



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

Welcome once again to DRAGON.

It is my sad duty to announce that this is the last issue of the newsletter. Unfortunately, despite much work, not enough food as been found to keep the old dragon alive. I have been calling for new articles for some time now, and in the last issue I not only pointed out the problem but also made it quite clear what could be the possible consequences. At first I thought it would be a good idea to continue with a biannual magazine but after much contemplation I realised that to produce such a publication would still need a good number of articles, and would lose out with more immediate issues. As most of you know DRAGON is very much a one-man-band and recently I have had to write quite a bit of the magazine. Also over the last year or so since it has become harder to get articles the old reptile has been living off archival material and instantly eating new articles. To be serious I have only two articles left. Despite a good number of interviews with newspapers, and one with BBC Radio Wales pushing DRAGON, things came to a head at the beginning of February and I had to make a decision.

In the first week of February I received a phone call from Fred Steadman-Jones, Chairman of the PENDRAGON Society, who was coming to Mold to do some research at the County Library's Arthurian Collection, and we agreed to meet for a chat. That evening I woke from my slumber unable to get back to sleep - all I could think about was DRAGON. It was during this period of insomnia that I made my decision - and I can tell you it wasn't an easy decision to make! At the meeting with Fred, on the next day, he was kind enough to tell that there were changes afoot in the society. So the time seemed ripe for a transformation. I told him of the situation, what decision I had made and offered my experience to the production team of PENDRAGON.

This does not mean that I have lost interest in Arthurian and Dark Age studies. I will now have more time to work on research, writing articles and the possibility of a book. I hope to be playing a part in the production of the PENDRAGON magazine and also becoming a more active member of the society (of which I have been a member since DRAGON was first formed in 1982). I also intend to visit the United States later this year and hope to meet as many members of DRAGON as possible, promoting PENDRAGON as I go.

Most members should have re-subscribed with DRAGON Vol. 4 No. 3/4, therefore, I would ask all members of DRAGON who are not already members of PENDRAGON to join PENDRAGON. The annual subscription to PENDRAGON is £6.00 and I would suggest that you contact Fred Steadman-Jones at Smithy House, Newton-by-Frodsham, Cheshire, WA6 6SX.

Interestingly, both "dragon" and "pendragon" had more or less the same meaning in

early Welsh poetry - a leader in battle, though it wasn't an official title. So with the bringing to a close of DRAGON, to paraphrase a famous saying, it's not as if you are losing a "dragon" but gaining a "pen".

I would personally like to thank all those who have worked hard to keep DRAGON alive and going for the last ten years. Your help has been greatly appreciated. I hope now you follow me and be willing to give your support and help to PENDRAGON. Once again, diolch yn fawr iawn and thank you very much.

Finally, I will be happy to answer any letters sent to me, and look forward to hearing from you. Good luck for the future and I hope you enjoy reading this final issue of DRAGON.

## PENDRAGON

The PENDRAGON Society was found in 1959 by Jess Foster and has grown over the years from a small group teenagers to a truly international society of all ages. It began originally in Winchester but it was from Bristol that it really began to grow. During the early sixties they were instrumental in promoting the famous archaeological excavation of Cadbury Castle, led by Professor Leslie Alcock, and some of the members actually helped with the dig. Since then members have also participated in other excavations, particular at Llanelen on the Gower Peninsula in South Wales.

The original aims of the PENDRAGON Society were - "to stimulate interest in King Arthur and his contemporaries, to investigate the history and archaeology of the Matter of Britain, and to study the significance, past, present and future of the Arthurian legends". This was still true when I joined in 1982. Its present constitution was laid out in 1989 and includes their aims as: "to stimulate interest and investigate the archaeological and historical background of the Arthurian period and the Matter of Britain and other aspects of the British mystical and mythical culture."

The magazine has been in production since 1966 and has had a number of editors since then, including Francis J. O. Male, Roger Davie Webster, Chris Lovegrove, Kate Pollard (Jess Foster's daughter) and recently Eddie Tooke. Unlike DRAGON, the PENDRAGON Society has a constitution and hold an annual general meeting every year. I have had the opportunity of attending their AGMs on a few occasions, and each time have been impressed by the camaraderie.

There has always been a certain amount cross over from DRAGON and PENDRAGON with a number of members subscribing to both magazines and though I know there may be those among you who would disagree with some aspects of PENDRAGON's aims and objectives, it is up to the members of any society to make of that society what they wish. I look forward to playing some part in the future of PENDRAGON and I hope that you will be willing to help keep the interest in Arthur and the Dark Ages going through PENDRAGON.

# The Dark Age Novels of Rosemary Sutcliff

by  
Charles W Evans-Günther

## Introduction

When I began to work on this article I thought it would mean reading four books, however, I ended up going through eight novels. I found that they were linked and it seemed correct to read them in a particular sequence. Interestingly, the first is *The Eagle of the Ninth* and the last *The Shield Ring*. Chronologically the books run:-

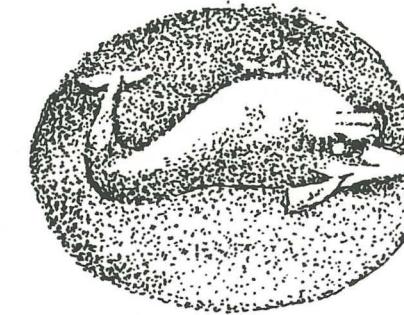
*The Eagle of the Ninth* (1954) - 129 AD, *The Silver Branch* (1957) - 284 AD, *Frontier Wolf* (1980) - 343 AD, *The Lantern Bearers* (1959) - 410+ AD, *Sword at Sunset* (1963) - 5th century, *Dawn Wind* (1961) - mid to late 6th century, and *The Shield Ring* (1956) - 11th century. All of the above are linked. *The Shining Company* (1990) which is set in the late 6th or early 7th century is not connected with the others. All will become clear.

*... Rome is hollow at the heart and one day she will come crashing down. A hundred years ago, it must have seemed that all this was for ever; a hundred years hence - only the gods know ... If I can make this one province strong - strong enough to stand alone when Rome goes down, then something may be saved from the darkness. If not, then Dubris light and Limanis light and Rutupiae light will go out. The lights will go out everywhere."*

Taken from a scene in *The Silver Branch* where cousins Justin and Flavius meet Emperor Carausius, the above statement lays the basis for most of the books to come. Throughout these novels there is a strong sense of light being smothered by an on-coming darkness. Again and again the analogy is used. In the first of the series, *The Eagle of the Ninth*, we are introduced to Marcus Flavius Aquila and told that he had been initiated into the raven level of Mithraism and this gives one 'clue' to the reference of light and darkness. The religion of Mithras, once rivalling Christianity for top place in the hit parade of religions in the Roman Empire, was dualist, derived from the much earlier Persian Zoroastrianism. Here we have a constant war between Good - the Light - and Evil - the Darkness. Also the analogy related to the more actual extinguishing of the light of Roman civilisation. The Roman Empire was becoming surrounded on all sides by 'barbarians' and it would be, in the eyes of the 'civilised' Romans (citizens of the Empire), the end if these savages took over. Rosemary Sutcliff shows the fears but then turns the camera

around and gives you the 'barbarian's' point of view. Often, the hero of the story begins with a great hatred of his enemy but grows to understand the reality of the situation.

