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...and also a couple of fabulous new beasts, one, the South American Hippocondor, somewhat similar to the one shown in No 52, page 6, but now more anatomically explicable with only two legs, and said to be the Patron of the Placeboindustrie Pharmacies and Drugstores, and the other, the hypnotic North American Grizzly Owl, seen here on the right

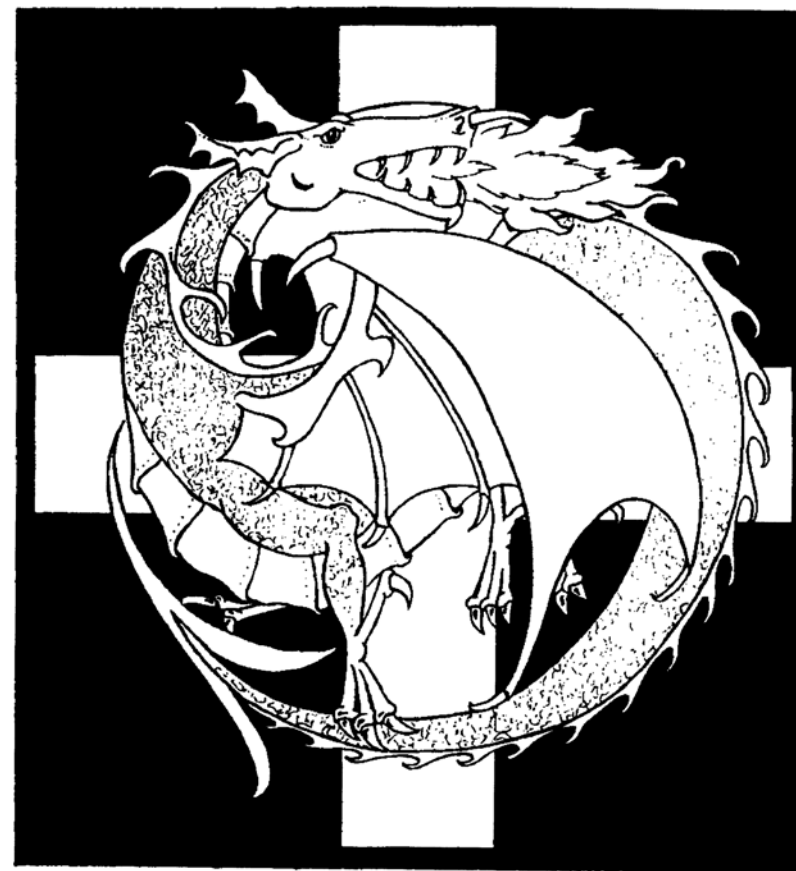


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Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 73 St Aldhelm's Day 2006



Badge of the former St George's College in Sydney as drawn by Michael McCarthy



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

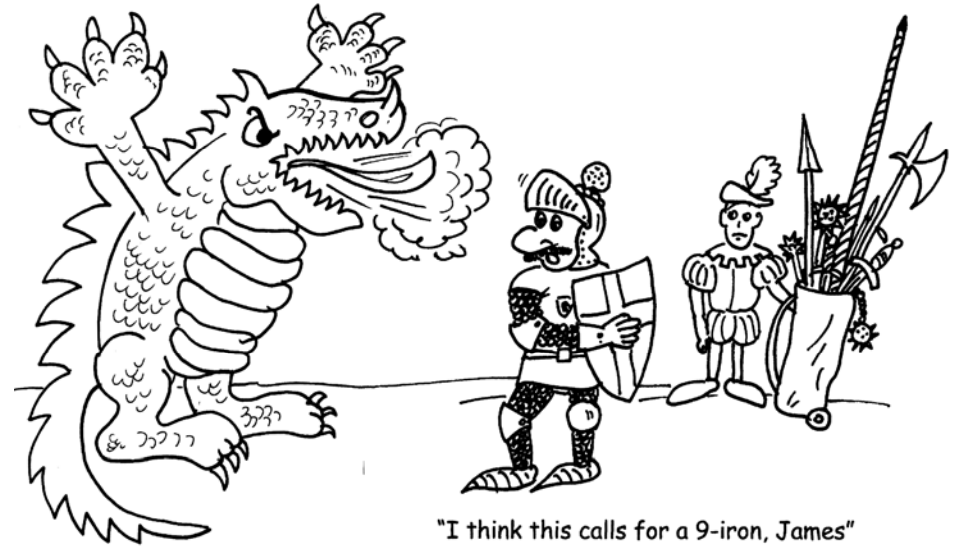
We welcome our first full-time on-line members, Kayleigh Marie Wooten and David Robert Wooten, who have mastered the art of printing copies from our website.

