pendragon

The Journal of the Pendragon Society

editorial

Vol XXIX No 2 Spring 2001

People

The beginning of the 21st century fortuitously ushers in a new era in Pendragon's history. Following an invitation from your committee, **Professor W M S Russell** has kindly agreed to become the first President of the Society. He has been a generous supporter and *de facto* ambassador for some time now, and a potted biography elsewhere gives ample reason why he was offered this post, while a few of his contributions in this issue we hope drive home the point.

It is with deep regret that we have to announce the death of **Chris Turner**, Pendragon member from the Cadbury-Camelot days and regular contributor to early editions of *Pendragon*. A re-published article of his this issue gives some indication of his speculative yet stimulating thinking, based on wide reading, and an appreciation of his contribution to the Society will appear in due course.

The next **Eddie Tooke award** goes to **Steve Sneyd**, for his diverse approach to the Matter of Britain – through articles, poems, reviews and numerous miscellaneous items for *The Board* and *Old News*. Congratulations! Thanks are also due for regular support and encouragement to, in particular, Fred and Marilyn Stedman-Jones, Simon and Anne Rouse, Ian Brown, and also to all our other correspondents and contributors.

Themes

This issue, as promised, showcases **Dark Age People** such as Maelgwn, Artbranan, Ider and Arthur himself, as well as looking forward chronologically to the later influence of Malory, a futuristic view of the legend in centuries to come, and a speculative take on Arthur's return. There are – in addition to the usual news, views and reviews – poetic contributions and personal responses to the Matter of Britain; what *Ceridwen's Cauldron* kindly calls "the customary mixture of good things", with something for everyone, we hope. The topic, incidentally, was suggested by Charles Evans-Günther's article (itself offered, rather diffidently, as a "filler"!).

Possibly because the deadline for this edition unfortunately came so soon after the appearance of the last, new contributions on this theme were singularly unforthcoming. In an attempt to remedy this, here are the planned themes for the next ***three*** issues – something that may never ever happen again!

- the theme for the summer will be **The Lady of the Lake**, and submissions are invited for a deadline of July 30th
- the winter theme will be **Avalon**, as previously indicated, with a deadline of November 30th
- next spring will feature **Camelot** as a focus (based on a suggestion by Ian Brown), and submissions should be in by the Ides of March, 2002

Hopefully, all that should get your creative juices going, and I look forward to bulging postbags for the twelvemonth to come!

As always, a cross [**X**] in the box above indicates that your subscription in now due.

The Pendragon Society investigates
Arthurian history and archaeology,
legend, myth, folklore,
literature, the arts and popular culture

PENDRAGON

Journal of the Pendragon Society

Established 1959 ISSN 0143 8379

Vol XXIX No 2 Spring 2001 Theme this issue **Dark Age People**

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Smithy House, Kingsley Road, Newton-by-Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 6SX
Annual subscription £7.50 for three issues UK *Sample* £2.50
Cheques payable to **The Pendragon Society**. Enquire for rates abroad
All letters answered if accompanied by an SAE or IRC

Advertisement rates £20.00 per page and *pro rata*, minimum quarter-page
Special rates for back cover and inserts – enquire for details
These rates are for camera-ready copy at A4 scale for reduction to A5 format
Data Protection Act 1984 Members' names, addresses and telephone numbers,
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Printed by Catford Print Centre, PO Box 563, Catford, London SE6 4PY
☎ 020 8695 0101 *E-mail* post@catfordprint.co.uk *Website* www.catfordprint.co.uk

Prof W M S Russell President of the Society

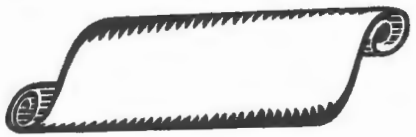
Professor Russell's entry in *Who's Who in the World* identifies him as a biologist and folklorist, but his range of interests spreads beyond these limiting labels. Born in 1925, he was with the King's Royal Rifle Corps for the last year of the war. Before that he was a scholar at New College, Oxford, first in Greek, then in Classics and English Literature. However, his first degree and subsequent DPhil were in the field of zoology, and following on this he was active in prestigious bodies on animal welfare research and agriculture.

By the sixties his studies were spreading to yet other areas, as the titles of his co-authored books – *Human Behaviour: a new approach* (1961), *Violence, Monkeys and Man* (1968) and *Population Crises and Population Cycles* (1999), all written with the late Claire Russell – and his own *Man, Nature and History* (1967) all indicate. After 1964 he was associated with the Department of Sociology at the University of Reading – first as lecturer, then reader and finally as professor until his retirement in 1990 (and thus now professor emeritus) – as well as with the University of London Institute of Education as an external examiner.

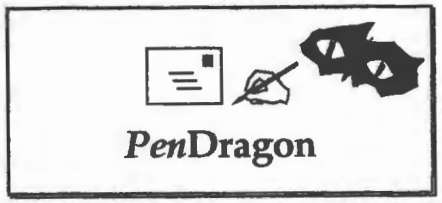
In the seventies his earlier academic interests reasserted themselves through his association with The Folklore Society. He was honorary librarian when he co-edited *Animals in Folklore* (1978), president when he wrote – with Hilda Ellis Davidson – *The Folklore of Ghosts* (1981), and vice-president until 1990. Meanwhile, his involvement in science fiction is easily represented by *The Barber of Aldebaran* (1995), a wonderful tour de force with comedy, Mozart, feminism, fantasy and, of course, science fiction all in the mix. And, naturally, he has contributed to numerous scholarly journals, such as *The Journal of Medical Ethics* and *Social Biology and Human Affairs*, with articles, reviews and letters. He also found time to serve eight years on the classic radio series *Round Britain Quiz*!

He has, in addition, received numerous international prizes and medals, as well as having an award from the American Humane Society, the Russell and Burch Award, named after him. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine and a chartered biologist of the Institute of Biology, he also lists in *Who's Who* his membership of the Pendragon Society, a generous acknowledgement from such a distinguished polymath.

W M S Russell first contributed to *Pendragon* with a republished article on H G Wells' *The Sleeper* in 1994, and since then has provided a stimulating succession of diverse Arthurian items ranging from fiction ("The Quest of Castle Peradventure", 1994) through literary studies (Henry Kuttner, Richmal Crompton, Dante, Michael Moorcock, John Gloag, T S Eliot), to contextual notes (Virgil, Byzantium), folkloric commentaries (mummers plays and medieval tales) and correspondence in the letters pages. And, as can be seen elsewhere in this issue, he clearly has no intentions of resting on his laurels.



As Fred Stedman-Jones has written, our new President's "wide range of Arthurian interests and warm sense of humour symbolise the ideal member at whom this magazine is aimed: someone appreciative of other writers' viewpoints and willing to contribute his own expertise to the pool of Arthurian knowledge". In spite of recent illness, he has very kindly agreed to become our President. Your committee is very, very grateful that he has accepted and sincerely hope that the post is stress-free but enjoyable!



AN EXILE FROM DUMNONIA

I was one of the early members, but lost touch after working abroad for years. Coming from north Cornwall, I have always had a special interest in Arthur; my father's family even claimed him as an ancestor!

Re the journal, the articles are interesting as ever, but the format is terrible! Can you produce it with larger print on white paper, as the last one gave me headaches to read. Information, and legible print are more important than glossy pages and pictures, colour or not. I'd like to see at least one-third of the journal covering the latest historical and archaeological work relevant to Arthur, and a bit less on the medieval literature. I would also like to see continuing reviews of Arthurian publications and items in the other media, such as TV programmes.

Re the Internet, I can't comment as I'm not "on line" and I hope I will never have to be. But please consider your members and readers who don't have computers, and continue to publish the journal.

Regional or national conferences would be one way for Pendragon people to meet – and a *well-organised* conference can make money. You would get more members if you got yourselves a higher profile, and advertised elsewhere than in small-circulation Pagan magazines. Get into the standard *Directory of British Associations*, and into more popular magazines such as *Prediction*. Try to organise an event that attracts the media: one that shows Pendragon in a favourable light, of course!

Morwen Tregudda, London

• Morwen signs herself 'Exile from Dumnonia' in this piece from a letter to Fred, and her comments are gratefully received. We welcome constructive criticism with a view to improving what we have to offer, as we are part of a Society composed of individual members. What are your views on legibility? on the balance of content? on Pendragon on the Internet (most exchange journals have at least one website, and so we are working on this)? on raising the Society's profile? Do you agree? Do you want development along these lines? More important, have you relevant expertise to contribute? Or are you happy to go along with things as they are or as they gradually evolve?

THE FUTURE OF ARTHUR

Thanks to Charles Evans-Gunner for his encouraging remarks on page 10 [last issue]. The theory that Moses was an Egyptian ["A Need for Heroes"] reminded me of an intriguing idea – I think it's in one of Joan Grant's books – that his real name was Ra-moses, later contracted to Rameses – presumably the first of that dynasty.

Another reminder was brought up by [Charles'] remark that "it is reasonably certain that anomalies in the New Testament throw a shadow of doubt on the historicity of Jesus." Many years ago I read (and I'm afraid that I can't quote 'chapter and verse' about this) – that although the Romans were sticklers for accuracy in keeping records – no record has ever been found relating to Jesus's trial and execution. As I recently remarked to a fellow-member of the Cornwall Archaeological Society: I don't think we are ever going toknow the full truth about the distant past until somebody comes up with a workable, reliable time-machine!

Paul Screeton's "Resurrection" article is interesting and quite provocative, but I'm surprised that he makes no mention of possible reincarnation in another hero's body – which is, as most Pendragons know (and is the basis of *Merlin's Quest*) my own pet theory to account for Arthur's regular returns in Britain's times of need. (So where is he now?)

Beryl Mercer, Truro, Cornwall

I recently returned from America and found the latest excellent edition of *Pendragon* awaiting me: thanks for that, it was a delightful welcome home.

Thanks for the generous review of Ralph de Tunstall Sneyd's *Vivian and Merlin*. I like the way you've used my work in this edition of *Pendragon*, especially the insertion of *Let Sleeping Dragons Lie* into W M S Russell's very interesting article on T S Eliot and the Grail.

Future themes: Avalon, I should think, will really get people's imagination flowing, academically, poetically, and artistically. How about a later edition discussing Camelot?

Ian Brown, Middlesbrough, Cleveland

*• A very promising suggestion! **Camelot**, then, will be the theme for the next Spring edition, after **The Lady of the Lake** and **Avalon** – see this issue's editorial.*

Thanks for the [summer issue of] *Pendragon*. I think it looks great. I really like the way you use the little clips of Dürer thoughout ...

I enjoyed your piece in the latest issue ["Whose Arthur is he anyway?"]: have you ever seen Daniel Defoe's pamphlet *The True-Born Englishman* (1701)? It's a hilarious attack on contemporary snobbery / patriotism, pointing out

how a Briton, or even an Englishman, is Roman-Danish-Saxon-Norman-Pict-Hibernian-Scot-Celt-*etc*, "a mongrel half-breed race". I thought the piece on T S Eliot [W M S Russell's "T S Eliot and the Grail"] was excellent too.

Geoff Sawers, Swansea

• *Geoff's three poems in this issue "are based on the story of Lancelot's madness in Malory, though each in a slightly different way," he tells us, and "inspired by Louis Aragon's guerilla usage of the the myth in Vichy France".*

In "Whose Arthur is he anyway?" I deliberately avoided the use of the inexact term "race", the misuse of which continues to bedevil all sensible discussion on such issues.

SAINTS ALIVE!

Thanks for the Winter issue of *Pendragon*, it's full of interesting bits and tips as usual. Ian Brown's illustrations are always a pleasure to look at. They are giving *Pendragon* its own highly individual style once more, just as Courtney Davis did in previous issues. The applause for Anne-Marie Ferguson's cover shows that *Pendragon* is becoming as notable for its artwork as it is for its verbal forays.

As for the verbal bits, well sometimes they are very clear, but sometimes equally not so. Occasionally some contributions are so over egged with learned gobbledegook that you are left groping for the meaning. For example take one single paragraph out of Laurence Main's review of Breverton's *Book of Welsh Saints*. Have you ever stood, glass in hand, with some learned group, trying to follow someone and nodding your head without having a clue what he's talking about? Well, here's the paragraph ...

Breverton reveals that he has Pelagian sympathies ... (I've just joined the group and am trying not to look blank. How do you reveal that you have Pelagain sympathies? What on earth are Pelagian sympathies? Are my Pelagian sympathies showing? I look nervously down at my flies.) ... *He thinks Camlan may have been fought between Arthur and Maelgwn ...* (I wonder whether I should laugh at this absurdity or just nod? I shuffle my feet awkwardly and decide to take refuge in my drink.) ... *He hasn't tried to uncover the truth about St Iltud ...* (Ah! Time to grunt knowingly at the chap next to me. To my surprise he grunts knowingly back at me. We both know the truth about St Iltud, don't we. We certainly do and he was no better than he should be! I begin to feel better. I'm getting the hang of this.)

But then the arch manipulator and controller of the sixth century version of the media did make that difficult! (Well of course he did. I nudge my neighbour and we both wink. We know who he is talking about. But it's best not to name names. You never know who is listening.) *...He follows Chris Barber up the false alley of identifying St Armel (the brother of Derfel Gadarn) with a post Camlan Arthur surviving in Brittany ...*

Here we all chortle in disgust. Poor old Breverton. Fancy following Chris Barber up that alley. How could he have been so foolish! He should have smelt a rat as soon as he found out that Derfel Gadarn was mixed up in it. They're all the same, that family. Mind you, I blame the parents. Suddenly I'm not embarassed any more. The rest of the group don't know what he's talking about either!

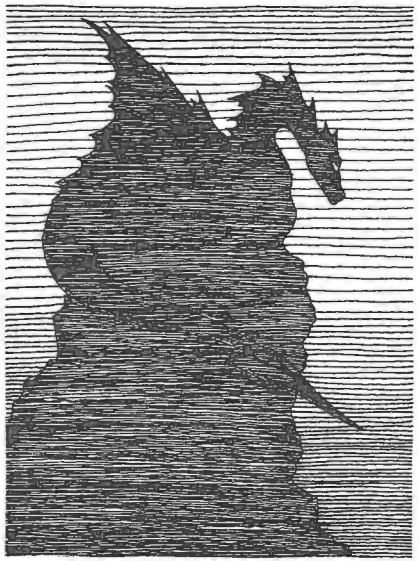
Forrester Roberts, Tuffley, Gloucestershire

Nick Grant of Reading asked about St Cadoc (page 6, *XXVIII* No 3). Cadoc was Sir Galahad. His father (and, therefore, Sir Lancelot) was Gwynllyw. His mother was Gwladus, daughter of Brychan. More on this in my *Spirit Paths of Wales*, being published by Cicerone.

Laurence Main, Machynlleth, Wales

• *That letter about St Cadoc was not in fact from Nick Grant but from another member. Unfortunately, like Alison Skinner's letter in the same issue, the extract was not attributed and I seem to have mislaid the original letter. Apologies to the reader concerned – can you make yourself known to me so I can rectify the omission? Laurence's points are from a letter to Fred; his book was published towards the end of last year and was reviewed last issue.*

Dragon Sentinel Ian Brown



VIRGIL THE MAGICIAN

Winter 2000–2001 saw another very enjoyable issue of *Pendragon*. In Steve Sneyd's very interesting letter, he suggests various factors in the growth of the Virgil legend – the supposed Christian connection, the Sibyl episode, and the *sortes Virgilianae*. I find these suggestions very reasonable.

It remains to ask why the legend surfaced at a particular time and place, 12th-century Naples. I do not claim to have answered this question, but I note an interesting parallel. The legends of Arthur in their medieval form also surfaced in the 12th century, and an important part in their diffusion was played by the Normans, probably because of their relations with the Welsh and the Bretons. The Normans occupied Normandy itself (bordering on Brittany), England (bordering on Wales), and Southern Italy (where they were visited by Breton knights and minstrels). It is strange that these very practical people, great soldiers and administrators, were also so important for the imaginative life of medieval Europe, but the facts are not in doubt. When we note that the Virgil legend surfaced in 12th-century Naples (captured by the Normans in 1139), it is natural to wonder whether the Normans played a part in promoting this legend too.

Steve Sneyd notes that the *sortes Virgilianae* were practised in the 17th century still. It is said that Charles I resorted to them in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. He opened the book at the point where Dido utters her terrible curse on Aeneas (*Aeneid* Book 4, lines 607–629). She prays that he will be driven from his realm, see his friends killed, be forced to make an ignominious peace, and finally lose his kingdom and die before his time. Little of this happened to Aeneas, but it all happened to Charles. The outcome of his *sortes* was naturally taken (at least after the event!) as a warning of the misfortunes in store for the king.

W M S Russell, Reading

A small footnote on Virgil as wizard. As the surviving accounts of this aspect begin, according to my 1929 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, with an 1194 letter of Conrad of Querfurt, *ie* pretty late in written in written form, I wonder if it could partly arise from a conflation of the poet with a later Virgil, the Irishman who became bishop of Salzburg (dying in 784, later sainted), who shocked the pope with cosmological speculations. Geoffrey Ashe, page 187 of Paladin 1972 edition of *The Quest for Arthur's Britain*, says he claimed the world was round and other worlds were inhabited – likely to be distorted into wizardry by later retellers.

Steve Sneyd, Huddersfield, W Yorks

• *Ah, we often find that in following a particular line of inquiry Geoffrey Ashe has been there before! The St Virgil who died in 784 was apparently an Irish monk called Fergal, later responsible as bishop for rebuilding Salzburg cathedral. Another saint called Virgil, from Arles in Gascony, was associated with the Gregorian mission to England, consecrating St Augustine and dying in 610. No wizardry there though.*

MISCELLANY

I was most pleased to read [in the Summer issue] Tim Porter's "Arthur and Alfred" (which I don't think I read on its first appearance), since much of what he writes backs up my own contentions – even to the inclusion of Robin Hood ... "The parallels between Arthur and Alfred are (indeed) remarkable", Tim!

Re the letter from Alistair McBeath, commenting on "a long item by Ed P Grondine": has Alistair, or anyone else, noted that 'Ed P Grondine' is *almost* an anagram of 'Pendragon'?

I have written to Fred Stedman-Jones, thanking him for his kind and helpful remarks to me in his letter, and assuring him that I *have* read quite a few of the classics. I found most of them uniformly drab and depressing – Dickens lived in a cruel era, reflected in his books and not neutralised to any great extent by happiness and humour. As for Fred's remark – "the language is what makes them classics!" – the language of Shakespeare, Chaucer *etc* is precisely what makes them so difficult of my comprehension and appreciation. Except Will's sonnets; oddly enough, I don't have any trouble with those, finding them – or most of them, anyway – both beautiful and intelligible.

