

District pilot finds royalty to be "warm and human"

Bill Pullen of Nassagaweya is accustomed to flying international high ranking officials all over the world. As a test pilot for the Toronto based De Havilland Aircraft Co., he has provided test and demonstration trips for world wide plane buyers for the past five years.

But on Tuesday, Aug. 1, he was captain of a rather unique flying trip.

Flying a De Havilland Dash-7, owned by Wardair, the 38-year-old former bush pilot carried the Queen from Saskatoon to several spots in the prairie provinces, for three days prior to her opening of the 11th Commonwealth Games.

"It was an honor to have been chosen to fly her," he said smiling, although he did admit to having some apprehension over possible mechanical or weather problems.

Laughing he remembers waking up each morning praying to see blue sky. His wishes were granted and in fact, the flights for the three days went off exactly as planned right down to the minute.

"You do your job in a professional manner, no different than any other time, but you also tend to be a little apprehensive, knowing you have the Queen aboard."

Having the Queen aboard did make for some special memories for Bill Pullen.

Although he met with her for only a brief few minutes on the final leg of the journey, he is able to recount some of the personal inside stories that occurred during her flights.

On one particular trip, the Queen with her husband Prince Phillip, was accompanied by son, Prince Edward.

The three had just been served a silver platter of roast beef sandwiches by a chief Wardair stewardess. The royal party had their own private compartment at the rear of the plane, and the stewardess returning to the front of the plane suddenly heard an enormous clatter.

Dashing back to the royal compartment, she arrived to find that the plane vibration had knocked the platter of sandwiches off a dining table.

On his hands and knees was 14-year-old Prince Edward, busily scooping up the remains of scattered roast beef back onto the platter.

Embarrassed by the whole situation, the stewardess dove into the centre, apologizing after having found the royal prince picking up the sandwiches. The Queen replied with a wave of her hand, she was "quite pleased to find Edward was proving himself to be useful."

One of the first places Prince Phillip and Prince Edward headed for during the first part of their flight was the pilot's cabin, which was a "complete surprise" for Captain Pullen.

Previously he had been told by protocol officials accompanying the Queen's trip that the royal party would remain in their compartment during the flights.

Instead, the two male royal members casually walked into the cabin to get a better appreciation of what they were flying in, recalled the captain.

Prince Phillip is a very reserved type of man, but he is also very natural and easy going; open and chatting, described the pilot.

Prince Edward, he found to be "quite polite" but also "genuinely interested in the plane".

"They all struck me as real honest-to-goodness human beings," he said, adding that many people tend to look upon royalty as something akin to "superhumans".

The Queen did however enjoy nothing but the best, during her travel with Wardair, according to Captain Pullen.

The two stewardesses assigned to the flight were the tops of the company and considerable effort was made to serve the Queen and her family in the best possible style.

The best possible style included the purchase of 12 teacups at a reported cost of \$400 by Wardair. The silver was also genuine silver.

The plane was meticulously styled and fitted to provide the party with utmost comfort. Six big comfortable chairs were specially brought in, so the Queen and her family and any visitors would be able to relax during their trip.

According to the pilot, it was "nothing, but the best" and certainly "fit for a Queen".

The care and thought that went into providing the best did not go unnoticed by the Queen.

On the final part of the trip to Edmonton, she presented the stewardess with a silver comb and to Captain Pullen, a photograph of the royal couple, personally signed.

Looking back to the presentation of the photograph, Mr. Pullen remembers the incident with a little embarrassment and humor.

Minutes before he met with the Queen, protocol officials told him exactly how the presentation would be carried out. The Queen would be seated and would chat with him for a few minutes.

The presentation to follow would be his cue to then leave.

"It didn't quite happen that way," he remembers.

"Instead I was ushered into her compartment to find her standing, not seated, and with the picture in one hand.

Flustered, he made an attempt to shake her hand and receive the portrait at the same time. He also remembered that the presentation signalled his time to depart from her compartment.

Disappointed he would not have any time to speak with her, he turned to leave, at which point "she started to say what a very nice plane this is, and continue with small talk."

