

NESS INFORMATION SERVICE
 NESSLETTER 124
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ANDREAS TROTTMANN

I received word from Andreas in early July with news of his trip to the loch. He and his wife, Angela, had been there for three weeks in May 1995, but had been dogged by misfortune. He first got heavy flu and then constant pains in the flexure of the groin. This due to prolonged fits of coughing. He was therefore very limited in continuing his researches on the loch or in Glen Carnich. Andreas is interested in the reports of Big Cats in the area. On their return home Andreas immediately visited a surgeon and was diagnosed as having an inflamed inguinal hernia. This necessitated a stay in the local hospital to undergo an operation. All went well and in mid-June he returned home. While still in some pain and needing lots of rest, he was happy everything was over.

He was disappointed about the holiday as he had been keen to get their boat, Mitch of the Mist, out on the water to follow up his sonar work. However, he thinks, 'it is good that mother nature always proves to be stronger than men'.

During their stay at Strone, Doug (Macfarlane) and family (Margaret and Peter) kindly visited them several times. It had been a great pleasure to meet them again and discuss Nessie and Big Cat matters. He hopes that if all goes well he and Doug will undertake a sonar search for a week in the 'New Atlantis'.

Andreas has written an article on 'Lake Monster in Switzerland'. It is in three chapters and is appearing in the British magazine 'Athene'. I have seen the first two parts and they make interesting reading, although being mainly historical and tales about legendary creatures. He list nineteen lakes or rivers, some of which are connected, which have the reputation of harbouring legendary aquatic creatures. The list is not complete, as he says that often respective legends are told and remain known only locally. As in other countries with lake-monster tradition, some of the Swiss waters are renowned to be fathomless and not give up the corpses of drowned people. Also some of the sightings were regarded as a bad omen for certain families.

I had another letter from Andreas at the beginning of August. He enclosed information on recent publications on 'Nessie'. 'Look Out, Loch Ness Monster' by Keith Brumpton, Simon and Schuster Story Books, 1992 (ISBN 0750017071), for young readers.

'Assignment Loch Ness' by Stephen Thomas, Compact Adventure Game Books, Hodder and Stoughton, 1993 (ISBN 0340588624), for young readers.

'Mysteriet om Nessie, Soslangen i Loch Ness' by Kim Moller Hansen, Gyldendalskie Boghandel, Copenhagen, 1998 (ISBN 8700208345), in Danish.

'Drache, Einhorn, Oster-Hase und anderes Phantastisches Getier' by Sergius Golomin, Spinx Verlag, Basel (Switzerland) 1994 (ISBN 3859141953) German book with large chapter on Nessie.

Andreas is also a member of the 'Society for Psycical Research', and has obtained a copy of a regional study on 'Scottish Haunts and Poltergeists'. The report has some astonishing opinions on the Great Glen Fault and its respective hauntings. He sent me a copy of this report, which is by G.W.Lambert, C.B. Lambert has published other papers on poltergeists in which he propounds that the primary effects in such cases, in the way of noises and the movement of objects, may very often be due to subterranean forces, of which the commonest is water in motion. Disturbances due directly to earth tremors are usually felt to be such, and shake a whole neighbourhood. But shocks transmitted by water along narrow subterranean channels and fissures, possibly over quite long distances can select single houses or even part of a house, leaving others nearby undisturbed. This effect sounds very like the harnessing of hydraulic principals. Adreas says this is an interesting item with perhaps relevance on the more mythical side of the 'Nessie' enigma. He also says the 'Great Glen Fault' has obviously his strange particularities.

A few years ago he made some researches (due to the well known, but still very enigmatic behaviour of cetaceans to earth magnetisim) in the

possible magnetic and gravity anomalies of the Great Glen. He found there are several areas with respective anomalies in Loch Ness, which appear on the 'Bouguer Gravity Anomaly Map' and the 'Aeromagnetic Anomaly Map'. Some of these areas even overlap. Unfortunately, he says, his enquiries to a geologist remained inconclusive. Nevertheless, he is keeping these anomalies in mind for further research.

In early September Andreas sent news about his 'Loch Ness Newsclipping Service'. In late 1994 he proposed such a service. His intention is not only to collect and publish newsclippings on the 'Nessie' enigma, but to cover every aspect of Loch Ness and hence give each NIS member, and others, the opportunity to extend their personal archives. He also intends to add a section in each issue with old newsclippings on 'Nessie'. He sees this as a possible supplement to the Nessletters. He says, 'this newsclipping service lives only with the participation of interested NIS members', and hopes they may provide clips on Loch Ness for publication. He will base the service mainly on the Inverness Courier's content and has recently received the go-ahead from them in respect of the copyright issue. This means he is now able to supply to anyone interested. He has already produced three on a trial basis. They consist of a dozen(+) pages of photo copied articles, stapled in light card covers. The fee for four issues (covers only copying and postage charges) is £10, at the moment. However, as he and Henry Bauer intend to incorporate the respective clippings of the American Durrant's Press Cutting Service, the subscription fee could change in the future. Anyone interested should contact:- Andreas Trottmann, Les Pretrresses, 1596 Vallamand VD, Switzerland.

