

P E N D R A G O N

Journal of the Pendragon Society.

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This issue must, of necessity, be more of a News Letter rather than a magazine. The Bristol Task Force has been plagued by domestic, domiciliary, absence from home and health handicaps and there has been little opportunity to gather material or time for printing and illustrating. We hope that perhaps our members who live elsewhere will take note of this and will send us material for future issues.

We have not, however, been totally idle. Our next immediate objective is a return to Cadbury and we must explain how this has come about.

Before the famous Camelot Research Committee came into being we, the Pendragons, visited Cadbury a great many times and did our best to gather information and ideas from people who lived locally. On one occasion we met a villager who, years previously, had been out on the hill catching rabbits. While digging out a ferret he had almost fallen down a tremendous hole that had opened unexpectedly beneath him and which he had, subsequently, filled in again. On a later occasion we met three men who told us that though they now lived elsewhere they had, as children, played in a large cave right on the summit of the hill. The rabbit-catcher and these men agreed absolutely on the exact spot where this cave/cavity had been. We promised that when the time for the dig came we would persuade the archaeologists to excavate this spot.

In fact, as everyone now knows, six summers of digging went by and this promise was never kept. We need not now go into the reasons for this. However, about eighteen months ago one of our Bristol members put us in touch with his brother who is a geophysicist, and whose business it is to investigate subterranean phenomena, chiefly on behalf of mining communities, in many parts of the world but chiefly in Cornwall. Our geophysicist, Mr. Colin Bristow, was invited to Cadbury where he carried out some exploratory tests. With the aid of powerful and sophisticated instruments he established the fact that there are several underground tunnels (possibly man-made) at the spot indicated to us.

The history of Cadbury can hardly be considered complete without further investigation of these tunnels. For this it is essential to find the Trig Point from which our surveyors can work. The Ordnance Survey Office is unable to furnish us with information since all records were destroyed, at the time of the Blitz on Southampton, in 1940. We must, therefore, with the kind permission of the owners of Cadbury, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery, establish a Trig Point for ourselves. We hope to have done this by the time this News Letter reaches our members.

Colin Bristow comes sometimes from Cornwall to lecture at Bristol University. Members of the Geophysical Department there have offered him any additional help he may need when the time comes to carry out a major survey. We have written

to Professor Leslie Alcock, who is now at Glasgow University, in the hope that he will be able to spare time to come south and take part in the project. We shall be making arrangements to hold an open lecture at Bristol University when Colin will explain to all those concerned all the various methods by which he will test the old tradition that Cadbury is a "Hollow Hill".

Our other project is a return visit to Gower to continue our investigation of the site at Llanellen. The usual difficulties have arisen with regard to members' holidays but we have now arranged to go for a week at Whitsun, May 26th -- June 1st. The owner of the site has kindly undertaken to provide us with a large caravan and space to camp nearby. As this will be quite close to a small caravan site access to water taps and sanitation will be easy. During the course of the week we hope to be able to arrange, with local friends, to have at least one more week on the site later in the summer.

Will any members who would like to join this party please send in their names to the Hon. Sec. as soon as possible. Experience of previous digs is preferable but not essential. Ability to work hard and ignore bad weather will be a strong recommendation. Anyone with transport will be doubly welcome.

Those who read the last issue of 'Pendragon' will remember how we became interested in scallop shells and pilgrim badges. Last autumn the Daily Telegraph Illustrated Supplements carried two long articles on the medieval pilgrimages to Santiago of Compostella. These, in addition to two long TV programmes on the same topic, inspired some correspondence in the Daily Telegraph columns. We joined in this and, as a result, received a number of interesting letters. One kind reader in Chichester sent us a beautiful copy of The Shell Book of Scallops. This can be borrowed from public libraries and we recommend it to our members. From the other letters we choose these extracts:

"The present ritual of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar accepts Pilgrims allegedly proceeding to the Holy Land dressed in a mantle with scrip and wallet and wearing a hat decorated with a "conch" shell. The modern name is of course scallop. Knight Templar ritual is supposed to go back to the First Crusade about the year 1099 and at that time it would seem to have been accepted as the 'Pilgrims' Badge'.

(From Geoffrey Osmond of Southampton.)

