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# DRAGON





Dear friends,

Welcome to a slightly delayed issue of DRAGON. Unfortunately the subject of this editorial must be without doubt the lack of material. You might say that the old DRAGON is not getting much to eat these days and if it doesn't get some fresh food soon it will definitely starve to death. This might sound a little frivolous but, seriously, I am down to a hand full of article and most of them done by one person. Winter tends to bring a slow down on archaeological news and unless something relevant appears in the way of articles in journals and newspapers or new books coming out I have hardly anything to fill the next issue - unless, of course, I write it myself.

So this is the position - the next issue will be a rather emaciated DRAGON - with sunken cheeks and ribs showing - but I hope to get it to you before Christmas or in the first week of the New Year. After that I don't really know what will happen. There will definitely be a DRAGON 3.10 but I cannot see DRAGON surviving beyond 3.12 unless contributions start rolling in. I dearly don't want to see DRAGON folding after such a good run but after such a successful period of time the old dragon seems to be ill and may die. What happens to DRAGON is purely up to US - I will do my best to keep it going but I need YOU to keep the mythical beast well stocked-up with articles, reviews, news and letters.

There are a small group of members who can be depended on to contribute articles and comments, but like President Nixon's famous 'silent majority' there are a good number who have never written an article or commented on the magazine. I would like to ask those who haven't contributed in the past, or at least recently, to try and do something for the New Year. I hope YOU can help and I look forward to hearing from YOU.

Meanwhile, we begin this issue with a suggestion for a new series of articles taking advantage of possible visits to different countries or interesting areas of the British Isles. Other items include a piece by Kurt Hunter-Mann commenting on Sheila Lavelle's article on St. Patrick, a round-up of recent news, mainly on the archaeological front, a what's on section, book reviews and scrolls. I wish it could have been a larger issue but I can't, at this stage, put all my eggs in one basket.

I hope you find this issue of some interest and I look forward to hearing your comments.

Finally, I do have for sale a limited number of back-issues - please see leaflet enclosed.

Now, please read on:

Cover photographs are of (top) the Roman walls at Mautern and (below) the Medieval gate based on the original Roman at Traismauer, Austria.

## ROVING REPORTS

*One in an irregular series of articles on places visited by members of the society.  
I shall start the ball rolling with:*

### AUSTRIA

#### On the migration road

For a week at the end of August and beginning of September 1990 I had the pleasure of visiting Vienna, Austria, and staying with Wolfgang, Roswitha and Willy Heindl. During my stay we visited a number of interesting place some of which were important at the end of the Roman period and into the so called Dark Age. The following is a look at Austria during the fifth and sixth centuries - a time of great migrations.

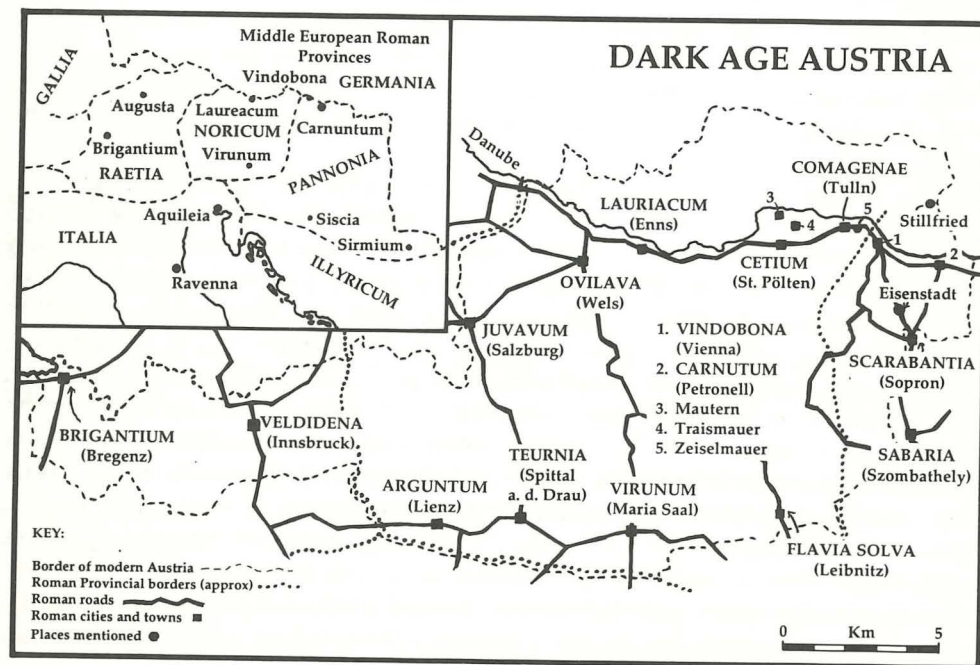
The country that we today call Österreich - Austria - had by the year 400 AD been for nearly four hundred years part of the Roman Empire. Divided into three provinces the most easterly was part of Pannonia (which also covered most of modern day Hungary), the far west was Raetia and the majority of country was Noricum. The border of these provinces on the north and east was the River Danube, and you only have to see the river to know what it meant to be a border. Beyond the three province, which was inhabited by an already mixed Illyro-Celtic people - not to mention the Roman Army, its auxiliaries and citizens who had settled from other parts of the Empire, were many barbarian tribes. These tribes were literally straining at the leash to move in and by 400 AD the Empire was crumbling. Pay to the legions still in provinces had been cut-off and the defence system was collapsing.

