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Wm. Borlase

Cornwall

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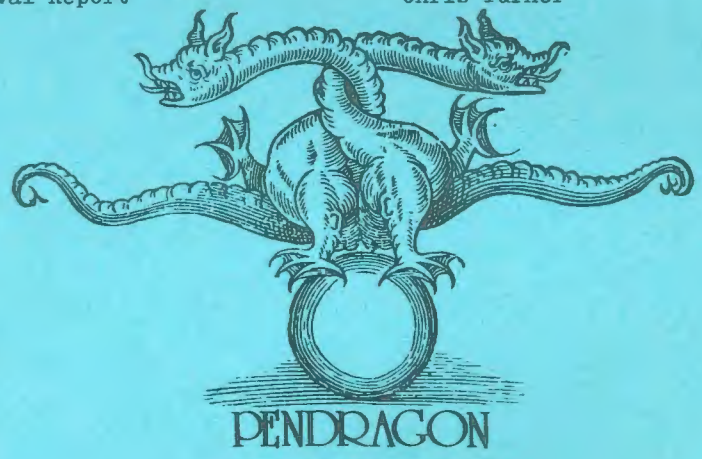
The Society investigates Arthurian history and archaeology and the mystery and mythology of the Matter of Britain.

Cornwall is the theme of this issue, and contributors deal with Cornish traditions, Lyonesse, Tristan, Templars and Tintagel; and there's new light on tracing ancestral origins, news, reviews and a report on Think 80 at Cheltenham. We've had to postpone sadly some good material for a future issue. The next theme, incidentally, is Galahad, suggested by an anonymous visitor to our Think 80 stand, so come on, all you budding scribes! Surely you're dying to see some new names in print?



NOTICEBOARD

TRISTAN LIVES! Nineteen-eighty has been the Year of Tristan. Apart from Tim Porter's opera and Welsh National Opera's production of Wagner's music-drama (on tour 1979-80), at least two other Tristans have been before the public. Gillian Whitehead's Tristan and Iseult was given a hearing on BBC Radio 3 (15.4.80). This chamber-opera in 13 scenes was described as a 'medieval' version of the romantic myth, with a libretto by Malcolm Crowther and Michael Hill. Look out for a possible repeat -- it repays careful listening. And the Cornish Miracle Theatre Company acted out Bill Scotts dramatic version of Tristan in August actually on Castle Dore, the Dark Age earthwork associated with Drustanus and Cunomorus (Observer Magazine 3.8.80). Write to the Miracle Theatre, 36 St Austell St, Truro, for future production details.

TRISTAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION. This association was founded in 1977 "to continue the investigation initiated by André de Mandach and John Lawlor to find the precise location of the grave of Tristan, and possibly that of Iseult". The Society is for the moment being kept small in numbers, and ad hoc meetings are usually held in the Fowey area in late spring after an investigation (Dr Colin Bristow has been involved in current fieldwork). Application for membership can be made to Prof John Lawlor, MA DLitt FSA, Dept of English, University of Keele, Keele, Staffs ST5 5BG.

OLDE NEWS

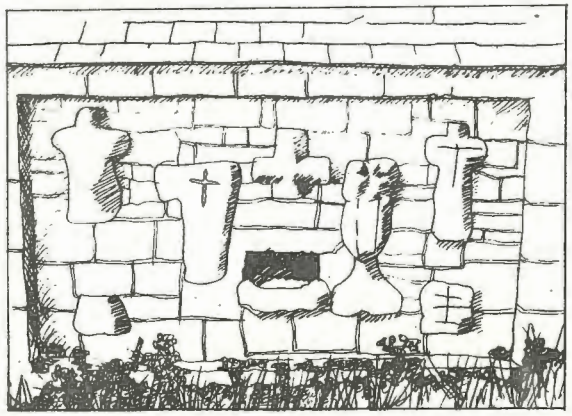
CAMELOT... OR THE SECOND ROME? Susan Gaitley of Castleford, W Yorks, sends us a cutting from her local paper concerning "amateur archaeologist Ron Jefferies" who is currently working on a book about the Arthurian legend. "Historians have tried to find out about the legend of King Arthur in the south of England," he says, "but I believe Sir Lancelot, the Knights and King Arthur were based in the north. I'm trying to find evidence of Camelot being based in the North." Not a very novel hypothesis, but Mr Jefferies has another theory about Castleford. "I've read that the Romans had a city in Britain, known as Rome Secundas (sic)... I think that Castleford could have been that second Rome... It is really quite possible that Castleford could have been a massive centre for the Romans." Comments, please!

RITUAL DOWN UNDER Morris dancing is alive and kicking (according to the Bristol Evening Post 1.9.80) in Fiji, where it is a "popular attraction for tourists and the locals." Two ex-members of, respectively, the Exeter and the Bathampton Morris direct it and Fijians are told it derives from Christian (?) religious ceremonies associated with seasonal customs and festivals. The Antipodeans are no strangers however to ritual dancing; nearby

Vanuaatu (formerly the New Hebrides) has a Duke-of-Edinburgh-is-God cult on Tanna Island (see "Le Roi Perdu" in Vol XIII No 2) among the Iounhanan tribe. In the school boys only learn the old customs and legends, the spiritual properties of stones, the tribe's ancestral memories; and the "daily PE period is for ritual dancing only" (see Observer Magazine 11.5.80). (Tanna, incidentally, is the island of the famous Cargo Cult, and Prince Philip is one of many foreigners identified as the "Big Man", John Frum, who will land on a volcano in an aerodynamic Noah's Ark to "banish illness, confer immortality, and distribute consumer durables".) Nearby Malekula Island too is noted for its Stone Age labyrinthine dances, so Morris dancing would come as no surprise to them either.

DARK AGE WELLS Recent excavations by CRAAGS, the Committee on Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Glos and Som, has revealed a long settlement period for Wells (Som), from the mesolithic to the recent past. Between Roman *Fontanetum and an 8th century Saxon cemetery very little has been revealed as Dark Age bar a small fragment of a Roman-type stone inscription. This is dated as either late Roman or, if sub-Roman, then probably a 5th/6th century tombstone (Current Archaeology No 73 p39). Tombstones of an Arthurian date are rare this far east, and of course Glastonbury is not far distant.

We would be glad to receive cuttings and other relevant items for inclusion in "Old News" and "Noticeboard".



Crosses incorporated into a wall from the old parish of Temple Church, Bodmin Moor. Illustration by Christine Bristow.

REVIEW

John Michell The Old Stones of Land's End (Pentacle Books, 6 Perry Rd, Bristol 1 1979 £3.95)

(This review first appeared in 1974 when the hardback was published.)

"In May 1971 we reported on an Easter trip to the West Penwith peninsula, 'anciently the chosen land of the giants', to help John briefly with his work on alignments of standing stones and crosses. This book should convince all but the most perverse of the existence of alignments, and its maps, photographs and

prints prove their deliberate design by prehistoric (but not primitive) Britons of four thousand or so years ago.

More important, however, are the conclusions reached as to the purposes behind this vast landscape engineering. Certainly their positioning may be partly due to astronomical reasons, partly to geological; either way their influence, both for physical health and for general fertility, is their strongest character, as readers of John's earlier books will know. It seems that their raising coincided with the establishment of settled agricultural communities which succeeded a pastoral, nomadic order: 'The Australian aborigines, who never reached the stage of megalithic technology, or, to put it another way, never degenerated to the point where it became necessary, hold certain points in their country to be sacred by virtue of an inherited quality in no way apparent to the uninitiated.' In Britain, these spots (now represented by standing stones, both pagan and christianised) were 'places to which the old wandering people returned at regular intervals, guided there by the configurations of the stars and landmarks on the horizon.'

And what did they come for? This is the question that specialists in various disciplines -- archaeologists, astronomers, dowsers, anthropologists and ley-hunters alike -- should be attempting to answer. The solution of this question is vital to our future well-being, and it is towards this solution that this book points."

Also available from the Pendragon Society at £4.00 including postage and packing.

Left A dubious attempt to soothe king Mark with harp-playing by a quizzical Tristan, from a 14th century floor tile. Below Isolde laments over the body of the dead Tristan, from a German 15th century woodcut of Tristan.

SPECIAL OFFER TO PENDRAGON MEMBERS:

Richard Hoskins' Westward to Arthur, normally £1.95, is available post-free to members for only

£1-50!

Limited period only.

REVIEWS

Sir Thomas Malory's Tales of King Arthur Edited and abridged with an introduction by Michael Senior (Collins 1980 £9.95)

ON THE FACE OF IT there doesn't seem to be very much room for yet another potted Morte D'Arthur. Editions of varying length and fidelity to the original have been churned out incessantly since the great boom of the early nineteenth century. It is possible to lay one's hands on a version with almost any required combination of stories and tales extracted from a whole variety of sources. However, when all the techniques and conventions of modern photographic reproduction have been marshalled against one's 'editorial' resistance it is difficult not to submit to the kind of visual seduction so often a feature of historical, mythological and legendary publications these days, and to welcome just one more piece of wood to the already considerable log-pile.

The author of Myths of Britain (reviewed in the spring edition of Pendragon) now offers us an opulently produced edition of, as it is described, "one of the most potent forces in English literature". It is asserted, somewhat dubiously, that Malory is "rarely read" today. The question of whether this is said in order to distract our attention from the necessary act of duplication incurred in publishing a book of Arthurian Stories, is perhaps overridden by the sheer effort that has gone into the presentation. After all, the status of the book, as physical object in an age of disposable paperbacks, has largely come full circle to the point where presentation is as much a selling point as content. Where historical texts are concerned, especially when dealing with a much revered source like Malory, the book is as much a valuable possession to the modern-day enthusiast as was the illuminated parchment book to the medieval collector. On these terms, Senior's version of the Malorian romances stand above many strong competitors.

The author has attempted to retain the atmosphere of Malory, upholding the archaic diction whilst updating the spelling and punctuation. The "great length and discursiveness" of the original, possibly a hindrance to the modern reader, has been passed under the editorial eye. The "major stories and sub-plots" are nurtured with a distinctly mid-twentieth century novelistic feeling, though Malory was not nearly so disciplined. Yet this urge to out-Malory Malory poses a puzzling question as to what kind of audience Senior is aiming at. He has chosen to omit what he calls "subsidiary matter -- largely detailed descriptions of tournaments -- which were of absorbing interest to a late medieval audience but now serve only to obscure the main themes." The young would most likely have enjoyed most the parts that are left out, whilst the purist may begin to have second thoughts about the whole idea. Nevertheless, Senior's introduction incorporates a responsible analysis of the synthesis of Celtic, Continental and Romano-British elements in the stories, and also dutifully explains that the edition is based on a combined Caxton-Winchester text, presumably of the author's own making. (This edition, also, usefully includes an index incidentally.)

