



# OVER THE HEDGE

GRASS ROOTS FLYING WITH LIGHT AVIATION



The Airshel in action, showing how the clamshell doors fold up to give clear access

## New Concept in Relocatable Hangars



Having to move out of their hangar because the landlord had plans to use it for warehousing,

Nic Mines and Bernie Mills urgently needed to accommodate their aircraft. As one of them had an interest in a marquee business, it was decided to convert an old marquee into hangar, and this proved very effective – plenty of light allowing them to work on the aeroplane, even in the depths of winter, plus a heater and all the comforts of home. That old marquee is now available; if anyone wants a cheap relocatable hangar, give them a call.

From these humble beginnings, Nic and Bernie came up with their 'Airshel' concept, developed with marquee technology but coupled more to the needs of aviation. Thanks to the design and production abilities of marquee manufacturer Tim Marshall, the seeds of an idea were sown and the marquee grew into what is now a purpose designed relocatable hangar that the duo have decided to market to other aircraft and airfield owners or anyone requiring temporary storage facilities.

Nic commented that they had decided to market the Airshel after it exceeded all of their expectations, it simply ticked all the boxes for them and they felt it could do the same for others.

The unit is totally stand alone, and the 'eyelids'



Waterbird flies over Lake Windermere (Photo: Waterbird Project)

are operated by a remote control unit – great as you are taxiing to the hangar. A remote control operates an electric 12v motor, powered from an ordinary car battery, which in turn is constantly charged from its own solar panel.

Nic and Bernie can be contacted on 07974 206442 and 07775 911373 respectively, and they are also happy for you to fly into Wadswick Farm Strip for a demonstration, by prior arrangement. If you are looking for a hangarage solution, Airshel might just be the answer.

### BRITAIN'S FIRST SEAPLANE

Centenaries of major aviation events are starting to come thick and fast and 25th of November marks 100 years since the maiden flight on Lake Windermere of *Waterbird*, the first successful seaplane in Britain. The world's first seaplane flight was on 28 March 1910 by Henri Fabre at l'Etang de Berre in France, and on 26 January 1911 Glenn Curtiss flew a float-equipped aeroplane from San Diego Harbour in the US.

The flight in 1911 realised the dream of Edward Wakefield, who patented the first effective British aircraft float and went on to develop a series of aircraft for the Government, encouraged by Winston Churchill,



The Airshel doors can be opened remotely as you taxi to the hangar

then First Lord of the Admiralty, who was determined to equip the Navy with what were then called hydro-aeroplanes.

As if to prove there is nothing new in aviation, even then there was opposition as author Beatrix Potter and Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, a founder member of the National Trust, strongly opposed the Lakeland trials of flying machines.

"The historical importance of *Waterbird* in the early development of Naval aviation is hugely significant," said Commander Sue Eagles, Campaign Director of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust. "Edward Wakefield's pioneering and innovative development of the stepped float brought about the evolution of a revolutionary new capability – the ability to take off from water – and it was to be a capability that would radically transform naval warfare."

The *Waterbird* Project was launched in 2008 with the ultimate aim of establishing a museum to commemorate the history of pioneering hydroplane flights on Windermere in the early 1900s and the pioneering work of Edward Wakefield. The Trust hopes to raise £160,000 for the building of a flying replica of *Waterbird*, and Gerry Cooper, of Cooper Aerial Surveys Engineering Ltd, has started building the replica using original plans of the aircraft from Sir Alliott Verdon-Roe, founder of Avro. It is hoped that the replica will fly in 2012.

A private function has been arranged at Storrs Hall Hotel, Windermere on 25 November for many descendants of those people engaged in the



*Waterbird* preparing to fly (Photo: *Waterbird* Project)

original *Waterbird* project, and a fly-past and display by a 1949 a Hawker Sea Fury from the Royal Navy Historic Flight will take place at 2.15pm (weather permitting).

Anyone interested in making a donation or volunteering to help the *Waterbird* Project can contact: [mail@waterbirdproject.com](mailto:mail@waterbirdproject.com) or call Ian Gee on 07786 918176 ■



*Waterbird* moored in her boat shed (Photo: *Waterbird* Project)