Dragon
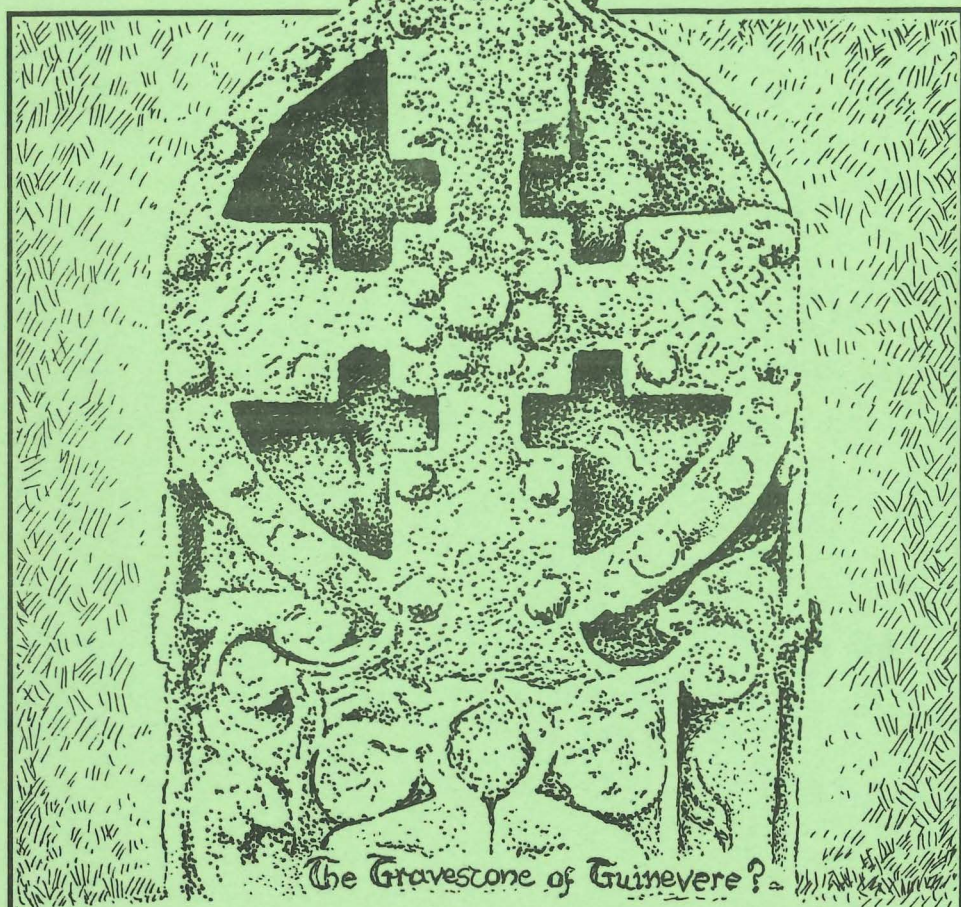
The Gravestone of Guinevere?

**Newsletter of the DRAGON Society for people interested in
the life and times of Arthur and the cultures of 'DARK AGE' Britain**

Dear friend,

Here is DRAGON, which has managed to survive the terrible weather of the beginning of Summer and is looking forward to its birthday next year when the old beast will be ten years old.

Meanwhile, I would like to thank those who have sent in articles but more material is badly needed because each time it is getting harder to fill the magazine. So, please, those of you who have never contributed anything to be published in the mag., let us have an article, it doesn't have to be long and it doesn't have to be a brilliant academic dissertation. Without your support, and I have said this before, it will be difficult to keep DRAGON going. It would certainly be nice to celebrate the 10th birthday with actually still being around to do so. Come on chaps and chapesses, give it a go and let have some new names on the credits of articles.

Talking of names - enclosed with this issue is a list of members (yes, the one I promised ages ago!) which I would be grateful if you check it to see you address is printed properly. If members would also like their phone numbers published, please send them to me for an update on the list quite soon. Also some members may have been left off the list - if you are one of them, please let me know. Also related to the membership list is re-subscription - for many the last issue should have been renewal time but I have managed to hold back this till the next issue. However, I will inform each member when the time comes.

This issue includes a number of interesting pieces including articles of ancient agricultural terms, Gawain and the Green Knight and the carrier pigeon, plus short items on archaeology, theories about Guinevere's grave and the Isle of Avalon. There is a quite long review section in this issue but unfortunately no Scrolls. There is also nothing in the way of future events of interest to Arthurophiles.

Nevertheless, please read on and I hope you enjoy this issue.

PLOUGHS, ACRES and HOLLOWAYS

by Reg Dand

The Romans so it is believed turned the Britons from purely pastoral activities to agriculture wherever possible and thus not only relieved the needs of the Army for imported foodstuffs, but also raised the standards of living at the time. Some at least, of what the British learned, came from Roman sources, some from the Celts over the Channel, where a well developed agricultural industry existed around rich villas. It appeared therefore worth while to look at the oldest agricultural words one might think of and see the results, a little of which appear below.

PLOUGH - This is relatively modern though there was an Old Norse word plogr, and a late Old English one, plog or ploh. The older word was suhl ... of which more later. The earliest ploughs called "ards" by archaeologists (though the word does not appear in most dictionaries) was a scratch plough, only breaking the land surface, but it looks kin to the Latin aratrum, and the Welsh aradr. But there was a heavier plough, brought so it has been said from the Belgae, known as the caruca a name which certainly suggests a Celtic origin from the prefix car- (as in the word for chariot: carpentum...a word taken into Latin by the Romans) of which there may be an echo in the modern French word for plough...charrue. Selion - 15th century had come from Old French seillon (Modern French sillon) by that time a reference to "an indeterminate area" of land "comprising a ridge or narrow strip". Of interest here is the Latin sulcus = furrow or trench. Near a number of old Roman camps in North Northumberland there are two areas still appearing upon the map as Sills and Silloans. There seems to be some relationship between all these sil-/sul- words and a common Celtic origin at some time. Were they only arrived at with the Normans one wonders, or is the Latin/Roman connection valid? and if so how did the Saxons come to use suhl..? from the earlier Romans perhaps, or had they "collected" it from their British landowners? Very curious and indeterminate.

ACRE - In modern terms this is of course a fixed area of land which there is no doubt from measurement. But its origin is much older and more vague for it comes probably from the Latin agar = a field, which explains how acres can be long, green, or broad, other than as a mere surface measure. In Gaelic it is achad, in a modern Welsh dictionary adds to acer, in Old English aecer (aecermann was a farmer so perhaps linked with the Roman road known as

Akerman Street). But the Welsh dictionary adds to acer...cyfair, and erw. The appearance of this in or near Wales should occasion no surprise, but on at least one occasion it appears near as small British enclave in Norfolk, an eruing, used in place of the virgate. The historian of the Gloucester village of Bledington noted some ancient privileges granted to a local "oarsman" unlikely to have been connected with much water. Domesday Book notes an assessment of "64d based upon 4 ores...for lands between the Ribble and the Mersey." Taking either acre, or the unexpected erw, it seems they are both of considerable antiquity and possible Celtic origin.

Both the last references to "ore(s)" come from areas of other British traces. Gloucester (Glevum) was a Roman colonia and centre of a British tribe and the Ribble "probably a British name". Odder still perhaps is that near the Hart Fell which Tolstoy marks as the "home" of Merlin...a thoroughly British area, is a place and small area called Castle O'er. Of the castle there is no trace on the map but had the O'ers been cultivated fields? A puzzle for philologists and Welsh speaking farmers, but it should be said that the time when such names became known for fixed sizes was much later. In East Anglia the furlong was recorded on occasion as a stadia, which seems to reflect the Latin stadium or racetrack, and the Modern Welsh Ystad. Whilst again in East Anglia a single strip known there as a pightle or tenementum (the smallest holdings) equates with the Medieval Welsh gardd. An interesting one this for it looks so very much like the Middle English garth, used as a yard or garden, and the Old Norse gardr. Who took what from who one wonders.

The great variety of names for indeterminate areas of land grew from the base of the ox and the plough, both known to the British, indeed two Roman sources of Bovium, as a Place Name, are based in Wales, Glamorgan and Denbighshire; scholars suggest from the British element Bou- = cow, but the Medieval bovate is a Latinised form of what, elsewhere, might have been known as a "furrowlong" (furlong) or in Scandinavian areas as an ox-gang; all were slow in crystallising into some determinate area of land, acceptable to all. Over these questions there hangs the essential problem - which came first? To have a Latin base is suggestive save that the Medieval monks in their records produced carucates, bovates, virgates and the like which may or may not have had an earlier origin. A French likeness might offer a Celtic Gaulish source, or merely a trip over the Channel with the Normans. In the case of English, there were both Germanic and Norse pressures, but equally both had had some contact with the Romans on the Continent. It would be a great help if some Welsh savant with a knowledge of Primitive Welsh could indicate the right road to select old British sources. One candidate suggested is the Mod. Welsh for street: Heol, which seems to appear regularly along Roman Roads as Huel/Hole/Hooley and so on.

