

NESS INFORMATION SERVICE

NESSLETTER NO 84

OCTOBER 1987

DEEPCAN

Over the past few weeks I think most members will have seen or heard something of Operation Deepscan, including the somewhat anti-climatic conclusions. I was unable to get to the loch myself, work and family commitments, however Henry Bauer was there and sent me his account of events. I did suspect how the press would react to any results obtained using sonar. As I have pointed out before sonar gives a blip on a screen or a mark on a paper roll. These results need careful analysis before any conclusion can be formed, but even then do not tell you what the target was. After all the build up there was a tremendous media interest in the work at Loch Ness, but I felt that after following a fleet of sonar equipped cruisers up and down the loch on Friday, Saturday and Sunday the newspapers would be looking for a headline; 'Nessie Found' or similar, for Monday morning. I knew that whatever happened the sonar work would not produce such a headline, at best we could expect more large unexplained targets to support the Project's findings of previous seasons. 'More Large Sonar Blips at Loch Ness' was hardly the world shattering headline the papers were looking for, and therefore their reaction would be rather negative. In the event that is what happened. Despite good strong deepwater echoes being obtained, the general tone of the media reports was that there is nothing there. I do not suppose Aidrian Shine helped when in one of the television interviews he gave afterwards, he said, 'Well, we were not expecting a media monster, were we?' (or words to that effect) That must have been a surprise to the journalists, as most of them had been. However some very good work has been done, and I think when everything is carefully examined some interesting results could emerge, hopefully warranting more research. One of our members, Johnny Long, telephoned me with the news that he had been in touch with Swiftech Ltd, of Wallingford, Oxon, the British distributors of Lowrance sonar equipment, they had provided him with information prior to the expedition, and he had spoken to a Mr Hancock afterwards and been told what had been found. Johnny suggested that I should approach Mr Hancock with the view of passing on that information in a Nessletter. I did and Mr Hancock gave me the following information. Five strong large contacts were obtained during the sweeps, in deep water adjacent to the bays at Urquhart and Invermoriston, these objects were between 400 feet and 600 feet deep, in water 700 feet and more deep. This is deeper than the usual salmon run and the contacts were stronger than single fish, but were definitely not shoals of fish. I asked Mr Hancock if he would hazard a guess at the size of the object, saying I realised it was difficult with sonar. he agreed, telling me it was a very complex calculation ideally needing the speed of the boat to be known, along with the speed of the boat to be known, along with the speed of the target and the rate of feed of the paper through the recorder, the first and last elements can be checked, but target speed is another question. Also the direction of movement of the target and the rate of feed of the paper through the recorder, the first and last elements can be checked, but target speed is another questions. Also the direction of movement of the target can have a bearing on the strength of the contact. Depending on the angle of intersection between the path of the object and the path of the boat, is the time the target is in the sonar beam, the extremes being if the object is going in the same direction as the boat or travelling in the opposite direction. The longer the target is in the beam the stronger the contact. However Mr Hancock did say that he estimated the objects to be somewhere around 25/30 feet long, and while he did not suggest Loch Ness has sharks, he did say he had seen similar strength contacts obtained from sharks. During our conversation it transpired that it had originally been Mr Hancock's idea to sweep the loch with a sonar curtain. He had no real interest in Nessie but while on holiday a few years ago visited Loch Ness, seeing the loch he wondered if there was anything in the stories and how he would set about finding evidence. With his background of sonar and echo-sounders he knew they had been used with some success over the years, but more needed to be done. He then devised the plan to sweep the loch's length with a sonar curtain, his first idea was to use as many as 100 boats. Having arrived at this conclusion he did nothing more about it, just having this scheme as something of a pipedream.

