

possibly the remains of a handle for one of the tanged tools, were found in the slight scatter of objects from the hoard disturbed by the plough. These are still undergoing conservation.

For an example of a hoard not consisting of scrap, compare that in the Ashmolean Museum from the Thames at Wallingford, which includes the tanged 'chisel', socketed knife, bifid razor, socketed gouge and octagonal socketed axe. See Evans, *Ancient bronze implements* (1881), 466, hoard 60.

For an example from England of a hoard found in the remains of a wooden box—see below—take the hoard from Winmarley, Lancs., in Warrington Museum and H. S. Cuming, *J. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, xv, 1854, 234–5 and Pl. 24, Nos. 2 and 3. Also *Arch. J.*, xviii, 1861, 158.

Several Irish hoards deposited in wooden boxes are listed by G. Eogan, *PPS*, xxx, 1964, 301.

A well-preserved Continental example is that from Koppenow, Pomerania, illustrated in Behn, *Altnordisches Leben* (Munich, 1935), Pl. 21.

The Nottingham Hill hoard is important because most of it was recovered by controlled excavation.

It is important to the study of metalwork because one can state with almost complete certainty that all the metal objects deposited have been recovered. Because the relationship of the objects to each other in the hoard, and to a possible box structure, indicated by soil traces on the worn bedrock on which the hoard rested, can both be studied, and because the condition of the objects will permit detailed technical study.

It is important to the study of the Late Bronze Age because it was deposited on an occupation surface, from which come finds of pottery, within the area of a hillfort.

## The inter-relation of Offa's and Wat's dykes

*Mr David Hill, Staff Tutor in Archaeology in the Department of Extra-mural Studies in the University of Manchester, sends us this note which he sub-titles 'A traditional interpretation'.* A classic of the vintage years of British Archaeology is Sir Cyril Fox's *Offa's Dyke* (1955). The fruit of many summers of fieldwork on the frontier earthworks between Mercia and Wales, the book is impeccably produced, authoritative and accurate. It is only when the author moves from gazetteer and inventory, the bulk of the book, to conclusions of a very wide-ranging nature that one may entertain any doubts. These conclusions are senatorial, appear indisputable and are based almost entirely on the fieldwork. No one will ever question the detailed work of the inventory; apart from anything else the damage of the past fifty years ensures that it is irreplaceable. But so convincing is the argument, so commanding the tone and so numbing the recital of facts that for nearly half-a-century archaeologists have avoided the whole dyke system. It has remained to the conservators, ramblers and historians to keep up interest in this, Britain's largest archaeological monument. From 1934, when Fox completed his work, until 1972 there were only two archaeological sections on damaged or

threatened sites. This would seem to be the sum total of research, with the honourable exception of Frank Noble and the Offa's Dyke Association which has acted as a focus for all forms of interest in the Dyke.

Since 1972 the Extra-Mural Department of Manchester University, in conjunction with the Offa's Dyke Association, has attempted to carry out work on the damaged sections of the Dyke during, or in advance of, destruction. In some of the nine excavations so far undertaken a great deal of structural information has been recorded. However, the most challenging information has come from a series of rescue excavations undertaken in northern Flintshire for the Department of the Environment (FIG. 1). At Tre-Abbot-Bach (SJ 112784) to the east of Trelawnyd, road widening on the A 5151 threatened the destruction of a length of Offa's Dyke. In advance of this destruction two trenches were cut across the line of the Dyke as a preliminary to the total stripping of the earthworks at this point and investigating both the Dyke and the underlying soil. It came as a considerable surprise to find no trace of any sort that was consistent with the Dyke having existed here. A third trench was cut in the same area with a similar lack of success. Two of these

