and Williams 2021). Yet there are many further potential visual and multimedia strategies for public engagement involving the arts (see Williams *et al.* 2019).

Over the years, I feel I have studied Offa's Dyke and its landscape in depth via maps and publications, drawing upon existing expert investigations (e.g. Fox 1955; Hill and Worthington; Ray and Bapty 2016) but also by visiting much of Offa's Dyke where it survives as a monument. I have also traversed significant sections of the Offa's Dyke Path both where it follows the early medieval monument and departs from its route. Similarly, I have visited many other prehistoric and historic monuments and landscapes in the 'shadow' of the trail, border and Offa's Dyke. Yet, tying them together, providing them with cultural and historical glue, remains an ongoing venture. This is the challenge for artists as well as archaeologists, historians, and heritage interpreters alike, and one which the paintings and poetry of *Walking with Offa* inspire us (and certainly me) to continue pursuing through a host of strategies and to tell a diversity of stories about people, place and the borderlands landscape (Ray and Bapty 2016: 373–376). *Walking with Offa* has articulated clearly the power of art created in moments to collapse time: to transcend space and millennia, helping local audiences and visitors alike to learn and reflect on the story of the Welsh Marches. The project thus celebrates the dyke's history but also its present-day redundancy and the many futures this earthwork has still to witness. As Gillian Clarke's poem attests, while Offa's Dyke persists as a monumental relic, as a division it is equally now 'no more than a line in the mind'. Or as Gladys Mary Coles sees it, a concept 'now returned to concept'.

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