

pendragon

Journal of
The Pendragon Society



Heroes and Villains

XXXIII No 1

editorial

XXXIII No 1 Autumn 2005



Head to head Ian Brown

Heroes and Villains

This issue – title inspired by a Beach Boys track – stars as diverse a range of heroes and villains as you might hope for, with even a handful of heroines and villainesses. Showing suitable heroic qualities are Lancelot, Athalric, Dion, Elizabeth, Douglas, Wellesley, Tom, Jack, Arthur, the Few and Macbeth, while (*Boo! Hiss!*) villains are represented by Thunderel, Blunderboar, Galigantus, a dragon and ... Macbeth. 2005 is the thousandth anniversary of Macbeth's birth, as exchange journal *Wipowinde* reminds us,¹ so Professor Russell's paper is a timely reminder of how characters may be blackened. Mind you, without Shakespeare's play we would not have such wonderful characters as the witches and Lady Macbeth, sorry, Lady Macbeth.

¹ Alex Johnstone MSP believes that the real Macbeth ... was grossly misrepresented by Shakespeare and needs to be remembered as a strong and successful king, not a power hungry thug who murdered his way to the top. Mr Johnstone is tabling a motion in Edinburgh "regretting" that misrepresentation. *Wipowinde* 137 (Summer 2005) 43

Heroes and Villains

We also touch on periods as various as the Dark Ages, the Age of Enlightenment and the Second World War, and among the contributors are The Prof (as interpreted by Paul Parry), a real professor (or is it a heart-throb? See The Board for details), and enough teachers to stuff a staffroom.²

Other themes

We have already flagged up *Treasures of Britain* as the theme for the winter issue, and submissions for this would be appreciated, to reach the editor by the end of January 2006.

Now, while **Primary Sources** doesn't sound very snappy as a focus, a re-investigation of the documentary material (Gildas, *The Gododdin*, Nennius *et al*) and a re-assessment of the archaeology of the Arthurian period are what is envisaged for the spring issue. While folklore, myth and legend, as well as the arts, literature and popular culture, all get their fair share of coverage in these pages, we know that both history and archaeology are crucial areas of interest for a number of subscribers.

We have tried to respond to the survey we took of readers' views of the journal by including as many of your suggested themes as possible, but new ideas to inspire fresh thinking for future issues are always gratefully received. Do write to the editor at the West Wales address on page 3.

Compliments

Thank you for your continued feedback on the Society and the journal – the following are typical of the very kind and favourable comments we've received. Ruth Drobak, treasurer of the Arthurian Association of Australia, wrote, "Thanks so much for your *Pendragon Journals* – I enjoyed them enormously and have passed them on to our committee..." Pamela Constantine says, "Everyone who has been and is involved with the Journal is to be congratulated," adding that "It continues to have a vital role to play." The words *heads, swollen* and *guard against* spring to mind.

For this issue, the Editor wishes to thank all the contributors, and especially those who have waited some time for publication.

² Charles Evans-Günther's two "I shall return!" papers were first published by *Clan Arthur*.

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Pendragon pursues Arthurian Studies: history & archaeology; legend, myth & folklore; literature, the arts & popular culture
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President Professor W M S Russell

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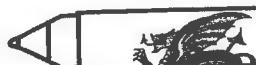
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Charles Evans-Günther

Letters



After Dürer

EPPSTEIN REVISITED

First, congratulations to the Editor on his *tour de force* in giving us two splendid issues at once. Second, I much regret again failing to attend the Round Table. Because of my chronic renal failure and need for regular dialysis, it would have been a *siege perilleux* for me, and I am not like Galahad or (in T S Eliot's words) 'other heroes of that kidney'.¹ But I am delighted it was such a success. Third, many thanks to Steve Sneyd for the factual information about Eppstein, which sheds a more agreeable light on Dumas's sinister setting; a spa is hardly the place for a spook.

W M S Russell, Reading, Berks

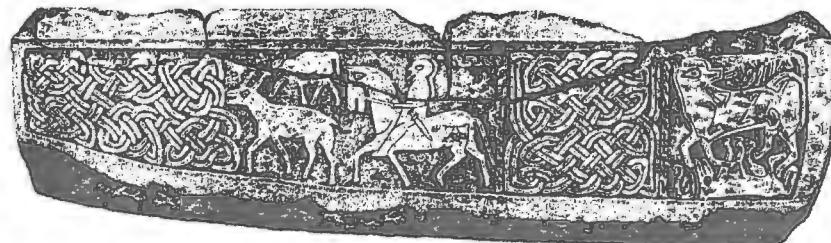
¹ Eliot, T S (1932) "A Cooking Egg". In Eliot, T S Poems 1909-1925 (London: Faber and Faber) 60-62, quotation 60 line 12



Cabal, Ian Brown

BEASTS AND BORDERS
Some great illustrations in the Arthurian Beasts issue [XXXII No 3] — I was particularly struck by Ian Brown's amazing giant (page 18).

Re the Baskervilles article ["Hound of Hell" by Fred Stedman-Jones, 46-7], I was left wondering if the story of Arthur's giant hound Cabal's footprint (in Powys fairly adjacent to Herefordshire, Erging / Archenfield area just east of Hay) could have at one time been associated with stories of sightings of the beast as a black dog haunt, which subsequently got transferred across the Wye to a later local figure of fear. The display board about the story outside Clyro church illustrates Black Vaughan's corpse itself turning into the beast: a version in that form would parallel other instances where the barguest (to use the Yorkshire name for such black dogs) is a posthumous were-manifestation of a terrifying human — Bungay Castle, Suffolk, for example, was said to be haunted by 'Mad Bigod', serial rebel Earl of Norfolk, in black dog form.



Front of Govan sarcophagus, as pictured in 1902

(2004) 10-11].

The church at Govan, Glasgow is situated a few metres from the River Clyde and houses 37 graveslabs, four early crosses, five hogbacked stones and the sarcophagus, which forms the largest collection of early carved stones out with Iona and St Andrews.

What we know of the archaeology, history and local lore of the site and its sculpture has been combed over by academics in various disciplines over a number of years now but their findings are neither final nor absolutely conclusive due to a dearth of knowledge of these 'dark ages'. Good progress has been made in casting light on the site's earliest period but debate continues, so what do we know, what do we deduce and what are the legends?

To be pedantic on yet another geographical front, in Shani Oates' very interesting article ["The Wisdom of Courtly Love" XXXII No 4, 14-19], her references to Aquitaine, Languedoc and Provence were somewhat confusing. They were three quite separate political jurisdictions running west to east within the area of what is now Southern France where the language called Provençal (also known as *langue d'oc*, so named because *oc* was the word for yes) was, and to an extent still is, spoken. Aquitaine (which later came to the Plantagenet kings via marriage to its heiress, Eleanor) faced the Bay of Biscay, and was a fief of the French kings, as was Languedoc, east of it, around Toulouse, which faced the Mediterranean. Provence, also facing the Mediterranean, was further east again, the other side of the Rhone, and at the time of the troubadours was a fief not of France but of the Holy Roman Empire.

Steve Sneyd, Huddersfield, W Yorks

GOVAN OLD PARISH CHURCH SITE

I'd like to add to what Chris Lovegrove has pointed up concerning the Govan Old Parish Church site and its early sculpted stones ["Early British Christians" XXXII No 4 (2005) 32-3; "A Portrait of Arthur?" XXXII No 1

² Richard Norton-Taylor "Priest and poet in MI5 check on far left" *Guardian* September 2005, 6

We know that in the 1830s bones were found in Doomster Hill by workmen amid what was possibly a timbered chamber, so the hill may have been the burial site of an important person and also a Court Hill, not necessarily at the same period.

We know too that in 1855 the sculptured stone sarcophagus was dug up from the graveyard where it had been entangled in the roots of two elm trees. It is thought that originally the sarcophagus would have stood in front of the altar and had been buried to safeguard it, perhaps at the Reformation. The layout of Govan churchyard is most unusual: to my mind it is very like the seed pod carrier of the elm, with the church as the seed itself. The Wych or White Elm is a sacred tree here and I have noticed its place-names at British or Arthur sites before eg Levengrove Park (*leamhain* means elm) at Dumbarton Rock (near Arthur's Castle site); and Loch Lomond is believed to be a corruption of Loch Leven, for the River Leven flows from it into the River Clyde at Dumbarton.

It is deduced that the sarcophagus dates from the 9th century on art historical grounds, but it is 'the only sarcophagus carved from solid stone known from pre-Norman Northern Britain and there are few parallels from Southern Britain'.³ It is carved from mica schist which we also find in Ben Arthur, the mountain north-west of Govan, and today the sarcophagus lies before the altar of Govan Old Parish Church, a building where in worshipping we too face north-west, unusual in a Christian church. The sculptured imagery of the sarcophagus does not contain Christian iconography however, indeed the carving for all we know could be of a later date than the rock-cut sarcophagus itself. The iconography includes a nobleman on horseback with an A carved on its flank: A for Alpha, or Arthur, or Aedan or for a royal badge or with some other meaning now lost to us. Its meaning can only be conjectured.

By local church lore the sarcophagus is associated with St Constantine, who is reputed to have established a church at Govan in the latter part of the 6th century CE. Dr Stephen Driscoll however believes that 'its imagery invites a royal interpretation' and

that 'it is widely considered to be the finest (extant) example of British sculpture'.⁴

Our lore tells us that St Constantine of Govan was a King of Cornwall who became a priest after studying in Ireland and came to Govan at St Columba's request. We are told that King Arthur left his kingdom to a Constantine. Another claim is made for an Irish St Constantine who was martyred on Kintyre in the 590s, which is of particular interest if you recall that the Christian King Aedan MacGabrain (MacGowran) of Dalriada, father of Artur, occupied and controlled Kintyre, Argyll at that time. Martyrdom or political slaying?

Constantine is the Latin form of the Irish Conn, and later kings of the Cenel n Gabrain dynasty of Dalriada were named Constantine as Kings of Scots, though probably called Conn by their own folk. The two 6th-century Constantines may or may not have been one and the same person; as yet we do not know. The sarcophagus could have been cut centuries later in order to house bones of one or more persons from the 6th century; again, we do not know.

I leave the last word to Dr Driscoll: 'The immense scale of the Govan mound and its proximity to the royal seat at Partick⁵ suggests that the Court of the King of Britons met here'.⁶ Govan is well worth a visit if you're in the area!

Eileen Buchanan, Houston, Renfrewshire
 • Eileen, whose father is Govan-born and bred, is a member both of the Friends of Govan Old Parish Church and of the Pictish Arts Society. In a note, she mentions an interesting discovery recently reported to her by the late Colin MacLeod of the Gal Gael Trust in Govan: A well shrine to Clotha, the river goddess of the Clyde, was found during work in the basement of the Pearce Institute next to the churchyard gates. We stay in Scotland for the next comment.

⁴ Stephen Driscoll (2002) *Alba: the Gaelic Kingdom of Scotland, 800-1124*

⁵ Govan Church sits a few metres from the water's edge on the River Clyde. A 12th-century source incorporating earlier British material states that the seat of the late 6th-century Rhydderch Hael was at Partick on the opposite bank to Govan.

⁶ Stephen Driscoll (2004) *Govan: from cradle to grave*

³ Anna Ritchie (1999) *Govan and its Carved Stones*

FORT OF THE BRITONS

The World SF Convention (held in the huge Clydeside exhibition complex, with innumerable programme stands and about 3000-plus attendees) I found a bit overfacing [see "Arthurian Matters at the World SF Convention"].

Anyway, I did fulfil one ancient ambition and get to Dumbarton. The pictures hadn't really prepared me for just how huge (and steep – garrisons must've been constantly in state of Olympic fitness!) the complex is. Nothing directly Dark Age is visible, except probably the well, very little medieval, what survives is mainly 17th / 18th-century artillery defences, but I could soak up the atmosphere, the feel of the place. Soak applying in two senses, in fact – tremendous rainstorm while I was up on the top of the lower of the twin peaks (!) – rain coming almost horizontal so even sheltering in a turret I got well wet, shoes took two days to dry out, but well worth it.

Steve Sneyd, Huddersfield, W Yorks

HEROES

In his writings, the well-known American writer Joseph Campbell deplores the fact that there are no modern myths leading us from the past, but I believe we have not yet outgrown the traditional myths which therefore remain highly relevant.

In any case, the relevance of Arthur has always been that of the once and future king. He and his knights are symbolically even more important to us now when society is again passing through decline and the soul-searching which must precede the outworking of a better, more just order.

In her splendid article ("Dancing with the Arthurian Legends, Druidry and Jung"), Dr Strode reminds us that Gawain and Perceval can be seen as two sides of one individual / someone in the process of becoming whole. To me, only Galahad represents the holistic being who has quested outwardly and then inwardly and is in true balance.

Of all the knights, Galahad, a completed being, stands as the symbolic pointer and example most vital in our time, when so many are journeying to the next stage of the quest, where personal wholeness – and thus the opportunity to be of greater service to life – is the goal to be achieved.

Pamela Constantine, Upminster, Essex



Lancelot's Lament

For her, I did the noblest deeds
 Upon this hallowed plot.
 ... For her, my vows and principles
 Of knighthood were forgot.

My king was aye my truest friend.
 I answered to his call.
 But Love, when he is sovereign
 Is ruler of us all.

Now those who battled to be true
 Must bear their punishment,
 She behind grey convent walls
 And I in banishment.

Saddest of all the kingly man
 Who was my faultless friend.
 Until his spirit finds its peace
 Our trials can have no end.

But Love's intent is all unknown,
 At least this side of heaven;
 And if my king is listening there,
 We yet may be forgiven.

Pamela Constantine

From the collection *The Light of Camelot*,
 available from 104 Argyle Gardens,
 Upminster, Essex RM14 3EU

Pen Dragon

Letters to the Editor (at the West Wales address on the Contents page) are very welcome. Please do indicate if any part of your correspondence is not for publication.



ARTHUR IN PEMBROKESHIRE?

Move over Cornwall, Somerset, Mid-Wales, North Wales, Scotland and anywhere else that boasts the site of Arthur's last battle – Dyfed in south-west Wales is the latest *Camlann* claimant, according to a local writer.

North of Pembrokeshire's Preseli Hills lie Nevern – Nanhyfer or Nyfer in Welsh – and its church dedicated to St Brynach, a 6th-century holy man. Separating the church enclosure (Welsh *llan*) from the local chieftain's secular land is a brook now called the Caman. Raymond Humphreys asks if 'Caman Lan' is the site of Camlann in which Arthur was mortally wounded. "The site of this battle has never been identified, although places as far afield as Cumberland, Cornwall and Somerset have been suggested," he writes. Why here? "There must have been a reason for Brynach to have found his church at Nevern ... besides the secluded nature of the wooded valley," Humphreys suggests, enigmatically. The problem with rhetorical questions such as "Did King Arthur meet his end at Nevern?" is that they invite a response in the negative.

VITALANI-EMERETO

After Nash-Williams

Rather more interesting is Humphreys' occasionally confused discussion of what he calls the *Vitalinus Stone* in Nevern churchyard (though this 5th to early 6th-century pillar was discovered in the late 19th century being used as a farm gatepost two miles away). The six-foot high stone is actually inscribed in Latin (with the A and the L ligatured together)

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VITALANI-/EMERETO

(Humphreys translates this as "of Vitalinus the superannuated") and in Irish ogam script as *Vitaliani* ("[the stone] of Vitalianus").

He then identifies this Vitalianus with the Vitalinus ("Guitolin") named as Vortigern's grandfather in the 9th-century *Historia Brittonum*, and also with the Vitalinus who fought against Ambrosius at the battle of Wallon ("Catguoloph") around 440. However, these are all likely to be from different generations and, therefore, different historical figures. CL

♦ Raymond Humphreys "Did King Arthur meet his end at Nevern?" *Pembrokeshire Life* (September 2005) 20-21; V E Nash-Williams (1950) *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (University of Wales Press); John Morris *ed transl* (1980) *Nennius: British History and The Welsh Annals* (Phillimore) chapters 49, 66

DARK AGE SOUTERRAINS ...

Souterrains are underground passages found associated with settlements in the highland zones of Britain and in Ireland, Brittany and Cornwall (where they are known as *fogous*). Typically, they have drystone walls and slab roofs, and when they can be dated seem to mostly centre on the Iron Age.

What is their function? The answer mostly favoured by archaeologists is that they are cold-stores for food: Diodorus Siculus (who got this information from Pytheas) recorded that British Iron Age people stored their grain in "underground repositories" (Fox 1973: 178-9). An early suggestion, that they were hiding-places in case of attack, is now generally discredited, while a ritual use is sometimes postulated, though usually with little if any proof.

A recently-rediscovered souterrain at *Langskall Farm* on the Orkney island of Westray was found in close association with a roundhouse of possible mid- to late 1st millennium BC date. In the Iron Age the single-chambered souterrain was reached down a steep flight of steps from inside the roundhouse, but the excavators found it hard to believe the damp fragile construction was indeed a foodstore: "Perhaps its builders used it for other purposes that were not purely functional?" (This is academic-speak for *ritual*.)

When the roundhouse was abandoned, the settlement's focus shifted to an adjacent

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area, dateable from pottery to around the mid-1st millennium AD. There were no finds in the souterrain dateable to the Dark Age period (did the inhabitants keep the souterrain floor clear, or was the souterrain no longer in use?) but the Viking Age successors, builders of a longhouse on the site, did use the adjacent souterrain as a rubbish dump. Whatever the final analysis is, these enigmatic structures seem certain to keep their mystery and mystique. CL

♦ Aileen Fox (1973) *South West England 3,500 BC-AD 600* (David & Charles); Hazel Moore and Graeme Wilson "The Langskall Souterrain" *Current Archaeology* 199 (September / October 2005) 333-5

... AND DARK AGE MAZES?



