



WILL HOPE CREATES....

an informal history of  
the pendragon society  
by jess foster

ZODIAC HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

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Pendragon Society

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Jess Foster

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## FOREWORD

by

Anthony Roberts

As publisher and editor of 'Zodiac House Publications', I take great pleasure in presenting Mrs. Foster's brief but cogent work for the examination of the reading public. It is a book that tells a direct story (the history of the Pendragon Society), yet at the same time weaves into its composition a magical, questioning quality that illumines many areas of vital psychic importance. It is a book designed as a succinct prologue to the Aquarian Age and its structure is such as to lead the reader steadily forward from the deceptively simple beginning to the magically complex end. Mrs. Foster's style is a robust combination of sound common sense interwoven with an acute insight into the underlying patterns that create the psychological geometry of the New Age. She has guided the Pendragon Society through its many vicissitudes with a sure hand, never losing her sense of humour, despite appalling provocations and numerous disheartening setbacks.

As the book progresses, the reader will discover that what began as a search for information regarding Arthurian Britain, gradually extended into a quest that embraced many seemingly unrelated subjects, such as Mysticism, Religion, Megalithic technology and Prehistoric Civilisation. Around the central, germinating figure of King Arthur, a strange magic grew. It is this mythic magic that unravels the threads of history in the light of prophetic understanding and psychic intuition, for the 'magic' of the past contains the true reality of the past! "Till Hope Creates" deals with all of this, always in a clear and understandable way. It forms a major addition to the series of books and booklets that are being produced by "Zodiac House" as part of our contribution to the foundations of the new society.

A clear understanding of the past is vitally necessary if the future is to be interpreted correctly, and Mrs. Foster's book does more to enhance this clarity than reams of boring text-books by pedantic and mean minded archaeologists. Such 'heresies' as are contained within this work will help to sweep away some of the false conceptions that have blighted the study of history for countless centuries.

London - March 1972



## CHAPTER 1

### THE CLEW ADVENTURE THAT STARTED IT ALL

*(Chambers Dictionary: Clew, n. a ball of thread, or the thread in it: a thread that guides through a labyrinth: anything that solves a mystery.)*

"Progress", wrote Ogden Nash, "may have been all right once, but it went on too long....."

It has gone on so long that it has become automatic, and ourselves automated with it. For every problem there is a ready answer, pre-packaged and set high on the shelf. For every question there is an Instant Answer - until some innocent asks: "Where does the sea begin?" and then we are gravelled.

Asked unexpectedly, "Who wears the purple?" the average person reaches for the packet and replies, "Those born into a royal line; those who become kings and queens; those who rule over other men."

Yet, as usual, the generally accepted answer is wrong. Caesar may rule, politically, over his fellow men but he does not wear the real purple. Caesar, like all his countrymen, is manifestly manipulated and moulded by the pressures and over-riding circumstances of his times, and he is no more in control of the world's destiny than is a private in his own army.

If one accepts this as true, then Politics, Power and Property get you nowhere: nowhere of any significance, that is. Yet we all feel that the world is evolving, and we all get carried along on this tide of evolution, and far too often we become acutely aware of the fact that we can do nothing about it.

It is this feeling of helpless futility that destroys so many people and sends them off on drugs or systems that will raise them to a more meaningful plane of existence. When circumstances become acutely painful people start revolts against the established ways of society and, by making life equally painful for other people



imagine that they are altering the course of evolution. None of which bends one blade of grass and, ultimately, the whole affair gets written off as past history or an experience.

Now, it is an obvious fact that everyone, but everyone, has experiences: it is curious how few people ever observe these experiences and consider their implications. Until we acquire wisdom most experiences are painful and are considered better forgotten.

However, there are always the few exceptions, and those few - if they observe closely enough - begin to discern an underlying pattern. It dawns on them that this underlying pattern, or trend, or tenuous thread, may be more significant than the experiences themselves. If you can discover the pattern, even vaguely, and can work upon it, then in a small way you help to form the future and get satisfaction from your efforts. It is unlikely that you will ever get thanked of course, because few people will ever notice what you are up to.

Take a simple example from contemporary history in this land of Britain.

An officer called Baden-Powell, while taking part in the Boer War, had several experiences which, though slight, he was wise enough to observe, and from which he drew certain ideas. He observed that when you are taking part in a war the man most likely to survive is the man who takes good note of what he sees (and makes it his business to see everything), and then makes use of what he sees in order to anticipate the moves of his enemy, and so keeps one jump ahead of that enemy.

Not a novel idea to us, but a new one in those days of scarlet uniforms and cavalry charges.

The notion of training a lot of youthful spies and abandoning the fighting squares was not likely to be accepted by the Top Brass, even if it was put to them. Yet B-P was certain he was on to something important. The next war, he surmised, would not be won by superior numbers but by superior Intelligence. He himself when his next leave came, went off to Germany in the guise of a professor in search of butterflies. He returned with beautiful drawings of butterfly wings which proved, on enlargement, to be careful sketches of German fortifications and defences. He also sat down and wrote a book called 'Scouting for Boys'.

You can forget all your current ideas about Scouts and Guides because they in no way resemble the originals. I know because I was one of them. The country was quite suddenly crawling with little spies who were training themselves to be quick and observant. They noted the direction of the wind, the way birds were flying. They took note of the ways people walked, talked, and the things they wore: it was important to penetrate possible disguise. They learned how to



survive in primitive circumstances, how to look inconspicuous and how to transmit messages at speed. In dark if homely corridors they flashed so many dots and dashes that the Morse code was as familiar to them as the alphabet.

The Movement roused, in its early stages, enormous antagonism. The Guide Movement in particular was considered an outrage to femininity. To save the Movement from immediate extinction the original plans were given a quick whitewash of citizen paint and Sunday School uplift. So the Movement became respectable, but it had been a near thing. Adults were no longer conscious of being shadowed, nor of having their words weighed and often found wanting.

Came the 1914 war soon afterwards. This, of course, was waged in water-logged trenches for four bloody years until its final stalemate. Though fathers and brothers and uncles were killed in their thousands, most of the little 'spies' survived because they were too young to be made into cannon fodder. In fact, they survived to become the brains of the 1939 conflict and - having absorbed certain ideas in their formative years - were quick to organise Underground Intelligence Forces and Resistance Movements, and to exploit the Morse code to its uttermost. Those exploits did more to win the war than anyone could have anticipated.

That B-P was honoured and decorated for something quite different is obviously of no consequence but it must have amused him considerably. He had seen the underlying trend, caught at the clew and worked on it. The idea grew and flowered when it was needed.

*"Before beginning, and without an end,  
As space eternal and as surety sure,  
Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,  
Only its laws endure.*

*"It maketh and unmaketh, mending all:  
What it hath wrought is better than had been:  
Slow grows the splendid pattern that it plans  
Its wistful hands between.*

*"This is its work upon the things he sees:  
The unseen things are more; men's hearts and minds,  
The thoughts of peoples and their ways and wills,  
Those, too, the great Law binds."*

#### The Light of Asia

A movement taking shape in Britain now began to show vaguely as some kind of underlying trend in the late 1950's, when books about King Arthur seemed to be falling round us like leaves from the trees in Autumn. It was difficult to know whether they were leaves and the evidence of a long and sad decline, or whether they were acorns and the evidence of a fruitful spring to come. I had a hunch they were



acorns and set to work to gather them together for closer investigation.

The result was bewitchment, botheration and bewilderment. No ordinary person would ever have guessed, off the cuff, that so many books could be written about one person; that one person could have so many personalities, meanings, angles, areas of activity and non-activity. It was staggering.

Mentally battered and bruised I went to a friendly girl in the County Library and said, "Please find me a book about King Arthur that makes some sort of modern sense." She gave me a book by Geoffrey Ashe called 'King Arthur's Avalon', published by Collins. It was not only interesting and readable, it revealed the reason for the current interest. Moreover, it proved to have the right chemical to bring a lot of other ideas together in my mind and make them jell.

About thirty years previously I had stood in the middle of a field and unintentionally overheard some scraps of conversation between some Guiders and a newly-appointed Commissioner. "And above all," this woman said in firm tones, "there must be no more quests."

That was the day I decided to remove myself hastily from that world. In a mood of fury against the speaker I made an inward vow that please God, somewhere and sometime, I would start a bigger quest than that Commissioner ever visualised.

A few years later, when I was first learning to write stories and books for children, I asked a young publisher just what kind of stories he wanted since everything I had produced so far had failed to meet with his approval.

"I want," he said with a small smile, "the kind of story that begins, 'Angelina has lost her pail...'"

I wrote ultimately many books and stories, but I was never able to write the kind of story that begins, "Angelina has lost her pail...." Only Enid Blyton ever succeeded in flooding the country and drowning a whole generation in arid trivia of that kind.

Years later again it had been borne in on me, slowly and sadly, that my children belonged to a deprived generation. They were deprived of contemporary heroes, heroic plans and purposes, even of national pride and self-respect. Democracy insists that since everyone cannot be heroes, no one must be allowed to become one. And no one must be allowed to harbour ideals because the numbskulls in the community can't understand them. That, at any rate, had been the climate of democratic opinion in the post-war years until the Teddy Boys began to break out of it. The time was over-ripe for that galvanising quest I had promised myself once and had long since forgotten, but there seemed little chance of it.

Now, in the late 1950's, when my children were grown up and



independent, it seemed to me that there was a vague smell of Spring in the air. Every now and then someone said or did something that inspired a flash of hope.

For instance, on one occasion, when the Queen Mother had been opening a new Domestic Science College, she was reported to have said that, "After the three R's come the three D's, and they are vastly more important. They are - Discrimination, Decision and Design."

I had pondered on this report frequently because I could see that in three words the Queen Mother had summed up the whole joyful, resplendent Gospel tale, as it is outlined in the New Testament story, and as it is lived in the life of an individual. If there were still people around who could spill words of wisdom like this, the dreadful devastation wrought by Enid Blyton and her kind had not been complete, and hope might yet be restored to the world.

When I had re-read 'King Arthur's Avalon', quite a number of possibilities began to open up gently before me. One of my sons, until fairly recently engaged on Youth Work, had confided in me that although the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme was admirable for certain children, there were still many boys and girls who were unimpressed by what they considered to be mere exhibitions of brawn and bravery: there was space, my son thought, for some project a little more subtle, less obviously a way of keeping the young in training for another possible war. I began to believe that I might have found the nucleus of that something else, albeit very vaguely and nebulously, in a Quest for the historical Arthur.

I made an appointment to meet Geoffrey Ashe in London. I was to call for him at the London Polytechnic and this I duly did. It was a very cold afternoon but the sun was trying to shine and he suggested that we should stroll in the park while I revealed to him more fully the reasons why I wanted to see him.

This was my first experience of the wariness with which men in the Higher Education bracket allow strange women to approach them with what they are convinced are going to be crackpot ideas. (Many of my relatives had been in the Higher Education bracket, but as they knew me quite well I had never before been made to feel conscious of this wariness, though it was going to become all too familiar over the next ten or twelve years.) After some time we even sat on a park bench - at opposite ends!

Well, I know Geoffrey a lot better now, and I don't suppose he will mind or be surprised if I say that as a writer of Arthurian books I consider him unequalled, but as a first-time-met acquaintance he is quite baffling. He may walk beside you but you are aware that he is operating from some remote-control spot in distant space and that park bench felt like a thousand years.



Nevertheless, in due course the distance narrowed. I learnt that he was married to a Canadian wife and had five children. Experience told me that the family might well be wondering if and when it could get a summer holiday. My house was on the South Downs where there were wide-open spaces, so I invited them all to stay. I think Geoffrey began to grasp the fact that my ears were a-tuned to the calls of the wild.

I asked him how it came about that we knew so little about the so-called Dark Age in Britain. He explained this to me and said it was a pity that 200 years were missing from our history books; the years that represented a long resistance to the invasion of the Saxons after the Romans had departed. I suggested that, with a little curiosity and endeavour we might perhaps be able to fill in those pages. He pointed out that the kind of people, such as himself, who would like to know more had not usually the time for the kind of Field Work this would require. I reminded him that young people have long holidays from school and children from Secondary schools are less hamstrung with prep and examinations than those in other types of school: why should we not harness their leisure hours for their benefit and ours? We could send them out with details of those things we would like to know, and expect them to come back with photographs, sketch maps and reports of local lore. Geoffrey wondered how we should start.

This was where I was naive enough to think I had a good idea. I was living near Winchester, and at that time Winchester was chiefly dependent for its cultural entertainments on its local Dramatic and Operatic Society, and occasional visits from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. As the city had a great hall (according to vulgar tradition built by Arthur) and a much-publicised Round Table within its walls, I hoped it would be interested in organising a Festival of some sort.

Geoffrey was willing to co-operate with any such suggestions and thought it might be wise for us first to form some sort of Society. I was already in touch, by correspondence, with several other people who appeared to be interested in Arthur. One was a Mr. Richard Hoskins who, I had learnt, had stacks of notes and would have liked to write a book if only his war service had not prevented him. Another who seemed most keen to initiate some kind of activity was an ex-Colonel Willoughby Gray, O.B.E., who was currently working for Southern Television and running a regular historical programme. There was also Mrs. Gray. Ultimately, sitting on that park bench, we decided to take action and see what came of it.

So, in due course, with the help of Messrs. Ashe, Hoskins, Gray and a few local inhabitants willing to help, a Society was formed and given the name of Pendragon. It's official aims were: "To stimulate interest in King Arthur and his contemporaries, and to investigate the historical and archaeological background of The Matter of Britain."

