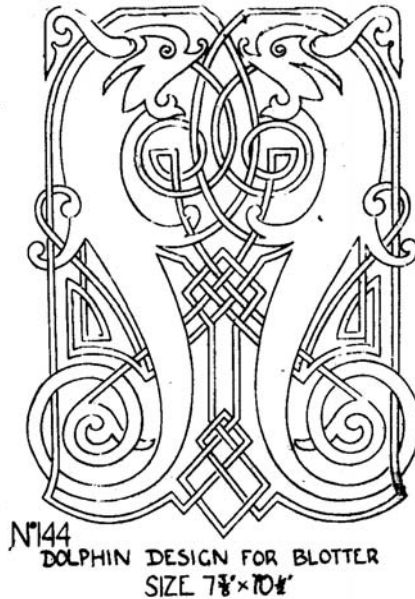


tops and wallets, blotters and purses, card cases and pochettes, to book-covers and fire-screens, mostly in the Art Nouveau style, but with a few Art Deco patterns putting in an appearance. Dragons and Dolphins are quite popular, with a Phoenix and St George for good measure. Here are a couple of them (*below*). We may well show others from time to time.



**AND FINALLY...**

For my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday I received lots of wonderful presents, including a dragon-handled paperknife, a Fantasy Encyclopedia, the latest Harry Potter book and several dragon-themed cards, not least among which was this hand-drawn version from my granddaughter Alice (*right*).



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# Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 88 St Helen's Day 2007



Tony Ryan's Griffin Crest, drawn by Dennis Field.



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

We welcome new members Chas Charles-Dunne, Bridget Donaldson, Angela Goschen and Steven Henriques, and sadly record the death of Michael Francis McCarthy, on Friday 3 August at his home in Australia, whose last book is reviewed in this issue. Apart from his work on ecclesiastical heraldry, he was a noted dracologist, and pictures from his *Dragonkind* will continue to appear in these pages from time to time.

Helen was the mother of Constantine, who became the Emperor of Rome, transferred his capital to Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople, and made his mother Empress. He also made Christianity the official state religion, having seen the sign of a cross in the sky just before a battle, which he subsequently won, confirming his imperial power. Helen was a devout Christian, and on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, said she had discovered the True Cross, which then became the source of many valued relics, one of which is still preserved in Rome, though another piece was captured by the Saracens during the Crusades and has been lost. Although many Byzantine saints have had encounters with dragons, Helen does not seem to have been one of them. She was born around 225 AD and died in 330 AD. Her feast day falls on 18<sup>th</sup> August.

Tony Ryan's crest, on the cover, is blazoned:- *A Griffin segreant Gules armed langued and winged Or in the dexter foreclaws a Bird-bolt bendwise sinister Azure and flighted Or the head upward in the form of a Fleur-de-lys Azure and supporting with the sinister foreclaws an Anchor Or.* Tony writes that the Griffin is a traditional crest of the Ryan family in Ireland, and the arrow, fleur-de-lys and anchor are all emblems associated with different ancestors. Strangely, he asserts that the upper part of the Griffin's body, between the aquiline and leonine parts, is that of a Dragon, though the artist has drawn it feathery rather than scaly. Perhaps it was just the taloned claws that suggested a

Benet's. This enigmatical monster has been likened to a lion, a Griffin, a Yale or even a novel hybrid, but from the photograph of it in a much damaged state it is impossible to say what it once might have been, while the two earlier drawings of it differ so much from each other that they do not give reliable clues. Ron concludes that "it does not accord with any named monster and, taken with the opposing figure, may simply represent good and evil or man and devil."

(Another spearman fighting a monster, this time a Griffin, also from Norwich Cathedral, is seen in one of the misericords, see No 63, p 7.)

Ron also includes mention of the seal of William Basset, who was the abbot of St Benet's in 1133 (right). This shows a figure dressed as a Norman warrior, said to be St Benet himself, in the act of rescuing "an idle young monk, who fled from his convent, and was forthwith seized on by the devil and returned safe to his convent." The devil is represented by a strange monster of a type not unknown in mediaeval iconography, and when I first glimpsed its bird-like head and wings, I said, "A Basilisk!" Ron immediately responded, "Of course! A play on the name Basset!" On the other hand, this devil does not have the serpentine body typical of basilisks, but rather, leonine lower parts, though Ron's quick insight may well have something in it. One early author, at any rate (Francis Blomefield, *An Essay towards a Topographical History of Norfolk, 5 vols, 1739-75*), believed that the figures in the spandrels were related to the figures on the seal. Whatever the case, thanks are due to Ron for drawing our attention to this interesting enigma.



