

Plane sailing for bmi

by Paul Tomlin

bmi british midland, the UK's second largest airline, took delivery of its first Airbus A330-200 long-haul aircraft at Manchester Airport on May 9, before a specially invited audience which included airport representatives, members of the travel industry and the national and international news media.

The aircraft, the first of three delivered last month, was introduced on bmi british midland's first ever scheduled long-haul route, to Washington D.C. on May 12. The flights operate six days a week and are the first direct scheduled services offered by any carrier between Manchester and Washington Dulles Airport. A second aircraft started a further transatlantic service on June 8, operating a daily flight between Manchester and Chicago O'Hare.

Both services are operated by bmi british midland on a codeshare basis with Star Alliance partner United Airlines. The strategic relationship with United enables bmi to offer passengers a comprehensive network of onward connections throughout the US from these two key hubs.

A quality product
Speaking at the launch ceremony, bmi british midland chairman Sir Michael Bishop said: "This is a very impor-



Airport chief executive Geoff Muirhead (left) and Councillor Peter Roberts, deputy chairman (right) congratulate Sir Michael Bishop bmi chairman, on the delivery of its first Airbus A330-200 at Manchester

tant day in the history of bmi. The arrival of our first ever wide-bodied aircraft is the final piece in the jigsaw enabling bmi british midland to compete globally.

"By choosing Airbus and Rolls Royce for our long-haul aircraft, bmi has shown commitment to British industry and British jobs. The deliveries form part of an order made in February 2000 for four Airbus A330-200 aircraft, with options for a further eight, worth a total value of £1.2 billion. "We have already demonstrated and gained recognition for our outstanding service on short-haul routes and now we will prove that we can deliver the same high quality product on long-haul services. This is only the start of our ambitions to bring the values of bmi british midland to markets throughout the world, in association with Star Alliance."

A Manchester investment
bmi british midland has invested £10 million in arrivals, departure lounges, passenger connection links, additional staff and check-in facilities, which the airline sees as a significant contribution to the overall growth of Manchester Airport. It is anticipated that the launch of services from Manchester to the US by bmi british midland will contribute substantially to the



Prior to the launch of the transatlantic routes, the first bmi A330-200 operated a series of flights on the airline's Manchester to Heathrow shuttle, much to the surprise and delight of the passengers

economic regeneration of the north-west and neighbouring regions, which is expected to see the airport's economic input to the region rise to £1.1 billion, compared to £600 million three years ago.

In flight
The Airbus Industrie claim, that the A330/A340 family of airliners boasts the quietest cabin in the sky, was put to the test on the day, in the two hour celebratory flight from Manchester, with bmi's new A330 certainly living up to the manufacturer's claims. Apart from being ultra quiet, the cabin is spacious, bright and comfortable: passengers should find no problems in flying long haul in this aircraft! Passengers on bmi british

midland's long-haul flights will be able to choose between three classes of travel - 'the business' (24 seats); an enhanced economy product labeled 'the new economy' (48 seats) and the 'economy' cabin (with 172 seats). Each of the 244 seats has its own in flight screen monitor with a wide selection of channels available. Amongst the most popular on this flight were the live transmissions from the forward looking camera along with spectacular views from the vertical mapping one. Alternatively you could watch the flight's routing being traced on the screen, along with readouts of altitude, ground speed and elapsed time. And to think, back in the mid-



A qualified chef is carried on board each flight to prepare your orders

1950's a hand written flight progress bulletin sheet was handed on from passenger to passenger - how times have changed!

But of course the screen monitor is also your personal in-flight entertainment presenter to while-away the hours. As we fly into the 21st Century, the 'Voyager' system is recognised as a flyer leader, with its state-of-the-art touch screen con-

trols to access the wide variety of films on offer, each carefully selected to get you in the mood, depending on whether your flight is heading for the US or the UK. There are also up-to-the minute television news channels and a multitude of games, but if you just want to sit back and relax you can tune into dozens of carefully selected audio channels catering for all tastes in music, talk shows and



bmi's new A330-200 prepares for its next flight

Photos by Paul Tomlin

personality profiles.

Airbus commitment
The acquisition of the A300-200 continues the bmi british midland commitment to the family of Airbus products. The A330-200 is the longest range twin-engine aircraft in the Airbus Industrie family, with a range of up to 12,300 km (6,650 nm).

The A330-200, which entered service for the first time in 1998, is a smaller, longer range version of the A330-300, which has been operating with the world's major airlines since 1994. By reducing the size and increasing the range of the A330-200, Airbus Industrie has addressed an aircraft market that is opening up as airlines replace old generation tri-jets and other twin-engine aircraft operating on continental and intercontinental routes.

The A330-200 wing manufactured by BAE Systems at Chester, combines advanced materials, structures and integrated fly-by-wire controls to deliver maximum efficiency and performance.

The combination of optimised wing design and twin Rolls-Royce Trent 772B low fuel burn high thrust engines give the A330-200 the best take-off performance for aircraft in its class, making it suitable for the widest possible range of airports and runway conditions even with full passengers and cargo payloads.

The A330-200 also benefits from the Airbus Industrie philosophy of commonality amongst its fly-by-wire aircraft family. All members of the family, from the 107-seat A318 right through to the 380-seat A340-600, share the same cockpit and, through the technology of Airbus Industrie fly-by-wire controls, share the same handling characteristics, allowing pilots to fly any model with only minor amounts of additional type training.

And cargo flies too
bmi british midland's cargo managers are encouraged by the very high level of positive interest shown on both sides of the Atlantic to the airline's newly launched transatlantic flights.

The twin-engine A330 combines some of the lowest operating costs of any aircraft ever designed. The revenue earning efficiency of the A330 is further enhanced by the voluminous underfloor cargo holds, with room for up to 60 per cent more freight than a Boeing 747. The unrivaled operating economics of the A330 mean that an aircraft can even operate profitable cargo flights without a single passenger on board, as demonstrated by some airlines which have flown regional overnight freight-only services with the A330, after a full day's passenger service.



The City of Manchester is spread across the picture: conspicuous by its size is the water reservoir at Audenshaw, with the newly opened eastern stretch of the M60 running alongside

The A330-200 boasts a bright, spacious cockpit. Captain John Quick (left) is bmi's chief A330 pilot, whilst in the right seat is Captain Geoff Linaker, general manager flight operations



The 'new economy' class has 48 seats, each with their own individual multi-channel video screens, together with laptop power, telephones and dataports. The seats have six inches more leg room than in standard economy class

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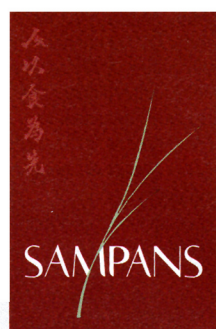
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Lined up for an approach to 06 Right, bmi's A330-200 passes over the stately home and grounds of Tatton Park, Cheshire



Made in Britain: the A330 wings are manufactured by BAE Systems at their Broughton factory near Chester. In the distance is the snow capped peak of Ben Nevis



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