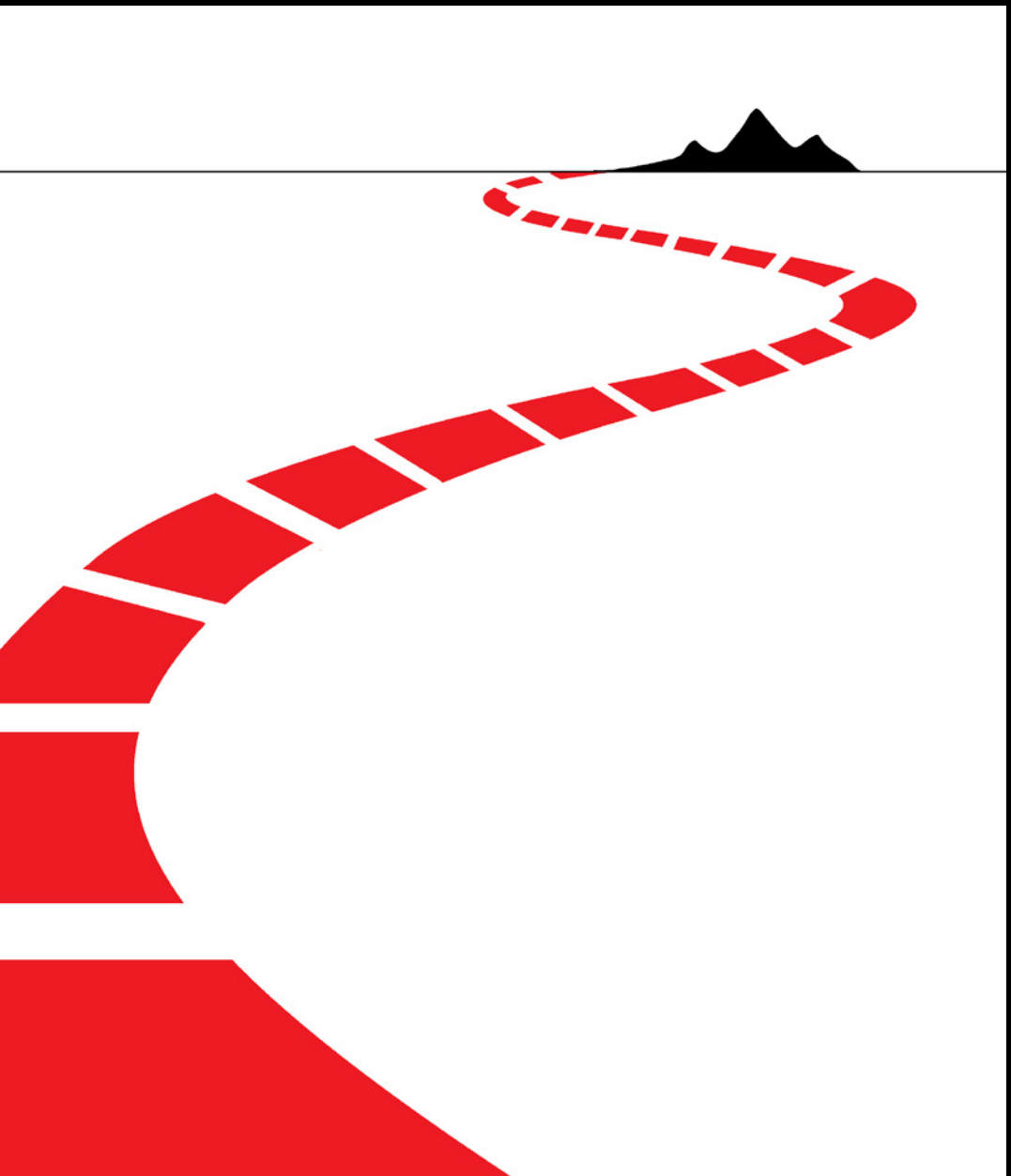
Public Archaeologies of Frontiers and Borderlands

edited by

Kieran Gleave
Howard Williams
Pauline Clarke



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Contributors

Sophie Billingham presented at the Public Archaeology of Frontiers and Borderlands conference in 2019 and subsequently completed her single BA (Hons) in Archaeology from the University of Chester.

Dr Kenneth Brophy is Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Glasgow. His research interests include the contemporary archaeology and relevance of prehistory, and public engagement archaeology. He has published widely on topics related to the Neolithic of Scotland and archaeological theory, and more recently on the use and abuse of prehistory in political discourse. He blogs as the Urban Prehistorian. Email: kenny.brophy@glasgow.ac.uk

Pauline Magdalene Clarke is a postgraduate researcher at the University of Chester, having recently completed both her BA (Hons) and MA there. She has a particular interest in material culture, and how it can demonstrate change (or not) in borderlands in the Anglo-Saxon period. She has recently published a review of the PAS finds from Cheshire for that period. Email: 1514346@chester.ac.uk

Dr Rob Collins is a Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at Newcastle University, and the Project Manager for the Lottery-funded Hadrian's Wall Community Archaeology Project. His research interests focus on Roman frontiers, the Late Roman–early medieval transition, comparative frontier studies, and small finds and numismatics. Email: robert.collins@newcastle.ac.uk

Kieran Gleave is currently an archaeologist with the University of Salford. He graduated from the University of Chester in 2019 after graduating with a BA (Hons) Archaeology degree. Email: kgleave75@gmail.com

Maiken Holst completed her BA (Hons) Archaeology degree at the University of Chester in 2019. She is currently completing her MSc in Maritime Archaeology at the University of Southampton, her dissertation focusses on maritime aspects and burial customs in the Iron Age/early medieval Age along the Norwegian coastline

Dr David R. Howell is a Lecturer in History and Heritage with the University of Gloucestershire. He currently teaches on nationalism and fascism in Europe. His research interests focus on identity and migration themes. Email: dhowell1@glos.ac.uk and davidrhowell@tutanota.com

Dr Rebecca H. Jones is Head of Archaeology and World Heritage at Historic Environment Scotland and a Visiting Professor at Heriot-Watt University. She is co-Chair of the International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies and involved in the management of the Antonine Wall and Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage properties, having led the mapping for the successful nomination of the Antonine Wall. She studied at the Universities of Newcastle and Glasgow and worked on a Roman research project for the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Her research interests focus on Roman campaigns and frontiers and making archaeology more accessible; her book on *Roman Camps in Britain* was awarded 'Book of the Year' at the Current Archaeology awards in 2013. Email: rebecca.jones@hes.scot

Dr Laura McAtackney has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies at Aarhus University, Denmark since 2015, she was recently appointed a Docent in Contemporary Historical Archaeology at the University of Oulu in Finland (in 2019). Her research uses contemporary archaeology and critical heritage approaches to explore social justice issues, including long-term studies on political imprisonment in Ireland (Long Kesh/Maze prison and Kilmainham Gaol) and post-conflict Northern Ireland (especially so-called peace walls), gendered perspectives on

the past and the experiences and memory of the colonial Caribbean. She is currently the Principal Investigator for an Independent Research Fund Denmark Project 2 collaboration *Enduring Materialities of Colonialism: Temporality, Spatiality and Memory on St Croix, USVI (EMoC)* (2019–2023), a Co-Investigator on ARCHAEOBALT (2018–2021), an EU-Interreg South Baltic project on promoting archaeological tourism and is part of the OPEN HEART CITY collective working with Magdalene Laundries in Ireland. Email: laura.mcatackney@cas.au.dk

Ruby McMillan-Sloan graduated with a BA (Hons) degree in Archaeology and Theology from the University of Chester. In 2019, she carried out fieldwork in Palestine and Israel, alongside the Swedish Institute of Theology. Her research interests include contemporary archaeology, industrial archaeology and the archaeology of utopianism. She has recently commenced a law conversion to be better able to engage with practical aspects of heritage and land debates.

Dr Michael Nevell is the Industrial Heritage Support Officer for England, based at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, and an Honorary Research Fellow in Archaeology at the University of Salford. He spent 18 years as Senior Lecturer in Archaeology for the universities of Manchester and Salford. He has more than 30 years of experience as a field archaeologist with research interests including industrialisation, buildings, and community archaeology. He is the author of dozens of books and academic papers, including *Buckton Castle and the Castles of North West England* (University of Salford 2012). Email: mike.nevell@ironbridge.org.uk

Dr Richard Nevell is Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Exeter where he completed his PhD in Archaeology in 2018. He worked for English Heritage as a Properties Historian from 2018 to 2019 and his research interests include medieval archaeology, the archaeology of destruction, and castles in the Middle Ages. Email: r.nevell@exeter.ac.uk

Professor Keith Ray is Honorary Professor of Archaeology in the School of History, Archaeology and Religion at Cardiff University. He was lead author of the book *Offa's Dyke: Landscape and Hegemony in Eighth-Century Britain* (Windgather Press, 2016) and was a founding convener of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory. His research and writing also encompasses the archaeology and landscape history of Herefordshire, the Neolithic of the British Isles, and the archaeology of sub-Saharan Africa. Email: RayK1@cardiff.ac.uk

John G. Swogger is an archaeological illustrator with a particular interest in the use of comics and other narrative graphics. He graduated with a BA in Archaeology from Liverpool University in 1992, and since then has worked as an illustrator for research excavations. Since 2007, he has specialised in developing archaeological comics for clients such as Cadw, the Museum of London and the United Nations Development Program, as well as comics with Native American tribes about repatriating ancestral remains, and community heritage comics in Wales, England, Nicaragua, Yemen and the Republic of Palau. Email: jgswogger@gmail.com

Emma Vernon is a graduate from the University of Chester, and has just completed a Masters in Archaeology at the University of Liverpool. She is now a commercial archaeologist working in the North of England, with a particular interest in Mesolithic archaeology. She is also a huge *Game of Thrones* fan, and has really enjoyed the opportunity to incorporate this into her love for archaeology.

Professor Howard Williams teaches archaeology at the University of Chester and researches public archaeology and archaeologies of death and memory. He writes an academic blog: *Archaeodeath*. Email: howard.williams@chester.ac.uk

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At the start of a new decade, frontiers and borderlands are constantly pushed into the limelight of contemporary politics and the public imagination. As landscape monuments which have been globally present from prehistory, there are many different dimensions to them and they manifest in varied socio-political contexts. They are tangible and enduring structures with both ephemeral and intangible dimensions. As well as dividing and controlling the movement of people and things, from regulating trade to defence, they can be powerful notions too, deployed as political tools and as pivotal axes around which concepts of peoples and nations are created, perpetuated and imagined. By design or through appropriation, they might come to define whom is seen as belonging, and whom should be excluded.

The pervasive if complex and varied nature of borders and their material components has resulted in an ever-increasing misappropriation of their past, both ancient and recent, in contemporary society. These range across the spectrum of political discourse and popular culture, from whimsical filmic inaccuracies to potent political weapons with dangerous consequences for people today. These can all filter into the public psyche as well as heritage conservation, management and interpretation strategies. Meanwhile, avenues of archaeological research can often find themselves implicated in wider discourses on walls and borders, frontiers and borderlands. Hence, linear monuments and frontier zones, whether artificial or natural (such as coastlines, rivers and mountain ranges) have never been more relevant in archaeological dialogues with the public. It is, therefore, crucial that archaeologists today come forward and substantiate their expertise to ensure that public understanding of, and engagement with, frontiers and borderlands is rich, engaging and informative. Archaeologists must also combat their appropriation for nefarious purposes.

Yet despite this pressing need, frontiers and borderlands have not received a sustained examination within the multi-strand subdiscipline of 'public archaeology'. Consequently, examining this as a topic was a deliberate and strategic step when preparing the 4th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference in late 2018. This public event was organised, promoted and ran by final-year Archaeology students from the Department of History and Archaeology and was open to all, free of charge. Titled 'The Public Archaeology of Frontiers and Borderlands', it comprised of three keynote speakers and 19 student contributions. Exploring a diverse range of frontiers and borderlands from public archaeology perspectives, the event took place at Cheshire West and Cheshire's Grosvenor Museum on 20 March 2019.

The editors wish to express gratitude to colleagues in the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Chester, especially the anonymous referees who evaluated the draft manuscripts, as well as Dr Caroline Pudney, Dr Kara Critchell and to Dr Rob Collins (Newcastle University) who served as 'critical friends' for the student contributions. The conference was only possible because of its hosts, and we extend heartfelt thanks to all the staff of Cheshire West and Cheshire's Grosvenor Museum for accommodating the conference for the fourth consecutive year. Thanks also to University of Chester doctoral researcher Reanna Phillips for guiding the students in preparing for the event. We also thank the guest speakers, John Swogger, Professor Keith Ray and Dr Penelope Foreman, who drew from their expertise to enhance the conference by exploring the key issues that underpin how we engage the public with this topic. Thanks to all the authors and interviewees for their patience and determination to stick with this project throughout a global pandemic. We are especially grateful to Dr Rebecca Jones for agreeing to compose the Foreword and to Dr Laura McAtackney for a broad-ranging interview which ably serves as a discussion piece to close the collection. Finally, we appreciate the sustained support of our publishers, Archaeopress, for sticking with us through these challenging times.

Foreword

Rebecca H. Jones

Frontiers and borders have become more topical in recent years, their importance raised through different aspects of politics in the 21st century. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic dominating 2020 has changed so many aspects of our lives, with borders becoming even more relevant. People are now having to consider where they can travel, quarantine rules in countries around the world, and what the various rules are in different parts of the UK. It has also led to more attention being paid to decision making in the devolved nations of the UK, as rules and restrictions are brought into force.

This volume serves as a call to arms to consider the public archaeologies of frontiers and borderlands. Those of us who work as researchers in these fields know their importance, more so when their key themes are so topical and relevant today.

My very first introduction to the concept of a frontier, as part of an undergraduate course on Roman Frontiers (at Newcastle University) was the published Oxford Romanes lectures by Lord Curzon, shortly after his term as Viceroy of India (Curzon 1907). Many of the concepts he discussed around the definition of frontiers are topical today: definition (natural and artificial), migration, separation, hinterlands, spheres of influence; and he referred to many of the frontiers under discussion in this volume: Offa's Dyke, Roman Frontiers and the Great Wall of China. Also, given his role and status in the British Empire, it is interesting to see how he viewed the world over a hundred years ago, before the world wars of the 20th century and the collapse of the British Empire.

Events of 2020 have also led to a more critical reflection on how the Empire and its legacy, and the wealth and history of Britain, is understood and taught in schools. While not by intent, these circumstances converge with a flurry for academic interests in frontiers and borderlands. For example, this year's European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) annual meeting, scheduled in Budapest but then run on a virtual platform in August 2020, had as one of its six key themes 'From *Limes* to regions: archaeology of borders, connections and roads.' This was intended to connect recent work on Frontiers of the Roman Empire (FRE) World Heritage properties with other frontier regions of other periods, emphasising separation, connection, and the permeable/impermeable nature of various boundaries[1]. This also recognised the significance of the geography of Budapest, sitting in the heart of the Carpathian Basin, connecting across Europe and beyond, and astride the second largest river in Europe, the Danube, once part of a Roman frontier. It will be interesting to see what themes are chosen when the EAA returns to Budapest, currently scheduled for 2022.

A further set of issues make this book's theme particularly pertinent in 2020. As I write this foreword in October 2020, it is Black History Month, which has taken on a new significance and enhanced energy following the Black Lives Matter events of this year. The news is dominated by one of the most significant and arguably divisive political elections of recent decades taking place in the United States. Simultaneously, the United Nations (UN) is celebrating its 75th anniversary and, in November, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is celebrating its 75th anniversary, with its mantra which seeks 'to build peace through international cooperation in Education,

[1] This is the description of the theme originally placed on the Budapest EAA 2020 website

the Sciences and Culture'[2]. It is UNESCO who established the World Heritage convention in 1972, which governs World Heritage[3], a topic raised through several articles in this volume.

A further theme which runs through several papers is the prominence in modern discourse of some structures, and their purposing and re-purposing. The misappropriation of Hadrian's Wall as the modern geopolitical border between Scotland and England is touched on, with similar issues involving Offa's Dyke between England and Wales (although at least the latter runs closer to the modern border). The importance of biographies of monuments is discussed, the challenges of presenting complex and difficult heritage, right through to the imaginative ways in which we can engage contemporary audiences.

Many of the book's themes resonate with those of us researching and working with frontiers and borderlands. Even in Roman frontier studies, Hadrian's Wall maintains a dominant position, reflected in its inscription on the World Heritage list in 1987. Even though it is now part of the expanded Frontiers of the Roman Empire (FRE) World Heritage property (Breeze and Jilek 2008), its initial inscription highlighted that it was *the best* Roman frontier:

Hadrian's Wall is an outstanding example of a fortified limes. No other ensemble from the Roman Empire illustrates as ambitious and coherent a system of defensive constructions perfected by engineers over the course of several generations. Whether with respect to military architectural construction techniques, strategy design in the Imperial period or a policy for ground use and the organization of space in a frontier zone, this cultural property is an exceptional reference whose universal value leaves no doubt[4].

Yet given that the mission of UNESCO is about building peace through international cooperation, it is worth noting that the expanded FRE World Heritage property, across multiple countries, is much better connected to UNESCO's goals than the initial inscription of Hadrian's Wall[5].

In Scotland, the Antonine Wall serves as bridesmaid to its much better-known southern counterpart, perhaps with some similarities to the relationship between Wat's Dyke and Offa's Dyke. We are not helped by the fact that when the general public think of a Roman wall, they think of something built in stone, a linear monument resembling Hadrian's Wall, whereas we have a turf wall whose best surviving feature is the ditch to the north of it. Perhaps if it were to be called the Antonine Dyke it would aid with modern perceptions (Figure 1), although the only ancient historical reference to the Wall, in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, refers to it being a wall of turf.[6] While certainly an impressive feat of engineering, spanning across the width of Scotland, it does not appear to have majorly influenced landscape change since its abandonment (Jones 2018).

Yet, the visitor to Hadrian's Wall encounters a palimpsest of a frontier, and one that is potentially difficult to disentangle from the emperor whose name it bears, despite its complex biography in Roman times, never mind the 1600 years after its abandonment. By contrast, the Antonine Wall represents the most advanced frontier created by the Roman Empire, but was only occupied for a single generation in the mid-2nd century AD. This brief occupation, in archaeological terms, provides a rich resource to try and understand Roman frontiers at their zenith. Unique features include the spectacularly carved distance

[2] https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco
[3] https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/
[4] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000098
[5] Although the current FRE is only the two walls in the UK and the Upper German-Raetian *Limes* in Germany, further FRE properties have been submitted to UNESCO for inscription and it is intended to manage these together as a cluster, see Ployer *et al.* 2017.
[6] SHA *Antoninus Pius* 5,4

Figure 1: Aerial view of the Antonine Wall and Roman fort at Rough Castle, taken in 2006 © Historic Environment Scotland (DP 014299)

stones (Keppie 1979), the most impressive of their kind in the Roman Empire, now known to have been more richly coloured than their sandstone facade today (Campbell 2020a, 2020b). Alongside other Roman frontiers, the sites and artefacts recovered from the Wall, together with environmental evidence, attest to the diversity of the military community, the presence of women and children, traders, and slaves, just in a tighter chronological framework. It enables us to have connections with other parts of the Roman Empire – we have an auxiliary regiment which was raised in Syria; pottery demonstrating a preference for cooking in a north African style; named individuals who travelled across the empire. For example, Vibia Pacata, the wife of a centurion, dedicated an altar stone to Silvanus and the Quadruviae (the goddess of the cross-roads). This and other documents suggest that she travelled from Pannonia, modern-day Austria and Hungary, possibly via North Africa (Wright 1968; Birley 1971; Foubert 2013).

Despite the military and divisive purpose of the Antonine Wall (and the purpose of Roman frontiers has been debated: see Breeze 2011; Breeze and Flügel in prep.), in the 21st century it provides us with a unique opportunity to celebrate the heritage of an international monument with its local communities in central Scotland, and use it to positively emphasise our international connections at a time when archaeology is being mis-used for nationalist purposes (Brophy 2018). We have a strategy for archaeology in Scotland which is about making it matter, telling Scotland's stories in their global context.[7]

[7] http://archaeologystrategy.scot/

Figure 2: The new Roman-themed playpark at Callendar Park in Falkirk in 2019 © Historic Environment Scotland

Recognising the issue of a lack of knowledge about the Antonine Wall, we started a programme of engagement to improve the awareness and relevance of the monument. It runs through some of the most deprived areas of Scotland, as recognised by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation[8]. This led to the co-design and co-creation of a project (which started in 2018 and has over £2m from various sources, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund), which is seeking to understand where our Roman heritage can have transformational economic and societal benefit. Capital projects include regenerating forgotten areas through sculpture – Roman inspired art and replica distance stones, and through the development and redevelopment of playparks, with five planned in total, one for each of the Local Authority areas along the Wall (Figure 2). These have been co-designed with local school children and feature stories about the diverse military community in the area almost 2,000 years ago (Weeks 2020; Jones in prep.). Echoing some of the other themes in this volume, we are also working on the creation of comics and have a graffiti project, where we are collaborating with a local graffiti company, who will engage international artists to work with local communities to create Roman inspired graffiti.

Other projects include gardens, community mosaics, arts, museum projects and creative writing. One is in collaboration with the Cycling Without Age scheme, where we are encouraging residents in local care homes and sheltered housing who may not otherwise be able to get out and about, to have the chance to socialise and visit local heritage sites in trishaws piloted by volunteers. These are intended to ease isolation, encourage socialising, and provide a boost to mental health by visiting sites which they may otherwise find difficult to visit.

[8] https://simd.scot/

Although paused due to the pandemic, we are re-starting projects as soon as it safe to do so. One is to work with asylum seekers and refugees who have relocated to Scotland and better understand their stories in relation to the Wall, weaving them into the wider story. This is a chance to explore stories and experiences from contemporary communities as well.

There is much more work to be done, and many fresh potential avenues for engaging today's public with the stories of ancient frontiers and borderlands. In his interview with Howard Williams in this volume, Rob Collins comments that they are privileged because Hadrian's Wall is well known by its local community, unlike the Antonine Wall, Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke. It is interesting to see the increasing interest in Hadrian's Wall from *Game of Thrones* fans, but it was not until I read Vernon's paper that I found out that this fictional wall was garrisoned by 19 forts. Interestingly, we have 17 currently known on the Antonine Wall, but two more are suspected. Perhaps we should be making more of our similarities with this fictional Wall!

Yet our efforts to connect frontier works past with communities in the present should never forget the nature of these divides on those who would seek to cross them. Migration features in various papers in this volume and many of us will remember the mass migration of refugees across Europe that took place in 2015. In September of that year, I was fortunate enough to be attending the International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (*Limes* Congress) in Ingolstadt in Bavaria, where the contemporary relevance of our studies was really brought home. Colleagues from the south and east of Europe struggled to cross borders and were held up for several days, arriving significantly late to the congress; many of us saw large groups of refugees in key transit points, such as the bus station in Munich. Indeed, this is the 21st-century impact of frontiers and borders, which comes out strongly in the final piece on contemporary walls, through the interview with Laura McAtackney.

Two years ago I read, with my primary school daughter, an incredibly powerful children's novel which told the stories of three refugees from three different events (a Jewish boy in the 1930s, a Cuban girl in 1994, and a Syrian boy in 2015). The author cleverly wove the stories in such a manner that they were ultimately connected, however tangentially (Gratz 2017). It was a creative way to tell important stories to young people. There is a huge awareness in young people today of the key issues that we face – climate change, plastic pollution, political upheaval, migration and refugees, and now the pandemic. Their engagement makes me optimistic for the future, and I am delighted in this light to read this volume and see the productive results of this student-led conference in Chester which simultaneously tackles archaeology's potential to link past worlds to present-day realities and concerns.

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Public Archaeologies from the Edge

Pauline Clarke, Kieran Gleave and Howard Williams

The chapter serves to introduce the first-ever book dedicated to public archaeologies of frontiers and borderlands. We identify the hitherto neglect of this critical field which seeks to explore the heritage, public engagements, popular cultures and politics of frontiers and borderlands past and present. We review the 2019 conference organised by Uiversity of Chester Archaeology students at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, which inspired this book, and then survey the structure and contents of the collection. We advocate that public archaeologies should seek to incorporate and foreground perspectives 'from the edge'. By this we mean public archaeology should make frontiers and borderlands – including the people living with them and seeking to traverse them – paramount to future work.

From IndyRef and Brexit, to the Refugee Crisis and Trump's Wall, frontiers dominate our news. In exploring both past and contemporary frontiers and borderlands, archaeological research can provide innovative perspectives and insights, revealing their creation, use, translation, removal, subversion, circumvention and reinvention. Sustained archaeological investigations can identify how frontier monuments and landscapes are not merely lines on a map, but zones that might possess topographic, economic, social, political, religious and ideological dimensions and may acquire biographies and significances contrasting from those intended and long after their creation (e.g. Hingley 2012). Borderlands, meanwhile, need not relate to clearly defined zones either side of a coherent 'border', but creative and fluid 'third spaces' distinct from core territories of polities; they can be networks where communities and social relations are transformed and re-fashioned (e.g. Naum 2010). Frontiers and borderlands can thus operate as zones of interaction and creativity as much as barriers and blockades. In these environments, new identities and societies can be fostered and reproduced.

Yet, while archaeologists have participated in exploring borderlands in the distant and recent past, including linear boundaries and their long life-histories (for a review survey, see Williams and Delaney 2019), the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands has received no sustained attention. Given the aspiration to regard public archaeology as a multi-strand subdiscipline which explores and critiques archaeology's intersections with contemporary society (e.g. Moshenska 2017), and set against the rise of critical investigations of contemporary dispossessed and displaced peoples (e.g. Hamilakis 2018), this is nothing short of a collective dereliction of duty among those working in public archaeology. This neglect is especially striking when so many community projects, heritage sites, museums and public-facing print and digital media involve archaeological narratives with a direct bearing on this theme. We contend they have a fundamental responsibility to shift away from narratives focused on 'peoples' and communities within bound transhistorical geographical boundaries. Instead, we propose that archaeologists should produce sustained critiques of over-simplified and politicised visions of past peoples and their landscapes. Starting on the 'edge': with their boundaries and frontiers, and with marginalised peoples living with and crossing borders, should be a priority for future research in public archaeology. Two striking exceptions to this situation are known to us in Britain, and both relate to the frontier works of the Roman Empire: the heritage interpretation of Hadrian's Wall (Witcher 2010a and b; Hingley 2012: 275–336; Hingley 2018) and the digital investigation of the use of the Iron Age and Roman past in contemporary political discourses surrounding Brexit (Bonacchi *et al.* 2018; see also Gardner 2017; Brophy 2018). Yet, there have been very few sustained community projects which have tackled frontiers and borderlands, including their linear monuments, effectively (O' Drisceoil *et al.* 2014; Williams and Evans 2020; see also Collins this volume), and these often struggle to tell the stories of those seeking to cross them (Stewart *et al.* 2018; Hicks and Mallet 2019). Even public archaeology projects focused on coastlines and islands fixate on their landward associations

rather than interconnections. Whether participating in projects relating to parishes, counties, national borderlands, natural thresholds and frontiers (such as mountain ranges, coastlines, wetlands and rivers), almost all public archaeology finds itself speaking of place and territories, and thus practitioners are forced to navigate modern mythologies and histories about them, mediated via material culture. These often focus on anxieties and fascinations, horrors and fantasies, regarding boundaries and boundedness, walls and borders as they emerge and shift (see also Witcher 2010b).

Figure 1: The 4th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference: the students in discussion after their final session (above) and Dr Brian Costello and Professor Howard Williams raffle books and journal as prizes including John G. Swogger's *Oswestry Heritage Comics* at the end (below)! (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2019)

Therefore, the broader task of public archaeologies of frontiers and borderlands is an as-yet largely unexplored field. Operating alongside the burgeoning study of undocumented migration from archaeological perspectives (see Hamilakis 2018), we might profitably seek to engage publics with the archaeological heritage of borderland communities but also frontier stories told in other (physical and digital) places and spaces too, in educating and critiquing popular (mis)understandings of walls and other linear monuments and infrastructures. In some instances, this might take the form of direct action and critique of political discourses, policies and practices, as strikingly revealed for archaeological work across the US/México border (Stewart *et al.* 2018). In other circumstances, it might take us into rethinking how museums and heritage sites narrate the past in ways that escape and critique colonial discourses and reject the legitimisation of modern nations and their ethno-nationalist origin myths (e.g. Polm 2016). Whether frontiers and borderlands are the primary focus or not, thinking and practices from the 'edge', from peripheries, allows us fresh, post-colonial and counter-nationalist perspectives on familiar and seemingly comfortable narratives on the past. Public archaeologies from the edge not only 'centre' the dispossessed and dislocated, but foreground the potential and actual violence of frontiers during and after their construction and use (see also Hicks and Mallet 2019). Public archaeologies of frontiers also takes us into digital environments as media for communication and education, as tools for investigation of popular perceptions of walls and borders. They also encourage us to explores virtual and fictional environments where popular ideas regarding frontiers and borderlands are created, afforded a sense of pastness and serve in strategies of present-day exclusion and inclusion. Drawing together these perspectives, we contend that it is both a necessity, and a duty, for public archaeologists to tackle frontiers and borderlands in a serious and sustained fashion in future research and archaeological practice. Both in the UK and globally, we should adopt public archaeological research from the 'edge'.

The Public Archaeology of Frontiers and Borderlands conference

To begin a process of addressing this research lacuna, the 4th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference tackled the theme of 'The Public Archaeology of Frontiers and Borderlands' on 20 March 2019

Figure 2: 'Blurred Boundaries: Shifting our Focus from the Land to the Sea', presented by Eleanor Culverhouse, Kelly Griffiths and Rowena Young (Photographs: Kieran Gleave and Howard Williams, 2019)

(Figure 1). The first, second and third student conferences set the precedent for this event, tackling key themes for today's public archaeology in terms of mortuary practice, art/archaeology interactions, and the Early Middle Ages. The format and rationale for those conferences are outlined in their respective proceedings (Williams 2019a and b; Williams *et al.* 2019; Williams *et al.* 2020). Specifically, each event has operated simultaneously as research workshops, public outreach events, and as innovative pedagogical exercises for final-year single honours Archaeology students were tasked to organise, participate and reflect on an academic day conference. The final-year students undertook the organisation of the conference and their presentations constituted formative tasks as part of their coursework. Each event was free and open to academics and members of the public alike, rendering them highly distinctive fora in debating new directions in public archaeology.

Given the theme of frontiers and borderlands, it was apposite that the conference was generously hosted, as were the earlier conferences, by the Grosvenor Museum. This is because the lecture theatre of the museum is situated in the heart of the border city of Chester – officially within the English county of Cheshire but with suburbs in modern Wales – and close to the great Mercian frontier works of Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke (Ray and Bapty 2016). Indeed, this theme appropriately coincides with the development of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory (co-founded and co-convened by one of us: Williams) as a research network facilitating and supporting interdisciplinary investigations of frontiers and borderlands past and present, with a focus on the Welsh Marches and its linear earthworks (Williams and Delaney 2019). This has led to the creation of the new open-access academic publication, the *Offa's Dyke Journal*, which

provides a unique venue for new research, not only for Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke, but also comparative frontiers and borderlands including their monuments and material cultures. Thus, it is only fitting that the book features multiple studies relevant to the Anglo-Welsh borderlands as well as investigations from farther afield.

Figure 3: Noah Young presenting 'Academic Discourse and Roman Frontiers: The Interpretation of Deva, the Roman Fortress at Chester, for Younger Audiences and the Wider Public' (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2019)

The resulting conference explored the public archaeology of a diverse range of frontiers and borderlands from a host of geographical locations and time periods. Famous examples from Britain included Hadrian's Wall and Offa's Dyke, while those internationally ranged from the Great Wall of China to the Berlin Wall. The final-year Archaeology students had a direct input into how the conference was publicised and ran, from designing the logo and social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) to chairing the actual sessions themselves and providing refreshments. The conference attracted an audience of c. 50 people, but it was also filmed, edited and uploaded to the University of Chester's Vimeo page where the sessions are free to watch.[1]

The conference adapted the format of previous University of Chester Archaeology Student conferences, with 19 students delivering their talks across three themed sessions which broadly addressed and discussed themes surrounding (i) prehistoric and ancient frontiers; (ii) medieval and global borderlands; and (iii) frontiers in fiction and modernity. Each session was sub-divided into smaller 15-minute student presentations each collating a range of case studies and examples of public archaeology research. Unlike earlier conferences, however, students this time were permitted to deliver joint presentations on a common subject. These varied topic choices allowed the conference to cover a good variety of concepts related to frontiers and borderlands, and opened up a broad range of discussions and debates surrounding public engagement and interaction with archaeological dialogues; discussions surrounding media, heritage management, politics and identity. Three guest presentations and a lively debate enirched the conference.

Prehistoric and ancient frontiers

The first session of the conference was sub-divided into two student presentations, which focused primarily on how the public engage with concepts and discussions surrounding prehistoric and ancient frontiers, how the themes arising from this may be misused in the wider media. The students tackled what archaeologists can do to combat public misconceptions that arise as a consequence.

'Blurred Boundaries: Shifting our Focus from the Land to the Sea', presented by Eleanor Culverhouse, Kelly Griffiths and Rowena Young, argued that the media misappropriates prehistoric archaeological evidence for the purposes of manipulating contemporary debates surrounding Brexit and in British politics more generally (Figure 2). Young began the presentation with her discussion of how the submersion of Doggerland has been unhelpfully used as a comparison to Brexit. She proceeded by proposing a need from archaeologists to combat such comparisons in the interest of preventing public misinformation. Griffiths identified the issues that can arise from shoehorning Neolithic archaeological

[1] https://vimeo.com/showcase/6021899

Figure 4: Josie Francis and Mena Griffiths presenting 'What's Wat? The Public Archaeology of Wat's Dyke' (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2019)

evidence that appears to be unique to Britain to form notions of modern 'British' identity (see also now Barclay and Brophy 2020). Culverhouse identified how Britain has always been perceived as discrete from the Continent in archaeological discourse, pointing out the close correlations between Iron Age settlement forms shared between Britain and large swathes of north-west Europe. Together, they argued that Brexit, as a modern problem, cannot be equated with any past period and its natural or socio-political borders. Archaeologists have a dual responsibility to ensure that past and present are not equated and to critique and counter political misuses of the present. Both aims are achieved by providing richer and detailed narratives which will enhance the public's understanding of frontiers past.

The second presentation, 'Academic Discourse and Roman Frontiers: The Interpretation of Deva, the Roman Fortress at Chester, for Younger Audiences and the Wider Public' by Noah Young considered how to challenge commonly held but incorrect views about Chester's Roman city walls (Figure 3). He identified the importance of making interpretation fun and accessible to younger audiences, using the Chester Portico project as a case study. He argued that one way of combating misinformation about Chester's past is to emphasise Deva's role as part of the Roman frontier and its colonial dimensions. He suggested that Chester, as a fortress, was often unsatisfactorily presented as part of a broader northern British Roman frontier zone with which it was linked by roads and sea with other settlements, forts and Hadrian's Wall (Breeze 2011: 55–70).

Medieval and global borderlands

The second session of the conference featured three student presentations, each tackling how the public are engaged with key issues surrounding medieval and global borderlands through both heritage interpretation and the past's portrayal in wider forms of media.

'What's Wat? The Public Archaeology of Wat's Dyke' by Josie Francis and Menna Griffiths presented their reflections on the wider public understanding of Wat's Dyke (Malim 2020), identifying a general

lack of interpretation or clarity for visitors around the location or purpose of the monument (Figure 4). They offered both Welsh and English perspectives on this late 8th/early 9th-century Mercian frontier work and compared its interpretation with its larger and better-known neighbour: Offa's Dyke. They recommended the development of better interpretation panels which could significantly combat the widespread lack of public awareness and understanding surrounding Wat's Dyke (see also Williams this volume).

Figure 5: Josephine Barnes, Rebecca Lloyd and Joe McMullen presenting: 'Identity through Heritage Interpretation in Later Medieval Borderlands Castles' (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2019)

Josephine Barnes, Rebecca Lloyd and Joe McMullen addressed the complexities that the concept of national and ethnic identities (past and present) can pose to interpreting later medieval borderland castles. Their presentation was titled: 'Identity through Heritage Interpretation in Later Medieval Borderlands Castles' (Figure 5). Lloyd considered the Anglo-Scottish borderland castles, using those at Berwick, Edinburgh and Stirling as case studies, to illustrate the challenge of interpreting historic 'Scottish' and 'English' identity to contemporary audiences; a point especially relevant in the context of the current growth in English nationalism and the Scottish Independence movement. Barnes shifted the discussion to the Welsh March castles of Dolforwyn and Flint, in each case identifying how sculpture or traditional sign-based interpretation can pose challenges in the context of contemporary Welsh nationalism and medieval (and modern) English colonialism. Finally, McMullen used Chateu de Falaise, Dover and Porchester castles as case studies to consider the Channel as a frontier in present-day imaginings of the medieval past (see also Nevell and Nevell this volume). In each case, they reflected on the way heritage interpretation relates to contemporary border politics in the light of Brexit and campaigns for Welsh and Scottish independence.

Sophie Billingham and Rebecca Pritchard developed this theme further in reviewing 'The Global Perspective: The Public Archaeology of the Great Wall of China' (Figure 6). They selected two themes concerning how the Wall is portrayed in global, particularly Western, societies. First, Pritchard tackled tourist media: books, guides and websites. She argued that these resources strongly influence the visitor experience and appreciation of the Great Wall to the detriment of understanding its complex history. She argued that the view of the monument as a 'bucket list' destination comes at the expense of an authentic experience, as the well-visited sections are often heavily restored and the broader historical context is left unexplained. Billingham considered the stereotypes (mainly that of the civilised Chinese versus the barbarian Huns) that arise from filmic representations (Billingham this volume). She also considered the wider implications regarding how other ancient walls are portrayed by looking at filmic representations of Hadrian's Wall.

Figure 6: Sophie Billingham and Rebecca Pritchard preseting: 'The Global Perspective: The Public Archaeology of the Great Wall of China' (Photographs: Kieran Gleave and Howard Williams, 2019)

Frontiers in fiction and modernity

The final section of the conference comprised of three further student presentations. The first, from Rowan Sharp, James Spencer and Emma Vernon, was entitled 'Watching Walls: The Public Archaeology of Fictional Frontiers'. Their talk explored how fictional frontiers may inform public perceptions of archaeological frontiers or borderlands, specifically focusing on the *Game of Thrones* television series (Figure 7). Spencer began the presentation by drawing direct comparisons between The Wall of Westeros and Hadrian's Wall; commenting on how depictions of linear monuments in terms of trade and as cognitive barriers in *Game of Thrones* can influence public perceptions of frontiers such as Hadrian's wall, both being seen in a similar light. Following this, Vernon discussed how representations of land and family identity in borderland regions within *Game of Thrones* can influence public perceptions of the archaeology of ancient linear monuments (Vernon this volume). Finally, Sharp presented examples of how filming locations in Northern Ireland, such as the 'Dark Hedges' and Dunluce Castle, have had an impact on visitor numbers, motivation and experience.

The next paper, 'Breaking down the Berlin Wall' by Rebecca Caldwell, Eleanor Boot and Kieran Gleave tackled the challenges to archaeology and heritage professionals posed by such an iconic and controversial monument, especially as it operated during living memory (Figure 8). This was both from the perspective of the residents of Berlin, and visitors to the city, with their differing perspectives. Gleave examined the complexities that interpreting pre-wall 'dark heritage' along the route of the Wall can challenge both national politics and widely accepted public narratives about the archaeology of the Wall, drawing from the Topography of Terror and Invalidenfriedhof cemetery as examples (Gleave this volume). Next, Boot discussed and questioned how the multiple physical manifestations of the Wall during its active years, and narratives from both sides of it should be incorporated into interpretation at sites along the Wall today. She went on to suggest that future interpretations of the Berlin Wall should be altered to convey the message to the public that the wall was adapted continuously throughout its operation. Finally, Caldwell discussed how the Wall should be commemorated and exist in the contemporary

Figure 7: Rowan Sharp, James Spencer and Emma Vernon discussing: 'Watching Walls: The Public Archaeology of Fictional Frontiers' (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2019)

cityscape of Berlin, drawing on Checkpoint Charlie and the East Side Gallery as case studies. The overall conclusion was that the public ought to be able to interact with the wall's materiality and biography for purposes of both memorialisation and learning.

The final presentation from the students brought the debate about borders right up to date, as Maiken Holst gave a paper entitled 'The Political Dimensions of Public Archaeology in Borderlands: Exploring the Contemporary US/Mexican Border' (Figure 9). She examined how archaeology can contribute to political debates regarding this prominent and contested contemporary border (Holst this volume). She emphasised the responsibility of archaeologists to ensure that the past is not misappropriated by politicians and the public in attempting to popularise the notion of a physical border between the countries (see also McAtackney this volume).

The keynote presentations

The three keynote talks were interspersed with the student presentations and whose contributions provided invaluable insights into the complexities and debates surrounding frontiers and borderlands.

John G. Swogger, an expert archaeological illustrator, spoke about 'Drawing Borders: What Comics can Bring to the Public Archaeology of Frontiers and Borderlands' (see Swogger and Williams this volume).

Figure 8: 'Breaking down the Berlin Wall', by Rebecca Caldwell, Eleanor Boot and Kieran Gleave (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2019)

in Public Archaeology'. She drew on her experiences of working with volunteers to overcome preconceived notions of frontiers and borderlands through archaeological practice (Figure 11).

The closing conference keynote – 'The Discomfort of Frontiers: Public Archaeology and the Politics of Offa's Dyke' by Professor Keith Ray (Cardiff University) discussed the contemporary and cultural relevance of Offa's Dyke, especially appropriate as 2019 was also the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Offa's Dyke Association (Figure 12). His talk centred on the fluctuating use of the Dyke as a blunt political symbol and tool, against a much more nuanced picture of its complex physical, cultural and institutional character. He illustrated this argument by presenting and discussing three

He outlined the unique problems in the portrayal and discussion of borders, in that they are often difficult to see, awkward to understand against the mores of today, and often seen as irrelevant in relation to contemporary realities (Figure 10). He proposed archaeologists overcome these significant problems through the use of the comic book medium of graphics with short commentaries to make the borderlands and frontiers more visible, engaging and relevant at all levels. He demonstrated how this particular approach could be used to convey complex ideas about identities and the biographies of frontiers by linking the past and the present, and mobilising community engagement.

Dr Penelope Foreman of Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) presented 'Crossing the Line: Borders, Barriers and Belonging

Figure 9: Maiken Holst presenting 'The Political Dimensions of Public Archaeology in Borderlands: Exploring the Contemporary U.S./Mexican Border'. (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2019)

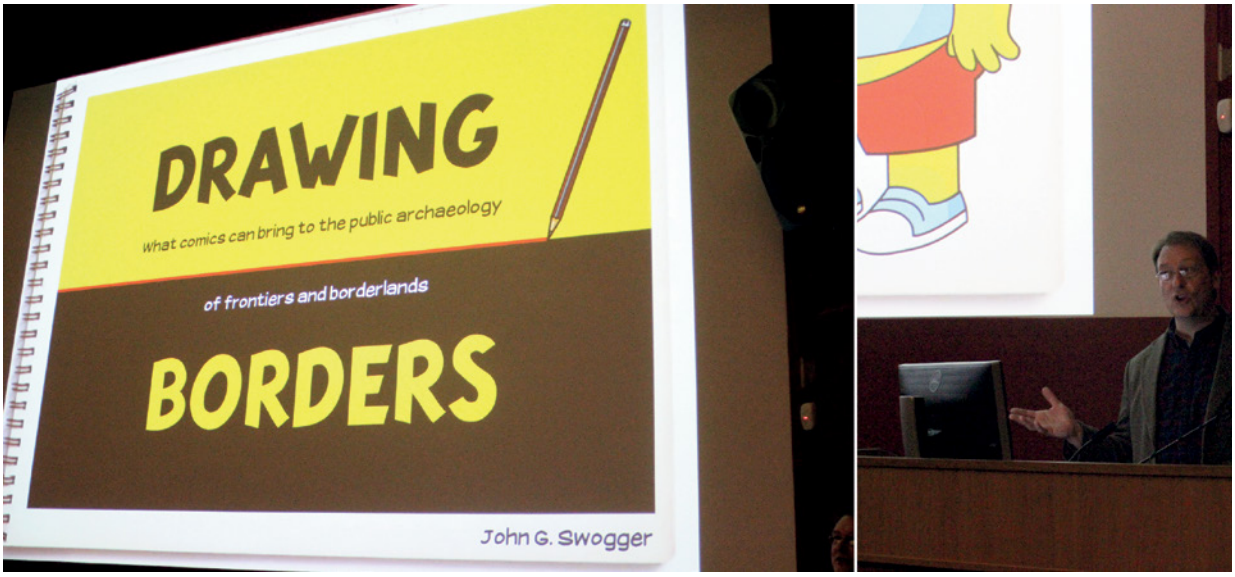
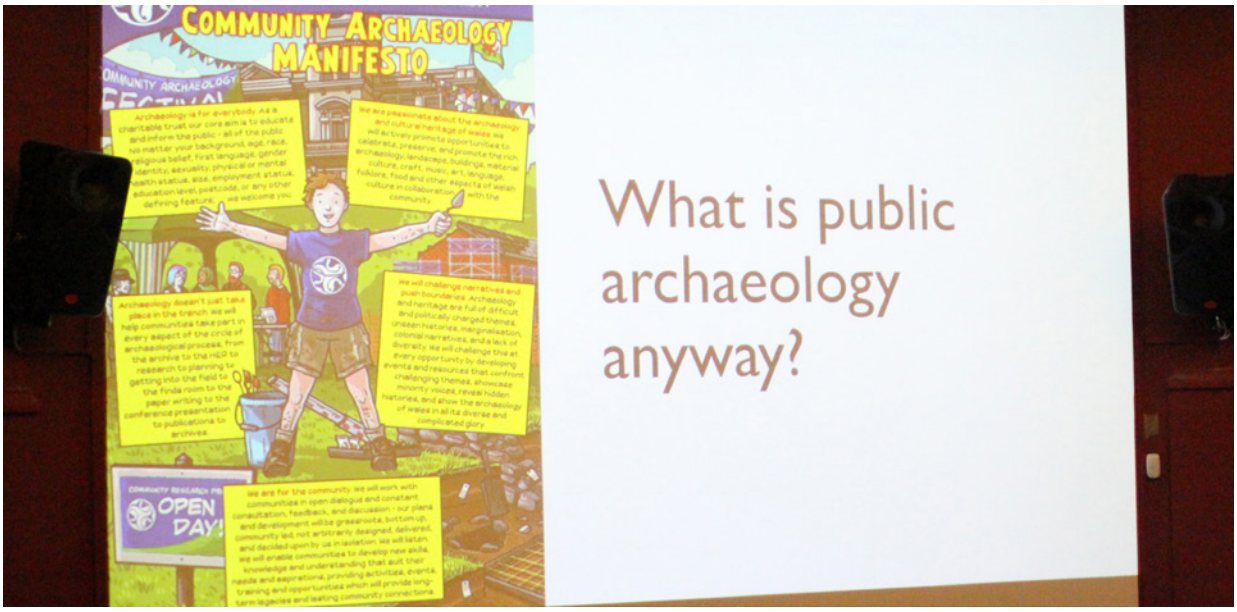


Figure 10 (above): John G. Swogger deliverinng his keynote talk: 'Drawing Borders: What Comics can Bring to the Public Archaeology of Frontiers and Borderlands' (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2019)

Figure 11 (below): Art by John G. Swogger presented as part of the keynote talk by Dr Penelope Foreman: 'Crossing the Line: Borders, Barriers and Belonging in Public Archaeology' (Photograph: Kieran Gleave, 2019)



theses – firstly, that any discussion of the Dyke needs to take into account the history of its perception, secondly, that the frontier has always been about more than just the Dyke, and thirdly, that choosing how to present the heritage of this early border has political resonances today. He also reflected on how we might work to better foster borderland community engagement and senses of affinity with Britain's longest monument to ensure its long-term conservation, management and interpretation (Ray and Bapty 2016; Ray this volume).

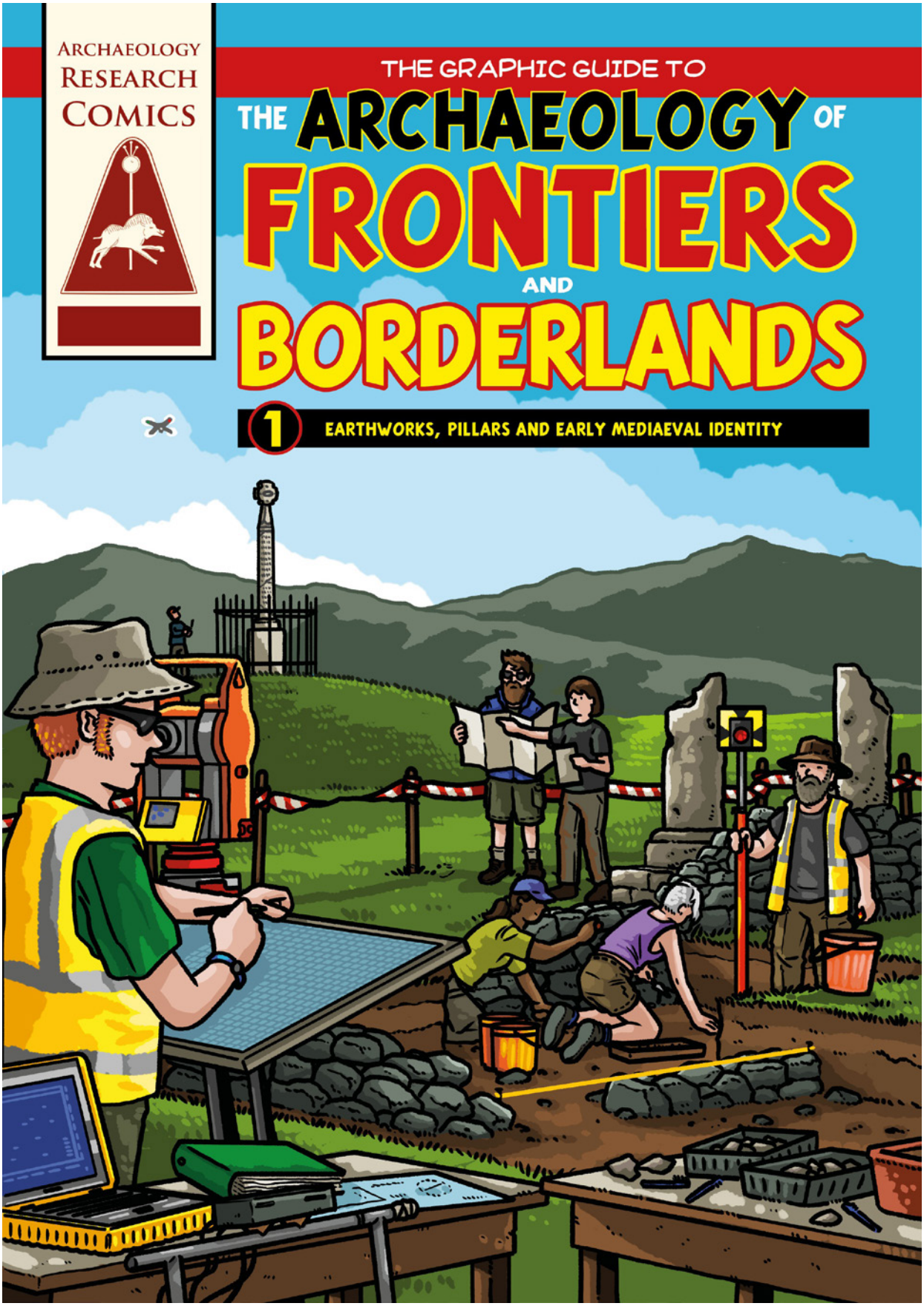
Figure 12 (above): 'The Discomfort of Frontiers: Public Archaeology and the Politics of Offa's Dyke' by Professor Keith Ray, chaired by Sophie Billingham (Photographs: Kieran Gleave and Howard Williams, 2019)

Figure 13 (next page): Artwork devised by John G. Swogger for his conference presentation, featuring a fictional excavation scene inspired by the Pillar of Eliseg (see Williams and Evans 2020). The image prompts us to imagine future strategies for the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands (John G. Swogger, 2019)

All three guest lecturers provided an insight into the various conceptual and logistical complexities that can arise from engaging the public with different frontiers and borderlands, significantly aiding the students in developing their ideas in preparation for their summative assignments after drawing from their expertise and experience.

From conference to publication

Of the nineteen students who took part in the conference, four elected to contribute their papers to this volume (Billingham, Gleave, Holst and Vernon). One further student (McMillan-Sloan) had not participated in the conference but proposed a contribution to the book (here, co-authored with Williams). Joining them and responding to an open call for papers, a series of further chapters address key themes (Nevell and Nevell, Brophy, Howell, Swogger and Williams, and two contributions by Williams). These are joined by three academic interviews (Collins, McAtackney, Ray) following a style pioneered in the previous publication arising from the third student conference (Williams and Clarke 2020).


Archaeology Research Comics
THE GRAPHIC GUIDE TO
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF
FRONTIERS
AND
BORDERLANDS
1
EARTHWORKS, PILLARS AND EARLY MEDIAEVAL IDENTITY

The structure of the book required some reflection, for while a thematic approach was desirable, most chapters tackle multiple themes. The chapter by Nevell and Nevell stands apart as an exploration of public engagement with medieval castles in broad terms, addressing multiple conceptual and physical 'walls' to public engagement as well as how we might challenge insular and nationalistic narratives for the Middle Ages. As their contribution picks out themes subsequently pertinent throughout the collection, it was placed at the start of the book.

Subsequently, the book looks at ancient and recent frontiers and their interactions with heritage. Via interview, Collins has created the first even reflection on the public archaeology of Hadrian's Wall. Next, Brophy considers the Anglo-Scottish border and its pre- and modern- history, along with the impact of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum; his specific focus is the Auld Acquaintance Cairn in Gretna. They are joined by the student contributions by Gleave and Holst building on their conference presentations (see above).

The middle of the book draws together five original studies of the Anglo-Welsh borderlands via the consideration of the Cofiwch Dryweryn mural heritage (Howell), the politics and public archaeology of Offa's Dyke (an interview with Ray), the contested landscape of Old Oswestry hillfort (McMillan-Sloan and Williams), and Wat's Dyke's heritage interpretations (Williams) and its envisioning (Swogger and Williams).

Latter part of the book takes us into the treacherous territory of imagined borders and walls, thus illustrating how archaeological perspectives on them have a deep significance beyond the real world in heritage tourism, entertainment and both imagined pasts and fantastical (and horrific) futures. The aforementioned student presentations on *Game of Thrones* (Vernon) and Hollywood portrays of the Great Wall of China (Billingham) are joined by a consideration of the television series *The Walking Dead* (Williams). The interview on contemporary wall-building and public archaeology (McAtackney) closes the volume.

Conclusion

Together, the chapters consider how archaeologists and archaeological research on frontiers and borderlands must navigate complex relationships and political discourses with communities both digital and tangible. We hope this collection encourages further work, contributing to fresh and transformative understandings of how frontiers and borderlands are conserved, managed and interpreted for future generations as well as how they create new senses of identity and community in the present (Figure 13).

At a time of increasing xenophobia and wall-building, critically engaging with how archaeological interpretations and heritage discourses narrate frontiers and borderlands is imperative (see also Hingley 2018). In doing so, we seek not to valorise and celebrate military barriers and socio-political strategies of exclusion past and present, but instead provide critical perspectives on their complex stories and ultimate failures as endeavours. If public archaeologies of frontiers and borderlands worldwide have a single purpose, it is to question our long-term and world-wide propensities to create divisions and to instead celebrate using the strengths of archaeologists' chronological, spatial and material perspectives to investigate frontiers' and borderlands' variances, limitations, fragilities and ultimate redundancies. In this regard, archaeological research and heritage assets harbour rich potential and exhibit powerful lessons for our future. As such, we feel this book contributions new insights in public archaeology and equally it serves as the ideal public archaeology-focused complement to the recent innovative and interdisciplinary edited collection on contemporary borders: *Walling In and Walling Out* (McAtackney and McGuire 2020).

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Breaking Down Barriers: The Role of Public Archaeology and Heritage Interpretation in Shaping Perceptions of the Past

Richard Nevell and Michael Nevell

In 2018, a survey by English Heritage found that children's memories of historic sites, specifically castles, are more likely to derive from film and television than visiting a castle. Ideas about the past become influenced by popular culture. Despite this, heritage sites remain an important resource with tens of millions of people visiting them in the UK every year, including 1.7 million schoolchildren in 2017. The level of interest in the past represents an opportunity to challenge and break down preconceptions about history. Through an examination of community archaeology digs at the castles of Buckton and Radcliffe in Greater Manchester and new heritage displays at the English Heritage castles of Orford, Suffolk, and Pevensey, East Sussex, this chapter will show how the public can engage with history and redefine the borders of their understanding, exploring conceptual rather than physical borders.

Introduction

Archaeologists, historians, and curators working in the heritage sector and in public archaeology aim to help the general public better understand the past and how it is researched and interpreted. This chapter will explore the conceptual barriers around public archaeology and how these are broken down – rather than physical borders – specifically through interactions between the public and professionals and how heritage sites can be used to unpick preconceptions about the past. The final case study in particular will relate public archaeology and heritage to national borders and how events in the present affect the public's perception of the past. While the Brexit debates have given rise to high-profile claims that 'the public have had enough of experts', research indicates there are 'broadly positive public attitudes towards experts' (Dommett and Pearce 2019). Such rhetoric risks diminishing the valuable role of public archaeology and museums.

The historic environment is a powerful force on both a local and national scale. Within communities it contributes towards a 'sense of place', which can in turn enhance a community's social networks (Clark 2019: 256–258; Graham *et al.* 2009: 28). On a larger scale, the historic environment can be used to shape concepts of identity. Castles are some of the most popular tourist attractions in the United Kingdom, attracting millions of visitors every year. Built to reinforce the power and status of a medieval ruling elite, hundreds of these ruins are now open to the public. As tools of conquest and expressions of authority, they can be used to explore identity in the past and the present. The castles built by Edward I in the 1280s to secure the conquest of Wales attract visitors from all over the world. The museums within these and other historic sites in Wales tell stories of conflict which have influenced Welsh national identity (Pitchford 1995: 49–50). Furthermore, the evolving management plan for the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd World Heritage Site notes that the rise of Welsh nationalism and cultural identity since the castles' original inscription in 1986 changes its cultural value, albeit with mixed emotions for the Welsh since the buildings are relics of conquest (Cadw 2016: 39–44). Meanwhile, in English history, particular events have a singular grip on the public consciousness, such as the battle of Hastings or the evacuation of Dunkirk. For many people their knowledge of the history around such events may derive from formal settings such as classrooms but also informal settings such as museums, popular culture, and films (Lyon *et al.* 2017: 9). This presents a challenge for cultural heritage sites in how they present the past: how do they strike the balance between highlighting the blockbuster moments in history and challenging the preconceptions people may bring with them. This can also challenge the

balance between telling local stories which are relevant to the community physically nearest a heritage site, and which therefore should derive some benefit, and the desire to present enough national and international context to provide familiar touchstones from history. Similarly, with public archaeology bridging the divide between the voluntary and professional archaeologist there needs to be a balance between perceptions of object-driven narratives and ideas of great places and presenting the past in a more engaging and nuanced way.

Community archaeology and museums use very different methods to inform their audiences about the past. Museums generally use carefully curated displays, with selected objects, interpretative text, images, and sometimes interactive elements, all of which contribute to an overall interpretative message about the site. The style, approach, and content varies greatly from site to site depending on a range of factors including available resources and interpretative frameworks. Sometimes there will be a route planned for the visitor, guiding their experience, while at other sites they can follow a more free-form route and make discoveries in their own time. Community archaeology, on the other hand, engages a local population in the hands-on exploration of their heritage, allowing them to participate in the construction of interpretative narratives. The relationship between professional and volunteer archaeologists on a community archaeology dig are very different to museum curator and visitor, because with the former the two groups are often in close contact and able to have conversations about the work as it evolves in the field – there is a shared dialectic (Gibb 2019: 3–5; Mitchell and Colls 2020: 17–19).

In 2018, a survey by English Heritage found that children's memories of historic sites, specifically castles, are more likely to derive from film and television than visiting a castle (English Heritage 2018). Ideas about the past become influenced by popular culture, but this offers an important opportunity for wider engagement. In 2015, Historic Scotland reported a 30% increase in the number of people visiting Doune Castle after it appeared in the television series *Outlander* (BBC News 2015). Two years later, the number of visitors to Framlingham Castle increased by 15% when it was mentioned in a song by popular musician Ed Sheeran (BBC News 2018). The impact of popular culture is evident, but beyond that there is a healthy level of interest in the historic environment. Every year tens of millions of people in the UK visit heritage sites, including 1.7 million schoolchildren in 2017 (Historic England 2018: 18). Beyond the influence of popular culture, there is also the challenge of the adoption of elements of history by the alt-right. One such example is their use of the symbolism of the crusades in Islamophobic acts (Bishop 2019: 246). Through social media, groups of people with a shared interest in the crusades and castles sometimes feature extremist and inflammatory content, including that of a xenophobic and white supremacist nature. In answering both popular clichés and potential extremist appropriations, it is the position of the authors of this chapter that heritage and archaeology professionals have a responsibility to present the past using strategies which challenge received wisdoms and stereotypes ripe for misuse – whether it is about the role of women in medieval society, or the makeup of communities that lived and worked in castles, often assumed to be predominantly male – and present the past in its complicated and messy truth and taking the opportunity to challenge the dominance of identity shaping episodes such as the battle of Hastings. It is a time consuming undertaking and it is a challenge to do so in a way which fits the format of heritage interpretation and public archaeology, often broken down into bite-sized chunks of information.

This chapter will explore the conceptual boundaries between experts and the public and how public archaeology and heritage interpretation can influence the public understanding of the past. This will be done through a series of case studies the authors have been involved with, examining the community archaeology digs at the castles of Buckton and Radcliffe Tower and new heritage displays at the English Heritage castles of Orford and Pevensey. Together they give insight into the practice of public archaeology and how a heritage body such as English Heritage approaches interpretation. Each case demonstrates how the public can engage with history and redefine the borders of their understanding.

Landmark community engagement at Buckton Castle

Built in the 12th or 13th century, Buckton Castle has attracted the interest of antiquarians and treasure hunters since the 1760s, although the first archaeological investigations were not carried out until the 1990s. The site, variously described as an Iron Age hillfort, Roman watch station (both interpretations disproved by excavation), and late medieval castle, lies on the edge of a sandstone escarpment some 4km to the north-east of Stalybridge at a height of *c.* 344m AOD in Tameside, Greater Manchester (SD 9892 0162). The moorlands of the southern Pennines rise above the site to the north and east where they reach a height of 500m AOD. To the east the site is bounded by Buckton Vale Quarry, and because of its proximity to this feature Buckton Castle was first protected as an Ancient Monument on 9 July 1924.

Its prominent position dominates the middle reaches of the Tame Valley and the castle earthworks, etched against the often slate-grey sky, remain a notable landmark lowering over the nearby village of Carr Brook and are visible to commuters using the nearby Manchester to Leeds railway line.

Between 1995 and 2002 the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit (UMAU) conducted a first phase of landscape survey, small-scale excavations, and remedial work, the latter repairing damage caused by illegal digging within the Scheduled Monument. This work was funded by Tameside Council as part of the Tameside Archaeological Survey, a community archaeology landscape research project that ran from 1990 to 2012. That project included the publication of an eight-volume monograph series about the history and archaeology of the borough (*A History and Archaeology of Tameside*) and a second monograph series focusing on key archaeological sites in the borough (*The Archaeology of Tameside*) (Nevell 2019: 114). A second, larger phase of investigation at Buckton was undertaken, also commissioned by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, and completed by the University of Salford; the three seasons of excavations between 2007 and 2010 were designed to assess the date, phasing, and extent of the surviving archaeological remains comprising the monument, with a significant community element (Figure 1) intended to widen local participation in the project and to provide training for local archaeology volunteers (Grimsditch *et al.* 2012: 57–60).

The fieldwork undertaken between 1995 and 1997 focused upon accurately recording the surviving earthworks of the castle and investigating an area to the north of the main earthworks through excavation. The earthwork survey showed that the absence of a ditch on the western side of the monument was due to the steepness of the slope rendering its presence redundant. A common school image of castles is the motte and bailey (often with a stone tower on a mound surround by inner and outer banks and walls), although this type of castle is just one variation amongst many. Prior to excavation, it was believed that Buckton might have had an outer bailey to the north of the monument (Nevell 1991). However, excavation work in the mid-1990s demonstrated that a pair of curving banks to the north of the site, the putative outer bailey, was of recent origin. These features were probably connected to earth moving activities associated with the construction of a Second World War decoy site in the early 1940s and the extension of the nearby quarry during the 1950s.

Damage to the interior of the monument in 1999 and again in 2002, caused by illegal digging, led to the excavation of a series of test pits within the damaged areas. These revealed details about the pre-castle landscape, in the form of buried land surfaces sealed by peat layers, and the make-up of the castle platform; radio-carbon dating indicated that a former land surface had been buried by upcast when the castle was built in the 12th century. The 2007 to 2010 excavations were focused upon defining the extent of the castle remains, examining the ditch, banks, curtain wall, parts of the interior and the original northern entrance and the post-medieval southern entrance, the latter of which would prove to be a later insertion. This indicated that the castle was built sometime during the 12th century with a curtain wall and gatehouse, and that it was probably unfinished. A key element of this second

Figure 1: The excavations team during the 2010 season of excavations at Buckton Castle. Volunteers were trained by archaeologists from the University of Salford Centre for Applied Archaeology

programme was the excavation of several sections of the ditch with the intention of locating datable artefacts and palaeoenvironmental deposits that would throw light upon the phasing of the monument and development of the landscape around the castle.

The Buckton Castle project was part of a wider conscious attempt at place building by the local council, using the heritage of the borough and the research of the Tameside Archaeological Survey. As the then-council leader of Tameside, Roy Oldham, noted at the start of the survey 'Until 1990 there had been no attempt to write a full-scale history of the area. This borough has a rich and interesting past and I felt that this should be documented so that we, and future generations, could increase our knowledge and understanding of our heritage' (Nevell 1991: iii). Writing in 2004, on the publication of the eighth and final volume of the *History and Archaeology of Tameside* series, Councillor Oldham noted that 'Taken together the complete set of volumes forms a comprehensive reference source on all aspects of Tameside's history. It is an area proud of its past, and one which is now on the brink of a new and exciting period with improved transport links, major opportunities for economic regeneration and industrial development, as well as enhanced leisure and cultural facilities' (Nevell and Walker 2004: vii). The role of archaeology and heritage, though, was still seen by the council leader as having a key part to play in the redevelopment of the borough. The aim was 'to continue with a programme of archaeological fieldwork and community-based projects which will lead to further publications on key archaeological sites in the *Archaeology of Tameside* series. Such work will supplement the *History and Archaeology of Tameside* volumes

which will continue to provide an essential resource for education, research, and tourism' (Nevell and Walker 2004: vii).

What began as a limited, academic project in 1990 had by 2004 evolved into a wider community-based archaeological survey, the fieldwork at Buckton Castle exemplifying the widening public involvement. Thus, the results of the earlier fieldwork at Buckton Castle, and the Tameside Archaeological Survey were used as the basis for a new, free, visitor centre in the basement of the town hall in Ashton-under-Lyne. This attraction, known as 'Setantii – Tales of Tameside', was dedicated to the archaeology and history of the borough, encompassed a family history centre, and was supported by a small team of heritage volunteers. Opened in 2002, the visitor centre featured aspects of life in Tameside, explained through site, sound and touch, from the Iron Age, though to the effects of the Roman, Viking and Norman occupations, the latter including Buckton Castle. There were depictions of local life from a late medieval market, through the development of industry and transport in the 18th and 19th century, the 19th-century battle to provide clean water using the Longdendale Reservoirs, to the recreation of a 1940s kitchen and a Second World War Anderson Shelter. Finally, there was a biographical feature on 'The People who Made Tameside' covering dozens of local Tameside individuals. The Setantii Visitor Centre welcomed 38,000 visitors in the year before it closed in 2012 due to reduced funding from the local council.

Other long-term outcomes of the fieldwork at Buckton Castle were the extension of the Scheduled Monument area around the site in November 1996 to encompass the earthworks to the north, and the establishment of the Tameside Archaeological Society in 1997 by volunteers involved with the fieldwork at Buckton Castle. This further raised the local profile of the castle, which in turn led to more public visits to the site and in this way the damage to the monument by treasure hunters in 1999 and again in 2002 was rapidly discovered.

The second phase of research at Buckton Castle, from 2007 to 2010, was designed around community involvement. During the three weeks of excavations in 2007 and 2008 and the four weeks of investigations in 2010, up to 20 individuals per day from various archaeological groups from the Greater Manchester area as well as the local community were involved in the investigations. The intention was to provide community archaeology training from the core of professional archaeologists (Grimsditch *et al.* 2012: 96–97). This represented over 360 person days using over 50 different people who completed all aspects of archaeological excavation and recording under the supervision and guidance of professional archaeologists from the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University Salford. The results of the excavation were shared in an article in *Current Archaeology* and an exhibition at the Portland Basin Museum, as well as a monograph.

Another outcome of the work undertaken at Buckton Castle was its impact on the development of the Dig Greater Manchester community archaeology project which ran from 2011 to 2016 (see below). Funding for this project was provided by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) plus Blackburn and Darwen Council using the model of annual support developed for Buckton Castle and the Tameside Archaeological Survey, perhaps not surprising since the AGMA lead for the project was the Tameside council leader, Roy Oldham.

Finally, the work at Buckton challenged the antiquarian view of the site's origins and form. Late 20th- and early 21st-century archaeological field techniques placed the castle's foundation firmly in the 12th and 13th centuries. It was probably associated with the earls of Chester, whilst landscape survey showed that it was part of a subgroup of enclosure castles. This fieldwork also disproved the notion that it was just an earthwork. Rather, Buckton was one of the earliest stone castles in North West England. The case study in the next section, Radcliffe Tower, also explores a site in Greater Manchester where community archaeology played an integral role in adding value to the site from archaeological and societal perspectives.

Radcliffe Tower, local community, and identity

Radcliffe, an industrial suburb of Greater Manchester, is centred on the 19th-century bridge across the River Irwell, roughly 9km north-west of Manchester. However, the original historic core of Radcliffe lies c. 1.5km to the east of the bridge within a great bend of the river. Here lie the remains of Radcliffe Tower (SD 7958 0751), one of the oldest structures in Greater Manchester, adjacent to the medieval church of St Mary and St Bartholomew. The present ruined tower at Radcliffe is just a fragment of a much larger complex built by the de Radclyffe family in the later medieval period and challenges the public's idea of what constitutes a castle. Radcliffe Tower is a defended manor with a peel tower, a type of site that emerged in the 14th and 15th centuries that was associated with the gentry rather than the nobility (Goodall 2011: 333–334). The community investigation allowed the complex history of the site and its relationship to the more visible defended sites of the late medieval period in the region to be explored and explained to a wider public.

Traditionally, the ruins are linked with the licence to crenellate, or fortify, the manor house issued on 15th August 1403 by Henry IV (Nevell *et al.* 2016: 7). The licence described the building James de Radclif was allowed to create; he was allowed 'to enclose his manor of Radclif ... with walls of stone and within them to make a hall with two towers of stone and to crenellate the walls, hall and towers and hold the manor as a fortalice' (Lyte 1905: 255). While James would have had some flexibility in what he built, not least because licences of this sort were often more important as status symbols (Davis 2006–2007: 227), it gave an indication of the key features the site may have possessed in the early 15th century.

The site of the hall and tower attracted the interest of local historians in the late 18th and 19th centuries, when it fell into ruin and the timber hall wing was demolished in the 1830s. A local campaign to save the ruined tower led to it being protected as a Scheduled Monument in June 1924 and as a Grade I listed building in July 1966. The site was bought by Bury Council in 1981 and conservation work undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s.

Excavations in 1961 inside the north-eastern corner of the tower failed to reveal any medieval archaeology beyond the wall foundations. However, excavation of five trenches by the Bury Archaeological Group in 1979–80 immediately west of the tower revealed the remains of a timber-framed wing (Tyson 1985). On the north-western side of the site, in Trench A, those excavations also found evidence of an outer wall fronted by a broad shallow ditch. This is believed to be contemporary with the construction of Radcliffe Tower and appears to have replaced an earlier ditch, set further to the south, which was recorded in Trench C. However, excavations in 2013 have thrown doubt on whether this was a ditch, or rather a trackway, and on the date of the wall, which might be a post-medieval feature.

In 2007, three evaluation trenches were dug along the modern haulage road by Oxford Archaeology North, which crosses the Scheduled Monument area. This work uncovered medieval and post-medieval remains, in the form of cobbled surfaces, a hearth, stone and clay foundations, and a stone culvert, to the west and north of the tower at a depth of c. 1m (Nevell *et al.* 2016: 12).

In 2011, Radcliffe Tower was chosen as one of the sites to be investigated by archaeologists from the University of Salford as part of a region-wide community project called 'Dig Greater Manchester' (Nevell 2019: 77; Thompson 2015: 151–152). The project was funded by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and Blackburn with Darwen Council (Nevell *et al.* 2016: 4–5). A two-week community excavation was undertaken in 2012 and found 19th-century housing south of the tower and earlier stone foundations associated with the complex. Additional support for community archaeology at Radcliffe Tower came from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2013, who grant-aided the Radcliffe Heritage Project. This was a partnership between Bury Council, Bury College, the University of Salford and local

Figure 2: Aside from the volunteers taking part in excavations, the Radcliffe Tower project drew significant interest from the local community

volunteers (Nevell *et al.* 2016: 6). The project was designed to inform interpretation and presentation of the remains and to consolidate the tower. The intention was to incorporate it within the neighbouring public park, thereby improving Close Park as a local community asset. In 2013 and 2014, the project partners excavated the site of the medieval hall range and dug within the tower itself. This confirmed that extensive remains of the foundations of the timber-framed hall range did survive, although most of the medieval deposits within the tower had been removed during the 19th century. A detailed survey was also undertaken by the volunteers of the surviving fabric of the tower, confirming that it originally had three stories, with a vaulted undercroft and heated rooms above accessed by a stone staircase. The Dig Greater Manchester project returned to the site in 2015 having chosen the site as one of two flagship community digs due to its popularity with volunteers (Nevell 2019). A six-week excavation stripped much of the site of the late medieval hall, recovering a regionally significant grouping of late medieval and early post-medieval pottery (Figure 2).

Dig Greater Manchester was a five-year community engagement project (2011–16), designed to widen participation in heritage within the Greater Manchester region (Nevell 2019: 77). The project aimed to provide community archaeology education and training across the region to explore the impact of community archaeology on participating individuals, local groups, and communities as well as to explore the impact of industrialisation in the region. This was done through excavating eleven sites in

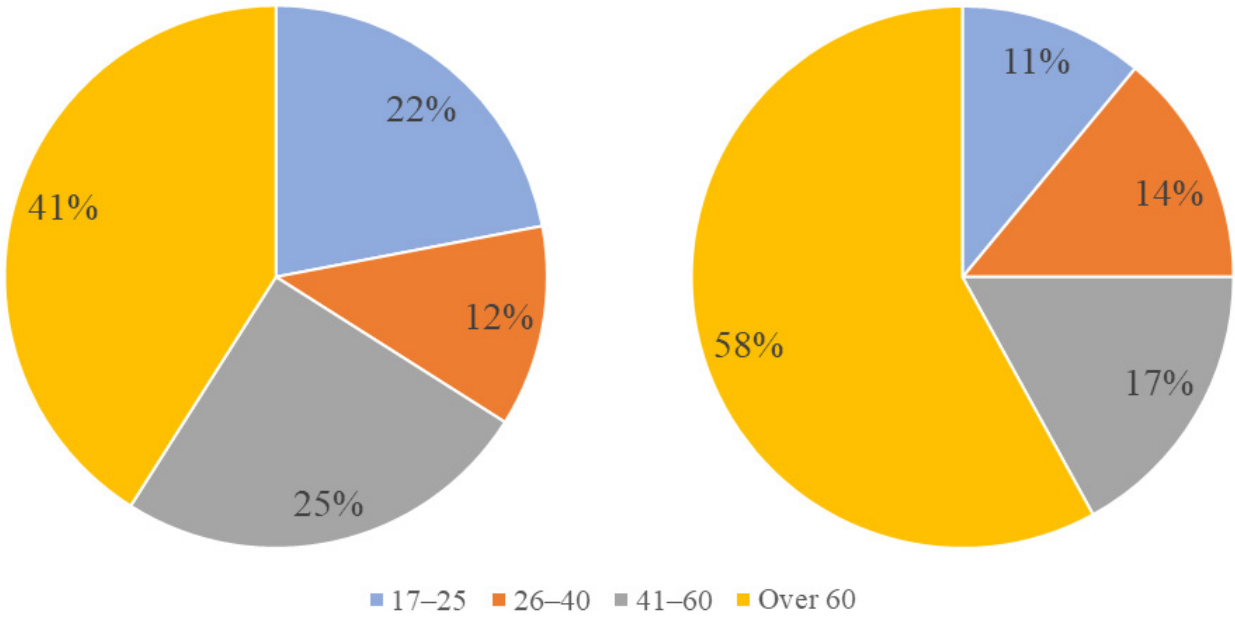

Figure 3. The age groups of volunteers taking part in excavations around Greater Manchester (Nevell 2019: 84). Left: age groups taking part in the DGM survey. Right: Age groups of volunteers at Radcliffe in the survey

Greater Manchester and one in Blackburn and Darwen Council. The project was run by the University of Salford's Centre for Applied Archaeology (*Cf*AA), in conjunction with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS). A small professional team oversaw the delivery of the project, with additional support from the staff of the *Cf*AA and the GMAAS. The late Brian Grimsditch (died 2015) managed the day-today delivery of the project along with Vicky Nash (community archaeologist) and Sarah Cattell (education archaeologist). Kirsty Lloyd joined the team in 2015 and Adam Thompson provided overall management of the project.

