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To continue the saga of Erik and his videotape; part of the letter I quoted in NIS 60 gave Erik's reason why he feels it was not ducks on the tape. "While up on the hill by the farm they call St. Ninians, I (Erik) watched a good many ducks in my binoculars. I was able to videotape a few, tiny little beggars, in a group of 7 or 8, but only at full zoom, 105mm. I found that when I used 37mm, the setting at which the Urquhart Bay creatures were videotaped, that ducks were simply not visible at all. Not at all. I also noted that the wakes they make are just the tiniest of ripples. I saw many types - loons (?) what look to be grebes, others that look like cormorants, and mainly small brownish ducks that are the size of a coot or smaller. I would estimate them to be 12 inches or less, I also saw some sea gulls, and these were visible, but never dove, never went in groups for any length of time in the water paddling along, and never even stayed in the water for long. Loons, and similar diving ducks were always solitary, and their wakes were also barely visible at all, if at all. In all, I found only one candidate for a water bird that could make a wake similar in size and strength as the wakes we videotaped - swans. In fact, I have swans on the same videotape as the one taken on August 6th (1983) which shows the possible Nessie wakes. They are white, large 36 inches or so and majestic. They come cruising along from the river mouth, approach the boat Cape Lorna, and proceed on to Temple Pier. Now are wakes and other effects due to swans? The answer is no. The objects making the wakes seemed to be first on the surface, and then under, then up on the surface again, with the wake being made all the time, regardless of the surfacing or diving. The swans, which we saw and videotaped many, many times during the month, never at any time dove under the water. They can dip their necks down for water plants, but since the water depth in the centre of the bay is considerable, they were never seen to do even this, and never while swimming forward. Comparing the wakes of the swans with those of seagulls, the regular gang of Urquhart Bay ducks, loons, cormorants, the odd coot or two, and even the rarely seen terns. We noticed repeatedly that the swan wakes were perhaps larger and stronger by a factor of ten or more. In fact, the only similar wake was that of the 14 foot rental fishing skiff from Temple Pier, or the wake one sees of the Nessie-hump in Dinsdale's 1960 film. So I seriously doubt that any duck made those wakes, or was able to dive and swim with three of its companions while making a wake, or was able to later make a 70 foot splash, or was able to swim away as a dark object that appears to be 9 feet across, when compared to the 14 foot rental boat, under the water. There is one possibility, that some one managed to create an 'invisible swan' pair that was able to be first visible, then invisible, then visible again. (I trust Erik is being factitious). But ducks? No, sorry, they were just simply too small to be seen at that distance, 300 yards, and their tiny wakes are just too small."

Erik has made some very valid points in the above, but he has also missed some. As I have earlier stated in NIS 59 I am sure that what Erik has on video are ducks, perhaps I should qualify that and say, waterfowl, and I am sorry that the 'not ducks explanation' does not change my mind. While I agree that the wakes they leave are usually very small, Erik has not mentioned speed. If a duck, grebe, or whatever, paddles along as usual the result is a small disturbance. If on the other hand, it travels much faster as when preparing for flight, chasing food or being chased, the result can be quite dramatic. The bird or birds making the disturbance remain the same size, and perhaps undetectable by a camera or with binoculars, the water disturbance becomes much more detectable and can show up on film or in this case videotape. There was a case of it happening to the Loch Ness Investigation in the late nineteen sixties. The watcher at the H.Q. site, which was Achnahannet, saw a disturbance close to the far shore and a little to the north, it was between a mile and a

quarter and a mile and a half distant. Examining it through binoculars and then the 1000mm camera lens revealed what appeared to be a large wake, with nothing apparent making it. Film was exposed and the remainder of the incident was recorded. There seemed to be a large bow wave and wake moving fairly quickly across the water, this gradually became less marked and eventually died down altogether. In the event that there seemed to be nothing causing this, it was at first thought, when the film was first examined, that what had been filmed was one of the animals swimming close to the surface, making the disturbance, and then slowly going deeper, causing the wake to slowly disperse. All those concerned were quietly excited, had they at last succeeded in capturing something worthwhile on film. Unfortunately they had not. When the film was enlarged and more carefully analysed it was revealed that waterfowl, of some sort, had been the cause. A group, or gaggle, of them must have been paddling along the far shore, not creating enough water movement to attract attention. When they began to accelerate the more pronounced wake brought them to the camera-mans attention, even though the birds themselves were not visible, even through the camera lens. The great splashing they caused as they became airborne, with legs churning the water, wing tips splashing, made a most impressive piece of film. This died away as some got into the air before the others, then as they all became airborne all there was to disturb the surface was the water dripping off them, this continued in the same direction as the wake had been taking.