The illustrations, which punctuate the text rhythmically, keep well up with the ever-rising standards in this area of publication. The images are predominantly medieval, some better known than others, and a sense of medieval story is encouraged by a string of manuscript miniatures from Lestoire de Merlin and Lancelot du Lac. To split hairs though, the Morrisian capitals at the head of each chapter are slightly out of key with the Gothic titles. The illuminated display of Arthurian images is most impressive, though blatantly in vogue at the present time. Sensibly, Senior steers well clear of Pre-Raphaelite pictures in the main text, content only to offer us a few in the introduction which features Hunt's somewhat Persian Lady of Shalott (why not Waterhouse's?), Hughes's visionary Sir Galahad, and Archer's spectacular Death of Arthur.

In many ways this volume stands as a complement to Richard Barber's recent Arthurian Legends anthology (Boydell Press 1979) in the ever-ascending thrust towards a revival of the visual, in conjunction with the literary, awareness of our Arthurian heritage.

PETER K GRIFFITHS

Geoffrey Ashe A Guidebook to Arthurian Britain (Longman, London & New York 1980 £6.50)

"ARTHURIAN BRITAIN" IS, AND HAS always been, a very elusive thing. Travellers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries marvelled at sites and objects in the landscape which purportedly bore silent testimony to the presence of Britain's greatest folk-hero. John Stuart Glennie in the mid-nineteenth century, following his antiquarian nose but led by a more than incidental nationalistic prejudice, attempted to locate the Arthur of history and romance solely in the wild and rugged environment of Scotland. He based this hypothesis on his tour of Scottish places associated with the legendary figure, and briefly dismissed the claims of Wales, the West Country, and even Brittany, to be the home of the long-lost king. The topographical instinct has never quite left all discussion of Arthurian matters, and has become of increasing interest with the growth of archaeology in this century. Such links with the past have become more precious in our time hedged as they are by a kind of cultural panic owing to the accelerating spread of urban development and the corresponding contraction of the "landscape".

To recover, and rediscover, as much of the Arthurian landscape, in whatever form, therefore, seems a laudable enough task. All those who have at one time or another rummaged through the indexes of Glennie, Snell, Chambers and others making lists of all places of "pilgrimage" will welcome with open arms this useful guidebook which has done the job for them. Geoffrey Ashe, that stalwart of modern Arthurianism, if not exactly attempting a definition of Arthurian Britain, has harnessed between two covers the physical co-ordinates of that "spirit of place" that is so powerful in the historical landscape. He seeks among rocks, trees, and other guidebooks the reflections of a legendary golden age. The pursuit is largely confined to "places which can be found on the map and visited," of which there are over one hun-

dred and fifty. But the whole business of "tracking Arthur over the map" can be both fruitful and frustrating, Arthur being a much-travelled figure, attested by stories of which some are as misleading as others are historically illuminating. Ashe's characteristically intelligent and considered commentary, however, maintains a sensible perspective.

A gazetteer such as this is always liable to imply a larger overall study of the nature of Arthurian topography. The introduction is helpful but brief, and perhaps could go further towards proposing a coherent view of the predominant features and most puzzling anomalies of the landscape in question. Most of the analysis can be found in the individual entries of places, though some illuminating comments do beg further speculation. "Since the romance image of King Arthur and ... the Knights of the Round Table has long been the accepted one, it is strange how little impact it has had on Arthurian place-lore." The quintessential Arthur, it would seem, resides in the wild places and remote regions of this island, and has never figured strongly in the history of any of the major cities which may have been active during his time. Again, it is pointed out perceptively that part of the spell of treading the pathway's of Arthur's country is that the traveller is "exploring mysteries which have never been entirely resolved." Examination of the landscape in fact reveals at its earliest stages the process by which Arthur is dilated from human to god-like status. The mechanics of "mythification" are comprehensively indexed in the extraordinary range and variety of sites and stories generated by the Arthurian legend, a perspective which supports and illuminates the literary development in the crucial period between the eighth and ninth centuries and the fifteenth century.

It is distinctly the reservation of the committed enthusiast to observe that perhaps a more detailed annotation of sources could have been inserted to accompany the text. Ashe's writing, whilst being clear and crisp, is generally allusive in accordance with the gazetteer format of the book itself. The book is a field-guide rather than a volume for academic reference and, as such, encourages the reader to get out into the landscape and see for himself. But in one or two instances, notably the Badon debate, a more comprehensive survey of available commentaries would have been valuable.

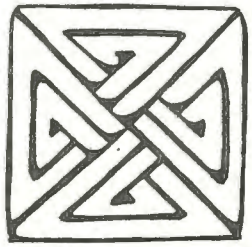
It would be rash not to endorse wholeheartedly the presence of a guide such as this. The traveller has at his disposal a large choice of sites, precise map references and directions, and the authoritative summary of the author. The book is also provided with black and white photographs, sometimes of rarely seen objects such as the Nanteos cup and the Alderly carved head. Ian Newsham's line and wash drawings, mainly images of anecdotes attached to sites, are however occasionally out of key with the atmosphere of the text. One depicts the death barge with Morgana le Fay watching over the Arthurian figure which is improbably clad in the arms, long moustache and tubular basinet of the Black Prince. Nevertheless, the user of this book will be heartened and stimulated by the concluding optimism which distinguishes so much of Geoffrey Ashe's writing on the subject: that the quest for Arthur's Britain is "worth pursuing. The presence can be evoked. The tradition lives."

PETER K GRIFFITHS

The Matter of Cornwall.

SID BIRCHBY

"WAS KING ARTHUR A CORNISHMAN? Did he ever reside at Tintagel? Did he indeed ever come to Cornwall? I have heard it stated that he was a Scotsman..."
Anon., Cornish Notes and Queries 1906



Well might Anon conceal his name, for the response, deep and heart-felt, affirmed that Arthur was a true Cornu-British chief, born and bred in Cornwall although he may have fought in Scotland. Moreover, he was much better than the Welsh Arthur, to whom legend ascribed acts little better than tyrannous -- or so said Mr Lach-Szyrma, an ardent Cornuphile of the time. Such loyalties reflect the nationalist fervour of post-Victorian Cornwall: in 1904, when the Pan-Celtic Congress of Carnarvon formally admitted Cornwall to the ranks of the Celtic nations (an event comparable to the Son welcoming the Prodigal Father), a telegram in Cornish was sent to a delegate.

> "I am delighted to know that Cornwall has been raised again to her rightful place amongst Celtic peoples. What a happiness is in my heart! Tintagel, be our faith and our fountain of inspiration! One and All."

Unfortunately the Cornish seems to have been garbled in transmission, and it has taken the efforts of two modern scholars, Beryl Mercer and Julyan Holmes, to put it into English, possibly for the first time. Their work is appreciated.

We see that the Cornish revival instinctively turns to Tintagel as a spiritual centre, with all its legends of Arthur who is said to fly about its crags in the form of a chough, that eerie bird like a raven, cunning and talkative, once common in those parts and featured in the armorial bearings of native-born Cornishman for many centuries. It may well be that Cornish folk saw the translation of Arthur to Avalon as a voyage into the lost lands of Kernow, the ancient kingdom ravaged by the seas -- perhaps to Lyonesse, that great forest-land between the south coast and the Scillies which was swallowed-up by the devouring sea. There are legends at Portquin, on the north coast, about the loss of the entire fishing fleet and the cries of drowning men heard in rough weather. Perhaps the cries of the chough are the laments for Arthur's Lyonesse.

CORNWALL draws its strength from many sources, and not least from the wealth of legends that Time has washed onto its shores. What is more endearing than the lines in the Padstow and Helston Maytime songs about Aunt Ursula Birdwood and Aunt Mary Moses?

> "God bless Aunt Mary Moses, with all her might and power-o,
> And send us peace in merry England, both by day and night-o."

Whoever those aunties were, Aunt was used by way of respect for old people, and Aunt Ursula may be a memory of St Ursula who was martyred at Cologne together with 11000 virgins. She was a Cornish princess who took the girls to Brittany as wives for Conan Meriadoc's men, and he was a descendant of King Lear, a 4th century ruler of Cornwall. Conan had gone abroad to seek a kingdom, and a memorial tablet found at Cologne seems to confirm the mass martyrdom; although some say that the inscription was misread, and that Ursula took only a servant-girl named Undecimillia, meaning 11000 in Latin. Why the poor girl should be numbered and not christened is not explained, and were there not 11000 nubile virgins in Kernow?

Padstow has other claims to fame than Aunt Ursula Birdwood. In 1542 the historian Leland was commissioned by Henry VIII to assess monastic properties with a view to confiscation, and whilst doing so he noted a local tradition that King Arthur had been born at Padstow. Doubtless he also became aware that the town was on the R Camel and only about 10 miles from Tintagel with its Arthurian legends, ancient even then. He had already observed whilst travelling in Somerset that the villagers of S Cadbury believed that Camelot had been thereabouts and says nothing of the similarity between Camelot and the R Camel. Perhaps he was wise to avoid probing too deeply into Cornish beliefs, in view of what once took place at Bodmin. In the year 1113 nine French monks toured Britain in order to raise funds for Laon cathedral, and in Cornwall they found a firm conviction that Arthur was alive and would return. When one of their servants rashly disputed this in Bodmin church, there was an uproar which nearly ended in bloodshed.

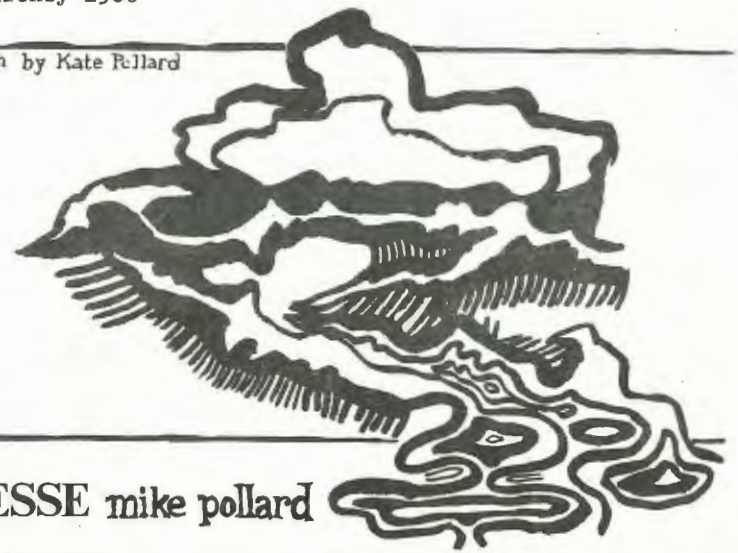
At that time, Cornwall was smarting under the Norman yoke, and the ballad-singers who had followed the Conqueror found receptive ears for the Breton tales of Arthur. Brittany and Cornwall were both subject to William and their kinship was renewed by means of the traditions which they shared. The faith in Arthur's return became part of a resistance-movement against the Normans until both parties were threatened by the French, whereupon the Normans, by an act of genius, recruited all their Celtic subjects by whole-heartedly adopting the Arthurian legends and claiming to be the true heirs of the King: a policy set out most plausibly in Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain (ca 1137). Thereafter, the poets of the French court did their best to belittle Arthur, and some of their efforts were as subtle as any modern propaganda campaign. The tale of the Fisher King who appeared in disguise to Perceval is a good example. He is also the Grail King, and a sinner who has committed incest with his sister. So, too, in the Welsh tradition, did Arthur, and thus both Arthur and Perceval his knight are derided. Perceval appears to be a simpleton deceived by a liar.

