



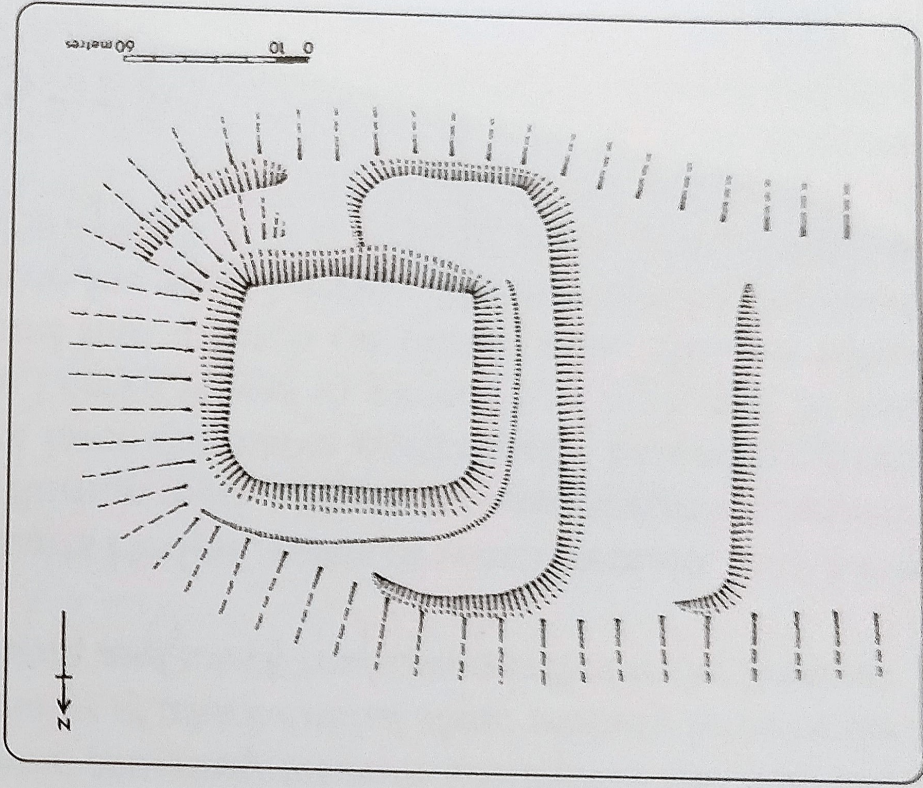




# THE NEW BOOK OF LOSTWITHIEL



Below: Restormel earthwork,  
a pre-Roman hill-fort, based  
on a drawing in the Cornish  
Archaeological Journal. (CAS)



Above: Ptolemy's map showing Uzzella in the second century AD. (BL)





scorn by Davies Gilbert, another historian, a century later. Suggestions such as 'Lost-within-the-hills' and 'Lost-withal' are treated with similar scorn in the twenty-first century.

Current thinking is that the name derives from two Old Cornish (or even pre-Cornish) words: 'Lost' and 'Gwydeyel' meaning 'tail' and 'wooded area'. This has been interpreted as 'the place at the tail-end of the forest'. If this is so, it was most probably the name given to the tract of land and small settlement in the valley (where Lostwithiel was later built) by the inhabitants of a pre-Roman fort up on the hill, near to the site of Restormel Castle and Lostwithiel would have been identified as a place nearly 2,000 years ago, long before it became a town.

Aerial photographs of a spur above Restormel Castle, taken in 1968 (for English Clays Lovering Pochin & Co. Ltd) revealed an earthwork consisting of three concentric rectangular enclosures with rounded corners. The inner enclosure measures 77 by 64 metres. This is believed to be Uzella, the pre-Roman hill-fort, which was probably occupied into the Romano-British period. Scraps of Roman pottery have been found in the area. Uzella was identified on Ptolemy's map of the second century AD sited west of the River Tamar. (Ptolemy was a Greek scholar and cartographer.) As it is likely that tin from Bodmin was being shipped to the coast from Restormel in those days it is conceivable that the hill-fort was used as a base, before and during the Roman occupation, from which operations were overseen. Perhaps one day more will be known - this site is waiting to be excavated.

There is evidence of human habitation in the hills surrounding the town, going back at least 3,000 years. The tumuli at Boconnoc were the burial-grounds of Bronze-Age people, who lived in hill settlements. Merchants from the Mediterranean are thought to have come to Cornwall to buy tin in those far-off days. It is likely that the river was already being put to good use, both for transport and as a source of food.