From Mr. Headley of Ashford in Kent:

Thank you for your letter in the Daily Telegraph. It adds to my understanding of this prayer.

O Lord

Give me my scallop shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage;
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

From Mrs. Griffith, Camberley:

I read with the greatest interest your letter on "Remember the Grotto" which of course does, as well, go back to the great days of St. Iago. As I am researching into the origins of King Arthur I have also collected much data regarding the Shrines or Grottoes of ancient Briton thus;

The Shrine of St. Davids.

The ancient road to Menevia (St. Davuds) led through Camros for a mile...it then descended to Niwegal sands and passed near the harbour of Solvach in a cove surrounded by high rocks....Holy men settled here and formed a grove and since the time of Davydd, twenty-five Archbishops presided over the See of Menevia...including St. Samson.

St. Bernacus made the pilgrimage to Rome and several churches were dedicated to him on the eastern side of the Prescelly Mounts.

St. Kynanc (492) was son of the Lord of Brecknoc where the great torcs were found...St. Illtyd was at Llanamlech where a Druidical monument called a cistvaen stood on the site....there was a well and grotto there and a stream called Illtyds Wells, which was the site of a hermitage.

The Goer Peninsular and the little people were seen by Elidorus the priest in the grotto when he was but twelve years old; and St. Caradoc of Brecknoc, attached to the Court of Prince Rhys of South Wales became a hermit at the church of St. Kined and St. Ismael near Haverfordwest. The Shrine was known as Caradoc's Well where a Great Fair was held with cakes and country games.....

Also from Giraldus Cambrensis, "The Power of the portable bells and crooked staves, either in silver or brass, and covered with images and relics of the saints, was held in great veneration by Ireland, Scotland and Wales". St. Illtydd founded the college of Llantwit but the editor does not believe this is the same person as St. Illwitus of Llanhamelach where also stood a cistraen (near Maenest out of the village) and again a Well called Flynnon Illtydd and a hermitage.

Chris Lovegrove has given us this quote from "King Arthur's Country" (Dent 1926) by F.J. Snell:

According to the Very obscure mythological poem, The Spoils of Annwn, Arthur sailed in his ship Prydwen to Caer Sidi with a numerous company, "thrice the fulness of Prydwen", but only seven returned. Caer Sidi and Annwn are identical, and Annwn is the Welsh Hell or Hades, of which Pwyll and Pryderi are represented as the keepers (cf. Pwyll Prince of Dyved in the Mabinogian).

