

AFTER MONTHS OF WORK, CONCORDE IS UNVEILED

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By OLIVIA DAWKINS

BROOKLANDS Museum's Concorde opened to the public on Saturday in time to mark the 30th anniversary of the supersonic aircraft's first commercial flight.



Concorde G-BBDG is the only one in the south east that can be viewed by members of the public and is renowned as the fastest Concorde ever to fly.

The Brooklands Concorde was used for route proving before the planes entered service and has been painstakingly pieced back together at the museum following its arrival from Filton, near Bristol, 18 months ago.

Since its arrival at Brooklands, volunteers have rubbed down G-BBDG's paintwork — applied when the plane was first painted in 1973 — and several areas of surface corrosion have been treated.

They primed and painted the fuselage using the correct specification paint supplied to the project by PPG Aerospace, supplier of paint for the British Airways Concorde fleet for many years.

Finally, the famous blue cheatline and British Airways titles were added.

In July work was completed to fix the wings into place. More than 200 aluminium channel sections were bolted into place to re-secure each wing to the fuselage.

Like all Concordes, more than 60 per cent of G-BBDG was built at Brooklands before being transported to Filton and Toulouse in France for final assembly.

The Brooklands Concorde took its maiden flight in February 1974 and was used for much of the flight-testing and certification prior to the aircraft type entering service. G-BBDG never entered airline service and was used for further development work and crew training after the start of commercial Concorde services in 1976.

At Brooklands, half the interior will be fitted to reflect the luxury of the airline-serving members of the Concorde fleet, donated by the interior of the model that remains at Heathrow.

The other half of the inside will remain as it was — a testbed used to measure flight characteristics and gather vital flight information involved in extensive flight testing of the ground-breaking aircraft.

Concorde G-BBDG made its final flight on Christmas Eve 1981.

In a special preview of the Brooklands Concorde, the first visitors up the steps on Sunday January 15, were a family from Weybridge who are members of the Association of Friends of Brooklands Museum.

Peter Worth, who took his children — Dominic, nine, Katja, five and Alexander, three — on board the supersonic machine, said: "I took my camera along to record such a notable event."

Concorde will open to the public at Brooklands Museum on Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday every week.

Sir George Edwards, who died in 2002, was the chief executive of the British Aircraft Corporation when the French-British dream of a supersonic passenger jet was initiated.

His office and top management and technical team were all based at the Brooklands Road site.

Brooklands made a vital contribution to Concorde since design work began in the late 1950s and the site's unique historical association with the aircraft was the prime reason for the museum's ambition to acquire an example for its aviation collection.

Thousands of people living in the area were employed on the Concorde project in the 1960s and 70s and many still have proud memories of their association with this supersonic airliner.

The museum in Brooklands Road, between Byfleet and Weybridge, opens at 10am with last admission during the winter at 3pm.

The museum needs help and funds to complete the work on G-BBDG and provide it with a safe home. Anyone who would like details should call Celia Rhodes on 01932 857381 or visit www.brooklandsmuseum.com.

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