



NDI News

SUMMER 2007

CVF decision is good news for NDI

When Defence Secretary Des Browne announced in Parliament on July 25th that "We will now place orders for two 65,000 tonne aircraft carriers to provide front-line forces with the first-class capability they will need", the news was greeted with delight by NDI member companies throughout the North East, Yorkshire and The Humber.

Since the CVF programme was first mooted, NDI has worked assiduously on behalf of our 200 member companies to ensure that - no matter how the eventual contracts were structured - significant parcels of work would potentially come their way.

At a very early stage in proceedings, NDI worked on a campaign in partnership with the region's major newspapers to get local companies to register their capabilities in anticipation of the recent announcement.

NDI's managing director Trevor Harrison told NDI News: "The sheer scale of the CVF building programme means there is potential for companies of all sizes in the North East and Yorkshire to bid for and win contracts as the programme progresses towards the two vessels' in-service dates of 2014 and 2016.

"The Defence Secretary has stated that CVF will create or preserve 10,000 jobs across the UK. Of these, we understand that 5,000 will be in the four main construction yards (Govan and Rosyth in Scotland; Barrow and Portsmouth in England). Of course, that implies some



CVF gets green light

5,000 jobs elsewhere throughout the industry, and you can be sure that NDI will be actively campaigning for as many of these as possible to come to our region.

"CVF will require - indeed it will demand - the creation of many complex and effective supply chains. NDI has considerable expertise in putting together such supply chains, and we will be encouraging not only our 200 member companies, but others in the region also, to seriously consider how they can position themselves to take advantage of the new work opportunities that will be presented in the next few years."

For more CVF news, please turn to pages 2 and 3

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NDI & BAE Systems to stage Fast Jets event at Wetherby

NDI and global partner BAE Systems are staging an event at Wetherby Racecourse as part of BAES's national campaign to engage with the supply chain, present the concept of the Fast Jets LTPA and discuss any concerns or issues the supply chain may have.

The event takes place on September 6th, and should prove invaluable to many NDI member companies.

BAES wishes to involve as many companies as possible in this process in order to communicate their future supply chain engagement strategy, and the Wetherby event will give NDI members a great opportunity to meet with Mike Mercer and Ian Laurence of BAES who are responsible for the Fast Jets LTPA programme.

Any NDI members who have not already registered are urged to do so as soon as possible. Please contact Maria Winsper at NDI on 0191 255 1720.



European Defence Agency Contracts Bulletin Board

The European Defence Agency (EDA) has developed phase two of a business portal offering European companies of all sizes the chance to take advantage of increased cross-border sub-contracting opportunities in defence procurement.

For the first time suppliers, and in particular small- and medium-sized enterprises will be able to see sub-contracting opportunities listed in the same place and take advantage of the opportunities that are being created by the Agency, Member States and industry.

EDA believe the bulletin board (EBB2) has already proved a considerable success with 15 major contractors publishing over 100 defence contract opportunities on it, and attracting a good response from suppliers across Europe. The companies currently using EBB2 are:

BAES, DCNS, FN Herstal, Thales, Alcatel Alenia Space, Carl Zeiss, Safran, Avio, Nexter Systems, QinetiQ, Saab, Dassault, EADS, Patria and Stork.

EDA want to expand this pool of suppliers who are advertising on EBB2 and would welcome further companies coming forward.

This initiative holds considerable potential for NDI members. Don't delay. Explore the possibilities this holds for you by visiting www.eda.europa.eu/ebbweb

Lord Drayson names North East companies on CVF upper blocks short-list

In his speech to mark the official opening of the Marine Design Centre in Newcastle upon Tyne, Lord Drayson announced that two North East companies are in a strong position to win work on the £3.9 billion CVF programme.

Lord Drayson said: "A&P Tyne and Pallion Engineering will be competing for work on the upper blocks. This is the largest piece of work the Navy has ever had. Building these ships will test the capacity of the whole UK shipbuilding industry."

NDI member Pallion Engineering, based in Sunderland, has been in talks with Government for more than a year about securing work on the carriers, and there is no doubt that winning part of this contract would provide a future in shipbuilding for a generation who never dreamed of a career in the industry.

Pallion chairman Alan Dickinson was quoted in the regional press, saying: "I am reasonably confident that it is good news, but I would like to get my name on the contract - then we will have a big celebration. This is good news not just for Sunderland but for the whole British shipbuilding industry."

