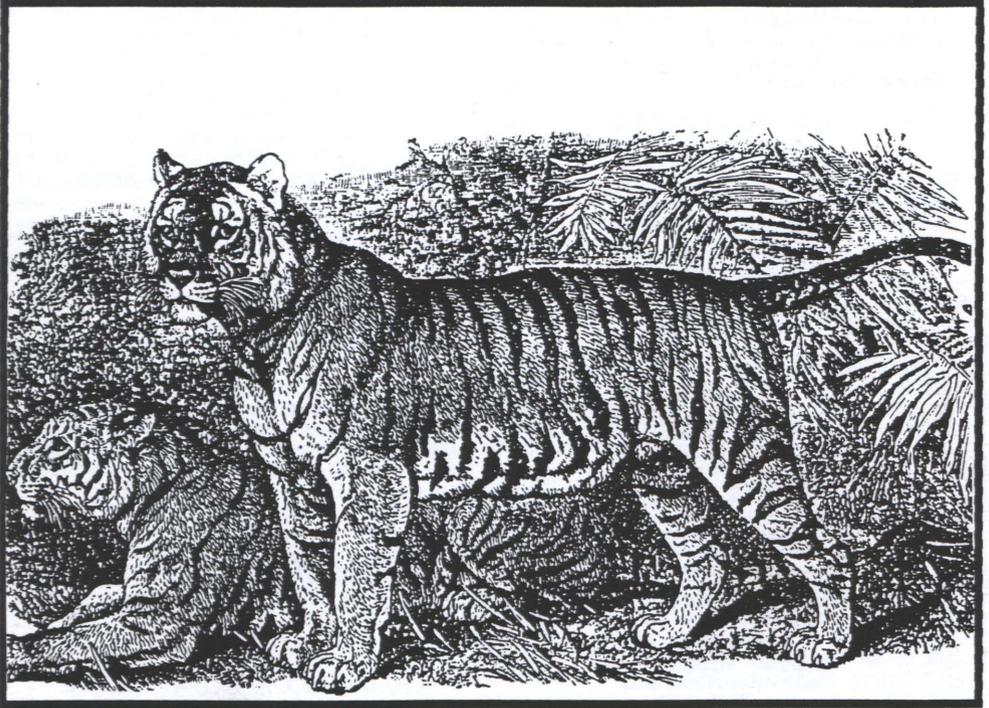


# Animals & Men

The Journal of the Centre for Fortean Zoology



A Tiger in Hong Kong; The  
Congo Peacock; The  
Horseman of Lincolnshire;  
BHM phenomena in Scotland.

Issue Nine

£1.75

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# THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to another issue of 'Animals & Men'. This issue will be available in time for UNCONVENTION 1996 and will in effect mark our third anniversary. So far we have managed to meet most of our objectives, but there is far more to achieve.

With the one notable exception; the sad death of our cartoonist Mort, in February, this is a very auspicious year. We have several interesting projects in the pipeline, and those of you who bought this years yearbook will be pleased to know that we have already collected over half the articles for the 1997 volume, and I am typing this in the first week of March.

Issue ten will be available some time in July, and both the 1997 Yearbook and Issue 11 will be published in October. We are currently negotiating with a Manchester based publishing firm about my Owlman book, 'The Owlman and Others' which will either be available in July or October, depending on whether they publish it or we do. My new book, 'The Smaller Mystery Carnivores of the South-West', with a forward by Karl Shuker, is now available through the editorial address.

It is peculiar that whereas practically without exception we have received nothing but help, encouragement and good wishes from the folk in the fortaen world, in the world of natural history the story has been very different. We have some very good friends and colleagues within the world of orthodox zoology, and within the worlds of exotic pet keeping, but have been 'snubbed' by practically all the natural history societies and discussion groups we have approached.

Indeed in a 'mail out' of this magazine to forty seven Natural History Societies, we received two answers. One from the ex-secretary of one society to say that the organisation in question had closed down, and the other, a rude note, saying that 'we shouldn't expect' his members to be interested in 'a subject like ours'.

This is sad, because in a world where the pursuit of zoological truth is increasingly the domain of the enthusiastic amateur, people working on the 'fringe' of the natural sciences should work together, not against each other. After all, at the

After all, at the risk of appearing pretentious, we are all in the business of trying to increase the sum total of human knowledge. Sadly we have also had an unhelpful response from some of the major institutions. Whilst the smaller zoos and museums we have talked to have been interested in our work, and have helped us a lot, and whilst all the Scottish Museums, have been equally helpful, several major English Museums and Zoos have been unhelpful, rude and hostile towards us and our aims. Maybe Charles Fort was the 'arch-enemy' of science after all? I don't think so.

Finally, we are planning to go 'on line' with an Internet web Site within the next 12 months. However if any reader is able to let us have some space on the web so we can start earlier we would be extremely grateful.

Keep on the track...

Jonathan D



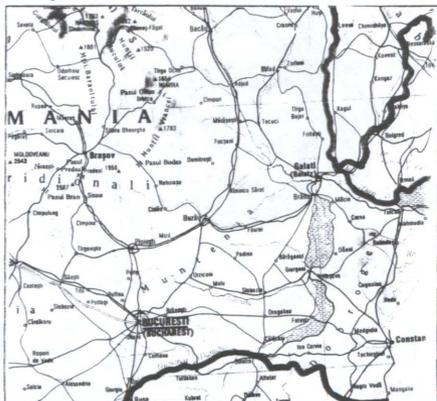
# NEWSFILE

Compiled and Edited by **Jan Williams**  
*(that was a DREADFUL joke about the Lada)*  
 and her Merry Band of  
 correspondents.

## NEW SPECIES

**IT'S LIFE JIM,  
 (BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT).**

Explorations in Romania have revealed an alien environment, an ecosystem surviving without light or oxygen. The Movile Cave system near Mangalia, west of the Black Sea, was first discovered ten years ago by building workers. Scientists from the Speleological Institute in Bucharest carried out a preliminary survey, but research was halted whilst Romanian dictator Nicolai Ceausescu was in power. Biologist Serban Sarbu of the University of Cinninau has now been able to return to the cave and continue exploration. Forty-seven previously unknown species have so far been found in the cave system, living in an atmosphere of Hydrogen Sulphide that would poison most life on earth.



ROMANIA



The species include earthworms, roundworms, pseudo-scorpions, spiders, mites, pill-bugs, centipede, beetles, primitive insect and bacteria. All are blind and pale yellow in colour.

The caves are believed to have been isolated for five million years, and the creatures scuttle for cover when they detect a change in oxygen levels.

Dr. Sarbu says: *"In the absence of sunlight, the microbes at the bottom of the food chain have turned to using hydrogen sulphide to live. Their energy comes not from the sun but from chemicals seeping from the rocks"*.

The Movile Cave is a freshwater environment, but similar life forms have been found in deep sea vents, where hydrogen sulphide seeps up from magmatic hot springs. (Daily Mail 15.2.96; Express 15.2.96).

Editorial Comment: "Stuck inside of Movile with the Memphis Blues again!"

## COUNTY BOUNDARIES.

A Leeds University team led by Dr. John Altringham has discovered that Pipistrelle Bats in Yorkshire and those in Lancashire form two distinct species. The possibility was first suggested three years ago by Dr. Gareth Jones of Bristol University, who found the bats were squeaking at different frequencies.

The majority of Lancashire Pipistrelles squeak at 55kHz as opposed to the 45kHz of Yorkshire bats. Females are only attracted to the pulses of their own kind, so bats of the two counties never mate. Yorkshire bats have darker faces and longer, more pointed snouts, whilst Lancashire bats are leaner and better at flying. (*Daily Mail* 6.3.96)

EDITOR'S NOTE: The taxonomy of the British Pipistrelles seems to be in a state of flux at the moment. See Tom Anderson's letter 'North of the Border' in this issue's letters page!

## CAMBODIAN CURIOSITIES

Researchers in Cambodia and Vietnam believe they have found evidence of a previously unknown cow-like mammal which, if confirmed, would be the second discovery of a new bovine species this decade in Indochina.

Horns, previously believed to belong to an immature female kouprey or "jungle cow" are now thought to have come from another species of mammal entirely, according to articles in scientific journals.

Comparison of horns discovered over the past two years with similar horns found in the 1920s and classified as those of a young female kouprey has shown that the horns are from a full-grown animal, according to an article in the latest edition of the quarterly publication *Mammalia*, the magazine of the French Museum of Natural History.

In addition, the horns are ringed and turn in on themselves and up at their tips, something kouprey's horns do not do, according to the article's author, zoologist Maurizio Dioli. Dioli is not the only researcher to make these observations.

Two German zoologists, Wolfgang Peter and Alfred Feiler, came to the same conclusion last year after finding similar horns near the Cambodian border in the southern Vietnamese province of Dak Lak and wildlife experts at the British Museum of Natural History have seconded the theory.

*"This means, there is another large-bodied animal unknown to the scientific community present in Vietnam and Cambodia",*

Dioli said in a recent interview.

Unknown to the scientific community, the possible new species has apparently been present in the remote northeastern Cambodian provinces of Rattankin and Mondulkin for centuries.

Villagers have called the extremely shy, rarely-seen mammal "*Kthing Voar*" or "*Kthing Sipu*" according to Dioli and Cambodians who have heard of it. The word "*Kthing*" has no English translation but refers to a horned animal about the size of a rhinoceros or hippopotamus.

"Voar" means "vine" indicating that the animal is herbivorous but "*sipoh*" means "eats snakes". Folklore has it that the *Kthing* eats snakes which struggle and bite its horns, giving them rings. The snake legend also explains why so few *Kthing* horns, though prized for alleged medicinal value, have been found in good condition, as local villagers believe the horns to be covered with venom and burn them before handling them.

Dioli believes the *Kthing-Voar* may exist in larger numbers in Cambodia:

*"Since Vietnam has 72 million people, there is a much greater chance for an animal to survive in Cambodia".*

Because of their isolation from much of the world community since 1975, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos have become treasure troves for wildlife researchers as the countries have opened up. A large but unknown number of rare, endangered and possibly undiscovered species of primates, reptiles, amphibia, birds and mammals including big cats live in Indochina.

*"To answer 'how many?' correctly you have to say 'unknown' because no one has done any kind of complete inventory",* Dioli said. (*MRL/BSM News Agency via Christophe Bealieu*)

## LOOKING FOR A GOOD TIME BIG BOY?

It is a monster by any scientific definition, it has survived undetected for 80 million years and it rules the roost in its habitat, the murky depths of the Pacific ocean of Australia's east coast.

It is a sludge-dwelling scavenging giant sea louse, rather like the common-or-garden woodlouse or

slater, but many times larger and dubbed "Big Boy" by the scientists who recently discovered it. They have also given it the more scientific name of *Bathynomus*.

"Big Boy", which grows to 30 cm. is likely to be ferocious to those smaller creatures that inhabit the deep a kilometre down, claimed crustacean expert Jim Lowry of the Australian Museum.

"We don't know yet whether they are predators, but we know they are scavengers and voracious eaters who will try to eat anything alive or dead", he said. "One of them even bit my hand".

Two other similar, but smaller species, "Wide Boy" and "Mono Brow" that also survive by feeding on dead creatures that fall to the bottom have also been discovered.

"We have found more than 200 species of marine invertebrates, more than 120 of which are unknown and *Bathynomus* was just one of them", Lowry told AFP. "Some of the others were totally unknown and others were previously undescribed."

More than 100 new species of ostracods, pea-sized shrimp-like creatures, have also been discovered. "Big boy" is a real giant", Lowry added. "They seem to rule the whole situation down there. Not even the fish get into the depths where we found these creatures". (AFP News Agency via Christophe Bealieu)

## NEW TARSIER?

In January 1996, a joint American/Indonesian scientific expedition announced the discovery of what appears to be a new species of Tarsier, one of the world's tiniest primates, on an island off the Sulawesi Archipelago. According to Myron Shekelle of Washington University the animal is a little larger than the Spectral Tarsier, with greyer, lighter fur and a golden-brown streak on its back. It also has whitish hairs around the mouth and a larger nose. It has been theorised that it may be a hybrid between a Spectral Tarsier and *T.syrichta* a related species from the Philippines.

The animal has been named *T.sangirensis*, but we must await the results of DNA testing to find whether it is indeed a new species. (BS/ML News Agency via Christophe Bealieu)

## NEW SPECIES OF PHILIPPINE CLOUD RAT

A mammal species previously unknown to science, a nocturnal, squirrel-like rodent, has been discovered in the Philippines. Named the Panay Clouddrunner, (*Crateromys heaneyi*), it is the fourth known species of cloud rat, a little known family of tree living rodents endemic to the Philippines. Two of the species, are, according to the New York Times, known only from single specimens, but the first species to be discovered, the Bushy Tailed Cloud Rat, known since 1895 is relatively common in the mountainous areas of northern Luzon. (New York Times 20.2.96).

## NEW RAT IN HONG KONG

Experts have discovered what they think may be a new species of rat described as 'quite cute' by Michael Lau a senior researcher. The team stumbled on the distinctive, small, white pawed rodent with a distinctive white underbelly on several outlying islands in February 1996. Fifteen specimens were caught in traps baited with peanut butter.

Although it is not yet sure whether this is a new species, a new sub species, or merely a new record from Hong Kong, it is not the first time that peanut butter has helped add to our knowledge of the biodiversity of the territory. In 1990, the first Hong Kong specimen of the Javan Mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*) was caught in a trap similarly baited, in Mai Po marshes.

## THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY HONG KONG PROJECT

The sharp eyed among you will have noticed several references to Hong Kong scattered across this issue of Animals & Men.

Hong Kong is ecologically so important, and has been the site for so many peculiar animal discoveries over the last few years, that in the opinion of the Centre for Fortean Zoology, it is as important as Vu Quang, and far more easily accessible.

We are starting a new project to map, in great depth, the fortean zoology of Hong Kong, both throughout history, now and into the future. Next

year it reverts to Chinese rule, and whilst it seems that some of the scare stories in the British Press may not be justified, it is bound to be a significant change, and these changes will reflect themselves within the infrastructure of the environment.

We realise that because of the nature of our discipline, some less liberal scientists tend to ignore us, and even be actively obstructive. We would merely say, that as fortians we are in the business of gathering data, and not necessarily in the business of drawing conclusions from it. Which ever way you look at our activities, we are compiling a data resource which is available to all. That, unfortunately, is something that one cannot say about all the organisations involved in the study of the more established branches of the natural sciences. Unlike them we receive no state funding, but unlike them it is in our remit to assist anyone who approaches us with their research, and not just those of whom we approve.

We have already made some excellent contacts in Hong Kong, most notably with the editors of the journal *Porcupine!* which is published by the Department of Ecology and Biodiversity at the University of Hong Kong, and we hope that the fruits of this project will be many, varied and fulfilling!

## BACK WHERE THEY BELONG.

### BEAVERS

Scottish Natural Heritage is conducting a study to investigate the viability of reintroducing beavers to northern Scotland. The U.K. Government is required to investigate the possible reintroduction of species such as the beaver, the lynx and the wolf under the EU Habitats Directive. A team from SNH will visit a site in Brittany where a beaver reintroduction is proving successful and will then evaluate suitable sites in Scotland. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 15.2.96)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tom Anderson, our Scottish representative has written a four part paper which is scheduled either four A&M10/11 or, more probably for the 1997 Yearbook (due out in October 1996).

### BURBOT

No-one knows why the Burbot vanished from British rivers. In the sixteenth century the fish were so common that they were used as pig food, but they became increasingly rare during this century and the last burbot was recorded in the River Cam in 1970. One hundred and fifty burbot imported from Moravia are being kept at Nottingham University, but scientists want to know why the fish became extinct before releasing them into rivers. Dr. Jim Reader, a lecturer in life science, is studying various theories including over-fishing, disease, changes in habitat, and a rise in water temperatures due to industrial pollution. (*Daily Mail* 8.3.96).

## LAKE AND SEA MONSTERS

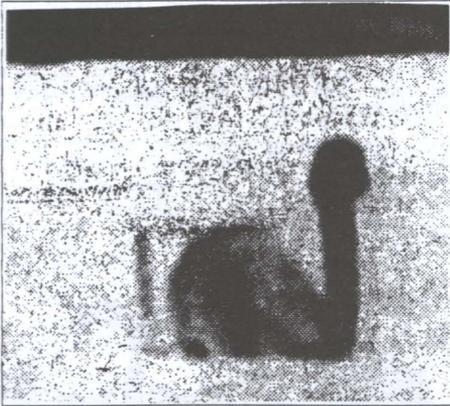


### SOUTH AFRICAN NESSIE

Bob Teeney, Publicity Spokesman for Howick, in Kwa-Zulu-Natal province, South Africa, claims that he will soon reveal shocking evidence of a local water monster. Mr Teeney says he first spotted the 20 metre long creature in October 1995 at a waterfall near the town. "We will unveil evidence proving the existence of the Howick Monster that will shock people ... it will prove beyond a doubt these things exist". (*Southampton Daily Echo* 21.1.96).

