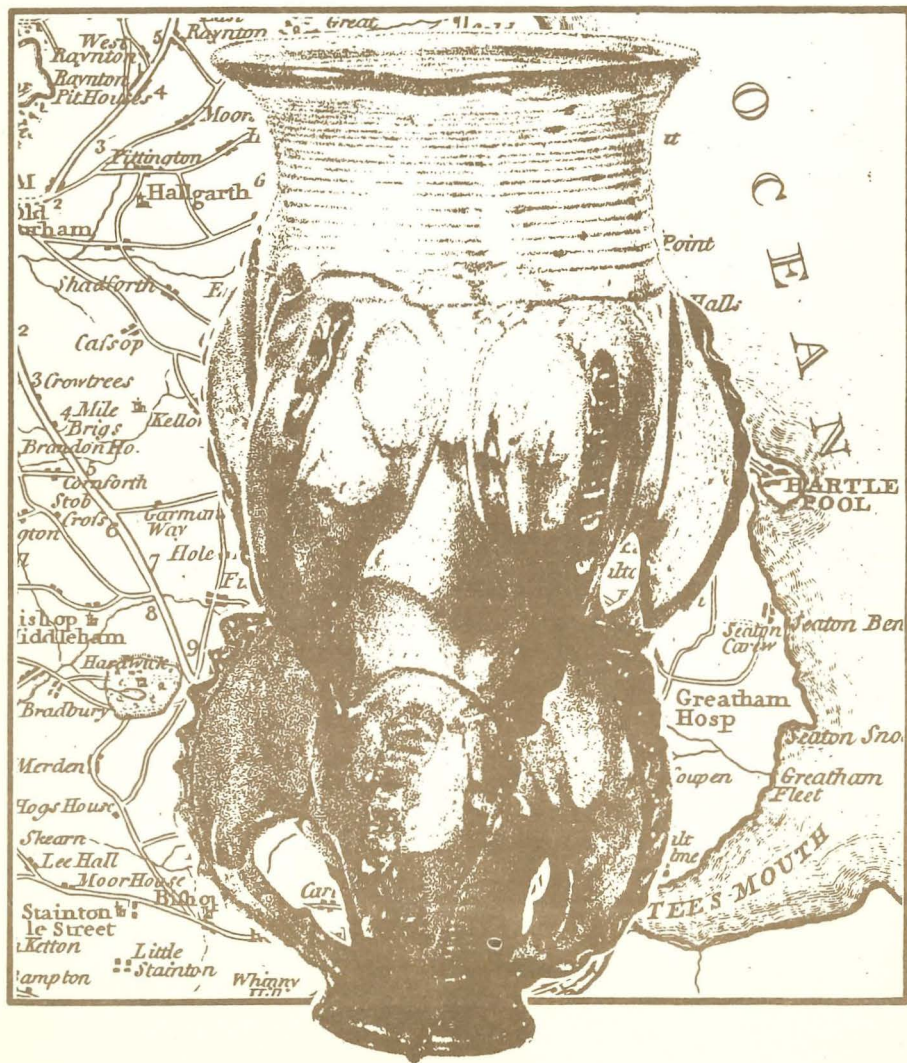


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# DRAGON





Dear friends,

Once again welcome to DRAGON.

My apologies for a delay in the publishing of this issue but a number of review copies of books came my way and I wanted to give them a fair read before putting pen to paper.

This issue has something of a northern flavour what with two articles that look at Arthurian connections with the north-east of England. The first concerns the ideas of Reginald Wright of Blackhall Rocks, County Durham, and the second is on Dunstanburgh Castle by John Marsden, author of "The Illustrated Bede". Also following the Dragonmoot held in London I thought it might be worth holding another but this time in the north of the country (information to follow). To add to the above the Sixteenth International Arthurian Congress is being held at the University of Durham on the 11th to 18th of August (unfortunately the closing date for registration was 1st January).

Returning to the northern 'moot I spent some time looking around to see if there were any events or exhibitions remotely connected to the subject or period we are interested in. My search didn't prove too successful. The only two of some interest is one at Llanberis, Gwynedd, which is all about the ancient Celts, and another at the Liverpool Museum concerned with Viking treasure. This exhibition is called "A Silver Saga" and features Viking treasure from the North-West. It opened on the 15th May and continues till the 2nd September. Finding something of an Arthurian connection is obviously very difficult and this is equally true of the Early Post-Roman period. So as they say "beggars can't be choosers"! Therefore, if anyone is interested, the northern Dragonmoot will begin with a visit to "A Silver Saga" at the Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street on Saturday 14th July 1990. If you are

interested let me know or turn up on the day - I will be waiting on the steps of the Museum between 12 noon and 12.30. By the way admission is free. I look forward to hearing from you if you can attend.

Now to the London Dragonmoot which was held on the 7th April 1990:

Saturday morning began with problem after problem - an early train from Flint to London was delayed by nearly one hour and then when I arrived in London the southbound Northern Line underground was closed for repairs and a detour had to be made. I rushed across London and up the steps of the British Museum just in time. Helen Hollick was the first to appear (in fact she had arrived just before me and had popped into the Brit'), authoress Kathleen Herbert arrived a little later, then John Marsden,



Kathleen Herbert Helen Hollick David Jones John Marsden Andrew Smith  
Steve Pollington





Kathleen Herbert John Marsden Helen Hollick David Jones Andrew Smith

Charles W. Evans-Günther

Andrew Smith, Dave Jones and Steve Pollington. This made a grand total of seven - the largest get-together for some time. John had seen the exhibition, "The Work of Angels", and so agreed to meet us later. The exhibition, suffice to say, was fascinating and we could have spent the whole day there.

"The Work of Angels" was one of the best exhibitions I have seen in a long time featuring some of the most beautiful metalwork ever to grace the British Museum. Nick Grant was kind enough to have described the exhibition in the last issue so anything I would say may be repeating Nick's article. However, there were many surprises - size being the most revealing.

Not only were some of the brooches much larger than I expected but everyone was bowled over by minute detailed ornamentation on the pieces of artwork. The exhibition was introduced by a display of the Ardagh Chalice and the Tara brooch. But, despite all the grandeur and beauty it was the final section of exhibition that amazed me. Two of the tiniest objects contained so much details. One was a little gold bird - 1.4cm in length - covered with spirals, and near to it was a minute panel - 0.86cm by 0.65cm - embellished, though unfinished, with fine gold wire. Though staggered by the Ardagh Chalice and the Tara Brooch I was left stunned by these two tiny pieces.

All too soon we had to rejoin John Marsden and find somewhere to have a meal and a chat. Suggestions were made by Kathleen and Steve to try a local pub called "The Plough". Though the food was a little expensive, well it is London, we were allowed to stay in the upper part of the pub for the whole afternoon without comment from the proprietors. Conversation jumped from one subject to another covering various aspects of the 'Dark Ages'. I must admit at times the conversation went over my head since most of the company were either authors or budding authors. I am very grateful to Kathleen Herbert for coming the 'moot because she gave us the benefit of her experience as an authoress, and I am sure gave good advice to the budding authors present. John Marsden told us of his new book - not yet finished - and Helen Hollick talked a little about her ideas for her novel on Arthur. Andrew Smith obviously knew a thing or two when it came to books on the subject as he is producing a bibliography of Arthurian publications, and Steve Pollington, I imagine, was happy to see his book - "The Warrior's Way" - published.

All too soon the day ended and we all had to make our ways home. Everyone agreed it was good to speak to others with similar interests and, I believe, we all had a very nice day.