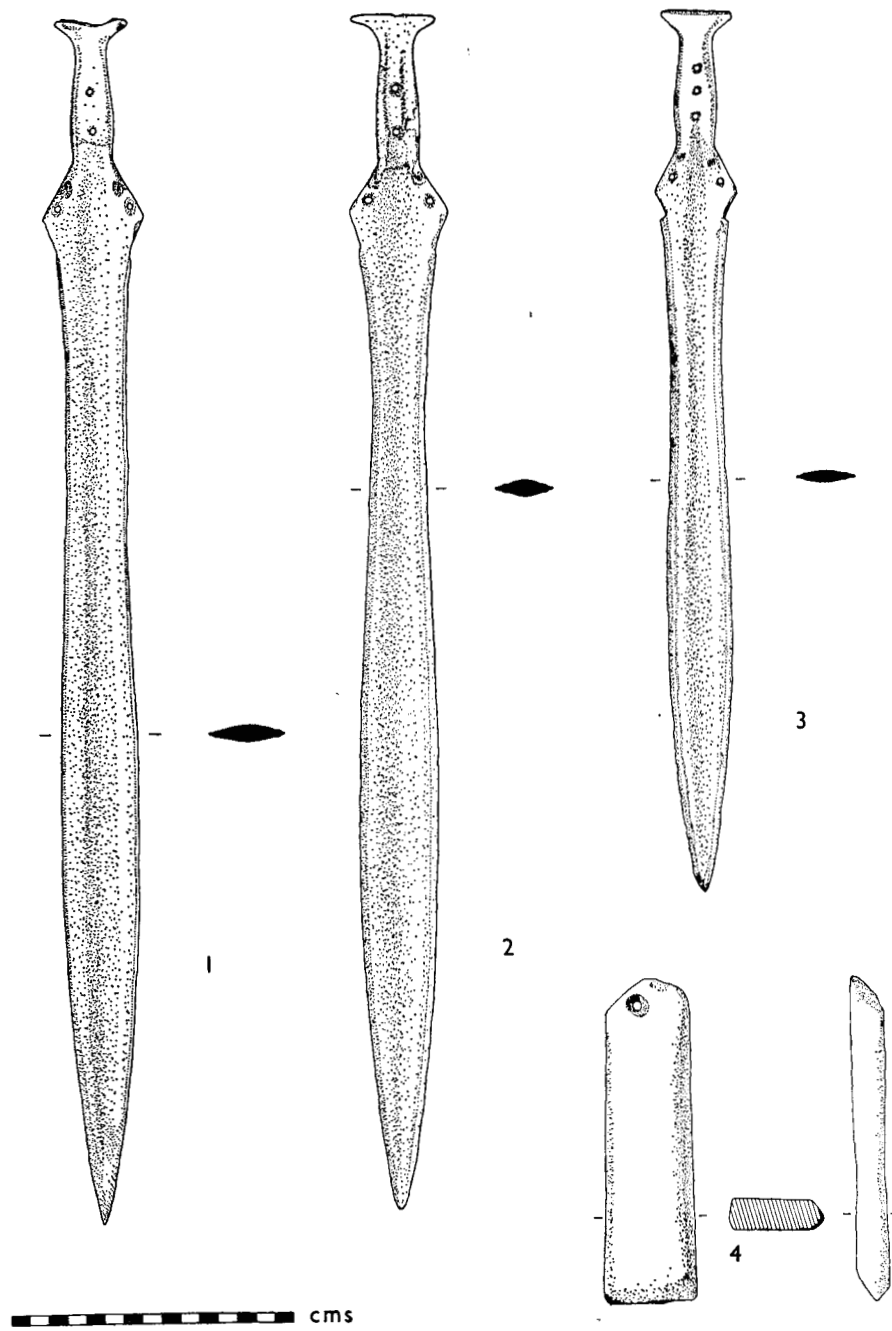
