

THE LOCH NESS INVESTIGATION

Annual Report

1967

(Price One Shilling)

1967 ANNUAL REPORT

In January, The Highlands and Islands Development Board announced a generous grant to the Bureau of £1,000. This was not intended as any endorsement of our scientific objectives, but as recognition of the beneficial effect of our activities on the tourist industry. The Development Board will surely feel that the amount was fully justified by the fact that during 1967 more than 25,000 visitors called at H.Q. during the summer to see our display caravan containing photographs, diagrams and maps.

In April we received a magnificent donation of \$20,000 from Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, of Chicago, publishers of THE WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPAEDIA. The Bureau, with the pump thus primed, took over the assets and liabilities of the expedition which previously had been vested in me personally, and re-equipped several camera stations with more powerful lenses, notably a 1,000 m.m. lens at H.Q., with an effective range of more than three miles, and also mounted an extra mobile unit to cover the Invermoriston area.

Between mid-May and mid-October, nearly 150 volunteers took part in watching the loch, often, in good weather, working for upwards of 18 hours a day; and their cheerfulness and persistence were beyond all praise. In addition to volunteers from Britain, we had watchers from the United States, Canada, Belgium, Sweden, New Zealand and Denmark, so we are acquiring quite an international flavour; and this was reflected in our press coverage, with particularly fine, accurate and sympathetic reports appearing in the American press. Outstanding was the four-and-a-half page article in the February issue of the READERS DIGEST, which was translated into all fourteen of their different language editions. This, undoubtedly, did much to promote world-wide interest and was directly responsible for some of our foreign volunteers. Another notable article, giving details of the expedition's operational approach, appeared in the magazine MACHINE DESIGN and has since, by kind permission of the publishers, The Penton Publishing Company of Cleveland, Ohio, been reprinted as a Bureau pamphlet.

Apart from photography and visual reports, another matter of some interest is that we had two verbal statements of fish being found or caught with bite-marks from a predator that certainly was not an otter, seal or pike. It is a pity that the pike was neither preserved nor photographed, and that the photograph of the salmon, taken by a tourist, cannot at present be traced.

In addition to those Loch Ness sightings which can be regarded as reasonably acceptable, there was a flurry of reports in the Irish press in May and June, and also two independent accounts from a loch near the Butt of Lewis, in Scotland. Written enquiries failed to elicit any response from those alleged to be witnesses of any incident, except for Mr Gerard Kavenagh (42), a Company Director from County Wicklow in Ireland, who gave a detailed account of a large, blue-black hump, texture like that of a wet seal, which surfaced near him while he was cruising on Lough Derg.

In addition to the foregoing, Mr and Mrs Traverso from South Africa, reported seeing a strange creature with serpentine head and neck in Loch Lomond on June 16th, while on July 16th, Mr John Rankin Muir (27), solicitor, Mr William S. Muir (15), schoolboy, Miss Barbara E. K. Findlay (21) student teacher, and Miss Elizabeth Gilcrest (17½), trainee computer programmer, had a ten-minute sighting of a creature,

also with a serpentine head and neck, and with two to three humps, which kept on surfacing and submerging in Loch Linnhe, three miles north-east of Corran ferry.

Sightings from Loch Ness itself bring into strong relief the two fine anti-cyclonic spells experienced in late May / early June, and during the second half of August. They are as follows: Expedition members are marked (*):—

1. March 17th, 1500 G.M.T. Jock Cameron (61), for many years head lock-keeper at Fort Augustus, out salmon fishing off his home, had a sighting at a range of approximately 35 yards, of 15 ft. of back cleaving through the waves against a strong wind. To the front he was certain there appeared to be attached some sort of mane or frill, which has been reported by other witnesses though Mr Cameron, himself, had never previously had anything other than a possible sighting. Further investigation impossible as he was playing a salmon at the time and also trying to keep his boat head-to-wind using oars and not an outboard. Wind — south-west, fresh.

2. April 5th, 1915 B.S.T. David Wathen (38), farmer and Conservative and Unionist Parliamentary Candidate for Inverness, stopped his car one mile south of the Clansman Hotel to inspect calm area of water. 200 yards across, in the middle of the loch he saw "worm-like" head and neck without features, 15 – 20 in. high, cruising in a gradual arc for 1½ minutes before submerging. No body visible, head dark brown or grey.

