

## LOCH NESS WELLINGTON R for Robert REMEMBERED

After Wellington N2980 'R for Robert' ditched into Loch Ness in a snow storm on 31 December 1940, it remained hidden in the dark water.

Until the 1970s when Academy of Applied Science led by Robert Rines began investigating the Loch with new technology scanners. In 1976 Martin Klein using a Klein Side Scan Sonar noticed what looked like a twin-engine aircraft on the sonar traces. In 1978 Robin Holmes from Herriot Watt University, from the research vessel, Seol Mara, using an underwater camera, found what they could see was clearly the geodesic structure of a Wellington Bomber.



From the time Wellington N2980 was first discovered in Loch to the day when she was lifted on to dry land took over 9 years. The Loch Ness Wellington Association, formed by Robin Holmes, masterminded the fundraising and organised for the Wellingtons eventual successful raise, spearheaded by Oceaneering International, in 1985. The Front Gun Turret was recovered a year later by the Royal Navy Fleet Diving Group. Despite nearly forty-five years underwater, the aeroplane was remarkably well preserved.

Delivered to Brooklands Museum by British Aerospace, over 100,000 man hours were spent restoring the Wellington. Out of the 11,461 built, N2980 is now one of only two surviving Wellingtons and is the only one which saw action as an operational bomber, and was originally made in Brooklands to Barnes Wallis geodetic framework design.



Unveiled on the 31st December 2020 to mark the 80th Anniversary of the ditching. Commissioned by the Loch Ness Wellington 2020 Project. Funded by Corporate & Private Donations.

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296 WORDS