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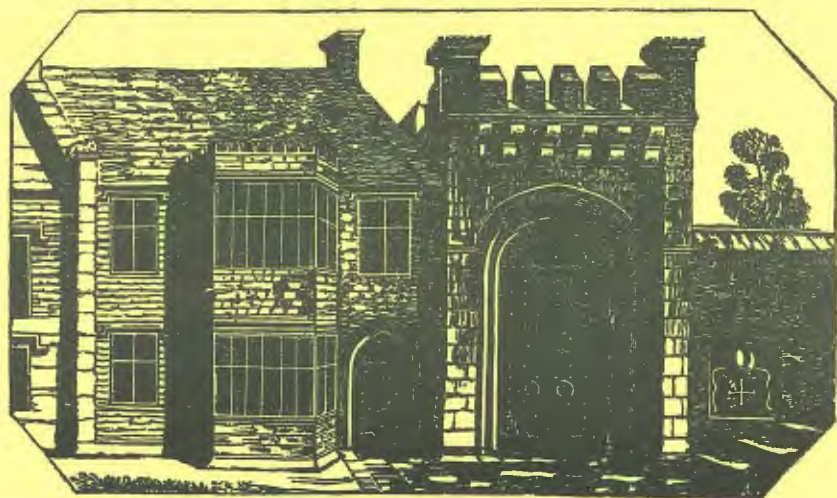


Illustration The west gateway of Glastonbury Abbey

PENDRAGON JOURNAL OF THE PENDRAGON SOCIETY



EDITORIAL

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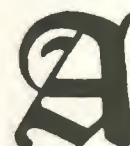
ISSN 0143-8379 Vol XVII No 1 Winter 1983-4
 GLASTONBURY edition JPS 65 7 84

Subscription £3.00 for four issues (which includes membership of the Society).

A cross in the box indicates subscription due...



Editor Chris Lovegrove Production Kate Pollard, Roger Davie Webster Correspondence The Secretary, 27 Roslyn Road, Redland, Bristol BS6 6NJ Meetings Ask to be put on a mailing list for meetings in and around Bristol Pendragon investigates Arthurian history and archaeology and the mystery and mythology of the Matter of Britain. Opinions stated are those of the writer concerned. © Pendragon Society / authors 1984



AND DID THOSE FEET in ancient times walk upon England's mountains green? Or is it yet another myth--the notion that Christ built an oratory at Glastonbury--to go with the other major Avalonian myths of Joseph of Arimathea and King Arthur?

And yet there are those who hold to the no-smoke-without-a-fire hypothesis and argue for at least a grain of truth in these legendary assertions. And there are new, more recent traditions--such as mazes and zodiacs--which have already passed into modern folklore.

IT SEEMS STRANGE that the story of Glastonbury has not already appeared as a theme for this magazine, synonymous as it nearly is for many people with the stories of Arthur, the Round Table and the Holy Grail. Still, it is fitting perhaps that in this, the Society's 25th year, we celebrate a site that exactly 800 years ago lost its precious "Old Church" in a disastrous fire (a fate that York Minster recently nearly succumbed to) and yet, within a decade, found a legendary hero to replace the lost magic.

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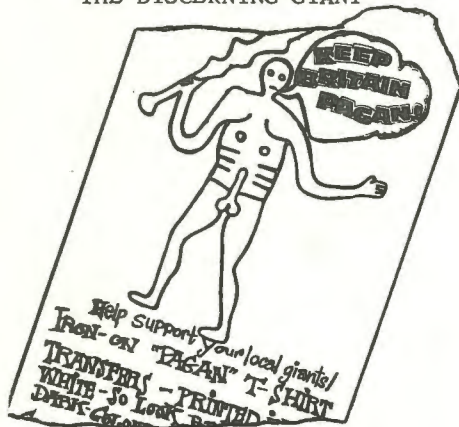
Illustrations Kate Pollard 8; Eddie Tooke 23, 25, 26, 35; all other original illustrations Chris Lovegrove

NOTICEBOARD

PENDRAGON DIG

On the Whitsun 84 Llanelen dig, John "Broceliande" Forrest turned up midweek to belabour members' minds with that day's Guardian crossword 16941, compiled by the suitably named Enigmatist. Students of synchronicity will not be surprised to discover that one of the across clues read: "The prune concoction monster gives King (5, 9)." No prizes were offered however (and none will be here) for the solution.

THE DISCERNING GIANT



Readers will remember Kate Pollard's T-shirt transfer offer that we advertised in the "Templar" issue. This featured the Cerne Abbas giant with a speech balloon issuing from his mouth proclaiming "Keep Britain Pagan!"

This jokey stunt--and it was no more than that--was taken seriously by eco-pagan groups after a mention in Mike Howard's witchcraft newsletter The Cauldron, and re-appeared frequent-

ly as a slogan in such literature.

It is nice to know that the giant is still powerful--too powerful to use for advertising campaigns. A famous beer company dropped an advert featuring the chalk figure without saying why ("The part Heineken could not reach" by Alan Gordon in The Daily Mirror 26.9.83) and even the comedian Dave Allen decided a TV skit on the giant would be too outrageous.

MERLIN LIVES!

Unless the British public are supposed to be aware of an obscure bird of prey, British Telecom seem to have named their Business Systems after the Round Table's technical adviser. Certainly Merlin is less of a mouthful than the alternative!

PERIODICALS

A new journal, EXPLORING LOCAL HISTORY, is intended to "give the well informed amateur a platform (and) societies, clubs and individuals the opportunity to have their say". Issue No 1 (April 1984) is a promising beginning with articles on museums, oral history, festivals, quarrying, street names... and "King Arthur and Dark Age Britain", a very fair review of Geoffrey Ashe's Arthur-Riothamus theory and the work of the Pendragon Society. Annual subscription £9.50 from Elmcrest Publishing, Maggs House, 78 Queens Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1QX.

Welsh border earth mysteries are examined in EARTHLINES--LLINELLAU DAEAR, another excellent magazine to join the growing number of regional journals such as NOTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES (North East), EARTH GIANT (Wessex) and EARTHQUEST (Essex). Jonathan Mullard and Christopher Fletcher edit jointly, and the second issue features footpaths, folkdance, phenomena, leys and

Herefordshire wells (by Pendragon member Mark Valentine).

CAERDROIA No 14 (March 84) includes "The Glastonbury Tor Maze Debate": four articles by Geoffrey Ashe, Russell Scott, Nigel Pennick and Jeff Saward "giving differing views on what is possibly the most controversial labyrinth in the British Isles." A must for students of the Tor.

"The Mystery of the Grail" in the RILKO NEWSLETTER No 24 (Spring 84) is in fact a translation from a Spanish review of an Italian book by Julius Evola -- Il Mistero del Graal. The grail dealt with here is "metaphysical, suprarational and super-historic", and while covering many aspects of the grail legends which Pendragon readers will have met before, throws in some interesting new ones.

"The Bell and the Grail" by Jim Kimmis is to be found in THE SYMBOL No 4 (midsummer 84) and is a "survey of the legend of the origin of the bell in Perlesvaus" or The High History of the Holy Grail.

"Sacred Glastonbury: A Defence of Myth Defiled" is the title of ANTI-FEMINIST PAPER No 1 (published by Zodiac House, "Gondolin", West Hay, Somerset). It is a diatribe written by Anthony Roberts, adapted from his article in Earth Giant No 4, against "Female Glastonbury", an article by Cara Trimarco in The Ley Hunter of August 1983. Ms Trimarco's article was admittedly rather silly in places seeing feminism everywhere in the Glastonbury landscape. Mr Roberts provides the masculist (?) backlash (though he claims to be "pro-people") and goes over the top in true bombastic Robertsonian style. The gentleman doth protest too much, methinks. Finally, the Glastonbury Zodiac. Ian Burrow, Field Archaeologist

for Somerset's Planning Department, took a fair look at the alleged zodiac in POPULAR ARCHAEOLOGY Vol 4 No 8 (Feb 83). "Star Spangled Avalon" considered sympathetically the case for giant effigies in the Somerset landscape but regrettably came to the conclusion that its antiquity is illusory. As Jeff Saward has pointed out in respect of the Tor Maze, the Zodiac DOES exist, for it can be plotted. But many of its key delineating features have only come about in the last couple of centuries and NOT in the course of millenia.



ARTHUR BOOZED YER

"Arthurian legend takes on a new lease of life at The Pendragon public-house at Thornhill, Cardiff..."

No, the Society hasn't taken leave of its senses. It's Brains Brewery which has a lot of bottle in opening this new hostelry in Excalibur Drive.

The Knight's Bar is the public bar of The Pendragon, the Garden Lounge caters for families and looks over the Bristol Channel, and Merlin's Lounge "is going to appeal to the younger drinkers" with disco lighting and food, reports S Barnes in a feature, "Building on a royal legend" (South Wales Echo,

8.3.84, spotted by Pat Havill).

ARTHUR SLAIN AGAIN

Alert goggleboxwatchers may have giggled through The Morte d'Arthur (BBC2) on 5.5.84 if they eschewed the Eurovision Song Contest.

Devised and directed by Gillian Lynne, the concept was that John Barton as Malory was to tell his tale of the break-up of the Round Table while players presented the action with moving tableaux to music. There were several nice touches, but overall this was not a production for purists or for those with a sense of humour.

NO TREASURE HERE

The National Trust has been allowed by the Department of the Environment to install an iron grid below the stone floor of St Michael's Tower on the Tor.

The purpose is supposed to be to baffle treasure hunters with metal detectors, reports the Bristol Evening Post (3.10.84). But will they be so easily deterred?

After the fiasco of the Cadbury gold eggs, one doubts that much will put off the really determined seeker.

(PS Since 2.4.84, English Heritage--as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission is called--supervises the conservation sections of the DoE.)

CONFERENCE ON RHEGED

"In the late sixth century the victorious armies of Cumbria were poised to destroy the Anglo-Saxons. Their great king, Urien Rheged, and his son Owen are celebrated in the earliest Welsh poetry. Was Urien the real King Arthur?"

Thus runs the advance publicity for THE LOST KINGDOM OF RHEGED,

a conference in the Lake District from 22nd-26th October.

The programme of lectures and tours looks very enticing, with talks on the early literature, Arthur, northern Dark Age archaeology etc, and visits to Penrith, Tarn Wadling, Richmond, Pendragon Castle, Arthuret, and sites connected with the important saint, Kentigern.

Accommodation in Rydal Hall, Ambleside, is £145 (inc VAT), but non-residents pay £17 per day (inc meals). Details: T Clare MA, 43 Silverdale Rd, Yealand Redmayne, Carnforth, Lancs.

NANTEOS CUP

Member Fred Stedman-Jones is an authority on the Nanteos Cup, which recent tradition has made the Holy Grail from Glastonbury.

He has been following up several leads on the Cup, and has decided to put together a booklet on it at his own expense.

His research on the Cup (reported in Pendragon XIV, 3, after an article in a magazine edited by Nigel Pennick) is that quoted by Geoffrey Ashe in Avalonian Quest.

Interested parties should contact Fred Stedman-Jones at: Smithy House, Newton by Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 6SX with any information, observations or queries.

PHOENIX RUNES

Phoenix Runes is a set of 24 cards in full colour representing the ancient runes brought by the Anglo-Saxons to Dark Age Britain. Each pack is accompanied by a 19-page booklet, and costs £5.50 (inc p&p) from Phoenix Runes, AMBER, Short Cross Road, Mount Hawke, Truro, Cornwall. TR4 8EA. The runes are designed and illustrated by Beryl Mercer and Tricia Bramwell.

