

# PENDRAGON

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## P E N D R A G O N

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### THE TIME HAS COME, THE WALRUS SAID.....

By Jess M. Foster.

The original idea of forming some kind of Arthurian Society was mine, and I went to find Geoffrey Ashe, as the author of "King Arthur's Avalon", to help me to do it. With a group of people who were equally interested in Arthur and some kind of Dark Age project we launched The Pendragon Society "To stimulate interest in King Arthur and his contemporaries, and to investigate the historical and archaeological background of The Matter of Britain."

All that now seems a very long time ago, and indeed it is more than ten years in the past. Since the Cadbury dig, and all that has gone with it, there is no longer any need "to stimulate interest". The time, therefore, has come to eliminate that clause from our aims. In fact, as this summer will see the last dig at Cadbury it would seem that the time has come for a complete overhaul.

In 1959, when the idea first began to take shape, it was obvious to all that Britain had once again lost an empire and was wandering about in much the same fog as enwrapped her in the fifth century. Anything written by Gildas about the days when the Romans departed seemed almost to have come off the morning's presses.

Now, any backwoodsman knows that when a man is lost he is apt to panic and run round in circles: the wise hunter sits down calmly and considers carefully the direction from which he has come. As the British Empire and Commonwealth stemmed from the Dark Age it seemed a good idea -- if this were possible -- to persuade everyone to sit down and consider the direction from which we had all come, and the Dark Age seemed the most suitable place to do it.

So, in due course, as Destiny so willed it, we persuaded a lot of people to go and dig holes in the summit of Cadbury/Camelot. And because something of moment was going on at Cadbury/Camelot a vast number of people were persuaded to climb the hilltop and meditate thereon. Whilst there they learnt an astonishing amount of British history, and from there they contemplated the Somerset Plain, in the middle of which Glastonbury Tor looms silently and enigmatically, directing the mind into unaccustomed channels.



Mr. Ashe will not mind if I quote something he said last summer when we were at Cadbury: "Ten years ago I used to get hundreds of letters and a vast number of them appeared to have been written by lunatics. I still get hundreds of letters but scarcely one appears to have been written by a lunatic, so in that sense I think one can say that a very big educational programme has been successfully carried through." Much the same has been said by Leslie Alcock, Director of the Cadbury Excavations.

So we might say that the main objective of the Society has been achieved. Time has passed on. A well-informed British Public has passed on. We could all now go home to bed. However, interests within the Society have broadened out into two separate paths which now lie ahead for Pendragons.

Our second aim was "To investigate the historical and archaeological background of The Matter of Britain" and there are those who still want to do exactly that. This active group wants to carry out the dig at Yarlinton in order to study a late Roman Villa of considerable size. After that they have designs on the Causeway and other sites.

This is admirable but there are reasons why it would be wiser for them to drop the name of Pendragon and why they should become an exclusively archaeological group. If they are going to seek help (as they obviously will have to do from time to time) from professional scholars they will have to make themselves acceptable to such scholars. They will have to eschew all flights of fancy into mythical realms and accept the disciplined limits of historical and archaeological research. Although they will form a separate body, information between the Field Club and the Pendragon Society will be inter-changeable. Further details about this will be given later.

Two years ago we added another clause to our original aims: "To study the significance, past and present, of the Arthurian Legends" and many of our members are now more concerned with this. Already a study of Arthurian Legends has blossomed out, all over the country, into a general study of all universal myths and legends. The new magazine, "Man, Myth and Magic", has settled down to a steady readership of about a quarter of a million. It is the "in" thing to practice Yoga and Meditation, and religious cults are proliferating everywhere. The scene is confused, and to those who can never see anything but the froth, much of it is reprehensible.

But to those who can blow away the froth it is all most encouraging. When something really vital has been lost, and when people are really determined at last to find it, they will clear out the attics and the cellars and the skeletons in the cupboards till they find it. In so doing they may well turn out a lot of junk but it must be as carefully scrutinised as the earth from an archaeological trench before it is impatiently thrown away.