Andreas also sent me a copy of a note he had received from Erik Beckjord, in June '95. On Erik's behalf I included an order slip with Nessletter 102, it was for a video that Erik was intending to produce. It was of a piece of video taken by two Canadian tourists, the Chappins, in 1989. It was featured and discussed in earlier Nessletters. Erik had done some comparative videoping and was to put it all together. Andreas was one of the NIS members who sent for one of the proposed videos. Up to now he had heard nothing more. Erik apologised, saying that his edited version burned up in the Malibu bush fires, along with addresses. He said he remembered there was someone from Switzerland and hoped it was Andreas. Then he asked if Andreas required PAL, NYSC or SECAM, as he was re-editing the video. So it looks as if Andreas will be getting his video.

SURGEON'S PHOTO

After sending NIS121 out I received a note from Steuart Campbell in response. At that time he had not seen the BBC Wildlife magazine articles, but found Richard Smith's comments interesting. Feeling Richard had made some good points, some of which justified his, Steuart's, scepticism regarding the Boyd/Martin claims. He made two comments:- '1. My height estimate was a maximum; I pointed out that if the photographer was nearer the water than I assumed, the object would be smaller. People who claim 'two feet' is too long for an otter's tail ignore this fact. My estimate of size (on its own) does not exclude the possibility that the object was a model submarine!

2. You propose that the model was self-propelled, sent out in an arc into deeper water and back to the shore. But the photograph shows no wake, indicating that the object was not moving through the water. If it was stationary on deep water, how was it retrieved?'

In reply to Steuart's second point and question how was the model retrieved? Being patient and waiting for it to drift ashore is one way. Unlikely, I accept. How about a fishing rod and casting a line out over the model to pull it ashore. The fishing gear could be carried as part of a cover story as to why they were by the loch side. However I do not think the model as photographed was stationary. Toy submarines of the type said to be used as the base for the model, did not travel very quickly on their own. Adding extra weight and drag to it would slow it down even more. So I feel that it would move along with a negligible wake. One that could be lost in the general movement of the ripples/waves of the loch surface. I feel happy with that as an explanation, but it was a valid query.

I also received a note from Erik Beckjord making some points on the controversy. He thinks Richard Smith is overall correct, with some well taken points. As someone with experience at the loch and a photographer who has used a copy stand, Erik finds the idea that first the alleged model was photographed in 35mm, printed, then re-photographed on to quarter-plate to be far fetched. He thinks in 1933/34 that would have been difficult, using equipment of the time, and hard to do well. He says that in 1998, while discussing the Surgeon's photograph at the Cryptozoology Convention (in UK), he tried to show there are additional 'critters' close by Nessie on the surface of the water. Some look very like 'bulldog faces'. He doubts these would be near a fake. (!) He thinks there is a strong urge to be famous and perhaps one of the easier ways to achieve this is to become a debunker. The media will print stories with reference to hoaxes, or alleged hoaxes, but will ignore real research. He then cites 'Doug and Dave' and the crop circles in England.

He finished by saying that he thought that Dr Wilson stuck his neck out for the photos, and to be involved in a hoax would be doubly damning bad news for his reputation as a surgeon. To first claim 'it is real' then to say 'it was a hoax' would be devastating for him.

Erik also enclosed a flyer for his re-opened Crypto-Zoology Museum. An earlier attempt which was sited in the TRANCAS resurant, Pacific Coast Highway, (NIS91) closed in '93 due to fires and floods. His new effort has opened in the South Venice district of LA., under the name of 'The UFO, Bigfoot & Loch Ness Monster Museum. It is a small, mini-museum with plans to extend into a larger facility next year. Exhibits on display relate to UFOs, aliens, crop-circle formations (English and Worldwide), Bigfoot, Loch Ness Monster & other Lake Monsters, Yeti, the Face on Mars and new ones on Venus, along with other paranormal events. The exhibitis will consist of mostly photos and some models and be displayed on a rotating basis. The location is:- 1056 Van Buren Ave, Venice, close to the intersection of Lincoln and Washington Blvds. Admissison will be free during the start-up period. Donations will be accepted. Adventurous persons who wish to particieate in crop-circle field research in England, Loch Ness Monster expeditions in Scotland, Bigfoot expeditions in Canada, etc, will be able to contribute to and join with museum staff on such trips. Erik is the curator, and he anticipates that visitors will bring in more photos and evidence as time goes on.

