Pendragon

PENDRAGON

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Editor Chris Lovegrove, 125 York Road, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5QG Secretary Kate Pollard, 42 Burghley Road, St Andrews, Bristol BS6 5BN Pendragon investigates Arthurian history and archaeology, and the mystery and mythology of the Matter of Britain. Opinions stated are those of the writer concerned.

Here is another ad hoc edition in which various contributions coalesce to create a theme This time it's the relationship between Christianity and the Celtic West which is touched on by some of the items.

Next issue will be primarily a reader's edition with a large number of reviews and news items joining forces with your views and letters. The Grail is still the next planned theme, but it keeps floating just out of reach like some object or other clothed in white samite...

Typing problems have caused delays, and so this particular editor is particularly grateful to Colin Walls for the loan of a superb machine to keep the magazine on the road. This has resulted in some changes in format, and the hope is that this will not impair your enjoyment of the journal.

Cover The ninth-century Cross of Einion from Margam, Glamorgan. The panel originally included an inscription.

EDITORIAL CONTENTS

OLD News TIMES FORGOTTEN

CRICKLEY HILL

In early autumn 1984 some Bristol members took the opportunity to meet up with members in Gloucestershire by arranging a memorable trip to Crickley.

This Cotswold hillfort has been excavated for a number of years now, and proves to have been discontinuously occupied for well over five thousand years. There was occupation from about 3500-2000 BC during the Neolithic period. When this was brought to a violent end, a "ritual" long mound over 100 yards long was constructed in a natural hollow. Not until the Iron Age was the site next occupied, and then only for a century when again violence displaced rectuangular house dwellers with round house dwellers, who were themselves finally pushed out in 500 BC.

The next evidenceof occupation is not forthcoming until the Dark Ages. In 1982 some small circular huts were discovered dug into the hillside. Entrances were to the south, and hearths in the middle. Sealed below floor levels were a few Roman pot sherds which helped give a date of around 500 AD.

WINCHESTER

If on Crickley Hill standards were modest, those in Wessex a century or so later were rather less so. Members attending Pendragon's 1984 "Eventa Belgarum" in Winchester were able to see the site of the first cathedral from a temporary viewing platform. The seventh century cathedral, cruciform and with a square east end, east-west aligned and over 100 feet in length, was marked in outline at present ground level, together with the later massive 10th century development.

Some idea of the internal arrangement was indicated by excavation. The altar stood between two transept-like porticūs, covered by a canopy raised on four posts. The celebrant stood facing the congregation. Two lesser altars and a cross may have been positioned in a line down the centre of the nave. A bishop's chair may have stood in the square west end.

Interim reports[1] show clearly the dangers and difficulties of interpreting a site before all of it can be excavated. Over a decade the plan of the Old Minster varied from season to season, and even now over a quarter of the design is surmised by assuming the southern part lying under the present cathedral to be a mirror-image of the northern part.

WEST HILL, ULEY

Winchester Old Minster was begun from scratch by a Saxon king. It straddled the ruins of 4th century Roman buildings built on a road bounding the south of the forum of Venta Belgarum, so direct continuity of use is rather lacking on this site.

A remarkable example of site continuity is found, however, back in the Cotswolds. The subject of an exhibition in Bristol Museum in 1984, West Hill Uley provides a rare example of a ritual area which made the transition not only from native to Romano-British religion, but also on to Christianity,[2]

The first major occupation of the site was probably in the early Iron Age. An oval enclosure was formed by four ditches, and that it was "ritual" is in part suggested by traces of an external bank.

In the early first century AD a rectangular timber building was erected within the enclosure, and later two other smaller timber structures built over two of the now silted-up ditches. Three infant burials were made, two as foundation deposits in a timber structure, and a pit contained typical votive deposits.

Over the next couple of centuries, two ranges of stone buildings and a possible (unexcavated) stone temple were constructed, and subsequently demolished. Then in the middle of the fourth century a temple was erected over the site of the 1st century timber building. This was the focus of a cult of Mercury, evienced by altars, figurines, pieces of a near life-size statue of the god and the sacrificed remains of Mercury's animal attributes: goats, rams and cockerels. Two ranges of buildings were associated with this temple.

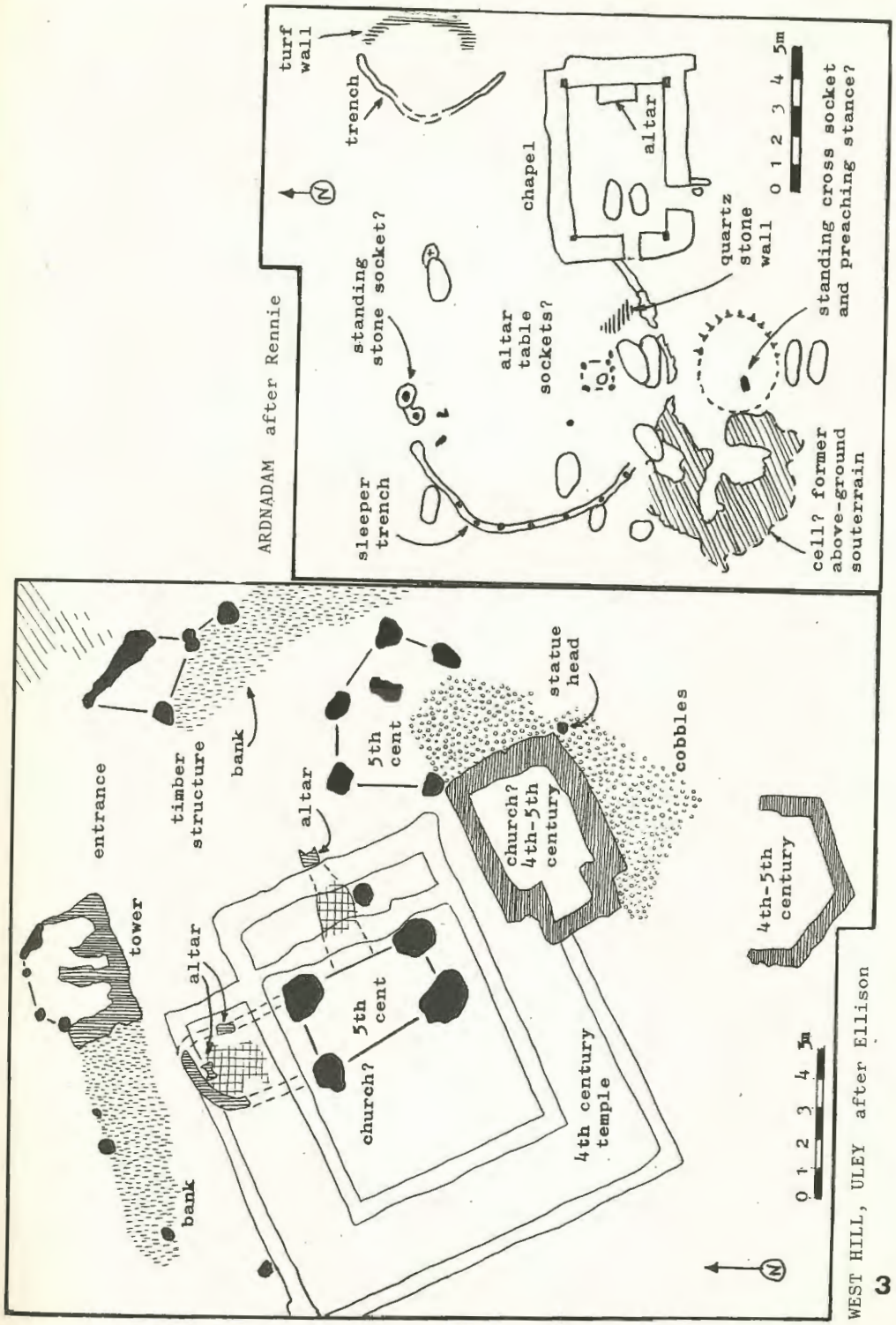
So far, Uley qualifies as a major religious focus of the Iron Age and Roman period, with the cult of Mercury typical of the fourth century pagan revival. But what makes Uley especially interesting for us is the further post-Roman, Dark Age use of the site.

In the late fourth or early fifth century a stone building, 6m by 4.2m, was erected over the corner of the temple and on the same alignment. Interestingly it has what looks like a square-ended chancel in the manner of a Christian church, but, unlike most churches, the "east" end is to the south-west. What strongly suggests a non-pagan foundation is the burial of mutilated fragments of the statue of Mercury in and around the building, a deeply symbolic act.

South of the "church" an open-sided polygonal stone structure was erected, whose purpose is a mystery to the excavators.

In the fifth century or later, another "church" was built over what was the open central area or cella of the ruined temple. The alignment of this was also odd: nearly north-south. Large post-pits outlined the "nave"; the "chancel" had an apsidal end; the "south porch" was oriented to the north-east; and two altars of Mercury were deliberately re-used in the construction of apse and porch. In addition there was another open-sided polygonal structure seemingly associated with this church, evidenced by more post-pits.

Banks separated this new religious centre from secular occupation to the north. And yet it is interesting that Christians (what else could they be?) though attempting to exorcise the spirit of Mercury still chose to utilise the same site rather than somewhere else in the vicinity. Pope Gregory at the end of the sixth century recommended that pagan Anglo-Saxon temples be re-used as Christian churches. At Uley the ruinous nature of the Roman temple may have necessitated a compromise: new buildings, but on similar alignments.



ARDNADAM

A similar continuity of site use seems to have occurred near Holy Loch, by Dunoon in Argyllshire. In Ardnadam Glen the local Cowal Archaeological Society have been excavating an enclosure marked on early OS maps as a burial ground.[3] Before the Iron Age the site was subject to flooding from the steep hillside above it, but after diversion of the hill water into a burn, a turf and stone wall was built to enclose an Iron Age settlement.

