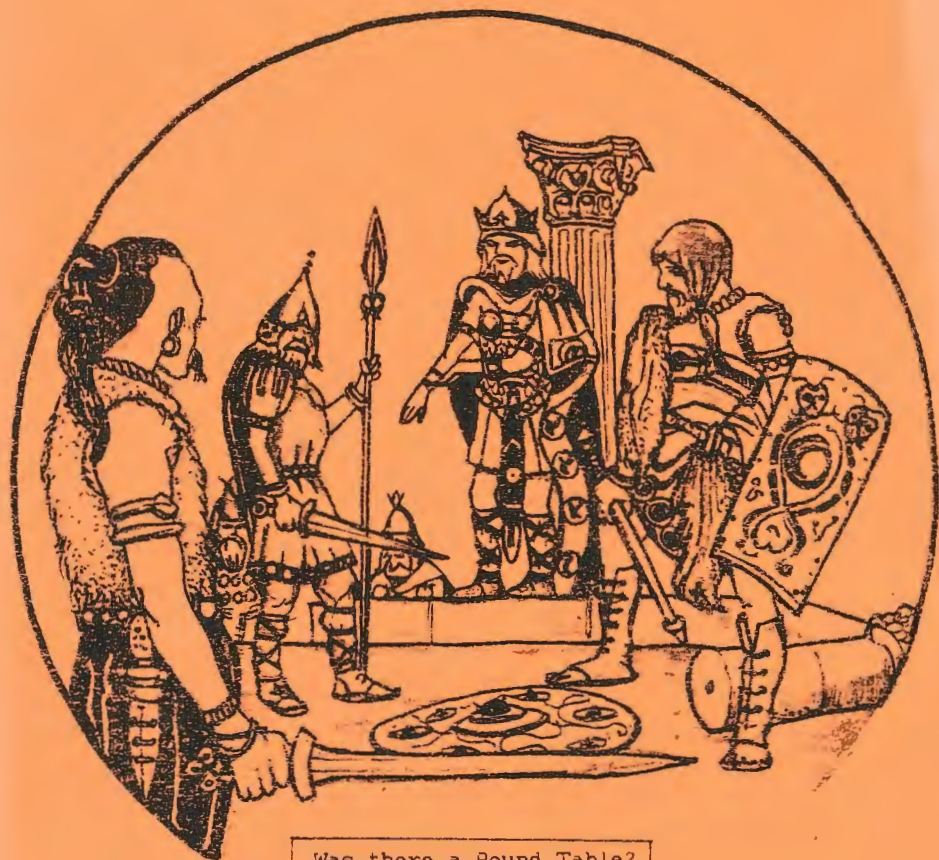


# Pendragon



Was there a Round Table?  
Celtic 'kinglets' argue  
around the Pendragon's  
shield - cast down to  
define a 'council space'



# Pendragon

Journal of the Pendragon Society

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Pendragon investigates Arthurian history, archaeology  
and the mystery and mythology of the Matter of Britain.  
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Main themes for this issue - Rings, Rites & Round Tables.  
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With all the mind-numbing impact of the magical inscription which appeared on the Siege Perilous, a mystic cipher manifested on page 2 of the March edition. I refer to the Cross-in-the-Box - the Sacred Sign of 'Subscription Due'. Rather more than half our members have so far responded. Which means (so my Commodore Plus/4 tells me with hair-splitting precision) that rather less than half

haven't. It is for the benefit of these latter tardy ones that the dread symbol appears again in this issue. Please don't ignore it; its awesome power is such that defaulters could disappear forever from the known universe.

Seriously, though, the punctual production of the Journal depends, of course, on Society solvency. At the moment our financial position is favourable - even though (can you believe it?) the PENDRAGON subscription rate hasn't been increased since - wait for it - Vol.XVII/2, Spring 1984! We expect further rises in costs, however, and this is something which will have to be discussed at the AGM. Any increase in subscriptions considered necessary at that meeting would not become operative until June 1991, and can be kept to a minimum if everyone pays his or her dues promptly. May we therefore ask you nicely to cooperate? Please. (And don't let the fact that your treasurer weighs fifteen stones and stands six-foot-three in his socks influence you in any way.)

A source of some concern is the dearth of articles etc. received for publication. This makes it hard to stick to a theme. Some stalwarts pull out all the stops in issue after issue but there's lots of room for offerings from other members with something to say.

The next theme is WHAT ARTHUR MEANS TO ME - which should give plenty of scope for fertile imaginations. [No, Deirdre; your white cat who dips his paw into his Kattomeat tin is NOT the Arthur I had in mind. I don't care if he IS the champion mouser of Chipping Sodbury. And neither Kattomeat nor Whiskas were among the 'best loved meats' provided by the Holy Grail at Pentecost ...]

And now - THE AGM.

The 1990 Pendragon AGM will be held on Saturday September 29th at Gupshill Manor Licensed Restaurant. This is a large timbered building which stands well back on the west side of the Gloucester Road (A38) about one mile south of Tewkesbury. It is the only building in the area (apart from Tewkesbury Abbey) that was standing in 1471 when the last battle of the Wars of the Roses was fought in the adjacent 'Bloody Meadow' - which should make it easy to identify if you happened to be around at that time.

Gupshill's carvery serves good, reasonably-priced meals.



including vegetarian dishes and snacks at the bar. The meeting will be held in the building which houses the skittle alley to the rear of the public house from a nominal 10.00 am. until 5.00 pm. The AGM proper will start when everyone who is coming has had enough time to get there, so a note to say you can attend and your approximate time of arrival would be useful though not essential. There are parking facilities for enough cars to fill the M1 but, unfortunately, no overnight accommodation. This, however, is available in Tewkesbury and Mr. Ratcliffe, Gupshill's landlord, can supply addresses when you get there. No charge will be made for attendance at the AGM, though a collection box will be available if you wish to make a small donation to Pendragon funds.

There will be plenty to interest you in Tewkesbury, including museums, old buildings and, of course, the Abbey itself, which is steeped in history and boasts the finest Norman nave in the country.

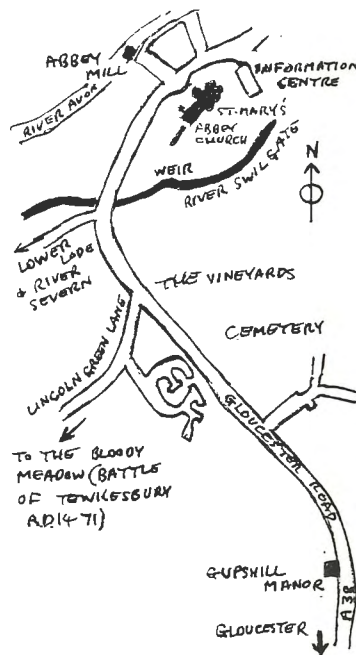
Last year's AGM was, it will be remembered, held at our house but regrettably ill-health makes it impossible for Anne to undertake the catering this time. Hence the change of venue. Sorry! We hope very much to see you at Gupshill, however. It is always a pleasure for Anne and I to meet fellow Pendragons and have a chat. Once the business is concluded there should be loads of time for that. Short talks on various topics will also be welcome. Please let me know in advance what you propose.

Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury plans to make a personal visit (I won't say 'appearance') to see you all - as does her boy friend Garlon. They are two of a kind. And if you don't know the significance of that, your knowledge of the Romances is sadly incomplete.

### 'A MYSTERY TO THE WORLD IS THIS STAVE OF ARTHUR.'

- but not, of course, to Pendragons. The first two readers to unravel the mystery in the following stanza will each receive a copy of our own David Jones's excellent little book 'Arthur and the Grail - A Guide to the Legends'. Plus, of course, honourable mention in our next issue! Are YOU equal to the test? Here it is:-

Mean they to find thee, Arthur, great king?  
Thinketh ye of that dream-age returning?  
Of that Sangreal romance, sire, a lay do men sing -  
As man's heart for golden Camelot is a-yearning?



## The Work of Angels

### Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6th to 9th Centuries A.D.



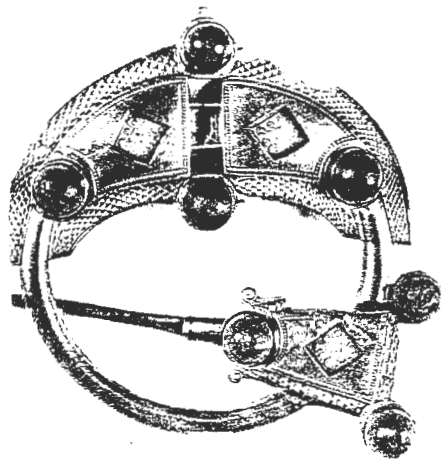
'If you take the trouble to look very closely, and penetrate with your eyes to the secrets of the artistry, you will notice such intricacies, so delicate and subtle, so close together and well-knitted, so involved and bound together, and so fresh still in their colourings that you will not hesitate to declare that all these things must have been the result of the work, not of men, but of angels.'

