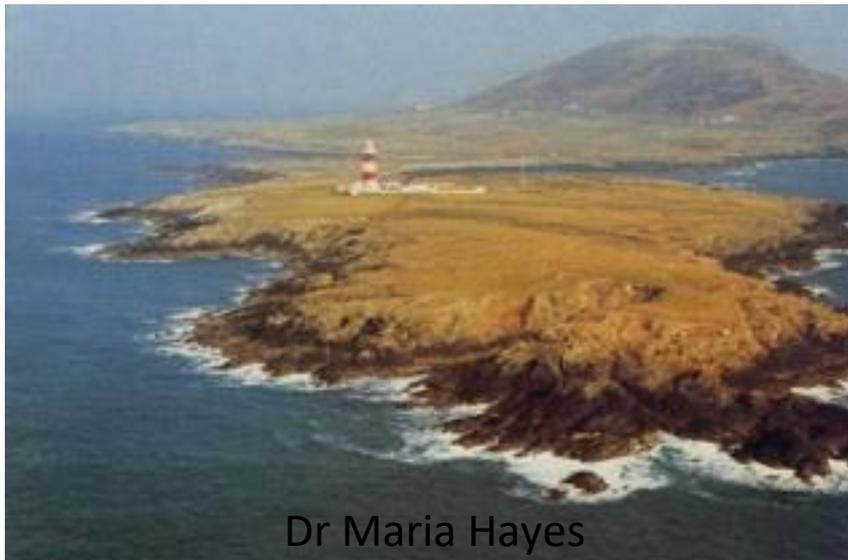




Self-portrait on Carnedd Dafydd 1938

Brenda Chamberlain and Bardsey Education Pack



Dr Maria Hayes

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Brenda Chamberlain on Bardsey

Education pack

Introduction

Brenda Chamberlain was both an artist and a writer. Her work was strongly affected by the places where she lived, most famously Bardsey and the Greek island of Hydra.

She published a compelling body of work, including her two books *Tide-race* and *The Water Castle*, the memoir, *A Rope of Vines: Journal from a Greek Island*, two collections of poetry and many poems and articles published in national and international magazines. With her painting she twice won the Gold Medal in Fine Art at the National Eisteddfod of Wales, held many solo exhibitions in London and Wales, and her work was shown in over thirty group shows.

While living on Bardsey Brenda Chamberlain painted murals on the walls of Carreg Fawr. Although some have been painted over, four can still be seen.

Chamberlain's personal life also affected her work. She married fellow artist and Royal Academy student John Petts, later had a long relationship with the Frenchman Jean Van der Bijl, and also enjoyed a life-long friendship with the German Karl von Laer. After living on Bardsey she journeyed to the Greek island of Hydra where she lived for several years before returning to Bangor.

Jill Piercy

Using the Education Pack

The opening sections of this pack (pages 6 - 18) are intended for teachers but the tasks on later pages can be easily accessed directly by the pupils. All activities can be adapted for younger and older pupils. The aim of the tasks are to stimulate a creative response to sights and experiences that are similar to the ones Brenda Chamberlain encountered while living on Bardsey.

The Curriculum

This education pack is designed to support pupils learning at Key Stages 2 and 3. Thinking and creative skills are fostered through the use of research, personal memory, observation, and creative and reflective activities suggested in this pack. Use of the outdoor learning environment is encouraged.

Developing thinking, communication, ICT and number are laid out in the Skills framework for 3 – 19-year-olds in Wales. Thinking skills in particular run consistently throughout the Art and Design curriculum and the activities in this pack are designed to promote these skills by providing opportunities for problem solving, making choices, decision making and working together.

Curriculum Cymreig requires the promotion of an understanding and appreciation of the geography, art, heritage, environment and cultural identity of Wales. The activities in this pack are designed to support Curriculum Cymreig.

As Brenda Chamberlain wrote in English, this pack also supports the English Curriculum and extends pupils' use of and understanding of different genres of writing and reading.

Introducing Brenda Chamberlain's work

Jill Piercy



Interior Tŷ'r Mynydd 1940s



Self-portrait on Carnedd Dafydd 1938

By the age of six, Brenda Chamberlain had already decided to be an artist and writer and nothing was to dissuade her from this ambition. Although she admits a stronger attraction to painting, in her lifetime she published three novels, a book of poetry, a book of poems and drawings and an account of the making of the Caseg Broadsheets, as well as having a large number of poems and articles published in magazines. Although at times she kept her writing and painting separate, in her many journals and in three of her books, she combined words and images. In many ways this was the most natural form for her to work although she often struggled:

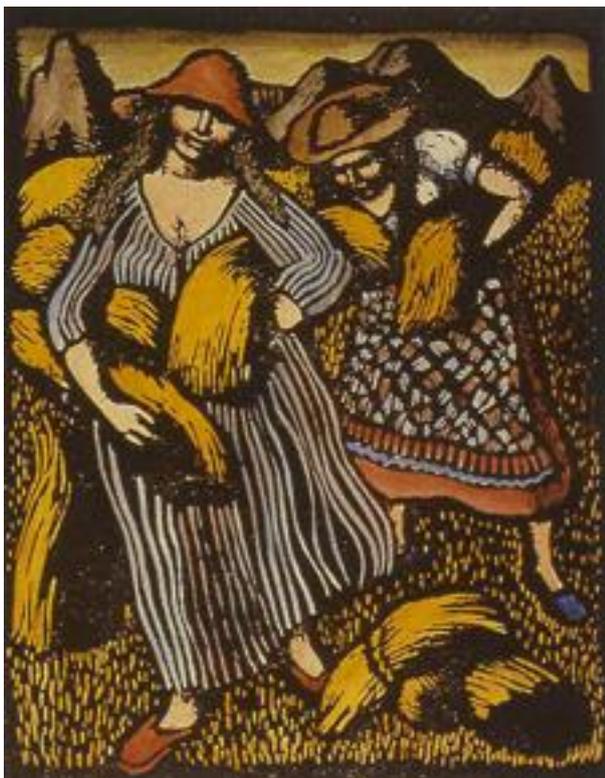
Emotionally, I was always tempted to drop the writing and concentrate on painting, because for some unknown reason, writing has always been for me an unhappy activity; while painting, almost inevitably, makes me happy. But however hard I tried to discipline myself, sooner or later the other form would take over, dominate entirely for a time, then swing back again.

Originally from Bangor, Brenda also lived in Llanllechid with John Petts; on Bardsey, initially with Jean van de Bijl and later alone; and she spent many winters in Germany with her great friend, Karl von Laer and on the Greek island of Hydra. Wherever she lived, she wrote, painted and kept illustrated journals and the style of her work changed in response to her surroundings.



Brenda wearing the Gold Medal for Fine Art at the National Eisteddfod, Y Rhyl 1953, with The Cristin Children.

During her lifetime, Brenda Chamberlain twice won the Gold Medal in Fine Art at the National Eisteddfod, held seven solo exhibitions in London and Wales and her work was seen in over thirty group shows. Although she lived in several different places, Brenda rarely painted landscapes. She drew them in her sketchbooks but rarely developed them into larger works. It was people that fascinated her and she would draw them incessantly. After leaving school, she spent six months in Copenhagen where the paintings of Gauguin influenced her early works. Her figures were solid and monumental and the colour bold throughout her early years in Llanllechid and on Bardsey.