The philosophy of the project was to make these sites easily accessible to as wide a range of the public as possible, thereby encouraging participation, helped as all these sites were on publicly accessible local council land, close to bus, rail and tram routes. The eleven sites investigated by the project ranged from textile mill workers' housing and factory owners' houses to a farm, a cavalry barracks, and Radcliffe Tower, the oldest of the sites excavated.

The impact of the project was recorded in a variety of ways. Adult participants recorded in detail their experiences through a purposely-designed feedback form, whilst 66 lectures and 116 training workshops across 11 local authorities in the region were undertaken. At the time, Dig Greater Manchester was one of the largest community engagement projects in the UK, engaging 1588 adult volunteers 2,409 open day visitors, and 3,406 school children, as well as producing two conferences, two major publications, an exhibition, and an archaeology festival which closed the project in 2017 (Nevell 2019: 77–78).

1,588 individual adult volunteers participated in the project between 2011 and 2016. Of these 741 agreed to take part in the feedback survey, with 212 ultimately filling in the feedback forms, giving a sample size of 28.6% for those taking part. This was similar to the 25% response rate for community archaeology surveys run by the Council for British Archaeology in 2010 and 2018 (Thomas 2010; Frearson 2018). The gender split in those filling in the forms was 62% female and 38% male, and this reflected the

overall gender split on the eleven excavations. The breakdown of ages can be seen (Figure 3) and again, observation from the excavations and workshops indicated the responses to the survey was representative of the overall demographics of the participants. This also echoed the experience of local archaeology and heritage groups whose membership is focussed on those over 50 years of age, whilst those in their 20s and 30s are less likely to join. The adult volunteers at Radcliffe Tower could be broken down as follows. The gender split in the 35 volunteers filling in the forms at Radcliffe Tower was 68% female and 32% male, slightly higher for females than the overall gender split on the eleven excavations. Figure 3 also shows the age groups of the volunteers taking part in at Radcliffe Tower, with a greater share of over 60s represented than in the Dig Greater Manchester project as a whole.

29% of the adult volunteers participating in Dig Greater Manchester already belonged to a local archaeology or heritage group, whereas for just Radcliffe Tower this figure was higher at 34%. At the beginning of the project there were 14 local archaeology and heritage groups within Greater Manchester, with a membership in excess of 1,000. However, 71% of those volunteering and responding to the feedback form did not belong to a local heritage group. These individuals found out about the project in a range of ways from posters in the local library, local press reports and social media, to personal recommendation.

In terms of the activities undertaken on site, those individuals who did not already belong to a local group had the least experience of archaeology in terms of fieldwork. However, nearly all of the feedback respondents, 98%, had visited a heritage site within the previous 12 months. For the purposes of the feedback form a heritage site was described as either an archaeological site, historic building, historic park or garden, monument, museum, or heritage event. Of respondents, 5% thought that the interaction with the professional archaeologists was satisfactory (3% at Radcliffe), 23% good (23% at Radcliffe) and 71% very good (71% at Radcliffe). 92% of those questioned (but only 88% at Radcliffe) were interested in further archaeology or heritage training, whilst 65% (but just 63% at Radcliffe) would attend future community archaeology digs for a fee (Nevell 2019: 84–85).

Finally, 99% of the adult volunteers who responded described themselves as White British, although this figure for Radcliffe was slightly lower at 95%. This contrasted with the ethnicity of the school children visiting the site, who better reflected the ethnic make-up of Greater Manchester, which according to the 2001 census comprised 88.9% White, 6.5% Asian, 1.7% Black and 2.9% other (Nevell 2019: 85).

The Dig Greater Manchester Project also sought to examine how participation in community archaeological excavations with a mixture of volunteers from different local areas might encourage the emergence of a group-based place identity. Working with a psychology lecturer from the University of Salford, Dr Sharon Coen, the Dig Greater Manchester project undertook specific work on this topic. The 'I Dig' study aimed to explore, using qualitative methods, the idea of identity involved in participation in community-based archaeological initiatives. In particular, the Dig Greater Manchester project was interested in whether, and how, individual participation in the digs had an impact on the volunteers' identification with, and attachment to, the local area and the local community (Coen *et al.* 2017: 212–213).

Dr Coen and her team used focus groups with 24 participants (11 male and 13 female) in five areas of Greater Manchester (Chadderton, Manchester, Radcliffe, Salford and Stockport) involved in the project during 2014 and 2015. The 24 participants were selected to reflect the range of ages and occupational statuses and to ensure the sample included participants of both genders.

Focus groups were held, where possible, in local community spaces in the area where the digs had taken place to facilitate local participants. At each focus group the researcher welcomed participants and encouraged them to talk freely when the questions were asked but not to talk over one another. Each

focus group lasted between 50 and 60 minutes; they were recorded and transcribed with all identifying text removed.

Insights from the focus groups suggest, firstly, that place identity is a complex phenomenon and that the boundaries and characteristics of place and what it means to 'belong' to a place are continuously negotiated by individuals. Indeed, by participating in the dig, people for whom the local area is an important part of their identity move from a personal to a social (community-based) account of the local history and heritage. This in turn helped them to move from the concept of 'my' place to 'our' place. At the same time, although at an individual level people might not identify with the local area, by interacting with other members of the community and learning about the local heritage, they could develop a sense of belonging. Participants spontaneously referred to the importance of the 'Home' dig, thus illustrating how exploring heritage in the local area contributes to the development and strengthening of an individual's link to the local area and its community. A second important finding concerned the important role played by stories in fostering a sense of connection to a place (in terms of its history and heritage) as well as to the local community. This supports the literature on the important role that stories play in the narrative construction of the 'Self'. Coen also observed that the dig seemed to foster the emergence of a social identity (Coen *et al.* 2017: 220–222).

A limit on the study's conclusions was the self-selection of the sample: volunteers who offered to take part in the focus groups were in most (but not all) cases people who were particularly enthusiastic about the experience. This restricted the applicability of the results to the entire body of volunteers, whilst suggesting that future community archaeology projects might usefully employ a larger study sample.

The results of the community excavation at Radcliffe Tower fed into the renovation and extension of Close Park at a community asset, turning the area into a medieval heritage quarter for the borough. The park was upgraded through landscaping and new paths which extended the park to encompass the tower and the scrubland that formally surrounded it, in the process removing an old access road that ran by the tower down to a local gravel quarry. More direct heritage legacies were a series of information boards and heritage trails that included Radcliffe Tower and explained its origins and impact on the wider landscape. Finally, both projects left a legacy of trained heritage volunteers involved with managing the park, tower, and the local medieval parish church. These outcomes are probably the most significant long-term impacts of both the Dig Greater Manchester and Radcliffe Heritage projects.

The work at Radcliffe Tower showed how a community project can engage with complex site histories and identities. This complexity extended beyond the emerging role of the site as a late medieval defended manor house. The projected was able to shift the perception of those undertaking the fieldwork about the value of communal exploration and the significance of the contribution of the volunteers to this discovery process. Having considered the role of public archaeology, the following two case studies explore how museum interpretation can help the public address misconceptions.

Using Orford Castle to challenge preconceptions

The ruins of Orford Castle in Suffolk (TM 4194 4987) look very different to the recognisable and imposing great towers at Kenilworth or the Tower of London. The keep stands on its own without the curtain walls that are an integral part of castles such as Corfe or Goodrich, leaving it looking almost naked; they are conspicuous by their absence. The centuries-old tower combines a central drum with rectangular towers in a way that has very few parallels. Sir Arthur Churchman bought the castle and gave it to the Orford Town Trust in 1928, and was transferred to the Ministry of Works in 1962 (Brindle 2018: 40). The castle remains an important part of local identity, and the Orford Museum moved into the castle's upper hall in 2005 (Orford Museum 2017). This was the setting for a new interpretation programme carried

out by English Heritage between 2016 and 2019, with a new guidebook prepared by Stephen Brindle and visitor experience developed by Richard Nevell, Angharad Brading, and external contractors ATS Heritage and Leach. To ensure that the castle's value to the community was maintained, the project worked with the curator of the Orford Museum to ensure consistency across content. In doing so, the project sought to address a number of preconceptions about castles and the Middle Ages, from the role of women to the notion that everything was designed around defence.

Before the project began, on-site interpretation rested primarily on the guidebook and an audio guide; the only interpretation panels were to be found in the castle's upper hall as part of the exhibitions curated by the Orford Museum. While the audio guide was free, the guidebook was an additional cost. Although the Orford Town Museum displays mentioned the castle, they focused on the history of the town rather than the castle specifically. In the same way that the Setantii Visitor Centre involved volunteers and told the history Buckton Castle and its surrounding area, the Orford Museum's content explores the history of the wider area beyond the castle and draws on the resources of the local history society. Its position near the top of the castle also meant that by the time people arrived at it they had usually already experienced most of the castle. There was therefore an opportunity to introduce a new approach to the public presentation and it was decided to install interpretation panels complemented by a multimedia guide populated with reconstruction drawings, animations, and voice actors to help visitors explore the site, as well as produce a new guidebook. As the residents of the area have a vested interest in the castle, English Heritage arranged an open day to give them a preview of the content of the multimedia guide and to seek their feedback to improve and adapt what was being presented to the public.

Castles are typically presented to the public as male-dominated spaces. A survey of five guidebooks produced by Historic Environment Scotland since 2007 found that named men far outnumbered named women, from as high as 14 to 1 with a low of 7 to 1 (Dempsey *et al.* 2019: 357). In part, this is due to the nature of the historical sources available, which typically focus on men; however, as Dempsey *et al.* (2019: 357) noted in the case of Threave Castle, two named royal women were absent from the guidebook's narrative until the 2017 edition, even though they had both lived at the castle. Considering that a fifth of castle owners in England and Wales between 1272 and 1422 were women (Rickard 1999: 38–39), ratios between 14:1 and 7:1 in Scotland fall short enough to suggest there may be other factors contributing to the disparity. Perhaps one such factor is the well-established format of guidebooks, typically split into sections giving a guided tour of the site and another detailing the history of the owners (Dempsey *et al.* 2019: 363). This familiarity in format may contribute to re-treading familiar narratives even when writers are consciously trying to tell a story which is not just about the male elite in medieval society. Orford Castle's history is littered with named men, and unusually for a 12th-century castle we know the name of the person who oversaw the construction (Brindle 2018). Its early history in particular was shaped by some larger-than-life characters, especially Henry II (for whom it was built), Thomas Becket (on whose confiscated land it was founded), and Hugh Bigod (a powerful earl who held the nearby castle at Framlingham). The challenge was to explore this history without marginalising the role of women. The multimedia guide took an approach to exploring the spaces within the castle and how they would have been used, while the guidebook detailed the overall history of the castle. This gave English Heritage the opportunity to foreground people who might otherwise be overlooked.

It was especially important to visibly include women since 'the past is peopled in the minds of most academics by a 'norm' consisting of adult males, which marginalises and makes invisible both women and children' (Crawford and Lewis 2009: 10). Compounding this, castles are often presented as masculine spaces to the exclusion of all else (Gilchrist 1999: 121). The audio guide being replaced had a single narrator leading visitors from room to room. For the multimedia guide a range of characters were chosen through which to explore the history of the castle: male and female, young and old, elite and non-elite. The characters in the multimedia guide would appear in the illustrations on the display panels (Figure

4), creating continuity across both forms of interpretation.

The concept of gendered space within medieval households was represented in the audio guide, which described the chamber in the mezzanine above the upper hall as a 'lady's chamber'. The reason for this interpretation is unclear, but may have been generated by the room's relative privacy and seclusion, linking to the idea that 'Given the crowded nature of the accommodation (in castles generally), it was probably best for everyone, especially the women themselves, if they kept away' (McNeill 1992: 29). Spatial analysis by Amanda Richardson (Richardson 2003: 163) has found that within medieval palaces queens' chambers were typically further from public areas and ceremonial spaces than those belonging to the king. This reflects a different kind of authority and role in the social hierarchy to that of the king, but does not necessarily negate it altogether. At Orford, the chamber in the mezzanine above the upper hall is today inaccessible without a ladder, and in the Middle Ages would have been accessed by a gantry running behind the timber ceiling of the upper hall. There is gendered space within the castle, as indicated by the presence of a urinal in a passage to one of the chambers, however there is little to indicate this particular room was specifically a female domain. Moreover, the lack of a heat source within the room and an absence of natural light along what would have been the only access route suggests this was not a space for high-status members of the household. In describing the room as a 'lady's chamber' and attempting to highlight the presence of women the audio guide had physically distanced them from the visitor as the room itself cannot be reached today.

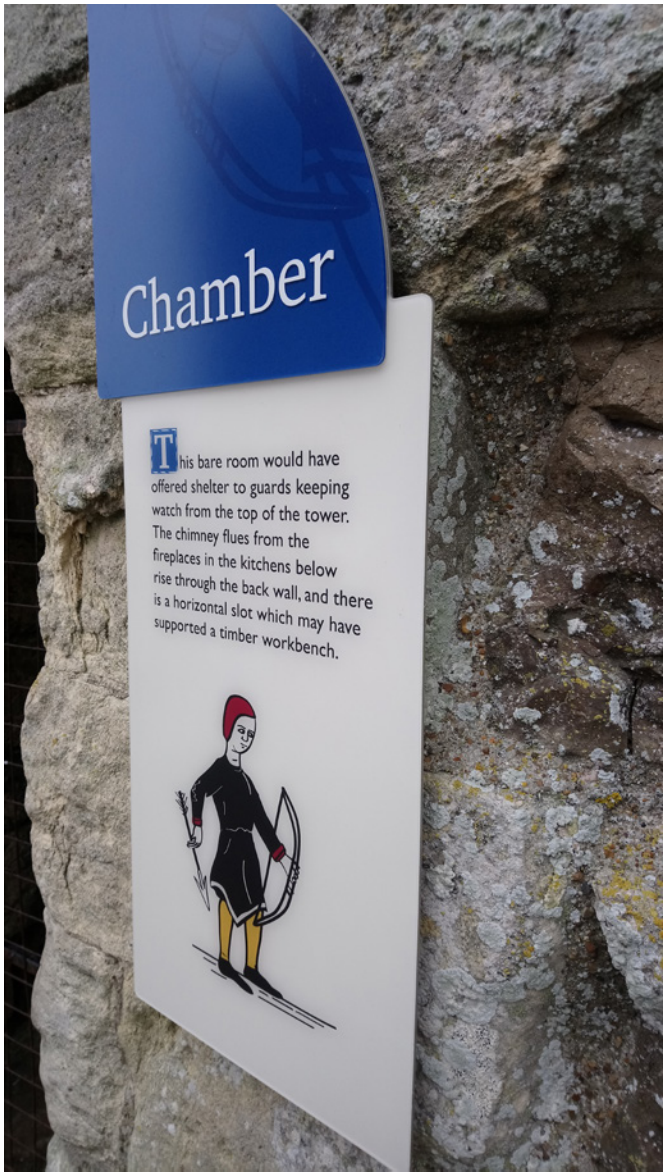

Figure 4. Before displays panels were installed at Orford Castle in 2019, visitors' options for interpretation were the audio guide (free) or guidebook (not free)

In the multimedia guide, the array of characters included the constable's wife – Isabella, who married Bartholomew de Glanville, a constable in the 1170s. This created the opportunity to show to the reader that elite women had some power in the Middle Ages and would be head of the household in their husband's absence. As such, the character introduces visitors to the upper hall, an elite space within the castle, and explains her role. In the reconstruction drawing of the upper hall there was a conscious decision to ensure that she was present but to avoid activities such as sewing which are popularly conceived as being female.

While the content of the pre-existing audio guide was generally accurate, on one notable occasion it included a widely held assumption which is not backed up by evidence. It stated that the average

person's height in the Middle Ages was 160cm (5' 3"). With audio guides, the underlying sources are essentially invisible, so where this comes from is a matter of speculation. The short height of medieval people is one of a series of stereotypes in popular circulation, including the widely held misconception that medieval people did not wash (Harvey 2020). These notions probably derive from the assumption that living standards were lower (Ohio State University 2004). A study of skeletal remains from England found that average heights fluctuated over time, but around AD 1100 the average height of an adult male was 173cm (5' 8"), close to the average height of an adult male in England today (Galofré-Vilà *et al.* 2018). This belongs in the same category as the notion that spiral stairs in castle rose clockwise so as to hinder right-handed attackers (English Heritage 2020; Marnell 2016). A wide ranging study of spiral staircases in medieval buildings found that while most were clockwise (70% in castles) a large minority were anticlockwise (30%), there was no indication that there was an intention to hinder attackers. They were more important as a status symbol (Ryder 2011: 294, 303–304). Both of Orford Castle's spiral staircases – one spanning the height of the castle and the other providing access between the lower hall and the mezzanine above – fall into the category of clockwise spirals. Addressing an inaccurate narrative requires more than simply removing the initial inaccuracy as it can take on a life of its own, and silences in interpretation invite substitutions from other sources of knowledge (Jones and Nevell 2016); for a myth as widespread and often repeated as this, an explicit rebuttal is needed while substituting an alternative explanation. Hence, within the content in the multimedia guide was a description of the spiral staircase which addressed its use, noting that it was designed to be wide so as to act as a means of display.

When creating content for a museum it is important that it is accessible and engaging to ensure the message reaches the audience. The new interpretation at Orford Castle attempted to challenge preconceptions about the past that people bring with them to historic sites, addressing some issues directly while also shifting the focus of the narrative around the castle. In doing so, the project reached out to the local community in the form of the Orford Museum and an open day for local residents. The feedback forms were largely positive, with suggestions that helped improve the guide; perhaps the biggest endorsement of the content came from a visiting school, where the children would listen to the guide and then repeat what they'd just heard to their friends because they found it interesting.

Challenging preconceptions is a worthwhile endeavour but one which has to be handled carefully. Myth busting has an allure that spawned a long-running television series based on the concept, but the enjoyment lies in the journey from 'a lot of people think that...' to 'here is what we think now we have done some experiments'. In a museum setting, there is typically little scope for that kind of discussion around minor issues, so the key challenge is to present the information to the audience in such a way that it makes visitors feel that they have learnt from the experience rather than feeling foolish for believing something incorrect or talked down to. The multimedia guide was an effective way of doing this, with snippets of content people can engage with in their own time and with a tone that encouraged people to explore their surroundings. Importantly, the open day also gave the local community the opportunity to be involved in the interpretation process, enhancing their involvement with local heritage. The next case study also explores the public presentation of a historic site, one where its complex history resonates with modern discussions of national identity.

Exploring complex histories at Pevensey Roman Fort and Castle

Sitting on England's south coast, about four miles north-east of Eastbourne, the history of Pevensey Castle (TQ 6444 0477) spans more than 1,700 years. Such is the allure of the area's storied past that local councils, tourist boards, and commercial partners created the '1066 Country' brand. That Norman invasion and especially the battle of Hastings are key touchstones of English history and both appear

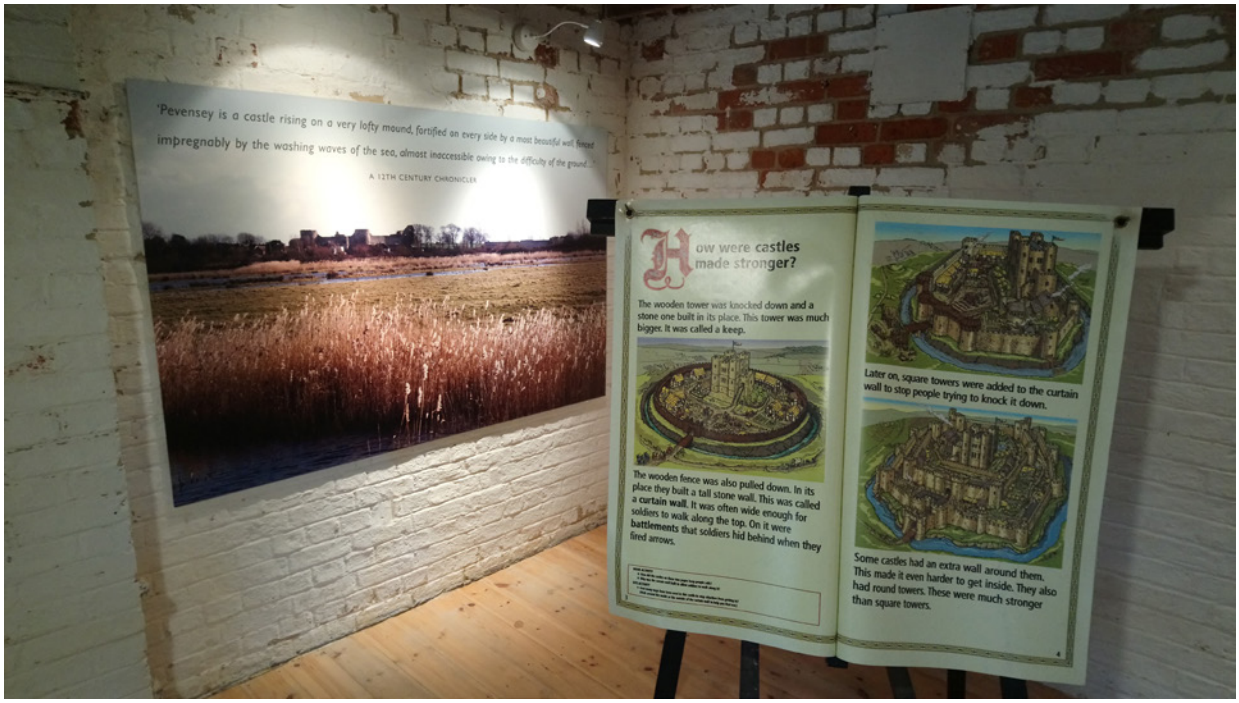

Figure 5: Some of the displays in the north tower at Pevensey Castle that were replaced in 2019. The large book on display is commonly found at English Heritage castles; it tells a story of a generalised evolution of castle design, putting emphasis on the defences

in the syllabi for AQA and OCR. In 2019, the English Wikipedia article on the battle of Hastings was read more than 800,000 times (WMFLabs Toolforge 2020), placing it in the top 0.5th percentile of the most read pages amongst the 15,514 articles related to the history of England.

Between 2017 and 2020, English Heritage refreshed the interpretation at Pevensey Castle. A new guidebook was written by Roy Porter and new displays and exhibitions prepared by a team including Will Wyeth, Richard Nevell, Mary Canham, Kathryn Bedford, and external contractors Anonymous Associates. Pevensey is a complex site with a rich history, and this presented a number of challenges when English Heritage began the process of renewing on-site interpretation in 2017, two of which will be considered here. Firstly, though the site is called 'Pevensey Castle' it is in fact a medieval castle built in the corner of Roman fort. This naming convention primes the visitor to expect a medieval site, but the first ruins they encounter are nearly a thousand years older than the surviving core of the castle. It also invites confusion over whether a Roman fort is a castle. As a site with links to William the Conqueror it is important to balance this with other aspects of Pevensey's history, and ensure that these are not drowned out. Visitor expectations influence the approaches to presentation taken by curators and museum professionals (Crane 1997: 47), and in the context of Pevensey the importance of 1066 acknowledged across the region would need to be addressed. The other challenge was that the project began at a time when nationalist sentiment was at the forefront of public consciousness due to Brexit. Some news stories explicitly linked Pevensey's Roman history to Brexit, exacerbating the challenge of how to present this episode of history.

The castle and Roman fort at Pevensey provide different experiences to the visitor, though in theory they are co-located. The Roman fort occupies an area of nearly four hectares, the high outer walls presenting an imposing façade which encloses an area lacking in visible Roman features. This part of the site later became the castle's outer bailey. Public access to this area is free, while entry to the castle's

inner bailey is paid for. Anecdotally, many visitors will come right to the pay barrier, peer around the inside of the castle, before leaving having already 'experienced' the Roman part of the site. While there are external display panels in both the inner and outer baileys, the key areas of interpretation are in the north and east towers (Figure 5), which is not immediately clear from the entrance to the inner ward. The pay barrier which helps to fund the running of the site also presents a barrier to participation and public engagement. At Pevensey in particular, it is possible to experience the site without crossing the pay barrier; arguably the castle looks more impressive from the outside, and the Roman fort is an ideal place for picnics and young families to explore and run about. A small number of interpretation panels also allow visitors in the free area to experience part of the curated interpretation. The blurring of the lines between Roman fort and medieval castle were in fact sharpened by the division between the two as a result of the ticket barrier.

Visitors are greeted at each of the Roman fort's two entrances by panels briefly outlining the site's history and presenting the juxtaposition between fort and castle. Reinforcing the idea that Pevensey's history spans multiple successive periods, the display panels encountered across the site as a result of the new interpretation project are colour-coded and use icons to indicate the different periods. At an early stage, it was decided that presentation should touch on five main periods in the site's history:

1. Roman, covering its foundation and early use;
2. early medieval, including Anglo-Saxon use of the site;
3. high medieval, including the Norman Conquest;
4. later medieval, including the mid-13th century when the extant stone walls were built;
5. and post-medieval, including Second World War.

While most of the extant remains are Roman or medieval, the 20th-century conflict also left its mark. Pillboxes were built into the ruins and camouflaged, while the north and east towers of the inner ward had floors and brick-encased rooms added so they could be used as offices and accommodation (Foot 2006: 512–519). From an early stage, the Second World War additions were appreciated for their significance, and the parish council petitioned the Office of Works to allow them to remain in place as it 'would form an excellent memorial of the recent war' (Anon 1946). This era was underrepresented in the on-site interpretation being replaced. The introductory panel at the west gate of the Roman fort mentioned the 1940 additions in passing, while amongst the ten display panels in the exhibition space in the North Tower there was a single paragraph of text discussing the war, with the focus on changes to the fabric of the buildings rather than the people at the castle. As part of the reinterpretation project, the empty ground floor room in the east tower was converted into an additional exhibition space. The intention was to use this to explore the history of the castle during the Second World War. A rotating cast of units were based at the castle, which included British, Canadian, and American forces. It was also important to use the opportunity to explore how the troops interacted with the inhabitants of the area. English Heritage organised an open day for members in the area, so they could preview some of the content of the exhibition before it was finalised. Based on the comments and questions throughout the day, the castle's 20th-century history was important to people from the area, who were often more than passingly familiar with it. Evacuation was mentioned, which had reduced the number of people living in the area although official and personal records in the form of war diaries and retrospective accounts show that there was still a lively community in the area running businesses and billeting and socialising with the soldiers. The Canadian war diaries were the most detailed with reflections on life in Pevensey and how welcomed the soldiers were made to feel. There are folders upon folders of relevant war diaries held in the National Archives, but it was possible to reproduce a small number of items to give visitors a sense of life in Pevensey during the war.

Showing that the story of Pevensey involved people from Canada and the United States as well as those from Britain was given extra importance with the political events unfolding on the national stage. During discussions around Brexit, there was the often-repeated idea that the United Kingdom was a country that could 'go it alone'. The Second World War has been prominent in British identity in the later 20th and 21st century, and during the Brexit debate it was used to justify both leaving the European Union and remaining. The wartime history of Pevensey is important to its residents and preserved in local memory. It is also important that this was not just British history, but involved people from many different countries and backgrounds.

People looked to the past for historical precedent, and in doing so some referred to an episode in Pevensey's Roman history. In 286, Carausius revolted against emperors Diocletian and Maximian and established his own rule over Britannia and some areas of Gaul; Carausius died in 293 and was succeeded by Allectus who styled himself as emperor. He was defeated in 296 and Britain taken back into the Empire (Casey 2004). When a gold coin from Allectus' reign was discovered in Kent and put on sale in 2019 it was perhaps inevitable that someone would make a link to Brexit. In its coverage, *The Express* used the headline 'THE FIRST BREXITEER! Rare Roman coin features Emperor who took Britain OUT of Roman Empire' (Millar 2019). Once a discovery or piece of research becomes public knowledge, those behind it may have limited control over how it is interpreted and understood. The way in which any archaeology discovery in Europe can be linked back to Brexit – whether positively or negatively – has been articulated as 'the Brexit hypothesis'. How a discovery or piece of research is initially presented is of integral importance to how it is received the proposers of the hypothesis suggest that researchers have a responsibility to consider how their work may be used (Brophy 2018: 1650–1651, 1656). Nearly three years earlier letters in the *Financial Times* had sought classical parallels for Brexit, one invoking Honorius and another Carausius (Horsington 2016). In *The Express* piece, the past was being related to the current politic climate to make it more relevant to readers. It also reinforced a particular view on the national identity, analogous to that observed by Pitchford (1995), this time depicting Britain as taking part in a historic struggle for independence from European rule. Myths of origins, resistance, and collapse are closely linked to political identities, as explored by Bonacchi *et al.* (2018: 182–186) within the context of the public understanding of the Roman Empire. It worth is noting, however, that studies such as that of Gardner (2017) have also sought to explore the construction of identities in 4th- and 5th-century Britain and exploring parallels with Brexit.

Pevensey's position on the south coast gives it a prominent part in many of England's conflicts. The fort was founded in the 290s when Carausius attempted to establish his own authority; William the Conqueror landed here in 1066; it was prepared for war again in 1588 with the expectation of a Spanish invasion; and most recently refortified during the Second World War. The transition from Roman to sub-Roman Pevensey is an opportunity for a curator to explore the end of Roman rule in Britain. The narrative of 'barbarian' attacks on the Roman Empire leading to its collapse have become a 'myth of collapse' which is an important part of political identity. In context of discussions around Brexit, pro-Leave groups tend to ascribe the collapse of the empire to not just invasions, but the assimilation of other peoples into the empire (Bonacchi *et al.* 2018: 184–185).

There are plenty of episodes in the site's history that can be used to reinforce divisions between England and Europe. Mentioning Brexit in the displays would have been incongruous, with the interpretation taking visitors up to the mid-20th century, and would have quickly become dated. A talk in 2018 titled 'The Ashbourne Treasure, the emperor Carausius and the First Brexit' by a curator from the British Museum drew some scepticism about the legitimacy of such a comparison, not least because Carausius attempted to portray himself as having the same authority as the emperors rather than being different to them; his aspiration was to be treated on the same terms as the emperors, rather than become established as a different kind of authority (Barford 2018). The social divisions highlighted and exacerbated by Brexit

are not easily dealt with. People coming to Pevensey are not looking to better understand Brexit, indeed the choice to visit a historic site may speak to a desire to escape from modernity. However, curators, historians, and archaeologists need to be careful about how their work is used by others. This cannot afford to be laissez faire as leaving a void of interpretation or information because it is problematic or uncomfortable will result in people perusing more readily available information, regardless of quality. Even being proactive in messaging does not guarantee information will not be misunderstood. As noted by Brophy (2018) archaeological research within a European context has a tendency to be used to justify or disparage Brexit, and there is therefore a responsibility for researchers to consider how to present their findings to mitigate against their misuse.

The interpretation at Pevensey sought to tackle the gap between what people expect a castle to be and its messy complexity. Beyond the idea of knights in shining armour, there were men, women, and children living in the castle every day, going about their lives. The reconstruction drawing of the castle in the mid-13th century foregrounded these activities, challenging preconceptions that people may subconsciously bring with them. Within the museum space, the objects on display illustrate both domestic and martial life and show that while Pevensey had its local context it also had international links, with some items such as glass being traded over great distances. The complexities of the past may not make the complexities of the present any more palatable, but by providing a context within which people are guided through an educational and engaging piece of history, they may bring an open mindset to other contexts.

Discussion and conclusion

In the 21st century, information is easier to access than ever before and there is an undoubted appetite for history, whether in the form of popular culture or formats which aim to be more factual. With this demand, there is a need for heritage professionals from the archaeology and the museum sector to engage with the public. High-quality accessible information is integral to helping the public understand the past, and the absence of such information does not mean the public stop engaging with a subject, but it can distort their understanding of it. Exploring unfamiliar narratives of the past can help both groups – heritage professional and the public – better understand the past and its value to communities. While well-known events from history have the ability to draw people in, it is important to use this as an opportunity to discuss new and interesting ideas rather than inadvertently reinforce misconceptions. Community archaeology and museums represent two complimentary prongs in this approach, operating on different scales and giving the public different ways to engage with the past.

In its approach in being explicitly run for local groups, community archaeology has the potential to transform how people understand their area. The volunteer survey of those who took part in excavations at Radcliffe Tower demonstrated that the activity helped cultivate a sense of place. The history of their area had become something they could participate in rather than observe; in working alongside professional archaeologists to better understand a site, the volunteers felt greater connection to the area. The excavations at Buckton Castle showed another benefit of breaking down barriers between professionals and volunteers: they became enthused about the subject and founded the Tameside Archaeological Society to continue working on heritage projects after the conclusion of the excavations at Buckton Castle.

Free and easy access to information in informal settings allows people to engage with history in a way in which they feel comfortable, but without an expert hand to guide, it can be harder to discern good information from popular misconceptions. Museums have a vital role to fill, bridging the gap between formal education in schools and universities, and easy-to-access information promulgated through popular culture. They can highlight the martial role of a castle, for instance, without reflecting the variety of activities and everyday life that happened at such sites. Part of what the exhibitions

at Pevensey Castle attempted to do was to help people understand that life in a castle encompassed rich and poor, soldier and civilian. Within a museum setting people can choose how they engage with content, with a less rigid format than a lecture theatre or documentary. Museum displays aim to convey information succinctly and clearly which can be a challenge when dealing with complex stories or tackling misconceptions. While this may be a difficult balance, it should not deter heritage professionals from attempting it and at Orford Castle there was a conscious decision to address some myths directly, while subverting others without making it explicit.

Archaeologists, historians, and heritage professionals have much to gain from engaging with the public, whether in project design or implementation. Shared ownership of activities can lead to a greater feeling of shared ownership of the past, helping drive people to further explore and preserve it. For fields regularly under financial threat, the need to demonstrate their own value is ever present. There is a vast audience interested in the past, and archaeologist and historians – not just those already working with the public – have an opportunity to engage with those who are interested.

Borders can be conceptual as well as physical, and the case studies in this chapter set out to explore the boundaries between heritage professionals and the public, and the public's understanding of the past, specifically the preconceptions people have when visiting historic sites. At Pevensey, the site's position on England's south coast meant it was populated by many different nationalities and ethnicities through its history, from Romans and Anglo-Saxons to Normans Savoyards, and Americans and Canadians. What might appear on the surface to be an example of an English castle is in fact an agglomeration of different influences which combine to make Pevensey unique. It is important to highlight these influences, otherwise history becomes reduced to well-known events such as the Norman Conquest or the Hundred Years' War – events which can easily translate into modern-day nationalist and political narratives, especially when centred around borders.

Dissolving boundaries between the public and heritage professionals adds value to historic sites and the communities involved, as demonstrated by the projects at Radcliffe Tower and Buckton Castle. At Orford and Pevensey opportunities were taken to help the public better understand how castles functioned. At each of these sites, engaging with the public was a long-term project with investment of time and money. Such resources are rarely in ample supply but are hugely beneficial. Conceptual frameworks can be a barrier that undermine the interpretative and engagement work of heritage professionals. A consequence is that the public become divorced from their local heritage through a lack of opportunity to engage with that past, whilst public historians have to spend limited resources reiterating their messages. If projects can include an element of public engagement, not only will the local community, volunteers and professionals benefit from this participation but there will be a wider benefit for the knowledge ecosystem. A thriving cultural heritage sector with active public engagement can create shared ownership of the past in a way which empowers people rather than excludes them. If specialists are not actively communicating their expertise, that void will be filled by other, less well-informed, sources, opening the door for the co-option and misuse of the past.

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Roman Walls, Frontiers and Public Archaeology

An interview with Rob Collins

What are the specific challenges for a public archaeology of Roman frontiers? In an interview conducted by Howard Williams (HW) on 24 January 2020, Rob Collins (RC) introduces his background and expertise, perceptions and approaches to this question. Focusing on RC's recent and ongoing work in northern Britain focusing on the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, the interview provides context for his current role with WallCAP (the Hadrian's Wall Community Archaeology Project).[1]

Introduction

Within Roman frontier studies, and the cross-disciplinary investigation of frontiers and borderlands more broadly, Hadrian's Wall looms large. The Wall is not only prominent in debates regarding how ancient frontiers operated and possessed military, socio-economic and politico-ideological import. In addition, Hadrian's Wall presents a well-known success story in the conservation, management and heritage interpretation of a Roman frontier to a host of local, national and international publics and audiences.

Transcribed by the editors and augmented with additional comments and relevant citations by the interviewee, the chapter surveys RC's career and his perspectives on Roman frontier studies writ large. It proceeds to explore not only the nexus of organisations, institutions and stakeholders involved in conserving, managing and interpreting Hadrian's Wall, it also tackles current community-based and digital media initiatives, emphasising in particular the strengths and challenges of telling a story of imperial military might and civilian life. The complex connectivities of Hadrian's Wall with present-day British, English and Scottish nationalisms and their attendant ethnicities and ideas of multiculturalism are addressed. Furthermore, the Wall's many relationships with fictional (including fantastical) frontier works are considered. The chapter concludes with discussions of what the future might hold for Hadrian's Wall, making this publication the first-ever critical reflection on the public archaeology of Roman frontiers.

Background

HW: Can you give us a narrative explaining your background and expertise in Roman frontier studies?

RC: My undergraduate degree was a four-field Anthropology background in a US university, with a strong focus on cultural anthropology. The programme also covered biological anthropology and evolutionary ecology, as well as socio-linguistics, but it was always archaeology classes that interested me the most. I really liked the medieval period, and from my earliest childhood I loved stories of King Arthur and Robin Hood. As a teenager, I realised that I could further study the historical era – the 5th and 6th centuries AD – associated with Arthur and that archaeology was essential to understanding those centuries. Then, when I was looking for graduate programmes, there weren't any medieval archaeology programmes I liked in the US, and hence I came to the UK and to the University of York. The MA Medieval Archaeology was excellent, and there where those who went on to achieve successful archaeological careers in our year on other Masters degrees – Aleks McClain, Steve Ashby and James Gerrard. In retrospect, it was a bit of a hot house. I stayed on to do a PhD, which I self-funded through part-time registration.

[1] https://wallcap.ncl.ac.uk/

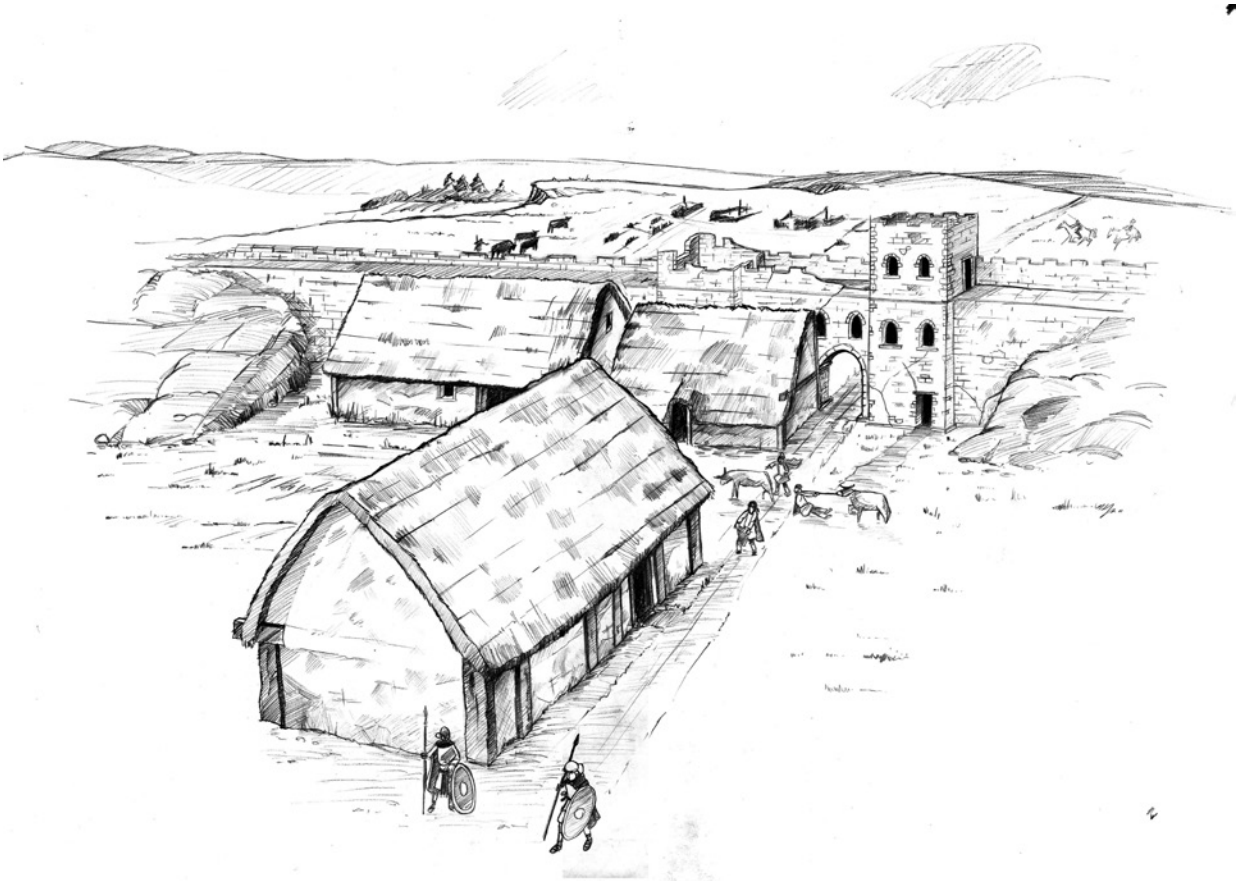

Figure 1: A reconstruction drawing of the last phase of timber hall at Birdoswald, with other timber-built structures in the background (Drawing by Mark Hoyle. Source: Rob Collins)

This is a longer way of saying that I came to Roman frontiers studies late in my career development. Only during my Masters dissertation did I become aware of Hadrian's Wall and frontier studies as a viable field in its own right. It was a light-bulb moment, and when I reflected back on the topics I always found most interesting in high school history and undergraduate classes, I realised that I had always been interested in frontiers and related themes, like culture contact, the impacts of colonialism, and conflicts between cultures. The other intellectual interest that my MA rekindled was the collapse of complex societies. Joseph Tainter's (1990) classic study of this was one of the most influential books I read during my undergraduate years.

So, while doing my MA in Medieval Archaeology at York studying the 5th and 6th centuries, whilst working on my dissertation, ideas about Hadrian's Wall were brought to the front of my mind. In particular, I became interested in what was happening in the 5th-century occupation at Birdoswald which had been recently published (Wilmott 1997). Tony Wilmott had argued that occupation at that Roman fort had continued from the late Roman period into the early medieval period, and that there was a sequence of post-Roman halls (Figure 1). The notion of whether the Wall and the wider frontier really collapsed hooked me!

HW: Tell us a bit more about your doctoral research and how that developed your interest and expertise.

RC: It developed directly out of my Master's thesis, which assessed 5th-century occupation on and around Hadrian's Wall. However, I had come to the conclusion during my MA dissertation research that no one had critically or consistently examined the archaeological evidence for the purported collapse

Figure 2: A composite image of Anglo-Saxon type brooches reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme that helped identify a new early medieval site at Etal, Northumberland. The brooches shown (left-right, top then bottom) are: NCL-1C82E5; NCL-7D2D81; NCL-424F24; NCL-577124; NCL-FBFB61; NCL-BE3AD2; NCL-7F3297; NCL-C74394 (Photographs by Rob Collins, individual brooch photos are copyright of the PAS)

or abandonment of Hadrian's Wall, or any other Roman frontiers for that matter. Frequently, the focus of Roman frontier scholars is centred around the formation of the frontier, not what was happening at the end. My MA research also led to the insight that many scholars were assessing the evidence for the late Roman period with the bias or expectations of their expertise for the early Roman period. The more I learned about the late Roman Empire, particularly the army, and frontier societies more generally, I felt sure that I was on to something. I was inspired by the aforementioned work of Tony Wilmott (1997) at Birdoswald, and in particular the warband model that his excavations supported for the post-Roman occupation there. This led me into my doctoral thesis, in which I systematically reviewed all the excavated evidence for occupation along Hadrian's Wall in the 4th–6th centuries AD, as well as other Roman military sites in northern *Britannia*. I was able to identify a number of recurring practices or trends at Roman forts. Looking in detail at the dating information, I was then able to identify that many of these changes were occurring in the 4th century, particularly the later 4th century as well as the 5th and 6th centuries. This was important, as many of these changes – which were often dismissed by other scholars as evidence of decline – were occurring before the formal separation of Britain from Roman imperial authorities, yet we knew that the Roman army garrisoned the Wall and broader frontier until the end. I argued that the structural changes made to the organisation of the Roman army, notably the formal establishment of the *limitanei* (fixed frontier soldiers) and the command of the *dux Britanniarum* (a general for the northern British frontier) coincided with a regionalisation of the late Roman army, such that the Wall garrison was not withdrawn, nor did it collapse. It was already undergoing changes by AD 400, and those military communities continued to live at Roman forts and adapted through the course of the 5th century, regardless of the political connection to a distant Roman emperor (Collins 2012, 2013b, 2017a).

HW: Has that been the primary focus of your research since?

RC: Improving our understanding of the late and post-Roman Wall has been a consistent pursuit, but I've expanded out from that. Following my PhD, working for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (Figure 2), I acquired a lot of the skills that come with working with small-finds in a very practical sense that

I never could have acquired as a doctoral student. This allowed me to utilise portable material culture when evaluating the Roman-early medieval transition more closely and carefully (Collins and Allason-Jones 2010; Collins 2013a). Having spent time trying to understand issues of taphonomy and preservation bias, this was really important. I've since then tried to sustain my interests in early medieval archaeology, and the formation of the so-called Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in particular. Notably, the focus in such studies is traditionally very 'Anglo-Saxon' with an emphasis, if not presumption, of dominance of Germanic ethnicity and culture. My particular region of interest, that is to say Central Britain, doesn't neatly fit in to a clear-cut story of Germanic founders migrating from a distant homeland. The kingdom of Northumbria emerged from Deira and Bernicia, whose unification and expansion then subsumed other kingdoms to the west and north between the Mersey and the Firth of Forth, like Rheged. I find it striking that the kingdom of Northumbria essentially came to encompass a territory that was almost the same as the Roman frontier zone. I do not think this is entirely a coincidence. In fact, I would argue that the late Roman army and frontiers have been under-appreciated in early medieval studies (Collins 2017b; Collins and Turner 2018).

Roman frontier studies

HW: What have been the big questions in Roman frontier studies over the last 5–10 years?

RC: There is a perennial interest in the formation and establishment of Roman frontiers, but looking through the LIMES Congress (International Congress of Roman frontier studies) proceedings, you can see the influence of Tony Wilmott and his excavations at Birdoswald, and it has been instrumental in guiding a range of scholars to focus on the later material at these sites. So there has been a shift over the last two decades to be more inclusive of the late Roman. Part of this has been the enhanced interest in the 'Late Antique', moving away from Mediterranean, Christian and urban foci to look at other themes. For example, there are important questions about Late Antique military archaeology that need further attention, if not strictly about frontiers.

HW: Do you sense, in terms of Roman frontier studies, a greater attention to comparative and anthropological approaches, or is it still within its traditional chronological and geographical boundaries?

RC: Yes and no. There's an interesting dichotomy in Roman frontier studies that links back to the distinction between Roman provincial studies as opposed to classical archaeology. Roman frontier studies can be very provincial, linked to modern nation states and traditions of research (Hingley 2008). And yet, Roman frontier studies has, since its inception in the 19th century, always been comparative. For instance, British and German scholars were constantly writing back and forth, sharing the latest results, and many antiquarians and archaeologists of the 18th–20th centuries also had military experience that influenced their approaches to fieldwork and interpretation (Hingley 2000). Tullie House Museum's Roman frontier gallery in Carlisle also has an exhibit with photographs, quotes, and a short film from modern and recent historical borders, some with walls or other barriers that is quite provocative. The film is particularly useful in juxtaposing imagery of fear, misery, and division against the rest of the gallery that provides a more standard presentation of Hadrian's Wall. So there is a comparative element to be proud of and to be built upon, and I think because of that tradition, other geographies and chronological studies will draw on Roman frontier studies. For instance, Hadrian's Wall frequently pops up in discussions of modern borders: it's a quick 'go to'. In a similar fashion, the Great Wall of China pops up in relation to the Palestinian/Israeli border and US-México border (Chaichian 2014; Frye 2018; Marshall 2018).

HW: Do you think, as a subject, we effectively convey the strengths of our research to investigate frontiers, including time-depth and the complexity of landscape change? Or do we fail to address broader interdisciplinary debates about borders and borderlands?

RC: I think we do it quite well, particularly over the last generation of scholarship and those of us who have come through with post-processual perspectives, and hence we understand a greater context of our work across disciplines. One of the problems I've noticed with those syntheses of walls and borders, though, is that authors who are not primarily archaeologists are going to older sources or putting forward a simple and easy message using the archaeological data. In so doing, time-depth and other nuances are lost in the broader sweep of the story. This is, perhaps, part of a contrast in disciplinary backgrounds.

HW: What are the big new questions in Roman frontier studies? Are we undergoing a paradigm shift and are there radical new approaches?

RC: I think it depends on which Roman frontiers you are looking at. It is clear in Roman frontier studies perhaps more than other fields of study. Because we meet every three years at the LIMES Congress the differences between national research traditions becomes apparent. For example, the Romanisation debate in Britain kicked off in the 1990s, but the concept has not received the same treatment or degree of attention in some other regions of frontiers research, where Romanisation remains an unproblematic concept. In other regions, the Roman frontier remains are not accessible to the same degree as they are buried beneath a modern city, as in Vindobona/Vienna, or are being actively destroyed in a war zone, as in Syria. Different national scholarly traditions and practices can also impact on research agendas, for example the role of local people in the establishment of a frontier (like the Batavians in the Netherlands) or the presumed impact of barbarian migration. The extensiveness of the Roman Empire and diversity of modern scholars across numerous languages, traditions, and countries means there is not one single new *big* question. Research tends to be more regionally variable. But I suppose, whatever our background, we all engage with the challenge of explaining what frontiers are for, and what they do!

You can see historiographically that the functions and roles of frontiers are often interpreted relative to contemporary politics, shifting along a pendulum that sees frontiers as defensive and exclusionary or about controlling movement in a customs and migration manner. No one is ever at either of these extremes, but these are the poles between which opinions vary, which David Breeze (2014) has neatly captured in discussing Hadrian's Wall.

Exploring Hadrian's Wall

HW: So we have explored the background and frameworks we are working with, let's now move on to Hadrian's Wall itself and its heritage and public archaeology. I'd like to start by asking about how this network of sites and monuments is 'told and sold' through heritage sites and walking trails, including its identity as a World Heritage Site. What do you think is going on, and then we can talk about problems and gaps?

RC: Hadrian's Wall is a really interesting case. As with any huge, linear, World Heritage Site, like the Silk Road, things are complicated. There are always multiple stakeholder organisations at the local, county, and national level. This impacts how things are displayed, how they are conserved and so on. So there is the challenge of organisational variability and it is essential that people who represent these different organisations and vested interests, including the research community, cooperate together. This does happen along Hadrian's Wall, but it is something that has developed over many decades. It will change with funding and politics. So, whenever English Heritage and Historic England are restructured, there is an associated sense of the loss of staff and support in relation to the World Heritage Site. One of the few positive things coming out of Tory austerity politics is that everyone has learned to do what they are best suited towards and what we can do together to cover our weaknesses. This is because nobody has enough money to do everything they would like or aspire to.

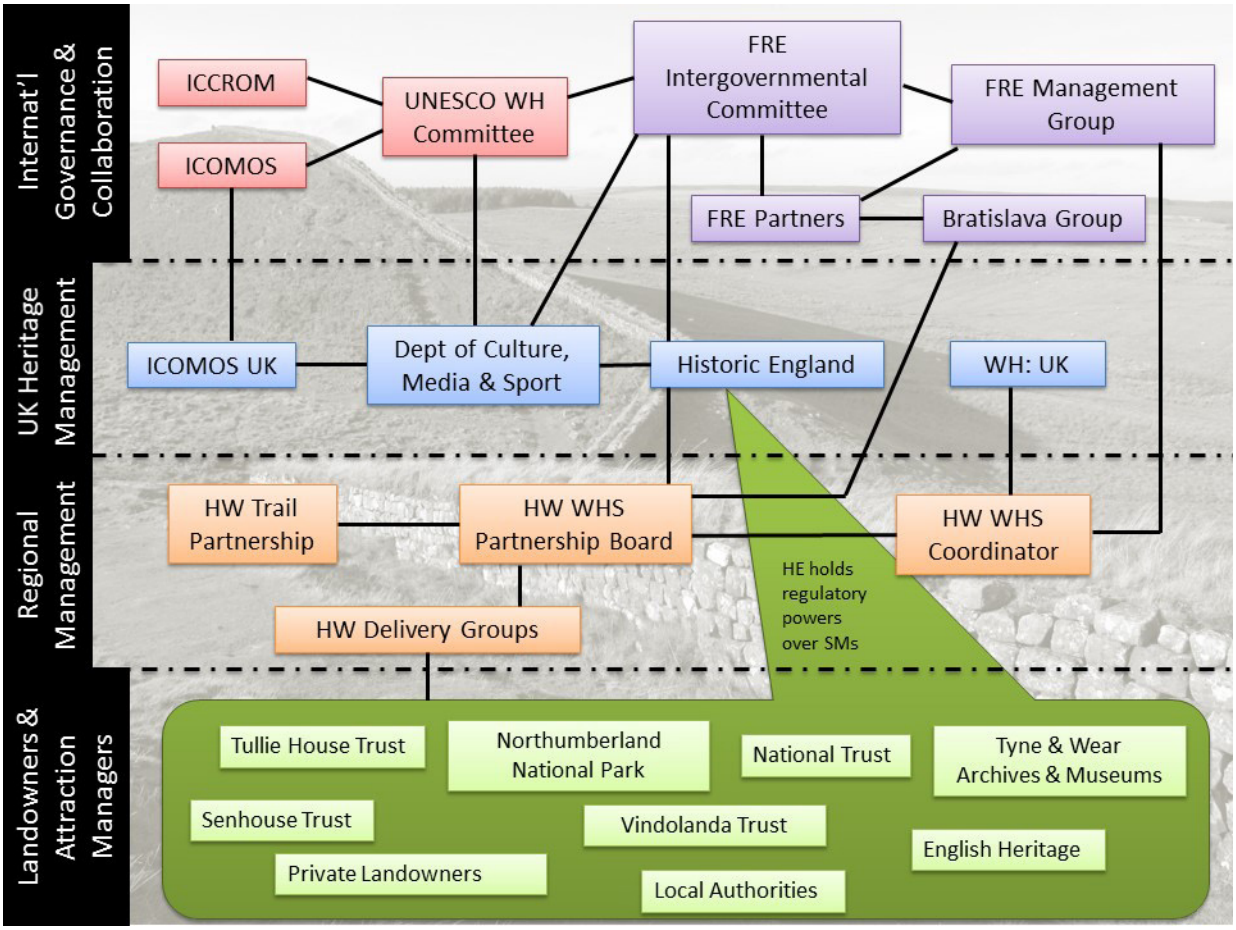

Figure 3: The management of Hadrian's Wall and relationships between different stakeholder organisations, represented as a simple graphic (Source: Rob Collins)

HW: Has this structure of organisation of Hadrian's Wall been surveyed and evaluated?

RC: People and organisations involved are aware of the strengths and benefits of this cooperation, but it is difficult to capture on paper (Figure 3). Being able to articulate this clearly is something that has been important for the recent Wall-to-Wall endeavour, linking Hadrian's Wall and the Great Wall of China (Yu and Brough 2019). Given the range of different organisations involved with Hadrian's Wall, it is hard to list each one and indicate the many ways in which they collaborate and contribute to the World Heritage Site. Something that facilitates such inter-organisational efforts, however, are the working relationships cultivated by staff at each organisation. This provides everyone with a 'contact' when inevitable queries or challenges arise. In addition, the Delivery Groups that support the Hadrian's Wall Partnership Board are composed of experts and professionals that pertain to the theme/remit of the group, for example marketing and tourism or archaeology and research; this means that there is a substantial body of expertise across sectors to support the Wall, much of it provided for free.

HW: What stories are told about Hadrian's Wall for visitors. Is there coherence or not? What does the visitor get?

RC: No, there isn't coherence but there is a desire for complementarity. Whenever it is marketed and messaged, the emphasis is on Hadrian, not the Wall. This is not so much about Hadrian the 'man', but about the origins of the Wall. That period of construction, is however, a small part of the story. It

Figure 4: An aerial view of the fort at Housesteads, with the north rampart of the fort also functioning as the curtain of the Wall (Source: Newcastle University)

is roughly the equivalent of judging an entire person's life based on their toddler years. We have an artefact or monument biography approach, but tourists get only a small part of the story. So we sacrifice a lot of a bigger story to focus on this small part of the story. Moreover, for that small part of the story, the focus is often simply that 'it was done', bypassing the 'whys' and the 'hows' completely.

HW: Do you think the gaps are not only in the biography, but other areas? If the causes and contexts are lacking, that's surely an issue. Are there any other gaps you would perceive?

RC: A challenge facing any site open to the public is how to display different periods and phases of the monument. This is remarkably more problematic for Hadrian's Wall in that it is perceived as one monument, when it is hundreds of separate sites arranged in a linear fashion. So, when the visitor goes to Housesteads, they get the dramatic windswept landscape and the playing card shape of the fort (Figure 4), but while signs and guidebooks highlight the 2nd, 3rd and 4th century phases and medieval structures, the deeper understanding of change over time is often lost.

Meanwhile, at Chesters, the principia (headquarters building) is coherent and grandiose and you can see the plan. While it has a long history, everything stays to that plan. However, right next to it is the commanding officer's house which is a higgledy-piggledy mess and even professionals struggle to work out what's going on with the remains. There's lots of upstanding remains, they are very impressive and small children can crawl into the small spaces, but it is very difficult to understand. Then imagine this complexity when these occur site-to-site, since we cannot expect visitors to engage with all, even many, of the guides and display panels intended to help understand these remains.

HW: So what about the Wall's landscape, even for the Roman period only. Is there anywhere you can physically go to see finds from, or get a walking experience, that connects to the Iron Age background and contemporary Roman-period civilian archaeology?

RC: There is a disconnect between the public and the research community here. Hadrian's Wall and Roman frontiers studies have always been interested in the wider landscape in the research community. However, connecting that to the visitor is a major challenge, just as it remains a challenge for researchers to know what happens with the native communities and settlements. In some cases we can see the Wall built over ploughed fields, so we can see chronology and the appropriation of farmland by whatever mechanism, but often the relationship is unclear. The longer term issue is that we have a harder time seeing rural settlement into the early medieval period. Walking routes tend to follow the Wall or consist

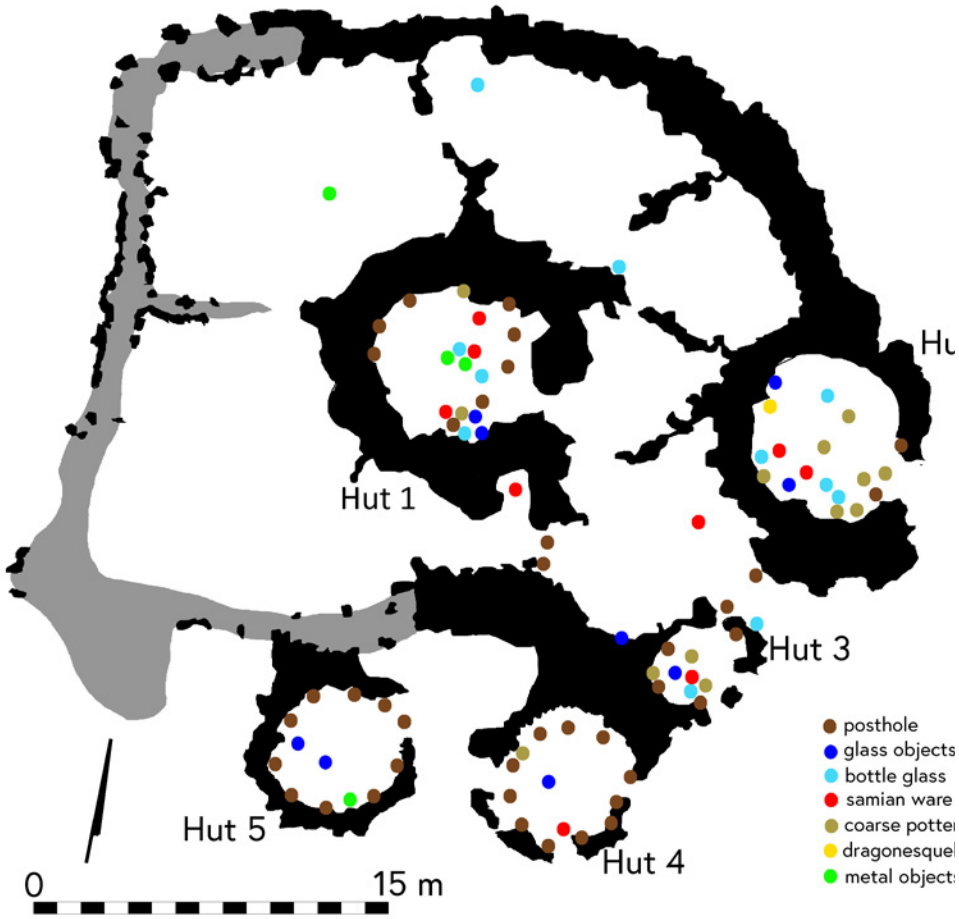

Figure 5: The 'native' farmstead of Milking Gap was built immediately south of the Wall and may pre-date the Wall. Excavations in 1937 revealed higher amounts of Roman objects than typically found at 'native' farmstead sites, with certain occupation during the 2nd century, but there is considerably more to understand about the chronology of the site and its relationship to the Wall (Source: Rob Collins)

of more local circular walks,[2] and enthusiastic and/or informed people will find 'native' settlements marked on maps, but they are not really signalled on the ground, even when only 100m away from the Wall, as at Milking Gap (Figure 5).

HW: Thinking about the physical remains of Hadrian's Wall itself, how are these managed and do different stories operate for different sites, including those run independently (Vindolanda), and those run by the National Trust and English Heritage? And is there coherence and complementarity between sites run by the same organisations?

RC: There is a consistent reinforcement and a degree of complementarity: a wall built by Hadrian, a cosmopolitan place with soldiers from all over the Empire. This is good, and English Heritage is attempting to diversify the sites for different audiences. Chesters works as a gentle landscape, with Clayton's country house overlooking the fort which appeals more to a traditional National Trust audience. It is also very flat, so works well for those with mobility constraints. In contrast, other sites offer different

[2] https://hadrianswallcountry.co.uk/walking/walking-routes

opportunities for public engagement. Housesteads has a more romantic 'empty' landscape. Vindolanda has the constant flow of new discoveries from their ongoing excavations. Birdoswald is being promoted for its family appeal, with lovely circular walks despite fewer visible remains of the internal fort buildings. Public appreciation of the differences and similarities really depends on how engaged any given individual is. The guidebooks are good and tell the stories of each site, and increasingly highlight how the attractions vary and complement each other.

HW: What about digital media and publications: are the same stories feeding through to those on the ground through interpretation boards?

RC: One of the benefits of digital publication means that papers previously only accessible to specialists are now widely available. For visitors, this is where social media, including Twitter and Instagram, offers so much potential: it's now so easy to upload photographs. The National Trail, which has been open since 2003, allows much greater access to more locations along the Wall, providing visitors with opportunities to visit lesser-known locations. As well as the iconic pictures, there are more photos of specific places beyond the big sites, allowing the message of diverse landscapes and different experiences to be played out with visitors and locals alike.

HW: Do you feel that digital resources adequately represent Hadrian's Wall for schools and visitors?

RC: It's well-served in some cases, with Roman Britain being part of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2. For teachers from across the country, Hadrian's Wall is an easy resource and iconic World Heritage Site to point to in order to illustrate things 'the Romans did' in Britain. English Heritage, Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums, and the Vindolanda Trust produce packs and materials for teachers, in digital formats and hard copy. So in this regard, Hadrian's Wall is well served. Moving out to a wider set of audiences beyond formal education, the broader digital resources are variable. I was fortunate enough to be part of the creation of a MOOC – a Massive Online Open Course – for Hadrian's Wall that we did here at Newcastle University in partnership with FutureLearn. Learners from around the world often posted various websites and YouTube videos that I had never come across before– some of which were good, many that were not. But resources like the MOOC, which is free to everyone, are a great starting point!

There are some great digital resources, however. For example, the *Roman Inscriptions of Britain Online.* They've employed the right people to make it digital and it is more accessible and versatile than the published books. These resources tie Hadrian's Wall into Britain as a whole and this overcomes the traditional north-south (military vs. towns and villas) divide in Roman studies, as well as incorporating other resources, like the Vindolanda Tablets.

I would be remiss if I did not point out that despite these digital resources, one of the most interesting and valuable aspects of the research community of the Wall is the expertise available. As a doctoral student, when I first started attending the Roman Northern Frontiers Seminar – which I'm now fortunate enough to act as the coordinator – I was astounded by the knowledge of the experts that attended the seminar. To be frank, it was an intimidating level of knowledge; individuals would quote an RIB number in discussion, expecting listeners to know the content of the inscription that was referred to (and most did). So the knowledge-base was high, but the professional diversity was (and continues to be) notable. A few were in university-based positions, but the majority were not, and worked in commercial units, public sector archaeology and heritage, and museums or were material culture specialists. What is notable, however, is that these individuals are each like a walking GIS for Hadrian's Wall; they can discuss – at length – not only key sites and types of evidence, but also draw on a rich history of research of lesser-known sites and specialist evidence and the connectivity (geographically

and chronologically) between such sites and evidence, and set that all against a broader Roman imperial backdrop of evidence from other frontiers. As an early career-scholar this was mind-blowing and provided me with a personal ambition to master the evidence so effectively. It also – at least to my mind – clarified what my expectations were to qualify someone as 'an expert' of Hadrian's Wall; it wasn't the academic qualification or their employment, but the critical engagement with evidence and willingness to participate and engage with other researchers *and* the broader public, whether this is digitally with the MOOC or via television programs, or more face-to-face events (see below).

HW: Are there any big pseudoarchaeological challenges with Hadrian's Wall? What are the broader misconceptions that simply won't budge in the public's imagination?

RC: The idea that Hadrian's Wall marks the border between England and Scotland just won't go away! You often hear this claim coming out of the mouths of visitors along the Wall. It's not always international visitors who think this, it is said by people from the UK too! I've never heard anyone who is Scottish say it; it always seems to be English, Welsh, and those from abroad. Then there are the simplistic and anachronistic statements like: 'Hadrian's Wall was built to keep out the Scots'. There are so many problems with this one: first, the Scots were not unified as a kingdom when the Wall was built; second, the Scots post-date the Romans, unless you want to count the raiders from Ireland (called Scotti) in the 4th century. And perhaps worst of all, it substitutes or inserts modern identity politics into the past. However, that misunderstanding of the position of the Wall and its function provide a clear target of what scholars, museums, and attractions need to communicate – namely we must contest modern notions of politics and geography with the past.

For example, before the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, there was graffiti placed on road signs along Hadrian's Wall. It is interesting that Hadrian's Wall, even though entirely within England, was a target of referendum-based tagging. This links to a broader pattern that I think can be observed in countries around the world: the farther one is from the border, the more it has significance. In this regard, Hadrian's Wall is a conceptual border between Scotland and England primarily for those who are far from it, not those living in the south of Scotland or north of England.

Another aspect that has become popular and gained traction in post-Second World War literature is the idea that the Wall was a customs barrier and had little military efficacy and little to do with defence. This comes up regularly and is part of that pendulum I discussed earlier between seeing Hadrian's Wall as military or about peacetime management. What is interesting is that new evidence of the past 30 years increasingly supports a more defensive interpretation of Hadrian's Wall in its initial phases (summarised in Hodgson 2017), and the continued maintenance of the curtain barrier throughout the Roman period also suggests a perceived positive military function for the Wall (Bidwell 2018).

HW: How and where do you think Hadrian's Wall's public archaeology has been done effectively?

RC: This is an area where Hadrian's Wall has been fantastic and ahead of the game for decades in many instances. There's always been a willingness to engage local communities that stretched back into the mid-19th century, at least. John Collingwood Bruce, a pastor and preacher in Newcastle in the 19th century, became a great populariser of Hadrian's Wall and initiated a tradition of pilgrimage in 1849, by which the pilgrims traverse along the Wall to see the newly revealed excavations and sites, and how these have altered understanding of the monument. This tradition continues, with the latest pilgrimage held in 2019 (Figure 6). There are also regular conferences aimed specifically at an interested public, such as the annual Arbeia Society conference (in South Shields) and Hadrian's Wall Archaeology Forum (in Hexham). More modern notions of public archaeology emerged in the 1970s and 1980s in response to Thatcherism and enthusiasm to involve local communities affected by industry closures, including

Figure 6: The Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage in 2019 at Brunton Turret, where Dr Matt Symonds leads discussion on the importance of the turret for understanding the construction sequence of Hadrian's Wall (Source: Rob Collins)

ex-mining communities. Certainly Vindolanda is a classic case in point: they've been taking volunteers since the 1970s, when they were set up as a trust. But also what's now Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums used to run volunteer excavations which allowed locals and people from all over the world to participate in archaeological excavations at South Shields.

This has continued to this very day, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund has supported a series of projects over the years, including the project I'm managing now. WallCAP, short for the Hadrian's Wall Community Archaeology Project, draws on volunteers from along the line of the Wall and its surrounding communities – the entire WHS – to undertake a series of interventions to remove or reduce risk to the standing remains of the Wall, as well as to better understand the long-term history of the monument. One of the things we're doing is trying to identify where the stones that were used to build the Wall have ended up, as well as trace the source quarries (Figure 7). The scale of the monument means that local people, who have a lot of knowledge about their local landscape, are not only incredibly helpful, but essential to the success of the project.

HW: The civilian and military dimensions, the finds-rich and monumental characters of the buildings, forts and Wall, mean that there are a range of narratives that can be told using the Wall. One quick follow-up question: people tend to say that the historic population of the Roman Empire, including its frontiers, were 'multicultural' or 'diverse'. How do we create links between stories of multicultural frontier pasts and global stories of diaspora today?

RC: This is one of the advantages of Roman studies compared to medieval studies. The latter is often framed in relation to medieval polities and groupings, with certain presumptions of colour and class. In contrast, Roman studies presume empire-wide links and beyond. No one can deny that the Roman Empire spread over three continents and we have the evidence that shows the movement of people. Inscriptions, writing tablets, and graffiti provide names for individuals that can often be contextualised within a linguistic tradition, as well as geographical or ethnic affiliations, professions, religious beliefs and even occasionally personal sentiments. In that regard, we aren't starting from scratch; we can point to specific and unambiguous evidence that supports long distance movement of people and regular

Figure 7: WallCAP volunteers undertaking geophysical survey of the field that Hadrian's Wall runs through adjacent to Thirlwall Castle, seen in the background, which was built almost entirely from stone repurposed from the Wall. Source: WallCAP

mixing of different cultures and traditions. The classic example is the tombstone of Regina the wife of Barates (Figure 8; Ivleva 2020: 260–261). We don't know much about Barates and we don't know much about his identity beyond that he was a Palmyrene. But he was able to speak and write in Aramaic. Meanwhile his wife was a freed slave of the tribe of the Catuvellauni, located in southern England. Within this we have all this great intersectionality that we can explore, questions and stories we can weave and engage with multicultural communities and challenge simplistic 'white' stories. Who was Regina and was there a paradox in calling a slave 'Queen', as in the historic American South? Was she really of the Catuvellauni? What kind of relationship did they possess? Was it loving, or was the option of a slave to be freed and 'serve' as a wife more appealing?

HW: Regarding the challenges of narrating the cosmopolitan nature of civilian and military life along Hadrian's Wall, is it a fundamental failing of the narrative for Hadrian's Wall and Roman Britain, or is this simply that bigots will object to anything? Don't we have a firmer evidential basis in dealing with this material for Roman Britain given the epigraphic data?

RC: Yes, I think so. The fact that we have names and identity affiliation, whether it is a linguistic identifier or a tribal affiliation, makes it hard to deny the diversity. So we don't face the same challenges that perhaps medieval studies confronts. However, something else that comes through are the dangers

Figure 8: The tombstone of Regina, freedwoman and wife of Barates. The inscription notes that Regina was of the Catuvellauni, while Barates was Palmyrene. Source: NU Digital Heritage, Newcastle University

of the military and the appeal to a particular white masculinity, and to some extent the military gloss that can supersede the diversity narratives, because it was all in the cause of the same imperial army fighting the undifferentiated 'barbarian' for the benefit of 'civilization'. The research and engagement that Sarah Bond (2017) and others have done in highlighting the painting of statues and different Roman perceptions and classifications of skin colour has encountered similar obstacles. The fundamental cultural sympathies and perceived cultural 'descent' from the Roman Republic and Empire means that there is a danger that we retro-project contemporary cultural values and expectations onto the past.

This retro-projection of contemporary cultural values and constructs is not limited to ethnic or racial categories; it also happens with gender and gender-roles (Greene 2015, 2016) and sexuality (Ivleva and Collins 2020), and often exacerbated in the militarised Roman frontiers.

HW: This is a similar issue for early medieval studies; the 'barbarian' warband can be misused to image discrete ethnic groups, when they might instead be envisioned to celebrate ethnic diversity within a martial context. Yet, for the Roman army, if we suggest the end game is to demonstrate diversity, but they are all there to defend imperial civilization, doesn't this threaten to allow nationalist and racist narratives to persist and flourish?

RC: Part of the problem with that is that a nationalist or racist agenda is being substituted for the realities or details of a militarized society. It retro-projects fallacious notions of a unified body politic and idealised notions of martial masculinity *against* a generic and simplified enemy. Arguably, what I think is more interesting is the fact that in a pre-modern society, without all the tools of psychological and sociological conditioning available to modern generals and warlords, those ancient kings and warlords were able to create meaningful societies of soldiers and warriors despite quite significant cultural diversity. There is an entire generation of scholarship that has pioneered the study of the Roman army as a social archaeology (e.g. Goldsworthy and Haynes 1999), and Ian Haynes (2013) is quite eloquent in his discussions of the success of the Roman army to incorporate cultural diversity. For me, the theory of an occupational community and understanding the concept of identity has significantly informed my understanding not only of the Roman army, but also early medieval warbands (Collins 2006, 2008). Occupational community theory allowed me to link social practices with material culture cognates and proxies. Basically, the theory posits that training, social relationships and practices and other circumstances dominated by an occupation – in this case being a Roman soldier – build up and sustain a professional identity that trumps other facets of identity, like ethnicity or age. For me, this is a great framework to understand how the Roman army could mix recruits that spoke different languages, had different cultures and practices, and turn them into a cohesive, professional army – something that is comparatively rare in history. That is how at any given point in the later 2nd or 3rd century along Hadrian's Wall, you can have men from Syria, Dacia (Romania), Germania (the Netherlands), and Mauretania (Morocco) all working together, communicating in Latin and participating in 'Roman' society, not to mention how local indigenous societies fit in. With diversity of individuals comes more voices, and ideally, an increased interest from more diverse audiences who find something to identify with. Perhaps more importantly, though, signalling diversity also reinforces the message that diversity is okay – by which I mean it is not bad or harmful or dangerous; great things, interesting things, happened in the past with diverse participants. Diversity was certainly an advantage to the Roman army both in terms of personnel and technology, much of which was taken up and adapted as a consequence of their encounters with 'barbarian' societies (James 2011).

Fictional frontiers and Hadrian's Wall

HW: I wonder if you could give me a sense of the interplay between Hadrian's Wall and fictional frontiers in different genres including science fiction and fantasy? Do people visit Hadrian's Wall and have other fictional frontiers of different kinds in their minds?

RC: Absolutely! If you look at historical fiction, there's a very healthy genre of Roman army historical fiction. A considerable proportion include Hadrian's Wall, where soldiers face fierce barbarians and encounter the ambiguities of war. So there is a genre there within historical fiction about the Roman Empire and Hadrian's Wall is a ready-made backdrop for a conflict zone, akin to the use of the Vietnam War in all manner of war movies and TV shows though the 1980s. The Wall is a 'known' monument with

an established visual landscape, both of which provide a shortcut to establish a scene or environment for a story. You can send your protagonists to go and have character development and whatever is required of the story. It is a flag, a shortcut to a dangerous frontier. So you can see this directly in historical fiction.

The Wall in the fantasy genre can be concurrently more monumental and more ambiguous. The way Hadrian's Wall is represented and reflected is often more revealing of the author's cultural background than their understanding of the wall itself. A great example is the *Game of Thrones* book series by George R.R. Martin. He was visiting the UK and drove from London up to Edinburgh with his friend and he stopped at Housesteads, or somewhere close by, on Hadrian's Wall in 1981 and 1982. I can imagine it would have been a bit more of a 'rough' land at that time, less than the manicured and more carefully tended attractions of the present day. He stood there looking out at the landscape and imagined what it would have been like to be a solider there. Following 'the rules' of the fantasy genre, he made his Wall bigger and more dramatic!

What's really interesting is that, as much as the Wall is a prominent landmark in Westeros in the books, it is presented and established in a very American fashion, like the American frontier, and inspired by attitudes to the vast landscapes with dramatic climates and topography. Stark's realm is huge and it is many days' journey from his broadly central capital at Winterfell to the Wall. Then north of the Wall, that's also quite vast and you have the rangers moving into and patrolling this territory. Martin captures something of how Hadrian's Wall is a monumental focus of that broader frontier landscape, but then I'm also American!

HW: So the fantasy Wall is able to encapsulate the frontiers on either side as well as concepts of savagery. Whilst scaled-up, this captures more of the sense of a frontier than the historical fiction about Hadrian's Wall itself?

