

Derek Taylor has sent some information on Canadian warships' badges, with a copy of an article by Lt.Cdr (SB) Alan B. Beddoe OBE RCN(R) (Ret) – who designed most of them – called *Symbols and Ships*. Illustrations include the Comox (which we saw in No 54) and this splendid Wyvern in the badge of HMCS Bonaventure..



Marc Van de Cruys, having failed to find any more cartoons on the internet, has sent one of his own, showing the young Dragon slayer. Although this young fellow has a perfect miniature of himself as his crest, his helmet was evidently not equipped with a rear-view mirror.

Roger Seabury took this picture in Dunster churchyard, of a spirited St George attacking a lively dragon which will be familiar to many of our dracological readers.



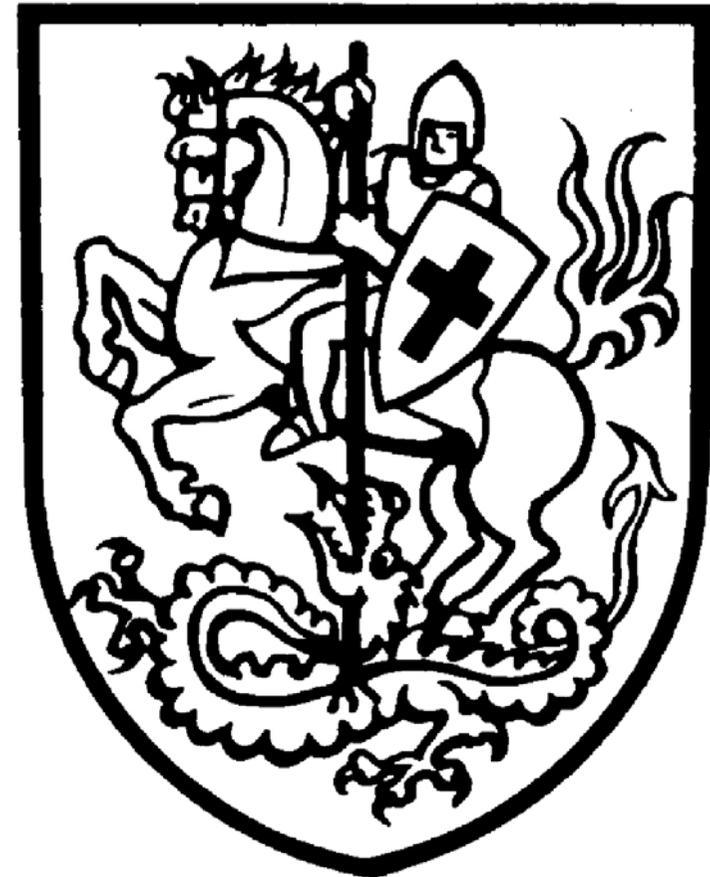
Issued 23 April 2006 by Ralph Brocklebank, Orland, Church Avenue, Clent, Stourbridge DY9 9QS
E-mail:- ralph@dragonlore.co.uk

Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 72

St George's Day 2006



The Arms of Ostap Sokolsky, a Canadian from the Ukraine



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

We welcome new members Brian Jeffs and Iain Boyd..

St George needs no introduction, but the picture on the cover may do. It is taken from the book *Beddoe's CANADIAN HERALDRY* (1981) as one of a selection of shields of arms of members of the Heraldry Society of Canada. I thought the artist was Gordon Macpherson, but he cannot remember doing it and thinks that it might have been drawn by D'Arcy Boulton, who in turn cannot remember doing it and suggests Hans Birk as being most likely, as he was an artist interested in European heraldry, but is no longer with us to ask, though we have the legacy of his great compilation. From *Birk's Armorial Heritage in Canada* (1984), we learn that Ostap Sokolsky was born in 1925 in the Ukraine, came to Canada in 1951 and lived in Scarborough, Ontario, as well as a lot more about his family. Their arms are not unusual for an Ukrainian family, and Birk shows a coloured version with a blue shield, white horse with golden mane, tail, hooves and harness, St George in white armour with red spear, reins, trappings and cross on shield, and a green dragon with a red tongue, all topped with a princely crown to denote their status as Kniaz. It must be remembered that Ukrainians followed the usual continental practice in which the coat of arms belonged to all members of the family, and not the British way of making differences on the shield for each family member. It has recently been questioned (letter to *The Gonfanon*, Spring 2006) whether the Canadians should not take more notice of this continental usage, rather than impose British habits on families of continental European origin. My own solution to this problem, to allow for great diversity without unnecessary complication, would be to treat the shield of arms as the mark of the surname, due to all those descended from the original armiger, whether by the male or female line, as long as they still bore the same surname, and to treat individual differences in the crest, which would become the equivalent of the Christian or given names. Thus the cock in

