

Leslie Hodgson sent in this excerpt from *The Evening News* of Saturday 13 August 2005:

Hagar the Horrible



MORE TEUTONIC TERRORS



Dragonlore

The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 63

St Aidan's Day 2005



The Arms of Styria, drawn by Hans Burgkmair, 1523



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

We welcome new members Andrew Jamieson and James Pettigrew.

Aidan was an Irish monk sent from the community of Iona to rescue the people of Northumbria from paganism. He established his church on the island of Lindisfarne (Holy Island), where he ruled as bishop for sixteen years. In Aidan's early years as bishop, the king Oswald often acted as his interpreter. Many legends were attached to Aidan, and he may have been one of those who saw the Loch Ness Monster. On the night that he died, in 651, a humble shepherd boy, who later became St Cuthbert, saw on the nearby hills a brilliant shaft of light shining from above, and Aidan's soul being transported heavenwards. His feast day is on 31st August. (adapted from Vince, 2001)

The arms of Styria on the cover, taken from Arthur Fox-Davies' 1904 book *The Art of Heraldry*, shows the notorious Styrian Panther, but with an almost aquiline head, particularly in the smaller version in the crest. Fox-Davis also gives another picture of this creature (*see right*) which he says "is drawn in the manner in which the animal is now represented." After giving a description of how the panther developed in early literature and in heraldry, he has this paragraph (page 136):-



"English armory knows an animal which it terms the male griffin, which has no wings, but which has gold rays issuing from its body in all directions. Strohl terms the badge of the Earls of Ormonde, which from his description are plainly male griffins, *keythongs*, which he classes with the panther; and probably he is correct in looking upon our male griffin as merely one form of the heraldic panther." (The same paragraph appears in Fox-Davis's *Complete Guide to Heraldry*, page 195.)

Indeed, Burgkmair's drawing might be taken for a griffin, but then Gwynn-Jones thought the male griffin was derived from the bonacon. So much depends on dates – which came first?

The Art of Heraldry is a vastly augmented version of H.G. Strohl's *Heraldischer Atlas*, published in parts in Stuttgart, the last part appearing in 1899. If at that time he thought that Keythong was the name of a male griffin, we cannot suppose that Colin Cole initiated the practice. We are thrown back to Barnard's Book of Badges, the muster roll of Edward IV's expedition to France in 1475 (Coll. Arms ms. 2nd M.16, f. xvi) which has against the name of the Earl of Ormonde a thumbnail sketch of a "male griffin" (*see right*) and the phrase "peyr keythongs." Some have argued that the sketch



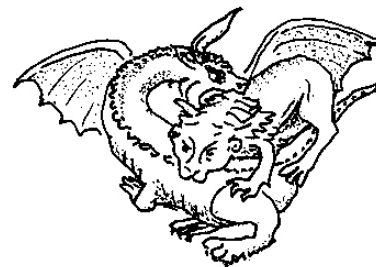
winged beast. Pegasus was said to be too wild to be tamed, but the intrepid Bellerophon succeeded and, after a mighty struggle, brought it under his control, having been given this task with the intention that it would kill him. He then used Pegasus as a steed to slay the Chimaera, another supposedly fatal task. In the end, Bellerophon triumphed over all adversities and won the wicked king's daughter. Pegasus was transferred to the starry heavens, where he forms part of the Great Square which all aspiring astronavigators find facing them in one of their first lessons. Perhaps he now deserves his tranquil new image.

FROM THE POSTBAG

Tony Jones sent in this beer-mat design from his travels in Canada. Obviously a dragon of sorts, but what the relevance to brewing could be remains a puzzle, unless his somewhat pensive look was the result of a hangover.

