

THE ARMS OF JOHN CHEW MEAN MAH, CD, Canadian Citizen



On 15 July 2011, Claire Boudreau, the Chief Herald of Canada, granted supporters to the arms previously borne by John Mah, which were granted in 2007. These mythical **qilin** are not quite the same as that on the arms of Benjamin Lee (*see No 68*), so perhaps they come in two-horned as well as one-horned varieties. The artist here is David Farrar. Our thanks to **Darrel Kennedy** for bringing this to our attention.

Issued 21 October 2011 by Ralph Brocklebank, Orland, Church Avenue, Clent, Stourbridge DY9 9QS
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Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 130 St Ursula's Day 2011



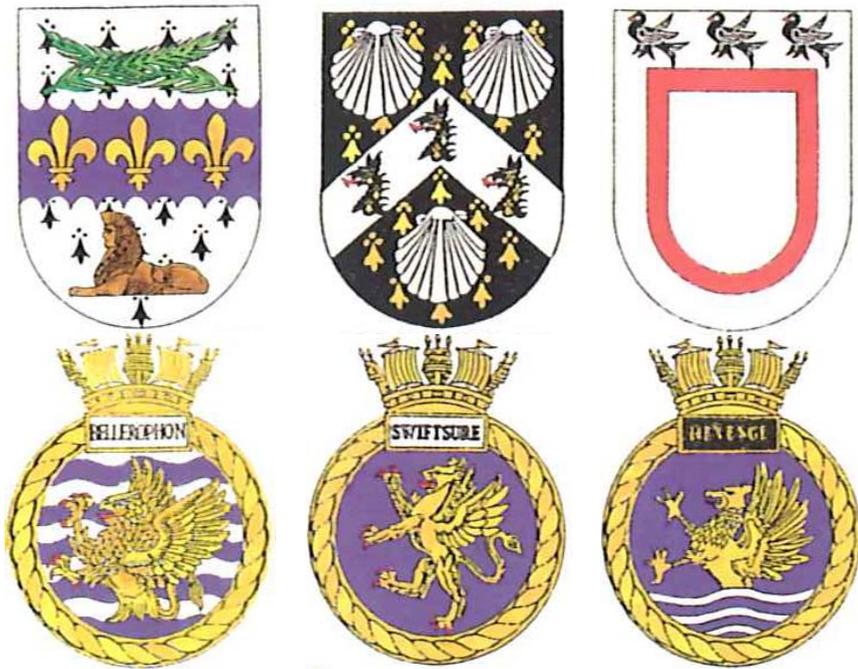
John Campbell-Kease's Crest painted by Anthony Wood



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts



We have dealt with Saint Ursula before (*see No 104*) but her feast day on 21st October is also celebrated as Trafalgar Day. **Roland Symons** has sent one of his colourful armorial postcards dedicated to THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR :- OCTOBER 21st 1805, with the full achievement of Vice-Admiral Horatio Viscount Nelson of the Nile plus the arms of 26 of his Rear-Admirals and Captains and 20 badges of ships that carry the same names of some of those that fought at Trafalgar. On the shields, Capt. Sir Edward Berry has an Egyptian Giza Sphinx, Capt. Thomas Hardy has three Dragon's heads and Capt. William Rutherford three Martlets, whilst on the ship's badges Bellerophon, Swiftsure and Revenge each has a Griffin in whole or in part and Minotaur has a Bull's head.



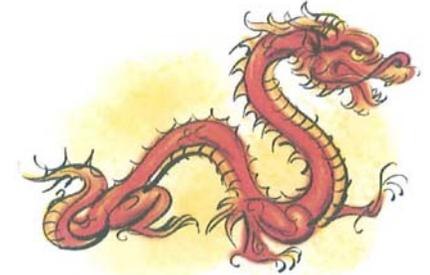
Official ship's badges were not authorised until 1919, but HMS Victory, Nelson's flagship, is still in commission and carries now as it did then the Royal Hanoverian Arms as its "badge."

CORRESPONDENCE

Tony Hilton sent this Dragon from the title page of "Heraldry as Art" by G. W. Eve (London 1907) published by Batsford's, hence the capital B, which we shall see again.



Cathy Constant sent a variety of letter-heads, this being a choice specimen (*right*).



Una Lewers sent this picture (*right*) of a fairly modest Melusine, with the attached caption "Mixoparthenos. Limestone sculpture, 1st-2nd c. AD, from the Black Sea."



Bernard Juby found this mermaid weathervane (*right*) at the Tower of Melusine, Vouvant, France. Or perhaps a Lamia? (Tail more ophidian than piscine!)



JOURNAL SCAN

The Coat of Arms No 221 (“Spring” 2011) – actually September – has an engaging piece by Steven Ashley on mediaeval sword pommels unearthed in Norfolk, including a Tudor one with incomplete Royal arms supported by a collared Greyhound and a Dragon. In an article by Adrian Ailes on symbols of imperial power, there is a picture of an 1892 draft design of a cap badge for the Hong Kong Regiment with an amateurishly drawn Chinese Dragon that was never actually used.

The Heraldic Craftsman No 77 (September 2011) amongst other delights has a couple of arms painted by two of our leading artist-members, one by John Ferguson (*left below*) which speaks for itself, with a Dragon’s head and three Martlets, and the other by Tony Wood (*right below*) of Martin Davies’ arms with its Griffin crest. In an extensive reprint of my armorial CV will be found 6 Martlets, 5 Dragons, 3 Griffins, 2 Unicorns, a Centaur and a Winged Bull, no Partridge in a Pear Tree but a Blackbird in a May Tree instead. (Quite a few of these were sent out, but there are still some left, so if anyone would like a copy, please let me know.)



