Offa's Dyke Journal

A Journal for Linear Monuments, Frontiers & Borderlands Research

Volume 7

Edited by Howard Williams

Aims and Scope

Offa's Dyke Journal is a peer-reviewed venue for the publication of high-quality research on the archaeology, history and heritage of linear monuments, frontiers and borderlands. The editors invite submissions that explore dimensions of Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke and the 'short dykes' of western Britain, including their life-histories and landscape contexts. *ODJ* will also consider comparative studies on the material culture and monumentality of land divisions, boundaries, frontiers and borderlands from elsewhere in Britain, Europe and beyond from prehistory to the present day. We accept:

1. Notes and Reviews of up to 3,000 words
2. Interim reports on fieldwork of up to 5,000 words
3. Original discussions, syntheses and analyses of up to 10,000 words

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Front cover: Detail of John Speed's map of Flintshire from 1610 showing the earliest cartographic depiction of Offa's Dyke (private collection)

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Flags and Frontiers: Linear Monuments Research in 2025

Howard Williams

Providing context and introduction to this seventh volume of the Offa's Dyke Journal *(*ODJ*), this article reviews the contents as well as select recent related research published elsewhere on linear monuments. The introduction also reviews the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory's activities during 2025. The context of Britain's ongoing public discourse focused on migration and its perceived threats to British and English identities is recognised, with the flag fervour of the summer of 2025 illustrating the ongoing need for academic critiques and comparative research on linear monuments, frontiers and borderlands. Specifically, it argues for the need for resesarch to take into account ephemeral material cultures, signs and symbols as well as monumental architecture in considering how divisions and demarcations are established and perpetuated in landscapes past and present.*

Keywords: flags, frontiers, linear monuments, territory

Introduction

Today, the relics of prehistoric and early historic walls and earthworks track their way across our hills and valleys. From China's Great Wall to Hadrian's Wall, they are curios and identity markers for local people, fabulous and exotic tourist destinations and ancient and enigmatic marvels to many. Amidst these present-day uses and perceptions, they are active foci for ongoing historical and archaeological investigation and interpretation.

What do these linear monuments mean for people today? They might seem to be archaic relics of former times when barriers were negotiated and enforced. From such a view, looking back from a world of global communications and international travel, such divisions appear to be echoes of long-redundant strategies and practices. Alternatively rather than vestiges of an earlier stage in a social evolution of division and demarcation, they might be seen by many as very familiar. Looking at our age of large-scale migration and genocides in which walls and boundaries frequently hold prominent and strategic military and political use, from the conflicts in Sudan to Gaza (e.g. Garman 2024; Soy 2025), linears are readily perceived as part of a continuum of human claims to land and assertions of control over the mobilities and lives of others. In other words, such ancient linears are often regarded as mirrors of our world that continues to be divided and demarcated with property boundaries, control lines and national borders (see McAtackney and McGuire 2020). Which is it? Are our definitions and defence of modern boundaries, borders and borderlands extensions of these earlier land divisions and linear constructions, or something completely different for our modern age? In other words, when we see past linears, do we perceive an otherness and disjuncture between us and them, or a familiarity and continuity between past and present?

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As a researcher of linear monuments, but also acutely aware of their significance and use in today's political discourses, popular culture and heritage sectors, one can see both the alien and similarities in the functions and significance between past and present. The enduring materiality of past frontier works continues to operate in dialogue with contemporary walls and borders, even if their functions and meanings might differ considerably (see Hanscam and Buchanan 2023; see below). We cannot escape the past in tackling our present-day landscapes, and we cannot avoid parallels made between today's uses of linears in our interpretations of the past. Rather than try to escape or deny this dialogue between linears past and present in our interpretations, perhaps our task is to make this recursive relationship pivotal to our dialogues with the public and our research questions, aims and objectives (see also Ray 2020: 118–124).

Taking forward this aspiration of connecting linear monuments past and present, I here introduce *Offa's Dyke Journal* 7. In particular, I would like to start by considering how ephemeral material cultures aim to enhance the territorialisation of our modern landscapes. Following a presentation of the journal's rationale and review of the volume's contents, I review new related publications exploring the significance of linears and their landscape contexts before outlining the main endeavours of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory since the publication of volume 6 (see Williams 2025a).