Behind this tale is a play on words between pêcher to fish and pécher to sin which the medieval French cunningly exploited: or so it seems. The long Cornish peninsula, thrusting like a ship into the Western seas, imposes a maritime air on its people, and as a result there has always been hostility between Cornish and

Breton fishermen who claim equal rights. Hence crime and fishing go together, and what is fishing to one is a crime to another. Consider the sorry tale of the Pilchard which is said to be the only true Cornish fish and the basis of Pilchard Pie. In Edwardian days it was soused in oil at Mevagissey and sold to gourmets far and wide, until the despicable French pêchers marketed Le Sardine in a typical Gallic ploy for selling to fools in London the pilchard fry poached from Cornish waters. What, one may ask, is Le Sardine? The word is Greek in origin, meaning bitter fish, and is used for "a small fish of the herring family abundant around the island of Sardinia, and potted with olive oil for export". In fact, a nothing-word, and one can see why fishermen are said to be the biggest liars, or why fishing and sinning are almost the same in French.

We take these attitudes from Cornish Notes and Queries because they seem relevant to the Matter of Cornwall as it developed, and as it was seen by various Cornuphiles in 1906. The Kingdom of Kernow remains as it always was, a shining land for to the west of Cape Cornwall, and in sight of Lyonesse. This is exactly where it should be, and tourists will continue to find that its spirit is duty-free.

Illustration by Kate Pollard



LYONESSE mike pollard

THE ISLES OF SCILLY lie about 30 miles to the SW of Land's End, and due possibly, until recently, to their inaccessibility have attracted much romance and speculation. The idea for example that in former times the islands were attached to the mainland and that on this land bridge there were formerly woods and fields and 140 parochial churches all now submerged between the Mount and the Isles of Scilly... This account from William of Worcester is 15th century, and his Itinerary parallels evidence from manuscripts housed in the Abbey of Mont St Michel in Normandy dating from the 13th century. Subsequently many investigators have been convinced of the authenticity of the legend, and in 1927 O G S Crawford came to the conclusion that after lengthy

investigation the substance of the Lyonesse myth is true. His account is published in Antiquity Vol 1, and he thought that within prehistoric times there did actually exist a land-bridge which is now covered by the sea. Geologically it would seem that if a land-bridge had existed it would have been submerged by the rising sea-level at the end of the last Ice Age; certainly prehistoric! However, it's not too much of an imagination-stretch to conceive that during Roman times the now separate islands were one land mass, albeit disconnected from the mainland.* The Sylina Insula of the Roman writers was used I believe as a penitential colony: Alcatraz rather than Lyonesse it would seem. Certainly there are remains of settlements visible on the beaches at low tide, and aerial photos through the crystal-clear water show the unmistakable features of a prehistoric settlement on the sea-bed.‡

For my part I don't see the necessity of trying to establish the exact location of a legend or the exact identity of a super-hero or whatever. Myths grow over hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, and whatever their original truth it is now obscured by translation and interpretation, ideas and investigation; dissection which for me at least detracts from both the story and the place. Whether the Scillies were the lost lands of Lyonesse or not seems to be immaterial. If one can stand on the shore of Tresco or St Martin's and watch the sunset, and possibly catch a glimpse of the romance of Tristan and Isolde, well perhaps that is a secret place that words cannot describe. If not, there's this nice little pub on St Mary's...

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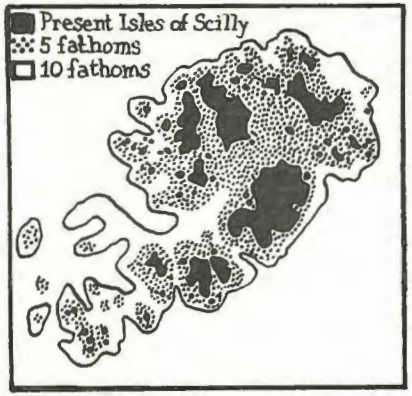
‡ It's interesting to note that the Scillies have a higher concentration of chambered tombs per acre than Cornwall.

* Editor's note: Recent research by Prof Charles Thomas and Dr Peter Fowler has questioned the Lyonesse-Scillies equation (see "Lyonesse Revisited" in Antiquity 53, 1979 pp 175-89). The Lyonesse legend was linked with Tristan and Arthur about 1150, but Lyonesse lay between Land's End and the Scillies. Further, it is argued that the Isles were one insula as late perhaps as the 15th century, certainly in the Dark Ages. Lyonesse must therefore be sought somewhere else -- the Breton Leonais or the Scottish Lothians? Any comments? (See Popular Archaeology May 1980 pp 22-5)



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The powerful Swineherd, by R.D.Hoskins

THE THREE GREAT SWINEHERDS of Britain were Pryderi, Drystan and Koll. (The Welsh Triads.)

From Pendragon Feb 1967 Vol II No 1

The name Tristan derives from Drystan which derives from the primitive Celtic Drustanos. He is the Drystan map Tallwch (map = son of) who appears so frequently in Welsh tradition as one of Arthur's contemporaries with Kai, Bedwyr and March. He occurs in about six of the Welsh Triads (including the famous one of the "Three Powerful Swineherds") in which he is called "son of Tallwch" but March is called his uncle:

> Drystan "kept the pigs of March son of Meirchyon, while the swineherd went on a message to Essyllt. Arthur, March, Kei and Bedwyr came all four, but could not get a single pigling out of him, by ruse, force or theft."

Drust, son of Talorc (fl c780) I have seen quoted before as being examples of Pictish names but I have never seen him equated with Drystan, son of Tallwch. As the latter was early sixth century and located in Cornwall and the South Wales area, I feel they were too far apart in time and space to have been the same person. But certainly Tristan and Tallwch are Pictish names, as was probably Kulhwch, the cousin of Arthur. These, I feel, are more likely to have been the result of mixed marriages rather than an indication of former residence. Professional warriors and raiders were always inclined to travel!

King Mark may have been Marcus Marcianus who appears as March son of Meirchiawn in Welsh traditional matter so often as one of Arthur's court. (I suspect that the two men named Mark are possibly father and son: King Mark, and a son Marcus Marcianus -- Latin -- who is the same son March son of Meirchiawn -- Brython language.) His Roman name identifies him with the Arthur theme but does not go so well with the note I have also that the King Mark of the legend was of Irish descent, although living in Cornwall. I think it is quite feasible that he was a sub-king (sub-regulus) under Constantine. Many Irish settled in parts of Cornwall and South Wales, probably under the "hiving-off" system as the main tribal areas became congested, and established small Goidelic kingdoms. I suspect that they were of a particular Irish tribe or descent who were acceptable to the British, e.g. pure Celts, as I am not at all certain that all the inhabitants of Ireland in those days were "Q" Celts.*

(It is a nuisance so many people using the same name: Drust, and Drustanus/Tristan; Gereint -- probably the family name of several Devon princes; March -- other men may have had this name already; and Constantine, Cornwall family princes who started the Royal Corneu line. He came back to Britain when Magnus Maximus was attempting to become the Emperor of the West in the 4th century, and was killed with his son Victor after the battle on the Continent.)

That Mark had another name, Cunomorus, is attested in "The Lives of the Saints" (9th cent). This is the name which appears on the early sixth century memorial stone at Castle Dore and is inscribed DRVSTANVS HIC IACIT / CVNOMORI FILIVS (Drustanus here lies, of Cunomorus the son). This stone is considered to witness the former existence of both Tristan and Mark and provides part of the evidence for a Cornish background.**

There is some possibility that people may have had two names in those days. Cunedda or Cunedag, the chieftain of the Votadini who led most of the tribe into North Wales, had a British name, Cunos Degos (The Hound of the Gods) but all his ten sons had Roman names, and the father may also have had a Roman name. Cunomorus also appears to be a British name with a derivation from Cunosmorus (The Hound of Death?). It is interesting to see these examples of Celtic affinity with the Latin language in the same roots appearing for the Latin words canis and deus.

It might be considered material that Arthur's home has always been indicated as Kelly Rounds, near Wadebridge (Welsh tradition refers repeatedly to Kelliwic) which is only 20 - 30 miles north of Castle Dore, and both of these localities are at the two ends of the ancient trade route across Cornwall.** The Triad of the Three Powerful Swineherds would agree with the close proximity of their homes, and could indicate an echo of their younger days.

Once again you have the elusive Irish echo coming into the Arthur story. What lies behind the old story of the archer who shot an arrow into Ireland from Kelliwic? "Medyr son of Medredydd (Aim son of Aimer) from Celli Wig would hit a wren in Esgeir Oerfil in Ireland, exactly through its two legs" (Culhwch and Olwen in The Mabinogion).

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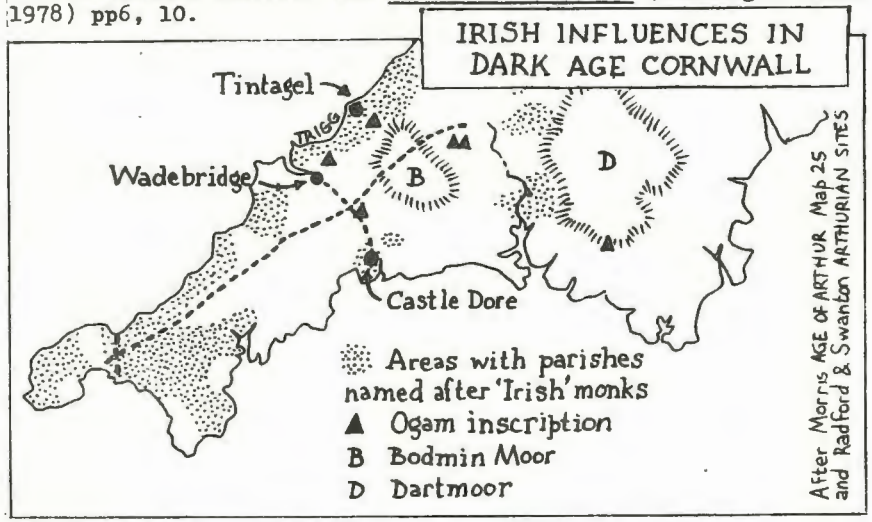
*Editor's note: "Q" Celts are a linguistic division of the Celts (the Goidels) to distinguish them from "P" Celts (the Brythons). See Gerhard Herm The Celts (Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1976) 204-5 for a simplified summary.

** See Richard Hoskins' own Westward to Arthur (Pendragon House 1978) pp6, 10.



ROGER DAVIE: WEBSTER

WAGNER'S TRISTAN & ISOLDE

WAGNER'S TRISTAN UND ISOLDE was in itself a musical / theatrical revolution. It was so different to anything that had gone before in the world of opera that its proposed first performance in Vienna in 1861 was abandoned as hopeless after fifty-four rehearsals! It was attempted elsewhere but the opera companies in Carlsruhe, Prague and Weimar all agreed the work was impossible. The opera was eventually given its first performance in Munich in 1865 under the patronage of King Ludwig of Bavaria.

