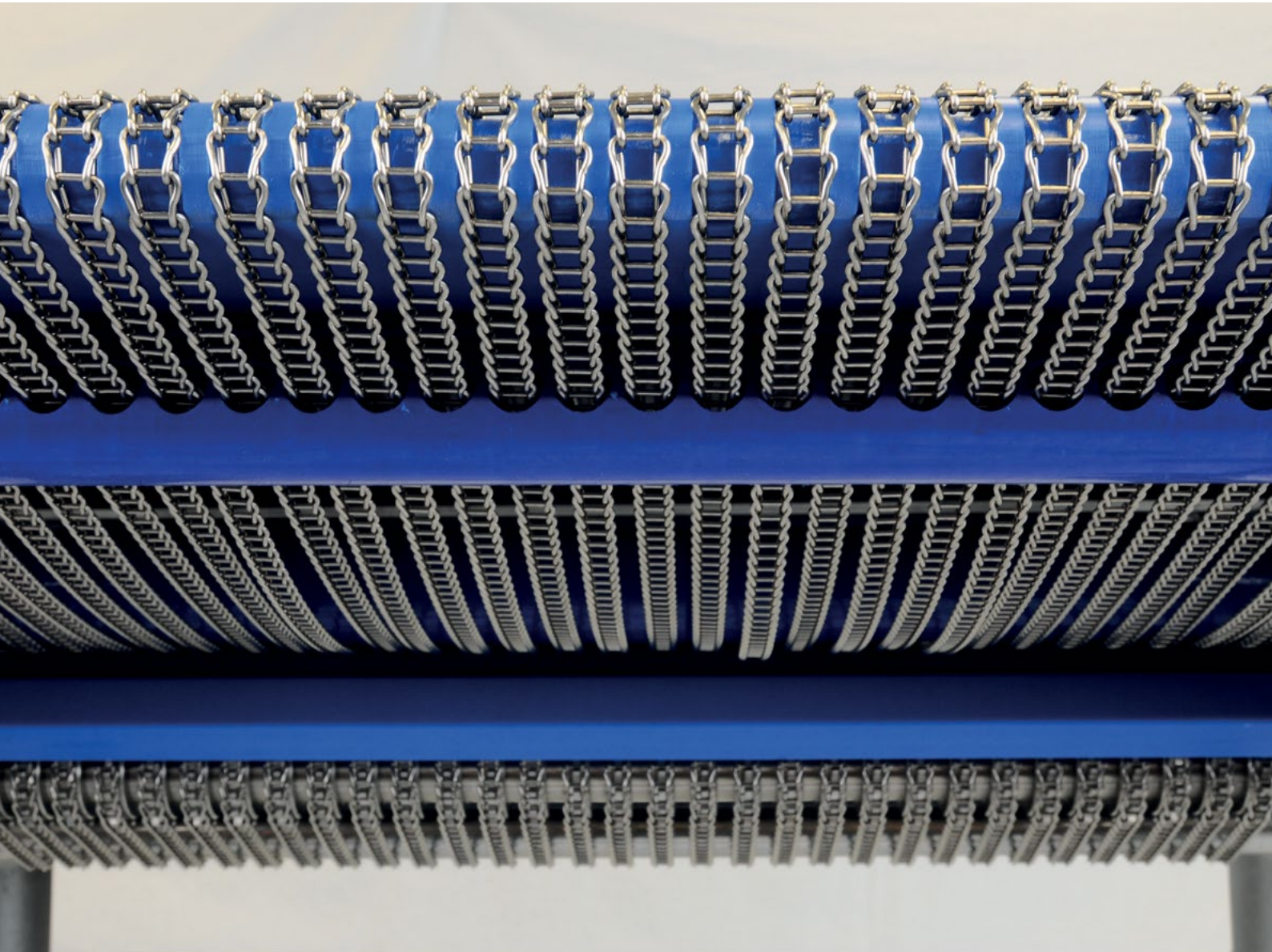




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NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR WIRE BELT CUSTOMERS

DECEMBER 2023



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METAL CONVEYOR BELTS IN FOOD PROCESSING FACTORIES - THE OVERLOOKED HEROES

Yogesh Yadav, Business Development Manager (EXPORT)



Metal conveyor belts, particularly stainless-steel, are the unsung heroes in modern food processing. Unlike their plastic counterparts, they offer unmatched durability, hygiene, temperature resistance, customisation, strength, and environmental friendliness. Used in diverse applications, from fresh cuts to bakeries, meatpacking to ready meals and everything in between; they ensure quality, consistency and most importantly hygiene. As symbols of efficiency and reliability, metal conveyor belts are pivotal for businesses prioritising productivity, safety, and sustainability in food processing.

