

Sightings '78

I have some news of sightings at Loch Ness this year.

Mr Bell wrote to me enquiring about a head and neck sighting in Fort Augustus Bay last January. It is thought that a Mr McGlew who had the experience took photographs, but as yet I have no word of them or more details of what happened.

In early May, Susan Russell, who was aboard one of the holiday cruisers which use the Caledonian Canal, was one of the people to see a creature near the shore. I have not full details of this yet but hope to obtain them. At the moment all I know is that they were approaching shore at about 7.30 p.m. when they saw a 'dingy' between them and the shore. Being twilight they could not make it out too clearly, it was only when it seemed to disappear to be replaced by three smaller objects they realised they were not looking at a dingy. They watched for a few minutes and it sank from sight, and did not reappear.

On Friday June 23rd while fishing from the shore beneath Castle Urquhart Bill Wright, from Camelon, Falkirk, had a remarkable experience. Just after 3 a.m. a creature surfaced 30 yards away from him. He first saw an arch-shaped body "not unlike an upturned rowing boat"; it was black in colour. Within seconds its head and neck emerged, the neck was estimated to be twelve feet long, the head about the size of a football (soccer). He did not see anything of a tail, He was very surprised, and scrambled up the bank to get a better view from a higher vantage point, but the noise he made in doing so startled the creature, which at once submerged. Mr Wright who has fished on Loch Ness many times has never before seen anything of the creatures, but after this he says there is no doubt that they exist.

Finally I hear that there was a sighting at Loch End by three local ladies, who discribed seeing two humps and a neck moving; obviously part, of a live animal. The like of which they had never seen before - more news of this later.

Tony Shiels

Last year Tony took two head and neck photographs from Castle Urquhart. I've covered this in previous Nessletters and the description given by Bill Wright (above), bears a striking similarity to the No.1 Shiels picture published in the press.

There have been queries from some quarters concerning the authenticity of Tony's photographs, but earlier in the year, at Tim Dinsdale's request he unhesitatingly made out an affidavit about his experience. Also, as Tim has been a member of the Royal Photographic Society for some years he was able to put the original 'No.1' Shiels ektachrome colour slide in the hands of Dr. Vernon Harrison - (Until 1976 President of the Society) a most distinguished photographic scientist - who wrote him a letter concerning his microscopic scrutiny of the transparency.

"The examination was made using a binocular microscope at all magnifications up to x 100. There was no evidence of double exposure, superimposition of images or handwork with bleach or dye.

See Fortean News
Sept 1978 p.1
for first head a/c.
Good sighting

I ANTHONY NICOL SHIELDS of

Truro in the County of

Cornwall DO SOLEMNLY AND SINCERELY DECLARE as follows:-

1. On Saturday May Twenty first One thousand nine hundred and seventy seven I was exploring the ruins of Castle Urquhart on the shores of Loch Ness in Scotland when at approximately 4 p.m. in the waters of the Loch below the Castle I saw what I believed to be a large aquatic creature. Its head and neck stood above the surface about four or five feet in length. Its colour was greenish brown with a paler underside.

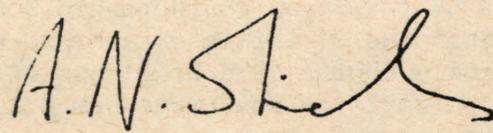
2. I watched the creature through the view finder of my camera which was fitted with a telephoto lens and it turned away from me and straightened its muscular neck before sinking straight down very smoothly. I managed to take two photographs in the five or six seconds before the creature submerged. The two photographs are now produced and shown to me and marked "ANS 1" and "ANS 2".

3. My camera was a 35mm SLR Zenith EM fitted with a 135 mm Chinon telephoto lens. The film used was a high speed Ektocrome.

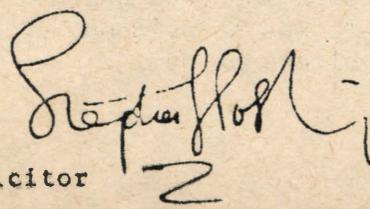
4. I believe that the photographs show one of the creatures known as "The Loch Ness Monsters" and I wish to declare that the two aforementioned photographs are genuine.

