

# PENDRAGON

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# EDITORIAL

Yes, you've noticed: PENDRAGON is late coming out! (Pause while the world catches its breath and the Post Office goes bankrupt.)

Don't say you weren't warned though. We anticipated this in our last editorial. Although our office is no longer in our manor building, its importance emphasised by a macroscopic neon-illuminated sign [sorry - there's some typographical errors here: that should read 'our minor building, its impotence emphasised by a microscopic non-illuminated sign] there is now fairly adequate room in which to function. A lot of sorting out was necessary however and most of our reference books have had to go to be stored at our new home in Buckinghamshire which is far from being completed. (It's a barn conversion and the cows keep coming back for milking. Have you ever tried milking a cow with one hand and typing with the other? If you haven't, don't. The milk clogs the keys and the cows don't like it.)

Actually the problem is really one of cash flow and we'll be here until after Christmas at least; when we hope Santa will put a quarter of a million pounds or so in our stockings.

Meanwhile our accommodation address 'The White House' still applies and we're thinking of changing the Society's name to PENTAGON as a status boost for President Bush.

A further source of delay is the fact that most members are due to resubscribe between March and June and this process usually continues until September. Lots of work for the Treasurer, Me. Late subs. are still coming in but we've lost a few members due to the recession. A real drop in membership hasn't occurred, however, because we've had a number of new members - some of them as the result of Ian Forrester Roberts' excellent exhibition in Gloucester, where he provided a corner for Pendragon publicity. Due to my own involvement with domestic matters, Fred and Geoff organised all this, including printing extra June PENDRAGONS. These sold quite well. My warmest thanks to all concerned.

Once again there is no particular theme for this issue. Our last theme (in March) was 'What Merlin Means to Me' but the only person Merlin apparently meant anything to was our staunch friend in Cornwall, Beryl Mercer, who submitted an article on this topic a few weeks ago. We had a large backlog of material for publication so we have had to defer printing it until the next edition. If anyone else has something to say on this subject please feel free to send it in; it will be more than welcome. We try to maintain a balance between historical and esoteric material and it's high time this latter aspect of our Society got a look in. I might even do something on this theme myself - unless you're nice to me.

We're sorry there couldn't be an A.G.M. this year; it's an event all of us look forward to very much. Pendragon, then, will roll on pretty much as usual for the time being, though I must stress that ANY proposals you care to make about any aspects of the Society and its Journal will receive careful consideration.

(Thank you, Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury, for your kind suggestion, but it won't work. Dozmary Pool on Bodmin Moor where Arthur acquired Excalibur is NOT bottomless as legend has it; it's five feet deep and I stand six feet three ...)

'Hear Ye' (overflow)

How did Arthur conquer the world? asks Prof. Bedwyr Lewis Jones, broadcaster and newspaper columnist. He is giving a free lecture entitled 'WHOSE ARTHUR?' at Bodelwyddan Castle, Clwyd, N.Wales on Saturday 31st October at 2 pm.



# LONDON'S CAMELOT

## CHRISTOPHER E. STREET

In the woods of Trent Park, on the very northern fringe of London, lies a lost and forgotten Camelot. It's a small, moated isle on a hilltop. Local maps call it Camlet Moat. The name has been abbreviated over the centuries. Camelot it should be and in fact, was, way back in 1136 or so. At that time, it was home to the manor house of Geoffrey De Mandeville, Earl of Essex and founder of Waldron Abbey.

David Pam, a prominent local historian, tells us in his book *The History of Enfield Chase*, that a survey of the area conducted between 1656-58 states that 'the manor and chase of Enfield were anciently in the possession of Geoffrey De Mandeville in the reign of William the Conqueror, whose seat and habitation at that time, called Camelot, was situated on the chase near unto Potters' Lodge, the ruins whereof are yet remaining, and being moated, is this day called Camelot Moat.'

A map dating from the same period, moreover, extends the boundaries of Camelot to the area surrounding the moat, referring to it as North Camelot, East Camelot, West Camelot and Camelot Hill.

The road passing nearby is marked as Camelot Way and although parts of it today are now called Hadley Road and Ferny Hill, a long section of it running through Hadley Wood is still called Camlet Way and leads directly to the Parish Church of St. Mary The Virgin, Monken Hadley - another site in the possession of the De Mandevilles - until ownership was passed to the Benedictines of Waldron Abbey in 1144.

Did Geoffrey de Mandeville christen the place Camelot, or does the name pre-date his association with the site, which itself may be even older, a Saxon homestead moat perhaps? Sadly we'll never know. There are no earlier records relating to it. There are though, some very odd coincidences, if coincidences are something you believe in.

Page 168 of Gareth Knight's book *The Secret Tradition in Arthurian Legend*, for instance, carries a map of Europe, drawn by the poet and occultist Charles Williams. It shows, in almost illegibly small lettering, the word Camelot, not in the region of Cadbury, or even Tintagel, but further to the east, exactly where a less esoteric geographer would place London.

Is there another Camelot in London, a better known one perhaps? I think not. Either Charles Williams considered London as a whole to be Camelot, or he was referring to this one.

Did he know something we don't? Almost certainly, in one respect at least. Williams was a long standing member of an association known as The Golden Dawn, an occult society which concerned itself directly with ancient knowledge, albeit of a magical nature.

One can only assume that this particular Camelot was known to Williams and other members of the Golden Dawn and that they considered it a place of mystical significance.

There are some local legends attached to the site which sound more allegorical than factual and therefore suggest that Williams may not have been the only one to regard Camelot Moat as a magical spot. The first concerns the death of Sir Geoffrey de Mandeville.

One story has it that he was being pursued by the king's men on the night of a full moon and had hidden in a hollow oak tree. When he ventured out of his hiding place at midnight, he is said to have fallen to his death down a well in the North East corner of the moated isle.

Now it is an undisputed fact that Geoffrey de Mandeville was killed at the siege of Burwell Castle, in Cambridgeshire in 1144, so on the surface the story looks like nonsense. But is it?

One would have thought the light of the full moon would have helped him avoid falling down a well in the dark. But mention of the full moon and midnight combine to suggest a time for mystical goings-on, as does the druids' oak, to a lesser extent. The death in the well may therefore be a ritual enactment of a symbolic death, in other words an initiation.

As many a survivor of drowning will tell you, an initiation by water can certainly provoke a near-death experience in which your whole life may flash before you, sometimes also allowing a brief but fleeting glimpse of the afterlife and bringing with it a fresh insight into the mysteries of life and death.

It has been suggested that a similar initiation was once practised at the Chalice Well at the foot of Glastonbury Tor, so perhaps Camelot Moat's well served the same function.

Another local tale tells of treasure at the bottom of the well. A tale of treasure though is usually also accompanied by a tale of greed and dirty doings and this case is no exception.

The well is no more. Although once reputed to be a solid, brick-lined structure with a mosaic-paved bottom, it is now little more than a mud-filled hollow, having been excavated out of existence in 1923 by Sir Phillip Sassoon who owned the site at the time and did not admit to having found any treasure of any sort in the process.

Sassoon himself may have been a man with mystical inclinations. His sitting room in Trent Park House has been preserved with its decor intact and three out of four of the walls are adorned with imagery depicting three of the four alchemical elements: Earth, Fire and Water. Air is the missing one (well, it is invisible, isn't it).

I have a sneaking suspicion that Sir Phillip Sassoon may even have been a member of the Golden Dawn himself. They were both around at roughly the same time. Unfortunately, I haven't yet turned up any evidence in support of this notion.

Whether Camelot was a place of mystical initiation in the past or not, it is certainly a place of great mystical significance to me.

The first time I went there, my hair literally stood on end. Not because the place was in any way frightening, you understand. The experience itself was a little unnerving, to say the least, and I felt somewhat disorientated, but I suspect it had more to do with an unusual energy presence at the site rather than anything else.

The presence was tangible in more ways than one. It was clairvoyantly visible as the radiant figure of a white lady, sometimes looking, appropriately enough, as if she might be Guinevere herself.

At the time I realised that someone more inclined to the Roman Catholic faith than myself might have regarded this as a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or, a BVM as they are called in the journals of anomalous phenomena.

I believe these manifestations can assume many related archetypal forms, to be interpreted in different ways, by different cultures and individuals.

Robert Graves, for instance, would have immediately recognised



her as his White Goddess and I understood her as a personified manifestation of the spirit of the place.

As you can imagine, these things tend to have a profound effect on those who witness them. But no, I didn't set up a shrine to our Lady of Cockfosters and bottle up the moat to sell as holy water.

In retrospect though, it seems I did set forth unwittingly on a kind of mystic quest and a place called Camelot, of course, is traditionally the place to begin such ventures.

Over the course of the next couple of years, I was led to other places, other experiences, other visions, until a pattern began to emerge. A pattern on the landscape.

The sites, connected in geometric patterns, perfect pentagrams, hexagrams, circles and stars, were all inter-connected so that they formed a vast and beautiful design covering almost the whole of London.

Moreover, it was the very same design upon which the megaliths of Stonehenge had been laid out thousands of years ago.

It is a plan of the cosmic temple on Earth; a symbol of a perfected state of existence, something that Camelot itself is often regarded as in mystical circles.

We'll never know if London's Camelot actually was home to Arthur, Guinevere and the Knights of the Round Table.

But it is very definitely home to a great many other mysteries.

[The discovery referred to in this article is fully described and illustrated in the book *Earthstars* by C.E. Street. Priced at £12.50 (£10.00 to Pendragon members) from Hermitage Publishing P.O. Box 1383, London N14 6LF. (P.& P. free in UK). *Earthstars* was reviewed in our last issue. Ed.]



#### THE RETURN

I learnt to feel the coming of the dream  
Peopled by those whom I could not recall,  
And I was moved to witness how each one  
Was welcomed, honoured and beloved by all;  
Each, separately, was laurelled, cherished, known,  
For motives, talents, missions that were not  
Perceived by the worldly eyes of worldly men  
But are acclaimed in risen Camelot.

Here each true soul is garlanded with flowers,  
Lauded in song, and led to that fair place  
Where he or she may further the true work  
By higher influence upon the race:  
Even by such a means came Galahad  
To waken a past that I had long forgot.  
Breaking my soul to be a shooting star  
That I might dwell again in Camelot.

Pamela Constantine.

(See 'Hear Ye')

# book Reviews

THE WAY OF MERLIN by R.J. Stewart (Aquarian Press £7.99).

In the fourth of his Merlin explorations Bob Stewart goes deeper into the Merlin Tradition and comes up with a practical handbook of guided visualisations, meditations and ritual based on the underlying images locked within the medieval texts 'The Prophecies of Merlin' and 'Vita Merlini'.

The Merlin Tradition embodies many aspects of Celtic and pre-Celtic tradition and although the figure of Merlin has nowadays become somewhat stereotyped - 'the old man in the pointy hat' - the fundamental root of the tradition is more important today than ever before - that of oneness with the land and, in turn, the whole of creation. In this current time of rain forest devastation and ozone layer depletion the basic principles of the Merlin Tradition need to be adhered to as never before.

The Way of Merlin is not just an inner journey but an outer one also. It is based upon the four elements and the cycle of the seasons, the first step being to enliven sacred space whilst understanding that all space is sacred as is all life within that space. It is encouraged that followers on the Way visit and meditate at ancient and sacred sites thus forming the all-important link with the land. Finding one's own sacred spring or tree is the first connection or re-connection with the natural world and from here on the work may begin in earnest.

