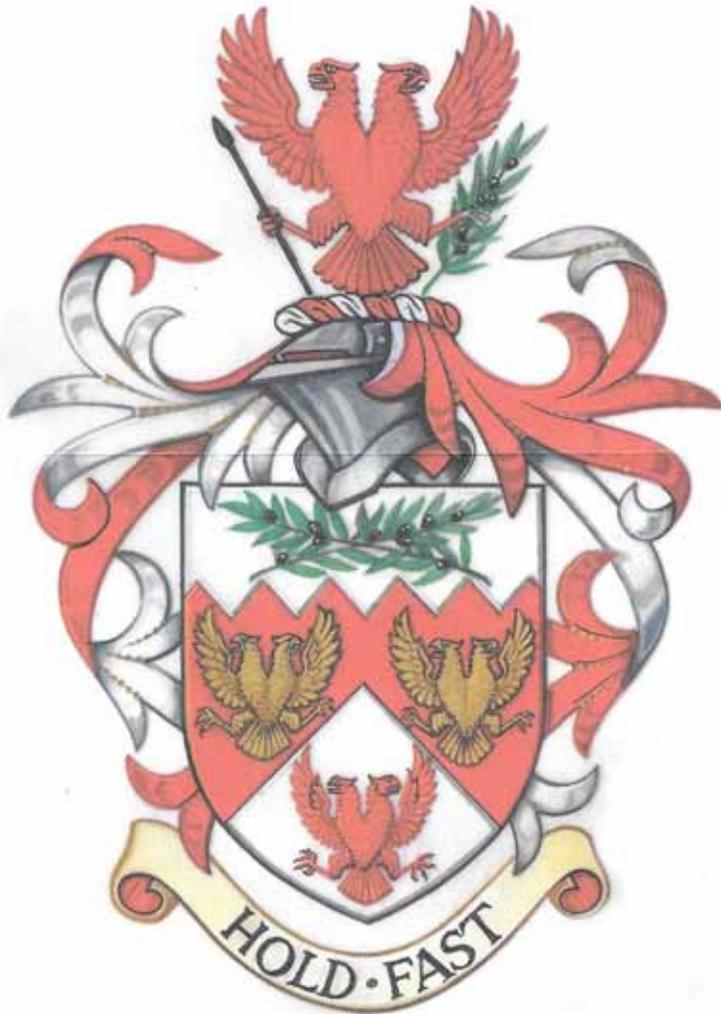


A FLOCK OF FABULOUS BIRDS



Double-headed Eagles abound in the arms recently granted to Robert Holden, who had served as a pilot both in the Royal Air Force and then in Civil Airlines, hence the spear and the olive branch in the crest. The olive wins in the shield, as that represents the greater part of his career. Now retired, he and his family are much enamoured of his arms .

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Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

No.190 Saint Columba's Day 2017



The Kraken by Olaus Magnus



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts



We have not referred to Saint Columba since 2007, in No 86, when we gave a potted history of everything that is known about him, including his reputed overcoming of a monster in Loch Ness, which was featured in a recent issue. He is still revered in Scotland and the North of England, and his feast day falls on 9 June.

The Kraken (to rhyme with ‘awaken’ not with ‘bracken’) was a legendary sea-monster off the coast of Norway, pictured as on the cover by Olaus Magnus in his marine map of northern Europe, as described in the Book Review in later pages of this issue. Olaus’s own description of the Kraken is as follows:

“Their Forms are horrible, their Heads square, all set with prickles, and they have sharp and long Horns round about, like a Tree rooted up by the Roots: They are ten or twelve Cubits long, very black, and with huge eyes: the compass whereof is above eight or ten cubits: the Apple of the Eye is of one Cubit, and is red and fiery coloured, which in the dark night appears to Fisher-men afar off under Waters, as a burning fire, having hairs like Goose-Feathers, thick and long, like a Beard hanging down; the rest of the body, for the great of the head, which square, is very small, not being above 14 or 15 Cubits long; one of these Sea-Monsters will drown easily many great ships provided with many strong Marriners.”