Beryl Mercer, Truro, Cornwall

GREEN KNIGHTS

A good friend of mine introduced me to a fascinating place called The Forbidden Corner a couple of weeks ago and it really is like something our of a children's fantasy story: something like *Alice in Wonderland*. Apparently, the landowner first designed the gardens and grottoes, which are full of surprises, for his children (or perhaps his nieces and nephews: I haven't yet got the full story), but it's now open to the public (anyone wishing to visit should telephone first, as spaces are restricted).

The reason I mention it is that there's an excellent scupture of the Green Knight in the garden, cleverly designed around a couple of aged tree stumps. It really is well worth a visit, for anyone with children, anyone with an active imagination, or anybody simply wishing to see what a bit of ambition and imagination can do (I sound like an advertising campaign, don't I?). It's not far from Richmond and Scotch Corner, in the Yorkshire Dales.

Ian Brown, Middlesbrough, Cleveland

◆ *More details of The Forbidden Place are to be found in* The Board, *taken from a leaflet Ian has kindly sent on. Ian's review of John Matthew's and Anna-Marie Ferguson's edition of* ***Le Morte d'Arthur*** *plus his article on a link between the Arthurian tales and the* ***Arabian Nights*** *will both appear in the next issue.*

Thank you for the copy of the [Summer 2000] edition of your journal ... I did love your journal; right up my street although I retired hurt from the Arthur conflict ...

In fact I do not believe that our Green Knight has anything to do at all with the Green Man. As I say in my little book [*The Green Man: companion and gazetteer*, rev edn 2000] one gets the impression that 'Green' is fortuitous and that he could just as well be called 'Red'. I do believe however that much of the original story was misunderstood, that whomever the author was he had little idea of the depth of his subject.

And I must hold to my hypothesis that Arthur has as much right to be thought of as Breton as Briton. That Gweltas or Gildas had an abbey within a few kilometres of an Iron Age hillfort called Badon (Mons Badonicus?) is too much of a coincidence for me. But you are the experts and coincidence it could be.

Ronald Millar, Steyning, W Sussex

◆ *This letter was received as the last issue, with its mention of The Company of the Green Man, was going to the printers, so I am happy to clarify that the author meant no link to be made between Green Man and Green Knight. Ronald Miller discusses Baden, the Breton Mount Badon candidate, on pages 150 to 158 of his 1978 book* ***Will the real King Arthur please stand up?*** *[Cassell].*

John Matthews' new book on the foliate head, ***The Quest for The Green Man****, is due out in May [Godsfield Press hardback, £16.99, ISBN 1 84181 111]. The publication of this exploration of the Green Man tradition is timed to coincide with The Green Man Conference at Glastonbury in early May (for details check out the website www.goddessandgreenman.co.uk/conference or phone the Isle of Avalon Foundation 01458 833033).*

On the matter of the Green Knight, Tristan Gray Hulse tells us he is completing a book of cephalophoria *(obsession with heads, apparently!) which traces the origins of the various medieval tales of saints and others taking up their respective decapitated heads and walking – more details when available.*

SLIGHT ERRANTRY?

'Once I realize that my view diverges from the orthodox view,' writes Rodney Castleden [page 18, *Pendragon* Spring 2000], 'I search out the logical flaw in the argument that underlies the conventional wisdom in order to understand how a wrong turning has been taken.' I wish I were that confident in my own inerrancy.

Andrew H W Smith, Oxford

The many mistakes in Rodney Castleden's sloppily-researched book ***King Arthur: the truth behind the legend*** (2000 – reviewed in the Spring 2000 edition of *Pendragon*) are summed up by his reference to the Sword Stone on page 208 and its picture on page 209.

The real Sword Stone, which is a magical imprint of an ancient British sword on a boulder, is not the one pictured on page 209 and is not, as described on page 208, "400m down the slope" from Cerrig Arthur stone circle, near Sylfaen Farm. The real Sword Stone is at grid ref SH644199, at least one mile north-east of Cerrig Arthur stone circle, where OS Outdoor Leisure map 23 or 18 (it's on both maps) is marked *Cerrig y Cledd*.

This real Sword Stone is truly magical, so it was probably hiding from an author who also places Camlan near Ganllwyd when the Ganllwyd Camlan was a mere mopping-up skirmish after the main battle near Dinas Mawddwy, a site Castleden fails to study adequately.

Laurence Main, Dinas Mawddwy, Machynlleth

ANOTHER BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Footnote to "A Bolt from the Blue" [*Pendragon 28* No 3]. The Egyptologist W E Wainwright in a 1932 article in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* quotes Plutarch. It seems the shrew mice were venerated at Letopolis not because of the plague but solely because they were associated with blindness. Letopolis was formerly the centre of a cult based on the Blind Horus – apparently, an injury Horus suffered during his conflict with the god Seth, the caster of thunderbolts. We may also note that the Greek goddess Leto was the mother of Apollo and Artemis, famed archers in the heavens, presumably a reference to lightning as well as meteoric phenomena.

Blindness was associated with a variety of gods – the Irish god Balor, for example, whose glare was used as a weapon by the Fomóiri *etc*. It would be interesting if blindness was a feature of the Arthurian tales. What any of this may have to do with Sennacherib I hesitate to guess, and as Sennacherib lived over a thousand years before Arthur it may all be irrelevant to *Pendragon* and the subject should thus be brought to a close. I'm sorry I brought up the Assyrian king as a parallel to be drawn.

The link with Mohammed and the lightning horse Borak is also interesting in another respect. Meteoric phenomena are sometimes manifested as bright streaks racing from the upper heavens towards the horizon and ground level. This may have given rise to the idea of a ladder into heaven, or a luminous rope on which to climb into the abode of the gods, on the basis that what comes down could also be used to go upwards – hence Mohammed, and Elijah, were whisked up into the sky, a device also associated with shamanic activity.

Phillip Clapham, High Wycombe, Bucks

◆ *There is interesting discussion of the association between mice (voles, rats or similar) and plague in Anatolian and Levantine myth in Christopher A Faraone's* ***Talismans & Trojan Horses*** *(OUP 1992, Appendix 2) and their connection with deities such as the archer Apollo Smintheus ("Mouse God"). This suggests that the* akbar *(mouse) /* barak *(lightning) confusion that Phillip mentioned in his original article may be more apparent than real. I had expected someone before now to have pointed out possible etymological links between the Semitic word* barak *and the names of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak!*

W M S Russell, in a recent letter to the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine *("Plague, rats and the Bible" Vol 93 October 2000), discusses links between mice and the "plague of the Philistines" in* I Samuel 6 (around

1000 BC). *The "mice" were likely to have been crop pests ("mice that mar the land") who may, by producing food shortage, have prepared the way for an epidemic of bacillary dysentery.*

The Waste Land motif, familiar from the later Arthurian tales, is touched on in the Mabinogion tales of ***Lludd and Llefelys*** *and* ***Manawydan son of Llyr****. In the latter, Manawydan counters a plague of mice by capturing one mouse (which later turns out to be the enchanted wife of his enemy Llwyd son of Cil Coed) and threatening to hang her.*

LATE NEWS

Arthur returns!

Wild choughs have re-appeared on the south coast of Cornwall, even before conservationists' plans to reintroduce them have come to fruition (*see Old News*). "It is believed that the five red-legged members of the crow family may have arrived from Brittany, where a remnant population remains," reported *The Daily Telegraph*'s environment editor [June 7 2001].

BEAR CULT

I enjoyed Sophie Masson's "Questing Beast", and Pamela Harvey's article about Artos the Bear of Britain [Summer 2000]. I've been trying to track down a bear cult in ancient Britain for quite a long time, but without much success. In his book *Creatures from Inner Space* (no success in locating a copy – any offers?) Stan Gooch says:

"The bear is in legend King of all the Animals of the North ... the Kaledonian bear was also a shamanistic guise for the early Pictish Myrddin (Merlin) as a Wildman Prophet ... As bear-cult sites have been discovered throughout Keltic lands, it is not surprising that people still encounter spectral / phantom bears (*eg* on Shipworth Common, and in the Jewel Chamber in London, etc.) for they will still come through from the Otherworlds ..." (*Kaledon Naddair: Keltic Folk and Faerie Tales* p 124).

This information is taken from Moyra Caldecott's book about King Bladud – or rather, her notes at the end of *The Winged Man* – so I'm not sure where Stan Gooch's comments end and the *Kaledon Naddair* comments begin. Ms Caldecott also quotes from Geoffrey Ashe's *The Ancient Wisdom* (which I do have):

"To survey the role of bears in religion, ancient and not so ancient, is to catch glimpses of a very strong magic ... immensely formidable and not-quite-animal ..." (p 147).

The relevant article in *Man, Myth and Magic* cites a regular haunting by a bear of Worcester Cathedral in the 17th century, and a bear festival "that has long formed a part of springtime celebrations in parts of southern France". But no mention of present-day bear-cults in Britain. If anybody knows of such, I would be most interested to have details.

Beryl Mercer, Truro, Cornwall

• *Some aspects of the survival of bears are touched on in "His name liveth for evermore" in this issue. Beryl mentions a ghost bear in Worcester Cathedral. There is a bear of sorts in Gloucester Cathedral, too, a carving on a 14th-century misericord of the brothers Valentine and Orson ("Bear Cub") – in legend they were the cousins of Charlemagne, and fought each other in the forest of Orleans. The twins were separated at birth, one being brought up by a bear and the other grew up at the court of King Pepin, though it was not till their duel that they recognised each other; Freda Derrick's 1935* ***Tales told in church stones*** *gives an illustration of the carving (see opposite).*

The problem with the supposed antiquity of bear-cults in southern France is that there are still bears in the Pyrenees, and it would be hard, without being familiar with the surviving evidence, to know how far back any such French bear-cult goes.

We still don't seem to know when native bears became extinct in Britain – in the Middle Ages and later, bear-baiting and the public exhibition of muzzled bears probably relied on the import of such beasts. Bear-baiting was apparently banned in 1835 and, according to Brewer, the practice of showing bears for money was only made illegal as late as 1925.

As for Stan Gooch, while he is an entertaining writer, I would take his ideas with a hefty pinch of salt! Another take on the Arthur / Bear link is highlighted in the next letter:

A question for the readers of *Pendragon*, who might be better informed than myself.

I recently came across a book published in 1959 called ***Guardian of the Grail*** by John Whitehead and sub-titled *A new light on the Arthurian legend*. I wondered whether any Pendragon members had read this and what they though of it. The main theme seems to be that since Arthur The Bear may have been a clan leader's title or battle name, there will have been more than one Arthur throughout the ages. Mr Whitehead's theme centres on the notion that the first one was Caractacus, aka Arviragus. Arthur was said to have travelled to Rome and Caractacus is the only ancient British King known to have done so. I hadn't come across the connection to Caractacus before and found it quite interesting.

I'd be interested to hear whether *Pendragon* readers give any credence to this, whether Mr Whitehead's work is widely known or whether any other author has made similar links to Caractacus. Unlike more recent tomes on the subject which place Arthur's exploits in South Wales, North Wales, Scotland and elsewhere, Mr Whitehead sets all his action in England, with Camelot identified with Winchester.

C E Street, Southgate, London

• *Correspondents and members have dallied with this theory, including Eric Ratcliffe and David Pykitt. Personally, I think it's an analogy stretched too far, but other readers may well disagree! See "His name liveth for evermore".*

Chris Street is author of the recently published ***Earthstars: the visionary landscape. Part One: London, City of Revelation*** *(£20.00 from Hermitage Publishing, PO Box 1383, London N14 6LP) which argues for patterns concealed within the London landscape and marked by some of the capital's oldest sacred sites.*

ARTHUR AT SILCHESTER?

Geoffrey of Monmouth begins his account of Arthur with a meeting of the British leaders at Silchester, where they crown him as king (1). Until recently, this could be dismissed altogether as yet another of Geoffrey's innumerable fictions. But now it begins to look as if he *may* have stumbled on a genuine tradition.

In the excavations of Silchester, or *Calleva Atrebatum*, as it still was in the fifth century, no trace has been found of wholesale massacre or general conflagration. The small number of Germanic artefacts found there can be attributed either to a few non-violent Saxon peasant squatters, or to the German federates who appear to have garrisoned the twon while it was still under Roman protection (2). So Calleva was evidently one of the towns that was not sacked and burned by the Saxons, but died a natural death as a result of the collapse of the economy and administration of Roman Britain. Some people think this applies to most of the Romano-British towns (3). But *when* did Calleva die?

Until recently, it was believed this happened early in the fifth century, making utter nonsense of Geoffrey's story.

'However, in July 1997 new excavations started in Insula IX [one of the blocks of buildings in the town] under the direction of Professor Michael Fulford of Reading University. In 1998 a post-Roman date was tentatively assigned to a late phase of a large aisled house, and a possible sixth-century date for a later series of pits cut into the walls of this house. Radio-carbon dating has now given a latest date for the pits of *c* AD 500, suggesting the town really was abandoned then or soon after. Arthur could have visited Calleva ...' (4).

Calleva, even if by that time in full decline, would have been a quite suitable venue for a meeting of Romano-British captains planning operations in the Thames Valley or Sussex. And who knows? They may have elected Arthur as their generalissimo, even, as Geoffrey Ashe has suggested, as Imperator (5).

References

1. *Historia Regum Britanniae* 9.1
2. G C Boon (1974) *Silchester: the Roman Town of Calleva* [David and Charles, Newton Abbot] 68–70, 76, 82
3. J Rich *ed* (1992) *The City in Late Antiquity* [Routledge, London] especially Chapters 5 and 6
4. R Rand "Prologue" in G C Boon (2000) *St Mary the Virgin, Silchester* [Ridgeway Press, Pangbourne) 4. She refers to M Fulford and A Clarke "Silchester and the End of Roman Towns" *Current Archaeology 161* 1999 176–180
5. G Ashe (1960) *From Caesar to Arthur* [Collins, London] *passim*

W M S Russell, Reading, Berkshire

• *On a joint Pendragon-RILKO visit to Silchester in August 1982 we were kindly given a commentary by Michael Fulford on excavations then being conducted on the site of the Roman basilica or town hall – which may even have continued standing into the medieval period ("Calleva Excursus" in Vol 16 No 1, 1982-3). Silchester is also the site of the most eastern ogham inscription, commemorating an Irishman, Tebicatos (formerly read as Ebicatos), and confirming the town's survival into the post-Roman period.*

Letters to the Editor for inclusion in PenDragon *may be sent to 125 York Road, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5QG. Please include a SAE if a reply is required. If your letter is not for publication, please indicate this at the time of writing.*

THE WASTE LAND

Last issue we included an item on the Byzantine writer **Procopius** and his "weird" view of 6th-century Britain (Russell 2001).

Coincidentally the May edition of the magazine *Prediction* carries an article by **Paul Harris** defending Procopius' description of a wall dividing not north and south (*ie* Hadrian's Wall) but east and west (Wat's Dyke). This was of course an argument put forward by Steve Blake and Scott Lloyd in *The Keys to Avalon* (2000).

To this Paul Harris adds the "wasteland" scenarios proposed by other recent writers. Mike Baillie in *From Exodus to Arthur* (1998) postulated that an exploding cometary fragment was to blame for poor growing conditions in the late 530s. David Keys' *Catastrophe* (1999) plumped instead for a massive volcanic eruption at Krakatoa in 541. Both scenarios have already been heavily criticised by Alistair McBeath in *Pendragon*.

Sadly for Harris, he relies on false dates for the 'mass death in Britain and Ireland', including the demise of Maelgwn of Gwynedd. These were not dated 539 or 540, as Harris states, but at 547, while Irish chronicles give various dates, all later – 548, 549, 551 or 552.

To support Procopius' description of western Britain as an "uninhabitable wasteland" Harris imagines "some event of a more localised nature ... such as the air burst of a small comet causing devastation on the ground below". On such flimsy grounds the author accounts for the Dolorous Stroke of the knight Balm (*sic*) on King Pelles.

- Paul Harris "The Wasteland" *Prediction 67 No 5* May 2001
- W M S Russell (2001) "A Byzantine View of Britain" *Pendragon 29 No 1*

KING ARTHUR REVIVED

The chough used to be protected in Cornwall because, we are told, "the soul of King Arthur was fabled to have migrated into one." Thus, the arms of Cornwall display

over the crest on a wreath Argent and Azure a chough proper resting the dexter claw upon a ducal coronet Or

while the motto of the Cornish *gorseth* reads *Nyns Yu Marow Myghtern Arthur* ("King Arthur is not dead") and features a chough.

Sadly the **Cornish chough**, despite surviving in Wales, the Isle of Man, Ireland and the Inner Hebrides, has long been extinct in the duchy.

The good news is that Francis Crocker aims to re-introduce the chough to Cornwall by "re-creating the bird's favourite nesting and feeding grounds on his land" at Trevigue Farm, Crackington Haven.

For this and other environmentally-friendly working practices used on his farm – designed to encourage dormice, badgers, deer, tawny owls and otters – he received the President's Award at the annual dinner of the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales.

The award was in recognition of his "special contribution" to conservation and farming, and was sponsored by *The Daily Telegraph.*

- David Brown "NFU award winner is well choughed" *Telegraph* February 7 2001
- *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (1985 edition) under "Bird"

CONSERVING AVALON

The National Trust has launched a £250,000 appeal for funding conservation work at **Glastonbury Tor**. Acknowledging that the Tor is "of national and international significance for both pagans and Christians", the Trust has followed up a survey with a conservation plan for the next three years.

The programme's immediate aims are to improve access, help prevent erosion and install new information panels, and in the medium term to carry out conservation work on St Michael's Tower and to renew protection for the archaeological remains around the tower's base.

The evidence suggests that the site has been occupied since around the 5th or 6th centuries, though the tower was only added in the late 13th or early 14th century. The Tor and environs were identified as **Avalon** from at least the 12th century.

£25 apparently will repoint a course of stones on the tower, and £100 will help buy a metre of path – you can contribute by phoning 0870 458 4000 during the day.

- Libbie Mead "Glastonbury Tor appeal launched" *Wessex News* Spring 2001 [National Trust]

BADON TEMPLE SITE

Badbury Rings in Dorset has long been claimed as a candidate for **Mount Badon**, site of Arthur's most famous victory. Though a weak contender, it has nevertheless been long suspected that the hillfort was used after the Roman conquest.

