

The Cockatrice Badge-Beast of Sir William Kingston KG holding his Banner.

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A Welsh Wyvern holding the Banner of Gwynedd



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

We welcome new members Bernard Juby and Edward Mallinson.

The Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels is celebrated annually on 29 September and was widely held to be one of the four cardinal turning-points of the year. Michael appears first in the Hebrew scriptures as one of seven Archangels, and may therefore be linked with one of the planetary gods of the ancient Middle East, probably Marduk who was traditionally shown fighting the monster Tiamat. In the Christian teaching, Michael is the Archangel who led the Heavenly Host in driving the fallen angels out of Heaven. See, for instance, Durer's version of this event reproduced in No 77, where the fallen angels are depicted as demonic creatures. In art, Saint Michael is often shown straddling a demon or a dragon, and this became a familiar symbol of the struggle of good over evil. For our own times, in which few people believe in the reality of demons or even of dragons, this image seems rather abstract and irrelevant, of historical interest only, but **Una Lewers** has sent in a brief passage from a work by Rudolf Steiner in which he has suggested that for people of today the picture of Saint Michael fighting the Dragon could be taken as a symbol of the struggle of the human spirit against materialism.

WELSH NATIONALISM

The picture on the cover shows an early form of Welsh Dragon, later classified as a Wyvern because it had only two legs to go with its two wings, holding up a banner of the arms used by the mediaeval princes of Gwynedd (and still used by the Prince of Wales today as an inescutcheon on his Royal Arms), taken from an early Tudor manuscript and reproduced in the article by Clive Cheesman in the book *Designing Change*, that we reviewed in No 110. These arms are the ones that it has been suggested might replace the repeated arms of England in the fourth quarter of the Royal Arms, should Wales ever achieve the status of a Kingdom. The same picture also appears in *The Art of Heraldry* by Peter Gwynn-Jones, who dates it to the mid-sixteenth century and gives the reference Coll. Arms Vincent 152 p 96. He then shows another heraldic monster from the same source (this time from p 107) which we now reproduce on our back cover, page 8. This is a Cockatrice supporting the arms of Sir William Kingston, Knight of the Garter. In each case the Tudor artist has given very expressive features to the creatures.

eagle's heads and legs, white wings, and ermine lower bodies of lions. They are not Griffins, because they have no ears (though this may be an oversight by the artist – no blazon is given, so one cannot be sure).

The BC/Yukon Blazon (Issue 6, Spring/Summer 2009) shows the “sea-cougars Gules queued and winged Argent” granted as supporters to augment the arms of Robb Watt, the first Chief Herald of Canada and now Rideau Herald Emeritus. It also has a page devoted to the Origin of Saab's Griffin, tracing the crowned Griffin's head used as a badge by that brand of motor car back to the 12th century, when the House of Pomerania bore *Argent a griffin rampant Gules armed Or* and in 1437 granted *Argent a Griffin's head erased Gules crowned Or* to the town of Malmö.

Somerset Heraldry Society Journal (No 15, August 2009) has a brief article on Some Somerset Dragons illustrated with a few drawings taken from these pages.

The Heraldic Craftsman (No 69, September 2009) features some new stamps showing Dragons, Unicorn (actually a horse in fancy dress – look at the feet) and Mermaid, whilst a diligent search will reveal another Unicorn, a Sea-Horse, some Martlets and a few Griffins.

The Heraldry Gazette (New Series 113, September 2009) has some more Heraldry of Recent Knights, including the Demi-Griffin crest of Sir Trevor Holdsworth and the Chinese Dragon supporters of Sir Gordon Jackson, and an article on The Apothecaries Arms showing the shield with the figure of Apollo straddling a Dragon (blazoned as a Serpent), two Unicorn supporters and an almost-fabulous Rhinoceros crest.

CORRESPONDENCE

Jack Campbell-Kease sent copies of four pages of beasts from Alex von Volborth's book *Heraldry: Customs, Rules and Styles* (Poole, 1981) which, for their clarity of drawing, are well worth looking at again.

Martin Davies sent a picture of the Gray's Inn Griffin, with a note on its provenance, explaining that the golden Griffin on a black field is a badge, and not a coat of arms, which was adopted because it was thought that the proper arms lacked impact, being based on the de Grey arms of blue and gold stripes: *Barry Azure and Or within a bordure quarterly Or and Azure*.

