

This is Bilk # 68, November 1995. Bilk appears bi-monthly and is published by Ulrich Magin, Fribolinstraße 5, 74321 Bietigheim-Bissingen, Germany. Subscriptions are 15 German Marks for Germany and Europe, 20 German Marks for the rest of the world. However convenient it may be for Americans, I can't cash American cheques, so please pay in bank notes or write your cheques in German currency.



● Big fish: A 32-year-old woman was attacked and bitten by a gigantic catfish in a lake near Feldkirchen, Austria. Feldkirchen is situated ca. 200 kilometres west of Vienna. The woman escaped with a 15cm/0.5ft wound. After she'd been injured, the woman noticed the "gigantic fish" close to her. "I nearly died of fright", she told reporters. Süddeutsche Zeitung, 11 August 1995, p. 10 -- strange catfish (mutation) in California: INFO

Journal 73, summer 1995, p. 38

● Big snakes: 23ft killer python with a diameter of 10 inches devoured and killed a Malaysian rubber tapper: The Times 7 September 1995, p.12; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 7 September 1995, p.12 -- stories of giant land snakes in Maryland from folklore and eyewitnesses. The INFO Journal 73, p.15

● Loch Ness: Andreas Trottmann's Loch Ness Newsclipping Service #3 has been published (Les Pretresses, 1586 Vallamand VD, Switzerland) with clips on a 1934 land sighting, a new puma sighting at Brora, controversies about tourism and parking space around the Loch and the Brahan Seer. -- An ad for a camera maker in the German news magazine Focus 37/1995, p. 165 uses the famous surgeon's photograph from 1934.



● Tanna, South Pacific. The island of Tanna is more famous for the cargo cult centred around "John Frum", a culture hero. A feature by Eugen R. Essig, "Tanna, die unglaubliche Insel", screened on Germany's S3 TV channel on 20 September 1995 (23.30-0.15) mentioned the "mermaid of Tanna". Locals told Essig a mermaid regularly surfaced in a bay close to Fort Resolution. They even were able to attract it by hitting on the ocean surface. After

some time, Essig observed a dugong approaching. The locals identified it as "the mermaid". They said there had been two mermaids before, but one had been harpooned and eaten. The only remaining dugong of the island is now protected by law.

● Madrid: When I called the mermaid-section Isis, it was because the Egyptians depicted this goddess with a fish tail (at her head)! Now, various papers had the fascinating news that a mummy of Isis had been found in the basement of a Madrid Museum. Isis was not the goddess, but the 14-year-old daughter of Ramses II (1290-1224 BC). The mummy is in a bad state of preservation. - taz 19 September 1995, p.20; El País 13 September 1995, p.32

● The German news magazine Focus (39/1995) has a small item about the Fortean Times exhibition "Of Monsters and Miracles". Pictures show a mermaid mummy, a fish with fur. The text mentions that the expo contains the backbone of a sea serpent.



● Loch Long, Scotland: A 6 ft/1.8 m conger eel dragged Mr Gordon Bell, a diver, down to the bottom of Loch Long. Bell had gone for a dive in the night from August 30 to 31, 1995. He was declared missing, then discovered lying unconscious on the shore of the Loch. He said he had found the eel entangled in a fishing line. The animal then dragged him down. (The Times 1 September 1995, p.3; 2 September 1995, p.3)

● Several stories have appeared on sea monsters generally in the German press recently. I have seen an ad for the tabloid Bildwoche (issue 35, 24 August 1995) which announced a story about the "discovery of awful monsters in the deep sea". Pictured was an ordinary yet grotesque angler fish, no monster. I assume the story was a rip-off of an earlier Time Magazine cover story about monstrous life in the sea, which was about the recent finds of strange and small deep sea fish. In its issue 34, 1995 (August 21, 1995, pp. 156-158) the German news magazine Spiegel had a review of Richard Ellis' book "Monsters of the Sea" (Alfred A Knopf, New York, 432 pages, 30 \$). The book contains information on the real monstrous life in the seas, from giant squids to sea serpents. From the article, it appears Ellis can add little to the already existing corpus of sea serpent literature, but he well points out what real forms of big marine life we know. The Spiegel mentions Olaus Magnus, Erich Pontoppidan, the 1817 Gloucester visitation and the Kraken legend, together with a depiction of the 1873 Newfoundland encounters with giant squids, a photo of a 1954 Norwegian giant squid find and an old engraving of a sea unicorn.

● Jimmy Carter and his daughter Amy have written a children's book called "Little Baby Snoogle-Fleejer" about the friendship between a sea monster and a handicapped boy. Süddeutsche Zeitung, 21 September 1995, p.15; The Spiegel, 25 September 1995, has a repro of the book cover.

