

# The British Invasion

**- 1988 to 2005**

## A Farewell to the BAe 146 Aircraft



**The BAe 146 aircraft** played an integral part in the history of Air Canada Jazz and two of its founding airlines. This publication shares memorable moments and humorous anecdotes as told by three groups of Jazz employees who have been most involved in the day-to-day operation of this aircraft: Maintenance, Flight Operations and In-Flight.

Many thanks to the contributing writers who have shared their memories. They are: Greg Davidson, Fleet Supervisor, Turboprop/BAe 146; Captain Brock Crawford, Chief Pilot, BAe 146; Kim Gaudet, Training Coordinator; and Robbie Stewart, Supervisor, In-flight Services.

This souvenir edition is dedicated to those whose commitment to service excellence has brought this airline to new heights – Jazz employees.



## The Fab Four (engines)

– *Maintenance remembers*

1988 was an exciting year in the histories of AirBC and Air Nova as the jet age revolution began – the BAe 146 joined the fleet.

The romance and excitement of a new aircraft was quickly followed by a flurry of activities when the rubber hit the runway. For the maintenance group, there was much work to be done once the new aircraft landed. Preventative maintenance and modifications were required before releasing the aircraft into our commercial schedule.



As is the case today with every arriving CRJ, it was no different when aircraft 202, the first of ten BAe 146s, arrived in the beautiful city of Vancouver on May 16, 1988. Following the anticipated arrival of the new “Queen of the Fleet” from England, much work was required to prepare her for the inaugural flight to Whitehorse. With a snag in the book, a routine inspection to do and an engine run to finish off, the AirBC maintenance crew went to work. Engineers Ian MacKay (now Maintenance Supervisor in Vancouver) and John Newberry (now Maintenance Supervisor in Calgary) performed the first maintenance overnight check on the new fleet of BAe 146s. This was the first of what would become a standard night of “BAe 146 mania” in Vancouver and Halifax over the next 16 years.

Combined, AirBC, Air Nova and Jazz have logged a total of 377,160 flying hours and 353,773 landings since 1988. Our fleet of ten BAe 146s safely carried over 10 million passengers to our many destinations in Canada and the United States.

An estimated 1000 engine changes have been performed on the BAe 146 fleet. The engine, an ALF 502 manufactured by Allied Signal (Honeywell), generates 6970 pounds of thrust. An interesting fact about this engine is that it was initially designed to power army tanks but was later converted to aircraft use with the addition of the fan.

This British-built aircraft is characterized by its several oddly named parts. One well known among the maintenance staff is the ‘doghouse’, which is the front panel of the flap computer. The error codes displayed on the ‘doghouse’ assist the maintenance crew in troubleshooting flap faults.

The BAe 146 has retreated from the Jazz fleet to make way for the next generation; however, our beloved Tonka Jet has undoubtedly left an indelible impression upon us all.



# The Queen of the Fleet takes off

– A View from the cockpit



In 1988, both AirBC and Air Nova entered into the jet age with the exciting acquisition of the BAe146 aircraft. Designed in the 1970s, the BAe 146 was built as a quiet regional jet with excellent shortfield performance and was the first four-engine aircraft to be flown by a crew of two.

It was an exhilarating time with crews flying to Hatfield, England to be trained on this new equipment and, at the same time, watch our new airplanes being assembled.

On May 17, 1988, AirBC operated its first BAe 146 revenue flight from Vancouver to Whitehorse. August 28, 1988 marked Air Nova's first 146 revenue flight from Halifax to Fredericton. The aircraft became known as the "Queen of the Fleet", aptly named as the Royal Family uses the 146 as one of its modes of transportation.

Our 146s operated in various roles, ranging from scheduled flights to charters of all sorts. They covered the four corners of Canada and the United States, from Whitehorse to Las Vegas to Miami to Goose Bay and many points in between. In their 16 years of service, most of the BAe 146s were airborne for over 4-1/2 years and each flew, on average, over 7 million miles.

The aircraft will be fondly remembered for an expression we often used, "It's not broken, it's British." Its rugged design made it a pleasure to fly, and it was not without some unique features. The distinct howling sound of the flaps and the generous use of trim are definite trademarks of the aircraft. The British design brings with it some unique labelling from "toilet engaged" to "torch stowage" and a "valve not shut" caption. It was nicknamed the "Quiet One" for its extremely quiet engines and no reverse thrust. Speaking of nicknames, it was also known as the Smurf Jet, Quadra Puff, Tonka Jet, Fisher Price 747, the plane with five APUs, and the list goes on. Despite all the nicknames, passengers and crew alike loved it. The design of the very large trailing link main landing gear ensured smooth landings – an ego booster for any pilot who flew it!

This workhorse will be missed for its awesome capabilities. It was just as comfortable going into Deer Lake or Prince George full of passengers and cargo as it was to New York or Las Vegas.

Economics have dictated the end of the four-engine regional aircraft era at Jazz. For most of the pilots who flew the BAe 146, its retirement from the Jazz fleet was anticipated with mixed emotions. Transitioning to new aircraft with state-of-the-art technology is exciting, but the 146 will always have a special place in the memories of those who flew the old ball and needle. For 16 years, the BAe 146 was a huge part of our airline history and as we bid it farewell, it will be remembered as a solid, trusty, old friend.



# Remembering the early days

– *Inflight impressions*



Lori Ferguson, Flight Attendant, Halifax

The In-flight group will never forget the excitement of welcoming the BAe 146 to the fleet – the smell of the new aircraft with its bright and clean materials, and the thrill of discovering each characteristic.

In-flight began the amazing task of establishing onboard service routines. So much energy and effort went into the plans that one may have thought we were organizing a banquet aboard the Queen Mary. The process of determining how long it would take to complete a bar and meal service was simple – practice tests were performed with 83 folding chairs placed on the hangar floor, replicating the initial all-economy class configuration. From balancing a tray of fluted champagne glasses to baking chocolate chip cookies at 31,000 feet, flight attendants quickly realized that jet flying was not as easy as it seemed.

In the early months of operation, some of the equipment featured on the BAe 146 proved to be a little challenging. Here are a few examples:

**Coffee Makers** – Flight attendants had to learn to use the coffee makers without spilling the brew all over the floor and into the precious avionics bay. The winter months brought a new discovery – water left in the pipes would freeze overnight. After a couple of morning flights without coffee, the process of draining water from the pipes on the last flight of the day was swiftly added to the in-flight checklist.

**Ovens** – It took some time to precisely coordinate the oven time and temperature, especially on very short-haul flights. There were occasional frozen or dried up meals served along the way, but eventually the appropriate settings resulted in a perfectly cooked meal.

**Slides** – The BAe 146 was equipped with four evacuation slides. The distinctive characteristic of these slides was that each had to be manually armed and disarmed for every take off and landing. Needless to say, a few slides were unnecessarily deployed in the past 16 years. In fact, the last incident occurred as recently as January 2005 when deployment of the slide was inadvertently triggered.

Executive class was introduced in 1990 at Air Nova, and in 1995 at AirBC. The BAe 146 cabin was then reconfigured to a 10-seat Executive class and a 67-seat Hospitality class. This enhanced service became most popular with business travellers and provided a seamless flying experience for passengers connecting to or from Air Canada mainline. AirBC and Air Nova enjoyed the competitive advantage it offered.

The BAe 146 aircraft played a significant role in the history of Jazz. The 'Queen of the Fleet' has bowed out of service to make room for a new era of regional jets that will take us on our next journey.

Goodbye trusted little jet, you will be missed.



AIR CANADA   
*Jazz*



1988-2005

**BAE 146**