

Ness Information Service  
Nessletter No.24  
November 1977.

Waterspouts

In the February Nessletter no.20 I had a piece concerning waterspouts and the possibility of mistaking one for a monster sighting. Since then N.I.S. member, Mr Lyster has sent me another interesting 'whirlwind' account, which has also proved to be a very strange coincidence. Mr.Lyster was reminded of a story told to him by Dr.H.M.G.Blair of South Shields..."Dr. Blair was fishing with a companion from a boat in a Norwegian fiord, when they heard a strange noise coming from the hillside opposite. It turned out to be a mini-whirlwind which moved down the slope of the hill, flattening fir-trees as it passed. The path of the whirlwind then veered across the water, where its relevance to Loch Ness-type sightings appears because it caused a distinct hump in the water which moved across the fiord just like your typical 'monster'. If Dr.Blair had not seen the effect of the whirlwind before it moved across the water then he might well have thought that he had sighted a 'monster'. Dr.Blair is a Nessie non-believer, and he regards LNM sightings as having some similar 'natural' explanation. I can well imagine that occasionally it could happen on Loch Ness -- but not that often!!

We can accept this as a true account of a strange happening which could be easily misinterperated - but to continue the story - my wife comes from South Shields, and for many years Dr.Blair was the family doctor! It is very odd that his account should find its way to me by such a roundabout route. I visited Dr.Blair and spent an interesting time with him. He told me the episode took place in 1934 during the latter part of June. They were not fishing but were rowing up this freshwater lake to see a stretch of country they had not previously visited; it was Lake Svartakselvand, in the area of Syd-Varanger in East Finmark, in northern Norway. They became aware of the whirlwind because of the loud noise it was making; it passed astern of them and when it reached the other shore it died away. Dr.Blair said it raised 'a bubble' some 20 feet in diameter by 3 feet high, and he felt if it had struck them the boat would have broken up.

Canada

George Vyce sent me a letter in response to N.I.S. 23, he too wonders about the old gang from the treasured Elsan races from 'The Ritz' and 'The Black Hole' during his stay at L.N.I. during the last month of the 1970 expedition. He also remembers well the kind hospitality extended to him when he stayed briefly with Holly, Arnold, Bear, and others at the London flat during the winter of 1971. George has settled into a teaching position with trainable mentally retarded children, in a small town north of Toronto. He is to visit Europe in the summer of 1978, and would very much like to join another party for a Loch Ness watch, either in the first part of July or the latter part of August. He thought an early word could be useful.

He also sent a report from the 'In-Toronto' programme on Radio CHUM-FM Toronto, October 2nd...

Margorie Halpern, Curator of the Museum of Ethnology, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia reported by telephone interview the approaching First Academic Council On Monsters, May 9th-13th 1978 at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

"This conference which is open to the public has a variety of aims. One goal is to show how scholars respond to 'monster' happenings. It is also hoped the gathering will stretch minds in the search for the right questions to ask in investigating these phenomena. It is claimed the topic will be addressed from as many perspectives as possible by over thirty scientists and scholars. This interdisciplinary approach will include a paper by Carol Carpenter of York University, Toronto, on the cultural role of monsters. Man-like monsters are the topic for this year's conference but perhaps a second conference would deal with aquatic animals." But for George, the highlight of the report occurred when Ms. Halpern coined an amazing new word referring to a specific set of artifacts as "a display of Sasquatchanalia". George asks whatever would we call physical evidence of the L.N.M.? - 'Nessieana' is a word which has already been used in Gt. Britain.

#### Italian Nessie Hunt

Three Italian sub-aqua divers from Trento in Northern Italy, are to be at the loch in late October and early November for about three weeks. They are to be joined by two students from Parma who won a television quiz game, and expressed the desire to find the Loch Ness monster. This has received some publicity but it would seem to be just a sightseeing outing.=

#### Danish Adventurers Club Visit

On the 24th October a group of Danes arrived at Fort Augustus where they put up at the Lovat Arms Hotel. Tim Dinsdale met them, gave an illustrated talk on Nessie, and accompanied them on a tour round Loch Ness and St. Benedicts Abbey, after a morning 'on the water' in a pair of Caley Cruisers. On the evening of the 25th the Highlands and Islands Development Board gave a Highland Dinner at the Lovat Arms in honour of the guests each one of whom was an adventurer in his own right - with some astonishing feats of exploration to his/her credit. A very jolly time was had by all.

#### Otters Again

In late August a big 2 foot otter was seen by Tim Dinsdale at 3 a.m. in the morning, after it had been aboard his boat 'Water Horse', munching the fat out of a frying pan, which he puts in the transome-well at night to discourage such visitors actually getting into the boat. Tim's first glimpses of an otter in 397 nights spent on the water.