Between Tintagel and Boscastle in North Cornwall, Rocky Valley famously boasts two unicursal mazes of the so-called Cretan type. Their date is much disputed, and the two favoured chronological windows are the Bronze Age (around 3,500 years ago) and more recent times (maybe around two centuries ago). The claimed discovery of a *third* maze has led to calls for them to be re-dated to the Dark Ages.

An exclusive report by Cornish exchange magazine *Meyn Mamvro* highlights a possible extra but very weathered maze just discernible above the existing two. Its discoverer David Roberts notes that it is "faint but unmistakeable", and the published photograph shows it to be similar in pattern and size to the others (one of which is pictured above). From its condition Cheryl

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Straffon believes it may be earlier than the other two, that the others may have been re-cut over time, or even that the two now evident were cut as late as the 19th century in imitation of the original (if that is what it is).

The editor of *Meyn Mamvro* goes further. She has argued ("Rocky Valley Mazes – the Irish connection" *Meyn Mamvro* 24) that "the most likely date for the carvings was in the early Christian period ... and not as early as the Bronze Age claimed for them on the plaque next to the carvings, nor as late as the 18th-19th century date claimed for them by both Jeff & Abegeal Saward" in 2001.

Near Hollywood in Ireland's Wicklow Hills a mirror image of the Rocky Valley mazes was discovered on the underside of a rock in 1908, also carved with a metal tool and of a similar size and shape. Straffon believes this reflects the known contacts between south-east Ireland and Cornwall in the 6th century CE, and that the Rocky Valley maze patterns may have been made in thanksgiving or remembrance of Cornish incomers' original homeland. This theory, however, ignores the contacts made between islanders over millennia since the Bronze Age which could equally account for the carvings. CL

♦ Cheryl Straffon "Third labyrinth at Rocky Valley?" *Meyn Mamvro* 58 (Autumn 2005) 6

PALUG'S CAT IDENTIFIED?

You may have caught the fascinating news item on BBC radio that carbon dating of two sets of lynx bones found in the Yorkshire Dales gave dates respectively in the Roman era and around 425, that is, far later than lynx had previously been thought to have been hunted to extinction in Britain. Perhaps the stories of Arthur and company fighting "lions" in were not so preposterous after all, but garbled memories of lynx encounters.

Steve Sneyd

♦ BBC Radio news, October 10 2005; Chris Lovegrove "A concise Arthurian Bestiary" *Pendragon* XXXII No 3 (2005) 9



We are particularly keen to hear of Dark Age discoveries in your area: do write to the Editor

I shall return!

2: From Scotland to Japan

Charles W. Evans-Gunther



Arthur MacArthur

Arthur MacArthur I was born on the 26th of January 1817, the son of Arthur and Sarah MacArthur from Glasgow.¹ The younger Arthur grew up to believe he was from a clan, and a highland one at that.² His father had died shortly before he was born and some years later his mother remarried. When he was about ten all three emigrated to the United States.³ Like most newcomers they arrived in New York, but moved to Uxbridge, Massachusetts, where Sarah's sister was said to be already living.

Arthur, an intelligent and ambitious young man, became interested in law and politics. He returned to New York, went to law school and was admitted to the Bar in 1841. While studying he met and married Aurelia Belcher, daughter of Benjamin and Olive Belcher, from Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts.⁴ The Belcher family were amongst earliest settlers in America and linked the MacArthurs to the Roosevelts and to Winston Churchill.⁵ Arthur and Aurelia had

¹ It is usually stated that he was born in 1815, which is probably based on census material, but a letter, printed in the December 2001 issue of *The Round Table* (the Clan Arthur Newsletter), states he was born in 1817. A photocopy of this letter was sent to me from the MacArthur Memorial Archives.

² The same letter says his father and mother visited his father's birthplace, shortly before his father's death. It described an area including Loch Katherine and the Trossicks.

³ According to this letter Arthur was seven years old when Sarah remarried, to one Alexander Meggett. Donald MacArthur, Listmoderator of the MacArthur Rootsweb, states he has seen the marriage records at Glasgow OPR.

⁴ Aurelia was the oldest of six children and the family are descended from King Edward the First, via Joan Plantagenet to Benjamin Belcher.

⁵ Franklin D Roosevelt was descended from Captain Lemuel Pope, and Pope's sister Hannah married the Rev Samuel Hunt. Samuel and Hannah's daughter, Deborah, married Joseph Belcher, Aurelia's great-great-

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two sons – the first, born in 1845, they named Arthur (thus Arthur II) and the second Francis (Frank), born in 1853 soon after they had moved to Milwaukee. The elder Arthur had had a disagreement with Aurelia's parents due to political differences. He became an attorney and in 1855 was elected deputy governor. Two years later he was appointed circuit judge and held the post for twelve years.

Arthur MacArthur

In 1861 the American Civil War broke out and the 16-year-old Arthur junior tried to join up. At first he was refused, but after strings were pulled he was given a commission in the newly formed 24th Volunteer Infantry Regiment. It was at this time that the surname was changed from McArthur to MacArthur – his name had been written down wrong in army records and Arthur II decided to continue to spell it that way. At the Battle of Missionary Ridge the young lieutenant rallied his men, picked up the fallen regimental colours and led a headlong frontal assault against the Southern lines. The next year he narrowly missed death when a bullet hit him in the chest. He was saved by a wad of letters and a small Bible in his jacket pocket.

Of the 1,150 original members of the 24th Volunteers only 400 survived. After the war, for a period, Arthur junior studied law but missed the army and rejoined in February 1866 as a 1st Lieutenant in the 17th Infantry Regiment. There followed a period of stagnation but he moved to the 13th Infantry and fought in the Sioux Wars during the 1870s. In 1875 he met Mary Pinkney Hardy at a Mardi Gras ball in New Orleans. It was love at first sight but there was a problem. She was a Southern lady from Norfolk, Virginia, and he was a Northern gentleman. Both families were against the match but they were married in May 1875. Mary's

grandfather, Joseph and Elizabeth Farnsworth had two daughters: Mary married Abraham Ripley and Rebecca married John Ruggles. Mary's line went to Clarissa Hall, who married Leonard Jerome and their daughter was Jennie Jerome, who married Lord Randolph Churchill. Rebecca and John Ruggles' daughter, Elizabeth, married Gregory Belcher, Aurelia's great-great-great grandfather.

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brothers, who had fought the North in the Civil War, boycotted the wedding.⁶ On the 1st August 1876 they had their first son – Arthur III, shortly after which Arthur II was posted to Louisiana. Their second son Malcolm was born in 1878 while visiting Connecticut. A year after this Arthur II was posted to Little Rock, Arkansas, where Douglas was born on the 26th January 1880. Sadly, Malcolm died of measles in 1883 aged only five.

Meanwhile, Arthur I had remarried following the death of his Aurelia during the Civil War.⁷ He headed the American delegation to the Paris Exposition and the following year became Federal Judge at the Supreme Court in Washington. He retired in 1888 but continued to lead an active life, being president of the board of regents of the National University and president of the Washington Humane Society.⁸ The impression is that he was a very likeable man as well as a respected one. Both Arthur I and Douglas had the same birthday and this made a strong bond between grandfather and grandson. Years later Douglas was to describe him as a "large handsome man of fine presence, genial disposition and marked charm of manner... I never forgot his words, 'My dear boy, nothing is sure in this life.'"

Frank MacArthur attended Harvard, graduating in 1876, after which he studied law, following in his father's footsteps, and was admitted to the bar in 1880. He worked in the legal department of the US Patent Office for about six years and then set up a private practice in New York. In 1886 he married Rose Winston, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and they had a son, Malcolm, in 1888. Frank died suddenly in December

⁶ The Hardy family came originally from Pembroke in Dyfed, descended from an Anthony Hardy, who died in 1605. The family emigrated to America and eventually settled in Bertie County, North Carolina. Pinky was the daughter of Thomas Ashbury Hardy and Elizabeth Pierce. She had at least four brothers.

⁷ Aurelia died in 1864. Arthur's second wife was Zelia Hodges. They married in 1868 but she died in 1869.

⁸ He married his third wife, Mrs Mary E Hopkins (widow of Benjamin F Hopkins), in 1871 and she outlived him by three years.

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1889, bringing to an end a short but brilliant career as a lawyer. Malcolm later also went to Harvard, but seemingly didn't work, didn't have any children and died in 1980.

Douglas MacArthur

In 1889 Arthur II got a promotion, moved to Washington and was awarded the Medal of Honour for his part in the Battle of Missionary Ridge during the Civil War. Meanwhile, Arthur III had enrolled at Annapolis, and Douglas went to the West Texas Military Academy. While Douglas was aiming for West Point and following his father's footsteps, Arthur III had decided on the US Navy as career. In 1892 he entered the US Naval Academy and graduated with honours in 1896. That year while Douglas was still at the West Texas Military Academy, Arthur I died while on holiday in Atlantic City. It was a great blow to the MacArthurs and especially Douglas.

Soon after graduating Arthur III served on the gunboat *USS Vixen* at the Battle of Santiago in June 1898. The United States had gone to war with Spain, Commodore George Dewey having sailed to the Philippines where he bombarded the Spanish fleet into submission. Meanwhile, Arthur II, now a Lieutenant Colonel, assigned to the chief of staff of the III Corps, also headed for Manila as brigadier of volunteers and led his troops into action, riding on a Filipino pony. He made quite a sight being rather plump with his large campaign hat, salt and pepper moustache and *pince nez*. While the father was promoted to major general and given command of the 2nd Division, the eldest son was with American naval forces in China during the Boxer Rebellion and Douglas had entered West Point.

In 1900 Arthur MacArthur II was assigned the job of military governor of the Philippines with William H Taft being made civilian governor. That year Arthur MacArthur III married Mary Hendry McCalla, the twenty-four-year-old daughter of Rear Admiral Bowman McCalla. Douglas was their best man. The senior Arthur became Commander of the Department of the Pacific in 1902. His headquarters were in San Francisco but he was soon back in the East on tour, first Hawaii, then to Japan and China. Meanwhile, Douglas graduated top of his class from West Point and sailed to the

Philippines with the 3rd Engineer Battalion. There he was nearly killed by rebels, the bullet passing through his campaign hat, but he returned fire killing both men before they could reload. In 1904 Captain Parker West, General Arthur MacArthur's aide, was ordered home and Douglas took his place. They stayed together, being joined by Mrs MacArthur in November 1905 when they had a holiday together visiting Singapore, Burma, India and Japan, where they met the Japanese Meiji Emperor.

At this time Naval Lieutenant Arthur MacArthur III was getting experience of submarines and in 1906 while his father took over the command of the Pacific Division he became aide to the Superintendent of the US Naval Academy. 1909 saw the retirement of Arthur MacArthur II, proud of his Medal of Honour but disappointed that he had never reached the position of Chief of Staff. Arthur III was serving aboard the *USS Louisiana* as Lt Commander and Douglas had been on a course at the Engineer School in Washington. Until the United States entered the First World War Arthur III continued to rise in rank to Commander, in charge of *USS McCall*, captain of the mine sweeper *USS San Francisco* and in 1917 the cruiser *USS South Dakota*. Sadly, in 1912 the retired General Arthur MacArthur died. Though already very ill, he insisted on attending a reunion of Civil War veterans and died while giving a speech. His youngest son, who lived very much in the shadow of his father, was heartbroken.

Douglas now was stationed in Vera Cruz, Mexico, during the revolution that was taking place there. At this time he took part in a raid which he considered should have got him the Medal of Honour. He was very bitter when he was rejected. The problem was Douglas had been working independently without informing his commanding officer – the first of a long line of acts in the MacArthur style of fighting. One soldier who served with Arthur MacArthur II and Douglas stated "Arthur MacArthur was the most flamboyantly egotistical man I had ever seen, until met his son."⁹ Then America joined in the conflict on the other side of the Atlantic and Douglas had more chances of

getting that which he craved. At that time Commander Arthur MacArthur III was captain of the *USS Chattanooga* on convoy duty. For his part in World War I he received the Navy Cross, DSM, a commendation from the War Department and promotion to Captain.

In Europe Douglas soon made a name for himself as Colonel of the 42nd "Rainbow" Division, often risking his own life and refusing to wear standard uniform such as a helmet or gas mask. The medals poured in with two Distinguished Service Crosses, two Croix de Guerre (from France), no less than seven Silver Stars and a Purple Heart. His attitude produced numerous occasions when he was in trouble with his commanders, and once he was arrested as a spy because a guard couldn't recognise his uniform. (When the War ended an investigation took place concerning MacArthur's idiosyncratic methods, but he was given support by General John J Pershing.) After service in the Rhineland he was appointed Superintendent of West Point.

During this period Arthur MacArthur became commander of the San Diego Naval Training School and then captain of the *USS Henderson*. Meanwhile, Douglas had met Louise Cromwell Brooks, a millionaire divorcee, daughter and heiress of Oliver E Cromwell. They got married on February 14th, 1922 and in September sailed to the Philippines where Douglas had been appointed commander of the Manila District. Douglas enjoyed his stay in the Philippines but Louise didn't. Then on December 2nd, 1923, while serving on the Board of Examination for Promotion and Retirement of Naval Officers, aged only 47, Arthur died of appendicitis. He lived an active life (19 of his 32 years in service at sea), was an officer of considerable ability, and very popular. It is believed he would soon have become an admiral if he hadn't died. His widow became the devoted companion of her mother-in-law, later joining Douglas in the Philippines.

In 1929 Douglas and Louise divorced. They had been living in New York at the time while Douglas had been released from Army duty to act as president of the American Olympic Committee. When Douglas returned to the Army and was reassigned to Manila, Louise headed for Reno and divorce. The following year Douglas returned to the

United States with a Filipina Eurasian mistress, Isabel Rosano Cooper. He now achieved what his father hadn't and was made Chief of Staff. During his term he personally took part in the Bonus Army Incident. Over twenty thousand jobless veterans of the First World War marched on Washington. Rumours of communists led Douglas to order his men to drive the veterans and their families off their makeshift campsite on the opposite side the Anacostia River. Forty were injured and a little baby died from inhaling tear gas.



C W Evans-Günther

When, in 1935, his term of office was up, President Roosevelt awarded him Oak Leaf Cluster to his DSM and shipped him off to the Philippines to be the newly appointed President of the Philippine Commonwealth Manuel Quezon's Military Adviser. On the way, accompanied by his mother and sister-in-law, he met Jean Marie Faircloth, a petite thirty-five year old from Tennessee.¹⁰ They spent a lot of time together during the

⁹ This was Colonel Enoch H Crowder, who was aide to General Arthur MacArthur.

¹⁰ Jean Marie Faircloth was the daughter of Edward Cameron Faircloth and Sallie Beard. Sallie had divorced when the children were young and went to live with her widowed father, Richard Beard. She later remarried to a Frederick Smith and lived next door to her father.

voyage. When they separated at Manila, she continued on to Shanghai, but soon returned and took up residence at a hotel, seemingly with some encouragement from Mary McCalla MacArthur. One month after landing on December 3rd 1935, having been ill on the journey, Douglas's mother died. Seemingly, he was inconsolable for some considerable time. The group returned to the United States with Pinky's body in 1937 and Douglas and Jean were married at a quiet ceremony in New York on 30th April.

A year later, on February 31st 1938, Arthur IV was born in the Philippines. Mary McCalla MacArthur died in the United States in 1959. She had five children, the most famous of whom was Douglas II. He was born in 1909, married Laura Louise Barkley, served as US ambassador to a number of countries, including Japan from 1957 to 1961, and died in 1997.¹¹

I shall return!

In 1868 Japan had opened up to the West, an emperor – Mutsuhito – was on the throne and the country began to modernise. At that time the Japanese were still feudal and their army had been armed mainly with muskets, swords and spears. At an incredible speed, throughout the rest of the 19th century and first three decades of 20th century Japan changed, becoming the most powerful empire in the East. The Meiji Emperor died in 1912 and his son Yoshihito – Taisho Emperor – died in 1926. When Douglas MacArthur retired from the US Army and moved back to Manila as Field Marshal of the Philippines, Hirohito was emperor, the Japanese had conquered Korea and Manchuria and were fighting in China. Many ignored the signs and when Germany invaded Poland and Britain and France

¹¹ Arthur MacArthur III and Mary McCalla's other children were: Arthur, born in 1903 but died in 1912; Bowman McCalla, born in 1907, married three times – Beatrice Ashmead Littlefield, Elena Gouchovsky and Kathleen Gray – and died in 1999; Mary Elizabeth born in 1913, married twice – John E Reyburn and Thomas R Symington – and may still be alive; and Malcolm, born in 1914, who joined the Naval Academy but died when a cadet in 1933. All those who married had children and all were female.

declared war, Japan sided with Hitler.

On December 8th 1941 Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor and the United States declared war on both Japan and Germany. The Japanese wasted no time and two weeks later invaded the Philippines. MacArthur's ill-prepared and badly supplied army were no match for the Japanese Imperial Army, who so far had only lost one battle in decades and that was to Soviet troops under General Zhukov in Mongolia. On January 10th, 1942, the Japanese commander, General Honma Masaharu, called on MacArthur to surrender, but he refused. American and Filipino soldiers were eventually pushed to Bataan. The General was ordered off the islands by President Roosevelt and on March 11th, with his wife, Arthur, Chinese servant and staff, MacArthur escaped on PT 41. From Mindanao they took a 10-hour flight to Australia.

