

Ness Information Service
Nessletter No.38
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Editor's Note

I have to offer you all an apology as I start on another year of Nessletters. Owing to staff problems in the little firm that does my duplicating the last two Nessletters have been late reaching you. This problem has been sorted out and we should now be able to get back to normal.

From one apology to another, as costs of producing and posting the Nessletters increase I must ask for an increased subscription. Up to £2.00 for the British Isles, and \$8.00 for North America. Other areas on a similar scale will be worked out on application.

Now let's get on. Once more may I thank you for being members, as I usually end the Nessletters, you are the NIS, your news and views are very necessary I am glad to report that I seem to be getting more response as the years pass. Please remember if you are planning to go to Loch Ness, or any other of the 'monster' locations, if you let me know, I can include the information in a Nessletter and then a little follow up of your trip. I always feel it is good to know that when most of us are stuck with our day to day life there is still someone interested watching the loch. From time to time I include the names and addresses of members interested in getting in touch with others to correspond about the subject, or even to meet each other. I do not know how successful they have been but if you would like to try it, let me know.

Satellite

A novel scheme has been put forward by Mr Parker of Partech Electronics Ltd. (NIS 35). It is for the monitoring of large volumes of the loch by satellite. The proposal is for three, or more, buoys to be moored in the loch. These buoys will be equipped with transmitters and a varied selection of sensors. Over the years he has been working on Loch Ness, Mr Parker has been able to establish the parameters of the area in which he requires the sensors to operate. Measurements of light, sounds, wave actions, are among those it would be possible to monitor. Also the movement of anything in the water, and how large it is, although the equipment should be able to distinguish fish from larger objects. The sensors would be suspended from soccer-ball sized buoys, with battery power capable of lasting a year. All that would be visible above the surface is a small stainless steel aerial. Information gathered in an hour could be transmitted in a three second pulse. In that time the satellite could receive as many as 32 separate items of information. The satellite concerned is the Tiros-N, part of the French Argos Satellite communication system. Tiros-N then beams the information to ground-telemetry receiving stations in France or America, then it comes through data processing computers in Toulouse, France, or Houston, USA. It is then possible to dial a Telex phone number and get the information that has been gathered in Loch Ness without leaving your office. The cost of this project works out at about £2,000 for the buoys, with running costs of from £3 a day to £3 an hour depending on the amount of information required and satellite time needed.

If this project is put into operation the results will be very interesting. I have always been in favour of any work done to extend our knowledge of the loch. But I must admit to feeling that it may not help too much in the solving of the 'monster' problem. I am a keen supporter of the surface cine-photographer type of hunt. Over the years many people have done much in the way of sonar work in the loch. On a great many occasions positive results have been obtained, but we are no closer to identifying the animals. My thoughts on the matter are, until we are able to lay hands on a body or a live creature the next best evidence for identification is a sequence of very good cine-film. If a continuous under-water monitoring could produce evidence of a pattern of behaviour to enable cameras to be mounted in the correct places, ashore or underwater, it would be a tremendous achievement.

