

# NESS INFORMATION SERVICE

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Here we are at the start of another year. Once again we all hope that this year will be "the year". 1982 was not, despite all the work put in by many people. There were few reported sightings, but sonar work proved productive once again. Loch Ness was brought to the public's attention by the media on a number of occasions. Unfortunately, this was twice caused by the publishing of theories on the nature of the phenomenon in the *New Scientist*. I say unfortunately because the first explained everything away as "otters", and the second said it was all caused by "decomposing tree trunks". I am very pleased that the case has been redressed by the article in the edition of the *New Scientist* dated 17th February 1983. Adrian Shine, the field leader of the Loch Ness and Morar Project, wrote the article, which is an account of their 1982 work and findings with some background material about the loch. I have carried most of the general news about the Project in the *Nessletters*, Adrian fills in details. Back Issues are available from: Post Sales Dept. IPC Magazines Ltd., Lavington Street, London SE1 0PF, cost 90 pence per copy UK, £2-00 overseas. Adrian, and the Project, have a full programme planned for 1983, I believe they still need volunteers; I have said before and still do, that it is a chance to become involved with the very worthwhile work they are doing. For details write to the Project % The Loch Ness Centre, Drumnadrochit, Inverness-shire. Last season they established 40 sonar contacts that had characteristics, worked out by experiment, that could not be explained by fish, side echoes, etc. It would seem that the steady approach, and careful groundwork, is paying dividends, Adrian says, "We have not found monsters, and we have not disproved them, but have shown that there is still a case to answer."

As usual at this time, may I thank you all for being members of NIS, after all you are NIS. Keep your news and views coming in, I am still receiving a fair amount, feedback is most necessary. Membership is about static, those few who drop out are replaced by new members, but we need more. If you feel that the *Nessletters* are interesting, and are doing the job of keeping you in touch, please spread the word to anyone who may have the same interests as ourselves. If you have written with a question and I have not answered, please allow me to apologise and write again. Are you planning a trip to the loch? I will put dates and area in the *Nessletters* if you let me have them, perhaps you could join forces with other members. Then a follow up of your trip later, it is good to know someone is there while we cannot be.

## NIS AT THE LOCHSIDE

To continue the theme; I have a number of letters from members who visited the loch last year, and others who are planning expeditions during 1983.

Kenneth Croal, of Edinburgh, was one of a group of four who spent four days at the loch last May, and one day there in August. They had no success but are not deterred, and are planning to visit the loch again in May. They also hope to visit Loch Morar for a day or two. Kenneth also sent me an account he had picked up while camping, neat St. Abbs Head, which is a small fishing community on the south east coast of Scotland. Carbonised campfire sausages and general revelry in pubs were well to the fore, with Loch Ness far from mind. They became

friendly with a local fishing family. One afternoon while chatting over a cup of tea, "Fort William" was mentioned, the granny of the family, a lively old lady of around seventy-five, asked Kenneth if he had been there. When he told her he had passed through it a few times as he travelled up to Loch Ness, because he was interested in "the monster", she seemed suspicious. After a few minutes she asked if he "believed in it". Being told that he did, and his reasons, she began, very warily at first, to tell him the story. Her late husband, a fisherman, had seen the monster many years ago. He was a crewmember on a fishing boat passing through the loch, part of the Caledonian Canal, being at the wheel he was the only one on deck, the others were working below. The monster had reared out of the water, at the side of the boat, and with a great splash had submerged again. This had happened twice in quick succession. She said her husband had been terrified, too frightened to shout for the others, as the boat was close to the shore he could not leave the wheel to go and get them. He described it to her as having "a lang neck and a wee heid, and was black", but he never talked about it, for as she told Kenneth "as he was a man of the sea this frightened him very much". All the family present swore that it was the truth. Kenneth, judging the old ladies attitude, feels that it was a genuine account. He hopes to be in St. Abbs again this year and will try to find any other members of the crew, to try and get more details on date, location etc. He goes on to recommend members to talk to people about "Nessie", "They may be surprised at the information they turn up in unlikely places.

Valerie Smith sent a short note, telling me of her trip to the loch. She was there for a few days last June, staying at Drumnadrochit, where she visited the exhibition; which she found very impressive. She did not find "Nessie", but talked to a man, while travelling on a bus, who did admit that he had seen something in the loch. He was reluctant to say too much, as the other passengers on the bus knew him, and laughed. Valerie makes the same point as Kenneth, saying there must be many sightings by local people which are not reported. While I agree, we must take care; for some of the locals, and others, take a mischevious delight in misleading gullible "sassenachs".

