COMET MAKES AVIATION HISTORY

When the 36-seater jet-propelled de Havilland Comet opened the latest act in the drama of man's conquest of the heavens, the eyes of many nations were focused upon it.

On Rome's Ciampino Airfield (nine-hundred-and-seventy miles from London) diplomats and air attaches saw the Comet fly in at 490 miles-per-hour to lower the record to two hours and two minutes. A proud day for John "Cats Eyes" Cunningham, de Havilland's chief test pilot. His achievement proves that jets will enable Britain's future airliners - in mass-production by 1953 - to do twice the work in almost half the time at four-fifths the cost. Tails up for Britain.

Routine tests continue, and although not primarily out for speed, Cunningham reaches Copenhagen, 661-miles from London in 81 minutes.

While Prince Axel of Denmark inspects the marvel of today, the marvel of yesteryear - 1909 - flies in. It's an exact replica of the first fragile 'plane to fly across Danish soil.

Back at the Hatfield aerodrome where the Comet prototypes were fashioned into shape, production figures mount as skilled hands get busy on Comets of tomorrow. On these vast assembly lines (planned from the outset for world business) perfection in engine is matched to perfection in airframe design. Equipped with four de Havilland Ghost engines, of a pattern which has already broken the international height record for aeroplanes, the Comet is destined to fly at 40,000 feet over the air highways of a dozen nations, and in the airfleets of a hundred airlines. B.O.A.C. - Canadian Pacific Airways and major airways throughout the World now study the performance and costing figures of what may well prove to be Britain's airborne answer to the problem of the dollar gap.