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Lake District holiday park honoured as site of significant historical importance

by Cumbria Crack — 13/06/2023 in News

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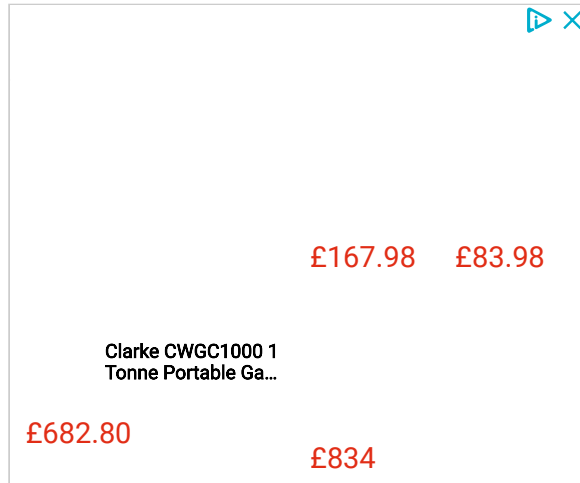
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A Lake District holiday park has been honoured as a site of significant historical importance.

Hill of Oaks Caravan and Lodge Park has been awarded a prestigious 'Red Wheel' by The National Transport Trust, recognising it as one of the UK's most significant sites in the history of transport.



The plaque has been installed on the shore of Windermere and highlights the spot where the famous 'Waterbird' hydro-aeroplane became the first plane in the former British Empire to successfully to take off and land on water in 1911.

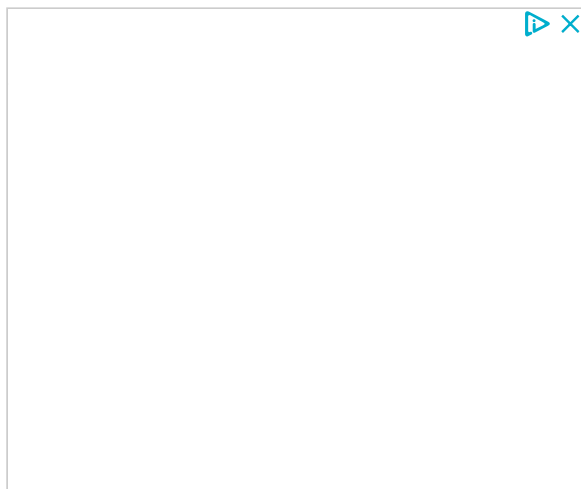
Waterbird was the brainchild of Captain Edward Wakefield who owned Hill of Oaks at the time.



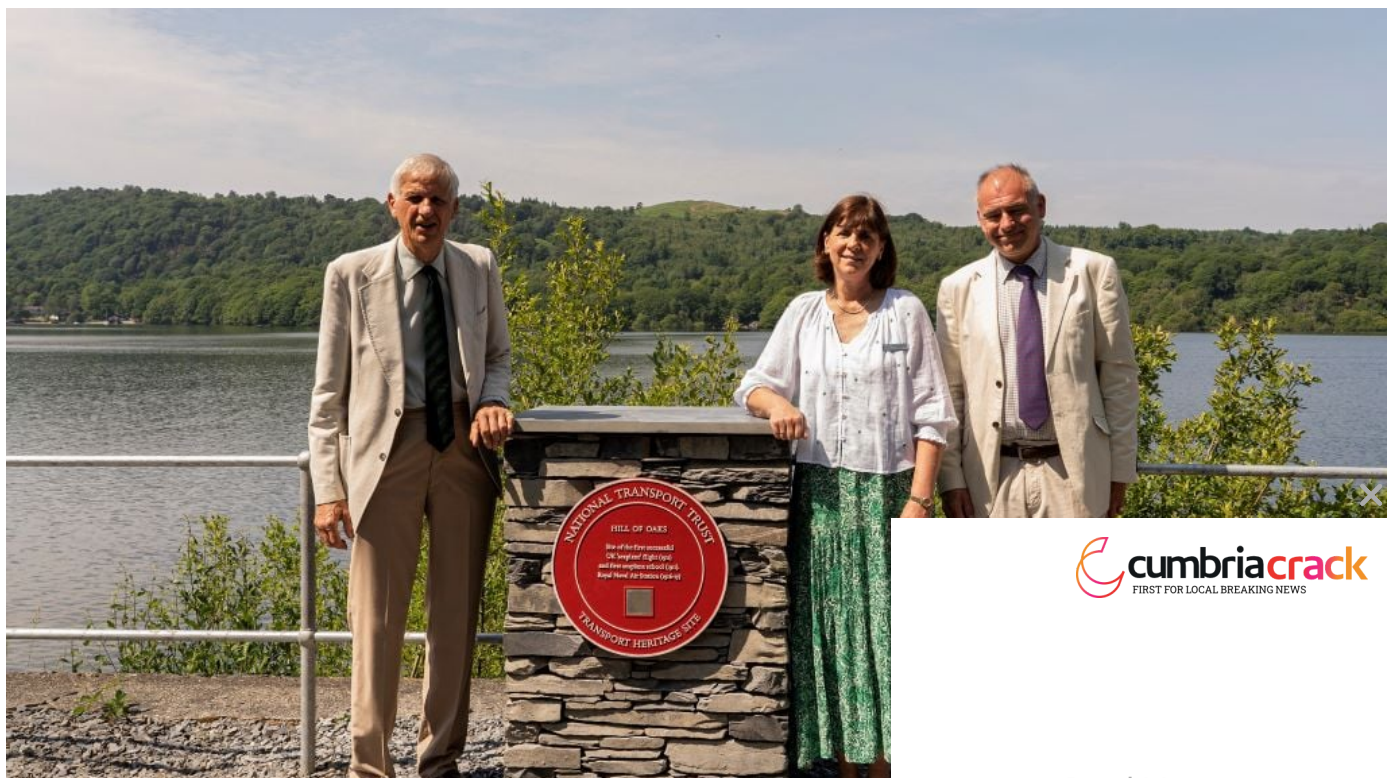
This was disbanded on 1917, but the officers' mess and other buildings remained on the site until it became a caravan park in the 1950s.

The plaque is also located close to the aptly-named Waterbird Boathouse – a luxury lakeside self-catering property.

It was officially unveiled by the Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria, Claire Hensman, at a ceremony attended by representatives of Lake District Estates, the National Transport Trust and the Lakes Flying Company Ltd.



Hill of Oaks is still owned by the Wakefield family today and current chairman, Peter Hensman said: "We are thrilled that the National Transport Trust has decided to award a Red Wheel to Hill of Oaks.



“This records for posterity the important part Hill of Oaks played in early aviation and in particular the development of Waterbird in 1911. It also serves to remind us of the innovation of those early pioneers, such as Edward Wakefield whose concept it was and Herbert Stanley Adams who as the pilot, took it first into the air.”

Stuart Wilkinson, Chairman of the National Transport Trust added: “We are delighted that this latest Red Wheel has joined our growing fleet of Red Wheels around the country. The Hill of Oaks Red Wheel marks a significant development in the early history of aviation.

“The aim of our Red Wheels is to highlight some of the lesser- known areas of the UK’s transport history and this splendid site reflects those early days in aviation a mere eight years after the Wright Brothers first flew.”

The unveiling comes just weeks after a replica of Waterbird flew over Windermere in honour of the original flight 112 years ago.

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