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P E N D R A G O N

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When we reached the Gower on July 28th.the sun was shining, and for five days we enjoyed a heat wave. Then the weather broke and for three days and nights we suffered torrential rain and howling wind till all our tents were waterlogged or completely buckled. Some members of the expedition had to return home, but a few remained and were joined by reinforcements from London. We were thus able to achieve a great deal more than might have been hoped for, and we are most grateful to all those who helped and supported us --including all those new, local friends who helped with the dig and rallied to our aid in time of crisis.

Briefly, we had been asked to investigate a site on the north coast of the Gower. Alex Schlesinger's report on this follows so there is no need to enlarge on it here. As a result of our investigations we became deeply interested in St. Illtyd. Therefore, one wet afternoon, we went to the splendid library at Swansea Museum to find out more about this man who once served with the Roman Legions and later became a monk. He was, it seemed, a great student of "the Seven Sciences". He also founded the famous College at Llantwit Major which produced such splendid graduates as Gildas, Paulinus, St. David and St. Samson. (Regular readers of 'Pendragon' will remember that the latter had a reputation for being something of a wizard. The Science Dept. must have been a good one.)

Amongst the various legends told about St. Illtyd the best known is the story of the bell. It seems that at one point in his monastic career Illtyd left home suddenly without leaving a forwarding address and left his friends sorrowing over his disappearance.

One day the Abbot of the monastery despatched a monk with a message and a bell, both of which were to be delivered to Gildas. On his way across the countryside the bell that the monk was carrying suddenly began to ring and Illtyd emerged

from a nearby cave. After some conversation the messenger hurried on his way, rejoicing that he would now be able to tell everyone that Illtyd was alive and well and living in a certain area.

Curiously, when the messenger reached Gildas the bell refused to ring. Gildas understood this to mean that Illtyd coveted the bell for himself, so, on his return journey to the monastery, the messenger was instructed to deliver the bell at the cave with the compliments of Gildas. In the hamlet of Ilston on the Gower, not very far from the very impressive Arthur's Stone, there is a tiny church dedicated to St. Illtyd. Immediately opposite the door by which one enters there is a window picture of the saint with a down-turned Roman sword in his right hand and a bell in the crook of his left arm.

Another striking feature of the area in which we found ourselves is the superabundance of cockle shells: they are everywhere. We soon learnt that the cockles are harvested from the estuary and brought to the village of Penclawdd where they are promptly boiled and the shells thrown out into huge heaps on the marshy shore. Anyone who is building a road, or filling a hole, has only to take a cart to Penclawdd and fill it. Cockle shells crackle under one's feet wherever one goes.

Now, we remembered that pilgrims, in early days, used to wear badges in exactly the same way as modern pilgrims do, and we remembered that Prof. Bowen, in his book,"Britain and the Western Seaways", said something about a shell being the Pilgrims' Badge carried by all those who travelled from one community to another around our Breton, Cornish, Irish and Welsh coasts. On our return to Bristol we looked this up and found that the professor actually said that the Scallop Shell was the badge carried by these wanderers. However, we have found support for our own ideas from other sources. It seems that the term "Scallop Shell" really covers all bi-valvular shells, and the Reader's Digest book, "Folklore, Myths and Legends of Britain" quotes the old Nursery Rhyme:

> Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary,
> How does your garden grow ?
> With silver bells, and cockle shells
> And Pretty Maids all in a row.

The Digest says: "This beautiful and tragic Mary Queen of Scots, is claimed as the heroine of this rhyme. The cockleshells are supposed to have been ornaments on a dress given her by her first husband, the Dauphin of France; and the pretty maids mentioned in some versions of the rhyme were her ladies-in-waiting, the famous Four Marys.

"Another interpretation says that it is 'a word picture of Our Lady's Convent' -- an allegorical representation of

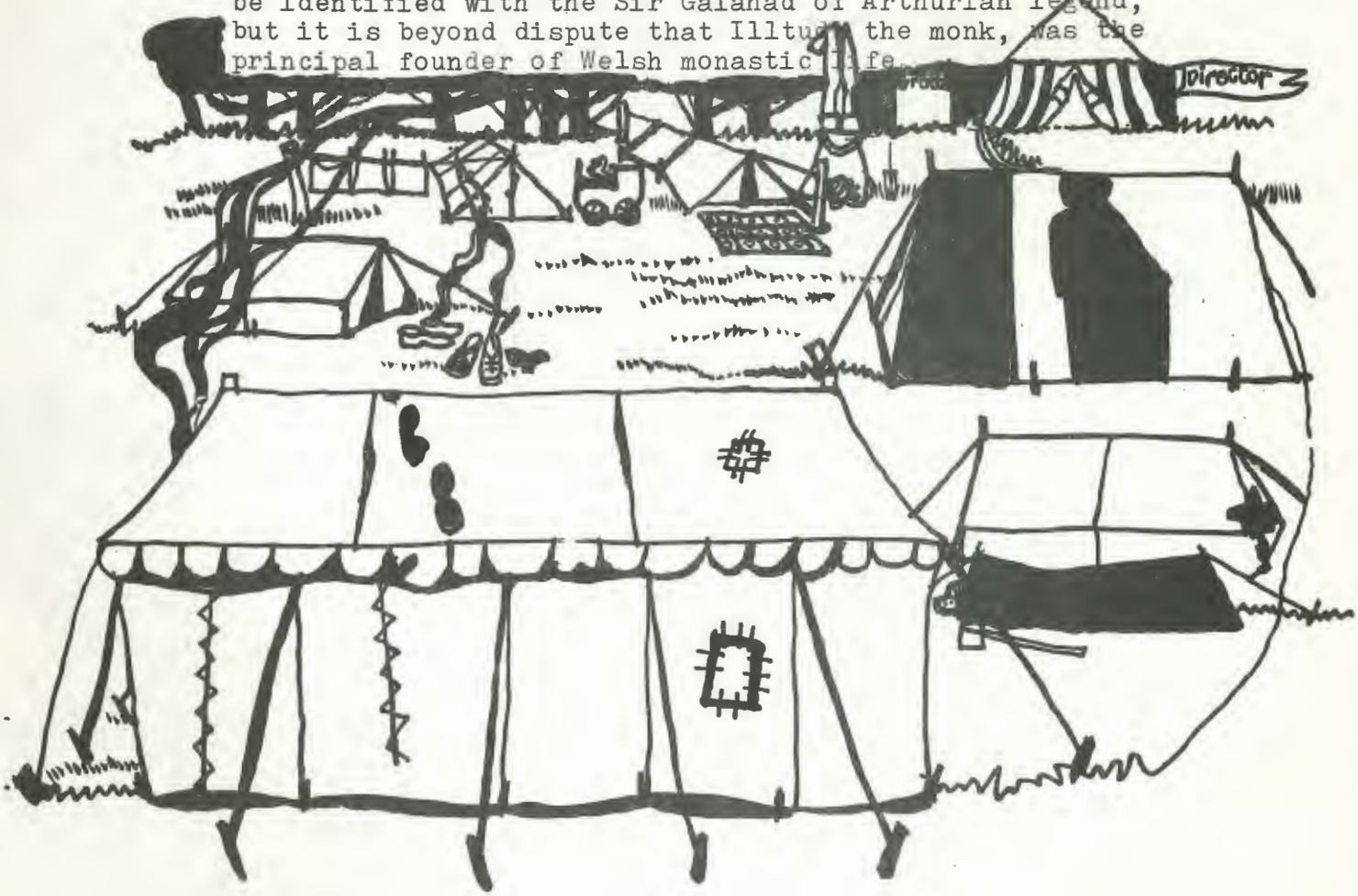
a religious and devout community of women dedicated to the service of the Church. The bells are holy bells, the cockle-shells are badges worn by pilgrims, and the pretty maids are nuns."

In the centre of the Gower Peninsula there is a hill that is high and wide called Cefyn Bryn and here, surrounded by bracken and tumbled stones stands the really magnificent Arthur's Stone. From this high point one can look across the estuary to the opposite coast of Carmarthenshire, and -- taking a short walk in the opposite direction -- see across another stretch of water to the coast of Somerset. We were told that one could also see Caldy Island and Lundy Island, but on the day we visited it the weather was not quite clear enough for that.

There is a local tradition that on Midsummer's Eve the Stone bows to Llanelen (our site) and then goes down to the water to drink. Presumably this is at the Holy Well adjacent.

Note from <u>The Saints</u>, ed. John Coulson (Nicholas Adams)

Illtud or Illtyd. Said to be a cousin of King Arthur, he was born about 425, probably in Brittany...It seems certain that he was a knight, and married, when he decided to renounce the world...Illtud, the knight, has some claim to be identified with the Sir Galahad of Arthurian legend, but it is beyond dispute that Illtud the monk, was the principal founder of Welsh monastic life.



A RECONNAISSANCE EXCAVATION AT LLANELEN, 1973.

The Site and its setting.

Llanelen (O.S.551933) is a ridge protruding west from the north west edge of a plateau known as Welsh Moor. The ridge itself rises to a maximum height of 325 ft. and marks the southern edge of the Millstone Grit series, which has been so severely folded that the bedding plains beneath the summit of the ridge are vertical.