Britain's frontiers and flags in 2025

Divisions in the landscape can be lines drawn in signs, symbols and materials as well as via architecture and monuments. By way of example, this past summer, the UK has experienced a rash of flags (Union and St George) raised and placed in public places without permission. This was characterised as 'Operation Raise the Colours', describing themselves as a 'grassroots movement for unity and patriotism' (Mackie and Somerville 2025; Lawson and Jefford 2025). Outside of Northern Ireland, this marks a fundamental departure in the popular public use of flags in the UK. Moving from occasional private displays of flags and specific short-duration public celebrations such as royal coronations, flags are now widely displayed on street furniture in many districts of mainland Britain for the first time. This has been, in large part, a thinly veiled strategy of far-right political protest, exploiting broader senses of disillusionment, to territorialise suburban landscapes and stoke hatred, fear and division under the guise of patriotism (Mulhall 2025; Williams 2025b). These practices have built from, and overlapped with, protests involving displays of flags at asylum seekers' accommodation (Mackie and Somerville 2025). Tragically, this phenomenon led to the death of one of the flag-raisers, Bristol City fan Paul Lumber, who had been a fundraiser seeking to raise flags for his local area and who fell from a lamppost while hanging flags (Cork 2025).

A November 2025 YouGov poll confirms that, regardless of what motives inspired the original groups to raise flags, most adults surveyed (including those who identify as 'white') regard the widespread raising of the St George's flag (69% of all adults, 67% of white adults, 75% of ethnic minority adults), and to a lesser extent the raising of the

Union flag (63% of all adults, 63% of white adults, 64% of ethnic minority adults) on lampposts and other public locations as (mostly or partially) related to an anti-migrant or anti-ethnic minority message (Smith 2025). However, the YouGov poll questions were posited about abstract symbols and their meanings rather than any contextual appreciation of their impact on specific landscapes. Indeed, the poll only queried the distinction between flags raised on private property and those in public spaces, and makes no distinction between parts of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Also, it is clear that perceptions vary widely, depending on ethnicity and voting choices.

A host of societal anxieties underline this movement, including diffuse questions and concerns regarding what it means to be 'English' and 'British' in today's world, to more specific fears and hatred inspired by conspiracy theories of white replacement and immigrant criminality. The result is that English and British flags, and also Welsh and Scottish flags, are now emblazoned in many public spaces and residential areas across the UK.

I would contend that flag-raising and flag-removal has particular connotations for the Anglo-Welsh borderlands (see also Williams, this volume). An ingredient of the flag raising protests so far has been the use of English flags to assert identities in Wales. This is part of an ongoing English tradition of complaining about Welsh flags (Y Ddraig Goch) and the Welsh language appearing on public signage whilst demanding England's flag should fly! Painting St George's flags on Welsh roundabouts were an additional feature of the 'Raising the Colours' protests (e.g. Evans 2025; Hill 2025).

Welsh people's reactions have been varied. One extreme reaction has been anti-English graffiti daubed on roundabouts in response to the English flags appearing (e.g. Evans and Ferguson 2025). An alternative reaction in some Welsh communities has been the forging of community identity through participation in the clean up of English nationalist vandalism (Buckland 2025). A distinctive strategy was taken in Pontllanfraith near Caerphilly where a road bridge was afforded with flags of all nations served as a strategy of resistance and counter-protest (Johnson 2025). In the Flintshire and Wrexham areas, I witnessed how English, Welsh and Union flags were raised rapidly on road bridges close to the modern borderline but then they were swiftly removed by authorities or others. This short-lived 'flag war' along the English/Welsh border makes it difficult to track their frequency and impact, but it does reveal that the most intensely contested locations for flags will not retain them for long.