There is a preserved head in one of the Royal Nordic collections said to be that of a Kraken, but in spite of its largely dilapidated condition, it has been identified as that of a Walrus. Perhaps the dreaded Kraken is just another of those beasts imperfectly identified and then elaborately exaggerated to become a fabulous monster. Maybe my zoology demonstrator was right when she told me not to go chasing after dragons and other legendary creatures because there were so many extraordinary real animals still waiting to be properly examined and understood. There must have been a time when the Walrus was one such. Nevertheless, the Kraken remains one of my favourite fabulous beasts, though with those large eyes it may actually have been a giant Octopus.

JOURNAL SCAN

Tak Tent No 74 Winter 2017 has this Mermaid crest on the Thistle Stall Plate of Lord Balfour of Burleigh (compare with Lord Byron’s crest in the last issue) and this very fine pair of Unicorns supporting the Royal Arms of Scotland from the Hague Roll of 1592.



Aspects of Heraldry Number 31 2017 starts on the front cover with a Mermaid and a Triton supporting the arms of Holderness, as painted by Jim Winstanley SHA

Inside there are a Pegasus supporting the arms of the newly appointed Lady Companion of the Garter, Baroness Manningham-Buller (*left*), a Demi-Dragon, a Triton, two more Dragons, a Phoenix, a Sea-Horse and another Dragon all in the arms of various Cities, and in the arms of their associated Universities, a Demi-Griffin and four more Dragons.



The White Lion Society Newsletter 73, May 2017 has a picture from Eton College with a fine pair of Unicorns carved in the round supporting an early Royal coat of arms, France Modern quartering England.

The Heraldry Gazette 144 June 2017 has this intriguing picture sent in by Roger Callan (*right*) of a mace being carried in a procession at Yale University which has a model of a Yale’s head as its crowning piece. Not, he says, the Yale of Beaufort but the Yale of Yale.



A FINE INN-SIGN



This is one of David Vaudrey's snapshots from Snailwell.

IS THIS THE BIGGEST DRAGON IN THE WORLD ?



The bridge over the River Han at Da Nang in Vietnam is shaped like an enormous Dragon and spouts flames at weekends and on public holidays – picture sent by Martin Davies.

DURHAM DELIGHT



On a visit to Durham, Leslie Hodgson met this delightful drawing (above) and brought it home for us. The very realistic Griffin (*Gryphus, Greiff*) was drawn by Johannes Jonstonus in 1657, printed in *Historiae Naturalis* in Amsterdam and now in the Durham Cathedral Library. It is not surprising that such life-like pictures convinced people that Griffins were real. This version makes it fairly clear that the front legs of the Griffin were the back legs of the Eagle.

FEEDBACK: Leslie Hodgson has himself answered the poser he set in No 188. The Bishop of London from 1945 to 1956 was John Wand. He cannot therefore have died in 1952; perhaps this date refers to the placement of the window. Similar solutions were submitted by Bernard Juby, Alan Buckingham and Edward Mallinson – the Bishop died in 1977.

