

INDUSTRY, COMPANY AND INSTITUTION NEWS AND RESEARCH



VMT CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF INNOVATION AND EXPERTISE IN TUNNEL AND PRECISION SURVEY

VMT GmbH located in Bruchsal (southern Germany) celebrated their 20th anniversary on June 7th, 2014. Together with friends and partners from all over the world, Manfred Messing, co-founder and General Manager, looked back on an extraordinary history of success. Started as a two-man company, VMT has established itself as a technological leader in navigation and data processing systems for tunnelling as well as a recognised expert in industrial survey.



VMT navigation systems guide the way for tunnellers safely and precisely all over the world.

A tunnel boring machine has been eating 11 km through alpine rocks for more than three years. At a diameter of 9.43 m and having a weight of more than 200 t, it hits the target accurately to the centimetre. An Airbus A320 aeroplane has a wing-span of 34.1 m and a take-off weight of up to 93.5 t. During manufacturing and assembling the aeroplane, tenths of millimetres are of importance to ensure profitability in the factory and passenger safety in the air. Between these poles, VMT GmbH Gesellschaft für Vermessungstechnik located in Bruchsal, Southern Germany, has been operating since the company was founded by Manfred Messing and Dr.-Ing. E.h. Martin Herrenknecht in 1994. On Saturday, 7 June, 2014, the 20th company anniversary was celebrated at the headquarters, together with employees, project and cooperation partners as well as friends from all over the world.

Navigation systems for tunnel boring machines are the most prominent line of business of VMT GmbH. VMT designs and provides laser and gyro controlled systems for building large tunnels as well as smaller diameter tunnels (microtunnelling) that guide the way for tunnellers all over the world. This is the basis for the close partnership with the Herrenknecht parent company, a world leader in mechanised tunnelling technology. In the founding year, VMT supplied navigation systems for a 2.62 m diameter water tunnel project in Zurich/Switzerland and for advancing the 5.14 m diameter Jubilee Line underground railway in London, UK, for which Herrenknecht tunnel boring machines were used.

Since that time, the company has continually grown in terms of the number of employees and sales figures and new divisions have been established. The rented flat in Ubstadt-Weiher, a community located north of Bruchsal, which was the origin of everything, could not keep up with the growth. In 2000, Manfred Messing and his team moved to the current site in Bruchsal. The threshold of 20 employees who earned a turnover of €2.7 million was exceeded in 2001. Similarly, subsidiaries were founded in Shanghai (2006), Melbourne (2008), Moscow (2009), and Seattle (2011) due to growth and internationalisation of the business. For 2013, the VMT Group records show more than 200 employees worldwide, of which 119 are working in Bruchsal, and a €29 million turnover.

PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

Developing hardware and software for precisely navigating a vigorously vibrating 200 t tunnel boring colossus through the rocks is considered the highest level of engineering. Pinpoint control of a smaller diameter machine in microtunnelling requires the same precision when this machine must pass several sharp bends on its way to the target shaft.

The system that was named 'SLS-RV' by VMT in a matter-of-fact manner and had its premiere in double-bend tunnelling in Heidelberg, Germany in 1996.

To continuously develop the navigation systems and to expand the product range for tunnelling, Manfred Messing brought in highly specialised partners such as, e.g., Qbit GmbH with Michael Bläsi and ITC Engineering GmbH & Co KG. Today, VMT GmbH has a product portfolio for tunnelling that by far extends beyond navigation and incorporates navigation into a comprehensive system for more quality assurance, advancing efficiency, budget compliance, and safety at work. In this respect, the future of the VMT GmbH is represented, for example by the tunnel project for the underground railway line B in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Bruchsal crew supplies a complete set of its equipment for navigating the tunnel boring machines as well as for information management, process monitoring, and communications at the large construction site.

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For the most recent business segment of VMT GmbH, which is mining, the engineers have had to rethink by 90° from horizontal to vertical.

In Canada, a project-specific adaptation of the TUnIS navigation system is running at the moment. It is being used to navigate two Herrenknecht shaft boring machines which vertically drive shafts of diameters of up to 10.6 m down to depths of up to 1,000 m. Prototypes of other products are currently being designed and tested for applications in the area of valuable raw materials production.

The industrial survey division of VMT is only slightly younger than tunnelling is industrial survey.

The starting signal was given when the precision survey of a shield for a tunnel boring machine was performed and during a follow-up project during which tunnelling moulds were checked for dimensional accuracy. Furthermore, proprietary innovations as well as co-operation with specialists such as New River Kinematics (USA) enabled VMT to establish itself on the market for measuring services and highly sophisticated survey equipment. Major references are the survey of the Airbus final assembly in Tianjin, China or of rotors for wind turbines.

In terms of global and regional activities, Manfred Messing and many employees have their bags packed alongside their desks in Bruchsal, ready for the next business trip that often occur and usually at short notice. Therefore, projects located in the 'neighbourhood' are always quite popular such as a microtunnelling project for a heating line and the 'Kombilösung' large-scale project in Karlsruhe, Germany which includes a city tunnel for the metropolitan railway. Website: www.vmt-gmbh.de



VMT specialists are on site, to support customers and projects.

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NOT ONE BUT TWO CHAINS OF OFFICE AT STEVE VICK HQ OPENING CEREMONY

Chris Murray, President of the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers, officially opened Steve Vick International's (SVI) new headquarters in Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire.

Around 30 guests joined Steve Vick, the Directors, staff and the Mayor of Bradford-on-Avon, John Potter as Chris Murray cut the ribbon marking the company's move to purpose-designed premises in the historic Wiltshire town.

Guests included representatives from many of the Gas Distribution Networks as well as senior staff members from water and electricity utilities. Also enjoying the occasion were long-standing customers and agents of Steve Vick International from the UK, Ireland, Denmark and The Netherlands.

In his address, Chris said: "I am delighted to have been invited to perform the official opening of the new Steve Vick International premises and consider it a real privilege to have been invited to do so."

"Change is always difficult", he continued, "and, having been there for so long, I am sure that there are many things that will be missed about the Bath location, at least for a little while but what



Chris Murray, President of the Institute of Gas Engineers and Managers, cuts the ribbon officially opening Steve Vick International's new headquarters in Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, UK. On the left is John Potter, Mayor of Bradford on Avon and on the right, Steve Vick, founder and Chairman of the company.