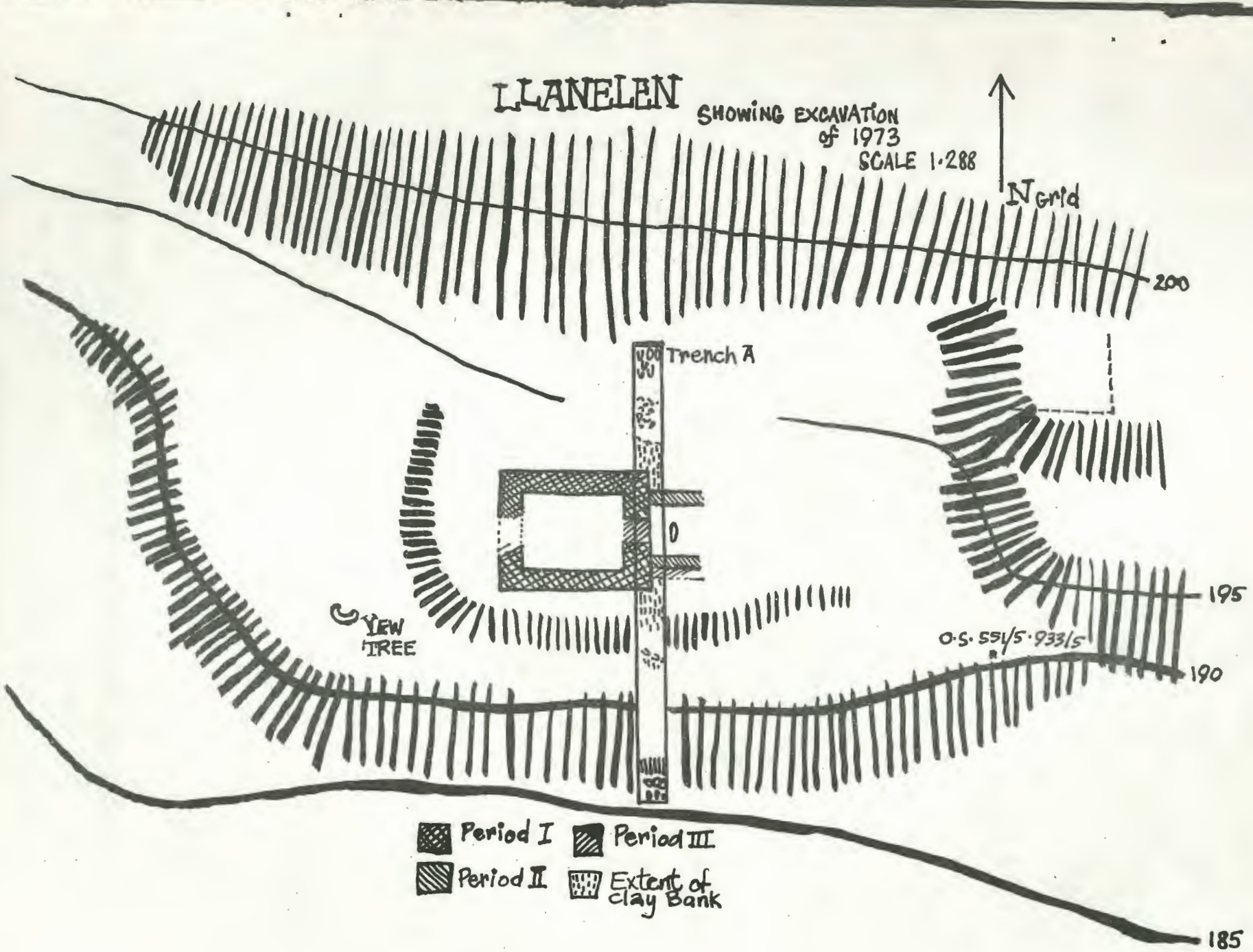
To the west of the ridge there are wide views of Llanridian Sands, the Loughor Estuary and the north Gower coast: whilst to the south, the view is dominated by cilifor Tor hillfort.

On the southern slopes of the ridge, some five hundred yards west of Llanelen farm, a plateau measuring approximately 150 X 65 ft., has been created by cutting back into the hillside to the north and banking up, with the aid of a retaining wall, on the south. On this small plateau, set 195 ft. above sea level, a low mound of rubble marks the site of a structure which, according to local tradition, was Llanelen Church. The presence of a large, and now dead, yew tree on the western side of the plateau, lends further credibility to the existence of a consecrated area in the immediate vicinity.

The ruins on this site are traditionally of great antiquity and local legend has it that there was a church on the site as early as the 6th century. There seems to be a difference of opinion as to whom the church was dedicated. The name Llanelen translates as either the sacred enclosure of Helen, or perhaps Selena. If the former is the correct rendering, then Helen may have been one of two ladies, for both the mother of Constantine the Great and the wife of Magnus Maximus were called Helen, and both were Christian during the later parts of their lives. Helen, the mother of Constantine is known to have founded churches throughout the Empire at the beginning of the fourth century, (after the edict of Milan 313 A.D.). And it is fair to suppose that Helen, wife of Magnus Maximus, indulged in similar activities in Britain before her husband was killed in 388 A.D.

The other alternative is for Elen to be Selena, the Moon Goddess. This more tentative theory, if correct, would indicate a pre-Christian and probably Roman shrine somewhere in the vicinity. This suggestion is not altogether unreasonable as the Roman settlement of Leucarum was situated at Loughor, about four miles away.

Another possibility is that the name Llan-elen means, "The sacred enclosure which is straight". Those


LLANELEN
SHOWING EXCAVATION
of 1973
SCALE 1·288
N Grid
200
Trench A
D
195
YEW TREE
O.S. 551/5·933/5
190
185
Period I
Period II
Period III
Extent of clay Bank

who have walked along the ridge of the hill at Llanelen will have noticed the natural causeway marked out by oak trees. It is possible that this natural feature may have been regarded as sacred in the pre-Christian period.

There seems to be another local tradition that the church itself was dedicated to Illtyd, the fifth century Welsh Saint. As Celtic churches normally bear the name of their founders we may assume that if the church was dedicated to **Illtyd**, then he was responsible for its being founded or its re-establishment.

As one cannot reasonably conceive of circumstances in which the problem of identifying the founder of Llanelen church should be solved, the options must remain open. However, one important factor does emerge from consideration of the most likely candidates, all point towards the area being regarded as sacred before the end of the sixth century, at the very latest.

Earlier Investigation.

An exhaustive search of the library at Swansea Museum provided only one account of the Llanelen site.

This description by R.E. Kay was published in'Gower' in 1969 Vol.XX (p.16.) Kay provides an accurate account of the nature of the site. He also attempted to locate the wall footings of the building by a close examination of the surface features. Events have shown that Kay's conjectures were not grossly inaccurate. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary Kay assumed that the wall footings which he located were of a medieval chapel similar to that which existed at Capel Dewi near Llandeilo Fawr in Carmarthenshire.

More recently, Mr. Don Howells, the present owner of the land, wished to initiate further examination of the site. He cleared much of the scrub and undergrowth which covered the area. Another local resident, Mr. Peter Williams, marked out Kay's conjectured plans of the church with wooden pegs. He also cleared away the vegetation around other traces of foundations about 50 yards east of the site which is at present being examined. He then compiled private notes on Celtic church sites in Wales. Mr. Williams kindly made all of these notes available to the Pendragon Committee.

Excavation 1973.

The purpose of the 1973 excavation must be regarded primarily as reconnaissance. At the outset of the dig we had no archaeological evidence to support the theory that the site was that of a church. A yew tree and a legend cannot between them act as a substitute for hard facts. All that we did have evidence for was a collapsed stone building of unknown age and purpose. After a preliminary survey of the site it was decided that a trench, orientated to grid North, should be dug across the site. The trench, known as Trench A, was four feet wide and ninety-three

feet long. It extended across the whole site from the exposed rock of the hill at the northern end, to the lower end of the earth terrace at the extreme south of the cutting.

On the first day of the excavation the eastern face of a wall was uncovered, running in a North-South direction. The East face of the wall, which ran exactly parallel to the line of Trench A, was located 1ft.6 inches East of the West baulk: the West face of the wall being situated outside of the area of Trench A. The full length of the wall was determined as 20ft. 6 inches. It formed the eastern wall of the Phase 1 stone structure. This wall was pierced by a doorway 2ft 6 inches wide. This opening may have been contemporary with the construction of the Phase 1 building, or alternatively, the opening might have been made when the Phase 2 structure was added. The doorway gave direct access to the Phase 2 structure, a chamber which was added to the Eastern side of the Phase 1 building. The external width of this added Eastern room was 14ft 3 inches, the walls being 2ft 6 inches thick. The South wall of this structure had an external plinth about 12 inches high. It consisted of large flat stones set up on edge, with a narrow coping resting against the outer face of the South wall; the core of this plinth (which seems to have been added to the Phase 2 structure) consisted of a soft clay and mortar.

Beneath a large quantity of tumble within the Phase 2 structure, a floor of small rough stones was uncovered. This floor was level with the slightly projecting doorstep of the entry into Phase L structure. Beneath this floor was a layer of clay and small stones. This layer, which was about 6 inches thick, contained slight traces of burning and overlay an earlier floor of beaten earth and small stones. The walls of this eastern chamber were not bonded into the Phase 1 building. At a subsequent date the door between the two rooms was blocked. The stones used in this Phase 3 activity were smaller than those used at earlier periods. The core of the blocking consisted of small stones. There was little in the form of mortar to bond the stones together and the work seems to have been poorly executed. Some of the stones in the core showed signs of burning as did the groins of the doorway.