So said Gerald of Wales after seeing an illuminated manuscript at Kildare, late in the twelfth century. Anyone who is familiar with these manuscripts: the Books of Kells and Durrow, the Lindisfarne Gospels, will understand Gerald's astonishment and praise for their makers. To see these designs and motifs transferred to metal is to be truly astounded.

This exhibition, jointly organised by the British Museum, the National Museum of Ireland and the National Museums of Scotland, brings together the largest collection of Celtic metalwork yet seen in Britain, ranging from relatively simple 6th/7th century pins, highly decorative penannular brooches and hanging bowls through to the masterpieces of the Derrynaflan chalice, and paten with its accompanying stand. Also included, indeed the first two items you see upon entering the exhibition, are nineteenth century reproductions of the Ardagh chalice and Tara brooch, arguably the two most famous pieces of Celtic metalwork.

With the exhibits clearly displayed, the full beauty of the ornamentations are allowed to shine through, with informative wall-notes for each section. Different influences and intermingling of ideas are explained: for example the influence of the Roman church on the insular Irish metalworkers and the cross-cultural exchange between the native Celts and the encroaching Anglo Saxons, as evidenced by the hoard found at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk. This fusion of ideas continued to spread even further afield with journeys undertaken by Irish missionaries in the 7th and 8th centuries, who often carried copies of manuscripts and various items of metalwork with them. Of particular interest here are the house-shaped shrines for carrying Saints' relics, with some fine examples displayed, notably the ones from Copenhagen and Italy.

Most of the pieces were for everyday use although a number of votive items are also included. Among these objects are water sprinklers and strainers, one in particular with its punched holes forming a pattern only properly discernible when light passes through it. A marvellous pair of D-shaped mounts, a belt shrine from Co. Sligo and a pair of small plaques of unknown use, are three of the more unusual exhibits.



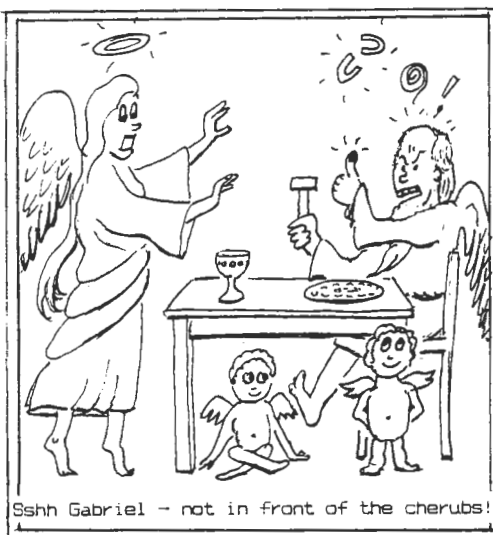
The sheer consistency of quality through four centuries of upheaval and inter-tribal strife is a tribute to the craftsmen who constructed these celebrations of the Celtic metalworkers' art. The minuteness and intricacy of some of the pieces only adds more weight to Gerald's comment that they really are the 'work of angels.'

An interesting last section to the exhibition gives an insight into the smith's tools of the trade and materials, including bone 'sketch pads' and pieces of bright enamel and glass allowing him full reign to indulge his obvious love of colour. A mention must also be given to

the exhaustive catalogue available which, as well as listing all the items, gives valuable insight into techniques, background history and influences, and has a wealth of photographs allowing long and leisurely study of this wonderful flowering of Celtic art.

Unfortunately the exhibition will have ended its run at the British Museum by the time you read this but it will be at the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin between May and September 1990, and the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh between October 1990 and January 1991. And judging by the number of people attracted to the London showing, the current interest in all things Celtic shows no sign of waning just yet.

Simon Rouse.



## EARTH PULSE

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# Artorius - AN HEROIC CYCLE BY GEOFF BIRD

On a sweltering Saturday afternoon I was looking lazily at the window display of the local Dr. Barnardo's Charity shop. Someone had presented them with not a few books on Arthuriana, including one titled simply 'Artorius' which caught my eye due to the sigil on the dust cover, the meaning of which would have been apparent to anyone with esoteric knowledge.

The book turned out to be a work by John Heath-Stubbs, published in a limited edition in 1973 by Enitharmon Press, London, with the assistance of the Arts Council under the Grants to Publishers scheme. The edition was limited to 315 numbered copies, of which mine is no. 283.

'Artorius' is described by its author as an heroic poem. It represents Arthur as not only an historical figure, using the existing reference sources familiar to us all, but as a hero of universal myth, whose exploits are related to the Twelve Labours of Hercules and the seasonal course of the Sun through the signs of the Zodiac. The work consists of four poems and eight episodes, the whole being 'presided over' by the Muses of legend.

The book makes use of a variety of poetic forms, deftly utilised by the author with his Oxbridge Classical education. John Heath-Stubbs sees many similarities between the so-called Dark Ages and our modern age, in fact he calls the latter the second Dark Age. Arthur, or Lucius Artorius, is portrayed as being of Illyrian origin, of the Venetic gens, of cognomen Castus, and his forbears as having fought in Armorica. Myth and known historical facts are subtly interwoven to produce not only the Arthur of historical legend but an archetype to whom we can relate in this day and age.

It is clear that the author is familiar with the Western mystery tradition. In the sign of the Crab, Arthur is conducted by his initiator, Merddyn, to his initiation at Stonehenge. He descends into the depths of the Earth - to Annwn - with Anubis as his guide. Eventually he arrives at the Cave of Cerridwen, who shows him the future history of the Isles of Britain and finally identifies herself as the Goddess of Sovereignty, the importance of whom anyone who has read Caitlin Matthews' excellent book on the same subject will realise.

The Red Worm and the White Worm not only represent the Britons and the Saxons but historical and socio-political duality, culminating in 'a tedious decline, with two rival crews of contending rats' (the two major political parties) as the crew of the Ship of State - Britain.

Arthur's career follows its predestined course and naturally ends on the field of Camlann, after which his body is taken to



Cornwall, and consigned to the sea under the auspices of the virgin Zennora with her three seals - a thinly-disguised Priestess of Isis. From the Sea of Eternity, when the time is ripe, he will return - in whatever guise is appropriate.

In my last article I suggested the possibility of performing some kind of ritual based on an Arthurian theme. I would suggest that this work would provide anyone sympathetic to my suggestion with suitable inspiration, for this modern epic deserves to be read by all Pendragoners.

## Letters

The newspaper advert reproduced on p.16 of PENDRAGON gives the impression (as do other reports on the 'dig') that the work was being done on Tintagel 'island', or the upper or lower wards facing it. This is not so; the dig took place in Tintagel parish churchyard (St Materiana's church, on top of the cliffs).

A report by Jacky Nowakowski C.A.U. in the June Newsletter (no.63) of the Cornish Archaeological Society describes the relocating and opening up of a trench originally dug by the Rev. A.E. Arundell FSA in 1942. This burrowed into a grassy mound in the older part of the churchyard and revealed not only two cist-graves but a slate structure - purpose unknown at the time. Early Christians were considered responsible. The new work, inaugurated and paid for by Mobil, raised pottery sherds from B-1 and B-2 amphorae and exposed a slate-covered grave suggestive of an important burial. The previously located slate structure was identified as a further grave.

The evidence shows 5th and 6th century occupation - the period of Arthur.

(Beryl Mercer. Truro.)

[Ed. note:- Thanks Beryl for being on the ball! It's nice to get follow-ups from previously printed articles and news items. As readers probably know, there are Arthurian legends connected with St Materiana. The church bells rang of their own accord at Arthur's birth and again at his death. Folklore tells us too that Arthur's spirit is incarnated in that very rare crow-like bird the red-beaked Cornish chough - the 'holy bird' of Cornwall - which once haunted the lonely cliffs near the church.]

Thank you, Mr. Stedman-Jones, for putting me on to a supply of binders for magazines. I have received my parcel of them; they are splendid.

The mention of Badbury Rings reminded me that there is, or was, a group of Morris Dancers associated with another ancient fort, 'Chanctonbury Ring' in Sussex: they apparently visited this site on May Day and on Midsummer Day. I think there might be a tradition of dancing and/or merrymaking attached to all these old 'forts', but have not investigated this.

Nick Grant's description of Badbury Hill, Oxfordshire, contains what might be a clue to this: '... little obvious strategic or tactical significance in the choice of site ...' on a flat-topped hill. Perhaps it was never intended for defence, but made a good centre for seasonal celebrations for the local folk.

The crop-circle phenomenon has caused amusement in a restaurant in Windsor: I was sharing a table with a couple and the subject came up. I referred to the idea that they were caused by un-noticed aircraft and one of my companions nearly lost his coffee through laughing. 'Well, if WE made them we certainly would be noticed and caught in the act!' It turned out that he was one of the crew of Concorde!

It seems as if 'Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury' was on our wavelength - I wish I had received this PENDRAGON a week or two ago - long may she flourish (and perhaps get a paragraph published?)

I have for some time been interested in family history and have discovered that we 'ancestor-hunters' suffer from a disease known as 'Historexix Familiari' - according to an article published in the Journal of the Genetic Analyst. I realise that I have the following strains of this disease:

Ancestorhoeia - an unstoppable desire to talk about people long since dead, especially if they did nothing unusual.  
'Meyenoma' - a predilection for wandering around churchyards reading the inscriptions on the grave stones'.

