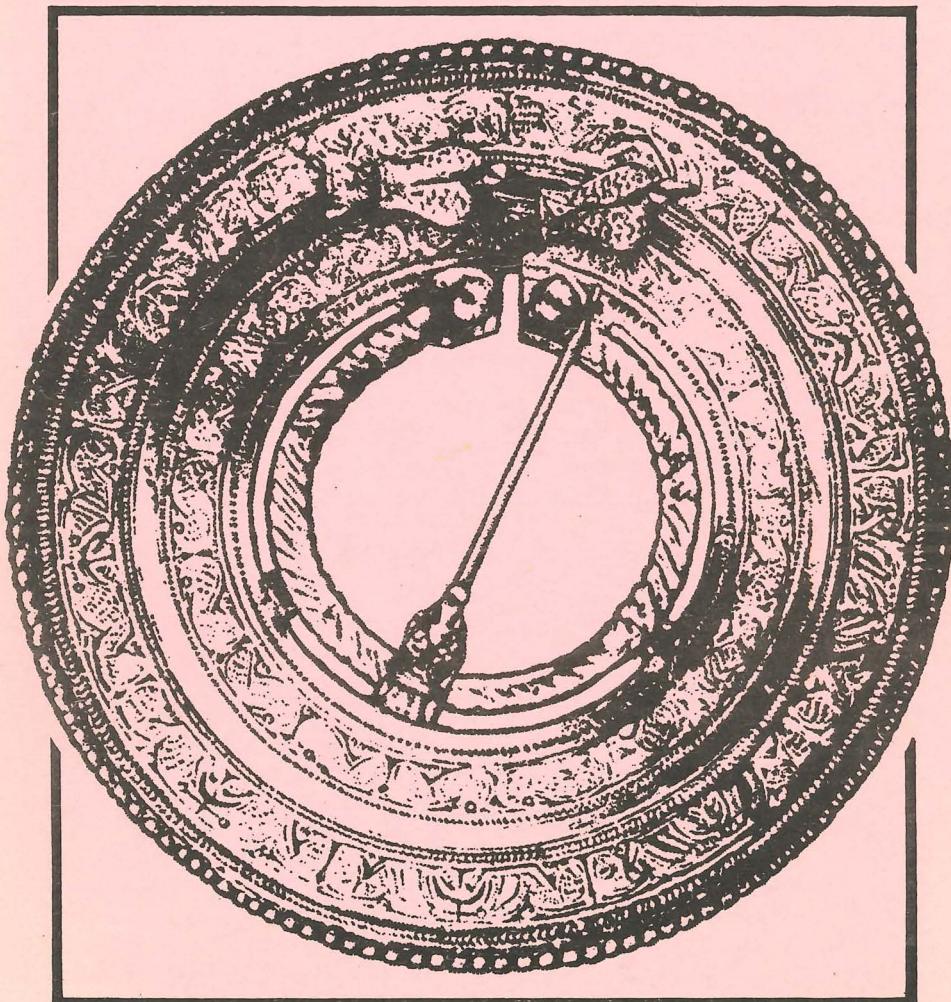


VOL. 3. NO. 1.

ISSN 0267-1026

# Orcus



Welcome to the third volume of DRAGON.

This is the twenty-fifth issue - a quarter of a century, and so to commemorate this event included in this issue is a copy of the very first DRAGON and a potted history of the society and magazine.

I had hoped that a DRAGONMOOT could be held at Liverpool, but the response was so poor - few members replied (thanks go to those who were kind enough to let me know they would not be able to attend) and in the end only one member actually turned up. I was glad to see her but disappointed that yet another DRAGONMOOT should fail. I guess I should take this as a sign that the membership, at least those in the UK, are only interested in the magazine. (I had hoped in the near future to hold an alternative Arthur tour around certain sites, but response to recent 'MOOTS have been so bad that I wonder if it would get any support.) I would welcome your comments on the future of the DRAGONMOOT - for it or against it.

A suggestion has come from Helen Hollick concerning "...any chance of having a few words from other members about themselves? What made me say this, is that I am curious about other members of DRAGON. Who they are, where they are, their main interests...?" To answer Helen's questions I have written a short piece to go with the potted history and two maps showing their placements in the UK and USA (my apologies to certain US members for not being able to locate their home towns on the map).

In this issue there are articles by Helen Hollick and Steve Pollington on horses, Ken Brassil on the dig at Tandderwen (which is now in its Bronze Age stage of excavation), a biography of Arthur Wade Evans, some points of views, reviews and a couple of hefty scrolls. Having scolded members for the lack of response, I would finally like to thank you all for your continued support in keeping the magazine going over these twenty-five issues. I certainly hope you will enjoy this quadricentennial issue, which begins with a short report on the one-day course at Liverpool.

Please read on:-

## King Arthur and Court

On the 25th. June 1988, at the Continuing Education Centre in Liverpool, between 30 and 40 people gathered to hear a series of lectures. The event organised by the Liverpool University began with an intro. to the course by Mr. P.H.W. Booth and proceeded quickly "The Age of Arthur" given by Dr. Lloyd Laing.

He began this lecture with saying he was going to look at Arthur as the Clark Kent is to Superman - in other words strip away the legend and try and get at the history. Of course, being a general look at the situation, he covered much of what anyone interested in the subject would already be familiar with - Gildas, Gododdin, Nennius and so on. However, things did start to get interesting when he began to look at the archaeological side.

Talking about the Saxon settlement of Britain Dr. Laing showed that it wasn't any short quick series of events but began long before the Romans 'left' the country. He indicated that in the Later Roman Empire Germanic styles became very popular and it can be shown that objects such as pottery and belt buckles once thought to be purely Germanic were produced by the people of the Provinces, who were not Saxons. It has also become evident that the Saxons were in fact a minority - outnumbered by about 100 to 1. Evidence shows through place-names, grave goods and even the analysis of blood (which can be identified from bones) that Britain was predominately non-Saxon.

The settlement could well have been far more peaceful than old chronicles would wish us to believe. Also the refurbishing of hill forts such as Cadbury and Liddington, once thought to be of the Dark Age, can now be shown to have taken place much earlier during the Later Roman period. Dr. Laing painted a rather different picture to what we normally think the Dark Age actually was. He closed his lecture with a short comment on the famous Glastonbury Cross, lost, found and lost again, and said that he thought the inscription was Saxon, which may indicate that it could have been copied from an actual tombstone found at Glastonbury.

There followed a short Q&A session in which one questioner asked Dr. Laing why was that if the Saxons were in a minority we now speak the English language. He likened it to the process that must have taken place in Scotland - in that the Picts must have outnumbered the Scots yet Gaelic became the dominant language.

We then broke for coffee at which time I was greeted by Kathleen Herbert, authoress and member of DRAGON - what a nice surprise! There was only time for a quick chat over coffee then it was back to the lecture hall for "King Arthur in Early Old French texts" by Dr. Glyn S. Burgess (mastermind of the actual course).

The next three lectures are really outside of the area of interest to DRAGON but were entertaining and brought out some fascinating points.

Dr. Burgess' obvious enthusiasm for his subject brought life to a series of stories from Medieval France. These included Lanval (Marie de France), Melion (anonymous), Le Roman de Tristan (Beroul), Erec et Enide (Chretien de Troyes) and Yder (also anonymous). He went through the stories in search of locations and aspects of Arthur. The conclusions showed that many of the stories tended towards a northern scenario - particular Carlisle, but other places as far a field as Cornwall, Cardigan, Chester and Pontefract were included. When it came to Arthur he was portrayed as a typical feudal lord and in a number of cases seemed to have been based on Henry II, and in one story John.

This lecture ran somewhat over time but one quite interesting point that came from it was a point of order concerning the Round Table. The stereotype of the Table always has Arthur with his best knights around him, however the earliest texts do not show this at all - in fact they indicate that Arthur, the feudal lord, sat separately. The reason for the table round was to give the knights a sense of equality between themselves - not with Arthur.

Following dinner Miss Elizabeth A. Danbury lectured on "Arthur in English History". Miss Danbury discussed the effect of the Arthurian legend, with its chivalrous ideals, on English history. She looked at the attraction of the legends to the Court, showing that that there were more books to be found in the royal library on Arthur than on religion. Points

concerning various kings and heraldry were talked about but of particular interest were the text of the Glastonbury Cross and the Winchester Round Table.

While discussing the Glastonbury 'discovery' Miss Danbury listed three coffins - the first was that of Guinevere, the second Mordred and the bottom coffin, with the Cross, was that of Arthur. She pointed out the unusual 'N's inscribed on the Cross, which looked more like 'H's, and said that the style was probably of the 12th. century. When it came to the famous Round Table of Winchester, Miss Danbury revealed that the table itself was built in the 1300s but the painting dates from the time of Henry VIII.

After a short tea-break the final lecture from Dr. Ray Barron - "The once and future king" began. Having announced that a good few of the pages of his lecture had already been covered by the previous lecturers, he decided to bring all the threads together. This done he proceeded to give an animated and entertaining lecture on the translation of the Anglo-Saxon writer Layamon and his "Brut". This work was based on Wace's "Roman de Brut" - a version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Historia Regum Britanniae". However, it was not a simple copy and contains some excellent Anglo-Saxon poetry. The fight scenes are particular evocative of earlier Saxon poetry.

Dr. Barron proceeded to give a series of vocal slides from this first post-Norman piece of Anglo-Saxon literature. This began with the lead up to the birth of Arthur and finally ending with the 'death' of the hero. He pointed out that this book was written in the early part of the 13th. century, after the so-called discovery of King Arthur's grave at Glastonbury, yet it indicates that the British still await Arthur's return. The "Brut" ends with the words: "Arthur should yet come to help the English" - a little twist in the tail here! Was the famous 'discovery' worth it?

The lecture came to a finish somewhat over time and after a brief farewell to Kathleen I had a short chat to Dr. Barron who informed me of a new book which will be appearing soon. Overall the day was very interesting and some of our stereotypical ideas concerning King Arthur were dealt with - particularly the Round Table. Also I found that the evidence given by Dr. Laing goes quite a way to supporting certain theories found in this issue of DRAGON.

(Note: Dr. Barron was kind enough to give me further information concerning the new book mentioned above: THE ARTHUR OF THE WELSH ed. A.O.H. Jarman, Rachel Bromwich and B.F. Roberts, University of Wales Press. It will be a survey of Arthurian material from the origins of the legend till Geoffrey of Monmouth, and will be out around the latter part of 1989. I am sure this will be well worth waiting for.)

# ROMAN SADDLERY

by  
HELEN HOLICK

As there have been a number of articles about horses in recent issues of "Dragon", I wondered if readers would be interested in sharing some information I have discovered about Roman saddlery.

The Saddler's Company of London very kindly sent me leaflets written by the late John Waterer who was in his time the leading British authority on the history of saddlery and leather. Here, I found some interesting information.