Recent excavations (September 2000) have established that there was in fact a Roman temple or shrine there between the 1st and 4th centuries AD. On the south-west of the site surface finds backed up the results of a geophysical survey, both evidence for a square building surrounded by a octagonal walled enclosure some sixty metres in diameter. Excavation established that the walls were made from local brown sandstone called heathstone, decorated with painted plaster, with chalk floors and Purbeck limestone slates for a roof.

National Trust archaeologists reportedly believe that the building was "probably" demolished about 1500 years ago, and the stone robbed "for other buildings". As similar pagan sites in the south-west were demolished in the late Roman or post-Roman periods, to be replaced by Christian sites (*eg* Uley on the Cotswolds), the same may possibly have happened at Badbury Rings.

- Libbie Mead "Excavation confirms Roman temple site" *Wessex News* Spring 2001 [National Trust]

EXCALIBUR'S RESTING PLACE

The National Trust owns yet another site with possible Arthurian connections, according to a news item in *The National Trust Magazine*. The Trust has been involved in negotiations for several years to buy Broomlee Lough and 80 hectares of moorland around it just north of Housesteads fort – Roman *Vircovicium* – on Hadrian's Wall. The reason? The vendor wished to retain the right to look for treasure in the lake, for the next 99 years.

Local legend claims that Oswald, a twelfth-century Dane, hid a treasure in the lake, casting a spell to prevent it being stolen. "Only two twin horses, two twin oxen, two twin boys and a chain forged by a seventh-generation blacksmith could pull it out." Despite recent searches by frogmen the treasure remains elusive. Perhaps the frogmen weren't related – or did somebody forget the oxen?

The 27-hectare Lough is further named in the Trust news item as Excalibur's last resting place, and presumably the home of the Lady of the Lake. This legend is apparently buttressed by Arthur's traditional connections with Carlisle.

I have to say that this identification of Broomlee Lough as the site of Arthur's mortal wound is new to me. Whatever the date of its origin, the tale may have been influenced by other sites on the Wall with legendary Arthurian connections – nearby, the demolished Sewingshields Castle has an Arthurian cave legend, Sewingshields Crags have a tale of Arthur and Guinevere as quarrelsome giants, Comyn's Cross is connected with Arthur's sons, and, further afield, Castlesteads is Roman *Camboglans*, possibly Camlann.

- "A lake with hidden depths" *The National Trust Magazine 92* Spring 2001 6
- Geoffrey Ashe (1983) *A Guidebook to Arthurian Britain* [Aquarian Press] under "Sewingshields"

BEDE'S GOSPELS

Secrets revealed last year by a British Library scholar throw new light on the **Venerable Bede** and the manuscript known as the **Lindisfarne Gospels**.

Michelle Brown, curator of illuminated manuscripts at the British Library, presented her dramatic findings to an audience at St Bede's 7th century church at Jarrow in Northumberland and art history books may have to be re-written.

Traditionally, the Gospels are believed to have been the work of Eadfrith, bishop of Lindisfarne from 698 to 721, as a later note in their pages testifies. Ms Brown accepts this, but ascribes their composition to the end of his tenure rather than the beginning, which would strengthen links with St Bede, whose theological thinking would have influenced Lindisfarne at this time. "One of the figures in the volume's painting of St Matthew relates to a theological issue he raised," Ms Brown declared.

The later dating is partly due to the revolutionary approach to the illumination of the manuscript. For the first time, Eadfrith dispensed with the traditional half-uncial script used elsewhere in the Church by fusing it with the pagan Anglo-Saxon runic style of lettering. "He was having to make up his font as he went along."

In addition, he combined both Anglo-Saxon and Celtic flower and beast images in a way that suggested he was "consciously creating a new English culture". Eadfrith prepared for this by making at least sixty practice sketches with a metal-point pen on the back of the vellum pages. Previously undetected, the doodles were revealed by using raking light and a high-magnification binocular microscope.

The significance of these exciting findings are bound to add to the debate of what "Englishness" really means.

- John Ezard "Revealed: hidden art behind the gospel truth" *Guardian* May 30 2000 [item noted by Steve Sneyd]
- www.bl.uk/diglib/treasures/lindisfarne.html is the British Library's Lindisfarne page

KING OF NEW BRITAIN?

Steve Sneyd has drawn attention to an article by Christopher Howse responding to **Ken Livingstone**'s belief that there should not be a statue of the historian Bede in Trafalgar Square "on the grounds that Bede was much to blame for not mentioning King Arthur in his history of England because Arthur was a pagan."

Howse rightly points out that "if Arthur existed at all he was a Christian and won a great victory against the Saxons – who were pagans". In any case, Bede himself "did not have any sources to draw on that mentioned Arthur."

In a well-informed but balanced piece, Howse writes that the broken fragments of stories of Arthur "have a strangely touching air to them, like bits of stained glass spared by the Protestant iconoclasts." His personal conclusion is rather more startling:

"It would be easy to get on a high horse and say that it is disgraceful that public policy on commemorating national heroes should be decided by the ill-founded prejudices of Mr Livingstone. Bede is a figure of world standing, but he might look rather silly on a plinth in Trafalgar Square.

So let's have a statue of Arthur, a symbol of Christian civilisation which, with the help of Bede and his learned, peace-loving brothers, came to displace for a time the barbarous habits of the warlike Saxon invaders."

• Christopher Howse "Arthur, king of all New Britain?" *The Daily Telegraph* June 21 2000

NEW LIES FOR OLD

Old News aims to highlight aspects of history that may encourage us to review what was previously accepted. But recent developments in former Soviet Russia are revealing a revisionist history of the world that should give cause for worry.

According to reports, a Slavocentric "New Chronology" overturns orthodox dating and claims, for example, that Britain was once part of a mega-Russian empire occupying Eurasia until the 16th century.

The theory's authors, Anatoly Fomenko and Gleb Nosovsky, are mathematicians from Moscow University who re-interpret astronomical and statistical data to create "our reconstruction" of the past. They dismiss criticism, saying that "There is nothing academically serious in anything our opponents have written about us."

The "New Chronology" claims that King Arthur was a **Russian prince** and that the early King Henrys were really titled Khan Rex. The name of Ross in Scotland "proves" it was part of the Russian empire, and Écosse, the French word for Scotland, derives from the Cossacks. Ivan the Terrible never existed, and the Romanovs invented Russia's past official history (rather like the Communists after them).

Apparently we should take these eccentric fabulators seriously – they are gaining popular support, numbering Garry Kasparov, the chess grandmaster, among their fans.

• Marcus Warren "King Arthur was really a Russian, say Slavs" *The Daily Telegraph* April 19 2001

BASQUE CASES

A recent study has suggested that the Basques, often considered to be genetically discrete descendants of Palaeolithic peoples of Western Europe, are more closely related to Celts from Britain and Ireland than previously thought.

James Wilson and David Goldstein of University College London, together with colleagues from Oxford University and the University of California, Davis, looked for similarities between the Y chromosomes of eighty-eight individuals from Anglesey, 146 from Ireland with Gaelic surnames, and fifty Basques. "They were statistically indistinguishable," declared Prof Goldstein.

The study is published in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and apparently provides the first clear evidence, reports *The Daily Telegraph*, of "a close relationship in the paternal heritage of Basque and Celtic speaking populations".

• Roger Highfield "Basques are brothers of the Celts" *The Daily Telegraph* April 3 2001

NEW LINES ON OLD TEXTS

New computer techniques may help reveal lost inscriptions. Tom Malzbender and Dan Gelb, of the visual computing department of Hewlett-Packard Laboratories, map the texture of rough surfaces using digital photgraphs and reproduce those surfaces perfectly as computer graphics in a virtual world (reports a recent *New Scientist*).

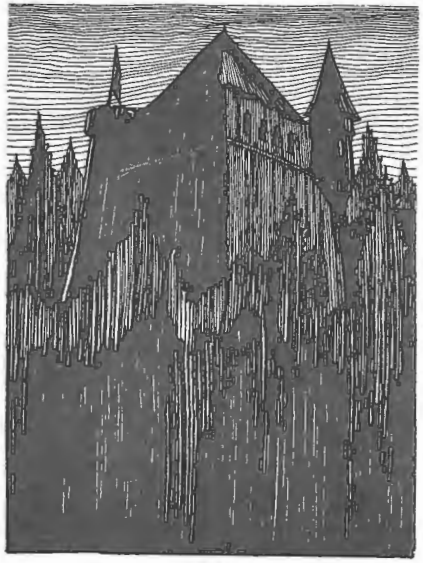
Together with Bruce Zuckerman of the University of Southern California's West Semitic Research Project in Los Angeles they have been able to produce enhanced images of Babylonian clay tablets to restore texts on the crumbling surfaces, dramatically revealing lost messages and even fingerprints.

The new software developed may prove a boon when applied to other fields such as car design and forensic science. If Mesopotamian inscriptions can be "virtually" restored, what about stone monuments from the Neolithic to the Early Christian period?

• Michael Brooks "Tricks of the Light" *New Scientist No 2285* April 7 2001, 38–40zzzf

An Ill-Made Knight: Sir Thomas Malory

W M S Russell



Mountain Sanctuary Ian Brown

The Malorys (Mallorys) were a family of Norman knights, who came to England either with the Conqueror or, more probably, with Queen Matilda.[1] Their name has been connected with an old French word *maloret* ("unlucky"), but this did not prevent them from doing very well in England, where they acquired substantial properties in seventeen counties,[2] and some continued to own these until 1714.[3] They included some distinguished people, among them a Lord Mayor of London, and can claim ancestry to Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon (later Duchess of York, Queen and Queen Mother), and hence of H M Queen Elizabeth II.[4] Some manors were held by Mallorys for centuries, for instance Kirkby Mallory in Leicestershire, though by the nineteenth century this had passed to another family, and belonged to Sir Ralph Milbanke, father-in-law of Byron and grandfather of Ada Augusta Countess Lovelace, who created the science of computer programme.[5]

The most famous Malory is of course the author of *Le Morte d'Arthur*. For some time his identity was in dispute, and Sir John Rhys, on the strength of references by Bale and Leland, suggested he was Welsh.[6] But it is now generally agreed that he was Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel in Warwickshire.[7] His patron was Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, whom he followed to France in 1436, and he therefore also probably followed Beauchamp's son-in-law, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, the famous Kingmaker. Malory was thus involved inevitably in the War of the Roses, initially on the Yorkist side, and probably briefly on the Lancastrian side when Warwick made his final bid for power.

But meanwhile, in that violent age, Malory had embarked on a career of personal delinquency that made his contemporary François Villon, robber, killer and very great poet, appear a model of respectability by comparison. Defenders of Malory have suggested he was the victim of frame-ups, but the charges against him were so numerous and circumstantial it is hard to believe they were all trumped up. He was accused of cattle-rustling, burglary, sacrilegious attacks on abbeys, the kidnapping and rape of a housewife, and the attempted murder of the Lancastrian Duke of Buckingham. He was repeatedly imprisoned, and made several sensational escapes. In 1934 a manuscript of *Le Morte d'Arthur* was discovered, which differs in places from Caxton's printed version: in this manuscript there are several pathetic references to the author as a prisoner.[8] Altogether, it is one of the great paradoxes of literary history that the greatest book of chivalry ever written should be the work of this maverick. E K Chambers pertinently quotes:

"What?" seyde Sir Launcelot, "is he a theff and a knht? and a ravyssher of women? He doth shame unto the Order of Knyghthode, and contrary unto his oth. Hit is pité that he lyveth."

'Surely the Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel could not have written this without a twinge' (Chambers).

But whatever we may think of Malory as a person, we owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for what is, after all, the supreme masterpiece of Arthurian literature. And we should be equally grateful to William Caxton, who chose to print the book in the inauspicious reign of Richard III. His timing was certainly

remarkable. The book came out on 31 July 1485,[9] the day before Henry Tudor embarked from Harfleur, and three weeks before the battle of Bosworth.[10] It was Caxton's good fortune (and ours) that the Tudors, like the Angevins, adopted Arthur as their mascot. When Prince Arthur visited Coventry in 1499, he was greeted by players representing King Arthur and the Nine Worthies.[11] After Prince Arthur's death, it is Henry VIII who is depicted on the Round Table in Winchester Castle,[12] and Arthur was shown as a world conqueror in hangings displayed in the Field of the Cloth of Gold.[13] In 1580, Dr John Dee was even claiming Greenland and Iceland for Arthur's empire.[14] This Tudor enthusiasm went far to counteract the savage attacks on Arthurian literature by humanists such as Erasmus, Vives and Ascham.[15]

Unfortunately, the Stuarts also adopted Arthur, and this did him no good: it is probably the reason why Milton abandoned his Arthurian project.[16] At the same time, historical criticism was demolishing the totally fictitious Arthur of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Hence the almost complete dearth of good Arthurian literature between Dryden and Peacock documented in detail by James Douglas Merriman.[17] Arthur had to disappear from history and return to romance before his triumphant return with Tennyson. Editions of Malory reflect the same pattern. There were five editions during the Tudor period, but only one between the Stuart accession and the nineteenth century.[18] Since then there have been very many, including Sommer's facsimile of Caxton's original.[19]

Aubrey Beardsley's first important commission (for Dent) was an illustrated edition of *Le Morte d'Arthur*. The pictures were to be produced by process-engraving and not by laborious woodcutting (to the indignation of William Morris).[20] It must be admitted that, as Beardsley moved from his Pre-Raphaelite into his Japanese phase, he became increasingly bored with the Malory project. To do him justice he did complete it, but towards the end he became increasingly casual about his deadlines. On one occasion the publisher called in desperation, the artist's mother went to fetch him and found him in bed, where he burst into a spontaneous limerick:[21]

There was a young man with a salary
Who had to do drawings for Malory;
When they asked him for more,
He replied, 'Why? Sure
You've enough as it is for a gallery.

[1] Smith, S V Mallory (1985) *A History of the Mallory Family* [Phillimore: Chichester] 124–7
[2] *Ibid, passim*
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[4] *Ibid*, xvii
[5] *Ibid*, 1ff; Wooley, B (1999) *The Bride of Science: Romance, Reason and Byron's Daughter* [Macmillan: London] index *sv* Kirkby Malory
[6] Rhys, Sir John (1906) Preface to *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory [Dent: London] vii
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[8] Chambers (ref 7) 186–7
[9] Chambers (ref 7) 185
[10] Rowse, A L (1998) *Bosworth Field and the Wars of the Roses* [Wordsworth] 214, 218
[11] Kendrick, T D (1970) *British Antiquity* [Methuen: London] 36
[12] Postcard: the Round Table
[13] Merriman, J D (1973) *The Flower of Kings: a Study of the Arthurian Legend in England between 1485 and 1835* [University Press of Kansas: Lawrence] 35
[14] Kendrick (ref 11) 37, 43
[15] Merriman (ref 13) 32–3; Lewis, C S (1973) *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* [Oxford University Press: London] 28–9
[16] Merriman (ref 13) 54-7
[17] Merriman (ref 13) *passim*
[18] Merriman (ref 13) 52
[19] Rhys (ref 13) 32–3; Lewis, C S (1973) *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* [Oxford University Press: London] 28–9
[20] Sturgis, M (1998) *Aubrey Beardsley: a Biography* [HarperCollins: London] 119, 122
[21] *Ibid* 155

Maelgwn: *insularis draco*

C W Evans-Günther

The historical Arthur continues to be something of a mystery – we really know next to nothing about him! Earliest records say he fought a series of battles, none of which can be clearly located, and was killed at the same battle as was Medraut. Two dates are known – 516 for Badon and 537 for Camlan – but both have been disputed. The rest is tradition, folklore or legend.

King of Gwynedd

However, there is one person from this 'dark' period who is considerably better documented. According to *The Welsh Annals* "Mailcun rex Genedotae" died in 547 during a great plague ("mortalitas magna"). Later Welsh calls him Maelgwn Gwynedd (or sometimes "Hir") and according to *The History of the Britons* he reigned in Gwynedd 146 years after Cunedda came from the North. Genealogies indicate he was Cunedda's great-grandson, being the son of Cadwallon son of Einion Yrth son of Cunedda.

The genealogies link Einion with the Picts since he is said to have married Prawst, daughter of Tiblet or Tithlyn, King of the Picts. Amongst their sons were Cadwallon Llawhir (Longhand), Einion and Owain Danwyn. Cadwallon married Meddyf daughter of Maeldaf son of Dylan Draco of Nant Conwy and the daughter of Tailwch, sister of Trystan (who could have been Tristan!). Further, Pictish connections are found in Pictish royal records where the name "Mailcun" is also met.

Maelgwn Gwynedd is said to have been married at least twice. His first wife was Sanan, daughter of Cyngen, Lord of Powys, and his second wife, Gwalltwen, daughter of Afallach (whose origin is unknown but the name was later used in Ynys Afallach to translate Avallon into Welsh). Cadwallon, according to tradition, expelled the Irish from Anglesey with the help of Meilir, Yneigr and Cynyr, sons of Gwron ap Cunedda. The latter is supposed to have been the father of Cei – who became Sir Kay!

The son of Maelgwn was known as Rhun Hir and he appears in a tradition about rivalry with Strathclyde and Rheged, and is mentioned in *The Dream of Rhonabwy* as a wise counsellor, despite his youth! This story is quite late and though it makes reference to one Madog ap Maredudd of Powys (died 1159), it is likely to date to the 13th century or later.

Tyrants

Much of the above is based on medieval tradition but there is an older reference dating from the 6th century. Gildas wrote a long epistle complaining about the condition of Britain in the mid 6th century. Few dispute his authority and some of the names he mentioned can be cross-referenced to stone monuments, particularly Vortipor's. The cleric chastises the rulers of Britain as being corrupt, lacking in justice and causing civil wars. He lists five such tyrants. (There is no need to go into detail since Chris Gidlow's excellent article in *Pendragon* says it all.) The last of the kings is called Maglocunus, who can be no one but Maelgwn.

There are some problems with Gildas' account in so much as the dates cause trouble. The writer claims he was born forty-four years previously, the same year as the battle of Badon. This is given as 516 in *The Welsh Annals*, while the death of Maelgwn is given as 547. However, Gildas seems to have been writing during Maelgwn's lifetime. *The Welsh Annals* also place Gildas' death in the year 570, which is reasonable. But the dates don't coincide – add 44 and 516 and you get 560, thirteen years after Maelgwn's death. Something is wrong somewhere! Experts have suggested therefore that the date of the battle of Badon should be around 500.

