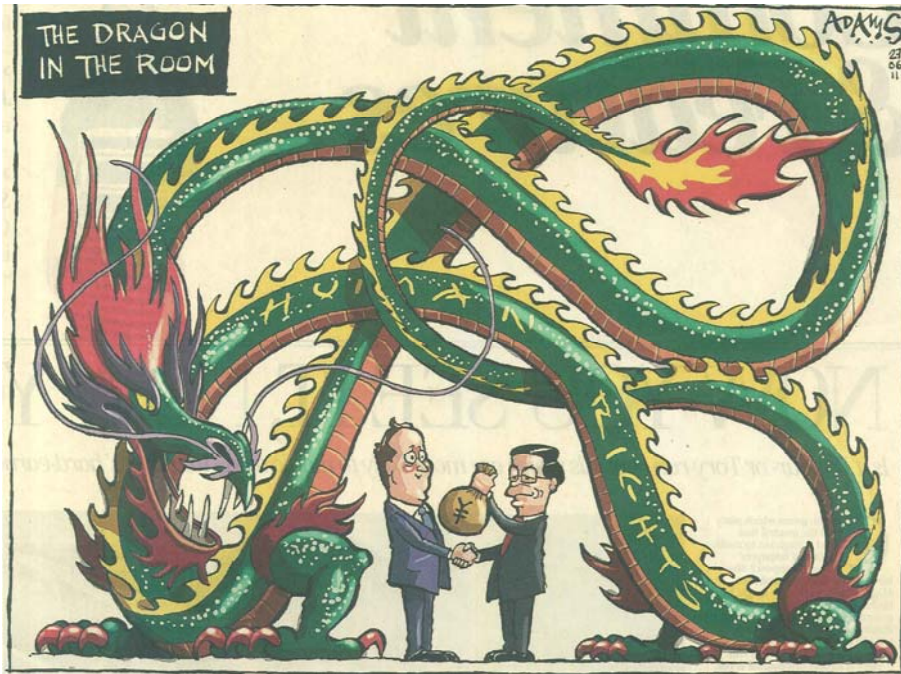


ANOTHER CHINESE DRAGON CARTOON



Cecil Humphery-Smith sent this dramatic commentary on the visit of the Chinese Prime Minister to England, from the pages of *The Daily Telegraph* of Monday 27 June 2011. This dragon is truly serpentine (though his front legs seem to be on backwards) and is rather more menacing than the traditional benevolent Chinese dragon. Perhaps there is a reversal of roles coming about, with the Western dragon as the embodiment of evil – at least since Christian teachings replaced pagan beliefs – being replaced by the sentimentalised and Disneyfied dragons now familiar in children’s books, while the peaceful Chinese variety, possibly disturbed by Western intrusions, is becoming more fearsome. Here (*below*), as a reminder, is a giant totem from a Chinese theme park that we showed in No 62.



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Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 128 St Veronica’s Day 2011



Winged Lion from Leicester photographed by Leslie Hodgson



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts



We welcome website member Robin Gleaves from Cheshire, and if any others who have been following Dragonlore on the internet would get in touch, we shall welcome them too. Incidentally, College ties are still available at £8.00 (inland postage included).

Here is what James Bentley writes about Saint Veronica in “The Calendar of Saints” (London 1986) under the heading JULY 12:-

“Veronica’s story first appears fairly late in the history of the early church, though it relates to the very heart of the Gospel – Jesus’s way to Golgotha. As he fell, carrying his cross on the way to be crucified, she wiped his face with her cloth. On the cloth was left an image of his divine face. Scholars have been quick to point out that Veronica’s name may well derive from the story itself and not be historical, since Vera means ‘true’ and icon means ‘image.’ Thus she obtained the true image of Jesus. A ‘veil of Veronica’ is preserved at St. Peter’s, Rome.”

Another source confirms her feast day as 12 July, mentioning that the legend was not known until the 4th century, whilst a third gives her feast day as 27 February (which we shall ignore), but adds that the mere sight of the holy relic was enough to cure the Emperor Tiberius of his serious illness, which led to his baptism. Legends do grow!

The Winged Lion on the cover stands in Town Hall Square in Leicester, and some information about it has been provided by **Drusilla Armitage**, who lives near there. They were designed by the architect F.J.Hanes (who also designed the Town Hall), and were commissioned by Israel Hart, who was three times the Mayor of Leicester in the 1880s, most probably to commemorate Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1887.

Thanks to both Leslie and Drusilla for this contribution.

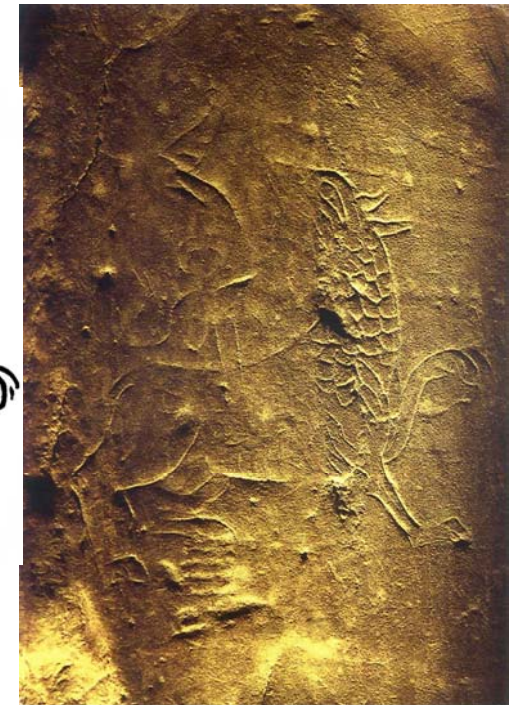
IS THIS A FABULOUS BEAST ?