RC: Yes, as a genre historical fiction is often more about the deeds of single individuals. Fantasy as a genre has different practices, in which the landscape or a monument is often a character in its own right. In Garth Nix's Old Kingdom series, he presents two realms separated by another monumental Wall, which divides a magical kingdom in the north from a more recognisable nation state akin to Edwardian Britain (1901–1910) in the south. The Wall is still an active military border. If the magic overflows from the Old Kingdom in the north it is dangerous and interferes with technology in the south, including cars and telegraph lines. It's very much like First World War trench warfare and there is fear of 'north of the Wall'. There are machine gun emplacements and barbed wire and this is a very European vision – or perhaps a modern nation-state vision – of a military border to keep magic (and other more dangerous things) out. When characters cross the Wall, it is more of a border crossing that a modern reader would be familiar with: there are clear paths/roads to approach the Wall; paperwork is requested; armed security moves about between posts constantly. So we have different kinds of perceptions of walls in relation to frontiers and borders playing out in different genres and different authors.

Wall futures

HW: What is the future of public engagement and popular culture for Hadrian's Wall? What will change in public perception and engagement with the heritage of the frontier landscape?

RC: The aim is to try to keep the public and local communities at least as engaged as they are now. We are very privileged for Hadrian's Wall, say in contrast to the Antonine Wall and also Wat's Dyke and Offa's Dyke and other linear monuments where local communities just don't know as much about their own heritage. So we want to maintain this position of privilege and build from that. I think we would

like to be able to write a story that is more nuanced. There is a political dimension with the closing of borders, and the Brexit movement, and I think now is the time to give a complicated story, not just about the building of a wall. If heritage organisations are willing, we have to change and expand the story without such a simple narrative.

HW: Do you think that change will be driven by digital media or more traditional museum-based or community-based projects. In short, how do we do this?

RC: Community-based projects where you can invite experts to speak and share expertise in informal and friendly settings are a great strategy. This allows members of the public to access very knowledgeable people and hear a range of voices. I've always been more public-facing having worked with the PAS, and this has helped me to understand – just in talking to a lot of people – what the public 'gets' and what they don't. No matter what work and research we do, some of that just doesn't easily pass into public awareness. The public are interested and willing to listen, but we have to find the right ways to communicate and deliver to them. After all, we cannot control what the public reads and what the public watches. But what we can do is produce accessible content and try to maximise dissemination: This is the potential of blogs and Twitter, for they are at least pathways to disseminate our research. So I think we need to explore these more, but we also need to understand that those pathways also require time and energy – to hone your communication style and build up an audience!

One thing I'd be keen to do is co-author an historical fiction book with a proper fiction-writer that can help me convey my imagination about the end of Hadrian's Wall. A paperback book like that, as historical fiction, will be read by far more people than will ever read a monograph of archaeological research. Building on good research, such a book could really engage new audiences. Likewise, the *A Song of Fire and Ice* books and *Game of Thrones* TV series has drawn loads of people to visit Hadrian's Wall, though I cannot point to any unambiguous evidence for this, only anecdotal. But the result is income for the region, with tourism supporting local businesses and infrastructure. So, the TV shows and books are driving interest and the economy, and engaging with this is at least as important as what we do in museums and evening talks for local societies. That's not to say that museums and public talks are not important – they absolutely are, and provide fora where we can communicate more complex stories and interpretations. But with films, TV, and books, it is a question of scale; those media have much wider audiences and are more likely to introduce a new topic or concept to a person. I think as researchers, as academics, if we are looking for anyone to help us transform public visions of the past, it is popular dramatic media that will do it. We do not have the budgets or expertise for this, but if it allows us to bring new audiences on board that is a good thing.

Let me take that forward by being honest about my past. I was drawn into this, as I alluded to above, because of my interest in Arthuriana, starting with children's versions of the medieval romances and as I grew I enjoyed reading the medieval romances and watching film adaptations, and from there into historical studies of the era. Those books and movies opened a path of interest for me, and Leslie Alcock's *Arthur's Britain* (1990) was the initial paving of that road into a career in archaeology. Why should I deny others the same route? Whether or not Arthur was real, it was an historical period that we can better understand through archaeology. This is not about imposing legendary material onto historical evidence, but it is a draw that gets people hooked. Such interests will not convert everyone into pursuing a career in archaeology, but if it provides a means for understanding and enjoying history more generally, that's great.

HW: Are there other themes we need to discuss you think are pertinent to the public archaeology of Roman frontiers?

RC: A big issue that strikes a chord with me, especially because I study the end of frontiers, is chronology. This is important for archaeologists and historians. We're professionally trained to think about time, the value of time, the passage and perception of time and what can happen in the passage of time. Most people don't, and most people's perception of time is related to living memory and their lifetime's experience. Beyond that, most people see time compressing, and the difference between 300 years old, one thousand years ago, or two thousand years ago doesn't really matter. In my experience, many of the challenges we face in communicating with public audiences (including about frontiers) relate to the difficulties of perceiving and understanding time-depth. Generally speaking, we give dates and we think that means something – locating an event or site in a broader setting of cultural practices and/or relationships. But for most people, they don't have a context and the network of events and associations are lost. So we need to be better at communicating time and what that means. This is one of the reasons why some people confuse the chronology of the Romans, and the Vikings, for example. I have experienced this in both America and in Britain, and I suspect that confused chronologies are found amongst the public of most countries. In this particular example, the confusion is that people see the Vikings as pre-Roman since they are perceived as less sophisticated and complex in their technology and civilization in comparison to the Romans. For most people, this is a more expected arrangement of simple preceding complex underscored by a linear evolutionary conception of history (or time).

If we could help people understand time-depth and that cultural complexity does not follow progressive linear development, I think this would help improve public understanding of archaeology and history. If we're lucky, it may even counter some of the push and pulse of social media and its focus on the 'now'. Having that longer-term thought process, especially for generations without pre-digital experience, will be increasingly important.

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Hands across the Border?
Prehistory, Cairns and Scotland's 2014 Independence Referendum

Kenneth Brophy

The current border between Scotland and England, UK, was a source of contention during Scotland's 2014 independence referendum; debate at times even involved the use and abuse of history and prehistory. Some strands of argument drew on the historical trope of Hadrian's Wall being confused with the modern border, and this chapter reviews some of the more public examples of the debate in the right-leaning and nationalist press in Scotland. The main focus of the chapter, however, is the Auld Acquaintance Cairn, located in Gretna, just to the north of the border. This monument, seemingly based on Bronze Age Clava cairns, was constructed in summer 2014 to celebrate the continued union between Scotland and England. The construction process and the post-independence referendum life of this prehistoric-style monument is documented through analysis of media and social media accounts of the cairn, and through site visits by the author. The study cautions against the egregious exploitation of prehistory in contemporary politics as having no relevance to the form and location of modern political borders.

Preamble

Over two decades ago, archaeologist Niall Sharples wrote: '... the archaeological record of earlier periods should not normally contribute to the discussion of a nation's identity' (Sharples 1996: 79). Yet despite this sensible rule of thumb there is no doubt that this continues to happen. I have noted, for instance, the ongoing (at the time of writing) tendency for archaeological research to be promoted, consumed, and viewed in print and social media through the lens of Brexit, the process by which the UK left the European Union in slow motion between 2016 and 2020 (with an indeterminate transitionary period thereafter). I have termed this the Brexit Hypothesis, 'the proposition that any archaeological discovery in Europe can – and probably will – be exploited to argue in support of, or against Brexit' (Brophy 2018a: 1650, 2019a). Yet Brexit is not the only constitutional issue to have faced the UK in the last decade, with an earlier referendum, just as vulnerable to backward glances to the ancient past for inspiration, having already taken place.

Scotland's 2014 independence referendum, also known as IndyRef, was marked by – from my perspective – what appeared to be a broad and energetic political awakening in the country. This was indicated by the unusually high turnout for the vote itself: 84.59%.[1] Others saw it as an angry and bitter process that has created deep divisions in Scottish society, and this provides the context for the current contesting of the legacy of the cairn that is the focus of this chapter. During the lively campaign, ancient and modern history inevitably played a misguided role in debate. Such interventions ranged across time, from the recurring (sometimes serious, often satirical) geographical confusion between Hadrian's Wall and the actual Scotland–England border, to Pictish mythologies about aggressive blue-painted tribesmen (almost always men), to 'grievance myths' related to 20th-century political events and wars (e.g. Barclay 2017).

In this chapter, I will consider problematic historic and prehistoric appropriations of the England–Scotland border during the Scottish independence referendum, which ran officially from November 2013 to September 2014. While I touch on Hadrian's Wall in this chapter, my main focus will be the strangest example of the exploitation of the past that emerged during IndyRef – the Auld Acquaintance Cairn (Figure 1). This megalithic monument is located close to the border at its western end, on the northern side, at Gretna (Figure 2). The Cairn, based on a class of prehistoric burial monument located largely

[1] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/events/scotland-decides/results

Figure 1: The Auld Acquaintance cairn with the historic bridge over the Sark – and the border – in the background (Photograph: K. Brophy)

in Inverness-shire, Highlands, was the brainchild of the then (but no longer) Conservative MP Rory Stewart, and was constructed in the months leading up to Referendum Day, 18 September 2014. The Cairn told a story, through its creation and promotion, that drew on the prehistoric past as well as the the medieval and post-medieval periods. The monument was a materialised form of political rhetoric: making the point that the border between Scotland and England has long been ambiguous, and indeed did not exist at various times at the past. Even the process of constructing the cairn became a political act of Union, with the monument a megalithic articulation of the political status quo.

It is worth considering the story of the Auld Acquaintance Cairn in some detail, as this is an especially egregious example of what Sharples was warning about in the quote at the beginning of this chapter and has left a troubled legacy. (Pre)historic mythologies pushed for political ends tend to be tenacious, as enduring as stone, and so it has proved with Rory Stewart's cairn, whose story did not end with the 'No' vote in the autumn of 2014 (Scotland voted narrowly against independence from the UK). The ongoing – seemingly permanent – presence of the cairn in this border zone means that the monument has continued to be a source of veneration and anger, pilgrimage and deposition, admiration and subversion. The monument has also become a focal point for other political disputes, predictably including Brexit, and I would argue that it is likely that it will be weaponised in any future second independence referendum ('IndyRef 2'). This chapter should act as a warning against this, and encourage archaeologists to have a greater self-awareness of the political exploitation of the past going forward, in relation to both

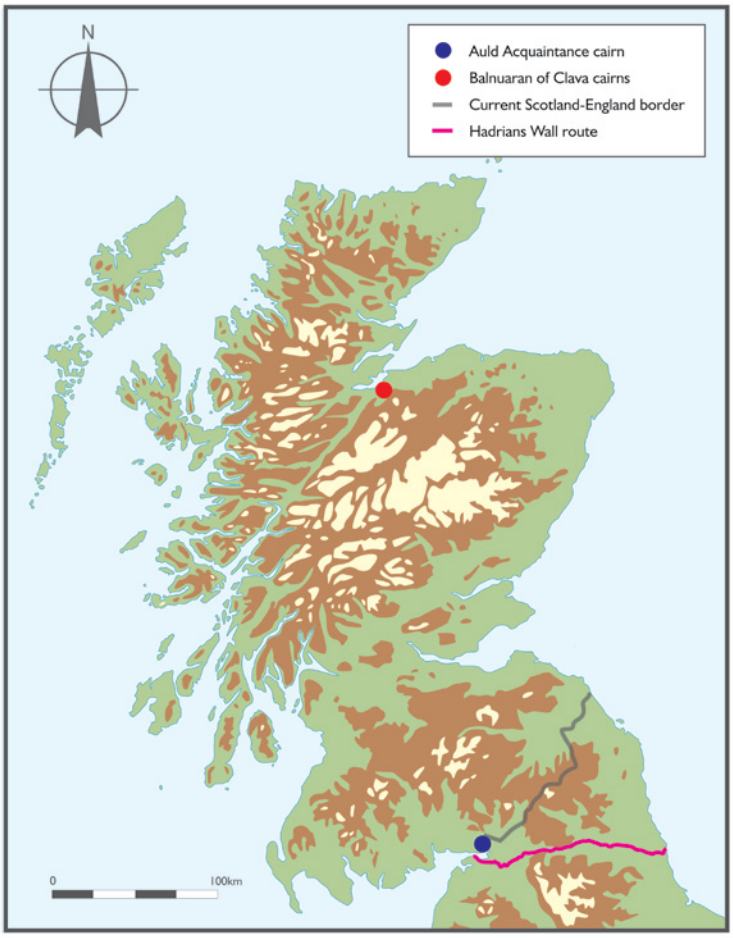

Figure 2: Map showing the location of the Auld Acquaintance cairn, the current Scotland – England border, Hadrian's Wall, and the location of Balnuaran of Clava cairn group (prepared by Lorraine McEwan)

ancient monuments themselves (e.g. Barclay and Brophy 2020), and their replication and representation.

In this chapter, I refer to the cairn at Gretna as the Auld Acquaintance Cairn as this was the name given to it when first constructed. As we shall see below, other names are used to describe this monument, but it seems sensible and consistent to use the name ascribed to it by those who conceived and built the cairn.

Hadrian and his hard border

The nature of borders and borderlands has become an increasingly fertile area of archaeological analysis in recent years, in part coinciding with the emergence of contemporary archaeology (e.g. papers in Bender and Winer 2001; Mullin 2011). The focus has tended to be on borders marked by walls, however ('wall-studies' as McAtackney (2015: 113) terms it) rather than contemporary soft political borders which have less evident archaeological manifestations. Where a border is physically marked, archaeology has a clearer role to play. For instance, McAtackney has written extensively on the 'peace-lines' of Belfast showing how an archaeological sensibility can help to shed light on the lived experience of barriers through their materiality, bodily impact, time-depth, monumentality, and architectural development (e.g. McAtackney 2011, 2015). Border zones without walls or barriers have received less attention within archaeology (hence the significance of the volume that this chapter is appearing within), and yet these remain powerful places, often as much a state of mind, a symbol, as they are a line on the ground to physically cross.

Although I would argue that an explicit archaeology of the Anglo-Scottish border has not yet been carried out, the border zone has been the focus of a limited number of archaeological studies. A survey of linear earthworks in the 'borders region of Scotland', the Linear Earthworks Project, carried out by the Central Excavation Unit in the 1980s, was reported on in some depth by Barber (1999). It was noted that some linear features in the Scottish Borders have traditionally been regarded as ancient (mythical) political boundaries such as the Deil's Dyke (oral tradition having it that this earthwork marked the northernmost 'Anglo-Saxon' expansion) and the Catrail (supposedly separating the Romans from the 'Anglo-Saxons') (Barber 1999: 78–79),[2] but one linear earthwork – the Scots' Dike (or Dyke) – was at one point part of the Scotland–England border and indeed the current boundary largely follows

[2] https://canmore.org.uk/site/86604/catrail

this monument. This earthwork consists of a bank with flanking ditches visible for some 5km, marks the 1552 border between the Rivers Esk and Sark (Barber 1999: 78; Crofton 2014: 44–47), and is thus located close to the Auld Acquaintance Cairn. Other ancient monuments lie on the current boundary. A Bronze Age cairn, Windy Gyle (also known as Russell's Cairn), Scottish Borders, sits on a hilltop with the border passing through it (RCAHMS 1956: 361–362); only 75% of the monument and Scheduled area lie within Scotland. This and other sites have been subject in the past to joint reviews of such dual nationality monuments by heritage authorities in Scotland and England (Gordon Barclay pers. comm.) but ultimately the border location is more serendipitous than meaningful in almost all cases.

It is also worth noting that modern political borders can also have direct impacts on archaeological interpretations of the past, both politically (cf. Stout 1996) and geographically. I have previously argued (Brophy 2018b) that the border is nonsensical when it comes to prehistoric sites and monuments and yet its present-day existence has been pervasive, for example, when interpreting Neolithic phenomena such as timber halls. The location of such a hall, a cropmark site at Sprouston on the banks of the Tweed, is 5km from England (Smith 1991). Had the border been on the other side of the Tweed, this monument would have shifted its perception from its current context from being seen as part of an 'eastern Scottish tradition' to the status of a unique site for England and considered by archaeologists to be a weird outlier. The artificiality of including the Scotland–England boundary on prehistoric maps has been noted by Barclay (2001) and Ralston (2018). However, the lack of a border in prehistory, despite being one of the points the Auld Acquaintance Cairn was built to make, literally has no relevance to contemporary debates about Scottish independence or the nature of the border today.

The establishment of the aforementioned Scots' Dike in 1552 could be viewed as the earliest attempt to physically mark the border close to its modern route, although an England–Scotland boundary has existed in more or less this arrangement since an agreement between Mael Coluim IV and Henry II in 1157. This was followed by claims on parts of northern England by the Scottish king Alexander II in the Treaty of York, in 1237 (Broun 2018 and pers. comm.). Before that, the concept of Scotland as a nation state is increasingly problematic (cf. Foster 2014), although that does not seem to have stopped the deep-time of the border zone – and the idea of borderlands – infiltrating modern political discourse back to the Romans and beyond. The current border than runs between England and Scotland (Figure 2) has not varied in route much since the 13th century, and became a soft border with the Act of Union in 1707.

The ancient past very much played a role in discussions about Scottish independence as a proxy through the use and, sometimes abuse, of Hadrian's Wall in public discourse and the media during the referendum campaign. The deliberate or mistaken suggestion that Hadrian's Wall (built and then in use in one form or another from the 2nd to 5th century AD (Breeze 2019)) was, or indeed could still become, the border between England and Scotland is nothing new (Griffiths 2003). However, as Hingley wrote in 2014, the 'Scottish referendum has caused the ancient Roman frontier of Hadrian's Wall to take on new significance and is inspiring both those who support and oppose independence'. Indicative of this is the notion of Hadrian's Wall used as a proxy for the actual modern political boundary both flippantly, and seriously, in a series of media stories.

Hingley (2014) gives as an example a story in the *Mail on Sunday* newspaper in 2012 with the headline ''Hadrian's Wall' customs if Scotland goes it alone to stop illegal migrants flooding into England' (Carlin 2012). What such a 'Hadrian's Wall style boundary' would have consisted of is not made clear in a leaked alleged 'UK Foreign Office document' from 2009 that the story is based on. It is still possible to access all 166 below-the-line comments on this article (as of March 2020), many of which make pro- and anti-independence statements, thus reading contemporary political significance into the supposed recreation of this ancient border. Comments range from, 'The peoples south of the wall were a defeated nation', to 'What if the Welsh should decide to become independent. Will we have to re-dig Offa's Dyke?' (see

Figure 3: Cover of *The National*, 13 February 2017

also Williams 2020). Less than 5% of comments note that Hadrian's Wall is not, and has never been, a border between England and Scotland, and indeed does not intersect at any point with the current border, being some distance to the south in most places and wholly within northern England (Figure 2). This inconvenient truth does not seem to matter to those seriously engaging with the Hadrian's Wall / border trope.

Maldonado (2014) blogged about the invidious tone of discussion about the Wall during the IndyRef campaign, identifying the 'trope of 'rebuilding Hadrian's Wall'' that emerged during the campaign in print, and social, media. As Maldonado notes, such stories were based on misconceptions about the original role of the Wall, and simplistic cultural observations. For instance, the *Daily Mail* newspaper ran a story in September 2013 with the long headline, 'Ever since the Act of Union in 1707, the wall has run across the middle of the United Kingdom – but after next year's referendum, it could become an international border once again'. This is a misconception with a lengthy heritage. Griffiths (2003: 89) notes that as early as 1604, King James VI and I gave a speech noting the 'demolished little walls' separating the kingdoms of England and Scotland. (It is also possible that this comment referred to the Scots' Dike, built during the lifetime of his mother, Queen Mary (Gordon Barclay pers. comm.).) This political exploitation of the past conjures up dogged Pictish resistance against Roman invaders, the unconquerable Scots, in contrast to the English who folded at the first sight of a Roman ship (a silly mythology engrained in the minds of Scottish school children of my generation!). Maldonado notes that Hadrian's Wall, from a southern (English) perspective, could also be viewed as the edge of the known civilised world. These are as nonsensical as narratives placing Hadrian's Wall on the border. Borders and walls often take on such different perspectives depending on which side of the border you are located. The Berlin Wall was described using two different German words – *mauer* and *wand* – depending on whether you were in the east or the west (Baker 1993).

Hadrian's Wall has always been mythologised and mis-remembered (Hingley 2010; Maldonado 2014) and so perhaps it is no surprise that it has been so readily appropriated into contemporary political discourse. In a big data study of the use of the past in Brexit discussions on Facebook, Bonacchi *et al.* (2018: 180) identified that 'Hadrian' was one of the most commonly used words on pro- and anti-Brexit Facebook posts, replies, and comments. In other words, arguments about whether we should leave or

stay in the EU were being made with recourse to irrelevant ancient history. Bonacchi has also noted, and this is important in relation to the schoolchild myths alluded to above, that 'the public will interpret what we say based on their own experience, knowledge and inclinations' (Bonacchi 2018: 1661). It seems then incumbent on archaeologists and historians to show more willingness to step in when egregious and mistaken interpretations of the past, for contemporary political ends, are given the oxygen of publicity. We should be proactive in pointing out that the Wall was constructed and in use within an entirely different political and cultural context to today. Hadrian's Wall was pre-Scotland, pre-Pict, pre-England, pre-UK, and pre-EU.

This kind of discourse is used by people and media outlets on both sides of the debate. For instance, on the front page of *The National* newspaper (a Scottish independence supporting daily paper) on 13 February 2017, a photograph of Hadrian's Wall was shown, with superimposed and disembodied heads of Nicola Sturgeon (First Minister of Scotland) and Donald Trump (US President). Sun rays shone from Sturgeon's face and beneath her were the words, in bold capitals, 'TRUMP WON'T CROSS HADRIAN'S WALL. State visit will not include Scotland' (Figure 3). Hadrian's Wall, like that other iconic British ancient monument Stonehenge, can be all things to all people, and be used to back diametrically opposed political arguments. The salient point here is that regardless of what the Romans did for us, the construction of Hadrian's Wall has no bearing whatsoever on the case for or against Scottish independence, the location of the modern border, or how any of us should vote in referenda. The same applies for prehistoric cairns, to which our attention now shifts.

The construction of a political cairn

The Auld Acquaintance cairn was constructed between June and August 2014. It is located in Gretna, Dumfries and Galloway, contained with a meander on the north side of the River Sark, in the grounds of a former caravan site and behind the Old Toll Bar café (Figure 1). Before construction began, this location was 'a field with a few abandoned caravans, tipped up at jaunty angles. The site was derelict. It looked like a tornado'd hit it' (Crofton 2014: 22). The cairn is situated tens of metres from the current Scotland–England border, and in proximity to two busy border crossing points, an historic bridge over the Sark, and the M74 motorway. This is one of the most established, and certainly the busiest, place to cross the border by car (Jack 2015) and no doubt this was a key reason for the construction of the cairn in this place. Another reason was a connection to the guiding mind behind the cairn, Rory Stewart, who in his 2016 book *The Marches*, documents a walk in the border zone where he waded across the 'trickle' of the Sark at this very location: 'the Sark had held onto its name because it has been made into the English–Scottish border' (Stewart 2016: 187).

Cairn building was co-ordinated by a charity called Hands across the Border, set up in 2014 by Stewart and described as 'a bipartisan group for people dedicated to the preservation of the precious union between Scotland and the United Kingdom'.[3] Stewart was at the time Conservative member of parliament for Penrith and the Border (term of office 2010–2019). At its most basic conception, the monument was constructed as a symbol of UK unity, and thus associated with the 'No' campaign in the referendum and one of its associated formal organisations called Better Together. This unity message was pushed through the name of the cairn, the construction process, building materials used, events held at the cairn in summer 2014, and more generally in appeals to the past.

As the cairn was being constructed, a short film was made about the project by *The Economist* (2014). In this film, Stewart described the monument as 'a model of our country' and the only physical manifestation of Better Together. More emotively, he suggested that Scotland and the 'rump UK' were

[3] http://www.rorystewart.co.uk/hands-across-the-border/

Figure 4: The noticeboard that greets visitors to the Auld Acquaintance cairn (Photograph: K Brophy)

rather like a couple whose marriage was on the rocks, with one partner only needing to say 'I love you' to reconcile the partnership. Project Manager Angus Aitken went further in the same video, calling the cairn a 'geological love letter to the Union', that far into the future would stand as a monumental reminder of when the people of the UK came together. The cairn was around the same time described in the *Daily Mail* newspaper as a, '350-ton symbol of togetherness' (Hardman 2014). This project appeals to the past in two distinct ways. Firstly, it references in form prehistoric burial monuments. Secondly, the monument belongs to a more general geo-political concept that Stewart calls the 'Middlelands', a large upland zone to the north and south of the current border which roughly accords with the historic Kingdom of Northumbria. Both deserve further scrutiny.

The choice of a prehistoric-style cairn is, for me, the most intriguing aspect of this project. Why a cairn, and why in this form? Stewart, on the project website, noted that these 'stone structures have been created by Britons since ancient times, as the physical expression of the values of the community'[4]. A noticeboard that, at the time of writing (March 2020) is still on display at the cairn (Figure 4), adds some more detail. 'A cairn is a traditional northern English and Scottish marker in the landscape', going back as far as the Neolithic. These claims are problematic, as cairns are such ubiquitous aspects of the Neolithic (and indeed Bronze Age) of large swathes of Europe that they would appear to have little relevance to arguments about northern British unity. Prehistoric cairns were not built by 'Britons' in

[4] http://www.rorystewart.co.uk/hands-across-the-border/

Figure 5: A No campaign promotional photograph from summer 2014, the cairn becoming the O of NO (© North News & Pictures Limited)

the modern sense of this word which is what I suspect Stewart was suggesting. More curiously, the specific form of cairn seems to make little sense in this context, as it is essentially a replica Clava Cairn. This style of monument is geographically restricted to an area around Inverness, from the Great Glen to the River Spey, in the Scottish Highlands, and all were constructed in the second millennium BC (the Bronze Age) (Barclay 1992; Bradley 2000).

The classic characteristics of a Clava Cairn are mimicked in the form of the Auld Acquaintance Cairn (Figure 5). It is circular on plan, with an overall diameter of about 15m, with a cairn of pebbles and stones of varied shapes, sizes, and geologies, held in place by a low sandstone drystone kerb or wall of four courses, with vertical stones arranged along the top of this retaining feature. (Earlier images, for example Figure 5, showed the cairn material spilling over the kerb, but this was subsequently tidied up.) The cairn reaches a maximum height of around 2m. There is a central open chamber within the cairn, about 3m or so in diameter, and this is accessed via a straight passage of just over 1m width. This entrance passage is on the east side of the monument, thus aligning the monument towards England. Clava Cairns such as Balnuaran of Clava, near Inverness (Figure 2), appear to be the most likely source of inspiration, with the north-east and south-west cairns there having identical form on plan and being of very similar size (Bradley 2000). Passage alignment was also a key component of the monuments at Balnuaran of Clava, with both passages aligned towards the midwinter sunset. However, Clava cairns often have stone circles around them, a feature not evident at Gretna, suggesting the core cairn element was of most interest to Stewart.

The method of construction was essentially an exercise in 'stone crowdfunding'. The cairn is said to consist of at least 100,000 individual stones which were laid by some 10,000 people (Hardman 2014). In a sense,

Figure 6: A montage of images showing painted stones in the cairn in 2017 and 2019 (Photographs: K Brophy)

these stones are key to the message of this monument, the parts more than the whole. The construction project was very much one that encouraged community input, with a request in summer 2014 put out for helpers and visitors from across the UK (and indeed beyond) and bring with them a stone from where they lived to lay on the cairn. A map of the UK that was on-site during summer 2014 showed places that helpers had come from right across Britain, but also Ireland, North America, and elsewhere in Europe (Hardman 2014). Volunteers were also encouraged to paint their stones with messages in the spirit of the cairn, with materials to do this provided on site for a time, and so the monument was, and remains, a colourful place, albeit with a bias towards red, white, and blue (Figure 6). Stones were largely painted with assorted pro-Union / 'No' messages, mostly words, less often symbols such as stylised poppies (associated with the memorialisation of the war dead in the UK). Stones had names, places, and dates, added, and sentiments ranged from the simple to the complex. Slogans taken from the 'No' campaign were commonly added, such as 'Better Together', as well as multiple variation on NO and NAW. Flags were often painted onto stones, mostly Union flags, but also Saltires (the flag of Scotland), the Red Hand of Ulster, and regional flags such as those of Orkney and Cornwall. At least one stone has a prehistoric symbol painted onto it, a cup-and-ring mark, in blue paint (Figure 7). Some of these stones have additional resonance. The *Daily Mail* noted that one stone was a piece of the Berlin Wall that had been sent to the cairn wrapped in a Union flag. The sender, a man from Glossop, wrote in a letter accompanying this package that the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989 had been 'the triumph of unity over division' (Hardman 2014).

The notion that cairns were communal activities, built from materials across the landscape and labour from various communities, has been developed by prehistorians for some time, with a suggestion that the source

Figure 7: A drawing of a cup-and-ring mark on one of the stones on the cairn (Photograph: K Brophy)

of the stone added meaning to the monument that they were used to construct (e.g. Bradley 1993; Jones 1999). Bradley (2000) suggested that differently coloured stones were deliberately selected for inclusion in prominent places in the Clava cairns; these were essentially multi-coloured monuments. Richards (2013) has focused on the memorable and communal nature of megalith movement and erection. The power and meaning of cairns and stone circles therefore were bound up with construction, people, and diverse places across the landscape, and not just the function that the completed monument served. Perhaps the best-known example of this is Stonehenge, a site defined in prehistory – and now – as much by the places that the stones came from as monument itself (e.g. Darvill and Wainwright 2014; Nash *et al.* 2020). The socio-politics of the construction of the Auld Acquaintance Cairn echoed these sensibilities just as much as it mimicked Clava architecture, which makes sense as it is likely megaliths have always been political projects.

The passageway and interior of the Auld Acquaintance Cairn is floored with grey gravel. Within the chamber (where in a Clava cairn human remains would have been laid) was placed a square stone plaque (Figure 8) with a poem carved into it recounting military campaigns of the past where English and Scots soldiers fought and died together. ('United they fought. United they died. For their sake let us be far-sighted. And stay together, stay united'.) The attribution to J.H.O.B on the stone may relate to the carver, as the poem was written by Christine de Luca. Taken together with the painted poppy, this gives the cairn the feel of a war memorial, falling into a millennial tradition of megalithic memorials to the war dead perpetuated at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire (Williams 2014). A second square slab, with a poem entitled Cornerstone by Charlotte Higgins, lay broken within the chamber when I

Figure 8: The cairn interior, and poem carved onto a sandstone slab (Photograph: K Brophy)

Figure 9: The broken slab with the poem Cornerstone, which had been collected and laid on a picnic bench when I visited in 2019 (Photograph: K Brophy)

first visited in February 2017 when the cairn was three years old. On a more recent visit in 2019, the fragments of this stone had been gathered back together, and placed in re-assembled but fragmented form on a nearby picnic bench, one of two near the cairn (Figure 9). The construction of the cairn was also accompanied by acts of creativity, music performances, torch-lit vigils, and social gatherings, another echo of how prehistoric building sites may have been used.

The other element of the historical situatedness of this cairn is Stewart's idea of 'Middleland'. He has written about this place not only in his (aforementioned) book (Stewart 2016) but also via a series of blog posts (e.g. Stewart 2013, 2014) and even presented a related BBC documentary – *Border Country – the Story of Britain's Lost Middleland* – which was broadcast just before work started on the cairn. Stewart has defined Middleland as a 'nation with its own Kings, languages, traditions of art, literature, and forms of religion,

that existed for over a thousand years' (Stewart 2014) and it spans a mostly upland geographical zone from the 'Firth of Forth in the north, to the Humber in the South' (Stewart 2014), a place that is neither Scotland nor England (Steward 2016: 48). Stewart has also argued that there is 'nothing natural' about a border across the middle of Britain, with any such concept merely an occasional imposition by overlords for their own convenience. He suggests that for long periods of time there was 'no single English ethnicity, or Scottish language', and people who lived across Middleland 'married each other...wore the same clothes, ate the same food, lived the same life...and sung the same ballads about their exploits' (Stewart 2013). In essence his argument is that those who live north and south of the current border mostly do not consider there to be a border, and this has been the way of things for centuries, perhaps millennia. Stewart's writing on Middleland are drenched in nostalgia and family history, this being a place that is now 'lost', 'vanished' (Stewart 2016: 186); it was a concept developed by his father (Stewart 2016: 48).

In his BBC TV show, Stewart suggests a deeper heritage for Middleland, with his suggestion that the tradition of imposing a border here can be dated back to the Romans and Hadrian's Wall. It is interesting then that the construction of his cairn was also viewed by some as connected to the Wall. Comments below-the-line on newspaper stories at the time of construction of the cairn (e.g. Hardman 2014) included sentiments such as, 'keep at it, should come in handy to help rebuild the wall', 'That's the building material for the rebuilding of Hadrian's wall', and 'You should have put the cairn at Hadrian's Wall'. The conflation of ancient and modern identities and motivations represented by the Auld Acquaintance Cairn is problematic, precisely because it suggests that we should live our lives today, define our identities, vote in a democratic process, according to things that happened 500, 2000, even 5000 years ago.

A contested monument

The Auld Acquaintance Cairn did not cease to exist, or be meaningful, on the morning of Friday 19 September 2014, once the votes had been counted, and a majority had decided (55% to 45%) that Scotland should stay within the United Kingdom, and that the border should remain soft. According to the now inactive Facebook site for Hands Across the Border, some 'No' campaigners camped at the cairn during the night of the referendum to await the results, while others gathered to celebrate in the morning. Poems were read, and songs sung (Wade 2015). New stones were added after the referendum concluded thanking voters for the outcome of the plebiscite. On a visit to the cairn in 2017, I recorded stones that were painted with phrases like 'Thank you for staying together United Kingdom', 'The people spoke forever' (a phrase also commonly associated with the Brexit vote), and 'Thank you all'. The Hands Across the Border website until at least 2019 encouraged the continual addition of stones to the cairn. For some it is a place of pilgrimage (Wade 2015), a term usually reserved for religious purposes, indicative of the passions raised by the issues and the monument.

The cairn has however, for the most part, adopted the role of a rather curious and underwhelming tourist and visitor experience. A glance at how the site has fared on Trip Advisor shows that the 'Hands across the Border cairn' is the fourth most popular attraction in Gretna (the first being a retail outlet shopping park) based on 26 reviews[5]. Through time these reviews have become more negative, a decline of sorts, with the last review at the time of writing posted in May 2019, being 'Dreadfully dull: a pile of painted stones polluting the local environment built in a shape of a burial cairn, is there any more suitable allegory for this failed Union?'. Another visitor called the site 'just a mismanaged pile of stones'. Yet 18 of the 26 reviews give the cairn an overall rating of Very good to Excellent, with comments like 'colourful, historic, beautiful' and 'It is still lovely, all the stones (so preciously laid) are readable'. I have

[5] https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g2138961-d6963121-Reviews-Hands_Across_the_Border_Cairn-Gretna_Dumfries_and_Galloway_Scotland.html

the suspicion that one's appreciation of the cairn depends on one's stance on independence and Rory Stewart. On a visit to the cairn in 2015, a year after it had been completed, journalist Ian Jack recounted in *The Guardian* newspaper how the cairn was less noble in appearance than in aim (Jack 2015). The banality of personal messages painted onto little stones was a little too much for him. He noted, 'A monument intended to celebrate beautiful generalisations – political unity, friendship between peoples – has been altered ... by the intrusion of the specific and the everyday.' Underlying Jack's narrative is a sense that the whole venture was weird, an indication of the perceived personal eccentricities of Stewart (the cairn was 'very Stewartish' (Massie 2019)), than a serious political statement.

In the six years between construction and writing this chapter, the cairn has been a continual focus for anti- and pro-independence sentiment. Like Stonehenge, this cairn has become a contested monument (Bender 1998). Very early in the life of the monument, it was a target of apparently politically motivated vandalism. During construction it was noted by the *Daily Mail* that, 'Only the other day, the cairn team arrived to find a huge 'Yes' spray painted on the stonework' (Hardman 2014). The cairn was also vandalised early in 2015 (Callaghan 2015). This included adding slogans to stones on the cairn – someone daubed 'Butcher's Apron' on a rock covered in a Union flag, while another stone had 'sheep shaggers' written on it. This was accompanied by the breaking of the Cornerstones poem stone in the cairn interior, and the removal of a noticeboard from the site which was then thrown into the River Sark. It floated downriver and was found a few months later by a former local MP on a beach (reported online on the *Cumbria Crack* website, no longer available, see Brophy 2017). Media coverage at the time suggested this was a 'nationalist stunt', with the *Daily Record* noting that slogans painted onto stones on the cairn included, 'Nicola Sturgeon (then deputy SNP leader) is coming to get ye!' and 'Don't blame me a voted Yes' (Callaghan 2015). Rory Stewart said at the time: 'I respect that nationalists will continue to put forward their own arguments, but I fail to see what these vandals hoped to achieve by targeting the cairn at Gretna, other than to manifest their bitterness and resentment for the way in which the Scottish people ultimately chose to vote last year' (Brophy 2017). Sporadic acts of vandalism have been reported over the years in the local press and social media, although whether these actions should be regarded as vandalism or legitimate political commentary remains in the eye of the beholder.

My most recent visit to the cairn was in April 2019. I found that the monument was still in good condition. The lack of weeds on the cairn and in the interior and passageway gravel path leads me to conclude that to an extent the monument is still managed (or at least weeded) by someone. There was no specific instance of anything out of place aside from some graffiti within the interior, the innocuous message 'Emma 31/8/18' written on one sandstone block in black marker pen. However, it was also clear that stones have continued to be added to the monument, with varying motivations. In some cases, these were memorials to deceased loved ones, at least one with a military association ('Household piper to HM The Queen'; one memorial to Uncle Brian included the message 'Stay United' and was laid in 2019). Political messages were also evident in relation to public transport and other rural policy issues ('Give us mobile phone signal not independence' (Figure 10)) suggesting the cairn through time has gradually morphed into a place of low-level political protest against the SNP government in Scotland. During this visit other materials had been added to the cairn – a wooden bird feeding house, a large lump of flint (an object with prehistoric allusions that must have been imported from England), wooden boards that were once signs removed from somewhere else. Many of the stones I recalled from my last visit in 2017 were still *in situ*, although some had faded considerably since then (Figure 11), inevitable as the cairn beds in. In a century, probably sooner, this will be a cairn of apparently undecorated stones, its original meaning perhaps forgotten; we should consider the possibility that prehistoric cairns also originally had colourfully decorated stones placed on them.

My visit in 2019 was in part to document whether the cairn had become appropriated in Brexit debates. I was surprised that there did not seem to be any explicit reference to Brexit. Clearly the monument had not at that time become a focus for Leavers or Remainers, although the relationship between these

Figure 10: Non-independence-related political messages have started to appear on the cairn painted onto stones (Photograph: K Brophy)

Figure 11: The painted stones are gradually fading: the same stone in 2017 (left) and 2019 (right) (photos: K Brophy)

positions, and Yes/No, can be complex. However, that situation was about to change. In early 2020, capitalising on 'Brexit Day' (January 31), social media captured an attempt to appropriate the Auld Acquaintance cairn for the independence cause. This was prompted by 'Yes Stones', a group of 'Scottish independence supporting stone painters'. Their Facebook page notes that they 'paint stones, pebbles, slate (anything really!) and then 'plant' them all over Scotland and indeed the world. The message is YES to Scottish independence... The stones can be left in place, photographed and posted to the group'. An extension of this activity was the installation of an artwork called the 'Yes Slates Montage' near the cairn on Brexit Day. This installation consisted of a series of painted slates spelling out the words 'Yes yes yes independence for Scotland' embedded in symbols and drawings; one of these painted slates has a standing stone on it. By this time, the 'yes-ification' of the cairn had already begun, with an article in *The Times* earlier that month documenting the increased presence of stones painted with messages

supportive of independence such as 'Flower of Scotland – it's time to see your likes again' and pro-independence messages written in Gaelic laid on the cairn (Wade 2020). The cairn has clearly become a focal point for protest, with images circulating on social media in November 2019 showing a line of people with saltire flags next to the cairn, holding a banner with an anti-Conservative party slogan on it.

Plans for the Yes Stones art installation had been revealed publicly in *The National* newspaper (Hannah 2020) and thus small numbers of pro- and anti-independence supporters descended on the cairn on 31 January 2020. The resultant angry but small-scale clash (perhaps the Scottish word 'stooshie' would be better) does not appear to have been documented by any mainstream media, and so we are left with social media images and comments to reconstruct what happened. Someone from the Yes Stones group recorded on social media that when they arrived '4 or 5 flag waving unionists decided to hold the cairn', confirmed by a photo circulating on Twitter of two men standing beside a Union flag adorned cairn. (At the time of writing, this seems a familiar image, with similar gestures of monument defence evident around contested statues and monuments in 2020.) Photographs on Twitter show a man wearing a kilt and holding a stone with YES painted on it about to lay it on the cairn, but for the most part flag-waving and Yes Stones activity was restricted to a roadside location near the cairn, not the cairn itself. One anti-independence campaigner tweeted that this amounted to 'an invasion' endorsed by SNP politicians, calling the cairn 'hallowed ground' for 'us Brits'. Others used words like 'desecration', and one tweet called for 'a Great British clear up' of the 'anti British mess'.

This is a monument which continues to divide despite the aspiration of those who first built it to bring people together, 'hands across the border'. Independence supporters call it Rory's Cairn or the Indy Cairn, while Unionists often call it the Friendship Cairn or use the Hands across the Border name. This is reminiscent of the various names used to describe Belfast's peace-lines, the tone of which very much depend on your perspective and sometimes embrace the use of euphemism or irony (McAtackney 2011: 82). There is no reason to believe that the politicisation of this colourful 'mismanaged pile of stones' is going to stop anytime soon.

Conclusion

The cairn sits in a border zone, a liminal and contested space. In the past this location has not always been a border. For some today it is a symbolic (and legal) border between Scotland and England. For others, there is no border. In a future version of the UK, this could become a hard or soft border. In some visions, this is a zone that might even one day be the border between the EU and what remains of the UK, should Scotland become independent and apply to re-join the EU. This is also literally an edgeland (Farley and Roberts 2012) – on the edge of Scotland, just outside England, perhaps one day marking a southern limit to free-movement Europe. Perhaps for these reasons this is also a restless place of flux. Stewart noted as he walked through this space that he could see a motorway, a railway line, a power line: 'no hint of a pause, or a break in the stream of traffic and people and power flowing between the nations' (Stewart 2016: 189). As the world passes by, crossing the border with careless ease, the cairn is easy to miss or dismiss, despite the light and fury that congregates around it from time to time. As Massie (2019) wrote when reflecting on Stewart's campaign to be Conservative Party Leader (and thus UK Prime Minister), 'even if Rory's Cairn has been largely forgotten now, there are reckoned to be 100,000 stones there, brought to it by people from all across the United Kingdom. And it is still there'. The Auld Acquaintance Cairn is a reflection of the ongoing divisions within society in Scotland, in part a legacy of IndyRef, but being a cairn, it endures. If tropes about Hadrian's Wall are anything to go by, the cairn will still be a focus of mythologisation and misunderstanding in 2000 years.

What does the nearer future hold for the Auld Acquaintance Cairn? Over the next few years, as a second independence referendum looms on the horizon, it seems likely that the Cairn will continue

to be a contested focus for gatherings and protest, a place where arguments about the future of the border will be played our through the proxies of painted stones and flags. At a time when prehistoric monuments have become a focus for English nationalism (e.g. Barclay and Brophy 2020), Brexit-related electioneering (Brophy 2019b), and Neo-Nazi ceremonies (Dixon 2019; Williams 2019) we should be vigilant about the uses and abuses of a cairn that was built to support British nationalism and is from time to time appropriated by Scottish nationalists. The contested nature of borders and their often-mythologised future means that the place where this cairn was constructed has additional power. Will it be possible to disentangle the prehistory from the politics of the present? Can this be reframed as a space for rational and calm political debate? Could this cairn become a monument to the pitfalls of referenda? These questions remain to be answered, but I doubt this is the last we have heard of Rory's cairn. Yet, perhaps it would be better that Auld Acquaintance be forgot.

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Breaking Down the Berlin Wall: Dark Heritage, Pre-Wall Sites and the Public

Kieran Gleave

The Berlin Wall is ingrained in public imagination and is arguably the most famous urban frontier in the world. This chapter examines the interpretative and ethical challenges that arise from engaging the public with two sites along the route of the Berlin Wall, the Topography of Terror and Invalidenfriedhof Cemetery, both of which run parallel to, or are intersected by, the Wall itself. I examine the various challenges that overarching themes present at these sites – contemporary death, nationalism and dark heritage – pose to the literature of public archaeologies and the ethical dilemmas they can present. I discuss how balanced and sensitive approaches to interpretation and wider public involvement in the archaeological process are essential for a greater public understanding of sites that are both important places of memorialisation, and are crucial for understanding the stratigraphy of the Berlin Wall and the wider cityscape. Upon exploring this I reach two key conclusions. First, it is crucial that the stories of these sites are told and are made available to the public, and that navigating ethical questions must be done on a site–by-site basis; all with the added challenge of ensuring the sites are not turned into 'bucket list' destinations. Second, that some sites should have a minimal amount of interpretation and should not actively encourage a large footfall, whilst ensuring public access to the site as a place of memorialisation and education remains. Both conclusions can be readily applied to other 'dark sites' along other frontiers and borderlands.

Introduction

The Berlin Wall is widespread in popular culture and the public imagination worldwide. Large tourist attractions include Checkpoint Charlie, the 'ghost' cobblestone markings that delineate the former route of the Wall and small roadside memorials dedicated to those who died along the route during its operation. Through such locations, the public are constantly exposed to the notion that this urban frontier is synonymous with the identity of Berlin today (McWilliams 2013: 63-65). Whilst Berliners and visitors may associate the Wall with post-war German division and the Cold War, it must not be forgotten that this is a multi-phase frontier; the route of the wall was erected through a living city. As a result, there are sections of the Wall that incorporate elements of sites that existed before it was erected and transformed into the urban frontier that it is presented and known as today. This chapter will examine two such sites as case studies which illustrate the requirement for a nuanced approach to the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands when applied to contemporary cityscapes.

The first site is the Topography of Terror, which features a standing section of the Berlin Wall, the excavated remains of the SS Reich Main Security Office and a free museum dedicated to remembering the victims of Fascism during the Second World War. The second site is Invalidenfriedhof, an active military cemetery with burials spanning from the time of the Kingdom of Prussia in the 18th century through to the Second World War. This site also has a standing section of the Wall running through it which effectively cut the cemetery in half during the operational years of the frontier (1961-1989). These sites will be referred to as 'pre-Wall' archaeology throughout this chapter.

Before examining the specific challenges that can arise from engaging the public with these sites, public archaeology must be defined. Here I used a condensed definition, arguing that it involves the dissemination of archaeological knowledge from archaeologists to the public (Moshenska 2017: 3). This extends further into critiquing and evaluating how this knowledge is disseminated, and debating what constitutes 'the past' as mediated by this knowledge. Incorporating this broad definition, the chapter will examine the ethical and political complexities that engaging the public with 'dark heritage' can

present to an urban frontier that already faces an array of interpretive challenges for locals and visitors alike (Saunders 2009: 10).

Having established how this chapter will approach the definition of public archaeology, the sites examined here provide two key opportunities for discussion. First, they allow us to consider and question the specific interpretative challenges that can arise from attempting to effectively convey the complexities and changing dynamics of urban frontiers to the public. Are these multi-phase sites posed as static examples of urban frontiers? Is it necessary to challenge public perception of the Berlin Wall from that of a timeless symbol of the Cold War to instead regard it as a 'phase' in the stratigraphy of Berlin's past? Second, questions relating to the level and intensity of such 'dissemination of information' to the public are raised. Is 'less more' in terms of engagement with examples of 'dark heritage'? Is it appropriate to omit information from public-facing sites on the grounds of ethical complexity? How should sites with associations of death and suffering, in the context of an urban frontier, be presented to the public?

The public and contemporary German politics: a challenge to the public archaeology of the Berlin Wall?

The rise of 'dark tourism', where people visit places with negative connotations such as battlefields or places of death (Foley 2000: 1-5), leads inevitably to an increased demand to exhibit 'dark heritage' for the public (Harrison 2013: 193). This poses a challenge to the public archaeology of the Wall. Interpreting and engaging the public with these 'dark sites' can become a difficult task when establishing where visitors come from and what their motives for visiting are (Foley 2000: 27). A sensitive approach to interpretation and presentation is required; not every member of the visiting public will want to interact with sites that have negative associations (Foley 2000: 27). Whilst dark sites can act as valuable commemorative and educational resources (Richter 2005: 266), such as Auschwitz Birkenau (Harrison 2013: 193), interpreting and presenting them as 'bucket list' or 'must see' destinations, despite an increased public interest in death and suffering (Sharpley 2009: 6), can be distasteful at best, and dangerous at worst. It is crucial that the educational value of such sites is not cheapened and their messages are not blurred (Richter 2005: 266).

In order to understand the interpretative challenges that pre-Wall archaeology presents to the values that underpin public archaeology, it needs to be established who 'the visiting public' in Berlin are. Berlin received 13.5 million visitors in 2018, 54.1% being German nationals and 45.9% coming from outside of the country (Berlin Statistical Office 2019); a slight majority of German citizens. This is further complicated by the stark difference in German post-war experiences between East and West (Lindenberger 2010: 15), especially in the context of post-war narratives of the Second World War which are applicable to the sites that are examined in this chapter (Harrison 2013: 172; McWilliams 2013: 48; Sharples 2016: 4). This mixed public background makes interpreting pre-Wall archaeology along the Berlin Wall a particular challenge; visitors from different places will hold different viewpoints and opinions about different subjects.

Commemorating pre-war Germany is a difficult subject for most Germans (Sontheimer 1988: 1–4); narratives of German expansionism and militarism are often interpreted with guilt (Kaufman 1998: 130). Debates surrounding the preservation or destruction of monuments or archaeological sites associated with this time, predominantly those from the Nazi regime, have been commonplace (Foley 2000: 33; Kaufman 1998: 124). A challenge to public archaeology here is whom the interpretation at pre-Wall sites from this period should target; a problem posed by other politically charged urban frontiers which have controversial pasts, such as those in Northern Ireland (Horning 2015: 6). Commemorating and presenting any archaeology or site to the public that have overarching narratives of nationalism,

colonialism or fascism will require a sensitive approach, irrespective of which country it may be in. This point can be demonstrated in the international debates that surround the question of statue retention and memorialisation following the Black Lives Matter movement in June 2020 (BBC News 2020). It would be incorrect to suggest that the non-German visitor will be less sensitive to such sites, and that interpretation for foreign consumption can be less sensitive in its approach. Contemporary German caution specifically of fascism and nationalism which arose partly as a response to the Holocaust (Vick 2005: 44) is a factor that must be accounted for when considering broader themes of public interpretation and engagement. With this point in mind, the challenge is in striking a sensitive balance that accounts for the views of German citizens and for the increasing numbers of international visitors to Berlin (cf. Merriman 2004: 13). The varied visitor expectations and opinions that come with such an array of people opens the possibility for multiple narratives and interpretations of the same site (Grima 2017: 73). Public archaeology must aim to cater for such a diversity of opinion (Endere *et al.* 2018), especially when dealing with morally complex sites such as those focused on here.

These issues all culminate in a set of challenges that must be navigated in order to engage the public with the complex narratives that underpin the Berlin Wall as an urban frontier. It is on this issue where this chapter seeks justification for its approach. Public archaeology, often defined in its approach by the politics of the state (Schofield 2012: 301), actively aims to encourage public participation with the past (Little 2012: 396). If that approach neglects to interpret areas of archaeology for the public due to political motives, as will be examined, then a challenge to public archaeology is presented (Copeland 2004: 133). Despite the political associations that surround the 'dark sites' in this chapter, visitors to the Berlin Wall are increasing every year. If the public are to engage and learn from the pre-Wall archaeology as a part of the stratigraphy of the Berlin cityscape, and a demand is there, then interpretation and public involvement with these sites, as media of public archaeology will need to be considered (Harrison 2013: 106).

Case study 1: The Topography of Terror

The Topography of Terror (hereafter ToT) is a multi-phase site located on Wilhelm and Prinz-Albrecht-Straße (Foley 2000: 33) which features a standing section of the Berlin Wall, an adjacent indoor museum (the Documentation Centre) and surviving below-ground remains of the basement of the SS Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, hereafter shortened to RSHA) (Figures 1–2). The office was operational from 1933 to 1945 as the most important office of the RSHA; a place synonymous with the Gestapo (the secret police of Nazi Germany), oppression of opponents to the regime and the Holocaust.

Due to the prominent role this site played in persecuting those targeted by Nazism, displaying the remains of the RSHA caused controversy when they were first uncovered and exhibited to the public in 1987 (Macdonald 2009: 82), posing moral questions regarding the appropriateness of their commemoration (Hartmann 2018: 273). The below-ground remains of the ToT are now used to honour the victims of the Nazi regime, using the materiality of the RSHA as a physical reminder to the public of the consequences of fascism by exhibiting the history of the building, the impact the site had on the citizens of Berlin at the time and pictures of victims and prominent members of the Gestapo and Waffen SS to convey the story of the site. The indoor Documentation Centre reinforces this message, with descriptions and photographs of the crimes the Nazis planned and implemented on site (Dalton 2020: 61). The ToT is a well-visited site, attracting over one million visitors each year (Sharples 2016: 1). The challenges faced by the public archaeology of this site, examinend below, will need to be navigated in order to provide a sensitive and balanced narrative to this large audience.

The first challenge to public archaeology with the ToT is striking an interpretative balance on site. This is because the Berlin Wall runs directly parallel to the site, obscuring the view of the ToT from the street. The Berlin Wall, as a feature in the cityscape, is one of the most internationally visited sites in Berlin

Figure 1: The remains of the basement of the SS Reich Security Main Office with a standing section of the Berlin Wall. The exhibits under the glass cover tell the story of the site and features images of those who fell victim to Nazism. (Photograph: Kevin Rutherford, Wikimedia Commons)

and, as discussed previously, is engrained in popular culture and living memory (Taylor 1997: 321). The Wall is key to archaeological debates that surround urban frontiers; arguably as the most famous urban frontier in the world, it shapes public perceptions about what an urban frontier is. One of the primary goals of public archaeology is to educate (Matsuda 2016: 41) and stimulate public understanding of the past (Henson 2011: 219). Whilst it is important to interpret and present the standing section of the Wall at the ToT to the visiting public, not only because it is a popular attraction, but also because it is an key part of the stratigraphy of Berlin's cityscape, it is also important that the message and story of the ToT is not overshadowed by that of the Wall. It is crucial that the section of the Wall on this site is used in a way that adheres to these points, and is not used solely to attract visitors.

Likewise, attempting to counter this by interpreting and focusing on the below-ground remains of the RSHA too heavily could be seen by some members of contemporary German society as commemorating the Nazi regime (Hartmann 2018: 273). This is an undesirable outcome as the site could potentially become a makeshift shrine for Neo-Nazis (Foley 2000: 33; McGuire 2008: 34). As the site has connections to Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich, it is crucial that those who worked there are not commemorated individually or collectively (Dalton 2020: 42). The interpretation at the ToT, at time of writing, navigates this issue effectively by utilising the close location of the Wall to convey the resulting division and suffering that stemmed from the pursuit of potent and dangerous ideologies. Despite this particular site using the urban frontier that succeeded it to its advantage, as a memorial 'lieux de memoire' that serves as a place to educate, the point is demonstrated that various complexities can arise when interpreting 'dark sites' along urban frontiers for the purpose of serving as educational tools (Dalton 2020: 42).

Figure 2: The Berlin Wall pictured next to the ToT (the glass on the left). (Photograph: Christopher Gleave)

Whilst no excavation has taken place since the unearthing of the RSHA, and therefore the discussion that follows is hypothetical, the ethical complexities of the ToT provide an opportunity to examine the challenges that can arise through involving the public in the initial archaeological process of 'dark sites'; both in excavation and interpretation design. Public engagement in the excavation process can yield many benefits (Little 2012: 396; Oldham 2017: 233), such as a greater public understanding of the past, an appreciation of the importance of archaeological work and constructing a sense of collective 'ownership'. Getting the public involved in projects that could be deemed as controversial, such as excavating elements of the ToT, could prove a difficult task (Macdonald 2009: 82); especially if German citizens are excavating a site like this, evident in the controversy that was caused when the basement remains were initially excavated (Macdonald 2009: 82). By way of comparison, however, excavations at the Second World War German field hospital at Inari, Finland, do prove that it is possible to engage the public in dark site excavation (Banks 2018: 129). A 'normal' approach to engaging the public in an excavation might not apply to a 'dark site' like this, and questions surrounding the specific ways the public can be involved at such a site would need to be raised before proceeding with public engagement. Would a site such as the ToT be appropriate for a young person to excavate? Is it fair to omit the public completely from an excavation on the grounds of it being too ethically complex? The same can be said with involving the public in the interpretation process; audiences will likely take more away from the interpretation if there has been public input (Copeland 2004: 133). Again, propagating the initial public participation when constructing such politically charged interpretation would raise questions similar to involving the public in the excavation process; how appropriate is it to engage the public in the construction of interpretation on a

site like this? Should it be left to specialists, or, as the public will be consuming the interpretation, should they have the opportunity to influence its creation? As with many urban frontiers and borderlands, such as those in Northern Ireland (Horning 2015: 6), which feature sites that share this controversial trait, such as the city walls of Derry, the theme of public engagement is likely to be a recurring challenge to the public archaeology of urban frontiers; one with no universal clear-cut solution (Moussouri 2014: 16).

A significant challenge that all archaeological and historic sites face today in the context of public engagement is what should be interpreted and why; the visitor ought to be able to derive meaning from what is being presented to them, with the interpretation acting as a medium (Harrison 2013: 105). Interpreting the ToT for the public is not exempt from this and has the added dimension of being a 'dark site'. It is crucial, at any site such as this, to interpret for the purpose of informing the public, and not for the purpose of making the site a visitor attraction. Unlike Checkpoint Charlie, it is important to guard against ToT being primarily portrayed as a 'must see' or 'bucket list' site as opposed to its aimed role as a place of learning and remembrance. Despite this ethically complex set of criteria on-site, balanced interpretation and careful consideration of the key themes in public archaeology by the German government has managed to overcome the challenges posed to it. The site is, at the time of writing, easy for the public to find and visit with good signposts and visitor guides which recommend a visit to the site. Visitors are encouraged to come and learn about the site and to remember those who fell victim to the Nazi regime, in a similar way that former concentration camps are interpreted; visitors are asked to show respect and the educational value of the site is the primary goal of seeking to encourage visitors to the site. This is a well-managed multi-period site which has received a fair degree of prominence and attention and effectively uses the archaeology of the RSHA and the standing section of the Berlin Wall to convey a powerful message to the public; not all places of archaeological interest along the Berlin Wall receive this.

Case study 2: Invalidenfriedhof cemetery

This site, in contrast, is one which does not receive widespread attention. Located in Mitte, this cemetery is the resting place of many Prussian and German military figures (Figures 3–4) who were buried there from the 18th century to the end of the Second World War, including several prominent figures such as General Scharnhorst (a leading figure of the Napoleonic Wars), Manfred Albrecht Freiherr Von Richthofen (The Red Baron) and Reinhard Heydrich (Chief of the RSHA, discussed previously). The site was divided when the Berlin Wall was raised through it (Figure 5), destroying many of the graves in order to make way for the 'death strip' which was patrolled during the operational years of the Wall (Hahnke 2012: 120). Aside from a small plaque at the gate of the cemetery and an interpretation board for the standing wall section, there is no interpretation that examines the site as a whole (at time of writing), and visitor guides aimed at international audiences do not mention this site at all. The broader funerary context of the site has seemingly, until recently (discussed below), averted wider public interest and spared the site from destruction by iconoclasts.

We are again presented with a multi-period site along this urban frontier, politically controversial in nature, but with the added factor of the site being a place of burial and remembrance; a difficult set of criteria when considering themes of engagement and education. As with the previous discussion of the ToT, the focus here will be placed on hypothetical, rather than existing interpretation; this provides an opportunity to fully engage with wider themes present within the existing literature of public archaeologies.

One of the primary challenges, again, is balancing narratives of the Berlin Wall and the site. Should this site be presented to the public as a cemetery, as a section of the Wall, or both? A prime example of this is the graffiti on the surviving section of Wall (Figure 5); graffiti on the Berlin Wall has been perceived as being symbolic of reunification (Manghani 2008: 130) and can be viewed as a part of modern German history. Should it, out of respect for those buried here, remain considering this is a cemetery? Is the Wall

Figure 3 (left): The grave of a German major at the cemetery, note the martial sculpture atop the headstone: symbolism the German public may be cautious of today (Photograph: Christopher Gleave)

Figure 4 (below): Some of the earlier and grander Prussian graves at the site. The sleeping lion at the back of the picture is the tomb of General Scharnhorst. Despite perhaps remaining symbolic of German imperialism, these monuments have escaped destruction (Photograph: Christopher Gleave)

Figure 5 (above): A standing section of the Berlin Wall which runs directly through Invalidenfriedhof (Photograph: Christopher Gleave)

Figure 6 (inset): The plaque just below the headstone of Manfred Von Richthofen; a humble form of commemoration for such a famous German figure in the First World War (Photograph: Christopher Gleave)

Figure 7 (left): Manfred Von Richthofen's former grave, his body was moved to a different location, but decades after the Wall was raised directly behind it. Note the spread of bullet holes in the stone; this was caused by Soviet fire during the operational years of the wall and stands as another testament to the site's multi-period nature as a part of the urban frontier (Photograph: Christopher Gleave)

as 'valuable' to Berlin's stratigraphy as the graves? Whilst cases can be made from both sides, there is of course no clear-cut answer; questions like these demonstrate how complex the interpretation of sites of this nature can be (Foley 2000: 120). Regardless of this, the challenge is to convey to the public the story of this site, as one that links the Imperial German past through the Second World War and into the present, with the added ethical complexities that arise through engaging the public with themes of death in modern conflict (Moshenska 2008: 162–164).

Most burial sites, not just in the context of frontiers and borderlands, present challenges to public archaeology in that they can be used to make political gains (Jenkins 2016: 251) and because they can hold a great deal of contemporary power. The earlier graves in Invalidenfriedhof, namely from the Prussian and First World War eras, do not present a large political challenge to this urban frontier as these times are relatively removed from the minds of the German public (Jefferies 2015: 1). Some Germans do not see Prussia as a part of the history of modern Germany, as it existed prior to the unification of the small German states (Lawson 1998: 13); an instance where identity and ownership can pose challenges to public archaeology (Boyd 2012: 186). Despite this, as mentioned previously, commemorating the military war dead in Germany is not something that all German citizens wish to do with gusto (Sontheimer 1988: 1-4); this explains why the former grave site of the infamous Red Baron, Manfred Von Richthofen (his body was exhumed and moved to the family plot in Wiesbaden in 1975), in the cemetery is not a major focus of commemoration (Figures 6–7). If there are issues commemorating such famous and relatively uncontroversial figure of the First World War, it becomes clear that public engagement at this site has no easy solution.

Invalidenfriedhof also has several graves that are the resting place of members of the Nazi party, as previously mentioned, most infamously that of Reinhard Heydrich; a prominent architect of the Holocaust. Burial sites of SS soldiers or Nazi officials is an expectedly politically tense subject (Kaufman 1998: 125); public engagement and commemoration again plays into this debate. There is no interpretation or means of identifying the grave sites, which have since been flattened (Figure 8) so as to prevent commemoration and formations of shrines. This point relates back to the contemporary power of cemeteries and modern conflict burials (Moshenska 2008: 165), illustrated in December 2019, when an unsuccessful attempt was made to uncover the remains of Heydrich after information was obtained about the exact location of his grave within Invalidenfriedhof (BBC News 2019). Is it appropriate, therefore, to risk future attempts such as this by raising the profile of the site through an increase in public engagement?

Here a dilemma is presented. The ToT uses the themes that underpin public archaeology (Moshenska 2017: 3) to display politically controversial remains for the purpose of education; the division and suffering that results from adopting a fascist government. One might assume, after reading wider literature on public archaeology, that public engagement in as many archaeological sites as possible is beneficial (Grima 2017; Merriman 2004; Thomas and Lea 2014). Whilst this is true for many archaeological sites, engaging the public specifically with these Nazi burials would yield more troubles than benefits. What would the public learn from engagement with these burials? Should the burials even be interpreted, or is it better to leave the site the way it is? Heavier engagement with the earlier Prussian and First World War burials could establish a greater public understanding of the importance of chronology in this urban frontier; especially as these eras have become removed from wider public knowledge (Jefferies 2015: 1). It is easy to suggest, from an Anglocentric perspective, that the public should engage more with the less controversial Prussian and First World War graves through interpretation. Would it, in the interests of preventing further destruction to the site and navigating the difficult set of ethical criteria, be fair to completely omit the Nazi era burials from public facing interpretation? Despite the difficult question of ethics this presents, it is the responsibility of public archaeologists to navigate and present these difficult topics to the public (MacAtackney this volume); we cannot presume that this site is too ethically complex on behalf of the public.

Figure 8: The approximate grave site of Reinhard Heydrich, flattened by the occupying Soviets to prevent commemoration (Photograph: Christopher Gleave)

Invalidenfriedhof was not the only old cemetery to be intersected by the Berlin Wall; the Sophien parish cemetery, also located in Mitte, suffered a similar fate. Whilst the Sophien cemetery does not contain burials as controversial as those at Invalidenfriedhof, both cemeteries, as active resting places, speak to the core themes that underpin the public archaeology of death. Regardless of the geographical or political implications that surround this site, discussed previously, ethical questions arise when questioning how, or if, the public should engage with these sites. As educational resources of Berlin's 18th–20th century history and places of remembrance and memorialisation, public access to these sites is paramount. As stated previously, modest interpretation in the form of the plaque at the gate and the interpretation boards for the Wall section are present at the site (at the time of writing), but a visitor to Berlin will not find Invalidenfriedhof in guidebooks, on popular city tours or on signposts, as other popular Berlin Wall attractions such as Checkpoint Charlie are (McWilliams 2013: 64).

Is this small quantity of interpretation and difficulty of learning about the site an issue? Whilst, as discussed previously, it is important to interpret these sites for a greater public understanding of this urban frontier, Invalidenfriedhof perhaps provides an example of a site that should not be heavily interpreted. Access to the site as a place of memorialisation and education is key, but must be done without actively encouraging a large footfall; especially considering the tense political atmosphere surrounding these burials and conflicting narratives between the Wall and the cemetery. Whilst the range of burials in the site vary in terms of their wider political implications, death and public archaeology, regardless of frontiers or borderlands, present their own challenges (Sayer 2010: 482). Invalidenfriedhof is an active cemetery, regardless of the politics of the state, the background of the individual visitor, or who is buried there; whilst the site is important to the chronology of Berlin's cityscape, a cemetery should not become a 'bucket list' destination. These factors will continue to pose ethical challenges to the public archaeology of this site and others like it.

Conclusion: The future of public engagement with pre-wall archaeology in Berlin

The route of the Berlin Wall is much more than the concrete structure that went on to become a symbol of Cold War tensions; this structure cut through sites which are just as important to the stratigraphy and identity of Berlin as the Wall itself. It is crucial that the Wall does not eclipse the important stories of such sites which serve to provide context, irrespective of how many visitors it attracts each year. A challenge to this point comes in the form of the 'dark sites' that this chapter has presented and discussed; it is paramount that the stories of these sites are presented to the public to ensure that this context is understood, whilst remaining mindful of the connotations and potential consequences that can arise from increased an increased public engagement with 'dark sites'.

Whilst not all sites around this frontier are as controversial or multivocal as the two case studies presented in this chapter, and often have simpler solutions to problems with public engagement, they adequately illustrate that there is no universally correct way to interpret or engage the public with 'dark sites'; especially ones with the added complexity of being multi-phased. The ToT and Invalidenfriedhof illustrate that, whilst both share the trait of being a dark site along the route of the Wall that is important for understanding the stratigraphy of Berlin's cityscape, a 'one size fits all' approach to interpretation and engagement is not possible. Emulating the same levels of interpretation and public engagement that are seen at the ToT at Invalidenfriedhof is not ethically appropriate, as it is an active cemetery. This hopefully makes the point that it is imperative to approach each site along this frontier, and indeed other places that have dark sites, as individual sites with divergent needs. Despite interpretation needing to retain a sense of the Wall's coherence, and showcase both the places where it is now gone and the multiple perceptions it had during its use, we also need to realise that different stretches of the wall have unique biographies with different prehistories and afterlives. This needs to be approached in a way that encourages public engagement for the purposes of education and remembrance, without transforming the sites examined here, and others like them, into a 'bucket-list' destinations. Part of the solution is recognising the traces of Berlin's cityscape through which the wall traversed and their diverse and complex narratives, as well as recognising the Wall itself as materiality and metaphor (cf. McWilliams 2020).

When using theories and terminology relating to public archaeology, it might be assumed that they are universally applicable; public archaeology can operate with the same implications and outcomes amongst all publics, over all nations. As this chapter has hopefully demonstrated, this is not the case. Each frontier and borderland, be they international, national or urban, as discussed here, will present its own unique challenges to public archaeology (Grima 2017: 92); even if they are not as extreme as the sites presented here, which grapple with connotations of Nazism and the archaeology of death. It is the future job of public archaeologists to remain alert, approach each site differently, and adapt accordingly to this factor.

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The Political Dimensions of Public Archaeology in Borderlands: Exploring the Contemporary US-México Border

Maikin Holst

The chapter explores the contemporary archaeology of the USA-México border and how public archaeology is participating in political discourses on a global scale.

Introduction

Contemporary borderlands, especially when considering borderlands are under pressure due to undocumented migration, shed light on the political contexts and roles of public archaeology to critique and challenge government policies but also to record the lives and experiences of migrants (Gokee & De León 2014: 134; Hamilakis 2018a: 12). Using the USA-México border as a case study (Figure 1), this chapter explores the relationship between archaeology and politics: both how political bodies use archaeological terminology to further their agenda and what archaeologists can do in order to deal with political (mis)appropriations. In particular, archaeological methods can serve to shed light on a complex diaspora which might otherwise go unrecorded and under-recognised: contemporary archaeology might serve as a form of social and political action within borderlands.

Background: borders and migration

Migration is a widespread feature of human societies past and present, with Bentley et al. (2005b: 406) arguing that, by definition, 'borders are legal and political infrastructures created by states to maintain boundaries and regulate movement.' These structures have a deep time-depth, and archaeologists can contribute towards understanding their origins and development. For example, for the later Roman Empire, borders along the edges of the Empire separated the 'civilised' world from the 'barbarians' but internal borders were also established, delimiting territories of different hierarchical order and function (Laine 2015: 15–16; Kolb and Zingg 2016: 11). Borders were an essential tool in regulating the movement of people and goods. During the later Middle Ages, the increased use of mapping technology enhanced perceptions of the globe, serving to help solidify the idea of a border from an abstract idea to a visible line separating countries and territories (Laine 2015: 16). Rulers and elites started to see the people as the wealth of the country – as they were the labour force – thus furthering the restriction of movement of people within the borders (Laine 2015: 16). This was followed by the idea of 'nationalism' which started to develop from the 16th century, increasing the mentality of 'us' and 'them' (Greenfeld, 2012: 1; Jensen 2016: 10). In the early modern era, nations such as France went to considerable lengths to define their borders in order to foster more homogeneous societies (Bell 2003: 3; Laine 2015: 16–17). The appearance of nation-states – in the aftermath of the French and American revolutions of the late 18th century – saw maps persist in affording senses of nationhood and making the idea of borders even more permanent in the minds of people. This crude sketch aims to make a simple point: long-term processes of border definition and mapping have created today's nations with an increased idea of the state as a homogeneous construct combining culture, ethnicity, language or religion (Kolossov 2005: 616–617; Laine, 2015: 17–18). Laine (2015: 17) argues that borders were '...manifestations of the highest form of effective social organisation within the world system and major – if not always the principal – sources of political, cultural and social identity.'

Figure 1: The border wall at Tijuana and San Diego appended with memorials to migrants whom have died trying to cross, some unidentified (Photograph: © Tomas Castelazo, www.tomascastelazo.com/Wikimedia Commons)

Yet borders have never halted population movements. Large-scale and complex processes of human migration and diaspora can takes various forms throughout the human past, from multiple phases where early hominin and human populations spread out from the African continent in early prehistory (Bentley *et al.* 2005a: 10; Derricourt 2005: 121–122) through to the European migration and colonisation of large parts of the world in modern times (Bentley et al. 2005b: 381; Wolfe 2006: 390–391). While the entire 20th and early 21st century can be characterised as a time of ongoing migration, recent years have again seen a striking increase in the scale and impact of human migration. We have come to live, as Hamilakis (2018b) puts it, in a 'new nomadic age'. The US-México border is not the only example of political, social, economic and other tensions in this new era; undocumented migration across the Mediterranean Sea between North Africa and the Near East and Spain, Italy and Greece also illustrate these ongoing issues (Hamilakis 2018: 1–6).

Trump's 'medieval' wall: using the past in the present

The actual scale of human migration does not always equate with the scale of its political and cultural capital and resonances. Notably, when it comes to the US-México border, there has been a decline in undocumented immigration during the last ten years while its socio-political ramifications have increased exponentially due to the xenophobic political climate in the USA (Bersin *et al.* 2019). During the election campaign and subsequent presidency of Donald Trump, there was an increased focus on the US-México border fostered by his campaign conviction that building a physical border wall is the best way to handle unregistered immigration (Morin 2019).

This renewed focus has led to a series of responses by commentators, some drawing on the human past. 'Medieval' is one such historical and archaeological term that has been used in regard to the proposed wall, and it was first used by Trump's opposition as an argument for a backward and outdated ideology, where it was stated as a '...medieval border wall that is a fifth-century solution to a 21st-century problem' (Russo 2018; Perry 2019). This is by no means new as the term 'medieval' often is used to describe things as negative, primitive, cruel or out-of-date (Elliot 2017; Wollenberg 2018). However, the term has recently been taken into use by Trump himself when he stated 'they say that it's a medieval solution. It's true. It's medieval because it worked then, and it works even better now.' In so doing, Trump was linking his border wall to known walls in both the real world and even in the fictional world of, for example, *Game of Thrones* (Marcin 2019; Perry 2019).

Critical statements of this misuse of the Middle Ages make clear that there is some merit in conceding that walls did 'work' in the medieval period, be it in terms of warfare, the control of movement of people or goods, of taxation or a display of status or identity, but also as ideological statements, yet modern borders are not comparable in function or significance (Maldonado 2019; Perry 2019; Williams 2019). One area of parallel is less in what walls aimed to achieve but in the rhetoric of their construction. As promoting the fame of their instigators, there is a 'medieval' parallel; Williams (2019) suggests: 'Trump needs a wall to afford him with the immortality that all delusional despots desire.'

Still another comment from Trump was – despite him using the term in a quite different light in 2016: '...this is like medieval times, we haven't seen anything like this – the carnage all over the world...' (Kozlowska 2016). This shows Trump's contingent 'ability' to manipulate the term 'medieval' to different ends: first insinuating how current wars and conflicts across the world are to be seen as barbaric and chaotic, and later to suggest that the Middle Ages offer effective solutions for the present. The medieval past and its conflicts and borders are mutable media, appealing to denigrate past and herald its virtues as required (see Elliot 2017).

The idea of migration as 'medieval' in itself, of barbarian hordes descending to destroy civilization, is pivotal to anxieties regarding present-day borderlands, notably the US-México border. A better understanding of this shift can be made by looking at the study of three major US news magazines from 2000 to 2010 which showed that undocumented immigration was in the majority of cases portrayed negatively in the US media where it was viewed as 'illegal' and responsible for 'criminal' activity (Farris and Mohamed 2018: 820–821). Trump's campaign and presidency have exploited this populist dislike of immigrants as a threatening medieval 'barbarian' other, with its flagrant racist underpinnings. The US/Mexican border, and the still-unbuilt 'Trump's Wall', remain a key focus of Trump's rhetoric and speeches against this perceived external threat: the medieval is the 'them' to the white American 'us' (Elliot 2017: 160; 204).

Archaeologists as political commentators and activists

While multiple commentators have warned academics to be 'vigilant' in the face of this appropriation of the past (e.g. Wollenberg 2008: 90), what as public intellectuals can archaeologists do to combat political rhetoric and the misuse of the past. Specifically, what stances and research can archaeologists do in exploring borderlands and frontiers? Archaeologists might be asked to engage with the public regarding current political agendas (Bonacchi 2018; Brophy 2018; Gardner 2017). All of these have offered their reactions and comments and suggested recommendations for what archaeologists as academics can do in order to prevent misuse of archaeological terms; this includes recommendations in how to address such terminology when needed. Further, they also address the problem of how DNA-studies have been used to justify different political agendas and how to deal with this '...as archaeologists, we all have a

responsibility to be vigilant and should be prepared to enter the public arena to correct mistakes...' (Brophy 2018: 1656).

Some of the potential ways for archaeologists to comment on and spread awareness of archaeological topics and debates is via social media (Morgan and Eve 2012: 523–524; Richardson 2013: 3–4) using platforms such as Twitter or blogs, examples of which can be seen below. Caution should, however, be exercised when deciding to use these media as the nature of online platforms – while making archaeological comments available for many – also excludes groups of people as not all have access to the internet on which these media depend (Richardson, 2013: 6). Furthermore, users of these arenas are in many cases more susceptible to harsh critique from whoever is reading their work than through more traditional media (Walker 2014: 229; Popa 2019: 263) and there is the issue of what is the actual impact of such posts in relation to how many people are reading, liking or sharing them. With so many people having access to this information, there are not only more people able to inform, there is also more noise and uncertainty, making it harder to establish what a reasoned picture of the past might be (Tarlow and Nilsson Stutz 2013: 7–11). Thus, these platforms should be used with caution and awareness; still, while blogs and tweets seldom carry the same authoritative weight, and arguably do not have the same longevity, as academic articles and books, these are – as can be seen below – arenas with great potential, readily available and quickly shared with the world at large and in real-time (Jeffrey 2012: 862). Social media could, therefore, not only allow archaeologists to respond swiftly, but also help to promote ongoing research.