Plus a few more!

Genealogy is a fascinating hobby, inextricably mixed up with local history. It is a pity that King Arthur, apparently, left no progeny - that would really set us all going!

We have been following up ALL ancestral lines, and have to date around 30 surnames all connected. AND across England from Cornwall to Lincolnshire, but will not inflict all this on you - unless we discover 'twigs' on the tree which may connect up with the PENDRAGON team.

Geoff Bird's article on ceremonies connected with the Arthurian Cycle made me think that here is one strand leading to the Mummers' Plays, in which it was traditional that the actors were heavily disguised: in some places it was considered 'unlucky' to recognise them at the time of performance. So was the character 'Glewlwyd Mighty-Grasp' a representative of evil, who was defeated? The idea of 'Pendragon' ceremonies-plus-celebrations is most attractive, but as we are well-scattered they would need much thought and planning (and cash!) to make them successful. The idea should not be dropped, in spite of these problems.

One possible place is Winchester, which is proud of its 'Round Table' and might be keen on the Pendragon link; it is the most central place that I can think of at the moment which has 'Arthurian' connections and good road and rail access.

Best wishes to all of your hard-working 'Pendragon' team.

(Mary Bonney. Windsor.)

[Ed. note: The 1984 Pendragon AGM was held at Winchester - and a memorable affair it was, camping members being mobbed early one morning by hungry ducks. As I pointed out at the time, Arthur, the DUX BELLI, was obviously responsible for this.]

I read with interest in your article entitled 'A Crop of Circles' that the crop circles may be the result of shifts in the earth's electro-magnetic field. The Cabiri, the all-powerful

priestly elite who preceded the Druids, were only too familiar with the properties of electro-magnetism. They practised the cultivation of the land and are credited with having revealed, by producing corn and wheat, the great boon of agriculture. They were also responsible for harnessing the Sacred Fires of the most occult powers of nature.

According to the Rev. Edward Davies, in 'The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids' (1809), 'The Sacred Fires were preserved in the Druidic temples whilst the corn stacks were made to puff out with smoke!!! Perhaps the crop circles mark the spots where the stone circles should have been!!!

(David Pykitt. Burton-on-Trent.)

Sorry Kate if I seemed to be disparaging your earlier review of The Wicked Day. I hadn't read this as I wasn't a Pendragon member when it appeared!

Kate's article on tilting etc. reminded me that the word 'tournament' is still in use today in sporting circles. However, I can't (at the moment, anyway) think of a modern tournament that takes place on a circular ground: but could the word 'court' in connection with tennis have any significance in this context?

There are several ancient earthworks in Cornwall (and probably more in other Celtic countries) which are known as 'rounds' - Kelly Rounds is an alternative name for Castle Killibury near St Mabyn, and another one which springs to mind is Tregear Round. Then there is the fact (or theory - I'm not sure whether it has yet been proved

beyond doubt) that if a Christian church is built on a circular site, it was probably the site of an earlier Celtic/pagan temple. Helston's parish church is on such a site, as is the ancient church at Temple, on Bodmin Moor. And of course, the Celtic (or Solar) cross is an equal-armed cross

inside a circle.

While on the subject of rounds and circles, I hope I may be pardoned for haring off into the future for a moment, in this magazine which mainly explores the past. The final paragraph of Alfred Bester's book, 'The Demolished Man', has always puzzled me (though, of course it may be a purely fictional speculation):

'This strange second in a life, that unusual event, those remarkable coincidences of environment, opportunity and encounter ... all of them have been reproduced over and over on the planet of a sun whose galaxy revolves once in 200 million years and has revolved nine times already. There has been joy. There will be joy again.'

If it is true that our galaxy has revolved nine times already, (and perhaps someone out there can either confirm or refute that?) - then it is further proof, if proof were needed, that the Circle, the Round, is omnipresent at all levels of life and science. From the macrocosm of the universe to the microcosm of a single drop of water. Oddly, I find that immensely comforting.

(Beryl Mercer. Truro.)

[Ed. Note:- I think Bester's paragraph must be considered speculative though he's on the right lines. 9 X 200 million years was about the estimated age of the Universe before Walter Baade's revised calculations in 1942. Currently cosmologists set it between fifteen and twenty thousand million years. This means we've done the rounds at least seventy-five times. Still, who's counting? The principle's the same, anyway.

(No, Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury, I've no idea why boxing 'rounds' are fought in a square 'ring'. But thank you for the rivetting

information that by applying the Hubble Constant to Einstein's field equations, it can be shown that 316 million, million, million, million average-sized boxing rings placed side by side would go right round the perimeter of the universe. Beryl, I am sure, will find that even more comforting. I know I do.]

Crop circles seem to have taken over from UFOs as the main mystery of our time. I really cannot believe in hoaxers; how could they lay over a large area of corn in a sort of swirl without breaking the stems, and could they carry out all that meticulous work in the dark? Then there are occasions when a large number of circles have been discovered on the same day - I cannot believe that whole companies of hoaxers are at work. Also I think that after all this time and publicity some hoaxers would have owned up, if only in the hope of getting themselves on TV. What is needed of course is for someone to actually see the rings being formed. Apparently there was one self-claimed eyewitness, but when asked about it he became exceedingly coy. I did hear recently that a man at Dundee actually saw a ring forming but I have not been able to trace the report of this.

(Ivor Snook. Exmouth.)

## EXCHANGE JOURNALS

DRAGON - Editor Charles Evans-Gunther. Dragon, c/o 9 Earls Lea, Flint, Clwyd CH6 SBT. North Wales. Arthurian and Dark Age matters. 4 issues for £4.50

FOLKLORE FRONTIERS - Editor Paul Screeton. 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 2AT. Four issues for £4.00.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE EARTH MYSTERIES - Editor Danny Sullivan. GEM Magazine, 49 Moored Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Glos. GL53 0ET. Three issues for £5.00.

MERCIAN MYSTERIES - Editor Paul Nix. 12 Cromer Road, St. Ann's, Nottingham NG3 3LF. Four issues for £5.00.

NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES - Editor Rob Wilson. 40b Welby Place, Meersbrook Park, Sheffield S8 9DB. Three issues for £2.95.

THE BRISTOL TEMPLAR - Editor Julian Lea-Jones. 33 Springfield Grove, Henleaze, Bristol BS6 7XE. Local history. Membership with monthly meetings and 4 journals p.a. £8.00.

Referring to your brief flirtation with corn circles in the last issue, you are only partly right in asserting that the phenomenon is caused by a family feud between Demeter, goddess of corn and Diameter, goddess of circles.

Demeter was certainly involved but the other goddess concerned was her daughter Persephone. As your Sir James Frazer rightly says in his book 'The Golden Bough', Demeter is goddess of the ripe corn while Persephone is goddess of the seed corn under the ground. A conspiracy between the two resulted in the appearance of the crop circles.

Punishment has now been meted out for this abuse of power. To prevent future communication, and therefore collusion, between the miscreants, Demeter has had her meter disconnected and Persephone has had her phone cut off, so they will be known henceforth as De and Perse. This loss of dignity and status should ensure their responsible behaviour in future.

Please accept my profound apologies for any concern my wife and daughter may have caused. (Zeus. Olympus.)

## ANSWER TO LAST WORD SQUARE.

1. BASALT (anagram)
2. AVOWER (AV-OWER)
3. SOCAGE (SO-CAGE)
4. AWAKEN
5. LEGEND (LEG END)
6. TRENDY (TR-END-Y)



# SQUARE Meals



# ROUND TABLES by Anne Tooke

No recipe books have survived from Arthurian times themselves, mainly because cooks in general were illiterate and none would have been written. We can only assume, then, that post-Roman Britain carried on more or less the same Roman traditions.

The workers probably had a diet consisting of dry bread for the first meal of the day, bread and an onion for the midday meal and a meat pottage for the last meal of the day and as a special treat wild pig's flesh. This would be accompanied with beans, vetches, seeds, grain and herbs. Herbs and spices were used profusely to disguise unattractive flavours of food that had been kept too long. Bread was made with flour and water and drink was sheeps milk, mead or ale. Raw birds eggs (when available) or fruit finished the meal. It is reasonable to suppose that Arthur and his men, when on military campaigns, had similar fare.

