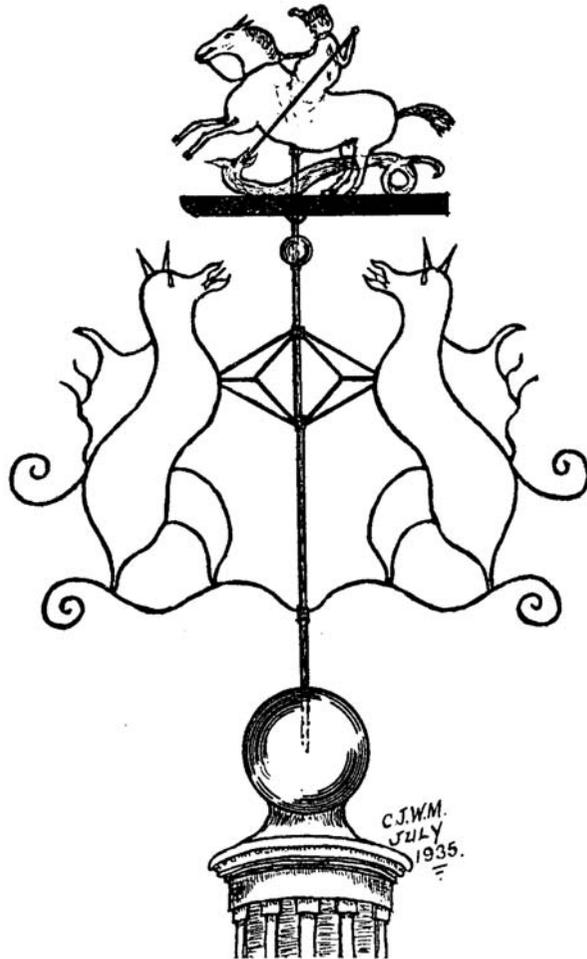


FROM THE POSTBAG

John Uncles writes that the Bristol Unicorns shown in No 74 were the work of David McFall RA in 1950, and that the architect of the building upon which they stand was E. Vincent Harris. Evidently there was some concern at first about their placing, but now they are much treasured as a feature of the Bristol skyline.



Philippa Sims sent this sketch by Claude Messent from "Parish Churches in Norfolk and Norwich," of the weather vane on St George's church, Great Yarmouth, showing dragons both legged and legless (before and after the Garden of Eden?).

Cecil Humphery-Smith, along with his other contributions, sent in a little cartoon showing a monster seated on the edge of a loch, licking his lips and writing a letter saying, "Dear Sir, Thank you for sending those tourists. Please send some more, as the last lot were delicious. Yours, Nessie."

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Basilisk from Johann Stabius's *De Labyrintho* (Nuremberg, 1510)



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

We welcome new members Howard Connell, Robert Harrison, Yvonne Holton and Roy Humphrey.

The feast of Saint Michael and All Angels on 29 September should be well enough known by now, and the picture of them on the opposite page by Durer is also a great favourite, showing a number of horrible monsters being driven out of heaven by the Archangel and a few well-armed colleagues.

Cecil Humphery-Smith sent a copy of a picture by Otto Hupp, reckoned by some to be the best heraldic artist of his day, labelled “Sankt Michael, du Deutsche Geist” which may come as a bit of a surprise. Obviously drawn at a time when pride in Germanic culture was at its height, around a hundred years ago, it still seems odd that the saint should be taken as a German spirit. Unfortunately the picture was too colourful to reproduce here (reds and yellows both come out as black), but thanks to Cecil for sending it in, and also for sending this selection of German civic arms featuring dragons; from the left, they are the arms of Wurmlingen, Crivitz, Wittenburg and Drackenstein.



Beastly Basilisk

The beast on the cover is a favourite of Carl-Alexander von Volborth, in spite of its ugly expression, so he drew a new version of it (*right*) looking rather more agreeable. If you look up Basilisk in Stephen Friar’s *New Dictionary of Heraldry*, it says “see Cockatrice,” so here is what Margaret Young has to say, illustrated by Andrew Jamieson’s heraldic version (*and see also Nos 12, 19 and 20*):-



Seton and Somerville are now regular winged Wyverns, Ochiltree has lost his Wyvern’s head crest in favour of a boar, while Caithness has given up his Mermaid supporter for a second Griffin. New entries give the arms of Lord Methven with its dexter supporter of a green amphisbaenid Wyvern, and Lord Sarquhar’s Wyvern crest.

