LOOKING AT LIMINALITY OVER THE LONGUE DURÉE: AN EXPLORATION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF BORDERLANDS THROUGH THE CASE STUDY OF THE ANGLO-WELSH BORDER

by

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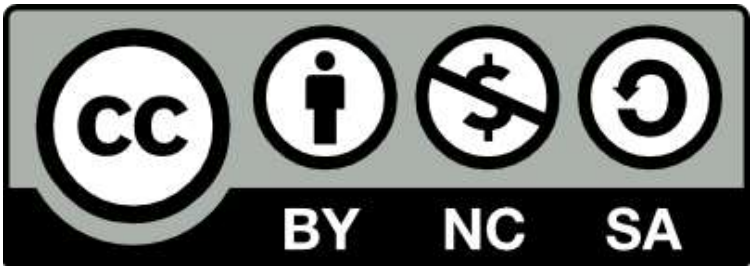
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Abstract

Borders are an intrinsic component of human societies around the world. Since the earliest hunter-gatherers began to encounter groups other than their own we have been creating and modifying the mechanisms through which we live alongside the 'other'. Today, despite the nature of our ultra-connected, globalised world borders persist and indeed the need to understand these complex, multi-vocal environments has resulted in the emergence of the interdisciplinary field of border studies. Inevitably, much of the scholarship in this field is undertaken on the character of these landscapes today. Meanwhile, analyses that promise to contextualise our understanding of these environments by accounting for their emergence and evolution over centuries or millennia remain largely under explored.

Similarly, within the context of contemporary archaeological research, beyond studies relating to the borders of the Roman empire, or *Limes*, borders have, until recently, remained at the literal and metaphorical edge of much work in the field. This thesis explores how landscape archaeology might identify, account for and present the evidence for borderlands over millennia through the development of an empirical and theoretical framework dedicated to constructing the biographies of these complex environments. The utility of this interdisciplinary framework is tested through its application to the case study of the Anglo-Welsh border, a culturally liminal region with 'old bones', but one whose origins are poorly understood.

The case is made for the successful application of this model to the Anglo-Welsh borderland, one that reveals both its early prehistoric origins as a culturally liminal region, but also the significance of the region's transitional natural environment in shaping its character. By combining evidence from the landscape itself with documentary, literary, toponymic and folklore sources and thinking about the results through the lenses of affordances, non-verbal metaphors and the *Longue Durée* this research establishes that it is possible to identify evidence for the biographies of diachronic borderlands over millennia and to identify and account for enduring themes of continuity and change which form and inform these landscapes. Finally, the argument is made for the intrinsic value in adopting these ways of

working with and thinking through these complex, hybrid environments more broadly, of their wider relevance to interdisciplinary debates on contemporary borderlands, concerned with issues of mobility and migration, identity and belonging, power and hegemony.

Dedication

To Ian, Margaret and Arthur, Agnes and Owen

For the ‘Heretical Britons and Heathen Mercians’

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Abbreviations

BIIS (British Irish Ice Sheet)

CPAT (Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust)

Csv (Comma separated value)

GIS (Geographic Information Systems)

KEPN (Key to English Place Names)

Mxd (Map Exchange Document)

NMRW (National Monuments Record of Wales)

RCAHM (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments)

RCAHMW (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales)

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Chapter 1: Making the Case for Biographies of Diachronic Borderlands

The origins of this thesis lie in the years immediately following the end of the First World War on the border between England and Cymru, so it begins with an account of the people and places concerned that contextualises much of what follows. On the 23rd March, 1926 Agnes Kilvert married Owen Breeze and moved from English-speaking Shrewsbury to the bilingual village of Trefonen. Though still in Shropshire, this part of the county, approximately 4 km from the border between England and Cymru, was a cultural world away. Owen, part of large family of speakers of Cymraeg had, in fact, grown up on the English side of the border whilst Agnes, as a newly arrived English-speaker in the village, equally effectively found herself a foreigner in her own country. Whilst on a superficial level it could appear that both of this researcher's maternal grandparents spent much of their married life out of place and in a landscape at the edge, the truth was rather different, that their lives on the Anglo-Welsh borderland were in fact played out in a region with its own distinct traditions formed and informed by their topographic and culturally liminal environment. Indeed, Trefonen's old border bones are well-established. At once a settlement in England with a distinctly Cymric place-name (which translates into English as the village of the ash trees) (Proffitt, 2016), this is also a community through which Offa's Dyke runs, the early medieval earthwork monument which traverses much of the region and that, in the popular imagination at least, constitutes the historic border between Cymru and England. Trefonen's deep-rooted bilingualism also finds additional expression through, for example, the Cymric, English (or rather Shropshire dialect), and hybrid field names recorded in its nineteenth-century tithe apportionment discussed as part of the analysis of the region's place-names in the case study (see section 4.9.1) (Shropshire Archives, 1843). Growing up, then, visits to Shropshire, whether consciously or otherwise, inculcated a curiosity about this borderland where things were done and said differently and where distinct sets of unspoken rules seemed to apply to so many aspects of everyday life.

As an archaeologist, then, this general curiosity came to be applied to whether it is possible to identify and account for the region's borderland character in its landscape over time, to ask questions of how and when it emerged and what processes of temporal and spatial continuity and change came to influence its development, to apply Naylor's (2008, p. 265) concept of 'biographies of objects and places' to these landscapes. In turn, these questions extended further, to provide the foundations of a PhD concerned with establishing whether it is possible and desirable to identify and account for diachronic borderlands more broadly, to explore the material remains of, for example, both long-established and more recently imposed borders at a range of scales, from the regional to the supra-national and across continents, to think about diachronic borderlands more broadly and to place the results of these analyses within the context of contemporary border studies.

In order to answer these questions and address these aims an interdisciplinary empirical and theoretical research framework through which to record, analyse and interpret the evidence from these often-complex environments was created and tested against the case study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland. The results were then assessed to establish whether it is indeed possible to detect the presence of diachronic borderlands in the archaeological record, to effectively build biographies for these landscapes and to establish the inherent value of, and future potential in, carrying out such studies. As a prerequisite, however, it is first necessary to demonstrate the significance of exploring these enduring, multi-vocal environments.

Borders are an intrinsic, common component of human societies across the world. Since the earliest hunter-gatherers began to encounter groups other than their own we have been creating and modifying the mechanisms through which we live alongside the 'other'. Today, borders persist despite the character of our globalised, hyper-connected world. Within the context of contemporary academia such is their significance that they have spawned their own field of border studies, one that embraces scholarship from a range of disciplines, some of which are archaeologically-adjacent, including, for example, geography, anthropology and history (for a recent overview see Wastl-Walter, 2016).

Bringing in archaeological evidence for diachronic borderlands to border studies scholarship, then, scaffolds enquiries relating to how today's borders came into existence, how they

evolved over millennia. By seeking answers to questions such as, are our experiences of these landscapes indeed new and novel or are we merely doing what we have always done, just faster and on a larger scale, we enhance our contemporary understanding of these environments. Understanding borderlands over time, then, clearly has value in the twenty-first century.

To date, however, archaeological engagement with these landscapes has often been piecemeal with many macro-scale studies conducted, not unreasonably, within contemporary regional or national boundaries. A conspicuous exception is, however, to be found in work carried out on the *Limes*, or external borders of the Roman empire, which demonstrates that liminality in both physical and conceptual borders can be identified and accounted for in the archaeological record (e.g. Hekster and Kaizer, 2011; Hingley, 2018; Verhagen *et al.*, 2019). Beyond the temporally, if not spatially, restricted studies of Rome's borders the subdiscipline of landscape archaeology's engagement with these environments currently remains limited, though promising.

The value of research conducted in temporal contexts from prehistory through to the twentieth-century is demonstrated by, for example, the studies incorporated in Mullin's (2011) edited volume *Places in Between: the archaeology of social, cultural and geographical borders and borderlands*, McWilliam's (2013) work on the landscape archaeology of the Iron Curtain in Cold War Europe and Johnson's (2017) study of the Bronze Age of the Anglo-Welsh borderland. More recent engagement still is evidenced through the establishment of the Offa's Dyke Journal (2019) which provides a scholarly home for research outputs related to a wide range of temporal, spatial and conceptual borders. Within the wider context of professional heritage Belford's (2020) recent call for a greater engagement with these landscapes also speaks of their increasing significance in the field. Together, then, these diverse studies illustrate the largely untapped potential for diachronic borderland studies in archaeological research. In each case, however, these analyses are primarily concerned with an individual liminal landscape in a single temporal context. Evidence for multi-period, studies of diachronic borderlands, for bodies of work drawing on the practices demonstrated by the papers incorporated in, for example, Lewis' (2011) edited volume on 500,000 years of occupation of the Mendip Hills, have yet to emerge. The potential for the application of

these ways of thinking about space and place over deep time to borderlands, however, is clear. This thesis, then, draws together these two strands of landscape archaeology research to develop a research framework capable of recording, analysing and accounting for the evidence from multi-period, diachronic borderlands.

Additionally, this research takes an explicitly interdisciplinary approach. As noted above, the field of border studies incorporates a diverse range of scholarly perspectives through which to explore these landscapes and upon which it is possible to draw (e.g. Newman, 2006; Paasi, 2009; Scott, 2018). Unsurprisingly, however, many of these academic outputs are concerned with examining contemporary borders, how we form, re-form and respond to these complex liminal spaces today (e.g. Andersson, 2014; Boas *et al.*, 2023; Salisbury *et al.*, 2011). Whilst noting the inherent value in many of the outputs from the field, however, O'Dowd (2010) has nevertheless reflected on the negative impact of a 'lack of historical reflexivity' and an over-reliance on 'epochal thinking' in many instances of border studies research. The evidence, then, is suggestive that border studies likewise suffers from a similar blind spot in relation to temporality as the one exhibited in landscape archaeology when it comes to borderlands. These two fields of research do, however, share many common interests including, for example, identity and belonging, migration and mobility and the mutual role of the natural environment in forming and sustaining how populations inhabit the landscapes in which they settle, move through or fall into conflict over (e.g. Agnew, 2008; Hofmann *et al.*, 2024; Vila, 2003). The potential for combining many of the empirical and theoretical components of both fields to facilitate the exploration of diachronic borderlands is clearly feasible. In the case of landscape archaeology, such possibilities also offer up the potential for greater levels of interdisciplinary engagement with border studies scholarship and, consequentially, a 'seat at the table' in wider societal debates on borderlands in general. The construction of the methodology for this research framework therefore also explicitly references and utilises the approaches incorporated within the field of border studies as well as those more widely used in landscape archaeology studies of individual landscapes over deep time and the borders of the empire of Rome.

Finally, in addition to the incorporation of theoretical perspectives from adjacent disciplines this research also embraces empirical evidence from those fields of study that offer the

potential to reveal the presence of cultural liminality in landscape studies. In each case, where available, historical sources, together with those from place-name and folklore studies are also used to strengthen the evidential basis for the presence of cultural liminality in borderlands.

The remainder of this introductory chapter goes on to outline the development of and reasoning behind this explicitly interdisciplinary methodology, the empirical sources selected for use and the methodological approaches through which the data was collected, analysed and interpreted. Finally, the means through which the chosen methodology was applied to the case study, and the suitability and utility of the selected landscape are outlined together with the remaining components of this thesis.

1.1 Developing the interdisciplinary methodological research framework for exploring the biographies of diachronic borderlands

Having initially registered as a taught MRes student at Birmingham with a view to establishing whether, after a break of over twenty years, I could still successfully write an academic essay I was provided with the opportunity to complete the two optional modules on landscape archaeology and GIS. The experience gave me the opportunity, as an upgraded PhD student, to use the understanding and updated skills I gained through this taught route to construct a robust methodological research framework. Based on the utility of GIS to support multi-scalar studies incorporating a range of quantitative and qualitative sources of data and recent landscape archaeology theories a clear route emerged based, from a theoretical perspective, on the application of affordances; a mechanism originally derived from the field of ecological psychology through which it is possible to explore and account for how any number of species, including humans, perceive and respond to their surroundings (Heft, 2013; Ramstead *et al.*, 2016; Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014). Additionally, the opportunity for part-time work in the College of Arts and Law also provided an unexpected encounter with the field of linguistics that had a major impact on the formation of the theoretical basis of this research. Having had cause to sit in on a lecture by Professor Jeanette Littlemore on how and why metaphors function across societies an entirely new

perspective on the practice of monument construction in borderland environments emerged. More specifically, it was Jeanette's work on non-verbal metaphors in advertising (Littlemore, 2019) and how those working in the field exploit their intrinsic power for us that held particular resonance. Jeanette's work helped me make the connection that whether the individuals or groups behind these constructions are modern automotive manufacturers, or to take an obvious example from ancient antiquity, Roman emperors, the bottom line is they are using billboards, or large-scale expressions of monumentality in the landscape, to sell their brand, to make *you* see things *their* way. Whilst monuments as messengers is a fundamental principle in landscape archaeology it was their role as non-verbal metaphors in contested, multi-vocal borderlands, where the intended audiences are more complex and comprised of both 'us' and the 'other' that added a new and novel aspect to this research.

Finally, wider reading across a range of adjacent disciplines not only cemented the significance of, for example, evidence from place-name and folklore studies to the research, but also that of additional insights derived from the field of history. Driven in part by the emergence of the field of digital humanities, scholars in the discipline have once again begun to engage with 'big history' or the *Longue Durée* as tools and theoretical lenses through which to explore, for example, the presence and role of inter-generational drivers for continuity and change together with the enduring significance of the mutual relationship between individuals and communities and their natural environment (e.g. Lamouroux and Throssell, 2015).

Together, these combined disciplinary insights produced the finalised methodological framework for this research. Well-established empirical and theoretical practices from the field of landscape archaeology provide the basis for this work. From a data gathering and analysis perspective examples from the extensively documented successful applications of GIS to multi-scalar studies of quantitative and qualitative data within the subdiscipline were adapted for use in the research (Chapman, 2006; C. Gaffney *et al.*, 2012). In addition to data relating to individual and groups of monuments, qualitative resources from the fields of history, place-name studies and folklore were used to provide additional interdisciplinary perspectives. Further, theoretical insights from the tools of affordances, non-verbal metaphors and the *Longue Durée* were combined with ways of thinking about space, place

and meaning from landscape archaeology to provide a holistic interpretation of the evidence. Finally, the results were contextualised within the wider themes of border studies scholarship to embed them in debates concerned with the nature of contemporary borderlands.

As a last step, and prior to its evaluation against a case study, the methodological framework was assessed to confirm its utility in achieving the aims of this research. The results confirmed that evidence in the form of monuments from the archaeological record from a range of periods together with place-name and folklore resources can indeed be used as a basis through which to explore how borderlands come into being and evolve, how they are marked out and perceived over centuries and millennia. Contextualising this evidence within sources that describe the physical characteristics of a given study area, for example, a landscape's topographic composition and its major features including its rivers and estuaries facilitates an exploration of the nature of the mutual relationship between a given landscape's anthropogenic and natural components. Further, by combining the evidence from a range of different periods, by embracing ways of thinking about these environments over the *Longue Durée* it becomes possible to identify enduring processes of both continuity and change which can, in turn, be applied to our contemporary understanding of a given borderland environment. Such an approach, then, enables the results to be embedded in wider scholarly debates on the nature of borderlands, their significance in contemporary culture and whether our twenty-first century experience of these landscapes is indeed new and novel, or whether we are in fact following patterns of behaviour whose origins may lie in the deep past. Having established its potential utility the research framework was then tested against the chosen case study.

1.2 Making the case for the Anglo-Welsh borderland as the case study

The Anglo-Welsh borderland was chosen as the case study for this research for several scholarly and pragmatic reasons in addition to the familial links noted above. Firstly, this is a UK internal borderland known to have very 'old bones'. Indeed, the modern border between Cymru and England has moved little since its creation in the sixteenth century under Henry

VIII, an act that was itself born out of Henry's desire to suppress the powerful Marcher lordships as largely autonomous seats of power ruling over the region since the Anglo-Norman conquest of England in the eleventh century. In the preceding early medieval period, in the late eighth century, this topographically transitional landscape straddling the Cymric uplands and lowland river valleys of the English west midlands, was marked out as the western-most extent of the kingdom of Mercia through the construction of Offa's and Wat's dykes, two of the most substantial linear earthwork structures of the period anywhere in western Europe. This is, therefore, a landscape at once marked out as culturally distinct over centuries, yet also one whose earliest origins remain poorly understood.

From an archaeological perspective, since Fox's (1955) fieldwork on Offa's Dyke in the early decades of the last century, the region has been subject to substantial programmes of fieldwork, primarily concerned with further explorations of its early medieval monuments, its medieval castles and Iron Age hillforts. These studies have, however, been dominated either by single period analyses, or those whose focus traditionally lay on one side of the border, or the other. Only recently has attention begun to focus on the Anglo-Welsh borderland as a valid unit of study in and of itself (Halstead, 2005; Johnson, 2017; Mullin, 2012a).

Additionally, the Anglo-Welsh borderland is, however, a landscape of significant contemporary relevance. Still subject to the hegemony of the major English industrial cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham it figures large in discussions of 'Welshness' and of the nature and extent of 'British Wales' (Evans, 2007, 2019). Additionally, during the COVID pandemic, as the lockdown rules and guidelines from Cardiff and Westminster diverged the border found itself in the spotlight of international news articles outlining the complexities of navigating this landscape, one within which it was impossible to play league football owing to the location of Chester FC's stadium that straddles the border, or complete a round of golf in Llanymynech where the club has 15 holes in Cymru and 3 in England (e.g. Castle, 2020). Finally, following the Brexit vote in 2016, through which Britain elected to leave the European Union, discussions of Cymric as well as Scottish independence have gained increasing traction (e.g. Lewis, 2022; Patrick, 2021). This landscape is, then, one bound up in British – if not necessarily English – dialogues relating to nationhood and of continued relevance to the communities along its length, visitors and their neighbours alike.

From a pragmatic perspective the Anglo-Welsh border is also within easy reach of both my institutional base in Birmingham and my home base in Worcestershire to facilitate fieldwork. Additionally, records of its significant (scheduled) monuments from the Neolithic through to the medieval period, from c.4,000 BC to c. AD 1500, are held in readily accessible English and Cymric national archives, as are the research outputs relating to place-names on both sides of the border (Cadw, no date; Historic England, no date; KEPN, no date; RCAHMW, no date). Additionally, the region's folklore has been the focus of significant previous scholarly attention, both in the form of contemporary studies and the (re)publication of several county-based archives (e.g. Burne, 1883; Leather, 1912; Palmer, 2001; Simpson, 1976). Lastly, my role as a trustee of the Offa's Dyke Association for several years has provided the opportunity to gain a familiarity with the culture and landscape of the Anglo-Welsh borderland.

In terms of the initial research questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter the Anglo-Welsh borderland is well placed to address many of the issues raised. How does a greater understanding of the character of this region inform how the English and Cymry live alongside each other in this liminal landscape today? Is it possible to identify spatial and temporal drivers for continuity and change over the *Longue Durée*, and if so, what are they? Are our contemporary experiences indeed new and novel, or are we in fact just the latest generation to experience life in this broad, culturally distinct, borderland between England and Cymru? These, then, were the carefully laid and implemented plans for this research up until late March 2020.

1.3 Carrying on through COVID



Figure 1 The interior of the locked down Offa's Dyke Centre at Knighton, Powys

Inevitably, the extended periods of lockdown at the height of the pandemic impacted on this planned timeframe whilst simultaneously cementing the relevance of the research. Throughout much of 2020 and into 2021 fieldwork, or archive research at the closed Offa's Dyke Centre in Knighton, Powys (Figure 1) became either completely impossible, or severely restricted, but at the same time other enforced opportunities revealed themselves. Almost certainly, without the requirement to 'stay local' many of the subsequently invaluable county-based folklore archives might have played a far less significant role than they eventually did (e.g. Burne, 1883; Leather, 1912; Palmer, 2001), as might some of the historical synopses and relevant toponymic papers (e.g. Brady, 2017; Coplestone-Crow, 2009; Jones, 2015; Palmer, 2001). Undoubtedly, the resultant research output was richer for the inclusion of these resources. Further, the extended opportunities for engaging with the academic literature coming out of border studies with their interdisciplinary insights into

contemporary borders would not have been taken up to the same extent had it not been for enforced periods of desk-based research. Finally, the very necessary extension to accommodate all these additional complications as restrictions finally lifted helped to put the original plans into action once again with the added benefit of the contextual insights provided by so much enforced background reading. With all restrictions lifted it became possible to reinstate the remaining fieldwork plans and to successfully complete this aspect of the research, albeit with a fresh appreciation of, and perspective on, the ability to seamlessly work across the border.

1.4 Structure of this thesis

The remainder of the thesis takes the following structure. Chapter 2 is comprised of an overview of the literature from the distinct disciplinary components of the proposed research methodology, their inter-relationships and the utility of bringing them together. Divided into three sections, section 2.1 synthesises the literature for the fields concerned with the chosen analytical approaches, namely those of landscape archaeology (2.1.1), border studies (2.1.2), history and the *Longue Durée* (2.1.3), place-name (2.1.4) and folklore studies (2.1.5). Section 2.2 provides a similar overview of the analytical tools used to structure the theoretical framework, those of non-verbal metaphors (2.2.1) and affordances (2.2.2). Finally, section 2.3 summarises the rationale behind the combination of the chosen sources of evidence and theoretical tools and outlines the resulting interdisciplinary lens used to assess the utility of exploring the evidence from borderlands over millennia.

Chapter 3 outlines the structure of the resulting research methodology, the aims and objectives and how the research framework was applied to the case study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland (sections 3.1 to 3.5). The data sources selected (section 3.6), data preparation, processing and presentation workflows (section 3.7) are described. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and challenges encountered with this research methodology (section 3.8) and final reflections (section 3.9).

In Chapter 4 the results of the application of the methodology to the case study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland are laid out. In section 4.1 the case for the selection of the Anglo-Welsh borderland as the case study is summarised. Section 4.2 deals with the region's topography

and evidence for how it might have been inhabited and exploited during the earliest periods of prehistory by transient hunter-gatherer communities. Subsequently, sections 4.3 to 4.8 go on to describe and present the evidence from the monuments constructed across the region from the earliest Neolithic burial tombs through to its medieval castles period by period. The relevance and impact of the additional sources of evidence, namely place-names, folklore and documentary sources are also described and discussed in section 4.9.

Chapter 5 offers up a multi-period interpretation of the results from the Anglo-Welsh borderland within the explicitly interdisciplinary theoretical framework of affordances and non-verbal metaphors. Following an introductory overview in section 5.1, in sections 5.2 and 5.3, the monumental evidence from the prehistoric and historic periods is synthesised, accounted for and interpreted though the lenses of affordances, non-verbal metaphors and the *Longue Durée*. In section 5.4 the additional forms of evidence, namely, the place-name and folkloric resources are also integrated into the analyses and interpretation. Finally, in section 5.5 the results are framed within the wider scholarly context of border studies and their relevance for our contemporary understanding of the Anglo-Welsh borderland are discussed. Chapter 5 ends with concluding thoughts summarised in section 5.6.

Chapter 6 contextualises the results of the case study within a wider discussion of the utility and value of the empirical and theoretical framework and of the study of diachronic borderlands more broadly. Following an introductory summary in section 6.1, perspectives on the construction of the new analytical (section 6.2) and methodological (sections 6.3 and 6.4) frameworks and the new forms of knowledge and ways of thinking they reveal are discussed. The resulting new perspectives on the biographies of diachronic borderlands are outlined in section 6.5. The impact and potential of the interdisciplinary research framework on the biographies of diachronic borderlands is summarised in section 6.5. The possibilities for the wider applicability of the research framework dedicated to exploring the biographies of diachronic borderlands to future landscape archaeology and border studies scholarship conclude this thesis in section 6.6.

Chapter 2 Interdisciplinary Lenses for Developing Biographies of Diachronic Borderlands

As this work will demonstrate, borderlands are, by definition, complex landscapes uniquely subject to sets of temporal and spatial variables that mark them out as distinct from their neighbours. These are the environments where we have encountered the 'other' throughout human history, at once on the fringes of the propaganda propagated by elites whilst also places whose residents face and exploit the challenges and opportunities afforded by living in these multi-vocal spaces. To make sense of these environments most effectively over time and across a range of scales it is necessary to draw on several intersecting approaches and tools from a range of fields. To provide a coherent overview of the resulting narrative this review of current academic literature across a number of disciplines is therefore divided into three distinct subsections:

- Section 2.1: The analytical approach. An outline of the approach used to identify and explore the available evidence (whilst also providing theoretical input)
- Section 2.2: The analytical tools. The tools that, in addition to the approach outlined in Section 2.1, comprise the theoretical framework used to explain why borderlands form and how remote elites and those living within these environments respond to them over time
- Section 2.3: The structure of the analytical framework. A discussion of the nature and utility of adopting this interdisciplinary approach to identify and account for the development of diachronic border landscapes over time.

2.1: The analytical approach

The data for accounting for the emergence and development of diachronic borders are derived from a range of analytical approaches. Anthropogenic and topographic sources including physical remains in the landscape alongside documentary and cartographic resources are combined to identify and account for the unique character of borderlands.

Whilst approaches drawn from landscape archaeology and history, incorporating the *Longue Durée,* facilitate the gathering and exploration of topographic and documentary sources relating to settlement patterns over millennia, place-name and folklore studies provide additional contextual data relating to how those who inhabited these spaces and places understood and interpreted their surroundings. Further, approaches derived from border studies provide an analytical approach for how these landscapes are identified and explored in our contemporary context. In each case these analytical approaches incorporate both the means of identifying, gathering and exploring the data as well as accounting for the results.

2.1.1 Landscape archaeology

> *"Everything* [*in the landscape*] *is much older than we think." (Hoskins, 1955 p. 15)*

Landscape archaeology is one of archaeology's most established sub-disciplines; a field of study born out of the realisation that our understanding of our contemporary world can be greatly enhanced by accounting for the form and location of the extant anthropogenic features within it, interventions which are often hidden in plain sight. Within the context of the British Isles landscape archaeology's origins lie in the eighteenth-century antiquarianism of, for example, William Stukeley and his work on recording the prehistoric landscapes of Wiltshire, or the later pioneering studies conducted by Pitt Rivers on Cranborne Chase, Dorset and Sumner's early twentieth-century fieldwork in the New Forest, Hampshire (for an overview see May, 2023, p. 110). Landscape archaeology's emergence as an acknowledged field of study owes much to the work carried out in the 1950s by scholars such as Hoskins (1955) and Crawford (1953) who made significant methodological breakthroughs, for example, through the application of aerial photographic techniques to the identification of archaeological features and the development of new techniques with which to interpret or 'read' the landscape.

The evolution of landscape archaeology

Throughout the latter part of the last century the number of studies undertaken across the British Isles grew exponentially as the utility of combining landscape archaeology with historical analyses to reveal the complexity and time-depth of the contemporary environment became clear (Aston and Rowley, 1975). As part of this movement several long-term projects were undertaken, work typified by Fowler's study of the parishes of West Overton and Fyfield, Wiltshire that revealed the complexity of the relationship between the landscape's topography and the anthropogenic interventions made within it over centuries (Fowler, 2000; Fowler and Blackwell, 1998). As the technologies and insights available to landscape archaeology developed over the following decades further studies were undertaken that demonstrated the validity of multi-scalar analyses addressing a range of themes including, for example, research frameworks exploring the multi-period landscape archaeology of the regions of the British Isles, the evolution of individual landscapes over millennia and the relationship between patterns of monumentality and the natural environment (Bradley, 2000; Historic England, 2021; Lewis, 2011; Powlesland, 1998).

Subsequently, some of the most recent scholarship has focused on exploring how macro-scale spatial and temporal variables impact on patterns of human habitation at the supra-national level and across millennia. A prominent example of such ambitious analyses is Cunliffe's (2001) study of the western European Atlantic coastal zone. Extending from the Iberian Peninsula in the south to the north of Scotland and from early prehistory into the early modern period Cunliffe's work revealed the enduring impact of this coastline on the lives of the communities living alongside it; one that shaped their shared heritage in such a way as to render it readily distinguishable from those of their neighbours to the east over millennia.

Today, landscape archaeology has its own scholarly International Association together with a bi-annual conference programme (International Association of Landscape Archaeology, 2024). Practitioners also contribute to many of the wider debates across the discipline of archaeology as a whole, for example, through panels and papers submitted to the annual conferences of the European Association of Archaeologists (European Association of Archaeologists conferences, 2024). The extent of landscape archaeology's interdisciplinary

engagement is also demonstrated through, for example, the papers submitted to Kluiving and Guttman-Bond's (2012) *Landscape Archaeology Between Art and Science* and a range of peer-reviewed papers in disciplinary-adjacent journals including the special issue of *Land* on Archaeological Landscape and Settlement (e.g. Biagi *et al.*, 2023; de Vingo, 2023; Soisalo and Roiha, 2022).

Methodology in landscape archaeology

From a methodological perspective, recent technological innovations in data acquisition, storage and analysis have also had a major impact on fieldwork practice. Powlesland's long-term project on the village of West Heslerton, North Yorkshire, provided an early example of the potential for computational techniques to facilitate large-scale investigative programmes (Powlesland, 2009, 1998). More recent studies still, for example those conducted within the context of prehistoric Wessex and Doggerland, the submerged landscape between the British Isles and Continental Europe, have proven how ambitious macro-scale projects incorporating the latest geophysical techniques and desk-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can aid in the discovery and interpretation of diachronic landscapes at a speed and scale unimaginable only a few decades earlier (Chapman, 2006; Chapman *et al.*, 2013; Fitch *et al.*, 2007; C. Gaffney *et al.*, 2012).

Theoretical approaches in landscape archaeology

From a theoretical perspective however 'progress' within landscape archaeology has been altogether less clear cut. The genesis for the adoption of theoretical concepts in the field originally came from the New Archaeology movement in the 1960s (Clarke, 1968). Whilst the positivist, hypothesis-based ways of accounting for human behaviour that emerged during this time provided new ways of thinking about the nature of past societies they were, in turn, nevertheless rejected by the proponents of post-processualism who cited their inability to take account of the qualitative and subjective variables that were readily identifiable in the evidence (see Hodder and Hutson, 2003). Post-processual debates in landscape archaeology during the 1980s and 90s went on to consider, for example, the significance of 'taskscapes' as a means of accounting for the inter-relationships between animal and human activities and the environment (Ingold, 1993) and the potential of the field of phenomenology to provide a

mechanism through which to describe both how humans and animals experience their surroundings and the role of the natural environment in forming these processes (Tilley, 2012, 1994).

Though the earliest post-processual models were themselves critiqued for their foregrounding of human agency above all other variables (Fleming, 2006), subsequent reviews of completed landscape analyses and of the most promising avenues for both empirical and theoretical studies led Johnson (2006) to propose a framework for future work that gained wide acceptance. Further progress in disciplinary approaches to individual landscape analyses, concerned with change over deep time, is evidenced through the work of, for example, John Bintliff.

Bintliff's application of the *Annales* paradigm to both landscape studies and wider disciplinary theoretical approaches (e.g. Bintliff, 2018, 2004, 1995), and in particular his (2012) seminal *The Complete Archaeology of Greece: From Hunter-Gatherers to the 20th Century A.D*, demonstrates the power of the application of these ways of thinking about time and space to landscape archaeology. In particular, Bintliff makes the case for the *Annales* approach resolving many of the enduring challenges of reconciling 'What has too often been portrayed as an unbridgeable gap between the medium and long term' and the fundamental dispute between the New Archaeology and Post-Processual Archaeology on the nature of human agency and the role of the individual (Bintliff, 2018, p. 111). Citing the example of the Valley of the Muses in central Greece from his team's regional project Bintliff's work provides not just a theoretical model, but also an applied example of what it is possible to achieve through the application of Braudelian approaches to landscape archaeology. By means of an extensive programme of intensive field survey across the entire landscape the project revealed the existence of a nucleated settlement that alternately shifted between lowland and upland locations over 5,000 years (Bintliff 1996, 2000). Bintliff's (2018, p.119) case for adopting these approaches in landscape archaeology in order to scaffold ways of thinking through 'human behaviour at all relevant levels of time' is compelling as a means through which we can make sense of individual landscapes not just over centuries, but millennia.

Today, the most successful contemporary analyses combine the power of digital data gathering, storage and analytical systems with theoretical frameworks to facilitate the exploration of diachronic landscapes in the round. Numerous multi-scalar studies have now been conducted that together illustrate the utility of exploring entire landscapes, the inter-relationships between anthropogenic and natural symbolic places and how previous generations interacted with, interpreted and curated the world around them (e.g. Fitch *et al.*, 2007; Semple, 2013; Swallow, 2016; Williams and Semple, 2015). By taking advantage of the most recent technological innovations these analyses are now able to incorporate data from many sources and across a range of scales including, for example, historic topographic and palaeo-environmental data sets (for a discussion see Denham, 2008). Further, for later periods where documentary, place and field-name resources become available, where these new sources of socially constructed and environmentally contingent evidence emerge, it becomes possible to gain additional insights into how local populations perceived and managed their local environments (e.g. Darvill, 2008; Jones, 2015; Rippon, 2013).

The emergence of thematic landscape studies

Concurrently, as the number and range of analyses expanded so did landscape archaeology's explicit engagement with a range of different environments. Increasing numbers of thematic studies emerged including, for example, those concerned with upland or marginal landscapes (Fyfe *et al.*, 2008; Tipping, 2002), urban environments (Burgers *et al.*, 2014; Smith, 2014) lowland zones vulnerable to climatic changes at the interface between land and coastal or riverine systems (Bailey *et al.*, 2020), or topographical and/or cultural landscapes of transition or mobility (Brudenell *et al.*, 2024). Further studies also emerged that were concerned with specific forms of archaeological evidence typified by Chippindale's multi-scalar work on prehistoric rock-art as 'pictures in place' (Chippindale 2004; Chippindale and Nash, 2004) and Carman's analyses of battlefields and landscapes of conflict (Carman, 2013; Carman and Carman, 2006).

One such emerging theme became that of liminality, the exploration of environments considered to have some kind of peripheral characteristic (for a discussion see Tilley, 2017). Such studies are typified by Gillings' (2017) work on the relationship between the topographically liminal upland landscape of Exmoor and its prehistoric monuments and

Chapman's (2015) recent analysis of the landscape archaeology of bog bodies. Additional studies extended the concept of liminality further to explicitly address culturally peripheral spaces, including borderlands.

Landscape archaeology and borderlands

How landscape archaeologists today consider borders and borderlands is a complex topic with a number of terms often being used interchangeably to describe these landscapes. Such levels of ambiguity are demonstrated by the definitions in the Oxford English Dictionary for a boundary 'that which serves to indicate the bounds or limits of anything whether material or immaterial' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2025a), a border 'a side, edge, brink or margin; a limit, or boundary' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2025b, p. 1), 'the district lying along the edge of a country or territory, a frontier' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2025c), or a borderland 'a land or district on or near the border between two countries or districts (Oxford English Dictionary, 2025d). Collectively, these definitions illustrate both the material and immaterial nature of borders and boundaries, but also how attempts to describe these landscapes are simultaneously both complex and reductive. The blurred and interchangeable nature of these terms unsurprisingly finds its way into English-language scholarship, and more particularly into the developing archaeological discourses surrounding these spaces.

Models of how archaeologists think about borderlands in particular have been, and continue to be, framed within wider disciplinary debates on space, landscape and place-making (e.g. Bender, 1993; Johnson, 2006; Tilley, 2012, 1994); in discourses concerned with how space frames the means through which people engage with one another and the material world and how identities and experiences are constituted and given meaning (Ylimaunu et al., 2014, p. 248).

In their early reflections on the potential ways that archaeologists might apply the discipline's ways of thinking about landscapes specifically to borders Lightfoot and Martinez (1995) described how theories bound up with colonial perspectives of active, dominant cores and passive peripheries effectively, both implicitly and explicitly, relegated borderlands to the edge of archaeological thinking. Further, Lightfoot and Martinez ibid., p. 474) also argued that 'New Archaeology, with its focus on cultural ecological models, closed systems, and anti-

diffusionism, were not conducive to the study of intercultural interactions' typical of those taking place in multi-vocal borders.

Writing a decade later in his seminal *Ideas of Landscape* Johnson (2006, p. 100, 139) similarly observed the inherent weaknesses in these ways of thinking bound up with 'cross-cultural laws' in accounting for 'uneven and wiggly' spaces such as borderlands. In his concluding thoughts looking to the future of landscape archaeology Johnson reflected (ibid., p. 140) that the most promising ways of thinking should embrace both the general and particular in constructing the most robust interpretations of the evidence from archaeological landscape studies. In the following years explicit archaeological engagement with borderlands found form in a number of studies dedicated to identifying, describing and accounting for the archaeology of these landscapes.

In his (2011) edited volume *Places in Between The Archaeology of Social, Cultural and Geographical Borders and Borderlands* Mullin (2011) reflected on previous archaeological attempts to identify, describe and account for past borderlands that moved away from ways of thinking bound up with core-periphery models. Noting the promise of the work of both Lightfoot and Martinez (1995) and Green and Perlman (1985, 4), the latter of which sought to develop a 'frontier and boundary approach' within which frontiers formed the edges of particular societies and boundaries functioned as nexus' of physical and conceptual difference, Mullin concluded that disciplinary progress in exploring these landscapes had, however, overall been lamentably slow (Mullin, 2011, p. 1) though with the notable exception of work being undertaken within the context of the scholarship concerned with the form and function of the Roman *Limes* (e.g. Breeze, 2018; Polak and Kooistra, 2013; Verhagen *et al.*, 2019).

Collectively, and contained within Mullin's (2011a) edited volume, the work of scholars including McWilliams (2011) on the archaeology of the Iron Curtain, that of Bradley and Fraser (2011) on the role of barrows in forming boundaries between the living and the dead and Monikander's (2011) account of the liminalities between early medieval Scandinavian folklore and landscape archaeology demonstrated the potential for archaeologists to engage with both physical and conceptual borders and boundaries across time and space.

Most recently, Ylimaunu et al (2014), whilst taking inspiration from Naum's (2010) earlier pioneering work, made the case for an explicit engagement with hybrid, or 'third space' ways of thinking to account for the diverse materialities and subjectivities encountered in borderlands. Drawing on the social sciences scholarship of, most notably Bhabha (1994) Ylimaunu et al (2014, p. 246, 247) observe the implicit and explicit value in the development of an archaeological borderlands school through which the materiality of these landscapes can be explored and how the means through which these environments produce multi-vocal 'human experiences, communities and identities' can be accounted for. Undoubtedly, such approaches, to which this research aims to contribute, have the potential to overcome many of the shortcomings of earlier theoretical models when applied to borders to scaffold the interpretation of themes including 'us' and 'them', migration, cooperation and conflict that arise in these 'entangled' spaces (Silliman, 2010, p. 29). In summary, the breadth of the emerging literature on borderlands, typified by Belford's (2020) call for a rethinking of archaeological research frameworks within the UK to take account of the unique character of borderlands alongside Greave et al.'s (2020) *Public Archaeologies of Frontiers and Borderlands*, illustrates the degree to which landscape archaeology is now engaging with these often complex, multi-vocal environments. It is equally clear, however, that these conversations on the nature of diachronic borders and their potential as legitimate foci of study in and of themselves are only just beginning. In order to further frame these debates it is timely, therefore, to look to fields already engaged in the scholarship of borders and borderlands.

2.1.2 Border studies

'What the map cuts up, the story cuts across' (de Certeau, 1980, p. 129)

Contemporary border studies scholarship is primarily concerned with the analysis of how we build, perceive and interact with liminal environments across the globe today; how spatial and temporal power relations are played out in spaces where different groups encounter the 'other'. But for landscape archaeologists hoping to engage with border studies scholarship a

range of preliminary questions arise. What forms of evidence do scholars from, for example, economics, geography, politics, anthropology and psychology use to study these landscapes? How do they select, collect, analyse and interpret their data? What can these inter/multi-disciplinary approaches tell us about contemporary and diachronic borderland environments? Are similar forms of evidence available in the archaeological record, and if so, to what extent is it possible and/or profitable to embed them in landscape archaeological borderland studies?

Once principally the focus of geographers and political scientists, the field of border studies grew out of a wider twentieth century intellectual engagement with the significance of space based around the Spatial Turn (Feld and Basso, 1996; Rapoport, 1992; Warf, 2010). Concepts of landscape, place and territoriality increasingly came to frame multi-disciplinary debates as scholars considered how we perceive and modify our natural and built environments (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Over several decades the work of cultural and social geographers, political scientists, historians, sociologists and anthropologists established models through which our relationship with space, and particularly how issues such as power and identity are played out within in it, could be explored (Bhabha, 1994; Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1979; Lefebvre, 1991; Martinez, 1994). With the subsequent emergence of the field of border studies came an explicit scholarly engagement with liminal spaces, one that placed borderlands at the core of academic debates rather than relegating them literally and metaphorically to the edge of spatial discourse.

The genesis for much of this scholarly engagement came from macro-scale socio-political events that took place in the later twentieth-century; events such as the fall and subsequent re-modelling of the Iron Curtain and the expansion of supra-national power-blocks typified by the European Union and their immediate and long-term consequences (e. g. Diez *et al.*, 2006; Paasi, 2009; Scott, 2012). Further, innumerable conflicts surrounding national and economic borders further drove scholarly debates many of which came to settle on the extent and complex nature of the borderland between Mexico and the United States (e.g. Martinez, 2008; McWilliams, 2011; Scott, 2012). The emergent key themes included the impact of globalisation on national borders, borderlands as expressions of national or ethnic power, the impact of enforced borders on former colonies and the responses of local

populations to these interventions (Feld and Basso, 1996; Ghosh, 2011; Martinez, 1994; Purbrick *et al.*, 2007; Ramutsindela, 2019, 2010).

Today's border studies scholars find themselves working in a rapidly developing field with an increasing number of dedicated research centres including the Centre for International Borders Research at Queen's University, Belfast ('Centre for International Borders Research', 2022), the Centre for Border Region Studies at the University of Southern Denmark ('Center for Border Region Studies', 2024) and the Centre for Inter-American and Border Studies based in the University of Texas at El Paso ('University of Texas at El Paso', no date), with dedicated peer-reviewed journals including the International Journal of Migration and Border Studies ('International Journal of Migration and Border Studies (IJMBS)', 2024) and the Journal of Borderlands Studies ('Journal of Borderlands Studies', 2024). Additionally, articles are regularly published across a wide range of disciplines including, but not restricted to, politics, sociology and anthropology (e.g. Andersson, 2014; Johnson *et al.*, 2011; Löw and Weidenhaus, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, given the scale, speed and range of global issues emerging in the first quarter of the twenty-first century much contemporary scholarly debate is understandably focused on making sense of borders in the present day (e.g. Antonucci and Varriale, 2020; Dibb, 2022; Freilich, 2023; Sanchez, 2022; Traublinger, 2013).

Theoretical approaches in border studies

Contemporary scholarly debates relating to the theorising of borders have emerged through a series of multi- and interdisciplinary exchanges. In his seminal review of border studies theory past, present and future Paasi (2009) eschewed many of the earlier frameworks derived primarily from the fields of political geography and international relations in which borders were treated as self-evident, fixed lines in the landscape. Instead, Paasi (ibid.) argued for the adoption of models based on borders as social processes. Crucially for archaeologists, Paasi's work is also concerned with the diversity of borders, in their qualitative, spatial and temporal characteristics, with questions relating to why they emerge, persist, disappear, or are re-made over time. More specifically, space and territory are re-imagined as spaces and places laden with social, political and cultural meaning, as 'discursive landscapes of power'

(Paasi, 2009, p. 225). Key emergent themes derived from Shields' (1992) widely recognised principles of 'social spatialisation' also include agency, power and hegemony, how ideas about territory and borders are constructed through internal and externa propaganda, how these processes in turn shape the images held by populations on both sides of a border and how these concepts are subject to both spatial and temporal change. In turn, these themes are addressed through questions of how individuals and groups are socialised spatially, how territorial identities are learned and reproduced over time, how these narratives find expression in the landscape and how in many cases these collective identities and memories are contested both between and within groups. In terms of evidence, these processes are noted as finding form in the physical expression of a group's culture, politics, economics and administrative practices; through an exploration of, for example, its oral histories and testimonies, art, documentary evidence, symbolism in its built environment and material culture.

Building on these principles, some of the most recent and promising scholarly exchanges in border studies have been between cultural and political geographers and anthropologists. Issues such as mobility and diaspora, how borders are formed and informed by dichotomies of 'inclusion and exclusion', 'inside and outside', and 'us and the other' and the frequent conflicting interests of politics and culture, the state and the individual. Studies influenced by this paradigm shift towards borders as process explore, for example, nationalised landscapes of power such as those found in post-Soviet Estonia and around the Berlin Wall, ethnographic studies of modern performative borders within both militarised and peaceful borders such as those shared by India and Pakistan or Sweden and Finland, the lived borderland environments of individual communities and the study of borderland representations in popular visual culture (Das, 2014; Dittmer, 2010; Ghosh, 2011; Kaiser, 2012; Leyva and Ortega, 2024; Prokkola, 2008).

The emergence of diachronic border studies

Embedded within all these developments is a loosening of the discipline of geography's hegemonic influence over the field of border studies and its associated imbalance between the spatial and temporal characteristics of these landscapes. Despite the early promise of Baud and Van Schendel's (1997) *Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands* in which the

authors theorised on the role of maps as the intellectual products of elites made real on the ground and the frequency with which populations elect to ignore or circumvent these interventions, their ground-breaking work failed to generate the breadth of scholarly debate they had hoped for. It would take a further decade before temporality would once again re-emerge as a significant theme in border studies with O'Dowd's seminal (2010) *From a Borderless World to a World of Borders: bringing history back in*.

Noting the legitimate reasons underpinning the discomfort and reluctance of border studies scholarship to engage with issues of temporality, including colonialism and exploitation and of a desire to create a break with traditions base on a 'denigration of borders as arenas where civilisation confronted barbarism' O'Dowd (2010, p. 1039) nevertheless warned against scholarship based on a denial of previous deeds and misdeeds. The result, warns O'Dowd (ibid.), is the development of an over-reliance on 'pseudohistory' or 'epochal thinking' resulting in 'exaggerated claims of the novelty of contemporary border change propped up by poorly substantiated benchmarks in the past'. In response to these challenges O'Dowd (2010, p. 1031) calls for a 'critical historical sensitivity' capable of exploring the extent to which today's national and state borders are contingent on both the legacy of earlier imperialisms and the alliances of opposition to them. Today, whilst border studies researchers begin to address the 'perpetual challenge' of working with diachronic data (Paasi, 2013, p. 537) scholars such as Di Fiore (2017, p. 37) are left to reflect that such historical studies still 'remain few and highly fragmentary'.

These few and highly fragmentary analyses undertaken by historical geographers and ethnographers have nevertheless illustrated the value of multi-scalar borderland studies incorporating a temporal component. For example, Megoran's (2012) exploration of the 'boundary biography' of the border shared by Kyrgystan and Uzbekistan successfully demonstrates the application of Naylor's (2008, p. 265) historical geography model for analysing the 'biographies of objects and places' to borderland environments. Through the adoption of a 'bottom-up' descriptive methodology using a range of sources Megoran's study was able to successfully record the impact of supra-national events on the lives of the inhabitants of this borderland who had witnessed its transformation from a landscape of peaceful coexistence to a highly militarised frontier within a generation. Equally, Gosh's

(2011) similar ethnographic study of the border between India and Bengal revealed the complex webs of often conflicting inter-relationships between national and local interests.

That temporality is finding its way into mainstream border studies is demonstrated by some of the most recent scholarship including Pfosner's (2022) work on borders and memory and the major research project being undertaken by Vivien Sommer on *Society and Space 'The Socio-Spatial Memory of European Borders: Dispositifs of Remembering and Forgetting* (Leibniz-Institut für Raumbezogene Sozialforschung, 2024); the latter aiming to explore the social memory of European borders with particular reference to recent disruptive events including the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit.

In summary, current trends in border studies show that in many cases the empirical landscape, material culture and linguistic evidence and bottom-up theoretical frameworks used within the field share many commonalities with those used in studies of diachronic borderlands in landscape archaeology (e.g. Ghosh, 2011; Megoran, 2012; Nicolae, 2010). Despite such developments, however, the majority of border studies with any form of explicit, or even implicit, temporal component are frequently concerned with postcolonial studies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g. Salisbury *et al.*, 2011; Schulze and Wolf, 2009; Zou and Kumar, 2011), with engagement with evidence from earlier contexts with no cartographic tradition being largely absent. The field of border studies, then, clearly has the potential to inform archaeological debates on liminal landscapes whilst the evidence routinely used by landscape archaeologists in turn promises to aid in overcoming the under theorising of temporal borders where written evidence is either limited or non-existent. As will be demonstrated in the case study of the Anglo-Welsh border, through a combination of archaeological landscape techniques, border studies and social and political sciences, interdisciplinary approaches to diachronic and contemporary borders through, in this case, an analysis of contemporary ideas of 'Welshness' (Evans, 2007), can provide powerful evidence relating to the nature of these environments.

2.1.3 The Longue Durée

'In truth, the historian can never get away from the question of time in history: time sticks to his thinking like soil to a gardener's spade' (Braudel, 1958, p. 47)

In his seminal paper in which he launched the concept of the *Longue Durée* Braudel (1958) chose to use the metaphor of the soil of the land sticking to a gardener's spade to describe the inextricable link between temporality and discourse in historical studies. For archaeologists looking for inspiration from adjacent disciplines, for new ways of thinking about the nature of the relationship between time and space, it is unlikely he could have chosen a more powerful comparator.

The concept of the *Longue Durée* was born out of a widespread mid-twentieth century frustration both with the nature of historical scholarship, a field of academic endeavour frequently grounded on elite biographies, and a wider 'general crisis of the human sciences' (Braudel, 1958). With its origins in the scholarly journal established by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in 1929 the radical new frameworks that emerged from the *Annales* school and its journal as part of the wider 'Social Turn' (Armitage and Guldi, 2014) sought to re-imagine historical scholarship both as a means through which to understand humanity's collective past and as a discipline capable of contributing to debates on the nature of contemporary society (ibid.).

By the late 1950s these new ways of thinking had begun to coalesce into a broad innovative framework dedicated to taking a more holistic approach to historical studies; one driven in part by Braudel's (1958) argument that by focusing on 'conventional' timelines across decades historians were effectively blindsiding themselves to the impact of deeper continuities. The result was a broadly tripartite system through which the inter-relationships between three sets of events could be explored; short-term *événements*, medium-term conjectures and the *Longue Durée*, the mechanism through which the role of variables and patterns of behaviours over centuries or millennia could be recognised and accounted for. As his thinking developed Braudel (ibid.) went on to further foreground the significance of the inter-relationships between time, environment and human agency.

Events across the wider discipline of history were, however, to impact on those within the *Annales* school. In the following decades, and in common with many of the humanities and social sciences, the discipline of history went through several seismic paradigmatic shifts. These new ways of thinking, concepts that evolved within the wider context of the 'Cultural' or 'Linguistic' Turn, were largely characterised by an initial rejection of the prevailing grand narrative and positivist approaches. In their place, empirical and theoretical frameworks more closely aligned with pluralistic, bottom-up narratives, or microhistories, came to frame historical thought across much of the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (for a summary see Weinstein, 2005). Though often welcomed from a theoretical perspective many of these developments also witnessed a turning in on itself on the part of the discipline, one lamented across sections of historical scholarship for the loss a seat at the table of public and policy debates. At the same time ways of thinking concerned with macro-scale narratives and their associated research themes fell from favour (ibid.).

Following several decades of eschewing 'big history' more recent scholarly debates on the empirical and theoretical nature of historical research have, however, seen a wider re-engagement with deep time, or the *Longue Durée*. Many of these drivers for change have been the direct result of the challenges and opportunities afforded by the advances in digital technologies made over the last two decades, primarily through the creation of tools capable of creating, storing, interrogating and interpreting macro-scale data sets of, for example, extensive documentary archives previously held in inaccessible paper storage repositories, or museum collections (Aronova *et al.*, 2017; De Miranda and Chabal, 2021). Emerging themes include, but are not restricted to, understanding the processes of the globalisation of trade and disease, trans-national displacement and migration and the climate crisis (see Guldi and Armitage, 2014). In common with colleagues across the humanities and social sciences historians have turned their attention to these emerging themes at regional, national, supra-national scales (Weinstein, 2005). The result of these collective developments has been a renewed impetus for historians to once again engage with macro-scale themes and to re-visit and reassess the validity of the *Longue Durée* through the lens of 'big' or 'global' history (Armitage, 2012, p. 493). The strength and breadth of these endeavours is typified by Tainter's (2011) analysis of the fall of the Roman Empire highlighting what contemporary

lessons can be learned about resource management and sustainability, De Miranda and Chabal's (2012) exploration of the applicability of big data studies to deep-time linguistics and Lamouroux and Throssell's (2015) study of the changing nature of international relations over centuries. Additionally, historians have also been able to develop opportunities to work with colleagues from other disciplines who now find themselves able to explore their scholarly archives, to mine these resources for new data that contextualises their work in ways that were not previously possible. Finally, a more ambitious range of explicitly interdisciplinary collaborations have also been facilitated typified by McCormick's (2019) study of climate change over the *Longue Durée* in collaboration with colleagues from the physical sciences and archaeology.

Most recently, in their review of current historical scholarship, big data and the future role of the *Longue Durée* Bonnell and Hunt (2023) have identified a range of emerging themes including those of social complexity and embeddedness and of the need to account for the ongoing tensions between continuity and change that occur across a range of spatial and temporal scales (ibid., p. 26). Their analysis has further cemented the role of the *Longue Durée* in future historical studies by highlighting its capacity to position the discipline in wider academic and public debates on issues such as climate change and migration. Further, Guldi and Armitage's (2014) ambitions for the re-invented *Longue Durée* extend even further, for it to inform contemporary archival practices to enable future scholarship into our contemporary world**.**

In summary, despite many fallow years where questions relating to macro-scale issues disappeared from historical dialogues today the *Longue Durée*, or Global History, is emerging as an increasingly relevant theoretical framework both for historians, and for scholars working in a broad range of disciplines. As large datasets increasingly come within the reach of a growing range of disciplines novel research strands are emerging and new questions are becoming possible. In parallel, studies relating to many contemporary global challenges, including climate change and migration and diaspora, are increasingly embedding temporality in their analyses in order to identify the origins and evolutionary processes underpinning these phenomena. The *Longue Durée*, then, facilitates discussions between

scholars working in disparate fields whose work is nevertheless concerned with data drawn from our contemporary world, the recent past, or deep history, or prehistory.

2.1.4 Place-name studies

Place-name studies, or toponymics, is an established, interdisciplinary field of study incorporating elements from, for example, linguistic anthropology, human geography, history, sociology, linguistics and folklore studies (Nevins, 2008; Savage, 2020). Though there is evidence for interest in toponymics as far back as the Renaissance its origins lie in the first part of the twentieth century. Key questions posed within place-name scholarship include why settlements and other significant locations in the landscape including, for example, bodies of water, hills and mountains, were named as they were, when and by whom (Savage, 2020). Many of the most recent studies are concerned with the role of place-names as potential 'linguistic fossils', or enduring lexical elements in the landscape capable of providing insights into how previous generations perceived and interacted with their local environments (Perono Cacciafoco and Cavallaro, 2023a, 2023b). The utility of exploring how and why previous generations named the places of significance around them to make sense of our contemporary landscape is recognised around the world (e.g. Bühnen, 1992; Nevins, 2008).

Within the context of the British Isles the pioneering work of scholars including Richards (1972, 1960), Gelling (1984) and Nicolaisen (1986) established the value of place-name studies in furthering our understanding of the complex inter-relationships between the diverse early medieval linguistic groups across Cymru, Scotland and England. Today, key macro-scale research themes include explorations of the extent of Brythonic and Old English place-names across much of southern Britain and the toponymic evidence for the presence of Scandinavian settlement in the north and east of England (Corrigan, 2011; Fellows-Jensen, 2011; Hall, 2012; Ryan, 2011; Taylor, 2010). In addition to these regional or national studies further place-name research themes are concerned with more local landscape analyses. Recent studies of the toponymic elements within individual settlements, primarily of the field names adopted by those whose lives were intimately interwoven with the land, have proven the utility of exploring place-names at a range of scales to provide micro-scale

insights into who was living and working the land and where (Field, 2013). Unsurprisingly, because of its nature, much place-name scholarship is directly tied to the analysis of individual languages, or linguistic groups.

The outputs of these various strands of research are to be found in dedicated toponymic centres, online databases, societies and associated journals, for example the multi-agency sponsored 'Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba – Gaelic Place-names of Scotland Centre, the English Place-Name Society and its associated Key to English Place-names database, both based at the University of Nottingham and the Welsh Place-Name Society and Melville Richards Archive Place-Name Database at Bangor University ('Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba (AÀA) – Gaelic Place-names of Scotland,' no date; "'English Place-Name Society' no date; 'Key to English Place-names,' no date; 'Melville Richards Archive Place-Name Database,' no date; 'Welsh Place-Name Society – Protecting the Place Names of Cymru,' no date).

The most recent place-name scholarship, typified by the Leverhulme Trust funded *Flood and Flow: place-names and the changing hydrology of English and Welsh rivers* project, now places the contextual information contained within place-names in wider debates on past, present and future climate change (see Jones and Kilby, 2020; Jones, 2016).

2.1.5 Folklore studies

What is the 'folklore' of Earth? It's the sum total of all those things people know without ever having been officially taught about them, all those stories and images which drift around with no apparent source.' (Pratchett and Simpson, 2008)

Whilst historically it has proven difficult to agree a scholastic definition of folklore (Paphitis, 2013) UNESCO (1989) characterises it as being comprised of 'Materials transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means. Its forms are, among others, language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts.' Today, folklore studies is a global field of analysis through which scholars explore both its form and evolution over time together with its enduring meaning and context in contemporary societies (e.g.

Becerra, 2021; Jirata, 2018; Lin and Liu, 2021; Nicholls, 2016; Peek and Yankah, 2003; Werth, 2022).

In Britain, folklore studies emerged as one of many strands of research that grew out of the wider antiquarian movement of the nineteenth century (for a discussion see Bronner, 2017). Whilst it is possible to identify earlier examples of engagement with folklore in the medieval and early modern periods expressed through, for example, Edward I and Queen Eleanor's exhumation of the putative remains of Arthur and Guinevere at Glastonbury Abbey in 1191 and Aubrey's seventeenth century idea of peasants as 'stores of traditions' (see Paphitis, 2013), it is not until the mid-1800s that the movement towards compiling and exploring the various sources of folklore began.

With the founding of the Folklore Society in 1878 a focal point for the disparate threads of folklore scholarship was established. The breadth of studies carried out over time is demonstrated, for example, by the indexes created for the Society's journal, *Folklore* (e.g. Bonser, 1969) covering the creation and curation of county-based, national and international archives together with thematic analyses concerned with, for example, farming and industrial practices and the significance of topography.

Over time, and in common with a range of culture-historical disciplines, folklore studies became embroiled in the mid-twentieth century manipulation and appropriation of evidence for nationalistic agendas across much of Europe (for an overview see Dow and Lixfeld, 1994; also Galai, 2019). In the following decades, subsequent scholastic developments further served to isolate folklore studies from its adjacent disciplines and the wider public, most notably Dorson's (1973) 'boundary work' or 'fakelore' through which participation in folklore studies was effectively restricted to a small group of academic experts.

Subsequent developments within folklore studies, however, provided the genesis for a more holistic scholarly model, one based on new empirical and theoretical frameworks and on greater levels of collaboration with colleagues from, for example, anthropology, linguistics, history and literary studies as well as archaeology (see Briggs, 2008; Bronner, 2006).

Today, folklore scholarship is an international field of study represented by a range of dedicated research centres, archives and publications, for example, the Hellenic Folklore

Research Centre, Academy of Athens, the Folklore Institute, the University of Iceland and the Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore, University of Alberta ('Hellenic Folklore Research Centre, Academy of Athens,' no date; 'Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore,' no date; 'Research Centre Strandir - The Folklore Institute, University of Iceland,' no date). Within the UK, in addition to the Folklore Society's extensive archives ('The Folklore Society Library and Archives,' no date) and *Folklore* journal ('Folklore Journal,' no date), research centres include the Centre for Myth Studies at the University of Essex and the Contemporary Folklore Research Centre, University of Sheffield ('Centre for Myth Studies | University of Essex,' no date; 'The Contemporary Folklore Centre, University of Sheffield,' no date). A range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study are also available including the MA in Folklore Studies at the University of Hertfordshire, Heritage and Folklore Studies, University College Cork and Folklore and Mythology at Harvard University ('Heritage and Folklore Studies, University College Cork,' no date; 'MA Folklore Studies, University of Hertfordshire,' no date; 'Harvard University,' no date).

Contemporary themes in folklore scholarship include literary and material culture studies through which the intersectionality of historic, archaeological and documentary sources is explored, the performance of folklore and its role in forming and maintaining communities, its wider role in twenty-first century society, notably its historical significance, its use in digital spaces and in the construction of past narratives that can in turn contribute to how current debates on, for example, climate change and migration are formed and informed (Arvidsson, 2022; Fiadotava, 2023; Flinterud, 2023; Horák, 2022; Kosonen and Greenhill, 2022; Rodgers, 2019).

2.2: The analytical tools

In addition to the approaches outlined in section 2.1 analytical tools derived from the fields of linguistics and ecological psychology provide further interpretative insights into the evidence for diachronic borderlands. In the case of the former, recent work carried out on non-verbal metaphors as devices through which we create, share and interpret ideas and concepts serves to enhance our understanding of the explicit and implicit forms of meaning embedded in our physical environment. Furthermore, ways of thinking about how we elect

to respond to the various opportunities offered up to us in our surroundings including non-verbal metaphors - concepts that underpin the field of affordances within the sub-discipline of ecological psychology - provide a useful device for thinking about how we respond to the often conflicting opportunities offered up to us both individually and collectively by borderlands.

2.2.1 Non-verbal metaphors

'Trouble is, just because things are obvious, doesn't mean they're true' (Pratchett, 1988)

The use of metaphor in human communication is ubiquitous, pervasive and recognised across a range of academic fields of study (Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Thibodeau *et al.*, 2019). Whilst culturally contingent, metaphors as tools to 'transfer meaning', as mechanisms to talk of one thing in terms of another, to share complex ideas between individuals and groups, are globally recognised (Gombrich, 1963; Kövecses, 2010; Ortony, 1975; Winter and Matlock, 2017; Yu, 2008). Though early formal linguistic scholarship was primarily concerned with verbal metaphors, their non-verbal, visual counterparts are now also widely researched (Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Yu, 2008). Metaphorical mappings can be as simple as 'the sun is an orange', but also much more nuanced and complex occurring in, for example, literature, music, dance, sculpture, architecture and visual media (e.g. Thibodeau *et al.*, 2019; Winter and Matlock, 2017).

The significance of metaphors has been understood over millennia with the earliest recorded references in Western literature occurring in ancient Greece. Opinion on their value and utility throughout history has been divided, however, with Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, III. iv, 1-3) observing that the command of metaphor was the mark of genius, whilst the nineteenth-century linguist Bréal (1900) held their value in much less high regard as a form of linguistics more commonly associated with the peasantry. Today, through studies in fields including, for example, linguistics, psychology, neuroscience, philosophy and media studies their ubiquitous role in both verbal and non-verbal communication is widely acknowledged (Benedek *et al.*, 2014; Clark, 1996; Johnson and Taylor, 1981; Kövecses, 2010; Ortony, 1975;

Thibodeau *et al.*, 2019; Winter and Yoshimi, 2020). The contemporary significance of metaphors in research across a range of disciplines is further evidenced, through for example, the journal *Metaphor and Symbol* ('Metaphor and Symbol,' no date) and the *Association for Researching and Applying Metaphor* ('RaAM – Researching and Applying Metaphor – The Association for Researching and Applying Metaphor,' no date).

Recent research illustrates that the most widespread non-verbal metaphorical tropes take familiar references relating to, for example, family, space and place, to create new symbolisms with, in the context of contemporary advertising, a given product or service. In each case, individual or collective frameworks of prior knowledge or experience are used to scaffold the cognitive processes necessary to support the requisite levels of engagement with the elected topic in order to elicit a response (Gibbs Jr. and Gerrig, 1989; Proctor *et al.*, 2005). Scholarship typified by that of Winter (2014) has established that the origins of these collective frameworks of understanding are the result of growing up in 'metaphor-infused' cultures (Winter and Matlock, 2017).

Today, research on the role and extent of metaphors in shaping our individual and collective responses to the world around us is conducted in a variety of fields including psychology, literary studies and philosophy (e.g. Marugina, 2014; Thibodeau and Boroditsky, 2013; Winter and Yoshimi, 2020). Whilst much academic ink has been spilled on the topic of metaphors in contemporary culture, on their powers of persuasion in consumerism and social media (e.g. Boozer *et al.*, 1990; Forceville, 1996; Gkiouzepas and Hogg, 2011; McGuire, 2000; Phillips, 2000; Phillips and McQuarrie, 2002; van Mulken *et al.*, 2014), it is perhaps the research undertaken within the field of cognitive linguistics, work that relates to embodiment and our understanding of metaphors in our physical environment, that is of the greatest relevance to landscape archaeology.

Such studies are typified by those undertaken by Winter (e.g. 2014; Winter and Matlock, 2017). In his work on primary metaphors (e.g. bad is down, evil is dark) in the horror film genre Winter notes that 'nearly every time people watch a movie, they (re-)experience (old, already entrenched) correlations' between good vs bad that reinforce engrained metaphorical mappings. Whilst noting that the precise ways in which cultural

representations interact with metaphors and cognition are still underexplored, Winter (2014) proposes three possible means through which culture, cognition and embodied metaphor merge; through cultural representations that elaborate on metaphors through specific examples, through cultural representations (including artefacts) that act as *reminders* across time and space, and cultural representations that may in themselves go on to create new associations. Further, Winter (ibid.) notes that these 'cultural representations have a way of stablising metaphorical representations throughout a culture, and thence also in the minds of its members.'

For landscape archaeologists, such embodied, non-verbal metaphors in both time and space are of particular significance. Whilst it is simple to draw on obvious, singular, examples of these metaphors in practice such as Nelson's Column in London, or Trajan's Column in Rome, which itself was subsequently re-purposed by Pope Sixtus V in the sixteenth-century, it is the less conspicuous, but more numerous examples that occur across landscapes which are of greater relevance to macro-scale studies; examples that are at once ubiquitous, but also hidden in plain sight. A return to recent work in the genre of science fiction, in the writing of Steven Moffat, provides a useful contemporary example (Charles, 2011). In his portrayal of the Weeping Angels who first appear in *Blink*, Doctor Who Series 3, episode 10, Moffat introduces his audience to a group of homicidal aliens who hide in plain sight in the form of the statues of angels that are frequently encountered in western, Christian graveyards. For landscape archaeologists Moffat's storytelling graphically illustrates the enduring, inter-generational power of embodied metaphors as he sets his 'Weeping Angel' narratives squarely between the familiar and alien, within the dark tropes that challenge us to face our cultural certainties relating to fear, life and our material experience of death. It is no surprise, then, that the Weeping Angels are some of the most popular and compelling adversaries encountered within the sci-fi television genre as it is difficult to conceive of a vision of an alien more carefully constructed to inspire fear in their intended audience.

Embodied metaphors, can, it seems, be used to generate a range of both positive and negative emotions. At once culturally contingent, ubiquitous and pervasive, generated and perpetuated both individually and collectively over time and across space, their role in non-

verbal communication is becoming an increasingly compelling research theme across a range of disciplines.

2.2.2 Affordances

'Ask not what is inside your head, ask what your head is inside of' (Mace, 1977, p. 43)

Driven in large part by the pioneering work of Barker and Gibson (Barker, 1968; Gibson, 1979), the field of ecological psychology emerged during the middle of the last century primarily as a response to the theories dominating cognitive psychology that placed much of our understanding of our relationship with our surroundings within the context of the brain. The reasoning behind its genesis is neatly summarised in Mace's (1977, p. 43) reflection that in order to fully comprehend spatial human and animal behaviour we should look beyond our immediate biological responses to our surroundings to instead explore the mutual nature of our relationship with the environment (Heft, 2001; Lobo *et al.*, 2018).

A key tool in the field of ecological psychology is the concept of affordances. First introduced in the psychological literature by Gibson (1979) affordances are now widely used across a diverse number of disciplines and fields of study including, for example, anthropology, human-computer-interaction and architecture (Ingold, 2022; Kent, 2000; Maier *et al.*, 2009; Vyas *et al.*, 2017) with their finer points still a matter of debate (e.g. Jones, 2003). In terms of a definition, building upon an earlier study by Warren (1984), Heft (1988) described affordances as the functional properties of an environment for a given individual or group. Far from acting as environmental determinants, however, affordances instead offer up a range of possibilities for action from which agents (animals and humans) are free to choose depending on their biological and social context. From a human perspective, such possibilities are illustrated through an architectural study of a plaza undertaken by Heft (ibid.), a space incorporating a ledge measuring c. 150 mm high which was found to simultaneously function as an edge marker for adults and as a place to sit, or challenging structure upon which to walk, for small children. Concurrently, the wider square was further observed to offer up affordances to both teenage skateboarders looking for somewhere to

practice their skills and its older residents who utilised the space as a place to sit and chat with friends. Through a diverse range of environment-person relations this anthropogenic space was, therefore, deemed to simultaneously offer multiple affordances to different groups of users engaging in a wide range of activities. More widely, a range of empirical studies have further established the significance of both individual and group agency and embodiment in the formation of human responses to these 'arenas for action' (ibid.).

In their philosophical analysis of affordances Rietveld and Kieverstein (2014) further made the case that far from comprising simple responses to manual behaviours and opportunities, affordances are instead formed by complex socially contingent sets of skills and knowledge relating to the characteristics of a given space. Building on Reed's earlier (1996) work which argued that our understanding of the places and spaces around us is infused with both temporal and spatial meaning in their seminal paper Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014) went on to examine how this knowledge is subject to complex webs of normativity established by both individuals and groups, and how, for example, actions come to be allowed, or forbidden, in certain spaces. Within a number of studies undertaken within the context of the E-turn in the cognitive sciences (for an overview see Newen *et al.*, 2018), these ideas found form in the concept of ecological niches, or clusters of affordances that become apparent to different groups of humans or animals in a given environment (Chemero, 2009; Gallagher, 2017; Noë, 2010; Thompson, 2007). Subsequently, Szokolszsky (2019) went on to argue that by virtue of our complex social structures, the landscapes of affordances and niches inhabited by humans are particularly rich and varied.

Much of the most recent work in the significance of affordances has been concerned with the impact of both embodiment and niches as culturally acknowledged normative frameworks. Following on from Rietveld and Kiverstein (ibid.), Weichbold and Thonhauser (2019) went on to consider the implicit and explicit role identity and group membership have in forming these frameworks of normativity within which affordances emerge. In turn, Baggs (2021) went further still to explore how issues of power and inequality within these groups go on to form our identity and their impact on how spatial meaning is collectively negotiated.

Finally, the most recent analyses typified by that of Dings (2021) are concerned with explicitly exploring the role of the 'phenomenology of mattering' in influencing which affordances are selected for action. These studies today form part of a wider pattern of engagement with affordances not just within ecological psychology (e.g. Heft, 2020, 2017, 2001) but across a range of disciplines and fields including anthropology (Ingold, 2018, 2000; Keane, 2014), architecture (Øien *et al.*, 2023), human cognition (Bruineberg and van den Herik, 2021), geography (Kaaristo and Visentin, 2023) and sociology (Hutchby, 2001; Manning *et al.*, 2023, Rose *et al.*, 2022). This diversity of multi-disciplinary engagement has in turn resulted in a proliferation of perspectives on the explicit nature of 'cultural' or 'social' affordances across a range of contexts (Baggs, 2021; Birk and Manning, 2023; de Carvalho, 2020; Ramstead *et al.*, 2016).

In summary, the evidence revealed by the application of affordances to the relationship between animals, humans and our environment reveals that it is both embodied and mutual. In the case of humans, because of the nature of the groups within which we live, the resulting cultural niches are multi-vocal, complex and bound up in notions of identity, power and place. Indeed, each space or place offers up not one, all encompassing, singular affordance, but rather a web of overlapping, intersecting instances the existence of which are subject to any number of inter and intra-group relations that are subject to both spatial and temporal change. Whilst the theorising of affordances has yet to mature it is clear that they are nevertheless effective tools through which to consider how individuals and groups inhabiting the same space might respond to the opportunities they perceive within in it whether those be, for example, elites, members of a wider population, permanent residents, visitors or invaders.

2.3: Structuring the analytical framework

The application of many of these interdisciplinary frameworks is nothing new in archaeology. Scholarship such as that of Gaffney *et al.* and Chapman has already proven the validity of GIS-based techniques in multi-scalar landscape studies (Chapman, 2006; C. Gaffney *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, Tilley's work on phenomenology, metaphors and on the value of taking the perspective of the *Longue Durée* (Tilley, 1994, 1999) alongside that of Hodder (1987), is

widely regarded as seminal in landscape archaeology, as is that of, for example, Gillings in the application of affordances (e.g. Gillings, 2012, 2009). It is the combination of these approaches to the analysis of diachronic borderlands that is new and unique to this study.

Together, these techniques provide a fresh lens through which to gather evidence, explore and interpret these landscapes. Whilst in many cases the individual forms of evidence are discrete, they are nevertheless complementary with, for example, contemporary and historic expressions of monumentality, place-name, documentary and folklore combining to provide a web of sources for how these spaces have been, and continue to be, marked out as distinct by a range of factors. Together, they speak of the impact of variables including human agency, individual and group identity, power and hegemony, mobility and diaspora.

In turn, the resulting theoretical framework addresses a range of themes including borders as social constructs, as uniquely multi-vocal environments or 'arenas for action' bound up in complex webs of negotiated, normalised inter and intra-group relations. Through a consideration of the impact of social processes including embodiment, non-verbal communication and the roles of culture and cognition it becomes possible to make sense of this evidence and to account for the complex and changing nature of these environments.

Together, the empirical and theoretical elements of this approach combine to offer a new model for the exploration and interpretation of diachronic borderlands and the construction of their biographies; of borderlands as spaces which are at once singularly fashioned by their own topographic and cultural circumstances, but also readily identifiable through a range of multi-vocal variables that mark them out as distinct from their neighbours. Such an approach also facilitates a wider interdisciplinary engagement through which scholars can incorporate discussions relating to diachronic borderlands over centuries or millennia into wider academic debates on the nature of contemporary borders and the future possibilities for these spaces and places where we encounter the 'other'.

Chapter 3 The Methodological Framework: Building Diachronic Borderland Biographies

This chapter provides an overview of the research context, the aims and objectives of this work and an account of how the methodological framework was developed and applied to the case study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland. Subsequently, the data sources used, together with the workflows relating to data preparation, processing and presentation are outlined. The application of the theoretical components of the model to the results are also described. Finally, the utility of the approach, together with its limitations and challenges and possibilities for its future application conclude this chapter.

3.1 Research context

Within the context of the case study itself understanding the emergence and evolution of the Anglo-Welsh borderland within the contemporary context of the United Kingdom is important for many reasons. Driven by factors including, for example, the decades-long diplomatic and political efforts to resolve the issues relating to the border on the island of Ireland and the timing and extent of Cymric and Scottish devolution borders have dominated much of the UK's recent political discourse (for an overview see Colley, 2014). Though earlier borderland debates from 2016-2022 were dominated by Brexit, the mechanism through which the UK left the European Union, more recent political discourse has been divided between the most effective means of securing the kingdom's external borders and the contemporary and future role of those between its constituent jurisdictions (Ibrahim, 2022). In the case of the border between England and Cymru many of these debates have been concerned with the ongoing implications of devolution following the divergent policies enacted by the parliaments in Cardiff and Westminster during the COVID pandemic (e.g. Harrington *et al.*, 2021). As a result, as the first quarter of the twenty-first century comes to an end these events have driven greater levels of public engagement with debates around Scottish and Cymric independence and the future possibility of a united island of Ireland (Dempsey, 2022; Morgan, 2014; Patrick, 2021). In light of these discussions, and in order to contextualise the future of the United Kingdom – if indeed it has one at all – making sense of

its past, of the origins and changing nature of the relations between its constituent components seems not only desirable, but necessary (Kenny, 2024).

In each instance, the borders between Cymru, Scotland and England are not simple matters of lines on a map. These are, for the most part, liminal landscapes with 'old bones' whose character has been formed by successive waves of invasion and retreat on both sides and by those communities living within them faced with overcoming and exploiting the myriad challenges and opportunities lives in these in-between places present (Armstrong, 2020; Dodgshon and Butlin, 2013; Royle, 2012).

In the case of the Anglo-Welsh border, this is a landscape frequently overlooked in wider UK narratives (Johnes, 2011). To its residents, however, this is a region with its own identity marked out by its unique hybrid culture bound up in its contrasting, transitional topography (for literary examples see Evans, 1932; Williams, 1960). The mono and multi-lingual road signs that, to the casual visitor at least, signal the presence of the border hide a much wider, more complex and multi-vocal spatial and temporal landscape.

As referenced in Chapter 1, a range of additional factors made the Anglo-Welsh borderland a practical proposition for a case study for this research project, including ease of access to the region both from Birmingham and my home in Worcester, to the necessary data sources via online repositories and the ability to utilise the knowledge and links established through my work as a trustee of the Offa's Dyke Association.

3.2 Research problems and questions

Superficially, the Anglo-Welsh borderland's 'old bones' are self-evident across much of the region. Its built heritage, characterised through the presence of the densest concentration of eleventh and twelfth century Anglo-Norman castles in Britain alongside their early medieval predecessors, Offa's and Wat's dykes, marks it out as readily distinguishable from its neighbours, as a distinct, seemingly timeless landscape. Whilst those with more than a passing interest in the archaeology of the region might further appreciate its spectacular hillforts that range across much of its centre and the density of the earlier Neolithic burial

chambers that overlook the estuary of the Severn from the south and east, little is known of its antecedent border character.

The following questions relating to the Anglo-Wesh borderland, then, address the research aims and objectives. How can an interdisciplinary study of the landscape and documentary heritage of the Anglo-Welsh borderland further our understanding of its liminal past? How have generations over millennia marked out and inhabited this landscape? What can we say about how these practices have changed, both spatially and temporally? Are the experiences of those living within the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the twenty-first century new and novel, or are the challenges and opportunities of living in this liminal landscape evident in the archaeological record? What value does this information add to contemporary debates on the relationships between Cymru and England and for the borderland's contemporary inhabitants?

3.3 Aims and objectives

Through its application to the case study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland this research seeks to establish that the interdisciplinary framework for researching border landscapes has utility; that this methodological approach supports the identification, analysis and interpretation of the landscape archaeology of borderlands over millennia. Additionally, through the new insights gained into the antiquity of the case study this research will also establish that borderlands are valid units of study in and of themselves and that through furthering our understanding of these spaces we extend our wider knowledge of the archaeological record. Beyond our own discipline, the case study will further illustrate the potential for this model to support research studies capable of embedding discussions of diachronic borderlands within wider scholarly debates taking place in the field of border studies. The research aims and objectives can be summarised as:

- The identification of the sources of evidence in the archaeological record that can be used to explore the liminal character of the Anglo-Welsh borderland
- The identification of sources of evidence from adjacent disciplines that may also form and inform our understanding of this landscape

- The application of the theoretical frameworks based on theories derived from landscape archaeology, affordances, non-verbal metaphors and the *Longue Durée* to the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland
- The testing of the interdisciplinary research framework against the case study with the results used in turn to establish the validity of the model within the context of landscape archaeology

3.4 Scope and limitations

The spatial and temporal scope of the case study for this thesis, the aim of which is to establish a narrative covering the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland over millennia, and from a landscape that constitutes just under 15 per cent of the combined area of Cymru and England, demanded that some strategic choices were required in order to make the workload achievable within the constraints of a PhD. For this reason, two key decisions were made, firstly, to identify which contiguous periods to explore and secondly, which representative forms of monument for each period to incorporate into the analysis, given that working with every category of monument for each period would not be achievable within the available timeframe. In the first instance, the medieval period was selected as the temporal end point for the research. This was largely dictated by the desire to incorporate evidence from both the prehistoric and historic periods into the research together with the impossibility of excluding the extensive evidence from the eleventh and twelfth centuries from any account of the Anglo-Welsh borderland. Additionally, the early modern period signals the end of *Y Mers*, or the March of Wales, and this landscape's unique political and economic (if not cultural) status as the border between Cymru and England became established.

With the temporal parameters of what was achievable defined, the second step was to identify groups of representative monuments from each period which could be consistently quantitively queried. In some cases, for example, the round barrows of the earlier Bronze Age, these decisions were self-evident as the most numerous form of extant prehistoric monument from any period. For other periods, the process was more complex, though in

each case the categories of monuments selected were done so on the basis of their ability to contribute to the ongoing quantitative narrative.

