

PENDRAGON

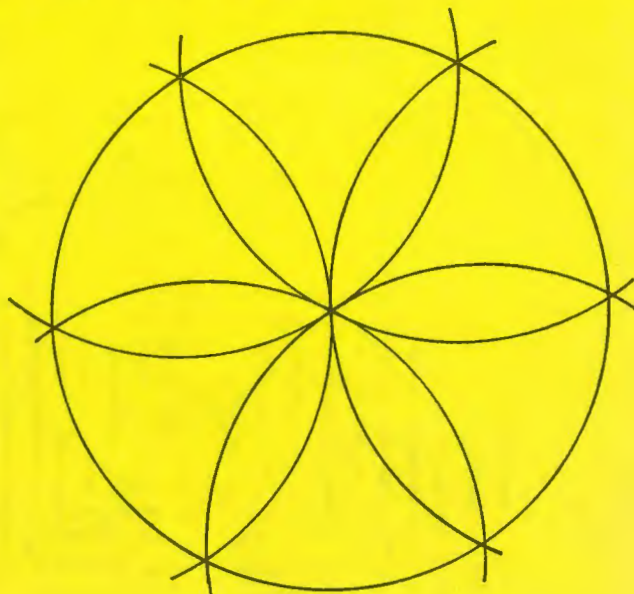


"Mizmaze," St. Catherine's Hill, Winchester.

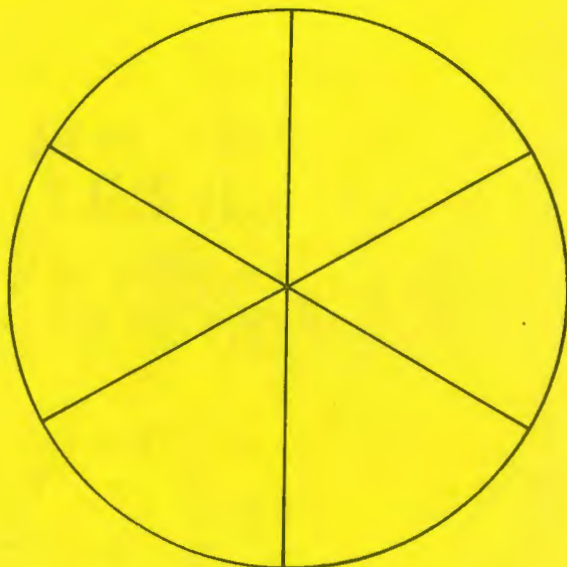
1959 1984
CAER SIDI



Construct a circle and divide into six by the "marigold" method.



Join opposing pairs of points.



Continued on back covers



PENDRAGON

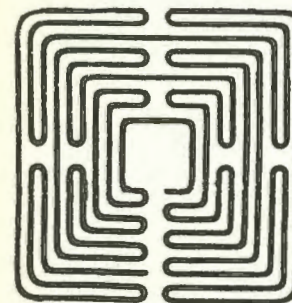
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Editor Chris Lovegrove Production Kate Pollard Correspondence Please send articles to 125 York Road, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5QG and membership enquiries to the Secretary, 27 Roslyn Road, Redland Bristol BS6 6NJ

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 1985



YOU WILL HAVE GATHERED from the front of this issue that it covers certain aspects of mazes. This was inspired by our visit to the Mizmaze on St Catherine's Hill, Winchester during our "Eventa Belgarum" in September 1984. The maze is the symbol par excellence for the quest, a theme met with in not only the medieval Arthurian romances but also in the early Welsh poem The Spoils of Annwn. In this poem we meet with Arthur and his band on a raid into the Otherworld, during which they encounter Caer Sidi--Spiral Castle.

1984 was the year the Society struck silver--not because of the Olympics but because twenty-five years before the Society was founded in Winchester. Winchester was a fitting place because of its medieval Arthurian associations, especially its 14th century Round Table, and one of the Society's founders, Jess Foster, often recounted that the dragon symbol was chosen because Geoffrey of Monmouth links it specifically with the city and its cathedral.

TITLES: Kate

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It was good to meet so many far-flung members at the "Eventa Belgarum". Some members were with the Society nearly a quarter of a century ago, some had only joined recently. Some were long-standing friends from the Research into Lost Knowledge Organisation, others were editors of magazines dealing with related areas, Dragon and Earth Giant. There were old and there were young, but somehow the disparate elements merged to visit Ian Roberts' Arthurian Exhibition in the Guildhall, the Cathedral with the earlier Saxon cathedral indicated in outline, the Round Table in the medieval hall of the Castle etc. The social side was also well catered for, from the famous Winchester wine-and-cheese do (see Eddie Tooke's report) to visits to various hosteleries. For the intrepid campers among us the St Catherine's Hill expedition was foreshadowed earlier in the day by the treading of the children's concrete maze in the North Walls Park, preceded of course by the ritual cleansing in the adjacent indoor swimming pool. (See, it's not all beer and skittles!)

One thing the magazine is not, and that is up-to-date! In a sense, our material is timeless, but I owe, as editor, an apology to contributors whose submissions appear in print so tardily that many may have forgotten their existence! This in part comes about due to an embarrassment of riches--there is often about two issues worth in hand after one edition is published--and in part due to our policy of having themes. (I pass quickly over our inability to keep to schedule...) We know from your letters that many of you appreciate the thematic approach, but this sometimes means that articles may see the light of day rather later than expected.

You may possibly have noted a steep rise in subscription rates and we apologise for this. We have tried to keep costs down for several years by doing most of the production ourselves, but the time has come when we have to relinquish some of that struggle and charge realistic rates. Many small magazines such as ours have had the same problems and have arrived at the same solution. We still believe however that Pendragon is good value for money. Nevertheless we welcome donations (thanks Eddie and Anné) and even paid advertising. Most of all we welcome your support as members, which shows itself in many generous ways and which encourages us to go on when we feel like throwing in the towel! (And will Arthur still beckon in 2009 AD?)

Next issue has a "Celtic" theme, and with luck will include items on Wales and other Celtic areas of the Dark Ages, plus features on archaeology, an ogam-inscribed knife, stirrups (at last!), graves and your letters, noticeboard and Old News as usual.

The HOLY GRAIL is the projected theme for Vol XVII No 4, and we already have some material, either received or promised, for this issue. But we need rather more if it is to be wide-ranging, authoritative and entertaining, so please send us your thoughts, contributions and your news and make this edition extra special.

CHRIS LOVEGROVE

Illustrations The cover shows W H Matthews' plan of the Mizmaze from his Mazes & Labyrinths (Dover reprint 1970). Other illustrations are from various sources mostly provided by the authors of articles. Original work is welcomed (and makes my life easier).

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ADVERTISEMENT

St Joseph COMES TO Glastonbury

part ii; Ivor Snook

ALL THAT I HAVE WRITTEN ABOVE concerning St Joseph and Glastonbury¹ I believe to be correct--except the orthodox date of AD 63 given for his arrival, for I believe that date applies to the other mission.

I have shown that there is a fair amount of evidence to indicate that he arrived at or near Marseilles with the Maries, Lazarus and other disciples, and took his way up the tin route and into Britain. Unfortunately we do not have firm dates for the arrival of those disciples in France, but according to some accounts it was in AD 47 or 48.

But if we accept that date, and it is more likely to have been earlier than later, we have to account for some fifteen years which it took him to make the journey to Britain.

Travelling in those days was far easier than we are apt to think, and the Rhône valley itself was a prime route for the Romans to and from Gaul and Britain, and the tin route further north would also have been well marked and safe. One or two years should have been long enough to travel by very easy stages, and if Joseph had the specific idea of preaching to the Britons one would not expect him to delay, nor can I believe that he would be content to delay his arrival until he was approaching 70 years of age (if he was born at the same time as Jesus he would be 63 years old in AD 63, but as Jesus' uncle one would imagine he was a few years at least older than his nephew).

When we turn to the records we find quite a number of refer-

ences to Christianity arriving in this country at a very early date.

Gildas, writing in about AD 547, says

"We know that these islands received the beam of light ... at the latter part of the reign of Tiberius Caesar ... these beams of light were received with lukewarm minds by the inhabitants..."

Tiberius' reign ended in AD 37, and it is sometimes said that Gildas made an error. Yet he is generally regarded as a reliable historian, and in fact he seems in one place to suggest that he took this information from some earlier ecclesiastical history of Britain. Fredegarus also gives this same date.

At Christian councils in Europe Britain claimed a priority on the grounds that this country received the faith of Christ first. At one they claimed that Joseph arrived "immediately after the passion of Christ", and at another that he arrived "at the time that Peter preached the gospel at Antioch". Peter quitted Antioch for Rome in AD 41, so Joseph would have arrived not later than that date, but could have come still earlier, as Peter was in Antioch for a considerable period.

COMPUTATION

When we come to the British histories we find the same computation of the date AD 63 repeated over and over again in words such as "thirty one years after the passion of Christ and fifteen years after the assumption of the Blessed Virgin, in the year AD 63". The date of the assumption is uncertain, but here it is assumed to be AD 47, which may be correct.

1. Vol XVII No 1

But looking into these dates we come up against the peculiarity of the fifteen years, which is not only fifteen years from the assumption to AD 63, but also the fifteen years of Joseph's journey to Britain.

I think there is a distinct possibility that the original computation was

"Fifteen years after the passion and at the time of the assumption..." but the historians (or someone) were so certain that AD 63 was unshakeably correct that they altered the computation to fit that date.

William of Malmesbury says that "after the persecution by the Jews and the slaying of Stephen ... the scattered believers sought divers kingdoms of the earth in order to deliver the word of salvation to the nations ... Philip coming into the region of the Franks sent Joseph of Arimathea with twelve companions to Britain, who arrived in AD 63".

Here again we have the two different time scales, for the slaying of Stephen was about AD 34 and William makes no effort to bridge the interval up to AD 63.