# The Wright Stuff

by  
Charles W. Evans-Günther

## Prologue

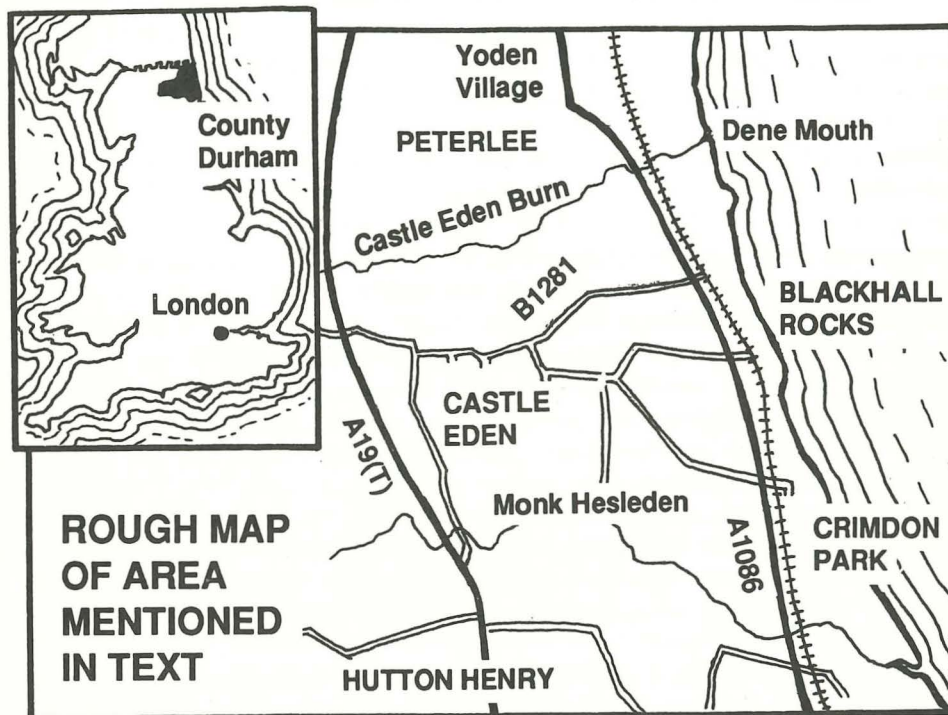
*In the last issue I reviewed Pendragon Vol. XX/1, Winter 1989 and mentioned a very interesting article by Paul Screeton, on the works of Reginald Wright, entitled "Crimdon and Camlann". This showed connections between County Durham and Arthur - something new to me! I wrote to Mr. Wright and bought two of his books. What follows is a look at County Durham in search of Arthur.*

Reginald Wright, 77, lives in Blackhall Rocks, about 5 miles north of Hartlepool, County Durham, and is a musician, composer, poet and local historian. His two with Arthurian connections are: "A History of Black Hall Rocks and Black Hall" (1985, enlarged 1989) and "A History of Castle Eden Lore: In Search of King Arthur" (1985). It is the latter of the two that is of most interest, though the former also contains some Arthurian material.

Basically Mr. Wright uses local information - including local folk memories - to compile a catalogue of places with Arthurian connections. These are interesting because there doesn't seem to be any other indications of an Arthur connection with County Durham (though there are some in nearby Northumberland). However, there is a problem. We are more-or-less dependent on Mr. Wright for the information and its accuracy. The County Durham Record Office doesn't have anything on the Arthurian connection with this area, and the Library could only point me to Mr. Wright's book on the subject. Nevertheless, there is much to discuss.

The area concerned is a coastal strip roughly from Peterlee to Hartlepool and somewhat inland to Castle Eden (see map). Mr. Wright points out a number of sites that have Arthur's name linked with them, including Arthur's Cave, near Blackhall Rocks, and an Arthur's Tor, near Hutton Henry on the A19, with its legend of treasure and a golden knight on guard. But it is the fact of a map dating from 1801 (source C. Smith) which shows the name Kamlan on the modern site of Crimdon Park which is of great interest. He points out that since the Anglo-Saxons didn't have the letter "k" then this site could be written down as Camlan. Kamlan is found near the mouth of Hasledon Brook and is a crooked glen surrounded by trees, which are part of the local "dene" (from the OE denu valley). Crimdon Park, today, is not so romantic or thought provoking with its vast caravan parks. Holiday resorts are often no respecter of ancient history. Mr. Wright also talks about a local farmer, at Ben Ridge, having found many remains of "skeletons of men and boys puddled together as if originally having been pitched into a hasty grave". (There is also evidence that an old stone cross once stood near the site having been discovered by road-workers

in 1923.) Mr. Wright points out that there are a number of better recorded burials. One was discovered by geologist Dr. Charles Taylor Trechmann near Blackhall Rocks in 1916 - being that of a rather early Anglo-Saxon burial. However, an earlier find is better known and is of some considerable interest. In 1775 while cutting a hedge near Castle Eden labourers found a glass vessel near the remains of a skeleton. The glass beaker was removed but the skeleton was left undisturbed on the orders of the local vicar. This find is said to have dated to the fifth or sixth century, and can now be found on display in the British Museum. Mr. Wright liken this vessel to the Holy Grail.



The connection with the Holy Grail takes us further into the legendary side of the Arthurian scene and Mr. Wright points out that there are a good few places connected with the legends quoting Dr. Trechmann: "The fascination of Arthurian legend is all around Castle Eden, Monk Hesleden, and Blackhall Rocks. You can feel it in your bones". In the "Mort d'Artu" Arthur is said to have been found by Giflet laid to rest in a Chapel Noir (Black Chapel) and Mr. Wright believes that Blackhall is derived from the Anglo-Saxon "blaec ahl" - "ahl" being a place of worship. However, he also mentions that Blackhall may mean "the burning beacon by the chapel" - black actually meaning blank or burn, like a beacon. The glass vessel (mentioned above) was, according Fordyce's History of Durham, found near a "...Chapel, (known as the Black



Chapel) about 100 yards north of the bridge between the mansion and the Church..." - the church being St. James's in Castle Eden. Other sites include Maiden Castle, a hill fort, a place called Mapon, which reminds one of the character Mabon from Culhwch and Olwen, and a local heard that his parents used to call a certain place "Wearyhall Bank" which is reminiscent of Wearyall Hill. Merlin is also connected with the area including being buried in Castle Eden, and Hartlepool, which Mr. Wright believes may indicate the possibility of being Avalon - Hartlepool Old Town once having been an island.

Other material of some interest includes two quotes used by Reginald Wright: from a character called "Brittorium, scribe": "This knowledge I find in the tradition of our elders, of a very brave chief, one Lucius Artorius who lived in the 'miraculous' Yuden woods.", and Morisone, writing around 1480: "Eudens king Artorio and his 'great enchanter' who could turn men into stone". Both quotes, which I haven't been able to pinpoint, indicate a connection with the name Eden - the old version being Yoden. It is believed that in the area is a lost castle and Yoden is thought to have been an Iron Age hill fort. Was Yoden Arthur's castle Wright postulates. Having given Mr. Wright's ideas about an Arthur and County Durham we must now look at the historical background that might give rise to such a connection. Could Arthur have lived in the north-east and fought the Anglo-Saxons there instead of the south? It has been my own belief for some considerable time that if Arthur is to be found (and I am not sure that is possible) then it shouldn't be where we normally expect him to be. The stories of Arthur mostly told in the Celtic fringes and the earliest reference seem to come from the north and the epic poem "The Gododdin". Interestingly, the Gododdin (Votadini) came from the east of Scotland north of the Angles of Northumbria. Is it that the tales of Arthur came from an area that is no longer Celtic but was in the seventh century AD. For this reason, and others, I believe that we must look east of the present Celtic fringe to find Arthur. But how far east?

