

# “Machines take me by surprise with great frequency”

Alan Turing

## Manual Picking

In previous issues, we have given detail on the new Stingray automated picking system that will be deployed in the warehouse.

While Stingray will be used for picking new and fast moving titles from forward stock locations, staff will continue to manually pick bulk stock and other lines.

The warehouse will be more than 20 metres tall, and this will allow us to have stock locations up to 18 metres high.

At this level, we will have one of the highest manual picking operations for any product in the UK. This is considerably higher than our current locations at Bookpoint and LBS, which go up to 11 metres.

New machines are required to safely lift our staff to these levels and we have ordered state of the art forklifts from a German company called Linde.

Our stock pickers will need to have a good head for heights!



## Construction Update

The warehouse floor was laid during April. This involved concrete being poured at a depth of around 30 centimetres across an area of more than 20,000 square metres.

Steel fibres, which look like straightened paperclips, were mixed with the concrete to reinforce it and help the floor withstand considerable load and stress.



The concrete was poured in sections and then levelled by a topping spreader. Once each batch had set, the top was then levelled and smoothed by a machine that glides across the surface like a small hovercraft.



It is important that the floor is exactly flat. As manual picking will take place at up to 18 metres high, the slightest discrepancy at ground level could introduce significant deviation at that height.

The flooring at one end of the warehouse was complete several weeks ago. This allowed Winvic, our main building contractor, to hand over around one-third of the warehouse to us on 18<sup>th</sup> April. We have now started work to install the forward stock locations and automated picking systems in this area.

## Meet the Project Team

**David McTeague**

Reporting Lead



David worked for five years as Commercial Manager across Hodder & Stoughton, Headline and Quercus where he was heavily involved in devising new ways of reporting and driving analysis in those businesses.

His experience in reporting led him to move to the IT team two years ago as Business Intelligence Analyst. On the project, David is analysing all types of sales and inventory reporting that will be used once the new systems are in place.

David is a keen cyclist and is one of the organisers of the London to Paris ‘Hachette Connect’ bike ride in aid of the National Literacy Trust which takes place from 7<sup>th</sup> May.



## Did You Know?



As detailed above, we are mixing steel fibres with concrete to reinforce the floor. Across more than 200,000 square metres of flooring, our building contractors estimate that we will use a staggering total of 201 billion fibres!