"There will be hundreds of jobs on a new build - there have to be, given the size of the build, the amount of work and all the skills that would be needed."

On Tyneside, A&P Tyne's Dave Skentelbery said in a press interview: "We are confident we can win part of the contract to construct part of the upper blocks on the aircraft carriers. We have been involved in the bidding process for quite some time and I think we will hear in the next year if we have been successful."

"But it is good news that the Tyne could share in this huge defence contract."

Kevan Jones MP seeks CVF assurance from the Defence Secretary

When the commissioning of the new carriers was announced in the House of Commons, Defence Secretary Des Browne was asked by Durham North MP Kevan Jones for an assurance that the economic impact of the £3.9bn order would be spread around the country.

Speaking in the House, Mr Jones said: "The announcement will be good news in the North East, as a lot of small and medium-sized enterprises will get work from the contract."

"I urge my right honourable friend to ask the consortium to work with Northern Defence Industries and other organisations that help SMEs to get work in the supply chain, so that the maximum economic impact of the orders is spread throughout the United Kingdom."

The defence secretary said: "I give him the assurance that he asks for and will ensure that that message is driven home to those who will build the carriers."

Mr Jones is optimistic about prospects for the region's defence companies. He told NDI News: "This is a fantastic opportunity for North East business."

"My job is to keep promoting North East industry and making sure prime contractors recognise the array of talent there is in the region."



NDI ready to do business at DSEi 2007

DSEI 2007 is almost upon us - and with it comes a sense of real anticipation from the many NDI subscribing member companies who are either exhibiting at DSEi, or visiting docklands between September 11th and 14th.



Since NDI first 'tested the water' at DSEi in 1999, our collective presence at this premier event has grown on each occasion, and at DSEi 2007 there will be no less than 30 NDI member companies taking part, either on the NDI stand itself, or independently in their own right.

DSEi markets itself as 'the world's largest fully integrated international defence exhibition bringing together senior international visitors and military influencers in an optimal business environment' - and we won't argue with that claim for one moment.

As a truly international event, it presents our member companies with an outstanding business opportunity, and we know many of our members have had extremely rewarding experiences in the past.

Quite apart from members who will be exhibiting, we know many of you will be attending as visitors. Make a point of 'dropping by' our stand (Number 1195) whilst you're there. Our staff team will be on hand throughout the event to offer advice (and possibly a refreshing cup of coffee or similar!)

Something that you might be interested in is a series of workshops that are running throughout the exhibition. Some need to be paid for, but a number are being advertised on the DSEi web site as completely free of charge.

In particular we would draw your attention to the following (not least because, apart from their relevant subject matter, they include contributions from NDI partner organisations and NDI members).

On Thursday Sept 13th, a workshop entitled 'How to do business with the UK MoD and Defence Industry Primes as an SME' features Mike Berridge, Director of Business Improvement at NDI member company AWS Electronics, and Steve Davies, Purchasing Director with NDI global partner Thales.

On Wednesday Sept 12th, the focus is on SC21 - a topic we have covered comprehensively in previous issues of NDI News. This particular event is facilitated by Helen Perthen, Project Manager Supply Chain Transformation Programme at NDI global partner BAE Systems

Also taking place on Wednesday 12th is a seminar entitled 'Introduction to Defence Exporting' featuring senior representatives from the Defence Manufacturers Association (DMA) with whom we recently signed a memorandum of understanding.

Further details of these events - and a lot more besides - are at: www.dsei.co.uk

We wish all NDI members much success at DSEi 2007. Naturally, we will report back on our collective experiences in subsequent editions of NDI News magazine and also in the members-only electronic newsletter, the NDI Bulletin.

AWS achieves AS9100 approval... and announces Instem acquisition

Another NDI member company exhibiting at DSEi 2007 has made two recent announcements that will have a far-reaching effect on their business.

AWS Electronics Group is one of the UK's leading specialist Electronic Manufacturing Services (EMS) providers, offering services for the whole electronic product life cycle from design through manufacture, to contract service and repair.

The Group operates through three UK based centres of excellence, Cemgraft (Newbury) providing Surface Mount Technology and rapid prototyping, AWS (Newcastle-under-Lyme) undertaking complex unit and cable/harness assembly and Jantec (Bedford) repairs and service.

