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MIDGET AND MONSTER

For youngsters of all ages, paradise is brought a step nearer at London's Model Engineering Exhibition. More than 1,000 exhibits are on view. Marine turbine engines compete with jets - elderly men jostle with schoolboys. It's a fascinating display.

Pride of place goes to several hundred model aeroplanes. Exact-to-scale reproductions of Britain's air liners many of these midgets are based on the Bristol monster - the Brabazon 1, which at Filten Airfield gets its first airing this year. The greatest aircraft ever made, its length is nearly three times as long as a cricket pitch. A special hangar spread over eight acres was built to accommodate it. Its wings span 75 yards - it stands 50 feet high on the tarmac - almost level with a four storey building. To prepare for the planned maiden flight in November, extensive ground tests are now being carried out. 13,000 gallons of fuel are being pumped in and out of its tanks to check consumption. But the Brabazon will never carry a fare-paying passenger. When it's finished, it'll become a flying test bed for the airlines of the future.