

Roland Symons never fails to find something. This is the badge of 185 Squadron, RAF, blazoned as: *In front of a Maltese cross Or a griffin segreant per fess argent and gules.* It was granted in February 1945 and signifies the Squadron's service in Malta co-operating with the army.



The arms of the Baltic Exchange.

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Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

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Sea-lion and Sea-dog supporting the arms of the General Council of British Shipping



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

Sadly we have to report the death of Roy Humphrey, one of our most frequent, most knowledgeable and most generous members, and share our sadness with Ruth, his wife, who kindly informed us of his passing. My most recent memory of Roy was to see him bravely competing in Mastermind, accompanied by his little mascot beastie.

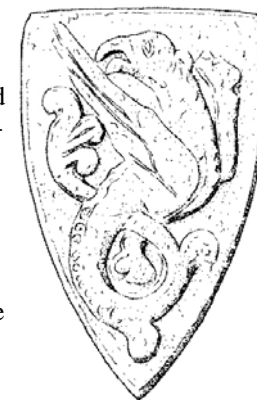
The story of Thomas Beckett is too well known to repeat in detail. Born in London in 1118, received into the clergy in 1141, made Lord Chancellor by King Henry II in 1155, and then Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162, he fled to France in 1164, having incurred the King's disfavour. Apparently reconciled, he returned to Canterbury in 1170, but was murdered on 29 December that year. Canonized in 1173, his feast day falls on the day of his martyrdom. To visit his shrine was the aim of Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims, but in 1558 the shrine was destroyed on the orders of King Henry VIII, who may have thought that Saint Thomas's defiance of his King was not setting a good example to his subjects.

Vernon Rolls has been busy looking into the arms connected with British Shipping, which contain many nautical beasts, including those shown on the cover. The General Council was formed in 1975 through the merger of the Chamber of Shipping and the Shipping Federation. The Chamber was started in 1878 and in 1921 was granted arms supported by two sea-lions, while the Federation, dating from 1890, had a grant of arms in 1956 supported by a pair of sea-dogs (*right*). The merged Council had one supporter from each, embellished with nautical collars. Note that the newer sea-dog, while keeping the webbed feet and spine, has lost the spatulate tail and little pectoral fins. Vernon says that there are dozens of arms connected with shipping and many of them contain monsters; one example being the Baltic Exchange, with a sea-lion and a sea-bear as supporters and two mermaids in the crest. (*see back page*)



The Heraldry Gazette (No 110, December 2008) features a set of grants to recent knights by Peter Gwynn-Jones, Garter Principal King of Arms, which include a demi-two-headed Wyvern party per pale Azure and Gules in the crest of General Sir John Wilsey, a red four-winged Harrier (the bird, not the aircraft) as the crest for Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire, and a green heraldic Tyger with golden wings being the crest for Sir Francis Kennedy. These were included in a talk that Garter gave at the Heraldic Weekend held in Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, last September, and in the exhibition at that weekend were some of the crests of late Garter Knights, of which the splendid red and gold Wyvern, gorged with a mural crown and holding a portcullis, of Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, is also illustrated in this issue of the Gazette.

The Coat of Arms (No 216, Autumn 2008) has a very interesting short piece by Steven Ashley, "A Wyvern on a Twelfth-Century Armorial Weight from Norfolk." The metal weight (*right*) is just 27mm wide and 42.5mm long and was discovered in early 2002 in the parish of Merton. Metal-detectors in Norfolk have found many treasures, but this one is most unusual. Steven makes good use of this opportunity to discuss many matters (a footnote even explores at some length the origin of the double-headed eagle) and wonders whether the shield depicts the arms of Reginald Arsic. In fact the Wyvern is so similar to those shown decorating some of the shields depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, that it may have been purely decorative, as they were, rather than carrying any heraldic implication. The matter is still undecided.



Navy News (December 2008) has a note on the launching of HMS DRAGON, with a picture of her badge of a golden dragon on a red field carved in high relief (that we showed as the original drawing by Robert Parsons on the cover of No 29), as well as a photograph of her bows painted with an enormous red Welsh Dragon on each side. A traditionalist commented, "Whatever next? Sponsors' logos?"

CORRESPONDENCE

Cathy Constant sends lots of things, including a picture of a "mermaid" or Jenny Haniver, said to have been washed up the River Avon on a flood tide and captured at Rownham Ferry in 1875. Also a ticket for "DRALION" by the Cirque du Soleil with a fantastic creature that seems to be a dragon-lion hybrid concocted from a variety of feathers, springs, bits of cable, picture mouldings, glass marbles and the neck of a fiddle.

