



A Tribute to Donald, Bluebird and the Lakes

If you think that Bluebirds gone....you're wrong!

Glen and Jon hope you like the songs which contain original British Pathe audio news release of the time.

Kimbustion©

Donald Campbell and Bluebird



The story of Donald Campbell and Bluebird K7 has rapidly descended into legend. Son of Malcolm Campbell, a legend of speed in his own right, Donald was to walk in his father's footsteps and continue the family tradition of world speed record breaking.



Donald was born in his father's home on the 23rd March 1921 (Povey Cross, Surry). When his father died in 1948, Donald and Leo Villa (originally his father's mechanic, and who Donald called "Uncle") continued the Bluebird tradition and the quest to be the fastest man on land and water.

Donald was to set a total of seven water and land speed records between 1955 and 1964. In 1957 Donald was awarded a C.B.E. and his career culminated in 1964 when he became the first and only man to hold both the World Land and Water Speed Records in the same year.

In November 1966, Donald set about attempting to push his existing 276.3 mph World Water Speed Record to over 300mph and returned to Coniston for trials. Bluebird, originally fitted with a Metropolitan Vickers "Beryl" Turbo Jet engine of "Straight Through" design and having a 10 stage axial compressor and single turbine, was re-fitted in September with a Bristol Siddeley Orpheus Turbo Jet 701 engine, as used in Gnat trainer aircraft of the time. This increased the thrust from 4,000 lbs to 6,000 lbs.

On the 4th of January 1967, a little after 8.30am, Donald took Bluebird out onto a still lake Coniston. After many recent set backs, both technically and with water conditions, finally he could get on with the job. In the next 10 minutes the 300mph record could be his.

A little after 8.40am, he completed his first run from north to south, achieving 297mph. (Speed records are set by averaging the combined speed across a measured kilometer, on a "there and back" run). The return run would require Bluebird to go even faster to officially conquer the 300mph barrier.



THE ACCIDENT

Tragedy struck just a couple of hundred yards before the end of the second run. Donald and Bluebird entered the measured kilometer at over 300mph, but Bluebird was now lighter than before. Donald, (some believe, eager to get on with the job), chose not to refuel for the return trip and left early for the homeward run. It is now believed that this slight loss of weight coupled with the fact that he hit the wake caused by Bluebirds water brake on the outward leg, caused Bluebird to loose stability. Within seconds her nose raised up out of the water and she became airborne, somersaulted some 20ft in the air then crashed down on the surface of the lake and broke up.

(At those speeds the water would seem concrete hard)

Bluebird sank almost instantly after the crash, leaving little debris (Donald's Helmet his mascot teddy bear, Mr. Whoppit, and one of Bluebird's "sponsons" (floats) were some of the only items found).

Donald was posthumously awarded the Queen's Commendation for Bravery.

Controversially, but with approval of the family, the Wreckage of the Bluebird and Donald's remains were recovered in 2001. Donald was buried at St Andrew's Church in Coniston. A funeral service was held on the 12th Sept 2001.

Donald did not just talk about doing things, he just went out there and did them. Records were to be broken, even his own. Before each attempt, he would often be thoughtful and became introvert and quiet. The balance of fear, adrenaline and aspiration was in continual flux.

Bluebird was named after a play in which there was a Bluebird of Happiness. In the play, happiness seemed so close but was never quite reachable. The same could be said about poor Donald, for even after clinching a record there was always a step further to aim for, and he could not rest.

In a way his fate was inevitable. With the technology of the time, and on a tight budget, Donald risked and lost his life in a step too far.

I wonder what he wouldn't have given to use the modern materials and computer design tools we have today to build the ultimate machine.

There will always be those to better him, but even at the time he was called a dinosaur of a man. The legend of Donald and Bluebird will live on to inspire future generations. He set his course in life and never once deviated from his dreams and ambitions. We hope you won't too.

Although primarily produced for a British audience, whatever your country of origin, I hope you can relate the story of Donald and Bluebird to your respective heroes and legends.

Please look upon the timeless beauty of Lakes now and keep them safe for future generations.

1 Trial Run	Dec 1966 news of the time (Pathé)
2 Bluebird K7	We need her again
3 The Accident	January 4 th 1967. Tragedy strikes. (Pathé)
4 Bluebird's Return	Glens "Power" mix. For Donald.
5 Reflection	(The Children of the Lake) A song of destiny, responsibility and preservation. Dedicated to the beauty of the Lakes.
6 The Spirit of the Lake	Poem Recital
7 Welcome to the Team	Dedicated to Bluebird Supporters

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**Vocals Production and Arrangement
Songs**

Glen Boulton (oh baby)
Jon Johnson (no gaps)

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