

Dolphins

I have little new news about this project. Work is going on at the loch in preparation for their intended arrival, but it seems to be going slowly. They are going to be kept at the North East end of the loch, in the Dochfour area. This does not seem to be the ideal place for them, as it will take about 10 minutes to swim to the loch proper and of course they will have to come back. Taking 20 minutes, at least, of their limited time in the loch. This situation may have been forced on the project organisers. There has been a great deal of local criticism about the proposal to use dolphins in the loch and it may have caused problems in finding a suitable site to house them.

The Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, in association with the British branch of the World Federation for the Protection of Animals have issued a statement in which the use of dolphins in Loch Ness is criticised as unnatural and objectionable. They urge as many people as possible to write in protest to the organiser, Dr. Robert Rines, President of the Academy of Applied Science, in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Society points out that in their natural habitat dolphins swim long distances in warm seas. While training methods may not be inhumane, the two dolphins concerned will have to become accustomed to the low temperature of the water in Loch Ness, quite unlike that to which they are used at present in Florida. The journey over is fraught with danger for the animals, they have to be sprayed to be kept moist and warm. On arrival they will have to acclimatise to fresh water.

The Society asks "Who can assert with confidence that these animals will not suffer? We do not believe that man is justified in exploiting wild animals for an enterprise such as this and we are confident that a large body of opinion will support our view". The statement ends by stressing that if there is such a creature as the Loch Ness Monster, its well-being will not be increased by the disturbance caused by the search.

Nevertheless work goes on, and the Academy of Applied Science's team will be at the loch this year dolphins or not. Among those coming will be Peter Byrne and his wife Celia Killeen who some NIS members will associate with the Bigfoot investigation, which takes us on to the next item.

Bigfoot

At the end of June The Bigfoot Information Centre and Exhibit situated in the Visitor Centre, Port Marina Park, Hood River, Oregon, will close; the Bigfoot Newsletter will also go out of print. For anyone interested they have various items for sale, these are. A complete set of the 57 back issues of Bigfoot News, with an index, and maps of sighting and footprint findings and a Bigfoot bibliography, \$27.50 postpaid. 'The Search for Bigfoot'; A paperback book of 224 pages, by Peter Byrne. It is the story in a factual manner of the Bigfoot past and present. \$3.00 postpaid. Plaster casts; First copy of an original that is believed by researchers to be a genuine footprint. Legend; A 35mm professionally made sound film strip. This 20 minute documentary is a serious look at the Bigfoot phenomenon, and is educational in theme. The soundtrack contains vocalisations that may well be that of a Bigfoot. \$35.00 postpaid. The Bigfoot Beltbuckle; A brass, finely engraved belt buckle; on the front the artists impression of a Bigfoot, a giant hair-covered fossil man, moving swiftly through the Northwest. There are notes on the back. \$10.00 postpaid.

The Bigfoot Picture Collection; A set of 20 35mm coloured transparencies, suitable for projection, private lectures etc. The collection is accompanied by fully descriptive literature. \$12.50 post paid. All orders must be addressed to: Order Dept. Bigfoot Centre, P.O. Box 777, Hood River, Oregon 97031.

Loch Morar

The Loch Morar Survey is to extend its scope and now becomes the Loch Ness and Loch Morar Project. A small party were at Loch Ness for just over a week at Easter. They were concerned with finding a suitable base camp and possible places for outstations. They are going to extend their activities slowly feeling their way carefully. It is not to be a 'Loch Ness Investigation' style expedition. There will be no surface camera watch as such but obviously with personnel around the loch they will not have their eyes closed. They intend to run scientific programmes of a similar type to those they carried out on Loch Morar. Where, incidently, they will be supporting a scientific expedition this year. In coming seasons it is intended to obtain core samples from the bottom in deep water. Sonar work will be undertaken and it is hoped to run a project using underwater cameras, once again in the deep parts of the loch. It was towards these ends that the group at the loch over Easter carried out work with a hydrographic sounder. They were attempting to find the deep 'hole' reported by Vickers submarine 'Pisces' in 1969. Until that time the previously accepted maximum had been 754 feet in the region of Castle Urquhart. 'Pisces' using her echo-sounding equipment while submerged reported a depth of 820 feet off the castle, and then went on to find a place of 975 feet somewhere below the 'Cobb' memorial. Strangely the Loch Ness/Morar party could find no deeper place than 220 metres; they had the reported position of the 'Pisces' deep places but despite very thorough square searches of the areas involved could not find either of them. It is important for them to know the depth of water they are working in, for example it is no use dropping a corer on a 750 feet long cable in 800 feet of water. They are to contact Vickers again and verify figures and references. There is a great deal of work to be done at Loch Ness and it is hoped to make a start this summer with a small programme.