So, the Quest for the Ancient Wisdom is now on. Ever since I first read "King Arthur's Avalon" I have wondered how much of the Ancient Wisdom lingered still with the Celtic Church. One of the most intriguing passages in that book comes on Page 67:



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"Celtic Christianity did vaguely ally itself with the east and respond to eastern influences....One of the Welsh Triads -- formalised summaries of historical tradition -- runs as follows: 'The Three Perpetual Choirs of Britain: the choir of Llan Lltud Vawr in Glamorganshire, the choir of Ambrosius in Ambresbury, the choir of Glastonbury. In each of these choirs there were 2400 saints, that is there were a hundred for every hour of the day and night in rotation.' "

Anyone who has wet his finger and rubbed it round the rim of a wineglass till it rings will have at least a rudimentary idea of what is meant by a mantra. Could it be that the Celtic Church knew something about mantras? From behind this protective wall members of that Church set off for all parts of the world, founding new communities and generally getting on with the business of life regardless of the wars, devastation and seething unrest that were afflicting other people.

We hope to go on producing "Pendragon" but on a rather wider basis of interests. We shall include reports from our own archaeological group, and reports of our own activities such as the current search for Badon. We shall try to include digests of any items that appear in the press, or that come to hand, which seem in any way relevant to the overall quest. And, of course, any information that is sent directly to us. Members of this Society may have friends who, although not interested in joining the Society, might like to subscribe to the magazine. We think we could produce additional copies for such readers at a cost of about 1/6 per issue, plus postage. (In Britain 4d -- Air Mail 2/7.)

We shall be very glad to receive news, views, ideas, suggestions, criticisms etc while changes are in the air.

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#### NOTICE BOARD

We have been asked to inform members in this area that a new club has been formed to investigate the archaeology of the coastline in the vicinity of the River Axe. The River Axe Sailing Club is providing boats and experienced skin-divers for off-shore work, whilst conventional groups will be working inland tracing the old coastline, harbours, etc.

Anyone interested in assisting or joining this club should write direct to:

Mr. J. Bird,  
The Boathouse,  
The Shallows,  
Saltford,  
Nr. Bath, Somerset.

Or contact the editor.



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## IN SEARCH OF BADON

By Rita Moreno.

Anyone who has read "Pendragon" is aware of Arthur and the role that he may have played in post Roman Britain. As a war chief we have heard of his battles, the greatest of which has come down to us as Mons Badonicus. Many sites have been suggested for this battle, but in considering the available evidence Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain cannot be totally disregarded.

The Penguin Classic Edition, Page 215, gives this:

"As the Saxons sailed away across the sea, they regretted the bargain they had made (with the Britons). They reversed their sails, turned back to Britain and landed near Totnes....Then proceeded by forced marches to the neighbourhood of Bath and besieged the town."

Then follows a description of the battle until "finally towards sunset, the Saxons occupied a neighbouring hill." The following battle is that in which Arthur stormed and defeated them, the battle known as Mons Badonicus.

Why Totnes? A glance at a map of Roman Britain shows that landing at this point only a short distance separated them from the Roman road that led to Isca (Exeter), on to Lindinis (Ilchester) to surge on by "forced marches" to Bath.

For Bath we can read Awua Sulis, the spa of Roman Britain, or equally it is possible that Bath meant Caer Badon, the old Brigantes settlement whose remains lie on Bathampton near Bath. Bath is surrounded by high ground -- Bathampton, Bathford, Beacon Hill, Claverton, to name only a few. Bathampton was identified by Stukeley, among others, as the ancient Caer Badon with its defensive points, Bathford Hill guarding the ford over the Avon and the way to Caer Badon. If a hill in the neighbourhood of Bath was occupied by Saxon hordes then, these hills are deserving of close attention.

Last year Pendragons began to reconnoitre Bathampton, and a few weeks ago I made a preliminary foray to the summit of Bathford Hill. A made-up road leads steeply upwards until, just above a parking area, a horizontal stone marks the point where the old path from the east begins its journey towards the distant summit: a hard climb, even steeper and harder than South Cadbury.

It can be no coincidence that this path (probably the continuation of the Roman road from Verluccio (near Calne) which they Survey map indicates as disappearing to the east of the hill, is also -- according to the authors of "Mystery of the Wansdyke", Major and Burrows, a part of that other mystery of the Dark Age, the Wansdyke. So I walked this old road, bounded by mass covered marker stones and old levels strewn with squared blocks of dressed stone and further on, always pushing upwards, punctuated by grass-covered mounds that hint at ruined buildings. One such hump overhangs the hillside just where the best view of the valley below is obtained, with a plateau where



animals could be grazed under the eye of the watchtower. But the path leads upwards until the final summit is reached, and far below the silver streams that are the Avon and the Kennet, together with the whole width of the valley, provide a strong-point that any modern general might covet.

