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Johnston Press invests again in Ireland

JOHNSTON Press has entered into acquisition agreements with the shareholders of two Irish publishers, the Local Press group and the *Leinster Leader*. Both acquisitions are subject to the approval of the Irish Competition Authority and the Irish Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

The Local Press group began trading on January 2004 following the acquisition of Trinity Mirror's Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland newspaper division by a 3I Group backed management team. The group publishes 12 main titles, eight in Northern Ireland, three in the Republic of Ireland and one which is published in both. It comprises three separate publishing companies – the Derry Journal, Century Press and Publishing, and *The Donegal Democrat*. The total weekly circulation is around 343,000, and the titles include the *News Letter* and the *Derry Journal*.

Johnston Press believes that the Local Press group represents an attractive and complementary addition to its recently acquired titles in Northern Ireland and the Republic. It also sees the acquisition providing opportunities for operational and purchasing synergies.

The same goes for the *Leinster Leader*. A privately owned company, its publications have a total circulation of 92,000. They include six weekly paid-for newspapers in the Republic of Ireland. The company also publishes a paid-for evening newspaper in Limerick three days a week. All newspapers are now printed in-house following the recent commission of a new print facility on a Greenfield site in Limerick.

This the third acquisition involving Ireland that Johnston Press made this summer.



● **Guardian Print Centre general manager Brett Lawrence with one of the first new-look Guardian's off the London presses**

B-day for The Guardian

THE GUARDIAN was unveiled in its new Berliner format on Monday 12 September, printed on new MAN Roland presses at the new Guardian Print Centre in London's East End and on mirror image presses at Trafford Park Printers in Manchester. PJ is the first trade publication to have been given a tour of the new plant which was built, equipped and running live copy in exactly 12 months. Full report on page 9



● **Guardian chief executive Carolyn McCall and editor Alan Rusbridger in the press hall on Berliner launch day**

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NI announces new orders...

AS PART of its £600 million investment plans for its printing facilities, News International (NI) has announced that MAN Roland will be supplying the complete reel handling system for all three UK sites (at Broxbourne, Knowsley and Glasgow), and that the mailrooms will be equipped with 20 MK 9 palletisers from Danish-based Dan Palletiser. In addition, the order for blanket and roller washers for the 19 MAN Roland Colorman 6-86 presses being installed has gone to Rotoclean.

For all suppliers, they represent the largest orders ever received and will result in NI's new greenfield site at Broxbourne having one of the most automated newsprint reel handling systems in the world.

"We spent quite a considerable amount of time looking at the various systems before we finally settled for the one being offered by MAN Roland," explains Brian McGee, NI's group director of manufacturing. "Not only is it technically a good solution but it also makes immense sense since it has to be closely integrated with the presses. It was the cleanest solution by far".

At Broxbourne, it will also be a completely lights out operation from when the reels are automatically unloaded from the trucks to when they are fed into the press reel-stands. In other words, on arrival at the plant, the reels will be automatically identified and checked using either bar codes or rfid tags before being unloaded and

...and chooses Agfa for ctp

AS PJ goes to press, it can be exclusively revealed that News International has chosen Agfa for its platemaking operations at its new printing facilities in the UK. Agfa will be installing 20 Polaris XVS violet platesetters, 12 of which will be installed at Broxbourne, five at Knowsley and three in Glasgow.

The agreement will also include supply of plates, a complete digital workflow based on Agfa's Arkitex software and full facilities management. In other words, Agfa will be responsible for on-site maintenance, as well as providing a full service for the equipment. (See PJ next month for more details.)

consigned to a high bay storage system.

When required, they will be taken to the automatic preparation stations where the outer wrapping will be removed and a splice pattern applied by MAN Roland's Aurorep system. The reels will then be moved to an intermediate storage area where they will be

held until required for production. At that time, they will be transferred to the pressroom and loaded into the reel-stands using MAN Roland's Aurosys system whose software will control the whole operation.

"We will supply the complete system but we will be using specialised partners for a number of the functions such

as truck unloading, the high bay storage and unwrapping the reels," says Wilfried Rill, the director in charge of automatic roll and material handling systems at MAN Roland. "We will also be providing the software which will integrate all these stand-alone operations into one big logistic system, as well as, of course, integrating the operation with the Pecom press control system".

Interestingly, the unwrapping of the reels will be carried out by a system developed by U-Veritas in Japan. This is believed to be the first one to be installed in Europe.

The MK 9 palletisers will also represent a first: although Dan Palletiser has been supplying this model to the food industry for the past ten years, this will be the first time that they will be installed in a newspaper plant, initially at Johnston Press as part of its new printing facility and then at the NI plants. The palletisers will be operating at 70 bundles a minute although they have been designed so that they can be upgraded to 90 bundles a minute if necessary.

As is explained by Ian Dickson, NI's group chief engineer: "A number of companies are now capable of supplying palletisers with product speeds of 70 bundles per minute.

"However DAN Palletiser offered one of the simplest solutions. It is also well engineered and the price was right".

Staffs Newspapers orders Goss Universal to meet colour needs

STAFFORDSHIRE Newspapers Ltd has ordered a four-high Universal 70 tower addition from Goss International which will be installed and on production at its Burton-on-Trent printing site by Spring next year.

The shaftless tower addition will be positioned at right angles to the existing Goss press line and will increase colour output by 16 pages for tabloid titles, enabling Staffordshire Newspapers to meet the rising demand for full colour advertising.

Jim Black, managing director at Staffordshire Newspapers Ltd, comments: "The basis of our decision to invest in the Goss Universal tower additions at this time is the success of our own company and the demand from our advertisers for increased colour capacity and pagination. The Universal tower offers the high-quality colour we require in order to remain competitive in the market".

● **Full story next issue.**



● **Signing the deal: Julian Knell, production director, and Jim Black, managing director, Staffordshire Newspapers with Martin Catford, sales executive and Keith Malcolm, vice president of European newspaper press sales, Goss International**

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