Celebrating 100 Years of Flight

The aviation world is celebrating 100 years of success. Business and Commercial aviation are celebrating the Milestones in various forms.

Flight started with the Wright Brothers on December 17, 1903 and has evolved through various stages to today when British Airways and Air France climax it with the retiring of Concorde this year.

Executive Traveller would like to link this celebration with the Concorde and all new innovations created to uphold its memory. We take you through some of the interesting times of aviation; present Virgin Atlantic's New Upper Class Suite and conclude with British Airways' answers to some of your questions when they announced the retirement of the aircraft.
1900
1903

December 17, 1903
The Wright Brothers successfully completed the first powered flight.

May 21, 1927
Charles Lindbergh completed the first solo crossing of the Atlantic, demonstrating the safety and reliability of air transport and unleashing a worldwide enthusiasm for civil flying.

December 17, 1935
First flight of the Douglas DC-3, the most popular commercial transport ever. Hundreds of ex-airline and converted military versions of the DC3 were flown by companies following World War II.

May 8, 1946
The Bell 47 became the first civil helicopter to be certificated by the Federal Aviation Association (FAA)

February 13, 1947
National Business Aviation Association was incorporated in New York under the name Corporation Aircraft Owners Association with 17 founding member companies. From 1953 until 1997, it was known as the National Business Aircraft Association.

July 10, 1964
Initial flight of the first turbofan-powered business aircraft (a Dassault Falcon Model 20).

1969
The Concorde's first ever test flight out of Filton.

January 21, 1976
British Airways first commercial supersonic flight flew London Heathrow to Bahrain.

May 24, 1976
First supersonic transatlantic crossing to Washington.

November 22, 1977
First British Airways Concorde flight to New York.

1980
Richard Branson created Virgin Atlantic Airways.

2003
Air France and British Airways announce the retirement of The Concorde.

Virgin Atlantic Created the Upper Class Suite
The Executive Traveller Magazine is born!
British Airways Answers
Your Questions On
Concorde In History

Why not ground Concorde immediately?
We are proud to have flown Concorde and want her to retire in dignity and in style.
The special events we will be planning between now and retirement will
celebrate the aircraft and it is fitting that we do so.
We also want to give all those people who still wish to fly Concorde that
once-in-a-lifetime experience. Some terrific offers will be available to enable
that to happen while also earning valuable revenue for the company.
In addition, we will want to work with
and support our staff, suppliers and
other partners rather than just giving
them no warning whatsoever.

Was it a mistake to re-launch?
Absolutely not. At the time of re-
launch, there was no way of knowing
that the downturn in business and
premium travel would take effect to the
extent it has. Indeed, for a period after
the re-launch, services were profitable.
Modification work and testing
programmes were virtually complete
and paid for by the time of the tragic
September 11 terrorist attacks, which
also impacted negatively on business
travel greatly.

What does a New York return flight
cost? What does a Barbados return
flight cost?
As of 7 April a return from London to
New York is £8,250.
As of 7 April a return from London to
Barbados is £7,430.30.

What is there to differentiate British
Airways now?
We have many innovative products,
which differentiate us from other
airlines - like the first truly flat bed in
Business class - Club World - and an
outstanding First Class product, which
offers luxury, privacy and comfort.
Although Concorde is unique, it only
represents a very small proportion of
our long-haul operation. We carry
seven and a half times more First
Class passengers than Concorde
passengers and 44 times more Club
World passengers.

What is the policy for passengers
booked to travel on Concorde after
its retirement?
All passengers are being contacted and
may choose to rebook onto a subsonic
flight on the same date or bring
forward their travel dates and rebook
on Concorde. They will receive a
refund for any difference in fare.
Alternatively they may cancel and
receive a full refund on their ticket.
As a gesture of goodwill passengers
will also be offered a free upgrade
from Club to First for a future journey.

What will you do for the last flight?
No decision has been made yet with
regard to how we will operate the last
flight but clearly, there will be lots of
opportunities to celebrate this unique
aircraft and to mark its retirement.

Will Concorde ever come out of
tirement - e.g. for a coronation
fly past or air shows?
No, as it would be too costly to
maintain for occasional use.

How many customers have travelled
on Concorde since its re-launch?
From Nov 2001 to Jan 2003, 35,000
customers have travelled on Concorde.

How many flights have the
British Airways Concorde made
since 1976?
Just under 50,000.

When did Concorde begin
Commercial Services?
British Airways' first commercial
supersonic flight flew London
Heathrow - Bahrain on January 21,
1976. British Airways' first Concorde
flight to New York was November
1977.
"Modification work and testing programmes were virtually complete and paid for by the time of the tragic September 11 terrorist attacks, which also impacted negatively on business travel greatly..."

"We are proud to have flown Concorde and want her to retire in dignity and in style..."

When and where was the first transatlantic crossing?
May 24, 1976 to Washington.

When was the first New York flight?
November 22, 1977.

What's the flying time to New York for Concorde?
Average flight time between London Heathrow and New York JFK is three hours and 20 minutes. A Boeing 747 averages more than seven hours for the same journey.

Is today's announcement about safety?
Absolutely not. It is purely a commercial decision based on the significant downturn in demand coupled with the rising costs of maintenance.

Is this announcement related to the Air France crash?
Absolutely not. Today's decision was not based on any safety concerns. It is solely a commercial decision based on our assessment of the long-term commercial viability of the Concorde service. If we had any doubt about the safety of any of our aircraft we would not fly them.

How old is Concorde?
34 years old since its first ever test flight out of Filon in 1969. 27 years since the first commercial flight.