During the last few decades of the fourth century Goths, Alans, Huns and the Quadi had already begun to move into the eastern part of Pannonia. In 405 Radegastus and his Ostrogoths moved straight through Austria and attempted to invade Italy only to be defeated by Stilicho and an army which included Huns, Alan and even Goths. Stilicho had gained the support of Alaric of the Visigoths who occupied parts of Pannonia and Noricum. For a while western Pannonia, Noricum and Raetia became united under a local military leader called Genseridus. But already Roman control had dwindled away leaving the way open for the barbarians to take over. This didn't mean wholesale massacres and many Romano-Celtic people began to live peacefully under Gothic rule. While many Roman cities and towns such as Carnuntum, the capital of western Pannonia, became disused others such as Vienna - Vindobona - survived enough to give rise to Medieval cities. It is also known that the remaining Roman units - which were already mixed Romans and Barbarians - caused a series of disturbances in 431, which brought General Aetius who suppressed the troubles with armed force. In



the first half of the fifth century the kingdom of Burgundy placed an interesting part in the history of Austria (or to be more correct the literature of German-speaking people). The Burgundians hacked out a kingdom for themselves with a capital at Worms, near Frankfurt on the Rhine, and despite their defeat in 436 by Aetius and his Hunnic allies their king, Gundahar, and his brothers entered legend. Like most myths the time scales tend to get mixed up but the characters of The Song of the Nibelungs were based on real characters. Gundahar became known as Gunther and, together with Hagen, Kriemhild, Dietrich of Bern and Etzel the Hun, is remembered in stories around the Wachau area of Lower Austria. Dietrich of Bern is a misplaced Theodoric the Great, while Etzel, placed in almost the right period, is Attila.

The great chieftain of the Huns rose to power in the 430s and in 434 conquered Pannonia building his 'capital city' somewhere on the central plains of Hungary. In 443 he defeated the armies of the Eastern Roman Empire and exacted from them an annual tribute. Six years later Priscus Panites, who accompanied the Byzantine ambassador Maximun, visited and described Attila and his court. Apart from the usual propaganda of the Romans, Attila was far from being an unsophisticated savage having others interests than pillage and rape. (The Barbarians nations were often underestimated by historians of the time!) In 451 Attila's armies passed through Noricum and Raetia, entered Gaul and came face to face with forces of the Western Roman Empire. Under the command of Aetius a joint force of Romans, Franks and Visigoths defeated the Huns at a battle near Châlons. Attila then cast his eyes on Italy but after capturing Aquileia returned



to Hungary where he died in 453. He had marked the height of the Hunnic empire and was placed in Teutonic myth as Etzel who married Kreimhild.

Meanwhile in Austria, despite the Barbarian states and the much toing and froing, Christianity continued to flourish. Many of the Gothic peoples were members of the Arian Church which was regarded by Rome as a heretical form of Christianity. In 460 AD St. Severinus entered Noricum with a similar goal to that of St. Germanus' visits to Britain. The Vita Sancti Severini, written in 511 by one Eugippius, gives an excellent picture of Austria in the second half of the fifth century. Severinus tells us that organised military defences like that of the Danube limes were now non-existent. However, pockets of Romano-Celtic people still in various areas of Austria. Lauriacum, Faviana, Augutunum, Commegena, Celeia, Virunum, Juvavium and Vindobona, amongst others, seemed to have survived in diminished forms. (I had the opportunity to see evidence of this kind of survival in the walls at Traismauer and Mautern.) Fifth century churches of various sizes have been discovered by archaeologists throughout Austria and a number of these sites gave rise to organised religious settlements including bishoprics.

St. Severinus, whose origins are obscure, was born in 433 and was believed to have been someone of important but fell from power at the same time as Emperor Majorian. He turned to religion and began to evangelise in Austria. Though visiting many parts of the Noricum and eastern Raetia he actually settled in Faviana (modern day Mautern) where he built a monastery. His Vita tells us of various Gothic tribes and personalities such as Queen Guso and King Feletheris. Eugippius, who actually lived in Noricum until its abandonment, also tells of certain characters and the position of the Roman defences. A Roman Army unit



The Stillfried hillfort (what looks like a guard tower is in fact part of a children's playground)



was holding out at Passau, Raetia, and at Flaviana when Severinus came to Noricum. The commander was one Mamertius, who like many of his colleagues gave up his profession and became a bishop (not at all uncommon in the Dark Age). These units were virtually militia and had long since given up expecting wages from the Empire. Nevertheless, they continued to hold out.

Some Barbarians settled in Austria becoming part of the general mixed population - even becoming Christians (whether Roman or Arian). Others, however, continued to ravage and besiege towns and cities. Many fell straight away but others continued into the later part of the fifth century - including Flaviana and Teurnia, which was besieged in 472 by Pannonian Goths. St. Severinus was not in Austria to fight for the Empire but to conquer for Christ. He visited not only the Romano-Celtic communities but also the Barbarians. Eventually, Severinus fell to the wiles of Theodoric the Ostrogoth who had him murdered at Flaviana in 482. His death was one symptom of the decline of Roman influence which was crumbling under the pressure of the Alemannic and Ostrogothic attacks. By 488 the three provinces were abandoned by the Roman Empire.

