

Midlands urged to prepare for upturn

Outlook positive after uncertainty of 2009, say experts

BETTER times are just around the corner. That was the message to the Midlands aerospace from industry experts speaking at the Advantage West Midlands aerospace cluster forum and MAA members meeting in Birmingham.

They reassured an audience representing a cross-section of businesses from across the region's aerospace supply chain that the sometimes painful economies and efficiencies of the last two years will help them get going again.

Offering the corporate finance perspective, Ian Wilson, head of the aerospace and defence sector at Grant Thornton, said the outlook is generally positive after a period of uncertainty in 2009. Airlines were positioning themselves for growth with financing.

He identified three areas of concern. The first was the risk of a double-dip recession as government safety nets are withdrawn and commodity costs soar. The second was a contraction of the banking sector. "Until banks are willing to lend to SMEs, we'll see stress in the supply chain." The third is the delivery schedule, where the order book is skewed to the growth markets, especially India and China.

He recommended staying "close to" customers, suppliers and competitors and keeping an eye



Delegates saw an instant graph of their answers to the survey, thanks to keypad polling technology.

Suppliers tip 2011 for recovery

MIDLANDS aerospace suppliers expect their markets to be recovering in 2011 after stabilising in 2010, an MAA survey has shown.

But companies also recognise that they face numerous challenges, including financial and internal capacity and capability, if they are to take advantage of renewed global industry growth.

These were among the conclusions of a survey carried out in March as part of the Advantage West Midlands aerospace cluster forum and MAA members meeting in Birmingham.

The survey revealed that although the economic downturn has caused widespread financial pressure, it hit the aerospace business of Midlands suppliers less between 2008 and 2009 than it affected their sales to other sectors. While more than half those polled said business dropped off in that period, turnover from aerospace and

Continued on page 3

out for collaborative growth opportunities. The recovery will be modest, but "if we stay focused on the basics, we'll be well positioned for the upturn when it comes."

Clive Lewis, managing partner of

Achieving the Difference, said research conducted for A?D?S, the national aerospace, defence and security alliance, confirms that the long-term outlook for commercial

Continued on page 3



Emma shows off a full-scale company display pod designed for the new MAA stand.

Farnborough: Clock ticking on MAA space

THE MAA's exhibition stand at Farnborough 2010 is almost completely subscribed.

As AIM was going to press, just four pods were still available for members wishing to join the MAA team at one of the world's greatest aerospace events.

Coordinator Emma Burgess said the benefits of exhibiting on the MAA stand – again in prime space in Hall 1 – are widely recognized, thanks to successful shows in Paris and previous Farnboroughs.

With the MAA taking care of construction and logistics, stand participants have a firm foundation for winning new business at the show.

❖ For more information please contact Emma at emma.burgess@midlandsaerospace.org.uk

Survey sheds light on uptake and benefits of SC21 in Midlands: see page 8

Independent MAA forges ahead

THE hard work of becoming an independent organisation at its new Coventry offices is paying off for the MAA, says chief executive Andrew Mair.



exploitation, SC21 and the Transport iNet," he added. "Our expanding membership base draws big benefits from these ongoing links."

The alliance's second year of operating outside its original base at Pera promises to bring more innovation and more benefits to members, including the best-ever Farnborough presence.

Mair is "delighted" things had gone so smoothly in providing services to members over the transition to new offices in Coventry, with new staff and systems.

"Of course we continue to work with our partners at Advantage West Midlands (AWM) and the East Midlands Development Agency (emda) on programmes such as technology

Members can expect to see a new MAA website in coming weeks. It will offer more interactive opportunities while promoting members as well as MAA programmes. The 2010 members directory will also be published in time for the Farnborough airshow.

Thanks to the MAA's proactive approach, as well as support from AWM and emda, Midlands aerospace has received prominent media coverage in recent months. "This bodes well for our industry as a bellwether for the economic recovery," said Mair.

"Over the last year, members will have noticed that we've been able to offer them a lot of front-line support on various projects in addition to our traditional technical and business development help," said Andrew. These include SC21, Transport iNet and the Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme (ATEP), each of which has had a dedicated manager working directly with member companies.

He paid tribute to the work of Bridget Day (innovation and technology manager), Tim Holmes (SC21), Stan Payne (Transport iNet) and Anthony Barlow (business development) as well as the office team of Anne Esterson and Emma Burgess.

"The feedback we are getting is that members find real value in our work – a classic win-win situation," Mair commented.

East Midlands transport initiative bears fruit

THE East Midlands aerospace innovation support programme (AeISP) run by the MAA as part of the Transport iNet has succeeded in its aim of bringing together supply chain companies to develop productive relationships and exploit opportunities.

In a little under a year, AeISP provided support for 15 SMEs under its Supply Chain Brokerage Programme. Assistance was generally in the form of making connections to new customers, technical roadmap planning and general marketing planning.

Meanwhile, two technology networks instigated by AeISP and centred on areas of expertise at University of Nottingham – precision engineering and composites – have attracted 39 companies. Joining a network involved



signing a collaboration agreement with the pertinent university department, with small grants available to cover initial costs.

