

Ness Information Service

Nessletter No 42

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Error

When reporting on the new exhibition to be mounted at the Invermoriston Loch Ness Camp Site, NIS 41 said that the Loch Ness and Loch Morar Project people did 'not' try to guide its content. This of course should have read, they did try to guide the content and lay-out.

Jeff Watson

I have had further word from Jeff concerning his expeditions this year. While in the Falmouth area in February this year, Jeff saw unidentified objects in the water, at various times. He took photographs of them, although the first two did seem to be inanimate. The slides of these two did show dark objects in the water but, as Jeff had first thought do seem to be driftwood, seaweed or some other flotsam. Also Jeff had watched the first object for some 40 minutes and the second for about 25 minutes. Which is a long time for an animate object to be observed, without showing signs of being animate. Two days later, on the 20th February, while watching in the Polgwiddden Cove area, Jeff saw an object some 50 yards off shore, he was able to watch it for about two minutes before it passed from view beyond the cove about 500 yards away from him. Some time later while watching from another point Jeff saw another object, which he kept under observation for about 90 minutes. Slides were taken of both these objects, and although they seemed to be different in some respects of size and shape it is possible that the same object was involved in both instances. It would seem that once more the object was inanimate debris of some sort.

Although Jeff has undertaken an extensive series of expeditions to various 'monster' locations in the British Isles, he has had no success with the animals this year. The above occasions being the only time he used his camera 'in anger'. Never-the-less he has had a successful year with the media, getting coverage in a number of newspapers and taking part in a radio 'phone-in' programme.

Jim Green

Jim wrote to me after his trip to the loch from 18th August to 2nd September. He believes he had a 'wake' sighting, and from the report it would seem so. He was standing in the new car park at Strone above Castle Urquhart at 1302 hours on Saturday 23rd August 1980. Weather was bright, dry, with blue sky and the loch surface calm. Just behind the castle tower he spotted a group of white birds, as he thought at the time, fluttering close together on the surface of the water. About 10 birds the size of seagulls, maybe, because he is not an ornithologist. Anyway the birds moved quickly down the loch making a broad band of foaming white water, then just past the other end of the castle ruins the birds did not rise but all disappeared. It took a while for the penny to drop and for him to realise what had happened. The following Friday morning he met Tim Dinsdale on the point at Fort Augustus, and in course of the conversation Jim told him of the wake. Tim was very interested in the incident and taped Jim's account of it. He said he was certain that the surge of power, that Jim estimated at about 15 mph, was a creature racing along just beneath the surface. This has been the first tangible evidence of Nessie's existence that Jim has had after about 500 hours watching spread over the years since 1974.

Lake Bala

Mrs Wallis sent me a note about her trip to North Wales. While there on holiday she, and a friend, had visited the lake twice. On the first they were very disappointed as it was full of canoes, racing around all over the place. They went there another day and there was no canoe activity, she

says it is a beautiful lake, but small.

Mrs Barbara Death enclosed a letter with her subscription, this concerned Lake Bala. During the period 1960/70 she used to go there about twice a year, Easter and Summer. She compared it to Loch Ness and says it is very small and had nothing to stop you seeing almost all of it. During the time she spent there she never heard anything about strange animals, and unless it has changed a lot in ten years she would be surprised to find anything there.

Television

On the 7th October Independent Television screened the programme on lake monsters, the Loch Ness pieces of this programme had been filmed during July 1979. It was one of a thirteen week series by Yorkshire Television with the overall title of 'Arthur C Clarke's Mysterious World'. I feel that all the subjects in the series, which ran from Sea Monster, through Ancient Wisdoms, The Great Siberian Explosion, U.F.O's., etc., suffered from lack of time, as the programmes were just over 25 minutes in length. This was very much so in the Lake Monster programme, as in the pre-programme run up they mentioned over 60 locations world-wide, that have been reported to be the homes of strange water creatures. In the programme they started with Lake Okanagan, Ogopogo, with a report of a sighting in 1980. A group of people out in a motor boat saw what they described as an animal, they reported 14 foot long body with four limbs and tail, with a head that moved from side to side. Then there was a piece of film taken in 1968 on one of the Scandinavian lakes, this 'showed' a hump and wake. Unfortunately it was of the usual 'monster-film' quality, leaving a great deal to be desired in definition. They interviewed some of the Loch Ness eye-witnesses, and showed most of the still pictures and pieces of film. Roger Parker, of Partech, NIS 35 & 38, was also interviewed and gave an account of their work at the loch, including their success with sonar, which includes tracking one of the animals for one and a half hours one night. This was brought to an end at 5 o'clock in the morning, when the animal moved away out of range after someone aboard a cruiser moored near-by used the toilet, and seemingly the noise disturbed the animal.

The Academy of Applied Science was featured with a run down of their work over the years. The programme closed with some rather derogatory remarks about Lake Monsters in general, and the fact that the Japanese were unable to catch Nessie.

