

Bottero line in full production

The Bottero line at Cowley Hill is now in full production, cutting and dispatching the coated glass from Greengate's UK5 line.

The line, last used to cut automotive glass in late 2009, has been extensively refurbished and upgraded to handle the UK5 output, which will be used for the solar energy industry.

New conveyor sections have been installed and the old vacuum glass transfer mechanism, which was designed to attach to the upper surface of the glass, has been replaced with a wheeled lifting system.

"Both these changes have been necessary in order to avoid any contact with the coated surface of the glass," said Plant Manager Karl Brogan. "The quality demands for the solar energy industry are extremely high and we cannot risk any residue or marks of any kind on the glass surface."

New statistical controls have been put in place to monitor



Above: The new Bottero Line's Inloader Operation.

the consistency and reliability of the processes in use on the line. Electronic measuring equipment has been installed to ensure the accuracy of the dimensions of the glass plates and a new SAP interface has been developed to maintain glass traceability and generate the required label formats.

"The whole team has worked extremely hard to ensure that we can conform precisely to the very exacting specifications of our customers," said Karl. "Our colleagues from Ottawa and Weiherhammer have also been helping us to assess our overall quality performance."

"All the commissioning work was completed on time and the final launch went very smoothly."

Major training

The relaunch of the Bottero cutting line at Cowley Hill has involved a major training exercise which began in February and is still ongoing.

More than 80 new employees will have joined the operation by the time 24-hour production starts at the end of August and training has been concentrated on three main areas:

■ **Health and Safety:** All new recruits have gone through an intensive two-day induction. "The main thrust of the initial training had to be to deliver an in-depth H&S awareness," said UK Operations Support Manager Barry Fairhurst. "Since we are dealing with a full team of new starters, we needed something over and above the normal induction."

■ **Training Within Industry – Job Instruction:** "TWI was seen to fit the needs of the new cutting line because it is designed for training employees to carry out a single, standardised process, producing a consistent result," said Group Learning and Development Manager Louise Colton. The TWI training was delivered by Laura Wheatley.



Training in progress at Cowley Hill.

■ **Quality:** An intense session of quality awareness has been delivered across the full team, using the Building Products Quality Toolbox – Level 1 for senior managers, Level 2 for line managers and Level 3 for the operators.

"The current team members come from a range of different backgrounds and have been able to contribute a lot of different ideas," said Off-line Process Manager Dave Jensen. "Following the initial training package, they have been heavily involved in helping us to develop it further to achieve a really effective, comprehensive system."