The Relevance of Glastonbury

Rick plewes



HAT I am going to put forward here is a general concept which I believe is useful and holds water. It is by no means final and certainly not provable at present. There is much archaeology to be done before anyone can be sure about it either way. I will try and leave the outline clear however for others to chew on if they so wish.

We know from archaeology done in the caves on the south slopes of the Mendips that Mendip has been occupied by man since the Old Stone Age. My interest however begins with the retreat of the glaciers roughly ten thousand years ago.

To begin with, what is now the Somerset levels was probably a raging torrent of water fed by flood water from the melting glaciers. The Tor and other hills in the levels were largely created at that time as the surrounding land was eroded. A glance at the geological map for the area shows that the Tor is not man-made but bears the same strata of soft stone and clays as other hills to the east which would have eroded very easily. When the floods ceased the levels became at first an inland salt sea, after a few thousand years the openings to the sea began to silt up and the water became brackish, and finally as the peat layers built up the water became fresh. It must have been an absolute haven for wild life and an abundant source of food for any settlers in the area.

Owing to the fact that Mendip has natural caves man would have favoured it from an early date anyway, since caves are few enough in Britain. Had man settled here in quantities, which I believe he did, he would also have been ideally placed to expand his civilisa-

tion when metallurgy began since the Mendips are themselves rich in no less than sixteen different minerals, including red and yellow ochre used by man in rituals from way back.

EARLIEST CIVILISATION

What I would like to suggest here, as an idea worth very serious consideration by all interested parties, is that Mendip may have been the earliest large British civilisation, on which the Avebury-Silbury complex was modelled. Michael Dames' work on Silbury, which I regard as authoritative, makes the Silbury mound the pregnant womb of the Lady of the Lake. It makes sense to consider that the creative process requires inspiration, and that inspiration must have come from somewhere...

In the immediate area of the five earth rings of Priddy there are 470 barrows or thereabouts. Mendip is a difficult area to estimate in that since there has been so much open cast mining, in every age including the Roman, it is impossible to say how many barrows have been destroyed, or, on the

other hand, how many barrows are in fact spoil heaps. So little archaeology has been done on the Mendips that much is conjecture.

At Glastonbury we have what may have been part of the religious centre for a very large early society living on Mendip. Viewed from Mendip across the great inland sea the Tor is awe-inspiring. You can reconstruct this vision quite easily from Mendip today if you view the Tor on a day when low-lying mist hides the levels completely. Indeed, the first time I saw the Tor such conditions prevailed, but that was from Cadbury.

I would assume that a society of that time would be Matriarchal at its root. As I've suggested previously² the Arthurian legends seem to me to contain elements of an attempt, evidently successful in the long run at least, to switch to Patriarchal dominance. The legends associated with Glastonbury are all feminine if we dismiss the Christian stories as no more than the usual cover-up attempt which Christians used everywhere they went, incorporating local deities and making them into saints.

Firstly, the word Tor meaning pregnant implies an aspect of the Goddess.

Secondly, the Holy Thorn is throughout British culture a symbol of virginity. It is bad luck to bring it into the house because traditionally it causes sterility. Flowering as it does at Christmas (Old Style) it exaggerates this meaning since Christmas is the least fertile time of the year.

Thirdly, we have the legend of the Lady of the Lake, who gives and takes back Arthur's sword.

Fourthly, we have the story of Morgan taking the dead or

wounded Arthur with the other black queens away to the isle of Avalon.

MENDIP SOCIETY

Bearing in mind that many early societies gave great importance to holy islands, as for example Iona, Bahrain, Delos, using them in their burial rites and restricting their use for other purposes, the significance of Avalon is not so much that it exists by itself, but that it implies the existence of a large local society that used it.

The society which built the Severn group of long barrows treated the Severn Estuary as a private sea and motorway. It was probably much quicker to travel and trade along coasts than overland. And the whole of the population living around the estuary would have easy access to Glastonbury by sea.

Meanwhile Mendip too was well protected. To the west, the Estuary. To the south, the lake and marshes of the new Somerset levels. Guarding the eastern edge of the levels, Cadbury. Only the north-east would have to be carefully guarded.

We have seen that the early people on Mendip would hardly have been short on anything they needed. The evidence of the barrows around Priddy indicates that however holy Glastonbury may have been, burials mostly took place on Mendip itself. Certainly there's not yet any great evidence of large scale burial on Avalon.

SECRET OF FERTILITY

The earth circles of Priddy, now three and a half, once possibly five, together with the Devil's Punchbowl imply a ley line which passes through the Chalice Well at Glastonbury. These circles are older than

stone circles, and must have served different purposes. I have elsewhere indicated the possibility that the arrival of calendrical stone circles historically marks the shift from matriarchal to patriarchal society.³ As the study of time enabled men to understand seasons and animal fertility, it also enabled them to understand the fertility of their own women and so steal from them the (until then) secret knowledge which predicted the concept of fatherhood.

In primitive societies today it is still true that tribes who do not understand the principles by which parenthood is achieved tend to be matriarchal, ie. property passes matrilineally, and very often there is no feeling of jealousy over women mating with males other than their official husband.

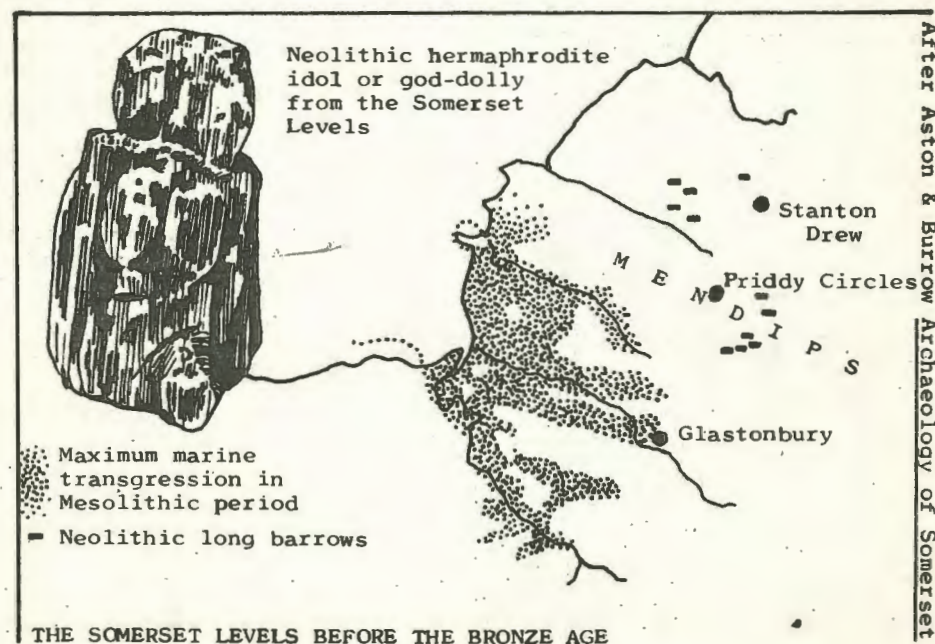
Once the secret of how impregnation occurs is out, all hell

breaks loose. The logic of the situation is simple genetics. Why should any male go hunting to support children, why should a male support a female who carries another man's heirs. At this point the male begins to demand a degree of ownership over the female, and female status starts a long downhill slide.

ARTHURIAN MYTH

It seems to me that Guinevere is classically in trouble at precisely such a time. The new rebel party finds her guilty of infidelity, led by Mordred whose inheritance is threatened should Guinevere give birth to an heir. Arthur, of the old party, doesn't see that infidelity is a crime or that it threatens anyone, but doesn't have much of an argument to protect her with.

The serpent who supposedly starts the last battle could be interpreted as the symbol of



THE SOMERSET LEVELS BEFORE THE BRONZE AGE

After Aston & Burrow Archaeology of Somerset

the women's secret lore. Since early days, snake poison has been used by midwives and doctors for its ability to cause abortion, ease birth and remove stubborn placentas. The poison of a specific group of snakes is very closely related to ergometrin, the modern obstetric drug. In the Greek female secret rites, ergot itself was used. Another side effect of the drug being the LSD effect of religious enlightenment. All these drugs of course closely mimic a brain chemical called serotonin which is why they work.

Time and again throughout the Arthurian myths we find women behaving loosely while the men behave demurely like young virgins. This fits a matriarchal society. Meanwhile all the problems of the Arthurian society seem to stem from having to cope with women. Women captured by dragons or evil knights. Galahad begot by stealth from Lancelot. The Green Knight's wife trying to seduce Gawain. Woman trouble all over.

GLASTONBURY TOR REBUILT

Well, in the long run we know who won, or we wouldn't be having women's lib today. What I am going to suggest here is that Mendip society, and more loosely the tribes around the Severn estuary, were at their political height during the last period in British history when society was truly matriarchal. That much of the Arthurian material stems from that time and concerns itself with the shift in power that then occurred. That the new patriarchal society formed itself far enough away in Wiltshire to be released from its age old dominance, but that it still paid lip service to the outward form of the old society despite the shift in power that had occurred within it. The Tor was rebuilt magically at Sil-

bury. The sitings of long barrows and the relative position of holy stream magically copied. The earth circles replaced by stone circles differently designed to serve different purposes.

This doesn't mean that the religion changed totally at this time. The outward forms were probably observed with, if anything, greater zeal than before. But the shift in power from priestess to priest, from Morgan to Merlin, was evident to those with open eyes. Morgan's Hill is on the western edge of Salisbury Plain. Merlin's hill on the other hand is right by Silbury, if we can credit the story that Marlborough derives its name anciently from Merlin. If that is so, then the perfect spiral mount, hidden under its mantle of trees within the grounds of Marlborough College, may well be one of the most fascinating manmade objects in Britain.

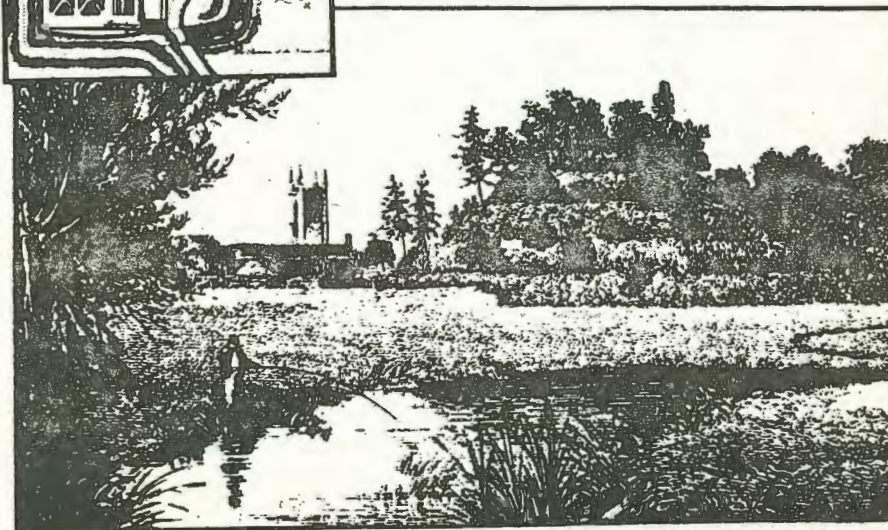
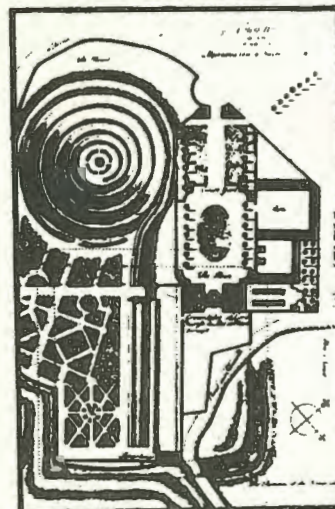
THE GLASS ISLAND

But with the change in power so the shift in emphasis and the legends of the glass island begin to fade into the mists of the Lady's Lake. The monuments of the Avebury-Stonehenge complex belonging to a later, and technically more advanced, society impress us more with their immediacy. They are obvious and large and hard not to notice. The society which inspired these achievements is smaller, older, and hard to find, and so remains uncredited.

