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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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MADE BY APPRENTICES

A ground effect vehicle built by 18 apprentices who started work on it in October is due to have its first trial today (Saturday). The machine has not been made for sale but as an exercise for the apprentices at English Electric Aviation's guided weapons division at Stevenage.

All the design and manufacture has been done by the apprentices including the engine, the fan which creates the air cushion on which the machine rides, ducting and superstructure. The machine is five feet in diameter and is powered by a 500 c.c. twin cylinder, overhead valve, engine designed to run at 4,500 r.p.m. With this power the machine should hover one and a half inches off the ground and carry the driver who will be one of the apprentices.

When the test was set the apprentices were told that their machine was to be designed to cover a quarter of a mile without touching down or refuelling. Today's trial will be the first time the quarter of a mile run has been attempted.

The only skilled advice which the apprentices have been given on the project has been advice against technically unsound designs and proposals likely to lead to difficulty in obtaining materials or in machining.

All the work has been done by the apprentices at English Electric Aviation's training school at Hitchin, Hertfordshire, and the machine has been brought on a lorry to Stevenage which is the company's main factory in the area. The engine and fan were bench tested at Hitchin.

Harcourt Stog Stan Goyce.

The project group responsible for the vehicle consists of 12 graduate apprentices (four physicists, four mechanical engineers, two electrical engineers, one mathematician and one classicist); three electrical technician apprentices and three student apprentices who assisted with some of the manufacture.

English Electric began this type of group projects for graduate apprentices some years ago. They are designed to provide a period of active engineering in the factory before going into the various departments for specialised training. When the apprentices join the company after finishing their university training they spend a short time in the drawing office and then start on a group project. In carrying out the project they must keep to delivery dates, do their own budgetting, choose their own staff from amongst themselves and use existing systems within the company for bought out equipment and for indenting upon other departments.

On March 22 and 23 the principles and objectives of this type of training will be discussed at a symposium at the Institute of Mechanical Engineers.

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