

NESS INFORMATION SERVICE
 NESSLETTER 109
 FEBRUARY 1992 (JULY '92)

DICK RAYNOR

In June I received a letter from Dick with some comments on NIS109, among other things. It is 25 Years (June 13th 1967) since he took what became known as the 'Raynor Film' while with the Loch Ness Investigation. He says that he still does not know what it was .. he changes his mind every five Years or so. He says a likely explanation is a family of Grebes running on the surface (it ties in perfectly with his written report at the time) and he saw them doing just that in the same Place in 1980, but when he looks at the film again, the disturbance seems too big. A seal maybe, but no-one else reported one at the time. He says that even though he says so himself, it was a good bit of filming ... the last genuine article? He says, 'Nothing taken since then makes him think 'that looks like a large unknown animal'.' Dick says it could be possible to see Doc Shields' Photographs as fakes. Some have pointed out that the background wave patterns seem to run through the neck. He says it is easy to produce Photographs using a model, stand it on a white sheet, Photograph it on slide film and sandwich the result with another slide of the background you want, (making sure there are no large highlight areas in the model or the background will show through,) then Photograph the sandwich onto whatever film you like with a slide copier. Dick suggests trying it with half an avocado skin if you want a nice rough textured hump! He says all the Rines' Pictures fail his standards of credibility, even though he was there when they were taken. There is nothing wrong with the Photograph, only with the interpretation. The 'Gargoyle Set', including the whole body and the other shots are obviously of objects on the bottom, while the 'Flipper' picture sequence as published by Rines do not fit with his description of them. There is an unclear situation whether or not they have been enhanced. All in all he feels there are too many unanswered questions.

Dick continues to run a specialised Photo Processing business at his home in Kilmuir on the Black Isle. He caters mainly to Professional Photographers but is also able to help almost anyone in photographic trouble. He says he also seems to run a free consultancy for people who wish to attempt the photographically impossible. Recent clients include someone wishing to snap wildcats in the dusk and another photographing ospreys. He can offer a photographic service to anyone who has exposed film in adverse condition and/or require special processing facilities. Providing they have not used Kodachrome Slide film he can do as much as any other lab could, right there at the loch. That could be very useful to NIS members.

Radio is one of Dick's hobbies, and he is expecting to have an Amateur B Licence, at least, very soon. He also has CB and Marine Band equipment should any Nessletter reader be interested in establishing a communication system during their stay at the loch.

Dick is also an Auxiliary Coastguard, (in his 'spare' time he says). The area covered by the Coastguard includes Loch Ness, and while taking part in a recent patrol down the loch he met Adrian Shine on board Ecos, with some visiting researchers. He did not ask what they were doing.

Going on to NIS109, Dick says he is slightly annoyed by Andreas Trottmann's reference to 'animals' in Loch Ness. He says, 'We are all interested in the things which people see, photograph, or record on sonar in Loch Ness, but there is absolutely no evidence YET that the phenomena are caused by unknown animals. If we are to be taken seriously then we must be careful with our words. If we insist on 'looking for the animals' then we are merely fanatics, believers of our chosen fable, driven ever onwards by the story we have ourselves created.' He pointed out that some 300 Years into the Age of Reason the world is full of strife caused by groups of fanatics with differing views. We need solid evidence before we can pass a verdict and grant existence to a new animal.

However he does say we must not get him wrong. He fully accepts that people see things which look like huge animals. Unlike some others, Dick

does not suggest that they are mistaking known objects. He points out that when a human sees something the brain automatically tries to classify the new image in terms of known objects (recognition) and verbal description uses the same principal. Dick says, 'Faced with something entirely new, possibly involving physical principles not understood, this system of classification and description breaks down. Imagine presenting a helicopter to John the Baptist, or a television to Aristotle .. and asking them to classify the objects afterwards. Of such things are religions made.' He does not say there are no unknown animals in Loch Ness, nor that the 'things' in the loch are not animals. Just that he thinks it improper, with our present knowledge, to say much at all, except that there is an interesting phenomena deserving of wide-ranging investigation. He suggests we should get away from our camera viewfinders, and start measuring magnetic fields, gravitational fields, electric fields, to monitor the entire electromagnetic spectrum from DC up to the Gigahertz ranges, to be free thinking. It need not cost a fortune, it could be done using a £200 scanner and a micro cassette recorder, set to VOX. Put the gear in a plastic bag and leave it under a rock on the beach for the day, while you think of something else to try. He finished, 'If I were a novel kind of intelligence, I think I would quite like to be discovered by those who have been blundering around me for so long without recognising me for what I am. It's so nice to be appreciated. Perhaps when 'The Loch' claims your camera but lets you swim ashore it is telling you that you do not need the camera .. but please try something else.'