AND I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

DECLARED at Falmouth this)
)
 Fourteenth)
)
 day of *November* 1977)



Before me,


A Solicitor *2* (S.T.H. HOSKING)

"The object depicted is certainly not a tree branch, a trick of the light or an effect of uneven processing. The lighting comes from behind, and a little to the right of the photographer; and the foreshortening of the water shows that the object was photographed from a considerable distance through a long focus lens. Under magnification a small 'reptilian' head is seen looking to the right of the photographer. It has a wide mouth, partly open, and light is strongly reflected from the lower lip, which is presumably wet. There is an indication of two eyes and a stubby 'nose'. The head is attached to a long neck whose girth increases as it approaches the water. The neck is smooth and is strongly reflective, and appears to be paler in colour on its lower side. Its course can be traced for some inches below the surface until the turbidity of the water obscures it. The image of the submerged part is distorted by the surface wavelets, and these distortions are entirely naturalistic. There is even a wavelet that has been thrown back by the left side of the neck and caught the light of the sun.

"It is not possible to say from a single still transparency exactly what the photograph represents. The obvious explanation is that the photograph depicts a living creature strongly resembling a Plesiosaurus. However, it could be a hoax. For example, a diver might have made a model of the head and neck and be holding it above the water while he himself was submerged. A third possibility is that the photograph is not of an outdoor scene at all, but is a reduction of an imaginative painting executed by a competent artist. To produce a sufficiently deceptive painting would require great skill and a detailed knowledge of the effects of light reflected from, and transmitted through, rippled water; and it is just these effects that are so impressive in the photograph.

The report concludes by stating that while the alternative explanations put forward are not very plausible, they can only be excluded by a study of any independent evidence that may be available.

I am grateful to Tony Shiels, Dr Vernon Harrison and T.D. who obtained their permission for NIS to present this evidence, for our members to read and make up their own minds about its value as with the other reports of sightings. Personally I feel there can be no doubt as to the validity of Tony Shiels photographs.

'Pursuit' Magazine, U.S.A.

The Winter 78 edition of 'Pursuit' - the Journal of the Society for the investigation of the Unexplained, contains an article about Loch Ness. Their writer had been to the loch in an attempt to talk to some of the Nessie hunters, but the only one he had interviewed was Frank Searle. However he did talk to Ronnie Bremner, who in his capacity of owner of the Drumnadrochit Hotel, (which acts as a message centre for some of the hunters) meets many of the searchers. Frank Searle now operates from the Foyers marine area, where he has a 'Frank Soarle Exhibition'. There has been a great change in his

outlook over the years. When he first came to the loch he lived as a virtual recluse in a hidden tent close to the water a mile or two from Dores. His stated intention was to 'see' one of the creatures. Since then he has acquired cameras, and a taste for tourists. He produced a number of 'monster' pictures over the years, but there was some doubt as to the validity of them. This all came to a head in 1976 in the Scottish press, when it was suggested that there was evidence to prove that some of Searles pictures were faked.

Odds and Ends

*** With reference to my (NIS No.26) 'horsie on the water' story. I have been sent a piece from a radio programme broadcast on BBC Radio 4, July 77, in it Alec Menzies (of Temple Pier) was being interviewed. As a boy of about 15 years he had been helping his father, who was village blacksmith, shoe a mare belonging to Andrew Urquhart. Old Andrew spoke mostly Gaelic, and this day he was telling Alec's father that he had seen the 'water horse' when asked what it was like he answered that it had a head just like "'shornits' there" 'Shornits' was what he called his mare, and is Gaelic for 'Jessie'. Alec concluded "now I can remember that distinctly, although at that time there was no furore about the Monster.... it was about 1916, you see."

In the Loch Ness Assn of Explorers 'Commentary No.1' T.D. has also sent me an account of work done in Loch Rannoch by the British Sub-Aqua Club, which he filmed. They have raised a Victorian Steam Yacht, of 54 tons and 90ft. length, from a depth of 100 feet into water of 30 feet depth. Further work will proceed at this depth and it is hoped to get the vessel afloat again, after lying on the bottom since 1882. It could be that the BSAC will investigate the possibility of raising the 'zulu' in Urquhart Bay, which is of potential maritime interest.

Jean Berton wrote from France, sending his subscription, and news of his newly published book Les Monstres du Loch Ness et d'ailleurs. He is also starting a series of talks, to (as he puts it) help educate the French.

The Fortean Times have changed their address, it is now c/o Dark They Were & Golden Eyed, 9-12 St. Annes Court, London W1, England.

A large pure-bred Alsatian dog was taken into custody by Inverness police on 3rd May. It had spent at least three days sitting on a rock close to the shore two miles south of Lochend. It was staring into the water and barking. Police were concerned that its owner may have gone into the loch and not returned. They asked for anyone with information to come forward.

Once more that is all for this Nessletter. Please remember news and views are needed, my address is still, Huntshildford, St. Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham, DL13 1RQ. Telephone Wearhead 359. Subscription rates are £1.75 U.K. \$ 7.00 U.S.A. & Canada.

Rip.