AWS has recently achieved AS9100 certification for the manufacture of wiring harness and cable assembly to aerospace customer requirements. The company is also due to complete full accreditation for surface mount circuit board assembly and complete box build applications before the end of 2007.

AWS quality manager Alan Yearsley said: "With us already established and active in the aerospace and military sectors, achieving AS9100 has been a major business priority. Our customers

have been urging us to do this for some time so that they can place new business and expand their scope of supply with us.

"AS9100 allows AWS to join a small but elite group of UK manufacturers who possess the skills base and financial stability to service the aerospace sector."

In a separate announcement, AWS has confirmed its acquisition of Instem Technologies Ltd in a deal that now positions AWS as the largest UK independent Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) provider.

Both companies provide specialist manufacturing services to customers in a range of high-value, high-technology markets, where technical collaboration, quality and on-time delivery are key drivers.

Speaking after the announcement, AWS Group chief executive Paul Deehan said: "This is great news for AWS and for our customers. As a group with annual sales now in excess of £40 million, we have further increased our capability and breadth of services. The acquisition is strategic as it allows us to provide flexibility and capacity for the sales growth being created within both businesses."



ITC in Sheffield - venue for NDI FRES event in October

NDI members urged to engage with FRES at Sheffield Event

FRES (Future Rapid Effect System) is the MoD's programme to deliver a fleet of wheeled and tracked armoured vehicles to the British Army that is network-enabled, capable of operating across the spectrum of operations and protected against the most likely threats. These vehicles are expected to be in service for up to 40 years.

The programme is broadly split into 3 main groups of vehicles: a protected mobility platform (Group 1), a reconnaissance platform (Group 2) and a direct fire platform (Group 3). It is the largest ever Army programme with an acquisition value of around £16 billion, and through life costs of £60 billion.

The MoD has stated that they are aiming at an Initial Operating Capability in 2012.

The first delivery platforms will be the protected mobility platforms, followed shortly thereafter by the Group 2 platforms.

NDI global partner General Dynamics United Kingdom Ltd is staging a FRES Industry Day on Oct 25th at the ITC in Sheffield, and we urge all NDI member companies who think they have suitable capabilities to secure their attendance as

soon as possible. Senior representatives from General Dynamics will make a series of presentations at the event, and there will be opportunities for a number of company '1 to 1' meetings during the afternoon sessions.

To find out more - and to reserve your place on Oct 25th - please contact either Maria Winsper or Aaron Jobling at NDI. (Tel: 0191 255 1720)

On the same subject, NDI is currently in discussions with our global partners Boeing and Thales with a view to staging a similar event in the region before the end of the year. NDI members are urged to check out the members-only electronic newsletter, NDI Bulletin, for further details.

There is no doubt that many NDI member companies have the right capabilities to play important roles in the development of FRES. There is substantial business to be won as the programme matures, and time and effort expended at this stage are likely to pay huge dividends for many of our member companies in the future.

NDI News will continue to run updated stories concerning the FRES programme in future issues.

Lord Drayson opens MDC



Lord Drayson opens the Marine Design Centre

The Minister of State for Defence Equipment and Support, Lord Drayson, ushered in a new era for North East ship design when, on July 26th, he officially unveiled the new £2.3 million Marine Design Centre in Newcastle upon Tyne.

In his address, delivered to an invited audience of more than 100 senior representatives from the marine industry, Lord Drayson said: "This is a tremendous achievement and I want to pay tribute to NDI and Regional Development Agency One NorthEast, not only for having the vision to commission this centre, but to get it done in just 12 short months.

"It is more than just the building here - it is about the network of experts. It's a fantastic model for the future.

"The Marine Design Centre deserves to succeed; I am confident that it will do so, and I am certain that it will make a significant contribution to the economic well-being of the North East."

In his welcome speech, NDI Group Managing Director Trevor Harrison said: "For more than two hundred years the North East of England has been at the forefront of marine engineering innovation. The Marine Design Centre's mission is to further develop that fine tradition and to ensure that our regional marine design companies continue to create revolutionary new concepts and deliver ground-breaking, innovative ideas from drawing-board to point of construction.

"We may no longer build ships here - but we still have the skills and the talents to



Lord Drayson sees the Common User Facility in action

design the ships of the future.

"The Marine Design Centre will service the needs of three distinct global markets - commercial shipping; oil and gas; and, of course, defence. We are privileged to be in at the start of a brand new chapter in the maritime history of this region."