Even with great magnification the individual birds were barely discernable among the film grain, but the water pattern was plainly that of birds taking off. A great disappointment to all LNI members, but one that did not cause any damage to the general investigation. Because as was their policy no premature public announcement was made before the evidence had been thoroughly analysed. It is a shame that Erik, feeling in need of the publicity, made the early statement he did. During the whole trip Erik deliberately used publicity for a definite reason. They had with them equipment worth £4,000, this had been generously donated by Tyne Video, and Erik felt they had to be repaid by publicizing their name and brand. I can understand that, it is a problem when equipment is loaned. It is awkward to approach firms to ask them for help with no guarantee of success, but it must be done, to safeguard the integrity of the research.

Two more points in Erik's account of the video, and of the stills he kindly sent me. As stated in NIS 60 there was a splash some 70 feet long, at one point on the tape. It was this moment that is on the two stills as well. Now perhaps I am splitting hairs, but to me a 'splash' is a quantity of water that becomes detached from the surface for a moment. For water to 'splash' 70 feet a tremendous force would be required, one that would make waves of some size. There was no evidence of such waves in the view or stills. Secondly Erik said that three objects swam away under water after the splash. He makes the point that the dark reflection, not a shadow, of the far shore helped them obtain this underwater shot. I have always held the opinion that to be able to see through the water surface takes very favourable conditions. Taking into account the height of the camera position, and the distance away from the disturbance, gives an angle of view of less than 10 degrees with the surface. This surface was reflecting, Erik stresses that, stating that it was a dark 'reflection' not a shadow on the water from the far shore. I doubt that even the Polarized filters used would have enabled any penetration of the surface. I am not making these points to be able to say, I am right and Erik is mistaken. It is a chance to illustrate how difficult a task we have set ourselves. By we, I mean all the people involved in the hunt, be it members of larger expedition or individual NIS members visiting the loch on their own. The majority of us are attempting to obtain pictorial evidence, but it must be good enough to be acceptable by the scientific world. It is my conviction that the animals are there, Tim Dinsdale's film is the best pictorial evidence we have, and it is enough for me. Sadly it is not enough for the scientists. We must always consider this when we present, or are presented with, evidence. If we can raise doubts about it, as I have been able to do with Erik's then, it is obvious that the scientific world will do the same; and not accept it. In that case perhaps it would be better not to publicise it.

In a later letter Erik points out that he was at Loch Ness in 1983 as a part of a group. The group was the National Cryptozoological Society, which has members in

Britain, as well as the USA. He says that they are sometimes confused with the similar organization, the International Society of Cryptozoology, based in Tuscon. Some reporters and writers lean towards the Tuscon Group, since it has many scientists as members, and it has put out some good publications. However Erik points out that the term Cryptozoology, like biology and other 'ologies is not a patented term, unique to any one group. If others wish to use it they have a legitimate right to do so. Their group is a bit more open to both conventional and non-conventional theories about Nessie, and other strange creatures, than is the ISC, but they are making sincere attempts to co-operate with them, and patch up past differences. Erik is also doing some analysis on the photographs taken by Doc Shiels in Ireland in 1983 (NIS). He has the originals of the Loughs Maumeen and Inaugh photos, and excellent enlarged slides of the shots from Lisconnor Bay, and Lough Keel. Erik is very impressed with them, and thinks Doc has something significant in all four shots. I hope to carry further news on these in future Nessletters.

Jeoff Watson

Jeoff paid us a visit one weekend early in December, we had an interesting time discussing his work over the past couple of years, and his intentions for coming seasons. He made expeditions to Falmouth Bay in April, June, and August, 1981, and to Bala Lake and Barmouth Bay in June. Of the Scottish lochs he visited Loch Ness in April, and Loch Morar in May, and Lochs Ness and Morar again in July, along with Loch Shiel. These expeditions were mainly of one week duration, to the Scottish locations with only a couple of days being spent at the other locations. While on these expeditions Jeoff spends most time on shore-based watching, but he also does background research and interviews local residents, where possible. While in Devon and Cornwall he managed to get some local press coverage for his work in the area. He also had two articles published in local London papers. As well as that, he has also been interviewed on local radio stations. This has enabled him to present his arguments in favour of large unidentified animals living in freshwater lakes, as well as frequenting certain areas of the coast. Towards the end of 1981 Jeoff started a liaison with the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena, which is the main research group now in Britain for the New Age mysteries. Leaflets about the work of ASSAP are available from Jeoff. He also started a music project, in 1981, he terms it psychedelic folk rock. He has continued to work at this during 1982/3, he is writing and recording music with the intention of making an income from it. This he hopes will help him to become a full time monster researcher by 1985. Owing to the music project he was only able to undertake one expedition during 1982/3, that was a two week visit to Loch Ness in July 1982. Since he visited me I have had a telephone call, and he is now giving serious thought to going to live at Loch Ness, perhaps in the Drumnadrochit area. This could be a good move, for if you are going to be a professional monster hunter it could be an advantage to live close by your work. He has also made arrangements with an organisation called Syndication International, they handle cartoons, newspaper pictures, magazine articles, and such like; to handle any articles he may write and any photographs he may take. Jeoff is a very intense young man, very keen on the whole water monster scene. But I am concerned about him, during his short stay it was obvious that he is living with a great deal of nervous strain. This I feel, could lead to problems with his health, both physical and mental.