(Later I was to learn that this was an unfortunate framework of words. One archaeologist wrote to me saying: "I certainly would not allow myself to become involved with a Society that contains historians. We all know where they lead us." I was unwittingly entering one of those parts of British society where the tribal wars are most persistent.)

Soon after the formation of the Society a small query about King Arthur appeared in the correspondence column of the Daily Telegraph. Geoffrey replied to this saying that a Society had been formed to investigate just such problems as the writer was posing. Geoffrey's letter elicited 82 inquiries from readers of the Telegraph and I sat down to cope with the first batch of a correspondence that has been going on ever since.

The only reason for writing up the early history of this small Society is just that from this vantage point we have been able to see the underlying pattern emerging, and in our small way we have been able to help it gain momentum.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE NON-ADVENTURE THAT WAS WINCHESTER

The wind might be blowing under the chaff but the chaff lay very heavy on the ground. We soon discovered that fanning would have to be more energetic than we had anticipated.

The Committee met from time to time and discussed possibilities. Correspondents sent in suggestions and did their best to encourage us. One notion was that we should mount an Exhibition with visual aids and models of different sorts. I enrolled a man who had made models for 20th Century Fox films in Hollywood. I made many appointments, interviewed and was interviewed without achieving anything whatsoever. I was just making myself ridiculous by believing that Arthur was anything but a very dead duck indeed.

At one point Mr. Peter Smithers, at that time M.P. for the city, suggested kindly that the Pendragon Society might like to consider an exhibition in the old Church of St. Peter at the foot of Chesil Hill. Mr. Smithers seemed to feel, as I did, that Winchester might even benefit from some new enterprise.

Within a few days I had learnt all I needed to know about St. Peter Chesil. It had already been offered, time and again, to other worthy enterprises. That nothing had evolved was due to the fact that the church was unsafe to enter and needed at least £4,000 spent on it. I paid a call on the vicar who was leaving, and who kindly showed me all the correspondence and documents that related to the history of the church. They made hilarious reading. At one point in history, after having been closed for years, the church had been re-opened for a service. Parson had scarcely climbed into the pulpit when an enormous block of masonry fell to the floor, missing the preacher by inches. An architect, when called in to report, had stated that the church walls, adjacent to the road, were unsafe because of heavy war-time traffic, and death watch beetle in the roof was pretty widespread. Apart from these minor defects the building was as sound as a bell. There were other equally engaging and enlivening passages in the church's history. It just happened that, at that precise time, I was invited to write an article for a new country magazine that was being produced so I wrote one about St. Peter Chesil.

It was good to note that this article stirred the members



of the Winchester Preservation Trust and by the time I left the city, about eighteen months later, members of that Trust were really working to raise a restoration fund. It almost seemed as if Arthur, in his sleep, had breathed a sigh.

Another idea mooted by Geoffrey was that we should acquire a bit of ground on which to lay out a model map of Britain which would be a tourist attraction in the same way that certain model villages are. We hoped that such a map would also pull in the Youth Clubs and the schools. Again I set off on a round of visits but again I retired discomfited.

The Arthurian Festival seemed to me, at that time, to be more hopeful. A Dr. Blower, whom I had known when living at Petersfield, offered to compose a fanfare. He was also a neighbour and friend of the Dolmetsch family and was ready to interest them in the making of such things as Celtic harps and other instruments. A Miss Sylvia Barrett, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., G.G.S.M. a professional singer, offered to come from London and bring a number of other professional musicians with her, if we would merely cover their expenses. One of our correspondents wrote to tell me that Rutland Boughton (composer of 'The Immortal Hour') had once written a cycle of folksy operettas, most of which had never been produced but which were all about Arthur, and that these might possibly form a hub round which an Arthurian Festival might begin to take shape.

I went to London to visit the Secretary of the Rutland Boughton Trust. I also met and discussed matters with Mr. Michael Hurd who was a composer and conductor himself and had written a biography of Rutland Boughton. At the end of another year we all admitted ourselves defeated. Winchester had King Alfred and St. Swithun and was content with them. Even the suggestion that Winchester's Round Table might be submitted to a small test to verify its age was not well received. I lost all faith in Sir Thomas Malory who had suggested that Winchester was Camelot. The truth was, of course, that though all cathedral cities have their long-cherished tribal fueds within their walls, they will actually close ranks and stand fast in the face of a newcomer who shows signs of having ideas.

One final scheme was tried in an effort to create interest in an Arthurian Britain. We thought we might organise tours and, with the help of tourists who would be encouraged by promises of splendid prizes in regular competitions, we would compile a Guide Book to Arthurian Britain. With the kindly help of British Transport officials at Southampton we worked out some enchanting itineraries. Alas, we had no money and we could not find anyone to sponsor such tours.

At the end of three years of monumental industry I had vast piles of correspondence to show for my efforts, an overdraft at the bank and exactly nothing else. For the first time in my life I had a widely-dispersed circle of friends and a concentrated number of enemies.

So I abandoned the adults and turned my attentions more fully on the young. After all, the original idea had been that we should start a fact-finding project in which the young would play a major part. I had already collected a group of youngsters together and if they did not, at the moment, appear to be very promising material they could hardly be less promising than the adults.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE ADVENTURE IN THE CHURCHYARD

The county magazine printed an article of mine in which I outlined the ideas and plans of the Pendragon Society. The only upshot of this was a letter from a fourteen-year-old boy called Richard who told me he was much interested in history and wondered if he might be allowed to join.

To this I replied that I thought he very likely might, and as he did not live more than a couple of stations down the railway line, between Shawford and Southampton, I suggested he might like to call on me the following Saturday.

Accordingly Richard presented himself. His clothes were tidy, his manner smooth. He seemed more knowledgeable about Arthur than I was. He told me he had become interested in history and archaeology through a master at his school who had now left, and he assured me he had quite a number of friends about his own age who were equally interested. He also mentioned that he had a small private museum in his room at home.

(This last item of information should have caused me to pause but I still had a great deal to learn. Some of the gaps in my education were destined to be filled by Richard. All I thought about his museum at that time was that it indicated some tendency to industry. My own children had started museums from time to time and had lost interest in them.)

We agreed that I should visit Richard at his home on the following Tuesday about half-past five so that I could meet his friends and he left me, apparently well content.

Accordingly, the following Tuesday I travelled a couple of stations down the railway line and presented myself at Richard's door on the dot of 5.30.

Richard himself responded to the ring at the doorbell. For a moment he was patently non-plussed: quite obviously he was not accustomed to literal-minded adults who simply did things they said they were going to do. However, he recovered himself quickly and, closing the front door behind him, joined me on the step.



"Will you please come this way?" He was about to lead me round the side of the house to the back garden. "As it's a fine evening I thought we could meet outside. There's a garden seat under the tree. Will you be kind enough to wait for a few minutes while I fetch a table and some chairs?"

His manner would have done credit to a subaltern ushering in the colonel's lady. I sat down on the somewhat rickety and much-weathered seat and told Richard not to worry: I was quite prepared to wait.

I must have waited nearly half-an-hour while Richard mounted one of the most high-pressure campaigns of his career to date. I guessed what had happened and wanted to find out how he would deal with the crisis. So I sat in a narrow strip of uncultivated garden, facing a row of chestnut fencing, contemplating the backs of other houses and, across the adjacent railway-line, a stretch of woodlands nestling against the South Downs.

Presently Richard appeared round the corner of the house staggering under the weight of a rather long, rough table. On it, teetering precariously, was a handbell of the kind erstwhile used to summon small children into school from the playground. Table and bell were placed before me and Richard disappeared again. From time to time I caught sight of his head passing backwards and forwards on the other side of the hedge that divided us from the street. Once or twice I heard him shouting in the distance. Now and again there came sounds of flurry from the direction of the kitchen window, and what might have been protests and even squeals of dismay. I became curious about the youngsters who were obviously being shanghaied to a meeting of which they had previously heard nothing. If I had hooked Richard with my bait I wanted to see what other little carp he could draw into the net.

After another interval he reappeared with a boy about twelve, each carrying a kitchen chair. These were placed opposite me and were obviously for my audience. They disappeared and returned with two more chairs and a stool. After the arrival of two more wooden stools the two boys returned to the house and finally emerged once more at the head of a little procession. I counted nine in all and all smaller than Richard. The smallest could hardly have been more than eight and the one just ahead of him was definitely very adenoidal. The older boys seated themselves and the tinies disposed themselves on what passed for grass. They were all obviously utterly overcome at the predicament they found themselves in.

Richard, standing at the end of the table, rang the bell ceremoniously. "We are here today," he announced, "to hear a talk from Mrs. Foster who has kindly come to tell us what she knows about King Arthur." (I learned later, of course, that Richard was a pillar of the local church and an acolyte.) "It is very kind of Mrs. Foster



to come and see us and I'm sure you will want to show your appreciation in the usual way."

The audience was near paralysed but when Richard clapped loudly they pulled themselves together and followed his example. I managed to restrain my merriment and addressed them as reassuringly as I could.

"Well, boys," I said, "I'm very glad to meet you all. I think it's quite likely that you don't really know very much about King Arthur but then, you see, neither do I. In fact, to be truthful, I don't think anyone else does either." After a pause in which they could digest this, I continued: "So you see I haven't really come to tell you about King Arthur, as Richard has just said, I've really come to ask if you'll come out and help me look for him."

I got their interest right away, which was all that mattered. At the end of ten minutes several had plucked up enough courage to ask a few questions. At the end of another ten minutes they were even prepared to start off somewhere and asked where we were going. I hadn't the least idea myself, but they were entirely happy when I reminded them that the world was large, and Arthur might be anywhere, and that anyhow the great feature of a quest is really that no one knows where it may lead to.

After a few weeks we managed to pull in a few more recruits and we started to ramble over the Downs. We weren't sure what we were looking for but Richard Hoskins had written helpfully to tell me we should be looking for three graves: the grave of Ambrosius, the last of the Romans: the grave of Arthur: the grave of Cerdic, the first of the Saxons. Needless to say we never found any of these but - oddly - graves were exactly what we did find.

It was in the course of one of our rambles along the river bank that we came on the little abandoned church of Otterbourne.

This had nothing directly to do with Arthur, but if you had happened to be King Pellinore, riding in the woods and following the trail of the Questing Beast: and if you, at the end of the day, happened to come upon a mysterious chapel in a wood, complete with Hermit and a whiff of the Grail, this would have been it. Only the Sanctuary part of the little church remained, the rest had disappeared under the grass. The roof and doorway were smothered in ivy and on the south side were two Mass Dials. It was within a circle of tall elm trees and the graveyard contained about a hundred grave stones that were not only smothered in brambles and creepers but mostly pushed drunkenly to one side by young saplings, mostly silver birch. A tiny stream trickled by on the farther side of the elms and a narrow footpath passed from the neighbouring farmland to the country lane beyond. A gentle hush brooded over it all, broken only by the occasional cawing of rooks. It was idyllic.



The children were enraptured. We explored it all, carefully, even reverently because it was so peaceful and harmonious. Then, like pilgrims who have found a resting place, we sat down on hummocky tufts of grass to pause and consider our ways.

Why, oh why, had this Sanctuary ever been abandoned? The sun glinted between the leaves of the elm trees, the rooks cawed from time to time but otherwise a brooding silence enveloped us. Our voices were hushed because we were conscious that we had walked right into a Strange Mystery.

Cleversticks who know everything and understand nothing would have laughed loudly at the thought of a fact-finding project running into a Mystery: better people know otherwise. It was Robert Graves, I think, who said that scientists look for facts while poets look for Truth.

The young had been combing the public libraries for facts, of their own volition and on their own initiative. They had compiled long lists of books that enhanced the name of Arthur but did nothing to advance our understanding. They had studied maps and followed old trackways and stood on grassy tumuli without experiencing anything even resembling a shudder. We might, in certain circumstances, have visited various digs but I was keeping the group away from digs for my own reasons. When I had first met Richard I had been impressed by the fact that he seemed to know quite a lot of archaeologists. I had since learned that quite a lot of archaeologists also knew Richard - and of his museum. When Richard showed up on a dig he was quickly frisked, then sent upon his way. If the name of Pendragon was to remain untarnished it was better we should keep away from digs for the time being.

But now we had our Mystery, and from the first afternoon that we chanced upon it the young had no wish to go further or elsewhere.

A friend mentioned our interest in Otterbourne old church to the City Archivist of Winchester. Through this friend we received a message that the City Archivist had no record of the people buried in the graves there: if we cared to get permission from the Vicar, and to compile a list of names and dates carved upon the tombstones, we should be doing something commendable and useful. This news was received almost with tears of joy.

I telephoned the Vicar who said he would meet representatives of the Society if I cared to bring them along to the new church on a certain afternoon. Richard, and a girl named Pat, elected to accompany me.

The Vicar showed us all round the new church that stands right alongside the busy Winchester-Southampton road. To be honest, we were not impressed: it lacked all the attractions of the old. He showed us, too, the corner where Charlotte Yonge had carried on her little



school, attended by all the village children who paid 1d. per week for this instruction.

We knew already about Charlotte Yonge and her many books: "The Daisy Chain", "The Heir of Redclyffe" and all the others. We had also learnt, just recently, that Otterbourne old church had been part of the Parish of Hursley, and that for many long years John Keble had been Vicar of that Parish. We now learned that it was Charlotte Yonge who had persuaded the people of Otterbourne to leave the old church and to build a new one. The new railroad which was being laid down between Southampton, Winchester and London, was going to run close by and Miss Yonge insisted that the noise of passing trains would make services impossible. We wondered what Miss Yonge would have felt had she known that passing traffic on the modern main road would make the new church a great deal noisier than the old.

