

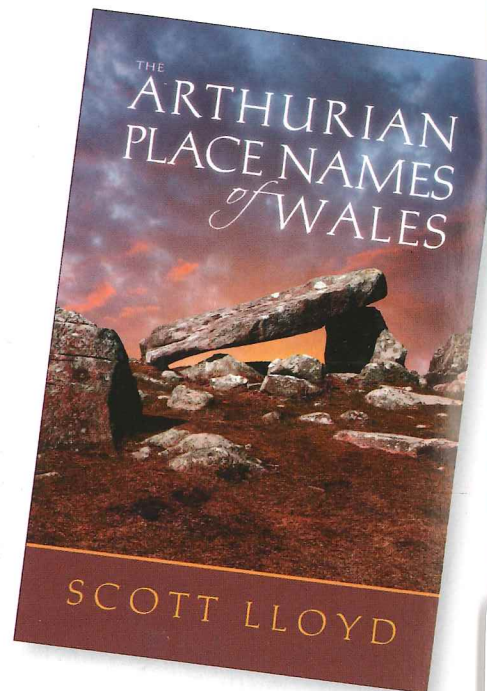
# ODd SOCS

## The International Arthurian Society



**LEFT** Arthurian scholars at the International Arthurian Congress held in Truro on 23-30 Aug 1930. *The Times* reported on President Henry Jenner's address at the Congress, in which he said that to call Tintagel (**BELOW LEFT**) 'Arthur's Castle' was an 'imposture', but one that was profitable to local hoteliers and so would stick.

**RIGHT** *The Arthurian Place Names of Wales*, published by IAS member Scott Lloyd in 2017, traces back to their original sources the names and histories of all the places in Wales that have acquired Arthurian associations. The cover shows Coetan Arthur (Arthur's Quoit), a collapsed Neolithic propped rock situated north of Whitesands Bay on St David's Head, Pembrokeshire. The name implies that Arthur threw the capstone on to the uprights in the course of a game of quoits.



PHOTOS: IAC British Branch; Kerry Garratt

The earliest reference to Arthur occurs in the Old Welsh poem, *Y Gododdin* (*The Gododdin*). Attributed to the 6th-century poet Aneirin, it says of one warrior who slew 300 men in battle that 'he was no Arthur'. This allusion to a heroic figure whose achievements exceeded even those of *The Gododdin* warrior assumes that tales of Arthur's deeds were already in circulation in the late Roman or early medieval period. From such small beginnings, a rich and international body of cultural material has developed: from medieval epic to Wagnerian opera, and from the obsessions of Edward I with his round-table rituals to Glastonbury hippies in flowing cloaks convinced that Arthur will soon return to save the world.

The International Arthurian Society (IAS) is a scholarly body whose 1,000 individual and 300 institutional members study the many different manifestations of the Arthur story through the ages. So rich a field is this, with so broad a reach and so great a variety of approaches, that the founder members, meeting in Quimper, France, in 1948, argued that Arthurian Studies constituted 'a distinct discipline' – one that we would now fashionably call 'multidisciplinary'. The IAS was therefore established to raise the subject's profile, to organise international congresses, and to publish Arthurian news, research, and bibliographies, as well as to maintain a library of relevant material.

The British Branch describes its members as 'serious and not sensationalist', and has been one of the most active of the 13 IAS branches around the world, hosting its own conferences and offering a number of annual awards for postgraduate research. Many of its members are academics with an interest in the history and archaeology of the post-Roman and early medieval period in Western Europe, or of the literature, art, film, and music of all periods centred on the Arthurian legends.

Its members have helped to set up the new Centre for Arthurian Studies at Bangor University, which now hosts the archives of the British Branch, combined with Bangor's own Arthurian and Celtic Studies collection (which dates back to the university's founding in 1884) and the Flintshire Harries Arthurian collection, created by former Flintshire county librarian ER Harries (which came to Bangor in 2015). As a hub of international research, the Bangor Institute has finally realised the IAS founders' dream of carving out a separate Arthurian Studies 'discipline'. ■

Further information: [www.internationalarthuriansociety.com/british-branch](http://www.internationalarthuriansociety.com/british-branch)

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