RDA One NorthEast has partnered with NDI in the creation of the Marine Design Centre, and has provided £1.5 million in initial funding for the project.

One NorthEast Chairman, Margaret Fay OBE, in a response to Lord Drayson's opening speech said: "The Regional Economic Strategy recognises that our economy is shifting, to one that is increasingly driven by knowledge-based industries - led by innovation, science and technology, and high-level skills like the design expertise that will be in action here.

"This centre - another first for the North East - will take the marine sector into new territory, positioning the region as a truly international leader in ship design and helping us to attract, train and keep the graduates of the future."

Regular readers of NDI News will know from previous reports that a key element of the Marine Design Centre is the provision of a Common User Facility (CUF) that will allow design companies

to hire the state-of-the-art facilities in a totally flexible way, giving them the flexibility to meet specific project needs without permanently increasing their overheads.

After declaring the Marine Design Centre officially open for business, Lord Drayson was given a guided tour of the facility, including a demonstration of the CUF in action.

The Marine Design Centre has recently developed and launched its new web site. You can find the MDC online at: www.marinedesigncentre.com



Trevor Harrison (NDI), Margaret Fay OBE (One NorthEast) and Lord Drayson at the MDC official opening event

New TT Electronics initiative delivers integrated defence solutions

New contracts, including systems for the latest phase of the Eurofighter programme, have been won by NDI member company TT electronics following the launch of the group's defence and aerospace growth initiative.

Subsidiary companies AB Connectors, MMG MagDev, TT electronic manufacturing services and Cramlington based Welwyn Components, have joined forces to deliver integrated solutions to the group's UK based defence and aerospace customers, and are exhibiting jointly at DSEi 2007, on stand number 489 in the UK pavilion.



TT electronics Chief Executive Neil Rodgers says the initiative reflects the group's growing presence in the defence and aerospace sector. "By consolidating technical expertise and experience across our operations, we can offer customers seamless project management and high level confidentiality.

"We are keen to support group companies that have identified development



Eurofighter

opportunities in the defence and aerospace market," said Rodgers. "Individually they each have a strong pedigree but their combined knowledge helps to consolidate our presence in the sector and further enhance our service to customers."

CAV Aerospace lands £100m Airbus deal



Clive Matthews (right) Commodities Manager of Airbus visited CAV Aerospace for two weeks in 2004 as part of a six-strong team working on supply chain development. He is pictured with CAV's Chief Executive Owen McFarlane (left) and Mike Eggleston, Head of Manufacturing.

Consett-based NDI member CAV Aerospace is investing an initial £4.5m in new manufacturing facilities and creating 44 new jobs after winning an additional contract, worth £100m over the next five years, from Airbus.

The project is the start of a planned £14.8m investment across the company's three divisions over the next five years as CAV Aerospace continues on the road to becoming a global force in the aerospace industry. The company now has manufacturing centres in Consett, Leicester, Wales and Poland and turnover is expected to reach £43m this year.

The latest Airbus contract is to supply wing components and establishes the company as a 'Centre of Excellence' in the UK for the

design and manufacture of spars and stringers. The contract was previously placed in the USA.

CAV currently employs 467 people worldwide with 325 at Consett, where this initial investment will not only create 44 new jobs but also safeguard a further 22.

The company has been designing and manufacturing components for Airbus since 1999 and is now a key supplier. The components include stringers for the wings of various versions in the Airbus range, including the A380, and every Airbus now contains a component made in the North East.

CAV is also expanding thanks to strong demand for its ice protection systems used on smaller aircraft, up to private jet size, with a 200% growth over the last three

years. It also operates successfully in the defence sector working on UAVs, the C17 transport aircraft and Eurofighter.

"This latest move strengthens our position as a major supplier to Airbus considerably," says Chief Executive Owen McFarlane. "The major airframe manufacturers are increasingly looking for suppliers to become partners for long term business and they need to have the capability to supply everything from a small, simple bracket to major structural sub-assemblies.

"We have positioned ourselves to support this customer strategy with the formation of three business units each with its own focus of expertise - aerostructures, ice protection and aeroproducts.

"Achieving this Centre of Excellence status will secure work packages for the Airbus A320 and A380 for the remaining life of the programme and this could be for up to 20 or 25 years," he added.