The shorter first section provides some background information to the techniques to be used later on. It is not just a regurgitation of Bob's previous books that contains much new material that will be of interest to people trying to unravel the mystery of Merlin. Included are notes taken from conferences and an account of Bob's own, rather unusual, meeting with Merlin on the hilltop of Dinas Emrys. He points out, though, that he does not think he met the Merlin but a Merlin, the name Merlin being a generic term or title for a bard or prophet that would have been handed down through the ages.

Followers on the Way will tread many paths and will have encounters with totem animals, ancestral beings and Gods and Goddesses of the Otherworld, eventually meeting Ariadne, the Weaver Goddess, who opens and closes the gates of creation.

The book itself is extremely well written and is a natural progression from Bob's earlier Merlinic studies. In it we go beyond pure history or literary adaptation to the core of the Merlin story and in doing so we begin to understand where our own paths through creation should take us.

It has been questioned whether books such as this further the course of Dark Age studies or if they are merely part of some New Age claptrap. Bob Stewart avoids the latter by his substantial knowledge of esoteric lore and his sympathetic handling and interpretation of the material. Never one to jump to conclusions and always willing to dig deeper to uncover the true essence of the Merlin legends, his books provide a valuable source of information when unlocking the door to the mystery of Merlin.

Simon Rouse.



THE ARTHUR OF THE WELSH - Rachel Bromwich, A.O.H. Jarman. Brynley F. Roberts (eds.)  
University of Wales Press, 1991, 310 pages, £27.50.

In 1985 the Eugene Vinaver Memorial Trust announced its intention to commission a series of new works to expand and update R.S. Loomis' monumental work 'Arthurian Literature In The Middle Ages', first published in 1959. 'The Arthur Of The Welsh' is the first of these projected volumes to be published. It includes 13 separate essays by a number of academic writers covering the following topics: Nennius, early Welsh poetry, Culhwch and Olwen, Geoffrey of Monmouth, the Merlin legend, the Mabinogion romances of Geraint, Owain, and Peredur, The Dream of Rhonabwy, the Tristan legend, sites in south-west England with Arthurian associations, Brittany's contribution to the Arthurian legend's development, and transmission of the Welsh traditions to England and France. The range of topics covered is thus somewhat wider than the book's title might suggest; perhaps 'The Arthur Of The Celts' might have been more appropriate? The only important topic within this sphere not treated in detail is the Welsh Triads. However, this omission is deliberate; the reader is referred to Rachel Bromwich's comprehensive study 'Trioedd Ynys Prydain'.

Undoubtedly this volume is a weighty and important investigation into the early development of the Arthurian legends. In general, the essays seemed to me to concentrate more on synthesising and summarising previous, recent research rather than advancing new theories and ideas. Consequently, as a statement of current academic research, this study is unrivalled. The essays are consistently fresh, penetrating and powerful. All are good; the particular interest of any individual essay will of course depend on the reader's own interests. For my own part I found Patrick Sims-Williams' careful dissection of the poem 'Pa gur yv y porthaur?' (What man is the Gatekeeper?) and other early Welsh poetry of the 9th-11th century containing Arthurian references, and J.E. Caerwyn Williams' essay bringing to prominence the Breton connection in the development of the Arthurian legends, both particularly fascinating. Also, Oliver Padel's survey of historical and archaeological research at the south-western sites of Tintagel, 'Kelliwic', South Cadbury and Castle Dore is a useful summary of recent important developments.

There is a common consideration relating to the historical Arthur lying behind all the studies, which I think worth commenting on. There is a brief discussion of the case for the historical Arthur in the introduction, then the first essay that follows is a study of the context of the Arthurian passage in Nennius. The conclusion reached in this essay is a bleak one for those interested in discovering the historical truth about Arthur: 'at this stage of the enquiry, one can only say that there may well have been an historical Arthur; that the historian can as yet say nothing of value about him, but that later conceptions of Arthur are likely to interest historians almost as much as they do students of mediaeval literature' (p.29). Acceptance of this statement is implicit in all the subsequent essays and indeed reflects the current weight of academic opinion. The question asked is not 'how much can we discover about the historical Arthur?' but rather 'how much can we discover about the traditional persona and role of Arthur, and how this developed, after that figure becomes prominent in the documentary record from the 9th-10th centuries onward?'

However, I am not convinced by Thomas Charles-Edwards' contention that the 'Historia Brittonum' has a unity of structure and outlook, rather than being the 'heap' of materials that the preface says it is. According to this view, the Arthurian passage

serves to contrast the short-term worldly importance of Arthur's victories, which are only followed by further waves of Saxons, with the lasting spiritual achievements and glory of Germanus. Patrick and Rhun son of Urien. However, this seems to me to read more into the work than actually exists. As a themed and structured work, Nennius simply does not compare with the works of Gildas, Bede and Geoffrey of Monmouth. Furthermore, these writers state that their histories had a purpose. Gildas thunders 'What I have to deplore with mournful complaint is a general loss of good, a heaping up of bad'. Bede philosophizes 'if history records good things of good men, the thoughtful reader is encouraged to imitate what is good; or if it records evil of wicked men, the devout, religious listener or reader is encouraged to avoid all that is sinful and perverse and to follow what he knows to be good and pleasing to God'. Geoffrey trumpets that the deeds of the kings of Britain 'deserve to be praised for all time'. The preface to Nennius merely notes that 'the scholars of the island of Britain had no skill, and set down no record in books ... I have therefore made a heap of all that I have found' - and this is exactly how the work reads. The leaps in the narrative from one story to another - Patrick, Vortigern, Germanus, Arthur, the Saxon kings - are always crude and obvious, and there appears, at least on face value, little attempt by the author to sift, blend and select from his sources, rather than simply tack them one onto another. This may reflect a lack of skill in the author, but it seems to me more straightforward to simply accept the 'heap' statement at face value. If this is the case, then it remains a valid exercise to regard the Arthurian passage as a piece of 'raw material', to be analysed in its own right rather than as a processed element of a thematic work.

The latter two paragraphs are a diversion on just one of the points raised by this book, but there is a great deal here for the Arthurian enthusiast to digest, and, as is the nature of Arthurian enthusiasts, form opinions on! This book is a significant and stimulating collection, and it will be fascinating to see how the arguments develop.  
Nick Grant.

*(So there is no proof of an historical Arthur. (History itself may be bunk - see Letters pages). How one drools at the thought of a discovery like that noted below of a perfectly preserved, Arthurian-type knight! (Bron's Age rather than Bronze Age. If one may coin a term.) Perhaps one day the gods may be kind ...)*

#### FROZEN FRITZ: THE ALPINE ICEMAN

In September 1991 a Bronze Age man was found perfectly preserved in a remote Alpine Glacier high in the Alps on the Italian/Austrian border. From the equipment he was carrying it was thought that he was a hunter who had been caught in a blizzard and frozen to death. Another theory is that he was searching for copper deposits at a time when sources of the metal were drying up. Since then the pundits have had a field day. While the authenticity of the body's age is not disputed, some experts are not convinced that the man died in the ice where he was found. They are asking how he emerged intact so conveniently on a well-trodden hiker's route after thousands of years under tons of slow-moving ice.

Reinhold Meisner, the celebrated Italian mountaineer who claims to have seen a yeti,\* told Italian journalists about Fritz's shoes before the body had been prized from the ice!

Professor Henrich Tilly of Innsbruck, an expert on ancient mythology, has suggested that the man was a willing sacrifice in an appeasement ceremony to the moon practised by a Mesopotamian tribe which went into the mountains to be near the stars. What's your theory?



(F. S-T)

\*[No, Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury. Abe Lincoln did NOT tell us where to find a yeti in the Arctic Circle: he gave us the GETTYSburg Address - not the YETI's berg address.]



FLOW by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. (Rider £9.99)

FLOW is subtitled 'The Psychology of Happiness', but the publicity handout is at pains to point out that it is not just another of the 'How to be Happy' books which proliferate in the States, and to a lesser extent in this country.

The work is basically about achieving harmony within oneself: learning to integrate the various aspects of one's make-up and experiences so that life 'flows' and is less fragmented. Internal conflicts are resolved. Goals are of vital importance: whatever one's goal is (and we are given as examples the diverse lives and life styles of Napoleon and Mother Teresa) it makes no difference to the ultimate aim - personal psychological harmony.

The trouble is, of course, that it takes a lot of courage and perseverance to stick to the same goal throughout one's life. If the going gets tough, the toughs get going, but those of us not-so-tough may choose to aim a bit lower - or even in a different direction. Not every knight is a Galahad. Bors or Perceval with an indomitable determination to achieve the Holy Grail.

Even with the Grail seekers we see a change of goal: before the holy vessel came on the scene, knights experienced flow by succouring maidens and clobbering dragons - lower goals which in this case gave place to a higher one.

There is a price to pay for changing goals too readily, the author tells us: 'While one may achieve a more pleasant and comfortable life, it is likely that it will end up empty and void of meaning.' But if pleasantness and comfort are the goals that satisfy a particular psychological make-up, then surely, for the person concerned, harmony is achieved - which is what flow is apparently all about. Again, some people might derive pleasure from leading a thoroughly disorganised and fragmented life pursuing transient goals as they rear into view over the horizon.

Whether a person will discover a harmonious theme in the apparent chaos of experience is influenced by many factors, both internal and external', says Mr.C. (I cannot spare the time to write his name in full more than once!) and this seems to me to be a sizeable obstacle. If a captain of industry experiences flow - achieving happiness by trampling on his rivals or his work-force, it makes flow harder to attain for his victims.

Psychological states cannot readily be separated from political and economic conditions whether the system is capitalistic, communistic or fascist. Nevertheless, most may benefit from a little more order in their lives.

Chance may also have a part to play. 'If a person is lucky and succeeds in controlling consciousness ...' is the phrase the author uses. This provides an easy 'out' of course for those of us who find the effort to achieve any goals at all too great, and prefer to say (with Omar Khayyam):

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me  
The Quarrel of the Universe let be;  
And in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,  
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.'

The whole subject is fraught with complexities - as the author readily admits. He appreciates that life (as Arthur Koestler made it clear in JANUS) has two aspects: differentiation and integration. We are individuals but also part of a greater whole - a fact that has been largely overlooked by man in his arrogant, if tacit, assumption that he is lord of nature. Mr.C. does not come down on the side of any established religious or political system but talks of the need for 'a new faith ... a system of belief that will marshal our psychic energy towards meaningful goals, a system that provides rules for a way of life that can provide flow.' He believes that man must accept 'a cooperative rather than a ruling role in the universe.'

FLOW, with its 63 pages of notes and references, its quotes and anecdotes, is a book obviously written by a polymath. You may not agree with the practicability of his ideas but they make worthwhile reading and are not too difficult to comprehend.

His name is a different matter.

Eddie Tooke.

## GAWAIN

and the

## GREEN KNIGHT

Beeston Castle - Friday 14th

August, 1992



Beeston Castle, now in ruins, is set on a rock of red sandstone which rises 500 feet out of the Cheshire plain, wound around with a network of footpaths climbing up to the castle through woodland, gorse and bracken. For an evening in August the Midsommer Actors Company changed the hill into the landscape of Gawain's mythic journey. As they led their crowd, 200 strong, through the paths and up the hill they enacted Gawain's story in a sequence of happenings, one set on a lawn beneath a tree, one on a bracken covered slope, one in a grassy opening in the woods all the way up to Bertilack's castle in the form of the ruin itself.

