

Ness Information Service
Nessletter No. 18
October 1976

Sightings

On Monday October 11th 1976 Mr. B. Cosens and Mr. A. Hand from Bootle, Liverpool, who were touring the Highlands, parked in the Castle Urquhart lay-by. It was too late in the day to visit the castle but they decided to stay and view the loch. Mr Hand, using binoculars, saw a motorboat coming towards the bay at a fast speed, he watched it come into the bay and as it circled on the surface nearby. Then in the centre of the circular wake it had created there was a disturbance; and both men were amazed to see a long black object emerge from the water and head directly towards the opposite shore of the loch. Mr Hand got out of the car and looking through his binoculars saw what he was sure was a live creature swimming on the loch surface. It had three humps, and using the boat as a guide, he estimated it to be over thirty feet long and moving at the same speed. It gradually submerged leaving a wake behind. It was also reported by a group of children who had been playing on the shingle beach below the castle.

(The presence of the boat does raise a slight doubt in my mind and I would dearly like to talk to the people concerned. Ed.)

1963

I have a report from Edward Doylerush, F.R.A.S. In 1963 he and his wife Mary, and their two daughters, and his wife's sister were on holiday in the Highlands. They had stayed overnight in Inverness, and next day (unfortunately he does not give a date) they drove along the south shore of Loch Ness. They stopped near the village of Dores, to purchase groceries from a mobile shop, and shortly after stopping an object was seen by those in the car. Mr Doylerush was called back and he took his binoculars (6x30) and looked towards the other side of the loch, at right angles to their shore. Although the object could be seen with the naked eye the binoculars showed it to be a hump standing about three feet out of the water, it was dark brown in colour and moving westwards. It did not 'rotate' like a dolphin or seal's movement but as he watched it slowly subsided, and left a long wake down the loch as if travelling just below the surface. The observation took place in a short space of time with no chance to get out a camera and use it, although Mr Doylerush doubts that if at the range of possibly $\frac{3}{4}$ mile it would have been effective anyway. Time is given as 12.20 p.m.

This report was passed to me by Tim Dinsdale, who also pointed out that it is possibly the shortest space of time between arriving at the loch and a sighting.

1930

This next report is a letter from the January 1976 'Scottish Field' and does not come from Loch Ness itself, but from the Inverness Firth. It is a most important account.

"Sir, - I was born 78 years ago a hundred yards from the mouth of the Ness and knew the Inverness Firth like the back of my hand.

The following incident happened in 1930 while I was home after a nine-month voyage down the River Plate. One glorious mid-June day I decided to go for a swim in the Inverness Firth at a place called the Hangman. The tide was high and I went to my favourite spot where the water was deep, with a sandy bottom. After my swim I decided to have a rest and it being such a lovely day I came in to about waist deep and floated on my back, looking up towards Beaully Firth.

It was so calm and clear you could see for miles and while skimming my eyes over the Firth I saw what I took to be an otter after salmon at the mouth of the Ness. But it seemed strange to see a long wash behind it. I went back to my floating and next time I looked this animal was about a quarter of a mile away. It looked like a young deer with two small projections on its head and as I lay there wondering what it was it came to about 100 feet from me and I saw it had a wrinkled, flat, horrible face, like tanned leather and the eyes were long slits up and down the face. At once I touched bottom and stood up at the same instant. The beast seemed to "put its brakes on" and to arch its back. I noticed a long, black, hairy back and about two feet of green belly— It must have got as big a fright as I did. I ran a few yards to the beach, collected my clothes under my arm and ran up the small bank. I looked round to see what was happening and was surprised to see the beast about half a mile away going at a terrific speed. At tea that night I mentioned my experience to my mother, brother and sister but all I got was "Take more water with it". I went to Canada that year and when I returned six years later I was told about the monster in Loch Ness. I am convinced there is a connection between Loch Ness and my experience in the Inverness Firth. Yours etc., M.Shand. Doncaster."

(Mr.Shand unfortunately does not give a size, but his "young deer" and "about two feet of green belly", does not suggest a very large creature, but it was definitely very strange. I am most grateful to Mr. Shand for this account. Ed.)