If it is wrong to consider any of Wagner's dramatic works as opera then it is doubly wrong to consider Tristan as such. Wagner himself called them Music Dramas; today we might call them exercises in 'Total Theatre' and it would be fair to say that no-one has ever achieved that concept so completely as did Wagner more than a hundred years ago.

Tchaikovsky unwittingly drew attention to Wagner's most radical innovation in operatic technique when he said, disparagingly, of the Ring Cycle, "I cannot call music that which is made up of kaleidoscopic flowing phrases that follow one another uninterruptedly and never come to a close, which is to say never allow the ear the smallest chance to grasp the musical form. Not one broad rounded melody, not a minute of rest for the singer! The latter must always run after the orchestra and watch not to lose his note which has no more importance in the score than some note for the fourth horn."

This was the essential difficulty of Wagner for the 19th century performer. Before Wagner, opera consisted largely of tunes for the actors to sing with orchestral accompaniment. Wagner's music (particularly Tristan) contained hardly any concerted music, being composed of themes and motifs woven together in a tapestry of extraordinary harmonic intensity displaying little that was recognised at the time as musical form. The singers' parts were scored in with the instruments of the orchestra producing a structure in which words, music and action were indivisible. Wagner's opera was a theatrical / musical experience entered into equally by actors, orchestra and audience.

Tristan und Isolde was, and is still, the ultimate achievement of this concept. In it he has combined Poetry, Music, Philosophy and Drama in a structure so meticulously and symmetrically put together that it is almost tangible.

The Tristan story is well known and a very brief synopsis will suffice here. The hero comes to Cornwall as a youth and slays the Ogre Morraunt who has come from Ireland to demand tribute. Tristan is sorely wounded in the fight and asks to be cast

adrift in the sea to die. Happily he comes ashore in Ireland and is cured by Moraunt's fiancee, Isolde. Eventually she recognises him as the killer of her betrothed but, impressed by his nobility, she allows him to return to Cornwall unharmed.

On his return he tells King Mark of the beautiful Isolde and Mark decides to have her as wife. He sends Tristan back to Ireland to fetch her. Isolde is less than enchanted at Tristan's willingness to act as Cupid on King Mark's behalf and Tristan does not help matters by holding aloof from her on the return voyage out of fealty to Mark.

Isolde resolves that she and Tristan shall die and, under the guise of proposing a drink of reconciliation, she orders her attendant, Brangwen, to prepare the death potion. Brangwen disobeys her mistress and substitutes the love draught intended to cause Isolde to fall for Mark. The two drink, fall hopelessly in love and can hardly be torn apart as Mark comes aboard to meet his bride.

Isolde marries Mark but her love for Tristan proves too strong and they meet often in secret. Inevitably Mark finds them out and Tristan is banished from Cornwall. Much later he marries another Isolde, Isolde of the White Hands, although when he is severely wounded in battle it is the Cornish Isolde he sends for to heal his wounds. The ship bearing her is to hoist a white sail if she is aboard or a black sail if she is not. As the ship approaches Tristan asks Isolde of the White Hands which sail it is and, out of jealousy, she lies that it is a black sail. Tristan dies in despair and Isolde dies shortly after when she hears of his demise.

This is the most often told tale of Tristan. Wagner used as his source a German version written about 1210 by Gottfried of Strasbourg in which Tristan does not marry the second Isolde.

The Music-drama Tristan opens during the voyage of Tristan and Isolde from Ireland to Cornwall. He follows the story closely until Mark's discovery of the lovers in the second Act. Here Tristan provokes Melot, one of Mark's knights, and falls upon his sword. Kurwenal (Tristan's devoted companion) bears the hero away to Kareol, his deserted castle in Brittany.

In the third and final act Tristan awaits Isolde who has been summoned to heal his wounds. When the ship arrives he is overcome with joy, re-opens his wounds and dies in Isolde's arms. Isolde, stricken with grief at the sight of her dead lover, lies down to die beside him. Mark, who has pursued Isolde, appears and Kurwenal, mad with grief, fights and kills the treacherous Melot, himself receiving a fatal wound in the contest. It transpires that Mark has not come to avenge his wife's infidelity but, having learned of the love draught from Brangwen, to forgive them. He declaims over the pair, "Dead together, all are dead." Isolde rises as though from death, sings her 'Liebestod' and falls upon the body of Tristan.

Tristan was written during an exceptionally traumatic period of Wagner's normally traumatic life. He was an exile from Germany due to his part in the Dresden uprising of 1848. His hopes of a Socialist Utopia were in ruins and his personal life was in similar case. In this mood he turned to the philosophical pessimism of Schopenhauer. Some commentators see much of Schopenhauer in Tristan but I cannot help but feel this to be futile. Certainly

Schopenhauer influenced Wagner's mind at the time but his interest in Buddhism and the lyrical poetry of Calderon are more apparent influences on the work itself.

Schopenhauer in essence maintained that will (i.e. the human drive to maintain the species by procreation) was evil -and that only through rigid denial of that will and eventual death could redemption be attained. Tristan is very nearly the antithesis of this where Wagner states, as no European philosopher had before, that redemption and transcendence of ego and the world was possible through sexual love and its sublimation. He believed that no man or woman alone constituted a human being. The human being was the unity of both and only in such a unity could Man find perfect consciousness. The death of the lovers in Tristan is no final denial of, nor release from, Will but the final sanctifying act of love which renders it both eternal and inviolable.

Tristan und Isolde is entirely a human drama, Wagner himself said of it: "It is a world without God." In this he denies even Calderon whose redemption takes place in the total consciousness of God. Wagner loved the work of this Spanish dramatist perhaps above all others at this time and Tristan is undoubtedly an auto (a drama concerned with spiritual life, such as the mystery plays) after Calderon as opposed to a comedia which is a story concerned with events rather than values.

The libretto is quite extraordinary and seems to have been inspired by the aphorisms of Heraclitus "the obscure". The dialogue is reduced to what Nietzsche called the most "audacious concision", often consisting of nothing more than exclamations or symmetri-

Above Isolde and Brangäne on board the ship carrying them from Ireland to Cornwall.

Below Marke discovers the unfortunate lovers at Tristan's Breton castle Kareol too late to forgive them. 1908
(Illustrations: Byam Shaw)

cal phrases such as "See I what she withholds, I withhold what she cannot see". Now not only the voice but the words themselves only have a significance as a part of the whole. Syntax and musical notation have become interchangeable, the whole is totally indivisible. Wagner has reversed our present-day assertion that the parts may determine the whole and created a monumentally complex work of art which can only be considered in its entirety.

Wagner, like Malory, Gottfried, Swinburne or Taylor has recreated and added to the Tristan story. Is it not extraordinary then that we who study and enjoy these stories do not accord to Wagner, surely the giant among them, much more attention? Wagner's Tristan is not something to see or hear or read, it is something to experience. It is Art, Philosophy, Love, Music and Drama. It is all of these things and more than all of them.

I shall leave the last word to Pierre Lotys who should strike a chord of sympathy (and humour) in the hearts of all Wagner lovers when he said, in a letter to Claude Debussy, "We recently had a very serious conversation on the subject of Richard Wagner; I merely stated that Wagner was the greatest man who had ever existed and I went no further. I didn't say he was God Himself though indeed I may have thought something of the sort."

Acknowledgements

J Cuthbert Haddon The Operas of Wagner (T C & E C Jack 1908)
Siegfried Melchinger An Action: Notes on 'Tristan and Isolde' 1966
Walter Mönch Artistic Genius and Philosophy (on Richard Wagner's 'Tristan und Isolde' 1975)

Tristan's mother dies in childbirth: how the French accounted for the hero's name by the sad (triste) circumstances of his birth.

(From a 15th century German woodcut)

TRISTAN: SOURCES

There are various so-called primary sources of the medieval Tristan legend:
1 Thomas' Tristan (c 1160)
2 Beroul's Norman Romance of Tristan (later 12th century)
3 Eilhart von Oberge's Tristan (later 12th century)
4 Anon The Madness of Tristan
5 Gottfried von Strasburg's Tristan (early 13th century)
6 The "Prose" Tristan

Beroul and The Madness of Tristan are in a Penguin translation by Alan S Fedrick, Gottfried and Thomas in another by A T Hatto. The beginning of Eilhart is summarised by E M R Ditmas in Tristan and Iseult in Cornwall (available from Pendragon House) and the Prose Tristan is the basis of Malory's "Tale".

THE PRINCESS FROM THE OTHERWORLD

BY TIM PORTER

based on a design by Angela Neill

STAGES IN CREATING THE OPERA "TRYSTAN AND ESSYLT"

Earlier this year I was faced with the task of making an operatic version of the tale of Tristan. This article is an account of the stages gone through in evolving a suitable version of the story for my purposes...

TRISTAN is a British story; as such it is complex, hybrid, reeking of red herrings, and overlaid with layer upon layer of storytellers' artistry and romancing.

I'm convinced that one of the only possible ways to study the tangle of British mythology is by a comparative study of the purer Irish mythology. So to Irish mythology I went first.

The first thing one notices is the similarity between the tale of Tristan and the Irish elopement stories of Deirdre and Diarmaid and Grainne. In each there is an old King, or leader, whose young bride runs off with a hitherto trusted and unimpeachable household warrior: the two young lovers live a free and joyous life on the run, close to nature which almost seems to conspire in helping and concealing them: but eventually the old suitor catches up with them, and the bride has to return to him. In some versions of the tales, a second elopement with the young lover follows, setting up a cyclic pattern. One indeed would expect this in a tale with such clear seasonal characteristics. The young bride is a kind of spirit of nature, wooed alternately by summer (the young lover) and winter (the old bridegroom). So far so good.

But then a British tradition confused the issue for me. This is a Welsh version of Trystan, written down in the 15th century, when the original significance of the tale was taking second place to the impulse towards "a good story": in it, the following ingenious twist occurs. King Arthur, stepping in to adjudicate between Trystan and King Mark (who are snatching Essylt back and forth like two dogs with a bone) decrees that one lover shall have her while the leaves are on the trees, the other while the trees are bare. King Mark, the old suitor, as one would expect chooses winter (though the reason he gives is the opportunity afforded by the longer nights!). But Trystan points out that holly and ivy keep their leaves all the year round, and thus he obtains Essylt for good! I liked this twist, so adopted it, together with the Welsh versions of the names "Tristan" and "Essylt" that go with it. But Trystan's clever ruse upsets the cyclic seasonal pattern, and so raises a new issue -- that of the dislocation of nature by a rash and unwitting human act.

Trystan's character seemed to be forming itself round this kind

of impulsive and unthinking behaviour: I began to see him as a bungling innocent who, like Gawain in the Green Knight story, leaps boldly in where angels fear to tread and then finds he has bitten off more than he can chew (if you will pardon the mixture of metaphors).

