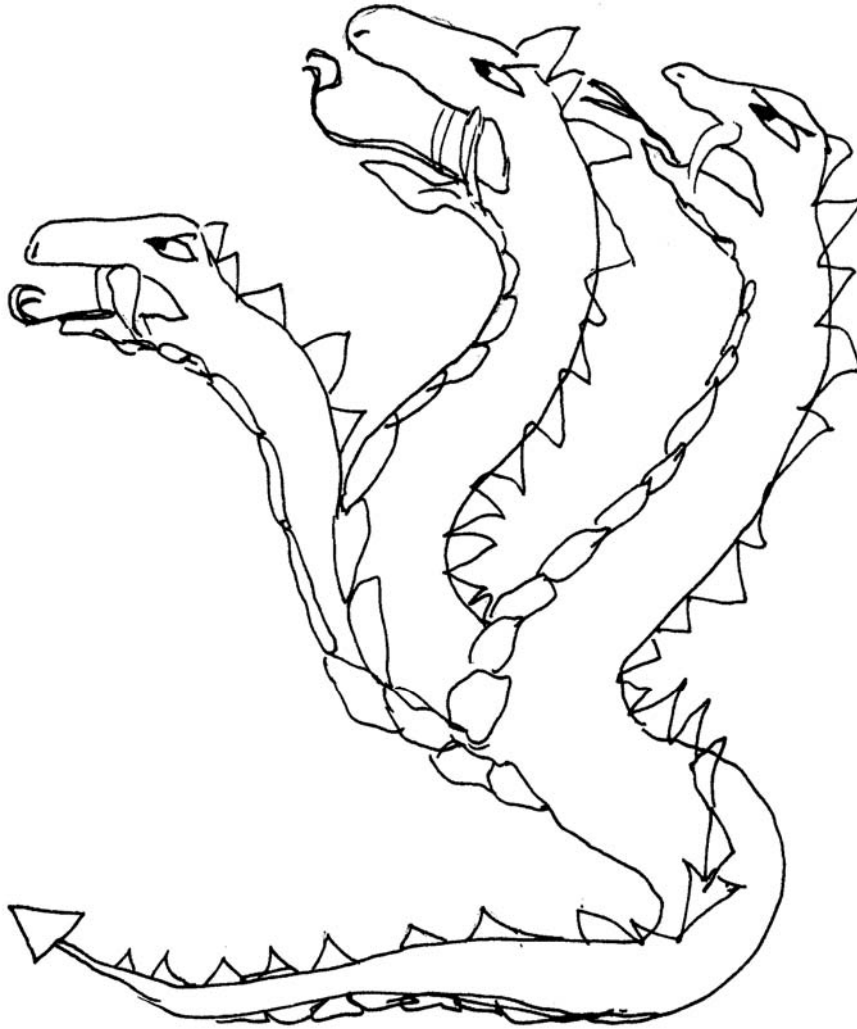


FROM THE POSTBAG

Cecil Humphery-Smith has sent a picture of “the international 3-headed bull snake” drawn by his nine-year-old autistic grandson William Buttayotti, all in colour (green bodies, orange breastplates, red tongues, white fangs, black eyes and a purple barb on the end of its tail). Cecil says that William is deeply into dinosaurs, but that whenever he draws them, they come out as dragons.



Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

No. 95

St Aelfleda's Day 2008



Cerberus drawn by Roland Symons



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

From time to time we hear about regular followers of our Journal who see it on the web-site, examples being Alan Fennely, Kevin Lindsay, Laurie Patten, the Wootens and evidently James Dempster, and we must welcome them all to our number, even when we do not know who they all are. On the other hand, we occasionally receive resignations, for various reasons, for instance, Cecilia Chance, Gillian Corrie and Rosalie Evans, and sometimes we lapse members who repeatedly fail to reply to letters (Diana Beauchamp, Frederick Hogarth, Graham Scott and Andrew Tully are some), so if you wish to stay on our mailing list, and happen to receive a letter with one or other issue, please do not fail to respond (an e-mail will do!).

Aelfleda is celebrated on 8 February, but is not mentioned in any of my books on saints, though it is such an unusual and attractive name that it is surprising not to come across it more often. All I learned from Google was that the name means “Elf beauty.” Stephen and Ute Clackson (*see No 53*) gave this name to their elder daughter, and Google also records that she has her own coat of arms.

The picture on the cover is taken from one of Roland’s drawings of the badges of RAF Squadrons, this one being No 98 Bomber Squadron (*right*) and shows a *Cerberus sable* intended to depict the Squadron’s role when it helped to bar the enemy’s way to the front and rear during the German retreat in 1918. The badge was granted in August 1937, and Roland was particularly tickled by the sting in the tail.



