

separately the “Ogopogo” with a virtually identical description, as part of the folklore of that area. But Cohen made a much more thorough investigation, and reported that the first appearance of the name “Ogopogo” was in a silly

little English ditty of the 1920s that somehow turned up in a club in Kelowna, a town on the shores of Lake Okanagan, where it was adapted to refer to the local legendary lake-monster. The local press then reported that “Ogopogo” was the official name of the “Famous Okanagan Sea Serpent” and, following a whole series of hoaxes, some just verbal but others involving semi-submerged motor tyres towed across the water, this name became widely accepted. Hoaxes or not, there were a number of reported sightings of the lake monster throughout the twenties, and they resumed in the late fifties and are now a regular feature of local news. Its fame has spread, and now there are similar stories of the Manipogo, the Winnipogo, and so on in other Canadian lakes, and it has secured an official place in Canadian heraldry, as reported in No

18. The whole saga bears a striking resemblance to the case of the Loch Ness Monster, rather more dramatic but less investigated scientifically. It is worthy of note that Lake Okanagan and Loch Ness are very similar in their physical characteristics, long and deep and always very cold.



HMCS Okanagan

Blazon Or, issuing out of a base barry wavy of four azure and argent, a marine monster “Ogopogo” gules, langued of the second.

This design depicts a fanciful heraldic version of a monster that is said to inhabit Lake Okanagan in British Columbia. Although scientists discount the existence of Ogopogo, the legend persists in folklore and people have claimed to have sighted it. The monster illustrated is purely imaginary, even to being coloured red, when Ogopogo, either real or fable, is said to be of a greenish complexion.

Okanagan is a member of the Oberon class of submarines. She was commissioned in June 1968, and wears pennant 74.

Colours Scarlet and gold

Motto Ex imo mari ad victoriam (From the depths of the sea to victory)

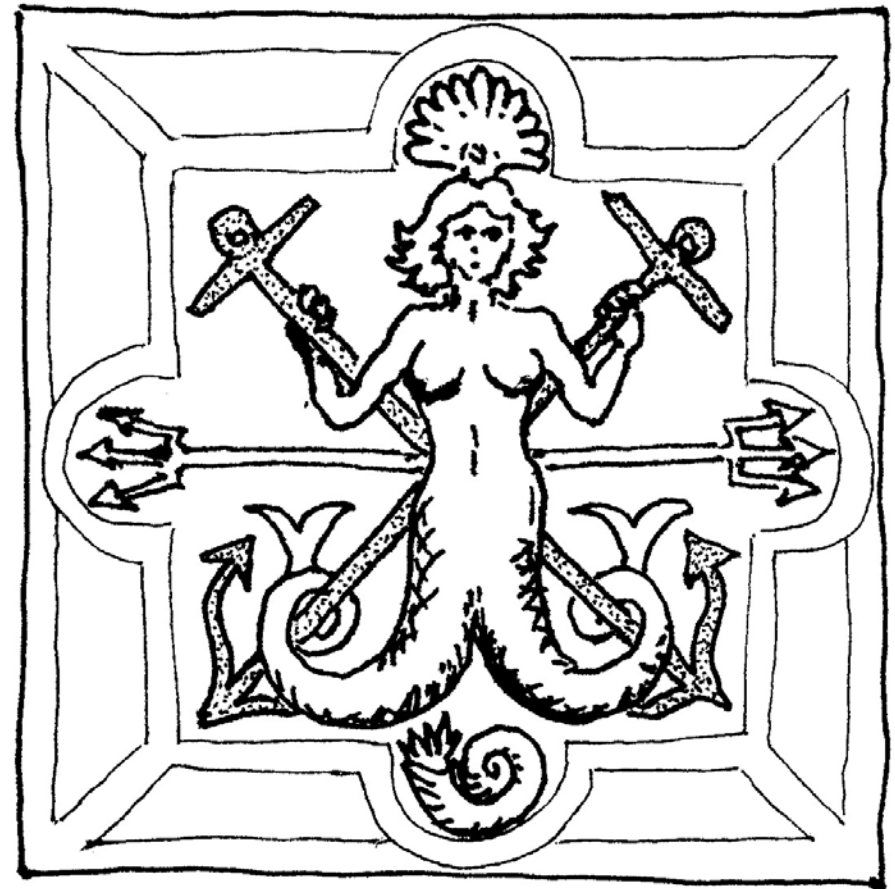
From Arbuckle (1987)

Dragonlore

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Melusine motif from gates and balconies at Portmeirion

The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

In Issue No 26, dated Midsummer last year but not actually issued until December, a Competition was set, to recover the words spoken by a rather smug Sphinx, accompanied by a few other classical fabulous beasts, as they watched Noah's Ark drifting away on the rising waters. Nobody has come up with the original punch-line, but from memory it went something like this:-

"You'll never catch me going out in one of those things!"

