

P E N D R A G O N



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NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD MEN TO COME TO THE AID OF THE TASK FORCE IN BRISTOL

Once upon a long time ago we used to talk about producing a "Guide Book to Arthurian Britain" but this has proved to be one of the more daunting projects from which we have shied away. It now looks as if we must brace our back muscles and consider the idea seriously.

Geoffrey Ashe has succeeded in finding a publisher who is willing to consider the possibility of printing such a book. We have been joined, quite recently, by a group from an American school that will be coming to Britain anyhow next June. They have kindly offered to help by taking photographs and collecting information for us in the course of their tour of this country. As they will be pursuing their own studies of Celtic and Arthurian Britain they will obviously be the most admirable people to outline what is wanted, and to help us with its production.

Geoffrey is coming to Bristol on Feb. 27th next to give us a Talk on "Myth and Magic", and he will bring with him the publisher's representative who will explain to us the aims in view.

So we are now asking all our members to come to the aid of the party by giving us their help and co-operation. Please, if you can and will, send us suggestions, handbooks, publications (or details of where and how they can be obtained), amateur photographs, sketch maps, local tales and legends etc. In addition to such well known sites as Cadbury and Glastonbury, for instance, we must add all the various Arthur's Dens, Seats, Leaps, Kitchens, Points etc and likewise all the various Round Tables, Pendragon Castles and so on. In fact, no Stone must be left unturned.

Please will you help us by working your own locality (if you know of any local lore) by combing through your libraries, and riffling through all the personal notes you may have made over the years? Even those members who do not live in Britain can help by ransacking their libraries and their memories.

Two members have expressed some puzzlement caused by the apparently wayward ideas we seem to be pursuing. In case there are others who feel this way, may we assure them that we are not being in any way wayward. If you go questing you cannot always foresee where the quest may lead you. If avenues explored prove to be unfruitful we can always try others and agree that we have changed our minds because we are wiser to-day than we were yes-

-terday. All the years we have been at Cadbury we have been asking ourselves "WHERE ?" The only difference now is that we have begun to ask ourselves "WHY ?"

Mr. Colin Renfrew (see quote from The Times) is challenging orthodoxy and upsetting a lot of well-established doctrine. Anyone who would like to read more about his theories should get copies of "The Listener" dated Dec. 31st 1970 and Jan. 7th 1971. The former also includes an article by Prof. Thom describing his work on the megaliths at Carnac.

We were visited on Nov. 14th last by Mr. Keith Critchlow who gave us a very interesting Talk which is reported on another page. On Feb. 27th we hope to welcome Miss Leader and Mr. Davidson (also members of the Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation) who will tell us more about the Glastonbury Zodiac and explain, for instance, why two of the Signs are missing. Some people do not consider the other signs particularly obvious but that may well be because they have not looked closely enough. It is difficult for us to produce drawings in a duplicated magazine such as this, but in our next issue we will try to pass on what we learn from this lecture.

Efforts are still being made to persuade a qualified archaeologist to investigate Mr. Geoffrey Russell's theory about a processional maze on the Tor but Emergency Digs are still proving to be a good alibi. Zodiacs and mazes are said to grow together like double sweet peas and current reading informs us that mazes of varying sizes and types are to be found all over Britain. How many other zodiacs are waiting to be observed, we ask ourselves.

Remembering that the Knights Templar were said to be The Guardians of the Grail some of our members are now researching in that area. Have you any Temple churches in yours ? If so, we would like to know more about them.

Best wishes for 1971 to all our members ! Before the year ends we hope we shall have collected all the material necessary for a "Guide Book to Arthurian Britain".

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For members interested in archaeology: SHIRE PUBLICATIONS, Tring, Herts, have produced the following handbooks:

CENTRAL ENGLAND (6/-) Cheshire, Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

SOUTH-WESTERN ENGLAND (6/-) Cornwall, Scillies, Devon, Somerset.
COTSWOLDS & UPPER THAMES (6/-) Berkshire, Gloucestershire & Oxfordshire.

EASTERN ENGLAND (4/6)

DISCOVERING ARCHAEOLOGY IN ENGLAND & WALES (5/-)

All pocket size and illustrated with maps, photographs and diagrams.

