

was relying on traditional Maori art-forms. It makes an interesting comparison with Okanagan's Ogopogo, discussed in No 34.

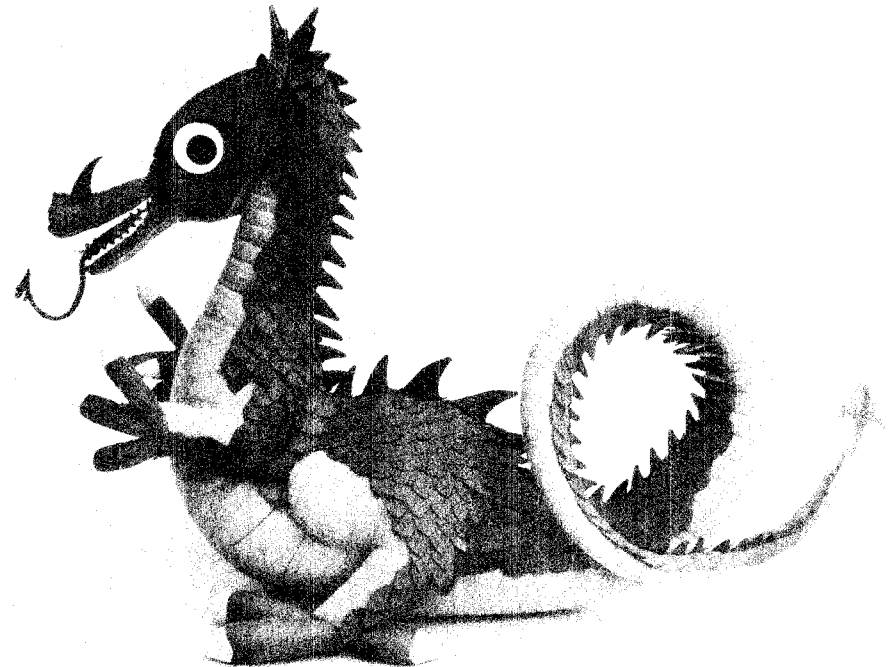


# Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 39

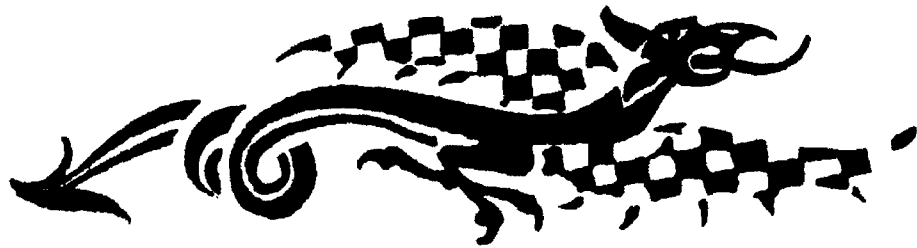
Christmas 2003



Prize-winning soft toy by Patricia Capon, 1972

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

In times long gone by, dragons were divine beings with great cosmic powers. They have not entirely lost this aura in the Far East, though through long years of neglect they have declined towards mere objects of interest in folklore and art history. In the west, however, probably as the result of the growing influence of new religions, dragons became demonized until they were seen as the embodiment of all that was wicked and evil and were vigorously fought by all manner of warriors from mighty archangels down to brave village lads. Sometimes they were slain, and then again they were just tamed, until at the present time they can be either playthings for fantasy artists to embroider in their dreams, or else suitable subjects for cuddly toys to amuse a child as a Christmas present, as seen on our cover. (We gave indications for its construction in No 36; this is the finished article.)



*Dragon doodle*

*drawn by Norman Manwaring*

At this blessed time of Christmas, we give thanks to all those who have sustained us in our endeavours, particularly to Mark and Keren, who with their love and skill have transformed rough scripts and choice of pictures into glossy master copies with elegant layout, and to Roger, who has most generously printed as many copies of each as were needed, as well as ensuring that the supply of back-numbers is kept well stocked up. And also to all those who have sent in books, postcards, photocopies, cuttings, drawings, *objets d'art*, stamps (really useful) and, always welcome, your appreciative comments. May the spirit of Christmas bring light and warmth to all, now and forever.