The burnt stones and the flecks of burnt clay in the layer overlying the early floor of the Phase 2 structure imply that the whole building was destroyed by fire and subsequently rebuilt. It was at this time that the door between the Phases 1 and 2 structures was sealed up and the eastern room was cut off from its western counterpart. A new floor was laid over the original floor. At present it is not possible to say whether the plinth on the outside of the South wall of the Phase 2 structure was added at the time of this rebuilding.

A low bank of clay extending some six feet South of the stone plinth was thrown up against the wall so as to cover the plinth. It is possible that both features were added to the South wall to counteract the weaknesses which the fire might have introduced into the stonework. A similar bank of clay was thrown up against the North wall of the Phase 2 building.

The South wall of the building was constructed of much larger stones than its counterpart to the North. As the building was constructed on a partly artificial platform dug out of the hillside, it is possible that the builders were mindful of the possibilities of the building slipping. An alternative is that the South wall and added plinth are all a later and carefully executed rebuild.

Twelve feet North of the Phase 2 building a filled-in pit was located. This feature was at the northernmost limit of a roughly-cobbled area which extended back towards the North wall of the Phase 2 building. The full extent of the pit lay within the scope of Trench A: the feature being trapezoid in shape and measuring approximately 3ft 9 inches by 2 ft., its deepest part being about 2 feet below the level of the cobbled "floor" area. Around this pit small flat stones had been set upright and these might well have served as a packing for whatever had been set into the hole. The filling of the feature consisted of small stones and soft clay. It is therefore conceivable that the pit originally held a standing stone or cross, long since removed.

At the extreme North of Trench A a scatter of large stones marks what might have been a low, retaining wall. A similar scatter of stones was located at the foot of the earth bank at the Southern end of Trench A. At this point, a retaining wall would have been absolutely necessary to support the artificial bank of the level area on which the building stood. Little now remains of the retaining wall at this point. It seems to have been about 18 inches thick and unmortared. As the earth bank is about 5ft high the wall would have been of a similar height.

As the walls of the building lie immediately below the surface, it was possible to locate wall footings outside of Trench A with only a minimal amount of disturbance to the topsoil. Consequently, it was possible to determine almost the whole extent of the Phase 1 building. It measured 26ft by 20ft, its North and South walls being 3ft 2 inches thick and its East wall 3ft 6 inches thick. The extra thickness of the Eastern wall implies that it supported a gable. The West wall of the Phase 1 building was more difficult to locate and a large gap in its length may imply either a doorway from which the uprights have been removed or the existence of another structure to the West of it.

We were not so fortunate in locating the extent of the Phase 2 building. The North and South walls ran East for

about eleven feet, after which it was not possible to trace them without serious disturbance of the surface. No trace was found of the Eastern wall of this part of the structure.

Within the area of the Phase 2 building a stone slab, about four feet long and eighteen inches thick, lies half buried. This stone may have been the lintel of the door which connected the two rooms of the structure, or it may have served as an altar slab. It shows some signs of having been hammer dressed, but no inscriptions or carvings are visible. A similar stone was re-used as an altar in the medieval chapel at Tintagel: it probably belonged originally to the Celtic monastery. (The inscribing of crosses on altars of Celtic churches does not seem to have been the rule.)

Time and inclement weather did not allow us opportunity to investigate two other small ruins to the east of the building now under examination,

With the exception of some pieces of Oolitic Limestone, all buildings located were of the stone of the hill.

Small Finds and Dating.

As one might expect from the site of a church small finds were few. The most important were undoubtedly some pot sherds found together in the clay bank south of the Phase 2 building. The sherds were fragments of two crude unglazed earthenware pots; neither seems to have been wheel thrown. One pot had thick sides and was burnt black on the exterior face. The body of the sherd was coarse and gritty. The other sherds may have constituted parts of one pot, the exterior of which was burnt terracotta red. The body of this pot was even more coarse and gritty than the other one. The sides were thin, as little as $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch thick just below the rim. One sherd bore traces of a thin slightly everted rim, almost all of which had been broken away.

Pottery of such a crude nature as that found at Llanelen can only be dated as post Roman or Medieval. However, the thinner of the pots and the hint of the weak and slightly everted rim on one sherd are features reminiscent of pottery found on sites occupied during the immediate post Roman period. Alcock shows sections and restorations of such pots found in Wales and Cornwall. (See 'Arthur's Britain', Ch.8 starting p.197.) Almost exactly similar sherds have come from other sites in Gower and those at Swansea Museum are regarded as being of a Dark Age date.

The total absence of glazed Medieval pottery at Llanelen at least allows one to argue for an early dating of the unglazed sherds which were found, but the absence of evidence to the contrary does not prove

that the stone building at Llanelen dates from the Dark Ages. Furthermore, the sherds were found in a feature interpreted as being of a late phase in the development of Llanelen.

If the sherds are Dark Age then the dating of the Phase 1 stone building would be pushed back almost into the late Roman period. I do not wish to deny the possibility of this being the case. There is good reason to suppose that Christianity was established in Wales by the fourth century, and as I have already stated, the place name 'Llanelen' implies late Roman foundation. However, it must not be assumed that all is already proven.

One other interpretation of the clay layer and its pottery (assuming it to be Dark Age), is that it was the base for an earlier structure, possibly of wood, which was replaced by the stone building. It is hoped that the question of the clay bank will be resolved next year.

Other finds included three fragments of Iron slag, the date of which cannot be determined. An elongated fragment of stone which showed signs of having been used as a grinder, and a small, rounded fragment of white quartz which showed some signs of having been shaped.

Conclusions.

The 1973 excavation did not provide any finds which proved beyond all doubt that Llanelen was a sacred site. As yet no burials, inscriptions or fragments of Christian art have come to light. However, the shape of the structure uncovered does seem to resemble that of a small church. The Phase 1 building formed the nave and the Phase 2 addition forming a chancel or sacristy. The absence of domestic debris also implies an ecclesiastical purpose for the building, as does the name and the local tradition.

The date of the building at Llanelen must remain open for the present. The building itself must have been primitive and lack of architectural ornament or moulding makes dating almost impossible. There is a close resemblance between the plan of the 'church' at Llanelen and the earliest portions of the churches at Oxwich and Ilston. The similarities even extend to size and the curious features of the chancels of their churches not being built centrally on to the east wall of the nave. At Llanelen the chancel was set 3ft north of what its position should have been if the building was to be symmetrical. Incidentally, the churches at Ilston and Oxwich were dedicated to Illtyd. I cannot offer any explanation for the architectural feature common to all three churches. I merely draw attention to the assymmetry of these churches.

It has generally been assumed that the earliest parts of Ilston and Oxwich churches date from the 12th century.

I do not know how or why these dates were arrived at. Both buildings have undergone massive Victorian restation which at Ilston, at least, involved the destruction of almost every original architectural detail. At Oxwich the church underwent one rebuild during the fifteenth century and another during the nineteenth. No systematic excavation has been carried out round either building.

It is extremely difficult to assess the date of a small church such as that at Llanelen by ground plan alone, or by earliest documentary evidence. Furthermore, the habit of assessing the latest possible date and then suggesting that as the actual date is a tendency which ought to be discouraged. If some small primitive churches can be dated to the thirteenth century then others may well be much earlier. The plan of these early churches seems to have developed out of the plan of the late Roman Mithraea. So it is reasonable to suppose that a set plan consisting of a nave and some form of chancel or sacristy continued in use for more than a thousand years.

On the Isle of Man there are the remains of over 200 small Celtic places of worship, all of which have a similar ground plan. These "Keeills" are said to have been constructed between the seventh century and the fifteenth century.

In Pembrokeshire, St. Govan's Chapel is dated as thirteenth century, merely because there are no earlier historical references to the site. Before the Phase 2 construction at Llanelen the 'church' must have resembled that at St. Govan's.

At Elizabeth Castle in Jersey the hermitage of St. Helier bears a resemblance to St. Govans. This primitive shrine has been dated as twelfth century. It was part of a quite large religious house dedicated to St. Helier which was rebuilt on an extravagant scale by Robert Fitz Hamon in 1155. What is certain is that there was a religious house on the islet of St. Helier as early as 800 when Gerwaldus was sent by Charles the Great to attend to matters in Jersey. The religious house might have been formed by Marculf in about 550. Old engravings of Fitz Hamon's rebuilt abbey show that it was in the Norman style. The hermitage is not in that style. Its stone roof is not vaulted but corbelled, the stones of which have been dressed to resemble a vault. The small 'gothic' window is a 1952 restoration of a 1930 renovation.

The question now arises as to whether a beautifully rebuilt abbey would have had such a crude shrine to cover the site of its saint's martyrdom. If the shrine pre-dates the 1155 rebuild then it may well have been regarded as a relic within its own right.