If we accept the possibility that the Saxons did occupy a hill neighbouring Bath, and that this hill became the site of Mons Badonicus, the Bathford Hill deserves close investigation.

But to continue...This Mons Badonicus is an integral part of that other mystery of the Dark Age, the Wansdyke, and therefore --as well as the other projects this year -- we propose to investigate the evidence available regarding the Wansdyke. If you are likely to be anywhere along the line of the Wansdyke, which stretches from Portishead to Inkpen in Hampshire, please take your camera and photograph anything that looks like being interesting in this hunt for knowledge.

Any member (or friends of members) willing to help can write to me and I will be only too pleased to indicate the locales that we are interested in and suggest the best place to take your photograph so that we can get a comprehensive view of this great earthwork.

Your holiday snaps could provide the evidence needed to cast new light on this Dark Age in our history. A two inch O. map is available from Pendragon with all the known camps and the line of the Wansdyke drawn in. The cost is 10/6, post free, or a photostat of any particular section, 2/-

#### NOTES

Phelps, 1839  
History and Antiquities. P. 101, 102.

Caer Badon, Bath, or more properly the settlement on Bathampton Down summit.....was situated near the great barrier Wansdyke and further protected by outposts on Beacon Hill and Berwick Camp on the S. side of the river, and in front of Sulisbury Camp with earthworks of Sion Hill and Lansdown on the opposite side.

Hampton Camp stands on the projecting point of Hampton Down, one mile S.E. of the city of Bath which, from traces still discernible, was a British town. Its area, 30 acres, part sloping off towards the north and of an irregular form from the nature of the ground on three of its sides, which are very steep, covered with wood, requires very little additional defence. On the side level with the hill a strong Vallum extended across the neck of land between the vales and afforded security. Several trackways led to it, one from the east passed over a ford and led up to the camp.

The earliest recognisable mention of the Wansdyke is William of Malmesbury's description of another battle fought in A.D. 592 at a place called Wodensdyke.

## THE BATTLE FOR BADON (CONTINUED)

Mons Badonicus -- The Battle of Bath. By Major P.T. Godsal.

(This digest is contributed by Julie Weaver.)

As this essay, published in pamphlet form in 1914 by Harrison and Sons, London, has long been out of print, the following summary of its main points may be of interest to readers.

Geoffrey of Monmouth (d.c.1155) in his History of the Kings of Britain (Book 9 Ch.3,4,5) describes a battle at Mount Badon in which the Britons defeated the Saxons. Many of Geoffrey's statements are untrue but by studying the terrain around Bath a strong case can be made for a battle on Beacon Hill.

One must note the importance of the Battle of Badon, generally dated 516 A.D., which checked the advance of the Saxons for so long, even if they did not lose the territory which they had already won. Badbury Rings has long been suggested as the site but why would the Saxons have marched down across Hampshire and the Avon, leaving their settlements, in order to besiege an earthwork of no strategic value?

It is more likely that Mons Badonicus means 'Bath Mountain'. The ground around Bath is very steep in places, unlike Badbury Rings, and Gildas locates Mons Badonicus near the mouth of the Severn, a fair description of Bath but not of Badbury.

Bath was surely the objective of the Saxons after their capture of Winchester, Silchester and Dorchester-on-Thames as it was a strong settlement, blocking their advance westward.

The later Saxons, under Ceawlin, wished to establish connections with Bristol and to part the Britons of the North from those of the West before expanding laterally. Ceawlin evidently wished to "settle up" the country as he went. (N.B. This was the Saxon method; they did not build fortresses and leave garrisons to guard an area.) Did he build Wansdyke or merely take it as his frontier? He took Old Sarum in 552, Barbury in 566 but reached Deorham (near Bath) only in 577. Scholars use this time lag to argue against 516 as the date for the Battle of Badon. If Ceawlin took so long, surely the Saxons would not have ventured so far west 50 years earlier?

Ceawlin, however, had learnt from his predecessors that as long as the Severn and its estuary were open to the Britons, they could assemble forces quicker than the Saxons could advance from Marlborough. Did Ceawlin therefore have to take Bristol by sea before he could advance on Deorham? Why were the Saxons so foolhardy in 516? Probably because they had defeated the British commander Ambrosius several times and had taken Marlborough (Crenetio) with ease. Bath therefore seemed easy to capture, being only 30 miles away on the Roman road.



