

PROJECT URQUHART

In response to NIS105 I received a letter from Nick Mitchell. He stated that he agreed entirely with my remarks opening and concluding observations about how absurd it would be for Project Urquhart and the Loch Ness Project to adopt rivalrous attitudes to each other.

He said, 'Any such situation would, as you say, be tragic. But it would be more than that. In operational and scientific terms it would be inefficient, and in human terms it would be a betrayal of the memory of those who have striven so hard in the Past to increase our understanding of the loch. It simply must not happen.'

Project Urquhart, and the major institutions which support it, want there to be a spirit of co-operation between us and Adrian. Indeed he was the first person we went to, and we offered him a role in Project Urquhart which, to our regret, he later declined so that he could do his own thing. As he knows, and as I am pleased to repeat now, I have the greatest admiration for what he has achieved at the loch, especially since it has often been done with comparatively meagre resources. Project Urquhart's purpose is to make significantly more resources available for the study of the loch. It is an ambitious programme and we must ensure that the spirit of co-operation is not lost.'

I am delighted to be able to pass on to members this declaration by Nick and hope that it could develop into a joint programme of co-ordinated experiments. It would be so good to have a series of complimentary experiments/surveys by the two Projects, maximising the input of human and financial resources.

SIGHTING

One of our newer members, Helen Cross, sent news of a hump sighting she had in 1990. It was the second Saturday in October (the 13th), she says it was fairly early in the morning, but cannot be exact as she and a friend had been driving around for quite a while and lost track of time. They had driven up the Drumbuie Hill, which gives marvellous views over Urquhart Bay, and parked to have a cup of tea. While her friend went round the rear of the car to get the flask, Helen sat in the front just looking around. The weather conditions were very clear with no wind, the loch surface being calm with small ripples over much of what could be seen. The sun shining fairly low in the sky over Inverfarigaig made the bay and much of the visible loch a silver sheen. Helen did not see the 'hump' appear, it was just there when she glanced that way. It was close to where the brow of the hill obscured the water and about half way into the bay. Because of the distance it would have been easy to overlook, if the conditions had not been so clear. It caught, and held, her attention as it stood out against the shining water. She was surprised by her passive reaction, and regrets her failure to go and tell someone immediately. The significance of what she was watching simply did not sink in. She just sat waiting for it to turn into a boat or something familiar, but it did not. Her camera was in the back of the car, although without a telephoto lens it would not have picked up anything useful, even if she had thought to try to get it. The 'hump' remained in view for about a minute, without moving at all. Helen said she had the impression it was basking in the sun. After that time it just sank straight down without making a ripple, and that was that, except for a particularly interesting shadow which remained for about half a minute. It was under the water surface and larger than the 'hump' itself. Helen judged the 'hump' to be about 5 feet from front to back. She said, 'I do not claim to have seen 'Nessie' simply because until a specimen is seen in its entirety, nobody knows what a 'Nessie' could possibly look like!'

Helen sent a photograph taken from the same place about five minutes afterwards. Using this and a map I calculate she was about 500 feet above the water and some three quarters of a mile from the object. At that range if she had been in a less elevated position she may not have noticed the

'hump'. One explanation of what Helen saw would be a small unrippled patch of dark water, which then ripples up and merges with the surrounding lighter water. However Helen has visited the loch a number of times and done a fair amount of watching, so she has some experience of the loch and water conditions. One aspect of the account I question is the 'shadow' left after the hump submerged. Helen suggested it was under the surface. I doubt that because the sun reflecting off the water would prevent any view through the surface. It seems certain that she saw something unusual but at such a range that details were not visible, and fuller identification not possible.

Helen is a student and would very much like to be able to spend time at the loch. Possibly working for one of the Projects.

As a postscript to the MacLennan sighting report, two points. Firstly, I received a phonecall from a Daily Record reporter requesting more details. I asked where they had come across the information in the first place. He told me that one of our English members had sent them the account from the Newsletter. I told him that I had written up the account as I had received it, and there were no details left out. I also stressed most strongly that Mrs MacLennan did not wish for any publicity, and would most probably be unhappy if the report appeared in the newspapers. Never-the-less it did appear in the Record, and also a few lines in the Daily Mirror. I wonder do members agree with the passing on of reports to the newspapers.

Secondly, in reply to my remark that I have never liked accounts with large waves rolling on to the shore, Jim Green wrote. He reminds me of his wake sighting on 23/8/90, this was reported in NIS42. He saw a great deal of turbulence, he likened it to threshing machines going through the water, with quantities of foam. Although he did say he agreed that there was very little 'rolling of waves towards the shore'.