The Backbone of Efficiency:

Metal conveyor belts, often made from stainless steel, are the backbone of efficiency in food processing factories. Their robust structure allows them to endure extreme temperatures, heavy loads, and harsh cleaning chemicals, making them ideal for the demanding environments of food processing facilities.

Advantages of Metal Conveyor Belts:

1. Durability: One of the primary advantages of metal conveyor belts is their unmatched durability. Unlike plastic belts that can wear out quickly under heavy loads or high temperatures, metal belts withstand rigorous usage, ensuring longevity and cost-effectiveness for businesses. Ease of repair is not to be underestimated either.

2. Hygiene and Sanitation: Metal conveyor belts are inherently more hygienic than their plastic counterparts. They are non-porous and resistant to bacteria, making them easy to clean and sterilize. In an industry where food safety is paramount, metal belts provide an unparalleled level of sanitation. Metal conveyor belts help to contain operation expenses with ease of sanitation and environmental impact by using lesser chemical and water for sanitation.

3. Temperature Resistance: Metal conveyor belts can withstand extreme temperature variations without compromising their structural integrity. This property is vital in food processing, where products often need to be heated, cooled, or even frozen during different stages of production. Delicious cookies, comforting biscuits, fried chicken, nuggets, frozen pizzas, or even frozen vegetables won't be possible without them.

4. Customisation: Metal conveyor belts offer a high level of customisation. They can be tailored to specific dimensions and designs, allowing manufacturers to optimise their production processes. This adaptability ensures seamless integration into various food processing equipment. In the age of mass customisation, they are the first choice to cater to all shapes and sizes.

5. Strength and Load Capacity: Metal conveyor belts possess exceptional tensile strength and load-carrying capacity. They can

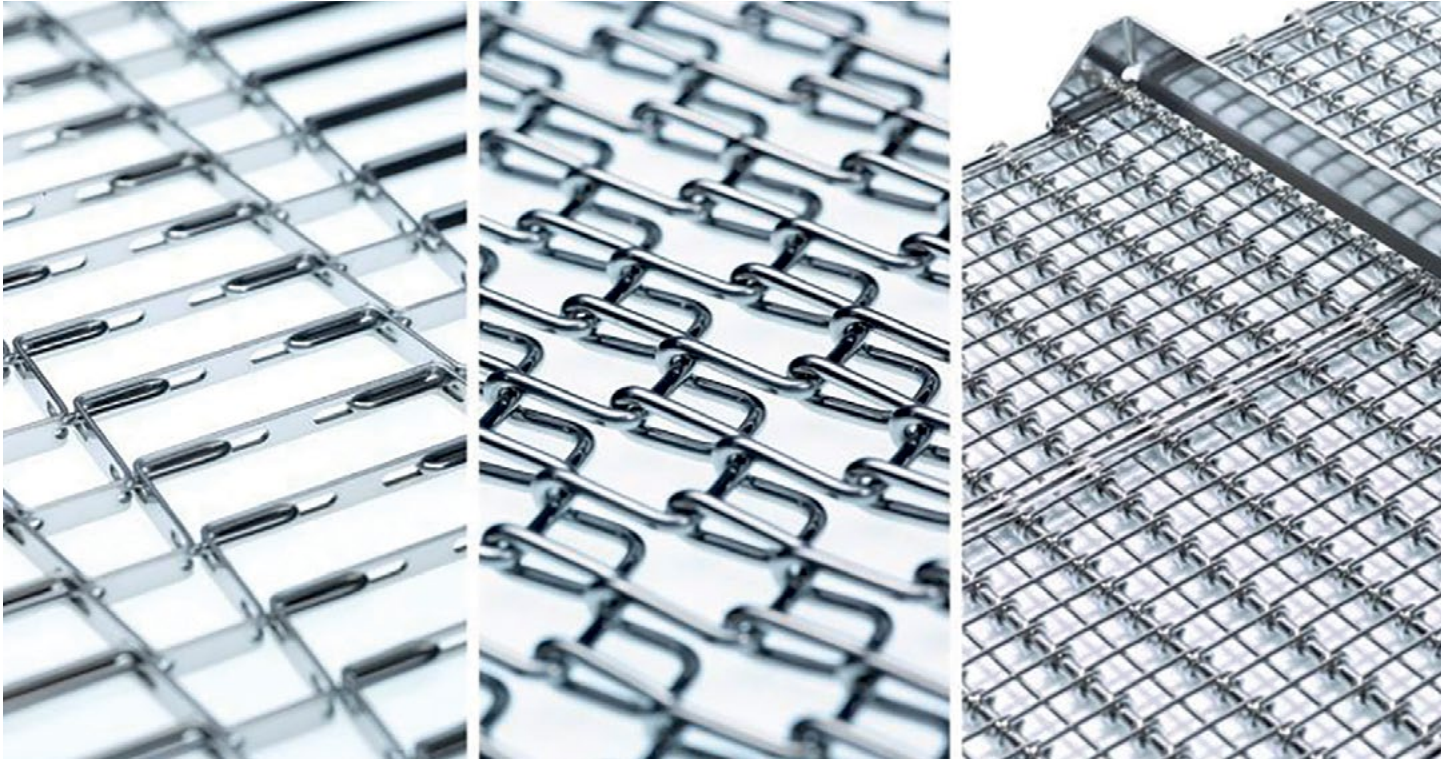
efficiently handle heavy loads without sagging or stretching, ensuring smooth and reliable operations even under intense pressure. Now don't be tempted to test it, they are highly engineered products made for specific purposes, pulling trucks is not one of them... unless you request so while discussing your application with our engineers.