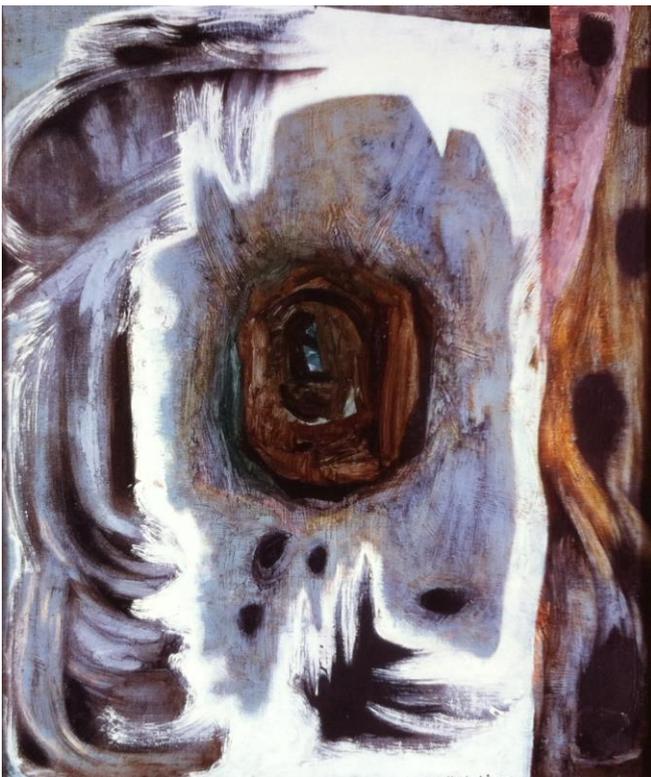


The Harvesters 1939



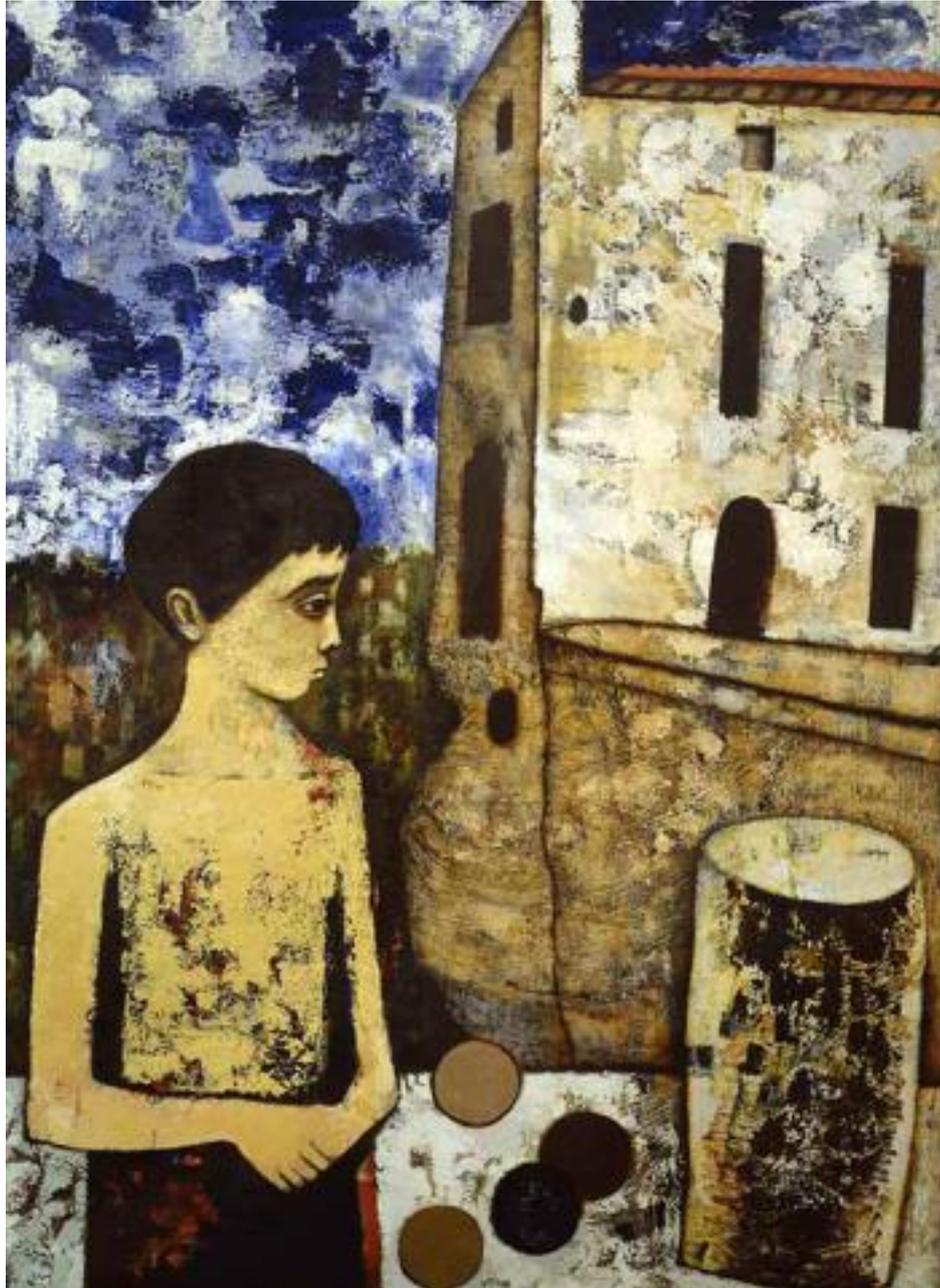
The Doves 1953

Whilst in Llanllechid, Brenda Chamberlain and John Petts set up the Caseg Press in 1937. John had studied typesetting and he taught Brenda to engrave woodblocks and together they produced Christmas, wedding and greetings cards based on religious and allegorical themes. Brenda and John also collaborated with Alun Lewis to produce a series of hand-printed 'broadsheets' of poems and engravings on the press.



Eye of the Sea 1960

In the early 1960s her painting became more abstract as she became fascinated with the concept of the metamorphosis of bodies into rocks in the sea and the effect of light through salt water. She used titles that reflected the theme such as *Grey Breast*, *His Loins Have Become a Stone Bridge* and *The Eye of the Sea*. During the 1950s she often travelled to France and Germany to visit friends and to paint. Drawings made on site in France were developed into richly coloured paintings on her return to Wales. Her portrait of Picasso's mistress, Dora Maar in *Intérieur Provençal* and Charles at Ménerbes are two of this French series. In Germany she stayed in a Schloss she called The Water Castle. There she drew portraits, wrote and made frottage crayon drawings which included *Free and with Wings* and *Insea* in Lisabeth's Winter Coat. They are an abstract series, rich in texture and slightly surreal in style.



Charles at Ménerbes 1961

In 1962, her environment changed once again. A driving holiday from Switzerland took her to Athens. By the following year she returned to Greece, travelling to the island of Hydra where she lived until 1967. Once more the change of location affected the style of her work. She wrote prolific entries in her journals, filled her sketchbooks with drawings and began working with a Greek dancer, Robertos Saragas. Rather than freezing the action in one pose, she tried to capture the flow of movements as he danced. Their collaboration led to a performance in London where Robertos danced and Dorothy Tutin read Brenda's poetry. This performance broadened Brenda's ideas and led her to be involved in other multi-faceted projects including musical experiments with the composer, Halim El-Dabh.

The Colonels' Coup in 1967 moved Brenda to write a play, *The Protagonists* after visiting the detention island of Levos. She left Greece and returned to Bangor where the play was staged in 1968.



Her work from 1970 onwards became very stark – black line drawn on thin white paper. Women's heads were drawn jammed inside jugs, between piles of stones, at the tops of Greek columns and wrapped in bandages. Some have whimsical humour but most show despair and frustration. They were shown in 1971 and known as the Gregynog series. In July that same year, Brenda died.

Jill Piercy



Bandaged Heads 1971

Brenda Chamberlain

Biography

- 1912 Born in Bangor, Gwynedd
- 1917-31 Educated in Bang
- 1931-36 Royal Academy Schools, London
- 1936-45 Moved to Llanllechid, near Bethesda in Snowdonia.
Married John Petts and with him and Alun Lewis published the
Caseg Broadshets
- 1944 Separated
- 1947-62 Lived and worked on Bardsey, Gwynedd and spent several
winters in Germany
- 1962-67 Lived on the Greek island of Hydra. Worked with the dancer,
Robertos Saragas and the musician, Halim El-Dabh
- 1967 Returned to Bangor and died there in 1971



The Cristin Children 1952

Tools for Drawing

Drawing is made up of three primary features: tone, line and colour. Secondary elements are texture, pattern and shape. These exercises can be adapted to many different situations, both in and away from the classroom.