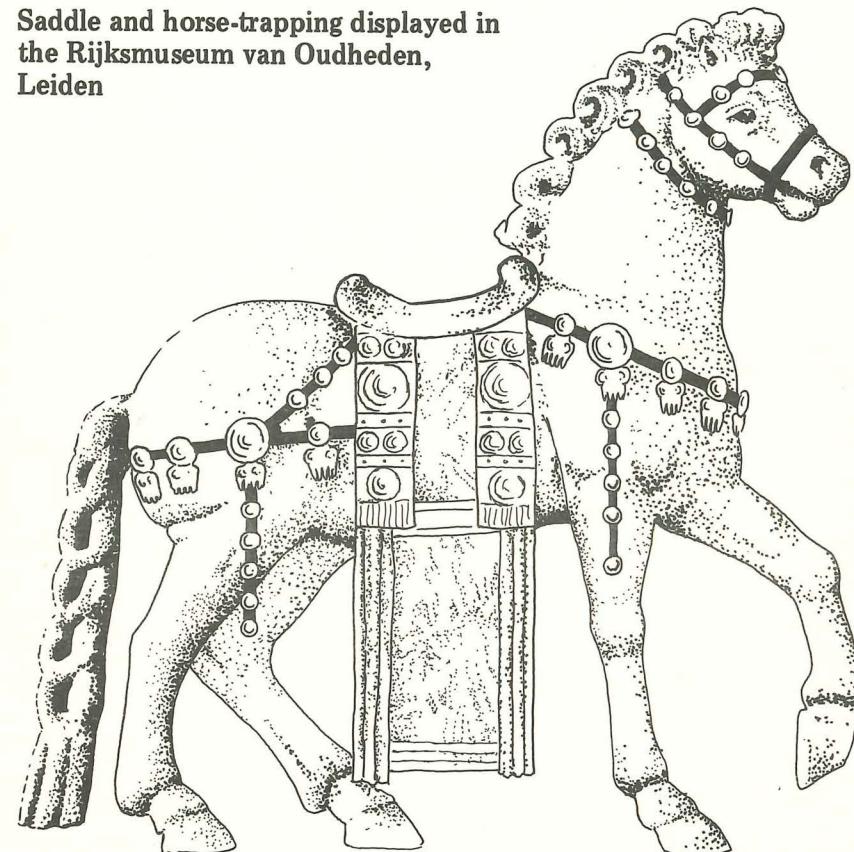
The earliest evidence of anything approaching a true riding saddle in Europe comes from Roman times. Contemporary sculpture have shown that riding saddles of some kind were used by the Roman armies. With their vast use of leather for military clothing and equipment leather was almost certainly used by the Roman's for saddlery.

The first improvement upon bare-back riding was used in Assyria from the 9th. century BC, this was a simple horse-cloth, probably made from animal skins, eventually became a known part of the Greek soldier's equipment by the 4th. century BC. Although the horse-cloth was probably attached to the horse's body, it undoubtedly gave little toward a rider's safety or control.

A saddle depicted on Trajan's Column of 113 AD takes the form of an improved horse-cloth which was really little more than a stuffed pad with

rolls or ridges to produce some measure of grip. This was attached by a girth. The depicted saddle is an elongated oblong consisting of twin layers of leather, perhaps with an interlining, hanging down to almost level with the horse's belly. Fretted bronze plates were inserted between layers at the lower ends to provide some stability. A shorter layer, sometimes provided with pockets, was fixed over the first one. The rider sat on the quadruple thickness rather precariously for he was without stirrups or any kind of foothold.

Saddle and horse-trapping displayed in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden



A similar construction but with much shorter side flaps and fitted with four vertical "horns" of

leather covered with bronze was uniquely used by the Roman armies. This is thought by John Waterer to have been an early form of pack-saddle. The smallest unit in the Roman army was the "contubernium" (of eight men) to which one leather tent and one pony with attendant was allotted. He has concluded that the cumbersome shape of a rolled tent could be effectively carried by these strange shaped pack-saddles. This form of pack-saddle would have become obscure with the disappearance of the legions and their tents for which it was purpose built to carry. Pack-saddles of the future had entirely different functions to perform.

The earliest form of a true saddle is shown in a sculpture from the column of Theodosius in Constantinople, erected 379-395. Only a 17th. century engraving now survives. It is a sketchy drawing, but scalloped edges of a "pad" saddle are clearly depicted. Both pad and horse-cloth must have been made from leather, for this was the only material of which edges could be cut and shaped into scallops or chevrons without being left raw to fray. The bottom edges of military leather tunics were cut in chevron shapes, depicted on Trajan's column.

This "pad" saddle has bold stuffed ridges back and front, a device still used on pad saddles in countries bordering the Mediterranean, this being the direct precursor of the "cantle" and "pommel" on later saddles. This type of saddle, probably preceded the date of the sculpture by a substantial period.

As with many other objects of the Roman period, the saddles they used disappeared into the "Dark Ages", there is no further evidence concerning the development of the saddles until the early Middle Ages, about 600 years later.

There is one curious thing about the Romans and their saddlery. Usually so astute, the Romans never realised that a horse's spine must be free from weight and pressure if it is to perform effectively and for any length of time. It was not until the 11th. century that the basis of

saddlery was formed around a primitive wooden structure with an inverted "V" to take the weight from the spine.

Stirrups were used by Attila the Hun, but there is no evidence to suggest that the Roman's, or a Romano-British cavalry such as Arthur may have had, used them. However, I personally feel that a lack of evidence does not constitute their lack of use - for we have so very little evidence of ANYTHING from this period - not even any saddles dating from Arthur's time. Perhaps Arthur fought bare-back? While not entirely essential, (the North American Indian fought well without the use of stirrup or saddle) stirrups do effectively provide a secure seat and much improved control and comfort - as any rider will confirm! I tried the experiment myself a short while ago whilst out riding. I abandoned my stirrups using a modern English saddle only. I gave up after a short while when muscles complained and nerve gave out! I seemed in too much danger of making acquaintance with the beckoning mud below! I believe, however, that many cavalry-men learn to ride without stirrups. I wonder if any readers could give their views on the pros and cons of stirrups, just how essential for effective riding are they?

I recommend John Waterer's excellent book "Leather and the Warrior" published in 1981 by the Museum of Leathercraft. It is packed with detailed information on this subject.

#### Editor's Postscript

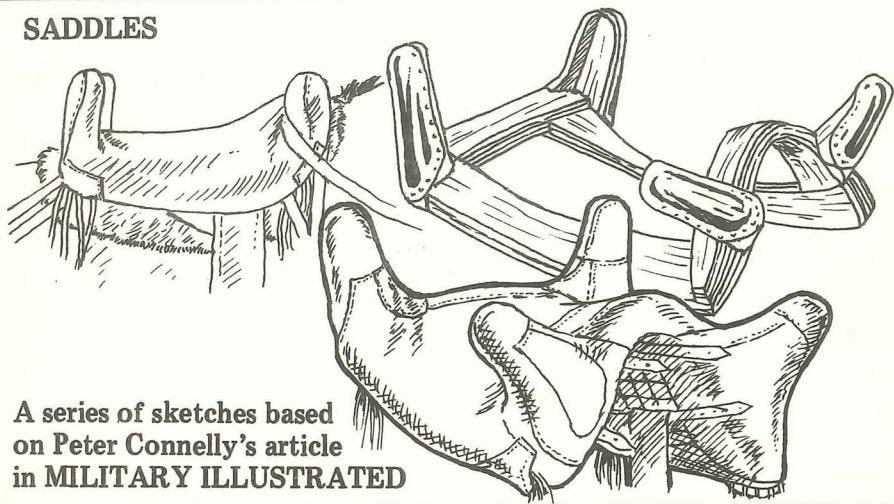
Since Helen Hollick wrote the above article Peter Connelly, famous for his books on the Graeco-Roman world, has done a number of experiments with the Roman saddle - which may answer some of her questions. Over a number of years Connelly has looked at aspects of the saddle to find out exactly how it was constructed. This included looking at bas-reliefs, tombstones and archaeological finds. Without going into great detail Connelly makes some interesting conclusions. He found that the saddle with four horns (see sketches) proved a

"secure seat, making shock tactics possible". He went on to say "The only advantage of stirrups is that they make it easier to mount, and that the rider can stand in them when rising up in the saddle to deliver a blow". Connelly found mounting quite easy - vaulting onto the horse - but had to experiment to learn how to dismount. The latter entailed holding the front horns, transferring the weight of the body onto the arms and dismounting in the same way as one would a bicycle.

Paul Holder has also pointed out that this type of saddle helped Roman cavalry to make use of the lance as well as the javelin, bow and sword.

All this may give some weight to the belief that the British of the Dark Age used cavalry as an active military arm against the Saxons, Picts and Irish. However, certain aspects of the use of cavalry should be taken into account and Steve Pollington in the following article points a few of these logistical problems.

#### SADDLES



A series of sketches based on Peter Connelly's article in **MILITARY ILLUSTRATED**

(The above is a short extrapolation from two articles - *Cohortes Equitae* by Paul Holder and *Experiments with the Roman Saddle* by Peter Connelly - in the latest issue of **MILITARY ILLUSTRATED** No. 13, June/July 1988. This is well worth getting, as the title implies, it is well illustrated. My special thanks to Graham Sumner for pointing out the magazine and articles.)

# ENGLISH HORSEMEN

by  
STEVE POLLINGTON

For a variety of reasons it is usually assumed that Arthur's means of combatting the Anglo-Saxons was the use of cavalry. Only cavalry, it is assumed, could move about with speed and freedom; only cavalry could provide an answer to the more numerous Saxon warriors; and of course the Saxons had no cavalry of their own to offer effective resistance.

Yet, when we look more closely at the situation we may question the wisdom of using cavalry at the time.

Firstly, it must be admitted that a horseman can in normal circumstances travel further in a given time than can a foot-man in the same space of time. But, horsemen must always think first of the needs of their mounts, and we can hardly assume that there was a network of Dark Age hostels (called Trust House Vortigern?) scattered the length and breadth of the land. Horses must be provided with food, water, rest and protection from the worst of the weather if they are to remain strong enough to carry the riders. How could a commander cater for men and horses? In home territory he could send messengers to farms on his route asking for food and lodging, but presumably this would have to be paid for in some way. Outside his own area he could not expect to be provided for for any length of time - he would have to keep moving round the country in order not to overburden the local food supply and outstay his welcome. In hostile territory he could hardly plan at all unless he could be sure that there would be a store of provisions in a specific location, and could direct his effort to seizing these. Alternatively he could take food and fodder with him, but to do so would involve either quantities of pack animals or a convoy of wagons; neither of these would suit a fast, mobile cavalry task-force. He would also be obliged to lay aside stores for a given campaign and to establish re-supply routes. All this would make it impossible to react quickly to a crisis.

As discussed previously in these pages, one must

doubt that cavalry would provide an effective answer to traditional spear-carrying Saxon footmen. In a man-to-man fight a footman (Old English FEDA) can often use speed and agility to duck in under a horseman's guard and do some very nasty things to the lower parts of man and horse. Also, spear-carrying infantry have often been able to "break" even charging cavalry provided they have enough resolution to outface the bulk of the horsemen, and long enough spear-shafts to keep the horses at some distance. (The Medieval Scottish 'schiltron' is a good example.) Furthermore, though they were never numerically stronger overall, the Saxons seem to have "made the running" - to have carried the war to the British. They were able to do so with or without horses by the use of their ships. Ships, powered by oar or sail, can move faster than horsemen, and the difference must have been even more marked in well-wooded 5th. century Britain. They can carry large quantities of supplies such as could keep the crew well-provided-for for a long period; they can act as a temporary home and even as a kind of mobile fort; and above all they require virtually no maintenance at all and so do not impose great logistical problems on the warlords who use them. Most of the towns of the period were sited on substantial waterways and even if these were not necessarily navigable right up to the town's walls, a leader with a little ingenuity would have been able to overcome the short land journeys involved. There can be little doubt that the use of ships was a factor in the English success; perhaps devotion to the ancient notion of the horse-warrior was Arthur's downfall.

