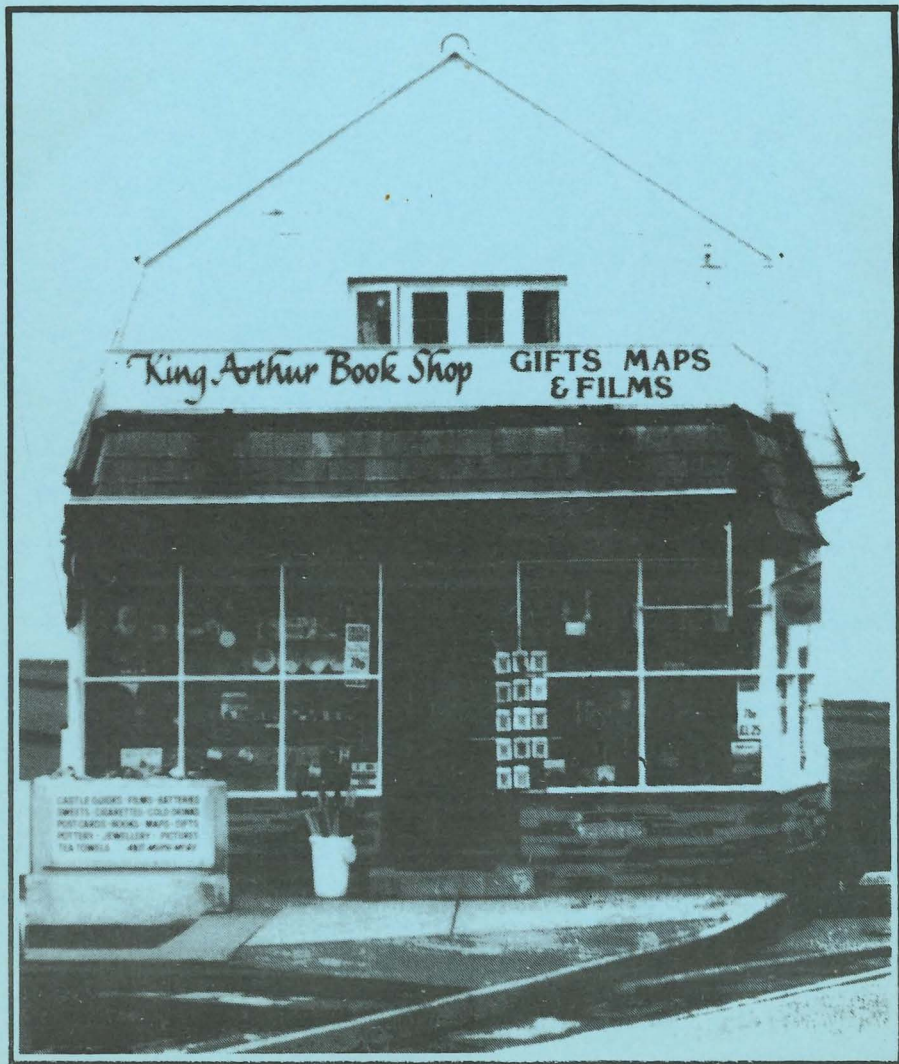


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Dear friends,

Welcome to a long overdue issue of DRAGON. Over the last few months I have been very busy at work both with the International Musical Eisteddfod and getting work ready for teachers before the summer holidays. While teachers have a long, well deserved rest people like myself, who work in the education department, find that the work-load does not decrease. There are two deadlines around this time of the year - the first before the schools go on their summer break and the second before the schools come back in September. During this period a lot of work has to be done. So I must apologise for the delay in producing this issue. Having said that, I will be having my holiday in September and I'm off to Japan again. If you wish to drop me a line, please do so, I will be happy to hear from you and will try to reply. My address in Japan can be found on the last page of this issue.

As many of you know the proposed merger between PENDRAGON and DRAGON is off. The two societies have been closely related since the beginning of DRAGON, fellow travellers on an interesting road. But there were differences in the content of our magazines. These differences could not be fully reconciled and so the merger was postponed. There is no doubt that it was a worthwhile exercise but the need for different aims and objectives led to a discussion that eventually produced an agreement to disagree. Flyers were sent out to members of both societies and many members replied. Of the replies, with the DRAGON Society, there were only two NOs. The rest were for the widening of the society's outlook but a large proportion were not for mysticism, ley lines, Templars and modern Western Magical Tradition. The comments of the members were precised and sent to Eddie Tooke, who has taken over from Kate Pollard as secretary of the PENDRAGON Society. The results of Eddie's flyer had more or less the same as DRAGON's but they preferred to keep the subjects that DRAGON members were not too keen on having in the magazine. At this point, we both agreed that as

respective editors of our society's magazines we must cater for what our membership wants. Therefore, it was decided that we would amicably agree to disagree. Since then Eddie has gone on to produce another issue of PENDRAGON (see REVIEW) and I'm sure that you will join me in wishing Eddie and his team best of luck with future issues of PENDRAGON.

It was interesting to see the reaction of members and I would like to thank you all for your comments and advice. I am particularly thankful to the advice given by honorary members. There is no doubt that there is a very strong interest in the subjects covered by DRAGON and I hope that I will be able to cater for the needs of members in the future. From the answers to questions in the ballot form I could see that there were those who felt strongly about the context of the magazine and others that would be happy to have a more catholic outlook. So, for the moment DRAGON stays DRAGON and its aim to study the history of the Dark Ages using Arthur as a pivot will continue unless the membership thinks otherwise. If you have any suggestions about the magazine or the society do write and let me know.

Now please read on and I hope you enjoy the articles, etc., in this double issue.

## Arthur's Britain

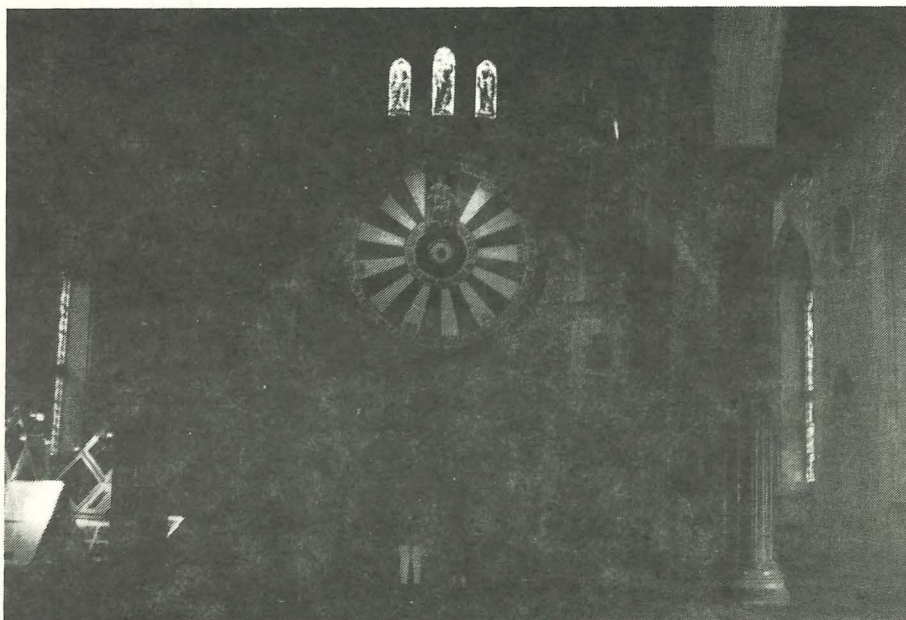
A trip to the South West of England - 29th April to 1st May 1989

I arrived at Blackfriars Station at about 8.45 on Saturday, 29th April - ticket number 30 on a coach of about 40 travellers. The tour was led by Kevin Flood and Mike Stone. We were soon on our way, first around sites connected with Malory and May Day celebrations in London, and then off towards the west and Wiltshire. Kevin and Mike introduced the tour with a talk on the background to May Day and Dark Age history. Much of the standard material was used - Nennius, Gildas, Annals and European sources.



Badon was listed as Arthur's possible famous battle, situating it at Liddington, Bath or Badbury Rings, and Camlan was thought to be Birdoswald - recent finds at the site were mentioned. However, there were hints at inaccuracies in the whole scenario, especially with the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain in the mid 4th century - suggesting that this was overplayed.

Our first stop was Winchester and the Great Hall of the Round Table. There Mike Stone discussed the dendrochronology and carbon dating of the Round Table which hangs on the wall of the Great Hall. The research shows that it was built circa 1250, possibly by a millwright and later painted during the reign of Henry VIII, who is depicted on the Table itself - thus connecting the Tudors with King Arthur (a subject I will be discussing in a future issue of DRAGON).



From Winchester we travelled to Cadbury Castle via Sherbourne for lunch. The ascent of Cadbury, despite threatening weather, proved much easier than expected (the route down turned out to be less so with lots of mud). Mike gave an interesting



Mike Stone (pointing) talks of the impressive defences at Cadbury Castle while standing on one of the ditches.

resumé of the known information on the re-fortified hill fort adding that the cruciform building once thought to be a church is now regarded as a pagan Romano-British construction. He also discussed the strategic situation in the area and something about the fort's possible Arthurian connections. Kevin quoted from the Welsh tale of Culhwch and Olwen with connection to the gatehouse. (One of the failings of the tour was the pronunciation of Welsh names, e.g. Culhwch, which is pronounced KILHOOCH - the CH like ch in the Scottish loch, being spoken of as Kilwitch.)

From Cadbury we moved direct to Porth Bay, near Newquay, Cornwall. On the way we passed Jamaica Inn, made famous by Daphne Du Maurier, and thus being the saga when Kevin played some of a tape of the book. We eventually heard the end of it on the last day of the tour (and quite enjoyable it was!). That evening after a very nice meal Mike gave a slide show about the archaeological evidence of what we had seen and what we were about to see. The show was both informative and entertaining.





Day two began with an early morning walk (in the rain), breakfast and the journey to Tintagel. The route to the famous site took us through the village of Camelford, near to the "Slaughter Bridge". This is supposed to have been the site of the battle of Camlan. Pieces of armour, etc. had been found in the area during the time of Leland (16th century) but it is more like that it was the site of a later battle fought in 825 AD. "We've just killed Arthur...now we have to give him birth." - and so on to Tintagel. The town itself was very much a tourist attraction with King Arthur's Pub, King Arthur's Cafe (nice Cornish pasties here!) and King Arthur's Bookshop (excellent selection of books here - plus note the plastic Excaliburs on sale). However, the Isle (for that is what it now is) of Tintagel, with its ruins was far more impressive than I had expected - rising high above the English Heritage bookshop and museum (there is a very good guide to the site on sale here). Apart from the wind and rain, Tintagel proved to be very interesting with a guided tour by Kevin and Mike (though some of the latest archaeological evidence wasn't covered in any detail).



Following a visit to the Church of St. Materiana we moved on to Dozmary Pool, where Kevin (as King Arthur) and Mike (Sir Bedivere) re-enacted the scene of returning Excalibur to the lake. Armed with a sword (remember the plastic Excaliburs) Kevin read from Malory while Mike pretended to throw the sword into the genuinely misty lake (in fact the





lake was so shrouded in mist you could tell whether it was a few feet wide or a mile). Mike didn't actually propel the sword into the lake, no sodden had rose to receive it and the sword was passed on to one of the children on the trip.

Castle Dore was next on our list. An impressive low site with dubious origins. Mike commented on the haphazardous way the site had been surveyed and the description of the post-holes as a Dark Age hall may have been wishful thinking. Pottery finds at this site are of a type that is common to both Pre- and Post- Roman. From there we visited the Drustanus Stone, which we were told had been at a different site and later moved to its present one. So Drustanus "hic iacit" somewhere else - though the stone itself is genuinely 6th century. Before returning to Porth Bay we visited the site of Damelioc now known as St. Dennis. After dinner that evening many of us enjoyed watching "Monty Python and the Holy Grail".

