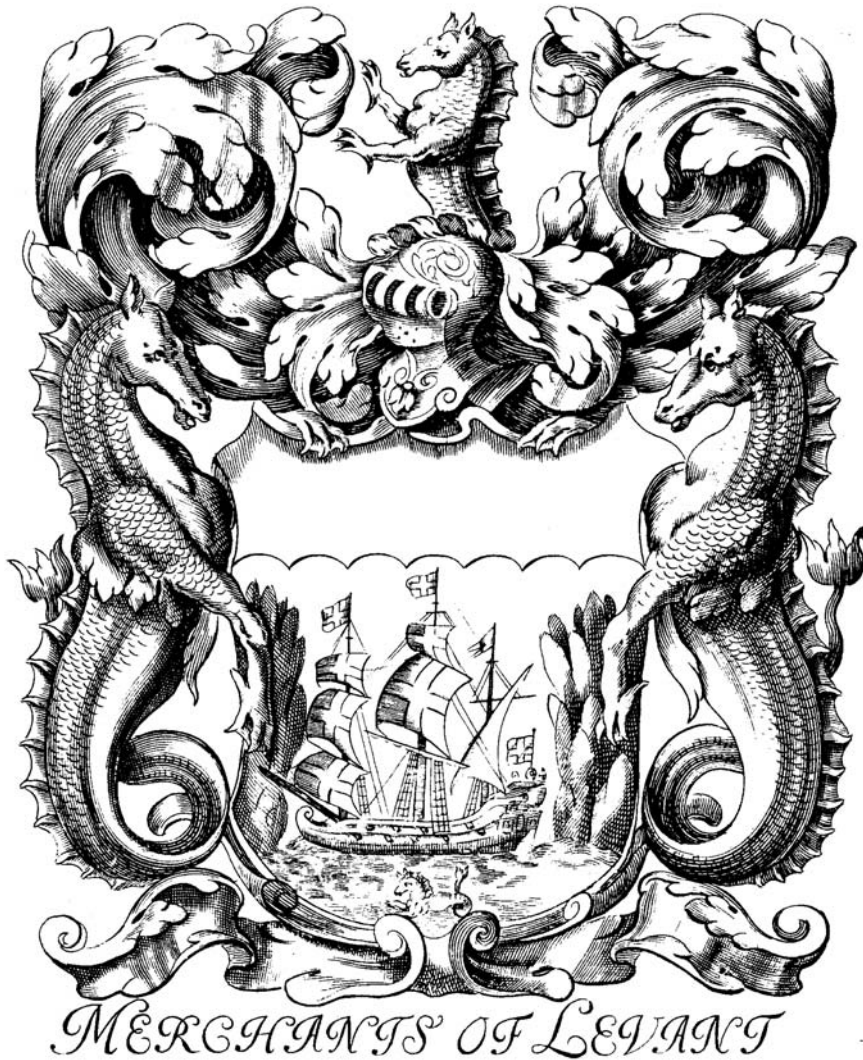


designs, and this version of an Ouroboros with its tail coming up through a slit in its body and its neck piercing its wings is a reminder of the mysterious Klein Bottle, a three-dimensional object with only one surface, inner and outer surfaces blending into one continuous whole, a development from the Möbius Strip.

Leslie has also sent another plate from "London's Armory" of 1677 showing the Seahorse supporters of the arms of the Merchants of Levant (*below*).



Dragonlore

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St George and the Dragon, designed by A.V.Baklanov



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

Sadly we report that Sheila Edwards died this morning. She did a lot for me over the years and was very fond of her fabulous beasts.

The Twenty-third of April is celebrated as the Feast Day of the Patron Saint of England, who also happens to be the Patron Saint of Georgia, Greece, Portugal, Russia (sharing with St Andrew), Serbia, and a new one on the list, Montenegro, with possible additions of Canada, China, Ethiopia and Palestine. But England has a special claim to the date, because it is the day we celebrate both Shakespeare and Turner, two of the greatest innovators in the arts in the whole of human history.

In art, St George is almost always depicted in combat with a dragon, and the company of dracologists has been diligent in sending in examples of such works. The one on the cover is from a £5 commemorative coin issued by The London Mint for the island (and British Oversea Territory) of Tristan da Cunha, but from the many submitted, by Leslie Hodgson and Carl-Alexander von Volborth among others, here is an elegant one sent in by Marc Van de Cruys, of unknown provenance but with a certain panache (*right*). Note that this dragon is more mammalian than reptilian and has rather ineffectually small wings.



their new Insignia car later this year, along with two earlier versions still to be seen on our roads, through the kindness of Matthew Green of Stourbridge Motor House, the local Vauxhall Dealers.



DRAGON (wood engraving, 1952) by Maurits Cornelis ESCHER (1898-1972)



Leslie Hodgson sent this copy of “one of the less visually disturbing works of art of one of the very best draughtsmen of modern times.” Escher was keen on paradoxical

Kevin Arkinstall has used the dragon he drew for us (*see No 46*) as a header for his flier advertising a Calligraphy/Heraldry Workshop he will be holding from 14th to 18th July at Urchfont Manor College, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 4RG (tel: 01380 840495), entitled “**Calligraphy and Illumination**” for which details may be obtained directly from the College.



Marc Van de Cruys found this fearsome creature (*above*) wandering around on the internet, and wondered if it were a Griffin needing a proper home. We are happy to give it a home here, and think that it is certainly a Griffin, even if it has only one foreleg and one wing. He also reported on a huge beast that appeared for a time in Antwerp, that the public were invited to walk into, entering by the vast gaping mouth and experiencing various thrills on the way through. He did send a picture of it as an e-mail attachment, but unfortunately it was not clear enough to reproduce here.

