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## INFORMATION

Release date: 13 July 2009

### **HYDRAULICS SPECIALIST TURNS TO ALPHA FOR 'SELF SUFFICIENCY'**

A leading East Anglian hydraulics specialist, with a history of more than 30 years' success in the industry, has invested in its first large-capacity manual/CNC combination lathe - a top-of-the-range Colchester-Harrison Alpha 1800XS equipped with a Fanuc 21i TB control system.

Ipswich Hydraulics Ltd says its decision to turn to Colchester-Harrison and 600 Group's distributor RK International Machine Tools Ltd was easy, based on the service and proven track record of previous CNC machine investments such as its "very capable" Tornado CNC lathe.

The company has selected the new 7-tonne heavyweight Alpha 1800XS lathe from Yorkshire-based 600 UK – part of 600 Group, Britain's largest manufacturer and distributor of state-of-the-art machine tools - to boost its high-precision turning productivity in the future.

Managing Director, Spence Deakin, is confident the Alpha 1800XS represents a major step towards his company's achieving self sufficiency to carry out all types of turning work in-house, made necessary by the declining number of specialist sub-contractors in the present economic climate.

Furthermore, with a 4 metre-long bed and 800mm swing over bed, it provides Ipswich Hydraulics with the means to turn large components for applications in new industry sectors which it has already identified, especially in the growth area of large-scale, hydraulically-operated flood defence barriers and similar environment-based projects.

"It is essential for us to invest in the right equipment for the future," says Spence Deakin. "Our customers in all sectors demand work which is produced to the highest levels of quality and accuracy to increasingly fast turnaround times. Lead times are becoming shorter all the time.

"The CNC capability gives us an important advantage in successfully meeting these demands and because so many of the big sub-contractors in the UK have gone, self sufficiency is the way the hydraulics manufacturing industry is moving."

More follows/

Ipswich Hydraulics Ltd 2/

During its early years the family-run company, founded by Spence Deakin's father Mel in 1978, concentrated on making hydraulic rams, cylinders and power packs, but more recently it has achieved an international reputation as a designer, manufacturer, supplier and installer of bespoke hydraulic systems for 'turn-key' projects, for example in the dockside, marine and specialist vehicle sectors.

It is an acknowledged leader in producing hydraulically-driven alignment systems, or 'trim, list and skew', and 'anti-snagging' systems for crane overload protection on dockside container cranes, and stabilizing jacks and levelling equipment for specialist vehicles including mobile outside broadcast suites.

Many of the projects which incorporate systems manufactured by Ipswich Hydraulics are supplied to end-user customers abroad. Last year, in which the company celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, overseas sales topped 60% of its output.

One such high profile international contract was a mobile race-control unit for one of the world's leading and best-known Formula 1 motor racing teams.

Nearer to home Ipswich Hydraulics Ltd, which has around 10,000 square feet of manufacturing space at its base on Boss Hall Industrial Estate and employs 15 people, also offers its UK-based customers a full repair and re-manufacturing service for a wide range of hydraulic equipment.

In the company's highly experienced workshop, Works Manager Nigel Butters who has spent 30 years in the industry, highlights the importance of the new Alpha 1800XS, which has a spindle bore of 170mm: "It effectively doubles our turning capacity and gives us the chance to machine bars which are twice as long – 4 metres compared with 2 metres – and the control system means it substantially reduces machining time," he said.

Manual Guide i conversational programming system is standard on all Colchester-Harrison Alpha XS machines for fully-automatic turning. Its real strength is that it is effectively a CNC Graphical user interface. All the time the machine is working in Manual Guide i, the Alpha's Fanuc 21i TB control is creating a CNC programme in the background. This means conversion from conversational mode to CNC mode is instant. It also means industry-standard CNC programmes can be loaded into and out of the control at any time.

The Colchester-Harrison Alpha Manual/CNC range now offers engineering specialists even more flexibility and machining capacity, thanks to the introduction of the Alpha 2800XS which is available with a 5 metre-long bed (distance between centres) and spindle bore sizes up to 380mm. Optional specifications for the new Alpha XS2800 include an increased swing-over-bed of 1000mm and centre height of 500mm. It can be supplied with a fully-enclosed retractable cabinet if required.

**RELEASE ENDS**

Pic caption 1: *Ipswich Hydraulics Ltd MD Spence Deakin with the company's new Colchester-Harrison Alpha 1800XS.*

## Notes to Editors:

600 UK is part of the 600 Group PLC, the UK's largest machine tool company operating from a number of locations worldwide which sells its products into more than 180 countries. The Group has two core areas of business activity centred on machine tools and laser marking excellence:

- Machine Tool Division: 600 Group is one of the world's leading names in the manufacture and global distribution of state-of-the-art machine tools. Principal products within the internationally renowned **Colchester-Harrison** range include **Tornado CNC** turning centres, **Alpha CNC** combination lathes, **Storm** vertical machining centres and conventional centre lathes. Important parts of this division are:
  - The 600 Europe operations in West Yorkshire and Stuttgart, Germany, distribute 600 Group products throughout the UK, Continental Western and Central Europe. Additionally, it distributes workholding accessories under the **Parat** brand.
  - 600 North America, based in Michigan, supplies Group products throughout the USA and Canada, including the **Clausing** range of machine tools.
  - The Group's international distribution centres also stock and ship a wide range of workholding accessories manufactured for other machine builders, most of which are manufactured in the Group's UK facilities. These accessories include manual and power chucking products from **Pratt Burnerd**, workholding products from **Crawford Collets** and precision machine tool bearings from **Gamet Bearings**.
  - To support these comprehensive product ranges, a complete technical support service is available for all customers, including on-site service engineering and extensive spare parts stockholding for the installed base of existing machines.

Laser Marking Division: **Electrox** provides laser marking solutions for a huge range of materials and applications, through its operations in the UK and USA. Electrox is one of the few truly integrated manufacturers of laser marking systems in the world, taking end-to-end responsibility for every aspect of design, development and production of both hardware and software technologies.

## For further information please contact:

Mike Berry, General Manager – 600 UK, Union Street, Heckmondwike, West Yorks WF16 0HN

Tel: +44 (0) 1924 415000

Fax: +44 (0) 1924 415011

E-mail: [mail@600uk.com](mailto:mail@600uk.com)

Web: [www.600uk.com](http://www.600uk.com)

## Prepared by:

Peter Loweth, Peter Loweth Public Relations, Wharfe View, Beamsley, Skipton, North Yorks. BD23 6HL

Tel: +44 (0) 1756 711129

Fax: +44 (0) 1756 711129

E-mail: [peterloweth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:peterloweth@yahoo.co.uk)