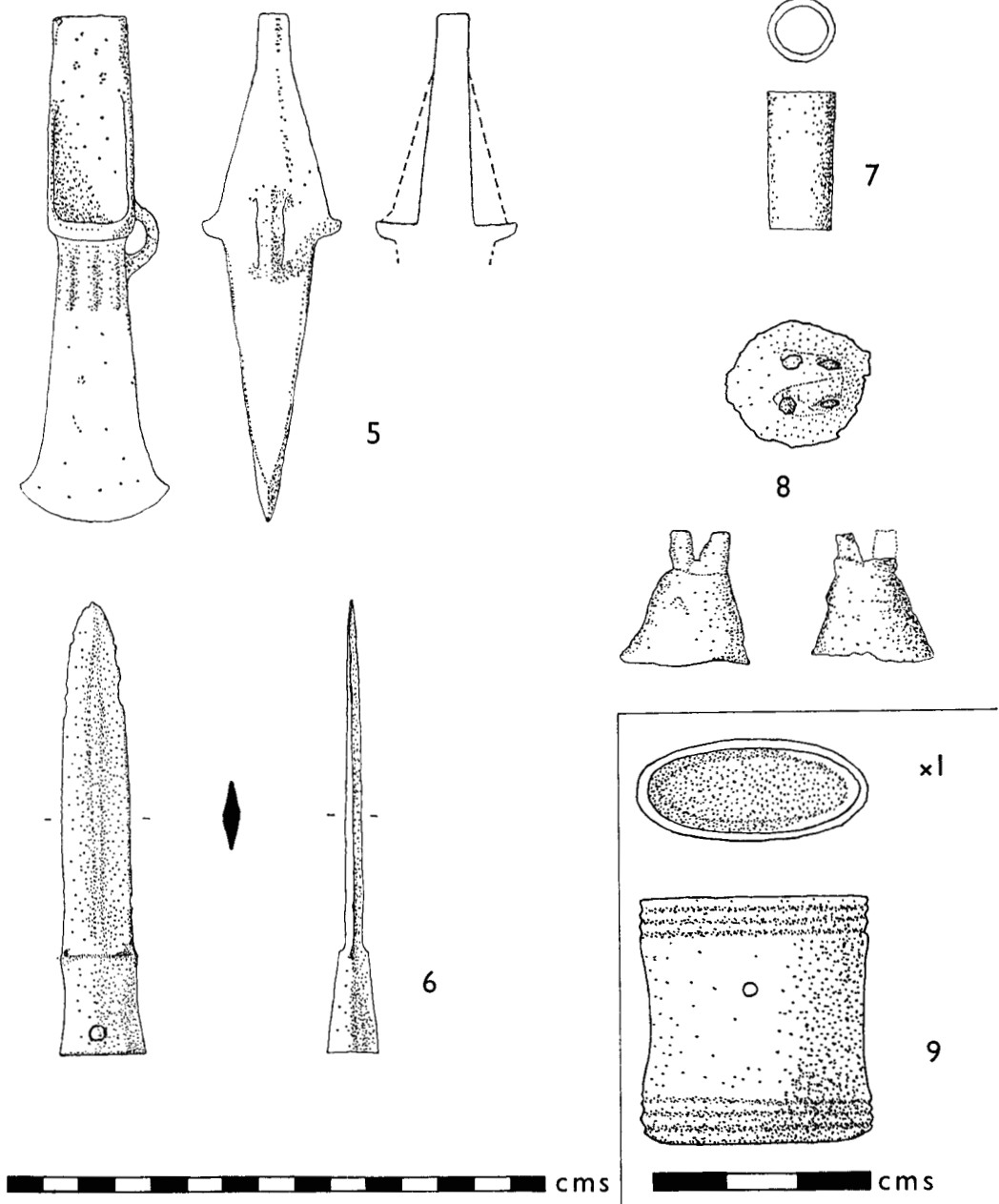