Feasts, on the other hand, would be great occasions - though perhaps less exotic than that described by William Edward Mead in 'The English Medieval Feast'. He hardly had the 5th century in mind when he wrote:

'Grete was the feeste that the Kynge (Arthur) hilde on the even of the assumcion to the riche baronye that to hym were come. When the kynge and the barouns hadde herde eve(n) songe at the mynster of seynt Stephene, the tables were sette in teints and paveions, ffor thei myght not alle in to the town; and on that othir side was the Quene Gonnore, and the ladyes and damesels with soche joye that merveille it were to rehearse, ffor in all the londe of Breteigne, ne in all the power of Kynge Arthur, ne lefte mynstrall ne jogeloure ne oon ne other, but all were come to that feeste; and at that soper were thei served so well as was convenient to so myghty a prince as was the Kynge Arthure, and thus endured thei in joye and myrthe till tyme was to go to reste till on the morowe. And on the morowe a-roose the Kynge Arthur and the riche barons and the Quene, and went to hire masse at the mynster of Seint Stephene, and the servise was honourably seide in the worship and reverence of that high feste, and grete and riche was the offrande; and the Kynge Arthur and alle other Kynges and Quenes that day bar crownes in worship of the day, and so ther wer LX crownes, what of kynges and quenes; and whan the masse was seide, and the servise ended, the Kynge Arthur lepe on his palfrey, and alle the other kynges after hym I-crowned, and so dide the quene Gonnore and alle the other quenes, and everyche of hem a crowne of golde on theire heedes and the Kynge Arthur satte at the high deyse, and made all the xij kynges sitte at his table downward a range; and also in honour of the high feste of oure lady, he made the Quene Gonnore sitte by hym crowned, and so dide all the other xij quenes by-fore theire lordes; and at other tables satte other princes, Dukes and Erles, and othir knyghtes were sette richely thourgh the medowes in tentes and Pavelouns with grete joy and melodye that never was seyne gretter in no Court.'

Another exotic description of a feast appears in the prose romance 'Merlin, or the Early History of King Arthur', edited by H.B. Wheatley (1869), but again the actual food receives little

mention, the 13C French original and the following 15C English version being mainly concerned with anachronistic descriptions of the splendid apparel of the guests, one of whom is 'clothed in samyte and girt with a bawdrike of silke garnysshed with golde and precious stones ... and his hosen of fin scarlet and his shone (shoes) of white cordewan orfraid, and bokeled with fin golde.'

But what dainty dishes would actually have been set before Arthur the King at his Round Table? Here are a few Roman ones which heroic cooks might have prepared and even more heroic guests have eaten - accompanied, perhaps, by Falernian wine from Campania in Italy or the later, even better wines from neighbouring Ager Statanus.

\* A Daily Dish: Grind brains with pepper, add cumin and assafoetida with broth and wine boiled down to make it thick, milk and eggs. Cook over a slow fire or in a bain-marie. (This probably tastes terrible but the assafoetida should keep the vampires away! Ed.)

Common Thrush: Grind pepper, assafoetida and bay cherries; mix with fish sauce and cumin. Stuff the bird through the throat (without removing the insides (!)) and tie with a thread. Then make the following stock in which to cook the thrush: oil, salt, water, dill and leek-tops.

Snails fattened on milk: Take the snails and wipe them. Remove the membrane so that they can be taken out of the shells. Place them in a shallow dish of milk and salt for one day, and of milk alone for several days. When they are so fat they can no longer get into their shells, fry in oil. Pour over wine sauce. Similarly they could be fed on flesh.

Vegetarians - and even non-vegetarians - among Pendragon members might prefer the following dishes:

Cooked peas: Cook the peas and stir. When they are cold heat again and stir. Cut onions finely and mix with egg-white, oil and salt. Add a little vinegar. Decorate with hard-boiled egg-yolks shaped as mushrooms (yolks cut in half). Sprinkle with fresh oil and serve.

Ordinary mashed pumpkin: Season the mashed, cooked pumpkin with pepper, lovage, cumin, origan, onion wine, oil and broth. Thicken with eggs in a dish and serve.

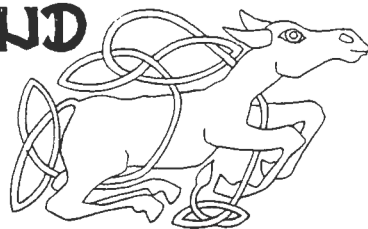
Happy eating!

\* Source book - 'Meals Through the Ages' by Peter Moss. Harrap.

Many Pendragon members are interested in mazes and labyrinths. CAERDROIA, run by Jeff and Debbie Seward of 53 Thundersley Grove, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 3EB, caters for all maze enthusiasts. 'The future editions of Caerdroia,' Jeff and Debbie tell us, 'will take the form of an annual publication ... the cost each year will depend upon its size and circulation, and no subscriptions will be taken in advance.' The first of the new series (1989) is available at £2.50 (UK). Phone or SAE for details.



# KNIGHTS RITES AND ROUND TABLES - R&G BAGGS



I have taken the 14th century knots of confusion surrounding the influences upon Edward III, who must have managed remarkably well in his eventual decisions concerning the order of knighthood. Windsor Castle's Round Tower has an odd shape with a 30 foot palisade added. Beyond is the Edward III Tower and in front, within the castle walls, is the tilting field of 1344. The mound would have served as an observation platform or temporary 'domus'.

Looking at the surrounding low wall of the main tower I would suggest that it marks the actual limit of where the main tower walls should have been in order to house constructively a 200 foot round table. I understand the inside diameter of the tower to be 190 feet at the widest point.

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In the month of June, when the Knights of the Most Noble Order of the Garter celebrate their annual event at Windsor Castle, the predominant circular-shaped object is the Garter symbol itself.

Of all the symbols, signs and objects to which general importance is attached - such as the circle, sword, number, sacred object or vision - a circular table has active distinction only in a minor role as the badge of a charitable group of people. For those people, chivalry can be associated sufficiently with the wooden round table by legend and fiction as a symbol of honour, although not of proven physical use by an established order of knighthood.

One may wonder whether, in the true essence of the legendary King Arthur - being concerned with a person who could have existed as a fighting leader - that there ever was a wooden Round Table or just a table-round as a meeting-place. A Celtic warrior might be too busy with military preparation and with healing wounds to involve himself with a cumbersome piece of furniture - scarce metal and a good armourer being more important.

However, the inclination to regard a wooden round table as an object of equality (as everyone would be seated in the same type of position) could apply to a meeting where all would be allowed equal expression on matters of survival and plans to make it work; the same attitude continuing during skirmishes where any hand that wields a weapon is as good as the next. In major conflicts, however, there are those who organise and those who comply. The decorated table at Winchester has the segment of the most important person clearly marked. It is not a symbol of equality.

If Edward III, after 1344, had succeeded in his ambitious plans, Windsor would be more fortunate, having a magnificent domus instead of a misshapen, undersized rounded tower with an additional palisade of the early 19th century, set 30 feet above the original roof as a symbol of the town.

Although nothing but the building would have remained after the

residence of Cromwell's army during the civil war of the 17th century, when they took all the swords save that of Edward III (which might have been hidden) from the Chapel of St. George, an element of legend could have continued, based on the great round table of the Plantagenets, with a variety of stories about some of the knights.

The mind can be fascinated by the possibility of the letter 'G', or garter shape, 200 feet in diameter, with 300 knights seated at the outer edge, being served and entertained from the centre; a round of colourful activity as the first part of the evening's arrangements. Then, the imagination being taken further with the table after the feast, one could see other sections being added and rounded off to form a huge disc containing enough timber to build a ship, in preparation for the exclusive Rite of the Round Table.

Unfortunately, inclination towards the hero and indulgence with the object in an evocative atmosphere, which excluded Christianity, would be bound to attract powerful jealousies.

Logically, also, it seems that the victor of Crecy, managing the best he could after continuing military struggles, needing to reorganise his country after the devastation of the Black Death (during which he experienced loss in his own family) had little chance of adhering to or being content with his original plans.

The once-great order of knighthood was reduced to a rump of 26 and a suitable table was planned, the larger project being discarded. One might suppose that eventually popular demand and matters of a spiritual nature predominated, therefore making unnecessary even the smaller table. That object was exchanged for the garter symbol and the hero, Arthur, lost his place as England's patron figure to the ethereal image of St. George as the Red Cross knight on horseback who slew the dragon; the Church then playing an important role in future celebrations.

The military significance of the order has faded; armour has been replaced by cloth and men who could not be expected to fight receive an heraldic emblem won by achievements in other fields ...

The knights now seemingly attached to Crusading history appear to ignore the original inspiration which created their Order, yet they represent a continuing link with an earlier heroic age.

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Note 1: The advantage of a circular table over an oblong one is the ability to see clearly all others present and to address other individuals without leaning too much across a neighbour. Such placement should also assist vocal clarity.

Note 2: Regarding a large table, here is an interesting question for anyone keen on acoustics. If 300 people sat around a 200 foot diameter disc in a circular building with a domed ceiling, would it be necessary for the one whose turn it was to speak to stand in order that all the others should be able to tell where the sound was coming from?

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[Ed. note:- Acoustic troubles may not only have made it difficult to identify a speaker, but could also have caused indistinctness of speech due to echo effects.

When the great non-conformist preacher Charles Wesley addressed



a congregation of 'between two- and three-and-twenty thousand' in the open-air amphitheatre of Gwennap Pit in West Cornwall in 1762 he had no difficulty in making himself heard and understood. 'I believe', he said, 'God enabled me to speak that even those who stood farthest off could hear distinctly.' Divine help or not, Gwennap Pit poses few acoustical problems - which might not be the case with enclosed halls such as those at Camelot and Windsor. Any thoughts on the subject, you folk out there?

Yes, Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury. I do know the Sabine formula,  $T = .05V/A$ , used by public address engineers for the calculation of reverberation times in buildings and hence the assessment of speech clarity, but I doubt very much whether Merlin and Edward III employed it at Camelot and Windsor.

