# Pen-Selwood.

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THIS otherwise unimportant parish has been most remarkably endowed with material for archæological study and discussion. The questions bearing on the early history of this island connected with the Pen-pits, Orchard Castle and other earthworks, the early campaigns of Vespasian, the identifications of Pensauelcoit of Nennius and the Brut y Tywysogion, the site of the battles between Briton and Saxon and Saxon and Dane recorded in 658, 1001 and 1016, may all be discussed here; and while the subjects are of the highest importance, lack of evidence forbids an absolute decision in nearly every case.

It will be well to begin with the Pen-pits, as not only are they generally allowed to be the most ancient of the visible remains at this place, but a description of them and of the surrounding district will serve as an introduction to the historical problems.

The village of Penselwood stands at the southern end of the high ground which carries on its western edge the dividing line between Wilts and Somerset from Frome to Dorsetshire. South of a line drawn from Kilmington to Mere the chalk downs come to an end, and the green-sandstone coming to the surface forms a tableland gradually sloping upward from east to west. The western side of the tableland is a precipitous cliff or escarpment extending for many miles from

south to north and reaching its highest elevation, 851 feet, at King Alfred's Tower. About one mile south of Penselwood church there is a similar escarpment from east to west about 200 feet high, caused, I believe, by a geological fault which has depressed the tableland to that extent. The south-west angle of the high ground formed by the meeting of the two escarpments presents a very bold and commanding outline, comparable by the traveller from Wincanton to the north-west angle of Ham hill. The two cliffs however are only a shell, as the ground behind has been hollowed out into a deep valley through which the river Stour rapidly descends from its sources in Six Wells bottom to the lower country beyond Bourton. There are four subsidiary valleys, separated by long tongues of higher ground stretching down from the western side, but they all unite above the gorge near Bourton through which the river passes. On the tongues of land on both sides of the main valley, and on the high land, the ground is opened up by innumerable hollows or pits roughly circular or oval in outline, from ten to thirty feet in diameter, and from four to ten feet in depth. Sir R. C. Hoare, writing early in the last century, estimated the extent of land covered by the pits at over seven hundred acres and their number at twenty thousand, but that the area was being rapidly diminished as the ground was daily being brought under the plough. This process has continued down to the present day to such an extent that all the pits on the east side of the valley have been obliterated.

The older topographical and antiquarian writers, Leland 1540, Camden 1607, and Speed 1611, do not mention the pits. Coker's *Survey of Dorset*, written by William Gerard, *circa* 1630, and Aubrey's *Wiltshire Collections*, 1685, are equally silent. The earliest reference to them seems to be on Bowen's Map of Somerset published in 1750, and the first author to give an account of them is Hutchins in his *History of Dorset*, (1771 edition, vol. ii, 223.) He quotes the tradition that "they were made by Canute for offence and defence, some for the

main body, some for the advance guard; confirmed by an old manuscript in the hands of Mr. Biggen, one of the lords of the manor of Penselwood." Soon after the last date the Honourable Daines Barrington, in a communication to the seventh volume of *Archæologia*, issued in 1785, on the Cole's pits, near Farringdon in Berkshire, adds, "I am informed that there are more pits which lie in Somersetshire between Meere and Wincanton, being called the Pen-pits." He may have had the information from Hutchins' *History*, or from Sir R. C. Hoare, at this time 26 years of age, and residing in London. Barrington considered the Cole's pits to have been dwellings "in the time of the earliest inhabitants of this island," and prior to Stonehenge. He cites divers authorities, ancient and modern, in favour of his view; the most important being the testimony of explorers that the inhabitants of Kamskatka live in pits roofed in by branches of trees covered with sods. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1786, contains a letter from A. Crocker, with a description of the pits, which may be considered as a second part to the notice in the *Archæologia*. Collinson (Hist. of Somerset, iii, 43,) refers to all the authorities given above: he contents himself with the dry remark that "All these conjectures are ingenious; albeit the pits in question very much resemble the obsolete grooves of the mines of *lapis-calaminaris* on the Mendip Hills."