This, however, was not what we had come about. The Vicar, after due consideration, agreed that we might make our list of names for the benefit of the City Archivist. When we explained that this would mean cutting back the brambles and saplings from the tombstones he agreed that the whole churchyard was sadly overgrown and we had his permission to clear what we deemed necessary for our project.

Accordingly, the following Saturday afternoon, the whole group, armed with forks, billhooks and stout knives, met together at Otterbourne old church and embarked on the first Task we had been given. All proper Questers were given Tasks to perform: we were already fairly familiar with the story of Culwch, and compiling a list of names from old tombstones was a piece of cake compared with the arduousness of the Tasks imposed on Culwch. We spent a long, sunny, happy afternoon and one of the first things we learned about Otterbourne in its olden days was that it had had a least one splendid stone carver: some of the engravings were very fine indeed.

During the course of that long, fine summer, when we foregathered every Saturday without fail to carry out our task, we enlisted about 30 new members and learned a great many things.

Charlotte Yonge had had a nephew who attended Winchester College. The poor boy fell ill and, on beginning to recover was sent out to Otterbourne to convalesce with his aunt. Alas, he had a relapse and died: we found his tombstone in the old churchyard. We also learned about changes in the calendar when we discovered that "Mary, wife of John Noyce, died on February 12th 1743/4" and again, that John Noyce himself died on March 8th 1738/9. There appeared to have been some doubt about when the change actually occurred. But chiefly we soon learned that the pathway passing through the old churchyard was a favourite haunt of many. We made many friends among those who frequently came to the site for peace and quiet, or to exercise their dogs, or to find the quickest route to the river. And many of the local children came to join us because it was something



to do, or because they had ancestors buried there and were curious to find them.

During peaceful moments when we were eating our mid-day sandwiches, or guarding the bonfire that became necessary to burn the rubbish, we discussed the future. We planned to make the stone Sanctuary part of the ruin safe and strong so that people could take shelter there in the event of a sudden downpour of rain, or merely if they wanted to rest. In a very short while we had already had offers of help from one builder and a number of local people who were prepared to work. We planned to make the churchyard tidy and plant new flowers in it. We began to rough out a history of the church and the parish in the hope of getting it printed.

Perhaps it was fortunate that on one particular Saturday I took along with me an old friend from Sussex. Leslie Keating had been teaching history and other subjects to children for many years and he thought this was such an admirable project for the young that he came over to see for himself. He was just as much entranced as we were. We were trying to trace the outlines of the old walls, now under the grass, when a new element was introduced. A tall man with strikingly grey eyes came striding down the path from the lane and there was no doubt at all about the fact that he was blazingly angry.

Vandalism he had seen before, in the course of a long life as village schoolmaster, but organised vandalism on this scale was so monstrous as to be right outside his experience. He had locked up the old church and we had somehow contrived to get into it. We would get out in ten seconds flat or he would want to know the reason why.

We were completely non-plussed. I protested mildly that we were carrying out a job we had been asked to do, and we had come in with the full knowledge and permission of the Vicar.

We were told that the Vicar's permission, even if given, was neither here nor there. This new man was a Churchwarden - the Peoples' Warden, moreover - and no one had asked his permission. It would most certainly not have been given anyhow.

I apologised for not asking the Churchwarden's permission but admitted that it had never occurred to me that this would be necessary: I had assumed that the Vicar's word was good enough.

Whereupon the Churchwarden broke out again into a tirade about the difficulty of ever catching the Vicar sober. Now this made us all very angry indeed. Our builder friend had told us that if we wanted to chat to the Vicar we ought really to meet him at "The White Horse" but, he had added, he saw nothing wrong in that and regarded him as "a splendid fellow". We had heard from others that the Vicar had a weakness, but we had also been told that the Vicar was a sick man. In the First World War he had been gassed and still had lung trouble. In the Second World War a wall had collapsed on



his back and dented it somewhat seriously. Now his eyesight was gradually failing. We felt that whatever weakness the Vicar might have, there were extenuating circumstances. A tremendous argument ensued in which Leslie played a formidable part and the Churchwarden was reminded that other and better people in the past had been accused of keeping company with publicans and sinners.

In the end the Peoples' Warden left in a fury, telling us he would be back, and we shouted after him that we would clear out only if and when the Vicar came to tell us so.

The Vicar never came, but, as fortune willed it, a newspaper reporter did. Jon Pepper was young and energetic. Cycling down a country lane he had accidentally stumbled on a good story. He was entirely sympathetic to our cause. The following day the local paper, The Southampton Echo, blazoned the story across a double-spread. Much correspondence followed. The whole area was split into factions and there was a considerable amount of acrimony.

Just one good thing came out of this. Charlotte Yonge's last remaining godchild wrote to us. She had lived for many long years at Otterbourne and had attended services every Sunday in the old church. She was now living in a Home for elderly people in Sussex. She, too, loved the old church and longed to see it again. Leslie Keating not only sought her out but he also drove her, and the other residents in the home, all the way over from beyond Chichester to see us. They all spent a long, sunny, happy Saturday with us and Olive Holder was able to tell us many things about the village in its older days.

Our Pendragons now numbered about 40 with the additional numbers of young people who had come in from the village and its immediate neighbourhood. There were, of course, also those Superior People who were ready to sneer at a Quest for King Arthur that had already got bogged down in good works of a very humble nature. These too, we agreed, belonged to a deprived generation. Their parents, presumably, had never read them the old folk tales or, if they had, never drew the attention of their youngsters to their significance. It should be noted that it is never the first two sons in the folk tales who win fame and fortune: they are always in a hurry and quite certain of quick success. It is always the youngest - the Fool of the Family - who sets out in a different frame of mind and finds time for wonder on the way. It is he who has time to liberate the trapped animal, who chops sticks for the old woman in the wood, who chases away the angry geese chivvying a child. If we were chopping sticks for an old woman in a wood that day we were, we hoped, so to speak, carrying out the required disciplines of a quest.

The living of the Church was, I learned, in the gift of the Chamberlayne family. I went to see Miss Elsie Chamberlayne, who was the elder representative of the family, and I explained



to her our ideas about making the old site a resting place for Wayfarers. She was all in sympathy with our aims and promised to do her best to persuade the Parish Council that this was a good and useful project though she admitted that the Peoples' Warden was likely to be something of a stumbling-block.

I went to Church House in Winchester and explained the situation to one of the officials there. He approved of our enthusiasm and advised me to go and see the Rural Dean.

I made an appointment and went to Twyford, an adjoining village, to see the Dean. To my dismay I found he received me with pleasure only because he had somehow learned that I had spent some years in India. He was prepared to talk about India for as long as I cared to stay but I could see that Otterbourne was of very little concern to him. However, since I insisted on being interested in that parish, he sped me on my way finally with a promise that he would have a chat with the Vicar.

For six weeks we waited, hopefully. We completed our list of names and sent it to the City Archivist. At last, in desperation, I telephoned the Dean for news.

Oh dear me! Yes, he did remember me. (I could tell from his tone it was not with much enthusiasm.) Well, he had mentioned the matter to the Vicar and the situation was really this: Restoration of the old church - with the necessary heating, lighting, seating and other matters - would cost many thousands of pounds. Moreover, the upkeep of it afterwards was what really mattered and had to be seriously considered. If we cared to raise a Trust Fund of £10,000 he would be glad to listen to our propositions.

"In other words," one Pendragon boy pointed out when the news was broken to the group, "he hadn't a clue what we were talking about and we've been given the brisk brush-off."

I learned later that about ten years previously a similar group of youngsters had harboured the same ambitions and had been given the same dusty answer. It seemed ironical that just at that moment the Diocese of Winchester was launching a big campaign to "Summon the Young to Jesus".

One last hope remained. Miss Chamberlayne told me that the Vicar was retiring and that she would be appointing a new man, with the approval of the Bishop of Winchester. She would try to find a vicar who had some understanding of the young and their ideas.

So we waited. We waited till the Vicar retired. We waited till the new man was chosen. We waited till he had been inducted and had had time to settle in. Meanwhile we went off on several coach tours to Glastonbury, Stonehenge and other places. We visited museums. Richard decided that his future lay in a theological



college, despite my warnings. He was soon back, of course, but quickly found another group less subjected to frustrations than we were. I made no effort to recover him: life with the young is always hazardous enough without taking additional chances, and I was pretty certain that his future would be full of opportunities which he would seize upon with avidity.\*

We celebrated Hallowe'en in good Celtic style and then I finally went to call on the new Vicar.

He did not even invite me in off the doorstep. His attitude was that it was the grossest impertinence for anyone (meaning me, because a large number of our members did actually belong to his parish) to try to interfere in the affairs of a parish that was not my own. His remarks were followed by a letter from the Church Council telling us to keep out of Otterborne old church.

That no one wanted to join the newly proposed Youth Club in the village, and that his church choir resigned in a body was, of course, purely coincidental.

We had set off on a Quest for King Arthur but just what was the significance of that quest? It could be that one day we should find evidence of an historical Arthur and so might prove that Arthur was a fact. But what of it? A fact, after all, can never be anything but a partial truth.

My group of Pendragons were average boys and girls from both types of State school. I now knew them well as they knew me. We had worked long days together, tended bonfires together, eaten our picnic meals together. There was a bond of genuine friendship between us that corresponded, we felt, with the fellowship of the Round Table.

The wind was blowing under the chaff all right: our many friendships and my correspondence files showed that. It seemed that the nation was sighing for Arthur because he was a pseudonym for a Way of Life: a Way of Life that Britain once knew and longed to know again. It had nothing to do with piety such as Charlotte Yonge had instilled in her readers. It was not the emasculated purity of the legends as perpetuated in the schoolbook stories of the Arthurian knights. What they were looking for was something a great deal more robust and invigorating.

\*Ten years later we are glad to report that Richard is a reformed character and we are in touch with him again. He deserves recognition as a founder of the Society.

It is written that the Celtic cauldron of Inspiration and Plenty would not boil food for a coward, and it was also said to be a Testing Talisman.

We began to have some vision of what kind of a Testing Talisman it was going to be.



## CHAPTER 4

### THE ADVENTURE OF FINDING A NEW AND STRONGER THREAD

Looking back now one can see how inevitable it all was: how right and proper it was that we should all meet, and that the idea should be born and begin to grow in Arcadia.

But Arcadia is the home of the fairies and the elementals. Like the frontier, it is also a state of mind. It would have been nice to leave behind us a wayside resting place, but we were only passing through anyhow. It was time for the quest to be resumed.

There being little or no Arthuriana in Hampshire it was difficult to know in which direction we were intended to go. Visits to museums and digs hardly constitute a future.

Domestically, too, I knew that the time had come for me to move. Circumstances pointed to a move to the West Country, and once this was envisaged an alternative to the Arthurian Festival idea became obvious.

The intention of the Festival had been to draw the public's attention to Arthur - as it were, to sound a dinner gong - and to encourage a study of the Dark Age and the beginnings of that which was later to become an Empire and Commonwealth. The nation was groping for identity, for purpose, for a design. The important thing was to grasp a strand of the weave and follow it along to see where it was broken.

But an equally resounding gong would be sounded if we could initiate a gigantic dig at Cadbury Castle in Somerset. Although archaeologists and historians differed on almost every subject, there was one point at which they seemed to have achieved an odd unanimity. If Arthur ever had a stronghold and anything like a permanent fortification it would have been at Cadbury: if there had ever been anything remotely resembling a Camelot in any material sense, it would have been at Cadbury. Indeed, on the large scale maps it was even called "Camelot", and Leyland, the antiquary, had written that Arthur much resorted there.

A dig at Cadbury would be more of a possibility if I could move nearer to that area, and in due course I moved to Bristol. It

was sad that the younger group had now to be left behind, but they would soon grow up and go their many ways in any case. All my numerous correspondents could go with me easily enough.

As soon as I reached Bristol I began to look round for a group of youngsters interested in history. Almost immediately I found myself talking to a Mr. John Male, churchwarden of a church near to my new home, who was not only interested in history but had two sons who had inclinations that way. The following day Allan Male came to see me, obviously rather reluctantly but obeying father's instructions. After a short talk he departed, to return the following day with Alex Schlesinger. I know now this was a natural turn of events: any oddity uncovered by one of Alex's 'gang' would be reported to Alex himself within the hour.

Alex stayed a long time and I was conscious of being very carefully vetted. Apparently he saw the potential possibilities of a Society such as I described, and with a definite object, and very soon he returned for a second visit with recruits, books, maps and references. The new Bristol group issued an invitation to the Hampshire group to come over and pay us a visit here. Two of the girls accepted the invitation for a week-end and were shown all the sights and amenities of the city. A week or two later Donald Bryan - one of the original members of the Hampshire group - came over on his own and so a link was forged. Don even changed his apprenticeship in electrical engineering to an apprenticeship in Post Office electrical engineering because the Post Office ran regular courses for trainees here: in this way he was able to cross the border more freely. In due course a camping expedition to Cadbury was carried out at Easter so that both groups could get together, but shocking weather conditions and mistakes about borrowed tents made this only a very qualified success. This was not the fault of Mr. Karslake, at that time Proprietor of the Red Lion, who did everything he possibly could to help us. He also made it his business to collect all the information he could about local landowners and local legends and local sources of help for a future dig if it ever took place.

Bristol's attitude to new ideas was quite different from Winchester's, naturally. As an outward-looking port Bristol is accustomed to travellers and apparently eccentric suggestions. Without such things no port can hope to survive. However, the Director at the Museum - though wholly sympathetic and polite - pointed out that neither he nor any of his staff had the power to initiate any digs outside the walls of the city. He also warned us that there would be difficulties for at least six good reasons:

1. To dig Cadbury would cost too much in terms of money.
2. No Director would be found who would be willing to tackle such a terribly important dig.