With regard to the debate surrounding the US-México border wall, one response has been to question the uses of the past in any form in the present. For example, Janega (2017) demonstrated how the term 'medieval' has been used in the context of chaos and war (see also Elliot 2017; Wollenberg 2018). Likewise, American archaeologist and anthropologist Sara Parcak deployed Twitter to respond directly to Trump's use of the term 'medieval' in relation to the confused portrayal of wheels as older than walls: 'And I looked, and every single car out there, even the really expensive ones that the Secret Service uses – and believe me they are expensive – I said, 'Do they all have wheels?' 'Yes.' 'Oh. I thought it was medieval.' The wheel is older than the wall. You know that? There are some things that work. A wheel works and a wall works' (Evans 2019).

tweet – only using a couple of sentences– was able to attract the attention of more than 2000 viewers, was retweeted on more than 800 occasions and attracted headlines in newspapers (Evans 2019), demonstrating the potential reach of archaeologists in using social media to critique misleading and bogus statements and policies promoted by politicians. In so reaching a broad audience and encouraging discussion around the topic.

However, being vocal on social media can be a superficial strategy and following the news cycle does little to affect deeper-seated concerns. A more responsible and long-term strategy is to pursue research which actively critiques political misuses of the past and affects policies and perceptions as a result (see also Williams 2020). One powerful example of this can be seen in the Undocumented Migration Project, an anthropological project running between 2009 and 2013. It was aimed at increasing understanding of the process that undocumented immigrants go through during the border crossing between México and the US, by using a combination of archaeological and ethnographic principles (Stewart *et al.* 2018: 48; UMP 2010). The use of archaeological principles here proved useful in affording 'material witnesses' on complex migration stories across borders through the study of material objects in order to examine the phenomena of undocumented immigration. This is a process seldom talked about by the immigrants who are experiencing it first-hand due to the emotional experience and the fear of repercussions if their status were to be exposed (Hamilakis 2018a: 11). As well as publishing in academic contexts, another strategy of the Undocumented Migration Project was to use art instalments made from the

material culture left by undocumented immigrants during the border crossing, raising awareness of the phenomenon (UMP 2015).

A comparable initiative is the work of Hicks and Mallet exploring *Camp de la Lande* – the 'Calais Jungle'. They use contemporary archaeology to explore communities of displaced peoples as an 'ecology of hostility and of resistance to violence' (Hicks and Mallet 2019: 12). Considering the Calais Jungle as a '(post)colonial monument, a duration, an assemblage', they explore the material evidence as a window onto contemporary multicultural experiences of migrants and a mechanism by which to articulate a critique of the policies and infrastructures aimed at controlling and asserting hostility towards them. Contemporary archaeology is considered a 'form of disclosure' and La Lande a 'place built for comparison', disseminating their results through exhibitions and a rapidly published e-book (Hicks and Mallett 2019: 19).

Conclusions

Given the complexity of borderlands past and present and the challenges of critiquing their present-day political appropriations, I advocate no single strategy for how archaeologists should work within these landscapes and disseminate their findings as part of a 'public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands'. However, through arguing the merits of digital dialogues with the public, via social media and blogging, with the US-México border as a case study, it is clear that this is only a partial solution in engaging the public, although it is faster and often can reach many people in a shorter time than that of traditional outlets. It should still form just a part of larger in-depth, rigorous research projects, exploring frontier and borderland landscapes past and present, which might transform public understandings and affect social policies more effectively and over the longer term.

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Cofiwch Dryweryn:
The Frontiers of Contemporary Welsh Nationalism, as seen through the Creation of Contested Heritage Murals

David Howell

This chapter considers the social impact of the Cofiwch Dryweryn murals, first created as a singular work of protect art in 1962, replicated over 100 times across Wales and beyond, from 2019 to 2020. Originally protesting the forced removal of a Welsh speaking community, to create a reservoir serving communities in England, the practice of painting Cofiwch murals and graffiti has significantly evolved. It is argued here that the Cofiwch 'movement' has offered Welsh nationalists a visible and recognisable tool, the use of which allows for Wales to be bounded, defined, and reclaimed. By mapping the locations in which these murals appear, and their subsequent treatment, it is possible to identify those areas of Wales where nationalism is at its most robust, and in turn, where the nationalist voice has little impact. Far from being the 'Wales wide' movement which some media outlets reported, Cofiwch Dryweryn instead reveals a 'Welsh' Wales which is often inward looking, where the artistic expressions of Welsh nationalism become ideological battle grounds for the political future of the nation.

Introduction

In 1962, the author Meic Stephens painted the first 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' (hereafter: Cofiwch) graffiti on the gable end of a collapsed cottage situated on the outskirts of Llanrhystud (Ceredigion, Wales) (Figure 1). The strikingly bold red and white mural commemorated the flooding of the village of Capel Celyn (Gwynedd). The loss of this Welsh-speaking community, removed in order to create a reservoir to service the people of Liverpool, became a trigger point for the nationalist movement in Wales, creating a springboard of support from which Plaid Cymru would become established as a genuine political force in Wales (Morgan 1981; Atkins 2018). Roy Clews (2013) explored the way in which this nationalist sentiment would give way to paramilitary violence (discussed further below). While bombings were a feature of the nationalist response, less aggressive but more enduring approaches were also taken, which included the 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' mural in Llanrhystud.

In the spring of 2019, an unknown individual (or individuals) painted over the Cofiwch mural with the word 'Elvis', an act which would trigger local and national outrage, and stimulate what is an arguably unpreceded scale of communal graffiti tagging in coming months and years. The painting over of the original Cofiwch mural was received in a similar manner to the flooding of Capel Celyn, perceived as an attack on Welsh culture, history and the Welsh language. Yet, on this occasion, instead of one mural being created to share the story, in excess of one hundred murals were painted on buildings and landscape features across Wales, parts of England and Scotland, and as far afield as Chicago in the United States.

The use of graffiti as a means of expressing political opinion is in no way a new phenomenon, and has become so ubiquitous as to now be considered part of the resistance to the gentrification process of urban communities (see Mcauliffe 2012; DeTurk 2015; Schacter 2019). The Cofiwch murals, however, stand out as something unique. While the production of a Cofiwch mural is not technically difficult, these examples tend to be very large, take significant time to produce, and are, in terms of composition and content, functionally identical. Examples tend to echo the original from Llanrhystud, with the 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' lettering painting in white upon a red background. On occasion, only the white lettering appears. Some variants are recorded, such as 'Cofiwch Epynt', which are a stylistic match for the original, but commemorate a different 'lost' Welsh community, namely the forced eviction of a

Figure 1: The site of the first 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' mural, Llanrhystud (Photograph: Hefin Owen: Wikimedia Commons)

community near Trecastle, Powys (formerly Radnorshire) by the War Office for military training in 1940 (see below). Critically, the murals are painted onto fixed points in the landscape, often on buildings or natural features (rocky outcrops, for instance). The majority of examples might be considered to be subversive in that they are painted without permission and are often produced on private property. However, as the movement evolved, many 'authorised' examples appeared, painted with permission on school and museum grounds. Still, the creation of a mural on a fixed, visible point in the landscape was a critical component. For instance, some murals have been produced inside people's homes – these private spaces, with no access or scope for the wider public to see or engage with, appear distinct from the original example at Llanrhystud, cited for its visibility, and the majority of examples which have appeared throughout 2019–2020, are therefore not included in the examples considered here. The wider use of the murals throughout Wales serves to convey what appears to be a unified message, covering themes of resistance and resilience. Yet the simplistic message belies a complex narrative of regional cultural distinctions within Wales, the efforts to exert claims over vast (largely rural) landscapes through singular works of graffiti, and the contested nature of border communities. Indeed, the 'Cofiwch' mural movement can be seen as an exercise in redrawing the boundaries of Wales, indicating where 'Welsh Wales' is at its most robust, and pointing to those parts of the geographical nation which are perceived as cultural or linguistic battlegrounds, to be fought over, reclaimed, or possibly even abandoned.

This chapter will explore the growth of the 'Cofiwch' movement, considering some of the practical challenges faced in the recording of an impermanent form of cultural expression, produced by artists who tend to value their anonymity in light of the illegalities of their actions, before outlining the varied ways in which the murals have been used to control and confront narratives of identity, depending on their geography within Wales. Ultimately, the Cofiwch murals will be shown to be a contemporary movement that is deeply rooted in historical preoccupations with the instability of Welsh culture in the face of external influences, and a movement that has (in 2019) been enacted as a means of bordering Welsh-speaking Wales, while reaching out to, or potentially claiming those other parts of Wales (certainly some of those 'other' parts of Wales appear to feel threatened, measured by hostile responses to murals). As such, this is the first critical academic treatment on the Cofiwch murals movement in (and beyond) Wales. While Mari Emlyn produced a publication in 2019, documenting the history of the original mural, which included reference to a selection of the murals produced in 2019, this text offered little in the way of analysis of the murals in terms of form, distribution or subsequent treatments, though a significant number of mural examples were produced subsequent to the publication of this particular text. Therefore, this chapter addresses a gap in current literature relating to the Cofiwch Dryweryn narrative and will hopefully serve as a platform upon which further critiques can be developed. The discussion of the murals in this chapter is accurate up to the spring of 2020. The evidence explored here is dynamic, with mural examples both appearing and disappearing (and being replaced in some instances) rapidly. To avoid inconsistencies in the drafting of this contribution, it was felt best to focus on data collected up to one fixed date, 1 March 2020, rather than constantly updating and revising as changes in the mapping project occurred.

From Tryweryn to Dryweryn: the formative factors behind Cofiwch

The story of the loss of the Afon Tryweryn valley in the early 1960s, and the forced relocation of the predominantly Welsh-speaking community of Capel Celyn is one of the most well-documented and revisited narratives of 20th-century Welsh social history. The episode has been the focus of a significant number of publications and the specifics of the event need only be outlined here, in light of the available body of literature on the subject (e.g. Jones 2007; Thomas 2007; Williams 2016; Emlyn 2019).

The Tryweryn valley was not unique in it being an area of land in Wales earmarked for development for an external community. The communities of Llanddwyn and Nantgwyllt in Powys had been lost

Figure 2: A protest in Liverpool attempting to prevent the flooding of the Treyweryn valley (Photograph: The National Library of Wales, Wikimedia Commons)

in previous decades, also in the process of water dam construction for the benefit of communities in England (Roberts 2006). The Welsh-speaking communities on the Epynt Mountain were also cleared between 1939 and 1940, to make way for a military training centre still in use today (Hughes 1998). The Epynt clearances had triggered their own wave of Welsh nationalist protest (Dudley 2012) which would be echoed in the wake of the loss of Tryweryn. In both instances, it was arguably the repeated impotent nature of Welsh politicians that stood as a catalyst for anger, as much as it was the loss of community.

For Tryweryn, a private bill in the House of Commons was sponsored by Liverpool City Council, petitioning for permission to flood the valley in order to create a new reservoir. By moving through Parliamentary procedures, the authorities were able to bypass local (Welsh) planning authorities, and supersede any legal requirements to seek permissions for the planned works. At the time of the Parliamentary vote on the 31 of July, 1957, Wales had 36 Members of Parliament, and all but one voted against the motion. Yet, the vote was passed, which condemned the community of Capel Celyn to a watery oblivion (Figures 2–3). The process rendered local authorities in Wales redundant, while highlighting the utter powerlessness of Welsh political representation. Liverpool City Council would later issue an apology, in 2005, forty years after the event (Ward 2005).

The Cofiwch graffiti, or 'mural' as it has come to be known, was created by the author and musician Meic Stephens, in the early 1960s. Stephens had been responsible for several graffitied political slogans

Figure 3: Clearance of graves in Capel Celyn, prior to flooding (© Gwynedd Archives Service)

across Wales, and he would go on to explore the Tryweryn story through his influential musical output (Griffiths 2014). The original mural was simple in form, white lettering on a red background, with the words 'Cofiwch Tryweryn' written across the gable end of an abandoned cottage. The first phase of 'Cofiwch' featured a typographical error, with 'Tryweryn' being grammatically incorrect in Welsh, consonant mutations demanding that the 'T' become a softened 'D' in this statement. In the various stages of repainting which would take place later, 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' would go on to become the standard (and grammatically correct) slogan. Over time, the wall and slogan would grow to become an anchor for Welsh nationalism, a symbol of resistance, and a reminder of the consequences of political apathy and the inability to act, one which would be replicated across Wales, and by Welsh people in a wider global context.

The Cofiwch mural and the 'copycat' examples can be seen as part of a dynamic graffiti subculture (Merrill 2015). Within Merrill's framework of graffiti subcultures, the Cofiwch murals might be considered as 'masterpiece' examples, given the physical scale of many of the recorded entries, and are consistently based around a singular form of tag or signature. However, while it may prove tempting to conflate the Cofiwch murals with other politicised 'masterpiece' graffiti, such as the murals of Northern Ireland (see Cashman 2008), the stylistic forms of the respective movements are highly distinct. In contrast to Northern Ireland's murals being notable for the complex, at times photo-realistic, images painted on the sides of buildings, the Cofiwch motif movement focuses on a far more simplified mode of expression, and has a much broader geographical reach. There is perhaps greater resonance between

the Cofiwch movement and the Wandjina murals in Perth, Australia, where in 2006, a series of graffiti/mural examples based around indigenous ancestral figures appeared across the city, numbering in excess of 100 examples (Frederick and O'Conner 2009). This exploration of historical-cultural figures echoes the historical narratives which underpins the Cofiwch movement, while the replication of a singular form of graffiti is also comparable. With the Wandjina murals though, it was perhaps the public response which was as important as the murals themselves. Frederick and O'Conner (2009) describe 'Wandjina watchers', individuals who would record and collate examples of the Wandjina graffities as they appeared. This trend was mirrored in Welsh media coverage and the creation of Facebook groups to monitor and create records of the appearance of Cofiwch graffiti. This participatory aspect of 'Cofiwch' is another important distinguishing element, where the establishment of a distinct 'Cofiwch' material culture, is perhaps as much perpetuated by community interest as it is by the artists producing graffiti/mural examples themselves. Indeed, the material culture of the 'Cofiwch' movement has evolved far beyond the murals, and has become a symbol that is likely to be seen in the form of bumper plate stickers, keychains, t-shirts and, as of the summer of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, decorative facemasks.

The status of the mural and the partially collapsed building on which it was painted, as a site of 'heritage', is debatable. While there is little doubt that the 'Cofiwch' mural serves as a form of cultural inheritance, one which is celebrated, protected and replicated in a contemporary cultural context, there is no formal heritage status afforded to the mural or the structure on which it is painted. Concerted efforts to protect the wall have been ongoing since at least 2010, when local fundraising efforts sought to purchase the structure, with a notional take over and management by the National Trust (Morgan 2010). The creation of what would have been one of the more obscure National Trust properties was, however, never realised. The fundraising efforts secured a commitment of £30,000 from Cadw, the heritage arm of the Welsh Assembly Government (as it was referred to at the time), though the funds were only to be released on the premise of local fund raising achieving a certain target, which was not achieved. In 2019, questions were raised at national government levels as to whether the site should be given listed buildings status, though this was refused by Cadw, who argued that the structure itself, rather than the mural, failed to meet any of the criteria for listing (Senedd 2019). However, in the same period, Dyfed Archaeological Trust added the Cofiwch mural to the regional Historic Environment Record as a 'modern commemorative monument' (a classification also given to commemorative war memorials, and community halls which also memorialise warfare), providing a layer of formality to the status of the site (Archwilio 2019). Later that year, the site was privately purchased by Dilys Davies, with the intention of establishing a charitable organisation for the management of the site (Nation.Cymru 2019). As a consequence, the Cofiwch mural and wall have no formal protection, beyond that afforded by the current owner, and there is no formal acknowledgement of the site as a heritage asset. Yet, Cadw had, in offering a sum of £30,000 for the purchase and protection of the site, given a form of formal State acknowledgement of the site as being a cultural resource of national value.

If heritage status is seen as something that can only be formally granted by State agencies, then the Cofiwch mural is not a 'heritage site' (beyond a very brief HER entry). Yet, this site of clear historic value has been the notional beneficiary of State funding, and continues to be an 'attraction' to visitors. Certainly, the membership of the Cofiwch Dryweryn Facebook Group regularly post images of themselves visiting the site of the original mural, making the site both (by definition) an attraction, whilst also serving almost as a place of pilgrimage. The argument can therefore be made that the mural and wall are unofficial heritage assets, a subversive expression of national identity and a crowd sourced, or 'crowd conserved', historical resource. It is also arguable that the wall and Cofiwch mural in Llanrhystud have together become of greater symbolic importance to the Welsh language, and Welsh independence movements, than the lost village which inspired its creation.

Vandalising 'vandalism'

Figure 4: 'Elvis' at Llanrhystud, 2019 (Photograph: © Jez Broughton)

In the first quarter of 2019, a series of 'attacks' were carried out on the Cofiwch Dryweryn wall. In early February, the wall was repainted with the word 'ELVIS' (Figure 4). The distinctive red backdrop of the Cofiwch mural remained as a fringe, but the lettering had been completely obscured. 'Elvis' murals are not a unique phenomenon in Wales, with an example outside of Aberystwyth having been a recognisable local landmark for over fifty years, the original example also having been painted on a rocky outcrop in the early 1960s (Morgan Jones 2019). However, the obscuration of the 'Cofiwch' lettering led to a significantly negative public response, including a call by Senedd (formally Welsh Assembly) member Bethan Sayed, to provide formal state protection for the mural (BBC 2019; National Assembly for Wales 2019).

Before any formal restorative action could be undertaken, a group of five locals repainted the mural. Completing the work in a single evening, the Cofiwch Dryweryn mural had been recreated within a week of the initial 'vandalism' (Emlyn 2019: 49–53). Using descriptive terms such as 'attack' and 'vandalism' are awkward in the context of Cofiwch Dryweryn, which has always been an example of unauthorised graffiti, otherwise known as vandalism. 'Attack' suggests the mural retained some sense of formal status, something never attributed to the wall or the wording painting on to it. It is perhaps more useful to consider these incidents as 'phases of Dryweryn'. The original, or first phase of, Cofiwch Dryweryn, having been painted between 1962–1963, was lost a significant period of time ago. The wall has been subject to repainting at various points in time over the last five decades, including a period in the early '90s when the 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' wording was painted in white and black, before going through a spate of re-imaginings throughout the first decade of the 21st century. Notable amendments included the addition of 'Cofiwch Aberfan', remembering the disaster and significant loss of life in the Welsh mining community of Aberfan in 1966. Less sympathetic contributions include the addition of a yellow smiley face and 'Big Ballz' wording in 2014 (Morgan 2014). Despite the numerous graffiti variations, the wall has always defaulted to 'Cofiwch Dryweryn'. There is a permanence in the impermanence of the mural that, regardless of deliberate and natural decline, a new generation of campaigners will consistently re-imagine the mural, adding to the chronology of protest.

In April 2019, however, rather than the mural being painted over, the wall which bore the mural was itself attacked. On the 12 April, the word 'agari' was added below the word 'Dryweryn'. It was not clear what was meant by this word (if anything), it not having a clear meaning in Welsh, though the word does translate to 'rise', or 'rise up' in Japanese. The word was removed the same day. The following day, the top portion of the wall, including a segment of the word 'Cofiwch', was found to have collapsed. The collapse was quickly presented as a deliberate attempt to topple the wall, with local media branding the incident as 'disgraceful' (Betteley 2019). A short-lived police investigation was conducted on the matter. However, there is no corroborating evidence to confirm the collapse was caused by intentional damage, or if the top portion of a derelict wall had fallen naturally, a collapse perhaps hastened by the repeated attempts of people to climb on the wall and create paintings on its facade. Regardless of the actuality of the incident, the narrative that this was an attack on the memory of Tryweryn and, therefore, an attack

on the people of Wales, proved irresistible, and a series of responses emerged in the following months (The Economist 2019).

Figure 5: Bridgend 'Cofiwch' mural (Photograph: ©Freya Bletsoe)

The Cofiwch wall was reconstructed and repainted on 13 April, adding a further phase to the performative history of this protest (Hemming 2019). A month later, what is widely accepted as the second example of a Cofiwch Dryweryn mural appeared on the side of a sweet shop in Bridgend, a town west of Cardiff and firmly in the southern, a far more Anglicised part of Wales.[1] The artist and shop owner responsible for the mural, Freya Bletsoe (pers. comm. October 2019), cited a desire to demonstrate support for the first mural site in the wake of the perceived destruction attempt. It was a desire which would go on to be replicated over a significant proportion of Wales.

In the year following the collapse of the Llanrhystud wall, and at time of writing, there were 115 recorded examples of 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' murals. Arguably, it was the creation of the second mural in Bridgend (Figure 5), which seemed to act as a trigger for mural painting in other locations (rather than the wall collapse, which occurred several weeks prior to the emergence of the first tribute). Another twenty Cofiwch Dryweryn murals appeared during the month of May 2019. Some examples were clustered around specific locations, with several examples emerging within a week of each other between Aberdaron and Pwllheli (Gwynedd). Other examples appeared in Cwmbran, Newport beach and Wrexham, all within the same month. In addition, as quickly as some of these murals were being added to the cultural landscape of Wales, they were also being removed. One large example on the side of the Bersham slag heap (south of Wrexham) was removed shortly after its completion, while another example nearby, in Deeside (Flintshire), was removed within a day (and before the example could be formally recorded). Meanwhile in Cardiff, an example near the site of the National History Museum (St. Fagans), having been painted in the first week of May, was recorded as having been washed off within three months. While the 'Dryweryn' murals marked a distinct cultural response to the damage recorded in Llanrhystud, the vulnerability of that response was illustrated with each successive removal of the murals. With several murals removed without any formal recording, a decision was made to launch the Cofiwch Dryweryn Mapping Project (Howell 2019), to attempt to record the wider range of examples, geographical location, dates of appearance and, when possible, the reflections of individuals responsible for the creation of the murals.[2]

Mapping the subversive

With 115 examples of 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' murals appearing across much of Wales (and beyond), in a ten-month period, getting to and recording each example in person was logistically implausible. The short-lived nature of graffiti also meant that certain examples were removed before formal recording could take place. The example in St Fagans is only known from a single photograph shared on social media three months after the removal of the mural. Had an appeal not been launched by the mapping project, it is probable that this example would have been lost.

[1] While the Bridgend example is often celebrated as the 'first tribute', the Cofiwch Mapping Project has revealed several other claimants to being the first example of a mural being made to specifically echo the example in Llanrhystud.

[2] Simultaneously, and independently of this project, the People's Collection Wales online archive, also launched an appeal to document all of the contemporary examples of 'Cofiwch' murals, which is accessible via the People's Collection Wales website.

Social media would go on to be a critical conduit for the recording of this phenomenon, and particular thanks must be extended to the Cofiwch Dryweryn Facebook group who have provided invaluable help in identifying and sharing examples of the murals. In many practical respects, the Cofiwch mapping project has been, and continues to be, crowd sourced. While many of the mural examples were deliberately located in prominent places, other examples were far more obscure, appearing on rocky outcrops near the Graig Fawr chambered tomb and Cynllwyd Uchaf, a slate outcrop south of Llangower. In such instances, it is arguable that only through attention brought to the murals by their creators via social media would these examples become the subject of wider attention.

In the development of social networks tied to the project, it became possible to trace the evolution of this movement beyond Wales. Two examples of the murals have been recorded in the United States, one in Ohio and one in the Pleasant House Pub in Chicago. These examples would prove to be of value in illustrating the associations between the proliferation of murals and the location of Welsh cultural groups, or Welsh nationalist groups. Further examples outside of Wales would appear in Brighton and Edinburgh.

A distinct challenge that emerged in the mapping of 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' was whether to include all variants of the murals, be those variations in text content, or physical form of murals. While the use of 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' appears in 108 of the recorded murals, seven examples draw attention to other forms of loss within the Welsh cultural/political landscape. In Mynachlogddu, Pembrokeshire, one mural was recorded with the text 'Cofiwch Gwmcerwyn'. This records the loss of a farm complex, purchased by compulsory order and subsequently destroyed as part of military training activities in the region. This is echoed by commemorations in Llanrug (Gwynedd) and Pontypool (Torfaen), both of which read 'Cofiwch Epynt'. As mentioned above, this refers to the agricultural mountainside community forcibly relocated for a change in use of land in order to develop the Sennybridge military training facility. While distinct in subject matter, thematically it was decided that these examples should ultimately be included. The core narrative which underpins the Cofiwch mural in its original form is one of acknowledging the loss of Welsh-speaking communities, and this sentiment is consistent throughout the recorded variants.

A more complex matter presented as the Cofiwch movement gained popularity and media attention. Cofiwch merchandise began to become prevalent by the summer of 2019. Cofiwch Dryweryn t-shirts, hoodies, mugs, banners and car stickers began to be produced by independent businesses across Wales, creating a diverse material culture of 'Dryweryn'. This led to accusations of exploitation and, ultimately, a watering down of the message behind the mural (Knapman 2019). Nonetheless, by the second half of 2019, it became common to see Cofiwch messages appearing on the bumpers of passing cars. While the murals were all impermanent, the mobility afforded to clothing and vehicle mounted slogans meant that it was impossible to truly track the geographical extent of the movement.

At the same time as the spread of Cofiwch merchandise, Cofiwch murals began appearing on wooden boards and printed banners. Examples of such variants were regularly sent to the project, which again forced a re-appraisal of what should be considered for a map entry. The first Cofiwch mural, the 1960s example at Llanrhystud, was painted without permission, on private property, and conducted in a covert manner. When the wall was repainted after the most recent spate of 'vandalism', the painting was conducted overnight. Many of the examples included in the Cofiwch map, record instances of private property essentially being defaced (notable examples including OS triangulation stations, and memorials, such as Port Eynon in Gower), completed in anonymity. Other examples are painted on buildings with permission of the owners, which would seem to undermine the 'protest quality' of pieces. However, as seen in the ongoing legal battle between the artist responsible for the Cofiwch mural in Bridgend and the local council, even examples that have been produced with permissions granted by parties directly responsible for the structure on which they are produced, may still be contested by local

authorities. In both instances, the murals still need to be painted in situ, in a way which might either draw the attention of local authorities, or landowners, if the event of painting is witnessed. In short, there is a risk element to the production of these murals, and that became deemed a key distinguishing characteristic of the murals (see McGarry et al. 2020 and Simoes and Campos 2017, for further consideration on the factor of 'risk'). Boards and banners displaying the same wording or sentiment, can be introduced to a landscape with comparatively little risk. The time involved is significantly reduced, while the destruction or removal of a banner is easily rectified by obtaining another. There is not the same investment of time, risk to personal freedom, or performative element seen in the process of painting. It was therefore decided that the Cofiwch map would record what could be categorised as 'acts of Dryweryn'. An 'act' would need to fulfil certain criteria for inclusion which generally focused on either the process of painting, or the illegality of the creation of a Cofiwch mural.

Figure 6: Tongwynlais 'Cofiwch' banner (Photograph: © Yes Cymru)

So far, only one banner example has been included in the formal Cofiwch map. In Tongwynlais, Mid Glamorgan, the standing remains of the Walnut Tree Viaduct is located (Deacon 2019). Today, two sets of brick-built supports remain as a visual reminder of this once notable legacy of the industrial revolution. Reduced and almost entirely removed in the late 1960s, one of the remaining support towers was decorated in 1977, as part of commemorative efforts in the area for the silver jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. Lettering from this commemoration remains visible and is perhaps the most recognisable part of the feature today. In late November 2019, a person, or persons, successfully attached a plastic banner bearing the 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' wording to the facade of the viaduct support directly above the jubilee lettering of 'ER II' (Figure 6). In this instance, while the example is not painted onto the structure, the legality of the entry is certainly questionable, while the positioning of the example meant that a concerted, and very public, effort would be required to remove the banner. As such, this example could be considered for entry as it conforms to the performative aspect of other murals. The impact of this Cofiwch example is not so much in its presence, but the question of how was the example introduced to the landscape.

It also became important to record phases of change for each example. Given that the performance of painting 'Cofiwch' can be seen as being as important as the final artwork, the process of repainting examples to have been damaged, or vandalised in turn, offers further examples of the performative response to a historical and contemporary cultural issue. A Cofiwch example appeared on a roadside wall along the route of the A5 between Corwen and Llangollen in July 2019. During the following month, two distinct 'attacks' were recorded on the painting. On 6 August, a series of swastika symbols, and the letters 'WP' were painted over the white 'Cofiwch' lettering, in red paint. Later that same day, the red paint additions had been removed. Yet on 7 August, the entirety of the 'Cofiwch' lettering had been obscured with thick green paint (Brennan 2019), which would then be partially washed off, leaving a form of shadow Cofiwch Dryweryn mural (Figure 7). What became clear in this episode was that

while the proliferation of Cofiwch murals marked a clear cultural-social response, the narrative and landscapes in which they were being produced often then became contested. Following the drafting of this chapter, a second swastika symbol (accompanied by a 'white power' motif) appeared at the site of the original mural at Llanrhystud in the summer of 2020. While the graffiti only lasted a few hours before being removed, its brief presence further highlights the contested nature of the Cofiwch murals and the way in which the site of the original mural has taken on the role of a theatre in which political narratives are 'performed' by 'artists' knowing that any activity at the site is likely to garner media attention.

Figure 7: Defaced 'Cofiwch' mural on the A5, from Corwen to Llangollen

The more common response to murals being damaged, or defaced, is no response at all. The Cofiwch mural recorded on the shorefront of Aberavon Beach, Port Talbot, stands out as one example to go through a cycle of painting, destruction, and repainting. This example exhibits at least four distinct phases of repainting since it first appeared in April 2019. However, the usual trend appears to be that once a mural has been defaced or damaged, it is then abandoned as a site of protest. Eight examples are known to have been removed, though it seems likely that other map entries have also been lost. Local authority interventions are a common cause for removal, with the cleaning of the Swansea beach seawall example being deemed worthy of national news coverage (Youle 2019). The aforementioned example in Bridgend is the subject of an ongoing legal battle between the owner of the building on which the example is painted, and Bridgend County Council.[3] This process seems to pitch authority against artists/owners, and reaffirms the conflict between people and the State in a Welsh context. Arguably, these local authority interventions and rejections of the murals serve to strengthen the narrative and draw greater attention to the themes encapsulated within the murals.

[3] Bridgend County Council objected on the grounds that the mural constituted a form of advertising, while the mural was also considered to be creating a distraction and a danger for passing motor vehicle users. At time of writing, the dispute is ongoing, and has been the subject of local authority debates for over a year.

In addition, further plans have been outlined among supporter groups of the Cofiwch movement for a celebration of the murals to coincide with the first anniversary of the rebuilding of the original wall in Llanrhystud. These celebrations are encouraging a series of new mural paintings and the repainting of examples previously lost or damaged. Therefore, a distinct second phase of mural painting is in the planning. This phase builds on the performative nature of the process, though this time encapsulated in the practice of a commemorative, or 'national', day more commonly associated with the nation building practice of national holidays focused on patron saints, or commemorations of political independence.[4] Again, it would appear that the act of painting can be as great, if not indeed of greater, importance than the end product.

Motivations: nationalism, or keeping up with the 'Joneses'[5]

When the first Cofiwch Dryweryn mural was painted in the 1960s, it was clearly done in the context of Welsh nationalist political rebellion to perceived threats against Welsh-speaking communities. The creation of the Llyn Celyn reservoir is consistently cited as a pivotal moment in Welsh nationalist politics, a notion clearly illustrated when Plaid Cymru returned their first-ever Member of Parliament, Gwynfor Evans, in 1966, one year after the formal opening of the reservoir. Before entering Parliament, Evans had produced an impassioned pamphlet arguing for the defence of the Tryweryn community, arguing that 'should anyone inquire what is a Welsh way of life, let him be brought to Penllyn and Cwm Tryweryn' (Evans 1965: 6). The circumstances of 2019 were less clear cut. The Llanrhystud mural certainly held 'cult' status among Welsh language campaigners. However, for its damage to trigger an international response of mass mural painting, is indicative of a more complex narrative.

The non-party political organisation Yes Cymru certainly played a prominent role in the organising and commissioning of several of the mural responses. The 'Yes Cymru' logo appears on at least four Cofiwch examples and discussions held with some members of the organisation revealed that local branches of the movement were proactive in identifying potential locations for murals, and commissioning their production. A correlation between the Cofiwch murals and a political community promoting Welsh independence is perhaps not surprising, however only a small proportion of the murals have a formal link to the Yes Cymru group. Cofiwch murals in Bridgend, Y Felinheli, Graig Fawr, Llangrannog and Maesteg are all accompanied by the wording 'Yes Cymru' (Figure 8). It has been established that branch members have been responsible for the production of some, but not all of these examples. It is possible to draw correlations between the geographical location of Yes Cymru branches, and the broad location of many 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' examples. This may well indicate a more critical relationship between the two, yet interviews conducted with some of the artists responsible for mural examples suggest that many are not involved with the wider activities of Yes Cymru, nor are they consistently aware of the existence of the Yes Cymru movement.

The other symbol to appear in relation to the murals is the Eryr Wen – the white eagle. This highly stylised crest is commonly associated with the Free Wales Army (FWA). The FWA, along with the Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru group, were paramilitary organisations, operating in Wales during the 1960s (Brooke 2018; Graham Jones 2013). Their emergence can be directly correlated with the flooding at Capel Celyn. The groups were responsible for a number of destructive forms of protest at sites connected to reservoir flooding, and for the planting of explosive devices, most notably in relation to the investiture of Charles Windsor as the Prince of Wales in 1969. While the activities of both groups largely ceased after the 1960s, a folkloric element has emerged in relation to their activities. The former Cayo Arms, a pub in central

[4] The planned 'second wave' of painting Cofiwch murals was suspended, following the Covid-19 outbreak, though discussions with the informal organisers of this crowd sourced painting programme, are adamant that this will still take place.

[5] This more specifically refers to Elfed Wyn Jones, one of a group of five people who were responsible for the repainting of the Cofiwch wall in 2019, after the addition of the 'Elvis' phase of the site's history.

Figure 8: Llangrannog 'Cofiwch' mural, with 'Yes Cymru' tag

Cardiff (though re-named in 2018), took the name of Julian Cayo-Evans, former leader of the FWA. Meanwhile, the Eryr Wen symbol is frequently used as a reference point to Welsh independence, and can be found in the form of more normalised/ sanitised car bumper stickers. The Eryr Wen has appeared on six Cofiwch murals. These examples are predominantly found in the western half of Wales, with three examples clustered in the north-west (Figure 9) at Bangor, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Harlech. One example is found near Wrexham, on the north-eastern border of Wales (and is discussed further below). While only appearing in 6% of the 115 examples, the conflation of themes is significant, given the cultural relevance of the activities of the FWA. Combined with the small spread of 'Yes Cymru' references, it can be stated with confidence that overt references to the cause of Welsh independence are a part of the Cofiwch movement. However, they are not a dominant aspect, and there are indications that this reflects the complexity of regional variations in response to the wider mural activities.

Making any statement of certainty regarding motivations behind the contemporary 'Cofiwch' movement is challenging. Graffiti artists tend to maintain anonymity, and this has largely been the case with 'Cofiwch'. Between this research project, and the work conducted by Mari Emlyn (2019) in preparation for the 'Cofiwch Dryweryn: Cymru'n Deffro' publication, roughly 30 individuals have acknowledged responsibility for the production of murals. Twenty of those commenting on the murals that they had produced, had painted murals on property belonging to their families, on private property but with permissions granted, or on school property (with several examples being produced with permission from and prompted by school teachers). This leaves 85 mural examples without any narrative of responsibility. It is likely this reflects the illegality of the artworks, and for this specific reason two individuals to contribute to the mapping project requested anonymity be preserved should their responses be included in any published works. A degree of speculation and extrapolation is, therefore, required to begin to make sense of the movement.

While the range of interviews conducted with established artists is limited in scope, enough detail has been forwarded to draw out recurring themes which underpin motivations to produce Cofiwch murals and their variants. The majority of interviews were conducted via Internet correspondence, using a set series of questions probing the circumstances of, and motivations behind the creation of murals, reflecting the desire among many participants to maintain anonymity. However, some contributors were happy to discuss the subject in phone interviews. Of those responses, there is, perhaps, an obvious emphasis on responding to the initial damage to the site of the original mural, and a sense of threat towards Welsh culture in broader terms. The example at Nefyn, Pembrokeshire, was underpinned by a sense that Welsh culture had been 'attacked' in the toppling of the Llanrhystud wall. In Chicago, the response was more measured but still directly cited a sense of 'annoyance' that someone would attack the symbolic Llanrhystud wall. One contributor to Mari Emlyn's (2019: 79) collection celebrated the 'furious response to the malicious destruction of our iconic wall'. While this ultimately negative

emotional aspect is unsurprising, it is a minority theme in instances where motivation has been recorded.

Figure 9: Llansannan 'Cofiwch' mural, with multiple Free Wales Army 'Eryr Wen' logos

The more common theme underpinning mural production is one of celebration. Rather than being focused on responding to the Llanrhystud 'destruction', or voicing a residual anger at the flooding of Capel Celyn, contributors focused on their happiness at the spread of the contemporary movement. Indeed, painting murals, because murals had been painted somewhere else, was one of the more consistent responses to be shared. One contributor specifically cited that they were 'so excited to see so many paintings go up after the destruction of the original, that I had to go and paint one'. Contributors at Cwmbran and Y Felinheli specifically expressed desires to create local examples in light of the widespread appearance of murals elsewhere in Wales. A pattern began to emerge, where contributors felt as much a need to paint a Cofiwch mural because their local area did not have one, as to have been motivated by the initial vandalism, or events at Capel Celyn. That three contributors specifically stated that 'we needed one' seems to give weight to this interpretation.

This process of painting murals, not specifically to support an aspect of the Cofiwch cause (which, as explored above, are varied in focus), but simply to have one in a locality because the locality did not have one before, has been cited as a point of concern by some participants, who have developed variants of the mural as a consequence. Alexander Velky, one of the very few producers of a mural who was happy to be acknowledged as a Cofiwch artist, was responsible for the 'Cofiwch Gwmcerwyn' mural, near Mynachlogddu, Pembrokeshire (Figure 10). One concern he shared with the broader Cofiwch movement was the 'potentially reductive, divisive and defeatist focus I felt the commodification of Tryweryn could have on the future of Welsh national identity' (pers. comm. November 2019). Velky also acknowledged that he felt he was likely to be in the minority to feel this way about the evolving mural painting process, but this concern with 'commodification' has also been raised in relation to the merchandising of the movement. If the popularity of a movement reaches a point where people are participating simply because the movement is popular, rather than having an investment in the narratives of commemoration, protest or causes, then has the movement actually died, despite being visually prevalent and expansive? Interactions with many of the members of the Cofiwch Dryweryn Facebook Group would suggest otherwise, but the sustainability of this movement is something that requires consideration.

Geographical patterns: the bounding of 'Welsh' Wales

When the original Cofiwch Dryweryn mural was produced, it created a clearly defined reference point for 1960s Welsh social protest, such that it evolved into a place of pilgrimage and took on an integral role as part of Welsh folklore, cultural tradition and tourism (with members of the Cofiwch Dryweryn Facebook group regularly posting images of visits to the site). Before 2019, the Cofiwch narrative did not go beyond Llanrhystud, a singular location near the western perimeter of Wales. It became a venue for

Figure 10: 'Cofiwch Gwmcerwyn', near Mynachlogddu (Photograph: © Alex Velky)

reimagining and contesting narratives of Welsh nationalism, with the mural repeatedly being recast/painted for successive generations. In a sense, the original Cofiwch mural can be seen as symbolic of the idea of a Welsh retreat, that the Welsh speaking version of Wales had been pushed to the fringes and isolated from an increasingly Anglicised nation. Be this perception or reality, it is certainly a notion mirrored by the political landscape, with the western, and north western extents of Wales being consistent strongholds for the electoral support behind Plaid Cymru. The 2019 mural responses can be explored in the context of a more confident culture of Welsh nationalism, one looking to reassert its voice across the entirety of the geographical extent of Wales, and the contemporary expressions of Y Wladfa in North America.

While the Cofiwch murals are concentrated in the south and west of Wales, there are examples of clear clustering in prominent locations. Cardiff is home to six examples, while to the north of the city, in Tongwynlais another three are recorded (Figure 11). The coastal community around Port Talbot has three entries to the Cofiwch map, and one example of a variant. Newport, Pembrokeshire, has three examples in close proximity, and Wrexham has three examples within a short distance of each other. Pontypool is another location to have recorded three entries. This clustering may be the result of one artist, though stylistically, the differing entries are distinct enough from each other to suggest these are the works of separate individuals. These groupings may though indicate the presence of a concentrated base for the Welsh language and for nationalist support. Cardiff is certainly an area to demonstrate remarkable resilience in respect of the Welsh language, with a recorded 25 percent increase in the number of fluent speakers between 1991 and 2011 (Cardiff Council 2015). It is, therefore, unsurprising to see a clustering of Cofiwch murals in an area to seemingly be embracing the use of the national language.

The narrative in Wrexham, however, challenges this notion. Wrexham and its immediate surrounds have been home to three examples, with another example to the north in Treuddyn, and two further examples to the south, along the route of the Llangollen Canal. Wrexham is an area in which the Welsh language has seen a decline between the censuses of 2001 and 2011, with a decrease of 1.4% (Wrexham Borough Council 2011). Also, within the constituency of Wrexham there is a clear distinction as to where Welsh is being spoken, with the central and eastern extents (towards the English border) seen as almost exclusively Anglicised, while the western extent of the county borough is much stronger for Welsh language proficiency. It is in these parts of Wrexham, and further to the west, where the Cofiwch examples are to be found. Given that parts of the borough county of Wrexham immediately border England, the 'Cofiwch' examples can be read in the context of boundary making, or indeed, boundary reclaiming. In a region where the Welsh language is seen to be under pressure, an embracing of the 'Cofiwch' narrative appears logical as a means of reasserting the visibility of a language in a cultural context of decline and retreat.

The culturally contested nature of the Cymro-English border is also evidenced in the treatment of murals in the area. Only two out of the six murals in the region have gone unchallenged. One example is located high up off of the ground, on the side of the Saith Seren Welsh language pub in the centre of

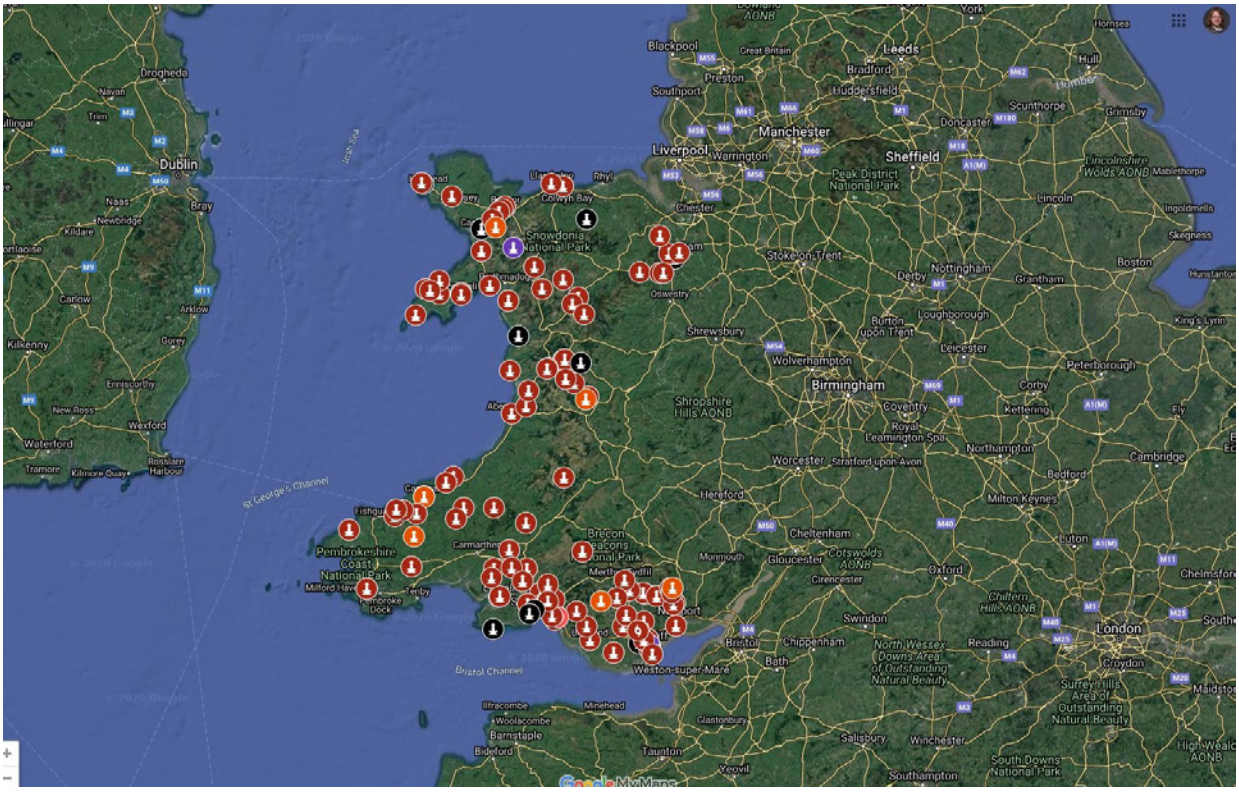

Figure 11: Cofiwch Dryweryn map. The live version of the map can be accessed at https://www.google.co.uk/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1huvM2jU-1lEF0u0mGCdrmiA4_scQtUMC&ll=48.112612875470205%2C-43.86244495000001&z=4. It is important to note that the map is updated on a weekly basis, and may, at time of consultation, appear different from the example included in this paper

Wrexham, the other is on the grounds of Ysgol (school) Terrig. Cofiwch examples on privately owned properties tend to be relatively safe, short of council enforcement notices (as seen in Bridgend). The Bersham slag heap 'Cofiwch', however, seen in a prominent and arguably provocative position, was removed within a month of its creation. The example near Coedpoeth, the only example found on the eastern side of Wales to include an FWA Eryr Wen symbol, demonstrated clear attempts at removal. The two examples found along the route of the Llangollen Canal have also been subject to removal notices.

Though the Cofiwch Dryweryn map is visually striking for the prevalence of examples, it is misleading to describe this as a movement to cover all of Wales. The other border counties not yet discussed, of Flintshire, Powys and Monmouthshire, are almost entirely devoid of examples. The Ysgol Terrig example, in Mold, is the only example found in the county of Flintshire. Monmouthshire is also home to a single example, on private land in Monmouth. Powys is a geographical oddity, in that it is vast in size having being created by the merger of the historic Welsh counties of Breconshire, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire and today accounts for roughly a third of the territory within Wales, yet it is sparsely populated. While the county does have five examples, these are all found in the north-western extent of the area, close to the borders of Ceredigion and Gwynydd, areas strongly associated with Plaid Cymru support bases, and more prevalent usage of the Welsh language. There are no examples in central or eastern Powys. A relative lack of prominent structures on which to paint provocative political slogans may be a contributory factor, but equally, local demographics (Powys is historically a swing seat at Welsh and British elections between the Liberal Democrats and the Welsh Conservatives) may have resulted in there being less of an emphasis on the narrative of Tryweryn. While earlier in the chapter it was

suggested that the movement might be seen as an attempt to 'reclaim' Wales, notable areas have been left behind in this movement, perhaps seen as areas already lost to the process of Anglicisation, or that those who regard themselves as Welsh within this region, are less preoccupied with the importance of the Welsh language. Whatever the factors, Cofiwch Dryweryn has not impacted significantly in the border towns of Wales, which introduces the notion that the border of Wales is conceived of in a manner distinct to that which is found on official maps (a point returned to below).

Figure 12: Harlech Castle (permissions granted, though image owner wishes to remain anonymous)

Specific examples suggest further instances of contested narratives within the Welsh landscape. Perhaps the most overt example to challenge a theme of external authority is found in Harlech Castle. The 13th-century structure is one of four prominent examples of the castles of Edward I to be inscribed as Welsh World Heritage sites. Painted during the summer of 2019, this small example is situated in a window opening, high in one of the towers, looking inland towards Snowdonia. The mural is complemented with an FWA Eryr Wen (Figure 12). It seems inescapable that a mural movement which champions a narrative of resistance to 'English colonialism' should be found on the stonework of one of the longer lasting, and most visually striking representations of perceived 'Anglo' control and suppression of Welsh culture. If anything, it is slightly surprising that more high-profile sites have not been the subject of specific Cofiwch-themed attention. The practicalities of producing the murals, at any scale, in a protected national monument, might well hinder or deter the pursual of such opportunities. Perhaps though, it is the more personal nature of the protest which is of importance. Rather than creating a coherent, and bounded sense of Welsh identity, producers of Cofiwch murals might instead be seen to be reasserting their Welshness, or a sense of where their imagined version of Wales is, in their immediate locality. This implementation of what is perceived as a nationwide protest, allows for local voices to express their political desires, motivations and affiliations, in a manner which more conventional forms of expression do not allow for.

While personal narratives certainly underpin a portion of the murals, it is clear that the majority are specifically designed for public consumption, and engage with the transformative theory of the spectacle (Debord 1994). The prominence of murals along major routeways through Wales, and on significant landmarks in geographically elevated positions, is a dominant feature of the movement. These examples are deliberately positioned to be seen, with the likely audiences being commuter traffic. While many of these examples are found 'inland', rather than near geographical borders, they serve to reinforce perceptions regarding where people are; that routes in the landscape which might ultimately serve to facilitate the departure of people from Wales, and the movement of people from England into the country, can instead be theatres in which definitive statements of resistance, rebellion and nationhood, are given voice.

A significant proportion of the murals are found along that which is referred to as the M4 corridor. Thirty-five murals are found either along the length of the motorway or in major settlements along this route. Examples in Newport and Cwmbran link with the nine known examples in Cardiff, including

those near to the M4, such as the Coryton roundabout, and the banner example at Tongwynlais. Singular examples in Bridgend and Maesteg lead to the four entries to Port Talbot, an urban centre directly off the M4. A further 15 examples are recorded in locations such as Cross Hands, Llanelli, Neath, Skewen and Swansea, settlements which all surround the western extent of the M4, before the motorway joins the A48 on route to Carmarthen. Oddly, no examples have been recorded in Carmarthen, a Welsh nationalist stronghold. This might indicate the sense of political confidence evidenced in the town, where it could be argued that there is not the same sense of 'needing' to express nationalistic sentiments. An additional conflation can be recorded along the route of the A494, which ultimately serves as a critical artery through North Wales, linking Aberystwyth with the contested landscape of Wrexham. The Cynwyd example is on the side of a bus stop, visible by both commuters and anyone relying on public transport in the area. This route leads past the roadside example between Corwen and Llangollen, before moving past the examples in Llangollen and then into Wrexham. Though less prominent, the A55 along the northern perimeter of Wales, exhibits seven examples, close to the route between Caernarfon and Colwyn Bay. These examples tend to become more clustered further west, and would seem to reinforce the notion that the prevalence of Cofiwch murals conveys a message of territory, as much as it does identity.

In addition to the idea of controlling routeways, large-scale landscapes can also be considered as 'claimed' through the murals, through the use of triangulation stations. Three specific triangulation points have been used for Cofiwch murals, those at Garnfadryn (Gwynedd), Glyntawe (Powys) and Foel Fadian (also in Powys) (Figure 13). Initially, these examples exert a visual dominance over their landscapes. While the murals might not be visible to many who walk through these mountainous landscapes, all who do are overlooked by a 'Cofiwch' message. The creator of the mural might be seen to be controlling the landscape by virtue of creating a Cofiwch tag which exerts a sense of authority over that which they survey. The Glyntawe example is situated roughly in the centre of the Brecon Beacons. It is the only Cofiwch mural within the national park, yet is there the need for any more when this example exerts such a dominant influence over a substantial area of land? It is also possible to consider the choice of 'canvas' as a challenge to authority. The Ordnance Survey, responsible for the mapping of Britain, can be viewed as an agency of the British state, and one which originally served an overtly military purpose within the British Isles (Hewitt 2008). As an extension of British state authority, are the selections of triangulation points, the physical manifestation of the authority and influence of the Ordnance Survey, a means by which the mountainous landscapes of Wales can be reclaimed from Anglo-British authority and influence?

In a similar manner, the Cofiwch mural at Port Eynon is found on a memorial stone. While the memorial commemorates the lives of two individuals linked to the Gower Society, and might be recorded as one of the less 'appropriate' examples of a mural, given its position on a commemorative stone, the mural remained untouched for six months after it was first painted in May 2019. The mural exerts a visual influence over a significant expanse of the South Wales coastline, becoming an unavoidable feature for passing tourists.

'Cofiwch' murals overlooking landscapes are recorded in other instances, though not so formally linked to expressions of British statehood. In Machynlleth, a mural high on a rocky outcrop overlooking the town, creates a visual impact across the entire community. The Bersham slag heap example, and the example found in Llyn Celyn in the Snowdonia National Park, achieve similar impacts, while an example found on a pier head in Milford Haven also projects the narrative into a much broader landscape by virtue of its prominent position overlooking a water way. As with those examples found on trig points, these examples are unlikely to engage with significant footfall, but the message is perhaps intended for the landscape, rather than individuals walking through it.

The final theme that should be considered in the context of Cofiwch and the affirmations of the boundaries of Wales, are those four formally recorded examples of Cofiwch murals outside of Wales.

Figure 13: Glyntawe 'cofiwch', found on a triangulation point

Murals appear in Brighton and Edinburgh, while two examples in the United States are found in Chicago and Ohio. Little is known about the circumstances behind the murals in England and Scotland, other than the dates by which they appeared (December and September 2019 respectively). There is, however, commentary from the artists responsible for works in North America.

At present there is a vibrant Welsh migrant community based in Chicago, branding themselves the 'Chicago Taffia'. In conversation with the artists responsible for the Chicago mural, it was highlighted that many of those Welsh migrants residing in the area where the mural is found, originally came from the Ceredigion area, where the site of the first Cofiwch mural is located. This desire to defend the mural therefore continues in an international setting. Here the boundaries of Wales are temporally displaced. Geography and time are no longer a factor, because the protest is framed by identity, a portable commodity that is not reliant on the continued existence of the source community. All of the Cofiwch murals in Wales might disappear, yet one could remain in Chicago. Indeed, Wales could die as a cultural entity within the British Isles, yet a version of Welshness might persist in a small corner of Illinois. In this instance, Cofiwch might serve as a beacon, to which the migrant Welsh might flock to in search of a sense of identity and 'home'. The Pleasant House Pub, the venue in Chicago which hosts the Cofiwch mural, also hosted a Mari Lwyd event in 2019 (Figure 14). The Mari Lwyd is an obscure midwinter tradition, focused on the use of a decorated horse's skull, and competitive poetic rhyme in the medium of the Welsh language (Howell 2018). That this distinctively Welsh cultural tradition played out in the same arena as the Chicago Cofiwch, indicates the evolution of a Welsh outpost in North America, much along the lines of those outlining

communities established in the Americas during the nineteenth century. Wales remains distant, but the concept of Wales stands defended.

Figure 14: The Chicago 'Cofiwch' mural and Mari Lwyd, 2019 (Photograph: © Chicago Tafia)

Territory by tins of paint

Cofiwch Dryweryn has proven to be a remarkable form of cultural expression and political protest. From a single geographical point in the county of Ceredigion, and separated by some five decades from the point of inception, the 2019 Cofiwch mural movement would generate over one hundred comparable commemorative acts, covering a significant proportion of Wales, and reaching beyond the formal boundaries of the nation. In monitoring the growth of the movement, and recording the emergent appearances of examples, it has become possible to trace the evolution of both the momentum of mural making, and the strengthening (or increased confidence and visibility) of the nationalist-independence movement in Wales.

Be it by design or circumstance, the Cofiwch murals reveal where contemporary Welsh-speaking communities are established and develop. The western extents of the country are heavily represented, as are the major urban areas in south-central Wales, where concerted efforts over several decades have secured the strengthening of Welsh language provision in schools, and public and private employment sectors. Pushing out towards the east of Wales, Cofiwch becomes a challenge, confronting Anglicised areas of the nation with a narrative of uncomfortable exploitation. Cofiwch markers stand out like flags planted in hostile territory, reclaiming something seen to have been lost. In some places, that narrative is perceived as a danger, and in and around Wrexham a destructive response is evident in the form of murals being removed entirely at Bersham, pushing back at the popularity, or notional threat posed by the legacy of Tryweryn, by removing, or attempting to remove, the contemporary cultural calls to commemorate.

Cofiwch Dryweryn is an active process. Having started in the 1960s, today Cofiwch plays out in a context of Brexit, the breaking of unions, political devolution and ongoing migration concerns from England into Wales. Those responsible for the rebuilding and repainting of the Llanrhystud wall, whose actions ultimately triggered the wider national and international paintings, had planned a wide scale programme of painting (of new murals) in the spring of 2020, to commemorate the commencement of the modern painting programme. Should this ambition be realised, following the impacts of COVID-19 related lockdowns, will these new murals follow a similar pattern, reinforcing the bounded Welsh in the western extents of the country? Will ideological control of major routeways continue to be of unspoken significance, as Cofiwch continues to frame visitor experiences, be it along major traffic arteries in Wales, or at some of the more significant national tourist attractions? Or will the movement evolve in a completely different direction, revealing the hopes and fears of a young Welsh speaking community reflecting on their changing status in the completion of a formal UK departure from the European Union?

As the murals continue to be produced, the Cofiwch Dryweryn Mapping Project will record the evolution and trajectories taken by this cultural and political movement. At this point though, it can be said with certainty that the use and proliferation of these murals have played a significant role in redefining ideas of contemporary Welsh identity, while the murals themselves have re-bounded Wales, building upon and introducing new notions of defended and contested cultural territories within the landscapes of Wales. Their survival, and indeed their destruction, will continue to document a Wales struggling to reconcile its present with its history, while also revealing the way in which the future political landscapes of Wales might yet evolve. Where we find Cofiwch, and where we do not, will by its presence point towards the path of independence, or, by its absence, signal a rejection.

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The Discomfort of Frontiers: Public Archaeology and the Politics of Offa's Dyke

An interview with Keith Ray

Exploring the politics and public archaeology of Offa's Dyke, this telephone interview by Howard Williams (HW) was conducted on 9 March 2020. The interview captures different perspectives on Offa's Dyke developing from Keith Ray's (KR) keynote presentation at the 4th University of Chester Archaeology Student Conference.

Introduction

As lead author of the 2016 book *Offa's Dyke: Landscape and Hegemony in Eighth-Century Britain* (Ray and Bapty 2016) and as a co-founder of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory, Keith has been a key figure in the recent revival of archaeological and historical interest in the Mercian frontier with Wales. He was formerly County Archaeologist for Herefordshire (1998–2014), and in that role was involved in the operation of a conservation network formed to support the work of the Offa's Dyke Archaeological Management Officer (1999–2005). This was a post funded by Cadw and English Heritage and occupied by Ian Bapty, based jointly at the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust offices at Welshpool and the Offa's Dyke Centre, Knighton.

The earlier part of Keith Ray's conference presentation focused upon the contrasting perceptions of Offa's Dyke in relation to Welsh identity through time. He then discussed the interim results of new field studies in the frontier lands and the idea that the dykes in the north were part of a wider Mercian strategy designed to dominate north-east Wales politically in the late eighth and early ninth centuries AD. The final part of his talk focused upon how Offa's Dyke has been perceived nationally in terms of its historic importance, and how this has fed into debates over its conservation and the (to date) unrealised potential of World Heritage Site status.

The present text comprises a transcript of the interview, expanded by KR with the provision of references and figures.

Background

HW: Can you give us a synopsis of your background and how you got to study Offa's Dyke?

KR: The early part of my professional background in archaeology[1] included undergraduate and postgraduate study and research at the University of Cambridge (where between 1976 and 1986 I specialised in the archaeology of sub-Saharan Africa), and employment at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, and then at (what was then) St David's University College, Lampeter, Wales. I subsequently embarked on a career in 'curatorial archaeology' in local government, initially with a post in Oxfordshire County Council. I was then employed as the first City Archaeological Officer for Plymouth in Devon, where I worked for six years, before being appointed as the first County Archaeologist for the new unitary authority, Herefordshire Council.

My academic and professional involvement with Offa's Dyke goes back 46 years to when I did some courses in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (ASNC) during my first degree. The purpose and extent of

[1] Starting in the 1970s: in 2020 I have celebrated the end of my 50th year of active involvement in field archaeology.

Offa's Dyke was a matter of some discussion and debate even in the 1970s, so in that sense it has always been with me. It nonetheless became more focused again when I came to work in Herefordshire. At that time (in the late 1990s) I learned two things. First, it was recognised by the national agencies that Offa's Dyke had existed in Herefordshire and I was therefore invited to join an advisory panel supporting the work of Ian Bapty at Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Second, despite this recogition, it was the view of some people that Offa's Dyke had hardly existed in Herefordshire at all (apart from in the extreme north-west of the county). These contradictions provided the basis for my discussions with Ian about the history of the dykes and the conservation issues affecting them. We also discussed the conclusions of David Hill and Margaret Worthington which arose from the most recent phase of 'Offa's Dyke studies', and we found that we were both of the opinion that their claims needed to be treated with a degree of scepticism given the equivocal nature of the evidence they produced (Hill and Worthington 2003).

After much puzzling and searching, and not a small amount of excavation, Hill and Worthington (2003) had concluded that Cyril Fox had been wrong about aspects of fact and interpretation during and after his fieldwork in the late 1920s and early 1930s (Fox 1955). They had concluded that a near-total rejection of his methodology and interpretations was necessary. In their view, only an entirely new approach to the interpretation of the Dyke would satisfactorily solve the questions of its real extent and purpose. In sum, the thesis about Offa's Dyke that Hill and Worthington were promoting in their publications from the late 1990s onwards (e.g. Worthington 1999; Hill 1990; Hill and Worthington 2003) was that it was a monument relevant only to political relations between the kingdoms of Mercia and Powys. Accordingly, in their view, any linear earthworks that were not part of what they termed the 'continuous Dyke' between Treuddyn (in southern Flintshire) in the north and Herrock Hill (Herefordshire) in the south had nothing to do with the 'real' Dyke. Most strikingly, they had come to discount the Wye Valley stretches of the monument as unrelated to 'Offa's Dyke'. They asserted that the eastern boundary of Powys was coterminous with this 'continuous' Dyke; but they saw no circularity in the idea both that the Dyke defined the extent of Powys while also being present only where Powys had existed (as if that were known independently of the Dyke's physical presence) (Figure 1).

The history of perceptions of the meaning and functions of Offa's Dyke

HW: Your book was a reaction to the work of Hill and Worthington, but why did you chose to write a monograph?

KR: The book started out as an article that Ian Bapty and I submitted for publication, in 2009 or thereabouts I think, for a relatively new, but nonetheless already well-respected, academic journal. We suggested in that article that Offa's Dyke was a unique monument reflecting *political* conditions, and that it needed to be understood as existing within a *political* landscape. This landscape, we argued, had existed across only a short span of time from the late eighth through the early ninth century. As such, the building of the Dyke had been a project that both reflected and augmented the Mercian hegemony within Britain of the successive reigns of kings of Mercia: Offa (757–796) and Coenwulf (796–821). To a degree, we suggested, the Dyke and its frontier also gave expression to a rivalry with Charlemagne's continental empire. We also took the opportunity in the article to challenge the 'new orthodoxy' promoted by Hill and Worthington (2003) about the Dyke's extent and purpose.

The comments of one referee for the submitted article seemed to sway the journal editors who declined our manuscript. The referee had expressed the view that our intended contribution to debate did not merit publication since it promoted no new perspective on the Dyke that could be sustained from the evidence. The assertion was being made to us that 'everyone knows' (that is, it was believed by the reviewer in question that there existed a general academic consensus) that Offa's Dyke was just one of many linear

Figure 1: Offa's Dyke at Bronygarth looking north: impressive by scale and siting (Photograph: Keith Ray)

earthworks and frontiers in early medieval Europe, and was not unique. This reviewer, and hence the editors, felt that we were asking the wrong questions by focusing solely on that one earthwork and were adopting an outdated, historicist and particularising, view of the past. Instead, they asserted, researchers ought to look at boundaries and boundedness across Anglo-Saxon England as a broader phenomenon to be explained.

Our response was that such a view was curious, given that we could find no evidence of any such consensus from the published literature. We were arguing that the circumstances of the creation of the Dyke were indeed historically specific, and that the very length of Offa's Dyke and its relatively late date compared with other earthwork dykes in Britain set it apart from superficially comparable entities.[2] We felt that it was dogmatic (and therefore academically questionable) to insist that only a comparative and generalising perspective on 'dyke-digging' and major boundary formation was valid.

We did not accept that we needed to re-write an article to reflect this bias. So, the rejection of the article led us to think that we should perhaps instead write a small book to better explain our perspective and substantiate it with reference to a detailed review of what was understood about the Dyke itself, and about contemporary Mercia and the expansive ambitions of its hegemonic rulers. However, the more I visited lengths of the Dyke, the more questions I had, particularly concerning the assertion that it had been adequately characterised as a monument. Our own 'project' of observation and interpretation grew

[2] It is something of an irony for me that this year I presented at a conference at the University of Cambridge about the range of boundaries that existed in early medieval Britain; and that the organisers felt that a contribution on research specifically on Offa's Dyke was an important and discrete topic which should covered in such a conference.

from there.[3] The fact that one could go into the field and make very basic new observations about the structure of the Dyke that had not been made in any of the existing literature (including the exhaustive work of Sir Cyril Fox) surprised me. That said, again and again I was struck by the skill Fox had brought to his observations and understanding of the Dyke as an earthwork. I felt that Hill and Worthington (and to be fair, Frank Noble before them) had been too dismissive both of Fox's field efforts and his understanding of the importance of the Dyke in the wider political setting.[4]

HW: So, there was a mix of inertia and mythologies about the Dyke at the time you were writing?

KR: Not inertia as such. A major problem that needed to be confronted (rather than politely avoided) was that, given the length of time that the late 20th-century 'Offa's Dyke Project' had run, it was assumed by casual (including most academic) observers that all the questions surrounding the Dyke had been satisfactorily answered by that work.[5] Yet only interim reports had ever emerged on the field studies of the monument (and Wat's Dyke) carried out during the 'Offa's Dyke Project', and it is therefore difficult to substantiate the thesis of a 'Powys only' frontier represented by the Dyke north of Herrock Hill.[6] For example, as soon as the *History and Guide* book (Hill and Worthington 2003) was published, it was immediately apparent that the physical interventions (excavations, watching-briefs, casual observations) made during the life-span of their project numbered more than a hundred. However, it was also evident from the often only single-paragraph-long reports included in the book that none of those carried out by Hill and Worthington or their immediate associates involved a full examination of the earthwork at an appropriate scale (the excavations were small-scale, and many of the interventions involved peremptory examinations such as during the cutting of commercial pipe-trenches). Moreover, not a single radiocarbon date had been obtained or published. In other words, lots of 'answers' had been given by these researchers in both articles and books as to the form and purpose of the Dyke but none were supported by closely documented evidence. Meanwhile, the book itself was organised according to the premise that many of the dykes of the borderlands, including lengths traditionally regarded as part of the overall scheme such as those in Gloucestershire, were unrelated to the 'real' Offa's Dyke (Figure 2).[7]

HW: The arguments that you've summarised here are set out at some length in your book. I'd like, however, to go back to some of the earliest myths that you made reference to in your talk at Chester. What about the pervasive popular perception that Offa's Dyke was concerned with 'shutting out (or in) the Welsh', a view that has been promoted from the time of Gerald of Wales' to the present? How does that perspective affect our understanding of the monument? In what ways has it been tenacious for the monument and the landscape?

KR: Those are huge questions, and I'm not at all sure that we have sufficient data to answer them satisfactorily. However, I can certainly outline for you some of the stories themselves. Among the earliest was one first recorded in the mid-twelfth century about a law said to have been established by Earl Harold (Godwin) in 1063. According to John of Salisbury, this stated that any Welshman found

[3] We initially made a number of joint visits but for a variety of reasons I became personally most responsible for carrying out the field research, writing the text for the book and organising the illustrations (see note in Ray and Bapty 2016: xvi).

[4] See Noble 1983. That said, I do not subscribe to Fox's idea that the construction of the Dyke was the outcome of political rapprochement between the Welsh and the Mercians that led to a 'negotiated frontier' (Fox 1955: 279–281): it was not an 'agreed boundary', but rather one that was imposed by the Mercians, almost entirely to their strategic advantage.

[5] A view that persists in some quarters today: hence the point of discussing it at length here.

[6] Herrock Hill is located in north-west Herefordshire. The 'Offa's Dyke Project' was based in the University of Manchester Extra-Mural Department and was conducted as an exercise mostly involving mature students. It was conducted from the mid-1970s into the opening years of the new millennium. For full discussion of our objections to the thesis and the evidence upon which it was said to be based, see Ray and Bapty 2016: 82–91.

[7] This also, by the by, involved casually dismissing the statement by Bishop Asser, c. AD 895, namely that Offa built the Dyke that bears his name 'from sea to sea' either as hyperbole or as merely a conventional formula.

Figure 2: Offa's Dyke at Passage Grove, Tidenham, Gloucestershire, looking south: structurally identical to lengths in (for example) Radnorshire and Shropshire, but better-preserved (Photograph: Keith Ray)

in possession of a weapon to the east of the Dyke would have his right hand cut off.[8] If not entirely a fabrication, this appears likely to have been an exaggeration. The idea of the operation of such summary justice being applied generally is contradicted, I think, by the content of the *Ordinance concerning the Dunsaete*. This is an Anglo-Saxon document which, while we cannot be sure precisely what area it relates to or its exact date, legislates for Welsh and English communities on either side of a river that also served as a cultural boundary, most likely sometime in the tenth century (Molyneux 2011). There is an elaborate concern throughout this document to follow the codes of both English and Welsh law equally, to make sure that injustices are not perpetrated across the frontier.

The *Dunsaete* document was, in effect, the record of a Welsh/Anglo-Saxon treaty probably first sponsored by King Athelstan. A misunderstanding (deliberate or otherwise) of its significance was possibly what engendered another enduring myth perpetuated by many writers (including some years ago, albeit somewhat jocularly, by Michael Wood), that the Dyke was built to stop the Welsh raiding lowland farms.[9] This 'cattle-raiding' idea reveals, I think, a fundamental misconception of how the cattle trade between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and upland areas likely worked. Welsh stock (and cattle in particular) were for millennia raised in the highlands in the west and then moved to the borderlands for fattening and for sale eastwards again into lowland markets. It was the lowland markets that were therefore driving this aspect of the upland economy from at least the seventh century onwards. In the *Ordinance concerning the*

[8] *John of Salisbury; Policraticus* (c. AD 1159): see Nederman 1990: 114; see also Ray and Bapty 2016: 56.

[9] 'One spring day around the year 787, Welshmen riding the castle-rustling trails into Anglo-Saxon England came back with astonishing stories. Thousands of Anglo-Saxon levies had moved into the border country... (where) they had been ordered to create a huge bank and ditch along the whole frontier...' (Wood 1987: 77).

Figure 3: Offa's Dyke and the politics of exclusion (cf Gerald of Wales): the view over the Dyke eastwards to the north-west Shropshire plain at Craignant, Selattyn, near Oswestry (Photograph: Keith Ray)

Dunsaete, cattle theft is mentioned as a not unusual cause of dispute, but the document makes it clear that this occurred in *both* directions (Figure 3).

The fundamental perception that the Dyke was about drawing a boundary and cutting off access eastwards for the Welsh started with Gerald of Wales (1146–1223). Gerald, like many of his aristocratic contemporaries in Britain, had a mixed ancestry and a complex personal history featuring both Norman and Welsh forbears. However, for various political reasons of his own (for example, he was a cleric and scholar and pursued for many years the ambition of becoming Bishop of St Davids) he took up the Welsh cause and listed the evils perpetrated by the English on the Welsh. He began that list with Offa, of whom he said: 'King Offa shut the Welsh off from the English by his long dyke on the frontier'.[10]

The consequence for the Dyke is that it was potentially seen primarily (and narrowly) as a cattle-raiding barrier; or at best a means of preventing raiding more generally. I think that this view may have arisen in part as a result of the experience of the frontier in the late tenth and early eleventh century period when, due to political unrest involving Scandinavian, English Dane, Irish Viking and Anglo-Saxon as well as Welsh people, there was a lot of laying waste to frontier communities. The consequences of this were still evident in 1086 at the time of the compilation of the Domesday survey, and such a perspective was then back projected to the situation that had existed nearly three centuries earlier.

[10] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Description of Wales* 1184 (Radice and Thorpe 1978: 266). Among other things, this shows the continuity and strength of the traditional ascription of the Dyke as Offa's creation. Contrary to a common belief among writers about Anglo-Saxon England, it does *not* necessarily mean that everyone writing in the twelfth century was familiar with Asser's statement about Offa and the Dyke in his (late ninth century) *Life* of King Alfred.

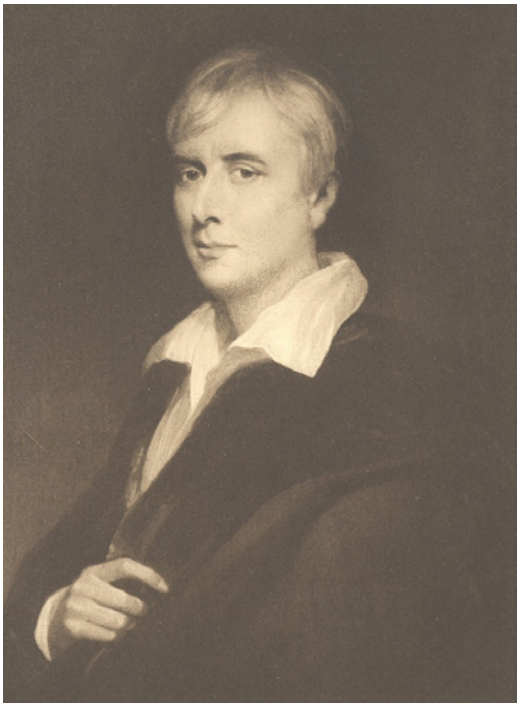

Figure 4: George Borrow, 1843 (Photograph from Jenkins 1912)

The Dyke has, however, nonetheless been something of a paradox, especially if you are Welsh. Among some communities the building of the Dyke has always been seen as an expression of imperious English actions, but there is also an acknowledgement among historians that the sense of Welsh nationhood and of the 'Welsh standing up to the English', resisting what may have seemed at one time an unstoppable Anglo-Saxon colonisation westwards, could not have developed the way it did without the Dyke's presence. To a degree, the building of the Dyke can be envisaged as an acceptance by the Mercians, and then the English more generally, that there were lands to the west of it that would never be settled by the English to the extent that they would *become* part of England.

HW: Moving up to George Borrow and his Mr Jones of 1862, is there still an idea similar to the one you referred to from the twelfth century and enshrined in the landscape of the people living along the line of the Dyke, namely that Welshmen could have their ears cut of if they were found east of the Dyke?

KR: Yes, you are referring to the quotation in my talk about a conversation recorded by George Borrow with a Welsh resident of the frontier near Llangollen. Borrow described the encounter in his book *Wild Wales* as follows: 'This way,' (said Mr Jones), pointing in the direction of the west, 'leads back to Llangollen, the other to Offa's Dyke and England.' We turned to the west. He enquired whether I had ever heard of Offa's Dyke. 'Oh yes', said I, 'It was built by an old Saxon king called Offa, against the incursions of the Welsh.' 'There was a time,' said my companion, 'when it was customary for the English to cut off the ears of every Welshman who was found to the east of the dyke, and for the Welsh to hang every Englishman whom they found to the west of it. Let us be thankful that we are now more humane to each other' (Borrow 1862: Chapter IX) (Figure 4).

It is interesting that Borrow wrote 'incursions' of the Welsh, because it was in this area of the Dee valley that Welsh resentment of the *English* incursion into their ancestral lands was probably felt most keenly. This is because there were special places to the east of Offa's Dyke here that Welsh people had strong emotional and historical connections to. Bangor Is-y-Coed (Bangor-on-Dee) is prominent among such places, given the former existence there of one of the largest and most famous early monasteries in Britain. It is not by accident that the area in which the Bangor monastery was situated was taken back into Wales during the sixteenth century, since the roots of attachment to the place go back to the origins of Christianity in these islands. I suspect there was an awareness at the time of building the Dykes of how politically explosive for Mercia it was to have appropriated so much of the Dee lowlands. And this may be why Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke are built so close together and so monumentally in the landscape at and east of Ruabon, so that they could more effectively block eastwards access to Bangor from the Vale of Llangollen.

HW: Stripping it of the fictional punishments, is it not perpetuating an anachronism to suggest that 'England and Wales' were already in existence at the time of building the Dyke? Surely, from a Welsh perspective, then, 'Wales' was still in existence on both sides of the frontier?

KR: I'm not sure that we can document such a feeling, unfortunately. In effect, this distinction must always have been something of a convention or shorthand, since there were always Welsh settlements

to the east of Offa's Dyke, in Cheshire as elsewhere, and from a relatively early date English settlements to the west beyond the Dyke. The early situation is, however, difficult to understand precisely, because of changes to names. So, for example, ever since the 19th century, historians and place-name specialists have pointed out there has been Anglicisation of some Welsh place-names to the east of the Dyke and 'Cymricisation' of several English ones to the west of it (Figure 5). In this way it is a more complex history than people have imagined, even though in terms of religion they appeared either to have adhered to English or Welsh customs and ecclesiastical organisation. David Parsons has been researching these name-changes in some depth in Shropshire and Montgomeryshire, and it seems that there are various 'layers' that attach to different naming and re-naming practices (Parsons 2020). It is certainly difficult to unpick and date these changes accurately.