\* \* \* \* \*

An interesting sequel is that in the end the English themselves did take to horses and by the 9th. century Aelfred of Wessex had to call on Frisian seamen to help him found an English warfleet to use against the Danes. Late English manuscripts show warriors on horseback riding to war. But even in 991 the English would only ride as far as the battlefield, then dismount and fight on foot. In that year ealdorman BRYHTNOTH was in charge of the English army which met the Danes at Maldon in Essex. The beginning of the poem which describes the battle is lost,

but the first two full lines of what remains are:

HET THA HYSSA HWAENE  
FEOR AFYSAN

HORS FORLAETAN  
AND FORTH GANGAN

"He then bade each of the young warriors to let his horse go, to send it far away, and to move forwards." Evidently English horsemanship still did not include fighting on horseback in 991.

\* \* \* \* \*

An English word for a troop of warriors was EORED which is ultimately 'EOH' + 'RAD' "horse + riding" - a body of horsemen. When one thinks of, for example, Offa's Dyke it becomes obvious that it could not be patrolled on foot.

# Tandderwen

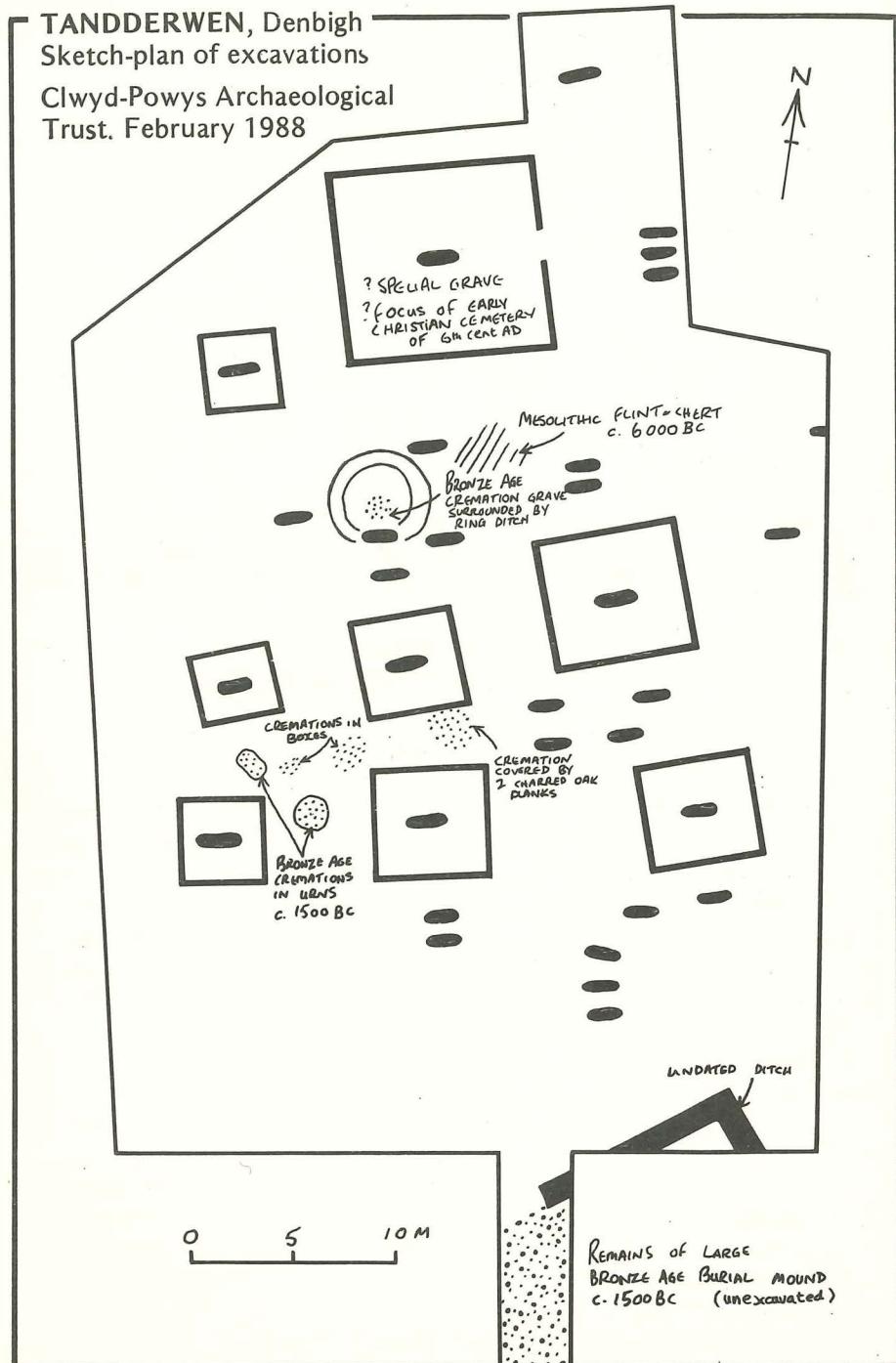
BURIAL IN THE DARK AGES: A NEWLY DISCOVERED CEMETERY  
AT TANDDERWEN, DENBIGH, CLWYD.

by  
KEN BRASSIL

For the aerial archaeologist drought summers can provide exceptional conditions for spotting and photographing sites. In particular the pattern of ripening corn which, in dry summers, over shallow soils ripen early due to moisture deficiency contrasts with the unripe corn growing in the moisture retentive and deeper soils of ditches and pits. It was as cropmarks that the Tandderwen cemetery was first seen in the last dry summer - 1984. Multiple patterns were visible on the aerial photographs taken by Chris Musson (of the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales): some were ring-ditches, formerly round barrows of presumably Bronze Age date (c. 1500BC) and others were square-ditches. These square-plan ditches, which surrounded graves, were the focus of archaeological excavations in 1986 and 1987 responding to the continuing threat from ploughing of an unusual type of cemetery.

By the end of the 1987 season over 30 graves, both simple

TANDDERWEN, Denbigh  
Sketch-plan of excavations  
Clwyd-Powys Archaeological  
Trust. February 1988



Excavations 1986: Two of the 'square barrows'. The far square, with its causeway on the east side and its size (10m), may be identified as the 'special grave' and focus of the Early Christian cemetery. The near grave contained remnants of an oak coffin - a sample of which was radiocarbon dated to the 6th. century A.D.

and enclosed, had been excavated. All were roughly aligned east-west, contained no bone other than the occasional tooth fragment and then always at the west end of the grave but some, fortuitously, preserved the vestige of oak coffins. One radiocarbon date has so far been obtained from the wood samples. This 6th. century AD date, the absence of grave-goods and the grave alignment indicate that Tandderwen is one of the earliest Christian cemeteries in this part of Wales. What makes this site even more interesting is the presence of square-ditches surrounding 8 of the graves. It is likely that the ditches provided the material to build a mound over the grave creating a square barrow. The mounds have disappeared due to erosion and the effect of perhaps centuries of ploughing. But the pattern remains of at least three rows of square-ditches generally increasing in area from west to east. One of these former barrows is exceptional in size being 10m square and for the gap or causeway across the ditch on its eastern side. Is

this a special grave, the focus of the cemetery? The contrast in size within the group of 'enclosed' graves and between these and the remaining 22 simple graves points to a hierarchy of burial.

Of course many questions regarding this Dark Age cemetery remain for the moment unsolved and may never be answered. The current absence of skeletal remains at Tandderwen severely handicaps attempts at identifying the dead, even at the basic level of male/female, young or old. However for the historical context of the cemetery we can at least offer some suggestions. At the present time we can look to eastern Scotland for a similar style of cemetery. Here there are well over 20 examples known as the result of aerial photography where square-ditches are the prominent cropmark; none have been extensively excavated. It is thought that the Scottish examples are of Dark Age date.



Excavating one of the 30 graves of the Early Christian Cemetery.

We could suggest that this practise of burial in graves surrounded by square-ditches and fashionable in the north of Britain was introduced to this part of north east Wales by people who had migrated from Scotland. Professor Leslie Alcock, one of our most respected Dark Age specialists, is not dismissive of a link with Cunedda Wledig's migration from the Forth to north Wales. For some historians the Cunedda migration is an 'origin-legend', developed as a source for the pedigree of the first dynasty of Gwynedd whilst also acting as a reminder of the former extent of Britain. Indeed one of the earliest documentary references to Cunedda, his sons, their origin in Manaw Gododdin and their defeat of the occupying Irish in the area between the Dee and the Teifi is in the 9th, century: over 500 years after the event supposedly occurred. We are reminded today of Cunedda's family, eight of his sons and a grandson by name: Dunawd in Dumoding, Rhufawn in Rhufoniog, Edern in Edernion and Meiriawn in Merionnydd etc. - the Medieval names for areas of north and west Wales. Tandderwen cemetery is located in the middle of Dyffryn Clwyd, part of which was once known as Dogfeiling - eponymously after Docmail, another of Cunedda's sons.

We could expand our links with the north to include Cyndeyrn Sant (St. Kentigern) who came from Glasgow to Llanelwy (St. Asaph) where he established a clas or Celtic monastery in the 6th, century (according to the Lives of the British Saints). Could some of his followers with an eastern Scottish ancestry be associated with the Tandderwen cemetery?

More questions are now being asked than answered. We hope to return to Tandderwen to continue our investigations in 1988 . . . extending the excavated area to the margins of the Dark Age cemetery and devoting more time to the Bronze Age cremation cemetery. Is there a link between the cemeteries - did the early Christians purposely select the pagan cemetery as a focus for burial? if so how did they recognize the already 2000 year old burial ground - by the presence of round barrows or did a folk memory survive?

How much more light we can shed on this currently rare Dark Age cemetery will have to await consideration of the

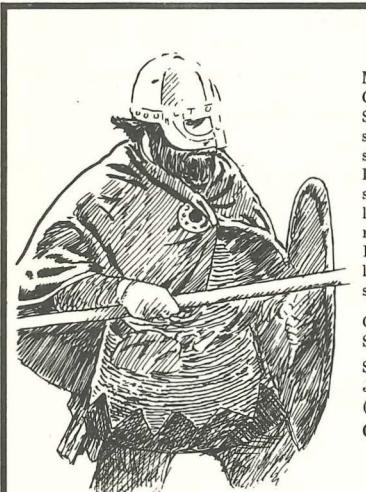
full results of the recent excavations, the dating of more wood samples and the product of the excavation programme proposed for this year.

For further information contact:

Kenneth Brassil  
Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust  
7a Church Street  
WELSHPOOL  
Powys.

*(Ed. The above article arrived on my doorstep the same day that DRAGON Vol. II No. 12 had been completed ready for printing. So, unfortunately, I wasn't able to put it in the above issue. Nevertheless, I am quite sure this article was well worth waiting for, especially since it is accompanied by some interesting illustrations.)*

COVER: Mentioned in Lloyd Laing's lecture at Liverpool, the Quoit Brooch, Sarre, Kent. It combines a number of interesting features - including Roman, Germanic and Romano-Celtic.



