

**IN BRIEF**

**LIGHTS OUT**

With increases in both interest rates, steel prices and the more direct influence China has on our manufacturing base, it is more important than ever for UK manufacturing companies to adopt lean manufacturing methods and keep spindles cutting at every available opportunity.

Being a UK manufacturing company, Hydrafeed are equally aware of this climate as much as their customers are. Over the past couple of years Hydrafeed have noticed an increase in the sale of more automated turning centres sold into the UK allowing their customers to compete in the global market. As a direct result of this Hydrafeed have been involved in many "lights out" automated projects.

It has always been incumbent upon Hydrafeed to listen to their customers needs and the product range reflects this. Hydrafeed are now able to offer a Multifeed short magazine bar feed fitted with a Multi-Stacker option allowing customers to store many times the traditional amount of bar stock. This provides "true light out" production scheduling, and not merely one layer of bars on the magazine. Hydrafeed have customers who are experiencing up to 72 hours uninterrupted manufacturing time using the Multi-Stacker option.

Hydrafeed's latest product is the X-Tract unloading system. This product is aimed squarely at fully automating twin spindle turning centres. Hydrafeed are now able to offer loading of bar stock in one spindle and unloading finished parts from the other. The X-tract can be tailored to suit almost any part regardless of how sensitive. This has allowed customers to run not only vastly increased run times but also reducing manual intervention to little more than the initial setting.

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**AUTOMATED ASSEMBLY & HANDLING SOLUTIONS**

Mason Pinder Toolmakers Ltd has formed an automation systems unit based at Doncaster. The team will support Mason Pinder's established injection mould tool services, and also provide complete process engineering solutions, form raw material logistics through assembly to finished goods.

Mason Pinder's automation engineering team covers material delivery systems, automated component extraction from tools, limited sub-assembly, and other processes such as multishot and 'intool' assembly, and related consultancy services.

The team at Doncaster has substantial experience of high volume projection in three main areas; pick and place automated/robotic systems, materials handling and process mapping and downstream assembly.

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**ACHIEVING HIGH LEVELS OF PRODUCT CONSISTENCY**



The installation of an abrasive blasting suction cabinet system from Mac'Ants Abrasives Ltd. has enabled one of the aerospace industry's key manufacturers to achieve high levels of product consistency and a dramatically increased throughput. The facility now in operation at BAE SYSTEMS' Blackburn premises is central to the cleaning of small fasteners used as skin anchoring components for the JSF, Joint Strike Fighter aircraft – a joint development undertaken by BAE SYSTEMS, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman.

The installation undertaken by METS, the surface preparation equipment division of the Mac'Ants group, features three adjacent, stand-alone elements – an MM750 suction cabinet, cyclone and dust collector. The compact blast cabinet which requires a

footprint of just 750mm x 750mm, with an identical overall height, is fabricated from high quality, heavy gauge steel to maximise durability despite the rigours of a typical application environment. Kevin Marshall, METS Sales Engineer at the company, explains the role undertaken by the new facility –

"The aluminium, quick bond anchor nuts, which have roughly the dimensions of a two pence piece, are positioned in the blast chamber of the suction cabinet and then cleaned using a hand-held ceramic nozzle. This is controlled by the operator through a viewing window via two oval hand holes, fitted with in-built gauntlets, and foot pedal activation," he says.

"The unit benefits from a blast pressure regulator and air filter which achieves an efficiency level of 99.9%," he adds. "The resultant dust from the media used is collected under vacuum in the adjacent cyclone unit which separates recyclable media from disposable particles. The latter are then removed from the cyclone by the dust extractor, with the reusable media pumped back to the cabinet for further operations."

The cleaning process is designed to remove a protective paint coating from each component before its subsequent installation onto the aircraft – specifically, the aft fuselage and empennage. Significantly this is a procedure which needs to be undertaken in-house as there is only an eight hour window between the coating removal and the subsequent application of bonding glue.

The Mac'Ants' contract is enhanced by the on-going supply of the blast media itself – an aluminium-oxide 220 grit certified for aviation applications.

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**MAJOR ONLINE AUCTION**

Riley Industries, one of Europe's leading surface finishing equipment dealers has announced the world's biggest ever online auction of finishing plant and machinery started on October 17. It was conducted by the world's leading industrial auctioneers, Go Industry.

The auction, to be known as Riley Relocate 2005, will be a rare opportunity to acquire valuable items of surface finishing plant and machinery. It will be of interest to manufacturers, sub-contractors, metal finishers, machinery dealers and consultants-anyone involved in the surface finishing industry worldwide.

Visitors to the Riley Industries' stand no 69 at surface World, NEC Birmingham, UK,

November 8-10, will be offered the choice of a 'virtual tour' of the machines on the company's web site or a 'real tour' of its warehouses, which are just 20 minutes drive from the NEC. A minibus shuttle service will be provided.

Riley Industries is relocating after nearly 40 years in business. As a result, a significant proportion of the company's stock, presently held in its 5000 square metre premises in central Birmingham, will be offered for sale at prices well below market value.

The stock includes: Surface Treatments, Rectifiers & DC Power Supplies, Cleaning & degreasing Deburring & Polishing, Ovens & Furnaces and Blasting & Extraction.

Web: [www.rileyindustries.co.uk](http://www.rileyindustries.co.uk)