The scale of these 'flag wars' seems to have abated (as of December 2025), in part due to the change of the seasons and the focus shifting to Christmas decorations on homes and lighting installed on lampposts. Still, this phenomenon reiterates an argument I made about the Welsh/English border before, namely, the latent potential of borders, including ancient linear earthworks perceived as such, to be co-opted into modern political discourses and protests by being appended or associated with new symbols and signs. As 'sleeping giants' (or dragons), these ancient monuments can be rapidly

awoken as powerful means of articulating symbolic violence alongside other simplified narratives of national identity and national origins rooted in the deep-time past. The choices of major road intersections, as well as housing estates, to install flags, bearing symbols of faith and fantasy rooted in the medieval past, reveal the role of ephemeralia in contested attempts to territorialise the Anglo-Welsh borderlands (Ray and Bapty 2016: 369; Ray 2020; Williams 2020a). Following the summer 2025 'flag wars' along the border, it is notable that two areas where Welsh flags have been maintained without removal each coincide with the lines of the early medieval 'great dykes': Wat's Dyke along the A541 at Y Cae Ras, and Offa's Dyke along the A539 at Plas Madoc, Ruabon. Whether consciously or not, the difficult, contested histories of these localities, so long simmering and avoided by authorised heritage discourse, are brought to the surface by those raising Y Ddraig Goch (Ray and Bapty 2016: 375). While this spatial association might be purely coincidental, and it should be noted that there is a wider inverse relationship between where flags endure and where they are most contested between different groups along the modern border thus are rapidly removed (cf. Howell 2020), at these locations the Welsh flags serve as symbols of resistance to English flag fever, set in the heart of Welsh communities close to the modern border and in spatial association with traces of far older linear monuments. Notwithstanding this specific association, the ongoing popular anxieties and debates about anti-immigrant and anti-minority politics illustrated by flag-raising shows how important our robust academic discussions of the interplay between walls and dykes past and present are to ongoing public conversations about history, archaeology and heritage in today's world (Ray 2020; Hanscam and Buchanan 2023).

Rationale and review

This sets the stage for the motivation and continued importance of this open-access publication venue on linear monuments, frontiers, borderlands. A peer-reviewed academic publication venue for interdisciplinary research on linear monuments, frontiers and borderlands, *Offa's Dyke Journal* is edited and produced under the auspices of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory supported and funded by the University of Chester and the Offa's Dyke Association. Published online without charge to authors or readers by JAS Arqueología and with paperback copies sold and distributed by Archaeopress, the journal is supported by an expert editorial board. Each article is peer-reviewed by multiple specialists (bar Introductions and 'classics revisited' articles), although here we adopt alternative editorial strategies for a report and interview (see below). *ODJ* here reaches its seventh volume aiming to provide a venue for researchers, scholars, students and the general public to learn about the latest work on frontiers, borderlands and linear monuments.

Volume 7 contains this Introduction plus seven further contributions: original articles, interim reports and a structured interview. First, we publish an updated evaluation of fieldwork on the Danevirke by Tummuscheit and Witte. Building on their earlier article in the pages of this journal (Tummuscheit and Witte 2019), they reinterpret

the monument's eighth-century phases 4 and 5: the Palisade Rampart and Fieldstone Wall. Next, Ravest and Williams present interim observations on a drone photographic survey on critical sections of Offa's Dyke, suggesting new interpretations of its design, placement and landscape context. Clarke presents an original investigation for localised clusters of metal-detected finds in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, which might reveal important locales in the early medieval landscape. Building on these new investigations of early medieval dykes, volume 7 presents the first-ever evaluation of Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke on early maps by Robert Silvester. Shifting to twentieth-century receptions of early medieval linear earthworks, a 'classics revisited' article by Bode evaluates Offa and Offa's Dyke in the poetry of Geoffrey Hill. The review of the contemporary archaeology of Offa's Dyke is presented by Howard Williams who considers the Dyke to be a modern-era assemblage of traces and material cultures, installations and monument. Finally, Downham and Sherman consider the Wirral peninsula as a liminal landscape; it was an early medieval frontier zone as well as operating as a distinctive locality between nations in today's world. Together, the contributions illustrate the interdisciplinary breadth and dynamism of research on frontiers, borderlands and linear earthworks connecting the disciplines of archaeology, history and heritage studies.

