

Britain an Ancient Centre of Learning

By Nigel Blair

The Druids were well known amongst the various characters and figures of ancient and legendary Britain. A Druidic jewel was found in a barrow at Kingston Barrow Downs near Canterbury and this is mentioned by Lewis Spence in his book "Mysteries of Britain" in addition to the idea that the Picts were "a dwarfish race living inside hills and mistaken for fairies and brownies".

Ancient Britain was noted by the classical writers as being a centre of sacred learning. Among ancient writings the two main sources we have are Hecateus of Masala who wrote in the 3rd - 4th century BC, quoting Marcellus, stating that "opposite Gaul there was a large island, larger than Sicily and in that island there was a great circular temple to the gods". Most people take this to mean Stonehenge but some think it may have been Glastonbury Tor because if you change one letter in the Greek translation you actually get spiral rather than circular temple to the gods. The book called "The Glastonbury Tor Maze" puts forward the idea that the spiral path leading up to the Tor could be part of an ancient sevenfold maze.

Whichever it is, it doesn't really alter the principle. Here is a well known Greek historian quoting another well known classical Greek writer talking about Britain where the Hyperboreans, "the people beyond the north winds" lived. There they had sacred gatherings, sacred teachings, they were very adept at musical harmonies, and every nineteenth year, Apollo the God of the Sun and of healing, perhaps the second Greek god after Zeus, went to this island which was known, according to Hecateus, as "the Great Cycle of the Moon".

When Professor Gerald Hawkins wrote a book called "Stonehenge Decoded" which came out in the mid-sixties, he studied the aubrey holes around Stonehenge, 56 of them and 19 divides almost exactly into 56. He reckoned that the holes were there to mark out the 19 year lunar cycle. It's known that every 18 point something years, the lunar cycle appears, there is a change in the moons path which is something well known by astronomers and he thought that the ancients were well aware of this and were marking it out with the aubrey holes so for every third lunar cycle which incidentally is about a lifetime, 56 years. He thought that this together with the marking out of the Mid-Summer sunrise with the Heel stone at Stonehenge was part of a sacred astronomical and astrological system. Whether they used the 12 signs of the zodiac that we know of is unknown but they may also used it as a calendar so that they would know when to sow their crops, they probably also used Stonehenge as a place of healing and of course as a place of initiation.

The original date of Stonehenge has now been put back to at least 2800 BC and it probably is older than that. The big sarsen stones that we think about are more like 2000 BC but even those are therefore about 4000 years old. The ancient priests that Hecateus mentioned were men of great learning and of great teachings and he says that it was as if the priests were as dedicated to Apollo which symbolised the sun to the Greeks. So therefore you have a Greek priest saying that Stonehenge was used for ancient sun worship, but not just a primitive type of sun worship, it would probably have been a clairvoyant vision of something behind the sun which of course a lot of modern see a great living spiritual being behind the sun, not just a bright light but the sun symbolising something far greater than that, a great spiritual being.

We also have the writings of Julius Caesar and he says that Britain was the centre of the teachings of the Druids, that they had great universities and great men of learning here and that people from all over Europe came here and that they had a 20 year system of training which was not written down, though he points out the Druids could in fact write in Greek which is a fact that is usually overlooked. This confirms another thing that Hecateus said, which is equally remarkable he said that they (the ancient Britons) "had a great association with the ancient Greeks, especially with Athenians and the Deolians". That ties up very well with a mention in another ancient Greek writing that an ancient British wise man who was named Abaris was no less than the tutor to no less a figure than Pythagoras, the greatest spiritual philosopher before Socrates, some would argue one of the greatest in the whole of history because it was Pythagoras and the sect that was founded by him which was known as the Pythagoreans which lasted for centuries in Greek civilisation. If, as Hecateus says, there was constant connection between the Hyperboreans and the Athenians and the Deolians and if they did in fact supply the tutor to Pythagoras, that shows Britain to be a very sacred centre.