We find the same kind of contradiction in Harding's Chronicle, for although he repeats the standard AD 63 in one place, in another he says that Joseph came to Britain when Vespasian wintered here, which would be AD 45-46. In another place he says that Vespasian and Joseph arrived in AD 76, which is a wrong date for Vespasian and would make Joseph nearly 80 years old at the time. (But that could be the date of Joseph's death: it is not far off other records for this.)

There is an ambiguous statement in Malory's Morte d'Arthur

where the hermit informs Sir Lancelot that

"After the passion of Jesus Christ forty year Joseph of Arimathea preached the victory of King Evelake ..."

If this is taken to mean that Joseph arrived 40 years after the passion we have a date of AD 72, which does not conform with any other account, and again the question of Joseph's age on arrival (nearly 80 in this case) and the lost years on the journey. If on the other hand we take it to mean that Joseph actually preached for a period of forty years we come back to an arrival date of AD 40 if he died aged 80, or AD 50 if he died aged 90. Nicholas Sanders actually puts Joseph's arrival "in the fiftieth year of Christ", claiming Gildas as his authority.

RECURRENCE OF DATES

Whilst much of the foregoing is admittedly speculative I think the constant recurrence of dates ranging between AD 37 and AD 50 is quite impressive, and that Joseph's true date of arrival may well have been somewhere in that period, and not at the orthodox date of AD 63.

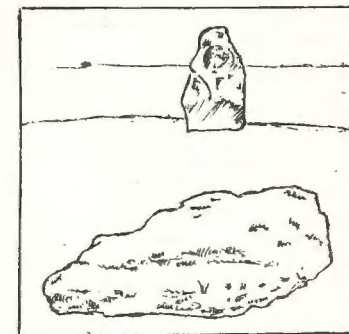


Fig 4 The Hele and Slaughter Stones, Stonehenge, from a photograph by Lady Antrobus, June 1st, 1901.

WAS STONEHENGE EVER CHRISTIANISED? R M TWIST

NOWHERE is the Latin tag more applicable than it is to Stonehenge: OMNE IGNOTUM PRO MIRIFICO EST. Take anything which is mysterious in itself, and we do all we can to increase the mystery. With it might be coupled another old saying: Let him who so wishes, be deceived.

CHRISTIAN

The process of increasing the mystery began about the beginning of the 12th century. Before that it had been enshrined in an obscure book: the HISTORIA BRITONUM. One 12th century archdeacon (Huntingdon) had never seen the book. He did not know when or by whom the monument had been erected. Another archdeacon (of Oxford) had it in his possession. Doubt has been cast on whether this book ever existed. But it was written in the Celtic language, with just the right amount of Celtic magic. What better motive need be sought than that it was written in Brittany by an emigrant trying to please his own people, and at the same time trying to impress those with whom he had taken up his abode?

It was translated into Latin by the bishop of a Celtic diocese, Asaph. What did it say? It said that STONEHENGE came either from N Africa or Spain: that it came first to Ireland, and then to Salisbury Plain. It came by the intervention of Christians from S Wales, travelling along just the same path as Christian monasticism spread from East to West. Archbishop Tremorinus advised Ambrosius to seek the assistance of Merlin, born of a nun. The monument was inaugurated at Whitsuntide in the presence of a host of clerics.

It was a monument to Christian nobles slain by pagan mercenaries. Then Dubric of Llandaff was summoned to the monument, and so on. Not a word about it having belonged to any pagan cult. The subsequent discovery that many of the stones came from S Wales seems to confirm that we are dealing with a well founded tradition.

And so the matter stood for quite a long time.

DATING

But with the Western World's ability to read about the Druids, their schools, their knowledge of astronomy, the belief grew up that they and only they could have been capable of the monument's conception. This is proved by the report which Inigo Jones made in 1620 to King James I. His first pages are devoted to a denial that the Druids had had anything to do with it.

Jones had been in Italy, had seen the Baths of Diocletian, become learned in Vitruvius, and others. He thought that the monument was Roman, and pagan. He was impressed with a stonemasonry which could fix the lintels so perfectly in a circle. He never mentioned the vital clue of the Aubrey Holes.

They must have been visible to him, for they had never been silted up. Aubrey saw them as clearly defined cavities in the ground. (What, may I ask, not silted up in 4000 years?) Jones ignored the vital clue that could have told him that the holes might have been dug under Christian influence. Just such a cycle of 56 was the first to be used by the Christians.

Another distinguished writer Sir James Fergusson, the historian of architecture, arguing for a post-Roman date, says: "Whatever else the monument might be, it is certainly NOT Christian" adding hastily, "or at least it is unlike any other Christian monument that we know".

So the question arises: just HOW do they date STONE? What are we to make of the official handbooks?

FAIENCE

The regular visitor must have noticed that even since the War the date for the digging of the Aubrey Holes has been altered from 1800 to 2800 BC. What is the justification for it, may I ask?

The way in which the date for the main structure was arrived at is interesting, and on the face of it quite excellent. Early in the 19th century Sir Richard Colt Hoare was digging in a tumulus some 300 metres to the west of STONEHENGE. Mr Cunington had previously dug in the same grave. But Cunington left off within inches of a large urn inverted over a pile of bones. Colt Hoare was more persistent. He found the bones, and with them an elegant pair of ivory tweezers.

These tweezers are a clue on which great store has been set. In other Wiltshire graves, tweezers are found with segmented blue beads. Similar beads are found in Upper Egypt. A bead of two segments most like those of Stonehenge came from grave No 1808A at Abydos. They were with a scarab of Amenhotep III (1412-1376 BC).

Though alike in appearance these Abydos beads seem to have been made of frit, though at least one was made of faience. The Stonehenge beads are of faience. The core consists of

finely ground quartz grains cemented together by a substance such as lime. The core is covered by a glaze, twice fired at a very high temperature. The Abydos beads for some extraordinary reason were sent to Australia and apparently lost.

Coupled with the evidence of the beads came the revelation (by Engelbach) that the unfinished obelisk in the quarry at Assouan, dated by him about 1500 BC, had been battered out by using exactly the same mauls as those used at Stonehenge. The case for a date of 1400 BC seemed a very strong one.

But nonetheless there were holes in it. Battering with stone mauls was not confined to 1500 BC: they were still doing it. As for the beads, it was clearly demonstrable that the Stonehenge beads had larger thread holes than those from Egypt. It was suggested, by investigators at the British Museum, that the Stonehenge beads were imitations, made in Alexandria.

CHRISTIANITY

The first serious examination of the ground on which STONEHENGE stands began in 1920. Under the direction of Col Hawley, it was continued for about seven years. Year by year, Hawley produced the most detailed reports. Whole sections of the ground, embodying the most interesting features of the monument were meticulously examined inch by inch. Everything found was carefully recorded. Yet though he had given the light of day to so many finds, Hawley himself was unable to give a date for the monument.

But it is upon these reports that I am able to form my own conclusions. These are: STONEHENGE is a pagan monument, but it contains elements which link it unquestionably with 3rd cen-

tury Christianity.

We are dealing therefore with a cult which was trying to combine more than one faith. In the 3rd century such a cult is immediately available.

By 221 AD, the Phoenician Boy Emperor, Heliogabalus, had established the worship of the Sacred Sun Stone of Emesa at Rome. At the SUMMER SOLSTICE he paraded his sacred Hele Stone on a chariot drawn by six WHITE HORSES. There was a sumptuous entertainment, chariot races, and circular Phoenician dancing, in which the Emperor himself took part. He climbed on high towers specially erected and threw down gifts to the people scrambling for them. His religious idea was to hold a holy wedding of his own Sun God to the Moon Goddess of Carthage. The old imperial religion of Rome would be incorporated. The Christians and the Jews would be invited. The sacred shields of Mars would be placed side by side with the symbols of Emesa and Carthage. But the Cross of Jesus was not well enough known.

EASTER

The ground plan of Stonehenge is that of the sundial for all latitudes used by the Roman Army. It was invented by Theodosius of Tripoli, and was familiar to the group of geometricians surrounding the court of Julia Domna. Xiphilinus tells us that while Julia was at York, the Roman Army made observations of the "angle of the sun" in the far north of Scotland, observations which involved the use of just such a sundial. Julia's geometricians were associated, says Philostratus, with the schools of Athens; STONEHENGE seems to be laid out for the latitude of Athens, 38° .

Superimposed on this sundial are concentric circles otherwise

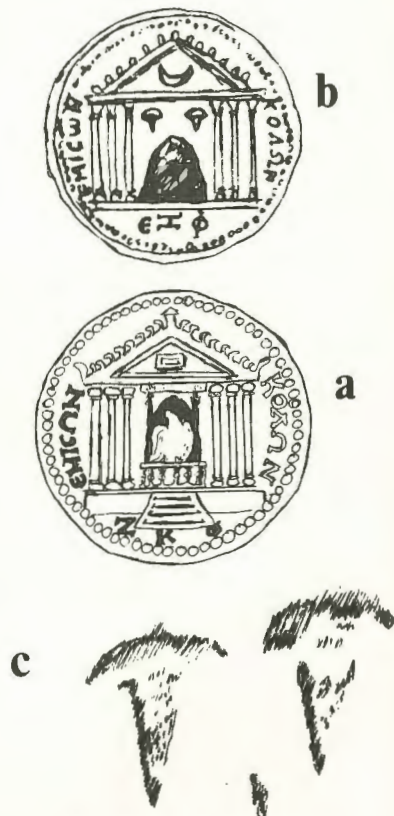


Fig 1 The Emisa Hele Stone
a. Coin of Heliogabalus (gabalus: gallows)
b. Another coin of Emisa: note the two "axes" over the sacred stone
c. Carvings on stone No 4 at Stonehenge.