Sir R. C. Hoare, in his elaborate work on *Ancient Wilts* (1812,) gives a long account of the pits and the other remains of human handiwork found in the neighbourhood, together with a map of the district. He enumerates three distinct theories to account for their origin: (i) Quarries for stone; (ii) Quarries for mill-stones or querns; (iii) Habitations. His objection against the first was, that the pits stop short at the stone strata instead of sinking through it. Against the second he urged, that it would have been much simpler for the workers to have opened up the strata when suitable for the purpose, in an open quarry instead of making innumerable holes. The

difficulty with regard to the third theory was, that in the pits there was never found a sufficient quantity of charred wood, animal bones, or pottery to confirm it. Sir Richard evidently found a satisfactory solution impossible, and his opinion remained unchanged to his death in 1838.

In 1820, Mr. J. Crouch issued a small pamphlet, a "Brief Enquiry concerning Pen Pits, etc." He introduced King Alfred as the *deus ex machina* to account for their excavation.

Our Society visited Penselwood in 1857, when the Rev. F. Warre drew attention to the pits in a paper on "Earthworks near Bruton" (*Proceedings* VII, ii, 42). He rejected the quarry theory on the ground that the Britons did not use stone buildings, or at least, that there were no vestiges of such in the district. With regard to human habitations, he pointed out that they were too numerous and crowded together to have formed a British town "while the shape, in the case of the smaller ones certainly, that of an inverted cone, is the last that would be considered adapted to human habitations. The only instance in which I have heard of its being adopted being in certain mediæval dungeons, where the object sought after was the very reverse of comfort."

The next positive opinion in the matter was given by Mr. T. Kerslake of Bristol, in a pamphlet entitled "A primeval British Metropolis, etc.," 1877. His argument may be thus summarized. The *History of the Britons*, by Nennius, flor. 786, contains a list of some thirty ancient cities of that people. One of these names is Caerpensauelcoit, and under a Welsh synonym, Penselwood is easily identified. Geoffrey of Monmouth's History, *circa* 1140, compiled from Nennius and a book of Breton legends, since lost, records that Vespasian, having been beaten off by King Arviragus in his descent on the haven of the Rutupi, *i.e.* Richborough in Kent, sailed westward to Totnes. Landing there, he marched to besiege Kaerpenhuelgoit, *now Exeter*. Arviragus overtook him and fought a drawn battle. The next day the two leaders made friends, and dispatched a joint

expedition to Ireland: soon after Vespasian returned home, leaving the king to finish his reign in peace with honour.

Aware of the weakness of this parody of history, Mr. Kerslake quoted the opinion of the late Sir Francis Palgrave, that in the *British Chronicles* there might be found in solution a large amount of the lost genuine history of this island, much of which might be reclaimed from them. Professor Freeman (*Proceedings* xx, ii, 40,) has remarked of some other British traditions, that by carefully turning them inside out, some hints for true history may be picked up. By combining these two scientific processes a residuum appears, consisting of the names of Vespasian, his landing place somewhere east of Land's End, and the city which he besieged. The reference to Exeter is not found in the earlier Welsh versions, and appears to be a gloss added by some transcriber who knew the relative position and importance of Totnes and Exeter. The change from "s" to "h" in the spelling of the name of the town is another instance of the rule which altered Severn (Sabrina) into Hafren. By some ingenious topographical derivations the "Totness litus" was shifted from Devonshire to Christchurch harbour, where the Stour and Wiltshire Avon unite. This site agrees well with the statement of Tacitus that Vespasian captured the Isle of Wight. The valley of the Stour provides many hill forts for the sites of the twenty-eight "oppida" which the Romans reduced, and history and legend seem to converge on Penselwood. On a lofty situation at the head of the Stour valley, still preserving the relics of the old oak wood to give force to its name, containing the remains of countless human habitations included within its fortified area; strengthened on the south and west by a lofty rampart, and guarded at the river outlet by a special stronghold still called Castle Orchard: add that the parish is at the meeting point of three counties, whose names and bounds may have an origin far beyond the advent of Saxon or Roman, whose inhabitants were accustomed to gather together for council and war; then what place

more suitable for a metropolis? Mr. Kerslake's words give the answer, "Here was a prize that might well have tempted the ambition of an imperial conqueror, here was once a truly great city, the long lost Caer Pensauelcoit."

