

Editor John Roper
Tel: 07967 666794
Email: john.roper@profinder.eu
Production assistant:
Jocasta Roper

Associate editor Brian Shillibeer

Advertisement sales

Steve Anthony
Tel: 07967 585475
Email: steve.anthony@profinder.eu
Mehreen Haroon-Ali
Tel: 07932 243008
Email: mehreen.haroon@profinder.eu

Advertisement production

Email: fabricatorcopy@profinder.eu

Admin:

The Studio, Hillside Avenue,
Elstree & Borehamwood, WD6 1HQ
Tel: 07807 374932
cathryn.ellis@profinder.eu

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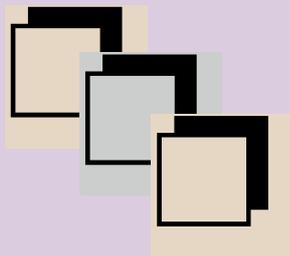
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Comment

There is a legend that King Arthur did not die but sleeps in the island of Avalon ready to return and save his people in time of need. More recently, (1596 to be precise, Sir Francis Drake is said that he will return to save his homeland should it be in peril.

Sir Henry Newbolt's poem dramatises this:

“Take my drum to England, hang it by the shore,
And strike it when your powder’s running low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I’ll quit the port of
heaven, and drum them up the channel as we
drummed them long ago.”

A bit specifically west country but in folklore there are many mythical heroes ready to return in a time of crisis. It seems to be just what they do. We British – along with many other races – seem to like our dead heroes (or is it that we like our heroes dead?) even though we have been through many perils and tragedies in the form of wars and epidemics and seen no sign of any of them.

It may be that, having tasted success or power, it is hard for these guys to let go. (As far as I can tell they are all guys.) Time of course fades memories and it may be that some of them weren't as heroic as they liked to make out. It is an attractive idea for someone who fancies himself as a hero to fashion himself on his own hero, taking on their persona, mannerisms, figures of speech and such. Even, perhaps taking on the role of biographer to get closer to him. (Again my apologies for gender typing but it does seem, mainly, to be a bloke thing.)

One has to wonder whether legends can be created in modern times. Is there a saviour of the nation ready to take on the role of sleeping protector? And what would it take to cause him to rise up? A faery queen striking from the north, attempting to split the kingdom asunder? An attempt to reunite with the Gauls across the Channel?

Who knows? Then just as I was wondering, Boris – the King of the World – stands up and delivers his ‘non’ resignation speech to parliament.

The parliamentary herd may have trampled him but he was, surely, signalling his preparedness to make a come-back and save us:

“Hasta la vista, baby.”

John Roper