3. Most archaeologists were already busy on emergency digs, and as no building was likely to take place on Cadbury within the foreseeable future it was unlikely that any archaeologist would even consider such a proposition.
4. Cadbury belonged to a private owner, as well as being under the eye of the Ministry of Works, and it was not likely that either would give permission for a dig.
5. There was no evidence to hand, in any case, that Cadbury had any interest other than as an Iron Age fort (or possibly earlier) and obviously that would not be my interest in promoting a dig.
6. The only real archaeologist I could properly apply to, on account of protocol, would be Dr. Raleigh Radford and it was unlikely he would abandon his current explorations at Glastonbury in order to embark on a colossal project that would obviously take several years to complete. (He might also have warned me that Dr. Raleigh Radford, on whom be peace! was highly allergic to answering letters. It would have saved us a lot of waiting and wondering.)

In spite of all these objections we started up a widespread correspondence about a possible dig at Cadbury and then, whenever transport was available, set off to explore the area for ourselves.

The vast, lush, pastoral Somerset plain now makes ideal cattle-farming country, but it does not require too much imagination to picture it as low, marshy, flooded fenland as it used to be when Glastonbury Tor was almost or even completely an island. Other, isolated hills may also have been tiny islets in those times. Cadbury Castle itself - huge and dominating and measuring 18 acres on top - was not only a natural place for settlement and fortification but also one that had obviously had its ramparts shored up, time and again, in times of crisis. From the top, on a clear day, one can get a view of five counties including all the hill ranges that spread from the middle distance into the far horizons. In the days before aeroplanes it must, as a refuge, have felt very cosily safe indeed.

There were, however, two features that struck us immediately on arrival. Safe one might be, but also considerably boxed up unless there were some private way out of the fort and across the marshes. If there were not a visible causeway there must surely be one that could still be uncovered if we set ourselves to look for it. (There was, of course, and many villagers offered to help us trace it.) The other feature was the striking lack of water.



Even allowing for the fact that people in olden times may not have needed so much water as we do now, and that quite a lot can be gathered in dew ponds, the one commodity that any fair-sized community is going to need is water.

On the way up the lane from South Cadbury there is a well - now wholly dried up with mud and rubbish - called King Arthur's well. It would be an arduous task to carry water from there to any part of the hill except its immediate vicinity, and anyhow it could never have been adequate for all demands.

On the far side of the hill, half way down the ramparts and therefore highly vulnerable, there is a spring which is known as Queen Anne's well. It too, seems wholly inadequate. Moreover, the present farmer, Mr. Montgomery, can pasture his cattle up there on the summit for weeks at a time without a water trough - this is because the grass is so long and lush. Also, there is a persistent tradition that the hill is 'hollow'; indeed, it was recorded that one year, when corn had been planted on the summit, and the tips of the grain became visible from below against the skyline, the same tips suddenly disappeared again from sight before the corn had been harvested, suggesting that there had been some kind of subsidence during the night or nights. Moreover, there are plenty of people who will tell you that they have heard 'singing' just beyond the peak point on the summit. If you aren't convinced by the theory of ghostly choirs you might consider the possibility of the 'singing' sound being the hint at underground water.

Anyhow, before very long Mr. Karslake had brought to our attention an elderly local man who said that one evening a good many years previously - he had been digging out a ferret from a rabbit burrow when the ground around him had subsided suddenly and he had found himself falling down a very deep hole. Having got himself out with difficulty, he had been sufficiently thoughtful of other people to have stayed to fill in the hole again with lumps of rock and rubble so that no one else should have an even more disastrous experience.

This local resident took us to the spot and we were discussing its possibilities as the site of an erstwhile spring when two men from the locality turned up to join us. They, when they were children, had often played in the cave that was on the slope of the hill there, just where we were standing, and they assured us that it had been a pretty vast cave in their day and they hoped we would dig it out again for them.

We had to point out that, until we had permission from the owners of the hill (Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery), and so long as the possibility of a dig could be considered, we were in no position to do any such thing. However, we promised that if we succeeded in getting some archaeologists interested in doing a dig we should most certainly draw their attention to this cave area.



These and many similar interesting features of the site were noted and considered and discussed. We may as well record now, that in spite of all the years of excavation that followed, in due course none of these points were ever considered by the archaeologists and they remain mysteries to this day. We recommend their investigation to the Mendip Cavers or some such group because archaeologists do not concern themselves with such matters.

Amongst the many other friends we made locally was a Mrs. Harfield, then in her late seventies, who lived near Wincanton. Some years previously when tramping over Cadbury in search of wild flora, and incidentally exercising her dog Caesar, she had picked up quite a number of odd bits of pottery which, ultimately, she had collected together and had actually persuaded Dr. Raleigh Radford to view. He, she told us, had been quite excited at the time because some of these sherds were of Eastern Mediterranean pottery of a superior type which might possibly be a hint that someone of more than ordinary wealth and culture had lived there on that hill-top. Indeed, Geoffrey Ashe had noted these finds and mentioned them in his book, 'King Arthur's Avalon'. We were delighted to find Mrs. Harfield and she not only joined the Society but also met us several times and came out with us on expeditions to find the causeway.

Having at last realised that writing letters would be of no avail Geoffrey contrived to visit Glastonbury at a moment when Dr. Radford was digging there. He even persuaded Dr. Radford to meet him later in London. Considering the significance of Mrs. Harfield's finds, and in the light of the growing public interest in Arthur, Dr. Radford agreed to go ahead and see if he could find others willing to co-operate in a dig. As a result of all this planning and conniving, a new group came into being which ultimately decided to call itself 'The Camelot Research Committee'. Its President was Sir Mortimer Wheeler and it was composed of representatives from the following bodies: The Society of Antiquaries: The Society for Medieval Archaeology: The Somerset Archaeological Society: The Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales: The Society for the promotion of Roman Studies: The University of Bristol: Somerset County Council: The Honourable Knights of the Round Table and .... yes; the Pendragon Society.

Young, ignorant and penniless the Society had nevertheless managed to bring something about that was of some importance. The other participants in the project realised this, but from that day to this, one major misunderstanding has always existed in the minds of all the academic people involved: We never were, we never intended to be an archaeological society, bound by all the disciplines, limitations and restricting ambitions of the archaeological societies. For us, the dig was intended to be a means to a greater end; for the others no greater end was in view.



The Camelot Research Committee assembled in Burlington House, Piccadilly, several times without making any spectacular progress. Archaeologists, I soon learnt, were as nervous of their reputations as Victorian mothers were of their daughters' virtue. In most jungles there is one arch predator against whom it is usually possible to persuade all the other smaller predators to unite: even if this predator is only the government, one can induce a kind of unanimity amongst the lesser fry. But in the academic jungle, there is no super predator and the one trap one must not fall into is the mistake of doing something - such as raising funds - which is not considered to be comme il faut. All kinds of methods for raising funds for Camelot were duly considered and hastily dismissed as unthinkable.

Finally it dawned on me that I was the only member of the Committee who could, in fact, set the ball rolling. I was the only non-professional person on the board, the only amateur. I was the only one with no reputation and therefore with nothing to lose. It was obviously up to me to take steps and produce some action, however unfavourably it might be received by the rest of the Committee.

So I sent first to one of our television companies in Bristol and asked to see one of the producers of feature or documentary films. When I was conducted to the appropriate office, I began my spiel and was completely taken aback when I discovered this man's reaction to my suggestion.

"Not for all the tea in China!" he told me. "I wouldn't touch an archaeologist with a bargepole. In the course of my work I have to deal with a great many difficult people: I've learnt to be patient and long-suffering. But archaeologists are just plain impossible, and what they have to offer isn't worth the effort involved. They've no manners, no common sense, no integrity. Their work may be of interest to other archaeologists but they take good care to see that it's of no interest to anyone else. Glorified schoolmasters is what they are, but they try to boost their prestige by acting like M.I.5. No thank you, I don't want to have anything to do with your dig."

I assumed that the poor man had had some unfortunate experience and was now prejudiced, so went to the office of our Western Daily Press and asked to see the features editor of the Evening Post. To my dismay, he responded in almost identical words as soon as I began to speak. However, this time I was not totally unprepared, and I argued.

"Think," I said, "of all the exciting things that may be uncovered when they get to work on that marvellous site."

"Yes," agreed the editor, "but whatever they uncovered, you can bet your boots they wouldn't allow you or me or any of the general public to know anything about it. No doubt they issue reports,



or give some sort of account to the people who employ them, but the most we'd hear, some day, would be that something or other was on view in some museum or other. No, I can't see anyone in this firm offering to help finance the affair: it just wouldn't be worth anyone's while."

I was puzzled. "But," I protested, "Cadbury is a huge open space. There are no walls or gates. It's not like some hole-and-corner trench dug behind a cathedral. There'll be thousands of visitors, and hundreds of diggers including ourselves, and I just don't see how anything could be kept secret."

(How little I knew! During the first exploratory dig, we had an unhappy experience which showed us just how easily, and with what satisfaction, finds could be concealed from the Press and public.)

My obvious sincerity impressed Mr. Walters. He finally promised to put forward my request to the Chairman and the rest of his Board at the next opportunity. The upshot was that the Western Daily Press very kindly opened the Camelot bank account by donating £100. Rosemary Sutcliff, author of so many historical books, persuaded Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton to add £10 and it became obvious that the fund was actually launched. Geoffrey Ashe persuaded the B.B.C. to contribute a further £200 and so, propelled into business by the Pendragons, the Camelot Research Committee felt able to go ahead. As soon as they had appointed Mr. Leslie Alcock, of the University of South Wales, to be Director of the dig, and it was agreed that Cadbury should be the training ground for the students of Cardiff University, that university contributed another £250. These were, in fact, rather slender sums on which to launch even an exploratory dig and in due course the other Societies involved came in with contributions, ranging from £25 to £75, and a dig at last became possible.

However, it took many months of careful negotiations conducted by Dr. Radford to persuade the owner that the hill would not be ruined, nor would the village of South Cadbury be rendered uninhabitable by sightseers. In the end, he and Mrs. Montgomery became splendid supporters and did everything possible to help.

During the months of waiting, Pendragons managed to get themselves into the air to take aerial photographs of Cadbury, Glastonbury Tor and all the intervening territory. We encouraged interest by inviting Mr. Montague-Smith, Editor of Debrett, (who had been among my correspondents for a long time) to come to Bristol to give a 'Talk on Arthur's lineage'. T.W.W. (now Harlech Television) kindly lent us a film they had made but we were beginning to realise that we, too, needed funds if we were really to make ourselves useful.

Our chief need was for transport. Few of us had cars and we couldn't continually sponge on our friends. We also badly needed



a duplicator of some sort. Finally, and this was really the core of the matter, if we could improve our communications and become more mobile, we were confident we could form other groups similar to our own, in other parts of the West Country and so encourage other young people to join in the quest; this would not only encourage an interest in Dark Age history, but would encourage an interest in archaeology generally, so that more volunteer diggers would become available, not only for Cadbury for for emergency digs all over the country.

I happened to go to London at that time and saw my son again. I learned from him that the Youth Service Development Council had a vast sum of money lying idle. A project such as ours, which provided both indoor and outdoor pursuits for the young, would surely qualify for a little bit of help. In order to approach them, however, my son told me that we should first have to get ourselves registered as one of Bristol's official Youth Clubs and then ask the Bristol Youth Committee to approach the Youth Service Development Council on our behalf.

On my return to Bristol I went to see Mr. Seath who was interested, helpful and full of good counsel. In order to become a registered Youth Club it seemed there were a good many qualifications we should have to conform to. There had, heretofore, been no generation gap nor anything resembling it: members of all ages blended happily together. Now, it seemed, we must fill in a form saying that we had so many members under 14 years of age, so many over 21 and so on. We had to have a regular meeting place, regular times of meeting, regular subscriptions and so on. The Pendragons reorganised themselves, at least on paper, and were duly registered. Then, with great care and concentration I sat down to write a letter which Mr. Seath would forward to the Council on our behalf.

I thought I made our intention crystal clear. We asked for a small grant that would enable us to acquire some sort of duplicator and some sort of minibus. We needed these in order to start and organise similar clubs in neighbouring counties: after all, similar clubs could find Arthurian projects to carry out all over the country. As Geoffrey Ashe had said in his book, no one except the devil is so renowned throughout the length and breadth of Britain as Arthur. There were Dark Age and Arthurian sites all over Britain that could well be investigated.

Mr. Seath not only forwarded our application, but he persuaded the Local Education Authority to back it. We waited in hope. It was like waiting, all over again, for the Rural Dean to reply about Otterbourne.

The outcome was exactly similar. "In order to be considered for a grant, the scheme is expected to be of national significance or, if a local project, to have potentially much wider significance in



that if successful, it could be repeated elsewhere. The proposal from the Pendragon Society has been considered in accordance with this criteria, and the general arrangements for grant under the Social and Physical Training Grant Regulations 1939. I am sorry, but it is not a project which the Council could consider for the award of a grant."

It just happened that a few weeks later, when she was being interviewed on television, Miss Jenny Lee agreed that the Youth Service Development Council had a large sum of money tucked away and that this had not been broached since no worthwhile project had yet been submitted to the committee that handled it.

Pendragons knew what they thought of this, but there was one hopeful aspect to be considered. The first dig at Cadbury was about to take place. If everyone worked very hard: if we showed ourselves to be dependable and amenable: if we could make some remarkable find, or make use of our local knowledge, there seemed to us just a chance that the national press, when reporting the excavation, might mention the Pendragon Society. In that case, we just might be able to write again and persuade the Youth Service Development Council to reconsider its decision.