Inevitably, some alternative classes of monument were excluded from this study. Future research incorporating the data from, for example, early medieval *llan* churches in the borderland would undoubtedly further enhance our understanding of how its elites were making their mark in the region through both ecclesiastical as well as secular means during this period. Whilst the resulting compromise means that though it is not possible to thoroughly interrogate all the evidence from a given period it does become possible to say something of how different elites and communities elected to make their mark in this landscape over the *Longue Durée*. Finally, some complimentary, but numerically limited, qualitatively significant groups of monuments were explored in the overall discussion, for example, the later Neolithic henges in the core of the border, or those structures clustered around the Walton Basin in Radnorshire.

In addition to these temporal constraints the scale of the region also inevitably placed spatial restrictions on the extent of the work that could be undertaken. Though the macro-scale data analysis incorporates data from the entirety of the case study, as the results emerged and the discussions developed, the focus of the research into patterns of monumentality was inevitably drawn to the south of the borderland in the landscapes surrounding the rivers Usk, Wye and the lower Severn. The quality and extent of the evidence from the north of the region would certainly support further research, but this was simply not achievable within the context of this project.

From an analytical perspective, the breadth of options offered by contemporary GIS in modelling diachronic landscapes means that it would have been possible to apply any number of different spatial queries against the data. A subset of the options offered by the selected platform were therefore selected specifically on their ability to identify, interrogate and present the evidence for liminality in the case study, as opposed to a broader analysis of the archaeology of the region as a whole.

3.5 Research Framework

3.5.1 Landscape archaeology

The evidence from the landscape archaeology of the Anglo-Welsh borderland provided the empirical and theoretical basis for the research. Inevitably, the monuments of the region from early prehistory through to the medieval period comprised the majority of the landscape archaeological evidence. The selected categories of monument from each period were used to address a number of themes concerned with the nature of their mutual relationship with the natural environment including, for example, the borderland's main rivers and estuaries as major arteries connecting it to wider cultural and trade networks, its rivers as essential resources for water and, for example, their relationships with significant upland or lowland locations. From a temporal perspective the relative locations of the monuments over time were examined to establish any evidence for the active curation of earlier structures, or the enduring significance of individual locations in the landscape.

3.5.2 Ecological Psychology

The concept of affordances was applied to the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh border to construct a response to Mace's (paraphrased) question (Mace, 1977, p. 43) 'What were its inhabitants' heads in?' How did the perceptions of those living within, or ruling over, the region affect their responses to this liminal landscape? What cultural niches did these relationships and ways of thinking generate? How did the mutual relationship between the region's transitional natural environment and cultural landscape form and inform these ways of thinking and the resulting patterns of monumentality across the region?

3.5.3 Linguistics

In turn, theories relating to the role of non-verbal metaphors in the creation of meaning in the landscape were applied to the data to explore the potential significance of the locations chosen for monuments across time and space. More specifically, the following questions were addressed: What messages were the builders of these monuments across the Anglo-Welsh borderland endeavouring to promote? Who might the intended audiences have been? What evidence is there for their impact on the lives of those living within the region? What

evidence is there for the enduring significance of given locations within the Anglo-Welsh borderland? How might these be accounted for, and if so, did their meaning change over time?

3.5.4 Border studies

The lens of border studies provided the means through which to consider the evidence from the processed data from an interdisciplinary perspective, more specifically, for the role of this liminal borderland as more than a given line on a map, but rather as a long-term social process with contemporary significance. Key themes included evidence for cross-border conflict, for collaboration or resistance, migration and mobility, identity and belonging and evidence for the region as a hybrid, multi-vocal landscape of economic, social and cultural exchange.

3.5.5 Longue Durée

The application of the interdisciplinary perspective of the *Longue Durée* facilitated a consideration of the evidence from each period within the wider context of the archaeology of the Anglo-Welsh borderland over millennia in order to obtain answers to the questions raised in Section 3.3. How have generations over millennia marked out and inhabited this landscape? What can we say about how these practices have changed, both spatially and temporally? Is it possible to identify enduring themes that run through this landscape's anthropogenic past? Are the experiences of those living within the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the twenty-first century new and novel, or are the challenges and opportunities of living in this liminal landscape evident in the archaeological record?

By combining these different perspectives it became possible to describe and interpret the data through a novel interdisciplinary lens. Questions relating to the internal nature of the border and its relationship with the remainder of Cymru and England and of the spatially and temporally distinct patterns of monumentality within the region from prehistory to the present day became possible.

3.6 Data Sources

The data for the case study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland was derived from a range of sources which will be outlined in the remainder of this section, most commonly in the form of comma-separated values (.csv) data for importation into a spreadsheet, or in a shapefile format facilitating its direct use in a Geographic Information System (GIS).

3.6.1 Environmental data

The national outlines for mainland Britain, Cymru and England together with the topographic data, specifically the major rivers and estuaries, rivers and elevation data, were obtained through the Ordnance Survey in the form of shapefiles from their Data Hub (Ordnance Survey, no date).

Though the modern Ordnance Survey shapefiles provide data solely on the modern river courses the 'distances from' methodology which was applied to the rivers, estuaries and earlier monuments facilitated both a broad, macro-scale overview of the impact of the rivers and their wider environments up to 5 km on patterns of monumentality in the region. Additionally, using this approach facilitated a comparative narrative through which to assess both the relative impact of the rivers and earlier anthropogenic interventions in the landscape using a common quantitative framework. Without doubt, however, the courses of the rivers running through the Anglo-Welsh borderland and the breadth and impact of their floodplains have been subject to considerable change over time (Crabb et al., n.d.; Lewin and Macklin, 2010; Pears et al., 2023) and more detailed studies at a range of scales would be valuable in furthering our understanding of these processes and their impact. Analyses concerned with exploring those landscapes where the uplands, lowlands and riverine routes converge would be of particular value, together with analyses of where atypical expressions of monumentality, such as causewayed enclosures and henges, are found. One outstanding example within the region is that of the Walton Basin in Radnorshire where this natural amphitheatre and its associated water courses has been demonstrated to have been subject to nationally significant levels of monumentality over centuries, if not millennia.

3.6.2 Archaeological data

The archaeological evidence for the case study, for the monuments of the Anglo-Welsh border from the Neolithic through to the medieval period was derived from several sources.

An analysis of a region as extensive as the Anglo-Welsh border, a landscape approaching 200km in length and covering over 22,000 km^2, conducted within the context of the wider picture of the remainder of England and Cymru required access to national-scale data sets from which to derive the information for the selected monument categories. As a result, the only suitable and readily available sources upon which to base the study were the respective national heritage listings namely the Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru/National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) hosted by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) and Historic England, respectively (Historic England, no date; RCAHMW, no datea). These national data sets hold the records for all the protected scheduled monuments in both countries and are available for download in .csv format. Additionally, for some periods, however, specialist data sets were also available and where possible these were utilised, namely the *Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland* for the Iron Age as .csv data (Lock and Ralston, 2024) and the Ordnance Survey derived data for the data for Roman roads in shapefile format (Blackwood, 2017). Additionally, Erik Grigg's (2018) gazetteer of early medieval short dykes (i.e. excluding Offa's and Wat's dykes) provided a reliable and comprehensive resource for these monuments, though one that required manual input into the spreadsheet as .csv data. Additionally, Shropshire County Council were able to provide data on unscheduled, but recorded, sections of Offa's Dyke in shapefile format as were CPAT for the monuments within the Walton Basin. The following table (Table 1) summarises the representative monument types selected on the criteria described above.

Early Neolithic	**Main criteria for selection**
Long barrows and chambered tombs	Frequency, relationship with topography
Causewayed enclosures	Relationship with topography
Later Neolithic	
Stone circles	Frequency, relationship with topography
Henges	Relationship with topography

Bronze Age	
Round barrows	Frequency, relationship with topography
Iron Age	
Hillforts	Frequency, relationship with topography
Roman	
Invasion period fortresses	Strategic significance, relationship with topography
Permanent fortresses	Strategic significance, relationship with topography
Forts and fortlets	Frequency and strategic significance
Early medieval	
Short dykes	Relationship with topography, strategic significance
Offa's Dyke	Relationship with topography, strategic significance
Wat's Dyke	Relationship with topography, strategic significance
Medieval	
Castles	Frequency, relationship with topography

Table 1 Representative monument types and selection criteria

3.6.3 Historic documentary data

Information derived from a range of documentary sources was incorporated into the study. Reflections from contemporary, or near contemporary authors, as in the case of, for example, Tacitus *Annales* (12. 33-35) and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* alongside invaluable secondary sources incorporated into Brady's (2017) *Writing the Welsh Borderlands in Anglo-Saxon England* provided a range of additional insights.

Further, data from the Historic Counties Trust (The Historic Counties Trust, no date) was used to define the extent of the study area itself and its constituent zones. The extents of historic counties were used in preference to contemporary administrative areas, or Ordnance Survey 100 km squares for several reasons. The primary driver behind electing to use the historic county outlines to define the study area and its constituent parts was that despite the reasoning behind their origins no longer being clear these land divisions nevertheless reference long-standing administrative, ecclesiastical and social boundaries. As such they hold a spatial and temporal resonance not shared by their more recent unitary authority successors, or the Ordnance Survey squares. The Historic Counties Trust historic make their data available for download in shapefile format (The Historic Counties Trust, 2024).

3.6.4 Place-name data

Both Cymru and England have national place-name databases available online through the Rhestr o Enwau Lleoedd Hanesyddol/List of Historic Place Names for Wales hosted by the Comiswn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru/Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW, no dateb) and the Key to English Place-Names (KEPN) hosted by the University of Nottingham (KEPN, no date). The data provided by the RCAHMW is searchable with the results downloadable in .csv format. Whilst the data provided by KEPN is fully searchable the results are not downloadable meaning that any records needed to be manually transcribed into a spreadsheet prior to being imported into the GIS. As previously noted in 2.1.4 place-name studies in England and Cymru that reference the hybrid spread of Cymric and English settlement names across the border are extensive (Gelling, 2006, 2004; Gelling and Foxall, 1995, 1991, 1990; The University of Nottingham, 2013).

Three complimentary studies at a range of scales were carried out. At the macro-level a toponymic analysis of the historic parish names within the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland was undertaken together with a more detailed analysis of the townships of Oswestry. Additionally, a medium-scale analysis of the inter-relationships between place-names and individual features in the landscape was conducted to explore evidence for similar patterns of linguistic hybridity attached to natural features in the landscape through a case study of the hills of south-east Radnorshire with the data being derived from Palmer's (2001, pp. 23-26) *The Folklore of Radnorshire* and manually converted into .csv data for importation into the GIS. Additional information needed for the translations of those hill names in the local Shropshire dialect was provided by Amy Boucher (pers. comm, 2024) and sourced from Beamond's (2017) *A Short Journey from England to Wales: a study of borderland place-names in the Middle March*. The data for the micro-scale field-name study was derived from the digitised tithe map for the parish of Trefonen made available through Shropshire County Council's Archives (Shropshire Archives, 1843).

3.6.5 Folklore data

The qualitative data for the folklore of the Anglo-Welsh borderland was sourced from a number of publications, most notably Simpson's (1976) *The Folklore of the Welsh Border*, the

republished archives of Charlotte Burne and Ella Mary Leather on the folklore of Shropshire and Herefordshire respectively (Burne, 1883; Leather, 1912), Palmer's (2001) *The Folklore of Radnorshire*, Collins' (2014, 2011) *Wrexham County Folk Tales* and *Denbighshire Folk Tales* together with Amy Boucher's Shropshire *Nearly Knowledgeable* blog (Boucher, no date).

3.7 Quantitative Methods

The quantitative analyses were comprised of two workstreams one facilitated through the use of spreadsheets, the other using a Geographic Information System (GIS). In both cases institutionally licensed software packages were used, namely Microsoft Excel and ESRI's ArcMap, respectively. As the ArcGIS is only available on Microsoft Windows this was the platform upon which all the work was carried out on a laptop running Windows 11. Backups were maintained using a combination of local devices, an institutional Microsoft OneDrive account and Google Drive.

GIS, and in particular, ArcGIS is a widely used spatial mapping tool in archaeological landscape research at a range of scales facilitating the analysis of individual sites and macro-scale landscape studies (e.g. Chapman, 2006; Gillings, 2012). In the context of this research ArcGIS, and more specifically its ArcMap component, was used to integrate and interrogate the diverse quantitative data sources required for this project.

In turn, Microsoft Excel was used to prepare the data provided in .csv format for importation into ArcMap and record, analyse and present the quantitative monument data generated in the GIS. In the first instance, statistics for the density of the different categories of monument were generated to establish their distribution patterns comparing the Anglo-Welsh borderland with the remainder of Cymru and England and then within the border itself. The figures for the whole of the border were compared with those for the uplands in the west, the transitional core and the lowlands to the east, where relevant separate figures for the south-east were also recorded. Additionally, statistics testing the significance of the relationships between individual monument categories and the key topographic features (major rivers and estuaries and rivers) were generated alongside those for earlier monument types to establish potential evidence for curation, or common themes in chosen location. In order to establish the quantitative significance of these results in each case they were tested

against matching quantities of random points generated in ArcMap. The results of these comparative analyses were presented in tabular format using Microsoft Excel and presented as bar charts, the majority of which form the appendix to this document. The following section describes the quantitative data analysis in more detail.

3.7.1 Data preparation

Csv formatted data

The majority of .csv formatted data was comprised of the individual records for the representative monument types (see subsection 3.6.2) obtained from the English and Welsh national heritage listings. Additionally, the data from the *Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland* project was also made available in this format. The amount of preparation required prior to the records being imported into the GIS varied significantly according to data set. The records from the *Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland*, as a discrete research project, were predictably clean and preparing them for inclusion in this research was a straightforward process. The required data to identify each monument's characteristics was uniform and so extracting this data required minimal effort. Similarly, the data from the Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru / National Monuments Record of Wales was relatively clean and cohesive. In many cases, however, the data from the National Heritage List for England reflects its historical legacy of being derived from earlier country records generated in the middle decades of the last century. In the case of the Bronze Age barrows, with, for example, 'cemeteries' referring to anything from 3 to 20 plus monuments some manual intervention was required in order to sanity check the data before it was ready to be analysed requiring several days of data processing.

Three additional sets of data were prepared in .csv format, namely the records for the early medieval short dykes, the hills of south-east Radnorshire for the medium-scale place-name study and the records for the folklore evidence. In the case of the short dykes the required data was derived from Grigg's (2018) gazetteer of these monuments and manually input. The data for the hills of Radnorshire and the folklore locations was subject to a similar process of manual inputting with the locational data being derived from the archive of historic Ordnance Survey maps held by Digimap ("Historic Digimap", no date). Additionally, in the

case of records where the location data was only available in Ordnance Survey eight-digit reference points Gridreferencefinder.com's batch conversion tool was used to generate the required eastings and northings ("Batch Convert Tool", no date).

In each instance the resulting data sets were extracted from their respective archives and combined into period-specific data sheets incorporating the data from both Cymru and England. Additionally, as discussed below in the case study, the differences in group size and individual monument size, respectively, for the Bronze and Iron Ages lent itself to further differentiation in order to make sense of their relative distributions. In the case of the earlier Bronze Age barrows this resulted in these monuments, based on Garwood's (2007a) and Field's (1998) definitions of typical and exceptional groupings, being further subdivided into three groupings of small groups (1-3 monuments), groups (4-7 monuments) and cemeteries (8 or more monuments). Similarly, the significance of the range of the size of individual hillforts was reflected in their subdivision into three groupings of 1.2 ha or less, 1-3 – 6 ha and 6 ha or greater (based on Brown, 2021). The selected monument types for each period and subdivided earlier Bronze Age and Iron Age data resulted in the following tabulated data sets (Table 2).

Early Neolithic	
	Long barrows and chambered tombs.csv
	Causewayed enclosures.csv
Later Neolithic	
	Stone circles.csv
	Henges.csv
Bronze Age	
	Small groups (1-3 monuments).csv
	Groups (4-7 monuments).csv
	Cemeteries (8 or more monuments).csv
Iron Age	
	Hillforts group I (1.2 ha or less).csv
	Hillforts group II (1.3 – 6 ha).csv
	Hillforts group III (greater than 6 ha).csv
Romano-British	
	Invasion period fortresses.csv
	Permanent fortresses.csv
	Forts and fortlets.csv
	Villas.csv
Early medieval	

	Short dykes.csv
	Offa's Dyke.csv
	Wat's Dyke.csv
Medieval	
	Castles.csv

Table 2 Extracted monument data structure

Within each .csv file the following common fields were identified as being necessary to the research (Table 3).

Record number	Identification number for the monument derived from the relevant national heritage listing, or research project data
Name	Name in English
Name_cy	Name in Cymraeg
Site type	Description derived from relevant national heritage listing or research project data, or manually added
Report	Link to online monument record from relevant national heritage listing or research project data
Easting	X axis spatial location data
Northing	Y axis spatial location data
Additional fields	Additional data where required (e.g. for sorting earlier Bronze Age barrow or Iron Age hillfort records)

Table 3 Fields incorporated into .csv data sheets

Shapefile data

Typically, the data made available in shapefile format had already been subject to processes of internal quality control before being made widely available in this format. Those for the national outlines, major rivers and estuaries and rivers were all derived from the Ordnance Survey with the historic county outlines being accessed via the Historic Counties Trust (subsections 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3). The following table (Table 4) summarises the shapefile data structure used to create the national outlines, topographic data and required historic county outlines.

National outlines	
	Mainland Britain.shp
	England.shp
	Cymru.shp
	Main rivers and estuaries.shp
	Rivers.shp
Topographic data	
	Contour data 150m plus.shp

	Contour data 200m plus.shp
	Contour data 250m plus.shp
Historic counties	
	Flintshire.shp
	Denbighshire.shp
	Radnorshire.shp
	Montgomeryshire.shp
	Brecknockshire.shp
	Monmouthshire.shp
	Cheshire.shp
	Shropshire.shp
	Herefordshire.shp
	Worcestershire.shp
	Gloucestershire.shp

Table 4 National and historic county outlines

Additionally, the data for the previously mentioned stretches of known, but unscheduled, stretches of Offa's Dyke in Shropshire made available by Shropshire County Council was incorporated into the main shapefile for this monument. The data provided by CPAT for the Walton Basin was also supplied in native shapefile format.

Spatial data creation in ArcMap

N.B. Comments in `monospace font` indicate ArcMap commands

In order to facilitate the GIS spatial analysis a template map exchange document (.mxd) was created in ArcMap. ArcMap uses .mxd files to store the descriptive map for each project created within it, for example, the coordinate systems, scale and extent of a given project, data on the layers of information and the location of the data sources they draw upon, for example, topographic data and the symbology used to represent them together with information on the arrangement of data frames, legends and other map elements.

The initial template.mxd file was created in ArcMap using the British National Grid Projected Coordinate System and GCS_OSGB_1936 Geographic Coordinate System to set its coordinates.

All the existing shapefiles described above were then imported into the template to create a resource incorporating the required national and historic county boundaries and topographic data `'File', 'Add Data'`.

The historic county boundaries were then used to create the study area and its constituent parts to facilitate comparative studies within the borderland itself (Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) (e.g. number of group I hillforts in the west, core, east, south of the border) 'ArcToolbox, 'General', 'Merge'.

Study area (study area.shp)	
	Flintshire.shp
	Denbighshire.shp
	Radnorshire.shp
	Montgomeryshire.shp
	Brecknockshire.shp
	Monmouthshire.shp
	Cheshire.shp
	Shropshire.shp
	Herefordshire.shp
	Worcestershire.shp
	Gloucestershire.shp

Table 5 Historic counties comprising the study area

Core of the study area (core.shp)	
	Montgomeryshire.shp
	Radnorshire.shp
	Brecknockshire.shp
	Monmouthshire.shp

Table 6 Historic counties comprising the core of the study area

West of study area (west.shp)	
	Flintshire.shp
	Denbighshire.shp
	Radnorshire.shp
	Montgomeryshire.shp
	Brecknockshire.shp
	Monmouthshire.shp

Table 7 Historic counties comprising the west of the study area

East of the study area (east.shp)	
	Cheshire.shp
	Shropshire.shp
	Herefordshire.shp
	Worcestershire.shp
	Gloucestershire.shp

Table 8 Historic counties comprising the east of the study area

South-east of the study area (south-east.shp)	
	Gloucestershire.shp

Table 9 Historic counties comprising the south-east of the study area

Additionally, shapefiles for the areas of England and Cymru outside the study area were created using ArcMap's 'ArcToolbox', 'Analysis Tools', 'Overlay', 'Erase' feature

Calculation of areas of the study and England and Cymru outside the study area

The areas for the following units of study were calculated using ArcMap's Calculate Geometry feature (Table 10):

'Table of Contents', 'right-click layer', 'Open Attribute Table', 'Table Options', 'Add Field', with the following options selected 'Type = 'Double'', 'Precision = '15'', 'Scale = '2'', 'right-click', 'Calculate Geometry', with the following options selected 'Property = 'area'', 'Use Coordinate System of the Data Source = 'PCS British National Grid'', Units = 'square kilometres''

	Area km2
England total	131177
Cymru total	20905
England outside study area	117665
Cymru outside study area	11900
Whole of Anglo-Welsh border	22513
Internal Anglo-Welsh border stats	
Core	12244
West	9003
East	13509
South-east	3353

Table 10 Calculated areas for Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland using ArcMap's Calculate Geometry feature

Once all the shapefiles for the outlines, topography and different zones of the study area were in place within the template.mxd versions of this file were created for each period (Table 11).

Neolithic.shp
Bronze Age.shp
Iron Age.shp

Romano-British.shp
Early medieval.shp
Medieval.shp

Table 11 List of ArcMap .mxd files created for the study area

The contents of the .mxd file for each period therefore appear as follows (Table 12):

National outlines	
	Mainland Britain.shp
	England.shp
	Cymru.shp
	England outside study area.shp
	Cymru outside study area.shp
	Main rivers and estuaries.shp
	Rivers.shp
Topographic data	
	Contour data 150m plus.shp
	Contour data 200m plus.shp
	Contour data 250m plus.shp
Study area	
	Study area.shp
	Core.shp
	West.shp
	East.shp
	South-east.shp

Table 12 Contents of the period specific .mxd files

The .csv data for each monument category was then imported into the appropriate period .mxd file for analysis and then saved as a shapefile for completeness (Table 13) 'Table of Contents', 'right-click ..csv layer name', 'Export', 'Export Data', e.g.

Data for the Iron Age and Hillforts (group I) will be used to demonstrate the remainder of the GIS workflow in ArcMap.

National outlines	

	Mainland Britain.shp
	England.shp
	Cymru.shp
	Main rivers and estuaries.shp
	Rivers.shp
Topographic data	
	Contour data 150m plus.shp
	Contour data 200m plus.shp
	Contour data 250m plus.shp
Study area	
	Study area.shp
	Core.shp
	West.shp
	East.shp
	South-east.shp
Monuments (Iron Age)	
	Hillforts (group I).shp
	Hillforts (group II).shp
	Hillforts (group III).shp

Table 13 Example of contents of completed .mxd file (Iron Age hillforts)

Within each period's .mxd file the monument records in the shapefiles were then subdivided the different zones within the border in order to create separate shapefiles for each area (Table 14).

Step one: (selection of the monuments in a given area of the study area) `'Selection', 'Select By Location', 'Selection Method', 'select features from', 'Target layer(s)` (monument shapefile), `'Source layer'` (area of study area), `'Spatial selection method for target layer feature(s)', 'are within the source layer feature'`

Step two: (creation of a new ArcMap layer from the selected monuments) `'Table of Contents', right-click on Target layer` (monument shapefile), `'Selection', 'Create layers from selected features'`

Step three: (creation of shapefile from selected monuments) 'Table of Contents', 'right-click layer name', 'Export', Export Data'

Resultant file structure for current example (Hillforts (group I):

Hillforts (group I) study area.shp
Hillforts (group I) core.shp
Hillforts (group I) west.shp
Hillforts (group I) east.shp
Hillforts (group I) south-east.shp

Table 14 Example file structure following subdivision of monument data in areas in the border

Creation of random point data in ArcMap

In order to test the strength of the relationship between the monuments and their natural environment in different parts of the border against a body of random data ArcMap's 'Create Random Points' feature was used:

'ArcToolbox', 'Data Management Tools', 'Sampling', 'Create Random Points'

With the following options set:

'Output Location' (chosen location for file to be saved)

'Constraining Feature Class' (the shapefile being used to define the area of the study area)

'Number of Points' (number of random points matching the number of monuments)

Resultant file structure for current example (Table 15):

Monument data	Random point data
Hillforts (group I) study area.shp	Random points hillforts (group I) study area.shp
Hillforts (group I) core.shp	Random points hillforts (group I) core.shp
Hillforts (group I) west.shp	Random points hillforts (group I) west.shp
Hillforts (group I) east.shp	Random points hillforts (group I) east.shp
Hillforts (group I) south.shp	Random points hillforts (group I) south.shp

Table 15 File structure for example monuments (Iron Age hillforts) following creation of random data in ArcMap

3.7.2 Spatial data creation, recording and presentation in ArcMap and Excel

The following section outlines the workflow for the spatial data generation and presentation in ArcMap and Microsoft Excel.

Distribution maps

Using the default template incorporated into the .mxd files for each period the following distribution maps were first created in ArcMap:

- Distribution map of the monument type across Cymru and England to represent their distribution across the Anglo-Welsh borderland within the national contexts (e.g. Figure 2).
- Distribution map of the monument type across the Anglo-Welsh border with topographic data (major rivers and estuaries, rivers, elevation data at 100m, 200m, 250m above sea level to represent their relationship with the natural environment (e.g. Figure 3).

Additional distribution maps were created to represent the locations of the referenced qualitative data for the research on place-names and folklore.

The maps were then exported as Portable Network Graphics (PNG) graphics files `'File', 'Export Map'`

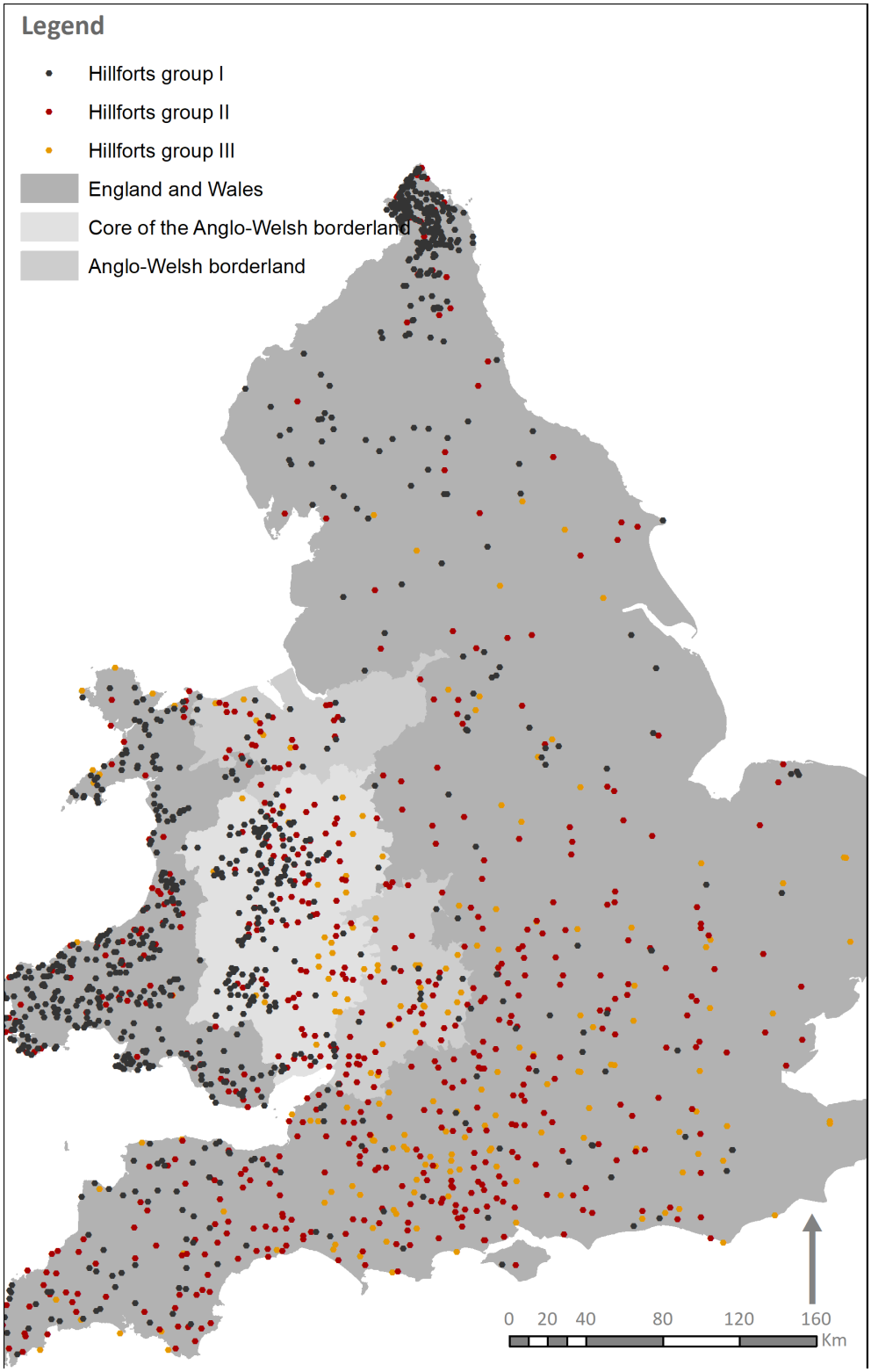


Figure 2 Distribution of group I, II and III hillforts in the study area and core of the study area within the context of the remainder of England and Cymru

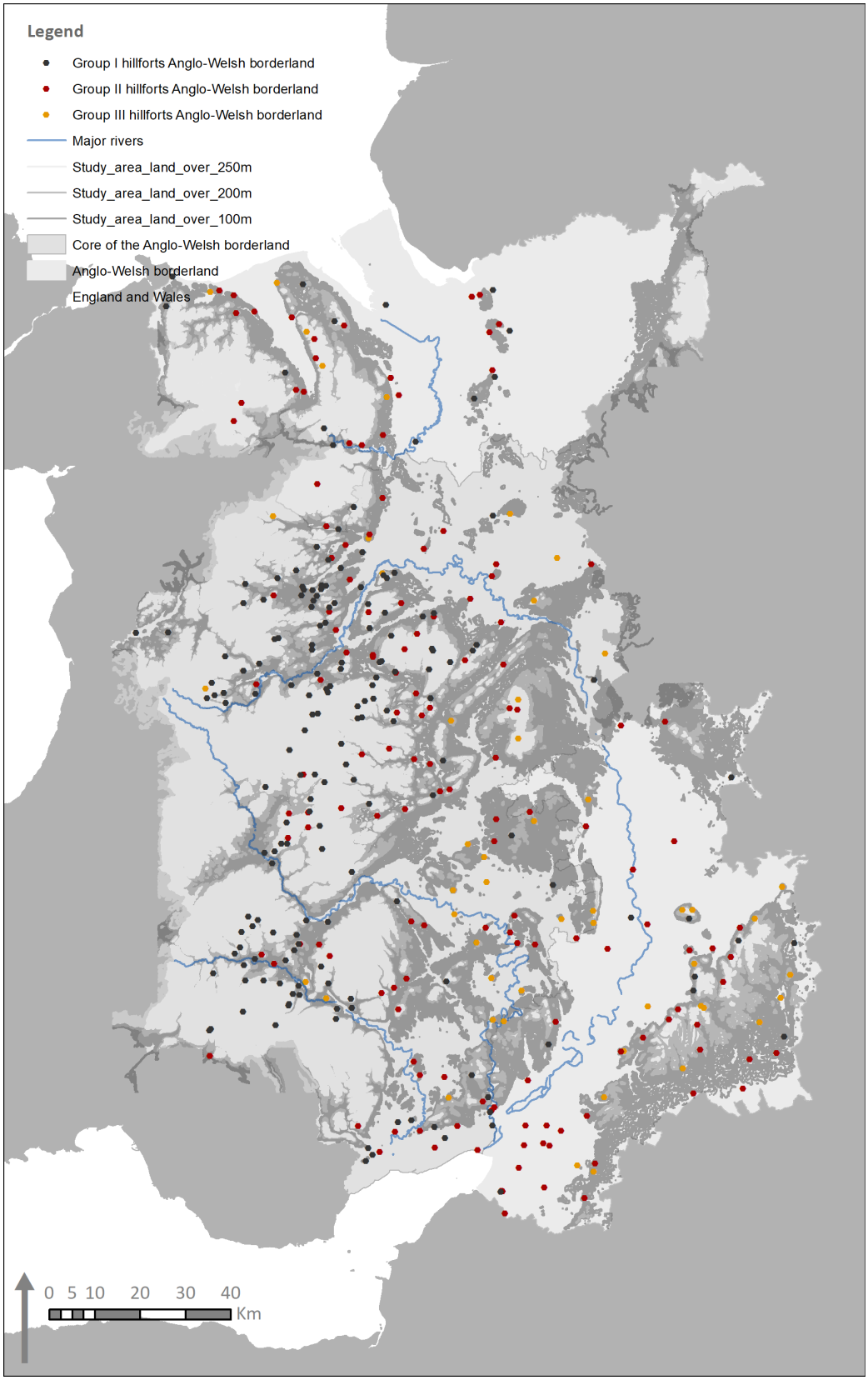


Figure 3 Distribution of example monuments (Iron Age hillforts) across the study area including major topographic features (land over 100m, 200m, 250m, major rivers and estuaries)

Processing and presenting the spatial data

The spatial data was created in ArcMap with the results being recorded in workbooks in Microsoft Excel. Microsoft Excel was then used to present the data in tables and bar charts.

As was the case with the .mxd period files in ArcMap (3.7.1), a separate master Microsoft Excel workbook was created for each period (Table 16)

Neolithic.xls
Bronze Age.xls
Iron Age.xls
Roman.xls
Early medieval.xls
Medieval.xls

Table 16 Spreadsheet workbook files (.xls) created for each period

In turn, copies of these workbooks were created for each of the parts of the border in the following data structure (Table 17). The following workflow was conducted for each part of the study area unless otherwise stated.

Study area\Hillforts study area.xls
Core\Hillforts core.xls
West\Hillforts west.xls
East\Hillforts east.xls
South\Hillforts south.xls

Table 17 Spreadsheet workbook files (.xls) for each part of the study area

Within each workbook separate sheets, or tabs, were created to record the following categories of data:

Monument statistics data sheet

The summary spatial statistics for monuments for the whole of the border relative to the remainder of Cymru and England and for the different regions of the border described above were incorporated into the workbook into a dedicated worksheet (Table 18). This worksheet is only needed once and so only appears in the spreadsheets for the top level ‘Study area’ for each category of monument.

Additionally, it is worth noting that not every single permutation of this spatial analysis was carried out in each part of the study area for each monument type (for example, in some monument categories it was necessary to analyse the data for the south-east separately, in others this exercise would have added little additional information over and above that offered by the distribution maps (see below) and so for logistical reasons this was omitted). In a limited number of cases, for example, henges and Roman invasion period and permanent fortresses these relatively rare, but still significant, monuments would not have generated statistically significant figures and so were also omitted.

	Area km2	No of hillforts	Percentage of km2	Percentage of hillforts
England total	131177	1201	86%	64%
Cymru total	20905	689	13%	36%
England outside study area	117665	1007	77%	53%
Cymru outside study area	11900	478	7%	25%
Whole of Anglo-Welsh border	22513	405	14%	21%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border stats				
Core of Anglo-Welsh border	12244	277	54%	68%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9003	211	39%	52%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	194	60%	48%
TOTAL		1890		100%

Table 18 Sample summary statistics for monument distribution data comparing the whole of the border with the remainder of England and Cymru and the different areas of the border as defined above

In the case of the Iron Age hillforts and earlier Bronze Age barrows additional calculations were required in order to represent the data for the different groups. The following table provides a visual representation of this data using the example of processing the data for the three categories of hillfort for each part of the study area (Table 19).

	No of hillforts	Percentage of hillforts
Proportions of hillforts from each group in the study area		
Group I	176	47%
Group II	146	39%
Group III	50	13%

	372	92%
Proportions of hillforts from each group in the core of the study area		
Group I	152	58%
Group II	83	32%
Group III	27	10%
	262	95%
Proportions of hillforts from each group in the west of the study area		
Group I	131	65%
Group II	59	29%
Group III	12	6%
	202	96%
Proportions of hillforts from each group in the east of the study area		
Group I	45	26%
Group II	87	51%
Group III	38	22%
	170	88%

Table 19 Example of results of data processing for sub-groups of monuments using the data for group I, group II and group III hillforts in the study area, the core, west and east.

The statistics for the south-east of the border were not required as the visual representation of this part of the region in the distribution maps conveyed the necessary information. **N.B. only those hillforts of a known, or confidently predicted, size were included in these more detailed analyses so this accounts for the overall percentage figures showing less than 100 per cent.**

Topographic statistics data sheets

Two further worksheets were then created to explore the relationship between the monuments and the major features in their natural environment

- Distance to major rivers and estuaries
- Distance to rivers

The spatial data for this exercise was generated through ArcMap's `'Distance from Location'` function

`'Selection', 'Select by Location', 'Selection method' = 'select features from'`, (the monument layer) `'Source layer'` = (the selected natural feature layer)', `'Spatial selection method for target layer`

`feature(s) = 'are within the source layer'`. With the `'Apply a search distance'` option selected in kilometres.

In each instance this query was iteratively run for 0.5 km, 1 km, 3 km, 5 km, > 5 km for the monuments data and the results were recorded in the worksheet (Table 20). These distances were selected in order to reflect the following spatial categories: co-located with, adjacent to, nearby, some distance from, remote from. The same query was then run against the random point data to establish if the relationship between the monuments and the given feature was more significant than that with the random point data.

Major rivers and estuaries	Hillforts	Random points
0.5 km	13	23
1 km	34	31
3 km	98	82
5 km	147	124
> 5 km	405	405

Table 20 Example of tabular output in Excel of 'Select by Location' query run in ArcMap against the hillfort monument records and associated random point data to test for any relationships with major rivers and estuaries

This data was then additionally represented in the form of a bar chart created in Microsoft Excel following the selection of the cells containing the spatial data (Figure 4).

`'Insert', 'PivotChart', 'PivotChart'`, with the resulting pivot chart being exported as an image in Portable Network Graphics (PNG) format `'right-click', 'Save as Picture'`

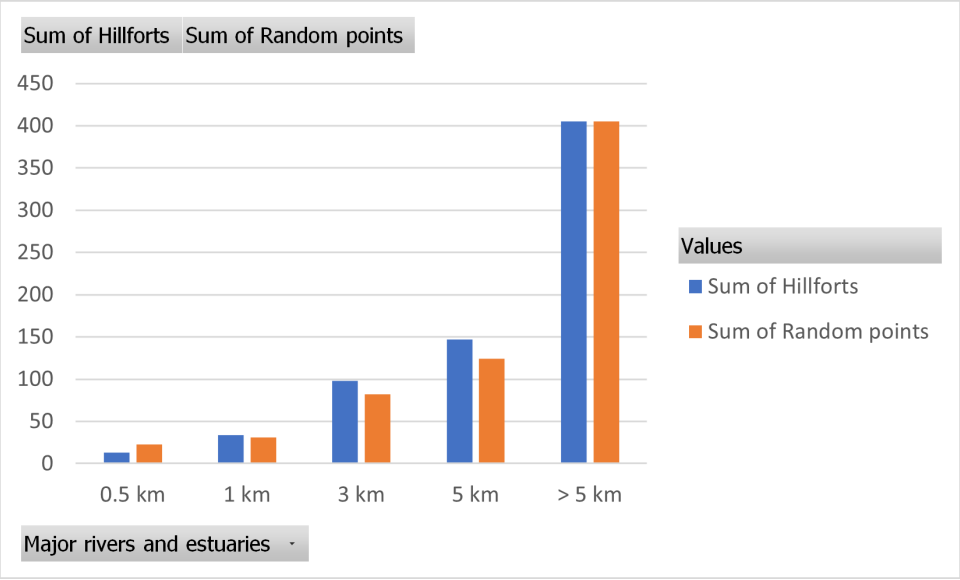


Figure 4 Example of bar chart output in Excel of 'Select by Location' feature query run in ArcMap against the hillfort monument records and associated random point data to test for any relationships with major rivers and estuaries

3.7.3 Temporal data creation, recording and presentation in ArcMap and Excel

The following section outlines the workflow for the temporal data generation and presentation in ArcMap and Microsoft Excel.

Distribution maps

Shapefiles for earlier monument types were added to each of the period .mxd files. In the example of the hillforts this resulted in the importation of the Neolithic and Bronze Age monument data (Table 21).

Early Neolithic	
	Long barrows and chambered tombs.shp
	Causewayed enclosures.shp
Later Neolithic	
	Stone circles.shp
	Henges.shp
Bronze Age	
	Small groups (1-3 monuments).shp
	Groups (4-7 monuments).shp
	Cemeteries (8 or more monuments).shp

Table 21 Table of shapefiles for earlier monument types imported into the ArcMap .mxd file for the Iron Age

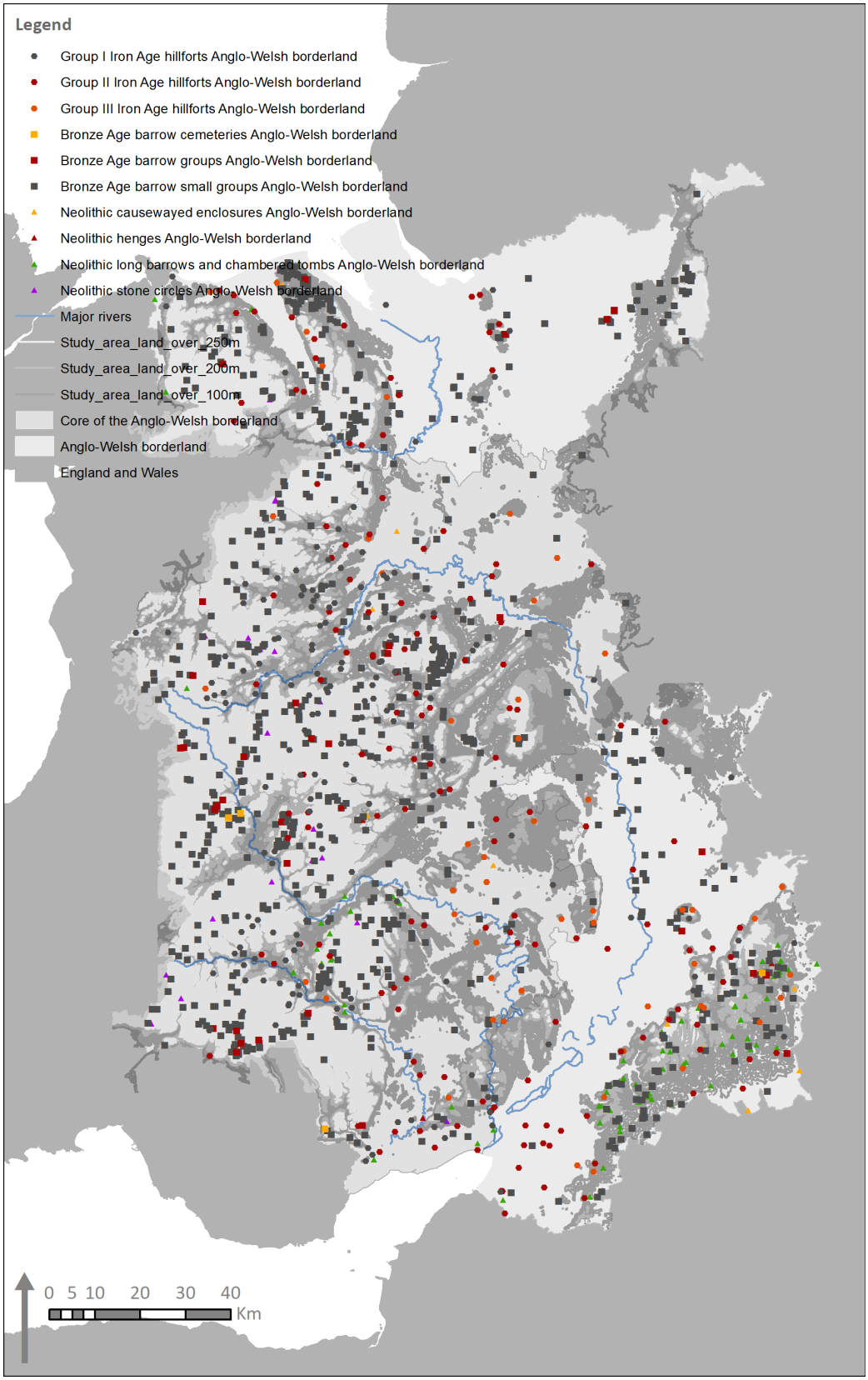


Figure 5 Iron Age hillforts in the study area, major topographic features (land over 100m, 200m, 250m, major rivers and estuaries) and earlier monuments with a viable statistical relationship relative to the random point data generated in ArcMap for a macro-scale overview

Where appropriate, a temporal equivalent of the spatial workflow was applied to the monuments for each period to identify any patterns of association with earlier structures including the creation of multi-period topographic distribution maps (e.g. Figure 5).

The temporal data was again generated in ArcMap with the results being recorded in new worksheets in the Microsoft Excel workbooks described earlier (Table 22). Microsoft Excel was once again used to present the data in tables and bar charts.

Major rivers and estuaries
Rivers
Long barrows and chambered tombs
Causewayed enclosures
Stone circles
Bronze Age barrows (small groups)
Bronze Age barrows (groups)
Bronze Age barrows (cemeteries)

Table 22 A summary of the worksheets in the Iron Age Excel workbook used to record and summarise the results of the analysis of the relationships between hillforts, major topographic features and earlier monuments (excl limited number of henges)

For example: how many hillforts are 0.5 km, 1 km, 3 km, 5 km, > 5 km away from long barrows and chambered tombs? (Table 23; Figure 6).

Long barrows and chambered tombs	Hillforts	Random points
0.5 km	0	1
1 km	7	6
3 km	46	21
5 km	80	38
> 5 km	405	405

Table 23 Example of tabular output in Excel of 'Select by Location' query run in ArcMap against the hillfort monument records and associated random point data to test for any relationships with long barrows and chambered tombs

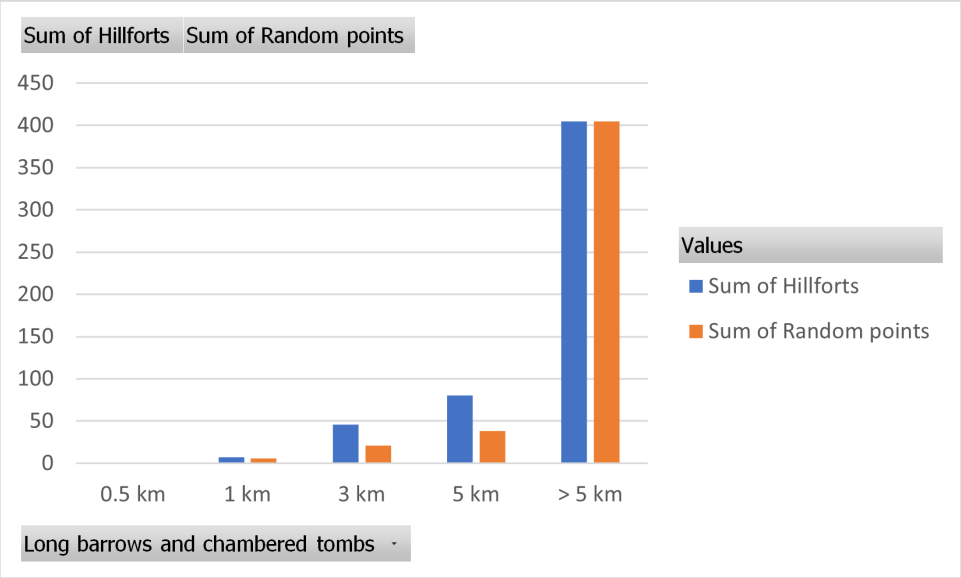


Figure 6 Example of bar chart output in Excel of 'Select by Location' feature query run in ArcMap against the Iron Age hillfort monument records and associated random point data to test for any relationships with long barrows and chambered tombs

The completed tables, bar charts and distribution maps for each monument type and for each part of the border were then collated and incorporated into a cohesive whole for interpretation through the combined lenses of landscape archaeology, affordances, non-verbal metaphors and the *Longue Durée*.

3.7.4 Qualitative data

The data from the Rhestr o Enwau Lleoedd Hanesyddol/List of Historic Place Names in Wales and Key to English Place-Names were manually added to the place-names-folklore.mxd document with an identical process being undertaken for the addition of the selected folklore references. Whilst it was not possible to undertake any quantitative analysis of the selected references the ability to present them alongside the quantitative data in an easily comparable format nevertheless added value in bringing together the evidence to illustrate the Anglo-Welsh borderland's cultural hybridity.

3.7.5 The application of the theoretical framework

Once work on the quantitative and qualitative data sources had been completed the evidence was examined through the lenses of affordances, non-verbal metaphors and the *Longue Durée* and then contextualised within the broader interdisciplinary framework of border studies.

In the following sections Chapter 4 describes the results generated through the application of this methodology to the Anglo-Welsh border from the Neolithic to the medieval period and Chapter 5 offers up an interpretation of these results through its interdisciplinary lens. Insights into how elites ruling over, and communities living within, the Anglo-Welsh borderland perceived, marked out and responded to the opportunities and challenges presented by such hybrid, multi-vocal environments demonstrate the potential for taking such an explicitly interdisciplinary approach. Additionally, presenting the results through the lens of the *Longue Durée* reveals the presence of enduring themes of, for example, the significance of the region's major rivers and estuaries, of its cultural connectedness to the wider Atlantic coastal zone and of the 'overseeing' of large tracts of the region's topographically diverse landscape.

3.8 Limitations and Challenges

3.8.1 Methodological constraints

Contemporary data storage, modelling and presentation technologies support the analysis of extensive data sets so the primary methodological constraint in terms of data sets chosen for analysis was purely logistical in terms of what is achievable within the bounds of a piece of PhD research.

3.8.2 Practical issues

The primary practical issue encountered as part of the research was the integration of the monument data from the respective national archives into a consistent usable whole – an inevitable challenge of working in borderland environments where records derived from a range of sources are required. Whilst many of the records were easily integrated, in other cases, most notably those older instances whose origins lay in the original English county archives created in the middle of the last century, some work was required in order to integrate them into the study. Whilst some limited automation was possible in the processing of these records inevitably a significant amount of manual input was required.

In other instances, for example, the division of the online place-name archives into national repositories, resulted in some duplication of effort in accessing Cymric and English resources.

On a positive note, as this researcher's language skills improve the ability to nevertheless access the Cymric archives in both languages proved invaluable. Equally, establishing a methodology to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data into the GIS was initially challenging, but straightforward to implement once the workflows were tested and finalised.

From the perspective of fieldwork, land ownership across the length of the borderland is complex and once again held in various national repositories. Establishing what pieces of landscape lay on which side of the border and were owned by whom occasionally proved be a labyrinthine process and so Rob Dingle's advice, as the Offa's Dyke National Trail Officer, was invaluable. However, the greatest challenge in terms of fieldwork and site access was the COVID pandemic. In particular, during the second lockdown as the rules set in London and Cardiff diverged establishing where fieldwork was possible at any given point in time and whether individual sites were accessible without inadvertently crossing the national border simultaneously proved challenging whilst also cementing the contemporary significance of the research (section 1.3). The authorisation of a 12-month extension provided the opportunity to make up much of the progress lost to the disruption of the pandemic.

3.9 Conclusion

In summary, the results outlined in Chapter 4 and their interpretation in Chapter 5 demonstrate the validity of the new interdisciplinary research framework in identifying, processing and interpreting the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland over millennia. The workflow outlined above based on data sets available through monumental archives, research project outputs, documentary archives and publications and processed through spreadsheet and GIS applications proved effective at producing a body of data capable of drawing together quantitative and qualitative evidence over millennia into a holistic whole through which to explore the evidence from the region. In reference to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, the following discussions based on this methodology suggest that it is possible to both enhance our understanding of diachronic borderlands through their archaeology and to address the lack of temporality in border studies through the application of evidence and practices derived from landscape archaeology and its adjacent disciplines. The interdisciplinary research framework further illustrated that such studies are both

possible and desirable to further our understanding of these multi-vocal landscapes over millennia and that the results have the potential to inform our understanding of physical and conceptual, enduring and imposed contemporary borders.

Chapter 4 Evidence for the Biography of the Case Study of the Anglo-Welsh Borderland

'The March, the middle land, is a will-o'-the-wisp. Hillforts and castle mounds growl from the green; [. . .] Even the names on the map refuse to choose a side, written in a mash of two languages that have coupled in a hayrick and spawned a beautiful bastard third.' (Parker, 2024, pp. 3–4)

This chapter summarises the results of applying the empirical component of the interdisciplinary research framework (outlined in Chapter 3) to the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland. The interpretation of these findings through the application of the theoretical framework is conducted in Chapter 5.

4.1 Studying the Anglo-Welsh borderland



Figure 7 Location of the Anglo-Welsh borderland in England and Cymru illustrating the whole of the borderland and the core of the region used within the study



Figure 8 Historic counties in the Anglo-Welsh borderland comprising the west, east and south-east of the study area

As its name suggests the Anglo-Welsh borderland occupies the transitional landscape that lies between the modern countries of Cymru and England (Figure 7). Previous analyses of the Anglo-Welsh borderland have taken a range of approaches to defining the extent of the region. In many cases the extents of programmes of research are frequently defined and restricted by regional and national boundaries, for example, the research frameworks for

Cymru and the West Midlands of England ("Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales - Fframwaith Ymchwil i Archaeoleg Cymru," 2017; Watt, 2011) with reviews of previous work and forward looking strategies defined by the contemporary political border. In other instances analyses that range across the borderland have been, and continue to be, concerned with individual monuments and their relationship to the region's topography at a range of scales; unsurprisingly, these are exclusively concerned with Offa's and Wat's Dykes (Fox, 1955; Hill, 2000; Noble, 1983; Ray and Bapty, 2016; Williams, 2023). Further examples, typified by the work of Capper (2023) and Brady (2017), reveal studies that combine archaeological and historical sources of evidence resulting in narratives that stress the fluid and multi-vocal nature of the borderland throughout the early medieval period rendering arriving at a fixed definition both problematic and counter-intuitive. More recent archaeological analyses have, however, taken the spatial Anglo-Welsh borderland in whole, or in part, as the focus of their attention.

In the case of the work of Burnham et al. (2010) on the borderland during the Romano-British period and that of Britnell and Silvester (2018) on its Iron Age, research programmes that explicitly ranged across the borderland ,rather than a historic landscape arbitrarily defined by modern politics, were undertaken. Though primarily concerned with evidence from the Cymric side of the border in both instances these studies explicitly 'looked over' into England to adopt a more holistic approach to understanding the evidence from the region as a whole. More recent studies still have been undertaken within the borderland, through which analyses of individual parts of the region are placed within the wider context of the borderland. Such work is typified by that of Swallow's (2022, 2016) analyses of the castles of the north of the border and Halsted's (2011) work on the prehistory of north-east Powys and Shropshire. In their turn, the origins of such studies are to be found in earlier research programmes such as the Wroxeter Hinterland Project that framed its results within the wider context of the territory of the Cornovii during the Romano-British period (Gaffney and White, 2007)

Analyses with their focus explicitly on the borderland as a whole are rare, but those undertaken by Mullin (2012, 2011) on the prehistory of the borderland and Johnson's (2017) work on the region's earlier Bronze Age barrows illustrate the validity of taking such an

approach. In both cases the region is defined though a combination of its topography, most significantly its major riverine routes, and its contemporary and historic counties. In each case, however, the focus of the research lay in the prehistoric period where there is no cartographic evidence. In contrast, within the context of the historic period, Henley's recent (2024) work typifies the programmes of research undertaken in the medieval period where *Y Mers* or the March is a cartographic known; one defined at least in part by the region's historic counties and the minor tenurial units that later came to be subsumed within them. That *Y Mers* or the March of Wales comprises the most appropriate means of defining the geographical parameters of the case study for the medieval period is clear.

The argument for adopting these medieval boundaries, beyond that of continuity for both the quantitative and qualitative analyses, is strengthened through the results of studies carried out on the early medieval landscape of the region that make the case for continuity in boundaries over the centuries that preceded Domesday Book in England and *Y Mers* or the March of Wales (summarised in Rippon, 2018, pp. 1–15). Whilst Williamson **(**2013, p. 105) stresses that in many instances boundaries may be established, abandoned and forgotten he equally makes the case for their re-emergence in the same or similar locations because of a given landscape's topography lending itself to such scenarios. Within the case of the Anglo-Welsh borderland itself the work of, for example, Bowden (2005, p. 52) supports such hypotheses. In summary, whilst many of the origins and evolution of the various historic counties and estates at a range of scales within the borderland are obscure, they nevertheless come closest to representing how at least some previous generations of communities within the region (within the historic period at least, if not before), would have understood how it was subdivided and administered. Whilst imperfect, with the focus of this case study encompassing both the historic and prehistoric periods, the adoption of the historic counties of Cymru and England to define both the extent of the Anglo-Welsh borderland itself, and its constituent parts seems more appropriate and relevant than any of the other possible strategies based on, for example, the squares of the eighteenth-century Ordnance Survey that take little or no account of the region's topography which is so significant to the framing of this analysis. In order to facilitate a comparative study of the patterns of monumentality evident across the region it was subdivided into its

topographically transitional core (Figure 7) and also its west, east and (where relevant) its south-east (Figure 8).

An initial in interest in the region's built heritage and the archaeological evidence for how the medieval March of Wales, Y Mers, was experienced by its Anglo-Norman castle builders and communities alike subsequently expanded into a much broader, more expansive consideration of the antiquity of its liminal character. Rather than focusing on the landscape archaeology from a single period, questions instead began to emerge relating to this borderland's culture over millennia. Why did the Anglo-Welsh border transform into a cultural and political buffer zone in the medieval period? What set the region aside from the rest of England in the minds of the newly arrived Anglo-Norman elites and what pre-existing conditions were in place to establish its status as a liminal landscape? Certainly, the presence of Offa's and Wat's dykes alongside a range of other monuments including, for example, the Pillar of Eliseg (Edwards, 2009), speaks of its borderland status in the preceding early medieval period as the minor kingdoms of the fifth to seventh centuries coalesced into the major polities that pre-dated the Norman Conquest of England. In turn, therefore, the evidence from the post-Roman period through to the eleventh century invited a similar set of questions about the cultural, political and economic factors that created the conditions for these and other related monuments to be constructed across this landscape.

At this point a new set of research questions emerged relating to the region's status. Just how far back might we have to look for the origins of this apparently enduring liminality? What might this borderland's prehistoric and Romano-British landscape archaeology be able to tell us of its culture over millennia? If the evidence is indeed suggestive of the presence of some form of liminal character for how the region was settled in prehistory how might it be accounted for and contexualised? If not, what variables might have been at play and when for it become so? Further, over time, what factors might have influenced its nature and what is it possible to say of the mutual nature of the relationship between the region's cultures and its transitional topography? Is it possible to account for spatial and temporal change in the evidence at a range of scales? Additionally, what insights might the evidence from adjacent disciplines including history, place-name and folklore studies bring?

As these questions coalesced into a much wider exploration of the evidence for how the Anglo-Welsh borderland was settled over millennia they also invited an answer to the question of why this knowledge about this particular landscape matters? Though the region has, until recently, been somewhat of a backwater in terms of wider Cymric and English political narratives the evidence suggests it still holds a prominent place in the national cultural stories of both nations. Today, the national walking trail that takes its name from Offa's Dyke annually attracts approximately 100,000 walkers with around 3,000 walking its entire 285 km length each year (Garside, 2011). Working collaboratively with the national trail authority, the Offa's Dyke Association also works to promote and conserve Offa's and Wat's dykes and their associated monuments (Offa's Dyke Association, 2024) and together, English Heritage and Cadw manage over 30 prehistoric, Roman and medieval sites across the region (Cadw, no date; English Heritage, no date). Finally, established in 2017 the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory brings together academics, individual researchers and local archaeology and heritage groups including representatives from, for example, the Holywell & District History Society, St Asaph Archaeological Society and Trefonen Rural Protection Group (Offa's Dyke Collaboratory: members, 2017) into a network to promote awareness of and investigate the early medieval heritage of the region. The evidence suggests, then, that there is an extensive awareness of and engagement with the cultural heritage of the region and further, that this extends well beyond academia.

Within the context of the contemporary borderland recent research by Williams further revealed the extent to which place-names chosen for modern roads and businesses across the region reflect an attachment in terms of personal and community affiliations which may contain the 'germ of a borderlands identity, [. . .] palpable in the memoryscape of toponyms, contrasting starkly with the macro-scale nationalistic connotations of opposition between 'Cymric' and 'English''. (Williams, 2020b, pp. 137–138). Clearly, even in the rapidly changing twenty-first century, being 'of the border' still resonates. Finally, as host to the annual Hay Festival the region still spawns its own culturally distinct literary traditions with publications such as Mike Parker's *All the Wide Border* (2024) continuing those established in the last century by authors such as Margiad Evans (1932) and Raymond Williams (1960).

Within wider dialogues across southern Britain the Anglo-Welsh borderland also figures in reflections on national identity particularly in relation to the degrees of 'Welshness' attributed to the different parts of the country. Framed within the context of, for example, the extent of English migration into east Cymru and the ongoing hegemonic influence of the industrial cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham on the north and east of the country the region consistently figures large in debates on the extent and nature of 'British Wales' (e.g. Evans, 2019).

In summary, over recent decades there has been, and continues to be, an extensive engagement with the heritage of the Anglo-Welsh borderland and an implicit curiosity about its multi-vocal, distinct contemporary culture. Given the depth and extent of the evidence the answer to the question of whether furthering our understanding of this liminal landscape over millennia matters, the answer must be in the affirmative. In fact, evidence derived from a multi-scalar analysis of the landscape archaeology Anglo-Welsh borderland would not simply enhance our comprehension of the region's distinct culture over millennia, but would also serve to contextualise many of the contemporary discussions of and reflections on life on the border, of this landscape's enduring in-between status, its place within Cymru and the continuing impact of English implicit and explicit power across the region in the twenty-first century.

4.2 The topography of the Anglo-Welsh border and its earliest prehistory

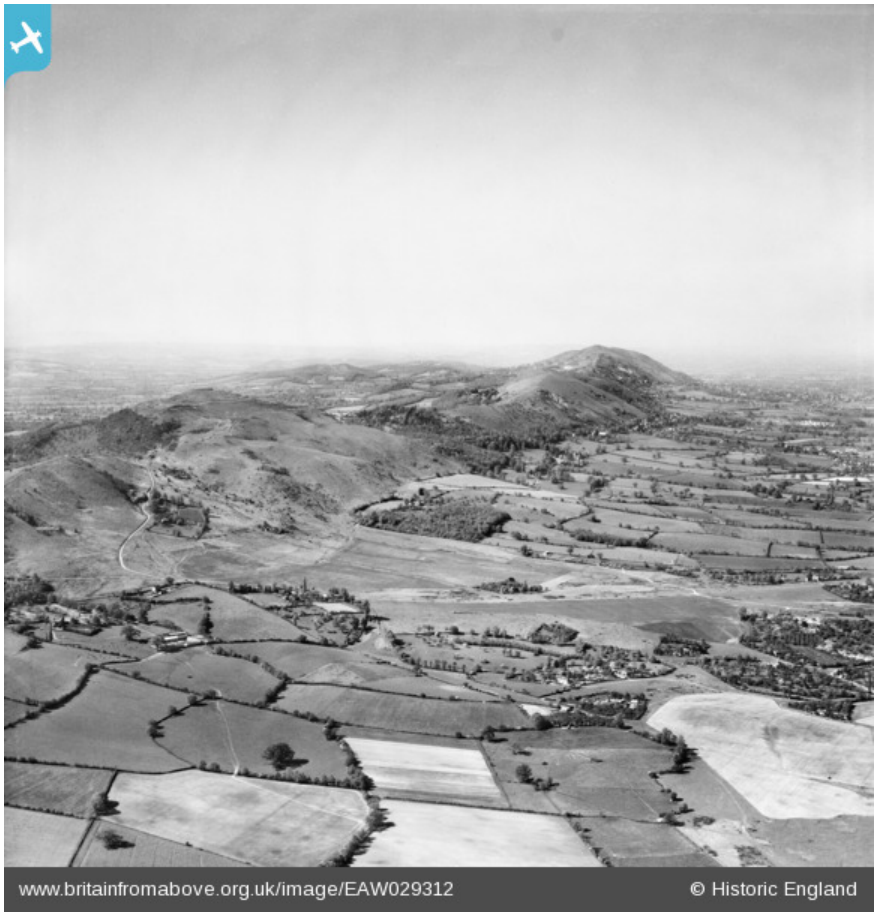


Figure 9 The Malvern Hills, viewed from the Golden Valley, Herefordshire, from the south-east. The Malvern Hills present a major topographic barrier to west-east travel in the south of the Anglo-Welsh borderland. Archive photo pre-dating much modern development (Britain from Above, 1950).

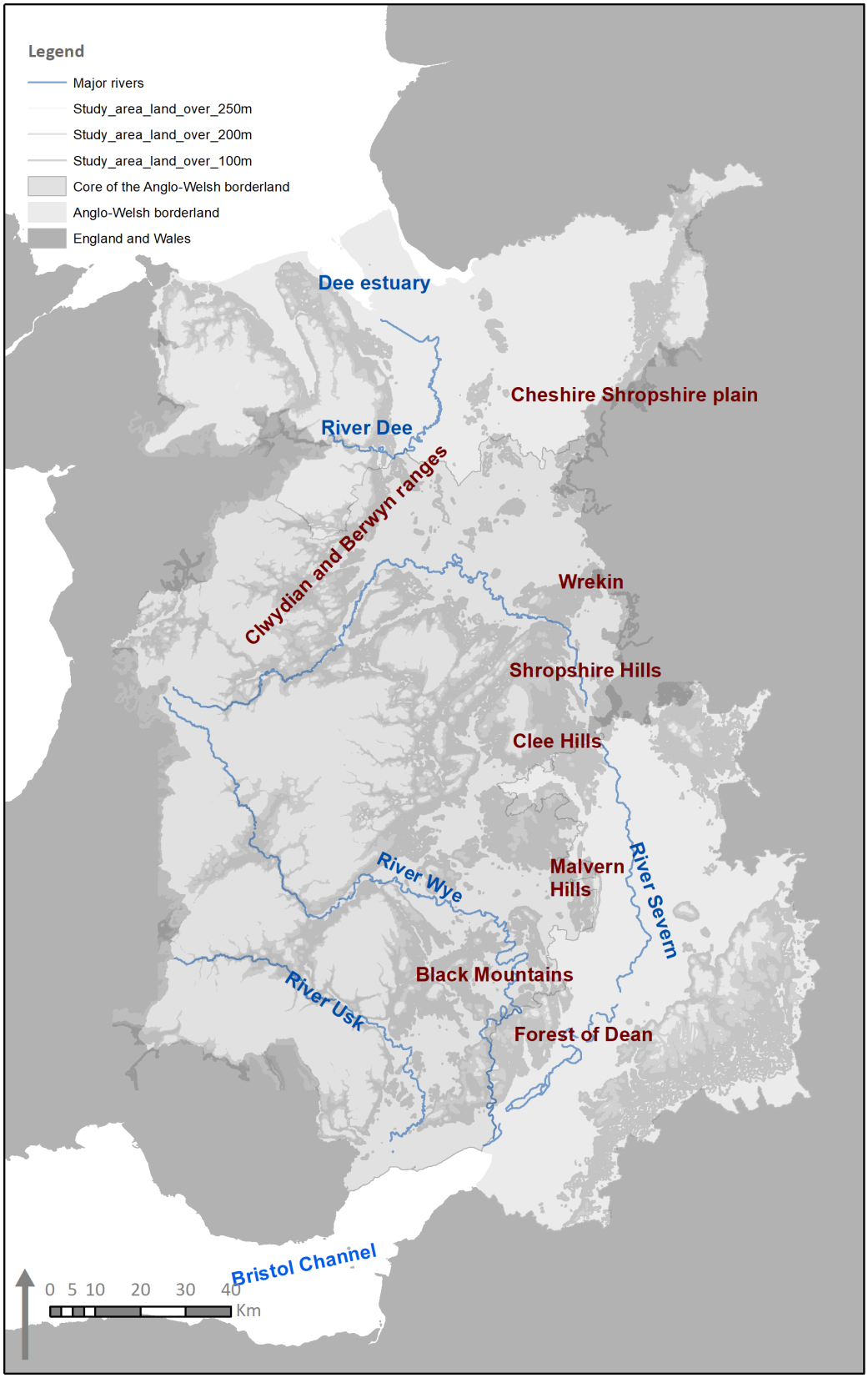


Figure 10 Major topographic components of the Anglo-Welsh borderland referenced in the text

Whilst the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods spanning between 1,000,000 to 10,000 BC and 10,000 to 4,000 BC respectively fall outside this study of practices of monumentality across the Ango-Welsh border it is nevertheless possible to say something of the formation and nature of this topographically liminal landscape and in turn of the challenges and opportunities afforded to its earliest prehistoric inhabitants.

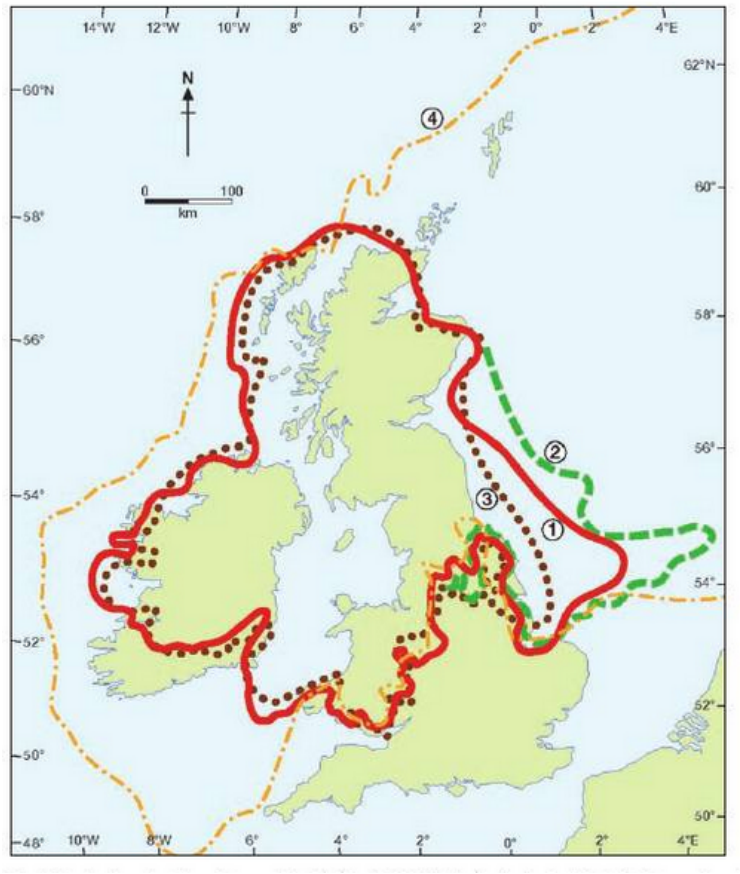


Figure 11 Map showing selected maximum global limits of the British Irish Ice Sheet (BIIS) during the Late-Glacial Maximum (Lillie, 2015, fig 1.1). Whilst the map incorporates a range of possible easterly extents (after Bateman et al 2011) the most recent studies agree that they fall on or around the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Significantly for this regional study, although opinion on the easterly edge of the British Irish Ice Sheet (BIIS) is divided (Bateman *et al.*, 2011) the results of the most recent quaternary research programmes all place its south-easterly extent on or around the Anglo-Welsh border (Fig. 11).

The region's position at the very edge of the expansion of the BIIS, then, unsurprisingly came to define its topographically liminal status sitting between the ice-bound mountains carved out by its presence and the neighbouring lowlands that escaped its influence.

The grain of this landscape unmistakably follows a north/south axis through which a limited number of west-east transects run (Mullin, 2012; Rowley, 2001; Stanford, 1991) and which is defined through a number of prominent upland and lowland components (Figures 9, 10). To the north and east the Cheshire/Shropshire plain dominates providing access to extensive wetland areas which are drained by the Dee (and Mersey outside of the study area) together with their tributaries as they flow into the Irish Sea. Additionally, the Severn, the other major river of the region, runs through much of this low-lying zone on its route through to the Bristol Channel in the south and west. Though generally low-lying, several distinctive upland features break up the plain, most notably the Wrekin which at 407m dominates much of the Shropshire skyline. To the west lie the uplands of the Clwydian Hills which are cut by the Dee as it runs through the Vale of Llangollen and whose southerly extent is defined by the Nant y Garth Pass. Further south the Berwyn Hills dominate this part of the north-west of the border until they in turn meet the valley of the Severn as it enters the neighbouring Cheshire/Shropshire plain. At the interface between the uplands and lowlands sit the Shropshire Hills. Formed by a series of primarily south-westerly/north-easterly ridges this part of the borderland is dominated by the Long Mynd, together with the Stiperstones, the Stretton Hills and Wenlock Edge. Sitting alongside them, the geologically distinctive Clee Hills lie somewhat isolated from their neighbours and provide the highest point in the Shropshire range at 540m.

Further to the south the low-lying Herefordshire Basin is bounded to the west by the Black Mountains which reach 811m whilst riverine access through this landscape is afforded by the Wye and its tributaries as it flows through much of this western part of the border on its meandering route to the Severn estuary. Further east the Malvern Hills (Figure 9) provide a dramatic and distinctive end to these westerly uplands. Running for approximately 15km and on a roughly north/south alignment ‘The Malverns’ which sit between the rolling uplands to the west and the low-lying Severn Vale to the east represent a major impediment to west-east travel in this part of the region. To the south the landscape is dominated by the distinctive outcrop of the Forest of Dean, the widening valley of the Severn as its estuary extends into the Bristol Channel and in the south-east the uplands of the Cotswolds which in turn share their easterly boundary with the Thames. The limited opportunities for west-east

travel through this landscape primarily lie between the Severn Vale and the Malvern Hills, the Severn Vale and the Shropshire Hills and from the Cheshire Plain, through the valley of the Dee through to the Clwydian Hills (Mullin, 2012, pp. 7–9).

Though less intensively archaeologically explored than the extinct and extant river valleys of the south and east of England (for a summary see Lillie, 2015) the distinct quaternary character of the Anglo-Welsh border nevertheless means it is possible to infer something of the extent and nature of its earliest human habitation and exploitation.

Indeed, this is a landscape that contains potentially internationally significant evidence for how the earliest Europeans repeatedly expanded into, retreated from and exploited those landscapes at the fringes of their world (Stringer, 2011). In particular, as sea levels rose during the Mesolithic the British Isles experienced some of the most extreme fluctuations in environment and flora and fauna (Conneller, 2022) whilst the mouths of the Dee and Severn came to form two of the major westerly estuaries in mainland Britain (Lillie, 2015). Research carried out around, for example, Liverpool Bay just to the north of the study area, together with the Severn estuary and Bristol Channel provides multi-scalar evidence for ongoing and at times rapid changes in climate, sea levels and vegetation to which Mesolithic populations would have had to have been at their most adaptive to survive (Fitch and Gaffney, 2011; Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee, 2017).

Though these periods pre-date the emergence of traditions of monumentality it is nevertheless possible to say something of the nature of their inhabitation and exploitation; of processes of advance and retreat through the Palaeolithic and of the climatic and topographic changes to which it was subject during the Mesolithic. It was within the context of this landscape, one at once on the edge, but also rich in both challenges and opportunities, that the Neolithic settlement of the region took place alongside the adoption of farming and the emergence of traditions of monumentality.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter the quantitative evidence relating to the location of the monuments of the Anglo-Welsh borderland is presented in a series of distribution and topographic maps together with quantitative tables and bar charts as described in Chapter 3. The distribution maps illustrate the character of the region's monumentality within the wider

context of the remainder of Cymru and England. In turn, the relationship between the monuments and the region's varied upland and lowland topography is presented in the form of topographic distribution maps. Finally, tabular data and bar charts are used to illustrate the relationships between the different categories of monuments and the major rivers and estuaries and rivers. Where significant relationships between earlier forms of monumentality emerge these too are illustrated by means of the tabular data and bar charts included in the main body of the text. Other less obvious potential associations are referenced through tables and charts located in the Appendix.

4.3 The Anglo-Welsh border in the Neolithic

The Neolithic represents the earliest period when visible, tangible statements of belief systems appear in the landscape, in the case of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, in a zone at once providing access to a rich range of resources, but one also at the edge bounded to the west by the Atlantic coast (Cunliffe, 2001, p. 154). The monuments constructed by these earliest farming communities vary in nature with some linked explicitly with the treatment of the dead and others fulfilling functions less readily interpretable in the archaeological record.

The monuments of the Neolithic set out the Anglo-Welsh border as a landscape of transition evidenced both through the presence and absence of 'classic' examples of construction for the period. In the areas where monument construction is undertaken it is the long barrows and chambered tombs, causewayed enclosures and stone circles that occur with sufficient frequency to say something of their relationships with each other, the natural environment within which they lie and the motivations of those who built and utilised them. Though fewer in number the henges of the Anglo-Welsh border all lie in topographically distinct locations, on sites in close proximity to the major riverine routes through the landscape and within or adjacent to the upland/lowland transitional zone; a landscape that itself plays a major role in forming Neolithic monumentality in the region.

4.3.1 Monumentality in the earlier Neolithic

Throughout the earlier Neolithic (c. 4000 – 3400 BC), the processes of monument construction undertaken across the Anglo-Welsh border speak of communities choosing sometimes radically different ways of marking their landscape, practices which in turn raise

fundamental questions about contrasting and changing settlement, land use and cultural patterns in the region. A range of subtle themes appear to be at play, but they are most clearly expressed through the distribution of the burial monuments and causewayed enclosures across this borderland.

Long barrows and chambered tombs



Figure 12 Nympsfield long barrow (Gloucestershire). Views across the Severn estuary to the west, to the Forest of Dean, Cymru and the Black Mountains beyond.

From c.3800 – 3500 BC long barrows and chambered tombs appeared in the Neolithic landscape coinciding with the widespread adoption of farming and settlement across much of the Atlantic coastline of western Europe including Cymru, Ireland and western France. These monuments vary in size and design, but in each instance, they represent a significant investment of resources in order to make a conspicuous statement in the landscape. Long barrows and cairns are typified by large rectangular or trapezoidal structures of stone or earthen mounds usually covering one or more burial chambers either side of a central passage and often with some form of substantial entrance or forecourt. Examples such as

Belas Knap, Nympsfield and Uley in Gloucestershire are part of the nationally significant 'Cotswold-Severn' group that falls within the study area (Figures 12, 13).

Previous work on the landscape settings of these monuments across the British Isles suggests a strong correlation with major topographic features such as river valleys and transitional landscapes offering views encompassing a range of natural resources (Barker and Webley, 1978; Cummings, 2001; Cummings *et al.*, 2002; Tilley, 1994). Additionally, more recent studies have demonstrated the potential for interdisciplinary approaches to further enhance our understanding of these burial monuments. Collaborative analyses involving, for example, landscape archaeologists, archaeo-astronomers and folklorists led Silva (2014) to describe these structures as 'tombs with a view' sited to embrace vistas of both land and sky. Indeed, much of the seminal work on the landscape settings of earlier Neolithic burial monuments in the British Isles has taken place within the south of the Anglo-Welsh border itself on the cluster of barrows and cairns to the west of the Black Mountains (e.g. Cummings, 2001; Cummings *et al.*, 2002; Tilley 1994).

	Area Km^2	No of long barrows & chambered tombs	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of long barrows and chambered tombs
England total	131177	402	86%	75%
Cymru total	20905	136	14%	25%
TOTAL	152082	538		
England outside study area	117665	319	77%	59%
Cymru outside study area	11900	99	8%	18%

Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	120	15%	22%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	33	54%	28%
Gloucestershire	3353	81	15%	68%
Anglo-Welsh border minus Gloucestershire	19161	39	85%	33%

Table 24 Distribution statistics for scheduled long barrows and chambered tombs in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 24. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 120 scheduled long barrows and chambered tombs, or 22 per cent of the total number of these monuments in England and Cymru. Their distribution is far from even however, with 68 per cent of these monuments occurring within the Cotswold-Severn group in Gloucestershire in the south-east of the study area that accounts for only 15 per cent of the total of the study area.