The abandonment of Austria doesn't end its history - though many books on this country really don't begin until the establishment of the Babenburg dynasty in the 10th century. At roughly this time can be found the earliest reference to Austria which can be found on a parchment discussing property at Neuhausen - "in regione vulgari vocabulo Ostrarrichi" - Österreich - the Eastern Realm, marchland of the Dukes of Babenburg. Unification of the Germanic peoples under the Babenburgs brought an end to the migration road - the Magyars being one of the last before this time. It didn't, however, end invasions whether they came from the east or the west. But what of the history of Austria before the Babenburgs. We saw earlier that the Ostrogoths had occupied Pannonia and it was amongst these people that Theodoric son of Theodemir and Evelieva was born around 454 AD. As a youngster he had been sent as a hostage to Constantinople where he learned about the advantage of Byzantine life. When he was nineteen the Emperor Leo returned him to Theodemir, who was now king of the Ostrogoths, and immediately Theodoric proved his friendship to the Eastern Roman Empire by capturing Singidunum (Belgrade). Following the death of Leo and Theodemir Theodoric, who was now supporting the new Emperor Zeno, became king of the Ostrogoths. In the last two decades of the fifth century Theodoric clashed with Odovacar. The Western Roman Empire had collapsed after 476 and Odovacar, a Rugian from beyond the Danube became king of Italy. Strangely enough he had been influenced by St. Severinus. When the Empire abandoned Austria Theodoric marched on Italy. In 489 Odovacar was defeated at Verona and then, four years later, having made peace with the Ostrogothic king was murdered by him at a banquet. Theodoric was now king of Italy and lord over the Ostrogoth empire which spread from Provence in the west to the Danube in the east and north and south to the Adriatic, Italy and Sicily. There followed a time of peace and prosperity in Austria, and during this time the governor of Carinthia, sent by Theodoric, had a delightful mosaic floor laid at Teurnia. The governor had the

interesting name of Ursus - and his wife was called Ursulina. For the next 26 years Theodoric ruled wisely and clemently - marrying the sister of Clovis, king of the Franks, and keeping the Lombards, Bavarians and Gepidae from crossing the Danube.

On the death of Theodoric in 526 his kingdom fell apart and the Lombards and Bavarians moved into western Austria while the Gepidae took over Hungary and a part of eastern Austria. Beyond these a further conglomeration of tribes led by the Avars was growing in strength. In 534 Theodoric's grandson died without air and his mother Amalasuntha, who was already regent, called in her cousin Theodat. A year later she was imprisoned on an island on Lake Bolsena and then murdered. The Eastern Emperor Justinian used this as a good excuse for war and sent Count Belisarius against the Ostrogoths. The Lombards allied themselves with the Byzantines and tore into Theodoric's empire. Their king had been Wacho, who came to power in 511, and when he died Alboin took the throne. He was forced to make an alliance with the Avars to avoid a defeat by the Pannonian Gepidae. Meanwhile Italy had returned to Ostrogothic rule under Totila but when he was slain in 552 the Lombards, seeing the weakness of Italy, moved in. In 567 after destroying the Gepidae the Lombards left Austria to the Avars. Alboin took most of Italy, making Pavia his capital, but didn't live long in his new empire being assassinated in 572. After this Austria came under the rule of three tribes - the Alemanns and Bavarians in the west and the Avars in the east.

So at the beginning of the seventh century the basis of Austria's future national composition was set. The Slavic Avars in Lower Austria and other eastern provinces and a Germanic Bavarian strain in the west particularly the Tyrol and Salzburg. Though the country was a mixture of Germans and Slavs there was still Raetio-Roman people in the Alps and Celts in the eastern territories. This interesting mixture has given Austria a uniqueness especially when you see some of today's customs which, have a pre-Germanic, even pre-Roman flavour to them. But that is another story.

This article cannot be closed without a mention of Arthur - yes, Arthur! At a chapel in of church of Maria Lanzendorf, not too far south of the Austrian capital of Vienna, can be found a curious chronicle. This is recorded in pictures and text depicting a series of events from the 1st to the 8th century. The first shows St. Luke preaching in the area, then Marcus Aurelius defeating the Marcomanni in AD 70 or 77, the third depicts Arthur, which we return to, and the final picture is of Charlemagne defeating the Hun and rebuilding the chapel in AD 791. The part dealing with Arthur reads: "Arthurus crown prince from Britain erected for the Christian soldiers...on this heath a chapel in honour of St. Luke, having found here a stone which was inscribed 'On this spot St. Luke preached the Gospel to the Christians.' The year could no longer be deciphered, but the stone was found in the year of our Lord 508." Though Geoffrey of Monmouth had Arthur invading Europe as far as Italy Austria seems a little too far. However, it is possible that the legend of Arthur was brought to Austria by Richard the Lionheart who was captured by Leopold Babenburg in 1193 and imprisoned in the castle of Dürnstein,