For initiations to take place you must have a place to have them and not all of them took place at Stonehenge. West Kennet is one of 170 long barrows within the vicinity of the Severn estuary that may have been used for initiatory purposes. It is trapeze shaped with one wide end and its got a straight megalithic gallery with side chambers where bodies would have been left to decay completely before being stacked up in rows. West Kennet is right next to Avebury and Silbury Hill which is significant as well.

There is one barrow in Ireland that is probably the oldest that we know of, about 4500 BC, at Newgrange, Drogheda, not far from Dublin, in the Boyne valley. This barrow is connected with the Mid-Winter sunrise when the sun shines exactly through the entrance portal and meeting at the end of the passage inside. The period to which it is dated, 4500 BC, is approximately half way between the appearance of Christianity and the end of Atlantis.

There does seem to be something of a gap between the earliest monument that we know of, that is Newgrange, and the end of Atlantis which was probably about 8500 BC. There is very little sign of any form of advanced life in Western Europe at that time. I believe that Atlantis was destroyed probably by a large asteroid of which there is mounting evidence, geological and other. This 4000 year gap may have been a dark age caused by all the muck that was ejected into the air caused by the impact of the asteroid, a great deal of dust, incidentally a great deal of water vapour which carried all around the world and submerged or completely wiped away most civilisations, some of the highland civilisations survive but most of the cities were on the coast. When the asteroid struck it released the Gulf Stream which then melted the ice raising the sea level by about 300 feet, which is a fact, nobody disputes the fact that the sea level rose but only the question of why it rose. The dust thrown into the air cut off the sun's rays, Otto Muck reckons for the most part several thousand years but thereafter life gradually recovered and the plant and animal life which was also killed off came back and the Megalithic cultures appeared.

The lost gods of Britain are a mixture of several things. They may have been a dim and distant memory of Atlantean heroes, Britain was probably one of several Atlantean colonies at one time, it was a very sparsely populated area, a very mystical area if we are to believe one account, an area that was regarded as a place of the gods, rather in the

manner of the Himalayas or the Gobi where the fabled Shambhala is supposed to be located. For a time the hierarchy or the great white brotherhood or however you wish to think of them decided to move away from Britain and went to Shambhala, the Gobi, according to the teachings of the Theosophists and Alice Bailey. Some teachings are now saying that the hierarchy have now decided to move back, at least that's what they've been saying in recent years and it runs something like this, it had always been the intention to move back to this area, which in some esoteric teachings is supposed to be the heart centre of the world.

Stephen Jenkins had been to Outer Mongolia and he had been told by the Lamas that he had been a Lama in a past life and that Wheel of Time, that is to say Colour Chakra Buddhism which is the form of Buddhism that the Dalai Lama follows, a mixture of Mahayana or Greater Vessel Buddhism and the old Bo religion which is a counterpart to our old Celtic religion, is a very intensive system of spiritual advancement which normally takes many years but we're going to give you a very special crash course lasting 4 months which carries three dangers, illness, madness or death but if you're willing to undertake those dangers we're willing to give it to you. He decided to take it and one of the things that Lamas told him was that when the Buddha was dying he was visited by a wise man from the west whose name was Sucranda. This was about 457 BC and they swapped some sacred teachings. The Lamas told him that they had been trying to understand where this Sucranda came from ever since, because the Buddha never told anybody. They originally thought he came from the Middle East but they now realised that he came from the west, either Greece or Britain.

Stephen Jenkins returned to Britain having learned from the Lamas that the word Sucandra means "beautiful all white moon" and he consulted two friends of his, one of whom was a Greek scholar, the other Welsh. The Greek scholar told him that in no way would any Greek ever call himself "beautiful all white moon". The Welsh scholar told him however that this name did exist in Welsh and that many ancient Britons were known by that name. Stephen then went to Glastonbury and visited Geoffrey Ashe who was researching the legend of Gwyn ap Nudd, the legendary fairy king under Glastonbury Tor which was supposed to be hollow. The area around Glastonbury, Somerset up into South Wales as well was called "Gwyntha" which apparently meant "place of bliss" and the Lamas had apparently been told that Sucandra had arrived from the Place of Bliss in the west. What is more, Gwyn ap Nudd actually meant "beautiful all white moon". Thus in addition to someone from Britain meeting and advising Pythagoras, a similar figure apparently went to visit the Buddha and exchanged sacred knowledge with him.