An early incident in the story reinforces this. Trystan, newly arrived at King Mark's court, and unfamiliar with Cornish customs, is outraged to discover that the kingdom pays an annual exorbitant tribute to Ireland. When the Irish champion arrives to collect the tribute, Trystan challenges and kills him, receiving, however, a wound for his pains which refuses to heal naturally. This seems uncommonly like a cautionary tale: violate the annual sacrifice, and the natural order will be upset.

Like Gawain, Trystan has to suffer the consequences of his rashness. Before he is done, he has to atone to Ireland by ridding it of a ravaging dragon, thus taking on the role of the Irish champion whom he killed. And his wound may only be healed by the touch of Essylt, the King of Ireland's daughter; this is not easily achieved, since Essylt was the lover (or sister in some versions) of the dead champion, and accordingly hates Trystan. Trystan ends up heartily sorry that he did not mind his own business and let King Mark pay whatever tribute he liked.

At this point we must ask ourselves what is meant by "Ireland" anyway. Not Ireland as we know it, I would suggest, but the Celtic Other World. It is a metaphor found elsewhere in British mythology (in the Mabinogi, of Branwen, for instance); which is natural enough -- "an island beyond the western sea" is one of the chief ways of expressing the Other World in Celtic mythology and to those on the western shores of Britain, Ireland is just that.

The Other World is the country of the Tuatha De Danann, a race of immortal folk who were expelled from our world by our own mortal ancestors. These Celtic immortals are not "gods" as understood in Classical mythology. Despite their immortality, they can die by violence, and their magical powers do not equip them with many of the strengths and qualities of the mortal race. I tried to summarize their attributes thus in my version of Trystan:

"They are of that race who dwelt on earth before us,
Possessed of magic, yet strangely wanting,
As though their lives, stretched so long, were stretched to thinness.
They do not age nor sicken; only by violence can they die.
They grow to fullness in youth,
Then remain, frozen in perpetual springtime.
Their joys never pall,
Snowy blossom never leaves the trees.
But their laughter's distant.
They envy us our warm earth, even in winter storms.
They turn it for its own sake, not for ours."

If, therefore, Essylt is a member of the Tuatha De Danann, the story of Trystan establishes links with another large section of Celtic mythology, that which tells of the dealings between mortals and immortals. One thinks particularly of Eochaidh and Etain, another pair of lovers who are mortal and immortal respectively. It is interesting to note that at the close of that tale the immortal Etain chooses mortality; despite its obvious drawbacks,

mortality seems to be a more desirable state. I borrowed this motif for the end of my Trystan and Essylt. Here, Essylt gives her reasons for preferring the mortal world --

"There's a wind out here,
The sea can beat out one's breath,
Brambles can scratch, stony ways blister the feet,
Sun can burn, waves dazzle the eyes,
The season enters me."

-- while stoically accepting the drawbacks in a verse with deliberate literary echoes --

"Needs must ever be.
What do the thrushes care?
On the same branch we swing.
When the bough breaks, we'll fall."

I drew the strings of the story tighter by making Whitehands (usually the daughter of another King) King Mark's daughter, and by causing the Island King to step into King Arthur's shoes at the end. I also firmly set the scene at Castle Dore, amid the forests and estuaries of South Cornwall. What follows is an outline of the story as I eventually set it to music...

TRYSTAN, a Pictish warrior, comes to seek service with his uncle, King Mark of Cornwall. He discovers that King Mark is about to offer his only daughter, Whitehands, as a sacrifice to the "Island Folk", a race of immortal beings who seem somehow to control the natural order of things. Trystan intervenes, and kills the Morholt (son of the Island King), who has come to collect the sacrifice. At this, the Island Folk withdraw their influence from the world, for good as well as for evil. As a result, it begins to seem that the natural flow of the seasons has been disrupted; neither will Trystan's wound from the fight heal naturally. King Mark believes that relief for both Trystan, and the mortal world at large, can only be obtained through the Morholt's sister, Essylt, whose healing powers are proverbial. This end is achieved by trickery.

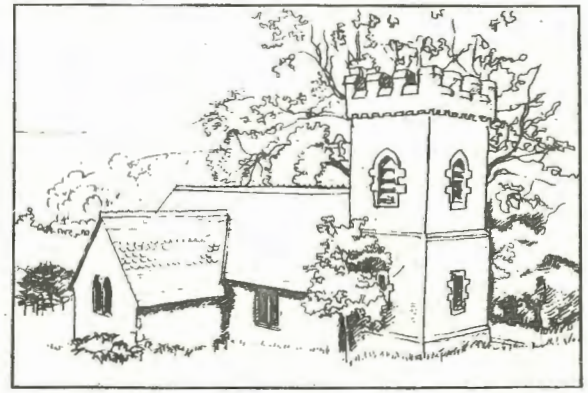
The Island Folk reluctantly accept that there must now be a relationship of equality between the two worlds. A marriage between Essylt and King Mark seals the treaty. But on the wedding night, the eternally-young Essylt finds that her immortal nature recoils from union with an ageing mortal. She runs instinctively to Trystan because of his youth. despite her hatred of him as her brother's killer. Trystan (equally instinctively, and despite his own recent marriage to Whitehands) finds himself making excuses for her. However, the consummation of King Mark's marriage cannot be deferred for ever, and when it can no longer be delayed, Trystan and Essylt admit that their hate has turned to love, and run away together.

They live in the forest all summer, but concealment becomes harder after the fall of leaf. At length, King Mark comes upon them as they sleep, but cannot bring himslef to kill them: instead, he exchanges his own sword for Trystan's, and leaves the blade between them as a signal. When they awake, Essylt realises the quality of Mark's forgiveness, and returns to him, leaving Trystan.

At this point, the Island King appears, to adjudicate between

the two lovers. One shall have Essylt while the leaves are on the trees, the other when the trees are bare. Mark accepts the ruling and chooses winter. But Trystan points out that holly and ivy always keep their leaves, and snatches her back. For this, the Island King cuts Essylt off from the immortal world; she stoically accepts the mortality thus thrust upon her, because it means being with Trystan. But King Mark, his forbearance finally gone, kills Trystan and slashes Essylt's face; so she is left in the mortal world to age and die, both her beauty and her lover gone.

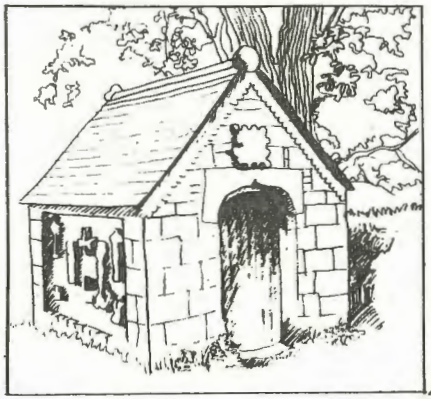
TEMPLE CHURCH Bodmin Moor.



HAVE ANY MEMBERS any information about this church which we fleetingly visited on our way home from Cornwall this summer? The tiny church is modern (1883 apparently) and dedicated to SS Katherine (revered by the Crusaders) and Luke. It has been rebuilt on the site of a C12 Templar travellers' Hospice. Incorporated in the side building are crosses from the original parish.

There is a gossipy history of the Parish being used for irregular marriages as a result of its being outside the bishop's jurisdiction after the Reformation, but being "cleaned up" in 1777. During most of the C18 and C19 there were no services in the building but in 1880 occasional services were held in the ruins.

The enigma of the place lies in its position, close to an old green trackway and with a scattering of now mostly recumbant ancient stones. According to legend St Samson passed through the area (Tricurium, now Trigg) en route for the S Cornish coast and Brittany, and supplanted local idolatrous worship with Christianity, denoted by a chiselled cross. There are certainly a record number of wayside crosses in the area according to the guide books and a tradition of slain dragons. Are there any other legends known about the place?



KATE POLLARD Illustrations by CHRISTINE BRISTOW

King Arthur's Tintagel.

CHRIS LOVEGROVE

UTHYR, described in Welsh as foremost dragon and chief of dragons, penn dreic a phenn dragon, is a rather strange and shadowy figure. His chief claims to fame are his sobriquet Pendragon and his being the father of Arthur. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth the name Pendragon came from a comet which gave Uther victory over the Saxons.[1] Geoffrey may have had in mind a comet of 508 with several tails, or have remembered a spectacularly brilliant comet of 1106.[2] It seems to have been a customary title however for Maelgwn, Arthur's near-contemporary, was called the "dragon" of the island, insularis draco.

In the medieval Welsh Triads[3] we are given a suggestion of genuine Celtic traditions of Uthyr. One of the Three Great Enchantments of the Island of Britain was caused by Uthyr Pendragon, which he taught to Menw, Teirgwaedd's son (little son of Three Cries). This Menw is known also from Culhwch & Olwen where he too is a great enchanter; "should he come to a heathen land he might cast a spell over (Arthur's men), so that none might see them and they see everyone." Menw also casts a calming spell over a giant mastiff and transforms himself into the likeness of a bird.[4]

In Geoffrey's History these meagre hints at Uthyr's powers are given substance. Uther is advised by one of his colleagues, Ulfin of Ridcaradoch, and by Merlin. Merlin, by the use of drugs, "methods which are quite new and until now unheard of in your day", turns Uther into Duke Gorlois of Cornwall, Ulfin into Jordan of Tintagel, and Merlin himself into Britaelis. By this deception Uther gains access to Ygerna (with whom he has become infatuated) and Arthur is thereby conceived.[5]

So the obvious feature both the Welsh Uthyr and Geoffrey's Uther share is "shape-shifting": Uthyr is a Great Enchanter - Uthyr teaches Menw, not only a great enchanter but also a shape-shifter - and Uther changes his appearance into that of Ygerna's husband. The main development is that the shape shifting is brought about by Merlin, not by Uther himself (assuming of course that Uthyr preceded Uther). Geoffrey rationalises the change by the use of drugs and not by spells (as the term "enchant" implies).

The most striking parallel to Geoffrey's version of Arthur's conception is in the Romance of Alexander, drawn from Near Eastern oral tradition, and it is to this romance that we now turn.

THE "LAST KING OF EGYPT" is Nectanebos, a royal sorcerer. While in disguise in Macedonia he becomes infatuated with the Queen Olympias, and tells her that she will mate with the Egyptian god Ammon. Ammon is "white haired, with the horns of a ram above his jaws". The first harbinger of the god is to be a serpent who slithers into her room in the palace. Needless to say it is Nectanebos who, disguised as Ammon, is responsible for Alexander the Great's conception and not Philip, Olympias' husband.[6]

There is no doubt that Geoffrey would have been aware of this popular medieval tale with its hero conceived by a shape-shifting king (complete with ram's horns and serpents) on a queen in her royal palace. The analogy with Uther Pendragon is striking, and the image is of the horned shaman grasping a ram-headed serpent (e g the Gundestrup cauldron). We might need look no further for the source of the tale of Arthur's origins.