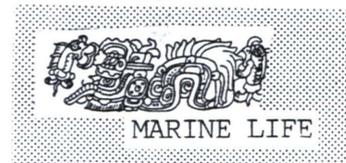


KRAKEN

● Spain: A Dead Giant Squid Stranded at Spanish Coast - Huelva (dpa) A dead giant squid with a length of 7.5m/25ft has been washed ashore at the Atlantic Coast of southern Spain. The cuttlefish which is assumed to have been killed in a collision with a ship, had tentacles 6.3m/21ft long and a head 1.2m/4ft in length. He weighed several hundred kilogrammes. Scientists say its appearance in southern Spain is highly unusual. Animals this big are normally encountered a great depths.

The carcass of the giant squid was brought to a rubbish disposal site, says the Süddeutsche Zeitung 13 September 1995, p.12. A shorter version of the item was in the Stuttgarter Zeitung 13 September 1995, p.16. The issue of the Spanish newspaper El País for the relevant days did not arrive in my library, so I have no additional information. What a great shame the carcass was not brought to a scientific institution, but destroyed together with domestic rubbish!

● In last Bilk, I related the revelation that new tests show the 1896 St Augustin carcass to have been one of a mammal, not of a giant octopus, as claimed by cryptozoologists. Additional comments by cryptozoologists (who, not surprisingly, all refute the latest findings or clutch at eyewitness reports) can be found in The INFO Journal 73, pp. 46-47. INFO Journal is a must read for all those interested in the areas covered by Bilk.



MARINE LIFE

● Whales: dolphin blocks ship traffic in the Canal of Corinth, Greece (Stuttgarter Nachrichten 9 August 1995, p.10) --A 10m/33ft whale entered the harbour of Bono, at Vannes, Brittany, France, passing through the river Auray and giving tourists an additional holiday sight. The whale left the harbour with the next high tide. (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 22 July 1995, p.7)

● Other creatures: 29-year-old diver David Alan Weir was attacked by a shark about 500 km south east of Perth, Australia (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 13 September 1995, p.11; Ludwigsburger Kreiszeitung 13 September 1995, p.17; Stuttgarter Zeitung 13 September 1995, p. 16) -- A 500-year-old turtle has been discovered in a south Chinese village. It weighed 46 kilogrammes and was brought to the Hainan Province Museum after having lived in a village pond the last 500 years, reported Xinhua. (Stuttgarter Zeitung, 22 July 1995, p.96) -- 120 million years ago, vegetarian crocodiles lived at the shores of Yangtse River in China, a mixed Chinese-Canadian research team found their fossils. Their jaws could not snap, only chew. (Bild 24 August 1995, p.6)



USO

● Swedish mystery submarines were mink - The INFO Journal 73, pp.49-50; Jorge Polanco, pilot of an Argentine Boeing 727, sees a "white light" shooting toward his plane at incredible speed while landing at San Carlos de Bariloche, the tourist resort at monster lake Nahuel Huapi. (Bild 3 August 1995; AZ 3 August 1995; Berliner Morgenpost 3 August 1995; CENAP Report 225, August/September 1995, p. 33)



THIS & THAT

● Submerged city in the Canaries, Spain (The INFO Journal 73, p.35)
● British scientists claim the losses of ships and planes in the Bermuda Triangle are related to submarine pockets of methane gas (The Times 11 September 1995, p.16)

● A new tribe of Indians has been found in the Brazilian state of Rondonia at the Amazon river. The woman and man said it was

their first contact with whites. (Neue Zürcher Zeitung 12 September 1995, p.47; taz 12 September 1995, p.8)

● Lake Aral in Russia is vanishing at an ever faster rate. Scientists speculate the salt water lake may have vanished as soon as 2015. Water has been drawn from the lake for irrigation in the 1960s, when he shrank to about half its former size. Today, the shores of Lake Aral are 120km from the shores of the 1960s! (Bietigheimer Zeitung 19 September 1995, p.1)

● I have note of a new cryptozoological magazin called "Animals & Men", but I have not yet seen a copy. Subs are 8 British Pounds, the address is Centre for Fortean Zoology, 15, Holne Court, Exwick, Exeter, Devon, EX4 2NA, Britain. Authors include Karl Shuker, Blashford-Snell, Doc Shiels and F de Saare, so contents will be mixed and controversial - a good addition, methinks. Topics covered include cryptozoology, unknown animals, animal folklore, bizarre behaviour, out of place animals, vampires and werwolves.

This ends another Bilk, the next one will appear in January 1996. Your news, views, clips and letters are always welcome. If you like Bilk, consider also the many other small cryptozoological newsletters and magazines. They're all worth your support.