Whatever was on the top of Glastonbury Tor was destroyed by Christians in their usual iconoclastic fashion in the sixth century, and not even topsoil from the period before that remains. I think myself that the top rings of the Tor were infilled with the scrapings and that a vertical trench on the

north side would reveal fascinating evidence of early Glastonbury and what role it played in Mendip society and, indeed, the world of the Severn estuary.

Very little work has been done in the Mendips, but when it is I believe that it will tend to show that there existed a society which gave birth to much of the Arthurian legends, and that Glastonbury is simply a rather obvious tip to a very much obscured iceberg.⁴



REFERENCES

1. Michael Dames The Silbury Treasure: the Great Goddess Rediscovered (Thames & Hudson 1976)
2. Rick Plewes "The sexual climate in the New Stone Age" Pendragon XIV, 4 (Old Stones edition, Autumn 1981) p 14
3. Ibid, 12-13
4. See also Rick Plewes "King Arthur in the Stone Age" Pendragon XIII, 1 p 17ff

* Below The River Kennett winds around Merlin's Mount, Marlborough. Left William Stukely visited the Mount in 1723 in the grounds of Lord Hertford's house; on his plan and drawings a gazebo is clearly shown on the top! Is it a Norman motte, or is the mound earlier?

ST JOSEPH COMES TO GLASTONBURY IVOR SNOOK

The story of St Joseph of Arimathea coming to Glastonbury in AD 63 is recounted in numerous early British and Welsh histories.

These appear to be based on two sources,

a history of Melkinus "who was before Merlin" and

a manuscript of a monk named Josephus at Glastonbury.

Both these were said to have been in the library at Glastonbury Abbey before the great fire of 1184.

The facts given vary from one history to another, but two which recur fairly frequently are:

first, that Joseph was sent to Britain by St Philip, and

second, that King Arviragus was not converted and that in fact few converts were made. The latter information accords with Gildas' statement that the gospel was received with lukewarm minds by the inhabitants.

GAUL

However, let us take a rather more practical look at some of the legends.

The stories of the Three Maries and others being set adrift in a boat without oars and finally drifting ashore near Marseilles may be apocryphal, and yet there can be no doubt that a group of Christians did land near the mouth of the river Rhone, and gradually made their way up the Rhone valley, preaching as they went. Records indicate Lazarus at Marseilles; St. Mary Magdalene at St. Maximin, St. Martha at Tarascon; St. Zaccaeus at Rocamadour etc.

Interestingly, St Josephus is mentioned as being with them,

although apparently not as a principal, but simply a companion. He was at Marseilles with St Lazarus and with Zaccaeus and Martial at Limoges and Rocamadour. Eventually he reached Morlaix in northern Brittany, for here he converted one St Drennalus who became bishop of Treguier in AD 72.

And here we come to the pervasive tin trade connection, for Joseph was following in reverse the route by which tin from Britain was carried overland to the Mediterranean. As "nobilis decurio" he would almost certainly have known of the route even if he had not used it previously.

It seems very possible that from the start Joseph had formed the intention of preaching to the distant Britons. He knew the route, he knew something of the people themselves, and may well have known enough of their language at least to serve the needs of simple pilgrims.

It is said that he was assigned to Britain by St. Philip, but there is a certain amount of controversy as to whether St. Philip was ever in Gaul. But Joseph was with the disciples including St. Philip before he left the Holy Land, and may have mentioned his project to St. Philip and received his approval then.

So from Marseilles he joined any disciples moving northwards, stayed with them until he could join someone going still further north, and so gradually reached Morlaix. No more is heard of him in France, so it would seem that he took ship from thereabouts to Britain. The legends say he was accompan-

ied by his son and ten other companions, but I find no records of them before he reached Britain.

BRITAIN

By most accounts their reception was lukewarm. The Britons had the reputation of always being ready to talk to strangers and hear the news they brought, so they may already have heard something about this new religion, and also that it had been horribly put down in Rome. However, these pilgrims seemed peaceable, and only asked for somewhere to live and follow their religion.

So King Arviragus granted them a largish area of what was probably rather poor land, probably admonishing them to observe the laws and cause no disturbance, and left them to their own devices. They made themselves huts in which to live, and then a church in which to worship.

They certainly wished to convert the inhabitants to the Christian faith, and it seems that they did travel short distances into the surrounding area and preach the gospel. However, they were not very successful; perhaps the language problem was too great, or perhaps their preaching was not very convincing.

Varying dates are given for Joseph's death, but a few years before or after AD 76 would appear to be correct. The suggested age of 90 years would make him 77 at the time of his arrival. He is said to have been accompanied by his son, and it would be likely that if he brought with him a company of eleven others that some of them would be much younger than Joseph. We can imagine therefore that it would be some years after AD 100 before all the original members were dead. After that there may have been descendants and converts who

maintained some kind of Christian worship, and preserved, either through reverence or fear, the famous church, and did that, it must not be forgotten, in a country which was otherwise entirely pagan. But preserved it was until a Christian mission once again reached Britain.

THE CHURCH AND RELICS



The Wattle Church.

The church erected by Joseph is variously described as wooden, timber, wattled, hurdle, or of twisted wattles.

Yet all these must mean the same thing, and would do so if the description was simply extended to "wattle and daub". This was a common method of building among primitive peoples and would have been known to the Celts of Britain.

First a framework of straight trunks of saplings would be used to make the frame; these would be interspersed with thinner members; and then the whole interwoven with willows or osiers making a sort of basket-work (the wattles).

Clay would then be puddled and applied (daubed) all over the basket-work.

The roof would probably have been treated in like manner and then turves or reeds added to allow water to run off.

All the materials would have been at hand, and the only

tools needed would have been adzes and spades. Here again, if Joseph had some knowledge of ship construction he would have been able to advise on building the timber frame. Such a building would survive for a very long time, and although rain and storm might sometimes wash away the clay covering it could easily be replaced whenever necessary.

After the decline of the first Christian community, the church would have deteriorated, and no doubt was in a very poor state when discovered by the next Christians to arrive at Glastonbury. Yet it was destined to become the fabulous and revered "Old Church", the Vetusta Ecclesia. There are two possible reasons for this.

For the first we must go forward some sixty years to the arrival of Faganus and Deruvianus at Glastonbury, sent to Britain by the Pope in response to a plea from King Lucius. They believed that they were going to a pagan land where the gospel of the Lord was unknown, but when they got there, wonder of wonders, there was a Christian church already there. No one seemed to know how or when it was erected. Here then, they thought, is a church miraculously provided for us in advance, provided by the hand of God himself. And because the early church loved miracles, the story would have circulated quickly to all the other Christian lands.

But there could have been another reason for its fame. The bishops of Britain for over 1000 years claimed priority over the bishops of Europe on the grounds that this country received the Gospel of Christ before they did.

Now this was obviously not so, for it was preached at Rome,

and up the Rhone valley, and less certainly in Spain, before Joseph could have reached Britain. But could it be that more enquiries in the Glastonbury area discovered the history of St. Joseph and his church, and then the idea arose that this had been the very first church of God erected anywhere in Europe?

When Joseph came to Britain, the Christians in Rome were meeting secretly in sympathisers' houses, and sometimes even in the catacombs. Up the Rhone valley the apostles lived in caves and grottoes, less frequently in a convert's house, and they preached in the market places, or set up crosses or portable altars and preached from those. For them churches of their own were a thing of the future, but in Britain there was already a church.

The key word here is probably "received". At the Council of Sienna in 1424 the Dean of Compostella in refuting the English claim said that it was based "on their more ancient reception of the Christian faith". Was the English claim that although the Gospel had been preached earlier in other lands it was England which first had a Christian community, supported by a grant of land, and with its very own church of God? That is to say that the Gospel was not merely preached here, but actually received and adopted.

RELICS

Now to consider the holy relics which it is claimed Joseph brought with him.

The Glastonbury tradition holds strongly to the story of two small vessels containing some of the sweat and blood of the Lord, and these are always referred to as cruets. The early

British histories however usually refer to them as white and silver flasks, but both accounts agree that there were two small vessels of a somewhat similar nature. These were apparently buried with Joseph after he died, and after a number of removals were probably stolen at the dissolution of the monastery.

Every church and monastery in early days claimed to have some holy relics of Our Lord, and this tale of two vessels may sound like another apocryphal legend, but there is much of a practical nature which could support the story. Of all the persons around Our Lord at the time of the crucifixion Joseph was the one person who had the opportunity to obtain the blood and sweat because he was the one who had the body carried into the sepulchre. There, during washing and cleansing of the body, and furthermore in secrecy, Joseph could have collected the holy fluids. Then it would be a prudent action to place them in some kind of small stoppered flask, on the one hand to preserve them, and on the other hand because should there be further persecution from the Romans such flasks could be easily hidden, or as easily transported in case of flight. In the event when Joseph went to Europe the flasks could have been carried in his pouch or scrip, or even hidden in his clothing.

I cannot believe the Grail stories of a large, valuable, and ornate metal dish or salver. For one thing I do not think the poor disciples would have had such a dish on their table at the Last Supper. Again, had they made use of such a vessel there would certainly have been an outcry and search had someone taken it away. In fact it would have been a foolhardy action to

make use of it because it would have been recognisable and difficult to hide and transport. A poor pilgrim carrying such a valuable object would have been in constant danger from robbers.

Nevertheless he may well have had a less valuable keepsake from the Last Supper, for one of the British histories says that Joseph brought with him "a vessel appointed to the service of the most holy guests". That suggests a vessel actually used by a guest, and could well have been a simple wooden bowl such as was in general use at that time. Carried by Joseph it would have aroused no interest, for most pilgrims probably had a similar vessel for their own use. There is evidence of a vessel of that type actually being preserved at Glastonbury, and in 1539 being smuggled out and transferred to Strata Florida in Wales. It came into the possession of the Powell family of Nanteos, and was described as a simple, wooden bowl, worn with age. Unfortunately it is no longer there.

*

"When did Joseph arrive in Britain?" This article will be concluded in the next issue...



The Joseph of Arimathea Legend

Sam Brewster



The earliest traditions about the church at Glastonbury are that Philip sent missionaries to Britain from Gaul to found it (William of Malmesbury, ca 1125).

The book *Joseph d'Arimathie* by Robert de Boron (about 1200)--whose main character is Joseph of Arimathea because it adapts the *Gospel of Nicodemus*--though it is the only medieval work in which the Grail is a CUP, speaks of neither Joseph of Arimathea or the Grail coming to Glastonbury, only that one Petrus is sent on to the "Vaus d'Avaron" (probably Glastonbury) to await Perceval the son of Alain; also Bron the Fisher King is sent "into the west" with the Grail.

The Abbey at Glastonbury finally accepted a version of the story in which Joseph of Arimathea had been sent by Philip to Glastonbury with two CRUETS: one carrying the blood, the other the sweat, of Jesus. These cruets appear on the "arms of St Joseph" in Meare and Langport churches in Somerset dated the 15th century.

An early tradition (see *Somerset Folklore* by R L Tongue, under "The Holy Thorn") says that when Joseph planted his staff a

WALNUT tree grew. There is a 16th century poem mentioning the Thorn at Glastonbury which flowers at Christmas and Easter (it is still there) but WITHOUT MENTIONING JOSEPH. In an 18th century chap-book, Joseph of Arimathea is described as coming to Glastonbury and planting his staff, whereupon it flowered as the Glastonbury Thorn, WITHOUT A MENTION OF THE GRAIL.

