

July 1974

## Apology

I am sorry this Nessletter is a little late, two factors have caused this, first, my wife Doris spent some time in hospital during June, where she presented us with a lovely baby daughter. Then we went on holiday (to make some of you green with envy) to Loch Ness itself.

## Loch Ness in the News.

The Loch has had wide press coverage over the past few weeks, not only Scots and English papers but in magazine articles too: 'Figaro' and in the American magazine 'Oui', of May 1974.

To take the last first, it provides a humorous account of the Japanese expedition, or non-expedition. It also mentions Frank Searle and his long vigil, but voices doubts as to the credibility of his pictures.

Then on to Bob Rines and the Academy of Applied Sciences underwater efforts, and the results obtained so far.

The article in the 'Figaro' is also concerned with the Japanese expedition, and why it failed. A catalogue of what a successful expedition should not do, in fact.

The Peoples Journal 13th April had an article about Loch Ness because it was reviewing Peter Costello's book.

The Glasgow Herald 2nd July did a piece about Frank Searle, describing his five year vigil and how he spends six hours in the morning watching and then another six in the evening, and how he is continuing to watch because the photographs he has are not conclusive.

## Bob Rines and the Academy Team.

The latest news I have about Bob is encouraging, he has bought a cottage by Tychat House to use as his headquarters, which has a marvellous view over Urquhart Bay. He was at the loch in early July but a fault in the sonar computer which controls the automatic triggering device delayed the setting up of this new equipment. It has had to be taken back to America for further adjustment, Bob hopes to be back in September. It is intended to use two 35mm underwater cameras linked to a powerful strobe light; in about

70ft of water, some 100 yds off Temple Pier. The sonar and triggering device will set off the cameras, and lights flashing every 8 seconds if any object larger than a predetermined size comes within range. If the gear works as it should it will improve on last years results, because when the 1973 sonar charts were examined it was found that something large had been within camera range on twelve occasions, but due to the lubrication solidifying in the very cold water, the cameras had not run.

I have been told that further computerised examination of the 1972 film frames is encouraging, but we must await conclusions.

#### Tim Dinsdales Ops

Tim has written to say that his 26th and 27th expeditions using his old boat 'Water Horse' on Loch Ness this summer - were not uneventful, but did not connect with Nessie directly. He was able to assist the Academy Team in July with sonar mapping work, and hopes to be back in late September, to test a new type of mini-hovercraft as a Monster hunting vehicle.

An 'Operations Newsletter' will be produced in due course covering his 1974 work.

#### Television

In June, Walker Productions an American television crew visited the Loch. They were filming for a documentary to be shown by CBS TV, and sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. It is to be about The Bigfoot, The Yeti and The Loch Ness Monster, the latter to be treated as the most probably real of the three. They shot footage of Bob Rines and his team plus Tim Dinsdale in his boat 'Water Horse' and Nick Mitchell in his hut, and the usual round of eye witnesses, and other attractions.

The programme which may eventually find its way here will probably be titled "The Monsters Who Will Not Die"

#### Sightings

I have news of three sightings, two I am not too sure about but the third seems to be entirely convincing.

First, published in the Daily Mirror of June 22nd headline One Two Three Nessies! Two young men who live in the vicinity of the Loch saw the monsters as they drove down the loch road. Douglas Stewart said "I noticed something black in the water but did not say anything; until George (Thomson) saw it too.

We watched it until it disappeared surrounded by huge ripples. Then about half a minute later it or another one appeared and moved off at great speed. "Adding" it was fantastic like a gigantic eel about 60ft long. "They went on to comment that they were sure there was another one further out in the Loch. So far I have been unable to contact either of the people involved to make more detailed enquiries.

In the Aberdeen Press & Journal of 5th July a busload of 30 are stated to have watched a long wake. They were at the Clansman Hotel and the driver Mr Douglas Neal said it was travelling about five times as fast as the trawler about 600 yds away. A house maid at the hotel said she saw several 'bits' sticking out of the water.