All this, and a great deal more of interest, will be found in the pamphlet. It excited a good deal of attention, and soon after its publication the Society met at Bruton to be able to examine the site under the author's guidance. The most important result of the visit, recorded in *Proceedings* XXIV, i, 57, was the appointment of a Committee to make a systematic exploration. A preliminary report was drawn up by Professor Boyd Dawkins (*Proceedings* XXIV, i, 59), and the final report was printed in the *Proceedings* XXV, i, 7, with a plan and sections prepared by General Pitt-Rivers. The excavations were carried on inside Castle Orchard, in the rampart and outer ditch, and in the Gaspar and Pen pits. The work inside the Castle yielded "Norman or Saxon" pottery. The diggings in the rampart and ditch showed that this work had been constructed at a later date, since the pits had been cut through and filled up in the process. The pits themselves yielded nothing referable to human handiwork. The report stated that "these pits were never intended for the purpose of dwellings, but that they were the work of people who had dug in the surrounding high grounds in search of that hard bed of greensand rock, locally called 'Penstone,' for millstones, querns, or building operations."

Mr. Kerslake considered that his views had not been fairly stated in the *Proceedings*; and after the issue of the final report he put forth a second pamphlet entitled "Caer Pensauelcoit . . . . a re-assertion," with a sketch map of the area, 1882. It is, however, only a re-assertion unaccompanied by any fresh arguments, and unfortunately the personal tone is too much that of the Irish juryman finding fault with eleven obstinate opponents.

General Pitt-Rivers (to give him the name by which he is

best known) having been much interested by the earlier reports, in the autumn of 1883 made fresh excavations in his careful and systematic manner, choosing a portion of ground which had not been examined. The work included a section cut clean through the tongue of land west of Orchard Castle and carried down below the original level to the undisturbed soil. The results (see later) were entirely confirmatory of the earlier report of the Society drawn up by the Rev. H. H. Winwood. They were issued as an Official Report, with plans and sections, under the Ancient Monuments Act, in 1884.

These plans, on a reduced scale, with a summary of the Report, will be found in the *Proceedings* XXX, ii, 149. The Report itself is absolutely necessary for a right understanding of the matter. Mr. Kerslake replied with a third pamphlet, entitled "Liberty of Independent Historical Research," 1885, which might be more accurately described as liberty to shut one's eyes to unpleasant facts not in accordance with a preconceived theory.

The controversy has not, so far as I am aware, been touched upon since with any new results. But it seems worth while to marshal the whole evidence afresh, as some of it is not easily obtainable, and the place itself difficult of access.

The first fact to be brought forward is one which must overthrow the whole theory of a Primeval Metropolis. There is not the slightest trace of any fortification by ditch and mound to enclose the area which contains the Pen pits. Mr. Kerslake seems to have been led astray in the first instance by the steepness and smooth appearance of the summit of the ridge, which runs about one hundred feet above the road leading up to the village of Penselwood from the west. Nature has done much and agricultural art something to produce this artificial appearance. The Rev. F. Warre (*Proceedings* VII, ii, 55) alludes to the British villages round Orchard Castle at greater or less distance "of one of which with its cattle enclosure I think I have observed faint traces on the western extremity of the hill

on which Pen church is situated." It is doubtful if he is not alluding to the earthwork entitled "Site of Church" on the six-inch O.S. map (*Som.* LXVI, S.W.) close to an earthwork called Balland's Castle.[1] Even if Mr. Warre did refer to the faint appearance of a rampart on some portion of the slope (*vide* plate in *Proceedings* XXX, ii, 151), it is impossible to suppose that such a keen antiquary, who paid special attention to the earthworks and similar remains in the county, could have overlooked the more definite indications which would have marked the site of a Caer. The maps of the ordnance survey mark no traces of fortifications, and I can confirm their accuracy in this instance from personal examination of the ground. Sir R. C. Hoare makes no reference, and his negative testimony is destructive of Mr. Kerslake's view, that the fortifications had been destroyed in the course of agricultural operations, for this cause was only beginning to be felt when *Ancient Wilts* was written.

There are absolutely no traces of mound and ditch on the north and east, and it is impossible to suppose that such, extending over a length of several miles, if they were to inclose the site of the pits and yet take advantage of the steep sides of the ravines, could have been obliterated; particularly if it be remembered that this part of the district was either in the bounds of Selwood Forest or in Stourton Park, and therefore on ground not likely to be utilized for the plough. As a matter of fact there are two camps in this very area quite untouched save that modern roads have been driven through them.