Fig. 2. See p. 308 (Scale 1/4)



(Scale 1/5)

Fig. 3. See p. 308

(Scale 1/3)

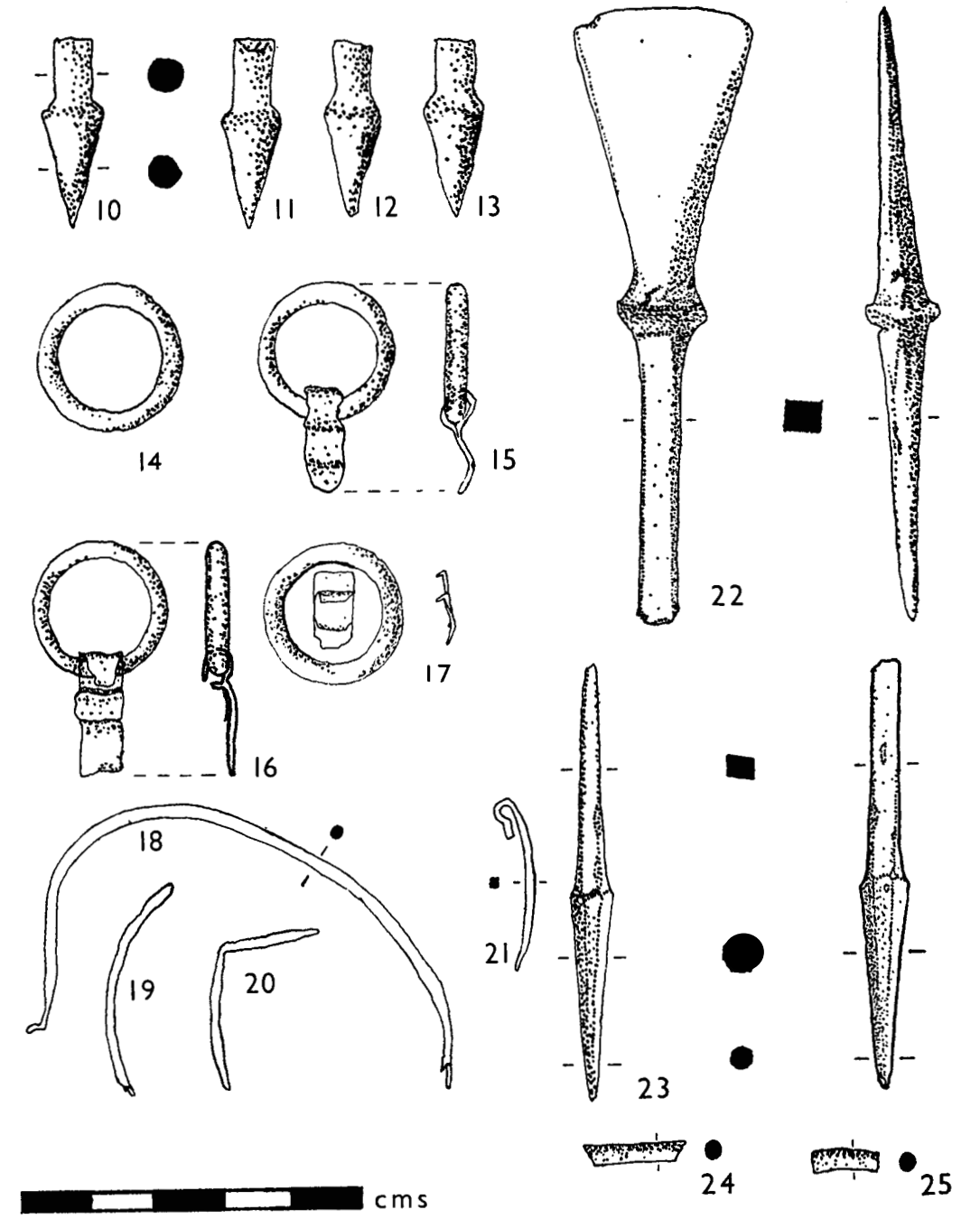


Fig. 4. See pp. 308-9 (Scale 1/2)

