

## **Hi-tech Plymouth firm salutes its 50 years in city**

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PROUD employees of a hi-tech Plymouth manufacturing plant have celebrated 50 years of business in the city.

Bombardier Transportation, which makes railway signalling technology in Estover, marked half a century of achievements yesterday.

City dignitaries, business leaders, staff past and present and company bosses gathered for an anniversary lunch and events.

The firm has been operating, under various names and at different city sites since 1959.

Today's site, with around 90 staff, is Bombardier UK's largest hub for rail control product engineering, project management, quality and safety, and manufacturing, exporting goods around the world.

Production manager Peter Long, aged 60, started at the company as an apprentice at 16 years old, when it was known as ML Engineering.

He said: "I'm very proud to be celebrating 50 years. I've seen this business in lots of different guises and I think its success is down to a quality product, the stability of the people who work here and the knowledge base that has been built in Plymouth."

Allan Morgan, Bombardier UK business director, said the Plymouth site had 1,160 years' worth of experience between its staff.

He said it was a "proud day" and the site had been through troubled times on the strength of its dedicated staff, with strong prospects ahead.

Lord Mayor Cllr Ken Foster, who attended the event with the Lady Mayoress, said: "It's good to see people working with their hands and making something well. It is proof we have the skills and are doing something for Britain, and other countries, in the city."

Jeremy Filmer-Bennett, Devon and Cornwall Business Council chief executive, added: "It demonstrates that Plymouth can still produce great companies in manufacturing."

The company was founded as ML Engineering (Plymouth) Ltd, and has also been known as EB Signal, ABB Signal, ABB Daimler-Benz Transportation (Adtranz) Signal, and Daimler Chrysler Rail Systems.

It was named Bombardier Transportation in May 2001 when the city plant became part of the signalling division of the huge multi-national Bombardier company.