The sacred Sun Stone of Emisa was taken by the Phoenician Boy Emperor Heliogabalus to Rome in 219 AD. For it he built two temples: one on the Palatine and another in some gardens just outside the Porta Maggiore. The gardens were called to ANCIENT HOPE: they had been anciently dedicated to Orcus, the Etruscan counterpart of Pluto, God of the Dead. Here, Heliogabalus gave chariot races, and on each

summer solstice he paraded the Sacred Stone on a chariot drawn by white horses. There was a sumptuous entertainment and much dancing to music, in which the Emperor himself took part, dressed in outlandish costume. He climbed on the high towers of the temple and threw down gifts to the people, who got hurt scrambling for them. He sacrificed children to examine their entrails. Heliogabalus was assassinated on March 10, 222 AD. On April 13, 222 AD, the 56 year cycle of Hippolytus began! The religious idea of Heliogabalus was to arrange the marriage of the Sun God with the Moon Goddess of Carthage.

Fig 2 Phoenician pillars, showing waxing and waning of moon. An inscription on a tin tablet found at Stonehenge could not be read; it was thought to be Punic.



found only in the Christian calendars for finding the date of Easter, based on the Pass-over. These begin at Alexandria and end in the Sarum Use at Salisbury in the middle of the 16th century. They ended with the Reformation so far as the Western Church is concerned. But they are still in use in the Eastern Ritual.

The Breton book translated by Geoffrey of Monmouth was an attempt to obscure the real origin of the monument. So many of these Breton monks were educated at Llantwit Major, in Wales. Tradition has it that this was a school founded by the Emperor Theodosius, who ordered the destruction of the Helioserapium at Alexandria, which was Christianised as a shrine for the ashes of John the Baptist by the monks of Upper Egypt. John's festival, like that of Heliogabalus, was on June 24, the Roman Summer Solstice.

These Egyptian monks used just such tweezers as are found at Stonehenge. British pilgrims, frequently visited the monks in Egypt. The first British monasteries founded in the Wye Valley by Dubric of Llandaff were based on the Egyptian Rule. Stones similar to those of Stonehenge are found in a circle in Somerset, where the church is dedicated to Dubric of Llandaff. Stones at Llantwit Major are tooled like those at Stonehenge.

CYCLES

What other clues are there? There is at least one which has been staring everyone in the face. The Hele Stone at Stonehenge is patently a copy of the Stone of Heliogabalus as depicted on coins, and more clearly on the pilasters of the Helio-gabalium at Rome.

But a really vital clue is the

Aubrey Holes. These are 56. I cannot understand how such an obvious clue could have been overlooked. In 222 AD, the year in which Heliogabalus was assassinated, a Christian bishop invented a 56 year cycle. The Aubrey Holes are surely this.

Sixteen years later it was found to be faulty. An 84-year cycle had to be put back in its place. Such surely are the Q and R holes.

Exactly 56 years after 222 AD, a 19-year cycle became the order of the day. This is the horseshoe at the centre of the whole monument, represented by the Prescelly stones. These "moonstones" were recommended by the Bishop of Alexandria, Cyril, for pseudo-scientific reasons.

The trilithons, the huge towers, are seen on a coin of Heliogabalus struck at Edessa. His bust is on the obverse. As they are set at every 5 stones of the Sarsen Circle, which represents a lunation, then they must measure the nightly elongation of the moon from the sun, which is 60° or 4 hours every 5 nights. This is precisely the way in which the monks illustrated the problem.

And finally, the circular ditch with its inside bank is reminiscent of that dug in sections by the Romans in the ritual foundation of cities. Such a ditch and bank was called a Kosmos or Mundus. It was conceived on the plane of the meridian, in the manner of the Greeks when projecting the sphere.

And so we can fill in the function of the Station Stones. They represent the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

SOLUTION

I will sum up like this: STONEHENGE consists of two parts: a

lunar superimposed on a solar. The solar part consists of the Ditch, the Hele Stone, and the Station Stones. The lunar part, supplied by the Christians, consists of the LUNAR CYCLES, namely, the Aubrey Holes, the Q and R Holes, the 19 Horseshoe plus the 30 "Y" and 29 "Z" Holes. The Y and Z Holes are clearly the lunar months used in a succession of 19 lunar years incorporated in a framework of 19 solar years.

Let him who wishes to increase the mystery, look elsewhere.

QUI VULT DECIPI, DECIPIATUR.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. Proof of Julia Domna's interest in Sundial Temples: Saxum Albae Juliae, 193 AD.

I.O.M. ET
IUNONI.REGIN.
PRO.SAL.IMP.M.AUR.AN
TONINI.PII.AVG.ET
IULIAE.AVG.MATRIS.AVG.
M.VLP.MVCIANVS.
MIL.LEG.XIII.GEM.
HOROLOGIAR.TEMPLUM.
A.SOLO.DE.SVO.EX.VOTO.
FECIT.
FALCONE.ET.CLARO.COSS.
ROMAE

2. Proof that Herodian's ἀκμαζοντος βέρεος, akmazontos therous should be translated as the Summer Solstice; and that this should refer to the ROMAN Summer Solstice on June 24, and not on June 21.

(a) Selden De Dis Syris. Syntagma I p 117. Ita omnium Coelitem simulacra Romae quotannis sub AESTIVO SOLSTITIO ALA-GABALUM DEUM PRETIOSISSIMO CURRU VECTUM, deducete eum ingenti pompa imperatore cognomine in delubrum suburbanum comitabantur, ut refert Herodianus lib. V.

(b) Dedication to Heliogabalus by Comazon.

DEDIK.VIII.KAL.IVL.
IMP.M.AVRELLIO.
AntOni

no PIO.FELIC.AVG.III
P.VALERIO.COMAZONTE...
Dated AD 220, June 24.

3. Proof that the LEGIO III GALLICA worshipped the RISING SUN. This was the only Roman legion to do so, having served more than 150 years in Syria. In 69 AD they were the first to declare for Vespasian: in 218 AD they were the first to declare for Heliogabalus. Dio says they worshipped the sacred Sun Stone of Emesa.

Tacitus, Histories. III.24. Battle of Bedriacum. Undique clamor: et orientem solem (ita in SYRIA mos est) TERTIANI salutavere.

4. Xiphilin's passage on the observations in the north of Scotland.

Severus desisted not until he had nearly reached the extremity of the island, and most carefully examined the angle of the sun, and the length of the days and nights both in summer and winter. Vitruvius, IX.7.1. introducing the sundial for all climates: "We must ourselves explain the principles which involve the shortening and lengthening of the day."

5. The following 19th century Church Historians may be consulted on the relations between Christianity and the cult of Heliogabalus. All are agreed that Heliogabalus, having satirised the old Roman imperial religion, made the way easier for the establishment of Christianity as the new state religion. Milman; Bigg; Allard; Foakes-Jackson; Elliott-Burns; Duchesne; Spencer; De Pressense; Gwatkin; Crawford.

6. For Heliogabalus's Circus on the Vatican, and the removal of St Peter's Tomb, see Crawford's Ave Roma Immortalis; Elliott-Burns p 110.

For the Library established in the Roman Pantheon by Julius Africanus under Heliogabalus and Alexander Severus, Pap. Oxyrhyn.III No 512.

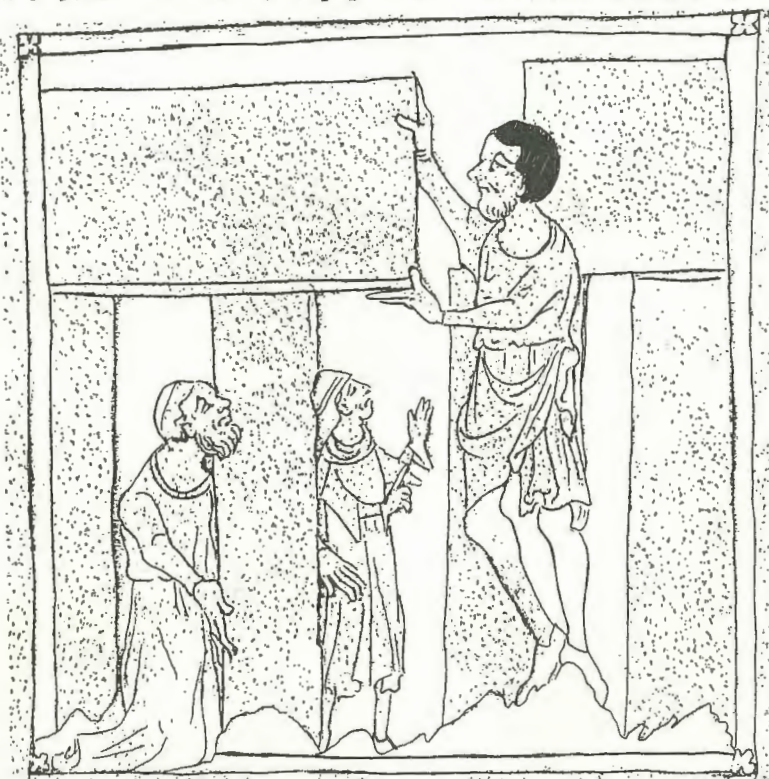


Fig 3 Pilaster marble from the Heliogabalium at Rome.

- Front view: the conical stone of Emisa being "adored";
- Side view: the stone is touched by the right hand, which is then transferred to the mouth, ad orem, and kissed.

"THE BIRTH OF MERLIN"

PATRICK VILLERS STUART



Merlin building Stonehenge: 14th cent French miniature

Despite its intriguing title, few people are familiar with this Shakespearian play. It doesn't however claim to be the bard's unaided work; one of the chief clowns of his company, according to the 1662 title page, is cited as co-author. Clowns seem to have been dear to Shakespeare's heart, and a character named Clown, just Clown, has one of the main roles in the story. Can it be that in this tattered, fragmented play, behind the kindly mocking mask of Clown, we are bidden a last farewell?

And yet not such a firm fare-

well as all that; we cannot so easily get rid of our Shakespeare. He will be there waiting for us in the 21st century, waiting for us to catch up with him. What could be more ominous than Merlin's attempt at banishing his father, the Devil, by shutting him up in a mountain, while acknowledging that there he will breed earthquakes. Isn't this just what we fear will happen with our own devils of atomic waste? Then there is that magic wand and book consigned to the deep by Prospero in deference to the "brave new world" of good

sense and happiness the young lovers, Ferdinand and Miranda, are hopefully about to create. Both book and wand return with Merlin.