The final day of the tour started with a visit to Trevelgue Promontory Fort not far from the hotel followed by travelling to Padstow for the May Day festival with its rival 'obby 'orses. It was quite inspring to see this ancient custom kept alive in a crowded seaside town. (By the way Padstow also has an excellent fish and chip shop!) From ancient customs to the ancient town of Glastonbury and a visit to the Abbey. Mike guided a group of us around the ruins making some interesting comments about the site. Then it was back to London via Stonehenge (looking rather small and unimpressive) arriving around 10 in the evening.

So that was the tour of Arthurian sites in the South-West of England. It was a pity no members of DRAGON came along - but welcome to Alison Skinner and John Marsden who are now members of our society. On returning home the trip made me reflect on Cornwall and mull over certain aspects of its so-called Arthurian connections. Nevertheless, the tour was most enjoyable and well guided by Mike Stone and Kevin Flood - all power to their elbows. (The presence of Ishizuka Yuca and Yamano Yuko added a touch



A shop at Glastonbury which didn't 'have a lot' but seemingly combined 'Avalon' and 'Camelot'.

of Japan to my trip and made me look forward to my forthcoming return to their country. It also goes to show that Arthur, and the legends surrounding him, are known far and wide.)

From "Arthur's Britain" to

## The Land of Arthur

At the Oriel Gallery, Theatr Clwyd, Mold, from May 13th to June 18th was held a celebration of art inspired by Arthur and the Arthurian legend. The exhibition was organised by Mr. Ian Forrester Roberts of Gloucester. It consisted of a series of different displays: Original artwork by Alan Lee from the "Mabinogion", "Castles", "Merlin Dreams" and "The Sword in the Stone"; a collection of large photographs of artwork by Gustav Dore for "The Idylls of the King"; the Search for Arthur, including maps of places



connected with Arthur in Britain (mainly Wales) and Brittany; illustrations from the Winchester Panels of the Knights of the Round Table; a Round Table Zodiac; Celtic designs by Courtney Davis; Symbols of the Holy Grail - a consideration of Parzival, with text by Ian Forrester Roberts and illustrations by Courtney Davis; a freestanding model depicting the last battle of Arthur and his transportation to the Isle of Avalon; and finally a collection of illustrated books from the Arthurian Library, Llangollen.

On the whole it was a very satisfying exhibition with plenty of colour, especially the excellent designs by Courtney Davis and the artwork of Alan Lee. I must admit I found some of it badly put together, especially the Dore photographs which curled up at the bottom and some of the exhibits were nailed to display boards. The whole exhibition began to show signs of deterioration before it was taken down. Little historical material was used except for section on the "Search for Arthur". Unfortunately, influence from Wilson and Blackett could be seen in this part. Many of the sites were those talked about by the famous duo and the genealogy, reconstructed in considerable detail, was definitely based on their ideas. Mr. Forrester Roberts, when I spoke to him briefly on the opening night of the exhibition, didn't seem to know anything of the other family trees except for that connected with the romances.

In a local newspaper, The Evening Leader, Mr. Forrester Roberts was reported to have said: "People are not really interested in the real Arthur - who was undoubtedly a bandit type figure from the South Glamorgan area. What people do like and want to know more about is the Arthur of legends stories.

"This Arthur really is the one people love. No other character has inspired so much legend, story telling or geographical naming like this mythical man."

I felt obliged to respond to this and in a letter to the above mentioned newspaper I pointed out

that there were many people who were interested in the real Arthur and the search to find out what is behind the legends. I also commented on the South Glamorgan bandit and the dubious genealogies. I plugged DRAGON and other societies including PENDRAGON and BRITANNIA (however, the paper saw fit to edit my letter leaving out the latter two societies and their addresses).

The above exhibition was scheduled as part of Theatr Clwyd's Festival 3 which ran from June 1st till July 2nd, but opened somewhat early. The Festival also included a number of other Arthurian orientated events. Amongst these were Lancelot and Guinevere with Timothy West, Branwen by the Made in Wales team and The Birth of Merlin, a play by the late Elizabeth writer William Rowley (possibly with help from Bill Shakespeare?), starring Roy Hudd. Unfortunately due to the pressure of work I was unable to attend any of the above, but I did manage to get to the Arthurian Conference on the 18th June.

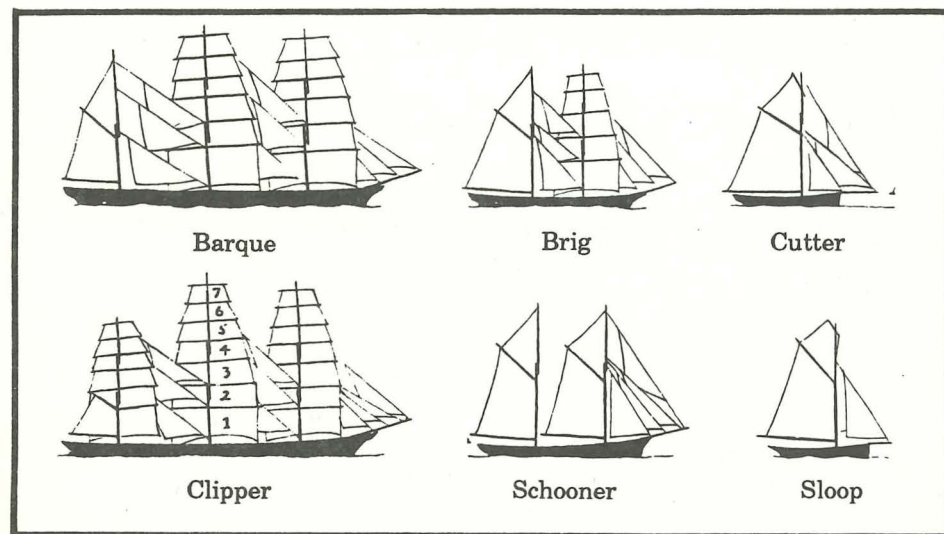
## Arthurian Conference

The Conference was held on a stifflingly hot day in the Clwyd Room of Theatr Clwyd. It consisted of a series of talks as different as chalk from cheese.

First was on DARK AGE NOVELS given by John James, author of "Men went to Catraeth", "Votan" and "Not for all the gold in Ireland" (originally published in the late 60s and early 70s but now available in paperback from Bantam Books). Mr. James gave an animated and amusing talk which discussed the needs of a novelist writing about the Dark Ages. He showed the ease in which the historian often writes of an event - e.g. the army left such and such with 4000 men and fought a battle at wherever. The novelist, however, has to fill in all the gaps - the whys, the wheres and the whens. He also pointed out that the novelist must know what he is talking about and used the following to explain: In a story about the Far



East one author talked about a warship harboured in a Chinese port. Throughout the narrative it was called (to mention a few of the word used) a barque, a brigantine, a clipper, a cutter, a schooner and a sloop. To anybody with any nautical knowledge, these are very different types of ship.



(See illustration to put over the point.) From there Mr. James went on to explore the evidence concerning Arthur and the Dark Age. He pointed out that it is often Collingwood's scenerio that is used by novelists on this subject. But modern research now shows a different picture and the take-over of Eastern Britain may not have been the same as is often thought. Where were the oh so terrible massacres? Was it plagues rather than war that decreased the British population making it easier for the Germanic elements to come out on top? Pertinent points indeed. Basically, he was saying that you must know your stuff to write about it. Should Le Carre's spy books be taken as fact? And equally should Collingwood be taken as gospel?

The second speaker was John Matthews, who was listed to talk about the Grail legends but spoke mainly about GAWAIN. John compared Gawain to earlier heroes, mainly Irish, and showed that he was the champion of the goddess. In the Welsh tales

Gwalchmai (Gawain) is the son of Gwyar - meaning blood, which reminds one of the Irish war-goddess the Morrigan, which in turn is like Morgana. In Gawain and the Green Knight we see Gawain like an old Celtic hero on trial. John indicated the strong pagan element in this story and compares the hag and Lady Bersilak as being characters similar to Irish tales when the hero meets the goddess of sovereignty. He also showed that it was Gawain who should have succeeded Arthurin the old way of the sister's son being next in line, but he was killed. Was it this paganistic element that caused Gawain to evolve from the paragon of a warrior to a villain in Malory?

There then followed a series of question and answers which indicated to me that a good percentage of the audience were more interested in the legendary and mystical aspect of the Arthurian scene than the search for the truth behind the myth.

After lunch Professor Bedwyr Lewis Jones was lined up to speak about Merlin in Wales, but, as the Professor put it, Merlin had played a trick on him and he thought he was there to talk about the evolution of Arthur. So that's what he did. He began by asking a question about who believed Arthur as legend and who as a real person, calling for a show of hands. Then he said he would like to ask everyone opinion and would probably get as many different answers - and there lies the problem. He went on to imagine a library of books on Arthur:

Collingwood - half page on Arthur with him as the last of the Romans;

Blair - no mention at all;

Nikolai Tolstoy - actually dating the Battle of Badon to Friday, 29th January 501 AD;

Markale - Arthur as a warrior and rustler of cattle; Professors Bromwich and Alcock discussing the North versus the South at an International Arthurian Society Conference; or

Arthur's grave in Glamorganshire (is it any sillier than dating the Battle of Badon so precisely?).

So what do we have tradition and who controlled



tradition? - the bards - the propagandists of the courts. Tradition can be manipulated and history is what people were told to believe (take for example China and Russia).

Arthur begins merely as a name in a number of poems, an entry in Annals or a paragraph in Nennius. Here we have a warrior fighting the English, written down at a time the British needed a hero. Thus we have Arthur Mark I. Soon he evolved into a giant slayer and killer of monsters. Once it was the gods who hunted the boar but now Arthur. However, he wasn't quite a god - superhuman but not supernatural. Therefore Arthur Mark II. Growing out of the Arthur of the early stories we have Arthur becoming a king or even an emperor. Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his best-seller and we then have Arthur Mark III. Later, under the influence of the French romances Arthur began to take second fiddle to his knights - he was passive and they had all the adventures. This was Arthur Mark IV. (Of course there were other Arthurs, such as the Arthur of the saints - say Arthur Mark IIa.) Using this system Merlin played no part in Arthurs Mark I and II but made an appearance with Arthur Mark III and was well established by Mark IV.

Since then Arthur, as a hero of Wales, has gone and today the heroes of patriotic Welsh are Llewelyn the Last and Owain Glyndwr. The Professor finished, as he put it, on a politically contentious note.

Next to speak was Caitlin Matthews, John Matthews' wife, and an authoress (see this issue's REVIEW). Her subject concerned THE SOVEREIGNTY OF BRITAIN. Arthur, like the kings of old, had to wed the land - in other words the Mother Goddess. Like Gawain, discussed earlier, there was definite Irish connections here. She discussed a possible framework in which the goddess and the king (hero) fitted into. The flowerbride, the warrior woman, the Queen of the Hallows and the Hag. Guinevere - Gwenhwyfar of Welsh tradition, is represented in the Triads as being three wives of Arthur. Is this a connection with the triple goddess? This Celtic concept of the sovereignty of the land being re-

presented by a woman - beautiful or ugly - occurs again and again in the Arthurian legends. The Irish background to these legends seem to be very strong.

This lecture would have been more interesting if it hadn't been so disjointed, with some rather long pauses. However, I am quite sure it must have been very difficult to concentrate in the rather oppressive heat of that afternoon.

After coffee break the final talk was by Bob Stewart on THE BIRTH OF MERLIN. Her certainly put over his enthusiasm for the work and indicated that its influences were not purely Geoffrey of Monmouth. Behind the basic story of the strange birth of the prophet Merlin was a comedy with its roots in old ritual plays - mummers, etc. He also pointed out some interesting background to the play including the appearance of a comet in 1618 which may have played some part in the success of the drama. Also he believed that the famous (or is it infamous) Dr. John Dee may have been used as a model for a character in the play. Finally, Bob believed that Rowley, who wrote the drama, seemed to have written parts paralleling the Vita Merlini, which it is very unlikely he would have known of or read.