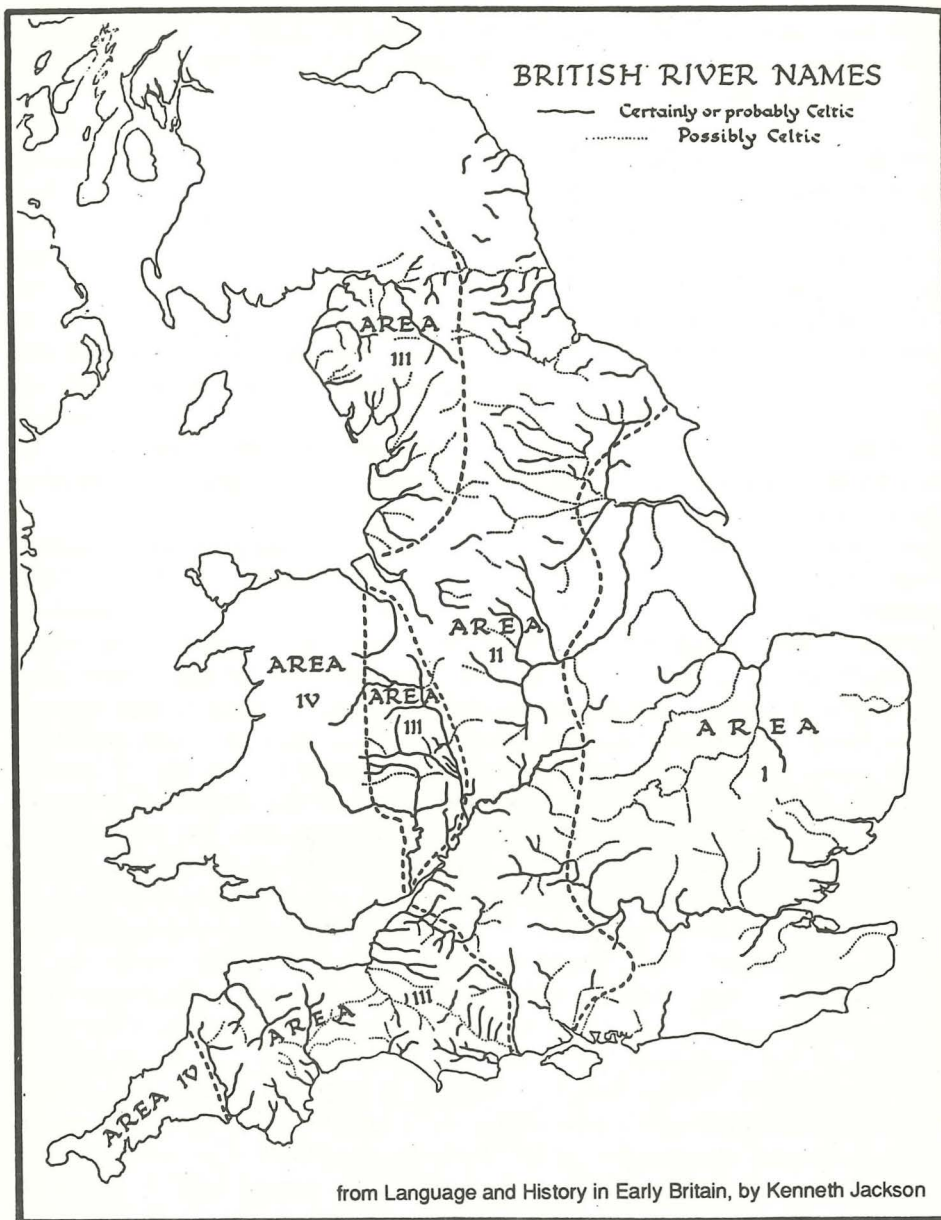
County Durham was once part of the tribal area of the Brigantes, a powerful north Iron Age tribe that covered much of the north of England. There is a vast amount of archaeological evidence for the prosperity and power of the Brigantes but not too much in Durham. There are a number of hill-forts in the area but only three large ones: Beacon Hill, near Heightinton, Shakerton Hill, not far from Bishop Auckland and Maiden Castle on the outskirts of Durham City. The Brigantes were eventually defeated by the invading Roman legions and the whole area of the north with Hadrian's Wall became a military zone. By the fourth century this area was under the control of the Dux Britanniarum, whose headquarters were at York. Durham at this time was criss-crossed, from south to north, by roads which joined a series of forts and settlements. Roman military establishments could be found at Piercebridge, Binchester, Lanchester, Chester le Street, Ebchester, Jarrow, South Shields and possibly Old Durham (which may have had a sort of villa) and Wearmouth. There may have also been signal stations but none have been found. There were also a

good number of rural settlements, mainly of a rectilinear type, though none have been found east of an imaginary line from Stockton on Tees to Jarrow. The settlements seem to have been of Celtic origin and the influence from Rome seems to have been rather minimal.

With the breakdown of the Roman administration it is likely that the military establishments in Durham were abandoned. The Celtic people of the area may have formed some way of defending their countryside against invasion from the northern Picts or Angles from the south and east. A number of interesting defensive sites were constructed either in the late Roman period or in the Dark Age. To the west of Bishop Auckland near Hamsterley is an unusual site called "The Castles", which is believed to be a late Romano-British defensive site. And, though outside of the county, just south of the R. Tees on the west side of Scot's Corner is Scots Dyke behind which is another Romano-British site called Whitcliffe Scar. All three of these may have been constructed to defend the area against intrusion from both the north and the south. Catricken, to the south of Scots Dyke, is believed to be the Catraeth of "The Gododdin" (and other early Welsh poetry).

Sometime in the fifth or sixth century northern Yorkshire became occupied by Angles who called their area Deira, while to the north in Northumberland and around the Tyne and Wear area other Angles established the kingdom of Bernicia. Interestingly experts believe that both names are of Celtic origin. However, the area between the Tees and the Wear seems not to have been touched by these Angles. Apart from a cemetery in the Darlington area and odd finds, like at Castle Eden and Blackhall Rocks (both having single skeletons) there seems to be no real evidence for Angles living in this part of County Durham. Having said that there is some evidence for the survival of Romano-Celtic people not only during the growth of Northumbria but well into the Middle Ages. It is known that on the estates of the bishop of Durham, during the Middle Ages, the annual payment of livestock was known as metreth from the Welsh treth. Also the agricultural system of Northumberland was of Celtic system rather than Anglo-Saxon, and the survival of Celtic words can be found, such as 'bratt' - a cloak, which continued to be used in the medieval to mean an unpretentious garment. Adding to these is the writings of Kenneth Jackson, in his "Language and History in Early Britain", he points out the survival of Celtic river-names. In doing this in maps out Britain into areas - Area IV being the lowest in Celtic names while Area I is the highest (see map). "Area II appears to agree pretty well with the movement of expansion of the Anglo-Saxon occupation which took place in the second half of the sixth century in the South and the first half of the seventh in the North. The hilly district between Tyne and Tees was probably the last parts of the Area to be settled by the Northumberians, and should perhaps be included in Area III...". You will see from the map that other such Area IIIs are western Lancashire and Cumbria, the Welsh border and parts of Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Cornwall. County Durham is without doubt different from these being so far





east - a tiny oasis in a desert of Anglo-Saxons.

It therefore can be shown that there may have been a survival of Romano-Celtic people in the area Mr. Wright is discussing. But was this survival due to the efforts of a local warlord like Arthur or is there some other reason? A clue may come from the "Life of St. Oswald" where Symeon of Durham describes

the area between the Tyne and Tees as "a deserted waste and was nothing but a hiding place and home for wild and woodland animals". Does this mean that Durham was uninhabited or that a good percentage of it was inhospitable. Certainly writers on the Roman/Dark Age period show that most of Durham was covered with dense forest. Whatever the reason the Angles of Deira and Bernicia had for leaving this area alone for some length of time is unknown, but when the area was taken over the inhabitants were mainly of Celtic stock. It is interesting that in "Trioedd Ynys Prydein" Dr Rachel Bromwich also places Arthur towards the north. "Perhaps he was in origin an opponent of the early Anglian raiders and settlers in the East Riding, who were in the process of laying the foundations of the kingdom of Deira - since the Gododdin reference may possibly imply that Arthur was regarded as the adversary in a previous generation of the same enemies as those who opposed Mynyddawg's force at Catraeth about 600." Of less historical weight is George Finkel's 1967 novel "Twilight Province", who places Arthur (or as he prefers Artyr) in the "the territorial limits of Turris Alba", which is roughly the northern part of Yorkshire and County Durham to just beyond the R. Wear. Finkel also places Mons Badonicus just south of the Wall to the west of the Dere Street Roman road which runs from York to Corbridge, and beyond.

Where then does this leave us? This possibly is that either due to its inhospitable nature or the defence of its Romano-Celtic inhabitants. There is as far as I can ascertain no references to Arthur from this area except for those recorded by Mr. Wright. Unfortunately, he uses sources that I have been unable to check out (some of which I have never heard of) and tends towards the romantic side of the stories. Such topics as Merlin, the Holy Grail, the Black Chapel and King Arthur with his knights are far removed from the history though they could well have been superimposed on older traditions. The most interesting of Mr. Wright's information, cutting away all the romantic material, is the use of the name Kamlan, for Crimdon, on an old map. It is a pity that the map is of the 18th century and not much earlier, which give it a little more weight. Nevertheless the possibility that somewhere left a tradition behind that has survived till today without the Arthurian experts finding is interesting. Maybe there was a warlord who defended this area against the growing threat of the Angles, but was it Arthur? We all know from experience that Arthur could well be a number of different people whose careers have been grafted on to the hero. Could this be true of a north-eastern warlord? This could bring into the picture a character who is more mysterious than Arthur and that is Outigern. "Ida son of Eobba, held the countries in the north of Britain, that is north of the Humber Sea.... At that time Outigern then fought bravely against the English nation...." wrote the author of the "Historia Brittonum". Nothing else is known about him except that his war must have taken place around the middle of the sixth century if he fought Ida of Bernicia. Finally, a certain doubt is left concerning the Arthurian connection with



County Durham. But there can be no doubt that this area continued to be Celtic for a much longer period than other parts of England. Was it because the Angles didn't see the area as being useful for their farming communities or was there a Celtic champion who defended it against invasion?

