

Handling & Storage Solutions

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Solutions for materials handling, logistics & distribution



INTRODUCING THE LINDE ROADSTER  
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Linde Material Handling

# Long-term benefits

*The National Distribution Centre for British Gas in Leicester is proof that logistics automation can provide low lifetime costs – the automated handling solution supplied to the site by KNAPP recently achieved ten years of successful operation.*

**T**he 12,800m<sup>2</sup> National Distribution Centre (NDC) provides next-day delivery of gas and electrical appliance spare parts and ancillary equipment for 13,000 British Gas engineers nationwide. Serving more than 11 million home and business customers in the UK, the company's Leicester operation is both huge and complex, with some 40,000 stock lines.

"In summer, 25-30,000 items are distributed from the NDC each day, rising to 40-45,000 items per day in winter," explained Jason Bailey, Logistics Manager for British Gas. "The warehouse operates seven days a week and orders made by our field engineers by 8.00pm are delivered to one of 800 collection points across the UK by 7.45am the next morning. It is the automation that has makes this possible," continued Jason Bailey, "and in fact the system allows access to any item in a maximum of 20 minutes. We also supply the engineers' van stock."

The logistics solution features two of KNAPP's OSR Shuttle automated storage and retrieval systems, as well as a miniloader store, several thousand metres of intelligent conveyor and pick-to-light technology. As British Gas engineers order their required parts and materials



at each customer site via their laptops, shipping totes are part-picked and buffer stored in one of the OSR Shuttle systems, allowing rapid vehicle loading when loads are ready for distribution.

### **Downtime minimised**

Under a 7-year maintenance contract signed in 2013 – the longest KNAPP service agreement to date – a resident team of KNAPP engineers provides a 24/7/365 service that includes preventative maintenance, spare parts management, hotline support, IT services and emergency repair. With the

life expectancy of each piece of equipment assessed, parts are replaced before they fail, resulting in fewer system outages. "The ongoing programme of preventative maintenance has been extremely beneficial to our business," commented Jason Bailey. "Downtime has been reduced and the NDC has an excellent reputation within our parent group, Centrica."

### **Successful partnership**

The KNAPP solution has secured a number of benefits for British Gas including improved management information, the capacity to handle growth, significantly reduced manual handling, enhanced stock integrity, superior space utilisation and a significant reduction in picking errors. "British Gas has been proactive in investing in extensions and upgrades for its warehouse automation," commented Nathan Billing, Head of Customer Service for KNAPP UK Ltd. "Of course, having members of our team on site has undoubtedly helped us to understand British Gas' evolving business needs and suggest enhancements. Under the continuing partnership with British Gas," he added, "KNAPP also recently took responsibility for providing service support at the British Gas returns centre in Coventry."

**Tel: 01844 202149**



## Efficient material flow for a leading confectionery manufacturer

**F**or a leading industrial cookie producer in the Netherlands, the strategic focus has always been on optimization, requiring the manufacturer to implement lean and efficient processes and invest in intelligent automation solutions.

The vast range of products offered has one requirement in common - they are all delicate, fragile and perishable products that need delicate handling. Production machines and especially material handling equipment need to enable operators to carry out fast changeovers, while minimizing the risk of product damage.

To maintain its competitiveness, this cookie manufacturer made significant investments in intelligent material handling solutions, involving primary automation partner Technisch Buro West-Brabant (TBWB).

### The challenge: automation of palletizing operations

TBWB was asked to design an automation concept with built-in flexibility for its customer's palletizing operations, which were mainly performed manually and resulted in a

bottleneck for shipping operations. A great variety of biscuit boxes exiting more than 10 production lines needed to be processed faster, increasing the palletizing capacity to 3,000 boxes per hour.

With a time sensitive and complex project, TBWB CEO Bart Friederichs confirmed the important need to be able to rely on trusted project partners.

### Modular conveyors and intelligent controls from Interroll

For the transportation of biscuit boxes from the different production lines to the palletizers, the project required a great number of roller conveyors along with automatic palletizers and vertical lifts, which were supplied by another trusted partner, Qimarox.

Using Interroll's latest generation of conveyor modules, TBWB reported the 24V roller conveyors were not only extremely easy to install, but also provided ongoing energy savings for the customer due to the decentralized, zone-driven conveying concept. For inclines and declines, Interroll belt



*For the transportation of biscuit boxes from the different production lines to the palletizers, TBWB implemented Interroll's latest generation of conveyor modules.*

conveyors were used. From the controls side, the new MultiControl allowed fast and easy setup and smooth integration with the PLC.

TBWB installed and integrated this large, turnkey system within the given timeframe, while increasing the overall capacity. Due to the fragility of the biscuits, the conveying task was critical in maintaining product quality and for that reason, TBWB relied on the product quality of Interroll, which was a real guarantee for them.

### For further information contact:

Interroll Ltd., Unit 1A Orion Way,  
Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN15 6NL  
Phone: +44(0) 1536 312770  
E-mail: [gb.sales@interroll.com](mailto:gb.sales@interroll.com)  
Web: <http://www.interroll.co.uk>



accurate  
robotic  
picking

# making complexity simple

KNAPP is a leading global supplier of warehouse automation solutions, with over 1700 active systems worldwide.

The group's advanced conveying, storage and fulfilment technologies are combined in solutions that feature seamless integration and intelligent software. Successful projects in the UK recently include systems for John Lewis, Boots, M&S, Staples, Clarks, British Gas and Well.

KNAPP UK Ltd  
Unit 60, Monument Business Park  
Warpsgrove Lane, Chalgrove  
Oxfordshire OX44 7RW  
Tel: 01865 965 000 | [sales.uk@knapp.com](mailto:sales.uk@knapp.com)  
[www.knapp.com](http://www.knapp.com)

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