Primary drawing vocabulary:

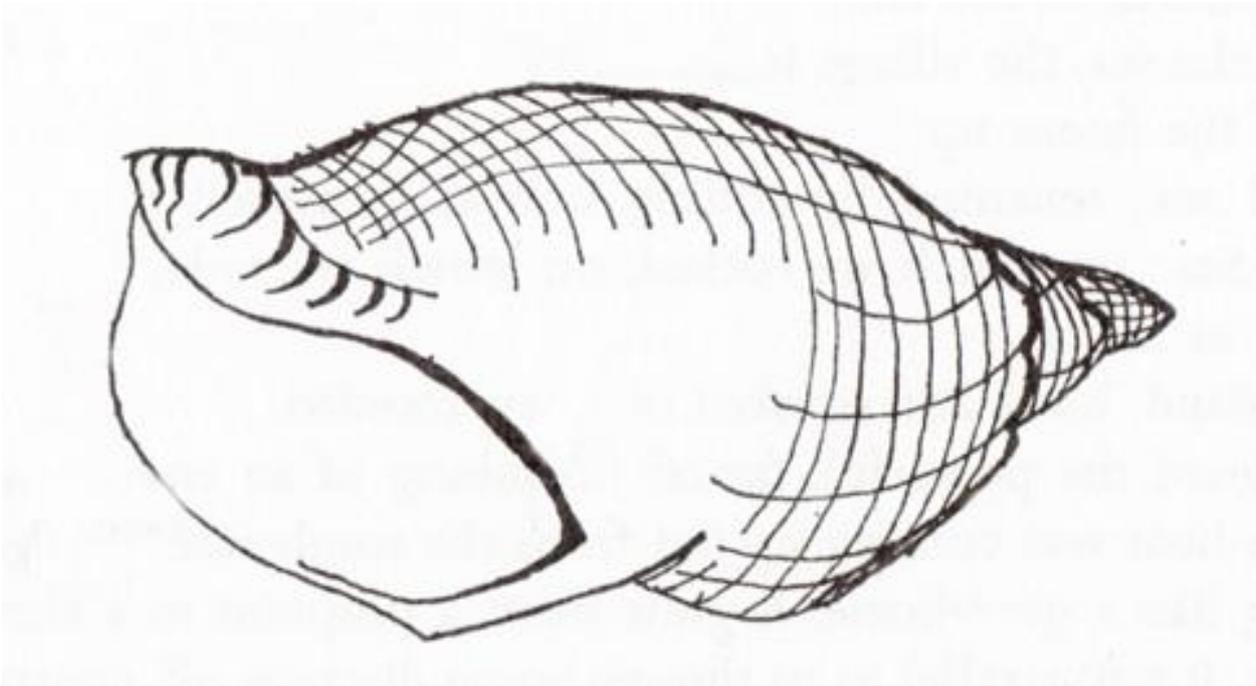
Line

Line is both the simplest and the most complex graphic tool, but it is one that everyone is capable of using in some capacity. The aim is to develop a use of line that extends sensitivity to looking, thereby capturing and communicating more effectively the complex nature of the observed world. Line, by its nature, has direction and velocity, and so readily conveys both a sense of movement and time.

It can also describe the form of an object by the use of tonal modulations in the line. How a line alters from dark to light, as it describes the observed form, communicates the shape of the object to the viewer. A line may also be coloured and alter in colour as it progresses.

Line, then, has the capacity to use all the three primary modes of drawing at once.

Brenda Chamberlain uses line very effectively in this drawing:



Drawing on p 93 of Tide-race

Notice how the lines go from being very fine to very thick.

Tone

The way light and shade is arranged over a form or subject in an image is called tone. The tones of a subject can be isolated by screwing up the eyes, which rids the scene of details. Tone can only be perceived in relationship to other tones. Light grey cannot exist unless it is in relationship to black, darker grey or white. Therefore, it is not possible to look at tone as a separate entity. Tones must always be considered in relation to the whole image. Even the 'tone' of the page affects the drawing. Drawing on a white page can be challenging. It is sometimes good to lay down areas of darker and lighter tones with charcoal (or similar) before attempting too much detail.

Notice how lines used closely together become tones in this drawing by Brenda Chamberlain:



Drawings on p 93 of Tide-race

Colour

Colour, or hue, is the amount of pigmentation in any given area of a subject. The exact hue is defined by the amount of light on the subject in relation to the inherent pigmentation of the material used to draw with. If a piece of cloth is bright blue, but the room is dark, the cloth will not appear blue. The hue only becomes apparent in light, and alters according to the light falling on the subject in question. Therefore, perceiving colour depends on light. Colour also has a tone value. Colour tones can range from the darkest to the lightest. As with tone, a colour in an image must be regarded in relation to the rest of the image/subject.



Fisherman Resting 1949

Notice how Brenda Chamberlain makes line, tone and colour work together in this painting.

Secondary drawing vocabulary:

Texture

Texture is the surface quality of the subject in question, ranging from rough to smooth with all potentials of variation in between.

Shape

A shape is a bounded area within the scene. Shapes can take any form but they are contained by a boundary. Some artists make intentional use of shape and flatten colour and tones across the shape to great effect. Designers place even more emphasis on the use of shape.

Pattern

A pattern is a repeated motif. Once a motif is noticed and/or invented it can be repeated in many different configurations, which is known as a pattern. Patterns abound in nature but are also a favoured device in art making. Patterns frequently have a rhythm to them and can be linked to music, or created by listening to music.

Most drawing consists of one or more of these six elements. The following exercises assist the development of skill at using these elements. The most important thing to focus on is what is being looked at. Deciding what and how to look at something is the most difficult part of drawing. However, when the decision of how to look has been made, the hand and the eye will do the rest. Practice hones skills.

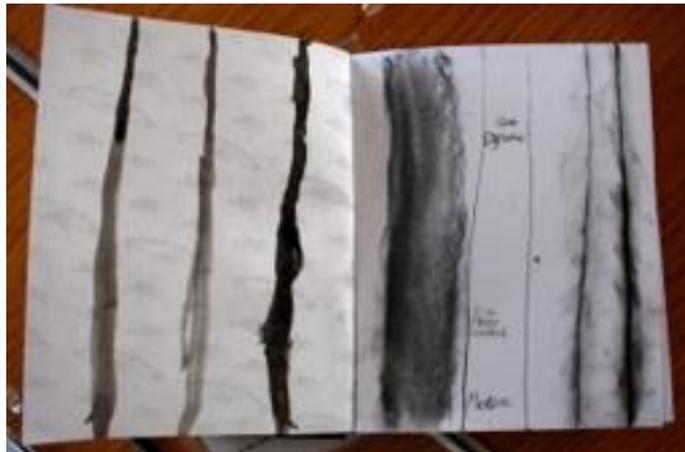
WARM UP Drawing exercises:

LOOKING

Practice looking at a subject and drawing it in your mind only. Do not start to do anything else. Drawing begins with looking.

LINE

Draw several lines of different thicknesses down the page. Begin with as light a touch as possible and gradually increase the pressure as the line descends. Do several more lines and use different drawing media - pencil, charcoal and compressed charcoal. You will see that there is a great tonal range possible in a line. When drawing, try to refer to these lines and check you are making full use of the tonal potential in a line.



TONE

Similarly, using different drawing media, experiment with dark to light without creating any lines. Allow the tones to merge one into another across the page. See how many effects you can get.

COLOUR

Mark out a grid and using your coloured media, make small squares of colours next to each other. Begin with cool colours and gradually use warmer ones until finally you use the hottest colour. Do another block beginning with the darkest tones of colour and graduating to the lightest.

TEXTURE

Mark out a grid and make small squares of textures beginning by making rough textures and gradually making them smoother.

SHAPE

Mark out a grid and change the square into a different shape by adding first one, then two then three or more lines.

PATTERN

Mark out a grid and add a new pattern to each square. You might like to do this exercise while listening to music to inspire you.

