

Ness Information Service  
Nessletter No.14  
February 1976

Editor's Note: As N.I.S. enters its third year it would seem appropriate to start it with the lucky number 14; and thus there will be no NIS 13! Let me thank you all for being members, especially those who have helped with news and contributions. You are the N.I.S. and the reason for its being. It is very gratifying to receive your letters and thanks and it shows N.I.S. is doing the job I hoped it would do. I would also like to thank one or two people individually, Tim Dinsdale for help and encouragement and Nick Witchell for news of happenings at the loch. There are others too and of course my wife and children also need to be thanked for their tolerance of my obsession with Loch Ness, and for practical help in addressing envelopes and folding up the contents.

I should take this opportunity to point out once more that I am not the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau; this ceased operations at the end of 1972, although the Directors are still very active in helping anyone they can in the search for more evidence, but of course, many N.I.S. members used to be with L.N.I.B.

As you know the annual NIS subscription has had to up as running costs are steadily rising. I keep carefull accounts however and in the past two years a small reserve of twelve pounds has accumulated which is close to the balance I would like.

Loch Lochy

Last November I received a letter from a member Ricky Gardiner concerning a 'Nessie-type' sighting in Loch Lochy, it was on 30th September by Mr Tony Sargent and his wife Margaret who are good friends of his. The Sargents have been living in Fort William for about a year, and are believers in Nessie. They were motoring North to Inverness when as they rounded the corner by the 'Corriegour Hotel', which is about six miles along the nine mile loch (which is from one mile wide at the Southern end to half a mile at the Northern), they saw an unusual wake in the water. The day was a little humid, lightly overcast and grey, the water was very calm and still. Mr Sargent says the wake was some 100 yards from the shore and looked like a long line of heart shaped 'puddles' each seperated from the other and growing in size, and proceeding along the loch in a southernley direction. - She cannot recollect

having ever seen such a strange wake sequence before, and was looking for the cause when she saw a flurry in the water which she at first thought to be a large diving bird. But suddenly she spotted a long black shape moving easily and swiftly through the water. She shouted to her husband, but he had already seen it and was stopping the van. She jumped out and snatching a camera from her bag ran back along the road to try to keep up with it. By now she was sure that it was the back of an animal some 15 to 20 feet long standing out of the water 2 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet. As she ran she was trying to get the camera out of its case take a light reading and set the operative and focus; but when she looked up to take the picture to her great dismay the animal had submerged with the same speed and lack of effort as it had surfaced. The wake was still apparent however so she took a picture of that. She continued running up the road in the direction the animal had been travelling, and then was conscious of a tremendous wash surging up against the bank just below her. Then as she stood waiting for her husband to catch up in the van the disturbance ceased, and the water returned to its former calm. Mrs Sargent had become frightened while waiting as she realised that in the water lurked a huge, living unknown creature. In his account Mr.Sargent gives the following information, he stopped the van and his wife got out, he did as well and walked to the rear of the van and then a little further. About 100 yards from the shore and at a range of about 100 to 200 yards he saw a huge grey-black wet back. He tried to think what it could be; seal, walrus, whale, but he says it was none of these. It was the back of a huge creature one he had not seen anywhere before, he is sure it was a back for he is certain he detected a backbone. A ridge running the length of the beast proud of the actual back, which sloped towards him the fartherest point being the highest about 2 feet from the surface. He estimates the length as some 20 feet, and from his position relatively behind it a girth of the visible part of 6 feet, he also puts the speed at 10 miles an hour or a little less. He looked to see where his wife was and when he looked back there was a much smaller hump behind the big one, it was only there for a short time and then submerged, to be followed by the big one with no great commotion in the water except the wash which came ashore. Length of whole episode was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 minutes, at no time did they see legs, arms,

flippers or head or neck. They both refer to the 'puddles' / 'heart-shaped pools'. In all a most remarkable happening witnessed by two well informed people, with nothing to gain from a hoax. As historically recorded by Mrs. Whyte and Tim Dinsdale there have been similar accounts from Lochy in the past, but they are years apart. TD who has seen the wake photo says it bears out the Sargents description exactly.