An additional section in this book is that on Gentlemen’s Arms, and among the many shields shown we find the Martlets of Rutherford and Cairn, Unicorn heads for Kerr and Meldrum, Ormiston’s Pelican, Griffins for Lauder and Forsyth, and Acheson’s Eagle with two heads. Finally, in the brief *Liber amicorum*, the full-page drawing of the arms of the Duke of Ventadour shows two splendid Griffin supporters, party per fess Or and Gules, though apparently these should really have been lions.

Scots Armorial or *Aspilogia Scoticana*,

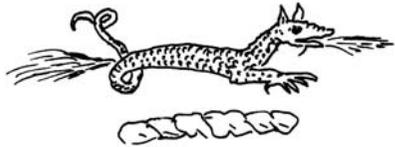
by Alex Maxwell Findlater (The Heraldry Society of Scotland, 2006), is a more modest companion to these other two books. It lists and describes all known Scottish rolls of arms from earliest times to the start of the eighteenth century, with a goodly selection of illustrations in colour. We see again Angus’s Salamander crest and Caithness’s Griffin and Mermaid supporters, but now drawn by a different hand. A newcomer is the red shield of Lauder of the Bas with its white Griffin within a double tressure flory counterflory, and another is the blue shield of Dicisone of Armstrong showing a somewhat startled looking Manticor (*right*). Lastly, one notes the odd lizard-like creature beneath a drawing of Queen Magdelene of France; could this be a flame-free Salamander? Perhaps the flames should have been added by the colourist, who overlooked them as there were no outlines to guide him.



have a pair of red Griffin supporters, the latter also having a red Griffin's head as a crest. The Earl of Mar's supporters are a pair of black Griffins, while the Earl of Caithness has a golden Griffin on one side and a Mermaid on the other. A Mermaid also appears as the crest on the last plate in the series, the arms of William Murray, Provost of St Andrews.

Less common are the pair of heraldic Antelopes supporting the arms of the Earl of Arran, the Dolphin embowed forming the crest of the Earl of Cassillis, and the red Pelican in her Piety as the Earl of Murray's crest. Not so rare, a pair of green Wyverns support the arms of the Earl of Eglinton and also those of Lord Ochiltree, who has a green Wyvern's head as crest as well.

Most unusual of all are three crests, each showing a creature issuing fire at both ends. The Earl of Angus has an animal said to be a dog, but with a spiked nose, taloned feet, a snake's tail and apparently covered in scales, "breathing fire and shooting fire from the other end" (*see right*), Lord



Seton has "A wingless wyvern contourney Vert spouting fire from the mouth and from behind" (*see left*), while Lord Somerville has "A wingless dragon Vert breathing fire and emitting fire from behind, over a waterwheel Proper." (*below*)



Leslie suggests that one at least of these improper monsters was derived from a careless copying of an amphisbaenian serpent, with a head at each end, both of which would have been breathing fire, but it is as likely that the artist was just having a little bit of fun. The Angus crest is the nearest thing I have yet seen in heraldry to the Babylonian SIRRUSH or MUSSHUSSU (*see No 38*), but then this ancient monster could hardly have been known at the time this armorial was made.

The Dunvegan Armorial, Edited by John and Eilean Malden and with a Foreword by John MacLeod of MacLeod (The Heraldry Society of Scotland, 2006) is a companion volume to the above, even more impressive with over a hundred colour plates. The original work was roughly contemporary with the Dublin Armorial, and contains many of the same arms, though with some variations. For instance, the crest of Angus is now a Salamander (*right*), those of



Cockatrice and Basilisk The magnificent lion is the king of the beasts, the equally magnificent eagle is the king of the birds, but the king of the serpents is the small and evil cockatrice.

This legendary monster, hatched on a dunghill from a cock's egg by a serpent, is so venomous that its look or breath is said to be deadly poison. With its cock's crested head, dangling wattles, glittering, death-dealing eye, barbed tongue and serpent's tail, it is truly a fearsome object to behold. Even serpents will flee from it to escape death, and all other creatures are easily overpowered and killed by it, even from a distance, all except the weasel, who will pursue it even to its den and kill it.



It is said that a cockatrice will observe a lark singing high in the sky, and will creep along until it is just beneath the bird, when it will breathe out its poison into the air and the lark will fall dead into its mouth.