3. April 14th, 2030 B.S.T. Mrs E. W. Cary* (60), housewife; Heather Cary* (17), student; Mary Morgan* (18), student, and Michael Breaks* (22), student, saw a large black hump, shiny in texture, something under 10 ft. in length, at a range of about 300 to 400 yards, cruising north out of Urquhart Bay. All four witnesses watched object submerge. Wind was westerly and causing a good ripple on the water, and it was just beginning to get dusk. (Both Mrs and Miss Cary are local residents who have had several previous sightings).

4. May 22nd, 1315 B.S.T. L. S. Durkin* (30), surgical technician, on watch at a point approximately one-third of the way from Invermoriston to Fort Augustus, had a brief viewing (filmed on 16 m.m. colour) of an area of disturbance moving in a south-westerly direction against the prevailing light wind. This could not have been a boat's wake because, according to the Canal authority's records and our own log at H.Q., both of which are confirmed by the log of the only vessel in the vicinity, the R.R.S. *Mara* was approaching the scene and still one mile away. The J.A.R.I.C. or Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre report on the film states:—

"(a) The combination of relatively long range and low resolution colour film makes detailed interpretation impossible.

"(b) The four disturbed areas can only be measured for size and movement, if an assumption is made of their range from the camera. If the loch width at this point is 1,500 yards, then a reasonable assumption of this range is 1,000 yards.

"(c) Using this assumption, the lengths of the disturbed areas are 50 ft., 65 ft., 38 ft. and 45 ft. Their speed from left to right is approximately six knots and they have portions raised some 2 ft. above water level.

"(d) Under magnification of times 10 (the film is incapable of being magnified more) and searching frame by frame, no solid continuous outline can be seen of the suggested humps. One cannot say that humps are present, or, for that matter, that they are absent.

(e) In the light of the above, no definite statement can be made on the origin of these disturbed areas, although the statement made by Mr James that no shipping had been in the area, certainly leads one to consider the possibility of a solid object

breaking the water surface. However, there is no photographic evidence to prove this."

Weather — overcast, light southerly wind, surface ruffled.

5. May 22nd, 2140 B.S.T. Miss C. W. Atkin (30), cashier, confirmed by a Mr and Mrs MacKintosh, from whom separate statements were not taken. From a lay-by between Invermoriston and Urquhart Castle a very substantial object more than 40 ft. in length was seen at a range of 35 yards, cruising out into the middle of the loch from close inshore. Object, black, and just below the surface, was observed for five minutes, but created a substantial wash on an otherwise flat, calm loch.

6. May 27th, 1720 B.S.T. F. W. Holiday* (46), farmer and journalist, stopped in a lay-by north of Invermoriston and in getting out slammed his car door. Immediately, at a range of about 200 yards, a V-shaped wake moved off out into the middle of the loch, cruising at a speed of three to four knots and being visible for two minutes. The wake was substantial on an otherwise calm surface, and the witness had no doubt that a living creature had reacted to the door being slammed. (N.B.— Peter* and Pauline* Hodge had an identical experience in 1964). Weather perfect.

7. May 28th, 1010 to 1020 B.S.T. Col. H. D. Pyman* (55), retired army officer, and A. G. Taylor*, Jackie Higgins* and P. M. Christopherson*, all students, observed a very considerable disturbance of the water, apparently emanating from two linked sources, moving in a clockwise arc opposite Urquhart Bay and at a range of 2½ miles from H.Q. All observed this disturbance on an otherwise smooth loch for nearly ten minutes. At only one point did a hump momentarily appear. Field-glasses — XVX Kriegsmarine 12 x 50. Weather and visibility excellent, loch calm.

8. June 7th, 1700 B.S.T. Robert Dodson* (20), U.S. student, got a brief glimpse of a substantial hump submerging at a range of 1½ miles from H.Q., off Urquhart Castle. No vessels in the vicinity, weather calm, sky overcast.

9. June 13th, 1140 B.S.T. Richard Raynor* (17), student, was in charge of a camera car parked in a lay-by opposite Dores when he saw and subsequently filmed a disturbance at a range of nearly one mile in Dores Bay. Weather perfect, loch mirror-calm. J.A.R.I.C. reported as follows:—

"On the film can be seen a wash or wake pattern not obviously associated with any surface object.

"This pattern, particularly the head of the pattern, has been studied.

"It is **not** possible to detect the shape or nature of the object causing the disturbance though varying optical enlargements of up to x 38 have been used.