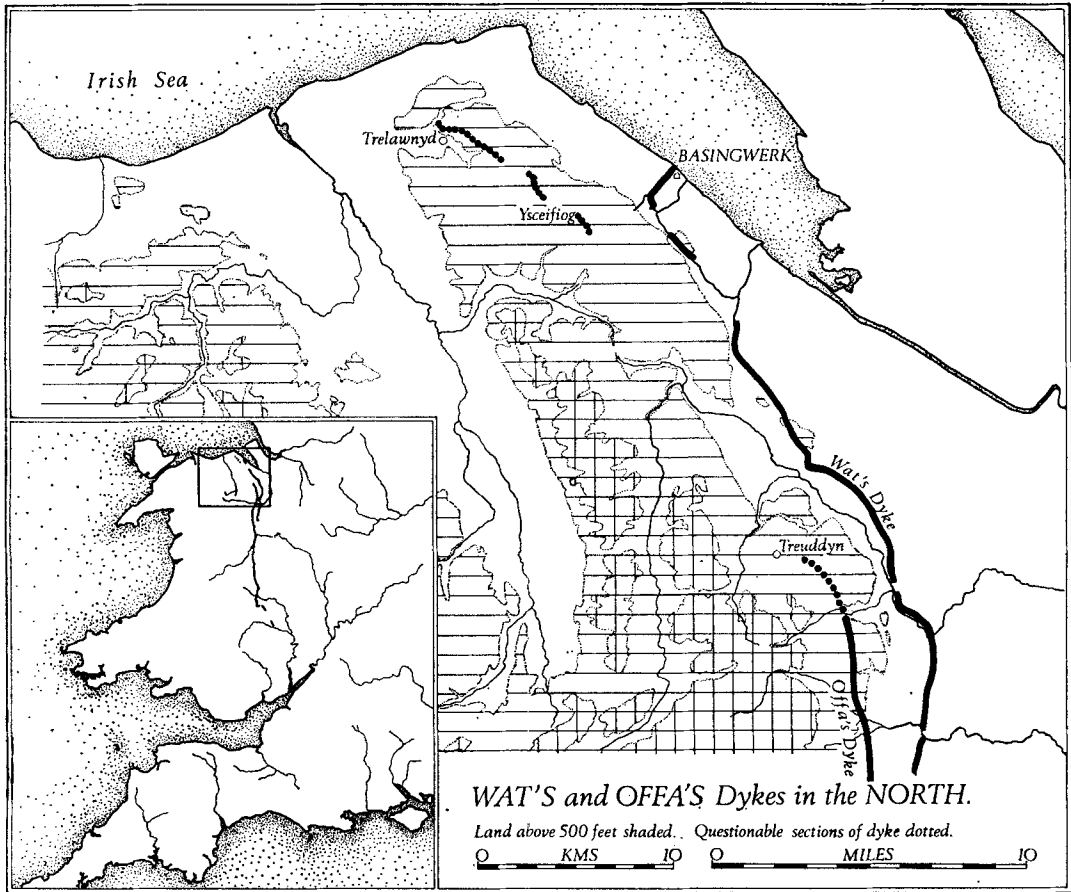


Fig. 1

trenches were extended well into the fields behind the postulated line of Dyke to find if the Dyke had run in the fields behind the hedge which Fox had seen as representing the Dyke. Again no trace was found and it was decided to try a fresh area in face of this lack of evidence at Tre-Abbot-Bach. Therefore, permission was obtained to excavate across what is suggested as the track of the Dyke in the village of Trelawnyd (SJ 089798) where redevelopment was taking place. Here the site was on gravels to a considerable depth and any ditch should have shown clearly in a trench taken well down into the subsoil and right across the postulated line of the Dyke. The excavations showed no sign of any ditch or dyke.

The lack of any archaeological evidence is

not so surprising when one refers to the field-work in the area of Trelawnyd. Other possible lines had been recognized (Fox, 1955, Fig. 2), but the one through Trelawnyd was the one accepted. It would seem that the preference of one line over the other was simply that the 'dyke' ran in the right direction. The postulated dyke in this section is part of some five miles (8 km.) of earthwork, and it may be instructive to examine this stretch. The 'dyke' is not continuous, consisting of three stretches broken by gaps of one-and-a-half miles ( $\frac{7}{8}$  km.) and one mile ( $\frac{5}{8}$  km.). The longest stretch is the one that was excavated without any trace of dyke appearing. The middle stretch, the one on either side of Brynbella (SJ 131772), was excavated by Fox (1955, 26 and Fig. 7) and

