



A close-up of the Harrier.

Car, bike and plane-talking

THE Harrier may have been the big star of Tuesday's Wings & Wheels launch but, like the show itself, there was more on offer.

Show display commentator and pilot Brendan O'Brien gave a display of seat-of-the-pants "crazy flying" and there was an impressive line-up of two, three and four-wheeled vehicles to go roaring round a simplified version of the *Top Gear* track.

Brendan's display featured lots of smoke and all sorts of manoeuvres, including a simulated landing on top of a moving truck.

"If someone saw him from the road they would think he was in trouble," said one onlooker.

"That little show is called crazy flying," said Brendan, explaining: "It was developed for - and is much better on - smaller airfields. I land on top of a truck, stop and take off again."

Boasting an impressive CV, he can also claim to have introduced upside-down wing walker to Europe, almost by accident.

"Some years ago I was with a Boeing Shearman which had an inverted fuel system. I had a wing walker on and I decided to fly upside down. This was the first inverted wing walking in Europe."

He also created an aerial ballet to the music of Pink Floyd.

"I taught them to fly and as a

result of that they said I could use their music - *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*," said Brendan, whose other stunts include mirror image flying - flying upside down above another plane.

"Fear does not come into it - it's thought and care," he said, describing it as "seat of the pants" flying.

"You get a physical feel. If you have to think about flying in any literal way, don't even be there."

"It has to be second nature," said Brendan, who is looking at developing a flying circus with all sorts of explosive stunts.

A Norton 500 racing motorbike and sidecar combination, which is displayed at Brooklands and owned by Roger Bird, was among the 'Wheels' being put through their paces on Tuesday, along with Bentleys, a Brookland's built AC Cobra from AC Heritage, a Marcos prototype and a clutch of Ford GT40 replicas.

Mr Bird has owned the Norton for four years and has written the history of the former works machine, which was first raced around 1927.

"It was the first 500 to do 100mph and Bert Denly was the original rider, who was a Byfleet butcher's boy, having been retained by Norton as a works rider in 1923," he said.



Roger Bird with his Norton 500.