



Star photos/Grant Black

IT MAY BE more than 20 years old, but the Concorde's cockpit still reveals sophisticated technology. John Butterley of British Airways, at right, was Concorde captain in Windsor



THOUSANDS OF CURIOUS spectators line up for a glimpse of the jet's takeoff Wednesday

Concorde bids city a roaring farewell

The Concorde lived up to its reputation for loud takeoffs Wednesday, with the deafening roar of its turbojet engines leaving spectators' ears reverberating.

Saying thanks to the estimated 20,000 spectators who stopped for a peek of the supersonic British Airways jet, Captain John Butterley repeated his Tuesday performance by making two farewell passes over the city and airport before heading for New York City.

As the jet began its rocket trip down the runway, hot, orange exhaust from the four engines sent clouds of dust and debris into the sky. A short while later, seconds after the jet flew overhead on its farewell pass, spectators at the end of the runway were buffeted by the Concorde's wake.

While the crew will take memories of Windsor back to home base in England, they'll be taking a piece of the city in the form of a bolt used to secure a loose door track which prevented a cabin door from closing. The repair job, performed by Windsor Airport crew, took two hours.

Although the Concorde is "really just another airplane" to its crew, members say there is a logical explanation for the effect the supersonic Concorde has on aircraft buffs everywhere.

The needle-nosed craft paralysed traffic throughout much of the city, turned the E.C. Row Expressway into a parking lot as it took off, and helped cause at least two traffic accidents as thousands of people watched the takeoff from Windsor Airport Wednesday evening.

"It might be old but it's different," Tom Dewis, a 55-year-old flight engineer with British

Airways, said of the Concorde. "If you are interested in aircraft, it's a real thrill.

"I'VE BEEN flying it for 11 years, and after all that time ... the moment those engines open up I get a shiver up my spine.

"It gets to people. I think it's that sheer power."

Power and speed are two concepts Windsorites love, judging by the thousands of people who covered the rooftops of factories and warehouses around the airport or dragged chairs onto their front lawns in South Windsor to watch the takeoff. The satisfied cheer that followed the tremendous roar of flight proved everyone liked what they saw and heard.

Butterley, the 49-year-old captain, obligingly made two low-altitude flyovers of the city, once with landing gear and nose cone lowered, making the passenger jet look like an enormous insect as it flew.

"It's the most beautiful airplane in the sky, really," Butterley told reporters Wednesday morning.

In Britain, people line up to pay the equivalent of \$450 US for supersonic flights on the Concorde which go nowhere, merely looping out over the Atlantic or North Sea before returning home.

"We get the airplane buffs, the old-age pensioners — we once had an 83-year-old woman who had never been up in any kind of plane," Dewis said.

"They all get dressed up in their Sunday best. They are taxpayers, and they paid for it, and they are proud of it because it's British," he said of the plane.

"Some people save up their pennies all year and take the flight year after year," he said.