Observational Drawing Exercises

LINE

Collect a shell and spend a few minutes just looking intently at it. Turn it over in your hand, look at it from all sides. What do you like about this particular object?

Begin to draw the object using LINE only. Make sure you use the full range of tonal possibilities as you draw, checking back with your volume lines or making one on the page to remind you.

Try to draw using the connected drawing method. Do not look at the page, keep looking at the object and allow your hand to follow the path of your eyes.

TONE

Using the same subject, this time draw it by only using TONE. You may decide to start in the middle of the object and move outwards, or you may choose either the darkest or lightest place and work from there. Remember that a drawing using TONE only means using no lines at all. The only place a line will occur in your drawing is where two tones meet each other.

TONE and LINE

Now, begin this drawing with TONE first, repeating the exercise above, then add LINE. Do not worry if they do not exactly correspond to each other, as sometimes this makes the drawing more interesting. The important thing is to keep strictly to TONE first and LINE second.

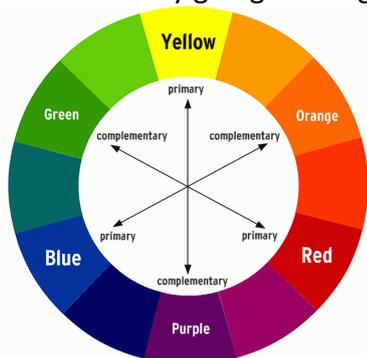
LINE and TONE

This time begin with the line first, and then add tone. What is different? Which approach do you prefer?

COLOUR

The colour circle is a useful thing to draw and get to know before you start to use colour.

Draw a circle and divide it into 6 sections. In the first section you need Yellow, then miss a section, then you need Blue, miss a section and then you need Red. These are the primary colours - the colours you need before anything else. All the other colours are made from these primary colours. In the section between the Yellow and Blue, mix a Green and paint it in. Mix Red and Blue to get a Purple for the section between those two colours, and mix Red and Yellow to get Orange for the last section. Now, the colour in the opposite section is that colour's complementary colour. So Red and Green / Yellow and Purple / Blue and Orange. The primary colour is the one not mixed and the other colour is the other two colours left, mixed. The circle can then show the hues (or tones) of the colours by going from light in the centre to dark at the edge.



- Using the same subject, choose a warm, light colour and a cool, dark colour. Using these colours, draw the subject by looking for the tones first. Then add in the lines. What do you notice?
- Choose something else to draw - a different shell, a pebble, a bone - something you have found on the beach or on the mountain. This time add in two more colours – another warm colour and another cool colour. Draw with tones first, then lines using four colours.
- Choose two complementary colours and draw the same object with those, working with line and tone as you choose to. What do you notice? What affected your decisions?
- Go back to your first object and draw freely, using line, tone and colour.

Remember to spend more time looking at your object than at your drawing.

TEXTURE

Mark a grid on your page. Using only black and white explore the objects in the space (this can be done inside or outside) and collect as many textures as you can. Remember to make full use of the way line and tone can describe what you observe.

Mark a grid on your page. Using colour collect as many textures as you can. Remember to make full use of the way line and tone can describe what you observe.

SHAPE

Mark a grid on your page. Using only black and white explore the objects in the space (this can be done inside or outside) and collect as many shapes as you can. Remember to make full use of the way line and tone can describe what you observe.

Mark a grid on your page. Using colour collect as many shapes as you can. Remember to make full use of the way line and tone can describe what you observe.

PATTERN

Mark a grid on your page. Using only black and white explore the objects in the space (this can be done inside or outside) and collect as many patterns as you can. Remember to make full use of the way line and tone can describe what you observe.

Mark a grid on your page. Using colour collect as many patterns as you can. Remember to make full use of the way line and tone can describe what you observe.

DEVELOPMENTS

After doing all the exercises above, pupils will be skilled with a basic drawing vocabulary that can be applied to any observational drawing exercise and is useful for other types of drawing.

For example:

- Using your own originals (or photocopies of them) cut all the grids and colour pallets up into different shapes and explore making a collage with the pieces – cutting and pasting the elements into a new single image. This image may be an observational collage of a new object, or the object used for the initial exercises. The image may also be an abstract image, which grows out of aesthetic decisions based on what looks and feels right to the maker/s. This image could stay as a collage, or could be the basis for a new drawing or painting.
- Cut all the exercise material up as above and share them out between pupils. Then proceed as above, but using parts of drawings they have not made. The pupils could also work in small groups on collaborative pieces.
- Make 'artist books' out of the preparatory material. Design the covers using information from the drawings in the books.

The drawings can form the basis for work in other materials such as wire, card or clay. This process will require decisions and inventions about how a two-dimensional drawing can be transformed into three dimensions. Experimental drawing can be done with groups in these ways:

- Scan a drawing into the computer and project it onto large paper. Work into the projection with drawing and painting materials. Perhaps focus on line, tone, colour, texture, shape, pattern or any combination. If a group is working on the piece, one pupil could be assigned LINE and another PATTERN and so on. This exercise could also be done with digital materials on a screen. In any case, capturing a digital photograph of the large work allows the possibility for explorations with digital mark making leading to prints.

AND/OR

- Scan the drawings in to the computer and make into an animated slide show. The slide show can be projected onto a large piece of paper and the pupils are directed to trace lines, patterns or shapes as they appear. This drawing can be worked into after the slide show has finished, allowing time for reflective decisions.

Ask the pupils:

- How can the drawings be transformed in terms of scale? Making them very small or very large alters the experience of them.

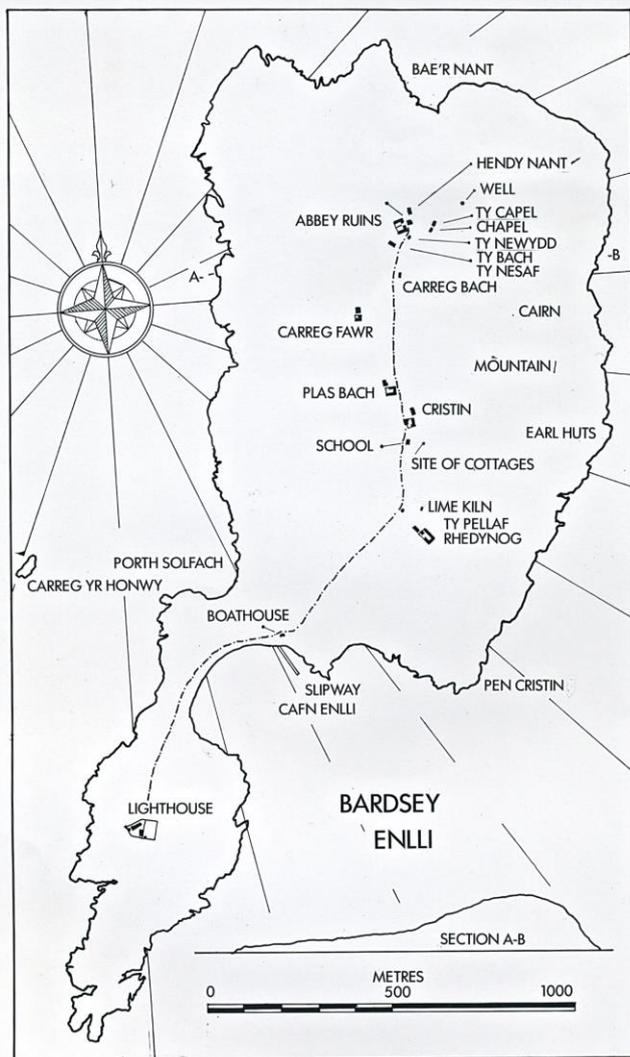
This approach depends on what materials and space you have to work with. Can they fit in a matchbox if they are redrawn with fine pens, or scaled down on the computer and printer? Will they make an installation or maze in the school hall if redrawn on large boards or cardboard boxes and stacked up

Bardsey



Bardsey is 3km off the tip of the Llŷn peninsula in north Wales.

