

NESS INFORMATION SERVICE

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Loch Ness

I have been in touch with the Loch Ness & Morar Project, and things would seem to be going well. After their publicity in one or two national newspapers they received several hundred replies from interested people. From these there has been a lot of follow up response. They will have sufficient crew members to operate from the last week in June, and on through July and August. The H. Q. site at Balacladaich Farm, by Dores, is operational and the organisation is sorting itself out. Any NIS members who are in the Loch Ness area are invited to visit at least, or possibly join in and offer help. The people to ask for on the site area, Adrian Shine or Bob Shepard or Sue Volk.

Tim Dinsdale

I have a brief note from Tim about his intended programme for the 1981 season. He will be making a number of trips to the loch as time and other commitments allow. I believe he will be shore based, in a small two berth caravan. He has designated this 'P3', which stands for 'Perambulatory Photographic Podule', His hunting has been water borne for many years, and he feels it is time for a change.

Caley Cruisers

Caley Cruisers have just equipped one of their boats with some £15,000's worth of sophisticated sonar gear. This craft, 'New Atlantis', is a five berth cruiser and is now available for hire by interested parties. The cost is £400 per week. Mr Jim Hogan, director of Caley Cruisers, believes that this scheme, which was his brainchild, will prove to be popular with scientist, students and school groups, although it is open to anyone who wishes to search for Nessie. They will have two sonar scanners and two echo sounders to record any moving or stationary underwater objects in the loch. The charts these pieces of equipment produce will be sent away for analysis. Anyone going on the cruiser will be given four hours of expert tuition on how the equipment works as well as being sent an instructional manual before they arrive. Then the parties will be able to cruise around the loch, eat and sleep aboard while carrying out their own survey. Mr Hogan feels that the service will fill a need, and has said that every year he has had reports of genuine sightings of the creatures. Tim Dinsdale has been involved in launching the project, and is confident that it will bring results. He says "I think it is an excellent idea, in the past sonar has only really been on the loch for a few days but this will be on board all the year round."

As with the Loch Ness & Morar Project, it is hoped that a definite pattern will emerge as to the animal's underwater behaviour. Then it would be possible to put cameras in situations where they have very good chances of success.

Roger Parker

I have no real news of his intended work this season, but have heard that he will be back up to the loch.

Theo Brown

I have had news from Theo, he is an Australian who has done research work on sharks, he worked at the loch for short periods during the 1978 and 1979 season. He has not returned since, although he had hoped to get to the loch last year. He will not make it this year either, he has been very ill. He is now making a recovery, but it will be some time before he is fully operational again. So he has no immediate plans to return to Loch Ness. I hope he will be able to get back before too long, as he has experimented with a method of attracting sharks, and has been trying to adapt it to Nessie. If it were to work, it would be a great step forward in the search for answers at Loch Ness.

Jean Berton

Jean, one of our French members, will be attending a summer course at the University of Edinburgh during August 1981. He hopes to be able to visit Loch Ness for weekends while there, he still has his white Ford, high top motor-home registration 9446.RC.72.

He is working on a grammar book of Scottish Gaelic in French as a thesis for a doctorate which he hopes to finish by the summer of 1982. The knowledge of language will enable

him to read whatever documents in Gaelic he may find on water-horses. He is still collecting legends of magic horses, water-horses, water-bulls etc., from all over the world. He has stories from the centre-east of France of a flying-horse, also a legend from Brazil of a Cavalo-Marinho (sea horse), and reports of Canadian Indians seeing 'water- buffalos'. It is interesting to consider through the ages, how wide-spread around the world are stories of strange horsey animals.

Paul Covell

Paul works at the Pitlochry theatre, where they are very busy opening the new building which replaces the old one. He hopes to make several short trips to Loch Ness this year, and has some thoughts about trying to get to Loch Morar. He expresses great interest in the Loch Ness & Morar Project's expedition, as he has met Adrian Shine, and was impressed by him.

Paul lives at Garden Cottage, Balnakeilly, Moulin, Nr Pitlochry. The telephone number is Pitlochry 3321., and any members passing through are invited to call, perhaps a telephone call before doing so would not be amiss.