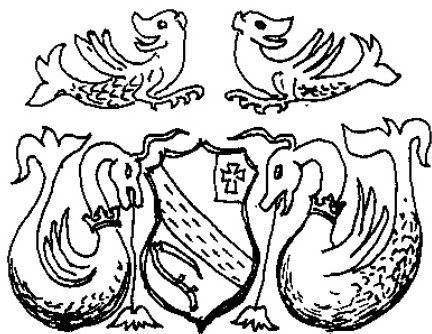


June Marriage sent some pictures and notes taken from "The Misericords of Norwich Cathedral" by Martial Rose with photos by Ken Harvey (1994), including several Wyverns, a couple of Dragons, one of them with a spiral horn (*right*), one fighting a lion (*left below*), and a man fighting a Griffin over a lamb (*right below*) which is unusual in that only the long ears shows that it is indeed a Griffin and not an eagle.



For previous examples of misericords, see No 25 (Gloucester) and No 31 (Carlisle).

STAFFORDSHIRE SEA-DRAGONS



A visit to Wombourne Wodehouse revealed amongst their collection of 17th century furniture a chair with the back carved into an intricate pattern of sea-dragons, seen here rather hastily sketched. They had no idea of its provenance, or whether it portrayed a genuine coat-of-arms or just a heraldic-looking fancy, but the monsters are rather fun.

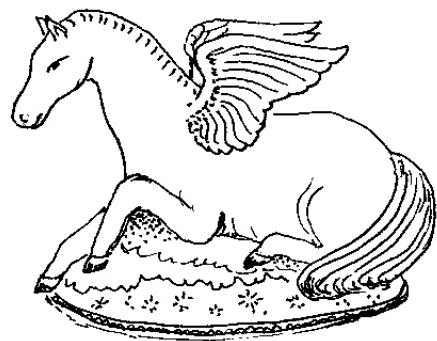
SCOTTISH WATER-HORSES

These amusing creatures from a Pictish stone-carving may represent an early form of the legendary Kelpie, now well established in Scottish mythology.



ANOTHER MYTHICAL PAPERWEIGHT

To add to their Wessex Wyvern (see No 48), Royal Crown Derby have now produced this porcelain Pegasus, 6 ¾ in long and 4 ¾ in high, in a limited edition exclusive to Govier's of Sidmouth, who say it is the first of a new series. We cannot reproduce the subtle on-glaze white decoration. It is priced at £265, so for serious collectors only. But this is a very docile Pegasus, sitting on its cloud amid the stars in the sky,



quite unlike the fierce monster of Greek mythology, who was sired by Poseidon, God of Horses as well as of the Sea, on Medusa the Gorgon, one of the least attractive creatures ever described. When Perseus slew the pregnant Gorgon by cutting off her head, her spilt blood, when it hit the rocks, gave birth to the fabulous



was added later by a different hand, and that the “peyr keythongs” relates to another badge of the Ormondes, their knot (*see left*), also known as a Carrick Bend, which could be seen as a pair of interlocking thongs (but is not drawn there). One question arises: did the Ormondes ever use a pair of male griffins as supporters? We know several cases where one appears; apart from the Butler family peerages, Carrick, Ormonde and Mountgarret, there is a sinister male griffin supporter in the arms of St Leger of 1531 (*see No 36*) and in the arms of Anne Boleyn as the second Queen of King Henry VIII (*see Dennys, 1975, page 177*), both of which have the Butler arms as one of their quarterings. It would be helpful to know the dates of the first use by the Butlers of a wingless griffin, and of the Ormonde knot.

One possible scenario is that the word “keythong” was first used to describe the knot, but was then transferred by association to the wingless griffin badge. Another fancy occurred following the discussion reported in No 60 on *volksetymologie*. Suppose you take the French name *Gryphon* and say it with an exaggerated French accent, so that it sounds a bit like “gree-fawng” with both vowels considerably lengthened. Now we know that in some forms of speech the “th” sound becomes an “f” sound, not only in Cockney*, but also in modern Russian (where Theodore and Dorothy have become Fyodor and Dorofy). Does it ever happen the other way round? Or could somebody have “corrected” what they took to be a vulgarism? More difficult is to account for the change from “Gr” to “K” unless it was not so much a speech shift as a case of careless orthography. In sloppy handwriting, a Gr squiggle might be mistaken for a Qu, which in French sounds the same as a K. And in those days, of course, the French did still pronounce the ends of their words, so from *Gryphon* we have reached “Qui-thawng” which is only a whisker away from Keythong.