This beautiful idea of telling the story while moving through the landscape presents challenges to performers and production team alike as they move out of the focused space of the theatre. The Midsommer Actors have developed a bold and exciting style of performance in response to these challenges. On a technical level their voice production was excellent so the alliterative language rang out, full-blooded, through the difficult open spaces - plenty of north-western accents, I was pleased to hear, for the Gawain-poet was a northerner himself. The event was filled with singing both solo and in harmony - authentic mediaeval lyrics creating and changing the atmosphere while the instrumental music was low-key but evocative - bells and cymbals, mediaeval woodwind and a violin - Bertilack cut a striking figure silhouetted against the evening sky as he blew his hunting horn high on the castle walls and the penultimate happening of the play was accompanied by the strange sound of the hurdy-gurdy.

Not only was the play evocative - it was also funny and I was delighted that Simon Corble's script avoided being po-faced and worthy about the story. Arthur celebrated Christmas with a red nose and a party streamer: Gawain, snatching forty winks from questing, was unceremoniously ejected from his hammock by Morgan Le Fey in a bear costume and the inhabitants of 'the Wilderness of the Wirral' were real scouse wide-boys. All this went down well with children and adults alike and was very sensitively mixed with the serious elements of the story. In the same way the language was an exciting mixture of styles: alliterative like the poem with some of the very beautiful nature descriptions recast in language evocative of the original text but with modern idioms and language blended in. The same applies to the design of the production: at other locations they used motorbikes for horses and very effective it looks from the press cuttings, however English Heritage were having none of this at Beeston.

All these factors combined to create an experience which was magical and at the same time fun - the Midsommer Actors are producing work of real imagination and quality and I was very intrigued by the ideas which their treatment of the Gawain poem raised.

The play began at the foot of the hill, the gate-house representing Camelot, with the appearance of Morgan Le Fey. Now in the poem itself, she only appears at the end of the work when



Bertilack reveals that she is responsible for his transformation and, so, for the testing of Gawain. The source of her enmity to the court of Arthur is not explained and she appears scarcely integrated into the story at all. Here she becomes a much more developed character stating her grievances right from the start and these grievances are very contemporary indeed. First, the court has converted to Christianity and so turned away from the nature gods which Morgan identified by indicating the beautiful trees in the landscape around us and addressing them by the names of Celtic gods. This tension between Christianity and paganism is, of course, present in the poem but here it becomes an image of our modern concern with our deteriorating relationship with the natural world. This is compounded by the fact that Morgan, a priestess of the old religion, is not allowed to join the Christian priesthood because she is a woman while Merlin, by contrast, is able to mix with the monks just because he is a man. There is the suggestion here that Morgan's grudge is Arthur's loss of respect for the completeness of life.



Lines 491 to 535 of the poem consist of a description of nature - the passing cycle of the year which brings us to the time when Gawain must set out on his journey to find the Green Knight: not the stuff of drama you might think; no action, no conflict. In this play, however, the description became a speech by Merlin so he too was linked to this idea of respect for the natural world yet he, unlike Morgan, is still tolerated within the court and, in fact, goes on to bestow arms upon Gawain-establishing him as his benefactor and protector. (Morgan as radical; Merlin as liberal ?!)

This gives a special significance to the symbol which is blazoned upon Gawain's shield - the pentangle - presented in the poem as a Christian symbol originating with Solomon who conceived of it "in beteknyng of trawthe" with each of the five points coming to represent symbolic sets of five: the five wits, the five fingers, the five wounds of Christ, the five joys that the Virgin Mary had in the infant Christ and five virtues in which Gawain excelled. This, clearly, is a reinterpretation of an existing pagan symbol and when presented by Merlin it becomes a much more ambivalent image, the presentation itself taking a magical form in the play: the shield burst into flame, the pentangle being depicted on it in fire at a

touch from Merlin's staff. Again, the idea emerges of the old religion operating within the new context. There was more nature magic when Merlin used seeds to induce visions in Gawain of the route his quest would take and Merlin finally promised to follow him in his journey, "as close as I dare."

"Sumwhyle wyth wormez he werrez, and with wolues als,  
Sumwhyle wyth wodwos, that woned in the knarrez,  
Bothe wyth bullez and berez, and borez otherquyle,  
And etayneze, that hym aneled of the heghe felle."

These adventures, now, were condensed into three scenes. In the first Gawain has an encounter with a bear which is really Morgan in disguise, emphasizing for us her importance in his testing. In the second he meets her again disguised as an old woman gathering herbs. Once he has passed on his way she reveals herself to Merlin before using the magic he himself has taught her to blast him into the far distant future out of harm's way. Finally, Gawain encounters the bandits of 'Wyrle' but Morgan, disguised again as a bear, chases them away-again stage-managing his progress to the castle of Bertilack where he will be tested.

The stay at Bertilack's castle was beautifully choreographed: the repetitive nature of the story reflected in the music and the hunt excitingly created in movement and speech. The Green Chapel was sinisterly lit with candles set in the rocks and skulls strewn across the ground and the character of Morgan had been so well built up through the events of the play that it came as no surprise when it was finally revealed explicitly that she had engineered the whole experience. The themes had been raised and it was left to us to decide what the test had shown; at any rate that the values represented by Arthur's court must be examined and considered. The situation was complicated by the arrival of Merlin from the future dressed as an acid house raver to great humorous effect but also to suggest what about our own relationship to the events of the play?

This reshaping of the material made it dramatically viable and also raised some contemporary questions from the Gawain story without being heavy-handed or pompous about it. The atmosphere of the event was beautifully magical and as we all wandered down the hill at the end of the evening, the path lit by lanterns and the full moon in the sky, there was a strong sense of having been on a journey greater than that represented by the paths of the hill. If you have the opportunity to see the Midsommer Actors Company in action at any time do go and see them and in the meantime they are contactable at the following address:

The Midsommer Actors Company, 2 Dudley Ct., Carlton Road,  
Whalley Range, M16 8B10.

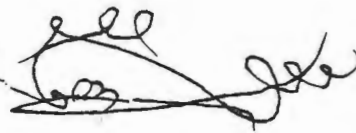


Review by Richard Stedman-Jones  
Artwork by Fred Stedman-Jones





# Rosemary Sutcliff



Rosemary Sutcliff died on the 23rd July, 1992 aged 71. She was born in Surrey in 1920, the daughter of a naval officer and her childhood was spent moving between dockyards. Her mother had wished for a boy so Rosemary was raised 'under a rigid naval discipline'. In later life she considered, 'I do not think it did me any harm. Maybe some of it helped me in later years.' Self discipline she certainly had. To meet Rosemary Sutcliff was initially a shock for she was a tiny lady in a wheelchair, crippled by Still's disease, a form of juvenile arthritis contracted when she was two. Penelope Lively has written: 'In her memoir of childhood, *Blue Remembered Hills*, she describes her wheelchair falling over when she was quite small, depositing her in the long grass where, instead of yelling for help, she simply lay observing and recording the close-up miniature world of plants and insects. The incident sums her up, in a curious way.' And, 'her whole being seemed subsumed into those enormous alert eyes (from which) sprang those vivid intensely physical books.'

These observations may touch the root of Rosemary Sutcliff's creative drive for, trapped in a frail body, her imagination embodied itself in the heroes and heroines of her books, often children alone or outcast who grew to adulthood courageously striving to overcome almost insurmountable odds. Her stories pulled no punches, her heroes often fail or make the wrong choices and have to face the consequences.

She loved the past but, again, her vision of it was unsentimental. She was deeply interested in how people lived, worked and interacted and how peoples with different beliefs co-existed and eventually merged together. She evoked time and place with an incredibly sure touch and David Gilmour the writer remembers how Rosemary Sutcliff led him among the vanished races in the Caledonian forest, among harpers and war hosts, to the bonfire festival of Lammass and Beltane and the mead horns

of Saxon feasting. Her descriptions of war and combat were amazingly vivid.

Rosemary wrote for children as intelligent readers and made the past available and fresh to them. Her books became a yardstick by which to measure historical fiction for children because of their integrity, their accuracy and their insight. She produced over 50 books which were translated into 15 languages and she was writing the morning she died in her elfin longhand, holding the pen almost upside down in her twisted fingers. She tells us how she received a letter once which read, 'Dear Miss Sutcliff, I enjoy your books very much and I hope when you are dead you will go on writing books and I can go on reading them.' In a strange way this hope will be realized for there are other works yet to be published which she left in manuscript form.

If you still have the Oxford University Press editions of her works with their powerful illustrations by Charles Keeping treasure them, their counterparts today are meagre, unillustrated paperbacks. If you don't then please buy even these for your children. Better still: comb the second-hand bookshops for them for they are a precious legacy.

FSJ



# THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL KING ARTHUR

BY DAVID PYKITT

## Introduction:

The part played by the Celtic saints in spreading Eastern lore, and much that was connected with the Arthurian Romances, is often overlooked. It was they who helped to spread the Arthurian stories throughout the Celtic lands, linking Cornwall with Wales and Brittany. The importance of St. Pol de Leon (Paul Aurelian, Bishop of Leon) in this respect needs further appreciation. We possess an early Life of this well-known Welsh-Breton saint, written by a monk named Wrmonoc before the destruction of the Breton monasteries by the Northmen in the tenth century. When the monasteries around the coast of Brittany were in danger, some of their treasures were taken inland, and Wrmonoc's Life of St. Pol de Leon was taken in this way to the great Abbey of Fleury, a few miles from Orleans. The Life is in the hand-writing of the ninth century and is now preserved in the public library at Orleans.

What is very significant is the fact that Wrmonoc definitely states that he received information directly from people arriving in Brittany from over the seas, from Cornwall and South Wales, in particular, and that St. Paul Aurelian took with him from South-East Wales a party of twelve presbyters to the court of King Mark (Marcus Conomorus) in Cornwall. This king and his family were among those who played a very important part in the Arthurian Romances. Wrmonoc states that after visiting the court of King Mark, Paul Aurelian and his presbyters proceeded on their way to Brittany. In that country he settled at Kastell Paol (now St. Pol de Leon) from where his cult spread to many parts of North-Western Brittany. As the late Canon Gilbert Doble pointed out, the coincidences between Wrmonoc's statements and information derived from Welsh, Cornish and Breton topography and archaeology is most striking and cannot be fortuitous. In the story of St. Pol de Leon we have evidence of direct contact between early Christianity and some of the leading Arthurian characters. The subsequent transference of much of this background to Brittany is the basis on which the French Arthurian Romances of the Middle Ages rest. It is important that we look to this area for the origins of the historical Arthur, and for many of the legends which surround his name.

(Edited extract from 'The Glastonbury Region - the Geographical and Archaeological Background' by Prof. Emrys George Bowen, published by R.I.L.K.O. 1969. It has a considerable bearing on the following discourse.)

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Until now one of the greatest mysteries of early British history has been the true identity of King Arthur.

When beginning my research, I was intrigued by the apparent lack of documentary evidence to support the existence of this most celebrated British king. However, I was convinced that the evidence did exist. It was just a matter of rediscovering and



interpreting it correctly.

A source of information which is contemporary with the events of the sixth century is Gildas's 'De Excidio et Conquesta Britanniae', which was written in the 540s. It is not so much a history as a ranting diatribe denouncing the British rulers of that time. King Arthur is not mentioned in this defamatory statement, and for this reason his existence has been questioned by some historians. If my findings are correct, Gildas wrote his 'Complaining Book' in his monastery at Rhuy in Brittany, and King Arthur was residing in close proximity at the time. Under these circumstances, it would have been unlikely that Gildas would have mentioned Arthur. Therefore, I had to look elsewhere for a source of information relating to Arthur's time.

