

Brian Trubshaw

Born 1924. Concorde test pilot.

Available online at www.livesretold.co.uk



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This life story was compiled by Alex Reid from internet sources in May 2022. The sources are acknowledged with thanks.

1. Introduction

The following chapter was archived in 2022, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Heritage Concorde website, www.heritageconcorde.com.



Prototype assembly at BAC Filton, 1970.

Ernest Brian Trubshaw, know as Brain Trubshaw was the chief test pilot at BAC and became the first Brist man to fly Concorde in April 1969. He was born on 29th January 1924 and died on 25th March 2001.

He first shot to public attention when he first flew the first British Concorde 002 on 9 April 1969 on a flight from Filton to its test base at RAF Fairford. He emerged from Concorde 002's then futuristic cockpit with the words: "It was wizard – a cool, calm and collected operation." Weeks earlier he had piloted an early test flight of the identical French prototype Concorde, 001, commanded by André Turcat. Trubshaw and Turcat were both awarded the prestigious Ivan C. Kincheloe Award in 1971, for their work on Concorde.

He ended his career as divisional director and general manager of the Filton works of British Aerospace from 1980-1986. From 1986-1993 he was a member of the board of the Civil Aviation Authority, and worked as an aviation consultant. He authored books on aviation, notably *Concorde: The Inside Story*.

'IT'S WIZARD'

Perfect first flight by 002

Concorde 002 had to change course to avoid a light aircraft during her perfect maiden flight from Filton to Fairford this afternoon.

The moment of drama came as 002 was within 15 miles of touchdown at the Gloucestershire R.A.F. base.

The single-engined aircraft was spotted by the Concorde crew few miles away from them as they made their approach to Fairford.

The pilot of the light aircraft broke the strict air traffic regulations by being in a restricted zone, and an inquiry is likely.

Warning

The radar operators at Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, spotted the machine, believed to be privately owned, and gave warning to Concorde.

Concorde's captain, Mr. John Cochran, replied that they had already spotted the machine.

Mr. Cochran commented: "That wasn't very friendly," referring to the



Filton workers clambered on airport vehicles this afternoon to get a grandstand view of Concorde 002's take-off.

Souvenir

A new shape in the Bristol sky. It ushers in a new way of life and new pride in the West-Country's planemakers.



For among the stories it tells will be:

TOWARDS TOMORROW

The story of the NEXT Concorde.

THE MEN AND WOMEN

Picture profiles of some of the workers at Filton.

FAIRFORD

A detailed look at the village that will house a world beater.

MEMORIES, MEMORIES

The winning letters from our aircraft memory competition.

AHEAD TO THE 1990s

An expert view of the shape of planes to come. Don't miss the plane — place a regular order today for the

EVENING POST

From the Bristol Post.

2. A Boy from Llanelli

This chapter was archived in 2022, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Llanelli Community Heritage website. It was written in July 2012 by John Simon.

The name Brian Trubshaw is synonymous with Concorde, the supersonic transport aircraft which was often referred to as 'the silver bird in the sky'.

Brian was a local boy who became a renowned aviator and a friend of the Royal Family. Although he grew up locally, the family originally came from the Staffordshire area. Apparently the family can be traced back to the year 1285 when an ancestor named Henry de Trubshagh was married in Wigan – this would suggest that Brian was of Norman descent.

His grandfather, Ernest Trubshaw, came to Llanelli from the Midlands when he married the daughter of an industrialist from the North of England who owned the Western Tinplate works in Station Road (later known as the Marshfield). Ernest was sent to Llanelli to be the manager, and he and his wife lived in Ael-y- Bryn House in Felinfoel (now the Diplomat Hotel). He was very active in the social affairs of the area and was a founder member of the Ashburnham Golf Club.

One of Ernest Trubshaw's children was called Harold (Brian's father) who took over the management of the works on the death of his father. Harold and his wife, Lumley Victoria Gertrude (nee Carter), lived initially at Caedelyn House in the Furnace area of the town. In 1924, contrary to popular belief, Brian was born in Liverpool (Ref: England & Wales, Birth Index: 1916-2005). When he was three years old, the family moved to the Links in Pembrey and at the age of eight, he was sent to a preparatory school in Twyford.

When he was ten, while on holiday, he witnessed an aircraft (carrying the Prince of Wales – later King Edward VIII) landing on the beach at Pembrey near his home. Apparently, this sight made an impression on him and triggered an early interest in flying.

At the age of thirteen, Brian was admitted to Winchester Public School where he remained until he was eighteen, when he joined the RAF and spent some time flight training in the USA. He then joined Bomber Command and flew Stirling Bombers during the latter stages of World War Two.

