

NESS INFORMATION SERVICE  
 NESSLETTER 112  
 AUGUST 1992 (MAR '93)

## EXPLANATION

You may have wondered about the unusual layout of page four of NIS 111. I had all the Nessletter on disc, and cut the stencils for the duplicator. As I was doing page four...oops too many lines. No bother, a little re-edit and away we go again. At that point the computer/word processor decided to throw a 'wobbly', and would not co-operate. So to get the Nessletter out I had to use the page four I had. The WP has been looked at and had a new 'chip' fitted.

## SIGHTINGS

Steve Feltham sent a short letter in December with two accounts he had been sent. The first was from Mrs Maltman who had seen Steve's Video Diary programme and had written reporting what her daughter and husband had seen some years previous. However it was not Loch Ness but Loch Lomond.

It was Easter 1980 and they were camped at Luss, and had pitched their tent near the waters edge. At about eight in the morning they were preparing breakfast when the daughter saw a movement out on the loch. At that time the surface was very calm but suddenly a patch seemed to be boiling, then a head appeared. It rose up on a long neck until it reached about five feet, behind it was a long curved shape. It was there for about thirty seconds and then submerged. They were petrified being only some 200 yards from it, and fled. They returned later to collect their belongings, and returned home. Mrs Maltman said no one else believed them but she did, as she knows her daughter does not lie. She and her husband had a boat and spent a few summers on Loch Lomond, although they never saw anything similar. She put forward the idea that perhaps others have seen something similar, but not reported it. Also suggesting it may be worthwhile to make enquires of the local paper (Lennox Herald) to see if they have heard something from other sources.

Over the years there has been a trickle of reports from Loch Lomond. Also according to some of the older manuscripts it was reputed to have a 'floating island'. It is difficult to know what to make of this. It would perhaps warrant further investigation.

Back to Loch Ness. Mr and Mrs Fulton sent Steve an account of what they witnessed, and earlier spoke to him about. They were on a cruising holiday and were passing through Loch Ness. They moored overnight at Urquhart Castle. The following morning, Saturday 19th September '92, they left at about 10.30am setting course for Fort Augustus. There was a heavy mist which kept rising and settling again, the water was very calm and they hoped it would remain so. They had been under way about half an hour when the mist lifted for a spell, giving good visibility. When Mr Fulton saw heading towards them about twelve feet from the starboard of their cruiser, what appeared to be two ears cutting the water. He wrote, 'They were of pointed origin. I shouted to my wife Susan, look at that, what the hell is that in the water. She said, Oh! My God. I said quick get the camera. She said it was no use I must have left it on and the batteries are flat. All this time the ears were showing above the surface of the water. I would register a guess that the ears were roughly ten inches apart. It appeared to me it was about to turn back to the boat after passing. For a moment I lost sight, because I had to steer the boat. I should to my wife is it still there? She said yes, then she said it has gone now. We are still bewildered by what we saw. But we are both certain it was ears, pointed and of a dark brown colour.'

They were on one of Jim Hogan's boats and reported it to him on their return. It was Jim who sought Steve out and took him to see Mr Fulton. After they had spoken to Steve about it, they had been discussing it between themselves. He asked his wife if she had seen any turbulence in the water after it passed. She said she had noticed some. Also something that had frightened her was when it passed the boat, the ears turned as if

it was something looking at the boat; before it disappeared.

This is one for the collection. There have been reports of nostril/snorkels breaking the surface, but as far as I can recall never ears. What could it be? If the pointed protrusions had been in line, one explanation could be the dorsal and tail fins of a large fish. It could be suggested that it was a dorsal fins of two fish swimming parallel. Considering the time the ears must have been in view that would have been quite a feat of fishy synchronized swimming!

In his letter Steve said things were going very well, cold but wonderful, snow on the mountains getting closer with every new fall. That presents no problem as the loch has started depositing his winter supply of drift wood at his door. He also described something he could not explain.

It was mid-morning on the 14th or 15th of September '92. The van was on the pier where the canal enters the loch at Fort Augustus. Steve was sitting on the steps watching the water with a friend, Liz Fox. The wind was quite strong and blowing towards Inverness up the loch. Just about enough to cause white caps on some of the 18/24 inch waves in Borlum Bay (thats the F.A. Borlum). Then he noticed a 'streak of disturbance' cutting through the waves against the wind. Whatever it was, was causing slightly larger disturbance than the height of the waves and travelling at quite a speed. it lasted for about 5 seconds during which time it covered perhaps 30 feet. He only had time to point it out to Liz before it finished. At no time did he see what was causing it. He had been watching the water all morning and within the last 30 to 45 minutes had seen no boats enter or leave the canal. Steve wrote, 'I don't class this as a sighting, but it was, for me very tantalizing, and the nearest I have come in 18 months.'