This is a reference to a well-known war-time cartoon showing a submariner and an air pilot looking at each other's craft. One entry, still on the smug line, ran as follows:-

"Doomed, I say, they're all doomed! We'll be far safer staying here where we are!"

Not so smug, but rather on the regretful side, the following was sent in by Eve Kaye:-

"I told you we should have come in pairs!"

In a similar vein, but more elaborately, was this anonymous entry:-

"The man said, 'Seven if you're clean, two if you're not, but we've no room for singular oddities like you.' I mean, the cheek of it! What are we to do now?"

This shows good biblical knowledge, but would hardly have got past the *Punch* Table.

Finally, a real weepy, also from Eve:-

"Now nobody will believe that once we were real..."

This premonition of their ultimate fate is in marked contrast to the earlier lines.

In an enterprising attempt to discover the original text of Michael ffolkes' cartoon, Guy got in touch with the Punch Library and Cartoon Archive, and although they were unable in the time available to uncover the one we were looking for, they did manage to unearth another of ffolkes' cartoons on a Noah's Ark theme (from *Punch*, 18 Nov 1959), which had Noah sailing away on his own ark and looking across to another rather ramshackle one stuffed with fabulous beasts, and saying a bit smugly, *"I don't think they're very seaworthy!"*

In fact, for a long time Noah's flood was taken quite seriously as the reason why many strange fabled creatures were no longer to be found in any numbers if at all, not only centaurs, griffins and the like, but even the more recently discovered dinosaurs, woolly mammoths and sabre-toothed tigers. There are those who believe that the Flood stories are a result of the extensive flooding which is now thought to have followed the end of the Ice Age, and did indeed see the extinction of many animal species. Whether our favourite fabulous beasts were among those eliminated by the Flood, is still a subject hotly debated.

Midsummer Day on 24 June is the Feast of St John the Baptist.

are all the clues we get, so it is hardly surprising that artists have created a considerable variety of different beasts. One of the earliest, in 1811, was a boar, seen again in Walter Crane's 1875 version. A sabre-toothed panther also appears in 1875 and an ogre in 1909, followed by Edmund Dulac's manticore in 1910 and a kind of bear-cat in 1913. Arthur Rackham's beast of 1915 is a sort of goblin, while Heath Robinson's version of 1921 is really a minotaur (*see above*), a model favoured by a more recent popular version, whilst the boar appears again in 1923. Staged versions of the story have also provided a wide range of monstrous heads for the actors playing the Beast. But the one thing they all have in common is that he was not really a Beast at all, just a magical prince in disguise.

Discounting giants and ogres, the only other candidate for Fabulous Beast is *The Little Mermaid*, if Hans Andersen is now considered old enough to count as Traditional; indeed, four of his stories are included in this book as Classics. The Mermaid, like the Beast, yearns to become human, and suffers terribly in her quest, but she lacks an immortal soul, so there is no happy ending.

Perhaps the reason why there are so few fabulous beasts in fairy tales lies in the strict definition of the *genre*. Whether collected by the Grimm Brothers, recounted by Charles Perrault, Madame de Beaumont and others, or written anew by Hans Andersen, they were presented as moralising tales to guide the young away from wickedness and into the paths of righteousness. In such a context, creatures that might be subjected to ridicule would be unseemly.

An Alphabet of Queries (18)

How did the Natiaka become the Ogopogo? (*See our A to Z in No 15*) According to Daniel Cohen (*see No 11*), there had long been a tradition of a water-snake or demon that lived in Lake Okanagan in British Columbia, as indeed there have been for lakes all over the world. One of the many Indian names for this monster was "Natiaka" or "N'ha-a-atik" meaning "Lake Monster" or "Lake Demon." It was described as between thirty and seventy feet long but only one or two feet in diameter, with a head like a horse with horns, mainly green in colour but with a forked red tongue. It could swim very fast and would occasionally catch unwary fishermen and drag them underwater through submerged tunnels to some other lake where it could consume its prey at leisure. Carol Rose (*see No 26*) has a similar story, though she uses the name "Naitaka" and ascribes it to the Shushwap Native American people in the vicinity of the Okanagan Lake. She also lists

changed, but there seems no doubt that it originated with the mythological otter or sea-hound of ancient Irish legend known as the Onchu.