When the war ended, he was selected as a pilot on the King's Flight, flying members of the Royal Family all over the world. He became a friend of Prince Philip and was a favourite of the Queen, who referred to him as 'My Brian'.



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Brian Trubshaw's pilot's licence.

In 1950, aged twenty-six, he retired from the RAF and joined Vickers Armstrong, flying Viscounts, Vikings and V bombers.

The following year, his father died and his mother moved back to North Wales. This effectively ended his main link with the Llanelli area.

During 1959, The British Aircraft Corporation was formed by the amalgamation of Vickers with other aircraft companies and shortly afterwards, the Concorde project was approved by the British and French governments, with the responsibilities being apportioned equally between BAC in Britain and Sud Aviation in France. A decision was made to manufacture sixteen Concorde – eight at Filton near Bristol and eight at Toulouse. Brian Trubshaw was appointed as the Chief Test Pilot of the British side of the project with subsequent promotion to General Manager of Flight Operations at Filton.

In 1969, following a nine year development period, the first test flight of a French Concorde took place, with the French senior test pilot at the controls. One month later, on 9 April 1969 the British prototype jet flew for 22 minutes taking off from Filton near Bristol and landing at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. Shortly afterwards Trubshaw was awarded the CBE.

1972 was a special year for Brian when he piloted Concorde on a world tour and also, at the age of 47, married a widow called Yvonne.

Concorde eventually went into commercial service in 1976 when British Airways flew to Bahrain and Air France to Rio de Janeiro simultaneously. A number of airlines had placed provisional orders for Concorde but eventually, partly due to the sonic boom concern, British Airways and Air France were the only airlines using the aircraft. Regular transatlantic services were introduced later that year, initially from London and Paris to Washington and later to New York. The flight duration was 3.5 hours and the return fare was £8,000.



A crew member's hat (above) trapped in an expansion joint on Concorde. During supersonic flight, travelling at 1350 miles per hour (twice the speed of sound and faster than a rifle bullet) and cruising at 60,000 feet, the heat generated caused the fuselage to stretch by up to 10 inches. The photograph shows the insertion at supersonic speed of a crew member's hat to show the expansion of the metal components in the plane. The cap could not be removed when the plane returned to subsonic speed.

Concorde consumed 5,400 gallons of fuel per hour, making running costs very high.

In 1977, the British Aircraft Corporation was nationalised and became British Aerospace. Three years later, Brian Trubshaw was appointed Divisional Director and General Manager of the Filton works of BAe. He retained this post until he retired in 1986 at the age of 62, having spent 36 years in the aviation industry and flown over 100 types of aircraft during his career. In retirement, he took on a number of advisory posts including becoming a board member of the Civil Aviation Authority.

The last ever flight of any Concorde, 26th November 2003. The aircraft (G-BOAF) is overflying Filton airfield at two thousand feet to take a wide circle over the Bristol area before the final landing on the Filton (Bristol) runway from which she first flew in 1979, and from which the first British Concorde flew in 1969. Photo courtesy Adrian Pingstone. During the year 2000, an Air France Concorde crashed shortly after take-off from Paris with no survivors. All Concorde flights were grounded as a result. Although services were resumed the following year, in 2003 both airlines announced that they would cease operations. That was the end of the Concorde era. In retrospect, it could be said that the aircraft was a technological wonder but a commercial failure since it had been developed

at a tremendous cost to the British and French taxpayers. On the other hand, Concorde was an iconic supersonic aircraft and a number of the planes produced may now be seen at aircraft museums in Britain, France and the USA.

Brian died at the age of 77 years at his home near Tetbury in Gloucestershire after a period of ill-health. A memorial service was held in his honour at St Clement Danes in the Strand, the official church of the Royal Air Force. Prince Michael of Kent represented the Queen and Lord Tebbit, an ex-pilot, gave an address in which he spoke of Brian Trubshaw as a great aviator and a very good man.

This was a fitting tribute to an outstanding individual who, despite all the accolades and numerous professional awards which he received during his career, remained a staunchly modest and private man. He surely deserves a permanent memorial in the locality.



Concorde passes over the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol on its final flight to its birthplace in Filton, where it will remain.

3. A Colleague Remembers



The following was archived, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the website of the Lancashire Post. It was written in February 2019 by Emma Harris.

It is regarded by many as an aviation icon and engineering marvel.

