

## SIGHTINGS

The Inverness Courier of 18th November carried a letter from Mr and Mrs Lamb who live near Whitebridge, which is on the Foyers to Fort Augustus road. They were driving along the B862 (also known as General Wade's road) on Wednesday the 12th November, when at about 8.45 a.m. opposite Urquhart Castle, they saw an object looking like a flat rock protruding from the still surface of Loch Ness. They watched for some five minutes but had to go as they had an appointment in Inverness. Unfortunately they had neither binoculars nor camera with them at the time. They were wondering if any other Courier readers had reported a possible sighting of Nessie around the same area and time. Up to now I have seen no response in the paper, however, the Highland News, another local Inverness paper, carried an interesting report in the issue for week ending 22nd November 1986. Professional freelance photographer Norrie Macleod came very close to obtaining a good Nessie picture. According to the report sometime during the previous week he had been in the village of Dores to undertake a special job for a client, this was to photograph a small antique vase. He had fitted a special close-up lens on his camera and placed the ornament on a wall at the back of the client's house only a few feet from the loch edge. Then, as he prepared to focus for a detailed picture, a movement about 50 yards out in the loch caught his eye. He told the paper, "As I looked up I plainly saw a large dark shape sink beneath the surface with a sort of sucking sound. The rest of the loch was completely calm so there was no question that this was some kind of very large animal and after it disappeared waves from the disturbance lapped the shore." It happened so quickly there was hardly time to think, let alone fit the right lens. He waited for over half an hour with a normal lens but nothing else was seen. He says that he has never believed in the Loch Ness monster, mainly because he has never seen a very convincing picture of it. He has now completely changed his point of view, and claims that given a few moments more he would certainly have obtained an unquestionable photograph. I have written to these witnesses but as yet have had no replies, so I have not been able to study more detailed accounts of these reports and form judgements as to their worth. However, on one hand we have two local people who travel on the lochside road regularly and who should know the loch and it's various moods; on the other there is a sceptic who is a professional photographer with a trained eye. Both should make reliable witnesses. An interesting point is that the MacLeod sighting took place some time during the week 8th to 15th November near Dores, and the Lambs reported their sighting on 12th November just about three miles south. Perhaps there could be a connection. I hope their replies may throw some light on it. I recently had a short note from another resident at Loch Ness, telling me of a sighting. This witness did not wish for any publicity, and gave no real details. The reason I mention it here is that to me it is an important happening. I have known this person for many years, during that time they have been very interested in the phenomenon, could even have been classed as a believer, but in a very sceptical manner, taking much of the evidence and accounting for it with quite ordinary explanations. So when this individual tells me, "I've seen it at last, no mistake," I am ready to accept it as a good sighting, whenever, or whatever was seen.

This last is not a sighting, as such, but an account of something out of the ordinary, perhaps. Early in October Mrs Jean Skeldon was being visited by her son and daughter-in-law at her home in Dores. On the Wednesday evening, the 8th, Jean and her son, Ian, went for a stroll up the hill and saw something strange in the loch. Jean wondered if it was worth mentioning, but as neither of them had seen anything like it before, thought perhaps it may be of interest. From a little way up the hill they were looking out into Dores Bay and in front of the houses along the shore they could see a brown shape, or shadow, or patch, or call it what you will quite motionless in the water. The water was quite calm with just little ripples, which were over whatever it was in the water. The 'thing' was about 25 to 30 feet long and seemed to be wide at one end and narrow at the other, their first thought was that it was a spillage or discharge from something on shore or a boat. They then thought that had it been so, surely it would have shown some sign of it breaking up the ripples.