Castle Dore, on the west bank of the River Fowey between Lostwithiel and the estuary, is the best local example of Iron-Age occupation. Raleigh Radford wrote:

*The fortified village can only have contained a small community not exceeding 150... It flourished during the first century AD but did not survive to the end of that century.*

The eighteenth-century historian Borlase believed that there were two Roman roads into Cornwall from Exeter, one passing via Stratton to Bodmin, and a southerly road by way of Horsebridge, the Hurlers and Braddock Down, fording the River Fowey below Lostwithiel en route west. F.M. Hext, in 1891, recalled that workmen cutting a canal at Pontsmill in

the nineteenth century 'laid open the a a bridge and a road of Roman const would support this theory. Borlase m

*... a stone causeway between Lostwithiel the remains of which existed about midw two towns, and which tradition ascribed*

'The Giants Hedge', parts of which re been a Roman road, although some hi it was a later defensive earthwork. F Looe to Lerryn it was in parts 7 feet F wide and had a ditch on either side have been found at Lerryn. The Rom several small forts in Cornwall from kept an eye on the tin trade. The Nanstallon, Bodmin, is thought to h pried for about 25 years. At this time I centre of the tin industry.

After the Romans left Britain, arou began a period known as the Dark flourished, kept alive through the ce badours and minstrels. The legends have long been associated with Corn with Tintagel, but the Lostwithiel played a part in this distant histor suggested that the area is connected v King Arthur. It is believed that C reoccupied in the fifth century and d palace, which may have been the C a Cornish king married to Igraine. Le Uther Pendragon fell in love wi pursued her to her home. Gorlois and Pendragon then seduced Igrain begetting of Arthur. Might it all ha near to Lostwithiel?

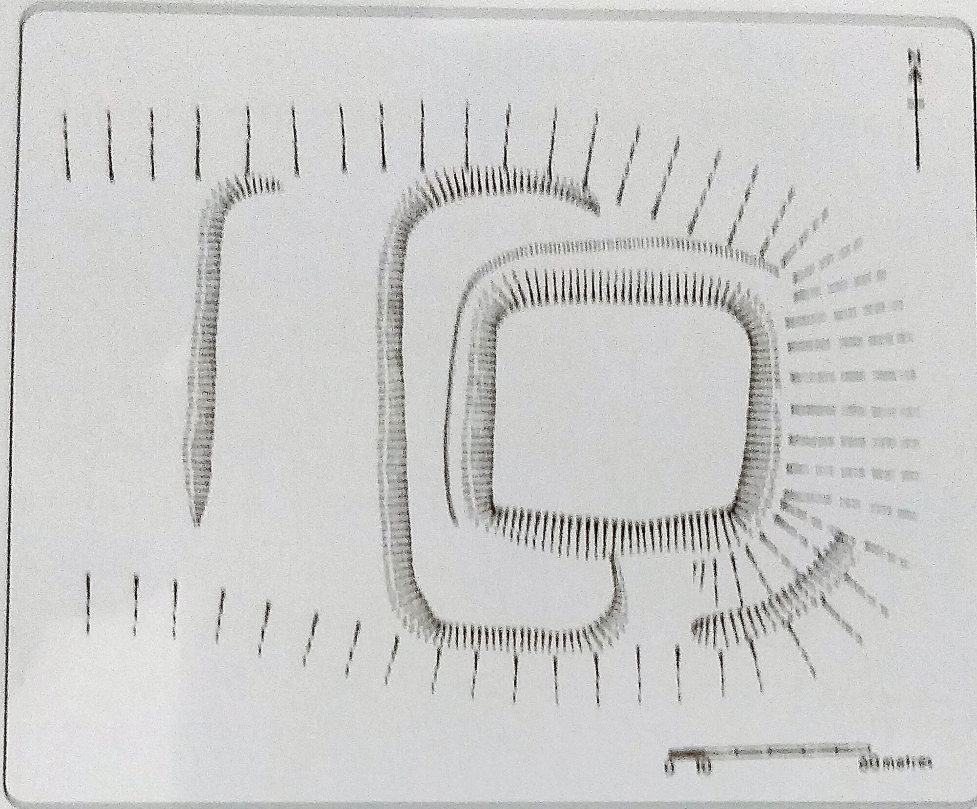
Another legend told down the ce tragic love story of Tristan and Iso is believed by many to have been 'The Cold Valley'. There is still a pla in the valley, which may have been Mark's palace (there is no other its name). The woods by the r Tristan's Woods, could be where the secret trysts.

There is also a theory that C became the site of King Mark's pala standing beside the road into Fow 'DRYSTANS HIC IACET CUNOMAR said that the sixth-century stone rec Tristan, son of Mark. Old manuscr Mark attending the Church of St Sa with his Queen (Isolda) mentioning gave her best dress to the chur displayed on feast days.