In the 19th century, Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* established the tradition that the Grail was a CUP. Later, Major Tudor Pole claimed to have discovered the Grail (a chalice) at a well in Glastonbury which he named Chalice Well. The chalice has since disappeared.

There is now established a tradition that Joseph of Arimathea not only founded the church at Glastonbury, but also planted the Thorn and brought there the Grail in the form of a chalice.

I might add that I myself believe the church at Glastonbury was founded in the first century, but not by Joseph of Arimathea, and that it was round and made of wattle. I believe the Thorn may have been brought by a Crusader.

* We regret to announce the death, last year, in tragic circumstances, of Sam Brewster, and send condolences to his family and friends. We have several articles of his in hand, and hope to publish a few of them as circumstances allow. *Illustration* Bronze bowl from Glastonbury lake village, after Arthur Bulleid, $4\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter, $3\frac{1}{8}$ " in deep.

holy blood at glastonbury

Chris Lovegrove

"For Joseph hath with him in his sarcophagus two cruets, white and silver, filled with blood and sweat of the Prophet Jesus...."

Thus runs part of the so-called *Prophecy of Melkin* quoted first by John of Glastonbury in the late fourteenth century. In about 1502 a poem mentioned the belief that Joseph was able to collect the blood of Jesus which had fallen on the saint's chest as Christ's body was taken down from the cross (but without mentioning the sweat). This is the core of the legends which in time were elaborated into tales of the grail in the isle of Avalon.¹

Why did the story of the Holy Blood become attracted to Glastonbury? After all, the abbey seems eventually to have claimed one or two of the Saviour's hairs, threads from His seamless coat, seven portions of the Cross, a spine from the Crown of Thorns, drops of Our Lady's milk etc etc.² And other places already claimed relics of the Holy Blood, including Fécamp in Normandy and Bruges in Flanders.

The existence of Fécamp's relic was due to Nicodemus scraping off some dried blood from Christ's body with a knife. The knife and blood, placed in leaden tubes, found their way in a floating tree trunk to Fécamp, and the story came to light about 1170.³ As Ashe points out, Glastonbury is unlikely to have been influenced by this version of the Holy Blood.

Bruges' relic was brought to Flanders by Thierry d'Alsace and an escort of Templars in the 12th century; and it is

claimed that it served as a model for the grail in Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval* of about 1180.⁴ Together with the phial of blood collected by our old friend Joseph was another of the water used to wash the body of Christ, both shown carved in stone on the wall of a crypt in Bruges.



Though the Bruges relic is connected with Joseph, the motivation for Glastonbury's appropriation of the legend is more likely to come from nearer home; from Hailes Abbey in Gloucestershire in fact. The fame of Hailes' relic in the late Middle Ages was such that Chaucer's Pardoner was able to swear "by the blode of Christ that is in Hayles", and locals could boast a saying: "as sure as God's in Gloucestershire".

At about the time that Joseph's connection with Glastonbury was first committed to writing (in a late edition of William of Malmesbury) Richard Earl of Cornwall, the richest man in England and the main builder of the castle of Tintagel, led the 1240 crusade to the Holy Land. Two years later, fearful of shipwreck off the Scillies, he vowed to build an abbey should

he be saved; and in 1251 his brother Henry III, Queen Eleanor, fourteen bishops, several abbots and nobles, and 300 knights witnessed the consecration of Hailes Abbey.

In 1270, Richard's son Edmund brought one-third of a relic of Holy Blood to Hailes, authenticated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem (later Urban IV). After a great fire in 1271 Richard rebuilt the east end of the shrine in greater splendour and many miracles took place there.

After a time stories went round that the relic was not genuine but duck's blood which was renewed annually. The number of pilgrims tailed off and by the middle of the 15th century the abbey was in a poor state. Glastonbury meanwhile had been doing well and, on the basis of its Joseph connection, had claimed precedence at various church synods and international Councils in the early 15th century.

Hailes picked up again in popularity in the late 15th century through the granting of papal indulgences to its pilgrims, but its days were numbered. At the Dissolution in 1539 the relic was examined by Bishop Latimer and the Commissioners. It was enclosed "within a round Beryl", garnished and bound with silver "being within a little glass". Latimer (formerly vicar of a nearby parish) wrote to Thomas Cromwell: "We have been boulding and sifting the blood of Hayles all this forenoon. And verily it seemeth to be an unctuous gum and compound of many things." The conclusion was that it was honey coloured with saffron, and the glistening red tint was due to the glass. The relic was publicly destroyed at Paul's Cross in London.⁵

Joseph of Arimathea had, at

least by the 13th century, become associated with Glastonbury. But before Joseph's two cruets had put in an appearance, Hailes Abbey had acquired its small glass vase of blood--or unctuous gum. Is it too much to suspect that Glastonbury may have taken steps to attract the flow of pilgrims away from Hailes with the "discovery" of the obscure Prophecy of Melkin by John of Glastonbury?

We may add that, despite at least one search in the 14th century, Joseph's body (and the cruets) was never found, and after the Dissolution one monkish account even had it that he may even have been buried at Hamden Hill near Montacute in Somerset and not at Glastonbury. One final postscript: there is a story of Edward Kelley, the associate of John Dee, the Elizabethan magus. This recounts that he was given two ivory caskets containing red and white powder taken from the tomb of a (?) bishop when Glastonbury Abbey had been destroyed. The powders were said to have been alchemical... Another miraculous compound?

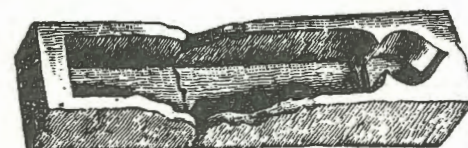
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GLASTONBURY · WELLS · WOOKEY HOLE SID BIRCHBY

THE ESSENCE OF GLASTONBURY lies in its sombre history as the scene of an ancient crime. When Henry 8th despoiled its Benedictine abbey in 1539, the severed head of the last abbot was impaled over the gateway as a visible sign that spiritual power was in new hands, and indeed the crime was much more than judicial murder. Richard Whiting died on the Tor with two of his monks in a blasphemous parody of Calvary, sacrificial victims of a brutal Closing Ritual for the age of faith. Thenceforth, the monarch was to be the spiritual arbiter.



Small wonder that, to some people, the town feels burnt-out, as if it has lost its soul. Countless attempts to breathe new life into old ashes have failed to produce any flames but at the most a few gleams of esoteric light, short-lived, thin and bodiless, with an eerie Astral look about them.

"The place has got a very odd (and to me, unpleasant) atmosphere. Too many people have tried to perform rites there, and the aura is very confused and nasty these days." (The editress of Quest in a personal letter, 1972.)

The enormity of the crime! Glastonbury is possibly the site of the first Christian church in England, whether or not the Joseph of Arimathea

legend is true, for there were certainly Christians in late Romano-British times elsewhere (the Roman villa at Lullingstone in Kent has a Christian chapel) and the town was a focal point of Irish missionary work in the post-Roman period. In a 9th century text, it is called "Glastimber of the Goidels" (ie Irish) and several Irish saints, including St Patrick, are reputedly buried there. There is, in short, good reason to think that Glastonbury was a Christian holy place in Roman times, and possibly the earliest one in Britain.

But the Celtic version of Christianity was not that of Rome. When St Augustine landed on the Isle of Thanet in 596 to convert the heathen (and vigorously propelled from the rear by Pope Gregory) he found that he also had to contend with a native Church claiming to be older and holier than his own. Ultimately, the Roman creed won the struggle. The records talk of trivialities such as the date of Easter and how monks should shave their heads, but the differences were never fully resolved. To this day, Glastonbury is a covertly Celtic town which in the past was never fully orthodox in its religious beliefs, and it has paid the price.

WELLS

Things are different down the road at Wells, where a certain Bond Street style to its shopping centre contrasts painfully with Glastonbury's faintly seedy image. Wells is up-market, as the estate-agents' prices show, and its tourists are richer. Wells is fat-cat in the sense of Braga in Northern

Portugal, another prosperous, conservative and Church-dominated city, and even more so. In Braga, the Church owns most places of entertainment, including the cinemas.

The key assets of Wells are that it has a cathedral and is a city, two status-symbols which are due to a religious alliance with the influential city of Bath. Its bishop is the bishop of BATH and Wells. One dividend has been that Henry 8th's asset-strippers left the cathedral alone and that the collective spirit of place has survived and thrived.



The earliest historical record of Wells says that King Ina of Wessex built a church there in 704 and brought four priests from Glastonbury to hold the services. Apparently, there was no existing Christian community and perhaps no civil one. His church was near a spring now called St Andrew's Well which may well have been a pagan site with a few custodians, but otherwise Wells as an inhabited place does not seem to have an earlier history.

The transplant was successful. Divine service has been held on Ina's site ever since, without

a break, and Wells has not had the traumatic breaks in its collective psyche that Glastonbury experienced.

SCHISMS

Perhaps the new start away from religious schisms made all the difference. Glastonbury tried to break away from its Celtic past, but failed miserably. When the ancient wattle church of St Joseph was (conveniently) burnt down in 1184, the Benedictines rebuilt their abbey. It fell in 1539, as we have seen. The church on the Tor dedicated to St Michael was wrecked in 1275 by a severe earthquake. Something went wrong.

We need not assume divine displeasure, although it's a nice idea. In the 12th century, King Henry 2nd encouraged what we now term Arthuriana as a political move against his French feudal overlord, and one result was the alleged discovery at Glastonbury of the tomb of Arthur and Guinevere. This was possibly a monkish device to attract pilgrims and money for the building projects after the 1184 fire (see Leslie Alcock Arthur's Britain) and "the first step to further claims about Joseph and the Grail". Yet such claims had existed for a long time and if the Abbots chose to endorse them, it was at their own risk. The tales of Arthur, Joseph, the Grail and the Holy Thorn all imply that Britain was Christian long before Augustine arrived, which of course it was. But they were schismatic and by encouraging them the abbots sealed its own fate. Politically unreliable: guilty by association.

WOOKEY HOLE

Like Wells, Glastonbury had its pre-Christian holy spring, now called the Chalice Well, where some say the Grail was hidden

for a time. There is little to say about the spring's early history, whereas the neighbourhood of Wells, though not the town itself, is mentioned in early records. The pre-Christian centre for the district was some 5 km. distant at Wookey Hole, well-known to modern tourists for its caverns, and also to earlier visitors. If you had lived under the Roman Empire and also been in Britain you would probably have visited the Great Cave of Wookey, given the chance, and thrown a coin into its waters. The late Dr H. E. Balch of Wells Museum, with whom I have worked, found coins dated between 120 BC and 392 AD, which spans most of the Romano-British period, allowing for some meanie with his ancient denarius dated much earlier.

The main cave at Wookey must have been on the Empire tourist route, for the 2nd century scholar Clement of Alexandria wrote:

"Those who have composed histories say that in Britain is a certain cave at the side of a mountain, and at the entrance, a gap. When the wind blows into the cave and is drawn on into the bosom of the interior, a sound is heard as of the clashing of numerous cymbals." Such noises, though more like the "water-hammer" in domestic plumbing, occur in Wookey Cave and nowhere else in Britain, so far as I know.

In the cave lived a witch whom Arthur slew, or at least Wookey is the most likely place (see the legend of Kulhwch and Olwen). A fragment in the Black Book of Carmarthen expands the story:

"Though Arthur was playing,
the blood was dripping,
a-fighting with a hag;
He slew Pen-Palach
in Awarnach's hall,
in the tasks of Dissethach."

