

Vorschlag

für die Umbenennung von „Nessie“ in „Elizabethia nessiae“

Your name is perfect for a monster, your Majesty

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By Patrick Sawyer

IT IS a mystery which has baffled and enthralled generations, prompting scientific studies, countless theories and repeated searches of the murky deep.

Now it can be revealed that such was the public fascination with the Loch Ness Monster that the Queen was at one point asked to agree to the creature being named after her.

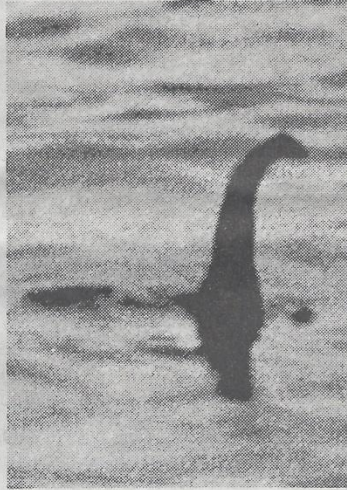
Newly discovered papers show that Sir Peter Scott, the eminent conservationist who led the search for the monster in the early Sixties, wrote to the Palace with the suggestion in 1960.

He proposed that should the Loch Ness Monster – or Nessie as it was affectionately known – be eventually found it could be named “Elizabethia nessiae”.

Palace officials poured cold water on the idea, fearing that the Queen might become associated with what could eventually turn out to be an embarrassing hoax.

Martin Charteris, the Queen’s then assistant private secretary, wrote back to Sir Peter: “If there is any suggestion of naming the animal after the Queen, there must of course be absolutely irrefutable evidence of its existence. It would be most regrettable to connect Her Majesty in any way with something which ultimately turned out to be a hoax.

“Even if the animal does prove to exist I am not at all sure that it will be generally



‘Elizabethia nessiae’ was floated as a name for Nessie

very appropriate to name it after Her Majesty since it has for so many years been known as ‘The Monster’.”

However, the papers – discovered in Sir Peter’s archive at Cambridge University – do show that the Queen was interested in the quest for the creature and asked to be kept personally informed of its progress.

Public interest in the monster was at its height when Sir Peter, a war hero who helped pioneer the modern conservation movement and went on to establish the World Wide Fund for Nature, launched the first properly scientific investigation into the possibility of its existence.

This included a programme of searches to establish the truth behind the popular belief that Loch Ness was home to one or more plesiosaurs – a species of dinosaur which inhabited

the seas 250 million years ago.

Zac Baynham-Herd, the history of science researcher who found the documents, said that Sir Peter may have been motivated to ask the Queen if he could name Nessie after her in order to pave the way for the monster – should its existence have been proven – to be protected under the endangered species act.

“I think it was a semi-serious idea,” said Mr Baynham-Herd. “Under legislation at the time for an endangered species to be protected in law it had to be named and this may have prompted Sir Peter Scott to approach the Queen with the suggestion she could lend her name to the monster.”

He added: “At the time a lot of people were genuinely interested in the mystery of the Loch Ness Monster and hoped to discover the truth about it. There was a national fascination with the story. Given the Queen’s love of Scotland and the fact her Balmoral home is only 80 miles away from Loch Ness it’s easy to understand why she might have shared that interest.”

Palace officials are unwilling to confirm whether the Queen has continued to take an interest in the mystery.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman said: “Her Majesty has seen many things in her life, but there are currently no plans for an audience with the Loch Ness Monster.”