## TEGGIE TALES

In the wake of the revelations surrounding the supposed photographs and/or film taken of 'Teggie' the monster of Lake Bala in North Wales, a Welsh newspaper published a dubious photograph of what someone, at least, claims is the elusive lake monster. We doubt it!



## MOKELE MBEMBE ON FILM?

There are rumours flying about the wonderful world of cryptozoology that a Japanese film crew has succeeded in filming the legendary 'dino aur' of the Congo. The descriptions do not, however appear to tally with those usually accepted for Mokele Mbembe, but until we SEE a copy of the film we will not comment further.

We have been told, but it has not been confirmed, that the film was taken by the same team who filmed the Lake Dakataua creature a couple of years ago, and who were responsible for the Lake Bala fiasco reported in A&M8.

The Welsh newspaper story which published the photo purporting to be 'Teggie' (above) included the following paragraphs:

*"The Japanese programme, called 'The Presenter' has already made three similar programmes. In North America they searched for the monster Champ on Lake Champlain, but didn't get anything on film.*

*In New Guinea they were looking for a monster called Migo, and they had pictures of a large animal there. In the Congo, in Africa, they have footage from the air of something very large moving through the water".*

Unfortunately neither of these stories can be referenced as my clipping, which includes a nice colour picture of a Japanese film crew getting into a mini submarine, had no details of where or when it appeared.

On a related topic, our Japanese correspondent Mr Takabayashi has sent us a couple of video tapes taken on earlier expeditions to the Congo. We are having them translated into PAL format, and will report on them further next issue.

(On a similar subject: There is a rumour that the Debbie Martyr expedition to Sumatra has managed to photograph, or even film the elusive Orang Pendek. We cannot confirm this, and have not seen any film or photographs!)

## G.S in N.Z

A Giant Squid (*Architeuthis dux*) was caught by marine scientists aboard a research ship, 600 miles east of New Zealand. The female squid, 26 feet long, and nearly a ton in weight, was found 1400 feet underwater, near the Chatham Islands. The squid did not survive long aboard ship, and was stored in a walk-in freezer until it could be transported to Wellington. (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 1.2.96; *Daily Mail* 2.2.96; *Aberdeen Evening Express* 31.1.96).

## STRANDINGS.

Six male sperm whales stranded at Cruden Bay, near Peterhead, Grampian died despite rescue efforts. The whales were each around 30 feet long and weighed 20 tons. Vet Laurence Brain of Grampian Wildlife Rehabilitation Trust said one of the whales appeared badly damaged. "It's possible that it was ill and came in too close. The rest of the pod would have followed, becoming beached as the tide turned".

samples of skin and stomach contents were taken by marine Biologist Bob Reid, Stranding Officer for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. Tests on these will reveal pollutant levels and where the whales had been travelling. According to the press reports, although not according to our man on the spot, Tooth size showed the whales were all young males, about 20-25 years old, and initial results of genetic testing suggested that they were from different family lines. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 29.1.96, 30.1.96, 31.1.96; *Aberdeen Evening Express* 1.2.96, 2.2.96, 3.2.96).

(See NEWSFILE EXTRA report by Tom Anderson..opposite)

Two weeks earlier, Mr Reid carried out a post-mortem on a Blue Shark, which was washed up on East Beach in the Moray Firth. Blue Sharks are rare in British waters. An increasing number of tropical turtles have also recently been found off the coast of Scotland. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 11.1.96)

Eleven dolphin carcasses were washed ashore in the Gerrans Bay area, near Portscatho, Cornwall, in the second week of January. Dr Nick Treganza of Cornwall Wildlife Trust said, "These are healthy animals that are dying. We do not think pollution is the problem. It has probably been caused by trawlers fishing in mid-Channel". (*Daily Mail* 10.1.96).

The decomposing bodies of more than 100 dolphins were found on a three-mile stretch of beach in Mauretania, north-west Africa. Newspapers blamed dragnets from trawlers fishing for sharks, but government scientists say a virus may be the cause. (*Daily Mail* 10.1.96)

Two seals normally restricted to arctic and sub-arctic waters arrived in Britain last Autumn. A Harp Seal was found in marshes at Holy Island, Northumbria, in September. The six-foot male was transported to the RSPCA Wildlife Rescue Unit in Norfolk. In October, a Hooded Seal was discovered at Treyarnon Cove, near Padstow, Cornwall. The exhausted animal was taken to the Cornish Seal Sanctuary at Gweek. (Teletext 15.9.95; *Daily Mail* 18.10.95).

A Moonfish or Opah was washed up at Water Sound, South Ronaldsay, Orkney, in October 1995. The rarely-seen fish may reach five feet in length, but this specimen was about half that size. In July a thirteen foot long Ocean Sunfish was reported off the Isle of Wight. (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 11.10.95; *The Sun* 22.7.95).

## NEWSFILE EXTRA WHALE STRANDINGS IN SCOTLAND.

by Tom Anderson.

On Sunday January 28th, six sperm whales beached themselves at Cruden Bay, north of Aberdeen.

The four males and two females were around ten metres long and weighed upwards of 20 tonnes each. One was badly injured, and the thinking was that rough seas took it to the coast, followed by the pod, and a combination of white water and loyalty was their undoing. Coastguards were in attendance overnight to deter souvenir hunters (lower jaw? flukes?), from unwelcome intrusion. Marine Biologists took samples to determine cause of death and the local populace was assured that under a Scots law of the 17th Century, whales, classed as a royal fish, were the responsibility of the Receiver of Wreck and the Department of Transport is liable for their removal and disposal. As they migrate northwards off the west coast this stranding is quite rare, the last major incident being eleven Sperms off Orkney in December 1994.

**Monday January 29th:** Scottish Natural Heritage is concerned interment would damage valuable dune structures. B.P. is worried as they have two pipelines in the vicinity.

**Tuesday January 30th:** Environmental Health authorities turn down £4000 from an animal feed company on health grounds. Tracked diggers are to tow the whales to 15' deep, 30' long pits above the high water mark for burial.

**Wednesday January 31st:** Burial suspended following collapse of the first pit following interment and covering with quick-lime when water undermined it. Even worse, nine holes of the adjacent golf-course had to be closed due to the prevailing odour. Stories emanating from the villagers relate strange noises emanating from the beach on the night of the stranding.

**Thursday February 1st:** Excavators again thwarted as pits fill with water. Thinking now revised and alternatives of burning, towing out to sea and dumping and selling to feed companies re-considered.

**Friday February 2nd:** Local farmer offers land for mass grave. All official bodies breathe sigh of relief as rumours

of expose by Esther Rantzen rife in the area. All deceased, (including the first one buried and exhumed) deposited in clay soil, which prevents leakage, doused in quicklime and covered in 15' of topsoil. Sorted.

CONTINUED OVER

## OUT OF PLACE

## EASY MISTAKE TO MAKE

Poisonous *Steatoda nobilis* spiders which forced the closure of Bembridge Primary School on the Isle of Wight (See A&M7), have been unmasked. The spiders are a non-poisonous English relative *Steatoda grossa*, common in coastal areas of the South West. According to spider expert Ian Burgess of Cambridge University, "The only difference between the two spiders is in the genitalia so it is obviously difficult to spot". (*Southampton Daily Echo* 8.2.96).

## RACCOON ON THE RUN

Police in Hampshire appealed for sightings of strange animals, after a raccoon escaped from Hansard Pet Centre at Awbridge, near Romsey on 11th February. The two-foot long male raccoon was spotted in Wellow and Awbridge. (*Southampton Daily Echo* 12.2.96, 16.2.96).

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Several people, including Simon Baker of MAFF suggested that the North American Raccoon and the European Wild Boar would become the next two exotic species to become acclimatised in Britain. Whereas his predictions about the wild boar seem to have been 'spot on' (see forthcoming 'special' in A&M), the raccoon has singularly failed to become established. They are now found in several European countries, but there is no real evidence to suggest that they will follow suit in Britain. They were not included in the first Dangerous Wild Animals Act in 1976, and, together with the Coati, were only included on an amendment a few years later. Zoologist Chris Moiser has suggested to us that, they will not become established because, there simply were not that many of them being kept. They were never 'high status' exotic pets, like Pumas and Ocelots, and they were always relatively cheap. His suggestion for the next animal species to become established in Britain? The Chipmunk!

## NEWSFILE EXTRA

... Reading this over I detect a levity which was not intended. The picture content makes this unforgiveable. Even by local press standards they convey a sense of awe and a loss of dignity which is almost embarrassing.

The final humiliation of being dragged by machine to the lime pit was more than I was willing to witness. The contractor being an acquaintance, access was not a problem. I never used my camera. Nor do I exult in road-kills. I'm not queasy by nature; when I was a teenager I had to pull a pitchfork out of someone's abdomen as no-one else would, most were throwing up around me.

I think it's the size that does it. You feel in the presence of a superior being, which, I happen to think, they are, in the things that are important...

## BEWARE OF THE BANANAS

('Cos you know they 're gonna get you ... yeah?' Eh? Ed)

A four inch long centipede found in a box of bananas at Chard, Somerset, was identified by Jon Flynn of Cannington College, Cricket St. Thomas, as a Scolopendra. The Scolopendra has venomous fangs at both ends. Its bite can cause a human limb to swell to twice its size, and in extreme cases can even kill. (*Daily Mail* 8.3.96).

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We will provide a year's free subscription to the first person who telephones us (or comes up to us at 'The Unconvention' with the source of my cryptic comment under the above sub-heading. By the way, no-one got the answer to my last silly quiz, but in answer to the four people who wrote asking the answer, the line 'Baal in silence dines on Vulture Soup' comes from the title song of a musical play, called Baal, written sometime previous to WW2 by German Playwrite Berthold Brecht. If anyone can get me a copy of the 1981 video or record featuring David Bowie, I will be eternally grateful!

## FROG FEVER SPREADS

Following the killer Bullfrog scare, concern is now being expressed over French Frogs said to be invading the south of England and eating their British cousins. Jim Foster of the conservation charity Herpetofauna described the situation as 'very worrying. They seem to be adapting to our habitat and spreading'. As with American Bullfrogs, the invasion is being blamed on breeders who imported Marsh Frogs. Edible Frogs and Pool Frogs into Britain for sale at garden centres and pet shops.

I don't know about Pool Frogs (*Rana lessonae*), but Marsh Frogs (*Rana ridibunda*) were introduced to Romney Marsh, Kent in 1935 and were well established by the 1950's. Edible Frogs (*Rana esculenta*) were released in several areas prior to 1960, most notably in the fens around Stoke Ferry, Norfolk in 1837. By the 1950's they were naturalised in Norfolk and Suffolk, and also in Surrey and around London, and were known as 'Dutch Nightingales'. After 160 years residence, it's hardly surprising if "they seem to be adapting to our habitat". (*Daily Mail* 18.1.96).

## MORE FLAMING PETS

Lothian firefighters dashed to the rescue when 14 gerbils were trapped in Gaby Dareau's blazing bedroom at Howgate near Edinburgh. The gerbils had stopped breathing, but the resourceful crew produced oxygen masks and managed to bring them all round. A heartwarming story - well it was for the gerbils....

## MYSTERY CATS

Essex.

Sheep and a goat were attacked at Chelmsford, and at Abberton near Colchester, in January. Essex Police blamed the attacks on a four foot long black cat seen around Great Wigborough, six miles south of Colchester, and said it "may be a mountain lion". On 31st January, 17 six-inch wide pawprints showing razor-sharp claws were found at Cooper's Beach Caravan Park in East Mersea. PC Michael Aicheson said "This is the first concrete evidence that there is some sort of big cat out there". (*Daily Mail* 22.1.96, 1.2.96; *Sunday Times* 21.1.96).



Hertfordshire.

Something attacked Madelaine Dinsmore's Range Rover on 23rd January. The car was parked on her front drive, on the outskirts of Brookmans Park, a commuter village just north of Potter's Bar. "It had gone bananas", said Mrs Dinsmore. "There were bits of rubber all over the drive. The rubber part of the front bumper, which is very tough, had been chewed and shredded. There were large, muddy pawmarks high up on the car and deep scratches on the paintwork so that you could see the metal underneath. The bull bars had teeth marks in". The brake pipes had also been chewed through, and there was brake fluid all over the drive.

Anne Suter, environmental health animal welfare technician for Welwyn and Hatfield Council videoed the damage and took plaster casts of large pawprints found on the drive. She said "No dog would have the strength to do this. My theory is that we are dealing with a large cat, possibly a puma". Ten months previously, there were reports of a large cat seen on the local golf course, described as "like a black labrador with a three foot tail". The evidence was examined by Doug Richardson, Assistant Curator of Mammals at London Zoo. His conclusion was that the damage and the prints were "in all probability caused by a large domestic dog".

So, was it a crazed Rottweiler, protesting against bull bars? Or are those who believe mystery cats are an alien life form right after all? Has an attention-seeking superior intelligence finally worked out that eating Home Counties Range Rovers is a better bet than Cornish Sheep? Take me to your Lada. Or perhaps not. (*Daily Telegraph* 24.1.96; *Daily Mail* 25.1.96).

### Cambridgeshire.

Motorist Karl Robinson nearly collided with the Fen Tiger, near Willingham in February. He said "I've lived in the country all my life and I've never seen anything like this thing. It just stopped in the road and watched me - I had to swerve to miss it". He described it as a tan-coloured cat, larger than a greyhound and with a long, thick tail, similar to a dog's.

### Norfolk.

A huge black cat seen close to a railway bridge, near Attleborough, waited patiently while the witness drove to the police station and returned with P.C Peter Walmsley from the local force. The cat was described as six feet long and the height of a man's waist. No prints were found despite a search of the area. (*Eastern Daily Press* 6.3.96).

### Warwickshire.

A large sandy-coloured cat was seen in a field close to the main Birmingham to Stratford-upon-Avon railway line, just south of Wooton Wawen, on 25th January. The witness identified the animal as a puma from photographs, and said it appeared to be stalking sheep in the field.

### Grampian, Scotland.

Traps are being set by two landowners in the neighbouring Garioch and Gordon regions, north of Banchory, following numerous reports of a large, black animal in and around the Midmar and Bennachie Forests. Ric Wharton of Midmar Castle, near Echt, decided to try and trap the beast after finding 4-inch wide prints on his land. Photographs of the prints were examined by Hans Kruuk, of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, who said: "They are certainly the prints of a large dog".

Christopher Burgess-Lumsden of Pitcaple Castle, believes a panther-like predator was responsible for killing three of his lambs. He has set a live trap in an attempt to catch the "big animal, black, but with brindlé marks, and a large, bushy tail" which he saw in January. Joanna Davidson, of Braeside Equestrian Centre, has been warning riders to avoid Durno Forest, which borders Bennachie Forest, after a similar animal was seen eating a carcass on a woodland track. She believes that the animal could be a feral dog - a black Rottweiler puppy was lost in the area several years ago. She said "it would be between four and five years old, and a massive beast. Its tail had not been docked, so it could pass for a different kind of animal

altogether, and the continuing reports have varied between a big cat and a big dog". (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 6.11.95, 9.1.96, 24.1.96).

### Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland.

A lynx was shot by a R.U.C marksman near the village of Fintona on the 18th February. The shootin followed days of reports of a 'young lion' in the area. The lynx, which was wearing a collar, was believed to have escaped from a private collection. The incident has increased demands for legislation in the province, which is not covered by the Dangerous Wild Animals Act of 1976. At present, there is no requirement for a license to keep a wild animal in private premises, and as shown on recent BBC Television 'Watchdog' programmes, large cats are still being kept in makeshift cages in back gardens. (*Daily Telegraph* 16.2.96; *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 19.2.96).

The night previous to the killing of the lynx. (which according to some reports was a caracal), another mystery cat was shot a few miles away. This was described as 'a wildcat', and was apparently 'tabby, but twice the size of a domestic cat'.

This is particularly interesting because, there are not, officially any wild cats in Ireland. In Dr Karl Shuker's book 'Mystery Cats of the World', and again in the Editor's forthcoming book 'The Smaller Mystery Carnivores of the Westcountry', evidence by Scharff and others suggesting that not only have wildcats survived in parts of Ireland until recently, if not the present day, but that they appear to be *F.lybica* rather than *F.silvestris*, is discussed. This corpse would, therefore have been a potentially invaluable piece of Cryptozoological evidence. Alison Downes contacted the R.U.C. She was told that the corpses were to be stuffed for the R.U.C Museum. We were promised photographs but at the time of writing, six weeks after the event, it seems unlikely that they will arrive. Alison phoned again a few weeks later, to be told that the corpses were still waiting for autopsy, and that contra to the previous report they will probably be destroyed. We have made tentative efforts to purchase the wildcat corpse for the CFZ, but it seems highly unlikely that we shall succeed.

### Newsfile Correspondents.

Tom Anderson, Neil Arnold, Penny Keenan, Christophe Beaulieu, Phil Bennett, Mr and Mrs J Love, Ian Sherrid, Heather Thurgar, Raymond Trew, COUDI, Associated French Press, Richard Muirhead, Herman Reichenbach.

# Strangeness in Scotland II

by  
Mark Fraser.