If there was no other proof that Shakespeare was the instigator of this play, it would suffice to examine the record of co-author William Rowley's collaboration with another writer, Thomas Middleton. Their venture called "The World Tost at Tennis" also features the Devil as one of its characters, but otherwise proves to be an unreadable hotchpotch of banality and time-honoured sentiments.

In comparison, "The Birth of Merlin" is shot through with the summer lightning of inspiration, from the subtitle onwards. This, "The Child Hath Found His Father", serves to point up the play's message. Men seek in religion to find a Father Figure to support them: when it can be recognized that a bastard having no father or, being in a worse case, having the Devil as a father, can stand on his own feet and see through this need for a psychological crutch, then he has indeed found his father, can approach an understanding of the complex pattern woven by sex, religion and psychic phenomena.

SURVIVAL

To turn to the practical side of how this play survived, it must be remembered that at the time of Charles II's restoration playwrights were non-existent. They had suffered a total eclipse during the Commonwealth. There must have been a great searching among the papers of former dramatists to find something to entertain the new King and his court.

We know that Pepys watched another play of Rowley's, so

it's quite feasible that someone having access to his scripts (he was already dead by then) found "The Birth of Merlin" among them with evidence of Shakespeare's share in it.

The humorous, critical spirit of this play must have suited the new times well. No wonder it is stated on the front page "As it has been acted several times with great applause". It might well have been considered too dangerous to present when it was first written. It certainly stands the whole basic myth of Christianity upon its head, the better to inspect it.

Merlin the newborn wonder child has the Devil as his father and Clown for his earthly protector --his Joseph figure--and who do we find in this unholy family playing the role of the Virgin Mary? None other than long suffering Clown's dear sister Joan, shades of Lear in their family name: it is Go-Too't.



Joan Go Too't is the archetypal bumbling innocent country wench who simply cannot resist the supernatural charms of a fin gentleman unexpectedly encountered in the Forest. No so much sex as loving the highest as

she sees it is her undoing, as she later confesses with great insight: "I supposed no mortal creature worthy to enjoy me". A state of mind quite prevalent among young women who like to dream of pop stars or angels or sheiks, anyone rather than the young man round the corner. In the same play it causes two sisters, Modestia and Constantia to get them to a nunnery rather than to marry their devoted betrothed. Modestia had been sparked off by a wonder-working Hermit, due for a Bishopric, and her sister follows her out of jealousy.

PRE-CHRISTIAN

Whatever Joan's sins were in succumbing to the blandishments of the Devil, rather than to those of the Hermit, her son promises her a splendid tomb: it is to be Stonehenge no less. Since in mythic terms Merlin is accredited with bringing the stones there from Ireland in the first place, it could be considered quite an appropriate way to honour his mother, after her lifetime of enlightened repentance.

Such a choice for interment, so rightly called "a dark enigma to the memory", has overtones bringing to mind the pre-Christian mystery religion, cult of the witches, still partially practised no doubt, at the time of writing, in the depths of the Forest of Arden. We now know that its attempts at integrating human beings with the ecology of the planet and the cycle of the heavens failed, just as Christianity in its present guise is failing. Shakespeare through his comically distorting lens gives us a clear picture of the state of play of both these systems.

PANTOMIME

In some ways "The Birth of Merlin" seems like a pantomime

image of so much that had gone before, so many old favourites turning up to take a last bow. Hamlet, Polonius, Henry VI, Harry Hotspur, Audrey, spirits and sprites galore, even little details like the crab going backwards (not the author at his observant best among crustaceans) or the child born with teeth: all are there. As for the presence of Clown, a Bastard who turns out well, and an assortment of women from innocent, fallen to downright wicked, these are very significant themes in almost any artist's life.

Shakespeare once asked heaven to stand up for bastards. I stand up for the suggestion that this play, in spite of its shortcomings, brings us the last rays of our English master's setting sun.

PROPHECY

Messrs W S and W R's gripping account of the Saxon-Celtic war struggle was already many centuries delayed when it first appeared. More centuries were to elapse before it was commented upon. Not favourably I'm afraid. By the mid-nineteenth century revered authors were supposed to be parfit knights and their ladies parfit ladyes, and this account was far too scandalous to be credited. It was left to moulder in the Bodleian and British libraries in its 1662 edition. However, one of Pendragon's moles industriously brings it to your attention.

The preceding account doesn't stress the detailed description of this war given in the last act of the play which depicts its battles, its frequent deceptions, its lifelike muddle and final victory: this has to be read to be believed, or better still seen on future TV.

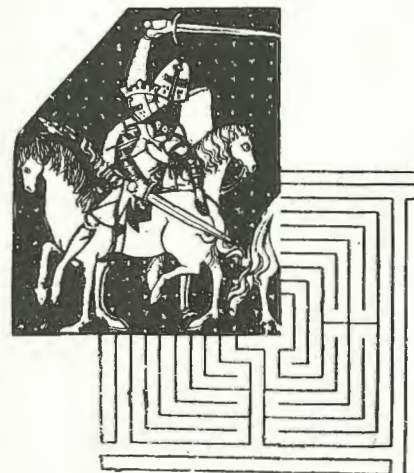
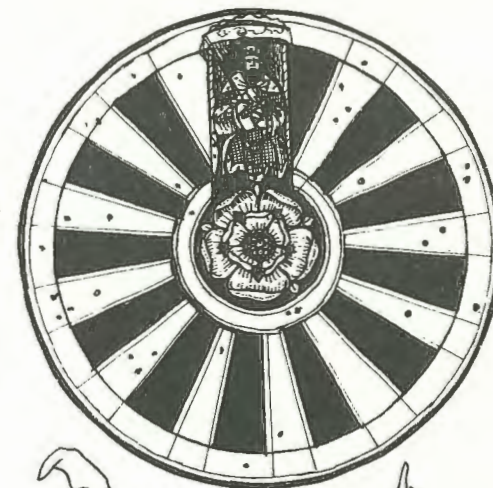
Merlin--whose birth we almost

witness (does Joan achieve a guinness record as the first very pregnant unmarried mother to be presented on stage?)--grows to instant wise manhood, though his small stature is stressed. (Is the actor one of the company's boys wearing a beard?) He is already an adept at astronomy-astrology; seeing a blazing comet he declares:

"What revolution, rise and fall of nations
Is figured in that Star that sings
The change of Britain's stage
and death of Kings."

And then, prophesying to Arthur's father, he is quite specific about his famous son who he calls a new Worthy:

"It shall be then the best of
Knighthood's honour,
At Winchester to fill his
castle hall
And at his royal table sit and feast
In warlike orders, all their
arms round hurled
As if they meant to circumscribe the world..."



Like a clew in a labyrinth, slim threads run through the foregoing articles, from the origins of Christianity in Britain, through Stonehenge and Merlin and Winchester. The maze section of the magazine begins more obviously at this point, with reviews, reports and even an original design. The latter perhaps is in response to a request for Arthurian Mazes in Vol XVI No 2. Any other offers?

Those whose appetites have been whetted may like their attention drawn to the Caerdroia Project. Caerdroia was the name once given by Welsh shepherds to mazes, and the Project publishes valuable original research and news of modern examples (see p32).

"Try my reins & my heart" ^{PSALM Verse 26} STEVEN BANKS

A few weeks before the Pendragon 25th anniversary Annual General Meeting in Winchester, I read a review of Conversations with Eternity by Robert Temple (Rider 1984). The reviewer described the book as a history of man's attempts to see into the future by the consultation of oracles; the examination of animal entrails; and by the methods given in the I Ching.

This subject had such an appeal to me that I ordered a copy, which arrived just after my return from the AGM. Reading the book, I found that in the chapter on divination from entrails (known learnedly by the tongue-twisting word "extispicy") the relevance of a sacrificial beast's intestines to the construction and use of mazes is discussed.

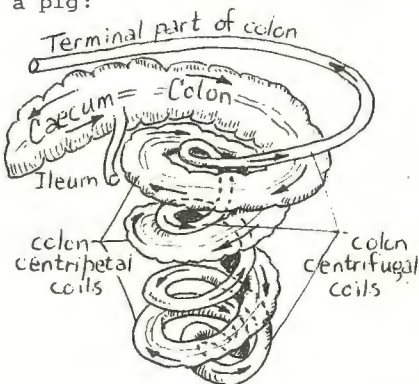
This gave me food for thought, fresh as I was from climbing St Catherine's Hill with other members of the Society the previous Sunday morning, when we had trod an ancient maze overlooking the city of Winchester.

EXTISPICY

Extispicy was practised by the early inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and later by the Etruscans, upon whom the Romans relied for divination all through the centuries of their Republic and Empire.

The sacrificing priest studied first and foremost the liver of the freshly killed animal, which was usually a lamb. Then he turned to the intestines, which he had carefully removed and laid flat in their natural coils. The colon of a sheep runs down in a right-handed spiral, then turns and runs to

the rectum in the opposite sense. The configuration is similar in a pig:



(Illustration of the spiral colon of a pig, from Sisson's Anatomy of the Domestic Animals)

When the coils are laid flat they resemble a maze, even as to the number of coils, which is from five to eight according to the age of the lamb. In Pendragon Vol XIII No 4, Figure 1 illustrating Patricia Villier-Stuart's article "A Cornish Maze" shows a seven coiled maze of distinctly colonic appearance.

MERCURY

The writer of Conversations with Eternity speculates on the "cosmic significance of the spiral colon". In particular he says that the apparent motion of the planet Mercury was seen by the ancients as related to the centripetal and centrifugal coils of the colon.

Now the god Mercury was the protector of travellers and also the arbiter of worldly success. Astrologers similarly relate the influence of the

planet Mercury to worldly success and failure. Furthermore, and this is of special significance, the House of Virgo is ruled by the planet Mercury in astrology, and governs the welfare of the intestinal tract.

One final point is that persons born under Virgo tend to have precise and analytical minds, such as a diviner would require.

