
Books about Ynys Enlli - Bardsey

Martin Richards. October 2019.

An annotated list of all the books that I know which in some way relate to Bardsey - fiction, nonfiction, poetry and prose are all included.

Anon. 1934. *The Book of Bardsey.* Ynys Enlli. W. Gwenlyn Evans & son. Caernarvon.

An informative illustrated guide book for the island and its history which includes O.V. Aplin's 1901 account of the birds. It notes that the name Bardsey is Scandinavian and says that there is another Bardsey in Yorkshire. It gives information about the fisheries of Bardsey providing figures for the numbers of crabs and lobsters sent away – over £200 worth in 1932 but only half that the following year. It promotes Bardsey as a health resort where the inhabitants are well known for their hospitality, with a weekly motor boat service, w p, of course. The island was receiving an increasing number of tourists in the 1930s.

Ronald. M Lockley. 1938. *I Know an Island.* Harrap. London.

Lockley (1913 – 2000) visited for 3 weeks in the winter of 1934. He found his host at Cristin, John Evans, content with his life of farming and fishing and the modest rents charged by the Newborough estate. As well as ringing birds at roosts and at the lighthouse, Lockley spent time trying to rid the island of its sparrow population. The sparrows had annoyed Lockley by their early morning chirping and consuming the food he had put out to attract other birds. Lockley was then an islander from Skokholm, where he had established the first bird observatory in Wales. He had come to Enlli to discover more about the lives of other Welsh islanders and see if they, like him, also suffer from what he called his 'island complex'. Here he writes about that first visit. Much later, in 1953, he was involved with others, including Bill Condry, Cecily Williams- Ellis and Cecil Lambourne, in founding the Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory.

1945. *Islands Round Britain.* Collins.

In the wartime Britain in Pictures series, includes Bardsey.

1957. *In Praise of Islands. An Anthology for Friends.* Fredrick Muller.

The romance and attractions of islands, including Bardsey.

Brenda Chamberlain (1912 – 1971), artist, poet and writer.

1958. *The Green Heart,* Oxford University Press. A book of poems.

Some of these poems were also published as illustrated broadsheets printed by Jonah Jones at the Cidron Press. I have one example. *The Green Heart – 1V.* On the last night of our

pilgrimage. This Brenda used as a birthday card for Evelyn when we were staying with her at Carreg Fawr for the summer of 1960.

1962. Tide – Race. Hodder and Stoughton. London.

This is Brenda's Bardsey book; a blend of fact and fiction richly illustrated with her drawings and a few paintings. "You who are in the traffic of the world; can you guess the thoughts of an islander?" In draft it was titled Silkie and Tide-Race. While critics generally liked the book, its reception on the island was more mixed. Brenda, together with Jean Van der Byl, moved to Enlli in 1947, living at Carreg Fawr. She was the gold medal winner for fine art at the 1951 and 1953 National Eisteddfod. Carreg Bach was also included in the lease for Carreg Fawr and Brenda used it as a workroom. (I sublet it from her in her latter years on the island.) Brenda left the island in 1964 and subsequently spent 6 years on the Greek island of Hydra, described in her, A Rope of Vines. Parthian, 1965. She later returned to North Wales where she died in 1971.

1969. Poems with Drawings. Enitharmon Press.

1970. Alun Lewis & the Making of the Caseg Broadsheets. Enitharmon Press.

1973. Brenda Chamberlain. A memorial exhibition catalogue. National Museums of Wales / Welsh Arts Council.

There is a biography and some analysis and her writing.

Jill Piercy. 2013. Brenda Chamberlain. Artist and Writer. Parthian.

Kate Holman. 1997. Brenda Chamberlain. University of Wales Press.

2007. Brenda Chamberlain. Her people in paintings, drawings and Caseg Press prints. Brochure to accompany the exhibition at the Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery, Bangor.

Donald Moore. (ed). 1988. Island Artist / Arlunydd Ynysoedd. An illustrated catalogue for an exhibition at the Mostyn Art Gallery, Llandudno of Brenda Chamberlain's paintings.

Robert Gerallt Jones (1934 – 1991) was one of the most prolific of Welsh authors of the post – war period, excelling as a poet and prose writer.