In a booklet about the local church at Dyserth, near Llandrindod Wells, Powys (Ed.: where the author spent a caravan holiday many years ago), there was mention of the village of Rheol, which it seemed was really Y(r) heol and referred to a local Roman Road. Now to the English there are two kinds of roads...the numerous Ridgeways, often ancient, and British, which keep to the higher ridges, and some called Holloways, also quite ancient, and so called from the fact that they are worn with use and so often below hedge level. The Old English origin of these is supposed to be OE hole or "hollow". This is quite logical, and makes sense, but it can be looked at in a different way. In Devon and Somerset, many "holloways" are in fact very old. Moreover, there are many English names which are a combination of a British element and an English one: Pendle (pen + hylle) or Chetwode (cetu + wudu) are two well known ones where in each case the common factor is a hill, and a wood, in two languages. It appeared to me therefore that in case it was possible that a holloway was in fact another of these for whatever hollo- meant, weg, was certainly OE for road, our modern "way". Since about AD 900 names have been more and more written, and the practice of toponymists has been to lean always upon a written recorded name. But what of the years before? or what of those which sounded like OE ones? I tested this holloway theory along three of the "modern" Roman Roads, north (A1), northwest (A5) and west into Somerset, and there was some evidence for all three, but less, oddly, for the last, where one might have expected more. But I found in the north three most interesting examples, two in Northumberland and one in Scotland, all on or very near Roman Roads; Huel Craig and Mount Huly near "The Devils Causeway" really a Roman Road. In Scotland I was chasing an odd name, Kitty Brewster, which also appeared in Northumerland, and to my surprise, came across another Mount Hooley, in the town: the Roman connection is to be found in a Causeyport south of the town, and a Causeway end to the north; Aberdeen is of course Celtic in origin.

So perhaps this is merely a shadow of co-incidences, which in many cases the normal English explanation would fluctuate between...OE holh = hole or hollow, and OE holegn = holly. Since all three of the special cases at least hillocks, OE holh hardly seems to apply, through Holly Craig or Mount might do so...but it does seem reasonable to think in terms of the nearby road. OE straet/stret seem to have come more directly from the Late Latin strata in some way, though the early Latin word via or platea. All unproven but to my mind pointing in the same direction, and unacceptable to those who accept standard English Place Name practice!

I suspect that there may be more names of this type buried in our maps than we realise....

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The art of story-telling has always played an important part in the everyday life of all classes of people in many different societies throughout the world. This was no less true of the Dark Ages, when king and peasant would sit around the fire and listen to the storyteller weaving his magic in words. Many of these tales have been passed down from generation to generation, until eventually they were written down. The authors of these stories embellished them to suit the times they lived in, but often the basic story stayed intact. One such tale containing many ancient elements is Gawain and the Green Knight.

Game playing in Gawain and the Green Knight

by Veronica Brigstock

Gawain and the Green Knight was written in the second half of the fourteenth century. It is written in a Northern dialect, Middle English and is a dense alliterative poem of one hundred and one stanzas, each one ending in a bob and quatrain. The poem is written in four fitts or sections and was probably meant to be spoken rather than read.

The central story is of a strange green knight who challenges Arthur and his court to a 'game' one Christmas time. This game turns out to be a familiar one as far Celtic mythology is concerned - namely the beheading contest. This was widely known about in the stories of Cuchulain, Carados and Lancelot, for in separate stories, they are all confronted by awe-inspiring opponents. 'Bricriu's Feast', which was written down in 1100 A.D. was the earliest version, although as E. Brewer points out, the story itself may well be far older. Cuchulain is the hero in this tale and there are many similarities to Gawain and the Green Knight. There is an axe, a challenge, the action is to be reciprocated, not in a year and a day but 'tomorrow'. The stories of Carados and Lancelot and the wasteland have similar themes- but they do not appear to have such ancient roots. Consequently an audience would be aware of and anticipating a story of both natural and supernatural contests and this is what the Gawain poet wrote of. Throughout the poem happenings in multiples of three occur showing strong Celtic traditions. There are three narrative elements - the heading, the exchange of winnings and the temptation, and they all work together. All of these are pre-conditioned to knowledge of Gawain's reputation as a man of honour and chivalry, his determination to keep his word and his prowess as a lady's man. All of these characteristics are questioned, and tested throughout the poem until Gawain reflects on the reality of his own identity at the end of his adventure.

The Green Knight provokes Arthur, then Gawain, into his idea of game playing. The plan is to see if Gawain can behead the stranger - which he does successfully. However, the Green Knight picks up his head and rides out, Gawain having agreed to meet him again in a year and a day. This time Gawain's head is at risk.

The Green Knight has come from outside the hall, where there is a danger and wilderness, to the interior of Arthur's court, where there is safety and indulgence. It is possible that the Green Knight may symbolise Winter encountering Summer once a year. Not only is he green, but he also holds a sprig of holly in his hand. This idea of winter could tie in with the contrast between inside and outside Arthur's court. Gawain is to leave this safety after a year and a day and meet the Green Knight at the Green Chapel. Why then should Gawain be the hero of the poem? Why not Bedivere or Kay, or one of the other knights? Gawain had a reputation, not only as a lady's man, but for for getting things done. In the Mabinogion, the tale of Culhwch and Olwen refers to "Gwalchmai son of Gwyar - he never came home without the quest he had gone to seek". Culhwch and Olwen is the earliest of the written Welsh tales and pre-dates the later 'trouble-maker' view of Malory. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that although Gawain and the Green Knight was written in the fourteenth century the original tale was far older and possibly pre-Christian. In fact, there are many elements in the poem which are clearly Celtic in origin. Heads were of major importance to the Celts, the taking of enemy heads in battle proved a young warrior's manhood. They thought that if they removed the head, they would take over the heroic nature of their opponents, for they thought that the nature and soul were stored there.

Gawain was Arthur's sister's son - another important Celtic relationship, and the tale of a quest together with mysterious shimmering castles and giants, especially green ones complete with sprigs of holly, are further pointers to early Celtic lore. I'm not even convinced that Gawain's Pentangle on his shield is Christian, although I know the early Greek Christians adopted the sign - and Solomon - but it is also connected with Pythagoras and mysticism. The cross is the symbol of Christianity, so I feel that the Pentangle is at least suspect. The endless knot is supposed to represent Gawain's qualities, but the image of the Virgin Mary on his shield sounds suspiciously like the usual medieval Christianising of early stories. Not only does Gawain have his shield and his Pentangle to protect him, but also a diamond studded helmet which was supposed to make him invisible (another positively non-Christian belief). So, is Gawain as sure of himself as his reputation leads us to believe? He obviously calls on outside influences - not just his trust in God and belief in his own abilities. This is not an epic hero, but a human being, responding to the challenge of a supernatural creature.

Gawain finally sees a castle which shimmers and shines in a supernatural way. His host, Bertilak de Hautdesert, makes him very welcome and suggests new games - this time an exchange of the day's winnings. We have already seen how unpredictable these games can be and now Gawain has two agreements to honour. The name 'Hautdesert' translates literally a 'High desert', but desert has no root in British culture and mythology. There are no deserts in the mists and hills of Britain. But deserts are also arid, desolate places, which could easily be

termed 'wastelands' and that fits much better in Medieval or Celtic Britain. I feel that the name Bertilak of the High Wasteland is a good translation - but of the books I have read only R.V. Elliot agrees with this view.

There are now three hunting scenes parallelling three temptations of Gawain. He lives up to his linguistic reputation and manages to avoid being too compromised by Bertilak's wife who allows only to kiss his cheeks, until finally he agrees to accept a magic green belt which will save him from death. This action is not really surprising, as he is to face the supernatural Green Knight in a few days time. Yet he says nothing to his host and therefore fails his testing.

Now he has to face the Green Knight's axe. There are three blows, the third one severing the skin but not killing Gawain. There have been three hunts, three temptations, three kisses and now three axe strokes. There seems to be undeniable Celtic roots here. M. Boroff in her book *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* points out that the three hunts are like the three transformations of Gwydion into stag, boar and wolf.

Gawain is finally goaded by the laughter and attitude of the Green Knight and looses his temper with a misogynistic outburst completely lacking in any courtesy. He has always seen himself as loyal, brave and courteous, but events have made him question his identity.

