

Very Rare Photo of Gander - The First Passenger Jet

(by Robert G Pelley, 2020-04-28)
bobsganderhistory.com

The first passenger jets to land in Gander were unplanned events. The planes themselves were designed to be able to look down in scorn on Gander's runways from 30000 feet. They were meant to fly London - New York direct, without a whistle stop in Gander. But it didn't always work out that way.

The first scheduled transatlantic passenger service with jet-powered aircraft began on 04 October 1958, when two BOAC Comet 4 airliners, G-APDC and G-APDB, left nearly simultaneously from London Heathrow Airport to Idlewild Airport New York, and from New York to London.

The first *Comet 1* airliner flew commercially on 02 May 1952. On board were 36 passengers, as the jet headed toward Rome, the first of five stops on the 6,724-mile journey to Johannesburg, South Africa.

However on January 10, 1954, on another BOAC Comet 1 flight, something went terribly wrong at 26,000 feet a few minutes out of Rome. Investigation found that the fuselage had suffered from metal fatigue caused by the multiple pressurisation-depressurisation cycles. All Comet 1's were ground. De Havilland bought out the Comet 2 and 3, which were not considered much better. The Comet 4 was De Havillands' last chance.

With solid tailwind, G-APDB flew the eastbound flight took just 6 hours, 12 minutes, averaging 565 miles per hour (909 kilometers per hour).

The east-to-west airliner, G-APDC, departed Heathrow at 8:45 a.m., London time, with Sir Gerard d'Erlanger, chairman of BOAC, and 31 passengers aboard. The westbound flight took 10 hours, 20 minutes, including the 1-hour, 10-minute fuel stop in Gander.

This photo shows passengers embarking in London:



(photo credit : This Day in Aviation)

The following is a photo taken by the Canadian Department of Transport on 04 October 1958 and not meant for general circulation.

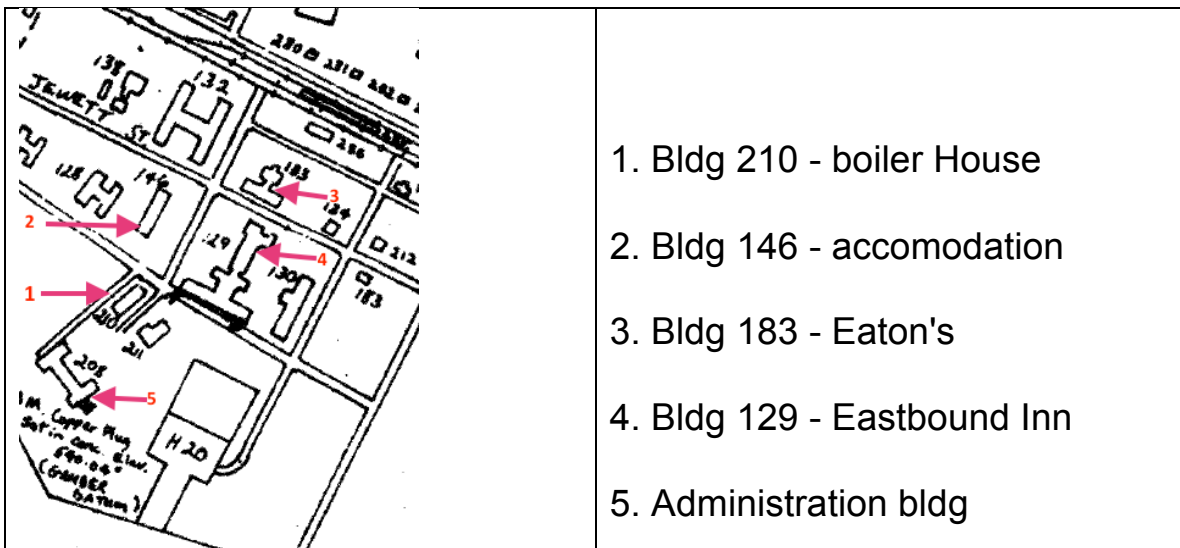


This photo is interesting for a number of reasons, not only as a historical archive. Firstly it gives an excellent view of inside the Gander tower roughly 60 years ago.

A zoom of the top left corner also shows the part of Old Gander known to many as the "railway area". We can see notably the DC-3 and Canso aircraft belonging to Eastern Provincial Airways, which then operated from Hangar 20.



But even more interesting is what appears to be the disappearance by fall of 1958 of numerous old buildings:



This Comet 4 "Delta Charlie" (which was scrapped in April 1975) beat Pan American 707 NC711PA by four days.

But both brought the same "dear John" letter!

Note :

In this photo can be seen the phrase "bobsganderhistory.com"
which was not in the original photo.

It also has slight modifications known only to me.

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Robert Pelley