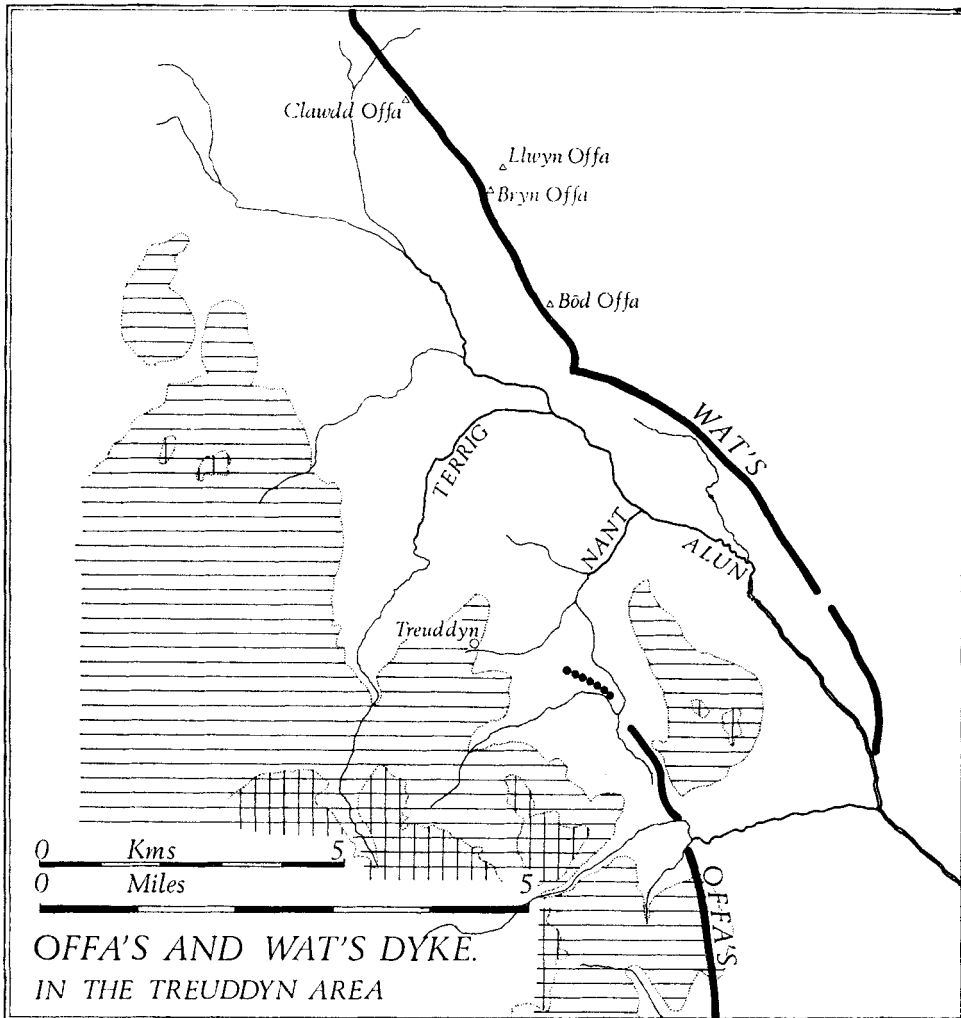


Fig. 2

two shallow ditches sixty-four feet (19.5 m.) apart were discovered. The intervening 'bank', a few feet higher than the ditches, was not excavated. This section, *two* ditches twelve feet wide and nearly six feet deep (c. 3.6 m. by 1.8 m.) on either side of a very slight, or non-existent bank, is inconsistent with the normal cross-section elsewhere, where the bank on average is 6.3 feet higher than the original ground surface, whilst the single, western, ditch is at least twenty feet (6.0 m.) wide and averages about twenty-five feet (7.6 m.).

The third stretch of Dyke in north Flintshire is the sector on either side of the Ysceifiog circle (SJ 152753) where Fox saw the Dyke as a surface feature, but when he came to excavate it in two places he remarked, 'failure to find the original floors of the ditches was unexpected'; in fact the published sections are of what Fox thought they should be. In other words there is no evidence at all for a Dyke in this section (*ibid.*, 25).