Alas for legend! The bones of Wookey's witch, now in Wells Museum, are those of a young woman who died ca 400 AD. Nearby were found two stalagmitic bosses resembling an old woman and her dog, a crystal ball, and the remains of two goats tied to stumps. As often happens, the truth is more pathetic than fiction.

Wookey's Arthurian context tends to be overshadowed by Glastonbury. Yet the tale of Kulhwch and Olwen is thought to be the earliest Welsh story we have, and it contains elements from the very dawn of Celtic myth. If it does not allude to Wookey Hole, then where else?

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* In The Avalonian Guide (8th edition 1839) the north-east corner of the abbey ruins was "called THE HAUNTED CORNER, from an ancient tradition still prevalent, relating to an ABBOT'S HEAD, and implying that supernatural sounds, resembling the roaring of a furnace, are frequently heard in a recess... In the year 1792, when the ground... was levelled, a free-stone coffin was discovered... just beneath the recess before mentioned, containing a skeleton, entire, EXCEPTING THE SKULL... A hollow roaring sound, resembling the reverberations of a conch shell, may still occasionally be heard in the recess." The illustration above was "an exact representation" of the coffin.

GLASTONBURY. pat havill AND OTHER CASTLES OF GLASS



ver the years historians and archaeologists have performed etymological contortions in trying to explain the meaning of the name Glastonbury. Isle of Avalon, "Isle of Apples" is a front runner in popularity, so is the idea that it is derived from a member of a ruling family in the area. But the one which I should like to consider is its derivation from the Welsh Ynnis-Witryn, crystal or glass isle. According to Lionel Smithett Lewis in his book St Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury, it is not strictly correct to pronounce the "t" in Glastonbury, and the spelling should be Glassenbury, which very conveniently coincides with the usual interpretation of Ynnis-Witryn. His explanation is that the "en" in Glassenbury is ynnis or ennis, and Glassen a muddled corruption with the Saxon bury tacked on.

There are, of course, instances of "genuine" glass castles. At least there are reports of a process of vitrification which was probably brought about by accident, because in many of the fortified camps where it is found it is only in isolated portions of the ramparts. Nevertheless, there remains the possibility that later builders copied the results of an accidental occurrence by artificial means, in order to consolidate their ramparts. However, the

technical side of this argument I leave to the archaeologists; my interest is in the mythological and literary sources.

The Spoils of Annwn is one of the oldest Welsh tales. It embodies a very ancient tradition concerning a raid by warriors in ships on an island fortress of glass, watchmen who will not reply when called, and a fatal ending for all but one shipload. The tradition of a fortress or palace of glass on an island seems to have been very well known to the Welsh as there are many references to such a place, and therefore to the Arthurian romancers who used Welsh material transmitted by Breton conteurs.

ISLE DE VERRE

One of the many legends of Glastonbury concerns the abduction of Arthur's queen, Guinevere, by Melwas, King of the Summer Country. Put very briefly, he imprisons her at Glastonbury, Arthur is apparently delayed for a year while he raises an army to go in pursuit, and in the ensuing siege of Glastonbury, Gildas is instrumental in obtaining the release of Guinevere. This simple tale holds much Celtic mythology and tradition if one cares to delve deeply enough.

The basic story as recorded in the Vita Gildae of Caradoc of Llancarfan is one of the few Welsh saints' lives which is sympathetic with the popular view of Arthur (all the more surprising as it concerns Gildas). Later French romance added much more. The story of Guinevere's abduction is clearly cognate with Chrétien de Troyes' famous romance; Caradoc's Maelwas is Chrétien's

Meleagant. It is also clear that Chrétien's description of Maheloa's "isle de verre" in Erec, an elysian isle where there is never any storm or winter, is anticipated by Caradoc's making Maelwas king of an "aestiva regio", and of Glastonbury, interpreted as the Saxon equivalent of the Welsh Ynnis-Witryn.

Chrétien lived at the court of the Counts of Champagne in eastern France, but his poems are based on Celtic tales which were already in circulation. However, his Arthurian stories deal with the adventures of the knights of Arthur's court, while Arthur himself is largely relegated to the background. He was the first writer whose work has survived to mention Camelot, Lancelot and the love affair between Lancelot and Guinevere (which does not mean to say that they were his brain-child).

ISLE DE VOIRRE

The Otherworld and mythical nature of Glastonbury runs through all the stories. It is identified with the "Insula Vitrea" of Caradoc of Llancarfan, and preserved in medieval romance by Chrétien in Erec where Maheloa is "the lord of the Island of Glass". And since Maheloa is generally conceded to be identical with Meleagant in his Chevalier de la Charette, the land of Goirre, of which Meleagant is lord (together with his father) and which can be only approached by bridges over or under water, is doubtless also the "Isle de Voirre", disguised by the scribal substitution of "g" for "v".

Maelwas is King of the Summer Country. The antagonism and annual combat between Winter and Summer is ritualised in much Welsh folklore and in some versions it is represented as a struggle for the love of a

lady. In Kulwch and Olwen Arthur is again engaged in the rescue of a wife, this time Creiddylad, wife of Gwythyr ap Greidylaw (Victor, son of Scorching, an emotive name in this context) who has been abducted by Gwynn ap Nudd, King of Annwn (the Celtic Otherworld) and carried to his home, which later Welsh tradition localised at Glastonbury. Arthur intervenes and decrees that the two rivals should fight for Creiddylad every kalen Mei, first of May. The story in the Vita Gildae is obviously a variant of this.

Again, Chrétien's Meleagant is prince of the water-girdled land of Goirre. He, like Maelwas, abducts Arthur's queen, and she remains inviolate through the intervention of King Baudemaguz. After three indecisive battles Lancelot and Meleagant finally meet in a meadow green and fresh in all seasons and beside a stream.

Finally, in Irish legend the same basic theme surfaces in connection with the hero Finn. In this Finn pursues and captures a hind, who, once inside his fortress, becomes a beautiful girl named Sadv. She tells him that she was bewitched by the Black Druid, whose spells do not work inside Finn's fortress. Finn marries her, but when he is obliged to go away the Black Druid disguises himself as Finn and entices Sadv from her sanctuary. Once outside she becomes a hind again. This legend has a profound resemblance to the oldest Arthurian material, in which he pursues his wife to the Otherworld.

SOVEREIGNTY

For behind all these stories is the belief in Guinevere as the personification of the sovereignty of Britain, and she possesses a fairy-like quality

in the early tales which she loses in the 12th and 13th century romances. Nowhere are we told of her origins, and even her name varies. In the Lancelot in Prose she is the daughter of King Leodogran; the Welsh Triads have Arthur married to three successive wives all called Gwenhwyfar, while Geoffrey of Monmouth calls her Guennevra.

The Arthur of the medieval tradition is no heroic figure, but a mocked and cuckolded king, whose wife symbolises true sovereignty according to the Celtic belief, and she is often taken from him by her lovers. For Guinevere is a lady who has many lovers besides the weak-willed Sir Lancelot, and seems to be constantly abducted and held prisoner. In her attitude to Sir Lancelot, particularly in Chevalier de la Charrette, Guinevere displays the qualities of an absolute sovereign. She is tyrannical, abuses her authority and makes her own decisions, and the unfortunate Sir Lancelot stands ready to act on the slightest whim of his chosen mistress. As the ruling and instructing force in her particular world it is right that every man should obey her.

The idea of a woman wielding so much power would be unthinkable in the medieval world, and so Guinevere had to be "watered down" into the symbol of courtly love which the troubadours sang. Pagan ideas had to be overlain by christianity, and adultery given a "respectable" veneer.

So that in order to hold the sovereignty of Britain as personified by Guinevere, Arthur had to be content with the onslaught of those seeking to wrest it from him, and his enemies were both human and

from the Otherworld. By this concept the Black Druid in the story of Finn is just like Maelwas or Meleagant. Guinevere comes from the Otherworld to marry the man worthy to assume the responsibility of sovereignty; but the god from the Otherworld continues his watch, waiting to re-assert his rights and take her back to his own fortress, the kingdom of Gairre or the Fortress of Glass, which is, perhaps, only to be found in the Celtic forest.

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* This illustration and that on page 3, are "two emblematic representations in pannels of sculptured stone" over the west door of St Michael's tower on the Tor, from The Avalonian Guide (1839).

St Michael is shown with the balance ready to weigh the souls at their judgement. Satan is attempting--unsuccessfully it seems--to tip the balance in his favour!

EINSTEIN'S avalon



In his 1962 Halley Lecture at Oxford on Physics and Cosmology Prof. H. Bondi made the point that because he was addressing a very distinguished audience, whatever his subject somebody present would know more about it than he did. He therefore proposed to discuss only those things he DIDN'T know--thus avoiding embarrassment. There's prudent!

So I will NOT talk of Glastonbury's mission, tradition, sacred geometry, ley lines and traffic warden mortality rate, but discuss instead something I know nothing about--the source of its magic and magnetism.

Unlike Pendragon members, scientists have little REAL understanding of the world's mysteries, but when they indulge in mind-blowing speculations about the nature of physical reality--because their intellects and instruments can come up with no sober alternatives--it may be worth listening to them. If we have to abandon common sense--so what? Einstein called this "a deposit of prejudices laid down in the mind prior to the age of eighteen."

Thus Prof. John Wheeler, leading authority on Relativity, postulates a "superspace of many dimensions which contain limitless doppelgangers of ourselves behaving in every conceivable way (how DARE he!); a region of reversed or multi-dimensional time--accessible (in theory) through black holes in our own space. (According to Arthur Koestler this concept is now acquiring "academic respectability".)

Prof David Bohm of Birkbeck College talks of an "implicate order" from which events manifest in the visible world. Matter, he believes, does not move but APPEARS to do so by ceasing to exist in one place and being recreated next moment and elsewhere--the implicate world providing the necessary continuity. (Shades of Zeno's Arrow!)

Dr Rupert Sheldrake of Cambridge--in his book A New Science of Life--proposes morphogenetic (form-creating) fields which shape matter and mind and, in turn, are shaped by them. Causation cannot be found in genes, DNA molecules, atoms or electrons, so we are forced to seek formative factors elsewhere.

The morphogenetic fields transcend the physical world and could well link the abstract with the actual; the ponderable with the potential. Sheldrake sees them as akin to the collective unconscious of Carl Jung with its dynamic archetypes and symbols.

COINCIDENCES

Which brings us to Jung's concept of synchronicity, worked out in collaboration with Nobel Prize-winning physicist Wolfgang Pauli. Synchronicity postulates acausal influences res-

EDDIE TOOKE

possible for coincidences--the coming-together in space and time of analogical events, disparate but possessing a similarity of pattern, sometimes of a punning nature.

I noted three such cases recently.

1. The figure of the PHOENIX in the controversial Glastonbury Zodiac discussed by Katherine Maltwood dips its beak into the Chalice Well--the chalybeate spring of clear water on the slopes of the Tor. Now "the clear water" in Gaelic is fionn-uisge which was corrupted into Phoenix in the Dublin park of that name containing a chalybeate spring!

2. In Patrick Meredith's book, Learning, Remembering and Knowing (to which I referred while writing this informative treatise), he mentions two world-famous neurologists--Sir Henry HEAD and Sir Russell BRAIN (no Michael FOOT or Patrick MacNEE you notice).

3. On a recent BBC Top Secret programme, one contestant was a chap who had ruptured himself while reaching across a Scrabble board to complete the word "hernia"! Obviously a Cosmic Clown is at work! Anyway, such correspondences are believed to happen far too often to be attributable to chance.