It seems to me that the priest might view the length of the colon as a span of time with identifiable features along it. Perhaps the normal seven coils were seen as the seven ages of man's life, each of ten years' duration. From this concept it would be a short step to lay out a maze, for walking along in a receptive mood from birth to death.

MAZES

My surmise would blossom into a respectable theory if the spread of mazes, over the world and throughout time, could be related to the dispersal of extispicy, perhaps with the "megalithic religion" in the New Stone Age, or through the Etruscan seers who accompanied the Roman army and served the Imperial government.

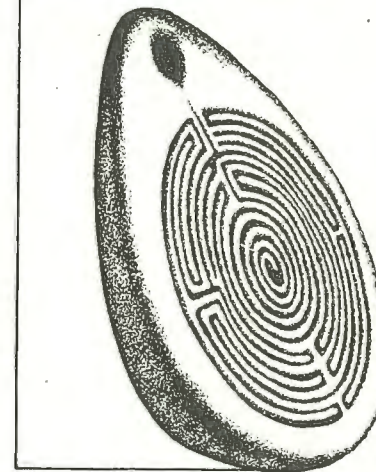
STEVEN BANKS

20th October 1984

I am grateful to Roberta Mueller for the astrological comments in this article.



REVIEWS



Bileen Dunlop
The Maze Stone
Oxford University Press
1982 £5.95

The story is about two step-sisters who get involved in a strange mystery. The older girl is devoted to a weird drama teacher called Nimmo Lessing. Fanny, the younger sister, doesn't trust him, especially as his pendant with a maze on it matches mazes she has secretly discovered both on her home fireplace and on a small stone in the garden. There also seems to be a connection with two standing stones on a hill behind the house.

I found the book very exciting and the tension was so great that I could NOT put it down until I had finished it.

All the answers to the mysteries are revealed at the end of the story, a brilliant and enthralling tale which had me reading it twice.

FLORENCE LOVEGROVE (12)

* Above Illustration from The Maze Stone by Martin White

Nigel Pennick
Labyrinths--their geomancy and symbolism

Runestaff Publications 1984
£1.25 from the author,
142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill,
Cambridge, CB3 8SD
(if the following publication
is ordered as well, the two
together are priced at £2.00)

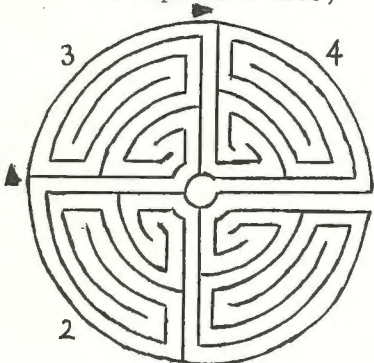
An attractive theory, first
argued by Jeff Saward, suggests
that the classical ("Cretan")
labyrinth derives from the
Greek key pattern found all
over the ancient world:



When the Greek key is fanned
out ninety degrees around a
central point, a basic pattern
is produced:



This is found, for example, on
many Roman mosaic pavements
where it is balanced by three
repetitions around the central
area (as in the squared form
found at Caerleon, S Wales--
traditional site of one of
Arthur's reputed courts):



Fanned out to 360°, the simple
but ubiquitous labyrinth is
produced, found for example cut
into the cliff face at Rocky
Valley, near Tintagel.

One of the reasons the laby-
rinth pattern is so potent,
however, is the fact that it has
so many links with other sym-
bols, such as the fylfot (aka
the gammadion or swastika), the
shield-knot, the cross, and so
on. On another level, the laby-
rinth as a sacred area has
tie-ups with the lay-out of
towns and defended sites, and
also with boardgames of various
types, whether race games, or
games of strategy.

The popularity of the unicursal
maze in the medieval period is
reflected in the flowering of
pavement labyrinths and graffiti
in church buildings, and while
the geometry often varies radi-
cally from the classical Cretan
type, some of the connections
mentioned above are still to
be found, ably documented and
lavishly illustrated by Nigel
Pennick in just forty pages.

Nigel Pennick
Pagan Prophecy and Play
Runestaff Publications 1984
£0.95

This 32-page publication covers
subjects closely related to the
topic of the preceding booklet.
Boardgames are examined in
detail for their origins and
significance, and are shown to
have had more serious purposes
than mere amusement. The
"chessboard" incidentally en-
countered so frequently in
Arthurian literature is in fact
that for the game of Gwyddbwl.
This has however a different
basis for play, and both chess
and draughts have been delib-
erately excluded from this study.

Many such games originated per-
haps as forms of pagan divina-
tion or prophecy, and utilised

dice; race games like Back-
gammon (and even Ludo and
Monopoly!) have their roots
here. Most of the boardgames
considered here however are
games of strategy, and can be
divided into three types:

1. Merels, which includes
Noughts-and-Crosses and Nine
men's Morris
2. Tafl, which is played on a
squared grid with sides of odd
numbers, and has a king on the
central square, protected by
his men but surrounded by an
opposing army; this is the
type of game Arthur plays with
Owein son of Urien in "The
Dream of Rhonabwy"
3. Fox-and-Geese

Many aspects of boardgames are
described in this booklet which,
like the same author's Laby-
riths, is crammed with inform-
ation, documentation, specula-
tions and illustrations. The
format is similar to Pendragon
but, in common (alas!) with the
latter, is difficult to read.
This is partly due to the
miniscule print, the reduction
in size being necessitated by
the need to economise in paper.

However, in the desire to pack
in as much as possible (a
desire not hard to sympathise
with) more concessions perhaps
could have been made to the
general reader: paragraphs are
long, text describing illustra-
tions is often indistinguish-
able from the main text, and
introduction, summary and con-
clusion are severely truncated or
relegated to the back cover.

But these are minor quibbles
(especially from one of those
living in glass houses); and
readers making the effort will
certainly find themselves amply
rewarded.

CHRIS LOVEGROVE

Randoll Coate & Adrian Fisher
A Celebration of Mazes
Minotaur Designs, 3rd ed 1984

£2.00 from Minotaur Designs,
40 Whitecroft, St Albans, Herts
AL1 1UU (USA \$5.00)

We have reviewed previous
editions of this booklet, and
as a basic guide for beginners
remains good value in this up-
dated and completely re-set
version. Together with Graham
Burgess, the authors have been
responsible for many recent
examples of the genre, including
the Beatles maze at the Liver-
pool Garden Festival, and the
Bath Festival maze--both com-
pleted in 1984 and included in
A Celebration.

One of the authors was himself
the subject of an article in
You (the Mail on Sunday maga-
zine) on 22.7.84: "The amazing
Mr Fisher"; and distinguished
himself by beating Channel 4's
"Tell the Truth" panel of cele-
brity guests who had to inter-
rogate three people to find out
who had the genuine claim to
maze fame.

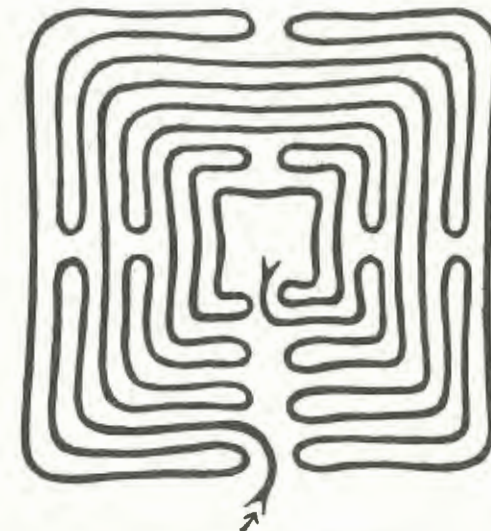
Meanwhile, in darkest Hampshire,
Breamore boasts the site of the
medieval turf Mizmaze. But at
nearby Breamore House is to be
found "The Great British Maze",
the outcome of a design-a-brick-
-maze competition held by The
Sunday Times Magazine. The
judges (who included a certain
Mr Fisher) whittled done the
winner from more than 500
entries.

Ian Leitch, an architect, based
his 52ft square maze on the
five-bar farm gate, particularly
fitting for its setting in
Breamore's Countryside Museum.
At the centre of 5000 bricks is
a topiary figure, a female
sheep, either a "box ewe" (ac-
cording to Woman's Weekly) or a
punning "yew ewe" (if you prefer
the ST mag). The maze lives! CL

Winchester, of course, is Malory's Camelot, and his knights could have seated themselves comfortably around the

As it happened, the Winchester event turned out to be full of subtle meanings and implica-

Maze-walking is said to be analogous to man's spiritual progress through life, so most of us essayed to walk this one--in our various ways. As in life, some paths were rather indeterminate and I personally found myself heading out again several times before I reached the centre. Only one member really earned a glimpse of the Anointed within the Sacred Urn by treading the tortuous paths to its Sanctuary in a spiritual way--barefoot. He was Chris



Chris Turner, a man of many parts, had the previous day given us some lively comments on the heraldic devices of the Round Table knights at Ian Roberts' Arthurian Exhibition in the Guildhall. The exhibition consisted mainly of an interesting collection of books, bric-a-brac and brass rubbings--but all in the romantic genre. I looked in vain for a hippo-sandal from Arthur's warhorse or a tin of Pedigree Chum belonging to Cabal. Still, it was all quite nicely displayed--though somewhat lacking in atmosphere due to the rather clinical surroundings. Much care and research must have gone into its preparation.

Our visit to Winchester coincided with the city's Saxon Festival with its emphasis on Alfred, but with commendable restraint we didn't put the Germanic savages to the sword. After all, as Tim Porter told us in Pendragon XIII No 1, there was a great affinity between the Celtic and Saxon monarchs. Alfred seems to have modelled himself on Arthur, and, like our own war-leader, fought under the Dragon Standard against the heathen hordes. (Seven hundred years later still, the dragon again saved Britain--in the person of Sir Francis Drake. He didn't fly our ancient standard but his name derives from draco or dragon--which HAS to be meaningful.)

Both great kings implanted the spark of culture in their followers, and another rather striking coincidence is that King Alfred's College, Winchester, is in Sparkford Road, while King Arthur's Castle, Cadbury, is near Sparkford village. (Oh, all right. Sorry I mentioned it!)