Wm. BLAKE OF ESSEX
ARRIVED IN AMERICA
IN 1630 SETTLING AT
DORCHESTER NECK



John Campbell-Kease (who cleverly signs himself “JaCK”) devised his crest (*on the cover*) with John Brooke-Little and wanted to call it the Unicox (Unicorn/Ox or “unique ox”) but Garter Wagner said that was unacceptable, and the name “Bullicorn” had already been taken by a hybrid of the Cole Bull and the Brooke-Little Unicorn, so in the end the crest was blazoned:- *Upon a Helm with a Wreath Argent and Gules Issuant from an Ancient Crown Or a demi-Bull rampant polled Sable winged unguled tufted and having an Unicorn’s Horn Gold and holding between its forelegs a Bristol Nail Argent.*

“We had to settle for a hybrid, ‘plain English’ description, (Jack writes) rather than a decent monster name for the unicox! Neither John nor I were over pleased, but at least the creature was accepted.”

Jack also sent this etymological exercise, which should be of interest to dracologists:

THE WESTERN DRAGON *by John Campbell-Kease*

“The Dragon,” wrote Margaret Young, in *The New Dictionary of Heraldry* (1987), “is enormous.” I thought this rather sweeping, given that the creature doesn’t exist (and never did). Then I remembered the Ratclyff Dragon as drawn by Alison Urwick and shown in *The Heraldic Imagination* (1975) by Rodney Dennys. Held in a human hand, it seems to be about fifteen inches long excluding its thin, winding tail. Through a bit of luck I found the word “dragonet” meaning a young dragon, or a small dragon, in Stratmann’s *Middle-English Dictionary* (1891). So, is the Ratclyff dragon a juvenile, or a small adult?



One dictionary followed another: *Anglo-Saxon* (1894/1975), *draca* also meaning “the Devil”; *Medieval Latin Word List* (1965), *drag/o*, found only in a 15c glossary. Modern Latin is revealing: *draco* for dragon, also a kind of snake, then *draconigena*, dragon-born, spring from dragon seed, what on earth was/is that like? Spanish (1988), *dragon*; Italian (1988) the dragon of mythology is *drago*; German (1990), *Drache*; Dutch (c1980), *draak*. Then, by courtesy of the staff of our local library, and Google – Norwegian, *dragen*; Danish, *dragon*; Swedish, *drake*; Icelandic, *dragon*.

I had never done this search before, but felt that there were enough words beginning ‘dra’ to suggest the existence of a common word-root for the monster’s name in the Indo-European languages. You will, no doubt, be familiar with all this, but it was never to me, and of great interest, particularly to learn how wide-spread was the apparent belief in dragons. Beyond the European area many western countries have words for dragons. Finnish, for example, has *lohikaame*. The point need not be laboured.

But to continue. As in so many cases with Indo-European languages, the word-root is Greek. In this case *drakon*. The word’s true meaning, however, remains obscure. It is probably impossible to discover how the wide-spread western beliefs in dragons came about and how their forms evolved from that of large snakes to huge and frightful reptiles whose structures combined ophidian and crocodilian bodies with strong claws, scaly skins, wings and the ability to breathe out fire. Certainly they

featured in ancient classical literature – such as those who guarded the Garden of the Hesperides – and persisted in medieval texts; indeed also in stories and motion pictures down to the present day. And we must not forget the work of modern artists. One of the finest representations known to me is that by Andrew Jamieson, published in *Beasts of Myth and Mystery* (2007). A noble and fearsome creature. Interest in dragons lives on.

There is probably much more to be discovered and to be written, but I am pleased to have done this little examination – even if the western dragon’s beginnings have eluded me. To finish: although as I have said the true meaning of the word *drakon* remains obscure, the OED says it usually refers in part to the past tense of the Greek verb for “to see clearly.” Is it reasonable to speculate that “eagle-eyed” may be implied as a defining characteristic of the dragon, more important than its wings or the ability to breathe out fire?

[Andrew Jamieson’s *Beasts of Myth and Mystery* was reviewed in No 97]

Puzzle Corner Solutions (from No 129)

- 1) Centaur 2) Unicorn 3) Dragon 4) Leviathan 5) Griffin
- ...and another easy one- “Monster is seen swimming (6 letters)”

A REALLY GREEN DRAGON

Brian Wright came across this shrubby model in the streets of Salisbury, the first time he had ever seen such a creation. It was accompanied by this verse by Deborah Hall –

Gilbert of Salisbury

Gilbert lives in the middle of town
 On account of his size he’s easily found
 At eight feet high and five feet wide
 He sits with a grin to show off his pride
 Everyone loves him cute as a bear
 You can’t help but smile when seeing him there
 With pointed tail and wings outspread
 Red and green from toe to head
 A creature of fancy made all of plants
 When we are asleep he’s likely to dance
 Floating like magic his feet off the ground
 From street to street they move him around
 Have you guessed what he is yet? I’ll give you a clue
 The smoke from his nostrils is probably blue
 Of course! He’s a dragon as everyone knows
 The mystery is where next will he go.



MELVYN’S MYTHICAL MAGIC



We have seen Melvyn Jeremiah’s running Welsh Dragon in No 62, but not in colour, nor in the context of his full coat of arms, seen here in an exemplification by Alexander Kurov. The Dragon “courant” is apparently unique in British heraldry, and refers to his Welsh ancestry and to the rapidity with which Melvyn got things done, while the Unicorn in the crest is appropriate for his personal character. Many thanks to Melvyn for letting us have all this.