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# Sir Guy the Seeker

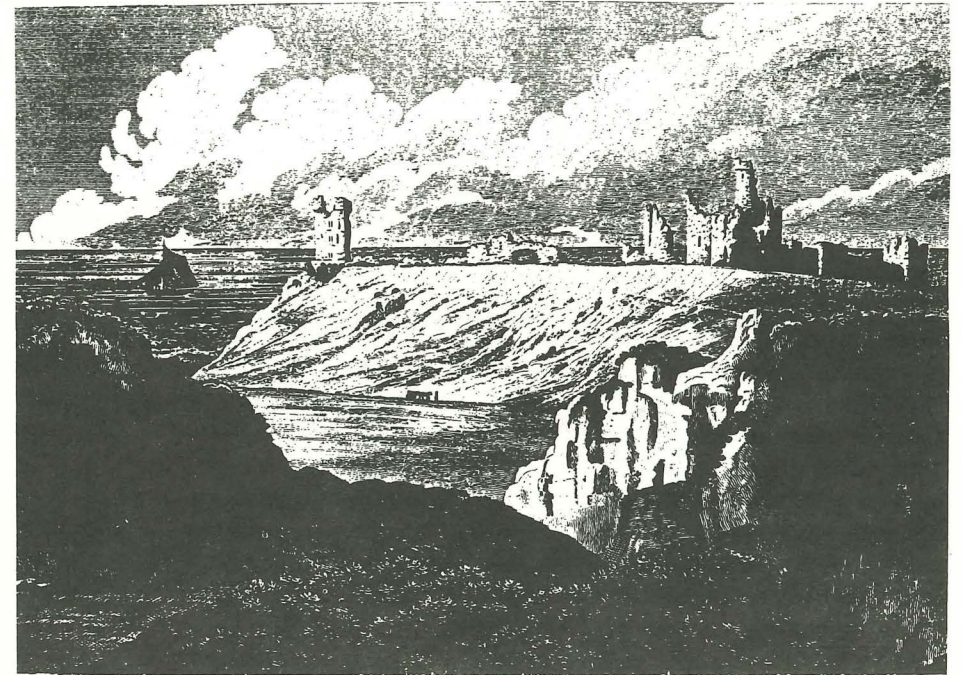
## An Arthurian Echo from Northumbria

by  
John Marsden

Of all the ancient kingdoms of these islands, Northumbria seems to feature least prominently in the Arthurian cosmos, despite its profusion of medieval castles offering an incomparable evocative backdrop for Sir

Thomas Malory's epic vision. It was in one of these castles - the gaunt ruins of the fourteenth century fortress on the coast of Dunstanburgh - that I was reminded of Malory's Northumbrian sitting of Lancelot's "Joyeuse Garde" ... namely "some men say it was Alnwick and some men say it was Bamburgh".

"No man", apparently, suggests it was at Dunstanburgh, but that the stronghold of the Earls of Lancaster does boast its own ghostly legend with its own distinctly Arthurian resonances. The Dunstanburgh mythos of "Sir Guy the Seeker" has been rendered in narrative prose and verse by several authors - amongst them that celebrated "gothic" master of the late eighteenth century, Matthew "Monk" Lewis. All the literary versions of the legend vary in one or more particulars, but the bones of the tale run as follows ...

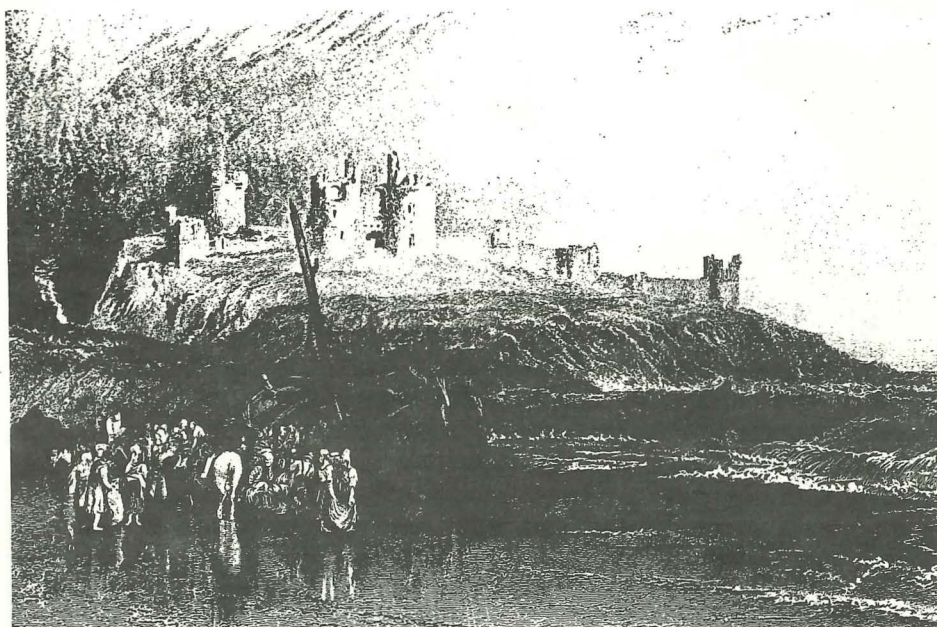


*Dunstanburgh Castle from the South West*

One dark and stormy night once upon a medieval time, a knight rides along the coast of Northumberland to where Dunstanburgh looms gaunt atop the cliff. He spurs his charger towards the gatehouse in the hope of finding hospitable shelter. He announces his presence at the gate to be greeted by a long-bearded ancient who suggests that such a chivalrous knight might be the man destined to liberate a lovely maiden who lives imprisoned in an enchanted tomb. Sir Guy, in the great tradition, declares



himself ready for such a task and follows the aged guided through the gatehouse and into a brightly lit hall where a host of some hundred marble knights stand ready by their marble warhorses. With them lies a lady, more beautiful than Sir Guy has ever seen, in a coffin-cum-tomb of crystal. The knight is present with a choice of weapon - a sword and a horn - and with the warning that he must beware of casting his choice away. Here the versions of the tale diverge most dramatically, but all agree that he settles on the wrong choice. In "Monk" Lewis's version, he is guided by an inner voice to take the horn. He does so and blows a blast thereon, waking the company of marble warriors who advance upon him with apparent grievous intent. In the moment of crisis, he casts aside the horn, seizes up the sword and everything goes black...



*Dustanburgh Castle from the North East*

Sir Guy has disregarded the warning, flung aside his chosen weapon, and finally regains consciousness outside the castle wall as dawn breaks. The lights, the knights, the wizard and - most importantly - the wondrous maiden are all disappeared, leaving Sir Guy crazed with torment, and doomed to wander the castle ruins in search of his lost vision of loveliness for all all the rest of time. And still of a midnight hour, they say, he might be heard - or even seen - in the ruins of Dustanburgh following his quest to this very day.

These bones of legend are variously fleshed out, most eminently by Lewis

whose narrative follows the general lines of my synopsis. Other versions place the proffered sword and horn in the hands of a giant hunter or in the clutches of two skeletons. James Service of Chatton, writing in the early nineteenth century, provides a similar metrical account to Lewis, but diverges from him in that Sir Guy first chooses the sword which is turns magically into a serpent. He casts it away in terror as a giant hunter blows the horn which wakes the company of knights. He diverges also from Lewis in the quality of his narrative verse, which frankly beggars description. The tale recounted in one George Tate's paper on Dunstanburgh presented to the Berwickshire Natural History Society in 1869 and in a lighthearted prose rendering by Paul Brown, a Newcastle columnist of the 1930s.

The origins of the tale are far from clear, but the Arthurian mythical stereotypes are unmistakable. The magic sword is a symbol honoured from Arthur's Excalibur to Siegfried's Nothung. The horn, similarly often found in folklore and legend, is specifically identified as "Merlin's horn" and indeed the ancient wizard character who greets Sir Guy is always redolent of Merlin and not infrequently named as such. The encapsulated maiden calls to mind Elaine of Astolat from Malory and the French romances, but the most powerful image is that of the company of mounted warriors awaiting their awakening by the horn of destiny.

In their presence lies the tale's most resonant Arthurian echo. It is borrowed for Sir Guy from the Northumberland legend of Sewingshields Castle - long since reduced to a mere earthwork - beneath which the knights of Arthur are said to lie in repose after the last great conflict until called awake by history. Adherents of W.F. Skene and the "northern recension" of the Arthurian cycle will recognise his northern location in battle site of Camlann. The Roman fort of *Trimontium*, found circa AD 81 as the fulcrum of Agricola's proposed network of border fortifications, lies in the Eildon Hills, another traditional "sleeping site" of Arthur's warband, and the battlefield of Camlann has been proposed as the Roman *Cambloglanna* at Birdoswald in Cumbria. The linking of Romano-British sites to the proximity of the northern "sleeping hero" legend does at least open a distinct fifth-century dimension and hints perhaps at a Celtic mythological original. The Border balladry of *Thomas the Rhymer* or *Thomas of Erceldoune* has its hero seduced by the Fairy Queen - strikingly similar in beauty to Sir Guy's lady - into an underground realm of supernatural beings dwelling below the Eildons.