VESICA PISCIS

On Nov. 14th, Mr. Keith Critchlow (Architect, lecturer, Executive Member of the R.I.L.K.O Group -- Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation) was kind enough to come to Bristol to give us a Talk on "Signs and Symbols". This Talk, illustrated by an enormous number of interesting slides, was given in The Music Room, Clifton and followed by a short Wine and Cheese Party. A majority of Pendragons afterwards repaired to the Hon. Sec's flat where discussion continued until some hours after midnight. We were very glad to have with us, at the same time, John Michell, and a number of Pendragon members who normally dwell in other parts and who don't often come to Bristol.

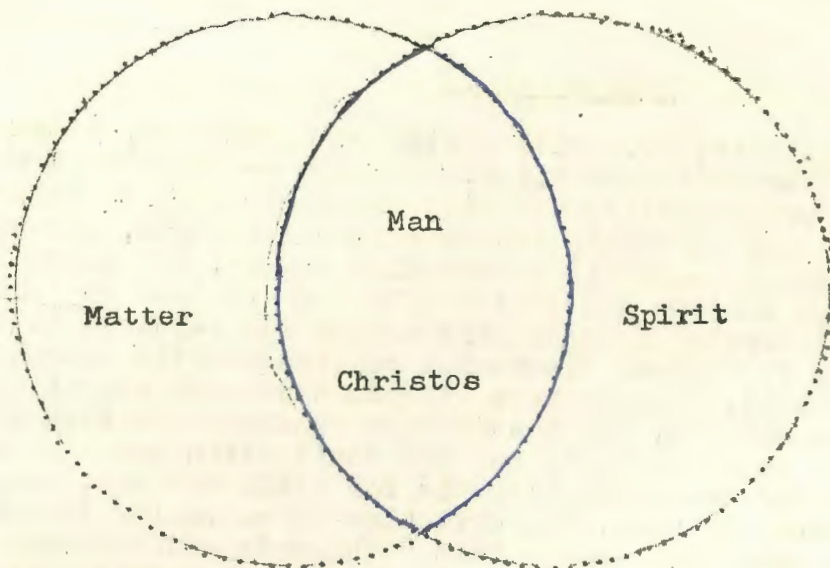
While the archaeologists dig for walls and pot, and the Hunters hunt for Leys, Mr. Critchlow is searching for hidden knowledge built into our Gothic Cathedrals and searching for correspondences in much earlier buildings in other parts of the world. His Talk covered a vast amount of ground but, in the main, his thesis was this:

There were three basic rules for designing churches. The first fixed the overall length and breadth by means of the vesica piscis, the second provided for the sub-division of the plan into equal bays, and the third determined the heights of the various parts by means of equilateral triangles.

This serves as a basis of fact from contemporary sources that the vesica piscis was the fundamental determining shape and proportion of the ground plan of Gothic cathedrals. The vesica piscis is so named because of its similarity of form with the fish bladder, used anciently as a float when inflated. It has a very involved symbolism and would appear to relate to the Hindu manas which has been explained as the spiritual consciousness evolving from empirical consciousness to universal consciousness. The form is determined by the overlapping of two circles of equal radius when the centre of one touches the circumference of the other, and vice versa: it has also been equated as the overlapping of the circle of "matter" with the circle of "spirit". All these interpretations serve to point towards the depth and breadth of meaning rather than the limitations of partial explanation: we are far, it would seem, from realising fully what this form has meant to man in the past....

It is conceivable that there was extensive mathematical activity over a long period; that what was once known as oral tradition was, finally, laid out in a three-dimensional way so that students might understand rules governing universal phenomena, and that this knowledge should not be lost.... It is well to remember that there was, in the days of ancient Rome, the death penalty for giving away the secret meaning of the Zero.

Further research will involve much greater understanding of the Cabala, and some of us have to start by studying elementary geometry. As soon as time and circumstances permit, Bristolians are going out to visit Bristol's churches in search of hidden symbols. The point of departure should be the (almost) defunct Temple Church since the Knights Templars were known as



the Guardians of the Grail. It would appear that this now rectangular church was originally oval in shape. Another site that has to be visited is St. Mary's Redcliffe which includes among its roof bosses a representation of a maze, only a matter of inches across.