One supply chain brokerage programme participant was David Bates, commercial and marketing director of Dynamotive, who was grateful for the programme's "influential and supportive" role in developing relations with Airbus UK and Meggitt Aircraft Braking Systems. "Dynamotive has found the whole MAA-iNet experience a very worthwhile investment in time and energy," he said.

Mike Cope, partner in Intelligent Solutions Technologies and another participant, was happy with assistance received from the MAA under the programme to break into the aerospace industry. "We now have developed some strong contacts within the industry and are working closely to set up alloy development projects."

♦ Midlands interest in UAV and defence markets, pg 10



New directors bring fresh perspectives to MAA board

THE MAA has welcomed three new members to its board of directors. They are:

♦ **Phil Hudson** – vice-president strategy, Goodrich Actuation Systems, Wolverhampton

♦ **Stuart Mclachlan** – business leader, Moog Aircraft Group, Wolverhampton

♦ **Prof Patrick Wheeler** – School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, University of Nottingham.

Their appointments are effective immediately.

Chairman Clive Snowdon, chief executive of UMECO, said: "I am delighted we have been able to strengthen our board with the depth

of experience and new perspectives that these directors bring."

They take up their posts at a time when the membership of the MAA is showing healthy gains, particularly among the leading aerospace companies in the Midlands.

"I'm also pleased to see that our membership has grown by more than five per cent in our first year of independent operations, despite the economic difficulties," said Snowdon. "Aerospace companies obviously continue to see real value in their MAA membership."

The board also paid tribute to the "considerable efforts" of Stan Payne, formerly of Meggitt, who resigned after five years.

'Keep investing' call to aerospace in Midlands

Continued from pg 1 aerospace remains strong.

Many leading indicators pointed to the increasing importance of the emerging economies, particularly India and China, he said. "Everyone recognizes there will be a recovery and we must keep investing to be ready."

Richard Brown, senior associate of AeroStrategy, said the recession has "cost the MRO market three years of growth." Hardest hit have been suppliers of parts and raw materials, who have seen business drop as much as 40 per cent as inventory at repair bases was used but not replaced.

A new trend, led by Airbus, for airframers to muscle into the MRO market has "quite severe" potential impacts on SME MRO companies which will find that their customers are no longer the airlines but the airframers.

He forecast a return to spending growth in air transport MRO, but not until 2011. The key, as always, was cost reduction.

Bombardier's Stephen Cowan, general manager of Supply Chain and the Hawlmark Fabrication Facility, encouraged Midlands companies to look for opportunities to get onto the CSeries programme. He said it was disappointing that only one work package on the CSeries had come to the UK. Design capacity is often missing, he said.

He said SMEs should explore ways of getting on the programme with Tier 1 suppliers and systems partners, for example in subcomponents and assemblies.



Bombardier's Cowan: 'disappointed' so little CSeries work came to UK.

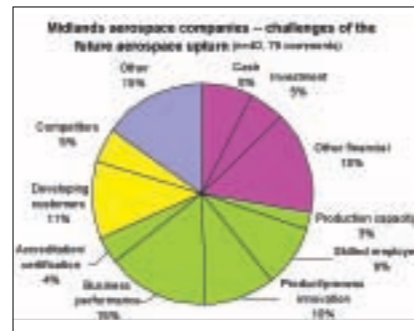
The CSeries is a "game changer" for Bombardier, he said. "We're proud to create a new generation of aircraft specifically designed for their market."

Stuart Mclachlan, business leader at Moog Aircraft Group, said longevity is a key consideration for a Tier 1 supplier. "We need to ensure we're working with suppliers who are in for the long haul," he said.

The Boeing 787 was a case in point. Contracts were awarded in 2004 on a 25-30 year programme whose first flight examples flew only in 2010. "There are some very capable suppliers elsewhere in the world," he said.

"If we don't manage the challenges, our competitors will. You need a presence on a programme to go forward."

Participants gave the event the thumbs-up for its usefulness and organisation with comments such as "very good event... well worth taking the time out to be there... very useful... relevancy to current climate".



Survey snapshot of current sentiment.

2011 recovery say aerospace suppliers

Continued from pg 1

defence tended to be more stable and nearly 60 per cent experienced steady or growing aerospace sales.

Half of companies expect that both overall business turnover and aerospace and defence turnover will rise – albeit marginally for most – between 2009 and 2010, with a further 30 per cent anticipating flat markets.

Analysis of the anticipated rate of change shows that relative stability is forecast by six in 10 companies for overall turnover and aerospace and defence turnover, and by four in five for employment – in general, a steep downturn for some, a shallow upturn for many.

Six in 10 companies expect an upturn in aerospace markets in 2011.

While their markets are diversified, Midlands aerospace suppliers depend largely on the major aircraft programmes of Airbus and Boeing, together with Rolls-Royce which in the Midlands supplies engines largely to these two airframers and it is these programmes – Airbus A350 with its Trent XWB engine, Boeing 787 with its Trent 1000 engine – that will drive growth.