Figure 5: Offa's Dyke above the Walton Basin, Radnorshire: the first English settlements to the west of the earthwork in this area may pre-date its construction (Photograph: Keith Ray)

HW: So, Welsh border landscape presents a complex process of cross-fertilisation?

KR: Yes, although we need at the same time to acknowledge that there were both positive and negative aspects to these relationships across the many centuries concerned here. In the medieval period, especially, there were long-term institutional rivalries between, for example, the 'English' and the 'Welsh' church, trying to perpetuate contrary allegiances. This affects lordship more generally, in the later medieval period. The diocese of Hereford and those of St Davids and Llandaff, for example, disputed the lands and churches of 'Archenfield' in south Herefordshire for generations, even after the formal adoption of diocesan boundaries. There was also a deliberate ambiguity among the Marcher lords regarding which aspects of their identities they wished to emphasise: their estates straddled this boundary and they inter-married between predominantly Welsh and predominantly Norman (and Anglo-Norman) kin. Therefore, their promotion of some tenants, and the evolution of different families and their alliances, created a kaleidoscope of identity and of constantly shifting loyalties.

An interesting thing about the Borrow example is that, in his time, there was a 'Victorianisation' of personal identities. So, while you had an understanding that you were *either* English *or* Welsh, your identity as either English or Welsh was, for the official purposes of the state, deliberately subsumed into an imperial identity as 'British'. Several processes connected to identity were therefore occurring in parallel and the real-life ambiguities of identity in some contexts, and especially that of the British Empire, became fixed ones, ideologically. This led in turn to a romanticization of past identities and a re-inscribing of old resentments which had in practice become much less important in terms of *cultural identity*. I'm trying to draw some subtle distinctions here, but what I would emphasise is the effects of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland were in some ways contradictory: a greater adherence to the idea of 'Britishness' while at the same time producing what were in some ways at least over-drawn, romantic

Figure 6: Near Rownal, Montgomery, on the England-Wales border (Photograph: Keith Ray)

senses of 'leek/daffodil versus rose'[11] Offa's Dyke was, in this setting, one among many subjects across which contrasts between two distinct 'countries' and their traditions could be drawn. You can sense the ambiguities as this played out in terms of class and reconciliation (the bit about being much kinder to one another now) in Borrow's to a degree apocryphal 'Mr Jones' – and that is why I think that it is a useful vignette to deploy.

HW: That is very much pertinent to the present and to issues of colonisation. So where does this leave us when we get to Fox and his 1928 quote that you provided in your talk?

KR: Cyril Fox, in 1928, was in the paradoxical position of being a senior representative of a Welsh national institution and yet (in the eyes of fervently nationalist Welshmen such as Iorwerth Peate) someone with attitudes wholly typical of the patrician (and patronising) Englishman.[12] Fox (1955: 277) reflected that 'When in 1928 I asked a Montgomeryshire peasant through whose garden the Dyke happens to pass, whether the folk of his hamlet knew what it was or what it meant, his reply, though indirect, was not ambiguous: 'You just put your head inside the back-door of Bob Jones' cottage there; tell him he was born the wrong side of Offa's Dyke and see what happens...' It is revealing that Fox saw no offence in referring to a Montgomeryshire resident as a 'peasant', and he overtly labelled his annual summer fieldwork trips to survey Offa's Dyke as being 'on tour', a term more commonly deployed to describe a British imperial District Officer's tour of duty inspecting his administrative domain. And yet, Fox was aware of some of the inherent paradoxes at play, at least to a degree, since he observed how the wily unnamed 'peasant' subverted the narrative by setting up a rhetorical encounter between Fox ('you just go...') and a true-born Welshman whose cottage happened to be located across the line of the Dyke. So, here as elsewhere there are paradoxes and ambiguities. In the talk, I presented a modern example of this, where a resident on the Welsh side of the Dyke who lives down a lane which they know is also part of the National Trail, can be seen (no doubt deliberately) flying the national flag of Wales from his residence (Figure 6).

[11] These national symbols were first identified in Elizabethan and Jacobean times but in the nineteenth century they arguably came into starker and in some ways more cliched usage.

[12] See Charles Scott-Fox's illuminating biography of his father (Scott-Fox 2002: 108–109; 143–144) in substantiation of this not insignificant point. Peate allegedly had little interest in prehistory (Fox's primary research field) and quite probably was not too impressed that Sir Mortimer Wheeler (as first Director of the National Museum of Wales) and Sir Cyril Fox (as his successor), both Englishmen, had placed so much emphasis on the study of Offa's Dyke, which was arguably from a Welsh nationalist standpoint (even in the 1920s) regarded as an English rather than a Welsh project.

HW: How widespread is that conscious drawing of contrasts today in the landscape, or is what you cited a one-off eccentric view? Here I refer to your *Herefordshire Times* newspaper report from 14 March 2019: Border 'in the wrong place'?

KR: That local newspaper piece, and the online off-the-cuff comments it inspired reveals a lot about contemporary attitudes to place and to identity, and how the Welsh on either side of the Black Mountains border view Herefordshire as substantially still part of Wales (Morris 2019; Figure 7). Among other things, the report repeats the common misconception largely 'cemented' by the chosen course of the long distance Path from 1971, that Offa's Dyke follows the crest of the north–south Hatterall Ridge above the east-facing scarp of the Black Mountains that overlooks Herefordshire from the west. In fact, the Dyke and the former frontier are several miles to the east. This is much more centrally located in the county and emphasises the way in which Herefordshire today still straddles the national boundary to some extent.

Thursday March 14, 2019

Could Herefordshire be set to grow?

Myrddyn Phillips (inset) has walked across Hatterall Ridge many times and believes Herefordshire's border should be moved further back into Wales. Photo: Myrddyn Phillips.

Border 'in wrong place'

By Sally Boyce

KING Offa must be spinning with glee in his eighth century grave at revelations that Herefordshire could be set for a land-grab from Wales of sizeable proportions.

During times of heightened feeling as rugby's Six Nations Championship plays out across the UK, Welshman Myrddyn Phillips believes the Wales-England border, which roughly follows the Anglo-Saxon defences built by Offa to keep out the Welsh, is in the wrong place.

According to his strenuous mapping procedures, Herefordshire's westerly borders are wider than was previously thought.

The experienced hill walker and surveyor from Welshpool has not left a stone unturned.

His investigations in partnership with Mark Trengove have revealed that the national border lies 39 feet short of the line along a nine-mile stretch of the Black Mountains.

In Herefordshire, news that the border on Hatterall Ridge, the main easterly part of the Black Mountains range, is wrongly placed has received a mixed response.

Celebrated writer and journalist Matthew Engel, whose home looks across to the ridge, fears the worst.

"I'd say this would mean a great deal less land outside the national park rather than in it. And that means more chance of some anti-social character building a monstrosity on the mountaintop and getting away with it," he believed.

Welshman Tudor Price-Jones, now living in Australia, was also unimpressed.

"It sounds like a typical bit of English land-grabbing, like the securing of land by the digging of Offa's Dyke."

Meanwhile art historian Ronald Moore, who lives in the area, made a light-hearted suggestion. "I would suggest the swift construction of a whole new set of motte and bailey castles along the newly drawn border!"

One of the longest running high ridges in England and Wales, Hatterall Ridge has been mapped by Mr Phillips and Mr Trengove using a state-of-the-art system.

If accepted, their findings would mean that Herefordshire villages such as Michaelchurch Escley, Craswall and Longtown might not be quite as close to the Welsh border as has long been supposed.

The 'land-grab' would give England – and more precisely Herefordshire – an extra 1.8 million square feet.

The men contend that the present border follows the natural watershed from the summit of Twyn Lloch, but should be further west.

Their story has been splashed in national newspapers and the likes of Radio 2 presenter Jeremy Vine and TV's Eamon Holmes have beaten a path to their door.

However, a spokesman for the Ordnance Survey has made clear that the official map will remain unchanged.

Mr Phillips, a hillwalker with over 30 years of experience, admitted he has a soft spot for Hatterall Ridge.

"The Black Mountains as a whole give some of the most rewarding hill walking in the country," he told the Hereford Times.

"I've visited this part for many years but it keeps drawing me back. It has an openness to it that I find wonderfully uplifting."

Figure 7: *Hereford Times* page: 'Border in wrong place'

Another popular debate has focused upon the perceived advantages today of living on one side of the border or the other. For example, both some Herefordshire farmers and some Welsh residents apparently believe that Herefordshire 'could benefit from being integrated with Wales', according to a BBC local radio station report in November 2006.[13] They were referring then to investment in rail services, but some other benefits were also identified.

Alongside these concerns about quality of life, there is the persistence of folk traditions and expressions concerning what the Dyke represents symbolically about the frontier. An example I quoted was a statement made in response to a blog-post about 'King Offa of Mercia' from 2013 by the novelist known as Sarah Woodbury (2013). This statement was from a contributor identified only as 'John' who wrote, I think tellingly, that 'Offa's Dyke still has resonance today. Whereas it may not be a universal saying, it's not uncommon for people to say in Welsh that they are going '*dros y clawdd*' ('across the dyke') when speaking of going to England. Its presence is used (in Wales) in both languages to indicate travel to England and is used in other contexts as a way of indicating 'England' without actually using the word 'England'. Although, except in certain areas, it no longer forms the border, it is in the mind of some (people) still the demarcation line between two culturally divergent peoples.'

HW: So, the Dyke doesn't make sense in terms of the complexity of the modern border and identities?

[13] BBC Hereford and Worcester 13/11/2006: http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/content/articles/2006/11/13/hereford_in_wales_feature.shtml.

KR: Well, that's one way to view the situation. I'd say that it's more a question that the existence of a physical *border line* has been of less importance than the value of the Dyke as a resource for establishing the conceptual centre line of a *frontier zone*.

HW: I'd really like soon, to get onto the practical and conservation implications of what could widely be seen as a failure to 'foreground' the importance of the Dyke adequately as a heritage and cultural asset. But before we discuss that, I want to ask you to identify any contemporary political misuses and debates. Are there, for instance, any overtly *political* debates concerning the Dyke?

KR: Yes, in this context I think that it is important to mention that when I was preparing my talk for the Chester student conference I did find to my surprise that Offa and his Dyke had routinely been cited in contemporary political discourse – necessarily used as a metaphor, but in perhaps surprising ways. One example was in respect to the online discussion that followed the radio bulletin in November 2006 already referred to, in which the BBC Hereford and Worcester radio journalist reported that a member of the Welsh Assembly had suggested that Herefordshire would benefit from Welsh investment in rail links. It was mooted that Wales could even contribute financially to the building of a short branch line spur leading off the Cardiff–Hereford–Shrewsbury–Manchester rail artery to connect the Rotherwas Industrial Estate in Hereford's southern suburbs to a Wales-focused transport network.[14]

The journalist concerned had gone to the length of interviewing the former Herefordshire county chair of the National Farmers Union who farms on the Welsh border. This man said that he thought that Herefordshire would indeed benefit from such links and investment, adding that: 'We always look over the border and are envious of the farmers in Wales as they have a Welsh Assembly that really cares about the countryside and about farming.'

The Conservative MP for North Herefordshire, Bill Wiggin, was then invited to contribute to the debate. He stated that, in his opinion, Welsh public services were in 'a perilous state' and might drag Herefordshire down, adding: 'What we've got to be grateful for is that we've got a particularly unique heritage in Herefordshire. There are tremendous cultural links on both sides of the border, and we should be celebrating that rather than moving it (to include Herefordshire within Wales, as some had suggested).' He ended his comments with what he must have thought was a rhetorical flourish: 'King Offa would be turning in his grave at the thought of moving the borders anywhere other than on his dyke.' We can of course readily observe, from what has been mentioned above, the multiple ironies inherent in this statement![15]

As recently as 2014, moreover, the then-Prime Minister David Cameron used Offa's Dyke as a tool with which to lambast the record of the devolved health service operated by the Labour Party's Welsh Assembly Government under Carwyn Jones. He accused the minister of 'sinking the hopes of a generation', claiming that 'Patients are waiting weeks and weeks for vital heart scans. One in seven

[14] BBC Hereford and Worcester 13/11/2006: http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/content/articles/2006/11/13/hereford_in_wales_feature.shtml. The Rotherwas industrial estate has since been renamed 'Skylon Park', because the famous Festival of Britain landmark feature was created at this location in 1950–51. This location was identified just after the Millennium as a key focus for the county's future industrial and commercial strategy, focused on the security sector.

[15] These comments from Mr Wiggin provoked a veritable avalanche of online comments, including one that listed all the lands in Britain that had formerly been (in his view) Welsh-speaking and that noted with joyous irony the fact that many of the county residents who were protesting that Hereford is English and that the Welsh should not be casting avaricious eyes eastwards had Welsh surnames. Another anonymous contributor who belonged to a hitherto unsuspected underground movement for the repatriation of Herefordshire to Wales and signed themselves 'henffordd yng ngcghymru' ('Hereford for the Welsh') listed six reasons why this transfer should happen. These included the prevalence of Welsh surnames in the county, the 'facts' that the rail services are run under a Wales-based franchise and that vital supplies come from 'Welsh Water', that the Herefordshire accent is 'unmistakably mid-Walian rather than West Country', and most important of all that 'Herefordians tend to support the Welsh rugby team rather than the English. Any Hereford retailer will tell you that Welsh rugger shirts outsell English ones!' BBC Hereford and Worcester 13/11/2006: http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/content/articles/2006/11/13/hereford_in_wales_feature.shtml.

people in Wales is on an NHS waiting list and there is a Cancer Drugs Fund in England but not in Wales.' He went on, 'I tell you – when Offa's Dyke becomes the line between life and death, we are witnessing a national scandal.' (Henry 2014).

However rhetorical this political jibe was, it not only displayed (perhaps inevitably) a monumental ignorance about the relative locations of the contemporary border and the Dyke itself (which for less than one tenth of its course coincides with today's border), but also of the realities of health provision along the Welsh Marches, where many people cross the border to one or the other NHS service centres in the other country. What this incident does reveal, however, is that Offa's Dyke hasn't yet lost its geopolitical relevance, nor its utility as a resource that can be used and abused and misappropriated as ammunition to support a particular political position. Since Brexit, the scope for the political 'weaponisation' of the Dyke has of course increased many times over.

Building public archaeologies for Offa's Dyke

HW: Returning to your book in this contemporary context: does it counter academic and popular misconceptions, and what would you say about the Dyke and the frontier as key points?

KR: It is difficult to gauge *popular* reaction to a book like that. There is very little access to a person-in-the-street view. *Amazon* reviews have not been helpful (there were only ever a handful), and the professional and academic reviews, though by and large very positive, give one little idea of the wider response.[16] The best indication of its impact as far as the general public is concerned has been the very positive reception it has had among local heritage groups. In the first year after its publication, I received more than a dozen invitations to talk about the Dyke and the book, ranging from Prestatyn and St Asaph by the Irish Sea in the north, through Trefonen and Ludlow (in north and south Shropshire respectively), to Tutshill and Chepstow by the Severn estuary in the south; and from Aberystwyth in the west to Lichfield in the centre of England and Cambridge in the east.

It is also difficult to gauge academic reactions to the book, due to the fact that it was designed to be a clock-setting exercise: we were trying to re-set the clock and say, 'there has been a good deal of discussion and several different views proposed, but fundamentally there remains a lot to understand'. Part of the problem in the past has been that the Dyke was seen in some degree too parochially, with too much concern about the earthwork and its continuities – or otherwise.[17] Throughout the book, I tried to point out that seeing the Dyke in a series of wider landscapes is crucial to understand its role historically - as are its national and international implications both historically and today (although the emphasis in the book was deliberately upon historical understandings rather than conservation statuses: see below).

It is important to reflect upon what has happened since the book was published. For those already interested in the Dyke's historical context, and for others who were involved in conservation, the book has served as a 'call to arms' to further explore and publicise the importance of both the Dyke and the Mercian-Welsh frontier. Although there is a huge amount of work still to do in terms of documentation and investigation, we've collectively managed to make some progress 'on the ground' since 2016. This has included the excavations by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust on Offa's Dyke at Chirk Castle Park and on Wat's Dyke at Erddig south of Wrexham (Belford 2019). So, some of the things that were once just propositions are beginning to be tested on the ground. For example, two implications from the work at

[16] https://amazon.co.uk/offas-dyke-landscape-hegemony-eighth-century/. For academic reviews see for example Blair, 2017; Squatriti, 2017.

[17] I've already noted the paradox here, that at the same time there were several intricacies to its construction that had nevertheless, and inexplicably, been ignored. See the author's post in the ODC website concerning Hawthorn Hill to not how he picked up on these aspects in a location not cited directly in the book (Williams 2017).

Figure 8: Boundary representing northwards extension of linear earthwork near Gronant, Flintshire, with the Irish Sea in the background, October 2017 (Photograph: Keith Ray)

Chirk Castle are, first, the realisation that the Dyke's ditch was much bigger than had been appreciated until this was pointed out in the book; and second, a dawning realisation from the radiocarbon and OSL dates that we may be getting closer to some degree of confidence in a late eighth century construction date from the field archaeology for both dykes.[18]

As for tracing the earthwork on the ground beyond places where it is already well-known, one thing that also really surprised me was to find that you could still go out into the landscape where there had been no hint from any publication that a linear earthwork may exist, and locate remarkably well-preserved lengths. The starkest example of this was at Rhual, north-east of Mold, in 2018. Here, across a stretch of more than a mile either side of the steep valley down which the River Alyn runs, the earthwork is near continuous and features some of the most substantial surviving bank lengths to be found anywhere in Flintshire.

The value of following up the book with new rapid reconnaissance and the importance of the establishment of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory is that we have now challenged the alleged consensus view with new potentials. This has really questioned two much-quoted opinions: firstly that there is nothing new to

[18] At this moment in time (autumn 2020) it should be added, we are still awaiting publication of these dates. This is likely to be due to the frequently lengthy laboratory process of verification and cross-matching of the dates from the OSL samples. There also will need to be some work done, ultimately, on the Bayesian statistical analysis of both sets of dates and from both OSL and radiocarbon determinations, to cross match the sample dates with the excavator's stratigraphic sequencing. These complexities are set out well in Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews ODJ Volume 2 article of 2020 already mentioned.

learn so why try; and secondly that Asser was simply using a 'figure of speech' and a well-worn trope in saying that the Dyke had extended fully from sea-to-sea. On the latter point, the new reconnaissance work that has been initiated since 2016 has opened up the possibility that there was indeed a continuation of the Dyke northwards from Treuddyn (in southern Flintshire) to the Irish Sea close to Prestatyn. Indeed, the location of what looks like a typical length of the Dyke (albeit degraded by subsequent re-use of the boundary earthwork) descending down the longest and steepest slope northwards from the highest hill in the district between Prestatyn and Gronant appears to terminate the Dyke in the north (Figure 8) with an equivalent flourish to the southern terminus at Sedbury Cliffs on the Severn Estuary (Ray *et al.* 2020).

HW: But you are happy to concede that different builds and forms of monument exist in the dykes?

KR: There are unquestionably different build forms that were used for the creation of the Dyke. However, these forms were deployed as if they were drawn from a *palette of options* to be applied in any one place rather than being forms that were limited in their occurrence in, and therefore characteristic of, different geographical zones. In other words, what I have termed 'build devices' recur repeatedly and often in similar combinations, along the whole course of the Dyke. So, for example, placement practices like the turning of the earthwork to a small extent eastwards wherever a significant valley is crossed (to enable the Dyke to overlook approaches from the west as it climbs, or descends, both north-facing and south-facing slopes above each valley) are found to have been repeatedly used. Other features such as angled turns also recur in widely separated locations. Some structural characteristics of the two major Dykes (Offa's and Wat's) are also shared between them. For example, the reasonably well-established course of Wat's Dyke, both in its northernmost lengths south of Holywell and near to the Dee estuary in Flintshire, appears to have some close similarities to the newly observed lengths of what might be Offa's Dyke north-west of Mold in central Flintshire. Many structural features, in contrast – such as the counterscarp bank – recur wherever the Dyke is well preserved (see also Williams 2017 for discussion of the recurrence of the distinctive 'adjusted-segmented' build form) (Figure 9).

If in 20 to 30 years' time you were to ask me: 'what was the most remarkable transformation of our understanding Offa's Dyke in the period 2010–2030?', I suspect that it might be the appreciation of the possibility that both Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke were contemporary and used together. That upsets every model so far proposed for the development of the frontier, and until now nobody has suggested this possibility. Curiously, though, this possible interpretation has been latent for some centuries. An oft-quoted stanza in Thomas Churchyard's long poem *The Worthiness of Wales* not only substantiates that there was an early appreciation of the separate existence of the two long-distance dykes in North Wales, but also hints at a reason why their co-existence was meaningful. Churchyard said: 'Within two myles (of Ruabon), there is famous thing; Cal'de Offae's Dyke, that reacheth farre in length: All kind of ware, the Danes might thether bring, It was free ground and cal'de the Britaines strength. Wat's Dyke, likewise, about the same was set, Betweene which two, both danes and Britaines met And trafficke still, but passing bounds by sleight, The one did take, the other prisoner straight' (Evans 1776: 104).[19]

This suggests that there may have been an economic motive for the creation of the two dykes together at the same time, to create a neutral or semi-neutral 'free trade zone' under the political control of Mercia.[20] Moreover, the building of Offa's Dyke well to the west of Wat's Dyke would have had the effect also of bringing the important lead-mining district at Halkyn Mountain firmly under Mercian control.

[19] This text of the relevant stanza was reproduced in full in Ray and Bapty (2016: 55). The meanings of the allusions in the passage of the poem concerned are unpacked fully in that book (Ray and Bapty 2016: 386).

[20] Of interest here also is the recent re-analysis by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews of the radiocarbon and Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating of the length of Wat's Dyke excavated by Tim Malim and associates at Gobowen in Shropshire some fifteen years ago (Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2020; Malim and Hayes 2008). The implications from that re-analysis is that the balance of probability for a most likely date of construction was not as those authors had suggested in the first half of the ninth century (Malim and Hayes 2008: 172–175), but rather (as for Offa's Dyke) the late 8th century.

Figure 9: Offa's Dyke in 'scarp mode' at Hergan, near Clun, Shropshire. This mode occurs also almost continuously over two miles between Plumweir Cliff and Madgett Hill in Gloucestershire; along Craig Morda near Trefonen (Oswestry); and (probably) south-east of Rhydymwyn, Flintshire. It features a modest bank sited at the top of a (mostly) west-facing scarp slope that is itself scarped back into the bedrock to exaggerate the size of the bank. The relatively slight ditch is then fronted by a substantial counterscarp bank that in the past in Gloucestershire and elsewhere has sometimes been mistaken for the bank itself (Photograph: Keith Ray)

A deliberate policy to create the two dykes in parallel may also have served specifically to stabilise the frontier while at the same time allowing for a future absorption of at least the Vale of Clwyd into a 'greater north-west Mercia' based on Cheshire.[21]

More generally, I think that we ignore at our peril the sheer length of the frontier. One consequence is that we can easily miss the likelihood that Offa's Dyke crossed different *kinds* of political landscapes. In other words, it could have been achieving different things in different areas. For instance, in the far north and south it may well have primarily been about the appropriation of economic assets such as mineral resources, and in these areas its performing a customs role may have been more important than elsewhere where its role was more confined to providing a zone of political control (Figure 10).

HW: Do you think that in this sense the Dyke somehow encapsulated the broader landscape, and determined the depth of the frontier, both westwards and eastwards too?

KR: The impression I get concerning the breadth (or depth) of the frontier, from east to west, is that it did indeed vary according to the political circumstances prevailing in each part of the landscape it traversed. I have already mentioned the tensions that may have existed in the area east of Llangollen.

[21] See also my forthcoming article entitled: 'A Purposefully Multiplex Border? Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke, and the late 8th–early 9th Century Marchland with Wales', first presented at the (virtual) *The Borders of Early Medieval England* Conference organised by Dr Ben Guy and (virtually) based at Robinson College, Cambridge, 11–12 July 2020.

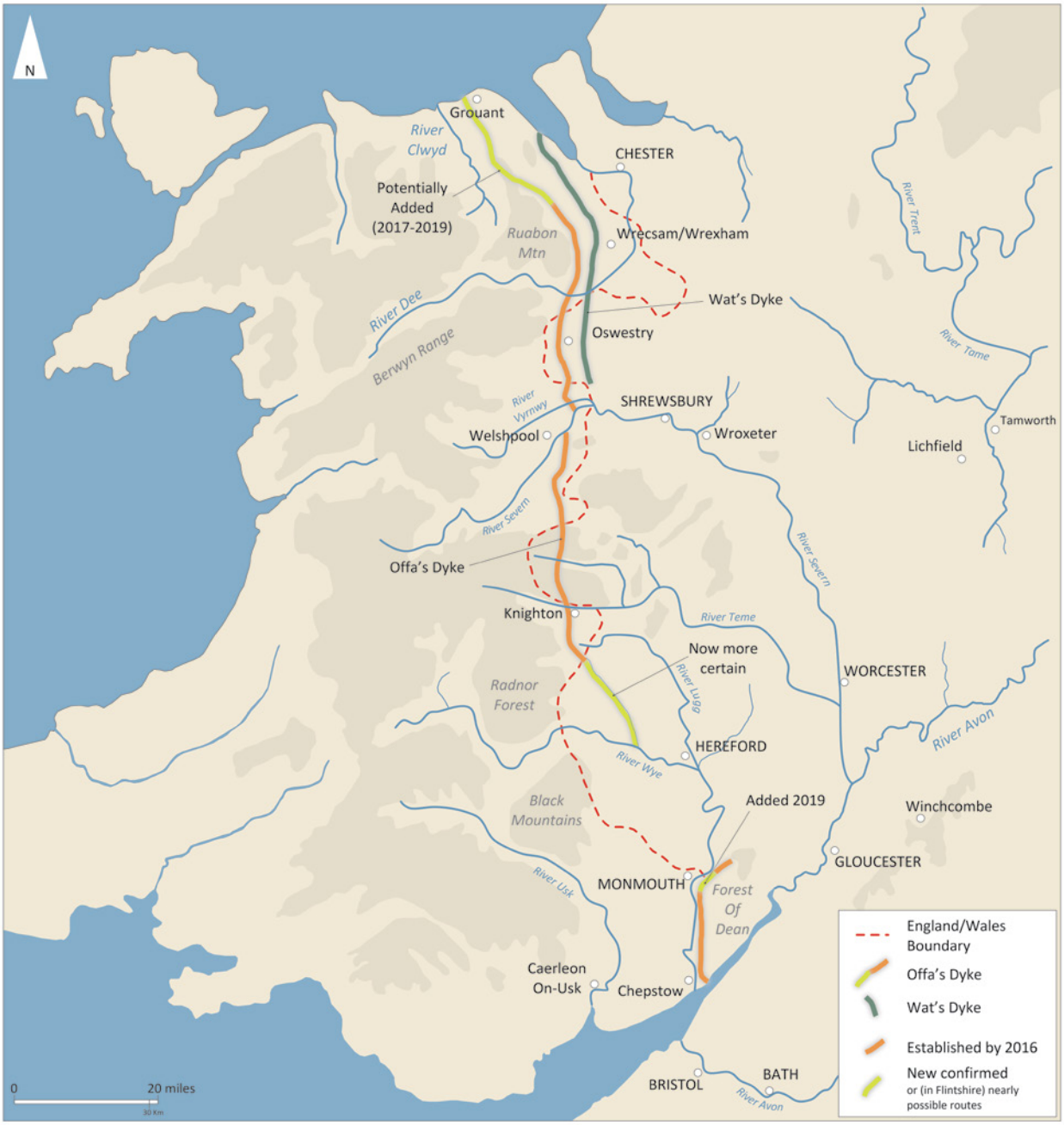

Figure 10: Map showing possible (revised) full extent and location of Offa's Dyke following recent reconnaissance survey. The putative 'extension' of the known Dyke across northern Flintshire has led to the suggestion that Offa's Dyke may have been used in tandem with Wat's Dyke in the northern sector of the frontier (Map prepared by Simon Mayes, © Simon Mayes and Keith Ray)

In that area, the two dykes are brought physically closer together than anywhere else where they co-exist, and I therefore suspect that the frontier zone there was very narrow. Elsewhere, for example in the Radnor Basin west of Kington, there is some evidence of early settlement by groups of Anglo-Saxon people west of the Dyke, probably from early on, while at the very same time the whole of the Arrow Valley to the south-east seems to have continued to host Welsh-speaking communities with ties to Welsh princedoms well into the twelfth century (Ray 2015: 208–209; Figure 6).

HW: Moving into the issues of conservation and where the lack of historic documentation for the date and rationale for Offa's Dyke leaves us, you cited the example of the compilation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site UK tentative list in 2010 as an example of how the importance of the Dyke is continually side-lined in the national heritage conversation. Can you expand upon this, and why you chose to focus upon it?

KR: It's important, I think, to consider the compilation of the UK tentative list for new WHS inscription in 2010 in tandem with what was then another potentially transformative initiative affecting the Dyke at that time.[22] This was a bid for a major (£2.5m) grant sought from what was then called the Heritage Lottery Fund (now the National Lottery Heritage Fund). The bid was put together by a three-organisation consortium comprising the Rural Media Company (a Hereford-based Marches not-for-profit company specialising in documentary films), the Offa's Dyke Association (ODA) and Herefordshire Archaeology (Herefordshire Council). The aim was to research and to publicise the Dyke and the frontier through field-based and creative mini-projects undertaken in partnership with local communities throughout the Marches.

The bid was appraised first at the West Midlands HLF committee and then having successfully advanced through that stage, at a national level. We heard informally that at this national level, the principal archaeological adviser in effect dismissed the proposed project because in their view the University of Manchester's 'Offa's Dyke Project' had already answered all the relevant issues concerning the Dyke. The reasons that were formally given for the rejection mentioned this but focused upon aspects such as the level of administrative support funding requested by the RMC for managing the project.

Ian Bapty had prepared the archaeological component of the consortium HLF project funding bid, and, working in a voluntary capacity as the Honorary Secretary of the ODA, he also prepared the justification in support of the bid for being added to the UK's WHS tentative list at around the same time. This was also rejected, citing as reason what I consider to be some highly questionable justifications.[23]

HW: Do you think it was simply too big a monument for them to get their brains around?

KR: I certainly think that there are aspects of the monument that might make inscription of its international importance difficult in some respects. For example, complexities arise due to the number of local and national administrations and agencies whose physical and statutory interests are affected by such a long linear trans-national 'heritage asset'. Those who would be responsible for administering WHS status no doubt considered that it would be a nightmare to administer. The inevitable consequence of emphasising the difficulties is however that the heritage importance of the Dyke and its landscape gets downplayed. I think that it would have been more honest just to identify this complexity as the

[22] For the process of nomination and inscription for World Heritage sites, see Preparing World Heritage Nominations (World Heritage Resource Manual), 2nd edn 2011: 138 (https://whc.unesco.org/document /116069). The Tentative List is the first-stage (of five stages to nomination) compilation by member states of potential nominations.

[23] The 16-page application prepared by Ian Bapty featured justification for proposal under three of the criteria (of six cultural and four natural) for achieving acceptance for the monument as being of Outstanding Universal Value (see www.gov.uk/government/publications/ heritage-site-uk-tentative-list-nomination-application-forms-2010). The criteria chosen for OD were (iii), (iv) and (vi), where (iii) was 'to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a tradition or civilisation which is living or whish has disappeared'; (iv) 'to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architecture or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history'; and (vi) to be directly or tangibly associated with events, or living traditions, with ideas or with beliefs, of outstanding universal significance.'
The Report of the expert panel was entitled*: The United Kingdom's World Heritage Review of the Tentative List of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Independent Expert Panel Report to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, March 2011.* The panel was chaired by Sue Davies OBE, then Chief Executive of Wessex Archaeology Ltd and Deputy Chair of the UK National Commission for UNESCO. The panel's decision of the UK expert panel reviewing the various 2010 applications for inclusion in the UK tentative WHS list is available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/78234/Review-WH-Tentative-List-Report-March-2011.pdf. See below for quotation of key justifications for non-inclusion of Offa's Dyke in the 2010 list.

Figure 11: Offa's Dyke at Selley, north-west of Knighton: the dramatic placement and construction of the Dyke in this location echoes the striking positioning of Hadrian's Wall in its central sections. While the latter is recognised as having 'Outstanding Universal Value' the former is in effect regarded as of no more than regional or (at best) national importance (Photograph: Keith Ray)

reason for not putting it forward into the tentative list. Instead, a variety of other reasons were put forward, perhaps most surprising among them being that no outstanding universal value could be demonstrated for the monument (Figure 11).

It was argued by the UK committee in 2010–11 (in a curious echo of what I mentioned earlier as a claimed 'academic consensus' view) that somehow Offa's Dyke could only have value as part of a wider European grouping of 'similar' such sites. There was a hint in the Report (p. 57) that a trans-national application that saw the Dyke included with sites such as the Danevirke in Germany, an earthwork and watery dyke that had once acted as a former frontier with Denmark, might have been considered. However, this idea was dismissed because that the Danevirke had already been included in a Viking WHS bid. The Report set out in brief several other reasons for rejecting the inclusion of the Dyke in the UK's WHS tentative list. The second reason was that 'It was noted that there a number of other similar dykes in England (*sic*) although these are not associated with a specific individual.'[24] Another reason given was that: 'Offa's Dyke does not compare favourably against other sites defining politico-cultural boundaries, for example the Frontiers of the Roman Empire and the Great Wall of China.' Unfortunately, the veracity of this sweeping statement cannot be evaluated because we cannot access the criteria used to establish exactly why the Dyke 'does not compare favourably.'[25]

[24] I express this as 'second', although I'm not sure whether comparison with the Danevirke was actually a justification for not having OUV. I'm afraid also that it isn't clear to me what exactly the relevance is of this mention of 'other dykes' was (while it also, of course, failed to note that Offa's Dyke – and Wat's Dyke – are Welsh as well as 'English' monuments). Presumably the argument ran that therefore Offa's Dyke is only unique in its naming.

[25] Was it, for instance, in the minds of the panel and their 'technical advisers' that Offa's Dyke could not be as important as

Figure 12: The 'National Trail' along the monument: walkers seen in profile near Montgomery (Photograph: Keith Ray)

The further reason for non-inclusion of the Dyke in the UK tentative list given in the Report in 2011 was that 'While Offa's Dyke did mark a linguistic divide, its physical survival was not complete and in places it survived only as a boundary rather than a major landscape feature. The panel was not convinced that it had Outstanding Universal Value in its own right.' This whole statement is odd, not least because it began with the claim that the Dyke marked a 'linguistic boundary', without saying how or why this (incorrect) fact matters. The physical survival of monuments such as Hadrian's Wall (WHS) or Stonehenge and Avebury (WHS) and their landscapes are far from 'complete'. The boundary character of Offa's Dyke is integral to its existence as a 'major landscape feature': the panel's appraisal was therefore highly prejudicial and can only be explained by (a) ignorance of the monument as it appears across the landscape, and (b) a refusal to acknowledge the breadth and depth of its ongoing historical significance (Figure 12).[26]

The final reasons given in the Report for rejecting the idea that Offa's Dyke could conceivably achieve recognition of its Outstanding Universal Value were entirely 'practical'. It was said that 'There could

these other monuments because there are no lengths known to have been built as a stone wall with battlements and walkway? Or that Offa's Dyke was simply not as long as the combined lengths of the other frontiers? But surely, the panel was assessing *the importance of the boundary*: in which case the next reason given reveals even more about the cultural/historical knowledge deficit among the 'experts' than this statement.

[26] The idea that the Dyke could not be included because in many places it is not well-preserved is in my view preposterous. This is why during the presentation of my talk at Chester, I observed that surely WHS inscription is diminished as a concept overall if you are only registering monuments that are already well preserved and protected. It is also another reason why we conceived of the book as a 'clock-setting' reappraisal of its importance historically and archaeologically, and why so much more study and further appraisal of its significance is so essential.

be considerable management issues (with WHS inscription) because the Offa's Dyke National Trail ran along the monument. Wind farms could also be an issue.' It is true that the co-existence of the Offa's Dyke Path along parts of the course of the monument does present management challenges. Yet, that surely means that its importance needs to be *better* recognised rather than less so. Recognising the importance of the setting of both the Dyke and the historic frontier should likewise facilitate mitigation of the impact of windfarms. It seems odd to cite a potential way in which the setting of the monument could be compromised as a reason to minimise the degree of public and agency awareness of its importance. It is a counsel of despair, surely, to declare that the setting of a monument on this scale cannot be protected?

The key questions here ought, I think, to be: who and what is WHS status for? In the Welsh context, successive WHS expert panels and advisers have accepted the notion that inscription of sites and areas has to do with regional and national pride in the national industrial heritage: hence the inscription of Blaenavon Industrial Landscape in 2000. Likewise, in the South West of England, the mining landscapes that have particularly to do with Cornish identity have been recognised (inscribed in 2006).[27]

A key problem with Offa's Dyke for the 'general public' is that it is of ambiguous value to identity. From a Welsh political perspective, it is possible to consider it as an example of overbearing English power and antagonism across millennia; while from an English perspective it can be viewed either as an historical embarrassment or an irrelevance. Both the Welsh and the English national heritage agencies use the Dyke as a good example of collaboration to do conservation works (if not necessarily research), but the whole idea of it being inscribed requires huge, conceptual and political issues and not just practical problems, to be grappled with. Even from the limited statement made in justification for rejecting Offa's Dyke as a potential UK WHS inscription candidate, it should be clear to any dispassionate observer that the decision was made first, and that the rationale for that decision had been put together retrospectively.

HW: So, in terms of what becomes a WHS more generally, do you think that a key unspoken principle is that a monument should be agreed to be of 'Outstanding Universal Value' and therefore important to inscribe, except in circumstances where that could be too combative or controversial?

KR: The concept of Outstanding Universal Value involves recognition that the monument (in the case of archaeology) is a major human achievement of more than regional or (single) national importance. In the UK context, the operational rather than technical criteria embody certain biases that reflect the British national 'stance' in the world – for instance as 'the cradle of the (worldwide) Industrial Revolution' (which is, incidentally, itself contestable internationally). The membership of UK 'expert panels' has therefore been, I would argue, heavily weighted towards practitioners specialising in historic buildings and industries.

HW: So where does that leave us leading up to the present with the broader development of our failure to develop public understanding of the monument?

KR: I think that a failure to regard Offa's Dyke as significant in its own right leaves local residents and 'stakeholders' up and down the former frontier, both short-changed and frankly in a state of some confusion. They see that the national agencies appear to accept that Offa's Dyke is of major importance but that, on the other hand these same agencies appear not to wish to see that importance recognised in an international context. But there are practical consequences to the failure to promote Offa's Dyke as internationally significant too. If a monument such as this (and its wider setting and landscape, and Wat's Dyke) is not seen as supra-nationally important, commensurate resources will not be made available to research and protect it. Without that research, its importance cannot be fully understood, and without adequate protection, the reason for not recognising it because of its poor condition becomes more

[27] For Blaenavon: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/984; Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1215.

Figure 13: The importance of researching Offa's Dyke: Clwyd-Powys archaeological excavations at Chirk Park, 2018 (Photograph: Keith Ray)

compelling, because it continues to erode. So, it becomes a chicken-and-egg problem that becomes yet more insoluble as time goes by (Figure 13).[28]

HW: Regardless of WHS status then, how do we engage those communities along the line of the dykes to encourage tourism and local awareness? What is the endgame for this better and engaged research you are currently promoting so vigorously?

KR: The endgame must surely be to have the Dyke and its landscape accepted at all levels as both a community resource and at one and the same time a precious inheritance for all humanity. This is the case because it was already understood by Asser only a hundred years after its construction as a powerful metaphor for the potentially overbearing nature of a proto-nation state. In that sense in a number of ways it had a unique place in the world of post-Roman and pre-Norman Europe.

HW: How much is this just about organising more meetings to galvanise action? But what else can we do? John Swogger's keynote suggested engaging the other heritage enthusiasts: how far do you agree with the idea that we should be getting specialist interest groups such as steam railway preservation groups involved?

KR: I would not entirely agree with John there. Those groups tend to be very focused on their own specialist interests and are in many cases likely to resist any suggestion of broadening out of those interests. This is not a criticism of such groups, nor to suggest that they are myopic in their outlook. Unless they do focus tightly upon their chosen agenda, their efforts could easily dissipate. I would instead suggest that if you are trying to engage with those communities, the people who tend to be able to do things are on the parish or community council or they are connected to it in some way. The important thing is to encourage communities to cooperate with each other. This is particularly important for dispersed communities where there is not necessarily an obvious focal settlement where amenities exist.

HW: Does this favour some communities over others?

KR: I think that it might favour some communities that can get organised to combat (for instance) individual building developments that are regarded locally as threatening to the character of an entire area. A recent example was the formation of the Trefonen Rural Heritage Protection Group that came about to resist a housing development that, in the view of the objectors, would have compromised the

[28] It ought to be admitted, nonetheless, that WHS status can be a mixed blessing, as the experience of managing Hadrian's Wall has shown. David McGlade, the current Chairman of the Offa's Dyke Association (and a co-Convener of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory), has direct personal experience of the erosion caused by large numbers of people walking along Hadrian's Wall when he worked in visitor management there.

Figure 14: 'Difficult' heritage: at places such as Trefonen, Shropshire, industrial heritage and modern housing demand complicate the appreciation of the importance of the (locally fragmentary) remains of Offa's Dyke across which industrial remains are spread and where housing developments are proposed. The north-central area of the village viewed from the north-west: Offa's Dyke survives residually on the left, while mining and other activities have compromised its condition at centre (Photograph: Keith Ray)

setting of the monument. This was easier at Trefonen than in locations where there are no settlements close by, so yes, it inevitably disadvantages dispersed upland communities (Figure 14). In districts where economic imperatives are greater, however, it is often difficult to argue for the overriding importance of what some local residents might think of as a specialist or esoteric concern such as the 'setting' of the Dyke, or views towards it. This has been what has made the preservation of Wat's Dyke and its immediate environs in some parts of the Wrexham area, for example, especially challenging (Clarke *et al.* 2020).

HW: Regarding the comic created by John Swogger for Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust which he discussed at the conference: the 'Community Archaeology Manifesto' (Clarke *et al.* this volume), I sensed the idea is that we should endeavour to constantly challenge preconceived ideas. But couldn't you argue that a massive political boundary forms the most un-diverse, non-marginalised narrative? How can you see this as 'unseen history': is it about the oppressor and great kings?

KR: On the first of these questions, I think that we should always challenge *ourselves* as to the veracity of the narratives we create. On the second, I don't think that we can apply modern concepts of 'diversity' to the distant past, even if recent advances in ancient DNA research might encourage some to envisage the possibility of isolating distinct communities based upon inherited characteristics. As to the 'on-the-ground' politics of the period AD 780–820, I think that we need to see 'oppression' in its widest sense when thinking of the creation and impact of Offa's Dyke. The expression of power in its creation

Figure 15: The Camlad crossing at Rownal, Montgomery: the possible site of a bridge built integrally with the Dyke 1200 years ago (Photograph: Keith Ray)

included the coercive power to assemble in effect an 'army' of construction conscripts from among the Anglo-Saxon provinces and subject kingdoms of the Mercian regime. If the project involved bringing the 'digging and shovelling' personnel sometimes some hundreds of miles to labour on the frontier, one wonders how this was organised in terms of who exactly made the decision as to who should be sent as a levy? So, yes, oppression was likely to have worked in respect to both English and Welsh communities. And equally, the 'rewards' of such a dynamic enterprise might not have been limited to the English, but could have been claimed by elites among both the Welsh and the Mercians.

HW: Do you think that there are research exercises that, if undertaken, could transform our understanding of the Dyke? And if so, how would you make these relevant to local communities?

KR: I can think of three or four projects that would do so, some with minimal input of resources, others requiring more substantial funding and organisation. I mentioned some of these in questions following my talk (see below). One such project would potentially look at the Dyke as it crosses the River Camlad at the northern end of the Vale of Montgomery (Figure 15). The possibility that there was a bridge over the former main channel of the river here is suggested by the fact that the line of the Dyke approaches the principal palaeochannel in the floodplain and then features a very clear short adjustment length to cross that channel precisely at the perpendicular. The crossing of that modest channel was achieved by this adjustment and its shortness suggests that the crossing was made via a bridge. This itself raises the possibility that the Dyke as built was provided with a walkway along its top to enable a crossing of the floodplain on foot. In turn this implies that at least in some areas the earthwork was patrolled – a possibility that has engendered much debate in the past, without the identification of any means of finding

supporting evidence for the idea. Bridge-building and fortress-building, and the provision of personnel to undertake military service (including, presumably to provide the workforce to carry out such works) were identified during the course of the eighth century in Mercia as key requirements of those holding title to lands to supply to the king upon demand (Ray and Bapty 2016: 222–228; see also Abels 1988).

HW: I recall that in your talk at Chester you said something like, 'people need to know that things they are engaging with locally are relevant beyond the local'. Can you explain that a bit further?

KR: Yes, I think that while local residents have a whole set of reasons why they value their local environment, they need to hear recognition that their 'local' is part of something bigger. One of the remarkable things about a monument like Offa's Dyke is that it physically connects communities along its course, so there is, if you like, an immediate metaphor of transcendence of the local and a sense of being part of something bigger.

This feeds into the whole question of how we as archaeologists engage with the public. Do we treat them as spectators or participants? To what extent is 'heritage' local (and possessed as a local 'asset') and to what extent is it universal? Participation in excavations is usually positive but can also be quite passive. Engaging with local communities to follow up on the 2016 book, I have emphasised how people can contribute to an exploration of their local 'Offa's Dyke heritage' by positively forming their own networks and groups and organising programmes of activity. This has been particularly successful in the Chepstow area in Gloucestershire and in northern Flintshire. I've not said to them 'what you need to do is to set up a monitoring group to report on the condition of the dyke in your area.' Rather, I've said: 'it's your choice as to how you organise the agenda for your group, but be aware that this can include making new observations about the form of the Dyke, and also positive conservation works'.

HW: So, the issue is getting beyond those who might simply be involved in the experience of digging. But how do we make an impact from the local to the national and even wider settings?

KR: I think basically that we need to create a context for a combination of several different approaches to new explorations of the Dyke that involve excavation. On the one hand there should be projects that are inspired locally, but that can draw in wider audiences. An example is the suggestion that we should look at the crossing of the Wye north of Chepstow Castle, and the intersection of the major Roman road from Gloucester to Caerleon with the Dyke there (see Ray *et al.* 2020). Another approach might be more research-oriented which addresses concerns that are held more widely in the public, such a flooding and climate change. So, in respect to the crossing of the Camlad that I referred to just now, I'm currently working up a proposal to look at the river crossing such that targeted palaeoenvironmental work may be combined with excavation to address a range of questions both specifically connected with the building of the Dyke (how did it cross river-valleys, did it include bridges, as Hadrian's Wall did, for example) and those extending beyond it (can the Dyke be used to chart changes in river dynamics and the effects, for example, of periods of major agricultural intensification since its construction).

Then there is the concept of a major 'performative' excavation that can capture the imagination of the public both locally and more widely.[29] Some while ago, I tried to promote the idea of organising a National Geographic funded and publicised excavation, perhaps again near Montgomery. I showed in the book (Ray and Bapty 2016: 194–198) that at Dudston Fields there are significant complexities in the form of the Dyke with what I termed 'structured variation' in alignment and in construction (Figure 16). The site is, extraordinarily, the *only* place anywhere along the Dyke where there has been a detailed analytical

[29] By 'performative' I mean here an excavation which receives a lot of media coverage nationally and beyond, placing it continually in the public eye and that show-cases the power of archaeology to uncover stories and unravel complexities.

Figure 16: Dudston Fields, Chirbury, Shropshire: a prominent location at which research excavation on a suitable scale could enable some understanding to be gained of the landscape through which Offa's Dyke was originally built (Photograph: Keith Ray)

measured survey with a specific question in mind: did the ridge and furrow field system observable on either side of the Dyke here precede or post-date the construction of the linear earthwork?[30] This work was important in revealing complexities, but did not in my opinion satisfactorily resolve the apparent conundrum (ridge and furrow is supposed to have developed some hundreds of years after the Dyke was built).

So here you would have a defined set of questions you can ask about Offa's Dyke and its immediate landscape setting, the answering of which might have much wider historical implications. This work would not only also have a clear relationship to the book, but there is a long-standing mixed Anglo-Welsh community in the Vale of Montgomery as you are on the national border there. You would need a rolling programme of events with excavation being only part of that in the summer and including a host of other activities. For all these reasons you could walk with people (locals and visitors) to the monument and the excavation and engage them with the Dyke and its purpose in a powerful way. The

[30] See Everson (1991), an article that includes the arguments put forward for alternative interpretations. This question arose due to an aerial photograph taken by Chris Musson that appeared to show that ridge and furrow (characteristic of a medieval open field farming system) shared the same alignment on either side of the Dyke, with the latter slicing through it obliquely. Phil Barker, who had recently excavated ridge and furrow that survived intact underneath the bailey bank of Hen Domen castle nearby raised the question of whether the ridge and furrow might also pre-date the Dyke. If so, there would be major implications not only for the history of the immediate landscape, but much more widely for the origins of open field farming across Britain, perhaps tracing it back at least to the earlier 8th century. Everson claimed to have solved the question by demonstrating that the ridge and furrow avoided the Dyke, so the Dyke must be earlier, but he did not really explain the shared alignment of both sets of ridge and furrow. Barker quite rightly pointed out that only excavation down into the land-surface underneath the Dyke could resolve the question.

monument here would allow you to address a rich range of questions from identity to the texture of landscapes and what large-scale archaeological investigations could and could not achieve. This would take place in a striking landscape from Hem in the north through to Dudston Fields directly facing Montgomery and its castle on its crag, and south to the high Kerry Ridgeway and its views northwards to the mountains.

HW: Can I ask about the potential need for future-proofing against abuses that are showing signs of happening right now, whether they relate to Brexit, the rise of English nationalism, the campaign for Welsh independence or any other political extremism or pseudoarchaeology which might 'adopt' Offa's Dyke to their cause?

KR: Well, you cannot future-proof, you can never know what the future will present. All you can do in relation to prejudicial statements is to forewarn, particularly young people, that there are people with their own individual, and frequently bizarre theories and agendas who want to deny science. Publication of extremely closely documented rebuffs to pseudo-science, as you are doing with an article by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews (2020) recently published in the *Offa's Dyke Journal* that provides a series of important correctives. Keith addresses, for example, the curious claim that Offa's Dyke was in fact the 'Wall of Severus' built by the Romans across part of their province of Britain. He demolishes also, in pretty short order, the fantastical assertion that Offa's Dyke had really been built as a prehistoric canal!

HW: With Offa's Dyke's Welsh indigeneity narratives, English nationalism, and various international takes, where do we get basic information to counter myths?

KR: This is an extremely important question, and yet one that is very difficult to address beyond the painstaking progress of new research and the careful debunking of new myths as they arise.

I write books in the way that I do, using attractive design and visually striking illustrations, to a purpose. This is to encourage people to engage with the book in question beyond the often necessarily dense text (which nonetheless provides the documented evidence to support the conclusions drawn). The extensive use of colour is, I think, particularly important, given that people are used to real-world real-time images and black-and-white illustration just doesn't provide this immediacy. Captions are important too, to explain the images and to provide rapid 'ways in' to the arguments that the book is communicating. As with John Swogger's work (e.g. Swogger 2019), this highly visual engagement provides people with an alternative way to explore the topic.

The 'basic information' needs to be provided also in a variety of formats, both digitally and in print. The *Landscape and Hegemony* book (Ray and Bapty 2016) included often detailed descriptions of individual locations, but since it also covered the background history of the reigns of Offa and Coenwulf and along the way explored a political landscape that extended to continental Europe, it reached 448 pages long. More than one reviewer observed that, together with its medium-sized format, this hardly made it 'rucksack-friendly': it is impractical to carry to refer to in the field. The available digital version provides an alternative option, since this can be 'contained' on a mobile phone, but this only addresses part of the problem.

While walking at many places along the Dyke over the past twenty years or so I have sometimes stopped and talked with other walkers I have met, and have noted their puzzlement about why the earthwork is configured the way it is at particular locations. Notable examples of such places have been at The Devil's Pulpit in Gloucestershire, but also for example at 'Hergan Corner' in Shropshire (for the latter, see Ray and Bapty 2016: 236-240). They have been surprised and interested to hear from me (especially in recent years as a result of the studies mentioned in this interview) about how the Dyke was so carefully orchestrated.

However, there is nothing available at present to explain, systematically, what the Dyke is doing at any individual point in the landscape. This is especially so since none of the available Offa's Dyke Path walking guides tells you more than to 'cross the stile at X, turn left and the Dyke is visible on the hillside above you to the right.' The walkers' unvoiced questions (except perhaps to themselves or each other as musings) as to just what features it presents there, and why it was built in this way in this location, are left unanswered. And we need to be mindful that the Path, with its massive southern detour from Monmouth to Kington, and a northern detour from Bronygarth east of Llangollen to the coast at Prestatyn via the Clwydian Hills covers only just over half of the route of the Dyke itself.

I have therefore set myself the task of describing, as concisely as I can manage, the whole course of the Dyke in the field as it exists on the ground in a new, more portable, book which I am provisionally entitling *Offa's Dyke: Encounters and Explanations*, and which should be out in time for the summer of 2022. The first part of the book concisely explains what the Dyke was, discusses when, how and why it was built, and provides an extended description of how to understand it when encountering it (or a bit of it, or a vestige) in the landscape. The second part of the book describes the Dyke as you see it in different places, explaining why it takes on specific forms. A series of chapters will identify what one sees in different parts of the landscape that the Dyke traverses, from the lower Wye valley in the south to the margins of the Vale of Clwyd in the north. The primary aim would be to focus on promoting the digital version, so that it can be easily accessed and navigated from one's mobile phone when visting the various sections of the Dyke. This capability needs to be addressed in terms of the way that the digital version can be accessed (for instance by using the geo-referencing capability of the phone's GIS) as a means to locate exactly what you are looking at the flick of a finger on the screen, without having to use an index.

HW: Is there a viable *local* dimension to all this, or does conservation as well as research depend upon the national agencies in the first place?

KR: This again is, I think, a fundamentally important question, that I began to address earlier. The national agencies clearly have a key role in co-ordinating action supported organisationally and financially by central and regional government. In the past years, since 2016, we have seen this manifested in the commissioning and production of a Conservation Management Plan for Offa's Dyke. The Plan, prepared by Haygarth Berry Associates, involved the identification of areas of loss and erosion of the earthwork, and reviewed length by length the condition of the Scheduled parts of the monument. Only 8.7% of the Dyke was said to be in 'favourable' condition, with much of the rest being threatened with erosion through 'benign neglect.' Completion of the CMP has kick-started a new series of management actions, starting with the appointment (due later in 2020 or early in 2021) of a new archaeological management officer to co-ordinate conservation groundworks on both Offa's and Wat's Dykes. Among other things, they will implement management agreements with landowners that have been negotiated with Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust staff and archaeologists employed in local councils, for instance in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire.

While these national initiatives are important, there is, I believe, a vital role to be played in the encouragement and co-working between professionals and local historians and conservationists up and down the Marches. This is why I have been so keen to help to establish local groups (often as sub-groups of existing societies such as the Tidenham History Society), but I should emphasise that those that I am connected with are by no means the only initiative being taken forward. For example, as you know, Melanie Roxby-Mackey and Ian Mackey have formed and are operating a Young Archaeologists Club specifically connected with the Offa's Dyke Association. Meanwhile, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust with their own community archaeologist Penelope Foreman, have organised many initiatives, including working with community groups and I think also with metal detectorists in the Wrexham area.

Conclusion

HW: What are the key messages that you'd like our readers to take away from this interview, and from the paper you gave at the conference?

KR: I set out three propositions, or what I termed 'three theses', during my talk. The first of these was that 'The *public archaeology* of Offa's Dyke always needs to take into account the history of perceptions of its meaning in terms of *political and cultural difference*: as well as the original purposes of its creation.' I documented such perceptions only anecdotally at Chester. There are, no doubt, many ways to conduct research into this fascinating topic in greater depth. For example, an entire line of research could focus upon the writings of medieval contemporaries and successors to Gerald of Wales, in both Latin and Welsh, and what they reveal about attitudes to cultural difference as manifested at the frontier and beyond. The concern would be however that the evidence that could readily be tracked down might be very meagre.

In contrast, the documentation of contemporary and historically recent attitudes would probably have to confront the opposite problem, of what to exclude. The example I gave during my talk, of the debate over the Welshness of Herefordshire as gauged from internet dialogues, I think adequately documented this. The use of Offa's Dyke as a convenient political trope when the situation prevails of a Conservative administration based in England and a Labour one in Wales is nonetheless revealing: not least of the survival of patrician attitudes by the public school-attending establishment in England!

The second thesis was that 'The frontier has always comprised *more than* Offa's Dyke (and there is much more to explore about the various dimensions beyond the Dyke)'. This was not explored in any depth in my talk, but is something I documented more fully both in the *Landscape and Hegemony* book (Ray and Bapty 2016) and elsewhere in more recent articles (Ray *et al.* 2020; Ray forthcoming).

The third thesis suggested that 'Choosing how to conserve the heritage of the early Anglo-Welsh frontier *also* has political implications and resonances'. I explored this briefly in my talk in reference to the debate over whether Offa's Dyke should or should not be nominated by the UK government to the tentative UNESCO list of prospective World Heritage Sites. It seems to me that the real reason for not doing so concerns its practicality given the myriad local and national governances and interests affected by such a physically long feature. I would maintain that behind this façade there are disagreements of real substance concerning the nature of heritage and the contemporary relevance of a monument that lies geographically so close to a continuing political boundary.

On the nature of heritage, the fact that Offa's Dyke is fundamentally an earthen construction and lacks the built stone solidity of (parts of) Hadrian's Wall, and thus has far less contemporary documentation attached to it (for example, no inscriptions), means that it is inevitably downgraded in relative terms: only its great length is accepted as distinguishing it from other, simpler, linear earthworks. We can address this problem, as we currently are doing, by investing greater effort in studying and better characterising the Dyke and publicising the results.

For the matter of contemporary relevance, there was a time not so many years ago (and including an era before the idea of ending Britain's membership of the European Union became so bitterly divisive) when the very idea of a politically contentious border between England and Wales seemed almost ludicrous. That this could be true as recently as David Cameron's comments in 2014 vividly illustrates the extent of political turmoil in the contemporary world. COVID-19 has brought into much wider public consciousness the freedom of quasi-independent policy-making available to the devolved administrations. Although Wales has been the slowest of these administrations to grasp the initiative, attention is beginning to turn to the 'national boundary' between England and Wales in a

way arguably not witnessed for centuries. What this implies for Offa's Dyke is harder to envisage. It is for example entirely conceivable that the UK government may want to downplay its role in defining Wales in contradistinction to its demographically larger neighbour. On the other hand, there have been marked differences, as well as some similarities, in the way in which the English and Welsh government administrations have formulated and enacted strategies to contain the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. Online, this has led to reiterations of unhelpful commentary on Offa's Dyke as a dividing line, and in turn this has led to rejoinders from the 'Offa's Dyke studies' community to the effect that this represents a misunderstanding of the actual historic role of the Dyke (see also Williams 2020).

My own sense, as indicated above, is that an important corrective to nationalist and overtly chauvinist agendas is to be found at the most local scale. Across the Marches as a whole, it is surely important to try to emphasise the unity of a complex frontier identity shared to a degree rarely fully appreciated, common to communities existing today on both sides of the Dyke. One marker of this is the considerable similarity in the environmental and cultural nature of the 'frontier towns' from Chepstow through Monmouth to Hay-on-Wye, Kington, Presteigne, Knighton, Bishop's Castle, Welshpool, Oswestry, and Llangollen, despite their contrasting immediate environmental and landscape settings. Organising observatories of groups of individuals who will monitor commercial developmental or estate management changes and conservation challenges and will organise to carry out or at least to contribute to research exercises is one way that meaningful action to better understand and appreciate Offa's Dyke can begin from a grassroots base.

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The Biography of Borderlands: Old Oswestry Hillfort and Modern Heritage Debates

Ruby McMillan-Sloan and Howard Williams

Responding to the recently published edited collection exploring the hillfort and landscape context of Old Oswestry (Shropshire, England) by heritage professionals connected to the Hands off Old Oswestry Hillfort heritage protection campaign (Malim and Nash 2020)[1]*, this chapter reviews and reflects on the significance of the overall 'life-history' or 'biography' of Old Oswestry hillfort and its immediate environs to the present-day emotive and mnemonic significance of the monument. It argues that this biographical dimension fosters the hillfort as a locus of borderland identity, which explains the affinities of local inhabitants to Old Oswestry and frames the ongoing debates and conflicts regarding its significance and setting. Giving greater attention to researching and communicating this biography promises to inform and foster future public engagement and community action.*

Introduction

The market town of Oswestry, north-west Shropshire, houses a community that has inherited a distinctive borderland identity and heritage. First, and with sensitivity for the numerous social and political criticisms of geographical pre-determinism by many academics, including Baud and van Schendel (1997: 211–212) and Bassin (1992: 3), it can be said that Oswestry's borderland identity originates from the inherent quality of its position and its environs in relation to the historic Anglo-Welsh political border, fixed since the early 16th century as a part of the English county of Shropshire but with deep socio-economic and cultural connections with Wales and home to Welsh-speaking communities and households (Lloyd Jones and Gale 2020: 8). Second, it can also be seen that Oswestry's borderland identity has been continuously reiterated through Old Oswestry hillfort's proximity and enduring monumental presence at a key junction between west-east and north-south routes (T. Malim 2020a). In this regard, Old Oswestry hillfort must be conceptualised less as a category of later prehistoric site and more as a 'timemark' in the landscape (Figures 1 and 2). Despite discontinuous use and long abandonmennt, it has acquired a place in mythological time, conflating past and present (cf. Gosden and Lock 1998). As such, the monument and its environs have accrued stories and significance over the *longue durée* for those inhabiting and traversing the landscape (Ingold 1993).

While the recent book *Old Oswestry Hillfort and its Landscape* (Malim and Nash 2020) compiles the evidence for key stages in the hillfort's life-history, the significance of the monument's biography as a mechanism for public engagement is left under-explored. This chapter, therefore, builds on this valuable recent scholarship but argues that the prominent prehistoric hillfort adjacent to the historic and contemporary town, Old Oswestry hillfort, operates today as a site of memory – a *lieux de mémoire* – for the town and its immediate environs which in turn explains the hillfort's significance for local people.

Not only does Old Oswestry hillfort represent one of a dense band of hillforts in eastern Wales, which Varley (1948: 42) refers to as a 'hillfort province' (Lloyd Jones and Gale 2020; Matthews 2020a); but it also memorialises and embodies the local ethos over several periods of Anglo-Welsh history. The affinity of local people to the hillfort has recently become manifest in the campaign to protect the scheduled ancient monument (first designated in 1934) from developer group Galliers Homes and Shropshire Council themselves (T. Malim 2020a; Malim and Nash 2020; Nash and Malim 2020; Trigg 2020a). In recent years, the hillfort has become a contested place through a heated and long-lasting battle between locals,

[1] http://oldoswestryhillfort.co.uk/

Figure 1: Looking south over the uppermost ramparts of Old Oswestry hillfort from the western entrance and towards the medieval and modern market town of Oswestry focused on St Oswald's church, traditionally perceived as the site where King Oswald of Northumbria was slain and his body displayed by the pagan King Penda of Mercia (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2015)

Figure 2: Old Oswestry hillfort ramparts (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

archaeological professionals and heritage organisations campaigning against plans to extend Oswestry in the direction of the hillfort through the construction of residential housing to the hillfort's south-east. The campaign is titled Hands Off Old Oswestry Hillfort (HOOOH) has received sustained local and national press attention and they remain active and supported nationally and internationally (Johnston 2019; Nash and Malim 2020). This group of local advocates have mobilised an anti-development campaign over the last decade, most recently against a planning application to build 91 houses in the hillfort's hinterland (Shropshire Council 2019; Trigg 2020b) (Figure 3). Of particular note is how their initiatives have not simply articulated the contemporary value of the hillfort as well-preserved prehistoric earthworks, but by successfully deploying the life-history of the monument. We argue this has been a strength of that campaign: deftly coalescing the hillfort with Oswestry's long-term borderland situation and mentality (Johnston 2019; Robertson 2019). Furthermore, the recent surge of publications centred on Oswestry and its hillfort reveals the contribution of professional archaeologists to the local cause (Malim and Nash 2020). We argue that HOOOH have exploited and enhanced the residuum of Oswestry's borderland identity which is deeply reinforced by the inseparable heritage and memory which emanate from the life-history of Old Oswestry hillfort. In this capacity, the hillfort constitutes less a 'Stonehenge of the North', for while the HOOOH campaign has used this to assert a 'national' status to the monument and mobilise wider support against development, and instead it operates more as a *lieux de mémoire* for constituting a distinctive Anglo-Welsh borderland identity for Oswestry and its surroundings. This insight has implications for future public engagement at, and related to, this ancient monument, namely that while a 'national' discourse needs consideration, it is in the strenght of local feelings and senses of connection that campaigns will succeed or fail (see also Ray this volume).

To comprehend the cultural significance of Old Oswestry hillfort and, by extension, the navigation of its biography by heritage and local interest groups, we cannot consider it a prehistoric monument in chronological and spatial isolation. Equally, it is not simply typical of one prehistoric monument category: it is not comparable to other hillforts in the vicinity in terms of scale, form or inherited associations. The hillfort has instead inherited a distinctive persona that simultaneously manifests and informs a robust communal consciousness garnered from the long history of habitation and presence adjacent to the town, and perhaps also from experiential impact of the monument looming over the northern approaches to the town and as a dramatic perambulated set of fortifications. Those who live or have lived in Oswestry and its environs have inherited the emotional and mnemonic residue left by the topographical, cultural and ethno-linguistic borderland which is seemingly manifest in the monument (Anzalduá 2014: 3). Thus, the following chapter will chart this biography and situate the monument in relation to its borderland context within the heritage of Oswestry to gain an aspect of the present developer battle that is informed by its *genius loci*.

A biography for Old Oswestry hillfort

Old Oswestry hillfort (NGR SJ 296 310) is situated on a fluvioglacial mound to the north of Oswestry town, dominating the landscape to its east and west. Since 1934, the hillfort is a scheduled ancient monument and in guardianship from 1946 (National Heritage List for England: 27556; PRN 00351; see T. Malim 2020a). Evidence of human activity begins with artefacts recovered which hint at Neolithic activity, yet the principal phases of the hillfort construction and occupation relate to the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age (c. 800 BC–AD 43). When at its height, the standing monument was likely a stronghold for a principal settlement, one of the multiple communities in the area and hosting a range of martial, socio-political, economic and ceremonial functions (Clarke *et al.* 2020; English Heritage 2019; T. Malim 2020a; Matthews 2020a).

While there have been a wide variety of Iron Age settlements found in Wales and the West Midlands of England that differ greatly in terms of landscape situation and function, the multivallate monument

in north-west Shropshire appears to be under-appreciated compared with comparable monuments in southern England. Certainly, it has received few excavations considering its prominence as a 'treasured' UK landmark (Johnston 2019; Richie 2018; Shropshire Council HER 2011a). There has been minimal artefact recovery, only through a series of excavations in the North Wales area by Varley (in 1939–40) and field observations by Ordnance Survey, English Heritage and Shropshire Council from 1960–1986 (Hughes 1996; Shropshire Council HER 2011a).

The formal excavations by William James Varley resulted in a minute assemblage of VCP pottery (stone-gritted *very coarse pottery* (Hughes 1996)). The ceramic remains were initially associated with phase iv of the monument, attributed to the post-Roman period, but they have since been alleged to be of Iron Age origin (Hughes 1996: 86; Varley 1948: 11). Varley's primary scope was broad enough, with a limited focus on the Old Oswestry hillfort, yet although preliminary findings were published (Varley 1948: 41–66) they were not fully published until the 1990s (Hughes 1996; Malim and Nash 2020; Shropshire Council HER 2011a). The hillfort was large enough (c. 2.1ha) to accommodate settlements from the Neolithic period through to the Roman occupation. The complex defensive ramparts comprise at least four distinct phases in development (English Heritage 2019; Hughes 1996). The banks and ditches were formidable and strategic, a viable defence against attack and a medium of display over its environs, exhibiting the prestige, wealth and authority of its creators (Ritchie 2018; see also T. Malim 2020a).

The two innermost ramparts were the first to be built in the Early Iron Age (English Heritage 2019; Hughes 1996; Shropshire Council HER 2011a). It was reorganised during the Middle Iron Age with the addition of two more banks and ditches to the enclosure, an additional stone revetted entrance, and the outermost ditch may have been buried during this later phase of improvement (English Heritage 2019; Varley 1948, fig. 3, 51). Finally, two substantial ramparts were added onto the hillfort, which were shaped into a continual slope up to the summit of the landmark (Shropshire Council HER 2011a). The recently discovered 'Epona' stone close to the western entrance might hint at cultic Iron Age associations with the site, although the function and dating of this damaged relief carving of a horse remain uncertain (Nash *et al.* 2020).

Slight evidence of Roman activity hint at the site's enduring, if reduced, significance (English Heritage 2019; Hughes 1996: 86; Matthews 2020b; Shropshire Council HER 2011a). The Iron Age societies of what became Wales remained unconquered by the Roman expedition for 34 years following the Claudian invasion of AD 43, resisting assimilation into the Roman Empire for an entire generation (Guest 2008). Once consolidated, Roman military control radiated outwards from the two legionary forces at *Isca Augusta* (Caerleon) and *Deva* (Chester), connected via Watling Street. Much of Watling Street, the Roman passage from Caerleon to Deva, has been partly repurposed into the modern A5 trunk road; which has passed directly through the setting of Oswestry hillfort since 1992 (Andrews 2017). Following the assimilation of Wales into Britannia, traces of continued occupation/reoccupation from the excavations remain slight but tantalising (Hughes 1996), Old Oswestry hillfort may have transitioned from being a naturalised symbol of strength into a liminal area that marked contours of subservience for the *Cornovii*, although the current heritage interpretation has nothing to say about the Roman-period finds discovered on the site (Hughes 1996; see Williams 2015).

The immediate post-Roman story of Old Oswestry and its environs is difficult to chart (see Matthews 2020a), yet by the early 7th century, Old Oswestry's strategic location at the intersection between uplands and lowlands, and between the watersheds of the Dee and Severn, reveals it as a key node in an emerging Anglo-Welsh culture of alliances as well as conflicts between Mercian and Welsh rulers (Brady 2017: 24). Close by was the site of the battle of *Maserfelth* (*Maes Cogwy*) where the Mercian king Penda and Welsh forces led by Cadwallon defeated and killed Oswald of Northumbria (Brady 2017: 37). The site of Oswald's death was marked by a sign following the healing of a sick horse, then a wooden

Figure 3: Looking north along the line of Wat's Dyke from Old Oswestry hillfort (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2019)

cross and finally a church by 1086, with St Oswald's well and an ash tree there also drawn into the legend (Stancliffe 1995: 90–91). Subsequently the town's name, *Croesoswallt* (Oswald's cross), preserved the story through the later Middle Ages. Evidently this was a frontier zone from at least the 7th century, attested by the battles of sucessive Northumbrian kings (Stancliffe 1995: 92).

This frontier zone was to be monumentalised during the late 8th when Offa's Dyke augmented the hills to the west of the hillfort. Soon after, perhaps within the reign of Offa's successor, Coenwulf, the hillfort was carefully incorporated into the early medieval linear earthwork of comparable magnitude to Offa's Dyke if shorter in length, now known as Wat's Dyke (T. Malim 2020b; Figure 3). Britain's third longest monument, one of numerous linear earthworks amid the landscape of the Anglo-Welsh border, Wat's Dyke was constructed as a frontier work of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia to control and manage movement through the landscape as part of a western frontier zone facing Welsh rivals (T. Malim 2020b; Ray this volume; Williams this volume). The incorporation of the hillfort may have coincided with its reoccupation as a lookout post, beacon site and perhaps also an assembly place, although there is no conclusive evidence of further features of early medieval date. Yet, the sacral and mythological associations of the hillfort and its hinterland might have also been significant for the Mercians, especially as the cult of Oswald might have already been fostered and perpetuated through this period in spite of Oswald's associations with a rival Northumbrian dynasty (Stancliffe 1995: 94–95). For while the hillfort and the church in Oswestry established by the 11th century and which became dedicated to St Oswald are intervisible but not contiguous, there is a broader pattern of the reuse of prehistoric enclosures as elements of ecclesiastical landscapes in Anglo-Saxon England (Semple 2013: 128–131). The hillfort and Wat's Dyke together fortified a pre-existing sacred, and perhaps ecclesiastical, landscape. Again, however, the significance of Wat's Dyke in relation to the hillfort, church and later town is given only brief attention in English Heritage's interpretation on site and online (Williams 2015, this volume).

How the hillfort was used and perceived through the Later Middle Ages, so close to the church, castle and market town, is unclear and certainly not tackled by the recent publication (Malim and Nash 2020a) or by either on-site or online heritage interpretation. Still, the traditional names recorded from the early modern antiquarian accounts for the site offer clues: with its perception as an ancient residence (Yr Hen Ddinas: the old stronghold: Malim 2020a: 65) and Arthurian connections (Caer Ogyrfan: suggesting a link to Guinevere's father) (Hughes 1996: 50; C. Malim 2020; Shropshire Council HER 2011a). The likelihood of a worked agricultural landscape extending from the medieval town of Oswestry is suggested by the recent revaluation of the Oldport Farm (Nash 2020a). Both the landscape and its folklore and legends require more careful consideration in informing the hillfort's significance today (C. Malim 2020).

While the early modern discussions of the hillfort have been framed only in terms of brief antiquarian descriptions (Malim 2020a), the emerging landscape of Oswestry can be considered in terms of borderland identities too, although again, to date these are not narrated to visitors. Ecclesiastical histories following the medieval period, such as presented by Ellis (2010), clarify the context of religious control and revolution sparked in late Tudor Britain between Roman Catholics and the burgeoning Church of England (AD 1485–1603) (Ellis 2010). By the early Stuart period, what was once a dangerous atmosphere for Roman Catholics in England had become a relatively pluralistic environment (Ellis 2010: 278). Ellis discusses the 'Turberville sisters', who were Welsh siblings from an Anglo-Welsh border town comparable to Oswestry (2010: 279). The diasporic pair committed to Catholicism in England as Canonesses, which was not possible openly in Wales (Ellis 2010). Ellis remarks that whilst they are referenced as 'English' in literature, they were Welsh, unlike the rest of the canonesses (Ellis 2010: 279). The sisters benefitted from a few months of Catholic education, whilst accommodating themselves to mainstream English theology and holding no 'Welsh goals' that may have been more akin to later appearing Liberation theologies (Gutierrez 2001; Cone 1996). This link to later Liberation Theology stems from how the 'weak Welsh presence' in these ecclesiastical settings was a result of subtle geographical, linguistic and cultural factors that caused convent life to be unattainable for Welsh Catholics in the 16th and 17th centuries AD (Ellis 2010). This sense of English ambivalence towards Welsh communities was a most visible injustice when taunted with a more liberated alternative, only superficially attainable for borderland communities like at Oswestry; where the prominence and former allusions to power by the hillfort proved to be a null vantage point for those aspiring for social mobility at the borderland (Ellis 2010). As Anzalduá (1987) puts so aptly, through this example of socio-religious gridlock, we can see how members of the borderland community were caught between two cultures and were outsiders in both. Framing the hillfort in relation to the social, economic, religious and political landscape of the early modern and industrial periods in the borderlands is clearly a priority for future research which might, again, inform local understandings of the monument.

Jumping forward to the First World War (1914–1918), troops were hosted by the Park Hall camp, including famous war poet Wilfred Owen, when they used the hillfort as a military training area (English Heritage 2019; Nash 2020b). This contemporary phase has led to some misunderstanding in the heritage interpretation of the earthwork because of the destruction that took place at this stage of the hillforts' usage. Trenches were carved out of the landscape and additionally, shallow craters were created from the use of explosives on the mound (English Heritage 2019). English Heritage (2019) cited that this damaged much of the archaeological interior of the fort. In recent centuries, the hilltop was thickly wooded and utilised as a game preserve before being cleared of vegetation by the Ministry of Works after the Second World War and used only for sheep and cattle to graze (Hughes 1996: 50). Again, none of this later history is enshrined in the site-based and digital heritage interpretation of the hillfort. The story of Oswestry and its adjacent hillfort have tended to focus on binary geographical designations relating to either England or Wales rather than its monument and landscape biographies.

Figure 4: An annotated aerial photography used by the HOOOH campaign to explain the threat to the landscape setting of Old Oswestry hillfort from proposed development (Reproduced with permission. Alastair Reid (photo) and HOOOH).

Finally, we need to consider the connectivity of both Oswestry and its hillfort to deep-time routes of movement through the landscape: the very arteries of communication which the early medieval Wat's Dyke sought to control by incorporating the already ancient hillfort (Malim 2020a and b). The A5 road was built over several phases and may have prehistoric origins. The modern re-organisation of the road was commissioned in 1810, following the Act of Union 1800 wherein Ireland and Great Britain became the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Thomas Telford was commissioned to design the blueprint for the road, linking London to the Menai Bridge and Holyhead Port, passing through North Wales and Oswestry and thus connecting England to Ireland and helping consolidate the former's control of the latter. Shortly before the Second World War (1933), the modern A5 bypass was constructed, thereby incorporating the remains of Roman Watling Street from London to Shrewsbury. The effect of this is that Oswestry remains, to this day, caught between two nations, and an outsider in both England and Wales (Anzalduá 1987).