The whole of this northern section would seem to be questionable. Fox found the end of

the main section of the Dyke at Treuddyn in southern Flintshire (SJ 268577). From there to a termination at or near Prestatyn we can summarize Fox's findings as a gap of eleven miles (17.7 km.), then the Ysceifog section, followed by a gap of a mile ( $\frac{5}{8}$  km.), the section at Brynbella, a gap of one and a half miles ( $\frac{7}{8}$  km.), the section from Tre-Abbot-Bach to Trelawnyd and then the final gap of two and a half miles (4 km.) to the sea. To follow Fox's line we have to accept first a gap of eleven miles (17.7 km) before the supposed earthworks begin, a line where we have three miles (4.8 km.) of postulated earthwork and sixteen miles (24 km.) of gaps and where the postulated earthworks bear little relation to the type of earthworks which make up the main section of the Dyke. Finally it should be noted that Fox's observations do not appear to be borne out by the archaeological investigations carried out by him or by later investigators.

If the only early source has any validity the Dyke must, in Asser's phrase, run *de mari usque ad mare*, 'from sea to sea' and should exist between Treuddyn and the Irish Sea. If, however, we attempt to carry the Dyke north from Treuddyn there are other lines available to us. A feature of both Offa's and Wat's Dykes is the use of the line of the earthworks makes of ravines and rivers. Between Prestatyn and Treuddyn there is none running in even remotely the right direction, which is north-westerly. At Treuddyn there are two possible lines running north, those along the valleys of the river Terrig and the Nant Brook which both open out into the Alun Valley. On the north side of this valley we find Wat's Dyke which, in coming from the north, makes a

notable right-angled turn to carry it behind the line of Offa's Dyke. If a line can be established between this turn (SJ 269627) and Treuddyn then the 'missing' portion of the Dyke is not the eleven miles (17.7 km.) from Treuddyn to the suspect dyke at Ysceifog but the two and a half miles (4 km.) from Treuddyn to the Alun (FIG. 2).

This suggestion has much to recommend it. The 'gap' is foreshortened, the persistence of the natives questioned by Guest in 1858 in calling part of Wat's Dyke 'Offa's' is explained, and an explanation is offered for the place-names 'Bôd Offa', 'Bryn Offa', 'Llwyn Offa' and 'Clawdd-Offa' on that section of Wat's Dyke immediately to the north of the River Alun.

This would not be a new suggestion; Asser said that the Dyke ran from sea to sea but did not specify its terminations. The late versions of the *Brut y Tywysogion* state in 787:

In the summer the Welsh devastated the territory of Offa, and then Offa caused a dike to be made between him and Wales, to enable him the more easily to withstand the attack and that is called glawd Offa from that time to this day and it extends from one sea to the other, from the south near Bristol, to the north, above Flint, between the monastery of Basingwerk and Coleshill. (William ab Ithel, 1860).

The line of Offa's Dyke from the Wye to Treuddyn and then along the northern stretch of Wat's Dyke from the Alun to its termination at Basingwerk would fit this description exactly.

AB ITHEL, W. J. 1860. *Brut y Tywysogion* (London).  
FOX, SIR CYRIL. 1955. *Offa's Dyke* (London).  
STEVENSON, W. H. 1959. *Asser's life of King Alfred* (Oxford).

## Governor Pownall's American vases

Governor Pownall, to whom Miss Orme and ANTIQUITY have so rightly drawn our attention (1974, 116-25), is notable not merely for his advanced intellectual attitude to the past, but also as apparently the first person to publish Pre-Columbian American archaeological material in this country. His paper in *Archaeologia* for 1779 on three 'vases found on

the Mosquito Shore in South America' is only the second contribution to that journal to deal with non-insular archaeological material (an earlier paper being an account of south Siberian barrows of Pazyryk type). In his paper, the philosophical portions of which are in the direct tradition of an earlier antiquary's *Urne Burial*, Pownall says that he was 'sit down at