The enclosure, about 150 feet in diameter, clearly showed the remains of a rectangular foundation, and so the Cowal Society was encouraged to search for a possible wooden predecessor under what appeared to be a stone chapel. (This is a similar situation to that met with by the Pendragon Society at Llanelen. Incidentally, both societies have been functioning for roughly the same length of time.)

Above Neolithic domestic occupation (much disturbed by flooding) was Iron Age occupation which included an "above-ground souterrain" attached to a roundhouse.

What emerged after the Iron Age seemed to suggest that the transition into the Early Christian period was smoother than might normally be expected. The "above-ground souterrain" survived and might have become the original cell of the monastic enclosure.

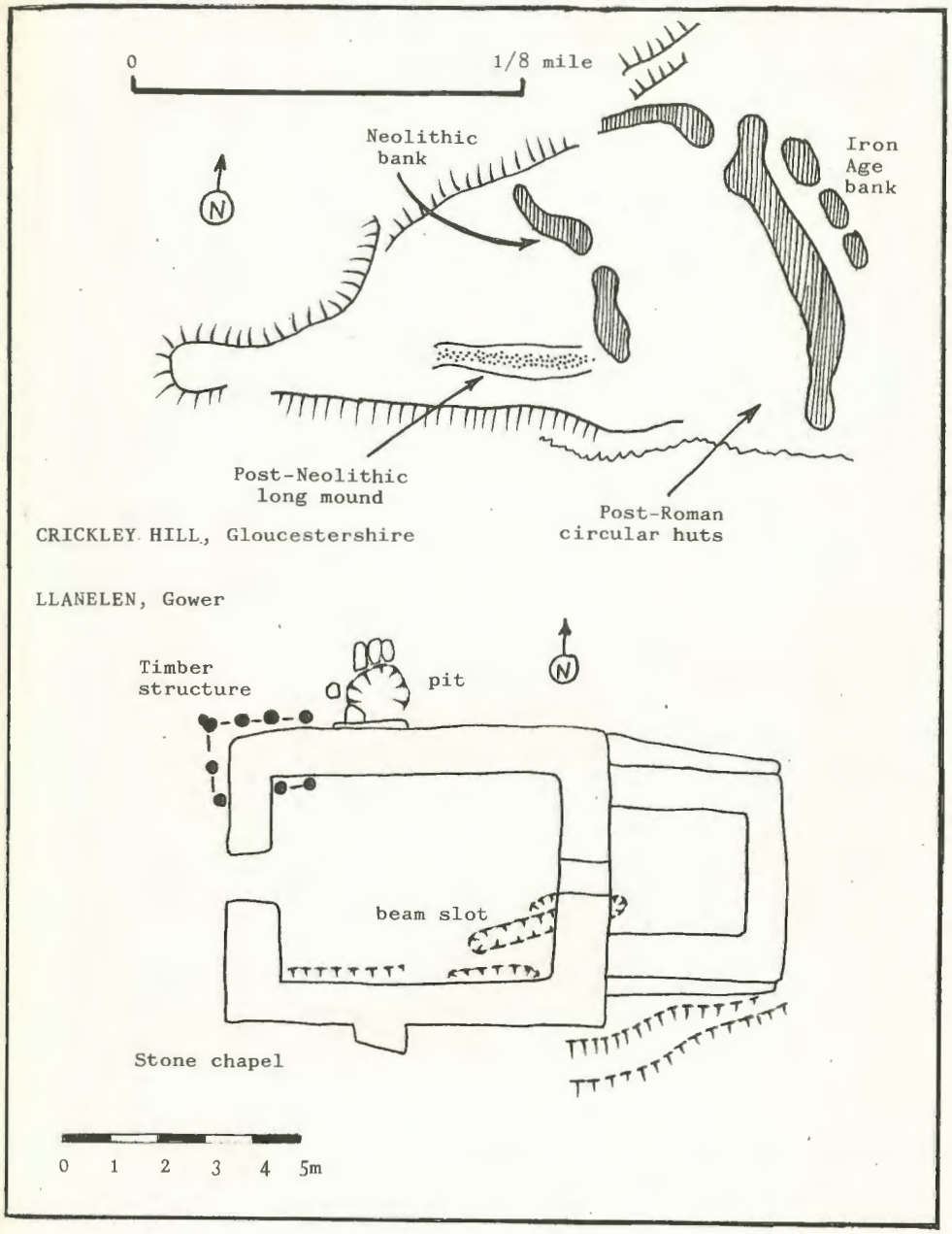
Overlying the Iron Age roundhouse were traces of another circular structure, defined by a sleeper trench. Was this the original church? Sockets for a possible table altar were found within it, and grave settings respected its limits. Sockets, possibly for standing crosses, were situated at the northern entrance to the structure, and south of it, adjacent to the "cell".

To the northeast was what may have been a contemporary structure, delineated by a trench and turf wall, reminiscent of the polygonal open-sided buildings at West Hill, Uley.

Subsequently (9th-10th century) a rectangular chapel, about 20 by 15 feet, was built over part of the circular structure, with its altar against the east wall. Post holes for roof supports were discovered in the corners, supposedly of the 9th or 10th century. The single entrance was in the south wall.

And what of the burial ground? The 40-odd graves were unusual. Some were aligned roughly east-west with the stone chapel, but others were NW-SE, the same alignment as a low quartz wall in the circular structure. No bones survived, but these were crouched burials, some in shallow oval depressions, surmounted by heart-shaped stones, or with head- and foot-stones, others in diamond-shaped graves often outlined in white quartz.

The religious use of the site seems to have ended forcibly in the 11th or 12th century. The excavators suggest that the circular structure and the crouched burials indicate that the type of Christians practising at Ardnadam were Culdees. These were Celtic monks who sent their own way at the synod of Whitby in 664, using rites and rituals derived from Irish sources and, in this particular case, influenced by Iron Age religious thought. Medieval Catholicism would have found this anathema, and so religious (but not secular) activity ceased at Ardnadam.



LLANELEN

In the meantime the Pendragon Society has been continuing its investigations at Llanelen in the Gower, West Glamorgan (interim reports available from the secretary).[4] Among other discoveries in 1984 was the finding of a timber structure (6' 3" by 4' 6") indicated by eight postholes, under the north-west corner of the later stone chapel. That this is rather earlier than the medieval chapel is in part suggested by the difference in alignment, about ENE, rather than the usual east-west.

The older alignment is matched by a 12 ft long beam-slot running under the crossing wall between the nave and the chancel of the stone chapel.

This discovery is quite exciting as it parallels features met with in at least three other sites, where small timber churches of Irish type are found under later stone chapels:
1. Church Island, Co Kerry; 2. Carnsore, Co Wexford; 3. Ardwall Isle, Kirkcudbright.[5] The Carnsore church produced a C-14 date of AD 660 which might suggest the late seventh-century for the Llanelen structure too.

BADBURY RINGS

Though a doubtful contender for Badon, Arthur's twelfth battle,[6] Badbury Rings is nevertheless an important Iron Age hillfort in Dorset. It is also very popular, so popular in fact that like Stonehenge it was in danger of destruction by the unwitting public.

In 1982 the Rings were bequeathed to the National Trust, and for three months in the summer of 1984 an army of volunteers taking part in the Prince's Trust scheme descended to turn the tide of erosion.

Land was fenced, a car park and walkways constructed, chalk ramparts restored and the area reseeded with grass. In summer 1985 sheep will safely graze to consolidate the new turf, and visitors will be allowed back on to the summit.[7]

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EASTER AND THE EARLY BRITISH CHURCH

I W J SNOOK

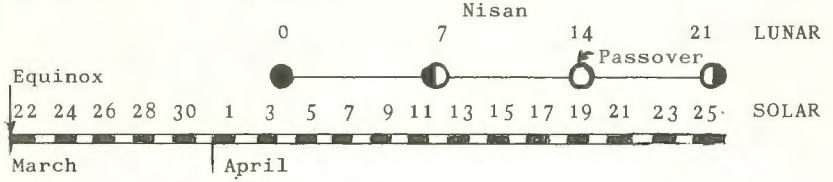
When St Augustine was sent to Britain in AD 596 his mission was to preach Christianity to the "English" or, as we would say, to the Anglo-Saxons, for the parts of Britain which were still independent had been Christian for several centuries. Augustine and subsequent missionaries from Rome disapproved of some of the customs of the British Christians and determined to convert them to Roman practices.

The differences were basically ritual. There were for instance differing rituals for baptism, for the Mass, for the consecration of bishops, and for the ordination of deacons and priests. But the two things which particularly incensed the Romans were the manner in which the Britons observed Easter Sunday and the way they tonsured their hair. There was no suggestion that the Britons erred in Christian doctrine or harboured heresies. Bede[1] is careful to point this out, as for instance where he says of the monks of Iona (III 4) that although they followed the wrong rule for Easter "they diligently followed whatever pure and devout customs they learned in the prophets, the Gospels, and the writings of the Apostles."

Most of the controversy surrounded the observance of Easter, and references to this in modern works usually suggest that the Britons were unable to calculate the correct date for it. For instance Saklatvala[2] says "Christians in Britain continued to celebrate the Resurrection at a date different from that used by their fellow Christians on the continent", and Arnold[3] says "The Celtic church followed a procedure for determining the date of Easter which was different from the procedure followed by the Roman church, and gave different results." This, as we shall see, is quite unjustified.