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Precision Engineers to the aerospace industry

Arrowsmith Engineering acquires Exhall Grinding & Engineering Ltd

Polish cluster on the radar

NINE Midlands-based aerospace suppliers are planning a return visit to Poland in May following a successful fact-finding trip in March.

The companies plan to follow up opportunities for supply chain development, partnerships and investment which they identified in the Polish Aviation Valley aerospace cluster based in Rzeszow.

Their mission was arranged by UK Trade & Investment in collaboration with Advantage West Midlands and the MAA.

The UK companies that took part were Allied Maxcut Engineering, Apollo Aerospace Components, Bodycote, Comar Engineering Services, Doncasters, JI Consult, Plasticraft, Southco and Techsil.

Aviation Valley is a leading Central European aviation cluster with a growing industrial base of 80 companies.

For information please contact matcliffe@advantagewm.co.uk

Indian firms visit Midlands

MAA members had an opportunity to meet senior representatives from 15 Indian aerospace companies at a reception hosted at Coventry's Ricoh Arena by the MAA.

The visitors, representing a broad cross-section of technologies and capabilities, were on an advanced engineering roadshow organised by UKTI. Among their destinations was Rolls-Royce in Derby.

MAA chief executive Andrew Mair described the event as "very successful", a good networking opportunity and a chance to highlight Midlands companies and capabilities to delegates from one of the world's fastest growing aerospace markets.



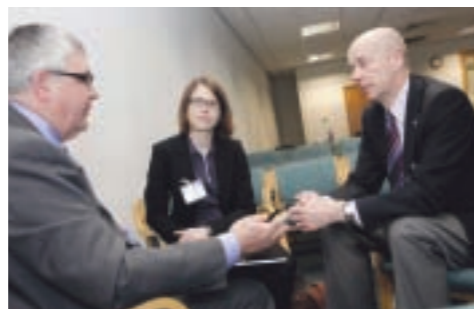
Indian aerospace under the spotlight.



Poland mission participants tour the Hispano-Suiza plant.

MAA and UKTI go global...

The MAA has been working with UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) for some years to help focus UKTI services on the requirements of MAA members in an effort to help open new markets. Recent results speak for themselves...



Peter Stevenson (left) and Katja Schlaug in discussion with Simon Parker from Cosworth.

Market advice from UKTI experts

Two UKTI aerospace specialists are helping Midlands supply chain companies further their ambitions of entering the German and US markets.

Katja Schlaug from Munich and Melissa McInnes from Chicago met

separately with a number of MAA members in visits to the Midlands arranged by UKTI in partnership with the MAA. As well as offering advice on their respective aerospace markets, both have been able to help with appointments and introductions.

The experience was "very productive and a useful way of meeting a larger number of aerospace companies," said Katja.

Peter Stevenson, the local UKTI representative who organised the meetings, said: "Our staff have detailed knowledge of the aerospace sector within their region and can add real value to Midlands companies wishing to enter these markets." More such events are planned.

❖ For copies of an aerospace market sector report for Germany, please contact peter.stevenson@uktiem.co.uk

East Midlands supply chain looks offshore

FOUR East Midlands aerospace suppliers have taken steps to include offshore partners in their supply chains, thanks to support from UK Trade & Investment (UKTI).

The support, delivered jointly by UKTI and aerospace consultancy Achieving the Difference LLP, is in response to customer requirements for increased dollar pricing, local offset and lower unit costs.

The four suppliers represent traditional East Midlands expertise in fabrications, machining and manufacturing. The increased ability to meet customer requirements will contribute to their long-term competitiveness, survival and growth.

A strategic review of capabilities that could and should be considered for offshore partnering led to identification of specific needs in specific countries. In the next phase, UKTI will identify potential partners for each customer prior to a country visit to begin the partnering process.

Meet the Buyers adopts 'virtual' format

East Midlands aerospace suppliers were the first to benefit from an innovative approach by UKTI's East Midlands office to its successful Meet the Buyers programme.

Instead of meeting in the flesh, this time the private meetings between suppliers and international aerospace buyers took place over a secure, 'face to face' web conference link over two days in March. The link allowed participants to view presentations, brochures, drawings and documents as well as see and talk to each other.

UKTI sees great potential in this new business meeting concept in helping busy purchasing and engineering professionals who do not have the time to travel find Midlands suppliers.

Mair carries Midlands message to China

MAA chief executive Andrew Mair met with a dozen aerospace companies across China in April when he travelled there as part of a high-level UKTI-sponsored delegation visiting Chinese aerospace companies Beijing, Tianjin, Xi'an and Shanghai.

Even while he was fact-finding, Mair put the visit to good use. He was able to advise one MAA member in Birmingham how best to set up meetings with its potential Chinese aircraft maker clients, having just met them.

Among highlights was learning the challenges of setting up manufacturing in

China with the plant manager of MAA member PFW (formerly HPL) and renewing acquaintance with the executive deputy chief designer for China's new COMAC C919 single aisle aircraft.

Mair also learned from Chinese aerospace customers why the Chinese view UK companies of all sizes as poor compared to other countries at projecting themselves strategically to Chinese customers.

He met with several Rolls-Royce staff posted across China to learn the implications for the UK supply chain of how rapidly the company is expanding in Asia.