The next year while on the Swiftech stand at the Boat Show, Earls Court, London, he was approached by Aidrian Shine, who as field leader of the Project's expeditions, was seeking help and advice on the best way to use the new Lowrance echo-sounders they had recently purchased from Swiftech. Mr Hancock gave him what help he could, then more or less as an afterthought he mentioned his ideas for a sonar curtain sweep of the loch. Aidrian immediately saw the possibilities of the scheme, and was very enthusiastic. Over the following months they remained in touch by letter and telephone, trying to plan how such a scheme could be made operational, and to visualise where the problems would arise. Mr Hancock approached the Lowrance people in Tulsa, USA, with the view of obtaining their sponsorship, as the size of the proposed operation was too large for Swiftech alone. At first their reaction was cool and it seemed that the idea would founder, then later for some reason they took to it, and the first hurdle was cleared. The results of all the planning, organisation and work came together in October. Mr Hancock commented that one aspect of the operation that had been given much coverage was the supposed one million pounds cost. This had come about when a reporter at one of the press briefings had asked how much it would have all cost, he was told that it would have all totalled up to about one million pounds. Mr Hancock said it was a shame that the price tag had been repeatedly used in reference to the operation, when, in reality the whole show had been run on a shoestring. He told me that they had sponsorship from many firms and organisations, Lowrance and Swiftech had provided sonar gear, and technicians, Caley Cruisers laid on the cruisers, Volvo-Penta had been prepared with spare engine parts and propellers, and an oil firm (I did not note which) fuelled all the boats free, Dan-Air flew technicians, reporters, and others to Inverness free of charge, transport around the area was laid on also free, hotels pooled together and gave much reduced rates, the boat crews were volunteers from the Drake Fellowship and the London Docklands Scouts Project, both organisations set up for young people, food for the crews was donated by local shops and firms, the Loch Ness Centre at Drumnadrochit, backed the whole scheme, as it has backed the Loch Ness Project's work over earlier seasons. As can be seen, if all these different items were to be charged at the full going rate and added up, the whole bill could have been a million, however as all the above were donated along with some help from other sources such as the Scottish Highlands and Islands Development Board; the cost of the operation to the Project was comparatively small. What is happening now is that the results are being studied and run through the computers, an interim press release will be circulated in late November or early December. Then at the boat show next year Swiftech will have everything on display, on their stand, equipment, charts obtained, results, illustrations, schematic drawings of the loch bottom, etc. It could be worthwhile for any member able to visit Earls Court to do so. Mr Hancock also told me they had taken video of the loch floor and seen many eels, one of which seemed almost to dance in front of the camera. They had seen nothing large, but had been told of a giant eel being seen at the Foyers power station. One evening after the days operation and evening meal they were relaxing in the hotel when a local man approached them and told them of a big eel. Foyers hydro-electric station is one of the water storage type, pumping water from Loch Ness up to Loch Mhor when there is spare electricity, then using it to generate power during peak periods. The water intakes have metal grids over them, to protect fish being sucked in. This local told them that some time ago staff noted that water pressure was falling and when they investigated, the grid on one of the intakes was clogged up with eels among them a real giant of around 18 to 20 feet long and some 2/3 feet in diameter. I do not really know what to make of this story, Mr Hancock said the man seemed sincere. One point that came to me later was the question of how could the grid be seen, the intakes must be some distance below the surface, well out of sight unless there are observation ports of some kind built into the installation. To clear the grids of debris the usual practice is to stop the turbines and allow the water to back-flush the system. I remember that another giant eel story did the rounds when the power station was being built. A wagon driver was dumping soil in the loch when he got too close to the edge and managed to lose the wagon into the water as well. The story was that divers went down to attach lifting gear, but they came up in a hurry and refused to go back down, claiming they had seen huge, hairy, eels. Attempts were made to locate the divers later, but failed, and the story remained heresay. Perhaps the account told to Mr Hancock will remain in the same category.

While talking about eels Mr Hancock said that shortly after returning from Loch Ness he had heard that the British conger eel record had recently been broken, he was not sure of the details but thought they were length 12 feet, weight 112lbs, I have caught and handled ordinary eels at the loch, they are surprisngly strong, the thought of tangling with a hundredweight of eel is daunting. If there are eels of twice that size in the loch, the power and strength of such animals would be awesome.