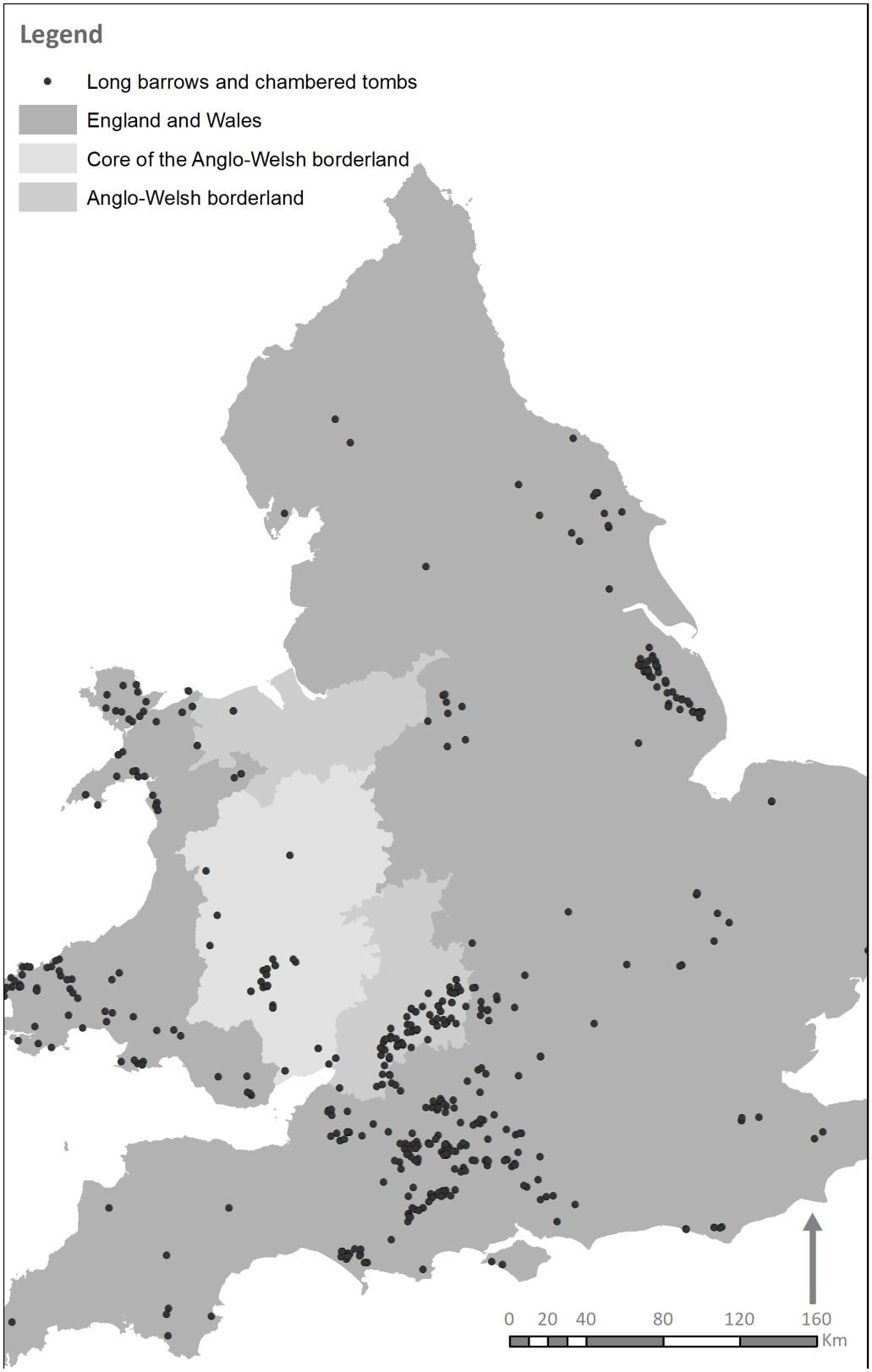


Figure 13 National distribution of long barrows and chambered tombs in Cymru and England

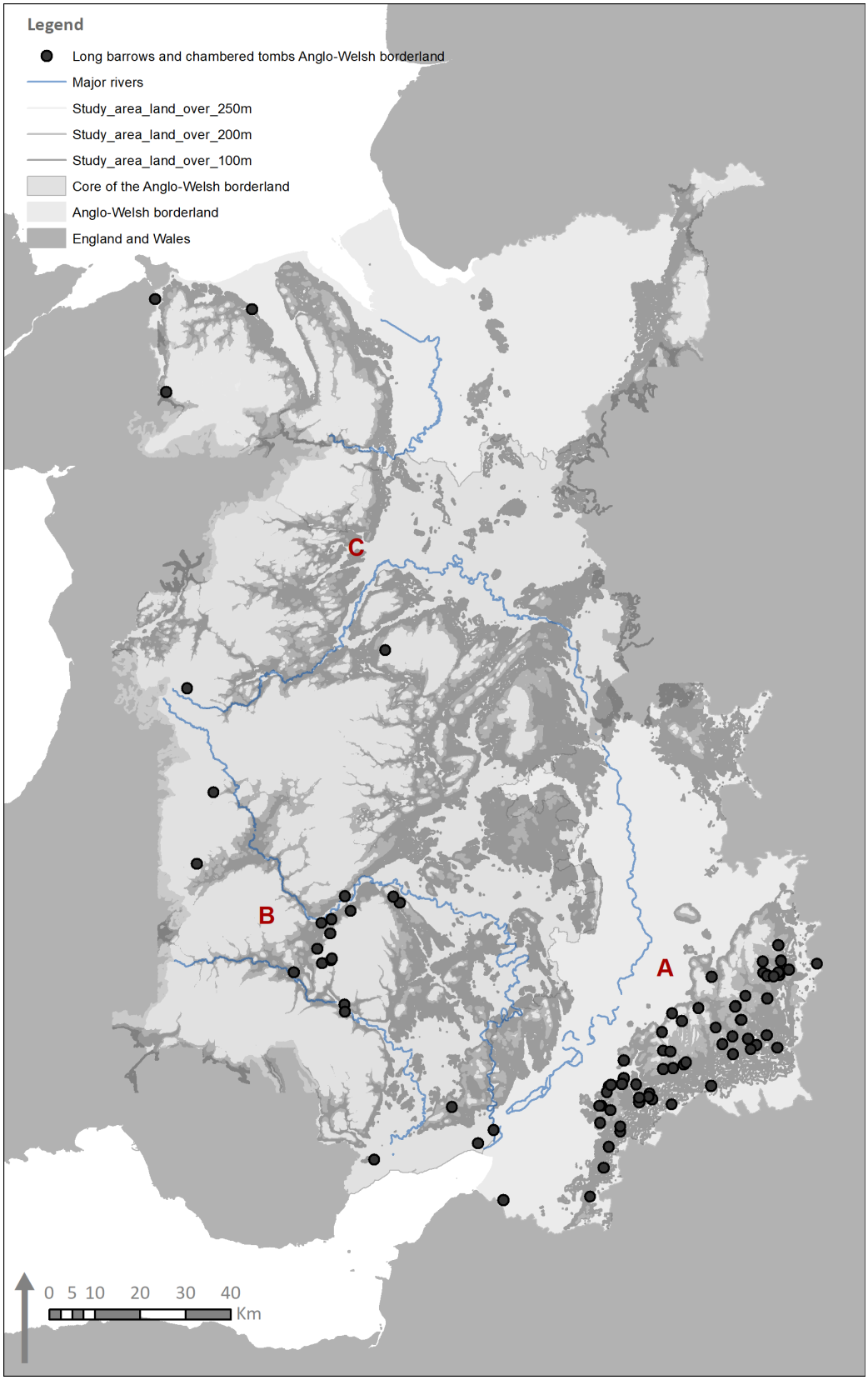


Figure 14 Topographic distribution of long barrows and chambered tombs on the Anglo-Welsh border

The results from the Anglo-Welsh borderland reveal that the distribution of earlier Neolithic burial monuments across this landscape is far from even (Table 24; Figures 13, 14). The 120 scheduled long barrows and chambered tombs within the study area constitute 22 per cent of the total number of these monuments in England and Cymru, but within the border itself 68 per cent of these monuments lie in the south-east within the Severn-Cotswold group in Gloucestershire which comprises only 15 per cent of the total area of the region.

To the south of the Severn estuary in the Cotswolds (Fig 14, A) and to the west of the Black Mountains (Fig 14, B) the density of these structures provides evidence for populations willing to dedicate significant resources to the building of these early burial chambers, of communities embracing this new model of construction.

Major rivers and estuaries	Long barrows & chambered tombs (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	6	5
1 km	11	8
3 km	22	24
5 km	27	42
> 5 km	120	120

Table 25 Relationship of long barrows and chambered tombs vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh border

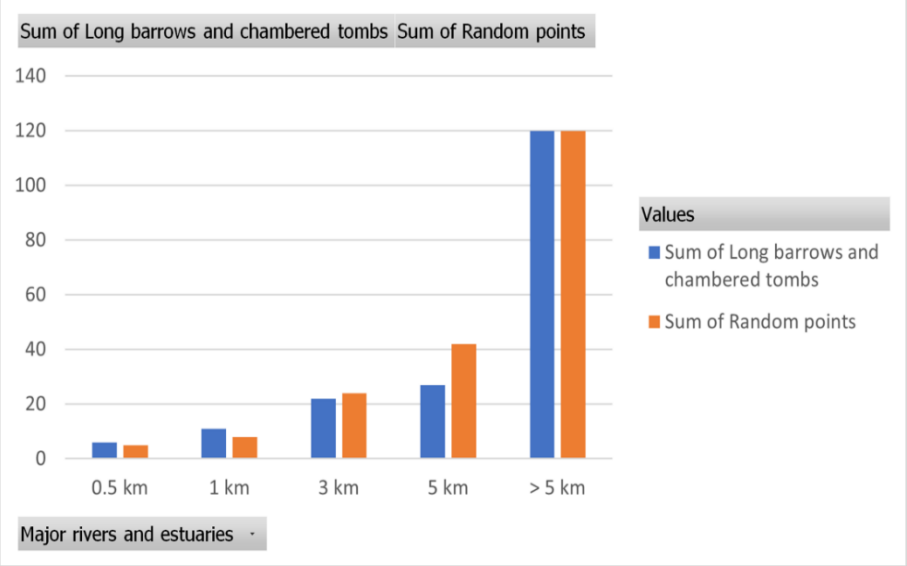


Figure 15 Bar chart of long barrows and chambered tombs vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh border

Rivers	Long barrows & chambered tombs (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	4	18
1 km	21	31
3 km	68	81
5 km	107	105
> 5 km	120	120

Table 26 Relationship of long barrows and chambered tombs vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

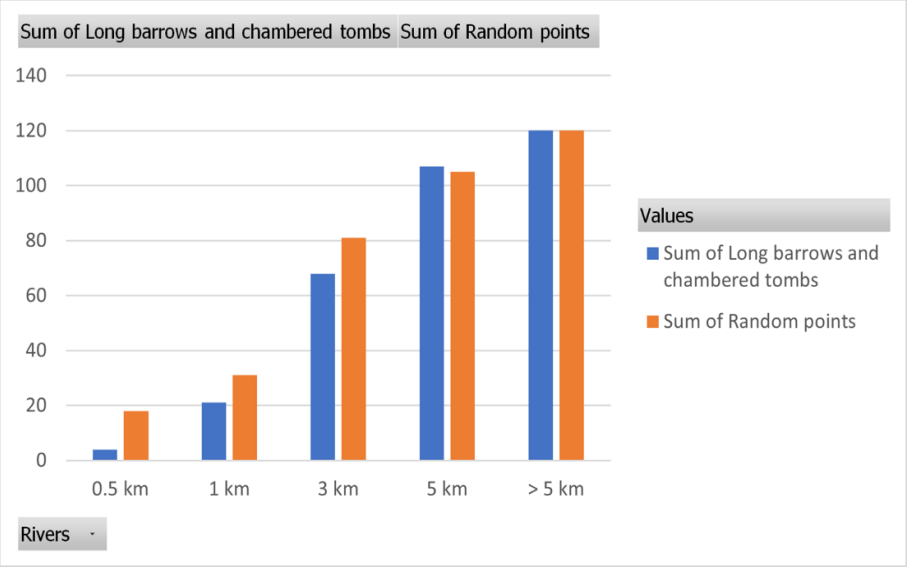


Figure 16 Bar chart of long barrows and chambered tombs vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Major rivers and estuaries	Long barrows & chambered tombs (core of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	4	2
1 km	9	3
3 km	19	6
5 km	22	13
> 5 km	33	33

Table 27 Relationship of long barrows and chambered tombs vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

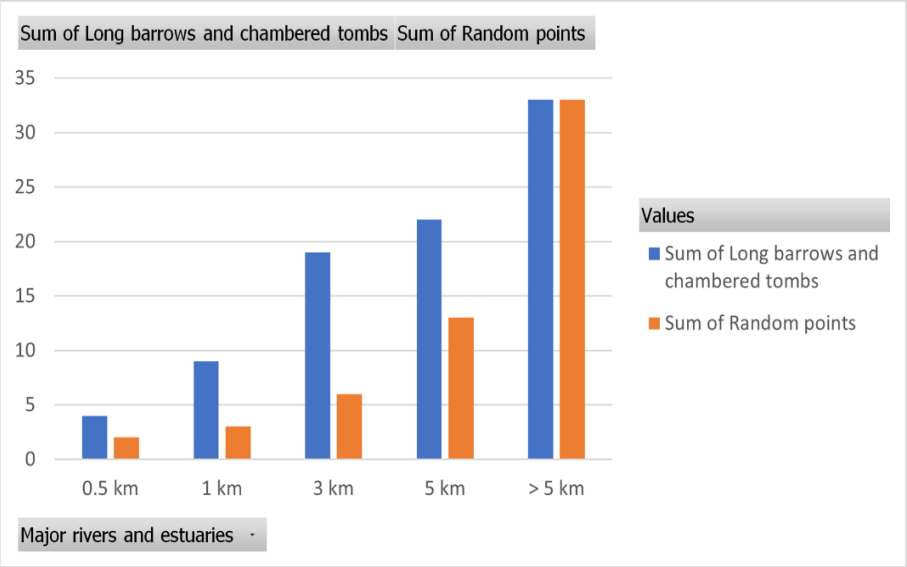


Figure 17 Bar chart of long barrows and chambered tombs vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Long barrows & chambered tombs (core of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	3	4
1 km	12	7
3 km	23	21
5 km	27	25
> 5 km	33	33

Table 28 Relationship of long barrows and chambered tombs vs random points to rivers in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

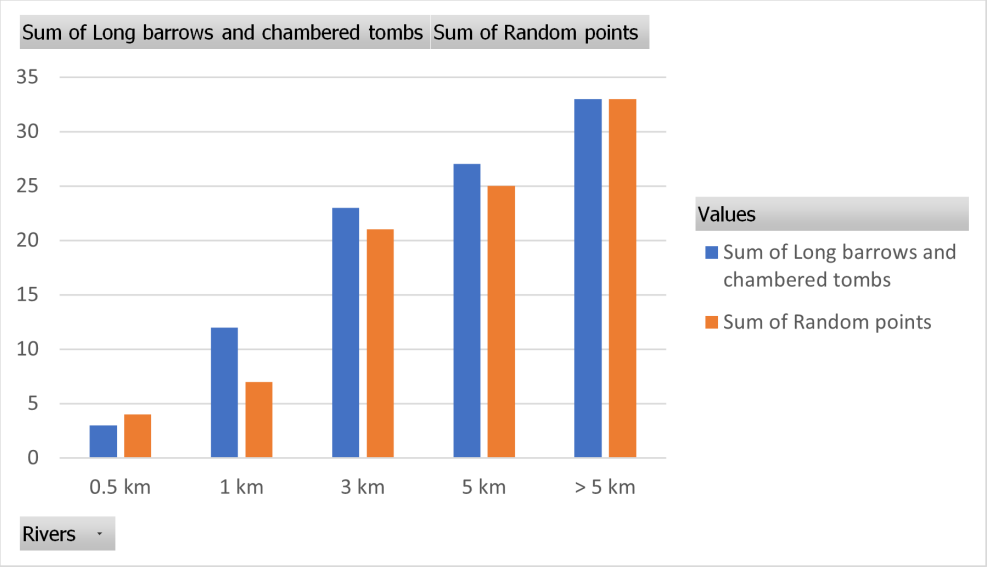


Figure 18 Bar chart of long barrows and chambered tombs vs random points relative to rivers in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

The figures for the whole of the Anglo-Welsh border for the long barrows and chambered tombs relative to the random points reveal different relationships with the natural environment in the whole of the border (Tables 25, 26; Figures 15, 16) and the core (Tables 27, 28; Figs 17, 18). In the case of the former, the majority of these monuments lie on the Cotswold escarpment, a location from which it is possible to enjoy panoramic vistas across the Severn Vale, the Forest of Dean and into Cymru towards the Black Mountains. These views are most effectively facilitated from the relatively gentle uplands of this landscape and so these barrows and cairns sit some distance from the estuary itself (Figure 12).

Within the core of the border the relationship with the natural environment changes as the stronger results across a range of scales are accounted for by the steeper nature of the terrain in the Black Mountains. Despite the apparently contrasting figures for the whole of the border and the core, however, the inter-relationships between the monuments and the natural environment achieve the same aims. In both instances the views afforded from these locations sit well with Fleming's (1999, p.124) interpretation of these monuments affording vistas over 'points of transition' along routeways and Cummings *et al.* (2002, p.67) descriptions of 'places in-between other places, between river valleys and between mountain escarpments' in this case from north-west facing slopes overlooking the valleys of the Severn, Wye and Usk (Figure 14, A, B). Elsewhere, the remaining westerly examples are isolated and these monuments are almost entirely absent from the east of the region. Notably, similar landscapes further north, for example the north-west facing uplands adjacent to the Upper Severn are not known to have been marked in this way (Figure 14, C). From a temporal perspective, whilst some of these monuments appear to have been in use for relatively short periods, for example, Hazleton North, Gloucestershire (Saville, 1990), the work of Barrett (1988) at Gwernvale long barrow in the Black Mountains suggests that in other instances they represent the final phase of construction at locations with prior significance indicating that, at least in some cases, these populations were able to maintain these practices on an inter-generational basis. The extent of burial mound construction in the south and south-east of the border contrasts powerfully with their near absence in the east of the region.

Causewayed enclosures



Figure 19 Crickley Hill (Gloucestershire) causewayed enclosure and the extensive views west towards the Forest of Dean and Cymru.

In the centuries after 3700 BC large earthwork enclosures were built across large parts of Britain. The individual monuments that fall within the broad category of causewayed enclosures vary considerably in size, but they share a common morphology of a series of pits, or ditches, separated by narrow causeways with the resulting spoil being used to construct an internal rampart or wall. They occur in a variety of contexts including hilltop or promontory locations, on hillslopes and in valley floors. Environmental evidence suggests that many appear to have been built in lightly wooded locations or clearings. Historically, their function has divided archaeological opinion, but more recent studies have settled on their role as either temporary or permanent settlements with some form of ceremonial function (Whittle *et al.*, 2011).

	Area Km^2	No of causewayed enclosures	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of causewayed enclosures
England total	131177	85	86%	85%
Cymru total	20905	15	14%	15%
TOTAL	152082	100		
England outside study area	117665	73	77%	73%
Cymru outside study area	11900	9	8%	9%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	17	15%	17%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	8	54%	47%
Gloucestershire	3353	8	15%	47%
Anglo-Welsh border minus Gloucestershire	19161	9	85%	53%

Table 29 Distribution statistics for total of scheduled causewayed enclosures derived from the National Heritage Lists for Cymru and England

Summary of Table 29. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 17 scheduled causewayed enclosures, or 17 per cent of the total number of the scheduled monuments in England and Cymru. Their distribution within the study area is far from even however, with 47 per cent of causewayed enclosures occurring

in Gloucestershire in the south-east that accounts for only 15 per cent of the total area of the Anglo-Welsh border.

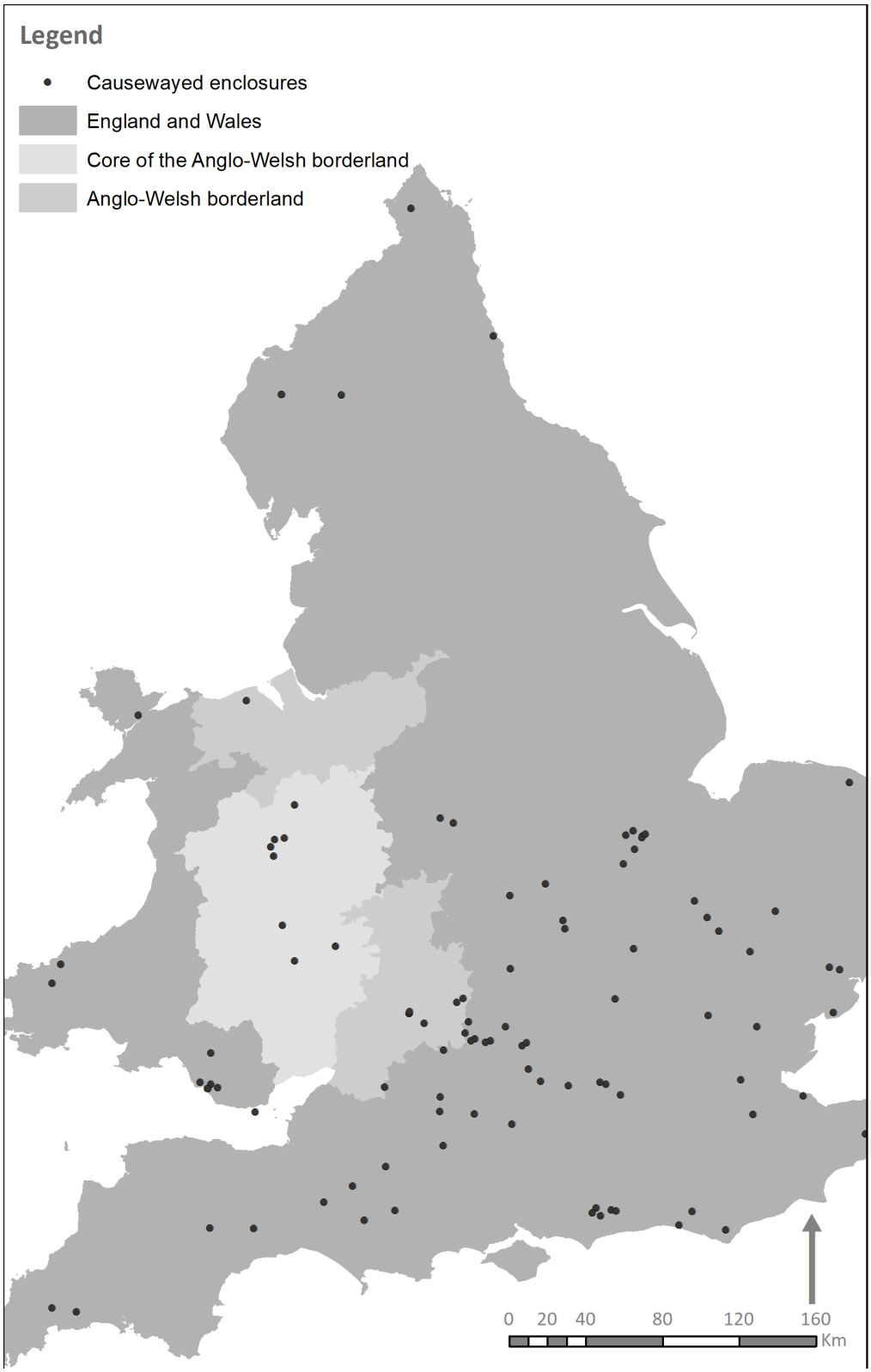


Figure 20 National distribution of causewayed enclosures in Cymru and England

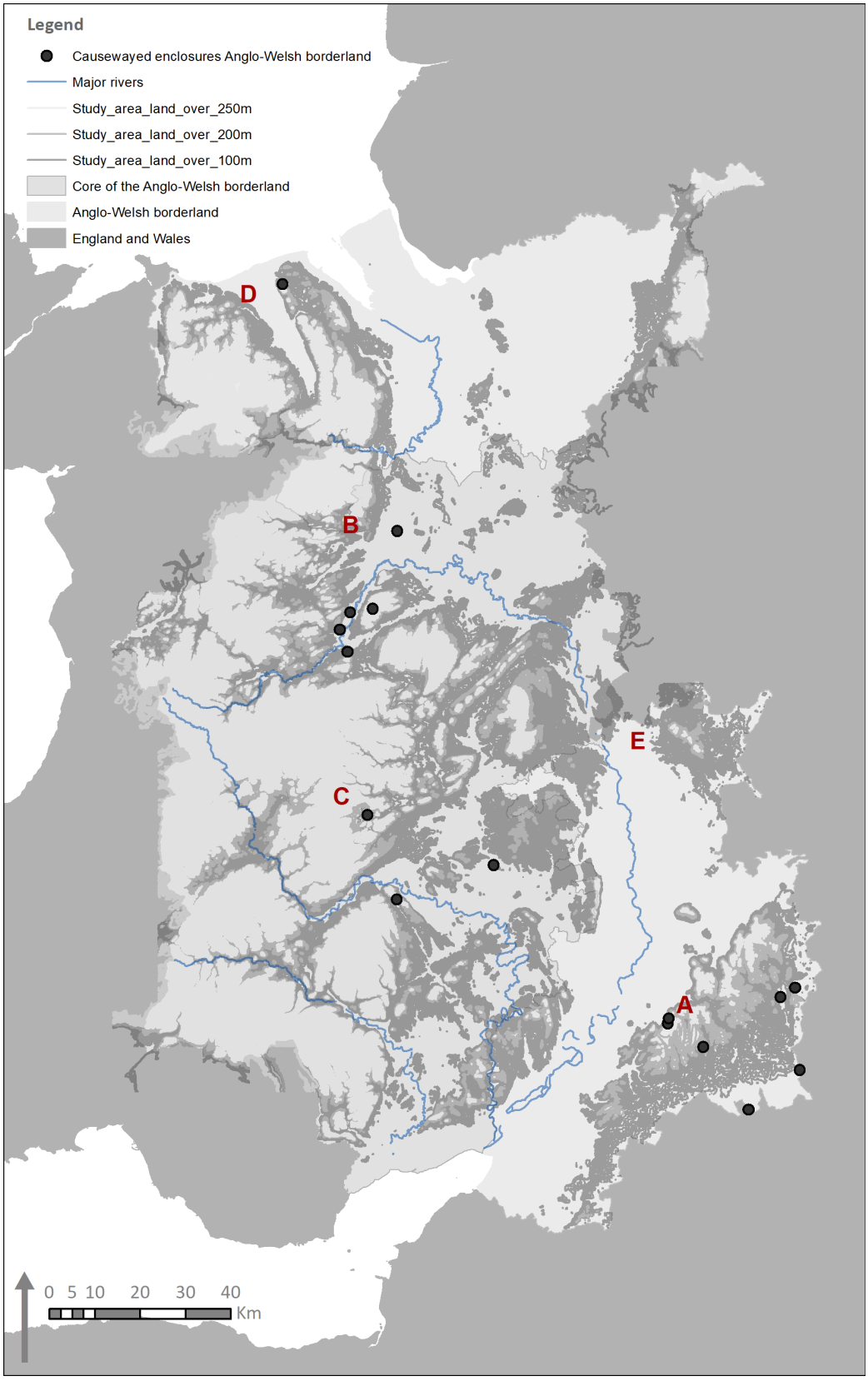


Figure 21 Topographic distribution of causewayed enclosures in the Anglo-Welsh border

The Anglo-Welsh border contains 17 scheduled causewayed enclosures, or 17 per cent of the combined national distributions for Cymru and England (Table 29). As with long barrows and chambered tombs a significant clustering of these monuments occurs in Gloucestershire with 8 instances, or 47 per cent, of causewayed enclosures in the border being located in this south-easterly county (Figures 20, 21, A). Further examples found elsewhere however include those in the Upper Severn valley (Figure 21, B), the Walton Basin at Old Radnor (Figure 21, C) and in the northern-most part of the study area to the west of the Dee estuary (Figure 21, D).

The causewayed enclosures of the Anglo-Welsh border include sites of national importance, for example, those at The Peak and Crickley Hill (Figure 19), both in Gloucestershire lying between the Severn Vale and the uplands of the Cotswolds (Darvill *et al.*, 2011; Dixon, 1972). At the latter site, long-term excavations revealed a complex construction sequence beginning in 3600 BC with a simple site boundary evolving into a fortified village by c.3550 BC within which discrete areas were set aside for domestic structures, flint-working, ritual and other activities.

In common with their contemporary burial monuments the causewayed enclosures of the Anglo-Welsh border also follow patterns of co-location with transitional environments offering access to a range of resources as previously noted by Barker and Webley (1978) in their seminal work in central southern England. Certainly, there is evidence for commonality in the location of the burial mounds and causewayed enclosures on the Cotswold escarpment (Figures 14, A, 21, A), but it is also possible to discern patterns of contrast where the causewayed enclosures drive further north into the centre and west of the region (Figure 21, B, C, D).

Major rivers	Causewayed enclosures	Random points
< 0.5 km	0	1
1 km	2	1
3 km	4	2
5 km	6	6
> 5 km	17	17

Table 30 Relationship of causewayed enclosures vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh border

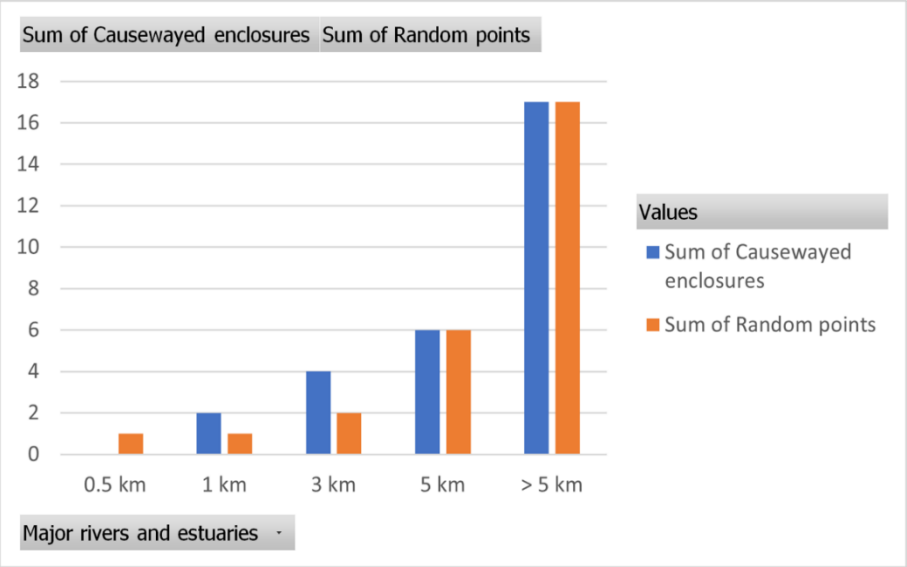


Figure 22 Bar chart of causewayed enclosures vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh border

Rivers	Causewayed enclosures	Random points
< 0.5 km	0	3
1 km	3	4
3 km	10	11
5 km	15	15
> 5 km	17	17

Table 31 Relationship of causewayed enclosures vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

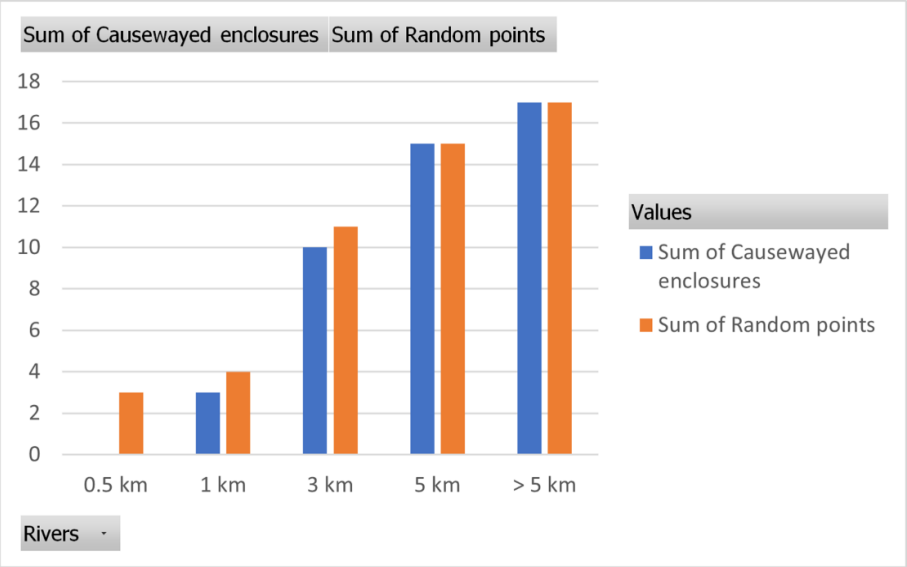


Figure 23 Bar chart of causewayed enclosures vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

The figures for the causewayed enclosures relative to the random points reveal that these monuments share an association with the region's major rivers and estuaries (Table 30;

Figure 22) whilst the topographic distribution map (Figure 21) shows that they are also closely associated with the liminal zones where the river valleys to the east meet the westerly uplands. In the case of the remainder of the rivers in the region whilst a high level of co-location is evident the figures relative to the random points are not indicative of a significant relationship suggesting that other factors are at play (Table 31; Figure 23).

Further patterns of continuity are evident elsewhere in the region through the absence of causewayed enclosures (Barber, 2007). Once again, running north-south through the river valleys in the east of the study area there is little remaining evidence for such projects suggesting that the communities in this part of the region were unable or unwilling to commit to the construction of these monuments and the forms of cultural and/or ritual practice associated with them (Figure 21, E).



Figure 24 Distribution of Neolithic monuments for the period 3800 – 3300 BC against contemporary pottery types (From Darvill 2010: Figure 33).

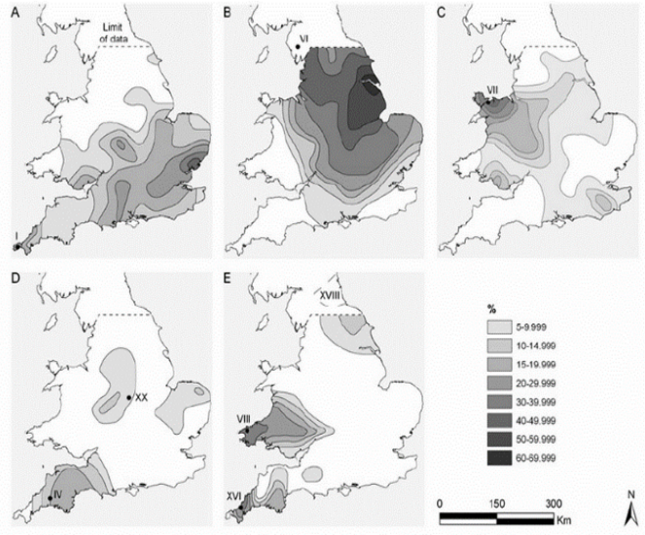


Figure 25 Distribution of stone axes in England and Cymru (Darvill, 2010, Fig 47).

Evidence from earlier Neolithic material culture distributions further serves to reinforce the liminal character of the Anglo-Welsh borderland and complement the observable patterns of monumentality. Darvill's (2010) work on the distribution of contemporary pottery groups

places the Cotswolds at a complex mid-point, at a location where the farthest extents of the Western, South-western and Southern Decorated Ware distributions meet (Figure 24). Similarly, Darvill's (ibid) summary of the work carried out on stone axe distributions echoes these patterns with the Anglo-Welsh border variously forming the furthest extent, or core, of types IV, VI, VII, VIII and XX (Figure 25).

The Walton Basin in the earlier Neolithic

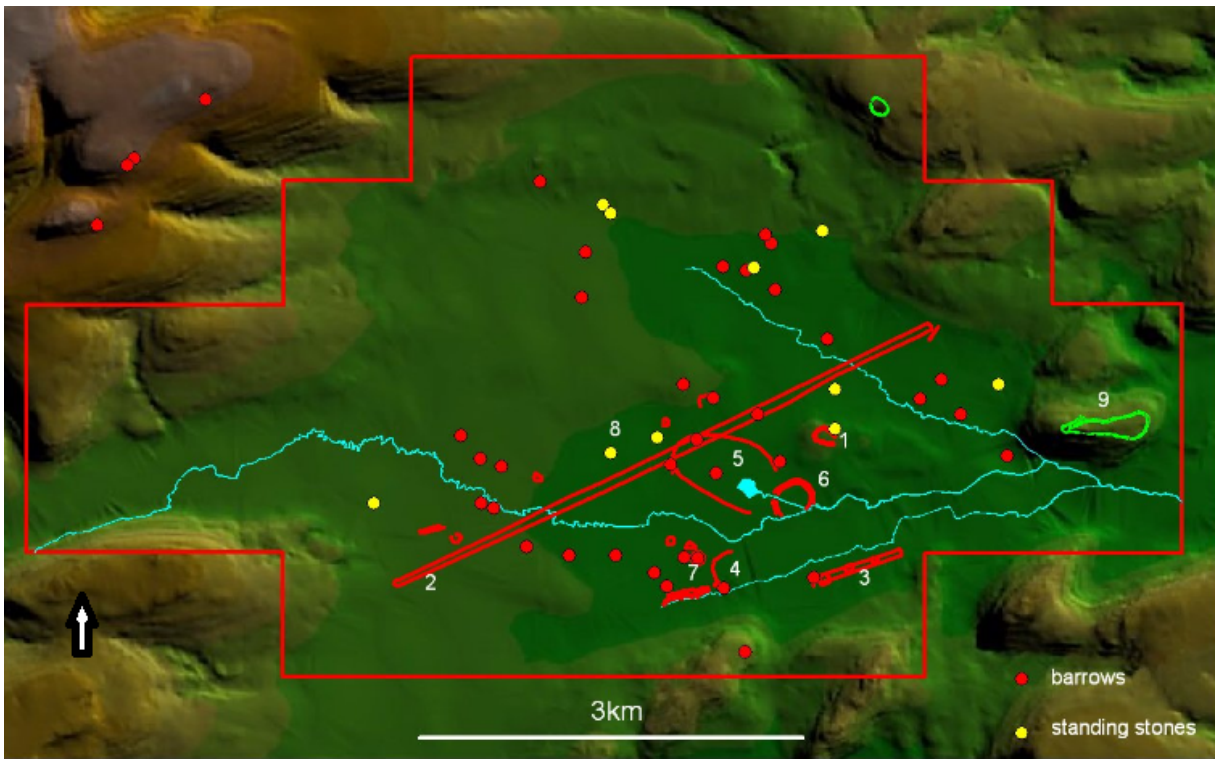


Figure 26 CPAT's survey results of the Neolithic monuments in the Walton Basin (Jones, 2014, fig. 9) 1. Womaston causewayed enclosure, 2 Hindwell cursus, 3 Walton Green cursus, 4 Walton palisaded enclosure, 5 Hindwell palisaded enclosure, 6 Hindwell double-palisaded enclosure, 7 Walton Court Farm ring-ditch, 8 Four Stones stone circle

Of particular note is the scale of earlier Neolithic monumentality undertaken in the Walton Basin (Figures 21,C, 26). The Womaston causewayed enclosure overlooks this natural amphitheatre in the core of the region at the interface between the westerly uplands and lowlands to the east. Dated to c. 3660 – 3340 BC (Jones, 2014, p. 11) and extending to 180m x 130m it sits alongside the Hindwell and Walton Green cursus' with the former being perhaps the second-longest known example of this form of monument in Britain (ibid.). The scale of the earlier Neolithic monumentality undertaken in and around the Walton Basin, at the intersection of the uplands and lowlands in the centre of the borderland through which

the Summergill and Hindwell brooks run, makes this site one of national significance (Britnell and Jones, 2012).

4.3.2 Monumentality in the later Neolithic



Figure 27 Mitchell's Fold stone circle, Stapeley Hill (Shropshire) affords panoramic views across the Shropshire Hills to the east and the Vale of Montgomery (Montgomeryshire) in the west (here looking south to Corndon Hill).

The archaeological record for the later Neolithic (c.3400 – 2100 BC) in the British Isles marks this period out as one of change and potential crisis. Changes in monument construction and material culture indicate the advent of new regional developments that often owed little to earlier community-centred traditions such as collective tomb building. Emerging forms of evidence for social ranking, new forms of pottery decoration, rock-art and large-scale ceremonial activity combine to paint a picture of significant social transformation. Within the Anglo-Welsh border these processes find expression through, for example, the deliberate blocking-up of the burial chambers at Gwernvale, Powys and Nympsfield and Notgrove in the

Gloucestershire Cotswolds and a wider move towards single or double inhumations (Darvill 2010, p.131).

	Area Km^2	No of stone circles	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of stone circles
England total	131177	143	86%	76%
Cymru total	20905	44	14%	24%
TOTAL	152082	187		
England outside study area	117665	141	77%	75%
Cymru outside study area	11900	19	8%	10%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	27	15%	14%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	24	54%	89%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9004	25	40%	93%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	2	60%	7%

Table 32 Distribution statistics for scheduled stone circles in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 32. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 27 scheduled stone circles. This total represents 14 per cent of this monument type in Cymru and England. Within the borderland, as with earlier monument types, this distribution is far from even with 89 per cent of these monuments lying in the core of the border that represents 54 per cent of the total area and 93 per cent in the west of the border which accounts for 40 per cent of its area. The density of stone circles is much lower in the east where the figures are 7 and 60 per cent, respectively.

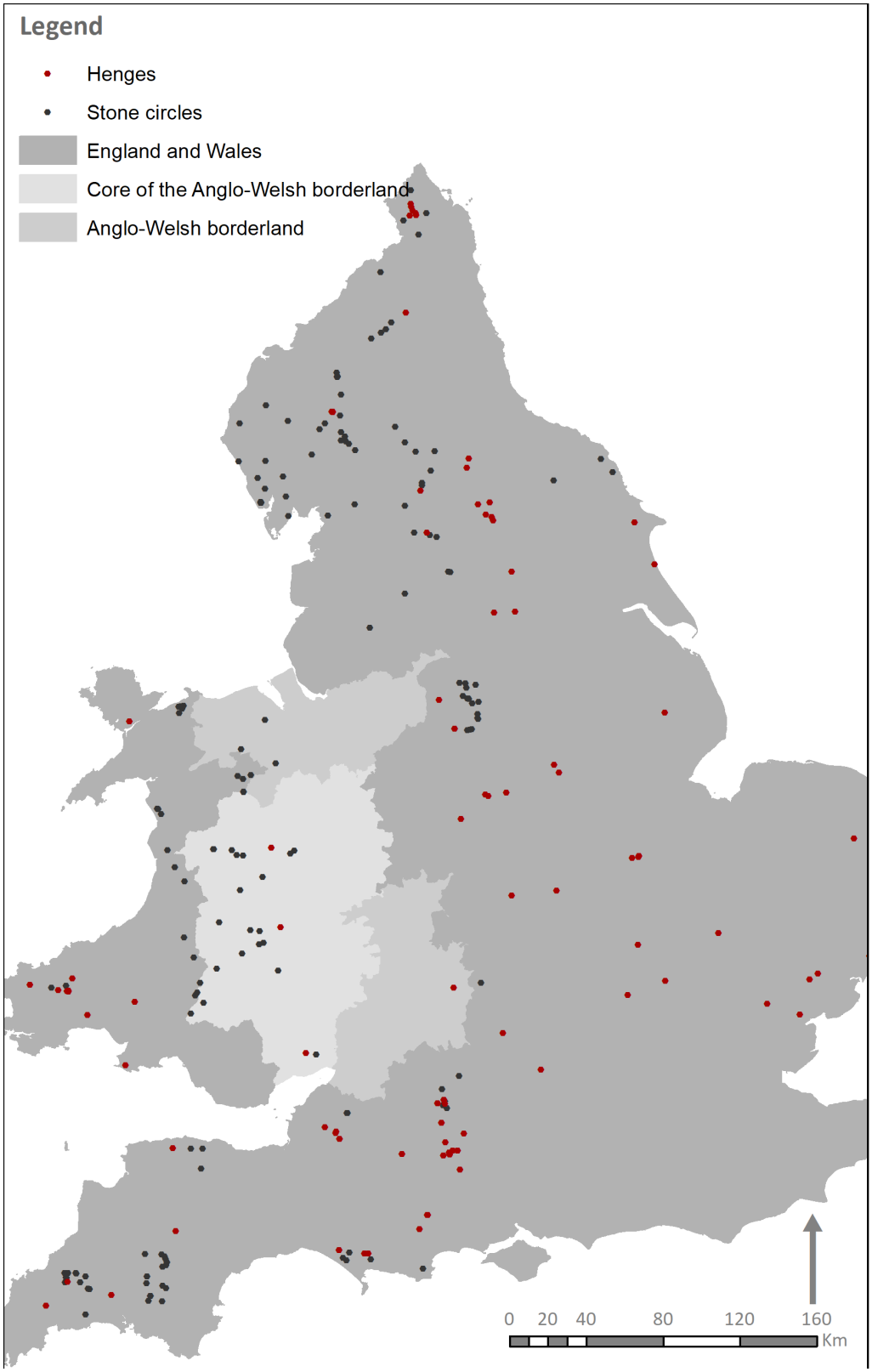


Figure 28 National distribution of henges and stone circles in Cymru and England

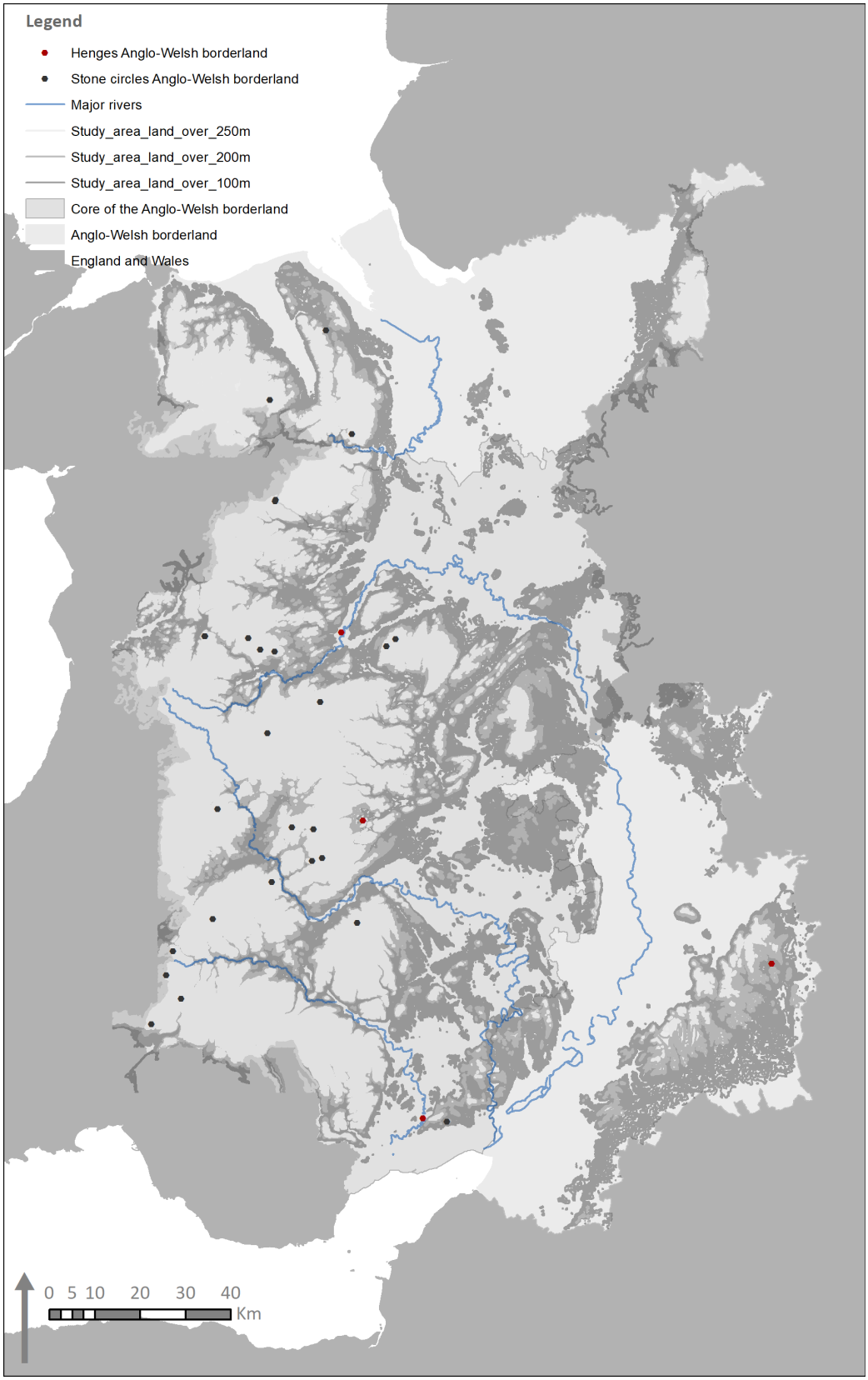


Figure 29 Topographic distribution of henges and stone circles in the Anglo-Welsh border

In addition to the closing up of earlier monuments new circular structures appear composed of combinations of earthen banks and ditches, timber posts and standing stones. Loosely categorised by archaeologists into henges, ring ditches and stone circles these structures vary significantly in their form and scale across the British Isles. Gibson's (2005, 2004) work on the scale and chronology of timber circles suggests that the earliest examples were relatively modest structures, that they became much larger c.2500 BC and then diminished in size during the second millennium BC. Bradley (2007, p. 122) notes that whilst relatively little is known of the origins and development of stone circles 'to a limited extent they may have followed a similar pattern' and that 'since stone structures often replaced those of timber, it is not surprising that these trends should overlap.' Bradley (ibid.) goes further to place stone circles within their often complex landscape settings citing the example of Stanton Drew, Somerset where two of the three circles are approached by short alignments of paired stones and where geophysical survey results confirm the presence of earlier timber structures (David *et al.*, 2004). Whilst these monuments are to be found in those landscapes that lie adjacent to the Anglo-Welsh border their presence within the region itself is highly variable with their distributions marking a significant departure from those of their earlier Neolithic predecessors (Figures 28, 29).

Construction of the long barrows and chambered tombs of the earlier Neolithic that distinguished the south-east of the border in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds and the west of the Black Mountains in Cymru ceases, whilst a limited number of henges are typically constructed on the main riverine routes through the border on, or close to, the liminal interface between the lowlands to the east and the westerly uplands (Cummings, 2019; Richards, 1996) (Figure 29).

Instead, it is the spread of stone circles that comes to characterise the Anglo-Welsh border in the later Neolithic (Table 32). The borderland contains 27 of the scheduled stone circles in Cymru and England which represent 14 per cent of the national totals lying within 15 per cent of the combined area of both countries. These figures, however, mask a stark contrast across this landscape. 24, or 13 per cent of these monuments lie within the area defined as the core of the border where the westerly uplands meet the lowlands to the east with the figures for the west and east of the border providing the sharpest contrast (25 or 93 per cent

of stone circles with 40 per cent of the total area and 2 or 7 per cent within 60 per cent of the total area, respectively).

Major rivers and estuaries	Stone circles (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	1	1
1 km	1	3
3 km	4	6
5 km	7	12
> 5 km	27	27

Table 33 Relationship of stone circles vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

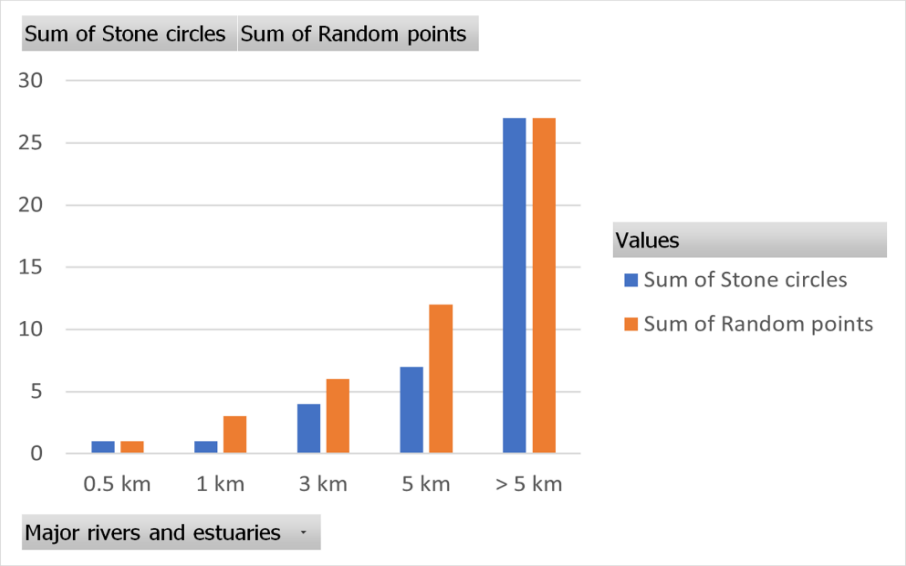


Figure 30 Bar chart of stone circles vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Stone circles	Random points
< 0.5 km	0	4
1 km	0	5
3 km	9	20
5 km	18	22
➢ 5 km	27	27

Table 34 Relationship of stone circles vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

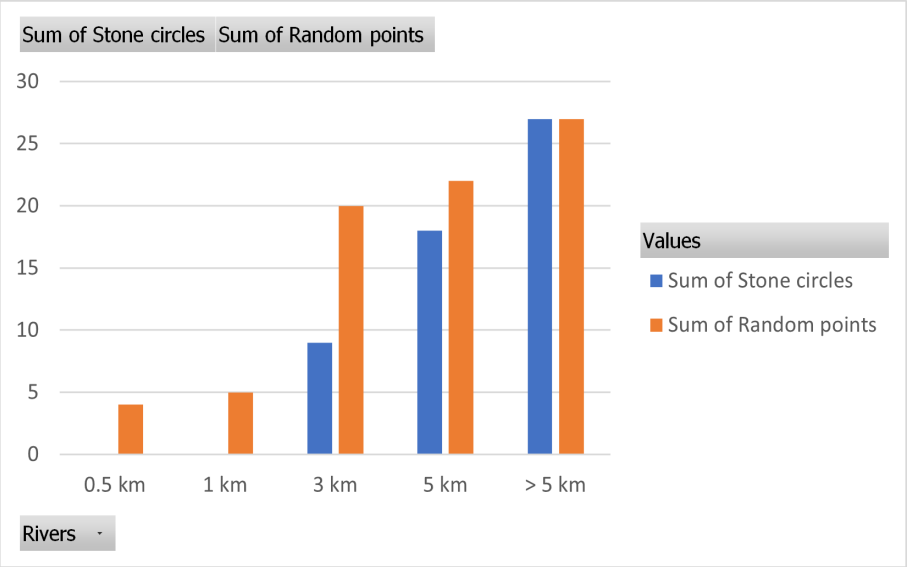


Figure 31 Bar chart of stone circles vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Whilst there is no significant relationship between the stone circles and the riverine routes through the landscape relative to the random points (Tables 33,34; Figures 30, 31) it is possible to discern a pattern of location at the edge of uplands facilitating views across river valleys albeit at some distance from these transitional landscapes (Figure 29). Additionally, continuing earlier contrasting traditions, the north-south corridor to the east of the border, in common with the earlier Neolithic, remains devoid of significant levels of monumentality (Figure 29).

Once again, the Walton Basin (Figure 26) is marked out as a landscape of significance through a series of major enclosures the most notable of which, the Walton Court ring ditch, is almost 100 meters wide, dimensions that are comparable to those of the first phase of Stonehenge (Jones, 2014, p. 11).

In summary, macro-scale later Neolithic patterns of monumentality emphasise the contrasting cultural traditions of the westerly uplands and the river valleys to the east, through the presence or absence of classic monumental forms. The core of the border continues to be marked out as a potential zone where communities come together, either through the presence of the limited number of henges in the region, or through the large-scale construction practices undertaken in the Walton Basin (Figures 26, 29).

4.3.3 Discussion

The landscape archaeology of the Anglo-Welsh border in the Neolithic is characterised by long-term and large-scale processes of continuity and change and of the ongoing role of transition in defining this landscape. Continuity finds expression through evidence for populations across this borderland thinking about their world on the macro-scale centred on the overlooking (albeit from some distance) of the main riverine routes through this landscape and the intersection of the uplands and lowlands at its core; of evolving patterns of active participation in monumentality, but also through the contrasting cultural and ritual beliefs of other communities living in the north-south corridor to the east who, for whatever reason, eschewed these practices. Evidence for spatial and temporal change emerges through evolving patterns in monument construction, primarily in the south and west of the border where collective tomb building in the Cotswolds and Black Mountains during the earlier Neolithic gave way to new practices of circular monument construction from the west in the later part of the period. At the centre of the Anglo-Welsh border lies the north-south zone of transition between the westerly uplands and lowlands to the east that both defines the edge of, for example, stone circle construction, but also acts as a fulcrum for the construction of causewayed enclosures, cursus' and henge monuments all of which provide evidence for large-scale community building projects facilitating the coming together of groups of people, potentially over significant distances in this topographically transitional landscape.

Certainly, it could be possible to argue that these patterns may be the result of differing rates of fieldwork or academic engagement and that further large-scale aerial photographic or LiDAR surveys particularly in the east of the border may change our understanding of this landscape during the Neolithic, or that explorations of known later sites may reveal Neolithic origins (Ray 2007). In writing his summary for the evidence in the English West Midlands, however, Garwood (2011, p. 44) concludes that the extent of recent surveys such as the Wroxeter Hinterland Project, the Mid-Shropshire Wetlands Survey and developer-funded projects such as the M6 Toll route (e.g. Gaffney and White, 2007; Leah *et al.*, 1998) suggests that the relative dearth of evidence from the east of the border is indeed real and needs to

be accounted for in some way, possibly through marked differences in the Mesolithic – Neolithic transition across the region.

In summary, the evidence from across the Neolithic speaks of the presence of distinct patterns of monumentality undertaken across the borderland with communities in the south-east and west embracing the opportunities for undertaking these practices and those in the east rejecting them. The Walton Basin in the core of the border, at a distinct point of intersection between the uplands and lowlands and riverine routes through the landscape, is marked out by the presence of some of the most ambitious known acts of Neolithic monumentality within the British Isles.

4.3.4 Future work

The following programmes of work may further our understanding of contrasting patterns of Neolithic monumentality in the Anglo-Welsh borderland and their relationships with the natural environment:

- Additional studies that build on the work carried out by landscape archaeologists, archaeo-astronomers and folklorists to extend our understanding of the land and skyscape settings of long barrows and chambered tombs
- When and where possible, to examine individual monuments to enhance our understanding of their individual biographies and to establish any evidence for use on these sites that pre-date the extant structures on them today
- Further landscape studies through, for example, the use of LiDAR in the east of the borderland to establish the extent of the absence of ‘classic’ monuments in this part of the border and additional studies to further our understanding of the contrasting traditions that may have developed in this part of the borderland
- Additional studies to expand our understanding of the inter-relationships between patterns of monumentality and the distribution of material culture
- Further surveys to explore the possibilities for further, so far unknown, monuments at the upland/lowland/riverine interfaces

- Macro-scale studies to place the region's causewayed enclosures, henges and large-scale expressions of monumentality in the Walton Basin in wider patterns of Neolithic movement across the landscape

4.4 The Anglo-Welsh borderland in the Bronze Age



Figure 32 The Shire Ditch on the Malvern Hills. Originally thought to date from the medieval period the most recent work on this boundary monument suggests later Bronze Age origins (Historic England, 2015).

Whilst the use of the term Bronze Age to describe prehistoric Britain from c.2100 – 700 BC is widely regarded as problematic (Bradley, 2007; Darvill, 2010; Garwood, 2007b) the period is nevertheless readily characterised by ongoing, wide-ranging changes in both material culture and ritual practices. Recent advances in ancient DNA techniques have revealed that these processes were the result of large-scale migrations over several centuries that resulted in the replacement of much of the existing Neolithic population and the incorporation of Britain and Ireland into wider international networks (Bradley, 2007; Olalde *et al.*, 2018). Earlier, simpler prestige goods were rejected in favour of new traditions typified by distinctive

pottery forms, or Beakers, whose distribution extends across much of Europe and the Mediterranean from Denmark in the north to North Africa in the south and Portugal in the west to Hungary in the east (Salanova, 2002). New metalworking techniques also appeared, initially copper-based and from c. 2150 in bronze, these practices exploited British tin resources in the south and west (e.g. Williams and Veslud, 2019). Over the centuries that followed bronze came to replace stone as the primary material for both tool and weapon making.

4.4.1 Monumentality in the Earlier Bronze Age

In terms of monumentality these processes of change found expression through the raising of round barrows or cairns constructed of earth or stone (Grinsell, 1990). The changes in burial rites that these structures represent mark a significant departure from earlier communal rituals, though in some cases these later monuments nevertheless appear to spatially reference their predecessors (Bradley and Fraser, 2010; Exon *et al.*, 2000). Initially relatively simple in nature these monuments evolved over time and between c. 2150 – 1850 BC their forms became more diverse incorporating both cremations and inhumations and additionally the graves of women and children. Subsequent developments between c. 1850 – 1500 BC included the development of extensive cemeteries, the widespread practice of cremation and the appearance of some of the richest grave groups in the earlier Bronze Age (Bradley, 2007, pp. 160–161). In many cases individual monuments acquired significant time-depth with the final phase of construction obscuring the remains of earlier, simpler structures (Barrett, 1994; Bradley, 2007, p. 164). The significance of temporality is further evidenced through the circulation of heirlooms and human bones that potentially served to locate individuals within wider genealogical networks. Further, the inclusion of unusual or exotic artefacts embedded these burials and monuments into long-distance trade and cultural networks (Bradley, 2007, p. 165; Johnson, 2017, p. 4). The evidence illustrates that the communities who built these monuments elected to invest significant resources in both their construction and the furnishing of the burials contained within them. Overall, their importance in furthering our understanding the relationships between people, places and things over time in the earlier Bronze Age has long been understood (Brück, 2004; Fleming, 1971; Woodward, 2000).

Whilst their form varies, round barrows and cairns represent the single-most prolific extant form of prehistoric monument in the British Isles with over five thousand scheduled examples in Cymru and England alone. Despite their almost ubiquitous presence their density varies between regions and nations with, for example, the extensive cemeteries of central southern England standing in contrast to the relatively isolated examples from north Cymru (Lynch *et al.*, 2000; Waddell, 1990). Whilst most surviving examples are located in upland settings aerial photographic studies have identified many further examples in river valleys that have been destroyed as a result of agricultural activity from prehistory to the recent past (Field, 1998). Particularly in light of the relative paucity of evidence for earlier Bronze Age settlement, the nature of the inter-relationships between individual barrows and cairns, groups and extensive cemeteries is recognised as being fundamental to furthering our understanding of the social significance of these structures in Bronze Age society and their role as expressions of status, stability and change over time (Bradley, 2012, 1984; Exon *et al.*, 2000; Garwood, 2003; Last, 2007; Owoc, 2000).

Inevitably, much of the work on the role of barrows and cairns in the landscapes of the earlier Bronze Age in the British Isles has been conducted on the extensive cemeteries of central and southern England. Whilst Woodward and Woodward's (1996) work in Wessex highlights the underlying principle of circularity in the locations of the barrows referencing the major monument complexes of the South Dorset Ridgeway, Avebury and Stonehenge, subsequent work in the region has illustrated the complexity of its landscape archaeology and the role of earlier Bronze Age barrows as markers both along long distance routeways and from within monuments themselves (Exon *et al.*, 2000; Watson, 2001). Additionally, and more specifically, Field's (1998) work further explores their relationship with liminal spaces, with transitional landscapes where changes in topography and geology that often offer access to range of resources may in turn underpin different social and economic practices. A note of caution however is found in Garwood's (2007a) analysis that these monuments should not be reduced to unchanging forms in the landscape, but that changes in both their temporal and spatial characteristics must be sought and accounted for.

Over time, the significance of round barrows and cairns waned. From the middle of the second millennium BC communities instead elected to invest their resources in the

organisation and 'bordering' of entire landscapes. Additionally, the deposition of metal objects moved away from mortuary contexts to liminal spaces such as bogs and rivers. Such developments led Bradley to conclude that perhaps social organisation in the later Bronze Age was less stable and that it became a world where genealogy as a source of power held less sway (Bradley, 2007, pp. 186, 188, 233).

4.4.2 Early Bronze Age monumentality in the Anglo-Welsh border

	Area Km^2	No of small groups of barrows and cairns (1-3)	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of small groups of barrows and cairns (1-3)
England total	131177	3431	86%	79%
Cymru total	20905	897	14%	21%
TOTAL	152082	4328		
England outside study area	117665	3015	77%	70%
Cymru outside study area	11900	430	8%	10%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	882	15%	20%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				

Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	528	54%	60%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9004	467	40%	53%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	415	60%	47%

Table 35 Distribution statistics for scheduled small groups of barrows and cairns in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 35 Small groups of barrows and cairns. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 882 scheduled individual barrows and cairns and small groups of up to three monuments, or 20 per cent of the national totals for Cymru and England. This landscape accounts for 15 per cent of the total area of both countries and so the Anglo-Welsh border is more densely monumentalised in the earlier Bronze Age with barrows and cairns than the average for England and Cymru. Within the border itself, the core is relatively more highly monumentalised with 60 per cent of barrows lying within 54 per cent of the area, with the west (at 53 per cent of monuments in 40 per cent of the border) having a greater density of monuments than the east (47 per cent and 60 per cent respectively).

	Area Km^2	No of groups (4-7)	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of groups (4-7)
England total	131177	206	86%	80%
Cymru total	20905	50	14%	20%
TOTAL	152082	256		
England outside study area	117665	196	77%	77%
Cymru outside study area	11900	27	8%	11%

Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	33	15%	13%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	23	54%	70%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9004	23	40%	70%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	10	60%	30%

Table 36 Distribution statistics for scheduled groups of barrows and cairns in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 36. Groups of barrows and cairns. The Anglo-Welsh border contain 33 of the scheduled Early Bronze Age groups of round barrows and cairns (defined as between 4 – 7 individual monuments). This category of monument occurs less than the national averages for Cymru and England with 13 per cent of these monuments lying in 15 per cent of the area of both countries. Within the border itself the core it more heavily monumentalised than the national average with 70 per cent of the monuments lying in 54 per cent of the area, whilst a distinction between the west and east is evident with the west having 70 per cent of the monuments in 40 per cent of the area and the east containing just 30 per cent in 60 per cent of the area.

	Area Km^2	No of cemeteries (greater than 8)	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of cemeteries (greater than 8)
England total	131177	83	86%	89%
Cymru total	20905	10	14%	11%
TOTAL	152082	93		
England outside study area	117665	82	77%	88%
Cymru outside study area	11900	7	8%	8%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	4	15%	4%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	3	54%	75%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9004	3	40%	75%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	1	60%	25%

Table 37 Distribution statistics for scheduled cemeteries of barrows and cairns in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 37. Cemeteries of barrows and cairns. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 4 scheduled barrow and cairn cemeteries (classified as groupings comprising 8 or more individual monuments). This category of monument occurs less than the national averages for Cymru and England with 4 per cent of these monuments lying in 15 per cent of the area of both countries. Within the border itself the core is more heavily monumentalised with 75 per cent of the monuments lying in 54 per cent of the area and once again the west has 75 per cent of the monuments in 40 per cent of the area in contrast to the east with 25 per cent in 60 per cent of the area.

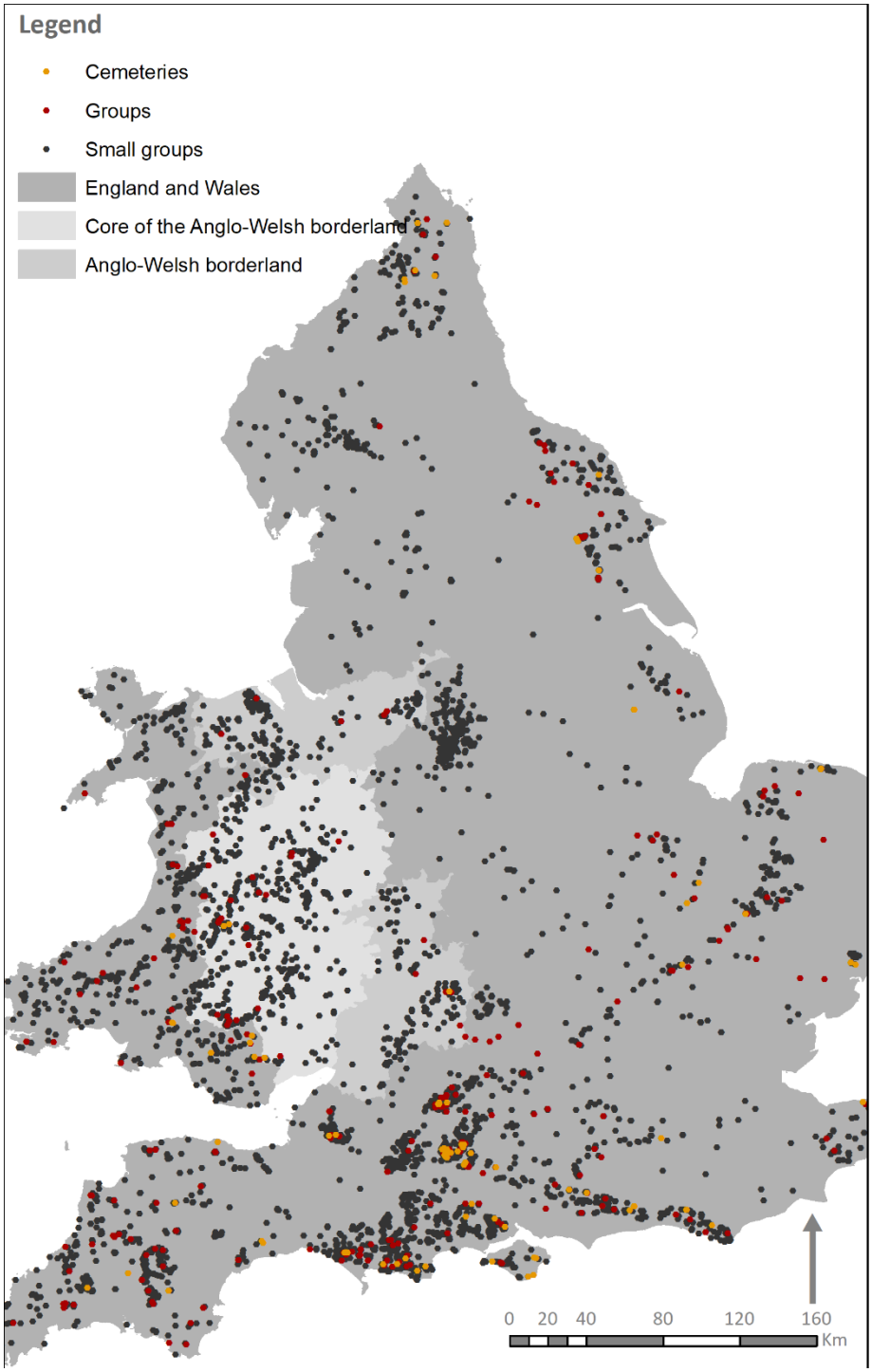


Figure 33 National distributions of Bronze Age barrows and cairns small group (1-3), group (4-7) and cemeteries (8+) monuments in England and Cymru

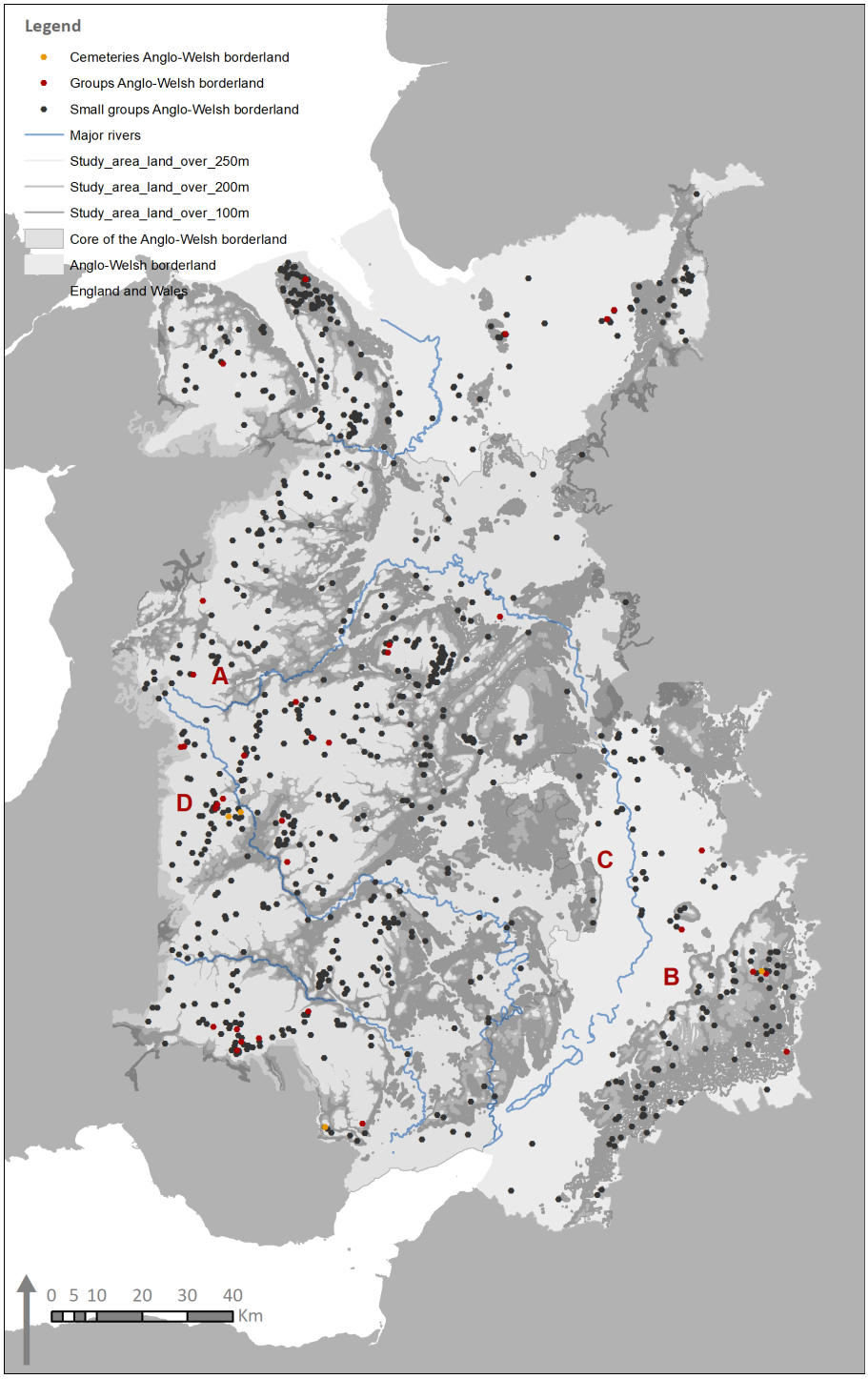


Figure 34 Topographic distribution of Bronze Age barrows and cairns (small group 1-3, group 4-7, cemeteries 8+ individual monuments)

That Bronze Age barrows and cairns occur in groupings ranging from isolated examples to extensive cemeteries of more than 30 monuments across the British Isles is well established (Lynch *et al.*, 2000; Woodward and Woodward, 1996). The utility of considering the distribution of these different classes of barrows and cairns, of their role in the expression of

permanence and succession within Bronze Age society is equally widely acknowledged (Field, 1998; Garwood, 2007a). Based on Garwood's (2007a) and Field's (1998) definitions of typical and exceptional groupings the following categories for barrows and cairns were established: small group (1-3 monuments), groups (4-7 monuments), cemeteries (8 or more monuments).

Within the context of the national averages for Cymru and England the figures for the earlier Bronze Age barrows and cairns for the whole of the Anglo-Welsh border show that rates of construction vary between small groups, groups and cemeteries. The small groups lying within the region account for 20 per cent of this category of monument against 15 per cent of the total area km^2 of both countries (Table 35). The figures for the groups show that the total drops just below the combined national average at 13 per cent (Table 36) and that this trend continues with the cemeteries accounting for just 4 per cent of the combined national total (Table 37).

Major rivers and estuaries	Small groups of barrows and cairns (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	12	35
1 km	34	62
3 km	102	168
5 km	219	288
> 5 km	882	882

Table 38 Relationship of small groups of barrows and cairns vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

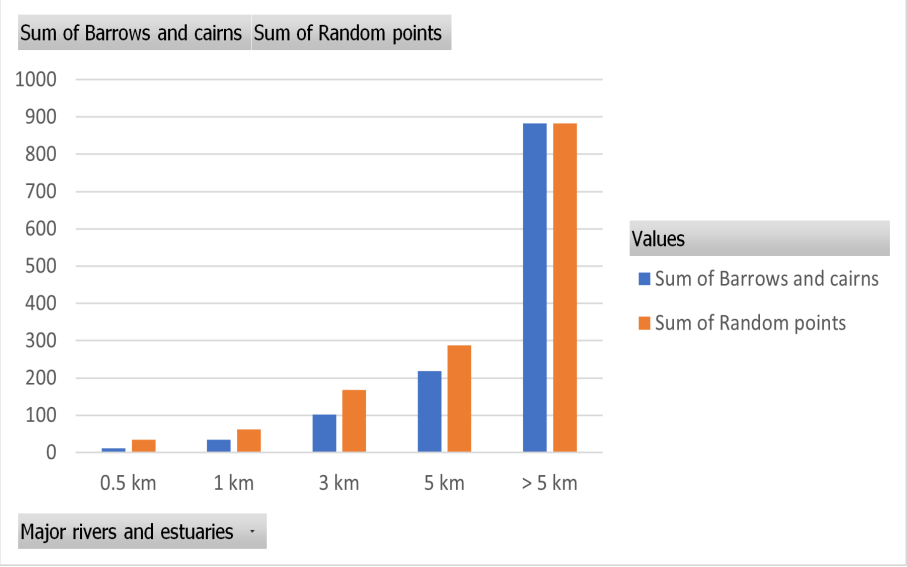


Figure 35 Bar chart of small groups of barrows and cairns vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Small groups of barrows and cairns	Random points
< 0.5 km	86	160
1 km	184	268
3 km	448	591
5 km	708	751
> 5 km	882	882

Table 39 Relationship of small groups of barrows and cairns vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

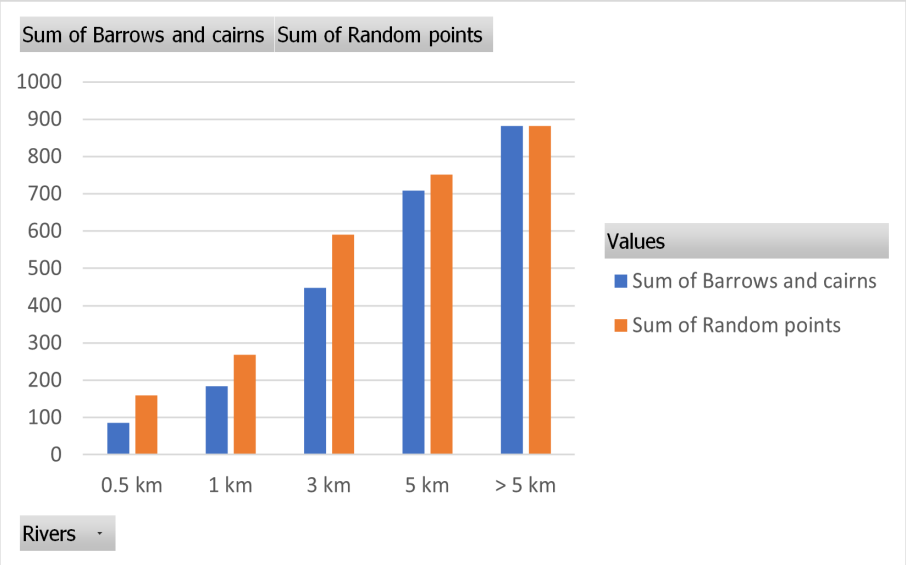


Figure 36 Bar chart of small groups of barrows and cairns vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Major rivers and estuaries	Groups of barrows and cairns (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	0	1
1 km	0	4
3 km	4	6
5 km	9	9
> 5 km	33	33

Table 40 Relationship of groups of barrows and cairns vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

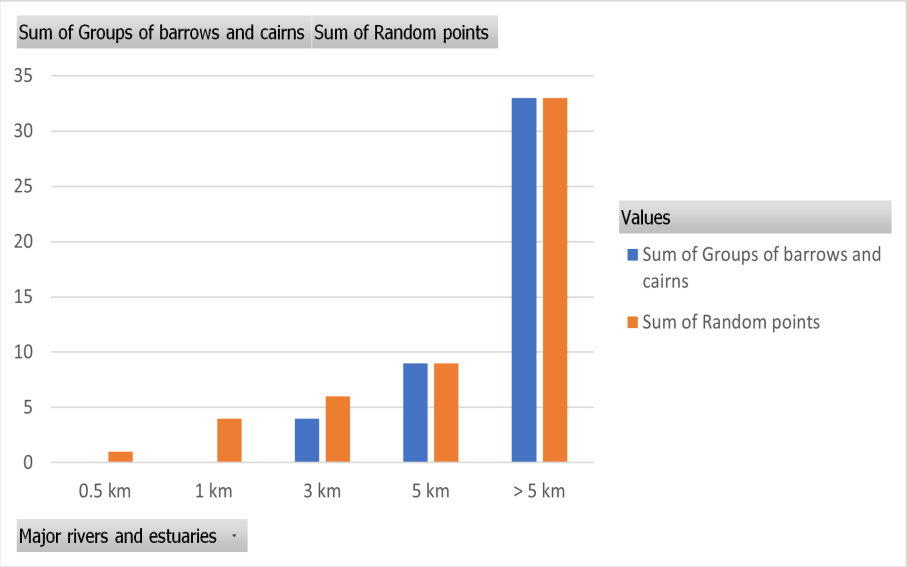


Figure 37 Bar chart of groups of barrows and cairns vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Groups of barrows and cairns (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	3	4
1 km	4	11
3 km	13	20
5 km	22	25
> 5 km	33	33

Table 41 Relationship of groups of barrows and cairns vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

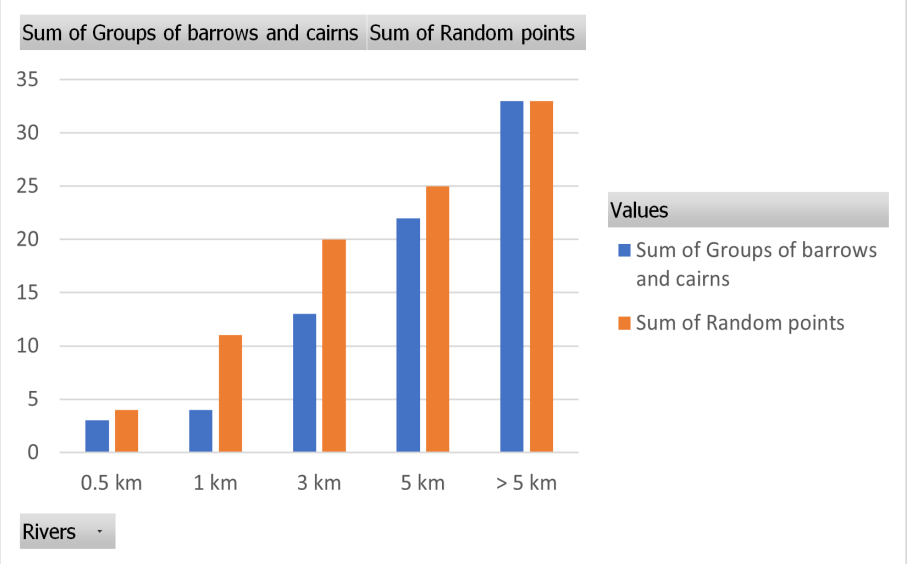


Figure 38 Bar chart of groups of barrows and cairns vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

In terms of relationships with the topography of the region as a whole and the earlier anthropogenic monuments contained within it, relative to their random points the major rivers and estuaries and rivers appear to have little direct impact on the location of small groups or groups of barrows (Tables 38, 39, 40, 41; Figures 35, 36, 37, 38). The high degree of co-location between these small groups and groups of barrows and cairns with the region's rivers more broadly is suggestive of some form of association, but the absence of any significance above the figures for the random points is suggestive of other factors potentially also influencing site location.

