

# AIRSHIP BOSS TO QUIT

**A DIRECTOR and former chairman of Airship Industries, the company developing the Skyship 500 at Cardington, is to resign to develop large rigid airships.**

The Skyship is the first in a series of non-rigid airships, but the commitment of Major Malcolm Wren to the rigid type is not in line with Airship Industries' current policy.

He will resign in April and be joined by company secretary Andrew Dean in June. His move was reached by "mutual and amicable agreement."

Nick Greenwood, corporate development executive of Airship Industries, said his company would probably work on rigid airships in three or four years — and it was "quite possible" it may then rejoin forces with Major Wren.

But in the meantime, said Mr Greenwood: "We do not feel we can spend shareholders' money on a project we feel is too early.

"We do not have the money to separately fund the project at the moment."

## Development

He said the split emphasised the company's role in developing the Skyship and concentrating its resources on non-rigid craft in the immediate future.

Mr Keith Wickenden, who took over from Major Wren as chairman in October, thanked his predecessor for his "sterling efforts" during the company's early years.

In a statement issued by Mr Wickenden on Monday, he told shareholders: "By mutual and amicable agreement, Major Wren will be leaving the company so as to be free to develop large rigid airships, a design concept to which he is deeply committed and

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which is not being pursued actively by your company at this time.

"Neither Major Wren or your directors consider this to be an untoward event in the affairs of your company, or the development of airships generally.

"Our good wishes go with him in his new venture."

Major Wren is expected to receive compensation of £25,000 and his company will take over part of the Isle of Man operation currently run by Airship Industries.

Mr Wickenden also confirmed proposals for the "Belgian Option" which, if agreed by shareholders on March 31, could see the Walloon regional government of Belgium taking a 29 per cent interest in the company.

If their bid goes ahead, Airship Industries will operate from both Cardington and Belgium.

Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Authority underwent flight trials with the Skyship 500 a fortnight ago.

"They were very pleased with the performance and handling," said Mr Greenwood. "Limitations are continually being withdrawn."

The ship should win its special category certificate from the CAA