Lake Champlain

Joe Zarzynski continues to keep me up to date with work on the Champlain front. He has three reported sightings so far this year. He has not had time to investigate them thoroughly but sent brief details. Three women residents of Port Henry NY., watched something large swimming in the waters of Bulwagga Bay for about 30 minutes on Friday the 17th April. The weather was overcast and the lake calm. The women used binoculars to watch the disturbance, and reported seeing something eel-like. One of them said she could see humps. A fourth woman contacted by the three others, went to the shore and also watched, she said she saw it surface four times and also saw a head.

On April 19th there was a vague report of something being seen in mid-lake off Port Henry, no further details.

Four high school seniors from Elizabethtown, NY., reported that they had been within 30 feet of 'Champ' on the 24th May. Cliff McDougal, Nat Morris, Bridgette Telkey and Billy Kohen spotted something in the water from the beach of Kohen's camp, and chased after it in a motorboat. McDougal described what he had seen, as about 20 feet long, black, slimy, with a large hump with a jagged ridge. When they got to within 30 feet of it, it submerged all at once like a submarine. Not like a basking sturgeon, which throws up its tail as it dives. William J Kohen, Billy's father and camp owner, said he and a number of other adults saw the monster from shore but did not go out in the boat.

Joe hopes to spend a week at Loch Ness this year. He will also spend much time at Lake Champlain, as he has done in previous years. Last year he was helped by James Kennard, as reported in earlier Nessletters. James operates his own sonar equipment, and last summer had some further success. They found the wreck of another steamboat in Lake Champlain, it was of the paddle-boat Champlain. It had run onto a rock shelf near Westport on the night of July 15th. 1875., the cargo and passengers were safely got ashore. The hull was later stripped of all valuable bits and pieces and burned to the water-line. It was then reported to have been towed into deep water and sunk. James was very surprised to find the remains in just 25 feet of water. Of more interest from our point of view, was the blip picked up under their boat in some 400 feet of water. It indicated something 12 to 15 feet long moving in the water below the boat. James said it could have been a school of fish but rather doubted that, as the blip seemed to be of something solid and large.

Australia

I have two items from Australia. The first is rather brief, just a report that some time during 1980 plesiosaur-like creatures had been seen in the mangrove swamps near Darwin, in the Northern Territory of Australia. That is all there was. It does not say 'creatures' indicating a number. Perhaps one of our Australian members may be able to find a little more, and let me know.

The second is a newspaper article about Mr Rex Gilroy. Mr Gilroy claims there are

creatures similar to the Loch Ness monsters in the Hawkesbury River, near Sydney. He has collected 250 sightings since 1871 and wants to organise a military expedition to investigate them. His work is hindered by the reticence of the locals. Around Wiseman's Ferry people are unwilling to discuss the monster. They are very close knit, and do not like talking about it because they are afraid of public ridicule. Aborigines near Jerusalem Bay, at the mouth of the river, tell the legend of a cultural hero who speared such an animal to death. Mr Gilroy thinks the Aboriginal tradition is conclusive, because the cave paintings which depict monsters are 3000 years old. This means the Aborigines could not have got the idea from Western picture books.

Mr Gilroy, the self-styled director of the Hawkesbury River Monster Survey, and Co-Ordinator of the Australian Strange Animals Investigation Centre, has also spent time watching Lake Taupo in New Zealand. He took a photograph while there in 1980, but in common with many other 'monster' pictures from other parts of the world, there is nothing of great value to be seen. Mr Gilroy is convinced that there are as many as 30 plesiosaurs swimming in Australian waterways, survivors of 65 million years of evolution. Their peculiar humps, he says, sometimes break the surface, giving rise to the monster reports. His enthusiasm for tracking them, and other strange animals, the yowie, for instance, and the Tasmanian tiger, has become his cross. Scientists accuse him of being a lunatic.

He has a remote 'museum' set on a crag at Katoomba in the NSW Blue Mountains, where he has gathered a vast collection of specimens, fossils and carefully-drafted diagrams. He takes visitors to a rocky outcrop called Fossil Point, where he traces the outline of what he claims is a fossil plesiosaur in the ironstone. The scientists say it is not a fossil, although they cannot explain its formation, and that no evidence has ever been found of plesiosaurs in Australia. Mr Gilroy says the fossil proves the Blue Mountains were once submerged, and the sinous back and tail of the creature, as well as the fin which guided it through the water are clear in the rock. He also maintains that if they were there, the plesiosaurs that is, there is very little reason why they should not still be around in suitable locations today. He says he has given up approaching universities. Academics have undertaken a straight-out character assassination on him instead of looking at his ideas. He feels they have to destroy him professionally because they do not want their pedestals upset. Scientists criticise from behind their desks, hundreds of miles from the scene. They have a lot of qualifications which they want to safeguard by silencing him completely.