Major rivers and estuaries	Cemeteries of barrows and cairns (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	0	0
1 km	0	0
3 km	1	0
5 km	2	1
> 5 km	4	4

Table 42 Relationship of cemeteries of barrows and cairns vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

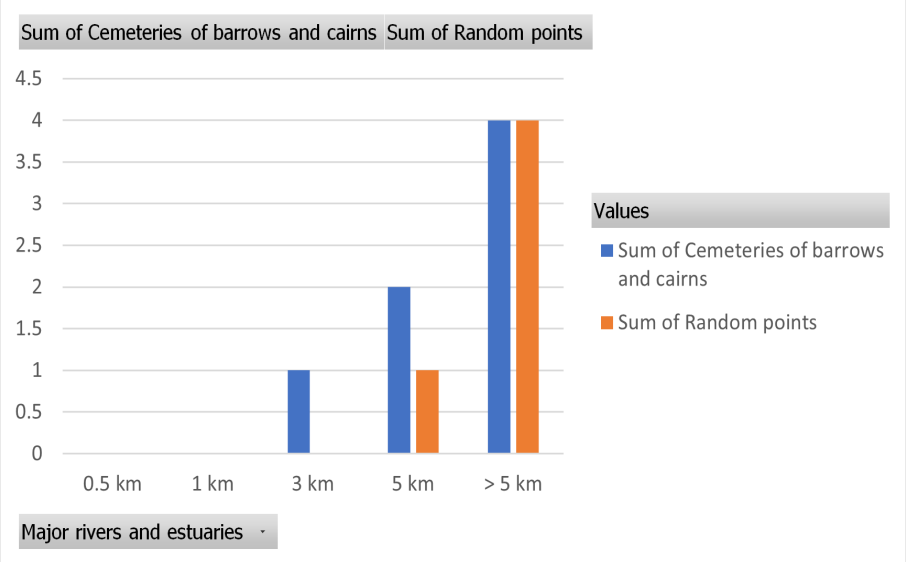


Figure 39 Bar chart of cemeteries of barrows and cairns vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Cemeteries of barrows and cairns (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	0	1
1 km	0	3
3 km	2	4
5 km	4	4
> 5 km	4	4

Table 43 Relationship of cemeteries barrows and cairns vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

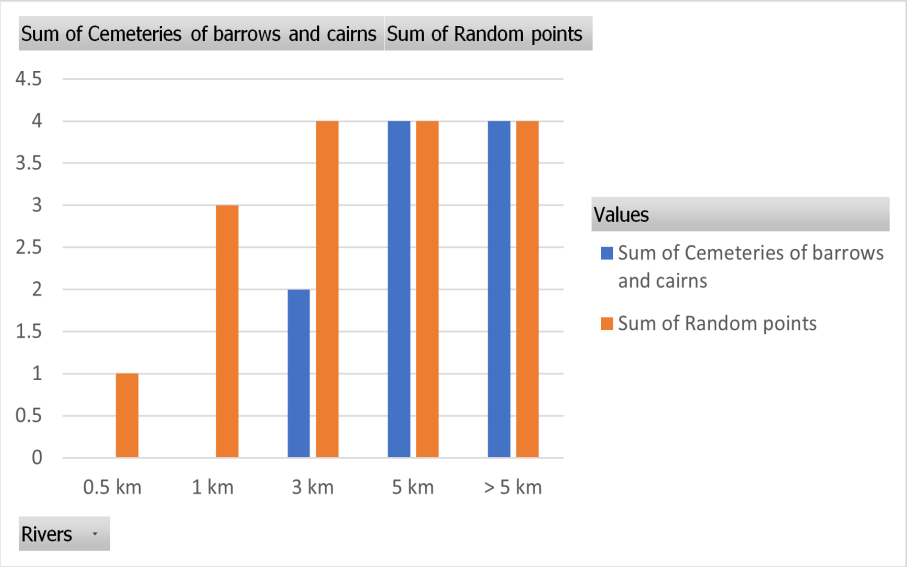


Figure 40 Bar chart of cemeteries of barrows and cairns vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

In contrast, the major rivers and estuaries do seem to exert some influence over the location of the very limited number of cemeteries in the Anglo-Welsh borderland in contrast to the rivers (Table 42, 43; Figures 39, 40) with two located within 3 km of the River Wye (Figure 34, D). The small numbers involved do, however, mean that any observations are more qualitative than quantitative.

Whilst there is little evidence to suggest any form of relationship between any of the categories of barrows and cairns and causewayed enclosures across the border (Appendix Tables 16, 22, 28; Figures 16, 22, 28) and any evidence for a correlation with henges is once again limited to the restricted number of cemeteries (Appendix Tables 18, 24, 30; Figures 18, 24, 30) there is a suggestion that stone circles may have some limited influence on the location of both small groups and groups (Appendix Tables 17, 23, 29; Figures 17, 23, 29) and

for long barrows having a similar limited degree of influence on the location of all categories of barrows and cairns (Appendix Tables 15, 21, 27; Figures 15, 21, 27).

A closer examination of these different groups within the border itself, rather than a wider national comparison, reveals that far from a unified pattern there is a distinct west-east bias evident across each type with 53 per cent of the small groups in the border lying within the west that accounts for 40 per cent of its km^2, and 70 and 75 per cent for the groups and cemeteries respectively (Tables 35, 36, 37; Figures 33, 34). Overall, the figures for patterns of barrows and cairn construction reveal that rates vary significantly both across the different categories and spatially across the region and that these figures should be accounted for in a discussion of earlier Bronze Age monumentality across the border. The results are also broadly suggestive of earlier monuments having little direct impact on the chosen locations for earlier Bronze Age barrows and cairns.

In summary, the results reveal a complex relationship with the changing topography of this landscape. The majority of small groups of barrows and cairns lie in the uplands to the west, often in locations offering views across, but not adjacent to the river valleys that intersect this part of the border (Figure 34, A). Pockets do however occur elsewhere on the Cotswold escarpment and in the Severn Valley (Figure 34, B, C). The groups and cemeteries also cluster to the west of the border though once again the Cotswolds stand as an outlier of activity in the east to provide the single example of a cemetery overlooking the Severn Valley (Figure 34, B). Additionally, the Walton Basin is once again marked out with atypically high levels of monumentality being undertaken within it and its immediate environs. Within the east of the border continuity is once again characterised by a relative absence of monumental practices.

4.4.3 Discussion

Relative to the extensive barrow cemeteries of Wessex which lie to the south and east of the study area little work has been done on the Bronze Age monuments of the Anglo-Welsh border itself. As Johnson (2017, p. 3) correctly observes 'It is easy to understand why the isolated hilltop cairns, or low standing stones barely visible above the heather, have not elicited the same level of enthusiasm from researchers.' Despite this relative paucity of

evidence studies at a range of scales have nevertheless been undertaken. Regional programmes of monument cataloguing have provided valuable bases for future research (Dunn, 1988; Grinsell, 1993; Roese, 1982; Watson, 1991) with work carried out by CPAT resulting in the creation of a comprehensive archive for much of the west of the border (Gibson, 2002; Jones, 2004; Lynch, 2003, 2002). Interpretative studies have also been undertaken typified by Mullin's (2012) work on the Anglo-Welsh border as a whole and the round barrows of Cheshire and Makepeace's (2006) exploration of these monuments south of the Wye with Garwood's (2007b, 2011) studies of the barrows of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire as part of the West Midlands Research Framework providing macro-scale insights into the east of the border. Closer studies of individual groups of barrows are typified by those in Shropshire at Bromfield (Hughes *et al.*, 1995a; Stanford, 1982), Meole Brace (Barfield and Hughes, 1997; Hughes *et al.*, 1995b) and Sharpstones Hill (Barker *et al.*, 1991) and at Holt in Worcestershire (Hunt *et al.*, 1986). The most significant of these latest analyses is Johnson's (2017) multi-scalar work on the barrows and cairns across the entirety of the border.

The results of these varying analyses together with those of the current study speak of large-scale processes of continuity and change in monument construction across the border and over time and of the ongoing influence of this topographically transitional landscape on lives lived differently in the west, south-east and east of the border.

Overall, the barrows and cairns of the Anglo-Welsh border are characterised by individual, pairs and small groups of monuments, but where evidence can be found for the creation of larger groups or cemeteries, for potentially longer lines of succession, it lies to the west and on the Cotswold escarpment in the south and east. In terms of these monuments' relationship with the natural environment they are typically placed in locations following broad national patterns, in landscapes overlooking, but not adjacent to, river valleys (Bradley, 2007) and on, or with views across distinctive upland features or 'special' hills (Mullin (2012, p. 91); a pattern noted by Field (1998) in east Powys in the west of the border where 'The greater number of barrows in the east and centre [of the county] are situated within the uplands; many on false crests or in positions overlooking lower ground, thus emphasising the importance of the valleys'. Whilst there is some evidence for the curation of earlier

monuments, of a relationship with some long barrows, chambered tombs and stone circles in the core and west of the border, it is not compelling and the results echo Johnson's (2017, p. 139) observation that other explanations for the siting of barrows and cairns must be sought and accounted for.

Once again, as was the case with the Neolithic, enduring processes of change and continuity in monumentality are evident across the border during the earlier Bronze Age. Change finds expression through the adoption and evolution of new cultural practices including different ways of disposing of and commemorating the dead and marking the land through the construction of round barrows and cairns across large parts of the border. Equally, whilst much Neolithic monument building occurs at the transitional zone where the uplands and lowlands meet, into the Early Bronze Age a contrasting pattern emerges where a macro-scale change in traditions can be distinguished running west to east, of changing cultural practices where the evidence suggests the communities to the west were both willing and able to embrace these new traditions in a way that did not occur further to the east. In summary, barrow building appears to form a significant investment in the time and resources available to the communities in the west and core of the study area.

Broad levels of continuity, in contrast, are evident through the extent of monumentality undertaken on both the Cotswold ridge overlooking the Severn estuary and within the Walton Basin and the equally relatively low levels of barrow and cairn construction in the easterly extent of the study area, a tradition that continues further east still into the Birmingham plateau and to its south. In the case of the latter Garwood (2011, p. 75) interprets the sparse evidence for such extensive linear groups as being suggestive of largely unsuccessful attempts to express political continuity through monumentality over time, with communities instead being restricted to constructing the dispersed clusters that today typify this easterly part of the border. Additionally, Garwood (ibid.) notes similarly low levels of evidence for rich graves and hoards in this part of the study area. Large, grandiose interventions in the landscape did not, it seems, form part of the cultural package in the north and centre of the east of the border, a pattern echoed in earlier Neolithic practices. Once again, however, the Cotswold ridge provides a south-easterly outlier with evidence for extensive barrow construction overlooking the Severn estuary.

With the evidence suggesting such varying approaches to monument construction in the earlier Bronze Age across the border it becomes necessary to offer up some form of explanation for these differences. Perhaps of most significance is that the distribution and density of earlier Bronze Age barrows and cairns across the Anglo-Welsh borderland is suggestive of communities adopting these new cultural practices and ways of working with new materials whilst also continuing their earlier traditions of thinking about their landscape at a range of scales. At a local level individual, pairs and groups of barrows and cairns almost certainly functioned as expressions of influence, control and rights of access in the landscape both through their location and the objects placed within them with, in some cases at least, the inclusion of heirlooms indicating an interest in time-depth and succession. At the macro scale their frequent location within transitional zones with views extending over (rather than lying adjacent to) the riverine routes that span the border expresses an awareness on the part of these communities of their varied landscape within the greater cultural networks of the period; an understanding which is further evidenced through the incorporation of prestige goods often sourced through these extensive connections. Indeed, the transitional nature of the border's landscape, offering access to pastoral and arable land as well as riverine resources for food and transport, sits well with Brück's (1999) model of 'residential mobility', of potentially temporary occupancy across the border. The distribution of barrows and cairns could readily be interpreted as a series of expressions of a sense of place based on complex and evolving networks of access, influence and control operating across a range of scales up to and including macro, regional levels. Certainly, evidence to support the assertion that barrows were more than simply monuments to commemorate the dead and that their role as markers of significant places, of routes or boundaries cannot be overlooked *(*Field, 1998; Garwood, 2007b; Last, 2007, 1998). Within the Anglo-Welsh border itself this finds expression through a phenomenon that both Mullin (2012) and Johnson (2017, p. 141) identify whereby the barrows associated with 'special' hills serve as markers for locations associated with valued resources such as stone or gold, many of which survived the stone to metal transition and through their association with vistas across the main riverine routes through the landscape more generally.

Overall, the evidence for barrow and cairn construction where it occurs in the Anglo-Welsh border suggests their complex, multi-faceted role in the lives of the communities living in its west and south-east. At once markers of local and long-distance routeways, of significant places of memoriam and resource, often imbued with expressions of time-depth and inter-connectedness, but always part of a complex, evolving multi-scalar expression of place. Equally, the lower levels of barrow and cairn construction evident elsewhere in the border, particularly in the east speak of lives lived according to different traditions. Whether through choice or necessity, the practices of these communities found expression through traditions less reliant on widespread monumentality across the landscape that may have had their genesis in similarly distinctive later Neolithic practices in this part of the region. In total, the evidence speaks of the agency of the communities of the border, of populations who selectively chose which parts of these new cultural offerings to embrace and who continued to adapt them to their own circumstances over time.

Evidence for ongoing differential cultural traditions within the border is also to be found in, for example, atypical practices in the deposition of metalwork and through an apparent widespread rejection of the traditions associated with burnt mounds (Barfield and Hodder, 1989). In both cases Mullin (2012, p. 52) and Johnson (2017, p. 25) argue that recovery regimes and levels of fieldwork indicate that these differences may be real and that they could once again be indicative of communities in the border consciously electing to embrace or reject the cultural practices of their neighbours. Additionally, Burgess (1980) considered the nature of the incorporation of metal and Beakers into the culture of the border as a 'gloss on existing institutions', that the deposition of Beakers in pits could be representative of continuity rather than change and that local metalworking practices were simply an extension of those working with stone. In each case the conclusion reached was evidence for the adoption of new technologies, but not necessarily the cultural practices more widely associated with them. Perhaps most significantly for our understanding of evolving Bronze Age society in the west, Bradley (1990, p. 139) has considered the more widely observed evidence from the rivers flowing into the Irish Sea, including the Severn and Wye, of the absence, or near absence, of recovered later Bronze Age metalwork. If such a distinction between the cultural practices of communities living alongside the rivers flowing to the west

and east within Britain and Cymru can be proven it could place the Anglo-Welsh border, and the Cotswolds in particular, at a pivotal spatial and cultural point throughout much of the Bronze Age.

Finally, looking to the later Bronze Age Johnson (2017) makes a compelling case for a consideration of the developments in this period forming and informing those in the Early Iron Age. In the case of the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh border, later Bronze Age boundary markers such as that of the Shire Ditch on the Malvern Hills (Historic England, 2015) (Figure 32), may in fact be suggestive of their continuing significance even further into the medieval period, of the biographies of some of these markers potentially extending over not just centuries, but millennia. That the character of the border in the Iron Age is defined by high densities of hillforts and defended enclosure sites is widely acknowledged (e.g. Britnell and Silvester, 2018). That it is also home to some of the earliest and most substantial examples of these types of site is also known at locations including Beeston Hill, Cheshire (Ellis, 1993) and The Breiddin, Montgomeryshire (Musson,1991). Whilst further work is required in order to clarify the earliest origins of these sites, their apparent genesis during the later Bronze Age and Early Iron Age transition is nevertheless one of the key sources of evidence to further our understanding of the societal changes taking place during this period and why the Anglo-Welsh border in particular is marked out in this way.

4.4.4 Future work

Future work on the monuments of the earlier Bronze Age in the Anglo-Welsh border could resolve a number of key issues in order to further our understanding of the period:

- Further large-scale landscape studies such as those undertaken in the Shropshire uplands would clearly provide new insights into regional scale distributions across the border. Likewise, local studies would also bring value in supporting our appreciation for more micro-scale decision making processes
- Explorations of later Iron Age sites may reveal evidence for their later Bronze Age origins and enduring continuity of settlement across the landscape at a range of scales

- Extended aerial photographic and lidar analyses would aid in our understanding of the degree of loss of sites, particularly in the river valleys to the east of the study area evidenced through Williams' (1808, p. 9) observation that the landscape around Leominster, Herefordshire was 'thickly scattered with tumuli' where only a thin spread of ring ditches are known today
- Studies based on field names, lidar data and Anglo-Saxon charters, the value of which were proven by Grinsell (1990) in the Anglo-Welsh border around the Berwyns where field names were used to fill in the gaps between upland and lowland distributions, could expand our knowledge through means not easily resolved through fieldwork alone
- As dating techniques improve, analyses of sealed contexts beneath barrows and cairns could establish both the time depth of, for example, cemeteries and the age of those that reference the earlier anthropogenic monuments of the later Neolithic answering the question whether it is the earliest barrows and cairns that exhibit this behaviour
- Similar programmes of fieldwork on known boundary markers typified by that undertaken on the Shire Ditch on the Malvern Hills has the potential to reveal much earlier origins for many of these features traditionally attributed to the medieval period
- Further fieldwork at a range of scales undertaken in the east of the study area could explore whether the barrows and cairns in this part of the region reference its earlier Neolithic monuments that themselves are less easily detectable because of their 'lighter footprint'.

4.5 The Anglo-Welsh border in the Iron Age

Whilst the term is problematic, the Iron Age in the context of the British Isles is widely acknowledged as spanning the years between c. 800 BC and the decades around the Roman invasion c. AD 43. In the zone incorporating the Anglo-Welsh border Haselgrove and Pope (2007) have additionally identified an earlier phase lasting to approximately the fourth century BC and a later Iron Age from c. 350 BC (Haselgrove, 2010, pp. 150–51). As our

understanding of the period has improved it has become clear that many of its cultural, social and economic developments were driven by processes with their origins in the later Bronze Age and that in turn developments during the Iron Age continued to exert influence well beyond the arrival of Rome in the mid-first century AD. Contemporary archaeological debates are now concerned with how material shortages in later Bronze Age prestige goods led to profound societal change, how these responses were in turn overtaken by events throughout the Iron Age, and how subsequent native responses following the Roman conquest varied over space and time (Bradley 2007).

4.5.1 Monumentality in the Iron Age



Figure 41 Old Oswestry hillfort, Shropshire. One of the most impressive group III hillforts in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland. Archive photo 1947 pre-dating much modern development adjacent to the monument and showing the relationship with Wat's Dyke running south-east-north-west (Britain from Above, 1947).

In contrast to earlier periods in prehistory the landscape archaeology of the Iron Age is characterised by extensive settlement evidence. Thousands of sites survive ranging from single household farmsteads to extensive hillforts and oppida. The distribution of these

settlements and structures is far from consistent however with significant variations in evidence over time and space. The largest of the hillforts of the central southern zone defined by Cunliffe (1982) as broadly spanning Wessex, the Cotswolds and the Anglo-Welsh border represent some of the largest and most impressive monumental remains from any period of prehistory (Figure 42).

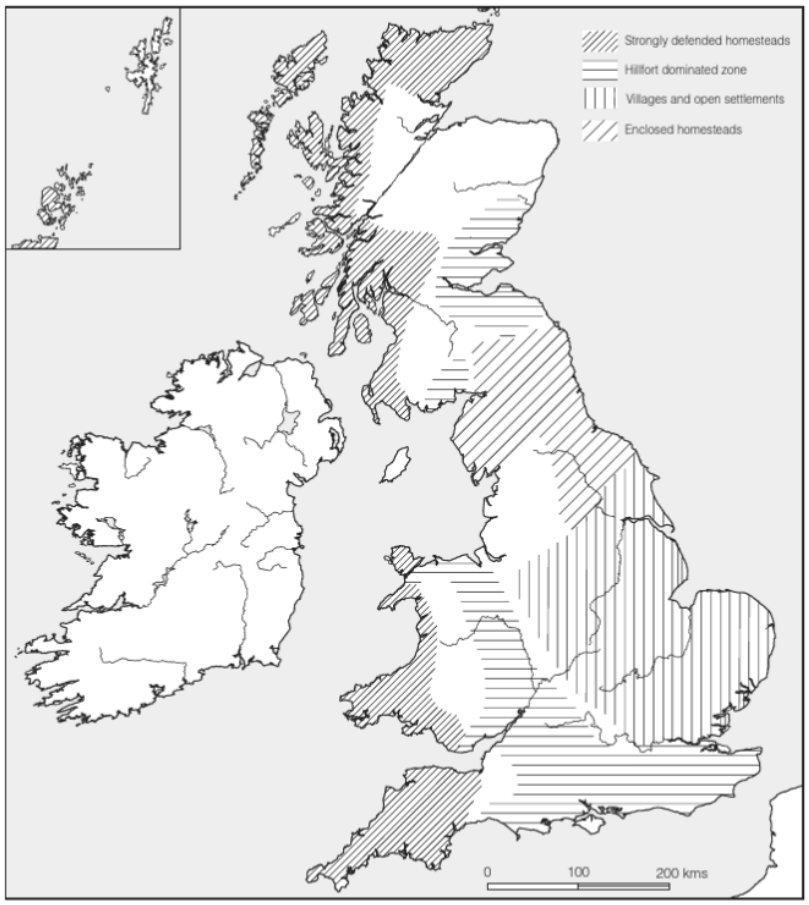


Figure 42 Cunliffe's (2005, Fig 4.3) principal socio-economic zones of Britain by the second century BC

As a single class of monument hillforts are highly variable both in their form and location ranging in size from less than 1 to more than 50 ha and lying adjacent to river valleys, on coastal promontories, or on exposed hilltops. These levels of diversity have led scholars to conclude that it is unlikely that these monuments fulfilled a single purpose though Cunliffe (2005) has proposed that assembly, settlement and storage were at least some of the functions centred on many sites in Wessex. Additionally, evidence for the presence of sling stones, of burning and of mutilated human remains points to a martial role for at least some locations. The single feature common to all hillforts however is the presence of ramparts,

ditches and in some cases elaborate entrances all of which set these sites out as separate from their surrounding landscape, as special places distinct from the world around them invested with symbolism (Harding, 2013); places 'from which to view the world' and also within which to be seen (Hamilton and Manley, 2001, p. 10).

Whilst the imposing form of many of the most substantial hillforts lends itself to a sense of permanence, of their dominance across large swathes of the Iron Age landscape, the archaeological evidence reveals that they in fact represent an evolved response to processes of enclosure, of the marking out of significant hilltop locations, whose origins may lie in the later Bronze Age or even earlier (Bradley, 2007, p. 227; Brown, 2021, p. 5). It is not until c. 400 BC that Cunliffe's (1982) 'developed' hillforts emerge in the central southern zone at a time when the archaeology indicates control over agricultural resources replaces access to imported prestige goods as an expression of elite power. Over the next three centuries until c. 100 BC these sites appear to serve as major centres facilitating a range of practical activities alongside a possible ritual component for a society comparatively isolated from external contact relative to their predecessors (Bradley, 2007).

By the end of the second century BC, whether through external pressures due to expanding Roman influence, or through internal social or economic factors, the system supporting these sites in the south and east collapsed with lowland oppida replacing much of their functionality. These processes of abandonment were spatially highly variable however, with evidence for ongoing ritual activity, conflict and/or sporadic occupation at some locations continuing into the Romano-British period including in the Anglo-Welsh borderland (Brown, 2021; Haselgrove and Pope, 2007).

Unsurprisingly, these distinctive late prehistoric monuments have been subject to extensive programmes of landscape analysis and excavation dating back to the Wheelers' early work at Maiden Castle (Wheeler, 1943). Recent examples include Driver's (2007) work on the hillforts of Cardiganshire, Murphy's (2018) study of the sites on the Atlantic coast and Britnell and Sylvester's (2018) analysis of the Anglo-Welsh border. The most extensive study to date from both a landscape and excavation perspective continues to be Cunliffe's (1986, 2000) work on

the site of Danebury, Hampshire which itself sits within his wider study of the hillforts of the central southern zone (Cunliffe, 1982).

Hillforts continue to attract significant scholarly attention typified by Harding's (2013) and Brown's (2021) macro-scale syntheses and the Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland (Lock and Ralston, 2022), a major mapping project undertaken by the universities of Edinburgh, Oxford and University College, Cork incorporating a major 'citizen science' component aimed at encouraging wider public participation in future hillfort studies. Given the extent and depth of the work undertaken by the latter project and the ease of access to its data via its online portal under a Creative Commons license (https://hillforts.arch.ox.ac.uk) it is the output for this research that forms the basis for the Iron Age section of this study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland.

4.5.2 Iron Age monumentality in the Anglo-Welsh border

	Area Km^2	No of hillforts	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage hillforts
England total	131177	1201	86%	63%
Cymru total	20905	689	14%	36%
TOTAL	152082			
England outside study area	117665	1007	77%	53%
Cymru outside study area	11900	478	8%	25%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	405	15%	21%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				

Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	277	54%	68%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9003	211	40%	52%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	194	60%	48%

Table 44 Distribution statistics for hillforts derived from the Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland (Lock and Ralston 2017)

Summary of Table 44. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 405 hillforts, or 21 per cent of the combined national total for Cymru and England. This landscape accounts for 15 per cent of the area for both countries and so the Anglo-Welsh border is shown to be more heavily monumentalised in the Iron Age than the overall average for Cymru and England. Within the borderland itself the core is more heavily monumentalised with 68 per cent of the monuments occurring within 54 per cent of the area. The west accounts for 52 per cent of these monuments within 40 per cent of the area whilst the east contains 48 per cent within 60 per cent of the area of the borderland.

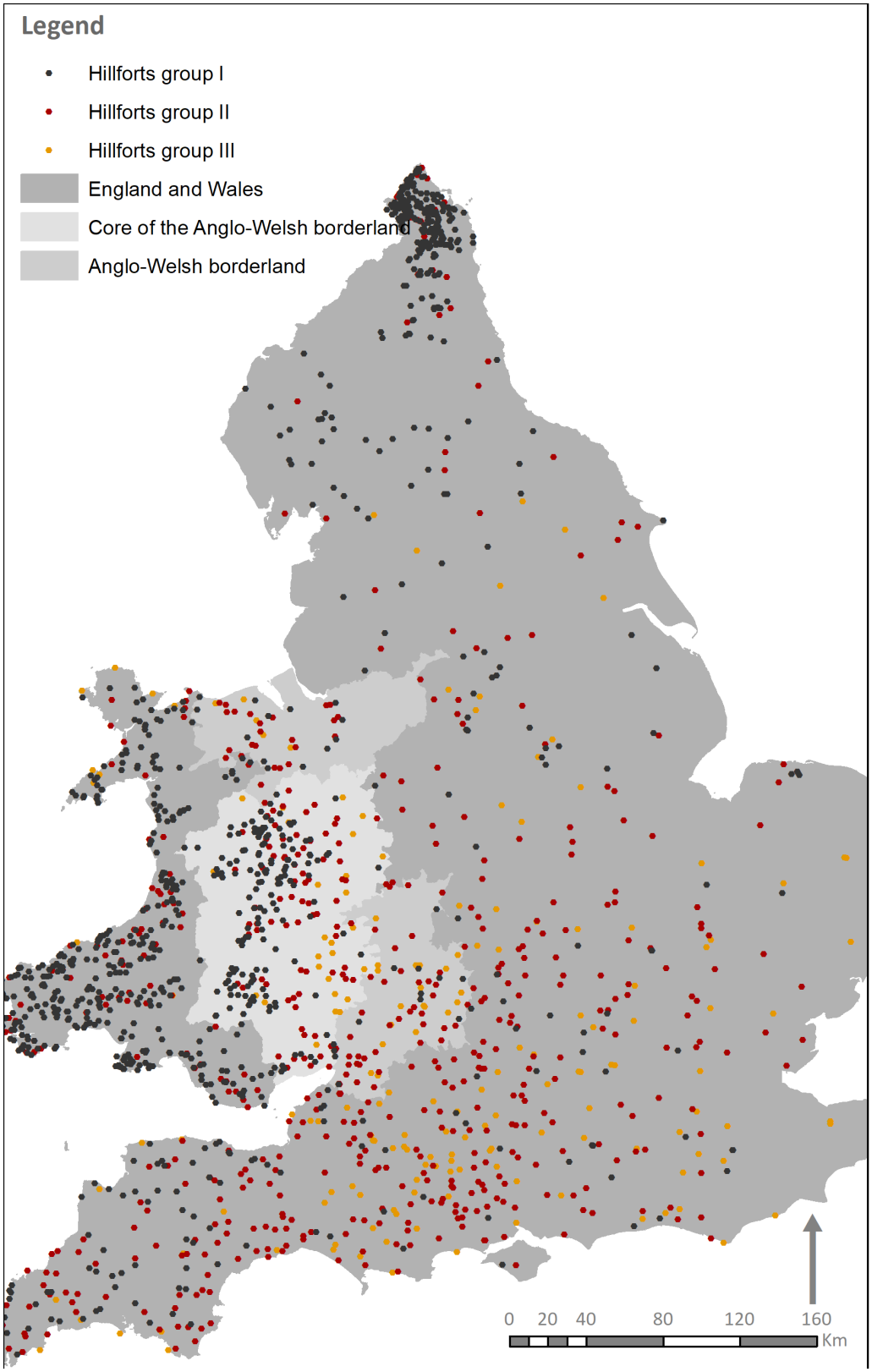


Figure 43 National distribution of hillforts in Cymru and England divided into three groups: group I (1.2 ha or less), group II (1.3- 6 ha), group III (6 ha or greater)

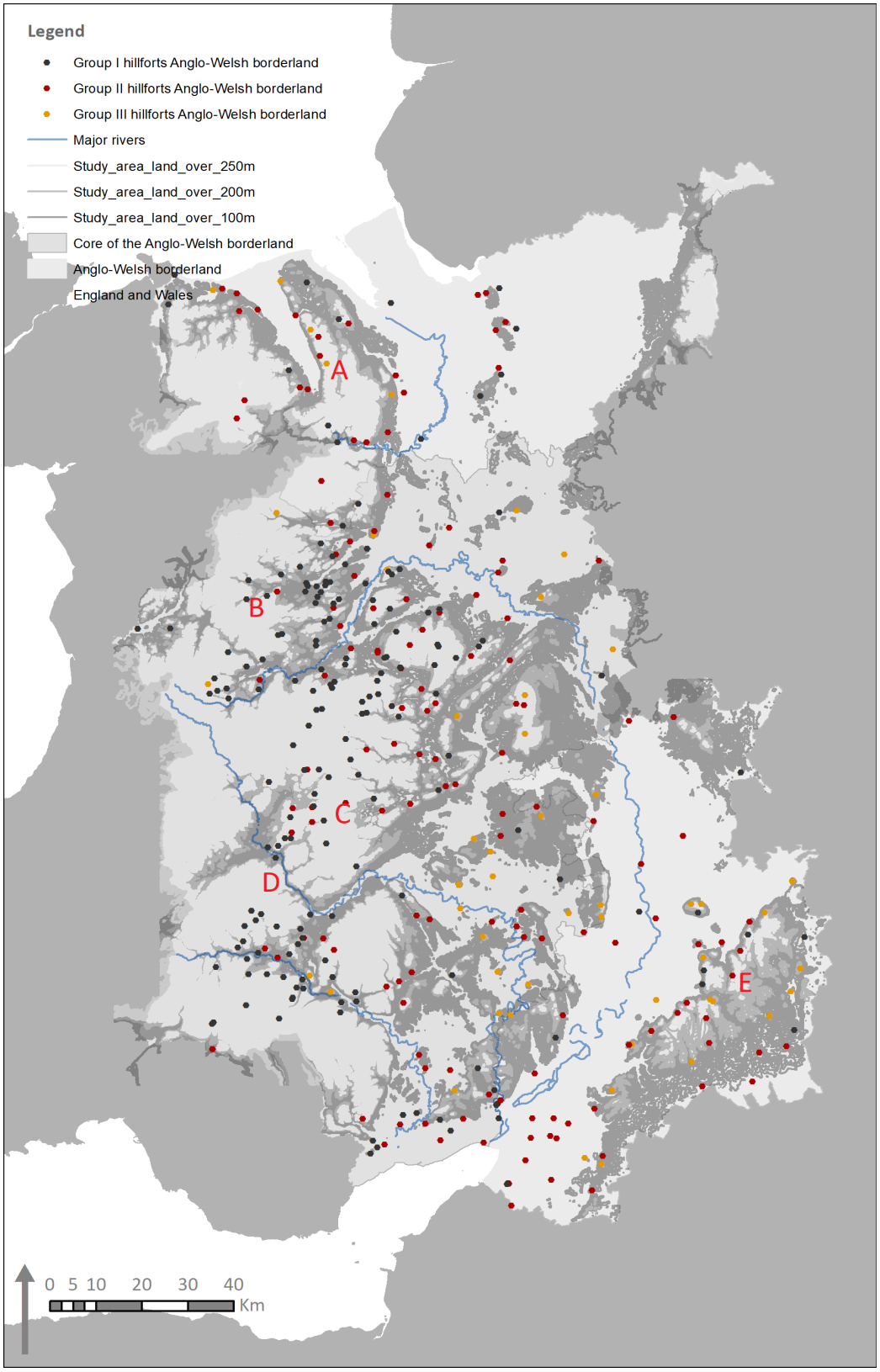


Figure 44 Topographic distribution of hillforts on the Anglo-Welsh border divided into three groups: group I (1.2 ha or less), group II (1.3- 6 ha), group III (6 ha or greater)

That the distribution of hillforts varies considerably across Cymru and England is well-established (Bradley, 2007; Brown, 2021; Harding, 2013). The utility of exploring these distributions to further our understanding of the different social, political and economic factors at play across central southern England where hillforts occur with the greatest frequency and in the east where they are relatively rare is equally widely acknowledged (Cunliffe, 2005). Based on the definitions outlined by Brown (2021, p. 91) ***where their size is known or can be estimated with a reasonable degree of certainty** the sites derived from the Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland (Lock and Ralston, 2024) were divided into the following categories: group I (up to 1.2 ha), group II (1.3 to 6 ha), group III (6 ha and above).

Hillfort group	Percentage of hillforts (whole of the borderland)	Percentage of hillforts in Cymru and England
Group I	47%	56%
Group II	39%	33%
Group III	13%	11%
	*92% of hillforts in the study area	*91% of hillforts in Cymru and England

Table 45 Totals for each hillfort group within the Anglo-Welsh borderland against national figures for England and Cymru

Summary of Table 45. The figures for the Anglo-Welsh borderland relative to the national figures for Cymru and England for each group show an overall trend for a rising density of hillfort construction as monument size increases.

Hillfort group	Total for whole of borderland (15 per cent of the combined area of Cymru and England)	Percentage in the whole of the borderland
Group I	176	47%
Group II	146	39%
Group III	50	13%
	372	92% of hillforts in the study area

Table 46 Totals for each hillfort group within the Anglo-Welsh borderland that account for 92 per cent of the known hillforts in the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 46. The Anglo-Welsh borderland contains 372 hillforts of a known size (from a total of 405). The background picture across the borderland shows the smallest group I hillforts

account for almost half of the total, group II just under 40 per cent and the largest group III sites just over 10 per cent.

Hillfort group	Total for the core of the borderland (54 per cent of borderland area)	Percentage in the core of the borderland
Group I	152	58%
Group II	83	32%
Group III	27	10%
	262	95%

Table 47 Totals for each hillfort group within the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 47. The core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland contains 262 hillforts of a known size (from a total of 277). Construction and density rates vary significantly across the three groups with group I occurring most frequently and group II also accounting for a third of all sites. 10 per cent of the hillforts fall within the group III category.

Hillfort group	Total for the west of the borderland (40 per cent of the border area)	Percentage in the west of the borderland
Group I	131	65%
Group II	59	29%
Group III	12	6%
	202	96%

Table 48 Totals for each hillfort group in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 48. The west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland contains 202 hillforts of a known size (from a total of 211). Construction and density rates vary significantly across the three groups with group I dominating construction in this part of the borderland. Group II hillforts account for a third of the total number of sites with the group III hillforts comprising just 6 per cent of the total for the west of the borderland.

Hillfort group	Total for the east of the borderland (60 per cent of the border)	Percentage in the east of the borderland
Group I	45	26%
Group II	87	51%
Group III	38	22%
	170	88%

Table 49 Totals for each hillfort group in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 49. The east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland contains 170 hillforts of a known size (from a total of 194). Construction rates vary across the three groups. In this part of the border group I hillforts account for only 26 per cent of the total whilst group II hillforts account for just over half. The percentage of group III hillforts rises to 22 per cent.

Hillfort group	Total for the south-east of the borderland (Gloucestershire) (15 per cent of the borderland)	Percentage in the south-east of the borderland (Gloucestershire)
Group I	7	13%
Group II	33	59%
Group III	16	29%
	56	100%

Table 50 Totals for each hillfort group in the south-east of the study area

Summary of Table 50. The south-east of the study area contains 56 hillforts of a known size or 14 per cent of the total for the borderland. This part of the border is distinct as group I hillforts account for 13 per cent of the total and group II 59 per cent. The largest group III hillforts account for 29 per cent of the total for this class of monument.

Hillfort group	Total	Percentage
No known earlier evidence	33	44%
Evidence from earlier prehistory	21	42%
Evidence from earlier Iron Age	12	24%

Table 51 Totals for earlier prehistoric or earlier Iron Age activity in the largest group III hillforts in the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 51. The Anglo-Welsh borderland contains 50 of the largest group III hillforts (6 ha or larger; Table 46). Of these 21, or 42 per cent have evidence for earlier prehistoric activity on the site in form of finds or monuments and 12 or 24 per cent for earlier phases of Iron Age activity.

Overall, the figures for the hillforts of the Anglo-Welsh border speak of distinct levels of monument construction being undertaken relative to the national averages for Cymru and England (Table 44, Figure 43). Whilst construction levels for the group I hillforts fall below the national averages with the greatest incidence of this group occurring further to the west in the remainder of Cymru, those for groups II and III reveal greater levels of monumentality in the borderland (Table 45). Across the region the figures for each group show that the smallest group I hillforts occur with the greatest frequency, followed by group II and then 3

(Table 46). Further patterns emerge within the borderland itself in the core where greater levels of monumentality are evident (Table 47) and a discernible shift between groups from west to east is also visible between group I in the west and group III in the east with group II occurring most frequently in the centre, or core (Tables 48, 49). The south-east of the borderland is also marked out as distinct accounting for just 13 per cent of group I hillforts but 59 per cent of group II and 29 per cent of the largest group III monuments (Table 50). A diachronic element in hillfort construction is introduced by evidence for earlier prehistoric activity (42 per cent), or earlier Iron Age phases (24 per cent) in the largest group III monuments (Table 51).

Major rivers and estuaries	Hillforts (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	13	23
1 km	34	31
3 km	98	82
5 km	147	124
> 5 km	405	405

Table 52 Relationship of hillforts vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

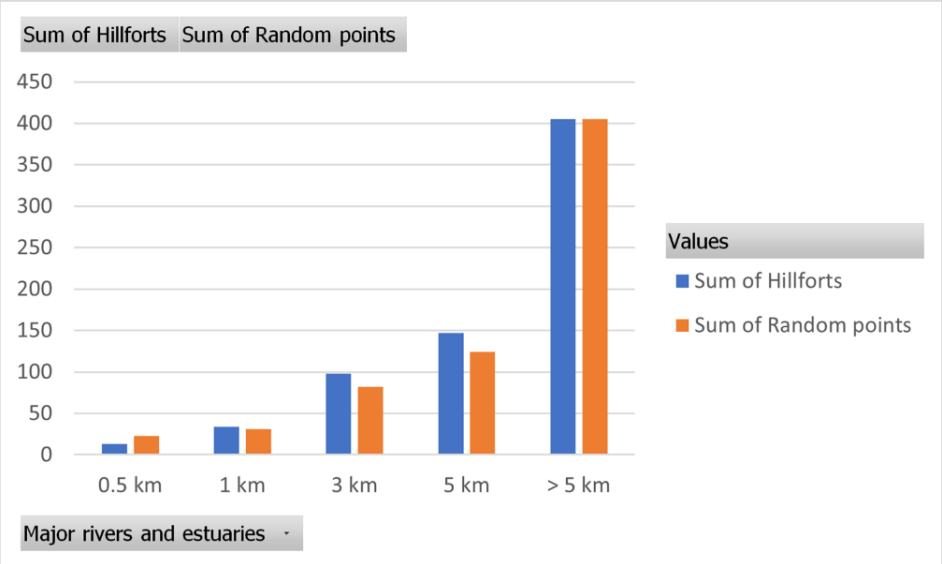


Figure 45 Bar chart of hillforts vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh border

Rivers	Hillforts (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	49	81
1 km	121	129
3 km	286	282
5 km	356	348
> 5 km	405	405

Table 53 Relationship of hillforts vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

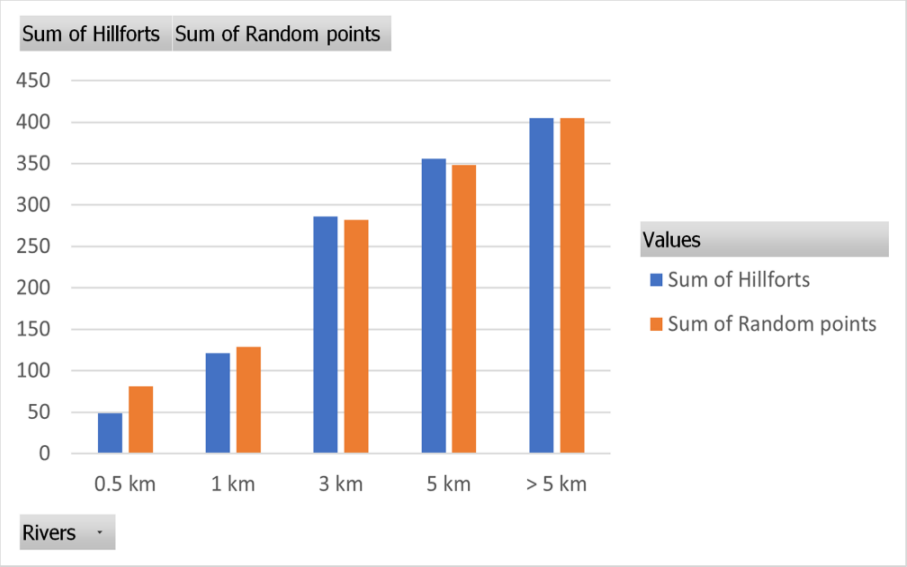


Figure 46 Bar chart of hillforts vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

In terms of relationships with the topography of the region and its earlier anthropogenic monuments it is possible to discern some significant correlations. Almost without exception all the hillforts are located along the edge of high ground overlooking the river valleys with clusters particularly evident around the major rivers and estuaries including the Dee, Severn, Usk and Wye (Figure 44, A, B, C, D). Nevertheless, the strength of the relationships relative to the random points is not compelling suggesting that whilst proximity to water and riverine routes through the landscape was an important factor in site selection other considerations may also have been at play (Tables 52, 53; Figures 45, 46; Appendix Tables 106, 107, 115, 116, 124, 125; Figs 106, 107, 115, 116, 124, 125).

Relationships with earlier anthropogenic monuments are variable with little evidence for any correlation between, for example, stone circles or henges (Appendix Tables 102, 104, 111, 113, 120, 122, 129, 131; Figs 102, 104, 111, 113, 120, 122, 129, 131). Relationships between small groups, groups and cemeteries of earlier Bronze Age barrows and cairns is more

variable with the limited number of known cemeteries in the borderland exerting no discernible influence on hillfort location (Appendix Tables 101, 110, 119, 128; Figs 101, 110, 119, 128), the groups having slightly more impact though primarily in the core and east (Appendix Tables 100, 109, 118, 127; Figs 11, 109, 118, 127) and the smaller groups again exhibiting more influence in the east than the west (Appendix Tables 99, 108, 117, 126; Figs 99, 108, 117, 126). The figures for the Neolithic long barrows and chambered tombs and causewayed enclosures relative to the random points suggest they have some form of relationship with the hillforts, but the rates of co-location are relatively low (Appendix Tables 103, 105, 112, 114, 121, 123, 130, 132; Figs 103, 105, 112, 114, 121, 123, 130, 132).

Overall, the results reveal a complex relationship with the changing topography of the borderland, one that marks this landscape out as distinctive to its neighbours during the Iron Age. To the west the Anglo-Welsh border forms the easterly extent of the tradition of building greater numbers of smaller hillforts that fall within the group I category. Similarly, the dominant tradition of constructing fewer, larger hillforts in the east severely diminishes in the west of the border whilst its centre is marked out by a distinctive cluster of group II monuments (Figures 43, 44). Topographically, the uplands adjacent to the major rivers and estuaries consistently constitute the most attractive location for hillfort construction with clusters evident to the west of the Dee, to the west of the Black Mountains in the hinterland between the Usk and Wye and around both the upper Severn and its estuary to the south (Figure 44, A, B, C, D).

4.5.3 Discussion

The Anglo-Welsh borderland is dominated by one of the densest concentrations of Iron Age hillforts in the British Isles (Britnell and Silvester, 2018). Further, this landscape is home to some of the largest, most spectacular and most exposed examples of this monument type typified by Y Breiddin and Llanymynech both in Powys and Titterstone Clee and Old Oswestry in Shropshire (Historic England, 1997; Historic England Research Records, no date; Musson *et al.*, 1991; Shropshire Historic Environment Record, 2023). In combination, the density of these monuments, their variation in form, location and early dating evidence set the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the Iron Age as a landscape distinct from its neighbours.

In contrast to the region's earlier Bronze Age whose relatively isolated barrows and cairns historically attracted relatively little archaeological attention this nationally significant cluster of hillforts has been the subject of decades of extensive scholarly research. Unsurprisingly, the earliest studies focused on some of the most prominent sites in the region including, for example, Nash-Williams' (1933, 1939) work at Llanmedlin and Sudbrook in Monmouthshire, the Wrekin (Kenyon, 1942) and Titterstone Clee (O'Neil, 1934) both in Shropshire and the Wheelers' (1932) excavations at Lydney, Gloucestershire.

More recent analyses have included Dixon's (1976) work on Crickley Hill, Gloucestershire where approximately half the interior was excavated, Old Oswestry, Shropshire (Hughes, 1994) (Figure 41), Thomas' (2005) study of Conderton Camp, Worcestershire and Brown's (2008) and Mason and Pope's (e.g. 2016) excavations on the hillforts of the Clwydian Range. Additionally, hillfort landscape studies have formed part of, for example, the Montgomeryshire Small Enclosures Project (Silvester and Britnell, 1993) and the Wroxeter Hinterland Project (Gaffney and White 2007). Today, work continues in the form of Heneb's project at Caer Digoll/Beacon Ring, Powys (Hankinson, 2018, 2019) and Lock and Reilly's (2021) renewed excavations at Nesscliffe, Shropshire. The breadth and volume of work carried out on the hillforts of the region today ensures that we have a greater understanding of later prehistoric monumentality than for earlier periods. The emerging key questions can be summarised as: Why is the Anglo-Welsh borderland characterised by elevated levels of hillfort construction? What might the distinct patterns of monumentality across the region mean? Why are some locations chosen for marking out or 'othering' whilst others are not? The picture that emerges is one in which a range of factors are at work including a macro-scale understanding of the landscape, the claiming of, or access to, natural resources and complex political networks.

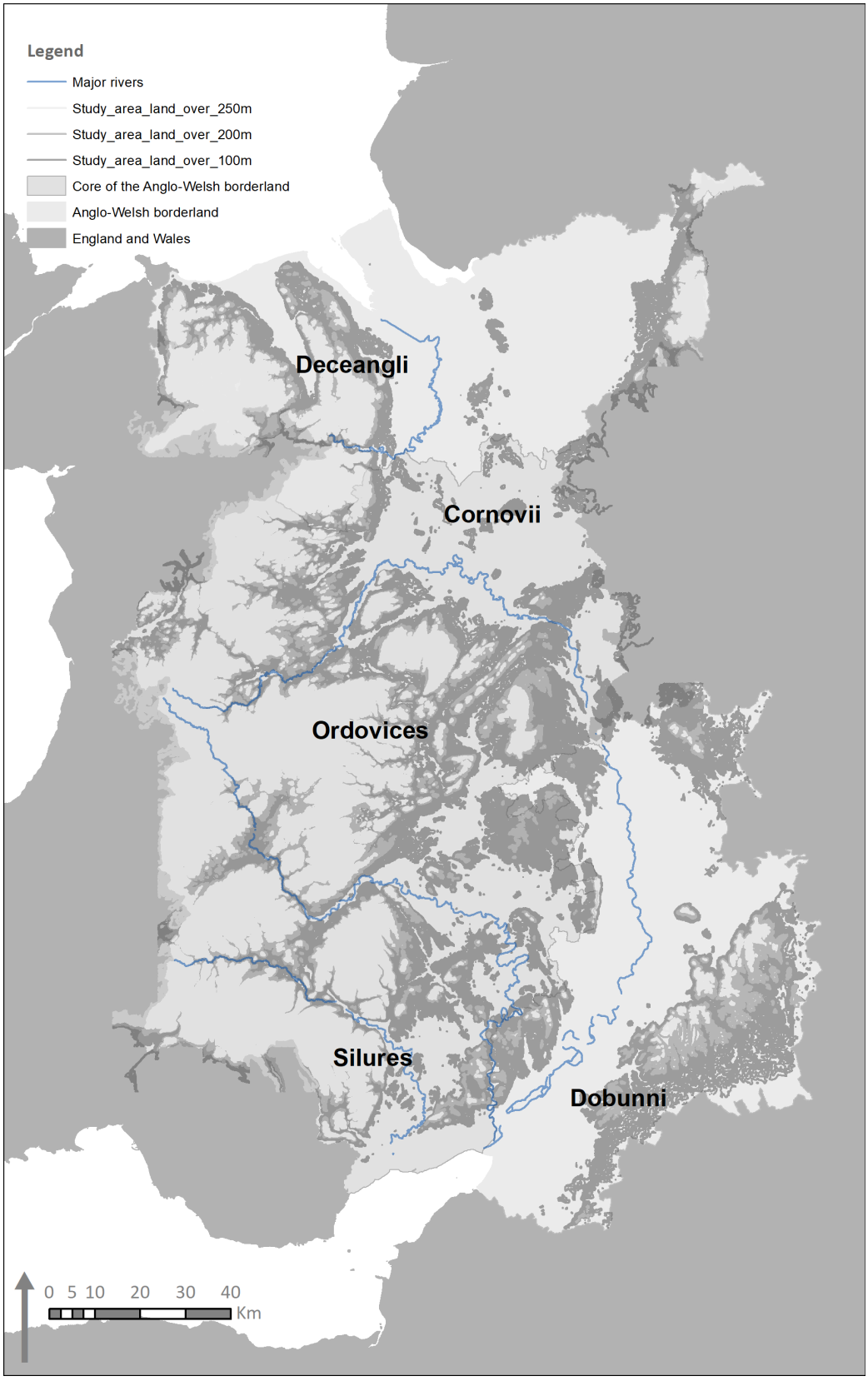


Figure 47 Late Iron Age polities in the Anglo-Welsh borderland

This is the first period for which contemporary written resources appear, albeit at the hands of the invading Roman administration. Together, the classical written sources including Tacitus (*Annales xii.*32**)** and Ptolemy (*Geographica II.2*) and the archaeological evidence speak of a landscape straddled by five main polities namely the Deceangli of north-east Cymru, the Ordovices of the central and western border, their southerly neighbours the Silures, the Cornovii in the east and Dobunni to the south-east (Figure 47). Whilst the written evidence can only be relied on to provide a brief snapshot from the time around the Roman conquest Brown (2021) suggests that the distribution of later Bronze Age metalwork in the region may, in fact, be indicative of pre-Iron Age origins for at least some of these political and cultural confederations introducing the potential for significant time depth in the cultural patterns of the region.

Within the wider context of the Iron Age of southern Britain Haselgrove and Pope (2007) have made a compelling case for distinct patterns of late Iron Age hillfort construction and use in the Anglo-Welsh borderland relative to other parts of Cunliffe's (1982) central southern zone. In contrast to, for example, Wessex where large, lowland oppida emerge as of centres of power in the years following c.100 BC the evidence suggests that some of the largest sites in the east of the region were not subject to similar processes of abandonment and remained in use at least until the Roman invasion (Bowden, 2005, p. 22; Brown 2021, p. 93; Stanford, 1982).

Across the region itself the evidence speaks of a landscape inhabited by populations whose elites were prepared to invest atypically high levels of resources in hillfort construction; of communities who understood their world at a range of scales and where practices of marking out, or the enclosing of significant geomorphological features, were at least in part based on traditions rooted in the earlier Bronze Age or Neolithic (Brown, 2021; Musson et al, 1992; Burnham 1995, p. 67; Rowley, 2001, p. 27).

Patterns of hillfort construction across the borderland are far from uniform, however, and it is possible to identify radically different traditions in the west where numerous smaller hillforts dominate and the east where fewer, larger and more elaborate monuments were favoured (Figures 43, 44). The scale and complexity of the defences at Old Oswestry,

Shropshire (Figure 41) in particular led Watson (2002, p. 31) to reflect on their role as "Prehistoric psychological warfare, or an ostentatious statement of self-esteem? Perhaps both?" Whether or not these divisions map on to the known Iron Age polities, these different traditions are evident across the Anglo-Welsh borderland and need to be accounted for in some way.

Certainly, distinct cultural and political practices between the populations of the west and east of the borderland are known from the period immediately preceding and following the invasion of Rome. Both the written sources and the archaeology in the form of, for example, differential evidence for the minting of coins (Cottam *et al.*, 2010), indicate that whilst the Cornovii and Dobunni to the east appear to have been either agnostic, or to have positively embraced the opportunities offered by the invasion, their neighbours to the west continued to offer up some of the fiercest resistance to the invaders (e.g. Thomas, 2005, p. 257). Further evidence for conflict, either with Rome or between Iron Age polities, has been recovered from, for example, Conderton Camp on Bredon Hill, Worcestershire and Croft Ambrey, Herefordshire (Field and Smith, 2008; Thomas, 2005), though more work is required to further our understanding of the extent of conflict between the different groups prior to the first century AD (Brown, 2021).

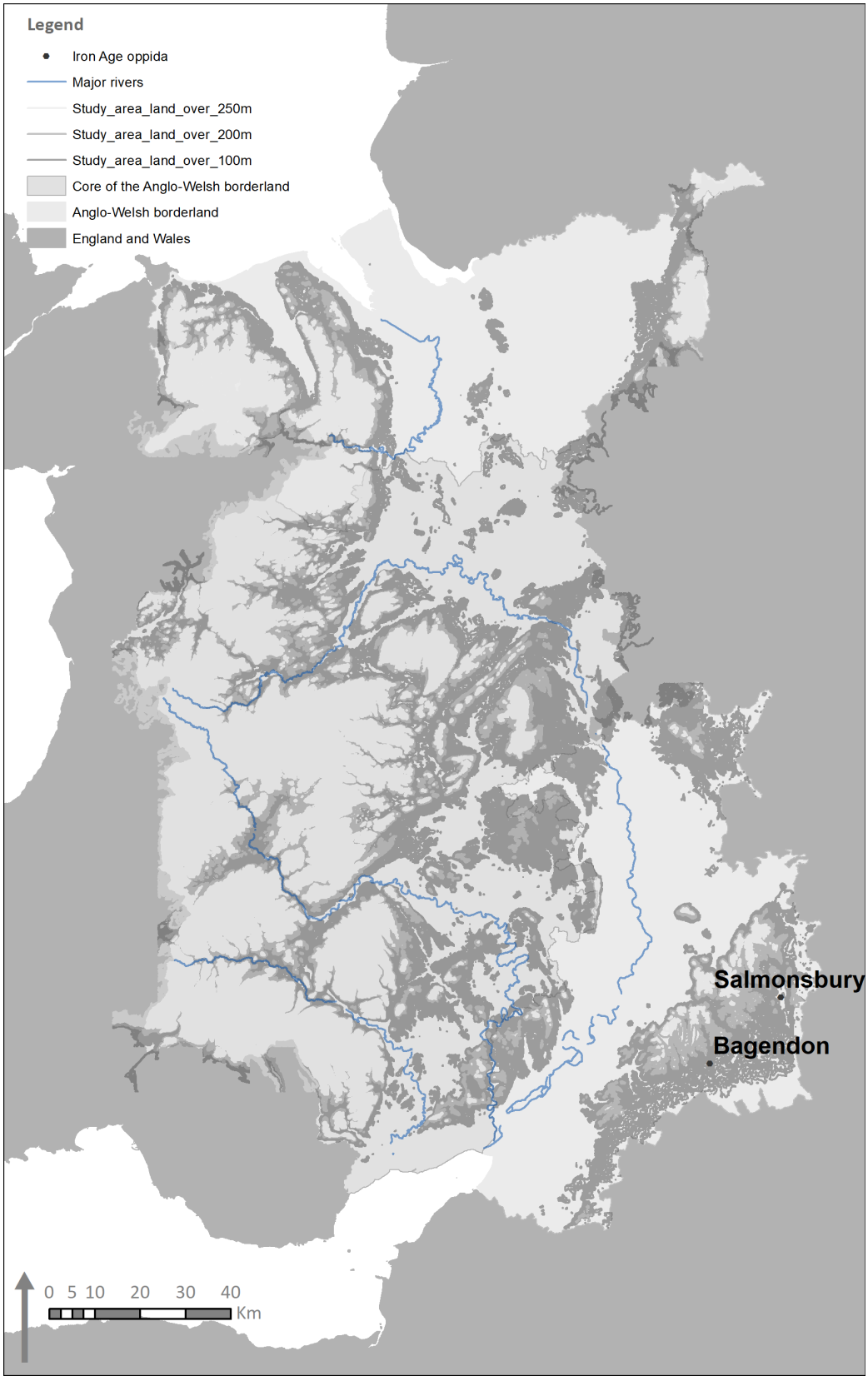


Figure 48 Map indicating the location of the furthest west lowland oppida at Salmonsbury and Bagendon, Gloucestershire

Irrespective of their cultural or political affiliations the evidence speaks of the communities living across the Anglo-Welsh borderland sharing an understanding of their world at a range of scales and its place in the wider trade, cultural and political networks linking it to the Atlantic coast and Continental Europe. Certainly, the majority of hillforts, irrespective of size, are connected with the main transhumance routes through the region, most especially in a web of 'overlooking' (rather than directly adjacent to) its main rivers and estuaries. Similarly, those hilltop locations offering access to metalworking resources such as Llanymynech, Powys and Y Breiddin, Shropshire, were also marked out (for an overview see Britnell and Sylvester, 2018). The figures are suggestive, however, that other factors were also at work in the locations chosen for hillfort construction. Undoubtedly, many of these hilltop locations were imbued with symbolism both from a natural and cultural perspective and the evidence from the relatively crowded core of the border further speaks of the significance of 'threshold' or liminal spaces at the interface between upland and lowland landscapes. Once again, the south-east of the borderland, in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds overlooking the Severn estuary, is marked out as distinct through the atypically high density intermingling of clusters of hillforts of all sizes (Figure 44, E) Additionally, the presence of the furthest west oppida at Salmonsbury and Bagendon, both in Gloucestershire, speaks of the south-east of the border representing the furthest westerly extent of this form of monumentality and their associated cultural and economic traditions (Figure 48).

Overall, the evidence suggests that the Iron Age in the Anglo-Welsh border is characterised by continuity, by ongoing evidence for the liminal landscape where the uplands and lowlands from the Dee to the Severn Estuary form a world of transition, of the continued significance of long-distance routes and the marking out of the south-east of the region in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds lying between the Severn and Thames valleys as yet again distinct, as a place where communities elected to monumentalise their environment in ways drawing on different traditions but doing so in a their own way. Whilst the arrival of Rome may initially suggest that the old macro-scale patterns of monumentality in the Anglo-Welsh border would come to an end and that the previous cultural patterns that evolved alongside the major transhumance routes through the landscape would be superseded, the evidence

nevertheless suggests that these powerful forces continued to exert their influence across much of the region.

4.5.4 Future work

The following programmes of work may further our understanding of contrasting patterns of Iron Age monumentality in the Anglo-Welsh borderland and their relationships with the natural environment:

- Excavations at more sites to establish whether there is evidence for later Bronze Age or Neolithic activity within, or adjacent to, Iron Age hillforts
- Further work on individual sites to enhance our understanding of their chronology in terms of wider patterns of, for example, abandonment and continuity into the Romano-British period
- Additional explorations in the south-east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, have the potential to further our understanding of this landscape's liminal character, as place in between the influences of central and southern Britain and those further north and west
- Further excavations on individual sites may provide evidence for the nature of the relationships between the Iron Age polities prior to the arrival of Rome, for example, is there evidence for conflict and if so, where, when and between whom?
- Community-led programmes of investigation embedded in the work of the *Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland* project (Lock and Ralston, 2022) have the potential to further our understanding of the nature of settlement in region in the Iron Age and its place within wider patterns of earlier Iron Age settlement in central southern Britain

4.6 The Anglo-Welsh border in the Romano-British period

The Romano-British period in Britain spans the years between the Claudian invasion of AD 43 and 410 when, in the face of increasing levels of instability across Rome's empire, the province of Britannia was given notice to look to its own security. These dates, however, mask a far more nuanced situation, with, for example, Rome's increasing hegemonic

influence across Continental Europe impacting on the late Iron Age polities of Britain decades prior to the invasion itself, with the empire's influence being particularly keenly felt in the south and east (Millett, 1992). Further, the archaeological evidence across much of Roman Britain speaks of the enduring nature of recognisably native Iron Age cultural practices (Mattingly, 2007; Taylor 2013). Additionally, the Romano-British period provides us with the first written accounts of the British Isles, albeit from the perspective of the invaders, within which the newly formed province of Britannia came to represent the new western edge of empire.

Traditionally framed in terms of 'military' and 'civilian' zones (Haverfield, 1912) modern scholarship today acknowledges the complex ongoing social, political and cultural interactions between the Roman invaders and native populations (Esmonde Cleary, 2010, p. 200; White, 2023, p. 109). Together with the Roman road network that would have served to put the empire's mark across large swathes of the landscape it is nevertheless possible to discern three distinct macro-scale zones within the Anglo-Welsh borderland. In the westerly uplands Roman power is primarily expressed through the construction of military installations whilst in the lowlands to the east widespread evidence for agricultural and industrial activity alongside one of the largest civilian settlements in the province largely define this landscape. In the south and east the Gloucestershire Cotswolds are marked out by one of the greatest concentrations of villas in Cymru and England (Adams, 2009; Mattingly, 2007). Though these regional patterns undoubtedly mask localised variations it is nevertheless possible to say something of the border character of this landscape during this period, one characterised both by change and continuity and the agency of both the native populations and the empire of Rome.

4.6.1 Monumentality in the Romano-British Anglo-Welsh borderland



Figure 49 Route of the Roman Walls at Chester subsequently extended and developed in the early medieval and medieval periods making the city one of the most heavily defended locations in England over centuries.

Whilst often overshadowed in the academic literature by Hadrian's Wall and the Scottish borderlands (e.g. Breeze, 2019; Hodgson, 2017), ongoing programmes of excavation and fieldwork continue to further our understanding of the Anglo-Welsh borderland throughout the period. Inevitably much of the earliest work in the region consisted of excavations at some of the major military sites including Caerleon (Nash-Williams, 1931, 1932a, 1932b, 1932c,1933) and Chester (Newstead, 1928; Newstead and Droop, 1932, 1935, 1936). Through the 1950s and 60s aerial photographic surveys across the region furthered our understanding of existing sites and revealed new ones (St Joseph, 1953, 1958, 1961, 1965, 1969. In the later part of the last century major projects were undertaken at, for example, Gloucester (Hurst, 1988), Chester (LeQuesne, 1999; Mason, 2000) and Caerleon (Zienkiewicz,

1986). The region has also been subject to extensive landscape surveys including The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain (Allen *et al.*, 2017), the Roman Roads Project (Sylvester and Toller, 2007), the Roman Fort Environs Project (Davies, 2005; Hopewell, 2005) and the Wroxeter Hinterland Project (Gaffney and White, 2007; White *et al.*, 2013). Much of the earlier work was synthesised in the first two volumes of *The Roman Frontier in Wales* (Nash-Williams, 1954; Nash-Williams and Jarrett, 1969) and in both cases the authors and editors demonstrated a forward-thinking approach in incorporating not just Cymru but also the Marches into their analyses. The third and latest volume in the series (Burnham *et al.*, 2010) continues in this tradition and provides both a comprehensive and nuanced overview of life across the borderland during this period. Some of the most recent work is typified by the landscape surveys undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales following the drought of 2018, work that is suggestive of new villa sites in the west of Cymru that may provide future cause to revisit current models (Driver *et al.*, 2020).

Our current understanding of the Anglo-Welsh borderland is of a landscape marked out as a distinct liminal zone, a place where the evidence speaks of both continuity and change, of at times radically different approaches to its exploitation by Rome and of varying native responses to these actions (Millett, 1992). Change is evidenced through, for example, the evolution of the military network, through the construction and relocation of fortresses in the earlier decades of the conquest and the subsequent abandonment of individual, smaller forts later in the period as the role of the military changed from conquest to control and demands from more troubled parts of the empire increased (Mattingly, 2007; White, 2023, p. 111). Processes of continuity meanwhile find expression at the macro-level in the evidence for enduring native Iron Age traditions across much of the landscape (Burnham *et al.*, 2010). Once again, the Gloucestershire Cotswolds in the south-east of the borderland stand out as a zone of atypical monumentality.

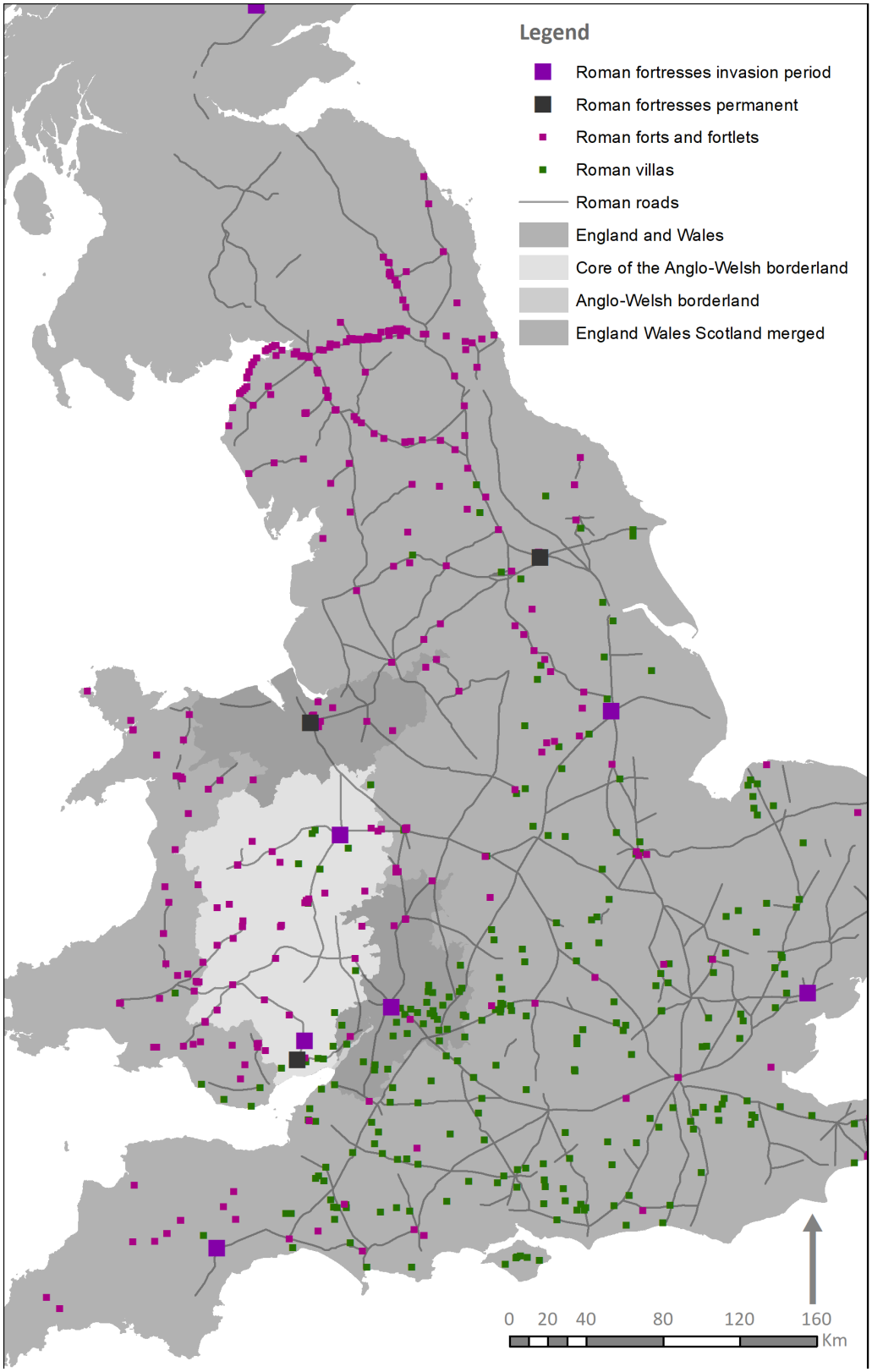


Figure 50 All known fortresses, forts, villas and roads in Roman Britain

Though interpreting the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland in terms of overly-simplistic 'military' and 'civilian' terms inevitably masks any number of nuanced, spatially and temporally fluid scenarios occurring over multiple centuries it is, nevertheless, helpful to explore the extent and nature of both military and civilian patterns of monumentality in the first instance. Subsequent interpretative reflections from the perspective of the communities living in the borderland are based on Esmonde-Cleary's (2010, p. 212) 'adopter' and 'non-adopter' models.

Roman military monumentality in the Anglo-Welsh borderland

	Area Km^2	No of forts	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of forts
England total	131177	308	86%	82%
Cymru total	20905	69	14%	18%
TOTAL	152082	377		
England outside study area	117665	274	77%	73%
Cymru outside study area	11900	42	8%	11%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	61	15%	16%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	40	54%	66%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9003	27	40%	44%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	34	60%	56%

Scottish borders	11204	139	7%	37%

Table 54 Distribution statistics for scheduled Roman fortresses and forts in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 54. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 61 Roman military sites, including forts and fortresses, or 16 per cent of the national totals for England and Cymru within 15 per cent of the combined area of both countries. Within the border itself the core contains 66 per cent of these monuments within 54 per cent of the study area, with the west accounting for 44 per cent of the monuments within 40 per cent of the area and the east containing 56 per cent of the sites in 60 per cent of the borderland. The Scottish borders are marked out as atypically containing 37 per cent of these sites within 7 per cent of the area.

The figures for the whole of England and Cymru (Table 54) reveal the Anglo-Welsh borderland to have a density of forts, fortresses and marching camps broadly typical of that for the total for England and Cymru. This data is, however, significantly skewed by the inclusion of the sites on, or adjacent to, Hadrian's Wall which account for 139, or 37 per cent, of military installations in only 7 per cent of the area of both countries. The removal of this data presents a more accurate representation of the Anglo-Welsh borderland relative to the remainder of Cymru and England (Table 55).

	Area Km^2	No of forts	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of forts
England excl Scottish border counties total	119971	169	85%	71%
Cymru total	20905	69	14%	29%
TOTAL	140876	238		
England excl Scottish borders and outside study area	106461	135	76%	57%
Cymru outside study area	11900	42	8%	18%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	61	16%	26%

Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	40	54%	66%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9003	27	40%	44%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	34	60%	56%

Table 55 Distribution statistics for scheduled Roman fortresses and forts in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland excluding the Scottish border counties

Summary of Table 55. The results for the forts and fortresses excluding those on or adjacent to Hadrian's Wall reveal a very different picture with the Anglo-Welsh border accounting for 61 sites, or 26 per cent, in just 16 per cent of the combined area of Cymru and England excluding the Scottish borders. Within the border the core contains 66 per cent of these monuments within 54 per cent of the area with the west accounting for 44 per cent of the monuments in 40 per cent of the area and the east containing 56 per cent within 60 per cent of the borderland.

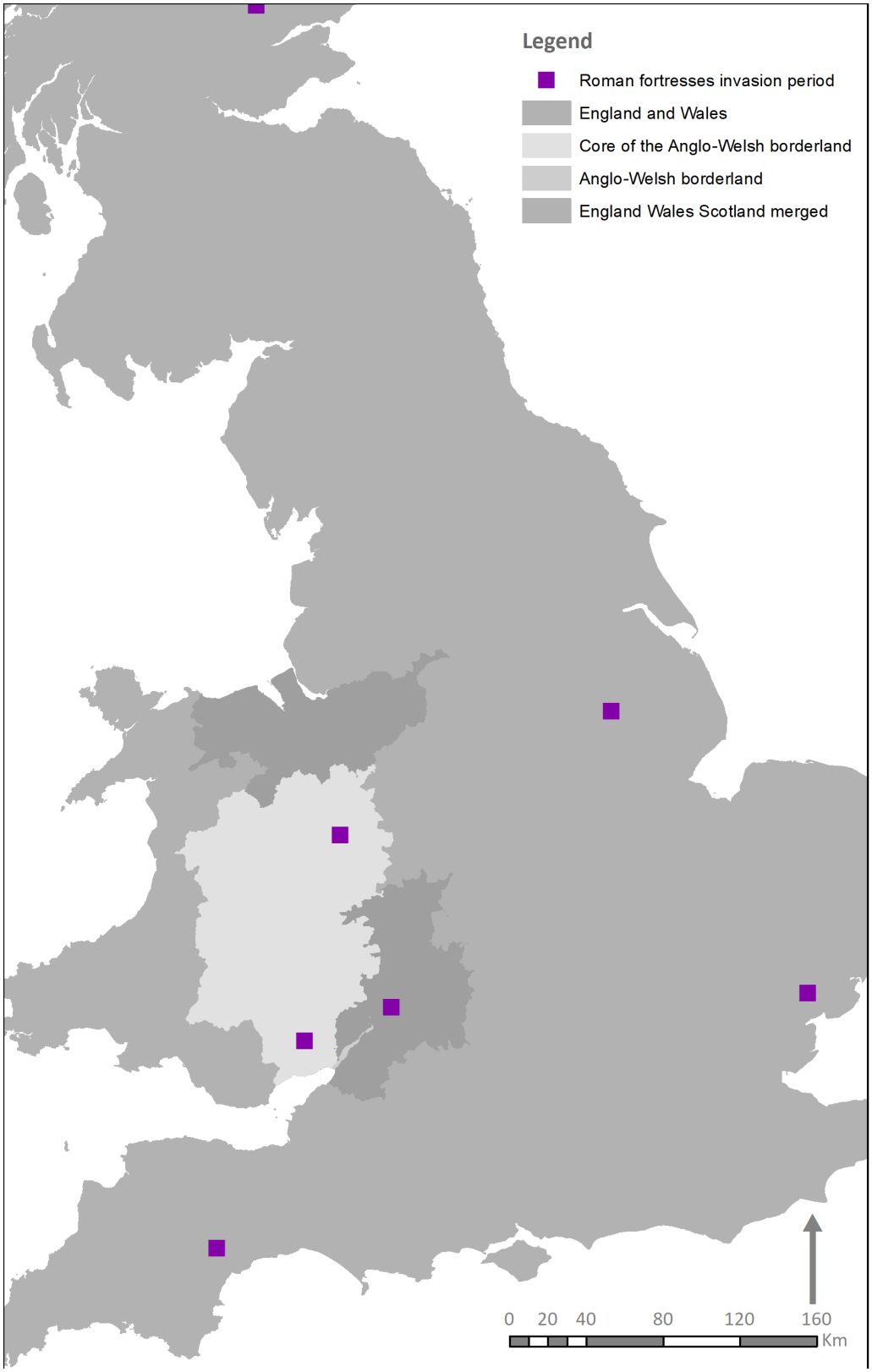


Figure 51 Invasion period fortresses located at Colchester (Essex), Exeter (Devon), Gloucester (Gloucestershire), Lincoln (Lincolnshire), Wroxeter (Shropshire) and Usk (Monmouthshire)



Figure 52 Permanent fortresses at Chester (Cheshire), York (Yorkshire) and Caerleon (Monmouthshire)

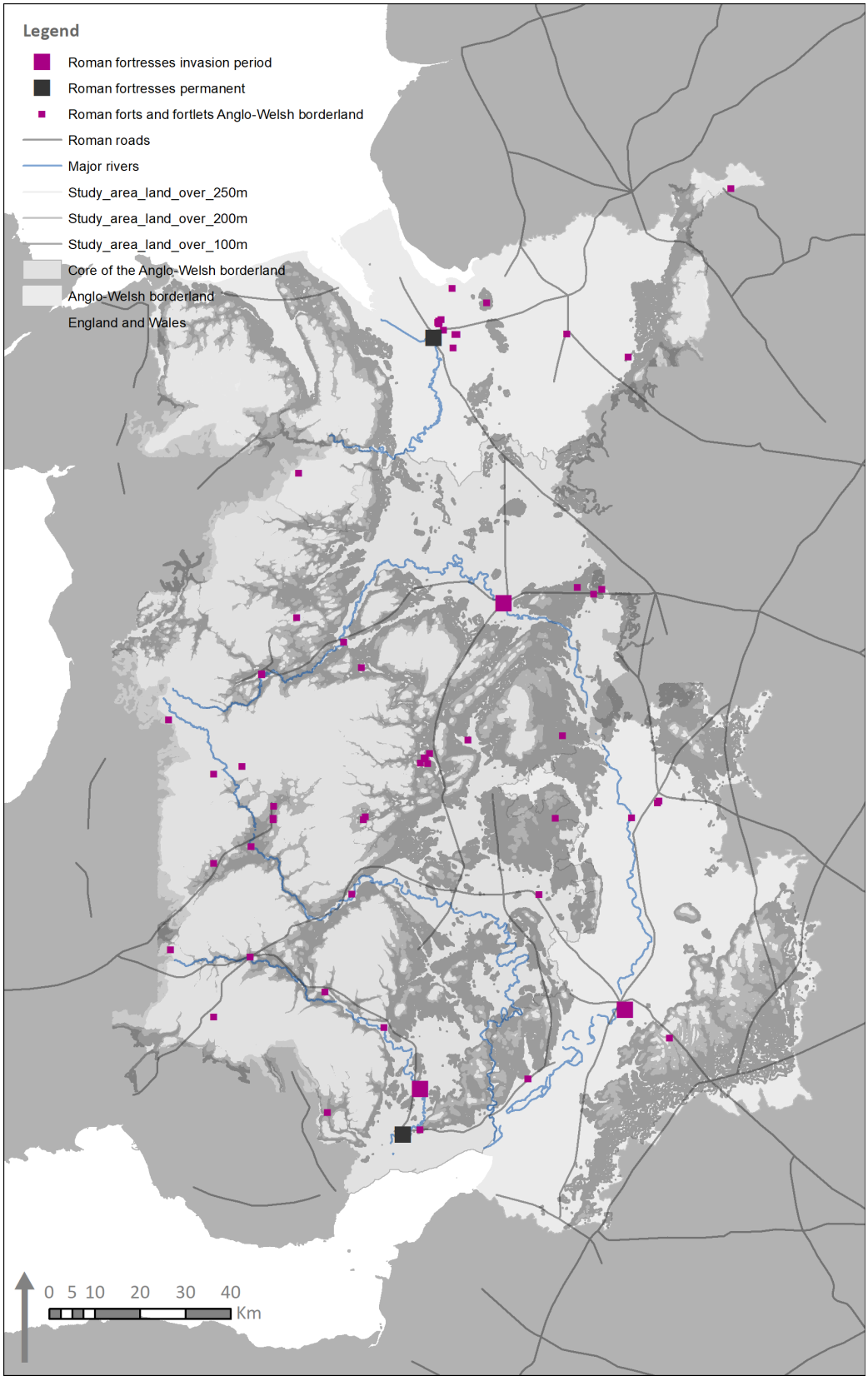


Figure 53. Roman fortresses, forts and roads in the Anglo-Welsh borderland

In the decades immediately following the arrival of Rome the Anglo-Welsh borderland is marked out as distinct from its neighbours by the presence of three of the six invasion period fortresses in England and Cymru at Gloucester, Usk and Wroxeter (Figure 51) two of which subsequently went on to evolve into the *colonia* (official veteran's settlement) at Gloucester and the major civilian settlement of Wroxeter (Millett, 1992). From the second century onwards this continued atypical militarisation found expression through the establishment of two of the three permanent fortresses in Cymru and England at Chester and Caerleon, with the former serving as a major southerly hub for operations on the Scottish border (Figure 52). The impact of the presence of these major military sites, of the support for their major logistical needs and extensive associated civilian infrastructure would inevitably have been keenly felt across much of the region.