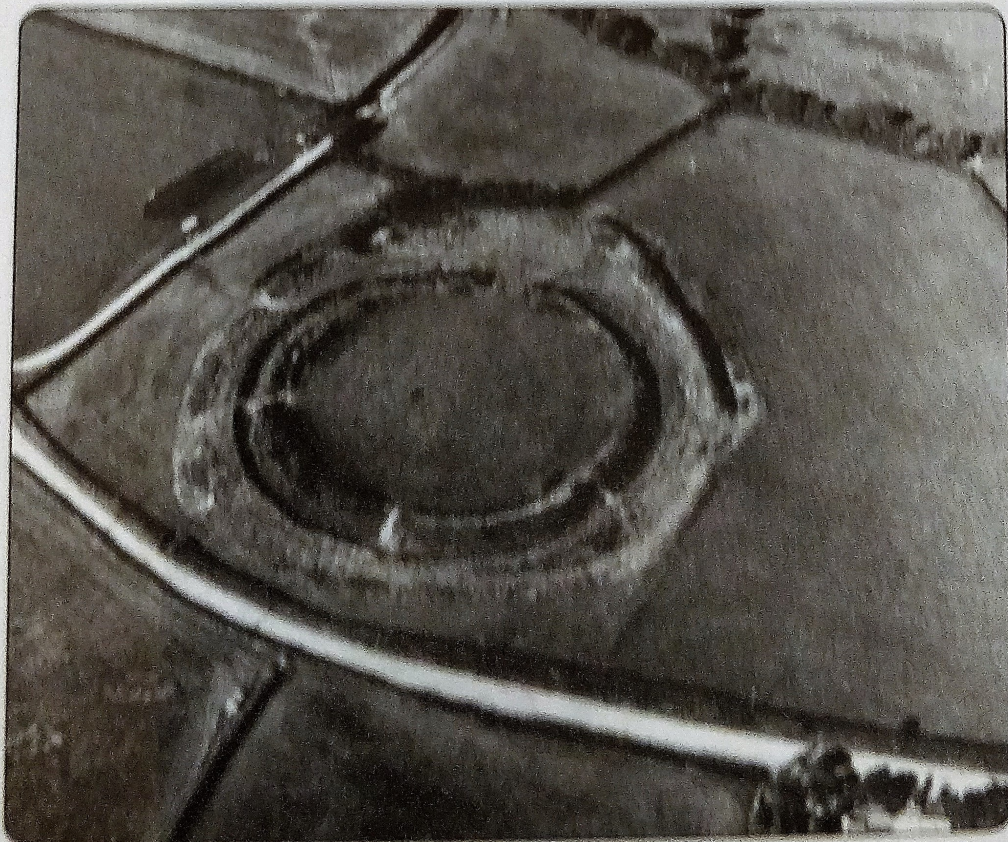
During the Dark Ages, Britain v settled by adventuring hordes fro Celts in Cornwall constantly resis their land and held out against the S



Below: Restormel earthwork, a pre-Roman hill-fort, based on a drawing in the *Cornish Archaeological Journal*. (CA8)



Above



Above: Castle Dore, first-century Iron-Age fort. (CAU)

The de Ma





*The remains of Cardinham Castle. (CAU)*

At about this time, the Cardinham family was building a castle five miles north-east of Restormel. The Cardinhams are said to have descended from Bertrand de Dinant, one of two brothers, Norman knights, who accompanied William I to England. Some years later, it seems, the Norman lords had taken possession of their lands in their own right, and a female descendant of Turstin's married into the Cardinham family, enriching and increasing their power by joining the two estates, and opening up enormous opportunities for the Cardinhams. They abandoned their castle and came to Restormel. It is still possible to follow tracks between the two castles.

In the twelfth century Devon and Cornwall were the only known sources of tin in the western world. Tin was used in the manufacture of bronze, for which there was great demand in London, Europe and beyond. Bodmin was the centre of the tin industry in Cornwall and was the main market for refined tin, which was shipped from the quay below Restormel Castle. The lords, now the Cardinhams, realised how much they stood to gain by developing a port a mile downstream, where the land opened out, and the river was wide – at 'the place at the tail-end of the wood'. Here more ships could be accommodated, and trade could be expanded. The town was conceived and developed as a commercial venture, some time between 1086 and 1189.

Many workers would be needed – craftsmen in wood, stone, metal and leather – as well as labourers to fell trees, quarry stone and transport material, more men than Bodardle could provide. It is likely that craftsmen came over from Brittany and it is possible that some labourers were escaped villeins. There must have been a great influx of people and surge of activity over a number of years to establish a new town, 'a plant of exotic growth' as the historian Charles Henderson described it. The first buildings were probably temporary wooden constructions, followed, as the town was established, by more permanent stone buildings. At some time during the twelfth century, as the little town developed, it must



*The Martyrdom of St Bartholomew, depicted in a medallion rediscovered in the church*

have been referred to as harking back to the ancient more officially as the Port other smaller ports, Gole (the town of Fowey not this time). Bridging the reaching Restormel Quay

A regular tin route via Oleron, an island in the tin was distributed to Bordeaux. It was also sent to Messina and the Levant

Soon after the Norman St Andrew's Priory was Andrew's was a daughter Bacchus, at Angers in France patrons of this 'alien' priory built a daughter church, dedicated in honour of saint of tanners. The alongside the smelting of the trees felled for charcoalies were established in L The design of the church common in Brittany (although a strong Breton influence in the west end of the sculpture intended to be the tomb of his wife, Isolda. Stories of human remains were even

St Bartholomew's links with the Crusades centuries, situated as it was for the Mediterranean West Country may have before setting out to fight

The streets of the town pattern. This planning of 'towns' or 'planted towns' way, both in Britain and the Isle of Wight was one such Winchester established and 1255.

The configuration of the town of Lostwithiel; the River