Comet! The World’s First Jet Airliner

Graham M. Simons
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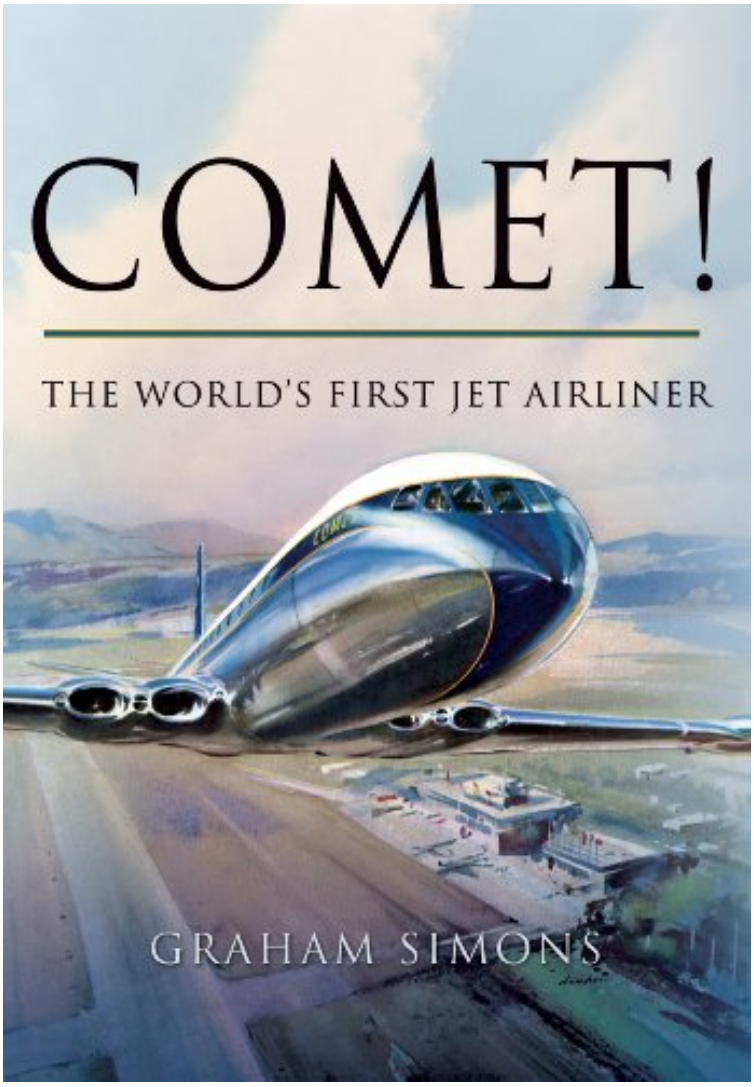

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Graham M. Simons : Comet! The World’s First Jet Airliner before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Comet! The World’s First Jet Airliner:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is the best book about the De Havilland Comet ~ Superb narrative, excellent illustrationsBy Expressed ReviewsI've read several books about the De Havilland Comet, but Graham Simons offering is far and away the best one out there. Although I've also watched numerous documentaries, most regarding the engineering problems that led to several crashes, the illustrations in this book stand out, even more so than what's portrayed in the documentaries.The Comet was the first passenger jetliner, and most certainly an airplane with an outstanding future. Sadly, due to unforeseen pressurization problems that led to the crashes, the fate