Ogopogo

Ritchie Benedict sent me the following article by Canadian Press. September 8th, 1979, Kelowna, B.C. An unidentified Alberta tourist could be in for a surprise when he screens the home movies of his holiday in the Okanagan area, believes a local resident who has spent years following the wake of a legend. Arlene Gaal said the film could contain some highly unusual wildlife footage and perhaps the best look ever recorded of Ogopogo, the creatures said to inhabit the depths of Lake Okanagan. Not only that, the film may reveal that not one but two of the creatures were visible on the surface of the lake near the shore. Gaal said in an interview, the sighting took place between August 12th and 15th and was witnessed by four or five carloads of passers-by. One of them Chris Clayton of Kelowna, captured the scene on an inexpensive box camera which yielded only a distant fuzzy photo of some turbulence on the water. Clayton noticed another onlooker recording the scene with a movie camera, but did not think of getting the man's name and other particulars. He was described as middle-aged balding and was driving a two-tono Dodge with Alberta license plates towing a trailer. Gaal is hoping the man will stop forward and volunteer his film for her research. "If he's taken any footage of it, he was close enough to get very good photographs," she said, noting that "it would be held in the strictest confidence for scientific purposes." The best look yet at the monster was recorded in a frame enlargement of home movie film shot in 1968. Gaal said it shows the outline of a reptilian creature estimated at anywhere from 15 to 20 metres (? my question mark, Rip) in length. Scores of eyewitness sightings back up the description that can be made out from the indistinct photo. The witnesses to the August 1979 sighting said their attention was drawn by some unusual movements in the still waters of the lake. They stopped for a look, and could make out a large creature swimming near the surface. Moments later, another ripple appeared at another point in the lake and moved rapidly towards the first. The ripples met, and Gaal said the scene was likened by Clayton as two elephants enjoying a mudbath as two large creatures with dinosaur-like heads, long tapering necks and round stream-lined bodies, thrashed playfully in the water. The scene lasted about ten minutes before the playmates submerged. Sightings of two creatures at once are not unknown, but sufficiently rare to warrant an extra measure of excitement. While Gaal is anxious to track down the movie-taking Albertan, she also has launched a local hunt for the man aboard a small pleasure boat near the spot where the monsters met. The boat, seen in Clayton's photo, started its engine and took off at top speed moments after the creatures surfaced. The frightened sailor probably has the honour of seeing Ogopogo from the closest range on record. Summer is usually the best time for Ogopogo sightings, the one just ended has been no exception. In May, a local couple strolling by the lake saw one of the creatures up with its head and neck fully out of the water. The first recorded sighting of a large creature in the deep waters of the mountain lake dates back to 1875 and they have occurred regularly enough since then to become almost commonplace. There is nothing as yet approaching definitive evidence that the creatures are anything more than illusions, overweight trout or some other imposter, or even an elaborate century-old hoax, even though the reports of other monsters around the world lend credence to the reports.

Gaal, who has written two books on her search for the monster, said she is not deterred by those who doubt or deny the existence of the creature. "There are sceptics who will disbelieve anything. Then there are those who will believe almost anything. Most people will believe something when they see it. My aim is to just set down any facts that are available and document them as fully as possible and let people decide for themselves."

I have no other sources to check the above details, but Arlene Gaal is an experienced hand with monster reports and should know what's what. Never-the-less I must leave readers to make up their own minds.

Knk-Kol

NIS 33 carried a story about Lake Labinkir in Siberia. At the end of the article was a brief mention of Lake Kok-Kol in southern Kazakhstan. The Times of February 16th 1980 had an article about this lake, with more facts, also an official explanation of the strange happenings. Anatoly Pechersky, a Soviet geographer, reported several sightings of a strange animal. It was described in the newspaper Kommunist'skaya Pravda, by Mr Pechersky, as a huge snake-like creature. He estimated the body to be 50 feet long with a head about 6 feet long. Two years later, in 1977, a student expedition was mounted to investigate the reports. Since then more sightings have been reported, and a further expedition organised with the support of the Zoological Institute of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences.

The Soviet creatures, like those in Loch Ness, would seem to be large and unidentified, but there the similarity ends. The creatures reported in Lake Labinkir (NIS33) have the reputation of being carnivorous, Those in Lake Kok-Kol are reported to have the same tendencies. Sheep go missing while grazing near the shore, and even humans go missing. Two young brothers are reported to have disappeared recently, while swimming in the lake. They are also credited with the ability to make noises ranging from eerie whistles to one that resembles a strangled camel cry.

A Kazakh scientific journalist, Sergi Ibrahimov, who accompanied the latest expedition to the lake first heard the monster's cry when he spent a holiday at Kok-Kol with his sons in 1974. The scientific journal Vokrug Sveta carried a report of his sighting.

"Suddenly all the birds fishing in the lake flew off and, amid awful screeching, circled above one point of Kok-Kol. I could not understand their behaviour as the lake seemed perfectly calm. Then unexpectedly, the water began to heave and wave some 21 to 24 feet from where I was standing. The zig-zags appeared on the lake surface, which seemed to eddy and whirl as if a huge snake-like body were swimming just below, I estimated its length at least 45 feet. The creature with the snake-like body, seemed to be raising itself from the lake and the waves broke over it." Sergei went on to say he was convinced it was about to raise its head from the water and during the several minutes of the sighting completely forgot the scientific scepticism a researcher is supposed to show.