FATALITY

I'll slip this piece in here, as it concerns Coastguards. The Inverness Courier carried the story that a man had been found dead in a boat on the loch on July 1st. He had been identified as 66-year old Alistair Fraser, a retired sales representative, who was a well known and experienced Inverness angler. The alarm had been raised sometime before 10pm when he failed to return from a fishing trip in a 16ft open loch-boat. A helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth as well as Inverness Police had been involved, but it was the Auxiliary Coastguard who found the boat floating two miles south-west of Urquhart Castle. A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal. That is an official that is peculiar to Scotland. I believe, something of a mixture between Coroner and Public Prosecutor. Last September a holidaymaker had been returning to his boat tied up in the mouth of the canal at Fort Augustus after an evening ashore with friends, and had slipped in between two boats. He had been in the water for some minutes and unfortunately was dead when pulled out. Once again the Procurator Fiscal had been informed.

I am not sure how long the Coastguards have had Loch Ness under their wing. I remember incidents on the loch from years gone by that would have warranted the Coastguard being there, but they were not. Early last year, April I think, a cruiser got into difficulties and drifted in high winds, eventually going aground near Aldourie. The family of four had reached shore safely, but had earlier fired distress flares. The Police and Ambulance services had been alerted, as well as the Coastguard. So they have been interested for over a year.

PROJECT URQUHART

Nick Mitchell sent me the latest information on Project Urquhart. The first step in P.U.'s fieldwork will be taken on the weekend of 5/6th July '92 when the scientific survey vessel MV SIMRAD will arrive in the loch. This 150 ton vessel is fitted out with sonar equipment developed by the Simrad Group of Norway. It will be in the loch for up to three weeks while it undertakes what is claimed to be the first full hydrographic survey of the loch since 1903. However I am led to believe that not all that time will be devoted to P.U.'s experiments. The survey which will be conducted using a Simrad EM 1000, which is the latest swath bathymetry system, is scheduled to commence on Friday 10th July. A Simrad EK 500, which is an echo sounder system, will be used by scientists from the Freshwater Biological Association to study the loch's fish population. Also available will be the latest ultra-low-light underwater video camera developed by Osprey Electronics of Aberdeen and Wick. These will be mounted on a remote operated underwater vehicle (ROV). Side-scan sonar will also be used to

study the loch walls and bed. Sub-bottom Profiling sonar will be used to try to Penetrate the loch floor and perhaps reveal geological data about the structure and origin of the Great Glen, and thus Loch Ness. There are a number of quotes from the scientific Personnel, all extolling the merits of working at Loch Ness. Professor Gwynfryn Jones, Director of the F.B.A.says 'The exploration of Loch Ness is potentially one of the most exciting such studies to be undertaken in Britain in recent years'. Commenting on the biological survey, Professor Colin Curds, Keeper of Zoology at the Natural History Museum, and member of P.U.'s council of management said, 'It is highly likely that species new to science will be discovered in Loch Ness'. But before we start jumping up and down with glee, remember the type of species they are examining are such things as nematode worms, and creatures in that size bracket!

So Project Urquhart is going to get off to a fairly high profile media launch. The next question is where to next, after the Simrad expedition, as P.U. is still seeking sponsors.

In the past some members have expressed fears that as sonar has been said to startle Nessie, perhaps operations such as being undertaken by Simrad/P.U. could have some detrimental effects.

LOCH NESS PROJECT

In May a team of 60 students from Wolverhampton Polytechnic spent four days on and around the loch. They were studying the chemistry of the loch, peat bogs and more than a hundred feeder streams. By examining the sediment of the loch they can assess levels of acid, pollution and metals which have built up over the centuries. It is hoped that this study will allow the scientists to build a time graph through the ages, as far back as the Ice Age, 12000 years ago. By linking mud samples with historical dates and events, such as the Industrial Revolution, they hope to establish the timing of climatic changes and the causes of global warming or cooling. The team leader Dr Kate Farr hopes they can create a text-book history of the loch's chemistry which will allow them to read its past much like reading the rings on a tree. She said Loch Ness is one of the most important sites in the western hemisphere for such studies, because of the depth the sediments have been largely undisturbed and provide a time capsule of historical change. This insight into historical climatic changes could provide valuable information for those studying present day problems. This survey the biggest of its kind, had been organized by Adrian Shine, field leader of the Loch Ness Project.

