Welcome to the seventh edition of Airbus in Wales. The last few months have proved to be extremely successful, full of major landmarks for both Airbus and the wider aviation industry. Three events which stood out as key achievements are the first flight of the A350 XWB in June, the commitment of almost $70bn worth of orders at the Paris Air Show and the delivery of the first British Airways A380 in July. Only a few of our many highlights, we hope that you enjoy catching up on all of our Airbus news and thank you for your continued support.

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A350 XWB First Flight success

Known for its innovative design, carbon composite structure and energy efficiency, the A350 XWB took its first flight on the 14th June this year. Three days prior to the start of Le Bourget, Paris’ biennial air show, the scheduled maiden voyage took place from Blagnac, Toulouse. Lasting four hours the aircraft was flown by British pilot and lead Airbus test pilot, Peter Chandler and looped over the Mediterranean Sea before landing back in Toulouse. Not wanting to miss out on the excitement, Broughton employees gathered to watch the aircraft take off, on large scale TV screens, in the North Factory, home of the A350 XWB wing assembly programme. Joined by local MP for Alyn and Deeside, Mark Tami and Welsh Assembly Member, Carl Sargeant, employees heard from Gareth Davies, Head of A350 CDT and Head of Plant, Paul McKinlay as they praised the team for their determination, enthusiasm and teamwork. Emphasising the importance of investing in manufacturing, aerospace and R&D First Minister for Wales, Carwyn Jones said, “We congratulate Airbus on this milestone achievement of the maiden flight of the A350 XWB aircraft and are proud that the Airbus facility in North Wales is at the cutting edge of aerodynamic design and composite technologies.”

British Airways receive first A380

A380 wings are manufactured at the Broughton plant in North Wales. Through the design and manufacture of the wings, the programme employs 1200 people within the UK, Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon David Jones said, “To see the flagship Airbus A380 in BA livery is a proud moment for everyone in the aerospace industry in Wales – none more so for those employees in North Wales who manufactured the ‘made in Wales’ wings that will fly thousands of people around the world every year. The standard of British engineering ingenuity that has gone into this is testament to the talent and skills that we have in our aviation workforce.”

Welsh Aerospace shines at Paris Air Show

Airbus took centre stage at the Paris Air Show exhibiting a variety of its aircraft including the A400M, British Airways A380 and the innovative A350 XWB which flew for the second time on the 19th June, mid-way through the week. A significant event for the global aviation industry, Airbus won almost $70bn of orders and commitments across all aircraft programmes. These include; 20 A380 aircraft, 371 A320 family aircraft and 69 orders and commitments for the A350 XWB worth $21.4 billion. These orders guarantee an order back-log for Airbus of 7 years production, safe-guarding jobs of 10,000 employees within the UK; over 6000 of which are located in Broughton, North-Wales. The Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon. David Jones attended the centre, touring the A400M Military aircraft and meeting with Ed Strongman, Airbus’ chief test pilot of Military programmes. Commenting on the exhibition he said, “The Paris Air Show provides the global platform for the best in cutting edge British industry as well as giving an international stage for the Welsh aviation sector to display its wares to the world.”

Issue highlights

• A350 XWB First Flight success
• British Airways receive first A380
• Welsh Aerospace shines at Paris Air Show
• Shadow Secretary of State for Wales’ high praise for Airbus Broughton
• Airbus apprentices help launch Industry Apprenticeship Council
• Keeping up with Cassidian
Airbus apprentices help launch Industry Apprentice Council

Airbus apprentices Jonathan Sixsmith and Hal Willis attended the launch of the Industry Apprentice Council in May. The council formed by EAL, the specialist award company for industry, aims to give apprentices throughout the UK a forum to shape the Government’s apprenticeship strategy and policy. Working in partnership with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Apprenticeships, EAL recruited 13 apprentice representatives from influential manufacturing companies such as Airbus, BAE and Vauxhall to form the Council, which meets on a monthly basis at the Houses of Parliament. The launch enabled members of the council to share with MPs and industry representatives the purpose of the IAC, its corporate goals and visions. Jonathan Sixsmith, a second year Broughton undergraduate apprentice, addressed the group and spoke about his own journey into Airbus, his reasons for taking an apprenticeship and how he believed it stood out from a conventional university education. Held in the House of Commons, the event was opened by Gordon Birtwistle, MP for Burnley and the Government’s Apprentice Ambassador for Business. Matthew Hancock, Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong learning also spoke at the event.