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In our last issue Peter Damsberg asked if anyone had information about Mount Batten, the hill fort near Plymouth. This brought an interesting letter from Mrs. Lazarides, our only Cornish member, from which we give a short extract:-

I know little about Mount Batten but a lot about words and accents and names.

Batten is a Cornish border name, spelled in various ways, often within the same family. Battin, Batton, Batten, always pronounced with a sort of click to the t. It is not like T in Tom, more like a D, and my guess would be Badon (Mons Badon) for the original.

There are other similar changes. Lundy Island, or Landy Island, or Lantis in some old MS, is in legend all that remains of the land that sheared off from Tintagel to Hartland Point. There is a bite out of the coast and Hartland Point is high and sheer and still breaking off in great boulders, and the change in coastline can be seen from year to year on this coast as the sea encroaches. Tintagel stands solid but Hartland rock is cracked and faulty. Atlantic breakers undermine it and the top then falls so recession of the coastline is a steady process.

Quote from THE TIMES, Tuesday, Oct. 27th, 1970.

ARCHAEOLOGY: . . . Doubts about prehistory.

Many of the accepted theories about prehistoric civilisations may have to be modified and even radically altered as a result of more accurate methods for dating archaeological samples.

This suggestion has been put forward by Dr. Colin Renfrew of Sheffield University. He argues in the current issue of the journal *World Archaeology* that dates put on Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures of Europe may be inaccurate by as much as 700 years.

The most striking results of Dr. Renfrew's analysis is that an early Maltese culture preceded the Egyptian pyramids by about 1,000 years, whereas it is usually thought that the ancient temples of Malta were built at about the same time as the pyramids, and that the Maltese culture was even influenced by Egypt.

Another important conclusion is that the Wessex culture in England which fostered Stonehenge had already declined before the rise of the Mycenaean culture in Greece. Again, the two cultures are widely believed to have been contemporaneous.

The chief conclusion Dr. Renfrew draws is that there should be a reappraisal of the influences of the Egyptian and Aegean cultures on those of Europe. This arises because archaeological samples from Egypt are usually dated according to the early Egyptian calendar which is believed to be accurate back to the nineteenth century B.C. and may even be accurate up to 3000 B.C.

Samples from other parts of the world, on the other hand, are usually dated by a method based on the amount of radioactive carbon that they contain. It is this so-called radio-carbon method which has been found to be inaccurate and which could throw accepted theories about European prehistory into confusion.

The first indications that radiocarbon dating may give inaccurate results came about seven years ago when it was realized that there is considerable discrepancy between the dates of archaeological samples from Egypt when they are measured by the radiocarbon method compared with those obtained from the Egyptian calendar. Since then much effort has been expended in placing radiocarbon dating on a more accurate footing.

One of the more promising approaches is based on cores taken from bristlecone pine trees, some of which are believed to live for about 5,000 years. The method consists essentially of comparing the age of each tree ring as determined by the radiocarbon method with the age worked out by assuming that the growth rings are annual. In this way, the radiocarbon time scale can be calibrated.

What Dr. Renfrew has done is to apply this time scale to archaeological samples taken from Europe. So far, the scale is still somewhat speculative, but Dr. Renfrew believes that it is sufficiently accurate to throw many of the accepted relationships between Egyptian and Aegean cultures and those of Europe back into the melting pot.

For example, for some time it has been considered that a number of small earthenware and fused-glass beads, the British faience beads -- which were discovered in Wessex sites were imported from the eastern Mediterranean. But if the Wessex culture ended before the Mycenaean culture began, this theory may be wrong.

In another paper Dr. Renfrew and Dr. R.G. Newton of the British Glass Industry Research Association, argue that the British faience beads were in fact manufactured locally. The chief evidence for their suggestion is a statistical analysis of the spectra emitted when beads from various sites are heated.

The statistical technique, which was developed by Dr. Newton, has shown that there are distinct differences in the chemical composition of beads found in various parts of the world and this suggests that the beads may have been manufactured locally.

Because these beads are usually regarded as the chief evidence for contact between Britain and the Aegean in Mycenaean times, Dr. Newton's analysis provides support for Dr. Renfrew's suggestion that the Wessex culture and the Mycenaean culture were separated in time.