As I mentioned earlier Henry Bauer sent me his account of the operation, I am including it with this Nessletter. You will note that during the Saturday evening debriefing a video was shown, which was claimed to show a rocky outcrop on the bottom, which the Academy of Applied Science had taken photographs of and mistaken as the monster's head. I have received from Bob Rines a copy of a letter addressed to Ronnie Bremner, Tony Harmsworth and Aidrian Shine, this letter has been sent to many people concerned with research at the loch, it is as follows. "Dear Folks: Congratulations on a tremendous logistical and public relations feat! It was wonderful that you could involve so many on the exercise. From the enclosed newspaper clipping, it would appear that Aidrian came upon some 'rotting tree stump 22 feet below the surface of the lake' that is alledgedly what we photographed in 1975. Since many experts have studied that picture, with and without computer analysis, and reached a very different conclusion, may we ask to see Aidrian's pictures of the tree stump or whatever other evidence he has on which this statement was made, apparently on behalf of your exhibition and from results stemming from your depth finder survey. We all wish to study this promptly since, if we were fooled ("debunking", we hope, is the reporter's word) we don't want to be fooled again on our up-coming underwater work at Ness. 'Doc' Edgerton has just completed a new elapsed time camera for us, and we have been provided with new low light level underwater video equipment which should differentiate artifacts: but we need Aidrian's evidence to assist in making matters even more fool-proof. May we also have permission to circulate Aidrian's evidence to some of the interested parties in the attached list to whom we are sending a copy of this letter because of their previous contact with our work?" The letter is signed, Cordially, by Bob Rines on behalf of The Academy of Applied Science. The list attached to the letter contains 47 names, and the clipping is from the Concord Monitor, of Monday October 12th. The article is headed 'Nary a Nessie: search fails to find her but debunks an old photo', and it does refer to a rotting tree stump', rather than Henry's outcrop of rocks.

I have just received a copy of a letter which Tony Harmsworth has sent Henry Bauer, answering the points which Henry has raised in his account of Operation Deepscan. As this Nessletter is longer than usual to start with, I will enclose it with the next one, so members will have both sides.

STEUART CAMPBELL

Remember Steuart. I have had a note from him on file since August it was in response to NIS 82. He had spoken to Dr Ayles and his wife. He points out that from Boleskin cemetery to Inverfarigaig one travels north not south. I must learn to hold maps up the right way. He agrees that reflections will not be very evident in rough conditions. We do not know the precise conditions of the surface at the time of the Ayles's sighting, but force 4 winds had been forecast. He suggests that the brevity of the sighting, and perhaps preconceptions about the size of Nessie's neck. He says it is not a case of distorting or disregarding data to make it fit the simplest explanation. All reports contain errors, he says, it is a matter of assessing which data are more likely to be in error. In the Ayles case we can be sure they saw something in the water and it was somewhat cylindrical. But because it is difficult to accurately estimate size and distance, the report on the object's size cannot be regarded as reliable. Steuart says that it is only the size of the object which cause some to claim that it could not have been an otter, and points out that Mackal noted that observers exaggerated size by up to five times.

That is all for now, please remember your news and views are needed and are always welcomed. My address is still: R R Hepple, Huntshildford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Tel. 0388 537359. Subscription: U.K. £2.50 U.S.A. \$7.00

4

DEEPCAN

Henry H Bauer

October 1986, a fleet of boats in line across Loch Ness had begun a sonar sweep down the loch, but bad weather intervened, and the attempt was postponed for a year. For 1987, there were to be more boats, more days set aside for the operation - more of everything, especially perhaps publicity. During August and September, Operation Deepscan was mentioned in a host of American and British newspapers, and from the beginning of October there was TV coverage as well (daily items on Cable News Network, for example; in Britain, a segment in the Blue Peter programme as well as news reports). Through the courtesy of Lowrance Electronics, I was able to observe the events as a member of the press corps; and I was able to make a record of some of the happenings with a Mitsubishi camcorder lent by Holdren's of Roanoke.