near the Danube. Unfortunately, I didn't know about this chapel until I had returned from Austria, therefore I only know the barest of fact. Maybe Wolfgang and Roswitha will be able to help out with some further details in the future. Finally, of the places I visited in Austria a number may be of interest to the reader. First, in the Burgenland, Eisenstadt has two very interesting museums - the Burgenländisches Landesmuseum and the Museum Österreichischer Kultur Museum - both well worth a visit and the latter has leaflets in English. Then there is, in Lower Austria, Traismauer with its Museum für Frühgeschichte Traismauer, a very interesting crypt beneath the church which has Roman remains and the skeleton of a Dark Age warrior called Chadalah, who was killed in 802 AD and a gateway and tower which developed from Roman originals. Other sites of interest include Mautern with some impressive Roman walls, Zeiselmauer, again with Roman walls and excavations taking place (September 1990), the Hoher Markt in Vienna (underground) and remains at Petronell-Carnuntum. The latter is well worth visiting with its extensive excavations, still going on, a reconstructed temple being used as a small museum and the museum proper in nearby Bad Deutsch-Altenburg. Also in Petronell-Carnuntum is an other small museum of Roman remains set up in the cellar of a private house, as well as further excavations taking place in the south-eastern part of the town. Another place of some interest (see photograph in text) is the hillfort at Stillfried, to the north-east of Vienna on the Czechoslovakian border. The hillfort was used well into the Middle Ages when after a fire the people moved into the valley. Apart from Roman and Dark Age interest Lower Austria is literally a province of castles - big, little, in mint condition and in ruin. (Wolfgang and Roswitha introduced me on my first visit to Mr. and Mrs. Hampapa who own a castle - Castle Grub - and though in their 70s are still repairing it. If you would like to know more about them please let me know.)

If you go on holiday or just visit a place why not write a piece about its Dark Age or Arthurian connections. I would very much like to hear from YOU. Where then will the next Roving Report come from?

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# St Patrick and 'Bannavem Taburniae' Reconsidered

by  
 Kurt Hunter-Mann

Sheila Lavelle (Dragon 3.7) suggested that BANNAVEM TABURNIAE was on the river Ewenny in Glamorgan and linked St Patrick with St Illtyd and so to South Wales.

There are some problems with this idea. St Patrick is linked to Llantwit Major villa because that villa had slaves/workers, and Patrick commented that workers at his father's villa fell prey to the raiders that kidnapped him. However, all villas were farming estates employing large a large work-force. Sometimes, the landowner did not live at the estate, although the laying of mosaics at Llantwit in the fourth century, and the fact that Patrick was captured there, suggests that the villa was still the owner's residence as well as a farming estate. Neither is there any evidence that the occupation of Llantwit Major ended with a massacre. The association of Patrick with other sites, such as Oystermouth is questionable. St Illtyd may have been there, but not necessarily St Patrick.

The only evidence that can reasonably be used to link Patrick with Glamorgan is the name BANNAVEM TABURNIAE. Sheila Lavelle suggests that the AVEM element is the origin of the river name Ewenny. However, if this was the case, the name would not have meant simply 'place of the Ewenny'; TABERNA means 'inn' and BANN peak/promontory, perhaps giving the full meaning of 'inn near the peak of the Ewenny'. The difficulty with this is that the place was a VICUS (small town) of which Patrick's father was an official, which suggests a much more substantial settlement than the Bannavem Taburniae reading of the name suggests.

Charles Thomas' reading of the name as BANNAVENTA BERNIAE is not new, but it does have its merits. The name BANNAVENTA already exists, for the fort of Whitton Lodge, Northants. The name appears to be Celtic \*venta 'meeting/market place?' and \*banna 'peak/promontory'. Perhaps 'market/meeting place on the peak' meant a hillfort (the economic function of hillforts was as important as their defensive use); the Whitton Lodge BANNAVENTA is only 2 miles from the Borough Hill hillfort, and it is not unusual for names to be transferred from an old settlement to its successor nearby.

I am not arguing that Patrick's BANNAVENTA was Whitton Lodge; the



geography does not favour this. The BERNIAE element is the next clue. Celtic \*berna (gap/mountain) is the likely root. Charles Thomas suggests that this referred to the Greenhead Pass, where Hadrian's Wall crosses the Pennines, so that the name meant 'the market at Banna on the mountain pass' (in present-day terms, the civilian settlement at the Roman fort of Birdoswald). This is plausible, but questionable on two accounts. Firstly, St Patrick's reference is to a VICUS BANNAVEM TABURNIAE; VICUS was widely used to describe a civilian settlement next to a Roman fort, so the VENTA element here is superfluous: VICUS BANNA BERNIAE would have been all that was necessary. It is more likely that Bannaventa was the correct place-name, as with the site of Whitton Lodge.

This brings us onto the second problem. The BERNIAE part of the name would have been the district or region that this Bannaventa was in, so distinguishing it from the place of the same name at present day Whitton Lodge. Thomas' Greenhead Pass is arguably too limited in this respect. It seems that the Germanic kingdom of Bernicia (in the north-east of England) was also derived from the name \*berna. I suggest that the Berna in question was not just the Greenhead Pass, but the whole region, the Tyne valley to the Solway Firth. The Pennines effectively separated the Brigantian kingdom into two distinct regions, west and east, so the importance of the area linking the two might have warranted the regional name of BERNA. This would make more sense in its use as a locative for BANNAVENTA, and it also explains why BERNICIA was so named - its rulers controlled the eastern part of the original Berna.