This must have been what the late Romans and Romano-Britons felt when they saw the destruction brought about by Anglo-Saxon raids. To them the light of Roman civilisation was going out and their whole way of life, and thinking, was changing. However, the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, Franks, Visigoths and other Germanic tribes in Europe, would not extinguish the light but transform it into a different light - a different civilisation. There can be little doubt that there were raids on Roman Britain by the Anglo-Saxons, Picts and Scots, without settlement, but when these tribes eventually set up home it became a different picture. They did not bring a darkness with them - their gods were gods of light and darkness - but they certainly didn't consider themselves of bringers of darkness. Possibly they saw the Romans as evil dominators but it may not have been a fight of good against evil rather a struggle for land. However, and there is no need to go so deeply into this, Miss Sutcliff's novels have another link - the dolphin ring.



More than anything in these seven books the characters are bond together by actual relationship - all being part of the Aquila family. We are introduced to the family in *The Eagle of the Ninth* and meet it throughout all the novels, though in the *Sword at Sunset* they take a minor part to the dominant figure of Arthur and in *The Shield Ring* the character is only a very distant relative. The Aquila family originated in Eturia, Italy, and came to Britannia with the father of Marcus Flavius Aquila. He had been with the 9th Hispana Legion which was defeated in the north and disappeared. Marcus finds out the truth and we are introduced for the first time to the concrete link. Marcus disguised as a healer is amongst the Epidii tribe in northern Britain when he is showed a object by their chieftain - "Marcus took it form him and bent to examine it. It was a heavy signet-ring; and on the flawed emerald which formed the bezel was engraved the dolphin badge of his own family . . . . suddenly, across twelve years or more, he was looking up at a dark, laughing man who seemed to tower over him. There were pigeons wheeling around the man's bent head, and when he put up his hand to rub his forehead, the sunlight that surrounded the pigeon's wings with fire caught the flawed emerald of the signet-ring he wore." It is eventually returned to Marcus by Liathan of the Epidii.

The ring appears for the first time in *The Eagle of the Ninth* but it continues . . . In *The Silver Branch* we meet descendants of Marcus - Marcelus Flavius Aquila - and his cousin Tiberius Lucius Justinianus. Flavius shows Justin the ring - "It was a heavy and very battered signet ring. The flawed emerald which formed the bezel was darkly cool . . ." Alexios Flavius Aquila, in *Frontier Wolf* is sent to Scotland and as he approaches Castellum - "His found that he had dropped his gaze from the distant fort, and was staring down at his bridle hand; at the flawed emerald ring with its intaglio-cut dolphin on his signet finger. An old and battered ring that had come down to him through a long proud line of soldiers . . ." In *The Lantern Bearers* the ring belongs to the father of the main character. Aquila's father Flavian "... was fondling (the dog) Margarita's ears, drawing them again and again through his fingers, and the freckled sunlight under the leaves made small, shifting sparks of green fire in the flawed emerald of his great signet ring with its engraved dolphin." Flavian is killed in a Saxon raid and the ring is taken by a pirate whose son later marries Flavia, Aquila's sister, who had been kidnapped by the Saxons. The ring was given to her as a wedding gift and then later in the story given by Flavia to Aquila. Rosemary Sutcliff wrote an adult novel about Arthur - *Sword at Sunset* - but kept some of the characters from her juvenile novels. Aquila, who married Ness and had a child whom he called Flavian, is seen with Arthur in Arfon. "Save for his horses the only thing of value that he possessed was the flawed engraved signet ring engraved with its dolphin badge, which had come from his father and would one day go to his son . . ." Aquila is killed in the battle of Badon and the ring is passed by Arthur to Flavian. A few generations go by and in *Dawn Wind* we find Owain wounded but alive on a battlefield. Searching through the dead he finds his father and his brother Ossian. As he is about the leave the scene "... something on his father's hand gave off a spark of greenish light under the moon. He bent forward with a gasp. The great ring with its dolphin device cut in the flawed emerald of the bezel was one of the first things he could remember. It had been his father's, and his father's before him, away back to the days when the Legions first marched through Britain." The ring finally appears, strangely enough, in *The Shield Ring*, a book about Norse people holding out against the dominance of the Normans published in 1956 before most of the other books mentioned above. In this Bjorn is given by his foster-father Haethcyn "... a small thing that caught the green fire from the lantern. . . . It was a ring: a massive gold ring of ancient workmanship, much scared and battered, with a bezel of dark green translucent stone, on which was engraved a device of some sort . . ." - a dolphin. Haethcyn tells him it was made "by the people of Romeburg", that it was Bjorn's father's and "... his father's before him, and his father's father before that. It came out of Wales with that British foremother of yours that I once told you of, and it was old even then, and had come down to her - for she was the last of an ancient line - from the high far-off days, from the people of the Legions whence her line was sprung. So the story has passed down with the ring, from father to son; . . ."

It would seem that Miss Sutcliff had thought well ahead from Marcus Flavius

Aquila, especially since *The Eagle of the Ninth* was published in 1954 and *The Shield Ring*, with Bjorn over a thousand years later, being published in 1956. This was before "The Silver Branch" the next in the Roman series of stories. In many ways this shows the kind of writer Rosemary Sutcliff was and that she devoted a lot of her self to the creation of background beyond the next book she was writing. I don't know how much of this she did but going from one book to the other indicates very good continuity. Certain characters can be linked very easily, while others are a bit harder, and yet the connections are so well produced that a virtual family tree can be constructed running from Marcus Flavius Aquila to Owain in the *Dawn Wind*. Without any doubt *The Lantern Bearers* and *Sword at Sunset* are inseperably linked. In the interview by Raymond H. Thompson for "Avalon to Camelot" Rosemary Sutcliff states: "... *The Lantern Bearers* is officially a children's book, but I would claim that my books are for children of all ages, from nine to ninety. *Sword at Sunset* is officially an adult book. But the two are really part of the same story. *The Lantern Bearers* finishes exactly three days before *Sword at Sunset* starts . . ."

All of Rosemary Sutcliff's novels are worth reading, they are not only good stories but believable. One of the signs of a good novelist is that when you read their works you think you are reading about real people and real happenings. Also you become drawn into the story and feel for the characters. This is very true of Miss Sutcliff's works. She was especially good at creating a reality from so few facts - you almost get the impression that she knows more about the subject than the experts. Interestingly, she had Roman army units at Exeter in *The Eagle of the Ninth* when archaeologists said there were not any, however, since the 1950s considerable evidence has been found at Exeter to prove otherwise. It is known that Rosemary Sutcliff did the necessary painstaking research to get herself into the feel of the period but there still seems to be something almost uncanny about her work, almost as if she had lived in the time she was writing about. She did hint on a number of occasions that she may have some belief in reincarnation but certainly she felt more at home in this pre-Medieval period. It is without doubt that her best books are about this far-away time.