Amidst much confusion, one fact stands out clearly --

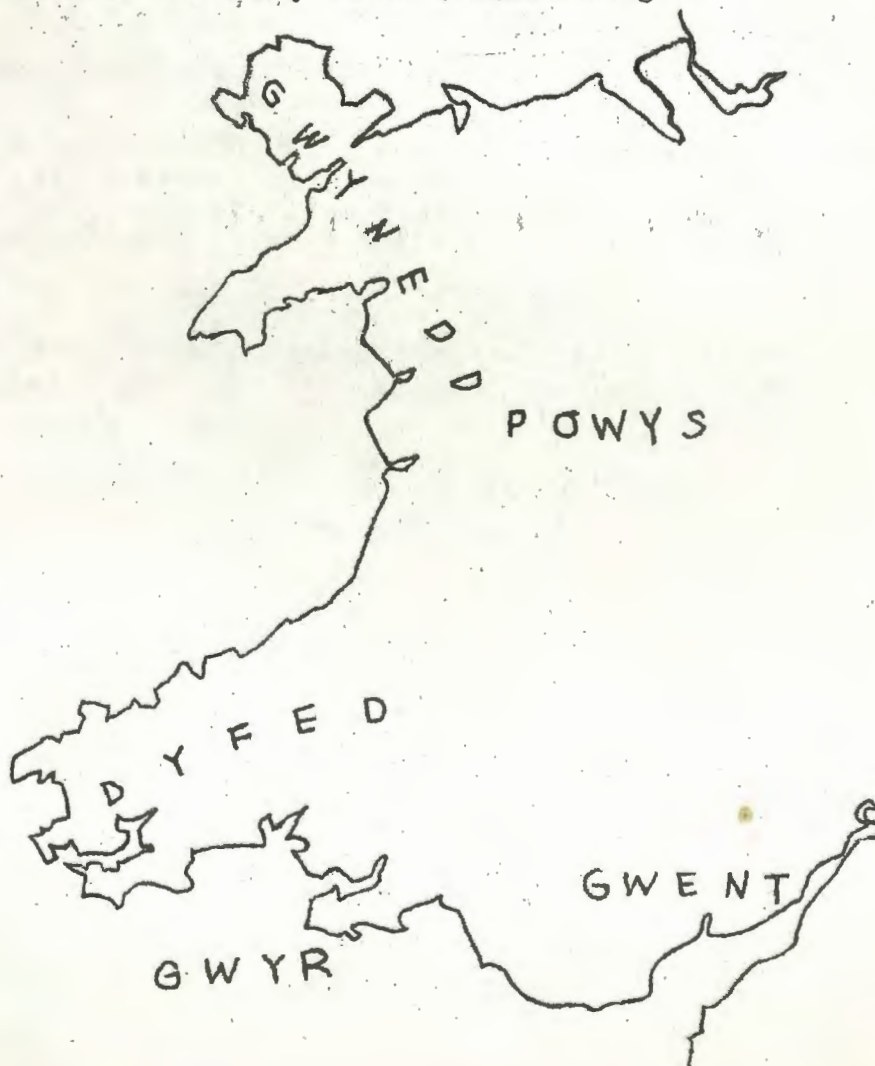


that Annwyn was not located within the region of Dyved. By Dyved is now understood only the county of Pembroke, but in ancient times the territory thus named included those of Arthen and Cardigan....

If Annwn was not in Dyved, where was it? There seems to be no reason to doubt that the two kingdoms were adjacent, and the region nearest Dyved, in the larger sense of the term, was on the southern side, the county of Swansea. This was precisely the Land of Gore. We have already referred to Gwanas Gwyr (the Point of Gower) as the Welsh Avalon.... Malory mentions a King of Brandegore, which leads Sir John Rhys to suspect a connection between Gower and the "dark divinity" Bran, possessor of the magic cauldron.

Then again Margan le Fay, who was endowed with the terrible power of turning men into stone, marries Urien, whom Malory calls King of Gore...It must not be forgotten that in Welsh tradition Urien of Rheged, who fought against Angles of Bernicia in the latter half of the sixth century, is represented as coming southwards and driving out the Goidels from the districts of Gower and Kidwelly...

Rhys believes that the idea of Gower being part of the Other World was really Cornish. Accessible to the Welsh by land, it would have been beyond the sea to the inhabitants of Cornwall: and Celts always thought of Hades as transmarine. The story of Morgan le Fay taking refuge in her realm of Gore from the wrath of King Arthur he also holds to be Cornish...Once more, Melwas is stated to be a Cornish spelling or pronunciation of the Welsh Maelwas, so that the legend of Guinevere's abduction by the King or Prince of Gore may be of Cornish origin.



From our friends in Glastonbury we have received the following notice:

THE AQUARIAN CENTRE

at Oaklands, Look's Lane, Butleigh Wootton, Glastonbury.

Will offer Lectures at moderate fees, and opportunities for leisurely discussion. A small library is available for reference.

Joint Organisers: Miss Barbara Crump.

Mr. Patrick Benham.

All Enquiries to Miss Crump at 'Oaklands' with SAE please.

1974 Summer Programme

April 13th. Easter Sat. The Glastonbury Zodiac -- Mrs. Mary Caine.

Easter Sun. Tour to Compton Dandon and Gemini Sign. Meet Compton Dandon Church at 2.30.

May 18th/19th at Oaklands. Bill Bryant on 'Gems and Precious Stones.'

June 29th. at Oaklands. Miss Iris Campbell on 'Do Ancient Stones Speak'.

June 8th. Sat. Evening Tour to Warminster --by coach.

July 6th/7th Lecture 'A Quest for King Arthur' by Mr. Geoffrey Ashe.

Sunday. Arthurian Week-end with tour to Cadbury.

July 20th/21st. at Oaklands. Mr. Kenneth Knight on 'The Quest for the Holy Grail with references to architecture.'

August 3rd. Lecture. Good Health from Nature Foods by Mr. Joseph Goodman.ND. DO.