As for your theory that amplifiers and loudspeakers were in use in Arthur's day, this is based upon a misinterpretation of the passage from the Idylls: 'Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed with rosy colours leaping on the wall; and then the music faded'. If you read it more carefully I think you'll find it refers to the Holy Grail - not to a disco.]

# BookReviews

'GAWAIN, KNIGHT OF THE GODDESS' by John Matthews (The Aquarian Press 1990. Hardback £12.99.)

In reviewing John Matthews' book, one cannot do better than begin by quoting from the 'blurb' on the dust jacket:

'Gawain was once the most important knight at Arthur's court, a shining example of all that was best in chivalry at the time. However, as the popularity of the Arthurian romances grew, the character of Gawain diminished, leaving him represented as a villain rather than as Champion of the Goddess. How this transformation came about, and the reasons why, are explored here by John Matthews.'

Gawain is one of the most bewildering characters in the Arthurian saga, a Jekyll and Hyde personality who leaves students of the genre wondering if TV soap-opera scriptwriters have been at work. How does one equate the Gwalchmei of the Mabinogion who always succeeded in his quests, or the Gawain who nobly married the hideous Lady Ragnall and played the beheading game with the fearsome Green Knight, with the contemptible libertine who betrayed the trust of his new friend Pelleas with the lady Ettard? Analysing the reasons for this apparent ambivalence must have set Matthews a daunting task but it is difficult to think of another writer who could have dealt with it as competently.

A major - but not sole - source of confusion is the

anti-feminist, anti-pagan attitudes of the later monkish writers. (Gawain, the most chivalrous of men, gets on well with the ladies and his personage has its roots in the pagan past - two reasons for clerical dislike.)

John Matthews considers that many of the female characters in the legends (Nimue, Ragnall, Lady Bercilak, Guinevere and so on) are varying aspects of the Goddess and makes out a good case for this. A thoughtful provision near the end of the book is a table listing the aspects of the Goddess in the major texts and showing that Gawain is in nearly all cases the hero involved with her.

The author's painstaking scholarship is evinced by the fact that the book's bibliography contains 155 items and that it is 'the result of more than 20 years' research into Arthurian and Celtic texts.' 'Gawain, Knight of the Goddess' makes absorbing reading.

What rounds the book off in a satisfying manner for me, though, is Matthews' final paragraph where he says: '...

Sorry! I seem to have run out of space. I'll have to leave it to you to find out.



'THE WOODCHESTER MOSAIC DECODED' by Ronald Fletcher. Obtainable from Gloucestershire Earth Mysteries, 49 Moorend Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, GL53 0ET. £2.80 incl. p&p. 88 pages: over 50 illustrations.)

Several feet below the old churchyard at Woodchester, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, lie the remains of a mosaic pavement. First mentioned in Camden's 'Brittania' in 1695, the mosaic is 'the biggest and most complex Roman mosaic in Europe north of the Alps.' It originally contained more than 1.5 million tesserae.

Quoting from the preface by editor Danny Sullivan of G.E.M.: 'This volume sets out to introduce the theory that the mosaic is more than mere decoration ... the Orpheus pavement is a giant pictogram; a complex coded message telling of a cataclysmic event at the dawn of history, the threads of whose story can be traced far back into the legends and folklore of ancient and modern cultures throughout the world.' The author concludes that Woodchester was once a Druid seat of learning.

Exciting stuff resulting from many years of research into such subjects as geology, history, ancient languages, astronomy and mythology (to name but a few!) It is not the whole story but a selection from a more basic work - 'a glimpse into Ronald Fletcher's extensive files'.

Slightly staccato in places (as Fletcher himself acknowledges), one soon gets used to this style and it does save space - and therefore cost. My own knowledge of the matters Ron Fletcher discusses is too limited to pass an adequate judgement but this



book seems to me to be something of a masterpiece of shrewd inductive delving into an intriguing subject.



'MERLIN AWAKES' by Peter Quiller (Firebird Books Ltd. 1990. Hardback £9.95; Paperback £5.95.)

'If you must have a name,' says Peter Quiller's cosmic correspondent, 'call me - 'Merlin''.

This casual attitude towards identification will be familiar to all who have had experience of psychic communications. It reflects, perhaps, the merging of discrete energy bodies (which we all are) into a 'group energy' at a certain level of spiritual development. Identity then becomes a meaningless concept.

From the beginning, the author tells us, 'Merlin appeared as an energy rather than as a solid, identifiable individual.' And again: 'The only way I could begin to define and comprehend the energies was by investing them with personalities.'

So 'Merlin' let it be; an appropriate name anyway for an archetypal intelligence joining the ranks of those who seek to warn us of the Waste Land invited by our 'environment unfriendly' approach to Nature. These, and other matters such as spiritual development, earth currents and the Matter of Britain are dealt with by Peter Quiller in an evocative fashion.

Though the entity 'Merlin' may not be regarded by sceptics as having a real existence, what he has to say might be a source of inspiration and upliftment to all. I personally have no difficulty in accepting the veridicality of Quiller's account - mainly because my own once uncompromising materialism was demolished by such experiences (though not, admittedly, of the same form or degree). This is not the place, however, to regale PENDRAGON readers with anecdotal arguments for the reality of the supernormal.

And by the way - detractors can forget all that hackneyed claptrap about such experiences being subjective and stemming from the individual subconscious. Such 'explanations' are pure cheek. For let us be quite clear about two points, (a) no one has any idea what the subconscious is, what mechanism it uses and where it resides, and (b) there is nothing in the universe more subjective than matter itself, consisting (as the physicists say it does) of mathematical abstractions such as quarks, mesons, gravitons, tachyons and neutrinos. 'Physics,' said mathematician/philosopher Bertrand Russell, 'is mathematical not because we know so much about the physical world, but because we know so little.' 'Atoms', said Nobel Prize-winner Werner Heisenberg, author of the firmly entrenched Uncertainty Principle, 'are not things.' Not everyone may have seen a spirit, but NO ONE has ever seen an electron.

The Tarot and the I Ching both find their place in MERLIN AWAKES. Arthurian aims and ideals are shown to be of vital importance in the modern scheme of things. A number of passages on this theme evoked a spontaneous 'Oh, yes!' response from me. If one cannot agree with all Merlin's views (and I personally balk at a simplistic yes-or-no attitude towards reincarnation) we must remember that psychic communications are mediated through incarnate minds and are therefore liable to a degree of over-simplification and coloration. This does not deny their genuineness.

Such, however, are minor matters. I liked this book. And as for the wealth of splendid illustrations (over forty) by Courtney Davis, they alone would be worth its cost.

# Rites and Ceremonies of Cornwall · Beryl Mercer

## II CRYING THE NECK.

This custom is another which was revived by the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, and it takes place at harvest time. Once again a Christian thanksgiving ceremony has been superimposed upon an older, pagan tradition.

It usually takes place on an evening in late August and, unlike the Midsummer Bonfires, representatives from all the Old Cornwall Societies will attend. In the middle of a field on some Cornish farm, one lone stook of corn stands among the golden stubble, surrounded by straw bales which provide seating for the spectators. The proceedings begin with a hymn, after which the M.C. explains the history and meaning of the ritual.

In ancient times neighbouring Cornish farmers competed to see who would be the first to finish reaping. As the winner cut the final sheaf, he would lift it and shout to the four points of the compass: 'Yma genei!' ('I have 'n!'). Back would come the cry: 'Pandr'us genes?' ('What 'ave ee?') - to be answered by the triumphant shout of 'Pen yar!' ('A neck!').

This final, winning sheaf would be used to make the traditional corn dolly, believed to ensure a good harvest for the following year. The last farmer to finish reaping would view the coming year with misgiving, as it was considered very unlucky to be last.

As at the midsummer bonfire ceremony, a prayer of benediction is offered in Cornish and English, after which the farmer who owns the field proceeds to cut and bind the last stook. He lifts it to the north and utters the time-honoured claim; the spectators make the required response. He cries 'A neck!' - and we all roar 'Hurrah!' This is repeated around the horizon, an extra 'Hurrah!' being added each time. A Cornish speaker - often a Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd - then takes over to repeat the rite in its native tongue.

As far as I am aware, no-one has yet explained - in public, at least - the translation of 'pen yar' as 'a neck'. Because pen yar actually means 'a hen's (or chicken's) head'. One cannot help wondering if the pagan version of the ritual demanded a blood-sacrifice to the Earth Mother, to ensure a rich harvest for the following year as well as giving thanks for what has been 'safely gathered in'. The Cornish version of the call seems to retain a trace-memory of something older and darker than the present-day Harvest Festivals in Christian churches.

(Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, is very interesting on this subject. He traces back these old harvest cries to those of early Egyptian reapers performing rites to Osiris, and quotes examples of the custom from many rural parts of Britain and the Continent. He sees the final stook as the neck of the Corn Spirit, 'who is consequently beheaded when the bunch is cut down'. <Chapter 47. Lityerses>.)

After a closing hymn, most of the spectators adjourn to a nearby church for a short service of harvest thanksgiving, and thence to the church hall or a local inn for a pasty supper.

