

BRISTOL CONNECTED BREAKFAST

EIGHTY people from a broad range of organisations came together for the latest Bristol Connected business breakfast at the Glassboat restaurant.

The speakers included Arne Ringner, owner of the Glassboat, James Preece from Colliers International, who spoke about the evolution in the city's office market, and David Clensy, business editor of the Bristol Post.



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AEROSPACE

Maiden flight before new A350 really takes off

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THE first of a new generation of Airbus A350s has touched down from its maiden flight. The first of three A350-1000 development aircraft to fly – MSN059 landed at Toulouse-Blagnac Airport France after successfully completing its first flight which lasted four hours and 18 minutes.

The crew in the cockpit on board the flight comprised: experimental test pilots Hugues van der Stichel and Frank Chapman, Experimental Test Pilot and test flight engineer Gérard Maisonneuve.

A further team of experts monitored all the test parameters at the Flight-Test-Instrumentation (FTI) station behind the cockpit.

Powered by Rolls-Royce's new Trent XWB-97 engines, the aircraft traversed south-western France, during which the crew explored the aircraft's handling and flight envelope.

The aircraft was accompanied by a chase plane to observe and film the various manoeuvres. Its progress was monitored by experts on the ground in real-time via a direct telemetry link.

Airbus President and CEO Fabrice Brégier said: "We have seen today the world's most modern and efficient passenger aircraft – the A350-1000 – in action for the very first time, adding soon to the successful A350 Family.

"My congratulations and thanks go to all the teams who have contributed to make today's flight happen."

He added: "We are equally pleased that many customers have witnessed this important milestone today together with us – here from our



headquarters in Toulouse."

Benefiting from the experience of the original A350-900 test campaign in 2014, the A350-1000's development programme will be shorter – under one year for the three aircraft.

MSN059's duties for performance testing will include "exploration of the flight envelope", handling qualities, loads and braking.

The second aircraft to fly, MSN071, will also be tasked with performance evaluation, which will encompass braking, powerplant, systems and autopilot.

The third and final aircraft to fly – MSN065 – will be equipped with a

cabin and will evaluate the cabin and air systems.

MSN065 will also perform the "early long flights" and route-proving. The overall campaign will culminate in the type's certification followed by its entry into airline service in the second half of 2017 with first operator Qatar Airways – the largest A350-1000 customer to date with 37 on order.

The A350-1000 is the latest member of Filton-based Airbus' leading wide-body family, together with the A330neo, offering unprecedented levels of operating efficiency, low noise and true long-range capability.

As well as having a longer fuselage to accommodate 40 more passengers than the A350-900, the A350-1000 also features a modified wing trailing-edge, new six-wheel main landing gears and more powerful Rolls-Royce Trent XWB-97 engines.

A spokesman for Airbus said that the A350-1000 embodies all of the fuel efficiency and 'Airspace' cabin comfort of the original A350-900 – but with extra size "perfectly tailored for our customers on some of their busiest long-haul routes".

To date 11 customers from five continents have placed orders for a total of 195 A350-1000s.

WINGS ALLIANCE GRADUATE FLIES STRAIGHT INTO JOB WITH THOMAS COOK

GRADUATES from the specialist pilots' college, Wings Alliance, near Clevedon, continue to secure jobs with airlines including Flybe, Thomas Cook and Stobart.

The latest graduate to gain employment is Si Sarkar who received news that he had been offered a job with Thomas Cook starting this month.

Si said: "Training with Wings Alliance schools cost me only £37,000 from my first flight to a job with Thomas Cook. This Alliance is providing a really credible and cost-effective route to airline placement for modular students."

At the age of 29 Si decided to have a complete career change from running his own business to training to become a commercial airline pilot.

He chose the modular training route because he wanted to complete his training in the shortest possible time and, as he was self-funding, it was also important to choose a



Wings Alliance graduate Si Sarkar

cost-effective route.

The large integrated schools he contacted said it would take a minimum of 18 months to complete his ATPL theory and were all much more expensive than the modular alternative.

However, Si believed if he worked

hard he could complete his theory training within 12 months following the modular route and he did. He enrolled with Bristol Groundschool, passing all his ATPL theory exams first time and completed his practical flight training with Wings Alliance member Bartolini Air.

Si heard about the Wings Alliance from a friend and applied successfully to their Airline Pilot Certificate (APC) course.

He said: "I thoroughly enjoyed the APC and found it really comprehensive. The course is designed and delivered by current airline trainers and managers, based on pilot competencies and it really focuses on developing the skills you need on the flight deck."

I think the Wings Alliance model is great. It opens a new door for modular pilots. The most frustrating thing is you get your licence and all job applications are linked to the big in-

tegrated schools which makes it hard for modular students. Now there is a viable alternative route with really credible schools behind it.

"As a result of passing the APC course the Wings Alliance put me forward for an interview with Thomas Cook's partner IAGO. I received confirmation I passed their Selection and Sim Assessment and I started the following week! I am still coming to terms with this - it just doesn't seem real or it's just not quite sunk in yet."

"This past four weeks since being put forward to the airline by the Wings Alliance have been one very fast roller-coaster. My first airline interview and I got in, and what an airline to get into!"

The Wings Alliance is a trade association of the leading commercial aviation modular training schools offering pilots a connected route to airline employment.

OPINION



Plans to introduce local bus franchising in Bristol creates huge uncertainty for operators, writes Stone King's **Peter Woodhouse**.

LAST month, Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire councils agreed to pursue a £1bn devolution deal, which could potentially see them working together on major transport projects.

Also last month, the Prime Minister Theresa May confirmed that the government was fully supportive of it, despite potential uncertainties post-Brexit.

While procedural processes are still being implemented for devolution, the Bus Services Bill is passing through Parliament and that gives devolved authorities significant new opportunities to manage, and indeed control, bus service provision.

But the questions that will shortly need to be answered are can these new powers improve the position for the bus user, and will there be any other consequences along the way?

The really "new" bit is the power of a Local Transport Authority (LTA) to "franchise" bus services. This is not a true franchise, where, for example, a private business takes a franchise of a brand to pursue a commercial opportunity, but rather gives the LTA the responsibility for planning and specifying the services to be delivered, and bus operators would bid to provide those services. If the bus operator is unsuccessful then it cannot operate on that network.

Such a step could have huge significance for bus companies, whether big operators or small family businesses. Imagine you run a high street shop, maybe it is a family business established over a decade, something that forms the inheritance for your family, and someone suddenly tells you that you have lost a "bid" to run it and now you must get out! What of the owners? What of the family? What of the staff?

The same principles could be at work with bus franchising. As I say, there is much to admire in the incoming legislation, but all those with an interest in the bus network should be encouraging genuine partnership working and looking at ways to reduce congestion, in which case it may be that no-one's business needs to be taken from them.

Peter Woodhouse is a leading transport specialist at the law firm Stone King and advises bus companies and hauliers across the region. Peter is also chairman of the South West Freight Transport Association Regional Council and sits on the committee for the Southwest Confederation of Passenger Transport.