

Holidays '75

We, the Hepple family, spent our holidays from July 26th to August 9th in a caravan on the shores of Loch Ness. The weather was good but the wind caused fairly large waves, which made poor watching conditions during the first four days, but it was warm. Then, very high pressure moved in bringing some of the hottest days I have known at the Loch, and of course beautiful calm water. I spent two or three hours in a canoe most mornings from dawn to breakfast. This was truly a magnificent experience, but I do not think it is practical method of hunting because it brings your horizon so close, and the difficulty of photography from an unstable platform is obvious; also, you have very little space in the cockpit for the stowing of binoculars, camera, and other odds and ends. But from the 'joy of living' point of view it is unbeatable; to paddle slowly and silently out into the centre of the Loch as the sun tips the hills above Dores and floods the calm surface with golden light, is a never to be forgotten experience.

I tried some baiting experiments. A concoction of fishfood and other materials tied in a muslin bag, and hung 60 feet below the canoe, but without any apparent signs of success. In a way I was not too unhappy about this. A light fibreglass canoe floating on very cold deep water half-a-mile from the nearest land is insecure, and the wisdom of dangling a bag of bait which may attract a creature two or three times the length of the canoe is to be questioned. I returned again from the Loch without seeing Nessie, but a sighting was reported in August. I did however have the pleasure of meeting up with three other N.I.S. members, and also called in to have a word with Paul Covell at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre. It had been three years since we first met. The three N.I.S. members were, Graham Snape, Bob Ballard (both ex L.N.I.) and Ricky Gardiner, who became interested after the L.N.I. had been forced to cease operations. Graham stays at Strone and moves about as the water conditions change, doing early morning watches. Bob was doing the same but was based at his wife's parent's home in Inverness. He had met her through his stints on L.N.I. expeditions. Ricky was camping and staying on the south shore keeping watch most of the day, conditions allowing. This demonstrates that N.I.S. is working, for we all were looking for each other. In addition I had word from Vicki and Murray Barber, (who also met through L.N.I.) that they will be at the Loch from September 21st to October 4th, staying in Dorothy Frazer's caravan at Achnahannet. Murray still has his ancient black VW number MHO 652, a veteran's monster-hunting vehicle, which is not difficult to recognise.

Sightings

Monday July 7th 1975. The skipper and chief engineer of Scott II while on the bridge during the morning cruise reported a large object moving through the water about three quarters of a mile ahead, off Abriachan, which is on the North shore opposite Dores. Passengers at deck level didn't notice anything during the minute or so when it moved swiftly north to south across the loch.

Another reported sighting happened during the early afternoon of Thursday July 10th 1975 when two young Canadian women hitch-hiking down the lochside watched something for almost three minutes. It was swimming northwards in a zig-zag manner with an up and down motion and submerged opposite the Clansman Hotel still headed towards Lochend.

July 18th 1975; the caravan site at Invermoriston. Mr Alan Wilkins a schoolteacher from Annan, and a group of other people saw something appear and disappear a number of times. He took photographs and some 16 mm film at very long range, through telephoto lenses. Results will shortly be published in 'Field' magazine, and should prove interesting

August 4th 1975, A group of about 18 people at the Altsigh Youth Hostel near Invermoriston reported seeing three dark humps in mid-loch, preceded by what looked like a head. There was some undulating movement, the humps moved at a fair speed, making waves which came ashore three or four minutes later. I did not interview any of the people concerned, but spoke to Mr Alex Campbell who had. He thought it was a good sighting made by genuine people, but I talked to Ricky Gardiner later and he had logged a large vessel passing him some time before noon, and wondered if it was the wake pattern from this that had deceived them.

Bob Rines

As reported in N.I.S. No.9 The Academy of Applied Science in the person of Bob Rines had readied equipment for continuing the underwater search and with the help of U.K. members had set it into operation. In late July early August the newspapers had a rash of small items reporting that 'American Scientists had hush hush film of Nessie', and similar headlines. People closer to the operation told me that something really big was in the offing, and that exciting things were happening. I have word from Bob himself and he says that they do not wish to release plans and further results yet, he states "we are planning jointly to present photographs and other new materials, never before released, at a scientific lecture this fall with the hope that we can now get official British 'sciencedom' to come aboard and make the final identification." So we can just sit tight and see what happens and hope that the Academy Team results will at last shake sense into the official scientific world.

Odds & Ends

On Monday 25th August a team of eight schoolboys and coxswain broke the newly set up rowing record for Loch Ness by covering the length in 2 hours 35 minutes 38.2 seconds, taking almost 10 minutes off the old record. The boys from Ballikinian School, Balfron, near Glasgow and their two coaches along with the official timekeeper left Fort Augustus at 6 o'clock in the morning in good conditions, but 2½ hours later as they neared Lochend heavy waves caused by the rapidly freshening wind almost swamped their boat. They were then going on to the World Rowing Championships at Nottingham, then starting training for the worlds longest rowing race 31¼ miles on the river Whitham from Lincoln to Boston which is due to take place in September.

Also, the much publicised firemen from Hemel Hampstead arrived at the Loch with their model monster on Sunday 10th August. They launched it from Dores without any sign of it attracting the real Nessie, but it served its purpose. They raised about one and a half thousand pounds for their Benevolent Fund, and intend to raffle the model to make more money for the cause.

In one of our local newspapers there was an article on betting, which gave the odds on some of the strange things people bet on. Nessie rates 100 to 1 against being found in any one year. Mabybe we who are convinced should make a little side bet?

Books

Penguin Books are to publish Nick Witchell's "Loch Ness Story" in paperback sometime in November. He has revised it and is adding a new final chapter to bring it

up to date he is hoping to include some of Bob Rines' new pictures.

Tim Dinsdal's new book Project Water Horse - mainly about experiments, the monster hunters who work there, was published by Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd in June. Price in paperback £2.50

Finally, please remember your news and views are both needed, and welcome.

RIP

Ness Information Service sends out bi-monthly newsletter to members interested in Loch Ness and what is happening there.

Subscription £1 a year U.K. \$ 5.00 U.S.A. Canada.

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(PLEASE TEAR OFF AND PASS ON TO YOUR FRIENDS)