

## **George at Asda expands automation of e-fulfilment with SDI Group**

SDI Group, the global integrator of automated materials handling systems, has been awarded a further contract to extend its existing warehouse solution for George at Asda to accommodate additional storage capacity and a new e-commerce operation within the company's Distribution Centre at Lymedale.

As part of an ongoing development programme with SDI Group for the site, which started in 2004, the latest phase will bring further levels of automation to George at Asda's fulfilment operation, allowing the company to bring its e-commerce activity under one roof and enabling the fashion brand to offer enhanced levels of service to its customers.

The site handles both hanging garments – 'goods on hangers' or GOH – and boxed product, with each requiring a dedicated handling system. Both, however, have been integrated so as to ensure a coherent flow from goods-in to the final assembly area for individual and store orders.

Lymedale is the flagship of George at Asda's three Regional Distribution Centres. The facility receives, processes and delivers the full range of George clothing and accessories to some 170 stores. It is also responsible for picking and dispatching all stock for the brand's expanding e-commerce channel.

To date, SDI Group has designed systems and written bespoke process control software for George at Asda that allows over 1.4 million picks per week, utilising advanced technologies such as RFID.

A four-storey mezzanine has been installed for boxed goods and hanging garments and is served by lifts which enables boxed product, transferred from delivery vehicles on boom conveyors and palletised on the ground floor, to be moved into flow racking within the mezzanine structure. From here, items can then be picked and moved to the out-going load assembly area.

Hanging garments are unloaded by boom rails and grouped by SKU on specially designed flight bar hangers – known as 'jets'. Fitted with an RFID

Arkill Matthews Allen Ltd. PO Box 637 Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 0DB  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1923 770455 Email: [info@amapr.com](mailto:info@amapr.com) Web:  
[www.amapr.com](http://www.amapr.com)

tag and holding up to 40 items, the jets are then moved by powered overhead conveyor up to the appropriate storage zone and manually off-loaded onto rails. When required, goods are picked onto jets and moved by conveyors to the ground floor where they are automatically stripped from their hangers and sorted by store.

Part of the latest phase of development required SDI Group to extend the automated storage and retrieval system from six aisles to seven.

Work is currently underway on the installation of an LS900 tilt tray sorter which will sort packaged e-commerce orders prior to despatch. Designed and manufactured by SDI Group, the sorter will be capable of handling a wide diversity of product types and sizes, from shoes and winter jackets to baby clothes and accessories. The system will be commissioned in early July.

In addition to the helping George at Asda with its phased development plans for maximising the cube utilisation and productivity of the Lymedale site, SDI Group has recently been awarded a contract by the fashion brand for the maintenance of automated materials handling equipment across all three of the company's UK distribution centres.

Gordon Smith, CEO of SDI Group, said: "We are proud to be continuing our partnership with George by expanding our highly efficient automated sortation and e-fulfilment solutions. Our existing system has proven to be a great success and helped provide George with a competitive edge as it aims for UK market leadership."

He added: "SDI Group is a successful British automation company making a big impact on leading retail brands in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, the US and Chile. Our continuing partnership with George demonstrates how SDI Group can offer UK retail fashion brands and general merchandise retailers highly effective automated materials handling solutions that deliver increased productivity, greater reliability and enhanced value."

ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

**SDI Group** is a £30 million global integrator of automated materials handling systems with operations in the UK, US, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland and Chile. SDI has over 30 years experience providing innovative solutions for leading brands in retail, wholesale, fulfilment and e-commerce. [www.sdigroup.com](http://www.sdigroup.com)

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Telephone: +44 (0) 1923 770455 Email: [info@amapr.com](mailto:info@amapr.com) Web:  
[www.amapr.com](http://www.amapr.com)

## **Client Contact**

Amanda Dowsett  
Marketing Manager  
SDI Group Ltd  
Mob: +44 (0) 7919591357

Tel: +44 (0) 1763 244 299

E-mail: [amandadowsett@sdigroup.com](mailto:amandadowsett@sdigroup.com)  
Website: [www.sdigroup.com](http://www.sdigroup.com)

## **PR Contact**

Arkill Matthews Allen  
Twitter: @amaprlatest  
Website: [www.amapr.com](http://www.amapr.com)

Ross Matthews  
Mob: +44 (0) 7711 347 701  
Tel: +44 (0) 1923 770 455  
E-mail: [ross.matthews@amapr.com](mailto:ross.matthews@amapr.com)

Nick Allen  
Mob: +44 (0) 7775 601 259  
Tel: +44 (0) 1444 467 307  
E-mail: [nick.allen@amapr.com](mailto:nick.allen@amapr.com)

Arkill Matthews Allen Ltd. PO Box 637 Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 0DB  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1923 770455 Email: [info@amapr.com](mailto:info@amapr.com) Web:  
[www.amapr.com](http://www.amapr.com)

Registered address: 86 Mildred Avenue, Watford, Herts WD18 7DX Company No. 6769729 VAT  
Registration No. 947 4597 68