They landed at Bachelor Field, where MacArthur gave an impromptu interview. *The President of the United States ordered me to break through the Japanese lines ... to Australia for the purpose ... of organizing the American offensive against Japan, a primary objective of which is the relief of the Philippines. I came through and I shall return.*

King Arthur is not dead, he but sleeps waiting to return when his land is in need! On October 20th, 1944, MacArthur waded ashore at Leyte beach, in the Philippines, and soon after gave the following speech: *People of the Philippines, I have returned. The hour of your redemption is here... Rally to me. Let the spirit of Bataan and Corregidor lead on... Let every arm be steeled. The guidance of Divine God points the way. Follow in His name to the Holy Grail of righteous victory.*

Japan was now losing the war and despite calls from members of his government Emperor Hirohito refused to sue for peace. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese, both military and civilian, were to die before his imperial majesty condoned a surrender. It was only after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union entering the war against Japan that Hirohito ordered his people to lay down their arms. General MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) and landed in Japan on August 30th, 1945.

A few days later on the *USS Missouri* he accepted Japan's formal surrender. World War Two was over!

For the moment Japan had a new ruler and, as Dower aptly puts it, "The line between Supreme Commander and Supreme Being was always a fine one in MacArthur's mind." At first GHQ, set up in the Dai Ichi Insurance Company building opposite the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, did wonders, especially with land reforms, but things began to go sour. MacArthur had no contact with the ordinary 63 million Japanese and ruled from GHQ giving audiences like a King. In fact during his term as SCAP never visited the Imperial Palace, the Emperor had to come to him. The first visit was on September 27th, 1945, and is still rather controversial. MacArthur claimed in his autobiography that Hirohito took sole responsibility for his country's conduct during the War, but recently released documents show no evidence of this. It is possible some kind of deal had been done, and soon Hirohito and members of the Royal Family were exonerated from taking any part in the Pacific War. Even though Hirohito, an extremely methodical man, knew and condoned more or less every action during the War, he was exempted from responsibility. Others, included Prince Asaka, who was in charge of Japanese troops at the notorious Rape of Nanking, plus the commander and staff of Unit 731, who conducted chemical and biological warfare, got away without barely a slap on the wrist. However, one of the three photographs taken on that day became famous and had a strong psychological effect on the Japanese people.¹²

Japan was given a new constitution in 1947 and the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal sent seven men to their deaths for their part in atrocities during the War. Two others had already been tried and executed in the Philippines. They were General Honma, who was held responsible for the Death March in the Philippines, and General Yamashita Tomoyuki, who had defeated the British in Malaya and Singapore and had conducted a fierce rearguard action in the Philippines. The latter certainly should have been found

¹² The photographs were taken by Gaetano Faillace, a US Army reporter.

not guilty, even the tough American reporters agreed on this, but when a plea for mercy was sent to MacArthur, he refused. In Tokyo Tojo Hideki took all the blame for the War and went to the hangman in 1948. Emperor Hirohito, who seemed happy to let others take the blame, never apologised for what was done. A number of times the Showa Emperor was asked to abdicate in favour of his son Akihito, even by members of his own family, but always refused.

MacArthur continued to lord over Japan, putting the same people in power who had taken their country into the War and releasing many who were right-wing nationalists and criminals, mainly because there was now a growing fear of communism.¹³ This fear came to a head in 1950 when the Korean War began. The Supreme Commander was put in charge of a multinational force but was relieved of duty in April 1951, when he advocated the invasion of China. The reason President Truman gave for MacArthur's dismissal was that did not want to escalate the Korean War into World War Three. MacArthur left Japan on April 16th while Japanese radio played *Auld Lang Syne* and thousands lined the streets to see him off.

On his return to the United States he gave his famous speech to Congress in which he quoted from an old barracks ballad: *Old Soldiers never die, they just fade away. And like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away – an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty. Good-bye.*

MacArthur visited his beloved Philippines once more and then, following two operations at the Walter Read Hospital, died on April 15th 1964. He was not buried in Arlington Cemetery, like his father, mother and brother, but in Norfolk, Virginia, which became the home of the MacArthur Memorial. He left behind a wife, Jean, and one son, Arthur IV.

Jean MacArthur died, at Lennox Hills Hospital, aged 101 years old on January 22nd 2000. Arthur MacArthur IV never followed in his father or grandfather's foot-

steps but after graduating from the Browning School, New York in 1956 studied music at Columbia University. Later he became a musical arranger and, as far as I am aware, continues to live in New York. It is said he looks remarkably like his father and for a while lived under an assumed name, hiding his features behind a beard.



C W Evans-Günther

Parallels

Strangely enough there are some parallels between General Douglas MacArthur and Geoffrey of Monmouth's King Arthur.

♦ According to the story Arthur's grandfather came from Brittany and married a British woman of a noble family, his father was a great warrior, who married a rival's wife, and there was no son of Arthur to succeed him. Also, Arthur's wife was considered the most beautiful woman in Britain but was unfaithful to her husband.

♦ Arthur MacArthur went to America from Scotland and married a woman from a well-to-do family. Their son became a great soldier and married a woman who was from the South after the Civil War. Douglas married a woman who was both rich and

¹³ The reasons for MacArthur's change of mind are complicated and would take up a lot of space.

beautiful yet she left him. His second wife proved to be much more faithful. While Douglas did have a son, he didn't follow in his father's career.

Arthur became a legend but Douglas MacArthur was a legend in his own lifetime. For example, one writer had the young Lieutenant Douglas MacArthur leading Japanese soldiers in an attack at the Battle of Mukden, rallying them and taking a Russian battery. The Battle of Mukden, however, took place in March 1905 and Douglas wasn't given orders to proceed to the Far East and join his father until October of that year.

Reading a life of Douglas MacArthur makes one wonder what a hero is and how much would the real Arthur have been like the General? Douglas MacArthur lived up to standards he considered chivalrous and according to his autobiography believed he was descended from King Arthur. He wrote: *The MacArthurs are of Scottish descent. A branch of the Clan Campbell, the traditions of the family are linked with the heroic lore of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table...*

Reminiscences (1964)

Note

The names of the MacArthurs are difficult and I have followed William Manchester's numbering – Arthur I to Arthur IV – but other numbering systems have been suggested. Douglas was Douglas I and his nephew Douglas II. The Malcolms don't seem to have been given numbers. Japanese names are given in the Japanese style, which is family name first.

I would also like to thank a good number of people for their help with these articles. First and foremost I must thank the Clan Arthur: the late Commander James E M MacArthur; Robert D McArthur, seannachie; Robert C McArtor, editor of The Round Table; Donald MaArthur, List-moderator MacArthur Rootsweb; Carlene Harper; William J MacArthur; and John A Hansen. Special thanks to James W Zobel of The MacArthur Memorial, Norfolk, Virginia, USA. Also thanks to: Alastair McIntrye of Electric Scotland; Louise Armstrong; Anthony Belcher; Steve Blake; Ray Faircloth; Denise Smiley, Geri Iervoudis, Helen and Karen. Many thanks to Rootsweb for helping me get in touch with some interesting people.

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Arthur and the Battle of Britain

Dave Burnham



Simon Rouse

Dion Fortune

Arthur's temporal representative during the war was Dion Fortune². A natural leader, she had been interested in spiritual phenomena since childhood, joining the esoteric group known as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn as a very young woman at the beginning of the century. Like others she was repelled by the notion of black magic as espoused by Alistair Crowley and soon left to set up her own esoteric society. Her major occupation in the thirties was as leader of the Fraternity of the Inner Light, a society dedicated to exploring and reviving the Western mystery tradition. The core of her belief system was that the spirit world was accessible by meditation, where sat Masters who could guide and admonish us and even heal our woes. Humans she believed were part of both a 'group mind' and a 'group soul'. The former was, to Fortune, a fickle thing, susceptible to fashion, much like individual minds. But the group soul was made of sterner stuff and represented the true fabric of the spiritual tradition of the 'race'. Although a bedrock of Fortune's belief was that all humanity is bound to become one and that racial differences are transitory she equally believed that distinct spiritual traditions demanded separate paths to true knowledge and that each 'racial' group had different Masters. For her the Germanic group soul was a rougher, darker thing than the English, which she saw as a delightful amalgam of Teuton and Celt. She was convinced that spiritual advancement had to be gained following the path laid down by western mystics, thus she used Egyptian mythology in her teaching (based on a view that Egypt inherited a store of esoteric

I was fascinated by the article about Sybil Leek acting as Hans Holzer's 'psychic bloodhound' in 1967 in his search for echoes of the spirit of Arthur in South Cadbury.¹ The spirit of Arthur seems to have been elusive on that occasion, but he had been more forthcoming some years earlier – in the part he played defending these islands during the war. Yes, you read that correctly, for Hitler's invasion plans of 1940 were scuppered by the Observer Corps, the RAF, radar, the vigilance of the Royal Navy, the staunchness of government and people ... and King Arthur.

¹ Fred Stedman-Jones "A Window to Camelot", *Pendragon* Autumn/Winter 2002/2003

² Dion Fortune (1993) *The Magical Battle of Britain*, Golden Gates Press, with an Introduction by Gareth Knight

knowledge from Atlantis) Jewish ideas (especially the Qabbalah), much Christian thinking and increasingly Grail symbolism.

As war broke she made several decisions about the work the Inner Light could do in this national emergency. Fortune had made sure the Inner Light could not be used for political purposes, but although sometimes accused of being a master of the black arts, she was dedicated to acting only for the good of people, teaching her formal initiates and others showing an interest in spiritual advancement. She was also, paradoxically, a severely practical woman. So she took steps to help with the war effort. First of all she decided to stay in London, even though many members of the Inner Light chose to, or were obliged to, move elsewhere. She set up what she referred to as her Sanctuary at 3 Queensborough Terrace (off Bayswater Road, just south of Paddington Station) and set about devising a spiritual protection programme for Britain. The plan was simple. From the beginning of October 1939 every Wednesday she sent a letter to all the members of the Inner Light across the country, both initiates to the inner circle and those with lesser knowledge as well. The letters contained a subject for meditation. The letters were only to be studied on the morning of the meditation and at precisely 12.15pm each Sunday members in groups or individually took position facing London and engaged in the guided meditation for exactly fifteen minutes. The next letter would comment on the images conjured up and the progress made the previous Sunday.

As the weeks passed the images built up during the sessions changed, developed and became concrete. But the building work was slow. Initially concentrating on the idea of a Rose on a Cross, the Inner Light found itself in a cavern under the Hill of Vision. Immensely powerful rays of light – red, blue and purple – cast shadows and as the weeks passed three figures emerged, the Masters of the western tradition. In the spring of 1940 Fortune identified one of these guardians as Yesod, the Master Jesus. Another was Merlin, identified as an Atlantean adept. He was seated and holding a sceptre. In the red ray mounted and holding a sword to defend the island was Arthur. Fortune interpreted these figures as providing a 'sphere of psychic protection' over all of those in the

meditation network, and slowly that sphere grew to encompass the whole island. Next she promoted the idea of her group undertaking an 'angelic patrol' of the North Sea coast under Arthur's protection. Unfortunately this coincided with the Nazi assaults on Norway, Denmark and then France, Holland and Belgium. Nevertheless when Britain stood alone that summer Fortune expressed her belief that the countries that had fallen had not been beaten in the field but had fallen apart internally due to poor morale and corruption. She felt able to write on July 31st:

England stands alone and happy. All war gloom has gone. There is confidence in the future ... Power is risen within us like a tide. The inflowing of a new life impulse is making itself felt.

What is striking is that from a very early date, even before the blitz, Fortune intimated that the psychic defence work was complete, the war was won and it was time to work towards a comprehensive reconstruction of Britain. She was very excited by the dawning of the New Age of Aquarius and could see in the international situation, even in 1940, the potential for liberation and the possibility of the breaking down of barriers to the development potential of the powerless.

At the same time she warned about occult forces that might be used by the Nazis. While she joked on one occasion that it was probably not Hitler who had contrived to give her heavy cold, she clearly believed there may have been attempts in Germany to undermine morale and the psychic defence system the Inner Light had constructed. And who's to say Hitler didn't try and snuff out the little band of psychic warriors?

On September 15th an incendiary bomb fell a few yards from Dion Fortune's Sanctuary. On the 12th October a stick of four bombs straddled the Sanctuary and on Saturday 19th October, the headquarters of the Inner Light was hit, the ceiling falling in on Fortune³. Although the meditation took place the following day among the debris, Fortune then had to move out as the building wasn't safe. The next letter had an ironic tinge as the bombing came only a week after she had asked for her friends to 'invoke for

³ These are probably the dates, but the letters are not as specific as they could be.

the protection' of their headquarters. She claimed partial success as no one was injured.



TP

Wellesley Tudor Pole

Others too were concerned with the spiritual defence of the realm, among them Wellesley Tudor Pole, who had been involved in the retrieval of the Cup of Peace from the Bride's Well in Glastonbury 35 years earlier and who in 1959 set up the Chalice Well Trust⁴. Using his acquaintance with the new Prime Minister he persuaded Churchill to instigate a 'silent minute' at nine o'clock each evening. On 10th November 1940 the BBC replaced the wartime pips at nine o'clock with the familiar and comforting chimes of Big Ben, heralding a minute of prayer to bolster the national spirit. Churchill may have grasped this opportunity for a communal act of defiance but TP, as he called himself, was convinced that the psychic energies of a

⁴ These and other comments are in *My Dear Alexias*, by Rosamund Lehmann (Neville Spearman, 1979), letters from WTP to the RL from 1963 to 1968.

whole nation directed to victory in such an orderly way would have a significant impact on the forces of evil he was sure were being directed at Britain. TP does not mention Arthur as being involved in the psychic defence of Britain, but he did – in later letters to Rosamund Lehmann – mention being summoned by Arthur to 'his celestial court' for 'conferences'. He too adhered to the belief that great spirit masters (Initiates and Elder Brothers in his parlance) guided mortals and he saw Arthur as one of these guides. TP also nonchalantly mentioned being active at Dunkirk in 1940, in spirit of course, trying to influence tides, wind and weather. He also claimed to have worked esoterically to prevent invasion in 1940. He like Fortune joked about being a target for Hitler's dark forces. His house in Lansdowne Road was bombed flat in 1941 and his Duke Street offices were severely damaged later on.

Elizabeth Clare Prophet

Post-war use of the spirit of King Arthur seems to have been limited, although the leader of the American Church Universal and Triumphant (sometimes called the Summit Lighthouse), Elizabeth Clare Prophet seems to have passed up a golden opportunity⁵. From the early 1960s her community was in Malibu, whose headquarters were in a building known as 'Camelot'; an apt name as Prophet claimed to be the reincarnation of 'Queen Guinevere' (among others famous figures). The life of the Church was disrupted in the early 1980s when Prophet predicted that Armageddon was due in the 1990s. She bought a ranch in Paradise Valley, Montana, led her followers into the wilderness and spent years digging Armageddon Shelters. This activity indicates that Prophet, despite her relationship with Arthur, seems not to have had the confidence Dion Fortune did in his defensive powers. Perhaps the rumours of Arthur's estrangement from Guinevere are true. It's equally possible that with his Second World War experience to call upon Arthur acted on his own initiative this time and used his influence to end the cold war and thus prevent nuclear destruction.

⁵ Rachel Storm (1991) *In Search of Heaven on Earth* (Bloomsbury). See also www.tsl.org/messengers/ecp.asp

King Arthur and 'The Few'

It's not such a big jump from the Knights of the Round Table to those brave gentlemen who rose up and saved this country in that fateful summer of 1940. If anybody merits membership of the Round Table, 'The Few' most certainly do.

I wouldn't mind betting that King Arthur, as a one-time Dux Bellorum (Battle Leader) himself, was watching events as they unfolded in that long hot summer. And it follows that he must have been mightily proud of those, his later kinsmen, who wielded their airborne Excaliburs so well, and with such dauntless courage.

D O

I from Dark Ages Table
Embrace you 'The Few' of legend's fable
When you flew to enemy heart
I was envious, not feared, of your plight
Since those days saw in your hand
Arms that knew perfection's blend
That unique mix of craft and men
Proved descent from yeoman kin

You strode history's page unbowed
And did your part so play
That on your pass down battles row
There your righteous wrath to sow
You were one in thought and deed
And wondrously sowed our victory's seed

Then you launched your bolts of fire
To enemy heart where they did aspire
You surely changed the conflict's course
By dauntless courage and resource

I know from my times past
That legend is a flimsy raft
Reviewed by those who see too late
So an unsound History did decide my fate

Now to you 'The Few' of fable
I honour pay you knights of a later Table
My spirit danced those skies with you
And – together – we saw it through

To 'The Few' – where would we be now
without you!

Dennis Oldham



Simon Rouse

Fate

The fray was over now
And Arthur's men had won;
Mordred's horde had released the maid
And the good knights saw her run
Into the arms of swineherd John,
Soul blazing like the sun.

For he who had turned the fray
The awakening was rude:
He had thought the young maid's love was
his.

Said Lance, "This interlude
Wins you your spurs, and Arthur
Will greet you with gratitude."

But the young knight answered, "I
Have my destiny to keep."
And, hiding his fatal wound,
With heart too full to weep,
Rode into the hall of silence
And the last, long sleep.

Pamela Constantine

Perceval reflects on good advice

warrior name
means valley splitter rides
dead white

horse under snow
pine roof ties rubs hands round gold cup
fire theft

Steve Sneyd



Arthur: the Last Gothic Emperor in the West

Paul S Parry

Who was King Arthur? is a question that has troubled me for many a year. I knew there were problems after reading many of the books in the Arthurian Collection held at the County Library at Mold, Flintshire, to which I have been a frequent visitor with my main interest of the local history of Northern Flintshire.