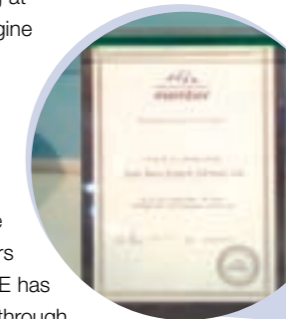
Midlands companies with production operations in China include:

- ❖ Dunlop Aircraft Tyre retreading facility Jinjiang
- ❖ Pattonair (office) in Xi'an
- ❖ PFW (formerly HPL) factory in Xi'an

- ❖ Sigma Precision factory in Chengdu (see story below)
- ❖ SPS Aerostructures factory in Kunshan
- ❖ Rolls-Royce joint venture factories in Xi'an

MAA recognised in China

THE reception building at China's major aero engine maker, the Xi'an Aero Engine Company, in Xi'an, central China, proudly displays the company's MAA membership certificate (right). Fellow members may not know that XAE has belonged to the MAA through its Derby office for some years and has 15 UK suppliers.



Sigma honoured as Cathay 'Rising Star'

MIDLANDS-based Sigma Precision Components has been named the Rising Stars category winner in Cathay Pacific's China Business Awards.

First introduced in 2005, these annual awards are designed to acknowledge and celebrate UK business dynamism and success in Hong Kong and China.

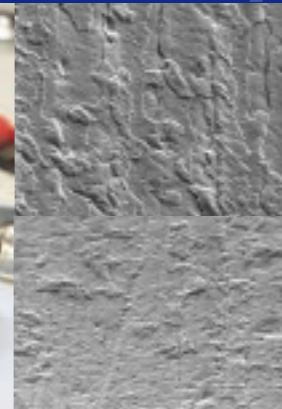
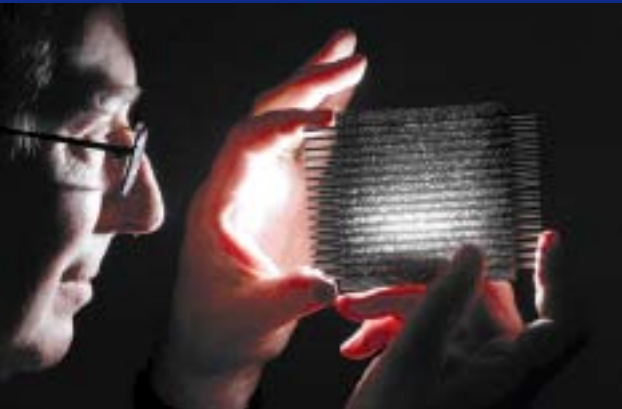
Sigma, a subsidiary of Nottingham-based Avingtrans plc, was selected from among entries reflecting a range of sectors including education, charity, manufacturing, professional services and technology.

Mark Johnson, managing director of Avingtrans Aerospace Division and MAA board member, said the award was a tribute to the work of the UK business in making its wholly-owned Chinese subsidiary, Chengdu Sigma Precision Components, a success.

▲ www.sigmacomponents.com



From left: Ocean Xu, Simon Timothy, Mark Johnson and Steve McQuillan.



ATEP 1 projects, from left: [1 and 2] Heat transfer surface development (Meggitt Controls); [3] Composite actuation gearbox housing (Goodrich Actuation Systems with Rojac); [4] Nano-coatings technology (Teer Coatings); [5] High temperature heat exchanger (HS Marston with Advanced Chemical Etchings).

ATEP: solutions for tomorrow

New technology developed with the help of the MAA-led Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme (ATEP) is starting to enter the aerospace supply chain.

MAA monitoring shows the five projects supported by ATEP 1 funding produced good results and demonstrated the benefits of teaming SMEs and mid-sized companies with, research bodies and end-users in highly focused problem solving.

The first phase of ATEP was launched in 2006 with company grants from AWM totalling £390,000. Five projects benefited from this programme and produced results with wide-ranging benefits for aircraft programmes of the future.

Wolverhampton-based **Goodrich Actuation Systems** worked with local SME **Rojac** to develop an actuator gear box housing in composite materials to replace traditional aluminium die-casting. The component is 60 per cent lighter than a conventional aluminium part and saves around a quarter of the weight of the full actuation gearbox.

Following a series of rigorous and highly successful tests by Goodrich, the company's technology has been welcomed into the Next Generation Composites Wing Programme which is led by Airbus and part-funded by the UK's Technology Strategy Board.

Another Wolverhampton-based company, **HS Marston Aerospace** – part of US company Hamilton Sundstrand Engine & Control Systems – has worked with Telford SME **Advanced Chemical Etchings** to develop high temperature heat exchangers for aircraft engines made from new alloys. Hi-temp capability is a significant contributor to fuel-burn efficiency, and the ability to operate at higher temperatures can result in CO2 reductions of up to 10 per cent.