DATING EASTER

To really understand the controversy it is necessary to know how the date of Easter is determined. The actual calendar time of Christ's crucifixion is known because the Last Supper took place on the eve of the Jewish Passover, the Crucifixion the next day (which in that particular year was the Jewish Sabbath), and the Resurrection the following day (which would be a Sunday by our reckoning). The Jewish Passover is based on the moon, and takes place on the full moon (the fourteenth day of that moon) in the Jewish month of Nisan. For brevity this is referred to as "14th Nisan". To match this date to our calendar we have to find the fourteenth day of the first moon after the 21st March. This full moon can occur on any day of the week and vary over about five weeks. Easter Sunday is then the first Sunday after that full moon, and can occur on any Sunday from March 22nd to April 25th.



During the early years of Christianity Easter was celebrated on the Passover anniversary on whatever day of the week it happened to fall. This must also have been the case in Rome, for in AD 143 Pope Pius decreed that Easter Day be changed from the fourteenth day of the moon to the subsequent Sunday. The churches of Asia would not agree to this change and in AD 197 Pope Victor threatened to excommunicate the Eastern bishops who followed their own rule. Polycarp, Bishop of Ephesus, refused to change, saying that they had ever observed that day according to the Scriptures and the examples of SS Philip and John and his seven ancestors before him.

EASTER TABLES

The Roman church found the correct date for Easter Sunday by the use of Easter Tables. These consisted of a series of one-line entries of about eight items, beginning with the AD number of the year and leading through various notes about the state of the moon to the date of "Nisan 14" and thus to the date on which Easter Sunday was to be observed in that year. Once a number of years had been completed it was possible to project the calculations forward to cover hundreds of years into the future.

At the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 it was ordered that tables on the nineteen year basis should be standard and that all Roman churches should observe Easter in accordance with these tables. Several different sets of tables were calculated during the centuries, perhaps the best known of which were those of Dionysius Exiguus in 525 based on a nineteen year cycle of Alexandria.

Bede mentions that at the time of the Synod of Whitby (AD 664) these tables were just about to reach their end. It seems that the Roman prelates were quite mesmerised by these tables, and regarded them as so marvellous and recondite that no-one could hold Easter without recourse to them. Actually of course any pastoral community which regularly observed the movements of the moon and stars could work out the date of "Nisan 14" from year to year with no difficulty.

In some modern accounts of the controversy between the Britons and Romans concerning Easter one will find lengthy discussions of reasons why the Britons did not have the correct tables and thus could not calculate the correct date for Easter Sunday; the implication being that they observed Easter at quite different dates from those the Romans did. There is absolutely no foundation for this view. In all the accounts of the disputes given by Bede--Augustine and the British bishops, Archbishop Laurence and the Scots, Wilfrid at the Synod of Whitby, and Ceolfrid's letter to Nechtan, king of the Picts--the complaint of the Romans was that the Britons kept Easter from the 14th to the 20th day of the moon instead of from the 15th to the 21st. In short it is obvious that the Britons calculated the same "Nisan 14" but differed from the Romans by one day in their observance of Easter day. In any year when Nisan 14 fell on a weekday both Britons and Romans would celebrate Easter Sunday together on the first Sunday after that day. But in the years when Nisan 14 itself fell on a Sunday the Britons would observe that day as Easter Sunday whilst the Romans waited until the following Sunday. Not only would there be two Easter

Sundays, seven days apart, but also Palm Sunday and specified days of fast, etc, would be repeated at different times.

It should be observed here that Easter Sunday could only fall on the exact lunar anniversary of the Resurrection day if Nisan 14 fell on a Friday. In the years when the Britons observed Easter Sunday on Nisan 14 and the Romans observed it a week later the Britons were two days in advance of the exact anniversary and the Romans five days after it.

THE SYNOD OF WHITBY

It was the confusion caused by the celebration of Easter Sunday on two consecutive Sundays at the court of King Oswy of Northumbria which lead to the Synod of Whitby in AD 664. Oswy and NOrthumbria had been converted to Christianity by Aidan and Ninian from Scotland who followed the British customs, but when Oswy married Eanfled who came from Kent, she brought with her a priest from Kent, and followed the Roman teachings. Bede says "The confusion in those days was such that Easter was sometimes kept twice in one year, so that when the King had ended Lent and was keeping Easter, the Queen and her attendants were still fasting and keeping Palm Sunday". Bede's use of the word "sometimes" and account of the seven days' difference between the two Easters exactly fits the circumstances of a year when Nisan 14 was on a Sunday, as outlined above. This kind of situation is not unique. In AD 445 the Roman and Alexandrian Easters were exactly seven days apart. Mervyn Stockwood in his recent autobiography[4] reports on his visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1963: "Worse still, the Eastern Churches have a different calendar from ours, so when I was invited by the Roman Catholic Patriarch to sit next to him at High Mass on Easter Day, others were celebrating Palm Sunday."

However, Oswy was determined to have the matter settled one way or the other, and called a Synod at Whitby in AD 664 where representatives from each side stated their case. Oswy finally decided in favour of the Roman side, after which all the British churches slowly and unwillingly adopted the Roman usages.

The arguments brought forward on each side may be read in Bede (III 25) but some of the statements of Bishop Colman, who spoke for the British customs, are interesting. He said that

> "his Easter customs were taught to him by his superiors ... all our forefathers observed them ... it is recorded that they owe their origin to St John."

This is very similar to the answer given by Polycarp to Pope Vicotr in AD 197.

Wilfrid, replying for the Roman church, agreed that John had followed the Eastern custom, beginning Easter on the fourteenth day, on whatever day it fell, but St Peter when at Rome had introduced the 15th to 21st day observance.

Colman then asked whether they were wrong to follow Anatolius, who wrote that Easter should be kept between the 14th and 20th days of the moon. Wilfrid replied that Colman did not understand and follow Anatolius correctly as he calculated by the Egyptian method and actually referred to the 15th and 21st days.

Colman's reference to Anatolius is significant. St Anatolius was bishop to Laodicea and died about AD 282. He wrote a treatise on the calculation of Easter by the nineteen year

cycle; and a book has been found in Britain entitled Liber Anatoli de ratione Paschali which is thought to have been written in England or Iona about AD 580-600.[5] It would thus appear that the Britons did have a guide to dating Easter according to the nineteen year cycle, despite frequent assertions that they did not.

THE GAULISH CONNECTION

We see that the British church observed Easter in a manner which had been abandoned by the Roman church hundreds of years before Augustine arrived, and from Colman's statement was heavily influenced by ideas from the Eastern churches. When and whence did Britain receive Christianity? The British version is that in about AD 185 King Lucius wrote to Pope Eleutherus asking him to send Christian teachers to Britain, which he did, with the result that king and country were converted.

There is, however, another possibility. In southern France (Gaul) there was a very large Christian church with several bishoprics, headed by Bishop Irenaeus of Vienne. These Christians were quite separate from the Roman church, and claimed to have received their Christianity direct from the Apostles. They held St John to be the source of their Christianity and followed many Eastern customs. Irenaeus was a close friend of Polycarp of Ephesus. If British Christianity came from the Gaulish church it would explain why Colman almost repeated Polycarp's reply to Pope Victor, why he claimed that the British Easter customs originated from St John, and why he claimed to follow the Eastern bishop Anatolius.

This does not necessarily invalidate the Eleutherus/Lucius story, for Eleutherus may not have sent teachers direct from Rome to Britain, but could have asked Irenaeus to send some from the Gaulish church. There could have been many reasons for this. Perhaps Romans were not keen on going to the wild and dangerous Britons, the Gauls and Britons had some useful racial affinities, perhaps only among the Gauls could be found teachers who understood the Celtic language, perhaps Eleutherus did not want to leap-frog over the Gaulish church. In AD 197, when Polycarp refused to give up his Easter customs, Irenaeus sent a letter to the Pope saying that he was willing to conform to Rome.[6] It would appear therefore that if British Christianity came from Gaul it was before Irenaeus adopted the Roman Easter, and so could have arrived around the time the Lucius story says it did.

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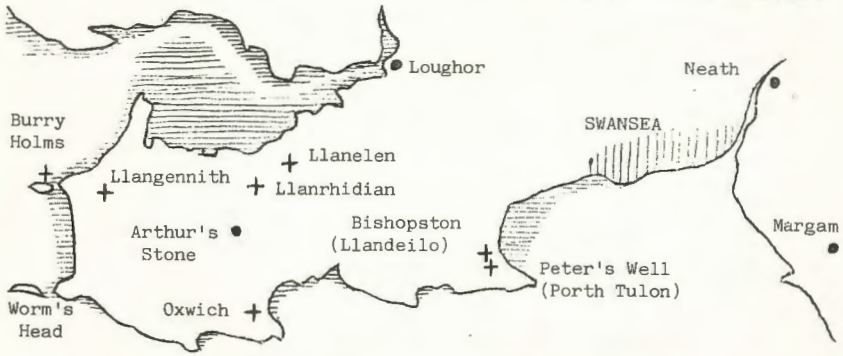
# of digs, wells and butter bells

PADDY STONE



The district of Wales known as the Gower according to legend owes its name Guyr (Guhir) to a virgin (gwyry). She was named Dulon, was immolated ie killed in sacrifice to Saint Dubricius by her father Guorduc. She was then consecrated as a nun by Dubricius!

This "saint" had strong links with Germanus (Germans, Garmon), Bishop of Auxerre, who was sent to Britain in 429 AD, and again in 444 or 447, to stamp out the Pelagian heresy, which he did quite ruthlessly. A grant of land was given to Archbishop Dubricius of Porth Tulon, in the region of Guhir, and in a Bull of Calixtus the name is given as Lann Teiliau Portulon. Llan Teiliau Portulan is likely to be Caswell Chapel, now Llandeilo Ferwallt, or Bishopston, in Gower.