The first of Rosemary Sutcliff's Dark Age novels is *The Lantern Bearers*, the tale of Aquila son of Flavian, how he survives the Saxon slavery, escapes and joins Ambrosius Aurelian to defend Britannia against the growing threat of Anglo-Saxon domination. Originally, Aquila is a Roman soldier but when the last of the Legions leave (no actual date is given) he deserts and stays with his family. Unfortunately, his father and most of the servants are killed in a Saxon pirate raid, his sister Flavia kidnapped and he his left to die. However, a separate band of pirates take Aquila as a slave and return to their home land. The young man grows up with Saxons, learns their language and finds out that they are people just like his own kind. Later, he manages to escape while his masters are at Hengest's court. He is now back in Britannia and makes his way west and north to join Ambrosius Aurelian. In the mountains of Arfon he meets for the first time a young

boy called Artorius - Artos the Bear - Arthur. 'He headed for the winding cleft in the hillside . . . More than half-way up . . . he found a small boy and a hound puppy very intent on a hole under a brown tumble of last year's fern. He would have passed by without speaking and left them to it, but the small boy sat up and grinned at him, thrusting back a shock of hair the warm, silvery-mouse colour of a hayfield in June and the puppy thumped its tail; there was something irresistibly friendly about both of them that he stopped, without meaning to . . .' Aquila eventually marries Ness, has a boy child and names him after his father - Flavian. Through his stay with the Saxons his real name was forgotten and he became known as Dolphin because of the tattoo he had on his arm. When Flavian is born Aquila's friends call the boy Minnow son of Dolphin. The battles with the Saxons increase and Aquila, and the novel ends with impending war and the young Arthur grown in strength is now ready to lead a band of companions into battle.

In the first chapter of *Sword at Sunset* we are introduced to another object that has a similar significance as the Aquila family's dolphin ring: ' . . . I saw that set into the pommel was a great square amethyst. It was so dark in colour as to be almost of the Imperial purple . . . clear on the place surface-sheen of the gem, I saw an Imperial eagle, intaglio cut, grasping in its claws a double M; and spelled out backward around the edge, turning the sword to catch the light on the letters, the single word "Imperator" . . . it is Maximus's Seal.

'I remember that I stood for a long time looking at the Great seal . . . oddly moved by the link across the years with my great-grandsire, the proud Spanish general who married a princess of Arfon . . .'

We are told that Arthur was the bastard son of Utha, Ambrosius's brother, and grandson of Constantine son of Magnus Maximus. This is a very interesting point, worthy of discussion, and I would suggest that it has its origins in the controversial ideas of Welsh scholar Arthur Wade-Evans.

In this version of the story of Arthur, Miss Sutcliff depicts Arthur as a cavalry leader under the command of Ambrosius Aurelian. He is depicted as a human being - not a superman or a medieval king - a caring man, a clever man but with flaws which eventually lead to problems. Rosemary Sutcliff obviously used many sources - including Geoffrey of Monmouth - and though far from the traditional romantic version of the tale it does contain some elements of these later stories. Amongst the characters in *Sword at Sunset* are some traditional Welsh ones such as Cai, Bedwyr and Gwalchmai - and, of course, Gwenhwyfar (Guinevere) but using Geoffrey of Monmouth's version of her name - Guenhumara. In this novel Bedwyr takes the part of Lancelot in the famous love triangle which develops. *Sword at Sunset* tells the story of Arthur in his own words - from the buying of horses in France to the terrible winter in Scotland, his wars, his loves, his friendships and his failures. It continues the tale begun in *The Lantern Bearers* leading to the death of Ambrosius in a hunting accident, the victory at Badon, Arthur being proclaimed Caesar, the break-up of the companions by Medraut, Arthur's son, and the end at Camlan. This is a marvellous story, well written by

Rosemary Sutcliff and though it includes many of the traditional events in Arthur's life, it also includes something of Miss Sutcliff's own ideas - such as Gwalchmai as a healer, the Little Dark People and the continuation of story of the Aquila family (Aquila dies at Badon, Flavian is Arthur's shield bearer and Flavian's son, called Minnow by Arthur, becomes a soldier like his forefathers).

*Dawn Wind*, the third of the Dark Age books, continues with the Aquila family and Rosemary's juvenile novels. It concerns Owain who is trying to find a place in the ruins of his world. The Anglo-Saxons have come to dominate the land that is to become England and the Britons have recently been defeated in a great battle. Owain and a hound, whom he calls simply Dog, have survived. Miss Sutcliff is very good when talking about dogs and horses, and both play important parts in this novel. In the early part of the story Owain is living with an old farmer and his wife and one Sunday attended Mass at which the priest lays out the situation: 'Brethren, the Light goes out and the Dark flows in. It is for us to keep some lamp burning until the time we can give it back to light the world once more . . .' The world seems to be crumbling around the Britons and literally when Owain enters Wroxeter hoping to find it still occupied. Ruins are everywhere and the only living soul he finds is Regina, a young girl who has survived on her wits. Together they leave the ruins in hope of finding a better life. However, Regina falls ill and Owain sells himself into Saxon thrall to save her. Now a slave of the hated enemy the view point is swiftly rotated to show what life for these Germanic people is like and we learn that they are not so much different. Owain settles in and becomes a part of the Saxon society. One excellent character in the story is old Uncle Widreth who tells the children stories and philosophises: "'When you are my age' the old man was saying 'when you are my age, you'll have learned how little all things matter. Life is fierce with the young, and maybe more gentle with the old. Only, while one is young, there is always the hope that one day something will happen; that one day a little wind will rise . . .'" And it is dawn wind that changes Owain life and brings him freedom - freedom eventually to meet up again with Regina and the hope of returning to those old friends in made in the hills of Wales.

With the re-union of Owain and Regina the Dark Age series concerning the Aquila family ends. However, the dolphin ring is passed on from father to son until the Aquila male line comes to an end. According to *The Shield Ring* a female member of the Aquila family becomes part of a Norse family and after her the ring is passed again from father to son but is no longer purely British. It is certain that Miss Sutcliff wanted to show that the British of later times were not simply Celtic or Saxon or Norse but a mixture of all these and more. From Clustunium in Etruria to Calleva in Britannia and from the hills of Wales to the crags of Cumbria the Aquila family changed from Roman to British.