The fact is, however, that this kind of mysterious conception occurs in all kinds of cultures and all manner of religions. Here are the relevant parts of a list compiled concerning the births of Celtic heroes (here with Arthur as exemplar):[7]
1 The advent and future greatness of the hero have been foretold (Merlin's prophecy of the Boar of Cornwall)
2 His advent is destined to bring death or misfortune to a presiding power (the Saxons)
3 Certain difficulties have to be overcome before his future mother can fulfil her destiny; she is closely guarded, confined in a fortress (Tintagel) and her own resistance has to be overcome by cunning (Uther's disguise)
4 There is a mystery about the hero's begetting; whether he has an earthly father or not, he is usually begotten by another -- a king, a man from another race, or a supernatural being (there seem to be echoes of Arthur's dubious origin when the 9th century Nennius says he was war-leader "though there were many more noble than he").[8]

WE HAVE ALSO to consider the role of Ygerna. She appears elsewhere as the aunt of St Illtud and with a respectable royal ancestry herself, but little else is said of her.

Victor Canning's novel The Crimson Chalice gives her a setting on Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel, I assume because of a 5th/6th century memorial tombstone reading ... IGERNI ... ITIGERNI. But Prof Charles Thomas suggests restoring this as CONTIGERNI (or VORTIGERNI) FILI TIGERNI (the stone of Contigernos/Vortigernos, the son of Tigernos). While Geoffrey may have known of the IGERNI stone on Lundy, there doesn't seem to be a general association of Ygerna (Welsh Eigr) with Lundy. What about Tintagel then?[9]

The plausible suggestion has been made that Geoffrey "wrote when the first Norman castle was being built. Probably the then existing ruins of the Celtic monastery suggested to him that there was an earlier settlement on the site". And so he made Tintagel Head the site of Ygerna's seduction. But nobody seems to have really asked, why Tintagel?[10]

The mazes carved into the cliffs at nearby Rocky Valley might provide the essential clue. They have been tentatively dated to the Bronze Age at the earliest, and their uniqueness as rock carvings in Britain, coupled with their proximity to Tintagel, makes one wonder whether some genuine tradition prompted Geoffrey to locate the Coming of Arthur here and nowhere else.

Two enlightening studies, by Rachel Levy and Jack Lindsay,[11] touch on the significance of maze rituals in preliterate cultures. In Mediterranean lands the maze-dance served related rites: first it set up magical defenses against the entry of the unitiated into the sacred city (as at Troy), and second it was the preparatory ritual for gaining access to the earth goddess and performing the Sacred Marriage (as with the Cretan labyrinth). In the S Pacific islands of the New Hebrides (Malekula in particular) the labyrinthine dances are also very clearly related to death-and-resurrection ceremonies.

AT TINTAGEL perhaps all these conditions are found fulfilled. Uther is told by Ulfin "No power on earth can enable us to come to her (Ygerna) where she is inside the fortress of Tintagel... There is no other way in except that offered by a narrow isthmus of rock. Three armed soldiers could hold it against you..." But by Merlin's deception three un-armed men gain entry without bloodshed, for when Uther, Merlin and Ulfin approached, the guard "opened the gate and the men were let in" like the wooden horse of Troy. Uther then comes to Ygerna saying he has secretly escaped from a siege, concerned as he was with the safety of her person and of his castle. She, in her turn, "refused him nothing".

Simultaneously (and this seems significant) Gorlois, Ygerna's husband and Duke of Cornwall, is killed as he tries to break out from his besieged camp.

The capture of ancient Troy was imagined as the rape of Athena its patron goddess, and the retrieval of Helen from her abductor Paris back to her original suitor Menelaos. The dance of the Cretan labyrinth was expected to lead to the sacred marriage of Theseus with the goddess Ariadne, but before that he had to undergo the ordeal of destroying the Minotaur. The circumstances of the events at Tintagel are not that far distant.

Geoffrey clothes his story as historical romance. But if he visited Tintagel (as his detailed description suggests) he could have been made aware of a local folk custom involving a processional dance, a maze cut into the rock, and a seasonal mumming play with its death-and-resurrection/sacred marriage rituals and hobby horse. (Some say Arthur was born at the winter solstice, which would make a spring equinox ritual likely.) We have only to look a little further down the coast to see Padstow's May Day rites which, against all odds, is still celebrated with great vigour in the 20th century. Was this, or something like it, what inspired Geoffrey? And was Ygerna of Tintagel a kind of British Helen of Troy or Goddess of the Labyrinth?

Notes and references

1 The History of the Kings of Britain (trans L Thorpe, Penguin 1966) 200-1. 2 R Ash & I Grant Comets (London 1973) 40. 3 R Bromwich Trioedd Ynys Prydein (Cardiff 1961) 4 Jones & Jones The Mabinogion (Dent 1949) 5 Op cit, 207. 6 E L Ranelagh The Fast We Share (Quartet Books 1979) 7 Rees & Rees Celtic Heritage (Thames & Hudson 1961) 223. 8 Nennius British History and The Welsh Annals (ed, trans J Morris, Phillimore 1980) 35 gives a standard version; my quote is from a variant. 9 In Current Archaeology No 16, Sept 1969. 10 C A Ralegh Radford Tintagel Castle (HMSO 2nd ed 1939) 6. 11 G Rachel Levy The Gate of Horn (Faber 1949) and Jack Lindsay Helen of Troy (Constable 1974)

A CORNISH MAZE

PATRICIA VILLIERS-STUART

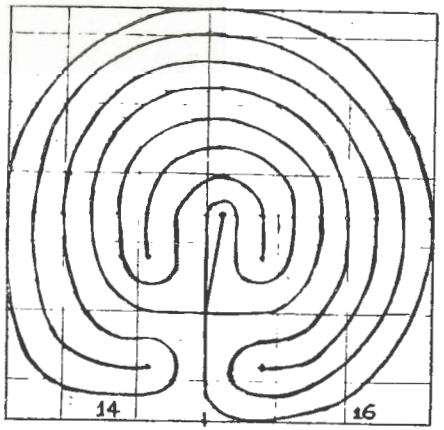


Fig 1 Round Maze

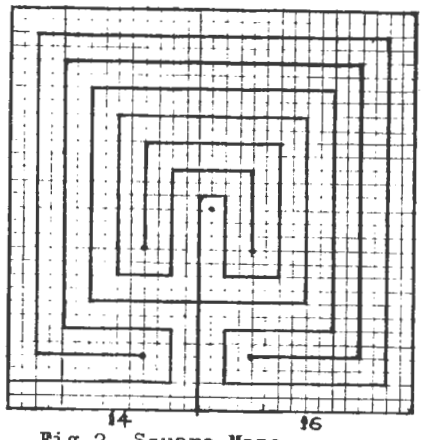


Fig 2 Square Maze

THE MAZES or labyrinths carved on the rock at Rocky Valley near Tintagel are the exact patterns which I have studied for many years. I know that the later Christianized mazes are often far more complex in their geometry (such as the one in Chartres Cathedral) but I have preferred to remain with the basic prototype. Other good examples of it come from Hollywood in Ireland, carved on a large stone (now in the Dublin museum), cut into the turf at Troy Farm, Somerton (near Oxford), found on Cretan coins circa BC 300, and among the Hopi Indians. The last two examples show mazes in both their round and square form (figs 1, 2).

The Hopi Indians say, according to the American authority Frank Waters, that the square mazes are for women and the round ones for men. I heartily endorse this distinction. In squaring a maze it is far more easy to define exactly its proportions! These necessary proportions turn out to be a square of 30 and the diagonal of a 1 x 7 rectangle. This diagonal links the centre of the cross on which it is constructed to the centre of the path, which is the 'minotaur' point as it were (see figures). It is the point of return.

Soon after I had made this out, I was delighted to find in Schwaller de Lubicz's book about the ancient Egyptians, The Temple of Man, that they considered this diagonal as sacred and that part of the Temple at Luxor was constructed upon it.

THIS MADE ME ENQUIRE further concerning the properties of a 1 x 7 diagonal. I realized that it was an integral part of a 3:4:5 Pythagorean triangle, forming a 45° or 1/8th angle with the hypotenuse (see fig 3). And equally the diagonal of a 7 x 17 rectangle bears the same relationship to a 5:12:13 triangle (and a 7 x 23 rectangle diagonal to a 8:15:17 triangle, as in fig 4). To find this diagonal for any Pythagorean triangle is an easy matter. Subtract the first two numbers (eg 4 - 3 = 1) and then add them together (4 + 3 = 7). Equally 12 - 5 = 7, and 12 + 5 = 17 etc.

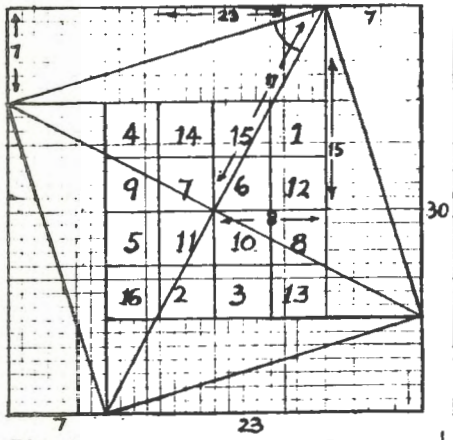


Fig 4 Magic Square of Jupiter and related 8:15:17 triangle.

Centre numbers across = 17
7 + 10 = 17 6 + 11 = 17
Rows and diagonals = 34

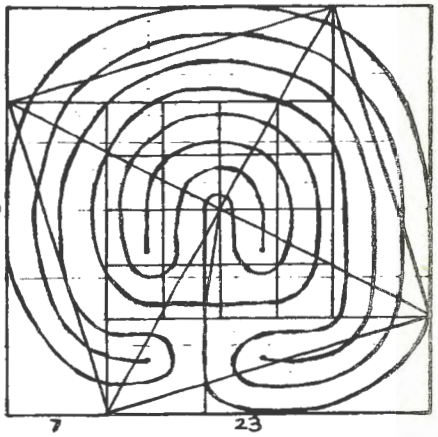


Fig 5 Maze, Magic Square of Jupiter and 8:15:17 triangles

1/8th or 45° angle formed by 8 x 15 and 7 x 23 diagonals:
15 - 8 = 7
15 + 8 = 23

This is not all. Pythagorean triangles relate closely to Magic Squares* and one of these magic squares, that of Jupiter, relates, in its overall presentation, to a square of 30. So a pattern can be made showing a Maze, a Magic Square and Pythagorean triangles all fitting closely together (fig 5). The triangles will be of the 8:15:17 variety.

For me this diagram presents a teasing problem that is quite beyond me to solve. Energy is locked away here I can't help but feel. What could be done about it?

Since Pendragon is sometimes a romantic journal, perhaps I could phrase it in this way. There is a damsel in distress at the centre of the Maze; where is the doughty knight who come to release her and by so doing set the whole thing in motion, turning and spinning and giving off a newer, better, purer source of energy? Don't look now but isn't that a dragon, lurking behind a bend, longing to muddy up their cleaner, purer source of energy and just itching to make it more expensive!

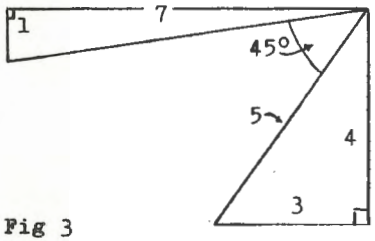


Fig 3

* See A Glimpse of the Grail and Project for the Year 2000 (50p each from Patricia Villiers-Stuart 12 Empress Place, London SW6).

