

Outreach visit to the centre

October 2023

Homely Learning visit

by Ian Mackey – ODA Trustee and Outreach officer)

In October 2023 we had a visit to the Offa's Dyke Centre from **Homely Learning**. Emma Brown got in touch (a few times because the visit was important part of their curriculum) and we arranged a date and time. What was lovely is that she was determined the visit would be to the centre to enjoy the landscape, ambiance and the displays.

The weather had not been all that good with the recent storm Babet, and the little ones had to come from Ty Mawr, Llangorse tucked into the north of Bannau Brycheiniog (*ban-aye bruch-ay-nee-og*)– a beautiful landscape, so it was quite a journey and commitment by the school – thank you to them.

Overview

I met the group at the centre – kindly opened by **Dave McGlade** .

Their visit was on a day after the last of storm Babet so they had had some heavy rainfall though luckily it was well behaved for the day.

It was a small group of pupils accompanied by 3 adults and, apparently, some pupils had levels of learning difficulty but you couldn't tell as they were polite, cheery, engaged, fun and enthusiastic as well as incredibly intelligently switched on. I had to be careful what I talked about because they had a good understanding of the Welsh – Anglo-Saxon history and would ask great questions as well as answering some tricky ones.

The session started at 10:30 and ended at 2:00pm with a few small comfort breaks and a post-lunch play on the swings ...no, not me. Luckily the weather had turned bright and sunny by then and we had taken a wander down to the Dyke section where the wonderful Anglo-Welsh bridge is.

The planned itinerary

Well, it was a good idea at the time and we got a lot done and it was good fun for all of us – but as with so many Outreach visits, some things were adapted on-the-fly because the youngsters were in-the-zone and asked interesting questions.

(a)=activity

10:30: Meet and greet and comfort break

10:45-11:15: Talk about King Offa of the Mercians and his affect (with PowerPoint slides)

11:15-12:15: (a) Visit the dyke monument and the Wales-England 'bridge'

12:15-12:40: A few more slides and discussing female warrior and Welsh strength in facing them off. Describe the impact of Æheflæd – female warrior who supported her brother who was king.

(Break for lunch around 12:30 for 30 minutes)

13:00-13:50: Design a coin (a). Discuss why coins are designed the way they are

Rehearse and record introductions and what they found out through the day (you can hear the recordings on the website)

13:50-14:00: What are these? (a) A discussion about the real archaeological finds we brought.

The seat of power...



A visit to the Dyke and the Anglo-Celtic border



...save me from these rampaging Celts

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...though this one is not so sure which way to go.

It was a lovely day all round, and as they left the youngsters were full of smiles and waves.

Emma and I even discussed a visit down to Ty Mawr (“the big house”) with a local historian to investigate the archaeology and heritage in their immediate neighbourhood. I’ll keep you updated on that either in the newsletter or the Podcast.



*"Get **Offa** my land ..."*

They even got to meet **ArchaeoDog** ("Hamish") showing the centre is dog-friendly for friendly-dogs.

For more information on an Outreach visit, contact outreach@offasdyke.org.uk; visit the website <https://digitalskills.ittutor.training/oda/> or get in touch with the Offa's Dyke Association

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