They watched from up the hill for about five minutes and it did not move, then they went down to the shore but could only see it from the pavement in front of the gardens and not at all from the shoreline. On each succeeding day they went up the hill again but could see nothing at all. They therefore think that whatever it was, it was obviously a 'one off', and they are mystified. Jean says that if she had to be specific she would opt for it being the shadow of something deeper under the surface. She offers this purely as a factual account of what was seen and does not claim it as anything tangible, although her son was inclined to think it was significant. One possible explanation that comes to mind is that it could be the outfall of the Dores sewage system. I do not know if this system has been changed in the last few years, but do know that at one time all it consisted of was a very large septic tank. The outfall just being a pipe (about 6 inches in diameter) taken a few yards out into the loch. I came across it when I was paddling my canoe along the Dores shore a year or two ago, the discharge was yellowy-brown and lying in the bottom layer of water, undisturbed by wave action as it was a calm morning. It was a calm evening when the Skeldons saw their patch, perhaps from the elevation of the hillside and with particular lighting conditions, they were able to see the shallowish loch bottom. When they moved closer to the water, reflection could have stopped them seeing the patch. On following days, different weather, surface, lighting conditions may have prevented them seeing it again. One possible explanation I feel.

#### CUMBERNAULD NESSIE

In NIS 76 I mentioned a Nessie photo which had come to light in strange circumstances, Fortean Times number 46 had the full story. For those of you that have not seen that magazine, here is a short account. It concerns Tony (Doc) Shiels and his 1977 photographs. Early in 1984 a close acquaintance of Doc's was in the Cumbernauld public library, looking for any Nessie books. This person, who does not wish any publicity for personal and health reasons and is referred to as H, came across a woman holding a copy of a booklet written for the monster exhibition at Drumnadrochit, on the cover was one of Doc Shiels' pictures. H approached her and told her that H knew the photographer. The woman, Mrs McLachlan or McLaughlin, H is not sure which, said she had taken a Nessie picture in 1983 and agreed to show it to H. They met as arranged a few days later. Mrs McLachlan told H that around mid-September 1983 she had been on a cycling holiday in the Loch Ness area, and had a Canon camera and zoom lens with her. This suggested to Doc that she had more than a casual interest in photography, and was possibly hoping to get a Nessie photo. She then gave H a 35mm colour slide, as if she was glad to get rid of it. The slide shows an expanse of water with small waves, a pole-like neck and head sloping to the left at an angle of 50 degrees, in the bottom left hand corner is a clump of leaves, bush or tree top. She said the slide had been exposed on a sunny afternoon, from the shore below the A82 road, somewhere to the south of Achnahannet. At first glance it seems a new, different, shot of Nessie, however, a closer look at the object shows it is very much like Doc's ANS-2. Doc's first reaction to the slide was astonishment, because it so closely resembled his own photo. He says, "I was impressed, but suspected a clever fake, based on a reversed image, a mirror-version of my ANS-2 picture." The original colour slide of ANS-2 was lost in the post when Doc sent it to a friend in America. Doc wondered if someone has somehow got hold of the missing original and used it to create the 'Cumbernauld Nessie.' Doc sent the transparency, now designated CUM-1, to Colin Bord (Fortean Picture Library) for his assessment. Colin copied it onto B&W film, enlarged the detail of the monster, printed it reversed and slightly rotated. There are pictures in the Fortean Times, it is startlingly similar. Colin lists 7 similarities, shape of head and neck, markings, musculature, colour, notch in base of neck, roundish object at water-level. There are 5 differences listed, grain structure, wave structure, angle of neck to water, CUM lit from left ANS lit from right, throat is paler. Colin could detect no cut-out/paste-up or double exposure work. After reading the Fortean Times report I wrote to Doc. He replied that he agreed that the Cumbernauld Nessie is disturbingly similar to his ANS-2. When he first heard about it, and then saw the picture, he was convinced that the whole thing was an absurdly elaborate hoax, designed to discredit him and his photograph; but Colin Bord and others have caused him to think again. In spite of all the suspicious coincidences and weird contradictions, he says "the thing may be genuine after all."