There could have been no defence at the mouth of the valley, since Orchard Castle has been shown to be later than the pits, and to have yielded nothing earlier than Norman or Saxon relics. Mr. Warre pointed out its strong resemblance to

1. There is no record of the church having been re-built, and as the present building contains Norman details, it is very unlikely. The earthwork is probably a post-Norman construction, perhaps one of the adulterine castles destroyed by Henry II.

Castle Neroche; and this also has been proved by excavations to be of the Norman period (*Proceedings* XLIX, ii, 23). It would not have been surprising to find that the early inhabitants had turned the south-western extremity of the plateau into a fort as strong as the camp on Ham hill, by a series of similar earthworks with a double or triple range across the neck of land near the church and Pear Ash farm, but of this there is no trace, and the greater portion of the pits would have been outside the defended area.

It therefore appears that the theory of a vast fortified area, containing a metropolis or meeting-place for several tribes, is unsupported by any visible facts. This result must weigh considerably in any decision upon the object or use of the pits. Without any means of defence they could never have formed an inhabited town of any importance such as their number would imply. The bulk of the pits are two miles distant from the two camps on the north side. One writer, indeed, has supposed that the pits themselves were of the nature of a defence; but as a battlefield the area would have resembled the valley of Siddim, with its slime pits, where the four kings fled and fell (Gen. xiv, 10). Then there is the negative result of the series of excavations. Practically nothing denoting human habitation has been found in them. This evidence extends over a greater area and for a longer period, for Sir R. C. Hoare's observations were continued during his whole lifetime, while many acres of pits were being destroyed. General Pitt-Rivers also quotes the words of a labourer who had worked for stone in the pits for many years, and said: "I scarcely ever found a bit of pottery of any kind." The Rev. N. Parsons, rector of Penselwood, has obtained the same opinion from a man who has excavated and levelled several acres of pits.

Again, the upholders of the habitation theory may fairly be asked to explain the manner of life under such conditions. Over large portions the pits are so close together that it requires care to walk between them without slipping down.

After making allowance for some falling in of the sides, what space could have been left for a path between the pits when they had been roofed in, for the principal rafters at least must have had some bearing on the solid ground? The largest pits would have furnished plenty of floor space as in the Kamskatka dwellings; but only the artist of "Pre-historic Peeps" could do credit to the conditions of existence in the lesser holes. Even a small family would have found it difficult to keep separate; and in their mixed-up state would rather have resembled Keene's picture of the too convivial party placed in a four-wheeler for safe conduct home, but presenting a chaotic mixture of human limbs when examined by the night policeman.

Also, how is it that only here in this part of England do we find the inhabitants preferring to bury themselves? The whole land to the east and south is covered with the remains of camps, tumuli, trackways, and sites of British villages; but nothing deeper than the ordinary hut circle is to be found there.

I think that some authority for this mode of life, based on classical and mediæval writers, has been found by taking their diction too literally. Depth, darkness, seclusion from the light and air, may as easily in poetical language refer to troglodytes as to dwellers in pits, and the quotations from Virgil and the Book of Job seem to refer to either mode of dwelling. Mr. Kerslake in sober earnestness cited as an analogy the appearance of the space of ground in central London cleared for the new Law Courts, completely overlooking the necessity of cellarage and foundations in such a confined space.

If the theory of human habitation cannot be sustained, do the excavations satisfactorily explain the appearance of the pits at this spot? As the Report of General Pitt-Rivers seems to supply in fullest detail the answer, that they are workings for obtaining the green-sandstone in pieces suitable for fashioning into querns or small millstones, it will be most satisfactory to print this part from pp. 9-11; the references are to the plans,

which are reproduced on a smaller scale in *Proceedings* XXX, ii, 149, 151.

"The cutting was commenced at C (plates I and II), near the top of the northern slope of the hill. After digging through the surface mould and about three feet of sandy clay with chert, the original surface was reached, marked by a line of buff-coloured sand, showing that the part above had been heaped up by the original excavators. Fragments of stone were found lying horizontally on this old surface line. Beneath this came disintegrated rock in more or less horizontal layers, in digging through which it became evident that to dig down to the rock by means of successive pits would have been a work of great labour, on account of having to dig vertically through the horizontal layers of stone, and that to push trenches horizontally along the surface of the rock would have been a much easier process. Beneath this, at a depth of four to seven feet from the top, we came to the solid sandstone rock, the joints of which ran obliquely across the cutting. These formed lines of weakness by means of which the large blocks of sandstone might be detached from the matrix.