Despite protocol officials' attempts, Captain Pullen felt pleased the Queen had obviously made the effort to put him at his ease.

"It was embarrassing to the point you are not sure how to handle the situation," he recalled.

"But she is a very warm and human person," he added.

Mr. Pullen was chosen as pilot of the Dash-7, after it was discovered Canadian military aircraft would be unable to land and take off safely at some of the very small airfields, the Queen visited in the prairies.

Hired by Wardair to train the pilot for the brand new aircraft, it was later decided by Canadian government officials and the Queen's chief pilot, that Pullen should be hired for the occasion.

Together Captain Pullen and the Queen's pilot completed a dry test run for the three days flights to assess the safety factors and determine exact timing.

He had been told the Queen was never late and it is with pride that he notes the Queen was never kept waiting with aircraft delays, despite the fact that she herself was on four occasions several minutes behind schedule.

That, he states, was usually due to traffic delays, but he still made an effort to make up for the lost minutes in flight.

"Once she made a request to make up time, and we were able to cut eight minutes from our flying time," he recalled.

His only frustration with the job, came after television and nation wide paper media arrival on one occasion to "headwinds".

"We did our flight in exactly the block time that was scheduled," he said of the precise flying plans. And that included an allowance for headwinds.

Although presentations were made only to the captain and the chief stewardess on the Dash-7 flight, Captain Pullen intends to share the honors by making copies of the photograph for other members of the crew.

Now home for a few days of vacation, the pilot intends to take a fishing trip with his family in northern Ontario, before heading back into the skies.



PROUDLY pilot Bill Pullen shows his wife, Gail, and son, Billy, the moment he received from the Queen. For three days prior to the opening of the 11th Commonwealth Games, Captain Pullen piloted a plane carrying the Queen to several spots in the Prairies. A former bush pilot, Mr. Pullen is a test pilot with De Havilland Aircraft Co. in Toronto.

'High taxes no benefit'

Poor social planning — rural problems

Formation of a local steering committee this fall and study of rural problems recently identified in a rural workshop is anticipated as part of a rural development project of the University of Guelph.

Rural residents, meeting in group workshops in Milton on June 10 identified concerns and issues in a Rural Development Outreach Project of the University of Guelph.

Under topics of economic concern, environmental concerns and human development, the groups targeted the five major issues of each area.

Now Valerie Gilmor, Halton Co-ordinator of the project, notes in a summary "a number of broad issues emerge. They can be regarded as either problems or as goals for the rural community."

Ms. Gilmor lists under the "problems" heading:

1. the negative impact of ex-urbanites on the rural community
2. poor social planning and land use planning for rural areas
3. high taxes with no benefits
4. alienation of rural people from the political and planning process
5. a feeling of

helplessness; being unable to influence one's own future.

"Turning the problems to 'goals', Ms. Gilmor sees them this way.

1. integration of ex-urbanites into rural communities
2. the need for effective social planning and land use planning for rural areas
3. the reduction of taxes
4. development of better means of communicating with politicians and planners
5. development of strategies to influence decision-making bodies."

"These issues were common to all groups. The fact that they arose in each of the discussion groups, even though the subject matter was different, indicates how crucial these issues are and how interwoven they are to the present day fabric of rural life and living. This was perhaps the single most important discovery of the day", Ms. Gilmor reports.

She points out that almost all of the critical issues for rural residents are associated with urbanization. She suggests the next step is in seeking solutions. The expertise of staff, faculty and students of the University are available to rural residents of Halton in working toward the goals.

Questionnaires distributed at the conclusion of the June workshop sought to identify suitable interested committee members.

It is anticipated a steering committee of Halton rural residents will be established in September or October to take advantage of the expertise offered by the University and to study the problem areas identified.

of treats for the large crowd of children who attended. Keeping to the holiday theme the room in the library was gaily decorated with Christmas decorations.

Christmas celebrated by children at library

An enthusiastic group of children enjoyed a summertime Christmas at the Acton Library recently. The library had Christmas films, a visit from St. Nick and distribution

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