

Britain's First Flying Saucer Airborne

Britain's first "Flying Saucer" flew on Monday. It made three flights, each of about half-an-hour, and hovered about a foot from the ground.

For the first time it was tethered in a yard at the works of its builders, Saunders-Roe Ltd., at Cowes, Isle of Wight.

During the second it was untethered in flight.

For the last it took off untethered.

Mr. R. Stanton-Jones, chief designer of Saunders-Roe Ltd., said: "It came absolutely up to expectations. We got from the machine exactly what we had hoped for."

The announcement was made jointly by Saunders-Roe Limited and the National Research Development Corporation.

The Hovercraft - half-aircraft and half ship is a saucer shaped vehicle designed to skim across the sea on a cus-

skim across the sea on a cushion of air.

Tests on the Hovecraft have been proceeding at the Saunders-Roe headquarters on the Isle of Wight, Southern England.

The prototype, designed to carry two people, is powered by a 450-horsepower engine which drives a ducted fan to provide the air for lift and propulsion.

It is 30 feet long and 24 feet wide.

The principle of the vehicle is for the fan to make an air cushion which lifts the Hovecraft and enables it to ride between three and seven feet above the water.

Some of the air is then bled off to propel the craft forward.

Pilot and passenger sit in a cabin on top of the "saucer" and ahead of the engine, which is set in a tower.

A huge form of the hovercraft may be used as a passenger and vehicle ferry across the English Channel.

Studies are said to have shown that craft weighting thousands of tons and capable of speeds of about 100 knots are possible—with the advantage that they can be loaded and serviced on land, making expensive port facilities unnecessary.

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The first operational craft will probably weigh less than 100 tons.

The hovercraft principle was invented by Mr. Christopher Cockerall, a 48-years-old Suffolk boat-builder, who began work on the project six years ago.

Mr. Cockerall was quoted by the London "Daily Mail" as saying that the men behind the saucer have almost run out of cash and that only big money from British backers can stop America from snapping up the invention.

"We ought to have a team four times the size of the present one, if we could raise the cash," he said.

At least six giant American companies are reported to be ready with the cash now.

The London "Daily Express" quoted test pilot Peter Lamb as saying:—"It was easy, and I discovered that it was a marvellous thing to fly."