Richard Smith wrote in response to the coverage of his views on the Surgeon's photograph in NIS 121. I queried 'journalist and researcher'. He tells us he graduated from Emerson College, Boston, in 1975 with a BA in Mass Communications. He then worked as a technician on a television news crew at the New Jersey Public TV. In 1982 he shot footage at Loch Ness, Loch Morar and Lake Champlain, along with interviews for an independant documentary on Lake Monsters. Some of the Champlain footage was shown on the Disney Channel in the US., unfortunately the Ness and Morar material was not. He is a long time freelance writer, and in 1988, worked as a staff writer and/or associate editor for two Princeton-area newspapers. He continues his freelance writing. He says much of his additional work as a researcher presently comes as assistant to prominent American architectural historian, Constance Greiff, at her company Heritage Studies Inc. He went on for a few pages covering points already made. His final point being that he was mystified why so many Loch Ness experts seemed eager to embrace Spurling's allegation. When Richard thought, perhaps, they would have known better and approached such allegations with at least a modicum of healthy scepticisim.

Richard put forward one suggestion. Loch Ness research is in the doldrums, there has not been a breakthrough for years. Which he says is not surprising, given that the LN&MP devotes more and more time to general limnological research (which is quite valuable). The Academy of Applied Sciences has been busy with other projects, and the newcomers to the field are re-inventing the wheel with shore watching. Richard feels that is a dubious pursuit, given that these animals are obviously superbly adapted to an underwater existance and spend very little time at the surface. Then along comes the 'Spurling Revelation' a breakthrough of some kind,

something has been done, accomplished. Loch Ness gets international media attention. Richard says it is all too tempting not to embrace. He says he does not like attacking Boyd and Martin's research but still feels the saga just does not work. Anyone accepting Spurling's story, must also accept that Wetherall, after failing with the crude hippo footprint hoax, in less than 120 days produced an image as complex and detailed as the Surgeon's Photograph.

A short time after sending the above letter Richard also sent me some of the relevant extracts about the Wetherall expedition and the Surgeon's photo from Nick Mitchell's book, Loch Ness Story, with more comment about it. He feels that in the light of Mitchell's account, Boyd & Martin underplay the humiliation which the Mail and Wetherall suffered as a result of the hippo footprint fiasco. Pointing out that Boyd & Martin fail to mention, although Mitchell does, that after the Loch Ness disaster Wetherall resigned his fellowship of the Royal Geographic Society. The conclusion he comes to is, that, Duke Wetherall became, in 1933/34, the laughing stock of Britain, his family would have shared this humiliation. Therefore Ian Wetherall and Christian Spurling had every reason to want to rehabilitate him.

I agree with Richard that the developements in the case of the Surgeon's photo were an important milestone at Loch Ness. Which is why so much Nessletter space has been devoted to it. However I do not agree with his views. I know Alastair Boyd and respect him and his philosophy about Loch Ness, as well as the quality of research he has done. While it was disturbing to be told that the Surgeon's photo was a hoax. I knew that Alastair would not say so unless he was very satisfied with his findings. Since that first telephone call, I have had the chance to have prolonged discussion with him about the case, and there is no doubt in my mind he is correct. When Alastair told me over the phone the day before the newspapers carried the story, my first question was, how?, and model submarines etc provided the answer. Recently I have thought the perhaps the first question should have been, why? I think there will be a motive behind a hoax, any hoax. In some cases that motive is one of gain, usually financial. In the past fake Nessie photographs have been sold to newspapers. Another reason is the joy, after appropriate passage of time, saying Ha! fooled you. There are some hoaxes I suppose, that could be classed as intellectual. Where the perpetrator goes to extraordinary lengths to fool society/the Establishment but never revealing themselves, content in their knowledge of what they have done. Piltown Man could be an example. Perhaps Richard is correct in saying that Ian Wetherall and Christian Spurling were trying to restore Duke's reputation. However I suggest that was intended to happen in 1934, not nearly sixty years later. My impression is that Duke, while not known to be the perpetrator of the hippo-foot hoax, was seen to have been well and truly fooled by it. It also looked as if he had been wasting his time 'Monster Hunting' when opinion was that it was only a 'big grey seal' behind the monster stories. How to regain his standing? Producing proof of the monster would do. Then at least he could say he had not been on a wild goose chase. The answer, a good photograph, not taken by him, that would look too opportune, too suspicious. But taken by someone not obviously connected to him or his family, someone of good character. Enter the Surgeon, the model and the photograph. A hoax not to make money, not to show people they had been fooled, but as evidence that there was a Loch Ness Monster and to enable Duke Wetherall to point to it and say to the world he had been on the right track after all! As I said in an earlier Nessletter, with all the participants now gone, it is all supposition. My suggestion is just another possibility.

Another Nessletter filled, perhaps more on the Surgeon than I had intended. As I wanted to include a piece as explanation and apology to Rita Gould. I referred to Rita in NIS123. That will have to be next time now. Meanwhile, thank you for being members and please remember your news and views are always needed and welcome. My address remains:- R.R.Hepple, 7 Huntshieldsford, St Johns Chapel, Neardale, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Subscription UK£2.75, N.America \$10.

Rip.