The new jobs created at Consett will range from machinists and CNC operators to inspectors and engineers. An additional CNC longbed machine with its associated plant and equipment, capable of dealing with the size of the spars and stringers, will be installed at CAV's HQ on Consett's Number One Industrial Estate.

Support for the initial investment project has come from One NorthEast with a Regional Selective Assistance grant of £249,000.

Lord Jones officially opens new metalweb facility in Birmingham

NDI member company metalweb plc is one of the UK's leading stockholders and processors of aluminium and other specialist materials, clearly focussed on the delivery of added-value to its growing list of blue-chip customers in high-tech industry.

The company has invested over £5million in plant including a £400,000 acquisition of a specialist water-jet cutting machine which is one of the largest machines of its type in the UK.

Lord Jones of Birmingham, Minister for Trade and Investment, returned to his home town recently to open metalweb's central 50,000 sq ft stocking, processing and distribution facility in Birmingham.

Following a tour of the new facility, Lord Jones unveiled a plaque to commemorate the occasion in front of metalweb's 50-strong on-site work force and other colleagues from the group who had travelled to the 'second city' to join in the celebrations.

NDI News spoke to metalweb managing director Derek Webb at the event and we

asked him about the significance of the new facility.

Derek told us: "Our strategy has been to focus on adding value to specialist products and market sectors. This supports our customers to meet the demands of today's global market. We have developed partnerships with customers and suppliers throughout the supply chain to deliver these tangible benefits.

"This state-of-the-art facility will play an important part in our future and it serves as both testament to the great workforce we have and the strong partnerships they have built up over many years with our customers and suppliers both in the UK and across the globe."

In his address, Lord Jones said: "Everyone at metalweb is to be congratulated for their hard work and determination which has undoubtedly contributed to this company's success; success which is clearly underpinned by the growth in revenue and productivity since Derek and his team acquired the business in 2001. I look forward to keeping in touch with the team here and monitoring

their success both at home and abroad"

Lee Shaw, metalweb's commercial director told us: "We have clearly established a reputation in the global and local market for our technical ability, product knowledge and high quality customer service - this is what metalweb stands for.

"Through innovation and constant improvement across the various facets of the business, we will continue to build on our leading market position and this new facility will allow us to build further on our product offering."



All systems go at Altec

Altec Engineering is a shining example of how exploiting NDI membership can work to considerable advantage.

Altec Engineering was founded in 1978 and has built an enviable reputation for providing engineering solutions to customers in many different industry sectors.

A major development saw the formation - in 2006 - of a new division, Altec Precision, which was established specifically to serve the aerospace, defence, nuclear & oil & gas sectors.

The practical value of NDI's members-only electronic newsletter (NDI Bulletin) was amply demonstrated when the Altec management team picked up on a possible future contract opportunity advertised in the Bulletin in 2005.

The opportunity in question was to supply critical spares for the BAE Systems-manufactured Challenger II Main Battle Tank. Altec followed up the NDI lead, and after lengthy negotiations won their first order for supply a year later, in 2006.

NDI News caught up with Altec's business development manager Paul Lackenby and we asked him to tell us about recent developments at the company.

Paul told us: "From the moment we decided to become members of NDI we were determined to extract maximum value for money from our membership.

"We knew and understood how NDI could help an SME like us to spot opportunities and win additional business; business that we might not even have gained access to by working on our own. The contract opportunity to supply into the Challenger programme with the MoD Heavy Armoured Systems IPT is a case in point.

"Buoyed by that success we have continued to be active members of NDI and we were delighted to be invited to make a presentation at the most recent NDI Annual Conference in Gateshead earlier this year.

"Our relationship with BAE Systems - and with many other Primes - has developed considerably since our opportunity to present at the conference.

"You will be aware that BAE Systems are currently running a national campaign, presenting the concept of the Fast Jets LTPA and engaging as widely as possible with the supply chain. (see feature on page 2)

"I am pleased to say that, following discussions with BAE Systems & the MoD when we were invited to Abbey Wood, Altec is now being sponsored for approval by BAE at Director level so we can perhaps manufacture service parts for the fast jets fleet of aircraft.

"We are also in discussions with a UK Prime helicopter manufacturer for a similar approval for the design and manufacture of modifications to in-service helicopters. If we are to be successful in this project, we will continue to need the support that NDI provides, and success would also require us to work co-operatively with other NDI member companies. "That is yet another reason for us to maximise the benefits of our membership; our business opportunities are improved simply because we are in contact with many other companies who have skills and capabilities that complement our own."