Pendragon visitors to Winchester arranged their own accommodation. My wife and I enjoyed the cheap method; we stayed with friends. The more affluent members pitched tents in North Walls Park (later changed to Colin Walls Park.) They told us next morning that they had had to fight a war against food-foraging ducks from the nearby River Itchen. More magic symbolism! Such an attack can only have been inspired by Arthur himself. One sees the driving force of the dux belli behind it...

The wine and cheese party on Saturday evening was a great success. Thirty or more were present and conversation was animated. Members' children did sterling work as waiters and

waitresses. A welcome and interesting visitor was Charles Evans-Gunther of the Dragon Society. There were displays of photographs of the Gower dig--including one of the above-mentioned cloud-dragon.

Now for a little more information--this time on etymology. (Is there NO limit to this man's erudition?) Kate Pollard hadn't realised until I pointed out to her just how divinely inspired a wine and cheese party was in the present context. Alfred's city was originally called "wine-cheese-ter" until the coming of Caxton with his Le Morte d'Arthur. Caxton, while functioning in Bruges, had printed a book which he extravagantly entitled "The Game and Playe of the Chesse", instead of the more austere "The Game and Play of Chess". So he started his preface to Le Morte d'Arthur short of three "e"s. Hence Win*che*s*ter.

Not many people know this.

The alternative suggestion that "Win-Chess-ter" is a sly piece of promotion by Caxton of his Bruges book is not worth a moment's consideration, being based on faulty etymology. As is the name's mooted origin in "winches", or "cranks" (see dictionary) in slanderous anticipation of the 1984 Pendragon visit.

Well, that's about all, folks. The weather wasn't too good but the pub lunches were. The walk along the narrow, overgrown banks of the Itchen on Sunday morning to reach St Catherine's Hill was hairy in places but delightful. The occasional stinging nettles which inspired the Itchen's name added to the fun. Many photographs were taken.

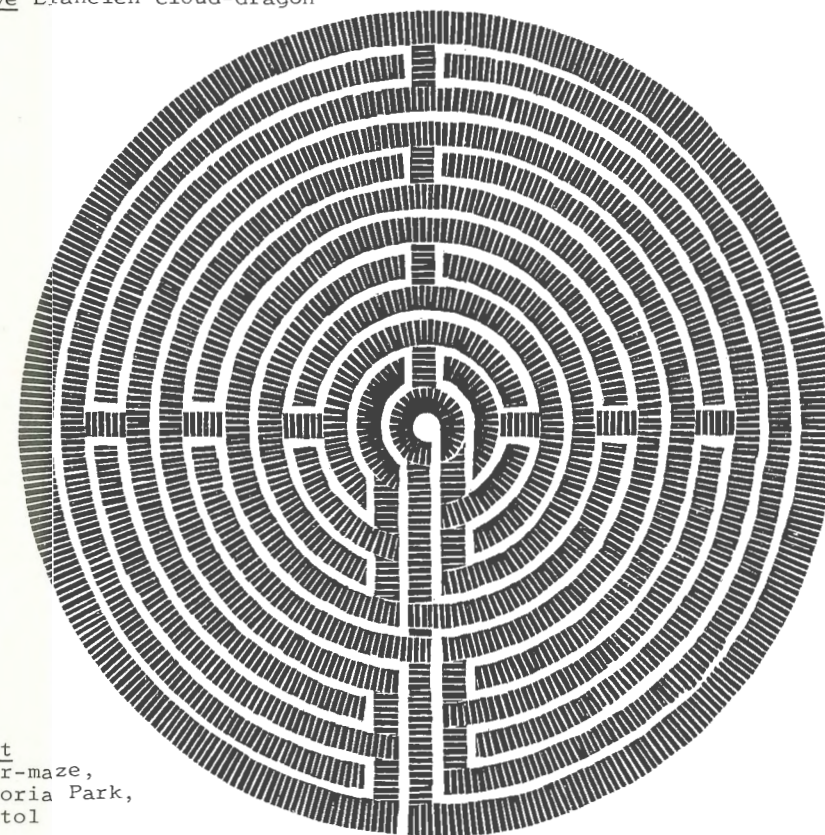
Winchester, the first home of the Society 25 years ago, is some way from Bristol, its



present home, and still further from Gloucester where Anne and I live, but we're glad we attended. Though some, reading this, may wish we hadn't...

Above Llanellen cloud-dragon

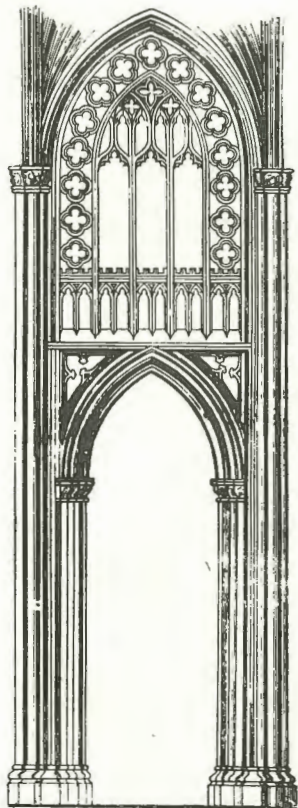
*NOTE The Arthurian connection was also symbolised by an Avalonian-type apple tree situated near the maze. (This had, incidentally, considerably less fruit on it AFTER the AGM.)



Right
Water-maze,
Victoria Park,
Bristol

The Redcliff Pipewalk 1983

AND NEWS OF A MAZE IN THE PIPELINE...



On a distinctly wet and chilly Saturday in September 1983 some of us went on a Pipe Walk. NOT a West Country dance but an annual walk which maintains an old right of passage for an endowment of spring water which rises on a hill in Knowle, southwest of the city of Bristol, runs in a conduit under fields, allotments and, nowadays, housing estates, and is directed to the parish of St Mary Redcliffe, where stands the "fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England" (as Queen Elizabeth I called it).

In 1190, when this spring water was bequeathed by one Lord Robert de Berkeley, it was apparently the only supply of water in the parish. His tomb is in the church and it was here the walk started--led by the vicar of St Mary Redcliffe and followed by a large, jolly crowd thanks to this year's advertising on HTV.

Along its underground course the pipe is marked by numerous stones upon which the (new) vicar and all the young walkers were ceremonially "bumped" and several manhole covers were lifted to disclose stopcocks which were turned to monitor the flow of water. (There IS a break along its course, to be investigated.)

The walk, which took about one and a half hours, was a companionable affair, and eventually it arrived on the hill to view the rising of the spring. (In fact there are probably several exergences of it.)

At that point, the sun came out and transformed the city below as we queued to view the spring. Then we dragged the mud-bespattered boy scouts out of the deep well and trooped off for the ritual cup of tea at St^c Barnabas.

The reason we report on this delightful afternoon is that the water is of special interest to those of us in Bristol who said, subsequent to the Maze Week End in February 1982, that we'd like a permanent maze here in Bristol.

Our member, Pete Milner, in Totterdown, is planning to effect this in his capacity of worker for ACCES, an organisation working on "Town Arts". It is planned for a park in south Bristol, using this water to form a water path in the maze. Pete's plan to link the maze with the St Mary Redcliffe pipe line seemed a particular-

ly apt one as Bristol's only other maze is on a roof boss in the church. ↓

KATE POLLARD



From "A proposal for a fountain, a water maze, in Victoria Park, south Bristol" by Jane Norbury & Pete Milner:

In Victoria Park there is a place on the route of the old pipe-line where you get an excellent view of the spire of St Mary Redcliffe; from this point you have an unimpeded view, and the blocks of flats of Redcliffe are angled in towards the spire: they emphasize its shape and focus your gaze.

The proposal is to reproduce the pattern of the maze in brick on the ground at the described site, bring the water up from the conduit in a new pipe so that it will well up through the middle. It will then flow through the maze and finally return to the conduit.

The maze would be some twenty feet across. It is meant to be walked over. Children and adults will be able to watch the maze being traced by dropping a piece of twig into the water at the centre, then watch it float through the channels to the exit. The courses of brick would be wide enough to walk on easily (10ins) and the channels too narrow (3ins) for even the drunk or concussed to drown in.

The fountain would cost nothing to run and little to maintain. If it was built it would leave behind a reminder of the ingenuity and expertise of two eras 800 years apart and an intriguing and pleasant place for people to enjoy themselves.

PETE MILNER

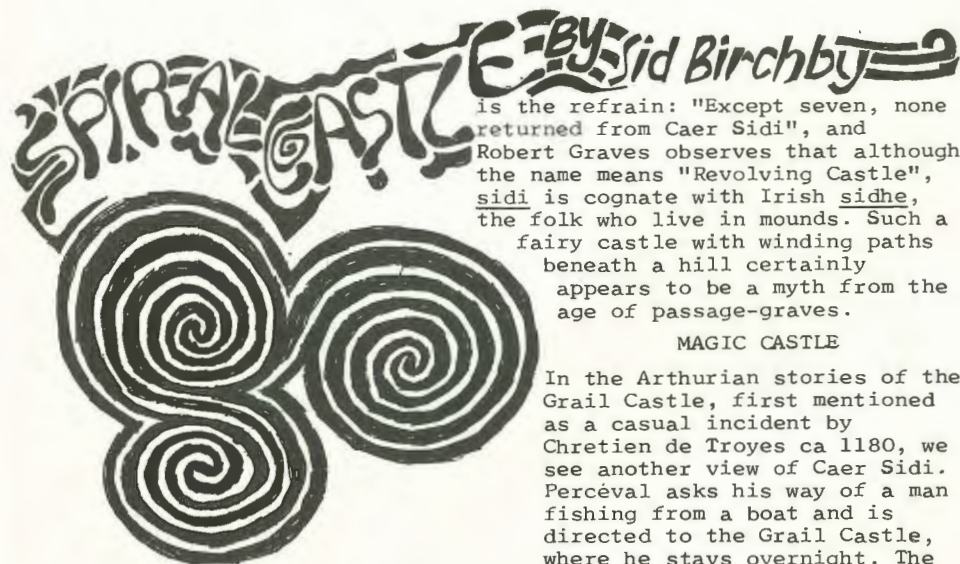
* When Kate Pollard first wrote her report, this "very exciting project" was still in its planning stage.