Wrmnoc's Life of St. Pol de Leon, or Paul Aurelian, was written in 884 but compiled from an earlier Life. St. Paul Aurelian (487-573) was born at the Roman station of Caput Bovium (Boverton) near Llanilltyd Fawr (Llantwit Major) in the cantref of Penychen, Glywysing (South-east Glamorgan). He is stated to have been the son of Count Perphirius Aurelianus, a Romano-Briton of high rank and one who bore the same surname as Ambrosius. (r.465-497) the leader of the British resistance against the Anglo-Saxon invasion of the fifth century. According to a passage in Nennius's 'Historia Brittonum', Campus Elleti, which has been identified as Llanmaes near Llantwit Major, was where Ambrosius was found during his childhood by the emissaries of the High King Gwrtheyrn Gwrtheneu (Vortigern the Thin) (r.428-465). The Mabinogion states that Myrddin Emrys (Merlin Ambrosius) came from Maesaleg in Glywysing. This is undoubtedly the same place as Campus Elleti. Count Perphirius Aurelianus, the father of St. Paul Aurelian, was born in Cowbridge, also near Llantwit Major. Therefore, the evidence for Glywysing being the home of the great Romano-British family of Aurelia is overwhelming, especially if one takes into account that the founder of the kingdom, Glywys, was like Ambrosius a direct descendant of the Roman Emperor Magnus Maximus (r.383-388). Wrmnoc's Life of St. Pol de Leon also contains a vital clue to the true identity of Uthyr Pendragon. St. Paul Aurelian's cousin was Count Withur of Leon in Brittany. Withur, Gwvthyr and Uthyr are all Welsh forms of the Latin Victor.

Another important source is the 'Vita Sancti Samsonis', an early Life of St. Samson, Bishop of Dol, which dates from the beginning of the seventh century and is almost contemporary with the events which it describes. This ancient Life is the work of Tigernomail, Bishop of Dol, who states that his source was a Life of St. Samson (490-565) written by the deacon Henwyn, a cousin of St. Samson himself, and handed to an old monk at the monastery of Dol in Brittany. Bishop Tigernomail also states that he obtained additional facts from this aged man and the monks of Llanilltyd Fawr. The information afforded by this early Life of St. Samson is especially valuable, considering that, according to the Genealogies of the Welsh Saints, he was the nephew of Athrwys, king of Glamorgan and Gwent. The name of Tigernomail, the author of the Life of St. Samson, occurs on a stone discovered in the tower of Cubert Church, Cornwall, and now built into its western wall, near the south-west corner. The stone is of the sixth or seventh century and reads 'CONECTOCI FILI TIGERNOMAILUS', which translated means Connetoc son of Tigernomail. Bishop Tigernomail was a companion of St. Paul Aurelian.

Further relative information on the Arthurian era may be obtained from the 'Liber Landavensis', the Ancient Register of the Cathedral Church of Llandaff in Cardiff. It records the grant of Lann Custennin Garth Benni (the Church and Monastic Enclosure of Constantine the Blessed), now Welsh Bicknor in Herefordshire, by Constantine's son-in-law Pepiau Clavorauc, king of Erging, to his grandson St. Dyfrig (Dubricius). Custennin Fendigaid (Constantine the Blessed), the son of Maccen Wledig (Maximus the Emperor), was also responsible for founding Llangystennin (the Church of Constantine) in Gwynedd, and, in conjunction with St. Garmon and King Tewdrig of Gwent, re-establishing the monastic college of Cor

Worgorn and renaming it Cor Tewdws (the College of Tewdrig). Under St. Illtyd, the great-nephew and disciple of St. Garmon, this comparatively small community became the famous monastery and monastic school of Llanilltyd Fawr (Llantwit Major). Its many famous scholars included Saints Samson, Paul Aurelian, Arthmael, Gildas and David, and king Maelgwn Hir (the Tall) of Gwynedd. The 'Liber Landavensis' also records the grant of St. Kinemark's Church, near Chepstow, with its territory, comprising a large portion of Erging, made by Athrwys, king of Gwent, to his brother Comereg, Bishop of Erging.

It therefore becomes apparent that the Romano-British faction was concentrated in the former territory of the Silures. The Silurian commonwealth re-emerged in the fifth century when Glywysing, named after its founder-king Glywys, became united with Gwent. The first ruler of the united kingdom was Tewdrig Fendigaid (the Blessed), an eminently good king who founded many churches and colleges. His son and successor Meurig married Onbrawst, daughter of Gwrgant Mawr (the Great), king of Erging, and as a result of this marriage alliance Meurig was able to extend his domain into present-day Herefordshire. Meurig and Onbrawst had four sons, Athrwys, Idnerth, Frioc and Comereg, and three daughters, Anna, Gwenonwy and Afrella. Meurig achieved another important alliance when he married his three daughters to sons of Emyr Llydaw (Budic, Emperor of Armorica).

The fifth and sixth centuries are known as the Age of Saints, a period when the great pioneers of the Celtic Church flourished. Many are familiar today chiefly from innumerable commemorative names of towns, villages and church dedications in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany. The ancient churches and chapels now bearing the names of the Celtic saints owe their foundation in the first instance to the fact that the saint in question actually visited the site and established there a monastic community which became the forerunner of the modern church. There were certain of the Celtic saints who through necessity were obliged to exchange their priestly apparel for armour in order to overthrow oppressive tyrants. They were known as the soldier saints and King Arthur and many of his knights were to be included in this illustrious company.

One of the first of these great crusaders was St. Garmon (Germanus), the nephew and disciple of St. Patrick and not to be confused with St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre. St. Garmon was the brother of Aldwr, who was the father of Emyr Llydaw and the ruler of the Welsh settlements in Armorica (Brittany). Garmon was ordained Bishop of Aleth in Armorica and later in life became first Bishop of Man. He participated in the insurrection which succeeded in overthrowing the infamous usurper Gwrtheyrn Gwrtheneu (Vortigern the Thin) and re-instating the Romano-British faction led by Emyr Wledig (Ambrosius the Emperor), the son of Custennin Fendigaid (Constantine the Blessed). Garmon also led the insurrection which deposed Benlli Gawr (the Giant), king of Ial, and installed Cadell Ddyrnllug (of the Black Hand) in his place. Cadell became the prince of the Vale Royal (Clwyd) and the first of a new line of kings of Powys. Llanarmon in Ial is attached to the parish of Mold near which is Maes Garmon, the site of St. Garmon's victory over the forces of Benlli Gawr.

The tradition of the soldier saints continued into the sixth century with St. Garmon's great-nephew St. Illtyd Farchog (the Knight). St. Illtyd was the son of Bicanys, the brother of Emyr Llydaw (the Armorican), and his mother was Gweryla, the daughter of Tewdrig Fendigaid (the Blessed), king of Morgannwg and Gwent. Therefore, Illtyd and Athrwys were first cousins. Illtyd trained as a soldier and entered the service of Paul of Penychen, the son of Glywys, king of Glywysing. He was made captain of the guard and in consequence was known thereafter as Illtyd Farchog (the Knight). On the advice of St. Cadog, the illustrious nephew of Paul of Penychen, he withdrew from the prince's service to be ordained priest by St. Garmon. Meirchion Vesanus (Marcianus the Mad), another son of Glywys who held sovereignty in Gower, granted



Illtyd the land of Hodnant, where he built the monastery and monastic school of Llanilltyd Fawr (the Great Church of St. Illtyd). However the stewards of Meirchion began to make life unbearable for the Saint, and Illtyd was obliged to resort to the military experience he had gained as a soldier in the service of Paul of Penychen. The threat to his existence was rapidly removed and Meirchion and his stewards came to untimely ends. Meirchion's son Marcus Conomorus fled to Cornwall where he formed a principality, which he administered from Castle Dore near Fowey. He is remembered in legend as King Mark of Cornwall. Unhindered by outside interference, St. Illtyd and his monks resumed work in reclaiming the land and rebuilding the Roman sea-wall at Llanilltyd Fawr. St. Illtyd introduced an improved method of ploughing and used the surplus wheat to relieve the famine in Armorica (Brittany). He is described as the most learned of all the Britons in both the Old and New Testaments, and in philosophy, geometry, arithmetic, poetry, rhetoric and grammar. Llanilltyd Fawr under his rule became a college of great men. Its many scholars included Saints Samson, Paul Aurelian, Arthmael, Gildas and David, and King Maelgwn Hir (the Tall) of Gwynedd. St. Illtyd's association with Brittany may be confirmed by the fact that on the mouth of Aber Ildut is situated the parish of Lanildut. In the same deanery, at the mouth of Aber Benoit, is the parish of Saint-Pabu which contains the Chapel of St. Illtyd. In the south-east of Leon, in the parish of Sizun, is a place called Loc-Ildut, where there is a chapel of the Saint containing a statue of Illtyd holding a book in his hand.

The territory of the Roman Republic of the Silures, which was displaced by a monarchy in the fifth century, included large parts of Gwent, Glamorgan, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. This was to become the immediate domain of the celebrated King Arthur, who held his principal court at Caerwent in Gwent. Athrwys or Arthmael, son of Meurig, king of Morgannwg and Gwent, was born at the Roman station of Caput Bovium (Boverton), near Llanilltyd Fawr in the cantref of Penychen, Glywysing, in 482. He was the cousin of St. Paul Aurelian, with whom he was educated under an abbot named Carentmael at St. Illtyd's famous monastic school, and was therefore related to the Aurelii, the family of the Romano-British Emperor Ambrosius Aurelianus. Arthmael journeyed to Cornwall with his cousin St. Paul Aurelian and there he founded the Church of



St. Erme in the deanery of Powder. Paul Aurelian travelled further south to direct the spiritual affairs of Marcus Conomorus. It was whilst in Cornwall that Arthmael became associated with Count Gwythian of Gelliwig (Callington) and his sister Gwenhwyfar, the son and daughter of Count Gwythyr of Leon (r.510-530).

Both Arthmael and Gwythian fell under the influence of Arthmael's nephew St. Samson, who built his monastery at South Hill, near Callington. In the garden of the rectory at South Hill is a standing stone on which St. Samson carved a cross and an inscription to Connetoc son of Maucous. Samson, like Paul Aurelian, also went south and arrived at the mouth of the river Fowey, where he founded another monastery at Golant. Inspired by the dedication of his kinsmen, Arthmael decided upon the idea of a crusade. He returned to South Wales, where he assembled a large body of men from Caerleon upon Usk in Gwent for the purpose of a religious mission to Leon in Armorica (Brittany).

Arthmael and his cousin Carentmael, with a large body of colonists, landed at the mouth of the Aber Benoit (Blessed River) in Finistere in the principality of Leon, which was named after Caerleon by its founder Count Gwythyr, and went inland until they formed a settlement at what is now Plouarzel. Arthmael left the religious administration of the settlement to Carentmael and went to assist his kinsman Riwal Mawr, king of Armorican Domnonia 509-524, against an invasion of the Visigoths. The united armies of Riwal and Arthmael succeeded in repelling a seaborne attack by the Visigoths at Baden, situated south-west of Vannes. The Venetians of Vannes took Arthmael as their Dux. Armel (Arzel) is Breton for Arth (Arz) mael, meaning 'Bear Prince'. This is undoubtedly a connection with Arthur and the Celtic bear deity, for Arthur was known as Artor or Arzur, 'the Bear'. Arzon and the Ile de Arz, south of Vannes, are both named after a great warrior prince called Arzur, who lived in a fortress in the Sarzeau Forest, near to which stands St. Gilda's monastery of Rhuys. There are dedications to St. Armel at Ploemel and St. Armel, situated west and south of Vannes respectively, and near to the site of Arthmael's victory over the Visigoths at Baden.