Sept. 7th. Lecture. "Folk Music, Dance, Song," by Mr. Archie Brydon.

October 5th. Lecture. 'Passage through India' -- with slides --by Dr. James Forth.

Dates marked by ****are at the Convent School Hall, Magdelene Street, Glastonbury.

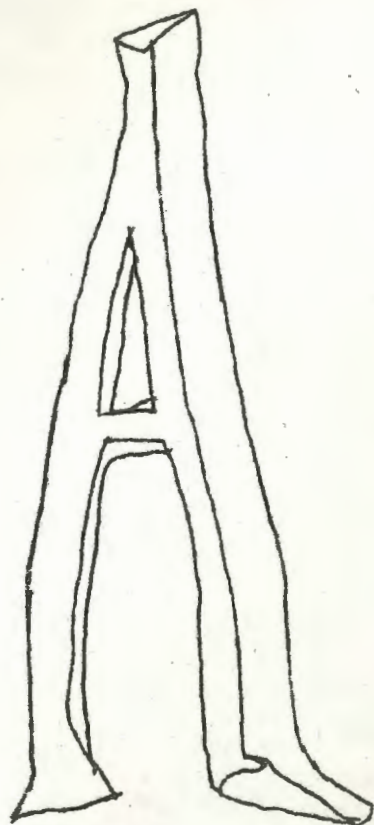
Admission 15p and 25p...Commencing 7.30 p.m.

The organisers regret that no over-night accommodation is available at 'Oaklands' but a list of local Hotels etc. will be sent on request.

Look's Lane is sign-posted to the LEFT (No through road)
Half-way between Street (or Glastonbury) and Butleigh.

A FOR AQUARIUS ?

By Chris Lovegrove.



In 1966 a gilt bronze letter 'A' was found at Cadbury in a third/fourth-century context. The theory was evolved that it came from a (conjectural) Romano-Celtic temple where it formed part of a (postulated) votive inscription. It is usually compared with the forty-five or so bronze letters, 2-3" high, cut from thin sheet bronze and pierced with nail-holes, found at the temple to the god Nudd or Llud at Lydney in Gloucestershire. For a small-find that is so visually arresting surprisingly little else has been officially said, particularly as Cadbury's letter 'A', as well as being gilt, is more substantial than the Lydney letters and also lacks the essential nail-holes to make it form part of an inscription.

Geoffrey Ashe has suggested that the letter could have come from an inscription "perhaps to Mars" (presumably from Ares, the Greek counterpart of Mars, though there are few Greek inscriptions in Roman Britain). A likely contender -- if the letter is in fact initial -- would be a local deity, perhaps a pre-Roman Celtic god or goddess identified with one of the Olympic pantheon as often happened in Gaul and Britain. The problem is where to start as the possibilities are, needless to say, numerous. (Mars Camulos springs to mind.)

One might take a lead from the obvious "A for Arthur" uttered at the moment of unearthing and which might not be so frivolous and embarrassing as at first construed. It might narrow down the field of competing deities if "Arthur" (despite or even because of whoever re-fortified Cadbury in the Dark Ages) could be said to be the god who was worshipped at Cadbury's pagan temple. This would eliminate such goddesses as the native Ancasta and Arnemetia, the oriental Astarte (found in a Greek inscription from Northumberland) and the Gallic bear-goddess Artio. It would then bring to the fore the often suggested link between Arthur and the Gaulish god Mercurius Artaius (although the meaning of the epithet Artaius is uncertain). Mercury is the Irish god Lugh, the Welsh Lleu, who was brother to Nuadha, the Welsh Llud worshipped at Lydney.

On the other hand, as Dr. McCana notes, "it does happen to be true that the Gaulish Mars and Mercury tended to be assimilated and their functions to overlap. And just as Mercury-Lugh is a god of warrior prowess as well as of arts and crafts, so, despite Caesar, the Mars of Gaulish inscriptions is more than a god of war: he is a god of healing, fertility and protection". This state of affairs thus lends weight to

Geoffrey Ashe's identification of Cadbury's god with Mars.

Another god of healing and resurrection, Aesculpius, is, like his father Apollo, found on insular inscriptions, and, again like his father, is associated with healing springs, a fact which might call for a re-evaluation of Cadbury's wishing-well, King Arthur's Well. (Also the one opposite the Red Lion. Ed.) Robert Graves compares Aesculapius to Bran, whose attributes Arther later inherits in a mythological capacity.