#### More Sonar

Videomaster Ltd. a British electronics firm who make television games, claims to have measured a large un explained body in Loch Ness with 'electro-Videosonic' high-frequency sound waves. It claims also some success in attracting types of fish with sound waves and put forward the idea that they should attract a beastie into part of the Caledonian Canal and then drain that section. Inevitably this has produced some cheap publicity for the firm, although they did produce a graph of the 'something', and have actually been up to Loch Ness.

#### Underwater Work

During early February a team of 23 divers from Mansfield were to spend three days at Loch Ness. They were to dive to depths of 200 feet with underwater lights in an attempt to locate a creature. Not the most pleasant time of year for such a risky undertaking and as yet I have no further news of these operations.

#### Loch Ness Film 'Carnivore'

Early February also brought newspaper report of a new film to be made featuring the Loch Ness Monster. First news is rather off-putting; it is to be of the 'Jaws' category and if this is so one feels that it will not help the case made by serious investigators. It is to be written by Tony Williamson, who is a successful T.V. writer responsible for 'Dr Finlay's Casebook', 'The Planemakers', and 'Jason King', who is now to do a new series of the Avengers with David Frost in it. No doubt the LN film will be well done but with a title of 'Carnivore' almost anything could happen!

### Television

The BBC are to make a major documentary about Loch Ness, the first time this has been undertaken by British national television. It promises to be worthwhile for they are serious about it. It is scheduled for the Tuesday night documentary slot sometime in June.

### Aftermath of 'Academy '75' results:

There has been a continuing reaction to the Bob Rines photographs. Letters in the magazine Nature from G.B. Corbet, Department of Zoology, British Museum, and L.B. Halstead, P.D. Goriup, J.A. Middleton, members of the Departments of Geology and Zoology, University of Reading. Answered by Sir Peter Scott led to some interesting points being raised and answered.

Also a number of people put forward various theories to explain the pictures. These vary from a Viking ship, to optical effects caused by warm and colder water mixing. (It is a matter of amazement to me how scientists can consider such strange explanations as a sunken Viking ship floating around in midwater with a steering oar over the stern to explain the 'flipper' picture, and a dragon-like figurehead to explain the 'gargoyle' picture; and who completely ignore the sonar readings).

### More Monsters

Paul Smyers, U.S.A. sent me a clipping about the Lake Champlain monster. Also Tim Church U.S.A. has sent me clippings, one going as far back as 1923 about a monster in Alkali Lake Nebraska, others about reports in lakes in Idaho, Ontario and British Columbia, also a report about a creature in the White River Arkansas. This river is over 100 feet deep and about half a mile wide at Jacksonport near Newport where most of the sightings are reported. It seems that North America is crawling with monsters just waiting for someone to identify them.

### Warm Blood

Bill Paintin drew my attention to the new theory put forward that some of the dinosaurs were warm blooded. They had acquired a regulating mechanism similar to that of birds and mammals. Latest fossil evidence

indicates that the pterosaurs, the flying reptiles, had hair covering their bodies and part of the membranes. Many dinosaurs were swift and agile, and only by having high body temperature could these creatures have had that sort of active life.

One of the arguments against reptiles in Loch Ness is the low water temperature. If the creatures are warm blooded and are insulated against heat loss like whales and porpoises, then this argument has no validity.

#### Coelacanth

An article in Science News 10/1/76 gives a good account of the coelacanths story since 1938. The latest development is that they are viviparous and so give birth to live young. The American Museum of Natural History in New York had obtained a large female (5 feet 3 inches) in 1962, but had kept it preserved on a shelf until last year. When they did start work on it found it to be a gravid female with five, one foot long, perfect miniature coelacanths inside. This type of new information is most interesting, and demonstrates that nature still holds surprises for us.

Once again it is time to bring another nessletter to a close. Please remember news and views are welcomed,\*also, that subscriptions (at £1.25 U.K. and \$7.00 U.S.A. and Canada), are due for 1976.

\* Especially dates of anyone visiting the Loch.

Rip.

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