

## New MD for Wichita UK

A new managing director has been appointed at Wichita's Bedford manufacturing plant. Neil Wright joins us from JCB's transmissions division in Wrexham, where he was general manager. Neil is already familiar with Wichita's products and markets, having previously spent more than a decade at Wichita's former parent company Dana. During his career, he has also fulfilled roles in design engineering, sales and product management.

Commenting on the challenges ahead of him, Neil said, "Wichita has always put a lot of effort into providing reliable products and great service, and now we must focus on developing robust plans that will assure future business growth in a demanding industry. As a small team operating in a global market, it's vital that we heed the voice of the customer and act upon it by deploying our group resources in the right places to support our customer base most effectively."

## Well earned rest in store

It's with a mixture of sadness and pleasure that we announce the recent retirement of Peter Sharp from Wichita Bedford. While we will miss his calm and good-humoured approach to everything that work could throw at him, not to mention his exceptional knowledge of

our products and markets, he has undoubtedly earned a rest after more than 36 years with us! We're sure that all of his colleagues and friends around the world will join us in wishing him a long and happy retirement.



## Industrial Clutch moves to Wichita



A recent rationalisation of Colfax manufacturing plants has resulted in Industrial Clutch manufacturing being moved to the Wichita plant in Texas from Waukesha. The combined experience of both teams has already resulted in exciting new product

developments which will be reported in later issues of All Torque. In the shorter term, this move will enhance our customer services with the complete range of heavy duty clutches and brakes now fully supported via your existing Wichita source.

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wichita.co.uk site upgrade planned.

## We're certified

Following a successful audit of our working procedures for re-certification purposes, Wichita's accreditation to the upgraded ISO9001(2000) standard has been confirmed.



We'd like to thank everyone involved for their hard work in ensuring that we maintain the high standards that our customers rely on.



# Customer survey defines focus

Our new MD Neil Wright has already made known his intentions for Wichita to focus on planning for future growth, and one of the best tools for deciding where to act first is to ask our customers what we could be doing better or differently. To this end, we recently commissioned an independent specialist firm to conduct a thorough customer survey on our behalf.

Firstly, we'd like to thank all of you who took part in this exercise – we appreciate that the individual face-to-face format of the survey required a considerable investment of your time, but we're sure it will prove to be one meeting that will produce noticeable results for you! Now onto some of the issues that arose as a result of the survey, with news of our ongoing efforts to effect improvements:

Overall the results of our 2003 survey were positive, with most of the replies suggesting that customers regard Wichita as a long-established, professional company, providing a well-engineered product with high standards of delivery and support. Encouraging though that is, there's no hint of complacency at Wichita – we're fully aware that market forces drive the need for continuous improvement in performance, delivery and pricing.

Delivery times in particular attracted comment from several respondents. In recognition of this, regular Kaizen

events are a feature of life within the Bedford plant. One of the earliest, combined with single-piece flow techniques (a description of this technique also appears in this issue), resulted in reducing the lead-time of a standard Mistral brake from ten days to just two days. This, combined with other changes, contributed to the reduction in price of standard Mistral units, announced at the end of 2002. The QuickServe system, giving 24-hour delivery for the most regularly requested spares was also the result of a Kaizen event, in response to the 2002 customer survey.

Some respondents remarked on increased turnround time for quotations, both for complete units and spares. This is an area that will benefit from the recent training of three of our personnel in 'value stream mapping', an extremely powerful 'lean manufacturing tool' that we intend to apply to improve our performance in all areas of customer response, by identifying waste within office processes.

Several customers stated that they were not aware of the full range of products and services we offer. To rectify this, and generally improve our communication with our customers, you will notice regular improvements to our website at [www.wichita.co.uk](http://www.wichita.co.uk) - please feel free to tell us what changes you would find useful. In the meantime we

## Exhibition Focus

### Hannover Fair, April 2003

Despite fears concerning international travel, this five-day event was fairly well attended by visitors from 24 countries.

Wichita was present on a large stand hosting all of the members of the Colfax Power Transmission Group: Marland, Stieber, Formsprag, Wichita and Warner. The Wichita section was hosted by Rolf Riesenacker and Willy Oelert from our German sales office, ably assisted by Trevor Woodhouse from the UK and Alberto Amoros from France.

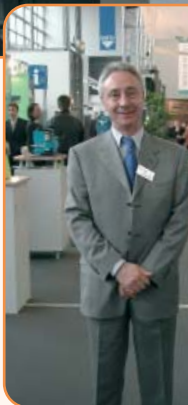
Meanwhile, our marine specialist Roeland van der Kuil was assisting on the Torquetest stand. Torquetest is a company that specialises in test rig controls, and its product display featured one of Wichita's large copper alloy water cooled brakes in a typical test rig mounting.