The Loch Ness & Loch Morar Project is now open for membership. The stated aims are to identify unknown creatures in Scottish freshwater lochs, and to contribute to scientific knowledge of the freshwater environment and develop methods for doing so. The second aim, it is stressed, is as important as the first. I believe membership fees are £5.00 and £2.00 junior, it is intended to publish bulletins while fieldwork is going on and an annual report. Members will be allowed to visit the expedition in the field and may apply to be accepted as field staff. The address to which anyone interested should apply for a prospectus and membership form is Miss Andrea Baynton, 11 Clyde Gardens, St. George, Bristol.

Wave Power

It is interesting that at this time of energy crisis to note that the wave power project at Dores on Loch Ness is still under way. I have word from Dick Raynor, whose sequence of film taken in 1967 is still one of the more important pieces of evidence for the creatures. He has been working with the wave power team since last September, doing boat work and diving around the rig. The important thing, from our monster hunting point of view that is, is the use of closed circuit television. They have a 60 foot tall pylon standing in 30 feet of water overlooking their equipment in Dores Bay. On top of the mast is a remotely controlled television camera which can be tilted and panned, it also has a zoom lens of about 150mm. In addition on the pylon are a spotlight and a back-up still camera. This is all operated from the shore where there are monitor and video-recorder facilities. The recorder has a time lapse mode and can be set to make a tape last for 10, 20, 40 or 80 hours maximum. The purpose of

this unit is to enable the wave power team to monitor their line of 'nodding ducks' at almost any time of day or night. Over the years Dores bay has produced a number of Nessie sightings and if, or when, it happens again this television camera set-up could prove invaluable.

I remember one of the features of the L.N.I. expeditions were the after dinner discussions of the best means of conducting the hunt. These ranged from the silly, find the plug and pull it out, to the reasonable, one of which was closed circuit television cameras at half mile intervals and a central monitoring room. It seems that we now have at least one camera, although its reason for being there is not the Loch Ness creatures.

Jeffrey Watson

I recently had a visit from Jeffery, we talked 'monster' for almost twelve hours. He is very keen, earnest and anxious to get something done at Loch Ness. He was fortunate to get a series of still photographs of a wake in 1978 (NIS 30 & 32). He was back at the loch for a weekend in May and is hoping to get back again late in July. He would like to get a surface camera watch organised for next season. The people concerned would be self sufficient, providing their own transport, equipment and food and shelter. But would be at pre-selected areas of the loch, and in contact with each other, possibly every day. Anyone interested in such an effort should contact J.Watson, 88 Eltham Rd, Lea Green, London, SE12 8UE. Tel. 01-852-3033. or myself. I feel this type of effort could be worthwhile and have suggested similar ideas from time to time in Nessletters, without any great response.

Tim Dinsdale

Tim sent me a copy of his LNA Commentary No.3, dated June 1st 1979. With the start of a new season he looks back over recent events to see what progress has been made. The assessment of any new material is a slow progress, and Tim points out that results reach the television news or newspapers long after the gathering of it. Thus the scrap of super-8 colour film shot by Gwen Smith in August 1977 did not receive its private viewing until January 1978 in London, or on television until February 1979. Where it was considered with interest, but reserve.

