

130-ton COLOSSUS TAKES THE AIR

A new era dawns in the sky. Britain's giant Brabazon airliners leads the way with a revolution in air travel. After five years of exhaustive experiments, success crowns the work of the Bristol Aviation Company. Burly Bill Pegg - the company's chief test pilot - is the man who will make their dreams come true. Entrusted with the tax-payers' twelve million pound investment, pilot Pegg treats the Brabazon's maiden flight like a routine job. Yet the details of this experimental colossus are truly astonishing. The world's largest airliner - the Brabazon's height is three times that of a double-decker bus. Each wing is big enough to hold five tennis courts. More than a million and half rivets have gone into its making. From wing to wing, it equals the length of London's Waterloo Bridge. It is a 60 yard walk from its nose to its tail. To get the feel of this giant, Bill Pegg spends almost an entire day in taxiing trials along the specially-built mile and a half long runway.

With the Brabazon ticking over perfectly and behaving like a text-book machine, Pegg and his crew take her out again on the following day - for what everybody believes to be further taxiing trials. Instead there is a quick order over the inter-com "This is it, boys" - and then Pegg lifts the Brabazon's front wheel after only a 400 yard run. Another 100 yards and the undercarriage slowly leaves the runway. Airborne!

Cheers greet the graceful-looking giant as she climbs to 4,000 feet and heads out over Downend to the River Avon. Average speed - 160 miles an hour - nearly 100 below the estimated cruising speed. After a 25 minute maiden flight that made aviation history, Pegg turns in over Avenmouth to bring back the Brabazon to Filton airfield.

Britain now celebrates another proud day for civil aviation. When all her trial flights are completed and the necessary adjustments are made, the Brabazon will lead the world as Queen of the Skies.