Approval was duly given for the £4,000 12-metre maze-shaped fountain, and it was built in August 1984.

On 22nd October the maze was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Bristol. It marked the opening of a new water-clearing system (The Southern Foul Water Interceptor!) planned to help clear pollution in the Bristol Avon.

The fountain was designed by ACCES (Avon Community Conservation and Environment Scheme) and the Bristol City Engineer's Department in co-operation with the Wessex Water Authority. Congratulations are due to Pete Milner, not least for the speed in which he pushed forward the erection of such a handsome edifice--eighteen months or so is very fast where many civic authorities are concerned!

The water-maze is unicursal in that it has one path only; this is a common feature of early mazes, but this one is unusual as the water goes OUT from the centre, not in as in conventional mazes. It could be treated as a puzzle however, as the brick "paths" have choices and dead-ends, with access from three sides of the fountain.



Spiral Castle, says Robert Graves in *The White Goddess*, was the pagan Irish name for New Grange, that dark, mysterious Megalithic tomb in whose recesses dead kings slept like seeds planted in the earth. Like many other caves and burial-mounds, New Grange was the realm of the Earth Goddess. At each new interment, the stones were rolled away from the entrance and the burial party entered with its burden. Usually, the bearers were women in the service of the goddess, and we are told that Arthur was taken away by three women to his last resting place in Avalon.

The narrow passages within these mounds led to the main chambers where the dead slept or perhaps silently observed the new arrival, and for the most part they were traversed in the dark to avoid rousing the sleepers. It must have been a nerve-racking experience, and possibly some memory of it lingered in traditions of the maze. In a medieval Welsh poem

is the refrain: "Except seven, none returned from Caer Sidi", and Robert Graves observes that although the name means "Revolving Castle", *sidi* is cognate with Irish *sidhe*, the folk who live in mounds. Such a fairy castle with winding paths beneath a hill certainly appears to be a myth from the age of passage-graves.

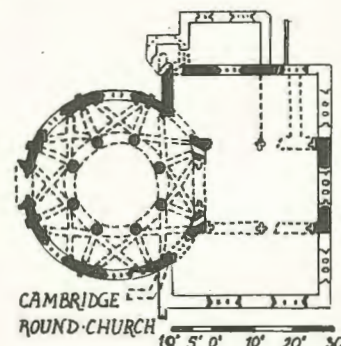
MAGIC CASTLE

In the Arthurian stories of the Grail Castle, first mentioned as a casual incident by Chretien de Troyes ca 1180, we see another view of Caer Sidi. Percival asks his way of a man fishing from a boat and is directed to the Grail Castle, where he stays overnight. The lord of the castle is also the fisherman and is called the Fisher King. This is the first clue that we are dealing with a tale about the *sidhe*, for at first Perceval sees only a fisherman and not a king. The fairy glamour is on his eyes.

During the evening he attends a magnificent banquet and mysterious symbols appear at each course, such as a maiden carrying a Grail, here first mentioned in literature. Perceval is silent and decides to ask questions next morning, but by then the spell has gone and the castle is deserted save for his horse, ready-saddled in the courtyard. He never learns, and nor do we, what the symbols meant. By chance or design, Chretien uses the familiar folklore theme of the traveller who chances on what seems to be a comfortable lodging for the night, only to awake on bare ground, having been the guest of the Little Folk. In Chretien's version, the traveller becomes a knight on a quest and the fairy mound is a magic castle.

TEMPLARS

If we look into some of the byways of Chretien's period, we learn more about the Spiral Castle. His patroness was Countess Marie of Champagne, daughter of Louis of France and Eleanor of Aquitaine, that Eleanor who was later married to Henry II of England and, later still, imprisoned by him. During their cordial years, Arthuriana flourished as never before: there was Chretien's romance, a poem about Tristan and Yseult sponsored by Eleanor, and the alleged discovery at Glastonbury of the bodies of Arthur and Guinevere. Additionally, Henry encouraged the Knights Templar, who founded a number of preceptories in England during his reign.



The Templars practised various esoteric rituals such as processing round the interior of their preceptories or teaching-places, which were built on a circular plan in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Just why the Sepulchre is round is uncertain, but there is a stone in the central nave, next to the Rotunda, which is said to mark the centre of the world. This part of the church is now the Greek cathedral, so that in a round-about way the world-navel

of pagan Delphi has moved to Jerusalem. It may well be that the Templars in Palestine recovered from the Saracen holy men a ritual almost forgotten in the West and stemming from the Megalithic cthonic cult. If so, the English turf mazes may be due to their influence: rustic copies, perhaps, of Templar preceptories and what went on in them.

ROSAMUND'S BOWER

In this connection, we may note the legend of Fair Rosamund's Bower, a labyrinth allegedly built at Woodstock in Oxfordshire by Henry II to conceal Rosamund, his mistress. Alas! Queen Eleanor found her way in and made Rosamund drink a cup of poison. The tale was first set down two centuries after Henry's time by Higden, a Benedictine monk at Chester, who drew on the classical myth of Theseus and the Minotaur to some extent and either invented the rest or recorded a folk-tradition which contained little truth. Rosamund certainly existed but she died peacefully in a nunnery. Her tomb bore the symbol of a chalice or grail, which in those days usually denoted a reference to the Templars. It may account for the fiction of the poisoned cup. The Bower also existed, but it was a walled garden rather than a maze.

Quite a lot is known about the Bower, thanks mainly to the 17th century antiquary John Aubrey who drew a sketch-plan of its ruins before Capability Brown landscaped them out of existence. The financial accounts of the building work have also survived from which it appears that the Bower was made before Henry fell out with Eleanor. The inference is that he made it for her and not for Rosamund. Indeed, it seems to have been yet another instance of a fashion more

appropriate to Aquitaine than to Oxfordshire.



PARADISE

Like the maze and the fairy mound, the walled garden is a cthonic symbol, a small enclosure epitomising the whole world. The medieval rose-garden with its formal arrangement of paths and rose-beds was a paradigm of the Garden of Eden wherein the whole of Nature obeyed the will of God, and it offered the hope that some day Nature will obey Man.

The Paradise Garden had become fashionable in Western Europe by Henry's time, either due to the Crusades or from Moorish influence in Spain. Today, the visitor to Granada or Seville may even yet stroll through wonderlands of fountains, courtyards and gardens, marveling at the artistry of those transplanted desert-folk whose idea of Paradise was an oasis. In the Christian West, as we have said, such gardens came to represent Eden and Man's hope of inheriting the Earth.

THE WASTELAND

Although such an objective seems less than wholly desirable nowadays when our attempts at winning the earth result in more and more degradation of it, there was a time when human survival depended on a battle with Nature, and the idea of total conquest was the height

of ambition. In the context of Chretien's age, when wolves still roamed the land, walled gardens made good sense both physically and mystically. Outside the towns, which were usually walled, the countryside was a howling wilderness where anything might happen, and it would have been quite reasonable to imagine a traveller finding a safe night's lodging in a magic castle, as Perceval did.

Chretien's narrative stops in mid-sentence, apparently curtailed by his death, and the story of Perceval and Spiral Castle remains unfinished. However, as far as it goes, we learn that Perceval made a mistake by not asking the meaning of the grail and other wonders in the Fisher King's castle. If he had done so, the king's lameness would have been cured and the land round about the castle would have flourished. First he is reproached on the morning of his departure by a damsel claiming to be his cousin (she calls him Perceval the Worthless, which seems rather hard) and when he returns to Arthur's court a second and loathly damsel appears and upbraids him in front of all the assembly. So off he goes again, vowing to find the answers this time. It should be a lesson to us all.

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SAMHAIN CHRIS HALEWOOD & STEVE BLACKBURN

Samain, Samhuin or Samhnagan: the celebration of the Celtic New Year, replayed by the Newcastle University Arthurian Society...

THE SOCIETY HERE IS primarily a battle re-enactment group but further immersion into the atmosphere of the Dark Ages is often useful to taste the flavour of the time. We had already celebrated Beltane in 1982 but that was very simple yet enough to give us the enthusiasm to make a bigger celebration of Samhain. The battle re-enactment group, despite being the Arthurian Society, are a Saxon war-band. The explanation of this and the fact that the said war-band actually celebrate Celtic festivals is as follows.

Newcastle (PONS AELIUS) is in the kingdom of Bernicia which is ruled by an Anglian aristocracy superimposed on a largely Celtic population. It seems reasonable that some diffusion of customs may have occurred.

We constructed a festival from a few ideas of what such a festival would symbolise rather than try to mimic such a celebration itself. Beltane or Beltaine has become the most famous of these festivals in modern times but Samhain apparently was the most important as it was the gate to the New Year and the end of the old summer.

In order to ensure the fertility of the land a tribal god's marriage to a nature goddess would be celebrated. The eve of Samhain even then had a reputation for being a magic time and the day's reputation for this has persisted ever since. Some writers believe that offerings were made to the ancestors to share in the general good for-

tune. The actual celebration of the festival could be regarded as an offering to our own most distant ancestors, the spirits of which were supposed to be free to walk the earth in the time between dusk and dawn, the gap between the old year and the new.

The cycling of winter and summer may well have been represented as the possession of the earth goddess passing from a sun-god to an underworld god, and such triangles are round widely in European mythology. At this time Bran (analogous to Saturn, Cronos) would wrest power over the earth from Bel (analogous to Jupiter, Zeus, and also named Beli, Belin and Belinus). The earth goddess is analogous to Demeter, Ceres and Persephone.

DUSK

In an ancient transit van (!) the seventeen of us comprising the Ravens Warband (Saxons, Angles, Frank, Britons and Irish--plus doubtfuls) embarked suitably clad and equipped for an Iron Chariot ride to the coast.

