

NESS INFORMATION SERVICE  
 NESSLETTER NO 69  
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## LAKE CHAMPLAIN

As I reported in number 68, Roger Acraman visited the USA and Canada last August. He and his girlfriend flew to New York aboard a 747 of Virgin Atlantic. The service was appallingly sub-standard, and Roger had quite a tussle with them before they decided to compensate him. They found New York uncomfortably humid, and Roger said he felt it was not a trusting city, no-one spoke to you unless you were prepared to buy something or pay. Nothing comes free in NY. However it was exciting and alive all the time. They stayed for a day or two seeing the sights, but Roger feels he would be reluctant to return. They then went to Toronto, about 13 hours driving time, Roger has a friend there and they were to stay with him for the rest of their time there. They visited Niagra Falls and Canada's Wonderland, Canadian equivalent of Disneyworld. Then the time came when Roger was to go by himself to visit Lake Champlain. Because everything in Canada and the USA is so expensive, 3 or 4 times England, he was to travel to LC via Albany instead of Quebec which would make his journey longer. The 600 mile journey East took about thirteen hours, with changes at Buffalo, Albany and Schenectady. He eventually arrived in a small village in Plattsburg NY, only to find he was still some distance from the Lake. No buses or taxis seemed to operate around there, but Roger had taken his driving licence on holiday with him, so he went into the local Rent-A-Wreck only to discover he had left it in Toronto. He finished up lugging his luggage over five miles to get to the lake. Most of his watching was centred by the Plattsburg Memorial where the Sarnac River enters Lake Champlain, he thinks Joe Zarzynski should know the exact spot. The area seemed dead as far as civilisation went. Being only a small working town feeding a new multi-million dollar sewage works and what looked like Exxon oil refineries. The weather was bright on the days he spent at the lake side and the water surface mildly choppy, a few white capped waves around. In the distance he could make out the Grand Isle, almost as far away as Loch Ness is wide. Roger's camera equipment was, his Pentax ME super with motordrive, standard, wide angle and telephoto Vivitar 70-150mm lenses, the latter he kept on the camera. His feelings on Lake Champlain are that he is thrilled to have visited it, but sorry Joe Zarzynski was not there, but it gave him a feeling of overwhelming magnatude, where does one start looking? At Loch Ness a group of 50 watchers, if organised, could cover the whole area. With Lake Champlain many times that number would be required to watch just the edges. He remembered what Tim Dinsdale had told him when he, Roger and Dave Calvert went down to Falmouth, "A lake is bad enough, but now we are talking about the sea". Roger says on the face of it Lake Champlain is almost as equally futile. However, in defence, it is more likely that a family could live in Lake Champlain due to its sheer size, but from a researcher's point of view where does one start? All too quickly his few days there came to an end, and he had to leave the crickets and midges (yes ... there to) and head for home. Due to the timing he was able to travel into Quebec, for a quick visit, just 8 hours from Toronto, but because he would have to pay extra for that trip he had to back track for a 21 hour return journey to Toronto. In all he travelled approximately 3 - 4000 miles, almost all of it overnight so that he did not miss daylight hours for viewing. Distances over there are so much greater than in the UK. An interesting and rather unusual trip, after all it is usually Americans who come to visit Loch Ness and not Britons going to see Lake Champlain.

I also have the latest issue of Joe Zarzynski's Champ Channels, and a letter from him. On a personal note, Joe is getting married in April to Pat Meany. She has been active for the past five years helping him with his Champ research. She is a scuba diver and a very fine researcher, indexing his book as well as the Champ Channels newsletter. May we wish them well in the future. Joe's book is to go into a second printing this summer, good news. He says they had twelve Champ sightings reported in 1984, that is down from the 26 reported in 1983. He does not put forward any theories as to why this should be, but in any case that is a fair number and perhaps a more realistic one. I wish I could report that number of authentic sightings from Loch Ness in a year. Joe mentions two publications in his newsletter, one is a novel for young adults the other is a new periodical. This is to be called 'Reptilia' and is to be produced quarterly by herpetologist and cryptozoologist John Becker, the first is scheduled for release in April. Material covered will be concerned primarily with mainline reptiles, but the possibilities of new or unknown specimens