TRAPPING

The Highland News of January 18th '92 carried a story and photographs from a Canadian paper 'Weekly World News'. Henry Bauer sent the original paper a little later, thank you.. The article proclaimed that Nessie had been caught in a steel net baited with 3,000 pounds of tuna fish. The story is that scientists from seven countries, after years of preparation, caught Nessie in the net last December. When they first tried in November the net was eventually torn apart after weeks of inactivity. It took them several weeks to replace the net and 24 hours after setting and rebaiting it Nessie swam into it and it held. At first Nessie, 70 feet long and weighing 20 tons, struggled furiously but soon settled down, resting on the loch floor. Because it needs air, the air bags fitted to the net are inflated to raise everything to the surface three times a day. They are feeding it about 2,000 pounds of raw tuna every day, and have been intrigued by it's demeanor. Their divers have become quite friendly with it, stroking its head and letting it feed out of their hands!!

The two photographs are most impressive showing a diver in scuba gear reaching out to stroke a large head in one, and putting his around the neck to hug it in the other. The head is roughly two feet long and 18 inches wide and deep, it is blunt with two inch eyes set close to the top. The mouth is large with rows of small sharp teeth top and bottom. The neck looks about 8 feet long and there is a huge bulky body in the background. The skin is depicted as wrinkled and rough, somewhat after the style of an elephant's. I am not sure how they have been produced. A life size model perhaps, or a small model and trick photography, are two possibilities.

The whole thing is of course a complete fabrication. The newspaper is well known for 'entertainment', after the style of the British 'Sport' editions. For instance on the opposite page is an account of UFOs which have been recharging from time to time since 1987, from a remote power station in Egypt.

I wonder if any harm has been done to the quest to obtain good evidence?

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

The latest Forten Times (No 61) is to hand, and is once again packed

with every conceivable type of wonderful weirdness. Of special interest to us is a still of humps from a video taken by Hideaki Tomiyasu at Lake Ikeda in Japan. As well as the Photograph Fortean Times prints an account of the sighting. This is the same sighting that I reported in NIS 102, having received word of it from one of our members, Kenji Chono. At the time I said that all I had to examine were rather poor quality photocopies, but taken along with the written account of humps merging and then separating again, it suggested we were dealing with a boat wake. Now having seen the much better print in the Fortean Times I am certain that it was a boat wake that was videoed on 4th January 1991.

I had received a postcard from Kenji after using the information he originally sent. He gave me the correct date of 1978 of a reported sighting by 20 people, which I had surmised to be 1990 when he left it out. He also said that while sightings continue to occur from time to time, he now thinks that most reports, including the two he first sent, are of boat wakes. Saying, 'I do not think there are large, Nessie-like monster in Lake Ikeda (rather small, and quite newly-formed.)' He will continue to investigate monster reports from Japan, as well as other locations, and says he will keep us informed of his findings.

I have a fresh source of second-hand and out-of-print books. It is Cameron Books, (D. & C. E. Nutter) 7 Gravel Hill, Wimbourne Dorset, BH21 1RN. Don will try to find out-of-print, if he is successful there is a charge of £2.50 plus postage. Contact him with your requirements or for more details.

I have had word from Henry Bauer. In September '91 he had received a copy of the British edition of his book 'The Enigma of Loch Ness', Johnston and Bacon, ISBN 0-7179-460-37, £4.99, in paperback. He had been awaiting it for two years. The publisher had wanted something that could sell at a reasonable price, so Henry had agreed they could omit the footnotes at the ends of the chapters, and the lengthy bibliography, and the list of sightings. In point of fact Henry says that although the new preface says the sightings have been omitted, they are still there. Appendix A has another page-and-a-bit added, a summary of notable events of 1987. He also said, 'What pleases me most is that the publishers allowed me to include a memorial statement about Tim Dinsdale and a photo of him. I still miss him a lot.' (I think that is true of all of us who knew Tim.)

The hardback edition of Enigma is going out of print, it's a second, slightly revised printing. Henry has obtained the last few copies from the publishers and they are available on a first come basis to NIS members. Cost £15 pounds each, surface postage included. His address is: 301-B Davidson Hall, VPI & SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0212, U.S.A. I suggest you contact him first to check availability.

