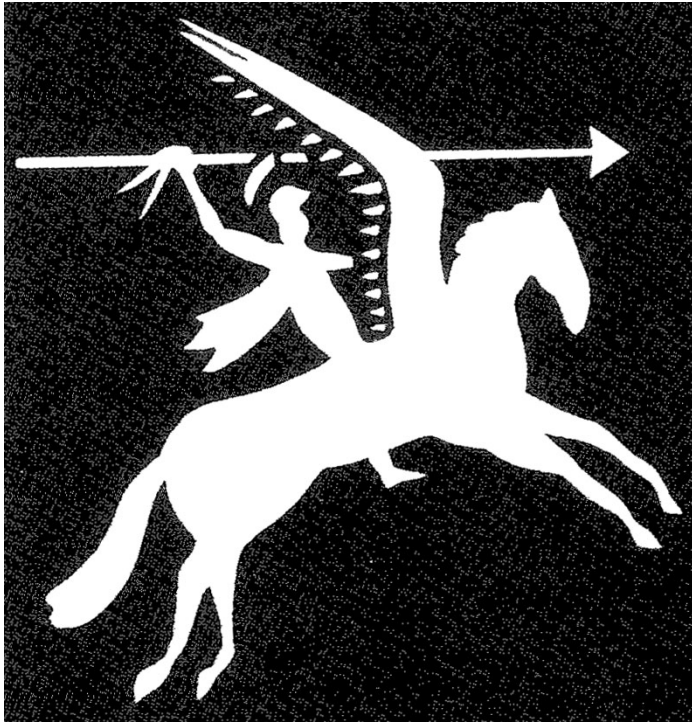


Loch Ness Monster A vast sea-beast said to inhabit the waters of Loch Ness. The legend originates from the 7th century, and periodic sightings have been reported since the 1930s. In 1987 a sonar scan of Loch Ness revealed an unidentified moving object, 181kg in weight. The search continues.

Pegasus A winged horse that grew from the blood spilled when Perseus cut off Medusa's head. Bellerophon tamed Pegasus and used him to help defeat the chimera. During WWII, Pegasus with Bellerophon on his back was used as the emblem for British airborne troops. (*Seen here, this was sky blue on maroon.*)



Minotaur The Greek mythological beast with the head of a bull and the body of a man. The Minotaur was the offspring of Pasiphae, wife of Minos, and a bull.

Manticore A fantastical beast with the head of a man, body of a lion, quills of a porcupine and the tail of a scorpion. Originating in Persian mythology, the Manticore was said to have a voice like a trumpet, and it liked to set riddles for his victims before killing them.

(Perhaps this last one got confused with the Sphinx? More another time.)

Issued 24 August 2004 by Ralph Brocklebank, Orland, Church Avenue, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcs DY9 9QS

Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 50 St Bartholomew's Day 2004



Opinicus drawn by Michael Francis McCarthy



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

We welcome new member Stephen Clackson, and sadly report the death of Eva Frommer, one of our founders (and see also No 23).

There is a brief mention of “Dragonlore” in the Bookplate Society Newsletter for June 2004 (and see also No 42).

St Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr, was first spotted by Jesus sitting under a fig tree, and met his end somewhat gruesomely in Armenia. Bartholomew was possibly his surname, meaning “son of Ptolomy,” and some people think that he may in fact have been the person called Nathaniel. He is commemorated on 24 August.

In No 46 we saw a fine traditional heraldic Opinicus drawn by Gordon Macpherson as the crest on Mark Dennis’s arms, and in No 36 there was William Metzsig’s modern version. Now, on the cover, we have a more romantic interpretation of this creature, drawn by Michael McCarthy. This is taken from a pre-view of his book DRAGONKIND, an imaginative, almost dream-like story of a collection of dragons, illustrated by forty original drawings, not only of a great variety of dragons, but of many other fabulous beasts as well. Two of these, which he said were his favourites, are also shown here (page 3). The Questing Beast was treated in No 36, with a rather more conventional illustration, while the Loch Ness Monster was discussed in No 35, but not hitherto depicted in these pages. Michael needs to be persuaded to publish this book, so please send in your feedback, or write direct to him c/o Thylacine Press, 8 Little Surrey Street, DARLINGHURST NSW 2011 Australia.

As for the Opinicus, there was an article by Lesley Holt in *The Coat of*



So the debate is open. Can a natural beast, however much fabled, be regarded as truly fabulous? If the Elephant, why not the Lion, the Bear, the Wolf, the Boar, the Stag and many others of which legends are told? While we are on the subject, mention might be made of certain elephant-derivatives, such as Tolkien’s **Oliphants**, which were shown in the film of *The Lord of the Rings* as enormous elephantine monsters with four tusks apiece, and, if it does not lower the tone too much, Dumbo, a creature remembered from childhood like a baby elephant with giant ears that it used as wings.

Also recalled from those far-off times, the Horrible Heffalump, as dreamed by Piglet (*left*) and as actually seen (*right*), drawn here by Ernest H. Shepard, and, of course, the immortal Babar and his family.