At the entrance to Newgrange there lies a huge stone decorated with spiral patterns. Ancient spirals or labyrinth patterns have been found as far apart as Malta, Crete, ancient India, Siberia, the Gobi desert area and the maze or spiral symbolically represents the protection of the inner core and the ability to work out from the inner to the outer (the relationship between the inner and the outer the working out of the inner self). Geoffrey Ashe regards the spiral path leading up to the Tor as a sevenfold maze. Seven is a universal sacred number, one that the Druids regarded as being very sacred and Geoffrey believes that the occurrence of these spirals over a wide area of the world is no accident and that the Druids may have been descendants of an even more ancient priestly caste who built Stonehenge and who may originally have come from the Gobi where there has been discovered evidence of mazes and shamanic initiations, very similar to ones that are supposed to have taken place in the west, also similar burial customs including burial in a

foetal position, sometimes believed to represent a belief in reincarnation. There was also discovered in Ireland an oath by which the ancient priests of Ireland swore that they would remain loyal to any agreements made with another tribe until the earth split open. An almost identical oath has been found in the Siberian regions.

We thus have a close connection between the practices of the ancient Celtic Britons and the Shambhala area. So maybe this confirms the story of Sucandra as having come from the Place of Bliss to the Shambhala area. Maybe in fact there was more than one Shambhala, in fact the indications are that the most advanced teachers considered Shambhala to be a dimension rather than just one locality, it really is a spiritual dimension which you pass into. The ancient Celtic legends considered that when you passed on you went to the "Isles of the Blessed" beyond the western sunset. Some people think this is a reference to Atlantis, others think that its a reference to a multi-dimensional Shambhala.

The worship would have been very closely connected to the idea of Mother Earth, there was a strong Goddess culture at the time, the Mother Goddess who's known in the east as Tara or in the west we tend to use the Greek word Gaia, there were various names for her in the Celtic traditions, Diana the huntress, Rhiannon the horse goddess, Cerridwen who is connected to the cauldron of rebirth, Blodeuwedd the Flower Goddess, the Irish death goddess Morrigan and many others, all of whom are various aspects of the earth goddess. The Mother Goddess was the deity who protected the earth. There were male gods of course Apollo for example probably under a Celtic name which would have been either Bel or Lugh/Llud.

What interests me particularly is how the stone circles tend to be concentrated in Celtic lands, massively more than any other country. The concentration in the west of the British Isles I find particularly interesting because that is the area nearest to ancient Atlantis. The Rollright Stones in Oxfordshire is a particularly good example. They were thought to have all sorts of magical properties and thought to have the power to give fertility to women and all sorts of things. Recently there has been a major project at the Rollright Stones, in the last decade or so, which Paul Devereaux has been involved in, which has been to measure the energies there with sophisticated instruments.

The Sanctuary near Avebury is interesting in that it lies at the end of a great curved or wavy serpent line that goes right through the middle of Avebury which is very symbolic and may represent the crossing of two energies or the fertilisation of one energy by another. The serpent was said to be the symbol of ancient energy and also of the kundalini which emanates from the spine and which can be raised by certain intensive systems of meditation.

Silbury Hill was said by George Wingfield to be of the same date, the same size and probably the same design as the earliest of the Egyptian pyramids, the step pyramid of Djoser near Sakkara. According to George Wingfield, Silbury Hill was originally a step pyramid which has since become overgrown and become smooth. Local people in Marlborough once told me that within the grounds of Marlborough College there was a twin to Silbury Hill which until recently was considered to be a rather striking hill but apparently its now considered to be artificial and is now considered to be much the same dimensions as Silbury Hill. There are buildings around it and its covered in trees so its not so easy to see but I was struck with the apparent size of the hill and apparently this is

beginning to become accepted by more orthodox people, that it is an artificial ancient mound.