A cockatrice which achieves the age of nine years will lay an egg on a dunghill, and a toad will come to hatch it, to produce, not another cockatrice, but a basilisk. In every way as evil as its parent, the basilisk has the added terror of a dragon's head at the end of its tail, and is sometimes known as the amphisian cockatrice because of its similarity to the amphiptre, a serpent with a head at each end of its body. So dreadful is the appearance of the basilisk that if a mirror is held up, so that it must look at itself instead of its victim, it will instantly burst asunder with horror and fear.

Cockatrice and basilisk derive from one origin, although later fables have separated them into two creatures. In spite of their unpleasant natures they are well represented in armory, several families using them as supporters and crests. Perhaps it was thought that ill-wishers would be repulsed by these venomous creatures. MY (Does the reference to the weasel perhaps refer to the snake-killing mongoose?)

Curtailed Dragon

Robert Harrison has sent a copy of his crest as drawn by Baz Manning, seen here. He tells me that the reason why the dragon's tail is docked, is to remind him of his pet corgi which he had as a boy and kept for many years. For some reason, probably a hangover from the days when they were working dogs, herding stock through fields and hedges that may have been full of brambles, corgis' tails are always docked. This feature makes Robert's dragon unique in heraldry, and possibly in dracology too.



Fabulous Beasts in Grants to New Life Peers

Peter Gwynn-Jones, CVO, Garter Principal King of Arms, has been displaying in *The Heraldry Gazette* some of his designs for arms granted to newly-created Life Peers, and several of these contain fabulous beasts. In the June 2006 issue we see that Baron Bingham of Cornhill has for a crest: *A Griffin sejant erect Vert beaked and holding with both feet a Key wards upwards and outwards Or*, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff has for Supporters: *On either side a Unicorn winged Argent armed and unguled Or gorged with a plain Collar attached thereto a Line reflexed over the back and terminating in a Ring Gules*, and Baron Griffiths of Burry Port has for a crest: *Entwined about a Bottle Kiln Or a Dragon wings displayed the body reflexed over the sinister side with the tail to the dexter Gules langued Or*, and for Supporters: *On either side a male Griffin Gules armed langued rayed and holding in the interior forefoot a Conch shell Or*, while in the September issue we note that Baron Snape has for a crest: *A Demi Unicorn Azure armed winged and unguled Or supporting with both feet a Grenade Azure fired Or*, Baron George's crest is: *A Dragon sejant erect Gules holding between the forefeet a Bezant*, while that of Lord Tunnicliffe is: *A Cat sejant Sable winged Or*. Most of the shields demonstrate Garter's love of intricate and ingenious geometrical designs. Also in the September issue, the arms of Heraldry Society member Major General Richard Gerrard-Wright CB CBE DL are shown in full colour; the shield is *Per pale and per chevron Sable and Argent three Saltires square couped Or in the Sable and Sable in the Argent in chief a Sphinx couchant per pale Or and Sable armed and headdress garnished Gules*. Although it does not say so, the Sphinx depicted is of the Egyptian variety, not the Greek (in other words, it has no wings). The General is to be congratulated on a bold and significant design, though one wonders whether the agent, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant, had some strong influence over it, as the basic pattern is much the same as his own arms (*Per pale and per pall argent and sable*). The Sphinx, though quite common in regimental badges, signifying service in Egypt (*see No 2*), is most unusual as a charge in heraldry.

BOOK REVIEW

The Dublin Armorial of Scottish Nobility by Leslie Hodgson (The Heraldry Society of Scotland, 2006) is a scholarly work of reference, with over fifty colour plates reproduced from the late sixteenth-century document *GO. Ms. 36: Scottish Nobility E*, held in the Genealogical Office in Dublin, with copious annotation. Fergus Gillespie, Chief Herald of Ireland, contributes a Preface. Of particular interest to dracologists, over twenty of the plates show fabulous beasts of various kinds, a few being most unusual. The King of Scots has, of course, his two Unicorn supporters, and single Unicorns support the arms of the Earl of Orkney, Lord Glamis and Lord Altrie, while the Lords Oliphant and Invermeath have white Unicorn heads as crests, and Lord Glencairn has a black one. (Oliphant's elephant supporters are a joy.)

Griffins are equally popular. The Earl of Orkney's other supporter is a red Griffin, while the Earl of Rothes, Lord Lindsay of the Byres and Lord Sinclair each