Finally, the testing of Gawain initially seems harmless enough. No-one has been hurt. No-one killed. Gawain's pride has been damaged and his identity called into question. But is this his Celtic identity being tested with Medieval Christian morality? All this has come about through Morgan Le Fay's malicious attempt to attack Guinevere and that is harmful.
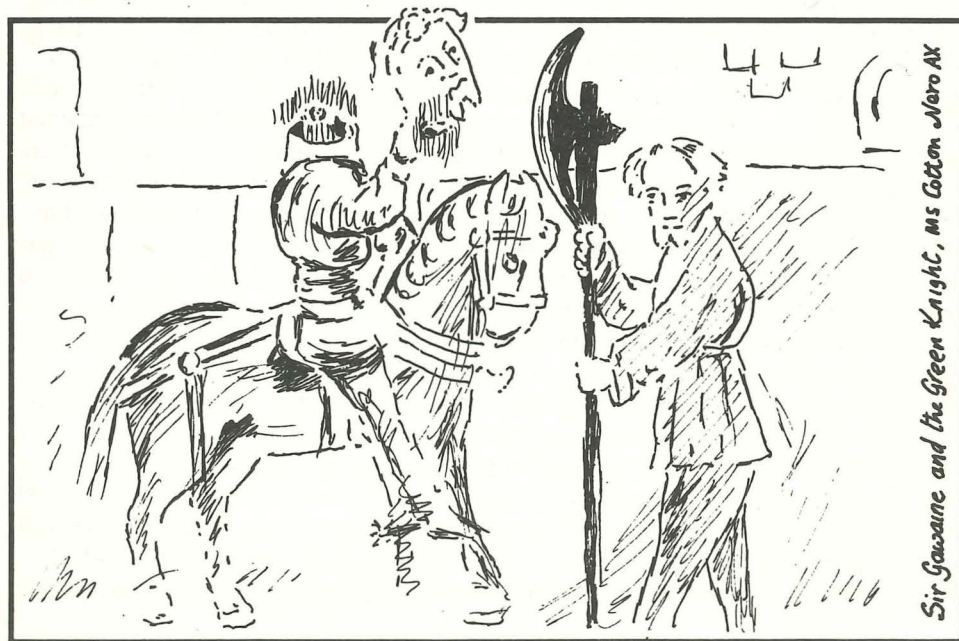
Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight, Ms Cotton Nero AX

The Gawain poet has woven older and probably known myths and legends and turned them into a poem which spans the centuries and is as vivid today as the fourteenth century.

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REVIEW

EQUUS: The Horse in the Roman World
Ann Hyland, Batsford, 1990, ISBN 0 7134 6260 4, £25.00

For anyone interested in the horses of the Roman period, this book is a MUST. The author has taken what little information we have on the harness and techniques of riding and turned them into practicalities by experimenting with her own horses. She found the four horned saddles very secure; the shield grip-strap bruised her hands, so padding was needed, and that leather "bracae" were essential, cloth slipping on the saddle, making riding insecure.

Her veterinary and training section are informative and interesting. So much of the Roman techniques have still survived. A worth-while, and enjoyable read.

Helen M. Hollick

(Ed. note: This book consists of over 280 pages, 31 photographs, seven text illustrations, glossary, index and four page bibliography. May I add to Helen's review by say that this book is one of the most comprehensive book on both military and civilian aspects of the horse in this period. I would say that for anyone interested in the horse during the Roman period would find this book of

considerable use. Equally, for the student of the Dark Ages, I'm sure there is something to learn from EQUUS.)

THE CHRISTIAN CELTS: Treasure of Late Celtic Wales
Michael Redknap, National Museum of Wales, 1991, ISBN 0 7200 0354 7, £7.95

Here is one of the National Museum of Wales's contributions to the Year of the Celt - an 88 page, square format paperback concerning the Dark Ages in Wales and concentrating mainly on religious artifacts. It is Illustrated throughout with black and white photographs, 21 colour photographs and a number of drawings and maps. The first half deals with the kingdoms, settlements, residences, warriors and crafts, while the bulk of the book concerns the Celtic Church and religious monuments and artifacts. Most of the latter looks at inscribed stones, decorated slabs, and crosses, including a chapter on the language and symbolism. These monuments are pinpointed on maps and finally catalogued at the back of the book. The stones range from simple inscribed small stones of the 5th century to the highly ornate giant crosses of the 11th century. The religious section is rounded off with a piece on sacred treasures, including such things as bells and illuminated manuscripts.

In the first part of the book are two interesting pieces - one on Late Celtic crafts dealing with decorative objects, such as brooches, and their manufacture; and Llangorse Crannog which is one of the most fascinating excavations in Wales in recent times and is firmly set, both by chronicles and archaeology, to the Dark Ages. Another chapter, which I found interesting, is about Scholars of the Stones including investigators from Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709) to V.E. Nash-Williams, whose book The Early Christian Monument in Wales is a classic in this field of study. One of the photographs accompanying this chapter shows how these monuments were put to good use in times past - a gatepost.

The Christian Celts ends with a list of places of interest, a short bibliography and a very useful glossary.

All in all this is a very well put together piece of work and is a useful book for the non-expert. My only criticism is that is rather expensive for its size, and knowing how popular this book already is, I am sure that it could have been somewhat cheaper.

THE BATTLES OF WALES
Dilys Carter Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 1991, ISBN 0-86381-178-7, £3.00

Wales has had its fair share of battles over the years and Dilys Carter chronicles its martial history from the recorded wars with the Romans to the last invasion of Britain (by the French in 1797) plus the Chartist and Rebecca Riots of the 19th century.

This small paperback consists of 128 pages with 21 photographs and a

bibliography. The contents are wide-ranging as shown above but there are a number of chapters that may be of interest to members. Chapters 1 to 4 cover the Roman period to the end of the Dark Ages, however it is chapter 3 that is of most interest: The Myth of Arthur.

This chapter tells the usual story of Arthur, mentioning that he was unlikely to have been a king and that he led the Combrogi - Y Cymry - "the fellow-countrymen" against the Anglo-Saxon invasions. Topographical Ms. Carter highlights the possibility of the battle of Badon having been fought near Bath or Wimborne in Dorset, and emphasises that Caerleon, the Roman legionary fort, may have been Arthur's HQ. She also suggests that Caerleon could have been the site of the Battle of Camlan. A rather nationalistic character comes over in this chapter, and not only is it emphasised that Arthur grew into the great king, lord of chivalry and leader of the Grail questors, but also that he still is held in great devotion by the Welsh. The last sentence (which I personally don't agree with and find rather jingoistic) is very telling:"This is how Wales will always remember Arthur, the greatest Celtic warrior to lift arms and fight for the Brythonic cause, and to keep Wales free."

A POCKET GUIDE "THE HISTORY OF WALES"
J. Graham Jones University of Wales, 1990, ISBN 0-7083-1076-1, £4.95.

This 178 page paperback is exactly what it says it is - a pocket guide history of Wales, and so the amount of information in it must be limited to salient topics. Here is a very well constructed book giving a good overview of the history of that small country to the west of England. It is divided into 10 chapters, a chronology of important dates, suggestions for further reading, a glossary, index and 22 illustrations.

Obviously, not all of this book is of interest to members of DRAGON but certainly the first chapter - Pre-Norman Wales - is worth a mention. Topics of interest include the Welsh language, Cunedda Wledig, Welsh kingdoms, Christianity, Dewi Sant, Wales and the Anglo-Saxons and The Legend of Arthur. For those visiting Wales is is an excellent small history that you will find easy to read and there is a lot of information easily at hand.

THE SAXONS AND NORMANS
Tim Wood, illustrations by Phil Page
Paperbird, 1989, ISBN 1-85543-007-X, £1.25.

This small paperback for children is part of Ladybird's Paperbird series "A History of Britain" (others include The Romans, The Middle Ages and The Tudors). The period covered by this book is from the first Saxon settlers to Magna Carta. It is illustrated throughout with colourful pictures with the odd photograph. The text is always simple and shows various aspects of Saxon, Viking and

Norman life together with a general chronology of events. Just right for children but adults might find useful as well.

EXPLORING THE BOOK OF KELLS
George Otto Simms
O'Brien Press, 1989, ISBN 0-86278-179-5, £6.95 (Irish)

Here is a very nice look at the famous Book of Kells with a book that won the RAI Award. This little 62 page hardback (which I purchased at Trinity College during a one-day visit to Dublin) is illustrated throughout with black and white drawing and eight full-colour reproductions from the Book of Kells. In four parts it tells the story of this famous art treasure, looking at its origins, how it was made, what it contains, where it is today and the book as a work of art.
Like the last book this is primarily a children's book but it is certainly interesting for adults. (Just as a "by-the way" - I went to see the Book of Kells for the first time earlier this year and though I have always been impressed by the artistry of the famous Book, I was rather disappointed by the way it was displayed. If you have been to Trinity College, Dublin, and have seen the Book of Kells, I would appreciate your comments.)

