

"That's Incredible" comes to Oak Island

By Gerrie Grevatt

The bigwigs at ABC-TV think the mystery of Oak Island is incredible.

In fact, the U.S. network decided the idea of buried treasure on the Lunenburg County island was so fascinating that they spent in excess of \$10,000 recently to produce three minutes of viewing time for the weekly television series "That's Incredible."



D'ARCY O'CONNOR

A film crew visited the world-famous island last weekend. Among them was a director from Los Angeles, a Quebec-based camera man and sound man, a helicopter and pilot from

Fredericton, N.B., and D'Arcy O'Connor, a Montreal resident who, since the publication of his book "The Money Pit" in 1978, is reputed to be the world's foremost authority on the Oak Island mystery.

"I was contacted just before leaving on vacation," said Mr. O'Connor. "The timing was perfect - I was on my way to Lunenburg County for my holidays anyway."

For the Montreal author, the contract provided another irresistible attraction. While filming, he enjoyed an all-expense-paid weekend at a local inn and a flat fee which covered the entire cost of his two-week trip.

Filming began early. With Mr. O'Connor as commentator, the script took him from helicopter to rented boat to point out the major excavations on the island. He also discussed some theories about Oak Island's buried treasure.

By the end of the weekend, the crew had videoed a total of four 20-minute cassette tapes, which when taken back to L.A., will be edited down to fill the three-minute slot.

Producers of "That's Incredible" learned of Oak Island from two sources. The first televised documentary appeared on the NBC network series "In Search Of" in 1979, in which Mr. O'Connor appeared to discuss his newly-released book. His second interview was aired on CBC's "Fifth Estate" last fall.

The latest filming will be incorporated into a 30-minute segment of "That's Incredible", scheduled to be aired sometime during the month of November. The program is expected to draw a minimum of 30 million viewers, the average weekly audience for the TV show.

As for the segment's host, Mr. O'Connor offered some clues on his theory for those who might miss the fall program.

During the Spanish conquests of the New World, during the 1600's, convoys of as many as 90 ships would return to the homeland with gold and silver from South American mines. Crews of 100 or more soldiers and sailors travelled aboard each galleon to protect their finds. It could be that one ship went astray during a gale and was wrecked off Mahone Bay. Spanish mining engineers could have designed the intricate chambers and tunnels below the island and had the crew dig them. Once the treasure was buried, they could have repaired their ship, and not wanting to risk the trip to Spain without the protection of the convoy, left the treasure behind.

"If that's the way it happened, there's a 60-40 chance the loot is still there," said Mr. O'Connor.

Sound incredible? The final answer awaits further discoveries, but too many clues have been found to expect that the mystery will be left unsolved.