"From time to time there is an impression of some object at the head of the disturbance as if the object was momentarily breaking the surface though mainly submerged.

"The track of the pattern appears roughly parallel to the shore of the loch, but is an optical illusion due to the foreshortening effect of the near horizontal photography. The track is in fact converging on the shore at a pronounced angle.

"As previously explained, measures in the Y or depth direction are extremely difficult with this type of photography.

"In this case a large part of the movement is in the Y direction and precise measures are impossible. However, it is probable that the mean speed of the object is not less than five m.p.h., and a possible length for that part of the object which seems to break the surface is in the order of seven feet."

The interesting thing is that filmed, the object gives a strong impression

of being tail-propelled, unlike Dinsdale's 1960 film which showed something "probably animate" which seemed to be paddle propelled. There are eye-witness accounts of both these modes of propulsion, and now we have both on film for the record. Another fact worthy of note is that as the pleasure steamer *Scot II* rounded Dores Point and steamed into the picture, the object reacted by increasing speed and then crash-diving.

10. July 15th, 1130 to 1135 B.S.T. Peter Dobbie (35), service manager, Mrs Helen Dobbie (35), chemist's shop assistant, and their seven-years-old daughter, travelling south, approaching Temple Pier on the north side of Urquhart Bay, stopped the car having observed a disturbance. A large, black, smooth object was seen to surface a few hundred yards out and, while Mr Dobbie ran to get his camera, Mrs Dobbie states that she saw a smooth black tail come out of the water and then go down again. Subsequently the object travelled north, eventually passing out of sight behind some cottages. Still photographs submitted bear out the object described, though the tail was not filmed. Witnesses referred to the object alternatively coming up and submerging, and Mr Dobbie considered propulsion was by tail thrashing. Weather sunny and clear, with surface of the loch very slightly rippled.

11. August 6th, 1720 B.S.T. Peter Davies* (17), student, was on watch on top of a camera car in the lay-by opposite Dores, and following a canoe entering the loch through Bona Narrows. He swung his glass right in time to observe a substantial hump, estimated at ten ft. in length and three ft. in height. He lowered his binoculars, rubbed his eyes and looked again to see the hump submerge amid great turbulence. No time for photography. Sky mainly overcast, wind south-west, surface of water "fairly choppy, no waves breaking."

12. August 7th, 0805 B.S.T. Norman Schofield* (21), student, was on watch two miles north of Invermoriston and was paying careful attention to a particularly flat patch of water in an already calm loch, when a small, round, black object came up and submerged. Two minutes later a small, black object, this time elliptical in shape, surfaced in the same position, followed immediately by a large black hump, almost triangular in shape, 10 - 15 ft. behind it. Overall length of the two combined was estimated at 25 ft., plus or minus five ft. Before it was possible to get the cameras turning, it had submerged once more. Colour of object, black; weather bright and calm. Binoculars used were Prinz 10 x 50, range of object, something under a mile.

13. August 13th, 1235 to 1240 B.S.T. J. Kendrick (51), engineer, Mrs H. Kendrick, and Masters R. J. Kendrick (14) and K. M. Kendrick (9½), stopped their car by "The Wall," a conspicuous feature on General Wade's old road, down the south side of the loch, almost opposite our H.Q. It was mirror-calm, and salmon were active and jumping when the boys saw "a kind of sub periscope" moving out towards the middle of the loch. They drew their parents' attention to it and all saw it surface and then submerge again. It subsequently re-appeared on the edge of the shadow caused by the further shore, when they lost sight of it. (N.B.— This was a calm, anti-cyclonic day with heavy heat haze and it is not surprising H.Q. failed to pick the object out, as it was originally so close in to the further shore).

14. August 18th, 0555 B.S.T. David Field* (21), student, and Eric Twelves* (21), student, had been out on the loch all night in a boat doing a night drift with flashlight and camera equipment, under mirror-calm conditions when, at a range of about two miles, they observed a hump, three to four ft. high and six to eight ft. in length, in the middle of the loch, opposite Foyers Bay. They started up their outboard with a view to closing in, but the hump shortly disappeared.