The transcript of the play The Birth of Merlin

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Overall this was an interesting conference with some fascinating discussion. However, a good percentage of it was concerned with the legends and what relevance they may have. It did have its pitfalls - it was held on a Sunday, the weather was rather hot and the price of the conference didn't include the usual extras like coffee or tea and biscuits. Nevertheless, it was good to meet John and Caitlin Matthews for the first time and to see Courtney Davis again, after so many years.

## The Works of Dafydd J.

Finally, from the 15th July to the 19 August an exhibition of the paintings and illustrations of David Jones was held at Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno, Gwynedd in N. Wales. Arranged by the South Bank Centre, it consisted of a cross section of his works and a tape/slide presentation with commentary by the artist. I visited the exhibition on one warm Saturday morning and was enchanted both by the artwork and the words of the man (I wish I'd had more time). But what has this got to do with Arthur and the Dark Ages some might ask?

David Jones was passionately interested in Roman Britain, the Arthurian tales and the Mabinogion. His paintings and poetry are full of Celtic symbols and he used Arthurian analogies and the Gododdin when writing about his experiences during the First World War in his "In Parenthesis". Some may recognise his work from "The Four Queens" on the cover of the Penguin Classics Mabinogion or "Tir y Blaenau" on the front of the English version of *The Oxford Companion to Welsh Literature*.

He was born at Brockley, Kent, in 1902, went to Camberwell Art School and the Westminster School of Art and served with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the First World War, taking part in the attack on the infamous Mametz Wood. A close friend of English artist Eric Gill and Rene Hague, the translator of *Chason de Roland*, David Jones died in 1974.

# Face to Face with Saxons

## The Mystery of the Hythe Skulls

by  
Roger Willcox



In the crypt of St. Leonard's church, Hythe, Kent, is a stack of some 8000 thigh bones, about 2000 skulls and a miscellany of other human bones, thus we have the remains of some 4000 people. But who were they and where did they come from?

The bones have been examined twice, once in 1908 and again in 1932. The 1908 examination showed that many of the skulls contained earth and traces of brain and wood fibres from coffins. Obviously at some time in the past the remains were buried and then disinterred. The practice of periodically clearing graveyards was common during the Middle Ages and later. Indeed the lack of gravestones in early churchyards must often have led to burials being placed one upon another, as occurs in *Hamlet* when the gravedigger finds the skull of Yorick.

A part of the church itself, the North transept,



was a Saxon chapel. If the usual custom was followed the graveyard would have been in the South. When the Norman church was added, this must have gone through the graveyard. It might be that the disturbed bones were placed in the crypt below the altar.

In the past various theories have been put forward as to why the skulls are there. They are as follows:

1. They come from a battle.
2. They are the result of a disaster.
3. They come from the clearing of the churchyard.

The battle theorist point to the damage which is evident on many of the skulls, as can be seen from the photograph. In support they mention three battles as taking place near Hythe. The first is quoted as taking place in 455, the second in 853 and lastly a battle with the French in 1292.

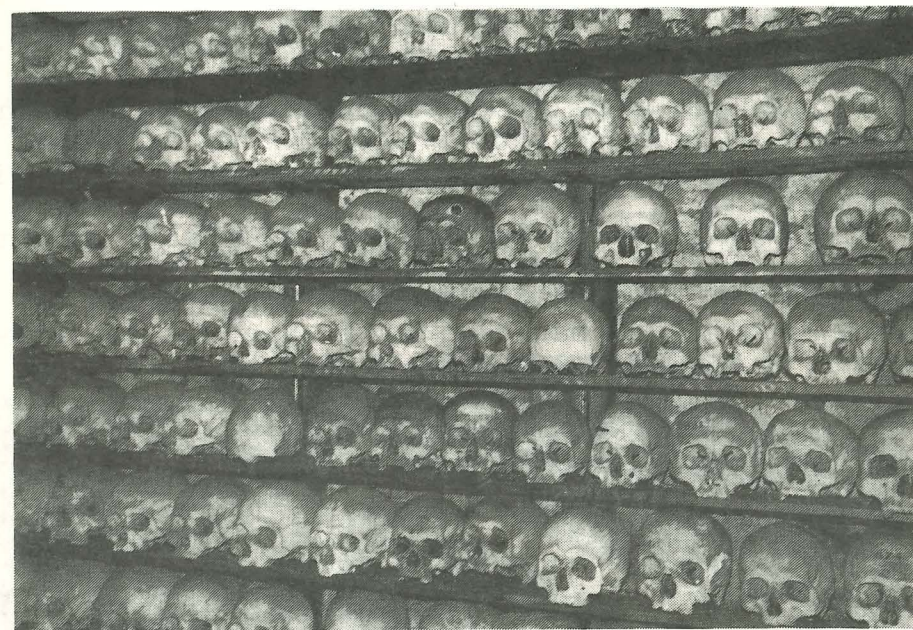
However, this theory displays a number of weaknesses. Firstly, given the small size of armies at the time, the number of bones would make this unlikely. Secondly, amongst the skulls are those of women, children and even two dwarfs. Finally, the marks on the skulls were in fact made long after death. In a rather gruesome experiment in 1908 Professor Parsons attacked a long buried skull and a newly dead one with a hatchett. In every instance the fresh skull splintered with a jagged edge. The old skull was left with a clean cut as displayed on the skulls in question. The wounds thus may be from spades used in digging up the graveyard.

Two disasters are put forward as possible sources for the bones, one is a great storm and flood of 1287, the second the plague. However, these also may be discounted. In 1287 the population of the whole of Kent was probably not 4000. As for the plague, the number of burials between 1587 to 1642 averages between 30 and 43 per year. Thus we have a collection of about 100 years worth of burials. We cannot therefore look at one drastic event as the source of the bones. This leaves us with the probability that the bones came from a clearing of the graveyard, either with the building of the Norman church, or with later clearances and discoveries.

Who were these people? The shape of the skull of various races can be classified by its Cephalic Index. The C.I. is worked out by multiplying the breadth of the skull by 100 and dividing it by the length:

$$C.I. = \frac{B \times 100}{L}$$

The C.I. for a modern English skull is 75. Those from the London plague pits have a C.I. of 76. The average C.I. for the Hythe skulls is 81 or 82, depending on the area of the pile from which the skulls are taken. Thus the skulls may have been from



different times or places.

The only skulls known in Britain with such a high C.I. are those of the Bronze Age, but most authorities believe the Hythe skulls to be of a later date. The only other English skulls of nearly such a high C.I. are from Spitalfields, and are known to be Roman.

Modern C.I. comparisons can be found in skulls in Italy, Switzerland, South German and parts of France (but not in Normandy). It can be inferred that the skulls are the descendants of people from



these areas.

Hythe was a part of a Roman harbour which included Portus Lemanis (Lympne) and the Roman fort at Studful Castle. Romney Marsh was partly drained in Roman times and so traders, soldiers, sailors and settlers from Rome and adjacent countries may well have lived in the Hythe district. Not that these skulls are those of Romans, but it is believed we are looking at their descendants from some time prior to 1000 AD. This is supported by the presence in the bone pile of unglazed pottery which, according to Thomas Wright who discovered it in 1856, resembled parts of Anglo-Saxon burial urns. During the various restacking of the bones, Medieval pottery and even an Edwardian lady's shoe have been found - evidence of frequent restackings. However, if Wright is correct then a pre-1000 AD date can be put forward for these people. We are thus looking at the skulls of 'Dark Age' people.

Close examination of some of the skulls show up some interesting curiosities. Only one skull displays a sword wound and the wound shows signs of tissue growth. The man obviously survived the blow. Another, a man of between 60 and 65 at death had

survived being trepanned. This skull can be seen just above the centre of the photograph.

Very few of the skulls display tooth decay, even the aforementioned old man's skull has only two teeth that show signs of decay.

Amongst the thigh bones are some which display mended fractures, most of which overlay resulting in shortened limbs. One displays osteomyelitis and there is an example of curvature of the spine. Amongst the skulls was as found the platted red hair shown in the photograph. The colour is not the result of discolouration from the earth but is the original hair colour.

Thus we have the remains of 4000 people who lived and died during the Anglo-Saxon period. However, apart from a few details of injury and illness their individual identities must remain a mystery.

## Archaeology Notes

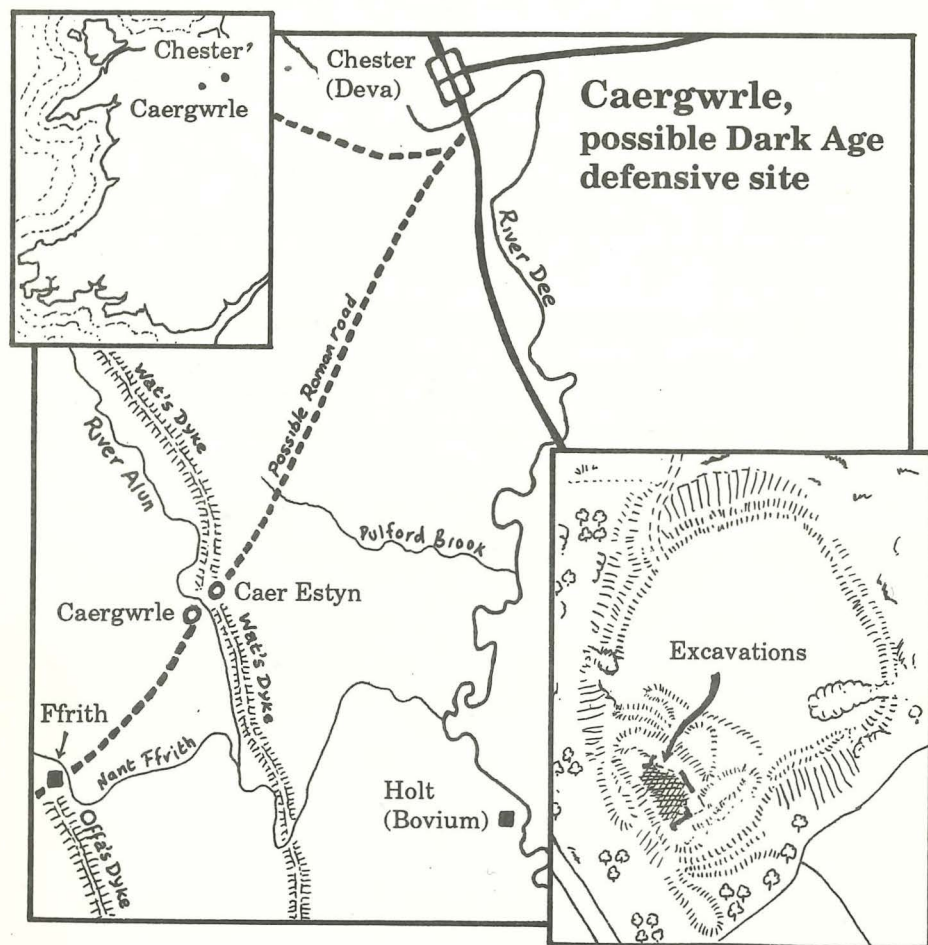
# Caergwrle

On the A451 Mold Road between Mold and Wrexham, in Clwyd, N. Wales, is a steep hill overlooking the village of Caergwrle. The site is occupied by an earth bank and a Medieval castle, but recent archaeological finds have added an extra element to the area. Traditionally the village has been thought to have connection with either the Romans or a giant. Caergwrle has been given two possible meanings: *Caer Gawr Lle* - the fort of the great legion, or *Caer Gwrle* - Gwrle's fort. The latter is based on legend of a local giant who is said to be buried on a common-Arffedogiad y Wrach. There has, according to antiquarians, been finds of Roman origin in the vicinity and the site seems to be strategically placed, together with another site, *Caer Estyn*, near a Roman road which leads to a Roman villa at *Ffrith* and beyond to *Caer Gai*. Both *Caer Estyn* and





Caergwrle Hill were thought to be Iron Age hill-forts. In the Middle Ages, Dafydd ap Gruffydd, brother of Llywelyn the Last, started to build a castle on the hill. Though never finished by him (he was captured in 1283 and executed) the castle building was continued by Master James of St. George until it was damaged by fire. By 1335 the castle was recorded as being a ruin.