New research on linear monuments

While *Offa's Dyke Journal* is a unique open-access journal dedicated to linear monuments, frontiers and borderlands, but it is important to recognise the many other strands of new research tackling this theme published in other venues. This section surveys a selection of this work published in recent years, augmenting previous annual reviews and illustrating themes connected to the work of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory and the contents of volume 7.

Dating multi-phased linears: the Darband Wall of southern Uzbekistan

Stančo *et al.* (2025) conduct a new investigation of the 1.1km-long Darband Wall in southern Uzbekistan. Fortified by towers and adapting its trajectory in response to the local topography, it straddles the watershed between the valleys of Kichik Ura Daray and Sheradbad Darya/Machay Darya and thus guards a critical pass between the historic regions of Sogiana and Bactria. Ten new radiocarbon dates inform their argument that it was likely first constructed in the early or middle third century BC under Seleucid or early Greco-Bactrian rule. In this first phase it was a stone wall on top of a pakhsa platform, further fortified by a fore-wall and ditch. Crucially, the investigation reversed the likely original orientation of the monument – it was built to be defended from the west (Sogiana) against those approaching from the east (Bactria). It was then later rebuilt in two successive phases in the first and second centuries AD, perhaps associated with the expansion of the Kushan Empire. These constructions augmented the stone wall with a mud brick construction, seemingly reversing the orientation of the monument to face westwards with the original ditch in-filled. While the precise

historical circumstances for the building and rebuilding remain elusive, the projects shows the necessity of integrating dating programmes with stratigraphic excavation data rather than relying purely on morphological and construction styles for dating linear monuments. While clearly a military structure in part, blocking a major transport route between territories, the precise circumstances of creation, use and reuse of this wall remain unclear. This requires us to be sceptical of equating this monument to a sustained militarised border without considering its biography of use, including phases of disuse, as well as anticipating multiple and shifting functionalities and significances.

Digging and dating linears, their associated infrastructure, and their afterlives: the Long Walls of Mongolia

Considering the complex 'Medieval Wall System' (MWS) of tenth to thirteenth-century northern China and parts of Mongolia, Hanks *et al* (2024) re-date the 'Northern Line', which runs for 737km, to the tenth to early twelfth century Kitan/Liao Dynasty, earlier than the twelfth to early thirteenth century Jin (Jurchen) dynasty as previously thought (Shelach-Lavi *et al.* 2025: 866). Hypothesising they were built to control the movements of nomadic groups within the steppe, they investigate clusters of enclosed features deploying pedestrian survey, archaeological geophysics (fluxgate gradiometry and ground penetrating radar), soil augering and targeted excavation (Shelach-Lavi *et al.* 2025). The research revealed evidence of intensive occupation and a possible military function to the structures. Excavations of the trench line of the monument elsewhere revealed the composition of the wall – made of earthen walls and trenches (Shelach-Lavi *et al.* 2025: 855). As well as noteworthy for the integrated methodology which challenges previous assumptions that these enclosures had been corrals for animals, the research also shows an awareness of the need for interdisciplinary research and considering the potential multifunctional roles of linear monuments as symbolic and choreographing movement of people and their herds through the steppe (Shelach-Lavi *et al.* 2025). They also identify the repeated use of the ruins as a place for burial in the post-Mongol period, suggesting they 'continued to be imbued with meaning across generations' (Shelach-Lavi *et al.* 2025: 865). This project is therefore innovative in both its theoretical approach to the function and biography of frontiers and in the field methodological approaches applied to linear monuments and their associated features and structures.