Evan Hadingham Ancient Carvings in in Britain (Garnstone 1974) and Janet and Colin Bord The Secret Country (Paladin 1978) both have illustrations of this maze. C L

TAFFY & THE MORGAN INDEX

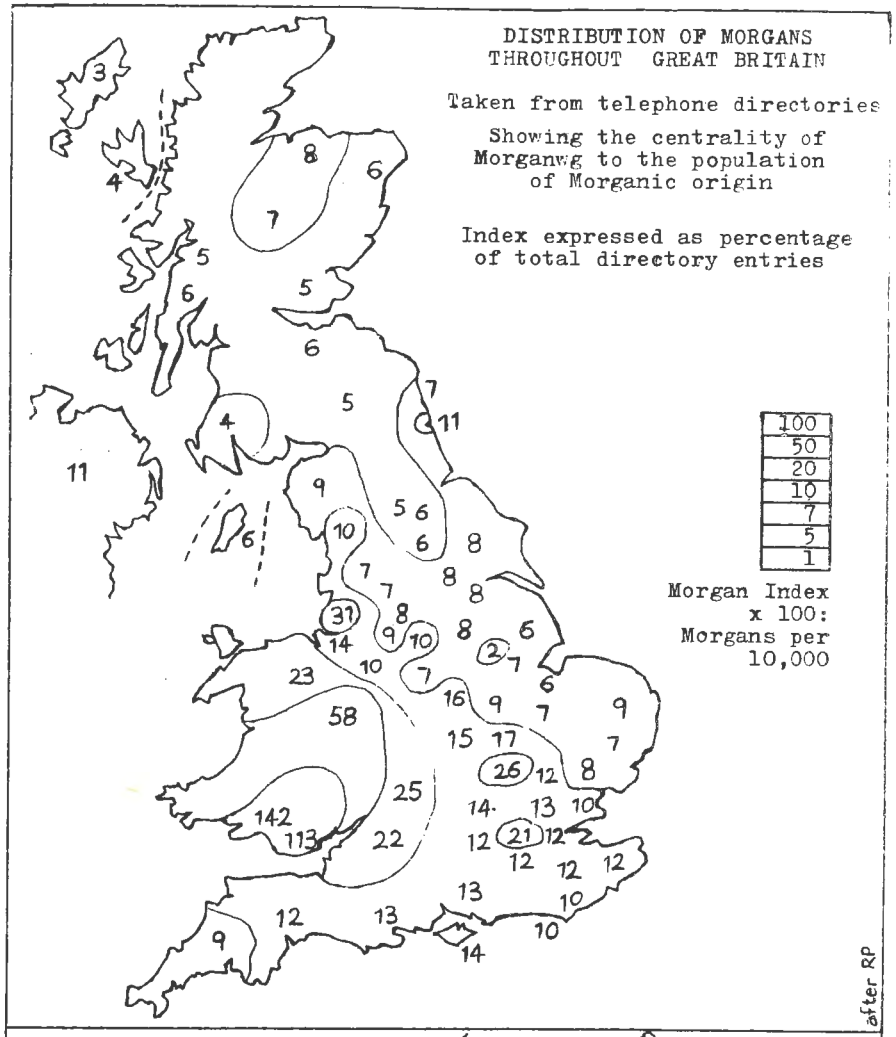
RICK PLEWES

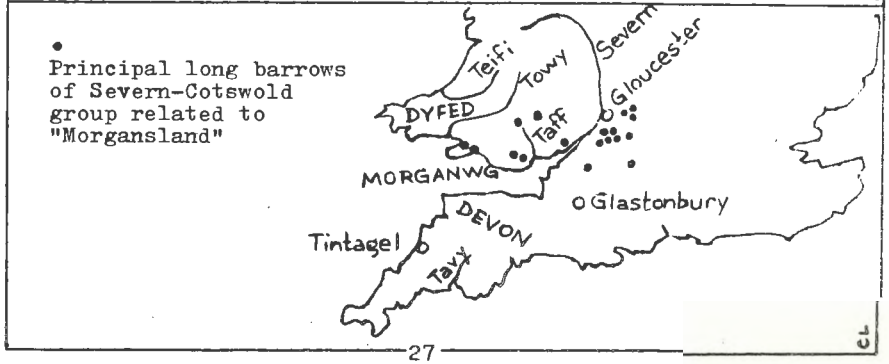
The earliest peoples to arrive in these islands have long been nameless, and it has been one of my aims to try and identify them, their language, habits, culture etc. I would like to be able to believe that my most ancient ancestors were people I should respect if I met them today. I do not believe they were fools or savages, although I do sincerely believe that under the misguidance of such latecomers to these parts as Druidism and Christianity they did fall into the vile and barbarous ways for a while. The Irish Book of Invasions has suggested that the first people to arrive here were from Africa and from Spain. The possibilities of the Berbers and the Basques being the direct descendants of those original invaders is one I have been investigating though not without difficulty. I have established certain links in the bloodgrouping and am beginning to have some success with the language. Tor for example can mean pregnant womb, or hill in Basque, so it has passed through certain Celtic languages intact, and from its presence in different parts of the country, and more precisely its absence, you can see where the Basque influence is strong and where not. Certainly one finds it in Spain (Torre Molinos), but most impressively throughout the West Country. .

Welsh Mor = the Sea. The Ancient Kingdom of Morgana (if we call it that for lack of better information) has been eroded to a smaller area known as Glamorgan or Morganwg. However if you take the larger area once occupied by this sea-based people it includes the whole of the Severn Basin with arms extending inland. It corresponds with a certain area grouping of Long Barrows known as the Severn-Cotswold group. South of the Severn these people left their legends in the form of Morgan le Fay at Glastonbury, inextricably wound into the myth of Arthur and Merlin, showing that the sea moors of Somerset were once part of Morgana.

In order to trace this possibility I invented a new form of archaeology known as a telephone-directory dig. To do this, take out all the telephone-directories in the library (not the Yellow Pages) and stack them in piles, and place your pocket calculator ready for use. The apply the Morgan Index. The Morgan Index is the number of Morgans in the directory as a percentage of the number of total entries in the directory. Rather than counting Morgans I measured columns and divided them into the number of pages each of which has four columns. This gives you the Morgan Index for a particular telephone area.

I know that not everyone's on the phone etc., but it gives an indication. Having then plotted all the results on a map you can see for yourself that the Morgan Index for S Wales is 1.42 (for the Swansea area) and 1.13 (Cardiff). North Wales is lower than Bristol. The Outer Hebrides is the lowest in the country being the furthest from Morgansland. The map speaks for itself. I had hoped that Somerset would show a high Morgan Index but this was not to be. However, this telephone dig did confirm that originally Morgans were people who came from Glamorgan. I was origin-





ally put onto this possibility by learning of a certain doctor who established that Morgans in Carmarthen were a statistically acceptable ethnic group as shown by their blood groupings. I never did manage to get hold of the original work although I did get other work by Mourant (Blackwells 58) on the world distribution of blood groups among native populations, and this confirmed and revealed a number of things, notably migrations across the Mediterranean from Asia to Western Britain, via the Basque Country and the Atlas Mountains.

Meanwhile let us return to Gawain and the Green Knight -- essential reading for all Pendragons. Gawain has reached the Green Chapel in his search for the Green Knight, "a fairy mound apparently, a smooth-surfaced barrow by the side of a stream... It had a hole in each end and on either side... All hollow it was within, only an old cavern..." Gawain meets the Green Knight who then completes the initiation ceremony of the beheading game, in which the magical being reveals himself to be only a shaman in a monster suit and they have a good laugh about that. "I was entirely transformed...through the might of Morgan the Fay... Many of the magical arts of Merlin has she acquired... So 'Morgan the goddess' she accordingly became..." And the Long Barrows were chapels dedicated to her.

The author of Gawain very wisely published anonymously because he was revealing real secrets of the old religion at a time when Christianity had more power than was good for it.

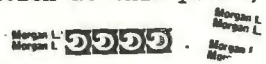
We know of the long barrow people and other cultures around that time, the Megalithic people in general, that they had a high regard for the Sun and engineered most of the monuments to pinpoint the sunrise. Most, though not all, long barrows are "oriented" towards the rising sun at a particular date in the year. It is not hard to see how people emerging from an Ice Age would have a healthy regard for warmth. The curious thing is that morning in German is still Morgen. This raises certain problems with language, that if Morgen is in an Indo-European language then the people who were the Morgans can hardly have been Basque, which is renowned for the fact that it is a non-Indo-European language. However, this will take more research. For that matter mor as a word unit is close to French mer, also meaning sea, and so we are left with an assumption that the Morgans were not Basques, but very early Indo-Europeans. Possibly the blond blue-eyed Schloer people of the Atlas Mountains fit the bill. The problem there lies in the fact that the Schloer people share the same blood group with the Basques. Much research remains to be done...

However there seems to be ample evidence to show that the Severn Valley Long Barrow people are responsible for the Morgan the Fay myths and associated Arthurian legends.

I also applied the Morgan Index to the Davies's of Wales and came up with further interesting thoughts which anyone can check out for themselves. The Davis /Davies Index relates to the map of Britain in a similarly convincing manner to the Morgans. Unfortunately the Swansea directory covers the whole of West Wales and so the precise areas of dominance require much more work. But it seems likely to me that the Davies's (who gave rise to the nickname of all Welshmen as Taffies) originally occupied the area now known as Dyfed. Dyfed used to be a principality and is

connected with the Underworld of the Mabinogion. Low on long barrows, it is high on peninsular forts. The capital city of Dyfed is St David's. In that region there are rivers named Teifi, Twyi, Tawe, Taff. What has all this got to do with the Matter of Cornwall? you may ask. Well, we may be pushing definitions a bit, but the River Tavy, running through Tavistock and Mary Tavy, does just run into Cornwall. (For that matter you have a St Mawgan just north of Newquay.) So boundaries cross. However if Pembrokeshire is renowned for its peninsular forts, I would simply like to draw attention to the fact that Tintagel, scene of so much, is really originally a typical peninsular fort. For that matter so was Glastonbury for a while. The name Devon itself is not far from Dyfed. Whether the Taf were earlier than the Morgans I'm not prepared to hazard at this point, but I would like to poinot out the possibility of two very early belts of people, one that occupied peninsular forts and occupied Devon and Dyfed, and one that built long barrows and occupied Glamorgan and Somerset and Gloucester. That the South Welsh so easily lost their Welsh language I suggest is related to the fact that they were never very keen on it in the first place, it having been imposed on them very late on when the Cymru arrived from the North. Also, words tend to hold onto the syntactical rules of their original language and it is worth noting that whereas most Welsh names "Ap" very easily (Owen/Bowen, Rees/Price, Howel /Powel) certain names never do; Morgan is one and Davies is another. I suggest that names which dont Ap don't do it because they're not Welsh.* The same rule applies in Scotland where some names don't Mac where most do.