During excavations, which began in 1988, under the direction of John Manley, County Archaeologist, a bank was cut through revealing some interesting results. The bank was found to be a wall consisting of dry stone front and back (roughly 1½ metres wide)

with a rubble and earth in-fill. Oak charcoal was found under the wall and two pieces were sent to Holland, where scientists made radio-carbon dating tests. Both pieces of charcoal gave similar results giving figures of roughly 300 AD. "These dates add a whole new chapter to the history of Caergwrle," said John Manley. "We appear to have an earlier fortification on Caergwrle Hill dating back to either the Late Roman Period or conceivably the Dark Ages. The site is potentially the most significant in Wales." Mr. Manley indicated that the fortifications were probably built by locals and that 300 AD is the earliest date for the construction of these defences. Sometime, possibly at the same time when other hill forts were being re-fortified, a dry stone wall defense system was built on Caergwrle Hill.

These, of course, are just the bare facts - further excavations will be needed to put some more flesh on the bones. I will keep you posted on any further information concerning Caergwrle. (There is an archaeological day school in November, at which further details may be forthcoming.)

## PARCHED FIELDS

As most of you know, though members abroad may not, we in Britain are having a rather hot summer. There are hose-pipe restrictions in many places, the level of water in reservoirs is getting low and the temperature hasn't been so high since 1976. This has a definite event both on agricultural and archaeology. Over the years aerial archaeology has become increasingly more important for pin-pointing sites for excavation. The hot weather is therefore especially useful to the archaeologist. "As grain-crops ripen in late June, July and early August the ditches of former settlements, burial mounds and the like are revealed as green marks in the yellowing fields, the plants above the filled-in ditches growing more strongly and ripening later than those in the shallower soil alongside." (Archaeology in Clwyd, 7, p.25) These green marks are usually called



'crop-marks' and are, as the quote indicates, signs of somekind of structure beneath the surface, or to be more exact the remains of it.

Throughout Britain aerial archaeologists have been having, excuse the pun, a field day. Over three hundred previously unknown sites have been discovered. These range across all periods from the Neolithic to the Dark Ages. From the Roman period the sites of two temples, three villas and seven military forts and camps have been found, according to an article in *THE INDEPENDENT*, 4th July 1989. Of the Dark Ages twelve Anglo-Saxon "sunken" houses have been traced near Norwich, Norfolk.

But this is just the beginning and with the continuing hot weather it is certain that many more new sites will come to light. The year 1989 could become a bonanza for the archaeologist.

## J.N.L. Myres

Recently the world of archaeology lost one of its finest. John Nowell Linton Myres was born at Oxford in 1902 and died at Kennington, near Oxford, on the 25th July 1989. During his college years he became actively interested in archaeology and after doing some excavation work he was spotted by Mortimer Wheeler and asked to run a dig at the Caerleon amphitheatre in 1926. He didn't agree with all of the 'great man's' conclusion and an enstrangement took place between them some years later. In the 1930s Sir George Clark asked Myres to work on the first volume of the Oxford History of England series. This was published in 1936 and became the famous "Collingwood and Myres", or to give its correct title: "Roman Britain and the English Settlements". In fact it was two books in one with Myres producing the second part. However, he had been told that R.G. Collingwood would concentrate only on the Roman period and that he should write about the early settlement of England - Sir Frank Stenton was to do the second volume on "Anglo-Saxon England".

Meanwhile, Collingwood had his own ideas and wrote something on the Dark Ages which was to effect many people's vision of Arthur. Myres disagreed with Collingwood, believing there wasn't enough evidence to make such conclusions. For instance even in 1986 Myres wrote: "To describe the whole period of the three hundred years from 350 to 650 as 'The Age of Arthur', as is done for example by J. Morris in his book of that title (1973), shows a total disregard of the valid historical evidence."

Since working on the Oxford History of England he has written a number of books including: Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England, A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery of the Pagan Period, collaborations with B. Green, and W.H. Southern on Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, and contributed to many journals. In 1985 (published a year later) he revised The English Settlements and it appeared as a separate volume of the Oxford History of England Volume 1B to Peter Salway's Vol. 1A "Roman Britain". He was married to Joan Mary Lowell and had two sons. His other interests including librarianship and he was Bodley Librarian from 1947 to 1965. He was also President of the Council of British Archaeology, 1959-61, President of the Society of Antiquaries and was awarded the CBE in 1972. According to the obituary in *THE INDEPENDENT* J.N.L. Myres' "output of scholarly publications continued unabated until 1988, his lively, energetic and investigative mind remaining wonderfully active, despite failing eyesight and other bodily infirmities."

### COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

**FOLK MEMORY AND  
GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH**

**by Reg Dand**

**THE LAST OF THE ROMANS**

**by Kurt Hunter Mann**



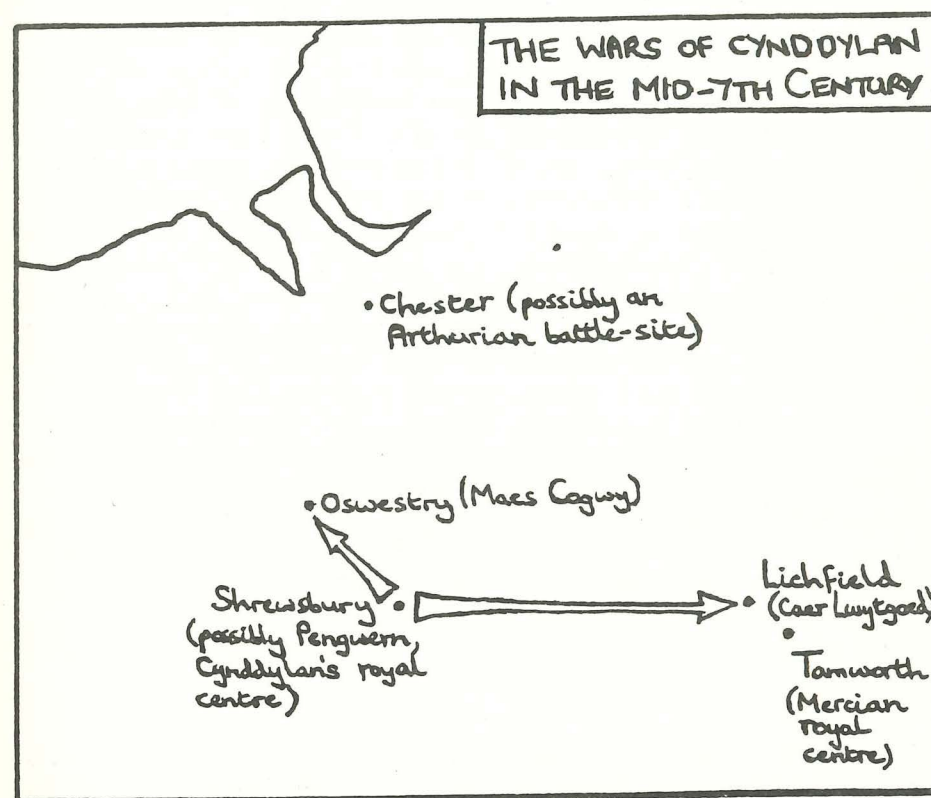
# Arthur and "Marwnad Cynddylan"

by  
Nick Grant

A poetic eulogy to Cynddylan, ruler of Southern Powys in the mid 7th century, contains a potentially early reference to Arthur that does not appear to have attracted a great deal of attention. A mass of poetry relating to Cynddylan and his family have survived, which seem to represent the poetic interludes in a prose/verse saga. The composition of the material has been dated to the mid 9th century by Ifor Williams (1972, p.150-1), the destruction of Cynddylan's family and kingdom in the 7th century paralleling the overthrow of the kingdom of Powys at the time of the poetry's composition, lending the saga its essential force and relevance. However, Williams distinguished from the saga poetry a eulogy "Marwnad Cynddylan" which he argued to be contemporary with, and therefore probably addressed to, Cynddylan (Williams is supported by Richards, 1973, p.142-3). The eulogy's triumphant, boastful tone certainly contrasts markedly with the doleful remembrances of the saga poetry.

"Marwnad Cynddylan" celebrates the warring exploits of Cynddylan and his brothers in nine stanzas, which culminate in an attack on Caer Lwytgoed, Lichfield, and the sacking of the monastery at this place. If this was an Anglo-Saxon establishment, the attack must have taken place after 653, when Mercia began to be Christianised. The possibility that the monastery was British seems unlikely, but cannot be ruled out, however (Kirby, 1977, p. 37). The 9th century poetry relating to Cynddylan makes him a participant at the battle of Maes Cogwy, Maserfield, near Oswestry, which took place in 641, but ultimately his death and the destruction of his kingdom at the hands of the Anglo-Saxons. It seems reasonable to associate this with

the rise of Wulfhere, king of Mercia, to become overlord of southern England in the 660s. It is therefore probably not far wrong to date the attack on Lichfield - and thus if Williams is correct, the composition of the poem - to c.660.



The reference to Arthur is brief and passing. The relevant passage, in stanza seven, runs:

"Brothers fed me, better it was when they lived  
Sturdy Arthur's cubs, steadfast stronghold.  
At Caer Lwytgoed they were not sated  
There were blood-stained crows, flesh plunder-  
ing.

They pierced shield with spike, Cynddrwynyn's  
sons."

(trans. by Clancy, 1971, p. 87-89; Cynddrwynyn was father of Cynddylan.)

Much like the potentially earliest reference of all to Arthur, that in "The Gododdin" of c.600, this



tells us little more than that Arthur was regarded as a paragon of warring heroism, to whom Cynddylan and his brothers were worthy successors. However, if both the Gododdin and Cynddylan references are authentic and not interpolations (and there is nothing in their context or wording to suggest they are), then taken together they suggest that Arthur's martial fame was already celebrated across widely spread areas within perhaps a century of his death.

This supposition is supported by the sudden burst in popularity, in the late 6th century, in the use of the previously very uncommon name of Arthur. Four Britons, respectively a prince of Dalriada, a ruler in Dyfed, the son of a Briton, possibly from Kintyre, and the grandfather of a priest of Dalriada, are known to have borne this name around this time (Barber, 1972, p.29-37). The inference is that all were named after the earlier hero, although it is not clear why the name's popularity was not then maintained. Therefore although the reference to Arthur in the "Marwnad Cynddylan" is not particularly informative in itself, it does buttress the other earliest evidence relating to Arthur in suggesting that his fame spread quickly and widely after his death, probably through the mechanism of heroic poetry.

