

## A Two-headed Eagle in a New British Army Regimental Cap-Badge

Since a selection of regimental badges was dealt with in No 2, there has been a continuing process of change in the organization of the British Army, with new regiments being formed from the mergers of the old ones. One of the latest to emerge is The Royal Mercian & Lancastrian Yeomanry, an armoured unit of the Territorial Army equipped with Challenger II tanks, with a brand new badge. This features a silver two-headed eagle topped by a golden



Saxon crown, to represent Mercia, the ancient kingdom which covered the area where three of the merging regiments were based (The Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire Yeomanry – itself the result of former mergers, The Shropshire Yeomanry and the Cheshire Yeomanry). The eagle is placed upon a red rose to represent the fourth merging regiment, The Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry, while the whole thing is covered by the Prince of Wales's golden coronet. An unusual feature of the cap-badge is that the rose is enamelled with red petals and green sepals, making it very expensive to produce (£36 each, I was told) instead of being just stamped out of metal or moulded in plastic.

There is little historical evidence to link the two-headed eagle with the ancient Saxon kingdom of Mercia, even as a totem, but since these old regions are coming back into favour as modern administrative areas, and as Wessex has its Wyvern, we had better get used to Mercia's Eagle emblem. Sussex has its Martlets, Kent its White Horse, Essex its Seaxes (not exactly totems, but well-known symbols) so what will they find for Northumbria?

*Issued 19 October 2004 by Ralph Brocklebank, Orland, Church Avenue, Clent, Stourbridge, DY9 9QS*

# Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 53 St Frideswide's Day 2004



*A Dove with Dragon's Wings, Legs and Tail from Stephen Clackson's Crest*



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

We welcome new members Igor Kennaway and Graham Scott.

*About St Frideswide, who died in 735 AD, John Vince (1969) has this to say: "Frideswide was a princess who became a nun and founded a nunnery on the site of the present Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Patron of the city and of the university, she appears on the diocesan arms with two demi-maidens. Her holy well at Osney was visited by many people each year. Henry VIII visited the well with Catherine of Aragon. Frideswide's remains are interred at Christ Church under a marked stone and she is shown in the east window at Osney. Dedications are at Frilsham (Berkshire), Osney (Oxford) and Water Eaton (Buckinghamshire)."*

*Her name is one of those puzzling Anglo-Saxon riddles that does not seem to have caught on widely, in spite of her importance in Oxford, though at least one family today has a daughter called Frideswide. (Perhaps she was born on 19 October, the Saint's Day!)*

Stephen Clackson, whose arms were granted in 1998, has sent in a poem about the unusual creature in his crest (the one on the cover) which tells an interesting tale in a delightful manner:

### *The Legende of the Drachentaube*

*Adomnan never told about  
Columcill's journey south  
Twixt Erin and the Cymru coast  
And in Sabrina's mouth.*

*The Saint He sought the Summer Land,  
Where tis by many said,  
Our Lord did with His uncle come,  
Its pastures green to tread.*



Wyvern (left) and this Scottish Unicorn (right below), both drawn by von Volborth. It is probably too much to expect English translations to come out,

but Flemish as a written language is virtually the same as Dutch, and a little knowledge of German, and the occasional use of words like "interview" and "beginners" make it not too difficult to follow, or at least get the gist. With German speakers, I often find that I know what they are talking about, but cannot decide whether they are for it or against it. This should not be a problem with these booklets, since they are unashamedly in favour of heraldry and heraldic art.



### A Little Welsh Publicity

Cardiff is looking forward to celebrating 50 years as the Capital City of Wales in 2005, and has already produced some advance invitations to join the celebration. Part of the publicity includes this happy dragon with human hands (right), sent in by Roger Seabury.