Maglocunus

Leaving aside the chronological problems, what of Maglocunus? Gildas provides a very interesting biography, which gives the impression that the cleric knew Maelgwn quite well. (This is also true of the first of the tyrants, Constantine of Damnonia, and though it is usually said the king was from the Cornwall and Devon area, it is also possible he was a ruler in Western Scotland. The name Constantine was very popular in this area right up until the Middle Ages.) It could be that Gildas, even when being very critical of Maelgwn still held out hope for his soul to be saved.

Unfortunately, Gildas as well as enlightening us on Maelgwn, poses some more problems. He doesn't locate his kingdom but does call him *insularis draco* – "the island dragon". As with all the animal imagery Gildas uses, the dragon is a monster – unlike its use by the 'heroic' Celtic society where a dragon represented a valiant

leader. As Chris Gidlow has shown (1997), Gildas used Old Testament Biblical images. But where is the island? It has been suggested that Maelgwn was the monster of the island of Britain. However, the Cunedda dynasty seems to have been centred on Aberffraw, now a sleepy little coastal town on Anglesey but then a revamped small Roman fort. Either may be correct but it must be remembered that the symbolism doesn't represent a leader – so Maelgwn wasn't the supreme ruler of Britain!

Gildas' potted biography begins by telling us that Maelgwn came to power by usurping the throne of his own uncle. In battle he defeated the king and his bravest warriors. The symbolism used called them "lions whelps" – the same terms used for the Saxons and other evildoers. The impression given is that Maelgwn's uncle was one of the tyrants removed from their country and life. Though the uncle may have deserved to lose his throne, Gildas disagreed with the method.

Seemingly, Maelgwn repented his 'crime' and may have relinquished the power he had gained by force of arms. Gildas at this point had great hopes for the young usurper, who had decided to become a monk, but Maelgwn broke his public promise and added "folly upon folly" by taking a wife illegally. This is probably Gildas' point of view, and a biased one! Then Maelgwn made things even worse by conspiring with his brother's son's wife and nephew, then married the 'widow' in a public ceremony.

In the epistle, at this point, Gildas lays into the tyrant, quoting from the Old and New Testaments. During the diatribe the cleric gives us one interesting piece of information and that is that Maelgwn was taught by "the most refined master in almost all Britain". Who the 'master' was is not quite clear. Even though he is vicious in his condemnation of Maelgwn, he still holds out hope and ends with words of encouragement!

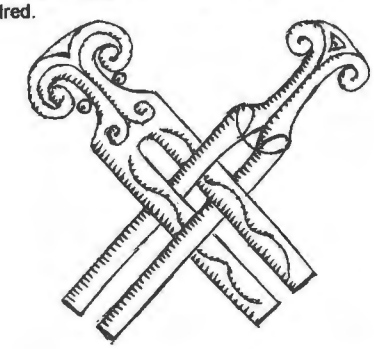
Mysteries

Despite the details, we are left with a series of questions. First, who was the royal uncle? The Latin text uses the term *avunculum* meaning 'maternal uncle' rather than his father's brother. Owain Danwyn, brother of Cadwallon, has been put forward as being Arthur's secret identity (Phillips and Keatman 1992) – but there is no evidence he was usurped, and his son Cynlas (Cuneglasus) and descendants continued to be lords of Rhos, ruling from Dinarth near Llandudno. The king must have been a brother of Meddyf, Maelgwn's mother, but there is no record of him.

Other mysteries include the identity of Maelgwn's own brother and the nephew he murdered. Neither can be found in any tradition or genealogy. Also there is the mention of the "refined master", Maelgwn's teacher. Some have suggested that Maelgwn was educated at Llanilltud Fawr – Llantwit Major – under the great saint himself, St Illtud. But we cannot be truly sure.

Influence

In many ways Maelgwn – Maglocunus – is one of the most detailed British characters from the early Dark Ages. And it is possible he, or his story, had some influence on the Arthurian tales yet to be written down. I doubt any real Arthurian historical connection (though I'd welcome further evidence!), and that Maelgwn is the secret identity of Medraut should be doubted. Nevertheless, the defeat of the royal uncle may have played a part in the creation of the Camlan legend with King Arthur fighting his nephew Mordred.



Note and select bibliography

I hope to do further research on this subject but my position, that of being thousands of kilometres away from my references, makes it impossible at present.

• *The following bibliography is editorial*

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Ider, Arthur and Brent Knoll

Nick Grant

Brent Knoll in Somerset has, as a site with Arthurian associations, always been rather overshadowed by those two other notable sites in the county, Glastonbury and Cadbury-Camelot. However, it is a place of no little interest, possessing perhaps both some of the mystery of Glastonbury and the imposing military grandeur of Cadbury.

Brent Knoll is one of several steep hills rising from the flat pasture of the Somerset levels, being twelve miles north-west of the most famous of these hills, Glastonbury Tor. The Knoll itself is a bare steep hill above a village from which the summit is reached by a footpath from the churchyard. The summit is 450 feet high and the hill's imposing nature is underlined by the Iron Age earthworks crowning its top. These defences enclose 1.6ha and consist of an inner bank, with two outer terraces, plus a third terrace running across the spine of the hill to the north-east. The interior of the fort has been subject to sandstone quarrying, and the banks have been damaged by Home Guard trenches (Burrow 1981, 72–3).

Aggressive Warrior Ian Brown

Ider's story

Brent Knoll's Arthurian story appears in the interpolated version (of *c* 1250) of William of Malmesbury's history of Glastonbury, *De Antiquitate*, which includes a great deal of legendary material inserted after the careful historian's death, material which William would never have included in his history in its original form. The story, from a section headed 'De Illustri Arturo', concerns a certain Ider, son of Nuth, who was knighted by Arthur one Christmas at his court at Caerleon, and assigned the task of challenging three giants living on the Mount of Frogs (*Monte Ranarum*), now called Brent Knoll. The eager Ider hurried ahead of Arthur and his entourage, and fought and slew the giants single-handed. When Arthur reached the hill, however, Ider was found in a state of collapse and apparently dead. In reparation, Arthur went to Glastonbury and appointed eighty monks to pray for Ider's soul, and, more importantly for the Abbey, conferred on it precious gifts and lands – including Brent Knoll itself (Robinson 1926, 18).

The same story about Ider's fight with the giants and Arthur's subsequent gift of Brent and Polden to Glastonbury Abbey is told by John of Glastonbury in his late-14th century history of the abbey. However, in this account the scene of the fight is not Brent at all, but the Mount of Spiders (*Monte de Areynes)* in North Wales (Robinson 1926, 19).

John then goes on to state that the lands were subsequently lost to the pagan Saxons, but then later returned to the abbey. Lands around Brent are indeed referred to in two charters of Ine, king of Wessex, to the abbey. The first, now lost but recorded by Adam of Domerham in 1247, whilst undated, appears to have been originally granted *c* 690–693, but may have been later tampered with. The second, dated 725, is a certain forgery, confirming all previous Saxon grants to Glastonbury and forbidding any bishop any rights at all over Glastonbury's churches, a clear reference to disputes in the 12th century over the relative powers and rights of the bishop of Bath and Wells and the abbot of Glastonbury (Dunning 1988, 113–7).

The story repeated by the interpolator of William of Malmesbury and John of Glastonbury reads suspiciously like a concoction to affirm the abbey's ownership of the Brent lands. A context for such an act of creation can be found in a dispute over land rights between Robert, abbot

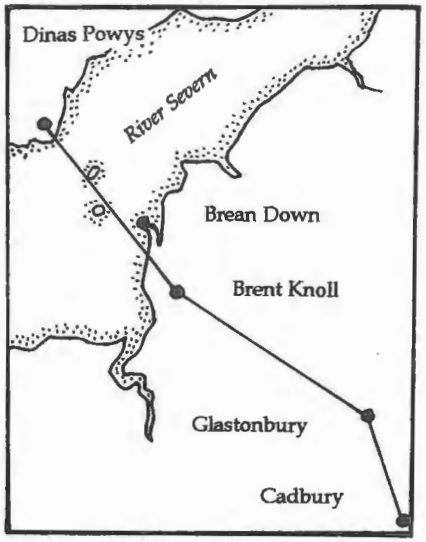
of Glastonbury (1172–1180) and Bishop Reginald of Bath. This dispute ended in 1173 with Glastonbury ceding the church of South Brent to the archdeacon of Wells as compensation for obtaining agreement to the abbot of Glastonbury's control of certain churches on the abbey's estate (Dunning 1988, 52–3). The claims of Glastonbury listed in the grant of Ine, a forgery, are strengthened by the Arthurian story, which casts Ine's grant as a restoration of lands that had been previously held but then wrongfully removed.

Romance

William's interpolator and John based their histories on material from Glastonbury itself, and the legend, with its details of the court at Caerleon, the conferring of knighthood, and fights with giants, is clearly influenced by Geoffrey of Monmouth and subsequent developments in mediaeval Arthurian romance. On face value, therefore, the Arthurian connection with Brent Knoll is weak. However, excavation of sites with only legendary connections with Arthur has provided spectacular results, and it should not be forgotten that the Cadbury-Camelot equation was not made until the 16th century. Also, Arthur as a figure is not used to assert the abbey's claim to any other specific parcels of property apart from that involving Brent and Polden, although he is earlier portrayed in Caradoc of Llancarfan's *Life of Gildas* (*c* 1130) as a benefactor of the abbey (Williams 1990, 101). Could the Arthurian connection with Brent Knoll therefore have some basis in fact?

The unfortunate hero of the Brent Knoll tale, Ider son of Nuth, appears (as Edern, son of Nudd) in three of the *Mabinogion* tales – *Culhwch and Olwen*, *The Dream of Rhonabwy* and *Gereint and Enid*. In the first two he is merely mentioned, while in the third Edern plays only a very minor role. As Isdemus, he also appears on a sculpture of the early 12th century on the north doorway of Modena Cathedral in Italy, as one of a select group in Arthur's company (Barber 1973, 31–2). In Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Hyderus son of Nu is mentioned briefly as a soldier in Arthur's army during the campaign in Gaul against the Romans (Thorpe 1966, 243). However, whilst Ider was the hero of one later French romance (Carley 1988, 161), he did not achieve prominence in later Arthurian literature. Thus whilst Ider seems to have been associated with Arthur by the late 11th and 12th centuries, he may have slipped to a position of relative obscurity by the time the Brent Knoll story was first committed to writing in the 13th century. This again supports the contention that the story is a development of the previous century.

No such obscurity, however, is attached to Ider's father Nudd, who is an important figure in early Celtic literature and mythology, being the Celtic god Nodens who had a notable Late Roman shrine at Lydney, Gloucestershire. Nudd was a god of healing, like Apollo, as well as other activities such as fishing (Senior 1979, 76–7).



Excavations

Brent Knoll attracted new attention after the Cadbury excavations in the late 1960s, by which time it had been shown that Cadbury, Glastonbury and Dinas Powys in South Wales had all been occupied during the 5th and 6th centuries, Cadbury and Dinas Powys by princes or men of some importance. These three sites lie nearly along a straight line, across both country and the Bristol Channel, which also passes near to Brent Knoll, which can be seen from both the Tor and Dinas Powys. This led to the suggestion that the four forts may have formed a signalling chain along which their lords could communicate by fire beacons. An experimental beacon lit at Cadbury was easily visible at the Tor (Ashe 1968, 157).

Archaeological proof of occupation contemporary with that at Cadbury, the Tor and Dinas Powys is, however, lacking. Although no modern excavation has taken place at the Knoll, excavation in the early 19th century and surface finds have produced extensive evidence of Late Roman occupation. The early excavations

uncovered structural evidence and fragments indicating the presence of a substantial building, possibly a temple, which can be paralleled at nearby Brean Down. A large number of pottery sherds have come from within the defences, the great majority being local coarse wares of the 3rd and 4th centuries. This is most probably of local manufacture, from Congresbury or the nearby area (Burrow 1981, 143, 295, 297 and 300).

No imported pottery or other certainly 5th–6th century material is known from the site, however. This need not rule out the possibility of occupation of the fort during this period since, as Fowler has stated, "Take away the imports from a site like Cadbury-Congresbury and what remains? – a collection of ostensibly Late Roman rubbish including metalwork" (Fowler 1971, 212). The site at Brent Knoll, a strong military postion, was ideal for re-occupation in the troubled 5th and 6th centuries; such a phase of occupation in former Iron Age hillforts in now seen as increasingly common. Traditions of both a castle on the Knoll (Burrow 1981, 238) and a great battle under the Knoll (Major 1978, 141) have been recorded, although these may simply spring from the situation of the site, with its earthworks crowning an already formidable hill.

Despite the lack of 5th and 6th century material from the site, Burrow has made the intriguing suggestion (1981, 72) that the fort's original Iron Age entrance appears to have been subsequently modified by quarrying to form hollow 'bastion' type structures in a fashion similar to probably 5th–6th century modifications at nearby Cadbury-Congresbury. The result is to emphasise and elongate the entrance. The date of these modifications at Brent Knoll is not of course known.

Mystery

Brent Knoll will it seems retain an air of mystery until a modern excavation has investigated the site. The proof for an Arthurian or simply Dark Age connection is flimsy in terms of both the documentary and archaeological evidence, but cannot be entirely dismissed.

In any case, Arthurian enthusiasts should not need to find convincing an Arthurian association to visit and climb the summit of this intriguing and impressive site. The view, across the flatlands of Somerset and Glastonbury Tor the one way, and over the Bristol Channel to Wales the other, repays the climb.

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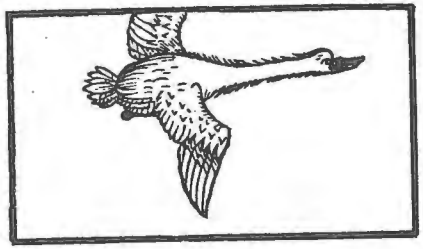
Editor's note

• This recently revised article first appeared in *Pendragon 19 No 2*, the Winter 1989 'Landscapes' edition, in photocopied handwritten form as "Brent Knoll and Arthur".

In 1979 Brent Knoll hill-top and part of the northern slope were acquired by The National Trust, and an anonymous 1980 leaflet, in the Archaeology in the National Trust series, gives a short book list at the end of its description. Andrew H W Smith's "Geography in *Yder*" (*Ceridwen's Cauldron* Michaelmas 2000) has some interesting speculation based on the sole 13th century survival of the romance of *Yder*. The experimental beacon at South Cadbury mentioned above was built and lit by members of the Pendragon Society at the instigation of the BBC.

Over the sea to Skye ...
Arthur's Island

Chris Turner



In 563 AD, St Columba established his monastery on the holy island of Iona to minister to his fellow Dalriadic Scoti who had come from Antrim in the 5th century and had settled in the un(der)populated Argyllshire seaboard and offshore islands. On a undated visit to Skye, Columba once baptized an aged person named Artbranan ...

Three points are of particular note:

1. This Artbranan could not speak Goidelic – Columba had to converse with him through an interpreter.
2. The name Artbranan is British, not Irish.
3. Artbranan was the leader of a cohort (*sic*) known as Geona.

Let us look first at the name of this aged person. Artbranan may be just a name; on the other hand, as he was a person of some consequence, being the commander of his own war-band, his name may include a title as well, in the Celtic fashion. Ready examples are VotepoRIX, VercingetoRIX (*rix* cognate with *rex* = king),
VorTIGERN, KenTIGERN (*tigern* = great roof *ie* Chief of the Great Hall).
In this case, the suggestion is that the name becomes ART-BRANAN (*branan* cognate with Welsh *brenin* = king).

We are told that he was the leader of the Geona Cohort. This curiously Roman military division was composed originally of six centuries, in practice about 480 men. Just what is meant in this context is not clear, but it must have been a substantial body of men. The Roman inference in this classification of Artbranan's war-band is reinforced by the fact that it was named, another Roman habit. The meaning of Geona has not been established and invites speculation.

Artbranan himself is something of an anomaly. He is called 'aged' yet is the leader of his own cohort; surely a post for an active man no older than his middle years. How did he retain his leadership into old age against younger, more vigorous warriors?

Let's spin a story. Arthur's warrior-force is split by dissension. The animosity culminates in civil war and the final showdown comes at Camlann. Arthur, near to death, is carried off by three queens in a boat to a mystical / holy island. So far, so good.

The identity of the three queens is unknown, but they may well by Arthur's three step-sisters, Elaine, Morgan and Margawse, Queen of Orkney and Lothian, and may have taken the insensible Arthur not to the holy Island of Glastonbury (which appears to have been rather close to enemy territory) but to the holy island of the North *ie* Iona, which already had a history of sanctity, even in the sixth century. A time of partial recuperation on Iona is postulated, followed by a move to nearby Skye which may have been in the gift of Morgawse, or more correctly her husband King Lot, Arthur's viceroy.

There are a number of possible reasons why Arthur did not return to lead a counter-revolution. Perhaps he realised his cause was lost beyond redemption or possibly he was suffering severe after-effects from his wounds. Whatever the reason, the Cycles tell us he left Camlann, alive, albeit only just, and never returned.

What then of the professional hard core of his army? Little enough is known of the military / chivalric code of the period and it cannot be argued that a chief's bodyguard would have felt it obligatory to die on the field if the leader fell, even in a purely futile gesture. The inference is reasonable, however, and examples can be quoted from Scandinavian and Saxon sources, although from a slightly later date. The case of a leader who is badly hurt and whose escape from the scene of battle has been effected poses a different problem for the knights of the body. It would seem the only course open is to disengage from battle and follow their leader to his refuge and attend on him until either he recovers and leads them back into conflict, or he dies and thereby releases them to find other masters.

The Arthur of this hypothesis in fact does neither of these things and his war-band finds itself forty years and more after Camlann still tied to a leader who is physically, and possibly mentally, incapable of leading any attempt to recover a lost and half-forgotten cause. The war-band, probably including the few men who could have continued effective resistance to the

Saxons in the event of Arthur's death, such as Cei, Bedwyr and Llud, is trapped on an offshore island with nothing to do but spin brave and empty tales of glory and might-have-been. The Geona cohort is helplessly tied to a leader who will not relinquish his dreams and cannot realise them. The parallel to Chiang-Kai-Shek and his Taiwanese army of over-sixties is inescapable.

This late baptism of a supposedly lifelong Christian is only unusual in the context of a society such as ours where infantile baptism is generally the rule. Examples of lifelong acting Christians postponing baptism, and the total absolution of all previous sins, no matter how heinous, that goes with it, to late life or deathbed are plentiful in Roman and Dark Age history.

