

NESS INFORMATION SERVICE  
 NESSLETTER 103  
 FEBRUARY 1991 (AUG '91)

NIS AT THE LOCHSIDE

Henry Bauer sent a letter late in May '91. He and his wife, Barbara, had an enjoyable two weeks in the Ross's chalet (at Strone). He had made contact with Andreas and Angela Trottmann, and enjoyed going out in their boat. They also visited Mrs Cary (Freddie), at Strone. She told them of some sightings, those in Nessletters 97/99, one in June '90 at Dore, which was featured in newspapers (I have no further information about this, RIP). Another in August which Henry says he has not seen described elsewhere: Bill and Edna Davidson were high on the road from Abriachan and reported seeing a head and neck which thickened greatly near the water-line, no more details. French Picknickers near the Clansman reported seeing a hump at about the same time.

One day he and Barbara saw a nice rainbow over the loch. Henry had been telling her of the use of a Polarizing filter on a camera to cut out reflections, and he thought a Polarizer would also decrease the the brightness of the rainbow since that comes from scattered light, so he was looking at it through his Polarizing sunglasses, while rotating them. In one position the rainbow became 'brighter' than with the naked eye. He asks, is there an optics expert among our members who can explain that?

Henry passed some comment on the latest format of the 'official' exhibition. He thinks that for the general public it is not as good as it was, though it has points of interest for the aficionado. Too much prior knowledge is assumed, he thinks, for example by Shine's favorite phrase about a 'war of attrition against the laws of chance'. The last few rooms, emphasizing the "food chain in the loch and intricacies of sonar and its interpretation, could be boring for those who seek information about the monster which excited their interest and may well have led them to make the trip to Scotland or at least the Highlands. He feels the shop at the exit of the exhibition is missing an opportunity, and possibly falling down on commitment, by not offering a comprehensive range of books and pamphlets such as are available in Inverness.

In London on the return journey, they were able to chat to Wendy and Dawn Dawn Dinsdale, who are continuing the good work of putting Tim's files and materials in order. Henry thinks that when Nessies are accepted by science, and no matter what they turn out to be, these files will be much sought by historians of science (among others). He had been vague when telling me of the proposed trip because until the last moment they were not absolutely sure they would be able to make it. Partly because of family commitment, partly because at the end of February, Henry had unexpectedly to have open-heart surgery, 5 by-passes to counteract narrowed coronary arteries. Thank goodness he recovered amazingly and marvelously well.

In June I received a letter from Andreas Trottmann with news of their (his wife and himself) trip to the loch in May. They were there for three weeks and for most of the time the loch and weather conditions were poor. Despite that, they managed to do several hours of sonar search with 'Witch of the Mist'. He got two interesting contacts of larger objects in the loch. He had considered hiring a night observation device from the manufacturer, Leica in Switzerland, but found their renting rates exorbitant.

They met Doug Macfarlane, who was up from Ayrshire for a few days, and spent some most interesting and lively hours on the water or at the cottage at Tor-na-Brack. They made some sonar runs with both boats on the loch, abreast and about 80 to 100 metres apart. Andreas says that naturally the boat further out (Doug's Topcat) suffered from interferences due to the reflection of the beam from the loch wall, but it was an

interesting experiment. He says it is always helpful for him to learn from Doug's enormous experiences with boats, sonar and the Loch Ness enigma. Andreas mentioned spending an interesting morning with Henry and Barbara Bauer. Henry is telling them he is working hard to finish what is planned to be the most accurate and complete bibliography of the Loch Ness Phenomenon. Andreas also says there is a German book on Nessie titled 'Nessie das Ratsel von Loch Ness' written by Karl-Ernst Jipp and published by Bertelsen Verlag, Stuttgart in 1989 (ISBN 3-927763-00-4).

For a number of years Andreas has also been interested in the research concerning the sightings of unknown Big Cats in the Strathglass and Loch Ness area. This May he left a voice activated tape recorder for 48 hours at a well known Big Cat site near Tomich, unfortunately without any results, nor did he find any clearly identifiable Big Cat Paw Prints. Never the less the strong ammonia-like smell on site and hearing two very loud and distinctive screams just before he reached the site were more in favour of a possible existence of such cats. He plans to try it again next time, together with a simple camera trap. He asks that if any of us come into contact with eye-witnesses, or hear reports of Big Cats while researching Loch Ness would we please send him a short note. He hopes to be back at the loch for a week or ten days sometime during September or October.

