

white dog looking at them through the gate. Tom asked a local farmer who owned it, and the farmer told them there was no such dog for miles around. They learned later that the lane outside Hole House is reputed to be haunted by the ghost of a white dog—at least four other people had seen it.

The story has a sequel. Clearing the undergrowth in the slope below the house, Tom found that someone had dug a trench as the foundation for a shed. With the natural instinct of an archaeologist, he clambered into it and examined its sides; sticking out of the earth, he found a fragment of a glazed floor tile dating from the fourteenth century. Further excavations produced most of the rest of the tile. It had probably come from the floor of a small chapel and it contained pictures of a white hare and a white dog, as well as symbols of the sun and moon. By this time, Lethbridge had reason to believe that these symbols were associated with ancient pagan religion. So again there seemed to be a tenuous connection between this religion and a 'supernatural' occurrence, the 'ghost' of a white dog.

In order to understand the reasons for Lethbridge's absorbing interest in the ancient religion of pre-Christian Britain, it is necessary to go back to 1954, three years before Tom and Mina left Cambridge for Devon. It was on a damp autumn afternoon of the year that Tom began his search for a giant. The search was the beginning of a curious detective story, and of a train of events that led him to abandon his academic career.

The giant was called Gog, and Tom was fairly certain that he lay beneath the turf of Wandlebury Camp, an Iron-Age hilltop fort built by the Celts about 400 BC.

He first came across his trail in a legend recounted by a dubious cleric named Gervase of Tilbury, who was born around 1150. For a priest, Gervase was an unpleasant character—in one of his works he boasts that he told lies about a girl who spurned his advances and got her burnt as a heretic. In 1212, Gervase wrote a book to flatter his patron, the Emperor Otto IV. In this book, he describes Wandlebury Camp ('Wandlebiria'), and tells the legend of a ghostly warrior on horseback. If a knight should ride up to the entrance of Wandlebury Camp on a moonlit night, and shout a challenge, the phantom guardian of the camp would appear, also on horseback, and engage him in battle. Gervase goes on to tell how Osbert, son of Hugh, conquered

the phantom knight and led away his magnificent black horse. As the sun rose, the horse broke its tether and galloped away, never to be seen again. But the spear wound made by the phantom knight re-opened every year on the anniversary of the fight.

A century ago, historians would have dismissed such a legend as a fairy tale invented by superstitious countrymen. Nowadays, students of folklore realise that most of them are based on some core of historical fact. And in this case, Lethbridge had a clue to what it was. One of his colleagues at the Museum of Archaeology was an old man called Sammy Cowles, an expert in restoring broken pots. And when Sammy was a child—say around 1870—he had met an old man who told him that there used to be a giant cut into the hillside near Wandlebury. Sammy knew nothing about a horse, or, for that matter, a legendary chariot of gold that is supposed to be buried in the same area. But about the giant he was positive.

Significantly, the range of hills that includes Wandlebury is called the Gogmagog hills. Magog was a legendary giant, and his story is told in the *History of the Kings of Britain* by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a bishop who died in 1155. Geoffrey's *History* is best known as one of the chief sources of the legends of King Arthur and the knights of the round table. It begins by explaining how, when the Trojan War came to an end, Aeneas and his companions fled to Italy, and became the founders of Rome. Another Trojan warrior named Brutus came to an island in the western ocean, 'twixt Gaul and Ireland', and named it after himself—Britain. The island was shared out among his companions, among whom was one called Corineus. He became lord of the peninsula that forms the westernmost tip of Britain, which became known as Corinea, or Cornwall. Cornwall was peopled with giants, and the largest and fiercest was Goemagot, or Gogmagog, who was twelve cubits tall (about eighteen feet). All the giants were killed in a great battle, and Gogmagog was slain by Corineus, who hurled him from a cliff top on to the rocks below. Later tradition turns Gogmagog into two giants, Gog and Magog, who were brought to London, and forced to work as porters at the royal palace. Their effigies can still be seen outside the Guildhall. And the giant figures of Gog and Magog were once carved into the turf at Plymouth Hoe—between Devon and Cornwall—although they vanished in the time of Queen Elizabeth I.

Now the giant Gogmagog may or may not have existed. But the giant hill figures are certainly one of the great historical mysteries of