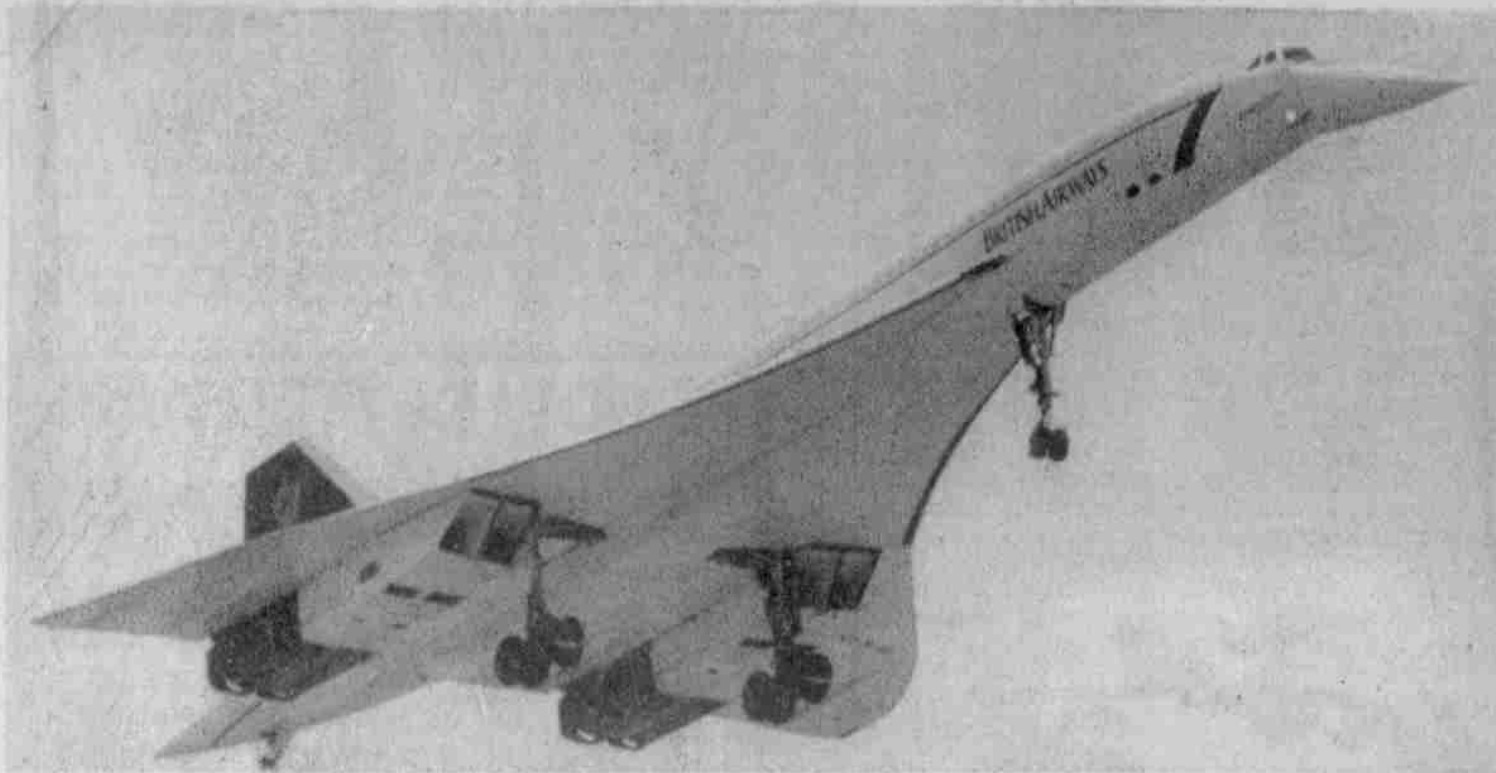


MONDAY, MAY 30, 1988



Star photos/Grant Black

THE CONCORDE breaks through the haze over Windsor airport Sunday, thrilling thousands of spectators. Co-pilot Tony Yule, right, drew laughs at an airport reception by wearing a rubber nose shaped like the Concorde's.

## We're still in love with the Concorde

By Scott Burnside  
Star Staff Reporter

Windsor's love affair with the Concorde jetliner has been reaffirmed — in spades.