#### Nodding Ducks (N.I.S. 19)

The first weeks of November will also see the installation, in Dores Bay of the 'nodding ducks' electricity generating system which is to be tested in the loch. The main spine, which is one metre diameter by fifty metres long steel cylinder, has been moored in Dores Bay since the spring, this was to

test its resistance to weather and wave effects. The programme has not progressed as quickly as first proposed, but is now nearing a vital stage. The 'ducks' are now being attached to the boom, which has been towed to Foyers, along with the generating equipment. When it is all assembled it will be towed the ten miles back to Dores, where it will begin generating. The equipment is capable of producing ten kilowatts which will be the first time such an amount has been generated by wave energy in this country. It is about one tenth the size of the ocean going equipment, which was one of the reasons in choosing Loch Ness for the development programme as wave size and conditions there are about one tenth ocean size. If these tests prove satisfactory it is intended to progress to equipment of one quarter size, which would be installed off the Clyde coast, or somewhere similar, where wind and wave conditions are stronger than Loch Ness. There is great interest in wave power as it seems to be one of the most feasible of alternative energy sources.

### Poisonous!!

In a recent issue of the 'Aquarist' there was an article concerning amphibia by Andrew Allen. He was discussing the poisonous aspect of these creatures, and pointed out the tremendous range of toxins, poisons, and hallucinogens that are found within the different species. They are currently in the forefront of research into the synthesis of complex molecules, and many of their poisons were known, and recorded, by the ancients. Amphibians poisons are exclusively associated with the skin, which is understandable when thinking of the special role the skin plays in the creatures life. The skins of reptiles, mammals, and birds, are primarily impermeable barriers against the outside world. While that of amphibians is a surface of interaction, the focus of water exchange and respiration. This delicate layer is well supplied with glands whose secretions protect it from dessication and abrasions. These glands are readily adapted into sacs of virulent poisons, sometimes it is the mucus glands but more often it is granular glands. It is from these latter that the most potent examples come. The European salamander produces a skin secretion called salamandrine which cause chronic convulsions, paralysis, and death by respiratory failure, which is enough to deter most predators. Several European newts possess similar poisons, those of the crested newt are particularly obnoxious. To a human, a small drop of the fluid placed in the mouth causes pain, total paralysis of tongue, lips, and gums along with an uncontrollable flow of saliva. Certain tribes in tropical South America use the poison obtained from a small forest frog to tip their arrows. These are used in hunting and kill birds or monkeys in a few seconds. These poisonous attributes are only a defence mechanism, and only harm predators or anything which interferes with them. But even so, some animals get round this by using their claws or beaks to take the skin off amphibians, and then eat the harmless interior.....

One may wonder what has this to do with Loch Ness? - but if the 'Nessie is an amphibian' theory turns out to be the right one - we could be faced with the situation of having a very large and very poisonous (to the touch) creature to deal with.

## Costello

Earlier this year I read Costello's book 'In Search of Lake Monsters'. It was interesting, but in my opinion was not among the better books on the subject. One reference I found disturbing was that Frank Soarle was being 'sponsored' in his 'researches' by David James. I wrote to David on this point and received the following reply.

"Costello's book on 'Nessie' is full of inaccuracies, but none greater than that we are supporting Frank Searle. We did originally give him a camera, but as he promptly broke his agreement with us by publishing film prior to a JARIC assessment we have had nothing further to do with him."

The "we" referred to is/was the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau. I am pleased to be able to set N.I.S. members, at least, right on this point.

## Book and Map

I have word from Mr. M. Foxley that he still has some copies of 'The Search for Morag' by Elizabeth Montgomery-Campbell. Obtainable from him at 14, West End Lane, Pinner, Middlesex. price £2.00 plus P&P, for U.S.A. \$6.00 should be enough (allowing for exchange rates, bank charges etc.). Tim Dinsdale is also able to supply copies of the map mentioned in NIS 23, obtainable from him in U.K. at 17, Blewbury Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire. Send £1.00 note or P.O., in the U.S.A. write to the Big Foot Information Centre PO Box 777, Hood River Oregon, 97031, and send \$3.00 for the 'Loch Ness Map'.

## N.I.S.

The question about lapel badges brought a small response, but it also brought other ideas. One was for car stickers, another one was for an annual get-together of N.I.S. members. Another one that has been suggested before is that we should organise ourselves into an expedition. This last idea presents many problems but how many people would be interested, and what ideas have they for; organisation, equipment, transport, etc.

## Sighting

Report of sighting off Fort Augustus by young girls. Humps and neck visible for quite a long while, further details in next newsletter.

Once more that is all for now. May I thank all those who have written, and remind those who have not that the N.I.S. address is still Huntshildford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Subscriptions U.K. £1.25, U.S.A. , Canada \$7.00.

Rip.

N.I.S. 21 contained a 'Nessie' poem, to which I had a pleasing reaction, many members letting me know how they liked it. Here is another one, this one I have had since November 1976 waiting for a space to use it. It was written and sent by Jane Hibbert, who is just a youngster, of Wallasey, Merseyside, here it is as received.

### Nessies Night.

Nessie comes out every night  
Only when the moon is bright  
She looks to make sure nobodys there  
Then darts about all the night long  
Once she knows that nothings wrong

But just as it strikes 12 O'clock  
Mysterious Nessie sinks back in the loch  
The next morning people wondered what  
they heard  
They could of come out but nobody dared  
The trace of Nessie has completley gone  
So the Loch Ness mystery lingers on!