

MONSTERS AND UFOs

Some observation on Loch Ness

F. W. Holiday

THE enigma of lake-monsters has interested me since 1933. This interest developed into an intensive field study which I described in detail in *The Great Orm of Loch Ness* (Faber & Faber, 1968).¹ From 1966 onwards, however, doubts arose about the intrinsic nature of the phenomena which subsequent events have done nothing to diminish.

To broaden the data-base relating to monsters, a study of religion, folklore and archaeology—particularly the Bronze Age—was undertaken. Not only did water-monsters turn up in the material but they turned up in juxtaposition to such classic UFO configurations as spherical and discoid vehicles with tripod landing-legs, supposed “crew-members” in “space suits”, the footprints left by such “crews” and even such weird objects as the “jellyfish saucer”² described by Michel, Vallée and others. Was it therefore justifiable to suspect that water-monsters existed on a plane with UFOs and shared a similar quality of reality, whatever this might be?

The Loch Ness Investigation Bureau has used two main tools for establishing the objective existence of monsters—sonar and photography. Sonar operated by scientists from Birmingham University,³ The Atlantis Scientific Foundation (in conjunction with Chicago University)⁴ and the Massachusetts Academy of Applied Science⁵ have each determined that very large, apparently animate, objects do exist in Loch Ness. Visual observation by Dr. Neil Bass,⁶ a marine biologist, confirms that similar objects exist in Loch Morar.

Photography over the last seven years, however, has been curiously unsuccessful in supplying a reasonable image. Teams of volunteer cameramen, armed with 35 mm. cine cameras fitted with 20in. or 36in. telephoto lenses, have failed to film a monster even though the objects are visible during every watching season (May till October). By 1968 it was becoming obvious, at least to me, that there were factors involved of which we knew nothing.

Similarity of psychological effects

Increasingly, I began to take note of the unusual psychological effects on witnesses, including myself, of seeing monsters. At first I was quite unaware that similar effects have been noted amongst UFO witnesses. In the case of monsters a frequent reaction is the tendency to minimise or even to dismiss what one has just seen. This often provides a brief interim in which the phenomenon escapes further observation. Here are some examples of this effect:

1. The late Gavin Maxwell,⁷ in a TV programme in which the writer took part, described how he once saw three black humps projecting out of Loch Ness

and thought they were boulders. A moment later he found that they had disappeared.

2. His brother, Major E. Maxwell,⁸ told me how he once saw a huge hump projecting out of Loch Fyne and, *while he looked at it*, thought it must be a sandbank. The car moved behind trees before he remembered that this is a deep loch. When he reversed to the original spot the hump had gone.

3. On January 15, 1970, Mr. M. K. Smithers, B.Sc.B.E.,⁹ the site engineer at Foyers power station construction, saw a great black mass in Loch Ness he estimated at 30-40ft. long projecting 5-10ft. out of the water. Hurrying to get nearer the object he removed his eyes from it momentarily only to find that it had disappeared leaving a wake. Soon afterwards, Mr. Smithers resigned from the project.

4. On August 4, 1970, Mr. A. Butterworth,¹⁰ a zoology student working with Dr. Neil Bass at Loch Morar, was on watch with camera and binoculars. He saw what he imagined was a small rocky islet opposite the camera-station. Continuing the sweep he saw a second islet. Returning to the first object he then saw that it was a dark hump about 15ft. long and 3-4ft. high. He ran to the camera but then found that the hump had disappeared.