THE NEW ARTHURIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA
Edited by Norris J. Lacy, Associate editors: Geoffrey Ashe, Sandra Ness Ihle, Marianne E. Kalinke and Raymond H. Thompson;
St. James Press, 1991, ISBN 155862-125-3, £50

Originally published in 1986 by Garland Publishing Inc., this is "a completely revised and expanded edition". The New Arthurian Encyclopedia is a larger format with over 570 (plus 38 pages including preface, contributors, list of entries and illustrations, selected bibliography and a chronology), as compared to the just over 680 pages of the original, however with the change of format and smaller type this edition manages to pack more in. The additions to the original include the useful chronology, a 42 page index, an updated bibliography and nearly as twice as many illustrations. It is, however, the entries that make up the main body of the book and which show the changes.
Looking through the Encyclopedia from A-Z here are some of the interesting changes: author of Der Jüngere Titurel, once thought to be by Albrecht von Scharfenburg is now given a more accurate credit; there is a new entry under B - Ballet, while under C can be found Cavalry, Arthurian (very interesting), Comics and Czech Arthurian Literature, as well as splitting up Celtic Arthurian Literature into Gaelic Ballads, Irish and Welsh Arrthurian Literature. Further on there are Experimental Theatre, the Film section is updated to 1989, a new entry entitled French Symbolism, and Games has been greatly expanded. There new entries under M including Marvels and Marvellous, Masques, Music and Mystery and Suspense Fiction. The there is Philately and Popular Culture, Helmut Nickel expands on his Sarmatian Connection, "Scholarship: Historic Arthur" has brought in more recent opinions including those of David Dumville. However, strangely two entries have disappeared from the S section - Scottish Arthurian Chronicles and Symbolist Arthurian Material. Welcome additions include Troubadours and Women, Arthurian, as well as an entry on Widult, a Yiddish Arthurian tale based on the German Wigalois.
Of course it is impossible to include every new entry and there are many new or expanded entries on authors, poets, and writers plus characters from the Arthurian tales. In some ways the New Arthurian Encyclopedia looks like a combination of the original Arthurian Encyclopedia and The Arthurian Handbook by Norris J. Lacy and Geoffrey Ashe. There are still some omissions that seem rather strange, such as while Roger Sherman Loomis (1887-1966) gets a full entry, John Rhys (1840-1915), who contributed quite a bit to Arthurian studies is only mentioned in a list of Arthurian scholars. (It is hoped that a short biography of this gentleman will be appearing in a future issue of DRAGON.) Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that The New Arthurian Encyclopedia is of great value and considerable use to students of Arthurian studies. It certainly surpasses the original Encyclopedia both in contents and graphic design - its two column format and smaller type makes it a joy to read. This book should be on every Arthurian students shelf. But if you feel that £50 is somewhat too much, then please approach your local library and try and get them to order it for their reference department.

THE EARLIEST ENGLISH KINGS
D. P. Kirby
Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1991, ISBN 004 445692 1 (PB), £9.95.

The sub-title of 'The Earliest English Kings'. 'studies in the political history of the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy, c. 575-875', more closely defines its concerns. This book is a detailed study of the development of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms during this period. Ecclesiastical history is not covered except so far as it interacts with political history. The sources used - the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Bede, chronicles, annals, saints' lives, letters and legal documents - are familiar, but it must be some time since they have been subject to such a searching re-examination. Considerable emphasis is placed upon establishing the basic chronology of the period; that is, the regnal dates of kings, and the dating and sequence of events with those reigns. This is frequently difficult; the documentary evidence often being contradictory, not credible, or simply lacking. Whatever its quality, all the evidence is carefully and clearly set out and discussed. Much use is made of documents which quote the regnal year of the king, such as legal documents, which partly sidesteps the difficulty of addressing the varying ways in which the Anglo-Saxons could define the start and end of the year. Relatively more space

is given to the early period of the study (575-675; 113 pages) than the later (675-875; 108 pages), not because the events of these earlier years were necessarily more significant, but because the sources are less reliable and more problematical, requiring more detailed discussion.

This chronological study is of course important in the widest sense, to establish the basic framework of the early Anglo-Saxon history. However, at a more detailed level, it is also critical for the historian to try to fix closely the dating and order of a chain of events, in order to interpret the political implications of any particular episode of history. As an example of this, the discussion of the struggle between nascent Christianity and resurgent paganism in the period 616-627 (p. 37-42 and 77-80), and its effect on the relations between the kingdoms of Kent and Northumbria, is a fascinating and convincing piece of historical deduction. In Bede, the ultimate triumph of Christianity is portrayed as swift and straightforward, resulting from a series of semi-miraculous events. In fact, the author's analysis shows that the struggle took place over a relatively lengthy period, and possessed a complex and vital political dimension.

The broader developments in Anglo-Saxon political history - the successive political supremacies of Northumbria (7th century), Mercia (8th century), and Wessex (9th century), interrupted by a balance of power prevailing in the late 7th-early 8th century, are also drawn out. One interesting point made is that we may be guilty of anachronism in the use of kingdom names such as Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria in the 5th and 6th centuries, since these do not appear before the later 7th century. Less specific terms such as "king of the northern Angles' or simply 'king of the Saxons' are probably more appropriate.

The author is unwilling to give much credence to the chronology of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle before Christianity became firmly established in the kingdoms, i.e. in Kent c. 600, in Wessex c. 650, in Northumbria c. 625. The early history of Wessex is seen as the struggle between two groups of settlers based in Hampshire and the Thames valley respectively. This view is supported by many of the discrepancies that exist between the genealogical evidence preserved for the early, apparently rival, kings of Wesex. This body of information seems to have been worked over in an attempt to portray the later kings of Wessex and England as descended from a single royal family. Determined attempts are made to redate (from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle dates) the early kings of Kent and Diera using other sources, although in the case of Wessex the evidence is regarded as too fragmentary and confused for this to be possible. I was therefore surprised to find that author seemed willing to accept as approximately correct the dates of the kings of Bernicia back as early as c. 550, as theoretically calculated from early - often conflicting - kinglists.

In summary, this is a detailed and important study. It incorporates and brings to wider attention new ideas appearing in less accessible publications but adds many perspective insights and interesting idea of the author's own. It is not quite the book to read for a simple straightforward introduction to Anglo-Saxon history, but as an indicator of the uncertainties and difficulties lying behind the study of the period, and as a demonstration of the methods of historical analysis and interpretation that therefore need to be employed, the book is a model of its type.

Nick Grant, June 1991.

NEWS

NEW COUNTIES FOR OLD!

It was announced on the 17th June 1991 by David Hunt, Secretary of State for Wales, that changes could be afoot. Mr. Hunt published a Green Paper setting out a series of opinions dealing with the government boundaries. At present there are 45 authorities - option 1 reduces them to 13, option 2 to 20 and option 3 to 24, while it is option 2 that favoured. If Mr. Hunt gets his way Wales will have made another change in its boundaries - the last big shuffle having been in 1974. However, a study of Wales and, of course, other parts of the British Isles shows that change is nothing new.

David Keys, in the article "Age-old lore of dividing to rule makes comeback", The Independent, 25th March 1991, indicates that there is a tradition of redefining counties or administrative area back over 1,000 years and maybe even more than 2,000 years. In the first century AD the Roman novelist, Petronius, said: "If in doubt, reorganise." And certainly the Romans did their fair share of reorganisation. When they arrived in the 43 AD they found the country divided between various tribes. They soon got to work and organised the country, first in AD 75, they reorganised in around AD 200 and again in AD 300. "By the sixth century", writes Mr. Keys, "long after the Romans had left, Britain was subdivided into an estimated 1,000 independent states and kingdoms." By 620 many of these had been absorbed into larger kingdoms and by 680 only 40 were left. In the 10th century Alfred the Great's son Edward had divided England into shires and following the Norman invasion many other parts of the British Isles came under Anglo-Norman administration.

Wales eventually came under English administration after 1282 and by the 16th century had lost its tribal area for shires. These shires continued until 1974 when some of the old pre-Norman names came back. Gwynedd is a good example replacing Caernarfonshire, while I once lived in Flintshire, then I found myself in Clwyd (and the smaller administrative area of Delyn) and soon I may be part of the Vale of Clwyd. As the American Indian says "Nothing stays the same, except the rocks."

TODDLING TOWN

In the 3rd April 1991 edition of The Independent David Keys told the tale of the "Tracks of 'wandering village' discovered". Excavations led by Gill Hey, for the Oxford Archaeological Unit, has discovered that at Yarnton, about five miles north-west of Oxford, the town has toddled along. From its beginnings 2,600 years ago as a small prehistoric village, Yarnton has moved progressively 1,500 yards along a dried-up river bed. From its origins in the Early Iron Age (7th century BC) Yarnton has progressively crawled along. By the 4th century BC it had moved 50 yards to east and this has continued through to being 50 yards further on when Caesar landed on the South Coast, another 50 by the end of the 1st century AD and by the Late Roman period (4th century AD) Yarnton was 50 yards more to the east. By the early Saxon period (500 AD) the village had moved a 100 yards and by the 7th century Yarnton had moved once again. It is probable that Yarnton gets its name from this period after someone called Eardas - become Eardas-ingas-tun = Erdington in the Middle Ages, Yardington in the 16th century to the Yarnton of today.