"Pushing the section southward, at G we came to the vertical line, easily perceived in the section, which marked the margin of the original excavations. This line, GH, plate I, was followed out and found to run across the cutting into Pit 3 on the south-east, and Pit 4 on the north-west, showing that the present circular form of Pit 1, which had been selected on account of its symmetry, did not in any way accord with the shape of the original excavations. The bottom of the pit also was shown, by excavating the silting and exposing the sandstone rock, to be very irregular, running down on the slope of the joints to a depth of 10·5 feet from the surface, proving that it could not by any possibility have been used as a habitation, but had been formed simply by the removal of irregular blocks of sandstone on the lines of the joints.

"Continuing the cutting southward, at L we came to a block

of sand which appeared to be unmoved on the west side of the cutting. The old surface line above this, marked as before by a buff line of sand, dipped down towards R in a manner which appeared to indicate that it had fallen in during the excavations. The line of old surface terminated abruptly in the hollow, and was not continuous with the old surface line above M. At R a deep pit filled with silting had to be excavated to a depth of sixteen feet from the surface, beneath which the bottom was found sloping irregularly on the line of the joints, and it appeared evidently to be the corner of a trench or pit which had been cut lower than the others in search of stone. This was the deepest part of the old excavations that we found, but there was no indication here of any pit at all on the surface . . . . .

"At M, another portion of undisturbed ground was found, at the west side only, as before, but the margin of the old excavation dipped abruptly at P, where tool-marks were observed on the undisturbed rock at a depth of ten feet from the surface. In the centre of the pit, at S, at a depth of 7·75 feet from the surface, six broken fragments of quern-stones were found as if thrown together during the filling in of the pit. All had marks of having been tool-dressed, and they were probably thrown away as being imperfect. The fact that tool-marks were found on all the quern stones, and only at one spot on the undisturbed rock, proved that the workmen could not have quarried the rock continuously, otherwise tool-marks would have been found all over. They appear only to have removed the loose stones, or such as could be easily detached . . . . .

"It would thus appear that the circular form of some of the pits is wholly delusive, in so far as it might be supposed to indicate shapes suitable for human habitation. The probability is that the original excavators followed the lines of the joints in continuous trenches, throwing back the sand in irregular heaps, and a general coincidence in the lines of pits, depressions, and ridges on the surface in the vicinity of the section, with

the lines of joints in the rocks laid bare in the section, makes it probable that these trenches followed the lines of the joints. Where the depressions in the rubbish thus thrown back happened to have equal length and breadth, the loose sand, in the course of time, became rounded into perfectly circular pits, but in other cases, the long trenches and the ridges between them can still be traced on the ground. The ridges and circles are not spaces of undisturbed ground left between the pits, but simply heaps of *ejectamenta* thrown back and rendered more or less uniform in appearance by age and silting. The sides of the original excavations discovered in the section were also found to be perfectly upright, and even undercut in some places, so that they could not have stood for a couple of days in this soil, if the holes had not been quickly filled up by earth cast back from fresh excavations . . . . .

"From first to last not a single fragment of pottery the size of a pin's head was found in any part of the section through the pits, although it was carefully looked for by all the workmen, which is quite in confirmation of the evidence of Sir R. C. Hoare, and of the workmen who, since his time, have been employed continuously for many years in levelling the pits on the opposite side of the hill. I consider this evidence conclusive against the habitation theory, for if, as has been assumed by the advocates of that hypothesis, many of the pits, though originally dug for habitations, have since been transformed by quarrying for stone; this process would not have eliminated from the soil all trace of pottery, but rather have preserved them."

To the above extract it will be sufficient to add the evidence of one of the workmen (note to p. 6 of Report): "There are usually three layers or qualities of stone lying level beneath the surface and beneath the sand. The top layer—one to two feet—is made of fragments, which I consider was of no use to the old people. Beneath that was another layer, perhaps one-and-a-half foot thick on the average, consisting of larger

pieces, and much harder than the upper one. It is now used for building walls. Beneath this we find another layer of the same stone as the other two, but solid and soft, not in fragments like the other two . . . I think it was to get stone from this second layer that they made the pits. The top layer was of no use to them, but the second layer was the kind they wanted, and the bottom layer was too solid and soft, and they could not work it. I have seen more than twenty millstones got out, and they were always made of the second layer."