Llanrhidian, the district in which the Pendragon Llanelen dig is taking place, is named after Trinihid, said to be St Iltut's wife. Iltut is also thought to be a disciple of Germanus, and he left his wife to become a teacher and holy man. The story goes that Trinihid was a most chaste woman, who led a single life after her husband separated from her. She chose a place to dwell, constructing a cell, and an oratory. Her time was spent in prayer and doing good works, relieving the needy and supporting widows and nuns. Trinihid did not eat until the ninth hour when she partook of barley bread and water.

One day she went to see her husband, Iltut, but the man she saw digging and looking dirty was far different from the handsome soldier she once knew. Iltut did not speak to Trinihid when she called him, and she lost her sight as a punishment for her uncalled-for visit. However, she soon regained her sight, but her face was pallid as if with fever. Trinihid returned to her place and never visited the famous Iltut again, fearing to invoke his displeasure.[1]

THE BUTTER WELL

In the parish of Llanrhidian there was a holy well of Iltut referred to in the Annals of Margam, 1185:

"In the same year" (as the siege of Neath) "about the feast of John the Baptist an extraordinary thing happened not far from the said castle (Neath). In the district known as Gower in a villa named Llanrhidian on Wednesday there was a copious flow of milk lasting about three hours from a certain fountain, which the inhabitants of the place called the fountain of St Iltut. Several persons who were there state that they saw with wonder the well continue to pour forth milk while butter was forming on the edge of the spring."

(Which is rather similar to the three drops of milk which fell into the open mouth of St Bernard of Clairvaux from the breast of the Black Madonna of Chatillon. Margam Abbey, south east of Port Talbot, was founded in 1147 by Robert Earl of Gloucester as a direct colony of Clairvaux.)

THE BUTTER BELL

On a steep hill leading to Llandaff, Cardiff, was a ffynnon (well, fountain) of St Teilo. The legend of the butter washed in this well, and changed into a gilt bell (cow-bell?), preserved in Llandaff Cathedral in the Middle Ages, goes as follows:

"A maide clene
clansede her boter bi a welles streme
sein telyon her bed him zuf drink anon...
& in form of a bell ye boter togader clange...
in ye church a landaf thulk vessel is."

(Compare St Bridget milking her cow on the top of Glastonbury Tor. These old dun cows usually disappear into lakes when they are called by their mistress. Does she ring a butter bell?)

THE TITTY BELL

King Arthur was holding his court at Loughor, and a baby a few days old was brought to him. The child (Cenydd, or Kenneth) was crippled in one leg, and had been born from an incestuous relationship--a father had seduced his own daughter. Arthur's counsellors advised him that such a child conceived in this way must be evil and therefore should be killed, but Arthur decided that "God" alone should decree the child's destiny. The baby was put in a wicker cradle and placed in the River Loughor.

A great gale blew that night and the cradle was smashed to pieces off Worm's Head. The little mite was saved from death by the deagulls, who caught him in their talons and carried him to the top of the cliffs, making a bed of their own feathers to protect the baby from the weather. This lasted for an "octave", or eight days.

On the ninth day an angel from heaven, carrying a great brass bell, came to the baby, and placed the bell by him. The bell had a breast, and when the child needed milk he sucked the bell. Years later the bell was kept in the chapel at Burry Holms and it was called by the local people the Titty Bell.

A hind then appeared at Worm's Head, who suckled the child. Later the angel appeared again and told Cenydd to eat five herbs which grew there, and to stay at Worm's Head until he

received further instructions.

Eighteen years passed and Cenydd crossed from Worm's Head, at low water, to the mainland, where he found a spring and made his dwelling of rocks at Burry Holms. The name of Saint Cenydd remains at the village of Llangennith.[2]

NOTES

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2. Showell Styles, Welsh Walks and Legends (Mayflower-Granada)
R D Webster, "The Peculiar Geometry of the Gower" (1981) in Pendragon XIV 4. The Titty Bell was kept at the chapel, Burry Holms, at the apex of the Christian and Pre-Christian Sites I triangles, with Llanelen and Oxwich castle/church.

Letter

* From P R Dearing Lambert,
* Nuneaton:

I was vastly intrigued by Roger Webster's "The Horse at Badon" (Summer '82, Vol XV No 3).
I enclose a copy of a letter of mine in The Guardian (4.6.83):

"I have interested myself for some time in the question of whether stirrups were known to the Romans, or...at least to the heavy cavalry of the late Eastern Empire. My edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica asserts that the stirrup was introduced into Europe by Charles Martel in AD 730... In Travel in the Ancient World, Lionel Casson asserts (it) "did not come into use in Europe until the ninth century AD." Asked about it last year the Professor of Roman History at Oxford University confirmed this orthodox view.

By contrast virtually every modern fictional account of King Arthur represents him as a Romano-British leader of a small force of heavy cavalry using the stirrup... Alfred Duggan started it in Conscience of the King.

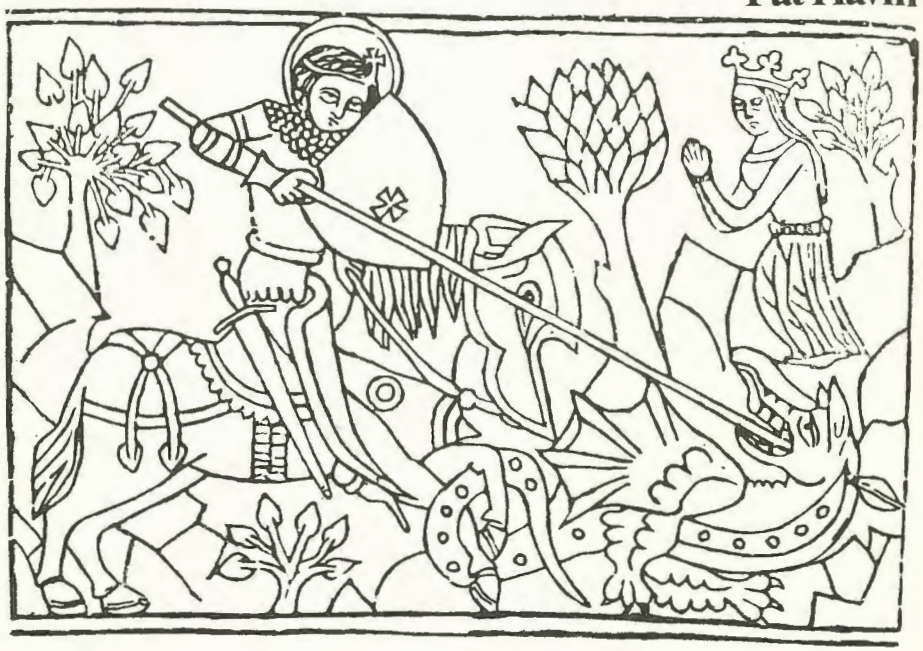
Duggan rightly perceived that the weakness of this hypothesis is the unlikelihood of the availability in these islands of suitably large horses... Historians are to blame for emphasising the military importance of the stirrup (putting it, instead of a cart, before the horse)..."

You will see that I do not share Mr Webster's view of the question of stirrups as "vexed and tedious"...

* Any comments? Our correspondent would like to hear of references to work done in the past along these lines.

The Flying Foxes of Glamorgan

Pat Havill



Stories of dragons must be amongst the most wide-spread of any told in Britain. In Wales, of course, the dragon is familiar in his heraldic form of a four-legged, winged beast, and the story of how this became the emblem of the Principality is part of our folk-lore. It commences with Lludd and his brother Llevelys and the burial of the sleeping red and white dragons in a strong place so that "no plague shall come to the Island of Britain from elsewhere". The rousing and subsequent combat of these dragons led to the acquaintance of Vortigern and Merlin, and so to the legends of King Arthur.

Here in the Vale of Glamorgan we appear to have once bred a unique race of dragons, or more accurately "winged serpents". Perhaps a transition between the "worm" and "flying lizard" types of so many stories. Unlike the majority of dragon stories, there are in the Vale no traditions of a local hero sallying forth to do battle with a nightmare adversary. No overtones of good overcoming evil, of Christianity triumphant over the "ancient religion". Our winged serpents were not big enough apparently to terrorise maiden or man, they had not a puff of smoke between them, and they appear to have been exterminated merely because of their being "as bad as foxes for poultry".

These stories also differ from the more familiar type in that they are not set in the medieval atmosphere where religion and witchcraft were intermingled. but were recorded at the beginning of this century. One old man who died only a few years before the end of the nineteenth century speaks of them as being regarded as vermin by the farming population. He lived at Penllyne in the Vale of Glamorgan and is recorded as relating that in his boyhood the woods around Penllyne Castle were frequented by these winged serpents. He described them as being very beautiful. They were coiled when resting, and "looked as though they were covered with jewels of all sorts. Some of them had crests sparkling with all the colours of the rainbow". When disturbed, they would not attack but glided swiftly away "sparkling all over" to their hiding place. When angry, they "flew over people's heads with out-spread wings bright, and sometimes eyes, too, like the feathers in a peacock's tail."

An old woman who was taken on visits to Penmark Place in her early childhood recalled many people talking of the ravages of winged serpents in that area. She described them as being very similar to those seen by the old man at Penlynne. There was a "King and Queen" in the woods around Penmark, and "more of them in the woods around Bewper" (Beaupre). Stories were told that whenever these creatures were to be seen, there "was sure to be buried money or something of value" near by.

Her grandfather told a story of an encounter with one of these beautiful creatures at Porthkerry Park. He and his brother "made up their minds to catch one, and watched a whole day for the serpent to rise. Then they shot at it and the creature fell wounded, only to rise and attack my uncle, beating him about the head with its wings". After a fierce fight the serpent was killed and the skin and feathers kept as trophies. She had seen these, but after the grandfather's death they were thrown away. That serpent was notorious "as any fox" in the farmyards and covens around Penmark.