The closely-related story of Canonbie Dick was current in the Borders around 1829 and mentioned by Sir Walter Scott in *Waverley*. It tells of Dick the horse-coper, riding home with his unsold stock and encountering ancient purchaser who bids him return on several future occasions to sell more steeds. When Dick eventually inquires as to the need for so much horseflesh he is led into a cave beneath the Eildons where the chargers



and their riders lie sleeping. When the full compliment of horses have been purchased the company of knights will be ready to ride out to the last great combat. He too picks the horn. It blast rouses the sleepers. Dick is whisked into oblivion by the wrong choice and lives just long enough to tell his story the following morning. John Leyden, the Border poet and antiquary, the Reverend John Hodgson of Northumberland both provide decidedly Arthurian versions which firmly identify the wizard horse-buyer as Merlin and the sleeping knights as the company of the Table Round. Precisely how that old and obviously borrowed tradition attached itself to Dunstanburgh castle remains a point at question. One possible solution may well lie in the history of the castle itself. It stands today as a ruined gatehouse and perimeter wall with two fortress towers on the cliff overhanging the North Sea. It has the most romantic and impressive aspect of all the Northumberland castles and would in itself have been enough to inspire the storytellers of the gothic tradition. But "Monk" Lewis attests to an original tale of local tradition which provided his prototype. The castle was first built - according to historical records - by Thomas, the second Earl of Lancaster and grandson of Henry III, in the second decade of the fourteenth century. Alone of all the Northumbrian castles, it was raised as neither a border keep against the Scots nor a royal fortress, but as a fortified retreat for Earl Thomas, High Sheriff of England, in exceptionally turbulent times. Now the fourteenth was a time when the Arthurian legends had become the favoured folklore of the upper classes in much the same way and at much the same time as Robin Hood had become the outlaw hero of the lower feudal orders. Nowhere in the knightly classes was the Arthurian mythos more popular than in the circles of the House of Lancaster. Indeed, Malory himself was certainly a Lancastrian sympathiser and, very probably, for that reason found himself with all the leisure of a "knight prisoner" to write his own Arthurian cycle. If Malory had heard "some men" site Lancelot's Joyeuse Garde in Northumberland, a like romantic vision may well have prompted Thomas of Lancaster to raise his own fortress retreat just down the coast from Bamburgh at Dunstanburgh. In much the same way, the local legends of Arthur and his warriors lying asleep beneath Sewingshields or the Eildons must have provided popular storytelling fare in the hall at Dunstanburgh. Medieval imagining being such as it was, it would take barely a generation for the same story to acquire a wandering knight for hero and attach itself to the castle at Dunstanburgh.

All of which leaves the distinct possibility that Sir Guy the Seeker is the offspring of the northern recension of the Arthurian tradition and chivalric romance of the medieval period sharing something of both genre and genealogy with Sir Thomas Malory's own Arthurian epic. Should any *DRAGON* readers find themselves in the vicinity of Northumbria's

"lordly strand", a diversion to Dunstanburgh might be of some passing interest. Sadly, English Heritage opening times do not accommodate the midnight hour which Sir Guy the Seeker favours as the moment of his reputed materialisation!

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# THE CAT CAME BACK

or More Thoughts on English Place Names

by

Steve Pollington

The recent *DRAGON* article by Reg Dand on the subject of Cat- place names in English set me thinking and prompted me to do some research. Reg is right in saying that Ekwell's work is for English place names only, there is no attempt to examine non-English names except in so far as they intrude into the modern survey. Unfortunately, there is some inconsistency in the treatment of names selected for inclusion: not all modern names of places are included (e.g. Canning Town, Peacehaven) nor all place names in English (e.g. Edinburgh, the Northumbrian name for what the Caledonians call Din Edein, I believe).

However, as I hope to show, a Celtic word 'catu' is not itself a likely direct etymon for Cat- in English place names. If, for the sake of example, the Trinovantes had fought the Cantiaci south east of London at a ford, it is possible they might have referred to this as the 'catu' ford. However, research into Celtic place names in Roman Britain has demonstrated that the norm was strictly descriptive names, in a topographical sense, e.g. (Welsh) Penmaenmawr "head of the great rock". English place names, on the other hand are much more likely to be a habitative in that they describe dwellings - enclosure, farm, manor, stronghold - or features of the landscape - woods, clearings, fields - although there are also a large proportion of nature names, such as "heron stream" or "hunting dog ford", and so on.

Ekwell has been criticised for assuming too many personal names uncritically, particularly ones that don't exist elsewhere, as the formative



elements in English place names. When no other source is obvious, it is often easy to impute a late form of some supposed personal name - particularly when, as with Domesday, the earliest record has been recorded by a scribe of Norman extraction to whom the name meant nothing. Yet even allowing for an excess of personal names against the dubious entries having been ascribed by Ekwell, there is still a prevailing trend among the early English to give names to places linking them to some person, either names or described by profession, for example, Kingston, Abbotsbury.

When we return to 'Catu-' as a personal name, we are struck by the very small amount of firm evidence. CATTa occurs only once in any record as a personal name, and Ekwell gives the form C(E)ATTA, suggesting that there may have been an -E- either imperfectly written, partially obscured or added later. The East Saxon, Ceatta would be pronounced something like 'chair-tar' so this unlikely to produce place names beginning Cat-, unless they had been given very early before the change in pronouncing the 'CE' occurred - probably soon after written records began in the late 600's. Elsewhere in the country, this change did not occur, but it is improbable that the -E- would have been inserted in the spelling in that case.

But when we look at 'Catu' as a personal name element, we are fortunate in that it is one of the few whose transfer from British to English can be observed. We read in Bede's Ecclesiastical History of a herdsman who retires early from the feast each evening through his inability to sing; subsequently he receives angelic help for his trouble and immediately begins declaiming verse in praise of "the Keeper of Heaven's Kingdom". The poet has a British name - Catumanos - which is recorded in Bede's account in the form current among his English contemporaries: CAEDMON. The same first element recurs in the name of a West Saxon king, CAEDUALLA, re-spelt CAEDWALLA in later manuscript retellings. This can hardly be other than the name also borne by a king of Gwynedd, Cadwallon, who fought Edwin of Northumbria in the early 600's. The conclusion to be drawn from these two names is that the English took over 'Catu-' names they did so in the form CAED, pronounced like 'cad'.

An interesting sidelight on this is the ranking found in the Old English personal names. In general, kings, important churchmen, provincial governors, men of rank, all seem to have names composed of two two elements, e.g. Wulf - stan or Alf - red. The very early leaders often have names which are just one word - Hengest, for example, is a word meaning "stallion". But the bottom tiers of the social structure, of whom we hear relatively little, seem usually to have had short names, often with no obvious meaning. It is obviously interesting to speculate on the origins of these names. Some are certainly shortened forms of unwieldily long names, nick names in fact, such as SAEBBA for Saeberht. But these are

virtually aristocratic names. The odder ones include Dudda, Assa, Binta, etc. Probably some are also curious contractions of known old English names, but these remain a sizeable group for which only a very tenuous origin, if any, can be surmised. It may, therefore, be the case that these are British names, names of British farmworkers and craftsmen, which have been taken over by the English but without observing the finer points of native pronunciation, and with a final -A (for men) or -E (for women) tacked on to bring them into line with an existing subset of English names which were already assuming social significance. Consider the local landowner visiting his cornfield where his men are work reaping - he may assert his authority by addressing them by 'pet' forms of their names (as we might today with Dave, Steve, Nick, etc.) while the men were obliged to address him by his full name and perhaps his title - as we do with certain dignitaries, nobles and professions.

Returning to the original point, it seems unlikely that 'catu' could form an element in English place names: if it were simply the word for "battle" it could form part of a British place name, but there is no reason to assume that this need have influenced the English name, or even that it would have been known to the English, except in certain areas where the British language remained in use quite late. These are not all in the West Country - there is evidence for a British-speaking enclave centred around St. Albans, Hertfordshire, only a day's ride from London by horse. If the battle were referred to was already ancient, there is no compelling reason to suggest that the English would have perpetuated the memory of it. If the battle had been more recent and involved the English themselves, they would hardly have bothered to translate half the placename into British just to record this fact; they might have called the site by a general name such as 'waelstow' (battlefield), or as seems to have been the case more often, they would have linked the spot with a certain person, perhaps an eminent Englishman who fell in the battle.

Again, I feel bound to agree with Reg Dand that many 'Cat-' names may not all refer to the animal. But the supposed derivation from some assumed battle is surely unwarranted - there simply isn't any evidence in most cases to support the idea. In fact, as with so many aspects of Dark Age research, this is just another possibility which does not appear to lead anywhere, though they might just throw a little light on the period. There is not so much Dark Age material available to us that we can afford to overlook any of it, or fail to pursue any lead.