## BHM Phenomena.

In my last letter I mentioned sightings of Bigfoot type 'creatures' in Falkirk. I was contacted via the telephone by a chap from Falkirk in Fife who told me of his sighting of two of these 'creatures'. He would not give me his name or a contact address and did not write to me as promised. He describes the creatures as being four foot in height, very agile - being able to jump from a standing position to a height of ten feet or more into the branches of trees. He claims to have seen this. He also claims that several people in the area have seen the same things, and that the area 'from way back' was said to be the haunt of strange creatures. I cannot add any more to this report unless I hear from him again.

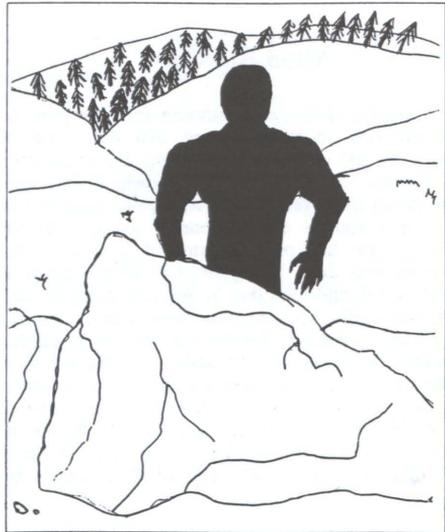
Dundonald Hill in Ayrshire, is said to have a similar phenomenon to that reported at Ben McDhui. These 'big man' reports seem to be 'ghost y' rather than a flesh and blood animal.

Derek R. who does not wish his true name known), was out walking with two friends (identified only as Ben and Andrew), in the woods near their home at Torphins, about twenty miles from Aberdeen. Through the forest there is a wide track, about the width of a three laned motorway. As they reached the end of the trail, Ben saw a dark figure of what he took to be a man, run from the trees on the right, a couple of hundred yards in front of him. It disappeared into the trees on the left. Ben was left with a feeling of foreboding. Andrew and Derek did not see the figure, and were busy telling Ben that he had been imagining things, when they too were shocked rigid at seeing a face that they described as 'human, but not human', pop out of the trees behind Ben's back on the right. It darted away just as quickly as it had come when Andrew threw a large stone at it.

A few weeks later, all three friends were to have another sighting of the creature as they were driving along the road into Torphins, about two

miles from the site of their first encounter.

Suddenly, from the side of the road bounded out a great, muscular, hairy figure. It started to run behind the car. At one point it caught up with them and started to run along side the car. It did not seem 'out of breath' as it reached speeds of between thirty-five and forty-five miles per hour. Derek described the man like 'creature' as being very strong and muscular. It had red eyes and a body covered with hair. He also said that the creature seemed to be 'more curious than anything'. After about five minutes the 'thing' stopped in the middle of the road, leaving the three friends, somewhat frightened to carry on with their journey into Torphins alone.



According to Derek, a female friend of his, living in a secluded cottage has twice seen a dark, hairy figure standing in the forest watching her cottage, before slinking away into the undergrowth. Derek drew me a sketch, which has not reproduced well, so the picture on the previous page is a copy, done by my nine year old nephew!

Editor's note: Whilst the possibility of pockets of relict hominoids living in Scotland is so remote as to be dirisible, it cannot be denied that BHM phenomena have been seen across the British Isles. I refer the interested reader to my article in the December 1996 issue of Fortean Times, in which I discussed several such cases from South-Western England. I believe that these BHM sightings, like so many other anomalous phenomena are part of a much wider pattern of activity, which has little or nothing to do with conventional zoology. This is not to dismiss these occurrences however. They are important, either as a genuine paranormal phenomenon or as a sociopathological one and deserve serious study!

### Alien Big Cats.

Lee Conelly, (15), came running into his parents bedroom one morning saying that there was a strange animal in the field opposite. He lived with his parents on farm land between Dairy and Kilwinning in Ayrshire, and was quite used to the sights and sounds of the country along with its animals. As his parents jumped up to look, whatever was there had gone. Lee then became a little bashful, and reluctant to describe what he had seen, especially because now there was no proof. He did say, however, that the animal was jet black, and larger than any dog he had ever seen. He said it was cat like, perhaps like a panther. Lee's father told me that his son is a remarkably level headed lad for his age and certainly not given to flights of fancy. If he says he saw something unusual, then his father has no reservations at all about believing him.

Editor's note: At the risk of appearing cynical, I have to point out that in my experience the father of EVERY teenage witness of an anomalous phenomenon claims that his offspring is 'unusually level headed for their age'.

I have not come across a parent yet who will admit to researchers that their child is a hormone driven idiot, fixated with 'Take That', who would not recognise a panther if you shot it and put it in front of them on a chafing dish with an orange in its mouth! However, there is no evidence to suggest that young Master Donelly is other than what his father claims!

Duncan and Alex Binning use the Dean Park Country Estate pretty often for walking their dogs. Late one evening in February 1994, the two dogs began acting nervously.

The largest and oldest dog had spent all its life on working farms, it had been used to going out late on dark, winter's nights and was not easily frightened. They walked on a few more more paces and they heard the sound of snapping twigs coming from the trees that lined the drive way on which they were walking, heading in the direction of the car park on the edge of Dean Rd in Kilmarnock.

The couple then became a little nervous as they had never seen their dogs react in such a manner before. The younger of the two dogs was by this time walking, nervously, in between the legs of its owners. As they reached the car park, Duncan then looked over his shoulder and in the darkness behind him he saw two, yellow, cat-like eyes which belonged to a large, black animal, standing much taller than the dogs, about forty feet away. Becoming more than a little afraid at the presence of the unknown creature the couple leashed the dogs and left the area rapidly.

Duncan tells me that the creature was definitely cat-like. He has said that maybe it was a wildcat, but he has never heard of one that size before, and certainly not one that could make dogs react in such obvious terror.

He drew this sketch of the animal they had seen.



A few days later whilst out walking the dogs, but this time in the area of the walled garden near Assloss Cottage which is a part of the Dean Castle Country Estate, the dogs again began acting strangely. Then, both Duncan and Alex heard the sound of purring, like that of a domestic cat but much louder.

This time, remembering what they had seen a few evenings before, they left quickly, and did not bother to look over their shoulders. Duncan also mentions that in all the years they had been using the Dean Castle estates, it has only been on these two occasions that they had experienced anything like that. The dogs, when in the grounds both before and after the two incidents have been fine and have displayed no odd behaviour at all.

Another resident of the area close by the castle, who does not wish his name to be known at all told me of the strange behaviour of his dog in the early part of 1994. He cannot remember which month.

For years he, and his faithful hound have walked the estate without incident, except for the time when his dog flatly refused to enter the grounds each evening for about a week. No amount of coaxing would entice the yelping, quivering animal into the estate. Then, one evening, after sniffing the air, the animal entered without any problem at all. The dog's owner is puzzled and has no clue to the reasons for his pet's behaviour.

\*\*\*\*

These stories were given to me in good faith. I have made no judgement but have passed them on as they were given.

Editor's Note: Mark Fraser is the editor of the 'Haunted Scotland' newsletter. He can be contacted at

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# Ancient Whales, Sea Serpents and Nessies Part One: Pros and Cons.

(Part three in our series on Cryptocetology)

By Darren Naish.

This is the third article in a series on Cryptocetology and, as you may have gathered from the title, represents a blend of discussion on sea 'serpents', lake 'monsters' and, of course whales. Novices among you may be wondering what the connection is. Well, for some time now, an explicit link has been postulated between these cryptids and the fossil whales that I introduced in article 1. <sup>(1)</sup> the basilosaurid archaeocetes, generally known to cryptozoologists as 'zeuglodonts'. This is because, for most of zoological history, zeuglodonts have been reconstructed as wriggling, serpentine beasts that would fit descriptions of certain aquatic cryptids rather well - presuming, of course, that they had not died out over 30 Million years ago! In this article I hope to review all of the problems - anatomical, philosophical, and palaeontological - that beset notions of zeuglodont survival.

Modern whales are all of pretty much the same plan: torpedo shaped with body and tail streamlined but not elongated to the extreme. The basilosaurid 'zeuglodonts', however, apparently had enormously elongated bodies and tails resulting in a serpentine form. (Fig 1a). Unlike modern whales, zeuglodonts could still move their flippers at the elbow <sup>(2)</sup>, their tiny hindlimbs still externally visible and mobile <sup>(3)</sup>, and, unlike the majority of modern whales, they had a definite neck and could obviously move the head around. Zeuglodonts certainly had tail flukes (as shown by special vertebrae at the end of the tail), but differed from living whales in that the main body of each vertebra (the centrum) was elongate while the processes atop centra were not (see Fig. 2). The vertebrae were not, therefore, firmly 'locked' together. This is important: it has traditionally been regarded as meaning that the entirety of the tail and most of the body would have been of extraordinary flexibility. Authors favouring this interpretation have postulated that, during swimming, several vertical 'waves' would have passed along the hind part of the body at a time. The famous 19th Century American palaeontologist Edward Cope even suggested that,

because their bodies were so long, zeuglodonts may have been able to lift their forequarters out of the water when they needed to see above the surface <sup>(4)</sup>, effectively pulling the thorax into a position perpendicular to the back and tail. In modern whales, raising the head above water is called spy-hopping, they accomplish it by 'standing' vertically in the water. (Fig 1b).

Zeuglodonts appeared early in the history of whales - toward the end of the Eocene (about 45 m.y.a), and were descended from an earlier family called the Protocetidae (sometimes informally called 'pro-zeuglodonts' or 'pre-zeuglodonts'). Unlike zeuglodonts, protocetids were small (up to 3.5 m) and almost certainly were capable of movement on land, albeit rather clumsy movement (some people believe that even the giant zeuglodonts were still capable of terrestrial locomotion) <sup>(2)</sup> <sup>(5)</sup> <sup>(6)</sup>. Two recently discovered protocetid species, *Ambulocetus natans* <sup>(7)</sup> and *Rodhocetus kasrani* <sup>(8)</sup>, both from the early Eocene of Pakistan, were somewhat more like their wolf-like 'mesonychid' ancestors than later whales (see fig 3.). Even so, known protocetids present somewhat different morphologies showing that different forms were adapted to different environments. *Ambulocetus*, for example, had four well developed limbs, distinct digits with small hooves, and, almost certainly, a furry pelage (lost in later whales) and a tail lacking flukes <sup>(7)</sup>. It must have lived in the same way as do sealions: a capable swimmer but one tied to rocky shorelines and shelving beaches. Most protocetids seem to have been denizens of warm, epicontinental seas <sup>(9)</sup>, and not of tropical rivers as initially suggested <sup>(10)</sup>. Seemingly, they first took to piscivory around estuaries and river mouths, and on evolving a less land-dependent lifestyle, spread from their area of origin (the modern Middle East, or thereabouts) to most of the Eocene world's shallow seas. <sup>(11)</sup> *Rodhocetus*, however was a deepwater protocetid that spent most of its time off the shallow continental shelf. Unlike *Ambulocetus*, it had a powerful, heavy tail (more like that of a modern whale) that would certainly have born flukes <sup>(8)</sup>.

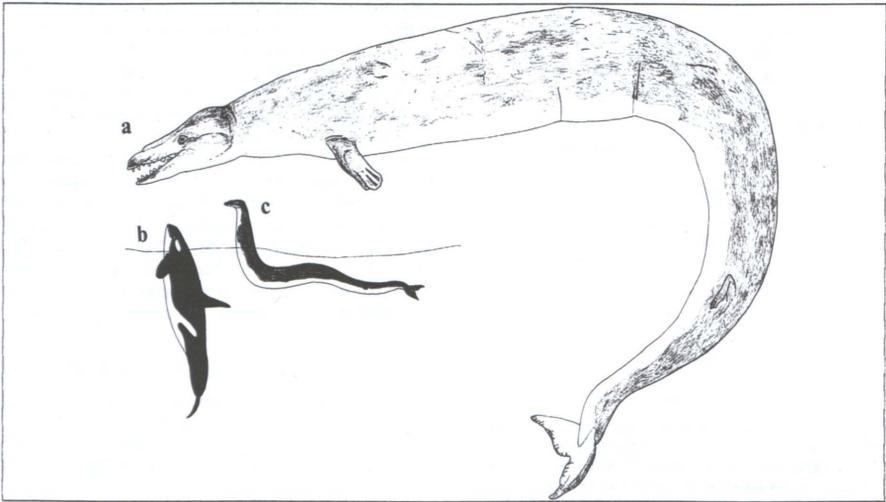


Figure One. 1a: A traditional restoration of *Basilosaurus isis*, the best known species of all ancient whales: a 16m long zeuglodont named by H. Beadnell in 1904 from the late mid Eocene (Bartonian - 42-40 million years ago) of Egypt. Note the serpentine morphology and the tiny hindlimbs. 1b: 'Spy-hopping' posture as adopted by a modern cetacean, the Orca (*Orcinus orca*). The long axis of the body becomes vertical in order that the head be raised above water. 1c: Imaginary 'spy-hopping' posture adopted by *Basilosaurus*. The long axis remains horizontal, the entirety of the thorax is raised out of the water.

Rhodocetus proves that not all protocetids were restricted to coastal shallows as was previously assumed, and modified themselves to suit very different habitats. As I write, evidence continues to come in of new protocetids and protocetid relatives (most notably the bizarre remingtoncetids <sup>(12)</sup> that endorse this interpretation - these early whales were more diverse than we could ever have imagined, both morphologically and ecologically).

Despite this recent influx of pro-zeuglodont information, zeuglodonts remain the most famous and most studied of all archaocetes (literally, 'ancient whales'). They fall into two groups that some people believe should be treated as separate families and others believe should be treated as subfamilies of the same family. The zeuglodonts that we have already seen - the huge, supposedly serpentine ones - are different habitats.

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famous and most studied of all archaocetes (literally, 'ancient whales'). They fall into two groups that some people believe should be treated as separate families and others believe should be treated as subfamilies of the same family. The zeuglodonts that we have already seen - the huge, supposedly serpentine ones - are the basilosaurines, the group with which we are mostly concerned. The other zeuglodonts are the dorudontines: not as elongate as basilosaurs, and not as large either, reaching a maximum of 7 metres. Looking more like modern whales than basilosaurs, dorudonts had a proportionally larger head and a shorter backbone (see fig 4). In fact, restored with a dorsal fin, they look little different from modern dolphins, and some cetologists think that this group is ancestral to all later whales <sup>(5) (14)</sup>. Remember all this, because we shall be returning to it later.

### Basilosaurus and the sea-serpent.

Not long after its discovery by James Harlan in

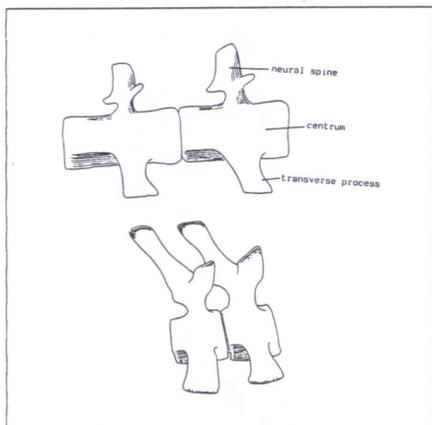


Figure Two: Lumbar vertebrae of *Basilosaurus* compared with those of a modern day balacnopteric baleen whale. In the *Basilosaurus*, the processes of the vertebrae do not contact one another and each centrum is very elongate.

1832, comments were made on how *Basilosaurus* resembled some 'mythical sea serpent', a comparison that you can find in even the most modern texts. It seems that the extraordinary appearance of this prehistoric creature invokes some act of recognition in people: there is imagery of sea serpents firmly impressed in the human mind (they are 'beast icons', see (17)). This is an issue that cannot be discussed here, but it relates to Zeuglodonts because the comparisons between them and sea serpents have been so unequivocal. It has even been used to financial advantage: in 1845 Dr Albert Koch strung together bones from at least two *Basilosaurus* skeletons to make one and then exhibited it as a 'genuine' sea serpent skeleton.

Naming it *Hydragos sillimanii*, he exhibited it in New York and then various European cities, reaping profit. Koch's creation was eventually exposed as a fraud but was merely re-named *Hydrachos harlani* and put back on the road (18) (19).