Despite its association with Celtic saints and its famous monastery, Llancarfan also had a reputation for being haunted by winged serpents and other reptiles, while the neighbouring parish of St Donat's was clear of any of these vermin. Tradition says that they could not penetrate here, for in long ages past Irish earth was mingled with the soil!

Dragonesque ribbon-animal from a cross-shaft, Penally, Pembrokeshire (now Dyfed): after Nash-Williams

The Weeting Knife

PK Johnstone

The Weeting Knife is far less well-known than, for instance, the Stone of Scone, the Loch Ness Monster, the Lia Fail, which is still on Tara Hill, or Stonehenge. It is a tiny thing, just two and a quarter inches long. Yet its significance outweighs all the others by far. It is a relic of a battle that most "authorities" on early English history have never heard of: the Battle of Stamford. Not Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire in 1066, where King Harold Godwineson wiped out the Norse invading army of Harald Sigurdsson Hardrada, but Stamford on the River Welland in the extreme south of Lincolnshire.

This battle was fought in the late summer of AD 429. It was not a great battle in the numbers involved. J B Bury estimated that the greater Continental battles of the Dark Ages involved about 20,000 men on each side (certainly too low a number for Catalaunian Plains, Nedao and Adrianople). At Stamford-on-Welland, since it was the climactic battle of a desperately contested war involving the Irish, the Scots (then called Picts), English and Welsh it is barely possible that if all who fought there that day had been lined up and counted, the total on BOTH sides might have come to 10,000. I doubt it very much. I would suggest about a thousand Irish and five thousand Picts--six thousand men in all--on one side against, at most, about twelve hundred English and three or four thousand Welsh.

A mere skirmish? Of course, if numbers are all you look at. But all Britain then held possibly two million people, while in 1970 it was 54 million.

But the really important fact here is that what is referred to as "the working classes" or "the lower classes", or "the masses" (them asses) TOOK NO PART IN WAR. War was then truly the sport of kings and their retainers, well-born gentlemen (some of them in extremely reduced circumstances) eager to recite their pedigrees (real or invented) over some alcoholic beverage at such length that no one but the speaker would be awake when he triumphantly reached its conclusion, "the son of the Red Lion, the son of the Wren" or perhaps "... the daughter of Finnabair, the daughter of Medb", for many folk still preferred maternal descent. There were no recruiting sergeants, no nonsense about "Your Country Needs You". In war, the Common Man was expected to stay out of his betters' way, and in most cases he was happy to oblige. So one man then was worth a thousand now. (This is undeniable. See The Origin of the English Nation by H Munro Chadwick, published in 1924 and still not fully understood, even by his pupils.)

This is the basis for my claim that the Battle of Stamford-on-Welland is the main reason that we THINK we speak English today. As against this, a case can be made for the weary feet of St Augustine of Canterbury at Chester in 603, but we will not go into that. Our actual ancestry has very little to do with the language we speak, as the presence of blacks should remind us.

(By the merest accident I know a large portion of my ancestry --have no fear; I am not going to give you even a smidgeon of

it. My point is that a few of my ancestors, on the day that King Edward the Confessor was alive and dead, were able, if urgently called upon, to say a few words of what they would have stoutly insisted was English. Does this make me an Anglo-Saxon? Certainly not. According to the tale they told (and their neighbors agreed with them) they had come, not from Angeln in Schleswig but straight from Hell, and they could point to the hole where they had emerged, now the Devil's Beef Tub at the head of Annan Water in Dumfriesshire.)

Enough of that. We are dealing with the Battle of Stamford, and I do not think any of my forebears had any part in it. If they did, they would have been counted as Welshmen, Britons, Cymry.

I am going to totally eliminate footnotes, and hold references to sources to an irreducible minimum. But the Weeting Knife, despite its importance, is so little known that an exception has to be made.

The Weeting Knife was a "surface find" (it was not dug up) at Weeting in Norfolk, England. It was published for the first time in The Antiquaries Journal, XXXII (1952) 71f, attracting very little attention, even among the learned. Like Sherlock Holmes' "incident of the dog in the night time" (who did nothing), a certain amount of elementary ratiocination is required, plus the knowledge of a few facts.

Being (a) bone-lazy, and (b) apparently sick unto death, I left its explication to others--who apparently turned out to be either lazier, sicker or more stupid than myself (all three possibilities extremely hard to believe). Eighteen years have passed and with them my weariness and sickness. Instead of being eighteen years older, I feel several thousand years younger. So now I take up the challenge.

Let me give warning--this is not going to be simple. We have to explore an enormously complicated series of events, extending from Denmark to Connacht and from the Shetlands to what is now the Ukraine. On the other hand, this quest leads us back to a younger world, a barbarian world in which men cared very little for the twin gods of modern mankind--Money and Sex. Of course they could be greedy and they could be lustful: they were our ancestors, however much they may writhe at the thought. But they were far more concerned with such archaic concepts as courage and honor, truth and loyalty...

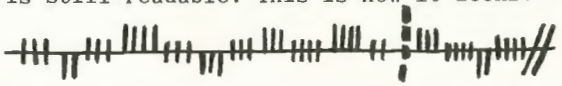
The words are still current, even if what they stand for has been forgotten. Attila the Hun, St Augustine of Hippo and his far greater rival, Pelagius the Heresiarch--all men of the Fifth Century--however bitterly they were divided, took those things seriously. For example, there was a Gothic king, probably a heathen, for Christians still remembered not to curse, who hated Attila so bitterly that he went to the length of having a bracteate (a medal like a very large coin) struck of pure gold, inscribed with runes reading

HAIUHAH AITILA FAUAUISA GIBUANA

("Be hanged, Attila of few gifts!"). It was his very carefully considered opinion that Attila should hang, "ride Wodan's horse", because he was not generous. St Augustine is known to have bribed bishops with fine riding-horses to cast their votes against Pelagius on the question of whether grace--the ability

to do the right thing at the right time--was a faculty potential in all men everywhere, as Pelagius insisted, or was given to only a few men, at the undeserved whim of an inscrutable God, as Augustine thundered. Men actually took such things SERIOUSLY in the Fifth Century. They were willing to bribe and willing to kill for such considerations. Heathen and Christian alike, they were willing not only to kill but equally if not more willing to take their chances of being killed, not for lebensraum, not for the dictatorship of the proletariat, not for Freud or Marx or Hitler but for concepts of honor and righteousness. I like that.

Back to the Weeting Knife, which is now, I suppose, in the Cambridge Ethnological Museum, of which my friend Tom Lethbridge, of happy memory, was once Curator. It is the handle of a sgian dub, or in the orthography of the Sassenach, a skene duff, a "black (deadly) dagger", very handy at close quarters. It was cut from the tine of a Red Deer antler, and fitted to an iron blade which has almost completely rusted away. While it was still a very useful weapon, a message was scratched into the bone, and is still readable. This is how it looks:



These marks are Ogam letters, the craft of the old Celtic god, Ogmios. Until very recently it was an accepted archaeological doctrine that these letters were invented in Munster (Gaelic Mumu, Mumain) in the south of Ireland about AD 200. Now, thanks to Prof Barry Fell, a Harvard marine biologist (now being given a rough time for stepping outside his proper niche), in his epochal book, America BC (1978), the claim made by the Book of Ballymote that Ogams are far older has been fully established by Fell and his co-workers. In their earlier, purely consonantal form, Ogams have been found in Spain, Portugal and New England.

The Ogam nicks on the skene-handle spell a perfectly understandable if archaic Gaelic sentence:

ULUCU VUTE COVU MI TELEG.

In order to make it easier for modern, Sassenach-speaking Gaels, I will repeat it in modernized spelling:

ULUC FADA CU MI TULACH.

Easy, eh? Never mind, I will explain--a little leter. In the meanwhile, keep recalling that Weeting is in West Norfolk, which may well have been a part of Gaedeltacht in the Bronze Age, before 800 BC, but never since. But the Weeting Knife is not THAT old, or it would run: *ULC VT CVM TLQU.

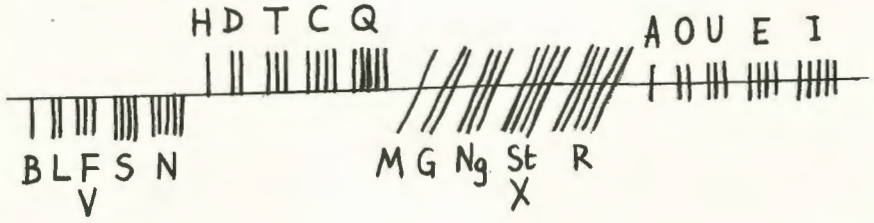
The Weeting Knife has a story to tell, and it has told it to me, just as the White Goddess told her story to Robert Graves as he held a West African obeah figure and as the monks of medieval Glastonbury told theirs to Bligh Bond, and other folk of the far past still very much alive on another plane are now telling their stories to General Scott Elliott. This is not the first such mystery that I have solved, nor even the tenth. I will cite only one. In his Window to the Past Hans Holzer has told how I guided him to the lost grave of King Cerdic of Wessex. Then, I dreamed the solution. I needed no dream to solve the Weeting Knife, nor (I think) any ESP. It was simply a matter of putting a large number of disparate bits of information together.

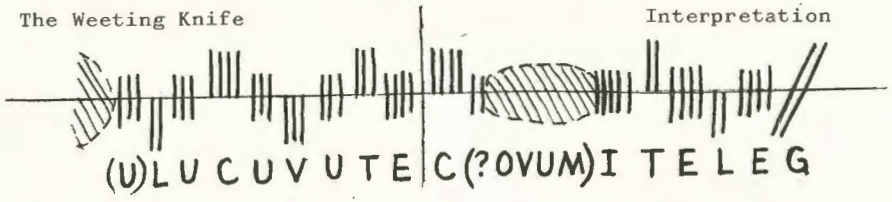
(This article will be concluded in a future issue.)