September

I heard of a sighting in Urquhart Bay in early September but I have no details, except that the people concerned came from Jersey. If they are traced I hope to be able to include details in a later Nessletter.

Press and Journal

I have been sent two cuttings from the Press and Journal, both about sightings. The first was around the 25th of August concerning a Rev. John MacNaughton, from Portnalong, Skye, his wife and daughter and an aunt from Aberdeen. They were driving from Aberdeen to Skye and passing Loch Ness when Mrs.MacNaughton saw four humps, through a gap in the trees. When the car stopped they ran back and Trina,= the daughter, said; I saw four humps. They looked like tyres with only the tops showing. Its head was snake like and arched like a walking stick." She took two pictures - then realised she had not taken the lens cap off. Trina's third picture, without the lenscap, is being processed as quickly as possible.

Secondly a young couple, Brian and Luba Green from near Milton of Drumbeck, in August had a sighting and took a piece of film. The couple and Brian's mother and stepfather, who are from Cornwall, were driving along the loch towards Inverness when the car windscreen shattered. They pulled into a lay-by almost directly opposite Foyers, and Mrs Hamer (Brians mother) standing on the bank saw something in the loch. Brian said "It was this object - long and with three or four black humps - almost right in the middle of the loch." He ran to get his 8mm cine camera and managed to get a 30 second sequence. The result is a bright and fairly clear shape which has a definite undulation movement when tracking darkly down the centre of the loch. The Greens are hoping to have the film enlarged and examined by experts, to prove that these are really humps.

(This episode again shows how difficult it is to get convincing results without the right equipment and without having to resort to further processes. Ed.)

Switzerland

Following the reports from Lake Uri concerning a 'Nessie-like' monster. There have been further newspaper reports revealing it as a hoax. It was a 50 foot long inflatable construction, with floats and flippers for diving and surfacing, built for a television programme.

Seals

This year there have been several reports by visitors of 'strange', objects seen in the River Ness. In normal years seals are seen in the river fishing in the tidal stretch up to the Infirmary Bridge, but in '76 salmon have been so scarce that a seal was observed as far up as the Mill Stream pool. There was also some talk of a seal in Loch Ness itself.

Runestones

A Mr Ramsay has sent me an interesting letter; he has been reading "Riddles in History" by Cyrus H. Gordon, published in 1974 by Arthur Barker Ltd, and in the U.S.A. by Crown Publishers. It is about ancient cryptograms particularly those relating to Pre-Columbian contacts between the Old World and the New World, Mr Ramsay gives full reference to pages and chapters about the matter of three small stones with carvings on them (called Runestones) found on the east coast of the U.S.A. at a place called Sprit Pond. From careful examination it seems they are genuine, and date from 1123 A.D. and indicate the settlement of Hop in Vinland by the Norse men. The interesting part to us is that on the reverse of the number-one Runestone. (which shows drawings of the flora and fauna, population etc. of Vinland) There are some eight drawings of (quoting authors words) "a fish, a bird, a deer, a serpent (or eel), a native, a man rowing a boat, an animal hide, and a bow and arrow". A look at the drawing of the "serpent (or eel)" by someone who knows 'monster-lore' - makes it clear that what is shown is, in fact, a sea-monster. The classic small head on an elongated neck, and hump (or wash) are clearly depicted. The location of Hop in Vinland, is on the eastern seaboard of the U.S.A., where particularly in the early 1800's, there were many reported sea-serpent sightings. Mr Ramsay asks "did the early Norse explorers of Vinland encounter a sea-serpent, and were they so struck by this that they included it in a drawing of the areas local flora and fauna"? It is a most intriguing finding and Mr Ramsay would welcome anyone's comments on it.