The Wichita units on display attracted considerable interest, especially our Metana hydraulic calliper brake (photo right hand side) and the MCS2000-POT ultrasonic tension control system, shown in the foreground of the bottom photograph second from left with our ModEvo tension control brake in the background.

### Europort, November 2003

Europort, the 31st International Maritime Exhibition and 13th International Inland Shipping Exhibition, takes place in the Europacomplex at the Amsterdam RAI, from the 18th to 22nd November 2003. We will of course be there promoting Wichita's marine line-up and offering our advice and experience free of charge!

The previous Europort exhibition, in 2001, attracted 800 exhibitors and more than 27,000 visitors, making this an event not to be missed by anyone involved in specifying or purchasing marine engineering products. We'll have more details available nearer the time, including hall and stand numbers for Wichita.





have included a one-page summary of our product range with this copy of All Torque.

In conclusion, as a company, we are committed to providing a finely engineered product that exceeds our customers' requirements in terms of performance, delivery and support service. The simplest and most effective way of achieving this goal is to listen, and most importantly to react, to what you tell us you want from Wichita. Your comments – both positive and negative – are always welcome and will help us to shape Wichita into the company you remain happy to do business with.

# Automated Switchboard improves communication

The telephone system at Wichita Bedford has been automated as part of our continuing effort to improve efficiency. Now when you call us, you'll hear a short introductory greeting, followed by options for connecting you to the department you require. Pressing '0' at any time will connect you directly with a sales secretary. The new telephone and fax numbers for the Bedford plant are as follows:



**Telephone no.** +44 (0)870 243 7012  
**QuickServe orders fax no.** +44 (0)870 243 7014  
**Main fax no.** +44 (0)870 243 7015

If you know the name of your Wichita contact, we encourage you to use their direct-dial (DDI) number to bypass the switchboard altogether. The 'Who's Who' section on our website at [www.wichita.co.uk](http://www.wichita.co.uk) gives the main site contacts and their DDI telephone numbers.

For your reference, three of the most useful sales contacts are:

**Tony Griggs (Units)** +44 (0)870 324 308  
**Geoff Belcher (Units)** +44 (0)870 324 307  
**Sal Perri (Spares)** +44 (0)870 324 306



# Website enhancements planned

Based on our readers' feedback, we're currently embarking upon some improvement work on the Wichita website. As we write, there is a general 'clean-up' of all areas on the site underway, which will make it easier and faster to navigate. We're also adding more functionality to the site – for example, a new section containing case studies and application stories for Wichita products will be one of the first to appear in the coming weeks. Design and layout changes will continue throughout the year, so if you have any comments on how we can help to make the site meet your needs, there's still time to let us know.



Wichita home page

[www.wichita.co.uk](http://www.wichita.co.uk)



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Product info and PDF downloads

## From batch manufacture to single-piece flow

From time to time in All Torque, we report on improvements that we've made to our manufacturing or administrative processes, usually as a result of a Kaizen event. In this issue, we're pleased to report another successfully completed project at the Bedford plant, where we've been striving to reduce the manufacturing times of certain components, starting with the ring and back for Mistral brakes.

Previously, batch manufacture was employed, whereby a large number of components would all complete the first stage of manufacture – in this case turning – before proceeding to the next – gear-cutting, and then subsequent operations. Consequently, it could be several days before the first finished component rolled off the production line.

The aim of the team was to convert the process to single-piece flow, with each component passing to the next stage of manufacture without waiting for the others to complete the previous stage. This required major upheaval, as the layout of the manufacturing cells had to be changed completely. The machines were moved closer together and arranged in a logical flow pattern that enables just one person in each cell to work all of the machines for turning, gear-cutting and drilling.

The result was well worth the effort though – a component that previously took days to make can now be produced in just 17 minutes!



**Wichita**  
QuickServe

## A fast way to buy spares

Call or email our QuickServe team to find out more on +44 (0)870 243 7012 / [quickservice@wichita.co.uk](mailto:quickservice@wichita.co.uk)



**Wichita**  
Clutch

**Wichita Company Limited**  
Amphill Road Bedford MK42 9RD U.K.  
t. +44 (0)870 243 7012  
f. +44 (0)870 243 7015  
e-mail. [clutch@wichita.co.uk](mailto:clutch@wichita.co.uk)  
web. [www.wichita.co.uk](http://www.wichita.co.uk)

**Colfax Power Transmission Group**