Paul Karlsson Johnstone, 5310 N Euclid, St Louis MO 63115, USA is the author of: The Rusted Blade (1948), Up, Red Dragon! (1950), The Real King Arthur (1967), Escape from Attila (1969) and the articles "A Consular Chronology of Dark Age Britain" in Antiquity (1962), "Why Rome Fell" in Harper's, "King Arthur's Silverware" in Stonehenge Viewpoint (1979) and "Origins of the Norse Pantheon" in The Dragon (1979).

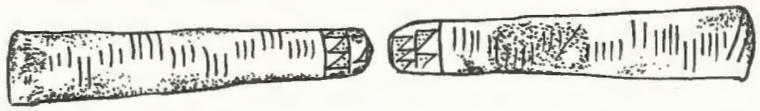
The article in The Antiquaries Journal is a note by Mr R Rainbird Clarke, FSA: "An Ogham inscribed knife-handle from south-west Norfolk" (71-3 and Plate XXIII). The finder, Mr R F Parrott, presented it to Norwich Castle Museum in 1950.

The Ogham "alphabet":





Knife handle alignments:



1 2

ARTHUR of the North

S. BANKS

"King Arthur lies in
merrie Carlisle"
--from a ballad in
Percy's Reliques

In front of a NO SMOKING sign writ large and clear, the Chairman of the Friends of Whitehaven Museum endeavoured to light a pipe of heroic proportions. The room slowly filled with smoke, and also with people as the Friends of the Museum, and also their own friends, gathered for the evening's lecture. The Curator called for extra chairs, which were borne in with smothered oaths by aged men dressed as museum attendants. Only twenty minutes after the advertised time, it was announced that Mr Thomas Clare, the Cumbrian County Archaeologist, would speak about "King Arthur and the Lost Kingdom of Rheged".

The audience composed itself: earnest seekers after Arthurian truth, such as myself, to listen and take notes; others, who had accompanied the aforementioned earnest seekers for various reasons unconnected with Arthur, contemplated the cases of stuffed birds ranged along the walls, or dozed fitfully.

URIEN OF RHEGED

Mr Clare developed his theory, that King Arthur was none other than King Urien of Rheged, quoting a wealth of well-chosen references. He explained to us how Urien, with the aid of his son Owain and Owain's natural son Kentigern (known to the Scots as Saint Mungo, no doubt for some good reason), advanced north and south from their homeland in the southern hinterland of the Solway Firth.

Finally, he said, they established an "empire" stretching from Strathclyde to Powys; and then they took on the Anglians of Northumbria, with only moderate success.

However, it was not conflict against the Anglians which brought down King Urien and his relations, but Christian versus Pagan dissension among the Britons, culminating in the fateful battle of Arthuret, which our lecturer placed near Caerlaverock Castle on the north shore of the Solway Firth.

ARTHUR'S CHAMBER

Having got so far, he then brought in certain north country traditions about Arthur, which may be found in a recent book.[1] Here the author postulates that the battle of Camlann took place near the lower reaches of the River Eden, perhaps around Camboglanna on the Roman Wall, now known as Birdoswald. The sorely wounded Arthur is embarked for passage round the Cumbrian coast to Ravensglass, where the walls of a Roman building still impressively

stand.

Local tradition has it that this was a bath-house adjoining a Roman fort demolished in building the coastal railway, and that it was in the Dark Ages the palace of a certain King Eveling.[2] Moreover it is identified with the Castle Perilous of medieval Arthurian lore. Certainly there is an interesting reference to it--and incidentally to Carlisle--in a charter of Henry II of about 1175 AD:

> "...near St Cuthbert's Church where stood an antient building called Arthur's Chamber... part of the mansion house of King Arthur... also other antient buildings called Lyons Yardes... remembered in the history of Arthur... the ruins whereof are yet to be seen... at Ravenglass..."

"Lyons Yardes" is translated by Carruthers into "Livan's Garde", that is to say a precinct of a Celtic water nymph. So the mystic final journey of Arthur is perhaps in the care of the sea-goddess ("white her shoulders, white as sea-foam") and her maidens, to Avalon the blessed land where heroes live immortally.

While in Carlisle for a day I looked for a possible site of Arthur's Chamber. Recent excavations[3] have established that Carlisle was not abandoned after the Romans left, as had been accepted from literary sources, but a focus of settlement remained around St Cuthbert's Church. The "mansion house" may well have been across the Roman road from St Cuthbert's Church, on the site of the present Crown and Mitre hotle, or the former Angel Inn adjoining now occupied by a radio shop.

But what of Mr Clare's theory that pins the Arthur of popular northern tradition to a specific historical character, namely Urien of Rheged?

DISCREPANCY

The main objection is in the dates: Urien died at Lindisfarne in 585 AD, says Carruthers, and the Welsh Annals give 537 as the date of the battle of Camlann, at which "Arthur and Mordred fell". It would require a competent historian to comment further, but I did observe that Mr Clare passed over the discrepancy with a dismissive wave of the hand.

And he did not make it clear to me if he considers the battles of Arthuret and Camlann to be the same event, only commenting that Camlann is not listed as one of Arthur's battles in the Historia Brittonum. Moreover Merlin is said to have been present at Arthuret, which adds another dimension to the problem of dating.

With regard to the notable expansion of Rheged, upon which the fame of Urien/Arthur depends, this is not attested in the standard historical works which I have consulted. For example, Peter Hunter Blair in his Roman Britain and Early England (Nelson 1963) simply reads on page 154 "...kingdom of Rheged, comprising parts of south west Scotland and possibly parts of Cumberland..."

TITLE

Towards the end of his thought-provoking talk, Mr Clare said that the bards who moved south out of Rheged into Wales, under Anglo-Saxon pressure, called King Urien "Arthur" meaning "the Bear of the North". In thinking about this, it seems possible to me that "Arthur" may indeed have first been a title given to more than one hero, rather than the original name of an individual. After all, the

oracular priestess at Cuma was called "The Sybil", and this former title is now a name given to many girl babies. So the title of Arthur applied to a succession of "Bears" may have become the Christian name known to have been given among the princely families of Wales from late in the 6th century.

NOTES

1. F J Carruthers People Called Cumbri (Lowe and Brydone 1979)
2. ibid p 92-92. "Eveling" has been equated with "Avalon/, and going somewhat further with "Avalloc" a Celtic god of the afterworld
3. Mike McCarthy Carlisle: a Frontier City (Carlisle City Council 1980)

Below Arthur's Chamber, from a photo by Steven Banks.

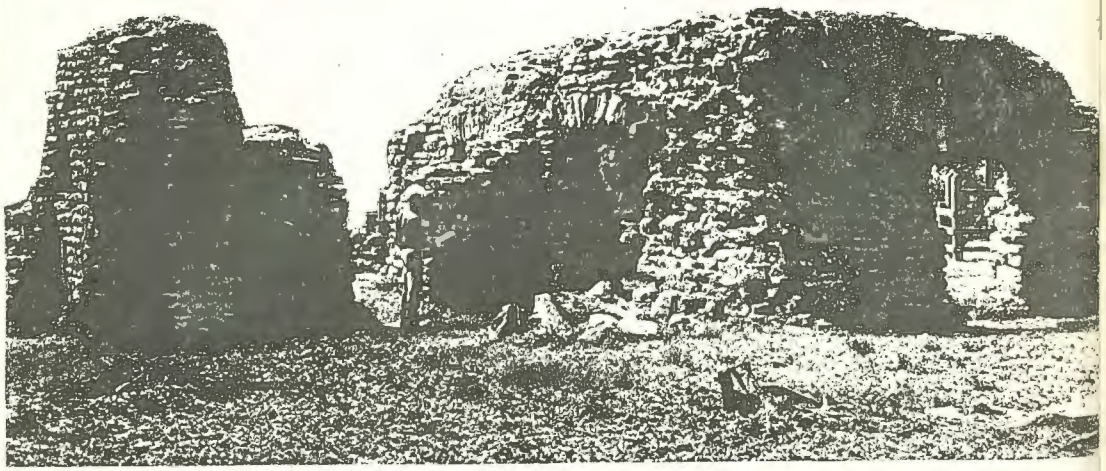
STOP PRESS

Researcher Dr Sidney Hart has announced a competition for the best essay on why a faculty of Arthurian Studies should be set up at a West Country university. The winning essay, which should be 20,000 words long with illustrations, maps and tables, would be eligible for a prize of £1000 if submitted before July 31st 1986.

He is to publish One in Specyal et al: Immortalizers of King Arthur on September 3rd at £5.95, from his own firm, Three Golden Crowns (Y Bwlch, Evancoyd, Presteigne, Powys).

On the same day, the Post Office is to issue four new stamps on Arthurian themes, including King Arthur & Merlin (17p) and The Lady of the Lake (22p), to designs by Yvonne Gilbert. Like Dr Hart's enterprise, this is to mark the 500th anniversary of the printing of Malory's Morte D'Arthur.

(Bristol Evening Post, "The Round Table and a chair..." by Paul Fluck 31.7.85, and The Times 17.7.85: Kate Pollard and Peter Ratazzi.)



THE PLANTARD GRAIL. PAUL SMITH.

Just exactly what led Pierre Plantard to form the Priory of Sion in 1956 might never be known. The original statutes of the organisation were first deposited at the Sub-Prefecture in Saint-Julien-en-Genvois on May 7th 1956.

Under Article Two the statutes declare that the Priory of Sion has the subtitle C.I.R.C.U.I.T.[1], it being also the name of the organisation's companion magazine, which was described as the Bulletin of Information of the Organisation for the Defence and Rights of Liberty for Low-Cost Homes. The first issue (with its maiden article entitled "First Steps...") is dated 27th May 1956.