1976. Bardsey. A fortnight's journal, translated from the original Welsh by the author. Prints by Nicholas Parry. Made at the Tern Press by Nicholas and Mary Parry. A limited edition of 200 signed copies.

H.D. Williams. 1979 Ynys Enlli. Gwasg ty ar y Graig.

1982. Across the Bardsey Sound. Published by the author.

Christine Evans. 1983. Looking Inland.

1983. Falling Back.

1986. Cometary Phrases. (Welsh book of the year)

1995. Island of Dark Horses.

2004. Selected Poems. (Roland Makias Prize).

2006. Growth Rings. All of these books of poetry are published by Seren.

2006. Burning the Candle, 2006.Gomer.

2008. Bardsey. Essays by Christine Evans and photos by Wolf Marloh. Gomer.

Christine Evans, the poet of Enlli, moved to Pwllheli in 1967, where her father and grandmother were brought up, to work as a teacher. Later she married into an Enlli farming and fishing family. She now divides her year between Enlli and Uwchmynydd.

John Fuller. (English poet and author. b 1937). 1983.Flying to Nowhere. A Tale. Salamander Press/ Penguin Books. London. An historical fantasy. Nominated for the Booker Prize.

Peter Roberts. 1985. The Birds of Bardsey. Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory.

Peter Roberts was warden of the BBFO from 1976 to 1982.

Peter Hope Jones.1985. Bardsey: Its history and wildlife. Bardsey Island Trust/ Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory.

1987. Enlli Ddoe a Heddiw. / Bardsey Past and Present. Gwynedd Archive Service.

A collection of nineteenth century and contemporary photos of Enlli and its community.

1988. The Natural History of Bardsey. National Museum of Wales. Cardiff.

2000. Peter Hope Jones & R.S. Thomas. Between Sea & Sky. Images of Bardsey. Gomer.

Peter, who has long been involved in Enlli affairs and management is among the finest photographers of island. Here his images are married with words from his good friend **R.S. Thomas.**

2008. Beauty and Spirit at Bardsey. Published by the author.

In 2013 Peter was given a lifetime achievement award by the Welsh Ornithological Society.

R.S.Thomas. 1975.Laboratories of the Spirit. Macmillan.

1985. ABC Neb. Gwasg Gwynedd.

1997. Autobiographies. Phoenix.

1995. No Truce with the Furies. Bloodaxe Books.

R.S.Thomas (1918-2000) was vicar at St Hywyn's Church in Aberdaron; a priest, poet and naturalist. He was much engaged with Enlli and he was first chair of the Bardsey Island Trust Council. He produced almost 40 books, largely poetry, some about Enlli. The above are but a very brief selection. There are biographies, eg.

Justin Wintle. 1996. Furious Interiors: Wales, R.S.Thomas and God. Flamingo.

B.Rogers. 2006. The Man Who Went West: The Life of R.S.Thomas. Aurum.

Fflur Dafydd. 2008. Twenty Thousand Saints. Alcemi.

This prose medal winner at the Eisteddfod's first novel in English. A black comedy set on Enlli, involving the annual conferences of hermits in a hot August week when the islanders were anything but saintly. Fflur was awarded a writers' residency on the island by the Bardsey Island Trust.

There are other examples of Enlli crime fiction:

James Rollins. 2009. The Doomsday Key: a SIGMA Force Novel. William Morrow.

Mark Billingham. 2014. The Bones Beneath. A Tom Thorne Novel. Little Brown Book. Super sleuth, inspector Tom Thorne, escorts a convicted serial killer to Bardsey.

Tania Martin. 1994. Rockets to the Rescue. Pont Books.

Teen fiction set on an island, Craig yr Ynys, which has more than a passing resemblance to Enlli.

Mary Chitty, also known as Anna Mary Kitson Clark (1905-2005). 1992/2000. The monks on Ynys Enlli. Part One. C.500 AD to 1252 AD. Part Two. 1252 AD to 1537 AD. Published by the author

Bessie Williams. 1992. O Enlli i Gwenlli. Privately printed.

Bessie Williams. 1996. Twenty – six Years on Bardsey. Privately printed. A translation by Rosemary Gaches of the Welsh edition. Bessie's mother was born near Aberdaron in 1905 and later spent 26 years living at Carreg Fawr. Here Bessie puts together what she was told about her mother's life on Enlli.