St Aldhelm was born in 640 AD and became the Abbot of Malmesbury in Wiltshire around 675. He pioneered the monastic revival based on the rule of St Benedict, founding monasteries in Frome and Bradford-on-Avon. In 705 he became the first Bishop of Sherborne. Dying in 709, he was buried back in Malmesbury in the Church of St Michael the Archangel, who is shown there fighting a dragon.

Why St Aldhelm? Perhaps some explanation is needed. Dragonlore is an occasional journal, that is to say, it does not have a regular timetable. I keep my eyes open for suitable items of interest in the papers, magazines and books, and take my sketch-pad on visits, as well as collecting a growing number of pieces that arrive in the post (for which, many thanks, whether or not they get into print). When I have enough to fill eight pages, I look in the calendar for a suitable date, one with local or historic resonance, and declare a date of issue. (John Vince's 2001 book has at least one saint named for every day in the year.) St Aldhelm, for instance, whose feast day falls on 25th May, is still highly regarded in Sherborne, where we had a memorable meeting last year, as reported in No 59. Then the production process is set in train. I e-mail the text to Mark, and when he can spare an hour or so, take round the selected pictures and we put the issue together. Mark is brilliant at manipulating the details of the layout. When finished, the copy is e-mailed to Paul to go on the website, and a master copy is printed for Roger, and when he can find an opportunity, he prints off as many copies as are required (currently 120). Then they just need to be folded and posted off, though this may be only a few days or perhaps several weeks after the nominal date of issue. I like to write the envelopes by hand, because then I can think of each member in turn, whether or not I include a letter. I was recently warned that Dragonlore might itself grow into a monster, but for the time being it gives a lot of pleasure to me and some others, and seems to be well under control – a tamed monster, perhaps.

The picture on the cover was kindly sent in by the artist, who says that it is his version of the badge of the now-defunct St George's College, which was subsumed into the University of New South Wales in 1987, the badge thus becoming redundant. For those who like to colour it in, the cross must be red, of course, and the dragon was originally all gold, but it could be green on the stippled bits with gold for the rest, and orange flames from his mouth, or whatever you like. Michael also sent the picture opposite, which he entitles *The Eternal Question (the Dragon or the Egg)*.

Marc Van de Cruys has sent another of his cartoons:-



...and he has also recommended a DVD film called *George and the Dragon* which was directed by Tom Reeve and starred James Purefoy and Patrick Swayze, with parts for Joan Plowright, Simon Callow, Bill Oddie and others, and tells the tale of a knight and his companions returning wearily from the first crusade, coming across a princess threatened by a dragon. The story unfolds with plenty of action, adventure and romance, and has a surprising twist at the end. While aimed primarily at a younger audience, Marc thinks that any dedicated dracologist would find it rewarding viewing. On no account is it to be confused with an earlier film called *George and the Dragon*, which is a comedy about a man and his mother-in-law.

Carl-Alexander von Volborth has contributed some more of his fantasies, including a whole range of sophisticated hybrids contained in a booklet "C'EST LA VIE" put out under the authorship of Alexander Troblov, from which we show these samples:-



...one here, and one.....

over the page

mitred, proper supporting in the dexter hand a walking staff also sable ensigned with a cross paty convexed Or and holding with the sinister hand a book gules edged gold.