At Tintagel there are extensive remains of a monastic complex. One structure located directly beneath the Medi-

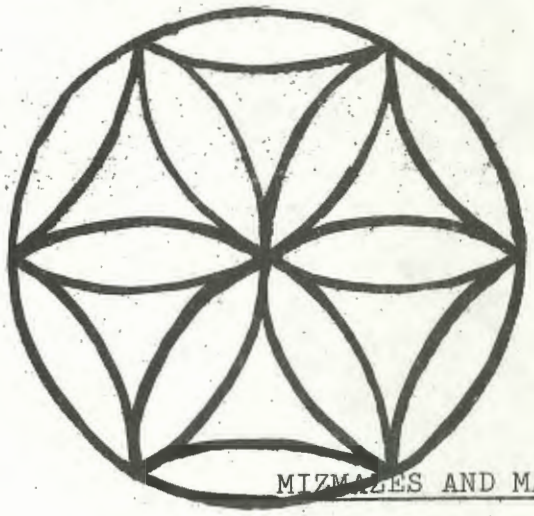
-eval chapel is thought to have been the cell of St. Juliot. This sixth century room had a doorway at each end, as Llanelen might originally have had, if the door into the east wall is contemporary with the building of the Phase 1 'church'.

It is reasonable to assume that the Gower was a centre of early Christian activity in Wales, although as yet little archaeological proof has been produced. Indeed, there is little archaeological evidence for Christianity anywhere in the British Isles during the Dark Ages. Llanelen offers the possibility of helping to set the record straight on this matter, and the Pendragon Society is most fortunate in having this opportunity of systematically excavating a site which could prove to be most important.

Next year it is proposed that we continue Trench A which had to be abandoned this year due to severe weather. The rest of the site should be laid out on a grid pattern and systematically excavated. Traces of other buildings on the hillside could also be examined.

I would like to thank Mr. Howells, Mr. Williams and Mrs. Griffiths for having made this dig possible. A special thanks is also due to the diggers who endured inclement weather, the directors and each other -- a sad combination. I hope to see the more forgetful of them again next year.

Alex Schlesinger.



MIZMAZES AND MARIGOLDS

By Margaret & Chris Lovegrove.

In the November 1971 edition of 'Pendragon' ran this query: "Can anyone, please, help us to trace this quotation to its source ?

'Where in the likeness of a marigold Meridianes
sitteth in a maze '.

The only clue we have is that the elderly lady who quoted it to us, and who is now cut off from her former library,

has always been a great reader of medieval books. "

The source has still not been traced, but here is a suggestion as to its meaning.

There is what is called a 'conventional' marigold design, Mediterranean in origin, illustrated in Nora Chadwick's Celtic Britain (the marigold in question appears to be the marsh marigold or kingcup, belonging to the buttercup family, which has six, though more frequently five, enlarged golden sepals). This six-sided geometric figure, inscribed in a circle, can be drawn by anyone with a pair of compasses, and neatly demonstrates various features, e.g. six vesica pisces , the number traditionally symbolising harmony. The figure further sub-divides into twelve sections which can then be used as a basis for construction of concepts such as circular zodiacs, Round Tables and Rose Windows.

Rose windows bring to mind those large substitutes for pilgrimages to Jerusalem, the floor tile mazes of the large cathedrals of northern France --Rheims and Amiens for example -- which have a single route to the centre. That of Chartres measures forty feet across and consists of twelve concentric circles symbolising the zodiacal signs, so that the pilgrim partakes of the properties of each on his journey to the middle.

As Keith Critchlow has pointed out, if the west front (including the Rose) was laid down the nave, the window would exactly cover the maze. Or, if there were a bright enough light source, at the right position, the coloured image of the twelve-sectioned rose could be shone on to the twelve paths of the labyrinth.

The meridian, generally, is the position of the midday sun, or the point at which a star attains its highest altitude. It might be that at some church, perhaps in Britain or some more northerly latitude, has all the requirements for the correct positioning of celestial object, marigold window, and observer at the centre of the maze.

Concurrences or refutations are invited. The marigold, echoing those other 'natural' patterns of snowflake and honeycomb, can be used as the basis for three-dimensional edifices, the vaulting of the hexagonal north porch of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, (which was part of a shrine for a relic for the Virgin Mary) being an example.

HIGH DRAGONS AND COMMAS

By Chris Turner.

A casual remark in Arthur Bryant's "The Age of Chivalry" may prove to be the key to a most promising line of research into the position of Arthur in the history of Britain. Indeed, it may cause us to re-think or even abandon many beliefs that have been cherished these many years. On page 59, as a prelude to the rebellion of LLewelyn, he says, "King Henry... ..acknowledged LLewelyn's lordship of Gwynedd and his self-chosen title of prince or pendragon of Wales."

> Note the lower-case category of the word pendragon. If, as it seems, pendragon is a title rather than a name, a whole host of anomalies that bedevil any attempt to unravel a plausible account of the historical Arthur's life and times are resolved.

A further pitfall is that it is all too easy to forget that all records of the time were not written or otherwise handed down in mid-twentieth century English. Bearing these two points in mind, we look again at our lore and notice some strange shifts in emphasis.

Taking the problem of language first, we can say that the names Arthur, Uther and Pendragon, as they stand, are nonsense. They are late anglicizations of names in a foreign and incomprehensible tongue, and the English have always been notoriously ham-fisted at transliteration. The names are Celtic, and if we are to believe our cousins beyond the Marches, the Celtic culture is still preserved in a very pure form in Wales. Now, the 'u' and 'th' do not normally occur in Welsh, their places being taken by 'w' and 'dd'. Similarly, Welsh 'f' is English 'v', the 'f' sound being accounted for by 'ff'. Arthur therefore becomes Arddwr (or Addwr) and Uther becomes Wdder (possibly Wddwr). Pendragon is a translation (more or less) and becomes Penddraig or High Dragon. The argument which follows will become more cogent if the Celtic spellings are used; they may look strange at first, but they are quite painless after a while.

Let us look awhile at Wdder Penddraig (Uther Pendragon, remember ?), accepted by all as Arddwr's

father. Head of the Penddraig family and some sort of king somewhere. Why, then, isn't Arddwr known as Arddwr Penddraig ? Similarly, why is Wdder's name always qualified ? As we have already seen, penddraig is high dragon is not a surname, as commonly believed, but a title, as in Henricvs, rex. What we now have is Wdder, penddraig (note the comma !) Corroboration comes from the fact that surnames have always been glaringly absent from Wales. Even to-day, the names Pritchard (ap Richard), Price (ap Rhys) and Jones (John's (son)) are simply patronymics. Even in the later stories, Wdder is the only one to be graced with a 'handle' to his name. Arddwr's second name, if he used one at all, would probably have been simply ap Wdder. Penddraig was a title which he either did not inherit, or chose not to use.

Referring to an earlier article, (Pendragon Magazine, May, 1969), we can now fit in a few more pieces to the chronology of the period between the Romans and Saxons, and even more important, suggest socoilogical reasons for certain anomalies. According to Speed, after the Legions left, Britain was led by Ambrosius Aurielanus, his brother Wdder, his son Arddwr, followed by a period of anarchy and internecine warfare amongst the Celts which was exploited by the Saxons to their complete satisfaction. The first point that stands out in the narrative is the curious situation of two brothers, one called Ambrosius Aurelanus, the other Wdder, not even Wdder Aurielanus. From the evidence, or lack of it, we can determine that very shortly after the withdrawal of the Legions there blossomed a popular Celtic revivalist movement. Anything even vaguely smelling of Rome was proscribed. Building in stone stopped dead. The minting and usage of coined money ceased. Representational art gave way to geometric abstract. Secular writing disappeared. These arts did not die out with the last of the old romanised Britons who learnt their trades at the turn of the century: they cut off short. It is not unreasonable therefore that a child born, say, in 405 should be given a wholly Roman name while his brother born, say, in 435 should be given a wholly Celtic one.

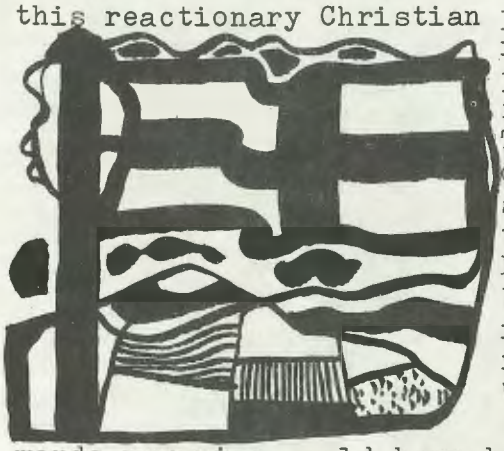
Now another look at 'penddraig'. It is thought that the leadership of Britain passed down in succession from the last official Dux Brittanorum of the Occupation, supposedly Ambrosius himself. This, of course, conflicts with the arbitary dates given above, but assuming that Ambrosius's father was also Dux, he may not have inherited the title until some years after 410. Speed says that Ambrosius is supposed to have directed a provincial Synod around 470 for RESTORING the primitive (Christian) worship and REPAIRING the dilapidated churches, (my capitals). It would seem that the church had suffered along with everything else Roman. (Please note that references to a Roman Church are geographical not ideological.) Shortly after, he is succeeded by Wdder who reigns for some 40-odd years until Arddwr was put on the throne by the Archbishop of Caerleon in 516. It is then stated that Arddwr was a friend to the Christians and REBUILT their churches. Why have to rebuild churches that were repaired only forty years before ? Why have to make the point that he was friendly to the Christians ? Who wasn't friendly to them ? Ambrosius was. The only candidate is Wdder, the High Dragon. The man to whom Rome in all her ways was anathema. The man who regarded his Celtic heritage with a love bordering on obsession, a condition not too unfamiliar even in these days. The man who discarded the imperialist title of Dux and resurrected the ancient title held by the priest-kings of pre-Roman Britain: Penddraig.