In the 9th century the movement speeded up again and now it was 200 yards from its previous position. By the 12th century it had moved a further 200 yards and then in the fourteenth century unrest caused the local vicarage to be burnt down and sacked. It was then taken by Henry VIII after the dissolution of the monasteries and given to the royal physician and during the Civil War the manor house became a military hospital. By the 18th century it was 300 yards further down the watercourse and now it is 300 yards way from the eighteenth century centre.

It looks as if Yarnton is one of the oldest continually occupied village in the country despite it tendency to be something of a crawlsville.

(In this issue we have two pieces that are connected with the American scholar Professor Norma Goodrich - one direct and the other secondhand.)

GUINEVERE'S GRAVE

Two articles appeared in two British newspapers: "Scots carving 'proves Guinevere lived' " written by Kevin Gill in The Times, 20th May 1991, and "Guinevere's existence 'proved'" being a short news item in The Independent, 20th May 1991. Burke's Peerage announced that Professor Norma Goodrich, "a leading authority on Arthurian history" revealed that a stone now found in a small museum at Meigle, Tayside in Scotland, shows that "the true story of Arthur and Guinevere had been written in stone". The article in The Times described how Prof. Goodrich had spent two decades searching for this link before discovering this particular stone at Meigle. While in The Independent says she "believes her interpretation of the figures and symbols on the ancient stone has removed Guinevere from the realm of legend". The Times add by pointing out a reference in the 16th century indicated a triptych of slabs depicting Arthur, Merlin and Guinevere. Prof. Goodrich said she was shown a mound near to the church, where the stone was originally found, which may well be the site of Guinevere's grave.

I contacted Burke's Peerage and they said that they couldn't supply any further information but gave me Prof. Goodrich's address in the United States. A letter has airmailed its way across the Atlantic but I have yet to receive an answer. Meanwhile, let's look at the stone - and anything that might be relevant to the story of Guinevere and the slab.

First of all, the stone depicted in the two newspapers and , I hope, somewhat better reproduced here, can be found in what used to be an old schoolhouse but is now a museum at Meigle, to the north of Dundee. The stone in particular is catalogued as Meigle Stone 2 and stands 8ft 1 inch in height. On one side is an enclosed cross with studs in it, while beneath there are a series of strange creatures facing each other and one of the borders is said to depict a number of
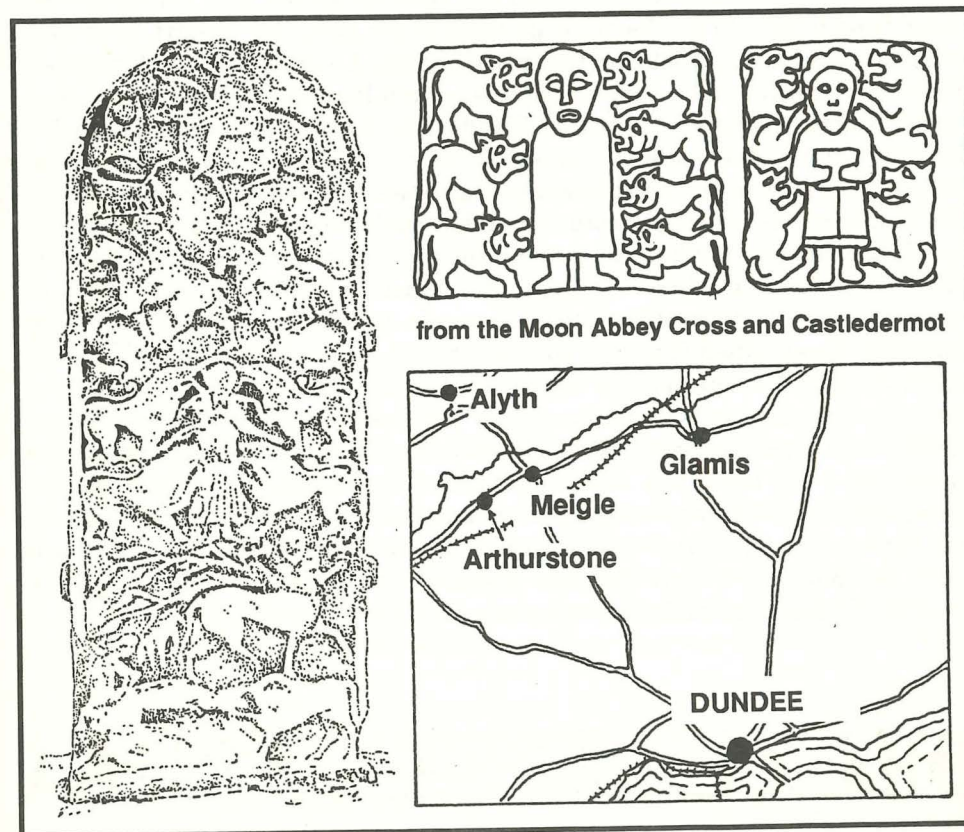
from the Moon Abbey Cross and Castledermot

animals, while the other seems to be a kneeling man pulling something up - described as three climbing figures. On the back of the cross slab are a series of different scenes: at the top is a man on horseback with two dogs facing what is said to be an angel; beneath this are two horseman one with a spear; below this is a strange scene showing four animals seemingly attacking a bearded man while there a two smaller animals at the top. This scene is said to depict Daniel in the Lion's Den. Underneath this is a centaur (half man - half horse) with two axes and a branch of a tree. At the base of the slab is said to be a man with a club and a monster (dragon?) biting the nose of a horned beast.

The style of the cross can be found in a number of other places in Scotland (including Invergowrie, Aldbar and St. Madoes) and strangely enough at Margam in South Wales. There are also numerous crosses with ring designs but without the square parts. The carvings on the back said to be Daniel in the Lion's Den (which symbolise the delivery of the faithful from the power of evil) seems to date back to the Catacombs of the 2nd century and can be found on six crosses in Scotland and seven in Ireland, including Castledermot and the Moon Abbey Cross.

Having said that, the stone mentioned has been connected with Guinevere for a long time before Prof. Goodrich pointed it out (see: J.S. Stuart Glennie's Arthurian Localities, 1869, or the more recent A Guidebook to Arthurian Britain, by Geoffrey Ashe, 1980). There is a story local to the Meigle area that a queen named Ganora, Vanora or Wander "held unlawful intercourse with Mordred", who had a castle at Barry Hill, near Alyth. The unfortunate queen was punished by being torn to pieces by wild horses. It is said that this stone (No. 2) at Meigle was once her gravestone and that she is depicted on the slab. Other says that it shows a goddess on a cart pulled by horses - Archdeacon Sinclair, 1560. Whatever it depicts it doesn't bare much resemblance the stories of Guinevere from Geoffrey of Monmouth onwards. It is possible that there was an unfaithful queen called Ganora and she suffered the above mentioned horrific punishment, but it sounds as if one character has been superimposed on the other. Nevertheless, it is dangerous to try and base fact on fiction!

Finally, until I hear more from Prof. Goodrich I will reserve my judgment on the matter, but I will leave you with a quotation from Stuart Glennie: "As an old fellow, however, with whom I got into talk on the road near this, and who told me a legend I had not previously heard of the four places in the neighbourhood where the parts of Queen Vanora's dismembered body were buried, sagely remarked: 'Thae auld histories as maistly lees, I'm thinkin'."

THE ISLE OF AVALON

"Arthur himself, our renowned King, was mortally wounded and carried off to the Isle of Avalon, so that his wound might be attended to."
XI,2 History of the Kings of Britain, Geoffrey of Monmouth, c. 1136

Two and half miles off shore from Abersoch, Lleyn Peninsula, Gwynedd, lie two small islands - St. Tudwal's Island West and St. Tudwal's Island East. The western island is long and narrow with a light-house but is uninhabited. The eastern isle is rather squarish in shape consisting of around 26 acres and, though at present uninhabited, was once the home to various groups of people including monks, island farmers, a religious community and a team of archaeologists. On the island are the remains of monastery with Mediaeval church. Today, its only inhabitants are sea-birds, puffins, seals, small animals and deer. St. Tudwal's Island East came into the news in February when it was the subject of an investigation by the RSPCA following the deaths of a small horde of deers on the isle.