One of the more intriguing points raised by Williams in this paper is the possibility that in the seventeenth century the Onchu was perceived as the National Animal of Ireland, as the Unicorn was for Scotland and the Dragon for Wales (all fabulous beasts!). It was so often depicted on the banners used by warriors that the word *onchu* was used for the banner itself, but unfortunately there do not seem to be any pictures of what it looked like. It may have been a picture painted on a flag, or it might have been a wind-sock type of banner as seen in Harold's so-called Dragon-standard as shown in the Bayeux Tapestry. By the seventeenth century it was no longer regarded as the same creature as the stylized Enfield of the Kellys, but perhaps it was the model on which the Alphyn was based (and the earliest known drawings of this latter beast show it as a badge on a banner or standard). The vast water-hound as a National Emblem perhaps found an echo in the great Irish Wolfhound which I remember from my childhood visits to Ireland as holding that position in many a mind.

On the evidence of this paper, we must regard Nicholas Williams as a Master of Dracology, and we could wish that other enigmatic creatures had been so well researched.

Fabulous Beasts in Traditional Fairy Tales

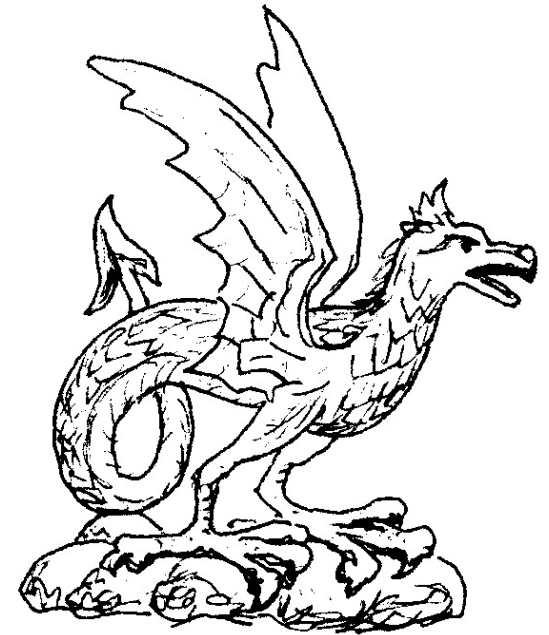
A sumptuous new compilation of fairy tales by a Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University gives a history of the fairy tale *genre* with biographies of their collectors, authors and better-known illustrators (Doré, Dulac, Cruikshank, Crane and Rackham) with many examples of their work, together with new translations of all the best-known stories. It is **The Annotated CLASSIC FAIRY TALES**, Edited with an Introduction by Maria Tatar (Norton, New York/London 2003). The rather schoolmarmish annotations were probably considered necessary for an American readership unfamiliar with European social conventions. Whilst there are wolves, bears and cats aplenty, not to mention giants and ogres, there are very few fabulous beasts. The enchanted prince under the spell of a wicked fairy who features in *Beauty and the Beast* might perhaps be counted as one, but there is little guidance in the text of the story as to his beastly appearance. "He looked dreadful," "this horrible monster" and "very ugly"



Fabulous Beasts at Portmeirion

A visit to the magical innovative village of Portmeirion in North Wales proved that its creator, the visionary romantic architect Clough Williams-Ellis, had a soft spot for fabulous beasts. From a distance the weathervane on the top of the tallest tower is seen to be a golden wyvern, and others appear perched on walls as one draws nearer (*right*).

Unicorns, Dolphins and Mermaids abound (each of these is the name of a building) and there is a Golden Dragon Bookshop and even a couple of Griffins on decorative coats of arms. Everywhere, on gates, railings and balconies, are examples of a Melusine, or Mermaid with two tails, in cut-out metal relief, entwined with two anchors, tridents and seashells (*see cover*). These were rescued by Williams-Ellis from a Seamen's Home being demolished in Liverpool in 1954. I wonder whether this Home was the one founded by one of my ancestors, in an effort to break the terrible cycle of deprivation and dependency that afflicted seamen in her time. How pleased she would have been that social advances made such a home no longer needed, and how delighted that the decorative grilles that adorned it should now give pleasure to so many visitors to this architectural gem.



Clough Williams-Ellis had a motto:- "*Cherish the Past, Adorn the Present, Construct for the Future.*" Portmeirion is proof of his success in attaining this goal, and of his achievement in embodying what he fought for - "beauty, that strange necessity." In his work, it is most agreeable that Fabulous Beasts had so prominent a place.

