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Belfast Airport Facts and Figures

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Belfast Airport was opened in November 1917 at Aldergrove and was initially the Royal Flying Corps training establishment during the First World War. However when the war ended, Aldergrove remained open for both Royal Air Force aircraft and some limited civil traffic.

In June 1921, King George V and Queen Mary visited the airport for an air show. Numerous aircraft landed at Aldergrove filled with members of the press and returned to London with newsreel films and photographs of the royal visit. On the 15th of May 1925 Northern Ireland's own Special Reserve unit No 502 (Ulster) Squadron RAF was formed at Aldergrove. On the 31st of May 1933 the airport became the first in Northern Island to offer a regular and sustained civil air service. The first route was between Glasgow and Aldergrove and was operated by Midland and Scottish Air Ferries.

Royal Visits to Belfast Airport continued and on the 28th of October 1963, HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother reopened Aldergrove as a functioning civil airport and inaugurated the current terminal building, cementing Belfast Airport as Irelandâ€™s busiest.

As traffic at the airport was increasing The Minister of Development revealed a Â£3 million expansion plan in 1970 for the airport, which included a 3,000 foot extension of the main runway. Airport traffic further increased with the launch of the first Belfast Heathrow shuttle service by British Airways in 1977.

On 30th November 1995, Air Force One landed at Belfast International, carrying former US President and First Lady, Bill and Hilary Clinton on a state visit to Ireland.

By 1999, the airportâ€™s annual passenger numbers had exceeded the three million mark. As this figure continues to increase so does the variety of hotels to be found at Belfast airport and staff at Belfast Airport hotels will be happy to advise visitors in relation to all available facilities in the vicinity of the airport.

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