It appears that many Iron Age hilforts were in late Roman times refurbished as centres of pagan Celtic worship. At Cadbury it has been suggested that the pagan temple was finally destroyed about 500 AD to help in the "Arthurian" reinstatement of the defences. We may never know who the presiding god was but analogies may be drawn with a circular Roman shrine north of the Antonine Wall in Stirlingshire, which, when it was destroyed in the eighteenth century, was known as Arthur's O'on.

Alternatively the letter may be purely secular. Frank Woodhead, taking a lead from Malory, has suggested that the 'A' was a token for Arthur's knights south of the Trent. Other historical personages though might as easily qualify, such as Ambrosius Aurelianus who certainly has much to commend him. In the meantime Pendragons may like to speculate on what the 'A' could be for: Amherawdyr Arthur, father of Anir, brother of Anna, nephew of Ambrosius; renowned in Armorica; lord of that abode of the afterlife Annwfn; like an Avatar of Atlas, buried at Afallon in the land of Albu or Albion on the shores of the Atlantic, or perhaps only sleeping in places like Alderley Edge in Cheshire where the tree of Bran, Arthur's precursor, is the Alder. (Incidentally, A is also for Ashe and for Alcock.)

Proinsias MacCana, Celtic Mythology, Hamlyn 1970
Leslie Alcock, Arthur's Britain, Pelican Books 1973.

BOOK REVIEWS

ARTORIUS, by John Heath-Stubbs. Enitharmon Press, London, 1973. Published with the assistance of the Arts Council of Great Britain. Limited to 315 numbered copies. Price £3.50.

Geoffrey Ashe considered this book to be so important for our quest that he was kind enough to present the Society with a copy, for which we are most grateful. It has been going round the Bristol circle; if members outside Bristol wish to read it, please send in names to be placed on a waiting list and we will try to enlarge the circle of readers.

The blurb tells us that this Heroic Poem is the result of thirty years of research and deliberation. The author has "endeavoured to strip away the Romantic and Medieval accretions, and to present a historically plausible Arthur in the setting of the 6th century....Arthorius is at the same time presented as a hero of universal myth, whose exploits are related to the twelve labours of Hercules, and to the Sun's seasonal course through the zodiacal signs."

This is almost an understatement. The opening stanzas are reminiscent of the opening stanzas of the great elegy to Lycidas, and instantly the reader's memory is stirred to life. This happens again and again as the poem continues, small trailers of mention pulling in whole areas of recollected matter: it is like a huge picture with gigantic figures dominating a landscape that is both fearsome and yet familiar.

The book is an amalgam of Classical, Welsh and Nordic mythology. It is Malory and Alcock interwoven. It is very much like White's "Once and Future King" inasmuch as it is laced with prose passages of hilarious and anachronistic content.

the bishop

For instance, at one point/relates to Illtud how it came about that Arthur summoned a synod of the Church soon after the victory at Badon. "And were, in fact, many of the leaders of the heretical sects in Britain persuaded to attend?" asks Illtud.

Bedwini: "Very many. On the one side sat various sorts of Gnostics, twiddling their flowers and tinkling their cow-bells. It was said that demons in flying saucers descended from the celestial spheres to whisper instructions to them. But I cannot find that this was actually observed to occur. On the other side sat the bull-necked Pelagians, believing in the indomitable human spirit and in the march of progress --and with scourges ready for the backs of anyone who failed to live up to these ideals. And in the centre, between these two opposing parties, the Millenarians. They believed in the imminent return of the Saviour, with a large cargo of barrels of salt beef and bottles of cheap wine, and pension-books for all his followers. And hell fire for everybody else. They were provided with massive documentation -- measurements of the Great Pyramid, apocryphal apocalypses,

and sibylline and hermetic palimpsests and pseudepigrapha."

At the end, when Modred takes advantage of Arthur's absence in Armorica and arranges a night of Bacchanalia on Cadbury, the Queen of Heaven comes to take back the gift she gave at the beginning:

"This field is Camlann, the sedgy moor
In the western marshes: O Absalom, Absalom,
In the vale of Hebron, by Avalon's isle !
But now it is Modred who challenges Artorius;
He heads the band of the yelling Picts,
And the silent Saxons. And I have come
To take back my Luck, the luck of Artorius,
This gleaming grail. And do not ask me
Why, feminine, my mind is changed,
Nor to whom I shall deliver it.....