During the time of King Arthur there was an incessant to and fro between Armorica and the British mainland, and one of the recurring features of Arthur's life is the help he received from and gave to his kinsman Riwal Mawr (the son of Emyr Llydaw). Arthur is represented as having visited the British settlements in Armorica and as having committed the government during his absence to Riwal, who was one of his most strenuous supporters and distinguished himself greatly in the wars fought on mainland Britain against the Irish and Saxon foe. It was Riwal who secured Arthur's possessions in Armorica and ruled jointly with him as Dux Britannorum on both sides of the sea. In alliance with Riwal, Arthmael carried the ensign of the Red Dragon back into Britain. The two staunch allies, together with their Armorican army, joined forces with Cadwy, the son and successor of Geraint Llyngesog (the Fleet-owner), the king of British Domnonia who was killed attempting to prevent an incursion by the Gewissei in 508, and in the campaign which followed they subjugated the Gewissei and their Saxon allies. The campaign culminated in a major victory for Arthur at the Battle of Caer Badon (Bath) in 516.

Count Gwythian of Gelliwig perished in an insurrection raised by Arthur's treacherous nephew Medraut in Cornwall. As a result of the tragic outcome of this conflict, St. Paul Aurelian, knowing well that his cousin Count Gwythyr was now without male heirs, went to him and demanded as his right as kinsman a large slice of the principality of Leon. Gwythyr acknowledged Paul's right and consented, but bade him first to obtain the permission of the Frankish king Childebert of Paris (r.511-558). At this point, St. Arthmael, who had married Gwythyr's daughter, Gwenhwyfar, and therefore had a vested interest in the negotiations, interceded and acted as delegate in a mission to Childebert relative to the religious administration of Leon. Arthmael thus paved the way for Paul's visit to the court of the Frankish king at Paris, and there



Childebert expressed his willingness to ratify the negotiations on the condition that Paul be made Bishop of Leon. Paul acquiesced reluctantly. When Count Gwythyr died without male heirs in 530 his daughter, Gwenhwyfar, inherited his estates and her husband, Arthmael, gained access to this inheritance, thus gaining overall control of the principality of Leon. Leon was absorbed into the Armorican kingdom of Domnonia under the joint rule of Arthmael and Riwal's son and successor Deroch, King of Armorican Domnonia 524-535. Meanwhile, Paul Aurelian ruled as a true saint prince over the portion which he claimed and received by right of kinship to Count Gwythyr. The whole of Paul's inheritance constituted one ecclesiastical principality conterminous in later times with the diocese of Leon. Deroch requested help against a further invasion by the Visigoths, and Arthur, to his irreparable disaster, was away from Britain for four years and left his regent Medraut in charge of the kingdom. Medraut treacherously seized his realm and his queen, and, after making a treaty of alliance with the Saxons, usurped the throne. When Arthur heard of this, he turned back with all that survived of his army and succeeded in landing an army in opposition to Medraut. Then there took place in 537 the Battle of Camlan between the forces of Arthur and Medraut. Arthur slew Medraut in mortal combat but he himself was wounded and taken from the battlefield to recuperate on Bardsey Island, from where he eventually returned to Brittany with his companion St. Brendan.

Meanwhile, Marcus Conomorus (King Mark), who was no longer content with his petty realm in Cornwall, decided to seek fresh pastures in Armorica, where he would be able to expand. In the course of time he became Count of Poher, annexed Leon, after a violent quarrel with St. Paul Aurelian, and was then directly responsible for the assassination of Jonas, King of Armorican Domnonia 535-549. In order to obtain the regency, Conomorus married Jonas's widow, and Judwal, the rightful heir, was forced to flee for his life to the court of the Frankish King Childebert in Paris. Arthmael got on bad terms with the usurper and was obliged to leave and go to Paris, where he did his utmost to induce Childebert to displace Conomorus and restore Judwal. His efforts were unavailing until the timely arrival of his nephew St. Samson, whose energy and persistence in the same cause finally broke down Childebert's opposition and they returned to Brittany to organize an insurrection on behalf of Judwal.

The combined forces of Samson, Judwal and Arthmael consisted of a formidable army of soldier saints together with reinforcements provided for the occasion by King Childebert. They met the forces of Conomorus near a place called Brank Aleg at the foot of Montagnes d'Arree, and fought three fiercely contested battles over a period of three days. On the evening of the third day Judwal ran the usurper through with a javelin. Conomorus fell wounded from his horse and was trampled to death in the press of the charge. At the village of Menquenez, not far from Brank Aleg, is an enormous slab of slate, called Menbeg Konnor, marking the tyrant's grave. The Abbey du Relecq (of the Bones), was erected on the site of the battle by Judwal and St. Paul Aurelian. Judwal, King of Armorican Domnonia 555-580, rewarded Arthmael for his services by granting him land on the River Seiche, now Ille et Vilaine, where is the village of St. Amel des Boschoux. Here he established his monastery. To commemorate the victory St. Samson erected a stone cross at Llanilltyd Fawr in Glamorgan. The inscription on the stone testifies that St. Samson made the cross for his own soul and for those of Iuthael (Judwal), the king, and Arthmael. This is confirmation of a successful campaign organized by the soldier saints or the Knights of King Arthur. The whole region of the Ille et Vilaine, which was granted to St. Amel by King Judwal for services rendered, is the area most associated with the legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The Forest of Paimpont, once part of the vast Forest of Broceliande which extended over much of central Brittany, is, even more than our own West Country, the centre for the survival of

King Arthur and his Knights. Many of the names have associations with King Arthur, since Broceliande was one of the places where he is said to have held sway, and where his memory still lingers.

St. Arthmael died and was buried in a tomb at St. Amel des Boschoux in 562. In 1645 Pierre Hamon, rector of Loutehel, obtained from M. Tyart, rector of Ploermel, the relics and insignia of St. Amel and they were placed in 1685, through the rector Pierre Barre, in a new shrine at Loutehel.

The cult of the great soldier saint Arthmael or Amel was encouraged by King Henry VII of England, who firmly believed that he was saved from ship-wreck off the coast of Brittany through the intervention of the spirit of St. Amel. Consequently, there is a fine statuette of St. Amel in King Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey. This is a reference to his designation as 'Miles Fortissimus' (Mighty Warrior), in which he is invoked as the armigere (armour-bearer) against the enemies of our salvation. The Latin version of Arthmael's name is Armagillus, which is derived from armigere. King Henry VII believed that in freeing his country from tyranny he was fulfilling the prophecy of Myrddin Emrys (Merlin Ambrosius). The aura that surrounds the great soldier-saint Arthmael convinces me that he was the sixth-century emigrant leader who inspired the legend of King Arthur.

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# LETTERS

At the risk of further boring Pendragon readers, I'd like to add a postscript if I may to the discussion of the likelihood of a Temple of Claudius at South Cadbury.

Recently I briefly visited Colchester in Essex. The Castle, the largest surviving Norman keep in Europe, was closed at the time but I was reminded of a possible connection between this building and the Roman temple at Cadbury.

Unlike Cadbury's temple (the precise site and dedication of which are both unknown) Colchester certainly had a genuine Roman edifice on the site of the later Norman keep; the Castle was built on the massive foundations of the Great Temple dedicated to Claudius. This Emperor, it will be remembered, probably received the formal submission of eleven British kings here during his short visit to Britain, the culmination of the first successful Roman campaign in 43 AD. After Claudius' murder in 54 AD, work probably commenced on the temple in memory of the deified emperor.

The significance of Colchester as a focus of Roman interest is that it was the royal seat of the Catuvellauni, a tribe whose most famous king, Cunobelinus or Cymbeline, had died just before the Roman invasion.

I believe the traditional romantic narrative of Arviragus outlined by David Pykitt rests on a series of mistaken identifications. One of these concerns both Colchester and Cadbury. Colchester was named by the later Saxons from its being the Roman ceaster on the River Colne. But it was anciently Camulodunon (latinised as

Camulodunum), the dun or town named after a Celtic war-god Camulos. Now one of the mysteries of the Matter of Britain is where the name of Arthur's capital, Camelot, came from. The name seems first to have been used by Chretien de Troyes in the late 12th century. There is no apparent earlier independent use of the name in British native tradition.

In Chretien's romances, Arthur held court at Caerleon, or at Carlisle, or Winchester, or Dinasdaron (? Dinas Bran), or Cardigan. In his Lancelot Camelot is mentioned for the first time and it is possible that Chretien took the name from an account of the Claudian invasion, inspired by the fact that William the Conqueror began to build the largest of his castles at Colchester in 1075.

This, I think, accounts for John Whitehead's assertion that 'The Romans ... erected a stone temple at Camelot with two statues in it, the one of Victory and the other of the emperor Claudius.' In this statement for 'Camelot' read 'Camulodunum-Colchester' not Cadbury-Camelot.

In the same way, when David Pykitt declares that 'it is recorded elsewhere that the Emperor Claudius received the submission of Arviragus at Cadbury Castle' this seems to be based on a conflation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's 12th century account, where Winchester is the placename mentioned, and Malory's later identification of Winchester as Camelot. The sequence seems to be this:

1. Geoffrey says Claudius met Arviragus at Winchester;
2. Malory says Winchester is Camelot;
3. But Camelot is, of course, South Cadbury;
4. Therefore Claudius must have met Arviragus at S.Cadbury. QED.

If these misidentifications are exposed, then I believe the case for Arviragus being identified as the wellhead of Arthurian traditions starts to dissolve. It may or not be significant that the French word camelote means junk or tawdry rubbish sold by a camelot or street pedlar.

(Chris Lovegrove, Bristol.)

I was very pleased to read the review by Simon Rouse of my Song of Taliesin, but feel I must write to set the record straight on one point. The stories in the book are, essentially, fiction, written by me and though based on traditional material are not part of a hidden cache of material in my possession. Like Tolkien's 'Red Book of Westmarsh' the 'Books of Broceliand' only exist in the form of my own writings. I used this literary device to enable me to fit the material together into a better whole. In fact, every one of the stories is based on an already existing myth or text - I have simply completed them from researches and intuitive studies over a number of years. For the 'real' story readers should refer to my other book, mentioned by Simon, Taliesin: Shamanism & the Bardic Mysteries of Britain and Ireland. (Harper Collins, 1990). Those who enjoyed the stories in Song of Taliesin might like to know that I am now hard at work on the epic scale Broceliand, which will complete the story of Taliesin and Arthur. This has taken me nearly thirty years to write and will, I hope, be completed and published in 1995.

This will also, as mentioned to Fred Stedman-Jones, include the story of the death of Llacheu, which I have reconstructed from the fragmentary sources available. For some interesting comments on this

story, and on Kay's involvement in the death of Arthur's son, see also Linda Gowan's excellent book *Cei and the Arthurian Legend* (Boydell & Brewer, 1990) and to the early Welsh poem 'Par Gur' where we find the lines

Fair Cei & Llacheu, they made slaughter  
Before the pang (death) from blue spears.

suggesting that here at least the two warriors fight side by side rather than against each other.

