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A managing director for Cumbrian Newsprint, a national sales manager for MAN Roland GB, an international dealer manager for Farrukh Systems and newspaper application specialists for Miles 33.
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IfraExpo exceeds expectations

WITH four of the major suppliers to the industry deciding not to exhibit at the IfraExpo this year due to it being a Drupa year, there were a number of exhibitors wondering whether they had made the correct decision when the show opened at the Rai centre in Amsterdam last month. However, these fears proved unjustified. Although, at around 9,000, the number of visitors was similar to last year's show at Leipzig, a number of orders were taken and there was an upbeat atmosphere around the show, possibly due to the announcement half-way through of the £600 million investment by News International (see lead story this page).

The exhibition also proved worthwhile for the visitors with many products being shown for the first time including a number of unexpected launches (see page 13).

It has to be said that the location of this year's exhibition also probably had something to do with its success. It might not be possible to say the same next year when the exhibition is again being held in Leipzig.

However, Ifra is doing its utmost to make the trip to east Germany more attractive and easier including providing coaches at Berlin airport to take visitors to the show. Ifra also reports that a number of manufacturers have already booked stand space for next year, the total taken so far being almost 10,000 square metres. Interestingly, they include not only Kodak Polychrome Graphics but also MAN Roland, Fujifilm and Agfa, all of whom decided not to exhibit at this year's show.

“We do believe that what we are going to do will change British newspaper production. I also think it will be the most efficient and will probably turn out more newsprint per hour than any other plant in the western world”

– Ian McDonald, managing director of operations, News International Newspapers – full exclusive story, pages 10-11

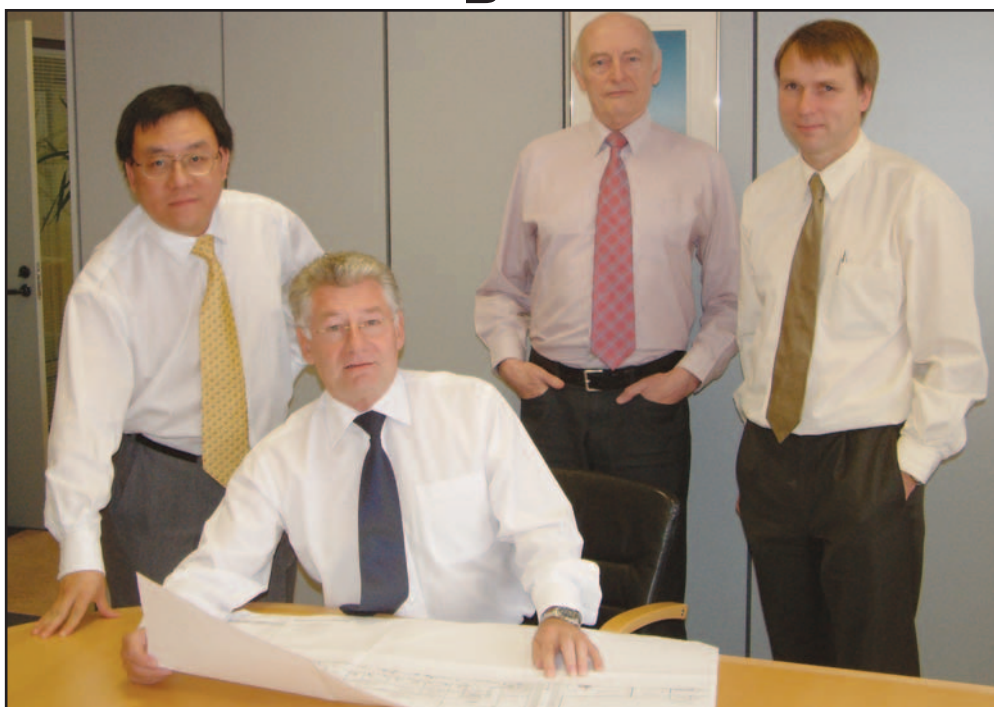
Nationals' colour bandwagon starts to roll

IN WHAT is probably the largest single investment made by a newspaper group, News International has announced that it is to spend £600 million over the next four years on its printing facilities. This will mean an end to printing at Wapping where production will be transferred to a new 15.5 hectare greenfield site at Broxbourne in Hertfordshire close to the A10/M25 junction. It will also involve building a new greenfield site printing plant in Glasgow, plus expansion of its operations at Knowsley on Merseyside and the Smurfit plant in Kells, Ireland. In other words, as Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of News Corporation explained, it demonstrates the group's 'absolute commitment to the future of print'.

It also displayed 'a huge expression of confidence in our future by our parent company, News Corporation,' according to Les Hinton, News International's chief executive.

"This will ensure News International maintains its leading position in the national newspaper industry. The new presses will provide colour on every page bringing advantages to both advertisers and editorial. When this project is complete our newspapers will be unsurpassed in the quality of their printing, and the speed and efficiency with which we produce them".

Somewhat as expected, all sites will have triple wide presses: the group has ordered 22 Colorman XXL 24-page machines from MAN Roland capable of printing 120 pages in full colour at 86,000 copies an hour. However, as PJ found out



● The News International Newspapers' project team, left to right: Jeff Yeung, contracts and budgets director, Ian McDonald, managing director of operations, Ian Dickson, group chief engineer, and Brian McGee, group director of manufacturing

in an exclusive interview with Ian McDonald, NI's managing director of operations at News International Newspapers, and his project team, the presses' configuration and, indeed, the whole way the operation will be undertaken is somewhat unusual and is likely to set a new trend in world-wide newspaper production in the future (see pages 10-11).

In a related development, Johnston Press has also announced that it is extending its current contractual arrangements with News International with a 15 year agreement to print News International titles at its planned new printing facility in Sheffield, South Yorkshire. This has resulted in Johnston

making an additional investment of around £20 million in the greenfield site, bringing the total cost of the project to in excess of £60 million.

Again, a Man Roland Colorman XXL press will be installed, this time with 12 stacked satellite units with three folders, as well as a Muller Martini mailroom. The facility is due to be fully operational by the end of 2006, in time for the NI contract to start in 2007. (For more details, see page 3.)

Not surprisingly, the NI announcement was soon followed by one from Express Newspapers which says that it will be investing £20 million in West Ferry Printers to upgrade its colour production. The group

says that the money will be spent over the next few months although it has yet to say on what.

However, the likely areas are computer-to-plate equipment and the presses giving them more colour capabilities.

Indeed, the press manufacturers, or at least some of them, are in for a bonanza what with the Guardian Media Group having already announced that it is to invest £50 million in converting to a 'mid-size European format' (see PJ August) and the Telegraph Group expected to announce its plans for its presses at West Ferry now that the ownership of both the publisher and the printer has been settled.

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New position for Marshall

ASSOCIATED Newspapers has announced that Allan Marshall has been appointed chief operations and technology director and is heading up the Group's new Operations and Technology Services team. This has been formed as an integral part of Associated in order to ensure that the Group's IT services and pre-press functions are more closely aligned to its business goals. The new team has taken on responsibility for both IT services for the Group, as well as other new areas including the provision of pre-press operations, and technology evaluation and implementation.

Kevin Beatty, managing director at Associated Newspapers said: "This new entity will help maximise the use of our existing IT systems and will work closely with ANL's operating divisions to identify, develop and support their ongoing technology needs."

"The Group Operations and Technology Services team will subsume our current IT division, Associated Mediabase".



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