

WORKING DAY

Today Farnborough plays host to the first ever International Youth Day – and event which aims to promote the aerospace industry to the up-and-coming generation

SOWING SEEDS FOR FUTURE NEEDS

More than 1,250 young people will be given an introduction to the aerospace industry as part of Farnborough's International Youth Day today, the first event of its kind ever to be held at an international airshow.

The young people, ranging in ages from 15 to 24, come from as far afield as Canada, the US, France, Germany and the Netherlands. They have either been recommended by their schools and colleges directly or through university bursary awards, trainee apprenticeships and scholarships.

Youth Day project manager Jon Chitty says the event is unique. "The interest and involvement across academia, industry, and range of regional alliances has been little short of staggering."

In all 95 companies and 40 educational organisations have been involved in the DAE-sponsored event. More than 80 Youth Ambassadors from the aerospace world have volunteered their time to guide groups of 20 young people through a programme of lectures and activities.

"This is the perfect catalyst for everyone – students and

industry alike – in recognising and advertising the personal and professional opportunities in a challenging and innovative sector such as aerospace. It all illustrates the huge importance of attracting young people of the right calibre to sustain, develop and enhance the key technologies essential to the sector's future success," Chitty says.

Guest speakers include Patty Wagstaff who will talk about her experiences as US champion aerobatics pilot. Peter Chandler, experimental test pilot on the A380, will give a presentation, as will members of the RAF Red Arrows display team.

Opportunities

"You could ask many young people what they know about, for example, Rolls-Royce. Most of them could tell you they make nice cars, some of them might know that they are involved in aircraft, but they will have no idea about its, the structure and the career opportunities," says Chitty.

"And you could say the same thing about Airbus, Boeing, Lockheed Martin or any aerospace company. By introducing these young people to aerospace and the

huge range of careers within it, we hope that we are engaging them so that at the end of the day, they ask themselves what is the next step that they can take to pursue one of the careers that they have seen showcased."

The day's activities will include presentation on areas such as UAVs; green air travel; flight testing; aircraft of the future; developing silent aircraft; how to become a commercial pilot; designing fast jets; space flight; and rocketry.

Hands-on elements of the day will include a build-a-plane project; a freshers' style fair; business simulation exercises; and a Robot Wars demonstration.

Students will also be given guided tours of the exhibition halls, the static aircraft display, and the Space Pavilion, they will be able to try a range of simulators including one for the A380, and will have a chance to try out the Parachute Regiment assault course.

After the show, participating schools and colleges will be sent a DVD of the presentations and displays to use for follow up learning.

"The International Youth Day is a powerful catalyst," Chitty says. "It provides the



Youth Day project manager Jon Chitty.

Opportunity knocks

"There are fantastic opportunities for young people in the modern aerospace industry and Farnborough's International Youth Day will give them a chance to experience and explore what is on offer. This is a great initiative and demonstrates a long-term commitment to skills and exciting careers."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, speaking about Farnborough's International Youth Day

momentum so essential to the aerospace sector in attracting high calibre students into the lifestyle and career opportunities that it can offer. It also provides the baseline for similar programmes of engagement across other industry sectors."

Chitty is also director of Launchpad for Learning, a partnership of schools and industry which aims to promote careers in science

technology and engineering to young people. "Our aim is to initiate a programme that continues well into the future, to ensure that the momentum we have created is sustained across industry and academia. We have to link individual aspirations to potential jobs, to the route available to get that job, and then the qualifications necessary to follow that route," Chitty says.

MyTravel: apprentices to learn manufacturing

MyTravel Aircraft Engineering has begun offering a three-year apprenticeship programme leading to an EASA Cat A licence. Six school-leavers have been selected for the course. They will spend their first year alongside Airbus apprentices developing handskills and learning about manufacturing.

"This programme is unique in the fact that we are aligning ourselves with the manufacturer. Usually apprenticeships are either maintenance or manufacturing focused – we're linking these areas together so students get the bigger picture," says Husain Ishaq, MyTravel Aircraft Engineering training manager.

In the second and third year, they will be based at Manchester airport four days a week, spending the fifth day with Deeside College. "There is a serious shortage of new entrants coming up to replace mid-level engineers," Ishaq says. "People see maintenance as a job where you get your hands dirty. Many school-leavers are entering areas such as IT where starting pay is better. "Being a craftsman doesn't need to be a poorly paid job; we want to let people know that this type of apprenticeship can lead onto senior positions."

Institute backs push on job-related studies

British teenagers are turning their backs on practical industry-relevant subjects in favour of fashionable courses such as media studies, says British charity The Manufacturing Institute.

Last year just over 4,000

students aged 15-16 sat the Manufacturing GCSE examination in England, only one-tenth of the number that took the GCSE Media Studies Course.

The organisation, which has helped 2,000 UK companies

gain competitive advantage from high impact skills-building and productivity improvement in the last decade, says that getting young people interested in manufacturing at school was crucial.

It is developing an interactive online resource that it hopes will make the Manufacturing syllabus more interesting for young people. Course content is currently being developed in partnership with teachers, and will be piloted in north-west England early next year.

The charity says that the perception of manufacturing among young people has suffered, partly through negative coverage in the popular press. Most people don't realise that through working in manufacturing they can go on to gain first degrees, MScs and even doctorates.

CASE STUDY

Nicola Watkins

Nicola Watkins began a career in industry as an apprentice pipe fabricator at BAE Systems two years ago when she was 16. She joined BAE after gaining 10 GCSE credits at school, choosing an apprenticeship over continuing to university because she identified the opportunity to earn while learning up to degree level, in a job with advancement opportunities and prospects for international travel. "This is a great career for both boys and girls and I'm always trying to persuade more females to think about working in engineering and manufacturing," she says. "One of the directors here started out as a fitter, so there's no reason to stop me or any of the other apprentices being a director one day. "I've already gained a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 and will move from NVQ Level 3 through to a degree over the coming years. The best bit is that I'll be paid while I train and will be in a position to buy a house in a few years' time."

