

## Waterbird: Wings over Windermere

by Anne Hughes and Ian Gee

published by Anne Hughes  
and Ian Gee

The effort to re-create in replica form the Lakes Flying Company's Waterbird, Britain's first successful 'hydro-aeroplane', and to emulate the 1911 original in flying it from Windermere has been among the most enthralling on the UK's aviation heritage scene in recent times. It reached a degree of fruition on 13 June last year, when Pete Kynsey took the machine for its maiden flight off water, though there remains a great deal still to achieve in terms of providing it with a permanent, publicly accessible home on Windermere's shores, where it can be regularly seen and demonstrated.

This new book by Ian Gee, who now heads up the project, and Anne Hughes tells two stories: those of the original Lakes Flying Company and its Avro-built creation, and their 21st-century successors. It begins with a brief bit of background to water-borne flying in general, but soon moves on to the



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meat of the first Waterbird's development and brief existence, together with other pre-World War One aviation activities on Windermere. This it does with the aid of copious period reports and images, some of which you may have seen in our feature in the December 2022 issue. Having caught up with what the key figures went on to achieve, the narrative moves on to the replica, bringing its tale up-to-date — for now, at least.

Illustrations are plentiful throughout, those from the early 1910s generally being well-reproduced in spite of their age and inevitably varying quality, while the modern-day photography is diverse and largely excellent, and the text reads well. A delightful, well-balanced, good-value account of a fascinating subject, which thoroughly deserves to be brought to a wider audience. Indeed, it truly makes one want to see the Waterbird replica flying in Windermere's delightful surroundings. **Ben Dunnell**

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softback; 80 pages, illustrated; **£14.99**

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