RESONANCE

But how does synchronicity operate?

The most likely "explanation" may be that analogical items produce similar morphogenetic fields which in turn--by "morphic resonance" as Sheldrake calls it--draw the items together. So we can see a reason for the magnetic appeal of Glastonbury and Arthur. With their multiplicity of associations and attributes they have a large number of similar mor-

phogenetic fields which reinforce each other synchronistically and enormously increase their dynamic effect.

The process is very much like that of learning: schemas (units or patterns of mind) gain in power through diversity of application. Meredith, in fact, says schemas are "the basis of all analogies ... The more often each schema is used in a new way the stronger it becomes." Schemas, like morphogenetic fields, are not at all parochial--they cheerfully lend a hand outside their own immediate province. Form resonates with form, uniting things which have no CAUSAL relationship.

MEMORIES

Cause and effect in the physical world--the gift to science of Hobbes and Newton--is, in fact, "breaking down"--to quote Prof Bronowski. "Order and symmetry," says physicist Walter Thirring, "must be sought in the underlying field." In fact the field, according to Einstein, "is the only reality." (Though as he refers elsewhere to a "world of things existing as real objects", perhaps Einstein too was talking of something he didn't know about!)

So why are Pendragonists attracted by places and themes like Glastonbury and the Arthurian saga? (Anyone who says it is because the word "Pendragon" can be derived from the Cornish pendra "village" and goon "idiot" will be excommunicated personally by Kate Pollard. Or something equally drastic.) It could be that because of environment, upbringing, character quirks, past lives, or just "chance" encounters with the genre we enter into harmony with past and present thought-forms and events--by Sheldrake's morphic resonance.

An initial inclination is alone necessary. Once we tune in, feed-back from the fields does the rest, stimulating our ideas and emotions which then re-impress the fields and add to their variety and potency. They may even link our present selves to our own past states (Sheldrake's idea) or to our FUTURE states (MY idea, fool that I am) reinforcing our memories--not to mention our manias!

What is intriguing in all this is the notion that ideas, legends and memories originating in Arthur's time and before may still be around exerting a direct influence on our minds--and not merely in the form of ancient writings. Sheldrake talks of memories being stored, not in our heads but in the universal field. Joseph of Arimathea's thoughts or--if he never really came to Glastonbury--thoughts of Joseph in the minds of later generations of monks may be hovering here and now in the field, waiting to impinge on our minds when we tune in. Bligh Bond's communicators are alleged to have told him something of the sort when helping to guide his oft-criticized but highly productive excavations at the Abbey in the early 1900s.

RETROACTIVE EFFECTS

Past influences disturb the future. Conversely, however, according to the frankly startling concepts of Dr Evan Harris



ARTHURIAN LEG ENDS

Walker, future actions may affect the past: our attraction to Glastonbury may be due to events and associations YET TO OCCUR--a form of eteleology perhaps. Walker is a quantum theorist--hence his shocking ideas. As the great Niels Bohr said: anybody who isn't shocked by quantum theory hasn't understood it!

Morphogenetic fields could be the carriers of Walker's retroactive effect because they have an infinite and eternal aspect--like Wheeler's superspace and Bohm's implicate order. Bohm developed his theory of "Wholeness and the Implicate Order" (the title of his book) as a result of the Einstein-Podolski-Rosen (EPR) Paradox which notes that interactions between separated objects that were once in contact continue to take place in a manner which apparently defies physical laws. So if we once knew Arthur or dwelt in Glastonbury in a past life... Yes: you've got the message!

UNTHINKABLE

Alternatively our unconscious minds may enter Wheeler's superspace and sample its time-transcending contents. Who knows? Time has been deposed.

Says science-writer Timothy Ferris in The Red Limit (a book approved by Prof Carl Sagan) "things generate time, not the reverse", while our own Sir Fred Hoyle does not go along with "the idea of time as an ever-rolling stream." (Which proves, if nothing else, that Hoyle and water don't mix.)

Then there's Prof Herman Weyl who says mysteriously: "Events do not happen, we simply come across them"--which must also prove something or other, but heaven knows what. (God! How did I get myself into this?)

Now David Bohm affirms the interaction of the "observer" with the "observed system" (which the Vedantists knew, several thousand years ago) and the late Dr Kit Pedler talked of the "fundamental unity and inseparability of all things". Says Pedler: "If information can be exchanged between objects with no measurable connection which are separate in space--as happens in the EPR effect--then there is no reason at all why information should not also be exchanged between human beings who are separate in space and who also have no measurable connection."

Given the Einstein/Minkowski equivalence of space and time one sees again that a magnetic attraction may take place between individuals and places separated not just in space but in TIME too, where the right conditions are fulfilled. Another intriguing thought: is Arthur--or one of his doppelgangers--influencing us here and now from a Wheeler-type retarded-time parallel world linked with our modern one via "worm-holes in quantised space", worm-holes barred to matter to matter but penetrable by mind? (Yes, your Majesty, I'm writing it down just as you dictate: it won't be MY fault if Chris doesn't print it. Ouch! Go easy with Excalibur, will you?)

Far-fetched? Possibly. But physicist Fritjof Capra sees future developments as "transcending the realms of thought and language; leading out of science and into the world of ... the unthinkable."

UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE

Well, I did warn you I was going to discuss something I knew nothing about. The Dark Age uncertainty that hides Arthur and Glastonbury's origin has its counterpart in the modern dark age in science which has suc-



ceeded the "enlightenment" of Newtonian physics:

Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night:
God said: "Let Newton be!"
and all was light.

(Alexander Pope)

It did not last: the Devil howling "Ho!
Let Einstein be!" restored the status quo.

(Sir John Squire)

Let's be honest and admit it: Jung/Pauli's synchronicity and such-like notions are not everybody's cup of tea. Nevertheless the same Pauli's Exclusion Principle (a "very general and elusive thing") is regarded as a corner-stone of modern science. Koestler asks: "Could it be that telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, psychokinesis and meaningful coincidences are merely DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS ... OF THE SAME UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE?"

Not that we should blow our minds, of course. There are special places reserved for people like my friend Dr Tavas Coth, who, bitten by the syn-

chronicity bug, noticed the resemblance between the Cornish logosen (mouse) and the Greek logos (the Word) and spent the rest of his etymological career teaching Greek to Cornish mice. All things in moderation, Comrades! Anyway, as I don't speak Greek the little perishers gave me an inferiority complex.

Let me finish with some good advice from Bondi: "Suppose you did gain great insight, then you would not be able to convince anybody else of it unless you had also done enough good, solid, pedestrian work for other people to think you competent." Good, solid, pedestrian work is the thing. It ennobles the soul--though it plays hell with the back and muscles, as my wife and I found at Llanelen last August!

So now you know as little as I do about this obscure subject. For those conceited types who think they know MORE than I do, here--to induce greater humility--is Lao Tzu's famous dictum.

Read it and remain respectfully silent:

He who knows does not speak:
He who speaks does not know.

(Though if Lao Tzu KNOWS this to be true, how come he SPEAKS about it? Perhaps HE doesn't know either! The mind boggles.)

This, then, may--or may not--be the reason for Glastonbury's strange magnetic attraction and Arthur's perennial appeal. Look out for a future exciting issue of Pendragon in which I deal with another esoteric topic I know nothing about--the Grail Effect in the Study of Plate Tectonics.

Only a 5.7 earthquake would NORMALLY cause
"a cracking and a riving of the roofs..."

* Below North Gate of the Abbey in 1800, with St John's Church beyond.



REVIEWS

Philip Michaels

Grail

Coronet Books 1983 £1.95

This is the sort of book that should carry a Government Health warning: "Not suitable for minors or adults". For some inexplicable reason the author has decided to weave "a tale of terror" around the sacred chalice. In fact it's as terrifying as the Reader's Digest: the true horror is the writing, not to mention the dire plot.

The Grail it seems was a gift from Satan to the Demon Kind; well, of course, but just who ARE the Demon Kind? Who but a regular bunch of indestructable reptilian humanoids spinning out time feasting on the flesh and stealing the souls of us mortals. Anyway, Joseph of Arimathea (who else?) acquired said object while the DK were hanging out in Scotland! Actually this area is left unclear but I presume they were Rangers supporters. So we then have twenty centuries of flesh-ripping bone-crunching Demon Kind searching for their lost cup. (As I said, Rangers supporters.)

On to the next chapter... By this time the Grail is in the hands of the Vatican, who decide to display it in America; it had to be America--it's the largest market for pulp paperbacks. The Grail arrives in Boston, and so do the Demon Kind, and innocent young female flesh is soon being scattered in all directions.

Who can save the world? Could it be tall, beautiful Lauren Blair of the Geochronology Laboratory? Could it be handsome, husky Inspector Donnellan who has just single-handedly destroyed the IRA? And who is it that is working for the Demon Kind--not cunning, clever,

Napoleonic Percival Leech, Director of the Bennet Museum? (Actually, it is.) Another 200 pages and we are at the thrilling climax where everyone gets their just desserts, all except the Demon Kind who are the most believable characters in this book. Never mind, it's all done in the best possible taste...

NIK WRIGHT

R J Hutchings

The King Arthur Illustrated Guide

Dyllansow Truran, Truran Publications, Trewolsta, Trewirgie, Redruth
1983 £2.95

R.J.Hutchings likes Tennyson. Not a crime, though I think the Home Secretary should consider it as an option; especially if people such as Mr Hutchings are going to inflict their taste for the Old Romantics on the unsuspecting populace in the guise of a book on King Arthur.

Supposedly a gazetteer of Arthurian Britain (the picture of "The Lady Chapel, Glastonbury" is in fact Malmesbury) this slim volume is a guide to the places that inspired Swinburne, Keats and Tennyson to write their specious rhymes on Olde England. Very useful if you have a thing about 19th century poets. Personally I think it is time the Dark Ages struck back.

NIK WRIGHT

Neil Fairburn

A Traveller's Guide to the Kingdoms of Arthur

Evans Brothers Ltd 1983 £8.95

This Traveller's Guide will inevitably invite comparisons with Geoffrey Ashe's A Guidebook to Arthurian Britain (new published in a revised 1983 paperback edition by the Aquarian Press at £4.95). This would be

unfortunate as the two are different animals, each with its own particular strengths and weaknesses.

The first obvious things about Fairburn's Guide is that it is larger than Ashe's Guidebook, not pocket-sized, and certainly glossier; and this may commend itself more to the armchair traveller--especially as the evocative monochrome photographs of Michael Cyprien are more of a delight than Ian Newsham's often risible line drawings in the Guidebook.

Secondly, Arthurian sites in Brittany are included by Fairburn (hence the "Kingdoms" of the title), and though many of these are dubious--to say the least--they make for a sense of completeness. However, Ashe sticks to Britain, and does so with the authority of well over a quarter of a century's sympathetic yet critical study.

It would be difficult to make a choice between Fairburn ("Alderley Edge--Wookey Hole") and Ashe ("Aberffraw--Zennor"). It faced with this dilemma, do as I did--and buy them both.

CHRIS LOVEGROVE



THE VISION AND THE VERBIAGE

Robert Coon

Elliptical Navigations through the Multitudinous Aethyrs of Avalon

Preface by Anthony Roberts
Glastonbury Papers No 1
Street, Excalibur Press, 1984
pp 8 + 71, £2.50

As with orthodox literature so with esoteric writing: each generation gives birth to one work that rises above its fellows and stands as a shining light in the darkness of dead words. And if such a book exists for our generation at the zenith of the occult literary universe, then Elliptical Navigations must surely be at the nadir of that universe, for never in the history of occult endeavour--and given the loathliness of so much that passes as esoteric literature it is surely high courage to use the word "never"--has so much occult gibberish been spewed out upon an undeserving public, nor so much ignorance placed upon public display as in this futile exercise in bombastic verbiage that offers itself up as "Glastonbury Paper No 1". Let us pray that our sins are not so great that we must be punished with future numbers; indeed, let us pray that future "Navigations" sail clear over the edge of our world and out into the void. But let us also be just and justify such prayers.