A New Dictionary of HERALDRY, Edited by Stephen Friar (London, 1987), has been a constant source of reference, and we have reproduced all the articles on heraldic monsters and fabulous beasts written by Margaret Young with illustrations by Andrew Jamieson, over the last few years (all except one, on the Pelican, which follows), so by way of an index, here is a list of them with the Number of *Dragonlore* in which each of them appeared:-

Alphyn No 68	Martlet No 90	Salamander No 93
Basilisk No 77	Panther No 79	Theow or Thos No 71
Cockatrice No 77	Pantheon No 70	Tyger No 92
Dragon No 73	Pegasus No 82	Unicorn No 94
Eagle No 67	Pelican No 95	Wyvern No 73
Griffin No 83	Phoenix No 80	Yale No 66

AN OUROBOUROS IN NATURE

David Attenborough’s latest television series, *Life in Cold Blood*, kicked off on Monday 4 February with a stunning display of amazing reptiles and amphibia, and among them was a little spiky Armadillo Lizard, which, when threatened, curled itself up into a prickly circle no bigger than a man’s hand by biting its own tail, a true image of the legendary Ourobouros. (*Drawn here from memory*)



“CUTE CRITTER IS MONSTROUS FUN”

This was the headline over a review of the film *The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep*, a fantasy based on a cross between the ancient Scottish kelpie and



our old friend the Loch Ness Monster. The picture of him as a baby (*seen here*) may be cute, but he grows into a wild and unpredictable monster causing much amusing consternation to the characters played by David Morrissey and Ben Chaplin.

A SINGAPORE SEALION



This unusual sculpture stands on the waterfront in the so-called “Lion City” spurting water through its mouth, so it is in fact a decorative fountain, an original interpretation of its theme. It may be based on the supporters of the arms of the East India Company, which will appear in a later issue.

Pelican The heraldic pelican is transformed from the clumsy natural bird into one of great beauty and religious significance. It is sometimes depicted like an eagle, and sometimes more like a swan, and although it always has a much longer beak than either of these two birds, this is much more slender and graceful than that of the real bird.

It was once believed that although pelicans were extremely devoted to their young, these would rebel against their father and provoke his anger, whereupon he would strike back and kill them. Three days later the mother bird would return to the nest, and piercing her own breast would bring them back to life by pouring her blood on them. Thus the pelican became the mystic emblem of Christ, whose blood was shed for mankind. It is the symbol of charity, love and piety.

There are armorial terms which apply only to the pelican who is depicted with her wings raised, her neck embowed, pecking at her own breast, from which drops of blood are falling. In this posture the bird is blazoned as ‘vulning herself’. [right] But if she is standing on her nest and nourishing her babies with her blood she is described as being ‘in her piety’.



The pelican is used quite frequently in armory both in the arms and as the crest. Its association with Christ makes it a particularly appropriate charge in the two colleges of Corpus Christi, one at Oxford and the other at Cambridge. At Oxford the shield is divided into three and on the dexter part is a pelican vulning herself. At Cambridge the shield is quartered, the first and fourth quarters bearing a pelican in her piety for Christ.

MY



Corpus Christi College, Oxford



Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

Tierced per pale, the centre argent thereon an escutcheon of the Arms of the See of Winchester ensigned with a mitre all proper, the dexter side azure a pelican Or vulning her breast gules, the sinister side sable a chevron Or between three owls argent on a chief gold as many roses gules barbed and seeded proper.

Recorded at the Visitation of 1574-5.

Quarterly gules and azure, in the first and fourth quarters a pelican in its piety, and in the second and third three lily flowers slipped and leaved all argent.

Granted 23 December 1570 by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms.

(Drawings of arms, and blazons, from Briggs, 1971.)

Margaret has also written pieces about the Bear and the Lion, which may be fabled but are scarcely fabulous, and will not be reproduced in these pages unless there is an overwhelming demand for them!

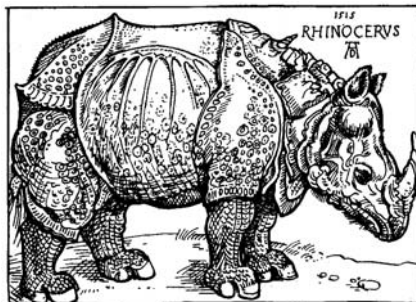
THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES

Leslie Hodgson has very kindly and promptly responded to my request for a copy of the arms of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries, drawn in *London's Armory* of 1677, shown opposite:-

The arms were granted by William Camden, Clarenceux, on 12 December 1617, just six days after the incorporation of the Society by King James I, and the original is still in the possession of the Society, and the wording of the blazon that appears therein is as follows:-

In a Shield Azure, Apollo, the inventor of physique, proper, with his heade Radiant, holding in his left hand a bowe and in his right hande an Arow dor, supplanting a serpent argent, above the Shield an Helme theruppon a mantle gules, doubled Argent, and for their Crest upon a Wreath of their Colours, a Rhynoceros proper, supported by too Unicorns or, armed and unguled argent, upon a Compartiment to make the Achievement compleat the motto, Opiferque per orbem dicor.

The motto is a quotation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which clearly inspired the whole design, and means "I am called throughout the world, the bringer of aid" as a reference to Apollo, the legendary founder of the art of medicine. In those days, as in the Bestiaries, serpents were regularly shown with little wings and legs like a chicken, though in modern heraldry a beast such as the one depicted would be called a Wyvern. The Unicorns are almost certainly present because their horns were supposed to be a source of healing potency, as was the horn of the rhinoceros, drawn on the grant as a copy of Albert Durer's famous woodcut of 1515 (right). There has been some speculation that



the similarity of the Apollo figure to traditional images of St Michael and the Dragon may have some significance, in that overtly religious symbols had become unfashionable and possibly even punishable by the puritan-minded, yet could be subtly suggested by a pagan equivalent, though in this case surely the relevance of Ovid's interpretation of the meaning of Apollo would have appealed greatly to the apothecaries, religious overtones notwithstanding.

Much of this information is taken from *The Armorial Bearings of the Guilds of London*, by John Bromley and Heather Child (London, 1960) with Heather's modern interpretation of the arms in full colour.