'SERPENT (OR EEL)'

Loch Ness: October news

Tim Dinsdale again visited Loch Ness for a short stint of long-range shore watching, in early October, hoping to coincide with a patch of 'Indian Summer' weather. Unfortunately the day after arrival he went down with gastric flu', and the weather produced nothing but a huge equinoctial gale, which blew the Academy boat 'Hunter' clear across the loch to Dores, from her mooring on Urquhart Bay, complete with bouys and 80 feet of cable which tore adrift from the auto-station footing, underwater. By an extraordinary piece of good luck 'Hunter' ended up on soft shingle only feet away from boulders, which would have destroyed her - and has been recovered virtually undamaged. TD also managed to do some watching with gear set up inside a caravan overlooking Inchnarcadoch Bay, but the only excitement was a 'hump' at half a mile, which turned out to be an oil drum! Charlie Wyckoff is expected to return in November to winterise the Academy raft equipment now on Urquhart Bay, and terminate experiments for 1976 - which will be reported in detail

in the M.I.T. Technology Review for December. (The 'Hunter' incident illustrates again how very careful anyone working on the water must be; disaster always seems to be but a short step away. Ed.)

More Book News

The Monster of Loch Ness by Roy P. Mackal - Swallow Press Inc. Chicago, Illinois in hard covers \$12.50, 401 pages, is the first detailed analytical tome on the subject, by any professional scientist - and is available in the UK as a paperback from Futura Publications, 110 Warner Road, Camberwell London SE 5, at £1.50.

The Leviathans by Tim Dinsdale also by Futura Publications Ltd. is out in paperback at 75p - a revised and updated edition of this first book to deal with reports of water-monsters sightings from lochs, loughs, lakes, rivers and oceans around the world, includes some interesting new reports, and an introduction by Sir Peter Scott.

Loch Ness Monster and The Story of the Loch Ness Monster (juvenile) both by Tim Dinsdale appear again as updated new editions from RKP Ltd. Broadway House, Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames, (£3.95 cloth, £2.25 paperback) and Target Books, Wyndham Pubs. Ltd., 123 King Street, London W.6 (£1.50 cloth, 50p paperback) respectively. These books are about the 'monsterhunt' as it relates to the LNM and the Morar animals. The first has remained in print for 15 years through three editions, and the latter for young people, has sold some 80,000 copies!

Odds and Ends

Under the Governments Jobs Creation Scheme plans have been approved for a number of additional tourist facilities at Loch Ness. They include the provision of access paths to the lochside from parking areas and lay-bys, information boards and view-point indicators and the clearance of picnic sites.

**** A report from Australia about the 'Yowie'. According to Rex Gilroy, director of the Mount York Natural History Museum in New South Wales, the Yowie - the Aboriginal word for "great hairy man" - has been the subject of 3,000 reported sightings dating back hundreds of years. It recently came back into the news with the discovery of strange footprints in the snow near the town of Kiandra in the Snowy Mountains near Canberra. The prints were definite in outline and impressive in size and shape; the owner was apparently three-toed and of giant proportions. This brought a flood of other reports from skiers using Mount Kosciusko. They claimed to have seen it loping up the side of the mountain, which at 7,314 feet is Australia's highest, or it had left footprints around the countryside. No other evidence was forthcoming, but Mr Gilroy firmly believes in them and says they grow about 8 feet tall and are covered with long dark hair, stoop slightly, and have a long loping gait. They are, he maintains, vegetarians, living on seeds and a type of moist bark which they tear in strips off trees. They sleep in trees, rock overhangs, and caves, but being shy creatures keep to inaccessible regions. He says that they come from the same line as the Yeti and Bigfoot, and migrated over land bridges that once connected Australia to the other continents.

**** To round off, I have a letter from Vicki Judah, c/o 9 Station Rd, Christchurch, Dorset. She has for sale a 'collection' of monster books and ephemera which consists of 38 books and a mass of loose material, including L.N.I. reports, Loch Morar Surveys, newspaper and magazine cuttings etc. She says she would like a 'monster-ophile' to get it and keep it all together. No price given but anyone really interested should contact her at the above address and she will send full details.

Once more that brings another Nessletter to a close but please remember your news and views are needed, and much appreciated. My address is still, Huntshieldford Cottage, St. Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham, and the subscriptions are still U.K. £1.25, U.S.A. and Canada \$7.00.