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*Ed. Those of you who have been with us for a number of years may remember an article I wrote in Vol. 2 No. 8. In this I made similiar comment to the above,*

*went somewhat further and indicated that the reference to "cub", in early poetry represented a son of or descendant of someone. In this case Cynddylan was a possible descendant of Arthur. Nick had not read that article and therefore it is of interest that the Marwnad Cynddylan is known to others. I sent Nick a copy of the article and he replied with some points.*

*In the eulogy there is mention of the line of Cadell, founder of the leading family of Powys, though there is no known connection either between Cadell and Cynddylan or Arthun and Cynddylan.*

*"(1) It is possible that in "Marwnad Cynddylan" it is Cynddylan himself who is referred to as of the line of Cadell, i.e. the ancestor of the kings of Powys. Alternatively, if it is another (unnamed) patron of the poet who is referred to, this may still imply that Cynddylan was also of this line, since the eulogy would be of more interest to the poet's patron if it concerned one of his kindred. If either of these suggestions hold water, this must be reconciled with the hint that Cynddylan was descended from Arthur - still quite possible if a family link between Arthur and Cadell could be discovered.*

*(2) The poem "The Battle of Argoed Llwyfain" by Taliesin uses the term "a cub of Coel's line" in referring to Urien of Rheged, who certainly was descended from Coel. I am not sure how the original Welsh in this poem compares with that of the Cynddylan poem. However, it would be useful to collect all such uses of the terms "whelps" and "cubs" in early poetry, to see how often these terms are used in the sense of descendants, or, taking the alternative argument, how often in the early poetry heroes of the present are compared to (unrelated) heroes of the past."*

*Ed. On both counts Nick is correct to question the position of Cynddylan. I have been unable to clean up, as yet, the connection between Cynddylan and Cadell. The poem is ambiguous on that point and it is difficult to tell whether Cynddylan or someone else is being spoken about. As for the term "cub"*



being representative of a son or descendant, I have reference to a few other examples apart from Unien. For example Llywelyn Fawr is described as: "yn keneu kynlas" (this could be a comparison with a hero of the past since I have been unable to find a relationship between Llywelyn and Cynlas. However, in Canu Heledd there is a poem called "Cynddylan" and one stanza calls Cynddylan "Keneu Kyndrwyn" and it is known that he was the son of Cyndrwyn(yn). Both in Canu Llywarch Hen and Canu Taliesin Sir Ifor Williams indicated that "ceneu" meant "son, descendant".

In the above mentioned article I also suggested that the court of Cynddylan (and therefore may be that of Anthur) was the Shropshire hill fort Bury Walls.

"(3) Fieldwork may be able to indentify any surface indications or elements in the ground plan of Bury Walles (or indeed any of the other candidates for the site of Pengwern) that might indicate reformation/remodelling subsequent to the defences' original construction. Ian Burrow's book "Hill-forts and Hill-top Settlements in Somerset 1st-8th Centuries AD" discusses this topic."

Ed. Many thanks to Nick for the article and comments. If you are interested in the poem "Marwnad Cynddylan" I will be happy to reproduce it in the next issue (in English and Welsh). Please let me know.

# History for Children

by  
Helen Hollick

My daughter, Katherine, is approaching six years of age. (Ed. This article was written last year so Helen's daughter is nearer seven by now.) She is as passionate about history as I am. (NO, I have not INTENTIONALLY brainwashed her!)

Her awareness of the past began, as with most children, with the fasciantion of the dinosaurs. By

4 years old, she knew many of their names, and we spent many hours, investigating the giant skeletons at the Natural History Museum. (What a shame there is now an entrance fee. I can no longer afford to take in the odd, quick, visit to see these dinosaurs whenever I happen to be in Town on some outing or other.)

Her "passion" blossomed in the summer of '86. We spent a week at Criccieth, Gwynedd. For the most part, when not idling on the beach, we visited castles. Harlech, she was particularly impressed with. I purchased many books about castles, which we poured over together, and, for my own interest, I also obtained a selection of books about Romans.

Naturally, we visited Segontium. Kathy had already heard about Romans, had seen the pictures in my books and had listened to what I had occasionally told her. On the journey toward Caernarfon, my husband remarked "perhaps we'll see a few Romans there." Kathy promptly replied "don't be silly Daddy they are all dead." I thought, "at least SOMETHING has clicked!"

We spent about an hour and a half at Segontium. For an adult, this may may not seem long, but for those of you who know, or have, young children, you will appreciate that to hold a child's imagination for even five minutes is often quite impossible!

From that holiday, her interest has burst into full bloom - York, and the Jorvik Centre, in particular playing an important part. Kathy LOVED Jorvik, and desperately wants to go back (so do I, but York is a long way from London!) The scenes, set out so lifelike, really MEAN something to a child's eye of things. Kathy could see for herself, the different way they lived, dressed and worked.

Although she does not have a clear picture of the sequence of events, muddling Vikings with Romans for instance, she understands that these things happened "in olden days". I must admit though, I was not quite sure about her question, "Mummy did you know any cavemen when you were a little girl?" Hmm.

Febraury 1988 found us at Hadrian's Wall. A



20 year ambition of mine achieved at last! Kathy enthused over Vindolanda. The reconstructed watch towers, had to be investigated, and still, she talks of "the little boy and his mummy in that Roman kitchen". For those of you who have not been there, I would recommend it - especially for those with children. Vindolanda has a small museum, just right for children, not too long and boring. One room of the museum has been reconstructed as a Roman kitchen, with figures, and a taped narrative. Kathy insisted on listening to it three times. (An advantage of out of season is the lack of crowds!) Again, these re-constructions mean so much more to youngsters - and to long suffering husbands!

At Housesteads, we traced some of the buildings - how I wish we had been able to spend more time there! We discussed what each one had been, what it had been used for. We pretended to be Romans. We patrolled the Wall, we "spent a pretend penny" in the latrine, bathed in the bath house, galloped on our hill ponies through the north gate to the Commander's quarters.... How much we learned that day!

I have told Kathy a little of later history - Tudor in particular, with the approach of the year's Armada celebrations. Out of the blue, while discussing Roman Baths, she said "Mummy, if I had to meet a Roman or a lady in a big dress (she meant Elizabethan), I think I'd rather meet the Roman."

"Oh? Why is that?"

"Because the ladies must have been smelly as they never washed. Romans were nice and clean."

I wonder if they really were?

### BOOKS

I am fortunate, I suppose, in the fact that Kathy is also as passionate as I am over books. I read her stories as a tiny baby - finding it easier to sit cuddling her and read aloud, whatever I happened to be reading. That way she received my attention - while I read my novel!

Although the following are published for children, I have found a number of them to be interesting at an adult level, particularly in areas where I

know very little! History, set out in a language children can understand, and with many lively and colourful illustrations can be more entertaining than the often dull and dreary adult reference works!

First, FICTION.

There is, unfortunately very little for children. Stories are mostly aimed for the approaching-teens and adolescent. (Rosemary Sutcliff for one - it was her book *The Eagle of the Ninth*, which introduced me to history when I was 14 - I LOVED it - I still do!) There is very little for the infant age group (5-7), which is not surprising as I think Kathy's interest is not over common. Apparently most children have difficulty remembering and understanding last week! Again, though, I found a delightful, easy, story by Ms. Sutcliff. Called *A CIRCLET OF OAK LEAVES*, (Beaver Books) it is a typical example of her excellent work. Written simply, in clear, bold print, ideal for children. I read it to Kathy and she loved it. The story is about Aracos, who claimed he won the CORONA CIVICA - the highest award for personal bravery - in his youth. But, there is a mystery. Aracos, is not all that he seems....

Ladybird Books have re-published many of the classic tales. One, is *KING ARTHUR*. I am not over-sure that I like it. The story is about a boy, Bran, whose adventures begin when he meets Sir Lancelot and is taken to King Arthur's Castle at Camelot. While the storyline was simple to follow, and the illustrations colourful, I thought there was something lacking. The legends of Arthur can be told brilliantly - or boringly. I am rather afraid, the Ladybird book rather drifted toward the latter.

Not so, another re-telling of one part of the "legend". *SIR GAWAIN AND THE LOATHLY LADY* re-told by Selina Hastings, illustrated by Juan Wijnsaard (Walker Books, £2.25). I confess, I bought this for myself! The illustrations are magnificent! There is mystery, suspense and what all children adore, horror! The loathly lady is certainly that! Each page is bordered by a delightful pattern, the pictures themselves, to quote *THE GUARDIAN* "wonder-



fully rich". This book won the Kate Greenway Medal for children's book illustration 1985.

BEOWULF. How many of us are familiar with this tale? It is a complex story, but as told by Kevin Crossley-Holland and excellently illustrated by Charles Keeping, (OUP) this version for children, is one of the best. It is told in strong, rhythmical prose, with all the passion and wonder familiar to us "grown-ups". I was particularly grateful for the list of pronunciation of names so important for reading aloud! Although not suitable for Kathy's age group just yet, I know she will love it when the time comes. I was enthralled by it! I am certain children will be especially keen on the gory parts! There are quite a few torn bloodied limbs!

#### NON FICTION.

Usborne Publications has the edge here. They have several books. Their TIME TRAVELLER series is worth every penny. Loaded with information. I have KNIGHTS AND CASTLES, VIKINGS and ROME AND ROMANS. There is so much going on in each illustration, full of details and interest. Each book is about one particular family, in the case of Rome, it is the family of Petronius, a rich nobleman, and his wife Livia. As each page is turned, we see a bird's eye view of the road to Rome; the splendour of Rome itself; Petronius' house; going to school - and everyday life in Rome. With the eldest son, we "join the army" and attack a citadel! Each time Kathy and I look at these books we spot something new!

LIVING IN ROMAN TIMES, (Usborne First History) is along the same lines, but not done in the same "fun" way. Of the two, I prefer the first.

Finally, in the Usborne range, POCKET GUIDE TO ANCIENT ROME by Anne Millard, is crammed with snippets of information. Extremely useful for taking on trips to Roman remains and museums.

My last book is a Dinosaur Publication, LIVING IN ROMAN TIMES by Althea. Simple, easy, but full of information for young readers. To give an example: "we know how the Romans cooked by looking at the cooking pots and other kitchen items that have been found. People cooked in pots over a charcoal fire."

So much information in such a few words!

Much of teaching children history, comes from the enthusiasm of parents, of course. But, oh how grateful I am for these marvellous books!

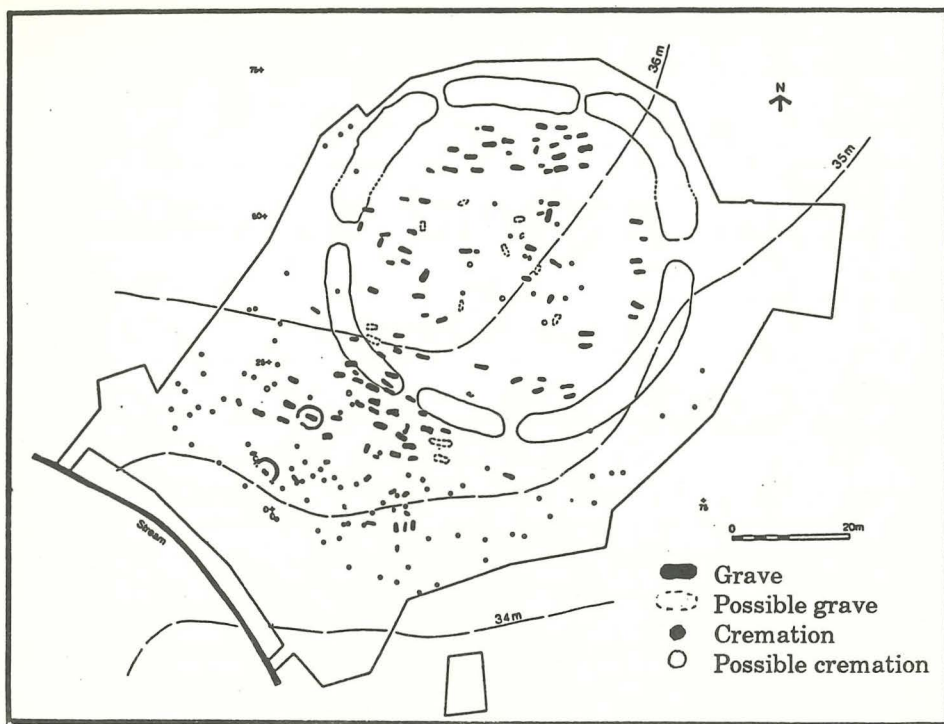
## Springfield Lyons

by  
Steve Pollington

One of the unforeseen benefits of aviation has been the discovery of hitherto unsuspected historical sites, in the form of "crop-marks", variations in the colouring and quality of vegetation growing over pits, trenches and buried structures. Organic matter such as timber releases nutrients into the soil while quantities of stone are less porous than soil; naturally, the composition of the soil at such places will differ from that of the surrounding, undisturbed earth. Many of these sites are virtually invisible at ground level, and have consequently been ploughed over. The expansion of modern towns has made it important to identify and excavate such sites before they are submerged or destroyed by housing or industrial development, or further damage by agricultural practices.