Doug Macfarlane sent a note at the beginning of July to update us a little on what he has been doing. Because of bad weather, his off shore commitments and closed canals, Topcat had to stay at Dochgarroch for the winter. The rig he was on in the North Sea has been decommissioned and sold, he was laid off but has now been taken on the stand-by crew aboard her in the Firth of Forth, off Methil. All this uncertainty has prevented him planning too much for the 1991 season. He managed a few days at the loch every month over the winter, but the time was mainly spent working on the boat. He had three outings in May including the pair sounding experiment with Andreas and Angela, but strong winds prevented more outings over the week. He also took Topcat out for a couple of days in June and did some single handed sail and sounder work between Lochend and Invermoriston. His totals so far this year are 24 hours with sounder and 57 hours camera watch. During the 1990 season he arrived at Loch Ness on 26th June with Topcat and between then and 11th October he put in 68 hours sounder work and 166 hours camera watch. He has not done a full review of the years sounder charts, but he thinks that he only had one target of size last season.

He is hoping to get to the loch from 11th to 22nd July and again from 6th to 19th August, when his son Alan is on holiday. He says he is always pleased to meet other NIS members and others with an interest in Loch Ness, and while he is on his own help with 8 metre handling is always welcome.

In the early days of Doug's sounder work when he was testing his equipment in the Clyde, I said in a Nessletter that some would wonder why as there is no history of monsters in the area. But pointing out that there were seals and basking sharks around and they were what Doug was trying to track for experience, as he still does. Doug says there would seem to be a history of sea serpents around there. He sent me a copy of a little pamphlet on 'The Scottish Sea Serpent' which Andreas had come across during his stay (Andreas also sent me one). There are three reports in the pamphlet of sightings of large sea serpents in the Firth of Clyde, the most recent in 1962 at Helensburgh. There have also been two carcasses reported ashore, one at Girvan in 1953, soon after fishermen reported seeing two long necked large creatures nearby, and one during the war at Gourloch, reputedly buried under a school playing field. There are also more historical ones off Arran and in Loch Fyne, where Doug goes basker hunting. So there is always the outside possibility, although has a more recent claim with Moragwan, he says.

COYNNAR

Now on to Proposed trips. I have a letter from Alastair Boyd. He is still not in the best of health, but along with his wife Sue, hopes to be at the chalet below Strone from late July to mid-August.

I will slip our details in here, because we normally meet up with Sue and Alastair at the loch, not so this season. I was made redundant in February when the Fluorspar mine where I had worked for over 19 years closed because the Parent company went into liquidation. There is little chance of employment in our area, so at first we thought that our holidays at Loch Ness were at an end. However we decided to try to get there this season, although it could be the last. Then along came family weddings, hospital appointments, village shows and the imminent arrival of our fourth grandchild, so it will be September before we get to the loch. So for two weeks from September 6th we hope to be at our usual place at the end of the old Abriachn Pier. We still have our white Bedford hightop motorcaravan.

Some of our members may have heard about the next visitor, his Proposed stay at the loch received coverage in some newspapers and radio stations. It is Steve Feltham a fairly recent recruit to the ranks of the NIS, his earlier expeditions to the loch were mentioned in NIS 101. Steve has sold his house and bought an old mobile library, which he is going to drive to the loch and use as his base while there. He telephoned and we made arrangements to call on his way north, he was visiting a few people on the way up. I was very pleased to see him, and I suppose a little envious, as he is doing what I think many of us would like to do. The old van is somewhat unwieldy, but looks servicable, it had been converted before Steve got it, but he has added to it. He has all the 'life support systems', cooker, water, gas, storage space, shower, bed and a little solid fuel stove. The last will be needed over the winter. Steve plans to spend perhaps two or three years there, using the van and moving slowly around the area. He showed me through it and it looked very promising. Now to the important bit, he is looking for Nessie; using what? He has a good video camera. As members may recall, I have reservations about video as a medium, thinking perhaps that any results obtained could be awkward to get the best from. Steve had taken advice from professionals and had been advised to use VHS super 'C'. This is the format used by the BBC, and others, for news coverage such as the Gulf Conflict, and produces very good high definition tapes. Steve is confident that should/when he gets 'it' on tape, it will be good quality.