R. Gerallt Jones and Christopher J. Arnold. (gol). 1996. Enlli. Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru. Caerdydd. *The* book about Enlli, its people and buildings etc with contributions from the editors, Kim Alkinson, Richard Hartnup, Elis Gwyn Jones, Lewis Lloyd, Brynley F. Jones, Mick Sharp, and Mona William. (Sadly, as yet, no published translation for English readers)

Jennie Jones. 1999. Tomos the Islandman. / Tomos o Enlli. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch. (First edition in Welsh, 1964). A man at 60 relates the story of his life on Enlli around the turn of the nineteenth century. Illustrations by Kim Atkinson.

David Hart. 2002. Crag Inspector. A Poem of Bardsey Island. Five Seasons Press.

Jonathan M. Wooding (ed) 2010. Solitaries, Pastors and 20,000 Saints: Studies in the Religious History of Bardsey Island (Ynys Enlli). Trivium. Volume 39. University of Wales, Lampeter.

Joan James. 2015. A Bird Observatory is Born. The Edited Diaries of the Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory 1953 to 1955. Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory.

Marian Delyth. 2015. Enlli. Tu Hwnt i'r Swnt. Carreg Gwalch. A photographers essay about the island and some of its people.

Myrddin ap Dafydd.(gol). 2015. Pobol Enlli. Straeon o'r ynys yn yr ugeinfed ganrif. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch. A collection of ten stories and articles presenting personal recollections of life on Enlli and changes to their lives through the 20th century.

(Sadly no translation for English readers.)

William Condry 1995. Wildlife, My Life. Gomer.

Bill Condry (1918- 1998) was a great friend of Bardsey and here he tell the story of the founding of the Bird and Field Observatory, as he looks back over his life as a naturalist and author in Wales. It was Bill who insisted it should a bird *and field* observatory. His foresight has been rewarded by work on many aspects of the fauna and flora of the island.

W.Bingley. 1814. North Wales, delineated from two excursions. Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown.

Bingley (1774-1823) was thwarted in his attempt to reach the island by lack wind. But he includes an account of the island provided by the vicar of Aberdaron, Rev. Mr. Jones. This includes a description of 'the intrepid inhabitants [who] employ themselves in collecting the eggs of sea-fowl. This is usually done bare footed, to prevent them from slipping from heights whence they must be dashed to pieces; and their concern for their safety ,while seizing these egg is infinitely less than that of the beholder, sitting securely in the boat below'.

Carol Gilligan. 2008. Kyra. A novel. Random House. A first novel about love from the well-known US psychologist in which her protagonists stay at Nant, where Carol herself had stayed a few years earlier.

Jean Napier. 2018. Bardsey Now and Then. Carreg Gwalch.

A well-known local photographer who was invited by the Trust to film on the island.

Douglas B. Hague.1994. Lighthouses of Wales. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

Douglas B. Hague and Rosemary Christie. 1975. Lighthouses: their architecture, history and archaeology. Gomer.

I include these books as the Bardsey lighthouse is described, and because they are by Bardsey's own industrial archaeologist extraordinaire and artist, Douglas Hague (1917 – 1990) - and because the later volume includes his obituary. Among his many works on Enlli, Douglas was responsible for restoration of the Abbey tower which he embellished with a beautiful carved slate cross on the alter table and a cement sand castle on its top. The latter serves as a fitting memorial to Douglas, typical of his quirky humour

Susan Cowdy. 1961. Bardsey Island and its Bird Observatory. Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory.

Susan (1914-1996) first came to Bardsey as a volunteer cook at Cristin in 1957. Many years later she played a central role in raising the money to purchase the island and the setting up of the Bardsey Island Trust.

Susan Cowdy and Richard Rolfe 1965. Bardsey Island and its Bird Observatory. Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory.

Bardsey Trust's Interpretation and Education Committee. 2010. Ynys Enlli – EL Hanes a’L Bywyd Gwyllt / Bardsey – Its History and wildlife. Cyoeddwyd gan Ymddiriedolaeth Ynys Enlli Cyf / Bardsey Island Trust.

The Bardsey Island Trust (1993) produced a series of illustrated leaflets about the island. I cite these 4 examples here. Introducing Bardsey. Bardsey a Spiritual Retreat. Under Bardsey: The Island's Geology. Bardsey Buildings.