of the aircraft was sealed well before its time. This book covers all aspects of the aircraft, from the original ideas, to the production, to the water pressurization tank that disclosed the design defect that cost so many people their lives.If you're looking for the definitive book on the first passenger jetliner, than you've come to the right place. The Comet was placed into service several years before the Boeing 707 had even finished its initial testing. This was a stunning aircraft, that was well ahead of its time. Flying in the early 1950's by luxury passenger jet was exclusive to the Comet. It wasn't until October 26, 1958 that Pan American World Airlines would finally introduce the Boeing 707 to passenger service. I have no doubt, had it not been for the structural problems with the Comet, that it would have been just as, or more successful than the long lived 707.By the time that the Comet was retrofitted with new windows and all the pressurization problems were resolved, it was too late for the airline. Sadly, it goes down in the history books as an ill fated aircraft, despite the fact that it was years ahead of its time.If you have even the slightest interest in aviation, I highly recommend this enlightening book. The narrative, combined with the massive illustrations will totally satisfy your curiosity about this aircraft.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. a great book... brings back memories!By CustomerI have to mention I am biased... my father worked for De Havilland engines at the time the Ghost and Comet were produced at Leavesden and Hatfield respectively. I have flown in a BEA Comet 4B (and a DH Dove and Heron) and my memory is of an amazing take off....felt like 45 degrees... and you could balance a coin on the table, so little was the vibration. The author has researched this topic well and produced an accurate and interesting read. The De Havilland achievement is all the more impressive when you consider they produced both the engines and the airframe. The first USA jet to fly used a De Haviland engine and on the topic of accidents and incidents, Boeing 707's used to drop their engines (one fell in a garden near Heathrow), DC10's would lose hatches in flight and the latest Boeing Dreamliner has had its fair share of incidents with batteries. No company is exempt from issues of one magnitude or another!6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Jet travel pioneers - a story to grab youBy John McCowanThe stunning advent of this aircraft and the subsequent sequential disasters in the first half of the 1950's are a landmark in my memories of youth. I bought this book to satisfy my curiosity about the accuracy of my recollections of the Comet "story" and what might lie behind it. It did that handsomely and more.It confirmed that the string of disasters began with some instances of pilot error, for which the public generally accepted the plane was blameless, but quite rapidly reached a crescendo with at least two monstrous structural failures and losses of all on board. The reasons for these were quite rapidly determined, but the public's trust, at least in the outer reaches of the Empire in which I lived, was pretty thoroughly blown. By the time the aircraft had technically "got back on its feet" with the defects remedied sufficient time had passed that its main American rival, the Boeing 707, wasgoing into service. Benefitting from the knowledge gained from the Comet troubles, which was generously shared around, and buoyed by itssuperior size, commercial viability and the Comet's damaged reputation the 707 swept the floor as far as sales went, as did the similar and closely contemporary Douglas DC8. The rejigged Comet was relegated to a minor role in jet passenger transport and lasted only a few further years in main line service with BOAC and BEA.It was surprising to learn that almost 50 more of the redesigned machines were built. After a few years service on scheduled routes most ended up with minor airlines and charter services and were not totally removed from service until quite late in the 1970's. A military version, named the Nimrod, was also produced in appreciable numbers with progressive and quite dramatic airframe and engine advancements and to suit a number of duties. The latter of these got caught up in one of the common military development fiascos experienced in most countries and was cancelled after huge expense with unfinished airframes left lying around. Nimrods remained in service until the late 1990's.The initial conception, design, testing, development and placing into service of the Comet by De Havilland was in marked contrast to the blundering demise of the military version several decades later. The author's assembly of information about the early phases of its progress is comprehensive. It gives an admirable picture of the forward thinking intelligence and organizational skills which took this absolutely revolutionary machine from early design to flight testing, certification and commercial service in the period 1949 to 1953 - all from a price fixed before serious work began to delivery on time several years later. That these skills, and the responsible caution applied to all aspects of the development so evident in the details provided, was tragically tripped up by the unknown and unappreciated aspects of metal fatigue applying to frequently stress cycled civil aircraft is a glowing example of "there but for the grace of God go I".Equally admirable were the technical and organizational skills applied to identification of the reasons for the disastrous structural failures. Exhaustive large scale tests on myriad components and even a whole aircraft were designed, completed, analysed and reported on in an unbelievably short 6 months. The following very public enquiry into the disasters was a model of openness. It benefitted the art of aircraft design by the frank exposure of the technical reasons for the failures. Rightly enough, the enquiry absolved from individual blame all in the chain of design, testing and certification on the grounds that caution appropriate to the unknown territory, allied with the best and state of the art skills had been applied throughout. I could wholeheartedly support the author's indignation at the publication of a TV beat up in the early 2000's alleging a cover up at that enquiry all those years previously. It was an indulgent and reckless effort to stain the names of many good people no longer able to defend themselves.The book is a comprehensive history of the aircraft type and is thus heavily burdened with recitations of the myriad versions of the plane, the subtleties of the changes from one version to another, airframe and registration numbers, names of

operational personnel, photos and other aspects of a book of record. Much of this is of no interest to the general reader, but it can be skipped without losing the thread. What is left is of considerable interest to those looking to inform themselves of vital steps in the development of civil jet transport that has transformed our world.

This new volume from the respected and well-regarded aviation historian and author Graham Simons is sure to appeal to all aviation enthusiasts, including as it does a wide array of historical sources and archival information drawn together into one consolidated volume – the closest to a definitive study of the craft than any produced before. Extensively illustrated throughout, the book features details lifted directly from enquiry and salvage reports, much of which has never been published before and offers a unique insight into the failures and tragedies that blighted the early days of development, laying down lessons that were ultimately to benefit later designs. As part of his research into the book, the author met and interviewed Harry Povey, the De Havilland Production Manager and John Cunningham, the Comet test pilot who would be the first to experience flight at the helms of the iconic craft. Both of these firsthand accounts are relayed in the book, adding a deeper sense of authenticity and a more personalized account of proceedings than facts and reports alone are able to achieve.Attention is also paid to the derivative Nimrod design, and the book features an interview that the author conducted with the aircraft commander of the last ever Nimrod operational flight. Interviews of this kind are supplemented by the author's own narrative of proceedings, setting personal experience within historical context and exploring the themes and historical topics that the interviews evoke.REVIEWS The lavishly illustrated volume sports dozens of BW and color photographs, drawings, maps, art, portraits, and even cartoons and memorabilia. A selected bibliography and index neatly wraps things up. And – ta! da! – Simons correctly calls the Old Testament "Tanakh"!CybermodelerA solid book of such scope that you’ll probably consult it for a lot more than just Comet materialSpeedreaders.info

About the AuthorGraham Simons is a highly regarded Aviation historian with extensive contacts within the field. He is the author of Mosquito: The Original Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (2011), B-17 - The Fifteen Ton Flying Fortress (2011), and Valkyrie: The North American XB-70 (also 2011), all published by Pen and Sword Books. He lives near Peterborough.