He finished the letter by tearing a strip off me. In NIS110 I wrote Steve had heard of six sightings by locals, but he had not been able to interview any of the witnesses to date. Steve wrote, 'that is totally incorrect. Of those six, and there were actually seven, at the time Margaret MacLennan was the only one willing to give me a written account of her sighting, which you published. The others, all of whom I spoke to, would not make public what they had seen, I interviewed them all (and many others that I dismissed) to my own satisfaction. You make it sound like I heard of their sightings 3rd hand and never bothered to follow it up.'

I am sorry it read that way to Steve, and to any other members that drew that conclusion. That is the trouble of condensing Steve's good work into a couple of lines. I said six because through Steve's efforts we had already been priviledged to have had Magaret's account. I know how very carefully he must approach witnesses. It is one thing to ask a local witness if they have seen anything and get an affirmative answer. It is another question to get them to agree to a proper interview, and again to agree to the account being published. Also time and distance are factors. You can hear that Alec, Morag or whoever has seen something but to be able to arrange to meet them can pose problems. Although Steve has now won a fair amount of trust in the locale and some witnesses seek him out. The old Loch Ness Investigation did build up a similar standing, but of course were only active during the 'season'. Although for many years Clem Skelton was there all the time.

NIS AT THE LOCHSIDE

Martien 't Mammetje (Mans), from the Netherlands was at the loch, in the Ross chalet at Strone, for the last week in May and the first two of June '92. He logged more than 100 hours of watching and patrolling Urquhart Bay in his outboard dingy. He had sunshine and it was warm, nice weather for watching, although he did lose quite some time owing to the disturbance caused by jet-skis and water-scooters which used the shelter of the bay for waterskiing. Mans says their noise is as bad as the low flying planes. Next time he plans to change his film rating so he can spend more time watching in early morning and evening, the quietest times. One evening, Thursday 11th June, at 21.40 he saw a v-wake near the mouth of the River Coilte which looked similar to those made by ducks. He could not see anything at the head of the wake, even with his binoculars.

Although it was moving in the shade of the trees, so he says a duck may not have been visible. The light was not good but he took a shot with his 400mm len, after about 20 seconds he lost sight of it. The slide showed nothing at all being completely blank, even though the other 35 taken with the camera were alright. Later the same evening, at 23.05, there was a larger v-wake near The Cover (I am not sure which area Mans means by that, Rip.) He says it does not count for much but he could not, and still cannot explain it.

Andreas Trottmann, from Switzerland, sent word of his next trip to the loch. He and Angela will be at Strone for three weeks in May '93, they had already reserved the chalet before the turn of the year. He also sent word of an unusual Nessie Collectors item, the 1960's TV serial 'The Saint' starring Roger Moore, had an episode in 1966 concerning the Loch Ness Monster. With a Nessie hunter as murrdress, and including some footage from the Tim Dinsdale film. This episode has now been published by ITC Home Video (ITC1038) as 'The Saint' Vol 1 'The Convenient Monster'. Available from 'Our Price' retail shops.

Dan Nowak, an American, is one of our newer members, he is already planning a two week trip to the loch in June/July 1994. He will be accompanied by his wife and a couple of friends. He is a journalist, a sportswriter, but says that he is not planning the trip to get a 'big scoop' but may get a 'travel' piece from the visit. Anyone interested in contacting him may write to:- 345 West Main Street, Apt.2S,Cheshire CT 06410, USA.

I have word from a number of new members who intend visiting the loch this year, short on details unfortunately. Maurice Jones (Birmingham), a week late in May with camera and binoculars. S.Griffiths (Mersseyside), in June, did not state for how long or where. Peter Fraser (Silloth, Cumbria) is the same, just he will be there late summer. M.Playfair (Mountsorral, Leics) has been six times before. His last trip was in 1989, but he hopes to be back this year. Another one who is just sometime this year, is Nick Griffiths (Birmingham). Eileen Waterer (Winchester) is planning her first trip there this year, no details apart from she will be in a caravan. Jeffery Rumble (Truro) has visited the loch once but is unable to return. However he does manage to do some watching from the Cornish coast for Morgawr.

