

Ness Information Service

Nessletter No.30

October 1978

Expeditions

Tim Dinsdale, 38th (Private) Expedition, Loch Ness June 12th - July 27th 1978: quotes from his newly founded Loch Ness Association of Explorers Commentary No.2'

'Phase One of this expedition was taken up with the making of a short uncomplicated film for US educational childrens TV, The Big Blue Marble programme, which is apparently funded by industry, producing batches of filmlets on interesting subjects which go out on channel 13, and to foreign countries. The making was a success, with Phillip, a 12 year old lad from Edinburgh acting the part of Monster Sceptic, and Caroline a 13 year old local girl, that of Monster Witness. Both children had bicycles, and the film director John Macdonald had them cycling round talking to different people, including Bob Rines at Drumnadrochit, Fr Gregory and a trio of Abbey schoolboys, and TD aboard 'Water Horse'. Caroline had in fact had a good sighting off Fort Augustus last November of a two humper, with head and neck uplifted, lasting about 15 minutes. Three local girls watched it.

'Phase Two: the first two weeks in June were taken up with some serious monster-watching from the boat, through terrible weather, rain and wind - but it produced some good new sighting reports; a lecture in Inverness for a group of scientists from Bemidji State University, Minnesota; and interviews with a journalistically inclined American professor, and one for an amateur (award winning) super - 8 sound film maker. It also helped to cement local friendships (largely via the lounge-bar at the Lovat Arms) and good local monster hunting relations are so important.....

'Phase Three: commenced in mid July with a long flog up-loch to Urquhart Bay in the teeth of an easterly, and a heart-stopping wallow to Lochend next day in the wake of a westerly. Forces were then joined with colourful, dramatic annual high-technology, underwater activities of the Boston based Academy of Applied Science in Urquhart Bay, until the end of the month. During this time much brilliant electronic work was done in grouping massive strobe-light/synched cameras and trigger sonars under the main raft platform. Also extensive sonar mapping (Prof. Harold Edgerton) of the Lochend 'stone-circles' was undertaken, and many hours of diving put in by scientists, geologists, archaeologists, to determine their origin, using 'Hunter' the Academy workboat. More mapping was done later by Marty Kleins team, most ably assisted by Hamish MacDonald out of Fort Augustus with the Abbey School's navy diesel cutter, which proved an ideal platform for towing the heavy sonar 'fish'. Results included the re-finding of the sunken aircraft at Lochend (now about 200ft down) and a stunningly spectacular sonar 'picture' of a large moving 'target' deep in the watercolumn making a wake and turbulence comparable to that of a small submarine. Checks with the Caledonian Canal Office in Clachnaharry proved there was no submarine in transit in the loch.

Jeffrey Watson,

returned to the loch for another visit on the weekend of 2nd - 3rd of September. He cycled down the north shore, stopping for periods of watching at various points, he reached Foyers late Saturday night after travelling round by Fort Augustus and Whitebridge. After spending Sunday morning around the Foyers Bay area, he started along the southern shore for Dores, intending to get to Inverness for the train south. He planned to stop and watch from various points along the road, as on the previous day. One of his first selected stopping places was the fairly high section between Foyers power station and Inverfarigaig. After watching for about 30 minutes, he noticed near the far shore of the loch a waveform which was developing; this was about opposite Inverfarigaig. At first he thought it was one of the various phenomena created by the wind etc.. He then realised that the waveform had begun to develop, at times quite rapidly, to the right. Realising this was unusual he started taking photographs with a Chinon 35 mm SLR camera with a 200 mm lens. The wake now extending a fair way along the shore and began to move across the loch. He was now certain that the wake was being made by an animate object, - for two reasons. Firstly, no apparent object could be seen causing the wake, and secondly, although there were small boats in the area they were moving in the usual up/down loch direction parallel to the shoreline. By now the wake was extending roughly at right angles to the opposite shore, and by the time he had taken his second photograph, the wake had a distinctive vee pattern; the twin arms becoming more evident as the wake increased in length. That at times the object causing the wake was travelling he estimated at speeds of ten miles an hour. As it headed out towards the centre of the loch he noticed a small dark object at the head of the wake, from time to time. He had by now taken six photographs, and the wake's length was quite extensive, although the rear portions were dying away. He thought the object which was appearing from time to time was about 2ft long and 1ft long and rounded in shape. The wake had come some two thirds the way across the loch by the time he lost sight of it. It had moved into an area of slightly more disturbed water closer to the southern shore. He estimated it was about 950 yards away when he first noticed it and had increased to some 1100 yards distance when it faded away. It had traversed the loch in a diagonal manner towards Inverfarigaig, during which time Jeffery had taken eight photographs. He had drawn the wake to the attention of a family parked nearby, one of whom had watched it through a pair of 10 x 50 binoculars and reported seeing 'a finlike' object at the head of the wake. The sighting occurred at approximately 2.10 p.m. and lasted about two minutes. The loch surface was fairly calm, there being ripples or small waves nearer the southern shore. Weather was dry and bright but there was a cover of cloud. Photographs were taken on 400 asa film.