Tests completed by the company show that the new alloy heat exchanger can operate at up to 300C hotter than existing units. These results have led to HS Marston Aerospace becoming one of 10 partners on the Environmentally Friendly Programme (EFE) launched by Rolls-Royce to develop greener engine technology for the future. Launched in 2006, EFE is addressing engine technologies to cut nitrous oxide emissions by 60 per cent, among other benefits.

Another project from ATEP 1 has developed technology that is attracting much interest both inside and outside aerospace and defence. Birmingham and Coventry's **Meggitt Control Systems** worked with the **University of Birmingham** and two local SMEs – Solihull's **Arden Precision** and **PAB Coventry** – to perfect a heat transfer system that improves heat exchanger efficiency. The technology involves a novel nickel-based metal foam (Retimet) and has proved to be a much more effective medium in heat transfer in a range of environments.

The original ATEP also included two other partnerships. In one of them, **Teer Coatings** of Redditch and **Anapol Coatings** of Birmingham linked up to improve the life of tools for forging with the use of nano-coatings technology, working with end-user Rolls-Royce. The other was between the **University of Wolverhampton**, **Ajax Toco** and **Unipart** on a lower capital equipment cost process which has wide applications for aerospace and possibly other manufacturers and has led to a patent and further funding from other sources.

New expertise on tap for your company

AEROSPACE companies across the Midlands can benefit from the skills of newly qualified graduates and regional universities by signing up to a Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP), which some will recall under its original name of Teaching Company Scheme.

This was highlighted at an MAA breakfast event in Coventry, where businesses heard first-hand how Moog has already gained from the programme.

KTP involves the recruitment of a graduate to work at your company to develop an important project, supported by an academic mentor. Benefits include up to 60 per cent funding provided by government, and access to expertise and resources available from the university including equipment and facilities. Previous projects have included new product development, better working practices, adaptation of emerging technologies and new marketing strategies.

A KTP lasts between 10 weeks (shorter KTP) and 36 months (classic KTP). You can work with any university in the region. For more information please call 0800 068 5023 or email wmktp@wlv.ac.uk. Or visit www.wlv.ac.uk/wmktp.

ATEP 2: support for SMEs to work with big players

WORK is well under way in the second phase of the Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme (ATEP 2), a £1.5 million programme run by the MAA which is designed to encourage the development and exploitation of new technologies by companies operating in West Midlands' aerospace supply chains.

ATEP 2 is part-funded by the regional development agency Advantage West Midlands (AWM) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and is helping larger manufacturers work in partnership with both SMEs and leading universities to develop new technologies that address emerging

market requirements for future aircraft programmes.

Headline developments include longer-life brakes, led by Meggitt Aircraft Braking Systems of Coventry with Stoke SME and research institute CERAM, research by Dunlop Aircraft Tyres working with Birmingham University and Airbus into innovative designs and an SME team working on new spring designs.

❖ *More news of the projects now funded will be reported in the next issue of AIM.*

ATEP technologies exposed to MOD customers

THE MAA reinforced its position as a gateway for customers into the Midlands aerospace SME community with a successful display at Defence Research 2010, the annual conference and exhibition which is an important event in the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) supplier engagement programme.

The MAA stand, promoting the ATEP programme with strong visual displays, attracted significant attention over the two days and gave the MAA member companies associated with ATEP projects the opportunity to discuss their experiences with interested parties.

"It was an event not specifically themed as aerospace that enabled us to put a spotlight on Midlands technologies with a more diverse audience," said business development consultant Anthony Barlow.

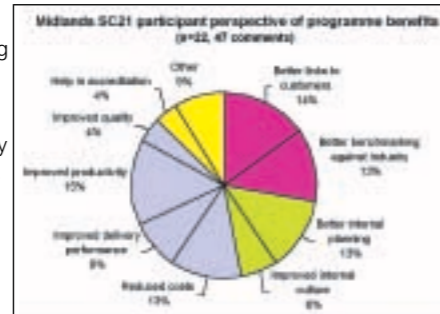
❖ *Inset above: How Defence Contracts Bulletin reported ATEP.*



Benefits of SC21 programme spread in Midlands: survey

ADS SC 21 A SURVEY of Midlands aerospace companies attending a recent meeting showed that about half were signed up to the national 21st century supply chain improvement programme. About one-quarter were actively implementing SC21. This is a good level of uptake, says Tim Holmes, MAA SC21 manager. "Achieving SC21 recognition is a challenge but companies deploying the programme quickly gain rewards."

This survey was undertaken by the MAA and the Manufacturing Advisory Service as part of the Advantage West Midlands aerospace cluster forum and MAA members meeting on 23



respondents cited improvements to quality, cost, delivery and productivity (40 per cent); better links to customers or better benchmarking (25 per cent) and improved planning or company culture (20 per cent).

March. Another three in 10 firms are signatories to the programme but not yet actively implementing it.

Of the companies signed up or actively implementing SC21, 30 per cent believe SC21 is already effective; 70 per cent reporting the programme still needs to mature further with not all the UK's key aerospace customers yet fully on board.

When asked to specify benefits,

Primes set to follow Babcock with clusters

ADS SC 21 ONE of the UK's largest engineering support services groups has launched a new SC21 cluster for its Midlands supply chain. The move by Babcock International Group, working with MAS-WM, comes ahead of four more customer-led SC21 launch events planned in the region by national primes and involving more than 200 Midlands suppliers.