The controversial 'Doc' Shiels still pictures of what appears to be head and neck in colour and with good definition were also taken in 1977. They have been the subject of various magazine articles, with the result people either admit they are the best still pictures ever taken and thus enormously important; or declare they are false and therefore enormously unimportant. Tim is in the former group and looks forward to new pictures in support of them, hopefully on movie film.

Tim then looks at the sonar results of 1978, which took in the stone circles at Lochend, which may after all only be barge spill from the original canal workings. Then on to the relocated sunken aircraft in 200 feet of water, since dived on by the Royal Navy. Finishing with the one impressive target, a large turbulent wake deep in the water column, as great as that from a small submarine. The Klein sidescan sonar made this contact, and was brought in by Bob Rines' Academy of Applied Science.

Looking ahead, on the eve of new endeavours, Tim introduces the possibility of the two dolphins which may be brought over from Florida in an attempt to obtain new close-up underwater photography of one of the creatures. Providing permissions can be obtained and the logistics worked out. Also there will be the

usual scatter of ardent long range photographers from shore, like Jeff Watson. In addition there are the somewhat decrepit old hands like himself who will be waterborne for long periods on private search-and-find expeditions.

From Tim's personal viewpoint, and a 20th year of such field ops. which have taken him more than twice round the earth in getting to and fro, and through countless colourful experiences, and some anxious moments on the water, the prospect is both daunting and exotically challenging. The beauties of Loch Ness, the weather, the human drama, the complications and the magic of anticipation remain as fresh and stimulating as ever.

Tail Ends

*****Omni. The new magazine 'Omni' has a very interesting article titled 'Return of Loch Ness' in Volume 1 no.8 of May 1979. It is an account of the setting up of the Academy of Applied Science's 1978 expedition. It also covers much of the background detail, touching on such things as the sonar work that has been done at the loch and Tim Dinsdale's film footage shot in 1960, right back to the first report by Saint Columba's biographer. A very good, balanced article, in spite of a small inaccuracies.

*****Holly. Holly Arnold has returned to Foyers after taking part in an expedition to the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean (NIS 29). It was a marine biological expedition involving the Army, Navy, RAF and Royal Marines. She took part in the diving and did her share as a guard against sharks, which she says were more of a nuisance than anything else as they had always to be watched when they were around. She also made a collection of Nudibranches (seaslugs) for the British Museum.

It is a great shame that the British Museum will not accept her work on Loch Ness and its creatures in the same way.

***** Visitor Centre. In the last few months there has been under consideration by the Highland Regional Council's Planning Committee a proposal for a Visitor Centre and Marina in the Rhu area at Invermoriston. It was proposed to have an exhibition centre with a shop and restaurant with parking for up to 200 cars and coaches. The marina envisaged a boat yard and workshop and mooring facilities for 40 or 50 boats the whole project to be sited on some 12 acres of land. After much discussion and on the site visits and after local objections had been heard, the committee has turned down the scheme as a whole but has said that providing certain conditions are met the visitor centre alone would receive favourable considerations.

*****Petrol. In the present climate of petrol shortage there is a fear of being unable to get petrol in the Highlands. This is refuted by the Highlands and Islands Development Board, who state that there is an adequate supply. They have also set up a 'petrol line' which enables tourists to telephone and get up-to-date information on where petrol may be obtained anywhere in the Highlands. The Inverness number is 0463 34353, line open 0900-2000 Mon-Fri, 0900-1900 Sat, 1400-1800 Sun.

Well once more the end of another Nessletter. Must get packed I'm off to Loch Ness for the last two weeks in July. We'll be in a white Bedford Dormobile CXG 583K (Nellie). Please remember your news and views are needed, my address is:- R.R.Heppele, Huntshieldsford, St. Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1AQ. Tel. Wearhead 359. Subs are U.K. £1.75. U.S.A. Canada \$7.00.

Stop Press

There has been a news report on BBC radio that 'Susie' one of the dolphins being trained in Florida for the Loch Ness project has died.