The Welsh name means 'the island in the currents', although its English name may refer to the 'island of the bards', or possibly the island of the Viking chieftain, 'Barda'.



The island is 1.5 miles (2.5 kilometres) long and, at its widest point, is just over half a mile (1 kilometre) across. The island mountain rises to a height of 167 metres and the whole island has a surface area of 180 hectares, most of which is farmland.

The island was purchased by the Bardsey Island Trust and is managed by the Trust with advice from Natural Resources Wales and CADW. The island has many designations for its environmental importance including National Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation.

A tenant farms the island and a warden looks after the Bird and Field Observatory at Cristin, as Bardsey is an important place for birds.

Visitors cross the Bardsey Sound, a very dangerous stretch of water, by boat. Even though the distance is short, the journey can be very rough and the boat only crosses when the sea is sufficiently calm.



The island now has a harbour, but in the past the boats had to be hauled up over the rocks and onto the land.



Today, a tractor and trailer meets the boat bringing the visitors. Their bags are put on the trailer and delivered to the house they are staying in, while the visitors walk up the track.



Brenda Chamberlain lived, worked and painted murals in the house called Carreg Fawr, which means 'large stone' in Welsh.



Only a few inhabit the island now, and some leave for the winter months. Often only the Trust warden and assistant remain on the island throughout the year. Emyr Roberts was the warden from 2007–2013 and Siân Stacey is the current Trust Manager. Here is a picture of her house and garden in the summer. She grows both flowers and vegetables in the garden and the crops are abundant.



Murals in Carreg Fawr

The artist and writer Brenda Chamberlain lived in Carreg Fawr from 1947-1962.

Often she painted directly on the walls. As well as being an attempt to throw off the convention of easel painting and to decorate the house, it was often because she had run out of paper or canvas. She drew freely in charcoal or red ochre and often painted finished murals. According to her friends, there were life-size horses, a big-eyed monkey, a woman with a head-dress, a girl at a table, a jar of flowers and the towers of a cathedral. Inevitably, over the decades, many of these have been whitewashed over but there are still a few to be seen on the walls of Carreg Fawr. (*Brenda Chamberlain Artist and Writer, Jill Piercy 2013*).

Four paintings can still be seen on the walls of Carreg Fawr. As they were painted in the 1950s, the surface of the works has inevitably deteriorated due to climatic conditions on the island and the unstable surface on which they were painted.

They are an important part of Bardsey's heritage and with the support of The Bardsey Island Trust and a support group of specialists led by Peter Lockyer, funding was successfully received from the Heritage Lottery Fund to improve the condition of the fabric of the house and to stabilise and conserve the murals.

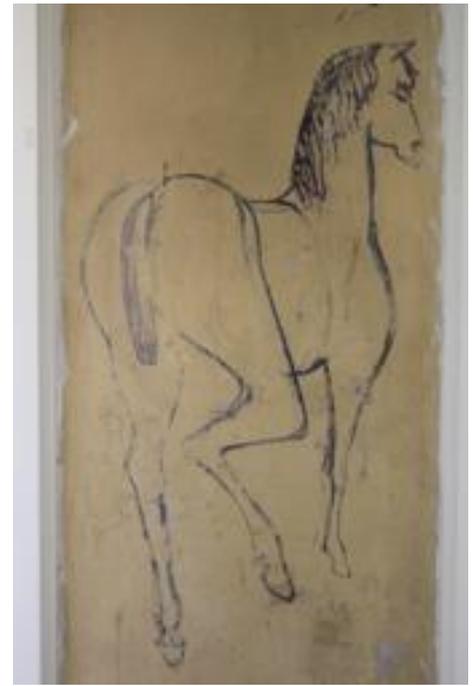


These two pictures, taken 30 years apart, show what has been lost.

The restoration team led by Jane Foley examined the works in 2012, wrote a report with recommendations and costs, and began work in 2012 to stabilise the works and to reinforce lost detail. In the picture below, Jane Foley is at work on *Figures in a Boat*.



Horses drawn on the walls of Carreg Fawr



The murals are now protected with specially made acrylic panels and will need to be regularly monitored to check there is no further deterioration.

TASK

Discussion: Imagine you have just discovered the murals in their untreated state. What are the first three things you would do?

Writing: Write a newspaper article on the murals. Can you inspire people to support restoring them?

Drawing: Make a drawing in charcoal. Take a photo of it.
Now rub half of it out.
Give the drawing to someone else to 'restore'.
Photograph the restored version, compare and contrast.

Wildlife on Bardsey

Bardsey is both nationally and internationally important for wildlife. The wide range of special interests includes birds, rare flowering plants, lichens, liverworts and mosses, coastal grassland and heathland, sea cliff ledges and marine wildlife.

Along the coastal margin, spring squill forms hazy blue carpets in early spring. Dense tufts of thrift and patches of thyme follow the squill. Later the bell heather and ling appear. Rare plants include western clover and small adder's tongue. Amongst the most notable of the plants are the lichens, of which Bardsey has a rich variety of over 350 species.

The seas around the island, with their forests of strap seaweed, are rich in marine life. In the rock pools you can see anemones, crabs and small fish, and in the deeper waters filter-feeders such as sponges and sea-squirts cushion the rocks. One offshore species, the yellow star anemone, is more commonly found in the Mediterranean. Risso's dolphins and harbour porpoises are frequently seen in the waters off the island.

Atlantic grey seals are to be seen in the rocky bays of the island, with some breeding on Bardsey each year.



Birds

The Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory opened in 1953 and is based in the old farmhouse at Cristin which was built by Lord Newborough in 1874. Natural Resources Wales is the Welsh Government's advisory body for nature conservation and works with the Bardsey Island Trust to provide support and advice on the best way to maintain habitats for birds and other resident wildlife. The island provides vital habitat for a range of wildlife including key Welsh bird species such as the chough – the rarest member of the crow family. Wales is particularly important for choughs, with around three quarters of the UK's population living here.



The Bird Observatory records and monitors the birds that breed on Bardsey and the birds that pass through on migration.

Oystercatchers are a familiar sight on Bardsey. They have a distinct red bill and make a loud, piercing cry to protect their territory.

It is also common to see herons, peregrine falcons, wheatears, and warblers, as well as sea birds such as puffins, gannets, razorbills and shags. Manx shearwaters are also important nesting birds on the island. More than half the world's population of Manx shearwaters can be found in Wales, with up to 16,000 pairs on Bardsey at the height of the breeding season.



Much research is carried out in the Observatory and staff use a mixture of GPS tags, which let them know how far and when the birds are travelling to feed, and TDR (Time, depth recorders) that give an insight into the bird's activity under the water.

The razorbills forage to the west, within 40km of the island. Although dive depths are typically less than 15 metres, a maximum dive depth of 97m has been recorded – quite a feat for a bird only 40cm long. Many of the birds staying away overnight tend to rest on the water, drifting for many kilometres in the Irish Sea with the ebb and flow of the tides.

Being surface feeders, the kittiwakes are tagged with GPS only, and forage in all directions within 40 kilometres of Bardsey. Typically they fly fairly directly from the colony, until spotting an area for likely prey, at which point their track becomes more sinuous as they search for food. The tags also show that at night they rest on the water, drifting with the tides.

This research helps to show that birds' from protected sites use the waters near to their roosts for a number of reasons, giving weight to calls on the Government to extend the protected areas around existing seabird sites. The range that the birds travel also helps to highlight that whilst the roosting areas are protected, the birds' feeding grounds are currently unprotected. They both need protection.



These studies have been expanded across more Welsh islands, including Grassholm, Puffin Island, Skomer and Ramsey.

TASK

Research:

How many birds can you identify from these pictures?

Discussion:

What do you know about birds in your area, and how can you find out more?

Writing:

Imagine you are a bird watching the islanders try to steal your eggs to eat. What are you thinking and feeling?

Use this description from Brenda Chamberlain's novel *Tide-race* to help you.