If Patrick's 'vicus at Bannaventa in Berna' was near the western coast, this would put it in the western part of the region, that is the Solway Plain, around Carlisle. This would have been more at risk from Irish raiders than Llantwit Major, and as Thomas noted, fits in with Patrick's father being a decurion (member of the tribal council) - the tribal council would have sat at the tribal capital capital LUGUVALIUM.

In conclusion, the location of the Bannavem Taburniae is still very much the matter of debate. However, I would suggest that the place-name evidence, together with the fact that Patrick is most strongly linked with the northern part of Ireland (and Coroticus of Strathclyde), indicates that the northern location of Bannavem Taburniae is the more probable.

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## What's on

### THE MISTS OF AVALON

Tutor: Vivienne Crawford

Venue: Leeds University Adult Education Centre

Date: 27th October 1990 10am - 5pm

Fee: £9.00

"The Matter of Britain" is the phrase commonly used to refer to the stories of King Arthur and the adventures of the Knights of the Round Table. These tales were composed in France as well as in Britain, and helped shape the genre of romance, although it is believed that they may have a basis in historical fact. This day-school will begin with a look at some of the early versions of the tales and then move on to a modern feminist retelling which emphasises the significance of Queen Guinevere and Morgan le Fay. In the afternoon session there will be an examination of the symbol of the Sword, the Grail or Cauldron, and Avalon itself. Some time will also be devoted to Merlin the Magician.

It is recommended that you read and bring Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* (paperback edition by Sphere Books), but this is not essential. Further details from: Marilyn Morland, Dept. of External Studies, The University, LEEDS, LS2 9JT.

### EARLY BRITISH CHRISTIANITY

Venue: Manchester Cathedral

Date: 3rd November 1990

Fee: £9.50

Why did Christianity die out in England, if so many of the British population merged into early Saxon England? What can we learn of British Christianity from contemporaries, such as Patrick, Gildas, and Constantius (biographer of St. Germanus)? Why did Christianity succeed in the un-Romanised West and North - and in Ireland - when it failed in the South East? These and other questions will be addressed in three linked seminars.

Further details from: Enrollment Secretary, Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies, The University, MANCHESTER, M13 9PL.

### THE CELTS AND THEIR SOCIETY

Tutors: Barry Cunliffe, David Ellis Evans, John Coles, Wendy Davies, Thomas



Charles Edwards, Martyn Jope, Fergus Kelly, Chris Lynn, James Mallory,  
Maryon McDonald and Huw Pryce  
Venue: Rewley House, University of Oxford  
Date: 8 - 10 February 1991  
Fee: Residential: Single - £88.80, Shared - £74.10, Non-residential: £50.20 (with  
meals), £25.40 (without meals)

The origins of the Celtic peoples of Europe is an obscure and hotly debated problem. In the fourth and third centuries BC migrating bands, identified as Celts by classical writers, thrust into Italy, reached Rome and beyond, terrorised the Greeks as far south as Delphi and crossed into Asia Minor. Later as Rome advanced north, Celtic tribes were conquered and absorbed but in the Atlantic fringes, in Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Scotland and Ireland much of the prehistoric social fabric remained.

This conference brings together archaeologists, anthropologists, historians and linguists who are advancing our understanding of these Atlantic communities. Is there a unifying thread that is recognisably Celtic or simply a diversity? Can we speak of the Celtic West or is it academic wishful thinking?

For further details: Archaeology/Local History Secretary, University of Oxford  
Dept. of External Studies, Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, OXFORD, OX1 2JA.

#### **KING ARTHUR IN MYTH, LEGEND AND ROMANCE**

Venue: City University, London

Date: begins 22nd April 1991 (seven meetings)

Fees: £20.00

"The fifth century warrior who became one of the most potent figures of the Indo-European myth."

Details from: Courses for Adults, Centre for Continuing Education, City University, Northampton Square, LONDON, EC1V 0HB, or tel: 071 253 4399 exts. 3268, 3277 or 3252.

*Many thanks to Sandra Garside Neville for the all above information. I hope that members will be able to attend at least some of these courses and possibly write reports for the magazine. I look forward to hearing more of concerning these events.*

*And don't forget if you know of any interesting lectures, events, etc., please drop me a line and let me know. I, unfortunately, learned too late of a very interesting course on Arthur being held in Aberystwyth that was held earlier this year and would have liked to have attended but it clashed with my*



Like articles and letters reviews are low on the ground at the moment, and this issue's consists of two book reviews, two journals and two comics.

#### **MYTHOLOGY OF THE BRITISH ISLES**

Geoffrey Ashe Methuen, 1990 £17.99

Three hundred pages, 153 colour and monochrome photographs and illustrations, a four page bibliography and seven page index makes up Mr. Geoffrey Ashe's latest book. Extremely well illustrated with some beautiful colour photographs Mythology of the British Isles is obviously a considerable achievement and well worth getting by anyone interested in the mythical history of Britain. It covers a period from the prehistory legendary first inhabitants of the Isles, through the Arthurian period up to the ninth century, including a few chapters on the Anglo-Saxons. However, primarily it is a retelling of selected parts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain with additions from the Welsh Mabinogion, etc.