Discussion

Old Oswestry hillfort is a rare example of a well-preserved large multivallate hillfort. Despite recent work, much remains to be learned about the hillfort's biography and significance from prehistory to the present, and its wider landscape context (C. Malim 2020; T. Malim 2020a and b; Matthews 2020a;

Nash 2020a and b). Furthermore, this is a landscape in peril from development and is thus a focus of ongoing contestation between local people, heritage organisations, builders and local authorities (Nash and Malim 2020). Once the landscape is gone it will be forever lost, along with the opportunity to fill the vast gaps left vacant by Varley's (1948) contentious excavations (Hughes 1996). The huge gaps in our knowledge are thrown into sharp relief by the lack of archaeological investigations subsequently.

While the monument has been respected, conserved and managed through its scheduling and well known through its monumental earthworks, its broader urban and rural landscpae settings, including its relationship with Wat's Dyke, remain in peril. The hillfort and its setting face external threats and might be justifiably perceived as fragile, especially considering the limited degree of robust investigation the monument and its immediate setting has inspired. A number of local and national media publications have drawn attention to this disparity, between the perceived *value* of the hillfort and the *actions* taken to recover its material culture, in discussions and campaigning over the Whittington Road development proposals by Galliers Homes (Clarke *et al.* 2020; Nash and Malim 2020).

While Malim and Nash (2020) have made a valuable contribution to the *story* of the hillfort and its environs, these remain portrayed as fragments of a linear narrative from past to present. Yet, there remains considerable potential for instead conceptualising and exploring the monument's biography as a site of memory, in which the hillfort's monumentality and landscape context are considered in biographical terms from prehistory to the present merging historical phases with mythological connotations. We argue that only by taking this cumulative biographical approach is the monument's value and significance for borderland identity revealed, not simply as a multi-phased monument, but as a timemark accruing significance during use and abandonment and successive reuses through the centuries. Thus respecting both tangible and intangible heritage (see also Swogger 2020), this understanding of the hillfort is inevitably hindered by the limited archaeological investigations conducted thus far upon the hillfort and in its surroundings. Moreover, this perspective is further hampered by the current heritage interpretation focusing near exclusively upon the hillfort's later prehistoric phases (see also Williams 2015, this volume). Yet more positively, the biography has been fostered through HOOOH's campaign, affording an emotional and social significance to the monument in the present, and for the future.

Yet, how might the monument's biography be narrated in future, escaping from the stranglehold of archaeological categorisation of the earthworks, and detaching them from the rich story of the inhabited and worked landscape in which they are set? One successful avenue has been John G. Swogger's (2020) innovative heritage comics which have fostered engagement among local people in the different stories connected to Old Oswestry, from geology, prehistory, the Middle Ages and nature conservation to First World War history and steam railway preservation. Moving forward, integrating the emotive and mnemonic dimensions of the hillfort must be considered key to creating sustainable and meaningful protection and engagement with both the hillfort itself and its hinterland (Clarke *et al.* 2020). The questions that remain are numerous; but one stands above the rest, what comes next for the determined people of Oswestry, their hillfort and their housing crisis?

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Interpreting Wat's Dyke in the 21st Century

Howard Williams

Linear monuments offer special challenges in the context of the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands. This chapter tackles the interpretive neglect of Britain's second-longest early medieval earthwork, Wat's Dyke, showing how its sparse and sporadic archaeological attention is reflected in poor and out-dated public archaeology and heritage interpretation. I evaluate the current media and mechanisms by which various publics – including global digital audiences, visitors to the Anglo-Welsh borderlands through which the monument runs, and local communities living in the Dyke's environs in Flintshire, Wrexham and Shropshire – can access, experience and learn about Wat's Dyke. Having identified how Wat's Dyke is fragmented and obscure in the landscape despite its monumental presence, and how its digital resources are inadequate, I then propose new avenues for developing innovative interpretations of Wat's Dyke for both existing and new audiences which aim to provide up-to-date and engaging resources and connect the monument to the rich cultural landscapes, past and present, through which it runs. I argue these recommendations provide the basis for both enhancing awareness and knowledge. I also argue they provide a more robust resources for current and future generations of research and public engagement. I also suggest they serve to combat the risk of pseudo-archaeological narratives and extremist political appropriations of Wat's Dyke.

Introduction

Wat's Dyke is present and yet absent, named but inexplicable. The Dyke is simply too big and too diffuse, too concealed and too divided up by modern boundaries – between Welsh and English counties and across the English/Welsh border – to be apprehended as a coherent entity. Hence, Wat's Dyke hides in plain sight. How do we devise public archaeological projects to address this challenge, specifically in the context of borderland identities past and present?

Originally built by the Mercian kingdom as a near-continuous linear bank-and-ditch running for up to 62km long between the Dee estuary at Basingwerk (Flintshire) (SJ 195 775) and the Morda Brook south of Maesbury (Shropshire) (SJ 304 257), Wat's Dyke is Britain's second-longest early medieval linear monument after Offa's Dyke (Hill and Worthington 2003; Malim and Hayes 2008; Worthington 1997; Belford 2019; Worthington Hill 2019; Malim 2020) (Figure 1). Traditionally ascribed to the 7th or 8th centuries AD (Fox 1934, 1955), excavations at Mile Oak, Oswestry indicated an earlier date for its construction in the 5th century (Hannaford 1999). Most recently, further excavations at Gobowen led resulted in dates suggesting that Wat's Dyke was contemporary with, or later than, Offa's Dyke, perhaps a product of King Coenwulf of Mercia in the early 9th century (Malim and Hayes 2008; see also Ray this volume). Most recently, Malim (2020) has argued that, while early 9th century in date, it may have partly enshrined an earlier boundary from the 7th century AD. Contentions regarding its date aside, it is no longer conceptualised as a territorial border between polities, but as a multi-functional monumental component of a frontier zone stretching to its west and east (Malim and Hayes 2008; Ray and Bapty 2016). Yet, despite Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's welcome new excavations at Erddig Hall (Wrexham) involving public engagement activities and digital dissemination (see Belford 2019), this monumental bank-and-ditch has been starkly neglected in regards both public engagement and heritage interpretation (Figure 2). Wat's Dyke today remains an invisible monument: difficult to apprehend and comprehend, thus intangible despite its intermittent monumental tangibility in places.

This 'monumental intangibility' (or we might refer to Wat's Dyke 'monumental inapprehensibility') is the result of many factors. Despite Wat's Dyke's surviving to a considerable magnitude in specific locations and despite its overall substantial length, it is often 'lost' or difficult to identify along much of its course. It is subsumed by development in some areas. In most places where it does survive, it is partially

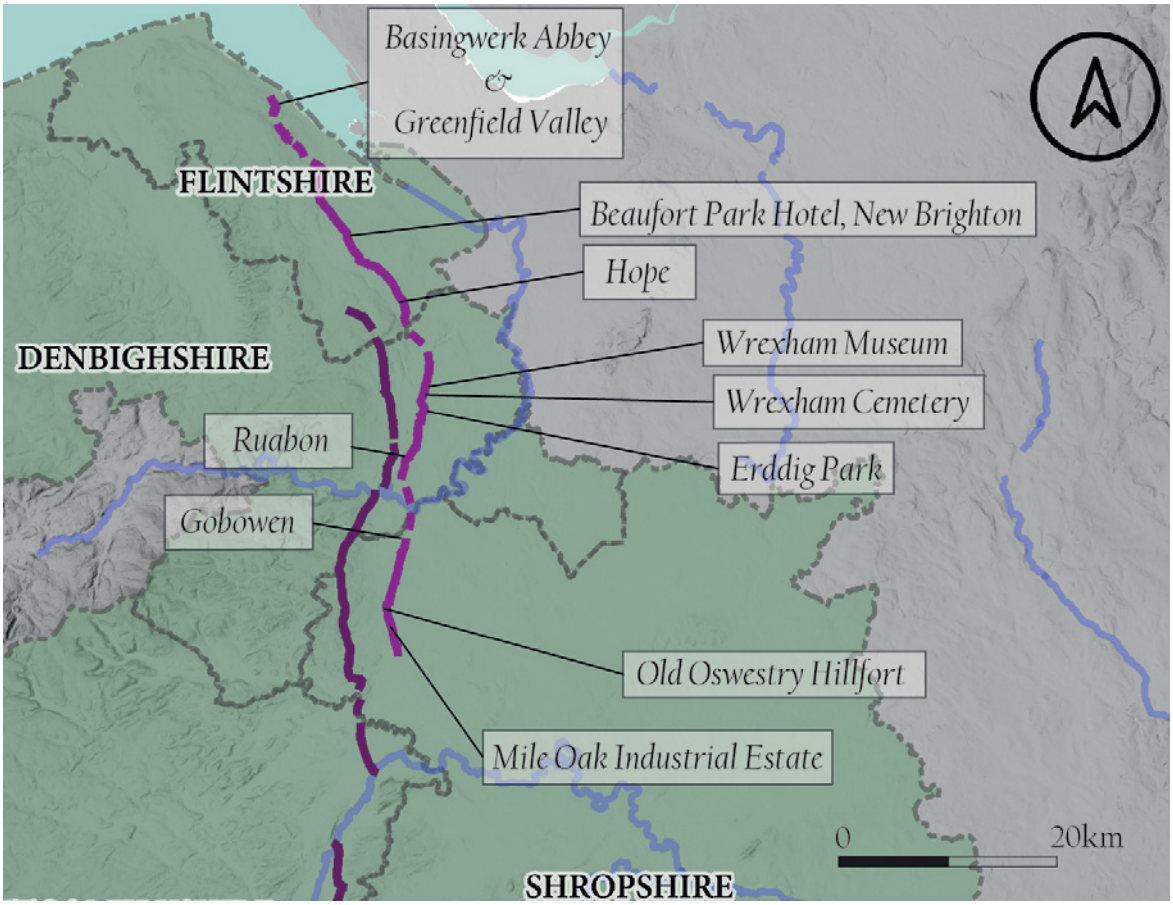

Figure 1: Map of key locations along the route of Wat's Dyke referred to in the text (Basemap: Liam Delaney)

Figure 2: Looking south at Sychdyn Farm on a well-preserved section of Wat's Dyke (SJ 2360 3678) (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

and/or poorly preserved. Conversely, Wat's Dyke's very length and scale make it impossible to appreciate as a whole from any one locale. Moreover, the fact it runs through both England and Wales is a further impedance to its heritage interpretation; the monument exists within starkly contrasting popular, nationalist and regional perceptions of the Early Middle Ages and perceptions of borders in today's world. Wat's Dyke seems to embody ambivalence and ambiguity to all but political extremists. Furthermore, Wat's Dyke operates in both popular culture and

academic discourse as a poorly understood ancillary 'handmaid' to Offa's Dyke, shorter and less precisely rooted in history. In particular, Wat's Dyke is disconnected from a specific historically attested personage, contrary to Offa's Dyke which is inextricably linked to the late 8th-century Mercian king through its name. In many ways, Offa's Dyke is exceptional among early medieval linear earthworks for its popular appreciation, whereas Wat's Dyke, like many other smaller monuments across Britain, attracts legend and pseudohistorical parables (cf. Doyle White 2020).

Figure 3: Looking north along Wat's Dyke just south of Erddig Park (SJ 3230 4720) (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

Figure 4: Looking north along the line of Wat's Dyke with Wat's Dyke Primary School behind it, Garden Village, Wrexham (SJ 3324 5219) (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

The result is that Wat's Dyke languishes relatively under-appreciated in both archaeological and heritage terms compared to Britain's other major linear monuments. Notably, Wat's Dyke has not enjoyed the benefits of World Heritage Site status awarded to the Roman frontiers of northern Britain, nor has it the focus of a dedicated charitable organisation provided by the Offa's Dyke Association for the Offa's Dyke. Similarly, it has no National Trail unlike both Hadrian's Wall and Offa's Dyke, the latter further supported by a dedicated visitor centre (the Offa's Dyke Centre in Knighton). More simply, while traversing beautiful countryside as well as built-up areas, Wat's Dyke does not incorporate the same upland aesthetics and vistas as experienced whilst visiting Offa's Dyke where it coincides with the National Trail (such as along the Wye Valley, through the Clun Forest or the Vale of Montgomery). Hence, in the Welsh Marches, Offa's Dyke continues to soak up most of the sporadic academic and heritage attention afforded to linear monuments (e.g. Hill and Worthington 2003; Ray and Bapty 2016). Most recently, while the Offa's Dyke Association has supported the welcome initiative of the Offa's Dyke

Figure 5: The line of Wat's Dyke within Wrexham Cemetery looking north (SJ 3265 4967), the bank covered with graves (Photograph by Howard Williams, 2020)

Conservation Management Plan which evaluated the preservation of the monument and set out recommendations for the future (Haygarth Berry Associates 2018), there is currently only an aspiration for a similar strategy for Wat's Dyke and nothing for the many short dykes of mid-Wales (see Hankinson and Caseldine 2006).

Local communities, as this study will reveal, are rarely given any coherent narrative, let alone an up-to-date story, about Wat's Dyke: what it is, how and why it was built and when. Hence, if there is an aspiration to protect, conserve and interpret these monuments for present and future generations, and indeed it is this author's contention that there should be, an audit and series of recommendations for its public archaeology are required.

Let me explain further why this discussion in imperitive. Despite this relative neglect in terms of both archaeological research and heritage conservation, management and interpretation, Wat's Dyke offers manifold opportunities for engagement with local communities about their early medieval past and its complex relationship with the histories of the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, the origins of England and Wales, and the broader shifting significance of frontiers and borderlands in the 21st-century world (see also Belford 2019; Swogger 2019; Williams and Delaney 2019). Wat's Dyke runs for much of its course through arable, pasture and woodland, preserved in many places within historic field boundaries, with some striking rural stretches accessible by public footpaths, including the long distance trail, the Wat's Dyke Way (Figures 3). Moreover, its relative lowland topographical course compared with its larger neighbour, Offa's Dyke, means that, today, Wat's Dyke interacts with many more present-day settlements than its longer and better-known neighbour. Wat's Dyke runs (from north-to-south) through the

Figure 6: A panorama view looking upslope and south-east where Wat's Dyke descends into the Greenfield Valley from Strand Walk and its line is cut by the historic railway line (SJ 1913 3770) (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2019)

modern villages of Sychdyn (SJ 245 666), New Brighton (SJ 254 655), Mynydd Isa (SJ 260 642), Hope (SJ 331 589), Gobowen (SJ 332 332) and Maesbury (SJ 332 326). The course of Wat's Dyke has become subsumed by three larger conurbations – Holywell (SJ 190 764), Wrexham (SJ 329 351) and Oswestry (SJ 294 307) – in a fashion Offa's Dyke only does once (Knighton, Powys). In these urban contexts, Wat's Dyke has been destroyed in many places, yet its bank and ditch can be seen beside lanes, roads, railway lines, houses and gardens, parks and schools and even in a memorial wood and a cemetery, thus significantly enhancing potential zones of public access and education (Figures 4–5).

Figure 7 (above): Looking south along the line of Wat's Dyke towards Old Oswestry hillfort (SJ 2967 3148) (Photograph by Howard Williams, 2019)

Figure 8 (below): Wat's Dyke in Court Wood, Erddig Park, looking south-east (SJ 3282 4912) (Photograph by Howard Williams, 2019)

Another striking feature about its course today that fosters potential public engagement is how Wat's Dyke interacts with a series of other key heritage sites and leisure amenities, including the industrial landscape of the Greenfield Valley (SJ 190 770) close to the Cadw-managed St Winefride's Well, Holywell (Figure 6). Wat's Dyke also runs into two prehistoric hillforts: at Bryn Alyn, Wrexham (SJ 331 535) and Old Oswestry, Shropshire (SJ 330 331) (Malim 2020). While the former is on private land, the latter is freely open to visitors and under the stewardship of English Heritage (McMillan-Sloan and Williams this volume) (Figure 7). Meanwhile, Wat's Dyke runs through the grounds of the National Trust property of Erddig: one can walk along the Dyke in parkland north and south of Erddig Hall (SJ 325 481) (Figure 8) and witness its cutting by an Anglo-Norman motte-and-bailey castle (SJ 327 486) (see also Belford 2019).

Putting these dimensions together, despite neglect, Wat's Dyke harbours considerable untapped potential for creating new multi-period narratives linking the dyke to the landscape of the Anglo-Welsh borderland from prehistory to the present. Doing this not only entails forging interpretive relationships

with the prehistoric, medieval and modern components of the Anglo-Welsh borderlands as a monument with a biography (cf. Hingley 2012) but moreover, it also involves recognising and exploring narratives which link together the Dyke with the few other early medieval sites and monuments in this region. By this, I not only refer to Offa's Dyke but also sites yielding early medieval stone sculpture at Hope church (SJ 310 584), and the early ninth-century Pillar of Eliseg near Valle Crucis Abbey (SJ 203 445) (Edwards 2009; Tong et al. 2015; Murrieta-Flores and Williams 2017; Williams and Evans 2020).

Furthermore, this is an issue of some urgency because Wat's Dyke has been, and remains, subject to greater threats to its survival than its larger and better-known companion in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands. In comparison to Offa's Dyke, much more of the length of Wat's Dyke has been damaged by modern activity, running as it does through lower-lying landscapes. Yet equally, this situation affords many more opportunities to connect and communicate heritage interpretation to local communities. Therefore, there is an *a priori* and timely need and opportunity to engage communities and publics with, and provide educational and heritage resources for, Wat's Dyke. This can be a key means of fostering local senses of place and thus ensuring the monument's survival for future generations (for Offa's Dyke, see Ray and Bapty 2016: 373–376). As such, this requirement addresses broader themes in the archaeology and heritage of the Anglo-Welsh borderlands specifically and also the archaeology of frontiers, borderlands and diaspora (see also Belford 2019; Swogger 2019). Furthermore, this is a time of growing English and Welsh regionalisms and nationalisms, as well as broader international debates on borders, national identity and immigration intersecting with perceptions and appropriations of the Early Middle Ages (Williams 2020a; see also Doyle White 2020). The Dyke's latent potential for extremist and ethnonationalist appropriations might be readily countered if only clear heritage interpretations were cultivated, identifying both the Dyke's past significance and its present-day moribundity. The Dyke is objectively redundant, testified by its fragmentary and ruinous state, and because it was unquestionably created not by 'England', but by a Mercian kingdom which did not itself survive as an independent entity beyond the 9th century AD. It thus affords considerable potential for public engagement of all ages, genders and ethnic backgrounds and debate outside of English and Welsh nationalist origin myths. The relationship with today's Anglo-Welsh borderland, and yet its dislocation from the contemporary border, allows Wat's Dyke to shed light on the complexity and fluidity of borderland territorialities and identities from prehistory to the present.

Before advocating new initiatives for heritage narratives and interpretive strategies for Wat's Dyke, this chapter aims to evaluate the current state of heritage interpretation of the monument in maps and publications, online, at heritage sites and in the wider contemporary landscape. In so doing, I argue that current digital and physical resources are struggling to communicate the story of Wat's Dyke effectively and in any coherent fashion. Hence, new interpretive methods must be fostered and supported. This chapter serves as a prequel to the discussion by Swogger and Williams (this volume), highlighting in particular the value of existing intersections between the Dyke and both urban and heritage landscapes to tell its story via new media, including comics.

Wat's Dyke in Maps and Guides

Ordnance Survey Maps

One popular means by which Wat's Dyke is promulgated to the public is through its featuring on Ordnance Survey (OS) maps since the 1870s (first as 'Wat's Dike (remains of)'). The *Ordnance Survey Map of Dark Age Britain* (1966) also records the monument, and while now extremely dated, this map has had enduring appeal and remains in circulation if out of print. However, the fragmentary nature of the monument on the ground makes it very difficult to navigate using contemporary OS maps. Still, on the present-day 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps, Wat's Dyke is marked by hachures where it survives as an

earthwork. It is, however, most prominent where it is annotated by Gothic text. This occurs 22 times at key locations on the current OS maps (Table 1), although only 12 of these named stretches, mostly in Wrexham and Shropshire, are publicly accessible via footpaths and roads (identified in bold on Table 1). Of these, perhaps only half of the accessible sections might be regarded as well-preserved sections where visitors might readily appreciate the character of the monument (12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20).

This disconnection between public accessibility and OS denoted sections is also clear upon the 1:50,000 Landranger series maps. Here, Wat's Dyke inevitably appears fewer (9) times (given the larger scale), with the urban and lesser stretches omitted from text annotations (Table 2). Yet again, around half (5) are at points where the public can visit, only 4 of which are in sufficient condition for the public to be able to recognise the monument's scale and character (9, 10, 11, 12).

The OS maps cannot alone facilitate significant public visits and substantial appreciation of the monument's date and form, let alone its historical and archaeological significance and context. Moreover, the dislocation between public rights of way and where the earthwork is named and marked on these maps is itself a hindrance to public exploration and appreciation of the monument. Still, these maps at least affirm the monument's long-term presence in the contemporary landscape for both locals and visitors.

Table 1: Locations on the 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps 265, 256 and 240 featuring the line of Wat's Dyke in text alongside its marking through hachures where it remains an extent earthwork (listed from north to south). Publicly accessible sites are listed in bold

1	Abbey Smallholding, Holywell	SJ 192 768
2	Coetia-Llŵyd, Bagiltt	SJ 197 746
3	Fron Dudur, Bagillt	SJ 201 739
4	Nant Farm, Halkyn	SJ 213 730
5	Coed Uchaf, Northop	SJ 232 683
6	Geenacres, Northop Hall	SJ 252 658
7	Garrey-Lwyd Farm, Buckley	SJ 270 626
8	Clawdd-Offa, Penyffordd	SJ 301 603
9	Pigeon House Farm, Hope	SJ 304 594
10	Rhyddyn Farm, Hope	SJ 311 576
11	New Farm, Hope	SJ 311 570
12	Pandy, Rhosddu	SJ 333 527
13	Wrexham General Railway Station, Wrexham	SJ 329 350
14	Big Wood, Erddig	SJ 325 483
15	Middle Sontley, Marchwiel	SJ 334 347
16	Pentre-clawdd, Ruabon	SJ 333 345
17	Rhos-y-llan Wood, St Martin's	SJ 310 366
18	Henlle Park, Oswestry	SJ 306 350
19	Pentre-clawdd, Oswestry	SJ 298 320
20	Old Oswestry fort, Oswestry	SJ 294 307
21	Laburnam Drive, Oswestry	SJ 296 295
22	Maesbury Road, Oswestry	SJ 302 272

Table 2: Locations on the 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey Landranger Maps 116, 117 and 126 featuring the line of Wat's Dyke in text alongside its marking through hachures where it remains an extent earthwork (listed from north to south). Publicly accessible sites are listed in bold

1	Coed Uchaf, Northop	SJ 232 683
2	Geenacres, Northop Hall	SJ 252 658
3	Dyke Farm, Leeswood	SJ 286 618
4	Bryn-yr-eithin, Llay	SJ 321 549
5	Pandy, Rhosddu	SJ 337 529
6	Middle Sontley, Marchwiel	SJ 322 458
7	Pentre-clawdd, Ruabon	SJ 311 437
8	Pentre-clawdd, Oswestry	SJ 297 314
9	Maesbury Road, Oswestry	SJ 302 272

Burnham's Archaeological Guide

If existing maps are inadequate for satisfactory public engagement, there equally exists no accessible and public-facing publications about Wat's Dyke beyond the difficult-to-access academic accounts (Fox 1955; Malim and Hayes 2008; Worthington 1997). Only recently have two key articles become accessible for free in a digital format (Worthington Hill 2019; Hill 2020). Conversely, Wat's Dyke takes an ancillary role in the two most recent publications on Offa's Dyke (Hill and Worthington 2003; Ray and Bapty 2016).

Indeed, although now 25 years old and out-of-print, Cadw's *A Guide to Ancient and Historic Wales: Clwyd and Powys* remains the only archaeological guide for north-east Wales with coherent and reliable information about Wat's Dyke (Burnham 1995). Within it, the Dyke appears in two entries; each relating to a prominent well-preserved stretch of the monument, namely the 0.5km section at Soughton Farm (Flintshire) (SJ 325 368) (Burnham 1995: 106–107) and the longer 5.3km set of alignments from Erddig Park south to Wynnstay Park (Burnham 1995: 107-108; Figure 9) (SJ 310 344). From the description provided, the former section is near impossible to locate and appreciate in topographical and monumental terms. However, the latter is accompanied by a useful map showing its course in relation to principal footpaths (now the Wat's Dyke Way, see below: Figure 9). Following Fox (1934, 1955), Burnham suggests that Wat's Dyke is an 8th-century monument, reflecting the consensus at the time she was writing.

The fact that north-east Wales lacks a modern guide book in printed or digital form is itself a major limitation on public engagement worthy of note. For while Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust share some excellent archaeological walks on their website, none currently relate to Wat's Dyke.[1] Therefore, Burnham's Cadw guide stands alone as the only public-facing publication to have dedicated any space to the monument. Because it is a site-based guide, it is not structured to effectively guide access and exploration of a linear monument.

Lewis's Walking Guide

If archaeological guides fall short, what of more popular literature aimed at walkers and visitors? Offa's Dyke has inspired the creation of dozens of walking guides, but none specifically focused on the archaeological monument and its context. Wat's Dyke suffers with the same problem. Still, a significant improvement to public access and appreciation of Wat's Dyke was achieved by the opening of long-distance footpath: Wat's Dyke Way. This walking route was initially devised in the late 1990s by Medwyn Roberts and the Wat's Dyke Association was founded in 2001 leading to the opening of the

[1] https://www.cpat.org.uk/walks/

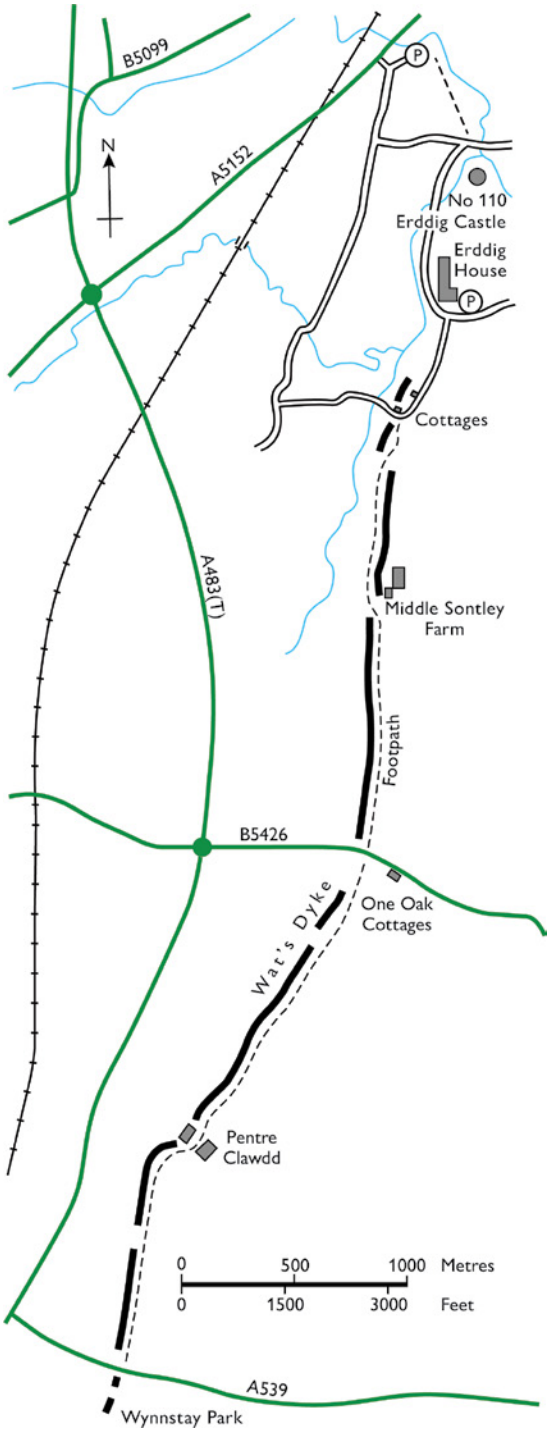

Figure 9 (right): An updated version of the map appearing in Helen Burnham's 1995 Cadw guide (© Crown copyright (2020) Cadw, Welsh Government)

trail and publication of a walking guide in 2008 (Lewis 2008: 25–26). It does not have the status of a National Trail, but the Way is supported by the Long Distance Walkers Association (LDWA) and follows broadly the direction and landscape surrounding Wat's Dyke. For some significant stretches, it follows the monument where pre-existing rights of way made this viable.[2]

The markers now present on the footpath create a material imprint of the monument upon the landscape in their own right, including plastic waymarker discs bearing the logo of the route as well as wooden and metal finger posts (Figure 10) (we will return to discuss the presence of the monument through signage below). The guide, *Wat's Dyke Way Heritage Trail*, seems to be the only non-archaeological publication to dedicate space to the monument. It outlines 9 sections to the Wat's Dyke Way through three counties from Llanymynech (Shropshire) to Holywell (Flintshire), plus four circular walks at Maesbury, Ruabon, Rhosesmor and Holywell (Lewis 2008). As noted, the walk followed pre-existing rights of way and thus deviates significantly from Wat's Dyke itself. Yet, the guide works hard to explore not only the 'turbulent history of these borderlands but its rich industrial and cultural heritage too' (Lewis 2008: 9). Therefore, in addition to topographical features, canals and industrial remains (e.g. Lewis 2008: 30–34, 99-100), chapels and churches (e.g. Lewis 2008: 40, 68–69, 81–82, 92, 99) it steers far from the Dyke to incorporate stretches of beautiful countryside, including the River Dee at Erbistock and Overton Bridge (Lewis 2008: 47–62) and extending to Llanymynech along the Montgomery Canal to the south (Lewis 2008: 28–32). The Way incorporates other significant prehistoric and medieval monuments, notably Old Oswestry hillfort (Lewis 2008: 44–45), Rhyn Park Roman fort (Lewis 2008: 49), Sodylt Old Hall (Lewis 2008: 51–52), Caergwrle Castle and Moel y Gaer hillfort, Rhosesmor (Lewis 2008: 91), St Winefride's Well (Lewis 2008: 97–99) and ends at Basingwerk Abbey (Lewis 2008: 101). The circular walks also foster engagement with the historic landscape, with the Ruabon Circular incorporating St Mary's church, Wat's Dyke, Offa's Dyke and Gardden hillfort (Lewis 2008: 109–116).

[2] https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Wat%27s+Dyke+Way+Heritage+Trail

Figure 10: The Wat's Dyke Way's presence in the contemporary landscape via waymarkers (from top-left to bottom): (a) at Sychdyn, Flintshire, (b) Pandy, Wrexham, (c) Middle Sontley Farm, Ruabon, (d) near Pentre-Clawdd Farm, Wrexham, (e) Pentre-Clawdd Farm, Oswestry (Photographs by Howard Williams, 2019)

Although unsupported by academic citations, the introduction provides a valuable and (broadly) up-to-date summary to the history of Wat's Dyke, but will not be drawn on its date beyond saying 'it was probably built in the Dark Ages, sometime between 1200 and 1600 years ago, but there is a tantalising lack of real data to pinpoint this more accurately'. Lewis (2008: 12) concludes that it was built 'by the Mercians against the Welsh' but remains neutral regarding its function, noting that 'some have described it as a frontier, a boundary rampart, rather than a line of defence' (Lewis 2008: 12–14). Lewis explains and explores the similarity and relationship with Offa's Dyke, suggesting Wat's Dyke was more readily defensible (Lewis 2008: 16), finally opting (following Fox 1955) for an interpretation of Wat's Dyke as an earlier 8th-century work of King Aethelbald of Mercia. Unlike many of the official heritage records (see below), Lewis (2008: 18) is rightly critical of the proposed 5th-century date for Wat's Dyke (cf. Hannaford 1999). Unfortunately, the brief Wat's Dyke Way website erroneously contradicts the guide and dates the monument to the 5th century AD![3]

In regards to the relationship between the Way and the Dyke, the guide's maps are clear and simple, identifying where the Dyke is in relation to the Path in a fashion many guides for Offa's Dyke fail to make clear (Lewis 2008: 6, 13, 29, 39, 48, 57, 63, 71, 80, 88, 94, 110, 124). Furthermore, along the route, Lewis identifies instances where the Way joins Wat's Dyke (Lewis 2008: 45, 47, 65–66, 81, 84). For instance, it follows the most prominent northern section of the monument for c. 1km between Mynachlog and Sychdyn, a more denuded section of just under 1km west of Penyffordd, a c. 0.5km section of the monument within a field boundary at Hope, and shorter section surviving at Pandy, Wrexham. The principal long sections where the Way follows the Dyke are the c. 5km section between Erddig Park and Wynnstay Park and a c. 1.5km section north of Old Oswestry hillfort. Lewis also notes a cultural association in Mynydd Isa, with the Wat's Dyke Way running parallel to Mercia Drive and past the Mercia Inn (Lewis 2008: 86). However, where the Way coincides with Wat's Dyke at Pandy, the Dyke is not mentioned (Lewis 2008: 76), nor is the presence of Wat's Dyke on the right and upslope of the Way on its route north from the village of Hope (Lewis 2008: 83-84). Likewise the well-preserved section of the Dyke at the Beaufort Park Hotel is overlooked by the walking guide despite it being a spot where walkers might pause to see the monument (Lewis 2008: 87).

Hence, there is a demonstrable disconnection between the Way and the Dyke in the guide book, even when the monument and path do coincide in the landscape. In the guide, there is only a single attempt made to describe the placement of the monument in the landscape. Relating to the section north of the A539 east of Ruabon, Lewis argues that it was 'designed to have commanding views westwards and made use of the natural terrain', which is surely correct (Lewis 2008: 64). Similarly, the relationship of the monument to Old Oswestry hillfort is vague (Lewis 2008: 45). This divergence of path and Dyke is by no means as severe as that experienced for the northern section of the Offa's Dyke Path which does not follow Offa's Dyke north of Bronygarth (Chirk, Wrexham) and last crosses the monument north of Plas Offa in the Vale of Llangollen.[4] Yet, the line of the Wat's Dyke Way means walkers will miss out key well-preserved sections of the Dyke on the north side of the Clywedog in Erddig Park and in Erddig Wood and in very few situations will one gain a sense of the monument's landscape-traverse as one can for multiple key sections of Offa's Dyke in Powys and Shropshire.

A further indication that the walking guide is not focused on the monument itself is in how the Dyke is visualised. There are only three black-and-white photographs of Wat's Dyke in the entire guide; two are in the introduction. Oddly, two show similar shots of the same denuded stretch of bank-and-ditch near Sychdyn (Lewis 2008: 12, 89), and another illustrates a better but still relatively poorly preserved section in a hedge line near Penyffordd (Lewis 2008: 11). If a photograph of a well-preserved section of the monument is not included, there is at least a useful schematic section of the monument (Lewis 2008: 10) together with an artist's

[3] https://www.watsdykeway.com/the-trail.html
[4] http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/leisure_tourism/walks/wats_dyke.htm

reconstruction of Wat's Dyke being built (Lewis 2008: 17). This situation is perhaps no worse than many guides to Offa's Dyke, but it is noteworthy that one cannot appreciate the inferred nature of Wat's Dyke's original design, varied survival, let alone its placement and landscape context, from this guide. Although not designed as an archaeological guide, Lewis (2008) is certainly a solid walking guide fit for purpose but also sensitive to the monument and the trail's archaeological and built heritage.

Figure 11: Wat's Dyke, looking north-west, at Big Wood, Erddig (SJ 3254 4834) (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2019)

There are other walking trails and local footpaths that incorporate stretches of Wat's Dyke. For example the Oswald's Trail notes accurately the presence of Wat's Dyke and the trail follows part of the Wat's Dyke Way, both on the website and the linked pdf guide, but makes no observations regarding its date, character or significance whatsoever.[5] In summary, the Wat's Dyke Way and its literature fails to explain the archaeological monument and its landscape context. Furthermore, there are no local equivalents that make the Dyke apparent to those who are not serious long-distance walkers, including those of all ages and different mobilities.

Wat's Dyke Heritage Online

In general, Wat's Dyke's online presence is fragmented and contradictory; let me survey the principal resources.

Greenfield Valley (SJ 194 773)

At the northern terminus of Wat's Dyke, the ruins of the Cadw-managed Cistercian house of Basingwerk Abbey and the industrial remains of the Greenfield Valley focused on its farm make for an ideal place to engage and educate local people and visitors about Wat's Dyke. Yet, the monument simply does not feature in the online literature about this landscape.[6] The Greenfield Valley's online site map does indicate where a well-preserved section of the Dyke runs with stylised hachures, but without explanation.[7] Moreover, this cartographic representation is completely disconnected from the statement made under the 'early history' section of their website, namely that:

> By early medieval times the Valley had grown in importance as part of a boundary with the English Kingoms [sic.], the earliest of which is a section of Wat's Dyke. King Offa of Mercia built this defensive ditch to mark the boundary of his land in the 8th century.[8]

[5] http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk/route/oswalds-trail/
[6] https://www.greenfieldvalley.com/highlights
[7] https://www.greenfieldvalley.com/visiting
[8] https://www.greenfieldvalley.com/history-collections/early-history

This statement is marred by multiple errors. It attributes the Dyke's builders anachronistically as 'English kingdoms' (as opposed to the demonstrably more precise 'Anglo-Saxon' or more generic 'early medieval') and conflates it with Offa's Dyke and thus attributes it to Offa. It also describes the Dyke inaccurately as a 'ditch' which is 'defensive'.

The downloadable walking tour does include an annotation to these hachures on its version of the map as 'Wat's Dyke/Clawdd Wat'. However, Wat's Dyke does not qualify as one of the 9 stopping points on the tour of Greenfield Valley.[9] In summary, this online information will neither explain nor locate Wat's Dyke for visitors.

Wrexham Cemetery (SJ 327 495)

Our next 'heritage' environment is a mortuary one: Wrexham cemetery. Wat's Dyke runs through it and served as the original Victorian-era western boundary of the original cemetery. However, despite up-to-date website exploring the history of the cemetery since its opening in 1876, Wat's Dyke makes no appearance at all in the story of the funerary landscape.[10]

Erddig Hall and Park (SJ 325 483)

The National Trust site of Erddig has little demonstrable online information about Wat's Dyke, ignoring it within its history and parkland information.[11] The image-rich but information-light website contains a single mention of Wat's Dyke and the associated map does not mark the line of Wat's Dyke, even though the 'Motte & Bailey' castle is denoted:[12]

> Erddig Big Wood trail through Emes' pleasure park
>
> Come and enjoy a leisurely stroll around William Emes' pleasure park at Erddig. Wander through beautiful woodland and discover the ancient remains of a Norman motte and bailey castle as you join the historic and mysterious Wat's Dyke way.

Why the walking trail is 'mysterious' is unclear. This is followed up with the statement about station 10 of the trail:

> Half way down the steps on your right is one section of Wat's Dyke, the second of our Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

The print version and a box opens up to give you following information on Wat's Dyke which is easily missed on the website.

> Wat's Dyke Constructed in the 8th Century [sic], it predates its larger cousin Offa's Dyke, acting as a 40-mile defensive linear earthwork in the form of a bank with a ditch on the western side. Wat's Dyke stretches from the Flintshire coast to just south of Oswestry. There is currently 2 miles of Wat's Dyke on Erddig's estate. You will notice the piles of branches along it which helps to reduce the footfall and prevent further erosion.

[9] https://www.greenfieldvalley.com/Walking-Greenfield-Valley.pdf
[10] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/env_services/community_services/wrexham_cemetery.htm; https://www.wrexham-history.com/wrexham-cemetery/; https://wrexhamcemeterystories.com/about
[11] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/erddig/features/discover-emes-parkland-at-erddig
[12] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/erddig/trails/big-wood-trail

As well as failing to connect the information to a map which might have allowed visitors to know where Wat's Dyke is and what they might be looking at, this statement once again mis-dates Wat's Dyke, and while its extent is accurately described, its 'defensive' role is obscure. Where the '2 miles' of Wat's dyke are located is not apparent although it is noticeable that a protective conservation measure is identified as a means of recognising the bank and ditch rather than any description or visualisation of the earthworks themselves (Figure 11). In summary, the National Trust render Wat's Dyke unmapped and enigmatic in the absence of clear and coherent online information.

Old Oswestry Hillfort (SJ 294 308)

Old Oswestry hillfort might be considered the third principal heritage site along Wat's Dyke but online once again there is limited information for visitors. In the section 'After the Hillfort' in the online 'history' of the hillfort,[13] English Heritage state:

> Wat's Dyke is one of a number of linear earthworks in the Welsh borders, and is similar to the longer Offa's Dyke. This was probably built by King Offa in the 8th century to separate his Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia from the British kingdoms in Wales.
>
> Unlike Offa, 'Wat' is not a known historical figure and recent dating evidence suggests that Wat's Dyke was probably built some time before Offa's Dyke. It may have been an earlier border between the Anglo-Saxon and British population, or perhaps it defined the western boundary of a now forgotten kingdom which ruled the Shropshire/Cheshire area in the post-Roman period.

Perhaps this is a more detrimental situation than the oblivion to which Wat's Dyke is consigned for visitors to Greenfield Valley and Erddig, for here we are given the narrative based on a single radiocarbon date from Mile Oak, Oswestry as evidence the monument was built 'before Offa's Dyke' (Hannaford 1999), with no attempt to adapt or refine this in relation to current research (Malim and Hayes 2008).

Online resources

Shropshire's Historic Environment Record is publicly accessible by enquiry, but also through the online Heritage Gateway. It has a general entry for Wat's Dyke (PRN 01001) with 18 records of specific stretches and associated features.[14] The summary information is valuable but limited in extent and sometimes of doubtful accuracy:

> Scheduled Monument: A major boundary earthwork which survives intermittently between Maesbury and the Dee Estuary, Wat's Dyke is commonly dated to the early 8th century (though it could be earlier), thus predating Offa's Dyke, to which it runs parallel for part of its length.

Individual sub-records tend to be accurate, concise and descriptive but at present they are not available in map form. In presenting the monument, the HER curates the argument that Wat's Dyke forms a boundary between lands in Anglo-Saxon control and those of native Britons, dating to before Offa's Dyke, as reported for the section south-west of Gobowen station (PRN 34381).[15] Most frustrating is the time-lag enshrined in these digital records, with the 8th-century date of Wat's Dyke perpetuated from

[13] https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/old-oswestry-hillfort/history/
[14] https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MSA720&resourceID=1015
[15] https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MSA37229&resourceID=1015

earlier records, as with PRN 34390 for the sections adjacent to Old Oswestry hillfort,[16] and PRN34384 for the scheduled section east of Weston Farm.[17] In contrast, other records perpetuate the unlikely 5th-century dating (PRN 34380).[18] All records define it in misleading terms of monument types as a 'boundary bank' (as with the quote above, this unhelpfully presumes a territorial role for the earthwork), 'dyke (defence)' (implying a military function primarily) and 'frontier defence' (this is the least misleading but it lacks definition of what constitutes the 'frontier' in question and between which polities). The dating terms 'Early Saxon to Mid Saxon – 410 AD to 800 AD' enshrine three problems: (i) the use of 'Saxon' as opposed to 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'early medieval' as a period definition is old-fashioned and misleading when dealing with an arguably 'Anglian' Mercian kingdom and kingship, (ii) the exclusion of the possibility of an early 9th century date for the monument raised by the excavations at Gobowen (Malim and Hayes 2008), and (iii) the wrong placement of 'AD' in relation to calendar dates is a minor error.

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's records for Wat's Dyke in Wrexham and Flintshire record it as an 'early medieval linear earthwork', thus divorced from precise chronological or ethno-linguistic attributions. The primary record (PRN17774) indicates that a 5th-century date had been proposed (Hannaford 1999), but is up-to-date, unlike Shropshire, in highlighting that the OSL dating from Gobowen indicates that an early or mid-9th-century date is possible (Malim and Hayes 2008).[19] The limitation is that one cannot search using the apostrophe in 'Wat's', but a key advantage over Shropshire is the readily accessible Bing satellite map-search. Each of the entries contains a brief, concise description, links to key resources, and oblique aerial photographs, while some records for areas in Wrexham borough contain a link to the 2017 condition survey (Jones 2017). Links to the Archaeological Data Service records for *Medieval Archaeology*, such as for the record of excavations at Watergate Estate, Mynydd Isa (PRN 17763) thus constitute a further asset and dimension to the record.[20] Other entries include links to archaeological evaluations (e.g. PRN 106645) and watching briefs (e.g. PRN123126, PRN 70162, PRN 152566).

Complementing the Archwilio record, the Coflein database of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) contains 39 entries for Wat's Dyke, again linked to a map-view. The main entry (NPRN 306867) is brief, focuses on a point where the Dyke cannot be seen, and suggests based on the Mile Oak Industrial Estate (Maes-y-Clawdd), Oswestry, excavations that it might date to the 5th century AD. Coflein is therefore out-of-date in relation to current thinking. Still, the website does offer complementary information, including links to unpublished sources. For example, the Coflein entry for Mynydd Isa (NPRN 309644) confirms the presence of Wat's Dyke from resistivity surveys conducted by David Hill; this is reiterated in CPAT's Regional Historical Environment Record (PRN 106631).

Wikis

If these 'official' resources fail to fully engage visitors and locals with such a sizeable monument as Wat's Dyke, there might be the potential for alternative informal resources and 'wikis' to do a better job. Wikipedia in fact offers more accessible and (surprisingly) more up-to-date and reliable information than any of the above resources. Still, the Wikipedia entry lacks some basic information and detail regarding the monument's form, function and where one can visit it. Furthermore, it is backed by sparse and out-dated resources, relying as it does only on online open-access information that can be

[16] https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MSA37238&resourceID=1015
[17] https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MSA37232&resourceID=1015
[18] https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MSA37228&resourceID=1015
[19] https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/query/page,
php?watprn=CPAT17774&dbname=cpat&tbname=core&sessid=CHI215pviax&queryid=Q094336001585172252
[20] https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/query/
page.p?watprn=CPAT17763&dbname=cpat&tbname=event&sessid=CHI215pviax&queryid=Q094336001585172252

gathered and verified by Wikipedia editors.[21] Meanwhile, other archaeological wikis focus on discrete ancient monuments, and linear earthworks, such as Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke, have tended not to feature (although there is the capacity for their inclusion, see below).[22] To date, therefore, the potential for online co-created resources to fill the woeful gap left by heritage organisations and institutions has yet to transpire for Wat's Dyke.

Heritage sites and heritage boards

Next in our review of current provision, we turn to the heritage signs that exist along the line of Wat's Dyke. As well as the small Wat's Dyke Way plastic waymarker discs, plus wooden and metal footpath signs (Figure 10), there are only a handful of interpretation panels explaining the presence of Wat's Dyke. Each panel was installed at different times, by different authorities, with contrasting information available and en vogue regarding how to interpret Wat's Dyke. Each panel faces significant problems in terms of being inaccurate and/or misrepresenting the monument in the light of contemporary research. While they collectively raise the profile of Wat's Dyke to varying degrees, they are collectively either (i) broken/inaccessible, (ii) contain information which is too obscure or brief, (iii) include inaccuracies about the date and significance of the monument and/or (iv) are wholly or partly incomprehensible. Hence, visitors today face eclectic and (sometimes) contradictory information about the monument ad in only a selection of locations. Meanwhile, well-preserved sections of the Dyke lack any heritage interpretation.

Greenfield Valley (SJ 194 773)

As mentioned above, despite rich and varied interpretation panels on site throughout the Greenfield Valley focusing on industrial heritage, the relatively short surviving section of Wat's Dyke is depicted on general heritage maps by the main entrances and there is no further on-site information available about the monument on the ground (Figure 12). At the monument itself, there is no signpost or interpretation panel. It is impossible to see how a non-specialist would recognise and appreciate the monument as part of the complex story of the landscape of this readily accessible recreational space.

Beaufort Park Hotel (SJ 255 655)

The stretch of Wat's Dyke, well-mown and protected, adjacent to the Beaufort Park Hotel, New Brighton, is a rare survival of an accessible section in this region. There is a c. 20 year-old interpretation panel adjacent to the hotel overlooking the monument, protected by its location on private property (Figure 13). However, while prominently situated, it is not publicly accessible to those who are not visiting the hotel itself.

The board is bilingual and is clearly written, but the content is now out-dated. It claims Wat's Dyke is an early 8th-century predecessor to Offa's Dyke. The ornamentation of the sign board is crudely pertinent in that the border draws upon Style II animal art like that from Sutton Hoo's Mound 1 (early 7th century), yet the representations of the two warrior figures confronting across the linear monument perpetuate the idea of the Dyke as a border. Moreover, the border is defined by constant warfare and ethnically distinct populations through the use of racial stereotypes of the dark-haired Welshman (left) and blonde-haired Anglo-Saxon.

Whatever the limitations of location and content, this at least is an example of an interpretation panel beside a section of the Dyke that is visible and accessible to the public, protected from vandalism and prominent for hotel guests, albeit situated on privately owned land.

[21] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wat%27s_Dyke
[22] https://www.megalithic.co.uk/

Figure 12: The Greenfield Valley welcome panel, with Wat's Dyke marked out but not explained (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2019)

Hope (SJ 309 588)

On the outskirts of the village to the north-north-west, the dyke is well preserved beneath modern property boundaries where it has survived for a short stretch and is maintained and protected beside the Wrexham Road (A550) (Figure 14). This is the entrance to a series of modern cul-de-sacs collectively called The Beeches which also lead to a further cul-de-sac: Almond Way. Amidst a planting of evergreen bushes beside the road and in front (west of) the Dyke, a low but large boulder bears a bilingual plaque: CLAWDD WAT'S/ WYTHFED CANRIF O.C./ EFIN SACSONAIDD GYMREIG. WAT'S DYKE/ A.D. 8TH CENTURY/ SAXON-WELSH FRONTIER.

Here again, the Dyke is conceptualised as an ethno-national frontier work, and dated following the tradition of Cyril Fox to the 8th century AD. Clearly installed when the housing estate was constructed in the 1990s, this is perhaps the closest to a piece of public art that exists along the line of Wat's Dyke. On previous visits, I have encountered it completely obscured within the bushes surrounding it, but on a recent visit it was exposed again. However, it is clearly orientated for residents of the close, not for those using the main A-road or walking by, since the text faces west. So, while different in form, in terms of location it shares with the Beaufort Park Hotel interpretation panel in being locally prominent but relatively obscure unless one knows it is there already: set away from the main thoroughfare.

Figure 13a–b: Wat's Dyke and its interpretation panel at the Beaufort Partk Hotel, New Brighton (Photograph by Howard Williams, 2020)

Figure 14a–d: The memorial stone beside The Beeches, Hope (Photographs by Howard Williams, 2020)

Hope village trail (SJ 309 584)

Despite Wat's Dyke running through the village and accessible in the section mentioned above and to the south of the village where the Wat's Dyke Way follows it, the heritage panel at the heart of the village in front of the church gives it scarce attention (Figure 15). The sign does include an evocative impression of the monument as a black divide beneath a canopy of trees by local artist Kate Hall. Also, the accessible section of the Dyke is marked on the map. However, while 'Wat's dyke' is mentioned in the text, it is not explained.

Wrexham Museum (SJ 333 350)

The only heritage interpretation about Wat's Dyke in the region but situated away from the monument is outside Wrexham Museum. Here, as part of the story of the medieval town, a map shows the lands of Wrecsam Fawr and Wrecsam Abad abutting Wat's Dyke but the date and significance of the monument, marked in yellow, is left undiscussed: it might be regarded by viewers as anything from prehistoric to later medieval (Figure 16).

Wrexham Cemetery (SJ 327 495)

It is striking that the aforementioned Wrexham Cemetery is the only place in the entire c. 62km length of Wat's Dyke where Wat's Dyke is marked out on the ground (Figure 17). Here, the ditch has long gone but the

Figure 15a–b: The heritage panel beside St Cyngar's church, Hope, Flintshire (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2020)

bank remains and is covered by prominent Victorian graves. The line of the Dyke was reused as the original western boundary to the 19th-century cemetery. Upon the two cemetery driveways that cross its line, linking its original extent to its westerly extension, the western extent of the ditch and the eastern extremity of the bank of Wat's Dyke are marked by stone slabs inscribed with the monument's name, deliberately cropped at either end to afford the sense of an ongoing imaginary line of text persisting beyond the path on each side ('...awdd/ Wat/ Clawdd/ Wat/ Cla...' and 'Dyke/ Wat's/ Dyke/ Wat's / Dy...'). Notably, the Welsh text is on the eastern ('Mercian') side, while the English on the western ('Welsh') side of the monument, indicating spatially the territorial/ ethnolinguistic division that the Dyke popularly embodies based on the direction of travel across it (i.e. one reads the Welsh version (Clawdd Wat) on the 'English' side but as one is walking west into 'Wales', and vice versa). However, while the cemetery information board does mark the line of the Dyke at the entrance, the monument is not explained (Figure 18). One is expected to read the monument in terms of contemporary geopolitics.

Despite proximity to National Trust-managed Erddig estate, Wat's Dyke remains written out of Wrexham's past, and this is a great shame for locals and visitors alike. Currently, anyone looking for the history of the cemetery online or on the ground is being sold short.

Figure 16: The map of medieval Wrexham outside Wrexham Museum: Wat's Dyke is marked in yellow but not explained by the text (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

Erddig Hall and Park (SJ 325 483)

Popular with tourists and locals alike, the National Trust site of Erddig Hall and Gardens offers an unrivalled opportunity to view Wat's Dyke in parkland and woodland. However, just as it is near-invisible in the site's online resources (see above), the National Trust guide book fails to explain the monument. Also the interpretation panels throughout the estate of Erddig Hall indicate the line of the Wat's Dyke Way on the north-east side of the Clywedog but do not indicate that Wat's Dyke can be seen along its course (Figure 19). In addition, the line of Wat's Dyke is not marked out, even if it is annotated at the southern end of the estate by the Rookery: it is unclear how visitors are expected to know what Wat's Dyke is and what it looks like o the ground based on this lack of information.

Meanwhile, a relatively new interpretation panel at Erddig Castle creates a striking cross-section visualisation of the motte and bailey Anglo-Norman castle and mentions the presence of Wat's Dyke (Figure 20). However, the line of Wat's Dyke is not represented on the map and so it will not be clear where visitors should go to view it. Moreover, despite its recent construction, it still claims Wat's Dyke's construction is dated from the 8th century.

Ruabon (SJ 332 344)

Preceding the creation of the Wat's Dyke Way, there is a now-overgrown interpretation panel on the trail just inside the kissing gate in the field north of the A539 east of Ruabon. Part of a Ruabon circular walking trail, it therefore represents an extant, but now utterly obscured and illegible dimension, presumably installed to coincide with the Wat's Dye Way in the late 2000s (Figure 21). When legible a decade ago, the bilingual board explained that Wat's Dyke was of likely 8th-century date.

Gobowen (SJ 331 333)

Situated south of the village beside the roundabout where Thomas Penson Road joins the B5069, the interpretation panel was established following the excavations which proposed an early 9th-century


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Figure 17a–b (opposite): The line of Wat's Dyke marked out on the paths within Wrexham Cemetery (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2019)

Figure 18a–b: Wrexham Cemetery information board near the main southern entrance beside the car park and chapels (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2019)

Figure 19 (above): One of the Erddig National Trust interpretation panels (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

Figure 20 (below): The interpretation panel at Erddig Castle, on the Erddig National Trust estate (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2018)

Figure 21: The overgrown and now illegible interpretation panel beside Wat's Dyke Way just inside the kissing gate beside the A539 east of Ruabon (SJ 3098 4341) (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2013)

date for this stretch of the monument (Malim and Hayes 2008). Funded by Natural England and produced by SLR Consulting Limited, the board is monolingual (this being in Shropshire, not Wales) and its text effectively describes the line and scale of the monument, and the dating extracted following excavations in 2006 (Figure 22). Exclusively among the interpretation boards, the text posits a more up-to-date interpretation of Wat's Dyke. Like Offa's Dyke, the monument is presented as concerning the control of movement in the landscape: monuments with functions in peace time to control and tax goods, as well as potentially as aggressive monuments from which to launch attacks, rather than simply for defence. Somewhat contradicting the text, the colouration of the landscape implies its function as a territorial border and a military stop-line. Also contradicting the more fluid sense of the monument, the central image shows a skirmish upon the Dyke itself, implying it was indeed a military stop-line with the Anglo-Saxon defenders combating Welsh attackers, each side equipped similarly with spears, helmets, shields and some in mail coats. This is an adaption from an image created initially to discuss the Cambridgeshire Dykes and has also been utilised on Kent's Faesten Dic (Doyle White 2020): while the similarity in armour and weaponry between the opposing forces is welcome (contrasting with the aforementioned New Brighton interpretation panel), the use of the dyke for combat unhelpfully emphasises its military function. Furthermore, the map leaves the strong impression that the Dyke constituted a territorial boundary or border between 'Mercia' and the Welsh kingdoms. Despite this criticism, the isometric image suggests the scale of the bank and ditch. Moreover, an annotated historic map and photographs of both the excavation and the monument in the landscape viewed from Old Oswestry hillfort to the north, as well as coins of Coenwulf, help the viewer to conceptualise the monument and its likely Mercian royal creators.

Together, the text and images provide a condensed, perhaps over-dense, set of resources with which to apprehend and comprehend Wat's Dyke. However, the real downside of this board is not its images, maps and text. The problem is instead with the monument itself: the very fact that at this precise location, the monument is nearly invisible! Without some further surface marker beyond the interpretation panel itself, akin to those deployed in Wrexham cemetery (see above), this monument will continue to be blissfully dislocated from local knowledge and experience, contradicting to some extent the panel's assertion that the Dyke is an 'important part of local heritage'.

Old Oswestry Hillfort (SJ 294 308)

The English Heritage interpretation at Old Oswestry hillfort unsurprisingly focuses on the prehistoric phases as noted above (Figure 23). The principal introductory sign recognises the relationship between

Figure 22a–b: The interpretation panel beside Thomas Penson Road, Gobowen, Shropshire (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2018)

the hillfort and Wat's Dyke, dating it here to the early 9th century (following the work of Malim and Hayes 2008). There is no indication or interpretation of Wat's Dyke on the northern approach to the hillfort, which is odd since, while denuded, the Dyke is clearly extant right up to the ramparts. Yet on the southern side, there is an interpretation panel upon the middle rampart looking out over Wat's Dyke as it runs into the hillfort (Figure 24).

Figure 23: The English Heritage interpretation panel at the entrance to Old Oswestry Hillfort showing the position of the interpretation panel mentioning and overlooking Wat's Dyke to the north of the hillfort (Figure 21a and b) (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

The southern-approach board is effective in its combination of components. It has a map showing the relative positions of Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke in relation to Old Oswestry Hillfort. There is a black-and-white archaeological excavation photograph from Mile Oak, Oswestry, showing the bank and ditch of Wat's Dyke as seen from the west (Hannaford 1999). This schematic map locates the viewer to where they are in relation to the earthworks. Giving a further perspective, an aerial photograph is included; this imiiage was taken Chris Musson, formerly of CPAT, and looks north to Maesbury along the line of Wat's Dyke (Worthington Hill 2019). The text explains that Wat's Dyke is similar in construction to Offa's Dyke and that it was perhaps earlier than it, querying if it was built by a 'now forgotten kingdom which ruled the Shropshire/Cheshire area in the post-Roman period?'

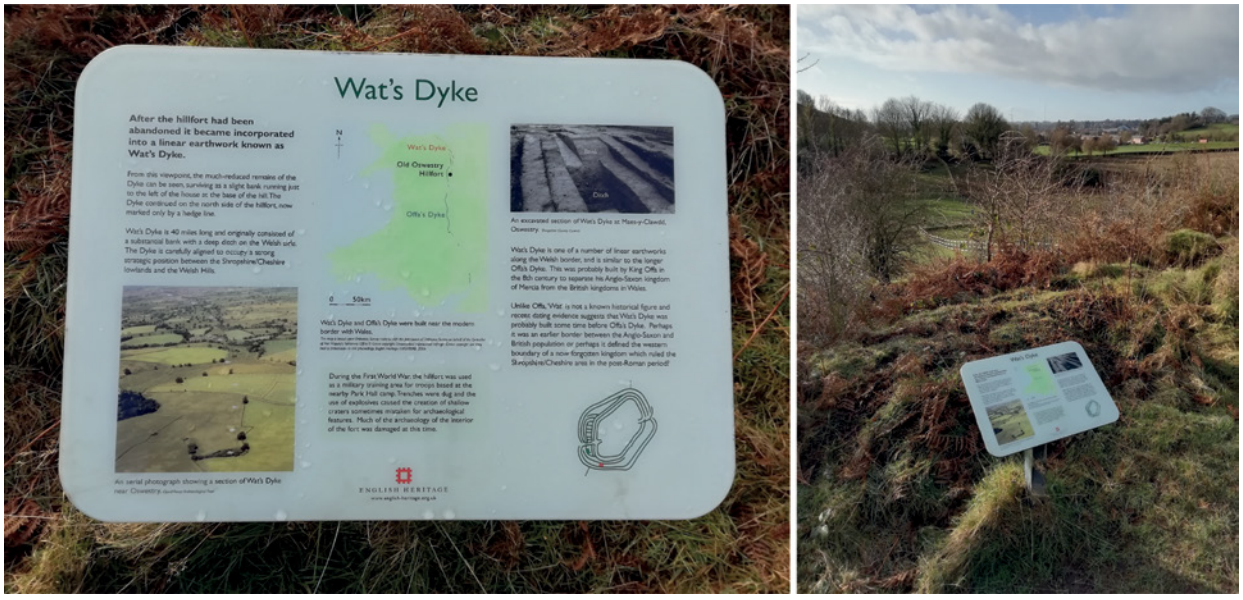

Figure 24a–b: The English Heritage interpretation panel on the south side of Old Oswestry Hillfort (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2020)

However, there are two critical issues. First, as noted for English Heritage's online resources, based on OSL dating from Gobowen, it is currently conjectured that Wat's Dyke may have been constructed later than Offa's Dyke, perhaps in the early 9th century (Malim and Hayes 2008; cf. Hannaford 1999; see also Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2020; Malim 2020). So now the board is out of date for not mentioning this possibility, and has been for the last c. 13 years. Second, the text explains the length of the monument, its alignment and division of the Shropshire/Cheshire lowlands from the Welsh Hills, that 'from this viewpoint, the much-reduced remains of the Dyke can be seen'. This is no longer the case because vegetation growth now means the line of Wat's Dyke is invisible from the position of the board, even in the winter months when leaves are off the trees.

Despite these limitations, and the fact that the northern line of Wat's Dyke isn't explained to visitors, Old Oswestry does at least incorporate a relatively effective interpretation panel attempting to explain the southern approach of Wat's Dyke to the hillfort.

Mile Oak Industrial Estate (SJ 321 280)

Where a cycle path joins the Maesbury Road, at Mile Oak industrial estate, we find the southernmost interpretation panel on the line of Wat's Dyke. The monument itself is here concealed within dense vegetation running north-east and parallel to the Maesbury Road in the land to the north. From the panel, the Dyke is concealed from sight (Figure 25). The panel is now c. 25 years old and was constructed following Hugh Hannaford's excavations of Wat's Dyke which produced a single radiocarbon date indicating it was a post-Roman (5th-century) monument (Hannaford 1999).

Figure 25a–b: The interpretation panel beside the Maesbury Road, Oswestry, just north of Maes-y-Clawdd (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

The panel helpfully indicates where the viewer is situated in relation to the overall line of the monument running from Basingwerk to Maesbury, with Wrexham and Oswestry marked upon it and the county towns of Chester and Shrewsbury also indicated. It is titled 'What? When? Why?' The text explains that the earthwork was originally huge, but is much denuded and the text describes its course. Once thought to be early 8th century, the monument is here, in the late 1990s, considered to have be built 'in the fifth or sixth century AD'. It goes on, explain that '...Wat's Dyke may have been built by a tribal group living in the region after the end of Roman rule but before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons'. Outdated, and situated where the Dyke cannot be readily apprehended, this is another oddly disconnected interpretation panel, seemingly floating free of the monument and telling a now out-dated story.

Summary

For a monument straddling c. 62km across two countries, three counties and numerous communities with different social, economic and ethnic compositions, there has been no planning and no consensus of approach to the heritage interpretation of Wat's Dyke in the landscapes where it can be seen. Indeed, there is only one up-to-date and accurate panel – at Gobowen – along the entire course of the monument. Even this pael embodies misinformation regarding its territorial and military functions, perpetuating the idea found elsewhere that the Dyke marked an ethno-linguistic and political 'border'. Also, this interpretation is frustrated in its appointed task by being located where Wat's Dyke was excavated over a decade ago, but there are only slight surface traces of the monument itself for people to see.

Meanwhile and conversely, in many of the key locations where the Dyke is prominent there are no interpretation panels, notably at Sychdyn, Hope, Pandy, Wat's Dyke Primary School, Erddig Park, Ruabon, North of Old Oswestry Hillfort and in Oswestry town. Similarly, as discussed above, no museums or heritage sites present information about Wat's Dyke. Britain's third-longest ancient monument and the second-longest of early medieval (Anglo-Saxon) date (after its longer neighbour: Offa's Dyke) is both fragmentary in its survival and intangible in terms of its on-site heritage interpretation.

Contemporary landscapes of Wat's Dyke

So far, we have considered bespoke resources and heritage interpretation, but it is important to remember that Wat's Dyke is commemorated in other fashions in the historic landscape. We've already identified how the Wat's Dyke Way signs afford a presence to the monument where footpaths coincide with it. In addition, in areas where Wat's Dyke has been encroached by development, sometimes leading to its destruction in the last century, it is cited through toponyms (Figures 26 and 27). These place-names refer to both 'Offa' as well as 'Wat', and are discussed in the context of Offa's Dyke's contemporary place-names elsewhere (Williams 2020b).

In relation to this discussion, these are an untapped resource for public archaeology. This is not only because they enshrine the ambiguity and confusion regarding the identity of the monument in relation to Offa's Dyke and the contested nature of borderlands past and present, but also because they are prominent physical as well as a map-/digital references to the monument.

In contrast to Offa's Dyke, this writer has been unable to identify unambiguous references to the Dyke deployed by businesses and services, but two primary schools have been named after the Dyke. One is now simply called Mynydd Isa primary school, while the adjacent public park retains the association (Figure 28). Yet, in Garden Village, Wrexham, there still exists a Wat's Dyke Primary School with a road called Wat's Dyke Way/Ffordd Clawdd Wat running parallel to it (Figure 29).

House-names alluding to the moument are prevalent in most settlements closely associated with Wat's Dyke's line and there are few in settlements detached from the monument (Figure 26). Yet it is street-names that are most fascinating, marking publicly the former line of the monument or its close proximity (Figure 27). Together, the house-names and street-names enshrine a dimension of the lost monument in local consciousness, either responding to the monument's line itself, or to historic place-names which referred to it. The densest concentration of street-names is in the Flintshire village of Mynydd Isa (Figure 30), but others along the monument's line are known from Holywell, Sychdyn, Pennyfordd, Llay, Wrexham and Oswestry (Figures 29 and 31). The challenge for the future is to positively utilise this relatively dormant but materially and textually latent referennces to the monument in naming practices for a school, park and roads to inform local people's interest in this monument and the broader stories of the Early Middle Ages it might serve to represent.

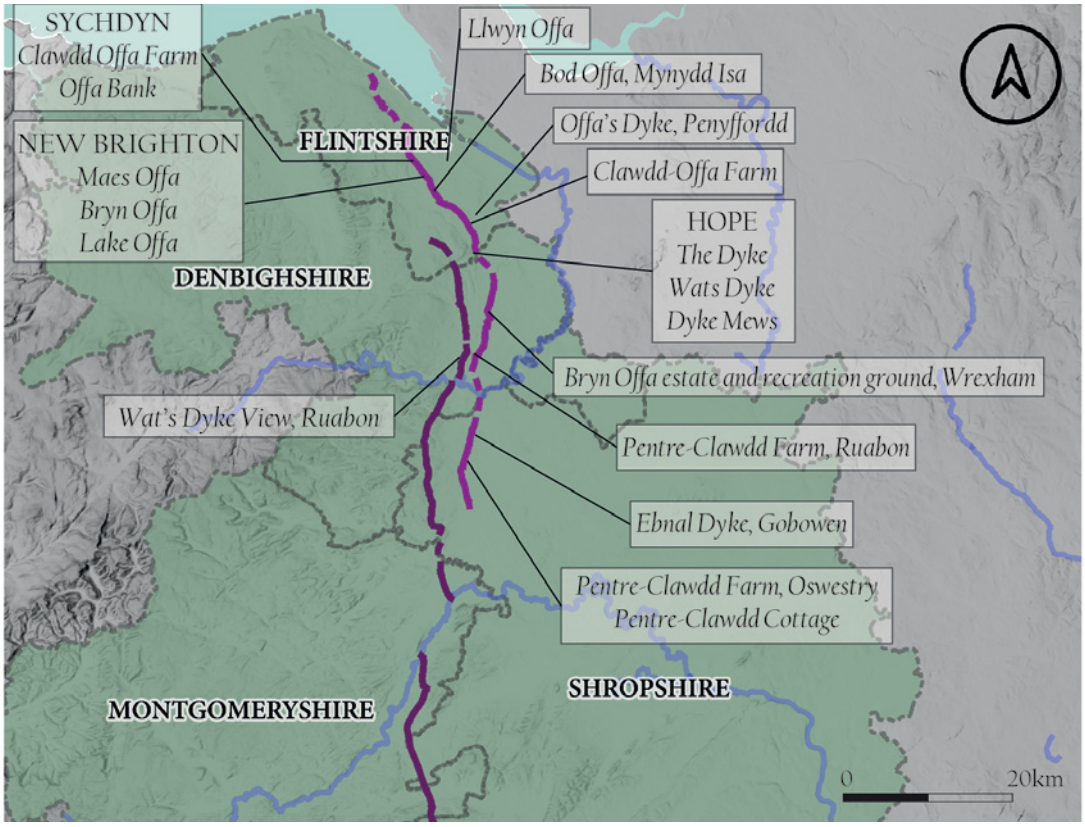

Figure 26 (above): House-names referencing Wat's Dyke (Basemap by Liam Delaney)

Figure 27 (below): Street-names referencing Wat's Dyke (Basemap by Liam Delaney)

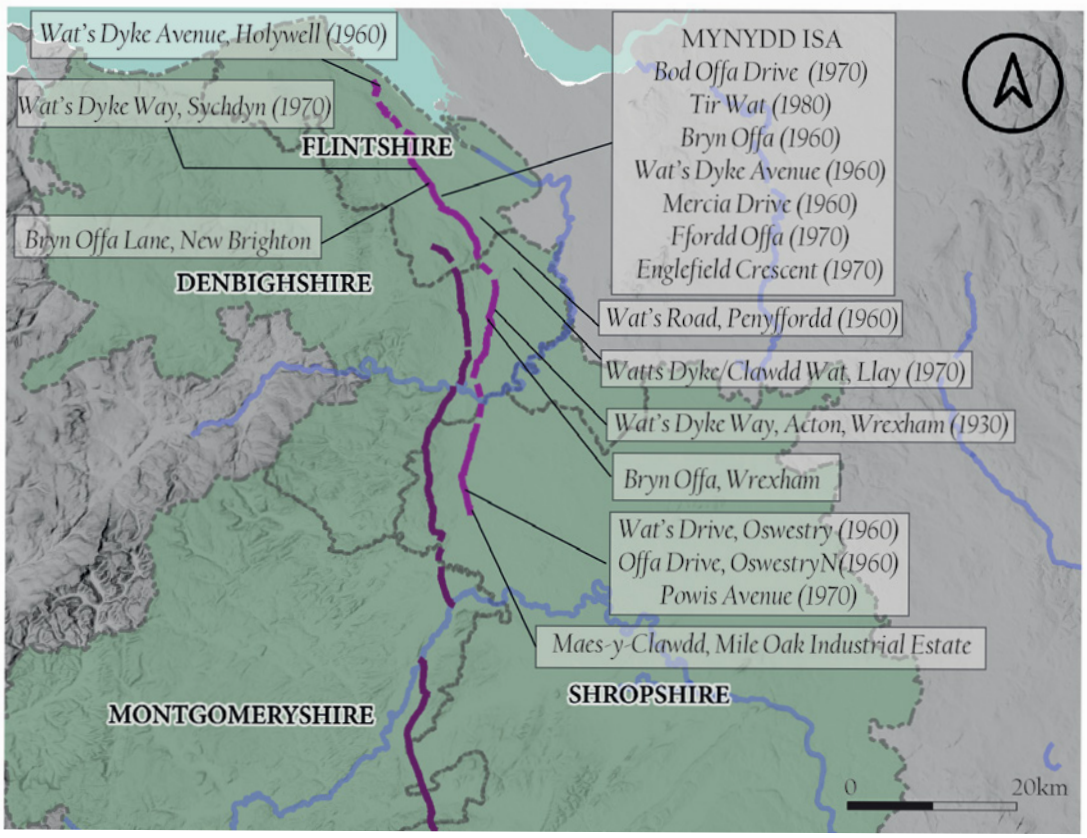

Figure 28: Signs in Wat's Dyke Park, Mynydd Isa (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2020)

Figure 29: Clawdd Wat Ysgol Gynradd/Wat's Dyke County Primary School, Wrexham (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2019)

There are further points of note. First, there is a clear preference for Wat's Dyke house-names and street-names in Wales. Second, it is clear that Wat's Dyke remains popularly understood as Offa's Dyke, or at least closely associated with Mercia and King Offa, through the street- and house-names. Together, it is evident that these toponyms presence the Dyke in its absence and thus embedded social memories of the monument in the local landscape (see also Witcher 2010: 145). Also, the references to the Dyke provide a potential resource for new engagements with the monument.

Figure 30a–f: Street-names in Mynydd Isa, Flintshire: (a) Ffordd Offa, (b) Englefield Crescent, (c) Mercia Drive, (d) Wats Dyke Avenue, (e) Bod Offa Drive, (f) Tir Wat (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2020)

Figure 31a–g (opposite): A selection of the street-names along Wat's Dyke from north to south: (a) Wat's Dyke Avenue, Holywell, (b) Wat's Dyke Way, Sychdyn, (c) Wats Road, Penyffordd, (d) Watts Dyke/Clawdd Wat, Llay, (e) Bryn Offa, Wrexham, (f) Wats Drive, Oswestry, (g) Offa Drive, Oswestry, (h) Maes-y-Clawdd, Mile Oak Industrial Estate, Oswestry (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2019/2020)


WAT'S DYKE AVENUE
WAT'S DYKE WAY
WAT'S ROAD
WATTS DYKE
CLAWDD WAT
BRYN OFFA
WATS DRIVE
OFFA DRIVE
MAES-Y-CLAWDD

Conclusion

This review of the heritage interpretation of Wat's Dyke makes clear that the monument, despite running through historic (former industrial and rural) landscapes, villages and towns, including North Wales's largest conurbation (Wrexham), remains poorly appreciated and understood, both by the public and by heritage organisations and professionals. Wat's Dyke is woefully under-represented and/or misrepresented in print and online maps, guides and other repositories and resources and it is omitted or poorly represented at heritage destinations via an eclectic set of out-dated on-site interpretation panels and other signs. Notably, the visual representations on these panels perpetuate ethno-nationalist discourses by presenting Wat's Dyke as a 'border' between 'England' and 'Wales', either explicitly or implicitly. Ironically, only in one location, within the Victorian part of a municipal Wrexham cemetery where the monument is covered by graves, can one see Wat's Dyke marked on the ground for visitors.

Yet the survey has also identified how Wat's Dyke as 'lived on' via naming practices (see also Williams 2020). Two primary schools (Mynydd Isa and Garden Village, Wrexham) have borne its name and one continues to do so. There are street-names where the Dyke has been largely obliterated, but these naming practices do more to materialise the monument in the landscape than any heritage initiatives and resources have been individually or collectively achieved. Ironically, it is thus in places where the monument is destroyed or subsumed by the contemporary conurbations where it is perhaps most prominently manifest in the contemporary historic environment. Yet, even in these naming practices, the Dyke's identity is mixed up with that of Offa and thus conflated and confused with its larger neighbour: Offa's Dyke. Hence, while the Dyke is accessible and marked for visitors at various points along its line, yet it remains generally ambiguous, mutable and intangible for experts, visitors and local people alike (see also Belford 2019).

The question is, therefore, how can academics and heritage professionals work with stakeholder communities to raise the public awareness, engagement and understanding of Wat's Dyke as part of the complex historic and cultural environment of the Welsh Marches? Moreover, how do we do so to combat not only pseudoarchaeological but also overt ethnonationalist narratives implicit in the popular characterisation of these early medieval linear monuments (Ray and Bapty 2016; Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2020)? As shown above, they are regularly glossed as 'borders' with all the present-day connotations this brings, rather than seeing them as current academics tend to do, as elements of complex multi-faceted and fluid frontier zones (e.g. Malim and Hayes 2008; Ray and Bapty 2016). While Griffiths et al. (2020) have recently identified challenges and recommendations for public archaeology in Wales, focusing on the work of the four Welsh Trusts, the specific demands of tackling linear monuments, their popular misconceptions and widespread neglect within authentic heritage discourse, and the specific the challenge of working not only across the English border to conduct research and public engagement (see also Belford 2020), have yet to be met.