The final Dark Age book is *The Shining Company* and is, as far as I can see, completely divorced from the previous books. Rosemary Sutcliff has returned to the first person for this book with Prosper telling his own story. It begins with Prosper, the son of a Welsh lord, being given a Irish slave - Conn - and we soon

meet Luned who makes up the youthful threesome. However, their lives were soon to change when Prosper becomes second shieldbearer to Prince Gorthyn ap Urfai of Rhyfynog who was riding out to join Mynyddog's warband at Din Eidin. Rhyfynog was a district of North Wales in Gwynedd Is Conwy and in an area that is now called Clwyd. They join in the year long preparation for a battle against the Anlges of Bernicia. As the months pass by Conn, who is with Prosper, becomes interested in smithying and eventually is freed to become a smith. Here we come across one of Miss Sutcliff's trademarks - an object that links up parts of the story. At the beginning of the novel Conn becomes fascinated by the stories told by Phanes of Syracuse, a merchant, and his Archangel Dagger which has brought from Constantinople. This and Phanes appear later in the story and have a profound effect on both Prosper and Conn. After the preparations comes the campaign. Though the Britons cause the Angles great losses, the enemy eventually triumphs. The wounded Gorthyn is saved by Prosper and returns to Din Edin. The novel ends with Gorthyn and Prosper making their way with the Archangel Dagger to Constantinople and Conn returning to Luned in North Wales.

Rosemary Sutcliff's novels are all well worth reading - even though they are in the main juvenile publications. Like all novelists she puts her own peculiar stamp on them. In the Dark Age novels and the Roman series we see some of her trademarks - the passage of a youth to adulthood, her love of dogs and horses, healers and strange objects that lend a continuity. Though she follows some of the traditional events, characters and so on, she always adds greater reality to the story. Taking into account the information was available in the period of the writing of the earlier books, I feel that Rosemary Sutcliff's representation of the Dark Age may be near to the mark. You may not agree with how she put the character in a particular position - for example - Arthur being Ambrosius Aurelianus's nephew - but the overall feel seems right. Also the way she depicts the everyday life of the various people is hard to fault. I do feel that her way of showing the growth of change from Roman, Romano-British to modern British is correct. Few people can claim purity of blood - no English person is pure English and the same is true for Welsh, Irish or Scottish people. There are certain people in the British Isles that can trace their ancestors back to Normans who came over with the Conqueror but they are not Norman now. The Light of the earlier novels didn't go out, it changed into a different sort of illumination.

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(Special thanks to Graham Sumner for finding a dolphin illustration.)

# The "King" and I

by  
Reg Dand

During my seven and a half decades of life Arthur has appeared and reappeared at irregular intervals since childhood. The earliest Arthur for me was of course of the Tennysonian variety, regal and mailed in the midst of the idylls of the time.

Around 1935 I came across a book, the name now long forgotten but not the contents, in which the author compared the story of Arthur with that of Robin Hood, the one as solidly Celtic as the other was Anglo-Saxon, the first pre-English and long before the second which was purely medieval. This book I now recognise as one of many which dealt with the literary dimensions rather than the historic, but it did note that the original had emigrated from Britain to Brittany and then taken over by the Normans and spread far and wide. I was much impressed.

Perhaps twenty years later, as a member of a small town literary club required to research and speak upon a chosen subject to its members I came back again to Arthur and began to find that it was in fact much more complicated than I had originally imagined. I was fascinated by the longevity of the phenomenon of Arthur from the late Roman times, but was soon bogged down by the welter of decoration it had received as the years passed by; what was truth and what was fiction? I quickly ruled out the magical implications and felt that at least up to Nennius there was something to be worked upon . . . Geoffrey of Monmouth sounded too odd for words, whilst Mallory (whoever he may have been . . . another dubiety) looked almost purely literary. But Mallory presented some problems too, by his several references to the country of my birth, Northumberland, which in fact may have played a greater part than normally imagined in the Arthurian legend.

After I had retired in 1975 I took an Honours Degree in History and oddly enough a solid part of the work covered the history of the traditional Northumbria . . . i.e. the part of Britain north of the Humber which was once known as Bernicia and Deira. The history really centred around the arrival of Ida in Bamburgh around the 6th century and events thereafter, leading to the coming of the Normans in the 11th. The area, however, north of the Tyne, had been the home of the Brigantes, with the Votadini along the coast, and Novantae, Damnonii and Selgovae elsewhere towards the west coast, quite solidly British, so much in fact that as late as the 18th century land in the central valleys was still being exchanged in the "old" fashion, despite the

influence of the dominant Anglians. The curious move of the Votadini (otherwise the Manau Gododdin . . . the men of the north) back to Wales, and the very questionable influence these people had upon the Welsh kingdoms, has been held to have been at least a possible source of a North country story and poetry to the heart of Wales. Not surprisingly it is an idea not universally held! Yet in the 18th century there was a well known tale of a local shepherd who having fallen asleep in the Elidon Hills within a cavern saw Arthur and his knights sleeping there with the horn to awake them nearby . . . he was scared and ran away, and since the area was one of many illicit stills, the story was blamed upon alcohol by the critics!

This period of my life provided a much more comprehensive consideration of what was available in the way of "evidence" about Arthur . . . and it is of course really very little, yet such is the magic of the business that at that time I felt certain in the past existence of Arthur, as a person, and if pressed offer a kind of character picture of him . . . like the sort of picture the police sometimes provide for the identification of an unknown person. Founded upon what little is known, and some of the people met during a life time, especially in the Forces, Arthur was to me a jovial extrovert, trained at least in part as a soldier, probably as a cavalryman, but prepared to fight on the ground if needed. The battles were carefully analysed, and as usual a kind of "armchair" generalship adopted for battle areas only partially understood! With the historical background it is possible that a kind of influences of Cromwell's New Model Army, and the charge of the Light Brigade, perhaps filtered through . . . a mixture of discipline and dashing bravery. So far as his relationships with others were concerned . . . he was probably hated by the local kinglets because he was good at what he did, and treated them without much great respect (though they may have hated each other more!) and this seems perhaps to have been the case with the Church despite the reference to the shield carried at Badon. On the other hand because he was not equated to the British hierarchy, his "Roman" background meant that he could lead and indeed enthuse his men to follow him with faith in his judgments. Napoleon used to ask whether a general was "lucky" . . . to him an important question . . . I think that Arthur was in fact a "lucky" leader for whatever reason, and his men felt this, and it might indeed be a reason for this wide admiration. But there was a snag . . . it was difficult if not impossible to think, from the dates, that "Arthur" was one single person, but at least two. In which case of course the careful character photofit became useless. After first year studies Arthur had his proper time, he was put to one side by a greater pressure of other historical matters, and he did not feature, so far as I remember in Examination Questions.

I must admit that Arthur has only had minimal attention since then . . . a period of some ten years . . . save for an interesting Welsh seminar at

Llangollen, where I listened to the Welsh point of view, so how do I feel now? I have been able to add very little to what I already knew and most of my history activities were devoted to matters around the central issue - the British and the mysteries about them, the odd question of Geoffrey of Monmouth and so on . . . the new ideas that Arthur had been imported by the Sarmatians on the Roman Wall, and the way in which the search for Arthur spread into Europe. None of this has greatly helped, and whilst when I first heard David Dumville's dismissal of Arthur as really a case of "no smoke without fire" I have gradually come to the view that he is really right, without abandoning the acceptance that there must have been fire, which puts limits upon what I can bring myself to believe.