He had also been responsible for a hydrographic survey undertaken in December '91. It has been explained to me that sonar beams bend as they travel through water layers of different temperature/density, akin to the way light refracts as it enters water. Loch Ness develops a very strong thermocline during summer months, this, along with the associated seiche effect has been studied by the Loch Ness Project using sonar/echo sounder over a period of nearly ten years. The lack of such stratification, thermocline, leads to obtaining the optimum results when using swathe sonar for a hydrographic survey. So December was chosen as the period when the water temperatures of the loch are most stable. While undertaking a general survey the LNP had a look at the deepest point of the loch. In 1903 the John Murray Bathymetric Survey of the loch, using what was then state of the art lead and piano wire, established it as 754 feet. Despite the report from the Vickers Submersible 'Pisces' (1969) that they had found an area almost 1000 feet deep no one else has located it. Adrian and the LNP produced the figure of 734.4 feet (223.8m), as the deepest, hopefully this is the definitive measurement. It lies in a slight depression in the loch floor, in mid-loch due south of Urquhart Castle. The difference of 20ft compared to the Murray findings, can be explained by a slight angle of the wire used by them. As little as 13 degrees from perpendicular accounts for it, indicating how comparatively accurate the Murray survey had been.

I am now left with the feeling that perhaps my early misgivings about two scientific projects operating at the loch, are going to be justified. Is the P.U./Simrad operation going to duplicate much of the work already done by Adrian's LNP? I hope not. There is also a rumour around, or I

sincerely hope it is a rumour, that some work Proposed by Adrian has been shelved for now in case it damages the P.U.'s efforts to gain sponsors. Time will tell.

SIGHTING!

Steve Feltham sent a cutting from the Highland News, 29th Feb, '92. It is the account of a possible sighting along with a rather poor newspaper photograph of a disturbance in the water. The incident took place last September, when Hector MacDonald an ex-merchant seaman, who joined Scott 11 in 1962 a year after it started to operate, and is first mate, saw a large disturbance. He has done thousands of trips on the loch, as well as seeing dolphins, porpoises, crocodiles and other types of natural phenomena during his merchant navy days. Scott 11 was on its way back from Urquhart Castle and between Tor Point and Dores Bay, he was on deck on his own when he noticed movement 250 yds off the starboard quarter. He had binoculars and looked at the object through them, (but there is no description given of what he saw) he then took the picture, using a simple 35mm camera. When he grabbed the binoculars again it had gone. He says he has seen nothing like it before (although we are not told what it looked like), but does not claim to have seen the monster, saying, 'I am not in a position to say whether I saw the monster or not. I'm leaving others to decide what I saw, phenomena or otherwise'.

I am not sure what to make of this report. We have Hector, who should be a reliable witness, but there are some questions. It took place in September '91, why did it take so long to appear in the paper? I reported a sighting in NIS4, July 1974, by the first mate of Scott 11 whom I was able to interview, at that time the mate was Mr G. Siegel. Was Hector a deckhand at that time and has become mate since? The picture in the paper is very poor. The loch looks calm with small ripples, and an indistinct disturbance can just be made out. What is discernable is the south shore of the loch, and one of the large forestry lay-bys on the B052 Dores/Foxers road, in the left-hand side of the frame. This would put Scott 11 somewhere in the region of the Clansman, not Torr Pt/Dores Bay. I would very much like to speak to Hector and have a look at an original print of the picture.

NIS AT THE LOCHSIDE

The first week in June I received a letter from Doug Macfarlane with his news and plans. They had an upset early in January when his wife, Margaret, suffered a small stroke, which affected her senses/feeling in the right side. The better news was that she has largely recovered. The specialist told her to lose some weight, exercise a bit more and try to return to a normal style of life. Doug had intended to give his boat 'Topcat' a major refit last winter. But with the time devoted to Margaret's upset, and that lost because of a very wet spring he is running very late. He was just then getting into the modifications, new front to the cabin and replacing the foredeck, among other things, and does not expect to get 'Topcat' into the loch before July. They did manage a couple of days up in March, they stayed at the Clansman and did some quiet camera watching and relaxing around the loch.

Word just to hand from Alastair and Sue Boyd. Alastair is still having some health problems but they are intending to get to the loch, at Strone as usual, from 26th July to 15th August.

I am usually at the loch around the same time and look forward to meeting up with them. At the moment I do not know if I will get to the loch this year, finances are in a poor state.

That is all for now, as ever please remember your news and views are welcome and needed my address remains:- R.R. Hepple, 7 Huntshieldsford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Tel. 0330 537359. Subs U.K. £2.75 N.America \$9.00.

LATE NEWS. A phonecall from Steve Feltham, the Video Diary is to be broadcast on 1st August at 10.10pm by BBC2. The Radio Times for that week will have a two page article about Loch Ness.

RIP.