And Saturday marks 50 years since Concorde made its first ever flight. Concorde 001, built by Aerospatiale (formerly SUD Aviation) at Toulouse, made a test flight from Toulouse – piloted by André Turcat, on March 2, 1969.

The UK test flight – involving the UK-built Concorde 002 – came just over a month later, on April 9, 1969, from BAC (BAE's earlier incarnation – British Aircraft Corporation) Filton to RAF Fairford, in Gloucestershire.

The origins of the project date back to the early 1950s when Sir Arnold Hall, Director of the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE), asked noted Welsh aeronautical engineer Morien Morgan to form a committee to study the potential of supersonic transport (SST).

In February 1965, construction of two prototypes finally began – with Concorde 001 being built by Aerospatiale in France, and Concorde 002 was built by BAC at Filton. After the test flights, it went supersonic on October 1 that year.

Several hundred BAC workers – including in Warton – had been involved in the early design work of rear fuselage components, and prototype 002 also made a low-level fly-past over Warton airfield and Preston.

John Dickens, from Ingol, Preston, started his career with BAC working on Concorde as an 18-year-old – based at Filton. Now 72, and retired, he also worked on some of BAE’s biggest projects – the Typhoon, the Tornado and the Jaguar. His father had been in the RAF and John had become an air cadet, but felt engineering with BAC was a more attractive career option.

“I joined BAC as an apprentice in 1964, and came out 1968-69 and they asked me which department I wanted to work in.

“I knew Concorde was on the cards and I liked the sound of the flight testing department, although I didn’t expect to get it.

“But I did and started working in the flight test department and the Concorde project.



Aerospatiale BAC Concorde G-AXDN taking off.. Pic courtesy of BAE Systems.

“My role was to monitor the take-off and landing performance. Obviously the take off and landing of the aircraft is very important – A: To make sure it can do both safely and B: to know how long the runway needs to be for a supersonic aircraft.”

On the first UK flight, on April 9, 1969, piloted by Brian Trubshaw, John had a major part to play.

“We had to use a big format camera, to film the take-off, for measurements and safety.

“The downfall was the camera was only able to run for a short time, so you had to synchronise the take-off with starting the camera running.

“Brian, the pilot, and I were in radio contact and I was operating that camera that day.

“To synchronise the camera with the take off, I gave him the countdown... 3-2-1 and he took off.”

John’s job took him all over the world – as before Concorde could be taken into commercial service, the landings and take-offs had to be tested repeatedly, including in different climates and at different altitudes.

It saw John travel as far afield as Madrid, Casablanca and Johannesburg.

“We were working with cutting-edge technology at that time. A supersonic passenger aircraft was absolutely unbelievable. It was a supersonic aircraft, it was new and would behave differently, it wasn’t your average 707.

“And landing and take-off would be different in different climates, in higher temperatures or at higher altitude.”

Such was Concorde’s iconic status, that when John and the testing team were in Johannesburg and wearing their Concorde overalls as they walked through the airport, they were mobbed by members of the public asking for their autographs.

“I said I wasn’t one of the pilots, I was only an engineer, and they said it didn’t matter, they still wanted my autograph. That was the buzz it created, that’s how people reacted.”

He flew down to Casablanca for the tests there on board Concorde itself.

“Flying at 60,000ft, over the Mediterranean, Spain and Gibraltar looked so tiny.

“Travelling at twice the speed of sound, when you reach Mach 2, you can’t really tell. You feel more force on take-off than a regular jet and there is the reheat of the engines, but they had to display it in the cabin when it reached Mach 2, as people wouldn’t know otherwise.”

After nearly seven years of testing, development, route proving and an extensive sales programme, scheduled flights began on January 21, 1976 on the London to Bahrain and Paris to Rio (via Dakar) routes.

Concorde would regularly operate at over twice the speed of sound, at Mach 2.04 (1,354mph or 2,180km/h at cruise altitude).

Over time, the aircraft became profitable when it found a customer base willing to pay for flights, on what was for most of its career, the fastest commercial aircraft in the world.

It had a flight time from London to New York of less than three-and-a-half hours, compared to eight hours on a commercial jet.

John said: “All good things come to an end and in 1976, Concorde went into service. I decided to stay with BAE because they had been good to me. “I moved to Warton with BAE, and over the years worked on the Jaguar, Typhoon and Tornado.

“A lot of the skills were transferable, and it was nice to move up here, we liked it so much we stayed here.”

Concorde was retired in 2003 due to a general downturn in the commercial aviation industry and after the type’s only crash in Paris in 2000. Added to this, the remaining in-service aircraft faced multi-million pound overhauls for which the airlines could not prove a financially-viable business case.