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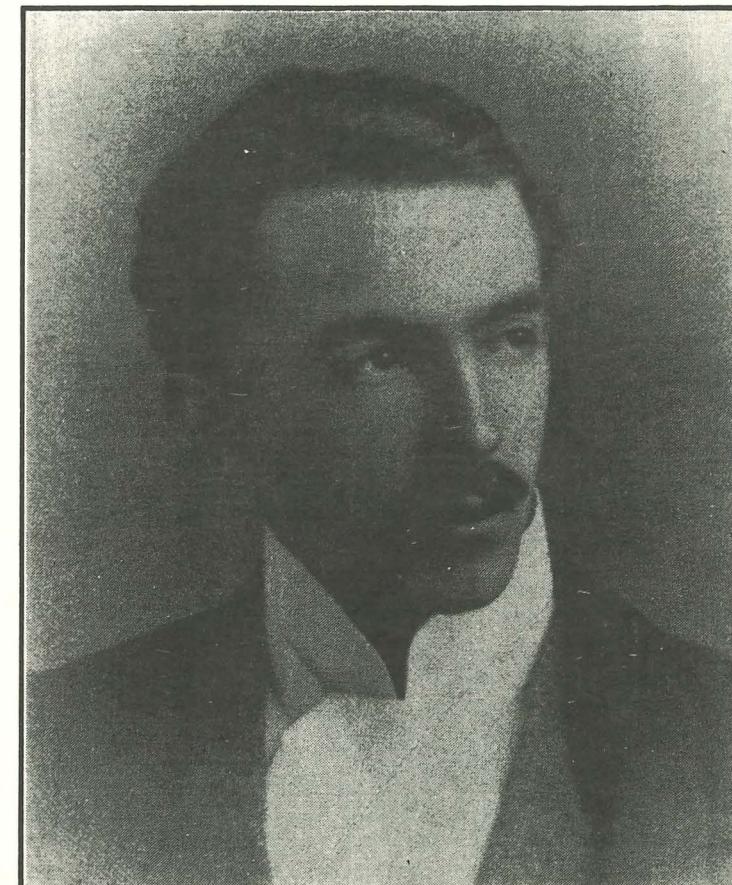
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# "Venerabilis historiographus"

A short article on the life and theories  
of  
the Rev. ARTHUR WADE EVANS  
by  
Charles W. Evans-Gunther



Arthur Evans was born to Titus and Elizabeth Evans of St. Mary, Fishguard.) on the Pembroke coast, on the 31st. August 1875. (In his youth he adopted the name Wade Evans from reasons which are not quite clear - maybe it had some connection with James Wade, the nineteenth century teller of tall tales who lived at Goodwick near Fissguard.) Having attended grammar school at Haverfordwest, he gravitated like many young Welsh men and women, before and since, to Jesus College, Oxford. He matriculated in 1893, finding himself in a world dominated by certain academic attitudes and prejudices. A "pro-Germanism" prevailed - "Ireland was riff-raff, Wales was scorned - and I was made to realize I was only a 'Celt'". Wade Evans, as a youth, wrote articles that showed a leaning towards the Conservative Party, but his experiences led him later to give active support to the Welsh Nationalist Party. In 1896 he graduated with a degree in Art.

He was ordained in 1898 at St. Stephen's, Ealing, and a year later married Florence May Dixon. The next few years saw him in service in a number of parishes on the Welsh border and then in 1907 he became assistant curate at St. Andrews in Cardiff. During this time he began to contribute to national journals (having written on varying subjects for local newspapers and magazines) - the first being on Peniarth MS. 37 (Welsh law tracts) in Y CYMMRODOR XVII, 1904. From 1909 to 1926 Wade Evans was vicar of France Lynch, Gloucestershire, then Northamptonshire and finally rector of Wrabness in Essex from 1932 till his retirement in 1957. Most of his interesting work was produced away from his native land. He extended his present studies and in 1909 published "Welsh Medieval Law", Clarendon Press. The in 1923 came the "Life of St. David", 1944 "Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae", 1950 "Coll Prydein" and finally "The Emergence of England and Wales" in 1956.

Wade Evans was a very hard working, researching many different subjects. He made a considerable contribution to the study of the Medieval Church in Wales with his "Parochiale Wallicanum", Y Commrodor in 1910. However, it is for his controversial writings that he became well-known. These theories also caused him many

problems. Following the death of his wife in 1953, an event which effected him greatly, he attempted to publish a book which summed up his theories. Despite help from his friends and agents, publishers shied away from his unorthodox conclusions which didn't follow the lines of accepted academic opinion. Wade Evans was now eighty years old and, from certain accounts, this inability to get his book published had its toll. However, finally with the help of the Rev. Father Paul Grosjean, S.J., a Belgian historian and supporter of Wade Evans' theories, the book was published by Messrs. De Meester of Wettern, Belgium. This took a lot of effort and money but it was all worth it to the Reverend Gentleman when a 2nd. Edition was called for and published, this time in Britain by W. Heffer and Sons, Cambridge, in 1958.

Arthur Wade Evans retired in 1957 and went to live in Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. He continued to write articles on his theories and was working on a piece entitled: "Welsh Introduction to Anglo-Welsh History" when he died on the 4th. January 1964, aged eighty eight. Through the fifty years or so of contributing articles and writing books Wade Evans was always rather controversial - and though some of his theories do not stand-up to scrutiny, others have been proven fact by the test of time and new evidence.

The theories put forward by the Rev. Wade Evans are of some interest, provocative and controversial. It would be impossible to cover all his theories, so in this article I shall just look at his opinion concerning the "De Excidio Britanniae" and the possibility of two Gildases. (A further article in a future issue of DRAGON will be on Wade Evans, Arthur and the Battle of Badon.)

Gildas is believed to have been born the same year as the Battle of Badon and according to the Welsh Annals he died in 570. He is best remembered for his history-cum-sermon written sometime in the mid-sixth century - "De Excidio Britanniae" - The Ruin of Britain. Most of it is concerned with Gildas' sermon to the clergy and laity of Britain on their sinfulness. The history is only a small part of the 110 chapters showing how bad the Britons were and that they deserved the tribulations

that they suffered beneath the heel of the Saxons. He tells how the Romans left and the Britons had to fend for themselves first against the Picts and Scots and then the Saxons - the most hated of the three, so much so that their "name should not be spoken". They were invited into the country by "the proud tyrant" to help fight against the Picts and Scots. Then they rebelled and "a fire heaped up - destroyed town and country round about, and...did not die down until...was licking the western ocean with its fierce red tongue". He paints a picture of terrible violence and refugees fleeing to the mountains. However, the Britons are rallied by Ambrosius Aurelianus and after a series of battles the "villains" are defeated at the Battle of Mount Badon. From then on till the time of writing there was virtual peace despite corrupt leaders.

Wade Evans questioned all this and even cast doubt on Gildas - suggesting that there were two Gildases. He believed that the accepted dating for the events of the "De Excidio..." were normally placed too early. He didn't see Gildas (which ever one) as the culprit rather the later writer Bede. His argument is backed by quoting for other sources of the early period - Prosper Tiro, St. Patrick, the Gallic Chronicle and Constantius. Much of what Wade Evans discusses seems to be a reaction to the academic beliefs of "Oxford School of Anglo-Saxon Historians".

Britain, according to Wade Evans, was divided into zones at the beginning of the sixth century - equivalent to the five late Roman provinces. *Britanniae Prima* was occupied by the Britons, *Secunda* by Saxons, *Flavia* by Angles, *Maxima* by Deirans and *Valentia* by the Britons in the North - *Gwyr y Gogledd*. However, they all considered themselves to be *Britanni* - Romans. When the "Saxons" did actually come and wars between the *Britanni* and the "Saxons" took place - the "Saxons" called their enemies the Welsh, which actually means Romans rather than slaves or foreigners as is often believed. When the Romans spoke of the Saxon Shore, Wade Evans suggested, they meant that not only was it to protect against pirates but also the area was colonised by "Saxons". There seems now that it can be proven that this area was inhabited by Teutonic

tribes before the Romans "left".

Wade Evans once wrote: "Archaeology, philology, geography, or any other auxiliary discipline that serves in some degree to uncover the past, is not history. Any amount of archaeological discovery is of very little use and often very deceptive so long as it cannot be connected with written memoranda of some sure sort...". It was one of these disciplines that eventually gave weight to Wade Evans' theory. Archaeology shows that not only were there "Saxons" in Britain before the Romans but also that even after the Romans 'left' there was no indication of the wholesale slaughter of the British part of the Roman society. Racial mixing, trade and use of British names in "Saxon" society seem to indicate a less violent beginning to the Emergence of England and Wales. But when one reads Gildas it is evident that the Welsh only became Welsh because they were pushed into the mountainous regions of the west of the island. Or, at least, that is what is thought to have happened. Have the historians got it wrong? Did Gildas get it wrong? Or could it be that the "De Excidio..." was not written in the mid-sixth century and is in fact a later work?

If one looks at Gildas' work there is very little to help pin-point dates - the main ones are Maximus Magnus, 383-388, and the letter to Aetius, sometime between 446 and 453. However, Wade Evans shows that they may be a way to calculate certain dates which indicate a much later date for the composition of the work. When the Saxons landed they made a prophecy and said that for 150 years there will be wars and then for the next 150 will be comparatively peaceful. Gildas said that after Badon there was peace for at least 43 years, having been born the same year as the battle. Wade Evans then shows through calculation Gildas was writing one hundred and ninety three years after the Saxons landed. If then the Saxons landed in 450 that would give a date of 643. However, if you calculate from the landing of Stuf and Whitgar in 514 you get the year 707, now take away Gildas' age and the date for the Battle of Badon is 664. In the Welsh Annals is an entry for the year 665 for the second Battle of Badon. Wade Evans says that this was the only battle of Badon. Could he be right? Coincidence, fact or

just playing with numbers?

To sum up - Wade Evans saw the advent of the Saxons not in the mid-fifth century but 514 with the first Jute landing of Stuf and Whitgar. The "proud tyrant" who invited them over was not Vortigern but Cerdic, whom Wade Evans believed to have been a Briton. After this the writings concerning the wars, destruction of the towns and so on took place. These continued until 665 but by then the Britanni - the Welsh had been forced further west into Wales, Cornwall and Cumbria. Great battles had been fought, countries like Powys in Shropshire had been eaten up and our modern boundaries established.

Provocative - certainly, controversial - definately, but very interesting and whether you believe it or not, Wade Evans may actually have hit on some aspects that may be proven fact. The evidence concerning two Gildases and the two parts of the "De Excidio..." being written by two different characters can not be proven. But this doesn't negate the possibility that the scenerio that Wade Evans lays out before us may be wrong. I think it is up to the reader.

Following the death of Arthur Wade Evans, Sir Idris Foster wrote an excellent obituary in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. He ended the piece with the words: "all students of early Welsh history and law will long be grateful to this *venerabilis histiographus* and unselfish priest who, during years of isolation in a sparsely populated parish along the estuary of the River Stour and amid many tribulations, found deep and rewarding joy in trying 'to recover the broken fragments of early Welsh tradition'".

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Photograph: National Library of Wales.



#### A SHORT HISTORY

The society and magazine owe their origins to the magazine *MILITARY MODELLING*. Normally I wouldn't buy such a magazine but I saw a copy in a newsagents and it almost jumped off the shelf into my hands. It was the first in a three part series entitled: "Arthur. Fact or Fiction", written by Geoff Mills and illustrated by Richard Scollins. This appeared in the May issue of 1981 and was concluded in July. I wrote to the magazine complimenting them on the artwork but criticising the text. I had been interested in Arthur and the 'Dark Ages' for some time and felt I should make some comment. I didn't expect there would be many letters - however, the letters pages, *DESPATCHE*, of MM were crammed with correspondence. MM wrote to me and I replied saying that I would be interested in contacting folk of a similar interest and possibly starting a club together with a small 'fanzine'. In the October edition of *MILITARY MODELLING* the following appeared in their "Noticeboard":

#### Arthurian Club

Following the recent series on King Arthur, Mr. Charles Gunther, of 2 Feathers Lea, Flint, Delyn, Clwyd, CH6 5BZ, N Wales would like to contact people with an interest in this subject and the "Dark Ages". He hopes to set up a small club of enthusiasts and issue a newsletter. Please write to Mr. Gunther at the above address.

