

Search '75

Early June saw Bob Rines, Academy of Applied Science, at the lochside preparing to continue the struggle to obtain more underwater photography of the monsters. It is a struggle for Loch Ness is not an easy or forgiving stretch of water to work on. He is being assisted by Tim Dinsdale, who is on his own 32nd expedition to the loch. The weather has been wet and windy, Bob reports, but they are readying the automatic sonar-strobe camera underwater station, and their newly acquired boat 'Hunter'. The camera will be installed on the slope of one of the deep channels of Temple Pier by divers as soon as it is ready. Bob and family are leaving the loch at the end of the first week in July, but hope to leave the equipment operating to be recovered in the autumn.

Meantime they are awaiting the next draft of the article on the computer enhancement of their previous underwater pictures of parts of one or more of the animals. It has taken a long time to get approval for the Jet Propulsion Laboratories of California Institute of Technology for the use of their equipment, also the right for their staff to publish the academics data, after the improving process.

I have also had word from Ike Blonder, Blonder Tongue Laboratories Inc. U.S.A., who is hoping to be at Loch Ness for the third week in July to try his monster call tape recorder experiment again. When this was done before it consisted of underwater microphones and loudspeakers linked to a tape recorder. Sounds being recorded and anything interesting being immediately replayed underwater in an attempt to get a response.

N.I.S. member Jean Berton (Mr). French, intends to be back to the Loch in early July. He was there from Saturday April 12th to Monday the 21st, he called in to see me on his way North as anyone is welcome to, he also sent me an account of his expedition. The weather was not too good but he did have some spells of warm sunshine, he moved around from place to place but spent most time at Strone Point overlooking Urquhart Bay. From here on his last day he saw a large commotion in the water, weather was calm and overcast when about 200 yds away the water seemed pushed upwards in a ring about 5/8 yds in diameter, it lasted 5 to 10 seconds, there was a much smaller disturbance close by at the same time. Nothing came to the surface and he looked for birds or anything else that may have caused the disturbance, and he is sure that it was not a salmon. Strange, not really helpfull, but a moment of excitement for Jean, which we all have from time to time while watching.

Another member, Michael Foxley, sent news of his move North. He is working at the Belford Hospital in Fort William and living on a croft at 4, Achaphibuil, near Fort William. He is intending to spend as much time at Loch Ness and Loch Morar as he can manage. His vehicles are a white Marcos sports car GST 11 and a LWB Land Rover truck CST 453D, members are invited to call in for a 'chat and a dram'.

More Monsters

Following the piece about 'Barmy', George Andrews wrote telling me he has just read 'Against the Wind' by Douglas Sutherland on life in Orkney. It was written about 10 years ago and it refers to various sightings of a similar creature in those waters over a period of about 150 years. Most interesting of these is a description by Inspector Cheyne of Kirkwell police of a creature washed up in 1941, presumably pretty well decomposed. Extracting from his description:-

"From head to tail 24ft 8 inches but must have been longer as part of head torn away and tail broken off." "Hair on body like coconut fibre."
"Head like a cow but flatter, eye sockets 3 inches in diameter."
"Neck triangular 10 feet long 2 feet round. Bone at base of neck like horse collar 4 feet thick." "Fin along back 2 feet 6 inches high 10 inches thick at base." "Four flippers with bone structure like hands 3 feet 8 inches long, at least a ton of flesh still on body." George goes on to say "I know it was war time, but perhaps there is a complete skeleton existing somewhere on the orkneys."

And now there is 'Pinky', John Pisano, U.S.A., sent me a cutting from the 'Sunday News' of June 8th 1975. It concerns a fishing trip on Florida's St. Johns River by Dorothy and Charles Abram, Brenda Langley, Ed St. John and Wallace McLean, no date given just referred to as a recent Saturday. They had been out some time when about 10 a.m. a storm threatened and they turned for shore, as they turned 'it' came into view about 20 feet from the boat. "His head was about the size, or maybe larger than a human head," Mrs Abram recalled. "He turned his head like you or I. He had little horns - well, they weren't very little - like a snail with little knobs on the end. He looked like a skeleton. He was real jagged-looking. On the side of his head were flaps. I guess some kind of gills, hanging down. About three feet of his neck was out of the water. His mouth was turned down at the edges and he had big dark, slanted eyes. And he was pink. Sort of the colour of boiled shrimp."

Brenda Langley had seen it two or three times earlier in the day but the others had told her it was just a fish jumping, it was not till it was so close that everyone saw it, it was there for about eight seconds, seemed very interested in them, not harmful, just ugly, and then just went under without a ripple, the water was very calm,

The Coast Guard, which is responsible for patrolling the river, said it had received no other reports about the monster. But Coast Guard assurances to the contrary, other people insist they have seen Pinky.

"One lady called me and said 20 years ago she and some other people had seen the same thing, and no one believed them," said Mrs Abram. "And a gentleman from Atlanta called me. He described almost exactly what we had seen, and said he had seen it before. Several other people have said the same thing."

I must thank John for this fascinating report which adds one more to the list of strange animals which need investigation.

Water Sports

The third Loch Ness sponsored swim had to be abandoned on Saturday 26th April because of extreme cold and high waves. The six girl team from Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh, who have won the first two races looked set to beat their previous best time of 13 hours 25 minutes for the 24 mile relay swim, but had to give up four miles from the end. Accompanied by a men's team from Salford Technical College, they entered the water at Fort Augustus at 6 a.m. the Salford team were forced to up after six hours with three of their team suffering cramp. The girls managed to carry on for another three hours before they too were beaten by the conditions. They were however presented with the sponsors Carlsberg Trophy, and still hope to have raised more than £1,000 in aid of cancer research.

On Saturday 17th May Mr. George Parsonage, an art teacher from Glasgow, had ideal weather conditions for his record breaking row of the length of Loch Ness. He set out from Fort Augustus in his 27ft scull, which only weighs 35 pounds, and completed the row in 2 hours 43 minutes 34.1 seconds, beating the existing record of 4 hours 11 minutes set up by a four man crew in 1969. This was also a sponsored event and he hopes to have raised about £800, to be shared between the Multiple Sclerosis Fund and a minibus for his school.

Angling, there have been some good salmon taken so far this season, late April saw a Mr. Clark at the Fort Augustus end get two, scaling 20lbs and 10 lbs. He was one among several with good fish, and the milder weather brought the trout into better taking mood. Early June found the water so low that salmon were seen in the canal locks in their effort to travel westwards. Also they were seen to have U.D.N. the first seen for many weeks.

Odds

There is a new postbus service serving Grottaig and Culnackirk areas. this is the road "over the hill" from the old L.N.I. site at Achnahannet, running from Lewiston parallel to the main road coming to more or less dead end at Grottaig. The Post Office will use a passenger carrying Landrover to deliver mail and carry people.

A new cruising venture was started in May when a 48ft cruiser was launched at Muirtown Lock. The Jacobite Cruises Ltd. intend to have four boats cruising Loch Ness and the Caledonian Canal by mid-July. The largest one being a twin deck craft seating 70 passengers.

Monster hunters are linked with the above along with the rowing and other things in a letter of complaint to the local paper by a local fisherman, who does not like the idea of having 'his' loch spoilt. What can one say to that?

Once more that's it for this month, thank you to those those that have sent pieces to me, please remember news views are always needed YOU are N.I.S.

RIP