Geoffrey Ashe is mentioned, and Apollo; and Calliope and Ceridwen; and Merlin and the Minataur; and Taliesin and the Twelve Days of Christmas; and Anubis and Annwyn; Ostrogoths and Owain.

This book is total recall, and the total is Arthur.

THE OLD STONES OF LAND'S END, by John Michell. Garnstone Press (£4. 25.) with a dedication to Charles, Prince of Wales & Duke of Cornwall.

In May 1971 we reported on an Easter trip to the West Penwith peninsula, "anciently the chosen land of the giants", to help John briefly with his work on alignments of standing stones and crosses. Ever since, we have been waiting for this book to appear, and, needless to say, it has been worth it. It should convince all but the most perverse of the existence of alignments, and its maps, photographs and prints prove their deliberate design by the prehistoric (but not primitive) Britons of four thousand or so years ago.

More important, however, are the conclusions reached as to the purposes behind this vast landscape engineering. Certainly their positioning may be partly due to astronomical reasons, partly to geological; either way their influence, both for physical health and for general fertility, is their strongest character, as readers of John's earlier books will know.

It seems that their raising coincided with the establishment of settled agricultural communities which succeeded a pastoral, nomadic order. "The Australian aborigines, who never reached the stage of megalithic technology, or, to put it another way, never degenerated to the point where it became necessary to hold certain points in their country to be sacred by virtue of an inherited quality, in no way apparent to the uninitiated." In Britain, these spots, now represented by standing stones, both pagan and Christianised, were "places to which the old wandering people returned at regular yearly intervals, guided there by the configurations of the stars and landmarks on the horizon."

And what did they come for ? This is the question that specialists in various disciplines --archaeologists, astronomers, dowzers, anthropologists and ley-hunters

alike -- should be attempting to answer.

The solution of this question is vital to our future well-being, and it is towards this solution that this book points. C.L.

THE GREEN ROADS OF ENGLAND, by R. Hippisley Cox. Garnstone Press. (£3.25.)

First published in 1914 and revised in 1923, this book claims that the "accepted explanation that the earthworks were tribal strongholds, used for local purposes only, appears...impossible to maintain after examining a map of the watersheds. The hillforts are obviously arranged systematically along the watersheds..connected together by a fully developed system of travelways." In southern pre-Celtic Britain Avebury, as the central gathering ground, seems to be the seat of government, its authority extending along the roads radiating from it and protected by their earthworks. Interestingly, he declares that "it is indeed not impossible that the men of the Bronze Age destroyed a civilisation more fully developed than their own."

The original book is well illustrated with line drawings and maps. This re-print, with its re-drawn maps, unfortunately omits all the contour markings which so strongly supported the author's arguments in the 1923 edition. C.L.

AN OBLIQUE VIEW OF STANDING STONES

By R.D. Webster.

The appeal of the 'Stone' as a symbol of some forgotten mystical process is universal. It appears in one way or another in this light in all of humanity's many cultures. The sight of a single standing stone, erected thousands of years ago by unknown hands on some bare and rugged hillside, is almost bound to arouse in the observer some sort of response. It may be fear or fascination, he may be repelled or attracted by it's presence. Whatever happens he is unlikely to remain unmoved by the sight of the stone. Why? Why should we be deeply affected by the apparently pathetic attempt of our ancestors to modify their environment, to place upon an inhospitable mountainside a mark of their existence, or perhaps a symbol of their mastery over nature?

Man has always been fascinated by the business of structures. The smallest untutored child, when confronted with a pile of stones or a sandy beach at the seaside, will almost immediately start to build structures. It is a compulsion. A need, perhaps, to assert our authority over inanimate objects, to create order out of chaos. Or is it the manifestation of an innate awareness of the fact that we must isolate ourselves from our environment in order to live? For this is indeed what we do. We build houses, roads, skyscraper, tower blocks, all of which isolate us and cosset us, well removed from an environment which, if we were to go out into it naked, could very well destroy us.