One of the problems is the lack of consensus amongst scholars as to the person of Arthur, his deeds and his very landscape within Britain. Therefore I decided that by putting to use my local history skills I could find Arthur. For a time I thought I was making progress, seeking out all manner of written material, scarce and common. I became subscriber to *Dragon*, an Arthurian magazine run by Charles Evans-Günther whom I met during my research, and I was impressed by his immense knowledge of the subject. However, try as I may Arthur did not come to me. I could say nothing new on the subject, so I went back to my local researches but kept abreast of the literature that was being produced, and when *Dragon* finished as a magazine I switched, with the encouragement of Charles, to *Pendragon* magazine of which I have been a subscriber ever since, its pages having kept me entertained.

A little time had gone by and I happened to be in Chester, and quite by chance I found myself in an antiquarian bookshop. I could not help but notice there were lots of books on Arthur and related material, and on browsing through the first book on the shelf I found that someone had annotated many of its pages. Of course, we are all accustomed to finding such notes within second-hand books; however, as I perused the notes I realised these had not been done by a student but rather a teacher. I sat down in that bookshop and got lost, not within the books but within the notes. I enquired as to who had been the previous owner for I found around twenty volumes annotated by the same person. The assistant told me it was confidential so I made an appointment to see the owner of the shop. I borrowed money and purchased the twenty volumes. A week went by and I kept the appointment, and although he told me that it was confidential as to who was the previous owner he could tell me that he had bought thousands of books from this particular person and that he was called "The Prof" and that he had moved to South Wales. After further investigations in Chester Library and other avenues I am still unaware of his identity.

I have sat on these books for some three years for two reasons, the first being that I could just not believe what I was reading, the second being that I have not been able to abridge the notes to make a full story. The reason for this was that I was naïve in thinking Arthur would be easy. He certainly is not. I am just not scholarly enough to even follow the notes. I have not been able to add to them.

However, I do believe they are of great value.

What I would ask is that if anyone can help me with this jigsaw I would be relieved and grateful. Here as follows are some of the notes and which book and pages they appear on. There are many others.

*Arthur and His Times*¹

443. In this year the Britons sent oversea to Rome and asked them for troops against the Picts ... and then they sent to the Angles and made the same request to the princes of the Angles. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Lindsay 1966: 183)

Fir-Teigh-Aere = Vor.tig.er = High.Lord of. Ireland

"It is simple enough. The first wave is mainly of Burgundians being re-settled after the Hunic invasion of the infidel Burgunds, one of their main contingents being the scribe Scirri who divided most of England into schiris or shires. Their overlord who was ambitious was Edecon Lord of the Scirri, otherwise known as Gun(e)ther of the *Saga of the Nibelungs*. He then came into conflict with his relative Fin-Clodgio = Theudareiks, leader of the Gewissi-Goths. So Edecon, who is none other than Theudimer son of Alaric I, calls in his nephew Hengest = Engle, to assist him in this conflict, this results in the fall of Finsburg circa 447. Thereafter Edecon takes the title Vir = Foremost, Teig = Lord of, Aere = Ireland or Vortiger. Of course at this period "Aere" includes all the British Isles. He gives his nephew the Isle of Engle, not Thanet of course, but Aenglesea across the Menai Strait.

"Then his cousin, Attila's brother Bleda = Waled = Walther = Baldur = Sigefried = Seigferth Lord of the Seaglan = Sigisvult Consul of the West: makes a claim to the Roman area of the British Isles, that part that lies within the Roman walls. He marries the sister of Edecon, who must have realised that a male child from this union would stand to inherit the joint kingdom, so he had had a part in the betrayal of Siegfried and Hengest to the forces of Fin, and probably hoping each would destroy the other. Siegfried perished in the conflict but Fin was forced to come to an accommodation with Hengest. This must have involved recognising him as ruler of Siegfried's claim, which then takes the name Engleland. Later when Engle established his superiority over Vortiger, he invades the Eastern Empire and forces their recognition of his claim to Engleland at the same time having Ireland granted to his brother Scotta.

"Confusion arises from the fact that Fin would be most likely to have appealed to his fellow Visigothic Franks under Aegidius King of the Franks in Northern Gaul, but he would have wanted them to assist him against Vortiger, who would then be forced to appeal to Aetius or/and Etzel, who probably sent Denegesius = Hengest and his own eldest son Elak, probably to support Vortiger's claim, but also to make some of their own."

*The Years of the Barbarians*²

The rest of the Visigothic people, led by Wallia, continued their trek into [Spain] ... where they settled.

The Prof substitutes "Western Britain" and continues in notes:

"Named Visi – or Western – Goths from their agreed settlements in the most western parts of Europe. In Britain they went under the name 'Gewissae'. Powys in Wales carries the same name element. They were part of the buffer defence system encouraged by the Eastern Empire in the early fifth century AD and earlier."³

"The deal was struck between Constantius III, who wed the pregnant Galla, and Alaric's eldest son Gwalamer, also known as Gwallia, but the price he demanded also included land. The land given, on which no doubt the wheat also stood, was the Wirral, at that time an island, which then became known as Gwalamers-ey or Island, which name yet remains in the residual forms Mersey – originally not the waterway, which when the Wirral was an island

¹ Jack Lindsay (1958) *Arthur and His Times: Britain in the Dark Ages* (Frederick Muller 1966)

184-185

² Elespeth Davies (1988) *The Years of the Barbarians* (Pentland Press, Edinburgh)

³ Notes in Davies (1988) 66

was on both sides called the <Upper and Lower> Dee – and also as Wallasey, now shrunk into a town. This same man subsequently took Chester from where he completed the conquest of, and gave his name to Wales. His name also descends to us as Wallis, Wallace and Wales.

"Through marriage he was brother-in-law to Athawulf, and because Athawulf was also known by the title Seigmund, he was called Fra-a-Mund = brother of Mund, which by a slight distortion became Pharamund, know[n] as the first king of the Franks – he was an Amal on his mother's side and was a major link to all the royal families of Europe..."⁴

"The Goths ... had negotiated with General Belisarius to be allowed to keep control of Britain. It was this agreement, that the 'Romans' had given the Isle of Britain to the Goths, that earned him the censure, hatred, and punishment of Justinian, who stripped him of his rank and fortune."⁵

*The Glastonbury Legends*⁶

"We need only know ... that the religious orders of that time [the twelfth century] had an interest in the appropriation and distortion of this history [2000 years of "the glorious achievements of the British people"] to understand why; and since they were the keepers of all the historical writings and records we can also see how; they were able to remove almost all historic trace of Arthur. Freeman say 'We possess no single fact about him.'

"Such is the obvious explanation of why, for example, we possess all the minor works of Cassiodorus, the major historian of that period, but not his *Opus Magnum*, *The History of the Goths*. However, even in this case the destruction was not complete, and at least one copy of his work survived right down to the 15th century, the effect of which was to cause the publication by Caxton of a very much altered and distorted version of a fraction of this original, which he accredited to a mysterious man named Malory, but it is this work which actually supplies the title of Cassiodorus' original in the Latin it was *La Tome Amal-Ri a la Morte D'Artu*: 'The Book of the Amal Kings to the Death of Arthur'. This was altered of course to read Sir Tomas Malory (*La Tome Amalori*) *A la Morte D'Artu*.

"Which brings us to the connection with the Order of the Garter, their original motto being *Honi Soit Qui Amal y Pense*: 'Honoured are they of the Amal Think', so that at that time it was a crime of the first order to even mention 'The Amal', so subsequently we find, much to the surprise of the scholars, that within fifty years of Caxton's publication no copy of this work could be found with a title page, at least five copies are recorded at that time as being thus mutilated, someone had clearly 'cottoned on'.⁷"

*An Ecclesiastical History of Monmouthshire*⁸

The dynasty of Glewys-Gwynllyw came to an end with the latter and was succeeded by that of Meurig ap Tewdric which lasted into the eighth century in Monmouthshire. Tewdric is commemorated in the dedication of Matherm church ... while his son, Meurig, gave his name [The Prof inserts the name "Emeric"] to the Meurig brook and Pwyll Meurig in the parish of Matherm.⁹

Gwynllyws = Kin-Clovis = Theuderic. He is then followed by his son Emeric: which is simply a title Rex = king of the Merovingians = Franks. Which substantiates the given descent:

⁴ Notes in Davies (1988) 72

⁵ Notes in Davies (1988) 117. I noticed in Thomas Hodgkin DCL (1891) *Theodoric: the Barbarian Champion of Civilisation* (G P Putnam & Sons) the following (336): "Belisarius answered with sarcastic courtesy: 'Such great benefits should be repaid in kind. We will concede to the Goths the possession of the whole island of Britain, which is much larger than Sicily.'

⁶ R F Trehearne (1967) *The Glastonbury Legends* (Crescent Press)

⁷ Notes to Trehearne (1967) 74, 75, 76

⁸ E T Davies, Canon of Monmouth (1953) *An Ecclesiastical History of Monmouthshire, Part 1* (Starsons, Risca, Monmouthshire)

⁹ Davies (1953) 41

X Clovis X Bassallec

511:

Theudric X

534:

Emeric

Flame Bearers of Welsh History¹⁰

"Cunedda did not make the crown, he inherited it. Obviously, we have to begin somewhere in the study of history, but we cannot accept a "fait accompli" as a beginning. We should examine the name Cunedda. It comes from Cun – kin (of) Edda = Atha, we can then find out who this Atha might be, nor is that so hard to do, he is Atha-Wulf, a Gothic Emperor."¹¹

"375 AD: the dyke and vallum were first erected by the Emperor Severus from which circumstance the estuary was first named The Severan and later The Severn. Compare the account of the building of the Wall of Severus stretching 136 miles from sea to sea. This is the precise measurement of Wales from south to north. It bears no relation to either of the northern walls."¹²

Rhoscomyl says (1905: 27) *The Romans never subdued the land beyond the northern wall, neither did he cross to conquer Ireland*. The Prof says in his notes

"Yes he did, but only in the Roman name. The troops used, as elsewhere in the north, were Norsemen, 'Lombards', 'Ge-Picts', later amalgamated with Goths as Franks. Titled in some cases as: 'Saiones', later this is corrupted into "Saxons". It owes its title to its function: a sea born 'sai' (compare sailor), law enforcing body "ones", most probably relates to hundred, the legal strength and limit of such a peace inspiring force, thus probably the origin of "Hun". Compare the modern epithets for the police "scum" and "pigs" etc. Consequently, the first trace of such a body in Ireland is a force that has rebel[led] from Roman rule under Carausius the Menapian or Welshman, also known as Car = Caesar - Ossian of harp and song".¹³

Arthur: "Although the author has failed miserably to touch upon his true parentage, the figure he now refers to is known to history beyond any shadow of a doubt as Athalaric, the Last of the Gothic Emperors of the West. As Allah the god, he is known, albeit distantly, to religion and to the author he is known historically as the figure Fflamddywyn, from which comes the title of this book."¹⁴

From other notes

"Athalaric = Arthur-the-King. Born 516 AD. Became Emperor of the West 531 AD, died 534 AD, Saturday 2nd October. Killed by Maelgwyn – Amal-Gawain – at Gweith Camlam, Cors Vochmo, the marsh that runs beside Maelgwn's Strand. This was the doom of Arthur. They were cousins."¹⁵

¹⁰ Owen Rhoscomyl (1905) *Flame Bearers of Welsh History* (Welsh Educational Publishing Company)

¹¹ Notes to Rhoscomyl (1905) 1

¹² *Ibid* 4

¹³ *Ibid* 27

¹⁴ *Ibid* 41

¹⁵ If anyone is interested, I have many other notes that would be tedious to put down. I have many genealogies showing where Arthur and Maelgwyn and the other characters are connected. Can anyone help me put the other notes together to put the theory into a book(?) or does anyone know who the original author of these notes is? If so, please contact me (01745 886744).

Paul S Parry

The Making of a Villain

W M S Russell



Macbeth and Banquo with the weird sisters, from Holinshed's Chronicles (1577)

The making of a hero has its counterpart in the making of a villain. Arthurians are of course interested in the changing reputation of Arthur from his death in 539 (?) to his full-scale heroisation by Geoffrey of Monmouth in 1136, just six centuries later. For comparison with this it is interesting to look at the changing reputation of Macbeth from his death in 1057 to his full-scale villainisation (to coin a word) by Shakespeare in 1606, five-and-a-half centuries later.

Eleventh-century Scotland^{1 2 3}

In the fifth or sixth century, the Scots came from Northern Ireland and occupied Argyll (*the shore of the Gael*). Later, as Norwegian immigrants moved into the West, the Scots moved East and conquered, intermarried or

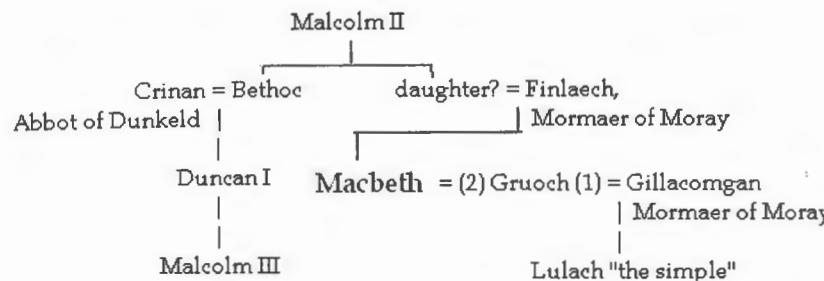
¹ Aitchison, N (1999) *Macbeth, Man and Myth* (Stroud, Glos: Sutton) Chapter 1

² Barrell, A D M (2000) *Medieval Scotland* (Cambridge: University Press) Chapter 1

³ Lynch, M (1992) *Scotland: a New History* (London: Pimlico) Chapters 2 and 4

absorbed the Picts, who occupied the North-East. By the eleventh century they had established the Kingdom of the Scots based on Southern Perthshire, though already beginning to encroach on the Welsh in the South-West and the Anglo-Danes in the South-East.

The kingdom was divided into provinces, each ruled by a *mórmaer* (Gaelic "great steward"), a kind of satrap. The *mórmaers* of Moray, East of the Moray firth, were almost independent: Irish chroniclers call them kings. The Northern Picts of this region had been conquered or absorbed by a separate branch of the ruling family of Dalriada. Their *mórmaers* were hereditary rulers, not appointed by the kings. They were cut off from the rest of the Scots by mountains, and had more to do, as allies or opponents, with the Norwegians of the Orkneys and Caithness. The lords of Moray (later, under English influence, called earls) rebelled, or asserted their independence, again and again until they were finally subdued in the twelfth century.



Both the kings of Scots and the mormaers of Moray had a curious rule of succession, in which members of two branches of the royal or mórmaer family took the throne alternately.

The historical Macbeth^{4 5 6}

Macbeth was hereditary mórmaer of Moray. He was born in about 1005. In 1020 his father was killed by his cousins, and he fled, probably to the court of Malcolm II, king of Scots. The elder cousin quite properly became mórmaer of Moray, under the alternate lineage system. When he died, the position should have reverted to Macbeth, but the other cousin usurped it. This cousin was killed in 1032, probably by Macbeth or his supporters, and Macbeth became mórmaer. He married the cousin's widow, Gruoch, who already had a son by the cousin, Lulach (so she had given suck!). Macbeth adopted this step-son as his heir.

Meanwhile in the kingdom of the Scots, Malcolm II determined to change the rule of succession, in favour of his own lineage. He killed several collaterals, and made his daughter's son Duncan his heir. On his death Duncan I duly became king.

Macbeth, besides his position in Moray, had a good legitimate claim to the throne of Scots through his mother, a close relative, probably a daughter, of Malcolm II. In addition his wife Gruoch belonged to the lineage that Malcolm had displaced and eliminated. Two other factors must have helped to gain Macbeth powerful support.

⁴ Aitchison (ref 1) Chapters 2 and 3

⁵ Barrell (ref 2) 12-15

⁶ Lynch (ref 3) 49-50

Many people disapproved of Malcolm's succession rule change, and doubted Duncan's right to the throne. In addition, Duncan turned out a most unsatisfactory war leader, suffering disastrous defeats at the hands of both the Northern Norwegians and the Anglo-Danes. When he moved North to assert his rule over Moray, Macbeth was able to dispose of him and take the throne, in 1040.

For lack of good contemporary evidence, modern historians are divided and rather vague about Duncan's death. Barrell simply states he 'was killed at Pitgaveny near Elgin'.⁷ James states Macbeth 'defeated him in open battle'.⁸ Stenton states he 'killed him in battle',⁹ but Lynch hedges and has him 'defeated and killed'.¹⁰ Aitchison, quoting sources not much later than Macbeth's death, has Duncan murdered by him, or fatally wounded and carried to Elgin, where he died.¹¹ Succession murders were almost routine in the kingdom of the Scots, so even if Macbeth killed Duncan after the battle, he was hardly villainous by the standards of the time. And with his legitimate claim, and the doubt about Duncan's, he was certainly not a usurper.

Was he a tyrant when he was king? We know very little about his reign, but the few facts available form a consistent picture.