John said: “I was very sad to see it go. The aeroplanes are designed to last for 20 to 30 years and Concorde exceeded that.

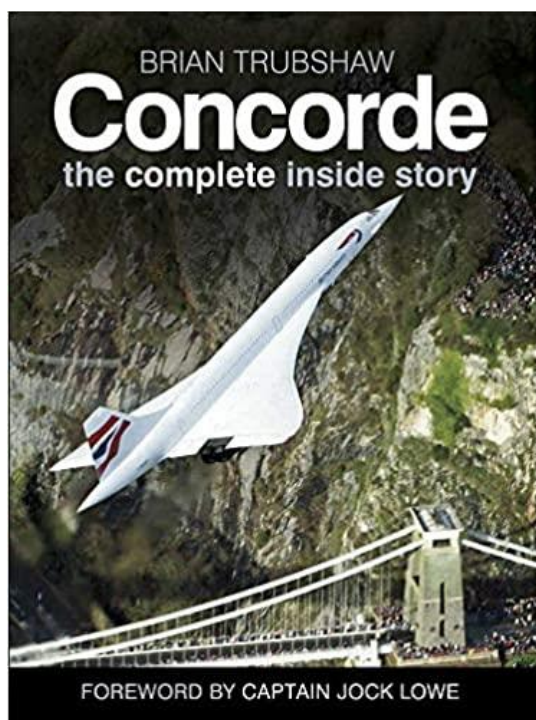
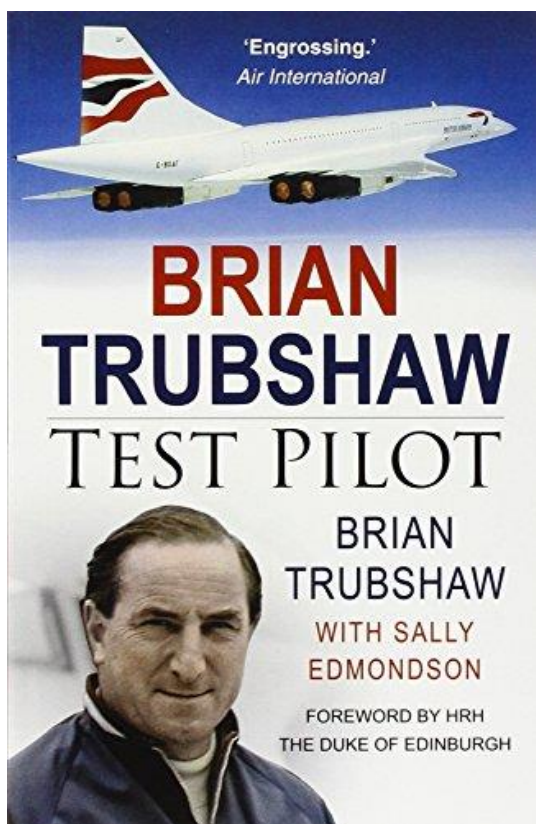
“It’s a beautiful aircraft and it used to stop people in their tracks.”



Brian Trubshaw in 1999, 30 years after the first flight of Concorde 002.

4. Books

Brian Trubshaw wrote two books, described by the Guardian as 'excellent'. Test Pilot, (1988), and Concorde: The Inside Story (2000).



5. Memorabilia

In 2013 Brian Trubshaw's widow Yvonne offered some of Brian Trubshaw's memorabilia for sale at auction. These included Concorde flying kit, and medals.



In an online discussion in November 2013 a contributor (Tankertrashnav) wrote:

Just rang the auctioneers to see how it went and apparently the logbooks remain unsold (I take it that means they didn't reach the reserve price).

Looks like there is now a chance for some benefactor along to step in and do a private deal on behalf of some museum or other where they might go on display.

The medals made £2,100 - not a huge sum, considering the recipient.

A Gold Concorde

In 2020 Bonhams sold at auction:

A RARE 9 CARAT GOLD MODEL CONCORDE PRESENTED TO BRIAN TRUBSHAW,

Garrards & Co, London 1972, the presentation plaque London 1985 realistically modelled, on an agate base with presentation plaque engraved 'Presented to Brian Trubshaw by the Board of British Aerospace on the occasion of his retirement December 1985', in original case. Length 22cm.

It fetched the impressive sum of £29,000.



LOT 44

**A RARE 9 CARAT
GOLD MODEL
CONCORDE
PRESENTED TO
BRIAN
TRUBSHAW,**

Sold for £ 29,000 (US\$ 35,757) inc.
premium

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