Leslie Hodgson, as a genealogist, wondered how William Maule, whose crest we showed on the cover of the last issue, was related to the Earl of Panmure, whose arms with a very similar crest we showed in No 96, page 4.

in three loops. In (c) the whole head is lengthened and narrowed, the lower part of the mouth being filled with involved loops. In (d) the forehead, eye and nostril have been almost crowded out and the lips enormously lengthened, while in (e) and (f) elongated eye and mouth alone have been used.

We are grateful to Jim for sending these examples of how monsters evolve.

JOURNAL SCAN

The Coat of Arms (No 217, Spring 2009) has a paper by Steven Ashley about a metal buckle-plate unearthed in Norfolk bearing a lion charged on the rump with a cross potent, but in illustrating other examples of this device he also shows in the margin a strange one-eyed double-headed eagle which I thought was worthy of our attention (*right*). It is from the 12th century mosaic floor in a church in Provence. John Cherry, Master Dracologist, reviews very favourably the book *The Natural History of Unicorns* by Chris Lavers that we dealt with in No 107.



The Norfolk Standard (May 2009) has a picture of the fierce “Horseshoe” dragon that was on show in the Assembly House during Norwich’s Dragon Week, as well as a pair of red recumbent Griffins in the arms of Trafford of Wroxham.

The Heraldic Craftsman (No 68, June 2009) has a couple of Griffins. One is the crest of Michael Beloff QC (with three Griffins’ heads on the shield) painted by Baz Manning for Gray’s Inn, that we had in No 110, p 8, and the other appears in the arms of William Wand, Bishop of London in 1945, the only fabulous beast in a total of 84 arms of all the Bishops of London on a page produced by Roland Symons.

Tak Tent (No 44, July 2009) cannot avoid a Unicorn or two, but also shows the Opinicus crest of Mark Dennis over his arms augmented with the additaments of a pursuivant.

Flagmaster (Issue 131, July 2009) has an article on the mediaeval banners of the Palio of Siena, and these include among other devices a double-headed Eagle, a Unicorn, a wavy Dolphin and a Dragon (shown as a Wyvern).

Gonfanon (Vol 20, No 2, Summer 2009) has a couple of new hybrids. The newly-granted arms of Canada’s Federal Court is supported by a pair of golden winged sea-caribou, one male and one female, with salmon’s tails and black raven’s wings, while the arms of the Canadian Bar Association has a pair of striking supporters with red

MAORI MONSTERS

Jim McCready has sent some interesting items from New Zealand about the monsters developed by their native peoples, the Maori, starting with a page of text, reproduced below. He also sent a large number of pictures, and we shall try to include as many as we can, in this issue or the next.

Maori Monsters in New Zealand Heraldry

New Zealand was the last major group of Pacific islands to be colonized by the Polynesians. Their wood carvers were inventive and exuberant using their stone tools, and even more so when Europeans introduced metal ones. Carved ancestral figures decorated gateways, doorways and their meeting houses. Increasing stylization and elaborate spiraling tattoos produced carved panels that seem grotesque and “monstrous” to European eyes. Contortions also added more impressive vigour.

Tiki, greenstone neck pendants used by both sexes, are well-known through our coinage, but have not yet been used in personal or civic heraldry; probably because of doubt about their meaning.

The earliest, and still the most striking use of carved ancestor panels was in the 1940 grant by the Kings of Arms in London to the **Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand**, Ltd. The design was the idea of Percy Watts Rule, the notable Timaru architect and heraldist. Close inspection reveals that the two figures do not have legs, but coiled fish tails. Thus they are river or sea monsters, *taniwha* or *marahikau*, usually terrifying to canoe crews. These however are to represent **Tangaroa**, the mighty guardian sea god of the intrepid Polynesian seafarers. [*See next issue*]

A much later grant in 1982 to the **Bay of Plenty Harbour Board** at Tauranga uses a pair of *marahikau* figures from a meeting house at Te Kuiti in the central North Island ‘King Country’. [*Below*]

A full-face carved head alone is used as a crest in the 1984 grant to the **Borough of Kawerau**, also in the ‘King Country’. Unfortunately the depiction is not very effective as it is filtered through the European eyes of a College of Arms artist (as are most of these examples).