15. August 22nd, 1205 B.S.T. Dennis Gartrell* (20), photographer, was manning a camera car in the lay-by opposite Foyers Bay when, at a range of about 1,400 yards, he saw a "flexible 'neck' (hinged below the water line) quickly rise up — and curling — hit the water again with considerable commotion." Weather, mirror-calm, with haze. (Note: Possibly this episode should not be included owing to visibility conditions and the duration of the episode — less than two seconds. It is recorded because it may be relevant to the question of how a head and neck go down. (See 17 below). Witness's estimate of length of neck was eight ft., and black. It would have been inconceivable that anyone, no matter how sharp-eyed, could see any bird's head and neck at such a range).

16. August 22nd, 0800 to 0846 B.S.T. Andrew Chapman* (20), medical student, and Gillian Christopher* (21), physiotherapy student, with expedition camera car in lay-by opposite Dores. Film was exposed several times over a 45 minutes' period on a long, shiny object which kept on appearing low in the water. There appeared to be a fixed white turbulence at southern end and the object was moving slowly northwards. While the film certainly bears out the witnesses' observations in considerable detail, the anti-cyclonic, hazy conditions and the fact they were looking almost straight into the sun, make it seem doubtful whether there is anything to be deduced from this episode. This view has since been confirmed and the film record is worthless except that it does support eye-witness statements.

17. August 23rd, 1245 to 1309 B.S.T. Christopher S. Hunter* (22), Merchant Navy Navigating Officer, and his brother Jeffrey W. Hunter* (20), student, were manning a camera car two miles north of Invermoriston when, to quote the former:—

"At approximately 1244 I sighted an object (bearing about 200° True) more or less immediately dismissed as two ducks. At 1245 another ripple was seen (as though a stone thrown in water) and a forward looking object was seen at one edge of this circle of rippled water, a neck appeared, and identified, we immediately started filming. The object dived and re-surfaced 14 times in six minutes (1245 to 1251), during which time a number of still shots were also taken. The object travelled in a magnetic arc of 55°. The dive was to half right every time, and forward reaching (the head inclining much further forward). It was more of a swift sink. Swimming was rather slow, and at all times the head and neck appeared stationary though it looked both right and left very often. All swimming was noiseless (we were a good distance away). At 1256 the object was again sighted at an estimated distance of two miles from where it was last seen, which indicates that the object had a superior underwater speed to its surface speed of up to 12 m.p.h. Then I conclude a second object rose and proceeded in a similar manner to the first. (A possible third was observed, but both observers were filming and cannot be sure). At about 1309 it dived and was not seen again.

"The wake was interesting in as much as the neck only could not possibly have caused it. The wake, especially when the object turned rather sharply, indicated a larger underwater bulk. Should this be so, then this observer concludes, because of the lack of forward wash, that the coefficient of fineness of the whole object was extremely low, indicating a very streamlined object. After diving there were two parallel washes."

This incident occurred in the middle of a great anti-cyclone centred on Loch Ness. It was therefore flat calm and very hazy. Obviously, the operator found extreme difficulty in picking up the head and neck in the very small viewfinder of a Newman-

Sinclair camera, but he did succeed in securing a few feet of "it" cruising, then diving, and the film entirely bears out the written account.

The unlikelihood of this head and neck being a bird is strengthened by the reported and filmed absence of any body or indication of body — most birds display much more body than head and neck; while disappearance in one frame (1/24th of a second) indicates a crash-dive as described by the witness, rather than a birds up-and-over dive or flight take-off. J.A.R.I.C. reports:—

"The third sequence shows something like a vertical neck and head moving through water and leaving a V-shaped wake. After some seconds, the head and neck disappeared and the V-shaped wake opens into near parallel lines. Scaling the area of interest, a scale of 1 : 1800 gives a neck and head height of some 12 - 14 inches, with the wake length varying between eight and twelve feet. Subject movement is in the order of 1½ knots. There is no visible evidence of any body attached to the neck, but as the neck is represented on the film by an image length of 0.2 m.m., any body height above the water would be in the order of 0.05 m.m., which is getting very close to the resolution limits of this film. There is no evidence on the film of how the neck and head disappear, i.e., whether the subject dived beneath the surface or flew away. It is thought that it would have been seen on the film if it had flown off the surface, so it is deduced that it must have dived below the surface. The opening V-shaped wake may be a record of underwater travel or simply the residual pattern left by a water bird taking flight. Mr James' observations include the statement that the creature was observed for a further 30 minutes after the film episode, which suggests that it re-surfaced. On the evidence, it seems unlikely to be a bird, but no suggestions can be offered of a suitable alternative solution. The measurements recorded were checked by a photogrammetrist."

