

BRITANNIA CRASHES

The second Britannia prototype (development of the model that thrilled at Farnborough) took off at Filton on a test flight. Fourteen men were on board; the pilot, the famous Bill Pegg.

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Very soon the starboard inner-engine caught fire. Pegg *skillfully* grounded the great aircraft on the ~~ground~~ tidal mud at Littleton-upon-Severn. All on board got safely ashore.

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Next morning hundreds comprising the small army of salvage men renewed efforts, defeated over night, to drag the 67-ton plane above the high-water line. It was time, tide, mud and gravity against men and machines.

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Hawsers snapped like cotton. In the freezing wind odds were heavy <sup>ily</sup> against the salvage crews. 6,000 gallons of ~~kerosene~~ <sup>and water - ballast</sup> were emptied into the river to lighten the weight, and everything possible was removed from the fuselage. Two tanks ~~stood~~ <sup>l</sup> ready to tow the Britannia as soon as ~~it~~ proved possible. The Bristol Aeroplane Company gave highest salvage priority to the fuselage itself.

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Only the magnificent piloting of Bill Pegg ~~steering the Britannia into the mud without wrecking the fuselage~~ averted complete disaster. Chief Test Pilot of the Bristol Aeroplane Company Pegg was the first man to fly the Brabazon. The Britannia could carry 90 passengers. Her range <sup>32</sup> would be more than 4,000 miles. The crash ~~is one~~ <sup>of t</sup>

*Brit is* of those disasters inseparable from air-liner development.