

# Writing Notes

“HERE’S TO A GREAT 2021 - STAY POSITIVE”

SURVIVING COVID19, TRAVEL MEMORIES, AND REFLECTIONS



## Surviving COVID19

### Online & Distance Learning

Let’s face it, we’re all weary of the impact of COVID19. But apparently, 80% of people in UK have studied an online or distance learning course in 2020, so why not see what is on offer from Aberystwyth University?

## Travel memories

### Winetasting in Bordeaux with SmoothRed

As all our trips have been cancelled this year, and February isn’t looking hopeful either, here are memories of our trip to Bordeaux to inspire you (and me!) for 2021.

## Reflections on 2020

2020 has been tough for everyone but looking back, there have been some **interesting new activities** to try out and still some more to come in 2021. With lockdown restrictions, I signed up for lots of short courses, so hope you will try some new ones too.



## MEANDER THROUGH WALES BY BUS, TRAIN OR ON FOOT

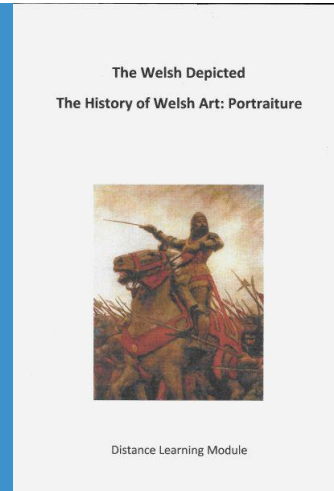
A new series of E-Books is planned for beginning of 2021 featuring stories and information about our travels around Wales by public transport.

Too much for one book, it will be 4 smaller editions to cover the whole of North and South Wales - lots of illustrations too!

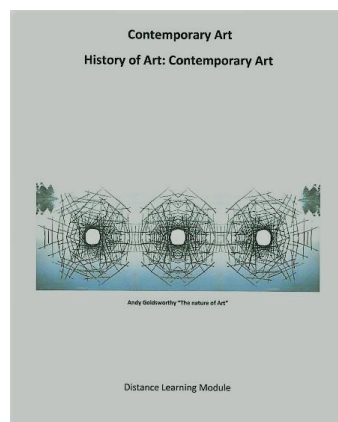
## Online and distance learning

As you will know by now, I am a fan of distance learning since I completed the National Extension College A Level English Literature course in the 1970s. It was a great course that taught me how to study and carry out research, so it has underpinned all the courses I have written or tutored since then. A new article about my experience with them is due to appear on NEC site in the New Year.

Here's what to look for at Aberystwyth University Online Shop



## Lifelong Learning modules with Aberystwyth University



We are now more than halfway through this short 10-Credit module on Contemporary Art, so students are submitting their first piece of work on an artist/art movement of their choice.

Some excellent work so far, and Paul Klee is proving to be a fascinating subject to study in a bit more depth. Keeping a Learning Journal is also a great way to see how far you have progressed through the course.

The final study for the module, due around Easter 2021, is the work of any artist the student fancies, so it gives everyone a choice of contemporary artist to study more closely.

## The Online Shop is now open to book your course!

The next module starts in February 2021 so you can sign up for it any time now.

“**The Welsh Depicted**” is also a 10-credit module, and of course you do not need to live in Wales to study as it is fully distance learning.

We look at the way the Welsh have been depicted over the centuries, as paintings, sculptures, or photographs.

We certainly have some fascinating characters to study, including **Miss Vulcana** the 19<sup>th</sup> century women’s weight-lifting champion from Abergavenny, and **Christmas Evans** the one-eyed preacher!

**Lots of other subjects to choose from so see more details at**

<https://shop.aber.ac.uk/short-courses/dysgu-gydol-oes-lifelong-learning>

## Travel Memories - Winetasting in Bordeaux with SmoothRed

SmoothRed's Bordeaux Wine Experience certainly lives up to expectations. At first glance, it seems expensive - £754 per person for 3 nights B&B in 3\* hotel + two full day tours - but a wine tour locally is around €150 each, and ours included lunch at 'the best restaurant in St-Emilion' plus €20 entry ticket to Cite du Vin so definitely worth the price.



Tour operators **SmoothRed** offer **VIP treatment** for guests with just our group of 4, plus another couple, chauffeured around for the day. First class guides on both days, impressively knowledgeable about the whole wine-making process and the **Medoc region and St Emilion**. Both days start at 9.30am and finish around 5.30pm, covering a lot of the region. Free time for lunch on day 1 alongside the quay at Pauillac, several tastings at different Chateaux, then back to city centre to sample the local cuisine.



Day 2 to St-Emilion follows a similar pattern with 3-course lunch at the exceptional **L'Envers du Décor** plus white and red wine. This is a beautiful Medieval town so a web of narrow uneven-cobbled streets, some very steep, lined with every type of store related to the wine industry.

A late flight home so time to visit **Cite du Vin** (free glass of wine of course!) and learn unusual facts about winemaking since ancient times. If you are fascinated by the how and why of winemaking, rather than just knocking it back, the SmoothRed package is a perfect way to learn more. Thankfully, there isn't a test at the end to check how much you know! Check out [www.smoothred.com](http://www.smoothred.com) for details of their trips - late 2020 or 2021 would be something to look forward to!

# Reflections on 2020 and Aims for 2021

Looking back over this year of restricted travel, and with so many other people working from home, I realised that I have actually learned a lot through some new activities. As I said in Newsletter 3, I decided to submit some pieces as a **Guest Blogger**. I was amazed to see how many there were that were keen to include blogs by guest writers, and reading their criteria for submission, I could see lots that were relevant to me. **Worth a search if you enjoy writing shorter blogs and reviews.**

1. Blogs published include being an introvert is perfect background to become a writer/ a mini memoir on my charity trek across Cuba/ Pros and Cons of working from home/ first chapter of my novel/ part of my Meander Through Wales travel guide/ and guest interviews with NFAA and Silver Travel Advisor.
2. Still putting together a Timetable to regularly submit short pieces to other Blog sites - OK, it should have been done by now but I really am working on it!
3. Looking back over the year, I completed lots of short online courses, mainly just for pleasure.

These include:

- **Travel Journaling and Travel Writing for Publication** through Udemy. Yes, I know I am already a travel writer, but there are always new things you can learn;
- **Architectural painting** with watercolour and pen/ink with Domestika;
- **Creative Portrait Painting** with Domestika - an “interesting” portrait of my husband from this project!
- **Watercolour Illustration with Japanese Influence**. I was excited to find an old children’s story I had written that is perfect to illustrate in this way;

**What of 2021?** Well, I have enrolled on a [Diploma Course on Hieroglyphics](#) as I am finally going to Egypt in September 2021 (hopefully!). I have revised the Wye Valley Way guide and submitting it with Severn Way guide as [Walking Wales and Borders series](#). Sending out the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 chapters of [THE novel](#) on sex trade of young Chinese girls (had a great professional review so here goes..). I might even complete a [Memoir](#) of the marriage from hell - not the current one of course.

**Next time** – send in your aims for 2021 and we can include them in the next Newsletter. Email: [jackiepencoed@gmail.com](mailto:jackiepencoed@gmail.com)