Mapping linears: the River Suck-Hind tochailt

Moving to Ireland, a new study charts the line of a mid-twelfth-century earthwork described in the *Annals of Tigernach* for 1139 (Curley and Timoney 2024). They argue this *tochailt* traversed 2.17km of a c. 5.8km course. The authors postulate that it was one of a series of territorial fortifications built by Irish ruler Toirrdelbach Ó Conchobair. It aimed to flood the landscape between the rivers Suck and Hind as a royal project in communal labour comprising three lengths of earthworks between the rivers and turloughs to create what I would call a 'hydraulic frontier' (see Williams 2021). Charting the possible link of the *tochailt*, the study suggests that, by linking water courses, it afforded a response to raids from rivals, Torrdelbach Ó Conchobair

was aiming to defend and monitor mobility into and out between the traditional territory of the kings of Connacht and southern Roscommon. It may have also had a secondary function as a water course between the rivers (Curley and Timoney 2024: 91–93). The study illustrates the need for detailed field observation and careful consideration of multiple forms and functionalities linked to hydrology when interpreting linear monuments.

Rethinking linears as magical thresholds: The Walls of Benin

In rethinking acts of royal power to control mobility through the landscape, we next turn to a reconsideration of the Walls of Benin, Nigeria, drawing on hitherto unpublished excavation data (Evans 2025). Heavily damaged by subsequent urban development in the Nigerian city, we are reliant on the work of South African archaeologist A.J.H. Goodwin who investigated the linear earthworks of Benin City in 1954–1956. This data is used to advance the interpretation of earthworks and their elaborate gateways found across West Africa between the mid-first millennium BC and late second millennium AD. Evans regards these monumental works as multifunctional thresholds associatd with both towns and territories. He argues the walls could serve as defenses, to regulate mobility for tax and trade, but also were deployed over generations to afford magical protection to communities from spiritual dangers.

Applying these ideas to the Benin and Ishan earthworks, amounting to around 16,000km of linear monumentality in total, Evans (2025) argues that they were organised in cellular clusters. Their scale was enhanced with thorny hedges and sacred trees/groves. As Goodwin's preliminary excavations reveal, they were connected to shrines and symbolically charged with shrines and ritual deposits affording spiritual protection. In this fashion, the Benin earthworks controlled access to land and people and may have held complex cosmological significances through their military construction and use. Moreover, it seems the earthworks are attributed to social memories, including perceptions that they were magically bolstered thresholds, and resulting in the deeds of famed past rulers. In this way, linear monuments accrete social memories for their inhabitants and visitors alike. Evans provides us with yet another example where we cannot differentiate between religious and military interpretations, indeed to do so might be unhelpful and misleading, and imposing a Western rational intentionality on complex monuments built over time for various purposes and significances. Their work inspires our interpretations of the multifunctional and overlapping significances of linear earthworks. As Evans states: these walls were 'heterogeneous, incorporative, generative compositions of art and architecture that played a number of closely interconnected and evolving roles in the livies of Bini communities, past and present' (Evans 2025: 329).

Linear ritual practices: Monte Sierpe

Linear monuments take many forms. This particular example is a 1.5km-long segmented alignment of c. 5200 holes, between 14 and 22m wide, in the foothills of the Andes from Mont Sierpe, on the north side of the Pisco Valley, southern Peru. Dating from the eleventh to early sixteenth centuries AD, its study shows the effective application of

both drone reconnaissance (see also Ravest and Williams this volume) and sedimentary analysis to understanding a cumulative monument linked to accounting and exchange (Bongers *et al.* 2025). The holes resemble local *khipu* – Inca knotted-string devices used for record-keeping – and this monumental version might have resulted from its use as a barter marketplace and for tribute collection.

The study is a solid example of the application of field methodologies to rule out alternative explanations in terms of defence, water collection, fog capture, burial or mining. The landscape context and data from excavation points in favour of recognising the monument as a node in the coast-highland and north-west/south-east valley-connecting trade routes. Here, lined holes were used to deposit goods for exchange and/or tribute in highly ritualised practices. Their regular arrangement and segmentation might have assisted in counting and sorting goods. Each section may have been connected to specific social groups. In addition to the methodological implications, I would add the potential of considering further the mnemonics of this linear monument: as it developed it not only facilitated social and economic integration through the exchanges taking place, it monumentalised and recorded the history of these exchanges.