Jamie Owen. 2002. Magic Islands. Gomer. A sea journey around Wales, includes Bardsey.

Pierce T. Jones and J. Beverley (eds). 1972. Bardsey. A Study in Monastic Origins. University of Wales Press.

Enid Roberts (1938-2010). 2008/2012. A’u Brud ar Ynys Enlli. / Bardsey Bound: Pilgrim Routes to Wales’ Holy Island. Gwasg Y Lolfa.

Virginia Bjertnes. 2010. Ynys Enlli: Ce Qui Se Veut. Ce Qui Est Montre: Construction D’Un Lieu A Des Fins de Transmission de Valeurs. Editions Universitaires Europeennes.

Mike Endicott.2009. Pilgrimage: Reflections on Healing from Bardsey Island. Terra Nova Publications.

Gwlym Davies. 2003. Shades from the Sky North Wales. Vol.1. Steam Publications. Aerial photos, including Bardsey.

Richard Lovett. 1920. Welsh Pictures drawn with Pen and Pencil. Religious Tract Society.

Robert Greenhalf. 1999. Towards the Sea. Pica Press.

The well-known bird artist's book includes a visit to Bardsey.

C.Matley. 1913. The Geology of Bardsey Island. Offprint from the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society, Volume 13.

Geology of the Country around Aberdaron (including Bardsey). 1993. **HMSO**

Manfred Bockl. 2006. Dis Bischofin von Rom: Romman. Berlin Aufbau Taschenbuch- Vert. A novel set on fourth century Enlli. The story of a princess who tried to reconcile the druids and Christians

Archaeologica Cambrensis. Journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Association. 2001. Includes a report of the excavation of Ty Newydd, Ynys Enlli.

Peter Lindsey. 2010. Visiting Welsh Islands. Anglesey. Bardsey Island. Derbyshire Horizon Press.

Peter Cookson (ed) 1982. The Observer's Island Britain.

Includes Christopher Wordsworth on Bardsey. One of the more informative of the many books on British islands.

M. Dinorben Griffiths. 1899. My Visit to the Island of the Dead. Not a book but pages cut from World Wide Magazine, 1899. The account of Bardsey includes photos of King Williams 2nd of Enlli and the interior of his 'palace', which was Carreg Bach.

A.M Allchin. 1998. Resurrection's Children – Explaining the Way Towards God. Canterbury Press.

1991. Enlli. Cyrchfa i bererinion.

2014. Bardsey. A Place of Pilgrimage. (Third edition)

'**Donald**' **Allchin** (1930- 2010), sometime canon at Canterbury, was devoted to Bardsey and produced and published booklets about the island.

Jon Gower (Ed). 1998. A Year in a Small Country. Gomer.

Includes Christine Evans on holy island of Bardsey.

Roger Redfern. 1968. Rambles in North Wales. Hale. Includes Bardsey. Roger Redfern, writer and teacher (1934- 2011) who, like Bill Condry, contributed country diaries to the Guardian.

Chris Green. 2018. The Swinging Pendulum of the Tide. A story of spiritual and sexual reawakening. Youcaxton publications. A first novel from a sometime pilgrim to Enlli who has worked in various cultural industries. The story of an encounter on Enlli of a clergyman with doubts with an Authurian scholar seeking to uncover the truth behind Bardsey's claim to be Authur's Avalon. Together they find drama on the island. Helpfully with a further reading list of books about Wales, the Celts, Authurian Bardsey, Merlin, the history of the Britains and much more.

I will conclude my bibliography with two periodicals.

The **Bardsey Trust's** Year Book. Across the Sound / Dros y Don. The 2018 issue is the 5th in the series. Full of articles about the island, the doings of the Trust etc. This goes out to all Trust members and is often on sale on the island. The 2019 bumper issue celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Bardsey Island Trust.

Bardsey's Wildlife. This is the richly illustrated annual report of the Bardsey Bird Observatory with articles on birds but also many other aspects of the wild life of the island. This goes to the Friends of Bardsey, the membership organisation for the **Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory**. bbfo.org.uk

I am sure I will have omitted some Enlli books from this list. Please let me know if you are aware of any not included.

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