(In other words: Civilisation travelled from West to East, contrary to all that we have been taught to believe up till now.)

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Another Quote, this time from THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, dated Friday, June 19th, 1970, under the heading of POP MUSIC.

Round about the time of the last election, the Kinks' "Sunny Afternoon" was top of the charts. Now a similar simple hymn to pleasant weather is top of the charts: Mungo Jerry's "In the Summertime". In the summer, both songs say, nothing matters but just how good the sun makes you feel, no matter how many aggravations press upon you.....

This is also the time of the summer solstice. Hippie tourists hire cars, and visit Stonehenge, and talk of Avebury and Glastonbury. It's too easy to chuckle against pop mysticism, though, as it seems to me. The people who built Stonehenge, after all, were not all religious initiates. A great deal of British rock music, now, is in one way or another pre-occupied with what ran peoples' lives, in Britain, thousands of years ago: the sun, the earth, the sky, the ceremonies of the seasonal cycle.

Country music, now, in Britain, is a music which is moving back into our far past, and bringing it close to us.....all are stretching out and down to the history of Britain.

The roots of America's culture, by contrast, don't reach down deep in years. To feel part of America's past, you must either pretend that the Indians didn't exist, or else pretend to be an Indian. (There's no American rock music that I've heard of). But, sitting on Avebury, or walking on the chalk

hills carved with vast figures of men and monsters in England: passing over any Neolithic or Celtic monument in Britain, the felt affinity is with our fathers' fathers'....fathers.

....Very many of the people who are going to the Bath Festival, next week-end, will afterwards walk to Glastonbury, 20 miles away, and feel that through repossessing the spirit of the place, central to peoples' lives for so many centuries, that they may re-establish the continuity of man with the land and the elements.....And now, more and more people, in Britain, are making their own songs, in season.

By Geoffrey Cannon.

It would seem that Pendragons are not the only people aware of the Giant Albion.

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Nor are Pendragons the only people studying the Arthurian Legends. "The Ley Hunter", December issue '70, carries this short article:

THE NORTHERN ENTRANCE TO THE "KINGDOM OF LOGOS" IDENTIFIED ?

By Kenneth Knight.

The ancient City and County of Bristol, traditionally said to have been founded by the twin brothers, Brennus and Belinus, ancient British nature-gods, stands at a prominent position and on the direct route between the Kingdom of Galois (Wales) and the Arthurian "Kingdom of Logros" (sometimes called "Logos"). Those who have read Alfred Watkins's book, "The Old Straight Track", will recall the references to church alignments and ley tracks in this old city. Overshadowing all, of course, is Blaize Castle, an ancient earthwork, and undoubtedly a site where the Beltane fires were kindled in their due season. To the north of Blaize Castle is Aust, where the entrance to and from South Wales is gained, stands the new Severn Bridge. According to a map which had been prepared by the late Mrs. Maltwood, and published by J.M. Dent in their "Everymans " Edition, and placed at the end of "The High History of the Holy Grail", translated by Sebastian Evans in 1930, this road from Aust to Bristol marks the route to "The Kingdom of Logres". Another advocate of the importance of the area was Comyns Beaumont who wrote a number of books on South Wales and Somerset in particular having strong associations with the Arthurian Legends. In fact, in his book, "Britain -- the Key to World History", he gives a far wider area over which the Somerset Zodiac was set, taking in Bristol and Aust in the north, and Montacute in the south, with Glastonbury Tor being the hub of the whole scheme. A most interesting feature of the area is the alignment between the ancient "castle" sites and their astronomical affinities, namely the rising and setting of the Sun at the Summer and Winter Solstice, as well as the rising and setting of the Pleiades at the May and November festivals associated with Beltane and St. Blaize.

THE PENDRAGON STANDARD

By L.C. Gowers. F.S.L.A.E.T.

The origin of the Pendragon standard or flag can be traced with reasonable accuracy and the probable evolution of its use has been the subject of research in aeronautical engineering circles for some time. This should be of interest to members of the Pendragon Society.

During medieval times an invention came to the notice of many of the writers of that time which was superficially similar to a kite. This kite had a body like an elongated dragon and was in fact a "semi-kite". The German word for such a device was "warmluftdrachen".