Further to my letter on the Russian Arthur, I have now read the article mentioned by Alby Stone (Folk-Lore 98, 1987), and tend to agree (with some reservations) on its conclusions. However, there is no doubt that the Sarmatians were here, and that they did possess the hero myth and other characteristics mentioned, so that we should certainly not dismiss Scott-Littleton's theory out of hand. Dr. Nickel's book, when it appears, will doubtless clear up many of these speculations.

(John Matthews, Oxford.)

[Simon writes 'Thanks for the copy of John Matthews' letter: it seems I completely missed the point! Oh well, hopefully it won't detract from what is still an excellent book'. Ed.]

My wife and I have just bought the General Stores Shop in Princetown. I would at some time like to use some of our massive space available by having a room or exhibition on an Arthurian Theme. I am interested in all aspects of Arthur and have found your Journal most enjoyable and informative.

At the moment I am searching for Arthurian stories and legends in Devon; these appear quite thin on the ground. (Tony Court, Princetown, Devon.)



(Any ideas or suggestions from members would, I am sure, be appreciated by Tony. Send them to us and we'll forward them. Ed.)

-----  
We progress with the Llanelen reports; the ones on the quernstones and the whetstones are now in the bag. You may be amused to hear that when I tentatively started to make arrangements to receive the whetstones back from their specialist who moves between the British Museum and his retirement in Farnborough I was told that he would be passing through Bristol imminently. It transpired that he was staying with relatives in Bedminster (where I work) overnight. He grew up there and his cousin keeps the typewriter shop I frequent for ribbons!!

Do you remember the charismatic young Isobel Holroyd, a local volunteer, on the dig? She is now working for the British Archaeological Bibliography, a very important resource for archaeologists, and has just published a paper in *Antiquity*! (Kate Pollard, Bristol.)

Kate sent me a copy of the following letter received by DRAGON editor Charles Evans-Gunther from Leslie Alcock, who directed the South Cadbury dig in the late 60s:-

'Thank you for the copy of DRAGON 4:1 and your note about a final report on the Cadbury excavation.

The position is that since 1989 work has been going on in my (ex-) department on the massive quantity of material from the excavations - principally relating to the 1st millennium BC. The major funding for this is coming from English Heritage.

For various reasons my role in most of this is purely advisory, though I have a grant for post-excavation work and writing up of the early medieval structures and finds. (i.e. late 5th - 6th cents. and Late Saxon). It is still too early to say what form the final publication will take, or when it will be ready.

You will see from this that your correspondent's information, though on the right lines, is distinctly premature. I hope none the less that my comments are helpful.

-----  
Otto M.K. Pay has told me about your publication and sent me a copy of his letter (PENDRAGON No.22/3).

His reason for quoting me as a source of information is that I am a member of the Norwegian UAOD since 37 years and hold their 6th degree. Although rituals and proceedings are not revealed to non-members, details of our organisation, history, aims and work are of course common knowledge. If of interest, I am more than willing to answer questions.

While remaining a Norwegian member, I have worked for the Norwegian Tourist Board here and in Sweden and Finland since 1963 and have since retirement in 1986 contributed to various English and Norwegian publications. I am also foreign editor of the Norwegian journal BARDEN. (Knut Sjøvorr, Orpington.)

[Knut has since joined our Society. His address is:- The Old Bakery, Church Road, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent BR6 7RE. Ed.]

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OBOD, The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, which, amongst many other things, studies the Arthurian cycle and the Grail myths, can be contacted by writing to The Secretary, OBOD, 260 Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3EG.

Beryl repeats Henry Ford's provocative cliché, 'History is bunk' in her letter in P. XX/3 and adds, 'the more history I read the more I am inclined to agree.' Unfortunately her list of sources for her understanding of history is inevitably fiction. Personally, I find this scorning of the academic integrity of the professional historian worrying. In recent years even younger children have been trained to understand historical evidence from primary and secondary sources in order to come to their own balanced conclusion. Historical novels may offer us new insights and interpretations of historical events but a different principle may be at work, well expressed by John Keats:

'what the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth - whether it existed before or not.'

This is essentially a romantic viewpoint, of course. The discipline of the historian demands that he tries to be more faithful to the facts than a fiction writer needs to be. At his first lecture as Professor of History at Jena in 1789, Schiller reminded his listeners of the great responsibility of the historian's task:

'the world's history is the world's judgement.'

Beryl believes that historians are 'flagrantly wrong' about Uncle Richard's murder of his nephew; now she extends her sympathy to Uncle John. I would like to offer a few more facts for Judgement's scales.

William de Braose was the baron who actually captured Arthur of Brittany at Mirabeau. His story, told to a chronicler some years later, was that John killed Arthur in a drunken rage after dinner on 3rd April, 1203. John seems to have been determined to eliminate de Braose and pursued a vendetta against him and his family. He demanded hostages from him as a guarantee of 'good behaviour.' As a baron of the Welsh March, de Braose knew what happened to John's hostages: there is no doubt whatsoever that John had Welsh royal hostages cruelly blinded. William preferred to flee to Ireland with his family

in 1218. John also picked a quarrel with Arthur's step-father, Ranulph Earl of Chester, and seized his estates. Was this the tyranny of a man determined to punish those who revealed his guilty secret? Perhaps; the verdict on John must be: 'Not proven,' but there is sufficient evidence from which to write a rattling good yarn giving a different interpretation from Jan-Yves's hitting his nephew Jonas in self-defence. Ironically, Henry Ford was giving evidence during his libel suit against the Chicago Tribune in 1919 when he delivered his profound judgement on history. In '1066 And All That' Robert Yeatman seems to have put his finger on the American tycoon's philistinism:

'A bad thing - America was clearly top nation and history came to a full.'

So it did in Nazi Germany where another 'top dog' was painted whiter than white by his fiction writers posing as chroniclers and historians.

'Tis strange but true: for truth is always strange; Stranger than fiction.' (Lord Byron).

(F.Stedman-Jones, Cheshire.)

-----  
Well, IS history bunk? Do historians lack academic integrity? Perhaps their interpretation of facts is unintentionally coloured by ingrained dogmatic beliefs.

The late Dr. Kit Pedler, in his book *Mind Over Matter*, admits that he once caught himself biasing the results of a visual experiment by unconsciously moving his head. Appalled, he nearly gave up research altogether when he realised what he was doing.

Are honest historians more resistant to unconscious bias than honest scientists? When a sturdy idea-construct is beset by a damaging little fact, could they necessarily give that fact the credence it deserves? And if not, what may be the ultimate effect on history? Can reliable historical research thrive in our Arthurian Wasteland of doubt and dogma? Perhaps it can and Henry Ford's dictum itself is



bunk. In any case he uttered it 73 years ago - and that's history. But if history IS bunk perhaps he DIDN'T say it. In which case he DIDN'T regard history as bunk. But if history ISN'T bunk, he DID say it. And so ... Oh forget it.

(No. Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury, 'Arthurian dogma' does NOT refer to Cabal's mum. Ed.)

I'm writing in response to Knut Sjövorrr's letter on p.29 of the recent issue. May I say that Druidism is not stagnant in this country. There are about 8 separate orders in this country, not including the cultural groupings of the Welsh and Cornish eisteddfodau.

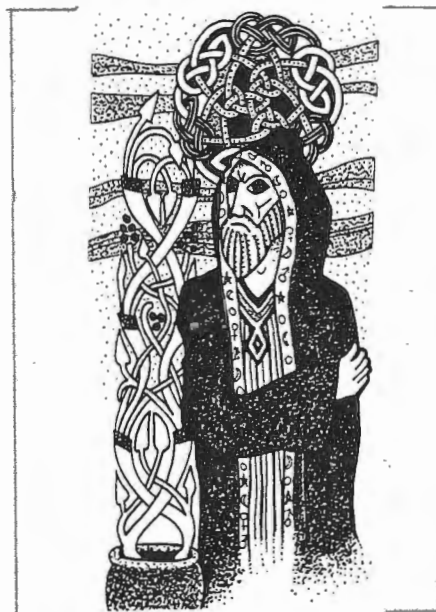
With John, I myself am a member and past president of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, which has a large membership here and abroad. OBOD have an excellent tutorial correspondence course which trains its scattered members in developing their potential in spiritual, practical and artistic ways. OBOD inculcates a practical love of creation, having a treeplanting programme. It celebrates the seasonal festivals and has a series of groves countrywide. The study material covers learning about one's own land, the elements and seasons, about all forms of natural life, poetry, sacred sites etc. The Druid Grade includes a deeper study of the Arthurian and Grail cycles.

Unlike the Ancient Order of Druids or the Scandinavian Order, which seems to be organized around the masonic model, OBOD follows the ancient Celtic model and has mixed groves of men and women. Exclusion of one or other genders from spiritual work seems to me both offensive and old-fashioned, and is reminiscent of the Grail call in Quest of the Holy Grail where every one gets up to seek the Grail until a hermit says that women must be left behind! The companionship of our fellow and sister bards, ovates and druids is a very important part of our work, making a closely-linked family. Our human quest for responsible living must be

pursued in harmony and justice.

I'm sure that readers will be pleased to know that, while Stonehenge was being watched by policemen from all points of the compass, for any procession of over two people, OBOD was meeting on Primrose Hill in London. There were about 150 robed bards, ovates and druids of our order, as well as guests from many British and Breton orders. The ceremony of Midsummer included addresses from each representative, saw the installation of John Michel as new president, the reception of Dwina Murphy-Gibb as patroness of the Order (not 'druid-queen' as reported by some listless newspeople) and celebrated the joy of Midsummer with a good selection of non-druidic friends and droppers-into-the-park alike. Many countries, including USA, Finland and Hungary were represented by complete strangers who dropped into the ritual and were welcomed in to mediate the Midsummer blessing to their own lands. As we stood in a vast circle, it was hard not to think about the Round Table and to feel the spiritual friendship which links the ages.

(Caitlin Matthews. London.)



I subscribe to a good number of magazines (too many for my health - and wallet) but I always feel a special uplift when PENDRAGON arrives. I enclose a cheque for two years' subscriptions.

Thank you for the leaflet about Earthstars: the only reason for my not sending for a copy is that I already have one - indeed a fascinating book.

(David Lister, Grimsby.)

Thank you for publishing my previous letter (PENDRAGON No.22/3).

I was interested to see, in your last editorial, a reference to dendrochronology, the method of determining the date of early historical events by counting tree rings. Once again, however, it becomes necessary to set the etymological record straight. 'Dendrochronology' is a corrupt form of 'den-dragon-ology' - the study of dragons' dens with a view to determining the age of their occupants.

Telling a dragon's age by its teeth was impossible (not to mention dangerous) in view of the universal use of artificial teeth by the dragon fraternity (mentioned in my last letter). Other methods were employed. [As a matter of interest, an apprentice dragon was formally given a set of den-chewers - or 'dentures' - to be used only in its den. These, of course, were known as 'in-den-chewers'. (which, I understand, apprentices in your era still receive.) This, however, is all by the way.]

As a young dragon developed in size so its fiery exhalations would leave successive carbon rings higher and higher up the walls of its den. Young dragons reached puberty and grew in ferocity from the age of fourteen. Hence dragonophobic knights such as your St. George unsportingly introduced the practice called Carbon-14 dating to enable them, by a glance at

the walls of a dragon's den, readily to estimate its age and the consequent degree of hazard they faced. They could then decide the best method of defence and retaliation. This was known as 'countering' (from 'count-a-ring').