1. He reigned for seventeen years.

⁷ Barrell (ref 2) 12

⁸ James, E (2001) *Britain in the First Millennium* (London: Arnold) 269

⁹ Stenton, Sir Frank (1989) *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: University Press) 570

¹⁰ Lynch (ref 3) 50

¹¹ Aitchison (ref 1) 62

2. He was away for several months on a pilgrimage to Rome, without losing control of his kingdom.
3. He was only finally overthrown by an enormous English army. (The English meant to install Malcolm III, son of Duncan, as a puppet king. Malcolm turned out to be more than a puppet, but he did have English courtiers and an English wife.) Macbeth did have some Norman mercenaries, but his army must have been mainly Scottish.
4. After severe defeat by the English, he held out for three more years, and even his stepson kept power for a few months after Macbeth was finally defeated again and killed.

All this strongly suggests that Macbeth was supported by most of the Scottish nobles, if not by most of the Scottish people, which would have been inconceivable if he was a tyrant and oppressor. We may conclude that he was a legitimate king and a reasonably good ruler.

Macbeth becomes a Villain

The changing reputation of Macbeth has been followed through medieval poems and chronicles to Holinshed's chronicle (first edition 1577, second 1587) and Leslie's book on Scotland (1578), Shakespeare's main sources, in an excellent book on Macbeth by Nick Aitchison.¹²

The oldest source, the *Prophecy of Berchan*, contains verses which Aitchison reasonably supposes came from a panegyric of Macbeth composed in his life-time and probably recited at his court. It is, as one might expect, unstinted praise of a brave and just prince under whom the country flourished. By the thirteenth century Macbeth is getting ambivalent treatment, as a usurper under whom the country was prosperous – two traditions have become fused. At an early stage, there is a similar ambivalence about Arthur. But because of his importance for the Welsh, Cornish, Bretons and eventually the Angevin dynasty, the positive version of Arthur's legend prevailed. In Macbeth's case, the negative version came to prevail. All the later kings of Scotland were descended from Duncan I, so Macbeth came to be seen as an interloper and usurper, and

naturally therefore a tyrant.

Successful dynasties are often uncharitable about their predecessors. The historians writing under the Abbasid caliphs have little good to say of the Umayyads, especially Muawiyah.¹³ Boris Godunov was a brave and honourable man. When Ivan the Terrible, in a fit of mad anger, attacked and killed his eldest son, Boris threw himself between them. He failed to save the prince, but sustained a serious injury. When he recovered his senses, Ivan was duly grateful. Boris loyally served Ivan and then his son Fyodor as a minister, and on Fyodor's death was elected Tsar by common consent (except for the Romanovs and other nobles, who were envious of him). He was perhaps the best ruler Russia ever had. But the historians of the Romanovs successfully blackened his name for centuries, accusing him quite falsely of murdering Tsar Fyodor and another son of Ivan's, who undoubtedly killed himself accidentally, through handling a knife when he had an epileptic seizure.¹⁴ So we need not be surprised that by John of Fordun's chronicle (about 1370) Macbeth has become a murderous tyrant, killing, imprisoning or depriving of their estates all he suspected of supporting Malcolm III. In this chronicle MacDuff first appears. In about 1406, Andrew of Wyntoun, in a verse chronicle, introduced the supernatural element, making Macbeth son of the Devil (and hence invulnerable to anyone of woman born), and having three 'weird sisters' appear to him in a dream with the fatal predictions.

In Hector Boece's history of the Scots (1527) the weird sisters became real-life witches. He also invented Banquo as an ancestor of the Stewarts, soon generally accepted as a historical character. Leslie's book already mentioned (1578) provided a genealogical tree from Banquo to James VI of Scotland. Boece and Leslie both make Lady Macbeth an accessory and instigator of crime. Raphael Holinshed's chronicle, Shakespeare's main source, has most of the plot motifs of the play, and presents the villain as a brave but cruel man who became progressively corrupted by crime and power.

¹³ Hitti, P K (1967) *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan) 198

¹⁴ Grey, I (1074) *Boris Godunov, the Tragic Tsar* (Newton Abbot: Readers Union) *passim*

Shakespeare and James VI / James I

Unless we accept the statement of Nicholas Rowe, in 1709, that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written because Elizabeth I wanted to see Falstaff in love,¹⁵ *Macbeth* is the only one of Shakespeare's plays that is obviously custom-made. In every respect, it is designed to please and flatter and interest James VI of Scotland, by 1606 James I of England. Like Polonius, James seems to have disliked long plays;¹⁶ *Macbeth* is the shortest of Shakespeare's plays except for *The Comedy of Errors*; it has 1993 lines, compared with *Hamlet*'s 3924.¹⁷ The Banquo fake genealogy is played for all it's worth. The witches are designed for James as the author of *Daemonologie*: the king had been obsessed with witches ever since five of them had been tried for conspiring with the Earl of Bothwell to kill the king by magic. James had himself taken part in the interrogations of the witches under torture. They were executed, but Bothwell, who had packed the city of Edinburgh with his followers, was acquitted, though magic apart he had behaved treasonably enough.¹⁸ In 1605 a playlet was performed before James at Oxford, in which three sibyls prophesied eternal empire for Banquo's descendants.¹⁹ Shakespeare clearly amplified this message.

Macbeth was the culmination of Shakespeare's concern with James. As soon as it became certain that James would succeed to the English throne, 'Shakespeare had a pressing personal motive for interest in his country's probable new ruler. The dramatist's whole career, professional and financial, hinged on the attitude of royalty to the stage, already threatened by the Puritans.'²⁰

In 1601 a troupe of twelve actors, probably from Shakespeare's (Lord Hunsdon's)

¹⁵ Spencer, H (1948) *The Life and Art of William Shakespeare* (London: Bell) 6, 274

¹⁶ Russell, C and Russell, W M S (1961)

Human Behaviour: a New Approach (London: André Deutsch) 408

¹⁷ Bradley, A C (1905) *Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Macmillan) 467

¹⁸ Watson, G (1975) *Bothwell and the Witches* (London: Robert Hale), *passim*

¹⁹ Muir, K (1978) *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale University Press) 208

²⁰ Russell and Russell (ref 16) 408

Heroes and Villains

company, and probably also including Shakespeare himself, went to Edinburgh and Dunfermline to play before the King and the Queen. They received a very warm welcome, and were splendidly entertained. If Shakespeare was with this troupe, he probably read in Scotland William Stewart's chronicles (1558); the Comtesse de Chambrun showed that *Macbeth* follows Stewart more closely than it does Holinshed. The actors were no doubt much relieved to find that James was very fond of plays (if not too long!). He even allowed the Queen to take part in amateur theatricals, and he forbade the Edinburgh pastors to preach against the theatre.²¹ Shakespeare certainly shows considerable knowledge of (contemporary) Scotland in the play.²² A further link between the company and James appeared on the 26th of March, 1603, when Lord Hunsdon's son, Sir Robert Carey, rode to Edinburgh to inform James of Elizabeth's death and of his succession.²³

James showed great favour to Shakespeare's company. He made them his own company, gave them handsome privileges, and between his accession in 1603 and Shakespeare's death in 1616 they earned one thousand six hundred and thirty-five pounds, a huge sum at the time.²⁴ To write a play specially for their royal patron was obviously desirable. Shakespeare set to work on his sources. A difficulty was that Holinshed made Banquo an accessory to Duncan's murder. This would obviously not do, and Shakespeare made Banquo perfectly innocent and had him murdered, though he let his son Fleance escape to be James's ancestor.^{25 26} To have Duncan murdered after a battle would merely repeat the murder of the Duke of York in *Henry VI Part 3*. Shakespeare was able to compose a far more dramatic murder by using that of an earlier Scottish king, Duff, by one of his nobles, Donwald. This noble had connections with witches and an ambitious

²¹ de Chambrun, C L (1957) *Shakespeare: a Portrait Restored* (London: Hollis and Carter) 268-275

²² *Id* 271-2

²³ Russell and Russell (ref 16) 407

²⁴ de Chambrun (ref 21) 285

²⁵ Muir (ref 19) 209

²⁶ de Chambrun (ref 21) 272

Pendragon Journal of the Pendragon Society

wife, who egged him on to kill Duff in their own castle where he was a guest; he then murdered the king's two chamberlains, accusing them of the crime. Thus the marvellous murder scenes of *Macbeth* took form, and as a final compliment to James's ancestor, Duncan is made a gentle, dignified and worthy old man, instead of an incompetent youngster.^{27 28}

After the Play

Once Geoffrey of Monmouth had made him a full-scale hero, Arthur of course became the subject of an enormous literature. Macbeth as Shakespeare's villain cannot claim as much, but he has been the subject of many works in literature, music and the cinema, of which Verdi's opera is only the most famous. They are listed in a useful passage by Aitchison,²⁹ and of course in all of them Macbeth is a villain, just as Arthur is always a hero after Geoffrey. This completes the instructive comparison between the making of a hero and the making of a villain.

Macbeth does have one additional unfortunate distinction. Acting is a nerve-wracking profession, so it is very understandable that actors and actresses tend to be superstitious. In Cole Porter's words,³⁰

*The overture is about to start,
You cross your fingers and hold your heart...
But no other play in the whole of world theatre has attracted so many superstitions and opportunities for bad luck as this play so full of ominous prophecies and supernatural coincidences.*



²⁷ Muir (ref 19) 209-10

²⁸ Aitchison (ref 1) 128

²⁹ *Id* 130-143

³⁰ In *Kiss Me Kate*

Heroes and Villains

Peredur son of Evrawc

room after room
empty to his foot-echo

no life only
room after room a board
on it the chessmen
play against themselves

no hand seen to touch
in each successive room

that same game
one move on

the final courtyard
under the mound

last stronghold
highest last defence

as he climbs
blue shimmer in
cropped grass speedwell
as he nears

high summit
bared of tower
opens leaps as water
where spring pierced

suddenly one colour
of thunder rises

fully from earth
springs over

his helmet top
cartwheels downslope is gone

as lost wheel through
door to empty

rooms to endgame
on bowl of summit

wound already healed
no hollow to the foot

world not one not well
merely again even

this sun-held cup

under all sky

has closed to

keep him out again

Steve Sneyd

Tom, Jack and Arthur

Chris Lovegrove



For those with only a marginal interest in Arthurian literature, nothing much happened between Malory and Tennyson. More clued-up buffs may recall Spenser, Purcell and Dryden, Wagner and (rather dubiously) Shakespeare. But not all Arthurian heroes and villains owe their popular status to these greats of the literary world, for in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Tom, Jack and diverse adversaries were the once-upon-a-time protagonists who dominated The Matter of Britain. Who were their literary midwives? Step forward Richard Johnson, John White, John Cotton and Joshua Eddowes, names which should resonate as much as Nennius, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Chrétien de Troyes. Nor should we forget Iona and Peter Opie, who made these tales once again available to the general public in the 20th century.

Tom Thumb

The earliest surviving text of a popular fairy tale in English is *The History of Tom Thumbe*, printed by Richard Johnson in London in 1621, though earlier editions almost certainly existed (Opie and Opie 1975: 30). The first part of the title runs

The History of Tom Thumbe, the Little, for his small stature surnamed, King ARTHVRS Dwarfe...

and capitalised on a traditional character, a nursery bogey, by linking him with King Arthur, perhaps for the first time. The first sentence begins

Heroes and Villains

"In the old time, when King Arthur ruled this land, the World was in a better frame then it is now: for then old plainnesse and civil society were companions for all companies..."

King Arthur's time was clearer closer to the egalitarian commonwealth that many hoped would follow the Civil War that was to come. This golden age, however, may not be to present tastes, for then "learning was [scarce], and the chieftest discipline in the world was Martiall activitie."

One of King Arthur's councillors was "a plaine Plowman" called Thomas of the Mountaine. His wife being barren (assuming the fault is hers) he decides they should consult the prophet Merlin, who, apparently, is more a devil or spirit than a man. Merlin's character reference describes him as "cunning in all Arts and Professions, all sciences, secrets and discoveries, a conjurer, an inchanter, a charmer, hee consorts with Elves and Fayries, a Commanduer of Goblins, and a worker of Night-wonders: hee can shew the secrets of Nature, calculate childrens Birthes..."

Thomas' wife leaves early next morning and before sunrise comes to old Merlin's cave, in reality the hollow trunk of a blasted oak all overgrown with withered moss. She finds Merlin with his ebony staff, mumbling incantation spells and making characters in the sand. Merlin delivers an "Ænigma, or mysticall Riddle" which promises her, within three months, a premature "shapelesse child ... No bigger then thy Husbands Thumbe" which "shall have life, but substance not".

Merlin's oracle comes true, and at the child's birth the midwife is the Queen of the Fairies, with attendant elves and dryads. In less than four minutes he reaches manhood. An outfit is provided by the Fairy Queen who, as his godmother, gifts him the ability to fast forever without any sustenance, a quality which comes in handy whenever he is bullied by his contemporaries.

There follows a run of adventures: Tom defeats his bullies with a miraculous trick, gets cooked in a black pudding (consequently called Tom Thumbs from then on), gets swallowed by his mother's cow and then evacuated in a cowpat, swallowed again by a giant, vomited into the sea and then swallowed finally by a fish. He eventually sees the light of day after the fish

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is presented to King Arthur's Table, whereupon he is promptly made the King's dwarf.



Tom entertains the court so well that he is given leave to take money home to his parents. All he manages is three-pence, taking two days to travel three-quarters of a mile. After his return to court, his Fairy Godmother bestows on him four enchanted gifts: a hat which allows him to know anything anywhere, a ring of invisibility, a girdle or belt to change shape and shoes to transport him anywhere. These magical objects however do not stop him being affrighted by a lady's sneeze and becoming "troubled with a great Palsie", and only the chief physician to Twaddell, King of the Pygmies, is able to cure him.

Away from court he next has a boasting match with the giant Garagantua (Rabelais' Gargantua) over who can achieve the most extreme feats. When the giant loses his temper at being rated no better than a murderer, Tom paralyses him with an enchantment. Finally, he entertains King Arthur with accounts of his various encounters, though without a "happily ever after" formula the way is left open for further possible exploits.

Apart from its intrinsic interest as an early fairy tale, *The History*'s use of an Arthurian setting is noteworthy when the monarch could so easily have been anonymous and the period sometime in the indeterminate past. Perhaps having Arthur's wizard as a principal character was instrumental in transferring the action to Arthur's court. Possibly the conceit that this was a historical account meant that including the most famous king in Britain's mythical history ("myth-story" we could term it, perhaps) was the only option open, whether to Richard Johnson or his source.

Heroes and Villains

Jack the Giant killer

Another character whose story's beginning utilises King Arthur's reign as a once-upon-a-time equivalent is Jack, "commonly called the Giant Killer" according to Palgrave (Opie & Opie 1975: 47). The Opies note that the earliest-known appearance of Jack's tale (which in this form was never recorded in English oral tradition) was in the second of two parts in 1711, printed by John White of Newcastle. The no longer extant first part (the second has now also disappeared) of *Jack and the Gyants* appeared some time before this date (possibly around 1707 or 1708). Luckily an edition by Joshua Eddowes and John Cotton, printed in Shrewsbury in the mid-18th century, probably preserves the 1711 text in its entirety, to be later re-published by the Opies as *The History of Jack and the Giants*.

The first part begins with the by now familiar scenario:

"In the Reign of King Arthur, near the Lands-End of England, namely the County of Cornwall, there lived a wealthy Farmer, who had one only Son, commonly known by the Name of JACK the GIANT-KILLER."

As with Tom, Jack was a generic name for a common fellow (as a glance at any edition of *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* will soon make clear), and the first paragraph soon establishes that this Everyman lives by his wit rather than relying on brawn.



A cave in St Michael's Mount ("the Mount of Cornwall") was inhabited by a giant, eighteen feet high and three yards around, who terrorised the neighbourhood by feasting on cattle, sheep and pigs. Jack is promised all the giant's treasure if he destroys the monster. At dawn he blows on a

horn, which not unnaturally causes the enraged giant to rush out, straight into a pit Jack had prepared earlier. After a joke about no longer being the giant's breakfast, Jack dispatches the monster with a blow of a pickaxe, and the pit becomes a grave.

As well as the treasure, the local magistrates dub him the Giant-Killer and present him with a sword and a belt with, in letters of gold, the legend

Here's the right valiant Cornish Man,
Who slew the Giant Cormilan.



Somewhere in the West of England, en route to a Wales reputedly infested by giants Jack is captured whilst asleep by the owner of a castle in a lonesome wood. This is a giant called Blunderboar who recognises Jack from his belt. There is some gruesome humour about body parts and monstrous diets before Blunderboar sets off to fetch another giant. Luckily the upper room which is Jack's prison contains the requisite ropes to throw over and throttle the returning giants, who are then slain with the sword. Three ladies, tied up by their hair, are rescued before Jack continues on his journey.

Welsh giants were renowned, in England at any rate, for their "private and secret Malice", so the two-headed Welsh ogre Jack next encounters puts on a show of hospitality at his castle. Jack sensibly puts a beam of wood into his bed at night, and from a dark corner of his room witnesses the giant clubbing his presumed guest to death. Next morning Jack claims he felt nothing untoward, but secretly disposes of a breakfast of hasty-pudding in a hidden leather bag. With a large knife he rips open the bag and out tumbles the pudding. The

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giant cries out, *Cotsplit, hur can do that Trick herself*, with the result that, having ripped open his own belly, "out dropt his Tripes and Trolly-bubs, so that hur fell down dead."