Conrad Kyeser in his Belifortis (1505 A.D.) wrote:-

"Draco volans iste formetur capite perga medium sit lineum cauda tamen servicea sit colores diversi fine capitis sit tripla zona ligno coadiuncta medio ventilabro mota capud versus ventum ponatur quo tunc assumpto duo levent capud tertius ventilabrum portet equo sequatur eum corda mota moveteur volatus sursum dorsum dextrorsum & sinistrorsum capud sit depictum rubeo colore que fictum medio lunaris coloris fine diversi".

"This flying dragon may be made with parchment for the head, the middle of linen, but the tail of silk, the colours various. At the end of the head let a triple harness (bridle) be attached to the wood, moved by the middle of the flail (shaped reel). Let the head be raised into the wind and when it has been lifted, two men may hold the head while a third carries the reel. It follows him while he rides (or 'he follows it as he rides'). The movement of the line causes the flight to vary up and down, to right and left. Let the head be coloured red and made to look real, the middle should be of moon-silver colour, the end of several colours."

On the previous page of the Belifortis, page 104, there is a passage headed "Ignis Pro Tygace Volante", and contains a formula for fire producing materials. This was presumed to be meant for the draco (kite) and therefore the draco and tygax can be presumed to be identical. The subsequent works of Romocki, Berthelot and Feldhaus have supported this supposition. This fire producing dragon consisted of a hollow tube into one end of which a container of fire could be introduced. This "fired up" windsock was thought to be derived from the hollow dragon standard which became familiar in Europe during the latter period of the decline of the Roman Empire. A metal ring supported the front of the hollow tube of cloth. The wind was allowed to blow into the mouth of the metal ring which was supported by a pole and the dragon standard was allowed to billow out in the wind. The Romans took the idea from Eastern peoples before adopting it at some time between 100 and 300 A.D.

This draco was used to instil fear into the enemy and to inspire courage in troops, and for ceremonial purposes. It was used continuously in Europe until the Middle Ages. This is proven

by its appearance in the Psalterium Aureum (9th cent) and in the Bayeux Tapestry. The Warmluftdrachen developed from the draco standard according to popular theory in aviation circles.

It is but a step from our research to assume with a high probability factor that the dragon standard used by the Romans was adopted by a Dux Bellorum such as Artorius, Ambrosius or some other Romano-British war leader of the day. This again brings to mind the word Pendragon which in the Celtic tongue means "Dragon's Head" and probably became the battle standard of the Dux Bellorum. As the standard was certainly in use by the Romans in 400 A.D. and later by the Saxons (9th century) and shown in the Bayeux Tapestry (11th century) it is more than probable that this was the origin of the Pendragon Standard.

The Dark Ages being dark in knowledge as they are, we can only calculate probabilities in the light of proven facts and a percentage of circumstantial evidence.

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Mr. Gowers, New South Wales, Australia, also sent a letter:

Dear Mrs. Foster and members:

Thank you for the regular despatch of the "Pendragon" journal which keeps me in contact with a hobby which is closest to me. The few years I spent in England actually browsing and searching through the musty shelves of antiquarian bookshops, and the public libraries for the monthly proceedings of various archaeological societies, will remain for ever in my memory. Then actually to live in Somerset, climb the steep path to the top of Camelot, and also Glastonbury, and breathe in two thousand years of history. I can understand Samuel Clemens' (Mark Twain) enchantment when he was inspired to write "A Yankee in King Arthur's Court."....I hope to be in England next year and if I am in the vicinity of Bristol I will do my best to contact you.

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ARTHUR'S POINT, NEAR WELLS.

(From 'Somerset in Bygone Days' by William J. Tate, 1912.)

A SUGGESTION AS TO ITS HISTORIC ORIGIN.