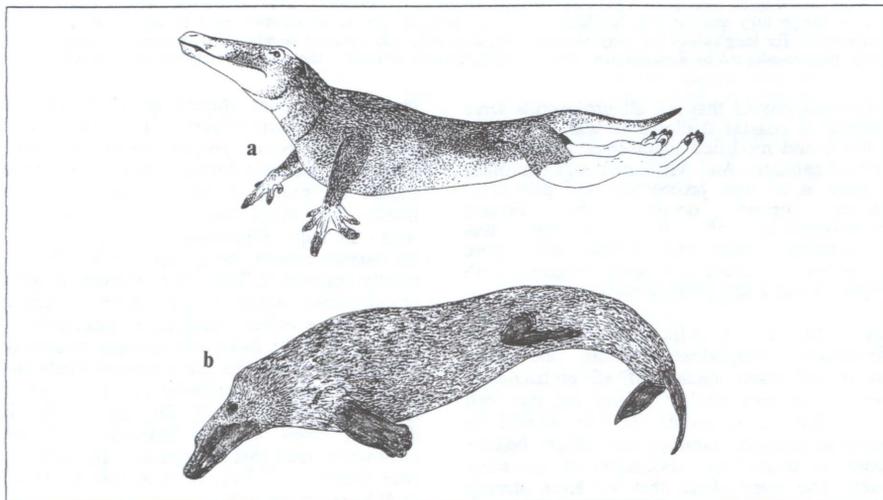


Figure Three: Morphological variation amongst the protocetids, the most primitive of all whales. 3a) *Ambulocetus natans*, a 3m long species from the 49 million year old Pakistani Kuldani Formation. 3b) *Rodhocetus kasrani*, a deepwater form more like later whales than *Ambulocetus* (13). In life, around 3m long. A little younger than *Ambulocetus* at 46 million years old, its fossils are from Pakistan's Lower Domanada Formation. 3a restored from Fig. 2b in 7, 3b from 1a in 8 (and see 13).

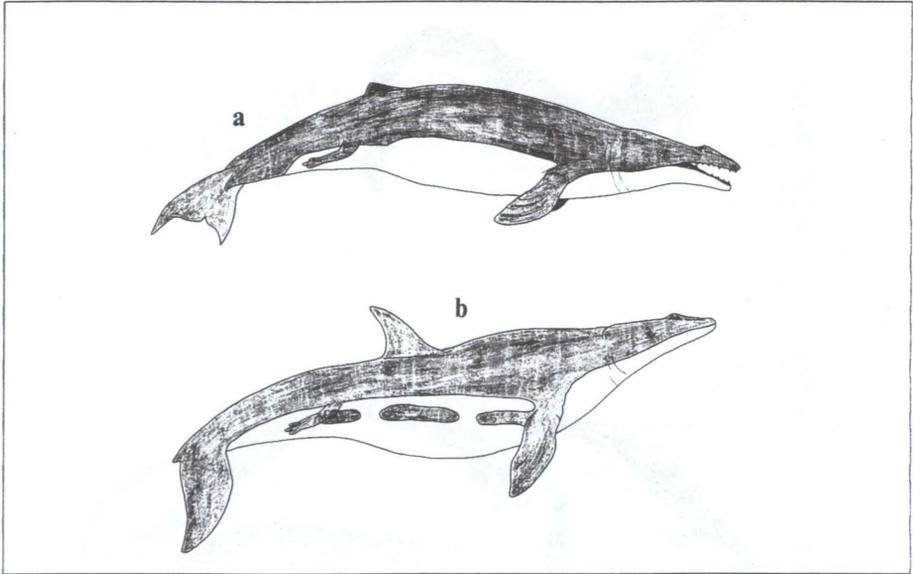


Figure Four: 4a) A typical dorudontine zeuglodont, *Zygorhiza kochii*, from the late Eocene Atlantic coast of N.America. In life, about 6m long. 4b) A different restoration of *Zygorhiza*, in which there is a tall dorsal fin. Dorsal fins certainly existed in a number of extinct whales, but are hypothetical in restorations. 4a after Folkens in (15), 4b after Bakker in (16).

So, if a couple of strung together basilosaur skeletons can be taken by people to be a genuine sea-serpent, how might they respond to seeing a live one?

### Sea serpents as basilosaurids.

It is not surprising, then, that over the years a number of writers have proposed zeuglodonts as candidates for certain types of sea serpent. Even respected cetologists speculate on the possibility of their survival<sup>(20)</sup>. Amongst cryptozoologists Bernard Heuvelmans, obviously, has been most influential. He has suggested that sea-serpents described as having a line of humps along the back are actually modified zeuglodonts that swim by wriggling vertically. In theory, these animals, though lacking long necks, would be capable of lifting the front of their body out of the water, exactly as we saw proposed for the basilosaurids earlier on, and might be responsible for sightings of 'rearing', long bodied sea-serpents<sup>(21)</sup><sup>(22)</sup>. A great many other aquatic cryptids too, have been seen as 'surviving zeuglodonts': so many have, in fact, that they will be reviewed in the second part of this article.<sup>(23)</sup> Protocetids, too, have received much attention in the cryptozoological literature, so more about them next time (see<sup>(23)</sup>). But for it to be seriously considered that sea-serpents are descendants of any archaeocete, several obstacles need to be overcome. In the rest of this article I consider the pros and cons for and against zeuglodont survival, and attempt to form conclusions.

First, and most obvious, is the fact that zeuglodonts disappear from the fossil record at the end of the

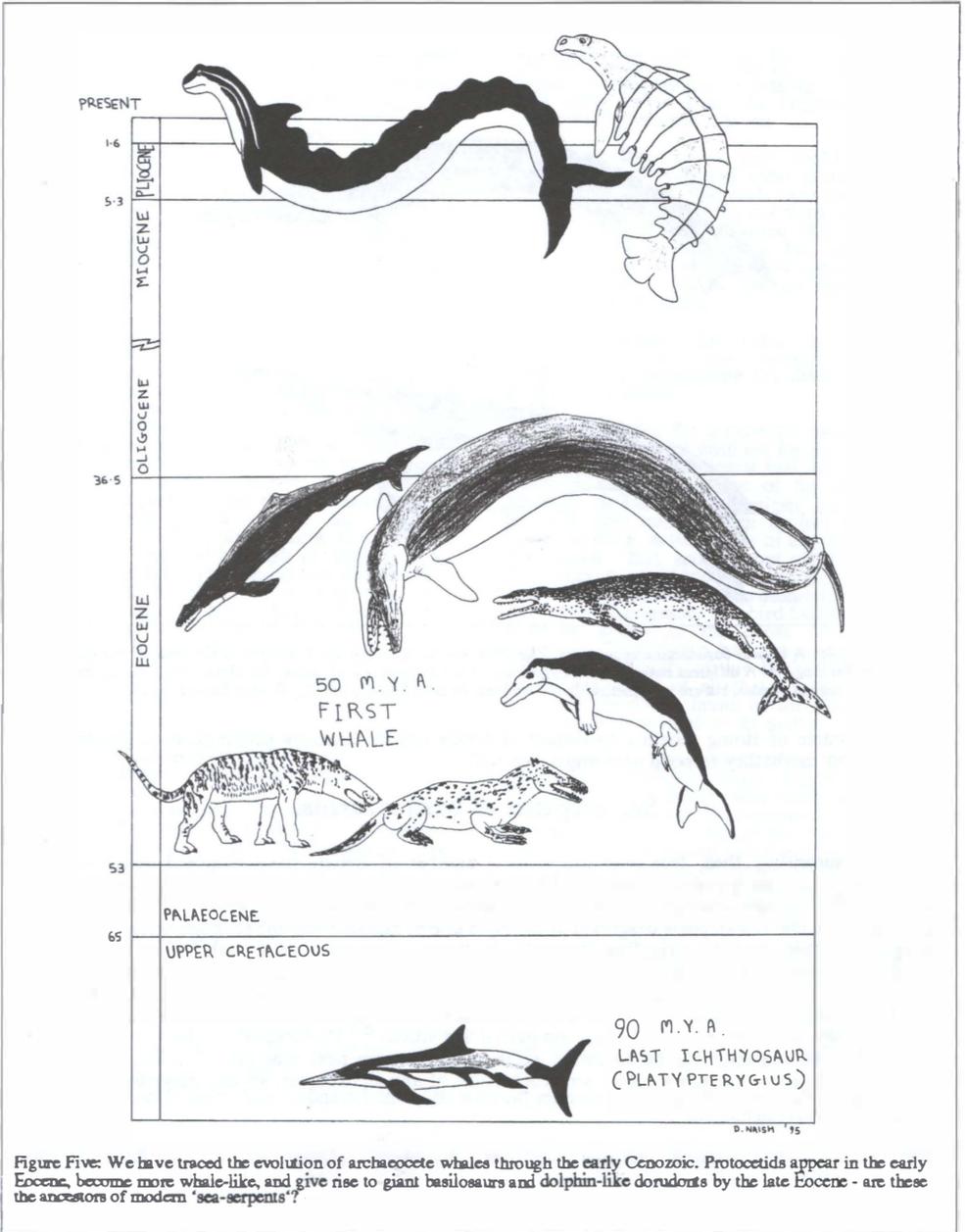


Figure Five: We have traced the evolution of archaic whales through the early Cenozoic. Protocetids appear in the early Eocene, become more whale-like, and give rise to giant basilosaurs and dolphin-like dorudonts by the late Eocene - are these the ancestors of modern 'sea-serpents'?

m.y.a). To argue that these animals have actually survived to the present, we must account for at least 36 million years of missing fossils.

### The Fossil Problem.

This is a familiar problem in cryptozoology: an extinct form seems to best fit the description of a modern cryptic one. At various times during the past, most large, extinct vertebrates have been 'theorised' back to life (see <sup>(24)</sup>). So need the same old pleas be summoned to argue for the survival of supposedly long-gone zeuglodonts? We would cite the patchiness of the fossil record and point out both the coelecanth and the okapi. But what else can be said? While we are prone to rely on negative evidence with fossils (i.e. if a group disappears from the record, surely it has gone extinct), we must constantly be reminded of the famous words of palaeontologist Leon Bertin: '*In palaeontology negative by evidence means nothing*'.

The zeuglodonts we have seen were, unlike their earliest relatives, fully marine creatures well capable of exploring oceanic realms well away from land. If one zeuglodont lineage evolved a 'deep ocean' lifestyle - amplifying this pelagic trend - then their chances of becoming fossils would be much smaller than that of the mostly coastal whales whose fossils we have recorded in some abundance. Other truly oceanic whales, most notably the true dolphins (family Delphinidae), have very poor fossil records <sup>(25)</sup>. So we could consider the possibility that zeuglodonts were changing ecological roles to avoid competing with 'modern' whales. By the mid Oligocene, modern whales - both toothed and baleen - had appeared and, as their fossils show, were becoming important in marine environments where zeuglodonts were previously dominant <sup>(26)</sup>. Also, and supposedly more importantly, while zeuglodonts might have been becoming rarer in the Northern Hemisphere by latest Eocene times (the Priabonian stage), they remained at moderate diversity deep in the south, as shown by the possible presence of three or more forms in New Zealand of this time. <sup>(27)</sup> This, in theory, reduces the possibility of any of their fossils being found because the Southern Hemisphere is less yielding than the Northern. This is a separate argument.

### The 'Elusive Southerners' Theory.

While it is known that late Eocene zeuglodonts swam over what is now Antarctica, we have no Antarctic zeuglodonts younger than that. So is Antarctica hiding zeuglodont fossils younger than the late Eocene age? It's usually argued that, covered as it is by an enormous ice cap, Antarctica is unyielding in fossils. This would make the unrecorded presence of post-Eocene zeuglodonts there a fair possibility. But, Marine Plain in Antarctica has now yielded vertebrate fossils from the late Eocene onward, including numerous extinct whales <sup>(28)</sup>. As yet, no definite post-Eocene zeuglodonts. Does this argue against their existence as fossils there? Or are we still relying on absence of evidence for a conclusion? We could certainly argue that the reason zeuglodonts drop out of the fossil record of Antarctica was that they could not adapt to the extreme cold (Antarctica became truly glaciated in the Oligocene). But this does not explain their extinction elsewhere. One of the ten biggest mass extinctions in the history of life, and the biggest of all in the Cenozoic era, occurred at the close of the Eocene - this was probably a major factor in the eventual extinction of these whales. Or was it? Other whales made it through (and, furthermore, gave rise to gigantic descendants as soon as the early Oligocene. <sup>(29)</sup>). Whales are also the only big mammals to have made it through the Pleistocene mass extinction (about 0.01 m.y.a) without experiencing the decimation of taxonomic variety that other mammals underwent <sup>(30)</sup>. This shows that whales are 'durable' mammals, at least at the family level. The possibility of zeuglodont survival could therefore be quite high. But to verify this, a post-Eocene zeuglodont is needed. Are there any?

For some time it seemed that the very youngest of known fossil zeuglodonts was *Kekenodon onamata*, from the mid Oligocene of New Zealand <sup>(31)</sup>. It is particularly notable in combining both the 'elusive Southern Hemisphere fauna' theory and the 'ecological niche not usually fossilised' theory - it is not only from New Zealand, but follows a '7 million year plus' hiatus in the record of fossil zeuglodonts. Here might be evidence that not only were the last zeuglodonts animals of the Southern Hemisphere, they were also becoming less 'available' candidates for fossilisation. Opinions

have changed much on the relationship of this species to other whales: early interpretations were that it was a possible 'last archaeocete', but others expressed doubts<sup>(32)</sup>. In 1989, Mitchell decided that Kekenodon was, after all, a late surviving archaeocete and created a monotypic family for it<sup>(33)</sup>. But by 1992, the work of Fordyce<sup>(29)</sup> changed opinions again - now it seemed that Kekenodon was an early toothed mysticete. So much for Kekenodon then. Indeed, a recent review states that 'supposed (post-Eocene) archaeocetes are either misidentified or are too incomplete to place conclusively'<sup>(34)</sup>.

One final argument remains and, like the lack of fossil evidence, it argues against zeuglodont survival. This argument begins with the very fact that first led zeuglodonts to be even considered as sea-serpent candidates. This is their 'serpentiformity' for, as we saw earlier, the best known members of this group - the giant basilosaurines - have long been restored as sinuous serpentine animals. In fact, ever since the skeleton of *Basilosaurus cetoides* from Alabama was first reconstructed in the 1830's, this is thought to have been the case. But suppose they weren't serpentine after all. If this were so then the notions of surviving zeuglodonts would have to be dispelled. Earlier in this article, we saw how the dorudonts were definitely not serpentine, but proportioned more like modern whales (see fig. 4). If dorudonts were really close relatives of basilosaurs, could the two really have been that different in morphology?

In 1984<sup>(35)</sup>, Barnes re-assessed the skeletal material of *Basilosaurus* and, concluding that the animal was NOT serpentine but, in fact, more like what a giant dorudont might look like, submitted a brand new reconstruction. As we can see from fig.6, Barnes' *Basilosaurus* would not be thought of as a 'sea serpent' if seen in the flesh and, if this reconstruction is accurate, then we are wasting our time even considering the survival of zeuglodonts!

Other, more recent analyses have also shown that *Basilosaurus* was not a serpentine animal. The centra of its vertebrae were wide and bulky with very little space in between them - in fact they did not have any adaptations to allow greater flexibility. The serpentiformity of *Basilosaurus* is an illusion - it is caused by allometric increase in the length of the centra, rather than an increase in the number of vertebrae<sup>(36)</sup>. Some modern whales, while being of similar length to *Basilosaurus*, actually have more vertebrae. Ironically, therefore, basilosaurs increased their length at the expense of flexibility, the very opposite of traditional interpretations! So they could not 'wriggle' vertically. Technically, the jury is still out over whether they could have survived beyond the Eocene, let alone to within recent times, but there is no fossil evidence that they did. So, do descendants of *Basilosaurus* still cruise the oceans? It is up to you to make your own decision, but, as will be seen in part two of this article, others have already made theirs...

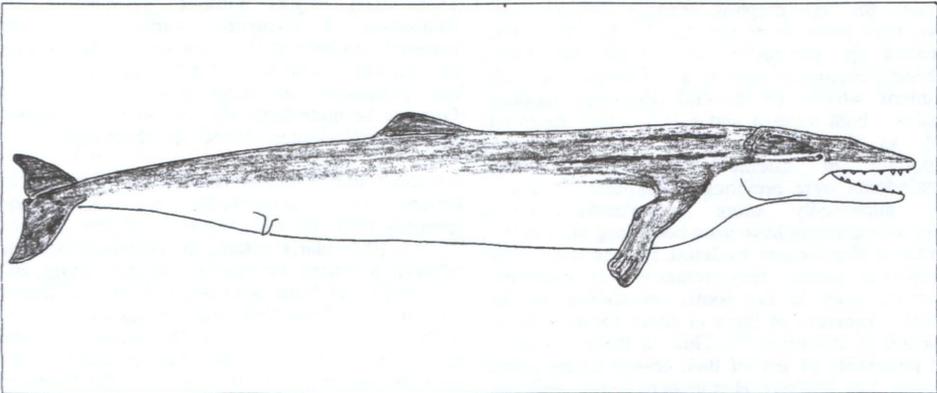


Figure Six: *Basilosaurus* in its more dorudont-like guise.  
After Barnes 1984 (35).

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## The Horse-Man of Lincolnshire: A hitherto unrecorded Zooform Phenomenon. by Alison Downes.

Dr. Karl P.N. Shuker recently appeared on the Good Morning show, (ITV Weekday mornings), and was one of the featured panellists for a viewers 'phone in' on the subject of mystery animals. Well over a thousand people telephoned in. Most of the eyewitness accounts were of 'big cats' or lake monsters, but a few were far more unusual. One was from a lady who claimed that her husband had undergone a very unusual experience.

I contacted the gentleman to get the true facts of the case. This is the gist of what he told me.