the Brocklebank crest (*right*) could be made to hold a scroll, or an anchor, or a sword, a quill, a trowel, or anything pertaining to the particular individual, either his or her occupation or an attribute connected to the name itself. For greater variation, the cock might be replaced by an eagle, a wolf, a hound or even a wyvern, each sitting on its bank with the shells. However, it is unlikely that any heraldic authority would adopt such a radical system, though I feel it is worth mentioning.



Margaret (see No 35), but it is possibly a Calopus, with some heraldic significance. More on this later.

Gordon Casely has sent a copy of an excerpt from a paper he gave on *Heraldry and Science* about the Pantheons and the arms of the UKAEA. He is full of praise for these arms, both for their attractiveness and for their appropriateness, a view with which we fully agree, but he gives no more information about the Pantheons apart from what was contained in No 70.

Tony Jones has sent yet another dragon-derived logo, designed "to market Wales." This was apparently necessary following the merger of the Welsh Development Agency with the Wales Tourist Board (both of whose logos we have seen before) and



cost a mere £119,000. Tony included a page from the *Western Mail* with an article by Martin Shipton and an array of sixteen logos all based on the Red Dragon of Wales. The *Western Mail* itself (*left*), Brains Brewery (*centre*) and the Football Association of Wales all use recognizable heraldic dragons, but some of the others carry the process of abstraction to extremes. With regard to the new design (*right*), Shipton quotes a few politicians in favour and a good many against. Tony himself writes, "I fail to understand the rationale behind the decision to re-brand Wales yet again, when, thanks to our own national flag, the Tudor dragon of Bosworth fame is recognised the world over as representing Wales. Are they mad?" My somewhat cynical guess is that the graphic designers saw a potential pot of money and persuaded the gullible politicians that they need to "modernize their image."

Roland Symons sends another RAuxAF badge, for the 3614 (County of Glamorgan) Fighter Control Unit with a golden dragon in front of two red torches symbolizing "the role of seeking out by both day and night." The motto, *Chwiliwn Yr Awyr*, means 'We search the Air.'



Another sort of Dragon from China

Annie Robertson brought us a sample of the Dragon Fruit, that grows on a cactus plant in China. Following the appearance of beautiful flowers that bloom for a single night, the fruits swell to about the size of an avocado pear, but with a purplish-red body covered with an array of greeny-yellow scales or tufts, quite fearsome looking. However, when cut open the inside contains a harmless watery white flesh studded with hundreds of tiny black seeds, which may be scooped out with a spoon and eaten a bit like a water melon (and even more tasteless, if that is possible). Our thanks go to Annie for an unusual experience, one unlikely to be repeated.

FROM THE POSTBAG

Kevin Arkinstall has embellished his latest letter with an improved version of the dragon that appears on our College tie, and has signed off with another aspect of the same beastie. The original, for comparison, is on the left; the other two are Kevin's.



Drusilla Armitage was browsing through some old papers and came across these two Griffins in *The Heraldry Gazette* for September 1992. The first was the badge designed by Stephen Friar for the Gryphon School in Sherborne, and drawn by John Ferguson. The other is the Sea-Griffin emblem adopted by Kerr, McGee Oil (UK) plc for the Gryphon Oil Field discovered in 1987 north-east of Aberdeen.