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# THE FORT OF AMBROSIOUS

by  
Nick Grant

Among the many ingenious ideas put forward by John Morris in his book 'The Age of Arthur' (p.100-102, 625) was the suggestion that a group of place-names in southern England and the south Midlands, containing the element 'Ambr-', refer to places where garrisons were raised and stationed by Ambrosius Aurelianus in the 5th century<sup>1</sup>. The most interesting of these place-names is Amesbury, the town in Wiltshire.

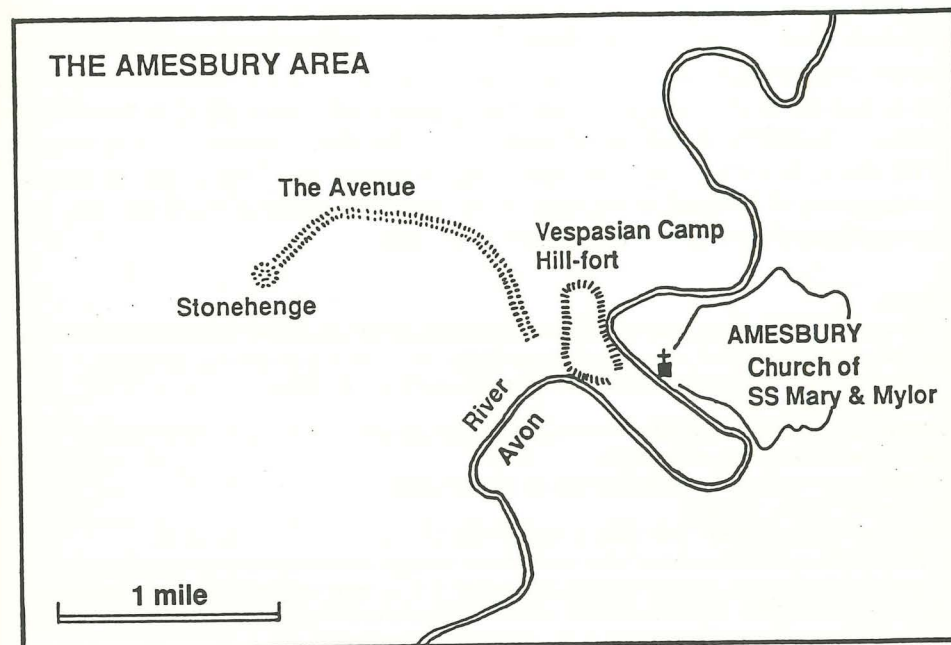
Amesbury first appears in historical record in 858 when Aethelbald, King of Wessex, held a witan (king's council) there. It continued to be a location for royal activities through the 9th and 10th centuries, and remained an important royal estate up to the time of Domesday<sup>2</sup>. The earliest forms of the place-name are 'AMBRESBYRIG' or similar, that is 'burh' or 'fort' associated with a personal name 'Ambre' or 'Aembre'. Place-name experts (Gover, Mower and Stenton, 1939, p.358-9, Ekwell, 1960, p.9) believe this name is cognate with the recorded Old German 'Ambri'. Historians (Morris, cited above, Myres, 1986, p.160-1, and others) have argued rather that the name represented is that of Ambrosius.

The 'burh' element of the place-name is equally interesting. It derives from a large Iron Age hillfort on the western outskirts of the town, now rather obscured by tree-planting and landscaping. The fort has acquired the name 'Vespasian's Camp' as a result of antiquarian speculation. The defences consist of a rampart and ditch ringing a hill spur with steep slopes on all sides except for the north, where there is an entrance. The area enclosed is roughly triangular (Hogg, 1975, p.286). In the 5th and 6th centuries the British reinforced and sometimes refortified a number of Iron Age Hill-forts in southern England. As the fort at Amesbury has never been excavated, it is not possible to state whether the fort could have been occupied at the time of Ambrosius<sup>3</sup>. With an area of 16ha, the fort is much larger than others reoccupied at this time<sup>4</sup>, and would have required considerable resources to fully man the defences, probably at a level only available to a leader of the stature of Ambrosius.

Geoffrey of Monmouth is the first writer to specially associate Ambrosius with the Amesbury area. Geoffrey refers to the 'Cloister of Ambrius' on 'Mount Ambrius', near Salisbury, the scene of a peace conference between the Britons and the Saxons under Hengest. Here the Saxons treacherously massacre the British, who are later buried in the cemetery there (Thorpe, 1966, p.164-6). Unexpectedly Geoffrey derives the place-name not from Ambrosius, but from a certain Ambrius, founder of the cloister many years before. Later Ambrosius visits the cloister - described as a monastery of 300 brethren - and cemetery, and decides to build a monument there to the murdered Britons. This proves to be the Giant's Ring, or Stonehenge, brought over from Ireland and re-elected around the burial place by

Merlin. Ambrosius and his brother Uther are later buried inside the Giant's Ring (Thorpe, 1966, p.195-202 and 211).

Geoffrey's geography in these stories is rather confused and it does not appear that he personally knew the area. He treats Amesbury and Stonehenge as if they were in the same place, Ambrosius being buried near the monastery of Ambrius and inside the Giant's Ring (Thorpe 1966, p.202), whilst later Uther is borne to the 'monastery of Ambrius and buried...at the side of Aurelius Ambrosius inside the Giant's Ring'. In fact, Stonehenge is some two miles from Amesbury, and whilst it is relatively elevated compared to the town, which is situated in a river valley, it is hardly on a 'Mount', whilst the town is certainly not.



As always with Geoffrey, it is not clear whether he wholly fabricated these stories or whether they are based on some scrap of folklore or legend he had picked up. There was a nunnery at Amesbury, but it was not founded until 979 or shortly after, by Queen Elfrida, as recorded by William of Malmesbury in his 'Gesta Pontificum Anglorum' (Doble, 1927, p.24). The abbey church was dedicated to St. Mary (the Virgin) and St. Melor, a (?) 6th century Breton saint. It is, however, most unlikely that this dedication indicates the presence of an early Celtic cult (as Morris suggests, 1973, p.256). The medieval Amesbury 'Life' of St. Melor states that his relics were brought to Amesbury from Brittany by 'preachers of foreign extraction', and the most likely date for this is the reign of Athelstan (924-939) (Doble, 1927, p.10 and 24). Melor's body was recorded as lying at Amesbury in the 'Resting Places of Saints', a list of c. 1032 (Hill, 1984, p.152), and Athelstan had many contacts with Brittany, arranging for the relics of many other Breton saints to be



brought over to England<sup>5</sup>. The only other 'evidence' that a monastery existed at Amesbury in the 5th and 6th centuries is one version of a Welsh triad listing 'the choirs of Ambrosius in Amesbury' as one of the three choirs of Britain, along with Glastonbury and Llan Illtyd Fawr. There were allegedly 2,400 saints in each of these choirs. There are a number of versions of this Triad; the only one to include Amesbury survives only in the highly suspect collection of the Welsh antiquarian Iolo Morgannwg, first published in 1801. Morgannwg adopted his Triads from older written sources and oral traditions, but also simply made some up. As historical evidence, this reference is worthless<sup>6</sup> (Smith, 1977, p.57).

At present, therefore, the connection of Ambrosius with this area - if any - remains tantalisingly obscure. However, there remains plenty of opportunities for further research. Firstly, there must be more scope for investigation of the 'Ambr-' place-names, and perhaps, discovery of new examples, after the pioneering work carried out by Morris. Secondly, Geoffrey of Monmouth continues to be re-appraised, as his use of traditions, that is, embroidery rather than pure invention, is now thought to be more important than has been argued previously. Finally, archaeological investigation of 'Vespasian's Camp' could establish whether there was any late Roman/Early Post-Roman occupation of the site.

#### NOTES

1. The connection of these place-names with Ambrosius was first suggested by S. Applebaum in 'The Agrarian History of England' ed. H.P.R. Finberg (1972), Vol. I, part ii, p.24 and n.2, and p.253.

2. Amesbury's recorded royal connections during this period are as follows:

858 Witan of Aethelbald.

873/888 Land bequeathed by Alfred in his will to his younger son.

932 (12 December) Witan of Athelstan.

946/955 Land bequeathed by Eadred in his will to his mother.

955 (Easter) Visit by Ethelred.