- ← The sea was emerald, frothed with white. In lee of the land, submerged rocks of the reef showed as soft purple stains under the water.
- ← We began to collect a few eggs while birds circled wildly round us. Herring gulls lay their eggs in shallow, primitive nests made of dead grass, feathers, sheep's wool, or seaweed, along the rocky shore; or simply drop their eggs in depressions on the grass slopes. We found razorbills' eggs hidden in deep crannies. They were of a chalky white splashed with brown blotches the colour of old blood, and were more beautiful than the mottled dun-green eggs of the herring gull. Against the stones whitened with bird-droppings, they were perfectly camouflaged. Whenever we found a gull's nest with three eggs in it, Stewart broke one to test whether it was addled, for usually if the full clutch was there, it meant that the chicks had begun to form. When we had gathered about two dozen eggs for the making of omelettes, we hid them under a fleece ready to put into our bag on the way back to the west side.

←

(pp 32-33)

Drawing:

Group piece.

Take a large piece of paper and paint the sky all over it. Spread the paint out with plenty of water and make sure it has flow. Look at the colours in the sky - they are often mainly greys unless it is a clear blue summer day.

When the paint has dried, go outside and watch the bird flights. When you see a bird flying overhead, follow its path with your eyes, while drawing a line with your hand. Use charcoal or a charcoal pencil for this task and remember to use a dynamic line (with variations of light and dark in it).

If you would like to do more on this image, get some heavier, smaller paper and using a photograph or stuffed bird for inspiration, make an accurate copy of a bird. Cut out and paste into the sky drawing.

Detail from Bird Drawing by Year 6 pupils 2013



Grey seals

The island is one of the best places in Gwynedd to see grey seals. In mid-summer a large number of them can be seen, sunbathing on the rocks or bobbing in the sea, and around seventy pups are born in the autumn. The seal's sharp teeth and strong jaws are perfect for breaking the shells of lobsters and crabs, which live in the waters.



Two species of seal are resident and breed in Britain - common seals, also known as harbour seals and grey seals, or Atlantic grey seals.

Grey seals are only found in the north Atlantic, the Baltic Sea and the Barents Sea. They are one of the rarer seal species with a world population of about 350,000 – 400,000. About 40% of the seal population lives in the UK and about 90% of these live in Scotland.

Seals live and breed on:

- A wild and remote coastline, which provides safe places to haul ashore and to breed.
- A rich foraging ground

Atlantic grey seals can dive down to 250m, but do not usually need to go as deep as this. They eat sand-eels, flatfish, white fish, cephalopods (mainly octopus) and members of the herring family (herring and sprats).

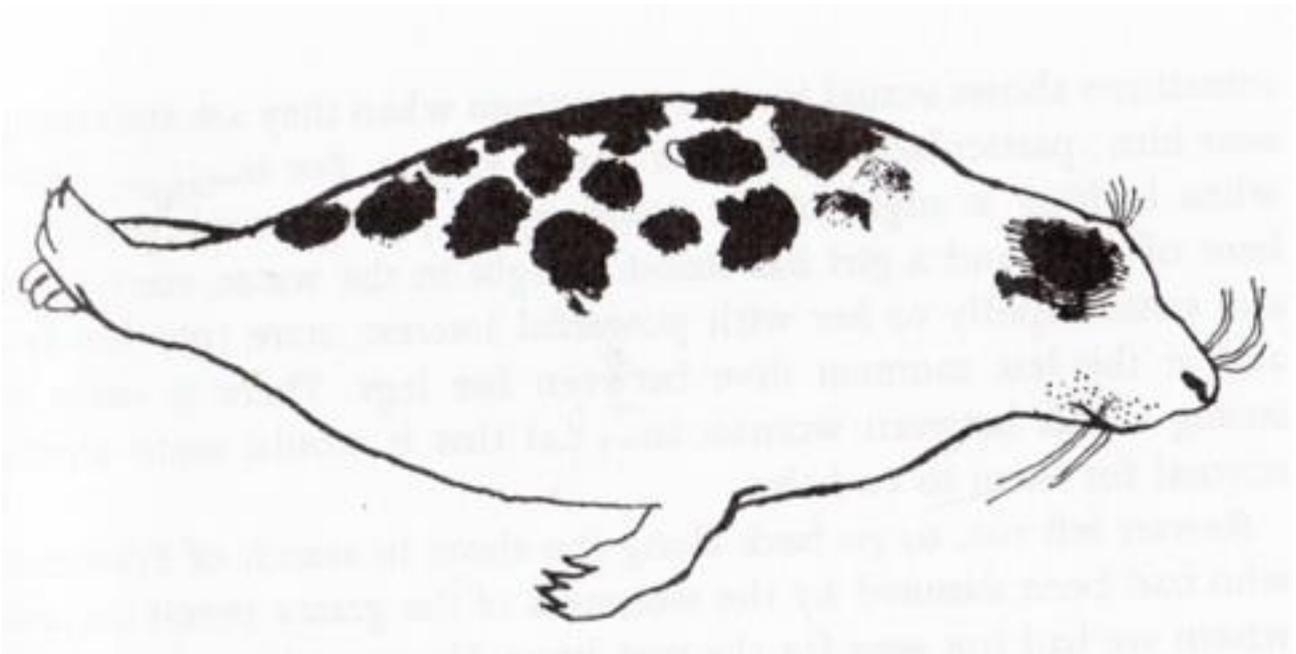




Adaptations to life in the water

Seals have:

- Large lungs to enable them to exhale large amounts of carbon dioxide and inhale oxygen quickly and efficiently when they surface between dives.
- Large blood volume in relation to their body size.
- A different oxygen-carrying pigment, myoglobin, in their muscles that can carry 40% more oxygen than haemoglobin, allowing even more oxygen to be stored in the muscle tissue.
- The ability to restrict blood flow to the vital organs when diving, reducing their heartbeat to only a few beats per minute.
- Very large eyes to cope with the reduced light underwater.
- Sensitive whiskers to detect slight changes in the water movements, made by swimming fish.
- Efficient kidneys that allow them to drink sea water.
- A well adapted system to conserve body heat when swimming in cold water. However, on hot days they can easily overheat, so they move into the water to cool off.



Seal from Tide-race, p 37

TASK

Drawing:

Group or individual piece.

Put the drawing of a seal by Brenda Chamberlain on an OHP (overhead projector) or project onto a wall from a laptop. Draw into the projection, tracing her drawing very carefully. Make several drawings in this way, altering the size of the projection each time and trying out different drawing materials each time. Now cut around the outlines of the seals and arrange the drawings as if you are looking at a colony of seals.

If it is possible, go down to the beach and draw the sea. Look at the colours, the movements, the shapes it makes. Use line to try and follow the shapes. Use watercolours or pastels to try and capture the colours. Take photos to remind you.

(If it is not possible to go out, project a video of the sea and draw from watching that.)

Back in the classroom, take large pieces of paper or card and make some waves. Draw onto them with lines of the sea's movement, and tones of the sea's colour.

Now place the sea waves in and around your seal colony. Photograph different options.

Drawing:

Group or individual piece.

Find a video of seals and project onto a large piece of paper on the wall. Encourage the students to draw into the video, tracing the shapes of the seals as they move. The image will be very 'abstract' - it won't look like a seal, because they are following the movement. The lines should be made with charcoal. Before drawing make a 'volume' mark on a piece of paper.

Writing:

Complete these descriptions of watching the seals on Bardsey:

Through a narrow fissure we saw the slimy ledges on which seals lie up, and the deep pool fed from the sea through a narrow-necked entrance. A seal cow was lying on her back in the gloom of the cavern. Her head was out of the water. She waved her flippers, bidding us to come down to her. They were like ...

Something barked with a deep voice. It was the bull seal ... One moment he is in the stillness of the cavern; the next, he is in that boiling emerald sea. His nose is nobly aquiline, his heavy lids droop, hooding the eyes. He ...

Flora and fauna on Bardsey

TASK

Find out what these creatures and plants are and write their name near the image.







Living on Bardsey

The weather is very changeable on Bardsey - one day it can be blue skies, the next a raging storm.

