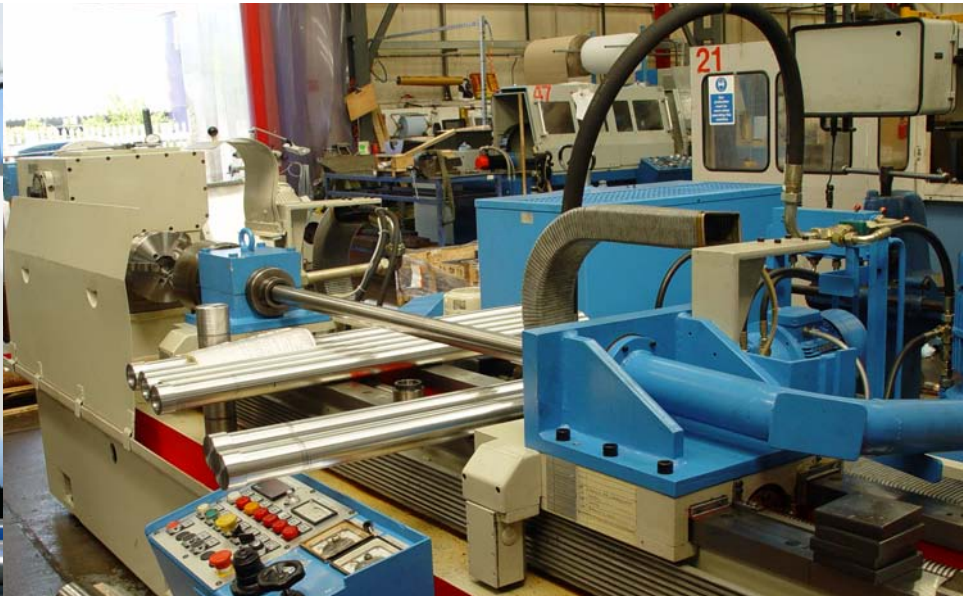




Editorial for Metalwork Production's 'Best Practice in Manufacturing' special publication, From start to perfect finish



Colin and Andrea Rodney – united in a positive response to customers' machining requirements.

Hone-All Precision's emergence as a leading 'one stop shop' for precision machined components is the result of an on-going capital investment programme, a continuing focus on quality, and a motivated and well-trained workforce.

The Dunstable sub-contractor's transformation from a niche drilling, boring and honing shop into a Metalworking Production Award-winning business offering a complete manufacturing service inevitably requires changes to be made to the way in which Hone-All operates. According to Colin Rodney, Managing Director, the ISO 9001:2000-accredited company's priority is always to respond positively to customers' machining requirements, however demanding they may be.

"We are committed to reducing set-up times and shortening delivery times," he says, "and our investment in new production equipment reduces manufacturing costs and cuts lead times on high-value machine components for customers in key industry sectors, such as aerospace, automotive and oil and gas."

Colin Rodney points to the recent installation of an Ex-Cell-O spline rolling machine as typical of the continuing investment being made by Hone-All, although it is a machining operation that is

rarely offered on a sub-contract basis. "This machine is crucial in the final machining of automotive drive shafts for the motor sport sector," he says, adding that Hone-All's expertise extends to machining a wide range of motor sport components, from anti-roll bars to steering column and transmission elements in a wide range of materials, including titanium, aluminium and various alloy steels.

Motor sport customers include Formula One racing teams and rally sports teams but Hone-All also manufactures parts for classic car enthusiasts needing one-off replacement parts. This flexibility is reflected in the complete re-organisation of the main machine shop following the installation of a third deep hole boring machine in the 10,000 sq. ft. main factory. A number of smaller manual and automated machine tools have now been transferred to a nearby satellite unit that specialises in one-offs and small batch work.

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The new Combi CNC Lathe further expands capacity

The 1.5 m, 2 m and 3 m length capacities of the three deep hole borers matches the between-centres capacity of the sub-contract turning section, where earlier this year a 1250 mm between-centres, 400 mm swing Colchester Combi manual/CNC lathe was installed to ease the pressure on this busy section. In fact, one of the first jobs tackled on the new lathe – a batch of 1200 steel sleeves turned and bored prior to heat treatment and finish honing – sums up Hone-All's rapid progress from drilling, boring and honing specialist to its current status as a 'one stop shop' for precision machining.

The continuing investment programme and the changes that it brings about has contributed to what Hone-All Director, Andrea Rodney, describes as "a massive increase in demand". This has prompted the appointment of a full-time progress manager to ensure that despite this growth in demand the company continues to meet its customers' expectations. A crucial aspect of Hone-All's continuous improvement strategy is its investment in, and use of, the RedAnt production control system. Hone-All has backed the development of this innovative system by South Wales-based Stone Technology because, says Mrs Rodney, "other systems on the market are too complicated, too difficult to implement and maintain, and often too expensive for the smaller business."

In the highly competitive world of sub-contracting, nothing can be left to chance and, says Mrs Rodney, Hone-All's investment programme is always under review. "So we are confident that, in combination with a successful recruitment policy and a comprehensive training programme, we are fully equipped to deliver close tolerance components on time and at a very competitive price. However, change is the only constant in the sub-contracting business and the challenge facing Hone-All Precision is always to stay one step ahead of the competition."



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