Babcock, which supports the defence, transport, energy and telecommunications sectors, believes SC21 offers an opportunity to manage its complex supply chain better.

A similar arrangement is expected in the East Midlands where the MAA is working with Babcock for a similar launch as part of

the East Midlands SC21 support project.

More than 30 West Midlands suppliers heard Babcock's Andy Chapell, head of supply chain capability development, describe SC21 as "a significant and fundamental part of our wider supply chain management" that allowed the company to "work with our suppliers from the outset on improving all aspects of our engagement."

MAS-WM's Cliff Johnson added: "By forming an SC21 cluster, not only can we support and nurture them as a group, but suppliers can also position themselves to win future business in an ever increasing competitive market."

❖ For information on SC21 please contact tim.holmes@midlands.aerospace.org.uk.

A&M EDM bronze is first for Black Country

ADS SC 21 MIDLANDS-based A&M EDM has become the first company in the Black Country to secure a Bronze SC21 Award for its commitment to excellence.

The award, unique to the UK aerospace and defence sectors, will help the wire erosion and spark eroding specialist target more new orders as it looks to increase turnover to £2 million in 2010.

With the aid of a grant from the Manufacturing Advisory Service – West Midlands and European Regional Development Fund, the Smethwick firm identified efficiencies and installed new systems to help it achieve a quality performance of 100 per cent 'right first time' and an average of 99 per cent on time delivery for the last 12 months.

Kevin Powell, quality manager at A&M

EDM, credits SC21 with helping A&M EDM acquire new business, including a project to provide wire and spark erosion services to a major aerospace OEM and its supply chain on actuation systems for Goodrich in Wolverhampton.

▲ www.amedm.co.uk
▲ www.advantagewm.co.uk

Five join first cluster in East Midlands

ADS SC 21 AN SC21 cluster of five aerospace and defence cluster has been established in the East Midlands, facilitated by the MAA. The companies are Atlas Composites, Chemring Defence UK, CVI Laser, Paul Fabrications and SL Engineering.

All five have accessed grants from the MAA as part of the East Midlands SC21 support project, which is funded by the East Midlands Development Agency (emda).

The companies will develop their improvement plans independently and then work collaboratively to share best practice and review each other's progress.

Five progress workshops will be held over 12 months.

Meanwhile, the high profile aerospace and automotive engineering company Cosworth of Northampton has received MAA support under the East Midlands SC21 project.

❖ Participants from East and West Midlands said they found an MAA-organised Root Cause Corrective Action (RCCA) workshop useful in helping to reduce non-conformance across their operations. The workshop showed how a manufacturing sector approach can be effectively applied to SC21.

UAV, defence markets attract Midlands delegates

THE importance of UAVs to the Midlands aerospace sector was underlined by the strength of interest in a seminar on UAV markets and technologies, organized by the MAA in association with the East Midlands iNet programme, combined with a follow-up workshop.

More than 100 delegates to the seminar heard speakers from major UK aerospace and UAV companies explain why they considered this area of aviation a significant growth market with implications for the Midlands aerospace industry. The event also showcased the technologies and capabilities of several Midlands companies heavily involved in the UAV supply chains.

The UAV workshop attracted representatives of 15 East Midlands companies. It explored ways for companies, particularly smaller ones, to exploit market opportunities and the support and guidance available to them from the MAA.

❖ Opportunities in the defence market were highlighted at a seminar organized by the MAA jointly under the East Midlands iNet and West Midlands ATEP programme. Sixty-five businesses attended to hear expert presentations from internationally prominent defence companies.

Representatives of Agusta Westland, Boeing, Lockheed



Boeing's Tim Wheeler.



Members of the audience at the event.

Rolls-Royce Coventry plant to Typhoon fleet

ROLLS-ROYCE'S Ansty plant near Coventry in the Midlands is one of two UK sites identified to provide support for the EJ200 engines, assembled by Rolls-Royce, that power the Royal Air Force's fleet of Eurofighter Typhoons.

Under terms of an innovative £865 million service contract with the UK Ministry of

Martin and Thales focused on the technologies and capabilities required of the supply base to participate in current and future defence programmes. Their insights were of particular interest to companies currently in the aerospace and defence markets and those looking for information about future trends and needs of the customer base.

Defence (MOD) that runs until 2019, Rolls-Royce will provide the RAF with a guaranteed level of availability for its EJ200 engines.

Meanwhile, Rolls-Royce has signed a similar service contract with the MOD, worth £690 million, to support the RAF's RB199-powered Tornado fleet, extending to 2025 a relationship it has had since 2005.

The majority of work is undertaken at the Rolls-Royce facilities at Ansty and Bristol.

▲ www.rolls-royce.com

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One mission of the Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme (ATEP) is to highlight the innovation and technology potential of smaller companies. Here we showcase new offerings from a range of companies in the supply chain.



Automatic production of wire-forms for higher volume manufacture.