(Of course since then I have added to my name and changed my address.)

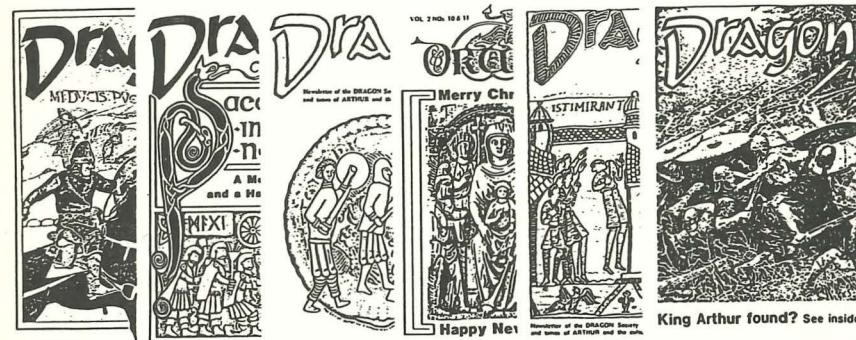
Within a few weeks I'd had over a dozen replies to the advertisement. Some of the enquirers are still members of the society. Three international one came - one from California, one from Japan and a group letter from Vienna, Austria. The latter was from four Austrians including Roswitha Rutter and Wolfgang Hendl, who have since married and recently had a baby boy, Wilhelm (MANY CONGRATULATIONS!)

The first thing I did was produce a leaflet putting forward the aims of a society giving it the name DRAGON. I had taken some time pondering over a title and decided on this before I found out about PENDRAGON. I contacted this society and they were kind enough to advertise DRAGON in their magazine PENDRAGON Vol. XV No. 1. I am very grateful to Kate Pollard and Chris Lovegrove for their encouragement and help.

DRAGON Vol. 1 No. 1 was published in January 1982 (see enclosed free copy). The first one was only eight pages but it was a start. Issues were sent to all members, enquirers and to people who might be interested in the subject. These included Geoffrey Ashe, Leslie Alcock, Rachel Bromwich and Rosemary Sutcliff (since then some new honorary members have been included: Tom Clare, Arthur Young, Tim Strickland and Bedwyr Lewis Jones). Since then DRAGON has grown in pages and members. Of course things have changed - some members have dropped out and we have had a new logo, but the aims and objectives are much the same.

Over the last six years DRAGON has looked at various aspects of Arthur and the Dark Age. There are many interesting highlights. In DRAGON \*3 Geoffrey Ashe's book "Kings and Queens of Britain" was reviewed, being the

first book to go into any detail on the Riothamus-Arthur connection. I had the opportunity of interviewing him in August 1982 when the first DRAGONMOOT was held in Glastonbury. Graham Sumner began his look at the Dark Ages in film in D\*5, which also had an article on the Coppergate Helmet.



DRAGON \*6 saw the first of The Tales of the Two Ells cartoons by Roger Willcox (to let you into a secret - the title comes from Roger getting a series of letters from me in which I spelt his surname Wilcox - thus a tale of two 'l's). In number seven we encountered Messrs Wilson and Blackett for the first time - a running battle has continued ever since (of course I was unable to print some of the comments they made about me for decency reason - they are certainly colourful characters). DRAGON \*8 was the Magnus Maximus anniversary AD383 - 1983 and the report on the London DRAGONMOOT - ten members in one place at one time (phew!). In DRAGON \*10 we had our only Dark Age crossword - any chance of another in the near future? The final edition of the first volume was the first to have a card cover and introduced the DRAGONPROJECT. It also announced the death of Sir Idris Ll. Foster, possibly the country's foremost expert on Culhwch and Olwen.

Volume two began with a review of the previous volume and two fascinating interviews of Rosemary Sutcliff and Tim Strickland, of the Gorsvenor Museum, Chester. Also Tom Clare, Cumbrian archaeologist, began a two part article entitled "The Rheged Connection. In the next issue we were taken into the school with Roger Willcox's "Arthur in the Classroom" and had the first of irregular series of biographies - this one was Joseph Ritson. DRAGON \*2.4 had the first of the DRAGONPROJECT articles and a piece on comets in the Dark Ages - remember it was the year of Halley's Comet (no, I didn't see it either). Messrs. Wilson and Blackett returned onto the scene in 1986, and are still propagating their "interesting" theories. In D\*2.6 Graham Sumner concluded his series on Dark Age films and we had the second DRAGONPROJECT articles. With the next issue came a new DRAGON logo by Courtney Davis, and our first index. In DRAGON \*2.8 I laid all my cards on the table and wrote about my own theories on Arthur and the Midlands (still thinking of writing a book!). In Volume One we had Riothamus and Athrwys while in Volume Two we had Arthurs from Cumbria and the Midlands - I wonder what Volume Three has to offer? Sad news of the death (passing over) of Paul Karlsson Johnstone eventually filtered through from the United States and I learned we had lost a good member and a fascinating gentleman. In DRAGON \*2.10/11 there was a short biography of Paul and I inaugurated the P.K. Johnstone Memorial Prize - no takers yet!

And so to Volume Three....

Through Geoffrey Ashe I was contacted by Freya Reeves-Lambides when she was in the process of setting-up AVALON TO CAMELOT, a

magazine that deals with history and literature, and through her DRAGON got a good number of US members. I am grateful to Freya for her help.

Basically, DRAGON has not done too bad with a membership growing, and fluctuating, from dozen to nearly 60 members. There have been many interesting and educating articles over the years but the DRAGONMOOTs have proven to be a bit of a failure - and I feel I must take the blame. The London one was the most successful, but things haven't been too good since then. Despite this DRAGON is still going strong, apart from some delays and my atrocious typing. Help also comes from non-members such as the Clwyd Library Headquaters, and especially Mike Hill, the Arthurian Library, Folk Studies Centre in Llangollen, and printers Ian Morrison and Dave Martin. Thanks, chaps!

I hope to keep DRAGON going as long as I can (though I might take a break of six months in the near future - a temporary job in Japan). Maybe in a few years I will be reviewing the past in issue 50 - our semi-centennial issue or even the centennial one. Meanwhile, thanks to everybody for their support over the years and keep them articles coming.

#### THE MEMBERSHIP

Like any society DRAGON's membership tends to fluctuate but at the time of writing, including honorary members, there are fifty eight (58). In a number of cases these are joint memberships and a number of copies go to universities and libraries. Of the membership, 36 can be found in Great Britain, 20 in the United States, 1 in Austria and 1 in Canada. At the end of this section are two maps shwoing the placement of members in the United States (some positioned by state alone) and Great Britian. In the next issue I hope

to publish a list of members, including honoraries. (IMPORTANT: If you do not wish your address to be included in this list then please contact me as soon as possible. If I do not hear from you I will automatically take it that you do not mind. Thanks.)

Concerning such things as age, occupation and interests, I cannot answer these questions in any detail. Membership range from twenties to the over sixties with occupations ranging from author, authoress, historian, archaeologists, government officials and teachers, to name but a few. Interests are so varied as to make it impossible to list. However, Helen Hollick has suggested that members write in with their own details - mini-autobiographies. So if you are interested do write and I'll include a few biogs per issue. Helen has contributed her bit and mine can be found in the first issue (with a few extremely minor changes).

#### MEMBERS' PROFILE

I am Helen Hollick. I live in Walthamstow, on the outskirts of London. Walthamstow is of Saxon descent, although no one can interpret the name. The river Lea runs nearby, and close to my road is the site (now heavily built over) of an early village, which was sited on a hill above the river's old course. I hope to write an article for DRAGON at some time soon about the ancient site, for it seems quite possible that the place has been continuously occupied, and, just may have connections with Ambrosius Aurelianus. We live within a ten minute drive of Epping Forest, which boasts two Iron Age forts, the most well known, Ambresbury Banks. By tradition, Boudica poisoned herself at Upshire, a few miles away from Walthamstow.

About myself. I am 35, my husband is Ron

- who knows nothing about history but is becoming interested because I drag him off to see dozens of old ruins! My daughter Kathy, is 6, and she is passionate about knights and castles.

I heard about DRAGON through Sandra Garside-Neville (to whom I am eternally grateful) when I was trying to discover some information about Riothamus and Cunedda.

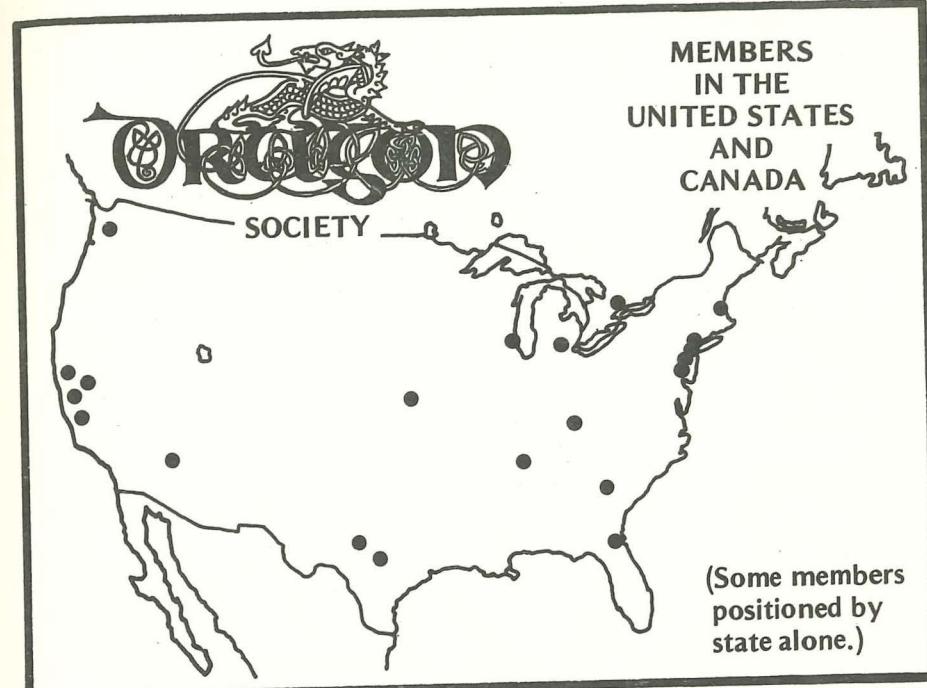
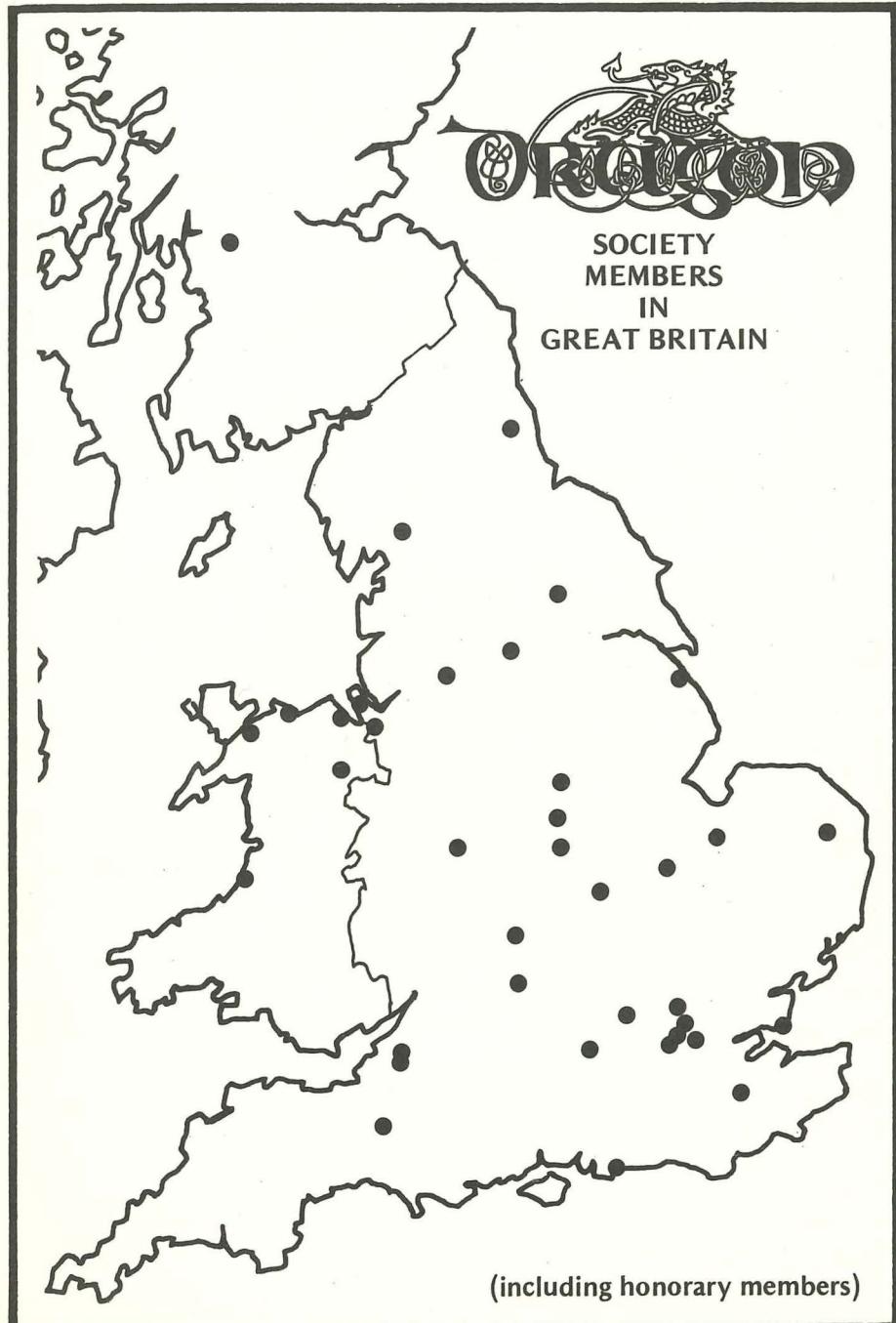
I have been an Arthur "fan" since reading Mary Stewart's "Hollow Hills" series (years ago now!). I enjoyed the stories and wanted to discover more of the history behind them. At the time, I worked as a library assistant, and so obtaining books was no problem.