Tony Denning sent a card with his lino-cut of a Pelican in her Piety, showing what this bird really looks like.

griffin segreant Sable armed Gules” while Cornuell of Banhard has three ‘martlets’ on a fess.



Altogether the book is a treasure. Scholars and genealogists will value the extensive biographical notes, while we may hope that our more staid heraldic artists will be inspired to liven up some of their more conventional output. It is worth noting that of the 158 subscribers listed, 42 are known to us as dracologists, not counting the Editor himself.

JOURNAL SCAN

Gonfanon (Vol 19 No 4, Winter 2008) has the fine arms of the B.C. Medical Association, with its pair of red Griffin supporters and a golden demi-griffin holding a black ankh in the crest, and elsewhere a red demi-griffin holding a golden gavel in another crest, a Pegasus, a winged Bull, and a silver Wyvern on the chapel banner of Brent House, Trinity College School. Most interesting, however, is an article by the Editor, Jonathan Good, suggesting the use in heraldry of images from the ancient Near East, including a fine picture of the Lamassu, the human-headed winged Bull of Mesopotamia.

Heraldry in Canada (Vol 42 Nos 1-4, 2008) amidst a wealth of informative articles has a pleasing tribute to “Dragonlore” by Kevin Greaves.

The Heraldic Craftsman (No 66, December 2008) has a painting by David Hubber of the arms of Lord North with its black Dragon supporters and dragon’s head crest. Also, though rather small, the arms of the 17 *contrada* of Siena in Italy contain among them a two-headed Eagle, a Dragon, a Dolphin and a Panther.

The Questing Beast

A later episode of the BBC series on “Merlin” contained an interpretation of this strange monster, which was true to the chimerical description of its composition, but showed it, not as the shy retiring creature of legend, but as a fearsome aggressor that needed all Merlin’s skills to overcome. Here is what Grant Uden had to say in his *Dictionary of Chivalry*:-

The Questing Beast was so-called because, wherever he went, he made a noise like sixty hounds giving tongue. It had a serpent’s head, the body of a leopard, the hind-quarters of a lion and the feet of a hart. King Pellinore pursued it vainly for twelve months, and after his death Sir Palomides took up the quest. The monster’s other name was

Glatisaunt.

(See No 103, p 4, for a drawing of this animal by Pauline Baynes.)

ADDITION TO THE A TO Z :- **The Kinaree of Bangkok**

From time to time a previously unknown fabulous creature comes to our attention, and this photograph appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* earlier this month, taken at Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi International Airport. Known as the Kinaree, this mystical creature might be described as an oriental Harpy, having the upper body and arms of a young woman and the lower body and legs of some kind of bird. The statue seems to have been blindfolded, perhaps for some special occasion. If any of our more widely-travelled members can come up with some background information, we would be very happy to have it (*see right*).

