

FOG WON'T STOP FUTURE FLYING:

Three and a half million people used London Airport last year, and the number is all the time going up. But though it's probably the finest airport in the world, bad fog can still bring all its traffic to a standstill. And that goes for all other airports. Airlines can't take the risk of landing their machines in thick fog. How to overcome that handicap has puzzled scientists ever since air travel captured the imagination of the millions to whom it is now the normal thing.

On the runway at Bedford Royal Aircraft Establishment stood aircraft of the Blind Landing Experimental Unit which may solve the problem of how to land in fog with near perfect safety.

From the control room is operated the electrical system which gives eyes to the aircraft when the human eye can see nothing. Beamed along the runway, magnetic impulses are picked up by instruments in the cockpit of the aircraft, and the Glide Path operators are able to set the plane on to its course to the ground. It's all highly scientific. A diagram shows at what height the impulses are picked up and the angles at which they bring the aircraft down. That so delicate an operation can be accomplished without a pilot handling the controls was now shown. First the "Glide Down" button was pushed and the whole mechanism brought into action. Then the pilot sat back and the automatic gear began to function. He must have wanted some faith not to take over again as the runway came near. That faith was justified. Perhaps before very long, even in thick fog, airliners will be landed in this way.