## WAS THIS CAMELOT ?

By F.S. Woodhead.

Most readers will recognise the title as being the caption of a handout made available to visitors throughout the dig at Cadbury Castle. This year will see the end of the dig and as Pendragons are not being officially represented, the time has come to take stock.

The original purpose of the dig, of course, was to prove the correctness or otherwise of a local tradition that the legendary Camelot of King Arthur was once established on this hill top. The archaeological results of the dig will be dealt with in due course by the experts but meanwhile we can make our own assessment.

Evidence of all sorts contributed to a fascinating story of the way in which succeeding communities with different characteristics each left their mark. From the Pendragon point of view, of course, the most interesting period was the Dark Age, with perhaps a little of the immediately preceeding Roman period.

Here finds were disappointingly small. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence was found to prove that the hill had been occupied during the relevant period. The timber building which once stood on the highest point of the hill top was proved to have been erected during the fifth or sixth centuries. There were also slight traces that the remarkable Saxon gateway at the S-W corner had been preceded by another gateway a few centuries earlier, and, of course, the remains of the defence wall underneath the Saxon wall. All of which pointed to Dark Age occupation.

Unfortunately it was not proved who those occupants were. There was not a single clue by which positive identification could be made. But there was one find to which, in the opinion of the writer, sufficient importance has not been attached.

Right at the beginning of the dig, in 1966, Mrs. Jess Foster --our founder and general secretary --found a metallic letter 'A'. Most members will have either seen it or the post card depicting it. Nothing like it had ever been found before, and after various experts had examined the find, it was tentatively pronounced to be some votive letter connected with the Roman pagan religion. With the greatest respect, it is now suggested that this interpretation may not be correct.

In Malory's account of the battle of Bedegraine in Book One, whilst the preparations are being made, Merlin suggests that in order to foil possible spies, all Arthur's knights south of the River Trent should be provided with a token, and this was done. The nature of the token is not disclosed but it seems reasonable to suggest that a metal letter 'A' about six inches high fastened to the front of a man's armour would be ideal.

If this suggestion is accepted, then that letter 'A', found at Cadbury, is extremely precious for it is the only link with the real Arthur that has ever been found.

It could also prove that Cadbury was not Camelot but that it once belonged to one of Arthur's knights. Unless one can show which knight that might be there is liable to be fierce argument.

Perhaps as good a clue as any is to be found in the "Life of St. Gildas" by Caradoc of Llancarfan. But before looking at that work, let us remember that Queen Guinevere was a much abducted lady. Malor has a story of her abduction by one of the knights of the Round Table, Sir Mellyagraunce. This name is also rendered elsewhere as Meleagant or Melwas, and is associated with the 'King of the Summerland' or Somerset. In Malory, however, the story is set in the middle of London, so we can only take it as being probably based upon fact but the location must be an invention.

But Caradoc has a very much more convincing story. He describes how Queen Guinevere was abducted by Melwas, King of the Summerland, and immured at Glastonbury. How Arthur came with his army and besieged the place for a long time without success, and of how Gildas, who was then apparently the abbot, interceded and the affair was settled amicably. The story sounds very plausible until we learn of her being imprisoned at Glastonbury. With the best will in the world, even in those days, a monastery was an odd place in which to confine a Queen, quite apart from the reason for her abduction. Neither would it have been a difficult place to overcome for a man of Arthur's talents. But if we read "near" for "at", the whole story takes on a very different aspect. Near Glastonbury could be Cadbury, and as we know only too well, those fortifications were well high impregnable. We have then the reason for Arthur's long and unsuccessful siege and the intercession of Gildas. We also establish who the occupant of Cadbury was -- none other than the King of Summerland.

We need not necessarily think that Melwas had his palace on the hill top. It may only have been a military stronghold -- part of a strategic defence system of Somerset. As the dig at Yarlington has shown, there were some magnificent late Roman villas in the vicinity which may still have been in a reasonable state of repair at the relevant period and where Melwas might have lived. But most important of all we have established how that letter 'A' could possibly have come to be on Cadbury hill and what it represents. It just might be the only genuine relic in the world directly connected with King Arthur.

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And while on the subject of Malory: Pendragons are concerned with finding out the truth about Arthur and separating fact from fiction. Certainly, tales of thirty foot giants and dragons can be eliminated, but there are other equally fantastic



stories for which a reasonable explanation can sometimes be found. Such, for example, is the story of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight".