This survey has identified the key resources currently deployed and identified their inadequacies. There have been other fresh initiatives, including:

- Fieldwork and publications raising awareness of contemporary monuments, notably the Pillar of Eliseg.[23]
- Through the efforts of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory, Wat's Dyke has been formally incorporated within the charitable aims of the Offa's Dyke Association coinciding with its 50th anniversary celebrations.[24]
- The availability of digital open-access academic research on Wat's Dyke through the *Offa's Dyke Journal*.[25]

[23] https://projecteliseg.wordpress.com/
[24] https://offasdyke.org.uk/chairmans-blog/
[25] http://revistas.jasarqueologia.es/index.php/odjournal/index

These are valuable developments. However, this chapter ends with some key proposals for future public engagement with Wat's Dyke in both England and Wales, which might help rectify and enhance the limitations and missed opportunities identified in the critique above:

1. The development of a research, conservation and management strategy for the monument tied to a plan for its implementation and connected to a coherent research strategy for further investigation into Wat's Dyke and its multi-period landscape setting;
2. The production of a coherent heritage 'brand' including signage, interpretation panels and both physical and digital resources about the monument. This might include an up-to-date map and guide book for visitors, available in print and online. A further valuable dimension would be a set of local, circular heritage trails to complement the existingn Wat's Dyke Way. Key to this will be exploring fresh media for conveying the key narratives about the monument's date, function and significance, as well as enhancing and updating existing digital resources in collaboration with existing heritage organisations and stakeholders, including art and sculpture at key locations along its route, involving locations where the monument remains tangible, but also areas where it has long been 'lost'. These might taken inspiration from the public art developed for the Antonine Wall (Jones this volume);[26]
3. Fostering and supporting community archaeology projects to research and sustain interest in the monument, particularly in areas where the monument is situated in close association with:
    - conurbations with established house- and street-naming practices;
    - heritage sites and monuments from other periods, from the industrial landscape of Greenfield Valley, the prehistoric hillfort of Bryn Alyn, the country house of Erddig Hall and Park and Old Oswestry Hillfort (see also Clarke et al. 2020: 232);
    - regional and local museums: notably in Wrexham.

It is for the companion study contained in this book (Swogger and Williams this volume) to propose further potential specific avenues for fresh initiatives, both tackling popular misconceptions and presenting fresh media and narratives for Wat's Dyke and its landscape context.

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[26] e.g. https://twitter.com/AntonineWall/status/1292475196511858690

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Envisioning Wat's Dyke

John G. Swogger and Howard Williams

In response to the challenge set by one of us (Williams this volume), this chapter explores new avenues for a public archaeology of Wat's Dyke. A host of digital and real-world initiatives for public and community engagement are suggested, but the focus is upon one new initiative: the What's Wat's Dyke? Heritage Trail which aims to envision Wat's Dyke within the town and suburbs of Wrexham using a comic medium. From this basis, the potential is explored for using the linearity of Wat's Dyke as a gateway to explore the complex historic and cultural landscapes of the Welsh Marches from prehistory to the present.

Introduction

Williams (this volume) sets the challenge: how do we develop new initiatives for engaging contemporary communities and visitors with the 'monumental intangibility' of Wat's Dyke, a c. 62km-long linear monument running along the edge of the Welsh uplands from the Dee estuary at Basingwerk (Flintshire) to the Morda Brook south of Maesbury (Shropshire) (Malim and Hayes 2008; Worthington Hill 2019; Malim 2020)? The stark neglect of this early medieval linear monument identified by Williams, both at heritage sites along its line, but also via digital resources, renders it open to physical damage, pseudoarchaeological and extremist political and ideological narratives, especially given the ongoing contentious nature of 'walls' past and present, in today's world (see also Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2020; Williams 2020a).[1] Williams identified that Wat's Dyke is ironcially more tangible in places where it is destroyed but preserved in naming practices of houses and streets, as well as schools and parks (see also Williams 2020b) than it is for visitors to (for example) English Heritage's Old Oswestry Hillfort and the National Trust's Erddig Hall and Gardens. And yet, even where it is accessible and recognised, it is subsumed within the identity of King Offa who is traditionally considered commissioner of the larger, neighbouring Offa's Dyke!

Williams makes clear that Wat's Dyke, despite running through historic landscapes and north-east Wales's largest conurbation – Wrexham – remains poorly appreciated and understood, both by the public and experts alike. Wat's Dyke is woefully under-represented in print and online maps, guides and other repositories and resources with few exceptions (see Burnham 1995; Lewis 2008). Furthermore, Wat's Dyke is omitted from, or poorly represented at, heritage destinations via out-dated on-site interpretation panels. The question is, therefore, how can we move forward to improve public awareness, engagement and understanding of Wat's Dyke?

Williams proposes:

1. A research, conservation and management strategy for Wat's Dyke and its multi-period landscape setting;
2. The production of a coherent heritage interpretation and 'brand' for the monument, including resources available in print and digitally;
3. Fostering and supporting community archaeology projects to research and sustain interest in the monument.

[1] https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2016/11/14/the-trump-wall-in-archaeological-perspective/; https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2019/03/02/trump-claims-medieval-walls-worked-they-absolutely-did/; https://almostarchaeology.com/post/182176393408/archaeotrollingthewall

We suggest heritage comics might contribute to each of these proposals, conveying the complex stories from tangible and intangible heritage in landscapes with rich biographies from prehistory to the present, of which Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke are elements (Swogger 2019a–c; see also Swogger 2020).

Background: digital and real-world strategies for public engagement

There is potential for multiple new initiatives to enhance long-term public engagements in and understandings of Wat's Dyke. These in turn might foster responsible and enduring relationships with place, both rural and urban, focusing the monument. As well as developing a research strategy, and conducting a conservation management plan akin to that developed for Offa's Dyke (Haygarth Berry Associates 2018), Wat's Dyke also requires community fieldwork projects. The groundwork is already in place for such initiatives, illustrated not only by the long-running Caer Alyn community archaeology project which has worked close to the line of Wat's Dyke, but also the sustained amateur and professional support to focus on Old Oswestry Hillfort as a heritage and conservation locus (Swogger 2019a; Clark *et al.* 2020). Building on Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's (CPAT) condition survey (Jones 2017), the value of engaging communities in fieldwork on, or close to, Wat's Dyke is demonstrated through the prominent fieldwork conducted in the National Trust-managed Erddig Park in 2018 (Belford 2019). Such interventions build on the long-standing precedent of the Offa's Dyke Project, run by David Hill and Margaret Worthington Hill, of using amateurs and students, at least some of whom were local people (Hill and Worthington 2003; Worthington Hill 2019). To these examples we might also add that fieldwork in and around those few contemporaneous or analogous monuments in the region, such as that conducted by Bangor University and the University of Chester at the Pillar of Eliseg, near Valle Crucis Abbey (Tong *et al.* 2015; Williams and Evans 2020), sheds light upon, and enhances public understanding of Wat's Dyke's broader context.

Indeed, part of the rationale of the establishment of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory has been to foster and connect communities and research networks together in developing new projects on Wat's Dyke and Offa's Dyke (Williams and Delaney 2019), including a blog dimension on the Collaboratory Wordpress site to promote news and foster debate and understanding about linear monuments.[2] In addition, the creation of a new academic peer-reviewed open-access journal to serve as a repository of high-quality resources including sites past and current research, the *Offa's Dyke Journal*, provides a rigorous foundation for public engagement activities moving forward. This is because, while an academic journal might be traditionally regarded as not public-facing, many enthusiasts and amateurs are willing and able to access academic literature directly via the Internet, and there is a thirst for in-depth quality information available open-access as opposed to behind paywalls.

Building on these initiatives, there is also considerable potential for podcasts and vlogs to become media for further dissemination of knowledge about linear monuments (Tong *et al.* 2015; Boyle 2019; Barkman-Astles 2019; Duckworth 2019).[3] As showcased at the recent *Special Offa* digital conference, virtual tours, YouTube videos, blog-posts and Twitter presentations afford diverse and innovative media for public engagement.[4] Furthermore, fostering community participation through initiatives like the Community Stewardship of Mercian Monuments (CoSMM) has the capability to provide a locally-based, but widespread network of 'citizen science', working with heritage organisations and academic institutions to foster local voices and engagement with linear monuments (see also Ray this volume).[5]

In addition to these field investigations and new digital resources, there is also considerable potential of enhancing pre-existing online platforms and their materials, including HERs records for Powys, wikis,

[2] https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com/
[3] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRD7gIrwOmLN_D4_0RbLtSA
[4] https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com/2020/04/06/__roundup/
[5] https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com/2017/10/08/community-stewardship-of-mercian-monuments-cosmm/

including the information available on Wikipedia, as well as more bespoke databases such as the long-running archaeological hub The Megalithic Portal.[6] In short, there are a plethora of interconnecting strategies which might be adopted to promote public appreciation and understanding of Wat's Dyke and its broader landscape settings through Flintshire, Wrexham and Shropshire. This includes places where the Dyke's course intersects with both earlier monuments (including Old Oswestry Hillfort and Bryn Alyn (Caer Alyn) hillfort) and later features of archaeological and historical significance, including medieval and modern rural, urban and industrial landscapes.

What's Wat's Dyke? A heritage comic for Wrexham

As one distinctive avenue that has the potential to possess multiple real-world and digital dimensions, we suggest comics as a potential powerful and versatile medium for fostering public engagement and understanding of Wat's Dyke and its landscape contexts. Hence, we have devised and are in the process of implementing a Wrexham Comic Heritage Trail titled: *What's Wat's Dyke?* Wrexham seems an ideal test-case, as North Wales' largest town, and allows us to tackle stretches of the Dyke which are destroyed and denuded as well as those where the Dyke is well-preserved. In doing so, we build on both blog-posts and now YouTube videos created by one of us (HW), extending his initial series of eight locations where you can see Wat's Dyke to a total of 15 potential readily accessible situations where locals and others can visit the monument (Table 1; Figure 1).[7] Using a selection of these places, our aims are to:

1. foster local people's and tourists' ability to engage with the monument as it is, and imagine how it was;

2. craft a story to include landscape and biography and engagement with the different materials and components of the linear monument;

3. encourage recognition of the wider significance in early medieval linear earthworks in comparative terms – part of local borderland stories, as well as both 'English' and 'Welsh' national stories, and wider comparative international stories of conflict, territoriality, ideology and identity in frontier zones past and present.

The nature of Wat's Dyke around Wrexham presents a series of particular challenges to interpreting the monument in a way that explains its history and construction, its original context and meaning, and what has happened to the monument in the centuries up to the present day. Because of the broken and interrupted nature of the monument and its varied accessibilities and scales of survival, any explanation has to account not just for the monument itself where it can be seen, but also for the spaces between where it survives: its absence as well as its presence within the heritage landscape of Wrexham. But despite the fact that the surviving fragments of the dyke can be difficult to see, difficult to access and difficult to interpret, an engaging story about the monument, its 9th-century functions and meanings, and its later history, can be told to those who visit it - as was discovered when the authors toured the dyke in autumn 2019.[8] In our exploration, from horse paddocks in Pandy through housing estates and cemeteries in central Wrexham to the National Trust estate at Erddig (Figure 2), it became clear that the key to understanding the monument lay in being able to (1) spot what was hidden, (2) reconstruct what had vanished, and (3) provide context for what was isolated or disjointed. As we talked about how Wat's Dyke could be better presented for public audiences, these three things developed into key objectives for any visualisations.

[6] https://www.megalithic.co.uk/
[7] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRD7gIrwOmLN_D4_0RbLtSA
[8] See also: https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2019/01/03/where-can-you-visit-wats-dyke-in-wrexham/

Figure 1: Table of the key locations of Wat's Dyke in Wrexham identified Howard Williams's blog-post 'Where can you visit Wat's Dyke in Wrexham' augmented by others and subject to discussion in this chapter as foci for the development of the *What's Wat's Dyke* comic

Map Number	Location Name	Features	Access
1	Alyn Waters Country Park	No surviving traces of the monument on the scarp above the valley, but the likely line of the Dyke frames the top of the valley slope overlooking the country park	Access on foot or bicycle. If arriving by car, park in one of the designated car parks for Alyn Waters Country Park and walk or cycle from there
2	Llay New Road	No clear traces of the dyke surviving, but the top of scarp overlooking the Alyn is where the Dyke likely ran	Access on foot on the Wat's Dyke Way, or park and walk from Alyn Waters Country Park
3	Bryn Alyn Hillfort	The possible line of the Dyke descending into the valley from the site of the Iron Age hill-fort	The hillfort itself is on private land, but the footpath beside the river allows views
4	Bluebell Lane, Pandy	Multiple surviving sections of Wat's Dyke surviving as field boundaries	Park on Bluebell Lane, Pandy and on public footpath across the fields following the Wat's Dyke Way
5	Tegwen Lane, Garden Village	A section of Wat's Dyke preserved as a property boundary facing over a public park between housing developments leading uphill to Wat's Dyke Primary School	Park on Wat's Dyke Way or Tegwen Lane and accessible on foot or bicycle
6	Wat's Dyke Primary School	The monument survives in a 'green lung' stretching south of Wat's Dyke Primary School west of Buckingham Road	Park by Wat's Dyke Primary School or on Buckingham Road and access on foot or by bicycle
7	Crispin Lane, Wrexham	Wat's Dyke survives on line-side land east of Crispin Lane	Park on Crispin Lane or walk from Wrexham General railway station.
8	Premier Inn, Wrexham General Railway Station	A reconstructed segment of Wat's Dyke sits adjacent to the Premier Inn parallel to the railway line	Opposite Wrexham General railway station
9	Coleg Cambria, Wrexham	South of the Ruthin Road, Wat's Dyke survives beside allotments and an alleyway	Walk from Morrisons supermarket, Bellevue Park
10	Wrexham Cemetery	Wat's Dyke runs through the older graves on the west side of the municipal cemetery	Park at Wrexham Cemetery or in layby on the Ruabon Road
11	Court Wood	A well-preserved pair of sections of Wat's Dyke used as a modern property marker	Accessible on foot from any of the National Trust car park situated on the Erddig estate, on Wat's Dyke Way
12	Erddig Castle	The Anglo-Norman castle of Erddig reused a location deployed in the line of Wat's Dyke	Accessible on foot from any of the National Trust car park situated on the Erddig estate
13	Big Wood, Erddig	Well-preserved segments of the monument in woodland between the castle and Erddig Hall	Accessible on foot from any of the National Trust car park situated on the Erddig estate
14	The Rookery, Erddig Park	A well-preserved section of Wat's Dyke overlooking the Black Brook	Accessible on foot from any of the National Trust car park situated on the Erddig estate, on Wat's Dyke Way
15	South of Bryn Goleu to Middle Sontley	A well-preserved section of Wat's Dyke	Accessible on foot from any of the National Trust car park situated on the Erddig estate, on Wat's Dyke Way

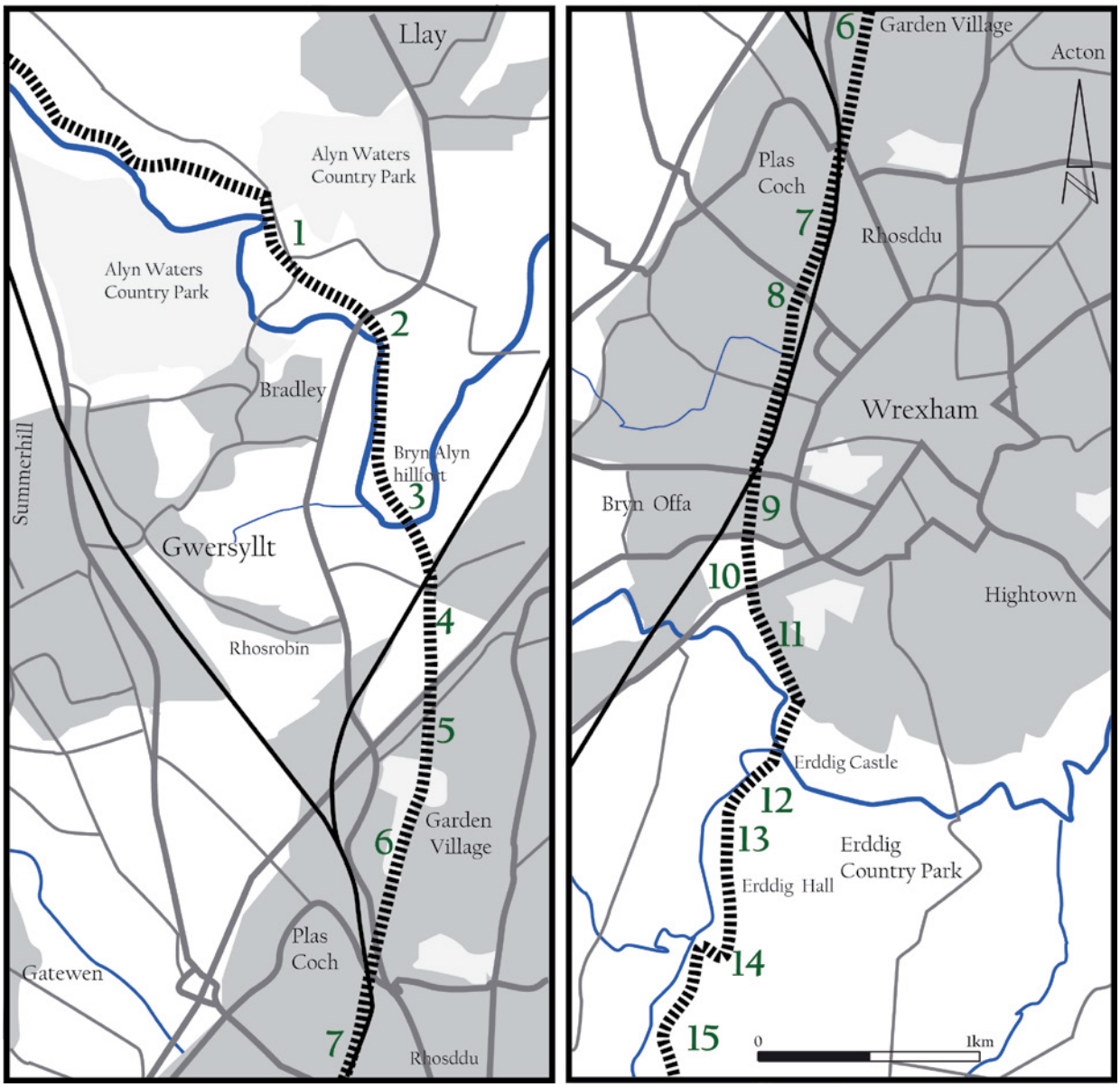

Figure 1: Map of the key locations of Wat's Dyke in Wrexham identified for HW's blog-post 'Where can you visit Wat's Dyke in Wrexham?' augmented by others and subject to discussion in this paper as foci for the development of the What's Wat's Dyke comic. Map by Howard Williams, 2020

Where Wat's Dyke survives around Wrexham, it does so primarily in marginal (sub)urban spaces: in fields at the edge of villages (south of Bluebell Lane, Pandy, location 4), in non-spaces at the back of gardens (around Garden Village/Croes Eneurys, locations 5 and 6) and allotments (south side of Ruthin Road, location 9), at the margins of alleyways (behind Alexandra Road, location 9 also) or by the sides of busy roads (along Crispin Road/Wrexham FC (location 7). The bank is often eroded, the ditch filled-in; both are frequently overgrown with grass and weeds or obscured beneath hedgerows and ivy. Even when in the company of a knowledgeable tour guide, it was not always possible to say with confidence exactly where the Wat's Dyke was – or is. Indeed, even where it was marked the signing was misleading (Wrexham Cemetery, location 10) or even inaccurate (Erddig, location 11), where it seemed most visible, it turned out be an entirely spurious – but un-signposted – reconstruction (at the edge of the Premier

Figure 2: A panorama view of a well-preserved section of Wat's Dyke at The Rookery in Erddig Park, south of Erddig Hall, Wrexham (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

Figure 3: Wat's Dyke reconstructed between the railway line and the Premier Inn just south of Wrexham General railway station, looking south (Photograph: Howard Williams, 2020)

Inn near Wrexham General railway station, location 8, Figure 3).

Visualisations of the Dyke, or even its route, were of little help: dashed lines on a map confusingly indicated both Wat's Dyke and the Wat's Dyke path – or maybe they didn't (Erddig); dashed lines elsewhere were more suggestive of a buried, underground or hidden feature – when, in fact, the dyke was at that point highly visible and well-delineated (Wrexham Cemetery). While following the route of Wat's Dyke would test the most determined of urban antiquarians, it is that antiquarian eye which helped us spot Wat's Dyke hiding within the urban landscape. The route of the dyke is also a pathway through the history of the growth and development of Wrexham: from schools to suburbs, from supermarkets to allotments, from cemetery expansion to the declining fortunes of the local gentry. If you know what to look for, Wat's Dyke carves a very distinctive narrative through the 21st-century town and its suburbs. More significantly, excavation by CPAT at Erddig (Belford 2019) has

Figure 4: The alley to Buckingham Road, Garden Village, Wrexham; (a) top: looking north-east along the line of the monument; (b) bottom-left: looking west down the slope of the bank with figures standing on the line of the ditch, (c) bottom-right: looking east up the bank along the alley (Photographs: Howard Williams, 2020)

demonstrated that even where very little of the Dyke can be seen, the greatest surviving portion of both bank and ditch is buried; what survives as visible is only part of the story.

Thus, any guide to Wat's Dyke would need to be able to help those touring the dyke to spot not only the hidden survivals of the monument itself, but the later historical and landscape clues that point to its ghostly presence within the town. With this in mind, any visualisation of the dyke would need to not only reveal the shape and form of the Dyke itself, but note the relationship to later historical and landscape features that provide clues as to the invisible presence of the Dyke. Utilising illustrations familiar to archaeology – cutaways, overlays, sections, etc. – annotated with captions and diagrammatic visuals, and accompanied by a narrative explanation, both Dyke and 'absence of Dyke' can be picked out from the historical jumble and urban clutter of the modern landscape.

A good example of this would be the portion of the dyke at the southern end of the Wat's Dyke county school 'clear strip' to the alleyway leading to Buckingham Road (location 6: SJ 33185 51857). Here, the dyke is visible as a ground-level feature under hedges and garden fences, but is then very neatly sectioned by the alleyway, the tarmac of which underfoot describes the profile of the bank extremely clearly (Figure 4). However, to most people this might very well seem to be nothing more than an inconvenient hump in the path – an obstacle to prams and a hazard to cyclists. A comic panel visualisation of this portion of the dyke (Figure 5) could show through cutaway, overlay and section what these features mean in terms of elucidating the form and extent of the Dyke – and, in the shape of Howard (as narrator) and some speech-bubbles, provide a narrative explanation, framed by references to contemporary research (Swogger 2019a: 149). The difference that a narrated visual explanation can make is illustrated by a parallel example of a comic panel about general features of Offa's Dyke (Figure 6). One could imagine the photograph on the left accompanied by the text on the right in a popular or even academic publication; yet when image and text are combined, and a narrator introduced, an entirely different form of explanatory graphic emerges. Even where the line of the dyke has been utterly lost with the construction of houses, roads and the railway, such an approach will help to visualise what is no longer visible, and explain what has been forgotten. In many ways, the tour we conducted in October 2019, or the video tour of Offa's Dyke around Trefonen produced for the 'Special Offa' online event,[9] are models for how we would envisage such comics: the diagrammatic graphics drawing from traditions of archaeological illustration 'materialising' the archaeological and antiquarian view that helps identify and reveal the presence of a vanished monument in the landscape, accompanied by a narrative explanation that makes it engaging and accessible to an audience with no prior understanding of the monument or its broader contexts.

The 'pilot project' based on this idea is – at this stage in our planning – to take the form of a map, designed to guide visitors to Wat's Dyke across Wrexham by car, bike or on foot, viewing different sections of the monument as they do. The choice of points on this map, and the design of the visualisations will help tell the larger story of the reasons for the dyke being sited where it was, the different ways in which it was constructed, and the reasons why it no longer survives as a contiguous whole. Almost incidentally, such an explanation will also serve to introduce audiences to the rest of the history of Wrexham: Wat's Dyke providing a literal and metaphorical thread to follow through the town's story.

If the eventual aim of better presenting Wat's Dyke is to better engage both local as well as visiting audiences with the monument, then it may be that interpretations of the dyke will need to move away from 'specialist', site-based presentations. Exploring how local communities already engage with Wat's Dyke – even just as a street name – may provide a useful starting point for alternative mechanisms for engagement.

[9] https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com/2020/04/06/__roundup/

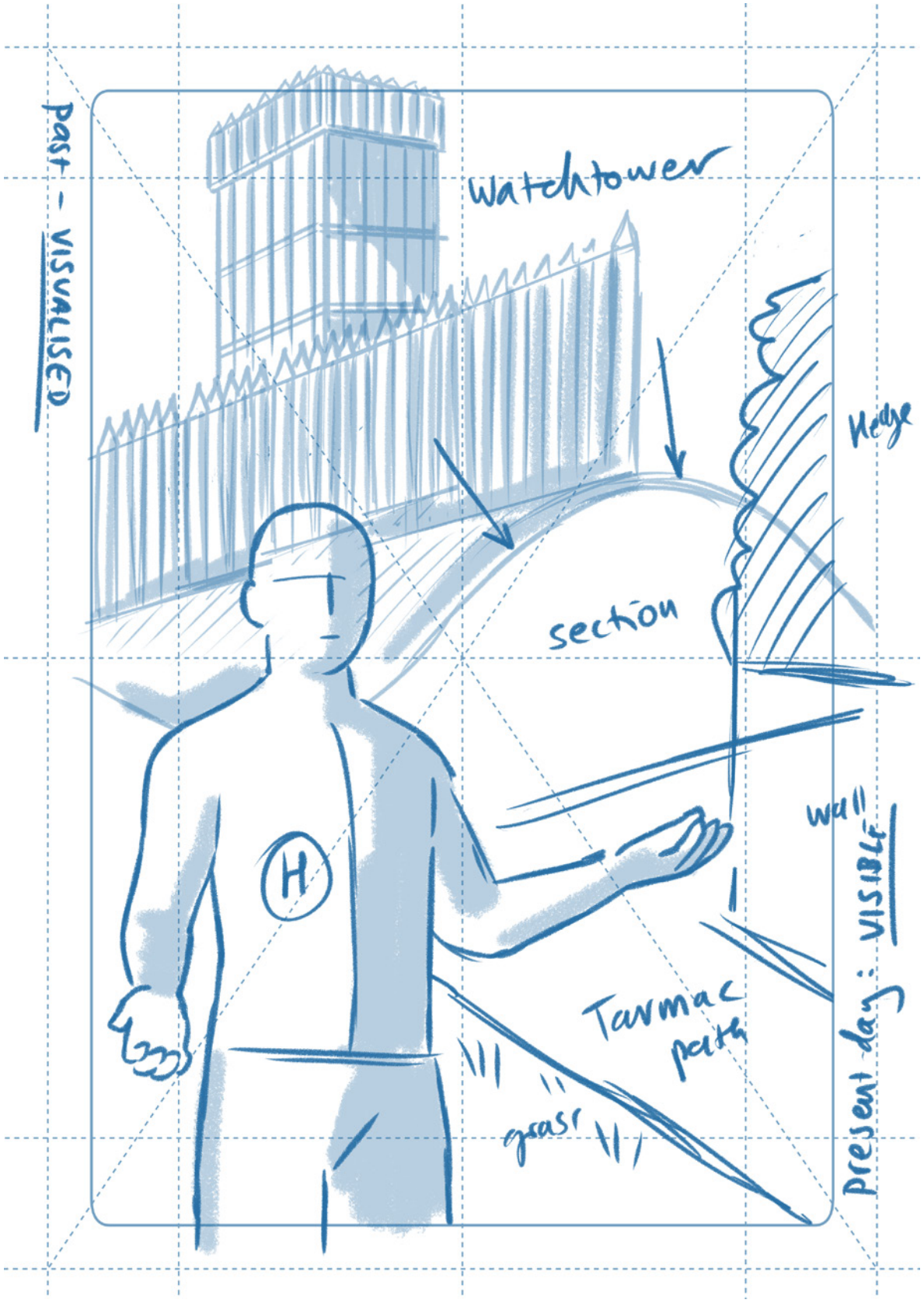

Figure 5: Rough draft of comic panel for Wat's Dyke map leaflet (John G. Swogger)

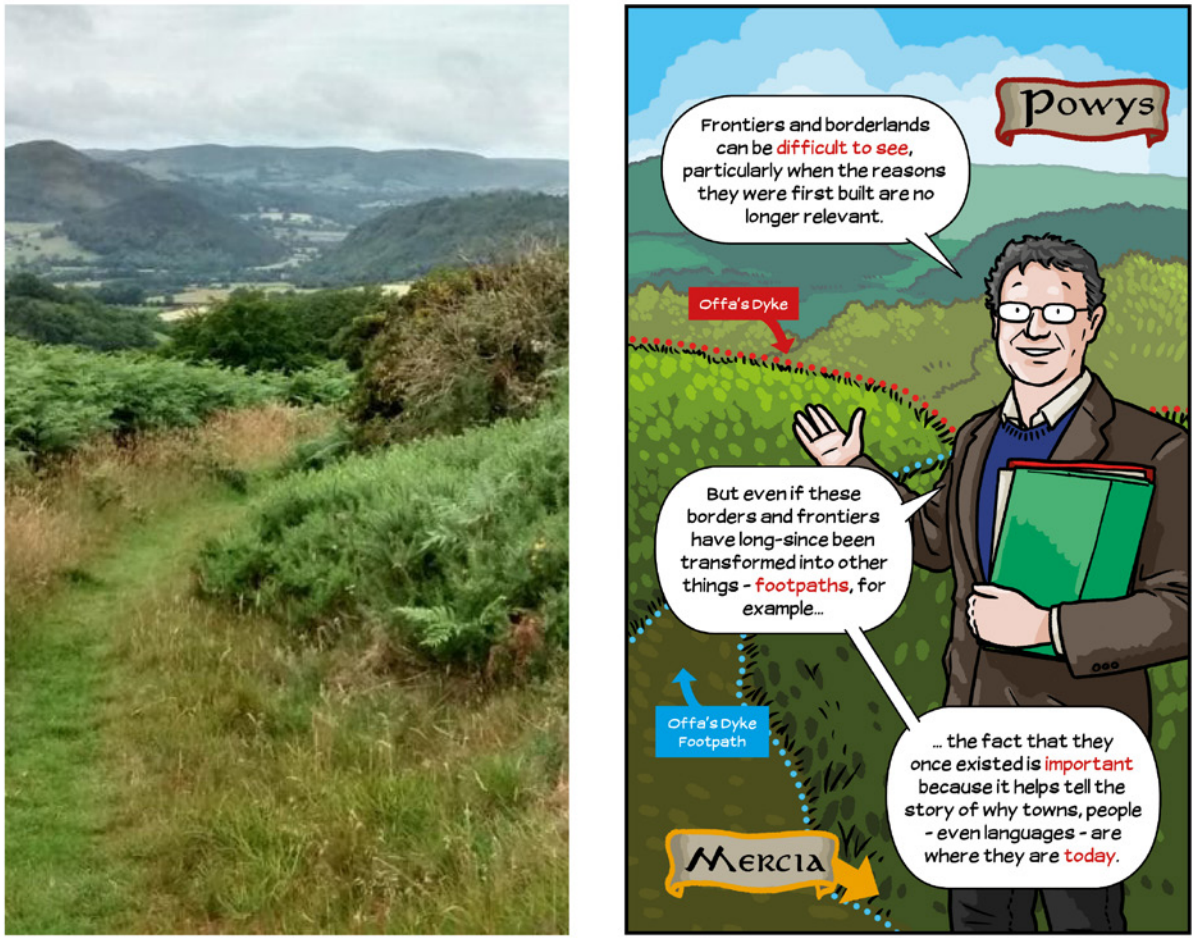

Figure 6: Comic panel and photograph of Offa's Dyke, demonstrating how drawings can be annotated to enhance visibility of a monument and a narrator used to provide a researcher-fronted explanation (John G. Swogger)

During the Oswestry Heritage Comics project, it was both interesting and surprising to note the number of local people who, having become familiar with the format and content of the comics, came forward with suggestions for new strips. The project was planned with a long list of ideas for topics to be covered. But by the six-month mark, halfway through the project, that list was no longer needed: readers of the comics themselves had come forward with more than enough suggestions about what they would like to see in the series. The collected anthology (Swogger 2019b) demonstrates how the number of such stories increased as the series progressed, more often than not narrated by the person who had made the suggestion. These ranged from local heritage enthusiasts to full-time amateur researchers. Their participation not only expanded the number of stories the comics were able to tell, it expanded the *range* of stories which could be told: to include research and family biography that was important to the story of Oswestry, but unlikely to make its way into any mainstream narrative of the town's history. Through these conversations, the comics became a dialogue, as local researchers moved beyond being simply informants to become collaborators and colleagues (Swogger 2019a: 155; Swogger 2020). Such forms of engagement can be enabled by the collaborative nature of the medium of comics itself (cf. Brienza *et al.* 2016: 126), at once inclusively validating enthusiasm and interest in local heritage without forcing it to conform to 'elite' models of scholarly communication (cf. Perry 2018: 223–224, Atalay 2012: 118, Swogger 2000: 129–131). Through the use of comics as a collaborative process as well as a medium, it became clear that local communities were already engaged with their heritage. In many instances, this was in ways significantly different from academic historians and archaeologists. It became clear, for

Figure 7: Four panels from a tribal community NAGPRA comics workshop. They were drawn as part of an exercise on what the term "heritage" meant to the participants. In these four panels, participants drew comics which connected "heritage" to traditional spirituality, community mental health, school truancy and dawning political awareness. Redrawn by J.Swogger, 2020 (cf. Barry 2014)

example, that many local people understand Old Oswestry hillfort much more in terms of its importance as a place where one goes for a walk 'to clear one's head' and get away from the pressures of everyday life (Evans 2019: 2), as a green space and an ecological refuge in an increasingly urbanised landscape, or as a focus for art and creative engagements, community volunteering or pride (Swogger 2019b: 3, 12, 15, 19, 35, 37, 41, 44, 47, 50, also Evans 2019) before they then understand it as a significant archaeological or historical space.

A dialogic approach that helps reveal how communities envisage the local past can help design more relevant approaches to comics-based communications. In the United States, a collaborative project between the University of Colorado and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and Native American communities in Michigan and North Dakota has created comics about the repatriation of Native American sacred items from museum collections back to tribes. These comics have been written in collaboration with tribal members, historians and archaeologists, as well as other community members. The aim has been to communicate to archaeological and non-archaeological audiences – as well as Native and non-Native audiences – why and how repatriations take place, and why they are so important.[10] There is a great deal of archaeological and legal information to communicate, and – as each comic is based on a set of case-studies – a great deal of

[10] https://nagpracomics.weebly.com/

personal testimony from the repatriation participants to communicate as well. During a research trip to Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota to work with tribal historians and language specialists of the Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara nation, community workshops were used to show how comics about subjects raised by NAGPRA were written and illustrated.[11] During the workshop exercises, participants quickly moved from the rather narrow definition of 'heritage' suggested by the NAGPRA stories, to one which included everything from education and sports achievement to language revitalisation and political activism. In narrating the importance of 'heritage', participants' daily and personal engagement with the past naturally segued into other kinds of engagements: hobbies and past-times, family and friends, travel and business, aspirations and worries about the future. In these community comics workshops, it was possible to witness first-hand how 'the past' could not always be presented simply in terms of objective, academic information, but was inextricably linked – as well as given meaning and context – through connections with other aspects of community life (Figure 7). In the Pacific island nation of Palau, this approach is being used on a collaborative and connected project framework for comics about the impact of climate change on cultural heritage that frames archaeological data and historical narrative within the community's own understanding of their past (Swogger in press). New NAGPRA comics projects with the Kumeyaay tribes in California and the White Earth Chippewa in the Midwest, are now structured so that community comics workshops – focusing not just on heritage, but on community issues more widely – are an integral part of the project design (J. Shannon and M. Connolly, pers. comm.). While similar projects have been successful elsewhere (Brophy and Sackett 2019), and during the Oswestry Heritage Comics project (Swogger 2019b: 9), the NAGPRA projects have developed a broader, less specifically heritage-focused storytelling curriculum for community workshops (Shannon and Swogger 2019) which have been helpful in fostering a dialogic and empowered approach to collaborative heritage storytelling.

Exploring how communities and individuals in Wrexham already connect to their heritage beyond archaeological data and historical facts would enable a story about Wat's Dyke to be told that was both archaeologically and historically accurate, as well as relevant and meaningful. Workshops – perhaps organised around Dyke-related street or place-names, or businesses located on or near the Dyke, such as Morrisons, Erddig or the Maelor Hospital – that used comics as a medium to explore both aspects could be incorporated into onward projects as a way to work on a broad and inclusive biography of Wat's Dyke in partnership with local communities, enabling their voices to be heard in the story of the Dyke and its landscapes.

Such a story may well need more than a single leaflet; a longer-form narrative, perhaps, created with the express intention of taking the story beyond the environs of the Dyke itself – beyond guidebooks and maps and interpretation boards, and into other, more 'vernacular' spaces within the community. Rather than frame the act of visiting the monument as the only meaningful context for information about the Dyke, the process of creating a longer-form, community-informed work might suggest new spaces for public-facing information away from the problematically-(in)visible monument. Just as the now-vanished railway heritage of Wrexham is commemorated in photographic displays in the Morrisons supermarket which stands on the former yard site, so too might a more broadly-visualised story of Wat's Dyke be commemorated in the Premier Inn or the Wrexham football club grounds. Comics lend themselves to display and presentation of heritage information in local contexts where text-only, jargon-heavy information may struggle (Swogger 2019a). This includes display spaces away from sites and museums, print spaces such as local newspapers and community noticeboards, and digital spaces such as local history pages on social media. Such presentations could bring the complexity of the Wat's Dyke story – of linear earthworks as part of local borderland as well as both 'English' and 'Welsh' national stories, of wider comparative international stories of conflict, territoriality, ideology and identity in frontier zones past and present – to audiences who might find new and unexpected meanings in them, and a new and unexpected reason to value the archaeology and heritage from which those stories spring.

[11] https://nagpracomics.weebly.com/project-updates/comics-workshops-at-mandan-hidatsa-arikara-nation

The ability of comics to meld context and explanation, to unravel and re-present complex subjects and yet remain engaging and accessible, means it has the potential to bring more than just clear explanations to the issues surrounding Wat's Dyke (cf. Witek 1989: 153). Through dialogue with community voices, through the use of novel arenas for debate and conversation, comics could become a 'common language to discuss archaeological and cultural heritage issues' (Atalay 2012: 180) such as wider issues of preservation, conservation, and interpretation not just of Wat's Dyke, but other aspects of Wrexham's history with which it intersects.

Future directions and further applications

There are interesting connections to be explored between comics and other forms of outreach media: animation being the most obvious. There has always been a strong historical and popular culture link between printed comics and animation – Tintin, Asterix and Marvel superheroes have all started life as printed comic books before being adapted as animated shorts or full-length films. The advent of digital animation technologies has made the process of adapting comics to animation significantly cheaper, easier and quicker than it once was. The rise of freely-accessible video sharing sites online, and the ease with which those are now integrated into social media makes it quick, easy and affordable to distribute animated video to a wide public audience. This all raises the possibility of creating animations based on Wat's Dyke comics which would increase their reach and diversify the scope of their public engagement. Indeed, even the process of creating the animations could become an opportunity for engagement. A 'Wat's Dyke Animation Project' could involve the media and graphics departments of schools and colleges in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, giving students a chance to shadow the project, using their own local heritage to learn skills and liaise with industry mentors. Video documentation of the process could be used to develop further levels of engagement, as well as link with local television and radio. Such a multi-media approach would enable communities to engage with the documentation, interpretation and presentation of Wat's Dyke in multiple ways, broadening the definition of the dyke as a community asset. Such a multi-media approach could also be specifically designed to integrate with other, existing public outreach and engagement programmes. Young Archaeologists Club (YAC) participants could be encouraged to get involved in the animation shadowing at school, for example, while any documentary video about the process of creating the animations would make appealing display content for the Offa's Dyke Centre, and so on. More broadly, such an approach could be specifically tailored to fit into local engagement forums – such as the "Special Offa" event at Trefonen in April 2020.

Indeed, it might be interesting to use the opportunities that developing a comic about Wat's Dyke present to explore how researchers could make better use in a more general sense of both visualisation and visual presentation in their work. Discussions about both Wat's Dyke and Offa's Dyke (and, indeed, other earthwork monuments) often draw upon interpretative visual assumptions that have never (or rarely) been visualised. In academic discourse, authors often appeal to their readers' visual imaginations in debating features such as gateways, bridges, roads, fortifications and on the position of earthwork monuments in the landscape (e.g. Ray and Bapty 2016: 236, 247, 255–257) but are rather more reluctant to put such visualisations down on paper. Hill and Worthington's use of 'comic strip sketches' to visualise the possibility of beacons, the use of ranging poles during construction and the landscape context of Offa's Dyke is a notable and laudable exception, making comics already part of the heritage of borderlands earthwork research (Hill and Worthington 2003: 113ff, a model for Swogger 2019a:147, see Figure 8). Archaeological reconstructions, like all scientific 'drawings', are often less about 'the way that they reflect or represent ideas, but more about the way that they construct those very ideas' (Moser 1998: 171) – partly by omission. Lack of visualisation can imply that there is no story to tell (cf. Frank 2012: 75), leading readers and researchers to resist challenging the assumptions of existing models. But, as such appeals to the imagination suggest – and as Alan Sorrell once so rightly observed – visualisation

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Figure 8: An expanded 'comic strip sketch', demonstrating how the principle of using sequential illustrations can be used to help visualise complex archaeological, historical and contemporary processes which affect earthwork monuments (John G. Swogger)

is crucial to the process of archaeological interpretation, and '...cannot be properly considered without it.' (Sorrell 1981:20).

Yet it should also not simply be considered an afterthought; archaeological visualisation should be an integral part of the process of interpretation and reporting (Sorrell 1981: 22). Unlike in traditional reconstruction art, where "well-informed guesswork" is historically suspect (Dobie 2019: 27), comics present researchers with the opportunity to show and explain not just archaeological knowledge, but the process by which that knowledge is created - guesswork and all (Clark *et al.* 2019: 19). Including researchers as visible narrators of a comic about the work of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory is a step in this direction (Swogger 2019b: 42), but this can, and should, be taken much further. In talking about the use of comics to engage with 'community', one should not forget that those who research, conserve and protect earthwork monuments like Wat's Dyke are also a community. Comics can be a form of research methodology: synergies between words and pictures used to explore new ways of seeing relationships between textual and image-based information (Sousanis 2015:57ff). The structure of the Collaboratory and its meetings – in bringing together researchers, academics and field workers with a broad range of interests and backgrounds – lends itself perfectly, for example, to the running of visualisation workshops *as research*, sessions in which both the ideas and the construction of those ideas can be both worked on and recorded in visual format. Documentation of such sessions might then constitute both an important academic resource as well as an important outreach resource: helping both to clarify and codify archaeological interpretation of the dyke as well as explaining and presenting the process by which archaeological knowledge is created to a wider audience. There is no reason why such potential future directions should not be considered in the context of a broadly-applicable model for creative engagements with frontiers, borderlands and their monuments elsewhere across Europe and around the globe.

Conclusion

Comics offer more than simply a novel way to do public outreach for Wat's Dyke. The medium – its process as much as its product – offers the study of frontiers, borderlands and their associated monuments a toolset with which to address issues relating to paradoxical (in)visibility, shifting ontologies and problematised community engagement. That toolset can be used to drive practical, audience-led responses to the need and desire for clear and accessible information. And while the use of comics in public outreach about community heritage is a new field of both practice and research (Swogger 2019a), projects can be designed to be reflexive, able to adapt and respond to changing community feedback and needs, capable of showing what monuments like Wat's Dyke mean as 'heritage' beyond archaeology and history. Such approaches should also include the community of researchers around Wat's Dyke and other earthwork monuments, and the visual explanations that are integral to their work. They should also include connections to other media and forms of visualisation discourse, such as professional-level visual workshopping, and be conceptualised as part of a model with applications beyond the earthwork monuments of the English-Welsh borderlands.

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Watching Walls: Frontier Archaeology and *Game of Thrones*

Emma Kate Vernon

George R.R. Martin took his inspiration for The Wall ice structure lined with forts from a visit to Hadrian's Wall. From his books and the hit television adaptations, the Westeros barrier is perhaps the best-known fantasy linear monument, enduring for millennia, garrisoned by those whom have forgotten its original purpose, dividing the Seven Kingdoms from the Wildlings. This chapter reflects on its significance from an archaeological perspective, not only because of its inspiration from Roman Britain, but its potential to engage audiences in how and why ancient and contemporary frontier complexes were built, their life-histories and afterlives, as well as their ultimate futility. While this magical and gargantuan barrier seems far removed from any real historical barrier, it has a direct bearing on the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands.

Boundaries are spaces that are physical and metaphorical, and are visible structures or agreed geographical boundaries in the archaeological record. Newman (2006: 177) describes them as both invisible and tangible. Frontiers and borderlands have been adopted by fictional media, often drawing on physical, archaeological places in order to develop the dynamics within a fictional world. This is evident within the popular fantasy film franchises, such as *The Lord of the Rings* (where mountain ranges and rivers constitute borders and walls demarcate fortresses and cities), and television series, notably *Game of Thrones*. The consumption of fictional films and television shows by the public can be exposed to archaeological evidence through a fantastical lens. However, the lines between the human past that provide the inspiration and the fiction of the frontiers becomes blurred in the popular imagination. This chapter evaluates how the fantasy television series *Game of Thrones* (*GoT*) mediates contemporary ideas about linear monuments and their frontier contexts, past and present, through popular entertainment.

Game of Thrones began as a book series by George R.R. Martin (*A Song of Fire and Ice*: with the first novel entitled *A Game of Thrones* 1996), and was adapted for television, directed by Benioff and Weiss, which recently concluded its eighth and final series (*GoT* 2011–2019). The franchise follows the conflicts between the leading houses of the fictional continents of Westeros and Essos, with the ultimate goal being to secure the Iron Throne of the former.

If we conceptualise a frontier as a physical division between places, land or people, The Wall in *Game of Thrones* is typical of this description in one regard. The Wall is portrayed in both the book and television series as an imposing, monumental, defended structure made of ice that crosses the width of Westeros from coast to coast (Martin 1996: 178, 180). Standing at least 700 feet high and 3000 miles long, it was garrisoned by nineteen forts, each protecting a gateway. This fantastical ice barrier is of far greater magnitude than any real-world linear monument, dwarfing the greatest walls past and present (Figure 1). The Wall's purpose is to defend Westeros from what lies north of The Wall, although we meet its contemporary, reduced, garrison unaware of its original purpose. The perceived primary threat presented in both the books and television series are the Wildlings, who populate the land to the north of The Wall; yet the origins of the Wall were lost in the distant past. Only later do we learn it was first created to defend from the supernatural White Walkers (Martin 1996: 178, 180). The structure primarily functions in a militaristic sense, with intentions to control trade, as well as who enters and leaves Westeros, where a system of signals operate that communicate who is approaching The Wall (Martin 1996: 535-547; Season 2 Episode 10). The series defines the purpose of the Wall from the onset, conveying to audiences the complications that defending a frontier might have, and illustrating their extent in the opening sequences (Season 1, Episode 1). And yet, as Larrington (2016: 74) identifies,

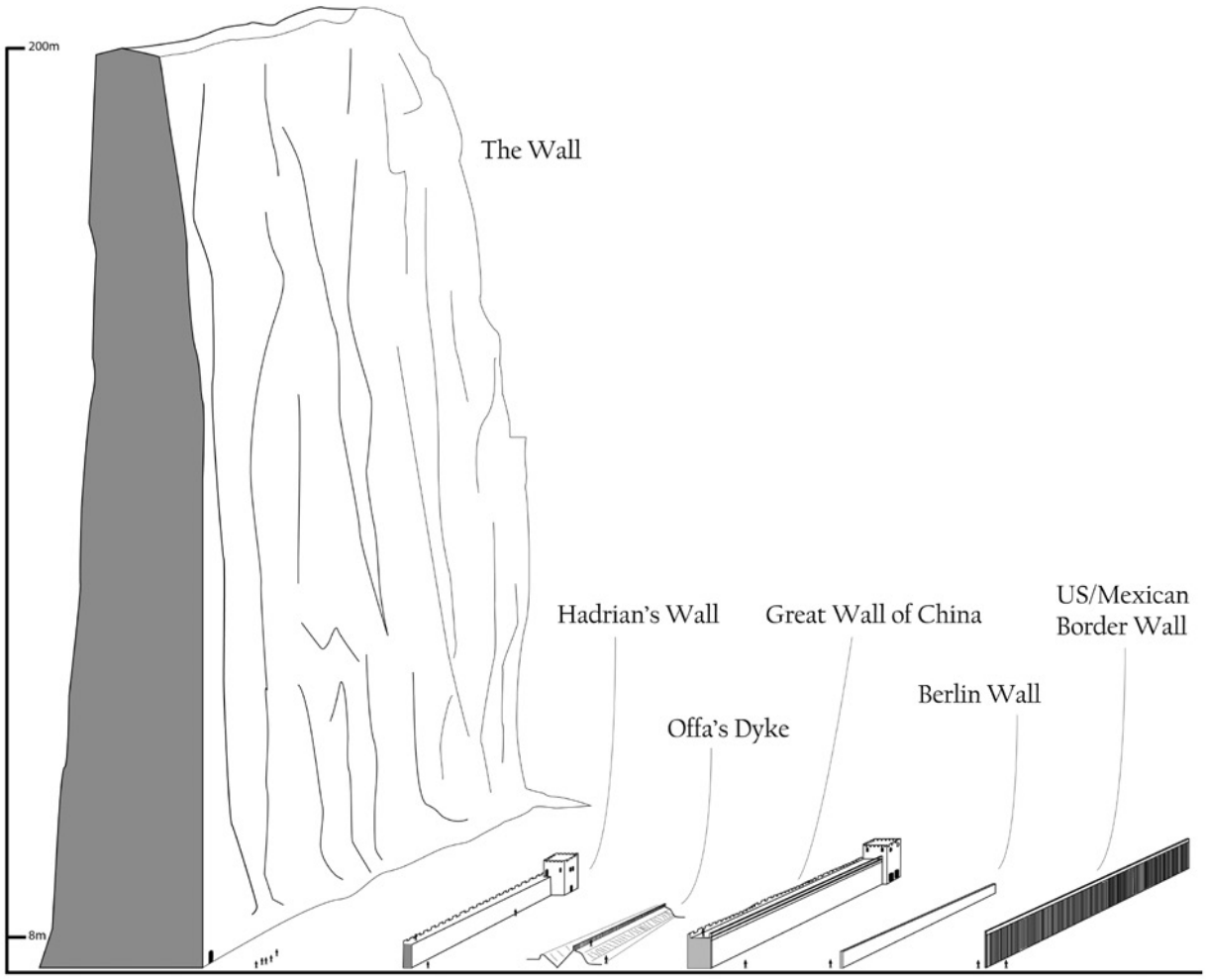

Figure 1: The Westeros Wall reaching c. 200m compared with stylised and simplified representations of stretches of historic and contemporary walls: Hadrian's Wall, Offa's Dyke, the Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall, and the US-México Border Wall (Howard Williams 2020)

the wall is perceived differently depending on perspective, much as a modern barrier might be both a material division and a metaphor perceived and experienced by those included and excluded by it, those living close by and those living far away (McWilliams 2020). Hence, to those among the Free Folk living beyond, it is a symbol of injustice, with Ygritte saying 'You know nothing, Jon Snow. This Wall is made o' blood' (see Larrington 2016: 75). Meanwhile, from the distant perspective of King's Landing, the Wall is simply a place to exile criminals and dangerous (politically exiled or disgraced) individuals (Larrington 2016: 75). It also defines the identity of the Night's Watch themselves as separate from both the Wildlings and the people of Westeros. Living by oath and set apart from those both south and north of the Wall: they are bound to it.

To relate the Wall to archaeological discussion, parallels can be drawn with other linear monuments. Hadrian's Wall, being the direct inspiration for the Wall, bears striking similarities both in its function and apparatus, even if their scales and details are markedly different and superficially seem unrelated (Figure 1). Hadrian's Wall, for example, was intended to define the limits of the power of the Roman Empire, whilst defending the Empire from the 'barbarians' in the unconquered land to the north of

the Wall (Collins 2017: 2, 5; Collins and Gillis, 2016, 49). Moreover, the Wall would have been a heavily defended military space, as indicated by the presence of forts that occupied its 73-mile length at regular intervals (Collins 2017: 3, 5). It also had a significant and varied history of use and afterlife from the early medieval period to the present (Collins this volume).

Martin, the author of the *A Song of Fire and Ice* book series, has confirmed the relationship between Hadrian's Wall and his fictional ice Wall (Larrington 2016: 74; Collins this volume), which has resulted in other associations between the politics of the Roman Empire with *GoT*, such as the power struggles between Kings, and the political dynamics behind the battles that occur in the series.

This physical border, therefore, fosters a host of dynamics between peoples: it is not necessarily a border between people, and relationships with those living on either side of these frontiers exist and perpetuate. In *GoT*, these are seen as tense encounters between Wildlings and the Nights Watch. One such encounter occurs in the second season, where Nights Watch members seek to stay at Craster's Keep, a Wildling settlement beyond The Wall. The Night's Watch, in return for their stay and information, gift goods, including weapons, to the Wildlings (2:2). The gifting of an axe and other weapons in this scene is representative of the turmoil that living in a borderland may entail. The use of derogatory language and violence between the Night's Watch and the Wildlings further reinforces the concept presented to audiences that The Wall is defensive, and that what lies on the other side is inherently bad. The Wall is a conceptual and political division between 'civilization' and the 'barbarian' characterised by a lack of formal social hierarchy (Martin 1996: 535–540).

Despite these violent and tense encounters, the presence of a physical frontier does not affect the formation of relationships on either side of the Wall, and this is implied to be the case with Hadrian's Wall and those who lived north of the Wall, as Roman artefacts have been found at sites thought to be 'high-status British' in Scotland, including those found at Traprain Law (Collins 2012: 125). The hoard found here is the largest silver hoard of this period found outside of the Roman Empire in Britain, and the items within depict Roman imagery. These may have been used as bribery to maintain peace and conduct trade with those living within proximity to the frontier. This archaeological evidence suggests that a Roman frontier works were not necessarily purely about division, and the opportunities for complex interactions between societies either side of the frontiers.

GoT has been widely adopted to promote heritage tourism at its various filming locations, but also more broadly (e.g. Williams and Evans 2020: 187). The popularity of The Wall has had real-world impacts. Although Offa's Dyke, another well-known border monument, this time on the Anglo-Welsh border (see Ray this volume) is not known to have inspired borderlands within *GoT*, it could be implied that it has been used in the promotional campaign for the final season due to the frontier nature of the monument (Forest of Dean and Wye Valley 2019). HBO, prior to the premiere of season eight, placed six replica Iron Thrones in six different countries. One of these thrones was placed in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire, England, close to where Offa's Dyke runs through South Wales and South west England (Forest of Dean and Wye Valley 2019). It could be argued that this choice of location is in recognition of the history of the Offa's Dyke monument in contestation between early medieval kingdoms, given the complex conflicts which unfold in the television show. However, this was not mentioned in the campaign, and thus the *GoT* fans that visited the area were not informed about the archaeology and social dynamics of Offa's Dyke (Forest of Dean and Wye Valley 2019).

English Heritage has endorsed the comparisons made to Hadrian's Wall and have described in detail how the world of *GoT* and the Roman Empire can be used to inform the public of the real history of the archaeological site (English Heritage 2019). Another article on the BBC website *History Extra* also draws these comparisons between the series and Hadrian's Wall, tying together the politics of the fictional

world with that of the Roman occupation of Britain (McIntosh 2019). These articles both discuss how tourism to Hadrian's Wall has also been influenced by its association with *GoT* (English Heritage 2019; McIntosh 2019).

This use of Hadrian's Wall is beneficial in that it helps to show how fiction can be used to educate the public on the history of the World Heritage Site. However, there is the risk of conflating fiction with the functions and significance of past frontiers in order to market archaeological sites as a real-life *GoT*. For instance, some of the filming for the series took place in Northern Ireland and Belfast airport now hosts a sign stating 'Welcome to Westeros,' in recognition of the fact that tourists now want to visit Northern Ireland's historical sites because they were used in the set of *GoT*. Bowyer suggests that tourism driven by television locations allows a sense of familiarity with the public, implying that this may be down to the integration of film sets with locations, such as in Dubrovnik, Croatia, where filming for the capital city of Westeros, King's Landing, took place (Bowyer 2017: 111, 113; Tkalec *et al.* 2017: 712). This can potentially influence how much, or how little, the public want to learn about historical sites, how the sites control what information is distributed to tourists and the manner in which they choose to do this.

Hadrian's Wall is an example of a stationary boundary that consistently influenced the land and the people who lived in the frontier area (Collins this volume). However, boundaries regularly shifted elsewhere in Britain over the centuries since its construction. These shifting boundaries are additionally conveyed within *GoT* but they are not represented through physical structures. The events that follow the execution of Ned Stark, in the capital located in the south of the continent, causes a North-South divide, with the North (the Starks) seeking justice and independence, and the South (Lannister/Baratheon) seeking to regain control of the continent (1:9 and 1:10). The battles between the North and South that follow Ned's execution are focused on securing alliances and strengthening fluid boundaries. The son of Ned Stark is named 'King in the North' in a decision between northern leaders and is representative of a group of people with a collective identity defining their own borderers' status and working to enforce this (1:10). As such, the Starks at Winterfell, and their bannerman are themselves a people of the frontier defined by proximity to the Wall, distinct from the southerners (Larrington 2016: 57).

Marriages in *GoT* are a method used to create new alliances; these are political in nature and are influenced by the requirements of each army. The controlling of land is one of these requirements and this takes us to consider other frontiers in Westeros. The isthmuses The Neck and The River lands are representative of boundaries that shift as loyalties change and are seen as desirable areas to control due to the access to other lands that they provide. Amongst these are The Twins, which control access to a river crossing, and a marriage alliance between the Starks and the Freys, the family that control the crossing, is agreed. These alliances are beneficial to both families in terms of freedom of movement and gaining power, as well as defending the identities and boundaries formed by the new Northern Kingdom. The relationships between the Houses can additionally be seen in the medieval period during the Wars of the Roses, where marriage was also used to form loyalties and gain power during times of war, and also to secure land and boundaries (Tharoor 2015).

Although this is not explicitly represented as a boundary to viewers, the concept of metaphorical boundaries dividing loyalties and identities are recognisable and allow viewers to acknowledge the clear differences between each side. Moreover, the incorporation of natural barriers, such as rivers, into the fictional frontiers is reflective of the use of these features had in the early medieval landscape of Offa's Dyke (Williams and Delaney 2019: 5). In the construction of the Dyke, hills, rivers and coastlines were included in association with the earthwork, acting as natural fortifications and crossing points and perhaps demonstrating the defensive element in the construction of the earthwork (Williams and Delaney 2019: 5). The use of these isthmuses in *GoT* can be related to the archaeology of linear earthworks, which adds to public education in the understanding of how frontiers were constructed

and operated in depth and utilising monuments but also natural topography (Williams and Delaney 2019: 5; Williams 2019: 34).

To summarise this chapter, it can be stated that the archaeology of fictional frontiers is now important for how the public understands real frontiers and borderlands past and present, with mass media influencing public knowledge and opinions. *GoT* is a valuable example of frontiers and borderlands in popular entertainment, and these are all used in different methods and plot lines. Despite the ludicrous scale of the Wall, the public can relate the information from *GoT* to past times and present circumstances through locations and events. Although there is no doubt that the filming locations have been commodified for tourism, these locations are adapting in order to cater for a growing tourist base. Crucially, the ways in which the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands are communicated is potentially enhanced by this increased awareness of borders in fiction. The fantastical and magical material and scale of the Wall allow us to reflect on real-world walls, past and present, their violence, divisiveness and their ultimate futility. In this spirit, the challenge is for us to harness, rather than either denounce or embrace wholesale, fictional frontiers in our public engagement.

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Frontiers on Film: Evaluating *Mulan* (1998) and *The Great Wall* (2016)

Sophie Billingham

Written during the production and prior to the release of Disney's live-action Mulan *(2020), the chapter explores two prominent earlier Hollywood representations of China's Great Wall.*

Introduction

This chapter explores two Hollywood filmic representations of the Great Wall of China: *Mulan* (1998) and *The Great Wall* (2016). Together, these popular visualisations of ancient linear monuments reflect Western ideas and anxieties regarding walls as impenetrable barriers guarding civilization against barbarian and chaotic forces. As such, they can be considered works of Orientalism: framing the civilized Western against the East as uncivilized Other (Rosenblatt 2009: 52, 61).

Much of the literature pertaining to archaeology in films has tended to focus on how archaeologists and traces of ancient civilizations are portrayed in relation to stereotypical characters and plots (Holtorf 2005, 2007; Hall 2005; 2009; Mickel 2015). Public archaeologists have yet to develop sophisticated and sustained critical voices regarding how material cultures, monuments and landscapes of past times are portrayed in film, beyond a fixation with accuracy and a sense of historical authenticity. Indeed, archaeologists seem rarely to be directly consulted, with historical advisors employed for legitimisation or only to guide the story line in broad terms, rather than to offer detailed guidance on material cultures and built environments (Schablitsky 2007: 10; see also Williams 2019). While there are ongoing and fresh discussions of filmic representations of the archaeological record (e.g. Hall 2020), regarding the comparative portrayal of the monumentality and functions of linear monuments there seems to have been no sustained analysis to date (see chapters by Collins, Vernon and Williams this volume). Hence, while only a provisional study, this chapter steps into new territory for critical public archaeological research.

The Great Wall of China in films

The Great Wall (Figure 1) dominates the Disney animation *Mulan* (1998) from the start, when Shan Yu and his army of Huns invade China. The Wall is shown to be a long snaking stone wall with regular signal towers which are lit to warn of an enemy threat. Almost two decades later, similar features are represented as comprising the barrier in *The Great Wall* (2016), exaggerated massively in height and with added fantastical features to confront hordes of monstrous enemies. In both instances, while supposedly portraying some vaguely distant past, the Wall is very much as it appears to tourists today, sections rebuilt and conserved but as it was originally constructed during the Ming Dynasty. Both films conflate the long and complex history of discontinuous wall construction from at least the 8th century BC to the 17th century AD and instead visualise a singular unified 'Wall' (Spring 2015: 45–53; 174–180; 209–225; Waldron 1990). By conflating centuries of wall-building by very different dynasties: a sense of unified construction and function is manufactured by creating the walls as key components of the myth and legend in both *Mulan* and *The Great Wall*.

The former's story is the legendary tale of Hua Mulan (Yin 2011: 71). It portrays the enemy of China as the 'Huns', and thus conflates the principal Han Dynasty walls (206 BC–AD 220) and the later Ming

Figure 1: The Great Wall of China at Jishanling (Photograph: Severin Stalder/ CC BY-SA (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0) Wikimedia Commons)

Dynasty Great Wall (AD 1368–1644) with the Northern Wei Dynasty (AD 386–535) from whence the Mulan legend originated (Spring 2015: 220–21). Meanwhile, *The Great Wall* portrays a mythical story of hordes of beasts that attack China every 60 years. The myth played out in *The Great Wall* is of Tao Tieh – a gluttonous monster – a story of a classic Chinese myth Shan Hai Jing (Wang 2018: 310). These two stories have been warped and transformed for Western consumption, with the latter incorporating ludicrously sophisticated defence mechanisms within the wall itself with no historical foundation. While no one would imagine that the mythical beasts are historical portrayals, audiences are expected to regard the characters as living in 'the past'. Thus, the fantastical elements become imprinted into the subconscious of the viewers as dating to before the modern era. This vague but immersive ancient or medieval 'pastness' of the costumes, the conception of the wall as a defensive line against demonised invading human or monstrous hordes, and the monumental design and character of the wall itself as a purely military barrier, have powerful real-world ramifications on global perceptions of wall-building past and present. The films thus afford a sense of a homogenised civilized world in need of defence against outsiders by wall-building. *Mulan*, a Disney production for Western children in particular, celebrates the Chinese fighting against the nomadic Huns, defined as coming from wastelands beyond the wall and distinguished by their dishevelled furs and leathers. For Western audiences, the civilised Chinese army act like the West within this film, and the Huns are the savages who kill all those they come across. Meanwhile, *The Great Wall* features Matt Damon, Pedro Pascal and Willem Defoe are Western saviours joining forces with the Chinese against non-human invaders.

A further dimension of note is the fascination with the Wall being a monumental origin myth for China in itself, as well as guarding secrets of what is beyond the wall (Byrne and McQuillan 1999: 161). This is shown within both films, however, *The Great Wall* is depicted as guarding the entire world, not just China

alone. Hollywood plays on these fascinations and anxieties regarding foreign invaders, and implants into the subconscious of the viewer the wall as a monumental saviour of civilization. Hence, these films are laden with stereotypes regarding borderlands and their peoples: the nomadic barbarian equated with the monstrous, the antonym to civilisation and therefore, embodiment of the complete opposite to civilised peoples (Jones 1971: 377).

Conclusion

The Great Wall of China is portrayed in these films as a boundary demarcating China from barbaric and wild others. This topic needs broader exploration in film from an archaeological perspective, and how this affects public perceptions and misconceptions of walls as parts of frontiers and borderlands past and present, including the Great Wall of China. This is particularly timely with the release of the live action version of *Mulan* (2020) set against a host of global discourses relating to perceived external threats to civilization from different human agents (including terrorists and foreign powers) and non-human agents (climate change and disease). As well as lobbying for vast improvements to the archaeological details of how past times are represented on films, and challenging stereotypical portrays in film, public archaeologists need to reflect further upon how films might foster public engagement more effectively, raising questions regarding how mural monumental might (or might not) have operated to curtail and control the movement of people and goods in structured fashions, not just to keep people out.

Moving forward, and given the rich and deep world-building demanded by audiences and their passion to learn about the details of the monuments and buildings, material cultures and costumes portrayed of past times, film makers and archaeologists should work closer and listen to one another to ensure that films are not only as accurate as they can be in details, but also to ensure storylines do not perpetuate xenophobic and denigrating representations of linear monuments as protecting civilizations from barbarian 'others'. Such attention to detail and narrative will not detract from the thrills and engagement of storylines, but allow audiences to use film media to be educational and immersive, informing and intriguing (Schablitsky 2007: 10). Hence, archaeologists need to offer critique of popular representations of the past, and use their authoritative voices and create resources which help artistic creators and their audiences to enriched understandings of the past, including its myths and legends alongside prehistoric and historical events, conditions and environments. Moreover, public archaeology can deploy film as a medium for exploring past societies using popular media as a 'stage' (Schablitsky 2007: 11). For the representation of linear monuments, the stakes have never been higher, since there remain many controversial and ongoing strategies of government control and violence instituted by frontiers and borderlands, including many linear barriers, across the world today (Holst this volume). For the representations of the past to be 'true', they need to encourage self-reflection on the complex and contingent use of linear monuments past and present, not to reify the present through through the verisimilitude of film.

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Undead Divides: An Archaeology of Walls in *The Walking Dead*

Howard Williams

In 2010, the zombie horror genre gained even greater popularity than the huge following it had previously enjoyed when AMC's The Walking Dead (TWD) *first aired. The chapter surveys the archaeology of this fictional post-apocalyptic material world in the show's seasons 1–9, focusing on its mural practices and environments which draw upon ancient, biblical, medieval and colonial motifs. The study identifies the moralities and socialities of wall-building, dividing not only survivors aspiring to re-found civilization from the wilderness and manifesting the distinctive identities of each mural community, but also distinguishing the living from the undead. The roles of the dead and the undead in mural iterations are also explored. As such, dimensions of past and present wall-building practices are reflected and inverted in this fictional world. As part of a broader 'archaeology of* The Walking Dead'*, the chapter identifies the potentials of exploring the show's physical barriers within the context of the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands.*

> Andrea: What's your secret?
>
> The Governor: Really big walls.
>
> Andrea: That soldier had walls too and we all know how that turned out, so.
>
> The Governor: I guess we do. The real secret is what goes on within these walls. It's about getting back to who we were, who we really are, not just waiting to be saved. You know people here have homes, medical care, kids go to school. Adults have jobs to do. It's a sense of purpose. We're a community.
>
> Milton: With a lot of guns and ammunition.
>
> The Governor: It never hurts.
>
> Andrea: And really big walls.
>
> The Governor: And men willing to risk everything to defend them. Compromise our safety, destroy our community: I'll die before I let that happen.
>
> *TWD* 3:3[1]

Preamble

The Walking Dead (2010–, hereafter *TWD*) televises and expands upon the comic books of Robert Kirkman and Charlie Adelard of the same name. In both the comic books and television series, we follow the journey of survivors in a fictional present-day America fighting to escape the apocalypse caused when, for reasons and in circumstances left mysterious, the undead ('walkers') rise and spread their deadly virus by biting their victims. The living struggle to survive, some attempting to adapt to the new

1 Note: throughout the text, citations to specific episodes are denoted in text by series/season followed by the episode number, in this case, Season 3, Episode 3 is represented as '3:3'.

wilderness of the undead while others choose to build new communities from the ruins of our world. We quickly learn that the walkers are only one of the challenges facing Rick Grimes and his band as they seek refuge and build walled communities; they must contend with the challenge of violent marauders and dystopian communities, many deploying territorial markers and mural practices of their own. In Season 2 we learn a revelation: all those who die, not just those bitten by the undead, 'turn' and 'come back'. Everyone is destined to become the walking dead!

As revealed in the opening quote from Season 3 of the hit television show, The Governor is the sinister and janus-faced leader of the first successful and sustainable walled community encountered: Woodbury. Helped by his sidekick Milton, he explains the significance of the walls to new arrival, Andrea. The Governor perceives that walls alone cannot protect the community. Instead, it is the determination of those within: the community's people. The walls of Woodbury do not just hold back the undead hordes and potential enemies, they define the community itself as a beacon of civilization in a wild world. Thus, the walls protect a 'seed' which he envisages will repopulate the world anew under his leadership.

Andrea is in awe of Woodbury, having spent 8 months in the wild through the winter, saved by her friend Michonne, fighting off the walkers and hiding in temporary refuges. While she remains sceptical, she is seduced by the prospect that Woodbury's walls offer a sanctuary and a future away from the wild and the walking dead. Unfortunately, the community is not what it first appears: Michonne sees this and leaves, but Andrea remains. Woodbury harbours dark barbaric secrets behind the façade: murder and plunder, experiments on, and the torturing of, the living. Meanwhile, the undead are maltreated: captured for killing as public entertainment. If there was any lingering doubt that The Governor was a truly twisted tyrant, he fails to comprehend that the walkers are no longer living. He keeps his undead daughter locked in a room, combing her hair and singing her songs, imagining she still has not turned. Yet if this might be taken as a 'human' side to The Governor, he keeps the heads of his enemies and victims as trophies, floating in fish tanks! The walls of Woodbury are keeping the horror in, not keeping it out!

Unsurprisingly, this 'seed' of future civilization is doomed from the start under a dictator who turns upon his own people in his personal drive for revenge against Rick Grimes and Michonne and the desire to acquire their prison walls after he has lost control of his own defended community. In the world of *TWD,* makeshift and newly constructed walls afford protection against both the living and the walkers, but they cannot save communities from their own internal fault lines. The self-destructive tendencies of people's personalities, and their communities' social and moral conflicts, are depicted as the true enemies in this apocalyptic world. Walls and guns are merely the pivots around which these dramas are played out for both good and ill.

Introduction

Complementing this volume's contributions on archaeological interactions with fictional frontiers (*Game of Thrones*) and legendary representations of historic frontiers (*Mulan* and *The Great Wall*), this chapter makes a first step towards writing an 'archaeology of *The Walking Dead*' by exploring the pervasive mural environments of the AMC hit television show's fictional material world. This vision of a post-apocalyptic United States focuses on the states of Georgia and Virginia. *TWD* is less about the horror of the undead and anxieties regarding viral contagions and more a reflection on what it means, in moral, social and ontological terms, to be human and the challenges of being alive, thrown into sharp relief by the apocalypse (Mullins 2013). Here, I focus on how the show reveals Western anxieties and horror regarding both the power and futility – the potential good and the inherent ills – of walls to exclude and include, to define and constitute, communities. Our anxieties are shown as clearly bound up with ruins and abanndoned spaces. In this wild landscape, walls offer the promise of security and yet

ultimately often prove to be futile in the face of untold horrors from without, and conflict from within. Meanwhile, others reject walls, embracing the wilderness and become transient, or else they seek safety through isolation or remoteness. As well as offering one vision on US gun culture and violence, and both anti-state self-sufficiency and the needs for communal participation, *TWD* focuses on walls – frontiers and borders, barricades and prisons – as both the mechanisms for creating communities and keeping out living and undead 'others', and as the germs of their own self-destruction.

Previous academic research has explored the horror genre and zombies specifically, but archaeological dimensions seem to have received sparse attention. Moreover, while some archaeologists have considered how archaeological themes inspire and pervade horror writing (e.g. Moshenska 2012) and the relationship between the archaeological investigation of ruins and abandoned landscapes and post-apocalyptic fiction, the full extent of the worlds built for television dramas offer rich vistas for further and fresh investigations. Meanwhile, recent work on contemporary walls has yet to venture into their fictional representations (McAtackney and McGuire 2020). To date, archaeologists have only used *TWD* to engage contemporary audiences in past beliefs and practices surrounding revenants and prosthetics (e.g. Mattison 2017; Porck 2017; Killgrove 2018), although Dawid Kobiałka insightfully explores the connections between the television show and historical re-enactment (Kobiałka 2013). There has also been brief commentnaries on the contemporary archaeologies of abandoned places as 'undead' landscapes (Frackowiak *et al.* 2014; Williams 2015). Still, the show merits further archaeological attention from multiple perspectives, not only because *TWD* is so popular that archaeologists of our contemporary world need to be aware of its apocalyptic representations of material culture, landscape and society, but also because it offers an engaging perspective on our own world and anxieties regarding its demise. It is also fascinating because zombie horror, in different but striking fashions akin to vampire and mummy horror, explicitly draws upon Western imaginings about human past and human mortality (see also Kobiałka 2013). In *TWD*, this relates directly to perceptions of walled communities which bear allusions to the ancient Mediterranean (Alexandria), the European Middle Ages (The Saviours; The Kingdom), and from America's colonial and frontier pasts (Hilltop). Together, these constitute varied vistas upon what constitutes a 'civilization' versus the 'wild' and its various occupants: barbarians in their own walled communities (e.g. The Scavengers), itinerants (The Claimers), outright marauders and 'savages' (The Wolves and The Whisperers) and, of course, the hordes of walkers whom have taken over our world and whom everyone becomes upon death. Moreover, themes of Christian heritage connect together multiple walled spaces in the show, from the uncanny rhetoric of The Sanctuary and biblical quotes upon the walls throughout The Kingdom, to the Baptist church of Season 2, St Sarah's church as an uncanny fortified space in Season 5 (5:8), and the church burned and rebuilt in Alexandria through to Season 9.

This chapter explores the mural dimensions and environments of *TWD* by extending the discussions of the mortuary archaeology presented in 42 *Archaeodeath* blog-posts composed from 2017 to 2020 which chart the material cultures, monuments and landscapes from Season 1 to Season 9 (2010–2019).[2] While I recognise that many of the storylines, characters and environments are inspired by the comic books, my focus here is exclusively upon the television show, in which the scope of mural environments are enhanced considerably and visualised in greater detail than the comic books (Williams 2017a). The 'archaeology' of *TWD* promises to shed light on the detailed and rich fascination with zombies in popular culture (Williams 2018a: 5–6), but perhaps could help to foster a sustained dialogue between academics and the public regarding the materialities of fictional past worlds and imagined landscapes in which horrific and uncanny inversions of the contemporary world are exhibited. Therefore, here I offer an archaeology of fictional futures and their frontiers, and what they reveal about attitudes towards walls in the human past and present as well as potentially affording a fruitful avenue in public engagement and education for the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands.

[2] https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/category/archaeodeath-on-tv-film-and-video-games/the-walking-dead/

A landscape of wrecks and ruins

Waking up in a hospital bed recovering from gunshot wounds sustained in the line of duty as a Georgia state police officer, Rick Grimes discovers the hospital is abandoned. This hitherto safe and secure facility of healing is blown apart. In a later flashback scene, we learn that the army have killed doctors and nurses who have in turn been killed by the undead. Rick discovers that his ward is riddled with bullet holes, evidence of the slaying of the living and walkers. He encounters a female corpse, and then the double doors of the cafeteria barred and padlocked, daubed with the words: 'DON'T OPEN, DEAD INSIDE'. Escaping via the stairwell, he encounters lines of corpses outside, a snapshot of the failed emergency efforts. No one is left alive.

From the show's very start, we are shown the promise of security and implicit futility of walls and fences in the face of the walking dead. From this moment on, Rick and those he encounters stagger from temporary refuge to temporary refuge, from Freddy and Cindy Drake's house where Morgan and Duane Jones take Rick to let him recover, via a police station, office blocks, houses, flats, farms, factories, warehouses, shops and military and government installations. They all share the same physical limitations: they can be traps for both the living and the undead, and their walls and doors only provide temporary and precarious protection from the hordes of the undead and living marauders who might be attracted by the sight, sound, smell and movements of the living within.

Thus, as we follow Rick's group's adventures, first in search of his family and then seeking survival and security, we are simultaneously shown the ruins of our world, but also a host of scenarios, some only dimly explained, where the living have turned on each other and their communities and/or survival plans have failed. Before we turn to the exceptions, let us chart, archaeologically, this 'wild' American landscape. Architectures – houses and flats – are shown to be the coffins of their residents repeatedly (e.g. 1:1; 3:1), as when The Governor encounters the terminally ill David Chambler, his daughters Lilly and Tara and granddaughter Meghan in a flat, sustained by food supplies from a truck outside, temporarily safe but ultimately doomed to Chambler's terminal illness requiring a regular supply of oxygen, and to starvation (4:6). Other failed refuges include farms, as when Martinez's group encounter a cabin where the men have been killed and beheaded by the women, accused of murder, lies and rape, but who themselves have perished from suicide or starvation. In one harrowing scene, an insane hermit is encountered living in a cabin with the corpse of his dead dog; Michonne kills him to prevent him letting in walkers attracted to his cries (3:7). Another instance is a boat on the lake previously defended by Leslie William Starton: Aaron and Rick encounter it surrounded by walkers in the water, presumably (in part) potential bandits Starton killed before either being killed himself or taking his own life (7:7–7:8). Even abandoned walled communities (see below) contain the undead traces of their demise (9:9). Interpersonal violence, suicide and starvation are the surmised causes of death. Other failed refuges include a church (2:1), schools (e.g. 2:2–3; 5:3), a golf club house (4:12), a compound (2:10) and an amusement park (7:12). The same applies inside cities and towns where failed refuges include a woman's shelter, a covered walkway between office blocks (5:6) and inside the foyer of a museum (9:1).