Curiously, the magazine describes itself as being issued from Sous-Cassan, Annemasse, which is near the Swiss border and close to Geneva. Why did Plantard choose this geographical location to form his organisation? And why the importance behind the name of CIRCUIT?

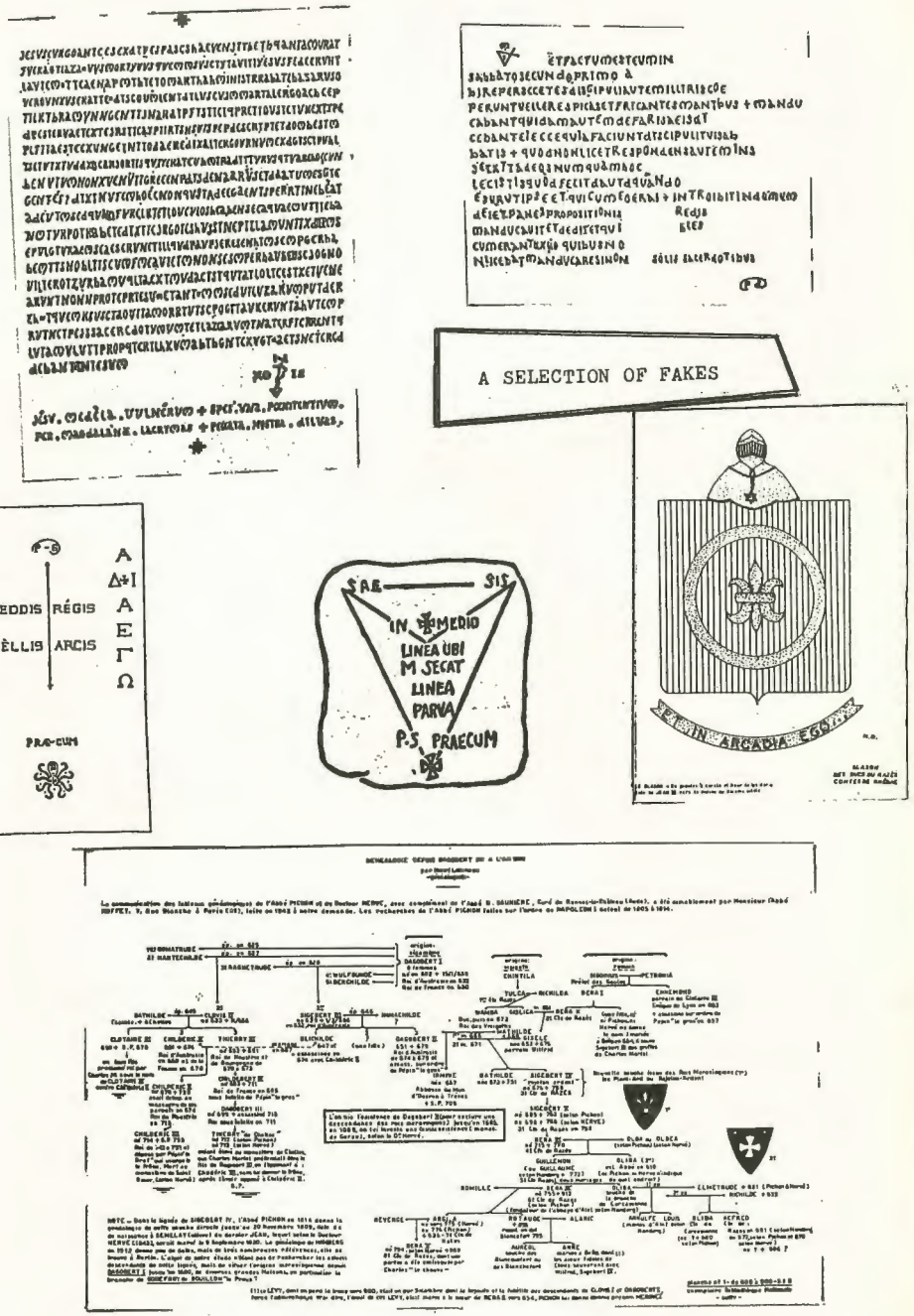
The answer is provided in The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, where Perceval's origins are analysed. According to Chrétien de Troyes' account, Perceval was born in "Scaudone" or "Sinadon". According to Wolfram von Eschenbach's account, Parzival came from "Waleis". It so transpires that "Scaudone" and "Sinadon" are both names alluding to Sidonensis, the modern name of which is Sion--the capital of the Valais in Switzerland on the shores of Lake Leman to the east of Geneva ("Waleis" being Valais).

The region in question is indeed both mountainous and is inhabited by French-speaking people. However, the credibility of the authors' research ability is called into question when reading the next paragraph of their book, where it is claimed that Der Junge Titurel was Wolfram von Eschenbach's "most ambitious work", when in fact it was written by Albrecht von Scharffenberg in 1270![2]

The Priory of Sion made the following declaration of its existence during the week of July 20th 1956 to the French government publication Journal Officiel (Number 167):

> "June 25th, 1956. Declaration to the Sub-Prefecture of Saint-Julien-en-Genevois. Priory of Sion. Objectives: studies and mutual aid to members. Head Office: Sous-Cassan, Annemasse, Haute Savoie."

A second series of CIRCUIT appeared in 1959, described as being the Cultural Periodical of the French Forces' Federation. So far, there is no indication that Pierre Plantard knew anything about the Rennes-le-Château mystery. Indeed, accord-



ing to the Priory of Sion's original statutes it was a right-wing Catholic organisation deriving its name from the Montagne de Sion in Haute Savoie, where they planned to build a centre.

In 1961 Pierre Plantard wrote a letter of enquiry to Gerard de Sède asking him if he would be willing to write about the Gisors mystery[3], using him as an authority. The result was Gerard de Sède's 1962 book The Templars Are Among Us. It was in that book that the early mythological history of the Priory of Sion first began to be formulated[4]. In short, Plantard had "ambushed" the Gisors mystery and had tried to weave it into his organisation's mythology.

In 1962 there appeared a book by Robert Charroux entitled Treasures Of The World, which contained a chapter on the mystery of Rennes-le-Château. Two years later, the very first Priory Document made its appearance in the Bibliothèque Nationale. It was entitled "Genealogy of the Merovingian kings and origins of various French and foreign famillea of Merovinvingian roots according to Abbé Pichon, Dr Hervé and the Abbé Saunière's parchments, he being of Rennes-le-Château (Aude)".

This work contained detailed genealogies concerning the survival of the line of King Dagobert II, which had intermarried with most of Europe's noble families--but that the true lineal descent had been preserved by the House of Plantard (FALSE)[4]. Of more interest however was the short essay entitled "The Enigma of Rhedae", which gave an account of Béranger Saunière's discovery of hidden parchments (FALSE), and how he went to Paris to get them deciphered (FALSE). The same year that Priory Document was deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Philippe de Cherisey, an associate of Pierre Plantard, forged the parchments which had allegedly become discovered by Béranger Saunière. The mystery of Rennes-le-Château had been firmly embroidered within the mythology of the Priory of Sion...

During the following years about a dozen or so extra Priory Documents made their appearances in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The mythological history of the Priory of Sion became finally developed within "Les Dossiers Secrets" by Henri Lobineau, giving the Grand Master List and claiming that Godfroy de Bouillon was responsible for its origin during the Crusades[5].

Plantard's current interest is Radio Occitanie, an organisation for the defence of the distinctive culture of South-West France.[6,7]

Those who wish to find out more can write to him at 110 Rue Henri Dunant, Colombes, Paris, Hauts-de-Seine, France.

NOTES

1. Chevalerie d'Institutions et Règles Catholiques, d'union Independante et Traditionaliste ("Knighthood of Catholic Rules and Institutions of the Independent and Traditionalist Union")

2. There is no doubt that the authors of Holy Blood have here confused Scharffenberg's Der Junge Titurel with Eschenbach's fragment Titurel and mixed them both together! For the benefit of those who may be interested in the location of the Grail Castle in Scharffenberg's work, see The Grail--Quest for the

Eternal by John Matthews, pages 22-25 (Thames & Hudson, Art and Imagination series, 1981).

3. Briefly, this story concerned Roger Lhomoy, a guide employed at the ancient castle of Gisors who in 1946 reported that he had carried out unauthorised excavations beneath the castle, and had discovered a treasure. The local authorities have always denied his allegation.

4. "First Supplement: An Esotericist's Point of View--an interview with Pierre Plantard."

5. There have been a number of absurd claims over the origins of the Priory of Sion. For example in the Belgian Bonne Soirée magazine (No 3053: 14.8.80), it was claimed by the anonymous writer that the Priory of Sion was founded in 1956 by "Mgr Lefebvre, André Bonhomme, Noël Corbu and the Abbé Joseph Courtauly"(!). The Abbé Ducaud-Bourget and Georges de Nantes connections are equally ludicrous.

6. On July 10th 1984, Pierre Plantard resigned both as member and Grand Master from the Priory of Sion. Here is the complete translation of his letter of resignation:

Cahors, 11th July 1984
Pierre PLANTARD de SAINT-CLAIR
to members of the PRIORY of SION

Dearest Brothers,

Yesterday, July 10th 1984, I resigned as Gr.˙. M.˙. of the Priory of Sion, into which order, sponsored by Abbé François Ducaud-Bourget, I was initiated July 10th 1943, that is, 41 years ago. Since my election on the 17th January 1981 at Blois, I have in 3½ years taken on an enormous amount of work (and continual moves) which my state of health no longer allows me to continue.

Moreover, I resign my membership, for I do not approve certain manoeuvres by our English and American Fr.˙. and wish to keep my independence as well as that of my family.