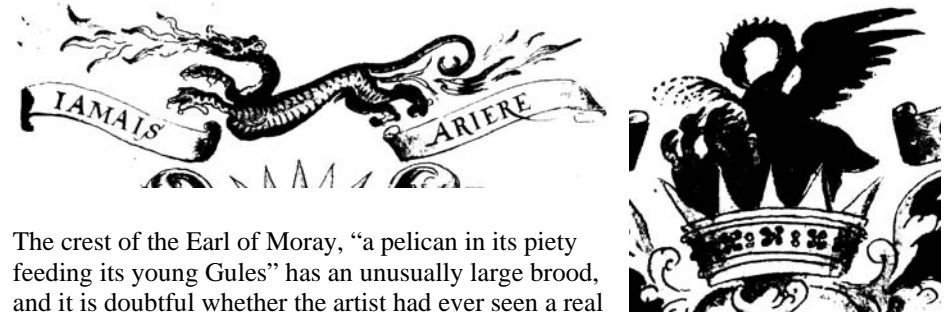


GENEALOGICA ET HERALDICA St Andrews MMVI, in two volumes, is (or are) the proceedings of the International Congress held in 2006. The first 80 pages cover the opening ceremonies and speeches, the exhibitions, outings and other general events of the week, and include an essay by Gordon Casely on the exhibition he arranged, “Who do you think you are?” and another by Romilly Squire on the Artists’ Workshop that he organised. From eight different countries, each artist was asked to produce a “Monsterpiece” and they are all illustrated here in colour. Ronny Andersen with his Styrian Panther, Laurent Granier with his tribute to the Auld Alliance containing a traditional French winged Antelope, and Michael Medvedev with his animated Unicorn, all stuck to well-known monsters, while Don McKee produced a double-headed Griffin from his own arms. The others all produced new monsters for the occasion, Marco Foppoli with his “Unilygon” having an upper body of a Unicorn, the lower parts of a Lion and Dragon’s wings, Gavin Schlemmer putting forward his “Wartlion” with an African warthog’s head, a lion’s body, all armoured and cloaked and trampling on a snake-tailed fish-eagle, and Neil Bromley presenting his “Gartire” with an interlocking Unicorn and Griffin in a saltire-shaped creation, partly inspired by gargoyles, and winning him, following a popular vote, the first Patrick Barden Prize for Heraldic Art. Sadly, Cathy Bursey-Sabourin’s sketches for her all-Canadian hybrid monster were lost in transit, and she was unable to complete her design in the time available. Perhaps one day she will finish her drawing, as it sounded most intriguing.

The rest of the two volumes is taken up with a total of 43 papers, of which four were given by our own dracologists – Clive Cheesman, Darrel Kennedy, the late Michael MacCarthy and Elizabeth Roads – though none of them on dracological subjects (though Elizabeth, dealing with modern crests, did show a couple of Unicorn heads, a Chinthe and three winged beasts, as well as an unused example, of which more anon). Throughout the work, fabulous beasts keep turning up, with Griffins just in the lead (seven including one sea-griffin) and Dragons a close second (with six), four Unicorns plus one sea-unicorn, three double-headed Eagles, two each of Mermaids and Wyverns, a Cockatrice, a Sea-Lion, a Pegasus, a winged Wolf and a few other winged animals. Of special interest to us were two papers dealing with the Order of the Dragon from Central Europe, Ivan Mirnik on the Order as reflected in Hungarian and Croatian Heraldry, and Jean-Claude Muller on “Luxembourgers and Dragons: from Melusina to Henry’s Helmcrest and Sigmund’s Order of the Dragon.”

Elizabeth Road’s regret was that nobody had ever granted an Unicorn Proper, based on “that wonderful description of Ctesias about 400BC – ‘There are in India certain wild asses which are as large as horses and even larger. Their bodies are white, their head dark red and their eyes dark blue. They have a horn in the middle of their forehead that is one cubit in length. The base of this horn is pure white, the upper part is sharp and of a vivid crimson and the middle portion is black.’” She even provides a little picture showing how this creature might look in an heraldic setting. Let us hope that somebody will soon seize this opportunity.

LORD CRAWFORD’S ARMORIAL, edited by Alex Maxwell Findlater (Edinburgh, 2008) is a massive scholarly work containing about 125 full-page colour plates of the arms of Scottish peers and lairds. Of these, some 30 contain one or more fabulous beasts in whole or in part. Griffins are again in the lead, appearing on ten of the plates, while Unicorns turn up on seven of them. Wyverns and Pelicans are on three plates each, while Martlets (which look like legless crows) and two-headed Eagles each show up on two, with single showings of Antelopes, a Salamander ‘spouting at both ends,’ a Dolphin leaping (as a crest! How does it stay over the helm?), and a Mermaid. The drawings are vigorous and quite elaborate, but without the smooth finish that we expect to see in heraldic art today. Nevertheless, some of the beasts are worth a look. Here is the crest of the Earl of Angus, “a salamander Vert spouting from both ends flames proper” (*below left*).



The crest of the Earl of Moray, “a pelican in its piety feeding its young Gules” has an unusually large brood, and it is doubtful whether the artist had ever seen a real pelican (*right*).

The Earl of Cassillis (a Kennedy) may have kept his crest “a dolphin leaping Azure” in place with hidden threads, or perhaps it was just paper heraldry, never made in the round (*below left*).

The Wyvern supporters of the Earl of Eglinton seem to be supported *by* the shield, rather than supporting it, unless they are supposed to be flying (*below centre*). The same goes for Lord Ochiltree’s supporters, though he has a rather engaging crest of “a wyvern’s head Vert” (*below right*).



Among the Lairds, Sir Alexander Lauder of Haltoun has elegant arms of “Argent a