A bestiary of uncommon knowledge

Compiled by Ben Schott for his *Original Miscellany* in the *Daily Telegraph* for the Weekend section on 12 June 2004, this listed twenty-odd beasts, most of which will be quite familiar to our regular readers, but also included the Beast of Bodmin, the Beast of Bolsover, the Beast of Belsen and the Beast of Burden. (Note the theme of alliteration.) The definitions are quite succinct. Here are a few for starters:-

Chimera Fire-breathing mythical beast, with the head of a lion, body of a goat and the tail of a serpent. Figuratively used to describe any form of outlandish fantasy.

Harpy A beast from classical mythology with the head of a woman and the wings and claws of a vulture. Described as fierce, loathsome and greedy, the harpy lives in odious filth and contaminates all who come near with her violent stench.

years but no man has outlived his elephant.

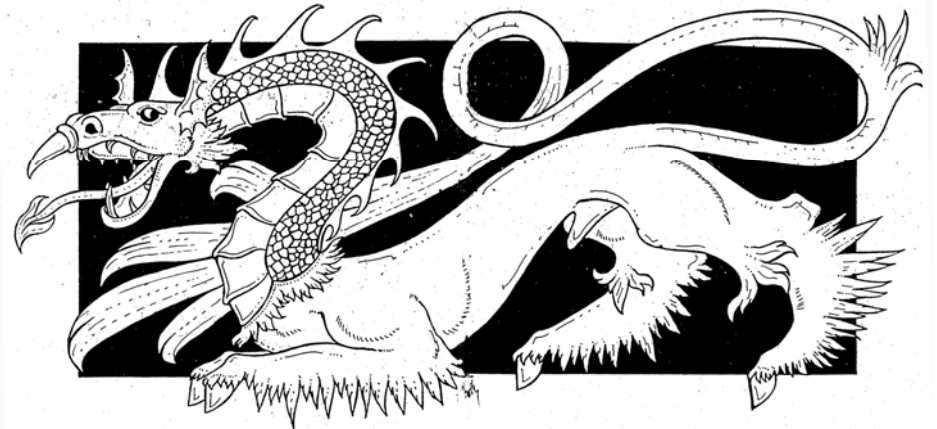
The elephant's nose or proboscis is long and great, and hard as a Horn, and he uses his nose or trunk instead of a hand, taking thereby food and drink and putting it into his mouth. The trunk is of great strength and he uses it with agility. Nature has recompensed it for the ineptness of its legs which the beast uses for other services. Roman historians relate the story of the huge elephant that had been teased by a child. He carried this little boy in a shell in its proboscis about the city of London. He cast the child to a great height and caught him again in its snout and laid him gently without any hurt into the arms of his mother. While the beast had been hurt by the indignity to which it had been put, the childish fright was revenge enough. Such gentleness is unknown in any other animal.

Instances of the Elephant in heraldry are numerous. From a Tudor Armorial that I have now presented to the Royal Library in Windsor whence, I judge, it had been removed probably during the Commonwealth, is an

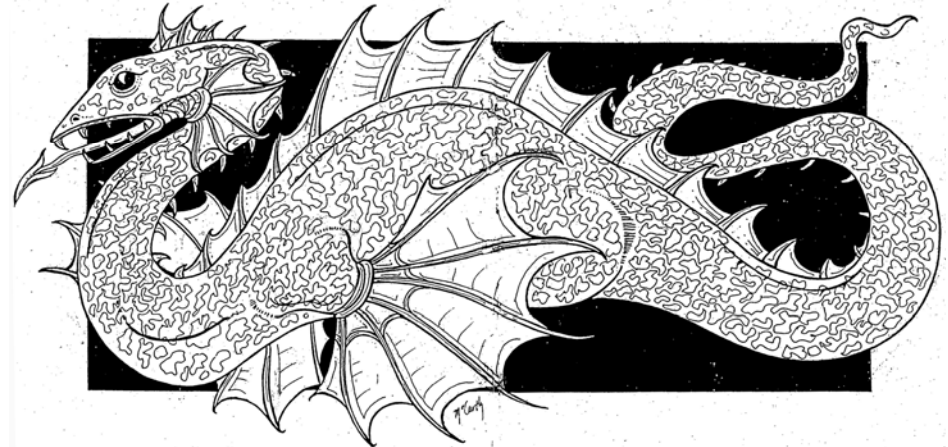


example that may be regarded as sufficiently monstrous to appear here (left). Legends and attributes abound in armory, almost equalling those of the creators of emblems. (See Mrs Bury Palliser's *Historic Devices, Badges and War Cries*, 1870, with a number of examples, and W. Cecil Wade's *Heraldic Symbolism of Heraldry*, 1898, for some fanciful interpretations of heraldic usage.)

Cecil also sent in two more illustrations, one is this stone relief carving from Clonmel showing a wingless Griffin perching on a very tall castle on an Elephant's back (left), and the other from a twelfth century English bestiary showing an Elephant at war.



OF THE QUESTING BEAST, conjured for Pelionor, to his eternal loss....