## A Fabulous Beast in Perigord

A booklet by Jacques Lacampagne, *Blasons du Perigord* (Bordeaux, 1988), gives 124 shields in colour, drawn by the author, showing the arms of families from this part of France. A dolphin appears for de Jammes and three griffins' heads for de Malbec, but the prize must go to the old family of de Griffon, ennobled in 1441, who bear a golden griffin on a blue field, seen here.



de GRIFFON,

## And More from Flanders

Marc Van de Cruys, who publishes under the name Homunculus, has produced a number of works on heraldry, mostly in Flemish, though the pictures speak in a universal language. *Over het tekenen van wapens: een interview met Carl-Alexander von Volborth* (Wijnegem, 2002) is a fine overview of heraldic art, with examples from many masters in the field, from Durer onwards, including our own John Ferguson. The illustrations, many in colour, include this stylish Melusine (left) and a noble demi-griffin holding the ink-balls of a



printer (right), both by the subject of the interview. Another of Marc's booklets is *Heraldiek: beknopte inleiding voor beginners* (Wijnegem, 2004), which has, amongst a wealth of illustrations, this

*Here built the Holy Carpenter  
A humble wattle home,  
Around which later saints put up  
A church of solid stone.*

*The pilgrims flock to see this place,  
Most sacred of its class---  
Tis held the Holy Chalice lies  
Beneath the Isle of Glass.*

*But when Columcill it beholds,  
Destruction there he sees;  
Smoke fills the air, the houses burn,  
And flames leap from the trees.*

*The Abbot, he is in despair,  
And weeping doth explain,  
"The bloody dragon from the Tor,  
She hath come down again."*

*"Vouchsafe me now Saint Joseph's staff!  
Confront this fiend I will!"  
Declares the Saint, on setting forth  
To climb upon the hill.*

*Aloft the evil beast appears  
Exhaling smoke and fire;  
Brave Saint! He smites her with the rod,  
And utters these words dire:*

*"Hence, Dragon, Thou this Holy town  
Shalt hurt not nor destroy,  
And from this day on Michael's Hill  
Shall play the suckling boy.*

*"The infant weaned, its hand shall touch  
The columbrice's den,  
And never more shalt Thou strike fear  
Into the hearts of men!"*

*As this is said, the creature's head  
 Into a dove's doth turn;  
 She plucks a twig from Joseph's staff,  
 Then burrows like a worm.*

*She disappeared into the Tor,  
 Was never seen again,  
 And as the Saint of Hy decreed,  
 Has ceased to be a bane.*

© Stephen Gregory Clackson MCMXCIX

Perhaps, for the sake of beginners, it would help to explain that the German word *Drachentaube* means “dragon-dove” and refers to a creature like a Cockatrice, but with the Cock replaced by a Dove (*columba* in Latin), hence the “columatrice.” St Joseph of Arimathea is reputed to have travelled to Glastonbury in Somerset, and there to have thrust his hawthorn staff, cut from the bush from which Jesus’s crown of thorns was made, into the ground, where it miraculously took root and flourished, coming into blossom every year at Christmas. The *Drachentaube* in the crest holds a sprig of hawthorn in its beak, and if the poem is to be followed literally, it should be a Wyvern with a dove’s head rather than a dove with dragon’s extremities as it is blazoned. These dragonny bits were inspired by the arms of Somerset County Council (see No 1) which is where Stephen was born and brought up, though he now lives in Orkney. His shield of arms is beautifully simple: *Gyronny of sixteen Or and Argent a Lozenge Azure*, though the crest takes longer to blazon: *A Dove Argent beaked Azure with Dragon’s wings displayed and with Dragon’s legs and Dragon’s tail all Gules in the beak a sprig of Hawthorn Vert fructed Gules and resting the dexter claws upon a Mullet gyronny of ten Argent and Or*. These arms, granted by the College of Arms in 1998, were matriculated in the Court of Lord Lyon in 2001. For those who wish to colour in the picture on the cover, the dove is silver (white) with a blue beak and red dragonny bits, the sprig is green with red berries, and the star is radially alternating silver and gold (white and yellow).

**One of Norman Mainwaring’s Doodles**



**Fabulous Beasts in Derbyshire**

A visit to the splendid parish church of St Oswald’s in Ashbourne did not prove dracologically fruitful. Apart from a rather fine modern statue of St Oswald of Northumbria (not to be confused with the rather later St Oswald of Worcester) and a large number of tomb effigies, the only features of special interest were found in the bookstall, which had a set of alphabetically illustrated postcards, of which we show D for Dragon, G for Griffin and U for Unicorn. The drawings are by Jane Walmsley.

