

War of words between rival aircraft cities

by John Le Couteur

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THE heated row between Filton and the city of Wolverhampton over which has the right to call itself the Home of Aerospace is continuing unabated.

It took off when the Mayor of Wolverhampton, Phil Bateman, said it would rebrand itself as the hub of Britain's aero industry and reproduce a logo of the slogan on civic signs at the gateways of the city.

Filton councillor Roger Hutchinson hit back, saying the claim was pompous and pretentious and passionately defended Filton's right to claim to be known as the home of aerospace.

Today Mr Bateman told the *Evening Post*: "Bristol is a proud and successful city known as much for its seafaring exploits as for the aerospace industry if harbours."

"But here in Wolverhampton we also have a proud and illustrious tradition in engineering and manufacturing following the industrial revolution of which this area was at the very heart!"

"Obviously, we do not want to enter a war of words with Bristol. But it is a fact that Wolverhampton is very proud of its precision engineering and the growing reputation of its aerospace industry."

"All we ever wanted to do was to speak up and speak out about Wolverhampton and the skill of our workforce and the self-esteem that we have in them."

"Placing signs at the city boundary that salute these skills really should not be seen as anything more than a signpost of our pride."

"I am, however, proud that the city is raising its profile not only across this region but across the nation. This debate about the pride of our workforce enhances Wolverhampton's growing reputation as a city on the move."

Keep your aero on



Rivalry: Visitors to the RAF Cosford Air Show, near Wolverhampton, watch a Hercules taking off. Inset left, how the *Post* told the story on Monday



Councillor Hutchinson welcomed the Mayor's conciliatory reply and said: "We are pleased to see he recognises the versatility of the workforce over the ages of the Bristol region. "We are celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Brunel, one of the greatest engineers this country has ever seen, and we do

recognise that they have had some success in engineering in Wolverhampton as well. "When it comes to aerospace, we have even exceeded the greatest engineers in building memorable aircraft like the Brabazon for which we had to build one of the biggest runways in the world.

"Concorde is, of course, synonymous with the name of Filton, and now we are involved in creating the largest passenger aircraft ever built, the Airbus A380, and the rest of the Airbus family. We look forward to seeing the endeavours of Wolverhampton in trying to catch up with our massive success in aerospace."



Controversial: The sign that may greet people entering Wolverhampton