TASK

Writing/discussion/research/drama

Imagine you are about to leave the island. However, a storm blows up overnight and you cannot leave the island until the storm passes. This could be days or even weeks.

You only brought enough food with you for your stay.

Write about what you do. Here are some pictures to help you.



Remember

There is no electricity or public telephone and water comes from a well on the mountainside.

The nearest shop is on the mainland.



Think about:

What food do you eat?

(seagulls' eggs, fish, milk from the island goats, dried food)

How do you keep warm?

(collect 'broc môr', driftwood on the seashore)

What do you do to provide light when it goes dark?

(candles, paraffin lamps, solar-charged lights,
- go to bed when it gets dark, get up when it's light)

There are no televisions or computers -

how do you entertain yourselves in the evening?

(radio with batteries, card games, reading, painting, writing, visiting neighbours)

Turn the writing into small plays and act them out, and/or make a radio play - record it as a podcast.



Carreg Bach



More tasks about living on the island:

Imagine you have lived on the island all your life in Carreg Bach, and now you are being sent to the mainland to school. You will have to stay with a relative during term time. What happens? How does this make you feel?

Write about:

- Waiting for the boat. Are you alone? With family? With friends?
- Being on the boat. What is the weather like? How do you feel? Which way are you facing? Looking back at the island, or towards the mainland?
- Being at school. Do you miss the island? Or are you enjoying living on the mainland?
- Your first visit back to the island for the holidays.

Draw pictures to go with your writing - or draw first and write later.

Draw:

- The members of your family
- A map of the island and any places that are special to you
- The view from your window on a good day
- The view from your window on a bad day
- The animals, birds and flora on the island
- Make a copy of your favourite Brenda Chamberlain painting

When you make your drawings, think about the materials you use.

Brenda Chamberlain often used pen and ink, charcoal, pencil, chalk and pastels to draw with.

Collect:

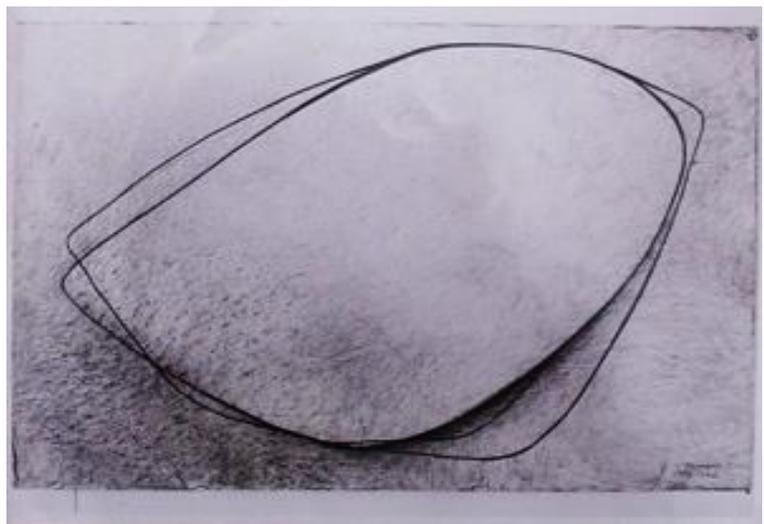
smooth large pebbles from the beach and draw them. Here is a drawing by Brenda Chamberlain to inspire you. Notice how she uses more than one outline. It gives the impression she is turning the pebble over in her hand.

Then, draw one of these on each of the pebbles:

- A seal
- A map of the island
- A bird
- A piece of seaweed
- The name of the house you're living in

Arrange:

the pebbles in different places. Try inside as well as outside. Take digital photos of the drawn pebbles in each environment.



Pebble (Genesis) 1966

King of the Island

From the early 19th century, there are various accounts of a King of Bardsey but no one is sure why a 'monarchy' was established. Some say the tradition was introduced by the then landowner, Lord Newborough and his wife Maria Stella. Records show that the first king died in 1826 but his name is unknown. In that same year, John Williams of Cristin Uchaf was crowned king and reigned from 1826 to 1841 and later in that century, his son, John Williams II became king. It is said that each king was crowned while standing on a chair and holding a snuff box. The tin crown which is said to be made by one of the lighthouse keepers is now kept in the museum at Bangor.

The last king of Bardsey was Love Pritchard of Tŷ Pellaf who died in 1926. He was the most well-known king as his photograph was printed on postcards and in newspaper articles.

In her book *Tide-race*, Brenda Chamberlain imagines meeting the king on her arrival at the island harbour.

At last, the high land fell away and we were in the anchorage. Seated four-square on the middle of the beach was an ancient man with a Neptune beard and flowing hair. He had a light metal crown chased with a design of seahorses and shells, worn slightly sideways on his head, and in his crablike fingers he held a plug of twist from which he was cutting thin wafers of tobacco. By his side lay an empty rum bottle. He was gross with majesty ... he reeked of fish and salt and tarry ropes.

Tide-race p 21



The Crown is kept in Oriel Gwynedd (Museum and Art Gallery), Bangor.

TASK

Writing

Imagine you have just been made King or Queen of the Island. How will you rule? How will you help your people? What sort of a ruler will you be?

Discussion

Why does an island need a King or Queen?

How is the island ruler different from Queen Elizabeth II?

Have a debate - one side wants a ruler, the other side doesn't.

Take a vote. Who has won?

Drawing and making

Design your own crown. Begin by doing some research into crowns. A good place to start is to look at all the crowns made for the National Eisteddfod of Wales. Each year a new artist is commissioned to make the crown. The Bardsey crown is a simple affair made of tin and seashells, string and gold paint. In contrast, the 2013 crown by Andrew Coomber for the National Eisteddfod was made from silver, enamel and velvet.

When your design is complete, make it out of whatever materials you like.

Drama

It is Coronation Day on the island. Set up everything you need for a coronation and a celebration.



National Eisteddfod of Wales Crown 2013 made by silversmith Andrew Coomber

A Sacred History

Bardsey has been a place of pilgrimage since the early years of Christianity, but there are signs of settlements on the island that date from earlier periods. The reference to the island as the burial place of twenty thousand 'saints' dates from the early middle ages, when three pilgrimages to Bardsey were said to equal one to Rome. This is when Bardsey became a focal point for the Celtic Christian Church, attracting devout monks. It is believed that St Cadfan began building a monastery on the island in the sixth century.

The Abbey ruins are all that is left of the thirteenth century Augustinian Abbey of St Mary's, which was in use until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1537. Bardsey was then left to the pirates and marauders until the establishment of a farming and fishing community in the mid-eighteenth century.

With her black bulk behind, the towing boat's crew might be justified in doing what men did long ago on their way across these waters. Row a little, ship oars, remove hats, pray ardently: 'O God, grant that we come in safety.' And bend again to the blades, repeating the formula until landfall was made.

From Tide-race, p 172

TASK

Research, writing and poetry - group

- Plot the pilgrims' route down the Llŷn Peninsula to Aberdaron on a map. How far is it?
- Many people were ill and went to Bardsey for healing. Write about being a pilgrim with an illness. What is it like to travel in bare feet, sleeping rough and eating only when food is offered to you from charitable people who live on the pilgrims' way? What is it like to be on the boat, sailing across such a dangerous and often choppy stretch of the sea?
- Draw around your feet and then write a poem inside the outline - a poem can also be a prayer. What would you like to say?
- Now put all the poem/prayer feet on the floor, marking out the main landmarks on the pilgrimage. If you can, add a night light candle to each footstep and light it. Perhaps make a paper boat to represent the crossing.
- Stand next to a footstep that is not your own, and one by one, read out the poem. You might like to play some sacred music in the background.