The full-face carved head divided vertically provides two heads in profile [*next page, and further development on page 5*]. The protruding tongue, so prominent in the *haka*, is increasingly elongated along with the tattooed lips, to produce a bird-like beak, and another monster called a *manaia*. A pair



of *manaia* are used as supporters in the 1965 grant to the **New Zealand Law Society**. [See No 43, and again in the next issue.]



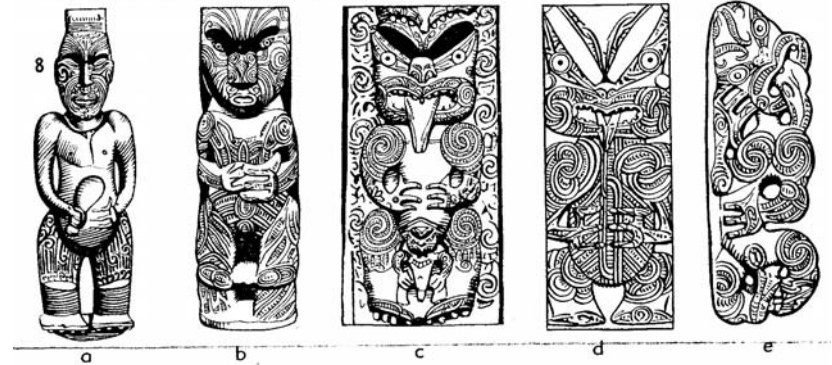
The most unusual example of Maori 'monsters' occurs within the shield of the Lord Lyon's grant of Scottish arms in 1977 to the **New Zealand Orthopaedic Association**. The crooked tree trunk is being straightened by tightly binding it to a post. The New Zealand elements here are a N.Z tree fern (the 'Silver Fern'), two *manaia* doing the binding, and a chief with a Maori rafter pattern; and a nice touch in the motto ! [Heraldry enthusiasts might like to have the blazon for this : *Or, on a mount Sable a tree fern (Cyanthia dealbata) with a crooked trunk bound to a post by a rope all Proper, the ends of the rope held by two Maori manaia respectant Gules, on a chief Sable a Maori rafter design (kowhaiwhai) Argent with inserts Gules.*] [Left]



One final Maori motif, the *pekapeka*, a native bat, is more enigmatic than monstrous. This pendant was worn close to the throat, as is the *tiki*, is used as a charge on the shield of the College of Arms grant of 1967 to the **Northland Harbour Board** at Whangerei. The *pekapeka* may be just a *manaia* with a head at each end. It certainly makes a distinctive badge in conjunction with a watersider's wool bail hook. [Right]



Jim also sent some pictures showing the transformation of a recognizably human figure by stages of stylization into what can only be seen as a monster, reproduced below with the original caption:-



Here are carved human figures, the first (a) reasonably life-like, the second (b) broadened and somewhat squared to the shape of the post on which it is carved. The third (c), carved in lower relief, is further broadened to cover most of a wide plank; while in (d), a carving in shallow relief, the human figure has not only sunk back, as it were, into the surface, but is now broadened, particularly the head, to cover the whole panel, with the lips and the body, legs and shoulders widened to provide flat surfaces for scroll and spiral decoration. The last figure (e) is turned sideways in a contorted stance, suggesting vigour and movement.

Further development of the *manaia* motif, in which the human face in profile, barely recognizable, is increasingly elongated to fill spaces in decorative patterns, is shown in another series of pictures, shown below with their caption:-

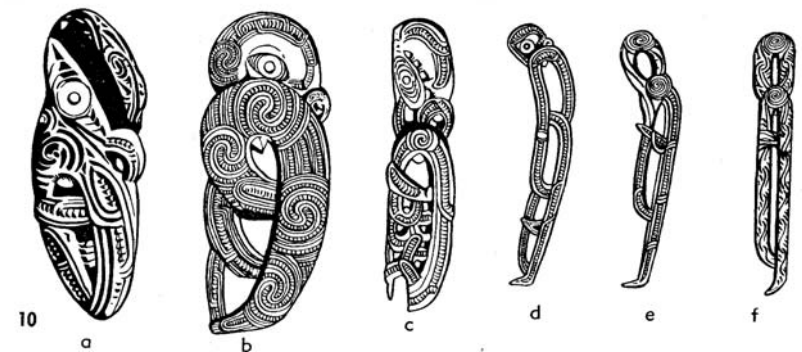


Fig 10 shows how an easily recognizable profile (a) could have the forehead, eye and nostril reduced (b), and the lips much enlarged, the lower lip in this case descending