An interesting programme, but one that left me wanting so much more. I wondered how the 'average viewer' reacted to it, after all I, and other people who are widely read in the lake monster field, know most of the problems and some of the answers and could fill in the blanks in the programme.

Zarzynski

Joe Zarzynski sent me some more clippings and a copy of a rather important paper, a recently passed resolution to protect 'Champ'.

On October 5th 1980, he gave a lecture on 'Champ' at the Crown Point State Historic Site on Lake Champlain. During the lecture he called for the local people to approach their Towns' political hierarchy and ask for the ordinance that would protect the 'Champ' community. He pointed out that in 1969 Skamania County in the State of Washington enacted a piece of legislation that protected its 'bigfoot' community. Thus, there was some precedent for enacting protection for 'unknown' animals.

On October 6th 1980 the Village of Port Henry (located on the New York state side of Lake Champlain) acted on the recommendation of the local Chamber of Commerce (a Chamber member heard his lecture) and passed the resolution.

The document is full of 'whereas' and similar terms, but it does say that all endangered species are entitled to protection under both Federal and New York State laws, and 'Champ' being apparently one of a kind, and hence its protection from harm, abuse and annihilation is vital. It is then resolved by the Village Board of the Village of Port Henry that all the waters of Lake Champlain which adjoin the Village of Port Henry are declared to be off limits to anyone who would in any way harm, harass or destroy the Lake Champlain Monster.

Joe is very happy to have the document, which is unique, because he now has a precious paper so necessary to use to get his foot in the door, to impress upon other authorities the need to protect 'Champ.' Port Henry is only one of many towns along the 109 miles length of Lake Champlain. But it is a beginning and one he has worked so hard at for the past six years. He thinks that possibly we are on the eve of some type of greater form of environmental protection that will grant eternal protection to the community of the Lake Champlain Monsters.

Joe has also had word of two new 'Champ' sightings this year. On July 18th 1980 Thomas Westphal and his family were on the Vermont side of Champlain. They were cruising out to Gull Island from 'The Gut' and saw a large wake being produced in the lee of Knight Island. A coiled black snake-like object was seen at the head of the wake. They reported the creature to be about 30 feet in length. On September 13th 1980 Crystal Cadioux and Craig Mowry were in a car on Route 9, they saw something in the water 150 feet from the shore. Craig Mowry gave Joe the following details: They saw a long neck with a 'kidney bean' head moving slowly through the water, they could see that its back was darker than its front. A roughness was visible on its back, too. Craig put on the car headlights to get a good view, and as he did it 'scurried' off still above water into the darkness.

More Cousins

One of the clippings that Joe sent was from the Toronto Star of 29th July 1980, it featured a report from Lake Simcoe. The article starts by asking, has the Lake Simcoe moved its lair? It says that last week a storm forced Barrie officials to dump a million gallons of raw sewage into Kempenfelt Bay. Since then, it says, the monster has not been seen in the bay. Does this mean that they have a monster that shows up in a particular area at least once a week? (Rip). Anyway, it showed up one bay away in Cook's Bay, where it gave two fishermen a scare. John Claude Bergeron and his Uncle Gaston Bergeron were fishing in the bay last Sunday (27th July?), when they sighted "this big monster". It was about 300 feet from their boat, which they then brought to about 35 feet from the thing. John Claude said it was over 15 feet long and must have weighed close to 1000 pounds, it had a head two and a half times the size of a human's, a hump like a camel, and a tail seven feet long. While it looked like a fish it was not exactly a fish, there it was with eyes as big as a cow's jumping in the water for several minutes. Gaston, who has fished the lake for over 30 years, and fished deep sea as well, said he had never seen anything even similar to it
China

Another cutting from Joe, as well as a number of other sources, was of a Chinese creature. The Peking Evening News carried the report in early October. The 6,400 foot Baitoushan volcano is in the Jilin province near the North Korean boarder. The last time it erupted was in 1702. Near the top is a crater lake. The lake has an average depth 653 feet with an extreme depth of 1,184 feet, its four square mile surface is surrounded by towering cliffs, which break only in one place where the lake empties out in a waterfall. Since mid-August the staff of a weather station and visitors to the lake have reported five sightings of the creature. Witnesses say the creature has a flat snout, similar to a duck's bill, and an over-sized head like a buffalo. On one occasion witnesses were within 40 yards of the beast. Only its head was visible above the water, but they estimated the creature was much bigger than a buffalo (water), the head was some 15 feet above the surface. Seven people were watching the sunrise on 21st August, when they saw the dark head of the creature move rapidly over the mirror-like surface of the lake, it left 300 feet of disturbed water behind it. One very strange facet of this report is the fact that the weather station officials had never seen anything before August this year, and had no explanation as to why this should be.

