

THE Duke of York will see a pioneering robot in Bristol during a series of trips to aerospace companies in the South West.

OC Robotics, based close to some of its major customers in Filton, created the Snake Arm Robot to allow work to be carried out in awkward and restricted areas.

It has a flexible tube-like arm which can carry cameras and tools into spaces which a human would have difficulty reaching and counts Airbus, British Nuclear Group, the Ministry of Defence, US Department of Defense and Rolls-Royce Naval Marine among its customers.

Prince Andrew is touring companies as part of his role as the UK special representative for international trade and investment. He will visit the firm at Abbey Wood Business Park on Monday.

OC Robotics spokeswoman Ros Conkie said: "He is coming to us because of the work

Prince has robot tour in his sights

by Lynne Hutchinson

l.hutchinson@bepp.co.uk

we have done with Airbus developing robots for in-wing assembly tasks.

"Using an industrial robot to perform tasks inside the wingbox is a real 'eye of the needle' problem. It is physically impossible to manoeuvre an industrial robot arm through the small man-access holes in a wing to carry out tasks inside because, put sim-

ply, the elbows get in the way. Snake Arm Robots are flexible robot arms that don't have elbows so they can follow their nose into confined spaces."

OC Robotics was set up 10 years ago by Dr Rob Buckingham, an expert in robotics, and technical director Andrew Graham. It moved from Henleaze to its current site in 2005 and currently has 11 staff, with more set to be taken on.

The robot can also be used

for decommissioning radioactive equipment in the nuclear industry, in surgery or in bomb disposal.

Dr Buckingham is about to address a major exhibition in Los Angeles, when he will present the latest developments of the company's work with Airbus as well as outlining plans for the future.

It will be the first time OC Robotics has exhibited at the SAE Aerotech Exhibition, which takes place later this month.



City visit: Prince Andrew