I am now a full time Mother, and at last I am attempting my ambition of becoming an author. Two years ago I had a children's book published (COME AND TELL ME, pub. Dinosaur) which has just been reprinted. It is a short, but important story, aimed at telling young children about the dangers of going off with "strangers". The book is selling very well, I'm pleased to say! (I'll be happy to send a signed copy to anyone who wishes to buy one!)

I go to many schools to read it to children, who seem to enjoy it, and take in the message. I cannot believe I am doing something I really want to do, enjoy, AND get paid to do it!

For about three years though, I have been working on an adult novel about...yes, well you can guess! It is not a fantasy, more, my own thoughts of what might have happened during the unsettled times between the going of Rome and coming of the Saxons.

I am fortunate that I have a very good friend who is a brilliant author (Sharon K. Penman). She is encouraging me like mad! Perhaps one day, if I ever get to finish the thing, and if Fortuna runs with me, my Arthurian novel will be reviewed in DRAGON.



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##### Volume 2 No. 7

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News: Sub-Roman Britain lecture at Leeds  
Arthurian Adventure, tour of Somerset

Contents List Vol. 1. No. 1 to Vol. 2. No 6.  
(No "Legend of Two Ells")

##### Volume 2 No. 8

an Arthur in the Midlands? by Charles W. Evans-Gunther

A day in the Dark Ages by Kurt Hunter Mann

Review: The Swords of the Britons: An Additional Chapter by  
A.J. Young.

King Arthur by Norra Lorre Goodrich

King Arthur: Hero and Legend by Richard Barber

Celtic Britain by Charles Thomas

The Celts by Frank Delaney

**Ghost in the Sunlight** by Kathleen Herbert  
(No Scrolls in this issue)

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**Arthurian Re-enactment** by Kenneth Bamford

**A Triad of Thoughts on the British after Arthur** by Reg Dand

**"Cynaniad Cymraeg" Welsh Pronunciation** by C.W. Evans-Gunther

**Review: Grail Seeker's Companion** by John Matthews and Marian Green

**Y Seint Greal/The Holy Grail**

**Volume 2 Nos. 10/11**

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**From Arthur to Beowulf** by Chris Lovegrove

**Review: The Landscape of King Arthur** by Geoffrey Ashe

**Life of Merlin** by Thomas Heywood

**Warriors of Arthur** by John Matthews and Bob Stewart

**The Celtic Alternative** by Shirley Toulson

**Military Illustrated No. 9 Oct/Nov 1987**

**The Arthur Project** by Nene Valley Publishing

**Sword in the Stone** by the Merlin Puppet Theatre

**Lady Charlotte, Mr. Price, Mr. Jones and the Mabinogion** by Charles W. Evans-Gunther

**Dragon Project: Dinas Powys** by Pat Litton-Havill

**Dark Age Battles in Miniature** by Charles W. Evans-Gunther

**Volume 2 No. 12**

**History, Legend and Myth** by Reg Dand

**Arthur's Battles** by Arthur J. Young

**News: "The Great Welsh Conspiracy"**

**From the Steppes to Britain**

**Tandderwen**

**Review: The Quest for Olwen** by Gwyn Thomas and Kevin Crossley-Holland

**Saxon Chester** by Paul Nicholson

**Pendragon Vol. XVIII No. 4**

**Witta Issue One**

Unless otherwise indicated each issue has a Scrolls section and a cartoon-strip by Roger Willcox - "The Tales of the Two Ells".

## **POINTS OF VIEW**

A new section for short articles from  
newspapers, magazines, etc.,  
which are not quite news  
but may be of some interest.

## **An East-Anglian Arthur**

Ken Bamford was kind enough to send in a copy of an article which appeared in the April 1987 edition of ESSEX COUNTRYSIDE. This concerned the theory that Arthur could have lived in Essex and Medraut (Mordred) in Suffolk. "Arthur was here", by Richard White, builds on a comment made by John Morris in THE AGE OF ARTHUR. Here it is suggested that Camelot was Camulodunum - modern day Colchester. The author admits that Camelot didn't appear in the Arthurian stories until the 12th. century - but he also points out that many of the places named in these stories were Roman towns. Was Colchester Arthur's capital, later to be called Camelot.

Mr. White goes on to suggest that the battle of Camlan was a conflict between an "Arthur of Essex" and a "Medraut of Suffolk". He makes two factors to connect Medraut with Suffolk: i. the name of Medraut is related to the Roman name for The Wash - Metaris - add the Latin stem Metarat - and it could mean "Person of the Wash"; ii. Medraut is said to have had a son named Dyfnog - and that Dunwich, on the coast of Suffolk, the original name of which was derived from Dyfnog.

Now if Arthur was from the Colchester area fighting a civil war in Suffolk the author suggests the topography of the campaign. If Arthur marched up the A12 he would have to cross the River Stour, but just before reaching the river the road swings around Gun Hill - could this have been Camlan. The possible translation of Camlan is "crooked glen", "the glen at the bend" or "the bank of the bend". The latter explanation fits Gun Hill

in the Stour Valley. After the battle Arthur could have been transported by river and disappeared from history. Maybe he had a watery grave.

So here we have another theory of Arthur's placement - from the North to the South to the West - and now to the East (all points of the compass now covered). If one believes in Arthur and the account of his campaigns against the Saxons - could he have fought the Kentish Jutes? This could have put him in this eastern area. That is capital, or base, was Camulodunum, that Medraut was connected with Suffolk and the battle of Camlan near the River Stour - are all conjecture. I think we have here is a case of, to paraphrase a famous saying: "It sounds like it, therefore it is it!" Camulodunum does sound a bit like Camelot - mind you it also sounds like Camlan. Metaris and Medraut is rather stretching things somewhat. However, two factors of the argument are of some interest.

Dunwich was called Dommoc, Donmic, Domoc and so on - Bede called it Dommoc-caester - indicating possible Roman connections, which can not be proved. Ekwell tends to relate Domoc with the Welsh "dyfn" - deep - indicating a possible harbouring place for boats. But it does sound like Dyfnog - and the later Welsh spelling of that name could have been written Dommoc in the sixth century. Certainly according to tradition Dyfnog was the son of a Medraut. However, he is normally placed in Wales - particularly Llanrhaiadr in Cimarch - once called Llan-ddyfnog. The church, with its beautiful windows, situated just south of Denbigh in the Vale of Clwyd, also has a holy-well connect to it - Ffynnon Dyfnog. There are also other places connected with Dyfnog - a church in Powys, a Llech Ddyfnog in Elfael, Powys, a Cil Dyfnog near Machynlleth, Ceredigion and a Porth Sant Dyfnog in Gwynedd.

Having said all this Dunwich seems to have merit of its own without any Arthurian characters. It is a vanishing place, being wittled away by the sea. Dunwich was once a bishopric, as early as the seventh century, and during the Middle Ages it was a prosperous port trading with Europe. It was once quite extensive but now, like some lost Atlantis or Lyonesse, it is now beneath the

sea. Seeing these changes that have taken place at Dunwich may indicate that during the Dark Age Britain was a rather different place, topographical speaking, with a somewhat larger coastline and its interior of vast forests. A study of the geography of this period I am sure would be very interesting.

The second point concerns the reference given by Mr. White to the comments made by John Morris in *THE AGE OF ARTHUR* (paperback edition, Vol. 1) on page 140. This was about Medraut and Suffolk, with a note concerning Dunwich. Morris indicates that something certainly unusual happened in this area. If one goes back about four pages there is a piece on early Saxon burials at Kempston, just outside of Bedford. Here it shows that grave goods are found in great quantity for the fifth century and the later sixth century, but "nothing for the early sixth". Also the fifth century goods are of Anglian style while the later sixth century ones are Saxon. What does this indicate? This phenomenon is found in a number of counties in the East Midlands. What caused this change that took place? Could the reason for this gap have been a re-establishment of British dominance and if so where did it come from? If Arthur existed at this time could he have led the resurgence? and where then was his base - Colchester, St. Albans, Gloucester....?

## Independent thoughts

*In the newspaper THE INDEPENDENT there is a series running monthly written by David Keys, the paper's archaeological reporter, called "The Great Outdoors". Basically, it is a history of Britain with an emphasis on sites worthwhile visiting. So far two have been of interest and within the scope of DRAGON's interest. The first was in May, Saturday 14th. May 1988, and was called "A bloody end to the British". The second appeared on the 11th. June 1988 and was titled: "Illuminating evidence". The former*

concerned the beginning of the Dark Age and the latter Anglo-Saxon history leaning towards the religious side.