The Griffin badge used on Vauxhall motor cars has been given a make-over, not all that different so that it may still be recognized, but not as splendid as the old badge that we showed in No 26. Here is the latest version, to appear for the first time on

HERE BE DRAGONS by Lesley A. Holt

(As we have often noted, St George is not the only dragonslayer who features in our store of legends, and Lesley has kindly written for us this account of one who was noted in her locality in Cheshire.)

During the early years of the 12th century news of a dragon reached Thomas Venables.

The distraught folk of Moston near Middlewich pleaded for him to rid them of this terrible monster. It destroyed crops and farmlands, it waylaid and killed local peasants, it molested young women and even ate children.

Thomas was appalled at the mischief and misery perpetrated by the beast. He determined to bring about its end.

Maybe dragons were but manifestations of cruelty, injustice and oppression. Peoples the world over knew of them from the remote past. They were the embodiment of evil, reckoned to be the most powerful of all living things.

Saint George keeps England safe from these creatures but just occasionally one or two slip past his guard. Local heroes then take matters into their own hands.

Courageous Thomas Venables was just such a man. He gathered together his weapons and set out to deal with the dragon.

People seldom traversed that swampy area where the rivers Wheelock and Dane joined the Weaver. There were few paths and many deep pools. But stray animals needed gathering and foolish travellers hoped for a short cut. They were never seen again.

Thomas could smell its foul breath but the swirling mists hid it from view, until, suddenly, it was towering above him, huge and menacing.

Quickly he loosed several arrows but they scarcely penetrated the thick scales. Then, horrified, he noticed that the bundle between its jaws was a baby. Thomas in fury snatched up his spear and drove it with all his strength into the dragon's heart, valiantly and courageously killing it instantly.

Wrapping the crying baby in his cloak he returned triumphant to the overjoyed villagers.

So goes the old story.

In Middlewich church is the shield of the Lords of Kinderton. Over it is carved the crest depicting the dragon in the act of devouring the child and through its heart is the spear... A visual reminder of how Sir Thomas Venables defeated a bully.

FROM THE NETHERLANDS

Jan Keuzenkamp has kindly sent, amongst other treasures, a copy of a paper which he co-authored with Professor Alessandro Savorelli from Florence in the Swiss journal *Archivum Heraldicum 2000-II*, on some Netherlandish town arms in a 17th century Florentine manuscript, with some twenty-six of his elegant illustrations of Dutch civic arms, two of which we show here, for Monnickendam and for Dordrecht, each of

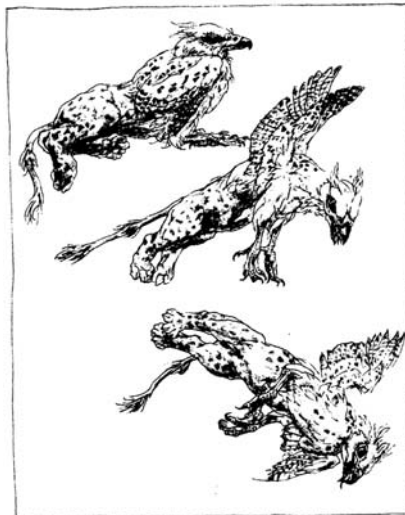
which has Griffins for supporters, the first with wings addorsed, the other with wings elevated.



We have previously seen his Capirussa supporting the arms of Brielle (*No 65*) and the Unicorn holding up the shield of Hoorn (*No 61*). Jan also sent some pictures from the Dutch *Kunstschrift 2002, No 2*, dealing with fabulous animals, including this monster hydra as represented and described by the Amsterdam chemist Albertus Seba (*right*), drawings by the Dutch painter Peter Vos showing the birth of a Griffin (*below, left*) and the youth of a Griffin (*below, right*), and some misericord wood-carvings from the Great Church in the city of Breda, showing harpies and a wyvern, which, together with some other delights, we must hold over for a later issue.



geboorte van een griffioen



uit de jeugd van een griffioen

THE LIVER BIRD - An Addition to the A to Z

Martin Davies kindly introduced us to *The Little Book of LIVER BIRDS* by David Cottrell (Derby 2006), celebrating the 800th Anniversary of the City of Liverpool. It is by no means little, weighing over a pound (520g), 8” x 6” with 270 pages illustrated in colour throughout and including some 370 pictures, mostly of close-ups of the Liver Bird or long-shot views showing it in context. Although blazoned in the arms and crest of Liverpool City as a Cormorant, the author makes out a good case for it being in fact an original fabulous creature, unique to Liverpool, a hybrid of an eagle, a duck, a cormorant and a dove. It is always shown with a piece of seaweed in its beak, said to be of the laver variety, but sometimes looking more like an olive-branch (the dove influence?), and with a crest of feathers on its head. However, the Greater Cormorant, common enough in Mersey waters, does not have a crest, though the Lesser Cormorant or Shag (“which lays its eggs in a paper bag”) does have a bit of one, but neither species ever eats seaweed, both being exclusively piscivorous. Furthermore, the Liver Bird is shown in a great variety of shapes, sometimes short and squat like a duck, sometimes tall and elegant like a stork (*right*). With all the evidence presented from examples all around the City (with maps to show where to find them), we must accept the Liver Bird as a genuine addition to our score of Fabulous Creatures, and congratulate the author for his thoroughly admirable guide to the wonders of Liverpool. It is good that he names the artist responsible for each piece whenever possible, as well as the architects whose buildings they enhance.

NEWS ROUNDUP

The Heraldic Craftsman No 63 (March 2008) has reprinted our piece on “The Relevance of Bats” from No 33, complete with Tom McOwat’s drawings.