1066 Land held by Edward. (Hill, 1984, p.83-4, 87, 89, 91, 101)

3. Wood (1986, p.75) states that when a road was cut through the southern end of the fort, finds made suggest that the fort was refurbished in the 5th century. It is not clear what information this statement is based on. Fowler (1971, p.206) specifically states that there is no archaeological evidence, as opposed to etymological evidence, for 5th century occupation at Vespasian's Camp.

4. For example, South Cadbury is 8ha, Cadbury-Congresbury 3.5ha, and Crickley Hill 3.6ha.

5. Including relics of saints Samson, Branwalader, Judoc, Tudwal, and Winwaloe (Doble, 1927, p.25).

6. Nevertheless Ashe (1957, p.55-56) uses this Triad to help support his argument that Glastonbury abbey was a pre-Saxon foundation! Since the Amesbury area would have been occupied by the pagan Saxons around 550, and the monastery at Amesbury then destroyed, his argument runs, Glastonbury must be at least as old as this date.

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## NEWS

## ROMNEY MARSH

Between Folkstone and Hastings are areas dominated by marshland, including the Isle of Oxney, Walland Marsh and Romney Marsh. These cover an area of about 100 square miles. Over the last few years archaeologists have some very interesting discoveries in this part of Kent.



"Anglo-Saxon town found on marshland" by David Keys, The Independent, 14th April 1990, tells of the work of Romney Marsh Research Trust. Having been badly hit by the Black Death, in the fourteenth century, Romney Marsh's population had decreased considerably compared to what archaeologists show. Twenty medieval settlements, half a dozen Roman industrial sites plus one from the late Bronze Age have been found. But for us it is the discovery of an Anglo-Saxon town that is of some interest. Aerial photography has uncovered a town of some 300 acres with four churches. The town would have been on the sea shore during the 'Dark Ages', but it is now three and a half miles in land. It will be interesting to see what will come from the research now taking place by a team led by Mark Gardiner from the London Institute of Archaeology. (If you have any information on this dig please let us know.)

## BYZANTINE LINKS

David Keys, once again, in "Dig reveals Byzantine link with Celtic Kings of Arthur's Castle", The Independent, 12th May 1990, looks at archaeological research at Tintagel.

Two pieces of research are taking place in the area of the Cornish town of Tintagel, site of the legendary birthplace of 'King Arthur'. These include English Heritage at Tintagel Castle and a joint venture by the Institute of Cornish Studies and the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, funded by the Mobil Oil Company, at the churchyard.

It has been known for a long time that this area had had links with the Mediterranean and now latest research is showing that this link was more than considerable. Greater importance must now be put on Tintagel than has been in the past. Christopher Morris, of Durham University, has shown that the 'Dark Age' buildings found at Tintagel Castle were far more extensive than original thought. This settlement must have been a very important link in the economic system of the Post-Roman period with its importation of wine, olive oil and household goods. So far, over the years, 3000 fragments of Byzantine pottery has been unearthed. These include bowls and plates from Phocaea, tableware from Carthage, jars from Sardis, and olive oil and wine amphorae from Cilicia and the Peloponnese in Greece.

Together with the discoveries made by a team directed by Jacqueline Nowakowski at the churchyard, which include two slate tablets marked with Mediterranean style crosses, the importance of Tintagel in the fifth and sixth centuries is becoming more and more evident. However, trade with the East was eventually interrupted following an economic slump and trade connections "withered away". Was Tintagel a centre of trade with the East - a port or a distribution place? What was the status of this complex - religious, royal or economic? Also was the importance of Tintagel a tradition that was passed down over the ages until the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth?



In this issue's review section we have a good few books to look at. The first four are reviewed by Sandra Garside Neville while the rest are by your editor.

### WISE WOMAN'S TELLING

by Fay Sampson, Headline Books, 1989, £2.99.

### WHITE NUN'S TELLING

by Fay Sampson, Headline Books, 1989, £3.50.

These are the first two books of the 'Daughter of Tintagel' sequence. They tell the story of Morgan, half-sister to King Arthur. The first book, 'Wise Woman's Telling', is told from the point of view of Gwennol, Morgan's nurse. She only takes us as far as Morgan's ninth year, but already the child is set on revenge against Uther and his son. She is banished to the nunnery at Tintagel, which is where 'White Nun's Telling' takes up with a different narrator, Luned, who is assigned to be foster mother to Morgan. She finds herself corrupted and ruined by the girl. Morgan is released at the end of this book, aged 18, with Luned stating that she knows how Morgan will take her revenge.

Although the storyline is familiar it will be interesting to see how Ms Sampson continues her tale. These first two books illustrate her skill in story-telling in the way she differ-



entiate between the gossipy old Gwennol and the brittle repressed Luned. The setting is surprising gritty - the low level of living is portrayed well, with fleas and lice getting an honourable mention!

#### THE ROAD TO AVALON

by Joan Wolf, Grafton, 1989, £3.99.

Morgan again! This time the story is the forbidden love between Arthur and Morgan, who are brought up together on the Isle of Avalon. It is a well-told tale, following Arthur and Morgan from childhood to Arthur's death. The author makes a good attempt at portraying Britain in the mid-5th century showing the Romans to be still vigorous and in control. Unfortunately, the use of Medieval characters and incidents detracts from the sense of realism, but the quality of the story-telling pulls it through.

#### BRIDE OF THE SPEAR

by Kathleen Herbert, Corgi, 1988, £3.50

As ever, the author takes us to sixth century Cumbria, in this last book of the trilogy. This tale is about Taniu, daughter of Loth of Lothian, who as a child is dedicated to pagan gods by her Pictish step-mother. The conflict between pagan and Christian is shown throughout the book. The setting is generally convincing and the use of Roman and sub-Roman names and place-names helps to create a twilight world. Ms Herbert is apparently writing a non-fiction book on Dark Age Cumbria which will obviously be worth looking at.

#### THE JUNIOR ARTHURIAN CLUB NEWSLETTER Vol.II. No.1, SPRING 1990

Sarah Gordon opens the second volume of the JAC Newsletter with a cover from Christopher Williams, who also did the cover of the first issue. This issue includes the question and answer section: Dear Merlin, Book Reviews of "Castle" by David Macaulay and "The Testing of Tertius", the sequel to "Merlin's Mistake"; the Junior Arthurian Project and a Castle Wordsearch. The project, mentioned above, is "to try to discover an answer to one of the major Arthurian mysteries". Sarah asks for suggestions.

It is nice to see the JAC Newsletter continuing and it would be even better if more British members were to join. Sarah

will be over in Britain during August for the International Arthurian Conference in Durham and it is hoped that some of us will meet her.

The next book is one that somehow got missed last year - I found a copy by accident in a second-hand book shop.

#### THE ENDING OF ROMAN BRITAIN

by A. S. Esmonde Cleary, B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1989, £19.95.

Here is one of those books that an self-respecting Dark Age buff should have. Consisting of 242 pages, 11 black and white photographs, 48 maps, plans and illustrations, plus an extensive bibliography, and index, "The End of Roman Britain" is a real must. It answers many questions and poses many more. And for an archaeological book does what many don't - mentions Arthur, Ambrosius Aurelianus and Vortigern.

This excellent book covers the period from the late third century to the end of the fifth, showing the changes that took place both on the Continent and in Britain. In fact it is this comparison between the two areas that makes some sense of the period. It begins by looking at the basic organisation of Late Roman society - military, economic and religious aspects being discussed. First the Continent is looked at and then a considerable amount of space is given to Late Roman Britain. It shows that there was a decline in economic aspects and a break down in the city, town and villa situation. But what is of some importance is that Dr. Esmonde Cleary delves deeply into what happened at the beginning of the fifth century.

We are shown through various methods that the evidence indicates that the Roman administration came to an end by the third decade of the fifth century. What we accept as Romano-British is superseded by a British society in the mid-fifth century. There seems to have been little or no interreaction between the Anglo-Saxon immigrants and the Romano-British, rather the meeting between societies were those of an heroic type. The British had, by the time they started to meet, trade, make treaties, fight and even marry with Anglo-Saxons, already forgotten to a great extent Roman institutions. The Anglo-Saxons didn't become, like France, a society using Roman ideas rather they eventually imposed their own laws, language and culture on a pre-dominately British population. The author estimates that the Anglo-Saxons must have numbered ten of thousands while the British probably were in their millions.



"The Ending of Roman Britain" should be on everyone shelf or at least well read from a library. After reading it a new picture of the early years of the 'Dark Ages' came to me. It is interesting, also, how Dr. Esmonde Cleary put over his points: when it comes to the beginning of the fifth century and the end of Roman administration he says: "In that time the towns, the villas, the industries and other material evidence diagnostic of Roman Britain disappeared. There was no slow drawing-down of blinds: the end was nasty, brutish and short."

#### ANY OLD IRON

by Anthony Burgess, Arrow Books Ltd., 1989, £3.99.

