

# Tradition Meets Innovation

Switchgear is crucial for the control and protection of power systems. Kraus & Naimer, one of the oldest manufacturers of electromechanical switch technology, talks to MEPCA about its apprenticeship programme, the use of its switches on an historic vessel, and more.

**K**raus & Naimer is a market leading switchgear manufacturer. Founded in Vienna, Austria in 1907 by Franz Kraus and Lorenz Naimer, the company now has six factories and operates worldwide. In the following Q&A, the company shows how it strives for innovation without losing sight of its origins.

## What is the most interesting or unusual application of a Kraus & Naimer switch?

We have supplied switches to many different industries and sectors over the years. One application that we were particularly pleased to be able to help with was the World's Last Sea-Going Paddle Steamer, the Waverley.

Named after Sir Walter Scott's first novel, built on the Clyde in 1947, the Waverley replaced the 1899 Waverley that sunk off Dunkirk during active war service in 1940.

The main engine telegraph and its bell are located both in the engine room and on the navigation bridge. A responsible officer from each of the departments handles the telegraph from these locations.

An additional telegraph was required for use in the event of a problem with the main telegraph, with the parts being sourced from various locations to keep the visual authenticity. This in turn created the need for a one-off switch for the selection by the bridge officer to indicate the direction and speed required of the main engine. In conjunction with the Chief Engineer, our in-house technical team were able to design a bespoke 12 position control panel switch to meet the requirement, and we were happy to be able to donate the finished switch to enable this historic vessel to continue offering unique cruising experiences between the picturesque Scottish Isles.



## How committed is Kraus & Naimer to innovation and the development of new technology?

Kraus & Naimer have always been at the forefront of electromechanical switch technology. From pioneering the use of bakelite during the early 1900s to the introduction of world's first modular cam switch (model C15) to the market in 1948, we have been market leaders.

The smallest cam switch in the world (model CA4N) also comes from Kraus & Naimer, so you can see innovation has always played a strong part. Even if the focus is on manual operation of the switching devices, trends in the industry such as automation and digital applications are also closely monitored at Kraus & Naimer.

We have always maintained our pioneering spirit and the pursuit of perfection. We are happy to accept the challenges of the future and continue to rely on technology, specialisation and know-how to provide new products and innovation to meet our customers' increasingly complex requirements around the world.

## Kraus & Naimer held its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Apprenticeship Day in October. How important are apprenticeship programmes to Kraus & Naimer?

Extremely important to us as a company. The apprenticeship scheme takes place in our headquarters in Austria every year and always attracts a high uptake. We strongly believe that today's apprentices are our skilled workers of tomorrow – in many cases they eventually become our department heads. It is particularly important for us to provide apprentices with the best possible support on their professional path.

Our goal is to keep motivated and well-trained employees in the company permanently after completing the skilled worker examination by providing support for higher qualifications during their educational path towards the master craftsman examination or HTL (Höhere Technische Lehranstalt) engineer.

More than half of former apprentices are still employed by the company in key positions.

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