With these three exploits behind him, Jack now encounters King Arthur's son, who has foolishly given away his entire riches discharging the debts of a corpse which had been arrested for money owing to creditors. Impressed by such generosity, Jack offers his services to the penniless King's Son. Jack tricks a three-headed giant into allowing himself to be locked into his own vault by saying that the King's Son had arrived with an invincible army. After wining, dining and resting with the King's Son in the trembling giant's castle, Jack asks – as a reward for his services to the duped giant – for "the old rusty Sword, Coat and Slippers" at the giant's bed-head. These, together with a cap, are no doubt related to Tom Thumb's enchanted gifts: they are a coat of invisibility, a cap of knowledge, a sword of incredible sharpness and shoes of extraordinary swiftness. Jack is able to use the magic objects to aid the King's Son in his quest to free a lady of evil spirits, and for his good service he is made one of the Knights of the Round Table at the court of King Arthur.

While all these adventures form Part One of Jack's history, Part Two is much the same if rather more tedious due to the invincibility of Jack's magic objects. Lords and ladies are rescued, riches are liberated, giants with wonderful names like Thunderdel and Galigantus are dispatched with much black humour (one has his nose cut off and then, with Jack's sword up his fundament, complains of the gripes), and their heads cut off and sent to King Arthur. Finally, Jack is

granted a large estate by King Arthur and, having married a duke's daughter, "he and his Lady lived the Residue of their Days in great Joy and Happiness".



The material of the second part of *The History of Jack and the Giants* is markedly different from the first. There is more Rabelaisian humour but also some doubling of incidental details from the first part. The sending of giant's heads to King Arthur (a feature which does not figure in the first part) suggests familiarity with the conventions of medieval Arthurian literature rather than a remnant of folk re-telling, as does the use of the name Galigantus (Coghlan, without citing his references, tells us *Galeantus* is the name of Lancelot's maternal grandfather and also the name of one of Arthur's knights).

The unsatisfactory employment of magic in the final episode, which lacks the logic of the best-told fairytales, looks forward to the self-conscious and equally clumsy use of the supernatural by Horace Walpole in *The Castle of Otranto* of 1764 (Bleiler 1966). Acknowledged as the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*'s atmosphere seems to be prefigured in the description of the events at the Castle of Galigantus, the last giant that Jack vanquishes, with its old conjuror, duke's daughter transformed into a white hind, and dangerous guardian griffins.

English oral tradition and literature

The History of Tom Thumbe is remarkable for preserving an Arthurian setting which, by the early 17th century, was becoming less fashionable. William Rowley's play *The Birth of Merlin* is its exact contemporary (c 1620, though not published till 1662, which leads

me to wonder if one influenced the other), yet of their types both stand almost alone in English literature of the time, perhaps reflecting an absence of Arthurian lore in England. Bob Stewart states that, "with one or two rare exceptions, Arthurian and Merlin legends play no part whatsoever in English folk tradition... Arthur and his knights are conspicuously absent from English oral lore, despite (rather than because of) their vast presence in literature" (Stewart 1989: 27).

Things are no better a century later. "The first half of the eighteenth century marks the low ebb of Arthur's literary fortunes," notes Richard Barber (1990: 145). "In the period 1700-1750 there is no work of any note whatsoever on the Arthurian legends." And yet Arthur's reign can still stand in for olden times, not only in *The History of Jack and the Giants* but also in the 18th-century chapbook tale *The King of Colchester's Daughters* which begins, "Long before Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table..."

However, "When Jack tales were rewritten for refined sensibilities later in the 18th and 19th centuries, the crudity of their gory killings disappeared [and] King Arthur faded away" (Bottigheimer 2000: 267-8). When Arthuriana becomes popular again, the more obviously fantasy elements, like the giants in *Tom Thumb* and *Jack the Giant-Killer*, get marginalised. "The Giant [became] a geographically unlocalizable oat, reachable only by the magic of a bean that grew endlessly heavenward," Bottigheimer notes, and in William Godwin's *The History of Jack and the Bean-Stalk* (1807, republished by the Opies), the tale begins, ominously, "In the days of King Alfred..."

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Arthurian Matters at the 2005 World Science Fiction Convention

Steve Sneyd

Interaction, the 63rd World Science fiction Convention, held at the Glasgow SECC from August 4-8, had a programming strand called *The Matter of Britain*, organised by the Liverpool University-based Science Fiction Foundation.

This was much wider than solely Arthurian, covering use of British history, myth, legend and folklore generally in science fiction by UK and overseas authors, topics ranging from Dr Dee to kelpies and Jenny Greenteeth, and the use of Drake's Drum and the Flanders Bowmen in World War II pulp fiction.

However, there were five specifically Arthurian talks in this strand. Of the first two I can only report the titles: collectively described as *Questioning Camelot*, they were "The Myths of Avalon: Celtic realities and Arthurian fantasies," by Dr Kari Maund, and "When Knighthood Was in Flour" by Dr Faye Ringel, Professor of Humanities at the US Coast Guard Academy.

"The Down Sides of Fantasy: Adultery: Sin/Crime in Arthurian Fantasy", by Christine Mains of the University of Calgary, compared and contrasted how much blame for the collapse of Camelot is ascribed to Guinevere in Malory, Tennyson, T H White and Marion Zimmer Bradley and other modern feminist novelisations, in particular noting how Tennyson removed the incest element from Mordred's parentage, generally made Arthur stainless, and transformed Guinevere's action from legal treason into irreparable sin blameable solely on her, since he also absolved Lancelot. By contrast, White saw Guinevere's adultery as an understandable response to the frustration of rolelessness in the male world of quest and adventure, at the same time also exculpating Arthur for the incest, blaming Morgause's evil use of magic. Bradley and her feminist Arthurian

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successors remove sin from the equation completely, while resolving the triangle into a sexual threesome.

Dr William Kimbrel read, for his absent wife, Elizabeth Lloyd Kimbrel, her talk "Come Again? Bryher's 'Visa For Avalon'", discussing a novel set in a then near-future Britain, shown as a dreary, linoleum-infested place where a destructive Movement for Change threatened an apathetically incompetent government. The story's characters seek refuge in the offshore island of Avalon: the novel, a "folktale of migration" influenced by Bryher's pre-war work with German refugees, was so different from her previous historical, including Dark Age, novels that her UK publisher refused it (it eventually appeared in 1965, in the USA, where it was reprinted in 2004). Its Arthurian roots manifest themselves in names of characters and places, most obviously that of the island refuge.

Finally, my own "The Goodbye Knights – Veiled American explorations of declining futures in Arthurian SF poetry", looked at how the Arthurian story's Old World provenance lets American poets use it as a "safe space" for dystopian forecasts about their country's future, eg Frederick Turner's Grail etc referencing epic of a disintegrated 2376 USA, *The New World*.



Simon Rouse

¹ Pun based on the ubiquity of King Arthur Flour when internet search engine is used. Ed

Heroes and Villains

A solo evening with a Lancelot



W M S Russell

As Arthurians, we are accustomed to finding our Lancelot a leading performer in the solos and concerted numbers of Arthurian Grand Opera. But in one modern play there is another Lancelot, who is strictly a soloist, with no mention of Arthur or Merlin or the Lady of the Lake or even Guinevere. True, he admits, when questioned, that the famous knight errant called Lancelot 'is a distant connection of mine' (which justifies his presence in this journal). Later in the play it appears that this Lancelot is 'called something different in every country', including St George and Perseus-the-Adventurer, and he is finally summed up as a professional hero.

The play about this hero is the most delightful play to come out of Russia, and one of the most delightful plays ever written. It is *The Dragon*, by Eugene Schwarz, to judge from his name one of the many Russians with German ancestors.¹ He was born in 1896, of parents who were both medical students. But his father got into trouble for revolutionary activities, and the family was forbidden to live in the national or

provincial capitals, and wandered around small townships. However, Eugene was allowed in 1913 to study law in Moscow. He soon abandoned law for writing, and by the time he died in 1958 he had published many stories, novels, film scripts, plays and fairy tales. His play version of Andersen's *The Snow Queen* was a lasting success in the children's theatre of Russia. *The Dragon* was written in 1942.

When the play opens, Lancelot has entered a house he thinks is an inn. But there is nobody at home except Mr Cat, dozing in an arm-chair. At first the cautious animal is reluctant to give information; he waits to hear something about Lancelot. The hero describes his métier, in the course of which 'I have been slightly wounded nineteen times, seriously wounded five times and thrice I was mortally wounded. But I am still alive, and that is because I am not only as light as thistledown but also as stubborn as a mule. So now tell me, Mr Cat, what has happened here?'

Realising that Lancelot may be a possible saviour for the city, Mr Cat now speaks freely. This is the house of Charlemagne, Keeper of the City Records, and his daughter Elsa, but they are both out. For four hundred years the city has been ruled by a three-headed, diamond-scaled, dagger-sharp clawed, fire-breathing dragon. Every year, the utterly docile citizens supply him with a beautiful girl. When taken away to his cave, the girls probably all die of loathing. This year's victim is to be Elsa. Lancelot naturally declares his intention of challenging the dragon, and Mr Cat is delighted. At this point Charlemagne and Elsa enter, offering supper and saying sadly that all is well in the town.

Lancelot: But ... I have heard tales about...
Mr Cat turns over.

Lancelot: I have read something about a dragon.

He now hears more about the monster. Charlemagne tells him some people had challenged the monster, who killed them all, and when the whole town rebelled he burned down a whole suburb. Now he and Elsa, like all the townsfolk, know nothing can be done, and accept the dragon's rule. It emerges that, besides the annual girl victim, they supply him every month with 'a thousand

¹ Hapgood, E R transl and Houghton, N intro (1969) *The Dragon* by Eugene Schwarz (London: Heinemann Educational Books)

cows, two thousand sheep, five thousand chickens, and eighty pounds of salt'. Whenever Lancelot protests, they beg him to be quiet, and when he declares his intention of challenging the dragon, Elsa begs him not to, since she is sure he will only be killed. At this point there is a terrible noise outside, and Henry, the dragon's footman-secretary, enters, announcing his master. It appears that Henry, and his father the Burgomaster, are the Quisling collaborators through whom the dragon rules. The monster now enters, he has taken human form, but keeps changing from one to another of his three heads.

When he hears Lancelot's challenge, he decides to burn the hero while he is unarmed, and tells Elsa to get a broom to sweep up the ashes. But Charlemagne reminds him of an undertaking he signed as a young dragon not harm a challenger before the duel. The dragon then decides to kill the whole household. But Mr Cat, leaping to the window, threatens in that case to tell the world of the dragon's cowardice. So the dragon agrees to have the fight next day, and leaves, with more terrible noises.

Elsa again begs Lancelot to leave her to die. Then the Burgomaster appears, followed by a crowd he has ordered to ask Lancelot to leave town at once and not annoy their lord, the dragon. Lancelot goes out to deal with these slavish subjects of the dragon, and Henry gives Elsa a poisoned knife, with orders from the dragon to kill Lancelot before the duel. Elsa furiously tells him the hero will kill the dragon, and Henry replies, 'to that, Sir Dragon ordered me to say: We shall see!' — *CURTAIN*.



The Second Act, set in the central plaza of the city, opens with a discussion between the Burgomaster and his son Henry, from which it appears that the dragon, having discovered that Lancelot is a professional hero, and being himself a professional villain, is badly worried. The Burgomaster tries to pump his son about the plan to knife Lancelot, but Henry is cagey. Clearly the two Quislings don't trust each other. Mr Cat, by the way, has listened to all this in hiding. Lancelot enters, and the Burgomaster calls him St George, and apologises, saying he thought the hero looked like the saint.

Lancelot: That's very possible. He is a distant connection of mine.

The hero has been making friends with the town dogs, set on him by the slavish citizens, but with more sense than their masters. The Burgomaster invites him to a session of the Municipal Board of Self-Government, and they leave. Elsa enters, and Henry promises she will be let off being the dragon's bride if she kills the hero. It is obvious she will do no such thing, but she had thought to kill herself with the knife. She now tells Mr Cat she will live after all. Lancelot appears again — the Board had offered him money to abandon the fight. They now all come out to arm the hero for the fight — with a barber's basin for helmet, a little tray for shield, and a certified document to show the only lance is being repaired and is unavailable.

The dragon appears in one of his human forms, and tells Lancelot the citizens are not worth fighting for, they are a bunch of cripples without souls — the dragon knows, for he personally crippled them. Then he calls for Elsa to say goodbye to the hero, while he and Henry watch, waiting for her to use the knife. Lancelot tells Elsa that, though he would have fought for her anyway, he has fallen in love with her. She responds to his love, tells him about the knife and that of course she wouldn't have used it anyway, and throws it into a well, to the fury of Henry and the dragon. They send her off to her house under guard, and she tells Lancelot not to interfere — he can rescue her after he has killed the dragon. The monster withdraws to his palace to assume dragon form.

Mr Cat now leads the hero over to a corner where some people are apparently

trying to pull a donkey along. They are good craftsmen Mr Cat has enlisted. The weavers present Lancelot with a genuine magic flying carpet they have woven, the hatter with a cap of invisibility, and the blacksmith with armour and weapons. A musical instrument-maker provides an instrument that will play itself, providing cheering music during the fight. Lancelot thanks them all, dons the cap of invisibility and rises into the air for the battle in the sky with the flying dragon, who emerges after an entertaining conversation between Mr Cat and Mr Donkey.

The plaza is now full of sycophantic citizens, all cheering for the dragon, even when a peddler supplies smoked glasses to watch the skies. Only a small boy asks:

Mama, what's the dragon running away from, all over the sky?

The Crowd: Shush!

First Citizen: He's not running away, boy, he's just manoeuvring.

The sycophants ostracise Charlemagne as the hero's host. The Burgomaster enters and announces: 'to avoid an epidemic of eye trouble, and for this reason only, it is forbidden to look at the sky'.

There follows the funniest episode in the play, as Henry gives a running commentary on the dragon's uniformly victorious success, while the people watch what really happens with mirrors supplied by the peddler, and one by one the dragon's three heads fall out of the sky and land on the stage, followed finally by his body.

The people now change their tune, shouting that they are at last free of the dragon, but they go quietly off to their homes when the Burgomaster orders his guard to clear the plaza.

The Burgomaster is delighted. With the dragon dead, he tells Henry,

the power has just fallen into my hands of its own accord! ... Their late master trained them so well that they will stay right on in the shafts, to haul whoever picks up the reins.

Henry: But just now, right in the square...

Burgomaster: ... Every dog jumps like mad when you let it off the leash, but then it runs off its own free will into its kennel.

Henry raises the question of Lancelot, but the Burgomaster is confident that the fight will have so weakened the hero that he will be easily dealt with, even if he hasn't drifted

away on the flying carpet. The two scoundrels go off into the palace to draft the first orders of the new regime.

The wretched dragon heads have been gasping for water, but the new bosses had paid them no attention. They continue to beg for water as Lancelot staggers in, carrying his rolled-up carpet, his bent sword, and his cap of invisibility. With great difficulty he manages to get water for the three heads, which finally fall back and die. The hero himself feels he is dying from the effects of the fight. He cheers himself by thinking that the citizens will recover their souls and their self-respect now they are free of the dragon. He urges them to love one another and be happy, and bids them and Elsa farewell. — *CURTAIN*.

The Third Act is set in the palace of the President of the Free City — the Burgomaster, of course. Henry is training a chorus of citizens to hail the President in song as the Conqueror of the Dragon, which he had achieved exactly a year ago (clearly a year has passed). When the President appears, the chorus of praise is duly sung.

The appearance of an impostor claiming to have slain a dragon, while the real hero is recovering from wounds or otherwise absent, is a regular motif in tales of dragon-slaying. Arthurians will recall that such an impostor appeared after Tristan slew his dragon in Ireland.² ³ But Schwarz has cleverly combined this with the takeover of power.

The new President thanks the chorus and dismisses them, announcing his wedding day, for of course the Conqueror of the Dragon is entitled to the dragon's maiden tribute, beginning with Elsa. A jailor now enters, and reports that all the artisans who helped Lancelot are safely locked up in prison. Birds, fishes and snakes have all been sent to look out for the hero, but there is no sign of him.

Next to enter is Charlemagne. It is clear that the President and Henry have between them secured all the wealth of the city

² Champion, *P*ed and *transl* into modern French (1938) *Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut* (Paris: Éditions de Cluny) 81-86

³ Hatto, A T *transl* (1967) *Gottfried von Strassburg: Tristan* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books) 159-172, 189-190

previously extorted by the dragon, and they offer Charlemagne a handsomely paid sinecure if he will accept the President as the Conqueror of the Dragon and bring Elsa along with no talk of them both dying. Otherwise all his friends will 'disappear'. Charlemagne goes off in despair.

Father and son now discuss the money they have been wasting, each trying to outbribe the other in engaging their footmen as spies, for obviously Henry wants to take his father's place, and his father wants to avoid this. They decide to spy on each other directly, saving bribe money and ensuring the footmen don't become rich enough to take over themselves.

Elsa is brought in, and the President hides to overhear Henry questioning her about Lancelot. She eventually tells Henry (and hence the eavesdropper) that Mr Cat had lain the wounded hero on Mr Donkey's back, and taken him to the mountains, where, Mr Cat told her, the hero died. The President shows himself, delighted, and after being congratulated by a number of sycophantic citizens, he uses his powers to marry himself to Elsa, ignoring her protests and vain appeals to the sycophants.

But suddenly the footmen dash in, throwing back their bribes and fleeing for their lives. Lancelot enters, 'followed by Mr Cat who curls himself up in the armchair watching with satisfaction throughout the following'. Lancelot tells Elsa he was mortally wounded, and 'that is very, very dangerous', but a wood-cutter's wife had nursed him back to health in the mountains. In a nearby cave he read the Book of Wrongs, which records all the crimes done on earth, and he knows all that has been going on in the city. After shaming all the sycophants with their appeasing deeds, he calls on his artisan friends, released from prison, to take the President and Henry there. Lancelot then tells Elsa he has some jobs to do on the citizens. He tells them:

You will all have to have patience. ... Do some grafting, like a gardener, pull up the weeds carefully so as not to harm the healthy roots. If you will think about it, you will find that people in reality, perhaps, maybe, with some exception, are worth careful cultivation.