Operation Deepscan had been conceived and organised by Adrian Shine. For a number of years, Shine has used primarily sonar in his studies of Loch Ness; his continuing patrons have been Tony Harmsworth, curator of the "Official" Monster Exhibition at Drumnadrochit, and Ronnie Bremner, owner of the Exhibition and the Drumnadrochit and Clansman hotels and associated ventures. But for Operation Deepscan there were many other sponsors as well: Jim Hogan, of Caley Cruisers, provided the boats (which are available for hire during the tourist season); Lowrance Electronics of Tulsa, Oklahoma, provided the sonar equipment and technical expertise; the boat crews were volunteers, mostly Scouts and unemployed youngsters from the Drake Fellowship; passages for press as well as participants were provided by Continental Airlines and by Dan-Air; and ancillary support came from many other groups, including the Highlands and Islands Development Board. (Just as professional tennis players sport emblems of numerous sponsors on their chests, arms, lapels, backs, shoes and so on, so the boats of Operation Deepscan bore many marks: Volvo Penta, Midland and others as well as Lowrance Electronics and the Deepscan logo.) John Fenn Associates (London) were in charge of publicity. Some 250 to 300 news people from around the world had been attracted to Loch Ness for the occasion - from America and Britain, of course, but also France, Holland, Japan, to mention only those I encountered personally. Obviously enough, not all of these people and groups were there purely out of a burning curiosity to know precisely what the Loch Ness Monster actually is. The motives were mixed, and the mixture was handled more gracefully by some than by others. (and I don't mean to exclude myself from those who have mixed motives: I had brought along a copy of my book about Nessie and mentioned it to all and sundry.)

At the introductory press briefing on Thursday night (October 8) and at the debriefings on the following three evenings, the platform was shared by Bremner, Darrell Lowrance, Shine and David Steensland (an engineer with Lowrance), with John Fenn as master of ceremonies; but it was clear that Shine was in control. I thought that the press, which had been profusely supplied with releases before the operation began, was not so well served in that direction during the operation itself: the short nightly briefings were not accompanied by written material and, most regrettably, no attempt was made to put Operation Deepscan into the context of a controversy that has persisted for more than 50 years, during which a considerable number of people have carried out a variety of investigations with many ingenious devices and approaches. (The practical arrangements for the press, on the other hand, were well handled: good transport between airport and the eight hotels needed to accommodate us all and the Press Center at the Clansman and the boats, coffee at the Centre and on the Press boat, telephone and photocopying services, and so on; John Fenn was unflappable and helpful.)

Lowrance Electronics was there, of course, to demonstrate what their equipment could do; the word among the press was that the company wants to break into the European market. Darrell Lowrance handled his role on the platform with considerable grace. Without disavowing commercial goals, he referred to other projects, notably at Lake Mead, in which the company's interests had coincided with the public interest; and he gave plausible reasons why this experiment was of technical utility for Lowrance. Concerning Nessie he was interested by openmindedly and intelligently skeptical.

Adrian Shine as usual disavowed any belief in the existence of a "Jurassic reptile"; but he thereby raised the question - which however he did not answer - why, then, he should be exploring in Loch Ness: why care what the bottom of the loch looks like, or what the biomass is, or the characteristics of the thermocline? On the one hand Shine explicitly expressed faith in the local eyewitnesses, but on the other he was implicitly rejecting all the details of appearance and behaviour given by those eyewitnesses. He disclaimed a connection between his large mid-water sonar contacts and any of the conventionally accepted photographic results. When pressed, he would go so far as to admit the possibility of a large appellation of "Monster" - even though, again, no eyewitness has ever reported any fish-like attributes: no scales, no fish-like fins. Those of us who have followed the Loch Ness story can make plausible guesses about Shine's goals and can sympathise with the dilemmas he faces in trying to combine "scientific" detachment with a programme of investigation that necessitates commercial support and intense public relations; but to the press, who lacked context and background, Shine seemed evasive and inconsistent and unforthcoming.