Since then Carla Lane, the writer of such comedies as *The Liver Birds*, *Butterflies* and *Bread*, has purchased the island from Jill Fairhurst. Two articles on St. Tudwal's Island East have appeared in The Liverpool Daily Post, written by Emyr Williams of Porth Madog. Mr. Williams gave a potted history of the isle and discussed plans for the island with Miss Lane, who wishes it to be made into a wildlife sanctuary, which will be looked after by Seiriol Thomas, a local man (according to The Western Mail). At the meeting Mr. Williams got into a conversation with Carl Hollins, Miss Lane's son. Mr. Hollins, and his brother Nigel, are convinced that St. Tudwal's is the site of the burial of "King Arthur". Quoting from the second of the articles in The Liverpool Daily Post:
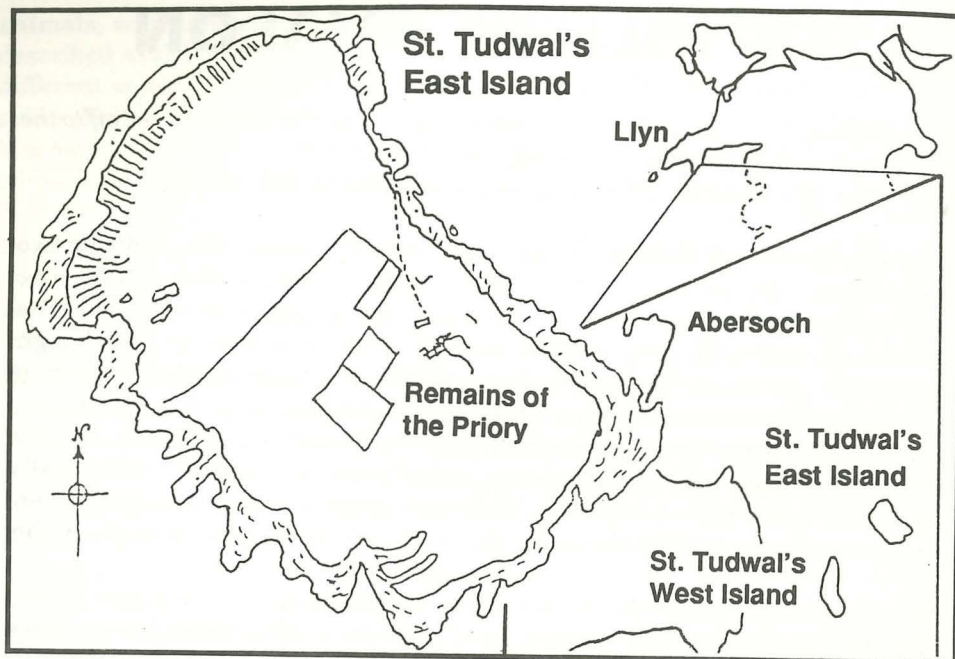
'Mr. Hollins said: "The is evidence that island was funded (sic - founded) by Augustan (sic - Augustinian) Monks of the 6th century and that there was a priory there in the 11th century.

"It was also owned by the Masonic Brotherhood, the Knights Templar Association for some 300 to 400 years.

"Four bodies were ceremoniously buried underneath the priory floor, and there is strong evidence that one of them was King Arthur." '

Amongst Mr. Williams's sources for his own potted history of St. Tudwal's is an article in the Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society, Vol. 21 (1960). This is an account of the beginning of excavations on the island by a team under Douglas B. Hague.

Taking the report further I, first, contacted Mr. Emyr Williams who was kind enough to add some extra information and gave me the phone number of Mr. Carl Hollins. I proceeded to contact Mr. Hollins and discussed his ideas about St. Tudwal's. From this I learned that Mr. Hollins while on the Isle of Man came in

St. Tudwal's
East Island

Llyn

Abersoch

Remains of
the Priory

St. Tudwal's
East Island

St. Tudwal's
West Island

contact with Professor Norma Lorre Goodrich. Prof. Goodrich has particularly interesting theories about Arthur and Avalon, however studying her book KING ARTHUR, Franklin Watts, 1986, brings to light a series of problems. (For further, see my reviews in DRAGON Vol. 2, No. 8 and AVALON TO CAMELOT, Vol. II, No. 4.) The Isle of Avalon according to Prof. Goodrich is the Isle of Man, and presumably Arthur is buried there or having been cured of his wound is awaiting to return to his land. She used several Mediaeval documents including the "Sone de Nausay", which describes the island of the Grail Castle believed by the Professor to be Peel Castle, an island off Man. Seemingly, Mr. Hollins has taken Prof. Goodrich's research and applied the descriptions to St. Tudwal's. The description tells of a square island, named after a pagan king called Tadus, and a castle, sword bridge and a cemetery. St. Tudwal's is certainly a rather squarish island, some graves have been found and Tadus does sound a bit like Tudwal but there is no castle on the island. Douglas B. Hague's excavations of 1959-60 showed that the island had once been a monastic site with a 10th-11th century church, beneath which were found four graves.

Whether all this as any relevance to Arthur is a matter for discussion. St. Tudwal's has never been connected with Arthur before and there are no tales of Arthur having ever been in the area. Avalon is equally a problem and there are a number of possibilities. Arthur died and was taken to a religious site to be buried though according to the Stanzas of the Graves the burial-place of Arthur is unknown. In the Vita Merlini, c. 1150, by Geoffrey of Monmouth Taliesin tells

Merlin of the Island of Apples - "It was there we took Arthur after the battle of Camlan...and Morgen (one of 9 sisters who lived on the island) received us with due honour." Morgen had great healing powers and said she could cure Arthur but it would take long time. The death of Arthur is mentioned in the Welsh Annals, while the survival of Arthur is obviously legend. However, to the Celtic mind both could be true, since life after death was a strong belief of both Christian and Pagan. The ancient Celts believed the dead went to an island in the west and I think that is as far as this discussion can be taken. Avalon is not a specific island but rather a mystical place in the west where the dead go - a sort of Celtic Happy Hunting Ground - and to try and identify it is, in my opinion, fruitless.

The Carrier Pigeon
A very ancient messenger
by Helen M. Hollick

My husband is a pigeon fancier. We keep around thirty birds, and they race from distances of between 65 - 600 miles. Weather and wind conditions affect speed, but they can cover say, 400 miles, with a following wind, in about three and a half hours, or with a head wind, the same distance, would take up to eight hours.

I was reading about the "problem" of how, if at all, the Roman Wall garrisons communicated in matters of urgency - for instance: "Help! We are under attack!" Signal beacons, smoke flares, etc., are all dependant upon the weather. Low mist, or rain would render any such form of communication between forts/milecastles, etc., as useless. The answer seemed to me to me obvious. Pigeons! They are, in modern times, 80% reliable at returning home, over a long distance. The shorter the distance, the more reliable. They are cheap to keep, and provide other useful benefits - manure and pigeon pie.

The question was: DID the Romans use, or know of, the homing/carrier pigeon? After many weeks of digging about in various libraries, and writing many letters, I have come up with the answer: Yes.

Before I clarify that, let me explain how pigeons are trained for racing today. "Old birds", (bred from previous years) are more reliable at getting "home", than "young" (bred in the present year). Birds hatched in the loft (as opposed to bought elsewhere) are also more reliable. Birds must be trained regularly, and fed well. They are allowed to fly free around the vicinity of the loft, getting to know their home area. In mid March, weather permitting, birds to be raced (racing is from April - September) are placed in a basket and taken a few miles from the loft, and released. Gradually they are taken a further distance. At each "toss" the birds, on release, circle a few times, then wing their

way back to the loft. From the air, on a clear day, a pigeon can see about 60 miles. Therefore, to release a bird at that distance from home he comes to recognise a territory of 120 miles - his own 60 miles radius + the radius from the release point. Even in bad weather birds can fly - although obviously modern fanciers do not chance losing their birds. However, in an emergency, over a short distance, say up to 20 miles, birds should be able to reach their home base, whatever the weather. The only time they can not fly is during the hours of darkness. Many birds can reach home even with great injuries.
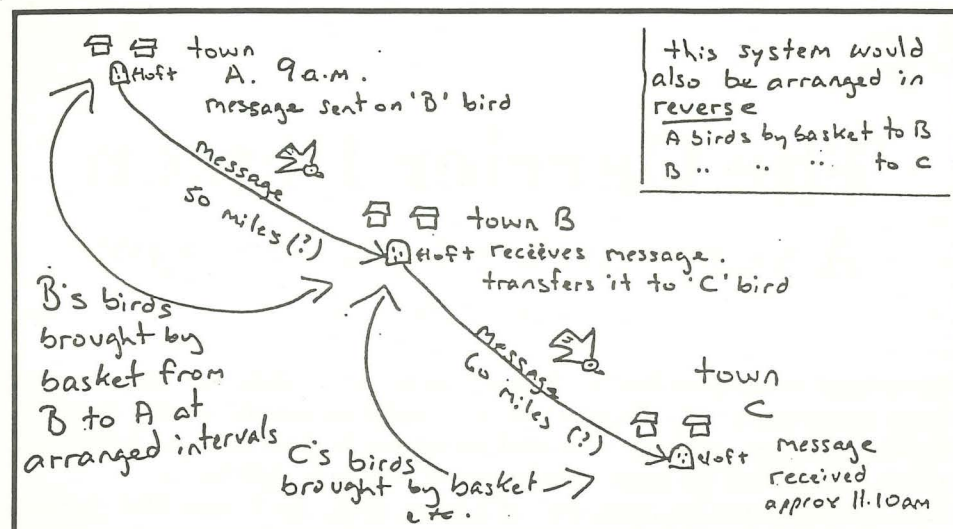
No one is quite certain HOW the "homing instinct" works, but does seem most likely to be a combination of magnetic and visual instinct. They recognise landmarks - rivers, roads, railway lines, forests. A bird does not "loose" or forget its home, but the longer it is away from the loft (in terms of months) the less reliable it may become. We train our birds three or four times a week - they are basketed, sent to the race point on Friday evenings and released on Saturday. Normally they are home by Saturday evening. Some arrive Sunday. We have had birds return home after a matter of years! (These "strays" had become lost during long races and had gone down to the first loft they found.) Birds normally arrive late because of various reasons - the birds themselves are not up to scratch, bad weather conditions (blown off course), clashing with other race birds and heading for a different area, therefore becoming confused. Another factor is injury. Many birds hit wires, are shot (which is illegal - racing pigeons are protected birds) or, if they come down to drink, are hit by cars. Some are taken by birds of prey. At the time of the Roman Empire the only danger would be from nature sources.