One can only too easily imagine the destruction of the churches and the persecution of the clergy as Wdder tried to eradicate the last vestige of Romanism and establish a revived and idealized Celtic Britain. There must undoubtedly have been enclaves which still followed the old gods and how they must have flocked to the man who would bring back the ancient rituals. For some forty years they revelled in the worship on high places as in days gone by, under the High Dragon (or, alternatively, He of the Dragon Hill). At last, through death by natural causes, murder or deposition, Wdder passes from the scene. The Christian underground, headed by the Archbishop of Caerleon and a group of powerful nobles, places the 15-year-old Arddwr on the throne, obviously making the re-establishment of Christianity the price of their support. It may be suggested that the building of churches dedicated to St. Michael on hilltops dates from this period. Perhaps one might even go as far as to propose that the dragon lying speared under the armoured feet of the cross-bearing angel is none other than the High

Dragon himself, Uther Pendragon.

Such a reaction against the Church is not too unusual. A similar situation devloped in the Heptarchy. It would also have been compatible with de-Romanisation programmes implemented by such people as Vortigern. Many Celts would not have accepted any church unless it were shown to be more Celtic in character than anything else, and for a naturally conservative establishment this realignment may well have taken some time. Meanwhile, a reversion to the pre-Roman Celtic gods may well have been supported by a substantial faction.

Now for Arddwr. While Wdder lived he presented no great threat to the ruling party, but when the 'throne' fell vacant, a pro-Christian heir-apparent may well have been regarded with trepidation. It seems that efforts were made to deny him his inheritance. He did not assume leadership automatically; he was placed in power by the ecclesiastics and Christian nobles. Even in the legends, he has to overcome obstacles possibly designed to keep this reactionary Christian prince from power. Succeeding at last with the help of powerful allies, paganism is rooted out once and for all. The churches are re-built, not only for the purpose of worship, but to underline the victory of the Cross over the Dragon. Well may Arddwr have been apinted as hero and saviour by the restored Christians.



What a problem is now left for the poor bard ! Tolerance towards paganism would have been about as sensible as being a Nazi in 1946. The exploits of Wdder, who was probably a scourage to the Saxons in his Celtic fervour, could not politically have been credited to such an Antichrist. Conversely, it would not be possible to vilify the acknowledged father of the shining hero of the hour. The only way out is to record that Wdder Pendraig was husband to Egrmy and father to Arddwr and leave it at that, which is just as it has been left. As for the glories of the battles of Celtic national awareness against the pagan alien, Ambrosius is too early and too Roman to get much credit, Wdder is quite beyond the pale, so Arddwr reaps the harvest as the ambodiment of the Christian Celt fighting for his home and heritage.

In summary, then, the hypothesis runs as follows: In the early 400's, Ambrosius Aurelianus is born to the Dux Brittanorum (Ambrosius senior ?); the Legions leave, but some attempt is made to preserve the Roman scheme of

things, at least at Establishment level; Wdder is born to Dux Brit. either with a Roman name to be later discarded, or with a Celtic name in deference to growing Celtic awareness; Ambrosius inherits title of Dux and maintains his father's domestic policies of Romanism; Celtic renaissance explodes under Wdder who carries fire and sword against Romanism and Saxon alike, operating on the dictum that if it is not Celtic, destroy it; Christian reactionary elements stage successful coup and take power under (figurehead) adolescent Arddwr; struggle against Saxons continues but united Celtic front crumbles under seditious internal feuds and the invaders are left to mop up after Camlan.

CORRESPONDENCE CORNER.

From Glasgow Mrs. Dierdre Concannon has written:

"I was very interested to read ", (in the last issue of 'Pendragon') "about which stars the various herbs come under, and how they are thus meant to work astrologically. I wish you could have put in whether or not many of these herbs are still used to-day, and if we do know why they work. So many cures that used to be considered superstition are now, of course, shown to work for perfectly provable reasons. Though whether their use was arrived at by trial and error, or if the theories behind them hold good is still a matter of dispute. I am thinking particularly of ancient Egyptian medicine which was largely dependent on different sorts of animal and bird dung prescribed in extremely precise quantities, and which most probably started off as familiar magic but which was found to work (if the poor patient survived the original shock of the dung) and because of particular chemicals present in those particular dungs which would certainly have helped the particular conditions prescribed for. They even had a pregnancy urine test which told which sex a baby would be, which worked to a certain extent.

And the ancient Indian civilisations had a very high success rate with stitching up wounds. For this they used the large ants who would bite the wounds together with their pincers, then the doctors broke off the rest of the ant. Of course the formic acid was a jolly good disinfectant but they may not have been aware of that at the time.

I know that foxglove and hemlock are still used but how about the others ? There is a lot about early medi-

-cine in 'Science and Secrets of Early Medicine" by Jurgen Thorwald (Thames and Hudson, 1962) but I don't remember him dealing with those particular herbs, and besides, he isn't particularly interested in the astrological aspects of drugs anyway."

Have any of our readers got further information on this topic ?

THE HOLLOW HILL AT RICHMONT

By R. Webster & Nick Bristow.

The remains of Richmont Castle lie on a rocky promontory jutting into Harptree Combe just outside East Harptree, Somerset. It has a short but colourful history which, lamentably, we find to be sparsely documented. The lands whereon the castle was built were originally given to Ascelin Gouel de Percheval (or Lupus) (1) who came to England with William of Normandy. He left the lands to John who, in turn, left them to William, baron of Harpetre who, in 1138, in common with other barons in the area, fought the cause of the Empress Matilda against King Stephen in the War of Bristol. He built Richmont Castle and garrisoned it in that year, while his uncle, William de Perceval built fortifications at Castle Cary for the same purpose.

However, Richmont was not destined to last long as a bastion of Matilda's cause for in the same year King Stephen, having failed to take Bristol, turned on Richmont and pretended to lay seige to it. The garrison, foolishly, sallied out to attack his rear and Stephen, feigning a retreat, quickly brought up his cavalry and scaling ladders to another part of the castle, fired the gate and made himself master of Richmont.

The Manor descended then to Lord Thomas de Harpetre, whose wife Eva de Gournay, was heiress to the families of Fitzharding, Gournay, Gaunt and Pagenel. Their son, Robert, assumed his mother's name of Gournay and was Lord of East and West Harptree, Famington, Inglishcombe, Nether Weare and, surprisingly, Over in Gloucestershire. (By coincidence, I lived in the Manor House at Over for some time in the past. R.D.W.) Robert de Gournay was the founder of Gaunt's Hospital in Bristol and died in 1268. A later descendant of the Gournays was the ill-fated Thomas de Gournay who was an accomplice at the murder of Edward lll at Berkely

(1) The Rev. Collinson's note in his own extensively annotated copy of The Compleat History of Somersetshire gives this curious alternative to Percheval as a surname.

Castle and who met his end by being executed at sea by order of Edward lll. After this, the estates of Richmont were confiscated by the crown and annexed to the Duchy of Cornwall.

Richmont Castle comes into the limelight again in the early 16th century when its lord was involved in the selling of a remarkable document known as the 'Constitution of the Mines'. Here we find that my lord of Richmont was one of the 'foure Lords Royall' of Mendip. The relevant passage from the Constitution (the original of which exists in the State papers domestic) goes as follows:

"The said King Edward commanded my Lord Clioche being chiefe Justice of England to goe downe into the country of Meyndeepe and sette a concord and peace in the countrey upon Meyndeepe upon paine of his high displeasure. The said Lord Clioche sate upon a place of My Lord of Bathes called the fordge upon Meyndeepe where hee commanded all the commons to appeare there and in especiall the foure Lords Royall of Meyndeepe. THAT IS TO SAY, my Lord the Bishop of Bath and Wells, my Lord of Glastenbury my Lord Bonville, Lord of Chuton and my Lord of Richmont..."

Just who my Lord of Richmont might have been at this time is a matter of some conjecture as the Gournay family are thought to have died out by 1535 and the seat to be held by Sir John Newton. Leland, however, gives Sir John Newton as 'Newton, alias Gournay alias Caradoc of Powys'. Caradoc of Powys is probably correct but he is almost certainly wrong in making Sir John Newton a Gournay.

The castle of Richmont, unlike most of its contemporaries, was left more or less intact until the reign of Henry Vlll when one of the Newton family dug up the foundations and used the stone to build his Manor house.

The combe was described by the Rev. John Collinson in 1741 as being 'thickly veiled with wood and very romantick'. Thankfully, it has changed little in this respect. Geologically speaking it comprises Dolomitic conglomerate overlying carboniferous limestone. The limestone is of the cavity bearing type which may be found all over the Mendip hills. The area around Harptree combe has been extensively mined for various commodities although --with the exception of some half-hearted attempts at calamine extraction in the 16th century, the remains of which may still be seen near the castle -- very little mining seems to have taken place in the combe itself. The area has, in the past, yielded lead, zinc and calamine and was probably first mined by the Romans.