The date of Columba's meeting with Artbranan is not given, but must have been after 563 when Columba first left Ireland at the late age of 43. Can we postulate an Arthur still alive, if not in the best of health, that late in the sixth century? We are told that Arthur came to prominence at an early age, let us suggest 16. He then campaigns to consolidate his power-base and launches out on an aggressive policy against the encroaching Saxons against whom he fights twelve battles. If this period takes 14 years, and it could well have occupied only half this, Arthur would still be only 30 at Badon. The most reliable date we have for this elusive battle is 518, and if this is accepted, Arthur would have been 75 when Columba first came to the Scottish islands and still would not have been impossibly aged ten years later.

This leads finally to the perennial mystery: the grave of Arthur. When at last Artbranan – Arthur the self-deluded King – dies, what action more fitting than to carry the sad remains of the sad old soldier from his haven of Skye across to Columba's own holy island of Iona, long-time resting place of the bones of warriors and princes?

This is a weighty hypothesis to hang from a passing reference* but it is hoped that further references will come to light in due course to strengthen or refute the argument. Whatever the final outcome, the Skye Boat Song will never sound the same again.**

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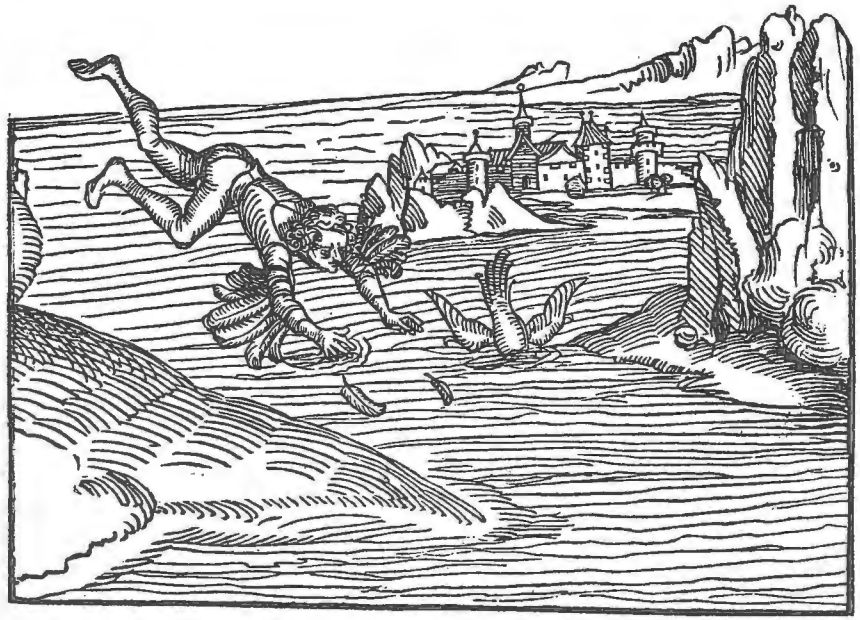
* Charles Thomas (1971) *Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times AD 400 - 800* [Thames & Hudson] 52-4. Highly recommended. *CT*

** Thomas (1971) is now superseded by Charles Thomas (1986 and later revised editions) *Celtic Britain* [Thames & Hudson]. See also Richard Sharpe *trans* (1995) *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba* [Penguin Classics] 136f and notes, and Rodney Castleden (2000) *King Arthur: the truth behind the legend* [Routledge] chapter 7. *CL*

• *This article first appeared in Vol XIV No 3 1981*



His name liveth for evermore

Part 2 of The Name of the Hero

Chris Lovegrove

In the olde dayes of the King Arthoure,
Of which that Bretons speken grete honoure,
Al was this land fulfild of fayerie.

Thus begins *The Wife of Bath's Tale* from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. It clearly demonstrates that in the late fourteenth century Arthur's name was not spoken in the same way in English as it is at present – nowadays the stress is on the first syllable, with the most common English weak vowel sound at the end (the *schwa*, the phonetic sound written as ə). In Chaucer's day even the possessive form retained the stress on the second syllable, as these lines spoken by the "foul wight" show:

'Is this the lawe of King Arthures hous?
Is every knight of his so dangerous?'

Similarly, in the anonymous *Yvain and Gawain* we have the anachronistic

Arthure the kyng of Yngland
That wan al Wales with his hand ...
Of al knightes he bare the pryse:
In werld was none so war ne wise.

And yet change was in the air. A Middle English romance from the North of England, variously spelled *The Awntyrs of(f) Arthure* or *The Anturs of Arther* ("The Adventures of Arthur" – *cf* Modern Welsh *antur*) begins

In the tyme of Arther thys antur betydd
Besyde the Tarne Wathelan, as the boke tellus

and ends cyclically with

In the tyme of king Arthore / This anter betidde.

Vowel sounds and stresses are more ambiguous, less consistent, and it is clear that we are starting to witness some major shifts in pronunciation.

Speculation

All this goes to show that we cannot draw any conclusions about the origins of Arthur's name from medieval let alone later English texts. Therefore, any theories suggesting that Arthur was originally pronounced, Cockney-style, Arfer, must be dumped as colourful but implausible. Similarly, the hypothesis that Arthur was originally Orpheus is a non-starter – Orpheus with his lyre is portrayed in Roman mosaics from the Cotswolds in a central position, the beasts that he has charmed circling him in Round Table fashion – and this seems to be an unconscious off-shoot of the Arfer-theory.

Another curious origin theory appears in popular books giving the meanings of names to call your baby. André Page's *Babies Names A–Z* is typical. *Arthur*, and its various forms (Art, Arturo, Artus) is supposedly "from the Norse, meaning 'eagle of Thor'" (found in the form *Arnthor*). While this will do for names like Arnold, it won't do for Arthur. Ditto for the suggestion that it is "perhaps from the Anglo-Saxon" meaning "valorous" (Saville 1994), if only for simple chronological and geographical reasons.

A more radical theory proposes that the name derives from a word related to Modern Welsh *du*, "black" – *arddhu*, "very black", where *dd* represents a voiced "th" sound – and could be the reason why in folklore Arthur was transformed into the Cornish chough or a raven. Alternatively, the name is related to Welsh *arddwr*, "a ploughman", and so gives rise rise to Arthur's association with the constellation of The Plough. Both of these theories arise from mythological speculations but don't really address the historical problems.

More antiquarian speculation, still with a Welsh slant, revolves around a supposed origin from *arth-gwr*, "bear-warrior". *Gwr* is cognate with Latin *vir*, "man", and like the Latin word is the root for a number of related words (such as *gwrol*, "virile" or "brave"). I mention this here because of the theory that Arthur is "really" the British king **Arviragus**. In his *Satires*, written early in the second century AD, Juvenal refers obscurely, in a prophecy allegedly made to Nero, to

Some king you will capture, or Arviragus will be hurled from his British chariot pole.

This is the germ of an idea developed by Geoffrey of Monmouth into a full-blown 12th-century biography, expanded by John of

Glastonbury (or a later interpolator) to include Arviragus' baptism by Joseph of Arimathea; whence John Whitehead's theory that Arviragus (who is *also* Catatacus) was the original Arthur opposing the invasion of Britain by warriors from overseas – but for Saxons read Romans. This is an intriguing but unsupported theory.

Having mentioned the theory that Arthur's name is derived from "Arthursus", supposedly compounded from Brythonic *arth* and Latin *ursus* ("Bear-Bear") to promote unity in post-Roman Britain (Phillips and Keatman 1993, 128), I will pass rapidly on without further comment. Rather more worthy of consideration is Chris Turner's suggestion, a while ago, that the sixth-century **Artbranan** includes the two elements *art* and a word cognate with Modern Welsh *brenin*, "king".[1]

Arth- names

As regards origins, a Celtic word like *artos*, Modern Welsh *arth* (plural *eirth*), meaning "bear", seems to me, as to many rather more expert commentators, to be the strongest contender. Parallels in other languages are readily available – the Germanic name Bernard ("Brave Bear"), Ursula (Latin for "Little She-Bear"), and Orson (from French *ourson*, meaning "Bear Cub").[2] From Scandinavian sources, we have a host of bear-names such as Bjorn and Bera, and in medieval sagas the characters Bödvarr Bjarki, Bodvarus and Biarco ("Bear Cub") all seem somehow related, in name and exploits, to the Old English character Beowulf, "bee-enemy" *ie* the bear (Byock 1998).

In Continental sources we find some names that include an element meaning "bear" – famously there is the Celtic bear-goddess from near Bollendorf and from the Berne area of Switzerland, **Dea Artio**, plus **Andarte** (who may be the same as Artio) and the god **Artaios** from Gaul (Green 1986, 184).

In Irish, we are told (MacKillop 1998, 22), *art* means "bear", in the sense of "champion". Several legendary Irish heroes bore the name, including **Art mac Cuinn**, Art son of Conn of the Hundred Battles. But it is from native British sources that we find a myriad of personal names incorporating the element *arth*, "bear", in combination with other elements.

The best-known of these names now is **Artognou**, which appeared on the so-called Arthur Stone from Tintagel in 1998. Artognou, which developed into Arthnou in 9th century Brittany, means something like "known as a bear" or "famed as a bear", and shows that *Art-* or *Arth-* names were not unusual in the post-Roman period – even if the slate is not proof that Arthur did really live at Tintagel!

Among the reputed saintly sons of St Brychan of Brycheiniog only five now have churches dedicated to them in South Wales, one of them being **St Arthen** (Bowen 1956, 26f).

Arthgen *rex cereticiaun* (king of Ceredigion) is noted in *The Welsh Annals* as having died in 807. He is one of a number of names mentioned with a similar root in genealogy XXVI of the Harley MS 3859 in the British Library. Arthgen himself is noted as son of Seissil and grandson of Clitauc. Preceding these names are **Artgloys**, **Artbothgu** and Bothgu – other than their names, and the fact that by back calculation they appear to have flourished in the early 8th century, we know little or nothing about them. That Artbothgu-Bothgu juxtaposition looks suspicious, as though several entries have been omitted, and the mere three or four generations to Ceretic and Cunedda (both possibly 5th century) underlies the historical unreliability of these characters.

Artbeu had a memorial dedicated to him in Merthyr Tydfil, in former Glamorganshire, dated to sometime around the 7th to 9th centuries on the basis of the letter forms (Nash-Williams 1950 157), but perhaps earlier in the period if the vertical inscription reflects Irish ogham influence. We have no other information about him, not even his father's name. It is tempting to see Artbeu as a form of the Artbothgu of Ceredigion, though not necessarily the same person.

Rather later in date is the 10th or 11th century stone cross from Llantwit Major which mentions an **Artmail** (Nash-Williams 144), who may or may not be related to the Arthmail who is recorded on the base of an 11th century cross as having dedicated a field to the Church at or near Ogmore (Nash-Williams 160), or to Arthfael ap Noë, a 10th-century Gwent chieftain. The name appears to derive from *arth* plus *mael*, "mail-armour", perhaps meaning "bear-soldier". Another Artmail appears in the dynasty of the kings of Glywysing and Morgannwg, written variously as Arthvael, Arthwael and Arvael, whose grandson Hywel (Hoel, Howel, Hewel, Higuel) died in 885, according to *The Welsh Annals*.

From a Breton context we have yet another **Arthmael**, modern Armel or Arzhel, who is to be dated to the early 6th century (traditionally 482–552). Probably from a noble South Wales family, he took holy orders and migrated to Brittany; "the places that he named are more widespread than those of any other Armorican saint, and include more district centres" (Morris 1995, 15), but he is more famous there as a magician at the court of Childebert and patron of several Breton wells (Autret 1996).[3]

Arthgal or Artgal, one of the last British kings of Strathclyde, died in 872; the name occurs in a late 9th-century genealogy, but may derive instead from the Irish Ardál, "high valour".

Origins of the bear

It is clear that, although most of these "bear" names post-date Arthur's supposed lifetime, there was nevertheless nothing exceptional in calling anybody after such a beast. However, we have the curious fact that there is more than one root word for "bear" in Indo-European languages in the west. The English word (Old English *bera*) is of course related to similar words in other Germanic languages from northern Europe. On the other hand we have the Greek ἄρκτος (*arktos*), which is related to later Welsh *arth*, Breton *arzh* or Irish *art*. Meanwhile, Romance languages provide French *ours*, Italian *orso* and Spanish *oso*, all derived ultimately from Latin *ursus*. Despite appearances, *arktos* and *ursus* are probably related words, distinguished mainly by a phonological process whereby *ks* become sibilants.

But there is another word which seems to have survived on the western fringes of Europe. The Archaic Old Irish word for bear is *math*, giving rise to *mathgamain* in intermediate forms and *mathghamhain* in Modern Irish (MacKillop 1998, 32f). Curiously, it is generally supposed that Ireland has never had native bears, at least in the historical period.

As a name *math* is found in the anglicised forms Mahon and MacMahon ("Bear's Son"), particularly in Scotland, where the Scots Gaelic form is *mathghamhainn*. It seems to have also survived in a medieval Welsh context, as indicated by the *Mabinogion* tale of Math, son of Mathonwy. The Celtic scholar Sir John Rhys accepted that Mathonwy was "probably the Welsh adaptation of some such an Irish name as the genitive *Mathgamnai*, now anglicized *Mahony*," of which the Breton names Madganoe and Madgone were an echo (Rhys 1901, 544). Thus Math, son of Mathonwy is ultimately "Bear, son of Bear". If however the *Mabinogion* Math ever had any bear attributes they are now no longer obvious; his function in this tale is to be a magician as well as King of Gwynedd, and to precipitate some of the action.

Questions

So we have three differing linguistic roots for this large animal, giving rise to *bear* in English, *arth* in Welsh, and *math* in Old Irish. Does this indicate that *math* is the oldest form, partially supplanted by P-Celtic *artos* in Britain and Ireland, with *bear* the most recent interloper?

And now to the real mystery. Is there any evidence that the Brown Bear, *Ursus arctos*, was common in the British Isles in the early medieval period? Bears were depicted on Romano-British intaglios and mosaic pavements (*eg* Orpheus and his beasts) and a Caledonian bear was featured at the inauguration of the Coliseum in Rome (Clarke 1999). In the later medieval period bear-baiting seems to have been conducted with imported exotics, as was the case with dancing bears up to the beginning of the 20th century.[4] Of all the animals – domestic, wild or imaginary – depicted on Pictish stones, only one appears to be a bear, and this is on the 9th-century Drosten Stone from St Vigeans, near Arbroath in Angus (Ritchie 1989, 36).

The general consensus seems to be that Brown Bears lived in Britain in the Scottish Highlands up to about 900 years ago, though in what numbers until their final stage of decline is unclear.[5] As noted before now, if they made any significant impact on native British folklore it is no longer evident,[6] and so the survival of the various "bear" names may be the only tantalising clue to their lingering spell.

And yet, can we dimly discern in the image of the hibernating bear the continuing fame of Arthur, whose name "liveth for evermore"?

To be concluded?

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Notes

[1] See "Arthur's Island", this issue.

[2] Bryan Sykes, professor of human genetics at the University of Oxford, has, using the evidence of mitochondrial DNA, assigned mythical names to seven matriarchs whose descendants populated Europe from Africa around 50,000 years ago (Graff 2001). "The Seven Daughters of Eve" (also the title of his book due out in June) are identified as Helena, Velda, Tara, Katrine, Xenia, Jasmine ... and *Ursula* – the latter's progeny being among some of the first modern humans to arrive in Europe. Professor Sykes also expects to start coding male Y-chromosome ancestral information soon.

The Late Roman treasure found buried at Hoxne in Suffolk, and dated to no later than the mid-5th century, included Christian objects engraved with the name of Aurelius Ursicinus. **Ursicinus**, with its root *ursus*, is also known as a name from historical sources [Roger Bland and Catherine Johns (1993) *The Hoxne Treasure: an illustrated introduction* (British Museum Press, London) 29].

[3] David Pykitt and Chris Barber (1993) identify St Armel as the original King Arthur.

[4] A photograph of "gipsies with a dancing bear; Herefordshire, about 1900" in Gordon Winter (1973) *A Country Camera 1844–1914* [Penguin, Harmondsworth] *71*, 56 seems to show East European rather than British Romanies.

[5] According to www.wildhearts.org/bears/html the continuing presence of bears in the Highlands was due to the availability of salmon. Anne Ross suggests that some bears survived in Scotland as late as the 17th century (Charles Evans-Günther "Arthur the Bear" *Pendragon 24 No 3* August 1994) but I have not found this reported elsewhere. Paul Brown, in "Outlook for bears is 'bleak'" (*The Guardian* July 27 1999), suggested that bears were wiped out "around 2000 years ago," but this is not quite correct.

There are increasing calls for bears to be re-introduced to mainland Britain, rather as beavers have very recently (Charles Clover "Beavers are returned to Britain after 400 years" *The Daily Telegraph* May 1 2001). The Brown Bear is still present in the northern USA, Canada, northern Asia and north-east Europe, particularly in Russia and the Carpathian mountains of Romania, with just a few left in Spain, France, Italy and central Europe (http://news.bbc.co.uk).

[6] "The folklore of the Celtic peoples ... shows no trace of the sacred paw print; it is many centuries since the demise of the last native British bears, and folk tales concerning them would soon have lost their relevance and followed them into oblivion ..." (Brendan McMahon "Jung and the Sacred Bear" *Pendragon 24 No 4* 12–13).

The only obvious survival of British bears in folklore I have found is the literary tale of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. "There is general agreement that the original source of *Goldilocks* is an ancient Scottish tale of three bears which are intruded upon by a she-fox," Bruno Bettelheim noted in *The Uses of Enchantment: the meaning and importance of fairy tales* (1975), but there is no indication of the antiquity of this cautionary tale.

Robert Southey's 1837 version underlines a Scottish origin by featuring a "Little, Small, Wee Bear" and traditional porridge for breakfast, plus "an impudent, bad old Woman" – perhaps metamorphorphised from an original vixen.

Illustration: Herbert Cole 1906, from Ernest and Grace Rhys (1913) English Fairy Tales

What ails the Future?

Arthurian Matter in Turner's SF Epic

Steve Sneyd

An account, in the form of an epic poem, of a 24th century America fallen apart into warring statelets is perhaps an unexpected place to find direct re-use of Arthurian material. But it *is* there, playing a considerable role in the story of a hero's rise, triumph and self-sacrificing end that is American professor Frederick Turner's *The New World*, the first of his two 80s science fiction poetry epics (the other, *Genesis*, being a dramatic saga of human settlement on Mars).

Overview

To context the Arthurian matter present, first a brief overall picture of the book. *The New World – an Epic Poem* is a 179 page poem, six Books of four parts each, in irregular length unrhymed, caesuraed, verse.

