



The Fairey Rotodyne, the world's first vertical take-off air liner. H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh is seen talking to the pilot, Sq. Ldr. R. Gellatly, and Mr. Richard Fairey, during his visit to White Waltham aerodrome, near Maidenhead, last March, when he saw the Rotodyne in flight. Illustrations by courtesy of The Fairey Aviation Company, Limited.

THE Fairey Rotodyne is the most exciting aeroplane flying anywhere in the World. At a time when some fighters and bombers are cruising at more than twice the speed of sound, and when 150-seat air liners will soon link London and New York in under seven hours, this may seem rather a sweeping claim for an aircraft that will carry only 48 passengers at under 200 m.p.h. But, whereas the others are simple developments of conventional types of aeroplane, the Rotodyne is entirely new—the first vertical take-off air liner ever to fly.

To find out why this is so exciting, let us imagine that we want to fly from London to Paris. We should probably begin our journey today at the West London Air Terminal, from where we should take a 40-min. coach ride out to the Airport. An even longer coach ride would await us at the other end, so that we should spend far more time in coaches on the ground than in our aircraft in the air. That is why the actual journey time for the 200-mile London-Paris service, from city centre to city centre and not counting time spent in passing through Customs and other formalities at the airports, is about 3½ hours. In other words, although we may fly in a 300 m.p.h. Viscount, we

average only 61 m.p.h. for the entire journey.

Now let us take a peep into the future, to see what will happen when the Rotodyne is in service.

As a start, there will be no need to ride out to the airport, because this will be in the heart of the city. We do not know where, or even what it will be like; but the ideal would be a big platform built over the top of a railway station. Let us assume that it is over Waterloo, which would be

perfect, as this station stands on a hill, so that the sound of the aircraft landing and taking off would be kept as far as possible from the people in

the streets, who expect a certain amount of noise from railway stations in any case.

From the ground, we see little but a big flat reinforced concrete deck, like a lid on the station. A lift carries us quickly up to the ultra-modern passenger handling buildings nestling under one side of the deck, where we pass through the usual Customs and Emigration checks. Then, up a short escalator and we seem to step straight into the world of science-fiction writers.

Lined up on the flat deck in front of us are the Rotodynes, one bound for Paris,

The Fairey Rotodyne

By John W. R. Taylor