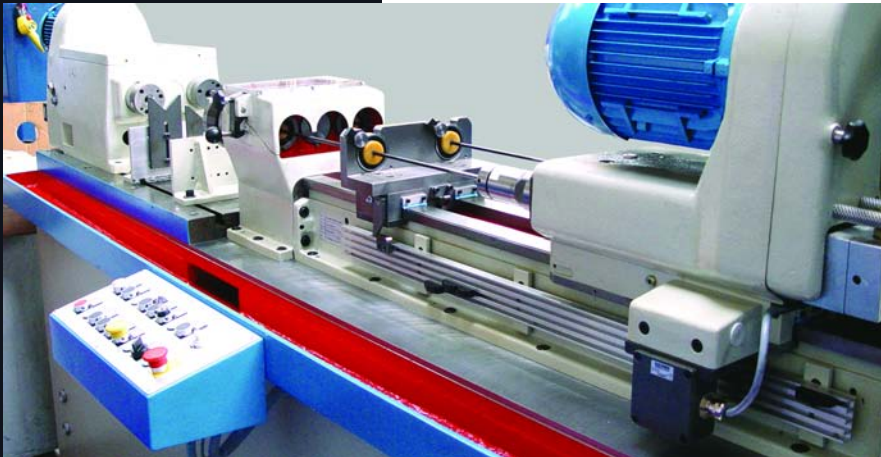




Exclusive for Machinery Hone-All Precision embraces change



This TBT twin-spindle deep hole drilling machine is part of Hone-All Precision's strategy to attract new business.

The freshly painted exterior of Hone-All Precision's 10,000 sq. ft. facility with its gleaming new signage is visible evidence of an ongoing investment programme intended to attract new business while retaining existing customers. Inside is further evidence of the Dunstable-based sub-contractor's willingness to invest – in new equipment and new ways of working to deliver lower prices, higher quality and shorter delivery times.

Although founded as a niche provider of deep hole drilling/boring and honing expertise, ISO 9001-accredited Hone-All Precision has in recent years evolved into a single source supplier of fully machined components. This has resulted in numerous changes to the shopfloor environment and the introduction of new ways of working as part of a 'best practice' initiative to improve the flow of work through the factory.

The company's most recent machine tool purchases reflect the company's origins in deep hole boring and drilling, although the emphasis is purely on improving productivity. Freeing around 1500 sq. ft of valuable floor space by relocating manual honing operations to an adjacent site has allowed for the installation of a Nagel deep hole drilling and boring machine. This is capable of producing holes from 18 mm to 60 mm diameter to a depth of 1500 mm, and eases the pressure on a larger Boehring VDF deep hole boring machine at the lower end of its drilling capability and also on the gun drilling section with regard to larger diameter drilling. Short billet and small batch production is now transferring to the smaller deep hole borer, contributing to reduced set-up

times, shorter lead times and improved competitiveness.

"We can now seek out more production-type work, because we are no longer risking tying up all our available capacity and upsetting longstanding customers," says Hone-All Precision Director, Andrea Rodney. This is also the motivation for the installation of a TBT twin-spindle deep hole drilling machine, because "when it comes to quantity orders, a twin-spindle machine makes it much easier to meet the delivery requirements". This particular machine has a 500 depth by 16 mm diameter capacity.

These latest acquisitions, while emphasising the continuing commitment to the company's core expertise, are part of a much broader picture that has seen Hone-All Precision embrace CNC milling and turning as well as grinding and EDM drilling. Part of this continuing programme of change has been a move towards creating machine cells with the emphasis on multi-skilling. According to Andrea Rodney, the latter not only provides much needed flexibility, it also contributes to component quality. "Knowing that you will be required to perform subsequent drilling and honing or other precision machining operations means you will be that much more careful about the condition of the workpiece that you are handing on."

In terms of the shopfloor layout the position of the Boehring deep hole borer effectively determined the location of the new Nagel deep hole borer, and then that of two large CNC lathes and a three metre capacity honing machine. The creation of this cell has minimised the movement of heavy material around the shop, while other machining cells are based on a judicious mix of machine cycle times – allowing individual operators to look after more than one machine – and flexibility, with operators given on-the-job training to broaden their skills set.

"Our emphasis is on continuous improvement," says Andrea Rodney, "because that benefits both the customer and the people who work here. The changes we have made, and will continue to make, simply reflect our determination to respond positively to the competitive pressures that all sub-contractors face."



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