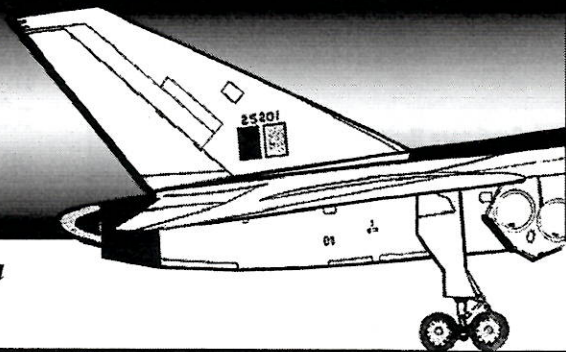


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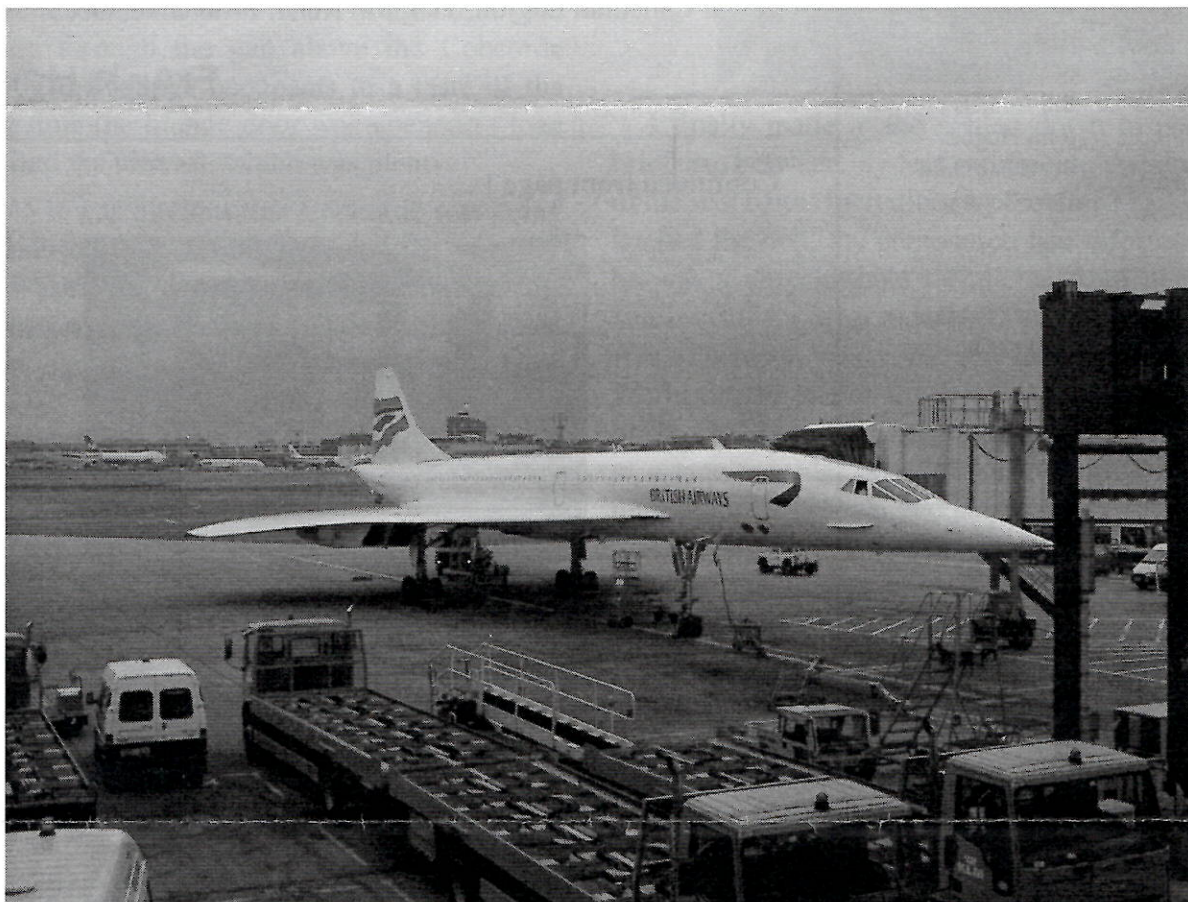