will assure some cryptozoological coverage. Inquiries to: Mr John Becker, P O Box 50, Brooktondale, New York 14817, USA with a SAE or International Reply Coupon please. The 92 page novel for young adults was published in 1981, entitled The Champlain Monster it was written by Jeff Dabziger, It is an illustrated tale of mystery and danger under the surface, from a chance discovery on an ice fishing line to the startling climax it is one surprise after another, and Lake Champlain will never be the same again. Supplied by mail from Vermont Life, 61 Elm Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602, USA, cost is \$5.95 plus \$1.50 p&h and \$2.50 p&h overseas.

#### BOOKS ETC

To continue on the theme of books etc. I have a copy of a pamphlet by Paul Lester, entitled 'The Great Sea Serpent Controversy. A Cultural Study'. This 24 page booklet would be a good starting point for anyone wishing to do further research, as in the index it lists 112 references and sources. It touches on an old Norwegian Natural History which briefly examines sea serpents, and then on to folklore in various occupations such as whaling and fishing. It moves on to the modern sea serpent, and its acceptance or otherwise by science, and then looks at the advent of Caddy, the British Columbian sea serpent and eventually discusses the disservice that the tag sea serpent does to the serious researcher. It is obtainable from, Paul Lester, Flat 4, 34 Summerfield Crescent, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 0ER, price 50p plus postage (no amount stated).

I also have to hand a copy of Theo Brown's new book 'Young Explorers of the Sea and Beyond', published in 1984 by World Life Books (Publishing) Australian Division, World Life Research Institute, P O Box 126, Newport Beach NSW 2106, Australia, or 23000 Grand Terrace Road, Colton, California 92324, USA. It documents the adventures in exotic lands and in the exploration of the oceans, as Theo and his young assistants research along Australia's Great Barrier Reef, and in Morocco and Egypt. It also examines the mystery surrounding the Loch Ness Monster, and the work done there by Theo, (two chapters). It also examines his investigations with young people and psychic phenomena through the aid of hypnosis. Theo has been involved with the paranormal for 27 years, and has been able to reach the startling conclusion that the so called supernatural activities associated with poltergeists and other unexplained events have 'earthly' origins. An interesting book written in a chatty narrative style, it perhaps tries to cover too many areas and jumps around too much.

Ulrich Magin, Stuhlbruderhofstr 4, 6704 Mutterstadt, West Germany, has sent me issue number one of 'Bilk', he intends to publish this newsletter bi-monthly. The title comes from the areas to be covered, Behemoth - freshwater monster; Isis - mermaid; Leviathan - sea serpent; Kraken - giant cephalopods, accounts of creatures sometimes mistaken for monsters and other forms of maritime Forteania. Point of interest; in English 'to bilk' means to cheat, usually by the evasion of payment of a bill. Number one is two single sided sheets in English mainly consisting of a collection of press reports. Anyone interested can contact Ulrich at the above address, subscriptions are to be £3 in Europe and \$5 for the USA. Ulrich has been a NIS member since January 1984 and has been referred to in the Nessletters. He wrote to me in September '84 with the account of his recent trip to Britain, he had visited Falmouth Barmouth, Kyle and Lochs Morar and Ness. Among the people he met when in Inverness was one of the two policemen who reported seeing two large fins near Invermoriston in April 1976. Ulrich said, "He sounded very convincing, and though I reached the conclusion that Nessie doesn't exist, his report did quite a lot to shake my sceptism!!!"

I have an ex-library copy of Constance Whyte's 'More Than A Legend' for sale, it is in good condition but without a dust jacket. Prices and p.o. will be £10, any member interested please write but do not send money at the moment, if there are more than one, first come will get it.