More broadly, the figures for the overall militarisation of the borderland, excluding those for the Scottish borders (Table 55), reveal greater levels of construction across the border as a whole relative to those for England and Cymru with 26 per cent of the forts, fortlets and marching camps lying within 16 per cent of the combined area of both countries. Within the border itself the figures reveal differing patterns between the core (66 per cent of sites within 54 per cent of the borderland) and the west (44 per cent of sites lying in 40 per cent of the area) relative to the east (56 and 60 per cent respectively).

Major rivers and estuaries	Military sites (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	12	4
1 km	14	7
3 km	23	13
5 km	33	19
> 5 km	61	61

Table 56 Relationship of military sites vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

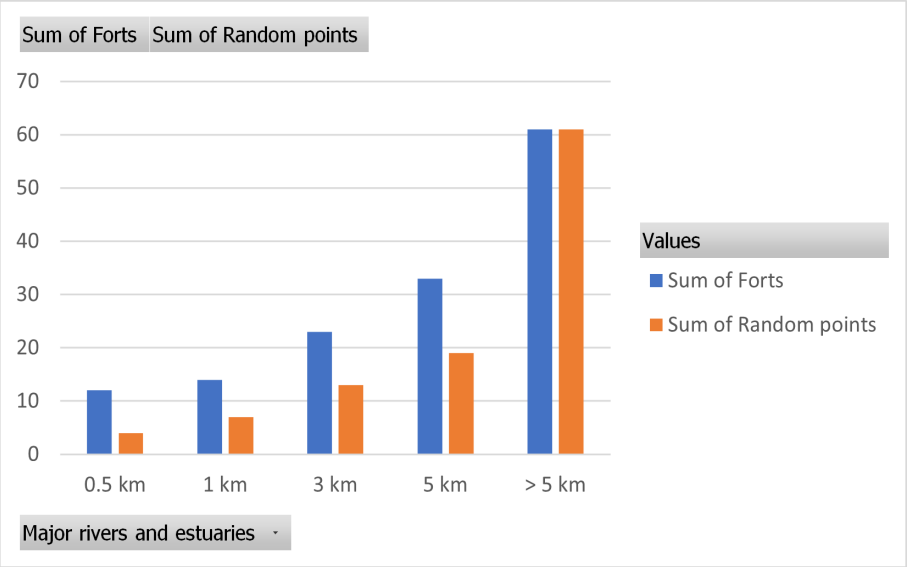


Figure 54 Bar chart of military sites vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Military sites (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	25	13
1 km	34	21
3 km	50	43
5 km	56	56
> 5 km	61	61

Table 57 Relationship of military sites vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

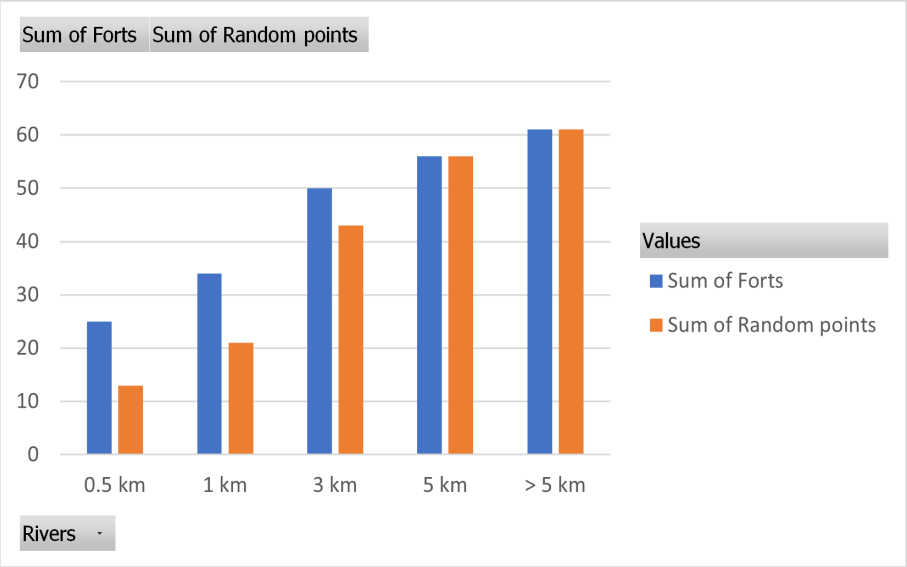


Figure 55 Bar chart of military sites vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

In terms of topography, unsurprisingly, there is a strong correlation between these sites and the rivers of the borderland relative to the random points across all scales (Table 57, Figure 55; Appendix Tables 137, 141, 145; Figs 137, 141, 145). A significant relationship is also apparent with the major rivers and estuaries (Table 56, Figure 54; Appendix Tables 138, 142, 146; Figs 138, 142, 146).

Roman roads	Military sites (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	9	4
1 km	20	8
3 km	44	18
5 km	48	30
> 5 km	61	61

Table 58 Relationship of military sites vs random points to Roman roads in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

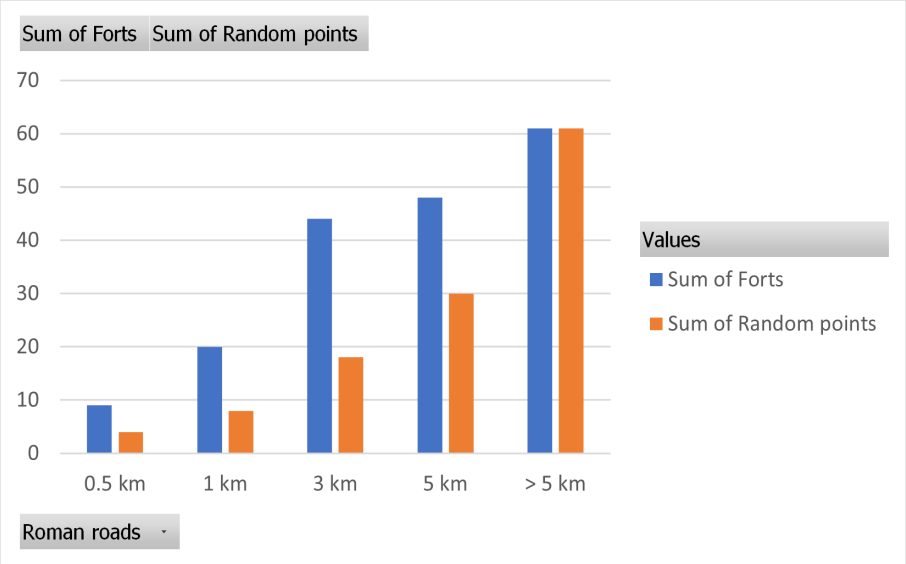


Figure 56 Bar chart of military sites vs random points relative to Roman roads in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

The power of the relationship between the forts, fortlets and marching camps and Roman roads is, predictably, evident across all scales (Table 58; Figure 56; Appendix Tables 139, 143, 147; Figs 139, 143, 147). The locations of the earlier Iron Age hillforts appear to have exerted very little influence on the placement of these structures (Appendix Tables 136, 140, 144, 148; Figs 136, 140, 144, 148).



Figure 57 Roman Wroxeter. The Roman baths complex with 'The Old Work', the remains of the south wall of the basilica and north wall of the baths behind. The Wrekin is visible in the background to the east.

	Area Km^2	No of villas	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of villas
England total	131177	252	86%	96%
Cymru total	20905	11	14%	4%
TOTAL	152082	263		
England outside study area	117665	211	77%	80%
Cymru outside study area	11900	5	8%	2%

Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	47	15%	18%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	13	54%	28%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9003	6	40%	13%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	41	60%	87%
Gloucestershire Cotswolds		34	15%	72%

Table 59 Distribution statistics for scheduled Roman villas in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 59. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 47 Roman villas, or 18 per cent of the national totals for England and Cymru. Within the border itself the core contains 28 per cent of villas in 54 per cent of the area with the west accounting for 13 per cent of these sites in 40 per cent of the border. The east accounts for 87 per cent of the villas in 60 per cent of the area, though within the east of the border itself the picture is significantly skewed with 72 per cent of the villas occurring in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds that account for just 15 per cent of the total area of the borderland.

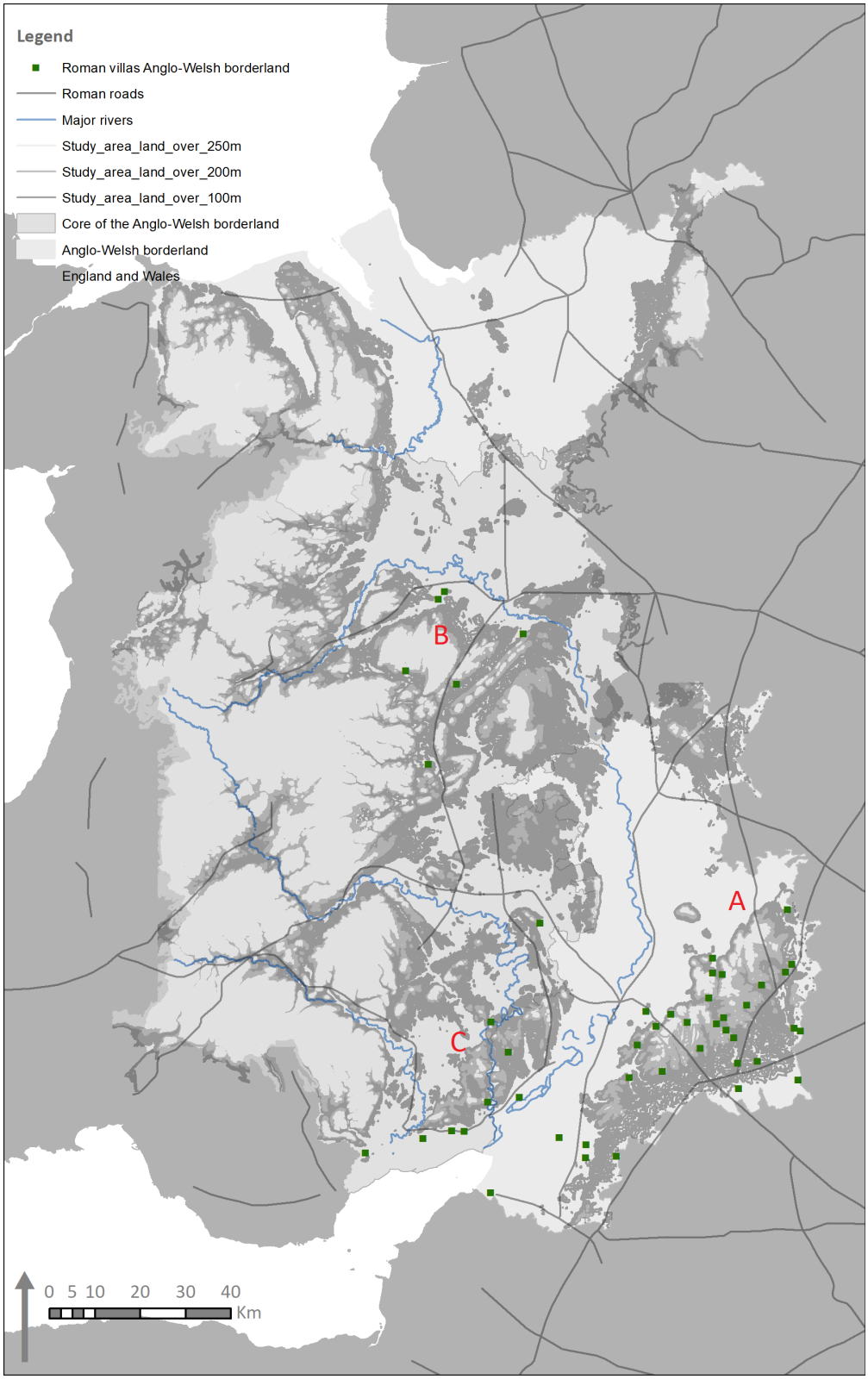


Figure 58 Topographic distribution map for Roman villas in the Anglo-Welsh borderland

The figures for villa construction across the Anglo-Welsh border reveal that 47, or 18 per cent of the national totals for these monuments lie within the study area which accounts for 15

per cent of the combined total area of Cymru and England putting the study roughly at the national average density rate (Table 59). Within the border itself the figures vary significantly. The core of the study area accounts for 13, or 28 per cent of these sites in 54 per cent of the area. Villa frequency in the west drops to 6, or 13 per cent in 40 per cent of the study area, but rises in the east to 41, or 87 per cent of these sites lying in 60 per cent of the area. Within the east these figures are heavily skewed again with 72 per cent of the villas across the Anglo-Welsh border lying in the south-east, in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, that account for 15 per cent of the area of the borderland. Overall, the distribution of villas across the region shows a distinct south-east bias (Figure 58, A) with outliers being primarily located alongside the Severn and the opposing side of its estuary surrounding the Wye (Figure 58, B, C).

Major rivers and estuaries	Villas (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	2	3
1 km	3	4
3 km	5	6
5 km	10	12
> 5 km	47	47

Table 60 Relationship of villas vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

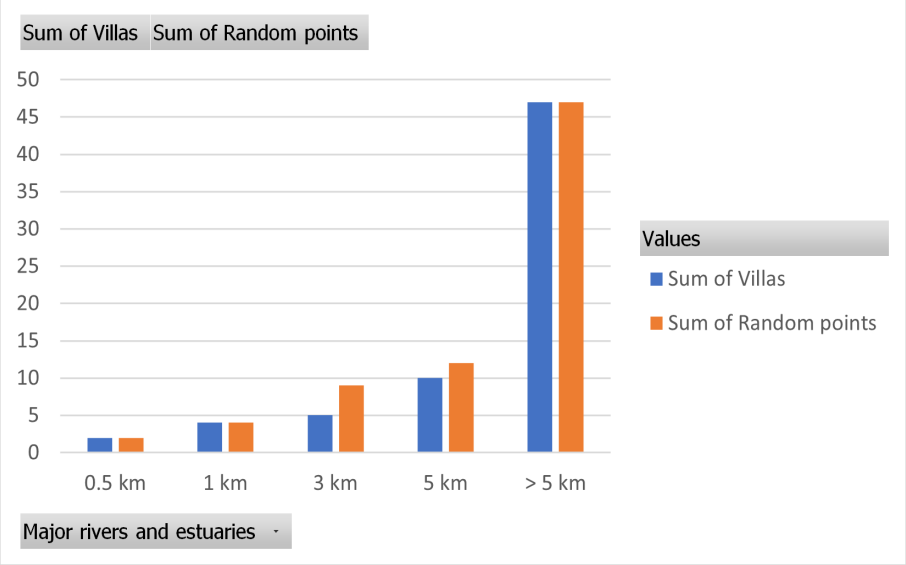


Figure 59 Bar chart of villas vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Villas (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	7	7
1 km	10	14
3 km	32	25
5 km	39	36
> 5 km	47	47

Table 61 Relationship of villas vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

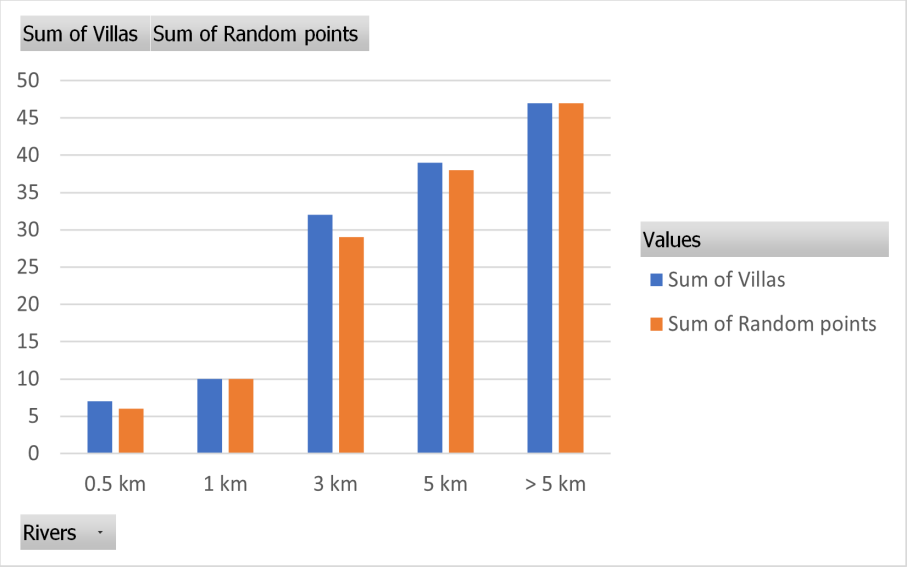


Figure 60 Bar chart of villas vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

In terms of topography the rivers of the Anglo-Welsh border show a strong co-location across the border as a whole with slight relationships evident at a range of scales relative to the random points (Table 61; Figure 60), perhaps suggesting other factors are also in play. Within the border itself whilst varying relationships can be discerned in the core and west (Appendix Tables 153, 157; Figs 153, 157) any correlation with the rivers vs the random points appears less obvious in the east and in the south-east in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds (Appendix Tables 161, 165; Figs 161, 165). Direct relationships between the villas and major rivers and estuaries are not easily discerned across the whole of the border, the core, or in the east and the south-easterly Gloucestershire Cotswolds (Table 60; Figure 59; Appendix Tables 154, 162, 166; Figs 154, 162, 166). The situation changes in the west where a correlation is evident across all the scales (Appendix Table 158; Fig 158).

Roman roads	Villas (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	3	4
1 km	6	5
3 km	23	9
5 km	31	16
> 5 km	47	47

Table 62 Relationship of villas vs random points to Roman roads in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

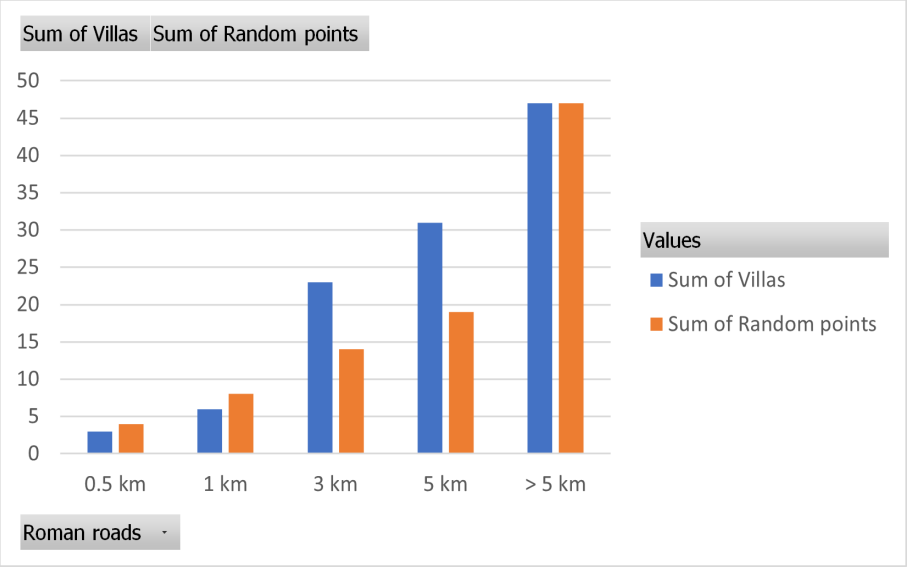


Figure 61 Bar chart of villas vs random points relative to Roman roads in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

A relationship with Roman roads can be discerned across the whole of the borderland, in the core, the west and the east (Table 62; Figure 61; Appendix Tables 155, 159, 163; Figs 155, 159, 163), though it is less easily identified in the south-east (Appendix Table 167; Fig 167). The Iron Age hillforts appear to exert limited influence on the selected locations for villas outside the west of the borderland (Appendix Tables 152, 156,164, 168; Figs 152, 156,164, 168). In all cases the extremely limited sample size in the west makes drawing firm conclusions problematic (Appendix Table 160; Fig 160).

4.6.2 Discussion

Overall, the macro-scale patterns of monumentality evident across the Anglo-Welsh borderland once again mark it out as a landscape of transition, the origins of which may owe something to both topographic and cultural factors. In his examination of the evidence across the province of Britannia as a whole Esmonde Cleary (2010, p. 212) notes the contrast

between the ‘adopter’ regions (of Roman culture and villas) and their primarily arable or mixed agricultural economies and the mainly pastoral models of the ‘non-adopters’. Certainly, the west-east, upland-lowland nature of the terrain of the Anglo-Welsh borderland lends itself to such scenarios and may go some way to explaining the extent of evidence for ‘adopter’ culture across the region after the arrival of Rome. From a cultural perspective, Tacitus, writing between AD 14 – 96 (*Annales* xii. 33-35) describes the early troublesome relations between Rome and the westerly Iron Age polities of the borderland, the Deceangli, Ordovices and Silures, citing, for example, their support for Caractacus in his last stand against the invaders the location of which may lie in the west of the region.

In contrast, evidence from the east following the conquest suggests that relations between the Dobunni, Cornovii and Rome were more positive, or at least pragmatic. Following the invasion the Cornovii are characterised by Millett (1992, p. 101) as ‘decentralised and egalitarian’ with the nature of the military presence in their territory being attributable to attempts to either reinforce native authority in a distributed population, the necessity of overseeing hostile neighbours to the west, or for the exploitation of agricultural or mineral resources (Hanson, 1986). Certainly, the Cornovii’s ongoing assimilation into the ‘civilian zone’ of Britannia is evidenced by the evolution of the town of Wroxeter into the fourth largest civilian settlement in the province (Gaffney and White, 2007). To the south Cassius Dio (lx. 20) further lists the Dobunni as one of only three civitates, or territories, known to have provided recruits to the Roman army; recruits whose presence may also be attested through the discovery of possible military veterans’ equipment at sites known to fall within their territory such as Lechlade (Miles and Palmer, 1982).

Overall, the archaeological evidence from Cymru and the western Marches supports the view that this remained a relatively militarised zone throughout the Roman period, one controlled by a network of forts, linked in turn to the major fortresses at Caerleon and Chester, whose locations on the Usk and Dee respectively, facilitated their roles as major conduits out into the wider Roman world (Burnham *et al.*, 2010). In terms of the consequences for the native population across this part of the region the early imposition of Roman roads and the presence of military installations and their associated demand for resources would inevitably have impacted on access to both traditional routes through the landscape and local

resources (Burnham and Burnham, 2004). Their enduring, long-term impact is, however, questionable. Following on from decades of conflict immediately after the invasion the later evidence is suggestive of some form of accommodation being met, of a transformation of the role of the military from one of conquest to management and control. From the third century a terminal decline in the military presence is perhaps attributable to a combination of a stable status quo in Cymru and the western Marches and of the need for redeployment of troops to other, more troubled, parts of the empire (White, 2023). White (2023, p. 111) and Burnham *et al.* (2010, p. 123) further speculate that a lack of integration of civilian settlements associated with forts into the wider local economy is suggestive of later native 'indifference' to Rome, rather than any active rejection of its presence. Further, within the territory of the Ordovices, for example, the archaeological evidence suggests that native Iron Age settlement patterns endured throughout the period with single-family farmsteads continuing to dominate local building practices. In summary, the nature of the evidence from large parts of the west of the region led Burnham *et al.* (2010, p. 415) to surmise that outside the network of Roman forts and their associated settlements there is little evidence of any significant impact by Rome on native cultural practices.

To the east the evidence suggests that the local populations were variously more amenable to taking up the opportunities offered by Rome through a range of different strategies. Whilst much of the east of the region was not dominated by villas with relatively few sites being identified in, for example, the north of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire (Ray, 2018; Smith *et al.*, 2016; White and Hodder, 2018, p. 7), there is instead widespread evidence for extensive landscape settlement together with agricultural and industrial activity (White and Hodder, 2018, p. 9). Overall, this evidence led White and Hodder (2018, p. 11) to conclude that most of Shropshire and Herefordshire, with the exception of Wroxeter, Kenchester and their environs and a handful of villas, were not highly Romanised with Ray (2018) making the case that Herefordshire in particular maintained much of its Iron Age character. In contrast to the west, however, there is no evidence of widespread conflict with Rome suggesting that relations between the empire and the local populations in much of the east were based on some form of mutual understanding.

This contrast in evidence between Gloucestershire and the remainder of the Anglo-Welsh border is evident not only in the highest density of villas in Cymru and England (Adams, 2009; Mattingly, 2007), but also in the absence of the kind of substantial military infrastructure found across the Severn estuary in the early years of the invasion. The relatively small military footprint south of the Severn led Holbrook (2008, p. 311) to interpret the presence of troops at Cirencester, for example, as no more than an expression of support for local pro-Roman elites. Across the Gloucestershire Cotswolds the picture that emerges both in the town of Cirencester and in the countryside is one of local pro-Roman elites dedicating significant amounts of resources to the construction and expansion of both their urban and rural infrastructure, a process that peaked during the second century.

Overall, the relative distributions of military infrastructure, agricultural and industrial complexes, towns and villas across the Anglo-Welsh border speak of the differing ways in which Rome sought to resolve the challenges and exploit the opportunities it encountered in the west of Britannia (Figure 50). Equally, the presence of continuing patterns of native Iron Age traditions, or their relative absence, provide evidence of the agency of the local populations who occupied this landscape prior to the arrival of Rome (Burnham *et al.*, 2010, p. 415).

By the later third century, as Rome's power slowly began to diminish a fresh pattern emerges in the archaeology of the Anglo-Welsh border, or rather it is possible to discern evidence for the re-emergence of the significance of the Atlantic coastal tradition through Rome's renewed attempts to fortify the estuaries of the Dee and Severn against raids across the Irish and North seas (Webster, 2002). Closer inspection of the evidence may in fact suggest that its influence may never have been far away with scholars including Van Arsdell (1994) making the case for the Severn forming the western border of pro-Roman Dobunnic territory within which coins were issued and for the Forest of Dean's role as some form of buffer between polities. Finally, Cunliffe (2001, p. 370) makes the case for the negligible impact of Rome on the lives of those facing the Atlantic coast, of the evidence for the persistence of their indigenous systems based on maritime patterns of communication, trade and culture. If this is indeed the case, then it seems likely that the Anglo-Welsh border continued to form the liminal zone between those in the west whose lives continued to be formed by their

relationship with the coast and their neighbours to the east whose native Iron Age traditions were more readily adaptable to life under Roman rule. Certainly, the macro-scale patterns in the evidence are suggestive of such a scenario (Figures 53, 58).

Though Rome's presence in the Anglo-Welsh border may have failed to dislodge long-established patterns of habitation, those that distinguished the lives of those in the westerly uplands and lowlands to the east, the empire's presence did nevertheless leave an enduring legacy in the evolution of, for example, the early medieval kingdoms of Cymru (Charles-Edwards, 2014; White, 2023, p. 112). Such evidence is found not solely in the landscape, but also from, for example, individual tombstones where expressions of continuing Roman identity are evident (White, 2023, p. 112). Certainly, the elites of the Cymric kingdoms exploited their blended Roman and Celtic traditions to distinguish themselves from the early medieval invaders from Continental Europe who were equally keen to exploit formerly prominent points in the landscape and cultural traditions to claim legitimacy. As White (2023, p. 114) and Ray and Bapty (2016, pp. 342-344) note it is therefore apt that Offa chose a dyke to express the material limits of the eighth-century kingdom of Mercia and to distinguish the extents of his kingdom from those of his Cymric neighbours; a monument type echoing the building traditions of Rome, not just in its physical form, but also in its scale and ambition.

4.6.3 Future work

The following programmes of work may provide valuable additional insights into the liminal character of the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the Romano-British period:

- Large-scale landscape studies based on, for example, LiDAR evidence, have the potential to reveal additional sites and routes through the region to further our understanding of the Romano-British period across the region
- Regional studies focussing on the evidence from not just the forces of Rome, but also those left behind by local populations, have the potential to reveal additional details on the nature of the spatially and temporally varied relationships between locals and incomers across the border

- The results of any future studies on later Iron Age sites may provide further details on the impact of the agency of the local populations on the Roman settlement and administration of the Anglo-Welsh borderland
- Further work on the later Roman defences around the estuaries of the Dee and Severn might identify further evidence for the presence of invaders which in turn might further our understanding of the continued relevance of the Atlantic coastal zone on the region
- Additional, explorative studies to reveal evidence for the transitional period following the end of Roman rule in the early fifth-century, particularly in the west, has the potential to extend our understanding of the contrasting nature of the experiences of the population of the Anglo-Welsh borderland during this poorly understood period

4.7 The Anglo-Welsh border in the Early Medieval period

'Þis is seo gerædnes, þe Angelcynnes witan and Wealhþeode rædboran betweox Dunsetan gesetton'

'This is the agreement which the advisors of the English and the counsellors of the Welsh put in place among the Dunsæte'

Dunsæte Agreement (Prologue)

Whilst the term Anglo-Saxon has a long academic pedigree, so does its use in racial debates relating to white supremacy. With the recent spread of far-right interest in the co-opting of 'Anglo-Saxon' to reinforce their agenda recent scholarly debates have considered the use of the term. Many studies now choose to use the term 'early medieval', or to refer to the individual kingdoms by their names (Mercians would, for example, have most widely considered themselves Mercian or English (or Englisc), not Anglo-Saxon and this is the chosen position in this case study. Current debates are summarised by Dr Hana Videen in her Old English Wordhord blog (Videen, 2020).

The early medieval period of Cymru and England is defined as running between AD 410 when the province of Britannia was abandoned by the empire of Rome and 1066 and the arrival of the Normans and their conquest of England. A further subdivision is also frequently made between the immediate post-Roman era of the fifth to seventh centuries, during which Brythonic and Continental influences drove the formation of the emergent post-Roman polities and the seventh to eleventh during which major, regional polities emerged, including the kingdoms of Mercia in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland and Powys in the west (Brown and Farr, 2005; Charles-Edwards, 2014).

Despite the excavation of a number of high-profile sites, for example, Sutton Hoo (Carver, 2000), Yeavering (Hope-Taylor, 2014), Llangorse Crannog (Lane and Redknap, 2019) and an expanding number of landscape studies, reappraisals (Shiner, 2021) and excavations such as those undertaken at the major cemetery site of Mucking (Hirst and Clark, 2009) this period remains one of the least well understood in both Cymru and England. New archaeological techniques have, however, advanced our understanding of early medieval life to reveal a period characterised by both social and political turmoil and remarkable artistic output (Hamerow *et al.*, 2020). Various written sources also survive typified by Bede's seventh century *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the eighth-century *Lives* of Guthlac and a significant corpus of Welsh poetry (for an overview see Brady, 2017, p. 13). Further, additional written sources including Old English riddles and documentary evidence also advance our understanding of both the cultures and administrative arrangements of the time (ibid., p. 14).

In terms of extant early medieval features in the landscape it is the earthwork dykes of the period that characterise much, though conspicuously not all, of England and Cymru. Whilst the largest of these monuments, Offa's and Wat's dykes on the Anglo-Welsh border and Wansdyke on the putative border between Wessex and Mercia have justifiably dominated many decades of scholarship (Fox and Fox 1958; Fox, 1955; Noble, 1983; Oman, 1930) contemporary academic attention has extended to consider these monuments more broadly (e.g. Grigg, 2018; Hankinson and Caseldine, 2006). The most recent analyses have sought to reconsider the methods used to construct these monuments, their placement, relationships with earlier structures in the landscape and their wider cultural significance (Ray and Bapty,

2016; Reynolds and Langlands, 2006; Semple, 2013; Squatriti, 2002; Williams, 2023). It is therefore with this class of monument that the early medieval study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland is concerned.

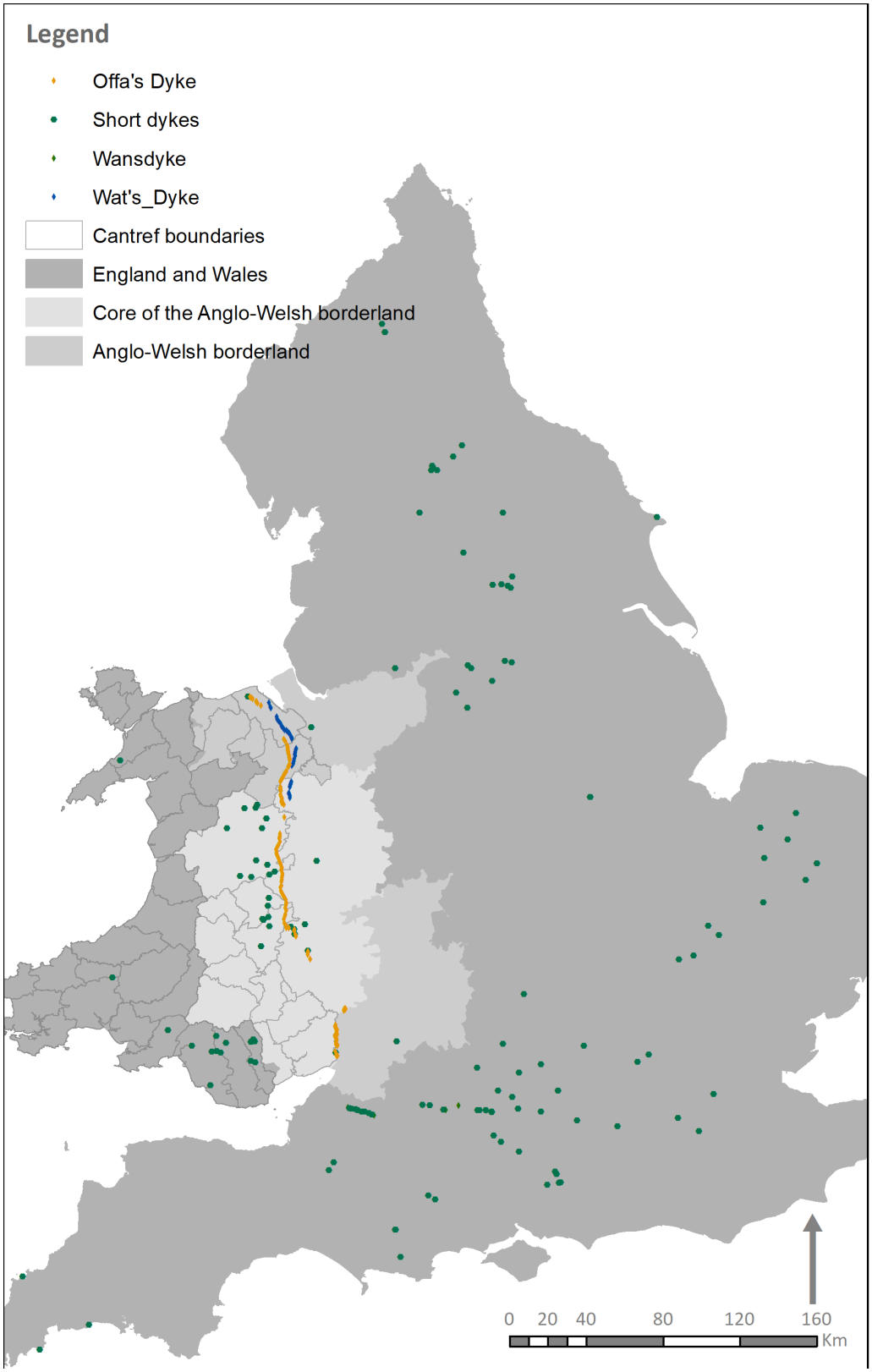


Figure 62 All known early medieval short dykes derived from Grigg's (2018) study of these monuments in England and Cymru, Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke, Wansdyke

4.7.1 Monumentality in the Anglo-Welsh border



Figure 63 Offa's Dyke on Herrock Hill (Herefordshire (just)) adjacent to the contemporary border between Cymru and England looking west across to Walton and the Radnorshire hills.

In contrast to many of the other periods where the data is drawn from the national heritage asset listings the records relating to the earthwork dykes of the early medieval period is derived from the comprehensive study of these monuments across Cymru and England by Erik Grigg (2018). Grigg's work, combined with dating evidence from CPAT's survey of short dykes in mid-Cymru (Hankinson, 2002; Hankinson and Caseldine, 2006) enabled him to successfully identify the dykes that could be reasonably attributed to the early medieval period and so it is this data that forms the basis for this analysis (Figure 62). Data for the Medieval Commotes (Cymydau) and Cantref boundaries of Cymru was obtained from the Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru/RCAHMW (RCAHMW, 2019) and whilst these land divisions are not dated to a particular period any correlation between their borders and the short dykes is likely to be indicative of some form of temporal as well as spatial relationship.

Marked out as distinct from its neighbours by the presence of two of the most substantial earthwork dykes not just in the British Isles but also the wider European context, and in particular by that of Offa's Dyke whose length has been a matter of conjecture in the archaeological community (summarised in Ray and Bapty, 2016, pp. 84–5), the Anglo-Welsh border in the early medieval period has been subject to a significant level of scholarly interest from the earliest decades of the last century.

The earliest substantive work on Offa's Dyke and the dykes of the border more generally was carried out by Fox (1955) and whilst some of his theories relating to, for example, the role of the density of woodland and its influence on the form of the monument, have subsequently been rejected (for a discussion see Ray and Bapty, 2016, p. 76) the extent and quality of his work remain relevant. An early major reassessment of Fox's work was undertaken by Noble in his 1977 MPhil thesis, subsequently posthumously published by Gelling (1983) which served as a useful 'corrective' (Ray and Bapty, 2016, p. 81) that, for example, further considered Offa's Dyke within its wider landscape context alongside other, shorter dykes and that also recognised the significance of literary and documentary sources in broadening our interpretation of the monument.

Further long-term studies were undertaken, for example, by the University of Manchester (e.g. Hill, 2003; Worthington, 1997) which sought to answer such questions as whether Offa's Dyke really ever did run 'from sea to sea' as Asser asserted in his ninth century *Life of King Alfred*. More recent scholarship has seen a burgeoning interest in the early medieval Anglo-Welsh border expressed through the establishment of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory research network ("The Offa's Dyke Collaboratory," 2017) which itself incorporates the Offa's Dyke Journal ("Offa's Dyke Journal," 2019) and provides a home for scholars considering not just the nature and role of Offa's and Wat's dykes and their associated monuments (e.g. Williams, 2023), but also their role in the wider early medieval landscape (Malim, 2020) together with their preservation for future generations (Belford, 2019).

Contemporary landscape studies acknowledge that whilst Offa's and Wat's dykes dominate much of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, these monuments alone do not define the nature of the region during the early medieval period. Only through an analysis of all the dykes across

the borderland, their location, symbolism and inter-relatedness is it possible say something of how the elites on both sides of the border understood this topographically and culturally varied landscape.

	Area Km^2	No of short dykes	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of short dykes
England total	131177	116	86%	76%
Cymru total	20905	37	14%	24%
TOTAL	152082			
England outside study area	117665	106	77%	69%
Cymru outside study area	11900	16	8%	10%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	31	15%	20%
Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	27	54%	87%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9003	21	40%	68%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	10	60%	32%

Table 63 Distribution statistics for short dykes in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland derived from Grigg (2018).

Summary of Table 63. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 31 early medieval short dykes or 20 per cent of the national totals for Cymru and England lying within 15 per cent of the total area of both countries. Within the border itself the core contains 27, or 87 per cent of the short dykes within 54 per cent of the study area, with the west accounting for 21, or 68 per cent of these monuments in 40 per cent of the border and the east containing 10 short dykes, or 32 per cent of these sites within 60 per cent of the area.

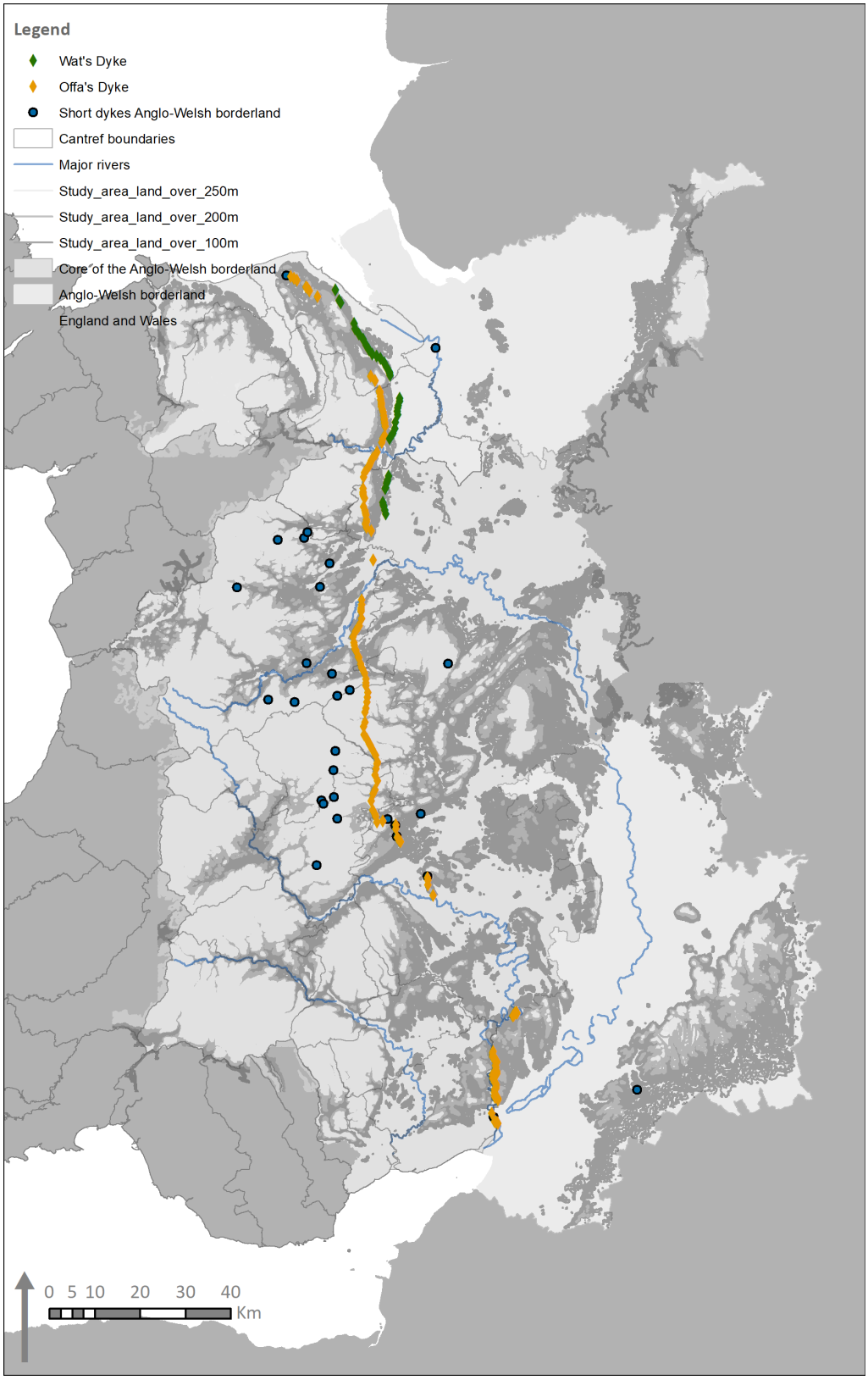


Figure 64 All known early medieval short dykes in the Anglo-Welsh border derived from Grigg's data (2018) and Offa's and Wat's dykes

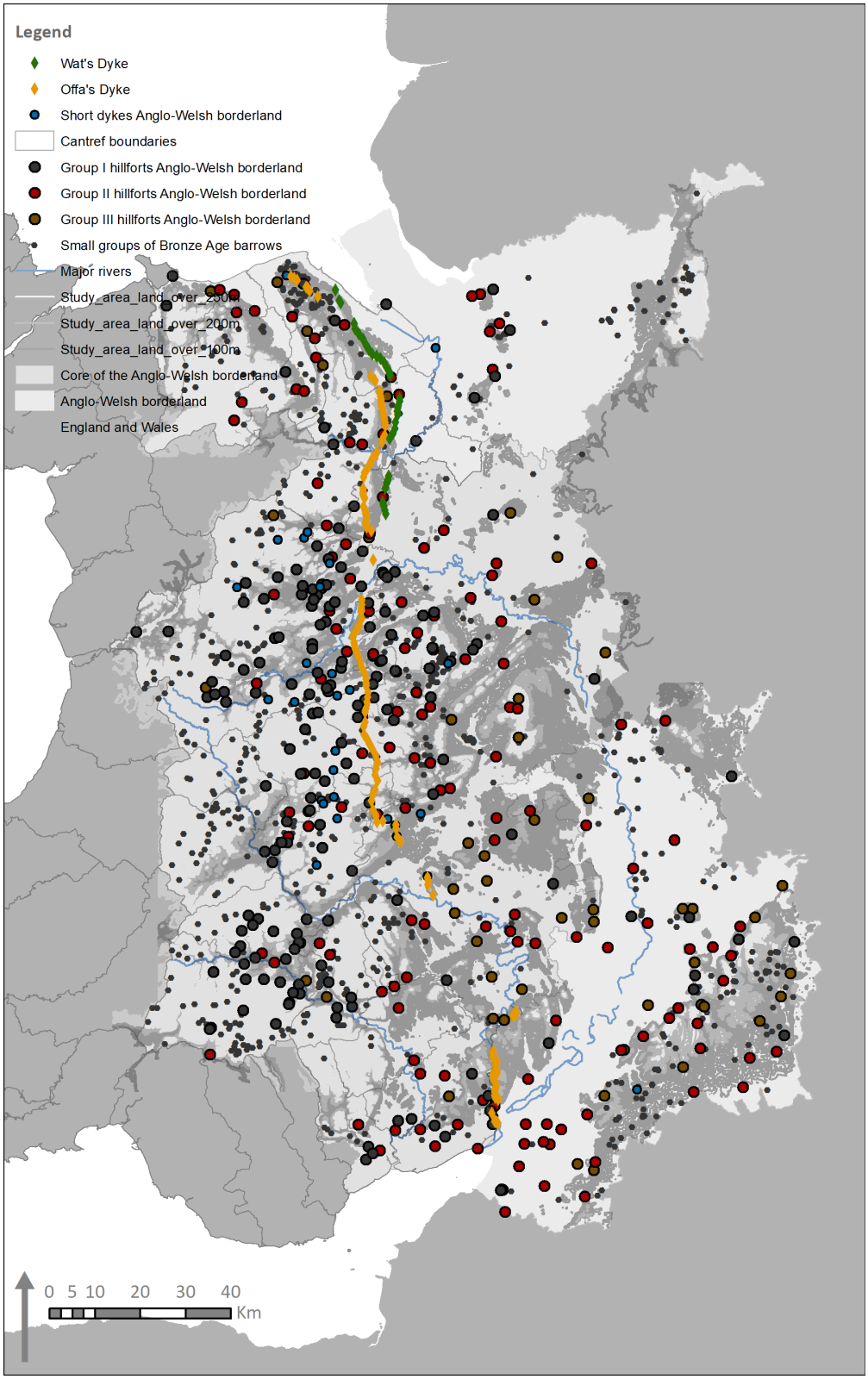


Figure 65 All known early medieval short dykes in the central Anglo-Welsh border with small groups of barrows and cairns, hillforts and cantref boundaries

The national statistics (Table 63) and distribution maps (Figures 62, 64) reveal that the Anglo-Welsh border contains a slightly higher proportion of early medieval dykes than the national average (with 20 per cent of these monuments lying in 15 per cent of the total area of both countries) and that these dykes form part of a wider pattern that broadly sits at the putative borders of Mercia with the Brythonic kingdoms to the west and those of Northumbria, Wessex and the East Angles. Within the border itself the core around the liminal interface between the uplands and lowlands is revealed to be the most heavily monumentalised zone with 27 dykes (87 per cent) sitting in 54 per cent of the border, followed by the west with 21 (68 per cent) in 40 per cent of the study area and then the east with 10 (32 per cent) of dykes lying in 60 per cent of the borderland.

Major rivers and estuaries	Short dykes (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	2	1
1 km	2	2
3 km	4	3
5 km	7	6
> 5 km	31	31

Table 64 Relationship of short dykes vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

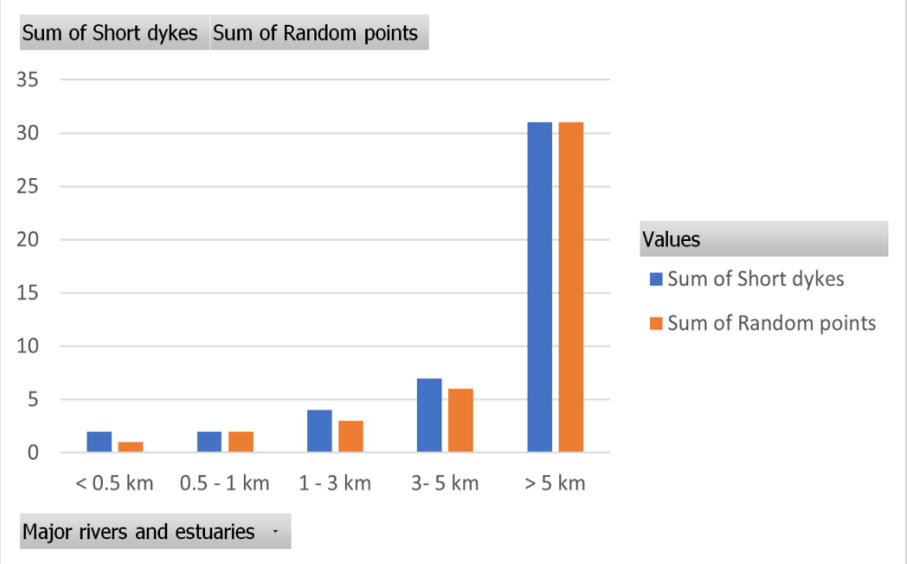


Figure 66 Bar chart of short dykes vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Short dykes (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	4	6
1 km	6	9
3 km	17	18
5 km	23	26
> 5 km	31	31

Table 65 Relationship of short dykes vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

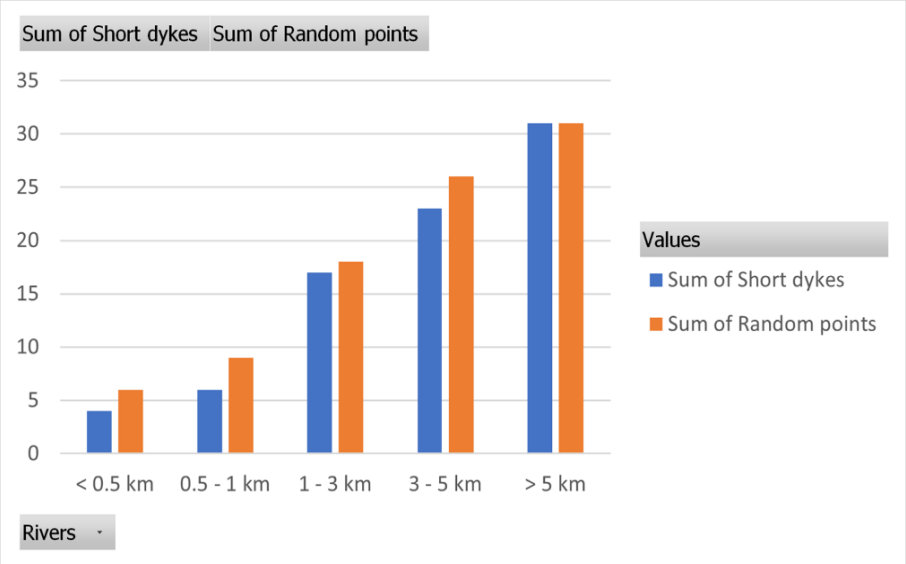


Figure 67 Bar chart of short dykes vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Topographically, it is possible to discern a strong correlation between the short dykes and the liminal interface of the borderland where uplands meet lowlands (Figure 64) but also a high degree of co-location with the rivers (Table 65; Figure 67; Appendix Tables 183, 189; Figs 183, 189), though the absence of a strong relationship relative to the random points is suggestive of other factors also being at play. This correlation is particularly marked in the east of the border (Appendix Table 195; Fig 195) and less powerfully also with the major rivers and estuaries (Table 65; Figure 66; Appendix Tables 184, 190, 196; Figs 184, 190, 196). From the perspective of any association with earlier anthropogenic structures across the whole of the borderland there is little evidence for any correlation between the long barrows and chambered tombs (Appendix Table 171; Fig 171), stone circles (Appendix Table 172, Fig 172), groups of barrows and cairns (Appendix Table 174; Fig 174), cemeteries of barrows and cairns (Appendix Table 175; Fig 175), the larger group 3 hillforts (Appendix Table 177; Fig

177), the Roman forts (Appendix Table 179, Fig 179), or Wat's Dyke (Appendix Table 181; Fig 181).

Small groups of barrows and cairns	Short dykes (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	5	0
1 km	8	4
3 km	18	19
5 km	25	23
5 km	31	31

Table 66 Relationship of short dykes vs random points to small groups of barrows and cairns in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

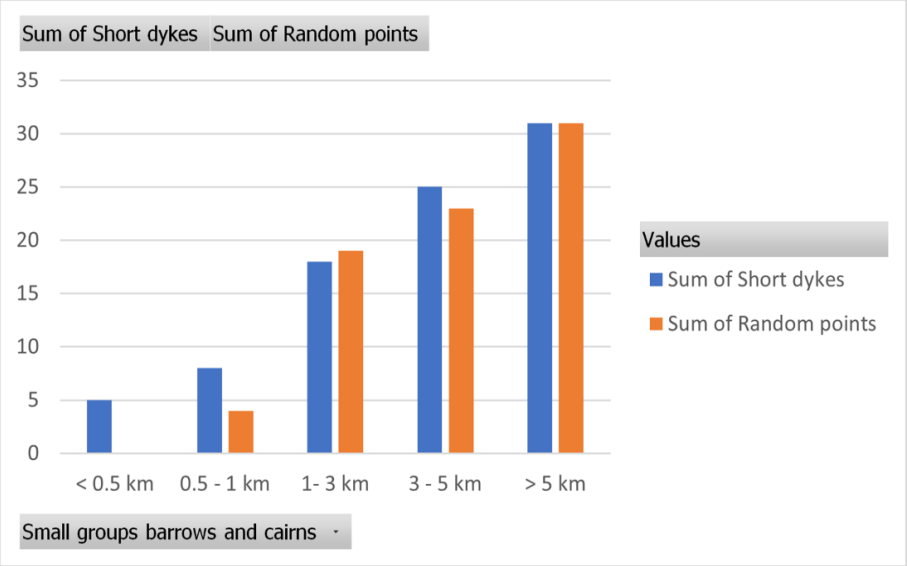


Figure 68 Bar chart of short dykes vs random points relative to small groups of barrows and cairns in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Hillforts	Short dykes (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	1	0
1 km	4	0
3 km	15	6
5 km	25	16
> 5 km	31	31

Table 67 Relationship of short dykes vs random points to hillforts in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

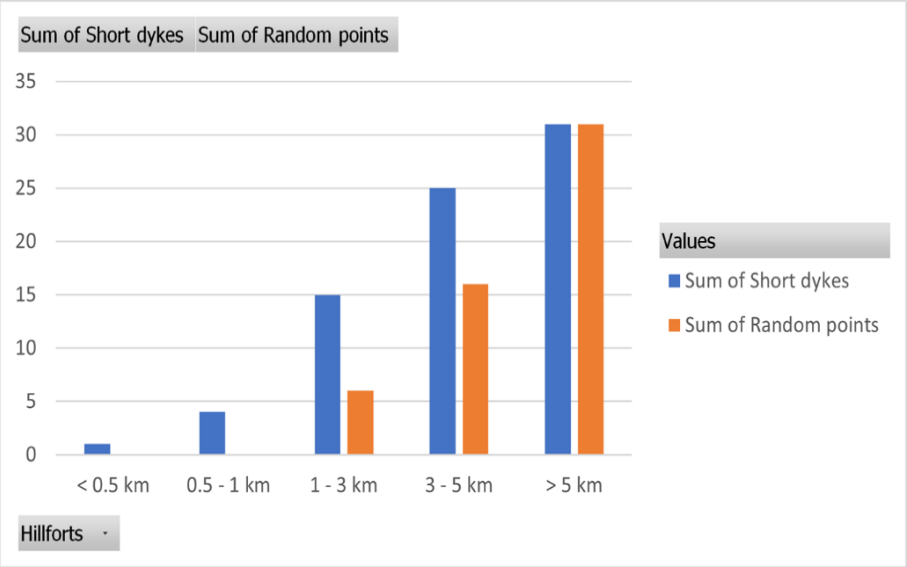


Figure 69 Bar chart of short dykes vs random points relative to hillforts in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Hillforts	Short dykes (core of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	1	0
1 km	4	1
3 km	13	9
5 km	23	17
> 5 km	27	27

Table 68 Relationship of short dykes vs random points to hillforts in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

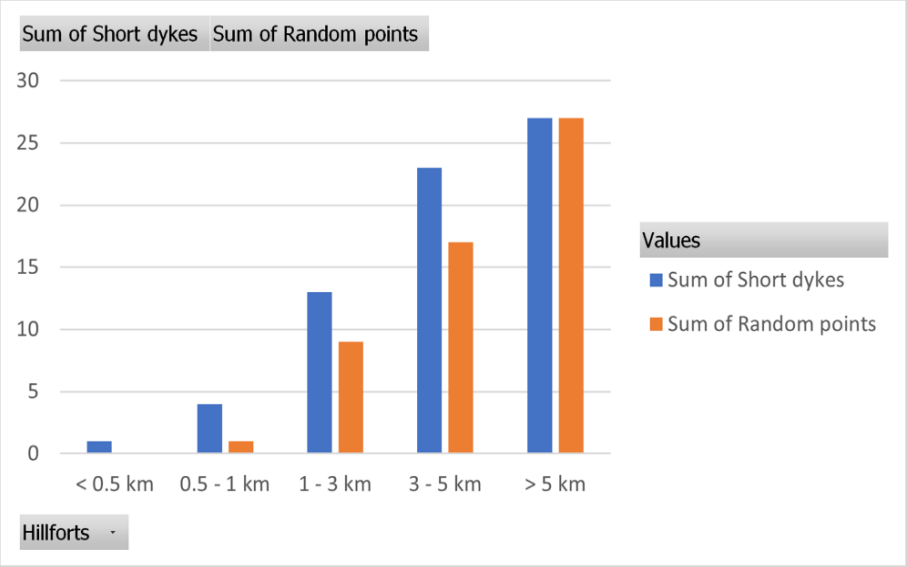


Figure 70 Bar chart of short dykes vs random points relative to hillforts in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Relationships can, however, be discerned with the small groups of barrows and cairns at a shorter distance (up to 0.5 – 1 km) across the whole of the borderland (Table 66; Figure 68;

Appendix Tables 185, 191, 197; Figs 185, 191, 197), hillforts in general (Table 67; Figure 69), but most significantly in the core across a range of scales (Table 68; Figure 70) and more variably (between 1, 3, 5 km) in the west and east (Appendix Tables 192, 198; Figs 192, 198), to a much lesser extent Roman roads (Appendix Tables 178, 187, 193; Figs 178, 187, 193) though most notably in the east (Appendix Table 199; Fig 199).

Short dykes	Offa's Dyke	Random points
< 0.5 km	4	0
1 km	5	0
3 km	6	0
5 km	6	1
> 5 km	10	10

Table 69 Relationship of short dykes to Offa's Dyke in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

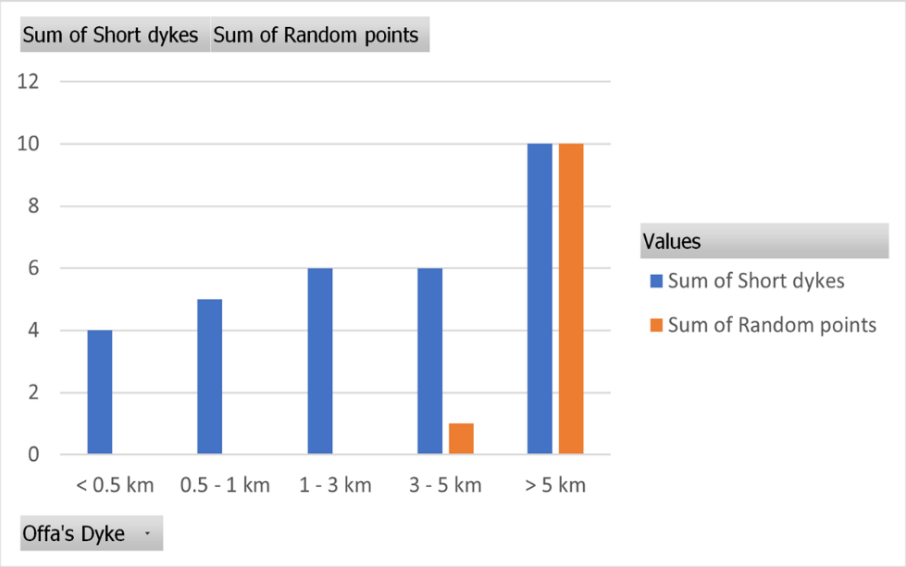


Figure 71 Bar chart of short dykes vs random points relative to Offa's Dyke in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Additionally, a correlation is evident with Offa's Dyke in the east of the borderland (Table 69; Figure 71).

Short dykes	Cantref boundaries	Random points
< 0.5 km	5	1
1 km	8	3
3 km	12	7
5 km	19	12
> 5 km	31	31

Table 70 Relationship of short dykes vs random points to Welsh cantref boundaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

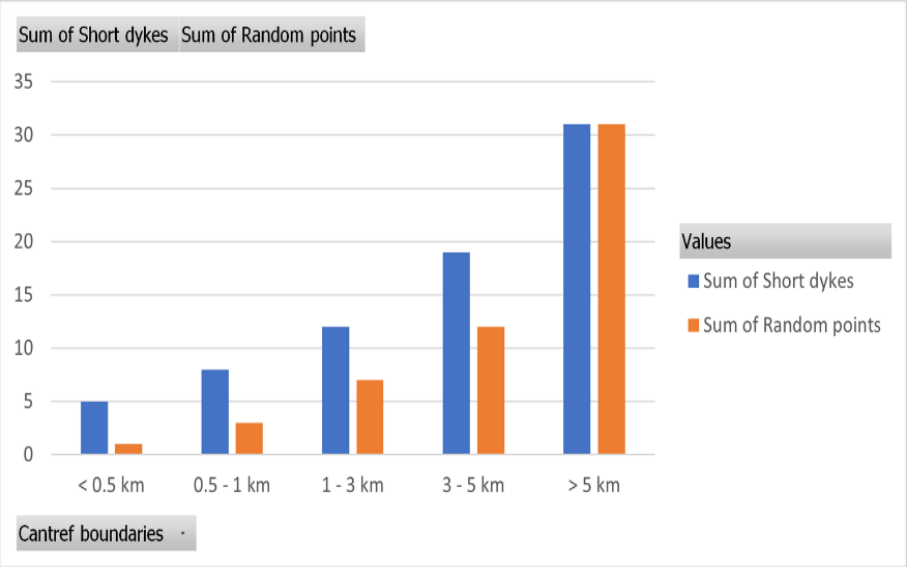


Figure 72 Bar chart of short dykes vs random points relative to Welsh cantref boundaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

The most significant correlation, however, is to be found with the Welsh cantref boundaries (Table 70; Figure 72).

4.7.2 Discussion



Figure 73 Late Roman provinces of Britain (White, 2013, Fig 3.)

Following the formal end of Roman rule in AD 410 the evidence suggests the four, by then largely autonomous, provinces of *Britannia* diverged as the fifth century played out (Figure 73). Those to the east fell relatively rapidly to the Continental invaders, but the situation in the west, in *Britannia Prima* suggests long-term and successful resistance into the seventh century and, in contrast, the presence of Irish raiders and settlers (White, 2023, 2018, 2013). With *Britannia Prima*'s easterly extent lying on, or close to, the Anglo-Welsh borderland its inhabitants would have once again found themselves at the interface between the interests of the two groups of incomers and in the vanguard of efforts in the west to maintain societal structures based on some form of *Romanitas*. Such evidence takes the form of, for example, an absence of early cemeteries with clear Continental cultural influences (White, 2018, p. 207), the presence of a fifth-century gravestone commemorating Cunorix, an Irishman claiming some form of kingship, at Wroxeter, Shropshire, Irish literary sources including *The Expulsion of the Déisi* that references migration from Ireland to Dyfed and Gildas' accounts of perhaps late fifth-century resistance in the west led by Ambrosius Aurelianus, a war lord whose exploits may provide the origin for the Arthurian legends (White, 2013, 2023). Certainly, Irish raiders penetrating the Severn estuary would have found the wealthy, yet relatively poorly defended, villas and towns of south Cymru and Gloucestershire attractive and vulnerable targets (Cunliffe, 2001, p. 441).

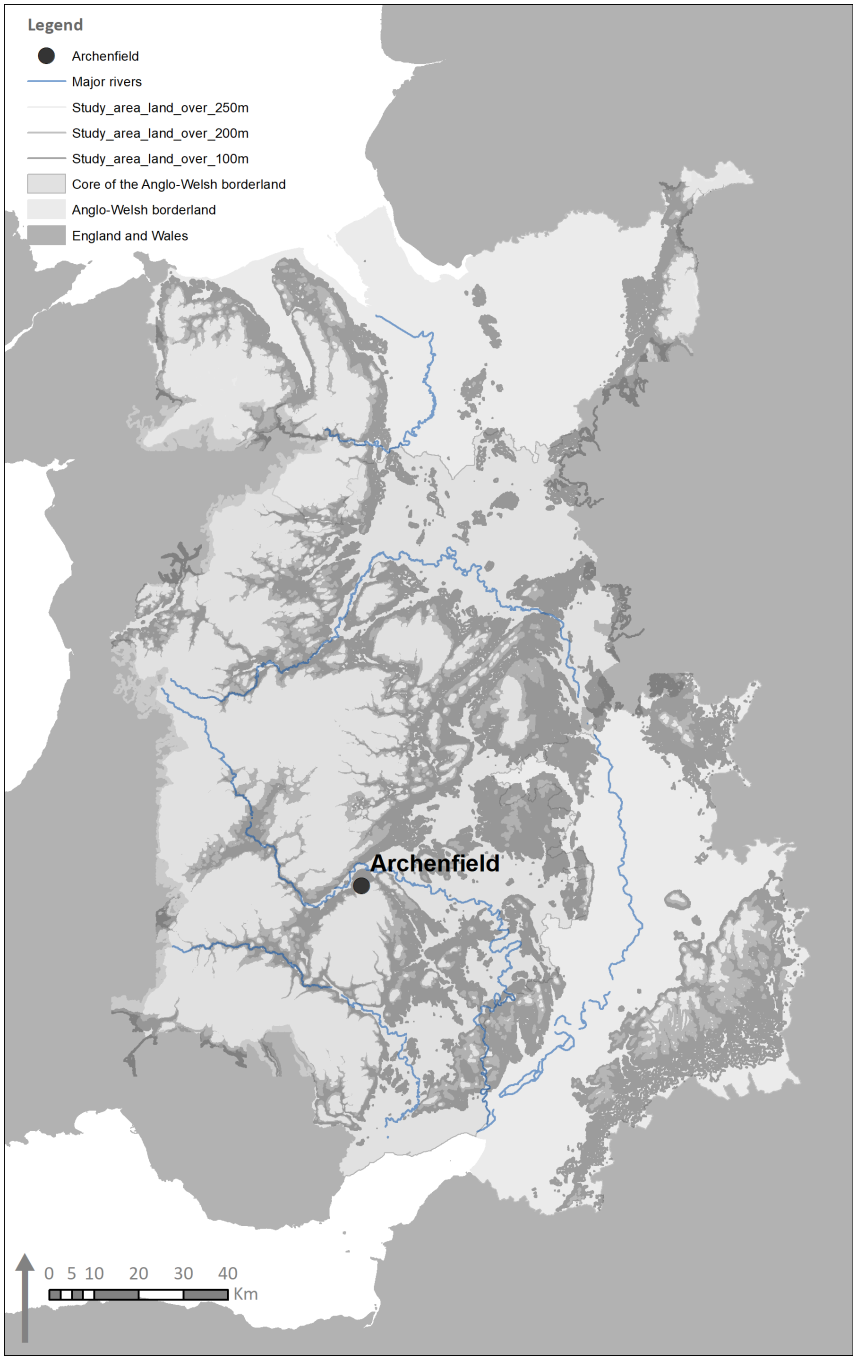


Figure 74 Location of Archenfield, Herefordshire

Over time, however, the individual towns of *Britannia Prima* were picked off (Campbell, 2012) though relations between the inhabitants of the 'broadly defined, permeable and fluid' border (White, 2018, p. 208) were not always confrontational with evidence for more pragmatic relations provided by, for example, the presence of British manufactured penannular brooches decorated in a Continental style (Dickinson, 1982). Change came to be characterised through the emergence of smaller power blocks typified by, for example, the

kingdom of Ergyng in contemporary Herefordshire that emerged in the decades immediately following the departure of Rome and continued up to c. AD 650, in a pivotal zone of the border that later came to be known as Archenfield (Figure 74) (White, 2018, p. 215).

Despite the competing socio-political interests at play across the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the centuries immediately following the departure of Rome there were also commonalities, expressed through, for example, a shared preoccupation with the marking out of boundaries as polities increasingly coalesced into more closely defined units and with the need to mitigate small-scale, endemic cattle-raiding (Grigg, 2018, p. 13). In their summary of the work carried out by CPAT in 2001 Hankinson and Caseldine (2006, p. 269) make the case for five of these short dykes lying within one kilometre of the border of the cantref of Mechain as defined by Melville Richards (1969), a cantref being an early medieval Cymric administrative unit which in this case was also the burial place of the princes of Powys. Hankinson and Caseldine (2016) further note that at least half the known short dykes in Powys lie within one kilometre of the putative boundary of a cantref. Grigg (2018, p. 13, 2015) also notes that the location of a further subgroup of these monuments could be accounted for by the blocking of access routes through the landscape in order to thwart, or disrupt, the widespread raiding of cattle and likely also slaves (Grigg, 2018, p. 86). Certainly, the results of the current study underscore their relationship with natural routes through the landscape and their potential role as boundary markers through their association with the cantref boundaries (Table 70; Figs 64, 72).

Whatever the function of the individual short dykes it is clear is that as an architectural form their symbolism as markers of authority in the early medieval landscape was understood by elites on both sides of the borderland. That this liminal landscape was far from static, but instead subject to the ebb and flow of inter-generational power struggles is further marked out by the text on the ninth-century Pillar of Eliseg in Denbighshire, erected by Cyngen ap Cadell to commemorate his great-grandfather Elisedd ap Gwylog who had retaken the land on which the pillar stands (Edwards, 2009). Additionally, the location of this monument on top of a Bronze Age barrow may point to their more widespread significance as earlier anthropogenic markers in the landscape (Table 66; Figure 68), a status shared, it appears with many of the region's hillforts (Tables 67, 68; Figures 69, 70) and most performatively

expressed through the conspicuous inter-relationship between Wat's Dyke and Old Oswestry hillfort in the east of the border (Historic England, 1997) (Figure 41). Additional written evidence for the fluid nature of political alliances and allegiances across the wider early medieval landscape over time is provided by Bede who wrote of Penda, king of Mercia, electing to fight alongside the kings of Gwynedd and Powys against Christian Northumbria in AD 613, making reference to the 'heretical Britons and heathen Mercians'. Additionally, early Welsh poems present a similar picture of collaborative exploits against shared neighbours to the east as do the eighth century *Lives* of Guthlac in which the saint is presented as a leader of a multi-ethnic warband in his youth (for a review of these sources see Brady, 2017, p. 13). The historical and archaeological evidence up to and including the long eighth-century is, then, suggestive of the presence of complex and fluid political networks.

By the later eighth century AD at the time of the construction of the Mercian mega-dykes (Figure 64) the kind of regional power blocks not seen since the end of the presence of Rome in Britain had re-emerged. Mercia in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland was at its zenith with much of what is now central England under its direct control and with extensive hegemonic networks over its immediate and more distant neighbours (Brown and Farr, 2005; Hunt, 2016). In the west and north of the borderland power had coalesced into the hands of the princes of Powys whose claims to legitimacy were in turn based on connections back to the earliest post-Roman networks of power (Edwards, 2009). Whilst Wat's Dyke remains relatively enigmatic relative to its near neighbour Offa's Dyke it was nevertheless clearly intended to make a powerful political statement across much of the Anglo-Welsh border (Ray and Bapty, 2016) with the most recent fieldwork revealing that Offa's Dyke was much closer to running 'from sea to sea' as described by Asser in his *Life of King Alfred* than previously thought (Willams, 2023).

Clearly, by virtue of its route and methods employed in its construction Offa's Dyke was intended to intimidate and oversee Mercia's immediate neighbours to the west, to make a statement not only drawing on a device familiar to their elites, but also one based on much earlier large-scale linear statements of power in the landscape dating back to the time of Rome. Whilst it is not clear if Offa ever had personal sight of Hadrian's Wall he would certainly have known of it and understood its meaning and significance (Ray and Bapty, 2016,

pp. 342–343). Offa's concerns were not, however, limited to his western borders, or indeed with Mercia as a whole. Evidence derived from Offa's ambitions to establish a third archbishopric at Lichfield, his minting of gold dinars to facilitate Mercian entry to continental trade markets (ibid., p. 327) and his ongoing communication and correspondence with his contemporary Charlemagne, king of the Franks, all point to an ambitious ruler more than capable of building and managing his reputation on an international scale (Naismith, 2017). That there is little or no evidence for the recutting the ditch (Grigg, 2018, p. 32) perhaps further suggests that thoughts of maintaining Offa's Dyke were secondary and that it was the act of construction itself that satisfied the primary drivers for the creation of the monument; that once made its statement of dominance and prestige required no repetition (Grigg, 2018, p. 30; Squatriti, 2004, 2002; Tyler, 2011, pp. 157–8). The results of the current study and those of the most recent scholarship (Williams, 2023) do however suggest a further strategic element, one in which a series of shorter dykes and watercourses potentially (Table 69, Figures 67, 71) formed part of a sophisticated, managed westerly Mercian frontier. Perhaps then, the evidence rather suggests that Offa's Dyke was in fact both practical and performative a 'swiss-army' statement in the landscape capable of simultaneously fulfilling a variety of complementary roles; roles similar to those of its more diminutive contemporaries across the Anglo-Welsh borderland which were understood by all. This may certainly go some way to accounting for why Mercia's ruling elite were prepared to dedicate the necessary resources to this monument's construction.

Built at the apogee of this form of earthwork the role of the Mercian mega-dykes was short-lived. Events in the later part of the early medieval period overtook the 'Mercian Supremacy' (Naismith, 2017) as with, for example, the arrival of the Danes Mercia's political dominance waned and it was under the leadership of the kingdom of the West Saxons that English unification was finally achieved.

Nevertheless, as these macro-scale political machinations played out across England in the later centuries of the early medieval period a piece of tenth-century documentary evidence points to at least some of the residents of the Anglo-Welsh border continuing to mark out their own identity, to make their own distinct arrangements for managing the complexities of life in an early medieval borderland (Brady, 2017, p. 4). The topographic description in the

single English copy of the *Dunsæte Agreement* held in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (MS, 383) most likely places its location in the aforementioned Archenfield in the Wye valley (Figure 74) (Molyneaux, 2011, p. 251). The document describes a community collaborating on an agreed legal framework to resolve their shared problems, one who placed a high value on compromise, the swift resolution of disputes and peacekeeping, not least through the equal treatment of Cymric and English law codes (ibid.).

In her review of the other later extant sources Brady (2017, p. 12) reflects that 'the Welsh borderlands were uniquely a place where two peoples lived together relatively peacefully for a very long period of time. In its varying yet consistent drawing together of Welsh and Mercian influences, the region of the Welsh borderlands formed a singular nexus of Anglo-Welsh culture'. Indeed, the combined historical and archaeological evidence speaks of a disparity between the violent depiction of the region in many Northumbrian or West Saxon texts and the evidence on the ground that suggests rather more peaceful relations between the inhabitants of the borderland (Bassett, 2000, 1989; Charles-Edwards, 2014; Fanning, 1991; Higham, 2008, 1994; Sims-Williams, 1983; Tyler, 2008, 2005; Yorke, 1990).

Less formal written references, a group of surviving Old English riddles also reflect a shared regional culture (Brady, 2017, p. 14). In combination with archaeological evidence from drove roads these sources counter the narrative that the later border was defined by Offa's Dyke and suggest that it was instead a landscape through which both Mercians and the Cymry raided and traded in ways that would have been familiar to their neighbours to the west and east. Finally, the understudied English *Life of Harold Godwinson*, written during the transition into Anglo-Norman England following the Conquest, claims that Harold survived the battle at Hastings and lived out his life in the relative safety and obscurity of the nebulous Anglo-Welsh borderlands. Clearly in the collective imagination of this transitional period the region's status as 'other', as a potential refuge inaccessible to the new Anglo-Norman ruling elites, was very real (Brady, 2017, pp. 159–168).

In summary, both the historical and archaeological sources point to a landscape where life was lived differently, a view shared both by its inhabitants, their near neighbours and more distant elites. The long-term impact of the events in the early medieval borderland following

the departure of Rome are still keenly felt today as White (2013, p. 593) observes had *Britannia Prima* fallen alongside the other provinces Cymric language and culture may not have had the opportunity to flourish as they did. Finally, the most recent scholarship on Offa's and Wat's dykes explores their potential role in the management of macro-scale riverine and maritime communication networks linking the Severn and Dee to the Irish Sea at the western extent of Mercian power (Williams, 2023, pp. 165–66). Future work may, therefore, reveal more on the continued influence of the Atlantic coast through the early medieval period in both England and Cymru and the Anglo-Welsh border's ongoing pivotal role as a liminal space between the well-established cultural networks to the west and east.

Whilst the arrival of the Norman elites following the invasion of 1066 undoubtedly left a dramatic mark on the landscapes of England and later Cymru, not least through their programmes of castle construction, nevertheless significant bodies of place-name and documentary evidence speak of the enduring nature of early medieval linguistic, tenurial and political arrangements into the later middle ages and beyond (e.g. Comeau, 2020; Rippon, 2022). Within the Anglo-Welsh border itself these sources reveal multi-layered, complex voluntary and legally-binding networks of understanding that set it aside as a unique liminal space across which different rules applied, rules which undoubtedly marked it out as a place of difference (Brady, 2022, 2017; Parsons, 2022), a landscape at the edge of the power of Cymru and England which the Normans inherited and, in its east at least, re-imagined for their own ends.