Set, predominantly, in the North-East of the former USA, from 2376 AD on, the epic's events take place against a backdrop of a world which has exhausted its fossil fuels and metals; many have left for other planets. Those remaining have a low-energy civilisation based on renewable power, sophisticated electronics, and glass, resin and organics technology.

Four separate, mutually hostile groups make up the population. In the lawless cities, now known as Riots, the strongest rule by terror over a population permanently drugged on joy-juice extorted by force from its cowed producers, the surrounding Burbs. Rural areas are divided between the Mad or Black Counties, terrorised by the rule of religious fanatics, and the Tree Counties they constantly attempt to overrun; these last the author clearly regards as armed islands of utopia, highly cultured, and having elements of surviving, if guided, democracy, albeit mediated by a caste system, neo-feudal economics, and a sacrificial religion neo-pagan in form though drawn from a melange of earlier religions.

The plot is full of action: tests, encounters, battles, journeys, disguises, caves, kidnappings, confrontations, family misunderstandings, deceptions as to parenthood, escapes, sexual temptations, witches, pirates *etc etc*. In essence, however, around a central theme of the search for a way to live which avoids the extremes of blind fanaticism and selfish hedonism, it uses this far future setting to convey a very traditional story of a young man's maturing to fill the role of heroic leader of his people in time of trail, and, at the last, to face the ultimate challenge – of saving them when the price is honour and life.

James George Quincy, in childhood mysteriously exiled with his parents to the Riot of Hattan (Manhattan), in his teens avenges his father's death there, then returns with his mother to their homeland, the Free County of Mohican in Ahia (Ohio); there, he wins a place in society, and the woman of his choice, Ruth Jefferson McCloud, sought also by his friend Antony Manse, a black warrior. James becomes a leader in war, for a series of confrontations with his evil half-brother Simon Raven, who has anointed himself Messiah of the Black Counties, united them with the Riots, and intends to destroy all that remains of civilisation. Simon is destroyed, his followers, bereft of their "Saviour", commit suicide in millions, and there is the prospect of a new dawn, but only if the land can be cleansed of the guilt of this chapter of horrors. Incurably crippled by his wound from the final conflict, James takes on the role of sacrifice, and willed, ritual, death enables a new beginning.

References

Most prominent among the Arthurian references are those to, in the author's own introductory words, "Parsifal ... not the hero's prowess but his questions ... enable him to find the Grail." The question motif occurs during the hero James'

encounters with the mysterious figure of the Kingfish, who lives in Hattan's ruined subway. James has three encounters with him. At the first, the Kingfish (whose blackness is portrayed by an unfortunate minstrel showish speech pattern) reveals the killer of James' father, and provides the intelligent sword Adamant.

At the second meeting, the Kingfish has another gift. James has lost an eye in battle; it is replaced with one which sees beyond the visible spectrum, and within the outer form of things; James now asks to see the Kingfish's real shape, and sees a vision of a green girl bearing a baby and a mirror.

At the last meeting beneath what had been Grand Central Station, James first asks what he can do when he must meet Simon, unarmed, to recover his son from the Messiah's hands. The Kingfish's only remaining gift is a tainted one, permission to break his honour by breaching the agreed conditions for the meeting with Simon. James then asks the Percevalian question, *ie* the one he should have asked at the very beginning of their encounters, "What wound do you carry that never abates?"

Now the Kingfish can explain his unending pain – and his hidden identity, as the last elected President of the USA before the country collapsed. His jealous brother placed on him a double hoodoo curse: immortality and constant cancerous agony. Only now, the vital question asked, can he die in peace. Although in his role as maker of magic-like gifts, the Kingfish has elements of Merlin, his name (albeit recalling the use of the same nickname by a real 20th century American politico, Governor Huey Long of Louisiana), and the need for the liberating question, clearly stem directly from the Grail Castle's Fisher King.

James' return from this decisive meeting involves another directly Percevalian inter-textuality. In his sleep on the sunplane carrying him home, James cuts himself on his sword Adamant. On disembarkation he notices drops of his own blood on the snow, and he is obsessively reminded of Ruth's red hair.

Echoes

The final confrontation of James and Simon, "The Fall of the King" episode, is full of Arthurian echoes, albeit this time with the hero as Arthur rather than Perceval. The three women who accompany James to the rendezvous where he is to take the place in captivity of his kidnapped son are described as "three queens", he as the "haggard king". However, the females' role is far more active than that of the queens at Camlann – one of them carries his sword, concealed, so that he is technically (although dishonourably) not in breach of his promise to come unarmed, and, after he has wounded Simon, the three women finish killing the evil Messiah before completing the post-Camlann pattern by bearing away the terribly wounded James (albeit not to an immortal island of healing but, back home, to the start of a final self-judging which culminates in his ritual suicide at the high altar of the city's temple).

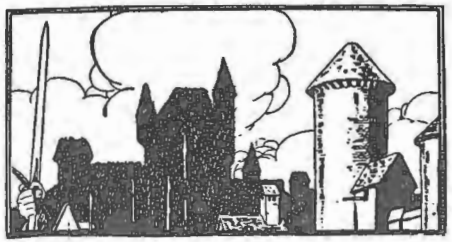
There are other Arthurian elements in *The New World*. For instance, the Arthur / Guinevere / Lancelot triangle clearly echoes in how Ruth, married to James, is unfaithful with Anthony: a fact James uses for the impersonation stratagem, recalling Uther's begetting of Arthur, which finally overcomes her frigidity towards him – returned secretly, two wandering years after escape from Simon's camp, he discovers their tryst plans and disguises himself as Antony to make love to her.

Minor Arthurian touches include Avalon as a Mohican County placename, and the hero's horse sharing the name Gringolet with Gawain's charger, being likewise capable of an incredible leap, in this case out over the great barrier round Simon's camp.

The three tests demanded before marriage with Ruth also echo a frequent motif of Arthurian and other Romances; here also is the narrative pattern whereby physical strength, personified in Antony Manse, is initially successful but finally defeated by James Quincy's cunning in overcoming the vampire boar, a gene manipulation nightmare, crossing the terrifying abyss, and, exotic final challenge, counting a diseased hive's bee-deaths three days solid without succumbing to sleep!

A final pervasive Arthurian echo is found in battle, for the Free Counties the preserve of a warrior caste fighting hand-to-hand on horseback. Why has this mode of warfare, even including challenges to single combat, been revived? The explanation is ingenious: with nuclear weapons set aside as too deadly to the planet, ordinary heavy weapons too expensive, large scale electronic warfare at an attack/defense stalemate and "any weapon of metal greater than a blade" near-unavailable, "... as of old, warriors mounted and armored / in glittering plate" (resinite armour) "ride forth with magical weapons" (lasers, and swords electronically enhanced to near sentience) "/ with which they speak as friends or sing the beatsong / ... whose ... / notes, and harmonics coordinate weapon and hero," so that, as in Arthurian tales, again "war / is imaged in armed individual ... / playing a fatal game in the forest and field."

• Frederick Turner (1985) *The New World – an Epic Poem* [Princeton University Press, Contemporary Poets Series]



Absent Grace

We only serve to distract ourselves
With tales of hunts and battle and beauty
Our quest, if such it is
Is our search, our struggle, to find grace
Let our highest tale be of Bedevere's throw

Helen Thompson

Insupportable

Not all the tears
Of old women or young warrior maids
Are enough to appease the loss of Arthur

No words are sufficient
To express the death of Arthur
A continuous wail of anguish would not suffice

A giving man while he lived
Arthur has been slain
In no way has this theft been made bearable

The warriors willl not fight today
A sadness has seized them
And they will not leave Arthur's accustomed place

Helen Thompson

They Return The Body of Galahad

When they brought him to us
He was small and bloody
Diminished in his armour

They put him in his mother's arms
And she said
"He was not thus the first time they gave him to me."

But for both times
The first and the last
She said, "It hurts."

Helen Thompson

Champion

When Arthur stood on the Badon rock
He was like the morning in his glory
He was like the sky
Like the spear
Like the single word
When Arthur stood on the Badon rock
He was more than the ocean

Helen Thompson

Stars

Once having been his favourite
Lancelot could no longer look at stars
He thought they shone with a fierce
and high pride
Which was too worthy for him
But Lancelot in the agony of his youth
Kneeling before Guinevere
Shone brighter than constellations

Helen Thompson

Star Man

Without you, I am lost
In the Void of Time.
My footsteps cannot trace
The primordial Space
You still know.
In the lantern-glow
Of human thought
I reach out
And touch you.
I am one
With the Earth
That those like you
Embrace.
I sense your warmth;
Your strength can hold me sometimes,
For my fragile form
Will one day translate
Into Forever.
Did you know, Arthur?
Did you begin
At the Beginning?

Pamela Harvey

The Witchery of Almostness

"... and so he ran two year, and never man might have grace to know him ..."
Malory

The First of May. a golden oriole
is nailed to the Church door.

at night his tears slit the sky's belly
shivering in a ditch
a pillow of acanthus

outcast in his own land
stealing bags of sugar from Red Cross parcels
to spike army petrol tanks

He stepped out of his old life
like a sheared sheep
walks away from her wool

nose clipped against the stench
he raises a midnight drainlid
an alleyway deep in shadow

and passing the town square
aghast at the bitter harvest
hung in lines below the flag

42 corpses — one for each year
of this bitter, purposeless century.
To leave the town again tonight

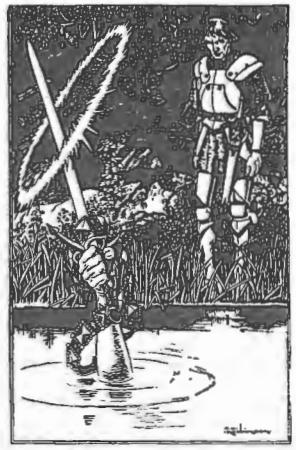
he must hide in a cartful of hay
eleemosynary
among lilyrian rushes

the queen's body
it is but little
as is the nightingale's

but her mind
is vast as the crystal spheres.
It is this soured land.

She has not forgotten him yet,
and will not till there is nothing
of him left to remember ...
he
breaks
in
waves
on
her
shore

Geoff Sawers



Edge of the world

lapping up the dew
dining on
a branch of apple-blossom

shivering we wake
underneath
a carpet of fading stars

skip down to the shore
each morning
to wait for the setting sun

Geoff Sawers

Knight takes Queen, Queen takes Knight

From bread & bed & candlelight
to the peewit's lonely cry.

A buzzing forever in my ears
a few acres of foreign sky.

But the lemon on its branch
is purest gold. Don't ask why.

Geoff Sawers

The War Lord

Pamela Harvey

I have just seen on television a programme on the Norman Conquest in the *A History of Britain* series. For reasons deep in my psyche it raised troubled thoughts in me. True, it was depressing as well as very interesting, but war is always a miserable, wretched business. Like many people, I have harboured some secret romanticism about knights in shining armour *etc.* I have even imagined the glories of chivalry, with Celt, Saxon, Viking and Norman – all (with more added) in my ancestry – being reconciled into what is now Britain. This programme effectually and brutally demolished such sentimental dreams.

Chivalry

Arthur is a key figure in the concept of chivalry. Indeed, in the medieval tales this is where this concept is first clearly promoted. Presumably descendants of the brutal Norman conquerors wrote about it. Further back in their ancestry the equally brutal Vikings were not considered by many to have included it in their sagas. Personally, I cannot vouch for that; I don't know enough about the sagas.

In fact, I often wonder, who does know enough about history? It is clearly not 'bunk', as – was it Henry Ford who said it was? But is it all true? Do not the historical commentators and writers fall prey to the human weakness of exaggeration, or desire to upset and disgust us? The joy of demolishing even fragments of our childish dreams?

Chivalry? So what? Where it came from – does it matter? How can it matter in the atomic age? One thing is clear: if there had been no consideration of each other as human beings instead of potential enemies, the Cold War – just finished – would have finished off the Earth. Chivalry is basically the idea expressed by Jesus: 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you.' It does not seriously conflict with or differ radically from the Pagan precept: 'An ye harm none, do what ye will.' We might have a bit of sexual moral argument here, but 'Make love, not war' was not such a bad slogan in the 1960s, when the Vietnam war was claiming young lives, as war always does.

The point is, medieval writers made much of Arthur, the War Lord of the Celts, even though they were Normans and Saxons as well. They romanticized the idea of knighthood. Chivalry fostered the notion of caring for the weak, the sick and old, women, and even your enemy on the battlefield. If, of course, you were in a position to do so. To save his life when you were in a position to take it was the true mark of the War Lord. To negotiate when possible rather than to rush in and try to annihilate the enemy. To be strong, tough – you needed to be in order to survive – but always to show mercy.

Leaders and rulers

Arthur was called the Once and Future King. Perhaps one day he will return ... to Britain? to the Earth? to all humanity as a superior being? He was believed by many in the past to be a God; even today this is a Pagan concept. The idea of the Sun Lord is very ancient, going back to the earliest mists of human history, especially according to Sanskrit writers and the traditions of Ancient Egypt.

This takes us away from our shores, but while humanity was being formed as a people, the continents were breaking away from Pangea, the first landmass. Races of mankind were only dreams of the future, as we know the world of today. There is some evidence that Atlantis, Lemuria, Mu, existed. There is agreement, however doubted by today's sceptics, from around the globe that wise beings of greater evolution came here, from other worlds or dimensions, ruled by Sun Adepts, totally evolved Beings of great wisdom. Was Arthur such? If he does return, will it be to rule?

The idea of democracy is a more highly evolved notion than that of the Ruler. The snag is that governments proclaiming the will of the people don't always defer to it. Leadership, and Rulership, can take many forms. They can be very subtle. Jesus aimed to reign in men's

hearts. Arthur is a part of men's hearts in this area of the world, as in the Middle Ages and before.

No true reign can succeed permanently if not grounded in our hearts – or souls. Outward things perish or fade. Life moves on to other dimensions or worlds. History constantly changes. Wars are fought, but down the generations the outcome is not what the belligerents expected, or wanted. Human bones become dust; Earth lives on to celebrate another epiphany. The survival of the human race has not been totally threatened until our Nuclear Age.

There is aggression in all of us, of course, but not necessarily expressed in an injurious manner. We have always had potential for good, but often regard 'good' as being less glamorous than 'bad'. Our true rebellion could be against our own ignorance, our lack of understanding of the balance of Nature. We need strength, but without strength of character we have no personality, no depth or charisma. In the martial arts, yielding to the strength of the Universe is the key to mastery of oneself. We live in a divided world where it is not up to us to further divide it. Even in petty or personal matters men and women are selfish, ignoring the effect on others. This is immaturity. All of us offend in these smaller ways, smaller only by comparison with the tragedy of international strife. But if we learn to care, that concept was encoded in chivalry. How long ago did Arthur's Logres exist in the dawn of humankind? Did humans even then gain the onset of true maturity, the conquest of self?

The hero

There is something that historians cannot, or will not, explain: that strength of character combined with kindness and mercy is in itself an irresistible force of attraction; that the light of the real Hero shines like the Sun. He has won the battle with himself. In life he bends like the willow, but deep in his being he is strong as the oak. He may not be perfect, but neither is he foolhardy.

Arthur will return to a world seeking some degree of maturity, yielding some friendship, or there will one day not be a world at all. In Milton's *Paradise Lost* are the lines: "Who overcomes by force hath overcome but half his foe." We need reconciliation, with others, and with ourselves, for Earth is a tiny bead in the Cosmic string, threaded into the gossamer web of Space-Time. Arthur may share in a Galactic civilisation where Avalon is also a Gateway to the stars, where human lives may find their destiny as well as on this planet, where our society will contribute to the Universe.

Reviews

Arthurian literature, chivalry and violence

Every so often a book appears which seems important enough to justify discussion at the ample length of an article, rather than in the briefer compass of a review. Such a book is Richard W Kaeuper's *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*.[1]

The starting-point of this splendid book is the problem of lawless violence within medieval Europe, which interfered with the spectacular social, economic and above all technological progress which gives this time and place such enormous importance in world history. Kaeuper examines in this context the concept of chivalry. Now I have always vaguely assumed that chivalry was a wholly fine and commendable concept, totally ignored by the knights and men-at-arms of medieval Europe (with the almost unique and very late exception of the good chevalier Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*), busy as they were looting, raping and murdering peasants and townsfolk. Kaeuper shows, however, that chivalry was a highly ambivalent concept, on balance rather more designed to promote lawless violence than to mitigate it.

What gives this book a special interest for Arthurians is the fact that he makes a detailed comparison of medieval imaginative literature with factual documents such as chronicles and manuals of chivalry from the same period. And although he considers *chansons de geste* and non-Arthurian romances, the great majority of his literary examples are drawn from the Arthurian cycle.

Holier than thou

Kaeuper provides good evidence that the romances were read by many if not most of the knights, rare copies sometimes being passed from hand to hand among them. He proceeds to examine the attitudes to each other of the three ruling groups – the clergy, the knights, and the royal establishments. He gives a detailed account of clerical attitudes as expressed in clerical chronicles, sermons, letters *etc*, and shows that similar attitudes are expressed in the clerically influenced romances, such as the *Queste del Saint Graal* and the *Mort Artu*.

As a former soldier myself (in the British Liberation Army), and with an uncle-in-law and a very good friend in the Wehrmacht (neither of them Nazis, of course), I found the clerical attitudes so well documented by Kaeuper distinctly unattractive. It would have been fair enough if they had approached the problem as it is formulated by Kaeuper himself. They were certainly entitled to protest at the lawless violence of knights and men-at-arms, and their customary brutality to anyone weaker than themselves, and to call for more responsible behaviour from them. But, except for John of Salisbury, these clerics took a holier-than-thou attitude to soldiers that gives quite a different emphasis. They seem to conclude that a soldier has not the slightest chance of getting their approval (and hence salvation!) unless he is fighting specifically *for them* (and not always then, if we remember their attitudes to the historical Arthur[2] and to Charles Martel,[3] not mentioned by Kaeuper).

Altogether, these clerical attitudes reminded me of the immortal words of Kipling:[4]

Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an'
'Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?'
But it's 'Thin red line of 'eroes' when
the drums begin to roll ...

How much wiser were the Indians, who sorted the whole matter out centuries earlier in the *Bhagavatgita*.[5] When Arjuna worries about going into battle against his relatives, Krishna tells him to do his duty as a soldier, and all will be well.