It is possible to summarise this as follows:

(1) There seems to be no doubt that there was a central "fire" . . . that the British were in danger from the Anglo-Saxon immigration. Whether this followed the legendary Vortigern / Hengest & Horsa way, is another matter but may well be correct . . . the fact is that there was an invasion, in sufficient numbers to disturb and displace the British, for a time until "Arthur" had his battles and with Badon set them back for an established gap until once again the Germanic tribes came back and finally became dominant.

(2) The timings make a single "Arthur" unlikely but not altogether impossible. If there was more than one perhaps this is partly the reason why so apparently successful a Dux (never a king) or Duces were forgotten so largely. The lack of "blue blood", that is of British importance not the Roman connection, may have been another reason. Any British king who had succeeded would surely have been recorded in after years by his family.

(3) At this stage I can write off the pressures of Sarmatian ideas, although they are very interesting, and I find any search for hillforts as "Avalon" or "Camelot" or whatever unrewarding. There must be hundreds of hillforts reactivated around this time, and the hope of really attaching one of these to "Arthur" seems to me unlikely. This applies of course to the Cadbury sites and that at Tintagel . . . although at the last there is more evidence forthcoming. I am even suspicious of searches in Brittany or Normandy, even though the Place Name evidence helps. It is possible but is it probable? In the same way I feel that Geoffrey of Monmouth had something to say . . . disguised no doubt in its poetic background . . . but we are reduced again to speculation and guesswork. In the absence of really new evidence it is my view that "Arthur" must remain a mystery among many others which seem attached to the legend. I suppose that much of the attraction of the problem would disappear if it could be fully explained in every way. If the original legend and the battles were not of this island, then placing them over the Channel (Brittany) makes the whole suspect, perhaps to be absorbed with the literary aspects which have confused the whole subject for centuries.

# Sea - road to Dalriada

John Marsden  
has been back to Dark Age Scotland

The roll-on / roll-off architecture of the ferry terminal at Kennacraig on Kintyre would not immediately impress the traveller as a point of entry into the Dark Ages, but that was just how it felt to me.

I was still under the influence (perhaps not the best term en route to an island with seven distilleries) of E.G. Bowen's *Saints, Seaways and Settlements*, one of those rare books which can re-draw your mental map of antiquity, available in University of Wales paperback and strongly recommended. I was going to Islay with the declared intention of looking at some of the finest high crosses in the Hebrides and sorting out some local dedications to Celtic saints.

Does Kilchiaran on the Rinnns of Islay commemorate Ciaran of Clonmacnois or 'Old' Ciaran of Saighir? Almost certainly, I discovered, it was Old Ciaran, who had been 'consecrated bishop' by Patrick in the fifth century and came this way some two generations before the time of his namesake of Clonmacnois, himself no great traveller by the standards of Celtic holy men.

Kilchiaran lay some way ahead as the MV Claymore made the two-hour crossing of the Sound of Jura to Port Askaig at the north end of Islay. The prehistoric landscape of Kintyre, so rich in cairns and circles carved with the same spiral symbols that decorate the pages of the gospel book of Kells, lay to the east. To our west loomed the great Paps of Jura, the Hinba or 'island of the cleft' of Adamnan's *Vita Columbae*. This had been Columcille's island retreat, where he had celebrated the Eucharist in an aura of heavenly light for Brendan of Clonfert, Brendan of Birr and Cormac of the Sea fourteen centuries ago.

To the south lay Ireland and you could see it, they told me, on a clear day. This was no kind of clear day and the Heads of Antrim lay behind an impenetrable grey blur of sea-mist. Thus had said Columcille in his bardic quatrains: "There is a grey eye that will look back on Erin . . . ."

I had come upon the great thoroughfare of so many Irish holy men of the sixth century. Columcille had sailed this sea-road aboard a curragh that would - eventually - land him on Iona. So also had Adamnan, his eighth successor abbot and first biographer, on his diplomatic missions from Iona to Ireland and back to Iona; and Cormac, with a safe conduct from the king of the Picts, on his quest for the 'hermitage in the ocean' he would find on the Brough of Deerness in Orkney; and Brendan - Voyager on the first leg of the great seafaring to the

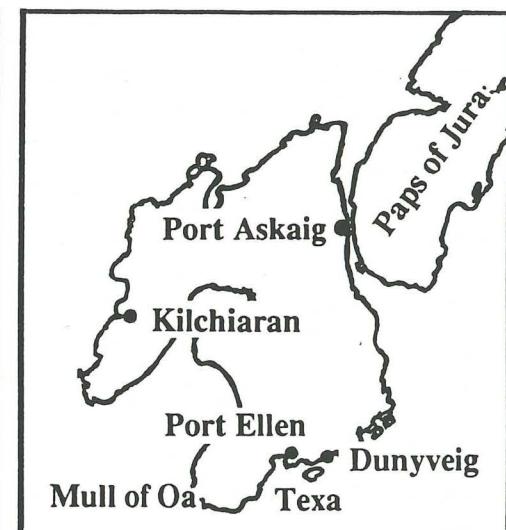
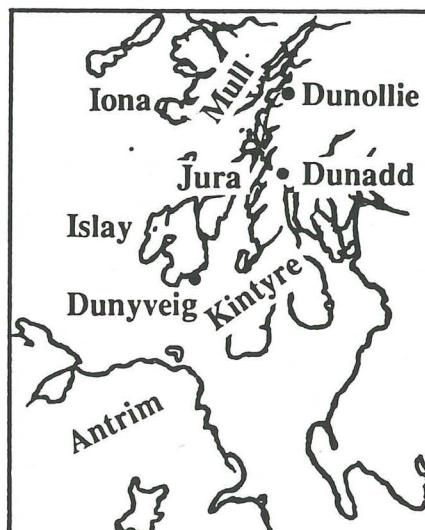
New World some nine hundred years before 1492.

So also Cainnech, Columcille's fellow Derryman commemorated by a long list of Hebridean dedications from Mull to South Uist, must have made countless voyages along this sea-road. On one of them - according to Adamnan - the notoriously absent-minded Cainnech left his bachall, the crozier of an Irish abbot, behind on Iona when he set sail on the isle of Texa, called Oidech by Adamnan, just off the southern tip of Islay. The remains of an ancient chapel on Texa are dedicated to Cainnech and traditionally mark the site where he found the lost bachall.

It is around this southern end of Islay that the historical geography of Dalriada comes most sharply into focus. The north end of the island - with Ben More on Mull clearly visible on the horizon - feels like the Hebrides. The south end - where the most prominent township of Port Ellen might easily be taken for a town in Donegal - feels just like the north of Ireland little more than twenty miles to the south.