STUART CAMPBELL

Last August Stuart wrote in response to my mention of the re-publication of his book in NIS103. He pointed out that I had not been thorough enough to note all the revisions. Those I missed are: P. 11: revised Para. 2. P. 42: addition at end of P6 (re Stuart Case). P. 50: sentence added to P19 (conclusion on Shields's Pics). P. 74: Penultimate sentence added. (conclusion on US. Passim: V. many corrections and revisions, including notes. He says, 'I have omitted a reference to the work of New Atlantis in 1985 (not 1987), in order to include a note about Operation Deepscan. I was fortunate to be able to get four lines in.'

Stuart went on to say that it is true I have commented on his book, but that I have not reviewed it. He says he understands why I am reluctant to review a book which undermines my belief in N. He says I have a duty to our readers to tell them more about 'the best book yet presented on the 'creatures of Loch Ness'' (his quotes). This is ground I have been over before. His book, by the way is 'The Loch Ness Monster (The Evidence)', does not undermine my belief of something large and unusual in the loch. It presents the contrary view, and I have pointed that out. Whilst devoting a fair amount of space to it in the Nessletters, which I suppose is no bad thing as far as Stuart is concerned. As I said before this is a book which should be read by anyone with an interest in Loch Ness, but

hopefully not in isolation.

Steuart finished with comment on Henry Bauer's rainbow query. Saying if part of the rainbow appeared brighter when the sunglasses were rotated, that can only have been because the light coming from water drops in that area was polarized in the same direction as the sunglasses. He said he would be very surprised if it was brighter with the glasses than without, but indicated that brightness is always relative, and it may have appeared brighter because the glasses were reducing the intensity of light from other parts of the rainbow.

In September Steuart wrote with more on rainbows. Seeing a rainbow earlier he had observed it through his Polaroid sunglasses, and gives the following explanation. The light from a rainbow is indeed polarized. The direction of the polarization is radial, i.e. at right angles to the arc of the bow. Consequently the bow is polarized in different directions at different points around its arc. However polarized sunglasses are polarized in one direction only, i.e. horizontal as normally worn. When viewing a rainbow through the glasses one will therefore see no bow where the polarized light and the grid on the glasses are at or about right angles to one another. He found that the bow disappeared from about the 11 o'clock position to about the 1 o'clock position. The other effect of Polaroid sunglasses (and perhaps other types of sunglasses) is to darken the sky, so making the bow easier to see. In effect, they seem to brighten the bow, where it can be seen. Rotation of the glasses, or any polarized filter, will move the 'bright' areas, and the areas where no bow can be seen, around the bow. He also enclosed a diagram to illustrate the point. He said he had not seen any mention in the scientific literature that the light from rainbows is polarized, but that he would let us know if he discovered any. This he did a few weeks later, when he sent a copy of page 64 from Tricker's 'Introduction to Meteorological Optics' (1970). He had marked the relevant passages that said exactly what he had, in his previous letter. Thanks to Steuart for throwing more light (polarized!) on Henry's query.

NIS AT THE LOCHSIDE

Peter Davenport enclosed a note with his subscription. His wife Lesley had a little boy on 6th January, both well. Peter hopes that all being well they will get back to the loch in June. That is about the only time he can get holidays. Last year they stayed at the Old Pier bed and breakfast place at Fort Augustus. Over the years they have stayed at just about everywhere on the loch, but Peter says that the Old Pier is definitely the best they have been to. The location is just fantastic, right on the lochside (uninterrupted views all round) and the atmosphere is very relaxed, with everyone encouraged to muck in. During their stay there were guests from Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Germany as well as England. One interesting point about the place is there are no 'midgies'. Mrs McKenzie, the owner, puts it down to the house being on a promontory and the breeze blowing up the loch keeps them away. Peter says that for as long as they can get up to the loch he can't see them trying anywhere else.

Another note in with subscription came from Jayne Mitchell. They had been to the loch and had very good sunshine most of the time. No details as to time or area of loch. She had done a fair amount of watching, without success. She did remark on the number (about 2 million) of boats around. She visited the Exhibition, but was not really impressed. She says the information presented was on the whole good, but she felt it was directed more at the curious tourist. She supposes that is only right as most enthusiasts probably know most of what is there already. She liked the music, the best bit of the exhibition, and bought the tape.

One last thing. On the first day of their holidays at the loch, she was 'proposed' to on the foreshore below the Clansman Hotel, and said Yes. How about that for romance?

There we are another one. Thank you for your letters. Please remember your news and views are always welcome my address remains:- R.R.Hepple, 7 Huntshieldsford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Tel.(0388)537359. Subscriptions,U.K.£2.75. North America \$9.00

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