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CHINESE ENTHRALLED BY PICKERSGILL-KAYE'S LOCK MAKING EXCELLENCE

Leading UK lock manufacturer Pickersgill-Kaye Ltd's successful export drive into the Far East has been officially recognised after the company was chosen for a visit from a high-powered Chinese trade mission on a fact-finding tour.

Several key figures from the Chinese Embassy, led by economic and commercial minister counsellor Mr Zhou Xiaoming, and the China Chamber of International Commerce visited Yorkshire businesses to get a better understanding of UK companies' potential for breaking into the difficult China market.

A joint China-Britain Business Council (CBBC) and UK Trade Investment (UKTI) initiative to promote the opportunities between the two nations, the itinerary included a tour of the highly-regarded Leeds engineering firm on Thursday July 8 2010.

The Chinese visitors, along with UKTI deputy international trade director for Yorkshire and Humber, Graham Percival, were shown around Pickersgill-Kaye's Pepper Road facility by manufacturing manager Simon Barnes and quality manager Jeff Moore.

CBBC Director Giles Blackburne, who organised the tour, said: "We chose Pickersgill-Kaye because it is a great example of a British company exporting to China. Pickersgill-Kaye is successful because it has unique skills and experience and can manufacture high quality products that meet the specifications required by Chinese rail companies."

News release PKaye PR27a Chinese delegation continued:

Following the tour, Mr Zhou said how impressed he was with the factory operation. He went on to discuss where the company might fit in the Chinese market and what opportunities and pitfalls they could encounter. "Pickersgill Kaye is a specialist low volume manufacturer which can build licensing agreements with Chinese companies to avoid the cost of investing in new facilities," he said, and added an offer of help in promoting Pickersgill-Kaye products to Chinese companies.

Pickersgill-Kaye already supplies the lion's share of door locks and security systems to the UK rail market but a growing international reputation earned the breakthrough in the lucrative China market two years ago, when China National Rail (CNR) came calling about mechanical cab door locks for its locomotives.

Andy Hewitt, rail product sales manager, explained: "CNR heard of our capability for manufacturing cab door locks through work we had done with Bombardier, the global transportation company, in Canada."

In 2008, CNR ordered just 12 sets of locks in a deal worth around £40,000 for locomotives built at its massive Dalian manufacturing plant in north east China. They were so impressed with the product it was followed by another order last year for 50 sets worth nearly £180,000.

Because of this successful collaboration, the two companies are now in the middle of negotiations for 300 of Pickersgill-Kaye's cab door mechanical locks per year, either supplied from the UK or made under licence in China.

Mr Hewitt added: "CNR could have got the locks made in China at a tenth of the price, but Chinese manufacturers could not match the outstanding quality of our locks. The facility in Dalian alone turns out 500 locos a year – so you can imagine the huge potential there is for our products in China."

News release PKaye PR27a Chinese delegation continued:

Pickersgill-Kaye's export boom has been spectacular. Fifteen years ago its only overseas customer was Irish Rail. Now it supplies high security custodial locks to the Malaysian police and continues to win orders in the rail sector from European companies including Siemens, Bombardier, Alstom, Irish Rail and CAF, in Asia from companies such as Jiwon Tech and Rotem in Korea, Ocean Eagle Holdings Ltd in Hong Kong and Hitachi in Japan, and in North America from companies such as Axion Technologies & Electro-Motive Diesels.

Backed by excellent levels of service and a solid reputation, the company is confident that it can continue to win new overseas business against stiff international competition.

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Background information:

Pickersgill-Kaye Ltd has built a solid reputation over the past 150 years through the specialist design and manufacture of Kaye's patent door locks for the architectural and railway industries throughout the UK and overseas. More recently, the company has diversified and is now using its expertise to design, supply & maintain high security locks for the UK detention and high security industries.

Operating from premises in Leeds, the company uses state of the art CAD systems linked to advanced CNC engineering facilities, producing high quality, British engineered products to the highest quality standards.

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