

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School-built plane takes flight in aviation challenge

Ercall Wood Technology College in Telford today celebrated the first public flight of their school-built light aircraft, in front of a crowd of proud students, teachers, parents and volunteers.

The students from years 9 to 11 (aged 14 to 16) have been working on building a RANS Coyote II light aeroplane since 2010, when they received a kit as part of the Schools Build-a-Plane Challenge, run by the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) and Boeing. Ercall Wood Technology College is one of the six schools involved with the project and their plane, G-GWFT, is the third to be certified to fly by the Light Aircraft Association (LAA).

“Boeing is in its 100th year of business and in order for us to continue shaping the world of aerospace with our customers, partners and suppliers, we all need a new generation of talented engineers,” said Sir Michael Arthur, Boeing’s President, UK and Ireland. “For us to sustain the highly-qualified pipeline of talent in the UK aerospace industry we work hard to inspire young people to take an interest in science, technology and aviation through engaging projects like the Schools Build-a-Plane Challenge. Congratulations on their fantastic achievements to the students and teachers at Ercall Wood Technology College.”

The aim of the Challenge is to bring hands-on learning to schools and to inspire young people with fun challenges in the areas of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), outside of the classroom.

“People are always surprised that we have actually built the plane ourselves. It has been a pleasure to be part of it and I am very proud of what we have achieved,” said student John Penswick.

The Challenge gives students real experience of the aircraft build process, knowledge of the scientific and engineering principles behind flight, and develops their commercial skills such as project management, problem-solving, team work and communication.

“For the UK to maintain its technological and competitive advantage in the global aerospace market, it is vital that we develop and nurture STEM knowledge and skills from an early age.” said Simon Luxmoore, chief executive of the Royal Aeronautical Society. “Providing young people with first-hand experience of what a career in aviation involves, through fun and exiting initiatives like the Schools Build-a-Place Challenge, is one way of achieving this important goal.”

2014 was a landmark year for the Challenge, with the students from Yateley School in Hampshire and Marling School in Gloucestershire seeing a world first—the planes they built fly at the internationally renowned Farnborough Air Show flying display, alongside iconic Boeing aircraft such as the 787-9 Dreamliner. The first aircraft has now been sold to a private operator, returning funds to the programme to be reinvested at another school.

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Notes to Editors

1. The [Royal Aeronautical Society](http://www.aerosociety.com) (RAeS) is the world's only professional body dedicated to the entire aerospace community. The Society promotes the highest professional standards in all aerospace disciplines; provides specialist information; acts as a central forum for the exchange of ideas; and plays a leading role in influencing opinion on aerospace matters. Visit www.aerosociety.com for more information.
2. Boeing is approaching 2,000 employees across the UK at numerous sites, from Glasgow to Gosport, and the company is experiencing solid organic growth. In 2013 Boeing celebrated 75 years of partnership with the United Kingdom, the Armed Forces, British manufacturing and the air transport industry.
3. Today the UK remains a critically important market, supplier base and a source of some of the world's most inventive technology partners. Boeing's expenditure with the UK aerospace industry in 2014 was approximately £1.4 billion (\$2.2 billion) and the company's activities support more than 60,000 jobs in the UK, in the process enhancing skills, facilitating exports and generating intellectual property. For more information visit www.boeing.co.uk and www.boeing.com.

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