It is the first of the two articles that is the most interesting. Mr. Keys tells of the Saxon invasion of Britain. He begins by quoting an emotive piece from Gildas telling of the terrible events that took place. He follows the usual line by saying that the Germanic tribes first came to Britain in the mid-fourth century and that in the mid-fifth century they revolted against their allies and began the series of events that would make them masters of England. From there he goes on to talk of Arthur, that he had an HQ at Cadbury-Camelot and he caused a temporary halt to the Saxon invasion. Also mentioned are Germanus with his Hallujah Victory and Ambrosius Aurelianus who may have been responsible for a sort of Maginot Line of defence against the Saxons.

Having described the invasion period he moves on to the warring period talking about Urien Rheged, Cadwallon of Gwynedd, King Mynyddog and his war band who fought at Cat-trick, Cynddylan of Powys and the battle near Forfar which was recorded on the Aberlemno Stone. Eventually the Saxons got the upper edge and became the lords of all England. Their wealth could be seen by the great burial mounds that have been found. In the Fact File, that accompanied the article, were listed many of the places mentioned in the article, from Sutton Hoo to Tintagel, from the hillfort of Cadbury to the Anglo-Saxon village at West Stow. Also listed are museums and books that may be of interest.

It is a fair account of the events of the 5th. to 7th. centuries - though it relies more on chronicles and less on the archaeology. Through the eyes of the chronicles this is a period of chaos and constant war, with a touch of religion. But to the archaeologists a different picture is emerging. Wars did come

but they didn't really get underway until the end of the sixth. Archaeology is proving that Saxon and Celt got on better than was previously believed and that not only was there trade but it is likely Celts, who outnumbered the Germanic tribes, lived quite peacefully with the "galley rogues".

However, all this apart, this is an interesting article and would be of some use to those who would like to explore the countryside for sites connected with the Dark Age. Places read in books are there to be seen and this article is an help for the Dark Age holiday maker.

The second article calls for less comment, since it is less controversial and covers the period between the seventh century and that of the reign of Alfred the Great. Once again Mr. Keys looks at various sites giving a historic background - mainly religious - travelling from Jarrow to Offa's Dyke and many other places. Like the first article there is a Fact File listing many interesting places to visit - including numerous Anglo-Saxon churches. There is also a list of museums and interesting reading matter. To add to all this there is information about Anglo-Saxon Tours organised by the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Manchester. Unfortunately, the tours, which costed between £160 to £185, were for the beginning of July. Nevertheless, I am sure it would be worthwhile contacting the University to see what they may have planned for the future.

THE INDEPENDENT is an interesting news-paper with some variety and archaeological reports often appear. Even as I type this article I noticed that there was a report about the finding of a very old Anglo-Saxon burial. Might be worth checking out this paper (no I am not employed by THE INDEPENDENT!).

# Paint your horses

A number of members have been kind enough to send me copies of an article and letter from MILITARY MODEL-LING for June and August of last year, 1987. The first concerns the "Wing Hussars", Polish cavalry, by Richard Brzezinski. In his article he pointed out that the Polish hussars had the habit of painting their mounts with waterproof, non-toxic paint - red in particular. Two months later a Mr. Bob Black wrote into "Despatch" and likened this Polish custom of painting horses to similar instances in the MABINOGION. He claims that the painting of horses may have some connection with 'King Arthur'. I am not exactly sure what part of the MABINOGION Mr. Black is talking about but it does sound very like the descriptions to be found in the story: "The Dream of Rhonabwy".

This story must have been composed some time in the latter part of the twelfth century - due to the names of various people mentioned, Madawg ap Maredudd especially. Rhonabwy is sent out to find Madawg's brother Iorweth on the Welsh-English border (Clwyd-Shropshire area) but while staying in a ramshackle house he has a dream. In this he meets Arthur waiting to do battle with Osla Big Knife at Badon, situated close to the R. Severn. Though there is obvious late influences, it may be much older and possibly not an Arthurian tale at all. It is reminiscent of early Celtic material from Ireland with much strange and wonderful imagery. The author ends the account of the story with these words: "...no one, neither bard nor storyteller, knows the Dream without a book, because of the many colours of the horses and the variety of strange colours of armour and equipment and precious mantles and powerful stones".

In the Dream Rhonabwy is shown many 'knights' and troops of warriors dressed in various colours. Such colours as black, white, yellow and even red could be quite acceptable. This is because there are only a limited number of names for colours in the Welsh language. For instance in the English language

there are many words to describe the different shades of red, but in Welsh it is different. Carmine is *fflam-goch* - flame red, crimson and ruby are both *rhuddgoch* - red-red, scarlet is *coch-golau* - light red and so on. So when describing a horse as red the author could actually mean chestnut. Nevertheless, some of the horses do have strange colourings: "...the horse was a remarkable colour: dapple-grey, with a pure red leg, and from the top of the leg to the hooves pure yellow". Other horses are equally multi-coloured. However, that the story was called a dream may explain all this.

The crux of the matter is that this is a fantasy, full of strange colours and symbols. Also, there seems to be a time reversal for in the dream Camlan has already been fought and yet they have not fought Badon. This is the topsy-turvy world of dreams and like many dreams seems real, with 'real' characters playing parts despite being from different times - Owein son of Urien lived at the beginning of the seventh century, Arthur presumably much earlier. But none of this matters because it is a dream. I don't think there is any evidence for the British of this period painting their horses, but if anyone knows better I would be very interested to hear from them.



THE ARTHURIAN HANDBOOK by Norris J. Lacy and Geoffrey Ashe. Garland Publishing Inc. New York and London, 1988. Hardback \$45, paperback \$18.95 (sorry don't have British prices).

This new book, from the same people who produced The Arthurian Encyclopedia, consists of 487 pages, 42 illustrations, a good bibliography (+ some following certain chapters), index, an excellent chronology and a map of Arthurian

Britain (not so good). It is divided into two parts - the first part consisting of five chapters: Origins, Early Arthurian Literature, Modern Arthurian Literature, Arthur in the Arts and Conclusion; the second half is "An Arthurian Glossary". Like Roman Britain and the English Settlements by R.G. Collingwood and J.N.L.

Myres, this is in fact two books - Chapter 1 and the Glossary are by Geoffrey Ashe while Chapters 2 through 5 are by Norris J. Lacy.

The authors, in their introduction, indicate that they haven't covered literally ever aspect of the Arthurian scene but they seemed to have done most of it. Odd things are missing and so it doesn't replace the excellent Arthurian Literature edited by R.S. Loomis and published in 1959. However, it isn't too far off and it has some extras like the excellent chronology, which I'm sure will be of help to all students of Arthurian literature. The Handbook makes a very good companion to The Arthurian Encyclopedia.

The criticisms I do have are very similar to those I made of the above mentioned book and are contained mainly in the first Chapter. Now I do not doubt that the expedition of Riothamus, whom Geoffrey Ashe points out as model for Arthur, could be the prototype of the Arthurian invasion of Europe in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae. However, is Riotamus really another name for Arthur? Jordanes names the leader of the British, Gregory of Tours only mentions the Britons but Sidonius Apollinaris

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**WHAT'S ON:** East Saxon Kingdom - an exhibition of various artifacts, photographs and information about life in the Kingdom of the East Saxons - AD527 - 828. Being held at the Central Museum, Southend, Monday to Saturday until August 27th.

**WHAT'S ON:** Merlin the Magician - a brand new show put on by Moving Being Theatre Company. A show suitable for all ages, with music, dance, action and acrobatics based on stories from Geoffrey of Monmouth. St. David's Hall, Cardiff from 19 th. to 27th. August.

actually knew Riothamus and wrote to him on friendly terms. The last author also knew Arvandus, whom Mr. Ashe likens to Mordred. It is known that Arvandus did betray his own people by having contacts with the Goths but that he betrayed Riothamus is stretching things. Early writers may have connected Arthur with Riothamus but it doesn't mean they were the same person. It is with Riothamus that Chapter One becomes somewhat more subjective compared to the objectivity of the rest of this part of the book. Having said that I feel that the above does not detract from the overall value of this excellent and obviously useful Handbook which will be a good guide for those beginning studies on Arthurian or Medieval literature.

WITTA Magazine of the AD 500 Re-enactment Society, Issue Two.

This second issue of Witta is larger and better put together than the first with a variety of interesting articles. These include a series of reports on a re-enacted battle at Kinver Edge, Christian Art in Roman Britain, a piece on what could be British Dark Age spears and an interesting article on the "Cervianus Plate". I found the articles on the re-enactment quite fascinating - the attempts to bring history to life seem to be enjoyable but they can also be very educational.

Finally, just as I was almost finishing this issue of DRAGON I received for review a copy of Merlin and Woman The Book of the 2nd. Merlin Conference, edited by R.J. Stewart. Unfortunately the contents were so far removed from what we in DRAGON are interested in that I felt I couldn't review it. We are basically interested in the history of the Dark Age and in the search for a real Arthur. The material in the above mentioned book and the Merlin Conferences seem to have moved too far away from the historical

context that they have no relevance to us, unless the members have an interest in mystism and modern Western Magic Tradition.

Meaning no disrespect to the editor or organisers of the Conferences, maybe it isn't too surprising that the use of the name Merlin is based on the need of one man to create a character to fit a part in his 'factional' novel. It is unfortunate that when he picked Myrddyn he was forced to change the Latinisation of the name - Merdinus - because it was too like the French oscenity 'merde', which translates roughly as 'excretement' and can be used as an exclamation. Merlin thus born of an oscenity has had more grafted onto him than even Arthur.

# SCROLLS

All the letters in this issue's SCROLLS are reactions to the last magazine, Vol. II No. 12. The first is from Chris Halewood of AD 500 Re-enactment Society:

"As a new subscriber to 'Dragon' I was rather disappointed by the contents of Vol. II No. 12. It included some rather inaccurate, eccentric and dated pieces. Perhaps in such an interest group as 'Dragon' a degree of eccentricity is to be expected - in which case this failing may be excused - but I feel I must make a few points on the other matters.

"Firstly, concerning R. Dand's article: He suggests that Leslie Alcock 'believes' in 'Arthur'. Unfortunately Mr Alcock has stated in print - several times - that he is now either an 'agnostic' (proceedings of the British Academy 1982 p. 356) or has discounted Arthur's historicity (Sunday Times 22/2/87).

Regarding Geoffrey Ashe I feel that the fact he has now deserted 'Arthur' for the Breton/ Briton Riothamus around whom it is suggested Arthurian tales originated (Discovery of King Arthur 1985) speaks volumes for any belief he has in 'Arthur'.

"Secondly, whilst making it plain that there is nothing personal in these comments, I feel that Mr. A.J. Young's article is a positive anachronism. Surely we must ask more in support of any grand strategic explanation of an ancient battle list than the author's own military service in a time and mode vastly removed from that discussed and the concurrence of a few friends. Militaristic explanation for historical and archaeological evidence was in vogue earlier this century under the leadership of such individuals as Mortimer Wheeler; given the contemporary circumstances this was not surprising - the public as a whole and archaeology and history as professions were permeated with military personnel and 'arm-chair generals'. In this climate - when Liddell-Hart's mobile warfare was even seen to be translated into the 'cataphract theory' of 'Arthur', there was little opposition and few alternatives to 'military solutions'. However, we now live in a vastly different world - one that no longer takes a short term 'explanatory' view of historical sources and problems but one that has fostered the 'holistic' approach of examining the source's content, author, author's background, the history of the manuscript, and the political situation and motives under which it was produced. Rather than to explain Nemnius' 'Arthurian' battle list in terms of an historical campaign Mr. Young should first have considered what the battle list is - if Nemnius invented it then Mr. Young has wasted a lot of time and effort and perhaps led some people up a cul-de-sac.