Why was Arthur's point so called?...Something real and tangible remains behind, and there seems a reasonable chance of our partly bridging the centuries, and after the lapse of some fourteen hundred years arriving at some conclusion as to the real origin of the name Arthur's Point. Let us go back fourteen centuries, and try to draw a fancy picture as we linger on the summit. In the valley towards the south-east where Wells now stands, there are but a few rude dwellings; the gray towers of the cathedral have not yet arisen; dense forests are seen on the slopes of the Mendips; thickly wooded are the hillsides closer at hand; at our feet is Wookey Hole, with its clear stream dashing over its rocky bed. Towards the south-west is Glastonbury and the mere.... Gleaming in the sunshine, as we glance across from Arthur's Point, are the waters of the Channel....Observe all this well; fix it in

your mind's eye. The Point is a most important one.

...It is a high mount which commands a view of the approach from the sea; it is a place where an army or strong guard is posted to do battle; it is a hill from which a leader can easily reconnoitre, and observe signals --by night especially, for.... fires can be lighted on the Mendips, and on the isolated hills... The great British leader has selected, we will say, this vantage ground. It is Arthur's Point !

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This point seems to be unmarked on modern maps, presumably somewhere near Ebbor Rocks. Can anyone get hold of a detailed 1912 map which may indicate this point, or suggest a 'summit' or 'high mount' from their own observations, either from a map or in the field ? If so, please write to Chris Lovegrove.

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CADBURY & CATTLE HILL: THREADS

By Chris Lovegrove.

I make no apology for re-opening speculation on the origins of the place-names Cadbury/Camelot. A consensus of opinion still does not exist to justify the hopeful theory that the whole vexed question is closed.

Cadbury has long been associated with Camelot though the linguistic similarities are not over-obvious. Cadbury is usually interpreted as 'Cada's fort', Cada being a common Saxon personal name (judging by the many Cadburys in existence), with a Scandinavian equivalent of Kati. Kenneth Cameron notes: 'Particularly in the south, burh seems to have been frequently applied to prehistoric sites of various kinds', but then goes on to say, 'Many of the names in burh which also take their names from (such) forts have as first element an old English personal name, presumably that of one of the first settlers there....in Somerset, two (sic) examples of Cadbury 'Cada', (K.C. p 113.)

However, though Cada is a common name, one may allow that not all of the numerous Cadbury sites need necessarily be named after otherwise unrecorded petty Saxon chieftains. 'We now know that non-personal first elements in the genitive case are much more common than used to be thought.' (FTW p.55). We may suppose then many non-personal origins for the Cad -element, if we can assume it is of non-Saxon, i.e. Celtic or earlier origin.

Most English villages depended originally for their English name-identification on the existence of other neighbouring English settlements. 'That is why,' notes Wainwright, 'river-names, hill-names and names of other topographical features, having a wider currency, are so persistent and so permanent'. (FTW p.58). 'The most persistent Celtic names are those of prominent natural features such as rivers, hills and forests, and with them we may include names of ancient territorial divisions and names of Romano-British towns.'

Thus we may notice that Cadbury, a prominent hilly feature

and a notable prehistoric site could have originally had a Celtic name suffixed later by the Saxon element burh. What is this element Cad? Cad, or Caddy, a word of uncertain origin meant a familiar spirit in 1657, a ghost, bugbear (1781 -- Shorter English Dictionary). It is interesting to note that many of the Cadbury sites -- for instance, two in Somerset, one in Devon, have attracted non-Saxon folk legends of ghosts and sleepers. Geoffrey Ashe suggests it could be based on the Celtic cad, meaning battle, which could tie in with various interpretations on the site of Camlann, while Nennius places Arthur's eleventh battle on a hill called Agned, though the Vatican MS calls it 'breguoin...quem nos cat bregion appellamus', and another MS calls it 'agned cat bregomion'. Dickinson sees in Cat Bregion a possible similarity with Cadbury. (1)

The important thing to remember is that 'Cadbury' is not limited merely to South Cadbury Castle, or even to South Cadbury. There is North Cadbury too, the other side of the A 303, nestling in between two brooks, one leading from Yarlington, which both eventually join to form the River Cam just east of King Arthur's Hunting Causeway. Was the whole area settled in Saxon times called after a Celtic battle-site, Battle Settlement, or Cadan-burh?

In all this is 'Cadbury' to be sharply distinguished from 'Camelot'? Camelot is an even more vexed riddle than Cadbury; is it derived from Camulodun (um), the fortress of Camulos the north Gallic War God, or from the Cornish river Camel, or from the Somerset Cam trickling beneath Camel Hill through Queen Camel, Wales and West Camel before joining the Yeo?