Articles in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. XL, p. 281, and *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* II, art. 50, 75, 76, 112, do not carry the matter any further; and the evidence given in Pitt-Rivers' report still supplies the best material for coming to a decision. This decision, of course, leaves untouched the question as to the identification of Pensauelcoit (Penhuelcoit), with Penselwood. Its name and position agree perfectly with the old British tradition of a fight to a finish at this spot between Vespasian and the native tribes. Retreating before a victorious enemy advancing from the south-east, the remnant would here find themselves on the verge of the open plain, with the deep broken forest country behind them, admirable for concealment, but hopeless for maintaining a combined and active resistance. If the natives had been in the habit of coming to the pits for their querns, it would be an additional reason why the site should form a rallying ground. It is difficult to understand why Mr. Kerslake should have ignored the two British camps in the Stourton woods. The larger and stronger consists of two concentric ramparts and ditches situated on the high ground between Six Wells bottom and the valley containing the convent and Stourton mill, seven hundred feet above sea level. Although in a strong position it could never have been a conspicuous mark in the district.

The other camp is one hundred feet higher in situation, and consists of one rampart with outer ditch, oval in form; it lies on the edge of the ridge just south of the depression at Black

Slough, which forms a natural fosse of great depth. Its site is, to use Leland's expression, "a *specula* to view a great piece of the country thereabout," from north-west to south. The camp is partly in the parish of Charlton Musgrove, and partly in Stourton parish, in the hamlet of Gasper, which until recently occupied the anomalous position of being in Somerset and Wilts at the same time. May it be that the Somerset connection was due to the tradition that, though a Saxon settlement and a Christian church arose, as is so often the case, on a fresh site, still here was the original position of Caer Pensauelcoit, the fortress at the head of the primeval forest of Selwood?

Three times the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records a battle fought at a place whose name sufficiently resembles Pen to have caused historians since Camden to have taken it for the site. In 658, Kenwalk fought against the Britons "at Peonne," and he drove them as far as Pedrida. The limit of the retreat may be either the town of South Petherton, or the course of the river Parret. As the town is close to the river, the choice of one rather than the other is only important as giving the direction of the flight. The number of localities called Pen in the district is rather confusing. Besides Penselwood there are, Pen hill near Wells, Pen hill near South Cadbury, two Pen hills in Yeovil, and Pendomer. The previous collision between Saxon and Briton had taken place at Bradford-on-Avon in 652, and it has been assumed that the victor worked his way south, keeping Selwood Forest on his right flank, until he met the enemy at Penselwood, from which point there was a road to the west. Mr. Kerslake was, I believe, the first to contend that no place now called Pen could have been the battlefield; because the diphthong in Peonna would give a long vowel sound, with a modern spelling like Peena; and he proposed Poyntington down, near Sherborne, as the site of the battle, (*Primeval Metropolis*, p. 45; *Proceedings* XXII, ii, 61). The second battle of Pen was fought by

the West Saxons of Somerset and Devon, against the Danes "at Peonnho," in 1001. This site is now allowed to be Pinhoe, near Exeter, which the natives call Peenhoe to this day. The third battle was that fought by Edmund Ironside against Canute, at "Peonnan by Gillingaham," in 1016. Mr. Kerslake foresaw the instant rejoinder that if Pen(selwood,) within five miles of Gillingham, could represent the last Peonna, it could equally well represent the first; but as Poyntington down is ten miles from Gillingham, he could only argue that "we must trust to the diphthong reason for a preference of ten miles." But then, in the first place, the chronicler would surely have named Sherborne, a highly important town at that time, the seat of a bishopric, and the burial place of kings, within two miles of Poyntington. In the second place, why should the chronicler of 1016 have written Peonna at all instead of Ponditone, in which guise it appears in *Domesday* in 1086? The ingenious argument that the original form of the name was Poinington, as pronounced locally to this day, has no support in any written example, while the supposed earthworks on the Down have even less existence in fact than those at Penselwood. The Montacute cartulary gives Pondintun and Puntintun, and Pointington occurs in 1225 (Charters of Lord Willoughby de Broke.) If Peonnan is a plural noun like "the Devizes," it might refer to the two camps at Penselwood. But if *Domesday* of 1086 can have Ponditone for one as it has Penne for the other, why, in the interval between 1016 and 1086, was one taken and turned into something quite different, while the other was left in its Celtic simplicity? It therefore appears that the site of the first battle only is in doubt, and in the absence of any other competitor, it may be allowed that the early British tradition of the fame of the first battle at Caer Pensauelcoit, which survived 300 years of Roman domination, as shown by the histories of Nennius and Geoffrey of Monmouth, led the Britons, for the second time, to meet their fate, on this occasion a lasting one, at Penselwood.