It is now thought that there were two "Hele Stones" at Stonehenge since at the time that Stonehenge was built, the sun during the Summer Solstice would have risen just to the left of the stone and it was thought for a time that it was a bit inaccurate but it is now thought that there were two Hele stones and the sun came up through the gap in the middle.

The Crop Circles may be telling us to get back in touch with the lost gods of the land. The Mandelbrot Set circle is a copy of the computer fractal image produced by Professor Mandelbrot and it appeared near Cambridge, others I've been told are copies of ancient Celtic symbols.

If there is any centre of the lost gods it is Glastonbury. During the dissolution of the abbey, Abbot Whiting and two of his fellow monks were hanged on Glastonbury Tor. The Lady Chapel was supposed to have been built on the site of the ancient wattle church where supposedly Jesus himself may have visited and later Joseph of Arimathea who is supposed to have been Jesus uncle may have come and set up the earliest church in the western world. The church is mentioned in Saxon writings, there definitely was a wattle church there although that doesn't prove it was founded by Joseph or that Jesus visited it but nevertheless there was a wattle church that was venerated very highly and was destroyed in 1191 when a large part of the abbey was burnt down by fire and it was then that the monks dug up the bones of a very large man, getting on for about 7 feet tall and a woman who was much smaller, who they then claimed was Arthur and Guinevere. They also dug up a cross which was inscribed with the Latin words "Hic Aecuit Arturus Rex (something) et Rex Futurus". In other words, "Here lies Arthur, the once and future king". This leaden cross was lost during the eighteenth century although there is a picture of it which is featured in many books on the subject.

Arthur has always been associated with Glastonbury and the Tor and incidentally the tower on the Tor was built in the Middle Ages as part of a church and the main part of the church was destroyed in an earthquake, somewhere around 1300. Some people take the tower that was left to represent masculine energy which complements Chalice Hill nearby which is more feminine.

From Arthur we move on to the Grail legends. Galahad was the only knight to actually find the Grail but he is actually an addition to the older stories from which he is missing, he was added in the Middle Ages so that they could find someone pure enough to find the Grail. Percival managed to reach the Grail Castle and saw the Grail briefly but wasn't pure enough to be taken into heaven. Galahad himself was pure enough to be taken into heaven and never actually died on Earth. He had to go to Palestine incidentally to find it which is another christianisation of the myth, in a ship that sailed itself, thus it became associated with the Crusades. The Grail has been interpreted in a variety of ways in modern times, through Tennyson and T. S. Eliot in his long poem "The Wasteland", the wasteland was a description of the land before the Grail was found, the result of the misdeeds of man, the fact that we've created a wasteland on our planet and thus this is an object lesson.

The Grail symbolises the quest by all of us to find the true inner part of ourselves, rather like the maze or labyrinth. The various trials and tribulations suffered by the knights are all

part of the quest, culminating in the requirement to ask the right question at the Fisher King's Castle. There seem to have been two versions of the question, one is "What ails thee?" in other words the need to show compassion, the other question was "Whom does the Grail serve?", or in other words the need for service to the whole community rather than just the self.

Cadbury Castle in Somerset is one of the more likely locations for Camelot, Arthur's main stronghold. There is a legend that Arthur lies in a cave inside the hill and that they emerge occasionally in ghostly form and ride through the countryside. The hill-fort was excavated 1966-70 and it was discovered that the hill had been re-fortified around 500 AD which is just the right period for Arthur; that it had a large wooden hall at one end of the hill on a raised mound of earth and with many remains of weapons and other implements dating to the correct period. It would have been in the right position geographically for a king resisting the Saxons. Arthur is said to have been Roman Britain's last champion, in other words from 410 AD to 500, Britain was the only country that maintained a proper sense of law and order during the chaotic period of the break-up of the empire. Arthur and his followers managed to hold back the Saxons for about two or more generations until the late 6th century when they finally conquered Wessex. Glastonbury abbey was taken by the Saxons in a peaceful, amicable take-over and it later became the Christian centre of the nation.