The 'Sons of Erc', heirs to the original kingdom of Dalriada in Antrim, sailed this way in AD 500. Under pressure from the expansion into their lands by the clan Ui-Neill, the dynasty founded by Niall of the Nine Hostages, they sought new territory just across the North Channel.

They would have sailed, as did all Dark Age seafarers, in full sight of land to claim Islay, Kintyre and the whole Hebridean seaboard as far north as the Firth of Lorn. The sites of their three great hillforts, one for each of the three sons of Erc, mark out their apportioned dominions. The capital fortress of Oengus mac-Erc stood on the crumbling promontory at Dunyveig in the south of Islay and that of his brother Loarn - for whom the Firth of Lorn is named - at Dunollie just above Oban. Both of those Dark Age fortresses were overlaid



with medieval castles, strongholds of the Lords of the Isles, but a third, and most politically important, has remained unreconstructed since the sixth century. This is the hillfort of Dunadd on Kintyre called by Adamnan caput regionis, the royal capital of Fergus Mor mac-Erc or 'Fergus the Great', first over-king of Scotic Dalriada. Here, in 563, came Columcille, blood-kin to the royal house of Erc by his mother's line, to take up his destiny as holy man and king-maker of the first century of the embryonic Scottish nation.

On Islay, at least for me, this earliest history of Dark Age Scotland comes most vividly in focus. I should, but for the sea-mist, have had a fine view from the Mull of Oa on Islay to Malin Head in Donegal. I didn't, but I did see the red-billed chough on the Mull of Oa and, moments later, two pairs of great black wings rising up from the blanket bog of peat, I knew this to be 'Alba of the Ravens'.



Due to various pressures I was unable to read a few books waiting to be reviewed, however, I will hopefully report on these in a future edition of PENDRAGON. And talking of PENDRAGON:

PENDRAGON No XXIII/1 Winter 1992

The main theme of this latest issue is "What Merlin Means to Me" with articles by Beryl Mercer, Nicola Stevenson and Eddie Tooke on that subject. Also in this edition is an interesting piece by Alby Stone on "Sir Perceval and the Red Knight". Reviews include "Visions of Bowmen and Angels", "The Circlemakers", "Tintagel and the Arthurian Mythos" and two books by Alby Stone - "Splendid Pillar" and "The Bleeding Lance". Fred Steadman-Jones produces the usual lively collecting small items under Talking Head, including an interesting look at re-enactment societies - the Dark Ages Society, The Norse Film and Pageant Society, The Ermine Street Guard, Regia Anglorum and others. In the same section is a report on Anne Ross's talk on Arthur at ECTARC, Llangollen, Clwyd, in September of last year. As always PENDRAGON is full of interesting aspects of the Matter of Britain and more.

I very much hope that members of DRAGON who do not already subscribe to PENDRAGON will do so and will find lots interesting material in issues yet to come.

## PENDRAGON Vol. I

This is the second in a series of imprints and reproduces Volume One of the Society's magazine. I found the contents both surprising and interesting. It was quite amazing to see who some of the original members of the society were - Geoffrey Ashe, Rosemary Sutcliff, Anya Seton, Steven Knight, Sir Ian Stuart-Knill and Robert Stoker, who wrote the interesting "Arthur's Chester". This imprint is an insight into the early PENDRAGON Society and I must admit, the more I learn of this period, the more I find myself in awe and admiring their hard work.

## POINTS OF VIEW

### Sword in the lake

Mr. Alf Tennyson, a detectorist (one who uses a metal detector), according to the magazine *The Searcher* (Vol. 8 No. 5) Issue 89, January 1993, has found a sword on the edge of a North Wales lake. In the section Searcher Price Guide, titled Crystal Ball Department, we are told that Mr. Tennyson '... unearthened a late 5th century iron sword hafted in gilt bronze set with diamond and sapphires'. So far, the article goes on, no public announcement has been made and '... experts tell us in private that it is clearly the weapon of no ordinary mortal and "Excalibur" is on everyone's lips!' Another expert claimed 'this will make the Middleham Jewel seem like a trinket!' and also the magazine suggests that its value would reach in excess of £100 million - well beyond the budget of any British museum. However, there is 'interest from a major overseas museum and even more interest from a big theme park operator.'

The article asks: 'Did Sir Bedivere betray King Arthur for a third time? Did he, in lust for the precious hilt, conceal the sword amongst the reeds, with a view to later retrieval, only to fall himself in battle taking the secret with him to the grave. Alternatively, did the lonely maiden of the Lake, who wrought Excalibur during nine long years, and whose arm clothed in white samite plucked it from the air, lose her grip on the sword which fell to the depths of the lake? . . .' It ends quoting from a local legend in North Wales of Arthur defeating one Rhitta Fawr on the slopes of Snowdon.

Well, before you go out and buy yourself a metal detector and shoot off to Wales or anywhere else you think Arthur had his sword thrown note the "detectorist's" name - isn't Alf short for Alfred - Alfred Tennyson! And I seem to remember that Tennyson wrote a few Arthurian poems.

Derek Rowland, the author of the piece in *The Searcher*, was kind enough to let me into his secret. This was written by him to add a touch of humour to the magazine and also to show how difficult it is to class something as 'Treasure Trove'. Mr. Rowland, also, explained that 'Treasure Trove' is when a precious metal, i.e. gold, silver, etc., is discovered and had been buried to be recovered at some later time. If this can be proved, then the find belongs automatically to the Crown. However, if the object can be shown have been lost, buried with someone to go with them, say, to the Otherworld or as a votive offering, such as throwing a sword into a lake to honour the gods or goddesses - this is not classed as 'Treasure Trove'.

## The Penycorddyn Buckle



News just in tells of a more realistic find, as compared to the above piece, was discovered by Mr. Paul Field while walking over Penycorddyn hillfort near Abergel, Clwyd. In the Clwyd Archaeology News, Winter 92/93, there is a report on the finding of a late-Roman belt buckle of the type that dates from between c. 370 - 400 A.D. The bronze end-buckle is engraved with fishes and peacocks while the buckle itself is made up of dolphin heads surmounted by horse heads.

Ian Sanderson, of the Clwyd Archaeology Service, points out that such a buckle found on an pre-Roman Iron Age hillfort may indicate re-occupation. He says that this is the first end-buckle to be found in North Wales and the first to come to light from a hillfort. This find may therefore show that before the breakdown of the central Roman authority someone may have set out to re-occupy Penycorddyn as a possible defence against pirate raids.

Special thanks to the Clwyd Archaeology Service for allowing me to reproduce the illustration of the buckle.

## Motorway Madness

In the last issue we had a letter from Brigid Wright concerning a report about work being done on a motorway in Hereford and Worcester that would disturb an Arthurian site. After further research with help from members Mike Hill and

Grahame Sumner I can now tell you a little more about Wychbury Hill.

