

D. Dispatch 8/2/55

Can Bluebird do it?

Mr. Stagg

# This space reserved for GOOD LUCK!

**N**EAR the foot of Lakeland's 3,000-foot Helvellyn peak, on the southern tip of Ullswater, a team of mechanics and technicians have been working long after dusk hoping to help win Britain a new trick in the world's speed game.

They brought to the lake-side hamlet of Glenridding Donald Campbell's new £25,000 jet speedboat—Bluebird.

As they wait for the launching—expected any day—work goes on checking and adjusting the boat.

The prize they hope for: the world's water speed record, now held by American Stanley S. Sayrés and his boat, *Slo-moshun IV* at 178.49 miles an hour.

In the brand-new, electrically heated boathouse I stood alongside the new Bluebird with the Campbell team's veteran "speed doctor," chief mechanic Leo Villa.

By **ROBERT MURTY**

Birkin, Parry Thomas and Cobb.

What were the qualities a top-line speed king needed? I asked. He replied: "Determination, coolness and courage. Not forgetting luck." To stress his last thought he pointed to a space on Bluebird's instrument panel.

"That's where a silver St. Christopher (patron saint of travellers) is going to be screwed. It's a good-luck gift from us to Donald. The Campbells always carry one," he said. Then he became lost in the boat and his hopes for her.

She is a Lancashire lass. Her hull—not unlike a drawing of a space ship—was built at Sarnesbury, near Blackburn.

It is 24ft. 8in. long, has an 11ft. beam. It is made of a light alloy giving it twice the strength of a faster-than-sound aeroplane.

## Luck, please

**L**EO ("My hobby is listening to Puccini operas on my radio-gram") is 55. He was Sir Malcolm Campbell's chief mechanic for over 30 years and has a first-hand knowledge of all Britain's sons of speed from the early successes of Segrave,

## Skimming

**T**HE engine? Lancashire, too. A Metropolitan Vickers Beryl turbo axial jet

At high speeds a total area of only 20 square inches of hull, spread over surfaces on her port and starboard float and aft, will support her

"She'll just be skimming on the water," said Mr. Villa.

Her pilot will sit in an enclosed cockpit-forward of the engine. His instrument panel consists simply of a revolution counter, air speed indicator and temperature and fuel gauges.

There are a normal steering wheel and both hand and foot throttle controls.

Special features: Breathing apparatus enabling the pilot to survive for 15 minutes under water should the boat sink. Electrical transmitting gear which will give Leo Villa and his crew a detailed picture of how the boat is reacting.

"We will be able to tell Mr. Campbell just how far he can go, whether to press on or come in," said Leo.

## Calm

**A**T his Surrey home 35-year-old Donald Campbell said:

"Ullswater is well sheltered, but it will have to be proved in practice. When you are travelling at 150 miles an hour things look very different from what they do when you are standing on the bank."

Why has winter-time been picked for the start of the trials?

"Experience," said Leo Villa, "has taught us that there is more wind round about August, which produces waves."

"For speed trials we need a slightly broken surface. This enables air to break up the water under the riding shoes. In dead calm the water

to the boat and hold  
day now the  
to the water.  
on her  
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Campbell's