

Press release

## Royal visit lifts North East crane manufacturer

**The Duke of Kent visited Liebherr Sunderland yesterday [5th March] to hear more about the company's continued investment in the city and its award-winning apprenticeship programme.**

Sunderland (Great Britain) 6 March 2020 – His Royal Highness was welcomed to the plant by Liebherr Sunderland managing director Ralph Saelzer before meeting the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillors David and Dianne Snowdon and Sunderland Central Member of Parliament, Julie Elliott.

The Duke of Kent was then given a tour of the 70.500 m<sup>2</sup> site, where the company's market-leading port and ship cranes are produced. Afterwards His Royal Highness met with apprentices and staff, some of whom have worked at the plant since its inception in 1989.

The visit was part of His Royal Highness' two-day tour of the North East. The tour also included visits to the International Centre for Life, Excelsior Academy and the Theatre Royal Newcastle.

Ralph Saelzer, managing director of Liebherr Sunderland, said: "It was a real pleasure and an honour to welcome The Duke of Kent to our Sunderland facility and give him an in-depth tour of our factory. Over the past 30 years, Liebherr Sunderland Works has produced and exported thousands of cranes to all corners of the globe.

"We have also trained hundreds of apprentices in the process, many of which are still with us today. This dedication to upskilling our staff has been key to ensuring the business remains competitive. It was great to hear such high praise for our apprenticeship scheme from His Royal Highness."

Of the 190 staff at Liebherr Sunderland, 23 are apprentices and many more started their careers through the company's award-winning programme. Ellie Wilson, an apprentice quality engineer at Liebherr Sunderland, joined the company two years and was one of three apprentices to meet The Duke of Kent during his visit.

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She said: “It has been absolutely amazing meeting the Duke of Kent, there’s been a real buzz around the place and everyone has really enjoyed it. I joined Liebherr two years ago and since then have gone on to work at the company’s plant in Rostock and all over. It’s such a great place to work.”

### **Success story for the region**

Sunderland Central MP Julie Elliott said: “It fills me with great pride to be here for such an historic visit by His Royal Highness. Liebherr Sunderland is a real success story for the North East manufacturing sector. The company has ploughed millions into the city over the past 30 years, providing opportunities for local people, including hundreds of apprenticeships that many may never have been able to access without their support.”

Liebherr Sunderland saw turnover jump 15 % to £45.8 million for the year ending December 31st 2018, up from £39.7 million during the previous year.

The company recently revealed plans to lease land adjacent to the plant. The space will initially be used for storage and the testing of cranes. However, it will also provide the opportunity to expand the production facilities should the enormous demand for the cranes continue to grow.

“The visit provided a huge morale boost to our staff and is testament to all of the hard work they’ve put in over the last 30 years. We can’t thank His Royal Highness enough for his visit and hopefully we get the chance to host him again in the future”, Ralph Saelzer concluded.

### **About the Liebherr Group**

**The Liebherr Group employs over 46,000 people in more than 130 companies across all continents. In 2018 Liebherr achieved a total consolidated turnover of more than 10.5 billion euros. As a global family-run technology company the Group is one of the world’s largest manufacturers of construction machines and is recognised for developing technically advanced and user-oriented products and services. Liebherr was founded in Kirchdorf an der Iller in southern Germany in 1949.**

### **Images**



Liebherr-Royal-visit-36.jpg

Caption: (l-r) Ralph Saelzer, managing director of Liebherr Sunderland Works and His Royal Highness, The Duke of Kent.



Liebherr-Royal-visit-88.jpg

Caption: (l-r) His Royal Highness, The Duke of Kent, test drives a Liebherr Reachstacker (LRS 545) crane during his visit to the company's Sunderland plant.



Liebherr-Royal-visit-133.jpg

Caption: (l-r) Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, Mrs Susan M. Winfield, OBE, His Royal Highness, The Duke of Kent and Ralph Saelzer, managing director of Liebherr Sunderland Works.



Liebherr-Royal-visit-142.jpg

Caption: (l-r) His Royal Highness, The Duke of Kent and Ralph Saelzer, managing director of Liebherr Sunderland Works.

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