Drusilla also sent a copy of a rubbing from a brass to Margaret Wyllughby, 1483, with what is said to be a dragon at her feet in reference to her patron saint, St

BOOK REVIEWS

Michael McCarthy's new production, *A Manual of ECCLESIASTICAL HERALDRY: Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Orthodox* (Darlinghurst, 2005), is not perhaps one we would normally review here, except that Michael is one of our favourite dracological illustrators, and the arms shown on the cover, and again on page 72, of Alessandro d'Angennes, Archbishop of Vercelli, feature two Unicorns as supporters. There are a few other delights: the See of Lyon bears *Gules, a lion argent and a griffin or combatant*, to which Michael adds, "The lion in the coat is obvious, but why the griffin, and why dancing?" (page 47). Then there is the Griffin (*seen here*) from Prince Arthur's Book holding the banner of Thomas Cardinal Wolsey as Archbishop of York (p 60), and the arms of the Venerable English College in Rome (p 101), with its golden demi-dragon amongst other charges, and on the same page the double-headed eagle bearing the arms of the Basilica of St Sevass, Maastrich. Many of the illustrations are from historical sources, apart from Michael's own designs, and most are in colour, so the book is a joy for heraldists. Its main purpose is to record the correct heraldic procedures in each of the branches of the Church that has an heraldic tradition, and encourage their use. Michael is not afraid to criticise incorrect or sloppy usage when it occurs, in a polite and light-hearted manner, and he deserves a successful outcome from his endeavours.



Ottfried Neubecker's massively colourful compilation, *HERALDRY: Sources, Symbols and Meaning* (English Edition, London, 1977, with contributions by J.P. Brooke-Little, Richmond Herald of Arms) has, apart from various incidental Tudor Dragons, Germanic Griffins, Scottish Unicorns and the like, generally appearing as supporters, four pages devoted to Fabulous Beasts. The illustrations include Griffins conducting the Flight of Alexander (the picture we used in No 26, p 7), a Basilisk from a Bestiary (very similar to the one we had in No 19, bottom of p 4) and the one used by Basel (the same as on the cover of No 12), the Hindu Garuda, a Pegasus crest and several Unicorns culminating in one of the Gobelin tapestries from the Cluny Museum in Paris. Less familiar is this pair of sketches from a 16th-century English armorial (*right*) showing arms attributed to Uther Pendragon (*above*) and the King of Barbary (*below*), described as "stylized monsters." Although this book is mainly prized for its pictorial content, its text is also quite interesting; for instance, it notes that heraldic monsters are mainly derived from the bestiaries, themselves stemming from the *Physiologus* originating in Alexandria in the second century B.C.



HE'S BACK, BY GEORGE !

This was the headline to an article by Sir Roy Strong in *The Daily Mail* on 22 April, with the leader, "For years the Left derided him while thugs hijacked his flag. Now England has once again embraced its patron saint. Here, on the eve of St George's Day, a historian explains why we now need him more than ever." Accompanying it is a picture loosely based on Raphael's 1506 painting now in Washington (*see No 32, page 5*) which seems to show an interesting detail of the dragon's wing as a spiny fin attached to his fore limb, thus avoiding the anatomical nonsense of a six-limbed reptile – though it might just be a trick of perspective, as there is no such feature in Raphael's original. Strong's piece is very good on how St George came to be taken as England's patron saint, and also on the early legends that attached to him, even before he became associated with the rescuing-a-maiden-from-a-dragon theme. It was said that George was persecuted as a Christian and underwent a whole series of gruesome tortures and executions – poisoning, burying, burning, boiling alive, cutting up into little pieces – after each of which he was miraculously restored to wholeness. In those days people were quite ready to believe in miracles, but in a more sceptical age we wonder whether these should be taken as metaphors or allegories, or perhaps he was just threatened with these tortures which were designed to frighten him into submission, but which were never actually carried out, so that naturally he appeared entire each morning, steadfast as ever. Strong emphasises that it was St George's moral character that led to his adoption by our mediaeval monarchs, in particular Edward III, founder of the Order of the Garter, and believes that it is this that makes him an appropriate symbol for England today... "In his true context St George should be seen as standing for the ideal of a man of true virtue, a symbol of all that is best in our nationhood: valiant, patriotic, dutiful, upright, God-fearing, someone whose life is one of service to others and who fears not to lay down his own life in the cause of right.