4.7.3 Future work

The following programmes of research may further our understanding of early medieval monumentality, in particular of the construction of earthwork dykes, across the Anglo-Welsh borderland:

- Incorporating results of studies of Offa's and Wat's dykes with those of the other short dykes across the landscape may serve to establish whether there are degrees of commonality of purpose in relation to, for example, facilitating or blocking access to resources or significant locations across the borderland, or the marking of local boundaries

- Future excavations conducted on Offa's, Wat's and a sub-sample of the short dykes have the potential to provide valuable dating evidence to introduce a degree of temporality in our understanding of these monuments and how they may have, for example, been constructed as a response to one another
- Additional studies on the nature of the relationship between the Mercian mega-dykes and the shorter dykes and their relationships with riverine routes through the landscape may further explain the strategic placement of, and routes taken by, these monuments at a range of scales and of the significance of the major riverine routes through the landscape into the Irish Sea
- Further work on the inter-relationships incorporating archaeological, place-name and documentary sources may further our understanding of the relationships between the short dykes and Welsh cantref boundaries
- Similarly, interdisciplinary studies may also provide additional insights into the relationship between these monuments and macro-scale patterns of settlement across the Anglo-Welsh borderland

4.8 The Anglo-Welsh border in the Medieval period



Figure 75 Clun Castle (Shropshire). The thirteenth-century stone castle sits on the site of the earlier post-Conquest Anglo-Norman structure overlooking the River Clun and its valley to the west.

The medieval period in England is defined as beginning in 1066, a date marked by the arrival of a new French-speaking aristocracy who almost entirely replaced the existing early medieval ruling classes (Williams, 2000) and ending in 1486 with the fall of the Plantagenet dynasty (Thornton, 2005). As the conquerors steadily consolidated their position what followed was a politically-charged programme of religious and secular building and rebuilding the results of which still dominate much of the built heritage environment of both England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland today.

Within the English context the Norman Conquest represented less of a single overarching victory and more the beginning of a process characterised by ongoing and repeated suppressions of rebellions by the English elite in the decades immediately following 1066. Certainly, by the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 a picture emerges of a country scarred

by conquest and rebellion with only four surviving English lords of any significant status remaining with lands elsewhere almost exclusively in the hands of William's senior supporters (Gillingham and Griffiths, 2000, pp. 1–2).

Within the secular context, post-conquest castle building falls within three broad phases, the construction of royal centres of power in key strategic locations, the granting of lordships to individual magnates who then went on to build their own fortresses and the final period of construction undertaken by knightly tenants also seeking to establish their authority over their own estates (Liddiard, 2005, p. 18). As Liddiard (ibid., p. 18) further notes most of these castles were undocumented and so the most reliable estimates for numbers are to be derived from the surviving earthworks themselves. The remains on the ground suggest that hundreds of castles of either timber or stone were constructed during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, though they would not all have been in concurrent use.

Meanwhile, the situation in Cymru was very different. The legacy of early medieval resistance in *Britannia Prima* meant that the west of the region still lay beyond the borders of England in the late eleventh century (White, 2023, 2007). As a result, in this part of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, the power of the native princes of Cymru went unchallenged with authority slowly coalescing into the hands of the leaders of Gwynedd who subsequently went on to lead the ill-fated late-thirteenth century rebellion against the forces of Edward I. Consequently, once again the inhabitants of the Anglo-Welsh border found themselves at the interface of what now constituted two opposing national polities.

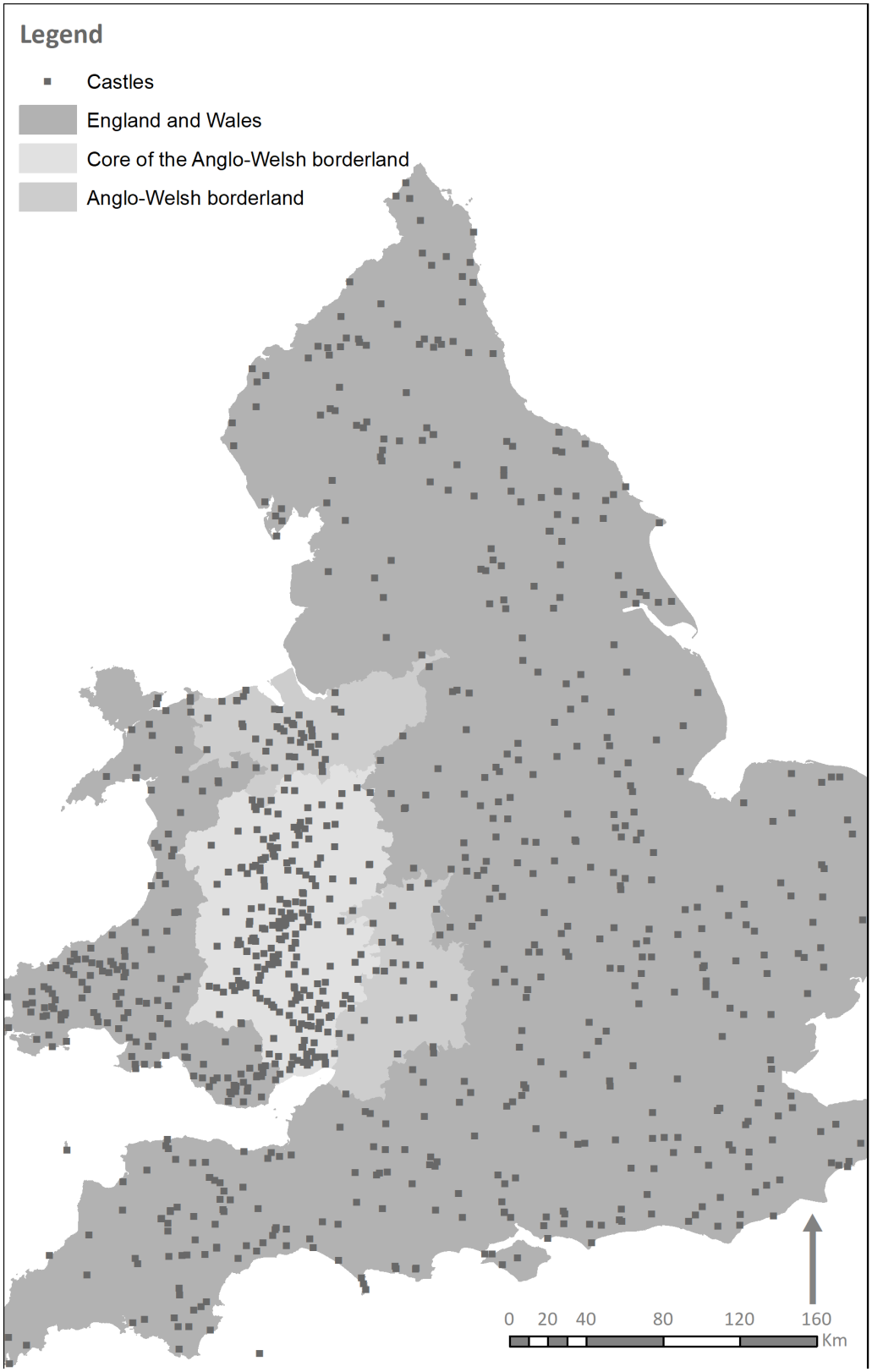


Figure 76 Castles in Cymru and England derived from the national heritage listings

Certainly, throughout the medieval period, whether within the context of the eleventh-twelfth century conquest of England, or Edward I's late thirteenth - early fourteenth century campaign of castle construction in Cymru these monuments came to represent the quintessential statement of Anglo-Norman and Plantagenet power and permanence in the landscape (Patourel, 1976). In the Anglo-Welsh borderland the former period witnessed far greater levels of castle construction than anywhere else under, or at the edge of, Anglo-Norman control and it is with these castles this study is concerned (Figure 76).

Coordinated academic interest in the analysis of castles has its origins in the Victorian period with many decades of research being primarily concerned with their martial functionality (Creighton and Liddiard, 2008). More recent work has, however, sought to develop more complex and nuanced interpretative frameworks concerned with their wider cultural, economic and political roles (ibid.). In his seminal study of the later medieval site of Bodium, Coulson (1979, pp. 74-77) concluded that 'the functionalism inherent in a fortified structure cannot be disentangled from their evocative purpose' and certainly the nature of castles such as Cooling, Kent emphasise their role in the medieval imagination as performative as well as practical places (Johnson, 2002, pp. xiii–xix). More contemporary studies still have moved beyond the individual castle to explore medieval landscapes in the round building on Standen's (1999, pp. 22–27) interpretation of these environments as 'a whole set of lines and zones which frontier inhabitants and rulers could pick and choose according to circumstances'. Such analyses are typified by Swallow's (2016, p. 289) work which places the castles of Cheshire within a multi-faceted spatial and temporal borderland and that led her to conclude that 'contemporaries viewed borders and frontiers as both linear (clearly defined demarcations) and zonal (fluctuating areas of cross-cultural borderland)'. Certainly, as Swallow's analysis demonstrates these contemporary ways of considering the individual castles, their wider landscape setting and the nature of borderlands in the round promise to further our understanding of life in the Anglo-Welsh border during the medieval period.

4.8.1 Monumentality on the Anglo-Welsh borderland

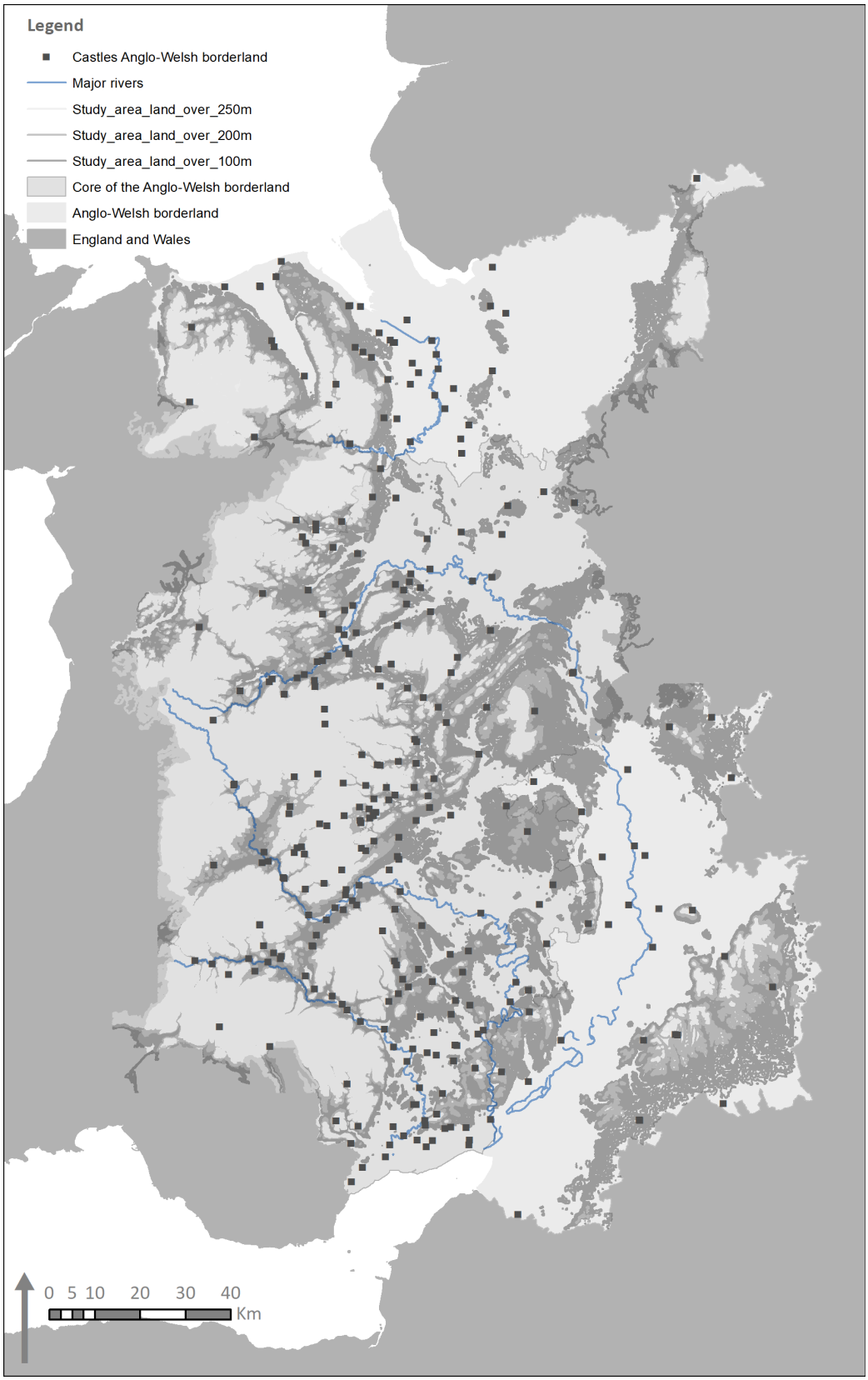


Figure 77 Topographic map of medieval castles across the Anglo-Welsh borderland

The genesis of the liminal nature of the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the medieval period is directly attributable to William I's early decision that the conquest of Cymru was both unnecessary and prohibitively expensive; a view that held sway until Edward I's militarily successful, but financially ruinous, campaign against the Cymry in the late thirteenth century (Prestwich, 2008).

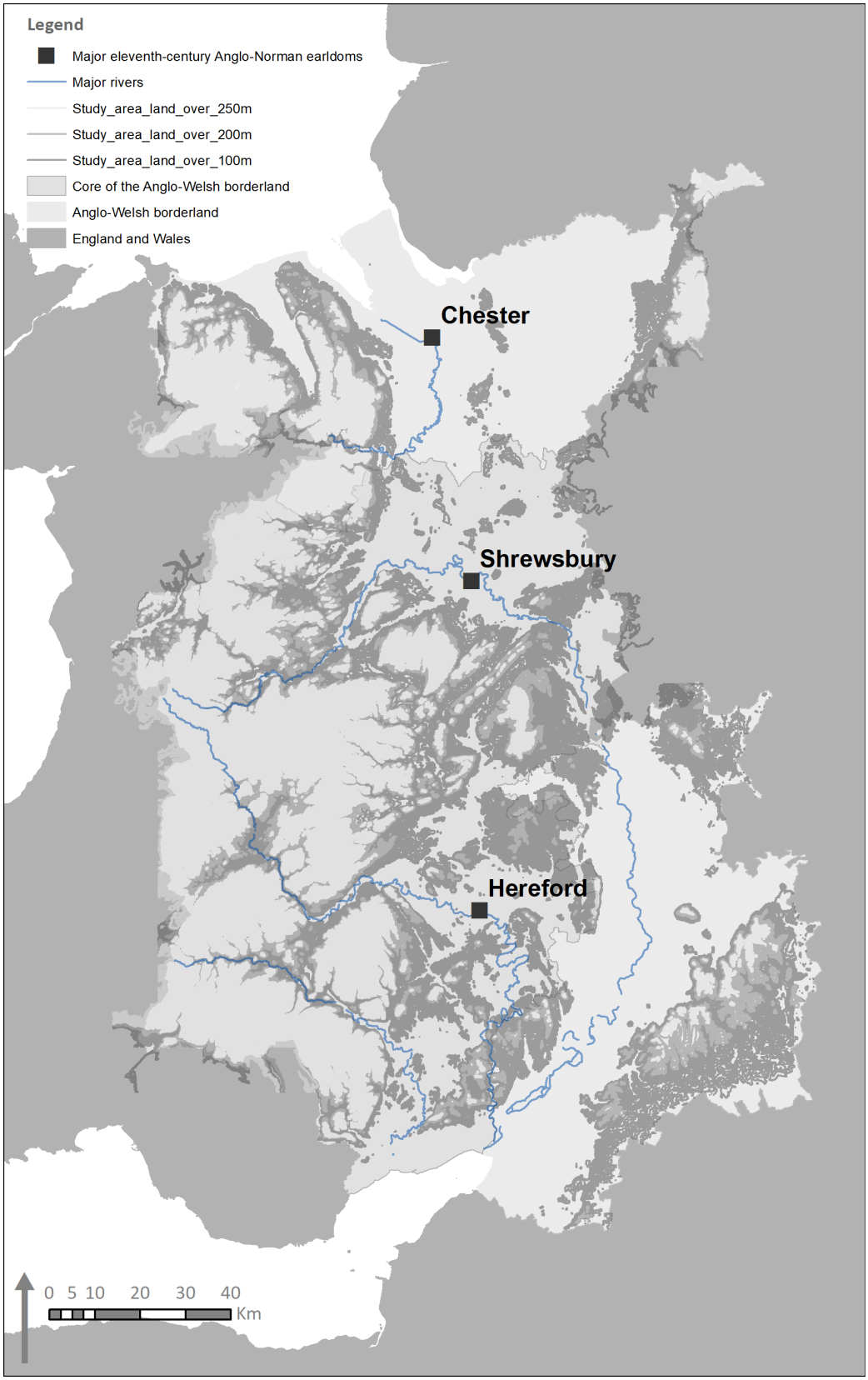


Figure 78 Locations of the first three major Anglo-Norman earldoms at Chester, Shrewsbury and Hereford on the rivers Dee, Severn and Wye

Nevertheless, faced with fluid political and geographical fragmentation on the one side and the rise of powerful native rulers on the other, securing the English border with Cymru proved strategically unavoidable. The result, for the rulers of England at least, was a masterstroke of delegation through the creation of three new powerful earldoms based at Chester, Shrewsbury and Hereford on the Dee, Severn and Wye respectively (Figure 78), whose raison d'être was to enhance their own prestige through the acquisition of Cymric territories (Lieberman, 2010). Over time these earldoms fragmented into over forty semi-autonomous, competing seigneurial units which went on to form a distinct territory, the *Marchia Wallie*, or March of Wales, Y Mers, in which the king's writ did not run for over four centuries until they were finally suppressed in Henry VIII's Laws in Wales Acts of 1536 and 1542 (ibid.). Whilst periodically constrained by the needs for English monarchs to recognise the authority of the Cymric princes the Marcher lords became adept at assimilating lands that were either disputed, or where there was no recorded native ruler, a practice that over time extended across both sides of the border. Whilst still distinctively liminal in character the resulting archaeological legacy of prolific and enduringly piecemeal castle construction stands in contrast to the early medieval kingdom of Mercia's macro-scale landscape planning expressed through Offa's and Wat's dykes.

	Area Km^2	No of castles	Percentage of Km^2	Percentage of castles
England total	131177	612	86%	64%
Cymru total	20905	338	14%	36%
TOTAL	152082	950		
England outside study area	117665	493	77%	52%
Cymru outside study area	11900	154	8%	16%
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	22513	303	15%	32%

Internal Anglo-Welsh border statistics				
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	12244	220	54%	73%
West of the Anglo-Welsh border	9003	184	40%	61%
East of the Anglo-Welsh border	13509	119	60%	39%

Table 71 Distribution statistics for scheduled castles in Cymru, England and the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Summary of Table 71. The Anglo-Welsh border contains 303 Medieval castles, most of which date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or 32 per cent of the national totals for Cymru and England lying within 15 per cent of the total area of both countries. Within the borderland itself the core contains 220, or 73 per cent of the castles in 54 per cent of the study area, with the west accounting for 184, or 61 per cent of these monuments in 40 per cent of the border and the east containing 119 castles, or 39 per cent of these sites within 60 per cent of the area.

	Average hinterland of individual castles (km^2)
England outside the study area	239
Cymru outside the study area	77
Whole of the Anglo-Welsh border	74
Core of the Anglo-Welsh border	56

Table 72 Average hinterlands of individual castles in Cymru, England, the Anglo-Welsh border and the core of the borderland

Summary of Table 72. The figures reveal the extent of territorial variation between individual castles across England and Cymru. Whilst figures across the rest of England vary considerably, nevertheless the average comes out at 239 km^2. For the rest of Cymru the average reduces to 77, whilst across the borderland as a whole each castle averages out at 74 km^2. Within the core of the borderland the figure reduces further to 56 km^2.

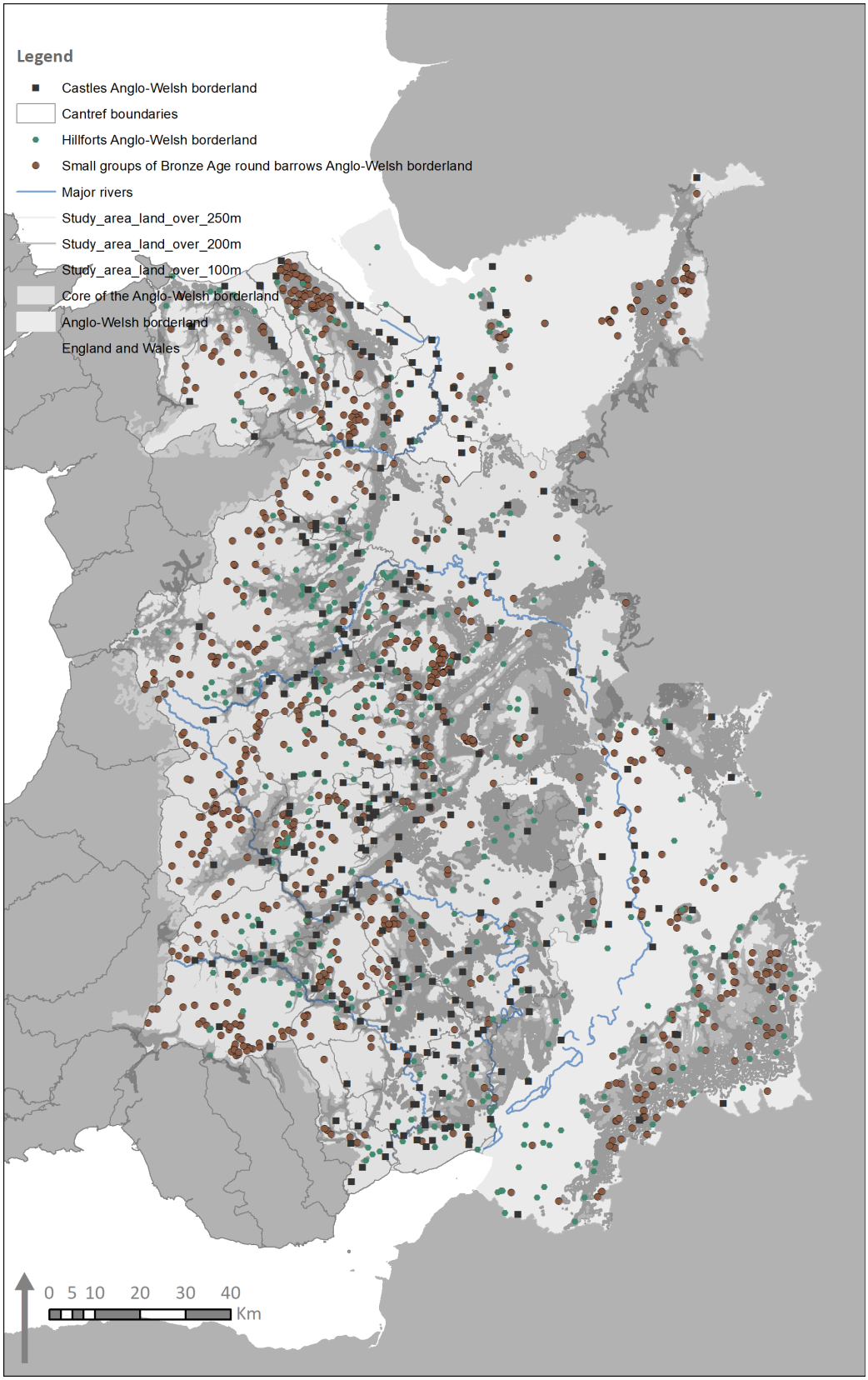


Figure 79 Castles in the study area with Welsh Cantref boundaries, hillforts, small groups of Bronze Age barrows, topography and major rivers and estuaries

The national figures (Table 71) and distribution map (Fig 76) reveal that rates of castle construction in the Anglo-Welsh borderland were far greater than elsewhere in England and that within the core of the border the density of castles was greater still than those found in both England and the remainder of Cymru. Additionally, the statistics for the extents of average hinterlands (Table 72) illustrate the constrained spatial nature of the individual territories under the control of each castle in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland relative to those enjoyed elsewhere in England in particular. Whilst not all castles were contemporaneously occupied the figures nevertheless reveal a broad pattern of atypically dense castle construction and speak of the limited resources available to each location relative to their contemporaries elsewhere.

Major rivers and estuaries	Castles (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	52	14
1 km	64	24
3 km	114	63
5 km	145	93
> 5 km	303	303

Table 73 Relationship of castles vs random points to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

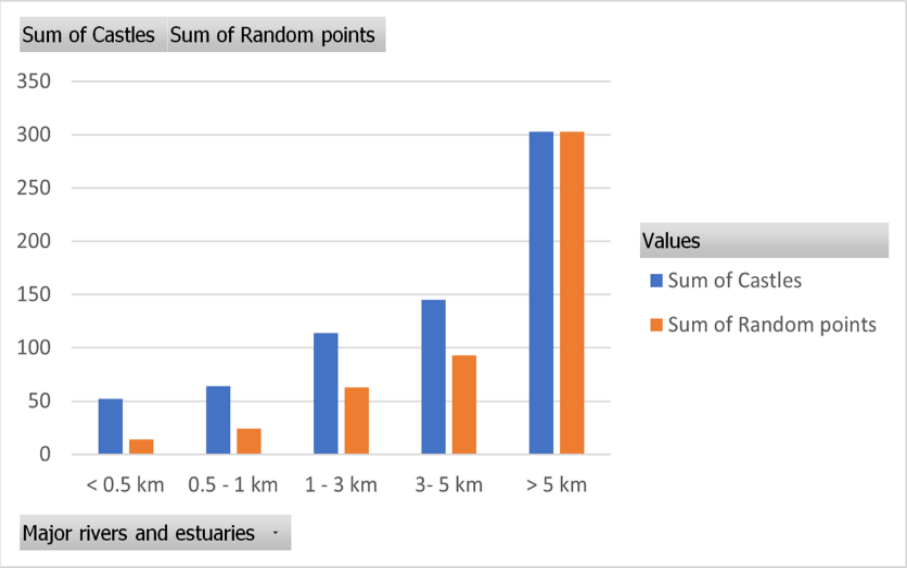


Figure 80 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to major rivers and estuaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Rivers	Castles (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	115	59
1 km	150	100
3 km	240	203
5 km	278	250
> 5 km	303	303

Table 74 Relationship of castles vs random points to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

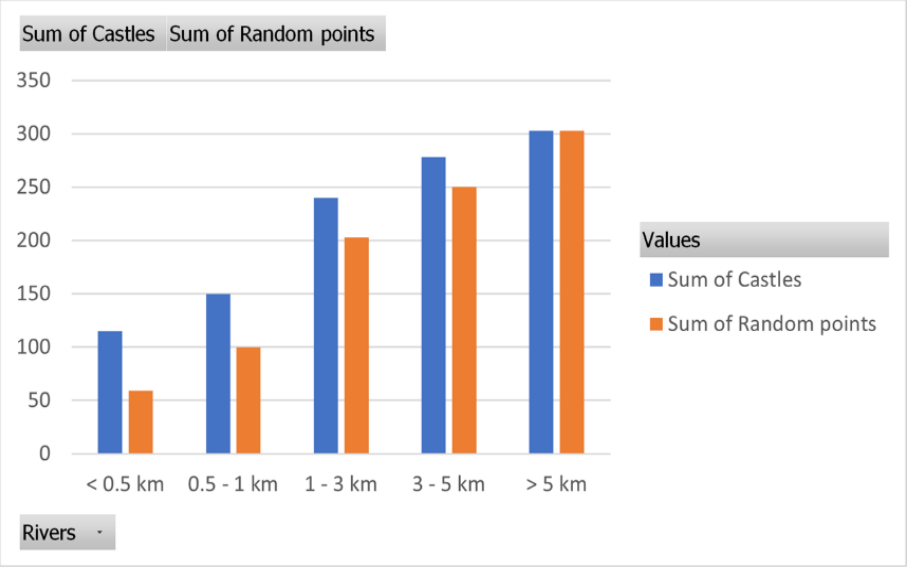


Figure 81 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to rivers in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Topographically, it is possible to discern a relationship with the rivers and major rivers and estuaries across the whole of the border relative to the random points (Tables 73, 74; Figures 80, 81). In terms of any relationship with earlier anthropogenic monuments there is little to no evidence for any correlation with long barrows and chambered tombs (Appendix Table 203; Fig 203), stone circles (Appendix Table 204; Fig 204), groups and cemeteries of barrows and cairns (Appendix Tables 206, 207; Figs 206, 207), group III hillforts (Appendix Table 209; Fig 209) or Romano-British villas (Appendix Table 212; Fig 212).

Small groups of barrows and cairns	Castles (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	8	4
1 km	26	20
3 km	133	130
5 km	232	201
> 5 km	303	303

Table 75 Relationship of castles vs random points to small groups of barrows and cairns in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

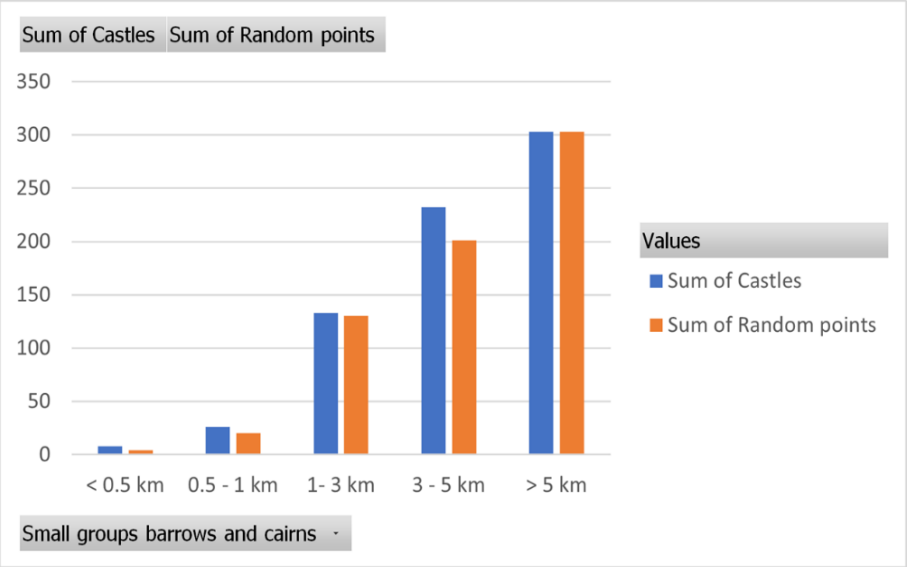


Figure 82 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to small groups of barrows and cairns in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Small groups of barrows and cairns	Castles (core of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	5	8
1 km	18	21
3 km	105	94
5 km	176	147
> 5 km	220	220

Table 76 Relationship of castles vs random points to small groups of barrows and cairns in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

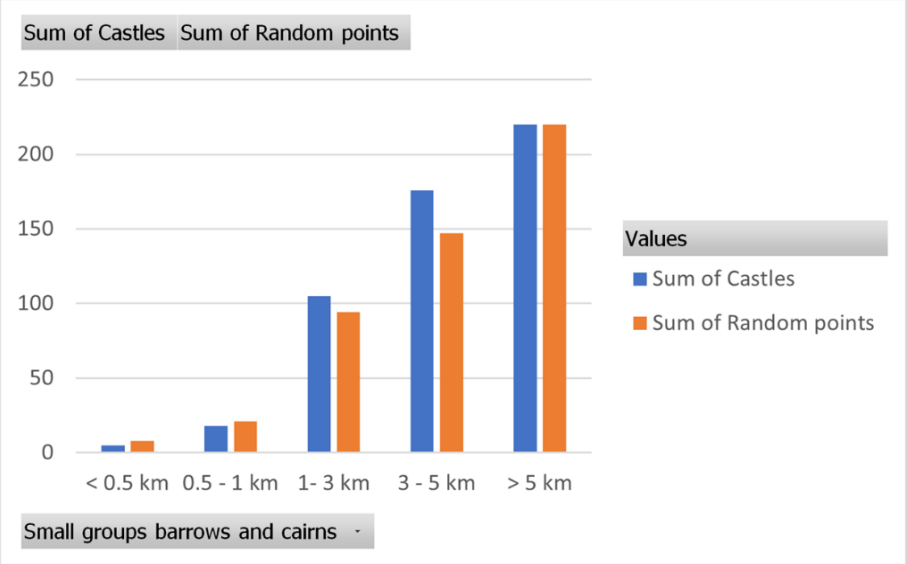


Figure 83 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to small groups of barrows and cairns in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Small groups of barrows and cairns	Castles (east of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	5	0
1 km	12	6
3 km	51	38
5 km	83	68
> 5 km	119	119

Table 77 Relationship of castles vs random points to small groups of barrows and cairns in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

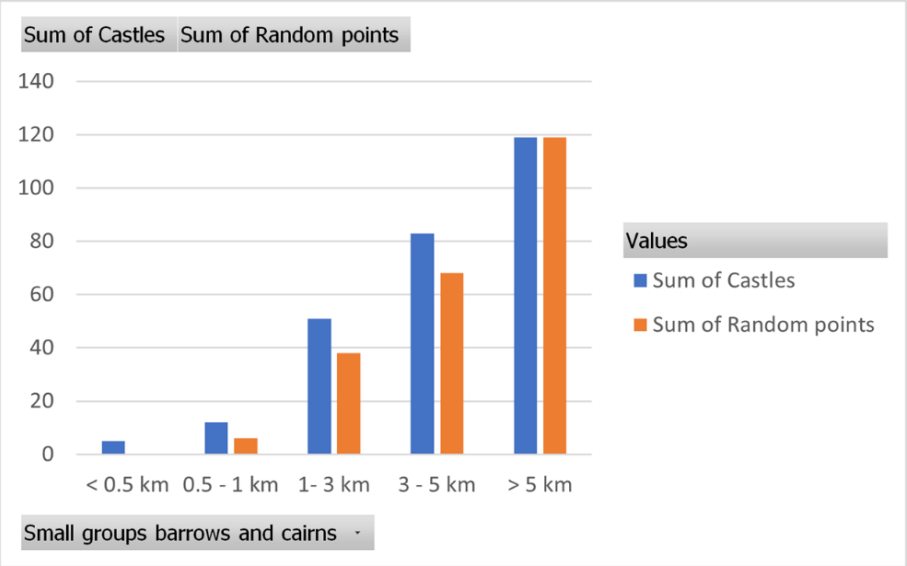


Figure 84 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to small groups of barrows and cairns in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Relationships of varying strengths could, however, be discerned with the small groups of barrows and cairns across the border (Table 75, Figure 82) where the relationship is revealed to be weaker in the west (Appendix Table 229; Fig 229), but more significant in the core and east (Tables 76, 77; Figures 83, 84).

Hillforts	Castles (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	15	6
1 km	28	25
3 km	152	95
5 km	234	182
> 5 km	303	303

Table 78 Relationship of castles vs random points to hillforts in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

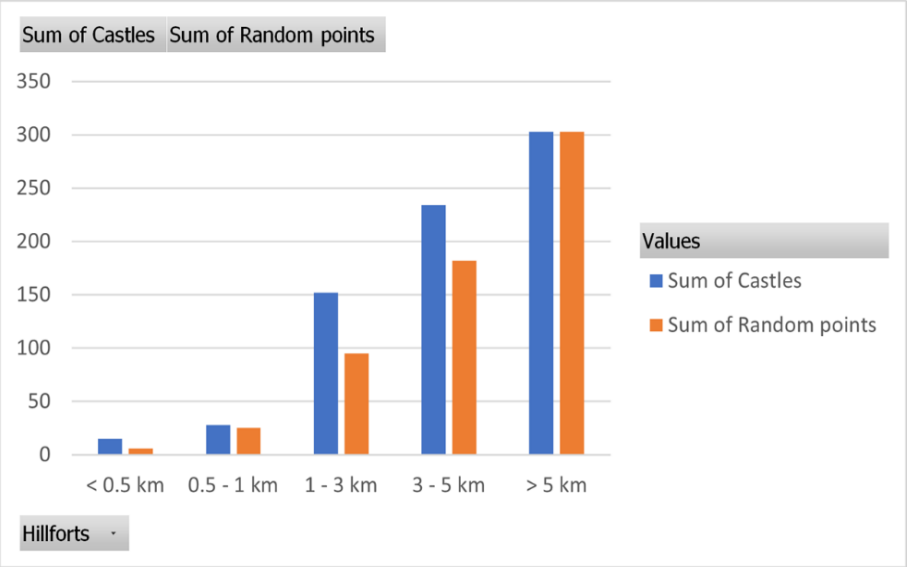


Figure 85 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to hillforts in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Hillforts	Castles (core of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	8	8
1 km	19	18
3 km	129	82
5 km	186	150
> 5 km	220	220

Table 79 Relationship of castles vs random points to hillforts in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

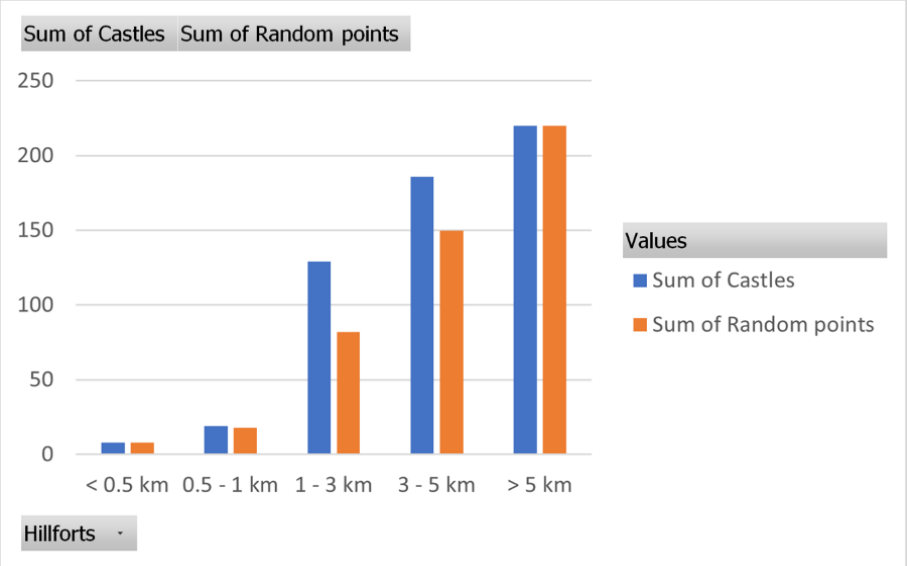


Figure 86 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to hillforts in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Hillforts	Castles (west of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	8	3
1 km	16	11
3 km	106	62
5 km	152	106
> 5 km	184	184

Table 80 Relationship of castles vs random points to hillforts in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

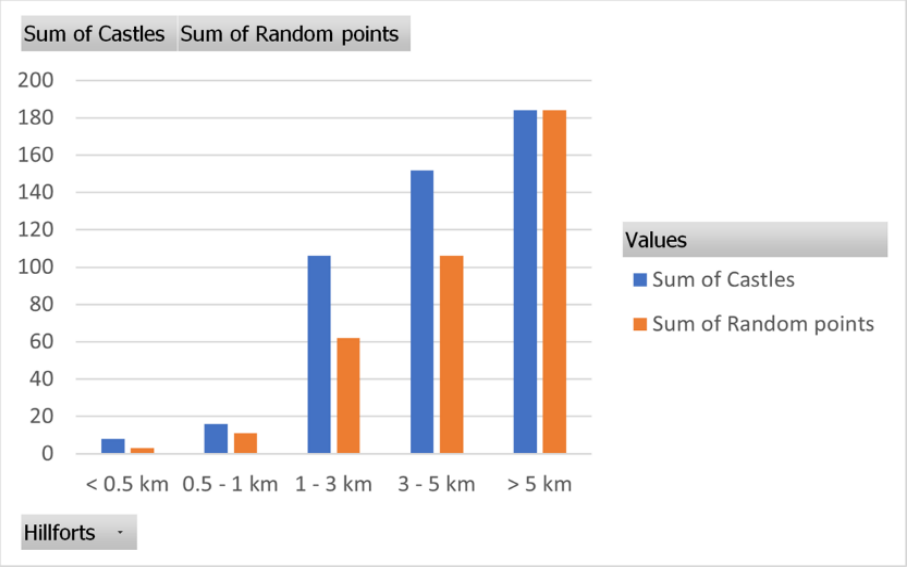


Figure 87 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to hillforts in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

In the case of hillforts (Table 78; Figure 85) the relationship is least evident in the east (Appendix Table 240; Fig 240) but strongest in the core between 1-3 km (Table 79; Figure 86) and the west between 1-3 and 3-5 km (Table 80; Figure 87).

Roman roads	Castles (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	22	8
1 km	44	24
3 km	105	71
5 km	154	119
> 5 km	303	303

Table 81 Relationship of castles vs random points to Roman roads in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

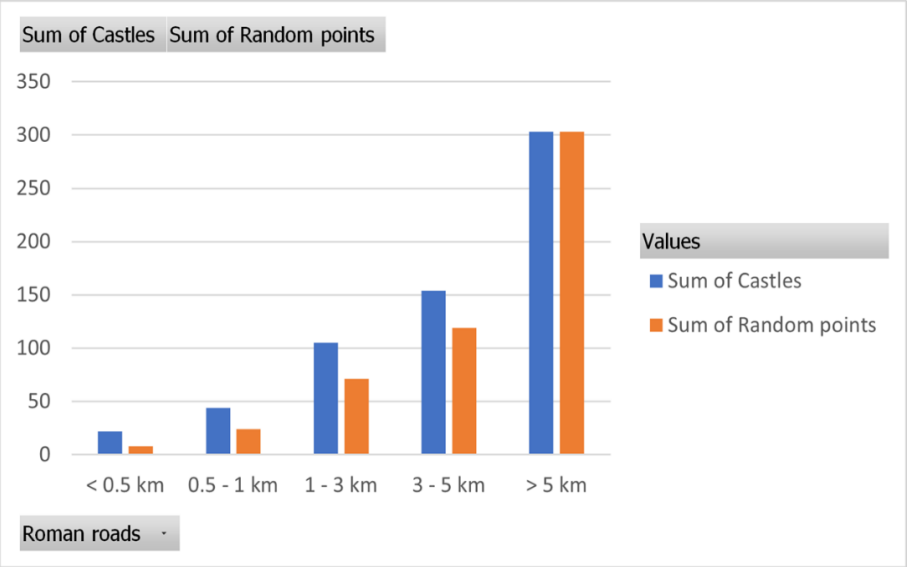


Figure 88 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Roman roads in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Roman roads	Castles (core of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	16	10
1 km	31	15
3 km	80	54
5 km	115	85
> 5 km	220	220

Table 82 Relationship of castles vs random points to Roman roads in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

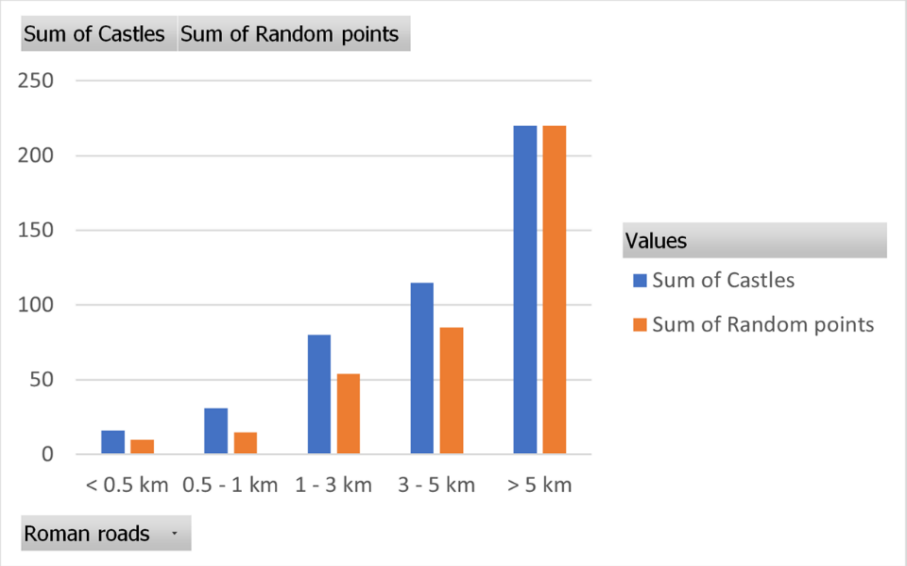


Figure 89 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Roman roads in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Roman roads	Castles (west of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	11	4
1 km	20	7
3 km	60	43
5 km	80	65
> 5 km	184	184

Table 83 Relationship of castles vs random points to Roman roads in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

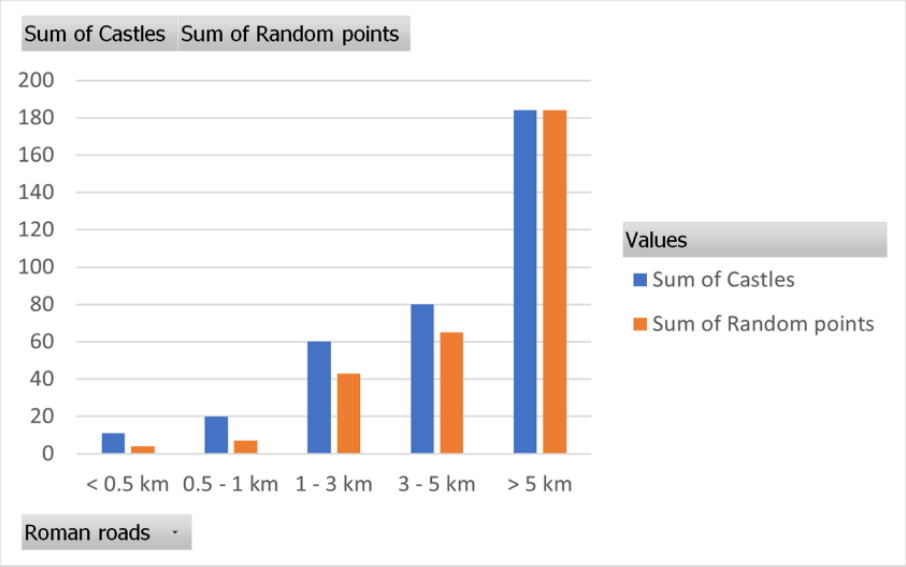


Figure 90 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Roman roads in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

For Roman roads a relationship is visible across the border (Table 81; Figure 88), weakest in the east (Appendix Table 241; Fig 241), but more significant in the core and west (Appendix Tables 221, 231; Figures 221, 231).

Roman forts	Castles (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	5	0
1 km	10	1
3 km	36	11
5 km	73	35
> 5 km	303	303

Table 84 Relationship of castles vs random points to Roman forts in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

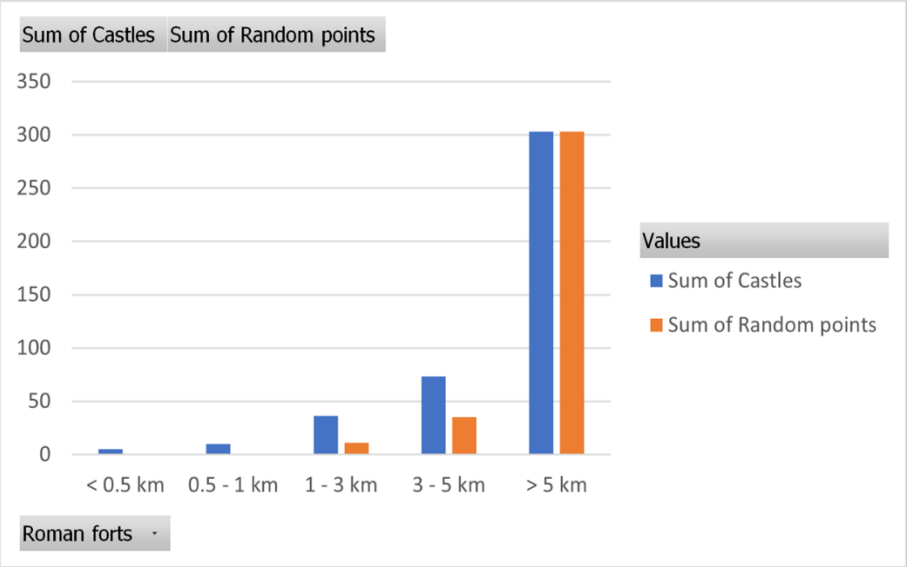


Figure 91 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Roman forts in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Roman forts	Castles (west of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	4	0
1 km	8	0
3 km	28	11
5 km	55	29
> 5 km	184	184

Table 85 Relationship of castles vs random points to Roman forts in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

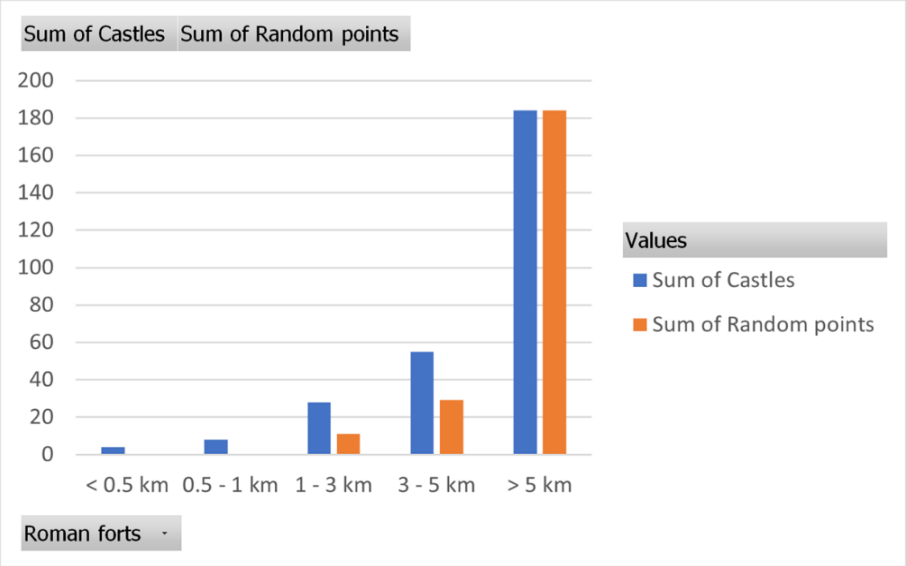


Figure 92 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Roman forts in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

In the case of Roman forts where a relationship is evident across the border (Table 84; Figure 91) it is less evident in the core and east (Appendix Tables 222, 242; Figs 222, 242) relative to the west (Table 85; Figure 92). For the short dykes there is a slight relationship across the

border (Appendix Tables 213, 223, 233, 243; Figs 213, 223, 233, 243), a pattern echoed with Offa's Dyke (Appendix Tables 214, 224, 234, 244; Figs 214, 224, 234, 244), Wat's Dyke where due to its position in the east of the study area there is only a relationship in the east and the furthest easterly extent of the west (Appendix Tables 215, 225, 235, 245; Figs 215, 225, 235, 245).

Cantref boundaries	Castles (whole of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	42	16
1 km	62	36
3 km	138	96
5 km	195	128
> 5 km	303	303

Table 86 Relationship of castles vs random points to Welsh cantref boundaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

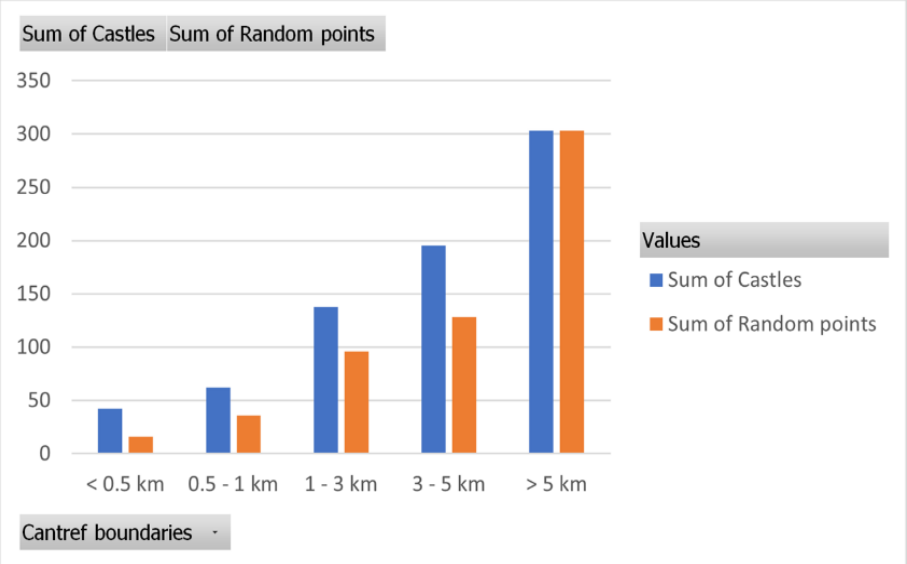


Figure 93 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Welsh cantref boundaries in the whole of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Cantref boundaries	Castles (core of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	30	15
1 km	45	29
3 km	105	67
5 km	147	103
> 5 km	220	220

Table 87 Relationship of castles vs random points to Welsh cantref boundaries in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

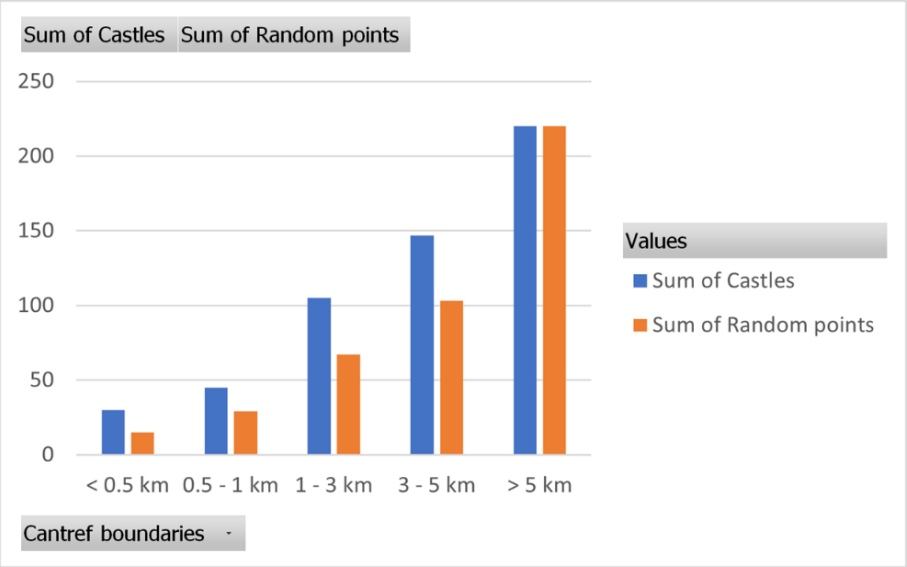


Figure 94 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Welsh cantref boundaries in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Cantref boundaries	Castles (west of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	35	31
1 km	51	51
3 km	116	112
5 km	156	151
> 5 km	184	184

Table 88 Relationship of castles vs random points to Welsh cantref boundaries in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

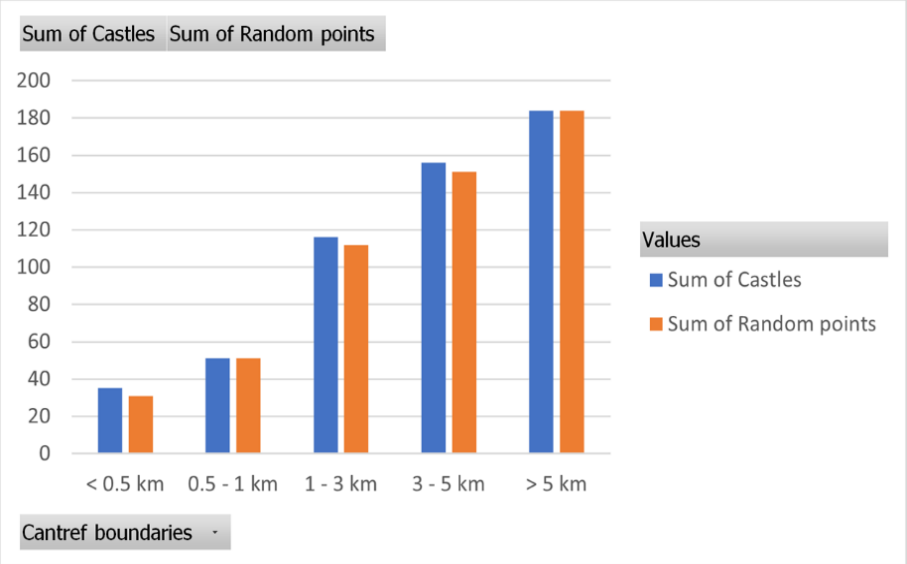


Figure 95 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Welsh cantref boundaries in the west of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Cantref boundaries	Castles (east of the borderland)	Random points
< 0.5 km	7	0
1 km	11	4
3 km	22	6
5 km	39	11
> 5 km	119	119

Table 89 Relationship of castles vs random points to Welsh Cantref boundaries in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

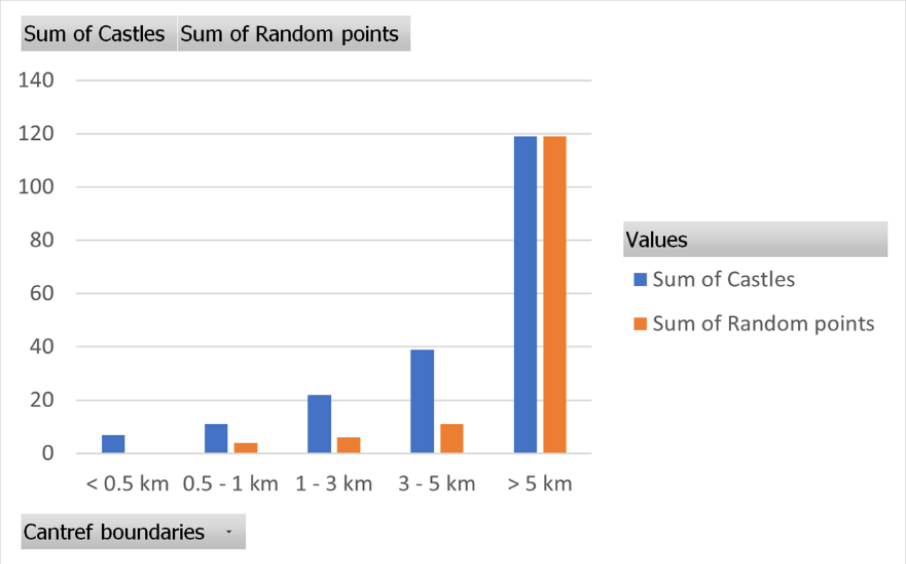


Figure 96 Bar chart of castles vs random points relative to Welsh cantref boundaries in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

The strongest relationship with any earlier anthropogenic structures is found with the Cymric cantref boundaries (Table 86; Figure 93). Here a particularly strong correlation is evident in the core (Table 87; Figure 94). In the west the relationship between the castles and cantref boundaries is expressed through a strong co-location but not a very strong relationship relative to the random points suggesting that some other variables may be at play (Table 88; Figure 95), whilst in the east there is a relationship evident at all scales though there is less obvious co-location than in the west (Table 89; Figure 96). When interpreting the figures for all the earlier anthropogenic classes of monument it is necessary to consider the possibility that castles may have buried or destroyed the evidence for earlier anthropogenic structures such as Bronze Age barrows and cairns.

4.8.2 Discussion

The evidence from the current study points to the distribution of early Anglo-Norman castles across the Anglo-Welsh borderland being defined by a range of political, cultural and practical factors operating at a range of scales that mark it as distinct from its neighbours and also for the greatest evidence for the active curation of earlier anthropogenic monuments. At the macro level the immediate post-invasion decision by the very top of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy not to press on into Cymru set in motion a chain of events that was to define the Anglo-Welsh border as 'other' from its neighbours for four centuries (Hume, 2021; Lieberman, 2010). Throughout this period, unencumbered by, for example, the need to seek royal approval to construct their castles the Anglo-Norman elites of the region, together with their minor supporters, set about creating a political, cultural and economic landscape better suited to their own requirements than those of their neighbouring kingdoms; a pattern of behaviour matched by their peers in Cymru as opportunities for re-taking land were similarly exploited at every opportunity (Darby, 1986). The result was a complex web of competing and complimentary power bases whose nature was defined both by opportunism and pragmatism, but one ultimately bound together within the context of an increasingly crowded martial landscape.

Certainly, the results of the current study reveal the significance of both the local rivers and major rivers and estuaries in the choice of castle location. At a regional level, whilst enjoying the freedoms afforded by their status, the major landowners in the borderland would equally have wished to embed themselves in the prestigious wider trade and cultural networks largely facilitated by the rivers Dee, Severn and Wye and their tributaries. Such macro-scale, strategic thinking is additionally evidenced through, for example, Swallow's (2016) work on the castles of Cheshire and their role in facilitating the Irish Sea Cultural Zone through access to and control of the major riverine routes in the medieval period. The evidence from the current study suggests that such patterns were not restricted to the north of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, but that they are to be found across this landscape. Such considerations would inevitably, however, have had to sit alongside those of more local practicalities of access to fresh water to ensure the viability of any site. Though as noted earlier, not every castle was necessarily in use concurrently, inevitably, as the rates of construction in the

Anglo-Welsh borderland burgeoned and the average hinterland available to each location diminished a level of strategic thinking not required elsewhere in England would have come to characterise the choices made by minor members of the nobility, in particular. The evidence from across the borderland is then suggestive of the significance of access to water for both practical reasons and also for links to wider cultural and trade networks within and beyond the borderland itself.

Additionally, the castles of the newly conquered lands of the Anglo-Welsh border also sat within an equally complex cultural environment imbued with both English and Cymric traditions. Whilst historically the discipline of castle studies has not extensively engaged with the re-use and attribution of meaning to earlier places of power in the landscape, more recent scholarship (e.g. Creighton and Higham, 2004; Jamieson, 2019; Leary and Pollard, 2022; Paphitis, 2013), itself drawing on prehistoric landscape and folklore studies (e.g. Bradley, 1987), has sought to explore the possibilities for such approaches in enhancing our understanding of the processes of castle construction. That many prehistoric and Roman sites would have held significance for both the elites and wider early medieval populations has been widely established over several decades (e.g. Bradley, 1987; Hope-Taylor, 1977; Jamieson, 2019; Semple, 2013, 1998; Williams, 1998, 1997). The result for the incoming Anglo-Norman elites in the Anglo-Welsh borderland would have been the presence of people and places steeped in the folklore of a broad liminal environment, a world of collective memories drawn not just from Cymru and England but also created in the ebb and flow of power between them. These phenomena are perhaps most powerfully expressed through the aforementioned Pillar of Eliseg (Edwards, 2009). Erected by Concenn, a ninth century ruler, the monument honours his great-grandfather, Eliseg, who is credited with expelling the Mercians from this part of Powys with the inscription quite possibly intended to be read aloud to assembled audiences. The potential for such powerful places to be exploited in the legitimisation of the new Anglo-Norman order is unlikely to have been lost on their elites and certainly the results from the current study offer up evidence for the extensive curation of earlier monuments, or significant places in the landscape. Further, detailed landscape analyses such as those carried out by CPAT in Maelor Saesneg, Flintshire, south and east of the River Dee (Heneb, no date) also provide further archaeological and documentary

evidence for the widespread fluid changes in relative Cymric and English power to which residents of the region were subject in the medieval period.

The evidence across the Anglo-Welsh borderland, then, suggests that such acts of cultural curation extended across a range of extant anthropogenic features known to be of practical value, and/or of cultural significance and that these locations were appropriated to legitimise the process of the region's assimilation into the hegemonic orbit of Anglo-Norman England. Prominent Iron Age enclosures and hillforts including, for example, the sites of the British Camp with its panoramic views across much of Herefordshire and Worcestershire and Beeston in Cheshire located on a prominent outcrop overlooking much of the Cheshire Plain were both chosen as the sites for the construction of Anglo-Norman castles. In the case of the former the site is also associated with the Shire Ditch, a medieval boundary marker which is itself considered to potentially have much earlier prehistoric origins (Bowden, 2005; Higham and Barker, 1992; Jamieson, 2019) (Figure 32). Additionally, the place-name evidence from Beeston, which is derived from the Old English *byge* and *stan* meaning 'market stone' may be suggestive of the site's long-standing significance in local and potentially regional commerce and assembly (Dodgson, 1971, p. 24; Jamieson, 2019). Further examples of these processes of assimilation are known from across the border including the castle at Ritton, Shropshire (Jamieson, 2019), whilst those at Goodrich, Herefordshire (Ashbee, 2005) and Caus, Shropshire (Fradley and Carey, 2016) illustrate the potential for further fieldwork to extend our understanding of these processes.

Within the historical period the repurposing of Roman remains across the borderland finds expression through the active appropriation of individual high-status sites including The Great Tower at Chepstow (Turner *et al.*, 2004), Gloucester (Fradley, 2017) and Chester where the castle was built to the south-west of the Roman legionary fortress (Lewis and Thacker, 2003) and where the Roman walls provided the basis upon which the subsequent early medieval and medieval defences were constructed (Figure 49). Across the region more broadly the evidence suggests that access to the remaining Roman road network was particularly desirable, quite likely for both practical reasons of local and regional transport and the prestige of controlling these routes through the landscape.

The results of the current study reveal that the strongest inter-relationships with earlier anthropogenic places of power in the landscape are reserved for the Cymric cantref boundaries. Immediately prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Norman elites these locations would have played a key role in how secular power came to be expressed across the landscape. As such, their assimilation into the newly implanted Anglo-Norman landscape would have sent a compelling message to Cymric and English alike as to where power now resided. Individual examples of these correlations are explored in Swallow's (2016, pp. 301, 308) work on the castles of Cheshire where almost every subdivision within the Articros and Exestan hundreds, or cantrefi, has evidence of an early Anglo-Norman castle associated with it. The landscape evidence from the current study is highly suggestive of such patterns occurring across much of the borderland, of the active appropriation of existing expressions of power in the landscape by the Anglo-Norman elites.

The documentary evidence from the period further speaks of the unique hybrid status of the Anglo-Welsh border and its continuing influence on how the region was settled and administered. Evidence for the local administrative and legal arrangements in place across the region is provided by records originating from the individual Marcher lordships including, for example, charters, legal records such as court rolls and less frequently, by transcripts of individual legal cases (Hume, 2021, p. 8). In the case of the lordship of Ruthin/Dyffryn Clwyd, for example, it is possible to see Cymric legal concepts and English procedures being drawn on to arrive at a local law code acceptable to all. More broadly, the evidence from Ruthin speaks not just the diktats of these Marcher lords, but also of the efforts made by English and Cymric residents alike to work towards a stable and prosperous community (Stevens, 2010). By the thirteenth century these processes additionally found expression through, for example, the establishment of 'Englishries' and 'Welshries' to distinguish between the areas extensively settled by the English and those with still largely Cymric populations. Frequently, at least initially, the former often enjoyed altogether more preferential terms than the latter, though some 'Welshries' did succeed in improving their position over time (Hume, 2021, p. 7).

In summary, the evidence from the region in the medieval period is suggestive of a range of temporal and spatial factors at play that once again marked it out as a distinctly liminal

space. Far from a sharp frontier, the region instead formed a broad borderland at the intersection of Cymric and Anglo-Norman interests and uniquely subject to the ebbs and flows of power between them. The Continental connections and ambitions of the newly arrived Anglo-Norman elites confirmed its status both as a place embedded in the prestige of their wider political, cultural and trade networks, but also as a landscape within which, largely free of the obligations to the English crown to which other estates were subject, they were free to raise armies, build castles and develop law codes to support their ambitions to subjugate the region. At once, these same Marcher lords found themselves merely the latest in a long line of elites to rule over this landscape rich in multi-cultural antecedent traditions. As a result, a range of factors came to influence the form and placement of their castles incorporating both practical considerations and those immediately concerned with establishing their power and prestige. Concurrently, the lived experiences of the inhabitants of the region placed them firmly at the interface between what had by this time evolved into Anglo-Norman and Cymric competing interests. As each side in turn lost and gained ground the landscape and documentary evidence speak of their ongoing efforts to mitigate the challenges and exploit the opportunities of living in this liminal environment. For both the incoming Anglo-Norman and Cymric elites and the wider populations of the Anglo-Welsh border it is possible to discern a continuance of many of the cultural circumstances evident in earlier periods.

The evidence from a range of sources is suggestive that the origins of this collective borderland inheritance, of lives lived distinct from their neighbours in England and Cymru may lie not simply in the medieval, or preceding early medieval period, but much earlier. The results of the current study and from Swallow's (2016) work in Cheshire support the case for the continuance of the Anglo-Welsh border as a buffer zone where competing Cymric, or wider Atlantic coastal, influences from the west encountered those whose interests lay in the east looking instead towards Continental Europe, of the ongoing challenges and opportunities met by its elites and wider populations alike.

4.9 Additional forms of evidence

4.9.1 Place-name evidence

As noted in the review of the existing literature for place-name studies (2.1.4) much scholarly research in the field is concerned with the role of toponyms as 'linguistic fossils', as forms of evidence for how previous generations perceived and interacted with their local environments (Perono Cacciafoco and Cavallaro, 2023a, 2023b). The names attributed to the districts, settlements and natural features across the Anglo-Welsh borderland are no exception and indeed, in this hybrid, multi-vocal environment they provide a particularly rich source of evidence for who was naming what, where and when.

At the macro-scale, that today the Senedd Cymru, or Welsh Parliament, has under consideration a petition to abolish the name 'Wales', itself derived from the Old English for 'foreigners' ("P-06-1446", 2024) in favour of Cymru, reveals the continuing significance of how nations, regions and places are named. Indeed, at the time the concepts of English and Cymry were emerging during the early medieval and medieval periods, and when many of our contemporary place-names were coming into existence, the literary and documentary evidence speaks of the residents of both countries conceiving of themselves as simultaneously holding multiple identities and affiliations at a range of scales. In the case of Cymru these identities could extend to also holding an affiliation with, for example, Powys, whilst those living on the eastern side of the borderland would be as likely to consider themselves Mercian as English. Within the context of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, these multi-scalar hybrid identities were even more complex making them a particularly valuable source of information on the evolving notions of identity during these centuries.

Substantive bodies of research and publications have established both the validity of exploring the hybrid nature of Anglo-Cymric toponyms, the existence of hybrid place-names and the presence of English and Cymric settlement names on both sides of the border. In particular, Margaret Gelling's extensive work on the place-names of Shropshire, more recently jointly taken up by the Institute for Name Studies at the University of Nottingham and the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies at the University of Wales, has amply demonstrated the complex, multi-vocal evidence to be found in the Anglo-Welsh borderland

(Gelling, 2006, 2004, 1995; Gelling and Foxall, 1991, 1990; Lias, 1991; University of Nottingham, 2013; University of Wales, no date).

From an archaeological landscape study perspective, Rachel Swallow's (2016) extensive work on the castles of Cheshire and their toponymic context provides a rich body of evidence for the liminal nature of this part of the border at the county level. Evidence for the lands west of the Dee alternately falling under both Cymric and Mercian control, for the minting of coins at Chester by Hywel Dda (r. *c*. 880-950 AD) who became ruler of almost all of Cymru in AD 822, is bound up with settlement names incorporating extensive evidence for liminality including, for example, the village of Marlston, meaning 'boundary settlement' which itself sits on the boundary between the Domesday Book hundreds of Atiscros and Dudestan (*Domesday Book*, *268*d; Dodgson, 1981, xli; Swallow, 2016, p. 291), Threapwood, or 'disputed wood', an extra-parochial liberty on the Cymric border to the east of Shocklach (Dodgson, 1972, pp. 61–62; Higham, 1993, p. 75; Swallow, 2016, p. 291) and Hen Cymraeg, or Old Welsh Terfyn 'boundary' on the line of Wat's Dyke, a settlement that Swallow (2016, p. 291) reflects could itself be a relic of a pre-early ninth-century landscape marked out by the aforementioned Pillar of Eliseg (Davies 1989, 62; Higham 1993, 103; Edwards *et al.* 2012, Swallow, 2016, p. 294) (4.7.2, p. 203).

Elsewhere, Lewis (2007, p. 133) outlines the evidence derived from Domesday Book relating to the Cymric territory of Archenfield which was annexed into Herefordshire, but not actually part of it even in 1086 (Fig 73). Despite its origins as Cymric as many as fifteen of the settlements in Archenfield incorporated the Old English *tun*, 'settlement' or 'township' into their second element, a proportion of end names unusual across most of England, but with local parallels in the border including, for example, in the Golden Valley also in Herefordshire (ibid., p. 135). Lewis (ibid. p, 137) notes that Archenfield is significant for two further reasons. Incorporating both the Cymric name for the district Ergyng with the Old English *Feld* this place-name itself speaks of the cultural hybridity of this part of the border (Coplestone-Crow, 2009). Additionally, Archenfield is widely considered to be the part of the Wye valley within which the *Dunsæte Agreement*, the tenth-century legal framework through which local disputes could be swiftly resolved through the equal treatment of both Cymric and English law codes referenced earlier was drawn up (4.7.2 p, 203). In this case, then, the

documentary and toponymic sources combine to provide extensive evidence for the cultural hybridity of this part of the border in the early medieval period and into the decades immediately following the Anglo-Norman invasion.

Original studies carried out as part of this research further reveal the significance of the evidence not just through parish and township names, but also those attributed to features within the landscape at a range of scales through explorations of the toponomy of the names given to the hills of south-east Radnorshire and the field names contained within the nineteenth-century field apportionment for the settlement of Trefonen in Shropshire.

Toponomy of the parish names in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

The core of the borderland was selected for several reasons, not least to meet the requirement to provide consistency with the quantitative landscape archaeology component of the case study, to restrict the analysis to a manageable set of data within the constraints of a multi-disciplinary PhD thesis and also to facilitate a comparative discussion with the qualitative results of the exploration of this part of the region's folklore.

Data collection and processing

Parish boundaries

The outlines of the historic parishes for the core of the borderland were derived from Kain and Oliver's (2020) *Historic Parishes of England and Wales: An Electronic Map of Boundaries before 1850 with a Gazetteer and Metadata.* Provided as a shapefile containing census data down to the place, rather than parish level, it was first necessary to extract and flatten the data for each parish into a single polygon. This was achieved through ArcMap's Dissolve function

`ArcToolbox → Data Management Tools → Generalization → Dissolve`

Those parishes that lie entirely within the core of the borderland were selected for inclusion. Though some gaps are evident in the processed data in excess of 600 parishes in the core of the border were incorporated into the study.

Toponymic data

The toponymic data for this study was derived from two sources. In the case of the Cymric parish names Owen and Morgan's (2008) comprehensive *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales* provided the necessary data, with the University of Nottingham's Key to English Place-Names online searchable database providing the resources necessary for the English side of the borderland (KEPN, n.d.).

In order to facilitate a comparative analysis of the distribution of Old English and Cymric parish names across the core of the borderland the following categories of toponymic data were created:

- Cymric parish names
- Old English parish names
- Hybrid parish names (containing elements of both Cymraeg and Old English)
- Possible hybrid parish names (not explicitly described as hybrid, but implied in the description provided in the data source, e.g. the incorporation of the name of a Celtic saint in a parish name with an Old English element)
- Other (parish names of e.g. Anglian, Norse or French origin)
- Unknown parish names (category derived from KEPN for those place-names with no clear linguistic attribution)

An additional 'Lang' field was then added to the Attribute Table in the shapefile which was populated by these toponymic categories derived from KEPN and the *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales*

`Open Attribute Table → Table Options → Add Field`

A total of 616 parish names were categorised in this way. Of these, 55 (or nine per cent), fell into the 'Unknown' and 'Other' categories. The totals and relative percentages of the remaining 561 Old English, Cymric, hybrid and possible hybrid parish names are outlined in Table 90.

Etymology	Number	Percentage
Old English parish names	326	58%
Cymric parish names	211	38%
Hybrid parish names	15	3%

Possible hybrid parish names	9	2%
Unknown parish names		
Other parish names		
Old English parish names with known alternative Cymric parish name (derived from the *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales*)	25	4%

Table 90 Totals and relative percentages of toponymic categories of parish names in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

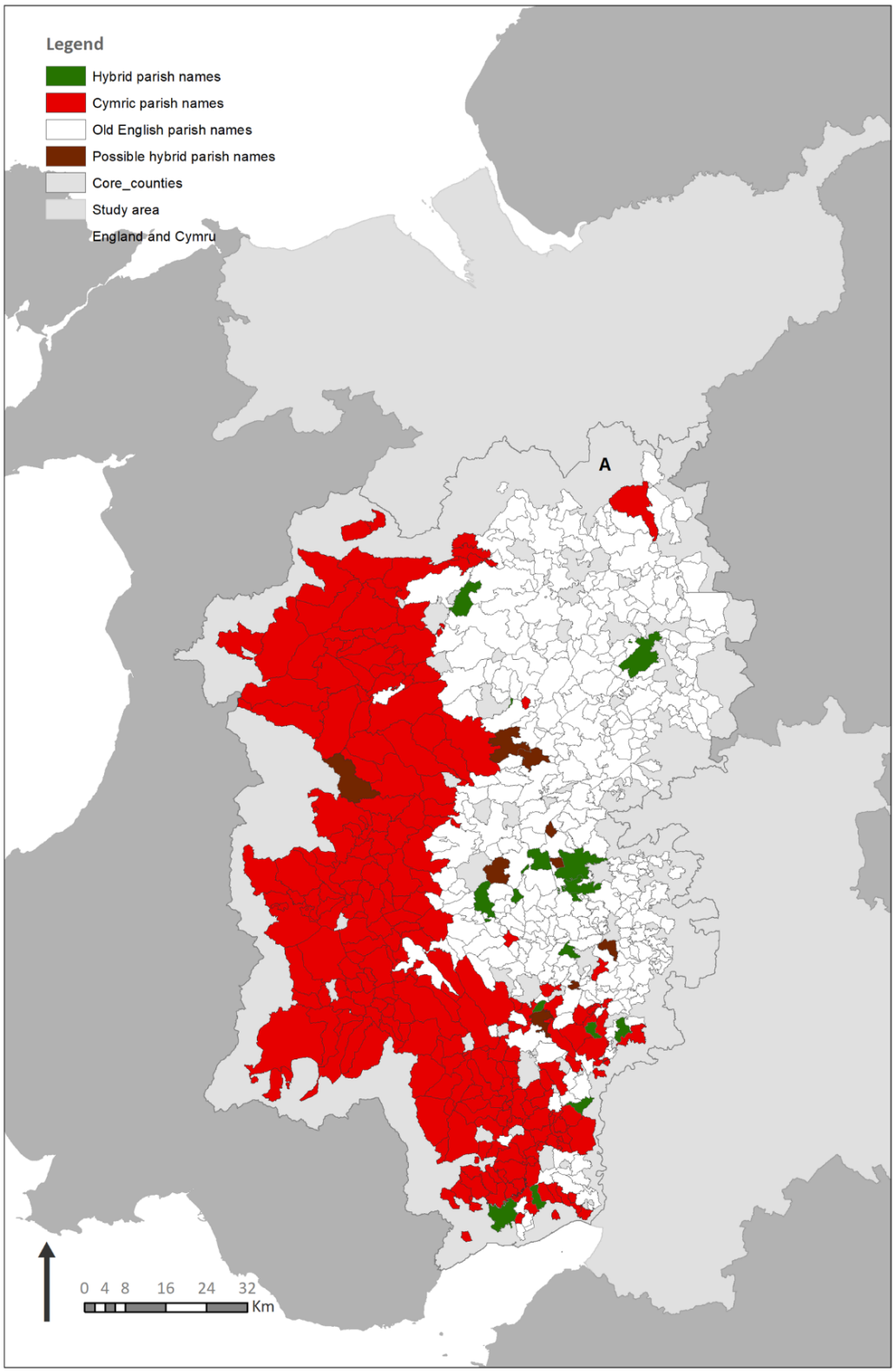


Figure 97 Distribution of Cymric, Old English, hybrid and possible hybrid parish names in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Overall, the results from the analysis of the parish names of the core of the borderland reveal a predominance of Old English over names of Cymric origin along a consistent west-east split with only a handful of outliers such as Hodnet in north-east Shropshire breaching this broad pattern (Figure 97, A).

Though the hybrid and possible hybrid names together represent no more than 5 per cent of the Cymric and Old English parish names their distribution appears significant (Table 91; Fig 98).