It is hoped to have these pictures examined and enlarged, as the small object appears in at least one of them. It may be possible to identify what it was, or perhaps see a portion of a creature's back.

Jonathan Long

Also visited the loch in September and was able to spend a week there. He based himself at the Foyers Hotel, watching from nearby, from dawn (5.30 a.m.) till breakfast; moving along the loch to just south of Inverfarigaig for watching later in the day. This was his first visit to the loch, and he was very eager and shot off film on swans, small boats, waves etc.. It was, he says, good practice in the use of camera and in getting to know the pitfalls of monster hunting. He found that in the week he was able to get the 'feel' of the loch and a pretty good impression of places and people, he uses the word 'mystique' in relation to the loch. He had no first hand success with the creatures but was able to speak to some local people who had. He found the Foyers Hotel proprietor and staff very pleasant and helpful even though he was keeping unusual hours. It was from the proprietor, Mr MacDougal, that he heard of a very interesting report. Some two weeks earlier (which puts it early September) one of the workers at the Foyers Hydro Station, who had been there for nine years and was a total cynic, had seen a hump. It was the 'size of a cruiser' about 40 yards away from him, in the early morning, travelling against wind and waves, and he is now certain there are large animals in Loch Ness. Jonathan says he had a very enjoyable time and is now planning for next year - for a month he hopes.

Joseph W. Zarzynski,

I have word from Joe concerning his work on Lake Champlain. He devoted the full summer to his work on lake monsters, spending one complete week on the Vermont side of Champlain doing shore watching. He was also part of a special schooner cruise outfitted on Lake Champlain to look for 'Champ'. The schooner was the 'Richard Robbins'. Its owner Kempton Webb (a professor of Geography at Columbia University in NYC) asked Joe to co-ordinate this cruise to specifically search for 'Champ'. The cruise lasted from August 21st - 26th, the craft is a two masted vessel of some 80 feet in length. They had no sightings, but it had been enjoyable time for everyone.

To date Joe has collected 84 sightings of the Champlain creatures - 36 being 'longnecks' (reports of head and neck). He has several more which he is trying to try to verify. There were three sightings this summer which he is diligently trying to hunt down. Interested members may get further information from him at, P.O. Box 34, Wilton, NY, USA 12866.

Res Bureaux Bulletin

Since September 1976 the above has been published and circulated among interested parties in a general exchange of Fortean news and happenings. It has now been decided to open up subscriptions to anyone who while not being able to do any active work on such matters, is wishing to be kept in touch with events in Canada and abroad. It is issued on a tri-weekly basis and contains news of recent events, brief reviews of historical events, and notes of special interest to investigating Fortean. An annual subscription is offered for \$10.00 Canadian, anywhere at printed paper rate, or a single copy at 60c. The address is; Box 1598, Kingston, Ontario K7L 5C8, Canada.

Odds and Ends

*****Address; Lewis Dickinson, P.O. Box 212, Warren, R.I. 02885, U.S.A., who was a member of the old LNI would like any other ex-members to drop a line, or any other NIS member.

*****Rain; in common with many other areas Fort Augustus had the wettest September since records were first kept at the Abbey 86 years ago. There were more than seven inches (177 mm); however the maximum temperature of 65 degrees Fahrenheit was also the highest on record.

*****Alsation; the dog which was taken into custody by the Inverness police, after spending three days on a rock watching Loch Ness, has been reunited with its owners. It had been sold and then ran away from its new owner. It has been taken back by its previous owner, we are glad to report.

Once more that is all for this Nessletter, please remember your news and views are important, please let me have them, my address is still:-
R.R.Hepple, Huntshildford, St.Johns Chapel; Bishop Auckland, Co.Durham, DL13 1RQ. Tel. Wearhead 359. Subscription rates are U.K. £1.75, U.S.A. & Canada \$7.00.

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