

The Monster that Wasn't – Or Was It?

By Professor Gareth Williams

Professor Williams, who is Emeritus Professor of Medicine at Bristol University, has developed his diagnostic skills to research the plausibility of the many tales surrounding the Loch Ness Monster.

He outlined, in an extremely entertaining lecture, the “Monster Saga” that has waxed and waned from the early 1930s until the present day and has sustained a lucrative tourist trade that is worth many millions annually to the Scottish economy.

It seems that, over the past decades, a number of well-known scientists, explorers and adventurers have become enthralled and risked their reputations with their belief in the existence of an animal that should have died out 65 million years ago.

Believers have included the naturalist Sir Peter Scott, aeronautical engineer Tim Dinsdale, an MP by the name of David James and the American inventor of radar technology Robert Rines. These, and others, spent time at Loch Ness attempting to prove the existence of the infamous monster through the application of cryptozoology, being the study of animals whose existence remains unproven.

Two scientists, Dr Denys Tucker of the Natural History Museum in London and Professor Roy Mackal of the University of Chicago both became so obsessed with “Nessy” that they lost their professional reputations and their jobs.

However, detailed research by Professor Williams has highlighted the lack of credible evidence that there was ever a living creature even remotely resembling the famed monster. The well-known photograph of a long tapering neck appearing from the surface of the loch apparently taken in 1934 by a Colonel Wilson has been proven to be a hoax. Similarly, the evidence of a flipper attached to a monster emanated from a 1974 sonar image that was later proven to have been doctored by the misguided Bob Rines. One additional piece of negative evidence was provided by the master of a steamer that plied the loch regularly in the 1930s and reported to the Inverness Courier that he had never seen any sign of a monster over many years and hundreds of crossings.

It seems that the Loch Ness Monster legend has grown out of a £150 publicity stunt to boost tourism in the early 1930s with no shred of proven evidence to prove its existence.