OF SHE THAT LIVES IN NESS, allusive and mischievous, bane of saints and demons alike....

Arms, 166, for Summer 1994, which proposed, in an attempt to reconcile its use in the armorials of two Worshipful Companies, the Barber-Surgeons of London and the Plasterers, that it was a symbolic representation of the Guinea-worm, *Draculunculus medinensis*, citing in particular the long sharp beak shown in some earlier drawings of it (see previous page). The Opinicus has, of course, been used in the armorials of several notable members of the medical profession, but it must be noted that in subsequent issues of *The Coat of Arms* there was some lively debate and detailed refutations of Holt's arguments. McCarthy calls his Opinicus a "proto-griffin," which seems undeniable, but the possible link with the Barbers' Pole is intriguing and at least worth a little consideration.

The possibility that the Elephant might be considered as a Fabulous Beast, at least in the hybrid form shown in misericords, as illustrated in Nos 25 and 31, has been strongly reinforced by an article submitted by Cecil Humphery-Smith, which we are proud to present here.



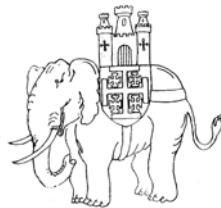
THE ELEPHANT by Cecil R. Humphery-Smith, OBE, FSA, FHS.

A long connection of our family with the Cutlers' Company of the City of London, led to the Elephant's head being selected as our Crest. The late John Bainbridge made a splendid interpretation of it with the arms (*right*). Having trained John in heraldic art, I tried my own hand at some similar artistry, as in this initial letter (*below left*). Indeed the Elephant can make an amusing monster for stances and structure.



But is the Elephant a monster, you wonder? Certainly, it does not come into the category of dragons and chimerical beasts of mythology and heraldry though the interpretation of its shape over the centuries has provided some exciting and original designs.

The elephant's association with the Castle is well known as are the several legendary origins of this combination. The castle is an augmented representation of the howdah usually borne on an elephant's back, as in China and the Indian subcontinent, to carry hunting parties. In war it was especially for archers, and in the chase for tigers and other animals. It protects both man and beast. It was often most ornate. Westerners did not appreciate these uses, in spite of the example of Hannibal and other military leaders who had made use of the elephant in battle with similar mountings. They came up with it being symbolic of the Infanta of Castile, perhaps for Eleanor, the wife of King Edward I. Indeed the heraldic badge was used in that context (*right*).



Probably elephants are not strictly monsters because they have been known throughout history as perfectly worthy and normal members of the animal kingdom. The elephant is a beast, but I will contend it is a monster of an animal, that passes comparison with all four-footed beasts in quantity of body, in strength and ingenuity, ambition for praise, a devotee of piety, for tameness and gentleness, for love, for fidelity, but also for its immense power. When excited or provoked, it shows the greatness of its strength. It is

regarded as the greatest protector of homes and family, with the highest capacity for wit and, certainly, the greatest ambition of all the animal kingdom both real and mythical. In the book of Maccabees (Ch 6, vv 34, 35 & 57) there is a good description of it and its power in battle; also of the castle upon the back of the elephant. It is so in an example in the Great Cloister Vault at Canterbury dating from the early fifteenth century – the original, not my sketch – used as the Badge of Beaumont as Kings of the Crusaders' Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Porus, a king among the great warriors of India, lying in camp on the furthest side of the river Hydaspes had 85 elephants of great bodies and enormous strength to hinder the passage of Alexander the Great with his army. The history of Quintus Curtius describes this in detail. These beasts, when they are tamed, make the best cavalry. Without fear or dread they overthrow men at arms, tearing them to pieces. A cry of terror was brought to the enemies, especially their horses which were thrown up in the air and dashed upon the ground.

Pliny says that among all beasts, the elephant is the most virtuous, more so than men. They are also so docile and that, once taught, it is known for an elephant to show its reverence by bowing with its knees. King Porus's elephants are shown to bend their knees to the earth and submit themselves to him. The emperor, Alexander the Great, was so impressed by this gesture that he himself acquired elephants and controlled them to be able to trample his enemies to death with their feet. When the elephants of the said King Porus were wounded by the copidice, a weapon held by the soldiers of King Alexander the Great, they were put into great fear and threw their own governors down on the earth and trampled on them, tearing them to pieces as though they were their enemies. They ran out of range of the battle like sheep but their cry brought terror to their enemies and especially frightened the horses who were in natural fear of them.

Elephants can be slow and apparently cumbersome when moving. Those beneath them know how they are not, for a short while. The Medes and Persians used elephants to fight from towers on the top of these beasts. The towers were made of wood and boards, and out of them soldiers threw and cast darts and fireballs. Using its nose or trunk and its horns or tusks, an elephant can be trained to lift up the heaviest weight that man could put in front of it and scatter it asunder, and if a dragon came into its way, in defence of man, it would fight the dragon. This elephants do especially when they have young foals for they fear that man and dragon seek their foals and therefore they first deliver them from man and dragon and the mares or she-elephants can then surely keep them and feed them. Elephants are more easily trained than any other beast. Isador says that they can live up to 300