"It is such despised ideals, so often held up to derision these days, which made our forefathers proud to be English.

"The English have come out of the devolution process badly battered, almost made to be ashamed of ourselves as wicked predators and transgressors on the three other nations which make up the union.

"I think that the genius of the English – and I am proud to be English – lies in our ability to be self-effacing in order to accommodate others. It is this quality that has accounted for our ability to embrace all parts of our United Kingdom and, in the past, to rule so successfully over the Empire.

"Our Union and identity are perhaps under threat, but our unique and self-effacing form of patriotism remain..."

Sir Roy does not say much about the dragon, but in connection with St George it was seen very much as a symbol of all the evils that true Christianity was intended to overcome and not, as some would have us believe, an image standing for the Welsh. It is doubtful whether in pre-Tudor times the dragon would have been associated with the Welsh at all, and afterwards the Red Dragon of Wales became a valued supporter

of the Royal House, carefully distinguished from the green or black dragon being done in by St George. But not everybody approves of him as our patron saint. On the same day that Sir Roy Strong's article appeared, there was a letter in *The Daily Telegraph* from Charles Phillips of Ingatestone, Essex, as follows:

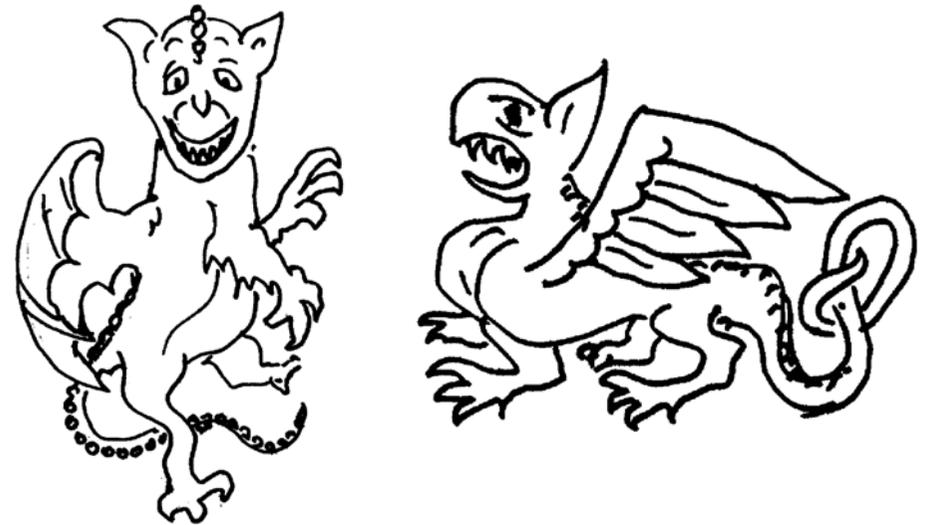
"St George is not the real patron saint of England. Prior to his adoption, the patron saint of England was St Edward the Confessor, who died in 1066 and was the penultimate Saxon king of England.

"Unlike St George, there has never been any doubt about his existence. He was also an Englishman, and not a foreigner adopted as a patron saint. I will not be celebrating St George's day tomorrow. St Edward the Confessor's day is October 13.

"So, can we please have him back? Long live St Edward, and away with St George."

This seems to show little of the English virtues that Sir Roy prizes, and in any case, prior to St Edward the Confessor our patron saint was St Edmund. Perhaps we should bring him back, too. Note that we commemorated St Edward in No 23 and St Edmund in No 66, and if we have celebrated St George more often, that is because of our sympathy with the Dragon.

TWO TUDOR DRAGONS FROM WINDSOR



Fully-modelled or carved supporters from Tudor arms, swiftly sketched on a guided visit to St George's Chapel, Windsor, arranged by the White Lion Society. Note that the one on the left is oddly cheerful and the one on the right has, unusually, feathered wings.