MSP bucks trend with Pattonair deal

MAA member Micro Spring and Presswork (MSP), based in Redditch, has demonstrated that growth is possible in a difficult market after signing a long-term agreement with Pattonair.

MSP managing director Keith Gardner commented that the agreement was "a great endorsement" and vindicated MSP's strategy of investment and upgrading.

The agreement covers the supply of springs and presswork and is only the second such agreement signed by global aerospace and defence service provider Pattonair last year.

Gardner said MSP had been "reinvigorated" under new management since its acquisition in 2008 by Nevis Capital. Work for three major new customers signed in the last two years

contributes nearly £1 million to turnover.

MSP gained both AS9100 and NADCAP accreditation in just six months as the company sought to redefine its capabilities for the aerospace and defence markets.

Continuing to position itself for the future, MSP is commissioning a new 125-tonne press and looking to expand its staff of 30. It is also installing a state-of-the-art enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

"We're evolving from a craft-based industry into a business more aligned to our customer base," said Gardner.

To achieve its goal of becoming a £5 million business, the company is looking for acquisitions, but will be selective. "We have a solid brand," said Gardner, "and don't want to weaken it."

▲ www.microspring.co.uk

Amfin invests in new NDT technology

NUNEATON-based Abbey Metal Finishing (Amfin) has responded to customer demand with a £150,000 investment in new non-destructive testing (NDT) technology.

The surface treatments and finishing specialist has introduced an Ultra Projects electrostatic dye penetrant line and a new Johnson & Allen magnetic particle inspection facility to help meet an expected 15-20 per cent rise in business in 2010.

The new equipment complements Amfin's existing etch inspection testing with newer technology which will bring benefits in terms of accuracy and turn-around to its OEM and Tier 1 customers.

Among companies that Amfin works with are Rolls-Royce, Messier-Dowty, Bombardier, Honeywell, Goodrich, Lockheed Martin and BAE Systems.

▲ www.amfin.co.uk



Amfin's magnetic particle inspection unit in use on gas turbine bearing housing.

Dunlop on A400M: New foreign object damage (FOD) resistance tyre technology developed by Birmingham-based Dunlop Aircraft Tyres is to be used for the first time on the new Airbus Military A400M. The tyres combine the superior sidewall FOD resistance of bias tyres with advanced materials designed to improve protection in the tread area.

Plasticraft record contract: Coventry-based Plasticraft, a major supplier of surface treatment equipment, has secured a record £6.6 million contract from Rolls-Royce for process plant and equipment to be installed in Singapore. The contract calls for the supply of 10 chemical processing lines for the manufacture of aero engine components.

Dunlop lands new bmibaby contract

BIRMINGHAM-based Dunlop Aircraft Tyres has landed a three-year contract worth more than £1 million with low-cost UK airline bmibaby.

The agreement covers the supply of nose wheel and main wheel tyres for the airline's fleet of Boeing 737-300s and 737-500s.

Bmibaby is a long-standing Dunlop customer. Under this new agreement, the airline will receive new and retreaded tyres.

Dunlop Aircraft Tyres chairman Ian Edmondson said it is "especially rewarding" to retain important customers such as bmibaby, and called the contract "a vote of confidence in Dunlop's ability to deliver in the future".

▲ www.dunlopaircrafttyres.com



AkzoNobel helps airline go plane crazy

A COATING made in Leicester by AkzoNobel Aerospace Coatings has been used in what must rate as one of the most unusual of aircraft liveries (above).

Short-haul South African carrier Kulula covered its Boeing 737-800 – dubbed Flying 101 – with text playfully pointing out parts of the aircraft.

The tongue-in-cheek pea green plane is one of eight of the type being introduced into the fleet. All are being coated with a different livery using Eclipse products from AkzoNobel's Midlands site.

The company's Steve Pickering, National Accounts Manager (Maintenance UK and Ireland), said: "We're delighted that our high performance coatings are being used in such an eye-catching way."

▲ www.akzonobel.com/aerospace

NEW MEMBERS

The MAA welcomes the following new members:

Acorn Surface Technology Ltd, Kirkby in Ashfield.
Specialist surface engineering.

Advanced Surface Engineering Ltd, Birmingham.
Titanium surface technologies.

All Metal Services Ltd Coleshill
Stockist and supplier of raw material.

Assembled Electronics Solutions LLP, Stratford Upon Avon
PCB assemblies and devices.

Blum-Novotest Ltd, Lichfield
Production metrology equipment.

CHH Conex Ltd, Birmingham
Cable assembly and electro mechanical integration process audit and re-design.

Cinch Connectors Ltd, Worksop
Design, development and manufacture of interconnect solutions.

Doncasters Aerospace Components, Shrewsbury
Provider of engine-ready components.

East Midlands Saw & Tool Co Ltd, Nottingham
Supply and service of cutting tools.

Factory Master Ltd, Nuneaton
Manufacturing software supplier.

Grant Thornton UK LLP, Birmingham
Financial and business advisory.

Guhring Ltd, Birmingham
Manufacturer of rotary cutting tools for composite and alloy materials.

Hadley Group, Smethwick
Producer of cold rolled sections.