'Celtic adjectives form the base of several....river names such as Cam (Gloucestershire) "crooked" ' (KC p 38). In its short course the Somerset Cam seems no more crooked than any other river in the area. E.T. Wills, in an unusual little work 'Egypt in Bristol', talking about the coast of North Cornwall, says 'Here at once we make contact with ancient Egypt, for many of the names are Egyptian, including the strange river name of Camel, which means exactly "Great Egypt" (Cam-ur), just as we say "Great Britain"....the common name of Egypt is Kam or Kem, meaning the Black Country, with reference to the soil' (ETW pp4,5)

'Claims to have discovered Phoenician, Mongolian and other surprising influences in the place-names of Britain are now put forward only by maniacs', Wainwright declares (FTW p57), but before we throw the Cam-ur suggestion out perhaps we should consider a few suggestions. Chris Turner, in a previous Pendragon article on Yarlington has this to say: '(Yarlington) sits astride the prehistoric ridgeway known as...the Hard Way. This ridge-way runs east-west from the Vale of Avalon to Old Sarum, via Andover and the great crossroads of Stonehenge, and seems to have been used as the trade route for the westward transportations (sic) of Cornish tin and lead...Yarlington is conceivably the staging-post at the end of the Harrow Way. There would be tin and lead merchants as well as farmers....(2)

R. Hippisley Cox in his 'The Green Roads of England' indi-

cates the Hard Way from Jack Straw's Castle to Cadbury but makes no textual reference to the actual route, which may or may not go through Yarlington. If it does, it would have to go by way of Shepton Montague down the road now called Cattle Hill and east of the Roman 'dig' reported for some time in the Pendragon magazine. 'About the year 1834 in digging in Cattle Hill, a lofty eminence west of the church, near the extremity of the parish (of Bratton Seymour), the foundations of a small Roman building were discovered', says a record of 1839. This is on a hill between Bratton (which has the remains of an undated pre-historic enclosure), and the road which now has its name and appears to have been built as a coach road in the 19th century. A modern-day Wincanton visitors' guide calls the site Castle Hill and mentions a Roman 'watch-tower'. From the triangulation point on top of the Hill fine views westwards are obtained including Cadbury and the Tor. The present Roman dig is below the 'lofty eminence' and may not necessarily be the 'small Roman building' described in 1839.

The dig-site is presently in a field, part of a larger area (now bisected by the road) which has always been known as 'Blacklands', the term usually indicating a field difficult to cultivate. However, 'look up the word (black) in the "New English Dictionary", and it is said to be a word "of difficult history", for....it seems to come from Blake and blac, which even in Anglo-Saxon days did not mean without light, but "shining, white, pale" and which root has in fact given us "bleach" and "bleak". --Mr. Hugh R. Watkin, of Torquay... links up the "black" names with "blag", an element meaning in Slav languages Blessed of light-given, (and) gives place-names which commence with Black....' These include -land. (AW p.80)

One need not accept Alfred Watkins' conclusions in 'The Old Straight Track', but such points do mean a re-appraisal of opinions accepted as 'facts'. I hope that all the preceding, thrown out as incentives to further thought, will stimulate further discussion and research on the area around Cadbury, where though the archaeological digging has officially ended, unofficial 'digging'-out of clues will continue as before.

(1) Can anyone throw any light on Caerdubalum, mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his 'Prophecies of Merlin'?

(2) South-east of the junction of Cattle Hill and the A371 road between Castle Cary and Wincanton is a hill forming part of the Yarlington strip-lynchet complex called Gods Hill. From 1010 to 1020, in Ethelred the Unready's reign, coins were being issued with the mark CADANBYRIG. The Inscription on the reverse reads +GODONCADANBYRIM (Of God at Cadbury). Coins minted less than 3 miles from Gods Hill by a coiner signing himself 'God' - an interesting coincidence.

REFS: 'English Place Names', Kenneth Cameron, 1961 (KC); 'Archaeology & Place-Names & History', F.T. Wainwright, 1962 (FTW); 'Egypt in Bristol', E.F. Wills, 1937 (EFW); Pendragon, Vol.2, No.3 1968; 'History & antiquities of Somersetshire', Vol.1, Phelps.