Arthur and his knights and ladies are in hall at Camelot. According to custom they are unable to commence feasting until something of an unusual nature occurs. Suddenly, talk is still- ed by the entrance of a huge knight on horseback, clad in full armour. Everything about him is vivid green. He dismounts and is seen to be of very unusual height. Some versions give about seven feet. No features can be seen owing to the wearing of an unusual visor. He throws out a challenge, with the condition that anyone accepting must first strike off the Green Knight's head.

Gawain accepts the challenge, takes his sword and decapit- ates the knight. In awestruck wonder the assembled throng watch him pick up his head, hear him remind Gawain that he must present his own head for decapitation in twelve months time, mount his horse and depart.

It is probably one of the first of the many headless horse- men stories and sounds sheer nonsense until we take a cool look at the tale. The clue lies in the unusual height of the knight. It requires little imagination to realise that any modern ill- usionist could easily perform the same trick, especially in the dim, flickering light of those days, and there is no reason to suppose that illusionists are special to modern times. The difference is that in those days they were usually known as sorcerers.

It would seem that students of the Arthurian legends have two courses open to them, both equally valid in their own right. One follows the course of imagination into the higher realms of literature and the other follows the narrower path of realism leading to exploration with the trowel. By looking over the fence there is always the possibility that one may help the other.

### SAINT GEORGE

By John Brooke.

Before considering possible reasons why St. George should have been selected as Patron Saint a survey of the various ways in which he is portrayed may prove profitable. The best known is the figure designed by Pestrucchi for the original George III Crowns. Here he is shewn semi- naked mounted on a prancing horse. He is riding over a dragon. He is armed with a Roman cavalry Spartha. Other pictures shew him as a medieval knight bearing a lance. However, the oldest picture of all makes him a Cataphractarius of the 5th or 6th century. He is wearing the high pointed helmet and both he and his horse are clothed in linked mail. He is piercing the dragon with a lance. To the left of the figure is a crescent moon whilst to the right is a

rising sun. This picture would appear to be contemporary. As George did not become Patron Saint until the ninth century this, to say the least, is curious !

When the Church converted the Saxons it was essential for them to employ every art to convince these fierce heathen warriors that the religion was the true one. It was necessary, to a certain extent, to pander to their natural way of thinking. It was no good putting forward some meek and mild candidate. A soldier was the obvious choice. A mounted man was necessary as only Saxon Chiefs rode (if rarely). A cavalry man shewed that the "Saint" was a Chief, and could be respected as such.

As both David and Patrick had been saints for some time before the advent of George one feels that there must have been someone in this country who already qualified for this appointment but who would not be acceptable to the Saxons. At first glance, St. Germanus of Auxerre would seem to be the obvious candidate after the "Alleuia" victory of 429. As is known, he was a Dux before he took Holy Orders. The next candidate is Ambrosius the Great; finally, of course, there is Arthur. Naturally, none of these could be tolerated by the Saxon heirarchy. However, doubtless many pictures existed of one or other of these heroes amongst the surviving Britons. The Church had to make certain concessions to the Briton as their Church still existed.

The legend of Ambrosius and Vortigern recounts how the Red Dragon of Britain and the White Dragon of the Saxons fought one another. How natural, therefore, if a picture of Arthur shewed him destroying a White Dragon. A slight modification of this picture, by colouring the dragon GREEN, would avoid giving offence to either the Britons or the Saxons. The Britons would continue to know the truth whilst the Saxons would be quite happy to see a warrior destroying the "Powers of Evil" as portrayed by the Green Dragon.

The final convincing fact in the above theory is the appearance of the Sun and the Moon in the early picture. This picture surely commemorates the Battle of Badon which was fought from sunrise to moonrise, by Arthur.

It is suggested, therefore, that the figure still shewn on our golden sovereigns is, not Cappadocian George, a Levantine, but Arthur.

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A letter from Mr. Boss, 100 Netherwood Road, London, W. 14.

I am interested to see things have come round to Lancelot at last. You see, I think, with your contributor, that he is very important to Arthurian study. He is without question the finest and noblest of Arthur's Knights of the Round Table, and as regards his origin ---? Could it not be that he had kinsfolk with the Parisii but that his own castle was in Brittany (France) ?



France claims him as hers in the French lays, and Malory says that he went (returned to) Brittany to his lands there after the rescue of Guinevere. That he returned to Logres to claim her -- if she wished it -- from the convent, and then -- on her refusal -- became a monk in the Hermit's chapel. Mr. Ashe has traced his path to the chapel door.