An example is the Springfield Lyons site, about two miles from modern Chelmsford, Essex; the march of suburbia threatened to engulf a cropmark site, and this has consequently been systematically investigated since 1979. Attention was first drawn to the site by the presence of a "cursus", a circular feature which proved to be a ring-ditch of 60m. diameter enclosing a Late Bronze Age round house and other buildings. The site did not appear to have been inhabited in the Celtic Iron Age, but have retained some local significance since a votive offering was made there - an iron La Tene sword and scabbard. However, no Belgic, Roman or Romano-British material was found apart from backfill in trenches which contained sherds of pottery and tiling; this was probably due to the practice





Cemetery, taken from "The Bronze Age and Saxon Settlement at Springfield Lyons, Essex. An Interim Report". (Illustrations also from this report.)

of manuring the fields with domestic refuse and dung, carried out by some unidentified local Roman-period habitation. The cursus would seem to have vanished from the local landscape.

Yet we may be sure that the site had not been entirely forgotten, even though the Romano-British had no practical use for it, because the whole area of the earthwork was used as a burial ground by the local Saxons. Finds of unmistakably Germanic cremation and inhumation burials were made during excavation, dating from circa 450-600 AD. Local soil conditions do not favour the survival of organic material, but sufficient metalwork remains for reasonably close dating, as well as a quantity of pottery.

There are at least 103 certain inhumation burials placed mainly within the cursus and outside it to the south west. The bodies lay mainly east-west, some evidently in wooden coffins, long since

perished like the bodies themselves, though some graves still contained teeth. The 100 certain cremation graves were nearly all found in funerary urns - those not put into some pots may have been enclosed in wooden boxes or leather bags. A handful of these burials were inside the cursus, the majority outside to the south, southwest and west. The remains of two small barrows or burial mounds were detected, one containing an inhumation, the other two cremation urns side-by-side.

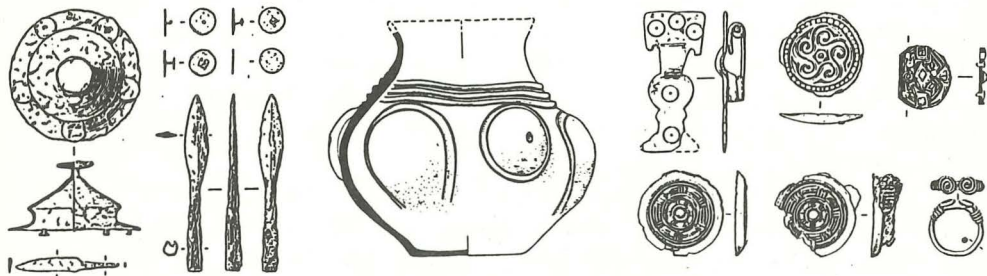
The entire site was built over during the later Saxon period, when formed part of a probably sizeable estate.

The importance of Springfield Lyons, and other sites in the south east such as Mucking, with which it has many similarities, lies in their showing the newly arrived English adapting to local conditions and respecting "native" tradition, at least to the extent that they chose a site for their dead which clearly had some part in local tradition (legend? mythology?) even though it had been abandoned for more than 500 years and consisted of nothing more visibly imposing than a circular depression in the ground (the ditch has silted up in the intervening centuries). The cursus was sited on slightly rising ground above a stream, and can hardly have been chosen for any outstanding topographical quality; the distribution of graves shows that it was the cursus itself which drew the attention and respect of the Saxons.

The graveyard was in many ways "mixed": mixed in sex - the presence of strings of beads indicates that some of the dead were women, who dress was Germanic rather than Roman while a few military articles (spearheads, shield bosses) show that men also were buried there; mixed in culture - brooches found are of both "saucer" and "small-long" types, indicating that either these English were of catholic taste, or that they were drawn from a variety of continental peoples; mixture in belief - cremation and inhumation burials taking place side-by-side argues for very different religious systems and ideas about "afterlife" within a single community.



Research has shown that the Essex coast and riverways were settled by small bands of Germanic "feoderati" or treaty-troops who served the Roman administration as a kind of coastguard-cum-Highway Patrol. It is not necessary to assume that contact with local inhabitants was forbidden them, even though the location of their settlements was



strictly controlled - these were commonly found just outside Roman centres or on coasts or important waterways. It may be, then, that here Saxon mercenaries absorbed elements of the native population - either girls as brides or young men as recruits - and in this way vague traditions concerning the circular earthwork were transmitted to the new community, who chose it as a significant or holy place in which to bury their dead. The blending of the new with the old, of the English with the British, began with such instances of a new and insecure community seeking to root itself in the past of their adopted home.

"The Bronze Age and Saxon Settlements at Springfield Lyons, Essex. An Interim Report" by David G. Buckley and John D. Hedges, published by Essex County Council Archaeological Section, 1987.

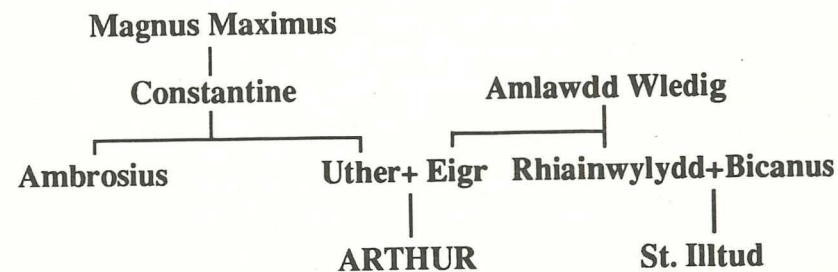
# Wade Evans and Arthur

by  
Charles Evans-Günther

During his lifetime Arthur Wade Evans produced a number of interesting and controversial theories.

Some of his suggestions are now considered to be not too far off the mark, while others are still hotly debated. Of particular interest are Wade Evans' ideas concerning Arthur, which are somewhat different from the usually accepted beliefs. There is a similarity between Wade Evans' theories and those of Geoffrey Ashe - but more of that later. In working out his ideas Wade Evans made use of Gildas, Nennius, 'Culhwch and Olwen' and Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'History of the Kings of Britain'.

Beginning with Arthur's ancestry, Wade Evans follows a tradition put down by Geoffrey of Monmouth. This has Arthur as the son of Uther and Ygraine. Uther is the brother of Aurelius Ambrosius and the son of Constantine, while no ancestry is given to Ygraine, except that she is married to Gorlois. (Various spellings exist of Ygraine, including Igraine, Ygern and the Welsh version Eigr.) Wade Evans parts from Geoffrey when dealing with Uther's grandsire - Geoffrey calls him Aldroenus, King of Brittany, but Wade Evans prefers Constantine son of Magnus Maximus. It must be admitted there is nothing to support this in any Welsh tradition. But from that tradition Wade Evans does add to the family tree with St. Illtud being Arthur's cousin and son of Bicanus and Rhiaunwylydd, daughter of Amlawdd Wledig (an unknown ruler) and sister of Eigr. From these a genealogy can be constructed according to Wade Evans:



When it comes to Arthur's position in the society of the Dark Ages, Wade Evans goes along with John Rhys' suggestion that he was Comes Britanniarum - Count of Britain - not a king but leader in battles. Arthur is never given the Welsh title of



'gwledig' like Enrys Wledig (Ambrosius Aurelianus), Macsen Wledig (Magnus Maximus) or Cunedda Wledig. Nor is 'rex' used in a legitimate reference, like that of Maelgwn, king of Gwynedd in the sixth century. The enemy of Arthur is not the Saxon, according to Wade Evans, but the Scots and Picts, and he was defending Roman Britain following the failure of Aetius to reply to the British call for help.

"...they kept fighting back, basing themselves in the mountains, caves, heath and thorny thickets. Their enemies had been plundering their land for many years; now for the first time they inflicted a massacre on them, trusting not in man but in God....The enemy retreated from the people, but the people did not retreat from their own sins.... It was always true of the people it was weak in beating off the weapons of the enemy but strong in putting up with civil war and the burden of sin."

Gildas 20.2-3 and 21.1.

This sounds very much like the scenario of the accepted Arthurian history with Arthur defeating the Saxons and then dying in a civil war. The quote from Gildas records a period before the coming of the Saxons. But what of the information in Nennius?

From the previous article on Wade Evans it was mentioned that he didn't agree with the battle of Badon having any connection with Arthur. The battle was inserted into the Nennian list, according to Wade Evans, but he was willing to accept Arthur fighting twelve battles. The last two of these he prefers to be Agned and Breguoin, and that the two separate battles were joined together as one. Another thing in the famous Chapter 56, which Wade Evans dislikes, is the indication that the enemy of Arthur was the Saxons. He believed that the enemy were the Picts and Scots and that Octa was not Arthur's adversary but his ally. He also believes that Octa was the Comes Litoris Saxonici. According to Nennius Vortigern employed the Saxons to fight the Picts and that they later rebelled against the British - the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle agrees with this. Octa is called by Wade Evans,

the son of Hengest yet in the ASC Ossa is called Hengest's son and no Octa is mentioned at all. Despite the ASC Octa is found in Nennius and at least three Anglo-Saxon regal lists as Osga Hengesting.

Concerning the career of Arthur, Wade Evans follows Geoffrey of Monmouth almost word for word, while adding evidence from other sources.

In book VIII, chapter 14 of "The History of the Kings of Britain" a comet is recorded, and in the next chapter Merlin explains to Uther Pendragon that the comet is an omen telling of Uther and his children to be. This, Wade Evans says, was the Great Comet of 442-3 recorded by Idatius and Marcellinus. Arthur was conceived and born soon afterwards. In XI.1 we have Dubricius crowning Arthur king on Uther's death, and "Arthur was a young man only fifteen years old..." Soon after Arthur was at war with the Saxons. At the most important battle of that war - Bath - it says "...he dispatched four hundred and seventy men with his sword Caliburn." Wade Evans explains that this is a mistake with which Geoffrey unwittingly gives the date of the battle - AD 470. Shortly after this Arthur marries Guinevere, but when the next "summer came around" he invaded Ireland. "Winter passed and Arthur returned to Britain. He established the whole kingdom in a state of lasting peace and remained there the next twelve years." (IX.10) Then he invaded Europe taking with him the young son of Loth - Gawain, who had been in the service of Pope Sulpicius. In the same chapter, X.11, we are told that the "province of Gaul was at that time in the jurisdiction of Tribune Frollo, who ruled it in the name of Emperor Leo." Here are two indications of possible dating references: Leo must be either Leo I (457-474) or Leo II (474) and Pope Sulpicius could be Pope Simplicius who reigned from 468 to 483. Arthur spent nine years in Europe and defeated Frollo. On his return home he received a letter from Lucius Hibernus who demanded tribute to Rome - "I appoint the middle of next August as the time of your coming (to pay tribute). If you fail to arrive, I shall invade your territory myself...."



Arthur didn't wait for August but entered Europe, defeated Lucius and then after spending the winter in the land of the Allobroges, marched on Rome the following summer. Unfortunately, Mordred rebelled and Arthur was forced to return to Britain where he killed Mordred but was himself mortally wounded at the battle of Camlan.

From this Wade Evans produced the following chronology:

- 444 Birth of Arthur
- 459 Arthur crowned king
- 470 Battle of Bath
- 471 Invasion of Ireland
- 483 Invasion of Europe
- 491 Lucius' letter
- 492 Battle of Camlan and death(?) of Arthur.