Lake Champlain

Joe Zarzynski, Director of the Lake Champlain Phenomena Investigation, has written to let me know that his newsletter, Champ Channels, is to change. Champ Channels was first published in April 1983, it was to have three issues a year, number 3 to be published in December 1983. However Joe is to now publish quarterly, Champ Channels is scheduled for release dates in February, May, August, and November 1984. Subscription rates will be \$8.00, for full information of this newsletter, the only one devoted to publishing material from Lake Champlain, contact J. Zarzynski, c/o, I.C.P.I., P.O. Box 2134, Wilton, New York, 12866.

Sea Serpent

One of our American members sent a cutting from the San Francisco Chronicle dated 3rd November 1983, I am sorry I have mislaid the name. The cutting concerns the sighting of a sea serpent off Stinson Beach by five people. The witnesses, all members of a construction crew who were working on a stretch of Highway 1 on a cliffside overlooking the sea. Shortly before 2 pm on Monday 31st October, one of the crew saw something large in the sea, he called the other flagman by radio and told him to get the binoculars. The serpent was swimming towards the cliff from Duxbury Point, some five miles away. They watched it for a while and it came within 100 yards of the shore about a quarter of a mile away. They reported that it was being followed by a flock of birds and some sea lions. The second flagman who had the binoculars, had the best view of it. The body broke the surface first, there seemed to be three bends or humps, then a head came up and appeared to look around. The head was rounded with a blunt nose. The creature turned away and swam out to sea, as it went it gradually submerged, lowering its head first. There was some disagreement among the witnesses as to how many humps they thought the creature had, one said three while another said four, and yet another said two, but all agreed it was very big and moving very fast. Jack Swenson, a biologist at the nearby Point Reyes Bird Observatory, said there have been periodic sightings of strange creatures off the Marin County coast and that as yet no one explained what they are.

Tail Ends

Doc Shiels - I have a short letter from Doc to tell me that he, and some of the people involved in the 'Monstermind' experiments, are to form a group specifically concerned with the investigation of Loch Shiel. This loch has a long history of monster sightings, the locals calling it 'an Seileag', but it has largely been ignored by the established groups at Loch Ness and Morar. The group will be called the 'Loch Shiel Investigation Group', what else! The L.S.I.G. hope to begin their first field trip sometime in the spring of 1984.

Frank Searle - It has been reported that Frank is to leave Loch Ness in the spring of 1984. He is going treasure hunting on the West Coast, with maps books and a metal detector. He says the recent criticism which he has received from other monster hunters has nothing to do with his move. After fifteen years at the loch he feels he cannot achieve anything further. Also to be taken into account is the fact that the boat firm, whose land he rents for his caravan, are to close down. He says he is more interested in the finding, than making a fortune. Although he is sure he will pay his expenses.

Whale - A specimen of the Sowerby's Whale was found on the beach near Castle Stuart, some five miles east of Inverness on the Moray Firth, it was a fully grown male some fifteen feet long. The Sowerby's Whale is a member of the beaked whale family, which is distinguished by a slender beak with a pair of tusks inside. The one found had well developed tusks, which it is believed the whales use for fighting, and it had scars on its body which could have been caused by such combat. Very little is known about this type of whale, which is very rarely seen in British Coastal Waters, apart from the fact they are very deep diving fast swimmers, whose diet is mainly cuttlefish and squid. Unfortunately a local souvenir hunter had removed one of the tusks with a hacksaw, which greatly detracts from the usefulness of the body as a museum exhibit. Nevertheless the Inverness museum has acquired the the skull, which it is hoped will eventually form part of a display about marine mammals. Although it will need to be left buried in sand for a year or two to remove the oil which impregnates the bone.

The end of another Nessletter, your news and views are always needed please let me have them, my address is: R.R. Hepple, Huntshieldford, St. Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham, DL13 1RQ. Subs: U.K. £2.50 U.S.A. \$9.00

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