However, a standing stone is hardly a fit shelter for a human being. Megalithic man was perfectly capable of building far more elaborate structures out of wood for the purposes of shelter. Why, then, should he expend a great deal of energy on erecting huge slabs of stone in outlandish places? There are many theories. We may be able to accept that man did this simply as a symbol of his mastery of inanimate objects, or that it was a religious act, or even that the standing stones mark out a huge system of 'leys' and terrestrial energies. There is no evidence to support any of this.

There is, however, in the more complex henge structures, evidence to suggest that Megalithic man had a grasp of Pythagorean geometry far beyond his presumed capabilities (1). A grasp of the subject which, incidentally, makes the 'Ley' theory's criteria of deduction seem, at best, patronisingly insufficient. If Professor Thom's work were extrapolated to cover the whole of Britain we may find that the standing stones form part of a vast geometrical complex with, perhaps, a nexus at Stonehenge or Callanish. Even if this were done, and it would be a formidable undertaking, it would tell us nothing about the nature of the supposed 'Leys' or even of the stones themselves.

I have already mentioned man's love of structure. It is also in the nature of Man not to tolerate a vacuum. When confronted with one he will fill it with the first available structure that fits. Thus it was when modern man was faced with the phenomenon of the Standing Stone. Something stood before him which evoked a deep-rooted archetypal response. It momentarily upset his new-found pragmatism and made invalid his growing grasp of reason. Why should a large chunk of rock, set roughly in the earth, call forth feelings of fear or fascination? Man had to find an answer, and quickly. The echoes of a past and barbarian society could not be allowed to stand in the way of 'progress'. The phenomenon had to be explained, filed away and eventually forgotten, in order that Man could proceed. Thus we have the explanations. Firstly, that the response was due to residual superstition left over from centuries of religious indoctrination, and later, concordant with the reawakening of 'spiritual' Man, that the response was due to coming face to face with the carriers or markers of the paths of terrestrial magnetism with which our ancestors may have been familiar.

These are explanations or hypotheses which we may accept or discard as we choose. It is not necessarily so. There is no evidence to back it up, or, at best, all the evidence that there is is based upon the hypotheses and not vice versa. So where might we find the truth, if indeed there is a truth to find? Surely it is within ourselves. The very fact that the phenomenon evokes a response is grounds for investigating more closely the receptacle of that response: i.e. the human mind.

Somewhere in the darkest recesses of the unconscious mind the Stone stirs an age-old race memory. Somewhere here the knowledge concealed within the Stone remains intact, untouched for millenia.

With all our modern science we can measure the stone,

deduce it's composition, state from whence it came, even make educated guesses as to how it was erected. We can draw lines between one stone and another and call them 'Leys'. We can construct vast patterns in the earth; if we knew what 'earthly magnetism' was supposed to be we could construct instruments to measure it. But with all this, what do we know about the Stone? Do any of our elaborate theories really explain the depth and power of the race memory evoked? If the Stone is the marker of a great 'Ley' system, why, then, are we afraid to stand alone by it at the peak of the moonlit night?

This article is full of questions, and they are questions for which I have no answers. We are in danger of becoming complacent in our attitude towards the search for ancient knowledge. A great deal, of inestimable worth, has been contributed by writers such as Watkins, Thom and John Michell, but with all this we are still skirting the edge of a sea of uncharted knowledge. There is a grave danger that we will be content to concern ourselves with the seaweed rather than the sea and end up, as so many of our scientists do, finding out more and more about less and less until, at last, we know everything about nothing.

Therefore let us welcome questions and be a little more wary of answers. Let us acknowledge, without necessarily attempting to explain, the power of the Stone and search within ourselves, in the dark places of long-buried race memories for the knowledge behind that power. It is not inconceivable that Alfred Watkins' vision of 'ley' lines in Herefordshire was just such a race memory bursting momentarily to the surface of his consciousness. But let us liken that to the earliest discoveries of science. No doubt the discoverers of the time allowed themselves some complacency and their contentment with the state of their art significantly slowed the progress of science. We are in a position to-day to see that they had a very long way to go; let us not, therefore, make the same mistakes ourselves. It is, surely, far better to have questions which intrigue and stimulate than to be content with answers which do not wholly satisfy.