No such opportunity ever came. Officially the dig was run by Cardiff University with the help of volunteers. As Pendragons, we did not exist: indeed, we were asked the following year not to send in our applications en bloc. The reason was obvious but - had the Director been aware of it - somewhat short-sighted: extra funds could well have been useful.

However, when the first exploratory dig was over, one of our members collected all the available publicity together - and there was a great deal of it - and photostated the lot. We forwarded all the papers to various motor companies and asked if they would give or lend us some form of transport for the following year's dig for the sake of the publicity. No car firm was in need of publicity, or perhaps the newspaper cuttings were not sufficiently impressive. It seemed that no one was interested in our efforts.

Finally, of course, two young mechanics in the group came up with an answer. One of them worked in his father's garage: his father had a wreck of an old Landrover lying about in a nearby field for some time. The boys put all their spare money into repairing this Landrover. They spent all their spare time - very frequently at night - in re-building it. By the time the next dig started we had this in which to carry our gear, and one of the boys had acquired a Jag that enabled us to ferry more people back and forth from Bristol into Somerset. If the Pendragon Society acquired a kind of panache of its own, the group deserved to be proud of it, because we were beholden to no one for it.

Amusingly, too, archaeologists were lecturing all over the

country on Dark Age topics, children in schools all over the country were carrying out Arthurian projects (we knew because so many of them wrote to us) and even the Bath Festival carried an Arthurian theme.

All thought of missionary journeys had to be abandoned and the hope of seeing other groups like our own in other places, but at least Arthur was no longer a dead duck.

One extra factor convinced me that the wind was blowing more strongly behind us. Generations of our children had been taught Greek and Roman mythologies, yet the young were avidly devouring pseudo-Celtic literature from Professor Tolkien. Sooner or later, I surmised, there would be a demand for the genuine article.

That demand was actually made in print five years later(1971) in one of the so-called Underground newspapers, International Times. It was included in one of three quite excellent articles (if one could read them under the also excellent graffiti) entitled, "Arthur", "The Mystery of the Holy Grail" and "The Enchanted Island" by Joy Farren.

One muses on the possibilities of Local Education Authorities reading International Times, or taking much notice of what it says if they do.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE ADVENTURE OF GETTING TRAPPED IN AN IVORY CASTLE

As the end of the Otterbourne adventure marked the end of our childhood and Arcadian phase, so the first dig at Cadbury marked the beginning of our National Service: there were times when it felt very much like square-bashing.

Summer after summer, for five, six and even seven weeks at a time, people came from all over the world to take part in this dig, or at least to visit it.

Most Pendragons had been previously on small digs in various cities and they had been doing a considerable amount of reading and studying in order to be at least reasonably intelligent about what was going on. What went on, archaeologically speaking, was not too puzzling: it was what went on on other levels that we found so constantly baffling.

Before any dig at all started, there was one factor that seemed obvious to all of us. Cadbury is away out in the blue, far from any form of public transport. There were no hostels or lodging houses within miles. There was, of course, plenty of room for camping and we soon located the possible sites where wood and water would be readily available. Enthusiastic sympathisers began to organise and collect all the necessary labour that would be needed - cooks, bottle-washers, First Aid posts etc., - and we visited as many homes as we could in the area with a view to making friends, interesting local people in the dig and trying to reassure them when they felt that their privacy or their properties were going to be invaded. When I went to London for the next Camelot Committee meeting, I hoped the Director of the dig would be pleased to find that he had so many willing volunteers ready to take the menial tasks off his shoulders.

Camp? I found Mr. Alcock regarding me with great disfavour. "Camps," he said, "were quite out of the question. No one could possibly work on a dig all day and then cook and wash at night." I was about to explain that Pendragons were prepared to staff a camp so that this kind of labour would not be involved, but the need did not arise. It seemed that arrangements had already been made for the whole outfit to be housed at Chilton Cantelo, a boarding school situated about seven miles from Cadbury, and that everyone would be ferried back and forth each day by coach.



(Three years later, when this arrangement had proved to be expensive, and for many reasons inconvenient for school and dig authorities alike, a camp was actually built at the foot of Cadbury. The staffing difficulties were considerable and expenses formidable, but by then we were seasoned Servicemen and had learnt never to volunteer.)

The first exploratory dig was a small one. Three trenches were opened, surrounded by chestnut fencing and supervised by students under the overall direction of Leslie Alcock. It lasted, if I remember rightly, three weeks. Volunteers paid £6 per week for their board and lodging and numbered about 40-50 per week.

Now Cadbury stands high. One is exposed to the elements up there. On a windy day one is nearly blown off the summit: on a hot day it feels like a frying pan. The Director had provided us with a ridge tent in which to take shelter if the weather became too inclement to work. When we were all crowded into it, and especially when visitors had come to see the dig, such a small tent was sadly overcrowded. It was obvious that we were going to have a very much bigger dig next year, and probably a great many more visitors, and the least we should need would be a marquee. Yet, when I mentioned the word at the Camelot Research Committee meeting which took place during the following winter, again I found Leslie Alcock regarding me with great disfavour.

A marquee? What for? When I began to stammer with surprise, he suggested that if we really imagined we needed a marquee it would be a splendid idea if the Pendragons would supply one. This would, indeed have been a splendid idea that we should have leapt at, if we'd had more than five pounds in the bank: it was all we could do to pay for our lodgings and petrol.

However, when the Director actually bought a marquee for £93 we realised that he, poor man, was struggling to understand us, just as we were struggling to understand him. To show that we appreciated his gesture, and in the cause of good Public Relations, we undertook to sell soft drinks to the visitors in this same marquee. Diggers brought a mid-day packed lunch and drinks for themselves from their lodgings, but there was not even water for visitors to drink, so, in addition to the soft drinks we also supplied containers and filled them with water which we renewed each day. We also converted some of our aerial photographs into postcards and we hoped to be able to contribute at least some of the profits towards the dig.

Failure to do this led to more misunderstandings. Since contributions coming in to the Camelot Research Committee were now being added into thousands instead of into hundreds of pounds, Mr. Alcock announced that he would be paying all his volunteers 10/- a day for their labours which would help towards paying their expenses. (Lodgings at the school had already risen to £7 per week.) This, of



course, was a relief to all: we were even surprised until we learnt that on many digs in other parts of the country, volunteers were sometimes paid more.

It meant that our members who were accepted for the dig, would not be too much out of pocket. Helpers in the marquee, of course, would receive no such payment, so it was up to us to pay them equally 10/- per day, since they too were giving up all or part of their holidays to help make the dig a success. To increase our profits we also decided to sell some Celtic-type jewellery which was cheap enough for any visitor who wanted to buy a souvenir. The Camelot Committee also decided to print post cards and we agreed to sell these for them as well. They also laid on guides who would conduct visitors round the site and we introduced a Visitors' Book which, in the event, was signed by all kinds of people from all over the world. This idea, too, was adopted by the Camelot Committee and proved helpful and illuminating.

Unfortunately, by the end of the first year's proper dig, we found that profits for our Pendragon sales were completely swallowed up by expenses. The cost of printing post cards, transporting innumerable crates of bottles up the hill in the Landrover, ferrying helpers back and forth from Bristol every week-end and endless other expenses which we seemed to incur as we went along, and finally paying our helpers 10/- per day for their industry, left us at the end of the dig with just £8 in hand. This was hardly handsome enough to be worth donating to the Camelot Committee: it would just enable us to print more cards for the following year.

It was disappointing but we had to console ourselves with the thought that we had at least contributed something towards good Public Relations and about 20 of our members had taken part in the dig, apart from those working in the marquee. We knew, however, that more had been expected of us financially.

It was a memorable season. The press were much in evidence and seemed quite happy though they had hoped for something more spectacular than actually occurred. Film makers were constantly round us, television cameras and crews jostled each other on the site, and were constantly filming the Director and the diggers in trenches. We had, for that season, all the good will of the public and the mass media behind us. We all looked forward to the next season.

Dismay arrived a few weeks before the next dig opened when we were informed that Sir Mortimer Wheeler, without warning to anyone so far as I could discover, had sold exclusive rights of all publicity to the Sunday Observer for £1,000. We learnt of this when all those taking part in the dig were asked to fill in a form undertaking that they would not take photographs or write anything that was intended for sale to the Press. When we reached Cadbury we found the atmosphere greatly changed. Huts had proliferated on the summit which were being used for all kinds of administrative work,



the army had flung field telephones in all directions, the staff had been increased, the whole affair had become much more of a military operation than a friendly dig. What distressed us most of all was the banishment from the site of all members of the Press.

At the earliest opportunity I went back to Bristol and called immediately at the offices of the Western Daily Press. I was not surprised that I was met with open hostility.

"No, I don't want to see you: I don't want to have anything more to do with you. I knew how it would be. We're going to report the Observer to the Press Council but whatever comes of this we'll never again have anything to do with archaeologists: they've got no morals whatsoever. Read the article I've written in to-day's Post and you'll see what I have to say about it, but don't come and talk to me now."

I left the office without saying anything because there was nothing I could say. I had made promises I couldn't fulfill. His disgust was completely justified. I could only regret my own gullibility. I bought a copy of The Evening Post and read the article. It compared Leslie Alcock to Lancelot and quoted the Tennysonian lines: "His honour rooted in dishonour stood." This seemed hard because, so far as I knew, Leslie had known nothing whatever about the new arrangement, but as it had been made by the President of the Camelot Committee, he had been forced to go along with it.

The Observer, realising the hornets nest they had stirred up, hastily withdrew their claims and it was generally agreed that the Observer reporter should be given only first rights of publication each Sunday and that the rest of the Press should be free to publish what they chose on Monday or thereafter.

But the damage had been done. The Press cleared off and left us. Weeks went by without the dig getting any publicity. Visitors - who had hitherto arrived in droves - thinned down to a trickle. Since they had always been generous in contributing small sums to the gift box we kept in the marquee, revenue went down to vanishing point.

However, Security was now Top Priority. Finds from the various trenches had always been swept off to the washing hut and from thence into the 'Finds Hut'. This had always been practically Out-of-Bounds to everyone, but it now became a veritable Ark of the Covenant. The public were shepherd round the chestnut palings and permitted to peer into empty trenches from a distance, and guides did their best to create interest out of scanty material, but what small bit of Welcome Mat had been visible previously, was still more hairless and reduced.

Indeed, the hush-hush element cast a blight on the marquee. One innocent Pendragon, whose firm had kindly donated



several thousand cardboard cups to the marquee, was bawled off the site without so much as a peradventure because he took a snapshot of someone drinking out of one of the said cups. The neurosis became such that we lost interest in the proceedings and for the last season we even had difficulty in persuading one or two diggers to take part in order to keep us in touch with events, and no one at all would volunteer for the marquee. The relief proved to be mutual.

From the point of view of the academics the dig was a success, since they found evidence of occupation of the hilltop stretching over several thousand years. This was just as well, since it had cost thousands of pounds and much hard work on the part of all concerned. From the view of the Camelot Research Committee it was a success since the Director was able to say that he had uncovered evidence of the re-fortification of the ramparts in post-Roman and pre-Saxon times, which meant it had been occupied during the Dark Age period. Better still, they had found evidence of a large timber-built hall right on the summit, the kind of hall that would have been occupied by some chieftain of considerable standing at that time - "an Arthur-type figure".

Cardiff University was more than adequately served, since its students had unrivalled opportunities for learning and the university itself got world-wide publicity. It was worthwhile too, from the Pendragon point of view, but we will come to that later.

It was while public interest in the Camelot dig was at its height that we were visited unexpectedly by two charming people from the B.B.C. They were Bruce Parson, a Canadian freelance documentary film-maker, and his assistant, Dorothy Snoxell. They had already seen Geoffrey Ashe in London and Leslie Alcock in Cardiff and other interested parties.

Bruce was making a film about Arthur and had discovered - as everyone else had been discovering for some time - that it is extremely difficult to make interesting films about Arthur. It is easy enough to take pictures of innumerable castles, ruins, hilltops, sites and book illustrations, not to mention statues and museum exhibits, but none of these show any life or activity and are therefore extremely dull.

We offered to produce some action for the film. For instance, we had sometimes discussed among ourselves some of the problems of communications in post-Roman times, and we had asked ourselves whether or not the Britons signalled from hill to hill by beacon as was done in the Armada days later on. Geoffrey had already theorised that a beacon message, shown on Cadbury could be passed on to Glastonbury Tor, from thence to Brent Knoll (which was also, by tradition linked to Arthur's name) and from Brent Knoll across the Severn to Dinas Powys. We told our visitors that if they would like us to light beacons for them to film we would be delighted to try.



Bruce thought this a splendid idea. It seemed that Geoffrey had already outlined another suggestion. He had written a short dramatic episode which was an imaginative effort to picture an initiation ceremony taking place in Merlin's Cave down at Tintagel in Cornwall. This would depict a knight arriving by boat to meet a small group of people awaiting him in the cave. These would include two Grail Maidens, carrying symbols of their esoteric cult, and a Grail Master who would ask certain questions of the petitioning knight. If the answers were correctly given, the knight would be initiated into the group and the necessary ceremony performed.

Arrangements were made for a party of Pendragons and a few professional actors to travel down to Tintagel. Filming was to be done over the Easter weekend. On arrival there, we found Geoffrey, Bruce, Dorothy and the camera crew already there. A small hotel had been specially opened for us, out of season and the kindness of the proprietor's heart, and for the time we were there we were royally fed: it was altogether a happy and enjoyable weekend.