NENNIUS:THE GLASS ISLAND

In the 1819 edition of Nennius's Historia Brittonum (edited by Mark the Anchorite, with notes and a translation by the Rev. W. Gunn B.D.) I find the following reference to a glass tower or island, from the text - and I quote for those Latin scholars among us - "Deinde venerunt tres filii militis hispanie cum xxx coelis unaquaque coela habentes xxx conuiges= et manserunt ibi per spatium uniu anni. et postea apparuit illis vitrea turris in medio maris= et quasi homines conspiciebant esse super turrim= et querentes loqui ad illos numquam respondabant."

The story attached to this extract concerns the settling of Ireland by groups of Scots from Spain, the above being the third attempt; the Rev. Gunn's translation goes as follows - "After these came three sons of a Spanish soldier with thirty ships, each of which contained thirty women; and having remained there during the space of a year, there appeared to them, in the middle of the sea, a tower of glass, the summit of which seemed covered with men, to whom they often spoke but received no answer."

And he continues - "At length they determined to besiege the tower; and after a year's preparation, advanced towards it, with the whole number of their ships and all the women, one ship only excepted, which had been wrecked and in which were thirty men and as many women; but when all had disembarked on the shore which surrounded the tower, the sea opened and swallowed them up." He goes on to say that Ireland was peopled by those left in the wrecked ship.

In Gunn's prefatory notes further reference is made to the above in - "The tower or ship of glass, filled with men, and seen off the coast of Ireland is part of an ancient bardic tradition." (Here he quotes from Camb. Biog v. Merddin.) "Merddin, the bard of Ambrosius, is said to have constructed a house of glass, in which he went to sea accompanied by the nine Cylveirrd Bards, of whom nothing was heard afterwards."

Then he goes on to quote 'The Cambrian Popular Antiquities' in - "Whether Merlin survived Arthur, or not, has not been recorded in history; but it is most probable that he did and, through some apprehension of the Saxons, endeavoured to escape them by sea. On this occasion, he is said to have sailed in a ship of glass, and to have taken with him the thirteen curiosities of Britain." This he notes, only to say tantalisingly, "I omit the detail for the sake of brevity", and to equate the powers of the above with some found in the Arabian tales; if anyone can supply further information on this I would be pleased to hear from them.

He goes on to say that according to Mr. Lewis Morris, Merlin conveyed himself and the bards to Bardsey Island, and there was buried, but that according to the triads he was never heard of more.

Again from Roberts Camb. Antiqu. - "The ship of glass is, by the author of the Mythology of the Druids, ingeniously explained as signifying a sacred vessel emblematic of the ark, and the name of Bangor Wydrin, or Glass Bangor (an ancient name of Glastonbury) confirms the idea of Wydr, literally glass, signifying sacred. I

believe gwydr in these instances has no connexion with, or relation to, the same sound, when signifying glass, but that its true signification is sacred, though now, not so used."

Thus we have, that the sacred ships need not be actually constructed of glass but that models or small representations of it would be made from this material, so, from 'Mythology and Rites of the British Druids', we have - "We are not hence to conclude that the Druids regarded the sacred ship as constructed of that material; but that they esteemed little glass models as very sacred symbols of the mystical vessel, and held the material itself in religious esteem."

To conclude, I will make short reference to a note by the Rev. Gunn, at the first appearance of the 'house of glass' in his preface. Here he refers to the 'Spanish Romance of Alexander', by Juan Lorenzo Segura de Astora' written about the middle of the thirteenth century A.D., where a description is made of Alexander's descent into the sea in a house of glass. This, he says appears also in the German legend of St. Anna, and that in "the continuation of the Orlando Furioso, where the spirits are summoned to attend the Demagorgon in council, some of them, impelled by the bellows of Demons, sail through the air in ships of glass".

~~NOTE:~~ Further to the Rev. Gunn's obscure reference, to the thirteen curiosities of Britain, I have, since writing the above, found a note in Robert Graves' 'The White Goddess' wherein he suggests that the curiosities might have been cyphers to decode the ancient language of Britain.

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