

Editors Note

As Ness Information Service enters its fourth year I once more take the opportunity to tell you a little more about its beginnings. After working for many years with the Loch Ness Investigation, as a holiday volunteer, I served full-time on their resident staff for the seasons of 1970-71. When the L.N.I. was forced to cease operations I had the idea of a newsletter service and I toyed with this for some time before putting it into practice. N.I.S. was brought into being in February 1974 as a one man, (or one family) operation. It is a part time operation as I earn my living as a miner. We live in County Durham in the north of England, about midway between Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Carlisle in Weardale. Even though it is an agricultural area there is much quarrying and mining done. The mining is for fluorspar which is used in the steel industry, and it is down one of these mines I spend my working days at about the same depth, I fondly imagine, as Nessie. This is the background history to our Ness Information Service, which is growing slowly but steadily in numbers. I would again like to thank everyone for being members and especially those who have sent news, letters, cuttings, etc.. I try to answer queries as soon as possible, but may I ask any member who has written but who has not yet had a reply to remind me?

Academy of Applied Science

I have read the full report of the 1976 seasons work in the 1976 December issue of MIT Technology Review. As reported in NIS 19, sonar did indeed produce the most interesting results last year. Martin Klein President of Klein Associates, Inc., arrived in late July a little after other members of his team. The equipment he brought with him (held up in customs for some time) was a Klein Model 430 HYDROSCAN Side Scan Sonar - a new combined side scan/sub-bottom profiler system, which apart for some local studies and tests with the U.S. Navy had not done any major field-work. It had the same layout as earlier models, producing a narrow fan-shaped vertical beam transmitted from either side of the 'towfish'. A new element was a third transducer which pointed a conical beam vertically at the bottom, having a lower frequency to penetrate the bottom sediments. Although time at Loch Ness was limited four sonar experiments were planned. The first was designed to probe the sediment in the deep parts of the loch. The second was to further study the loch wall structure. The third and possibly most important experiment was to search the loch floor for carcasses or skeletal remains. They also wanted to use the towfish in 'fixed-mode', placing it in the middle of Urquhart Bay and putting a 'sonar curtain' across the bay. This they hoped would track anything entering or leaving the bay and cover the u w cameras. (However) it was found when they arrived at the loch that Harold Edgerton of M.I.T. was already running fixed-mode sonar experiments at Temple Pier, in Urquhart Bay. Thus they were happy to leave this side of the work in good hands and to concentrate on other experiments, using Malaren, a 33 ft cruiser with twin diesels, which proved ideal for survey work. With the assistance of George Reid, a local surveyor, they set up a system of navigation which is an important part of this type of work, for not only is it necessary to know where you have looked, but it is essential to be able to return to the exact place if anything of interest occurs. Complex and expensive radio navigation systems are available, but financial considerations had to be taken into account and a simple scheme was worked out. Two compasses were used on the boat to take land bearings, and fixes every few minutes. These bearings, the boat's heading,

and the time, were all recorded while an 'event mark' was noted on the sonar trace. At first runs were made east to west across the narrow part of the loch. These seemed to indicate that the loch floor beneath the many layers of sediment is 'U' shaped rather than 'V' as some people had thought. But more work needs to be done in this area. They then moved on to the search for bones and remains. Some tests had been made in the U.S.A. using mammoth bones in a lake near the Klein laboratory in Salem, New Hampshire. The bones had been brought from Toronto by Dr.C. McGowan, paleontologist with the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. They had been placed in the lake and when the towfish was towed over the area the bones were easily detectable. It was decided that the search should be in shallower regions of the loch so if necessary divers could go down to investigate anything shown on sonar. This was difficult, as there are not many shallow places in the loch and its walls underwater are very steep. Normal hydrographic charts of the loch are not too detailed in this matter.

The team was aided in the search for data by Bill Owen and Dick Raynor at the Great Glen Exhibition in Fort Augustus, which portrays a map published by Bartholemew to the scale of 3 inches to the mile. It is of a bathymetric survey carried out with lead lines by Sir John Murray in 1903. While even this does not go into much detail it was of great help in finding target areas in Urquhart Bay, Dores Bay, Lochend, (north eastern end) and Borlum Bay, and near Cherry Island, (south western end). Much to their amazement they found objects worthy of further investigation in all the areas searched. Among them were the strange stone circles at Lochend, which seem to be of different types at two different depths. In Urquhart Bay about 100 meters from Temple Pier two targets appeared one was the wrecked sailing ship (possibly a 'Zulu') that has been looked at before. Bob Love when working with The LNI found this wreck in 1970 and had divers measure and photograph it. The other object had not been noted before and is worthy of further study. Near Cherry Island, which is a man made island, a 'crannog' - of a type found in other parts of Scotland and in Ireland, they noted what seemed to be a three sided square structure. This area was difficult to investigate because of a rapidly changing bottom profile. In between these various searches they continued a survey of the loch walls, finding that the complex geology of ridges and undercuts, which they had first noted in 1970, runs for miles and miles on both sides of the loch. They noticed one which seemed to be a square opening in the loch side near Invermoriston. They were surprised to come across an aeroplane lying reasonably intact in about 30 meters of water. It turned out to be a PBY Flying Boat, American built, but operated by the R.A.F.. (ed. 'Catalina' was the RAF's name of this aircraft type). As they were making some of their last runs with the side scan sonar in Borlum Bay near Fort Augustus they came up with one of their most intriguing finds. In approximately 100 meters of water they picked up an object on the bottom. It had a carcass-like shape with a long neck-like projection the whole target seemed to be about 10 meters long. While they do not claim this is a body, it most definitely needs further examination; possibly with underwater television or a small submersible.