"Robert Coon", says the curriculum vitae in his book, "is a poet and magickian (sic) currently focused in the Glastonbury area". He has also received an MA in Creative Writing and is manifestly a master of the polysyllabic word--although the meaning of modesty has escaped him if one is to judge by the catalogue of his attainments: "He is an immortalist philosopher who has been initiated into all major World Religions

and has unified Cabalistic Invocation, ley-line and earth-chakra research, and astrology into the Magickal Art of Celestial Alchemy". If he numbered also among his attainments the ability to write clear, precise and correct English (or even American) his task of awakening "in every Heart a Vision of the Infinite Panorama of planetary and individual potentiality" (p 9) would be simpler.

Glastonbury drew him because "In January of 1971 I received a revelation of a global Omega Point emanating from the Heart chakra of Glastonbury" (p 9), but it is with a panegyric to a more recent event in Glastonbury, the worthless "piece of magickal theatre" that was the play "The Adventures of Aleister Crowley", that Mr Coon commences the building of the vast dung-hill of verbiage that is his text proper. And from the very beginning he gives us "facts" that are patently false--or rather value-judgements disguised as facts.

One has no quarrel with opinions about Glastonbury, its age and its zodiac when these are clearly expressed AS opinions, but facts demand proof, which Mr Coon is reluctant to give. Aleister Crowley, whose syco-phantic disciple Mr Coon unhappily is, was assuredly NOT "the greatest Cabalist of the 20th century" (p 16), for his knowledge embraced only the westernised Kabbalah of the occultists and not the true Jewish mystical tradition of which Gershom Scholem and Martin Buber were the undoubted masters in this century. And Crowley is unquestionably eclipsed in his own western Kabbalah by Dion Fortune (Violet Firth of The Society of the Inner Light and of Chalice Orchard fame) if by no other. Nor does Mr Coon have a very clear grasp of the Kabbalah it-

self.

The Kabbalah originated within Rabbinic Judaism after the destruction of the Temple by Titus in AD 70: it does not date back to non-existent Lemurians and Atlanteans of whose empirical existence Mr Coon gives us no evidence at all. Indeed, Enochian Cabala, which allegedly "represents the fusion of Lemurian and Atlantean invocational systems" (p 44), has never had any existence in time or tradition outside the drivellings of Aleister Crowley; and as for the "Millennial Tree of Eternal Life" with its thirteen spheres and lunatic attributions to planets, angels, Tarot trumps (even Crowley would not be so crassly ignorant as to number the Fool "XXII" rather than "0") and what-have-you, all that it demonstrates is Mr Coon's total ignorance of the oldest Kabbalistic text, the Sepher Yetzirah, which states finally and irrevocably that there are "Ten ineffable Sephiroth, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven" (Stenring, The Book of Formation 1923 p 21).

The Sephiroth are emanations from God, and although they are commonly associated in the west with particular physical, mental, moral and spiritual characteristics, they are, by definition, not subject to influences, planetary or otherwise, from the created universe. Thus, they are not "ruled" by planets and if one does seek correspondences, that for Kether (the Crown) is the "primal swirlings" of the universe and NOT "the planet Pluto" (p 23). But then, Mr Coon believes that "there are no satisfactory texts. All true Cabala is revealed through loving, personal relationships" (p 67). It is thus not surprising that he sees Gematria not as a method of establishing correlations between biblical texts and Kabbalistic interpretations.

by means of setting one word in place of another with the same numerical value, nor as an arbitrary and doctrinally unsatisfactory part of Kabbalistic mysticism, but as "the science and art of expanding consciousness through the observation and pursuit of synchronistic resonances created by the interplay of numbers and words" (p 16).

Other mistakes and follies abound. There is not one shred of evidence that Edward (not "Sir Edward") Kelley ever visited Glastonbury or discovered his famous red and white powders; nor that the Rosicrucian movement (that began in Germany) originated in Glastonbury. Nor is it, by any means, "evident that the Ark of the Covenant has been 'recently' shifted to the Glastonbury area in order to unite with one Grail" (p 41). And what evidence is there that the (fictitious) 'Atlantean Cabala' may have "separated into two streams at the time of Solomon" (p 45)? Even had it done so, one stream certainly did not go back to Africa with the Queen of Sheba, for she came from Southern Arabia. Other examples, plucked from an avalanche of errors, may be had from the reviewer on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope and a votive offering of sweetmeats...

If not gifted with the ability to separate fiction from fact, Mr Coon has a singular genius for creating ("birthing", he would say) page upon matchless page of pretentious and indigestible verbiage. "The global heart chakra of Glastonbury is of no value to Life whatsoever and a traitor to Truth until this Circle expands to an infinite circumference that creates room for the free expression and nurturing of every individual's Divine True

Will" (p 15). To help this end, "Symbols of perfection, such as a six pointed star or a (sic) Omega symbol, are excellent conveyors of visualised energy. After the invocation, creatively react within the morphogenetic vibration you have activated. Deep spiritual insights may enter your consciousness if you are in a receptive mood" (p 52). Equally, they may not. Those who wish for other examples may seek them for themselves.

For Mr Coon, "The message is simple. Physical Immortality and the ability to teleport and materialise on any plane are possible for any of us to obtain" (p 58). All his convoluted reasoning is to this end, and there is further support from "a Company of physically Immortal human beings who have emerged from all times and cultures and religions and who are working to reveal this Truth" (p 57). He lists some fifty of these would-be Immortals, mostly mythical but including the historical Paracelsus--who most definitely died, on September 24th, 1541--and the fantastic angel Moroni, not "a physically immortal human" (p 34) but an invention of the ignorant, mendacious and ill-regarded pseudo-prophet Joseph Smith, an ancestor of Mr Coon's who founded the Mormon cult. In common with his ancestor Mr Coon has difficulty in maintaining a flow of English that is grammatically and syntactically correct. Evidently his course in Creative Writing did not teach him to avoid the split infinitive or to avoid ending his sentences indecisively.

Nor did it ensure that the avoided such infelicities as "A Himalayan locale is the current betting favourite" when listing the physical location of the "Crown Chakra" among "the principle (sic) earth centres" (p 52).

If Mr Coon should take it upon himself to seek this "locale", I would take delight in waving him goodbye, but my own "current betting favourite" is that he will remain among us and inflict yet more of this rubbish upon us in the form of some future Glastonbury Paper. It is not a happy prospect to contemplate.

R A GILBERT

Ian Wilson
Jesus: The Evidence
 Weidenfeld and Nicolson
 1984 £10.95

I approached this book warily on two grounds: one was the apparent consternation caused by the TV series, and the other was the notorious poorly structured, over padded nature of the average "book of the film". What did I find?

The book is almost classical in its structure, starting with an analysis of the nature of the evidence, progressing to consideration of several major question, and attempting a reasoned synthesis in conclusion. This natural approach makes the book very easy to follow and lends weight to its arguments.

The basic facts of the evolution of the Christian myths are, as the author emphasises, very well known to modern theologians (including the Bishop Elect of Durham!) which makes it all the more surprising that they are so obscure to many practising Christians. It is basically a tale of an originally pure and noble philosophy being covered by layer upon layer of accretions beneath which Jesus himself would be hard put to discern the original kernel of his teachings. The book presents not merely the facts, but also the dynamics of this very well.

Ian Wilson concludes, as do most serious students of the subject, that Jesus undoubtedly existed, and was responsible for bringing together many of the strands of religious thought of his day into a coherent whole, a system of belief of such internal strength that it has endured for two millenia.

This is a workmanlike and very interesting book, recommended to anyone with an interest in the origins of Christianity, and to anyone interested in the processes by which myths are created and evolve.

COLIN WALLS

Nigel Pennick
The Geomancy of Glastonbury Abbey
 1983 50p inc postage from:
 "ETP", 142 Pheasant Rise,
 Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD

An eight-page booklet with maps and diagrams, this publication summarises the story of the abbey in legend and history up to its latest phase when it was rebuilt after fire-damage. It suggests that the groundplan of the final rebuilding combines two masonic systems: ad quadratum and ad triangulum.

Pennick refines the 74 feet grid which Bligh Bond suggested as the basis of the rebuild by substituting the English measurement with corresponding Welsh unit to give a 90 Welsh feet module. Adherents of gematria will note that this length (of 1080 Welsh inches) is symbolically significant. HOW significant new readers will need to consult Stirling, Michell, Pennick et al, as there really is not space enough here...

CHRIS LOVEGROVE



Geoffrey Ashe Avalonian Quest
 Methuen 1982; Fontana Paperbacks 1984 £2.50

Glastonbury "was a great prehistoric site, comparable to Avebury, Silbury, even Stonehenge. But unlike them it became a great Christian site. It was both... At Glastonbury a mighty pagan presence underlies Christianity." So Geoffrey Ashe proposes in Avalonian Quest; not only expressing an instinct that many visitors to the site have felt, but also setting out to prove it to be possible.

The first part of the book is a brief resumé and review of the Christian history of Glas-

tonbury, reconsidering material from the earlier King Arthur's Avalon in the light of later evidence and more recent viewpoints. Sidelong and rather perceptive glances are taken at such things as Arthur's tomb, the Chalice Well ("misguided"), the Zodiac ("psychological projection onto the landscape?"), ley-lines, and so on. But discussing these modern "neo-mystics" brings the author to his point.

"We may dismiss these theories and others as flights of fancy... but their inventors... have really been trying to rationalize a feeling, an intuition, a sense of ancient mystery, and that must not be dismissed..."

The thesis for a prehistoric sanctuary at Glastonbury is founded on two underlying themes--the very early Marian dedication of the Old Church, hinting at an earlier "Goddess" cult, and the chance of an "Underworld" connection in the story of St Collen, and elsewhere. The sanctuary itself is the Tor Maze, first proposed by Geoffrey Russell in 1966*--a "Cretan" maze, correct, though elongated to fit the shape of the hill. The proposed route is described in detail in an appendix. Other possible explanations of the Tor terraces are considered but generally put aside in favour of a Maze. This the author goes on to equate with the "notable temple" written of by Hecataeus, although he has to resort to a "scribal error" to do it, which makes the reader uneasy.

Of course examples of the Cretan maze are widespread, but the Glastonbury maze, if such it be, would be very old indeed. Mr Ashe points out that the only known case of the Cretan maze having both Goddess and Underworld aspects occurs in

the mythology of the Hopi Indians of Arizona, and concedes that this causes a problem, bearing in mind the vast distance from Glastonbury. However he suggests a point of common origin, from which the Goddess/Underworld/Maze package has been passed on to Greece, Britain and America. Following the hints of various Greek writers it is suggested that this point of origin lies in the native shamanistic religion of Siberia and Mongolia.

"...The Cretan-type spiral could have reached two of the three areas where it is found. if it began as a magic symbol among Altaic shamans or their spiritual ancestors, a very long time ago. It could have reached the Aegean with votaries of Apollo, and the British Isles with the Druids, or rather with precursors from whom the Druids learned..." And Arizona, perhaps, by way of migration from Siberia over what is now the Bering Strait. Parallels of sacred mountains with seven ascending levels are cited.

But whether speculations about its origins are correct or not, the Tor "maze" is a tangible thing--it can be walked. As the author says, if the maze is real, then it is the only pre-historic sacred site of which we know something of what was done as ritual. No-one knows what happened at Avebury, but a maze is made to be threaded, and perhaps this is the best way to test it viability, and indeed its significance, for ourselves.