The writing of a mythology of Britain is without any doubt a most difficult task and Mr. Ashe makes a valiant attempt to achieve this undertaking. It is not easy to agree on what exactly is the mythology of the British Isles. Is it possible to include everything or does one have to be discriminative? In the Introduction Mr. Ashe points out that he has based the arrangement of the book on Robert Graves's Greek Myths and Hebrews Myths. As a child, and before I knew of my Welsh heritage, I revelled in Greek mythology - first with Kingsley and later with Graves. In fact I still have a much thumbed and worn copy of Greek Myths. This book consists of nearly 800 pages and covers every nook and cranny of these ancient tales. Comparing the two books Mythology of the British Isles is not as good, despite the marvellous illustrations. This, however, doesn't mean that it is not an enjoyable and useful book - far from it - it is both!

This difficult task, I am sure, would have been tackled in a different way by a different author. Cataloguing all the various tales about Britain from prehistoric times till the ninth century is an extremely daunting task and Mr. Ashe must be given credit for the work that he has produced. I must



admit that I found nothing new in it but just having all these different tales in one volume, so well illustrated and not too expensive makes Mythology of the British Isles a worthwhile purchase.

### **THE LEGENDS OF KING ARTHUR**

by Rhiannon Ifans, illustrated by Helen Holmes Y Lolfa, 1990 £3.95

This is a children's book telling the story of King Arthur is a simplified form mixing traditional Welsh tales, with Geoffrey of Monmouth and even later stories, including the sword in the stone, etc. Consisting of 127 pages of text and 24 colour illustrations this little hardback book is quite a nice read for both adults (reading it to their children) and children. One strange aspect is that it portrays Medrod as a hero and Camlan is a battle against the Saxons in which the Celts bearly win leaving three alive at the end of the battle - Cynwyl, Bedwyr and Arthur.

### **PENDRAGON VOL. XX/3 SUMMER 1990 and PENDRAGON VOL. XX/4 AUTUMN 1990**

Eddie Tooke and team have come up trumps again with two interesting issues of PENDRAGON. The articles in both of these are less not the Arthurian side and more esoteric, though there are a number of "Arthur means to me" pieces. Amongst these articles are a review of the exhibition The Work of Angels, Square Meals - Dark Age food, Knights, Rites and Round Tables concerning the Knights of the Garter and Edward III, the first and second parts of Perpetual Choirs - a geometry in the landscape, and Did Giants build Stonehenge?

In XX/4 there is a very interesting compilation of comments on Arthur from Kate Pollard and I found one statement worth repeating: "The tales of Arthur appeal particularly to the Celt in us; the down-to-earth Saxon responds more to Robin Hood." (from Tim Porter in "Arthur and Alfred", 1978) I am obviously fascinated by Arthur but, just as a by-the-way, I have also a considerable interest in Robin Hood.

For further information about PENDRAGON contact Eddie Tooke Pendragon Society, Chinook, Paxhill Lane, TWYNING, Glos. GL20 6DU, UK.

### **THE JUNIOR ARTHURIAN CLUB NEWSLETTER VOL. II, NO 2 SUMMER 1990**

JAC Newsletter consists of a very interesting interview with Persia

Woolley who wrote "Child of the Northern Spring" and "Queen of the Summer Stars", both of which are also reviewed. Other books reviewed include "The Sleepers" by Jane Louise Curry, "King Arthur and His Knights" by Henry Frith, and "Heart's Blood" by Jane Yolen. Other pieces in the JAC Newsletter include Dear Merlin, Members' News and a crossword puzzle.

For information on JAC contact Sarah E. Gordon The Junior Arthurian Club, P.O. Box 2208, YOUNTVILLE, CA. 94599, USA.

### **THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG BOOK ONE - FOUR**

Roy Thomas and Gil Kane, with Jim Woodring and John Costanza  
DC Comics Inc. 1989 - 1990 US \$4.95, CAN \$6.50, UK £2.80

Each issue comic magazine consists of 52 pages based on the story of The Ring adapted from Richard Wagner's immense opera (being broadcast on BBC2 TV at the moment). Part One is The Rhinegold, Part Two The Valkyre, Three Siegfried and Part Four The Twilight of the Gods. Though well drawn and told the comic falls down on its depiction of the story, owing more to Marvel's The Mighty Thor comics than a Dark Age story set in Middle Europe. Still probably worth getting if you are into comic art.

### **THE KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON**

Edited by Steve White, written by Dan Abnett & John Tomlinson, artwork produced by Gary Erskine, Andy Lanning, Helen Stone and Annie Parkhouse.

Marvel Comics Ltd., 1990. (Up to part 5, November, at the moment) 95p (US \$1.95, CAN \$2.50)

This is basically a comic about the damage being down by man to the ecology (in fact the comic is printed on Scangloss - environmentally friendly paper). It has an Arthurian connection which runs through the stories. At first the main character, Commander Dai Thomas (yes, a Welshman!), a member of WHO (Weird Happenings Organisation), is reading Gawain and the Green Knight, but throughout the series Dai slips in and out of a Dark Age world while he fights against man's misuse of nature. Well worth buying and reading, even though the artwork is not the greatest.

Both series of comics are available at comic specialists, though the later can be bought at most good newsagents.