Our exploratory instincts were first aroused by the discovery of some caves in the combe which, externally at least, bore a distinct resemblance to

that which we investigated at Carreg Cennen in Wales and which was reported by Alex Schlesinger in 'Pendragon' Vol.6. No.4. Further to this, we now have evidence in the form of an effigy of one of the Gournay family which leads us to believe that they were Templars. With this in mind we visited the site several times and a report of these visits follows here:

Richmont Castle was first visited on the 29th. April 1973. Situated to the West of East Harptree the remains of the castle occupy a position notable for its natural beauty enclosed on two sides by deep, wooded combes, and strewn with many varieties of wild flowers.

Very little of the Castle remains to be seen, in fact the only masonry still discernibly standing is that of the base of a flanking tower at the extreme northern end of the castle. There are traces of what might have been a barbican, and the possibility of a reentrant gateway through the barbican and inner wall on the eastern side has been mooted. Outside the castle's southern wall may still be seen a good deal of 'Gruffy Ground' (the remains of later mining activities) and, moreover, evidence of still later motor cycle scrambling activity.

Two openings in the ground were found on this visit on the castle site itself and a second visit was undertaken on the 6th May to investigate the site more minutely. This visit revealed several larger caves which entered the steep sides of the combe immediately below the western walls of the castle. These proved to be too much for our curiosity and so, on the 12th May a much larger party, properly equipped to penetrate the caves, arrived to investigate their extent and nature.

The caves are, for the most part, of the natural rift type and show evidence of both water action and blasting (the latter presumably carried out by miners or over-zealous spaeleogists in order to widen or extend them). Most of them end disappointingly after about twenty or thirty feet. However, the largest of them reaches a depth of about 130 ft. into the hill beneath the castle and terminates in a large chamber in the centre of which we found a large flat-topped boulder whose surface was covered in stalagmitic gravel and debris. Immediately preceeding this chamber a large Aven (vertical shaft) was found to ascend beyond the range of our light or climbing ability, towards the foundations of the castle.

The theory that the cave under Carreg Cennen Castle in Wales might have been used for some obscure ritual purpose has already been put forward ('Pendragon', Vol. 6. No 4.) and, although it is altogether too early to draw any definite conclus-

ions from our investigations, it would be fair to say that there is enough similarity between the two sites to suggest that if Carreg Cennen cave was indeed used for ritual purposes it would be more than likely that the cave under Richmont was put to the same sort of use.

Clearly more work is required on this site and plans are already being laid for another visit to Richmont which, hopefully, will yeild more information for the next issue of 'Pendragon'. But, before closing, a note of acution to any member wishing to go down these caves themselves: they are extremely dangerous, the roof in many places being composed of earth and rocks in a most unsafe condition. No one should go down alone, or without proper equipment, and on no account should anyone go down without having first left words of their whereabouts with someone outside.

P.S. The Society wishesto make it clear that rumours that it is becoming increasingly obsessed with holes in the ground are entirely without foundation !

Signed: R.D.W. & N.B.
The Water Chamber,
Goatchurch Cavern, Burrington Combe,
Mendip.

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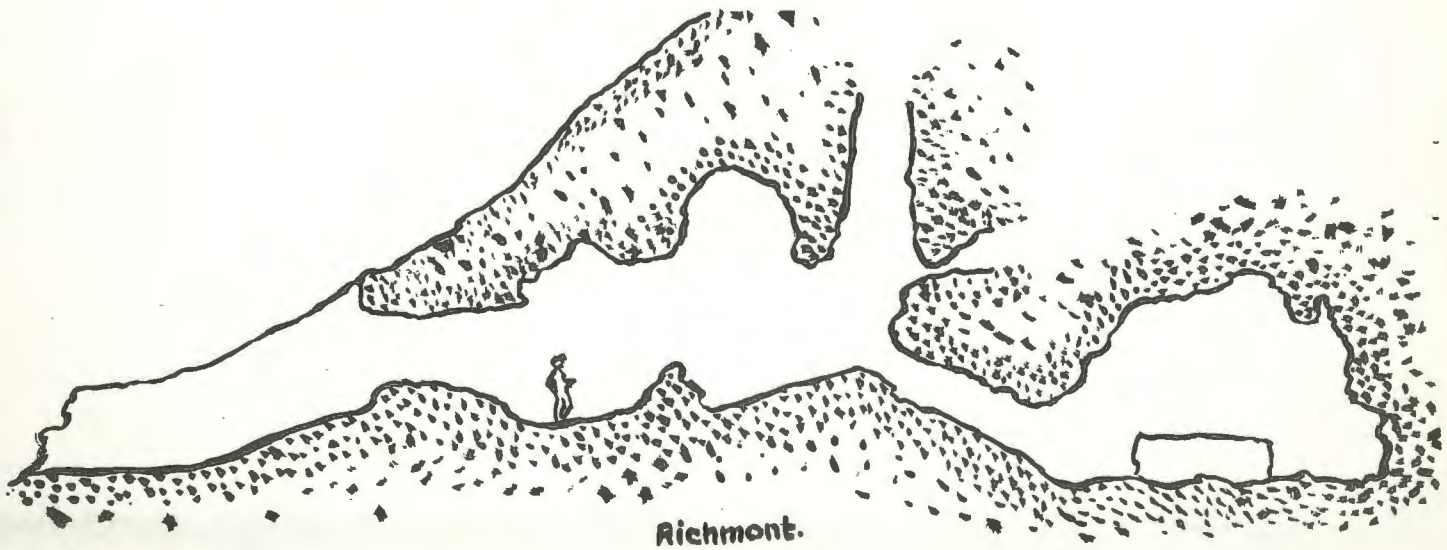
Note to readers: Letters and articles are gratefully received by the 'Pendragon' Committee. It will be of considerable help to our [redacted] printers if articles can, when possible, be typed in single spacing, as above and on A4 sized paper similar to this.



Richmont.

KING ARTHUR IN NORTHUMBERLAND

By Derek Brown.

Northumberland, like King Arthur, is being rediscovered in our time. Not long ago, it suggested only the coal-field around Newcastle, shipbuilding on the Tyne, and it was the last part of England you passed through on the way to your Scottish holiday. Now, thanks partly to the efforts of the Northumbria Tourist Board, increasing numbers of people are spending their holidays here; to those who enjoy a stimulating holiday it has much to offer. The county is a large one -- at 2.019 sq. miles the fifth largest in England -- and forms the heart of the old Saxon kingdom of Northumbria.

Scenically, it contains some of the remotest countryside left in England in the wild and lonely moors that stretch from the centre of the county to the Cheviot Hills (including the Northumberland National Park); it contains the green and peaceful valleys of the Rivers Allen and Tyne, Wansbeck and Coquet, Till and Tweed; it has Kielder Forest and the Farne Islands; and a 75 mile coastline from Tynemouth to the Scottish Border, 55 miles of which (from Amble to Berwick) is designated an "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty".

Northumberland has been fought over for thousands of years --Roman against Pict, Romano-British against Saxon, Saxon against Viking, Englishman against Scot. It has more castles than any area of comparable size in Great Britain. To the student of Pre-Norman history it has two things that make it worthy of pilgrimage --Hadrian's Wall, and the Holy Island of Lindisfarne where a group of monks from Iona established a community in AD 635, and set out from there to preach the gospel in both Britain and Europe. It is not surprising that such a place has connections with King Arthur.

The historical Arthur is as difficult to pin down here as anywhere. We can assume he came north towards the end of the Fifth Century to the rescue of the British and Romano-British in sore straits, and fought several of his famous twelve battles in the Borders and Southern Scotland, against Picts, Angles and Saxons. The traditional site of one of these battles lies in North Northumberland at Milfield Plain near Wooler. It is an impressive place, scenically and historically, being dominated to the south-west by the Cheviot Hills, rising to 2675 feet, and overlooked on the south side by the Iron Age hill fort known as Yeavering Bell: at the foot of this hill fort at Old Yeavering is the site of the Seventh Century Northumbrian royal palace of Gefrin, while to the north Milfield Plain abutts on Flodden Edge. Tradition places further Arthurian victories over the border at Dumbarton, Stirling, Edinburgh and Falkirk, but nevertheless the

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle dates the founding of the Saxon kingdom of Bernicia (later part of Northumbria) at 547, when King Ida established his capital at Bamburgh on the Northumberland coast. Ida was opposed by Urien, whom legend calls Arthur's successor (and according to some traditions, his brother), and the struggle was continued with varying success for the rest of the Sixth Century. However, the British were finally defeated in this part of the country by Aethelfrith in 603, and those unwilling to live in the rapidly-waxing kingdom of Northumbria were driven to the west of the Pennines. We have reached an end of what may reasonably be called Arthurian-Age history, and must proceed to examine the various places in the county which have Arthurian legends.

The Roman Wall, begun in AD 122 on the instructions of the Emperor Hadrian, ran from Segedunum in the east (modern Wallsend-on-Tyne) to Maia in the west (modern Bowness-on-Solway), a distance of seventy-three miles. Although one or two attempts were made to conquer lowland Scotland, it marked the frontier of the Roman Province of Britannia for most of the next three hundred years. At least three places on its course have Arthurian connections.