When we were at school there were two schools of thought. The majority believed that Rupert Bear and his chums (Bill Badger, Peter Porky and so on, if I remember right) were animals dressed up in human clothes who had fabulous adventures, but a determined minority were convinced that they were really children wearing animal masks. In fact there is no way of telling (they never took their clothes off), as they were but drawings appearing in a daily paper and then collected in the ever-popular Annuals.



CORRESPONDENCE

John and Rutha Titterton had a holiday in Orkney and sent a card with a photograph of the Maeshowe Dragon which we showed as a line drawing on the cover of No 33 (*left*). The original, thought to be of Viking provenance, is scratched on a yellowish stone and is very hard to discern (*right*).



This Czech postage stamp (*right*) showing half a Sagittarius fell out of my wallet while I was in the Post Office. Who sent it? I cannot remember. Perhaps somebody will own up! As the back half of the beast is missing, we cannot tell whether he had a snake for a tail, but if he had, it does not seem to be bothering him.



JOURNAL SCAN

Hogtown Heraldry (Summer 2011) has some pages devoted to the Royal Wedding of the Duke of Cambridge to Catherine Middleton, so some Royal Unicorn supporters put in an appearance, but more to our liking was a colour picture of the assembled company at the Annual Branch Dinner (*below*), with our members Kevin Greaves and John Wilkes sitting side by side in the front row and Gordon Macpherson standing behind. Microscopic examination reveals not only another royal Unicorn, but a Mermaid in the arms of the University of Birmingham (England) on the wall behind them, part of a display of the arms of universities of the world in the Great Hall of Hart House in the University of Toronto, where the dinner was held.



Flagmaster No 139 (June 2011) has a couple of double-headed Eagles in the arms of Russia (*below left - spot the tiny dragon*) and Austria (*below right*), with reference to the flags of Poland during their years of partition.



AN UNUSUAL DRAGON CREST



The Arms of Malcolm Howe drawn by Michael Medvedev of St Petersburg.

BOOK REVIEW

Here Be Dragons by Ralph Whitlock (London, 1983) is a survey of nearly two hundred sites in Great Britain which have an association with a dragon, either as a local legend or as a carving in a church. We reviewed the author's book on Folklore in No 30, very favourably, and several of the examples he gives here have been noted in these pages - Henham, Mordiford, Snap at Norwich, and the Centaur fighting a Dragon on a roof boss in Westminster Abbey among them. On the other hand, we have recorded quite a few that he has missed - Martley in Worcestershire, Axbridge, Halse and Somerton in Somerset among others. The book starts with a comprehensive 70-page Introduction on the origin and prevalence of dragons throughout the world with some well-chosen illustrations (though none in colour) of which this lively and probably Victorian picture (*below*) is but one.



I have only one small reservation. In a section headed "Species of dragons" he writes:

"Griffins. Only dragons with the heads of eagles qualify as griffins."

I believe this remark reflects the confusion which led to dragons first appearing with four legs (like a griffin) instead of two. Griffins were never dragons and have quite a different origin in the Middle East.

Many thanks to Robin Gleaves for letting me see this remarkable book, which I must have missed when it first came out. Robin also sent me a photocopy of a complete chapter entitled "An Abundance of Dragons" from the book **Adventures in Unhistory: Conjectures on the Factual Foundations of Several Ancient Legends** by Avram Davidson (New York, 1993 and 2006) which, though written in a curious disjointed style, gives a very thorough survey of all possible sources of dragons. Other chapters deal with the Phoenix, Mandrakes, Werewolf, Unicorn and Mermaids among other legends, so should be worth a visit.

TEN YEARS HAVE PASSED

Midsummer has just gone by and it was just ten years ago that we issued the first of the present series of Dragonlore. Although a few of us had started the College of Dracology in 1945 in our last year at school - and I had recruited a couple of new members while at university - the first two issues of Dragonlore were prepared but never issued. For a good many years I kept up my interest in fabulous beasts by getting relevant books and making notes of appropriate events, but it was not until 2001, after my wife Beryl had died and I found the original drafts while sorting through some old papers, that my son-in-law Mark, with his new computer set-up, suggested that Dragonlore might be revived. With his technical skills and my notes we reconstructed not only the first two issues, but many more that might have been produced during the intervening years until by No 29 we had caught up with the current date, 1st March 2003, so that thereafter the issue date coincided with the nominal date of issue and not with some hypothetical date from the past. For most of this time the print run, starting with a few dozen and building up to well over a hundred, was provided free of charge by my brother-in-law Roger Seabury who had access to a suitable photocopier. Unfortunately he was unable to print in colour, so when from issue No 100 it was decided that colour was needed, the work has been done professionally by Chris Jepson and his team at Prontaprint Stourbridge (although we had managed colour issues for Nos 23 and 30). We now have 140 members on the mailing list and goodness knows how many others who follow Dragonlore on our website, a large number of whom send in contributions of various kinds, for which we are forever grateful. Mark continues to use his technical mastery to convert my written notes and choice of pictures into a presentable format whenever he can spare time from his busy schedule of work, supported as ever by my daughter Keren, and we hope to be able to continue for some time yet, perhaps even another ten years. However, I am not expecting anyone else to take it on when I can no longer continue, so enjoy it while you can.