Without the protection of walls, individuals and groups are exposed to attacks from the undead and from other groups of survivors. The Governor, in a raid to take supplies, slays an entire other group in the woods who were protected only by barbed wire (4:7). Then, once he has taken over Martinez's group, he exploits undead attacks on their poorly defended compound to justify taking over the Prison held by Rick's group (4:8–4:9). Characters relay how similar disasters have affected themselves, such as when Lt Welles reports to The Governor at Woodbury about the panic and decimation of an Army camp 'in a few hours' (3:2) and through the backstories of Michonne (4:9) and Alpha (9:10) in which secure locations are overrun. Similarly, we encounter the repeated struggles of Rick's group on the road, moving from place-to-place, desperate to find somewhere to stay while Laurie (Rick's wife) is

pregnant (3:1). Likewise, Andrea and Michonne endure an itinerant life before they reach Woodbury (3:1, 3:5). Occasionally, temporary refuges prove safe and secure with provisions, but only for a while, as with the funeral home encountered by Beth and Daryl (5:13). Even as groups, seemingly secure places offering sustainable destinations prove unviable for different reasons, from the quarry outside Atlanta which proved temporarily secure because it was isolated (1:2–1:5), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) where the single survivor, Dr Jenner, sets the facility to self-destruct (1:6), and Hershel's Farm (2:2–2:13) which, while fenced and remote, is under threat of discovery from groups of scavengers and the roaming undead: it is finally destroyed and abandoned when a herd of walkers are attracted by gunfire.

In terms of communities, the only one we encounter that is able to survive by deliberately exploiting topography and remoteness rather than by walls is the all-female settlement at Oceanside. Traumatised by the retribution of The Saviours who had slain all their community's menn, they retreated and concealed themselves by the coast, killing all whom they encounnter to preserve their settlement's secret (7:6). Even here, they are vulnerable to walkers washed up by the ocean itself and they inevitably cannot escape or ignore the wider world.

In rare cases isolated farmsteads are identified as havens for exceptional individuals and in exceptional circumstances. Hence, Morgan meets Dr E. Eastman who has survived alone in a cabin in the woods with limited defences and sustained by vegetables and a single goat's milk. This man has independent survival skills and has endured because of his cabin's remoteness as well as his ingenuity and determination forged through loss and having witnessed the worst of humanity before the apocalypse (6:4). He is only endangered by Morgan's presence and he perishes whilst saving Morgan from a walker. Likewise, Carol, an independent fighter who has endured abuse, loss and hardship a-plenty before and during the apocalypse, decides to live outside The Kingdom in an isolated roadside house which, with its family burial ground, is enclosed by defensible iron railings (7:1, 7:2). A far more sinister self-isolator is Father Gabriel (5:2), whom we learn barred his church, St Sarah's, against his own congregation and refused to open it even when he heard them plead for his help and curse his name as they were torn apart by the undead. Later, St Sarah's takes on further roles: it is deployed by Rick's group as an effective trap for the Terminus cannibals (5:3) and is temporarily fortified against the undead with spikes (5:8).

Embracing the wild

Not everyone embraces walls in the post-apocalyptic landscape, however. With the exception of foraging expeditions to find resources (as per Jesus for Hilltop) or to recruit new members for settled communities (as per Aaron and others for Alexandria), itinerancy is usually portrayed as a temporary solution which is ultimately self-destructive. The entirety of Season 4 is 'on the road': the disparate groups of survivors left following The Governor's attack on the Prison seeking a new place to stay. Living alone or in small groups, as transients, is repeatedly shown to be an unsustainable strategy, such as for the corpse of an unnamed man who is found by Rick's group having committed suicide in his tent (2:1), a Mexican family on the road encountered by Daryl and Merle (3: 10), the unnamed isolated male with an orange backpack whom Rick refuses to pick up (3:12), Sam and Ana who have somehow survived foraging despite Ana having a lame foot (4:4) or Bob Stookey, an alcoholic loner, who wanders alone before he joins Rick's group at the Prison (4:13). The worst instance is the traumatised, starving and insane women encountered in the woods by Rick (4:1); she tries to kill Rick to feed him to the animated head of her deceased husband which she keeps in a bag and imagines is still alive and to whom she still owes a debt as well as love. The wild comprising abandoned settlements, agricultural land and woodlands is equated with a slow death, craven behaviour and madness: itinerants *are* the walking dead.

Living in isolation in the wild is also connected to mourning, chosen by Michonne after losing her family and Morgan after losing Duane. Both live alone, combating the undead alongside their own trauma and loss. Michonne leads two chained walkers with their arms and jaws removed so they cannot bite but whose proximity to her protects her against the other undead (3:1). She temporarily reverts to this life after the breaching and destruction of the Prison (4:9). She joins a group of walkers who do not even notice she is alive, which finally shocks her back to the world of the living (4:9). Meanwhile Morgan creates makeshift painted warning signs ('turn around and live') and arrays of spikes and tripwire traps, marking out territory he has made 'clear' of the undead (3:12). Siddiq is the third example of a person sustained by his Muslim faith and wits in equal measure, but, as with Morgan and Michonne, he must eventually join the Alexandria community to survive (8:6). Another rare example of an effective lone survivalist is encountered by Aaron and Daryl who hope to make contact in order to recruit him to join Alexandria but he is captured and killed by The Wolves (5:16). The message is clear via this exception which proves the rule: you might be able to survive against walkers and in the wilderness, but other living people are still a threat! Only Daryl is shown living long-term in the wilderness in a sustainable fashion and again. As for Michonne and Morgan, this is related to mourning: Daryl lives alone camping in the open after Rick's apparent death, initially in order to keep looking for his corpse without success (9:6–9:7).

There are seven groups we encounter who embrace an itinerant mode of existence: behaving as post-apocalyptic hunter-gatherers. Each embodies perverse stereotypes of (pre)historic lifeways. The Highwayman are post-apocalyptic cowboys, riding horses and the leader wearing a cowboy hat, another wearing a Civil War Union soldier's jacket (9:13). These are the only group who become 'good guys': having attempted to extort tribute they strike a deal with King Ezekial and Queen Carol to protect the roads between Hilltop and The Kingdom. Then, we have the 'bad guys'. In Season 2, we encounter a roving group of murderers and rapists intent on finding Hershel's Farm (2:8–2.9). Next, we have The Claimers, who have a simple and inevitably self-destructive rule that each man (and they are only men) can claim all they encounter by simply uttering 'claimed' (4:13, 4:15–16). Jed's group of ex-Saviours attempt to live as bandits in the wild, a strategy that ultimately fails when they encounter Carol (9:6). Jocelyn leads a group of parentless children who are depicted as just like other pack of rovers living in the wilderness, kidnapping other children to join their ranks; Michonne must fight them to retrieve Judith (9:14).

Two further groups go far beyond these bands of rovers. In different ways, they embrace the wilderness and revert to animalistic 'savagery' in different regards. Morgan and then the Alexandria community encounter The Wolves. This group have embraced the choice of being bandits in the face of the apocalypse and while we never seen how and where they live, we anticipate they have no fixed abode. In addition, however, they have concocted a philosophy that likens them to a pack of hunting wolves who have returned to reclaim the landscape from human settlers. Hence, they kill and deliberately turn the living into the undead, marking them with a 'W' on their foreheads. These 'savages' seem to be responsible for destroying Noah's family's walled community in Virginia (5:9) as well as attempting to breach and plunder Alexandria, slaying all whom they encounter (6:2). Most horrific of all, they exploit fences and walls in a perverse manner, creating traps for wandering survivors (5:16).

While we might see the Wolves as conjuring a contrived justification for their actions as a re-wilding of America, equating themselves with marauding pack animals (5:16), The Whisperers embrace this mindset further still. They seek to eschew human social structures, operating instead as pack animals. They thus have denounced individual names, living in camps, droving the herds of the undead. Their aim is to accept and blend into the post-human world of the walkers. To do this, they gather and fashion flesh masks to conceal their identity and walk and move like the undead, using gutteral whispers to communicate (9:7). Their sense of identity is portrayed as 'primitive' and Alpha defeds her leadership by reputation and summary violence. Their pack-animal behaviour is extended to a strong sense of territory as they roam. Conflict with Alexandria and then Hilltop and The Kingdom starts when unwittingly Rosita and Eugene infringe on The Whisperers'

territory. In retribution for the incursions and subsequent conflict, Alpha, leader of the Whisperers, kidnaps and beheads individuals form each community, lining their heads on stakes along a grassy ridge top to mark the border of the Whisperers' territory (9:15). This practice has clear resonances with early medieval judicial practices and, rather than walls per se, it evokes a 'barbaric' attitude towards territoriality and trophies as deterrents (Williams 2020). Indeed, it is the only territorial 'linear monument' created in the world of *TWD* as opposed to the settled communities who only attempt to defend fixed walled communities. Rather than a defensible barrier, it is a threat and deterent aimed at others.

Therefore, despite rare exceptions, repeatedly we encounter those with walls but alone or in small groups consigned to a slower but inevitable transient doom. The walls become prisons and eventually coffins if one does not move on. Roaming people are doomed too unless they join with settled, walled communities. Meanwhile, those without walls or with flimsy defences perish also, bar those rare instances of independent survivalists and those able to find the most remote locations (in the unique instance of Oceanside) and defend the wilderness itself against potential threats. The most horrific dimensions of the wilderness, however, are those who give themselves over fully to it, The Wolves and The Whisperers, who turn their back on walled communities and any trappings of civilization whatsoever, perceiving them as destined to fail. For these groups, the undead themselves offer salvation in the post-apocalyptic world, and yet territory matters in defining their post-human communities against those who wish to retain vestiges of pre-apocalypse humanity.

'Bad' walled communities

In contrast to those in the wild, the world of *TWD* juxtaposes a host of walled communities which can be readily divided between 'good-guys' whose communities, while perhaps flawed and sometimes ultimately failing, attempt to defend and sustain civilization, and 'bad walls' which defend and harbour dystopian and despotic groups. These walled communities together constitute the principal survivors of *The Walking Dead*. Before we analyse their detail, it is worth highlighting how these communities all share ideals demanded from television audiences which contrast sharply with our contemporary world. For while organised very differently, they are all mixed-age, mixed-gender and almost all are mixed-ethnicity, and seemingly they cut across real-world class boundaries too. Vicious despots like Negan claim to be blind to issues of race. However, within this shared dislocation of contemporary world divisions, equality is a mirage and democracy a thing of the past. Instead, they are all organised around charismatic leaders of different qualities and characters. Hence, they are all 'returns' to a fictional frontier.

There are five principal dystopian walled communities encountered in seasons 1–9 (Figure 1). First, we encounter the aforementioned seductive Woodbury in Season 3: an historic high street of a small Georgia town which has been barricaded at either ends with trailers and buses augmented with tyres and metal strips, with one makeshift pair of doors. Together with the buildings themselves – windows blocked – they encircle a community that, superficially, appears to perpetuate civic values under the charismatic and determined leadership of The Governor. Rapidly we realise that The Governor is a murdering marauder and despot who leads his people to war against Rick's group and loses both Woodbury and his community as a result. The undead are being captured for entertainment and (later) as weapons against The Prison. The landscape of Woodbury is schizoid – the leafy high street seemingly an island of calm and civility is contrasted with the back-street warehouses where the undead are stored, where gladiatorial combats with the undead are played out and where The Governor tortures his victims. It is important to note that Woodbury's defences are far from secure: Rick effectively raided Woodbury to rescue Glenn and Maggie (3:7–3:8) and even walkers sneak in when the walls are not being watched (3:9). This is because, whilst seemingly outward looking and robust, Woodbury's defences are dysfunctionally shown repeatedly as being used to keep people in and controlling who leaves (3:5, 3:9).

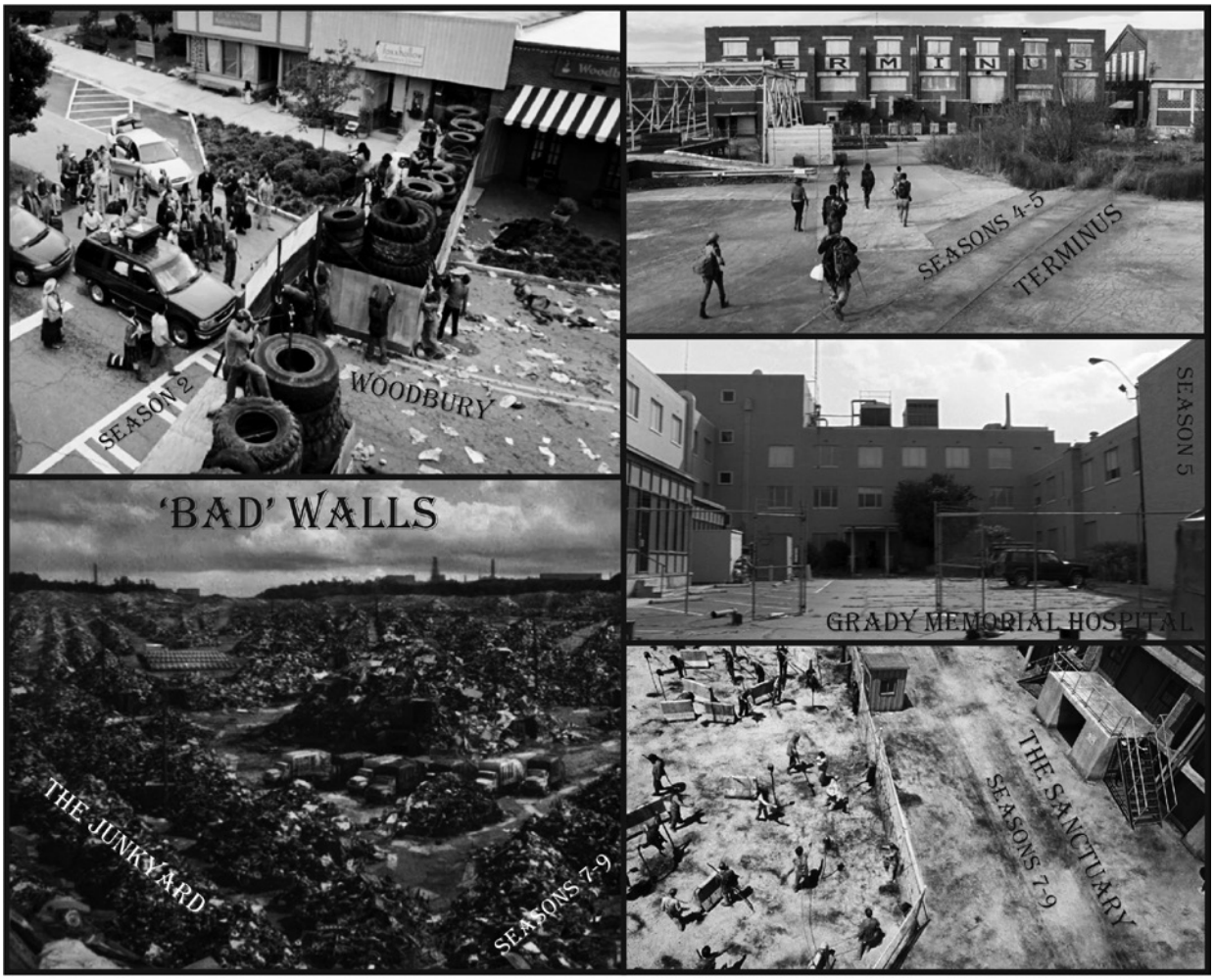

Figure 1: Five 'bad' walled communities in *The Walking Dead* seasons 1–9. Clockwise: Woodbury (The Governor's commuity), Terminus (Gareth's cannibals), Grady Memorial Hospital (Officer Lerner's commuity), The Sanctuary (The Saviours) and The Junkyard (the Scavengers)

The second walled dystopia encountered is Terminus (4:16; 5:1), established in line-side warehouses adjacent to a railway marshalling yard, and thus situated at a key node in the landscape. The walls of this community are merely the compound fences and these are left unlocked. We learn they can be locked and flares are set to disperse walkers and yet most often they are left open to afford the impression of an inviting community to those who have followed signs along the railway tracks promising that 'those who arrive survive'. A barbecue is ready to welcome newcomers. In uncanny fashions akin to a concentration camp, the visitors are deceived and manipulated regarding their fate if they enter the unguarded compound (Williams 2017c). In reality, Terminus is a trap and the brutalised inhabitants have legitimised their cannibalism, giving newcomers the 'choice' of joining their ranks or becoming the next meal. Hence, the walls are horrific and barbaric, laced with lies: both a defence against the undead and a trap for the unwary.

The third dystopian mural community is the Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta run by former police officers led by Officer Dawn Lerner and a complicit Dr Edwards. Secure in their multi-storey eyrie rather than newly built walls, they treat the community as slaves 'for the greater good' of maintaining law and order. As with Woodbury and Terminus, the superficially fair and ordered community is deeply sinister.

The cops enforce and abuse their power and justify maltreatment and injustice over hospital staff in a strict regime (5:4, 5:7, 5:8). The hospital is effectively a prison, inescapable without the sanction of the former police officers. Those that try to escape are brought back to continue their servitude.

Our fourth dystopia is The Saviours. Again, we encounter a charismatic leader convinced of his righteousness: Negan. The Saviours are not the entire community, but the 'warband'. The Saviours operate a 'defence in depth' approach unique in the world of *TWD.* A network of defended outposts extract tribute and supply the headquarters: a converted factory called The Sanctuary. The outposts are of all adapted structures, from a school and residential flats to warehouses and a radar station (6:12): they share an austerity and a lack of sense that they are anything other than utilitarian, ancillary, defensible posts (8:2–8:4). They portray themselves as akin to a medieval knightly retinue protecting their citizens. They control the landscape: a further aspect of their scale and mobilisation is the use of barricades to block and intimidate Rick's group and prevent them getting to Hilltop (6:16). Both the permanent walls of The Sanctuary and the outposts, and these temporary devices, are together concerted efforts to construct a landscape of control, surveillance, fear and intimidation. In reality, they are little more than an extortion racket fuelling servitude for the many. Vicious punishments are meted out to law breakers overseen by Negan himself. Negan insists on loyalty through a cult of personality and knee-bending deference. He extracts labour, allegiance and enjoys relative wealth and comfort as well as a harem of women. His captains and followers are given preferential treatment in exchange for their loyalty including, food, drink, entertainment and access to sex. Negan has acquired a quasi-religious persona alongside his royal airs: wielding Lucille (a barbed-wire covered baseball bat) like a sceptre of office. In short, we are looking upon a post-apocalyptic equivalent of an early medieval warlord with martial roles mashed up with a charismatic cult leader affording salvation and a charming yet vicious concentration camp commandant.

The materiality of the walls of The Sanctuary and their outputs are deeply uncanny since they are merely repurposed fences. It is instead via The Saviour's numbers, violence and intimidation and their network of outposts that makes them secure until threatened by the combined forces of Alexandria, Hilltop and The Kingdom. Yet the fences are rendered a fearful prospect because they are augmented with an animated deterrent: the bodies of the undead creating a minefield of spiked and staked animated corpses of those who failed to maintain Negan's rules or those who tried to escape (7:3). Ironically, this strategy is deployed against them: walkers are used by Rick to block in Negan and his captains to besiege the Sanctuary and dislocate it from its outposts (8:1). The parasitic nature of the Sanctuary is revealed through the siege, but also after Negan's defeat: despite the best efforts to maintain the place in the peace and alliance that follows, the Sanctuary fails and its survivors revert to scavenging (9:1).

These four walled communities share similarities in their promises of security, abuse of power, a strict hierarchy, and uncanny subversion of Western moral and social values whilst purporting to uphold them. They also share in abusing the undead as well as the living, a point to which we shall return. The fifth and final dystopia is more ambiguous and it is different from all of these: the Junkyard of the Scavengers (7:9). With their unusual speech pattern, joyless expressions, drab clothes and hair, they have crafted the first post-apocalyptic community that lives fully sedentary and scavenging, literally creating a life out of the rubbish of our civilization. In some ways, they are sedentary versions of The Whisperers, creating a post-human world amist junk, rather than attempting to hold onto aspects of the human past. They have crafted a bespoke gated community from the anatomy of the Junkyard escaping from the wilderness and the undead, as well as concealed from other communities. Hidden within the wider Junkyard we gain a sense they have a labyrinth of streets, solar power (7:10) and they live in adapted containers with clean possessions and sleeping quarters, contrasting with outward appearances (8:14).

Like The Saviours, their sinister side is embodied in how they harness the undead to their needs, deploying Winslow, one of their former members, as an instrument of gladiatorial-style killing (7:9, see also 8:7).

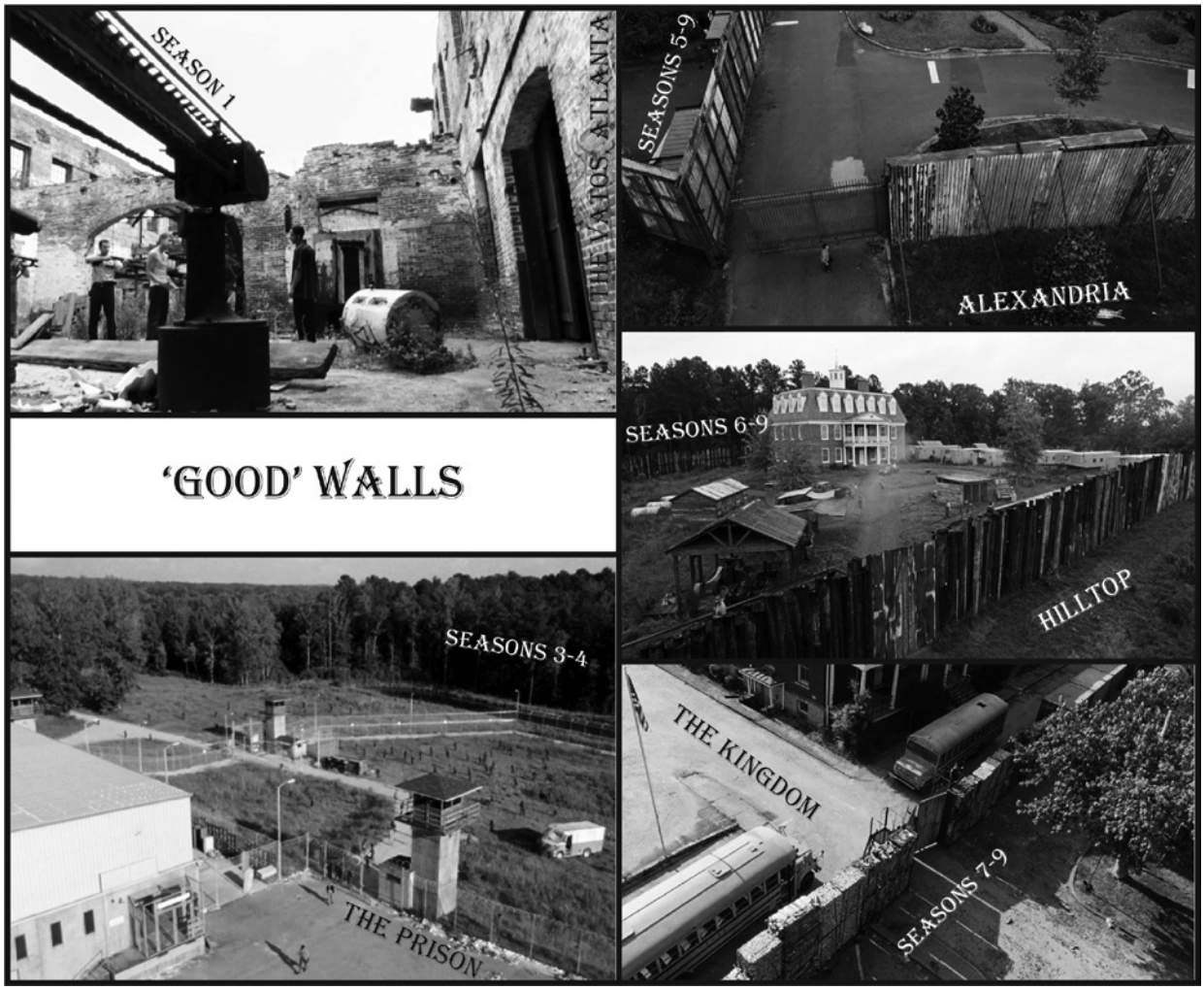

Figure 2: Five 'good' walled communities in *The Walking Dead* seasons 1–9. Clockwise: The Vatos in Atlanta, Alexandria, Hilltop, Kingdom and the Prison (West Georgia Correctional Facility)

What is particularly intriguing is that The Scavengers, via their leader Jadis, possess a taste for fine art (8:6). With rubbish, they create community, defences but also new aesthetics! Most intriguing, they are in contact with an as-yet unnamed other group who have access to high-technology, medical care and helicopters. Of all the communities I have crudely categorised here as 'Bad Walls', The Scavenger's Junkyard is most ambiguous: having seemingly rejected our society, they are best-placed to endure and flourish away from the undead and the living communities seeking to retain ties to past social foramtions. They exercise contemporary archaeology; creating a community amidst discard. Sadly, The Scavengers misjudge their relations and conduct one too many double-crosses. As a result, they are slaughtered by The Saviours, victims to those more brutal than themselves (8:10).

'Good' walled communities

Walls are not all bad, however. They can also offer security and hope in response to the apocalypse. The unquestionably dystopian walled communities in which walls conceal, deceive, contain, control and exclude in different interleaving measures can be contrasted with those walled communities that the world of *TWD* holds up as potential custodians of civilization. None are without flaws and ambiguities,

yet together they might be regarded as aspiring utopias rising from the ashes of the apocalypse. Complemeting the five 'bad walls', I identify five principal 'good walls' communities (Figure 2).

The first example we encounter is deceptive by design. Exploring Atlanta, Rick's group comes into conflict with what at first seem to be a gang. Yet it transpires The Vatos are protecting an old people's home, their urban sedentism conditioned by the inability of the elderly to move. It is also the only community that comes close to having a defined ethnic identity, largely but not exclusively comprised of Atlanta's Hispanic community (1:3–1.4). The Vatos gang scavenge and defend the old people, having barred the windows and welded all doors bar one, using a deceptive 'front door' through a ruined factory to conceal the character and location of those they defend. Led by the former custodian of the nursing home, Guillermo, we never learn of their fate after Rick's group leave on amicable terms.[3]

I do not regard Hershel's Farm (Season 2) as a walled community, even if at first it appears a safe, almost idyllic, rural retreat. This is because, while fenced, it survives unscathed mainly through remoteness. Likewise, for simplicity, I will not count Morgan's barricades since he is defending only himself in a dystopian and self-destructive fashion (3:12). For our second 'good' community we must wait until Rick's group discover the West Georgia Correctional Facility (the Prison). It must be claimed by removing the undead occupants, and this is followed by conflict with surviving prison inmates. Even when taken, it is only one cell block and part of the compound which is safe and cleared: the undead rule the rest of the complex. Indeed, it is never a fully secure and sustained perimeter (3:4) and is readily breached by The Governor (3:10) who enters and is defeated by the undead within 'the tombs' rather than by Rick's group (3:16). Hence, while aspiring to be a 'good' walled community, the Prison is shown as a temporary, permeable, vulnerable and ultimately futile environment. This is further manifest in the opportunities the fences afford for long-term interaction with the undead through these fences, the children start to give them nicknames and somehow a virus borne by the undead spreads to the living within the Prison walls (4:1). The Prison is finally breached and destroyed by The Governor with the help of a new band of survivors who possess a tank. However, no one survives to claim it, with the undead pouring in attracted by the fire fight (4:8). Still, while the Prison community lasted, it promised to be the future. Crops were grown, the dead were buried by its walls (Williams 2017b), and an attempt was made to create a community there.

Following the failure and destruction of the Prison, Rick's group is scattered until they finally encounter Alexandria. St Sarah's church offers one temporary stronghold which, while harbouring a dark backstory, offer temporary positive reprieve (5:2). Meanwhile, Noah's family's walled community is a further example of 'good walls' (5:9) but it is only encountered once overrun. Unlike the failed project of the Prison, destroyed by the Governor's retribution rather than the undead, Alexandria was devised and is founded on idealistic and proto-democratic principles. Founded by a US congresswoman Deanna Monroe and her husband Reg in a part-complete eco-friendly self-containing housing estate, Alexandria is the sanctuary Rick's group have been seeking for ever since they left the Prison (5:11).

Yet almost immediately, Alexandria's walls are a focus of tension and anxiety. For while no one is forced to remain within, multiple characters cannot cope with being disconnected from the wider world. These include the Alexandrian traumatised teenager, Enid, who has never become fully accustomed to living in a settled community after the death of her family beyond the walls, Rick's son Carl, Michonne and Daryl. Conversely, there grows the fear that those within have not experienced the horrors and hardships of the outside world, and are therefore out of touch and ill-equipped to respond to its dangers (5: 13). A further twist is that Alexandria harbours and indulges criminals who should be expelled; Rick is prevented from doing so with disastrous consequences in the form of Reg's slaying (5:15–5:16). The name 'Alexandria' was designed to

[3] In a deleted scene from 2:1, the Vatos gang and the old people were executed by unknown assailants: https://walkingdead.fandom.com/wiki/Guillermo_(TV_Series)

promote a sense of pastness and luxury, but inevitably it garners further post-apocalyptic associations with its famed ancient library and the concept of the community as the fragile custodian of civilization.

The design and material composition of its walls embody Alexandria's strengths and its flaws. Bespoke and newly constructed, they were created from construction materials gathered from the building site of the luxury self-contained development, abandoned when the apocalypse struck. The walls are made of robust steel girders with sturdy supports. However, it is evident that Reg Monroe who designed the wall had created defences that were robust but naïve in their design and placement. This is because they were built primarily to defend against herds of the undead, against whom they hold fast until breached by the falling church tower (and indeed under Rick's leadership the Alexandria community also create temporary barricades against herds of walkers that would have effective redirected them were it not for The Wolves' attack: 6:1). However, Alexandria's walls are ineffectual against living attackers who can easily scale the struts (6:2). As with all the communities, the wall lacks external ditches. Also, there are no watch towers, wall walk, or even lines of sight (the main gate is positioned on a blind corner). Only the church tower offers a rudimentary lookout point and this is left *outside* the defences. Moreover, when the church tower collapses, it spells the (temporary) doom of the community when it is surrounded by a herd of walkers (6:7–6:8). The walls of Alexandria thus offer security, but they are equally a folly scaled first by The Wolves and later approached and overrun by The Saviours on multiple occasions (8:8). Still, the walls have other functions: they garner mortuary and memorial dimensions of community definition (Williams 2017d and e; see below).

It then becomes clear that Rick's group's world is going to get much bigger. Having met Jesus (Paul) they encounter Hilltop, a small peaceful defended community run by the ineffectual Gregory. While the name of Alexandria evokes a neoclassical revival, Hilltop is a tangible link to the colonial past, both in its physical structure and its entitled and incompetent leader (6:11). The hill is defended by a corrugated iron gate, a timber palisade with wall walk either side of the gate, all drawn from the materials yard of a power company. Jesus explains that the great house within the enclosure was called Barrington House. It was a wealthy private residence gifted to the State in the 1930s and subsequently a living history museum visited by schools from over a 50-mile radius. Jesus suspects people were drawn to this historic landmark following the rationale that it might stay running once the modern world has broken down (see also Williams 2017f). Jesus also explains that the house's windows allow them to see for miles in every direction affording it a location with historical gravitas but also ideal for defence. The colonial landscape aesthetic therefore takes on a defensive role followign the apocalypse. Yet, Hilltop's walls prove only superficially effective against concerted attack. As with Alexandria, no one thinks to build a ditch and other defences beyond the wall and the treeline obscures the required vistas to see approaching enemies. Hence, Hilltop's walls are breached on two occasions by The Saviours, first to send a message (7:5) and then in an outright attack with weapons tainted with walker blood when Barrington House itself becomes the last line of defence (8:13). Still, the wall does serve as a deterrant and refuge during the first encounter with The Whisperers (9:10–9:11). The wall acquires further functions beyond defence: a prison is built up against them to house the prisoners captured when The Saviours' outputs were taken (8:6). Moreover, The Saviours are instructed to bury their dead separate from the Hilltop community, outside the walls (Williams 2018b): thus the walls define the community in life and in death.

While the locations, architectures and names of Alexandria and Hilltop allude to neoclassical and colonial pasts, the next community encountered, The Kingdom, possesses neo-medieval dimensions (7:1). Situated amidst the buildings of a town or suburb, it resembles Woodbury. Yet rather than perpetuating the past, it has been crafted with feudal dimensions, as well as biblical pretensions. Guarded by armoured horse-riding 'knights', it is led by 'The King' and his tiger (King Ezekiel: a former zoo keeper and amateur dramatist). Comprised of freight liners and compacted recycled metal and cans the walls resemble a moderately advanced version of Woodbury's but not quite as bespoke as Hilltop's or Alexandria's. Again,

however, there are no watch towers or ditches or other installations to enhance their capability in defence against the living as well as the undead. The Kingdoms' mixed biblical and feudal dimensions are also manifest in its final abandonment in winter conditions; the community perform an exodus to Alexandria and necessity forces them to encroach upon the territory of The Whisperers, walking past the stakes upon which they had displayed heads to define their terrain.

Dividing with the dead

Archaeologists have long explored the role of mortuary practice in defining senses of place and community (Williams 2006; Howell this volume). A repeated theme in the landscapes of *TWD* is the use of both the dead and walkers as symbolic and social components of walled communities.

The 'bad' walled communities and 'wild' groups share in their misuse of the undead for entertainment and as weapons (Woodbury; The Scavengers, The Whisperers), as traps (The Wolves) and as defences (The Saviours). Furthermore, two dystopian communities incorporate the dead into defining their identities and defending their perimeters. In Grady Memorial Hospital, the division with the outside is also marked by the dead, in this case vertically: those who die are summarily disposed of down a lift shaft to be eaten by walkers below (5:4). Meanwhile, although not on their perimeter, the Terminus community adapt a warehouse as a shrine with candles and offerings and their names are daubed on the floor. In this instance, honouring those killed by former attackers who were trusted and invited in are used to solidify a sense of community against newcomers (Williams 2017c). Here specifically, commemorative practices are deployed to legitimise the group's cannibalism. Meanwhile, The Saviours tie up the undead as road barricades and fix them on their perimeters of The Sanctuary: using walkers as borders!

The 'good' settled walled communities also articulate their mural practices and identities through the disposal of the dead. At the quarry in Season 1, Hershel's Farm in Season 2, and the West Georgia Correctional Facility, grave-digging, inhumation burial and grave-markers are afforded to named loved ones who die. The makeshift cemeteries are in each case by the perimeters of the lived space, thus constituting places of remembrance and even dialogues with the dead (Williams 2017a and b). In contrast, the anonymous undead are cremated separately, usually outside the settled area: consigned to the wild. The named, loved ones are differentiated by both spatial location and disposal method. This distinction is alway materialised at Alexandria where the cemetery is placed beside the walls, and the inner face of the perimeter wall itself becomes a memorial space to commemorate those lost whilst trying to save the community under the legend 'In our Memory' (Williams 2017d). In contrast, the anonymous walkers are buried outside (5:16). Hilltop, not only are the inhabitants cremated near the external perimeter, but the graves of Abraham and Glenn comprise the focus of resistance to The Saviours, while the dead of the captive Saviours are interred outside the walls (7:5; Williams 2017g). In the world of *TWD*, therefore, walls are more than physical markers of division between the wild and the community, but liminal spaces enforced with the bodies and memorials to the dead and, in some cases, with the bodies of the undead.

Conclusion

Having conducted a 'walk-over' survey of *The Walking Dead*, exploring the mural environments and walled communities of seasons 1–9, I have built up one archaeological perspective on the post-apocalyptic landscapes of the show. Other approaches can and should be attempted in future research, looking not only at the mortuary practices and memorials (Williams 2017a) but also at the abandoned spaces, uses of material culture and landscape, and perhaps also the archaeological dimensions of the undead

themselves as an abject corporeality akin to mummies and bog bodies surviving unncannily from the human past (Sanders 2009). The markers, barricades, fences and walls – around refuges, communities and (in one case at least) territories – feature predominantly in the backdrop and storylines in which factories, warehouses, quarries, rubbish tips, cities, towns, villages and farms because places of exclusion and inclusion in new fashions following the collapse of civilization and in the face of the walking dead.

As well as reflecting repeatedly on how one's personal and communal humanity are defined by how one treats the living, the dead and even the undead, *TWD* represents a world in which people trust and invest in walls to define and exclude their makeshift communities, while those who live without walls in the wilderness perish or turn 'savage'. As such, I contend *TWD* not only present us with a frontier world of transient groups enduring martial cultures, mural materialities and strained moralities. Furthermore, the show focuses repeatedly on the obsession with, seduction of, anxieties over, and ultimate failure of, fences and barriers to define the living from the undead, but also the living from other survivors. As such, the mural practices and environments of the show are uncanny subversions and inversions of our world, and distorted reflections of it. Moreover, the distinctive communities and characters and enclosed spaces are manifest in their distinctive material compositions of their walls, both for dystopian 'bad' communities and those that aspire to be utopian. Cross-cutting 'bad' and 'good' walls, mural identities are a mixed pastiche of different kinds of pastness: returning not to a single fixed point in time, but to an imagined frontier world against 'the wild' taking elements from a host of time periods. Indeed, this is a common theme in horror and science fiction writing. Yet the show, and its characters are never explicit or discursive about where this past derives, with hints of biblical, ancient, medieval, colonial and modern authoritarian uses of walls deployed in the construction of different types of egalitarian and hierarchical social formations. In each instance, walls and compounds which are adapted, walls created from reused materials, and walls crafted from garbage, embody a return to the past and the aspiration to create new, competing futures by different groups. Those without substantial walls, with the exception of Oceanside, are considered 'lost' in the wild and lost in time, unable to move past the chaos and catastrophe of the walking dead.

There is now an established field of research exploring archaeological periods and subjects in and *as* popular culture, including exploring both the material cultures and archaeological practices represented in fictional and virtual environments (Russell 2002; Holtorf 2005; Parker 2009; Reinhard 2018). Yet the horror genre has received limited archaeological attention to date (but see Brophy 2012; Moshenska 2012), and in regards to film and television, with most discussions of archaeology relating to specific pasts, such as the Middle Ages with little consideration of how post-apocalyptic futures are crafted around archaeological themes and media (e.g. Schablitsky 2007; Hall 2009, Elliott 2018; but see Hall 2020). Yet, this short chapter has illustrated how archaeological themes pervade *TWD*, fixated on the relationships between the living, the dead and the undead, mediated in large part through walls of all sorts: makeshift barricades and both repurposed and newly created walled communities. Archaeologists exploring the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands are better informed and equipped to engage contemporary audiences aware of this show and its themes. Moreover, the human past is refashioned through *TWD* in various subtle and sometimes overt guises, from 'prehistoric' hunter-gatherer lifestyles, allusions to biblical, classical and medieval pasts, as well as references to frontier communities of the American West and even the darker moments of Europe's 20th-century past (i.e. the Holocaust manifest in both Terminus and the Sanctuary). These are reimagined for a fictional post-apocalyptic work in a complex *bricolage,* with dystopian and utopian dimensions manifest in the walled communities in particular. Walls are represented as defending and defining both islands of civilizations and hellish prisons of subjugation and dehumanisation, and those who fail to join communities are shown, both good and evil, to inevitably fail to endure and wither away. Perhaps those who escape this characterisation as individuals and communities (Oceanside, The Scavengers) are the most interesting, but they are still bound into a world of walls against the wilderness.

As the characters traverse the landscape, they repeatedly encounter the material testimony to other failed strategies of survival, exhibited through the ruins and wreckage of their communities, destroyed either from within or without, and through the shambling ruins of the undead cadavers of their former occupants. Notably, however, racial and xenophobic divides of real-world walls are careful and starkly eschewed in this fictional universe; most of the communities, portrayed in terms of good or bad, seem to afford moral choices that are never explicitly framed in terms of divisions faced in our real world, notably ethnicity, religion, language or class (cf. Dinzey-Flores 2020). Only the brief encounter with The Vatos gang in Season 1 provides a (positive) glimpse of a majority Hispanic community, and here ethnicity is afforded cursory attention. Otherwise, the pervasive societal divisions that plague the contemporary United States are (largely) erased in the new communities forged after the fictional apocalypse. Although *TWD* might be criticised for attempting to take a neutral stance on, and thus erasing, the societal divisions of the US past and present, this is also why, despite many elisions and illusions, *TWD* offers much hope that real-world contemporary conditions need not determine the future.

For the public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands, *TWD* is but one manifestation of a wider trend in zombie horror fiction of revealing the salvation and horrors of walls, to keep out and to fence in. Other television shows extend and adapt these themes, from the spin-off *Fear the Walking Dead* where a host of walled and guarded communities are encountered and in which the US/México frontier provides a focus of attention in fashions which overtly critique the inequalities and discourses related to the border in our contemporary world (see Holst this volume). Yet within the scope of this study, *TWD* provides a 'morbid space' (Penfold-Mounce 2018) in which we not only reflect on our mortality – what it means to be human in the face of the collapse of civilization. In addition, *TWD* casts a critical and sustained attention on contemporary wall-building practices, their inherent seductive promise of security, and their deeply rooted inherent futilities, inequalities and violence. In *TWD*, it is less the undead that are the enemy, but other people. In this regard, *TWD* is a 'mural environment' in which our anxieties and tensions surrounding wall-building to distinguish the living and the dead, and the living from each other, are manifested and critiqued. By charting these fictional frontiers – mural practices and materialities defining the living against others and the undead in a world that is both about the past and the future – archaeologists can be more effectively equipped in tackling contemporary walls in historical perspective, and reveal a host of tropes and themes drawing on the human past in imagining our most feared and fascinating visions of a post-apocalyptic future.

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Contemporary Walls and Public Archaeology

An interview with Laura McAtackney

As co-editor and author for the recent interdisciplinary edited collection Walling In and Walling Out *which tackles wall-building in the contemporary world (McAtackney and McGuire 2020a) Dr Laura McAtackney (LMcA) is ideally placed to reflect on this book's themes. Howard Williams (HW) interviewed Laura on 9 September 2020, a discussion which explored critical challenges and necessities for archaeologists when investigating and engaging publics regarding the construction, use and afterlives of frontier works, past and present. Transcribed and then revised by the author with the addition of citations and illustrations, this published interview explores how these endeavours must contend with the physical structures of borders themselves as well as their contentious claims and ideologies. Moreover, archaeologists must look beyond the barriers to borderland communities living with and traversing across walls' divisive materialities.*

HW: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed, Laura. This book project, stemming from a student conference, tackles a lot of themes regarding the public archaeology of fictional and real-world frontiers and borderlands, and varied material foci from ancient walls and dykes to present-day graffiti and commemorative monuments. Yet it seems both appropriate and instructive to conclude the volume with a discussion with a researcher who has been dedicated to exploring contemporary wall-building and the communities affected by them. Perhaps you could start us off by explaining your recent work on this topic, please?

LMcA: Thanks, I will start by admitting that I'm wary that my work is more contemporary than many of the papers in the collection so I hope that I can make my comments speak to them. I think my comments might address more broadly issues that cut across many discussions of walls and boundaries whereas other comments are much more embedded in doing work in, and of, the current moment. There are some key issues regarding how we think and communicate about walls and frontiers, and then other insights will relate to the areas connected to my own research that are quite specific, but I hope there is a broader relevance for connections between past and present studies of walls despite the very different contexts we may be dealing with. To start with one of my most recent publications about borders and materialised divisions, *Walling In and Walling Out,* an edited collection with Randall H. McGuire, one of the things that was interesting about working on the volume was the contributors all had different disciplinary backgrounds and ways of doing research and thinking about the issues (McAtackney and McGuire 2020a). The publication was the result of a workshop funded by SAR (School of Advanced Research) in Santa Fe, USA, in 2016, where we had the absolute academic luxury of spending five days in each other's company talking about our work, what we were grappling with and noting our differences as well as similarities (Figure 1). As the publication is freshest in my brain I'll probably return to it more than my other publications.

HW: Dealing with a modern boundary is clearly not the same as working with Hadrian's Wall or a prehistoric land division. How would you characterise your work on the contemporary archaeology of frontiers and borderland landscapes?

LMcA: The reason we chose the title *Walling In and Walling Out* was because we were not just interested in the materials, but in what the materials used to create walls do and how they impact on the people who live around them. We realised that their impact was different depending on whether you are being walled 'in' or walled 'out'. The walls we study are specific types of walls, they are not about just marking a division but about keeping some people out and letting some people move across them. The walls we were studying

Figure 1: Participants in the School for Advanced Research Advanced Seminar "A World of Walls: Why Are We Building New Barriers to Divide Us?" co-chaired by Randall H. McGuire and Laura McAtackney, April 17–21, 2016. Left to right: Dimitris C. Papadopoulos, Amahl Bishara, Zaire Dinzey-Flores, Randall H. McGuire, Anna McWilliams, Laura McAtackney, Reece Jones, Michael Dear, Miguel Díaz-Barriga, and Margaret E. Dorsey. Photograph by Garret Vreeland. © School for Advanced Research.

were, therefore, created with an ideological purpose, whether that was to exclude people due to class or race or ethnic identity. Due to those aims, we considered them negative walls and it is important we deal with them as material entities. A lot of what we have talked about is how these boundaries and walls have created, not only perpetuated, inequalities, and how walls materialise these inequalities. Having worked with anthropologists, geographers and archaeologists – we all have different ideas about how we work with these issues. We were conscious that themes of race or class, or ideas of exclusion and belonging relating to walls are often present. Indeed, boundaries are always about belonging, so that means they are also about defining who does not belong. Walls are placed where boundaries and identities meet, so boundary identities are also forged in these environments. We become conscious that in the climate we are living in, walls are becoming militarised more and more, and it is also about money-making, and exploiting fears about security for a profit. Many of the papers in the volume, especially those working on the US-México border – engage with the industrial-military complex we have now, which is monetised, from concrete-makers to the personnel paid to patrol them, and this is very different from past centuries. Consequently, there is a lot of money involved in lobbying and convincing politicians – and the general public - these walls are a good thing.

My research is more local and focuses on community walls rather than international borders. My background is in researching Northern Ireland, where I come from and looking, in particular, at so-called peace walls that are associated with sectarian conflict in cities. These are walls that were put up to materially divide antagonistic communities during The Troubles; in pragmatic terms they were erected to maintain the peace but ultimately they ensure that society maintains segregation (Figures 2–5). They are predominantly located in working class areas and so have a class component to them that is often unmentioned (McAtackney 2011). The issue with working with these walls in 2020 is that they were not taken down after the formal peace process began in 1998. They remained as large walls hidden in plain sight, and people didn't really see them unless they lived in that community or had to figure out a way around them. They were only considered an issue if you lived right beside them but in reality they had a lot more repercussions in terms of how communities became more segregated and their identity more essentialised. As an archaeologist, I was interested in how something so big could be so unseen, merely because we decided not to really engage with them (the communities and the authorities, but also us as researchers). Moreover, I have argued it is because those walls are amidst the most marginalised communities: they aren't within middle-class communities or in the city centres, they're in lower working class areas, and were often placed in areas of social housing, so only those who

Figure 2: The back of a house beside the 'Bombay Street Martyrs Memorial' that abuts the peace wall and has security fencing to prevent projectiles from the other side damaging windows (Photograph: Laura McAtackney, 2016)

Figure 3: The 'Bombay Street Martyrs Memorial' situated against the Bombay Street side of the Falls / Shankill Peace Wall in West Belfast (Photograph: Laura McAtackney, 2016)

Figure 4: The 'other side' of the Falls / Shankill Peace Wall in West Belfast, which is the only part of a peace wall in Belfast that can be found on googlemaps and is presented as a tourism attraction - 'Peace Wall Belfast' – at Cupar Way, Shankill Road (Photograph: Laura McAtackney, 2014)

lived right beside them had experience of them. However, it is important to remember that walls persist, even when we think they should be obsolete, for a reason. For many people, they were happy that they were there, and they lobbied various authorities to ensure they were put up and stayed up. This is another important point about walls. Even though we can critique them as divisive and problematic they exist for understandable reasons. Regardless of their effectiveness, they give a sense of security for those who feel they are protected behind them, even though, in reality, they don't usually create security. Of course, if walls are raised as a means of materially dividing antagonistic communities then they don't usually alleviate that problem; they reinforce it and cement it in place. The walls then act as flashpoints to channel antagonism and so the walls have to be made higher and higher, a situation clearly evidenced in Belfast by the many different layers of materials used in constructing the walls that allow for them to be added to.

So, I became interested in these contemporary walls that were situated within and between communities and started writing about it around 2010; that was around 12 years after the peace process had been initiated. At that time, the walls had been enlarged or increased in number during the peace process; in reality the focus on maintaining 'peace' did not eradicate the walls but rather reinforced divisions on the ground to ensure that on a societal level 'peace' appeared to be in tact. As an archaeologist, I began to ask questions. What did they look like? Where were they? What did they do? And then, over time, I became more and more interested in what these walls created around them, ideas of borderlands and

Figure 5: An elaborate montage placed on the Shankill side of the Peace Wall at Cupar Way, commissioned by Belfast City Council. Includes text relating to walls in other 'troubled' locations alongside descriptions connected to their well-known wall – divisions, separation. The image includes representations of some of the key tropes of Unionism – the founding father Edward Carson, the connection to World War I, especially the Battle of the Somme, and the central scene is a depiction of an Orange Order march (Photograph: Laura McAtackey, 2014)

frontier areas that impact on identity and belonging. So, I noticed that walls created a focal point for division and differences between communities and they have a host of repercussions, including creating liminal areas that stretched far beyond the walls themselves. I found that on one side of the wall, one community moved further away from the walls whereas the other community became used to living very close to them – literally abutting them (Figure 2). It made me think about how uncomfortable those places were to live in, but they were being lived in and were normalized, while we were supposed to be transitioning to a more 'normative' society. How do those conditions impact on the 'peace' people experience in their everyday lives? The next question I asked myself was how do these walls impact on memory and community (Figure 3)? How do they direct the sense of community, and its experiences, both negatively and positively (Figures 4–5)? I found these walls often created senses of community that were discrete, where people never engaged across those divisions or saw anything from the community on the other side of the wall; this had not been the case before the walls were erected. People don't often see beyond the walls – they are very high! – and realise what is going on beyond them. So, the walls created very contained and unquestioning senses of community by preventing the free flow of people between ideologically different communities. I think that is a key issue surrounding identity formation that can be impacted by such material boundaries, and it is an issue that affects many different periods that our colleagues outside archaeology don't always engage with – material boundaries can stop you

seeing as well as moving. People living one side of the wall don't experience what life is like on the other side; so when those barriers were erected due to antagonism, they can easily become places of fear, loathing and misunderstandings.

For the *Walling In and Walling Out* volume, my colleague Randy had a more historical interest for his chapter but he does a lot of activist work around the US-México border. Including the politics of borders and walls was very important to us. Political and social critique is integral to many people's work as contemporary archaeologists (Kiddey 2019: 5). For instance, as well as being an academic archaeologist, Randy volunteers in border communities. He was interested in how patrolling the borders created a very different sense of place and community and how the border is being instrumentalised within a wider landscape and that includes the actions of people as individuals and groups. The group he volunteered with would leave water in the desert and they knew border guards would spike the water cans. The materialising of the border between the US and México has forced crossers into dangerous terrain where many die in their attempts to cross it and the humans working around the border walls were part of that policy, as described in vivid detail in Jason de León's (2015) award-winning book *The Land of Open Graves*. The investment in terms of money and resources go into protecting these materialized borders, how they look and function differently from the different sides, and how easy/difficult it is for people to move backwards and forwards depending on their status and situation, are all aspects archaeologists can speak to.

These are perspectives that archaeologists can bring to the materiality of boundaries and frontiers in the contemporary world and can affect how we look back into the past, especially the changing meanings they may have. We should consider how they are placed and interacted with, used and activated or whether they are inert and inactive. This idea of changing meanings can be found in the flux of contemporary walls, such as peace walls, which can sometimes be inert and inactive and retreat into the background but they can be activated to channel conflict, prevent movement people and emphasize inequalities of access.

HW: So you have this whole host of approaches and issues from across disciplines to explore their functions and significance. A point about definitions. Archaeologists tend to use the term 'linear monuments', 'linear earthworks' or 'dykes' for ancient monuments – is this honest and clear or does it gloss over past realities? I say this because 'walls' is quite active and clear about their significance as barriers, whatever their precise function.

LMcA: There are many different terms they can be called and the peace walls I have studied, for example, are most often called 'peace lines' but also 'environmental barriers' and 'interfaces' (McAtackney 2011). A lot of the more ambiguous terms irritate me as they deny the reality of their material presence, their impact on the ground and the intentional of why they were built and how they worked.

HW: I notice Randy encapsulates the debate between military versus non-military functionality – intended or unintended – in his chapter about ancient and historic wall-building (McGuire 2020): do you think it is a challenge to impose modern conceptions on earlier monuments?

LMcA: Yes, this relates to points 1 and 4 of the 8-point conclusion from our collection (McAtackney and McGuire 2020b). I think this connects to the issue of how we work with 'material memory' – as per the writings of archaeologists such as Laurent Olivier (2011) and Rodney Harrison (2011) – we are always dealing with the material remains from the past that survive into the present. We are trying to examine various degrees of 'the past', or how it has evolved to the contemporary. While walls can evolve in meaning without having much of a change in material form we must look at that wider context. They can still look grand and project a sense of power and effectiveness while being militarily ineffective. Walls built as military barriers can be long abandoned for their original intent but still have some functions of separation

and promote a distinctive idea of place or communicate inclusion and exclusion. There are lots of ways of looking at them, but we have to be careful about projecting their contemporary uses back because even in the present, walls, barriers or fences can look very similar but 'work' differently. It all depends on how they are used and supported and if people are facilitated or curtailed from navigating them.

An issue we don't often consider is the role of technology to activate walls. Along the US/México border, there is a big issue regarding the scale of investment required, in terms of personnel, equipment and digital surveillance infrastructure. The role of digital surveillance is a key point in the chapter written by anthropologists Margaret Dorsey and Miguel Díaz-Barriga's (2020), who uncovered just how much of our data is sold to governments by seemingly mundane organisations, such as some academic publishers, as they survey us crossing borders. They argue the implications of this deep surveillance impacts on fundamental issues – of democracy and citizenship – and is expanded on in their recent book, *Fencing in Democracy* (Díaz-Barriga and Dorsey 2020). Hence, the use and activation of walls has different dimensions now that weren't possible even 50 years ago. I'm very wary of projecting static meanings upon walls because they might have looked and been used very differently in the past from how they are used today. But it is important for archaeologists to move beyond employing a static function or meaning. This is not to denying functional approaches, and they can be seen as exemplars for replication in these regards. However, the ideological and communication aspects of a wall might become key and they might not always function in the ways we expect.

HW: We are living in a world where there are aspirations for walls that, even when not built, have a massive effects on communities and nations way beyond the frontier. They might have little or nothing to do with the frontier zones themselves when operating as ideas and images in (for example) political rhetoric and propaganda. As ideas, they affirm and exaggerate divisions between other communities?

LMcA: Yes, for some people in the US the popular idea of 'building the wall' is attractive precisely because it is so detached for them. Walls often make no sense to those who live on the border. In the case of México and the United States of America, not only have there been border walls along that frontier for over a century, but communities living either side of those divides have traversed on an everyday basis since it was first a line on a map. Putting increasing types of barriers in the middle of this landscape is just such a weird strategy. Some of the chapters in the book address this, including Michael Dear's (2020) focus on borderlands and the identities created across both sides. In reality, he argues people in the borderland area don't just consider themselves 'Mexican' or 'American' but they have a distinctive borderland identity. I think people, including academics, who live in countries that don't have long-term or activated borderlands, don't always appreciate that these are different places. Often these borderlands allow for flexible identities and there have always been more connections between people on the other side of the border than people elsewhere in the same country. In the context of the UK, this is of course an issue now due to Brexit, the rise of nationalistic rhetoric and the idea of 'four nations'. The desire by some to activate borders has conversely unsettled the idea of a united 'British identity' and fostered senses of enhanced division especially in those British citizens who feel they will be most negative impacted by a UK separated from the 'borderless' EU and those who live beside the previously deactivated border in Northern Ireland.

In my work, I have explored the negotiation of British and Irish identity in Ireland, especially in relation to families that have complex allegiances across the political spectrum. There are many historic examples of families with members who were nationalist, unionist and anything in between; of Irish nationalists who also joined the British Army in the First and Second World Wars. The re-emergence of the questions on national identity, which the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 had done much to negate, has raised clear divisions and the re-writing of histories in popular discourse. The threat of a potential border in either the sea or on land will negatively impact on those senses of identity no matter where

the border is placed. The emphasising of polar identities – with a presentist sense of what makes up British or Irish identity – doesn't necessarily reflect the realities of complex human pasts and their relationship with borders, frontiers and identity. What may fit now in current circumstances doesn't necessarily relate to past loyalties and affinities within and beyond national boundaries and this is especially the case in somewhere as complex, and colonized, as Ireland. These complex issues are often flattened by politicians, who deny or deliberately lie about the meanings of agreements and have no understanding of the borderland communities they are wishing to impose restrictions, not only on their movements but also their identities.

HW: Of course, *Walling in and Walling out* is an important and (in many ways) first-ever contribution to examine how we study contemporary walls' materialities. It is not specifically about how we engage various publics locally, nationally and globally with this research, and critique archaeology's role in contemporary society. So, how much of the field of contemporary archaeologies of frontiers and borderlands has explored the heritage and public archaeology of walls and their landscapes?

LMcA: It depends, there are different people doing different kinds of work and for various reasons. Part of the challenge is how we define what a community is. This is one of the things I'm thinking about most in a project I'm starting on St Croix – an ex-Danish island in the Caribbean. It was a project I formulated after moving to Denmark in 2015 and having worked for years on Montserrat – a current British Overseas Territory in the Caribbean – on my colleagues Krysta Ryzewski and John F. Cherry's landscape archaeology project (see Ryzewski and McAtackney 2015 and McAtackney *et al.* 2014). I wanted to work on this former Danish colony due to the lack of wider knowledge about the colonial experience in Denmark. This is a field that has had really interesting inputs from Danish historians but not archaeology. However, I wanted to ensure we were focusing on community engagement on the island and in Denmark. We were supposed to start the fieldwork in the summer of 2020 but have not been able to (due to the COVID-19 pandemic), so rather we started to refine the questions by asking: what is the community? How do we understand it and how do we work with them in a way that is mutually beneficial, intellectually honest but also aware of our positionality as white (European and American) academics?

'Community' is such a broad term that it needed consideration but so did our engagement with it in practice. Working with communities requires careful consideration, and by extension also openness to critique and change. There are always those who are happy to work with us, explain their perspectives but there can be gatekeepers and marginalised groups and people who are difficult to reach. In terms of how we do it, this really depends on our aims and scale as well as more pragmatics such as how long we are funded (if at all) and how well we are financed. For example, there's Jason de León 's long term anthropological work on the US/México border. His work is on a large scale and he's had so much funding with which to expand it due to his MacArthur grant. This means he can push the public engagement aspect from his research, he's reaching global audiences via exhibitions online *Hostile Terrain 94*.[1] He has been planning to travel around the world to promote the understanding that real people, not just statistics, have been found dead trying to cross the US-México borderlands due to the US government actions and policies. So the scale of his work is far beyond what most of us will ever be able to do and he is working on that global stage.

By way of contrast, many of us at tackling global issues but on local scales, working with local communities. For example, Rachael Kiddey's (2019) fascinating post-doctoral research involves working with refugees and going from the borderlands of 'Fortress Europe' to various resettlement situations throughout its constituent states. Her conception of community is focused 'on the refugee communities created as they navigate their passage to and throughout an increasingly hostile (and clearly not really

[1] https://www.undocumentedmigrationproject.org/hostileterrain94

'borderless') EU rather than the communities they move from or into. Still, a lot of the more normative work completed on 'community archaeology' is based on the idea that we all know who and what 'community' is and the researchers don't always focus on how they have selected the community or how they have constructed their idea of community. There is some great stuff out there but there is potential for more in-depth perspectives in thinking about how communities are made and unmade as they live in and around borders, especially if the borders are materialised and then fluctuate in terms of being activated to facilitate and / or try to prevent crossing.

HW: Do we valorise some communities over others? While refugees deserve considerable archaeological attention and focus (e.g. Kiddey 2019) – displaced people who have had to negotiate borders – what of other groups living and engaging with frontiers, borderlands and their walls?

LMcA: My own work at the moment presents a lot of potential issues here. Anywhere that we work with contentious border histories and substantial divisions between communities will prove to be very challenging as to how you engage with 'community'. With my own work in Northern Ireland, I was surprised to see how often people working in other disciplines took a 'one community' perspective and either became champions or extreme critics of one side of the divide. I did not find that antagonistic mode of research especially helpful as the communities do not exist without the dynamic of the 'other side' and they are set within a society that has been used and misused by various state and non-state actors. One of the contributions to the book by Zaire Dinzey-Flores (2020) I found particularly interesting in terms of the subtleties of materiality and its meaning at boundaries. She looks at Puerto Rican definitions of race and class in relation to gated communities. Gated communities for rich people articulate exclusivity, cohesion and prosperity and to keep those who do not belong out, whereas gated communities for poorer people are designed to keep those people in: and this is manifested in the different ways they create their walls. For example, how easy or difficult they are to navigate entry into and exit from of the space. How are security personnel and infrastructure used? Now, I would say you could see these types of subtle uses of material inclusion and exclusion at boundaries in other contexts. We need to move away from more obvious topics around boundaries and onto the more challenging and difficult ones.

Moving back to St Croix and the idea of community, there are so many people we could work with, but there are so many divisions in identities; so many different layers of identities from people coming to the island through force (the transatlantic slave trade) or economic opportunities, and / or tourism. It is important to consider how much integration or division between the various communities there is and how it has changed over time. How can we see it in terms of festivals, hobbies, food culture or places they chose to live or visit. How do you work with such flux and complexity?

HW: Are there any particular challenges for working at a global scale with borders?

LMcA: As archaeologists, we have a very particular place in all of this and especially those working with contemporary audiences. One of the issues I have with archaeologists, especially with European training, working on contemporary issues with borders is often that they are not really trained to interview people and read their interpretations with nuance: they often take at face value what people say. They are simply not trained to work with living populations and consider how to work with views representative of different groups and how they may represent, or not, the entire population. As archaeologists we are trained to retrieve human pasts through material remains and traditionally this was completed on contexts with little contact with living people. Once we try to do more contemporary work we have to think about what training we need to access that new source. We cannot do this work by simply talking to a handful of people and then reproducing all their opinions and thoughts as fact. Within that work we need to figure out who we need to talk to while being careful of not working with only particular groups or gatekeepers who may be directing our interpretations for their own uses. We

cannot simply reproduce the views of small numbers of specific communities as representative without thinking through what other experiences there might be; I try to avoid this by simply saying 'this is what someone saw or how someone thinks' rather than trying to extend it out as representing more than them. We need to avoid the perception of representatives of communities delivering us 'ultimate truths' and we need to be careful of how we use people's everyday experiences and extrapolate them out. When working with communities, especially on difficult topics, we need to draw upon multiple voices representig different ages, genders and ethnicities. I try to think, who might be an excluded voice? We need to break down the community to consider its different facets rather than reifying a particular idea or narrative. This certainly applies to communities living in and around frontiers and borderlands.

I would also encourage contemporary archaeologists to be clearer about what we know and what we don't know. It is essential that we consider the positionality of knowledge, namely what might be one person's truth might be singular or contradicts someone else's rather than focus on simply replicating normative understandings. Contradictions and contrasts need to be made explicit. This practice should continue through into our outputs and dissemination – for example, exhibitions and books – we need to be clear if there are multiple perspectives and if there is one 'take' that there are other ways to represent the experience. I wish exhibition curators, in particular, would make clear where decisions were made, to indicate that there is an angle and this is how we decided to do things, but there are other options. Either they need to show multiple angles; if they chose to cover only one they must be clear that this is only one angle or many.

A lot of these practices stem from being honest about the past and the negative processes and practices at play that have got to us living in societies that have their good points but have many inequalities and marginalized groups. For example, where I live now in the Nordic countries, their traditional treatment of Saami communities and more contemporary marginalizing of migrant communities, especially people of colour, cannot be ignored or sidelined. Similarly, in the UK, the colonial history of the country and how this manifests itself in land and border-related issues should provide an unavoidable background context to any public archaeological endeavours. We require an honest approach to negative things we've done as societies, including treatments, marginalisation and land-taking, and involving the story of borders and their features. Let's denaturalize them!

HW: Do we miss public engagement opportunities, and sometimes misfire and stoke divisions?

LMcA: We are all different researchers in terms of training and expertise, and we don't all have to do the same kinds of public archaeology. Big institutions and organisations do have a responsibility to tackle difficult topics, especially those relating to their own wealth and power, without smoothing it over. I really love the project that the University of Glasgow initiated to investigate their own accumulation of wealth, directly and indirectly, from the transatlantic slave trade. They commissioned an academic led report on their connections with the slave trade, started a collaboration with the University of West Indies and acknowledged that past with reparations (Carrell 2019). That is a real and meaningful acknowledgement of past wrongs with future-orientated policies to make a difference moving forward. What a great initiative. These are the type of programs that could be replicated across the sector and not only can the public handle those truths, they need those truths. In particular, this might be readily translated to tackling the histories and realities of frontiers and borderlands for communities in their proximity. Members of the public are sometimes treated by the heritage industry, and especially museums, like educated 10-year olds who impart basic information or see themselves as just there for public entertainment. We need to find ways to introduce layering of information and to be unambiguous about difficult truths, not to presume the public can't handle or appreciate it. There is a need to inject more of the complicated and awkward issues rather than fearing they will be turned off or won't want to

appreciate these difficult issues. We should think about how multi-faceted the public is and to avoid presenting one-sided stories and at least state what we know and what we don't know. This honesty, should extend to ensuring exhibitions are alive and aware of difficult points as well as the parallels elsewhere and, if possible, its contemporary relevance.

HW: So how do we deal with sensitive issues with past frontier works? Do we risk waking 'sleeping giants' if we aren't careful about how we research and engage publics? We surely need to show the dark heritage dimensions?

LMcA: With long-lasting linear monuments, we need to remember the importance of the biographical approach, and this can be used to show the different lives of these monuments and complicate the simple nationalist interpretation or other problematic narratives. It is important to shows the complications and how these monuments are ever-changing. Above all, we should avoid essentialising what a barrier or dyke is and consider how it played different roles over time.

Figure 7: Performance art at Kilmainham Gaol titled 'Re-membering' by Niamh Murphy and Laura McAtackney in the isolation cells in the basement of the East Wing. May 2016

Another key issue is to think creatively with linear monuments: how do creatives and artists engage in different ways than archaeologists with these monuments? How do we use those creative approaches to think and use them in ways to counter what we assume they were supposed to be and avoid reinforcing overly singular approaches? I'm thinking of some of the big monuments in Ireland, such as Kilmainham Gaol, and how the curators have attempted to move away from the site being seen as only as a symbol of oppression, and instead begin thinking about how there are many different stories regarding its inmates and operation (McAtackney 2019). These re-imaginings can be much more creative and connected to artistry and allow us to reimagine the site through stories we don't often hear about connected to the gaol. One project I was involved with was 'Future Histories', a performance art event curated by Áine Phillips and Niamh Murphy at Kilmainham Gaol in May 2016. The piece was commissioned by the Arts Council in response to the centenary of the Easter Rising. Áine and Niamh arranged for a number of performance artists to take over the site for one day to allow the public to see the prison in a new way. I worked with Niamh to create a performance based on women prisoners' experiences from the civil war that included commemorating the Easter Rising as prisoners. We wanted to re-centre women's connections to this event and implant that interpretation back into the site. It was an incredibly interesting experience for me as an archaeologist working as an artist and (I hope!) for the members of the public who came to it (Future Histories 2016). These attempts to de-centre simplistic narratives and meanings of place, if they are framed around the biographies of place, allow for emotional interactions and potentially allow for a complex and unfolding story of the monument or wall to emerge. In many ways, the focus of most archaeologists – the telling of the story of the original construction and its use -– is the hardest of all to tell as it can feel very distant and is often the most difficult to retrieve.

HW: The biographical approach surely applies as much to peace walls and other contemporary monuments as well as century-/millennium-old monuments: they seem to have rapid shifts in significance?

LMcA: It works for everything and it is useful to show that materiality doesn't always dictate meaning and things can have different lives than intended. The meaning of the most monumental and static objects can change significantly over time and that is the interesting thing. Focusing on this change can help to destabilise the essentialising narratives about linear monuments and borders.

HW: Do you think our role as archaeologists is to unsettle cosy narratives regarding initial function and use of linear monuments without diluting their potential horror and violence?

LMcA: I think it is important because not only does it avoid essentialising, it can give us hope for the future: that walls can have potential different futures that are not predestined by their material forms. Even the biggest monument is not a material with one meaning that has and will always be the same. Walls can have very passive or very violence pasts, but these can rapidly change according to different historical-political or socio-economic circumstances. Those changes in meaning can also highlight when very bad decisions have been made about how to use walls. Contemporary walls can have different meanings and uses, but they can be instrumentalised in ways that are really destructive and problematic and make identities much more antagonistic and aggressive rather than allowing us to accept that different identities exist. In borderlands, these different identities have always existed and co-existed. Understanding historic walls can be made sense for contemporary audiences when they are not portrayed as only being about violent confrontations. I think showing these different pasts gives us the potential to show different futures as well as highlight complexity.

HW: When dealing with such sensitive and contested dimensions of contemporary landscapes, is public engagement always desirable and constructive, or are there ways/times in which archaeologists might do more harm than good as 'social workers' and 'public intellectuals'?

LMcA: All contentious material remains dealt with poorly can do harm. All heritage institutions work differently and have different agendas. Some organisations have explicit mandates to promote only particular identities, which may be reasonable if they are currently marginalized, or other organization may be filled with board members with a narrow range of views that they do not want to move from either can be problematic although unintended if they are not open to change. Two issues that archaeologists have to consider is (1) how much we are legitimizing problematic interpretations of the past rather than exploring difficult pasts. There is a difference. I've worked with different community groups throughout the time I've been working in Northern Ireland and at times my work was used to justify related but different work that was being done in terms of community engagement. While we should not always be dictating cooperation you have to realize the difference between working with a community for mutual benefit and doing what you realize is bad work that increasingly suits particular agenda. (2) We have to consider our position as *expert* in the work we do and the power dynamics involved in creating or shaping the research agenda. What is our role in deciding what is worth studying or what groups are worth working with? Could we be creating more problems if we are not cognizant of the groups working within communities? Can we balance the needs of different identities at boundaries and frontiers? Archaeology has the role, at times, to allow us to just find what is there, but we need to do a lot of research prior to fieldwork to determine where we work so there aren't decisions-made that unintentionally create problems.

At times it depends on how much freedom and control the archaeologists are given in their partnerships but we should be as careful as we can to be open and clear about what we are doing, how, why and with whom when we enter into doing potential difficult work . Furthermore, I do think that we have to be careful about how we present certain narratives. In Denmark, museum curators have told me that they don't want to be too didactic: they present the information and leave people to reflect on it without moralizing from our contemporary perspectives. From a more Anglo-American perspective, I think museums and heritage organisations, as social organisations, tend to have more responsibility to make

a clear judgement about the past when we know there were wrong decisions or actions, rather than reifying a particular traditional narrative and implicitly condoning past behaviours.

HW: Let's bring that back to walls and frontier works more generally, is there anything particular that is important in that regard?

LMcA: Their scale and prominence cannot be ignored. They are often visible from far away but many have people living alongside them: they have projecting meanings and lived experiences. We cannot treat borders as conceptual entity or simply 'liminal' places, but as physical things that people engaged with and that have enduring histories. We have to be careful about how we interpret the monuments to provide these layers. We have to make sure our perspective isn't overly presentist – focused only on contemporary uses and meanings – but rather we look at the nuances of its many pasts and how the wall has had different roles and communicated different relationships – some violent, some more benevolent and even beneficial for both at times. Thus, we shouldn't be afraid of presenting counter-narratives of meaning, by explicitly saying that things were much better when there wasn't violent interactions either side of them. People die when clashes occur and identities don't have to be defeated but can be accepted. We should perhaps have an approach which allows us to talk about the past that allows us to say things that happened were good and/or bad; that there were different pasts and the wall has existed through different stages of significance and use.

HW: Is it odd that only in 2020 that we get an academic collection on contemporary wall-building. Why have we struggled to look at the biggest ancient and modern 'objects' in our landscapes when they affect the lives of millions?

LMcA: I think it is because they are hidden in plain sight: walls are everywhere and they are often perceived as generic. The reason why we have walls, and how and why they are put there can be for very different reasons. We need to take notice is when they are put up to divide people for ideological reasons. That is what the book is arguing – they are put up now to keep people out or to divide people, they are ideological walls. They may all seem boring and ordinary, but their roles can make them worthy of archaeological scrutiny. They might be seen as 'not sexy' topics for research and are not aesthetically pleasing and thus are not generally viewed as official heritage but they can have a big impact on the people who live alongside them and who try to cross them.

When I started working on walls, I was shocked that few people studying peace walls had examined and presented them as material-based entities. There had been historical, sociological and anthropological work, but not very much material-based work. Partly this is because they aren't nice to look at. They are dividing walls that are not in middle-class areas and so academics might not regularly see or engage with them in depth. Many studies don't even include decent photographs of them to show what they look like, and yet they were put up at different times by different groups for a multitude of reasons and they continued to evolve. This links back to what we said before about the biographies of linear monuments; they have different stages of use and reuse, extensions and abandonment. They are an anachronism in a post-conflict society but there are reasons why they are still there, they become naturalized and communicate feelings of security even when they don't promote it. These meanings we can retrieve made them interesting to me but we have to engage with theirmateriality and the lived experience of people around them to make sense of them.

HW: How do we best visualise walls? The photos in McAtackney and McGuire 2020a are well selected and the haunting front cover with the permeable yet impermeable design is very evocative. The way we publish, however, limits our use of images: how can we capture this complexity and the scale of linear monuments?

Figure 7: Street art with a nod to Banksy situated close to the well-known Troubles tourist destination known as the 'International Wall' on the Lower Falls Road, which showcases nationalist muralists' interpretations of political events around the globe as well as relating their point of view on regional political issues and histories. This is an unofficial addition to the wall and depicts a 'hole' in the wall that opens up a view to Cavehill, which is the feature which is currently hidden by the wall (not a peace wall, merely an industrial property boundary wall). No longer extant (Photograph: Laura McAtackney, 2014)

LMcA: Agreed, it's a challenge. Detailed descriptions of walls don't help: we need to see them. For the Belfast peace walls, showing only a snippet of the monumental walls that run for miles doesn't reveal the scale of them. The best images of peace walls are aerial ones and I cannot gain permission for their reproduction. Reproducing sections don't really give a sense of scale, particularly in built-up areas, when you cannot acquire vistas over the entire monument but equally the 'bird's eye view' requires some interspersing from the ground, so the various scales are reproduced. This is more challenging to do now as many publishers are limiting number of photographs in the books we produce. Trying to creatively represent the wall was some of the most interesting conversations we had at the SAR workshop, which led to the book's production. We intentionally created one session that was focused on how we creatively engage with the walls we work with to think about how we capture them in different ways, be it visually or soundscapes around the walls. These are issues that street artists have long tackled to bolster or subvert wall-building (Figure 7). In many ways it showed we were all still grappling with how to communicate the scale and impact and, for me, it was far more impactful than sessions focused on textual descriptions of theories and methods. These creative discussions are important, as academics we have to be aware that communicating the issue is what engages people. The images help us conceptualise how this is about people, not just things, and archaeologists often forget that and end up writing just about stuff. That's why we were keen on the front cover image in particular. We wanted not to just be pictures of walls, but make the readers think about how walls effect people and those trying to cross them, so we felt it was important although it is a difficult image.

HW: But we don't get that landscape-level experience of walls and the frontier zones of surveillance and control, that's a challenge moving forward?

LMcA: Yes, this is something one cannot really articulate visually, the inertia and obstacles to get through walls are very difficult to replicate even from overviews as they don't show the wall as they are experienced on the ground. Indeed, that was one of the disagreements we had with the publishers, because for some chapters we only had low-quality images because they were taken in these liminal areas around border walls where photographs are officially not allowed, but we wanted to include them. We didn't want to present just aesthetically pleasing 'compositions', but a grittier reality of doing research around places where the authorities do not want you to be. That is what makes them interesting because we are trying to write about the material repercussions of baad decisions made by people in power and we cannot get good photographs to show how they use walls: that's part of the story and part of our role in critiquing these walls and their frontier zones.

HW: This is part of the problem that has been haunting me about the beautification of linear monuments as 'scenic' and the politics of the aesthetics from the Great Wall of China to Hadrian's Wall. We never show them in relation to contemporary settlements, through supermarkets and railway lines and so ancient and modern borders are aestheticized. Less composed images are a positive thing, maybe?

LMcA: I deliberately try not to create compositions that are aesthetically pleasing representations of what I can see – I try to represent what I can see in the space as honestly as possible rather than create an aestheticised image, even though I have been told some of my images have looked composed they are always as I find the places. Maybe we need more challenging photography and other visual media to juxtapose images of beautiful images with less typical images of the monuments, to disrupt our preconceived ideas? The point of these barriers, walls and boundaries was not to be attractive but to divide, prohibit movement, mark territory, look intimidating and powerful and we should try to reflect that as well as indicating what has happened to those materials up to present day. It is not an easy task!

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