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MY FIRST FLIGHT IN CONCORDE

My scheduled information. I am departing on Concorde flight B.A.171 from Heathrow to New York at 7.15 am on January 23rd., and arriving in New York at 10.00 am local time, then I am being whisked off to a meeting with Dixon Speas in Manhattan, hopefully arriving at his office at 11.00 am and spending that afternoon and the following morning on the business we had together, then returning on Concorde flight BA.170 at 12.15 pm and arriving back in London at 21.00.

It all looked too good to be true and it was. At 08.30 on the 23rd a very pleasant voice from British Airways informed me by phone that due to the bad weather conditions in New York, flight BA.171 would not be departing until 13.00, one and three quarter hours late.

I arrived at Heathrow at 12.00, parked my car and went to check in at the special departure area for Concorde at building No. 3 and from there into the special Concorde lounge, where drinks were being served.

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Legal Consultant Jerry Faivish
Editorial Consultant John Thompson

PRE-FLIGHT Nicholas Doran
Ted Harasymchuk

President's mailing address:

1951 Rathburn Rd., E.
Unit 199
Mississauga ON L4W 2N9
905-624-4909

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**Aerospace Heritage
Foundation of Canada
P.O. Box 246, Etobicoke D
Etobicoke ON M9A4X2
(416) 410-3350
www.ahfc.org**

From the President

In this issue of Pre-Flight we continue with more Concorde articles. Reading the previous articles reminded me of my one and only flight on Concorde. It started at Boscombe Down with a bus ride to Heathrow where I boarded the Concorde, and then a flight back to Boscombe Down via the English Channel with a short supersonic spurt. After landing, the aircraft was due to undergo testing. What a ride!!

It is that time of the year. Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday the 26th of September at 10:30 am the September Board Meeting will be held at 10:00 am prior to the Annual Meeting at the Royal Canadian Legion, 11 Irwin Road, Etobicoke, ON.

Frank Harvey

Continued from page 1...



A few passengers had obviously arrived earlier, probably due to the inability of 'the pleasant voice' to reach them and one in particular had apparently spent the preceding hour or so taking full advantage of the free drinks. He was by that time looking very happy and uninhibited and seem to feel that it was his duty to count the new arrivals and welcome them.



Although it probably not fair to say that at this stage he had matured to the non de plume I will give him from this point on I will refer to him as "THE DRUNK".

The first procedure on entering the lounge is for the hostess to take your coats and arrange for them to be put into the aircraft ahead of the passengers.

Concorde being very narrow-bodied with little room to manoeuvre. I only had a Parka-type coat (in deference to the reports of a blizzard in New York) and so kept mine with me, which turned out later to have been a very good move. The end doors to the lounge opened directly on to the passenger loading ramp to the aircraft and since the Concorde fuselage is much smaller than the wide-bodied aircraft for which the ramp-to-aircraft weather seals were designed, a gale was blowing through the gap above the Concorde door, treating the lounge occupants to a taste of the Arctic every time the lounge door was opened to load something into the aircraft, which was plenty.

By 12.45 it was obvious that Concorde was going to have a full load, due to the fact that the previous Concorde, Washington flight had been cancelled as the result of a blizzard on the United States Eastern coast and the passengers had been re-routed on this New York flight.



At 13.08 departure was announced and we trooped into the aircraft and made our way to the seats reserved several days before. With my flair for landing next to a fellow passenger with a heavy cold or some-thing that his best friend would not tell him about, guess who I had 'won' this time? Yes, you guessed it.

He was in the aisle seat and I had to get into the window seat. (Concorde) has two seats each side of a single aisle). He had arrived a little ahead of me and his two bags were already occupying my seat. He appeared to be incapable of removing them and I spent the next few minutes trying to lean over him and move the bags into the aisle, which besides being very narrow

was now full of passengers trying to get past me and the bags. My 'problem' did try to get out of his seat to help but after a couple of non-productive attempts left me to it.