Pigeons (columbae), ring-doves (palumbae) and turtle-doves (turtures) were all known in the Greek and Roman worlds. Pliny describes their habits, while Varro and Columella both give elaborate instructions for keeping, rearing and fattening them.

Also for constructing pigeon houses and dovecotes. Varro says that these houses often contained up to as many as 5000 birds. There were pigeon keepers (pastor columbarum), among whose duties was to keep the birds' living quarters clean. Apparently, a particularly good pair of pigeons could cost as much as between 1000 and 4000 sestertii. Many people, Pliny writes, took their love of these birds to insane lengths, building towers for then on their roofs, or boasting of pedigrees and high breeding. (No different from today's fancier!) In towns, the pigeons lived on roofs. Many, it seems, were kept as pets. Varro mentions some birds became so tame they fed on household fare within the house door. Many tombstones depict people holding doves, and what we now call "lofts".

Carrier pigeons (columbae tabellariae) functioned in public and private contexts in the Roman world. Frontinus tells of how the consul Hirtitus used pigeons to communicate with Decimus Brutus when the latter was besieging Mark Antony at Modena (Mutina) in 43 B.C. On the other hand, Pliny states that it was Brutus who sent pigeons as messengers to the consul's camp, fastening messages to their legs, thus defeating all Antony's efforts to cut him off from the outside world. Either way, pigeons were used as carriers of messages. Caesar also used the birds throughout his campaign of conquest in Gaul. Birds were released by sightseers at the various Games in Rome - no doubt carrying home messages of "we won!" (One can almost imagine this at, say for instance, a modern football match not being covered by radio or TV!)

There are many instances of fantastic achievements made by pigeons - being able to fly to and fro from certain points for example. Pigeons can only fly to a fixed point, normally their home base. However, bearing in mind that even today we not fully understand how pigeons manage to get home, some of the reasoning behind grossly exaggerated stories can be understood. And, confusion is excusable. To the untrained eye all pigeons look alike. To see one (say of the typical "blue" colour) released from a loft, with a message, and then within an hour see a bird of the same colouring return with an answer - it would be natural to conclude that it was the same bird.

Doves are familiar to all of us, as sacred birds in many religions. For the Romans they were sacred to Venus. They are many examples in Roman art of the goddess holding one, two doves. It is tempting to think that most of these depicted birds are "homers", but we must be careful of not assuming too much. Doves were (are) attractive birds to keep as pets. Not all types of pigeons are capable of the homing instinct - doves certainly are not. But, there are a number of prophets and oracles associated with pigeons and doves. When the mystery of the carrier pigeons is connected, is this surprising? How useful pigeons could be for these various men and women of priesthood. As if by magic, they would know in advance of approaching armies/travellers, etc. No one would dream of connecting a sudden "god-given" message with the arrival of a flock of sacred birds! At the shrine of Mahomet, at Medina, there are thousands of pigeons, and they are called the "prophet's birds".

Pigeons were used by almost all early civilisations: Phoenicians, Persians, Assyrians and Lydians. They were used by sailors, who released birds from time to time, to discover which way land was situated. The Egyptians had lofts constructed. Birds flew

from town to town, relaying messages. It was probably this latter method that was more substantially used. Without modern transports, it would be difficult to "train" pigeons over large distances. However, between towns, it would be no problem. Trained in "teams" and sent with messages transferred from one bird to another, a warning, or order, could be conveyed quickly and efficiently over a vast distance. It seems probable that the pigeon houses of Egypt were an exact replica of the highly organised, efficient system used by Persia. Which civilisation copied from which is unknown though.

In later history, the Arab kingdoms had a regular "pigeon post" system, which operated out of Baghdad in the 12th century. During the Crusades, pigeons were used by the Saracens. While during the War of Independence in Holland, pigeons were also used extensively. At the siege of Leyden (1574) by the Spanish, the citizens were saved by messages sent to them, via birds, that relief was on the way. This story is included in Dumas's "THE BLACK TULIP". Later, birds were again used during the siege of Paris - 1870-71. Also, during the First and Second World Wars.

As for the Wall, what better place for teams of relay birds? In modern mileage, a pigeon could easily cover the distance from one end of the Wall to the other (73 miles) in about an hour and a half. Between major forts, a system of exchange would be easy to maintain, following the line of how the Egyptians used their birds. Within these small distances, extensive training would not be necessary. Could perhaps, carrier pigeons have been sent between the Wall and other places? York for instance. Even down as far as London, using the relay system.

There is no evidence that they were used. Little has been written about the use of pigeons by the military (even in modern day, there is barely any information beyond surface knowledge of exactly how and when they were used during the World Wars). It is almost as if pigeons are a military secret. Understandably! The difficulty in obtaining evidence, outside of written work (of which there is little anyway) is that we only have the foundations of buildings - we can not know of any rooftop lofts. Finding bones, or droppings, of birds prove nothing. Carrier pigeons along the Wall - it is all conjecture and theory.

Even so, I think it is plausible, and very tempting to believe! Even the British Museum, who are most reluctant to admit to anything with little or no proof say it is a "reasonable proposition"!

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Plus various communications with pigeon fanciers, in particular, my husband, and Peter B. Martin, of Montcuq, France, who lectures on the history of the Racing Pigeon.

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SUPPLEMENT - JULY 1991

Just a few notes that came my way that were either missed from the body of the magazine or too late to be included

ARTHUR OF THE WELSH

This long awaited book unfortunately has been delayed and will not be published until August at the earliest, according to The University of Wales Press. However, since this publication seems to be very interesting, I am sure it will be well worth the wait. More news on this as soon as possible.

REVIEWS

PENDRAGON Vol. XXI/2 SPRING 1991, and Vol. XXI/3 Summer 1991.

Here are two very interesting issues of PENDRAGON which, as always, are well worth a read.

The Spring issue includes the first part of a fascinating series of articles by Alby Stone entitled: The Fisher King and Odin, which is continued in the Summer edition, and presumably the Autumn. Mr. Stone approaches the legendary material on Arthur and the Holy Grail from a Nordic view. Quoting from the first article: "The mythological elements of Arthurian literature are usually viewed as exclusively Celtic... (and on) the whole, the accepted 'Celticness' of Arthurian literature has gone unchallenged...." Very true and Mr. Stone goes on to discuss the possible Teutonic elements.

In the same edition one article has the title: Why is the Round Table Round? Unlike the above article I was unimpressed by this piece which looks at that old chestnut - the Glastonbury Zodiac. Thanks, but no thanks.

Finally, before moving on to the Summer issue, Eddie Tooke asks himself: What Arthur means to me (and may mean to all of us). In this article Eddie makes some valid points that are of considerable relevance to all students of Arthur and the Dark Ages. However, Eddie says more about the thought processes than Arthur - the use of vertical and lateral thinks. I must agree that it is so easy to get an idea and try and make the facts fit that idea. What I disagree with, in this piece, is the use of Arthur for reason over than historical research. The legends which grew up around the name have little or no relevance to Dark Age studies. This is, of course, a matter of my opinion.

The Summer edition of PENDRAGON has a very interesting article by Kate Pollard on the origins of the PENDRAGON Society and Cadbury/Camelot. Reading it I found myself humbled and very much a junior relation seeing how much the Society has done to forward the study of archaeology, not only Cadbury but Llanellen (a religious site in Carmarthenshire) too. I also find myself envious of the amount of material

Eddie Tooke and his team manage to get and publish. Other articles include Alby Stone second part on Teutonic Arthurian connections and Talking Heads which gives a round up of news, reviews and events.

Like most issues in the past Eddie continues to keep up the good work with often thought provoking material. PENDRAGON can be contacted through Eddie Tooke, Chinook, Paxhill Lane, Twyning, Glos. GL20 6DU.

ON THE TRAIL OF MERLIN
by Deike Rich and Ean Begg, Aquarian Press, 1991, ISBN 0-85030-939-5, £15.99.