#### COUSIN

Brian Herring sent an article from New Scientist No 1857, 23rd January '93. It concerned a paper presented by Paul LeBlond, professor of oceanography at the University of British Columbia, to a joint meeting of the Canadian and American Societies of Zoology in Vancouver, last December. The subject was the biology of the unknown creature Cadborosaurus (Caddy) reported to live off the coast of British Columbia. LeBlond believes the native people of B.C. were familiar with Caddy, citing rock carvings as well as wooden images dating back to AD200. the sightings are too regular to be ignored, he says, with about one authenticated report a year. Also at various times over the last 60 years local people have had specimen of what they claim was caddy. One 3 metre juvenile was apparently removed from the stomach of a sperm whale. Sightings generally describe a similar creature, long neck, bulky body, pointed front flippers, horse-like head, distinct eyes and visible mouth, and either ears or stumpy horns. Often said to have hair like a seal and sometimes a mane down its neck. Although some reports suggest a more serpent-like creature with long narrow body, up to 7 metres long, undulating just beneath the ocean's surface. Le Blond and his colleague Ed Bousfield, from the depart of Natural History at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, have analysed the sightings to try to discover Caddy's behaviour and biology. They believe it may be a deep water animal, which could explain infrequent sightings, also the remains found in the sperm whale. The hairy/furry body suggests a mammal, but not coming to the surface very often; how does it breath? Some suggest the stumpy horns may be snorkels, but Bousfield has a more elaborate theory. He thinks the tubercles noticed along the animals back by one observer, could act as tiny gills. If these bumpy structures are of highly

vascularised tissue, oxygen could pass through the skin directly from the water. There are sightings in different areas at different times of the year, could this indicate the animals may move south to breed in warmer waters? Paul LeBlond does not know what they are, but suggests they are related to some of the sea mammals we know. While their habits mean they are only seen occasionally and never caught, he thinks that when one is caught it will be one of the known but rare animals of the ocean.

Paul LeBlond presented a paper on the Wilson Photograph (Loch Ness) at the symposium held at the Royal Museum of Scotland on July 25th 1987.

#### TOURISM

Early last year some tourist operators on the south side of Loch Ness formed the South Loch Ness Tourist group. The aim was to 'promote, co-ordinate and protect' tourism interests in the areas of Whitebridge, Stratherrick, Foyers, Inverfarigaig and Dores. They are seeking to promote the area and its natural resources for the benefit of local communities and visitors, but are determined to resist over-development. Mr Hugh MacNally, wildlife expert and author, the group's secretary, said the whole area is a remote one of mountains and lochs, quiet solitude, walks, natural scenery, abundant wildlife and historic associations. This is the perfect counter balance to the well-organized, more hectic attractions of the north shore. They feel that fundamental difference is the greatest attraction to their area. They are not averse to development but say their area has been developing naturally for centuries but now there is increasing pressure on the countryside. There is no conflict with the Inverness, Loch Ness and Nairn Tourist Board, which they feel is doing a good job in bringing people to the general area. It is then up to local groups or individuals to make an effort and help themselves.

By November there were indications that their promotion was bearing fruit. Inverness and Nairn Enterprise, part of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network were to invest a £5,000 grant and loan package in the £25,000 project to encourage more people to visit the 'forgotten' side of Loch Ness. Loch Ness Outdoor Holidays is the idea of Hugh MacNally and Whitebridge hotelier Donald Campbell, they aim to develop holiday packages offering local accommodation with boat trips, guided wildlife walks and Land Rover trips to mountain tops.

In early September a 25 strong group of Norwegians visited the Loch Ness area. They were from Seljord which is reputed to have its own monster. The creature is supposed to inhabit the waters of Seljordvannet, and bears a striking resemblance to Nessie. Tales of the monster go back 300 years. The delegation was studying how the Inverness area promoted Loch Ness and the monster, with the intention of taking ideas back to help boost their own tourist trade. Their home area is mainly agricultural, with unemployment problems among the 3000 people in the small community.

It has been reported Richard Branson, head of the Virgin group, hopes to operate tourist flights to Loch Ness by seaplane. He is said to have been discussing it with a number of aircraft owners, including one in Southampton who has a Sunderland (the famous wartime flying boat). Branson hopes to buy one, restore it to meet modern safety standards, and take tourists on Nessie-spotting expeditions.

Another Nessletter put together. Personal note, I am out of work again, the special job in the mine lasted for 12 weeks. At the moment we have not been able to make any plans to get to the loch this season, but we hope to. The Loch Ness article written last year appeared at last in the Sunday Magazine, 29th February '93, and brought a good response. Welcome to all those new members. Old hands will know that their news and views are always welcome, that goes for all the newcomers as well. My address is still:- R.R.Hepple, Huntshildford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Tel.0389 537359. Subs. N.America.\$9.00. U.K.£2.75. RIP