Vokrug Sveta has now presented the findings of the scientific expedition sent to resolve the mystery once and for all. V. Volchkov, a scientific officer of South Kazakh Geological Institute, has come up with the explanation to the sightings. He has established that the floor of Kok-kol is a deep crater filled by an Ice Age moraine. In such lakes the water often burrows under the lake floor. There are many of these siphons and channels under lake Kok-Kol, and some of them have been uncovered and measured by the expedition. The rest is obvious. Depending on the underground hydrological system the channels beneath the lake draw in water from the lake. The intake of water can be weaker; this is when small whirlpools appear, or the surface of the lake shows a snake-like motion resembling the body of a deep water monster. However, the intake of water can be most violent, and on such occasions the under-floor siphons can draw in air as well as water, giving rise to the strange sounds. This would also explain the disappearance of animals from the edge of the lake, and of strong swimmers in the water.

This is a very interesting account, but I feel that instead of siphons one could put, otters, logs, floating mats of vegetation, etc. While all these explanations must be taken into account, I think it is a mistake to use any one of them as a complete explanation of all sightings.

NIS at Loch Ness

I have word from Jeff Watson concerning his intended 'hunting' schedule for 1980. He will be at Loch Ness for two weeks from 5th May 80. Working from a base in the Invermoriston area he is planning to watch mainly on the northern shore, with emphasis on river mouths. He hopes to return to the loch on the 12th of July for a further 3 weeks.

He will use a base in the Altsigh area, and be watching in similar locations to his earlier visit. At the beginning of August he will transfer his attentions to Loch Morar for two weeks. From a base in the vicinity of the village of Morar, he hopes to do some watching from various places on the North shore of the loch. On his way back to Loch Ness in the third week of August he will spend a week at Loch Shiel. During this, his first, visit to this loch he hopes to be based near to Glenfinnan, watching along the South shore to Polloch. He is also intending to do some local background research into possible sightings. The 23rd of August should find Jeff back at Loch Ness for a further three weeks. Once again working from the Altsigh base, in a similar manner to his previous visits.

Already this year Jeff has spent some time down at Falmouth Bay, in Cornwall, researching into 'Morgawr'. He spent time watching around the mouth of the Helford River, between the points known as Rosemullion Head and Toll Point. While there he shot off a frame or two on a humped object at some distance from him. The resultant prints are not very detailed, and Jeff says himself that it was probably driftwood. Also on the theme of sea-creatures he is planning to make a short trip to Barmouth Bay, in North Wales, which is another location which has produced reports of strange animals in the past. Jeff's year of very varied 'monster' hunting will be rounded off with another week down at Falmouth, perhaps in December.

He has also been doing research into the literature of folklore, as a basis for possibly finding further British lakes or sea locations, with a history of strange animals, that may be worth further investigation.

When Jeff visited me last year he was anxious to be able to add something to the general field of monster research. With his planned programme for this year he is certainly trying very hard.

Allison Rigg and Nick Sykes will be at the loch from April 12th to the 26th, and while there, they will be travelling by bicycle. I've no other means of identification. They also hope to be back some time in August.

Alan Morrison writes to say he hopes to visit the loch in early July. No exact date, as yet, but he hopes it will be for a fortnight.

Paul Covell has moved back to Pitlochry. Some members may remember that in previous years Paul has worked at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre. He is doing so again this year, any members passing through are invited to drop in and visit. He is also planning to get up to the loch for a number of trips. He is now driving a red Mini Clubman Estate, registration NTS 971 R, keep an eye open for it.

Rip Hepple & family. I hope to be at the loch for our holidays, from 28th July to 10th August. My vehicle is still a Bedford Dormobile, white with NIS symbol on the sides, Reg number CXG 583K. We will be based on the lochside near Abriachan, Books Etc.

UFO Directory: A directory of UFO & Strange Phenomena groups and publications is now available, price £1.00 including postage, from UFO NETWORK, 2 Ivian Court, Colney Hatch Lane, London N10.

"Justice and MacNessie", is a childrens book aimed at the 5 to 10 year olds. Written by Ruth R. Curtis, a retired Rhode Island teacher and Robert H. Rines. It is illustrated with pictures in four colours, and is due out in the USA in March.

"Alien Animals": by Janet and Colin Bord, published by Granada Publishing in hardback £7.95. It has chapters on, Lake Monsters, Giant birds & Birdmen, Black dogs, Mystery big-cats, and the Bigfoot (Yeti etc). I have not read it properly yet, but on leafing through it it seems to be a most comprehensive book. The authors have written a number of books on paranormal subjects.

Well thats the first Nessletter of another year. Please remeber your news and views are needed, after all you are NIS. Sorry once more about the delays and increase in subscriptions. (U.K. £2.00 N.America \$8.00), the address remains the same; R R Hepple, Huntshildford, St. Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Tel: Wearhead 359.