Incidentally, may I suggest that a Pendragon postal 'swap-shop' might interest your members? This could provide an invaluable service. My friends and I, for instance, have a number of slightly scorched suits of armour from innurate knights (they couldn't count up to 14) which we'd be happy to exchange for a tasty maiden or two.

Wishing your Society every success.

(Draco Grendel, Denmark.)

(Thanks for volunteering. Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury, but you haven't got it QUITE right. Even when you've rescued the knights you don't get to eat the dragon. Ed.)



"THIS PROVES CONCLUSIVELY THAT ARTHUR WAS BORN AT TINTAGEL ON THURSDAY 21ST JUNE 457 AD AT 4.35 IN THE AFTERNOON ..."





## Talking Head

### ★ THE MIDSOMMER THEATRE COMPANY

This venture is the brainchild of Simon Corble, an actor trained at Manchester Polytechnic. On a day-out spent on Hilbre Island in 1990 he was cut off by the tide and had the inspired idea of performing *The Tempest* there. Audiences had to walk two miles across the sands at low tide to 'Prospero's Island' and return by the setting sun when the tide receded. In 1991 Hilbre became the setting for *Treasure Island* when cutlasses flew, children ran on the beach with Billy Bones and all joined in the hunt for the treasure. Since then they have performed Thomas Hardy under the greenwood trees at Hardcastle Crag and *Gawayne* at suitable venues in the North West. Their aim is described as allowing audiences 'to enjoy the freedom of live drama in the special atmosphere created by the genius loci.'

The performance at Beeston Castle was a rare delight. They have two productions planned for 1993 already and I urge you to give them your support if they turn up in your area.

### ★ WOMAN OF FLOWERS - BLODEUWEDD

The Actors Touring Company of London and the Sherman Theatre of Cardiff are joining forces to present this production of Saunders Lewis's play in a new English translation by Siôn Eirian. The plot is based on the tale of Math son of Mathonwy and the show is described as 'a production guaranteed to delight anyone interested in Arthurian legend and Celtic tradition - a

rare opportunity to see a tale from the Mabinogi myths brought to life on stage.' Saunders Lewis is widely recognised as one of the greatest writers in the Welsh language but his plays are rarely seen in English.

The production is visiting Cardiff, Frome, Broadstairs, Cardigan, Middlesborough, Birmingham, Aberystwyth, Kidderminster, Brighton and London and you can phone for a tour leaflet: 071-735-8311.

Definitely not to be missed, both companies enjoy high esteem in the world of theatre.

### ★ MERLIN OF THE CRYSTAL CAVE

This is a BBC Young Classic recording of the six-part serial broadcast on BBC 1 last November and December. Based on the novels by Mary Stewart it starred George Winter as Merlin, Robert Powell as Ambrosius and Kim Thomson as Ninianne. The cover note reads: 'from his boyhood with his beloved mother and his time in Brittany with his father the exiled king of South Wales to the crowning of the mighty Uther Pendragon, Merlin takes us back through his early life casting his spell over history.'

BBC Enterprises Ltd., 1992. Double Video Pack (4757). Price £14.99. Running time: approximately 166 minutes.

### ★ ALL ABOUT MERLIN

An edition of Pendragon was devoted to Merlin in January 1978. Titled: *Merlin - Ideas and Interpretations*, it included articles on: *Merlin at Carmarthen*, *Merlin at Alderly Edge*, *The Devil's Son*, *Merlin*,

*Fool of Time*, *Merlin's Dance - Stonehenge*, and *Merlin, Man or Myth*. If members are interested in reading any of these articles it might be an idea to reprint them or interesting extracts in coming numbers. Drop us a line and let us know what you think about our printing selected material from past issues as themes recur.

The illustration: after completing this drawing I realized I had done a self-portrait!



### ★ DIAMOND DRAGON RECORDS

(1) *The Tales of King Arthur*, narrated by Ray Smith. (3 hours)

(2) *Celtic Tales*, narrated by Sian Phillips and Dafydd Hywel. Tales from Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Brittany, Isle of Man and Cornwall. (1½ hours)

(3) *Tales from Wales*, narrated by Philip Madoc. Stories from the Mabinogi and classical folk tales. (1½ hours)

All have specially composed accompanying music. If you place your order through Pendragon cost is £5 each + VAT: £5.90.

Diamond Dragon Records, 158 Westbourne Road, Penarth, Cardiff CF6 2BQ. Tel: 0222 708226. Highly recommended.

### ★ WHOSE ARTHUR?

This is the Last of the Celtica programme of Arthurian lectures: *Who was the British hero and what did he do to achieve fame?*

Saturday, 31st October, 2 p.m. at Bodelwyddan Castle, Clwyd. Professor Bedwyr Lewis of Bangor University will outline the early growth of the Arthurian legend in Welsh tradition and answer the question: 'How did Arthur conquer the world.'

I am hoping to attend and present

a summary of the lecture in our Christmas edition.

### ★ CELTIC STUDIES

Members may be interested to know that courses are available at Bangor University leading to a postgraduate Diploma or an M.A. in Arthurian literature.

Enquiries: The Academic Registrar, University of Wales, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DG (0248-351151).

M.A. courses in Celtic languages are held at St. David's College, Lampeter and Aberystwyth University and in Celtic Studies at Edinburgh (M.Lit.) and Oxford (M.Phil.) Universities.

### ★ THE UNIVERSITY OF AVALON

This organisation was established in May, 1991, 'to re-establish Glastonbury as a great centre of learning by setting up a University of the Spirit in Avalon.' In effect it is a grouping of 'faculty members' - people who have a special love for and connection with Glastonbury whose main activity to date has been to organise an interesting programme of lectures and courses at modest prices at the Sophia Room in the town. Geoffrey Ashe has written their first paper: *The University of Avalon - an account of sacred study in Glastonbury*, (price 50p). A course of interest to members is:

(No.072) *Arthur and Gwenhwyfar, The Mythic Matter of Britain.*

A weekend with Geoffrey Ashe and Leone Graham. Sat. 17th and Sun. 18th October, 10 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. £50. Transport on Sunday afternoon to Cadbury Castle, at nominal cost.

Send a large SAE for information, prospectus and course programme 1992: The University of Avalon, 8b Market Place, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9HW. (0458-833933)

### ★ CAER

This centre for personal development and training was established in 1978. Its home is *Rosemerryn* at the head of the Lamorna Valley near Penzance in Cornwall, one mile from the sea. Based in a Cornish manor house which is situated in seven acres, in the grounds is a 2,000 year old fogou which contains a carving of



a God of Healing. A truly magical location !

It sounds idyllic - relaxed, comfortable and beautiful and Caer prides itself on the excellence of its cuisine. Groups can hire the centre for their own events: does anyone think it would be a good venue for a Pendragon Holiday Workshop ? We are here to serve your needs; if enough of us (about 22) wished for such an event. I'll leave the thought with you.

#### ★ CELTIC SHAMANISM COURSE: ARCANIA 1993

John and Caitlin Matthews will be repeating their 4 part course for the third year - you'll have to book early to get on it. Dates: Imbolc, 6-7 Feb.; Beltane, 8-9 May; Lughnasadh, 7-8 Aug.; Samhain, 30-31st Oct. Fee: £80. Details from: Arcania, 17 Union Passage, Bath, BA1 1RE (0335-311028)

You can keep in touch with the Matthews' schedule of lectures, courses, publications and tapes by sending four first class stamps to: BCM Hallowquest, London WC1N 3XX. This will bring you a quarterly newsletter. Caitlin's *The Arthurian Tarot Course*, to accompany their tarot pack, is in the pipeline.

#### ★ FROM ROMAN BRITAIN TO SAXON ENGLAND: A DARK AGE ?

A series of lectures over ten weeks, from 15th October, at The Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC), York. Lecturer: Kurt Hunter who will cover late Roman to early Saxon archaeology, including Arthurian evidences. Phone: Leeds University (0532-333222)

#### ★ A CELTIC WORLD: THE IRON AGE IN EAST YORKSHIRE

This display of life in Celtic times may be seen at the Hull and East Riding Museum, 36 High Street, Hull. The museum is open 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mon-Sat, 1.30-4.30, Sunday. Admission is free. Tel: 0482-593902

#### ★ CULHWCH AND OLWEN AT MOLD

On the 7th of July I attended the launch of a new edition of this fascinating work by Dr. Rachel Bromwich and Professor D. Simon Evans. Dr. Bromwich, looking very sprightly at 77, gave a short but

interesting talk on the text and the research aspects of their work and Professor Evans pointed out that linguistic evidences suggested an origin for the text in his native area of South-West Wales.

Without the aid of a 'deaf-aid' translator in my ear I would have missed a half of what was said by these brilliant academics and by our hosts. Full marks to Hedd ap Emlyn and his team for their consideration - how I wish I had learned Welsh properly at school!



We are greatly indebted to these Welsh scholars for this fine study, the text is in Welsh but the bulk of the work - introduction, notes and glossary - are in English. It is an indispensable reference for anyone studying Welsh and Arthurian sources.

An added pleasure of the evening was to meet up again with Charles Günther-Evans of *Dragon*. We browsed the Arthurian Collection together, where he introduced me to Dr. Bromwich, and we were about to move on to a hostelry when pressures of work called and he had to speed to Llangollen to help prepare for the Queen's visit to the International Music Festival.

We shall meet when you return from Japan, I promise, Charles! (*Culhwch and Olwen*: an edition and study of the oldest Arthurian tale. Ed. R. Bromwich and D. Simon Evans. University of Wales Press, 1992 [ISBN 0-7083-1127-X] £25)

#### ★ THE ARTHURIAN COLLECTION, MOLD

The Library and Information Service of Clwyd County Council

boasts a unique collection of Arthurian literature comprising nearly 2,000 volumes. It is housed at the County Library H.Q., County Civic Centre, Mold, Clwyd CH7 6NW.

There is material in twelve languages, the majority of titles being in English, Welsh, French and German. The basic Arthurian texts are all there together with books covering such topics as history, criticism, prose, poetry, children's stories, novels and art.

The collection contains some sumptuously illustrated volumes, including Beardsley and Arthur Rackham.

Originally the private collection of E.R. Harries, former county librarian of Flintshire, it is now expanded and acknowledged internationally as a source of research and information on Arthurian legends and history.

The collection may be used during office hours by prior arrangement and is set on a fine green campus - which includes Theatr Clwyd, with its own restaurant.

Tel: 0352-752121 Ext. 2495.

#### ★ CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Readers might welcome a few suggestions for Celtic/Arthurian presents and cards:

##### Past times:

Celtic Horses paperweight: a handsome solid brass circle inlaid with Pictish horses in pewter. 2 in. diameter. £9.95

Celtic Sword Paperknife: solid brass, shows a stylized warrior. 9 1/4 ins long. £9.95

##### Tantra Designs:

This firm specialises in Tibetan, Buddhist and Yoga goods but their extensive lists include a considerable amount of Celtic goods:

Hand-painted cards (20 designs); screen prints; heraldic chart of King Arthur and Knights; window prints of Celtic crosses, green man, chalice well cover; silver and pewter jewellery; enamel and embroidered badges; T-shirts and tapes of Celtic music by Philip le Breton.

Send £1 for catalogues, lists and

sample poster: Tantra Designs, 48 Kensington Park Rd., Bristol, BS4 3HU (0272) 724708.