*"It was very late one night, a few couple of years ago. I used to work on an oil rig platform in the North Sea and I was coming home on leave. I'm not naturally given to flights of fancy so I'm fairly sure of what I saw.*

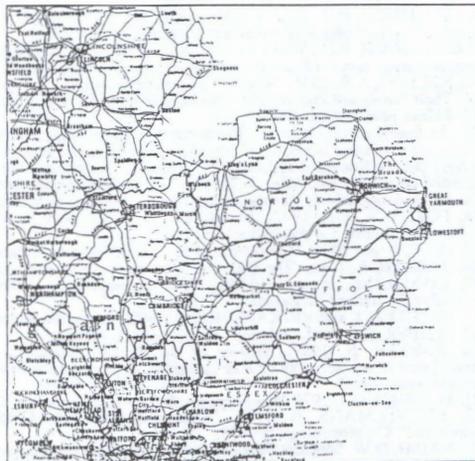
*I was driving down the back road from Great Yarmouth to Lincoln. It was very dark and quite rural in that area - lots of fields and trees around. As I drove down the road I noticed a shape in the fields at the right hand side. I thought it was probably a horse or a deer, as it seemed to be the right size and shape. But, as I got closer it moved nearer towards the road and I got the shock of my life - it had the body and legs of a horse but a man's face!*

*It was very scary and unpleasant. I didn't hang around, but put my foot down hard on the accelerator and 'got the hell' out of there! I had the sensation that it was following me down the road. I didn't look back - I was terrified*

*When I got home I told my wife and friends about it, but most people just laughed at me and said I was mad, or imagining things. As you can imagine, I didn't want to be a laughing stock so I kept quiet about it after that, but I am convinced about what I saw. I know it seems impossible, but I DID see it and it wasn't just a horse or a deer.*

*I've never heard of anyone else seeing anything*

*like it around this area, but I would be interested if anybody knows anything about it, or any legends about similar creatures".*



I looked into the situation, and found that this bears an uncanny resemblance to 'The Horse-man of County Louth', as described in 'Mystery Animals of Britain and Ireland' by Graham McEwan. (Hale, London 1986). This apparition was seen near Drogheda, County Louth, Eire in 1966, and appeared as "A huge horse with a man's face and horrible bulging eyes".

The Lincolnshire witness, Mr K., whose identity we have decided to keep confidential for the moment, had never heard of the Irish story, and apart from a mild interest in ghosts (which, of course, many people have), has little interest in the paranormal. He appears to be a reliable and objective witness. I found him a credible and sensible person who seemed slightly embarrassed by it all.

For this reason, I consider the story to be an interesting one, and would certainly not dismiss it. If anyone has any similar reports, please feel free to contact us at the Editorial Address.

# The Mystery of the Zebra-Striped feather.

by

Dr Bernard Heuvelmans

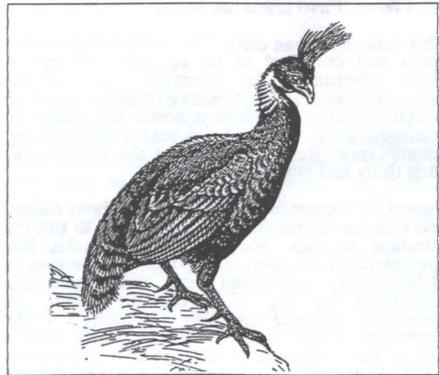
In 1901 it was finally realised that the presumed zebra, called okapi by the pygmies of the great equatorial forest of Africa, was in reality a sort of ancestral giraffe with a short neck. At that point, several expeditions were organised with the aim of capturing one of these survivors from the past. The one arranged by the American Museum of Natural History was led by Herbert Lang, who in turn was assisted by a very promising young ornithologist, James P. Chapin.

Despite its assiduous and continuing peregrinations through the Belgian Congo, the present day Zaire, the expedition carried on from 1909 to 1915, and in spite of the support of more than 38,000 natives, the Yankee team did not succeed in bringing back alive even the slightest shadow of an okapi. The young one which it had succeeded in capturing had perished after a few days, owing to an insufficient supply of condensed milk. However, this expedition did bring back a piece of evidence which was going to lead to another striking zoological discovery, this time in the world of birds.

In 1913, on the occasion of a festival in the village of Avakubi, in the forest of the Ituri, the habitat of the okapi, Chapin was much interested in the costumes of the dancers, and in particular their head-dresses of feathers, as these, in general were decorated with a variety of feathers collected from the local birds. From one of these pieces of headgear the zoologist collected a feather which did not appear familiar to him. It was reddish, with regular black, zebra-like stripes, and in 1915 he brought it back to the United States in a bundle of a variety of different feathers.

The zebra-striped feather posed a problem which was to prove even more difficult to resolve than that of the similarly zebra striped hide of the impossible 'forest ass' first reported by Stanley. One could even be lead to think that, in this dark and mysterious region, all mysteries had a zebra-like aspect.

The world of birds is indeed infinitely diversified. Moreover, the feathers worn by this limitless variety of birds are even more diversified, for there can sometimes be even very different types of feather on one and the same bird. But, let us be reassured: Chapin, in his efforts to identify the original owner of the famous black-striped feather, was not going to be obliged to review the feathers of the some 8500 species of birds then known. In fact, the feathers had certain characteristics which in any event were going to limit the scope of the research needed. To begin with, the mysterious zebra-striped feather bore a resemblance to the secondary remiges - i.e., the feathers that make up the second row on the wing - of certain coucals, birds which are related to the cuckoos but which are much larger than the latter. Because of the robustness and curvature of the stem, it also resembled the feather of a gallinacean, but it was still of too considerable a size to have come from a guinea-fowl or a francolin and, besides, its colouration was entirely different. Chapin long considered the possibility of some domestic hybrid between guinea-fowl and chicken, but his research in this direction lead to nothing. Could it be that this feather came from a still unknown species of African Gallinacean? This idea seemed to him to be so nonsensical that he ended up dropping his investigation.



A quarter of a century later, an unexpected stroke of good luck was going to reveal to him how ill founded was his disbelief. In July 1936, he went to the Museum of the Belgian Congo, in Tervuren, not far from Brussels, in order to work on the second volume of his book '*Birds of the Belgian Congo*'. His friend, Dr. Henri Schouteden (1881-1972), at that time director of this museum, had given him complete freedom to study all of the collections which had been accumulated there on the fauna of this immense Belgian colony, and which were of an incomparable richness.

As it turned out, on one day early in the month of August, a torrential summer rain meant that Chapin was obliged to enter the museum through a service door at the side, in order not to be soaked to the skin. And there, passing through a hallway that was being used for temporary storage, our ornithologist stumbled upon a whole series of stuffed fowl which were about to be burned in a stove, either because they were completely moth-eaten or because they were of no scientific interest whatever. Among them, perched on a packing case, Chapin came across a pair of birds which caught his attention immediately, as there was nothing at all African about them. One had blackish plumage with an iridescent sheen of violet and green, and the other - no doubt the female of the same species - was of a duller, more or less reddish colour overall. And, the big reddish feathers of its wings were marked with black zebra stripes!

This brought abruptly back to Chapin's mind a memory which had long lain buried: yes, indeed, these feathers were very much like the one, whose owner he had so long sought .... A glance at the label attached to one claw revealed this brief note: '*Pavo cristatus, young imported*'.

This was clearly an error. The male had powerful spurs and thus had to be an adult. Moreover, *Pavo cristatus* is the scientific name of the ordinary blue peacock, a native of India, and with which the bird in question could not really be confused, even though it did bear a slight family resemblance. But, a peacock in the Congo? No such thing had ever been seen.

Imported? Imported from where? Without further ado Chapin rushed to Dr. Schouteden, to put the question to him. He was told that the two specimens in question came from a collection of at least sixty naturalised birds, which had been assembled by the Copagnie du Kasai, an important trading company operating in the southwest of the Congo, and which had made a gift of this collection to the Tervuren museum in 1913. As the lot included some representatives of a few barnyard species, the person charged with identifying the specimens had doubtless

concluded that the two birds which vaguely resembled peacocks even though not having their magnificent tail-feathers or brilliant colours, must have been Indian peacocks imported into the Congo for ornamental reasons.

What were they really? They could have been hybrids of peacocks and other domestic birds, since it was known that such cross-breeding had been achieved. Chapin did not think so however, as the offspring so obtained did not at all resemble the fowl in question. This being said, if they really were of an unknown species, how the devil to verify it, as he had no idea where to begin looking for them.

A first valuable clue came to Chapin in circumstances no less unusual than the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the feather of Akabuki.

Several days after the unexpected encounter with the two stuffed birds destined for the bonfire, on 12 August, the ornithologist had been invited to lunch in Brussels by one of his old friends, Monsieur de Mathelin de Papigny, an engineer in the Kilo gold mines whom he had met in the Congo in 1911. In the course of the meal - as was the custom - they spoke about gastronomy, and the engineer mentioned in passing a delicious bird which he had tasted at a dinner in 1930 at his gold mine in Angumu. The bird had been shot by a native hunter in the dense forest nearby. Monsieur de Mathelin had never succeeded in learning the identity of this feathered game, but he did not doubt at all that Chapin, the great specialist on Avian fauna of the Congo, could finally shed some light on the matter.

When his host began to describe the bird, the American ornithologist nearly choked and, by his own admission, was thereafter totally unaware of whatever it was that he continued to chew on mechanically for the rest of the meal. For, the description of the animal corresponded exactly to the male of the couple of specimens which he had stumbled across in the storage hallway of the museum of the Belgian Congo! But it did differ in one minor detail: Monsieur de Mathelin claimed that his bird had a 'white badger brush' on the top of its head, in front of the little black crest that was quite visible on the naturalised bird. However this latter bird had, at this point on its head, only a few short, white silky hairs, and Chapin felt that his luncheon partner might be exaggerating the importance of this ornament just a bit.

However that may have been, the account of the engineer seemed to indicate that this mysterious bird lived in the region of Angumu, from which a specimen could very well have managed to reach the village of Avakubi, located scarcely 160 km

to the north.

By way of checking, and for a comparison, Chapin had sent to the museum in New York, one of the secondary remiges of the stuffed female bird, so that it could be compared with the feather that he had collected from the head-dress of a Congolese dancer; these two feathers proved to be almost identical! In short the feather from Avakubi, the game bird of Angumu, and the naturalised birds from the Compagnie du Kasai appeared to belong to one and the same species, which apparently frequented the northeast and the centre of the Belgian Congo. The pieces of the puzzle were beginning to come together.

On the basis of the stuffed specimens, James P. Chapin then undertook to describe the new bird under the name of *Afropavo congensis*, in other words 'the African peacock of the Congo'. The anatomical examination, and in particular the discovery of the little bony tubercule on the wing, which characterised the family of the Phasianidae, disclosed clearly that the unknown creature was indeed a relative of the peacocks and the pheasants, and definitely was not some other African guinea-fowl.

This description appeared first, in English, in the *Revue de zoologie et de botanique africaines* in November 1936. It was then translated at once into French and published in the *Bulletin de Cercle zoologique congolaise*, which was widely

This description appeared first, in English, in the *Revue de zoologie et de botanique africaines* in November 1936. It was then translated at once into French and published in the *Bulletin de Cercle zoologique congolaise*, which was widely circulated among Belgian colonists interested in natural history. The article was then reproduced in a very condensed form in a Brussels daily newspaper. In this form it amounted effectively to a 'Notice of Missing Person', and it subsequently produced the desired result.

Little by little, a whole series of people began to write in, to report that they had seen or even shot birds of this sort in the Congo; some in the region of the Lower Uele, i.e., quite in the northern part of the state, and another, the Reverend Thomas H. Wilson, at Inkongo, in the Kasai, in the very heart of the country. All of this, of course, was rather vague, and perhaps even a little embroidered and, in any case, quite unverifiable over the immediate future.

Finally, a police officer of the Congo, M.R. Geldof, claimed to have naturalised the Congolese peacock which he had shot in 1930 at a distance of 180 km to the south of Stanleyville (today Kisangani), and had given it to his sister, who lived at Eclloo, in Belgium. This time a verification was possible. Dr. Schouteden immediately sent his taxidermist, Rene Opdenbosch, to call on this lady and to



ascertain that she did in fact have in her possession a good specimen of the Congolese peacock.

Here, in any event was a point which established that the range of distribution of the bird was fairly extensive. Then, of course, more had to be learned, and, in particular, a specimen had to be collected in the field. But in those days, one did not travel as easily, nor as rapidly, as is the case today. Moreover, Chapin, being attached to a scientific institution, had a major project to complete, little time to devote to other matters, and, furthermore, no fortune at all to throw about. Nevertheless, the game was worth the candle. Thus, a well defined plan began to take form in his mind.

First of all, he had to train several natives to prepare in the field the skins of any specimens which could be obtained. Chapin had also been assured by Monsieur de Mathelin that, at Angumu, he would receive all necessary assistance from Dr. Pierre Dyleff, the physician of the mining company. The best would be to have assigned to him, as his assistant, a Congolese taxidermist by the name of Musoba, whom the American ornithologist had trained himself in 1926, and whom at that time was working in the Albert national park.

On top of this, Chapin had been warmly congratulated for his unexpected success by the authorities of the Museum of New York, from which he had obtained a special leave of two months. And then, from several American benefactors living in Europe, he was able to procure the funds necessary for this undertaking. Then, Professor Victor van Straelen, curator of the national parks of the Belgian Congo, proved to be more than pleased to send the taxidermist Musoba to Angumu. Thus, all was ready for the decisive stroke.

On 23rd May 1937, a very encouraging report reached Chapin. Dr. Dyleff had shot a first specimen of Afropavo, a female, which Musoba had then prepared with his habitual skill. On 17th June the ornithologist had an even greater surprise: The Reverend Wilson had obtained another individual, this time a male, which he had naturalised and which he wrote was being despatched to Chapin. Again, he had shot the specimen in the region of Inkongo, which earlier had appeared to be so unlikely, given its distance from Angumu: 750 kilometres!

On the photo which the missionary had attached to his letter, it could be seen that the male of the Congolese peacock did indeed have on the top of its head a true 'badger-brush' of fine white hairs. Monsieur de Mathelin de Pagny had in no way exaggerated: rather it was the specimen of

Tevuren which had been dreadfully 'moth eaten'.

Finally, on the 25th May, Chapin - already sure of not returning empty handed - left Brussels in a trimotor aeroplane of Sabena, which was to take him, in four and a half days, to the aerodrome of Stanleyville. Waiting for him there was a letter from Dr. Dyleff, who informed him that four duly prepared specimens of the Congolese peacock were awaiting him in Angumu, as well as a 'stretched' skin provided by a Russian friend. Moreover, a Veterinary in Stanleyville itself, Dr. Els, was quite anxious to show Chapin two other specimens which, for their part, had been conserved by means of injections of formal: they had been killed the preceding month by Monsieur Philippe de Braconier near the Ayena River, some hundred km to the east of Stanleyville. In short, the news of the 'discovery' of the Congolese peacock had spread like wildfire among all of those who were already familiar with it, and who in some cases had known about it for quite a long time.

Chapin went first to Angumu, where he made the acquaintance of Dr. Dyleff as well as of the new black taxidermist Nkotiba, who had been trained in the meantime by the veteran Musoba. A whole company of trackers, hunters and trappers had been assembled. Twelve days of frenetic searching, however, did not enable Chapin to see a single Congolese peacock. Thus, he took the decision to follow Dr. Dyleff, on the 13th of July, to Ayena, to the Braconiers, where an excellent hunter of the region, Anyasi, was placed at his disposal. Three days later, in company with this latter, the scientific godfather of the Congolese peacock finally had the opportunity to see one of his godchildren, a male. He at first had a glimpse of it in a thicket, whereupon Anyasi had fired his arm at it, but had missed. The magnificent bird rose in a single bound, flapping its wings majestically. Immediately afterward, another peacock also flew up nearby.

It was only on the 18th that Anyassi succeeded in killing a first specimen under the very eyes of Chapin, who collected it while it was still quivering, and was then able to dissect it with all of the care and skill to be expected. Moreover, it was to be the only one that he was ever to see shot. He, himself, never succeeded in shooting one, as he always trembled so with emotion.

Once back in Angumu, Chapin found there a new specimen that had been obtained during his brief absence and which had been prepared by Nkotiba. When he finally left Africa on 27th August, the specimens of Congolese peacocks which had been collected for him here and there numbered about ten. He had scarcely left when Dr. Dyleff obtained yet another one, bringing the total number of specimens known, including the

types, to fourteen.

Thus, it emerged little by little that the Congolese peacock, one isolated feather of which had excited so much interest for some 25 years, but which in spite of it all had succeeded in preserving its incognito until 1936, did indeed have a limited range. Nevertheless, this range was as extensive as the whole of Great Britain; a territory in the form of a pear, with the stem at Lusambo, in the Kasai, and the base on the Lindi river, which flows into the principal arm of the Congo River, a little downstream from Stanleyville. Moreover, the bird appeared to be rather common and had always been well known to the native peoples. The Bakumu of the region of Angumu, called it *itundu*, and the Wabali of Ayena ngowe, in imitation, it would seem, of one of its cries. Even certain colonists knew it, that is, at least those who risked venturing into the forest.