Despite this interesting piece of calculation, Wade Evans seems to miscalculate on a number of points. If the invasion of Ireland came one year of the battle of Bath - thus 471 - and Arthur reigned 12 years before invading Europe, in 483, the Emperor mentioned would have been dead nine on nine years. Equally so when he heard of Mordred rebelling in Britain he "cancelled the attack he planned to make on Leo, the Emperor of the Romans." By this time Leo presumably had been in paradise for some 19 years. After following Geoffrey of Monmouth so faithfully now Wade Evans says:

"Geoffrey was certainly wrong in continuing the reign of Emperor Leo to the year of Arthur's defeat at Camlan, both Leos died in 474."

Traditionally there were twenty two years between the battle of Badon and the strife of Camlan - therefore if Badon was in 470 Arthur must have died in 492. This sounds logical - but something still feels wrong.

Whatever you think of Wade Evans' theories there may be something in them. Independently, Geoffrey Ashe, using the same references to Leo and Simplicius, suggested that the invasion of Europe by Arthur could be based on the actions of Riothamus. But he keeps the chronology within Leo's reign having Riothamus fight his last

battle around 470. Maybe the mistake is taking 470 dead Saxons at the battle of Bath being a date instead of the casualty list. If you do ignore this dating it may be possible to make some of Wade Evans' chronology work. Arthur is born in 444, begins his career in 459 and dies 21 years later. This would keep the life span of Arthur more or less within the reigns of the Roman Emperor Leo - 457 to 474, and Pope Simplicius - 468 to 483. But this may be all just playing with numbers.

Did Arthur live in the second half of the fifth century? Was it the Picts and Scots who were his enemies rather than the Saxons? And were the Saxons Arthur's allies in the defence of Roman Britain? Questions proposed by Arthur Wade Evans and worth looking at in the light of recent archaeological evidence. What do you think?



In this issue we have a fair number of REVIEWS. First one from Nick Grant:

EARLY MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENTS IN WALES AD400-1100

*Edited by Nancy Edwards and Alan Lee, University College of North Wales and Cardiff, 1988, £6.00*

This book is a critical study of some 53 settlement sites in Wales where, it has been claimed, there is evidence of secular occupation during the period 400-1100 (ecclesiastical sites are not covered). The evidence used is mainly archaeological, but documentary sources are also cited. The book takes the form of a gazetteer of sites, each being described, and often illustrated. Appendices list and illustrate all imported pottery of the period known from Wales.

From the authors' rigorous analyses, it is argued that only 10 sites can be regarded as having defin-



ite evidence of occupation during the period 400-1100, whilst another 30 sites can be regarded as possibly occupied, leaving 11 as negative (i.e. rejected) sites. This relatively tiny number of sites identified for a period of 700 years reflects the difficulty in isolating specifically Dark Age dating evidence, dating being dependent almost entirely on imported pottery, radiocarbon dates, and some jewellery items. Native pottery and coinage, two of the archaeologist's main dating mediums, are of course completely absent from Wales during this period in question.

Although many of the individual site discussions can only be tentative in character, as a reference book for those interested in the archaeology of this period this study is comprehensive, detailed, thoroughly referenced, and well laid out. It is also very reasonably priced in comparison with most academic books. Studies to a similar standard for the Westcountry and Scotland are now required!

Many thanks to Nick for the above review - the book sounds very interesting and I hope to get a copy in the near future. One of the unfortunate things are that these types of books are few and far between. The archaeology of the Dark Age is still way behind much more popular periods.

#### THE ILLUSTRATED BEDE

John Marsden, translations by John Gregory and photography by Geoff Green. MacMillan London Ltd., 1989, £17.95.

This large format, 192 page, book is full of fascinating extracts from the works of that famous Northumbrian cleric - Bede - including his Ecclesiastical History of the English People, the Life of Cuthbert and the Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow. There are over 60 full colour photographs, two good maps, a chronology (547-794), a glossary of placenames, tribal names, etc., a two page bibliography and index. There is also a lengthy introduction to the book, together with introductions to each section and an Afterword.

What makes this book so worthy of purchase is that

not only does it contain some interesting textual material but it also abounds with spectacular photographs. However, it is not what can be called a coffee table book, being a well researched and serious look at the works of Bede. The book also has DRAGON connections as its author is John Marsden, who I met on my Cornwall trip and he joined our society soon afterwards. John, who now lives in London, is northerner hailing from Hull and having worked as a journalist and copywriter is now a full time freelance writer.

Bede's work have a strong leaning towards ecclesiastical matters but there is an awful lot of historical information to be gleaned. His Ecclesiastical History of the English People is an essential part of any Dark Age researcher's library, with its geography, history and biographical details. The Illustrated Bede does concentrate a lot on the religious side of Bede's work which can be seen by looking through the chapters. These include pieces on St. Alban, Oswald and Aidan, Whitby, Atheldreda, Hild, Caedmon, Cuthbert, John of Beverley, and Wilfred of Hexham.

I enjoyed reading this book as a good percentage of it was new to me, especially Cuthbert. However, at times I wished for a bit more than the chapter introductions to fill in the parts left out. I am especially interested in the period between St. Alban and Oswald but, of course, I can go to my Penguin copy of his history. Despite this The Illustrated Bede is a visual delight and suits both researcher and 'layperson' (in the sense of not being a researcher of the Dark Age rather than not being a member of the clergy). I wish John every success with this lovely publication.

#### THE CELTIC TRADITION

Caitlin Matthews, Element Books, 1989, £4.95 (USA \$7.95).

This book though not actually about Arthur or the Dark Ages is concerned with a period and tradition that had both an effect on the time, culture and the legendary material that was to grow from it. This 134 page paperback was a great surprise to me



since it contained so much without seeming to be crammed full. It is impossible to go into any real detail but it is a must for those of you interested in the Celtic aspects of pre-Roman and later times. Caitlin explains the Celtic tradition in a very workperson-like way showing a vast knowledge of the subject. I have a number of criteria about what is a successful book to me - and one of these is that I should learn something new from the book. This is certainly true of *The Celtic Tradition*. Over the years I have read numerous books not only on the Dark Ages but also on the pre-Roman Celts, though I must admit I am a bit deficient when it comes to the Roman period. *The Celtic Tradition* is without any doubt one of the most interesting books on this subject that I have ever read. A lot of the material is Irish, with some Welsh, and there is a bibliography listing somewhat over one hundred books used, showing the amount of work Caitlin must have put into researching and writing this fascinating volume. Finally, one of the problems with Celtic studies is the use of inaccurate information, mainly eighteenth and early nineteenth century speculation and invention, but none of this can be found in *The Celtic Tradition*. Caitlin has gone to some length to use reputable sources.

What follows are a series of short reviews of booklets, journals or books containing bits of interesting information.

#### JUNIOR ARTHURIAN CLUB NEWSLETTER

The first issue of JAC Newsletter came out in April and the second in July. The club and newsletter owe their existence to Sarah E. Gordon, of Yountville, California. So far the newsletter consists of an editorial, short articles, poems, a Q & A page called Dear Merlin and a book review section. The second issue also has a word game and information about the JAC and how to become a member. I think the newsletter has a bright future. I don't know if Sarah has any subscribers from the UK but I am sure she would welcome them. Subscription to the JAC is \$5.00 (outside US: \$6.00) for

membership (aged 6-18) and includes club card, quarterly newsletter and pen pal address exchange; while adults can join and get the newsletter at \$3.00 (outside US: \$4.00). For further information contact Sarah at:

Junior Arthurian Club  
P.O. Box 2208,  
YOUNTVILLE,  
CA 94599,  
U.S.A.

#### PENDRAGON Vol.XIX No.3 Summer 1989

Welcome back to PENDRAGON with Eddie Tooke at the helm. In the 'eddie-torial' (what a terrible pun!) Eddie explains the background to the continuation of PENDRAGON in more or less its old form. He had thought of producing a simple few sheet newsletter but friends gathered round and the result is very good. Taking Stonehenge as its theme, articles include The Return of Arthur (the changing face of Arthuriana), Unity in Diversity, three articles on Stonehenge, Dancing in the Streets (Helston Furry Dance) plus a word game, noticeboard and stop press. Here is an excellent first effort by Eddie. I know how difficult it is to produce a magazine and I am happy to see Eddie and his team trying to keep alive a long running journal such as PENDRAGON. I wish them all lots of luck in their future labours. So if you thought PENDRAGON was dead and if your interests spread wider than history and archaeology to "the mystery and mythology of the Matter of Britain", why not contact Eddie Tooke at:

Chinook,  
Paxhill Lane,  
Twynning, Glos.,  
GL20 6DU,  
U.K.

#### A HISTORY OF GWENT

Raymond Howell, Gomer Press, 1988.

Though primarily a complete history of the area of S. Wales now known as Gwent, this book as a



number of chapters that might be of interest to students of Arthur and the Dark Ages - The Kings of Gwent, and 'Arthurian' Gwent. The former looks at the society of Gwent from the sixth to eleventh century. Later, in an appendix, the rulers of Gwent, Iscoed Gwent and Erging are listed - it is interesting to see that Athrwys ap Meurig is dated to c.625-655 AD, which hardly corresponds with the sixth century Athrwys/Arthur of Wilson and Blackett. The chapter on 'Arthurian' Gwent gives you the standard line-up about Arthur, the Gododdin, Nennius, etc., but then says that "a spate of Arthurs" appeared in the seventh century including Athrwys ap Meurig - surely Mr. Howell means Arthur ap Nowy of Dyfed!?! He ends this section with: "It is, therefore, conceivable that Caerleon could have severed as one of a series of Arthurian foci. There is no confirmation of this association with Gwent, or with any other purported Arthurian site, but the possibility cannot be rejected out of hand." This is a fair enough comment and there are many who link Caerleon upon Usk with City of Legions listed in the Nennian battles. It's worthwhile after a look at this book, possibly through your local library.

DISPUTED BORDER The History of the North Wales Marches from Chester to Shrewsbury. Michael Senior, Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 1989, £1.75.

This small, 48page booklet discusses the history of one of the most disputed borders in Britain from earliest times until the thirteenth century. It covers numerous sites and, apart from getting Whitchurch in Hereford (and King Arthur's Cave) mixed up with Whitchurch in Cheshire, does a very good job. It is profusely illustrated with black and white photographs (36 in all) and 6 informative maps. Of particular interest are the chapters: "The Rise of Mercia" and "The Mercian Dykes" which cover the Dark Ages, though, of course, the rest of the booklet is worth reading. It is well written, with lots of information in such a small package. Readily available in Clwyd and Cheshire, it might be harder to find elsewhere. So if you are inter-

ested contact Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Capel Garmon, LLANWRST, Gwynedd, N. Wales, Tel: (0602) 261.

ARTHUR'S CAMLAN: A guide to King Arthur's 6th century battle against Medrawt and to walks in magnificent Mawddy.

Laurence Main, Raymond Street, 1989, £2.25

Arthur's Camlan is a 50 page booklet with 20 black and white photographs and 9 maps. It mainly concerns the situating of Arthur's final battle at Camlan in Merionethshire (Powys). Everybody interested in Arthur usually has questions about the where and when of the two main battles attached to his name - Badon and Camlan. These are dated in the Welsh Annals to 516 for Badon and 537 Camlan. However, the siting of them is less certain - some say in Cornwall, others Cumbria and some Scotland for the latter of the two. However, Laurence Main has other ideas.

He says that there exists a tradition of Arthur's final battle being fought in Merionethshire and bases it on unspecified information from "Dinas Mawddwy a'i Hamgylchoedd" by one Thomas (Tegwyn) Davies. Mr. Main goes on to say: "It is written in Welsh, which may explain why English historians seem unaware of it." The battle he says wasn't fought in 537 but in 574 - the date being different because the Celtic Church "may have practised the Gnostic manner of dating from Jesus' crucifixion". Now where have you heard that before? It all becomes clear in the next paragraph when he is told that "Welsh records are clear...that Arthur was the son of Meurig, son of Tewdrig, King of South Wales." And there is more - Arthur fights with Medrawt who is from the Llyn Peninsula and Maelgwn Gwynedd has been identified as Lancelot.