#### White Dove Prints:

Greeting cards with Celtic motifs, 8 designs, 65p each by David James. David has links with people with Celtic interests worldwide. He operates a free contact service and is always happy to correspond (sae). As well as White Dove prints he has applied his artwork to wood carving, ceramics, enamel work, silver jewellery and embroidery.

Contact: David James, Tamarisk Farm, West Bexington, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 9DF



#### ★ KINGDOM

This is an Arthurian board game played on an excellent jigsaw-type board. Players choose from six characters which include Arthur and Mordred and control villages and castles, joust in tournaments, enter into battles, hold hostages, pay ransoms and answer riddles. Visits are also made to Mystic Sites - to learn the secrets of the Holy Grail from its fearsome guardians.

*Kingdom* may be played as a straightforward board game but elements of roleplay can be injected so that chivalry points can be earned, enabling your character to be the most chivalrous combatant at the end of the game.

Games last about two hours and *Kingdom* is easy to play, entertaining and enjoyable. It is varied enough to allow for repeated playing.

*Kingdom* is available from games shops and is issued by Highbury Games and Designs.

#### ★ OTHER GAMES

*Past Times* has a game called *Tudor Joust* based on the lavish royal



tournament mounted by Henry VIII in 1511. Knights are empowered to make five different kinds of moves and charge across the board as each player attempts to capture his opponent's Tudor Rose. For 2 players. £9.95.

Caerdroi 1991 lists various addresses for maze games:

Virgo Games - 2 George St., Bath, Avon, BA1 2EH (0225 469866)

Oxford Games - Home Farm House, Rycome Park, Milton Comenge, Oxon. OX9 2PF (0844 339234).

★ THE LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR

Wedgwood Pottery produced eight collectors' plates under this title at prices ranging from £17.95 to £23.95; £171.60 for the collection. The Bradford Exchange are listing their current market quotations as follows:

- (1) Arthur Draws Sword £18
- (2) Arthur crowned King £18
- (3) Excalibur £22.50
- (4) Wedding Arthur/ Guinevere £29
- (5) Knights of the Round Table £29
- (6) Lancelot and Guinevere £27.50
- (7) Morgan Le Fey and Mordred £32.50
- (8) Arthur Taken to Avalon £48.50

The Collection: £225.00. Prices will vary considerably in showrooms but these prices are a good guide to market averages. The series is very attractive; I only wish I had collected them at their times of issue. Do any members have any or all of these? No.8 is becoming quite a fancied piece in the collectors' market and has been sold at £62 already.

★ PRINCE WILLIAM - STAR ROYAL

Rex Futurus ended with a suggestion that Prince Charles or his son Prince William might reign as King Arthur. A recent colour supplement printed an article by Russell Grant which looks at Prince William's stargazing. The astrologer says, 'this wee laddie has the sweetest of combinations that the stars can provide - born under the new moon in the sign of Cancer (also his mother's birth sign).' Grant

claims he will make a fine sovereign, care about his subjects, treat his people like a family and win their love and respect. He adds, 'so talk no more of disunited kingdoms with this uniting monarch around.' In the subconscious areas of the prince's chart Neptune, the psychic planet, and Uranus, the intuitive star, are active. The three masculine planets, Mars, Saturn and Pluto, high in his chart mean he won't brook failure: 'he'll be a king of an ideal as much as a country...although he must remember Utopia is but a dream.' He ends, 'William is all set to become the prince perfect for the 21st century.'

Does this prophecy from a modern mage suggest that Rex Futurus and his Kingdom of Logres may be more than a dream after all?

★ THE RICHARD III SOCIETY

This Society has about 4,000 members world-wide and some 40 branches and groups in the U.K. and overseas; so Richard of Gloucester has a large fan club. The Society's activities include meetings, lectures, seminars and visits and there is a research and publishing arm. The Society organizes displays and exhibitions and places memorials to Richard III at sites of historical significance. It has a lending library (books available through the post) and its members defended Richard III in the television trial in 1984. Subscriptions are basically £9 per annum with reduction to £6 for pensioners, juniors (under 18) and students. The membership year runs from 2nd October, when the AGM is held.



Write to: Membership Dept., P.O. Box, Hayward's Heath, West Sussex RH17 5FF.

★ LAND OF ARTHUR

I visited Ian Forrester Roberts's fine Exhibition at Gloucester on 5th August and we had a long chat about Society and Arthurian matters. Business was brisk and I was delighted that Ian had agreed to publicise the Society by displaying leaflets and magazines. Quite a number of people have shown interest and we should gain some new members. Many thanks, Ian. If members can place leaflets in local information offices and shops please contact us for supplies; we have a target for 1993 to at least double our membership. Sincere thanks are also due to Geoff Dando for all he does for Pendragon: this time for his willingness to print and deliver information to the Exhibition at very short notice. He deserves an accolade, so 'Rise, Sir Geoffrey.'

★ PENDRAGON IMPRINTS

For almost a year there has been a total lack of response to my idea for a publishing arm of the Society, so I have decided to concentrate on my own writing instead.

The costs of producing the now expanded volume of Pendragon Volume 1, plus postage for sending a double issue, means we have decided to offer it as Pendragon Imprint No.2. at £1, post free to members. Sorry folk, but we work on a tight budget and that is why we need everyone's help in boosting membership.

★ BOOKS

There is space only for a few books that I have found particularly interesting recently:

Celtic Design - Illustrated

Letters: This is the fourth in the Celtic Design series by Aidan Meehans. The source and symbolism of the Celtic scribes made accessible - from the elucidation of the pages of the Cathac of St. Columba to the Celtic animal alphabet.

Thames and Hudson. (0-500-276854) £5.95

The Pagan Source Book:

Nigel Pennick, £9.90, Rider and Shambhala. (0-7126-4786-4)

Another book from Nigel is due out

in October. It contains a wealth of information about pagan customs and traditions, origins of holy days, festivals, celebrations, etc. Illustrated. A real source book.

The Celtic Oracle:

Nigel Pennick and Nigel Jackson, Aquarian Press. £13.80. (1-85538-132-X)

A pack of 25 illustrated cards based on the 13 month Celtic Tree Alphabet and a book which explores the Ogham system and correspondences, suggesting ways of using the cards for divination, meditation and self-discovery.

The Celtic Lunar Zodiac:

Helena Patterson, Rider and Shambhala. (0-7126-5163-2) £18.99. Due out in October also.

Explains the qualities associated with the 13 moon signs and their relationship to Celtic myths and symbols; with attractive watercolour illustrations.

Ladies of the lake:

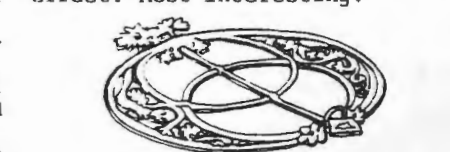
Caitlin Matthews, Aquarian Press. £8.99. (1-85538-045-5)

Nine of the women from Arthurian legend are seen as archetypes in whom the ancient Celtic goddess is fragmented and reflected. Guided visualizations offer 'pathways' for the reader's 'personal quest'. Caitlin's style is always easy reading and her ideas clearly expressed. A MUST for the ladies.

Portal of the Celtic Gods:

Mael Gwynedd, Excalibur Press. 1991.

The author rejects Wicca as the neo-pagan spiritual heritage of these islands. He writes from within a 'hereditary Keltic family tradition' and surveys the British religious heritage, attacking the abuses of the Christian church. He presents his own poetic Keltic ceremonies in an attempt 'to portray the individual spiritual core of British myths and legends.' The Mabinogi is used with great effect. Most interesting.





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# HEAR & YE

Congratulations to Ian Forrester Roberts on an excellent 'Land of Arthur' exhibition in Gloucester: beautifully displayed and full of interest. Anne and I also enjoyed meeting Ian for the first time. Pendragon made some new members from the publicity.

New member Knut Sjövorrr writes 'It has not proved possible to get new or second-hand, a copy of Rodney Castleton's 'The Stonehenge People'. Can any member help? Knut's address is: The Old Bakery, Church Road, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent BR6 7RE.

The beautiful poem on page 6 was written by Pamela Constantine of 104 Argyle Gardens, Upminster, Essex RM14 3EU.

Pamela produces THE SOLAR COURIER, quarterly newsletter of The Solar Lodge Foundation (established for 21 years). This is concerned with a New English Renaissance, and publishes books of high literary and spiritual merit - though there's much more to the project than that. The Solar Lodge has links with independent publishers around the world. Many of Pamela's poems have appeared in American journals and a large number have Arthurian connections and connotations. She has kindly given PENDRAGON permission to print any items from her work.

The newsletter costs £2.00 per annum, post-free. The Foundation is non-profit making. A 9x4 inch S.A.E. will bring you details.

Member Steve Hounsme runs THE WHEEL OF TAROT. He does individual consultations, lectures, workshops and courses: 'a complete system of consultation for development of Mind, Body and Spirit'. Steve can be contacted on (0703) 557560.

And talking of Tarot, Caitlin Matthews (letter on page 26) mentions that she and John will have The Arthurian Tarot Course published next year by Aquarian Press. Caitlin's book Ladies of the Lake is mentioned in Talking Head. There are two tapes to accompany this book. The Sacred Nine (which contains meditations on each of the Ladies concerned) and Initiations of the Lake - a 'mini-meditation' course for exploring the inner landscape of the Arthurian mythos. U.K. price £7.50 each, incl. p.& p. (£13 for the two if you quote your Pendragon membership). From Caitlin Matthews, BCM HALLOWQUEST, London WC1N 3XX.

Caitlin is also leading a weekend course on the esoteric roles of the Ladies - Saturday 22 to Sunday 23 May 1993, near Glastonbury. Details from The University of Avalon, Tel: (0458) 833933.

Information on another weekend course by the Matthews - this one on Robin Hood: Green Man of the Wildwood and taking place from 11th to 13th December 1992 at Hawkwood College, Stroud, Gloucestershire - can be obtained by dialling 045 376 4607. Join John and Caitlin in their annual Midwinter ritual celebration.

Did you know that King Arthur may have been buried under Wychbury Hill in the West Midlands where Caradoc (Caractacus) fought the Romans under Ostorius? Local belief claims this is so. Or, according to archaeologist Dr. Granville Calder, Wychbury could have been the site of the battle of Mons Badonicus in 521 A.D.

Sadly, Wychbury (probably named from 'Hwicce', a Saxon tribe) whose proven history goes back 3000 years, is threatened by an enemy more relentless than ever Caradoc and Arthur faced - the Department of Transport, who want to drive a six-lane motorway through the hill.

What was it Nennius said of Mount Badon? 'There fell nine hundred and sixty men in one onset of Arthur ...'. Now if Wychbury Hill really IS Badon, and if Arthur COULD return and repeat his performance - THAT might hold up the D.of T./McAlpine advance for a decade or two ...

[Many thanks to prospective member David Taylor for this information. He runs a local earth mysteries group and has asked for Pendragon publicity material to be sent to him for distribution among its members.]

**MYSTICAL REALMS**

PENDRAGON was in the final stages of cutting and pasting when a note arrived from Lee Richards telling us that *Mystical Realms* may cease publication. It's always a shame when a sister Journal of this calibre closes down and we hope it will not be permanent - more especially as our own Society has made a number of new members as a result of the publicity given in M.R.

Thanks or your past help, Lee, and good luck!

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NEWS LOCUM - Editor Beryl Mercer. Amber, Short Cross Road, Mount Hawke, Truro, Cornwall TR4 8EA. News and views of the paranormal. 4 issues £5.00. Cheques to Beryl Mercer (or equivalent in first and second class stamps).

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