

# Plane engineers earn their wings

**A** SOUTH Yorkshire company is celebrating after the completion of the first full set of wing skins for the world's biggest commercial airliner.

Rotherham-based engineering consultants Bennett Associates has played a key part in the development of the Airbus A380 Superjumbo, which is due to make its first flight next year.

Bennetts, based at Pleasley Road, Whiston, designed and managed the manufacture and installation of the production system for the wing skins.

The skins are being made in a new factory in north Wales and will be transported to France, where the aircraft are assembled.

John Wadsworth, who managed the £7.7 million contract for Bennett, said the company carried out intensive testing with suppliers of all the manufacturing processes and designed and project-managed the installation of systems for checking and handling the panels.

"The facility, delivered to budget, is the first of its kind and was taken from initial concepts to a production-ready



▲ **Ready to fly:** Removing protective material from a completed A380 wing skin

unit in under two years," said Mr Wadsworth.

"This is a major achievement, when taking into account that the completed final aerodynamic shape of the wing was being developed in

parallel with the manufacture and installation of the tooling."

Other projects they have been involved with include the Channel Tunnel, the Falkirk Wheel, Gateshead Millennium Bridge and the world's largest

coal terminal in China.

The A380 will carry 555 passengers, 140 more than the biggest aircraft today, and will be nearly 80 metres from nose to tail. The main wings measure 45m along the edge.