Finally, another motive has shaped my decision, that of publication in the press, in books and in duplicated pamphlets deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale of FALSE or FALSIFIED documents concerning me (such as birth certificate, copies of Priory of Sion papers bearing signatures dating back more than 10 years--1973/1974--bracketed with my own) and also libels upon my person for which I have lodged complaint in the Nanterre court, December 10th 1983, registration no 83 355 00017.

And so it is to all you Very Dear Fr.˙. that I hereby offer my sincere friendship and my hopes in your victory in establishing a better society.

Yours devotedly,
PLANTARD.

However, on December 16th 1983, Plantard issued a communication to the members of the Priory of Sion stating that all members should keep secret their affiliation with that society, so how do we know if Plantard has really "resigned"?

The statutes of the Priory of Sion that were published in The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail are different from the original statutes of 1956 that were deposited at Saint Julien-en-Genevois. I consider the former to be complete fabrications specially prepared for that book (there is no Article XXII in the 1956 statutes).

Plantard's mythomania and subterfuge are so easy to identify even a child could spot them. Miscellany:

* July 11th 1603, Treaty of Saint-Julien, recognising Geneva's independence.
* (Jean-)Henri Dunant (1828-1910), founded the Red Cross in 1864; founder of the World's Young Men's Christian Association; co-winner of the first Nobel Prize for Peace in 1901; paved the way for the first Geneva Convention.
* The Abbé François DUCAUD-BOURGET died on June 12th 1984.

7. A selection of "Prieuré Documents", as deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, in chronological order, according to Brigitte Picheral (Chief Curator of the Depôt-Legal Administration).

Henri LOBINEAU
Généalogie des Rois Mérovingiens et origine des diverses familles Françaises et étrangères de souche Mérovingienne, d'après l'Abbé Pichon, le Docteur Hervé et les parchemins de l'Abbé Saunière de Rennes-le-Château (Aude)
Depositor and date: Henri Lobineau; 18.1.1964

Anne-Lea HISLER
Rois et gouvernants de la France.
Depositor and date: A L Hisler; 25.2.1965

Madeleine BLANCASALL
Les descendants Mérovingingiens ou L'Enigma du Razès Wisigoth
Depositor and date: Alpina; 26.8.1965

Antoine L'ERMITE
Tresor Mérovingien à Rennes-le-Château
Depositor and date: Vie; 13.5.1966

Eugene STUBLEIN
Pierre Gravée du Languedoc
Depositor and date: Abbé Joseph Courtaly; 20.6.1966

Pierre FEUGÈRE, Louis SAINT-MAXENT, Gaston de KOKER
Le Serpent Rouge
Depositor and date: P Feugère; 17.3.1967

Henri LOBINEAU
Les Dossiers Secrets
Depositor and date: P Toscan du Plantier; 27.4.1967

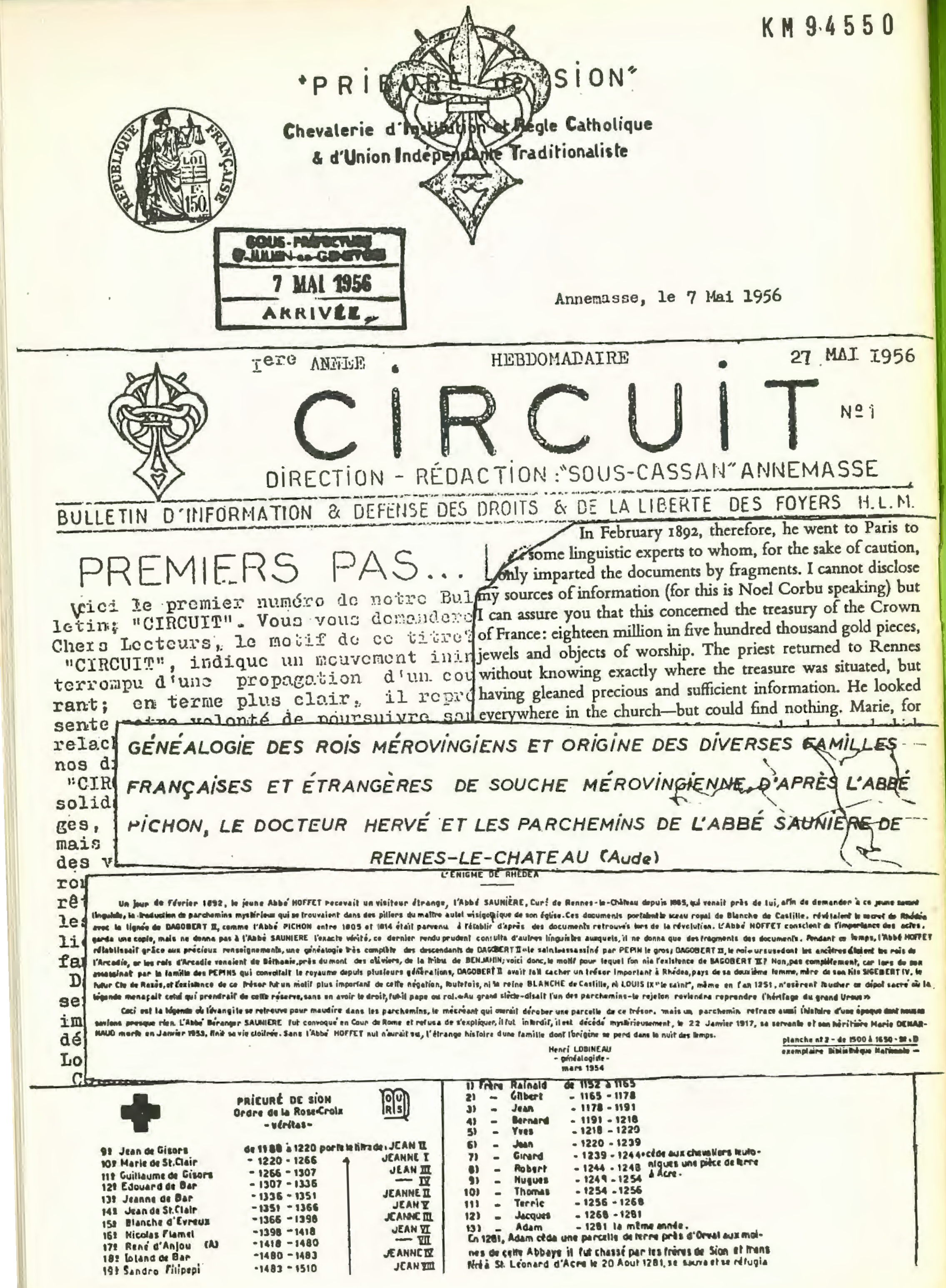
Nicholas BEAUCEAN
Au pays de la Reine Blanche
Depositor and date: P de Cherisey; 30.10.1967

Anne-Lea HISLER
Trésor au pays de la Reine Blanche
Depositor and date: A L Hisler 7.11.1969

Philippe de CHERISEY
Circuit
Depositor and date: P de Cherisey: 28.6.1971

Jean DELAUDE
Le Cercle d'Ulysse
Depositor and date: Jean Delaude; 4.8.1977

...DÉCOUVRIR UNE A UNE LES SOIXANTE QUATRE PIERRES...



NOGOD'S LAND

Seville Cathedral, the afternoon before Shrove Tuesday. A crowd of people are gathered before the High Altar (largest altar in the world, two tons of gold leaf, if anyone cares). Tall tapers are lit--eight groups of three. Some priests in rich vestments file solemnly in. A monstrance is placed above the altar. Incense, a verse of Vexilla Regis, versicles and responses, a short address, on the virtue of silence for some reason.

The organ strikes up a loud Bach toccata. Enter an orchestra. Enter about fifty young choir-children, all in white blouses with black string ties and black either knickerbockers or skirts. Then enter the chief performers in this drama, ten (perhaps there should have been twelve) dancing-boys, aged about eight to twelve, each wearing a scarlet jerkin with a white shoulder sash, white knickerbockers and stockings, and carrying a wide-brimmed hat with large red and white plumes. They form two facing rows. Enter more priests, in red cassocks; they disappear somewhere to the side, quite unimportant.

Now the choir and orchestra strike up a solemn music in G minor. The boys don their hats and begin their dance. Slow four-in-a-bar. Left--right--tiptoe--rest. Left--right--tiptoe --rest. Immense dignity, complete self-possession, intense concentration. Complicated interweavings and circlings.

The music moves into G major and the step changes. Left--right --up down up down. Left--right--up down up down. And now the boys bring their castanets into play. Crack--crack--cr-r-r-crack. Still the slow beat. Economy of movement. Arms stiff at sides. Only the fingers working the castanets and the legs pacing the dance. Not a single face muscle moves. The eyes are fixed on the boy in front. Nothing must go wrong. Not an inch out of place, not a split second out of time. Still the circlings and weavings. Absorption, dedication, devotion.

I have seen and felt this only once before, among the Horn Dancers of Abbots Bromley. They too were fulfilling, as a matter of urgent duty, their immemorial ritual.

The figures of the dance unwind. The boys are back in their two facing rows. They doff their hats. The music stops. There is a moment of silence. Then the organ bursts out into a loud voluntary and the scene breaks up. The dancing-boys come down through the congregation. They are not aware of us. Their eyes and thoughts are far away, in another land.

Outside the Cathedral the little choir-children come bouncing up to their parents. "Mummy, mummy, wasn't I good?" Of the boy dancers there is no sign.

This was not a Christian ceremony, not Muslim, not Pagan, not in religious territory at all. Jalaludin Rumi understood.

"He was not on the Cross. I went to the Hindu temple, to the ancient pagoda ... to the uplands of Herat ... to the mountains of Kaf ... to the Kaaba ... He was not there ... I looked into my own heart. In that, his own place, I saw him. He was in no other place."

Nogod's Land.