



Jet Powered

Year	Date	Speed	Venue
International	20/11/1995	202.67 km/h	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
International	16/11/1995	216.70 km/h	USA, Maryland, USA
International	19/11/1996	225.88 km/h	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
International	22/11/1997	239.07 km/h	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
International	10/11/1998	243.65 km/h	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
International	12/11/1999	240.95 km/h	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
International	31/11/2001	272.93 km/h	USA, California, USA
International	27/11/2007	287.07 km/h (official)	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
International	30/11/2007	285.72 km/h	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
State of Australia	20/11/1977	238.00 km/h	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
State of Australia	30/11/1978	317.00 km/h	USA, San Diego, CA, USA
Official	-	251.00 km/h	

Boat Records



Barmera Visitor Information Centre

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Open Mon - Fri 9am to 4pm

Sat & Sun 10am - 1pm

Public Holidays 10am - 1pm
Closed Christmas Day & Good



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Bluebird Monument



Donald Campbell

Discover the Secrets of the. **Riverland**
South Australia

The Donald Campbell Bluebird Phenomenon

Introducing Donald Campbell

The son of Sir Malcolm Campbell, Donald was born on March 23rd 1921. Donald's early attempt at records began with the World Water Speed Record. He used the boat Bluebird K4 for his early forays, but despite some valiant efforts, he struggled with the boat his father had used.

Donald suffered a 170mph crash in 1951 which prompted him to develop a completely new boat which became known as the K7. This was to prove a formidable boat which saw Donald Campbell set 7 World Water Speed Records between 1955 and 1964. The first record was set at Ullswater with a speed of 202mph. This was raised to 216mph at Lake Mead in 1955. Then followed a sequence of record raising runs at Conistan where he finally attained 248mph in 1958 and then 276.33mph at Lake Dumbleyung in 1964.

Donald's attention also involved cars, and while attempting a record run in Utah during 1960 he crashed heavily resulting in a long convalescence. It was at this time that people questioned his abilities. In 1964, Donald put all questions to rest setting a new World Land Speed Record of 403mph at Lake Eyre. Unsuccessfully attempting the "Unique Double" at Lake Bonney, Barmera, Campbell moved on to Lake Dumbleyung, WA, and successfully recorded a 276.33mph World Water Speed Record on December 31st 1964, thus achieving the unique and incredible second World Speed Record in the one calendar year. Donald became the first and only person (to this day) to hold both World Water and Land Speed Records at the same time. Three years later, on January 4th 1967, while attempting to break the unheard of 300mph speed barrier on water, Donald crashed at Conistan Water. After achieving a speed of 297mph on the first leg, Donald Campbell set off on the second leg not waiting for the wake to settle. Exceeding the speed of 300 mph, the nose of Bluebird lift out of the water, the boat somersaulted and disintegrated on impacting the water surface. The Great Donald Campbell was killed instantly.

In 1964, world renowned Donald Campbell and his dedicated team attempted to break the World Water Speed Record reaching an Australian Water Speed Record of 216mph on Lake Bonney.

On September 19th, 1964, the decision was made that Lake Bonney, situated at Barmera, South Australia, would be the site for the World Water Speed Record attempt. The size and situation of the fresh water lake was considered ideal to achieve Campbell's goal of the "Unique Double" after having broken the Land Speed Record on Lake Eyre that same year. Eager for success, Donald Campbell and his dedicated team arrived in Barmera, which was alive in preparation. Barmera District Council was given exclusive use of Lake Bonney for Campbell's attempts between November 14th and 20th.

Towed into position were 6 large marker buoys measuring 10ft by 10ft. The measured mile was marked by a red and yellow buoy one mile before entering the measured mile. Nine Police Officers were stationed into Barmera along with the District Telephone Manager, Postal Manager, a picturegram unit along with extra Ambulance.

The Bluebird K7 was transported by road departing Adelaide on November 6th along with the project team. Donald, his wife Tonia and project manager G. Ferret arrived on November 12th by air, landing on the 800 yard landing strip prepared specifically for them by the Barmera District Council. Donald and the team, who based themselves at the Barmera Community Hotel for the attempt duration, were welcomed amidst much fanfare.

A monument has been erected to commemorate Donald Campbell's Australia Water Speed Record on Lake Bonney, Barmera, by the Barmera District Council. The monument is located at the Bluebird Cafe which is the site in which the Bluebird was housed.

The Launch, the Attempts, the Frustration

The Bluebird entered the water for the first time since 1950 into Lake Bonney on November 12th 1964. An earlier attempt to launch the boat had failed and adjustments were made to the ramp at Bishop's Boatshed. A two way radio was fitted to the Bluebird K7 to assist in the trial runs. At 3.15am the team were readying the Bluebird for its official trial run.

By 4.30am Barmera was a hive of activities with spectators and camera crews lining the shores. Unfortunately choppy water hindered the trial but Donald Campbell indulged the large crowd by driving the Bluebird out onto the lake at low speed. Later in the morning, Campbell did two runs reaching speeds of 210mph and later in the afternoon three attempts failed due to water flooding the engine. Following a delay in radio communication and firing trouble, further attempts were cancelled for the day. It was then decided that the course would be altered.

On November 15th, work commenced on the alterations, which were witnessed by large crowds, as trees were blasted out of the foreshore at Donald's request. With the weather against them, Campbell and his crew awoke to strong winds on November 17th and 18th which resulted in the marker buoys which were anchored by large concrete slabs, being washed ashore. And so the set up began again.

To alleviate the frustration, a charity event was held that night which led to Campbell's decision to cancel the following day's trial run. This information was not transferred to all of the crew, and the following morning saw them up early finding conditions ideal. The waters of Lake Bonney were like glass, the perfect base for a World Record.

With this ideal opportunity missed, inclement weather followed and it was not until November 23rd when 3 runs took place, one which recorded a top speed of 218mph. Again, poor weather returned and it was this, along with engine and navigation problems which led the team to source a new location at which to break the record and achieve the "Unique Double". And so, on December 10th, the Bluebird, Donald Campbell and his team departed to Lake Dumbleyung.