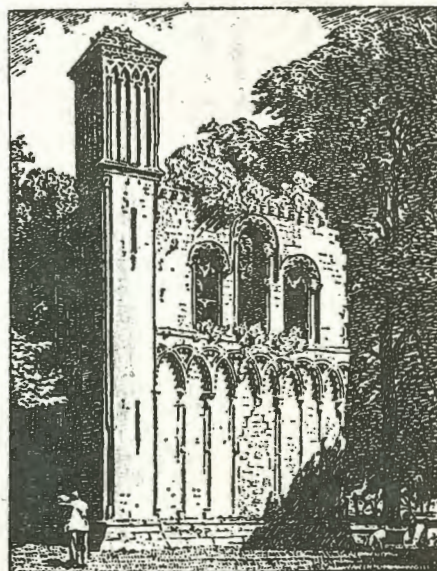
Avalonian Quest is clearly written, interesting, far-ranging and informed, and as always its author is not afraid of owning any gaps or guesswork in his chain of reasoning. In several places the evidence, as he admits, is less than one could

wish, and certainly at the end the reader feels he or she has travelled rather far from Glastonbury, and by a strange road; but perhaps like the maze itself, it is a road which, despite twists and meanders, may lead eventually to the heart of the enigma.

CATHERINE FISHER

Note* Pendragons may be interested to know that Geoffrey Russell was a member back in the sixties and did many years' work on the Tor as a maze processional path. He was featured in the Telegraph when his model was exhibited in Glastonbury, and his later researches led him to believe that a processional path at Stonehenge could also be based on the Cretan maze shape, thereby explaining the enigma of Stonehenge II said by Professor Atkinson to present "an insoluble problem".

KATE POLLARD



John Michell
The New View Over Atlantis
Thames and Hudson 1983
£8.95

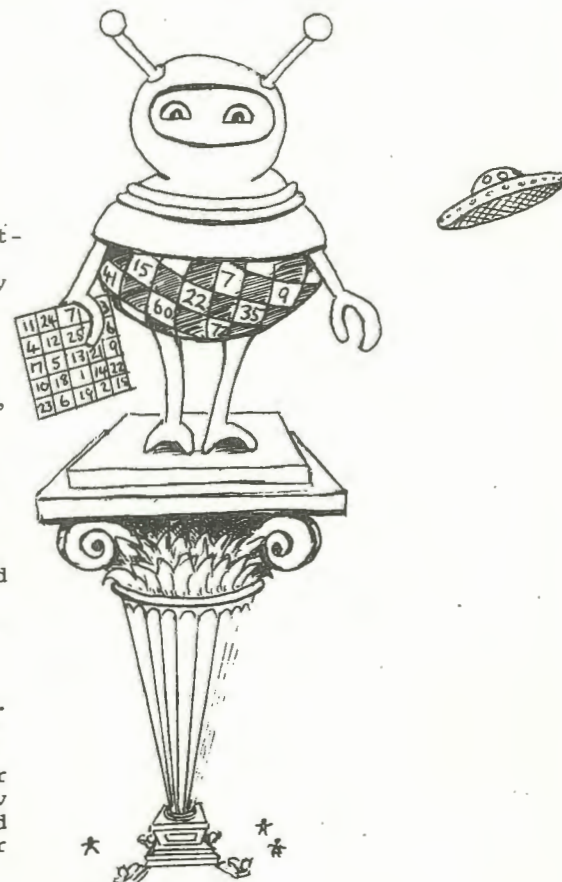
Sir Edwin Landseer was walking with Edward Baily in Trafalgar Square when Baily, looking at his friend's imposing bronze lions at the foot of the recently-erected Nelson's Column, said admiringly: "What heavenly craft, Landseer!" Modestly thinking Baily must be referring to Railton's elegant column, the artist nodded: "Craftmanship based, I believe, on Mars Ultor's temple in the forum of Augustus in Rome."

This innocent conversation was --sketchily--overheard by two passing Londoners. "D'you hear that, Bert?" 'E asked 'im 'What heavenly craft lands 'ere?' and the other geezer said the craft's a manned ship based on Mars! Cor! That tall fink must be a marker beacon for UFOs!"

The other shook his head. "Nah. 'E didn't say 'lands 'ere', 'e called 'is mate 'land seer'. That's prob'ly anuvver name for a geomancer. It's all to do wiv what they calls 'ley lions' and --stone me!--if that ain't four lions a-leying down now!"

In the local tavern later a retired systems analyst heard them arguing about it. He saw in a flash that the Column's height in feet (145 without Nelson) was close to the average distance in millions of miles from Mars to the Earth, while its height WITH Nelson (170.125) was associated with the orbital time in seconds of the Martian moon Phobos by the factor 161.8, the Fibonacci Ratio X 100.

Thus Nelson's Column was seen to be a UFO beacon, a ley centre and a high-ratio transcription of planetary parameters. It is common knowledge that the great admiral himself,



born plain Fred, was subsequently nicknamed "High Ratio" or "Horatio".

All right! This little scenario is just to demonstrate how the arbitrary selection of words and numbers--however sincere--can appear to support fringe concepts like those of John Michell in The New View Over Atlantis.

So when Michell claims that the name of Lichfield Cathedral is derived from liches, or "war", and is therefore associated with Mars, and draws an outline of the west front--ostensibly produced from the numerical

"Magic Square" of Mars--I dissent. The low angle of Michell's comparative photograph obscures the 100-foot difference between the height of the spires. Viewed head on, any conformity disappears. One could develop as acceptable a pattern from a Bingo card.

Again, it is at least as likely that lich came from the Anglo-Saxon lic or lych--a corpse--and in fact Britannica suggests that Lichfield means "the field of the dead" from an early Christian martyrdom. As R Morton Nance says in his Guide to Cornish Placenames: "A little misplaced dexterity may fit them [the names] with several alternative meanings--probably all wrong!" And as Bertrand Russell pointed out, a mathematical web can be woven about practically anything.

Yet much in Michell's book strikes a responsive chord in me, and before the orthodox-minded scoff at the author's heretical attempt to show the range and scope of our ancestors' knowledge of and attunement with nature's forces, they might observe Nobel Prizewinner Werner Heisenberg's dictum: "The most fruitful developments frequently take place at those points where two different lines of thought meet"--a concept reflected in Niels Bohr's theory of complementarity.

That our ancestors possessed marked mental ability and insight is shown by Prof Thom's now-respectable theory of sophisticated Stone Age mensuration based upon his megalithic yard of 2.72 feet. Yet he was formerly scorned by mainstream archaeologists. Michell fits this number, 2.72, and many other measures, including the holy numbers of gematria, into a statistically-plausible system of metrology demonstrated at Stonehenge, Glastonbury, in

the Pyramids and elsewhere. Lichfield-type weaknesses are not greatly in evidence.

Michell also discusses ley-lines--those invisible paths ostensibly linking churches, dragon-hills, forts, holy wells and so on in dead straight lines across the countryside, on one of which the Pendragon's tomb was reputedly discovered by Glastonbury monks.

Unlike Thom's theories, leys have not yet received statistical corroboration and still arouse orthodox ill-will--not least because the selection and plotting of their mark-points leaves too much to choice and chance. Ley preachers also have a tendency to claim straightness where waviness actually prevails--though some leys are, admittedly, pretty convincing. It's all very confused.

The fact that Alfred Watkins discovered leys as the result of an intuitional "flash of vision" tends to alienate the materialistically minded--but this attitude is not tenable. Einstein, Max Planck, Poincaré, Bohr, Kekule and Gabor all experienced--and admitted to experiencing--dreams and intuitive flashes which aided their scientific work.

The link-up of the ancient arts and sciences in one majestic canon, which Michell tackles with considerable scholarship, can be shown to accord with such semi-respectable concepts as Jung's Collective Unconscious, Dr Lyall Watson's Lifestide and Dr Rupert Sheldrake's theory of "morphic resonance". These theories, and others, were developed by sober-minded scientists who feel that certain phenomena just don't admit of alternative explanations.

The New View includes in its bibliography some 20 or so books which came out after the

first edition in 1969. I feel that Sheldrake's A New Science of Life could, with profit, have been one, because the Cambridge physiologist's morphogenetic (form-creating) fields are almost certainly the modus operandi behind many apparently diverse and dissociated phenomena. Quoting Michell's original work: "The earth was but another living creature, responding like a man to certain shapes, sounds and poetical correspondences"--a phrase inexplicably dropped from the new edition. Morphic resonance could explain this--as it could explain synchronicity (also dropped) and the resonances noted by students of geomancy, dowsers and suchlike folk between similar but separated megalithic structures.

Avalon addicts (of whom I am one) should also enjoy greatly the enhanced chapter on Bligh Bond and Glastonbury. I also endorse Michell's optimism regarding "the subtle code of science of the ancient sages being once more sought out and rediscovered"--though "science" may be a misleading word. One should not expect the ancient arts to respond completely to formal analysis. But then, neither does that keystone of atomic physics, Pauli's Exclusion Principle, which has been described by Prof Margenau as "a very general and elusive thing which does not operate by mechanical action". Pauli himself envisages a "unitary world view in which science is only a part in the whole". (The complementary approach again!)

Some of Michell's speculations regarding the association of antique sites with magnetic activity have since been tentatively confirmed by the researches of Dr Robins and Paul Devereux but there is also the possibility that the "occult"

energies apparently understood by our ancestors may act on our physical world in ways neither mechanical nor magnetic.

Much water has seeped through the dam of orthodoxy in recent years, helped along by the strong current of discovery in physical science in which materialistic explanations are conspicuous by their absence. The New View Over Atlantis channels some of this flow and, despite various shortcomings, it is, I feel, a book well worth reading. It is, generally, an improvement on the original edition.

One doesn't have to accept, unconditionally, all Michell's esoteric views: but, on the other hand, when alien signals loom up over the orthodox horizon, one should not--like Nelson--turn a completely blind eye to them. They won't go away...

EDDIE TOOKE

NEXT THEME

The Holy Grail. Send us your thoughts, contributions and your news and make this edition extra special.

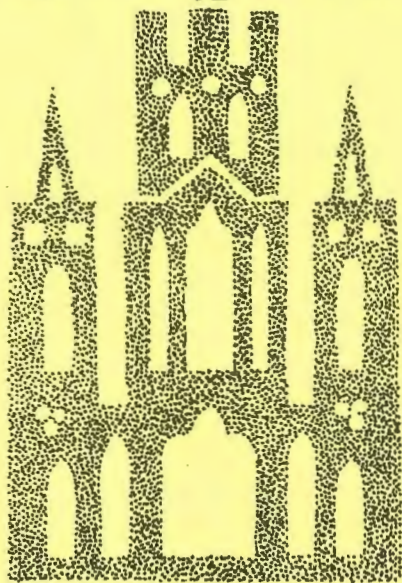
THIS ISSUE

The theme for this issue was suggested by Rick Plewes. Does anyone know his present address so we can send him a copy? (Likewise, Sean Woodward's abode; his poem appeared in the Pen Ceffyl edition.)

NEXT ISSUE

A miscellany of contributions is in the offing: Dark Age Stonehenge, a Shakespearean play on Merlin, stirrups, Gower folklore, Samhain, a new Bristol maze, Arthur's grave, ravens etc

INSULA Avalonia.



PENDRAGON 1959-84

The Pendragon Society was founded twenty-five years ago in Winchester, and this year's silver jubilee AGM & get-together will take place in that city. Members will have been notified separately of the events planned, and a full report will it is hoped appear in the next issue of Pendragon.