By far the most famous and most photographed section of the Wall is the dozen-or-so miles from Shield-on-the Wall (approximately three-and-a-half miles north of Haydon Bridge) to Greenhead near the Cumberland border. Much of this section is built along the top of Whin Sill, an intrusive ridge of quartz dolerite which runs across the breadth of the county, rising here to a height of 1230 feet. The walk along the stretch of the Wall, which includes part of the Pennine Way, is a strenuous business, but well worth the effort, as it passes through wild and lonely moorland and the views from the ridge of Whin Sill are magnificent in all directions. It also includes the celebrated Roman fort of Vercovicium (Housesteads), which attracts thousands of visitors annually from all over the world. Two miles to the east of Housesteads the Wall runs along the summit of Sewingshields Crags, where, according to the Rev. J. Hodgson writing in about 1830, "Immemorial tradition has asserted that King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, his court and his hounds were enchanted, either in some cave of the crags, or in a hall below the Castle of

Sewingshields." The enchantment may only be broken by the blowing of a horn and the unsheathing of a sword.

With regard to the cave in the crags, the most popular version of the story of its discovery concerns a shepherd who was sitting on a crag knitting when he dropped his ball of wool. While following the thread, he came upon a cave which he had never before seen, entered it, and found King Arthur and his Court in deep sleep with a horn and a sword laid on a table before them. Knowing the legend, the shepherd began to unsheath the sword but then lost his nerve and fled. After regaining his courage, he tried to find the entrance to the cave again, but was never able to do so. When William Hutton walked the length of the Wall in 1801 he recorded that he was taken by the farmer to a high spot in the crags to sit in "King Ethel's (i.e.King Arthur's) chair."

"The Castle of Sewingshields" mentioned above stood a short way to the north of the crags and there, according to legend, King Arthur held court. As Sir Walter Scott wrote of it,

".....No towers are seen
On the wild heath, but those that Fancy builds
And, save a fosse that tracks the moor with green,
Is nought remains to tell of what may there have been."

But the survey of Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Ralph Ellecker of 1542 states that the castle was the property of John Heron of Chipchase and was found "in great decaye both in the roofes and the floores", and the extensive grounds of the attached demesne were in equally deserted and unoccupied condition. The Rev. Dr. J. Lingard wrote in 1807 that the walls were still five feet high. The story relating the discovery of the burial-chamber under the castle is very similar to the one concerning the cave in the crags above it. The Rev. J. Hodgson states that it was the farmer of Sewingshields who was sitting knitting in the ruins of the castle "about 50 years since" (i.e. about 1790); he also

dropped his ball of wool and followed it to a deep subterranean passage, leading to a chamber below the castle where he found King Arthur and his Court in enchanted sleep. Hodgson continues: "Some say that terror brought on a loss of memory and he was unable to give an account of his adventure or where it occurred. But all agree that Mrs. Spearman, the wife of another, more recent, occupier of the Estate, had a dream in which she saw a rich hoard of treasure among the ruins of Sewingshields." This brings up the question of the Sewingshields hoard, a vast treasure which is also the subject of persistent legend. Although it is most frequently said to be buried under or near Sewingshields Castle, one tradition has it that the treasure is at the bottom of nearby Broomlee Lough (pronounced "luff" -- Northumberland dialect for lake), which gives the story an Arthurian ring.

An interesting legend concerns the building of Sewinghields Castle. It is related by Sir Walter Scott in "Harold the Dauntless", and tells how the Druid Urien had seven daughters whom he wanted to marry off. Seven suitors arrive, but all the daughters want the same suitor, King Adolph of Bamburgh. The daughters call on the Devil to help them, and he gives each a spindle and distaff and tells them to spin out-of-doors by moonlight.

"As light danced the spindles beneath the cold gleam,
The castle arose like the birth of a dream;
The seven towers ascended like mist from the ground
Seven portals defend them, seven ditches around."

Into this enchanted castle the daughters lure the seven suitors, and then murder them except for King Adolph, whom they then invite to live with them in the castle; but he is horrified by their crime and he in turn slays the seven daughters. He takes the shields of the six murdered men and hangs them round the walls, then adds his own shield and gives up his rank to become a monk of St. Dunstan. Sir Walter Scott has thus interpreted the name as "Castle of Seven Shields", but it must be added that 'shield' is a common name locally for a dwelling or settlement.

Other Arthurian legends are associated with Sewingshields. It is said that one Cumin, a chief from the wild north, came to Arthur at the castle. Arthur received him with all friendship, and when Cumin went away, Arthur gave him a gold cup as a token of peace. But some of the retainers got to know of this and pursued Cumin for the precious cup and slew him. Arthur

in sorrow erected a cross on the spot where Cumin was slain. The remains of "Comyns Cross" can still be seen near Wark Forest. Another, more primitive-sounding, legend concerns the crags called King's Crags and Queen's Crags about a mile to the north-west of Sewingshields. Arthur was sitting among the rocks, watching his queen comb her hair; suddenly he picked up a boulder and hurled it at her; she deflected the boulder cleverly with her comb. There lies the boulder to this day, between the crags, with the comb marks on it. It weighs about twenty tons, and the distance between the crags is a quarter of a mile !

I cannot leave Sewingshields without trying to give an idea of the impression left by this extraordinary place. The strange columns of black rock that form the edge and north face of the crags, the view of wild and vleak moorland and forest from the summit of the crags, make it an eerie and haunting spot. It has a massive strength, and --it seems to me -- a power to take whatever you bring to the place --be it reverence, curiosity, wisdom, indifference, loneliness -- and throw it back at you much magnified. I am never quite comfortable there, even on a warm summer's day, and in winter with low cloud scudding across the moors and hail or snow driven before the wind, it can be a stimulating and disturbing experience. The place has an uncanny timelessness about it, which makes border raiders and moss troopers, King Arthur and Roman legionaries, seem scarcely removed from the present moment.

Nine miles further westward along the Wall, at Walltown crags, one comes to King Arthur's Well, lying a few yards south of the Wall. It is said that here King Edwin of Northumbria was baptised by Paulinus in 627.

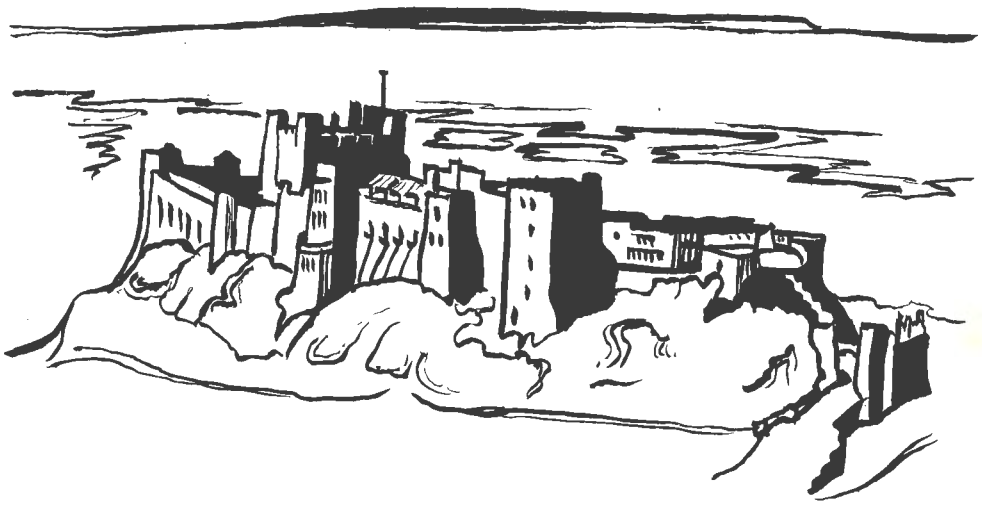
Cumberland has its own wealth of Arthurian associations, worthy of a separate investigation --Carlisle was one of Arthur's royal seats. But while we are on the Roman Wall we may perhaps be permitted to follow it a mile or so over the Cumberland border to Birdoswald where there are the ruins of a Roman fort which was called Camboglanna. It stands on a plateau overlooking a bend in the River Irthing, and has been suggested as a possible site for the last battle of Camlann. Interestingly, the Ordnance Survey One Inch map gives the name of a nearby stream as King Water.

Arthur's Hill also lies on the course of the Wall, but now forms a district of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Several local people have suggested to me that the name commemorates the king, but I have been unable to find any more substantial confirmation of this. On the contrary,

"North Country Lore and Legend" of 1891 states that the district is named after a Mr. Arthur Cookson whose father once owned the land. Nevertheless, the former idea persists.

Northumberland abounds in legends and folk-lore, in ballads, sayings and songs preserved, and perhaps nowhere more so than in the area round Hadrian's Wall; the Rev. H.E. Savage recorded in 1912, "To the present day in the district between Haltwhistle and Corbridge" (i.e. the country roughly to the east and west of Hexham), "mothers still tell their children about Arthur meeting his soldiers in a cave around a large stone on which a sword is laid." Is there a connection between the hillfort at the village of Fourstones on the Roman road called the Stanegate, and the Castle of the Four Stones of Arthurian legend ? In country like this, such speculation comes frequently and readily.