Linear heritage: Hadrian's Wall and the US/Mexican border

For our final review, we shift our consideration to the heritage and public archaeology of linear monuments. Hanscam and Buchanan (2023) pick up the challenge we set in 2020 by pointing out the limited development of a 'public archaeology of frontiers and borderlands' (Clarke *et al.* 2020). Disappointingly, the article does not address many of the key insights and themes for public archaeology explored in that collection (e.g. Ray 2020). Still, they focus on criticising the often uncritical comparison of hard borders past and present mediated by their materiality.

Hanscam and Buchanan (2023) identify how the popular perception and political evocation of Hadrian's Wall constitutes an archetypal frontier work removed from the complexity of scholars' narratives on the monument and its landscape context. Likewise, they point out that the messy reality of the US/Mexican border is not reflected in its iconic, simplistic and divisive use in political discourse and popular culture. They contend that the materiality of ancient linears help to perpetuate these modern fantasies about the power and durability of 'hard borders'. They argue that archaeology has power to challenge these misconceptions, including by shedding light on the humanitarian impact of frontiers, but also to challenge wider narratives of borders, frontiers and borderlands. Still, part of the limitation is the fixation on Roman frontiers as single-phase constructions. Another is the retention of a fixed ancient-modern dichotomy that prevents consideration of work done on later prehistoric and early medieval linear monuments, as well as those frontiers, borderlands and linears from other times and places with longer biographies of use and reuse, to help problematise and complicate the seductively familiar and simplistic notions of linears as 'hard borders'. Here, fictional materialities might also be more help than

hindrance, as I have addressed for *The Walking Dead* (Williams 2020b). The authors segue into a discussion of the need for archaeologists to be politically informed and active, if not activist, and this certainly applies to the archaeology of linear monuments, frontiers and borderlands. Indeed, this issue has been a repeated theme addressed in this and previous Introductions to the *Offa's Dyke Journal* (e.g. Williams 2020a; see also Ray 2020).

Collaboratory activities, 2025

The Offa's Dyke Collaboratory supported research and knowledge transfer for linear earthworks, frontiers and borderlands through 2025 by creating this open-access academic journal and by maintaining the Collaboratory website and blog (see below). In addition, the Leverhulme Trust funded 'Making the March' project continued to involve fieldwork and analysis of the early medieval Anglo-Welsh borderland including two co-convenors of the Collaboratory: Andy Seaman (Cardiff University) is Principal Investigator supported by (among others) Keith Ray as Senior Research Fellow (Ray 2025a). A further critical development is a new heritage interpretation for Offa's Dyke at Pinner's Hole, Knighton, near the Offa's Dyke Centre and developed by co-convenor Dave McGlade as Chairman of the ODA (Offa's Dyke Association) (McGlade 2025; see also Williams 2025c). The initiation and development of the first research agenda for the early medieval frontier including Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke is a further important Collaboratory-instigated development for the ODA (Ray 2025b).

Frontier conferences and events

Academic conferences in 2025 involved Collaboratory members and convenors presenting their research. For example, a four-session theme on 'The Making of the Early Medieval Frontiers: Contesting Lands in the Early Medieval Frontier' took place in July 2025 at the Leeds International Medieval Congress, organised by Collaboratory co-convenor Andy Seaman and Collaboratory member Charles Insley (IMC 2025). Twelve presentations explored fresh archaeological and historical investigations of early medieval frontiers from Britain and across Europe. Howard Williams addressed the significance early medieval linear earthworks when he presented at the National Monuments Service Eighth Annual Archaeology Conference at Trinity College, Dublin, on 18 October 2025. The conference theme tackled Within/Without: the Archaeology of Partitions. Williams presented a talk titled 'Dykes as deeds? Re-evaluating linear earthworks from early medieval Britain' (Williams 2025d). Also, his work on the public archaeology of Offa's Dyke (showcasing the work of charities, heritage practitioners and local enthusiasts along the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, plus the art of Dan Llewellyn Hall, John G. Swogger and others) was presented at the Theoretical Archaeology Group conference at the University of York, 15 December 2025 in a talk titled 'Walking Lines and Marking Times through the Linear Earthworks of the Anglo-Welsh Borderlands' (Williams 2025e).