Supporters: On the dexter side a sea horse (Hippocampus) azure and on the sinister side a Chinese Dragon azure tufted gules. **Motto:** Protect and provide.

The sea horse evidently represents Marine Life, but, Roland asks, why the Chinese Dragon? Does it stand for General Life, or did they do business in the Orient? If the Company has survived the flood of mergers in the insurance industry, perhaps somebody could find out. Briggs gives no explanations, only blazons and dates of grant. But it is a beautifully drawn Chinese Dragon, and one would like to know the artist. Originally, Dan Escott was asked to provide all the illustrations for the book, but as the deadline drew near, with the task unfinished, he became quite ill, and even had to be admitted to hospital. Others had to be asked to finish the job, and the book lists under Acknowledgements, "Illustrations by: Gerald Cobb, Dan Escott, Wendy Gould, Sandra House, Violetta Keeble, Theodora Winney." Unfortunately there is no way of telling which picture is by which artist, though some of them are obviously not as well drawn as others. I like to think that this particular Chinese Dragon was one of Dan's. He never fully recovered from his illness, and died in 1987, a great loss to heraldic art.

MORE FROM THE POSTBAG

Eve Kaye has sent in this delightful ditty, to be sung to the tune of the Major-General's song in *The Pirates of Penzance* –

I'm writing this because I owe you an apology:
I failed to send that contribution promised for 'Dracology' -
I don't know how it happened... through a lapse in synchronology?
But now I'll try and make it up with excerpts of philology.
I study many aspects of the realm of bestiology:-
How dragon legs have doubled by a process of morphology;
Why wyvern is vernacular in ancient terminology,
And can the Laidley Worm be classified in vermiology.
Are centaurs – being half a horse – a subject for zoology?
Would flying foxes feature in a book on ornithology?
Do unicorn and sphinx come under paleomammology?
Do kelpies grow from sea-horses in myth, or embryology?
Did salamanders join the fun with phoenix in pyrology?
Is jormangandra part of a zodiacal cosmology?
I want to know the what and why of any other -ology,
I am the very substance of a student of dracology.

James Pettigrew has presented us with a wine-bottle cap marked with an interesting asymmetrical Chinese Dragon, which we shall attempt to reproduce here:-



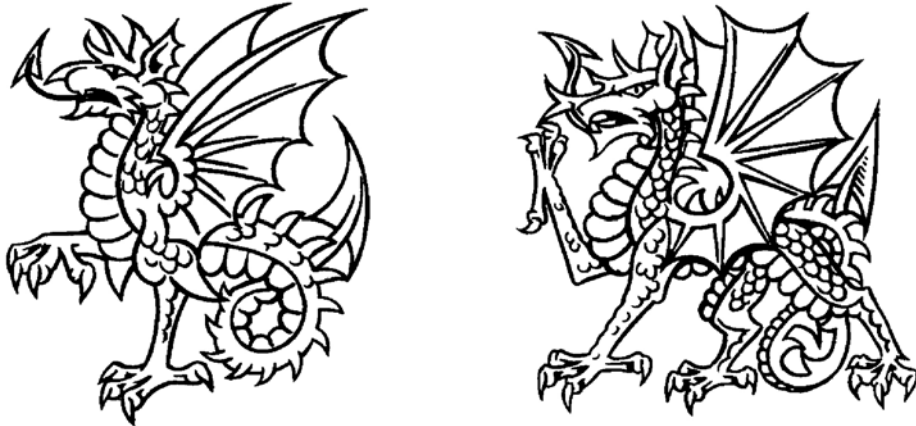
Which Came First ?



Another drawing sent in by Michael McCarthy.