Further about this, I do not know if Lancelot's mother may perhaps have been a Pole or a Hungarian. Lancelot, Wladislaw in Polish, Ladislaus in Hungarian is still a popular name with Poles and Hungarians, and there is a Saint, a Hungarian and Polish King of this name. There is an illustration of the Polish cavalry (catafracti) who served in the Roman Army. (Page 152 Plate XLX, "Auxilliaries in the Imperial Roman Army", by Graham Webster. Their banners were pennons bearing the device of the Dragon. And I have wondered if perhaps Barwick is a British mis-reading of the Breton Penevic or something similar.

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#### FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

In the autumn Mr. Ashe's final book about the Arthurian scene will be appearing from Heinemann. Pendragons will want to order well in advance.

In June Sago Press will issue two reprints at about 40/- each: "The Old Straight Track" by Alfred Watkins and "The Pattern of the Past" by Guy Underwood.

Mr. John Badger of Pendragon House Ltd: 71 Bathurst Street, Toronto, 2B writes: Recently we formed a British company, Pendragon House, U.K. Ltd: We wish to develop it into a publishing house and possibly one specialising in the Arthurian book. It may be of interest to your members to know this. In addition to books, we are prepared to consider booklets, monographs and maps. Submissions should be directed to me. (Our British manager is on the business, not the editorial side.) We will return manuscripts we do not wish to publish within one month. Those we do will be produced in Great Britain, to build up sterling. All profit will be retained in the U.K.

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For those interested in a northern Arthur our member, Terry Sonley, writes: Might I suggest that some of our members read 'Around Leeds and the Ancient Kingdom of Elmet'. It is a most interesting book and with very little imagination one can believe that here is a kingdom that could easily have been Arthur's. After all, it took in some of Cumberland, York, Newark, Knaresboro and also trailed out westward towards Chester. This gives access to the North, South, East and West both by road and also by the many canals which flow from these parts to nearly all the South and West. The book is by Edmund Bogg

and the edition I have has a preface by the author dated 1904. Once again I would say that Arthurian students may find it interesting and enlightening, especially when one realises that Leeds was once Loidas, then Liodess -- and, who knows, perhaps even Lioness ?

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THE DAILY MIRROR of Wednesday, Jan. 21st brought us news of our old friend, the Chinese Dragon. This was contained in a short article from Hong Kong written by someone called Ellis Plaice:

A historic improvement in the lot of the worker has just been achieved. A bunch of roadmen have won a "dragon allowance".

For a while, things looked grim at the construction site. Roadbuilding was being delayed by....two 'dragons'.

The 'dragons' were in the way of a road the Royal Engineers are building near Hong Kong's border with China.

To the British soldiers they looked like mere hills. But to the Chinese workmen helping the soldiers those hills were, by ancient tradition, sleeping dragons just waiting for someone to disturb them.

After consulting local trade union officials, the engineers devised a compromise. They would realign the road round one dragon -- if they were allowed to cover the beast's feet with the soil they dug. This, said the workers, was all right so long as the bulldozers did not cut the 'dragon's claws by getting too close.

'Dragon' No. 2 was a more difficult obstacle. The Chinese absolutely refused to dig near it. For a whole week delicate negotiations went on...and on. Finally agreement was reached. The workers would get special payments and a monumental booze-up.... ..which, the Chinese explained inscrutably, would not be for their benefit but only to placate the 'dragon'.

Major-General Richard Clutterbuck, the Army's Engineer-in-chief, said: 'Negotiating a dragon allowance might seem incredible to a Westerner, but we have to take local beliefs very seriously or goodwill would quickly evaporate.'

Pendragons, of course, have educational advantages that are denied to Royal Engineers, but with our (scanty) knowledge of Leys it is a little difficult to suggest what else the worthy Major-General could have done ! And consider this quote from "Somerset Folklore" by R.L. Tongue. A member of the Stogumber W.L. reported in 1960 that the Yeff Hounds, or Ghost Pack, were heard pattering through Stogumber after midnight that year, but no one looked out to see them, even nowadays. They are known to run through the village and down towards Roebuck, then on to Will's Neck.

If you wonder why no one looked out to see this pack the reason is this:



"Cannington Park used to be famous as the Devil's hunting ground. It is said the Wild Hunt and headless horsemen have often been encountered there. The Devil also performs exploits on the hills around Stogursy, and on Putsham Hill he rides nightly, while from Cannington Park he rides out with The Wild Hunt over the ancient track to Dowsboro and on to Crowcombe Heathfield.