In addition to these academic venues, an open day to facilitate coordinating efforts and fund raising for the conservation of the early eighteenth-century Trevor Chapel next to Trevor Hall, Garth, Llangollen took place on 20 September, organised by Suzanne Evans. Given the chapel is situated near the line of the Offa's Dyke Path and close to the northernmost intersection of Path and Dyke, Howard Williams was invited to present a talk at this event on the topic 'Offa's Dyke: Past and Present'. He highlighted the potential of Offa's Dyke and the national trail to connect up sites like the chapel to the deep-time story of the Anglo-Welsh borderlands from prehistory to the present (Williams 2025f; see also Ray 2020).

Digital dykes

As mentioned above, in addition to producing this journal, the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory uses digital media in the form of a website with information, resources and a blog, to help sustain reflections and critiques about linear earthworks, frontiers and borderlands research. In 2025, via the Collaboratory blog, posts have addressed public archaeology and heritage interpretation along the Anglo-Welsh borderlands, offering critique and constructive recommendations. The heritage interpretation of prehistoric burial mounds on the line of the Offa's Dyke Path was evaluated for Bwlch y Parc, Llanarmon-yn-Iâl and commended (Williams 2025g). Focusing on the contemporary archaeology of Offa's Dyke, a further post addressed the miscellaneous material cultures that accrue along the line of the Path and Dyke between Craignant and Bronygarth (Williams 2025h) and another considered a distinctive personal memorial created upon a fragment of dry stone wall beside the Offa's Dyke Path (Williams 2025i). A stark critique of the neglect of the Pillar of Eliseg and Offa's Dyke (as well as arguably Wat's Dyke too) in the UNESCO Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site was presented (Williams 2025j). The potential strategic importance of Melverley for the Mercian frontier was considered (Williams 2025k). Finally, a pair of posts tackled the heritage interpretation of Wat's Dyke: 'excavating' an old panel, formerly part of the Ruabon Heritage Trail, near Wynnstay Park (Williams 2025l) and critiquing the new attempts at heritage interpretation by the National Trust at Erddig (Williams 2025m).

Conclusion

Linear monuments of different scales and characters are but one among many interleaving strategies by which people past and present have subdivided and transformed their world. Built, used, discarded and reutilised over time, they tell us about both changing strategies of landscape organisation, control and experience in past times, as well as present perceptions and concerns with dividing the land. Shedding fresh insights on the evolving spatial and temporal diversity of linear monuments, frontiers and borderlands, and their significances in today's world, the *Offa's Dyke Journal* now comprises fifty-seven articles spread over seven volumes. In this way, the journal brings new research on some of our most extensive, monumental and yet enigmatic monuments to scholars and students as well as to the wider public attention and for public benefit.

Peer-review statement

All articles in previous issues of the *Offa's Dyke Journal* have been subjected to rigorous and critical evaluations by multiple peer-reviewers each with relevant disciplinary expertise in history, archaeology and heritage with the exception of the Introductions and 'classics revisited' articles. Likewise, for this volume, the articles by Pauline Clarke, Robert Silvester and Howard Williams were subjected to full peer-review, with Kate Waddington of the Editorial Board who generously served as stand-in editor to handle the peer review and evaluation of the article by Howard Williams. The remaining five articles were subject to different editorial approaches in response to their character and context as follows:

- The Introduction received invaluable feedback from Pauline Clarke and Meggie Reid.
- Astrid Tummuscheit and Frauke Witte's contribution is an interim review of fieldwork first published in a German archaeological magazine, translated by the authors and subject to fresh review and revisions by them in response to feedback from the Editor and one member of the Editorial Board, Clare Downham.
- Julian Ravest and Howard Williams composed an interim fieldwork report, here subject to open review by Lena Delaney;
- Christoph Bode delivered a 'classics revisited' essay, re-titled re-edited and revised by the author following feedback from the Editor;
- Clare Downham and Paul Sherman contribute a structured interview, recorded, transcribed and revised by the Editor and augmented with images and citations provided by the authors.

For each article, the Journal's proof-reader, Siobhan Wordingham, provided constructive feedback and invaluable insights.

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