Last November Ian Lyster sent me a copy of a book review from the Scots Magazine, among the books mentioned was 'Sticking My Neck Out' by E H Armstrong. He suggests in the book that the Loch Ness Monster could be an unknown species of water elephant, and he supports the theory with diagrams and an analysis of reported sightings. I have reported in past Nessletters that articles about elephants trunks being held above water when they are swimming, and resembling the surgeon's photograph. Perhaps the book has been written somewhat tongue in cheek, it does remind me of the light hearted after dinner discussions on the old LNI expeditions. One of the silly theories put forward was that the Loch Ness animals are camels, this gives the two hump and long neck sightings, of course the camels would need legs seven hundred feet long so they could walk along the bottom. Anyway, the book is available from the author, Brieryshaw, Ewesdale, Langholm, Dumfriesshire, DG13 0HJ. at £2.50 incl. post.

I have word from several sources of a film that has just been released in the UK Titled 'Baby' it is a fantasy adventure about a young American Couple, who while in the African jungle become foster parents to a young brontosaurus that has become separated from it's family. Mrs Linda Moloney, of Pittsburgh, said in her letter, that after the success of a film about mermaids in the USA, interest in anything vaguely fantastical is high. Following the expeditions to the Congo by Dr Roy Mackal and Herman Regusters in search of the 'Mokele-mbembe', this film could appeal to many people with an interest in such matters. Made by Touchstone Films, part of the Disney Organisation, it is said to have very good special effects, with several mechanical brontosaurus of different sizes being built, these are state-of-the-art models and are very lifelike. Could be worth seeing if it comes to your area.

#### LOCH NESS PROJECT ETC

I recently had a phone call from Aidrian Shine to give us some news of the Project's work last season, and to tell us what is being planned for 1985. He also made some comments about my report on the Kielar and Razdan articles concerning the work done by the Academy of Applied Science. As this is mainly sonar work most of the details are over my head, however Aidrian did his best, in the limited time, to enable me to understand. I still have not seen the original 'Skeptical Inquirer' article, but Aidrian has a copy and based his comments on that. Horizontal sonar produces doughnut shaped energy patterns, and these can be easily misinterpreted when they give false echos, Aidrian also says that in his experience multiple traces usually emanate from turbulence, such as that caused by a boat wake. Perhaps here I should say that 'wakes' differ for the surface watcher and the sonar operator. Members who have spent time surface watching will know that occasionally a vessel will leave a wake pattern that could be confused with two or three humps breaking the surface as an animal swims along close to the surface, but water conditions have to be just right to give the effect. However, I believe the case is that any vessel moving through the water displaces a volume of water in doing so, this displacement and the turbulence it causes can give a reading on s sonar screen. The question of turbulence giving sonar readings has been raised in this instance, because Kielar and Razdan attribute the overnight August 8th, 1972, sonar results to "several investigators (who) were rowing a large wooden fishing boat". Rines in answer to this statement says that it was after the "big black trace started to appear" that Bob Rines and Jan Willums (of the Academy) got into Fussy Hen and rowed back across to Narwhal. When they got on board Narwhal, the trace was still being etched out on the paper. Rines points out that a full contemporaneous account by a Loch Ness Investigation Bureau representative is in Nick Wittchells book. It was while that trace was being recorded that the 'flipper' pictures were obtained. In Nessletter 68, one of the examples I gave was the lack of an echo from an umbilical cable, which Kielar and Razdan said should have been there. Rines said that as there was no cable, there would be echo, which seem sensible. Aidrian says, while that is so, the equipment was bouyed and those lines should have showed on the sonar, which they did not. That is a valid point. As a sonar layman one thing comes to mind, I have been under impression that it was the difference in density between the water and the object that give the sonar reading. Would there be enough difference between rope and water to give a reading? I suppose that if turbulence in the water can give an echo, rope should be able to, I should have asked Aidrian. Aidrian then went on to the 1975 underwater elapsed time pictures. Kielar and Razdan in their article must say that these were not taken in the depth of water that the Academy states, and that while the Academy had been told about this by Dicky Raynor, they had ignored the information when assessing the photography. In the Academy's response Bob Rines says that while Dick has certainly helped the Academy over the years, he was not present

