

A chance meeting

On the Miyano stand at the recent EMO machine tool exhibition in Hanover, *Solutions* bumped into Fred Moser and David McIlwain from the Techno Group, a UK-based precision component manufacturer.

Mr Moser and Mr McIlwain had just completed the purchase on a new Miyano ABX51 TH2 triple turret, 9-axis mill-turning machine, the first of its type to be installed in the UK. So, while Mr McIlwain went off to bond (familiarise himself) with his new machine, which Technoturn has purchased for a significant new contract, Mr Moser explained the rationale for, and thinking behind, this purchase, to Simon Simmons and David Rose, over a cup of coffee.

The new machine together with a recently purchased Miyano BNJ42SY and a new Citizen K16 CNC, with new Fanuc 31i control, sliding head machine purchased from NC Engineering, will form the core of a production cell for a new range of products to be manufactured at Techno Group's, Technoturn division in Hastings.

"Our thinking and observation," says Mr Moser, "confirms that much of our traditional work is rapidly disappearing over the horizon on a slow, some may say fast, boat to Eastern Europe, India, China and other low cost destinations. It has become obvious to most of us that we cannot compete with low wage economies, with their plentiful supply of incredibly cheap, but in most cases reasonably skilled labour, using lower technology but



still with engineering capability.

"We shall possibly see the eventual disappearance of much of the automotive industry, together with much of its traditional supply chain for conventional components with which it is associated, which begs the question, what will remain for us?"

One answer, that Mr Moser is confident will present itself, is the further miniaturisation of already small components, for weight and material savings as well as for practical usability purposes. Also, the larger complex mill-turned components in, up till now obscure, tough, stringy and difficult to machine materials, which are produced in lower volumes for the medical, aerospace, defence, optoelectronic and telecommunication markets will also remain and increase.

"That is why, after considerable technical appraisal and evaluation, we have decided to make the considerable financial investment in these machines. They allow us to produce complex mill-turned parts, which come off the machines in 'one hit', and in most cases are de-burred on the

machine. Anyone working in the aerospace and medical sectors will understand the importance of deburring and how this normally requires people with skill and dexterity, which costs time, effort and money," explains Mr Moser.

The new machines will complement and extend the already considerable machining capacity and capability of the Techno Group – with 40 CNC machine tools – and will replace some older equipment currently in use. It is the company's policy to consistently replace older generation CNC machines and purchase and install the most up-to-date and productive modern equipment available affordably, which benefits production efficiency, the bottom line and of course, most importantly, its ability to keep its customers supplied on time and to specification.

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