On Friday, October 9, the first full-fledged sonar sweep began: twenty boats in line, followed by several others ready to confirm any possible contacts, a command vessel, a couple of speed-boats, and three Jacobite cruise-vessels for observers and press; a helicopter hovered in attendance (it was available for hire, at about \$175 per quarter-hour). At once it became clear that this was going to be no search of the whole loch: the sweep began southwards as the vessels left the Clansman marina, which is three or four miles south of the northern tip of the loch at Lochend: and the line of boats initially stretched over only about half the width of the loch (the loch narrows toward the south, and below Foyers most of the loch was being covered). Evidently the sweep was covering most or all of the two deepest basins of the loch, but the press had not been told why some of the loch was not being searched or how the selection of areas had been made. The boats kept in station fore-and-aft by lining up on flags flown by the two centre boats and the boat on the left flank: to maintain the right distance apart, the crews looked through finger-sized cylindrical tubes at the neighboring boats, to keep them precisely framed within the tubes. CB channels crackled with exhortations and reports; there was excitement when a marker was thrown and support boats rushed up to confirm a possible contact. The orange speedboats dashed around, and cruisers were continually transporting observers between the press boat and the shore. Not everyone, however, respected the work being done: soon after the sweep had started, a trawler heading north went through and not around the line of boats, and later another trawler and a couple of sail-boats did the same. The weather was fair, light southerly wind, temperatures in the forties, and waves no higher than a couple of feet. (Though I would not have wished to emulate the TV people who transferred from one boat to another while carrying heavy cameras and tripods and batteries; altogether, I developed considerable sympathy for the press, who put in long hours under strenuous conditions and only occasionally see perhaps a minute or two of their efforts actually used in a broadcast.) After about six hours, the sweep ended at Fort August.

The tone of the debriefing that evening was cordial. Shine reported that three interestingly large mid-water contacts had been made, each by one boat only, none of them confirmed by the support boats - just as one might expect if these were moving objects, and unlike what one would expect of spurious echoes from more than one boat. The sonar charts were shown, and copies of them were distributed the next day. Lowrance described the largest of the signals as stronger than any he had ever seen from such a depth: one of his engineers ventured to compare it with what might come from a large shark. Shine, refusing to speculate, reminded us of the recent report of another seal in the loch.

Saturday began wet, but by afternoon it was sunny, and the loch was almost glassy calm for the sweep from Fort Augustus back up the loch. The Press Centre at the Clansman had received only one report of a possible contact from the fleet, yet the debriefing that evening was prefaced by a commotion that promised something truly spectacular. A video player and two TV monitors were set up, and a slide projector and a screen: a delay was announced to await the arrival of newly processed tape; and when that came, it was test-run with sheets of paper covering the monitors to prevent us from having an unauthorised preview.

6
What could be coming? The previous evening, in response to a question, Shine had said - contrary to some earlier statements in the newspapers - that the support boats had not been carrying underwater cameras. So what could we be about to see? Finally the proceedings began, and Shine led off by promising to disappoint us because of the lack of a "media monster" (a term he seemed to use as an occasional alternative to "Jurassic reptile"). No big contact had been made today, no repetition of yesterday's contacts, although again that could indicate that those had been from moving objects - if, indeed, they had been from objects at all and not artefacts. New outcrops had been located on the bed of the loch, and these would be investigated in detail in due course. He seemed almost excited as he displayed a sonar chart that showed schools of bait fish, close to the surface at night but quite deep during the day.

Not since 1975, Shine continued, had the loch attracted so much interest from the press. On that occasion, the Academy of Applied Science had helped the media to cultivate the "Jurassic reptile" image of the Loch Ness monster, exemplified by the "gargoyle-head" photograph - which was now projected onto the screen. This week, Shine now revealed, other work than the sonar sweep had also been going on, including examination of the place where the Academy had obtained its photographs. There, the side of the loch slopes very steeply from a depth of about twelve feet to sixty feet, and one really needed to know what one was doing, and to have some common sense or at least some experience. This week, a diver had been down, and underwater cameras had also been used, and here is what had been found: and onto one of the TV monitors came an underwater scene, in black and white, with unidentifiable whitish objects moving around and what seemed to be an outcrop of rocks standing up from a sandy base. Was Shine suggesting, asked someone, that the gargoyle head was really a pile of rocks? Yes, said Shine, he was now prepared to go publicly on the record to that effect. But the TV monitor was not showing anything that looked like the gargoyle head on the screen, came a comment from the audience. Well, we were told, it was necessary to get the lighting and the contrast just right to see the resemblance, and trying to adjust its contrast as well as transfer to VHS format. At any rate, Shine continued, he hoped that this would now usher in a new era of investigation at Loch Ness, one unsullied by Jurassic reptiles and media monster and concentrating on careful, controlled, scientific work.