Doug Macfarlane sent an account of his year's efforts at the loch. Doug, from Largs, Ayrshire, managed four trips to the loch last year. On the first three they stayed at a boarding house in Inverness for periods from 4 to 8 days, because they did not have a vehicle suitable for towing their caravan. The highlight of the year was a week aboard *New Atlantis* in October, that was shared with two of their friends and their families. They had a motorcaravan which towed Doug's caravan, and based them at Borlum Farm campsite. The boat was kept in Urquart Bay. The weather was not too good at that time of year, so they did not get as much time on the water searching as they would have liked. But, even so, they did manage 4 to 6 hours a day on the water, mostly at the north east end of the loch, with one rough day trip down to Fort Augustus and back, mid week. Doug was surprised how uniformly deep the loch is and how flat the bottom. During last season Doug had no sightings, but they had eight underwater contacts with large, mid water, targets, three with the sonar and five on the coloured video echo-sounder. Unfortunately they did not manage to record any on the chart recorder echo-sounder. He hopes to continue with underwater work this season (1983), and will try to get another trip on the *Atlantis*. [See NIS 54] He is reading all he can on sonar, as he feels interpretation is very important. On the last day of their week aboard the *New Atlantis* Jim Hogan (of Caley Cruisers) went down to Urquart Bay with an underwater TV camera, and they did a couple of drifts across the bay with the camera on the bottom. Doug was amazed how clear the picture was, and feels that this could be a very useful medium in the underwater search. They could see fish and eels on the bottom, and at least two of the eels were quite large. Jim had only 500 feet of cable with him, and was only able to use the camera in the shallower water off Urquart and Foyers bays, but Doug thinks he is hoping to get a bigger reel for his next try,

Doug points out that the low season rates of about £250 is little over £60, split four ways, for a weeks search on the water, compares favourably with any similar hired boating holiday and the underwater search equipment is first-class. He now has a vehicle that will tow his caravan, a white Renault 30 number VGG 222R, so he hopes they will be able to spend more time at the loch with it during 1983.

A word from Nick Witchell, he had visited the loch for a couple of days early in December, along with Ivor Newby and Holly Arnold. Nothing much was happening, but they did meet Adrian Shine who was busy preparing for the tour of the "Loch Ness Monster Exhibition". Nick hopes to get back to the loch for a few days in early spring, and then later in the year. His work, with the BBC, prevents him making long term plans; all he can do now is take the chance as it arises and head north for a few days.

Martin Shipp, from Highworth, Wiltshire, sends news of a trip north he will be making. With three others he will be spending a week aboard *New Atlantis*. The dates are 14th to 21st May 1983. Any members who will be at the loch during that period will be welcome aboard for a chat.

An expedition is being planned by John Essex, from Redditch, at the moment dates are not decided, as it depends on everyone concerned being able to take time off. John has three boats, one is a twin hulled inflatable with a 4 hp engine, another is a 9 foot Avon inflatable, there is also a 13 foot speedboat. This last craft may not be taken as it depends on whether they decide to sleep in tents or take his touring caravan. The main part of the planned work will be drifting around, just looking, but all the time having a hydrophone suspended below the boat; waiting for weird sounds from below and standing by to record them. In his build up for the expedition John has been in touch with Roger Parker (Partech), he quotes from Roger's reply to him. "The large animals in the loch we are aware do have means of communication (our investigations have established this fact positively) we are hopeful of taking two loch bed monitoring records next spring". John says that Rogers success is a spur, and hopes to emulate his efforts and results. John is also building fishtraps and hauling gear, as he intends to do some deep water fishing. The hoped for prey is one of the strange little "white mice" that were filmed in August 1981. He expects to be troubled with eels, but is hopeful that one of the mysterious little may venture in. Another facet of the intended programme is to be live-baiting, John feels that this has been neglected over the years. He is not sure, but thinks that perhaps a couple of pike tethered below a buoy would be a start-in point. Moving on to other fish and lures.

I am planning to be at the loch, with the family, sometime late July early August, the holiday dates are not yet settled; more details when they are.