There were, naturally, many difficulties. Merlin's Cave is more of a tunnel than a cave — the sea comes in at both entrances. We had to make sure we were not cut off by the tide. The sea proved rough, the knight who was to arrive by boat had a raging cold and got well soaked while trying to simulate his arrival from the opposite coast. Indeed, several times we thought he was going to be carried out to sea and lost to us for good. It was a pity that the only suitable boat available was an inflatable rubber dinghy with a broad black plimsol line which rather marred its appearance as a coracle but, as Geoffrey said, we were not trying to enact the real thing, we were merely trying to demonstrate what it might have been like.

It was all good fun and a local fisherman who was enlisted to advise us about tides and other matters, and who started by believing that we were all mad, ended by enjoying himself as much as anyone.

After our return to Bristol, Bruce, Dorothy and the camera crew departed to Wales for several days and returned to tell us happily that they now had an additional seven cans of film safely in their luggage. They had gone to extraordinary lengths to verify their facts and locations and had put an immense amount of research into their efforts.

The next episode was to be the beacon-lighting, and we began to realise that we should have to modify the original plan. We had not enough members available to light beacons simultaneously on all four sites: nor had we time to gain permission from site owners and others. However, we could light a beacon on Cadbury, with the permission of Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery, and we could have a small group on Glastonbury Tor who would acknowledge the beacon signal by firing off Verrey Lights. A third party on Brent Knoll would report a sighting from Glastonbury if they spotted the Verrey Lights.



Came the big day. Cars and minibus travelled out to Cadbury. The weather was again cold and threatening but we were warm enough collecting wood and kindling. In spite of the chill weather Mrs. Harfield joined us, and her dog Caesar, and were with us when we fired the beacon.

By the time darkness fell and it was time to set the wood alight, the wind had risen somewhat and it was also raining. Too, Glastonbury was wrapped in mist. There was also another hazard which we had overlooked: the whole intervening valley was twinkling with lights from cars and homesteads. It was doubtful whether those on the Tor would be able to spot our beacon through the mist, and even more doubtful whether we would be able to recognise their answering flares. However, the whole operation was finally carried through and we all repaired to the pub at the foot of the hill to restore our circulations.

A week later an effort was made to light a genuine beacon on the top of Glastonbury Tor. Bruce and Dorothy had provided heavy logs which we struggled to manhandle to the top. The filming party was back at Cadbury but due to come over to film us at 6.30. p.m. At 10.p.m. we had made contact only to learn that they were still recording at Cadbury and having some difficulty on account of the wind. An hour later we were having difficulty in even standing up against that wind and we were wondering what would happen to the sparks from our bonfire if or when we ever lit it. At 11.p.m., when we could hardly hear each other shouting through the hurricane, we decided to abandon our posts and have a drink at The George in Glastonbury. Here we found some other BBC personnel who wanted to know why we had come down off the Tor when they were about to come up and film our beacon as soon as they had had some supper.

We told them to go and light the beacon themselves, if they could, and we returned to Bristol. We were sorry to have missed Bruce and Dorothy but no one could have recorded or filmed that night anyhow, and we knew they had plenty of material for their film already. We just looked forward to seeing the result on TV when it had all been processed.

What happened to Bruce's film we have no means of knowing. On the day of the showing we all assembled to watch, having alerted all our friends who, we knew, would be watching in their own homes. The programme started with a few children in a northern school doing a project on Arthur, and went on for half-an-hour showing endless scraps of museum material. There was little or nothing in it that even remotely resembled any of the research we had been doing over the last six years. In fact, there was little in it of interest to anyone. Just at the very end there was a flashing glimpse of a few people dashing away from a fire against a darkened skyline for no explained reason, and a crazy glimpse of our poor knight in his rubber dinghy on some unlikely shore.

"Oh, well," remarked one Pendragon member as he rose wearily from his seat, "I suppose it can be said that once again we were able to provide a little comic relief."

The upshot of this film was that we acquired one member in Sussex who joined us because she thought we looked like people who occasionally actually did something. The other thing was that, a few months later, when we found ourselves back on the Cadbury dig, we learned that this was again something which we might, just possibly, be able to live down one day but not until everyone else had extracted as much witticism and ridicule from it as they possibly could.

Oh well, we had enjoyed ourselves anyhow. Bruce went back to Canada and, when next heard of, was presenting a film about Arthur for a Canadian Educational Network. Maybe the Canadians got the benefit of all the research he had done.

From the Pendragon point of view, the Cadbury dig was worthwhile. It had stimulated interest in Arthur so much that many, many people were now studying the history of Dark Age Britain and re-reading the legends. We had made many new and charming friends and met many interesting people. We shall always remember with gratitude and affection all those many local residents at South Cadbury who were endlessly kind, helpful and hospitable, particularly the Whittle family who took over the Red Lion when Mr. Karslake left, and who worked tirelessly and unselfishly, summer after summer to help make the dig a success.

Some members had acquired a taste for archaeology and decided to keep it up as a hobby, forming a branch group of their own. We had learnt a lot of those lessons that are driven into you at Public School but which are missed by those who are educated at chummier places.

Most useful of all, it was the place where John Michell came to find us. Knights have a way of getting themselves shut up in ivory castles but in all the best stories they eventually make their escape.

We made ours and hastened off to learn more from John.



## CHAPTER 6

### INTERVAL

I have described some, but really only a few, of the delays, frustrations and ineptitudes that dogged us. Readers will say, "If you wanted help for the old church why didn't you write to some of the societies that donate money for the restoration of old churches?" We did, of course, and they were very kind and sympathetic, but no practical help was ever forthcoming.

Again, when we were planning models, maps, exhibitions and festivals we tried our luck with such people as handled the Gulbenkian Trust and the Nuffield Foundation and other similar though less well-known bodies. We never came within any of their terms of reference. If we had been offering to chop sticks for old people in reality, and not just metaphorically, no doubt we should have had an instant response: indeed, according to reports in the newspapers, the Youth Service Development Council did ultimately disgorge many thousands of pounds to people who were doing just that.

I was reminded often of the man I had once seen chatting on the old TV programme, "Tonight". What he said was: "The Western nations are like a herd of elephants. They tramp through the jungle waving their trunks and their tails from side to side. No one can halt them, nor deflect them. It's no good shouting because they can't hear anything above their own trumpeting."

This was rude, of course, but we all know there is more than some truth in it. The trumpeting of cars and jets and sirens makes us all block our ears, and we have been so conditioned to standard ways of thought for so long that new ideas seem quite meaningless. "Progress may have been all right once, but it went on too long...."

Digging a vast hole on the top of Cadbury proved to be a beautiful and kindly elephant trap. Summer after summer innumerable visitors tramped to the top of that hill and were forced, from sheer breathlessness, to stop and listen. If they saw little real evidence of archaeology, they were given long history lessons and lists of books to read. Best of all, on that summit with its great panoramic views, every visitor (and all the diggers likewise) had an opportunity to soak in the atmosphere of history.

The desperate need to stem the march to oblivion, to make warning noises heard above the trumpetings, to break up the established ways of thought and force people to think again, has created maelstroms of protest, and of course it has also created backlashes of fear from those who do not understand what is going on.

We can all understand military bands and tattoos. They make us feel good and secure with everything under control. We have long since ceased to question the purpose of them. The need to drown their resoundingly assured and reassuring noises has led to the crashing stereophonic cacophony of the Pop Beat Bands. Through sheer volume and repetition the public has been forced to recognise and actually take note of the opposition. Small but well-meaning groups like the Pendragons can be ignored, discredited and liquidated, but a quarter of a million young 'Hippies' cannot be so ignored, nor will discrediting effectively liquidate them. When the brass bands have been silenced, and when society has been forced to pause and question the rightness of its thinking, and when a sufficient number of people have agreed to sit down and 'consider their ways', the Pops and the Hippies will begin to subside because their purpose will have been accomplished.

Underneath all the tumult, except for those who are blind deaf and stupid, the pattern is beginning to show. ("All things may be cured save perversity in asses" wrote James Elroy Flecker.) The weave of those patterns, we can now see, goes back to the beginning of the century and further.

At that time, hard though it may now be to remember this, Britain had an Empire.

The most exciting and colourful part of that Empire was India (now India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.) That we did nothing but exploit that continent is one of the many lies that have been fed to our young people. India gave us many things: we gave India our young men from Oxbridge, Woolwich and Sandhurst and all the brains and energy they totalled between them. For the first time India's multitudinous tribes, castes, religions, rich rulers and perishing peasants were united under one flag and by one common language. The British waged incessant war against want, flood, disease, disaster and lassitude. Soldiers were trained to fight other troops and to protect women and children - contrary to Pakistani custom today. If India gave us much, we also gave India the best we had to give.

Small children travelled backwards and forwards with their families and if they did not exactly travel by covered waggon the difficulties and dangers were often just as acute. It required an immense amount of organisation in those days to transport families and all their belongings across the high seas by P. and O. or Ellerman Line, and when they took up residence many thousands of



miles from home, many were far from doctors, hospitals, schools or any of the amenities of civilization. If one lived in comfort and surrounded by servants, as one did in places like Lahore, Delhi and Calcutta, one had equally to keep up a tremendous standard of living, to be always at one's best, to remember that one was always - so to speak - a representative of the British Raj. Most of those who retired ultimately to Bournemouth and Cheltenham were understandably frail in body, having experienced endless hot summers in the Plains, bouts of amoebic dysentery, malaria and other similar complaints.

If the Judges, Commissioners, Army Officers and Engineers ruled India, men like Rudyard Kipling and E.M. Forster observed and learned about its peoples. Missionaries did their best to teach Indians Christianity and in due course, men and women began to bring back to Britain many of the religious, philosophical and artistic ideas they had imbibed from the East. The Theosophical Society did much to propagate these ideas in the West, and in the 1920's and 30's there were many groups in Britain studying yoga, transcendental meditation and magic. Bookshops full of Eastern teaching were by no means unusual or 'way out'. I know because I ran one of them.

It was in the nature of things that the Indian Empire builders were, by and large, members of the middle classes. Those who are now adopting and assimilating Eastern ways of thought are not, by and large, from the middle classes. Hitler's war sent them - as it sent everyone else - rushing for the barricades, and since then the middle classes have been busy fighting for survival. It is chiefly the semi-literate who are talking of transcendental meditation, peace and the inner life. In order to make it abundantly clear that they want nothing to do with the great Juggernaut that is western civilization, and which has twice within living memory done its best to destroy itself, they have to adopt way-out ways of clothing themselves, way-out ways of talking, and way-out means of shutting out from their own ears the blandishments and persuasions of conformity.

The most obvious and alarming example of the western Juggernaut in action is the Vietnam War. Most of us have forgotten, even if we ever knew, how the Juggernaut started, or exactly when. But it got under way with the usual brass bands, tattoos, pep talks, patriotic slogans and trappings of authority. For a long time, to protest against it was not only unpatriotic, it was cowardly, treacherous and disgraceful. Now that we have all been forced to pause and consider this war, we are all beginning to realise how horribly obscene it is. Yet the Juggernaut is not yet halted in spite of all the protests, killings and disruptions. The people who hate and despise the cocacola way of life most, are the young Americans but how much more can they do to change it?



Change is what everyone is looking for, and change for the better. Those who are politically minded are outraged by the sight of those who earn £30,000 a year when whole families have not so much as a roof over their heads. Those who realise that the Church has become merely a form of Social Service without any understanding of the Mysteries are trying in their own ways to recover some sense of Righteousness and the Love of God. Those groups, such as the Pendragons, which are neither political nor religious (and there are many of them) are striving to tread The Middle Way so that they can become the channels and links between those who have the visions and those who can bring those visions into physical manifestation.

At the time of writing - in Britain, and specifically in the West Country - it is round Glastonbury Tor that all the forces are gathering, both malefic and beatific. There is bound to be a struggle. Whether or not Glastonbury was ever the oldest religious centre in Britain, it is obviously going to be the centre of the religious revival sponsored by the young. Whether or not Arthur was ever buried at Glastonbury it is most certainly the place where the spirit of the Once and Future King is already a living and fighting entity.

Local forces, cemented into established ways of thought, are desperately resisting the influx of the new ideas, and the new ideas - in all the war-like panoply of hippy gear (and with, sometimes, the plundering propensities of an army in war-time) - are outraging and devastating the conformity which - since the dissolution of the Abbey - has gradually settled into unctious respectability. Battle is joined, and the worst elements in both parties will be wrestling there for some time to come.

But this is exactly what we should be looking for and expecting. Glastonbury's most treasured legend is that Joseph of Arimathea came to Glastonbury, after the crucifixion, and settled there at the invitation of King Arviragus who gave him twelve hides of land on which he and his refugee companions could build their homes and their wattle church. According to the legend Joseph planted his staff in the ground, and it took root and blossomed, and it blossoms every winter between Christmas Day and Twelfth Night. The proof of this tale is that a thorn tree - of a type which grows in the Middle East - blossoms at Glastonbury every Christmastide and a blossom is cut annually and sent to the Queen Mother.

Now, this is a significant legend. In our own hedgerows, the blackthorn is the first blossom we see in the late winter, and it heralds the approach of spring. Traditionally, it is the symbol of Aquarius, that era into which we are said to be entering now, and its purpose in life is to evolve into the Rose. The thorn that is thrusting itself into the side of Glastonbury now, is a thorn indeed, and its roots stretch back into the days of the Empire when the thoughts and philosophies of the East were introduced into this country.



If Joseph (or someone of similar type) brought the first Christian teaching to Glastonbury and founded the first Christian Church there, the need for historical evidence is irrelevant: it is without peradventure, the thought-pattern imprinted on the area: those who are trying to restore the spiritual values there are merely carrying out the intentions of the Designer. There are those who do not think the Chalice Well is a suitable place to bathe in, but Holy Wells have been bathed in before now. The mass media may make snide jokes about fertility rites (not understanding the real purpose of fertility rites); they forget that a healthy body is the evidence of a healthy mind, and one of the most important of all the Arthurian legends is the one about the Maimed King.