I finally made it and settled down to parking my briefcase between my feet and finding the elusive ends of the seat belts. Incredibly, by the time I had found and latched the belt, my companion had informed me that he was a photographic technician from Scandinavia, had invented a great number of photographic gadgets, was a bachelor, was on his way to Washington to join a World Cruise, and on his first Concorde trip, had sailed in the Q.E.2 five times, etc., etc. It was like listening to a tape recorder at 1.7/8 ins. per second being run through at 15 ins. per second. I decided at that point that the best ploy would be to nod at frequent intervals and not even attempt to try to either stop him or digest the deluge.



We rolled from the gate at 13.29 and joined the take-off queue at 13.44. At 13.58 plus 10 seconds we started to take-off and I settled down to timing the various stages. At 13.58 plus 58 seconds when we were going like hell along the runway and seemed just about to rotate, the power was cut and the brakes applied, a second later reversed thrust was engaged and we finally came to a screaming halt at what I judged by the timing and familiar land marks to be uncomfortably close to the end of the runway. I had visions of that

'leggy' nose gear giving up the struggle on the soft ground and the drooped nose digging a path into the earth like a giant tulip planter. Needless to say none of this happened but it might just as well have done so far as the reaction of my companion was concerned.

'THE DRUNK' went into a quiet panic and between his nose being punched into the seat ahead by the deceleration and his bag dropping off his knees and landing heavily on his feet, it was apparent he thought his time had come.

We came to a stop at 11.09 and the captain announced that he had had a red light warning in the cockpit that there was a malfunction in the trim system. We taxied to the nearest gate and were asked to deplane whilst the aircraft was checked and refueled, but asked to leave all personal items in the cabin.

A temporary mobile step unit was wheeled to the aircraft and the passengers disembarked through the small crew door. It was blowing a gale outside and I was glad that I had not let the obliging stewardess take my Parka.

We were 'bussed' to the nearest lounge and within a few minutes drinks appeared and a little latter hot scampi was handed round. I appreciated this move since by this time it was around 15.00 and we were all getting a little hungry, having had not lunch, but I must admit to being more than a trifle apprehensive about the condition of my unchosen companion after a further drinking session.

He was, however, now engaged on putting the 'wind up' all of the passengers who were willing enough to listen. He had corralled a small group of women who were looking a little unhappy anyway by this time and proceeded to tell them that "as a technician" he realized how close to death we had all been and that the airline should not under any circumstances put us back into that aircraft.

Queues had by this time gathered at all the available telephones in the lounge as the business passengers in particular tried to call the United States or someone in London. I finally managed to ring Dixon Speas in New York, who had arranged for me to be met at Kennedy Airport on arrival, and also phoned Irene to tell her that I was still in London.

We finally reboarded the same aircraft at 16.20 and started to taxi out at 16.30.

We commenced take-off at 16.48 and were airborne at 16.48 +50 seconds.



Having worked on the Supersonic Transport in the early days of the feasibility and design studies I decided to plot the speed versus time and later check against our early calculations on this relationship.

There is an illuminated display panel in the forward end of the Concorde cabin where the speed in terms of MACH No is continuously presented.

The MACH No, on a 'time from leaving gate' axis and indicates the latitude corresponding to the MACH No. where available.

The MACH display proved to be a mixed blessing as although it provided me with the data required to plot my curve it also provided 'THE DRUNK' with the opportunity to demonstrate his claim capability as a technician.

Every increase of 0.01 MACH No. was not only announced to everyone in a loud voice but being available I was probed in the arm by a bony elbow every time the display changed, whether up or down, and despite my pretexts at the start, he obviously felt that it was his duty to keep me fully informed.



I was doubly relieved when the MACH display came to a rest at M=2.0, both on account of my almost embarrassing knowledge of what goes on in the structure and systems in that aircraft as it accelerates up to that speed and also became my arm by this time felt that it had been through the proverbial wringer.

(The conclusion of Jim Floyd's "My First Flight In Concorde" will conclude in the November/December issue of Pre-Flight.)