Moreover, subsequent research was going to uncover the identity of the one, who in the last century, had assembled for the *ompagnie du Kasai* the collection of birds among which figured the type specimens of *Afropavo congensis*. This turned out to be the Botanist and Entomologist from Luxembourg Edouard Luja, whose name is carried today by many species of plants and insects. His Congolese collection had even been exhibited in 1910 by the *ompagnie du Kasai* at the Brussels Exposition where, it must be said, not a single visitor had noticed in it a couple of birds which were entirely unknown to science. It is true that when a distinguished Belgian ornithologist, Alphonse Dubois (1839-?1910) had been charged with identifying the pieces of the collection before it was given to the Museum of Tevurn, this expert was so convinced that peacocks could not exist in Africa that he took this couple for a pair of common peacocks which had come from elsewhere - which is almost unthinkable, and so he had catalogued them as such. '*Pavo cristatus*, young, imported'.

Yet once again, conventional knowledge had well and truly blinded a specialist, and a great discovery had been set back by several decades, and, if the badly labelled birds had been destroyed, as was about to be done, we would perhaps be unaware, even today that a species of peacock is strutting proudly about in the dark forests in the heart of Zaire!

*The Editor would like to thank Dr. Heuvelmans for this article which is previously unpublished, in French or English., and is therefore an exclusive for 'Animals & Men'.*

## NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL CRYPTO

by  
NEIL NIXON

Rare, elusive, the stuff of legend. Once encountered, forever pondered. No, not the water horse of New France. We're talking music here. Specifically, the tracks that make up the legendary album, '*Now that's what I call Crypto*'. This edition brings you....

### "Bo Meets the Monster"

Starting with a pick on string guitar grind that would be impressive from any of the current crop of ace indie haircuts this basic blues soon settles down into the classic skeletal beat until the great man himself starts to intone another improbably adventure.

Waking up to find the Purple People Eater sitting in his old apple tree Diddle takes to the sky in his own plane and on the way to see his 'Baby' notices '*All those funny people from another land*'. Having got to his 'baby's' house Diddle has to leave again right away. It doesn't make a lot of sense but it does give his 'baby' the chance to break down and beg '*Bo Diddle, Bo Diddle, don't leave me in this house*'. Advising the hysterical chick to '*lock all the windows and bolt all the doors*'. Diddle rambles in classic fashion. This is musical rambling with a burst of scratchy riffing and a rough edged short solo, before heading for the skies and arriving back home at which point he discovers that the Purple People Eater has '*had*' his '*baby*' and gone. Scratch riff/rapid fade.

We're talking cheapo production, continuity errors which make your average Charles Berlitz book look like the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and a story that has more events than logic. Yup, its 1961, the teen market and the musical equivalent of those tacky films '*The Giant Gila Monster*', '*Plan 9 from Outer Space*', etc. If you're the picky type who can't understand how Diddle's baby from her own place to his faster than Diddle's plane, give this one a wide berth. If you're up for a bit of tack with attitude from a guy whose riff history makes ZZ Top look like Mozart then buy up the whole Diddle catalogue now!!! On the way you'll find this obscure gem nestled three quarters of the way through '*Chess Masters Volume 2*'. From the crypto point of view this is an interesting diversion. For starters its an insight into late fifties/early sixties values and monster archetypes. The Purple People Eater is, well, whatever you want him, her or it to be. Anything from an escaped circus geek to some bizarre biological offshoot that would give Mulder and Scully an adventure to remember. Short on genuine crypto substance maybe, but this is a crypto adventure to match any other committed to vinyl!

## The Life and Times of Bert Palmer 1989-1995

by Chris Moiser.

(Photographs by the author).

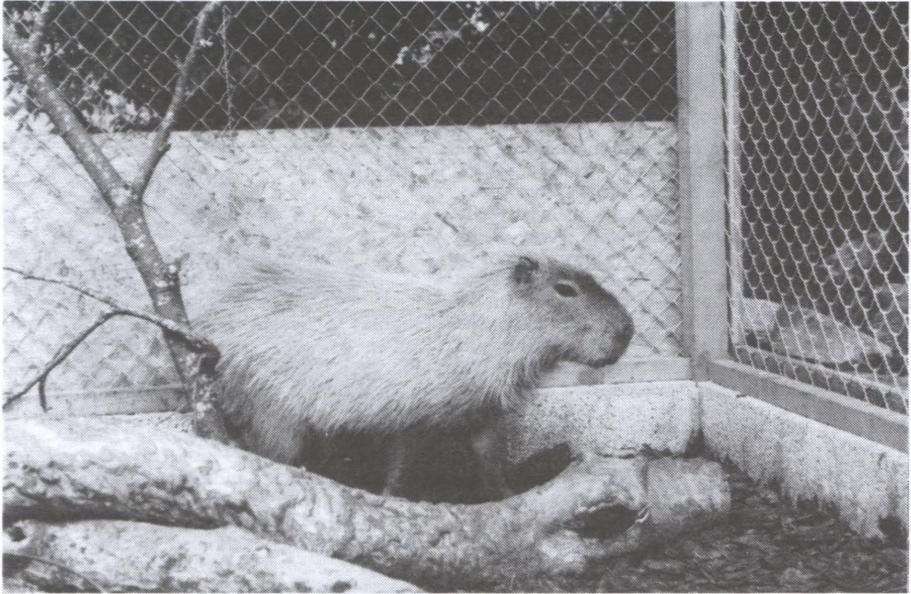
Although born in Paignton, Devon, Bert spent most of his life in Cornwall. He had left 'home' as the capybara equivalent of a teenager, to be one of the main exhibits at Joy and John Palmer's Porfell Animal Land, near Lanreath, in late 1989. Little is known of his early days at Porfell, except that he had a spacious enclosure with a stream running through it. This domestic, but mundane life did not last though.

The gales of January 1990 were some of the most severe to hit the South West in living memory. Nationally thirty seven people were killed and a considerable amount of damage was done to property. Bert's back wall, was one of the unreported casualties of this storm. Whether Bert was frightened by the storm, or whether he just fancied exploring Cornwall we will never know, but he left home and disappeared for three weeks. At the end of this time he was reported to be at Shill-a-mill lakes, a man-made fishery, two miles away. This establishment was originally constructed with the angler in mind, but serendipitously was also ideal capybara habitat.

Bert spent seventeen months living here. It was an almost idyllic type of existence, no-one really bothered him, the food was excellent, and there were lots of good hiding places. The only thing that was lacking was female (capybara) company. Knowledge of Bert's presence became local knowledge, and many local anglers who considered themselves to be good field naturalists looked on a sighting of Bert as a good omen. Sadly though, Bert's absence from Porfell was causing Joy and John major headaches. Initial attempts to catch him had proved unsuccessful, and the local authority was taking more than a passing interest.

Under English law, Capybaras are listed as being 'dangerous', and the local authority are therefore permitted to do just about whatever they like to control or capture ones that venture abroad unlawfully.





Bert, being the gentleman rodent that he was, decided not to be dangerous. In fact, the only thing that he proved dangerous to during seventeen months of freedom was a bucket full of groundbait that had, rather carelessly, been left under a caravan overnight. The owner of the groundbait had immediately forgiven him this peccadillo.

A point was reached, though, where the local authority issued an ultimatum; either Bert was recaptured quickly or they would use a marksman to kill him. At this stage the media started to take a greater interest and Bert became national, and then international news. Many letters of support came in, including one from a South American country where they still eat capybara! The local authority, sensing trouble, backed down a little and gave the Palmers some time to reconvene the 'capture committee'. Bert carried on regardless.

One Saturday afternoon a group of us met at the fishery, we had borrowed and scrounged nets and other pieces of equipment, knowing that this might be our last chance. After what might loosely be described as a hectic three hours, Bert was back in captivity. Both capybara and human honour was intact and there were no serious injuries on either side.

Once back in captivity Bert was no longer a national media figure although the local newspaper did do a piece on him, together with rather a nice photograph. He was kept off show for a few months to try and get him used to human company again, at the same time a large enclosure was built. Female company seemed a good idea too, so Bertha was acquired from Twycross. Although an arranged marriage, it worked, they became inseparable companions and over the following years several babies were born. Sadly Bertha died, in labour, earlier in 1995. It would be almost unacceptably anthropomorphic to say that Bert never got over losing her; perhaps it is just better to say that capybaras are almost all very social rodents.

Bert died suddenly, but peacefully on 30th August 1995, leaving several surviving offspring. Bert was, perhaps, the epitome of a liberated (in every sense of the word), 20th century rodent. He had an inauspicious start in life, he found fame as a young adult, and returned to normality and family life after stardom. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him. I'm glad to be one of many humans in that list.

## THE STANLEY TIGER

by Jonathan Downes and Richard Muirhead.

Our current project is a book with the working title of 'The Mystery Animals of Hong Kong'. Numerous people have asked, one or other of us, why we are writing this book. When it is perfectly obvious that a territory the size of Hong Kong can't have any mystery animals? This could not be further from the truth. Hong Kong, is a collection of small islands and peninsular mainland in the estuary of the Pearl River in South China, and being on the cusp between the Northern Eurasian and Tropical Asian regions provides a unique habitat for a bizarre mix of wildlife.

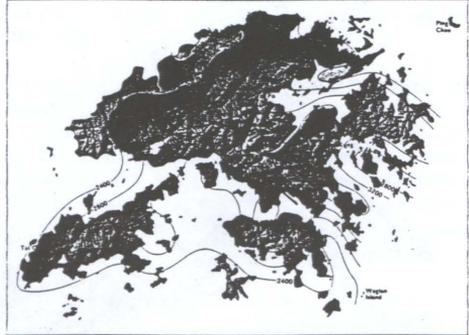
There are indeed, genuine cryptids to be discovered, and these are discussed more fully in the pages of our book, but the truth of the matter is that there are so many anomalies between the different accounts of the fauna of the territory, and so many truths, half-truths and downright lies have been printed about it that nearly all of the wildlife of Hong Kong is a mystery.

In this article we present one particular story with some facets to it which are of interest to the fortunate zoologist. It concerns the (now almost extinct) South China race of the Tiger, *Panthera tigris amoyensis*, and the man who was, perhaps one of the greatest naturalists to work in Hong Kong: Dr. Geoffrey Herklots.

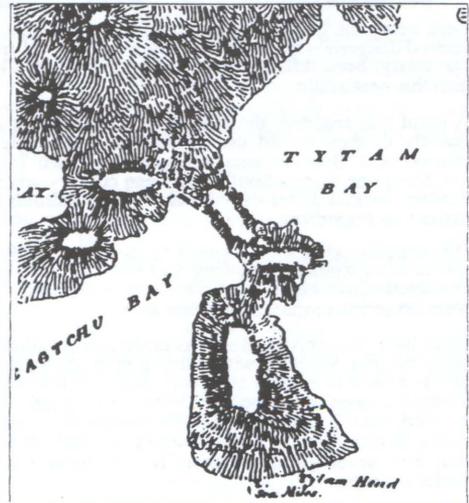
In 1951, Dr. Herklots published a book called 'The Hong Kong Countryside'. This was the natural history bible to the authors when they were growing up in Hong Kong. Large portions of the book was written whilst he was interned by the Japanese in Stanley Internment Camp between 1941 and 1945.

There is no doubt at all that tigers were regular visitors to Hong Kong during the first half of the century. One particular visit, however is rather more problematical. Herklots seemed unsure of what had actually happened: <sup>(1)</sup>

"During our internment at Stanley a remarkable story filtered into the camp that there was a tiger at large on Hong-Kong Island. Later it was reported to be on Stanley Peninsula. The guards got excited and it was risky walking about in the evening for an excited guard might fire at a prisoner mistaking him for a tiger! Soon pug marks were seen at the camp: I examined some myself but was by no means convinced. Then the



The Colony of Hong Kong



Stanley Peninsula  
on Hong Kong Island

story was spread that the tiger had been shot and finally there came into camp a Chinese or Japanese paper containing a photograph of the dead tiger. This photograph I saw. People said that it was a menagerie animal that had got loose; a likely story! It is strange how loth people are to believe that tigers do visit the Colony and occasionally swim the harbour and visit the island".

We are loth to appear judgemental, but it appears from the above passage that Herklots himself was not fully impressed with the truth of this episode. There are, however several other pieces of supportive evidence, and it seems almost certain, to paraphrase 'Alce' that 'someone killed something' and that the 'something' was a large Tiger. The exact provenance of this tiger is less certain. 'Thagorus' (1979) wrote<sup>(2)</sup>:

"During the war, a tiger was shot by a party of Japanese Militiamen near Stanley in May 1942. A Mr E.W. Bradbury, who was once a butcher with the Dairy Farm Company, was brought from the Stanley Internment camp to skin the animal, the meat from which subsequently provided a feast for members of the Hong Kong race club. The animal was three feet high, six feet long, weighed 240lbs and had a nineteen inch tail. The skin of the tiger was stuffed and mounted in the hall of Government House, from which it was subsequently transferred to Japan in 1944.

One theory about its presence on the island was that it had escaped from a menagerie during the Japanese invasion; another and more likely theory was that it had swum over from the mainland".

Although there are discrepancies between the two stories we shall avoid discussing them for the moment. Let us examine the supportive evidence for the claims. There is no doubt that a tiger is capable of swimming from the mainland to the island of Hong Kong, (or Lantau as well, as the 1915 beast is supposed to have done). As Guggisberg wrote in 1975:<sup>(3)</sup>

"(Tigers) can easily swim four or five miles"

Guggisberg also provides useful evidence to support the claims by Herklots and others that the regular visits by tigers to Hong Kong were a perfectly natural piece of behaviour on the part of an animal with a relatively large territorial range:<sup>(4)</sup>

"The extent of a tiger's range varies considerably according to habitat and availability of prey. Corbett knew a tigress which for four and a half

s years roamed over an area of 3885 square kilometres.

Kaplanov, who made a study of the Sikhote-Alin tigers and travelled hundreds of kilometres on skis following their tracks, found ten or twelve individuals within a region of 30,000 kilometres"...

A third account of the 1942 Stanley Tiger, which initially appearing to be valuable and exciting evidence in favour of the event actually casts some important doubts on its veracity. In 'Captive Years', their study of Hong Kong under Japanese occupation Birch and Cole (1982), describe conditions in Stanley Internment Camp, (now Stanley Prison). They quote a newspaper story from 'The Hong Kong News', an English language newspaper published by the occupying Japanese:<sup>(5)</sup>

"Fierce Tiger shot in Stanley Woods!

Successful Hong Kong police hunt in early morning.

Although for some years past, rumours had circulated that there were tigers roaming the Hong Kong hills, it was only yesterday morning that such was shown to be fact and the feat of shooting the first tiger on the island was accomplished by Nipponese gendarmes and Indian and Chinese police at the back of Stanley village. Early yesterday morning the lowing of wild beasts was heard by many residents in Stanley village and gendarmes and police and military set off fully armed to search the hills. The search party consisting of Nipponese gendarmes and Indian and Chinese policemen was headed by Lt. Colonel Hirabayashi. The party was divided into smaller groups and a net was spread around the woods. After going over the ground for some considerable time, one group of searchers came across the tigers lair. They immediately opened fire but despite all efforts and the use of big wire netting the beast succeeded in evading the hunters. Not discouraged by the failure of the first attempt, the Nipponese police continued their search and a bigger cordon was thrown around the whole area.

Apparently alarmed by the noise the tiger rushed about the forest for some time when it was again encountered by the police party. The police opened fire, and shots from an Indian policeman this time found their mark, causing the tiger to halt. The Indian fired three shots, hitting the tiger in the head, left shoulder and lungs".

This is, presumably the newspaper article to which

Herklots refers, although, of course, Herklots refers to a 'Chinese or Japanese', publication, inferring that the article might have been in Chinese or Japanese writing. This article, was of course, in English. Birch and Cole's book also includes a photograph of the dead beast, credited to 'Lady May Ride', (see below right), which is captioned:

*"The famous Stanley Tiger which was shot by the guards in 1942. This appears to be the only unofficial photograph taken by an inmate at Stanley".*<sup>(6)</sup>

The first thing that has to be ascertained is the identity of Lady May Ride. The only 'Ride', referred to in the text was Colonel Ride, the leader of the British Army Aid Group, the organisation which helped British Servicemen and other internees escape. Whether or not 'Lady May', is/was the wife of the gallant Colonel, it is unclear whether she is the copyright owner or if she indeed was the photographer.

If this is the photograph from the Japanese newspaper, referred to by Herklots, why was it taken by an internee, whoever he or she was? Collaborating with the enemy to the extent of becoming an unofficial press photographer for a newspaper full of propaganda, which was published by the occupying would have been considered almost treasonable? If this isn't the photograph, then it means that there is/was at least one other photograph purporting to be of the Stanley Tiger in existence! Despite the claims that this is an 'unofficial' photograph, it is obviously posed and well composed. The stringency of Japanese security arrangements, especially earlier on in the War, is clearly documented over again in this book. Violence, torture and even executions were relatively commonplace for what the Japanese considered to be infringements of security. If, indeed it was taken by an internee and not by a Japanese Press Photographer, then the evidence suggests that it was done so with the connivance, tacit, or overt of the Japanese Military.