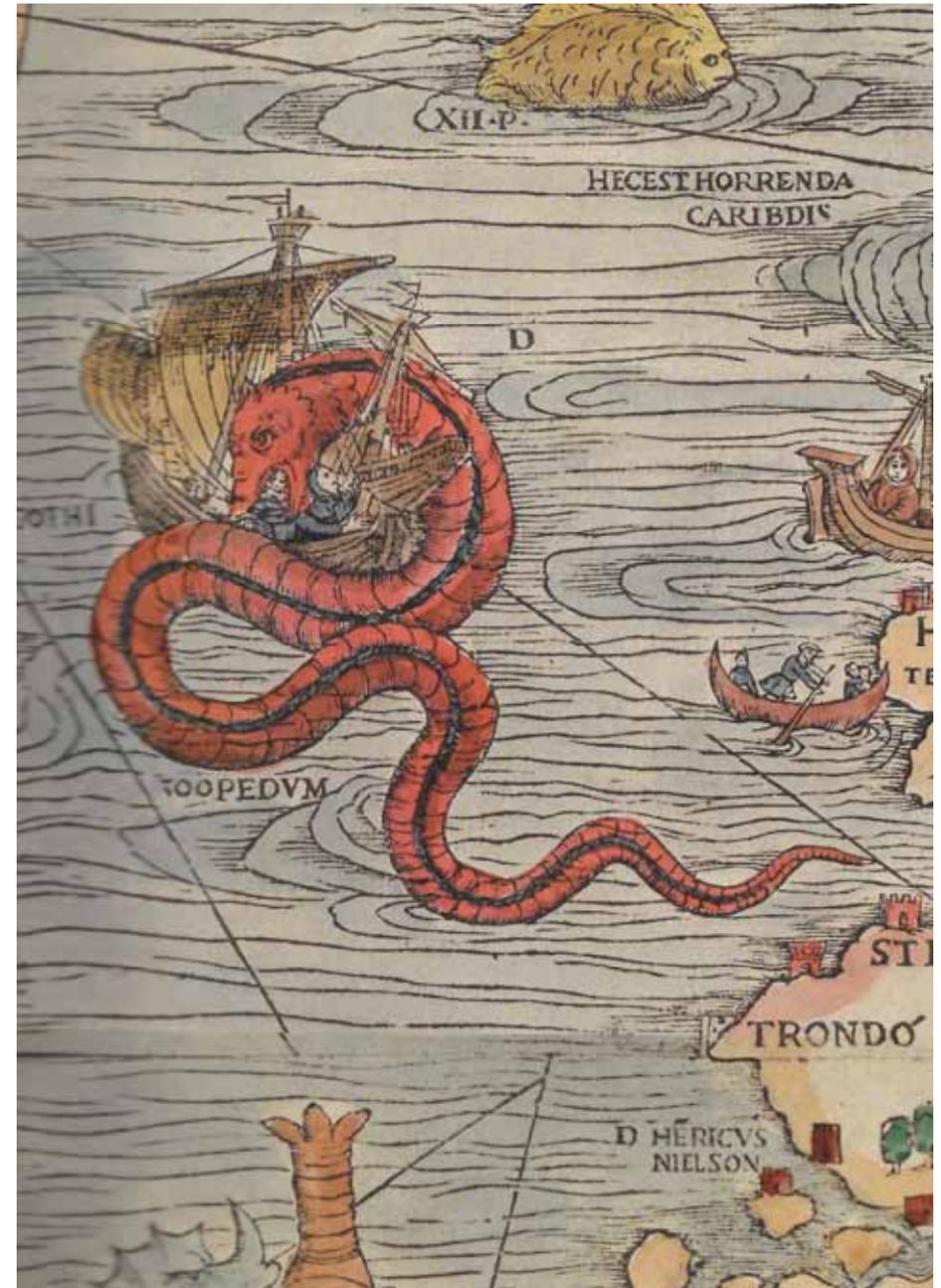
BOOK REVIEW

Sea Monsters. The Lore and Legacy of Olaus Magnus's Marine Map by Joseph Nigg (Lewes, 2013) is a fantastic work of scholarship. We have met Joseph Nigg before and recognize him as a master of fabulous beasts. In this book he takes the classic map of northern Europe from 1539 known as the Carta Marina and analyses each of the monsters depicted in the North Sea and Arctic Ocean, but first he gives a thorough outline of the whole history of marine monsters from ancient classical sources down to mediaeval times. The initial surprise is that the book jacket, on stout paper, unfolds to reveal a print of the entire Carta Marina, 23 x 31 inches. It is, of course, reproduced within the book, but not in this magnificent size. Nigg then compares two subsequent sea maps that depend heavily on Olaus's imagery, Sebastian Munster's *Cosmographia* (1544) and Abraham Ortelius's *Islandia* (1590) and identifies all the monsters depicted, and then sets out on a Voyage through Olaus's seas, from south to north, picking out each outlandish creature as he comes to it, with a chapter of description and analysis. They are the Rockas, the Sea Worm, the Duck Tree, the

Polypus (a strange anomaly here, as Olaus's commentary obviously describes an octopus while the illustration shows a lobster – both, of course have “lots of feet”), Balena and Orca, the Sea Swine, the Sea Unicorn, the Prister (*see our No 143*), the Ziphius, the Sea Cow, the Sea Rhinoceros (*left - eating a lobster*), Spermaceti, a Beached Whale, More Pristers (*right below*), the Island Whale, the Sea Serpent (*see opposite*), Caribdis, Another



Prister, a Sea Creature, a Rosmarus, and the Kraken (*see cover*). Nigg finishes his voyage with a summing up called ‘Landfall’ along with a glossary, list of resources and so on. This is an exemplary book and is beautifully presented, a real dracological treasure.



The Sea Serpent from the Carta Marina by Olaus Magnu