

John Twine
De rebus Albionis ... commentarii
London
1590

IOANNIS TWINI
BOLINGDVNENSIS,
ANGLI, DE REBUS ALBIO-
NICIS, BRITANNICIS
ATQVE ANGLICIS,
Commentariorum
libri duo.

Ad Thomam TWINVM filium.

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LONDINI,
Excudebat Edm. Bollifantus, pro
Richardo Watkins.

1590

<This book is available online, and I am doubtful whether any part of it is worth transcribing. It was written by John Twine in 1560, not for publication, but as a parting gift for his 17-year-old son, Thomas, who was about to leave home for Oxford. Thirty years later (his father having died in 1581), Thomas Twine decided to put it into print. For reasons which, as he explains them, do not make sense, John Twine chose to say what he had to say in the form of an imaginary conversation, supposedly taking place at Chislet, in or soon after 1523. The abbot of St Augustine's, John Foche, had a house there to which he could retire when he wanted to relax. Three friends arrive to visit him: John Digon, one of his monks, Nicholas Wotton, and John Twine himself. (Digon and Wotton have recently returned to England after studying at Paris and Louvain and want to pay their respects; Twine just tags along.) Before supper (book 1) and after supper (book 2), they discuss what is known or thought to be known about the early history of Britain – or Albion, as it was called at first, while it was still connected to Gaul by an isthmus, a tongue of land between Dover and Calais. (This is what 'Vochius' suggests. He does most of the talking; 'Wottonus' asks questions and adds some comments of his own; 'Digonius' intervenes now and then; 'Twinus' never speaks.) It is, all told, a very strange piece of work. . . . Up to this point, I have been assuming that we can take the published text at face value. But in fact I am far from sure that Thomas Twine is being candid with us. – C.F. February 2011.>