However, he deliberately avoided contacting the press and delayed publication of the picture because of his suspicions. All this happened over two years ago and he was waiting for someone to pop out of the woodwork shouting 'Yah Boo fooled you.' So far there has been only one move, early in 1985 somebody contacted the Scottish 'Daily Record' and told them of the slide's existence. The newspaper contacted the Bords, but they did not release the photograph. Bob Rickard, editor Fortean Times, was partly responsible in getting Doc to agree to the publication of the article, both for the record, in case it is genuine, and in the hope that if it is a fake, it will draw the perpetrators out of hiding. As yet it has not succeeded in that, although it is now a month or two since it was published. I must admit that to my eye the reversed CUM slide is too much like ANS-2 for it to be anything other than a fake, using ANS-2 as it's base. I know that one photograph of, say, a horse or lizard or any creature, should show many similarities, however, the chances of catching the mouth open by exactly the same amount is a very long shot, as is getting the head/neck angle exactly the same. These two items, along with others, are the same on both slides. The puzzling question is why? Why go to what has obviously been a great deal of trouble and possibly expense, then let the whole scheme lie without making your profit, or pulling the rug out, or whatever? Strange.

Doc also mentioned another picture he has received since the Cumbernauld affair. It is a B&W print, obviously taken from a photograph of another print, of the monster of Lough Leane, Co. Kerry. The original was taken by a young fellow called Pat O'Talbot Kelly, in August 1981. Doc is trying to obtain the original negative, on loan. Kelly lives in the States and Doc also remembers meeting him in Ireland, in 1981. He says he does not trust Kelly, but all the evidence deserves to be explained impartially. He will let us know if he finds out any more about the picture.

#### BOOKS

Brian Cannell sent details of two second hand book dealers that members may find useful. The first dealer R. Norman, 3E Mountjoy Research Centre, Durham, DHI 3UR, runs a computerised book search service. He can also obtain books from America. The second dealer is, Jay Books, 1 Roull Grove, Edinburgh, EH12 7JP. Both dealers issue free catalogues.

I have also had lists from Excalibur Books, who are mail order booksellers specialising in all manner of anomalous phenomena. These go from Arthurian, through UFO, on to Ghosts & Fairies, then Legendary Creatures and so on. They sell new as well as second hand books and pamphlets. Address is, Rivenoak, 15 Rockport Road, Craigavad, Holywood, Co. Down, Northern Ireland, BT18 ODD. Telephone (02317) 7192.

Joe Zarzynski, author of 'Champ-Beyond The Legend' has a new book out. It is entitled 'Monster Wrecks of Loch Ness and Lake Champlain' and provides updated news on the scientific search for Nessie and Champ. It also explores some of the other mysteries from Loch Ness and Lake Champlain, with chapters on ship and aircraft wrecks, mini-monsters, possible underwater megalithic sites, ghostly apparitions, state of the art technology used at both monster haunts, and other intriguing stories from Loch and Lake. This limited edition book (3,000 copies) has over 40 illustrations, photos and maps. It also has a bibliography, end notes, and an index making it a useful source for any researcher. It can be ordered from:- M-Z Information, P.O. Box 2129, Wilton, New York 12866, U.S.A. \$8.95 per book, NYS residents add \$.63 per book for sales tax. \$1.00 for p&h for first book and \$.50 for further books. Foreign orders add \$2.50 for p&h.

I have just received the current copy of Llewellyn New Times, which is the magazine/catalogue of Llewellyn Publications. They are America's oldest publishers of New Age Sciences. Perhaps not of interest to the majority of members, however for any of you that have an interest in these matters it seems to be very comprehensive. It has articles, book reviews and columns on a number of diverse subjects in the fields of astrology, earth magic, metaphysics, healing, divinations, psychic development and other New Age subjects. Details from:- Llewellyn Publications, P.O. Box 64383-E, St. Paul, MN 55164, U.S.A.

Two Bigfoot items to finish. First, 'The Bigfoot Directory' by Danny Perez, is the Who's Who in the field of Bigfoot Studies, according to the flyer.