The questions that followed were largely hostile and largely directed at Shine. Was he criticising the press by speaking of a "media monster"? Not at all, said Shine; the press could only report what they were told.

When had that rocky outcrop been discovered? Several days earlier, it turned out. Why then had the press not been told of it before? There was a shuffle of indignation among the audience, and shaking of heads and lifting of eyebrows; and Shine's response, that they had wanted to be quite sure, seemed a little weak in view of the earlier comment that they had not yet got the contrast and lighting right.

Who had been the diver? Dick Raynor, formerly of the Loch Ness Investigation, who had known and shown exactly where the Academy's raft had been moored. He had been down for about an hour on this occasion.

What about the Academy's flipper photographs? Well, Shine was not satisfied with those. They had been retouched for publication - by the magazine editors, he hastened to add, not by the Academy. At the same time, the photos supplied by the Academy were certainly not the same as the originals, which he had seen, or as the computer-enhanced ones. Moreover, he wasn't happy with the sonar charts that accompanied the flipper photos, though for different reasons.

If Shine didn't approve of the conventional plesiosauric Nessie, why then did he feature on the logo of Operation Deepscan? Well, responded Shine, that logo was the work of American public-relations people, he hadn't been consulted about it, and we might have noticed that he had refused to wear it. (And indeed the emblem on his windbreaker was from Lowrance Electronics, and not the Deepscan logo; but that logo did figure on the passes issued to the press).

What work was going to be undertaken the next day? Another sweep? No, said Shine, the work planned under Operation Deepscan had now been completed. Again there was a stir among the audience: why then had the operation been announced as spanning three days?

Had it been? responded Shine; not by him.

Bremner said a few words, disagreeing with Shine because he, Bremner, had actually seen Nessie a few years ago: he had no fear that the Loch Ness monster would be "killed off" by the current revelation, or that tourism would suffer; clearly more research was warranted, and perhaps in a few years the press would be back for more interesting news. Darrell Lowrance was still intrigued by the strongest of yesterday's contacts, but still skeptical too; though a major portion of the loch had been swept, not all of it had been; but one might have hoped that a population of creatures would have shown more evidence of their existence. A new digital sonar was under development, which might offer the possibility of better information, but that was a number of years away. The rocky outcrop had come under investigation because its sonar reflectivity differed from that of the adjoining wall of the loch. Under an agreement on which he had insisted beforehand, all results of Operation Deepscan were being made publicly available.

Though Bremner and Lowrance did their best, it was a sad, anti-climatic end to a promising venture. The interpretation seemed unavoidable, that in absence of anything noteworthy from the second day's sweep, we had been served up an expose that had been kept ready for several days for such an eventuality. If so, it didn't work. The video shown simply didn't look like the "gargoyle head". (In later news reports, from Associated Press for example, it was a tree stump rather than a rocky outcrop that was said to be the "original".) Moreover, most of the press didn't know anything about the Academy or its results, and couldn't understand why reference was being made with such fanfare to something more than ten years old. For the cognoscenti, of whom there were a few present (Heather Cary, Ivor Newby, Nick Witchell), it was also less than newsworthy; after all, they had long known of the suggestion that the "gargoyle head" was really an inanimate object, namely a cylinder block from an auto - even the precise brand and type of engine had been specified. That hypothesis had been shared privately with Bob Rines and the Academy, but in the intervening dozen years no one before Shine had thought it appropriate to call a press conference to argue the matter.

I canvassed a number of people to test whether my reactions had been too extreme, whether they stemmed too directly from my pre-existing opinions about Nessie and about the various Nessie hunters. Said one British person who works in public relations: "The worst press conference I've ever attended". Said a representative of one of the sponsors, a day later: "By working intensively with members of the media, we hope to have recouped perhaps eighty percent of the damage done on Saturday night".