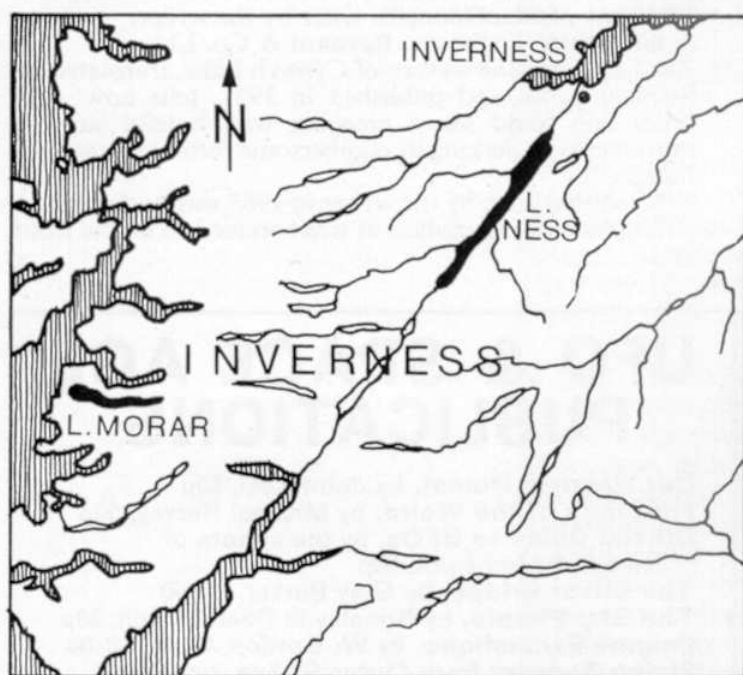
5. In a letter to the writer dated May 8, 1970, Dr. Kenneth MacLeod, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Public Health, Cortland, New York, described how he saw a Loch Ness monster while motoring with his father in July, 1968. Dr. MacLeod, who was driving, was between his passenger and the loch and the latter failed to see the large, moving, grey-black object. In italics, Dr. MacLeod writes: “I did not even mention it to him.” Thinking that his own reticence over such a thing was odd, he repeats: “It was curious that I did not even mention it to my father as we partook of our afternoon tea in Fort Augustus.”

6. In August, 1968, after several days of observing Loch Ness, I saw a large black object undulated into three humps. Mr. Pickett, a Yorkshire schoolmaster, his wife and their children also saw the object as did a 19-years-old student working as petrol-pump attendant on the opposite shore.¹¹ The object, which was moving, was about 35ft. long at the waterline and projected about 5ft. I held this object in view for about 10 seconds before running to the camera. It submerged before I could take film. To me, this sighting had a strange dream-like quality to it. However, the upsurge of water and foam at the point of submergence—which I watched through 10 X binoculars—and the fact that the witnesses were on both shores argued against a purely mental event such as an hallucination.¹²

After seeing a monster in 1965 I wrote in the L.N.I. Bureau's report: "It could have been a boat." Manifestly, it could not have been a boat since it submerged twice while I observed it; nor did I ever suspect it to be a boat. Later, I put this misleading remark down to tiredness, being unaware, at that time, that others had been similarly affected.

Repeated failures with cameras

The catalogue of unexplainable misses with high-power cameras at Loch Ness has now become absurd. A camera is removed from a site for servicing and, soon afterwards, a monster is seen nearby by a bus-load of people. A watcher goes for a meal and visitors call to report unambiguous monster phenomena near the unmanned camera. Cameras have failed for no reason that Kodak technicians could discover. Over the last



Map showing locations of Loch Ness and Loch Morar, Scotland

10 years there have been many scores of such incidents.

The Bureau's main camp and cameras are on Fraser's Field at Achnahannet. This site has now been manned since 1965. Previous to this, there had been numerous sightings of monsters from Achnahannet. Since 1965, however, the sightings have virtually ceased and no definitive film has ever been shot. The only major sighting—it was witnessed by Professor R. P. Mackal of Chicago University—was masked by trees from the cameras and went unrecorded.

In my view, such secretivity can no longer be attributed to normal animal caution, but must be seriously considered as paranormal. No organic creature can manipulate humans and machinery in order to preserve the mystery of its own identity. Loch Ness monsters, however, appear to do this.

Physical effects, UFOs and psychic activity

John A. Keel's view¹³ is that monsters and UFOs are what he terms "transmogrifications"—material apparitions from the higher reaches of the electro-

magnetic spectrum. My regard for his ideas increased greatly when I found him describing, accurately, secondary phenomena that had, in fact, happened with myself as the recipient.

In 1965, for example, I suffered an inexplicable and horrifying blackout lasting for about five minutes for which no medical reason could be given. In 1966 I had three experiences with UFOs—the first I had ever seen.¹⁴ Three times during the past seven years I have found myself in houses containing a poltergeist. None of this harassment was recognised as such by me at the time it occurred. Only after I had rejected monsters as normal organic animals and regarded them as manifestations akin to UFOs did this psychic activity seem part of a total content.

It should, however, be stressed that lake monsters are not shadowy apparitions but solid objects of great mass. Lt. Russell Flint, skipper of a Royal Navy H.S.L., hit a specimen with his ship while travelling through Loch Ness in 1943. The steel bow was damaged.¹⁵ In August, 1969, a monster collided with a 16ft. cabin-cruiser in Loch Morar and almost capsized the boat.¹⁶ The phenomenon is material and actual. Large amounts of water are visibly displaced. If it is indeed organic there is no evidence of this to date.