Kaeuper examines, with equal thoroughness, the attitudes of the knights to religion, and here too he finds a good match between the more knightly romances and the manuals of chivalry. Not surprisingly, in view of the clerical attitudes, the knights tended to develop an idiosyncratic religion of their own, which, while doctinally impeccable, involved as little as possible benefit of clergy. They were very partial to hermits, often ex-knights, respectable but definitely on the periphery of the Church.

Power and loyalty

If there was one force that finally reduced the lawless internal violence of medieval Europe, it was the kings and their agents, who gradually succeeded in monopolising violence, restricting it to the maintenance of royal justice at home and warfare with other kings abroad – thus when Louis XI at last developed a standing army, his son Charles VIII promptly used it to invade Italy.[6] But at first kings had to proceed carefully, since while they wished to control the knights, and turn

them into loyal officers, they long depended on them for any military activity. It is well known that royal power and royal justice advanced earlier and faster in England than in France. One obvious reason was the fact that the French kings were based on their little dominion in the Île de France, whereas England had been conquered all at once, and by the very efficient Normans. Kaeuper notes another, very interesting factor: whereas French nobles tended to own compact masses of land, in England the estates of great and even middling landlords were often scattered widely over several districts. Hence they could only protect their more peripheral holdings by resorting to the king's law-courts. Finally, very interestingly, Kaeuper shows that the difference between the two countries is reflected in their romances, the English ones placing more emphasis on the loyalty of knights to the sovereign.

Chivalry

After these preliminaries, Kaeuper devotes the rest of his book to a detailed study of the concept of chivalry. He shows again an excellent match between the romances and the chronicles and manuals, hence between literature and life. Indeed, he points out that 'the authors of Arthurian and Grail stories ... claimed historical authenticity' for their narratives.

From both kinds of evidence, he concludes that 'chivalry was no simple force for restraint'. He quotes a maiden in the *Perlesvaus* remarking of Lancelot: 'Because of the vigour of his chivalry he has committed many an outrage'. Specifically, Kaeuper shows that by far the most central quality of chivalry, as medieval people saw it, was *prowess*, with spear, sword or battle-axe. He also shows that the feats in which the romancers delighted – lopping off heads, arms, shoulders *etc* – could be matched in real life in the exploits of warriors such as Cœur-de-Lion. I was reminded of Gibbon's comment on one of Richard's feats: 'Am I writing the history of Orlando or Amadis?'[7]

The second-most central quality of chivalry, Kaeuper shows, is *largesse*, that is giving to other knights what you have stolen from peasants or townsfolk. In other words, chivalry boils down to killing and looting. With such central qualities, the usual vague injunctions to seek justice and protect the weak are seen to be at least perfunctory. Kaeuper suggests the romances may have helped to discourage knights from torturing and killing *each other* when captured, but I should have thought the huge incentive of ransom was more important. The usual practice after medieval battles was to spare those who could afford sizeable ransoms, and kill everyone else. Claire Russell showed that there was sometimes overpopulation at the top, for instance in 15th-century England, where there was a surplus of nobles and a shortage of labour.[8] The procedure was then reversed, and Edward IV, after each of his victories, rode over the battle-field shouting: 'Kill the lords, spare the rest'.[9] But this has nothing to do with chivalry.

None but the brave

If the romances did have any effect, we might suppose it to be on the treatment of women. Kaeuper shows overwhelmingly that the romancers supposed only one thing made a man attractive to women – prowess. In the words of Dryden (and Gilbert!) none but the brave deserves the fair. Oddly, Kaeuper does not refer to the great classic on this subject, C S Lewis's *The Allegory of Love*.[10] Lewis records perhaps the first enunciation of the hoary statement: 'The age of chivalry is dead' – in Chrétien's *Yvain*, in 1177![11] And he notes the passage in the same

author's *Lancelot* in which the hero obeys the Queen's cruel order to *lose* in a tournament, and even run away. This shows that the tyranny of courtly love could in theory override even prowess. Of course this is not feminism in any modern sense. About the only medieval feminist was Christine de Pisan, and for the first great male feminist we have to wait for Ariosto in the Renaissance.

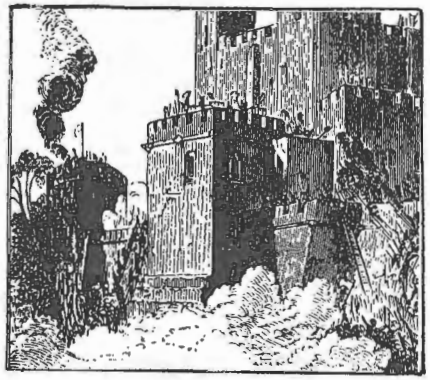
Kaeuper shows that in the romances it is all right to rape even a lady in some circumstances. But generally raping ladies is discouraged, and he thinks this may actually have helped to make this crime less frequent. Certainly the medieval knights came nearest to a modern conception of chivalry in their attitude to ladies. As late as the early 16th century, the French, who still retained a medieval outlook, were horrified by the atrocious treatment of Caterina Sforza by their ally, Cesare Borgia.[12] Bayard, leading his troops to defend the Countess of Mirandola, told them they were going to the service of ladies, and should behave like gentlemen.[13] But Kaeuper shows that, even in the most idealistic versions of medieval chivalry, peasant girls are fair game. In the Post-Vulgate *Queste*, Arthur himself rapes a peasant girl, without a murmur of disapproval from the author or anyone in the story. Bayard, who refrained even from this sort of thing, was *improving* on medieval chivalry.[14]

As examples of fairly idealistic, 'reforming' works, Kaeuper considers a biography, two manuals of chivalry, and Malory. Surprisingly, he makes no mention of Malory's activities in life (robbery, sacrilege, rape, and attempted murder):[15] the glaring contrast between his life and his book shows how little all these works improved behaviour. But, as Kaeuper shows, they all still put prowess first.

Service

A concluding section, about degraded forms of chivalry in early modern times, criminal rebellions and murderous duelling, includes the only small factual error I found in the book. He mentions the miliary exploits of the Duke of Parma. In fact all the laurels of Alexander Farnese were won while he was only the *Prince* of Parma, before his brother died and he inherited the Dukedom.[16] I have seen this odd error in several other books that were otherwise scholarly.

In this review article I have done little justice to the great wealth of examples in Kaeuper's book, or to the thoroughness and subtlety of his analysis. He has done an enormous service to the study of Arthurian literature, and his book will be of absorbing interest to anyone wishing to know more about medieval attitudes and behaviour.



W M S Russell

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Oxford University Press 1999 £30.00
ISBN 0 19 820730 1

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Howard Reid
Arthur the Dragon King: the barbaric roots of Britain's greatest legend
Headline 2001 £18.99
0 7472 7557 2 hb 244pp illus

Howard Reid apparently has all the right academic credentials – an unpublished PhD thesis in anthropology based on research among hunter-gatherers in Brazil – and, as well as practical experience from living with Tuaregs in North Africa, he has made documentaries about ancient civilisations for the BBC, Channel 4 and the Public Broadcasting Service in the USA. So you would expect him not only to declaim knowledgeably with his Indiana Jones hat on but also to discuss with scholarly rigour wearing his mortar board.

Not a bit of it. This, I'm afraid, is a thoroughly irritating read, partly because he deliberately dispenses with any real scholarly apparatus (apart from a rather uncritical bibliography) and partly because, despite an enthusiastic description of nomadic peoples of central Asia, he clearly is all at sea with his Arthurian material. In fact, so inadequate is this publication as a contribution to the Arthurian debate that I am led to question either Reid's integrity as an anthropologist or his motives in producing what seems to be a cynical ploy to cash in on the increasingly saturated Arthurian book market – or both.

Reid argues that the nomads of the steppes, particularly the Scythians, Sarmatians and the Alans, were so innovative and culturally pervasive that they virtually single-handedly introduced the sword-in-the-stone motif, the grail, the notion of chivalry and the return of Excalibur to the lady of the lake to medieval romance. This is the equivalent of the diffusionist theory that the pyramids of Egypt, the Americas and Asia were so alike that they had to have the same origin (preferably Atlantis). Reid feels that to point out a parallel and then to sketch in a chain of transmission is enough to prove his case. But it isn't.

He also overstates his case. You might think, coming fresh to his argument, that the Romans were lacking in effective cavalry before the incorporation of steppe horsemen into their armies – but the evidence is otherwise. As Arrian's *Ars Tactica* of the 2nd century makes clear, many cavalry terms were derived "from the Iberians or the Celts ... Celtic cavalry being held in high regard by [the Romans] in battle". Ann Hyland reminds us the "the Celts and Spaniards, the two peoples Arrian singles out as influencing Roman cavalry tactics, had a long history of equestrian warfare behind them ... During Vespasianic times the Gallic or Celtic peoples were supplying by far the largest proportion of auxiliary and *cohortes equitatae* cavalry to the Roman army ... In fact the profile of the Spanish horse was to place him in a position of supremacy never yet to be lost ..." (Nyland 1993, 91). Prof Russell (1999) has made similar points, too, in these pages. In fact the Romans, as Arrian acknowledged, were quick at "taking over good customs from every source and making them their own", and this included some steppe peoples' cavalry practices, including the feigned retreat, the parting ("Parthian") shot and use of the dragon standard.

Reid declares that the Romans settled many Sarmatian troops throughout the empire in the fourth century, with the result that "many of the prized cavalrymen had been reduced to the status of peasants within a generation or two of their settlement". These then are the peoples whose hero lore, according to Reid, was to dominate the literature of medieval Europe.

And yet even if the steppe nomads had made as big and as permanent a cultural impact on Europe as Reid says, there is a huge chronological gap in his lines of transmission. The pressures that they exerted on the overstretched Roman Empire in its last few centuries are indisputable. The flowering of the Arthurian legends in Europe comes in the 12th and 13th centuries, with all the motifs that he keeps reminding us of, but there are no apparent intermediaries in the intervening centuries that Reid bothers to quote. The "typical" Arthurian romance motifs – swords in stones, ladies in lakes, knights on horseback – sprang forth, Reid would have us believe, from a field that lay fallow for over half a millennium.

There are several other irritations in this publication. The popularity of the name Alan (in its various spellings) – of which Leslie Alan Dunkling notes "All that can be said for certain is that the name is ancient and Celtic" – is, according to Reid, to be attributed to key figures from the Alan peoples dispersed throughout western Europe. Then, we have the general Stilicho mysteriously becoming Emperor on page 189, and St Germanus receiving the title *dux bellorum* from both Bede and Nennius (page 210) in passages oddly missing from the editions on my shelves. (To be fair, Bede does use the title *dux* of Germanus, but not *dux bellorum*). Arthur's name is derived, we are told (page 212), from the Alan king Goar (also known as Eothar), bested by Germanus in 446. Goar / Eothar is therefore the historical original of our hero ...

Finally, I heartily disliked Reid's (largely unnecessary) use of brackets which should have been ironed out at some stage in the editing process but which remain as symbolic of this highly idiosyncratic reading of the origins of the Arthurian legends.

Any plus points? Well, the colour plates are nice, even if not always relevant to Reid's central argument. Incidentally, the publishers have selected as a cover design one of the few medieval illustrations to feature Arthur's dragon standard, familiar from the front of the Penguin edition of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Curiously, the illustration was last used in a similar way for Rodney Castleden's *King Arthur, the truth behind the legend* (2000), and the credits make the same mistake in ascribing it to Robert de Barron (instead of Borron or Boron). And yet, of all the recent Arthurian books listed, Castleden's is the most significant omission.

- Leslie Alan Dunkling (1978) *Scottish Christian Names* [Johnston and Bacon, London and Edinburgh]
- Ann Nyland (1993) *Training the Roman cavalry: from Arrian's* Ars Tactica [Grange Books, London]
- W M S Russell (1999) "Arthur as cavalry leader" *Pendragon 27 No 4, 4*

Chris Lovegrove

J Weiss, J Fellows and M Dickson *eds*
Medieval Insular Romance:
Translation and Innovation
D S Brewer, Cambridge 2000

Sir Agavain is so consistently villainous in the Arthurian romances that it is surprising to find he has his moment of glory. Yet this is what appears from a fascinating paper by Tony Davenport about the Middle English romance *Sir Degrevant* [W A Davenport "*Sir Degrevant* and Composite Romance" in Weiss *et al*, 111–131].

The hero of this romance is a brave and skilled knight, who defeats enemies in both tournaments and serious fights. While he is away on a crusade, a neighbouring earl trespasses on his land, and Degrevant feuds with him, killing many of his retainers, but falls in love with his daughter, who eventually returns his love. There is a happy ending, with reconciliation and marriage, as the hero becomes the earl's son-in-law. He is certainly presented throughout as a hero.

The name Degrevant, Davenport tells us, 'has usually been taken as a variant of Agravain ... The hero is identified in the poem as the nephew of Arthur, and ... is given the blazon of the second son of the king of Scotland. Otherwise, though, the Arthurian connections are ignored.'

So there we have it. Gawain himself varies somewhat in character in different romances, but his brother has a much more spectactular metamorphosis in this one.

W M S Russell

Kerrie Pateman
The Small Press Guide 2001
Writers' Bookshop 2000 £9.99
1 902713 08 7 pb 300+pp

The sixth edition of *The Small Press Guide* ("the complete guide to poetry and small press magazines") is packed with details for those who want to write for or find out about journals such as the one you are holding. While many of those included are dedicated to fiction or poetry, there are also other special interest independent magazines, ranging from *Competitions Bulletin* through *Gairm* (a Scottish Gaelic publication) and *Wanderlust* (travel, naturally) to Steve Sneyd's *Data Dump* (SF and other genre poetry). Every edition has recurring old faces (including *Pendragon*) as well as new ones to offset those that fall by the wayside.

The Guide is published by Writers' Bookshop, Remus House, Coltsfoot Drive, Woodston, Peterborough PE2 9JX (if you have problems getting it through a bookseller) or phone 01733 898103 (fax 01733 313524) or try www.forwardpress.co.uk

Chris Lovegrove

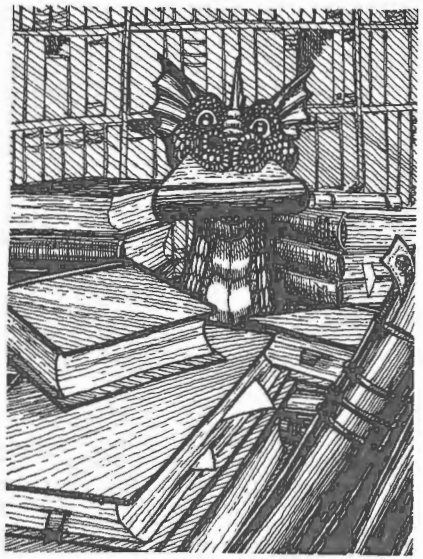
bookworm

FEATURED PUBLISHER

Sadly, we have to report that **Llanerch Publishers** are ceasing production shortly. Though they are negotiating with a possible buyer, who may keep many of the titles in print and who would continue with their mail-order list, the business may still be wound up slowly by continuing to sell books until stocks are depleted.

Llanerch have been publishing new and facsimile titles on specialist subjects for some time now – the categories have included Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Old French, Chinese and other cultural areas, plus titles on Saints' Lives, Folklore, Medieval History, Mysticism (including Alchemy) and Music. From a *Pendragon* point of view the backlist includes several key texts and studies which were otherwise difficult to access at such reasonable prices – typically in the range £6.95 to £9.95, comparable to the mass market prices the big players were able to offer as against the limited-run high prices of academic publishers.

As a special "last orders" concession, Llanerch will not be charging UK postage on any orders (including singles). As a further offer, on orders for two or more books ten percent may be deducted. Here are some typical bargains (with their original prices):



The Book Hunter Ian Brown

- ***Peredur***, in a modern translation £7.95
- ***The Celtic sources of the Arthurian legend*** £9.95
- ***The Celtic Legends of Glamorgan*** by Pendragon member Anthony Rhys £6.95
- ***The Black Book of Carmarthen*** in modern translation £6.95
- ***The Gododdin of Aneirin*** also in modern translation £.95
- ***Arthurian and knightly art from the Middle Ages*** by F M Shurlock £7.95
- J S Glennie's ***Arthurian localities (in Scotland)*** and W F Skene's ***Arthur and the Britons in Wales and Scotland***, both classics and both £8.95
- eight volumes of Baring-Gould and Fisher's classic ***Lives of the British saints***, each at £9.95, and Doble's ***The Saints of Cornwall***, six volumes each at £7.95
- Jessie Weston's translations of obscure Arthurian romances *eg* ***Sir Gawain and the Lady of Lys*** and ***Guingamor, Lanval, Tyolet, Were-wolf***, mostly at £7.95

These and many others, in a catalogue of not much under 300 titles, are available – but for not much longer now – from Llanerch Publishers, Felinfach, Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales SA48 8PJ. The current backlist with recent new titles is accessible at www.llanerch-publishers.co.uk; you can phone/fax 01570 470567 or request a booklist from booklist@llanerch-publishers.co.uk or order (while stocks last!) from order@llanerch-publishers.co.uk

FICTION

Warren James Palmer has written a series of novels entitled *The Dyason Trilogy*, which according to Ronan Coghlan of Excalibur Books "is set in the future, where an alien race takes over Earth and King Arthur returns to oppose them". The three titles, all in paperback, are ***Minds of the Empire*** (450pp £4.99), ***Dominator*** (416pp £5.99) and ***Third Player*** (450pp £5.99), and all three are descibed as "ripping" yarns (or is Ripping the name of the publisher?). Available from Excalibur Books by phoning 028 91458579.

Kevin Crossley-Holland's ***Arthur: the seeing stone*** was touted around Christmas as the first in another trilogy, this time for the younger reader. This handsomely illustrated 324-page hardback comes from Orion Children's Books and sells at £10.99, its quality suggested by Andrew H W Smith's review in *Ceridwen's Cauldron* where he confesses that he is "impatient for the rest of the trilogy".

Nathan Cate's first novel, ***Sanctuary of the Gods***, is not strictly Arthurian, but may be of oblique interest, based as it claims on a "controversial" theory of the origins of the Tarot. The author suggests that a secret pagan sanctuary in the mountains of southern Europe, with its population decimated by the Black Death in 1348, created the cards "to serve as a coded repository of their beliefs". A website has been created by the Canadian academic (who teaches at a university somewhere "in the Orient") at http://nathancate.tripod.com to offer more information on the book, including samples and graphics, promoting the theory of links between classical paganism and the origins of the Tarot. (Thanks to Fred for this information.)