The head of the creature is being supported by a man who appears to be an Indian, presumably the policeman that shot it. If the man in the picture is a guard/policeman, as seems probable, he was certainly aware that he was being photographed. He is even smiling for the camera! It seems

almost impossible that the Japanese Security Forces could not have been aware of the photograph.

Two, seeming anomalies can be cleared up immediately. The guards/policemen are referred to as Indians and Formosans. Formosa (TAIWAN), was at the time a Japanese Colony. And although as Oliver Lindsay wrote:<sup>(7)</sup>

*"The Japanese put great pressure on the Indians to turn traitor against Britain. the vast majority remained loyal".*

This implies that some, including, presumably, the Indian man who is seen clutching the head of the Stanley Tiger, did not.



**Editor's Note:** If this picture is genuine it was taken in 1942 and is therefore, now, out of copyright

Lindsay continues: <sup>(8)</sup>

*"The guards were later Formosan (Taiwanese) and were pettily officious and quick to take offence".*

There is, however, another paradox. There may have been three thousand internees but it seems almost impossible that Herklots, who was after all Hong Kong's leading naturalist and the editor of the Hong Kong Naturalist magazine, and a minor celebrity in his own right, would not have known about the tiger incident from more than hearsay and rumours. Dr Herklots was important enough to be put in charge of revitalising the post war fishing industry for the region, in a successful attempt to restore food stocks as quickly as possible. Welsh (1993), gives more details of this affair and implies that Herklots, whom he describes, <sup>(9)</sup> as a 'Biologist just released from Stanley Internment Camp' was a person of considerable importance. Even if he had not been taken to view the carcass in person, it seems certain that the photographer, who did see the carcass would have spoken to Herklots about it!

We have examined enough evidence from Herklots to suggest that he is a reliable and indeed an expert witness. His mind may have been vague about minor details, but surely an event as important to the sum total knowledge of the fauna of Hong Kong as this would have remained fresh in his mind. As fortune tells, the present authors are often accused of paranoid conspiracy theorising, but in this case, something doesn't add up!

The mounted skin was taken to a place of honour in the newly restored Government House and eventually to Tokyo as a trophy of war. The occupying army were inordinately proud of their trophy! At the time the Hong Kong News reported: <sup>(10)</sup>

*"A party of press-men, invited to Stanley to see the tiger yesterday morning found it weighed about 240 lbs and measured three foot high, 73 inches long with a tail of 90 inches. According to the Chinese, the appearance of a tiger is an omen of the approach of a period of prosperity".*

It seems likely that the invading Japanese were determined to extract the maximum of publicity from the event by exploiting local folk beliefs. Near the end of the war when it was obvious that they would lose they were still fermenting Chinese Nationalist feelings, often through the use of cultural motifs, and sometimes by recruiting collaborators, in an attempt to ensure that at least

the British would no longer be in power in Hong Kong. They, as history has proven, failed, but what seems almost certain is that forty years later when Birch and Cole were researching the incident for their book someone, either wittingly or unwittingly, was not telling the whole truth!

Herklots was not the only person to report rumours that the animal had in fact escaped from Captivity. Writing in 1978 Lindsay said firmly that "it had escaped from a circus during the invasion", <sup>(11)</sup> and had therefore only been on the loose for five months. It would be interesting to know whether he had any further evidence to support this supposition and was not just sharing in the view, so scorned by Herklots, that bona fide wild tigers never actually visited Hong Kong.

One is left to speculate that the 1942 Stanley Tiger may not be a genuine example of a rare animal visiting the Colony. If it was in fact an animal brought in from somewhere else and released so that it could be killed as a potent piece of psychological warfare then the incident is something far rarer and far more interesting to the fortaean and to the student of military history!

The confusion surrounding this unfortunate beast does not end here, however.

A 1955 book by V.R.Burkhardt, describes the interior of the temple of the Queen of Heaven at Stanley: <sup>(12)</sup>

*"A wooden tiger, about to spring, is a notorious enemy of evil spirits, and it is reinforced by a skin of the real beast hanging on the wall, whose resistance to moths has not been commensurate with his influence over the powers of darkness. This was the gift of an individual who attributed his escape from demoniac possession to the intervention of the image".*

Jules Brown and Helen Lee (1993) <sup>(13)</sup> also mention the Tin Hau Temple, giving the additional information that it was built in 1767, and is therefore comparatively ancient by Hong Kong standards. They, too mention the tiger skin, and they claim that it was the skin of an animal that 'got his at the hands of an Indian Policeman in 1942', which presumably refers to the animal discussed above. (They also point out that whereas the name 'Stanley' serves to commemorate a nineteenth century Colonial Secretary, its Chinese name Chek Chue means lair of robbers or cheats, after the pirates who used the village as a base).

It would be tempting to theorise that this sk n is

the pelt of the Stanley Tiger, finally come to rest in a spiritual environment after its theoretical use as a weapon of psychological warfare, but it is highly unlikely, especially as it seems that Burkhardt was only stationed in the colony between 1936 and 1939, three years before the unfortunate beast met its ignominious end at the hands of an un-named Indian policeman.

Both the references cited above which claim that the tiger pelt in the temple is that of the Stanley tiger, are therefore wrong!

A final observation is that it is interesting to note that Chang T'ien Shih, the Master of Heaven, and presumably the husband of the Queen to whom the temple at Stanley is dedicated is said to ride a tiger instead of a horse as his steed as he brandishes his demon vanquishing sword<sup>(14)</sup>.

This is just one bizarre incident of many in our files. Our forthcoming book will include as many more as we can discover, and will prove not only that those who scoff at the concept of 'mystery animals' in Hong Kong, are completely wrong, but that Heuvelmans, again was right when he claimed that 'There are lost worlds everywhere'.<sup>(15)</sup>

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## ODD by Alison Downes ORNITHOLOGY

The artist formerly known as the Nervous Twitcher.

In August 1995, it was reported that a new species of nightjar had been discovered in Ethiopia. Dr Roger Stafford found the wing of a dead, squashed bird on the road one night in 1990, whilst on an expedition to Nechisar Plain. It has taken five years to establish what kind of bird it was. Now, experts are keen to find a live specimen. *Daily Telegraph 16.8.95*

From Hong Kong comes news of a rare Thick Billed Pigeon (*Trean cumrosta*). Unfortunately it was found dead after hitting a fence at full speed. Coincidentally, several years earlier another specimen was found dead at almost exactly the same spot!

The skin of the first specimen is now in the British Museum. *Porcupine! March 1996 #14.*

People on the lookout for flocks of free flying parrot likes in Britain may well see the flock of Patagonian Conures (hello Socrates!) which live over Surrey and West Sussex.

These, however, belong to bird keeper Paul Bailey of Oakland Park farm, Surrey. They escaped one day about nine years ago by chewing through the aviary wire, but returned the following night to roost. Since then they have lived free, flying around the villages and countryside by day, and returning 'home' each night. This just goes to show how easily foreign 'exotics' can live in our countryside. *Cage and Aviary Birds March 9 1996.*

As part of our new project about rare, vagrant and out of place birds, would all readers who would like to be involved send me photocopies of their county bird reports, and any birdwatching notes from their local newspapers. We would also be interested in news of any rare or unusual animals seen in pet shops or for sale privately. Thanks AD.

# OBITUARY: MARTIN "MORT" BROWN 1969-96

I didn't know Martin very well. He was just an anonymous name on a list of subscribers until the tragic death of our previous cartoonist. He offered to become our cartoonist, sent us some funny drawings that made me laugh, and didn't want paying. All the criteria were there and we gave him the job.

He telephoned occasionally and we would have long telephone conversations about Science Fiction, rock music, magick, and, oh yes, cryptozoology. He was a lake monster buff, and furthermore one with a wicked sense of humour as shown by his article in A&M8. What we didn't know was that for many years he had suffered from a depressive illness, and that in February this year he was to take his own life. His father telephoned me to tell us the news and to say that 'Mort' had left us his entire collection of books and papers on cryptozoology. I was touched, but immensely sad. A part of my life, and moreover, one that I valued, had been taken away. JD

A few weeks before he died he sent us this letter for publication. We print it as a tribute to a very talented man:

*"Regarding Grover S.Krantz's article 'On Collecting a Cryptid' and to a lesser extent my own article on proof:*

*I'm against collecting a specimen. I don't think that it's necessary to say "far more likely producing a dead body", only dead will do. I should imagine that its very hard to dissect something when it can still breathe. I also expect that it would be unrealistic to expect the scientists to be satisfied with one dead body. There would be too much competition and always one more thing to check. The very best scenario we could expect would be live capture and live study, but how long would it take to get things right?*

*The late Gerald Durrell seems to have lost a great many specimens trying to keep them alive in captivity and HE cared about animals. The problem with both these approaches is the 'Cans in the Fridge' problem: "I'll just have one more..." before you know where you are there's no beer*

*left!*

*The question raised in my mind is this: If we care about Unknown Animals, should we want to prove their existence at all? Humanity's track record seems to suggest that the future for any unknown proven to exist is black in the extreme. I don't think that it would be exaggerated to suggest that in the case of a cryptid with a limited range which is easily accessible, even relatively so, discovery would very soon lead to extinction! If science didn't finish them off the chances are that the rest of us, either by accident or design, probably would.*

Regards,

Mort, England".

I had known Martin for over three years when he became a customer of Midnight Books in early 1993. He mainly bought material on Cryptozoology, but showed an interest in most mysteries. I found him articulate, open minded, intelligent and of great humour in our many telephone conversations. He was someone who loved to talk on a diverse range of subjects, and we would enjoyably work our way through a whole spectrum of topics in the course of a lengthy telephone conversation.

I remember well his first 'phone call to me which lasted well over two hours! Martin was a man of Principle too. If he felt he was being wronged he wouldn't let up until justice had been done. Shortly before his death he had finally won a five year battle with TIME-LIFE over some video material he was buying from them. I admired him for that.

He did promise to visit me last year but circumstances prevented him from doing so. It would have been nice to have met him - to have put a face to the voice. He was one of those rare kindred spirits one encounters now and then. I will miss his calls greatly and it will be strange not to speak to him again.

I do hope that wherever he is now he has one or two mysteries to solve - he'll be at home then!

Stephen Shipp,  
Midnight Books,  
Sidmouth.

## H E L P !

In issue 4 of this magazine we printed an appeal from Newsfile Editor Jan Williams for more information about two mysterious corpses washed up on an Essex beach. We received this reply last year, we think from a correspondent in Germany or France, but it became separated from the letter, and we cannot remember who sent it in. If you recognise the piece below, please contact the Editor!

*"As already mentioned, in November of 1953, nearly a hundred years (after the mysterious footprints had been found on the Devon coast) a strange creature was washed ashore on the coast of the British Canvey Islands (sic). Nobody had ever seen anything like it. The finder covered the 80cm (33 inch) large creature, which had thick, red-brown skin and a deformed head with protruding eyes with seaweed and notified the local authorities.*

*The local authorities did not know what to think of the creature and asked the government in London for assistance. Two famous biologists arrived in Canvey. They examined, measured, and photographed the unidentified creature and announced that it was not related to or showed any resemblance to known animals.*

*It probably came out of the ocean. Its extremities allowed both bowed and/or erect movements. This is all that is known, since the two scientists decided to get rid of the mystery once and forever. They had the creature burned and refused any official comment.*

*Their attempt to conceal details about the creature would have been more successful if it wasn't for another cadaver being found on August 11th the next year.*

*Reverend Joseph Overs literally stumbled over it when he went for a walk on the beach not far from where the first creature had been found. The thing was lying in a little pool left from the last tide. The priest called the police. Bobbys carried the creature on land (sic). Again experts were called. This time, the investigation was done much more thoroughly. Again, no official classification of the creature was done.*

*The animal (?) was nearly twice the size of its predecessor, weighed around 25 lbs, and was in a good condition. It had two large eyes, nostrils, a*

*mouth with strong, sharp teeth, and gills. Instead of the scales which would be expected, it had pink skin, resembling the colour of a healthy pig. Just like its predecessor it stood on two short legs which ended in U shaped soles. Every other information was treated with secrecy"...*

We do not wish to comment until we have identified the source of the above passage, so watch this space! Any further information would be gratefully appreciated.

## Recent Bigfoot Research

from Bill Green of the N.E. Bigfoot Centre.

\* Pocetello, Iowa. A woman claimed she encountered a 7-8 foot tall, brownish grey bigfoot-type creature standing in her back-yard watching her. This sighting took place three years ago this March.

\* A friend of mine claimed that he found fifteen inch long footprints in the snow on South Mountain near a reservoir in Bristol, Connecticut during the winter of 1994/5.

## Green Kitten Update

by Eric Sorenson.

The latest news about Miss Greeny, the Danish green cat is both good and bad. The colour has, according to an article in the Danish newspaper, 'Ekstrabladet', Feb 3rd 1996, faded almost away, meaning that sadly, the green was probably of a secondary nature Good news for the cat, though, because it was obviously fed up with being on exhibition, photographed and being handled endlessly. It can now concentrate on cat business.

The hair sample was confirmed as being genuinely green by the laboratory, so the risk of a clever hoax must be considered to be minimal. The presence of copper was not mentioned. Strangely, things tend to pop up together, with the help of the Editor, ('Gee Thanks Eric' JD). It seems that the green dog described by Richard Muirhead (A&M8) was explained as being Utera Verdi - greening in its mothers womb. This sounds a very good hypothesis to me, and a good explanation for the loss of colour with subsequent hair growth. Anyway, the cat's days as a celebrity, getting attention from the BBC, Readers Digest, Associated press, and the cat fanciers' home page on the Internet, where it created a raging success, are over. The family, her owners, are not dissatisfied. They were being accused of money-making, (all they got were three bottles of wine from a museum), and were getting strange letters and telephone calls. An American doctor (?) claimed to have three patients with green hair, a German wanted the cat for a peace crusade etc...

But the cat is not green anymore. Clever Cat!

# LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

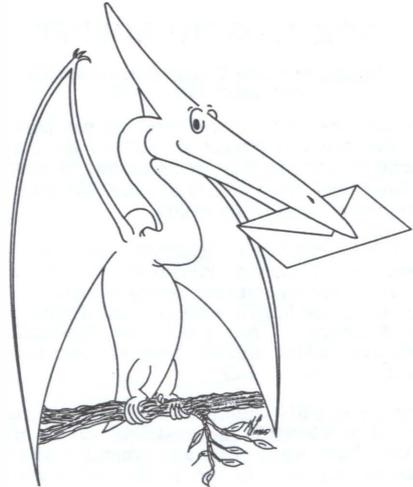
## 'THE OWLMAN STRIKES BACK'

Dear Jon,

Forget about the whole *thing*? Are you kidding? For now I'll die fighting. The objections to the reality of 'owlman' recently brought up in your letters are hard to dismiss at all convincingly but at the same time, to my mind, they are ridiculous. We have some very big problems here. Owlman looks like a very large owl (hey, it's not called owlman for *nothing* guys?), I've seen it and those who object haven't. Janet Bord wrote of her suspicions that the creature, despite my protestations was an owl. The only way to ever be sure that you have seen an image as recorded in your mind is to see that image again, and, as I don't think (and hope it likely that I will ever see the creature again, I do remain sceptical of my own conscience. Owls tend not to grow to more than four feet in height, nor would sightings of them result in the construction of exactly the same mental image, as drawn independently by witnesses including myself. That, for me, is the biggest problem. If I see an owl I draw an owl, not the same quasi-bird humanoid that teenage girls and Doc Shiels were drawing back in the late 'seventies.

John Heath-Stubbs clearly did not read my account: if he did he considers me either a liar or a pathetic observer. 'The five feet given by the observer is wrong' ?????!!! Excuse me, but trying to say that 'owlman cannot be five foot tall because eagle owls do not exceed two feet', is an absurd approach to the data, and a poor attempt to dismiss it. I have decided that to prove to myself, if no-one else, that the animal I saw was considerably bigger than an eagle owl, I need to find the actual tree in which my sighting occurred. Photos, when obtained, will be published.

John Heath-Stubbs notes it is characteristic of owls that two toes point forward while 'the outer toe' is reversed. Actually the 'inner toe' (digit 1), is reversed too. This could be the case in owlman, but the large, bulky, pincer feet (again remarked upon independently by



witnesses), don't remind me one bit of an owl's slim feet. Look at my drawings for god's sake.

'Gavin',  
Somewhere.

## AUSTRALOPITHECINES AHOY!

Dear Jonathan.