## NEWS

### ANGLO-SAXON TREASURE

The 'need' for another by-pass has brought to light a treasure-trove of Anglo-Saxon jewellery near Norwich. Reported by David Keys in *The Independent*, 12 July 1990, archaeologists led by Trevor Ashwin, of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit, have been carrying out rescue dig north west of the Roman-British town Venta Icenorum due to be destroyed in September. Forty graves, dating from the seventh century, were found. The graves, which were mixed male and female and possibly Christian, yielded some very interesting pieces of jewellery including "a gold pendant inlaid with garnets", "an oval Roman gemstone inscribed with the figure of a god set in a gold mount" and "a filigree gold pendant bearing a cross-shaped motif". Other finds include silver coins, a bronze sewing casket, glass, faience beads, silver chains, iron keys, knives, buckles and a short sword.

### CHRISTIAN AMULET

An interesting discovery has been found at a 17 acre site in Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet. Ten skeletons were found at the site, according to a report by Paul Stokes, in *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 July 1990, and it was with one of these skeletons that a Christian amulet was found. This consisted of a matchbox-sized, silver-alloy amulet bearing the Chi-Rho inscription, which was a Christian symbol. Worn on a necklace, this discovery dating from the late fourth century is considered to be of some importance. Dr Warwick Rodwell, consultant archaeologist to the Dean and Chapter of Wells, said: "This period is a dark age for Christianity because it is something we do not know a lot about. It is an important piece in the jigsaw because it is a Christian object from a grave. Pagan graves are choc-a-bloc with artefacts, but Christian did not consider possessions necessary in the after-life."

### LONG-LIVED VILLAGE

While studying the deserted Medieval village of Westbury, according to David Keys, in *The Independent*, 7th August 1990, archaeologists have

found there may have been an Anglo-Saxon predecessor. Richard Ivens, directing the excavations for the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit, has shown that the site has been occupied more or less continuously since the first century BC. Seven Anglo-Saxon graves have been found including several which contained knives and jewellery buried along with the bodies. Amongst the jewellery there was a golden pendent remarkably similar to one found in Norfolk mentioned in the first article in this section.

### WOODEN HOARD

Scottish archaeologists directed by Dr. Anne Crone, an archaeological consultant working for Scotland's Historic Buildings and Monuments organisation, have been excavating a Dark Age village built on an artificial island. The site near Kilmarnock, Strathclyde, which is now a swamp has preserved many wooden objects including parts of the buildings, a 30ft dugout canoe and various utensils. The latter include dairy equipment such as a churning paddle, butter beater and a churn lid, wooden objects like a wooden shoe last, metal chisel handle, a mallet and several unfinished wooden bowls. The settlement itself, according to David Keys in *The Independent*, 20th August 1990, is about 60 feet across and is believed to have been established by Irish settlers who came to the Scottish shores sometimes during the 4th to 6th century.

### SPIRIT HOUSES AND BABY BOTTLES

Excavations near Barton-on-Humber, according to David Keys, *The Independent*, 28th August 1990, have uncovered 105 Anglian burials. The Humberside County Council's Archaeological Unit found a number of very interesting things. Some of these graves, which date from the late sixth century and are likely to be pagan, appear to have wooden constructions built over them, and these could be first time wooden spirit houses, from the Dark Age, have been found in Britain. Other finds made by the archaeologists, led by Martin Foreman, include a 30 inch sword, a 30 inch bronze bowl, brooches, necklace, knives, spearheads, belt buckles and, in a number of children's graves, small drinking vessels. One of the latter consists of a breast-shaped pottery bottle complete with perforated teat. Is nothing new!

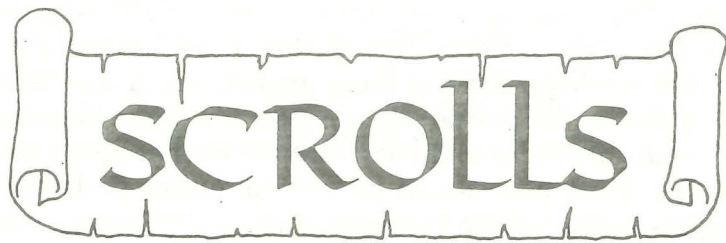


## A MIXED SOCIETY

Another report from David Keys, The Independent, 14th September 1990, sheds light on transition of Roman into Anglo-Saxon society. "Excavations at Market Lavington, Wiltshire, have unearthed the remains of a Roman settlement and a Saxon village, including the graves of a dozen warriors." Amongst the warriors mentioned most have been buried with shields and spears, and one, who died "around AD 500", measured 6 feet 8 inches in height and 3 feet across the shoulders. Another grave had a skeleton with an arrowhead embedded in his skull, while a further warrior, whose arm had been severed by a sword, could have been an outcast or an enemy warrior since he was buried face down.

The Saxon village which may have once been called "the settlement of Lafa's people", using a derivation from the modern name of Lavington, was excavated by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology, helped by the Melksham Metal Detector Club, and directed by Philip Williams and Richard Newman. These archaeologists believe that it is possible that Market Lavington shows evidence of continuity "from Roman villa via Saxon hall to the surviving manor" and if this is so "the site would be unique." It is suspected that the Romano-British stayed on at the villa even after the Saxons took over and that the community "evolved into a mixed British/Saxon village that came under the domination of the Saxons in the sixth century."