## An Alphabet of Queries (23)

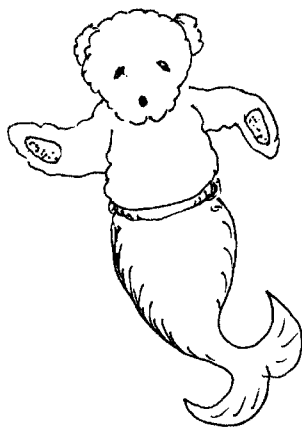
What is known about the Taniwha? This is an elemental being or river spirit from New Zealand, in the Maori tradition, particularly one from the Waikato River, though it is not clear whether the name is a personal one (as is Medusa) or a generic type of creature (as is Undine). It seems that if it is upset, it can cause trouble such as flooding, or in extreme cases, drought. Reports reached us a few months back that some roadworks in the Waikato province had been suspended because a Taniwha had been disturbed. Feelings ran high and there were even threats that troops might be brought in, but apparently the Taniwha does not like to be used for political purposes, and an amicable settlement was reached, so that the roadworks could proceed. There is in that locality a kind of ground-statue which is meant to show what it looks like - a sort of cross between a giant newt and a sea-serpent - but there is quite another version of it on the badge of HMNZS WAIKATO, seen overleaf. When this name was chosen for a New Zealand frigate, there was no extant badge, it being a previously-unused name, so a competition was arranged. The winner was a schoolboy, and his design was adopted. The body is dark reddish brown with pink highlights, against wavy blue bands to indicate water, and it is shown in colour in Stopford's book, although this copy (seen here on the next page), kindly sent in by Derek Taylor, was taken from P. Dennerly's book on *Ships' Badges of the RNZN*. It is not easy to make out the head, with eyes and mouth, and it is not clear whether the schoolboy had actually seen one or

## Fabulous Beasts in Birmingham

Victoria Square in the heart of Birmingham has been developed as a traffic-free area, flanked by the Town Hall (in the style of a Greek temple) to the West and the Council House (in the most impressive Victorian Municipal manner) to the North. It contains a number of fountains and examples of statuary. Among the latter are a pair of sphinx-like objects, carved from solid stone, three metres high, four metres long and two metres wide, known as the Guardians. With subtle differences, each has a human head, though with different hair styles, and they are both winged, but whereas one has the fore body of a lion and the rear of a bull, the other has a bull's fore end and a lion's rear. Thus each combines the four beings that appear in the prophecy of Ezekial and that we know as the emblems of the four Evangelists, but in contrasting arrangements. They were devised by Dhruva Mistry who was born and brought up in India, studied sculpture at the University of Baroda and at the Royal College of Art in London, and was elected a Royal Academician in 1991.

## ADDITIONS TO THE A TO Z

**MERBEAR** - This cuddly toy was created exclusively for the King George's Fund for Sailors, for their 2003 Christmas catalogue, and consists of the top half of a golden teddy bear with green glass eyes and jointed arms and a lower half of a satin fish's tail in maritime blue, fourteen inches long overall. One more unusual hybrid, it is undoubtedly more child-friendly than an heraldic sea-bear.



**WISHPOOSH** - This is listed by Cherry (1995) as "a huge lake-dwelling beaver-monster of the Nez Percé tribe of the north-west Pacific coast and forest, vanquished in a titanic struggle by the trickster-god Coyote." Could this be the same beaver-monster that visited Darren George, as reported in No 35 ?