Then on June 20th, Mr G. Siegel who is first mate on Scot II, the British Waterways pleasure craft, saw Nessie while on the regular afternoon trip. He said "I sighted Nessie when on the wheel of the Scot II. One minute there was nothing on the surface then all of a sudden I saw a disturbance on the surface then a black cigar shape break surface. When Nessie first surfaced she was broadside onto me swimming north causing slight ripples of water. After about 200 yds she turned to the east facing the boat paused then slowly submerged causing another disturbance on the water. I was left speechless and shocked for seeing I did not believe in."

He put size at about 12ft and about 18 inches out of the water at the highest, smooth textured, black coloured, moving at about 3-4 M.P.H. The sighting was at 1530, seen between Tor Point and the old pier at Abriacian, the Loch was mirror calm with no wind or water disturbance.

I had the chance to speak to Mr Siegel when I was up at the Loch, and found him a very credible witness who until then had not believed in the monster, but he did tell me the previous Scot II captain, who is deceased, during his 35 years on the Loch reckoned to have seen the creatures ten times, but Mr Siegel always thought he was pulling his leg. When asked why no one else had seen anything he pointed out he was alone in the Wheel House and the extra height gave him the advantage over the passengers on deck, as the creature was 400 yds away. All in all this seems a very good sighting by a reliable witness with great experience of the Loch, and water conditions.

## Vacations

As already said we 'Hepples' have been to the Loch, not so much for a spell of intensive watching but as a family holiday, complete with children, parrot and the cat. We all go! Of course I spend as much time as I can within sight of the water with a camera to hand. We also get round to visit friends and hear the news, and gossip. This year we were up when Tony Blackburn did his show for 'Radio One', from the Lochside. It was the follow on to his Tell us your Nessie story series. He was first on the South shore road interviewing locals and visitors, starting with the head of the Inverness tourist board. He then moved towards Dores, causing quite a traffic jam wherever the B.B.C. van stopped. The weather was fairly good but the Loch surface had two to three foot waves. I later spoke to some of the people interviewed on the subject of publicity there was another stunt while we were visiting - posters inviting people to the Clansman hotel to see a life size model of Nessie, and have their photographs taken with it! The model was a bit of a disappointment but about the right size. I had a word with Peter Reno who had written the song "Loch Ness Nessie", and whose idea it was. He agreed the model was not quite what it should have been, pointing out the tail and neck were shorter because it made it easier to transport; and the head and face were like a ducks because "the kids like it". This was all a lot of harmless fun.

On Saturday 10th August Nick Mitchells book "The Loch Ness Story" was published. During the previous week, while we were at the Loch, the press reviewed it and seized upon the passage in which he places doubt on the validity of the photographs released by Frank Searle; and also gave Searle a lot of publicity denying this. One way and another quite a row has developed.

The book is a welcome addition to the literature on Nessie and the Loch, dealing with past history, then coming up to date. It has a chapter on land sightings (some not published before) and deals with the formation and work done by the L.N.P.I.B., and some of the independant monster hunters. There is a chapter on the underwater work using sonar; cameras, and so forth; and on the important results obtained by Bob Rines.

It was, we are told, to have been written by Constance Whyte M.B., B.S. as a sequel to her "More Than A Legend", but she declined the task, and it fell to Nick to write it. In my opinion he has done a very good job.

Bad News, Good News Department.

Bad news, on August 8th while staying with the Carys at Loch Ness, Ted Holiday had a very bad heart attack and was rushed off to Raigmore Hospital Inverness. Ted Holiday author of "The Great Orm of Loch Ness", and "The Dragon and The Disc" is a long standing monster hunter, and a familiar figure around the Loch, which he frequently visits.

The good news, after about two and a half weeks of treatment he has been discharged from hospital. He is going to stay with Holly Arnold for a little while before going home to Wales.

That is all for the Nessletter, if any of you have news, views, etc., let me have them. Also please remember to pass on the word about N.I.S. to any interested parties, new members and news always welcome.

Once more sorry for the delay.

Rip.