Bamburgh Castle is one of the glories of Northumberland. It is built on a great rocky outcrop on the coast, dominating the countryside to the rear, while to the North, West and South it commands extensive views of the coastline and the sea, including Holy Island and the Farnes. The Norman keep has stood for eight centuries but it is known to have been a royal citadel right back to 547 AD. Excavations of the last two years have shown that this natural fortress was occupied in pre-Roman times. The castle was completely restored by the first Lord Armstrong in the nineteenth century, and is still lived in, though it is open to the public in summer. Tradition states that this was the Joyous Garde of Sir Lancelot, where Tristram brought Isaud when fleeing from King Mark, and where Lancelot himself brought Guinevere after rescuing her from public burning at Carlisle. The Celtic name for the site was Din Guayrdi (or Din Guoaroy.)



Ten miles down the coast, on another outcrop of Whin Sill, stands Danstanburgh Castle. Unlike Banburgh, this castle is a total ruin but its site, perched on stark black cliffs falling sheer to the sea, is a magnificent one. The Dunstanburgh legend, concerning one Guy the Seeker, exists in various forms, but I will tell it first as it was told to me by the castle guide. Sir Guy was a sea captain whose ship was driven ashore in a fierce gale, and who was thus forced to seek shelter on this wild coast. He came to Dunstanburgh Castle where he was made welcome and given a bed for the night. There, he dreamed that he was walking down a corridor in the castle which was quite unknown to him, and that he came to a door; he entered and found there a beautiful maid held in an enchanted sleep. On a table before her stood a horn and a sword and a great stone; Sir Guy knew in a moment that the enchantment could be broken either by blowing the horn or by splitting the stone with the sword: he must make the correct choice. If he chose correctly, the maid would wake and he would make her his wife. Sir Guy chose to blow the horn, and as he did so the vision faded and he woke: he had made the wrong choice. Sir Guy the Seeker still walks through Dunstanburgh Castle, for ever seeking the strange door and the lost room. Another version of the story makes Sir Guy a wandering knight who, on a stormy night, seeks shelter under the walls of Dunstanburgh Castle which is already in a state of ruin. He falls asleep, but wakes on the stroke of midnight to find that part of the castle has, apparently, been reconstructed; a door opens, and he enters to find himself in a chamber where a maid lies alseep on a slab of marble encased in a globe of crystal; she is guarded by two kings, one of whom holds a horn, the other a sword. All are held in enchanted sleep. He realises that he must blow the horn or shatter the crystal globe with the sword, but he blows the horn, which proves to be the wrong choice, and at once finds himself lying again among the ruins of the castle.

Now, although there is no mention of Arthur here, the details are so familiar --- the enchanted sleep, the horn, the sword and the stone -- that when I heard it for the first time it seemed to me at once to be an Arthurian legend. I have since found a version of the legend which states that the enchantment was wrought by Merlin; while "The Local Historian's Table Book of Remarkable Occurences" (1844), discussing the legend of Arthur's enchanted sleep, says, "It is not unknown on Dunstanburgh's caverned shore;" but tantalisingly it says no more. If, with these thoughts in mind, we look again at the Dunstanburgh legend, it may throw new light on the King Arthur legend. (I am well aware of the dangers involved in the "interpretstion" of legend; but I think that the modern, intellect-centred conscious - ness is now so strong in most of us that at least an attempt

must be made to re-tell our legends on that level also before they can fully satisfy us). For the Dunstanburgh legend is clearly one of the "Sleeping Beauty" type, in which man is represented as having to overcome various difficulties or trials before he can reawaken and be re-united with his true Being, his Higher Self. Sir Guy makes the wrong choice because he blows the horn, a familiar method in legend of sommoning aid, instead of seizing the sword and smashing the stone with his own strength (i.e.overcoming the enchantment of materialism with strength of soul). Perhaps we can understand from this that we are to 're-awaken Arthur' for ourselves in a similar way.

For what is 'Arthur', in these legends of the enchanted sleep ? In this area alone there are at least two sites, apart from Sewingshields, where King Arthur is said to be buried --in Arthur's Cave on the River Derwent near Allansford in County Durham, and in the Eildon Hills by the Roman Fort of Trimontium in Roxburghshire -- in addition to the sites throughout the West of England and Wales. I would like to suggest that at that time in history which we think of as the time of Arthur, three cultural streams -- the Christian, the Roman and the Celtic --came together and thereby was created a seed which was to be concerned with the benefit and evolution of future humanity. Where the knowledge and memory of this Happening were particularly strong, there arose the story of Arthur held in sleep until a future age. I do not mean by this that we should look for traces of Roman settlement, for example, near these places -- though they are remarkably often to be found -- but rather I am using "Roman" as a sort of short-hand for the characteristic virtues that were developed by that people = justice, equality and discipline in the Romans; in the Celtic people imagination and a sense of the immanence of the spiritual. These virtues, combined with the new Impulse of all that is implied by Christianity, are what make us love the Arthurian stories so much. The Force which this seed contains for the future of humanity has thus acquired the name 'Arthur', and has been buried in the consciousness of men until they have won sufficient strength of soul to re-awaken it. Some would say that time is almost upon us.

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"ANCIENT STONE CROSSES OF ENGLAND"

By Alfred Rimmer. Published by Garnstone Press

The blurb tells us that this book was first published in 1875 and "is one of the most complete surveys of the sites and appearances of ancient stone crosses in England ever published; it discusses the origins, religious significance and historical importance of all kinds of crosses --boundary, market, memorial, preaching, weeping, etc."

This is a really fascinating book with excellent illustrations on nearly every page. Who would guess that we have so many hundreds of stone crosses carrying so many messages, historical and obvious, esoteric and symbolical ? For those following ancient trackways, tracing leys or even enjoying a rambling holiday, this book should be a joy. It is laced with scraps of family and village events that weave a pattern of national history which leaves the reader with a picture of our island life which must be almost unique: the crosses might well be the bones of our corporate body.

Thanks are due once again to the Garnstone Press for re-publishing an old work and bringing it to our notice.

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Since our editorial page was written BBC2 put out a programme, which some of our readers may have seen, about three latter-day pilgrims who set out to trace the footsteps of medieval pilgrims on their way to Santiago and the shrine of St. James of Compostela. In this programme the pilgrim Scallop Shell badge was shown several times.

In the Daily Telegraph coloured Supplment of Oct. 5th. there was a long article about this same pilgrimage, the first of two. A footnote reports that the author, Edwin Mullins, "has been engaged in preparing a 75 minute television documentary to be screened by BBC2 around the Christmas period." He is also the author of a book about the pilgrimage to Santiago which is to be published by Secker and Warburg next spring.

Further, we have received some notes from members. George Moffat, from London, has written: "I have been reading through some books and come across this (in Alchemists & Gold, by Jacques Sadoul.) It begins on page 78 where he's quoting Fulcanelli. I'll start where Jacques Sadoul is talking about Flamel and leads up to the quote:

The Alchemists. ....At long last inspiration, possibly divine in origin, came to him. Realising that he would never get anywhere without help Flamel decided to take with him a copy of the book and visit some country where he might meet learned members of Abraham's race. There were at that time several famous synagogues in Spain, especially round about Saint James of Compostella. So quite naturally, Flamel announced that he was going there on a pilgrimage. This reminds us of the pilgrimages already made by Raymond Lully and which Basil Valentine later also claimed to have undertaken. It is interesting to see what a Master such as Fulcanelli has to say about it in his book.

Demeures Philosophales. Fulcanelli.

....These suggestions help us to understand the mistakes which many occultists have made by taking literally various purely allegorical writings that were intended for the information of some but had to be kept secret from others. Albert Poisson himself was taken in. He believed that Nicholas Flamel, leaving his wife, his business and his illuminations, had actually fulfilled the vow made before the altar of his parish church to go on foot by the long road to Iberia. But we are prepared to certify --if our sincerity is to be trusted --that

Flamel never quitted the cellar where his furnace roared. Anyone who knows the significance of the pilgrim's staff, the begging bowl and the cockle-shell in St. James's hat, will also know that we are speaking the truth. By substituting himself for the material and modelling himself upon other secret workers the great Adept was obeying the rules of philosophic discipline and following the example of his predecessors.....End of quote.

George says: Notice it is the cockle shell in St. James's hat, and begging bowl and Pilgrim's staff. Underlinings are mine. I hope you find this interesting.

And from Julie Weaver we have received another note:

Shell Grottoes. Iona and Peter Opie, on pages 266 and 267 of their fascinating book, "The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren" (Oxford 1959) refer to shell grottoes still made by children in the poorer districts of London on St. James's day (25th.July). In olden times, a saying ran, "He who eats oysters on St. James's day will not want money". The shells were afterwards collected by children to make tiny grottoes, decorated with flowers and a small rush-light. Passers-by were asked, "Please, sir, remember the grotter," or "Penny for the grotter".
Nowadays, oysters do not form part of ordinary peoples' diet, so stones and other shells are used instead. The grottoes are usually found at the wall-side edge of the pavement, and the begging continues !
A write in 1822 noted a similarity to an old Spanish custom, and it is clear that despite the change to oyster shells there is a link with the use of the cockle-shell emblem by pilgrims to the shrine of St. James of Compostela in northern Spain.