18. August 29th, 1845 to 1847 B.S.T. Mr H. C. Kewley (over 21), retired, Mrs M. G. Kewley (over 21), housewife, and Charles Kewley (14.9), student, and Richard Francis Banyard (15), student. All witnesses had spent a full day on the loch, which was flat calm throughout. They had returned to Temple Pier and just got into their car when an object, 20 to 30 ft. in length, dark grey in colour, rose in the middle of Urquhart Bay. Although the object was all in one piece, it was humped to give the impression of "five or six porpoises following each other." After three members of the party had had an opportunity of observing through Raylite 8½ x 30 fieldglasses, the object was seen to submerge, but it subsequently re-surfaced twice for brief periods in slightly different positions. All witnesses commented on the degree of turbulence caused in an otherwise calm loch.

19. September 18th, 1400 to 1402 B.S.T. Mr John Matheson (41), technical engineer, from Fort Augustus, stated on a sighting report form:—

"I was motoring towards Invermoriston, and when passing point of view (Croft-na-Creich) I noticed a huge turbulence on the loch's surface. Stopped car and looked closely — turbulence grew and grew. Then three humps appeared and turbulence grew even more agitated. Each hump seemed to be three feet apart and colour of skin was greyish-black. Turbulence grew further and masses of white foam appeared. The three humps disappeared together and a huge wave spread rapidly towards opposite shore — a full mile distant. In the path of wave, incidentally, was Cherry Island. The wave struck shore of island, and spray engulfed all the vegetation growing on it. The wave then hit the shore of the loch itself, travelling upwards to the green vegetation. Then water became as calm as a mill-pond."

20. September 20th, 1545 to 1547 B.S.T. Dennis Bland (58), order clerk. Witness was in a lay-by opposite Dores looking at the glass-like surface of the loch

when he noticed a small wave moving in the direction of Dores. The wave suddenly subsided and its place was taken by a dark hump which rose slowly until it was about nine ft. long and about three ft. in height. After some seconds it slowly submerged and continued on course just beneath the surface, causing a considerable wash which, when it reached the shore at the feet of the observer, seemed about equal in size to that created by one of MacBrayne's larger pleasure steamers. Witness was using 9 x 40 fieldglasses and described the colour as very dark grey or blackish and skin texture as rough. Witness was using 9 x 40 German fieldglasses and hence failed to use his camera, which he had just set.

21. September 21st, 1510 to 1520 B.S.T. A. E. Hayward (57), farmer, who was subsequently joined by Mr Birnie (58), a painter, of Inverness, and his nephew, Mr Alexander Massie (28), a South African police officer. Mr Hayward first saw a silvery wake when at the fish trap half-way between Altsigh and Invermoriston. After watching this wake which was coming in towards his position from the middle of the loch, he was joined by the other two witnesses. All three saw a humped object about 20 ft. long surface some distance behind the head of the wake pattern. Two witnesses describe the colour as dark brown, and one merely as dark, the texture "roughish" and "flexible." The object finally submerged when not very far from where they were standing, and Mr Massie, who was very familiar with hippopotami in Rhodesia, reported that it made much more wash than any hippo. The day was fine but sunless, and the surface of the loch flat calm.

22. September 26th, 1502 to 1505 B.S.T. John Stroud (48), civil aviation executive, stopped just north of Invermoriston and saw a long (20 ft. at a minimum) object lying motionless on the surface, looking like an almost-submerged hippopotamus. It was in the middle of the loch and was seen partially to submerge, but was still just visible when Mr Stroud had to continue on his way. It was raining, but visibility was good, with the loch generally calm.

23. October 5th, 1500 B.S.T. C. Lister Skelton* (48), film technician, and Mrs Skelton* (21), saw and filmed a floating mass off Foyers. This episode is still under examination at the time of going to print.

To sum up:—

The number of acceptable reports of sightings by Bureau members is higher for 1967 than for any previous year since the Bureau began its operations. It is recognised that this may well be a direct outcome of the extended coverage of the loch which the Bureau is now able to provide.

What is particularly notable is that 1967 was the first year to yield filmed confirmation (even though of poor photographic quality) of phenomena observed at the loch side and fully described by observers in the Bureau report forms before the film itself was developed and delivered direct to the London H.Q. My most grateful thanks must go to J.A.R.I.C. for their reports.

DAVID JAMES.