What is a hovercraft riding on when it is in motion?

Many strange new means of transport have been developed in our century, the strangest of them being perhaps the hovercraft.

In 1953, a former electronics engineer in his fifties, Christopher Cockerell, who had turned to boat-building on the Norfolk Broads, suggested an idea on which he had been working for many years to the British Government and industrial circles.

It was the idea of supporting a craft on a ‘pad’, or cushion, of low-pressure air, ringed with a curtain of higher-pressure air.

Ever since, people have had difficulty in deciding whether the craft should be ranged among ships, planes, or land vehicles, for it is something in between a boat and an aircraft.

As a shipbuilder, Cockerell was trying to find a solution to the problem of wave resistance, which wastes a good deal of a surface ship’s power and limits its speed.

His answer was to lift the vessel out of the water by making it ride on a cushion of air, no more than one or two feet thick.

This is done by a great number of ring-shaped air jets on the bottom of the craft.

It ‘flies’, therefore, but it cannot fly higher—its action depends on the surface, water, or ground, over which it rides.

The first tests on the Solent in 1959 caused a sensation.

The hovercraft traveled first over the water, then mounted the beach, climbed up the dunes, and sat down on a road.

Later, it crossed the Channel, riding smoothly over the waves, which presented no problem.

Since that time, various types of hovercraft have appeared and taken up regular service.

The hovercraft is particularly useful in large areas with poor communication, such as Africa or Australia.

It can become a ‘flying fruit-bowl’, carrying bananas from the plantations to the ports.

Giant hovercraft liners could span the Atlantic.

The railway of the future may well be the ‘hovertrain’, riding on its air cushion over a single rail, which it never touches, at speeds up to 300 m.p.h...—the possibilities appear unlimited.

A hovercraft works by riding on a cushion of air.

The craft is, in fact, supported on a cushion of low-pressure air which is ringed by a curtain of higher-pressure air.

Large hovercraft liners could be developed, and ‘Hovertrains’ could replace conventional railways.

When the company decided to appoint a new IT Manager, they chose a former university lecturer.

All the spelling mistakes in my composition are ringed with red ink.

The shop owner arranged her goods neatly in the shop window.

We spent hours trying to find a solution to the problem of how to cross the river.

The singer caused a sensation when he gave a concert in a small village.

The jet skier was riding smoothly over the water when he suddenly hit a small rock and flipped over.

Some bridges that have been built in recent years span very wide rivers and estuaries.

The hovercraft is perhaps the strangest means of transport developed this century.

In 1953, Christopher Cockerell put an idea to the British Government.

The idea, Cockerell’s solution to the problem of a ship’s loss of power and speed due to wave resistance, was to support a craft on a cushion of air, so that it was something in between a boat and an aircraft.

The vehicle rose out of the water and rode on a cushion of air, and tests proved that it could travel over water and land.

The twentieth century has seen greater developments in forms of transport than at any other time in the history of this planet.

Because of modern methods of transport, the world has become a smaller place.

People can now travel from one place to another almost anywhere in the world with speed and comfort.

For many people in the world, the best way to travel long distances is by air.

Air travel by jet airplane is no longer a luxury.

Even helicopters, once almost exclusively used by the armed services, are now being used more and more commercially, especially for short internal flights.

We can look forward to rocket travel in the next century.

Flying in a craft like the space shuttle will circumnavigate the Earth in minutes.

For those who travel by sea, too, there has been progress.

Ocean liners are popular, especially for luxury holidays.

So too are the hydrofoil and the hovercraft for use over comparatively short distances.

On land, we can now travel by car, by coach, or by train.

The building of motorway networks has meant that we can get to our destination by car or coach much faster than we have ever done.

The development of electric trains and new railway networks has also improved rail travel in many countries.

Sadly, of all the modern means of transport, the car is creating the most problems as it is causing serious congestion in cities.

No satisfactory solution to this problem has yet been found.

If the car is replaced by a different form of personal transport, perhaps the problem will simply go away.

Many international exhibitions have been held, the most recent one being in Tokyo.

New York is full of skyscrapers, the tallest one being the World Trade Center.

People have had difficulty in deciding whether the craft should be ranged among ships, planes, or land vehicles.

It is something in between a boat and an aircraft.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries have broken down.

Strictly between you and me, this whole business is beginning to get me down.

A great deal of the information she gave me is incorrect.

She knows a great many famous people.

He's flown a good many times, but never really enjoyed it.

She has had a good few different jobs in the past ten years.

I made him write a short letter of apology.

The teacher made the class do their homework again.

He trained the team by making them repeat the performance dozens of times.

She might well find the course of the account too difficult.

The teacher may well be quite angry with a number of the students.

It is every engineer’s dream to design a machine that will use water as fuel.

Can I have a word with the mechanic who serviced my car?

The ozone layer is depleting, and there’s no easy solution to this problem.

Water is the most common solvent.

He had turned to boat-building on the Norfolk Broads.

Please turn off the tap.

Aunt Matilda turned up unexpectedly last night.

The soldiers marched to the other side of the park, turned about, and marched back.

The very first time I tried to ride a horse, I fell off.

Now that Andy’s got a new bike, we can all go for a ride together.

If you’re driving into town, can you give me a ride?

The hovercraft depends on air pressure to keep off the ground.

Christopher Cockerell had been working on this idea on his own.

The extraordinary thing about the hovercraft is that it can travel at speed over land and water.

The exciting thing about the hovercraft principle is that it has implications for other modes of transport.

Since that time, people have had difficulty.

Ever since, people have experienced difficulty in deciding.

That’s the way he made it ride on a cushion of air.

Its action depends on the surface it rides over.

Cockerell was trying to find the solution to the problem.

This is done by a great number of air jets under the craft.

The hovercraft traveled first over the water, then climbed up the beach.

Since that time, different types of hovercraft have appeared.