"Once in the hand of Attila; then in that of Arthur; looted by the Nazis at Monte Cassino; seized by the Soviets to exhibit in Leningrad, King Arthur's Excalibur is the flashing blade that hangs over the fates of men and women caught up in the chaos of history."

Sounds really good, but if you're expecting a book about the history of Excalibur, forget it. If, however, you are interested in the story of a Welsh-Russian family with Jewish friends then this is the book for you.

The book starts out giving the impression it is about the sword but soon it is relegated into the background, appearing occasionally. The story tells of the Jones family from South Wales and brings in the Titanic, two world wars, the massacre of Soviet prisoners of war and the raise of Welsh nationalistic fanaticism. The Arthurian connection is oh so slight as to not be there at all - and the book would have held up without this theme. Heaven knows why Mr. Burgess bothered to have Excalibur in it. Despite this, though far from worth reading because of this, there is a nice bit where Dan Jones, a bit of a moron, says he heard the sword talking and later that it screamed. Here is the opportunity for an interesting book lost.

If you decide to read it get it from the library.

#### KING ARTHUR: THE DREAM OF A GOLDEN AGE

by Geoffrey Ashe, Art and Imagination Series, Thames and Hudson, 1990, £6.95.

The Art and Imagination series has been going for some time and has produced some very interesting volume. Celtic

Mysteries and The Grail may be worth reading. The latest edition is a look at 'King Arthur' and how writers have built up a golden age around the legendary characters and his world.

Consisting of 96 pages, of which there are 15 illustrations in colour, 120 in black and white, 32 pages of text and numerous captions. In the pictorial section aspects of the Arthurian world are recorded from Celtic times up to the world of films (even postage stamps). Profusely illustrated from many ages and a number of different culture this book covers not only the Arthurian golden age but compares to others, with an explanation of what is the origins of the golden age. From earliest times we hear of a god of the golden age sleeps in a cave on an island to the west and who will one rise again when people are in need. The legend goes back to Cronus (Roman: Saturn), through Arthur, various leaders like Barbarossa, and Napoleon, to Blake's Albion and on to President Kennedy. Other heroes are also claimed to have survived including Elvis Presley. Legends live on and transform to suit the particular era - seemingly we still have a need for heroes and saviours. So from the possibility of a defender in the fifth or sixth century to the King of Camelot, with his Knights of the Round Table and the Quest for the Holy Grail, Arthur typifies the golden age that once was and can now only be yearned for.

Mr. Ashe does a very good job of telling the tale in a fashion that is easy to read and doesn't get bogged down in detail or speculation. "King Arthur" is not exactly a history book but rather it looks at what people have made of a 'Dark Age' warrior. Nevertheless, a very interesting book with some fascinating illustrations.

#### THE WARRIOR'S WAY: ENGLAND IN THE VIKING AGE

by Stephen Pollington, Blandford Press, 1989, £16.95.

Though not about about Arthur or the period of the 'Dark Age' covered by DRAGON, I though it was well worth this book being mentioned, particularly as it is by a member of the society - Steve Pollington.

This is a large format book, 9 inches by 11½ inches, 192 pages, 36 colour photographs, numerous black and white photographs and line drawings, plus two appendices, glossary, bibliography and index. In most cases the visual material is excellent, though some of the line drawings



are not too good. Visually this is a very well designed book and certainly well laid out.

It is basically about the poem The Battle of Maldon, but it is far more than that. The battle itself, with a new translation of the poem, is covered in Chapter 3. The book begins by introducing the period and following the battle looks at life in England during the 10th century, though touching on the new millenium. The detail is fascinating and Steve touches on almost every aspect of life for the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings. This is definitely more than a book about warriors or battle, it brings to life Anglo-Saxon England in a very straight forward way without overloading the reader with documentary evidence. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Steve has had to do a lot of research before producing this work. The introduction, on the inside cover, tell us that Steve actually taught himself Old English to translate "The Battle of Maldon". He has certainly done an impressive job.

Even if this book wasn't written by Steve Pollington I think it is well worth a read, especially those of you who have an interest in this period.

#### DRESS IN ANGLO SAXON ENGLAND

by Gale R. Owen-Crocker, Manchester University Press, 1990 (paperback, 1986 hardback), £12.95.

This an excellent book which whom be of great use both to the historian and those interested in re-enactment. It covers the costume from the fifth to the eleventh century and contains masses of information. Consisting of 241 pages, 187 drawings (by Christine Wetherell), 8 photographs, appendix, lengthy notes and bibliography, plus index, this book is a jewel for those interested in the costume of the 'Dark Ages'.

Gale R. Owen-Crocker, Lecturer in English at the University of Manchester, uses a number of methods to investigate the dress of the Anglo-Saxons. These include archaeology, literature, historical documents and pictorial material such as sculpture and early manuscripts. I found the whole book fascinating, bringing light not only to the history of dress but also the people of the period. Of particular use are the introduction, chapters II to IV and the final two chapters. These cover the periods up to the 7th and look at the production of textiles. A fascinating insight to the

early Anglo-Saxons builds up. Also a number of amazing facts about the relationship between the Celtic people who lived in Britain and the Anglo-Saxon newcomers. Despite the accepted belief of the whilespread masscre of the Celtic people by the Anglo-Saxon invaders Gale Owen-Crocker points out that: "modern scholars believe that peaceful co-existence and inter-marriage must have taken place in some areas". And that: "the newcomers could have learned weaving techniques and the art of 'finishing' cloth" from the inhabitants. However, she goes on to emphasize that this type of continuity was probably the exception than the rule. The survival of Celtic people can be found in a number of areas including Northumbria which "included many people of Celtic stock and that they dressed like Britons rather than like the Anglo-Saxons of others kingdoms". She also shows that, for instance, the Celtic word 'bratt' for cloak continued to be used even though Old English was generally spoken. To add to this we also see the Celtic Church having a very strong influence on this part of the Anglo-Saxon world. "Dress in Anglo-Saxon England" is without any doubt very useful, well researched and full of the everyday things that history book so often push aside for politics and wars.

#### THE MYSTERY OF KING ARTHUR

by Elizabeth Jenkins, Michael O'Mara Books Ltd., 1975 (re-printed 1990), £13.95.

At first I was a little disappointed that "The Mystery of King Arthur" is just a reprint of the 1975 edition. Basically it is exactly the same except for two variations in the coloured plates and the slight difference in cropping of the black and white illustrations - the cover is also completely different. The text is the same and has not been updated to accomodate changes in theories (such as Riothamus-Arthur) or the progress of 'Dark Age' archaeology. Having said that this is one of the best books on the subject of 'King Arthur' and stands well with others such as "The Quest for Arthur's Britain" edited by Geoffrey Ashe and "King Arthur" by Richard Barber.

"The Mystery of King Arthur" consists of 224 pages, 16 colour plates, 74 black and white illustrations (including a map), a short bibliography (the 1975 original - no additions) and a five page index. Elizabeth Jenkins covers the whole Arthurian scene from the pre-Arthurian history and legend up to



the literature of the 19th century. Unfortunately, like the 1975 edition, it stops short of the 20th century with its novels and films. Nevertheless, there is an immense amount of information in this book, including some I have never come across before. Take for instance (and this is nothing to do with history but may be of some interest) Fielding's "The Tragedy of Tragedies, or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great" in which we are given an insight into 18th century curiosities. "The Arthurian Encyclopedia" gives some academic information about this play, but Ms Jenkins adds some lovely bits like quoting from the *dramatis personae* with Arthur described as "...a passionate sort of king, husband of Queen Dollalolla, of whom he stands a little in fear, father of Huncamunca, whom he is very fond of, and in love with Glumdolca...". Strange stuff here. However, she also looks at the more historical aspect, covering it very adequately while not adding any theories of her own.

This is an excellently illustrated book, full of information about the literature of the Arthurian legend. Since it is likely that the original 1975 edition is out of print, this new reprint is warmly welcomed. I very much enjoyed reading "The Mystery of King Arthur" the imagery from medieval manuscripts very useful. I found some of the spelling of names a little unusual - for example 'Culwych' instead of 'Culhwch'. Nevertheless, a book well worth reading.

## CORRECTIONS

Sheila Lavelle wrote to me pointing out that in her article "Patrick and Illtyd in Glamorgan" (D. Vol.3 No.7) there are a number of mistakes. At the top of page 7 the first sentence should read:

*"Perhaps the term 'villula' implies that it was not the most developed type of Roman villa building..."* And there are two spelling mistakes:

"Bennavem" for "Bannavem" (para.4, page 6) and "tabirnae" for "taburnae" (para.5, page 6).

My humble apologies to Sheila.

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