Etymology	Number	Percentage
Hybrid in Herefordshire	9	60%
Possible hybrid in Herefordshire	5	56%
Combined hybrid and possible hybrid in Herefordshire	14	58%

Table 91 Percentages of hybrid names in the county of Herefordshire

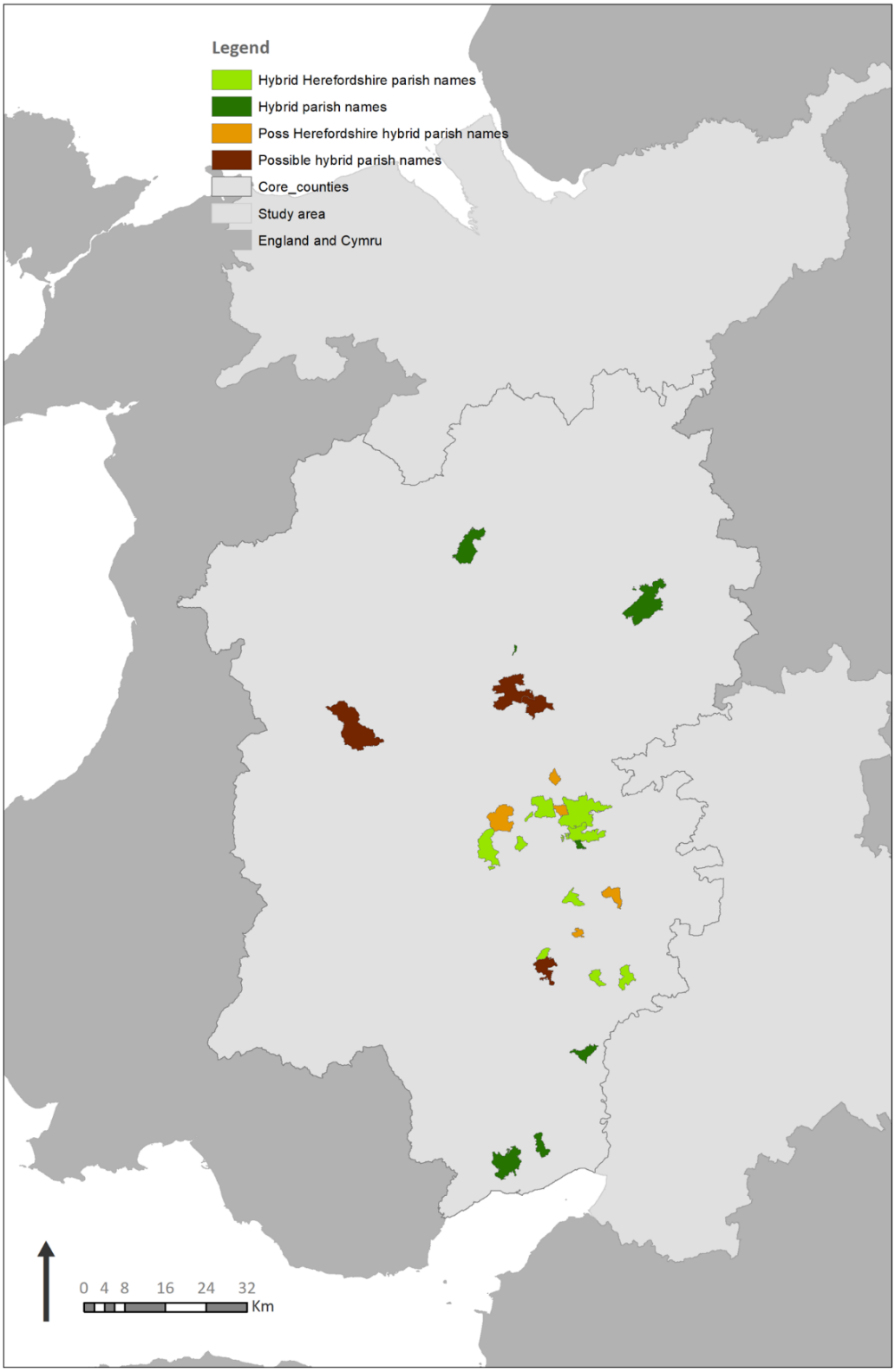


Figure 98 Distribution of hybrid parish names in the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland

Discussion

The overall pattern of Cymric and Old English parish names across the core of the borderland reveals a largely consistent west/east split with only a handful of outliers being identifiable in this macro-scale analysis. At the macro-scale, the evidence, then, speaks not simply of the spread of Old English across the east of the border, but also of the persistence of Cymric parish names in the west, including, as noted by both Parsons (2023) and Gelling and Foxall (1991), in those areas subject to permanent or intermittent English overlordship and administration. In turn, the evidence from the hybrid and possible hybrid parish names, both in their relative rarity and spatial distribution, speaks to the unique character of Herefordshire, and in particular that of the district of Archenfield in the Wye valley; evidence which is also reflected in the archaeological, folkloric and documentary sources (see Sections 4.9.2, 4.9.3) and that is strongly suggestive of the hybrid, or liminal, character of this part of the border being multi-faceted, significant and enduring.

Case study of Oswestry

At the median-scale, the quality of both the evidence available and previous work including that of, for example, Gelling and Foxall (1991), Worthington (1997) and Parsons (2023) makes a closer exploration of the evidence from the town of Oswestry and the settlements surrounding it an appropriate addition to this case study (Figure 99).

Oswestry's status as a geographically and culturally liminal border town is well-established in both contemporary and historical sources typified by, for example, the recent survey (re-conducted as recently as 2015 on whether the town should be English or Cymric (Shropshire Star, 2015) and as its status as a settlement frequently caught up in the waxing and waning of Cymric and English fortunes across the border over centuries (for an overview see Parsons, 2023, pp. 77, 232).

Indeed, Parsons' most recent work on both the place-names themselves and their relationships with anthropological monuments in the landscape, including Offa's and most notably Wat's Dyke in the east of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, highlights the benefits of taking an explicitly interdisciplinary approach to historic landscape studies and also the, at

times unexpected, benefits of working through the lens of the *Longue Durée* (Parsons, 2023, 2022).

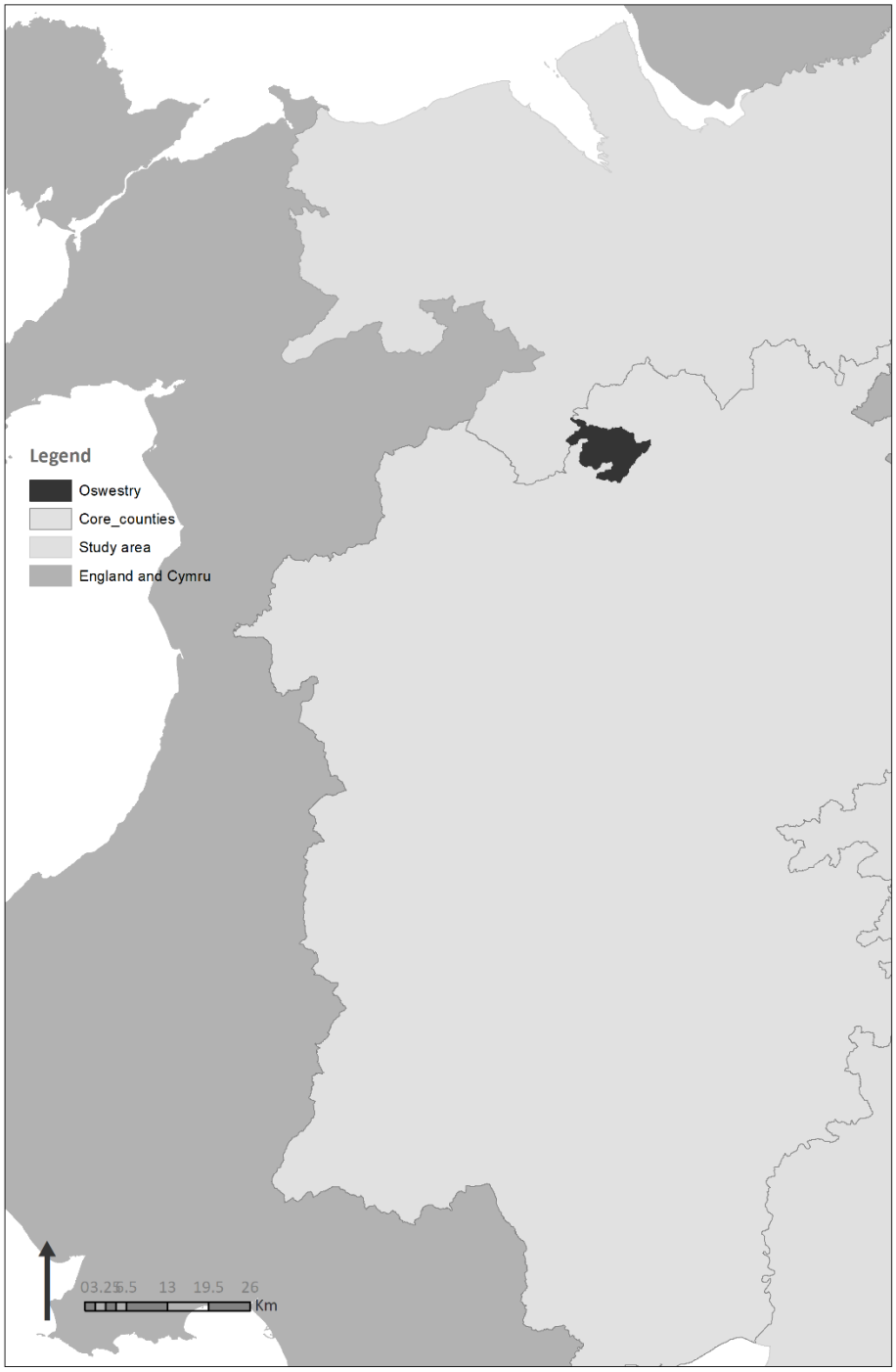


Figure 99 Townships of Oswestry parish (as derived from Satchell et al., 2023)

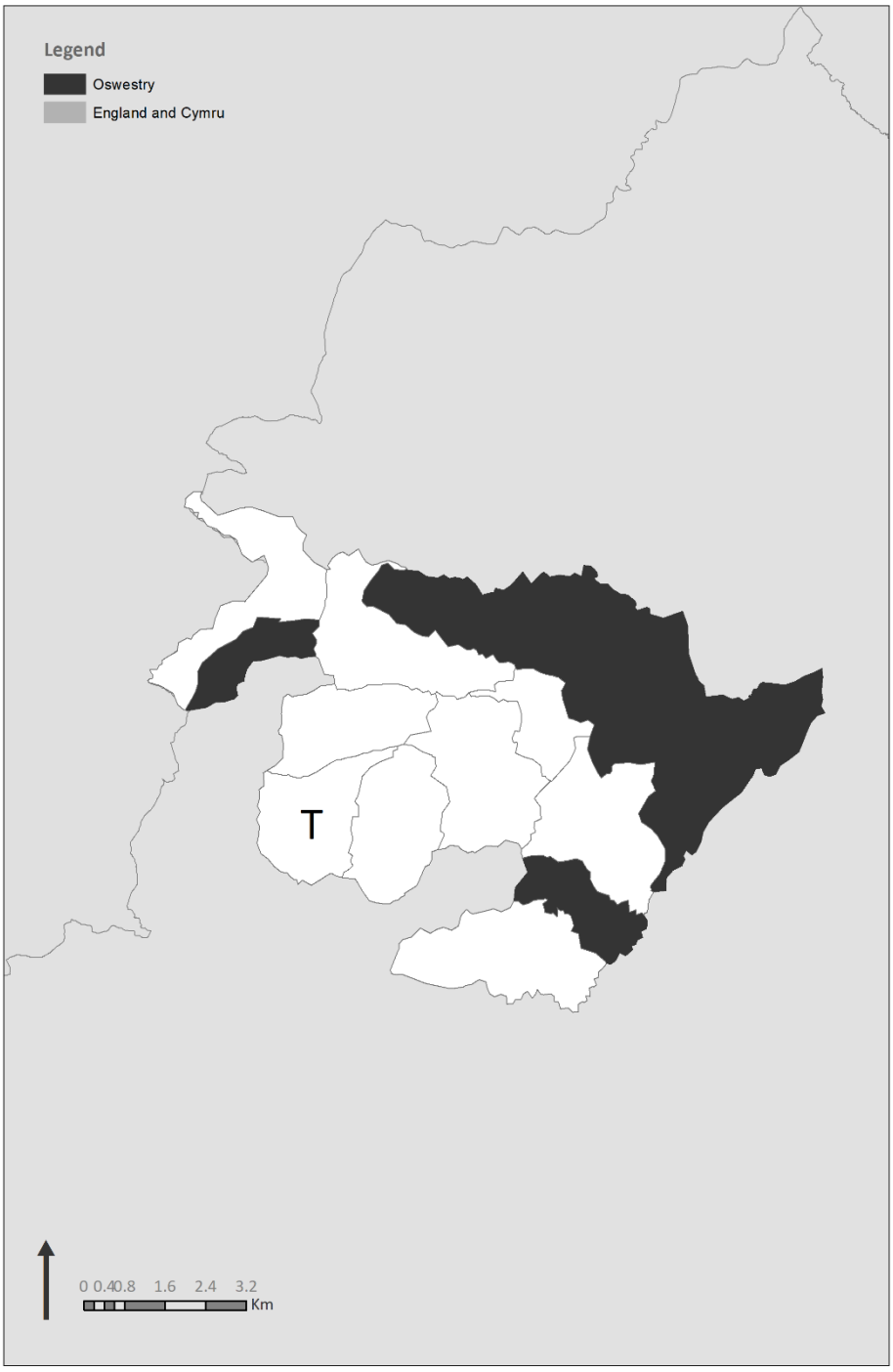


Figure 100 Townships of the 1272 Welshry (white) with Trefonen highlighted (T) (after Parsons 2023, Map 4)

Despite Oswestry's contemporary and historic status as a town, albeit only just, within the English border the evidence for the enduring presence of speakers of Cymraeg over centuries is extensive. From its very earliest days as an Anglo-Norman foundation, though English was likely the first language of its elites, the evidence for Cymric place-names and patronymics across the other levels of society paints a compelling picture of Oswestry and its hinterland

as a place where both languages would routinely be encountered, albeit with some degree of social stratification (Parsons, 2023, pp. 203, 206, 209, 216). Indeed, Parsons explicitly notes the presence of 48 generics in Cymraeg represented across nearly 200 hundred separate place-names that incorporate elements such as *erw*, or 'arable strip, acre' followed by *tir* 'land' (Sylvester, 1969, pp. 307-8).

Additionally, documentary evidence for the liminal status of the town and its surrounding settlements can be derived from the eleventh century Domesday Book. Recorded as part of *Mersete* hundred entries for the place-names, ethnic makeup or organisation of the landscape to the west of Oswestry are conspicuously entirely absent. In his interpretation of this absence of evidence from the west Parsons (2023, p. 231) suggests that it is 'not an unreasonable hypothesis' that these arrangements may be suggestive of these lands being both culturally and linguistically Cymric and independent of the English state; of their potential status as an effective early Welshry owing dues at English manorial centres, but being organised according to their own principles and falling outside of the remit of the Book for some time. That this part of the hinterland of Oswestry could indeed have been under Cymric control is plausibly the result of, for example, the border warfare undertaken by Gruffudd at Llywelyn in the mid-eleventh century (Charles-Edwards, 2012, pp. 561–6; Lieberman, 2010, pp. 106–7). Subsequently, and perhaps more profoundly still, the mid-twelfth-century incursions of Madog ap Maredudd that saw the area's churches incorporated into the Cymric diocese of St Asaph, placed Oswestry and its environs firmly on an ecclesiastical as well as linguistic and tenurial boundary (Parsons, 2023, pp. 9, 219). Oswestry's borderland character appears, then, to have taken a variety of forms incorporating both a relatively broad cultural zone of engagement, but also an explicit ecclesiastical division that was to exert its influence over centuries.

Over time, in the later middle ages, these zones appear to have become consolidated into those that were dominated by speakers of Cymraeg and Cymric tenurial practices in the west and those where English land-holding practices were adopted in the east but where the language of Cymraeg continued to be used by the wider population (ibid., p. 221). Indeed, it is not so much the spread of English that is remarkable, but rather the persistence of Cymric traditions and the language of Cymraeg within the borders of the state of England.

The perhaps unexpected benefits of an explicitly interdisciplinary and *Longue Durée* approach are most evident when the linguistic, tenurial and landscape evidence for the origins of these patterns are considered. In particular, Parsons' (ibid., p. 217) hypothesis that the location of the line beyond which English barely appears to have travelled westwards during the Middle Ages aligns with the extent of the established *Waleschiria* or Welshry of Oswestry as defined in the close roll of 1272 is suggestive of much earlier origins for the contrasting practices that become observable in the documentary records of the central middle ages (Fig 100)**.** Looking further back still, Parsons (ibid., p. 244) speculates that the potential relationship between the linguistic boundary and Wat's Dyke could be a fruitful line of future research. Though there remain anomalies that remain to be individually resolved Parsons argues that the unequivocal evidence from further north in Flintshire that Wat's Dyke marked a tenurial boundary that still held resonance in the eleventh century and the presence of the royal manor of Maesbury which *may* have been a 'boundary stronghold' are strongly suggestive of this part of the border having very deep liminal roots indeed. Further, Worthington's (1997, pp. 189–90) earlier work on Wat's Dyke correlates with Parsons' observations (Parsons, 2023, p. 245) that the earthwork correlates with a significant tenurial distinction observable in Domesday between hidated, and therefore fully English, manors to the east and those in the west which were held beyond these English practices and were, therefore, not subject to their associated taxes. The results from the current study are certainly supportive of Parsons' (ibid., p. 247) call for further work to clarify the nature of the relationship between Wat's Dyke and the earlier linguistic and tenurial boundaries that later formed those of the westerly-most Domesday manors, the post-Conquest lordship of Oswestry and its associated Welshry. Certainly, the present evidence from Oswestry is that on the margins of early medieval England, in this part of its furthest west extent at least, its inhabitants were able to preserve its Cymric tenurial and ecclesiastical traditions and the language of Cymraeg across the centuries.

Toponomy of the hills of south-east Radnorshire

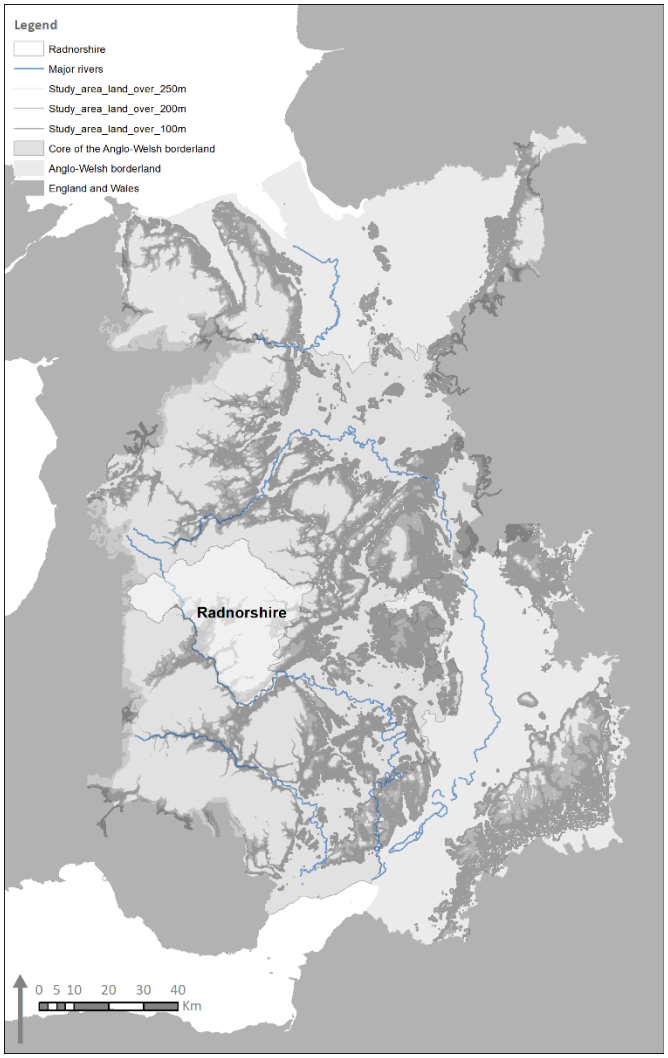


Figure 101 Location of the historic county of Radnorshire

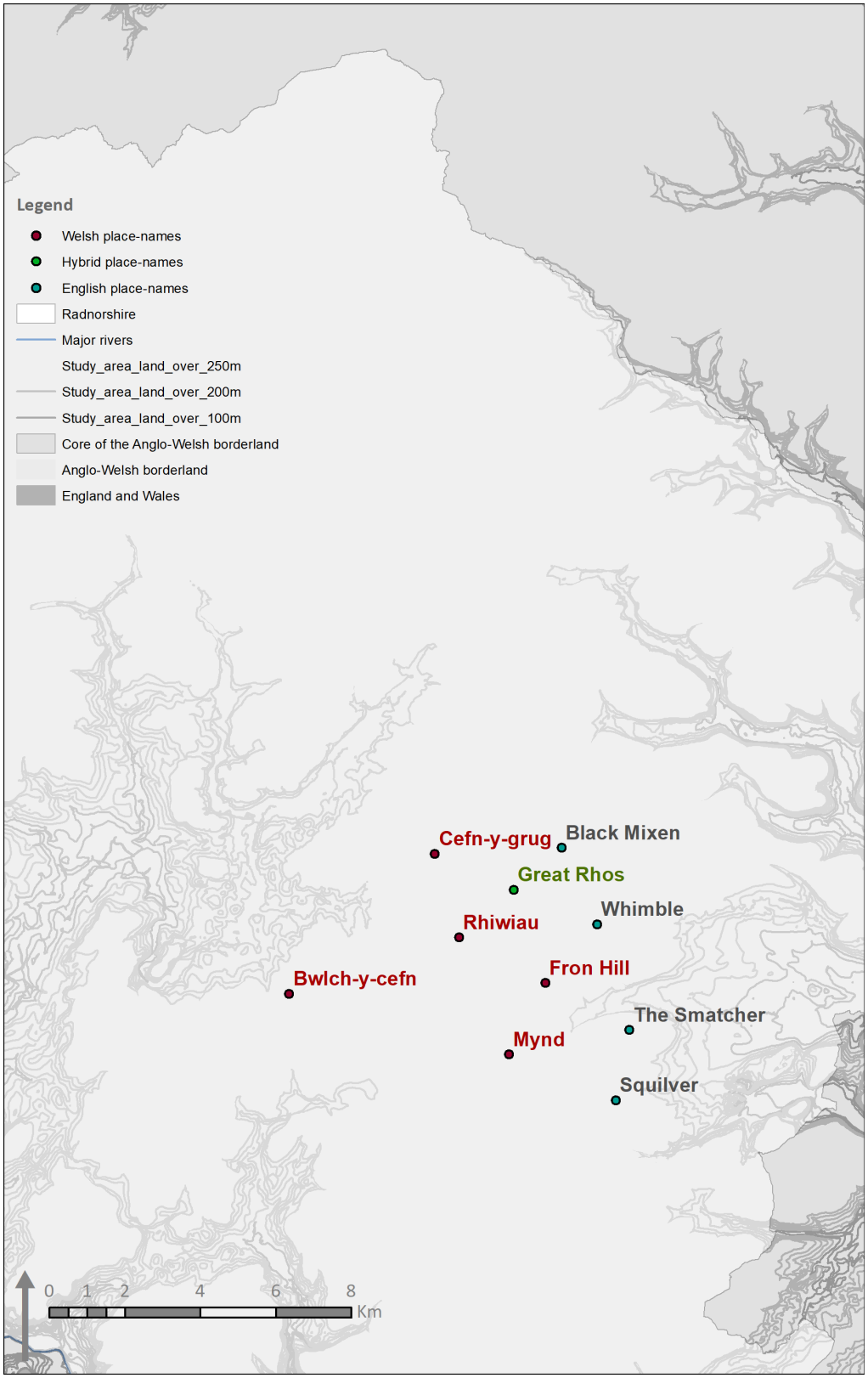


Figure 102 South-east Radnorshire hill names used in the case study

Name	Linguistic origin	Meaning	Reference
Black Mixen	Old English	A place where dung and refuse are put	https://tinyurl.com/5d5tsc9a (OED)
The Smatcher	Unknown	-	-
Squilver	Shropshire dialect?	Corruption of the Welsh 'disgwylfa' watchtower	https://tinyurl.com/2up9j54e (Library of Cymru)
Whimble	Old English	Pot hook, of brow of a hill	https://tinyurl.com/2up9j54e (Library of Cymru)
Great Rhos	Hybrid *Cymraeg* and English	Red moor	(Palmer, 2001, p. 24)
Cefn	*Cymraeg*	Ridge	(Palmer, 2001, p. 24)
Fron	*Cymraeg*	Breast	(Palmer, 2001, p. 24)
Mynd	*Cymraeg*	Mountain	(Palmer, 2001, p. 24)
Rhiw	*Cymraeg*	Hill	(Palmer, 2001, p. 24)

Table 92 Radnorshire hill names used in the study listing linguistic origin, meaning and source of the data used

The old county of Radnorshire, Sir Faesyfed, sits on the Cymric side of the centre of the Anglo-Welsh borderland. Covering little under 1300 km^2 Radnorshire's character is primarily upland and rural (Figure 101). In this central, topographically transitional, part of the borderland steep-sided open moors combine with enclosed pastures, ancient woodlands and minor riverine tributaries to create a mixed agricultural landscape (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Cymru, 2014). Radnorshire shares its easterly border with the English county of Shropshire, a landscape through which Offa's Dyke runs and the county incorporates the archaeologically significant natural landmark of the Walton Basin (Figure 26). The hybrid character of the county is reflected in its place-names often comprised of Cymric, English and Shropshire dialect elements, or corruptions of all three (ibid.)

Palmer's (2001) *The Folklore of Radnorshire* provides a comprehensive account of the county's heritage and its rich folklore traditions, not least how the latter ties in with its natural and anthropogenic environment. Within his chapter on *Landscape* (ibid., pp. 1 – 26) Palmer provides an account of the names attributed to the hills of the south-east of the county and their linguistic hybridity (Table 92; Figure 102).

Adjacent to the border with Shropshire the names are predominantly English, or rather Shropshire dialect including Black Mixen, Smatcher, Squilver and Whimble. In other cases, such as that of Great Rhos the names take on a distinctly Cymric and English hybrid character. Further west, unsurprisingly, the names become predominantly Cymric. Overall, however, the impression is one of a landscape in which English, Cymric and hybrid names were applied and in which they endured. In some cases, the names reference purely natural features in the landscape including hills, mountains and ridges, whilst others clearly refer to extant anthropogenic interventions. Most intriguing of all is Squilver, the anglicised version of the Cymric 'Disgwylfa', or watchtower which leaves the unanswered question of who was originally watching who, why and when. In this case a degree of not just shifting spatial power relations, but also of temporality is implied through the corruption of an earlier name. Together, then, the names applied to the hills of south-east Radnorshire by those who lived in and had an intimate knowledge of this part of the borderland leave little doubt as to its multi-vocal, hybrid character and of the spatial and temporal shifts in power to which it was subject.

Evidence from nineteenth-century field names in the settlement of Trefonen, Shropshire

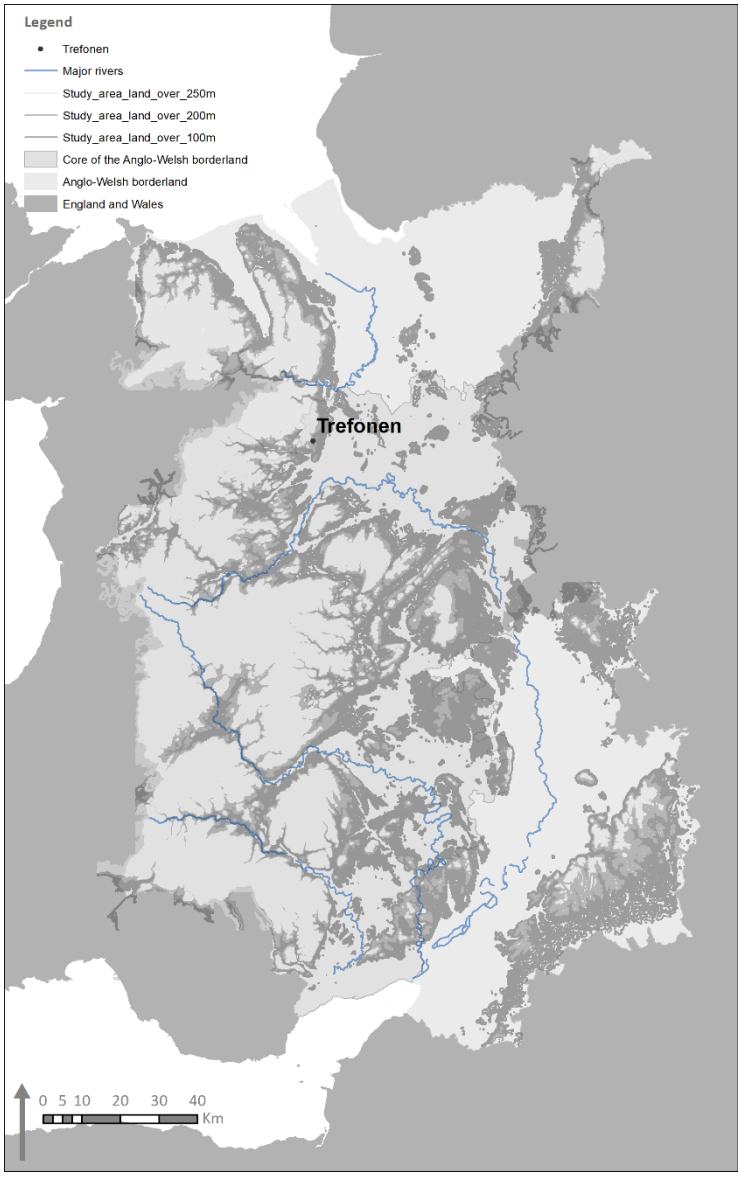


Figure 103 Location of the Shropshire village of Trefonen

A micro-scale toponymic study of the names attributed to the fields within the township of Trefonen in the west of the parish of Oswestry (Fig 100, T) Shropshire in the middle of the nineteenth-century (Shropshire Archives, 1843) illustrates the value in exploring the names applied to features within settlements themselves (Figures 103, 104).

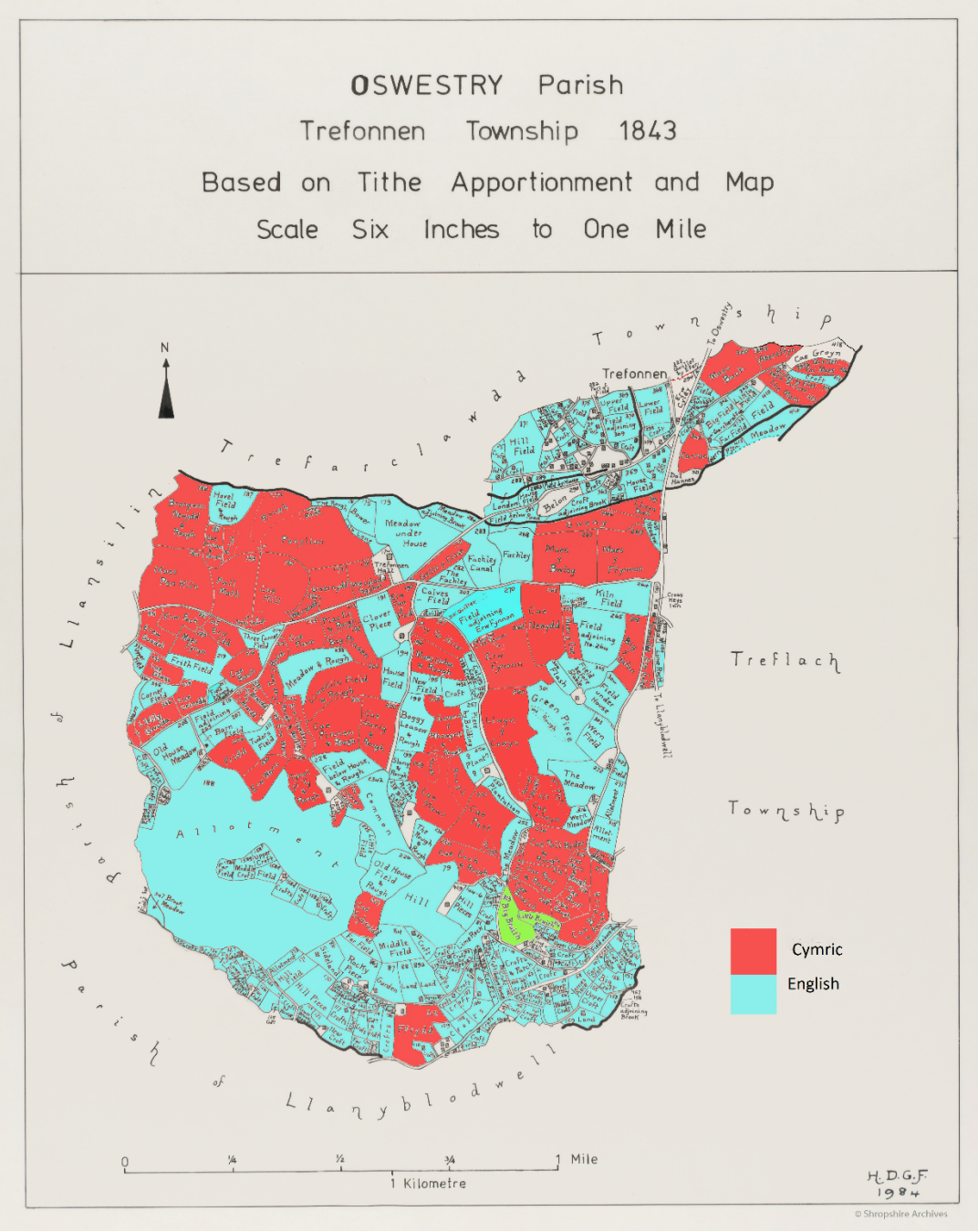


Figure 104 The fields of the Township of Trefonen, Shropshire dating from 1843. Fields rendered blue have English names, those in red Cymric *and green are hybrid.*

Here, the evidence corroborates Parsons' observations on the toponymic and tenurial practices undertaken in the medieval Welshry of Oswestry referenced above; ways of thinking about this landscape that are themselves to be found in earlier studies such as Charles' '*The Welsh, their language and place-names in Archenfield and Oswestry*' (for a summary see Parsons, 2023, p. 15).

Indeed, the evidence from the field names of Trefonen, that itself retained its Cymric name, speaks of the endurance of similarly culturally aligned traditions of tenure and toponomy at the most local of levels. Critically, for the current case study, Parsons' work on the records for Trefonen (Parsons, 2023, pp. 33, 37), derived from the records of the Wynnstay estate (held at the National Library of Wales), is largely suggestive of an overall pattern of stability of the boundaries appearing in both the medieval and nineteenth century records. Additionally, Parsons also notes that the English field names identified within the tithe map are not to be found in the medieval records and so almost certainly represent impositions from the early modern period, or later. Certainly, the extent and distribution of the field names codified by language illustrate the persistence and extent of the use of Cymraeg in naming these individual landscape features, but also an intermingling with later English names inferring, perhaps, that in more recent times speakers of both Cymraeg and English farmed alongside one another within a tenurial system whose overall form was, most likely, established centuries earlier.

Further, Trefonen's field names reveal not just of the extent of the use of the language of Cymraeg in the naming of the plots of land at this most local of levels, but also of the presence of Cymric tenurial practices within the borders of England. Through the evidence for units of land held by *prid* alongside those called *kevere* or *cyfar* – literally a 'joint ploughing' (Slack, 1951, pp. 35, 170–1) Parsons (2023, p. 15) notes it is possible to infer the presence of medieval Cymric tenurial arrangements of unfree or bond tenure which in turn are suggestive of the presence of a fully functioning and gradated system of Cymric land tenure within the post-Conquest Anglo-Norman lordship of Oswestry.

At this most local of levels, the evidence from Trefonen supports that from the macro and medium-scale studies that speaks of the persistence of the language of Cymraeg within the local population, but also that of Cymric traditions of land tenure despite Trefonen lying within the extents of the Anglo-Norman lordship of Oswestry and within the borders of England. These results reflect those from the wider archaeological and toponymic elements of this research that despite the top-down imposition of both local and remote elites such as Offa of Mercia in the late eighth century, or his Anglo-Norman eleventh century successors, the traditions and ways of seeing the world experienced by those who inhabited the Anglo-

Welsh borderland persisted, albeit below the top-level radar of many elite documentary records. Together, these analyses demonstrate that the evidence for the agency of local populations is to be found at a range of scales when such studies are undertaken.

4.9.2 Folklore

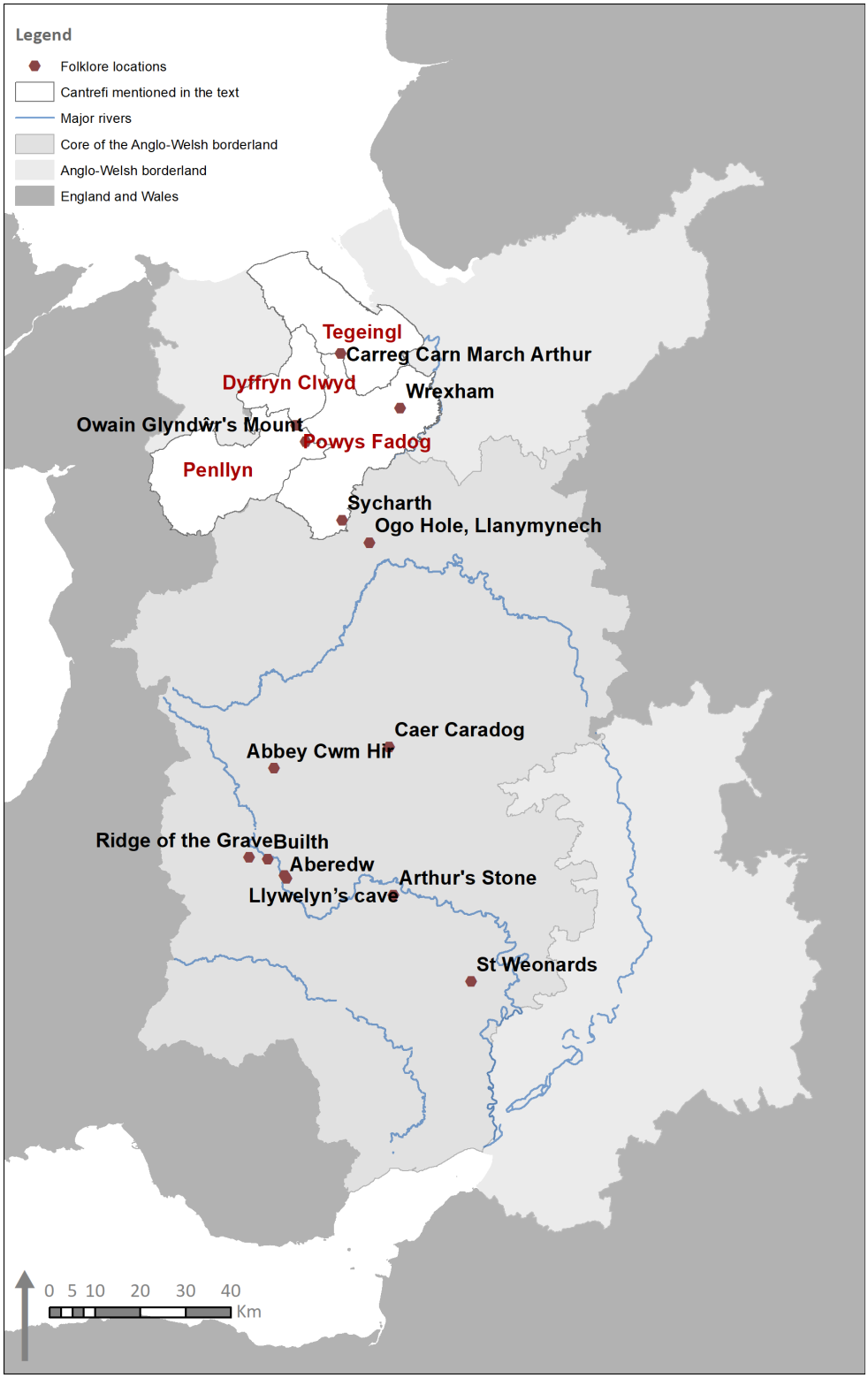


Figure 105 Folklore locations used in the case study

Name	County	Significance
St Weonards	Herefordshire	Location of burial of St Weonard/St Gwennarth
Ogo Hole	Shropshire	Entrance to ancient mine workings interpreted as entrance to the world of the fairies
Bwrdd-Tri, Arglwydd (Table of the Three Lords)	Denbighshire	Boundary marker associated with Owain Glyndŵr's lands
Owain Glyndŵr's Mount	Denbighshire	Mound associated with Owain Glyndŵr's declaration as Prince of Cymru
Caer Caradog	Radnorshire	Possible location of Caractacus' last stand against the Romans in 51 AD
Ogof Llywelyn (Llywelyn's cave)	Radnorshire	Location associated with Llywelyn's last night before his fatal battle with Edward I
Cefn y Bedd (Ridge of the Grave)	Brecknockshire	Legendary location of Llywelyn's interim burial
Aberedw	Radnorshire	Settlement implicated in Llywelyn's betrayal
Builth Wells	Radnorshire	Settlement implicated in Llywelyn's betrayal
Wrecsam	Denbighshire	Location of legends attributing construction of Offa's Dyke to the devil
Carreg Carn March Arthur	Denbighshire	Boundary marker associated with Arthurian legend
Arthur's Stone	Herefordshire	Neolithic burial monument associated with Arthurian legend
Abbey Cwm Hir	Radnorshire	Cymric Cistercian monastery where Llywelyn is buried
Sycharth	Denbighshire	Location of Owain Glyndŵr's main residence

Table 93 Table of sites featured in the case study

As noted earlier in the review of the literature for folklore studies (2.1.5) the myths and legends bound up in landscapes over generations have the potential to reveal evidence from the oral traditions created by communities with an intimate understanding of a given environment. In the case of borderlands these testimonies may further reveal patterns of cultural difference or hybridity not available elsewhere in the historical record. The folklore

of the Anglo-Welsh borderland is no exception. Together, the evidence from the counties on both sides of this culturally complex landscape speaks of its multi-vocal nature and distinctiveness over centuries and at a range of scales (Table 93; Figure 105).

Within the context of British folklore studies the Anglo-Welsh borderland has attracted the attention of some of the most prominent scholars in the field with Jacqueline Simpson's (1976) *The Folklore of the Welsh Border* in particular providing a rare example of scholarly attention being directed at the region in its entirety. In other instances, the county archives of Ella Mary Leather for Herefordshire (1912) and Charlotte Burne in Shropshire (1883), subsequently republished in 2018 and 2015 respectively, provide invaluable late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century insights. Later county-based studies include, for example, Palmer's (2001) study for Radnorshire, Collin's work on Denbighshire and Wrexham (Collins, 2014, 2011) and Nanson's (2012) account of the folklore of Gloucestershire. Additionally, Leslie Grinsell turned his folkloric attention (1976) to the region both in terms of groups of monuments (typified by his work on the Bronze Age barrows of Herefordshire) and some of its most prominent sites, including, for example, Arthur's Stone again in Herefordshire and Mitchell's Fold stone circle in Shropshire (e.g. Grinsell, 1993, 1980) (Figure 27). In combination, this scholarship carried out across much of the border and over many decades provides a patchwork of culturally contingent myths and legends that reveals how its diverse communities interpreted their natural and anthropogenic environments.

At the macro, or regional, level the Anglo-Welsh borderland's folklore reveals its cultural interconnectedness with wider European traditions of, for example, the Wild Hunt and the Sleeping King (Hutton, 2019; Simpson, 1986) as evidenced through the myths surrounding Wild Edric in Shropshire, or Arthur and Owain Glyndŵr across much of the rest of the landscape (Collins, 2011, pp. 159–65; Simpson, 1976, p. 78). Additionally, from a distinctly Cymric perspective, the Second Branch of *The Mabinogion* places the Denbighshire village of Bryn Saith Marchog (The Hill of Seven Knights) at the centre of the tale in which Brân the Blessed journeys to rescue his sister Branwen from a failed marriage to the King of Ireland thereby providing further evidence for the region's connections with the wider Atlantic coastal tradition and of the nature of the cultural relationships with the island of Ireland in particular (Collins, 2011, pp. 172–182).

Conversely, however, the macro-scale evidence from across the borderland also speaks of the contrasting levels of English and Cymric influence across the region. Such patterns find expression through, for example, the presence, or absence, of the Tylwyth Teg, or fairies in Cymric folklore which Leather interpreted as evidence for the influence of these traditions across much of Herefordshire (Leather, 1912; Simpson, 1976, p. 75). In contrast, beyond the border with the Cymric counties, Burne noted their large-scale absence from Shropshire myths and legends across much of the rest of the county and their almost complete absence from those of Cheshire (Burne, 1883, pp. 55–62; Grinsell, 1980; Simpson, 1976, p. 75).

Unsurprisingly, a key theme running through much of Anglo-Welsh borderland folklore is that of conflict, with early battlefield legends being attributed to, for example, Caer Caradog near Knighton on the border between Radnorshire and Shropshire, as a potential site for Caractacus' final battle against the forces of Rome in 51 AD (Palmer, 2001, p. 192). Subsequently, in the early medieval period, Helbert's (2016) PhD thesis on *The Arthur of the March of Wales*, presses the case for the conflicted border environment within which much of Arthurian folklore is based being a natural fit with the region's character during this period. As an aside, Helbert additionally observes that with so much Arthurian scholarship concerned with only Cymric or English sources these modes of working could themselves be the source of a scholarly 'blind spot' when it comes to considering the significance of the Anglo-Welsh borderland in this wider body of folklore.

Certainly, a number of individual archaeological sites in the region are bound up with Arthurian folklore with two particular examples being the Neolithic burial chamber of Arthur's Stone overlooking the Golden Valley in Herefordshire (Leather, 1912, p. 5) and the Carreg Carn March Arthur boundary marker in Denbighshire (Collins, 2011, p. 147). In the case of the former, Arthur is said to have slain a giant who left an impression of his elbows on one of the stones as he fell, whilst the boundary stone at Carreg Carn March Arthur is said to bear the hoofprint left by Arthur's mount as horse and rider leapt from a nearby cliff to escape the invading Saxons. Though the stone is today marked by an inscription dated to 1763 (RCAHMW, 2009) its location on the medieval boundary between the cantrefi of Tegeingl and Powys Fadog could instead hint at a far greater antiquity.

Similar tales relating to the region's borderland character are also bound up with more recent historical figures, specifically, Llwelyn ap Gruffudd (1223 – 1282) recognised as Prince of Cymru from 1258 until his death in 1282 and Owain Glyndŵr (c. 1354 – 1415), the last native-born Cymric leader (Collins, 2011). Whilst the circumstances of Llwelyn's birth, widely regarded as having taken place in the Brecknockshire village of Llyswen, provide an early connection with the region, it is the events surrounding his death at the battle of Irfon Bridge (RCAHMW, 2017) between the Cymry and the army of Edward I at Builth Wells, also in Brecknockshire, that cement his place in Anglo-Welsh borderland folklore. Legends concerned with events immediately preceding and following the battle place Llwelyn spending his last night in a cave that now bears his name at Aberdw in Radnorshire and his body initially being placed in un-consecrated ground at Cefn y Bedd (Ridge of the Grave) west of the village of Cilmeri in Brecknockshire. Despite Llwelyn finally being laid to rest at Abbey Cwm Hir back in Radnorshire tales relating to the betrayal of the residents of Aberdw and Builth Wells persisted into recent memory with the Reverend Alan Charters reporting as late as 1992 that upon hearing of his transfer to the latter's parish his parishioners in Talgarth remarked on his 'going to join the traitors' (Palmer, 2001, p. 199).

Owain Glyndŵr's origins are similarly tied to the borderland as his inherited lands sat within the valley of the Dee and he maintained his primary residence at Sycharth near Oswestry and close to the border in Denbighshire (Wiliam, 2016). In the steep uplands overlooking the river and above the village of Carrog the barrow bearing his name (Owen Glyndŵr's mount) (Wiles, 2007) is the putative location where Glyndŵr declared himself Prince of Cymru in 1400; additionally, a nearby field between this site and the river still bears the name Cae'r Llys, or Court Field (Collins, 2011, p. 166). Perhaps most significantly, however, to the north and west is the site of Bwrdd y Tri Arglwydd (the Table of the Three Lords), from which the neighbouring settlement takes its name and which local folklore identifies as the boundary marker between Glyndŵr's lands and those of the Phug estate and the territory of the Marcher Lord Reginald de Grey. Though the block of stones marking the site today remains undated (Coflein, no date) its location at the meeting point between the cantrefi of Dyffryn Clwyd, Powys Fadog and Penllyn however, is strongly suggestive of the enduring significance of this site as an established border between three major seigneurial units well into the

medieval period, if not earlier (Collins, 2011, pp. 167–168). Once again, this stone marker offers the potential for tying together elements from local legends with the extant archaeology on the ground.

Evidence for the region's folklore being used by communities to make sense of more enigmatic anthropogenic interventions in the landscape also occurs at a range of scales and is typified by the local accounts from the town of Wrecsam (Wrexham) that attribute the construction of Offa's Dyke not to the eighth-century king of Mercia, but rather to the devil ploughing from coast to coast across Cymru in a single night (Collins, 2014, p. 126). Additionally, the cultural hybridity bound up in many of these oral traditions is typified by the myths and legends surrounding specific locations such as that of Llanymynech Hill, a major limestone outcrop adjacent to the village of the same name that straddles the border between Cymru and England. Today, this landscape is marked out through the presence of extensive Iron Age hilltop defences and evidence for Roman and possibly Bronze Age mine workings (Shropshire Historic Environment Record, 2023); large-scale and enduring earlier anthropogenic interventions that local communities clearly felt the need to account for in some way. The legends surrounding one of the entrances to these earliest of industrial workings, the *Ogo Hole*, neatly encapsulate not only the inter-relationship between the region's archaeology and its folklore, but also the multi-cultural influences in its creation. Sitting on the English side of the hill the *Ogo Hole*, nevertheless derives its name from the Cymric Ogof (cavern) and local legends account for its presence as the entrance to the land of the Tylwyth Teg, or fairies (Burne, 1883, pp. 56–57). Even today it does not require a great leap of imagination to conceive of how the scale of the industrial workings in the side of the hill and the prehistoric ramparts and ditches around its summit lent themselves to such a liminal interpretation within local folkloric traditions. That these legends are associated with a major local landmark that straddles the long-standing physical border itself, but also incorporates Cymric linguistic elements and traditions further speaks of the cultural hybridity of this part of the Anglo-Welsh borderland.

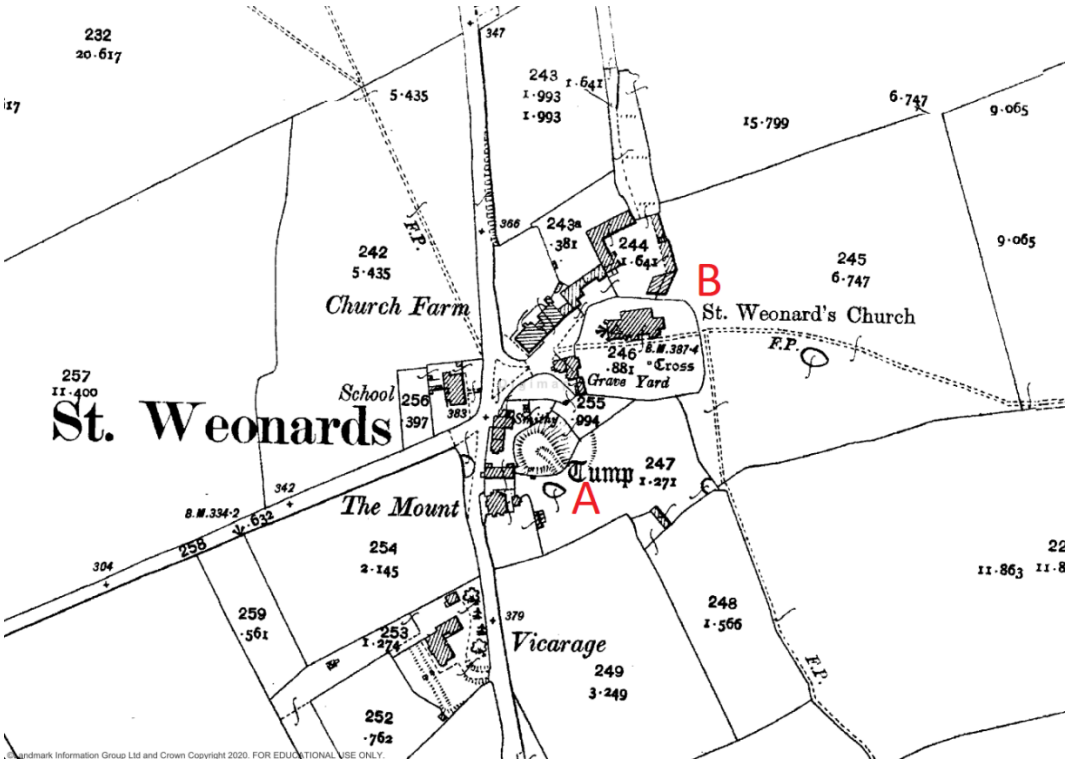


Figure 106 Plan of St Weonard's, Herefordshire © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2024). All rights reserved. (1900).

So far, the folkloric examples have been tied in with notable topographic locations, substantial anthropogenic interventions, or larger-than-life real or mythical figures, but the multi-vocal nature of the region's folklore is also bound up with seemingly minor, insignificant sites in remote rural locations. St Weonards provides the final example of Anglo-Welsh hybrid folklore traditions at the micro-level of an individual settlement. The village of St Weonards lies deep in the Herefordshire countryside 16 km from Hereford, 11km from Ross-on-Wye and 13km from Monmouth and takes its name from a relatively obscure seventh-century British hermit who, legend relates, was decapitated by the Saxons (Leather, 1912, p. 213). The settlement's association with St Weonard is accounted for through a local belief that the saint was buried in a gold coffin beneath the substantial tumulus in the centre of the village (ibid., p. 9) (Figure 106, A), a relationship commemorated in a stained glass window in the adjacent parish church (Figure 106, B), also dedicated to St Weonard, accompanied by two inscriptions in Cymraeg (those accompanying the two further windows are in Latin) (Robinson, 1873, p. 295). Mid-nineteenth-century excavations of the mound revealed the cremated remains of two individuals under a cover of stones suggesting the

later Anglo-Norman motte and bailey was itself constructed on top of an earlier prehistoric round barrow (Historic England, 1996; Robinson, 1873, p. 295). Additionally, local folklore also places the mound at the centre of village fetes and Morris dancing into the nineteenth-century 'from time immemorial' (Robinson, 1873, p. 295) suggesting its long-standing significance in local lore and custom. St Weonards is far from unique but provides a rich example of the hybrid nature of the region's folklore within which an early medieval British or Celtic saint, believed to have been murdered by Saxons, is commemorated on the English side of the border, and how these beliefs have, in turn, been maintained over centuries through their association with earlier anthropogenic features in the landscape which themselves speak of earlier traditions of re-use and reappropriation. Rather, St Weonards serves as an extant example of the wider cultural hybridity of this part of Herefordshire, of the early medieval kingdom of Ergyng, later Archenfield, within which the tenth-century *Dunsæte Agreement*, the legal contract drawn up by the English and Cymric communities living on either side of an unnamed river (widely assumed to be the Wye) was enacted (for a discussion see Molyneaux, 2011) (4.7.2, p. 203). Together with the earlier examples from across much of the remainder of the region St Weonards, then, demonstrates how local myths and legends operating at a range of scales and drawing on both English and Cymric traditions provide valuable additional insights into the meaning attributed to any number of natural and extant and lost archaeological features in the landscape.

4.9.3 Documentary sources

The documentary evidence for the Anglo-Welsh border reveals this as a landscape largely understood through the lens of others, through accounts created by its invaders or neighbours. For the most part the documentary references are incorporated into the relevant sections of the case study, but this section provides a brief contextual summary of the overall nature of the evidence. The first explicit reference to the region comes from Tacitus' (*The Annales,* xii.33*)* description of the final confrontation between the forces of Rome and Caractacus somewhere in the territory of the Ordovices marking out the polities occupying the westerly uplands of southern Britain as largely hostile to the arrival and influence of Rome.

Lindy Brady's extensive (2017) work *Writing the Welsh Borderlands in Anglo-Saxon England* provides an overview of how the region was understood during the centuries between the end of the Romano-British period and the Anglo-Norman invasion. From an English perspective, for much of the later part of this period, the centuries from which most sources come, there are relatively few pieces of evidence created by those living within the borderland itself, or the wider kingdom of Mercia into which it was incorporated. Primarily due to the destruction and loss of Mercia's archives, for example those held at Winchcombe in Gloucestershire, contemporary scholars are largely reliant on sources from Northumbria, or Wessex, on sources such as Bede's seventh century *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, the eighth-century *Lives* of Guthlac and the ninth-century *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Bede's famous reflections on the 'heretical Britons and heathen Mercians' fighting together against Christian Northumbria in 613 AD serves as a reminder to scholars that he can hardly be relied upon as a neutral source of evidence (for a summary of the literature on early Mercia and the Britons see Tyler, 2008). From a Cymric perspective, however, we are gifted with a significant corpus of Cymric poetry (Brady, 2017, p. 13) which provides a contrasting, more positive, first-hand account of such collaborative exploits ranging across central and southern Britain with an early sixth-century example being provided by *The Gododdin* (see the most recent translation by Clarke, 2022).

Where documentary sources from within the Anglo-Welsh borderland are available they present an altogether more peaceful impression of a region largely interpreted by its neighbours as mysterious, 'other' and bound up in petty violence (Brady, 2017, p. 12). Key amongst these resources is the previously referenced tenth-century *Dunsæte Agreement* (4.7.2, p. 203) (see also Bassett, 2000, 1989; Charles-Edwards, 2014; Fanning, 1991; Higham, 2008, 1994; Sims-Williams, 1983; Tyler, 2008, 2005; Yorke, 1990). Additionally, insights into the role and impact of ecclesiastical land holdings over several centuries, though primarily in the eighth and ninth centuries, is provided by the Llandaff Charters within which the transfer of secular and ecclesiastical estates are chartered. Lastly, when the folkloric tales reported in the *Life of Harold Godwinson* emerged, written during the transition to Anglo-Norman power across much of England, it was in the nebulous, poorly understood Anglo-Welsh borderland

that it was believed the former king lived out his life in relative safety (Brady, 2017, pp. 159–168).

Finally, in the case of the centuries following the Norman Conquest, as the region came to form the March, Y Mers, between Cymru and England its other worldly character continued (for a discussion of the emergence and wider significance of the March of Wales, or Y Mers, in Anglo-Norman politics see Lieberman, 2010, 2008). Whilst undoubtedly the region was riven by the impact of the competing interests of the Anglo-Norman lordships and their Cymric counterparts, once again, however, a range of legal documents drawn up within the borderland itself including court rolls (Hume, 2021, p. 8) provide evidence for a continuation of many of these locally-based, pragmatic practices. In particular, the evidence from Dyffryn Clwyd/Ruthin speaks of the efforts of its Cymric and English residents creating the means through which a stable and prosperous community might be achieved (Hume, 2021, p. 8; Stevens, 2010) (4.8.2, p. 232).

Together, the sources referenced throughout the individual historical sections of the case study provide evidence for a landscape whose documentary references are primarily derived from sources elsewhere, from Roman authors encountering the polities in the west of Britain for the first time, early medieval writers based in culturally-distinct and/or competing kingdoms and writers based in Cymru or Anglo-Norman England with little or no first-hand experience of the region. These sources stand in contrast to those from the relatively limited number of authors whose familiarity with this landscape instead present a contrasting image of a complex, multi-vocal environment that presented unique challenges to those living within it, but also one open to opportunities for political, economic and cultural collaboration at the local level.

Chapter 5 Writing the Biography of the Case Study of the Anglo-Welsh Borderland

"East is east, and west is west"

(Kipling, 1892)

5.1 Introduction

The case study of the Anglo-Welsh border was conducted as a practical exercise with a dual purpose. In the first instance, the results of this research are intended to further our understanding of the region over millennia, over its deep past, and to explore the origins of, and drivers behind, its liminality. Secondly, these outputs also form the evidence against which to assess the utility of the new interdisciplinary framework for building the biographies of diachronic borderlands. It is the first of these aims with which this chapter is primarily concerned with reflections on the wider applicability of this methodology to the construction of biographies of diachronic borderland research following in Chapter 6.

This discussion summarises the findings of the case study through the creation of a single narrative covering the evidence from earliest prehistory through to the present day, through a set of reflections through the lenses of affordances, metaphors and the *Longue Durée* and by means of a final conclusion evaluating their utility in supporting our understanding of the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the twenty-first century.

5.2 The Anglo-Welsh borderland in prehistory

The results from the prehistoric periods reveal both the origins of this region's liminal status and the role of its topography in shaping its character (section 4.2). Evidence derived from the earliest human habitation of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, through analyses conducted by physical geographers and palaeo-archaeologists, speaks of the region's status at the edge of the habitable world (Figure 11) (Lillie, 2015). Whether through repeated ice sheet incursions and retreats through the Palaeolithic, or warming temperatures and rising sea levels during the Mesolithic, the region offered mobile hunter-gatherer communities access

to a rich and diverse array of resources, albeit within the context of a challenging and at times rapidly changing natural environment. By the time of the arrival of the first farmers the Anglo-Welsh borderland had settled into a topographically varied landscape dominated at its northern and southern extents by two of the most significant west-facing estuaries in mainland Britain. Elsewhere in the region, westerly uplands gave way to extensive lowland plains to the east providing access to a diverse range of resources which were, in turn, connected to the wider world by four major river valleys and their tributaries.

The findings from the case study for the earlier Neolithic (4.3.1) reveal evidence for a region whose residents embraced traditions associated with monumentality, and the raising of collective burial mounds in particular, to a greater extent than those living in the remainder of Cymru and England (Table 24, Figure 13). Within the borderland itself, however, a more nuanced picture emerges, one in which several macro-scale culturally distinct zones or 'arenas for action' (Heft, 1988) become apparent. Across much of the south of the border the influence of the broader Atlantic coastal tradition finds expression through the construction of, for example, large numbers of long barrows and chambered tombs positioned to facilitate extensive views across the major river valleys of the Wye, Usk and Severn (Figure 14). In the case of the Severn, the form and density of these monuments overlooking its estuary mark them out as forming a substantial part of the nationally significant Severn-Cotswold group (Darvill, 2004). Clearly sited and orientated to maximise the available vistas across this major riverine and transhumance route, these collective burial chambers are additionally noteworthy because of their shape and form. Incorporating elements derived from the traditions of their neighbours to the west and to the east in central southern England their frequency and unique architectural characteristics speak of the wealth and hybrid cultural confidence of the communities in this part of the borderland (Cunliffe, 2001, p. 192); of their ability and willingness to dedicate significant resources to the raising of these enduring, inter-generational statements of power in place in locations from which to view, but also from which to be seen.

The contrast with the evidence, or lack thereof, for the emergence of similar traditions in the remainder of the east of the region could not be clearer. Here, the almost complete absence of 'classic' monuments of the period instead speaks of the adoption of practices, either

through choice or necessity, that were not reliant on such expressions of monumentality. Whilst the drivers behind this apparent absence of any enduring forms of monumentality in the east remain to be accounted for, in this instance, it is the lack of evidence and its contrast with the south-east and core of the region that is itself significant. Clearly, the territorial identities in these lowlands were articulated, learned and reproduced over time by different means (Paasi, 2009). The final part of the region with its own distinct character during the earlier Neolithic is the transitional core, the space in which the uplands and lowlands intersect. Here, conspicuously, locations also incorporating a riverine element were selected for the construction of monuments widely interpreted as being associated with communities coming together, including, for example, causewayed enclosures (Table 29; Figure 20). In the case of the Walton Basin (Figure 26), a distinct natural amphitheatre in the centre of this part of the region, the scale of the cursus' and enclosures in its lowland centre mark this out as a place of national significance in the archaeological record, one to which early Neolithic individuals and groups may have travelled some distance (Jones, 2014). The early Neolithic can, then, be summarised as a period during which themes of distinct cultural expressionism tied in with contrasting traditions of monumentality emerged, most prominently in the south-east, core and east; as a time when the first evidence for Paasi's (2009, p. 225) 'discursive landscapes of power' becomes evident. Additionally, the patterns of use revealed through excavations conducted at several long barrows and chambered tombs also speak of the evolving 'biographies of objects and places' (Darvill, 2004; Naylor, 2008, p. 265). With the levels of resources expended in their construction these structures and their chosen locations over time emerge as non-verbal metaphors for inter-generational and collective expressions of power in place in settings affording views across many of the main transhumance routes through the landscape (Bradley, 2012; Winter, 2014). Further, evidence for these earliest farmers conceiving of their world at a range of scales comes from the causewayed enclosures located at the interface between the riverine routes through the region as they intersect with the uplands and lowlands. Here, these monuments speak of these topographically distinct locations as substantial 'arenas for action' (Darvill et al., 2011; Heft, 1988; Whittle et al., 2011) potentially bound up with large-scale episodes of mobility and diaspora embedded with notions of 'inside and outside' and 'inclusion and exclusion'.

The contrasting traditions of monumentality across the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the earlier Neolithic, between 'adopters' (of monumentality) and 'non-adopters' can, then, be interpreted as the earliest evidence for cultural liminality in the region.

Subsequently, in the later Neolithic (4.3.2), a period marked by the emergence of new forms of circular monumentality and their associated belief systems, the first evidence for processes of continuity and change appears. Though the figures here fall broadly in line with rates of monument construction encountered elsewhere across England and Cymru, they once again obscure a more nuanced, multi-vocal picture within the borderland itself. Though the monumental forms themselves were subject to processes of radical transformation, the region's liminal character, as a space at the interface between contrasting traditions, endured. Change is evidenced through the adoption of new traditions in the south and west of the borderland whilst elsewhere those in the east and core speak more of cultural continuity (Table 32, Figures 28, 29).

In the south, overlooking the Severn, the earlier atypically high levels of resource expended on the construction of collective burial chambers diminishes, accompanied, in some instances, with the deliberate blocking up, or closure of these structures; of the active rejection of earlier forms of cultural normativity (Darvill, 2010; Rietveld and Kieverstein, 2014). Equally, for whatever reason, the evident enthusiasm for the adoption of stone circles and henges in central and southern England did not translate into this part of the region reinforcing the presence of a level of agency on the part of this hybrid landscape's inhabitants as 'adopters' or 'non-adopters' of both locally established and newly-emerging neighbouring traditions (Winter, 2014). Elsewhere, communities in the westerly uplands elected to mark out many of their significant locations, often those that afforded extensive views across the land or skyscapes, with stone circles, creating their own distinct 'arenas for action' (Gibson, 2004; Heft, 1988). Though in this case archaeologists do not consider these monuments to form part of a wider European Atlantic coastal tradition they nevertheless still reflect continuing cultural connections with the west, most particularly with the island of Ireland (Cunliffe, 2001). In contrast, in the easterly lowlands the evidence instead reveals a continuation of cultural practices conspicuous in the archaeological record for their rejection of life ways bound up in enduring expressions of monumentality (Garwood, 2011; Rietveld

and Kiverstein,2014). Finally, in the region's topographically transitional core, in the locations where the rivers, uplands and lowlands converge, the evidence from the presence of the limited number of henges in the borderland is suggestive of their enduring status as places, or niches, of connectivity and zones of encounter (Dings, 2021; Gibson, 2004). Once again, the Walton Basin (Figure 26) is noteworthy for being chosen as a location for atypically large expressions of monumentality, as a topographically and culturally distinct 'arena for action' (Heft, 1988; Jones, 2014). Overall, despite extensive evidence for change in the west and south-east the region's liminal character, as a place in between, appears to continue through the later Neolithic.

In summary, the evidence from the Neolithic as a whole (4.3.3) speaks of varying macro-scale patterns of monumentality emerging across the region. Taken together, these phenomena are suggestive of populations responding to their contrasting upland and lowland landscapes through the development of at times radically different cultural practices. Throughout, despite wide-ranging changes in monumentality, the liminal character of the topographically transitional core where lowlands, uplands and riverine routes converged, apparently as a place of encounter or coming together, continued throughout.

The form and scale of the evidence from the later Neolithic in the Anglo-Welsh borderland, and that from the Walton Basin in particular, then, is suggestive of the region's status as a liminal space of encounter during this period; of its role as a destination within which potentially significant numbers of individuals and groups elected to come together. Accordingly, it becomes necessary to consider its significance within wider contemporary disciplinary debates on the nature of later Neolithic medium and long-range patterns of transhumance across the British Isles.

Of particular relevance to the results from the Anglo-Welsh borderland are the contrasting, and contested, theories surrounding the role of Stonehenge, and to a lesser extent that of the Orcadian archipelago, as 'luminous centres' in later Neolithic society (e.g. Barclay, 2001; Parker-Pearson, 2013; Parker-Pearson et al., 2024). In the case of Stonehenge Parker-Pearson's interpretation of the evidence for the Bluestones circle originating in specific quarries in west Wales and for recent isotopic results being indicative of the movement of

animals and people from Orkney, or the north-east of Scotland, and by extension of the monument's role as a 'unifying' centre in late Neolithic Britain (e.g. Madgwick et al., 2021; Parker-Pearson, 2013; Parker-Pearson et al., 2021) has, in turn, resulted in some of the most robust scholarly rebuttals of the interpretation of a body of archaeological evidence in recent decades (e.g. Barclay and Brophy, 2021; Darvill, 2022). Certainly, Brophy (Barclay and Brophy, 2021, p. 331; Brophy, 2018, p. 1650) has argued that the resulting 'complacent view of the construct of 'nationalism' in relation to writing 'British' prehistory from a Wessex-centred perspective' has had a 'deleterious effect on the quality of public discourse in the UK', particularly in relation to Brexit and British, or English, isolationism (e.g. Collins, 2012; Knapton, 2019).

The evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland is not supportive of such 'Wessex-centred' accounts and in fact offers up an alternative perspective, one based on richer and more diverse patterns of transhumance during the later Neolithic. This is achieved on several levels. Firstly, the results from the current study, themselves based on earlier fieldwork, clearly indicate that the scale and ambition of the monumentality undertaken in the region, and within the Walton Basin in particular, mark it out as a destination; as a distinctive landscape at the interface between the uplands, lowlands and riverine routes where individuals and groups may have come together at scale and across some distance (e.g. Britnell, 2013; Britnell and Jones, 2012; Gibson, 1999). Whilst the scale and complexity of the expressions of monumentality across the landscape of Wessex are undeniable, the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh border is suggestive of the presence of alternative significant destinations if researchers care to look for them. Indeed, the results of the current study are supportive of the reflections from scholars working in equally overlooked regions of mainland Britain who have made the case for actively looking beyond Wessex if we are to further our understanding of later Neolithic society across mainland Britain (e.g. Frodsham, 1996; Harding, 1991; Jones, 2011).

Secondly, bound up with the Wessex-centred perspective on the later Neolithic are associated theories on mainland British isolation during the period. However, these perspectives focus primarily on the mainland continent and take little account of the evidence for clear monumental and material connections across the Irish Sea at this time

(Bradley, 2007, p. 116ff; Sheridan, 2004). Again, exploring the temporal and spatial extent of the evidence for later Neolithic connections with the island of Ireland may serve to broaden the academic debates on the extent and nature of the relations between the inhabitants of southern Britain and their wider world. With its status at the edge of westerly later Neolithic monumental traditions furthering our understanding of the Anglo-Welsh borderland during this period may also offer up valuable insights to inform these wider analyses.

Finally, and crucially for the Anglo-Welsh borderland during the later Neolithic, Barclay and Brophy (2021, pp. 339-40) offer up alternative interpretations of the isotopic evidence derived from animal teeth that have been used to make the case for long-distance travel to Stonehenge from as far away as Orkney or the very north of Scotland (Madgwick et al., 2021). In summarising the earlier work of Viner et al. (2010, pp. 2817-19) and Chenery et al. (2010) Barclay and Brophy highlight the potential for the sources of these particular strontium readings coming from more local, southerly origin points within the Anglo-Welsh borderland, specifically in the Malvern Hills and Gloucestershire. Once again, further explorations of the evidence from the region may well offer valuable insights to inform the wider national narrative.

In summary, the form and breadth of evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland strengthen the case for Barclay and Brophy's (2010) call to look beyond the evidence from the 'luminous centres' of Wessex and Orkney and to instead more closely examine that from the vast, comparatively under-explored, 'areas in between' if we are to further our understanding of the later Neolithic of the British Isles and to provide a more accurate portrait of the period in the increasingly febrile contemporary debates on Britishness.

In common with the remainder of Cymru and England, the earlier Bronze Age in the Anglo-Welsh borderland (4.4.2) is marked out by the replacement of previous collective Neolithic traditions of monumentality with the extensive raising of round barrows (Tables 35, 36, 37; Figures 33, 34); of the rejection of earlier traditions and the creation of new individual and collective webs of normativity (Johnson, 2017; Rietveld and Kieverstein, 2014; Winter, 2014). Whilst there is little evidence for the extensive cemeteries encountered elsewhere in central and southern Britain, the figures for individual and small groups of barrows within the region

indicate moderately higher rates of construction being undertaken than elsewhere in England and Cymru. Within the borderland itself, however, once again a more nuanced picture is revealed, one characterised by a re-imagining of the established west-east divide and through a significant resurgence in enthusiasm for monument construction across the Gloucestershire Cotswolds in the south-east once again indicating the enduring presence of contrasting macro-scale 'discursive landscapes of power' across the region (Last, 2007; Paasi, 2009, p. 225). Continuity in the east becomes apparent through these communities' continued rejection of traditions predicated on the extensive raising of highly visible, enduring monuments across their landscapes, of their ongoing 'non-adopter' status. In contrast, in the neighbouring uplands, barrow construction comes to form a conspicuous part of the cultural package of these communities in the west. Here, in common with the south-east, the widespread adoption of barrows in locations from which it is possible to both view and to be seen, as monuments used on an inter-generational basis, is strongly suggestive of their role as non-verbal metaphors, as physical manifestations, or reminders, across time and space of the cultural character of this part of the region (Johnson, 2017; Winter, 2014).

In summary, a broad west, south and east macro-scale pattern of regional traditions becomes evident. In terms of location, the barrows of the Anglo-Welsh border are consistently positioned to facilitate extensive views over (though not directly adjacent to) the main riverine routes across the region that in turn feed into the wider trade and cultural networks of the time. The clusters of these monuments in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, those overlooking the Severn estuary and this major transhumance route into the south of the borderland, stand out as particularly extensive. In addition to the main riverine routes through the landscape, other 'special' locations also came to be marked out, in particular, those places most closely associated with resources of value in metalworking suggesting the creation of additional, new associations. Though for the most part the topographically transitional core ceases to be othered through the presence of atypical expressions of monumentality its liminal status is maintained as the interface between the contrasting traditions in the east and west. Yet again, however, the Walton Basin is marked out as a place of some significance through the presence of seven surviving barrows on the peaks of the

surrounding hills, seventeen extant monuments within the basin itself with crop marks suggesting the presence of at least a further eighteen (Jones, 2014). Additionally, in a potential example of conspicuous curation, one of these barrows itself located within the earlier Hindwell enclosure (Gibson and Becker, 2001) potentially also incorporates a later Neolithic stone circle (for a summary see Jones, 2014, p. 12). Despite the many changes in expressions of monumentality, technology and potentially also population over several centuries, the Walton Basin appears to have maintained its status as an important nodal point within the core of the region; as a place yet again marked out with atypically high levels of cultural representation, a landscape at once bound up with temporal and spatial reminders but also a space within which new 'biographies' were potentially made (Naylor, 2008, p. 265).

Overall, the macro-scale evidence from the earlier Bronze Age speaks of the continued character of the Anglo-Welsh borderland as a nuanced, multi-vocal 'discursive landscape of power' (Johnson, 2017; Paasi, 2009, p. 225). Though lacking evidence for the extensive barrow cemeteries encountered elsewhere in southern Britain the region nevertheless provides evidence for the agency of individuals and communities at once consciously embracing or rejecting the opportunities for marking their place in the world, for the presence of contrasting 'arenas for action' (Heft, 1988).

Whilst the later Bronze Age offers less readily identifiable evidence from across the wider landscape individual 'bordering' interventions in the landscape, for example the Shire Ditch on the Malvern Hills, speak of ongoing, if changing, patterns of marking the land during this period (4.4.3, p. 136; Figure 32). Additionally, the work of scholars including Bradley (2012) and Mullin (2012) may also offer additional insights into the drivers behind the cultural distinctions apparent across the region and potential origins for patterns that emerge in later periods. In particular, if it transpires that the evidence for differential practices in metal deposition between the rivers flowing into the Irish and North seas is indicative of wider cultural distinctions, might these also find expression in the patterns of monumentality surrounding them? Might the region's location and topographic status transform it into a cultural zone of encounter where the influences of the rivers flowing into the Irish Sea meet those formed around their neighbours to the east with their Continental connections? If such

phenomena do exist, how might they manifest themselves in the landscape? Could they account for the form of the earliest Neolithic structures in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds and the wider west, core, east character of the region through the remainder of the Neolithic and into the Bronze Age? At this point it becomes possible to ask if, through the lens of the *Longue Durée*, it might it be possible to identify such patterns with different forms of monumentality in later periods? Certainly, these questions are worthy of consideration within the context of a wider discussion of the evidence from the borderland through prehistory to follow, where the macro-scale patterns across the region in the Iron Age reveal the enduring character of the west, core, east and south-east.

The evidence from the earlier Iron Age of the region (4.5.2) reveals that its inhabitants were dedicating considerably greater levels of resource to the construction of hillforts than their contemporaries elsewhere in Cymru and England. Additionally, the results of a range of excavations and field surveys shows not only that these communities were amongst the earliest adopters of this form of monumentality, but also that they were responsible for some of the most ambitious examples both in terms of size, complexity and location (Britnell and Silvester, 2018).

Forming most of the northern half of Cunliffe's (2005) central southern zone the Anglo-Welsh borderland's hillforts at once sat within a uniquely congested niche, a topographically transitional environment that offered access to numerous sites offering extensive views over and control across the main routes through the region and beyond. As is the case with the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, however, a closer examination of the evidence within the region reveals a complex picture comprised of several distinct traditions of hillfort construction suggesting the presence of overlapping webs of practice, or Heft's (1988) 'arenas for action' (Tables 44, 45; Figures 43, 44).

In the east, a part of the region previously noted for its near absence of expressions of enduring monumentality, hillfort construction is characterised by the greatest number of larger, group III, monuments. Forming part of a wider distribution covering much of central and southern England, these hillforts are most frequently found east of the Severn and around the Wye in the south, but rarely occur deeper into the westerly uplands. In turn, in

the west of the region, smaller but more numerous group I hillforts dominate. As is the case with their contemporaries in the east, these relatively diminutive structures also form part of a wider, nationally recognisable distribution, one that extends east from the Atlantic coastline, but similarly diminishes in or around the core of the border. Across much of the region these two groups are, for the most part, mutually exclusive. In contrast, the remaining intermediate group II hillforts range across the entirety of the borderland, but their distribution is densest in the core overlooking the upper Severn. To the south-east, in common with earlier periods, a final group of distinct monuments emerges in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds overlooking the Severn and its estuary. Here, uniquely and in roughly equal number, all three groups of hillforts are found together. Whilst accounting for precisely what was happening in the uplands overlooking the Severn is problematic, it is nevertheless possible to observe that patterns of hillfort construction undertaken here were perceptibly different to those of their neighbours. In summary, once again, the macro-scale spatial evidence from across the borderland during the earlier Iron Age is suggestive of the communities in the west and east following distinct patterns of monumentality. Equally, the density of construction evident along the topographically transitional core of the border is suggestive of the role of hillforts in earlier Iron Age place-making being played out at an intensity not readily apparent elsewhere in southern mainland Britain. Whilst the results of the case study speak of the high degree of co-location between the riverine routes through the borderland and the siting of hillforts, they also reveal other factors not immediately explainable in terms of access to resources or curation of earlier monuments having a significant bearing on choice of site. The evidence is, then, suggestive of the core of the Anglo-Welsh borderland forming a crowded liminal landscape sitting between two distinct traditions of hillfort construction within which a range of factors were exerting their influence over site location (Britnell and Silvester, 2018). Additionally, the Gloucestershire Cotswolds in the south-east are once again marked out as a landscape with its own particular traditions. Whilst it is not possible to speak in terms of fixed borders between polities across the region, the presence of distinct traditions of monumentality can be observed. In each case the resources dedicated to the marking out of these distinct places in the landscape, ones closely associated with its topography and transhumance routes through it, speak of

the willingness of these communities to invest atypically high levels of resource in marking out these locations; of the significance of these sites as places of 'inclusion and exclusion'. Additionally, the potential exists for the enduring temporal significance of these sites, as locations chosen at least in part on the basis of their own enduring inter-generational biographies (Naylor, 2008; Paasi, 2009; Winter and Matlock, 2017).

Despite their apparent ubiquity, however, the significance of hillforts waxed and waned during the Iron Age, with a range of different responses to processes of social change being revealed in the archaeological record (Brown, 2021; Lock and Ralston, 2022). In the case of the Anglo-Welsh borderland the landscape evidence suggests that the region can be broadly characterised as a place where change, in terms of monumentality at least, happened less readily. Whilst in much of southern Britain many hillforts appear to have been abandoned in the first century BC in the Anglo-Welsh borderland results from excavations indicate that at least some sites continued in use (for a discussion see Haselgrove and Pope, 2007). To the south of the Severn estuary, in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, once again, a different picture emerges with the presence of the two most westerly examples of later lowland oppida, namely Bagendon and Salmonsbury (Figure 48). Despite the extensive evidence for the utility and status of these sites from central southern England, for any number of potential reasons (Moore, 2006, p. 79), the transition from hillforts to oppida does not seem to have occurred across the remainder of the region.