My own thinking on this subject continues and I don't regard it as anything but speculation at this point, but I hope you find it stimulating.



* Even as I write I have learned that there may even be a direct connection in one part of Wales near Llandovery, between Morgans and red hair, which would be really stimulating. T H White gives Sir Kay red hair I think. Is there any evidence for this?

18th century Siberian shaman and 1st cent BC Celtic horned magician

from the Gundestrup cauldron

CHRIS TURNER REPORT

STOP PRESS++++STOP PR +++STOP
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DATELINE BRISTOL.....MINOTAUR DISCOVERED ALIVE
AND WELL + TRYING TO GET OUT OF CHELTENHAM ONE
WAY SYSTEM++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

Cheltenham appears to operate a discreet and highly effective method of separating the U from the non-U. Anyone who is anyone must be aware of the main streets of the town, so it follows that it is an unnecessary waste of ratepayers' money to clutter up the facades of fine buildings by putting street names on them. Those who have not had a basic knowledge of Cheltenham's geography included in their curriculum of basic education must suffer the consequences of their folly.

Recently, the Elder Fathers have instituted a one-way system designed to plug the loophole previously exploited by people such as my wife, Mary, who is normally a superb navigatrix and can find her way to and from the most outlandish places by brilliant deduction and lucid intuition long after I have become catatonic behind the wheel.

Lacking sun, stars and street names, Mary nonetheless guided me unerringly to within two hundred yards of the Town Hall by a process which I suspect may have involved something to do with sheep's entrails. However, the genius of the latter-day Daedalus of Cheltenham was equal to the challenge and after a further fifteen minutes of tortuous driving, we could * see our goal two hundred yards away, sitting four-square and invulnerable behind the scarlet and white arms of the Hapsburg Emperors of Austria-Hungary. (Fact; both the modern flag of Austria and the International 'No Entry' Road Sign are derived from the Hapsburg arms. It just goes to show the exciting things you learn when you belong to the Pendragon Society.) I then recalled an old Spanish proverb which states that it does not matter which way you go down a one-way street as long as you POINT the right way.

* still

Cheltenham Town Hall is one of those buildings that Louis XV would have built if he had been fortunate enough to have been born an English Victorian Gentleman instead of a dreadful old-fashioned foreigner. The Think 80 Team had, quite reasonably, arranged the layout of the stands on an East-West basis, but by the time the people involved had worked their way through the one-way system, they had become totally disoriented. This resulted in a certain amount of pink-faced dismantling and re-erecting of stands and signs with comforting but not very helpful assurances that it would be alright on The Day. We didn't get caught on that one, and having set up the Pendragon stand, Mary and I sallied forth to set up our tent in the rain and pitch dark on top of Minchinhampton Common, but that's another story. →

FIRST DAY: SATURDAY.
The Festival was formally opened by Sir George Trevelyan. It was the first time I had heard Sir George speak and found him completely mesmeric to the degree that I can still hear the sound of his voice, but cannot for the life of me remember anything he said. The Town hall quickly filled up and I was surprised at the numbers and variety of people who thronged the gangways.

I should perhaps explain that while Mary ran a solo ten-day stint at the Festival for Mind and Body at Olympia and we are both experienced in trade exhibitions, I had never been able to get at anything like Think 80 and did not know what to expect. I think I was looking for psycometric little old ladies in black and camphor or intense questers after the Universal Panacea. A few of these we had, of course, but there was not a stratum of society I did not see fully represented, even down to numbers of rather bewildered-looking punks with curiously perforated appendages, looking rather like beans that had sprouted under black plastic.

Public attitude towards the Pendragon display was quite lively and soon fell into a fairly steady pattern. People appear to be adopting more and more of a pre-seal, freezer-pak, boil-in-the-bag mentality and require even their beliefs, philosophies and obsessions to come in fresh roasted granules, just add boiling water. The most common question was "What do you believe? (You have eight seconds starting from....NOW!)." The answer that Pendragons are allowed to believe in whatever each individual member finds credible was treated with astonished delight. When it was further explained that the only true Rule of the Society was;'No Dogma; no point of view may be imposed by any member on another.', the reaction often bordered on reverence of such seventh-cycle enlightenment. Indeed, one woman quizzed me minutely on our history, make-up and what sexist problems the Society had encountered until she pronounced quite firmly that the Pendragon Society was under the direct patronage of the Great Ones. →

MAGAZINES

WOOD & WATER (sacred wells and springs) 40p per issue 38 Exmouth St, Swindon, Wilts SN1 3PU.

STONEHENGE VIEWPOINT Donald Cyr, £3.00 for 2yrs/12 issues, PO Box 152, London N10 1EP.

THE LEY HUNTER (alignments and earth mysteries) £3.60 pa, Paul Devereux, PO Box 152, London N10 2EF.

ANCIENT SKILLS & WISDOM REVIEW £2.00 pa, Paul Screeton, 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 2AT.

ANCIENT MYSTERIES (geomancy, lost knowledge, ancient enigmas) £3.75 pa, Nigel Pennick, Institute of Geomantic Research, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD.

NEWSLETTER (paraphysical research) For details send stamp to Sid Birchby, NL, 40 Parrs Wood Ave, Didsbury, Manchester M20 OND.

RILKO NEWSLETTER (Research into Lost Knowledge Organisation) 40p from Janette Jackson, 36 College Court, Hammersmith, London W6.

SANGREAL (mysteries, magic legend, crafts and traditions in Britain) 75p post free/£2.75 pa from Sally & Gef Stuart Dearn, BM SANGREAL London WC1V 6XX.

THE ATLANTEAN (Atlantean Society magazine) £3.00 from: Cynthia Kenyon, 42 St George's St, Cheltenham, GL50 4AF.

THE CAULDRON pagan journal of the Old Religion. Single copy: 25p Annual subscription: £1.00 (cash or blank postal orders only) U.S. $4 bills from BCM Box 1633, London WC1N 3XX.

During the day, I was approached by a beard and bright yellow T-shirt belonging to Cotswold Hospital Radio. Would I like to give a three-minute interview on the Pendragon Society for C.H.R? Like right now? Like right now, if I would just care to come and sit on this balcony and talk into this and here we go..... For what it's worth, I can still hear the sound of my voice, but cannot for the life of me remember anything I said. The Yellow T-shirt was quite satisfied and particularly impressed with a society with such flexibility of outlook to be able to look so far forward by looking so far back. With such a capacity for mental gymnastics, perhaps we should go into politics.

SECOND DAY : SUNDAY

Rather a slow start while the good citizens of Cheltenham enjoyed their Sunday morning tea and Supplement. By 11-30, however, we were almost as busy as Saturday. The highlight of the day as far as we were concerned was the Pendragon Lecture at 12-30 by Roger Webster. I came to with a jolt at 12-05 when the Tannoy implored the Pendragon lecture team to check in at once. I dashed to Control and found that we had a 'Circumstances Beyond Our Control' situation running on all six cylinders. By 12-20 we had a half-full Theatre and Roger, but the lecture slides, projector, screen, notes and back-up team were still studying Central European Heraldry somewhere en route. By 12-35 nothing had changed except that the Theatre was now full. Would I talk extempore about Arthur until the rest arrived? Like, right now? Like right now, if I would care to stand over here..... I spoke for a matter of minutes which only seemed like a fortnight before a glowing Chris Lovegrove and Mike Pollard arrived and the proper production got under way. With such a capacity for repeatedly coming out with a whole skin from the jaws of imminent catastrophe, perhaps we should go into politics.

I was not able to stay for the rest of the lecture as I had a wife and exhibition to support, so I cannot give a first-hand report, but everyone seemed happy afterwards. Pendragon leaflets began to run out fast after lunch and we just managed to eke them out till closing time, and we were busy right up to the end. At last, someone blew the whistle and the exhibition folded up and blew away like the banquet in the 'Tempest'.→

Probably the most striking aspect of the Festival was the number of different Christian and quasi-Christian sects exhibiting cheek by jowl not only with each other, but with Buddhists, Sufis, Baha'is and some neo-pagan cults and all in apparent harmony and tolerance. If there was a message of Hope at Think 80, this was it as far as I was concerned. Not all exhibitors managed to be so high-minded; a small minority, particularly some animal protection groups and dietary freaks, seemed to be motivated more by prejudice and hatred than genuine concern and spent a lot of time in hard-eyed, tight lipped personal attacks on anyone who dared question a point or proposition. You always find some of these and they were few enough to ignore.

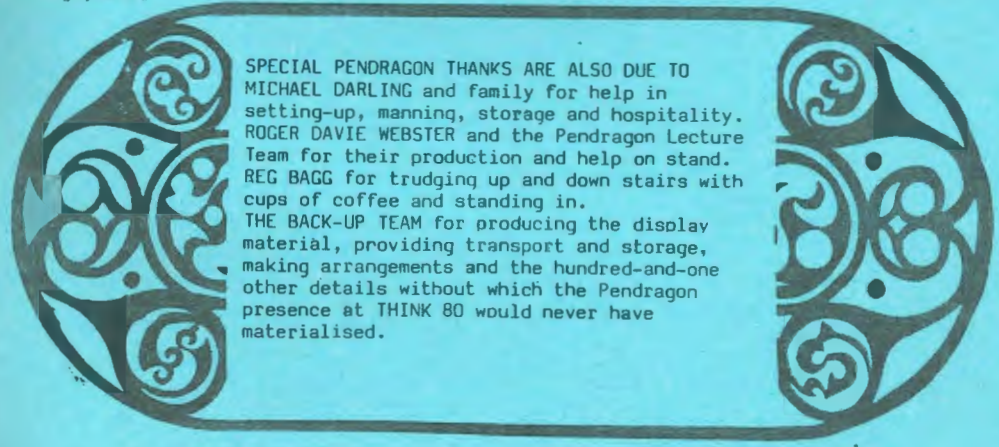
THE ACTIVITIES.

About a third of the floor space in the main hall was given over to action displays and demonstrations throughout the Festival. Again there was great variation in style and quality and some deserve special mention, see League Table below:

ACTIVITY	RATING	COMMENTS
Red Indian Dancing	***	Noisy, colourful and very exciting.
Kempo & Chinese Yoga	***	Beautiful people doing beautiful things.
Morris Dancing	**	As good as any I've seen; great fun.
Vegan cooking		Gave unexpected zest to lunchtime ham sandwiches.
'Then' (drama)		Probably very meaningful, but as actors wore paper bags over their heads throughout, it was lost on me.
Spinning (wool)	Raspberry	Wrong methods, inadequate and dirty equipment.

We were in the fortunate position of being in the gallery directly above the Activity Area and had a superb vantage point throughout Think 80.

The Think 80 Team of organisers deserve all praise for their efforts. Everything seemed very well co-ordinated and ran on wheels. The Team were unobtrusive and low-key but were always easy to find and nothing but helpful and considerate. There must have been a tremendous amout of behind-the-scenes pressure to keep things moving so smoothly, but there was no sign of the irritation and short temper that can so often creep in under such circumstances. Our thanks to you for helping to make Think 80 so enjoyable.



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4th century comet / 16th century