Heinrich Georg UK Ltd, Wolverhampton
Design, manufacture and installation of test rig equipment.

Hydrastore Ltd, Belton nr Doncaster
Hydraulic components and systems.

James Kent Group, Stoke-on-Trent
Specialist glass and glass/ceramic materials manufacturer.

Midland Group Training Services Ltd, Coventry
Education and training provider.

Paragon Engineering & Logistics Ltd, Wolverhampton
Supplier of make-to-print or subcontract machined items.

Pattonair (Derby) Ltd, Derby
Logistics and supply chain management.

Phase Vision Ltd, Loughborough
Dimensional metrology systems.

Precision Recruitment UK Ltd, Leicester
Consultancy supplying engineers.

Slack & Parr, Kegworth, Derbyshire
Precision metering pumps and aerospace components.

SMT Developments Ltd, Warwick
PCB assembly.

Swiftool Precision Engineering Ltd, Sutton-in-Ashfield
Precision engineering of complex machined components.

Thales Aerospace, Leicester
Defence and civil electronic communication units.

Valbruna UK Ltd, West Bromwich
Producer and UK stockholder of stainless steel, nickel alloy and titanium.

Associate Members

LATecis UK Ltd, Stevenage
Aero and space structures and systems design engineering.

The University of Sheffield AMRC with Boeing, Rotherham
Research partnership for advanced manufacturing problems.

Visioneering design solution

COVENTRY-based Visioneering has teamed with its sister company Cattrell Hudson Partners to offer an innovative solution to short-term aerospace design demands.

The firms, both part of the Envisage Group, can supply CATIA V5 HD2 licences (revision 19) to rent on a man and machine basis to overcome peaks in high-end design work. Licences typically cost about £20,000.

Envisage currently has a turnover of some £8 million and expects growth this year to top 40 per cent, with 20-30 new roles created in the process.

▲ www.visioneering.ltd.uk

Midlands aerospace in brief...

Midlands-based **Goodrich Actuation Systems** has been selected by Russia's Irkut and Aviapribor to design, develop and produce primary and secondary flight control actuation systems for all variants of the Irkut MC-21. Aviapribor is the supplier for the entire flight control system for the planned family of single-aisle aircraft.

Birmingham-based **Dunlop Aircraft Tyres** has strengthening its position in the global aircraft tyre marketplace with the acquisition of testing and manufacturing equipment from Yokohama Rubber. The move will expand Dunlop's manufacturing capacity in radial and bias tyres, boosting its range with products such as radial main tyres for the Boeing 777.

SMT Developments, a Warwick-based specialist in complex PCB assembly, expects to add ASEN 9100 accreditation within months to the two IPC manufacturing standards it already holds with assistance from the SC21 programme. It is one of a small number of contract electronics manufacturers to sign up to the UK national supply chain improvement programme.

The Watchkeeper unmanned air system (UAS) development by **Thales UK** completed a successful 20-minute maiden UK flight in April. It is seen as the first milestone in a long-term programme to demonstrate the system's capabilities and

adherence to robust safety and airworthiness criteria. Meanwhile, Derbyshire-based **Advanced Composites Group** has been selected by Elbit Systems to supply prepreg materials for construction of the Watchkeeper 450 UAV, the system's aerial platform.

Birmingham-based **Bromford Holdings** has acquired the trade and certain assets of Leicester's **H Beesley** from administrator KPMG. The acquired business will trade as **Bromford Technologies Leicester**. Its fabrication and precision machining business complements the existing Bromford businesses. It also shares many customers with Bromford.

Derbyshire-based **Gardner Aerospace** is looking forward to growth, upgrading of existing facilities and investment in new product lines following its acquisition by investment fund Better Capital. Terms of the takeover from Carlyle Group were not disclosed. Gardner chief executive Patrick Grady said the investment "provides us with a solid financial base to exploit future opportunities and deliver our growth plans."

Rolls-Royce's share in first quarter orders for IAE V2500 engines from Turkish Airlines, Sichuan Airlines and Jetstar Airways, to power A320 family aircraft, is worth up to £960 million for the Midlands engine maker.



❖ *Vipul Vachhani (above), the Midlands-based chief executive of Jaivel Group, joined aerospace sector leaders at the recent Global Engineering Leadership Summit in Mumbai. Presenting a view on global product development, Vipul emphasised that conscious and sustained investment in key domain expertise is needed if Indian companies are to play a greater role in future engineering development.*

Spotlight on injection moulding process chain

COVENTRY-based optical measurement specialist GOM UK is offering fellow MAA members an insight into injection moulding process chains with a free workshop on 26 May in Leek Wooton, Warwick.

Modern scanning technology enables companies to deliver high quality plastic parts in hours rather than weeks, says GOM, and this workshop is designed to help companies understand and benefit from it.

To book, e-mail contact@gom.com

About the MAA...

The Midlands Aerospace Alliance (MAA) is the voice of companies in the British Midlands supplying global aerospace. It was set up in 2003 to improve wealth creation and employment for companies and people involved in the aerospace industry across the Midlands. The MAA is supported by Advantage West Midlands (AWM) and the East Midlands Development Agency (emda).



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