Forty pages of address listings, from Abbott to Zurk, Bigfoot investigator Danny Perez says he is presenting the first international listing of people associated with the phenomenon right up to 1984. Cost \$6.00 from Danny Perez, 10926 Milano Avenue, Norwalk, California 90650, U.S.A.

Then we come to 'The Sasquatch and Other Unknown Hominoids' edited by Vladimir Markotic, with associate editor Grover Krantz. There are over twenty contributors, each is a specialist on the subject of unknown hominoids, most having written extensively on the subject, as well as related subjects. Seven chapters, 335 pages long, the publishers flyer says it is an important book in numerous fields such as anthropology, primatology, folklore and even religion and written in clear language that laymen will understand and find fascinating. For example chapter three deals with reports and surveys of the unknown hominoids in recent years, and includes happenings and stories from the Soviet Union, Australia, Caucasus, and China, as well as North America. Chapters VI and V deal with the biological and psychological aspects of Sasquatches such as footprints, with the Patterson-Gimlin film being analysed in all its details. This book may be ordered from, Western Publishers, F.O. Box 30193, Station B, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, costing \$12.00(U.S.) plus \$1.00.

#### ULRICH MAGIN

I have a letter from Ulrich who has been publishing the Bilk magazine for some time, mentioned in Nessletters from time to time, he says that number 13 will appear next March with 4 pages. He is living in Ireland for some time and has researched an interesting old story in the Irish newspapers. It concerns the alleged seamonster seen by Forstner from 'U28' on 30th July 1915, after sinking the 'Iberian.' Ulrich says the story is a hoax. He has often wondered why Forstner did not give an exact site for his encounter: Gould (1934) says "off the west coast of France" and Heuvelmans (1968) has only "north Atlantic." Ulrich has now read a German book about monsters published some time in the 1970's and written for children, which gives the position as 'Fastnet Rock, Ireland.' It seems the authors had done some investigation into the place where the 'Iberian' had been sunk. Ulrich decided to try to find out more and checked the 'Cork County Eagle' for 1915. On August 7th, 1915, it carried a report about the 'Iberian', verifying the Fastnet Rock but with no mention of a monster. It told how the U28 had surfaced and talked to the 60 survivors, then towed their lifeboat into Queenstown (now Cobh, County Cork.) If Forstner really saw a monster, why did he not mention it to the crew, asks Ulrich? Also why didn't the survivors who were, very likely, watching their ship sink, see the creature? Perhaps they mentioned it and the newspaper did not print it. Ulrich says he thinks that unlikely, for on August 14th the paper printed a local seamonster story. He thinks it would not have missed the more sensational one two weeks before. The August 14th monster was later identified as barracuda fish, so had nothing to do with the Forstner monster. Ulrich says he thinks Forstner obscured his true position in 1933 to prevent people from finding the truth!

Ulrich says he has now collected some 150 'new' monster reports for 1933/1934, these are from many locations worldwide, Ireland, England, Scotland, Turkey, China, South Africa, Pacific Ocean, France, Australia and New Zealand. He urges members to check their own local papers.

Ulrich has read Campbell's book and says that he thinks it is good, better than most of the believer's books; but full of mistakes, he says he need not point them all out as we will have noticed them ourselves. He mentioned just one item, p.56, 'newspaper report' of monster that turned out to be a dead horse, as the explanation for the Taylor film. He points out that neither the Inverness Courier nor the Northern Chronicle had such a report, and if Burton is unable to produce it, Ulrich would think that he made it up.

One last item to close, Valerie Smith is looking for a companion/s for a springtime trip to the loch, contact her at Flat 8 Riverside Court, Caversham, Reading, Berks. RG4 8AC. if you are interested. Contact me at Huntshildford, St. Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham. DL13 1RQ. with your news and views, which are always needed, Tel. Weardale (0388) 537359. Subscription, U.S.A. \$7.00. U.K. 2.50.

Rip.