To quote from Marian Green's *A Harvest of Festivals*:



'As the sunset light reddens the stripped cornfields, coacnes will carry home those Societies which have mustered from other parts of the country, their members replete, happy - and perhaps a little pensive too. They have witnessed one more facet of ancient ritual, one more revived tradition of their forefathers who plowed and sowed, tended and reaped these fields centuries ago, paying their ceremonial dues to the deities of the land that fed them'.

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\* A Harvest of Festivals, by Marian Green. Publ. 1980 by The Longman Group Ltd.

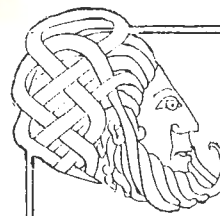


## MERLIN'S MASTERMIND

### ANSWERS

1. 'King Lear' and 'Henry IV part 1.'
2. Kelliwic.
3. Gringolet.
4. Amir/ Anir/ Amr.
5. Constantine. Son of Cadur, Duke of Cornwall.
6. Sagittarius.
7. King Leodegrance.
8. The Wife of Bath.'
9. Nicol Williamson.
10. The Queen's Robing Room.
11. Connecticut.
12. His knife.
13. 'The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall.'
14. A raven.
15. Edward Burne-Jones.
16. Dubricius.
17. Gustave Dore.
18. Alan J. Lerner.
19. Sir Mordred.
20. Modena.
21. Cabal.
22. Anfortas/ Amfortas.
23. Dolorous Gard.
24. Caerleon-on-Usk.

No ail-correct entries were received so the treasure remains in my safe keeping. Perhaps it will appear at the AGM! - F.C.S-J).



# Perpetual Choirs

## The Whiteleaved Oak Decagon

In 'City of Revelation'(1972) and 'Dimensions of Paradise' (1987) John Michell refers to a triad by Iolo Morganwg which describes 'Three Perpetual Choirs of the Isle of Britain': Glastonbury, Stonehenge and Llanilltud Vawr. Michell claims 2,400 'saints' maintained a ceaseless astrological chant at each choir, which celebrated the order of the heavens and guided the ritual order of life on earth: 'When the song changed a New Age began.' A student of the 'canon' of harmonious proportion, Michell finds a 'curious symmetry' in the three choirs, each pair being some 38.9 miles apart and at an angle of about 144°. He extends these measurements to identify two other sites, at Coring-on-Thames and Leicester, and deduces that these are five points of a decagon based on a circle with a radius of 504 furlongs. He computes the geographical 'pivot' on which the choirs turn to be a hamlet named Whiteleaved Oak, at the southern end of the Malvern Hills.

Further to this, Michael Behrend's research paper 'The Landscape Geometry of Southern Britain' (Institute of Geomantic Research) took up this hypothesis; (of Glastonbury and Stonehenge) '...a 5-5-3 isosceles triangle-accurate to one part in 1,000-links them to a site near Midsummer Hill.' He calculated a regular ten-sided polygon with vertices at 'significant points' and found Michell's 504 furlong radius to be about 4 furlongs too big. Fifteen years later Michael no longer believes in the geomantic significance of the decagon, but he has generously allowed me to reproduce his table of figures for the vertices. He tells me the calculations are exact and make proper allowance for distortion in the map projection.

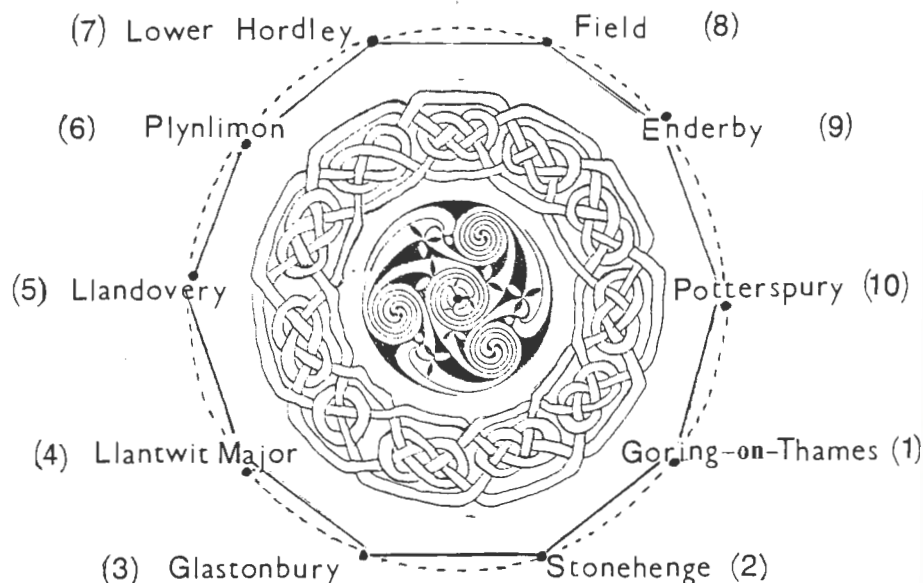
I am not a mathematician nor a geomancer and I have used the locations in my own way. I see them as omphali, sanctuaries, temenos, axis mundi, gateways, call them what you will, from which to make an armchair quest. My approach is 'Geomythical', to coin Anthony Roberts's splendid word, to seek the truth that lies in a search for myth-in-a-landscape: the blending of story, legend, myth, folklore and history with topography. As Britain itself has been seen as a special place: Merlin's Precinct; Blake's Jerusalem and Logres - where the Grail itself was brought from the Holy Land 'to the fairest Isle that lies in the World' - so I set out to discover the 'mysteries' of each centre. But why use folktales, stories, legends, myths as a guidebook? John Matthews has written, '...stories incorporate truths, reflect the traditions and mysteries of the land, in them we meet the great archetypes face to face. The Welsh for story is 'Cyfarwyddyd', it means 'guidance, instruction, knowledge.' The story teller is a seer, poet, initiator.'

I hope to make a case that these 'Caers', as I shall call them, are holy places in a holy land, seats of ancient culture and insight, each with its own initiators and instructors. The first archetype I encountered on my quest soon made its appearance and has remained with me throughout, elusive but always near. It was the powerful royal totem beast, The Stag. I shall begin my story with him, the Cervus Fugitivus, who also guided the alchemists in their search for the Elixir of Life.

Fred Stedman-Jones.

NOTE: It is fundamental to my approach to explain that I did not expect to find a 'crock of gold' at the precise map reference points listed. At Glastonbury it is actually the Abbey itself, at Stonehenge the vertex lies over 100 metres from the centre of the circle, elsewhere there seems to be nothing at the precise point. Who knows what was once there or what forces may have spiralled out from it? Each of my CAERS is based on a ten mile radius circle around the vertex.

## THE DECAGON



### VERTICES

Vertex	Grid reference	At or near
1	SU 60321 81366	Goring-on-Thames
2	SU 12143 42215	Stonehenge
3	ST 50154 38856	Glastonbury Abbey
4	SS 98025 72574	Llanmihangel
5	SN 75671 30499	Llandoverly
6	SN 91640 90500	Llawryglyn
7	SJ 39825 29649	Lower Hordley
8	SK 01815 33001	Field
9	SP 53937 99280	Enderby
10	SP 76287 41360	Potterspury

Centre: Whiteleaved Oak (Malverns) (SO 75982 35930)

This point marks the meeting point of the Three Counties of:

Gloucester Worcester &

Hereford whose cathedrals are the hosts of the Three Choirs Festival in turn.



## The Stag

An important symbol in Celtic and world mythology. A symbol of regeneration, immortality and wisdom. Its antlers: a sun emblem, solar rays, also they are related to the Tree of Life. A creature of grace, agility, a lover of faith and truth. Evidence of British ritual activity associated with stags; it is Sovereignty's own beast as the White Hart. A white stag heralded the birth of King Arthur. The appearance of the white hart is a signal for otherworldly happenings: it often represents the pure soul searching for baptism, the Grail or Way of ascent. The hunt may be a search in a spiritual sense: Perceval is hunting the white stag when he comes to the Grail Castle. The stag becomes a man (Christ). Prehistoric images of 'priests' in horns and antlers, Celtic cults of horned deities, gods of fertility and prosperity. The 10-pronged antler headdress is sacred to the life-renewing healing work of Siberian and Scandinavian shamans. At first the Christian church set heavy penances for dressing as a stag, later used as a symbol to weave together the two strands of Christian and pagan beliefs in Europe. Mythically, it ate the serpent and absorbed its wisdom. A powerful and royal totem beast. Stags are prominent in the Decagon.