Recently published is ***Neolithon: poems and drawings born of ancient stories*** [K T Publications 0 907759 18 1 £4.95] by Steve Sneyd and John Light which, though not all directly Arthurian, deserves a mention (and a review next time). Incidentally, Steve has heard from Frederick Turner that paperback copies of the latter's Arthurian epic poem ***The New World*** can still (despite being out of print) be obtained from amazon.com (see "What ails the Future?" elsewhere in this issue).

FACTUAL

D F Carroll has self-published a new Arthurian theory in ***Arturius: a Quest for Camelot***, and this 118-page paperback can be obtained for £4.99 plus postage from Excalibur Books (028 91458579). Incidentally, member Ronan Coghlan of Excalibur Books tells us they are creating a website which will, through a special arrangement, make available titles carried by amazon.co.uk as well as a range of US titles. More details when available.

Howard Reid's ***Arthur the Dragon King*** (reviewed above) featured in a rather breathless article in the *Sunday Express* for February 11, 2001 (passed on by Mark Cooper). "Was King Arthur really a Russian warrior captured by the Romans and forced to build Hadrian's wall?" asked Suzanna Chambers. Leaving aside any immediately cynical response, Geoffrey Ashe's quoted remarks were rather trenchant. "Mr Reid's theory is so old it has whiskers ... It is so dispiriting to see this kind of hogwash disseminated among scholarly circles ..."

Francis Boutle Publishers produce (it says here) "critically acclaimed and best-selling publications on Cornish culture and literature". ***Inside Merlin's Cave: a Cornish Arthurian Reader 1000-2000*** [£12.50 1 903427 04 5 256pp] "brings King Arthur back to Cornwall" with selections from Geoffrey of Monmouth, Malory, Tennyson, Hardy's *Queen of Cornwall*, A S D Smith's Cornish-language *Trystan hag Ysolt* and others. Included are three essays by the editors Amy Hale, Alan M Kent and Tim Saunders on the development of the myth, its use in popular culture and its impact on Cornish literature and culture. Futher info from Clive Boutle on 020 7278 4497 fbp@francisboutle.demon.co.uk or phone Dr Amy Hale on 01726 882271 a.hale@exeter.ac.uk

C J Arnold and J L Davies have co-authored ***Roman and Early Medieval Wales*** (Sutton £25.00 255pp). As well as an account of the Roman period this book surveys Dark Age archaeology in Wales, including inscribed stones. (For completeness, the same publishers produce F Lynch's ***Prehistoric Wales*** at the same price.) A new title in the Oxford History of Art series may also be of relevance to students of Dark Age history – Robin Cormack's ***Byzantine Art*** (OUP pb, 0 19 284211 0, £11.99 248pp), particularly chapter 1 covering 330–527 AD, should help place the largely invisible insular visual arts in a wider cultural context.

Andrew Sinclair continues to pursue his claimed ancestral links with Templars and the Grail, and in ***The Secret Scroll*** [Sinclair-Stevenson 308-page hardback £24.99] connects Henry Sinclair, purported traveller to America in 1389, with secret traditions. The following title comes thanks to exchange journal *The Rennes Observer*. Bill Mann's ***Labyrinth of the Grail*** [1999 Laughing Owl Publishing 0 9659701 8 3] follows in the footsteps of Andrew Sinclair's wayward Grail theories and involves the Venetian travellers Nicolo and Antonio Zeno, kinsmen of the Sinclair family, Micmac Indian white god legends, and Nova Scotia as repository of the bones of Jesus. For more details try http://www.labyrinthofthegrail.com

Moving now from metaphorical to physical mazes: Hermann Kern's ***Through the Labyrinth: designs and meanings over 5000 years*** has been available for some months and appears close to being the "definitive work on the labyrinth throughout history" that it claims. Co-edited by exchange journal *Caerdroia*'s Jeff Saward. the 360-page hardback [Prestel 3 7913 2144 7 £50.00] musters nearly 750 illustrations, and is bound to appeal to the general public as well as archaeologists, collectors and art historians. Prestel can be viewed at www.prestel.com or contacted at 020 7323 5004 (1 888 463 6110 in the USA) for further details.

Graham Phillips' ***The Marian Conspiracy*** (subtitled *The Hidden Truth About the Holy Grail, the Real Father of Christ and the Tomb of the Virgin Mary*), which was reviewed here by Laurence Main a couple of issues ago, is now available in paperback [Pan Books 0 330 37202 5 £6.99]. Interestingly, Phillips' mysterious *Didcot Perceval*, from his previous publications, has silently reverted now to its more traditional appellation, the *Didot Perceval*.

REVIEWS WANTED!

As always, we would like more reviews of recent (and even not so recent) Arthurian publications, especially fiction titles. Do include publication details, but remember scholarly expertise is not a prerequisite, nor length – just avoid any grounds for libel!

For starters, Mark Valentine draws attention to a review of Rosalind Miles' ***Guenevere, the Child of the Holy Grail*** (Simon and Schuster £9.99, *TLS* price £7.99) – "Arthurian fiction reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*!" – in which Carolyne Larrington notes that "the appeal of the Arthurian bodice-ripper lies in part in rich descriptions of colour and texture; this is a truly luxurious Middle Ages, one which medieval consumers of romance would themselves have relished." She notes that "the ending is strong and optimistic, though it does not avoid the sentimentality that plagues most modern Arthurian retellings." Do you agree? Or not? Let us know!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

We often feature enterprises that purloin Arthurian names – for example, Swiss watchmakers Raymond Weil of Geneva produce, among their range of timekeepers, his and hers wristwatches called **Parsifal** – so its nice to note nature imitating art. The recent Vendée Globe yacht race was memorable for bringing the inspiring figure of **Ellen MacArthur** to our attention as the youngest and the fastest woman to sail solo non-stop around the world. To have two Arthurian names is splendid enough – a pity, then, that her craft was not called *Prydwen*, but it was perhaps the next best thing: ***Kingfisher*** ... Further information can be had at www.kingfisherchallenges.com

The continuing affair of the Hinduja brothers' passport applications, and their fund-raising for all three major British political parties, has taken a mythic twist. They have hired **Luther Pendragon** to represent them. Who he? This is in fact a PR firm which, according to *The Guardian* [January 27 2001], "specialises in crises". Their previous clients have included McDonald's (during the so-called McLibel case) and British Beef (after the BSE crisis). Whether they will weave their spell for the Hinduja brothers remains to be seen [*item spotted by Steve Sneyd*].

Merlin (or, in brackets, **Myrddin**) advertises in *Prediction*, proclaiming himself as Celtic clairvoyant, magician, occultist and healer. "I am a magician with a history of ancient ancestry [*sic*] and powerful knowledge from the original birthplace of Merlin, and mine is an herditary line." His areas of expertise include Celtic and Angelic magic, love, soul mates, money, business, health and psychic attack. By writing stating your problem and enclosing your date of birth with a personal photo or small piece of hair he promises to reply quickly with a solution – donations are by mutual agreement. He can be contacted at 82 Sandy Road, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, West Wales SA15 4DW (include an SAE).

Finally, the fall-out from the recent May Day protests in London produced a slightly tongue-in-cheek commentary in *The Daily Telegraph* which claimed that "the May Day Anarchists are unexpected evotees of the cult of the Round Table". Apparently "the one thing that unites all these shadowy organisations is their Arthurian culture: I can guarantee that a quarter of the anarchists on [the] marches were named **Pendragon**, **Tintagel** or **Merlin** as *noms de revolution* to confuse the Pigs and the Corporate Media."

The author declared that the Excaliburs of "these middle-class Pendragons" were likely to be lead pipes, and that the Anarchist Camelot is "a nasty de-urbanised community purged of capital and culture" whose grail resembled the "forced rustifications of Pol Pot" [Simon Sebag Montefiore "In the name of King Arthur, they would empty the cities" *The Daily Telegraph* May 2, 2001].

VISITS AND EVENTS

Many enterprises run visits to historical sites, here and abroad, and a handful include an Arthurian dimension, a short selection of which follows, plus other events and places of interest.

Arthur and Elisabeth Jordan, of **Leisure Learning**, arrange "interesting and enjoyable" short breaks in England and Wales "exploring our heritage". Many are to later medieval sites like Tewkesbury, Ludlow, Beaumaris and so on, but a few are to "Arthurian" sites like **Glastonbury** and **Hadrian's Wall** (see *Old News*). Their prices include guided walks, visits to properties and necessary transport, and all bed & breakfast accommodation usefully eschews single-room supplements. A brochure can be had from Leisure Learning, 13 Arnhill Road, Gretton, Corby, Northants NN17 3DN. Alternatively, contact 01536 770478, e-mail medieval@leisurelearning.co.uk or visit their site at www.leisurelearning.co.uk

Among the Practical Archaeology courses which **The Kent Archaeological Field School** are running in 2001 I notice *The Saxon Shore (Litus Saxonicum)* on May 19th and 20th. This promises to throw new light on the Roman **forts of the Saxon Shore** and their historical context, with visits to Reculver, Richborough, Dover and Lympne. Fees are £30.00 per day. More details of this and other hands-on courses can be had from Kent Archaeological Field School, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP, or 01795 532548 or visit their website www.kafs.co.uk

The tenth **Storytelling Festival at the Edge** was mentioned last issue (*The Board*, 41), and

we now learn that it features a new storytelling commission, ***The Telling of Merlin***. The festival takes place from July 20th to the 22nd at Stokes Barn, Much Wenlock, Shropshire. More information can be had by phoning 01743 357 140 or 01952 504 882. Alternatively write to FATE, Rose Cottage, Church Road, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7LN or you can try emailing info@festivalattheedge.org or logging on to www.festivalattheedge.org

Ray Sandford and Ray Greenoaken presented ***An epic evening with Sir Gawain*** on Friday February 9th at The Albert in Huddersfield. Featuring the tales of *Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Gawain and the Loathly Lady*, this was billed as "an exciting evening of Epic Tales from the age of the Round Table and its foremost knight".

The event was part of Huddersfield's contribution to **National Storytelling Week** (4–11 February 2001) organised by The Huddersfield Tellers and supported by Yorkshire Arts and Kirklees Council. Steve Sneyd writes that he wasn't able to get to this, though he would have liked to see how they would have managed it as the function room at The Albert is very small, with "not much room for buckling the swash!" Phone 01484 534 852 for more details, or e-mail pete_sandford@bigfoot.com

The Guardian offered a DIY Arthurian visit in its Travel supplement of September 30 last year. Roly Smith followed Gawain's "fateful journey across the Staffordshire moors" in the modern Peak District National Park. ***Knight moves*** gave credit to Ralph Elliott's 1958 essay which pinpointed the Roaches area of the moorlands as the scene of Gawain's rendezvous with the Green Knight. With Brian Stone's modern version of the 14th century poem as a guide, Smith set off from Rockhall Cottage, a climbers' bothy just off the A53 Buxton-Leek road, passing areas with stories of a headless rider and the mermaid Jenny Greenteeth *en route* to Lud's Church, through Back Forest and then back again. On summer weekends there is a free park-and-ride bus service to Rockhall Cottage. (Thanks to Steve Sneyd for spotting this.)

Ian Brown draws our attention to the presence of the Green Knight in **The Forbidden Place** (see this issue's *PenDragon*). Described by The Folly Fellowship as "the best European folly of the 20th century" and voted the best children's attraction in Yorkshire, the garden is situated on the road between Middleham and Coverdale in North Yorkshire, at Tupgill Park Estate, Coverham, Middleham, Leyburn DL8 4TJ.

Admission is available only by pre-booking – phone 01969 640638 or 640687 – and prices range down from the standard £5.00 for adults.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Due to the usual last-minute haste to prepare the journal for the printers, not all the illustrations in the last issue were credited. Ian Brown kindly provided the figures on pages 24 and 40–42, in addition to those on 19 and 27. The rest were done by the usual suspects.

Needless to say, spelling mistakes littered the text. Among the less obvious ones are various Lost Consonants: *Homo heidelbergensis* (missing 's') on page 23 and a missing 'd' in Roger S Neville-Neil's *Lady of the Lake* on page 25 (which unfortunately put a different complexion on the said lady – apologies for impugning her honour). Roger tells us that he used to write lyrics for the rock band Hawkwind in the 1980s: "Heads" and "The War I survived" on the *Xenon Codex* album. In the 1990s Farflung did a concept album inspired by his poem "Raven swallows the moon" entitled *The Raven that ate the Moon*.

On the same page, Steve Sneyd's *Immortal as amoeba*'s last line should probably have read *Xenophon's master in ability to save, one who could rise [not use] up as spring again* which makes rather more sense.

Last issue we featured **The Folklore Society** in *The Board*. They have now moved, and their new address is The Folklore Society, Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB. The phone number is now 0207 862 8562/4 (fax number 0207 862 8565), but the other details remain the same:
e-mail folklore-society@talk21.com and website www.folklore-society.com

Those nice people at *Northern Earth* (from where these details were taken) write that what has become "a pretty complicated set-up ... reflects the decline of folklore's academic profile (known in the USA as folkloristics) in the UK during the latter part of last century – and publishers' frequent preference for speculation and whimsy." They conclude on a more upbeat note: "a new enthusiasm and optimism is emerging within the field, as reflected in its new publishing ventures" (as we noted in last issue's reviews).

FEATURED JOURNALS

Exchange journal ***Northern Earth*** featured Penrith's **King Arthur's Round Table** in Robert W E Farrah's "Mayburgh Henge – a sacred space odyssey" (No 85 Spring 2001, 13–20). Arthur's Round Table, the Little Round Table and Mayburgh are three Neolithic enclosures within 155 metres of each other. Antiquarian speculation "conjectured that the enclosure was designed for the solemn exercise of feats of chivalry, and the embankment around for the conveniences of spectators," but Farrah's article

emphasises not only the henges' prehistoric nature but also their inherent alignments and significance within a ritual landscape.

Cheryl Straffon, editor of ***Meyn Mavron***, notes three Cornish holy wells which have recently been re-discovered and/or renovated ("Lost and found – well restored" No 45 Summer 2001, 6–7). These include the well of **St Paternus** at North Petherwin, north of Launceston. Not only is this Dark Age saint commemorated by this restored and rededicated site by his church, but the village retains an element of his name. John Morris thought the placename may relate instead to Paternus *rex Cornubie*, this Cornish king being father of St Constantine. The name Paternus also recalls the 5th–6th-century saint Padarn (whose best-known foundation is Llanbadarn Fawr in Cardiganshire) as well as the 6th-century Paternus who is mentioned on the famous piece of slate found at Tintagel in 1998 ("Changing history?" *Pendragon 27 No 3*, 28ff). In his *Life*, St Padarn got the best of the "tyrant" Arthur, and his Breton mother (variously Guean, Uliane, Ulitte or Julitta) was, as St Juliot, patron saint of Tintagel.

Incidentally, Paternus retained its popularity as a name for some time – another Paternus (or Pair) was abbot at a community near Coutances in Normandy, and died in 564 while bishop of Avranches, while yet another Paternus was a Celtic hermit who died in a fire in 1058 at the abbey of Abdinghof in Germany, a misfortune which he had himself predicted.

Finally, the **Winchester Round Table** features in Martin Biddle's "The Round Table that wasn't Arthur's" in ***BBC History Magazine*** (Vol 2 No 2, February 2001). Professor Biddle's recent study of the Table was recently published by Boydell & Brewer (see *Reviews* next ish), and further details of the Table can be had by visiting www.hants.gov.uk/leisure/house/greathal/

Exchange journals

Caerdroia Journal of mazes and labyrinths *Editors* Jeff Saward, Kimberly Lowelle, 53 Thundersley Grove, Benfleet, Essex SS7 3EB *Annual sub* £6.00 *Ffi* 01268 751915 *email* Caerdroia@dial.pipex.com
http://www.labyrinth.net
http://ilc.tsms.soton.ac.uk/caerdroia

The Cauldron Paganism, wicca, folklore, earth mysteries *Sample* £2.50 *Four issues* £10.00 *Cheques* M A Howard, Caemorgan Cottage, Caemorgan Rd, Cardigan, West Wales SA43 1QU **Don't** put *The Cauldron* on the envelope

Celtic Connections Journal of Celtic and related subjects *Editor* David James, Sycamore Cottage, Waddon, Portesham, Weymouth DT3 4ER *Sample* £1.75 *Four issues* £7.00 *Cheques* D James *email* celtic.connections@wdi.co.uk
www.celtic-connections-magazine.co.uk

Ceridwen's Cauldron Magazine of the Oxford Arthurian Society *Editor* Andrew H W Smith, 41 Essex Street, Oxford OX4 3AW *Sample* £2.00 *Three issues* £5.50 *Cheques* Oxford Arthurian Society
http://users.ox.ac.uk/~arthsoc

Dalriada Insular Celtic culture, traditions and beliefs. Dalriada Celtic Heritage Trust, Taigh Arainn, Glenartney Hotel, Brodick, Isle of Arran, Scotland KA27 8BX *Sample* £2.50 *Annual subscription* £15.00
http://www.dalriada.co.uk

Hallowquest Caitlin and John Matthews' publishing and teaching programmes *Four issues* £6.00 *Cheques* Graal Publications, BCM Hallowquest, London WC1N 3XX
www.hallowquest.org.uk

Meyn Mamvro Cornish ancient stones and sacred sites *Editor* Cheryl Straffon, 51 Cam Bosavern, St Just, Penzance, Cornwall TR19 7QX *Sample* £2.00 *Annual sub* £6.00
www.comwt.demon.co.uk

Northern Earth Journal of the Northern Earth Mysteries Group *Editor* John Billingsley, 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W Yorks HX7 5NP *email* ne_editor@annexe.org.uk *Sample* £1.70 *Four issues* £6.50 *Cheques* Northern Earth Mysteries Group
www.northernearth.co.uk

The Rennes Observer Journal of the Rennes-le-Château Research Group (Saunière etc) *Editor* Gay Roberts, 'Cilhaul', Tylwch, Llanidoes, Powys SY18 6QX *Sample* £2.00

The Round Table Arthurian poetry and fiction *Editors* Alan Lupack, Barbara Tepa Lupack *Enquiries* The Round Table, Box 18673, Rochester, New York NY 14618, USA (enclose IRC)
www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/arthmenu.htm

3rd Stone Archaeology, folklore, myth *Sample* £5.00 *Annual sub* £10.00 from PO Box 961, Devizes, Wilts SN10 2TS *Cheques* 3rd Stone
http://www.thirdstone.demon.co.uk

Wiðowinde Anglo-Saxon literature, history and culture *Editor* Steve Pollington *Sample* £3.50 *Enquiries* BM Box 4336, London WC1N 3XX
www.kami.demon.col.uk/gesithas

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