Enfield and Onchu and Alphyn too

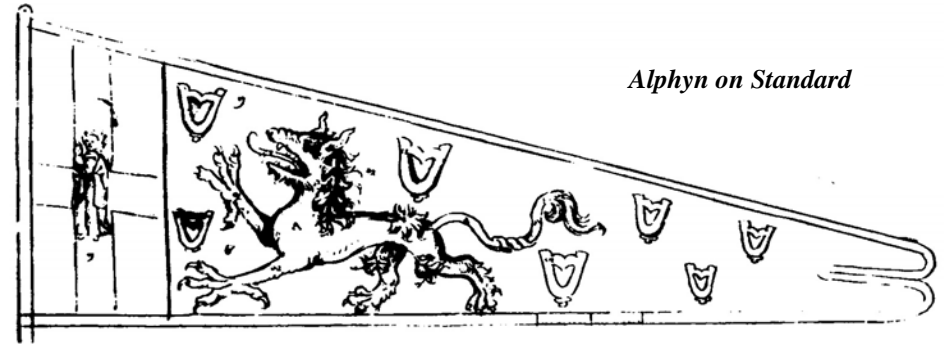
After the Query in No 24 (p 8), Fergus Gillespie, whose response was quoted briefly in No 27 (p 6), put me in touch with Nicholas Williams of the Department of Modern Irish at University College, Dublin, who has very kindly sent a copy of his 1989 paper in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* entitled **Of Beasts and Banners: the Origin of the Heraldic Enfield.**

This is a masterful exercise in multi-disciplinary academic detection, embracing history, heraldry, zoology and mythology, but all based soundly in phonology. Starting from the arms of the London Borough Council of Enfield, and working back through a 1964 grant to a man called Mann



Kelly arms with Enfield crest

who came from a place called Enfield in the United States, he comes to the crest of the Kelly family, the earliest recorded case of an Enfield in heraldry. He explores the legends that centre on the early history of the Irish, in which a fierce sea-creature features strongly, coming out of the ocean to take part in their battles and returning to the sea after playing a sometimes decisive part in the conflict. For instance, one of the Kelly ancestors was slain at the battle of Clonfart against the Danes, and this giant sea-hound came out of the water to guard the body until the Danes had been driven off, when it returned to the sea, and in gratitude the Kelly tribe adopted it as their emblem or totem - long before heraldry existed - and then much later used it as their heraldic crest. This creature was named the **onchu**, a beast found widely in Irish legends, whose name translates as “water hound” rather than “spirit hound” (though perhaps it was the “water of life”). In these tales, the onchu comes out of the sea to join in human fighting and performs heroic or terrible acts, according to which side you were on, and is often described as very large, but otherwise seems to have been an otter. There is a disposition to believe that “there were giants in those days,” not only monstrous ogres, but giant serpents, giant birds and giant fish, so to find giant otters is no surprise. Of its name, Williams writes, “Onchu in Irish is spelt with an acute accent on the second syllable. The grave accent is used in Scottish Gaelic but not in Irish. The accent itself shows that the syllable in question is long.” (As we are writing in English, we may be forgiven for leaving the accent off altogether!) The name *Onchu*



Alphyn on Standard

seems to have undergone various changes over the years and in different parts of Ireland, giving possible variants *onchainn*, *anchainn*, *anfainn*, *anfail*, *anfile* and thus *enfile* and *enfield* with anglicization. Heraldry, of course, was a largely Anglo-Norman rather than a native Irish activity, and the heralds who granted the Kelly arms would have used English rather than Irish names. Williams thinks it highly likely that the form *anfail* gave rise to the name *Alphyn*, for a somewhat similar creature that is actually rather more like an otter than is the heraldic Enfield, so that this is probably one of the beasts used by the Tudor heralds that they did not invent themselves, even if they got the name a bit wrong. Incidentally, there are only three drawings of an Alphyn in the Tudor records, all with different front feet. One has cloven hooves, one has paws like a lion (to match the back feet), and the third has talons like the Enfield. (*See pictures in No 10 and No 31*)

Another possibility is that the strange Sea-Dog of English heraldry, sometimes supposed to have been derived from a beaver, may in fact have been an otter. Its peculiar webbed feet, badly drawn or copied, could have become the eagle-like talons of the Kelly’s Enfield. The problem of trying to describe an animal never seen before is usually solved by comparing different parts of the beast to more familiar creatures, but if an artist who has not seen the original has to make a drawing based on the verbal description alone, some oddities are bound to occur.



Heraldic Sea-Dog

Consider the case of the camel, which was said to have “a face like a giraffe, a long neck like a serpent, two huge humps on its back like an yppotryll, feet with toes like an ostrich...and shaggy fur like a yak.” Now imagine what an artist would make of that. We should take these composite descriptions with a good deal of tolerance, and the Enfield is no exception. Of course its form is now enshrined in heraldry, and the Kellys would probably not want to see it