William Langland's 'dream' came to him as he lay on the Malvern Hills. Once

## Whiteleaved Oak

they were covered in oak, beech and ash and were a chase where the Earls of Gloucester hunted the deer. At their southern tip is the centre of our circle, in the valley just off the A438 at Hollybush. Whiteleaved Oak lies below the Iron Age fortress on Midsummer Hill. It is a lonely place, a place apart: there should be silence at the centre of a circle, a place of revelation, of the burning bush. Perhaps the Oak which gave its name to the place had ten great branches. The druids had their shrines in oak groves, we believe, away from the bustle of nearby hillforts and settlements - so was it here. A good place for the legendary axis of the Circle we seek. Dusk is a ghostly time here where the firefly still shows its eerie green light. Michell says there is a legend of Whiteleaved Oak which is not recorded. He says local people have either forgotten it or do not care to tell. There is certainly a dark reputation to the twin peaks of Ragged Stone hill which is next to Midsummer Hill. Christianised, it tells of a monk's curse, but there is another version. The Romans destroyed the druid groves and cut down sacred trees, a blasphemy which brought down upon them the curses of the druids. This may be so here. The jagged peaks cast a shadow which brings ill-fortune and death. Cardinal Wolsey's career was doomed after he fell asleep under this shadow at nearby Bismorton Court. A gormesiad, enchantment, affliction may have fallen on the once sacred ground: a wasteland awaiting its knight of the grail who will ask the right question. The day I went to Whiteleaved Oak it was wet and menacing, but the clouds cleared as I climbed up onto Midsummer Hill.



## Three Choirs

Here is the meeting place of the three counties of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester. Their county towns can be seen from the Malvern ridge and they form a triangle about 25 miles along each side. The world famous Festival of the Three Choirs is a six day annual coming-together of the cathedral choirs, at which Elgar's 'Dream of Gerontius' and Handel's 'Messiah' are always sung. Nigel Pennick lists Gloucester and Worcester as two of five English cathedrals having crypts oriented under the most sacred part of the building in a geomantic site of maximum telluric energy and says Glastonbury has such a crypt. The chapter houses are significant, too. These are seen as the crown, the mythical 'domus Dei' of such holy buildings. That of Worcester is round within with a central pillar, its windows gave it a 10-sided casing of masonry (a diagram of our studies!). That of Hereford was also ten sided with its entrance in the south, as the Severn Estuary enters our circle. The chapter house at Gloucester is rectangular, ark-shaped - a Nave or ship to sail up the estuary. There are many more interesting symbols for which there is no room here, examples are: Worcester has six Green Men carved in it, two at the chapter house door; Gloucester has the tomb of Edward II with paintings of stags



for it was told his bier was borne by stags; a restoration of royal dignity to a much-sinching king! At Worcester lies the body of the prince who would have been King Arthur II and at Hereford is a circular map of the world with Jerusalem, the Sacred City, at its centre. Gloucester, the 'shining city', was the prison place of Mabon son of Modron where he lay since the beginning of creation. He was released by Arthur and his warriors who questioned the totem animals, including the Stag of Fernbrake Hill. Kai fetched him forth on the salmon's back: the Son who was lost was found and restored to his Mother, the Great Goddess. But let us turn to the symbolic value of these three cities in their triangle at the centre of the circle. Three is a number of great significance, not only to the Celts.

### Triplicity

To the Pythagoreans three was the perfect number, a symbol of the Deity as Creator. The equilateral triangle is a symbol of the trine nature of existence. All colours can be made by combining the primaries of red, yellow and blue; when a ray of light shines through a prism it divides into its three prismatic colours. Dante ends the 'Divine Comedy' with a vision of God as the light eternal at the heart of three great circles of three colours - 'two reflecting each other as rainbow by rainbow and the third 'as it were fire.' (The Shining One?). The Celts used the Triskele, 3 curving forms swirling in a circle, as a symbol of the three in one. It is a solar symbol, an equivalent of the cross in the Bronze Age. The druids taught in Triads, verses of three statements; and gods, but particularly goddesses, are Triple. The 9 witches of Gloucester who trained Peredur in battle skills were a ninefold sisterhood, 3x3, who laid waste the land until they were killed by Arthur and his men. Peredur's uncle was the Lame King who had been struck by the witches with the Spear which heals and wounds. Three drops descended from the cauldron of heaven, and from these drops arose three streams, corresponding to the 3 Pillars of the Tree of Life. It is fitting that this triangle of cities should be sending out the heavenly music to the ten Caers still.

### Ten - not Nine

Understand this in wisdom and enquire and ponder through this meaning, so as to return the Creator to his Throne\*. (Babylonia, 6th.)



(i)



(ii)

(iii)



'Ten is the Kingdom of God on earth, it unites the infinite with the here & now.'

The Tetractys (ii) was a powerful symbol to the Pythagoreans who revered the divine harmony of number: the 3 contains 10. William Blake's powerful image of God circumscribing the universe with a pair of compasses relates to our theme. The Tree of Life is the yardstick by which all pantheons and systems may be measured. While it is not usually represented as a circle there is no reason why it should not be. From Kether, the Primum Mobile, Divine Will, a ray of light divides into its three prismatic colours and creates force, life which radiates around the circle through the ten different emanations or sephira which are all different but interrelated and equal (i). The continuous line of Celtic art, where forms are created as a continuum, distinct but one, seems to be based upon such ideas (iii).

Finally, before we examine the Caers separately, the significance of 13 arises, 10+3: the central choirs and the decagon. There were 13 months in the Celtic year based on the moon; the 'Tri Thlws' were the 13 precious talismans of Welsh heroic tradition, and are buried with Merlin. Thirteen is the traditional and mythical number of a leader and twelve disciples and of a leader and his heroic followers: King Arthur and the Inner Twelve Knights, Balder and his twelve Judges, Romulus and his twelve shepherds, Jacob and his twelve sons. The Cistercians founded new colonies by sending out an Abbot with twelve monks. The greatest of all these Companies of thirteen needs no spelling out.

In my studies I have tried to relate the Caers to other symbolic systems, chiefly the Tree and the Tarot. These studies are only at a preliminary stage but I am interested in the Celtic Tree Alphabet, the Celtic Months, and Pathworkings such as those of John and Caitlin Matthews, Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki, Bob Stewart, et.

## The Caers

Let us commence our journey around the circle. In order to say as much as possible in a small space I shall need to compress my style, I hope this will prove to be concise rather than cryptic. Each entry is headed by a Taliesin aphorism and Initiation title. I have also included sephoritic and tarot attributions, the latter rather tentatively. I have found Bob Stewart's 'Merlin Tarot' especially interesting, though my ideas are not based on any one system of symbols.

### (4) Llantwit Major

'I have been a light in a lantern - a word in a book.'



The Initiation of the Anointed One. Chokmah. Hermit & Hierophant.

The actual vertex is at Llanmihangel (enclosure, holy place of Saint Michael) Dragon slayer, bearer of sword of light, enemy of darkness and ancient evil (to Christians). Concerned with destiny of soul, great patron of the dead. Lethbridge: associated with places once centres of Lugh, Celtic sun-god. Nearby Ewenny Priory also dedicated to St. Michael and All Saints. Iolo Morganwg born Llanccarfan, historian, poet, visionary, 18th, invented gorsedd circle and ritual with sun alignments.

Age of Saints, 5th-6th; St. Illtud founded the greatest Celtic Christian centre of learning and missionary activity, an Oxford & Cambridge of time rolled into one. He inaugurated the round-the-clock liturgy and singing of psalms (Egyptian eremitic practice). Described as 'most learned of Britons' said to be a cousin of King Arthur, once a soldier. A co-guardian of the Grail (Triads). 'Now this Illtud was the most learned of all the Britons in scripture and in every branch of philosophy, poetry, etc., and he was wise and gifted in the power of foretelling future events.' Pupils came from Britain and Europe, included many renowned saints: Samson (suggested original Calahad of Arthurian legend), David, Paulinus, Gildas (Jeremiah of Wales - wrote 'De Excidio Britanniae'), Taliesin (great seer and poet), 7 king's sons. Pupils claimed exemption from taxes as druids had. Bangor Illtud - 'Pompeii of the Saints.' Two remarkable pyramidal stones 7' high found, reputed part of heathen altar. 2,000 students, renowned for its scholarship, Celtic mission centre, evangelistic activity (across Severn), burying place of princes. Manual work part of the discipline. Jan Morris: 'the paganism of old Wales was slowly absorbed into the innocent Christianity of the Celtic evangelists.' Vale of Glamorgan rich in pre-Norman crosses and stones. Vale possessed trinity of famous monasteries: Llanccarfan rivalled Llantwit under St. Cadoc (Carannog); cast portable altar on Severn Sea, preached where it came to rest. Given land in Summerland by King Arthur. Helped establish Glastonbury as a shrine. Blackett and Wilson claim Arthur buried, ruins St. Peters, super Montem, by Illtud - who lived as hermit in cave at time. Arthur's body carried up Ewenny River by barge. Vicinity of Llantwit a golden stag said to be buried, when found old glory will return. (Emblem of Saint, buried with its head to the west). Iron Age fort on cliffs, Bronze Age finds, Tinkinswood Barrow, Bedivere claimed buried among graves at Southerndown. St. Cadoc said to have brought giant Caw Prydein back to life in Scotland (19 of his sons at Arthur's Court).

### (5) Llandovery

'I am a Wizard - who but I sets the cool head aflame with Fire?'

The Initiation of the Magus. Hod. Magician & Star.