This king could only be healed and his Waste Land restored to prosperity if the Questing Knight remembered to ask the right and vital question: "Whom does the Grail Serve?"

Well, whom does the Grail serve?

This is not a book of answers. It was never the intention of the Society that anyone should be taught. Technology can be taught and because so much of our present day civilization is based on technology, instruction has become the norm and education has been thrown out of the window. We have tried, so far as possible, to see that the Pendragon project remains educational and everyone finds answers for themselves.

We have all been conditioned to believe that work is what a person does for gain at certain specified hours. Anyone who is not gainfully employed for at least eleven months of every year is regarded as a 'drop-out', a 'parasite' or a 'hippy'. If that is so, then Jesus was a drop-out and a hippy from the age of 30, if not earlier. One wonders if the Romans, who liked short back and sides, made snide remarks about His hair. One can imagine one Roman remarking to another: "A spell of discipline with the Legions wouldn't hurt that fellow. I remember when I was serving in Gaul..."

Present problems of unemployment and redundancies are forcing society to consider the plight of the fellow who is going to have more leisure on his hands without knowing what to do with it. It was a long time (and then it was too late) before the Romans got round to thinking about the saying: "Consider the lilies of the field...."

Perhaps one of the most interesting developments of the present scene is the burgeoning of little groups and communes both in urban and rural areas. They are not lilies of the fields inasmuch as they labour sufficiently on piece work to pay for their simple needs. A great many seem to have found refuge in the hills and mountains of Wales, like their ancestors before them in their retreat before the Saxons. Escape from 'the rat race' enables them to enjoy a certain amount of free time and a great



many of them are doing the kind of research work that has been keeping the Pendragons occupied for the past ten years or more.

All those I have met have been vegetarians; they abhor modern agricultural methods and believe in organic farming. Even farmers in 'straight' society are beginning to understand that the land and the animal kingdom cannot be exploited indefinitely. Society has been persuaded to consider the results of pollution; it is slowly being persuaded to consider other aspects of daily life as well.

Indeed, life is becoming so complicated and difficult, that thought can hardly be avoided. We have thousands of graduates who are redundant almost before they leave the Universities, because we have no need for the kind of learning they have been given. We have graduates from Art Schools who must either wash-up in cafes, or go and teach children the Art they cannot use themselves. We have so many trained mechanics that we have no use for their skills. The Social Services are over-loaded and the victims are demoralised.

There are hospitals that are fully equipped with the very latest appliances, the most dedicated doctors and hundreds of beds. The fact that the beds are empty is due to the fact that there is a shortage of nurses and/or probably no cleaners are available. Someone just overlooked the fact that the hospital is miles out of town, cleaners are mostly part-time workers, and part-time workers can get plenty of work in local offices and see no need to travel daily to work. No one thought of having any dormitory accommodation for cleaning staff.

We all know that roofs, plumbing, television sets, gas and electrical appliances need constant servicing. We know that we have plumbers, builders, and technicians available in times of emergency. We all know how impossible it is to get help in times of emergency because somewhere in between, there is a young person of limited intelligence, manning a telephone or presiding at a counter, who is totally incapable of relaying an intelligent message. Nothing in his or her education has taught this young thing to reason why a job should require the use of a ladder or another job will require someone young and active rather than an older man with more experience. In any case the young thing is not interested either in job or customer; only the pay-packet is of interest.

So we are told that 45% of all our patients awaiting hospital beds are mental cases. If nervous exhaustion does not first chase us all into the psychiatric wards, the revolutionaries will move in to exploit our frustrations.

I well remember, just before the Second World War, a letter that appeared in the Daily Telegraph. There had been some threat of a crippling strike and this correspondent wrote in to remark:



"Isn't it odd that in a Christian Society, such as this is supposed to be, everyone keeps on asking for more and more, when Jesus and his Disciples were prepared to demonstrate, all along the line, that the way to salvation lies in needing less and less?"

## CHAPTER 7

### THE ADVENTURE OF THE FIRST BLOSSOM

Ever since our Hampshire days we had been in touch with groups somewhat similar to our own. On one occasion we had joined up with the Ley Hunters and made a combined trip to Glastonbury from Winchester. At that time, the Pendragons were so very young and ignorant that we did not grasp what they were so busy about. Because we did not understand, we were slightly sceptical about the importance of leys, but we read Alfred Watkins' book, 'The Old Straight Track' and this was a good enough foundation.

For a time we lost sight of the Ley Hunters, but their duplicated magazine began to circulate again, just when we were trying to start a fairly regular production of a similar type ourselves.

John Michell came to find us at Glastonbury because we had aerial photographs which he thought would be useful to him in his researches. He was, at that time, about to publish his first book, 'The Flying Saucer Vision'. He soon became a friend, just as he was a friend of the Ley Hunters, and as he was of many, many other young people in London, and he wrote an article for our magazine which made the ley idea a bit clearer for all our members, especially those living abroad.

"To men of the 18th century such as Dr. Stukeley, the great antiquarian and Arch Druid, Britain was the Holy Land, the place of vision containing the vessel of enlightenment, the Holy Grail. As Blake said: 'All things begin and end in Albion's Ancient Druid Rocky Shore.' Somewhere enfolded in the landscape itself lay the key to mysteries known in the past and destined to be revealed in the future. Stukeley was the first to see the ancient monuments of Britain not only individually, but as part of a great pattern, truly meaningful only when viewed panoramically as a whole. Etched into the very face of the country could be found a system of signs and symbols revealing to its initiates the true spirit of the past and the path to the future.

"Those who rely on the arbitrary values of modern



science with its disregard for the purpose of knowledge and of true wisdom have naturally rejected the belief that a great tradition has been preserved for our use today, or that any native alchemical system ever existed of the sort that has been preserved more openly in the East. And it has been fashionable to belittle its last guardians the Druids, who inherited their knowledge of the holy places and centres and lines of power in the country from their predecessors, the great native astronomers, who divided the country according to the laws of geomancy and laid out instruments of precision such as the wonderful stone computer, Stonehenge.

"The recent revelations by Hawkins and Hoyle of the true meaning and barely conceivable delicacy of this monument should now have opened our eyes to something of the mystery contained within the landscape, the secrets towards which the scholars of the 18th century were groping before the rise of myopic sciences such as that of modern archaeology. Recently several clues have come to light. The first is the discovery of the British dragon lines, called by the Chinese 'Lung Mei'.

"The Chinese knew the dragon as a bright light moving across the night sky, the same phenomenon as gives rise to the legend of the flying saucers today. They regarded the dragon as a benevolent power, the spirit of life, the source of all good. The Lung Mei, the lines along which it was seen to move, were mapped out and so revered that the land along their courses was reserved for the exclusive use of the Imperial Family. Even at the beginning of this century no one else might live or be buried along these lines.

"The charting of the sites in Britain connected with the dragon legend, the hills or mounds said to be the place of a killing or of the appearance of a dragon, has revealed that at least three Lung Mei run across the face of this country, linking up most of those sites with three straight lines. One such line runs from Farne Island, off the tip of Northumberland and passes just east of Taunton. The other, intersecting it at Longwiton in Northumberland, runs from east of Linton in Roxburghshire to St. Osyth's in Essex, leaving England at Pegwell Bay, the scene of Dycé's great visionary picture in the Tate.

"A third, the most clearly identifiable of these lines, passes over Glastonbury Tor on its way from St. Michael's

Mount in Cornwall to the coast on the border of Norfolk and Suffolk. The cult of the dragon that flourished along that line is remembered in the numerous St. Michael and St. George dedications of the churches along its route, built on the high places which marked its route, for those saints were chosen by the Christian Church to confirm the suppression of the dragon cult which preceded it. North Brentor, Burrow Bridge Mump, the Tor and Silbury Hill are some of the siting points on its way, and its direction can be checked at certain centres of alignment such as the aptly named Eye in Suffolk where the relative positions of mound, church and abbey point its course.

"Glastonbury, the prime centre of the cult of the dragon and of the pre-Christian astronomical religion as well as, by an adaptation of its legend, of the Christian Church itself, was the place from which the line was chiefly assessed. Like the great hill outside Peking from which every year the Emperor renewed the sacred alignments, the Tor may have been surrounded by an astronomical garden, a feature which one might see in the Zodiacal Giants, first defined on paper by Mrs. Maltwood and refined by the great contemporary geomancer, Ken Knight. The dragon line itself follows exactly the alignment of the ridge of the Tor. Two stone pillars erected, one on the summit and one on the lower peak towards the western end of the ridge and just visible from the base of the present tower, gave the line of the great dragon of southern England.

"Its rediscovery and our progress towards fuller knowledge of its implications, mark a stage towards the ending of the Enchantment of Britain, the achievement of the Grail, the re-invocation of King Arthur, the sleeping king who will awaken to restore the true spirit of Britain."

This article combined with others from the Ley Hunter magazine, and broadening interests generally, set us off on a course of readings and discussions about henges and megalithic stones. Geoffrey pointed out that, strictly speaking, these did not come into our terms of reference, and, if we wanted to widen our projects to cover such interests, we must amend our official aims. So, at the next Annual General Meeting we added to our original intention: "To stimulate interest in King Arthur and investigate the historical and archaeological background of the Matter of Britain," a second clause which was "To study the significance, past and present, of the Arthurian Legends."

Just as the Ley Hunters were bordering on the Arthurian



fringes so also another newly-formed Society was beginning to border on Arthurian country. This was The Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation. They published a book about Glastonbury and the surrounding countryside which included a study of the legend of Perceval. This same publication included a study of megalithic monuments written by Professor Thom, so their interests also bordered on those of the Ley Hunters. It seemed that the three Societies were forming a triangular base and since so many of the standing stones, cairns, circles and other ancient monuments on our island were either named after Arthur or associated with him, Arthur could almost be said to be the linking clue word that joined us.

Geoffrey also wrote another book, 'Camelot and the Vision of Albion' (Heinneman) in which he wrote:

"It was the giant Albion who became identified with the British people. In 1809 the poet, William Blake wrote: 'The Giant Albion was Patriarch of the Atlantic; he is the Atlas of the Greeks, one of those the Greeks called Titans. The stories of Arthur are the acts of Albion, applied to a Prince of the fifth century.'

"Before concentrating our attention on Blake, however, we must consider other legends such as the tale of Atlantis. This could, as some present day archaeologists are arguing, have been an island in the Mediterranean called Thera which almost disappeared when Minoan Crete was overwhelmed by some sort of cataclysm. Yet Plato, who first publicised the legend of Atlantis, did not give the impression that he was writing about Crete.

"No argument will remove the fact that Plato, who knew perfectly well where Crete was, places Atlantis in the ocean outside Gibraltar. He may have got the direction wrong, but the difference between 'inside' and 'outside' is surely fundamental. Furthermore, it is outside and not inside that we find the sort of legends we need as source material.... These considerations point to Britain rather than Crete.... Both islands can be seen as parts of one thing, a common source of motifs trickling down from the second millenium B.C. To a certain extent also, Crete and Britain were extremities of a network of cultures which was none other than the Titan world.

"The linkage is chiefly through the megalithic societies that can be traced from the central Mediterranean to the British Isles, and shaded into the Bronze Age at Stonehenge....

"The spell of Arthur, like the spell of Atlantis, is the assurance of a long-lost glory that is not really lost and can revive.

"The complete legendary Arthur was formed out of materials prior to his actual lifetime and to Christianity - some of them, perhaps, prior to the Celts' advent in Britain. The original lords of the golden age were Cronus's Titans. Themes of their world, of which Britain was sketchily a part, descended on Arthur's shoulders... When Geoffrey of Monmouth passed them on to the romancers, he, (Arthur) was a composite thousands of years deep. Stonehenge had got into his legend and so, probably, had some of the smaller monuments and natural features which bear his name now...

i "So far as Arthur's return can have a precise meaning, I would say that it is happening now; not so much because of the general revival of interest, making him single (if complex) instead of multiple. Until recently, Arthurian literature was a special study; Britain's post-Roman history was another; dark age archaeology was another; and so forth. The assorted specialists hardly ever met or conversed. But lately they have begun doing so. The Cadbury project has played its part in this new intercommunication, which remains valid, whatever conclusions may be drawn as to Arthur's presence there..... In the 1950's there was still an 'Arthur of romance', and an 'Arthur of Welsh legend', and an 'Arthur of poetry', and a cloudy historical Arthur - several wildly diverse figures whom hardly anybody, apart from a few suspect amateurs, cared much about fitting together. The Arthur of the 1970's approaches his fifteenth centenary as one person, an actual man enlarged into a perennial symbol."

A little later in his book, Geoffrey elaborated on the work of the poet Blake, and particularly on his vision of 'Jerusalem' Blake's version of the British myth.

"He conceived it as a prophecy in the Hebrew manner. In fact it is not only prophetic but apocalyptic, going beyond the prophetic style of the Old Testament. Blake sees this corrupt world coming to an end in a total transfiguration....

"The result is a work of towering extraordinariness... 'Jerusalem' is orientated towards the final redemption... The story of the fall is repeated, however, with a more human and more British bias than hitherto... Blake produces startling effects by telescoping his images. In a single passage he draws together the



collapse of craftsmanship under the impact of machines, the growth of dehumanised factories with a preview of mass production.... Throughout the horrors, hints of a faithful remnant persist. Besides the Celts, there is an unexplained Someone hidden in Albion's forests who will found a future religion...