The belief that there was a fusing of the Anglo-Saxon and Romano-British is something that has personally interested me for some time. I find it hard to take for granted that fierce Saxon invaders murdered vast numbers of British people, and I am glad to see that archaeology is beginning to show that not only was there a fusing of societies but also that trade was not at all uncommon. I look forward to hearing further news about Market Lavington.



This issue's Scrolls consists of two letters - both concerned with articles in the last issue. The first is from Reg Dand - a self confessed expatriate Northerner: "I found 'Dragon' (Vol.3 No.8) very much to my taste with what you described

a Northern Flavour since the places mentioned are well known to me though I have been away from the area for some 15 years now.

"I have no doubt that County Durham as I knew it was the home of a substantial neo-lithic and British population, followed by clear Roman influences and then both Anglo-Saxon and Norman ones. The Lordship of the Bishop Odo was a wild and difficult one for the country. I have looked in detail at the area nearest the River Tyne, where there were some very interesting Place Names between there and the River Wear, some I think clearly of British origin. Modern South Shields was variously known as Horrea Classis 'granaries of the fleet' (Rivet & Smith: PNs of Roman Britain) and Caer Urfa in past times, and its importance in those times is well recorded. It is of course only a short way from Jarrow and Bede's monastery as well as that at Monkwearmouth. Local river names are ancient (Tyne, Don and Teams) and there are many traces of Roman ways along the south of the river to Corbridge (Corstopitum) as well as directly south towards York eventually. I find Eden/Yoden as an Iron Age fort interesting and so far unknown to me . . . in fact the whole background seems to be a fertile one for the Arthur legend, but I have never thought of this particular area as a very likely one . . . but there has always been a north country origin as a possibility, where in the country westward from the sea there were known British settlements of some size, and where there are still many British or possibly British traces. I would feel that some of Mr. Wright's sources a bit late to be relied upon. His 'blaec ahl' makes at least partial sense since one meaning of 'blaec' is black alright but 'ahl' as a religious place is new to me. Beckensall (Durham Place Names) relies upon the earlier Mawer for le Blackhall (1371) for the meaning of Blackhall. It is another open argument I suppose, but a British 'war' against the Angles of Northumbria is of course well recorded. But this could run into volumes if allowed to! For me it is quite literally 'ancient history' the details of which I fear I have forgotten.

"Again I have never really related Dunstanburgh Castle, though a fine site, in any way connected with Arthur, but it is clearly a former British 'din' or hillfort, if the modern name is any guide, like Dunbar and Edinburgh in its other form as Dun Edin. This would have been much earlier than intervention by the second Earl of Lancaster in the 15th C. Again there are a number of Arthurian legends of sleeping knights and so on which may point to a northern origin for Arthur . . . perhaps carried south and west in that curious and mysterious removal of the Gododdin to Wales to reject the Irish interlopers! Malory of course is a mystery in himself but his 'Joyeuse Garde' as either Alnwick or Bamburgh could again be an identity of an older British location because (OS Survey Map of the Dark Ages: Britain) shows against the old name for Bamburgh... (Bebbanburg) the even older one of Dinguayroi another hillfort with a suffix which surely suggests 'Joyeuse Garde' for Guayroi, and whether right or wrong why should Malory have settled upon Bamburgh in this guise? For me, added to other items, this adds an extra vote for a northern source of many of the Arthurian ideas. But it is all like a garden weed which...invasive defies its own source, and as I have



told you earlier in a separate article I have abandoned the hope of ever finding the 'true' Arthur if there ever was one...but I am still fascinated by the period and its many people, as you must know by now."

Reg also mentions his "delight to see Steve Pollington's article 'The Cat came Back' and to know that my interesting little animal had found a good interested home." Many thanks to Reg for his continued support with is stream of articles a few of which are yet to be printed.

The next letter comes from Kurt Hunter-Mann, commenting on Nick Grant's "The Fort of Ambrosius"

"Amesbury has been discussed in Dragon before (1.10) by Sandra Garside-Neville, and the 'Ambros' place-names were mentioned in an article I wrote on Ambrosius Aurelianus in a recent issue of Dragon (3.6).

"Dragon readers might be interested to know that Sandra and I have instigated a research project on Vespasian's Camp, Amesbury. We undertook trail excavations in 1987; as the work was primarily intended to sample the whole range of activity on the site through the ages (ranging from Bronze Age barrows to the 18th century landscaped gardens), there was little opportunity to investigate any Dark Age occupation that might be there.

"However, it was apparent that there was some activity within the hillfort during the later Roman period (i.e. some time during the fourth or fifth centuries AD), as indicated by pottery found in and above a 'road' surface laid down against the back of the eastern rampart, above the Iron Age levels.

"As Nick commented, the hill fort is huge (16 hectares = 37 acres), so survey and excavation of even a modest sample will be a major exercise over many years. However, survey and documentary research of the site and surrounding territory is in hand, and you can be sure that Dragon readers will be the first to know of its progress."

Many thanks to Kurt, and I am sure that everyone wishes Sandra and Kurt best wishes and success with the survey. By the way Sandra and Kurt have also made a very interesting suggestion which I hope to discuss with them in the very near future and then I will let you know what is happening.

Finally, like the lack of articles DRAGON is becoming starved also of correspondence, so if you have any comments to make, whatever they might be - good or bad, I would be most grateful to hear from you.

So for the present don't forget that DRAGON is your magazine so please keep the old dragon well fed.

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