At this Caer we encounter wisdom and learning of a different, more ancient, kind. This is Merlin's land, an area of romantic legends and ruined castles, seat of the Princes of Deheubarth in earliest times, and of Llandovery and Dynevor later, Llandovery on the Tywi River ('the loveliest river God has made') - meeting place of 3, one the 'Bran.' Mabinogion was printed there, 19th. Station of Romans, Sarn Helen East goes west from Llandovery: into Pumpsaint Area. Pump-Saint Zodiac of Lewis Edwards (and Pendragon). Fishermen still use coracles to catch salmon - since before Romans. Kite fly in hills. Gold mine at Dolaucothi, royal rings made from, ancient ones excavated there. St. Paulinus and 12 followers went from area to court of King Mark of Cornwall. (Direct contact of Christianity with Arthurian characters). Carreg Cennen Castle, famous wishing well, legendary home Sir Urien of Arthur's Court, husband of Morgan le Fey in legends. Merlin born south, greatest of wizards, active in Towy Valley. Unusual mastery over stags, may be late British shaman. Welsh name Myrddin, may be name for line of magicians. Spenser's 'Faerie Queene' describes cave in grounds Dynevor Castle where Merlin had oracular conversations and is confined with 13 Treasures of Britain. Prime-mover behind



Age of Arthur, wonder worker and sponsor of Arthur's reign. Several traditions converge: shaman, druids, Hermetic tradition. 'Life of Merlin' - Geoffrey of Monmouth, so potent were Merlin's Prophecies in Medieval Europe they were included in Index by the Council of Trent. Willingly imprisoned at end of his Cycle: Master of Wisdom beside Faery Lady of the Hollow Hills. Physicians of Myddfai, village 5m from Llan-doverly. From 12th.C. small hamlet renowned for its medical tradition. Farmer's son married fairy wife from Llyn-y-Fan-Fach (one of the Tylwyth Teg). 3 sons, she left him through breaking of a taboo 3 times. Later appeared to sons at lakeside, taught them power of herbs, touched seat of their senses - imparting secret knowledge. Truth is a line of doctors descended from this family, last of line a doctor to Queen Victoria.) Her charge: 'you must become a man of medicine and be a benefactor to mankind by giving relief from pain, healing all manner of diseases. Physicians to Lord Rhys, 13th, gave them ranks, lands, privileges to maintain them in their art. A treatise of their cures exists today. A line of Conjurors, most famous John Harries of Caio; Dyn Hysbys - wise man, seer or wizard; astologists, healers, learned their craft from spell books. Could foretell future with a magic glass. Important duty to protect people from curses and spells and find missing people and objects. (Long tradition of such Conjurors in Wales into 19th.) Hymn writers prolific in area, most famous - William Williams, Pant-y-cellin ('The Sweet Singer'); 'Guide me o'er. Largest hillfort in Wales, Carn Goch, encloses huge burial cairns of prehistoric date (Pagan Celts honoured earlier religious beliefs). Three notable stone circles, high on plateaux with round barrows). One 55' diameter, 20 stones, avenue going NE, standing stone 30' from circle - 6' high.

## (6) Plynlimon



'I am a height where Druids walk: I am a strong tide of the Deep.'  
The Initiation of The Silver Wheel. Yesod. Moon,  
High Priestess.

Llawryglyn: 'low ground in the glen': a place apart, standing stones - ancient route to summit. Sacred centre of Wales, a place of lakes & mists with rocks older than the Alps, Andes, Himalayas. Mynydd Perfedd, land of Vortigern. A fortress of 5 peaks. Buzzards fly where the winged dragon was. A place to ascend, fast and dream dreams, see visions: fall under Arianrhod's spell. At Llanbrynmair a stone circle called 'Width of an ox's hide' - a burial place of the sacred white, red-eared Uchen Bannog of Hu Gadarn? Ox-horns crown the forehead of the Moon Goddess. Mother of rivers: the Rheidol, Wye and Severn (Hafren in Welsh) rise within a two mile circle. Hoards of gold thrown into sacred Severn; meets Wye 130 miles later as they skirt the centre of our circle. Kai & Bedwyr, battle-diademed heroes, foremost of Arthur's warriors: at the summit beacon cairn in the strongest wind that ever was 'to find the giant Dillus, mightiest warrior who ever fled from Arthur, King Uther's Dragon-banner was raised again when Owain Glyndwr raised his on Plynlimon in 1400: a golden dragon on a white ground. His force camped on the banks of a small stream, the Hyddgen ('skin of the stag') and routed a much larger force of Flemings. Merlin ('Birch Tree Poem'): 'Blessed is the birch in Pumlumon which will see when the front of the stag shall be exalted.' Glyndwr moved to 'Y Wylfa' ('Watchtower'); two large unhewn blocks of white quartz (the Cerrig Cyfanod - Covenant Stones) set 60' apart, aligned N and S. Joined by many from N and S Wales; Halley's comet 1402 interpreted by bards as his lucky year - it was! Believed to be a magician: 'At my birth the front of heaven was full of fiery shapes' (Henry IV, pt. 1.). Dreamed of a new Wales, with a parliament & 2 universities. Never defeated, disappeared, story told he lies in enchanted sleep, like Arthur to lead his people to victory in Golden Millennium. At the Dissolution of the monasteries the White Monks fled to Arwystli (Upper Severn Valley), held their 'choirs' of the old worship, took relics of old Welsh saints: Crozier of Paternus, Arm of Cyricius: still a place of dreams & inspiration. Newydd Fynyddog: 3 Stone Circles (one 'The Altar'); Cefn Carnedd, immense Hillfort - one of alleged sites of Caractacus's last stand against Romans. Defeated, he fled east, but was surrendered to the Romans by Cartimandua, Queen of the Brigantes. Another lost Pan-Celtic dream! The goddess gives and the goddess takes away.

To be continued.

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# MORTE D'ARTHUR

ARTHUR ONSTAGE

The eagerly anticipated dramatisation of MORTE D'ARTHUR starts at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith on 1st August and continues until the 20th October. The Cycle of Arthurian Legends will take around seven hours to perform. Beginning with the birth of Arthur, the establishment of the Round Table, Merlin, the story evolves around the central figures of Arthur and his Queen Guenever, the passionate relationships of the Queen and Lancelot, Tristram and Isoud, the chivalrous and carnal quests of the knights, and culminates in the Quest for the Holy Grail, the Fall of Camelot and the end of civilisation. Phew! It is certainly going to be the show of the book!

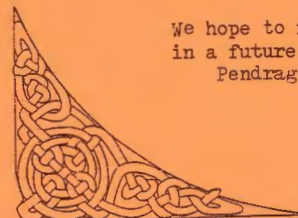
The production is presented by the team who were responsible for FAUST at the Lyric in 1988 and the press handout claims, 'it promises to surpass FAUST in terms of spectacle.' The show will be presented in two parts and you can either see it on separate evenings or in its entirety on certain Fridays and Saturdays. During the performance the audience will be conducted between the Lyric Theatre and St. Paul's Church on Hammersmith Broadway.

During the run works by artists inspired by the Arthurian legends will be on exhibition, some for sale.

Early booking is strongly recommended, especially if you want to attend the two parts on separate evenings.

Part 1 will be performed at 7.15 on Mondays and Wednesdays,  
 Part 2 will be performed at 7.15 on Tuesdays and Thursdays;  
 Both parts will be performed (with supper break) Fridays & Saturdays.  
 Ticket prices will vary according to whether you book both parts on the same day or two separate days: prices range from £15 to £30 (for both parts). Single parts can only be bought on the day of performance.  
 BOX Office: 081 741 2311 : Lyric Theatre, King Street, London W6 0QL.

We hope to review the production in a future edition of Pendragon.





# hear Ye

On Derek Jameson's radio programme Adrian Fisher (whose name will be familiar to all maze enthusiasts) talked of the Maze Society and 1991 - the Year of the Maze, with various functions such as treasure hunts to celebrate it. (There are, incidentally, more mazes in Britain than in any other country.)

The standard method of finding one's way out of a maze, by the way, is to place one's left hand on the wall and keep going down every turning, blind or otherwise. Designers, says Adrian Fisher, keep changing their designs to defeat such methods of maze solving. A murrain take them!

Pendragon elder statesperson (not in age, I hasten to add!) Kate Pollard, receives quite a bit of correspondence from long-standing members and would like to acquaint them with her new address. It is: 21 Hill Street, Totterdown, Bristol, Avon BS34TW. Her new telephone number is: 0272 776744.

Stonehenge authority Ivor Snook wonders if any reader takes the American journal Stonehenge Viewpoint. He hasn't received any after Issue No.81 and suspects it may have ceased publication. He particularly wants to check if they subsequently printed his article 'Did Giants Build Stonehenge?' If you've any information Ivor would be grateful if you would contact him. His address is: 47 Salt-erton Road, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2EF.

I phoned our old friend Sid Birchby - for many years a staunch and highly intellectual contributor to PENDRAGON, and am happy to report that he is making steady progress, after his serious illness last August (though not as fast as he would like!) He wishes to be remembered to everybody.

Sid, of course, is the chap responsible for my taking over the editorship of the Journal - but please don't hold it against him: his intentions were good.

AGM 1990 - see Editorial

