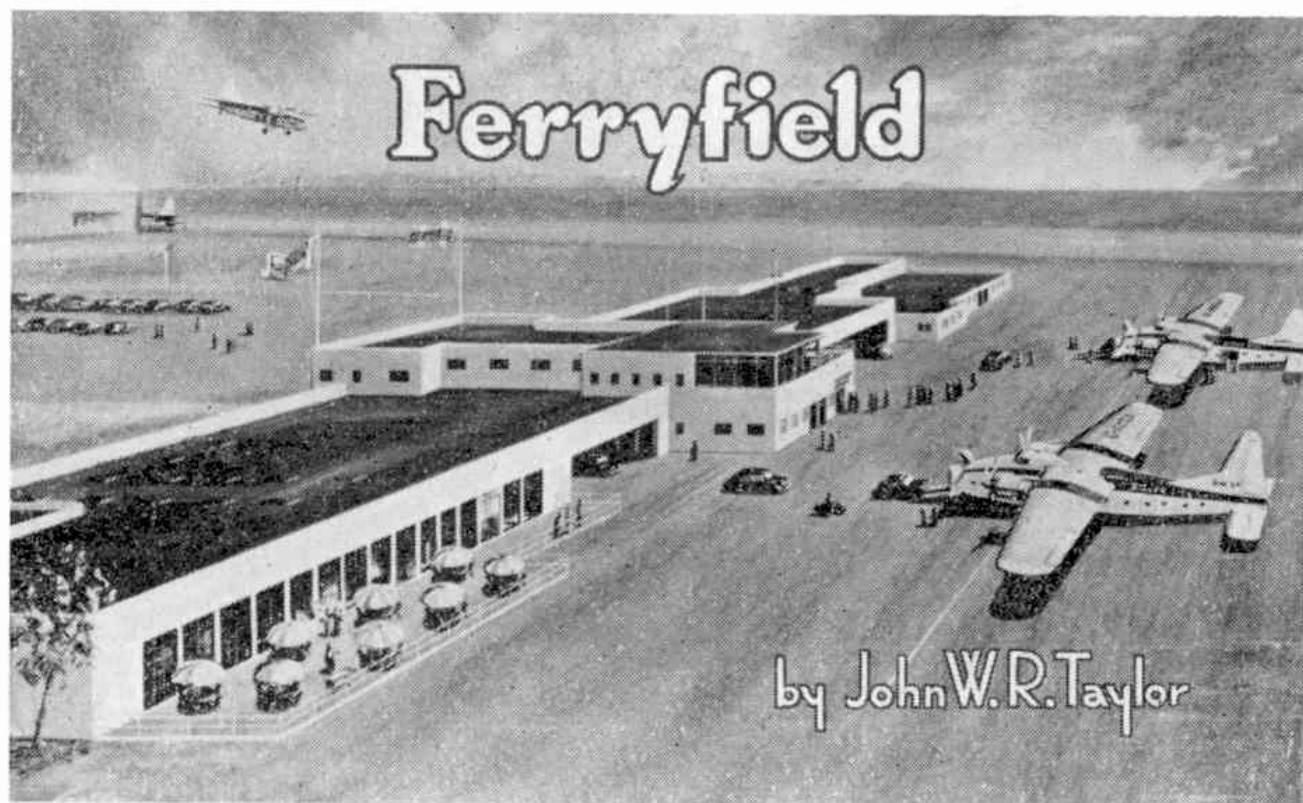




WHEN Silver City Airways announced in October 1953 that they were going to build a new aerodrome at Dungeness, for their cross-Channel air ferry service, and that the first aircraft would fly from it in the summer of 1954, it was difficult to take them seriously. Nobody doubted the Company's enterprise or good intentions; but modern airports have a habit of taking years to build and usually cost a fabulous sum of money. So, after reporting briefly the airline's plans, most newspapers and magazines promptly forgot the matter and started counting the number of shopping days to Christmas.

Down at Dungeness, however, it was the number of working days to July 1954 that mattered, and the total was frighteningly small.

It was 14th December before the final plans of the new aerodrome—named Ferryfield—were approved. Even then, before work could begin, a private access road $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles long had to be laid from the main road so that the constructors, Richard Costain Ltd., could transport their equipment and materials to the site, which is one mile east of the town of Lydd and 72 miles from London.

Every modern technique was employed to get the work finished in time for the all-important summer tourist season;

but it was an enormous task.

Biggest problem was to construct the two runways, one of which had to be 4,050 ft. long by 120 ft. wide, and the other 3,500 ft. long. This part of the programme might well have been impossible had not most of the materials required already existed inside the aerodrome boundary.

The whole of that area of Dungeness consists of deep shingle, covered with sand and a final layer of soft clay. So Costain's were able to make use of the new and speedy technique of "soil stabilization", which means, in effect, that the runways were made by mixing the existing soil with cement and packing the whole thing down by vibration to form a solid

pavement, which was then coated with a tarred surface.

In more detail, what happened at Ferryfield was that Costain's first removed the top soil to a depth of about one foot where the runways were to be built, and in its place put down a 27-inch thick layer of shingle, dug out from another part of the aerodrome. This was packed down by heavy steel sledges fitted with high-frequency vibrating rollers.

Next a 9-in. layer of clean sandy gravel was laid over the shingle and spread, a few yards at a time with cement, after which the two materials were moistened and

The photograph above shows an artist's impression of Ferryfield, Silver City's new airport at Dungeness.