

A SYMBOLIC LANDSCAPE

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Currently under investigation by *Gloucestershire Earth Mysteries* and other researchers this area of the Cotswolds, near the town of Dursley is rapidly becoming a place of revelation. Its curious conically shaped Peak and clearly earthworked Long Down has been the site of strange aerial light phenomena and psychic activity.

It has been identified by local amateur historian, Ronald Fletcher as Camlann, the site of King Arthur's last battle. From here the dying King was carried the few miles to where Arthur had his stronghold, the abandoned Roman villa at Woodchester whose famous Orpheus pavement contains in symbolic form elements of the Arthurian mythos. It is this huge mosaic that contains the wheel of zodiacal beasts, the Round Table itself, and the open-sided octagon at the centre which is repeated on the hillside opposite the villa as a darkened ring, 100 feet across, which is revealed in high-impenetrable Old Welsh text as the final resting place of the Once and Future King.

The Peak is overlooked by two Neolithic long barrows and the enormous Iron Age earthworked hill of Uleybury which are linked by an alignment. From these sites a subtle relationship can be discerned between the Peak and the Long Down and the landscape horizon beyond it. From Uleybury can be seen on the distant Welsh



St George and the Dragon - the triumph of Christianity over the Old Religion or the fixing of the earth spirit at a sacred site?

horizon a miniature reflection of the outline of the Peak and Long Down formed by the Sugar Loaf and adjacent hills. Was this place once recognised as being special in some way that it became venerated? There is much still to be done on this aspect of the area.

A strange alignment links Uleybury hillfort entrance with an avenue of trees atop the oddly named Smallpox Hill, next to Cam Peak, once a refuge for Plague victims, and the prominent Tyndale's Tower at North Nibley. Tyndale was a priest who first translated the Bible into English and was executed by strangulation on the orders of Henry VIII.

In recent years it has been customary for the local parishioners from the church at Cam village (clearly visible from the summit of the Peak) to walk in procession from the church with a huge wooden cross to the top of Cam Peak and place it there. A good few years ago the Peak and Long Down were heard described as a 'dragon hill', probably because of their shape - the Peak is the head and the curving Long Down the body. This all begins to make sense. The dedication of Cam church is to St George, the dragon slayer. Is the placing of the cross on Cam Peak an unconscious symbolic staking of the dragon's head (the devil or the Old Religion) by the ultimate Christian symbol?