6. Environmentally Friendly: Stainless steel, the primary material used in metal conveyor belts, is recyclable and eco-friendly. By choosing metal belts, companies contribute to sustainable practices and reduce their environmental footprint. Not to mention, they always have residual value in the stainless steel which is recyclable and mostly sold to recyclers at the end of life, as opposed to plastic which is charged to be taken off site.

Conclusion:

In the intricate tapestry of food processing, metal conveyor belts stand tall as symbols of efficiency, reliability, and hygiene. Their advantages over plastic conveyor belts are not just a matter of preference; they are a strategic choice for businesses aiming for uncompromised quality and productivity.

As food processing factories continue to evolve, embracing the superiority of metal conveyor belts is not just a step forward; it's a leap toward a future where efficiency meets sustainability, and where every product reaching our tables does so with the utmost safety and quality.



SPECIALIST CONVEYOR BELTS WITH WIRE BELT

Wendy Thrower, Senior Marketing Coordinator

Wire Belt has a range of metal conveyor belts that can benefit your systems performance in many types of industry. Our conveyor belts come in a variety of styles and specifications to match whatever application you require.

With more than 60 years of experience manufacturing conveyors and metal conveyor belts, we are confident that our belts can help your business improve its efficiency.

Compact-Grid™

Our Compact-Grid™ conveyor belts can help you if you need improved support, the belt has a 10x10mm nominal square opening designed for small and delicate products. You can also reduce cleaning time with Compact-Grid's 70% open surface area, which also makes it a great choice for heating, cooling and coating operations.

Compact-Grid comes with a range of benefits. It is lighter than many comparable belts, and there are no places for particles to become trapped or build up and its open area means easier and more effective cleaning in areas where accessibility might cause issues. Under heavy loads the belt will still run straight due to its no-slip positive drive, the highest standard in belt tracking.

Eye-Flex®

With Eye-Flex® conveyor belts you can take advantage of an extremely robust and

long-lasting belt which is perfect for heavy duty conveying. Eye-Flex configurations are custom designed for your businesses' needs, giving it almost unlimited options.

Flights and side guards can be added for product orientation and handling requirements. There are also a variety of drive options that can be applied, including cage rollers, positive drive sprockets, and an optional chain edge drive.

Finally, Eye-Flex's flat carrying surface and high strength make it an ideal choice for any heavy-duty conveyor belt applications you have in mind.

Versa-Link®

Installation is simple and easy with Versa-Link® conveyor belts. The belt's Advanced Link Rods can be joined to the belt as quickly as 30 seconds without the need for tools.