Mr Cat (springing up): That's the truth!
Music is heard.

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Lancelot: Elsa... give me your hand.
- CURTAIN.



The play had various vicissitudes in the Soviet Union, as described by my late wife Claire Russell.⁴

'In 1943, under Stalin's rule, the play was taken off after a few performances. When Stalin was gone, a collection of Schwarz's plays, including *The Dragon*, was published in 1960, two years after the author's death. The edition of 4000 copies was sold out by noon of publication day, but the book was not reprinted. *The Dragon* was put on again in Leningrad in 1962, but after a few performances it was banned again...

So Stalin, a dictator, forbade this production, and Khrushchev, who made so much of getting rid of this dictator Stalin, perhaps even getting rid of some of these dictatorial ways, nonetheless retained a sufficiency of dictatorship to stop the performance of this play. Khrushchev, of course, shouted so much about Stalin's wicked ways, that one might have suspected him of being not altogether a dragon-slaying hero. And this is the theme of a story about Khrushchev that was circulating in Moscow in March 1956. If it was not true, it was well invented, for it is also faithful to a more human quality of Khrushchev's, his sense of humour. At the famous 20th Congress of the Communist Party, Khrushchev made his denunciation of the late dictator. Later, the story goes, he read to the Congress an anonymous note he had received, which simply asked: *Comrade Khrushchev, what were you doing when Stalin was alive?* Having read out the note, Khrushchev asked if the comrade who wrote it would kindly stand up. Nobody moved, and there was an uneasy silence. *There you are, comrades*, said Khrushchev, *now you know what I was doing when Stalin was alive!*

⁴ Russell, C (1992) "The Dragon" *Social Biology and Human Affairs* 57, 17-42, especially 37-38

the board

News, views and previews of Arthuriana

NAME GAMES

"Pendragon could face a tough year as the economy slows down. Treat with caution and only buy below 285p," is the advice from *The Sunday Times* (quoted by freebie paper *Metro*). Fear not, this refers to car dealership operator Pendragon and not to this journal, which is good value at £10.00 for four issues (an unusual Christmas or birthday present!) and only £2.00 for a sample copy.

It was recently reported that a DVD is now out of *Pendragon Pictures*' three-hour version of *The War of the Worlds* in period setting – presumably to try to get sales on the back of the recent blockbuster's release, and the *Luther Pendragon* PR company got a mention on BBC R4 feedback May 20.

The poetic text for Ravel's song cycle *Shéhérazade* was written in 1903 by one of the composer's friends, Léon Leclère, "who adopted the Wagnerian pseudonym *Tristan Klingsor*" for publication of his racy verses.

Cricketing fans may understand this next reference, to a robot leg-spinner called *Merlyn*, compared (in a tongue-in-cheek report) to a "demonically possessed giant vacuum cleaner". Do not confuse *Merlyn* with Microsoft Office Assistant *Merlin* (pictured right) who, although described as "a little old-fashioned", still rates himself "your wise and magical companion" and invites you to summon him for a demonstration of his "awesome, cyber-magical powers". Also, in the August 16 episode of *It's Trad, Dad*, George Melly's BBC Radio 2 mini-series on the trad jazz phenomenon, he mentioned as a jazz centre a pub in Clerkenwell called the *New Merlin's Cave*. Does it still exist?

Esteemed journal *The Huddersfield Examiner* featured a picture of a steam engine on September 8 2005, which eagle-eyed Mike Swift spotted as a "73082 Camelot working a train on the Bluebell Railway in rural Sussex" – presumably one

of a number of engines given Arthurian names in the mid-20th century.

• *Metro* July 4 2005; *Guardian Review* August 20 2005; "A whole new ball game: No 96, More life-sized robot replica cricketers, please" *Guardian Sport* August 15 2005; "Rail picture" *Huddersfield Examiner* September 12 2005.

EVENTS

Pendragon's publication schedule precludes advance notice of events unless notified in very good time. There's no excuse, however, for forgetting to mention the 2003 Kalamazoo International Medieval Congress in the US which included a session on "The evolution of Arthur and Arthurian literature composed from 500 to 1200" sponsored by *The Heroic Age*. The call for papers in 2002 did allow that material of a later date could be discussed as long as it was pertinent to an early figure, topic, theme or genre. But that's not much comfort to you now.

There are apparently over 800 re-enactment groups of varying standards of authenticity listed in the directory *Call to Arms*. Among those with strong links to archaeology is the *Britannia Society*, the only one to concentrate exclusively on the period 350-650CE (others focus on the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings or the Middle Ages for example). Established in 1990, it has a membership of around seventy and has featured in *Gladiator* and *Time Team*. For details (including public displays) contact

■ 13 Ardleigh, Basildon, Essex SS16 5RA
■ 01268 544511
■ www.durolitum.co.uk



As the life-blood of the Society is stimulating discussion of Arthuriana, we welcome news of forthcoming conferences, lectures and other events, but do allow a very safe time margin for notification!

• Chris Haines "Re-enactment" *Current Archaeology Handbook 2005-2006*: 62-3; www.caltoarms.com

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Amazing Coincidence No 2. Those of a certain age may remember *The Adventures of Sir Lancelot*, a TV series which aired in the late 50s and early 60s. All thirty episodes, some in colour, are now available as a 4-DVD set for £29.99 (Cert PG) from

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outlets such as Razamataz near Oxford (which specialises in classic TV, films and music).

1 Parkside, Avenue Two, Station Lane, Witney OX28 4YF ☎ 0870 787 0033

The Adventures of Sir Lancelot starred "heart-throb" William Russell, who is of course thus a namesake of the Pendragon Society's President. Prof Russell tells us that he used to see the actor – then called Russell Enoch – at the Oxford Playhouse in the 1950s, and that he has a vague memory of being present at a party with him. "Whether or not there was such a party I certainly thought at the time he had pinched my name!"

Scotland's Rosslyn Chapel used to get 9,500 visitors annually until *The Da Vinci Code* bumped it up to 68,000 in 2004. When the film comes out in 2006 they are apparently expecting figures in excess of 100,000. What price notoriety?

Dan Brown's novel suggested there was a conspiracy to hush up the shocking conclusions of "art diagnostician" Maurizio Seracini. This real-life expert used infra-red photography to reveal that there were major differences between Leonardo's under-drawings for *The Adoration of the Magi* (now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence) and the unfinished painting. The novel suggests Leonardo's details were later obscured, literally a cover-up by church authorities "to subvert Da Vinci's true intention" and that Seracini's researches have "yet to be made public".

Well, now they have, and conspiracy theorists will now have to decide what the details of the under-painting – battle scenes, Egyptian temples and so on – mean. Art experts however will be concerned with matters other than resurrected Knights Templars and other speculative secrets.

Steve Blake and Scott Lloyd's belief that St Collen may have founded a chapel at Valle Crucis Abbey in the Dark Ages and that the Grail legends were linked with the Vale of Llangollen has stimulated further speculation. The *North East Wales Weird Guide* on the BBC website, included in 2004 this description of a vision witnessed at Valle Crucis Abbey in the 1930s, commenting, *Was this a vision of the Holy Grail?*

Walking one night on the road opposite Valle Crucis Abbey with my aunt, we stopped to

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peer through the darkness and suddenly I was amazed to see in front of the Abbey the ground light up in a large circle of the most golden dazzling light, apparently emanating from the ground. In the middle of the circle there was some kind of golden object several feet high and walking about quite a number of human figures, garbed in wonderful golden costumes with golden helmets on their heads. I said to my aunt 'Isn't it wonderful? It must be some kind of pageant they are putting on'. I couldn't believe it when she said 'What light? It's all dark'. For some seconds the wonderful scene went on, but she couldn't see it. Then it vanished as suddenly as it had come."

This brought in some responses. A Liverpool correspondent described how on holiday in Wales in 1946 her mother had heard "beautiful music and singing, similar to chants, coming from the abbey ... When she commented to my father on the beautiful singing, he said 'What singing?'" Others recalled other receptacles from elsewhere in Wales and the Marches, the Nanteos Cup and the so-called Marian Chalice, from Shropshire, popularised by Graham Phillips. ♦ Rosslyn visitor figures: *Huddersfield Examiner* August 10 2005; John Hooper "Art detective exposes hidden images to fuel Da Vinci Code conspiracies" *Guardian* September 20 2005; guardian.co.uk/arts; Michael and Veronica Haag (2004) *The Rough Guide to The Da Vinci Code* (Rough Guides) 123; Richard Holland "Holy Grail vision" www.bbc.co.uk/wales/northeast/guides/weird... (accessed 22/07/2004)

BROADCAST

On May 18 2005 Paul Gambaccini's US hit parade programme on BBC R2 mentioned that a recording of Monty Python's *Spamalot* is in the US top 100 album chart. On May 12 John Creedon's programme on Irish Radio 1 played a new version of *I left my love in Avalon* recorded by The Hot Club of Dublin. Bob Harris (May 14 BBC R2) said that Tracey Grammer has a new album called *Flower of Avalon* out on Signature Records. And on Radio 2 (May 28) Mark Lamarr talked about a Damned track called *Rat Scabies and the Holy Grail* (a goblet of phlegm etc) though it wasn't clear whether this was a genuine track by the group, whether he was imagining something they

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ought to have done or whether this was Rat Scabies' new book (see last BookWorm).

A Time Team Special

(imaginatively entitled "King of Bling") was aired on Channel 4 on June 13 2005. As well as outlining what we know about the rich occupant of the Southend-on-Sea Anglo-Saxon tomb (see recent Old News items) it revealed that the tiny gold foil crosses, similar in shape to the infamous Arthurian cross at Glastonbury, were probably placed over the eyelids of the 7th-century ruler.



In the wake of Dan Brown's controversial novel came the books, articles, film... and TV programmes. The latest was *Beyond the Da Vinci Code* on the History Channel, broadcast on August Bank Holiday. *Radio Times* called this documentary "earnest but muddled" and thought it ended up feeling "like an extended commercial for the novel". Cunningly, it was followed by a programme in the *Investigating History* strand on the search for the Holy Grail asking – yawn – "Does Rennes-le-Château cradle secrets protected for centuries by the Knights Templar?" No, don't tell me, let me guess.

CITV (on ITV1) repeated a cartoon series called *King Arthur's Disasters*, at first glance charmless despite a promising premise, at the end of August 2005. Meanwhile, BBC1 premiered *Black Knight* (director Gil Junger, 2001) on August 31. Described by *Radio Times* as a goofy comedy, it starred Martin Lawrence as a Medieval World theme park attendant who wakes up after a bump on the head in 14th-century England. Luckily for him they must speak recognisable modern English or this take on Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* would have been a non-starter.

Russell Davies on BBC Radio 2 (September 4 2005) spoke about the original cast recording of the musical version of *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* – Bing Crosby was fine, naturally, but apparently William Bendix and Sir Cedric Hardwicke were very musically challenged! Incidentally, in what Noel Coward song is the line "We all sit round King Arthur's table"? *

An intriguing bit of distance Arthuriana turned up in a BBC R3 programme on

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September 18 in the "Sunday Feature slot, *The Miraculous Journey of Margaret Kemp*, presented by David Wallace. Among the pilgrimages of this 15th-century lay religious from Norwich described was one which took her to Danzig, now Gdańsk. The Merchants' Hall there was called *Arthur's Court*, since the merchants saw themselves as the true inheritors of the Arthurian tradition of loyalty, partnership and honesty. They were, as it were, the real knights of their time, in contrast to what they saw as the corrupt tyranny of their fiscally interfering overlords, paradoxically themselves knights if only in name, that is the Order of Teutonic Knights.

On October 30 2005 ITV3 re-ran *Camelot*, a 2001 documentary by Cromwell Productions, which looked at different candidates for Arthur's capital. Written by Susanna Shadrake, and featuring interviews with Dan Shadrake, Nikolai Tolstoy, Ron Hutton and Arthur Pendragon, this came to no firm conclusions (can you do otherwise?) but included shots of South Cadbury, Tintagel, Winchester, Wroxeter and the rest, plus action sequences of Dark Age re-enactment group Britannia.

THE BOARDS

Wee Stories Theatre's production of *Arthur: the Story of a King* has been playing at five venues (in Glasgow, Manchester, Aberdeen, Dublin and Leeds) from September to October 2005. The show tried to press all the right buttons by boasting knights, maidens, kings, wizards, Camelot, Excalibur and "that sword in the stone," as well as featuring "inspiring performances and original live music". Among gongs won are the Equity Award for Best Show for Children and Young People in the 2004 TMA Theatre Awards and the Critics Award for Theatre in Scotland for Best Children's Show.

♦ www.weestoriestheatre.org

Hardly an issue goes by now without a mention of *Spamalot*, the spin-off from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. In 2006 the show will go on a US tour, starting in Boston, Massachusetts, and from 2007 an abridged 90-minute version is planned for a custom-built theatre in Las Vegas "for a potential 10-year run ... at a cost of more than £29m". No news of a UK version yet, though. A N Wilson's first impressions of the *Monty*

Python and the Holy Grail
video was that it "seems about as painfully unfunny as a mildewed copy of *Punch*". As an antidote he goes to a charity bookshop and lights on a second-hand Penguin Classic of Pauline Matarasso's translation of *The Quest for the Holy Grail*. "My first dismayed impression is that the medieval narrative bears too close a resemblance to *Monty Python*..." Eventually, however, he decides that it "has stood the test of time rather better than any Booker winner." Rather miraculously, "Returning to the *Python* video, I found for the first time that I was enjoying it." How will he view *Spamalot* though?

• "Off to Vegas!" *Huddersfield Examiner* July 26 2005; A N Wilson "My search for the Holy Grail" *Telegraph* September 5 2005 (passed on by John Haines)

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS
"You've probably already realised, but it was **Chet Helms**, rather than Atkins, who ran the Avalon Ballroom in the 60s," writes Simon Rouse (The Board last issue, 29). "Another legend gone," Simon adds. "He was such a major catalyst in the whole San Francisco scene; without him our, and most certainly my, musical world would be vastly poorer!"

Last issue's The Board appeared to suggest that the bass-player in the 60s progressive rock group Emerson, Lake and Palmer has "little appeal to women". This is a gratuitous slight on **Greg Lake** (who avers he has an internet appreciation society called The Ladies of the Lake) which should instead be visited on prog rock itself (according to John Harris in *The Guardian*).

In W M S Russell's paper "Alcmena and Igraine" (XXXII No 4, 7-9) a sentence – "He [Amphitryon] has left his wife Alcmena in Thebes for safety." – was missing after the first sentence in the second paragraph. In the feature review "Alchemy, Arthur and this Sun of York" (XXXII No 3, 34-41) a sentence (second paragraph, page 40) should read "Since the red elixir is for gold and the white one for silver, the red rose is clearly superior to the white one, a very embarrassing symbolism for the Yorkists." On the same page the second sentence in the paragraph headed *Genealogies of Edward IV* should



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read "But, so far as real historical ancestors were concerned, Edward's genealogists were in the happy position of stating the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Finally, **Diana Wynne Jones** (page 41) has not yet changed her first name (nor ever will, I suspect) to accommodate editorial typos.

Chris Lovegrove and Steve Sneyd
* *Answer to Noel Coward song question: "My home sweet heaven", from the musical High Spirits* (Feinstein's BBC R2 programme on Coward December 5 2003).

JOURNALS AND SOCIETIES

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FACTUAL

A new study aims to rehabilitate Newbold Revel's Sir Thomas Malory whose bad press¹ contrasts with the chivalry apparently espoused in his *opus magnum*. Christina Hardyment's *Malory: The Life and Times of King Arthur's Chronicler* (HarperCollins £25.00) displays an "unwavering loyalty" for the jailbird and his impugned integrity² but while her passionate defence is "a persuasive attempt to rehabilitate a tarnished icon"³ it does not convince some critics:



Richard Barber sees the *Morte Darthur* "not as the worthy life-long labour of an eager enthusiast but, much more

excitingly, the work of someone reading romances for the first time and discovering the ideals of knighthood which had until then meant little to him".⁴ Whether you relish or reject this romantic if speculative biography, the general consensus is that hers is an attractive and uncynical approach to a fascinating topic.⁵

Michael Wood's television series *In Search of Myths and Heroes* was recently reviewed by Ian Brown,⁶ but his quests are also available on DVD and as a BBC book. In an SF / Fantasy zine interview⁷ the author asserts that "All history is story-telling... For *Myths and Heroes* we were particularly interested in this area where story gets told and re-told, expanded and changed, sometimes over thousands of years." Over

¹ See, for example, Steve Sneyd's "Six does and £500 of damage" XXXII No 3, 28-9

² Helen Castor "A very imperfect, ungentle knight" *Sunday Telegraph* August 14 2005

³ David Horspool "Knights more erring than errant" *Telegraph* September 17 2005

⁴ Richard Barber "Nostalgia rules" *Guardian Review* September 3 2005

⁵ September 2005's issue of *BBC History Magazine* includes Christina Hardyment's own discussion of Malory

⁶ *Pendragon* XXXII No 3 (2005) 42-3

⁷ "Michael Wood talks about Myths and Heroes" *Prism* (July-August 2005) 34-5

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time King Arthur appears as a Welsh freedom fighter, the Napoleon of the Middle Ages, a figure of chivalry, a political symbol and an ideal Victorian. "The same character has the name Arthur, but the story has changed out of all recognition. Whether or not there is a historical truth behind Arthur ... is quite an interesting question ... but it doesn't really matter because the myth is much bigger."