The Yeff Hounds have fiery tongues and the Rider is sometimes mounted on a headless horse. There is also a legend, rarely mentioned, of the Wild Rider patrolling the Drove Road from Cothelstone to Quantoxhead after sunset. It is unlucky to hear him and very ill fortune to see him....."

So now you know.

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Also from "Somerset Folklore" comes the legend of Bath. In case anyone does not already know it....

Prince Bladud was the eldest son of King Lud of Britain. He was greatly beloved. He also travelled to Greece in search of Wisdom. On his return he was found to be a leper. He wandered away from the court and eventually came to Swainswick where a farmer allowed him to mind his swine. The pigs prospered, but in winter their skins cracked and chapped and no herbs cured them. They began to move down the hillside to a marsh where a faint steam rose and when Bladud caught up with them they were wallowing in mud. As it was warm, Bladud waded into the marsh to drive them out. Next day their coats shone with health and Bladud was cured of his leprosy. He returned to his father's court where he was hailed with joy and later, in gratitude he built a city where the springs were. Later to become BATH.

After Bladud became king of Britain he sent for the farmer and made him lord of a nearby village which Somerset folk called Hogs Norton. Later on, when the Normans came, they learned this story and thought it was not bad payment for reward, so since then it has been called Norton Malreward.

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### THE FISHER KING

(As this is one of the most important legends connected with Arthur we give here a quote from "Man, Myth and Magic" to remind readers of it.)

The connection between the king (whether 'divine' or not) and the fertility of his land appears in several societies. In Crete, for instance, the king was connected with the bull..... In the Odyssey (book 19) Odysseus describes the 'perfect king' who upholds the right, 'so that the dark soil yields its wheat and barley, the trees are laden with ripe fruit, the sheep never fail to bring forth their lambs, nor the sea to provide its fish -- all as a result of his good government -- and his people prosper under him'.

A striking example is the Fisher King of the Grail legends. He is the custodian of the castle where the Grail is kept and he is maimed, wounded in the genitals or the thigh. As a result his land is barren, the Waste Land of T.S. Eliot's poem, and the land will not recover till the king is healed.

The blow which wounds the king is the 'dolorous stroke', familiar to readers of Malory's Morte d'Arthur. A story written down c 1230 and called the Suite du Merlin describes how the hero Balaa'in came to the castle of King Pellehan. The king attacked Balaa'in, who ran through the castle trying to find a weapon. In a room richly hung he found a lance, standing in a vessel of gold and silver. Seizing it, he thrust it through Pellehan's thighs. The walls of the castle immediately fell in, and outside Balaa'in found the people all dead, the crops destroyed and the trees fallen. One of the tasks of the heroes who seek the Grail is to heal the maimed king and so restore life to the Waste Land.

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Finally, a delightful bit of spoof correspondence taken from "Current Archaeology".

Sir: I am equipping myself as an experienced digger for the 1970 season.

My hair is just about obscuring my vision. I've torn a shirt and have got a jungle hat, jeans with patches on seat and knees, and sandals held together with string. But I am having difficulty with my trowel. They don't sell them with blades less than 3 inches long, and grinding them down to the requisite one inch -- sorry, 2.5 cms -- is a long job.

If I can't get it down to just above the tang, how will the others know I am an experienced digger?

M.U. Smith.

144 Piccadilly, London, W.1.

(In the following issue):

Sir: Mr. M.U. Smith need not despair. A trowel with a 2.5 cm blade is not an essential part of the 'experienced archaeologist kit'. The really skilled practitioner never removes his trowel from the hip-pocket of his patched and faded jeans, so the length of the blade is immaterial.

For reasons of comfort it is preferable to remove the blade entirely and have the handle secured to a piece of stout cardboard which may be stitched into the pocket so as to leave the handle exposed in the manner of some pocket handkerchiefs. This device is strong enough to support the weight of the hand as one stands on the bank 'to see the general pattern developing' -- always on the point of starting to grovel in the workings, but never actually risking one's sandalled feet among the pick-wielding peasantry.

W.J. Hopkins.

24 Bridge Street, Risca, Mon.

What can Pendragons do but respectfully raise their glasses to the Editors for publishing these?



all about ARTHUR

Geoffrey Ashe

W. Hallen