

Westminster Abbey

Learning



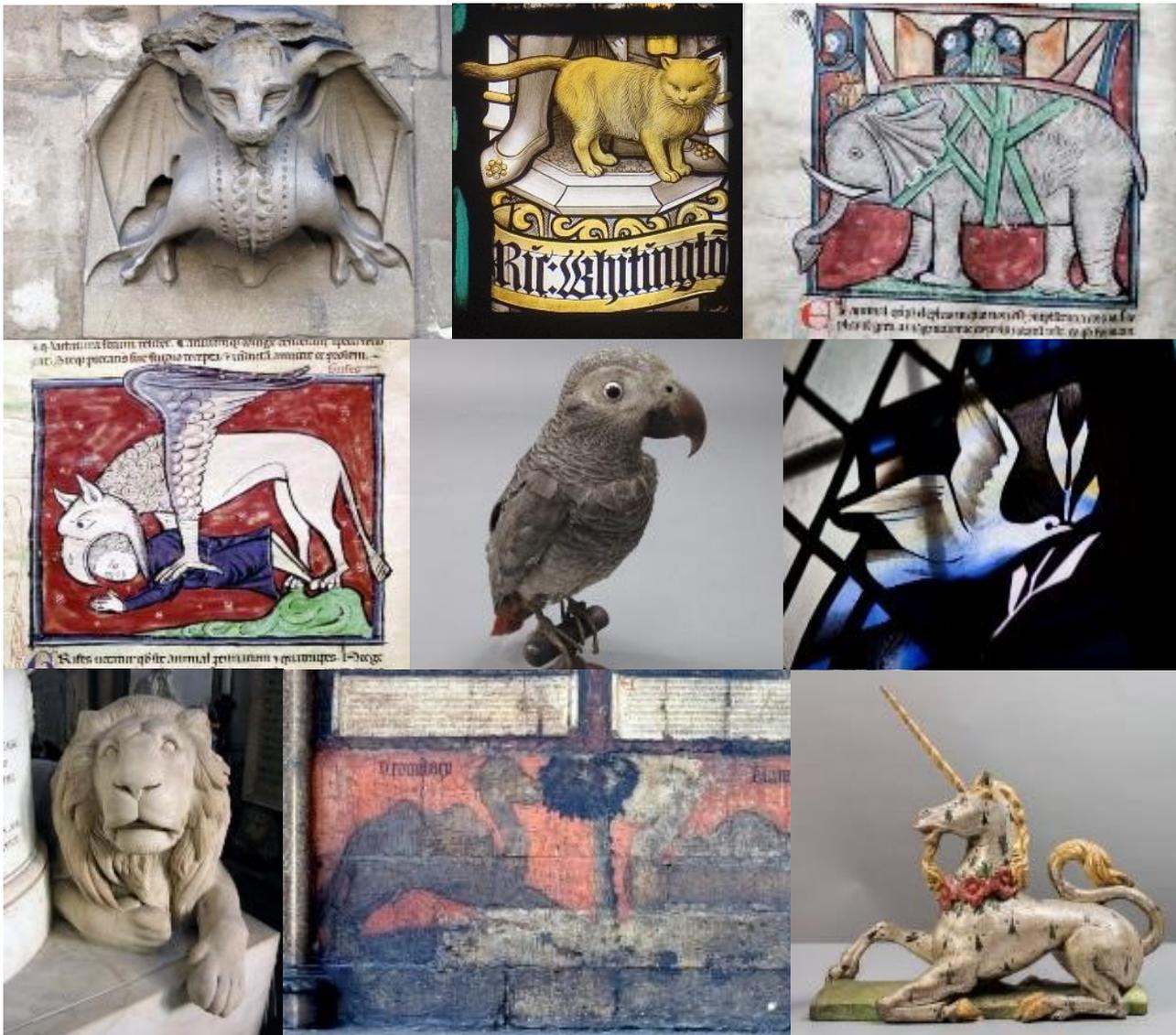
Z is for Zoo

Discover the Abbey's animals

While Westminster Abbey is full of people – people who worship, people who visit and people being remembered – we haven't spoken about all the animals yet. The Abbey is full of animals, although most of them are part of stone sculptures, images within stained-glass windows or items in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries. Some are animals you might have seen in real life, while others are a little mysterious. Let's find out more...

Identify the animal

How many Abbey Animals can you identify?



Answers:

Left to right, row by row

DRAGON

Found around the world, dragons have come to represent both good and evil. Can you think of any dragon stories? There's one story you may know about featuring a famous soldier who came to be known as St George.

CAT

Can you spot the name of the cat's owner? You may know this name from a well-known story.

ELEPHANT

This image comes from the pages of a medieval 'Bestiary', a book of animals. You'll notice this elephant has a small castle strapped to its back, with 6 soldiers. Elephants were once used in battles – though we would imagine this particular structure to be slightly wobbly!

GRIFFIN

This is not a creature you'll find in your local pet shop. The mythical griffin was reputed to have the body and back legs of a lion, and the head and wings of an eagle.

PARROT

Don't be alarmed, but this is a real parrot we have on display – the oldest mounted bird in England!

DOVE

The dove represents peace and you'll see our dove holds an olive branch in its beak from the story of Noah and the flood.

LION

Lions are everywhere in the Abbey. Kings and Queens love their lions as symbols of power and majesty.

CAMEL

If you look closely, you'll see the word 'Dromedary' in the picture. This is a kind of camel with only one hump. Now can you see the mistake in the picture?

UNICORN

This is another mythical creature that can be found everywhere in the Abbey. Considered to be fierce and swift, the unicorn has also become the symbol of Scotland.

Animal story telling

Take a look at this image. Can you spot an animal in this image? How many can you find?



We hope you can spot five little golden birds. These birds are called martlets. Martlets are often found on a Coat of Arms like this. A Coat of Arms is an image that represents a person, a family, an organisation or even a whole country.

Martlets are fictional birds and legend has it that they have no feet because they spend all their time flying around learning new things and finding out about the world.

When you look around Westminster Abbey, you will see plenty of these martlets because this is the Coat of Arms of St Edward the Confessor, the king who built the Abbey almost 1,000 years ago.

Invent your own story about the martlet or any of the real or mythical animals you found earlier. What do you think they would do? Where would they go? Can they speak to humans or other animals?



“Amazing stories...” said Livingstone the lion, “I wonder if you have heard the one about the time I met a mouse...?”

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