

News release from Leeds Manufacturing
11 June 2009



World Power Chase Relies On Pool Resources

The dash by emerging economies for improved infrastructures means good news and new jobs for one of the Leeds district's longest established companies.

Pool-in-Wharfedale based Weidmann Whiteley has long been a serious producer of insulation products for the global power industry and as countries including China, Brazil and India propel the worldwide demand for electricity, the order book grows and the firm has recently recruited six additional production staff.

The Yorkshire factory continues to thrive as the UK subsidiary of its £425m turnover Swiss parent company (part of a group employing 3,800 people around the world) which is operating at maximum capacity to supply the power generation and distribution industry.

Financial director John Briggs explains: "We have invested a six-figure sum in new CNC equipment for our fabrication shop, which created new jobs and we have recruited operatives

for the hand-moulding section. Successful applicants received on the job training here and in Switzerland."

Ian Williams, policy director Leeds Chamber of Commerce comments:"Accepted wisdom tells us that automation comes at the expense of jobs, especially in manufacturing, but in these days of lean manufacturing and where companies are actively winning new business it can mean increased capacity and create new jobs as the expansion of the workforce as Weidmann Whiteley demonstrates."

70% Exports

It's a far cry from the firm's origins in 1886, when production of board for the then flourishing Yorkshire textile industry began in a former corn mill alongside the River Wharfe. Today, the £14+m turnover company has a workforce of around 120 exporting 70% of its production to 120 countries – wherever there's a demand for electricity. Quality is paramount to Weidmann Whiteley and insulation products continue to be produced in Pool despite massively increased energy costs in the UK not faced by Weidmann Whiteley's European and American competitors.

In addition to growing sales to emerging economy countries, the growth of insulation products for replacement power and distribution transformers is set to continue in Europe and America.

New systems are also being developed, such as transformers for wind turbines, which creates a new demand despite the current world economic downturn. All of which bodes well for the firm's continued success supplying the major transformer manufacturers.

World-leading diversification

While the power industry remains the major market for the 12,000 tonnes of paper and board leaving Pool annually, a fair proportion of Weidmann Whiteley's products are supplied to a wide range of niche markets around the world when a consistent high quality presspaper is required.

Green Appeal

Wood pulp, used by Weidmann Whiteley comes from sustainable forests. Off-cuts are recycled in the production process and trim from customers at home and overseas is returned for use in production.

Another exciting 'green' development is the re-commissioning of the hydro-electric generating equipment on the banks of the River Wharfe. The electricity generated will keep the lights on at the Mill!

Ends

Photography: Toby Albrecht (left) sales manager industrial products at Weidmann Whiteley, pictured with David Baggaley, of Locate in Leeds.

Note to Editors: Leeds is the UK's second largest centre for print, publishing and paper manufacture with 425 companies employing over 8,500 people in the sector.

While the Yorkshire company has a proud history there is no doubt it owes its current success to the acquisition in 1981 by the privately-owned Swiss WICOR group (Weidmann International Corporation). Continued and substantial investment by WICOR made much technological development and product diversification possible.

In addition to Pool, the group has production centres in Switzerland, France, Ukraine, USA, Mexico, Brazil and China.