Parallels

In a general sense there are many parallels between monsters and UFOs. Both are supported by massive witness testimony yet both are abnormally evasive of recording equipment. Both appear to change shape and colour. Both figure in a religious sense in archaeological depictions. Both sorts of phenomena may produce side-effects, sometimes unpleasant. There are even odder similarities.

The only articulate witness to see a Loch Ness monster completely on land was the late Mr. George Spicer¹⁷ and his wife in 1934. Mrs. Spicer still remembers the encounter vividly. At the time, Mr. Spicer said: "The neck moved rapidly and the body followed in jerks." Monsters, both in folklore and as seen by modern witnesses, are often alleged to move in a jerking or spasmodic manner.¹⁸ Luis Schönherr remarks on the hopping and jerking movements of UFO entities in *The Question Of Reality* (FSR, Vol. 17, 2) and discusses some pertinent possibilities. Moreover, the lower part of the Spicer monster was not visible. Schönherr discusses this aspect under: "Missing, transparent or indistinct extremities."

Monsters on land never leave excreta or other traces one associates with ponderous animals. I have examined the surrounds of many lakes in Wales, Ireland and various parts of northern Scotland without finding a fragment of organic evidence. In 1962, however, on an inaccessible part of Loch Ness shore, I came upon a round patch of vegetation that had been beaten down in a curious way—almost as if the pressure on the broken branches had been applied from above. Local people say they very occasionally find these patches and associate them with the monsters. If the monster-UFO phenomena are regarded as parts of a whole, it may be significant to observe that the patch I found seems similar to some of the flying saucer "nests" that have been described and photographed.

It is too soon to draw conclusions. At the most it can only be said that two types of strange phenomena appear to be linked. If true, this is a major step forward since monster phenomena, at least, can be firmly located in space. Are monsters the UFO's Achilles Heel? If so, small wonder that they are protected with such care.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Available as a paperback.
- ² What appears to be a "jellyfish saucer" with dangling "tentacles" and a crab-like claw for grasping objects is figured on a Bronze Age carved stone at Knockmany, Co. Tyrone.
- ³ Braithwaite, H., and Gordon Tucker, D.: "Sonar picks up Stirrings in Loch Ness." *The New Scientist*: December 19, 1969.
- ⁴ Love, Robert E.: *Summary of 1969 Loch Ness Mobile Sonar Search*. U.S. Liaison Committee on Oceanographic Research.
- ⁵ Rines, Robert: Broadcast on BBC 1 Radio: November 1970.
- ⁶ *Report on the Loch Morar Survey*. Issued by the Survey Committee.
- ⁷ Author of *The Ring of Bright Water*, etc., and a brilliant naturalist.
- ⁸ Chairman of the Steering Committee for World Population Control.

- ⁹ From Mr. Smither's report of the incident. Files of Loch Ness Investigation Bureau.
- ¹⁰ *Report on the Loch Morar Survey*, 1970.
- ¹¹ A report from each witness was lodged with the L.N.I. Bureau within 24 hours of the sighting.
- ¹² A curious case of delayed reaction to the phenomenon occurred in September, 1958, at Loch Morar. Dr. George R. Cooper, F.R.S.A., F.I.A.L., was sketching the view and included a "floating log" in the picture. The "log" suddenly disappeared. Dr. Cooper has given this sketch to the Loch Morar Survey.
- ¹³ Keel, John A.: *Operation Trojan Horse*, p. 191. Also *Strange Creatures From Time And Space*, pp. 277-278.
- ¹⁴ I hope to publish details of these sightings when I have arranged certain archaeological material which seems to bear on the problem.
- ¹⁵ Signal to Admiralty on the matter. Press statements by Mr. Russell Flint in April, 1969.
- ¹⁶ *Loch Morar Survey*. TV and press interviews with the witnesses—Duncan MacDonnell and William Simpson. Interview of MacDonnell's sister by the writer.
- ¹⁷ A director of Todhouse, Reynard & Co. Ltd.
- ¹⁸ *The Legend of the wyvern of Cynwch Lake*, translated by Stephen Jones and published in 1921, tells how: "At times one could see it creeping with hateful stealthy movements . . . jerking its cumbersome form into uncanny humps."
A monster seen by the writer in 1965 was performing a jerking or slewing motion at what seemed to be the front end.

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