The descent of the manor has, curiously enough, been obscured by the mistaken identification of another Pen. Collinson (iii, 44), in his account of the parish, states that John Butler of Badminton died in 1524, seised of the manor. His Somerset property was situated at Emborough, Walton, Walcombe, and Penne, all held of William Tracey (Collinson ii, 135), which in 1340 had formed part of the property of Simon de Trewythosa, held of the Tracey family. None of the persons named above occur in any list of the owners of Penselwood; and Walcombe and Penne are to be identified with places still bearing the same names on the southern slopes of Mendip, above the city of Wells.

The overlordship of Penselwood, held in *Domesday* by William (Geral) of Roger de Arundel, descended through Gerbert de Percy to the family of Fitzpayn; and in Kirby's *Quest* of 1284 (S. R. S. III, 23.) Nicholas Clymund holds Penne of Richard Fromund, who holds it of Robert Fitzpayn. If the entry in the *Pipe Roll* of 10 Richard I (1198), that Matthew de Clevedon was asserting his right to certain lands in Ken Hewish and Penna, refers to Penselwood, it is most probably to Gasper; as in 1377 Matthew de Clevedon settled Gayspere on himself and his wife Joane (*Ped. Fin.*, 50 Edw. III, 797 of divers counties: S. R. S. XVII, 193). Early references to Pen are rare. In 1266, Richard Fromund was patron (Bishop Gifford's *Register*: S. R. S. XIII, 5). He was a considerable landowner in the county, holding Heggessole in Broomfield of Simon de Montacute. The property did not pass to persons of the same family, for in 1317, Oggeshole was held by John Gyon, and Pen by William Tauntifer. Johanna, daughter of Walter Tatifer, married Nicholas Chesilden, and their son, Richard Chesilden "junior," was patron of Pen in 1342 and 1345. The use of "junior" implies another Richard living, probably the father of Nicholas. The elder Richard was high sheriff of Dorset 2, 3, 4, Edward II, donor of property to the hospital at Wilton in 1333, and

steward of Mere in 1296-7 ; he married his daughter Joan to Roger le Walch of Chickerell, in 1332. From these notices we gather that Tauntifer and Tatifer are the same, and that Pen passed from Fromund to William Tauntifer, then to Walter, whose heiress married Nicholas Chesilden.

In 1325, Richard de Clare was patron, as life-lessee, of the manor (Bishop Drokensford's *Register* : S. R. S. I, 242), in 1327 he was the principal tax-payer. Richard Chesilden "junior" married Margaret, daughter and heiress of Jordan Fitzrogers of Holcombe Rogus, co. Devon. He married again, as in 1348 he settled lands in Devon, and the manor and advowson of Penne on himself and his wife Joan (*Ped. Fin.*, 21 Edw. III, 400, divers counties). To Richard succeeded, after an interval of one or two generations, John of Holcombe Rogus, patron of Pen in 1402, 1412, 1419, about which date he died, as his will was proved in 1420 (48 March). His widow Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Warre of Hestercombe, was patron in 1426, 1428, and 1433. There were two daughters, co-heiresses ; Matilda, who brought Holcombe to her husband John Blewett, and Margaret, wife of Sir William Wadham of Merifield. On the death of Nicholas Wadham in 1609, his large landed property was divided between his three sisters, Joan Strangways, Margaret Martin, and Florence Wyndham. In 1791 Pen was the property of the Earl of Ilchester (Fox-Strangways), the Earl of Egremont (Wyndham), Mr. Biggin, and others.