According to *The Times*, August 24, 1992: 'Archaeologists are to excavate a hill that is in the way of a new road to see if it contains King Arthur's grave.' The new proposed £115 million Kidderminster, Blackdown and Hagley by-pass which leads into Birmingham was to disturb earthworks at Wychbury Hill. Local tradition has this as the site of one of Arthur's battles and he with some of his warriors are said to be buried in the area. 'Malcolm Cooper, the county archaeologist, said . . . that Arthurian legend was full of gentle hints and misty suggestions. "Even if we uncovered a burial site and put a date on it, it would be difficult to be specific about the personalities involved. I saw a news item recently about two historians who think the site is in Shropshire. We will have to try and draw out hard facts as opposed to supposition."

.... Granville Calder, an independent archaeologist, who has carried out research into the possibility that King Arthur was buried locally, said there was evidence that a single burial had been carried out on a small hillock in line with the southern gate of the fort, suggesting it was the grave of a prince or warrior.'

Sadly, according to the magazine *Planning* (4th December 1992), a survey has shown that 'various claims made during the period . . . including one that King Arthur was buried under Wychbury Hill, near Hagley' have yielded nothing of importance. Well, the oldest references to Arthur's grave indicates that it would be a mystery till the end of time. Sure looks that way, doesn't it!

## " . . . roi de Sinadoune . . . "

Over the last few months I have had the opportunity to give interviews to the media in the hope of some publicity. These included *The Western Mail* (28/12/92), a BBC Radio Wales programme called *Streetlife* (13/1/93) and *The North Wales Weekly News* (14/1/93). Not quite nationwide but a few knew members came from the radio programme.

*The North Wales Weekly News* ran an article called "Arthur's Kingdom?" by George Herd which included an intriguing piece of information. The article pointed out that in the 16th century, maps of the local area show a ruined fort called Sinadon overlooking the sea from Conwy Mountain.

'The remains of the fort are still marked on today's maps as Castell Caer Seion.

'Early tales and poetry of King Arthur and his knights tell us that Perceval, who searched for the Holy Grail, was born at a place called Sinadon.

'Another early tale tells how a dragon at Sinadon turned into a princess after being kissed by the son of Sir Gawain.

'Could the Sinadon of Conwy Mountain be the same one mentioned in the tales of Arthur?'

David W. Edwards, of the Llandudno & District Historical Society, contacted

me following the newspaper article and pointed out that the castle of Sinadon appeared on the John Speed map of 1610, on a Lewis Morris map and in a list made by John Leland. Mr. Edwards is doing a survey of local castles and was intrigued by the information connecting this local Sinadon to Arthurian legend. What also interested Mr. Edwards was that John Speed placed Sinadon somewhat out to sea.

But what is the origin of Sinadon? The earliest reference I can find is in Robert Biket's "Lai du Cor" (12th century) with talks of a "... roi de Sinadoune ..." While in Béroul's Second Continuation of "Le Conte del Graal" we are told that Perceval was born in Sinadon and his father was a king of North Wales. Guinglain, son of Gawain, kisses the dragon princess Helie in Renaud de Beaujen's "Bel Inconnu", an early 13th century poem and the city has two variants in this story - 'Senaudon' and 'Sinaudon'. Roger S. Loomis in the chapter entitled "Segontium, Caer Seint and Sinadon" in his *Wales and the Arthurian Legend* (1956) goes for Sinadon being a variant of Segontium - the Roman fort at Caernarfon, though, strangely, his article makes no mention of John Speed's map!

This is an interesting mystery but since the sources for Sinadon are French I can not be sure of their topographical accuracy. Though it is possible that Breton bards could have brought tales of a castle in North Wales to France, Sinadon may just as easily be a reference to Snowdon. The so called castle of Caer Seion (or later Lleion) is an Iron Age hill fort and is mentioned both in 9th century and 12th century Welsh poems. Leland called it "Sinnodune a mile from Conway. The foundations of a greate thing yet remayne there", but Lewis Morris gave it the name Caer Sion or Sün. Interestingly, if you remember an article on Switzerland in the last issue of DRAGON, I suggested a site in the canton of Valais (Wallis) as the home of Perceval - Sion, once the Roman town of Sedunum or Sidonesis!?

## Return to Sutton Hoo

Now that excavations have ceased at Sutton Hoo, what next? Any new discoveries are now more likely to take place at the British Museum rather than Suffolk and two phases are envisaged:

### Phase I

All mounds will be maintained as mown-grass, as they were in 1984 when current excavations began, except Mound 2 which will be restored to its original dimensions (as determined by its ring-trench). The flat graves will be marked out by pebble-filled troughs, and the sand men (casts of shadow forms left) will be located by Mound 5. The dimensions and location of the ship burial will be marked out on Mound 1. A plaque by each Mound will give information as to the burial sites, etc. there. All Phase I will be ready by summer '93 except the plaques which may not be ready till '94.

### Phase II

The display will be 'improved' by locating a reconstruction of the ship and

burial chambers in Mound 1. A large, tabletop model and other interpretation aids will be housed in a redesigned visitor centre. This phase is not expected to be completed this century.

(According to Steve Pollington, contributor of the above information on Sutton Hoo's future, it has been claimed that these burials were not East Anglian but rather East Saxon. Steve describes this as "mischievous" and hopes to follow it up in a forthcoming report.)

## Queen Guinevere Reincarnated?

At the age of 22 Laurel Phelan started to have nightmares about blood, knives and killing Saxons. She was very disturbed about this and eventually, as she was skilled in past-life regression, she regressed herself to find out who she had been in a previous life. She saw a wedding scene, with King Arthur, his companions, and herself. She was called Gwenhwyfar. She could see everything in great detail, and it was like the legends. From six hours of tapes that she made of the regression she has now written a 280 page screenplay, set in the 5th century, detailing the life of Gwenhwyfar, and has checked all the details very well. Apparently Ms. Phelan was quoted by one article as having eaten potatoes, however, she claims that the whole article misquoted her throughout, and she had said that she had eaten a root vegetable LIKE a potato in her past life as Gwenhwyfar.

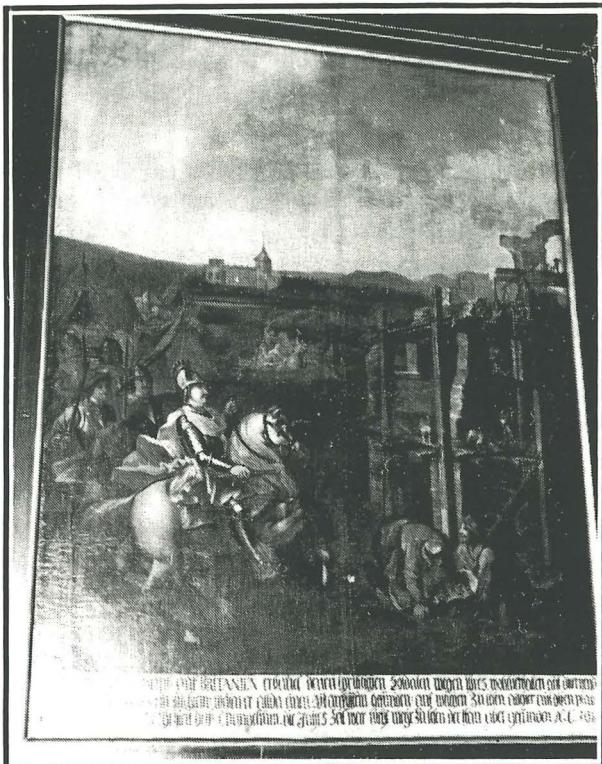
According to Ms. Phelan, Gwenhwyfar was born and raised in Northumberland. Her father was a great leader, and raised her as a boy. She used knives (two foot long), wore men's clothes, rode horses, and hid her femininity. She married Arthur for power, not love. She was brutal, chopped off men's heads, and other appendages. She was from the North, he was from the South, and they married to join the two areas together. She died by her own hand.