(More from Norfolk in the next issue)

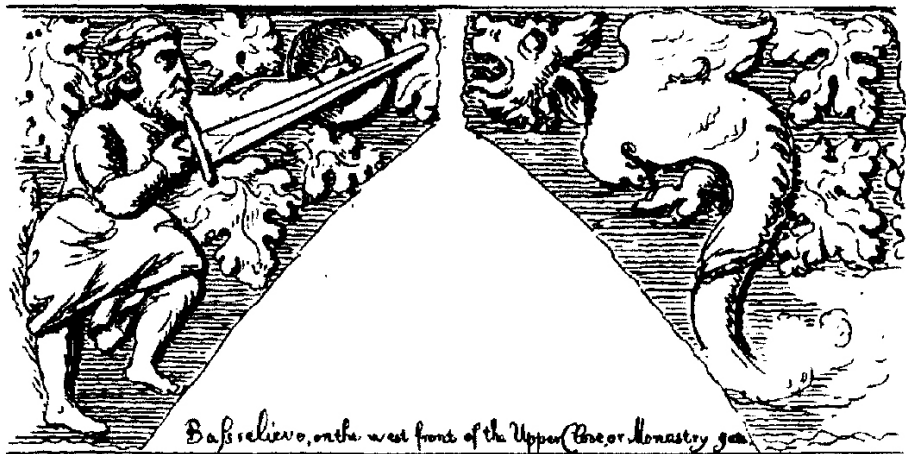
## Fabulous Beasts in Leathercraft Designs

Susan Elderton brought us a catalogue from her former class teacher with pages of outline designs for the use of leathercraft workers, published by George & Co, 21A, Noel Street, Soho. London W1, in the 1920s. These were priced at 2d each (6d for the larger fire-screen patterns) and were used to decorate all sorts of fancy goods, from box

*Gules*, while Norton Stuart has as a crest *An heraldic sea-lion sejant-erect Gules, armed, langued, queued, and finned Azure, grasping in the paws an escutcheon charged as in the arms ( Or a fess chequy Azure and Argent cotised flory outwards Gules)*. Note the difficulty each has in blazoning the posture of a creature half beast and half fish. While it is splendid that these journals can now print so much in full colour, it does mean that very few of their pictures can be reproduced in *Dragonlore*.

### News from Norfolk

Ron Fiske has written a paper on the Gatehouse of St Benet's Abbey near Ludham in Norfolk, which is mainly concerned with the heraldry but also deals with the figures in the spandrels of the arch at the west front, one of which, though badly damaged, appears to be some sort of monster. The theme of an armed man in the left hand spandrel facing a monster in the right was not unique to St Benet's, and Ron also shows a picture of similar figures that were once to be seen in the Ethelbert Gate at Norwich Cathedral (*below*).



The man on the left is not dissimilar to the St Benet's figure, with his small round shield outstretched, though the latter's weapon is more like a spear than a sword. However, the beast is quite different, being a traditional mediaeval dragon rather than the leonine creature at St

draconian origin. Nevertheless, it is a fine balanced design and Tony is to be congratulated on his good taste. Dennis Field is one of the regular artists at the College of Arms.

### London's Dragons, from the title sheet of *London's Armory* by Richard Wallis (1677)



### Papal Dragons

ARMORIA PONTIFICALIUM, A Roll of Papal Arms, 1012-2006, by Michael Francis McCarthy (Darlinghurst NSW, 2007) is a magnificent compilation of the arms of the Popes including both the earlier attributed arms and the later genuine ones, many illustrated four times over, with the official Vatican drawing, a selection of artwork contemporary with each pope, Michael's own inimitable drawings, and a complete reprint of Stroehl's 1909 *Wappenrolle*. Apparently only three popes ever had a dragon in their arms, and no other fabulous beast of any kind makes an appearance. The earliest example is for **Pope Clement IV** (1265-1268), to whom three different arms have been assigned, the latest, given by Galbreath (1936), is *Argent, an eagle displayed gules, armed and membered or, its talons buried into a dragon reversed vert*. This woodcut by Paul Boesch (*right*) is from Galbreath's book. Stroehl gives his arms as *Or, six*