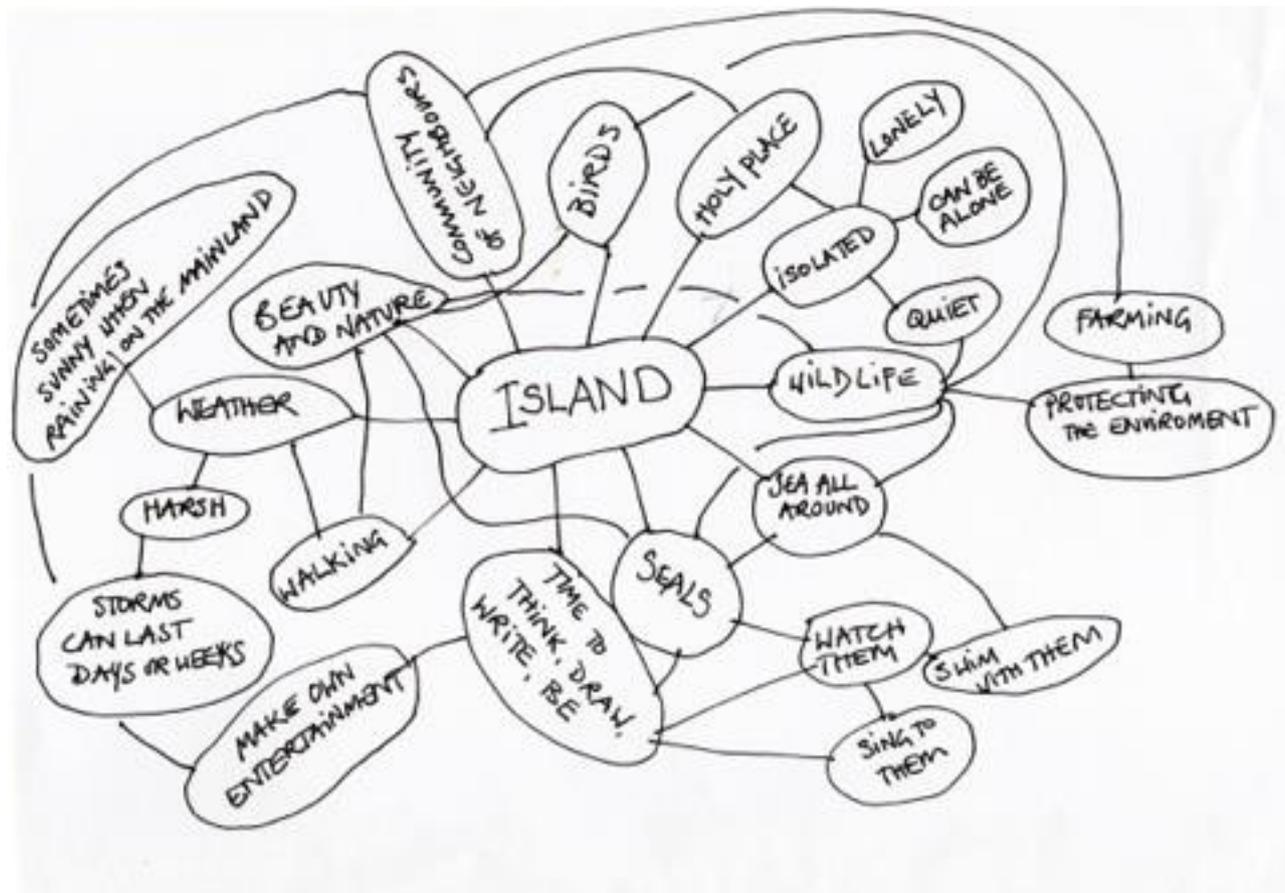
Drawing and painting - group

- On a large piece of paper on the floor, paint your feet and walk around the page. As you walk, think about your pilgrimage prayer poem. Walk until the paint dries on your feet. Now leave the image and wash your feet.
- Draw the main landmarks of your pilgrimage on the page. It is up to you how you draw them - you can draw as if you are looking at them, or you can do a birds'-eye view, as if you are looking down on them. Research different types of map drawing for inspiration.
- Now lie down and draw around yourself. Imagine that you died on the island. However, because you died on a pilgrimage, you are now a saint. Draw yourself as a saint. You may like to use mud to show that you are underground.

Additional Activities

Mind Maps

Mind maps record and document thinking as a visual map of connections. Beginning with the theme in the middle, encourage the pupils to add to, extend and notice connections. Mind maps can be made using words or drawings, or words and drawings.



Suggested mind map themes:

- Island
- Journey
- Adventure
- Travel
- Wildlife
- North and south
- Friendship
- Portrait
- Writing
- Drawing and painting

Use the mind maps to inspire

Poetry

Songs

Stories

Collages

Walking and observing

Go for a walk and make a note of everything you see, everyone you talk to, what you talk about, the colours, the season; notice details and then think about the whole scene. Make notes with words and with drawings.

Back in the classroom, put all this information onto one A3/A2 size page. Make the page make sense. The page should feel like the experience you had of the walk.

This can be done individually or in small groups.

Cartography

Map making. Draw a map of Bardsey. Begin on graph paper and measure it carefully. Plot all the places on the map. You can make up your own symbols for things, but you must include a key. If you want to make the map look old you can stain it with cold tea.

You could also find out how far you live from each place on Bardsey.

Model making

Make a 3D model of Bardsey. Use papier mâché and include as much detail as you can. You can even make the animals and wildlife. Then you can make a short film by videoing the model and using your writing for a voice-over.

Or, you can photograph the model, then on the computer layer a poem over the image and print.

Search

There are many useful websites you can use to research Bardsey and Brenda Chamberlain. These include:

<http://www.bardsey.org/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/artists/brendachamberlain>

<http://www.bbfo.org.uk/theisland/island.html>

<http://quaker-animals.co.uk/2013/07/seals-on-bardsey/>

<http://bbfo.blogspot.co.uk/>

<http://bbfo.blogspot.co.uk/p/adopt-manxy.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brenda_Chamberlain_%28artist%29

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/arts/sites/brenda-chamberlain/>

<http://www.parthianbooks.com/content/brenda-chamberlain-artist-writer>

<http://thelibraryofwales.com/node/53>

<http://www.gwales.com/goto/biblio/en/9781906998233/SPY09>

<http://readingwales.wordpress.com/2013/11/13/word-and-image-the-art-of-brenda-chamberlain/>

Other artists and writers inspired by Bardsey include:

Christine Evans

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christine_Evans_%28poet%29

<http://www.literaturewales.org/writers-of-wales/i/130004/>

http://www.bardsey.org/english/the_island/arts.htm

Carole Shearman

http://www.bardsey.org/english/the_island/arts.htm

Trudi Entwistle

<http://www.trudientwistle.com/>

Clare Barber

http://www.bardsey.org/english/the_island/arts.htm

Ben Stammers

<http://events.cat.org.uk/index.php/people/contributors/45-ben-stammers>

Kim Atkinson

<http://www.artwales.com/artists-detail-mtg-en.php?artistID=185>

http://www.arcadja.com/auctions/en/atkinson_kim/artist/321350/

Maria Hayes

<http://www.mariahayes.info/>

Dilys Cadwaladr

Further Reading

Chamberlain, Brenda Tide-race (London: Hodder & Stoughton) 1962

Evans, Christine Bardsey (Llandysul: Gomer) 2008

Jennie Jones Tomos the Islandman/ Tomos o Enlli (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch) 1964/1999

Jones, Peter Hope The Natural History of Bardsey (Cardiff: National Museum Wales) 1988

Piercy, Jill Brenda Chamberlain, Artist and Writer (Cardigan: Parthian) 2013

Seals Scottish Natural Heritage 2007

Thomson, David The People of the Sea (Edinburgh: Canongate) 1954

Williamson, Duncan Land of the Seal People (Edinburgh: Birlinn) 2010

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Bardsey Island Trust for information about the island and to the Estate of Brenda Chamberlain for permission to reproduce the work of Brenda Chamberlain.

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The following Illustrations were reproduced with kind permission of:

Self-portrait on Carnedd Dafydd, National Museum Wales

The Doves, Oriol Gwynedd, Gwynedd Museum & Art Gallery, Bangor

Photos of the mural restoration, Peter Lockyer

Other photos were taken by Maria Hayes on Bardsey

Map of Bardsey, p 19, by Douglas B Hague, Mrs Joan Hague



Drawing on end page from Tide-race p 89