To many of the media people, Operation Deepscan was primarily or even only a publicity stunt. Did I know, one of them asked me, that it was being dubbed Operation Deep SCAM? The press were not given any context into which they could put the events and statements of these few days. They had not heard that a symposium on Nessie had been held at the National Museums of Scotland in July. They didn't realise that the various Nessie hunters compete with one another, that they have quite different views about what Nessies are and about how best to get information about them. Why wasn't Dinsdale there, I was asked when I would cite his film as the strongest available evidence. I don't know, was my invariable reply. But of course I did privately harbour the strong suspicion that he hadn't been invited; that the organisers had no wish to share the limelight with other Nessie hunters not even with those like Dinsdale who had obtained important results or people with such germane and excellent technical credentials as the photographic and sonar experts associated with the Academy of Applied Science.

What did Operation Deepscan accomplish?

Lowrance expressed satisfaction over a useful technical test of their equipment under difficult and novel circumstances, and believe that other applications will benefit. Perhaps we can look forward to having available soon a truly detailed map of the bottom of most of the loch. Adrian Shine has some "outcrops" on the boom to look at in detail, schools of bait fish to study, and his sonar contacts from 1982 still to explain. So there has been some progress; but not, I think, in the public understanding of what the hunt for Nessie is really about. The media could hardly come away without a strengthened belief that it is all a stunt, for the benefit of the tourist industry and abetted by a few crackpots.

To those who see Nessie as a creation of the tourist industry, I've always pointed out how little commercial exploitation was actually to be found at the loch: almost no hotel rooms available with a view over the water; only in 1980 was there even a place to park cars above Urquhart Castle; and so on. But the picture has changed drastically since about 1980; and one of the saddest changes is the deadly rivalry among hoteliers in Drumnadrochit. During Operation Deepscan, for example, the proprietor of the Loch Ness Lodge announced that he would have been willing to support the venture but had never been asked to; no accommodations had been booked at the Lodge for participants or press, and there were 50 rooms empty, yet five hotels in Inverness, much less conveniently placed, had been used to lodge people, and at rates (\$50 per day) far in excess of those available at the Loch Ness Lodge even at the height of the season.

It would surely be to the benefit of all if this rivalry were to be curbed; and if the hotel-keepers could see their exhibitions as complementary and not competitive: let the Monster Exhibition display signs, "For material about local history and culture, see the Visitor Centre at the Loch Ness Lodge"; and let that Centre eschew mention of the Monster and display signs, "For information about Nessie, see the comprehensive Monster Exhibition at the Drumnadrochit Hotel".

I'd like to think that cryptozoologists as well as hoteliers could learn something from the less happy aspects of Operation Deepscan. As I discussed in my book, THE ENIGMA OF LOCH NESS (University of Illinois Press, 1986), the quest for Nessie presents inevitable dilemmas, and some attempts to further the quest turn out in practice to hinder it. Operation Deepscan confirmed for me that the press - and therefore the public - cannot distinguish among the hunters; and therefore it is worse than useless for the hunters to argue publicly with one another. When Shine decries Jurassic reptiles and denigrates an Academy photo, what the public hears is that there exists no monster in Loch Ness: not what Shine is really trying to say, that there actually is an unexplained and conceivably very interesting phenomenon to be elucidated. The public is simply not now concerned over whether Nessie is Kine's or Dinsdale's plesiosaur, or Heuvelman's long-necked pinniped, or Shine's fish - it needs still to be convinced that there is something worth searching for there and not just a myth and a tourist trap. So hunters ought not to criticise one another in public for their differing views and approaches; only in the case of definite fraud - as with the likes of Frank Searle, for example - should the whistle be blown to ensure that the press and the public know what's going on. Short of that, it might be well for cryptozoologists to follow the example of established professions, including those within science: technical disagreements are argued within the technical community only, at least until such time as the matter has been community only, at least until such time as the matter has been settled with the appropriate certainty. At Loch Ness at the moment, we have not certainty but only a difference of opinions. We have not yet seen a photograph or video of any pile of rocks, tree stump, or engine block that reproduces the appearance of the "gargoyle head", so those explanations remain possible but unproven; and Shine's opinions about the flipper photos and associated sonar also remain possible but unproven opinion. By the "scientific" standards for which he aims, Shine has not yet proved anything one way or the other.

16 October 1987

What did Operation Deepscan accomplish?