

## A DEFEATED DRAGON



This magnificent piece of painted woodcarving is a detail from St Julian's Church in Norwich. Parts of St George's legs in gold armour can be seen behind the Dragon's head.

Issued 22 July 2016 by Ralph Brocklebank, Orland, Church Avenue, Clent, Stourbridge DY9 9QS

Website:- [www.dragonlore.co.uk](http://www.dragonlore.co.uk) E-mail:- [ralph@dragonlore.co.uk](mailto:ralph@dragonlore.co.uk)

# Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

No.183 St Mary Magdalen's Day 2016



The Dragon Ladon painted by J.M.W. Turner



## The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts



Mary Magdalen is mentioned in all four Gospels and certainly played an important part in the life of Jesus, though there has been much controversy as to exactly what that was. One pope declared that she was a reformed prostitute, though there is no indication in the Gospels that this was the case. More recent studies have concluded that she was a leading member of the family with which Jesus stayed, some even speculating that she was his wife. Nothing is known of the life of Jesus between his discovery in the temple by his mother when a boy, and his baptism in the Jordan by John at the start of his three years' ministry. It is assumed that he was most probably a Rabbi and traditionally Rabbis were expected to marry, but that is scarcely evidence. Whatever the truth, Mary was highly revered in the Middle Ages and there are Colleges named in her honour at both Oxford and Cambridge (even if they cannot agree on the spelling of Magdalen/e). All are agreed that her feast day falls on 22 July.

The Dragon on the cover is Turner's version of Ladon, and is a small detail in his painting of *The Goddess of Discord choosing the Apple of Contention in the Garden of the Hesperides*. Ladon's job was to guard the golden apples, and he eventually fell foul of Heracles who had been charged with stealing them. It is said that Turner originally painted a much more heraldic Dragon, but re-painted it after he had been shown pictures of newly-discovered fossil dinosaurs that were believed to be true Dragons. Whether true or not, this creature is quite like the sort of monster that the Greeks would have imagined in this context.

### A DEFIANT DRAGON

**Phil and Maria**

**Hewitt** sent this card with a detail from the spandrel above St Jeron in the sixteenth-century chancel rood screen in their own Church of St Mary's, North Tuddenham, Norfolk, next door to Mattishall where they live.



**The Heraldic Craftsman No. 92, July 2016** has on the cover the arms of Anthony Wood as painted by Dan Escott, with its precarious winged lion crest (*below*). Superb on paper, this crest would be almost impossible to manage in real three-dimensional life. Also included are a Dragon being slain by St George in a memorial window, a Sea-horse, a Sea Wyvern, an Heraldic Tyger and the Unicorn and Welch Dragon on various British coins.



**The Heraldry Gazette, No 140, June 2016** has on the cover the newly-granted Achievement of the recently-founded Institute of Further Education in England, which is full of references to the vocational subject areas taught by its members, not least in the crest (*right*). Pegasus “stands for both the creative and the aviation industries, he places one foot on a harp for the musical professions, around his neck is a collar company of anchors for the maritime industries and also as a reminder of the Chairman,



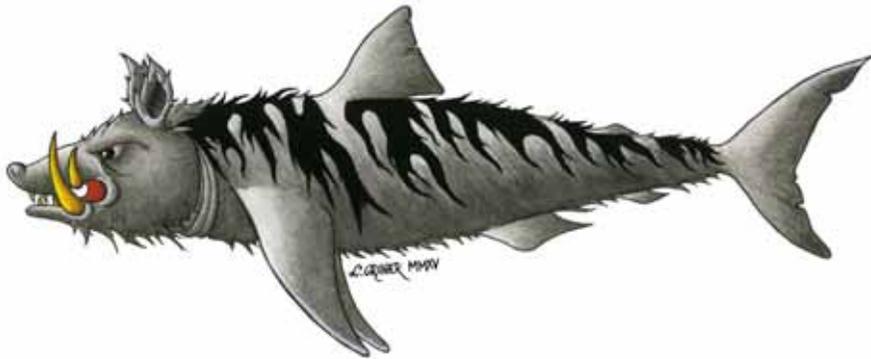
Lord Lingfield, for there is a similar collar on his own Bagwyn Crest.” (For more on his Bagwyn, see our Nos 143 and 153.) Later, on page 18, there is a picture of an unusual hybrid (*left*) spotted by Roger Callan in Bern in Switzerland and brought home for identification. The upper half is certainly a Griffin but the nether region includes cloven hooves, which were a puzzle. If we may take as precedents the Hippogriff, in which the leonine parts of the Griffin have been replaced by a horse’s, and the Bucentaur, in which the equine parts of a Centaur have been replaced by a bull’s, I think we may safely call this composite creature a **Buogriff**.

## TWO DISTINGUISHED DRAGONS



**Jane Connell** has sent two pictures of Dragons displaying extraordinary craftsmanship. First is this piece of Tiffany jewellery (*above*), a brooch from 1967 made from platinum and gold (the main body), turquoise (the egg), diamonds (studded all over), emeralds (the eyes) and a ruby (the pendant). It was designed by Donald Calfin and is 5.7 x 4.4 cm in size. As a complete contrast, the other one is a remarkable piece of painted woodcarving from St Julian’s Church in Norwich (*see back page*).

## THE BOARSHARK – AND MORE



Marc Van de Cruys sent this oddity, an unlikely hybrid but somehow not as convincing as the mythical sea-monsters found on old maps (and in our No 143). I am getting rather sated with the large number of incongruous pairings appearing as hybrid creatures these days. It seems to me a lazy way of making something new, and there are those, indeed, who think such inventions are highly unethical. Griffins, Centaurs, Unicorns and the like were believed in olden days to be genuine if elusive creatures, but nobody thinks that these modern hybrids exist anywhere but on the drawing board. In Tudor times the heralds tried to invent entirely new animals as badges for their clients, the Bagwyn, Boreyn and so on. If they described them in terms of the parts of known animals, that does not mean that they put them together in the first place in that way. If a Giraffe was described as having a head like a camel and spots like a leopard, it does not mean that the Giraffe was made up by putting a camel's head on a leopard's body. Let us try and devise some new creatures for a change. Marc also sent some pictures of Micemaids from a Book of Hours, ca 1460, (*right*) and these, like other grotesques, were mainly to be found decorating the margins of mediaeval manuscripts, intended as a bit of fun and not as serious heraldic charges or supporters.



## A DRAGON AQUAMANILE

This gilded copper alloy water jug with niello and silver overlay (*right*) is one of the treasures of the Victoria and Albert Museum. It dates from about 1120 and demonstrates what skilled craftsmen there were in those days.



## JOURNAL SCAN

**The Norfolk Standard, May 2016** (came in late June) has a Dragon being trampled by a very Roman-looking St George on a white horse, in the regimental badge of the 5<sup>th</sup> Foot, The Northumberland Fusiliers, on a cigarette silk, and four Griffins, two on another silk in the Town Arms of St. Helens and two supporting the arms of the Clothiers on a pub sign in Stroud, Glos. (*below*). These arms are those of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers of the City of London (*Sable a chevron ermine between in chief two havettes argent and in base a teasel cob Or. Crest: A mount vert thereon a ram statant Or, Supporters: On either side a griffin Or pellettee.*). These arms were granted in 1530 and it is worth looking at a drawing of them from Richard Wallis's "London Armory" from 1677 (*see No 92*).