"A nation formed by cultural fusion during the dark ages...The age of 'Bacon, Newton, Locke' brings what Blake optimistically regards as the final self-revelation and self-refutation, the darkest hour before dawn. If this dismal philosophy is taking hold says Los,

*'Is it not the Signal of the Morning  
which was told us in the Beginning?'"*

While we were still pondering on the vision of a culture that spread from Crete to Britain a report in The Times for Tuesday October 27th 1970, suggested that we should really be visualising a culture that spread from Britain to Crete:

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

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

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

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

"The chief conclusion that Dr. Renfrew draws is that there should be a reappraisal of the influence of the Egyptian and Aegean cultures on those of Europe. This arises because archaeological samples from Egypt are usually dated according to the early Egyptian calendar

which is believed to be accurate back to the nineteenth century B.C. and may even be accurate up to 3,000 B.C.

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

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

Having thrown all the usually accepted relationships between Egyptian and Aegean cultures and those of Europe into the melting pot, the report continues:

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

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

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

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

All of which suggests that last time the world knew a Golden



Age, high noon was experienced in Britain. Although evidence of a high and universal culture that existed all over the world has recently been forthcoming from many directions, we were not surprised when John Michell's next book, which was all about leys and centres of power, was called 'The View Over Atlantis' and was concerned chiefly with evidence in Britain. It also carried a great deal of interesting material about mathematical and geometrical measurements in comparison with the pyramids, Stonehenge and many of our great ecclesiastical buildings such as Glastonbury Abbey. To help us understand these measurements better and their significance generally, Mr. Keith Critchlow (Architect, Lecturer and Executive Member of the Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation) came to Bristol to give us a Talk on "Signs and Symbols". It is possible, he explained to us, that there was extensive mathematical activity in the world over a long period; that what was once known as oral tradition was, finally, laid out in a three-dimensional way so that students might understand rules governing universal phenomena, and that this knowledge should not be lost. (In the days of ancient Rome, we learned, the death penalty was imposed on anyone giving away the secret meaning of the zero.) The safest and most permanent way of perpetuating important knowledge, rather than writing it down, was to build it into great stone structures. To study one of these structures is to study a vast, visual teaching aid.

A few months later, the Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation helped us again by sending Miss Elizabeth Leader and Mr. Andrew Davidson to explain to us the Zodiacal Giants that are visible around Glastonbury Tor if one knows how to look for them. On this occasion a group of visitors arrived from the Glastonbury area and stayed to chat with us after the lectures ended.

They called themselves the Worthy Farmers because they were staying at Worthy Farm in the village of Pilton which is not far from Shepton Mallet in Somerset. The farm is situated on the side of a valley, and in the centre of this valley they had located a 'blind spring' - one of those centres of power that are frequently found under our ancient cathedrals and which are fully explained in a book called, 'Patterns of the Past' by Guy Underwood, published by Pitman. The valley lies right along the ley described by John Michell in his article, just quoted, and crosses over Glastonbury Tor. Indeed, from Worthy Farm - as we discovered when we later visited our new friends - one gets a much finer and more impressive view of the Tor than any other; far more remarkable than the one from Cadbury.

Andrew Kerr, previously a journalist and one of those who did all the necessary research when Randolph Churchill was writing a biography of his father, was the leader of the party. He was supported by Arabella Churchill, Sir Winston's grand-daughter, and a group of enthusiasts who had, for the most part, been living at the farm for a year or more. Appalled by the commercialism of



the age, and particularly by those features which were all too evident at every Pop Festival, they had decided to organise a Pop Festival that was different.

Their intention was to build a pyramid one-tenth the size of the pyramid of Cheops, right over the blind spring in the valley. It was also their intention to organise a Pop Festival that would be entirely free to all-comers: there would be no fences, gates or entrance fees. No meat would be sold or eaten on the site. They would try to incorporate some of the features of the old Medieval fairs, and they would hold their festival at the time of the mid-summer solstice. Basically, the whole affair was religiously motivated and Andrew was kind enough to suggest that the Pendragon Society should be present and should disperse some of its literature.

An enormous amount of thought, care, organisation and Public Relations work was put into this splendid venture. The weather was quite shocking for several weeks before the Festival was due to take place, and those who arrived early to help in the preparations had to sleep out in tents and shifty shelters on ground that was almost waterlogged and which became increasingly muddy as large areas were invaded by cars and vans and paddled through by many pairs of feet. Yet everyone remained cheerful and hopeful, examples of British fortitude at its best. Torrential rain for several consecutive nights before the event simply proved how testing a Talisman the Cauldron of Ceridwen can prove to be.

Between the Saturday when we all began to assemble, and the Monday which was the day of the solstice, the weather began to improve and the sun shone, at first intermittently, later with greater strength and continuity. It shone on the most extra-ordinary assembly that anyone present could ever have visualised, even in his wildest dreams.

Amongst the 8,000 to 9,000 persons who turned up for this Festival were young people of all ages, dressed in the widest possible selection of fashionable and unfashionable gear. Amongst them were Red Cross workers, Welfare workers, a few policemen, Orientals and Africans. There were also Dominican monks in white habits, Franciscan Friars in brown, Anglican and Roman priests. We met Geoffrey with members of his family, and Professor Siekmann and his wife who had visited us in Bristol several years previously. There were also a number of people who recognised us from our Cadbury days and greeted us as old friends.

One young man, who preferred to remain anonymous, sat down beside us and wrote a little poem for us:

The Return

Long ago  
the last days of beauty



surrendered to the darkening time  
in the Vale of Avalon,  
where sleeps the lost heart  
for just a little longer.  
The long age of matter  
is closing down in pain  
as spirit cries for heart's release  
from where was left the promise,  
whose fulfillment is demanded now,  
by orphans picking up the Grail  
from the Vale of Avalon.

tract: An elderly, hermit-like character left us a little blue

"Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly: and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter: for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble: it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs: for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is: many persons strive for high ideals: and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love: for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars: you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy."

(Found in Old St. Paul's Church, Baltimore: dated 1692)

From the pyramid came the strident sounds of Pop music, and there were those who liked to keep close to it. The vast majority, however, strolled backwards and forwards between the gaily coloured tents through the open fields and on the sloping hillside. Several thousands more could have infiltrated that peaceful scene without anyone noticing the difference.

I am not so gullible that I believe the world of the young to be all sweetness and light. As the schoolboy said: "A friend is a fellow that knows you but likes you." I know it is riddled with cheap little predators who are completely unaware, because no one has ever told them, how humiliating and self-destructing it is to cheat, lie, steal and defraud anyone who is weak and vulnerable. If there were any such at Pilton they were in the minority because this was not the kind of scene that would attract them. For four harmonious days - until the mass media publicised the event - everyone was bathed in a pastoral peace. The sound of grinding axes had ceased; the yells of those obsessed, in one way or another with physical bodies, had subsided. For a brief period we were permitted to live in a world of ideas and one would have had to be very insensitive indeed not to be conscious of the rising vibrations, the awareness of intention and the responses of human beings to each other when all are people of good-will.

The reward came at sunset on the day of the solstice. The valley lay to the east of Glastonbury so that the sun sank to rest behind the Tor. At one moment everyone found themselves gazing towards that end of the valley and all those I spoke to afterwards agreed that for a few seconds only they seemed to see two suns.

During those few seconds everyone had a vision of some kind though accounts varied. Some saw round objects in the sky, others saw columns of light or pyramid-type patterns. One thing they all had in common was that they were radiantly rainbow-coloured.

Away back in 1928 I was one of a small group of young people who were fortunate enough to work, for a short while, with a man whom we all loved and revered as an Initiate. Since there was much talk at that time of another war we asked our Teacher if he could tell us whether or not another war was inevitable.

"Of course," he said. "We are drawing it closer every day by our talk of it."

"And what then?" we asked.

"Another war," he replied, "will obviously leave Britain in ruins - ruined in money and man-power. She will cease to be any kind of military or political Power, but this is as it should be. In a little while she will become the home of the artists and the festivals. After that, following the cycle, she will become



a great spiritual leader. Ultimately she must return to being a pastoral community."

To some this will seem a depressing thought but if so, they do not understand the prophecy. A pastoral Community need not be a bucolic one. With the acquisition of spiritual insight comes an abhorrence of industrial, technological and commercial societies. If, as the archaeologists are now telling us, it was a pastoral community that raised Stonehenge; if Stonehenge was the astronomical observatory we are now told it was; if the great Megalithic stones and circles still standing were set out by a pastoral community that had infinitely more astronomical and mathematical knowledge than we now have (whether or not it had a written alphabet), then we can surely look forward to other developments in our evolution that may even be beyond our imagining at this time.

No individual can ever return in his later years to the innocence of childhood, nor would he want to do so, but he can return to a simplicity of life which is only possible if he has profited, on all levels, from the years of testing and training that have made him what he is.

No society can return to an earlier Arcadian condition any more than the Pendragon Society could, or would want, to return to the early days of Otterbourne. But we can retain our old ideals of Quest, and bring to that Quest the fortitude and understanding we have acquired on the way.

Prometheus is thus unbound, as Shelley declaimed:

"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;  
To love, and bear: to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;  
Neither to change nor falter nor repent....."

In one of the well-distributed Underground newspapers, "Frendz", Andrew Kerr wrote:

"There seemed to be a need for a truly free festival. All the others had some profit motive behind them - some for worthy causes, some for greed, none for love. The bread was made out of the people who could least afford it; it was time they were given a party.

"Where do you hold a free festival? Stonehenge has some meaning, so let's try Stonehenge. The Army has an establishment a mile away and just beyond that there is a firing range (someone said a minefield as well): all the farm land is arable and in the middle

of summer the crops are half high: there is barbed wire all round the Henge: it is an inhospitable place.

"What's so special about Stonehenge anyway? If you think it's a good idea to have a festival there you'd better find out why. We found a bit but we haven't finished yet. It's an astronomical instrument, it's a clock, it's a calendar, it's a meeting place for force lines and for people, it's a computer and a stimulator, it is there to make people aware that they too are a part of the universe.

"A couple of telephone calls revealed that Worthy Farm is linked to Stonehenge, the Glastonbury Zodiac and the great cosmic pattern of ley lines and energy points. The whole system is a mind-bender.

"After we chose the site for the stage at Worthy Farm, we discovered that if you could stand in the middle of the Glastonbury Zodiac watching the sunrise on the summer solstice, the stage would be in direct alignment. After that we discovered the constellation Sagittarius, the Glastonbury Zodiac, the stage, the Sun and the central sun of the Galaxy would all be aligned at the time of the solstice on June 22nd 1971.

"Sacred geometry is to do with the measurements of the Universe. The Great Pyramid, Stonehenge, the Glastonbury Zodiac, all the stone circles and megalithic structures in the world are built according to sacred geometry. The free-masons who built the ancient churches and cathedrals guarded those secrets until they became obscured by establishment ritual and archaeological arrogance. These secrets are gradually being unearthed by divinely inspired men like John Michell, Keith Critchlow, Noshier and many others. These secrets are being blown wide open to enable man to regain his place in the Universe as a part of it rather than a species alien to it.

"If you build according to the rules of sacred geometry there are two major factors you have to take into account. One, you have to use sacred measurements and two, you have to build on lines of force, the latter being discerned by dowsing and water-divining. All Pagan and Christian sites were chosen for these two qualities. The pyramid at Glastonbury Fair (we think) was the first sacred building to be erected since the Reformation.



"Under the apex of the pyramid there was a blind spring which connected to the Stonehenge-Glastonbury ley by way of a spiral geodetic line. What we were trying to do was to stimulate the Earth's nervous system with joy, appreciation and happiness so that our Mother planet would respond by breeding a happier, more balanced race of men, animals and plants. It was a fertility rite.

"Most of the people who went to Glastonbury Fair had heard of ley lines. Very few of us know anything about them at all, but we have some ideas. Try this one. Imagine all heavenly bodies transmitting astrological impulses (the Earth included). These impulses are received and transmitted at high energy points (like Stonehenge, Glastonbury, the Great Pyramid etc.) All these energy points are connected by leys, corresponding to the nervous system in the human body. The leys are therefore the Earth's nerves by which messages are passed. The energy points and blind springs are the nerve nodes by which the Earth feels her sensations.

"The stage at Glastonbury Fair was built in the form of the Great Pyramid on a powerful blind spring in the hope that it would draw to it beneficial astrological influence into our tired planet. We hoped that people would go away feeling a lot better for the experience, more creative, happier and more appreciative of the wonders of the Universe, not in a heavy way but proving that life is really a gas....

"Glastonbury Fair has started something which must not be allowed to stop. The energy, the ability, the impetus can now be used to do more research (we are all appallingly ignorant).... We are searching for a living pattern for our children, free from the burdens of the urban industrial society. If we don't try we will die.

"Thanks and love to everyone."

Which, translated roughly into the language of 'straight' society, means 'let us have peace from tribal wars so that we may study this ancient pattern, and learn from it, and work in harmony with it, so that together we may help to create Arthur's Britain'.

But this means you and me. It also means today and now.

We can't help our present state of ignorance but we can start to cure it. We can't change our present system of education but we can learn how to think for ourselves. We can't change the nation's eating habits but we can change our own. We can't cure a sick society but we can improve our own health. Pendragons feel that they have made a start and are on their way. The only purpose in writing this book is to get a lot of other people on their way too. Only in that way can we keep the energy flowing.

Pass it on.

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Addresses of Societies

The Pendragon Society: 22 Alma Road, Clifton, Bristol.

The Ley Hunters: 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Co. Durham.

Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation (R.I.L.K.O.): 36 College Court,  
Hammersmith, London W.6.



