

## NEWS INTERNATIONAL GLASGOW

## Setting an example

News International's Eurocentral plant on the outskirts of Glasgow will be the first of its new printing operations to come on stream.

**CARYL HOLLAND** reports on progress

IF YOU fly into Glasgow airport on a certain flight path you cannot help but notice a large modern blue and grey building. This is News International's new Eurocentral plant. Covering 85,000 sq ft in a 14 acre greenfield site, it is being built as part of the group's £600 million investment in its UK newspaper production facilities.

If the building looks somewhat familiar, it is not surprising since it is based on the design produced by Oxford Architects for Johnston Press's new printing facilities at Dinnington near Sheffield. In addition, Thornton Firkin is again acting as project manager and Thermal Transfer is providing the mechanical and electrical services.

Having started the building work in June 2005, from the aeroplane, the Eurocentral facilities look complete apart from the surrounding buildings. However, the project still has a little way to go. Although the major construction work is now finished, the building is not due to be handed over by the builders, Carillion, until December.

In the meantime, white paper testing on the two MAN Roland Colorman XXL triple-width presses has started. The installation of the Ferag mailroom commenced last month, as did that of the three Polaris XCV-S platemaking lines from Agfa Graphics. With their Nela plate bending/punching plus a two-tier Nela sortation system, they are being installed in an open plan area which also contains the press consoles.

"There have not been any major delays at all really," reports Ross McCombe, man-



● MAN XXL presses: now running white paper trials

ufacturing services manager at NI Glasgow. "Construction has been very quick".

"We are due to move to live production in the middle of April 2007," adds Richard Bennett, manufacturing manager.

The new plant is going to be quite a change for NI's staff in Glasgow. Currently, they are operating in the centre of the city in an old building which was originally designed as an engineering works. As well as editorial and advertising departments, it houses two MAN Roland presses which were installed some 17 years ago as part of NI's last major investment in its UK production facilities.

In fact, like the current project, Glasgow was the first NI plant to install them. The same

was true of its mailroom inserting equipment.

"This plant has been a pioneer for much of the innovation that News International has undertaken over the years," reports Bennett. "We were also the first with ctp. In fact, other than Southampton, we were probably the first people in the UK with ctp. Our Krause machines have been in here for nearly nine years".

Interestingly, around two years ago, the plant also piloted a rfid tagging system for newsprint reels using reusable aluminium or composite cores. At Eurocentral, the technology will be combined with MAN Roland's Aurosys reel handling system to provide closed loop control and tracking of the individual reels from when

they leave the paper mill to when they are used to print the newspapers.

As NI's Scottish editions require higher paginations than those further south the two presses at Eurocentral are larger than those at the other new NI plants, having six nine-cylinder satellite printing towers, six CD 15 reel splicers and a 4:7:7 folder each, the first to be installed in the UK.

With a web width of 2,211 mm and a cut-off of 578 mm, each press will be able to print up to 144 full-colour tabloid pages straight in up to six sections. Although the majority of newspapers printed on the presses will be tabloids, the configuration will also allow the presses to be combined enabling a 144-page broadsheet to be printed straight.



● Pictured (l-r): Eurocentral's group technical services engineer Neil Masson, manufacturing manager Richard Bennett and Ross McCombe, manufacturing services manager

The complete press line consists of six printing units, followed by two folders and then another six printing units. It will be controlled via MAN's Pecom system, while its Printnet workflow software will provide a complete plant network. The presses will be fed by the Aurosys reel handling system which will consist of Auroroll for conveying the reels, Autocut for removing the end caps, Auroprep for reel preparation and Auroport for transferring the prepared reels to the Auroload reel loading device which will automatically load the reels into the reel-stands.

Bennett believes that much of the success of the new operation which will involve printing high pagination, multi-section products efficiently at high speed will come down to properly trained staff and admits: "One of the biggest challenges we have is training people whilst we do the transition".

To help in this, MAN has supplied a training simulator. Developed in conjunction with NI, this can be integrated into any press console.

Fortunately for Glasgow, the plant has quite a history in training.

"One of the things that we did as part of NI's previous multi-skilling project was to build up a comprehensive training infrastructure including being accredited with City & Guilds," explains Bennett. "Consequently, we now have the benefit of having printers who are trainers and assessors for City & Guilds".

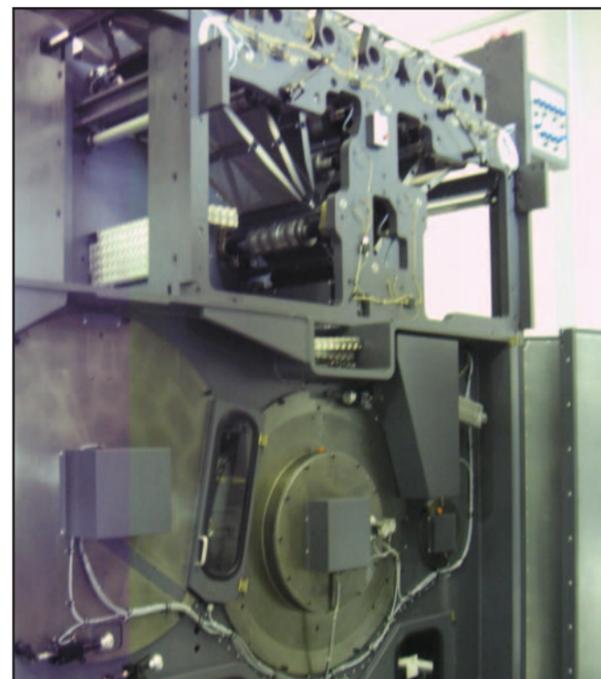
They will become what Bennett calls 'super users' at the new plant, having been given two months' training on the new presses plus experience with the installation engineers, while the rest of the crews will receive one month's training plus practical experience.

"What we are trying to do is maximise delegation. We have also tried to involve as many people as we can in the project and to keep people as well briefed as possible. For example, for the last four months, we have held tours of Eurocentral for the all staff and that is still on-going".

He concludes: "When you are in the middle of a project like this, it is tempting fate to say that it will be a great success because there are lot of things that could still go wrong. However, I think it is right to say that we are quietly confident".



● News International's Eurocentral plant in Glasgow



● UK first: the huge 4:7:7 folder