Members who have been getting DRAGON for some time will immediately recognise the theories of Messrs. Alan Wilson and Baram Blackett. Let me just say that there are English scholars who understand the Welsh language, ancient and modern, and there have been Welsh historians who have studied these subjects, with reference to Athrwys/Arthur. Dating for Athrwys ap Meurig is generally accepted as being



in the seventh century, so if Camlan was fought in 574 it is highly unlikely that the son of Meurig took part (in fact he was even born yet). And as for the battle of Camlan being sited at the various Camlans in the Dinas Mawddwy neither is it a new theory nor is it one that has been ruled out completely by experts. But that needs more space than the REVIEW section allows. (There will be a full article on this subject in the next issue.)

But let's not leave this booklet yet, because if you are interested and enjoy walking in the country the second part of Arthur's Camlan will be useful. This consists of eight different walks with maps, photographs and snippets of information about the areas. So if you are thinking of going to the Dinas Mawddwy area near Dolgellau why not get a copy of Arthur's Camlan (you can ignore the first bit if you wish). It is published by Raymond Street, Dinas Mawddwy, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9LS.

#### WELSH NATION BUILDERS

Gwynfor Evans, Gomer Press, 1988, £9.50.

Mr. Evans is somewhat of a legend in Wales and apart from having been president of Plaid Cymru from 1945 to 1981 he is also a historian. This book is about the men and women (out of 65 entries only 3 are females) who played some part in building the character of Wales. However, the ones that would be of interest to Dark Age scholars are a mixture, some written by Mr. Evans himself, others by his son Dafydd Prys Evans. The book illustrated with a variety of photographs and drawings (many by his wife, Rhiannon Prys). Characters from the Dark Age include Magnus Maximus, Cunedda, Illtud, Arthur, Maelgwn Gwynedd, St. David, Taliesin and Aneirin. (Other characters in the book range from Cadwallon through Owain Glyndwr, William Morgan, Howel Harris, Iolo Morgannwg, Daniel Owen, Lloyd George to Kate Roberts and Saunders Lewis.)

Without going into great detail, I'll just look at what is said about Arthur.

Dafydd Prys writes: "In many ways Arthur is the most difficult Welsh leader to write about as well as the most exciting." He goes on to indicate that this

early period saw three great leaders and it is possible that the accomplishments of the three were attributed to one. These leaders were Riothamus, Vortigern's successor, Ambrosius Aurelianus and the third was the victor of the battle of Badon. The successes, and failures, of Riothamus and Ambrosius later were grafted on to Arthur, whom the author believes to have been the victor of Badon. He also believed that Arthur fought in York, Lincolnshire and the Midlands. The final paragraph shows that the legend of Arthur grew to such proportions so that today there are 1,500 scholars belonging to the International Arthurian Society and every year 600 scholarly books and articles are published in this field.

#### SUPERNATURAL CLWYD The Folk Tales of North East Wales.

Richard Holland, Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 1989, £4.50.

Though not strictly a Dark Age book, Supernatural Clwyd does have a section on the connection of Arthur with Clwyd - albeit through folk tales. There are also a number of other entries in this book that have an Arthurian flavour. This 210 page book written by a North Wales Newspaper journalist Richard Holland, with thirty eight black and white photographs by the author and nine illustrations by Tim Pierce. It is divided into sections dealing with different aspects of folk lore including Fairies, Ghosts, Witchcraft, the Devil, Monsters and Arthur, each followed by bibliographies pertaining to the particular subject. Without doubt this is a book full of fascinating tales, some of which I, personally, have never heard, including the author's favourite a real gothic horror tale entitled "The Warrior Knight of the Blood Red Plume".

I bought this book at the Welsh bookshop in Mold and read the Arthurian section straight away. Much to my amazement I found I was not only mentioned in the bibliography, but also in the text. Mr. Holland had used references from an article I wrote some years ago called "Arthur: The Clwyd Connection". Unfortunately, Mr. Holland never



actually contacted me before using the information contained in the said article. If he had done so he would have discovered that my research since writing that article had changed some of the references - for example, the Ousel of Cilgwri, from the Tale of Culhwch and Olwen, I originally placed in Flintshire but now I know that Cilgwri was an old Welsh name for the Wirral in Cheshire, across the Dee Estuary. Nevertheless, I am grateful to Mr. Holland for the comments he made concerning my research.

Supernatural Clwyd is well worth reading, and not just because of the Arthurian section. If you are interested contact Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanwrst (address and telephone number in previous review).

Please, don't forget if you have any reviews you would like to send in, do so. Thanks.

# SCROLLS

In this issue's SCROLLS we have three letters - from Nick Grant, Steve Pollington and Kate Pollard. Recently I haven't been getting many letters that can be printed - so if you have any comments to make about DRAGON, my terrible typing or any ideas that you may have about meaning of life, please let me have them. So we'll begin with the letter from Nick regarding Mariolatry in 6th century Britain:

"I would agree that if it did exist at this time, it must have come from the Eastern, Byzantine Church, via the imported goods trade. It would be useful to assemble the scraps of information that might support the idea that Mariolatry was followed in the 6th century, and analyse these individually. Those which occur to me (and I'm sure this can't be an exhaustive list) are:

- a difficult passage in Gildas (mid 6c) which

- refers to King Constantine of Dumnonia's murder of two youths who, having taken sanctuary in a church, trusted for protection in "the choirs of saints and the Mother" (possibly Mary, or the mother church, or the youths' actual mother);
- the Arthurian reference in Nennius (early 9c);
- the Arthurian reference in the Annales Cambriae (mid-late 10c) which may (or may not be) independent of Nennius;
- the Glastonbury traditions of a church there in the 6th century in honour of Mary, first mentioned in William of Malmesbury's Acts of the Kings of England and Caradoc of Llancarfan's Life of St. Gildas (both c.1130).

I'm sure this is a topic worth going into more detail on."

Many thanks to Nick, not only for the above but for his piece on the Marwnad Cynddylan and his review. Come on chaps and chapesses - don't let Nick do all the work, let's have some of your ideas. But seriously, I would appreciate a few more contributors to DRAGON - I'm getting desperately short of material. Sorry to go harping on, but here is a note from another regular contributor, Steve:

"I recently received the Spring edition of WIDOWINDE, the publication and "club magazine" of ðA ENGLISCAN GESIÐAS (The English Companions) a group devoted to the study of Pre-Conquest English history, mainly literary and linguistic. Therein I read a contribution by one MERLIN HICKMAN concerning a book he recently acquired entitled "COMPENDIUM OF MEMORABILIA ANGLIAE" written by a certain GEORGE MERITON during the reign of Charles I, before the Civil War during which so many early records were lost. The author of this piece suggests that Meriton had access to material no longer available, based on some otherwise unsupported variant name spellings: CLEARLICK and CEALRICK (= CÉOLRIC in the Laud MS Anglo Saxon Chronicle); CHEWLIN and CHEULINE (= CEAWLIN). Most significant is a Saxon leader called COLGERNE whom Arthur chased from his camp in Northumberland to York, and who escaped thence to Germany later to return with 70 ships.



"I haven't been able to find out anything about the Compendium through my "intelligence network" nor through my local library. Is it known to you? Merlin Hickman asks: 'Is this book in general circulation and its significance unrealised, or have I discovered a unique gem from someone's attic?' Answers on a postcard, please, to Dragon....! I find it hard to believe that a genuine bit of Arthuriana has remained undetected, but it certainly warrants investigation. Perhaps someone with a broad knowledge of Arthurian literature will be able to shed some light."

Thanks for the letter, Steve, you've certainly got me stumped - I've never heard of the book nor the author. If any members can enlighten Steve, and myself, please drop us a line. However, I think the possibilities of a document of this date being hidden away could be reasonably good. Old books and manuscripts do occasionally turn-up and one only hopes that one day something spectacular will be found.

Now an open-letter from Kate Pollard, ex-editor and secretary of the PENDRAGON Society:

"July 1989.

Dear Charles and Dragon Members,

I shall look forward to the 'Double-Dragon' and am most interested to learn what part you have been taking in the Eisteddfod - (was it choral?!). Anyway the production delay means that I can get into the next issue to thank you all, sincerely and exceedingly, for the consideration and debate so many of you involved yourselves in over the Pendragon/Dragon merger question. It was a wonderful offer, Charles, which Eddie and I deeply appreciated and gave a lot of thought to, and thank you Dragon members, for responding with your comments and ideas.

"Yes, we did amicably decide to disagree over magazine content and that in itself was what got Pendragon on its' own feet again, because in the course of discussion Eddie began to clearly visualise his magazine of the future and because of that,

helpers mustered themselves and literary loins were girded, at least for the moment. As members can probably imagine, it is necessary for the beleaguered editor to identify strongly with his magazine otherwise it simply isn't worth all the hard work. Please don't take this as an insult: we do admire and feel closely allied to Dragon, it's just that our members are an obstinate bunch! Pendragon has had a different beginning and development from Dragon, and its membership is quite fierce in its desire not to have a central belief system. Many who have been worried by this, (and I have my sympathies!) have split away in factions or joined Dragon or both. I personally think that both Dragon and Pendragon have a lot to offer in the Arthurian field.

"I am quite open about the fact that modern Arthurian mysticism is not my bag, either. But although I may cringe at some of its manifestations, it does seem very much in keeping with the history of Arthuriana. Look how the Middle Ages and early modern periods have adapted and used the legends right through politics, literature, art, and folk belief. Arthur seems to provide a mouthpiece for desires, ambitions and nostalgic hopes which cannot otherwise be expressed, and the second half of the twentieth century has dealt similarly with them. Wearing the social historian's hat which I now do, I get very engrossed in such matters as we approach the end of the century, it is interesting to be able to see this surge in retrospect.

"Please excuse the home-spun philosophy - the Pendragon crisis put us in an analytical frame of mind! Maybe we'll merge with great success at a later date, (if we get invited again!). At the moment, though, Pendragon has gathered itself and will be all the better for some team-work - it suffered from being a one-(wo)man-band in my hands. Thank you all very much for your help and encouragement at a difficult time, and apologies for adding to your work-load, Charles. We've much appreciated your efforts.

Kate Pollard."



Many thanks to Kate for her kind words - there is little more that I can say - if a friend can't hold out an helping hand what kind of friend would he be. Admittedly nothing was gain but certainly nothing was lost. I without doubt appreciate Kate's letter and wish her all the best for the future. As for what I did at the International Musical Eisteddfod - no, it wasn't choral. Every year Clwyd County Council put up an exhibition of some kind - I pulled the short straw and it was my turn this year to put together the exhibition. This includes a bit of research, artwork, captions, photographs and the eventual setting up of the exhibition at Llangollen. It is quite a bit of work and very tiring, especially the setting up.

Well, that's it for the moment - I hope that the next issue of DRAGON will be out around Christmas. Meanwhile, if you have any articles, comments, theories or letters feel free to write either to my address in Flint, or in Japan, until the end of October, c/o 243 Izuruhara cho, SANO CITY, Tochigi Prefecture, Japan, 327-01. I will be happy to hear from you and will try to reply.

# TALES FROM THE TWO ELLS OR NEWLIGHTON THE DARKAGES

by ROGER WILLCOX



DRAGON c/o 9 Earls Lea, FLINT, Clwyd, CH6 5BT, N.Wales, U.K.



## NOTE

Dear friends,

If you have written to me and have yet to receive an answer it is because I have been so very busy. However, I am taking letters with me to Japan and will try to answer them while I'm abroad.

Thanks for being so patient.

---

## DRAGONFILE

Due to the loss of a program for my computer and the working out of a new list of members' addresses, I submit this form for your attention. I do have all addresses, but I would just like to check that they are correct and, also, I have no other details concerning members' backgrounds. Of course this form is not compulsory.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
(in full)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Interests \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*If you have any further comments, please use the back of this form. Thank you very much.*