I put this fanciful theory, briefly, to Nicholas Williams, and this was his reply:-

“The suggested etymology for keythong < griffon is not, I regret, wholly convincing. Griffon is a much commoner word than keythong and it is difficult to see how one could have replaced the other even in part. Moreover griffon has initial stress followed by an unstressed syllable, keythong on the other hand as a compound has a primary stress followed by a secondary stress. From the prosodic point of view the two items are dissimilar. You also suggest that gr > k by misreading and th > f as a vulgarism. That is adducing two completely different processes in the same lexical item. I am not saying that griffon > keythong is impossible (indeed I even momentarily toyed with such an idea myself before abandoning it) but I think it is very unlikely.

“The best suggestion so far is the connection with the Butler knot. If the Butler knot was thought of as a kind of key-thong, it is not impossible that the animal connected with the Butlers was given the name by association. I should certainly recommend further investigation of this idea.

“A further idea is this: the male griffon/keythong is possibly the same as the panther. The panther is associated with Styria. Might keythong be in origin a Germanic or Slovene word? The Dutch word *tweetong* means “split tongue.” The flames from the mouth of the Continental panther often look like a split tongue.”

Many thanks to Nicholas for giving us the benefit of his learning. There seems to be a degree of convergence in our searches. Perhaps “keythong” was the name of a knot and is *now* the name of the beast, so both sides of the argument are right!

*On the subject of Cockney speech I cannot resist mentioning *The Man from Fort Neef*, by Richard Mallett, who used to write for *Punch*. This man was a taxi-driver from Sarf Lun’n, who took his passengers past some paws cuff-feed-draw, and then on to see the exotic pinnacled palace of the Ahziza Pahmun. Mallett originated the phrase: “If I said you had a beautiful body, would you hold it against me?” It was he who defined a psychologist as the man who, when a pretty girl enters the room, looks at everybody else. And he devised this cunning, punning piece of heraldry:-



(For those not familiar with heraldic terminology, it is “Two harts that beat a swan”)

FABELWESEN DER HERALDIK

This book by Carl-Alexander von Volborth (ISBN 3-7630-2329-1) was first brought to my attention by Bruce Patterson and was reviewed in No 15. Having mentioned to the author that it was a pity that there had not been an English edition, I was asked to look into the possibilities. Stephen Friar put me in touch with Peter Clifford of Boydell & Brewer, publishers of such works, who eventually wrote as follows:-

“...It is certainly a splendid piece of work and appears to be unique in its coverage of this special area of heraldic art. In many ways it touches on areas of interest to Boydell & Brewer and this is why I have given it some time and thought to try to see if there was an economically viable way in which it might fit our list.

“Unfortunately, I think that the high production costs of a full colour quality book of this nature (which would push the pricing up beyond the reach of the general purchaser), linked to its fairly specialized market profile, would make it impossible for us. I have thought about who else you might try but I am afraid that here I have also drawn a blank.

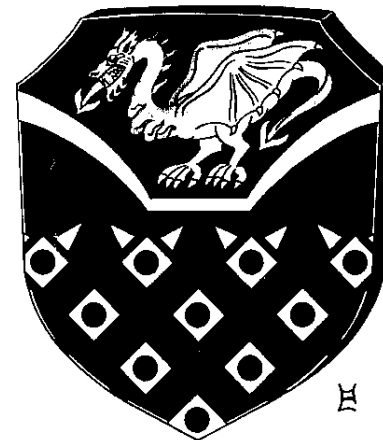
“ This is an extraordinary volume and I am sorry that I cannot find an English language home for it. Many thanks for entrusting your copy to me for so long...and please do pass on my admiration and good wishes to the author.”

So, no chance of an English edition – I shall have to cherish my copy – but here at least is another sample of its treasures, topical enough. The caption says (translated):

The “male” Griffin is a Fabulous Beast from English heraldry.



TEUTONIC TERRORS



Here are some more badges from Stephen Slater’s collection of German military insignia.