

24/04/2003 Scottish companies expand in the Czech Republic

Modular building specialist **RB Farquhar** is expanding the manufacture of prefabricated bathrooms to the Czech Republic. The company is going to build a new 8,000 sq metres plant in Chomutov and intends to employ some 50 people there. The £3 million facility will be completed this summer and aims to be in full production in the autumn. **“We chose the Czech Republic mainly because of its central location at the heart of Europe”** explains Forbes Shand, CEO of parent company RB Farquhar Holdings.

RB Farquhar produces prefabricated bathroom pods for major hotel groups such as Holiday Inn, Radisson and Travelodge, but also for private house builders and halls of residence. “We are a UK market leader in prefabricated bathroom pods but transport costs to the continent are too high”, says Michael Shand, Managing Director of RB Farquhar Manufacturing, **“After a two-year research of the European market it became obvious that the only way we could tap into this huge market was by setting up a manufacturing base in mainland Europe”**.

Caledonian Alloys set up a facility in Kladno, north-west of Prague airport this January. The company specialises in recycling and processing super-alloys for the producers of aerospace engines, land-based turbines and others. “We are the largest company in this business in Europe and one of the fastest growing companies in this sector in the world” says John Wardlaw, Business Development Manager at Caledonian Alloys and adds: **“the Czech Republic has a long tradition in aerospace and power generation equipment manufacturing and thus has attracted leading global manufacturers such as PCC. That is why we are here too.”**

One of the largest printing and software replication companies, **Thomson Litho**, established its Central European manufacturing facility in Lodenice at the end of 2001. The company supplies user manuals and software CD-ROMs to leading computer manufacturers in the Czech Republic. **“In recent years we have seen a trend for computer manufacturing companies and other high-tech firms to move their production to the Czech Republic and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe so it was essential for us to be here too,”** explains Ken Thomson, Managing Director of Thomson Litho.

Longer-established Scottish companies in the Czech Republic include **Devro plc** which owns three plants in the country and the ultra modern **Carclo** plastic plant in Brno is supervised from Scotland.

“I am confident that there will be more Scottish companies establishing operations in the Czech Republic soon,” says Rene Samek, Director of the UK & Ireland office of CzechInvest. Adding that, **“CSA Czech Airlines also shares this confidence in increasing Scottish – Czech business partnerships, given the launch of their direct flight between Edinburgh and Prague.”**