Squinting into the haze, as many as 50,000 area residents lined streets and roads surrounding the Windsor airport waiting for the appearance of the futuristic jet. Many arrived several hours before its arrival Sunday afternoon as binocular and camera-toting thrill-seekers sought better vantage points on rooftops of businesses and homes.

Thousands more watched the great bird lift off again this morning.

Police escorted the busloads of passengers to make sure they didn't get

caught in traffic foulups near the airport.

With little warning, at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, a ripple went through the crowd. In unison, the throngs that virtually choked off County Road 42 and slowed traffic on the E.C. Row Expressway shielded their eyes and looked to the east.

Out of the shimmering heat the world's fastest commercial aircraft floated into view.

"It's beautiful", "It's so elegant," murmured the observers.

As the plane approached the runway with landing gear down, its distinctive, curved nose suddenly lifted and with a mighty roar of its four Rolls-Royce

engines the jetliner climbed to circle the airport to give the crowd a chance for another look. The Concorde spent the better part of 15 minutes circling over Windsor and Detroit before finally touching down.

"We enjoy showing the airplane off," said Captain Roger Mills who was asked by Windsor airport tower officials if he wouldn't mind doing an impromptu air show. Even though the supersonic jet burst on the commercial aviation scene in 1976, the hooplah has yet to subside.

"PEOPLE LOVE to see it everywhere we go," said Mills whose been flying the jet for a year. In many airports, when the Concorde is called to

taxi into position for take-off, other aircraft will cancel their take-offs, "so they can watch us go."

Half-jokingly, Mills is asked if he has to sign autographs. The Workingham, England, resident smiles and nods his head.

"Most people get autographs on the flight," Mills said.

Today, 82 people from Windsor, Michigan and elsewhere in Ontario will sit back in the fine leather seats and know what it is to travel twice the speed of sound.

"When they punch through the speed of sound you feel a little bit of jolt," said Mike Meyers, manager of sales for British Airways in Detroit and a

two-time Concorde passenger. "It's then that you know you're on something special."

Cruising at 2,100 km/h, 18 km in the sky, has its perks. Like being able to see the curvature of the earth. And seeing the sun come up in the west.

"You're catching up on the earth," said Meyers. "It defies all logic."

Since the great bird's first commercial flight in January 1976, interest has been unparalleled in the aviation industry. But that interest didn't translate into profit for the wholly-owned subsidiary of British Airways until two years ago. Annual profits for the airline's seven-Concorde fleet now top the \$69 million mark with regularly sched-

uled flights from London to Miami, Washington and New York.

THERE ARE seven other Concorde jets, all owned by Air France.

The occasion of this, the Concorde's second visit to Windsor in less than a year, is a charter vacation package organized by the local Canadian Automobile Association branch.

In an effort to break free of its staid and conservative image, CAA chartered the Concorde and matched it with a return trip from England aboard the luxury cruiser Queen Elizabeth II. Tickets, depending on the berth chosen on the Queen Elizabeth See WE'RE STILL, A4

# We're still in love

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II, range from \$3,400 US to \$6,400 US.

"It's not the same as chartering a DC-9 to take people to Florida," said CAA president David Butler.

Despite some trepidation on the part of CAA officials, sales went well, with passengers coming from a wide variety of professions and backgrounds.

"They're just everyday people, with a lot of money obviously," said trip coordinator Mark Huggard.

Both Huggard and Butler, despite a chronic case of sea-sickness, will be joining the tour.

"It's just a beautiful thing," Huggard said. "I was up there going, 'Oh, it's landing in Windsor.'"

Despite the fact cars lined both sides of County Road 42 for several ki-

lometres past the airport, Essex OPP reported no accidents or problems.

Once the Concorde touched down, people ringed the airport, hoisting kids for a look and snapping frame after frame of the sleek craft.

"Beautiful. That's nice. Air Canada should have one," suggested Natalino Martin as he glanced through the chain-link fence at the airport. Both Martin's son Robert, 16, and classmate David Macri, agreed it would be nice to see the craft more often. But as for actually taking a trip on one, well . . . .

"Maybe one day we'll get lucky on the (Lotto) 649," laughed Martin.

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