The screenplay has now got backing from Hollywood and will be filmed in May. Helena Bonham-Carter has been approached to play the part of the heroine. It should be on our screens by the end of the year.

Details taken from: Midweek, Radio 4, 20.1.93 and Behind the Headlines, BBC2, 22.1.93.

Many thanks to Sandra Garside-Neville for the above information. It all sounds more like Boudicca to me, and since I have little faith in regression or reincarnation, I think I prefer the report on Alf finding a sword in a lake.

# Maria Lanzendorf



To the south of Vienna, Austria, can be found the church of Maria Lanzendorf, which tradition connects with the Evangelist St. Luke who is said to have visited the area in the year 70, 71 or 77 AD. (This was originally mentioned in an article I wrote in DRAGON Vol. 3 No. 9 and I mistakenly had this date for Marcus Aurelius's defeat of the Marcomanni, which in fact should have been 147 AD.) The church itself was built in 1145 and has been added to other the years. In 1809 French soldiers plundered the church and it was also damaged in 1945. However, what is of interest is a series of paintings that are kept in one of the chapels. One in particular shows the building of the church and a number of mounted figures watching. The style of the painting looks seventeenth or early eighteenth century and it is meant to represent the visit of Arthur, "Kron-prinz auf Britanien". The legend below the painting reads: "Arthur, crown prince of Britain erects for the Christian soldiers on the 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."

This references continues to be a bit of mystery.  
Many thanks to Wolfgang and Roswitha Heindl for kindly sending me the photograph and the leaflets concern the Church of Maria Lanzendorf.

## What's On

### ARTHUR - Y BRENIN A FU AC A FYDD

7.30pm 27th April 1993, a lecture in Welsh on "Arthur - the Once and Future King" by Dr. Brynley F. Roberts, National Library of Wales, at the Clwyd Library and Information Service Headquarters, Civic Centre, near Mold. This is the first in a new series of annual lectures devoted to the Arthurian legends. Fee: £2.00 (concession £1.00). For further information contact Clwyd Library and Information Service, County Civic Centre, Mold, Clwyd, CH7 6NW or phone 0352 702495.

### ABERYSTWYTH CELTIC SUMMER SCHOOL

11 - 30 July 1993, a three week series of lectures held at the Theological College, Aberystwyth. The majority of the topics in this series of lectures are language and poetry, including: The Celtic Poet, Taliesin Today, Poets of the Welsh Princes. Dafydd ap Gwilym (first week), Irish Bardic Poetry, Breton Poetry, Gaelic Poetry, Death in the Celtic World (second week) but in the third week has something that may be of interest to members - Welsh Poetry - Dr. Meirion Pennar, Picts and Celts - Dr. David Kirby, Celtic Place-name Studies - Dr. Oliver Padel and Arthurian Studies - Prof. Brynley Roberts.

There are also a series of seminars.

If you would like further information, please contact: Gerald Morgan, M.A., 10-11, Laura Place, Aberystwyth, Wales, U.K. or phone 0970-622677. Possible limited space.

### HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY SUMMER SCHOOL

24 - 31 July 1993, to be held at the University of East Anglia, Norwich.

There are two alternative courses -

A: Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon Archaeology - Roger Martlew BEd. PhD. F.S.A.

B: Medieval Monuments of Norfolk - Barry Harrison

The lectures consist of various visits to sites and museums in the area.

Fee: (A or B) £295 with registration fee of £50.

Further information from Marilyn Moreland, Department of Adult Continuing Education, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT or phone 0532 333220. Act quickly enrolment forms should be in before Friday, 5th March 1993.

### ACCESS ARCHAEOLOGY SPECIALITY TOURS 1993

A series of tours have been organised by the above company and these two that may be of interest:

#### Christian Northumbria

9 - 14 August 1993, staying in Durham Castle the course will include visits to Lindisfarne, Jarrow, Hexham, Ripon, Fountain Abbey and Durham Cathedral.

Cost: £275.

## The Lost Kingdom of Rheged: Arthurian Sites in Cumbria

12 - 17 September 1993, staying at Rydal Hall Conference and Retreat House while visiting a number of sites such as Lyvennet, Caer Leuel and Catraeth.

Cost: £355.

If you would like further details, contact: Speciality Tours, 69 Glisson Road, Cambridge, CB1 2HG, or phone 0223 67615.



Two short letters for this final Scroll:

Steve Pollington responds to come comments made by Beryl Mercer:

*"Both works she mentioned are known (I have copies of both) but I didn't recommend them as beginners' books. Sweet's "Primer" is very old and even the modernised version is a bit gothic. But Sweet's "Reader" is an essential buy for anyone intending to learn Old English, because it incorporates a great many 'classic' texts.*

*"Mitchell & Robinson's "Guide" is a very good book which packs in a comprehensive survey of grammar syntax, morphology and a few 'simple' texts. It is written in a chatty style, but still manages to make the reader aware of the depth of study involved. Despite this, it isn't a beginners' book, but a whole course in Anglo-Saxon in one book."*

Also connected with Steve is a letter from Nick Grant regarding the Anglo-Saxon charm invoking St. Germanus:

*"I don't know the date or provenance of this, but certainly by the later Anglo-Saxon period, St. Germanus would have been well known to the Saxons of southwest England. About 930 AD, the Anglo-Saxon bishopric of Cornwall was established by King Athelstan with its centre of a cult of St. Germans, then 'Llanaled' to the Celts of Cornwall. This was probably a Celtic monastery and was the centre of a cult of St. Germanus. A mid-10th century mass from the church refers to 'the very famous and universally known place Llanaled, where the relics of Bishop Germanus are preserved'. By this date, this saint had been identified with the 5th century bishop of Auxerre, although originally possibly he had been a local saint of the same name. The bishopric lasted until 1050, when it was merged with Crediton (Devon) and the new bishopric established for Devon and Cornwall at Exeter. I hope this is of some interest."*

Many thanks to Steve and Nick for their contributions, and my appreciation of all those who have contributed in the past.

DRAGON c/o Charles W. Evans-Günther  
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