Finally, in the period immediately prior to the arrival of Rome, the Roman writer Tacitus (*The Annales,* xii.33*)* confirms the Anglo-Welsh borderland's status as a later Iron Age border landscape within which the boundaries of five polities met, namely those of the Deceangli, Ordovices and Silures in the west and the Cornovii and Dobunni in the east (Figure 47). Together, the archaeological and documentary sources from the early Romano-British period speak of radically different responses from these groupings in the west and east to the challenges and opportunities afforded by assimilation into the empire of Rome; attitudes whose origins, the evidence from the landscape suggests, could potentially be very old indeed.

5.2.1 Interpretation of the prehistoric evidence through the lenses of affordances, non-verbal metaphors and the *Longue Durée*

Affordances

Considering the archaeological evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland from the Neolithic through to the end of the Iron Age through the lens of affordances invites a response to Mace's (1977) paraphrased question 'What were these prehistoric populations' heads in?' What does the evidence allow us to say about the mutual nature of the relationship between these communities and their environment? What ranges of possible actions did the Anglo-Welsh border offer up to its earliest, settled inhabitants and how did the resultant 'niches' change over space and time? In particular, what can the macro-scale landscape evidence reveal about how the region was settled through prehistory?

By the time of the arrival of the first settled farming communities in the Anglo-Welsh borderland the character of this previously topographically changeable environment had settled into a region offering access to a wide range of resources, or in Heft's (1988) words 'arenas for action'. Two of the most significant of these 'arenas' were the major estuaries of the Dee and Severn that dominated the northern and southern extents of the borderland respectively. These environments offered up not just access to important food resources, but also opportunities to link the coast and interior of the region to wider cultural and trade networks along the Atlantic coastline. Within the Anglo-Welsh borderland itself these major rivers and their tributaries additionally provided the main transhumance routes through the landscape which in turn connected it to the rest of central and southern Britain. In contrast, the westerly uplands of the Berwyn and Clywdian hills in the north and centre of the region and the Malvern Hills to the south acted as major barriers to significant land-based west-east travel.

Surrounding these riverine conduits the contrasting topography across the region would have offered up a range of opportunities and challenges. To the east, the fertile lowlands of the borderland would have promised extensive opportunities for arable agriculture. Further west, in the uplands whose character lent itself more readily to pastoral patterns of

subsistence, the extensive skyscapes and views across large swathes of the landscape, including the main transhumance routes, held the potential for opportunities to both lay claim to and control passage through this part of borderland. Sitting between them the transitional, topographically liminal core forming the narrow interface between the uplands and lowlands appears to have offered up an entirely different 'niche' once again as a zone of encounter between the two contrasting traditions of hillfort construction. At the same time, the riverine connections available to those communities in the south and east in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds afforded access not just to the Irish Sea via the Severn, but also to central southern Britain via the Thames.

In the case of the farming communities of the Neolithic we know that these populations were in possession of a rich skill set that enabled them to successfully exploit the riverine and agrarian resources available across the region (Cummings, 2017; Malone, 2001). The evidence across much of the landscape also speaks of their complex and changing belief systems expressed through monuments whose form and location were frequently bound up with the extensive skyscapes and vistas facilitated by the westerly uplands (Cummings and Whittle, 2003; Silva, 2014). Over time, as the societal and technological changes of the Bronze and Iron ages took place new 'arenas' and 'niches' emerged resulting in the exploitation and marking out of locations associated with the resources necessary to support these new lifeways, for example, metalworking (Britnell and Silvester, 2018; Johnson, 2017). Change also found expression through, for example, the evolving character of the liminal core from a landscape first conceived of as a place of coming together, to one whose transitional topography appears to have transformed it into an environment around which a number of evolving political and cultural territories coalesced. Throughout the prehistoric periods it is also possible to observe themes of continuity, in the mutual relationship between the region's topography and its inhabitants, the enduring significance of the riverine routes, of differing lifeways formed by these contrasting landscapes and of communities conceiving of their world at a range of scales (Baggs, 2021; Dings, 2021; Paasi, 2009; Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014).

Non-verbal metaphors

Drawing on the evidence derived from the affordances offered up by the region it becomes possible to perceive of the Anglo-Welsh borderland as a landscape capable of supporting a range of different agrarian models that in turn developed their own forms of cultural expression, traditions of place-making, over time. Within this broad, contrasting landscape, the evidence from non-verbal, embodied metaphors in the form of a range of different monuments, speaks of the early elites of the region simultaneously eschewing opportunities for these forms of cultural expression, or frequently investing atypically high levels of resource in using them to make their inter-generational mark in the world. Together, the frequent absence of 'classic' monuments in some parts of the region, the density of inter-generational expressions of place-making elsewhere and the marking out of the riverine intersections with the liminal core with structures associated with the coming together of communities combined to define the Anglo-Welsh borderlands as distinctly multi-vocal throughout the Neolithic (Kövecses, 2010; Winter, 2014).

Over time, into the Bronze Age, as new ideas, traditions and, potentially, populations spread across the region the evidence for contrasting 'niches', or notions of identity, power and place endured. Though new forms of monumentality associated with burial replaced the earlier collective traditions, the preference for inter-generational expressions of 'power in place' afforded by conspicuous upland locations offering extensive views over important routes through the landscape continued. Laying claim to and controlling these routes through the borderland through extensive processes of monumentality known to be understood both by communities based in the region and those passing through was deemed an essential part of the cultural package across much of the west of the region (Proctor *et al.*, 2005; Winter and Matlock, 2017). Elsewhere, in the lowlands to the east, earlier traditions with less reliance on the construction of extensive monuments similarly appear to have endured. Though the topographically transitional core no longer appeared to play host to large-scale expressions of monumentality concerned with the coming together of groups it nevertheless appeared to retain its 'in between' character as the environment where these two different traditions intersected. With the emergence and spread of new technologies relating to metalworking those locations associated with the resources upon

which they depended similarly achieved the status of niches which either required marking out in some way, or their overlooking from other significant places.

By the time of the earlier Iron Age the distinct west, core, east and south-east zones across the region had become established, albeit with different expressions of monumentality. Towards the west the evidence is suggestive of the niches engendered by life in these upland areas supporting the development of smaller, more numerous hillforts as expressions of power in place. At the same time, those in the lowlands in the east gave way to fewer, often much more substantial and elaborate sites. Though a middling class of hillfort ranged across the entirety of the borderland the character of the central core became marked out less as a niche at the edge of neighbouring traditions, but rather as a place of engagement whose nature caused the construction of one of the densest clusters of this category of monument anywhere in the British Isles. Though anecdotal, the documentary evidence for the later Iron Age provided by Roman writers that alludes to the borderland forming the intersection between five different loose confederations, or polities, along its extensive north-south axis provides one possible explanation for its distinct character. Certainly, the invasion by Rome revealed markedly different responses to the arrival of the new administration; models of behaviour whose form found expression through different building traditions and whose origins could have been formed by varying affordances and their resulting cultural niches over centuries (Naylor, 2008).

The Longue Durée

The lens of the *Longue Durée* provides an opportunity to examine the evidence from the prehistory of the Anglo-Welsh border for enduring themes over millennia. By taking a macro-scale approach to the evidence from across the region over centuries it becomes possible to say something of the affordances of this landscape during the prehistoric period and of the often-contrasting responses of its communities to their associated challenges and opportunities. Overall, the evidence speaks of an enduring concern with connectivity, of those living in the borderland conceiving of their landscape at a range of scales and of their deep understanding not just of the connections within the region, but also of those with the wider world. Further, the presence or absence of changing forms of monumental expression across the region speaks of the mutual relationship between the communities of the Anglo-

Welsh borderland and their natural world, of their varying responses to the affordances available to them across this highly contrasting environment (Bonnell and Hunt, 2023). In particular, the overlooking of the major riverine routes through the landscape and of the marking out of significant places are recurring themes. Throughout, the distinct characters of the uplands of the west of the region with their Atlantic connections, the easterly lowlands and of the topographically transitional core between them endure throughout. Within this context two further spaces and places are particularly worthy of note, namely, the Walton Basin in the heart of the liminal core in Radnorshire and the Gloucestershire Cotswolds in the south-east.

In the case of the former, the affordances for spectacular and prolific expressions of place-making and power in the landscape provided by this dramatic, highly distinctive natural amphitheatre with its riverine associations were consistently exploited throughout prehistory. From the scale of the cursus' and enclosures of the earlier Neolithic to the evidence for prolific barrow construction and the presence of two Iron Age hillforts on the uplands immediately overlooking its lowland centre the affordances for high-status monumentality provided by the spectacular topography of this piece of landscape appeared irresistible. This was enduringly a liminal, in-between space, in which significant levels of monumentality and impressive examples of place-making mattered (Bonnell and Hunt, 2023; Naylor, 2008; Paasi, 2009).

In turn, the affordances provided by the rolling uplands of the Gloucestershire Cotswolds in the south-east of the region overlooking the estuary of the Severn to the north also resulted in some of the most prolific examples of earlier Neolithic monumentality anywhere in mainland Britain. The building practices of the communities in this part of the region are not, however, remarkable simply because of their extent, but also because of the styles they incorporated. The long barrows and chambered tombs of this part of the region occupy and define a very particular niche as they conspicuously draw on their neighbouring traditions not just to the north and west, but also the south and east to create something singular and distinctive to this landscape. The form and extent of the monumentality undertaken in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds speaks of its communities not hiding away in a 'middle land', or fulcrum, between the Atlantic coastal and central southern British traditions of construction,

but rather their self-assurance in their identity; a cultural confidence expressed not least through the resources they were willing and able to dedicate to practices of inter-generational place-making carried out adjacent to the most significant southerly riverine route into the Irish sea. Whatever the details of the messages these communities were attempting to convey their intent to state their wealth, confidence and claim to this landscape over generations is clear (Naylor, 2008; Paasi, 2009).

The lens of the *Longue Durée* facilitates the opportunity to place the nature and scale of this earlier Neolithic monumentality and Bradley's (1990) and Mullin's (2012) observations on the contrasting later Bronze Age traditions relating to riverine metalwork deposition in the rivers flowing into the Irish Sea and those to the east within an inter-generational context (Braudel, 1958). Might these, together with the uniquely mixed nature of hillfort construction in the earlier Iron Age alongside the presence of the most westerly later oppida hint at the Gloucestershire Cotswolds overlooking the Severn as 'other' over centuries? Is it possible, then, to hint at the very early origins of its enduring hybrid status through its landscape archaeology?

If the interpretation of the prehistoric evidence facilitated through the lenses of affordances, non-verbal metaphors and the *Longue Durée* in the Cotswolds does indeed hint at this landscape's enduring liminal character does this in turn feed into a wider notion of the hybrid status of the south of the region in particular, and of the role of its major rivers in creating and sustaining this duality? Certainly, the most obvious interpretations of the macro-scale temporal and spatial evidence from the west of the Anglo-Welsh border speak of the long-standing influence the natural upland environment and of Atlantic coastal traditions facilitated through the routes of the main rivers and their estuaries into the Irish Sea. In turn, the relative absence for similar traditions in the easterly lowlands hints at the emergence and evolution of different cultural pathways which were, either through choice or necessity, less reliant on large-scale, or numerous, expressions of inter-generational power in place. Within the transitional core, at the interface between the uplands and lowlands, and most conspicuously at the points of intersection with many of the riverine routes, the atypical forms of monumentality, either through form or density of construction, indicate that this was a space whose character as 'other' also continued throughout prehistory. Finally, with

reference to the questions raised by Bradley's (1990) reflections on the potential significance of the later Bronze Age metalwork depositions the role of the region's major rivers and their tributaries remains significant, if enigmatic. At once certainly conduits for communication and trade, did these natural corridors for transhumance also serve as foci for 'soft power' around which varied traditions formed? Certainly, one possible interpretation of their role is not so much as frontiers or barriers in the hard and fixed sense, but instead as broad channels or arteries through the landscape offering up access to a range of borderland challenges and opportunities; affordances that were taken up and modified over time according to the circumstances of any given community to create a range of multi-vocal, culturally diverse niches which were marked out in distinctive patterns.

Having established the character of the Anglo-Welsh borderland through prehistory the evidence poses a number of questions for subsequent patterns that emerge in the historic periods. Does the documented presence of first Rome, then settlers and invaders from both Ireland and the Continent and finally the direct and hegemonic impact of Anglo-Norman rule fundamentally change the character of this landscape? What is the impact of the arrival of these frequently remote elites with little interest in, or understanding of, the mutual nature of the relationship between the landscape and its inhabitants? How do these drivers for change impact on long-term processes of continuity embedded within this multi-cultural, multi-vocal environment? To what extent do earlier affordances and niches endure, and if so, what compromises are made to accommodate them? Finally, what evidence is there for the enduring influence of the processes of the *Longue Durée*?

5.3 The Anglo-Welsh borderland in the historic periods

The results from the prehistoric periods revealed several enduring characteristics of the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the millennia preceding the arrival of Rome. In some form or another the mutual relationship between the region's changing topography and its cultural distinctiveness persisted over millennia as communities in the west and east developed, embraced or followed perceptibly different pathways that found expression through their diverse monumental traditions. Similarly, whether through the presence of different forms of

structure apparently concerned with the coming together of groups at scale, or an increased density of monuments atypical of a given period, the core of the border, the liminal landscape at the interface between the uplands and the lowlands, maintained its status as 'other'. To the south of the Severn, in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, the evidence speaks of the agency of communities who repeatedly marked themselves out as different either drawing on, modifying or rejecting, the traditions of their neighbours. Finally, the significance of the region's major rivers in forming patterns of transhumance through the Anglo-Welsh borderland and shaping those with the wider world also endured. It is this topographical and cultural landscape, one imbued with distinct traditions that had coalesced into five major later Iron Age confederations or polities, that the Roman administration encountered in the middle decades of the first century AD.

The beginning of the Romano-British period (4.6.1) marks a schism of some significance for the case study. For the first time documentary sources supplement those from the landscape, but it also becomes possible to explore new perspectives on the power, or lack thereof, of the enduring liminal nature of the border. From the point of view of its inhabitants the arrival of Rome facilitates questions on how communities across the region responded to the new challenges and opportunities offered up by assimilation into the empire. Equally, from that of the new administration, it becomes possible to explore how an external elite with little understanding of the borderland's existing political, economic and cultural characteristics engaged with this landscape. How did the new Roman administration make their mark and establish their authority? What evidence is there for coexistence, cooperation or resistance? To what extent can communities across the border be considered, in Esmonde-Cleary's (2010) words 'adopters' or 'non-adopters'? How were these processes formed and informed by the topography and earlier traditions of the borderland? Unsurprisingly, given the region's multi-vocal character throughout prehistory the evidence suggests many of these possible outcomes were played out, both in the initial invasion period and over the centuries that followed.

The figures for monumentality through the Romano-British period speak of more significant levels of construction taking place relative to the remainder of England and Cymru across the border as a whole, as well as the emergence of distinct macro-scale regional patterns within

the region (Tables 55, 59; Figures 50, 58). Overall, the combined sources of evidence speak of initial relations between Rome and the later Iron Age polities across the west and east of the border conforming to both 'adopter' and 'non-adopter' positions (Burnham et al., 2010; Esmonde Cleary, 2010). In the east, for example, the Cornovii's lowland arable farming traditions and access to industrial resources lent themselves to at least an 'accommodation' with the powers of Rome. Evidence for any substantial Roman military presence here is now widely attributed to the necessity for a base to deal with their more 'troublesome' neighbours rather than the need to suppress the local populations.

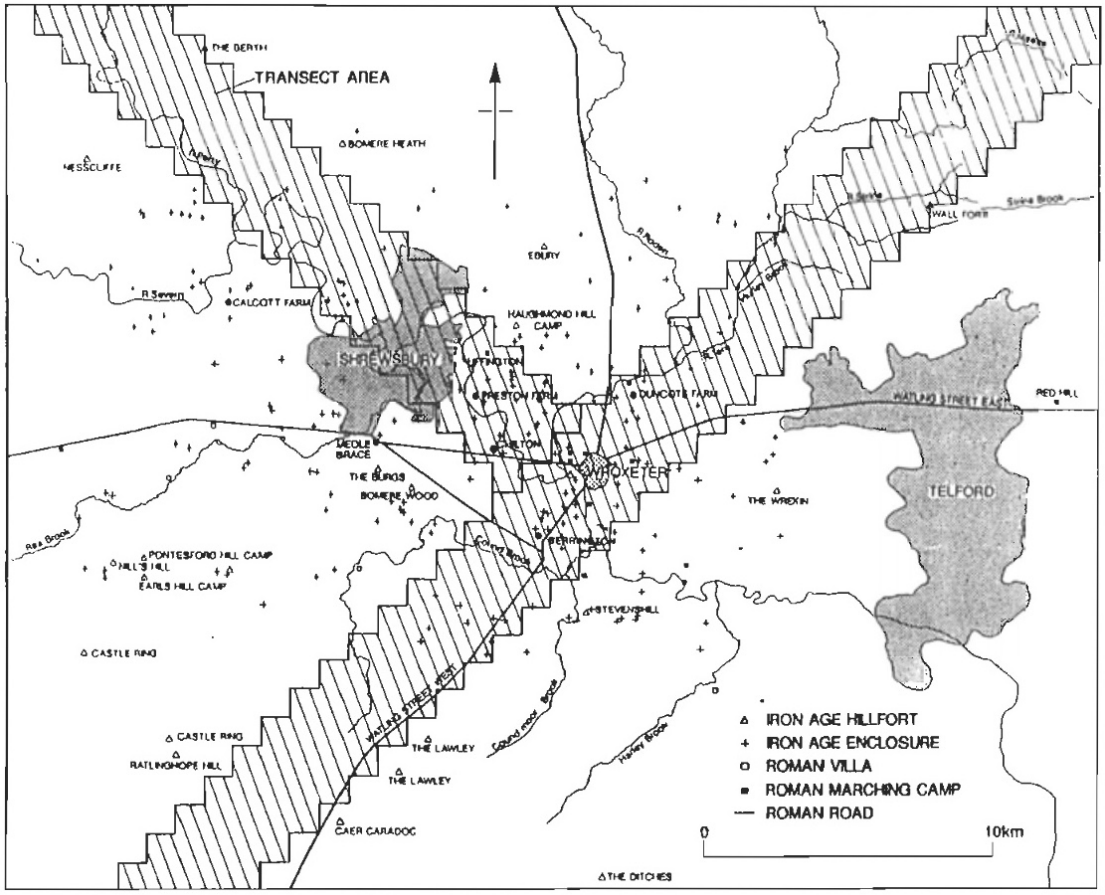


Figure 107 Location map of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project study area containing the distribution of Iron Age enclosures (from White and van Leusen, 1996, Fig 1)

Indeed, this part of the region contains extensive evidence for the continuation of earlier traditions of settlement and expressions of prestige through material culture into the Romano-British period. Collectively, surveys including, but not restricted to, those of the North-West Wetlands Survey, the Marches Uplands Survey and the Wroxeter Hinterland

Project have revealed the presence of hundreds of enclosures surrounded by single or multiple ditches; structures that sit within the wider traditions of defended settlements up to and including the numerous hillforts that characterise this part of the region (e.g. Gaffney and White, 2007; Hereford and Worcester County Archaeological Service, 2004; Leah, 1998) Though the majority remain undated the available evidence points to their role as Iron Age settlements many of which continued in use into the Romano-British period (Whimster, 1989, pp. 35, 64). Additionally, Whimster also observes (ibid., p. 52) that the nature of the soils of the central Marches combined with contemporary land-use practices mean that the potential for significantly more of these sites to be revealed over time is considerable. Work carried out within the extents of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project (Gaffney and White, 2007), for example, is suggestive of the town of *Viroconium* lying within an already densely settled rural landscape (Fig. 107) with the latest figures available through Shropshire County Council for this part of the region alone revealing the presence of several hundred of these sites (Orchard, 2025). The frequency with which these enclosure sites occur across the central Marches points to this pattern being closer to the norm within the river valleys though with a lower frequency of settlement being evident in the neighbouring uplands (Whimster, 1989, p. 4; White and Leusen, 1997, p. 137).

Whilst within this broad grouping of enclosures, many of which are under 1 ha some morphological variation is evident resulting in the emergence of loosely defined groupings characterised as curvilinear, rectilinear or hybrid, and with sites being defined by both single and multiple ditches, their common purpose as enclosed settlements spanning both the Iron Age and Romano-British periods is, however, widely acknowledged. Indeed, overall the extent and form of the evidence across much of the central Anglo-Welsh borderland is suggestive of the presence of a highly organised and settled late prehistoric landscape that was not subject to any great degree of dislocation following the arrival of Rome (White and Leusen, 1997, pp. 136, 139; White and Wigley, 2018, p. 117). Numerous theories have been proposed for the continued use and significance of these sites following the Roman conquest within Cornovian territory, practices which stand in contrast to those adopted further south and east. Possible reasons have, for example, included the constraints imposed by the largely land-locked character of much of their land and the pastoral character of their economy

which lent itself less readily to easily tradeable surpluses (White and Leusen, 1997, p. 138; White and Wigley, 2018, p. 118). Together with the evidence from the material culture remains, however, a far more nuanced and complex picture emerges; one within which Cornovian engagement with the processes of Romanisation was instead driven as much by their own agency as their geographic and topographic circumstances. Certainly, Cornovian elites enjoyed the trappings of their status as demonstrated through the presence of a range of high-status metalwork objects including, for example, fragments of gold torcs, copper alloy spoons and swords. Further, metalled road surfaces speak of the presence of broadly culturally connected elites with the means to both acquire these objects and to mobilise the resources necessary to undertake sophisticated infrastructure projects (e.g. Reavill, 2013, 2010; Slarke, 2009; Stead, 2013).

Where excavations have taken place, for example, at Collfryn just over the border in Montgomeryshire and Sharpstone E (Bain and Evans, 2013; Britnell, 1989) the evidence is suggestive of extensive cattle corralling. Further, as White and Wigley (2018, p. 118) note, a holistic interpretation of the evidence lends itself to cattle forming a principal pillar of the wealth of the region, particularly in light of subsequent comparable historic practices over centuries, which were themselves formed and informed by the nature of the landscape. If this is indeed the case then, that the Cornovian economy was primarily pastoral and that wealth and status were bound up with cattle, these patterns would sit well within wider observations that such societies are broadly characterised by lower levels of engagement with consumer goods such as pottery and also with coinage relative to their contemporaries with arable economies (Roymans, 1996, pp. 42–88; White and Wigley, 2018, p. 118). Additionally, White and Wigley (2018, p.118) go further to argue that the lack of pottery should not blind us to the viable alternatives within economies with extensive access to leather goods and items constructed from wood, both of which are lost in the archaeological record.

In summary, whilst undoubtedly more work is needed, the evidence from the landscape and material culture of this part of the Anglo-Welsh borderland speaks not of a backward society lacking in resources, but rather of a prosperous later Iron Age and Romano-British largely pastoralist society within which different paths were taken based on existing expressions of

wealth, prestige and power. In the case of coinage and pottery, the evidence is, then, suggestive of a pragmatic approach to the use of these resources when expedient, for example in roadside settlements with easy access to pottery trading networks, (Gaffney and White, 2007, pp. 269–78; White and Leusen, 1997, p. 138), but that in exercising their agency within their own territory the Cornovii elected not to embed them within their wider economy, but rather to continue to embrace their existing economic and cultural traditions.

In the west, in contrast, the Deceangli, Ordovices and Silures with their upland, pastoral traditions, were conspicuous 'non-adopters', with the combined evidence illustrating these polities' altogether more belligerent position to the imposition of Roman control over their part of the region. In order to deal with this extensive early resistance in the west, characterised by its presumed location for Caractacus' last stand, three of the initial five legionary fortresses in the new Roman province of *Britannia* were positioned on or around the Anglo-Welsh border, at Usk, Gloucester and Wroxeter (Figure 51). When combined with the substantial *canabae*, or logistical civilian settlements, that accompanied these three military centres, the early impact of the presence of Rome on or around the core of the border would have been substantial. Within much of the region to the north of the Severn estuary, then, the early evidence speaks of the invading elites responding to existing axes of political and cultural power, of eastern ambivalence or cooperation with the new administration, western resistance and the creation of a militarised buffer zone through which incursions into Cymru were launched. In contrast, in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, in the south and east, an entirely different scenario emerged. Within the territory of the Dobunni, with their greater connections to the south and east, from the outset relations appear to have been altogether more cordial. With documentary evidence for early Dobunnic recruits into the Roman army, the minting of coins and, within a generation of the invasion, the founding of the city of Cirencester, the evidence indicates that the elites in this part of the region were more than willing to embrace the opportunities afforded them by the presence of Rome (Van Arsdell, 1994). Certainly, given the evidence across the region and its prehistoric context it is plausible to observe the earlier influence of the pre-existing political and cultural confederations in the decades immediately following the invasion.

By the time of the third century, these spatial relations had embedded themselves in the very different experiences of life under Roman rule (Burnham et al., 2010). In the east, in the former territory of the Cornovii, the evidence speaks of the evolution of a widespread agrarian and industrial economy and the transformation of Wroxeter from a military fortress into one of the most substantial civilian settlements in the province of Britannia (White et al., 2013), but also of its placement within a landscape still conspicuously retaining many earlier cultural and economic traditions. In the west, the altogether more militarised nature of Roman rule had developed into a network of forts, fortlets and roads across much of the landscape; one whose extent diminished over time as pressures elsewhere in the empire drew resources away from the region (Burnham et al., 2010). As noted earlier in the case study (4.6.1) the extent of evidence, for example, for the continuance of traditional building practices and the abandonment of settlements associated with these forts and fortlets as they fell out of use, is largely suggestive of the insubstantial impact that the Roman administration made on the cultural and economic practices of the communities living in this part of the region (ibid.). Perhaps of most cultural, political and economic significance for life in the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the post-invasion period was the presence of two of the three permanent military fortresses in Britannia in the north and south of the core of the border, on the estuaries of the Dee and Severn at Chester and Caerleon, respectively (Figure 52). At the same time, south of the Severn, in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds the enthusiasm for the trappings of life in Roman Britain continued unabated finding expression not just through the development of the town of Cirencester, but also through extensive rural building programmes that resulted in this landscape constituting part of the greatest density of villas in the province. At its zenith, in the second to earlier third centuries AD, then, the enduring influence of the varied relations with the pre-invasion Iron Age polities was still evident. Across the region where the presence of Rome was keenly felt it took the form of the construction of luxury rural complexes, urban development, or the enduring presence of military bases and their affiliated settlements and infrastructure. Elsewhere, as the empire's attention and resources were diverted outside of the province the evidence is instead suggestive of practices continuing much as before with little to suggest that Rome's infrastructure became embedded in the cultural and economic life of the west of the region

in particular. Finally, in the later part of the period, in the later third century as the province of Britannia was split into four sub-provinces under Diocletian much of the Anglo-Welsh borderland fell within the western most Britannia Prima. Whilst the precise location of the boundaries of these sub-provinces is not known scholarly opinion largely agrees that the border between Britannia Prima and Flavia Caesariensis and Maxima Caesariensis lay approximately on, or to the east of, the Anglo-Welsh border (e.g. see White, 2013) (Figure 73). As external pressures were further brought to bear on Rome's borders efforts to secure those of the province of Britannia were no exception. In the Anglo-Welsh borderland, these efforts took the form of a renewal and extension of earlier defences including those around the estuaries of the Dee and Severn, efforts instead aimed at deflecting and deterring raiders from the west (Pearson, 2002). Arguably, the need for and construction of these westerly maritime and estuarine defences is, for better or worse, suggestive of the enduring influence of the Atlantic coastal tradition on the region.

In summary, many of the most impressive archaeological remains in mainland Britain come from the period of Roman rule and the Anglo-Welsh borderland is no exception. Whether through the construction of the major military installations at Chester and Caerleon, the towns of Cirencester and Wroxeter, or the substantial villas across the Cotswolds to the south of the Severn, much of the region outside the westerly uplands is marked out by the presence of some of the most substantial examples of civilian and military architecture in the province of Britannia (Adams, 2009; Burnham et al., 2010; White et al., 2013). These interventions, whether directly through the hands of the Roman authorities, or those of existing local elites speak of the Anglo-Welsh borderland as a landscape at once on, or adjacent to, the edge of the empire where statements of power, control and of belonging to Rome mattered. Within the borderland itself, these expressions of power were subject to both spatial and temporal change as the empire's direct and hegemonic military and domestic power waxed and waned over several centuries.

By the end of the rule of Rome the communities living across the Anglo-Welsh borderland once again found themselves at the intersection between their neighbours to the east and the enduring influence of the Atlantic coastal tradition to the west. Despite the impact of a new ruling elite with limited understanding of the cultural traditions of the communities

living across this landscape the evidence suggests that ‘east is east, and west is west’ not only prevailed throughout the Roman period, but that it further set in train events that went on to form the future character of the region. Throughout, the evidence from the Romano-British period speaks of not only the impact of external elites, but also the agency of the local populations and of the significance of the mutual relationship shared with the region’s transitional topography and most notably that of its major rivers and estuaries.

Whilst, as noted earlier (4.7.1), although the precise location of the eastern extent of Britannia Prima in this enigmatic period remains unproven, its presence in or around the Anglo-Welsh borderland proves significant for events immediately following the end of Roman rule as the former province took on a distinct character relative to its neighbours. Certainly, early evidence from Flavia Caesariensis and Maxima Caesariensis in the form of burial traditions and material culture indicates the presence of incoming populations of Saxons and Angles from the Continent (for a discussion see Green, 2020). Though the intricacies of the relationships between the existing populations and these new arrivals are currently lost to us the evidence for their presence in the east of southern Britain is unmistakable. In Britannia Prima, however, a different picture emerges, one characterised by a near absence of such Continental influences, of a culture based on both Celtic and Romano-British influences, of ‘Romanitas’ and by glimpses of the presence of those too from Ireland expressed, for example, through the tombstone commemorating Cunorix at Wroxeter dating from 450-475 (White and Barker, 1998, p. 106). Though scant, the evidence from the centuries immediately following the departure of Rome suggests that it was on or around the Anglo-Welsh borderland that the westward progress of the Saxons and Angles ceased. Whilst it is impossible to speculate whether this was through choice or necessity the material and landscape archaeological evidence nevertheless suggests that those communities living in the region once again found themselves at the interface between two, now markedly distinct, cultural traditions.

Later in the period, from the late seventh century AD onward, as power coalesced into a series of minor kingdoms either side of the border, the evidence shows that local, competing, elites developed a common means of expressing their power in the landscape. Whilst precisely dating early medieval short dykes is notoriously difficult, over time, nevertheless, a

picture emerges of atypically high levels of resource (relative to the remainder of Cymru and England) being dedicated to the construction of these monuments across the region and within the core of the border in particular (Table 63, Figures 62, 64). The results of the case study combined with earlier analyses (Grigg, 2018; Ray and Bapty, 2016) suggest that the willingness of these individuals and groups to invest such significant resources in the building of these monuments can, perhaps, be explained through their multi-functional nature, as not simply markers of prestige, but also barriers to raiding, or other means of controlling access across the landscape, or indeed as boundary markers as evidenced through their relationship with known Cymric cantref extents (Table 70; Figure 72).

It is within this context that the construction of Mercia's mega-dykes, Offa's and Wat's dykes, took place. Widely regarded as large-scale expressions of power in place drawn on earlier examples, most notably Hadrian's Wall, Offa's Dyke, in particular, appears to simultaneously fulfil a number of roles. At its most basic, this most expansive of earthworks speaks of the late eighth-century kingdom of Mercia's ability to both control and monumentalise the region in Asser's ninth-century words in his *Life of King Alfred* 'from sea to sea'. By taking a familiar form of monumentality and expanding on it to a grand scale, Mercia was able to express its overwhelming power, not just to its immediate neighbours, but to those its rulers regarded as equals in the context of the wider early medieval European political landscape. That excavations carried out on the monument over recent decades (for a discussion see Ray and Bapty, 2016) have so far failed to find evidence for any re-cutting or maintenance of the ditch may indicate that the value of Offa's Dyke lay not in its enduring ability to control passage between, for example, its lands and those its neighbours, but instead simply in the scale of its ambition and construction; once made, the statement needed no re-telling. An alternative interpretation lies in the possibility that by the time any degree of extensive maintenance was required Mercia's power was already waning and it no longer commanded the resources necessary to undertake the task (Brown and Farr, 2005). The results of the case study alongside observations from other recent research (Williams, 2023) may also hint at a further likely strategic role for Offa's Dyke, one that ties it in with the earlier, enduring theme of the control and management of the region's extensive riverine and estuarine networks. If, as seems likely, Offa's Dyke was the latest, most spectacular iteration of earlier patterns of

control and overlooking of these routes through the region it could provide additional context to Asser's original observation of Mercia's ambition to control access to the seas together with the estuaries of the Severn and Dee and the main riverine routes connecting them. Regardless of the intricacies of its function, however, we do know that in the late eighth century the dominant Saxon kingdom in mainland Britain elected to construct one of the largest and most impressive earthworks of the era anywhere in the wider European context along the length of the Anglo-Welsh border. In a region already marked out by its conspicuous levels of monumentality over millennia Offa's Dyke, in particular, represents an apogee in the exceptional levels of resource dedicated to monumentality across the region.

That metaphorical and physical borders had significance in the early medieval kingdoms of England is further demonstrated through several means. Examples include the multitude of words used to express the concept of the boundaries or extents of the demarcation of land, in the reflections of 'inside' and 'outside' and 'otherness' in King Alfred's ninth-century Preface to Gregory's *Pastoral Care* in relation to the lands then under Viking control, in the use of the term *mearcstapa* ('border stepper') to describe the character of Grendel in *Beowulf* as inhabiting an 'unbelonging' landscape outside the boundaries of the community of Germanic warriors around whom the tale is woven and in the very name of the kingdom of Mercia itself used to describe the *Mierce*, or 'Marcher-people' or 'borders' (Treharne, 2012, pp. 10, 12, 14). In the case of the latter, analyses such as those undertaken by Yorke (2001, pp. 19-20) reinforce the concept that the residents of Mercia were not simply 'border-dwellers', but that rather their name was derived from their status as those who lived *between* the borders of others.

In terms of physical boundaries in the landscape the evidence speaks of their form and significance at a range of scales. Whilst Alfred's reflections in his Preface are concerned with both space and time, with the significance of remembered landscapes, and the extents of the earlier kingdoms at the macro-scale with, for example, the natural boundaries of the Humber and Thames marking the extents of Northumbria, Kent and Essex respectively, other sources reveal details at the very local level (see also Yorke, 2001, pp. 19–20 for the significance of the river Trent as a border of the kingdom of Mercia). In one of the earliest documents held in the National Archives at Kew King Edgar's charter of 974 ("Charter issued

by the Anglo-Saxon King Edgar," 974) provides valuable insights into early medieval attitudes to how details of the extents of less extensive parcels of land and estates were established and transmitted to a range of audiences. Whilst Latin is used in those sections of Edgar's charter concerned with authority and the rights to both grant and receive land the extensive description of its physical boundaries is transcribed in Old English. As Howe (2008, p. 37) reflects on the significance of the bilingual structure of the document he posits that in all likelihood the Old English physical description was intended to be read aloud, to establish beyond all doubt the nature and extent of the land granted. The evidence, then, from documentary, literary sources, and within the landscape itself is suggestive of the complex and multifaceted ways within which borders were very much alive in the early medieval imagination and further, that the 'knowing' of borders and boundaries (Treharne, 2012, p. 20), both as physical manifestations in the landscape and as conceptual tools, was very much alive in the early medieval consciousness of all members of society.

The early medieval evidence from the region is additionally the first that incorporates extensive documentary sources from within the Anglo-Welsh borderland itself, as well as from elsewhere. Internal evidence for inter-generational conflict and shifting power relations is provided, for example, by the ninth-century inscription on the Pillar of Eliseg (Edwards, 2009) (4.7.2, p. 201). In contrast, the later *Dunsaete Agreement*, frequently attributed to being written somewhere around Archenfield in Herefordshire in the tenth-century – a piece of landscape traditionally regarded as being culturally 'hybrid' - speaks of the residents of this part of the borderland drawing on both Saxon and Cymric law in order to establish a set of principles to settle local disputes by means of a mechanism acceptable to residents of both sides of the border; law codes that would be widely regarded as unacceptable in neighbouring early medieval political contexts (4.7.2, p. 203). Together, then, the internal documentary and literary references from the border provide a picture of a complex multi-vocal early medieval environment; at once a landscape subject to both spatial and temporal change within which both local and more remote elites heavily invested in expressions of monumentality for a range of audiences and where communities adopted a range of strategies through which to mitigate and embrace the associated challenges and opportunities. Elsewhere, whilst inevitably bound up in the political motivations of their

authors, other accounts reveal this landscape to be a place widely regarded as 'other'; a region inhabited by, in Bede's eighth-century *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* Northumbrian perspective 'heathen Britons and heretical Mercians'. A final example of the region's mysterious, otherworldly character is provided by the legends that grew up around the fate of King Harold following the battle of Hastings. As part of their attempt to make sense of the political schism brought about by the arrival of the Normans and the installation of William I as King of England in the second half of the eleventh-century, some communities at least elected to reject accounts of Harold's demise in favour of myths and legends in which he lived out the remainder of his life in the obscurity and relative safety of the unconquered borderlands between William's new kingdom and Cymru (Brady, 2017, pp. 159–170).

As Norman power became consolidated across many parts of England in the decades following the invasion William I's attention was drawn to the vexed question of what to do about Cymru, whether to expand his campaigns into its remote westerly uplands, or draw a literal and metaphorical line under his conquests, and if so, where? William I's decision not to attempt a conquest of Cymru, but instead to consolidate the western border of his empire around the transitional landscape between the uplands and lowlands of the region simultaneously cemented its enduring liminal character, but also set in train events that would establish it was a medieval March, Y Mers, or borderland, for a further four centuries (Prestwich, 2008) (4.8.1).

The archaeological evidence in the form of the densest cluster of eleventh and twelfth-century castles in mainland Britain throughout the core of the borderland reveals a region subject to dense programmes of martial construction relative to the remainder of England (Table 71; Figures 76, 77). That William chose Chester, on the estuary of the Dee, alongside Shrewsbury on the Severn and Hereford on the Wye as the bases for his first three major earldoms speaks of the continued significance of the borderland's major riverine and estuarine systems in controlling and connecting travel within the region and in tying it into wider networks of culture and trade with Ireland and the Continent (Darby, 1986; Lieberman, 2010). It was through these three military and political power bases, initially ruled over by some of William's most trusted supporters, that Norman control was first exercised across

the Anglo-Welsh borderland. Over time, these seigneurial units were subdivided with many relatively minor members of local elites then being afforded the opportunity to construct their own castles. Whilst the evidence suggests that all these lower-ranking installations were not in use concurrently nevertheless their density was demonstrably greater than elsewhere in England. As a result, each of these minor seats of power enjoyed access to significantly fewer resources than many of their contemporaries, suggesting their location was subject to any number of calculated variables, including restricted access to water, that did not apply elsewhere**.** The Anglo-Welsh borderland may have offered up myriad opportunities for ambitious members of the lower elites, but not without an accompanying set of unique challenges**.** From the archaeological and documentary evidence, then, a picture emerges of a crowded martial landscape offering up a range of challenges and opportunities not found elsewhere under Anglo-Norman rule (Darby, 1986; Prestwich, 2008). Additionally, as an added complexity and in an extension of earlier Cymric and Saxon traditions, the documents of the period reflect extensive and ongoing inter-marrying and collusion against their immediate and more distant neighbours between the elites on both sides of the border when the opportunities presented themselves (Lieberman, 2010).

5.3.1 Interpretation of the historic evidence through the lenses of affordances, metaphors and the *Longue Durée*

Evidence from the landscape archaeology and documentary sources of the region through the historic periods speaks of a multi-vocal landscape within which extraordinary levels of resource were dedicated to acts of conspicuous monumentality over centuries. From the Roman military infrastructure around the estuaries of the Dee and Severn alongside the contemporary widespread investment in civilian town and rural domestic architecture, the earthwork dykes of the early medieval period to the networks of eleventh and twelfth century castles ranging across the region following the Norman Conquest this wide-ranging borderland was consistently marked out as ‘other’; its unique character revealed not simply through the atypically high levels of monumentality found within it, but also through the evidence for distinct practices of construction over space and time. As a consequence, the communities living in the region were in turn afforded a range of scenarios through which to

mitigate the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities offered up by life in this multi-vocal environment.

Affordances

In common with the resources from the prehistoric, the evidence from the Romano-British, early medieval and medieval periods likewise invites a response to Mace's paraphrased (1977) question 'What were these historic populations' heads in?' What does the evidence allow us to say about the mutual nature of the relationship between these communities and their environment? Is there evidence for change, or do the contrasting agrarian, riverine and estuarine resources and connections to the Atlantic coastal tradition maintain their significance? What 'arenas for action' (Heft, 1988) did the Anglo-Welsh borderland offer up to its inhabitants and those exercising power over it and how did the resulting 'niches' change over space and time? (Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014). In contrast to the evidence from the prehistoric period that from the first to the twelfth centuries AD is explicitly bound up with two broad groups of identities: those of known settlers, or conquerors, remote elites with little interest in the earlier cultural traditions of the region and those of the communities living within the borderland.

In the case of the Romano-British period a multi-vocal web of possible responses to Mace's question emerges for both groups. To the newly arrived Roman administration the Anglo-Welsh border represented a landscape rich in opportunities and challenges. The transport links afforded by the estuaries of the Severn and the Dee alongside the previously noted abundant agrarian and industrial resources were ripe for exploitation by a regime notoriously expert in taking advantage of such opportunities. This was also, however, a place equally bound up with a range of challenges for the Roman authorities. At once a relatively unexplored landscape at the furthest westerly extent of the empire, the Anglo-Welsh borderland was also a region inhabited by both Esmonde-Cleary's (2010) 'adopter' and 'non-adopter' groups whose individual responses to the arrival of Rome would demand a variety of strategic responses from the incoming administration.

From the perspective of the Roman authorities in the decades following the invasion, then, an array of possible 'arenas for action' (Heft, 1988) presented themselves across the region;

possibilities that broadly fell within the categories of collaboration and peaceful assimilation, negotiation, or the option for open conflict, or retreat. Equally, the local populations were also afforded a similar range of alternative scenarios due to their rapid change in circumstances; to embrace the opportunities afforded by assimilation into the Roman administration, to explore a range of avenues though which it might be possible to work with the inevitable presence of Rome yet retain a degree of cultural autonomy, or to choose a path of active resistance (Baggs, 2021; Dings, 2021). Over time, the evidence from the landscape speaks of the enduring impact of the choices made by all these parties; how these paths, once selected, appear to have set in train events that endured throughout the Romano-British period in mainland Britain (Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014). The continuing significance of the mutual relationship between the region's topography and its varying cultural traditions is clearly played out through the many of choices made by the different groups, both established inhabitants and invaders alike. In the south and east, across the rolling Gloucestershire Cotswolds that so readily and immediately lent themselves to the empire's macro-scale agrarian models the closer cultural ties between the Dobunni and their neighbours in central and southern England inevitably pre-disposed these groups towards readily exploiting the opportunities afforded by the arrival of Rome (Adams, 2009; Baggs, 2021). Here in the south-east, from a topographic, economic and cultural perspective all the pieces for the creation of an enduring, comfortable, pro-Roman 'niche' were already in place. In the east, another part of the region rich in natural agrarian and industrial resources, the Corvonii's more distributed political model nevertheless appears to have facilitated some form of mutually advantageous accommodation, one that extended as far as providing a base from which Rome was able to launch raids into the lands of their neighbours and one in which the agency of both the invaders and established polity in maintaining its largely pastoralist cultural character are evident (Baggs, 2021; Gaffney and White, 2007). In contrast, the upland agrarian models practised by the Silures, Ordovices and Deceangli in the west appear to have afforded little economic or cultural commonality with those of the incoming administration. Following a period of sustained hostility over several decades, however, here too both parties seem to have ultimately settled into a 'niche', a mutually tolerable compromise that remained in place until Rome's attention was ultimately drawn away to

other parts of the empire and life for the communities of this part of the borderland continued largely as before (Burnham et al., 2010; Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014).

Over time, the landscape of the Anglo-Welsh borderland under Roman rule evolved into several distinct cultural niches, in the pro-Roman south-east, the ambivalent east, the hostile west and the 'utilitarian' core. In summary, throughout the Roman-British period, it is possible to see the emergence and development of several contrasting macro-scale cultural zones influenced by the mutual relationship between the Anglo-Welsh borderland's contrasting topography, the pre-existing cultural traditions of the five Iron Age polities within it and the strategic decisions made by the incoming Roman authorities.

With the fall of Roman Britain in the early fifth century AD a new set of regional 'arenas for action' (Heft, 1988) emerged, both for the inhabitants of the former sub-provinces of Britannia and for those looking to avail themselves of its newly vulnerable resources either through settlement or raiding. Though the evidence from the fifth and seventh centuries is scant nevertheless a picture emerges of distinct west-east affordances as communities across southern Britain were first forced to look to their own security and then respond to the ongoing widespread breakdown of the old order (Baggs, 2021; White, 2018). Key to the formation of these contrasting 'arenas' were the rivers of southern Britain offering up connections to both the North and Irish seas. For those living in the former province of Britannia Prima their coastal connections to the west both formed and informed their responses to these challenges, primarily threats emerging from the island of Ireland. By the eighth century, as invaders, settlers and extant communities alike coalesced into minor kingdoms and subsequently into the more substantial polities of the seventh to eighth centuries the liminal space between these contrasting cultures, where their power and borders waxed and waned on an inter-generational basis, formed across the Anglo-Welsh borderland (Ray and Bapty, 2016; Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014).

To return to Mace's original question, then, it is clear that the heads of those communities and elites in in the early medieval Anglo-Welsh borderland were in numerous and often competing adjacent 'arenas for action' or 'niches' that were subject to sometimes rapid temporal and spatial change; cultural contexts that offered up challenges and opportunities

very different to those formed under the relative stability of the preceding Romano-British period. Despite the nature and scale of the political and cultural changes over several centuries, however, the evidence reveals the region maintained its multi-vocal, liminal status throughout once again framed and sustained by the mutual relationship between the Anglo-Welsh borderland's topography and the contrasting cultural traditions it supported.

By the time of the next major political schism to impact on the lives of those living within and ruling over the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the late eleventh century the region's cultural west-east cultural hybridity was firmly established. As Anglo-Norman rule became established across much of England once again this multi-cultural landscape offered up a range of different 'arenas' to both its residents and incoming elites (Heft, 1988); invade or consolidate for the Anglo-Norman elites, or resist or adjust for those already living in the region (Baggs, 2021; Lieberman, 2010). Equally, to the existing elites and local communities already accustomed to their own, widely recognised, distinct cultural traditions, a range of alternative strategies ranging from acquiescence to resistance became apparent. With William I's decision not to invade Cymru, but instead to insert a medieval March, Y Mers, on his western border the region's status as a space officially designated as 'other' was formally established; a status it maintained into the early modern period. For the incoming Anglo-Norman elites, unencumbered by the normal obligations to the crown the opportunities for personal and collective gain were extensive. In turn, the region's existing elites and communities were presented with a myriad of complex options for mitigating the challenges or exploiting the opportunities presented by life in this latest iteration of this landscape's liminal past (Hume, 2021; Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014). The result was a series of multi-vocal niches each in turn subject to sometimes radical spatial and temporal change, but always embedded in the mutual opportunities and challenges offered up by the region's contrasting topography, its riverine networks and resources and the cultural traditions of those living within it. Throughout the period, these niches were subject to both spatial and temporal change, but its cultural hybridity continued into the early modern period.

Non-verbal metaphors

Throughout the historic periods the evidence from the Anglo-Welsh borderland speaks of waves of Roman, Irish, Saxon and Norman invaders and settlers perceiving and acting upon a

range of natural and cultural affordances that were subject to both spatial and temporal change. At the same time, the documentary records and archaeology provide evidence for the equally varied responses of those living within the region. Throughout the historic period the multi-vocal region's monuments, its non-verbal metaphors, reveal evidence for the varying strategies deployed by these elites to make their inter-generational mark in the world (Lieberman, 2010; Ray and Bapty, 2016; Winter and Matlock, 2017). The Anglo-Welsh borderland's transitional landscape, whether taking the form of broad edge of a larger polity, a liminal space between competing kingdoms, or a formally constituted buffer zone was consistently conceived of as a space within which to make any number of statements of power in place (Grigg, 2018; White et al., 2013; Winter and Matlock, 2017). Additionally, the messages behind these non-verbal metaphors were directed at a range of audiences, not only its residents, frequently hostile neighbours, but also visitors to the region and distant contemporaries alike. Despite, or perhaps because of its status at the edge of things, between the first and twelfth centuries AD the Anglo-Welsh border became a vehicle through which successive elites chose to express their ambitions, a place from which to look out, to stake your claim to power in place, but also from which to be seen. Simultaneously, the archaeological and documentary evidence speak of the agency of those living within this broad borderland, of the choices made by those who embraced or rejected the presence of the Roman authorities, who fought, raided and traded across the contested early medieval landscape and who modified and maintained the region's cultural hybridity in the context of the fragmented rule of the Marcher Lords under Anglo-Norman rule (e.g. Burnham et al., 2010; Ray and Bapty, 2016; Winter and Matlock, 2017).

The Longue Durée

For the historical periods the lens of the *Longue Durée* provides the opportunity to explore the evidence for this landscape's liminality from the first to the twelfth centuries AD, but also to identify any enduring themes from prehistory. Certainly, the archaeological and documentary records from the Romano-British, early medieval and medieval periods together continue to define the Anglo-Welsh borderland as a complex, culturally multi-vocal environment; a region whose character was mutually formed and informed by its contrasting and resource-rich topography (e.g. Burnham et al., 2010; Grigg, 2018; Tilley, 2017).

Throughout, from the location of the permanent major Roman fortresses at Chester and Caerleon, the putative route of Offa's Dyke 'from sea to sea' and the siting of the major Anglo-Norman earldoms once again at Chester on the Dee, but also Shrewsbury and Hereford on the Severn and Wye respectively, the significance of the region's major rivers and the estuaries forming its furthest northern and southern extents is writ large (e.g. Hume, 2021; Ray and Bapty, 2016). At once facilitating connections within the borderland itself, these riverine highways also integrated the region into wider cultural and trade networks throughout the historic period. This was a landscape within which cultures collided, but one also hyper-connected to the wider Atlantic coastal and Continental worlds. The significance of the coastal links with the west, in particular, in setting the region's sights towards the Irish Sea rather than the east were conspicuously played out in, for example, the nature of the transition between the late Romano-British and early medieval periods. Enduring themes of macro-scale cultural continuity across the region are also evident primarily through the enduring 'othering' of the west and east of the border whether expressed through the personae of Romano-British 'adopters' or 'non-adopters', Saxon or Celtic early medieval kingdoms or the English or Cymric nations. Throughout, it is possible to observe that the answers to the questions posed at the end of the analysis of the evidence from prehistory indicate that the imposition of elites, settlers and raiders from the empire of Rome, the island of Ireland and Continental Europe throughout the historic period did not fundamentally alter the character of the Anglo-Welsh borderland. Though their direct and hegemonic influence is clearly evident in the form and location of their interventions, the cultural distinctiveness of the west, core and east of the border, however it found expression, continued.

5.4 Further sources of evidence

5.4.1 Place-name evidence

Whilst the evidence from the multi-period, macro-scale landscape archaeology in the form of the monuments raised over generations speaks of the impact of both local and remote elites on the anthropogenic landscape of the region other complementary sources of evidence reveal the enduring impact of the communities who lived across the Anglo-Welsh

borderland. As has been noted earlier (4.9.1), in the case of parish names, at the macro-scale the presence of English and Cymric place-names on the 'wrong' side of the border is well attested for example, as are levels of more local complexity revealed by the analysis of the townships of Oswestry. The case study further illustrated the value of a closer inspection of the names attributed to more localised features, in this instance through an exploration of the hills and mounds of south-east Radnorshire, in an area adjacent to the Walton Basin in the core of the borderland, which revealed clusters of both Cymric, English (or rather Shropshire dialect) and hybrid names (Table 92; Figure 102) (Palmer, 2001). Indeed, the value of such studies is shown not simply through the spatial distribution of Cymric, English and hybrid names but also through their temporality as evidenced through the presence of 'Squilver', an anglicised version of the Welsh 'Disgwylfa' or 'watchtower'. Such examples provide not just spatial but also temporal evidence of linguistic and cultural patterns in the landscape, with 'Disgwylfa' and 'Squilver' offering up the question of who was watching who, when and why. The evidence from the local landscape features of south-east Radnorshire, then, leaves little doubt for the multi-vocal nature of the communities living in this part of the border and of the shifts in cultural influence over both time and space. Finally, the evidence from the field names in the township of Trefonen in the parish of Oswestry, the genesis for this exploration of the archaeology of border landscapes, illustrates that similar principles apply at this most local of levels. Field names recorded in the Tithe Apportionment of 1843 across this village, with its Cymric name, sitting on the English side of the border and through which Offa's Dyke runs, provides extensive evidence for the enduring multi-lingual nature of its community and culture (Figs 103, 104). If expressions of borderland power in the landscape created by remote elites such as Offa were intended to act as barriers the evidence on the ground, from those inhabiting these spaces, suggest they were less than successful, that their utility over the long-term was questionable, at least.

5.4.2 Folklore

In addition to evidence left across the landscape in the form of place-names the hybrid nature of the region's folklore also speaks its multi-vocal culture that endured well into the last century (4.9.2). As noted earlier, a range of extensive nineteenth-century and early twentieth county-based archives created by dedicated scholars such as Charlotte Burne in

Shropshire (Burne, 1883) and Ella Mary Leather in Herefordshire (Leather, 1912) alongside later volumes typified by Palmer's work in Radnorshire (Palmer, 2001) led the leading folklore scholar, Jacqueline Simpson, to dedicate a book to the subject of *The Folklore of the Welsh Border* (Simpson, 1976). At once, the myths and legends that are embedded in the Anglo-Welsh borderland speak of the layers of conflict over centuries to which it has been subject, from those associated with Caractacus' resistance to the arrival of Rome, putative battle sites between the native populations and the forces of the empire, the conflicts between the Britons and Saxons that themselves became embedded in Arthurian folklore, to those associated with later Cymric resistance during the medieval period and into the mid-nineteenth century with the Rebecca Riots (Table 93; Figure 105). Individual instances such as that of the *Ogo Hole* in the hillside at Llanymynech that simultaneously embrace Cymric place-names whilst also being firmly embedded in Shropshire folklore provide evidence for the enduring oral traditions that recounted how communities on both sides of the cultural and linguistic borderland made sense of the earlier anthropogenic remains in their environment (Hankinson, 2016). It is in Herefordshire, however, a county whose place-names west and east of the Wye speak of the longstanding cultural hybridity of this part of the region, where the conflicting processes of challenge and opportunity, of continuity and change that range across the borderland are particularly prevalent. Whilst many examples exist the case of the village of St Weonards in the Wye valley close to the contemporary border between Cymru and England, in the area of Archenfield (Figure 74) whose early medieval cultural hybridity was recorded in documentary sources, encapsulates many of these traditions as the location of an Anglo-Norman motte now known through excavation to have been built on the site of an earlier Bronze Age barrow, which now sits in England but is bound up with legends associated with an early Cymric saint (Figure 106). Together, the evidence from the place-names and folklore of the Anglo-Welsh borderland provide extensive evidence for how those culturally hybrid communities who inhabited this landscape navigated, interpreted and commemorated the places which held particular significance for them. For multi-vocal borderland landscapes folklore resources that evidence the oral traditions of the communities living within these spaces over generations are of particular value.

5.5 Notes from the contemporary border



Figure 108 'The Janus Horse' Mark Evans (1995), Oswestry Racecourse

The ongoing and enduring cultural liminality of the Anglo-Welsh borderland is evidenced through, for example, the presence of its distinct literary traditions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (e.g. Evans, 1932; Parker, 2024; Williams, 1960). Though rendered largely invisible to those living elsewhere, aside from the presence or absence of bilingual road signs, the borderland has nevertheless continued to exercise its influence on those living within it. Evidence for its continued relevance to its residents is easily found through, for example, reflections on its contemporary culture with the residents of Oswestry twice being invited to consider the status of their town as either English or Cymric (Shropshire Star, 2015). The impact of living alongside not just the borders of Cymru and England, but also those of their distinct regional local authorities is equally demonstrated through the labyrinthine complexities of accessing school transport in Shropshire and Powys (*pers. comm*, Andy Heaton, 2018) and the protest referendum to become part of Cymru conducted by the

residents of Audlem in Cheshire in order to improve access to NHS services (Hughes, 2008). On the macro-scale, these and other twentieth and twenty-first century challenges and opportunities in turn feed into contemporary reflections on 'Welshness', on the continuing nature of the hegemonic influence of the English industrial cities on the north and east of the border and perceptions of its status across the rest of Cymru. Indeed, some of the most recent sociological scholarship on the topic of Cymru and belonging points to the utility of a new potential macro-scale landscape study to measure the 'Anglicisation' of this part of the border through an analysis of the proportions of domestic television aerials pointing to the Cymric Moel y Parc, or English Granada transmitters (Evans, 2007, p. 132).

Finally, events at the beginning of the decade as the remote governments in Cardiff and London developed their own policies on COVID restrictions once again thrust the region into the national and international news. From a sporting perspective, the shared status of Chester Football Club and Llanymynech Golf Club as venues straddling the border embroiled them in a range of legal wrangles as to which set of regulations to follow (Dowling, 2022; Yahoo News, 2020). More broadly, communities across the borderland found themselves subject to changing sets of regulations aimed at controlling where they could go, when and with whom. The particular challenges and opportunities afforded during lockdown were perhaps most profoundly felt in Llanymynech whose high street follows the course of the contemporary border. Neighbouring pubs and shops were alternately allowed to open or close with locals presented with the opportunity to follow the guidance to 'stay local' whilst simultaneously flouting national rules or guidelines (Castle, 2020; Chandler-Wilde, 2020). Additionally, the irony of the need to pore over the details of the extent of the national jurisdictions to stay within the COVID regulations was not lost on this borderland archaeologist as fieldwork became impossible, possible, or spatially constrained through the duration of the pandemic; a timely reminder that we are simply the most recent generation to endure or enjoy the challenges and opportunities afforded by life in this particular borderland.

Overall, despite the pressures of the hyper-connected, globalised twenty-first century, together with the comings and goings of more recent polities, including the United Kingdom and the European Union, the sense of the Anglo-Welsh borderland persists in its

contemporary culture; its heritage marked out, for example, through Mark Evans' 1995 Janus Horse statue at the old Oswestry racecourse. In one of the most recent non-verbal metaphors to be placed in the borderland this stone sculpture (Figure 108), oriented west-east, is comprised of a pair of identical horses' heads looking out towards 'Cymru' and 'England', respectively. Sitting within this culturally liminal space, one recognised within living memory as a place at which communities from the borderland, Cymru and England came together (Williams, 2021), their faces look out from each other and towards both countries, a juxtaposition deliberately confected to commemorate the borderland's status as 'other', as a distinct third-space sitting apart from both.

5.6 Conclusions

In summary, the archaeological, documentary, place-name and folkloric evidence together speak of this distinct borderland's character over millennia, of the region's cultural status as a core, in and of itself, rather than simply a landscape at the edge of remote polities. Whilst an array of cultural groupings adjacent to and within it have waxed and waned, the Ordovices and Cornovii, Silures and Dobunni, Britannia Prima, Flavia Caesariensis, Maxima Caesariensis and the kingdoms of Powys, Brycheiniog and Gwent, Mercia, most recently Cymru and England, the region's liminal nature has continued throughout. Evidence from the landscape further speaks of its enduring character and the continuing significance of a range of locations over centuries or millennia typified by the Neolithic and Iron Age remains on Crickley Hill, Gloucestershire, the medieval Shire Ditch running along the Malverns in Herefordshire and Worcestershire with its possible later Bronze Age origins, the inter-relationships between Old Oswestry hillfort and Wat's Dyke in Shropshire and the city of Chester's walls established by the empire of Rome, but subsequently developed during the early medieval and medieval periods (Figures 19, 32, 41, 49).

In order to account for the Anglo-Welsh borderland's enduring character it becomes necessary to revisit Bradley's (1998) reflections on the clues to the region's cultural hybridity in the distinct archaeology of its major rivers in the later Bronze Age and whether these differences might be reflected more widely in the landscape. Through the lens of the *Longue Durée* the evidence over millennia suggests it is possible to recognise such macro-scale

patterns across the region and further to recognise the powerful role of the mutual nature of the relationship between the natural environment and the nature of its culture. Over millennia, the region's character has been that of a truly Janus landscape, one linked simultaneously to the east by dint of its place within a landmass adjacent to the Continent of Europe, but also to the west through its riverine and estuarine connections to the Irish Sea and the wider Atlantic coastal zone. As such, the results of the case study illustrate that the Anglo-Welsh borderland's hybrid culture has always been a construct of its topographically liminal status, a place where those in the west and east have followed different cultural paths, between whom the region's core runs as a place within which to come together or clash, and whose residents in the south overlooking the Severn but adjacent to the Thames have developed their own, particular, liminal status over millennia. The results additionally illustrate the validity of incorporating data from both sides of major riverine routes through the landscape as the unique character and position of the Cotswolds, sitting between the Severn and the Thames, would have been lost within this perspective over the *Longue Durée* had this not been the case.

Clearly, in order to answer the questions posed at the beginning of the case study, these results have value in furthering our understanding of the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the twenty-first century, both in terms of this landscape's continued Janus, hybrid character looking to Cymru and England, but equally of neither, and its place in the wider political landscape of Britain and the United Kingdom. By taking an explicitly interdisciplinary approach, incorporating evidence from the region's landscape archaeology, place-name, documentary and folklore and framed within the interdisciplinary context of border studies it is possible to reveal that the lived experience of its residents is not, in fact, new and novel, but the latest iteration of a borderland culture whose origins lie in its prehistoric past. Whether expressed through the complexities of COVID, reflections on the continued hegemony of the English industrial towns of the north-west and midlands, or the west of the region's 'Welshness' the evidence speaks of its continuing liminal status both for those exercising power over and living within it. The evidence reveals that it is, then, possible to meaningfully speak of the unique status and culture of the Anglo-Welsh borderland over

centuries and millennia and to frame these results in terms of wider debates on the nature and future of the region in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 6 Thinking Through the Biographies of Borderlands

6.1 Summary

My research began with the aim of establishing whether it is possible to identify and account for the evidence for diachronic borderlands, to take Naylor's (2008, p. 265) concept of 'biographies of objects and places' and apply it to the analysis of these landscapes over time and space. This chapter outlines the results of the research process, the gaps in current understanding revealed and the development of the interdisciplinary research framework undertaken to address them. The new questions made possible and ways of thinking about diachronic borderlands this study facilitates are described. The resulting future possibilities for the development of diachronic borderland biographies are discussed.

6.2 Building the analytical interdisciplinary research framework

In the first instance, the preparatory research undertaken to support this study across a range of disciplines revealed that current academic understanding of diachronic borderlands is patchy at best, but also that promising sources of existing scholarly knowledge and common themes upon which to draw are similarly readily identifiable and that the stated aims of this thesis were, therefore, achievable.

In the case of the field of border studies this review (2.1.2) revealed that the historical primacy given to space over time has, at least until the last decade, resulted in a lack of extensive engagement with how these landscapes come into being and evolve and in O'Dowd's (2010) words 'a lack of historical reflexivity' and an over-reliance on 'epochal thinking'. Whilst the breadth of scholarship on contemporary borders informs our understanding of these landscapes in the twenty-first century, on their role in, for example, regional, national and supra-national processes of 'boundedness' and 'territoriality' (Paasi, 2009, p. 213), and as landscapes of cultural hybridity and exchange, studies with a significant temporal component remain rare (Di Fiore, 2017; Pfosner, 2022); those with a temporal

element over deep time, rather than the relatively recent past, proved elusive in this review. From a border studies perspective, then, the new knowledge and ways of thinking that this thesis develops are concerned with addressing the field's effective 'blind spot' with time, and the development of empirical and theoretical methodologies capable of supporting the incorporation of long-term temporality within its research.

Additionally, this research sought to establish the means through which to address landscape archaeology's similar 'blind spot' with constructing borderland biographies (2.1.1); to build on the principles established through Lightfoot and Martinez' (1995) pioneering *Frontiers and Boundaries in Archaeological Perspective*, more recent studies such as Johnson (2017) and Mullin's (2012) work on the Anglo-Welsh borderland and McWilliam's (2013) study on the archaeology of the Cold War Iron Curtain alongside those contained in the Offa's Dyke Journal (2019) and to apply them to new archaeological approaches to these complex landscapes. Whilst acknowledging the quality and breadth of these existing and entirely valid single-period landscape archaeology studies, the research undertaken for this thesis revealed an absence of analyses concerned with the long-term biographies of diachronic borderlands directly addressing the questions of how these culturally liminal landscapes come into being, how they evolve over time, or cease to exist, and how we might usefully further our understanding of these hybrid 'arenas for action' (Heft, 1988) by facilitating and undertaking comparative studies. The new ways of thinking and new knowledge that this thesis brings to landscape archaeology is, then, to take the principles of single landscape studies demonstrated by the work outlined in Lewis' (2011) edited volume *The Archaeology of Mendip: 500,000 years of change and continuity*, to explicitly apply these ways of thinking to diachronic borderlands and to create an interdisciplinary research framework capable of supporting future studies, facilitating comparisons between them and embedding their results into wider scholarly debates on these landscapes taking place in the field of border studies.

The explicitly interdisciplinary approach undertaken in this thesis revealed that, despite the gaps in thinking around diachronic borderlands shared by landscape archaeology and border studies, common concepts nevertheless emerged; ways of thinking about borderlands that could be used to construct an interdisciplinary research framework capable of creating a

shared understanding of these landscapes. Common themes were typified by those of borderlands as social processes, mobility, migration and diaspora, inclusion and exclusion, identity and belonging, the significance of the mutual relationship between the natural and cultural aspects of these environments, cultural hybridity, conflict and cooperation, power, propaganda and resistance (e.g. Ingold, 1993; Johnson, 2006; Megoran, 2012; Naylor, 2008; Paasi, 2009; Tilley, 2012, 1994). Additionally, shared sources of evidence, for example, diagnostic anthropogenic interventions in the landscape, documentary and cartographic legacies and oral testimonies also became apparent and similarly formed intersecting webs of understanding upon which to build (e.g. Jordan, 2012; Leyva and Ortega, 2024; Marin, 2012; Razowsky, 2018; Turunen, 2023).

Further, innovative approaches adopted by landscape archaeologists from several adjacent disciplines provided additional interdisciplinary insights for incorporation into the new research framework. In particular, the work of scholars including Gillings (2009) and Tilley (1999) in studies on how individuals and communities interpret and respond to their surroundings and how landscapes are marked out to transfer meaning were also modified to explicitly address the emergent evidence and themes in the creation of diachronic borderland biographies. In the case of affordances, the wider research conducted across ecological psychology (2.2.2) revealed additional, new opportunities to modify ways of thinking across space to incorporate a diachronic component capable of being applied to borderlands. The processes of re-imagining Mace's (1977, p. 43) seminal question 'Ask not what is inside your head, ask what your head is inside of' and Heft's (1988) accounts of landscapes as complex 'arenas for action' to address issues of temporality proved especially valuable. Similarly, research conducted across the field of linguistics on the significance of non-verbal metaphors (2.2.1) and typified by Winter's (2014) work on the inter-relationships between non-verbal metaphors, cultural representation and cognition afforded a further opportunity to take forms of scholarship primarily concerned with space and apply them to temporal forms of evidence to provide new ways of thinking about diachronic borderlands. Finally, wider reading across landscape archaeology also provided inspiration for the embedding of interdisciplinary perspectives on temporal studies concerned with these environments, most specifically on the ways of thinking through deep time embedded in the

historical analytical approach of the *Longue Durée* (2.1.3). In both cases, the pioneering work of Hodder (1987) on the identification of long-term structures in material culture patterning and that of Tilley (2017) on the nature of embodied relations between people and things over the long-term illustrated the potential and utility for weaving these perspectives into the interdisciplinary research framework.

From an evidential perspective, ways of working with anthropogenic interventions in the landscape, from the physical border walls of the twenty-first century to distinct or widespread forms of monumentality in prehistory, contemporary or historical documentary and cartographic resources provided clear common empirical, and theoretical ways of working from both border studies and landscape archaeology upon which to build. Additionally, new opportunities for thinking about the construction of diachronic borderland biographies were also offered up by border studies and landscape archaeology analyses carried out incorporating toponymic evidence and oral testimonies.

In the case of place-name studies (2.1.4) analyses within the field of border studies such as those conducted by Marin (2012) on the temporal boundary-making practices used in the re-naming of streets in Leningrad/St Petersburg and Düzgün (2024) on the broader relevance of the geopolitics of place-names revealed a broad degree of interdisciplinary engagement with this form of evidence as a mechanism through which to identify linguistic and cultural hybridity across space. Meanwhile, complementary ways of working with toponymic data as sources of diachronic evidence within landscape archaeology were illustrated through the work of, for example, Perono Cacciafoco and Cavallaro (2023a, 2023b) on place-names as 'linguistic fossils' and that of Jones (2016) and Jones and Kilby (2020) on their potential for revealing previously overlooked anthropogenic sources of evidence relating to climate change. In both cases, evidence for the common analytical approaches and tools used illustrate a shared appreciation for the significance of place-names as sources of evidence that speak to who is naming what, how, where and when. From the perspective of the construction of the interdisciplinary research framework for diachronic borderland biographies the explicit and implicit value in incorporating these sources of qualitative evidence, for their potential in revealing the presence of enduring processes of continuity and change in, for example, ebbs and flows in power across a given landscape over time is

clear. Indeed, evidence from the names attributed to the hills of south-east Radnorshire within the case study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland in the form of the Anglicised 'Squilver', a corruption of the Cymric 'Disgwylfa', or watchtower, demonstrates their potential as both spatial and temporal sources of evidence in order to address the question of who was watching whom, when and why? As such, their potential to enrich the interdisciplinary framework made their inclusion invaluable.

Meanwhile, the use of oral testimonies across border studies and landscape archaeology provided an additional shared, complementary source of evidence for incorporating authentic voices from a range of environments over time and space. In the case of border studies, such testimonies often take the form of accounts from individuals and groups involved in events, traumatic or otherwise, around borderlands (e.g. Hansen and Robles, 2021; Horsti and Tucci, 2021). Landscape archaeology studies undertaken across the globe incorporating a significant outreach or community component reveal the criticality of embedding public discourses into sub-disciplinary professional practice (Atalay, 2012; Gauvreau and McLaren, 2016; Moshenska, 2007; Riley *et al.*, 2005). Further, Paphitis' (2019, 2013) work on public archaeology and folklore, which itself builds on the foundations laid by the pioneering work of Grinsell (e.g. 1976), provides a diachronic extension to these principles through which it becomes possible to embed the voices of past individuals and communities into landscape archaeology studies (2.1.5). Within the context of the construction of diachronic borderland biographies, the potential of oral testimonies, additionally temporally re-imagined as folklore, both in terms of embedding such studies into contemporary debates on these landscapes and in revealing how these landscapes were in turn perceived, interpreted and described by those living within them in the past is unmistakable.

In summary then, whilst the review of current scholarly understanding of diachronic borderlands across landscape archaeology and border studies revealed significant gaps in contemporary knowledge this work also highlighted the presence of shared sources of evidence and ways of thinking through which the construction of a rich interdisciplinary research framework for building diachronic borderland biographies is possible.

6.3 Building the new methodological interdisciplinary research framework

Having identified the available evidence for diachronic borderlands and the analytical approaches and tools with which to identify, describe and account for these complex, multi-vocal landscapes the next stage in the development of the interdisciplinary research framework was the construction of the methodological means through which to combine the quantitative and qualitative sources of evidence described above to support these analyses and their subsequent interpretations.

From an empirical perspective the resultant research framework demonstrates the value in exploiting the capacity for GIS-based analyses conducted using 'big data' to draw together and query the evidence from diachronic borderlands over millennia and at a range of scales. Described in sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 and drawing on established principles in landscape archaeology (e.g. Chapman, 2006; Ch'ng *et al.*, 2011; Gaffney *et al.*, 2012; Jones, 2017; Kosiba and Bauer, 2012) alongside emerging practices in the field of digital history (see e.g. Guldi and Armitage, 2014) the research framework demonstrates the inherent value in exploiting GIS' abilities to compare and contrast patterns of monumentality undertaken in different parts of a given borderland over time and space. Though as noted earlier (3.8.2) the inherent challenges in integrating data derived from different regional, national or supra-national sources present additional levels of complexity, this research established that such studies are indeed possible and of significant value. The ability to query the archaeological data, to be able to ask questions relating to the adoption or rejection of wider cultural practices across subsections of a borderland during a given period, to examine evidence for the continued significance of 'special' places or landscape features, or patterns in the curation of earlier anthropogenic interventions in the environment over centuries, or millennia, is invaluable to the interpretation of diachronic borderlands. Further, to subsequently be able to explore the data over the *Longue Durée*, to be able to identify and account for ongoing processes of continuity and change between different periods through a consistent framework offers up possibilities for new ways of analysing and interpreting the

data from these complex, multi-vocal landscapes; new ways of thinking that promise to explicitly embed the application of GIS into interdisciplinary approaches to these landscapes.

6.4 Testing the new methodological interdisciplinary research framework

The utility of the GIS-based methodological framework was then tested against the case study of the Anglo-Welsh borderland; a landscape at once actively embedded in the contemporary politics of the UK and, in particular, on debates on the nature of 'Welshness' and English hegemony (e.g. Evans, 2007), but also one whose origins are poorly understood. Its contemporary significance and character therefore made it an ideal case study against which to test the new interdisciplinary research framework as it offered up both the opportunity to explore the monumental evidence from the region over millennia alongside rich and accessible place-name and folkloric resources, but also to embed the results in contemporary debates surrounding the meanings attributed to the region today.

Whilst, as noted above (3.8.2), the case study initially revealed the challenges in combining and processing the data from distinct national data sets the benefits of working within a GIS-based framework were readily identifiable. The ability to embed monumental data from the Neolithic through to the medieval period, to frame and undertake both spatial and temporal research questions against this data and to present the results in a consistent and cohesive manner within their topographical context facilitated the identification of enduring patterns of continuity and change that formed and informed the development of the Anglo-Welsh borderland over millennia. Additionally, the ability to embed the qualitative data from the region's place-names and folklore and to present them alongside the quantitative results from the monumental data served to further strengthen the overall narrative and so, therefore, the case for taking a GIS-based approach.

Overall, then, testing the utility of the methodological framework for the building of diachronic borderland biographies against a case study illustrated both its value and potential for supporting and extending our understanding of these landscapes. The extent and depth of the subsequent interpretations conducted through the lens of the *Longue Durée*, one that brought together ways of thinking about the mutual nature of the

relationship between the region's topography and its culture(s), how meaning was attributed to significant locations within it and how enduring processes of continuity and change went on to form and inform how the landscape was inhabited and perceived over millennia additionally demonstrated the implicit and explicit value in the chosen interdisciplinary approach.

6.5 New perspectives on the biographies of diachronic borderlands

The results of this process reveal that it is possible to successfully identify and interpret the evidence from diachronic borderlands, to apply Naylor's (2008, p. 265) concept of 'biographies of objects and places' to these landscapes and to construct narratives around them. Additionally, this methodology illustrates that the new ways of working with and thinking through borderlands, ones that address the disciplinary 'blind spots' in both border studies (2.1.2) and landscape archaeology (2.1.1), can be used to broaden scholarly understanding of these culturally complex landscapes.

The tangible benefits in taking such an explicitly interdisciplinary approach are to be found in the new insights into the breadth and quality of evidence available for diachronic borderlands that emerge and through the new ways of thinking this affords. From an evidential perspective the narratives constructed around the case study of the Anglo-Welsh border illustrated the value in incorporating complementary resources from adjacent disciplines (4.9.1, 4.9.2, 4.9.3) and of bringing them together in a GIS-based methodology (Chapter 3). New insights provided by documentary sources, place-names and folklore together spoke of the multi-vocal character of this landscape; of an environment clearly subject to both spatial and temporal change, but one which is nevertheless simultaneously consistently identifiable at a range of scales from region-wide patterns of bi-lingual toponymy to the mixed Cymric and Latin text to be found in an individual church window dedicated to a British saint sitting within an English church and bound up in multi-cultural folkloric traditions. Additionally, this study established the utility in adopting a similarly interdisciplinary analytical approach in order to scaffold new ways of thinking about this evidence (2.2.1, 2.2.2), how diachronic borderlands form and evolve, how they are

perceived, interpreted and marked out by multiple generations. Finally, the application of the lens of the *Longue Durée* (2.1.3) to these ways of thinking facilitated the identification of enduring processes of continuity and change that form and inform how these landscapes come into being and evolve over millennia.

These sources of evidence and ways of thinking in turn provide new, valuable insights into the unique character of these landscapes. Most significantly, bringing together both spatial and temporal sources and ways of thinking reveals both the persistence and resilience of diachronic borderlands, that once these landscapes become established they can be incredibly difficult to dislodge. Short-term interventions by external actors, or episodes of climate change, may modify their character, but their cultural liminality can continue. These new perspectives on diachronic borderlands additionally speak of the agency of those living within these culturally complex spaces, of their ability to overcome the challenges and exploit the opportunities they present through their acceptance, rejection or reimagining of the external cultural influences to which they are exposed. Finally, through the application of new ways of bringing together the temporal and spatial evidence the significance of the mutual nature of the relationship between the natural environment and cultural diachronic borderlands at a range of scales is revealed; evidence that accounts for how the ways of living and complex webs of connectivity they create and sustain exert their influence at a range of scales across time and space.

In summary, this thesis demonstrates that studies of diachronic borderlands are both possible and desirable and that by creating new ways of combining evidence and insights from temporal and spatial data sets and analytical approaches it becomes possible to further our understanding of these enduring and complex landscapes; new knowledge and novel ways of thinking that are applicable to research undertaken in a range of disciplines. The following concluding paragraphs reflect on the emerging possibilities these insights afford for future diachronic borderlands research and their relevance to wider scholarly, political and societal debates on how we understand our contemporary borderlands.

6.6 Concluding thoughts and future possibilities

Before reflecting on the possibilities that this thesis offers up on extending our understanding of diachronic borderlands it is worth taking a moment to consider what it is, and crucially, is not. In the febrile geopolitics of the second quarter of the twenty-first century this study is no polemic on borders, or a means through which to drag heritage into the increasingly heated culture wars around these landscapes. Rather, it serves as a vehicle through which to extend our understanding of the 'othered' status of borderlands across the globe and through time, of the role and character of these persistent environments which, the results of the case study illustrate, can endure regardless of the changing nature and fortunes, the waxing and waning, of their neighbouring polities. In the case of the Anglo-Welsh borderland, evidence for the enduring nature of this complex, multi-vocal region extends well beyond the primacy of its neighbouring Iron Age confederations, the empire of Rome, the individual Brythonic kingdoms in the west, that of Mercia to the east and the emergence of Cymru and England. This study is, rather, dedicated to providing a vehicle through which it becomes possible to say something of these landscapes where we encounter the 'other' over time and space, a means to account for their emergence and evolution and to say something of the agency of those who endure the challenges and exploit the opportunities these hybrid spaces offer up.

So, what are these new possibilities? The definition of insanity often attributed to Einstein, of its being framed as doing the same thing over and again and expecting different results, neatly summarises much of our current understanding of our behaviour in and around borderlands. With so little long-term temporal context, for better or worse, our collective assumption is that, despite an implicit acknowledgement of their long-term existence, our experiences of these landscapes are new and novel and that despite repeating historic mistakes the circumstances of our particular temporal and spatial context mean we, or rather our leaders, will obtain their desired results.

This study, then, provides a starting point for interdisciplinary scholarly, policy and wider societal debates on the nature of borderlands through time. By establishing a model through which the evidence from past borderlands can be embedded in contemporary debates on

the significance of these landscapes new knowledge and dialogues become possible. The shared empirical and analytical interdisciplinary research framework that emerged through this research provides a means through which to facilitate and structure these fresh debates, to offer up the possibility for comparative studies of these landscapes across the globe and in a range of contexts. Such analyses can, in turn, be used to structure subsequent research on themes such as the origins of long-standing borders that illustrate their status as hybrid landscapes with origins far beyond our twenty-first century experiences of cartographic boundedness, or why relatively recently imposed borders have the power to disrupt so extensively. By making O'Dowd's (2010) desire to embed temporality into border studies scholarship real, by bringing archaeological insights into the emergence and evolution of these complex, enduring, hybrid landscapes we have the means and opportunity to contextualise our collective experiences of borderlands in ways not previously possible. This study, then, provides the interdisciplinary means to begin these debates and reflections on our experiences of borderlands in the twenty-first century and to contribute to a broader school of temporal borderlands research.

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