More from Stephen Friar's *New Dictionary of Heraldry*

Look up "Dragon" in this work of reference, and it says, "see Wyvern and Dragon." So here is the entry under **Wyvern and Dragon** by Margaret Young, again illustrated by Andrew Jamieson:-



The wyvern is a large scaly monster with wings and two legs. The dragon is essentially a four-legged development of the wyvern, unknown as such before the late Middle Ages.

The wyvern probably entered British armory as the standard of the Roman cohort and remained in the symbolism of the post-Roman era and in the 'burning dragon' of Cadwallader from which the red dragon of Wales is derived. It is also associated with the ancient kingdom of Wessex and appears in the Bayeux Tapestry as the personal device of King Harold. In more recent times, a number of dragons and wyverns have been granted to Welsh and English west-country civil authorities, including a *double-headed wyvern displayed* as a crest in the arms of Sherborne, Dorset in 1986. [*]

'The voice of the dragon is thunder, the trembling of earthquakes his footfall, forest and heath fires are the heat of his breath. He is enormous, and has a scaly body, leathery wings and a forked tongue and tail.' The dragon is a mythical creature of great antiquity and is known equally well in the East as in the West. But in China and Japan, although it is similar in form, it is less forbidding and has very different characteristics. The Eastern dragon is benevolent and full of strength and goodness. It is associated with rain and water; in the evening it devours the sun and releases it in the morning. It takes treasure into its safe keeping from those who desire it from avarice. The Western dragon, however, is a malevolent and destructive power, and hoards gold and treasure for its own selfish purposes. There is an association with water in a legend of a water dragon in the River Seine, which ravaged Rouen in the seventh century. It was called Gargouille and has given its name in a corrupted form to water spouts on churches.

The dragon was a symbol of sovereignty among the Celts. *Dragon* was the name for a chief and he who slew a chief slew a dragon, so the title became confused with the fabulous monster. This is a link with Arthurian legend and Arthur's father Uther Pendragon, also with the Welsh dragon of armory.

The dragon, in spite of its more unfortunate characteristics, symbolizes invincibility and the power to inspire terror in the foe, which makes it a suitable armorial emblem. Dragons are the supporters in the arms of the City of London, as a dragon was said to have lived in the River Thames as a guardian of the City.

The wyvern still has a place of its own in modern armory. In addition to the attributes of the dragon it became the symbol of pestilence and plagues, and appears in the arms of the London Apothecaries' Society, beneath the feet of Apollo, the god of medicine. It typifies viciousness and envy, but it is used in armory as a symbol for overthrowing the tyranny of a demonic enemy.

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[* see No 66]

Margaret could hardly have squeezed more information into so little space, but it must be pointed out that, in spite of the strict nomenclature in modern British heraldry, the Wyvern is still a sort of Dragon, indeed, the more fundamental, archaic and primitive version, and these beasts retain some of the character of benevolent nature spirits, as their origin determines. Indeed, the Red Dragon of Wales would hardly command the respect it does if it were not so. As Margaret indicates, the Oriental Dragons still maintain this kindly nature, but we must not make the mistake of thinking that all Eastern Dragons are the same, as the Chinese recognize several different varieties, each responsible for different aspects of nature and the weather. Those tasked with guiding the sun through the hours of darkness would not be the ones in charge of thunderstorms and rainfall (it often rains in the night!) and earthquake dragons could not also be in charge of rainbows. The Chinese mind may be subtle, but it is essentially true to the facts. Nevertheless, we must congratulate Margaret on her masterful summary, and Andrew too for his lively drawings.

A Chinese Dragon in English Heraldry

Roland Symons has sent this example from the many included in Briggs' great 1971 compilation of corporate arms. It is the arms of the Marine and General Life Assurance Company granted in February 1955. The full blazon is as follows:-

Argent, a torch winged sable, enflamed proper; on a chief of the second a capstan also proper cabled Or between two escutcheons gold each charged with an escarbuncle Gules. Crest: On a wreath of the colours, Issuant from the battlements of a square tower sable, a demi figure representing St Swithin, habited and