■ www.mayavisioninst.com/productions/mythsandheroes/index.html

Yet another title claims to reveal the secret hidden by a certain Scottish chapel: Mark Oxbrow and Ian Robertson's *Rosslyn and the Holy Grail* (Mainstream Publishing £14.99 hb 1845960769) may or may not hold the key to the mystery, if mystery it be. Courtesy of Lawrence Main, we have a copy to review of Graham K Griffiths *Behold Jerusalem!* (Longinus Publications 2003 £17.99 0 9543519 0 8). Its subtitle ("*Found! The Zodiacial Miracle in the Map of Britain & N Ireland and its Message for Our Time!*") will either make your heart flutter with excitement or dampen your enthusiasm for life. The Grail is in there, and Arthur, and even a mention of the Pendragon Society.

FICTION

The first novel of Pendragon member David Hancocks is set in the Age of the Saints, when holy men and women began to spread the Christian message. *Cunval's Mission* (Y Lolfa 2004 £5.95 pb 0-86243-709-1) is concerned with the conflict in south-east Wales between this emergent new religion and older beliefs. Review next issue.

Catherine Fisher, author of the acclaimed *Corbenic*, has emerged with another novel for young adults with Arthurian-related themes. *Darkhenge* (Bodley Head £10.99 hb 0-370-32859-0) is the familiar mix of myth and teenage angst which freely acknowledges debts to Taliesin's *Battle of the Trees* via Robert Graves and John Matthews. As the title may suggest, there are terrifying descents into the Celtic Otherworld from the strangely sinister surface of the Marlborough Downs.

Kate Mosse's *Labyrinth* (Orion Books £9.99 hb 0 75286 053 4) is marketed with the slogan "Three secrets. Two women. One Grail." This links medieval France, the Cathars and Carcassonne with the modern

world and a grail, and at first sight looks good value for a thick hardback if you are not put off by hype saying it is better than *The Da Vinci Code*.

The recentish mini-anthology *War is a Dangerous Place: poetry inspired by the War on Terror* (Atlantean Press) included a poem by Bill West, "A Goatly Prophecy" of a future transformation from current horrors to a worldwide green utopia. What is interesting is a frame whereby a prophecy is delivered by Merlin's goat, having plucked a hair from the sleeping Merlin's head!

Chris Lovegrove, Steve Sneyd

Reviews

John Grigsby

**Warriors of the Wasteland:
a quest for the pagan sacrificial cult
behind the grail legend**

Watkins Publishing 2002 £14.99
1 84293 058 3 trade paperback 242 pp

Here we have an account of yet another quest for the "Grail solution", this time by an author with a degree in Prehistoric Archaeology and a Masters in Celtic Mythology. He takes as his starting point one of the most dramatic and at the same time apparently inexplicable manifestations of prehistoric belief systems, the murdered corpses of such peat-preserved Bog People as Lindow Man. Step by step, he proceeds, to his own satisfaction at least, to recreate the ritual sacrifice involved, its purpose and methodology, before using that reconstruction as his first gateway into explication of, as he sees it, the role and nature of the grail cult.

It has to be said that his technique of "proof" recalls the Bellman's proclamation in *The Hunting of the Snark*, viz "What I tell you three times is true." In other words, Grigsby will introduce some idea as a tentative suggestion in one chapter, which by the next he will have upgraded, without further evidence, from the category of possibility to that of "it is probable". By the third chapter, he will have promoted it yet again, proclaiming "I had learned" or "undoubtedly", as if here were a fact so well established as to provide an indisputable foundation for the next stage in his argument.

A generally very readable style seamlessly reinforces the unblushing application of this technique to, for

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considerable stretches of at least the earlier parts of this book, lull this reader at any rate into fairly unquestioning acceptance – a process aided because the reconstruction of the sacrificial rituals, including the use of hallucinogenic liquids, surrounding the "triple deaths" of the Bog People, does seem highly plausible, if unproven, indeed effectively unprovable.

In later chapters, employing ever more speculative leaps, Grigsby's thesis comes to involve religious conflicts, as moon worship is overthrown by that of the sun, peacefully communal rituals savagely distorted into an intruding cultus of the warrior with its own new hierarchy, misusing the sacred liquids to enhance ego rather than escape it. These conflicts are ascribed, inconsistently, to invader irruption or to changes of belief among indigenes.⁸ It is as well to say, incidentally, that none of his suggestions up to this point seem utterly impossible, and most lie at various points along the spectrum between not unlikely and likely. Indeed the thesis of far-reaching changes of social and economic structures in prehistoric times in conjunction, whichever direction the arrow of causality may have gone, with a change from lunar / goddess to solar / god worship, is familiar from Graves and many others, and nowadays fairly widely accepted. However, Grigsby's further, and new – to me at any rate – proposition of a powerful reaction, an Iron Age Counter-Reformation as it were, of moon worshippers against the solarists, this counter surge being associated with a back-to-its-roots Grail cult which then survived through to the Dark Ages, challenges acceptance, suggestive as many of his data conjunctions are.

In the final chapters, an increasingly New Age agenda appears (along with such "usual suspects" as the Templars, alchemy, Jungian mysticism etc), and this, unfortunately, backcasts, for me at least, an air of dubiety over what had gone before, tending to undermine the impact of those genuinely interesting, and often plausible, if unprovable so, earlier chapters.

In those earlier chapters, too, are found

⁸ A similar inconsistency, again it seems a subconscious response to the structural demands of his developing argument, is to at one point accept a Central European birthplace for the *ur-Celtic* language, at another to ascribe its origins, controversially, to the Atlantic coastline.

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many unexpected linkages, and it was these I see as the most valuable aspect of Grigsby's book, making it worthwhile regardless of whether, like me, you find it unable to convince as a whole.

To cite a particularly striking example of such linkages: the across-time parallelism of the triple deaths endured by the Bog People, *ie* three methods used on each, all fatal, and Merlin's prophecies of three different deaths for the disguised boy, and his own alter ego's, Lailoken's, triple death, represent either an extraordinary coincidence or ostensibly irrefutable proof of a belief system bridging the gap from far pre-Roman invasion to Dark Age times.⁹ He also notes a parallel between the location of the bog people's deaths neither on land or water, *ie* in marsh (a liminal situation, incidentally, as with Seahenge's tidal silt location), and their final attire, or lack of it, neither dressed 'nor naked, *ie* found wearing just a fox-fur armband, or belt and hat, and the geas deaths, under ostensibly unfulfillable conditions, like that of Llew Llaw Gyffes' at the hands of Blodeuwedd's lover.

Interesting, also, is his suggestion, linked with the healing properties of iron-rich water (he notes this aspect of Glastonbury's Chalice Well – it was also a characteristic of the Nodens site at Lydney), that red hair, via the iron/rust link, was seen as sign alike of the destructive / deathly and of the potential to heal (leading me to wonder if perhaps the ghost of such belief underlies the ambiguous reaction to red hair still extant). He also suggests, drawing on the presence of a double thumb on one Bog Person, that this kind of physical anomaly too was a sign of the healer / shaman (again a belief that lingers – for instance, the 20th-century American poet Lilith Lorraine also having a double thumb, complete with two separate nails, was regarded as having occult powers).

Mentioning bodily distortion, Grigsby explains the frequent appearance in early

⁹ Grigsby's later suggestion that the triple death also commemorated the first division of society into three classes – warrior, priest, and farmer, a mode of death appropriate to each being used – seems a speculative leap too far, although a more restrained version of the class-related thesis, namely that the three methods were each carried out by a representative of a different group, so all were involved, would seem possible.

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tale of the one-eyed one-legged man figure (as for example Merlin's appearance in this disguise) as phallic symbolism, yet sees the serpent, usually regarded as phallicentric imagery, as actually a placenta metaphor – as with so much of the book's interpretation, an intriguing but impossible attempt to read unreachable past minds.

The author has set his net extraordinarily wide. It catches a "were-saint", picks up the double liminality of the fox, that ambiguous red again and also, as a burrow-dweller, between upper and lower realms, and offers an explanation of a puzzling anomaly, suggesting that the ditch within bank reversal of normal defensive structures of so many sacred sites was designed to keep the *numen* in, not a living enemy out.¹⁰

One final instance of Grigsby's gift for the unexpectedly enlightening linkage – his association of the zigzag and other patterns of Beaker Ware with the very similar distorting overlays of vision experienced in epilepsy, migraine, or by very tired eyes (I have "seen" crenellation-like shapes in just that way myself), but which could be interpreted by early people as sigils of sacred vision onset, and indeed induced by the right hallucinogenic. Hence, he suggests, the marking of the beakers with the patterns their contents were to induce, as a kind of sympathetic magic vision-ware.

As to what induced the extraordinary sighting noted on page 56 – "Anne Ross ... has had the dubious honour of actually coming face to face with an ancient Celtic lycanthrope!" – sadly, Grigsby refuses us this once any further extrapolation of data – perhaps, as Sherlock Holmes said of the Giant Rat of Sumatra, this time he felt that hers was a story for which, unlike his Grail speculations, the world was not yet prepared!

Aside from the disappointment of thus being left amid mystery, mention can be made of a handful of uncorrected literals, one of which, on page 87, is almost a found poem: "the stones seemed to replace the need for ditch and bank, acting as the

¹⁰ However, elsewhere I have seen the suggestion that bank-without / ditch-within derived initially from animal enclosures – the bank to keep wolves out, the ditch to keep cattle in, as was done at the Royds' Edge Iron Age earthwork in the Pennines, regarded by archaeologists as clearly a cattle pound, not sacral site

scared boundary themselves". Occasional stylistic quirks include cases of gratuitous exclamation syndrome, presumably to dramatise his thought processes, as in page 51's "And then it hit me!" There are some puzzling word choices - "foisted from power", for example, or, on page 168, "This disaster [the eruption of Thera] also disenfranchised many coastal settlers, leading to mass migrations" - an unexpected way to lose the right to vote, granted, but that assumes the Minoan populace had a ballot to lose. Conflation of protagonist and antagonist on page 36 means that we are told "Sir Gawain in the English poem is described as being green". Although trivial, even amusing, such carelessnesses are a further factor militating against taking the book with full seriousness, fascinating as much of the content is, and thus increase the odds against acceptance of its more arguable conclusions. (It could also be said, incidentally, that the relevance of some, although not all, of the illustrations is equally arguable.)

Steve Sneyd

Steve Sneyd ed *Opening the Ellen Files / Jimmie Dickie A Dark Horse Fantasy*
Hilltop Press 2004 £1.75 / \$4.00
0 905262 33 6 pb 16pp

Rather like some bilingual publication, this short booklet features two works back-to-back and two front covers, but being independent they have no real common ground apart from a mysterious abduction. Jimmie Dickie's *A Dark Horse Fantasy* is virtually a prose poem, and concerns a scullery maid physically abused by the other staff at a castle. She escapes her tormentors by riding the dark horse of the title - an exhilarating but frightening journey, evocatively and effectively told - but when she returns home, she discovers he is

No dark horse, just a man

His feet and hands all bloody.

Themes of alienation and witchcraft and echoes of wild hunts and the kelpies of Scottish folklore all mingle here, leaving the reader curious as to any sequel.

The bulk of this booklet is devoted to fragments of Scottish ballads and their links to the story of Burd Helen and Childe Rowland, sometimes named as the offspring of King Arthur and Ginevra.¹¹ Helen (burd is

¹¹ Alan Garner gives a modern slant to this tale in his 1965 children's novel *Elidor*.

an unmarried girl) is abducted by the fairies to Elfland, and Rowland (*childe* meant an adolescent boy) goes in search of her after his two brothers fail to return. He gets advice from Merlin, who warns him to decapitate anyone who speaks to him in Elfland and not to eat or drink anything. When he arrives at the Dark Tower of the King of Elfland he defeats his opponent and successfully rescues his siblings.

Sneyd's very insightful introduction gives us the background to four independent ballad fragments. He explains that Robert Jamieson (who published them in the early 19th century) linked them to a *cante-fable* ("spoken prose narratives interspersed with short songs"¹²) he knew from childhood and to Danish ballads. There are inconsistencies (for example, sometimes the King is anonymous, or called Lord Thomas or Lord John) but there are also intriguing glimpses of variant motifs, such as of Ellen running or swimming to get to Elfland (over the Clyde, maybe, or overseas), of begetting seven children by the King, of serving the King's new wife or even of committing infanticide. The variants however cannot disguise the striking fairy abduction plot which underpins them, though the related story type "Quest for a Vanished Princess" (involving Rowland and his brothers) is not present.

Students of folklore and ballad enthusiasts will be grateful for the republication of these otherwise hard-to-obtain verses. Cheques etc for his booklet are payable to "S Sneyd" and are available from 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 8PB. An unattributed re-telling of Jamieson's version of the plot appears conveniently in a budget re-publication *English [sic] Fairy Tales* (1994 Wordsworth Editions), though this seems to be based on *The Arthur Rackham Fairy Book* (1933) that I remember from childhood and not on Joseph Jacobs's book of the same name. It is therefore disappointing to find that, despite the familiar lines in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, "the *cante-fable* which associates a Childe Rowland with the giant's rhyme is almost certainly of modern composition, and possibly a hoax".¹³

Chris Lovegrove

¹² J Simpson & S Roud (2000) *A Dictionary of English Folklore* (Oxford University Press) sv "cante fable"

¹³ Iona and Peter Opie (1975) *The Classic Fairy Tales* (OUP) 47-8

Chris Barber & David Pykitt

The Legacy of King Arthur
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In 1993 these two Pendragon members published *Journey to Avalon*, in which King Arthur is identified as Arthwys ap Meurig, hereditary ruler of the ancient land of the Silures, Glamorgan/Gwent in South Wales. The authors brought a new dimension to their claim when they added that Arthur had survived the Battle of Camlan on the Lleyn Peninsula, was taken to the holy island of Bardsey where his wounds were healed, and he later became the warrior Saint Abbot Armael/Armillius of Brittany, where he died c.570. (In Celtic hagiography Armael is recognised as having been born in South Wales, a cousin of St. Samson.)

The book sold well, especially in Wales, and in 1989 Samuel Weiser bought the rights in America and published a reprint; subsequently it has been translated into Italian and Polish and reissued in this country.

The present publication, an update and extension of the authors' research, is a handsome A5 paperback printed on fine quality paper with over a hundred illustrations, most in colour, including many full page photographs of the quality we have come to admire in Chris's Blorenge publications. There are full notes, appendices, a bibliography and index, while genealogical tables, useful chronologies and summaries appear neatly as featured panels.

On the Amazon website a reviewer from Alaska in 1999 expressed reservations about the authors' identification of Arthur but praised the book for "delving very deeply into Welsh lore that is often ignored or disregarded... providing fascinating insights into the development of early Wales".

The BBC website for south-east Wales has a large amount of feed-back from Arthurian enthusiasts, two I found revealing: Eirwen Goodman nee Morgan: "I know that Merlin and King Arthur came from Wales and so did Morgan le Fey. It's just obvious - just go to Wales and feel the place". To balance this 'parochial' claim: Eric Reed aka "Emrys" Oklahoma City, USA: "From my early days of childhood the stories of Arthur have held some special meaning for me. The books of Mary Stewart and Marion Zimmer Bradley make me homesick for a place that I, in this life, have never been. Lives can wax and wane but legends

never die".

I have no intention of picking my way through this book to criticise its evidence for the *real* Arthur, its value lies in something far more precious to me, I hope to others who read it.

In tracing the descent from Arthwys through 41 generations to a living descendant - Robert Morgan Williams, a London stockbroker aged 42 with two children - the authors follow paths through Welsh history that the Alaskan reviewer recognised and Eireen felt in her bones: this is a place where Arthur could have thrived.

As a 75% Englishman with 25% Welsh blood I absorbed it in my first 18 years growing up in the very places the authors write of. Born in the Tir Iarll - the Earl's Land (Robert, Earl of Gloucester, pattern of chivalry who Charles has seen as a model for Geoffrey's Arthur), with Margam Abbey on the horizon - where the Cistercians nurtured Welsh lore and lived in uneasy peace alongside the Lords of Afan and Neath. Their names were the house names of our Grammar school : Morgan, Iestyn, Caradoc, Leisan and our school badge bore the chevrons of the Clare family, later Earls of Gloucester. The castles that ringed us were the bases of the legendary twelve knights of Glamorgan, Normans and Bretons who made diplomatic marriages with the daughters of their Welsh princely neighbours and sired children beautiful for having Nest as a grandmother - Gerald the Welshman, his father from Barry Island, was such a product.

Our guides go in search of the lost register of Neath Abbey that may have had 'proof' of Arthur's identity - it was last seen at St. Donat's Castle, a strange link that might allow Mr Williams to see himself as a descendant of Arthur in his own land. His family lived in the Neath Valley, nurturing traditional Welsh culture, music and manuscripts - one bought St. Donat's Castle and restored it to its past glory. The Williams family trace their descent from the princes of Glamorgan, names that appear in the line drawn from Arthwys. A thought occurs: Arthmael, the fighting abbot of Brittany who may have been Arthur, has left behind his jawbone in a church there - Mr. Williams may be able to match his DNA!

This is a book to enjoy, forget facts and proof for a while and remember "Emrys's" words: 'Legends never die'

Fred Stedman-Jones



**Stained glass window in the Boardroom at Caerleon College,
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