Furthermore, it has an easy to clean design that saves time during routine cleaning, and an up to 81% open area which also provides maximum air and liquid flow-through which is great for frying, cooking, coating, heating, and cooling applications. You will not have to worry about catch points, as Versa-Link's Forged Edge Technology creates an edge that is flush with the side of the belt eliminating any catch points that can damage the belt during operation.

Contact us today for more information.

For more information on any of these metal belt products, we have blog posts detailing the benefits, along with case studies and comprehensive product information published on our website. Alternatively, you can call us and speak with one of our tech sales team and they will be happy to answer any questions or provide you with a quote for your requirements.

Visit www.wirebelt.co.uk, Call +44 (0) 1795 421771, Email sales@wirebelt.co.uk



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRODUCT SPACING IN FOOD PROCESSING

Gabriel Boxall, Product Manager

The role of product separation in Food Processing

Product spacing plays an ever more significant role in food processing as technology and automation evolve, to ensure excellent product quality and efficient processing methods. You may find that with the correct product spacing, you have a lower level of wastage and a better product quality, increasing your margins and brand image. The key: ensuring that you are using the correct conveyor solutions.

Maximising margin through product separation

As outlined above, product separation is becoming much more desirable across a wide range of products and processes, due to its ability to fundamentally change the food manufacturing process. In confectionery, increased product separation allows for the use of pick-and-place machinery to improve efficiency, and perform more advanced processing steps, than would typically be possible by hand. In value-added food processing, increased product separation allows for more consistently high product quality, by allowing for more even cooking, frying, and freezing of the product.

Our conveyor systems such as the Ladder-Flex™ Spreading Conveyor, can efficiently and effectively increase product spacing, without the need for operator input. This is done using individual chains for randomised products, or lanes of grouped chains for consistently spaced products. The increase in product separation is customisable based on your application, available space, and product size, to ensure that your product enters the next piece of processing equipment, with the optimal spacing.

The correct solution for your application

When deciding on a conveyor system to aid in improving your manufacturing efficiency, it is important to ensure that it is hygienic, facilitates cleaning and is a net benefit to your business, offering a return on the initial investment.

Ladder-Flex™ Spreading Conveyors are designed to meet the latest EHEDG guidelines and ensure that your product gets from point A to point B efficiently and in excellent quality. Wire Belt's conveyor solutions are fitted with metal belting, offering improved robustness and therefore overall reduced downtime over the comparable plastic and woven belts,

while also operating at higher temperatures and providing improved cleanability.

By investing in the correct conveyor system, manufacturers not only ensure higher efficiencies and reduced product rejections and wastage but also uphold the highest standards of food safety and consumer satisfaction.



Ladder-Flex™ Conveyor



OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Gary Allen, Managing Director

Integrity and innovation in our practices promote the growth of our company and earn respect and trust. We hope to earn that not just from our customers but from all our fellow inhabitants of this planet – which is why we are constantly committed to providing sustainable energy by implementing sustainable technology and policies in our facilities.

We take our environmental practices very seriously, with procedures to reduce, reuse, remove, and recycle. and even still we continue to look for ways to improve our business and cut our carbon footprint alongside costs.

This year as part of our commitment we have been reviewing all aspects of our business. One area that stands out is the use of plastics in our packaging, we have already started to make some changes to how we package our goods, with the final goal of removing all plastics and ensuring the materials we use are fully recyclable and responsibly sourced.

We have no final deadline for implementation of these changes as we need to ensure that all items selected are fit for purpose and will not compromise the products that we are shipping.

You may already have noticed some changes to how your orders have been packed, one of which is your belts now arrive with a new identification label.

These new labels are made from recycled paper and are also fully recyclable after use. The label will still show all your belt identity details, to make it easy and quick to reorder.

We welcome your feedback on the changes we are making and if you feel there is anything extra that can be done, please feel free to contact us.

Other sustainable practices we have committed to has been the installation of two rooftop PVCell installations.

Since our first PVcell installation in 2011 and expansion in 2014, we have seen great benefits, not only by cutting costs and reducing our reliance on electricity suppliers but improving our environment, business and cut our carbon footprint.

When the sun is shining, 795 solar panels on the roof of our manufacturing headquarters produce 200 KWp of electricity that is either used in real-time by our facility or fed back to the grid where it benefits our community.