I had a very enjoyable afternoon discussing various aspects of his scheme, wondering how the locals will look upon him, will he run into bother with the authorities because of overnight parking etc., Steve feels that he will just play things by ear, keep a low profile and try to merge into the background. He told me of a little incident that happened the previous day. Driving through the Lake District he had stopped in a town and found an Army Surplus store, where he proceeded to purchase items of clothing, some of it for winter, among the things he got were a pair of braces. As you may know Army surplus very often has the name of the last owner on it. Later that evening, parked on the tops in Teesdale, he was packing the things away and came across a name in faded ballpoint on the braces. That name was S.NESS! How about that for an omen? Steve says he is willing to help out with any projects. He also promised to keep us informed about his progress.

Books, Magazines, etc.

'Monstrum! A Wizards Tale' by Tony 'Doc' Shiels, a paperback published September 1990. ISBN: 1.870021.04.5, through good bookshops £8.95 or mail order SKS, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX, £9.75. Doc is a showman, a magician, and has had a long interest in mysterious water monsters. In 1977 he initiated the 'Monstermind' Project, which culminated in him getting what has been called by some, the best photograph yet of

Nessie. The account of 'Monstermind' is in the book, mixed in with Little People, the Cornish Owlman, Morogw, Giant squid, UFOs and the Irish Pooka among others, this all stirred in with a generous helping of surrealism. A strange book, perhaps not for the Loch Ness Purist, but certainly one for the Fortean.

'The Loch Ness Monster (The Evidence)' by Stuart Campbell, first published by The Aquarian Press in 1986, has reappeared as a revised edition. There has been a change of Publisher to Aberdeen University Press, it is still a paperback and the price is now £5.95. I commented on this book in NIS80, when I pointed out that Stuart seems to omit some reports and pick and choose parts of others that suit his argument. Saying that, like others before him, he has written a book which supports his explanations of the phenomenon, and as long as we bear that in mind when we read the book we can make allowances. This is a revised edition but the theme remains the same. I have been through it fairly carefully and only noted three changes; Dr Ian Lyster becomes Plain Ian, the reference to the New Atlantis's few weeks work in 1987 has been left out of the section on sonar. Operation Deepscan now has a mention in the same section. It is covered in four lines!

Strange Magazine is continuing in grand style, number seven has the usual varied mix of contents. An article on the 'Mona Grande', and de Loys 1920 photograph of what seems to be a large ape and the story behind it. Further discussion on the Crop Circle mystery, Cryptozoology news, readers experiences, letters and much more. Published twice a year U.S. sub \$17.95, U.K. £13.50, PO Box 2246, Rockville, MD 20847, USA. It is also available from some bookstores in the UK, it is worth enquiring anywhere dealing in mysteries and Fortean items.

Fortean Times, the latest issue takes a great step forward. For a long time the editors, Bob Rickard and Paul Sieveking, have been seeking the means to secure the future of the Fortean Times. After much investigation they have contracted a deal with John Brown Publishing Ltd. They will supply the editorial package and Brown will handle all the printing, distribution etc. The first issue of this combination is excellent. As ever the contents are a combination of wonderful mysteries and anomalies, there has been a slight increase in size, about an inch all round, which has opened up the layout. It is said that 'you cannot build the lily', with this new move I think Bob and Paul have just about managed it.

A video, not a new one of the monster, but a documentary type film called 'The Loch Ness Monster: Fact, Fiction, or Fantasy?' This has been produced by an Andersier based production company, North Scene Video, to full broadcast standard. It starts with a re-enactment of St Columba's sighting and progresses through an analysis of archive film going back to the 1930s. There are eye-witness interviews and spectacular filming of the area, and quite a lot on Adrian Shine's Loch Ness Project. It has had some publicity and been advertised. Andreas has a copy and wrote saying, 'It is an interesting and well made video. I think no NIS member should miss it.' It will be available in Inverness and the Exhibition Shop at Drumnadrochit. Andreas sent this address for it: - Ross Records, 29 Rain Street, Turriff, Aberdeenshire, AB5 7AB, and stating price as £10, no mention of post and package.

Then there is a video 'To See .. Is To Believe', Operation Deepscan. This video has been produced by Lowrance Video Productions. It is reviewed in Strange Magazine by Joe Zarzynski, who says it would be a valuable addition to the aquatic cryptozoologists video library. It would seem to be only available in the US, but enquiries could be worthwhile. Address given is: - Lowrance Electronics, 12800E, Skelly Dr., Tulsa, Oklahoma 74128, USA. 35.46 mins: \$16.95 Ppd.

Well there we are another Nessletter finished. Some of you may have heard of Project Urquhart, do not worry full information next time, in the meantime please remember your news and views are always welcome and needed: - R.R. Hepple, 7 Huntshildford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Tel (0388) 537359. Subs U.K. £2.75. North America, \$9.00