on that occasion, June 19/20th 1975. Aidrian says that is correct, but Dick wrote to Bob soon after pointing out that the mooring had been put down 20 feet shallower than intended. If this is so it does alter the interpretation placed on the pictures. In the MIT Technology Review of March/April 1975 a full and detailed account of the Academy's work and results in 1972 and 1975 was published. A drawing gives the deployment of the sonar and camera equipment, the main camera/sonar/lighting unit was sited on a bottom ledge at a depth of 80 feet, from it was a line to a bouy on the surface then via a length of line and another bouy to the boat. The backup unit, the 1972 gear, was suspended 40 feet under the boat. This unit was the one that took the pictures. It was stressed in the report in the Tech' Review this equipment was 40 feet from the bottom and could not have taken pictures of it. However if Aidrian's information is right the unit could have been within 20 feet of the bottom, and with the re-arranged strobe light/camera lay-out had an improved picture quality while the range of about 30 feet was not affected, and thus could have taken photos of it. Aidrian says that he thinks the 1975 photographs are of the bottom. I have looked at the pictures in the Technology Review again. Bearing in mind what Aidrian says about the depth, I feel he could be correct about those pictures labelled A, B and D, but I do not think pictures C and E are of the bottom. What they are I do not know, Bob has interpreted them as being 'front end of torso and neck/head', and the other as 'head', this latter has been termed the 'gargoyle'. It is very difficult in the limited space in the Nessletters to go into the great detail such a discussion deserves. All members should have copies of the Kielar/Razdan articles and the Academy's reply to them, you would then be able to make up your own minds. But what about the extra information such as that presented by Aidrian? Did Bob and the Academy not receive it, or receive it then ignore it, or was it deemed to be unimportant? As I have said in Nessletters before, in my experience the Academy have always been open and truthful about their work at the loch, and have been helpful to other researchers, as a rule. They may have published findings a little too soon to allow extensive analysis from time to time, but I do not think they deliberately produced false findings at any time. When I asked Aidrian why he thought Kielar/Razdan had attacked Bob and the Academy so vehemently, he said perhaps they felt cheated and misled. They had based all their work on the Academy's findings, even to siting their rig off Temple Pier where the Academy had achieved some success. When they returned home after a fruitless expedition they began to look for reasons for their failure. They re-examined the Academy's work and found some discrepancies in the presentation of the evidence. Then they felt they had been led on a wild goose chase and set about putting the record, as they saw it, straight. I think they have over-reacted. As pointed out in Nessletter 59 despite their magnificent efforts in 1983, they were monitoring a tiny fraction of the loch's volume and it should not be too great a disappointment if they did not achieve their aims. I think that being able to find fault with some of the Academy's findings does not mean that all their work can be written off. This controversy will rumble on, I am afraid. What about Aidrian and the Project? They have followed in the Academy's tracks, and then gone on their own way, not for one season as the Iscan Expedition did but year after year. They are building a growing file of sonar results that point to something unusual in the loch, even though Aidrian will not say as much yet. The fact is they will be back again this season, there must be enough of an encouraging nature to make them think it worthwhile. Aidrian told me they were a little disappointed with the 1984 results in the southern basin but they did get some medium sized contacts moving in deep water. They had hoped to get some large ones similar to those they picked up deep in the northern basin. They were sure the targets were moving, because they had used many miles of 'string' to make sure the raft was absolutely stationary. They intend putting down a similar mooring in the northern deepwater basin this year, then they can be certain they can stay in one place when they wish to, at other times they hope to do some mobile monitoring. Aidrian told me they are offering a new scheme aimed at the older volunteer this season, he thinks there are those who would be interested in working on the Project's expedition but are put off by the spartan conditions of field work. This package is based on using guest houses as accommodation, along with boat charter the cost will be around £220 per week, this will limited it's appeal I think. Anyone interested can get full details from the loch Ness & Morar Project, c/o Loch Ness Centre, Drummarochit, Inverness-shire.

Well that is all I have space for this time, please keep sending your news and views they are always important, my address is still :- R R Hepple, Huntshildford, ST JOHN'S CHAPEL, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Tel: Weardale (0388) 537359. Subscriptions UK £2.50, North America \$7.00

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