All in all the sonar work done in the loch during the 1976 season proved of great worth and interest. A full report of the Academy of Applied Science's, 1976 work is contained in the M.I.T. Technology Review of December 1976. It may be possible to get copies from Technology Review, Room E19-430, M.I.T., Cambridge, Mass. 02139. It is still possible to get copies from them of the March/April 1976 issue which has the photographs and sonar reports from 1972 and 1975, price \$1.00 plus post. (For English N.I.S. members I still have a few of the latter if anyone is interested.)

Sightings

The Inverness & Highland News of February 17th had a report of a sighting by Mr. C. Davenport and his two daughters Wendy and Julie. One morning recently they were driving towards Drumnadrochit when Wendy saw something in the water. She called out to the others who looked in the direction she indicated. She had seen a tail thrashing about and a hump in front. By the time the others picked out the place the hump was disappearing. Mr. Davenport saw a swirl in the water and "something" submerge. Julie saw a hump before it went down. It has been suggested that what they were seeing was an otter. But the family say that it must have been much larger than that for them to have seen it at fully 50 yards out.

An 'almost' Sighting

I have to hand a very interesting letter from Philip Marlow, concerning his last visit to the loch. He and his brother were there last August. They did not see a monster but did have a moment of real excitement. They had hitched a lift from Foyers to the hill overlooking Fort Augustus. The weather was magnificent and his brother, Kevin, thought the slopes beyond the fence were made for climbing. Over seven hours later they reached the top. He says he never thought such an extensive view of the loch was possible. Anyway they settled down with camera and binoculars. After a short while Kevin spotted a wake developing midway between the Abby boat house and the near shore. Philip says "I focused the binoculars on the wake, I almost went weak at the knees because 3 objects appeared right in the middle of it! I'm sure now that had those 3 'humps' sank and the wake subsided there and then, I would have been convinced that I'd seen the monster. But after a while, when these objects dived, and re-appeared for about the third time doubts began to appear in my mind. My doubts were more or less confirmed when these 3 humps all swam off in different directions. I think they were ducks." This, as Philip says, is a very valuable lesson in observation, and after such an experience a watcher would be less easily fooled. He also wonders how many sightings of the monster can be attributed to water birds etc.. He will be up at the loch again in May, 20th-27th, aboard a hired cruiser. The crew will be, Brian, Jerry, Steve, Philip, and another Steve. (Good luck boys).

Waterspouts and Water-Devils

To continue the theme of false sightings, I have two copies of the Journal of Meteorology sent to me by the editor Dr. G.T.Meaden. Under the title "A Meteorological Explanation for some of the Mysterious Sightings on Loch Ness and Other Lakes and Rivers" Dr. Meaden examines in great detail the subject of waterspouts and water-devils. He points out that from photographs and drawings most people are familiar with waterspouts, which are funnel-shaped clouds which extend down from storm-clouds and which disturb the water surface in a violent commotion of spray. But a less known atmospheric phenomena is the water-devil although its over-land counterpart the dust-devil is common in the warmest half of the year. Dust-devils frequently develop in fine situations, especially on hot sunny days, and if they should happen to move over an adjacent water surface they become water-devils. They can also form on fine days which are not necessarily warm when the surface-level mass of air is overrun by a cooler air-mass, as from an advancing sea-breeze. And water-devils can raise so much spray that it is easy to understand people thinking the cause to be animate. Several examples of water-devils on inland waters have been reported in the meteorological

literature. He quotes one from North Wales on the River Elwy on 6th April 1872. "Attention was suddenly called by a remarkable strange hissing bubbling sound to a diminutive waterspout in the centre of the stream, some 40 paces from where I was standing. Its base was a little more than 2 feet in diameter. The water curled up from the river in an unbroken cylindrical form to a height of about 15 inches, rotating rapidly, then diverged as from a number of jets, being thrown off with considerable force to an additional elevation of 6 or 7 feet, the spray flying all round as from an elaborately arranged fountain, covering a large area. It remained in the same position for about 40 seconds, then moved slowly.. The day was fine and sunny..The event occurred about 1215, and lasted 70 or 80 seconds.." Dr. Meaden goes on to select a number of reported sightings from various books on the Loch Ness Monster, and others. And he is able to draw our attention to similarities in these and those of water-devils. He also takes pains to stress that he does not believe that all reports are water-devils, but is of the opinion that they should be taken into account when examining new sightings.

Lake Champlain

write 1-4-77

Mr.Zarzyński and Mr.Bierman who have been working on the mystery are finalizing a short report of their findings. It should be ready in late March or early April, and will be available from 11, Lincoln Ave., Endicott, N.Y. 13760, U.S.A.

Loch Morar

I am sending a copy of the Loch Morar 1976 report to all members. Overseas members will get theirs under separate cover by surface mail. *To follow*

Underwater

I have word of a very interesting project being undertaken by Michael Alston. He is building an unmanned submarine which is to carry closed circuit television, and he hopes sonar. His address is Central City Hotel, Central Street, London E.C.1.V8DS. While up to now he has worked alone he would be grateful for any help anyone close enough could give him. He intends to be at Loch Ness for July to November and also could use help up there on his project. Anyone interested contact him at the above address.

Fortean Times

I have received copies of this interesting magazine which deals with all types of strange phenomena. Further information from R.J.M. Rickard, 551 Harrow Road, London W10.

Well, that winds number 20 up, please remember you make N.I.S. and news and letters are needed. Subscriptions are still £1.25 U.K. \$7.00 U.S.A. Canada. My address is R.R.Hepple, Huntshildford, St.Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, Tel. Wearhead 359 (new).

Rip.