*fleur-de-lis in pile azure* in his main work (properly the arms of the Farnese family, whose Pope Paul III renovated Clement's tomb and confused the issue by having his arms placed on it) but adds this sketch (*left*) in the index, giving it as the armorial emblem of the Guelphs. In the main section of his book, Michael draws the earliest known arms for Clement

IV, *Or, an eagle displayed sable, armed and membered gules, within a border sable semy of besants*, but he adds the Guelph arms on a banner and puts a little Farnese shield in as well.

The next dragon to appear is in the arms of **Pope Gregory XIII** (1572-1585): *Gules, a wyvern coupé at the waist, wings displayed or, armed and langued azure*. This is also blazoned as a demi-dragon, and although four versions of it appear in this book, all are in colour so that we cannot reproduce any of them.

The last example is for **Pope Paul V** (1605-1621) who bore *Azure a wyvern statant wings displayed or, a chief Capo d'Italia* (the chief being *or an eagle displayed sable*) but unfortunately the same disability applies.

Apart from the dearth of fabulous beasts, this is a most enjoyable and instructive book, almost all in colour, and Michael deserves our warmest congratulations.

### **Fabulous Beasts in New Peerage Grants**

Of the six new peerage grants shown in *The Heraldry Gazette* for June 2007, four display heraldic monsters. Baron Brennan has a *Male Griffin Sable beaked rayed and forelegged Or holding in the beak a Rose Gules seeded slipped and leaved Or* both as a crest, where it is *sejant*, and as a pair of supporters, which are *segreant*. It is said that the Griffins relate to the name of the building in which the grantee has his chambers.

Baron Hart of Chilton has for a crest: *A Dragon sejant Gules armed langued and supporting with the dexter foreclaws a Sword point downwards Or*. This is an allusion to Wales with the sword of justice reflecting the law.

Baroness Paisley of St George's (the wife of Ian Paisley MP) has for supporters: *On either side two Dragons the dexter Argent wings feathered Or the sinister Or wings feathered Argent*. Actually there is only one Dragon on each side, referring to St George, but the wings being uncharacteristically feathered instead of reptilian is merely a mark of difference, though technically could be interpreted as making a novel monster.

Baron Rosser's supporters are: *On the dexter a Unicorn dimidiated with a Lion Argent winged horned armed and unguled Or and on the sinister a Unicorn dimidiated with a Lion Or winged horned armed and unguled Argent*. He also has for a Badge *A Unicorn dimidiated with a Lion winged and sejant Argent horned armed unguled and gorged with a plain Collar attached thereto a Chain reflexed over the back Or*. Note the similarity of counterchanging Or and Argent with the previous entry for Baroness Paisley. Actually a beast dimidiating Unicorn and Lion is by no means new to heraldry, as a creature with upper half of an Unicorn Argent and the lower half of a Lion Or (but not winged) was devised by John George for the Wilkinson Sword Company's grant, and then named the Union, pronounced "You-Nye-on" to show that the name too was an amalgam of the two animals. This aroused the ire of Major T.R.Davies, whose letter to the *The Coat of Arms* (No 91, Autumn 1974) we reprinted in *Dragonlore* No 35. Baron Rosser's hybrids are said to "combine Scotland and England by means of the unicorn and lion dimidiation," a view which misses the point that James VI & I was trying to make, combining kingly majesty (the lion) with divine grace (the unicorn) for *both* kingdoms – and each had a lion or three on its shield, so the lion is as much Scotland's beast as England's.

This issue of the *Gazette* also has, on the back cover, a fine drawing by Dan Escott of the Beaufort Yale.

### **Some Sea-lions from Canada**

*Gonfanon* for "Summer 2007" illustrates two coats of arms with heraldic Sea-lions. First, Paul Langan has for his shield *Azure semy of Estoiles Argent three Sea lions naiant guardant Or armed and langued*