Nothing can gainsay the fact that Nemnius writes 300 years after the 'Arthurian era'. Does anyone alive today have an especially valid insight into the Civil War? The renowned scholar Richard Barber has, amongst others, made a good case for Nemnius' list originating as a traditional 'battle listing poem' (Figure of Arthur 1972) and Gildas' exclusion of 'Arthur' from his (supposedly) most famous victory at Badon cannot be ignored. In fact, examination of the manuscripts of Nemnius gives even less credence to the authenticity of the battle list.

"The majority of the MSS actually compress the name of the eleventh battle from two names - 'the hill called Agned' and 'the hill which is named Breguoin'. Two MSS, that of the Vatican and that of the Harleian collection show either Agned or Breguoin, respectively as the eleventh battle further highlighting this feature. It would seem that 'monte Badonis' has been inserted as the twelfth battle at the expense of either Agned or Breguoin in the original (Wade Evans 1959 -et al-). I feel such dubious elements in a source must outweigh any conviction of authenticity it offers by the mere numbering of the said battles!"

"Lastly I would direct the author on the Tandderwen graves to the paper mentioned by Mr. Dand in his article, that of D. Dumville (History 1977), for a summary of the long established evidence discounting the historicity of 'Cunedda' and the North-South migration.

"In conclusion, I cannot leave on such a wholly negative note but must praise the reserve of the 'Sarmatian Connection' - proponents of this 'theory' often seem to leave the rest of us behind rather rapidly in their speculations but not so here. Also, if nothing else then the 'Dragon' has proved a stimulus to thought - I am confident,

though, that it will prove more than this."

Many thanks to Chris for taking so much time to comment on certain aspects of the last issue. The whole reason for having this SCROLLS section is to have a forum of such comments - whether for or against a particular subject. This often spurs on others to make a reply. A number of the statements Chris makes are valid and need to be said - Nemnius (or as Chris prefers - Nemnius) should be taken in the context of the time of writing. What is amazing is that material from a hundred years later - and I speak of "Armes Prydein" - calls on Cynan (?) and Cadwaladar as heroes to save the British but completely ignores Arthur. Having said that I must admit that I, personally, am not a fan of David Dumville. He seems to be rather negative about everything. What I have read of his work indicates that he seems interested in discrediting all Early Welsh sources. He, like the proverbial road-mender, digs a hole without filling it and then leaves it empty. However, that doesn't mean that I disagree with everything Mr. Dumville has written - his point about giving over-importance to Arthur. The calling of this period the 'Age of Arthur' is giving a building a rather weak foundation. But while he criticises some writers for putting a lot of weight on the Celtic sources, it must be indicated that the Anglo-Saxon sources are equally rickety as a base for building upon. Let's leave Mr. Dumville for this issue and go on to the next letter.

Steve Pollington, one of our most prolific writer of articles, replies to some of the comments made by Mr. Young in the last issue:

"...I should first like to say that the short article (by Mr. A.J. Young - The Name "Arthur" - Vol.2 No.3) which first appeared did not set out the thinking behind the con-

clusion at all clearly, but I did not choose to attack the whole theory by nitpicking. In fact, all I did was to point out a rather obvious inaccuracy on what was, after all, a peripheral matter. If the reasoning behind the theory were so insubstantial that the whole thing would be disproved on so minor a point, then the theory would be virtually untenable anyway. But of course Mr. Young's views do not depend on the identification of 'Afa' with 'Arthur'.

"To summarise, Mr. Young's belief that 'Afa' is 'Arthur' is based on his own forename being colloquially pronounced 'AHFUH' or similarly. Now, in modern English 'Arthur' often is so pronounced - but the purpose of my letter was to point out that the two 'R's of the original Welsh forms ARTHWR, ARTHUR are a consistent feature even of by-forms such as ARTURO, ARTURIUS and the like. The suppression of 'R' (except initially or between vowels) is a feature of modern English (Standard Received Pronunciation) but is quite recent - 'R' is still pronounced in all positions in American dialects, though few of these are more than 300 years old. Therefore we may conclude that the tendency to suppress the 'R' is less than 300 years old, and has not yet been adopted in all dialects of British English - compare Welsh, Scottish or Cornish pronunciation of a word such as 'RECODER' with the BBC English.

"Thus, assuming as we must for the moment that the 'R's actually formed part of the name, what does this tell us? If the name ARTHUR were used by an early Saxon in, say, the 6th. century, and reproduced in his own speech, it should have a spelling something like \*AERÐUR (the \* means this is a hypothetical form); in West Saxon of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, this would appear as \*EARÐOR (or \*EARÐUR, possibly). If, as Arthur Young suggests, the hypothetical Saxon scribe were

reproducing a pronunciation 'AHFUH', the manuscript form should be \*AFFA. The original of Avebury is based on AFA. These two words - although they appear similar in print - actually represent words similar to 'laugher' and 'lover', in each case without the 'l'. The difference between them is marked and few English speakers would have any trouble distinguishing one from the other, and, by extension, in distinguishing \*AFFA from AFA.

"Now, no one is suggesting that the early English were bothered with the finer points of Welsh pronunciation, but they seem consistently to have made the attempt to reproduce native words in accordance with their own phonetic system. Thus the name VORTIGERN is rendered WYRTGEORN, probably developed from an earlier \*WURTIGORN or some such. It is worth noting that in this name both the 'R's are faithfully reproduced.

"Equally, if a Saxon had referred to 'Arthur's stronghold' the name would have been \*EARÐRES BURH; the early form of the name Avebury suggests AFAN BURH, and I do not think that there is any question that AFAN could be a form of the word \*EARDRES (especially as the former is a weak, the latter a strong noun). In fact, AFA appears - only appears - to be equivalent to the Norse name AFI meaning 'grandfather' found in RIGSDULA.

"Secondly, I did say IF one may trust Medieval Welsh spelling, because we must always be aware that we may be led into error by chance resemblances. Arthur Young suggests that such evidence is not always trustworthy - quite rightly - but then goes on to expound his theories based in part on Nennius's medieval Welsh records. One must be aware that Nennius's sources are not available to us, nor are those of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: they may have included annals, folklore, living memory, and other

documents; none of these survive, and so none of them can help us assess the accuracy and comprehensiveness of what we do possess.

"Thirdly, as to the question of the 'military factors' in the original article, this did not adequately specify any evidence for the military background, nor did I take issue with Mr. Young on any military point, despite his interpretation of my letter. The fact is, of course, that the vast amount of potentially significant Arthurian material we have allows us to draw all kinds of conclusions about the military and other matters. Arthur Young's military training and experience leave him better qualified than most people - myself included - to deal with the military aspect of this period. It is all the more to be regretted, then, that he seeks to bolster his theories, which are quite interesting in themselves, with the kind of spurious folk-etymologizing he includes in his article.

"Perhaps I ought to say, at this point, that I am less inclined than most people to believe implicitly in 'Arthur the Warrior'; I would regard myself as an 'Arthurian agnostic', since I do not think it likely that we shall ever know anything very much about that historical character if he existed. It may be that Arthur Young's reconstruction of the 5th. century warfare from Nennius's account and topographical study is accurate and precise - and as I stated before, I have not the means of determining this and cannot comment on it. I would say, however, that I believe the effort to recapture the Dark Age would be worth the making, and I applaud his attempt to bring light to the era.

"As an afterthought, I would add that the pitfall of much modern research into Arthur is that it assumes the literal existence of the man without discussion, and then goes on to use reason to illuminate

the mystery, to identify and label an historical character and say "This is Arthur". This approach produces results which are not so much doomed to failure as consigned to a limbo of unverifiable possibilities. The enigma of Arthur has proven itself singularly resistant to this 'logical' approach. Why?

"Partly, I think, because the Celtic mind which gave birth to Arthur has its own peculiar kind of logic, its own view of the world in which cause and effect do not follow in rational sequence, but are entwined and interlaced, like Celtic decorative art. And partly, also, because the quest for Arthur is more than the search for a man. Arthur is of the Divine Warrior, half-man, half-god, and more usually he is the Wise King, the stable centre round which other characters revolve, who forms a backdrop to the real heroes and their adventures. The milieu of Arthur and his followers is only incidentally the daylight world of the Romans, Britons and Saxons; rather more it is the magical world of the divine weapons and super-human deeds."

Like Chris, Steve makes a number of important points and I wish to thank him for the time he has put in, not only with this letter but with all the very interesting articles he has produced over the years. I must admit that I tend to agree with Steve on many accounts. But concerning the existence of Arthur, I must class myself a member of the "where there's smoke there's fire" school of researchers. No one can deny that Arthur grew into the Divine Warrior - taking on aspects and adventures of other Divine Warriors - but I believe that behind it all was a real person. Unfortunately, the Divine Warrior effects the research of many and Arthur has become more than he may have been - a man defending his land against an invader, who

may or may not have been Saxons. That's enough from me I'll let Helen Hollick's kind words finish this issue's SCROLLS:

"I want to respond to Carl Masthay's comment about the errors in DRAGON. I feel that I must defend Charles!

"There are errors, often quite a few, but, considering Charles puts himself out to produce DRAGON, shouldering the worries of what to put in it, getting it printed, and sent out etc., I feel he does an excellent job! Yes, the errors are there, but I cannot see how spelling, grammatical and typing mistakes distract from the magazine's credibility. Sorry Carl, I do not really agree with your comment.

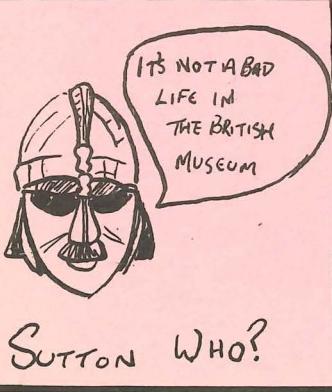
"After all, have you noticed how many errors there are in daily newspapers and, sadly, the rising number in novels?

"I say, well done Charles, keep up the good work, errors and all!"

What can I say - I'm moved!

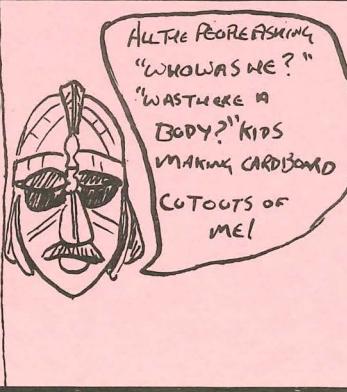
TALES FROM THE TWO ELLS  
or NEWLIGHTON THE DARKAGES

by ROGER WILLCOX

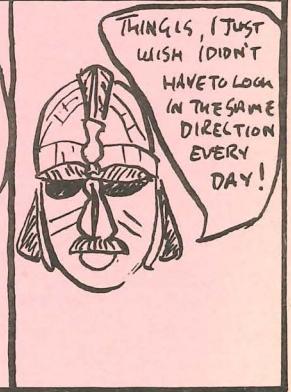


IT'S NOT A BAD  
LIFE IN  
THE BRITISH  
MUSEUM

SUTTON WHO?



ALL THE PEOPLE ASKING  
"WHO WAS HE?"  
"WAS THERE A  
BODY?" KIDS  
MAKING CARDBOARD  
CUTOUTS OF  
ME!



THINGS, I JUST  
WISH I DIDN'T  
HAVE TO LOOK  
IN THE SAME  
DIRECTION  
EVERY  
DAY!

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