This book has just come into my hands and though it is not specifically about Arthur or the Dark Ages, it is a very interesting guidebook. Though the subtitle of the book is A Guidebook to the Western Mystery Tradition, in my opinion, the contents don't live up to that label. It is a very interesting search for places connected with the legendary character Merlin beginning with an introduction which looks at various literary sources and Merlin's connections with ancient gods, saints, magicians, animals, women and prophecies.

The rest of the book, which consists of 208 pages, 44 black and white photographs, 22 colour, 10 maps, a glossary, bibliography and index, looks at various sites which have some relationship with the legends of Merlin (or similar stories). The chapters consist of different areas and countries: England, Wales and the Marches, Isle of Man, Ireland, Scotland, Brittany and Spain (yes, Spain!). There is a Merlin's Bridge and a Merlin's Spring near Toledo and their are Merlin connections in Galicia, which as its name indicates is Celtic. Other places, like Brittany, are more obvious when it comes to the stories of Merlin.

This is an interesting tome with some excellent photography, especially in the colour section. Compared to other books that have been published on Merlin, this would make a useful companion to Nikolai Tolstoy's The Quest for Merlin.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE CELTS
No this isn't a book - on the 9th July 1991 an exhibition opened on the European Centre for Traditional and Regional Cultures. It is part of the Year of the Celt, a rather political things, since the last time Europe was united under one culture (and not occupied by Roman legions) was during the Celtic period. This exhibition is rather small and consists of a series of photographs with captions, three display cases containing pottery, metallic objects and a replica of the Coligny Calender, together with some reproductions of Celtic objects found primarily in the Burgundy region of France. In fact part of the exhibition promotes Burgundy and there are leaflets and brochures about this region. By the way one of the entries in this booklet is Avallon, which is situated to the south-east of Auxerre and has a remarkable of Middle and Upper Paleolithic objects. One of the handouts includes Archaeological Burgundy which is quite interesting. Another aspect of this exhibition is Alesia and Vercingetorix.

If you are in the area it may be worth a visit and is open till the end of the year.

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Jones, Dave 52 Miriam Road, Plumstead, LONDON, SE18 1RE, U.K.

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Miller, Karen V. 3 Fort Road, Halstead, SEVENOAKS, Kent, TN14 7BN, U.K.

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New York Public Library

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Pollington, Steve 18 Shaftsbury Ave., Southchurch, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, Essex, SS1 2YS.

Pritchard, Dafydd Ael-y-Mor, 7 Ffordd Cynfran, Llysfaen, BAE COLWYN, Clwyd, LL29 8SU, U.K.

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Scotland, National Library of, Edinburgh

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Simpson, Roger 9 Friars Quay, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR3 1ES, U.K.

Skinner, Alison 16 Woodhill, Spinney Hill Park, LEICESTER, Leicestershire, LE5 3JB, U.K.

Smail, A.T. (agent for three universities)

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Strickland, Tim

Sumner, Graham Fern Close, FLINT, Clwyd, U.K.

Sutcliff, Rosemary

Thompson, Mary L.H. 300 Buckhout St., IRVINGTON-ON-HUDSON, New York 10533, U.S.A.

Tooke, Eddie *Pendragon Society*, Chinook, Paxhill Lane, Nut Orchard, Twyning, TEWKESBURY, Gloucestershire, GL20 6DV, U.K.

University Colllege of North Wales, Bangor

Willcox, Roger "Magrathea", 20 Acacia Walk, BEESTON, Nottinghamshire, NG9 2LW, U.K.

Wright, Reginald Pilmore House, Coast Road, Blackhall Rocks, HARTLEPOOL, Cleveland, TS27 4AY, U.K.

AMENDMENT

Please note that one of the addresses in the Membership List has changed:-
Brian W. Kearney, of 32 Mallard Lane, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, now lives at **16 Rye Close, Eynesbury, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 2RG.**
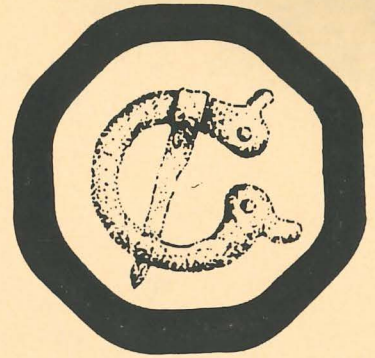
THE CLWYD ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE PROUDLY PRESENTS:

DARK AGES DAYSCHOOL

At Bodelwyddan Castle, Abergele, Clwyd

on Saturday November 9th 1991

from 10.00 am to 4.45 pm

The ill-illuminated gloom of the Dark Ages has always provided a shadowy
stage upon which little understood events and characters real or
imaginary acted out the course of history.

Between the departure of the Romans and the arrival of William the
Conqueror parts of the British Isles were attacked or settled by Angles,
Jutes, Saxons, Vikings, Irish, Scotts, Norsemen and Picts. Spanning the
spectrum from fact to fiction were such characters as Vortigern, Arthur,
Cunedda, Eric Bloodaxe, Merlin and assorted dragons from the Mabinogion.

The results of recent archaeological investigations at some major sites
have indicated that particular locations and specific years or decades in
the Dark Ages can be illuminated by concentrated research. Viking York
is the classic example. Excavations in the city have revolutionised our
appreciation of a Viking settlement, and provided the hottest tourist
attraction in the United Kingdom during the 1980's - the much admired
Jorvik Centre. A similar revolution has occurred elsewhere, with the
excavations of part of the Viking port of Dublin at Wood Quay. Rescue
excavations were carried out against the background of a full-blooded
political battle over the modern development destroying the
archaeological site. Now that the battle is over we can assess the
impact, both in the past and the present, of the Vikings in Ireland.
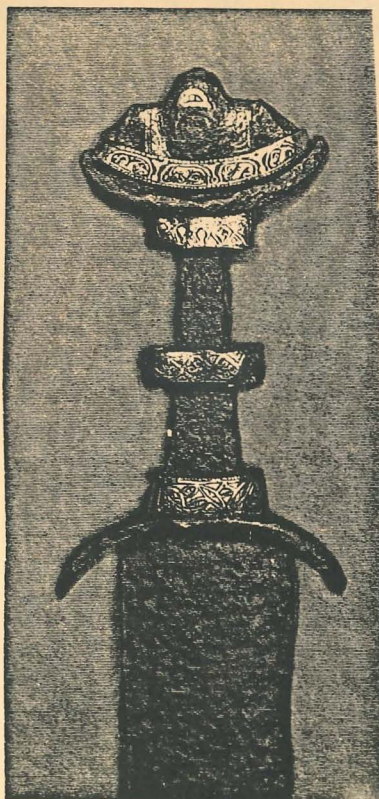
Here in Wales, the number of settlements known
to have been occupied between say, AD 500 and AD
1000 remains depressingly low. However,
potentially the most important Dark Age Site
ever excavated in Wales is beginning to emerge
from the muddy waters of Lyn Syfadan, (Llangorse
Lake) Powys, where a late ninth - early tenth
century crannog is being investigated.

No Dark Ages Dayschool would be complete without
a presentation on Sutton Hoo. The seventh
century ship buried in a mound near Woodbridge
in East Anglia contained an assortment of
precious and beautiful objects, seemingly
intended as a memorial to some king or
chieftain. Now we hear the results of the
latest investigations at Sutton Hoo, and how
they have changed our perspective of this unique
cemetery.

DARK AGES DAYSCHOOL

<u>Programme</u>

10.00 am	Opening remarks
10.15 am	The Vikings at York - their investigation and presentation Mr Richard Hall, York Archaeological Trust
11.00 am	Question Time
11.15 am	Tea or Coffee
11.45 am	Excavations at Sutton Hoo, East Anglia - Professor Martin Carver, University of York
12.45 pm	Question Time
1.00 pm	Lunch
2.15 pm	Excavations of the crannog at Llangorse, Powys - Dr Mark Redknap, National Museum of Wales
3.00 pm	Question Time
3.15 pm	Tea or Coffee
3.45 pm	The Vikings in Ireland - their investigation and presentation - Dr Patrick Wallace, National Museum of Ireland.
4.30 pm	Question Time
4.45 pm	Close

Clwyd Archaeology Service - Tel: (0352)752121, Ext 4015/4062/2745.

To reserve a place on this Dayschool please complete the form below.

I wish to reserve........place(s) on the 'Dark Ages' Dayschool on 9 November 1991 at Bodelwyddan Castle.

The price per person is £14.95 (with lunch) ☐

£7.50 (without lunch) ☐

Tick whichever applicable; cheques payable to Clwyd County Council.

I enclose a cheque for £.......

NAME: ....

ADDRESS: ....

               ....

               ....

TELEPHONE: ....
Return to Clwyd Archaeology Service, Development and Tourism, Shire Hall, Mold, Clwyd CH7 6NG. Telephone (0352) 752121 - Ext 4015, 4062, 2745.