Parking above an isolated bay on this historic Northumbrian coast our trek twixt tarmac and shore-sand was symbolic of a step back in time. The only vestige of modern man, a winking lighthouse on a nearby headland, merely added to the atmosphere that grew as dusk fell.

We established a site on dry sand above a tide-smoothed beach sheltered by dunes. The energetic collection of driftwood and repeated curses and invocations finally coaxed the

sprites and elementals into lending us a campfire--cotton-wool and cigarette lighters were also contributory to this piece of magic. The last hour of useable light was put to good use by the warriors amongst us, a steady peal of swordblade upon swordblade and the "thunk" of spear into shield accompanied eager practice.

NIGHT

The time for the ceremony arrived with the night, and we marched onto the hard sand to walk the maze dance.

With "divers subtle skilles" our mystic bard Eldol had constructed upon the sand a "magick signe"--the septenary maze. This figure, illustrated below, is an extension of the ankh cross. It is also found in the children's games Troy Town, Heaven & Hell. The centre of the maze is the location of Heaven, Hell being round the outside. Walking the maze is symbolic of a passage to Heaven via trial and tribulation and the four corners of the Earth. The maze is interpreted as the path Theseus took into the labyrinth where he met and defeated his lower self, the Minotaur, emerging a more complete being.

Some connection may also exist between this pattern and the Spiral Castles of Celtic mythology; such as the Star Castle of Arianrhod Silver Wheel (the Great Bear constellation) and the Castel of Ariadne at New Grange. Taliessin the bard identifies Glastonbury as Caer Sidi--The Spiral Castel--in his The Spoils of Annwn, and, rather intriguingly, the author Geoffrey Ashe has recently suggested that the dilapidated terraces around Glastonbury Tor are the remains of a large scale septenary maze--deepening

the mythic aura of this site. The dance was completed in due course--an interesting variation on Follow-my-leader and a conga. The only problem came when we tried to fit fifteen souls in a rather small heaven!

Bran



Bel



ENTER HERE

The Septenary Maze

WINTER

Dance completed the duel could now begin. The gods' earthly representatives starting from their appropriate sign marked in the sand advanced into a ring of spearmen to fight on the maze. Bran wielded a fearsome war-axe of godly proportion against Bel's blade forged in the heart of the Sun.

The rapidity of movement and strength of blows dealt by the duellists was all the more daunting amid the gloom. Deep grunts and the ring of steel upon steel, accompanied by sprays of red sparks, punctuated the contest.

At one moment all onlookers

were hopeful of a mild winter as Bel disarmed The Dark One and was upon him; but hopes were dashed as the underworld cunning of Bran triumphed in the struggle with a single deadly (pre-rehearsed) knife-blow. He rose victorious to assume his reign over the new season and the mortal witnesses shivered in anticipation of his shill presence at their hearths.

The band returned to the campfire and we lounged in the flickering light partaking of food and wine, recounting old tales, jesting and musing. Behind us a portable heavenly choir from the Land of Nippon thumped out such ancient ditties as "Stairway to Heaven", and "Hergest Ridge" blended with jig and reel to satisfy our 20th century tastes.

MOON

As we became more and more convinced of what grand sport this was, the night changed around us. All cloud gradually vanished and a near-full moon beamed down. It became warmer and the

still air provided a perfect environment for a recital of "The Fight in the Hall" and "The Killing of Grendel's Mother" from Beowulf to a hushed audience.

A most enjoyable evening was concluded by an hour or so's frantic dancing by moonlight. It was marvellous the way our skin of mead distracted our attention from wet sand and smelly seaweed as we "Stript the Willow" with riotous abandon.

Our slightly merry troop, smelling of woodsmoke and with sand in everything, resolved to celebrate the festival of Imbolc in the New Year, Bran permitting. Unfortunately we don't know how to go about getting a couple of ewes to milk!

POSTSCRIPT

However kind the gods were to us on this night they exacted tribute from us in a rather low manner--when one of our number discovered the loss of a silver bracelet!



SAMHAIN BIBLIOGRAPHY

John Snarke Celtic Mysteries
Robert Graves The White Goddess
Sir J G Frazer The Golden Bough
Geoffrey Ashe The Ancient Wisdom
-- King Arthur's Avalon
Robin Place The Celts
Glastonbury--A Study in Patterns
(RILKO)

THE ARTHURIAN SOCIETY

can be contacted at
The Student Union
University of Newcastle upon
Tyne
Tyne and Wear NE7
Article compiled by Chris
Halewood with "technical ad-
visor" Steve Blackburn

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MAGAZINES, GROUPS ETC

AVALON TO CAMELOT (Matters
Arthurian) \$14 four issues from
Debra N Mancroff, 2126 W Wilson
Ave, Chicago, Ill 60625 USA
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four issues from Jeff and Debbie
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Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex
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NEWSLETTER (the paranormal etc)
Details: send stamp to Sid
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six issues from P Heselton, 170
Victoria Ave, Hull HU5 3DY
RILKO (research into lost know-
ledge) Details: 25a Danvers St,
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wisdom review) £2.00 for four

issues from Paul Screeton,
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Details: send SAE to Nigel
Pennick, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar
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EIKON (icons etc) Send 30p for
catalogue from 221 Barclay Rd,
Bearwood, Warley, West Midlands
B67 5LA

TEMPLE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP
(central Bristol history)
Details: J Lea-Jones, 33 Spring-
field Grove, Henleaze, Bristol
BS6 7XE

GREEN BRANCH

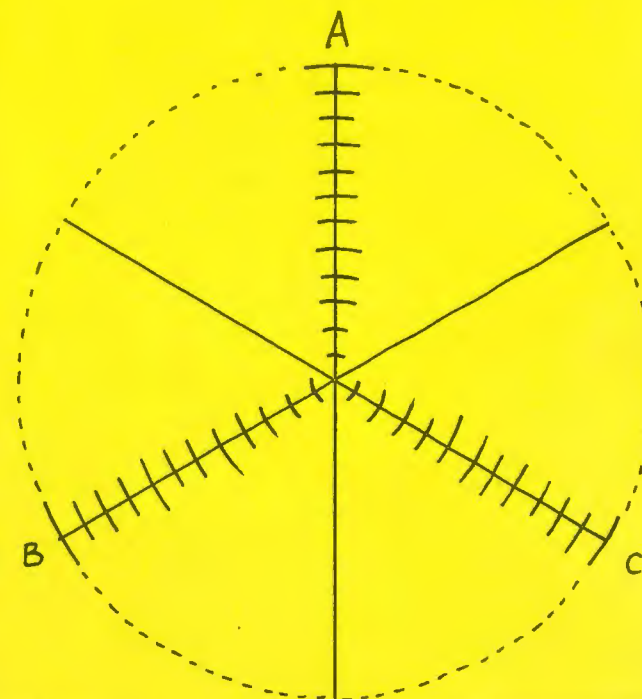
The Red Branch was a brother-
hood in Celtic mythology, not
unlike King Arthur's knights
"who struggled to preserve
Britain's heritage in a barbar-
ous age, and transmit it to
those who came after." The
Green Branch has more peaceful
methods--music and drama--but
their aims are similar.

1984-5 saw three new productions
(a revival of Trystan & Essylt,
a new play Lancelot in Lyonesse,
and a backstage musical Upstage
Downstage--good title!--two of
which were in August and the
last in January 1985).

Summer 1985 Tim Porter's
mammoth opera The Duke of Mon-
mouth's Maggot sees the light
after ten years, exactly 300
years after the historical
events depicted. Details: Hans
Hill Farm, Sezincote, Moreton
in Marsh, Glos GL56 9TB.
Associate membership: £3.00 pa.

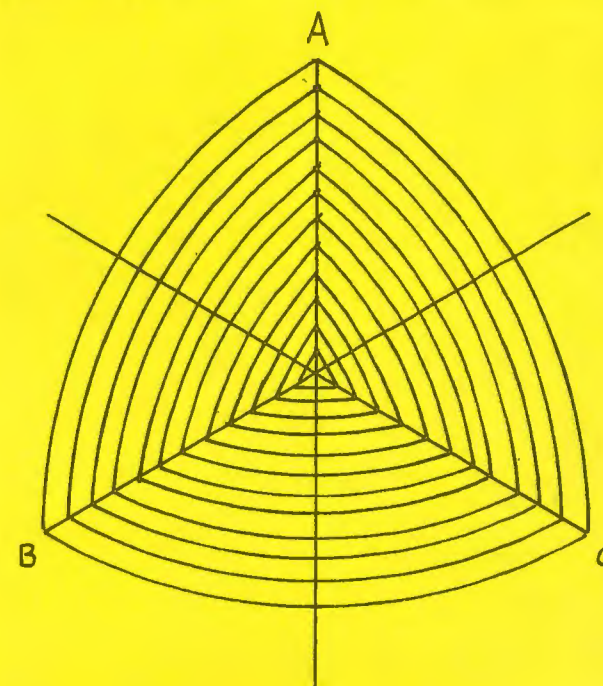
3

Select three
"arms":
A, B, C.
Divide each
into twelve
portions.



4

Join points
on two arms
by arcs
drawn from
end of
third.
Repeat for
remaining
segments.



PENDRAGAR



Construct
"nodes" on
remaining
three "arms"

5

An original maze design by Chris Turner © Pendragon Society 1985
At the heart of the shield of Galahad seek the Grail.

*Triangular format for: the Three Beautiful Women of Arthur's Court: the Three Princes of Arthur's Court: the Three Guardians of the Grail: the Three Wives of Arthur: the Three Great Slaughters: the Three Courts of Arthur etc (Thanks, Tri-ads).

*Three sided for the tricephalic Celt who inhabited Britain for one thousand years--400 BC to 600 CE

*Three segments for the Three Kingdoms of Britain: Loegria, Cambria and Alban.

*Twelve turnings at the internal nodes for the twelve battles.

*Design affiliated to the roof-boss maze in St Mary Redcliffe and the great labyrinth at Chartres.

COMPETITION: How many more Arthurian allusions can YOU find in this maze design?