Over the last year, the system has generated around 80% of our electricity

requirements, which is roughly 160,000 kilowatt-hours (kWhs) of electricity, offsetting the equivalent of driving almost 36 times around the UK and 56 times around Britain in an average passenger vehicle, which equates to 280,000 miles.

This energy production is just from our Sittingbourne premises, our facilities in the US and Germany are also solar powered, reducing our footprint internationally.

In October 2020, the first installation successfully paid for itself as predicted.

Other sustainable practices we have achieved to meet our objective of becoming energy neutral are as follows.

- Installed a new variable speed energy efficient air compressor.
- LED energy efficient lighting.
- Installed air source heat pumps, to both heat and cool portions of the building.



DEVELOPING EXPORT BUSINESS

Ross Higgs, Sales & Marketing Manager



Above: Jihong Li, Haby Kamara and Yogesh Yadav

With over sixty percent of Wire Belt's sales going to export, its seen as an important part of the business, the objective going forward is to increase this even further with the help and support of our Distributors and Agents that represent the company in many parts of the globe.

Countries in the Middle East and Asia continue to grow and develop, consumers increasing disposable income and the changing way customers consume food means there are major opportunities for Wire Belt products and services in these markets.

Using market data and consumer trends to identify both countries and industries to target is a key part of Wire Belts Export Team's responsibility.

Haby Kamara, Yogesh Yadav and Jihong Li as the Export Team are focusing on developing this business sector in earnest across many continents.

To support Wire Belt's global End User customers, training, best practice support, site audits, and stocking options to reduce production downtime are key pillars of our long-term partnership with our clients.

Maximising belt life, this is achieved through the continued training and development of its professional distributor and Agent network to benefit our customers, this is another key part of the exports teams efforts in securing long term sustained growth and profitability globally.

PILOTING CHANGE WITHIN SALES AND MARKETING

Gary Allen, Managing Director

Ross Higgs has steered the Sales and Marketing activity successfully over the course of the last sixteen years, moving the company forward with the professional input of colleagues both internally and externally including our family of distributors, agents, and customers worldwide.

Wire Belt thank him for his contribution in growing the company to where it is today, having decided to step back from the business in December, Ross will be focusing on family and pursuing his interests (including getting the golf handicap down from an extremely high number...).

Ross commented, "it's been a pleasure to work with a great family of people, I have made many friends across the world, I wish them all well and further success in selling and marketing Wire Belt's portfolio."

Neil Walter's who succeeds Ross in the role In January, brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the company, Ross and Neil have been working jointly on a smooth succession plan. Neil has been concentrating on making us lean and more efficient to meet future challenges and will continue to drive the business forward.

Neil commented "with Ross's knowledge we welcome his part time contribution next year supporting Gary Allen and myself on specific projects".



RETIREMENT AFTER 53 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE!



Frank Bone, our longest serving employee made the decision that 2023 was the time for him to retire and bid farewell to his role as Setter. Frank has worked at Wire Belt for an incredible 53 years which is such a remarkable achievement, and we are grateful for all his efforts and hard work.

Frank has many memories from his time spent with Wire Belt. He started on 12th January 1970 in the packing area, this was to last just 18 months when an opportunity arose for him to learn machine setting and maintenance. He took on the role and spent the first couple of weeks learning and has never looked back.

In those early days, the factory was modest, housing only a few machines. The work was hands-on, requiring multitasking skills, as all the machines were mechanical, necessitating repairs and adjustments with different types of hand tools.

Over time his job became more streamlined making the job easier and more efficient with the development of electronic machines transforming the process.

Frank remembers moving into Wire Belt's new factory in Castle Road, there was just one machine to start with whilst they moved in, which was situated in the corner of the otherwise empty factory.

Working with Wire Belt is like being part of a family' says Frank, 'If you do your job, it is incredibly rewarding. It became an integral part of my life, and I was never tempted to go and seek employment elsewhere.'

As Frank enters this new chapter, he is now looking forward to spending quality time with his grandchildren and continuing to indulge in one of his favourite hobbies - creating confectionery delights and baking. Frank was always bringing in homemade fudge, cherry liquors, and marzipan chocolates for his colleagues. Fortunately, they will not have to miss out now that he has retired, Frank plans to pop back in to see everyone regularly.

Frank Bone's retirement serves as a testament to his remarkable dedication and loyalty to Wire Belt. His contributions and presence will be deeply missed, but his legacy will continue to inspire future generations within our organisation.