## Do Sea-Griffins have Wings?

Following the appearance of these hybrid monsters in No 33, Derek Taylor wrote that he was puzzled by the comments, and enclosed a copy of Lord Jellicoe's arms taken from Burke's Peerage (*see right above*) and another, in colour, from a biography of the Admiral. Derek is a great authority on ships' badges, being the author of the book *Pictorial Index of Royal Navy Ships' Badges 1918 to 1995* (Colchester, Part 1, illustrations, 1995, Part 2, text, 1997) as well as the co-author, with B.J.Wilkinson and T.P.Stopford, of the excellent but over-ambitious series *The A to Z of Royal Naval Ships' Badges 1919-1989* (Orpington 1987 and 1988) that sadly only got from A to B. Incidentally, T.P.Stopford has also produced the splendid *Admiralty Ships Badges: Original Patterns 1919-1994* (Rochester, 1996) in two volumes, with 1729 illustrations, all in colour. To get back to sea-griffins, confusingly, Debrett's Peerage shows Jellicoe's arms with the supporters boldly winged (*see right below*). Since the blazon does not state whether the sea-griffins are winged or wingless, nor does it specify what type of whale is to be shown on the shield, it is presumably up to the artist to decide these matters. Robert Noel, Lancaster Herald, has kindly confirmed that the painting of Jellicoe's supporters in the records at the College of Arms shows wingless sea-griffins, and he adds that this is somewhat surprising since the Admiral was known as an advocate of the importance of Naval Aviation. Strangely enough, both the winged beast on the badge of HMS JELlicOE of 1938 and the wingless one on that of HMS JUTLAND of 1946 were submitted

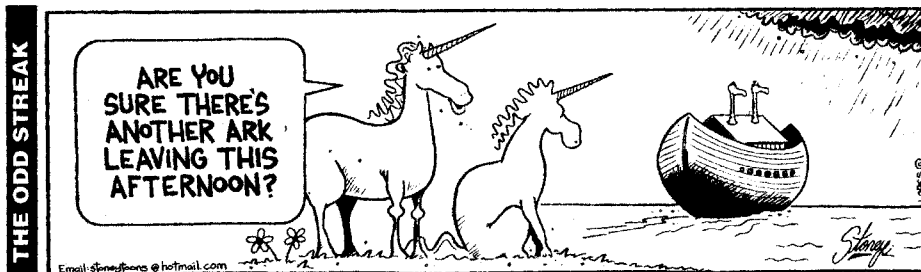


by Sir Arthur Cochrane, Clarenceux King of Arms and Naval Adviser on Heraldry during that period, so it cannot be argued that one form is right and the other wrong. Perhaps after all it was mere aesthetic preference that led to each choice, the winged form better fitting the circular space on the badge of the battleship while the wingless variety was deemed more seemly within the wreath of the destroyer's badge. The disturbing thought occurs that perhaps the artist of the Letters Patent for Jellicoe's grant might have been misled into thinking that a winged griffin was female and that a wingless male form would be more appropriate for the Admiral, though obviously Sir Arthur Cochrane had no such qualms. As we know, winged griffins are generally shown as anatomically male, though with fish-tailed varieties it is obviously more difficult to tell. It is just such a pity that the splendid badge for HMS JELlicOE (*left*) never came into use.



### More on the Ark

In issues Nos 26 and 34 we touched on the theme of the Ark sailing away and leaving certain creatures behind. Here is another variant, from the Daily Mail of 25 November 2003:-



### A Fabulous Beast in New York

A quick visit to New York included a guided tour of St Thomas Episcopal Church on the corner of 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue, one of the most architecturally interesting buildings in the city. It is full of heraldry, most notably on the various war memorials, and it is over one of these that there stands a remarkable figure of the Archangel Michael fighting a dragon, cleverly integrated into the architecture (*see below*). My guide was the Vicar, Harry Krauss, who is a keen heraldist, and to mark my visit he very kindly presented a magnificent book about the church and its history written by J.Robert Wright. St Thomas is probably best known for its musical tradition and its splendid boys' choir, but the spiritual life of New York is undoubtedly the richer in all respects for its presence in the heart of the city.



Figure over the World War I Memorial, dedicated 1927  
 "Quis ut Deus" means "Who is like God?" which is the literal translation of "Michael."