## REACTION

The piece on members theories in NIS 55 has brought some response. Lionel Leslie sent me his own thoughts on the subject. Lionel is still active in the monster search, at 83 years old, his latest book which I have mentioned in *Nessletters*, is tangled up at the publishers; but hopefully it will be out sometime later this year. Lionel goes on: "Speculation knows no bounds and can lead one to consider the theory of space/time dimensions. This is no longer just a philosopher's dream, for it has in recent years become the subject of books written by well known scientists. Professor H.T. Flint, formerly Professor of Physics at London University is the author of *The Quantum Equation and the Theory of Fields* in which he considers that this concept could help explain certain phenomena today. The late Ivan Sanderson, the well known American zoologist, concludes in his final book *In Search of the Unknown* with words expressing the same opinion. Arthur Koestler states: "superspace or hyperspace, has been an old standby of science fiction, together with

the notion of parallel universes and reversed or multidimensional time. Now thanks to radio-telescopes and particle acceleration, they are acquiring academic respectability. Another remarkable attribute of superspace is multiple connectivity. This means - put into simple and over-simplified language - regions in which our simple three dimensional world are far apart, may be brought temporally into direct contact through tunnels or holes in superspace."

So I might humbly suggest, once the reality of these tunnels in to hyperspace have been established then it would be easier to account for the sudden appearances of Nessie, and other errant creatures, in our space/time dimension today."

George Andrews, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, has the following thoughts. He found the Tulpa theory interesting but does not agree with it. Saying "It's hardly likely that sonar would pick up 'materialised thought form', or that Bob Rines' cameras would photograph them." He has recently been re-reading Ted Holiday's thinking on the subject, and feels there is a lot of sense in what he says. What puzzles George is how any creature that lives 700 feet down can come to the surface, a pressure gradient of from about 300 lbs.sq.ft. to 14 lbs.sq.ft., without being in some distress. He says, perhaps that is why they are sometimes reported to write about. It could be they surface involuntarily, having generated gas internally after a good feed on the loch bed; the fact that the humps sometimes just seem to collapse may be caused by the release of gas, given by a good burp. On the suggestion that some surfacing may not be intentional, it is not generally known that a human being normally surfaces from depths of less than 25 feet, but sinks below that depth. The Navy have a 100 foot deep submarine escape training tank, which has a bar running from top to bottom. Trainees normally come up with a life jacket on, but an experienced man can surface without one. However he must climb the first 75 feet of the bar, before rising naturally for the last 25 feet. Going down this is reversed, the man hauling himself down the first 25 feet, then sinking. George thinks the lower pressures near the surface may cause considerable distention in an invertebrate, and consequently a great increase in its buoyancy, leading to involuntary surfacing. He also says that he does not think the animals surface more on calm days than rough. It is just that when the surface is calm there is more chance of being able to see anything break it.

Another interesting letter from Alice Bjornstad, firstly she is of the same mind as George. Asking if Nessie is only mind stuff how does it show up on sonar etc ...? She sees the evidence pointing to something more physical than a Tulpa. As a teenager living with her parents, they had a fairly large pond in the front yard. Alice found it fascinating, containing frogs, salamanders, newts, turtles, snakes etc. She first came across leeches here, initially thinking they were some kind of eel or water-snake. She noticed they were good at changing shape, being elongated when swimming and squat when resting. They swam from side to side like a snake, and there could be a likeness to the Hugh Gray photograph on a tiny scale. But she does not recall having seen any part of a leech that could be described as 'an appendage' like those seen in the 1972/75 underwater photographs. Mr Skeldon mentions that if Nessie is an air breather there should be more sightings. Alice's experience with turtles in her yard suggests otherwise. The beligerent snap-turtle averages 14 inches long. They rarely come out of the water, but stick an inch or so of snout up, so that one has to look hard, particularly in wind to see them take air. Alice thinks that perhaps Nessie is doing the same, and in a loch the size of Ness one would be very lucky to see her break the surface to breath.

Well, that wraps the first *Nessletter* for 1983 up, thank you all once more for being members, keep the letters, news and views coming - they are always needed. I have some back issues if any newer member is interested - let me know which numbers you want. My address is still: R.R. Hepple, Huntshildford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland Co Durham DL13 1RQ. Subs: UK £2-50 N.America \$9. Other areas on request.