And what of the future? Paul told us: "Most immediately, we are looking forward to exhibiting at DSEi 2007. There will be a substantial NDI presence there this year, and we will be looking to further promote Altec's capabilities to the defence and aerospace markets, especially in frame work agreements for equipment through life support for which we already have a robust track record of supply to the Ministry.

"Next year sees Altec celebrate our 30th anniversary in business; we are in the midst of a substantial business expansion plan which should see us double both our turnover and capability to industry, so we are very optimistic about the future."

And when the next NDI membership renewal form next drops through the Altec letterbox? "No worries there - the cheque will be in the post!"

NDI members pick up Queen's Awards 2007



Mr Bill McPherson, General Manager International Paint Marine and Protective Coatings Business Unit, receives the Queen's Award from the Lord Lieutenant for Tyne and Wear, Mr Nigel Sherlock DL FRSA

Two NDI members were recently recognised for outstanding achievements in the 2007 Queen's Awards for Enterprise.

Geoff Ford of Ford Component Manufacturing Ltd picked up a Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion. Geoff has voluntarily supported enterprise for more than ten years as a member of the board of the South Tyneside Enterprise Partnership and has provided mentoring and support to more than 1,000 start-up and existing businesses.

Ford Components manufactures precision parts for the defence, aerospace and a wide spectrum of other industries.

Geoff said, "It is difficult to put into words what an honour it is to receive The Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion. It means a great deal to me personally, but it also reflects the commitment of South Tyneside to the principles and practice of enterprise."

A family business, Ford Components will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2010 and was established in Commercial Road, South Shields, by Geoff Ford's grandfather.

The only firm to pick up a Queen's Award for Enterprise in the innovation category was the marine and protective coatings arm of International Paint Ltd, which is based in Felling, Gateshead.

International Paint developed an environmentally-friendly coating - Intersleek 700. Intersleek is a specially-formulated paint applied to the hulls of vessels that prevents the growth of barnacles and weeds. The paint -

described as being like a 'non-stick frying pan' - counteracts the effects of 'drag' as the vessel moves through the water and increases fuel efficiency as a result.

Geoff Ford and representatives from International Paint were invited to a reception at Buckingham Palace at the end of July in recognition of their achievements. The reception was attended by the Queen and other members of the Royal Family and the Minister of State for Competitiveness, Stephen Timms, MP.

Richard Lambert, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, said: "All the winners should take great pride in their award. They will provide inspiration for other businesses to follow in their footsteps and give the UK the cutting edge it needs to succeed in the 21st Century."

....and it could be you in 2008

The Queen's Awards are highly sought-after and provide tangible commercial benefits for companies who receive one. The Queen's Award for Enterprise is recognised in the UK and overseas and is respected as a mark of quality and success by the business community.

Companies may apply for the business Award in one, two, or all of the three categories of The Queen's Award for Enterprise. These are: International Trade, Innovation and Sustainable Development.

If your company wishes to apply for consideration for the 2008 Queen's Awards programme, visit www.queensawards.org.uk. The deadline for applications is October 31 2007

International Paint opens £5m research centre on Tyneside



New International Paint R&D building

NDI member company International Paint - part of the global Akzo Nobel group - has officially opened a £5 million paint research centre at its Tyneside base in Gateshead.

The new centre will carry out product development - sometimes planning decades into the future - for International Paint's marine, protective and yacht coatings businesses in 54 countries all over the world.

Worldwide marine marketing manager Jim Brown told NDI News: "The new research and development centre gives us a significant competitive advantage, developing products for all of our businesses.

"Once the technologies are invented and developed here, they are then introduced in different regions around the world; our regional labs can then adapt or improve them further to suit local markets."

The new 2,100sq metre three-storey R&D centre replaces previously scattered lab facilities which had been developed around buildings dating from the 1920s, and the centre's opening represents another milestone in International Paint's business which currently employs 900 staff in Gateshead, and a further 62,000 people worldwide.

Jim Brown said: "This is a site that has been established for over 100 years and there were very good reasons for building this plant exactly where it is currently; it stands here because the river Tyne was the world leader in ship building and dry-docking.

"Since 2005 we have recruited 20 to 25 people a year and we expect to see a steady increase in staff numbers over the next two to three years." evices and products for the project partners."



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