African Dinosaur

News has come from various places, of the research that has been done on an African mystery. James Powell Jr., who has a degree in astronomy, and Roy Mackal, a biochemist who is a research associate in the University of Chicago's

Department of Biology, have made several research trips to the area of the Gabon and the People's Republic of the Congo. Roy has for many years done much good work on the Loch Ness problem, and his book, 'The Monsters of Loch Ness' is one of the better on the subject. For many years travellers in the jungles of Gabon and The Congo have heard tales of strange creatures in the swamps, they are described as having bodies about the size of an elephant, with smooth brownish-grey skin, a long flexible neck and long tail, with large, splayed, three-clawed feet. During their research Powell and Mackal have shown a series of pictures to natives, and the one that has been picked most often as resembling the creatures is one of a brontosaurus. The natives call it a 'Mokele-Mbemba', but Powell said the impression he got in the Gabon was that the animal was part of the native culture. They know about it but the trail did not seem too hot, it probably existed a generation or so ago but its range is shrinking. It was near a swamp in what was once the French Congo that Powell got the feeling that they were close, and this could be an area where the beasts still existed. Unfortunately they were running out of time and visas, and were unable to get an extension, so had to leave, but hope to return in August 1981. In 1959 there was a report of one of the animals being killed by members of a tribe of pygmies, near the Bai River. The natives told Mackal that three of the animals repeatedly tried to get into Lake Tele, local fishermen put up a stake fence to try to keep them out. One creature persisted and the native killed it with spears and it was cut up and presumably eaten. It would seem from reports that the animals spend the days in, or even underwater, and come out at nights to feed on land.

Puma

The 'Big Cat' that has been reported in the Cannich area (NIS 37) has been caught, or perhaps it has. On October 29th 1980 Mr Ted Noble, a farmer in the Cannich area, who has reported seeing a 'lioness' on his land on a number of occasions and who has had stock attacked, caught a large animal in a trap. Mr Noble, with the help of Mr Arthur Cadman, designed a cage trap, this was then built on a lonely hillside on the farm. It had a heavy drop-type door which was operated by pull wires, and was baited with sheep's heads. They had been baiting the trap since July without success although on one occasion the trap had been overturned on sprung. The police were called when the animal was found in the trap, and it was identified as a puma and arrangements were made for it to be taken to the Wildlife Park at Kincaig, near Aviemore. Now, the mystery deepens, the park director, Eddie Orbal, examined the puma and said he was sure it had not been in the wild for more than a few days, he also said that it had settled into captivity as if it was used to life in a cage. A few days later the police stated that they had investigated the situation and were sure that the animal had been living in the wild, and that samples taken from the puma after capture revealed that its previous meals had consisted of deer, sheep, and rabbit. So here the mystery rests for the time, Mr. Noble catches his puma, which he thinks is only one of three that are around, and the experts say, Ah-well, but yes, it looks like a puma doesn't it, but it can't be, no it's a mistake, or perhaps a hoax -- or, or. If a puma living wild in the Highlands of Scotland produces a reaction like this when it is captured, it highlights the problem of producing acceptable evidence of 'Nessie'.

Book

In October a book by Robert Rickard and Richard Kelly was published by New English Library. It is titled 'Photographs of the Unknown.' and has some 300 photographs, many previously unpublished, of such things as ghosts, UFO's, stigmata, poltergeists, lake monsters, psychic phenomena. Each photo is accompanied by details of when, where, who, took it, it is a very interesting book, with some remarkable photographs.

Bigfoot

I know NIS is primarily concerned with water creatures, but with the Bigfoot Newsletter ceasing publication in 1979, there has been no regular source of Bigfoot news. I have a news clipping concerning a Bigfoot sighting, courtesy Joe Zazynski. On Saturday night, October 4th 1980, Charles Fulton and his family were watching television, when one of their children said someone was turning the back-door handle. A short time later something rattled the front door. When Mr Fulton opened the door he was started to find a tall hairy

creature on the front porch. It was covered in long white hair, he could not see the face because it was above the 7 feet high door. It had hold of one of his roosters, which it dropped or threw away as it jumped off the porch and ran across the yard.. Mr Fulton fired two shots from a .22 pistol, after it with no apparent effect, at this point he said he saw glowing animal-like eyes. That is all there was, short and inconclusive, it makes you want to talk to Mr Fulton, let us hope that one of the interested Bigfoot investigators is on to it.

Sonar

The Daily Mirror of 10th October 1980 carried a short piece about a trawler using electronic fish-finding equipment as it passed through Loch Ness. The Skipper, Jim Bruce, said " I didn't believe in the monster, but what we saw on the screen of our now echo-sounder takes some explaining." The sounder registered what seemed to be a fish, but it was 300 feet long and 60 feet high, and it was at a depth of 720 feet. Those figures of 300 feet long and 60 feet high, are those given in the article, I only hope that it was an error, and should read 30 feet and 6 feet, otherwise it makes a nonsense of the whole thing.

Well that's another Nossletter, my thanks to all those who have contributed. Please remember you are NIS and your news and views are always needed, my address is still: Huntshildford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham, DL13 IRQ. Telephone Wearhead 359. Subscriptions: U. K. £2. U. S. A. Canada \$8.00

Rip