... regarding a communication of Darren Naish, Southampton (A&M7), about my article 'Mysterious Hominoids of Africa' (A&M6), would you be very kind and publish this short reply:

As I submitted my manuscript to Jonathan Downes, the corrigendum to 'Australopithecus ramidus, a new species of early hominid' was not yet published (Nature Vol. 375:88, 4.May 1995). I fully agree the generic separation from Australopithecus. Effectively Ardipithecus (not 'Aldipithecus!'), lacked some specialised features known from the Australopithecus lineages, regarding is thin molar enamel, and the large canines. Ardipithecus ramidus seems to have been more closely related to Pan (chimps), as I already emphasised in my paper in A&M6.

Keep up your good work for Fortean Zoology,  
Best wishes,

Francois de Sarre.

## NORTH OF THE BORDER

Musings on Fortean Zoology from our Scottish correspondent Tom Anderson.

The institute of Terrestrial Ecology has launched an other research project to discover the reasons behind its Scottish increase as against its southern decline. They cite roadkills as a possible source of information using DNA testing.

Re DNA. Aberdeen University claim to have found the Common Pipistrelle population to consist of two separate but closely related species. *(Did this come before, after or coincidentally with the discovery of two species of Pipistrelle in Yorkshire making different sounds? Are there in fact threespecies? Ed)*

Perusing an early volume of this worthy journal. I noticed an interest in the mustelidae on the behalf of the editor. Some years ago, when I worked for Marconi, we used to service the radars and the echo-sounders of the fishing fleet. In those days the west coast boats sa led round into Aberdeen to land their catch. This caused great anguish and angst among our engineers as wild mink infested these boats and led to much tucking of trousers into socks. A sort of Scottish version of the Yorkshire ferret olympics!

Yesterday, driving from Tomintoul to Braemar across moorland I was buzzed by red grouse. Half a dozen males flew straight at the car, swerving at the last second, only a metre or so away. They then settled on the road and commenced displaying to the females, usin the tarmac as a 'leck'. I hadn't realised they were so aggressive. Mind you, bearing in mind the recent 'death plunge' perpetrated, by a grouse on ~~the~~ YOUR Monarch (*REALLY, Thomas! ... Your friendly Editor who approves of the Act of Union, but then he's English*), I'm starting to consider the possibility of role reversal on the moors. I quite like the idea of the Aristocracy being thinned out by 'death wish' grouse catching them in the plus fours when least expected. Add to that the likely future escapees from proliferating ostrich farms, and green wellies and Range Rovers could soon become a folk memory!

Yours still ducking and weaving,

Tom Anderson,  
Aberdeen.

## MORE IS NESS

Dear A&M,

I wonder if it is still possible to comment on something written in issue five. Mr Leadbetter commented on some of the things I wrote in reaction to his earlier article. He seems to wonder why I assemble a collection of Loch Ness reports if I can not be sure that the stories from which they come are true or fact. My answer is this: You've got to start somewhere when you want to study a thing like the case for the Loch Ness phenomena. One of the most important ingredients in this case are the sightings. The sightings come from various sources. Mr Leadbetter should know this as he stated thathe considers himself familiar with the vast majority of Loch Ness sightings. He must therefore be familiar with the fact that a lot of books and other material on the Loch Ness Monster state the same sightings but not always the same data. Sometimes you have to deal with additional information on a sighting and other times you have to deal with completely different information concerning the same sighting. This is not always due to a messed up witness but very often to a messed up author who has difficulty in copying material from earlier sources, like other books. I agree with Mr Leadbetter that this makes the sightings liable to being unrel able. By putting the different versions together in one collection I hope to get a clearer view into these sightings and try to take out of this collection the data 'most likely to be reliable'. in order to make analyses on various details from this data. A lot of the sightings are indeed unverifiable and could be flawed but that does not mean that they cannot be used for study.

Even recent sightings which can be verified could be flawed, so for me there is no reason not to look at the older sightings. If bein verifiable, or 'may be subject to being flawed' were the main criteria in this study for me, then there would be no use to study the Loch Ness phenomena at all, but I agree with Mr Leadbetter that you have to keep these criteria in mind; and so does he when he states that sturgeon of 20 foot or more were common in the Danube and the Volga during the 19th Century. This statement looks unverifiable and could be highly flawed, or did he find a witness? I heard that people in the USSR sometimes reach a great age, but I cannot verify this, and this to might be flawed information.

Yours faithfully,  
M. 't Mannetje  
The Netherlands.

## THE LOCH NESS SOCIETY

We recently received the following press release:

*"Following the recent release of the Hollywood film 'Loch Ness', a new society has been formed to further investigate and conserve Loch Ness itself and the 'Nessie' mystery.*

*The new society aims to bring together all the thousands of people who visit and share an interest in the Loch. It intends to launch further and more up to date techniques in the search to solve the mystery of the monster. It will also involve itself in the many environmental and conservation issues around the shores of Loch Ness.*

*There will be an annual expedition to the Loch in the desire to re-ignite the spirit of the old Loch Ness Investigation Bureau expeditions of the 60's and 70's. In those days thousands of people from all ages and backgrounds took part in camera watches, boat surveillance and collating the many eye witness reports.*

*This new Society has been formed by Richard A Carter and Ian Kelloway who among many others have been interested in the Loch and its mysteries for many years. They have become aware of the lack of one organisation to which people can relate and partake in organised activity and which can update current information. It is a shame that there has been less and less promotion of Loch Ness, which attracts millions of visitors each year, and it is our intention to reverse that trend".*

You can contact the Loch Ness  
Society at:

34 Weston Crescent,  
Horfield Common,  
Bristol  
BS7 8UT

## FUTURE PLANS FOR THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY

The Centre for Fortean Zoology has now been in existence for over four years, and we have been active for the last two and a half. The time has come to try and move onto a higher plane.

We have, as regular readers will know, an active and enthusiastic team of regional and national representatives. As of the first of April, Alison Downes is taking over the coordination of this team of enthusiasts and she will be actively organising several new areas of research.

Starting this summer, we shall be producing an irregular series of 'ANIMALS & MEN SUPPLEMENTS'. The first two will cover exotic pets, (their husbandry, taxonomy and potential threat to the UK Ecosystem) and Vagrant Birds (A twitcher's delight - a list of every record of an aberrant bird during the previous twelve months, together with ornithological details, maps and as much other information as we can find).

The supplement series will be edited by Alison Downes.

We are working on a number of new and reissued publications as well. The first of our 'new wave' of products is now available:

*"Morgawr-the monster of  
Falmouth Bay"*  
by Anthony Mawnan-Peller.

*This booklet was originally published in 1976, but with the permission of the author, we have reissued it with a new introduction by Tony 'Doc' Shiels and an explanatory essay by Jonathan Downes. It costs £1.50 (plus 25p p&p) and is available from the editorial address.*

# BOOK REVIEWS

*'The Moron's Guide to the Paranormal'*  
by Jon D Inman (JD £3.99 32pp).

As an author who has worked hard on his three or four self published books, and a publisher who has worked hard for years to produce quality product at a reasonable price I find the elevation of what Frank Zappa once called *'A Tacky Little Pamphlet'* into a book quite offensive. My prices are not cheap, some of the second hand books we sell are quite expensive, it all depends on what I had to pay to get hold of them. This is nothing short of exorbitant.

The contents? It is one of those immensely sad tomes; a 'funny' book which singularly fails to amuse. Its mildly amusing in parts, tedious in others and veers towards blasphemy in one particularly annoying section.

It has only two thirds of the pages of an issue of *'Animals & Men'*, and costs twice the price. Buy it at your peril!

*'Mythical Beasts'* Edited by John Cherry  
(British Museum Publications 192pp  
£18.99).

Gloriously produced and as scholarly as one would have expected. This isn't chock full of revelations destined to take the 'crypto' world by storm, but it is a good solid primer on the subject which presents the available facts in a concise and pleasing manner.

This is not a book about cryptozoology, nor does it pretend to be. It covers historical matters to a far greater depth than I have seen before. It is probably the best book to be written on the subject of zoomythology since Peter Costello's *'The Magic Zoo'*, and should probably be read in conjunction with it.

It is a highly pleasing book to read from an aesthetic point of view, and beautifully laid out and designed.

The chapter on the Sphinx is particularly good, presenting, as it does a wealth of information that has not to my knowledge been gathered together in the same place before. Excellent!

*'Hong Kong's Wild Places - an environmental exploration'* by Edward Stokes (OUP 196pp £25.00).

This lavishly illustrated book presents many of the reasons why Hong Kong is rapidly becoming of greater interest to the forteen zoologist than most other places (except possibly New Guinea and Vu Quang). Stokes writes in a clear and happy style, and explains how although like the rest of southern China Hong Kong was practically deforested by the time that the British arrived in 1841, but how a concerted programme of re-forestation starting in about 1904 started to restore the landscape to the way it would have been three or four hundred years ago.

The next twist in the tale happened when the Japanese invaded in 1941, and over the next four years cut down much of the carefully restored forest as firewood. Stokes shows how the process started again in 1946, and how, with the exodus of people from the villages of the New Territories, the traditional *feng shui* woods have spread, so now areas which even when your editor knew them in the late 1960's were barren rocks and grassland, are now dense forest. What Stokes has not discussed is the way that the original fauna is returning, and some totally new beasts are arriving to populate these new forests, but that is, after all what the book currently being written by your editor and Richard Muirhead is all about, so it is probably a good thing at least as far as we are concerned!

This is an excellent book and moreover one which we recommend wholeheartedly to anyone with even the most passing interest in the orient, its wild places, and what is probably the most forteen place on earth. Even if you just buy it for the photographs, (which are outstanding) it is, by anyone's standards, worth the money!

**PERIODICAL REVIEWS**

We now exchange with so many publications that only those magazines received those magazines who have sent us material within the previous three months will be reviewed each issue.

**CRYPTOZOOLOGY AND ZOOMYTHOLOGY**

**THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CRYPTOZOOLOGY CLUB NEWSLETTER**, 3773 West 18th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. V6S 1B3. Excellent and well put together, and they are now on the Internet as well! Latest issue features Loch Ness, the monster of Lake Tanganika and much more

**CRYPTOZOOLOGIA**, Association Belge d'Etude et de Protection des Animaux Rares, Square des Latins 49/4, 1050 Bruxelles. Belgium. A French language magazine published by the Belgian society for Cryptozoology.

**BIGFOOT RECORD**, Bill Green, NE Bigfoot Centre, 21 Benham St. #F, Bristol. CT 06010. USA Round up of BHM News from the N.E. USA

**EXOTIC ZOOLOGY**, Matthew Bille, 3405 Windjammer Drive, Colorado Springs. CO 80920. USA. Excellent newsletter on new and rediscovered species.

**FORTEAN**

**TEMS NEWS**, 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2QY. An entertaining collection of odds and sods and generally weird stuff. A magazine I always enjoy reading. Recommended.

**FOAFTALE NEWS. MUN Folklore & Language Archive**, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1B 3XB Canada. Scholarly magazine about folklore, and the mechanics of how it becomes assimilated into societies. Highly recommended.

**THE ANOMALIST**, available in the UK from this office. Excellent bi-annual book about anomalous phenomena, cryptozoology and general forteana. Highly recommended.

**ZOOLOGY**

**SOUTH WEST HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY**, Frank Gibbons, Acanthus, 59 St Marychurch Road, Torquay, Devon. Entertaining and informative newsletter from a thriving organisation.

**BIPEDIA**, Francois de Sartt, CERBI, 6, Avenue George V, 06000 Nice, France. Interesting journal about the theory of Initial Bipedalism.

**PORTSMOUTH REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN SOCIETY**, M.Jones, 7 Haslemere Rd., Southsea, Hants. Erudite and witty magazine from another excellent society.

**MILTON KEYNES HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY**, 15 Esk Way, Bletchley, Milton Keynes. Fascinating reptilian facts and hints on husbandry. Recommended.

**MAINLY ABOUT ANIMALS**, 13 Pound Place, Shalford, Guildford, Surrey. GU4 8HH. A zoological magazine of the sort most of us feared was lost forever.

**ESSEX REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS SOCIETY**, 6 Chestnut Way, Tiptree, Colchester. Essex. CO5 0NX. Insightful and well researched look at Reptiles and Amphibians.

**PORCUPINE!** c/o Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre. HKU. Lam Kam Road, Yueng Long, New Territories, Hong Kong. Wonderful newsletter about rare and newly discovered species in the territory of Hong Kong. I cannot praise this magazine highly enough.

**FRINGE SCIENCE**

**NEXUS** 55 Queens Rd. E. Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1BG. Intelligent look at the fringes of science. Well put together. Very impressive.

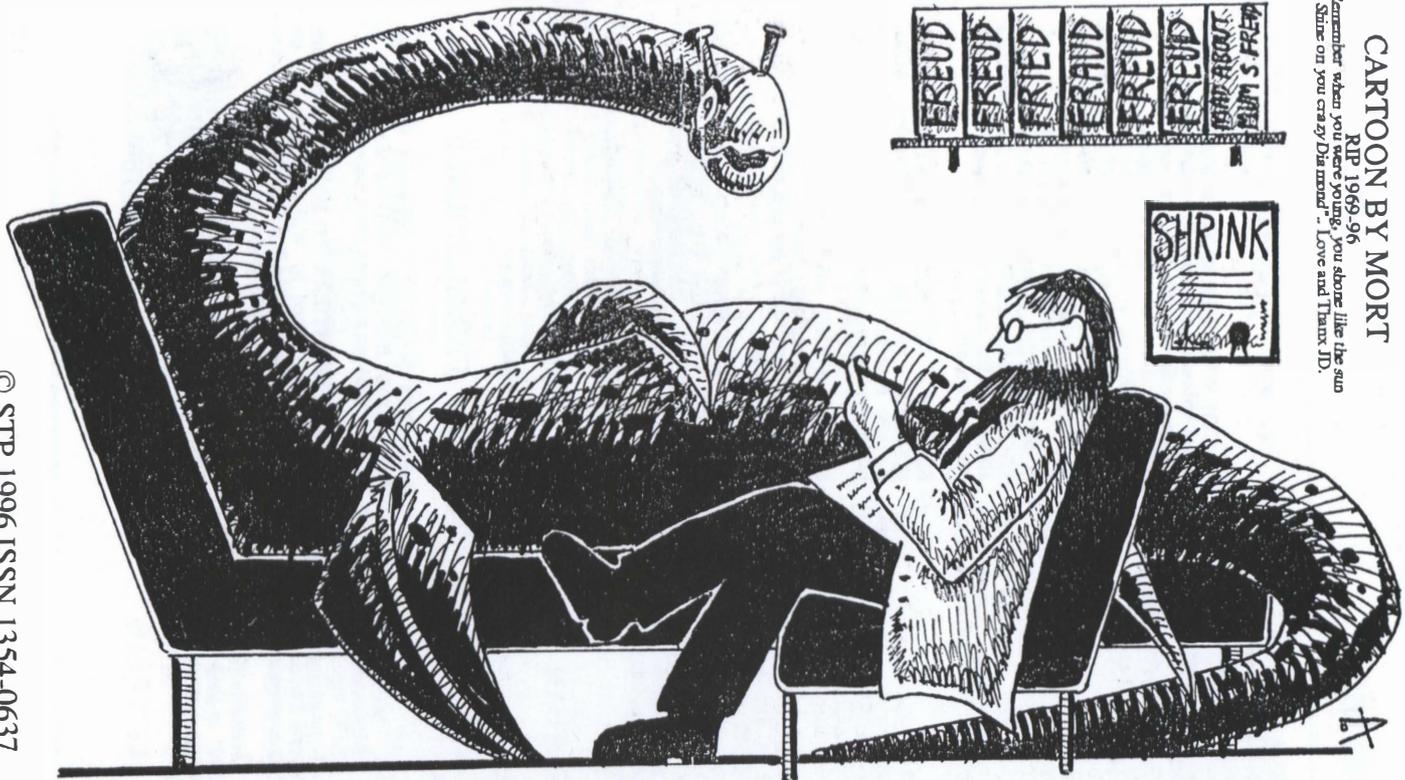
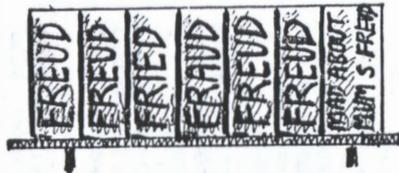
**SCIENCE FRONTIERS**, P.O. Box 107, Glen Arm, MD21057. Produced by William Corliss, of the Sourcebook Project, this is a marvellous pot pourri of fringe science information.

**THE EDITORIAL TEAM APOLOGISE TO THE EDITORS OF THE MAGAZINES NOT LISTED ABOVE FOR OUR CHANGE IN POLICY, BUT SEVERE LACK OF SPACE PRECLUDES US HAVING THREE PAGES OF MAG-LISTINGS**

CARTOON BY MORT

Remember when you were young, you stare like the sun  
Shine on your crazy Da mad? Love and Thank U.

RIP 1969-96



SO YOU SEE DOCTOR, IT'S A RECURRING IDENTITY CRISIS. FIRST I THOUGHT I WAS A LOG, THEN A MAT OF DELAYING VEGETABLE MATTER, A BIRD, A SEAL, AN OTTER, A DEER, A SUBMARINE, A WAVE, A STURGEON AND NOW I THINK I'M A PLASTICINE MODEL.....