Frank was presented with his retirement gifts during a cake and coffee morning the company organised for him, one of the gifts was a food mixer, his chosen gift to be able to continue creating lovely, tasty bakes! We all wish Frank well and an enjoyable and happy retirement.

NEW FACES



Marc Chambers Joins us as our new Business Development Manager with a background in generating new business and sales growth to a variety of sectors. Marc Served in the Armed Forces and his time in the military allowed him to become a multiskilled engineer with experience in specialist plant machinery, after leaving the military Marc has worked within the Plant and Construction Industry assisting with supply and demand of Equipment to major projects.

Living in the Derbyshire area of the UK Marc will Assist with delivering our high levels of service back up, customer relations growth and training. Marc is looking forward to aiding in Wire belts growth and successful expansion into new markets. In his spare time, he enjoys DIY and visiting new places with his wife Nina.

BREDHURST FC U16 UPDATE

Nathan Nicholson, Marketing Assistant

And just like that, the new season is upon us! I know what you must be thinking – what's happened to Woodcoombe?

To summarise, Woodcoombe played their football in the Medway Youth League, and as we all know, the team had a very successful couple of seasons, winning silverware along the way.

In football, you always want to play at the highest level possible, testing yourself against the best players. In order to do this, Mick Tullett, the team manager, made the decision to enter the Kent Youth League (East), which is widely known as a much higher level of Sunday League Football. To be able to do this, the boys had to make the difficult decision to part ways with Woodcoombe Football Club, as it was not possible to enter the Kent Youth League with them.

As a result, a new era has started! The lads now represent Bredhurst FC, in the

U16 division of the Kent Youth League (East). A few players have departed for pastures new, whilst Mick Tullett has worked hard to recruit new players who are capable of playing at the new higher level. Exciting times are ahead, but it will be a challenge. Clubs such as Dover Athletic and Tonbridge Angels compete in this division, who's first teams play in the 6th tier of English Football, alongside the likes of Maidstone United, Torquay United and Yeovil Town, all of which are full-time football clubs, with ambitions of promotion to the 5th tier this season.

With all things considered, it would be wishful thinking that Bredhurst would be able to replicate the results of the last 2 seasons straight away. The boys have played 7 games so far this season and have only picked up the 1 point. This was a draw against Tenterden Town, who sit 4th in the league, a result which shows the boys can compete at this level! The boys' heaviest defeats came against Tonbridge



and Dover, which is almost to be expected given the size of the clubs in comparison to Bredhurst. The boys most recent defeat at the time of writing this piece was a 3-0 loss to Phoenix Sports FC, another recognised semi-professional club, who's first team play in the Isthmian League South East Division.

Bredhurst Manager, Mick Tullett says: 'we're competing and working extra hard in training – players and coaches, we'll soon be up there'. The boys currently sit in 8th place in the 10-team division, with Hastings and Whitstable below them on 0 points, demonstrating how tough the league is. As the team starts to develop chemistry, don't be surprised to see the team climb the table as the season progresses into the winter months!

UP THE BREDHURST!

Wire Belt Contacts

Customer Service Team

Jo-Anne Spokes - Customer Support Manager
 Sarah Hill - Order & Quotation Administrator
 Dominic Johnson - Order & Quotation Administrator
 Rhodell Marling - Order & Quotation Administrator
 Victoria Hills - Order & Quotation Administrator

Technical Sales Team

Gabriel Boxall - Senior Technical Sales Engineer
 Elena Van Boolean - Technical Sales Engineer
 Ben Thomason - Technical Sales Engineer
 John Wartars - Technical Sales Engineer

UK Sales

Marc Chambers - Business Development Manager
 Jim Robertson - National Sales Manager – UK, Ireland, UK Group Accounts

Export

Sophie Risbridger - Export Import Coordinator
 Jake Wrigley - Export Import Assistant
 Haby Kamara - Senior Export Sales Manager
 Jihong Li - Business Development Manager
 Yogesh Yadav - Business Development Manager

Sales & Marketing

Wendy Thrower - Senior Marketing Coordinator
 Nathan Nicholson - Marketing Assistant
 Ross Higgs - Sales & Marketing Manager
 Neil Walters - Commercial Manager

Accounts Team

Tim Keevil - Accountant
 Sam Donnelly - Assistant Accountant