

The Whitlet Hoverplane

ALL attempts to impart the sensations of flying without abandoning terra firma are open to strong objections if the sensations deviate noticeably from the actual, for the pupil thus initiated will find his first flight baffling. He will have to unravel false impressions to receive the true, which will impose upon him a greater handicap than if he had not submitted himself to "ground" impressions.

On Selfridge's roof garden in Oxford Street, a "Whitlet Hoverplane" has been recently installed to initiate the public into the sensations of flying without the risks. On the whole it imparts to the layman a reasonably good impression. It enables him to operate ailerons and rudder controls and experience their effects. He can turn to starboard or port, perform climbing turns, dive, and recover an even keel.

The machine is a small biplane, built by A. V. Roe & Co., Ltd., and powered with a Douglas flat-twin engine. It is pivoted on a tripod which is supported by wheels, and upon these it travels on a small circular track, performing according to the pupil's handling of the controls.

He alone occupies the cockpit, but receives instructions by telephone from an instructor on the deck. He has full throttle control and an air-speed gauge, and, in fact, complete responsibility for the fundamental controls of a cockpit. He experiences the effect of slipstream and the noise and vibration of the real thing.

The controls are operated automatically by compressed air as the movements with the control column are made, and, naturally, they have not the sensitivity of proper controls, so that a pilot who tries the Hoverplane will immediately notice this difference.



The Whitlet Hoverplane in its new guise as a biplane being flown on the roof of Selfridge's store in Oxford Street. This model answers to its controls much better than the original little monoplane and gives its users a truer idea of flying. (FLIGHT Photo.)

But if this difference be allowed for, it may be said that the pupil does receive a very realistic impression of flying an aeroplane, and after a few hours' practice he should certainly find his first real flight more understandable than normally. He ought to be able to appreciate exactly what his pilot is doing to the controls as the machine manoeuvres about, and therefore when he is first asked to take control his actions should not be the wild speculations that they usually are.

The Hoverplane Co., Ltd., of Farnham, Surrey, have produced the machine for preliminary training purposes, and not merely as a source of amusement, and its use for this purpose seems feasible.

AIR SERVICE TRAINING ACTIVITIES

THE thorough and comprehensive training offered by A.S.T. at Hamble has already attracted large numbers of private and commercial pupils.

Several of these are now in residence taking a course, which at the end of two years will leave them fully qualified "B" licence pilots proficient in instrument flying, and moreover they will have the added advantage of holding their "A," "C" and "X" ground engineer's licences. They will also have reached the standard necessary for passing the second-class navigator's examination. At least one parent who recently inspected the establishment decided that his son would be far better there than at Oxford or Cambridge.

The increase of students has recently necessitated the opening of a new lecture room, where, amongst other things, the testing and calibration of aircraft instruments is dealt with.

The fleet available at the school has been augmented, and now consists of four "Atlases," one "Siskin," three D.H. 9 J's, two Avro "Tutors" and four "Avians," some of the latter being equipped for night flying ready

for those who wish to carry out the night flying test for their "B" licence.

Amongst the recent pupils are Lady Bailey, who has taken her "B" licence and is now studying for the second-class navigator's certificate, and also Miss Winifred Spooner, who is taking a constructor's course and gaining experience in instrument flying.

The number of R.A.F. reserve officers completing their training is large, and it is expected that this side of the school's work will increase. Squash rackets is being played with increasing interest, and the result of one of their recent matches against Flt. Lt. Clarkson's team is as follows:—

Flt. Lt. C. Clarkson lost to Flt. Lt. H. J. Jenkins (A.S.T.).

Mr. A. C. Irwin lost to Flt. Lt. R. P. Pope (A.S.T.).

Mr. Cameron lost to F/O. M. C. Dudding (A.S.T.).

Mr. T. F. Owen beat Mr. A. R. McMillan (A.S.T.).

The school has now its own colours, these being light blue, green and plum colour, which are taken to be as symbolic of the sky, water and earth.

Napier Cars Again

SIR HARRY BRITAIN, K.B.E., C.M.G., presiding at the general meeting of D. Napier & Son, Ltd., at Acton, on March 21, after referring to the important research, experimental and development work being carried out by Napier on several new types of aero engines, said:—"In accord-

ance with the broader policy adopted by the board, arrangements are in course for the re-entry of the company into the motor-car business. Steps are being taken so that the company may be able to produce a car of first-class performance, reliability and engineering merit." The 6-cyl. Napier was, of course, world famous.