Mr Gilroy draws comfort from comparing himself to the discoverer of Troy, Heinrich Schliemann, who was ridiculed on all sides because of his absurd predictions that he could find the site of the mythological city. But he proved the doubters wrong and came back with the jewels of Helen to show what the truth was. Mr Gilroy thinks that one day he will be able to prove that he too was right to keep an open mind, and not accept everything that people are taught.

This is the first time I have heard of Mr Gilroy and his ideas. He does sound somewhat eccentric, but then I suppose all we monsterphiles seem that way to the rest. I hope to be able to follow Mr Gilroy's progress and keep you in touch.

Sonar Report

The Sunday Post of 12th April 1981 carried a report concerning a sonar contact by a fishing trawler. One day during early April, brothers Robert and James West, were on Loch Ness in their 50 foot boat 'The Provider'. They had a new Japanese echo-sounder and took the chance to try it out. The instrument is able to identify different shoals of fish, their depth and size, and shows them in different colours on a screen. James was watching the set, when on the screen appeared a strange shape. The echo-sounder gave its depth as 30 fathoms, and a size of 60 feet long and some 30 feet wide was indicated. The brothers watched it for three minutes, as it moved along under the boat, it seemed to have a tapering neck and a humped body. The brothers say the equipment proved beyond doubt that it was not a shoal of fish, and are firmly convinced that it was the Loch Ness monster.

This is a rather strange account, it would be very nice if we could accept it as a 'good' Nessie contact. There have been few enough of them over the last two years. But while it is believed that there could be creatures as long as 60 feet, how can a width of 30 feet be explained. Also, as far as I know, there is no echo-sounder that is capable of producing a photographic type picture of a target, from which details can be discerned without much analysis. Once again, we have a newspaper report that is no real use to anyone with a serious interest in the creatures.

Tail Ends

Bigfoot, I have received a copy of BigfootTimes from the editor, Danny Perez. It is published by the South western Bigfoot Research Team. Since the demise of the Bigfoot News I have had no regular news from the Bigfoot scene. The 'Times' seems a good news-letter, carrying a long article about giant's skeletal remains being found in the Caucasus Mountains by youngsters way back in 1910. A book section, and other small pieces. No subscription is given, or other details, the address is : 10926 Milano Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650 USA.

Silly Bit, a Massachusetts' newspaper carried the story of a 10 foot long three-ton cement dragon. It had been commissioned by Robert Duteau to overlook a man-made pond on his property. It had a special feature, a propane gas line was taken through the dragon, and the dragon produced a belch of flame when a gate near the pond was opened. Shortly after being finished, Mr Duteau was walking away from it when there was a loud explosion, and the dragon was shattered, pieces being scattered over a large area. Luckily no-one was hurt.

Nessie Signs, over the years I have been interested in Loch Ness many things have changed, including the attitude of the local council. Hamburger vans have appeared in loch-side lay-bys, along with other types of traders. But I read in the Highland News that things are not that different. The Drumnadrochit Hotel has been in trouble with the Inverness Divisional Planning Committee. They have 14 signs advertising the Loch Ness Monster exhibition, and only a limited number of them had been authorised. Also two flagpoles had been erected without permission. The Hotel have been asked a number of times to remove them without result. The committee had agreed to serve an enforcement order on the flagpoles, but said that if the signs were removed consideration would be given to planning permission for the poles. This brought back memories of the problems the Loch Ness Investigation ran into at the Achnahannet H Q site.

Another Nessletter at an end, with no real news of any sightings. The last two seasons have been very poor for sightings. I have a close contact at the lochside this season but no news has been reported. So please send me all your news and views, or go on sending, as many of you already do, you are NIS. My address is still Huntshieldford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 IRQ. Telephone Wearhead 359. Subscriptions remain at U K £2.00. U S A Canada \$ 8.00.

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