

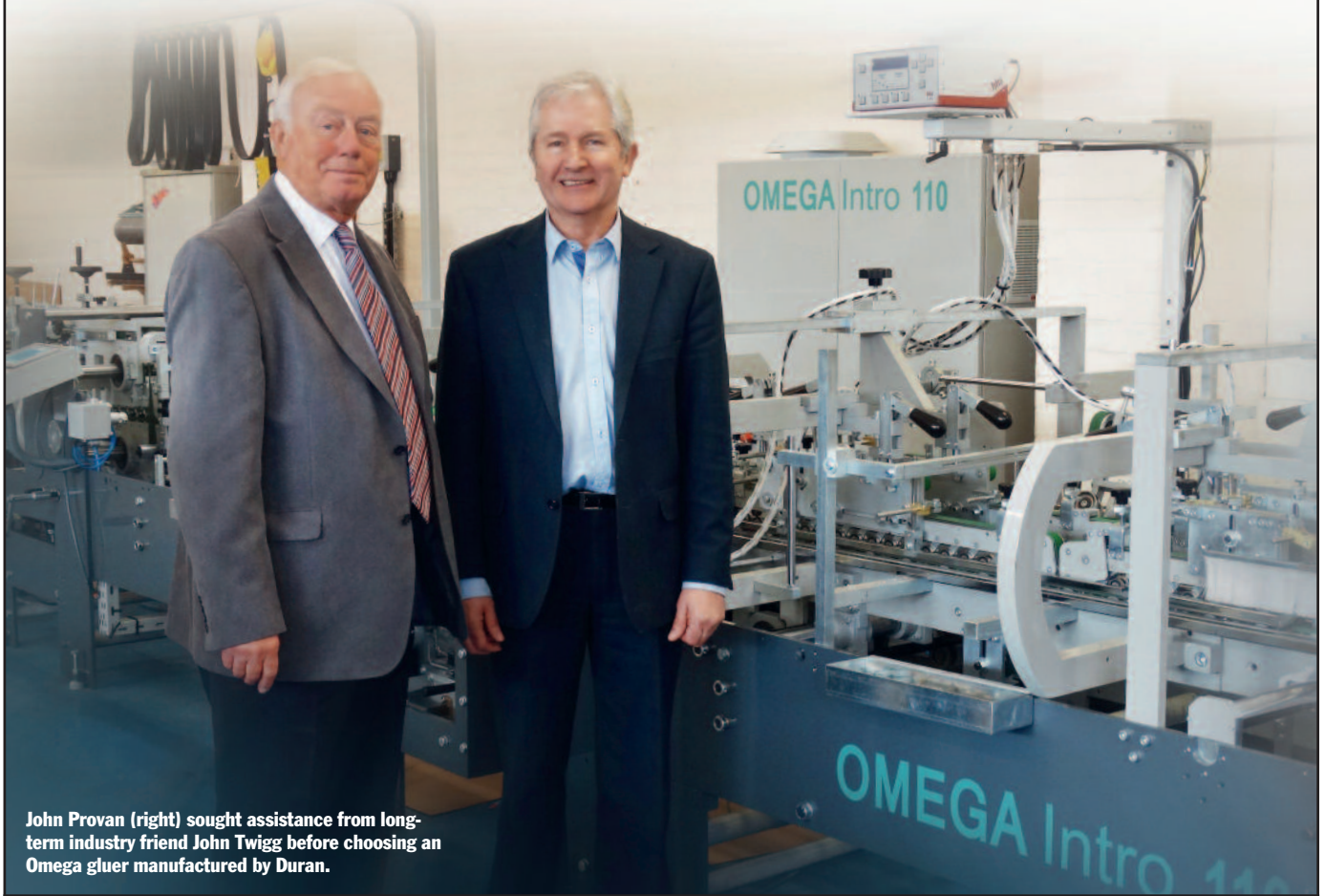
Printcut/Boxfast is the amalgamated version of two independent carton trade finishing companies that date back to 1970, when life began as a cutting forme manufacturer before John Provan and Derek Hatch became involved and took the company into packaging. Printcut was established when Hatch retired in 2006, and Boxfast acquired one year later. Today, the company employs 12 staff. Its production facility in the Highgate district of Birmingham in the West Midlands offers automatic and hand fed die cutting on 900mm and 1260mm platens, a CAD system for sample making and box design and window patching – in addition to folding and gluing.

Like many trade finishing houses, Printcut/Boxfast has built its reputation on specialist skills and a mixture of undertaking the jobs that carton printers cannot or will not handle in-house, and the offer of short term capacity in an industry where lead times are shrinking and JIT delivery is the norm. With a healthy portfolio of its own customers, including many well-known High Street names, Printcut/Boxfast found itself in need of more capacity in its folder gluer department.

“We had three folder gluers but they could no longer cope with the volume of work we were being asked to handle – in effect we had a production bottleneck that was holding us back,” explained Provan, who began to investigate what

NICHE MARKETS REQUIRE SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT

WHEN BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND BASED PRINTCUT/BOXFAST INSTALLED A NEW OMEGA FOLDER GLUER, ‘IT SOLVED ONE PROBLEM AND CREATED ANOTHER’, ACCORDING TO OWNER JOHN PROVAN. NICK COOMBES MET UP WITH HIM TO HEAR THE STORY BEHIND THE STATEMENT.



John Provan (right) sought assistance from long-term industry friend John Twigg before choosing an Omega gluer manufactured by Duran.

GLUER INVESTMENT

a new generation machine might offer in terms of increased productivity. One of his requirements was the ability to run 4-corner jobs at speed, which was more than many standard specification folder gluers could offer.

After discussions with a long-term industry friend, John Twigg, Provan was encouraged to discount any thoughts of installing a used machine and consider the Omega Intro 110, manufactured by Duran Machinery. What impressed him was the high specification of the folder gluer and the willingness of Duran to listen to his special needs and respond with the appropriate technology. Following machine trials at Duran's plant in Istanbul, the order was placed for one of the new Intro 110 models, which was launched at the end of 2013. Designed as a high quality budget machine that carries the usual Omega qualities of versatility and productivity, the Intro 110 is capable of running straightline, crashlock, double-wall, conical crashlock, inner partition and 4-corner boxes, as well as CD/DVD sleeves and French fries boxes with optional Z-fold and 6-corner boxes.

"The transformation in productivity has been amazing – it's a greedy machine, being three times faster than

the folder gluer it replaced and has now given us a sales headache because we have so much spare capacity," Provan commented. Describing the Omega Intro 110 as a step-up, and an ideal machine for trade finishers because of its versatility and speed, Provan has agreed to allow his premises to be used as a Duran demo facility for UK companies looking to see how the latest generation of affordable folder gluers can make a real difference. The two companies have decided to hold an open house event together in June.

As with all good trade houses, Printcut/Boxfast has noticed a few 'tweaks' that would benefit the machine's performance, and is delighted that Duran has responded with a positive attitude towards its newest UK customer. "One point that really impressed me during my visit to the factory in Turkey was the way

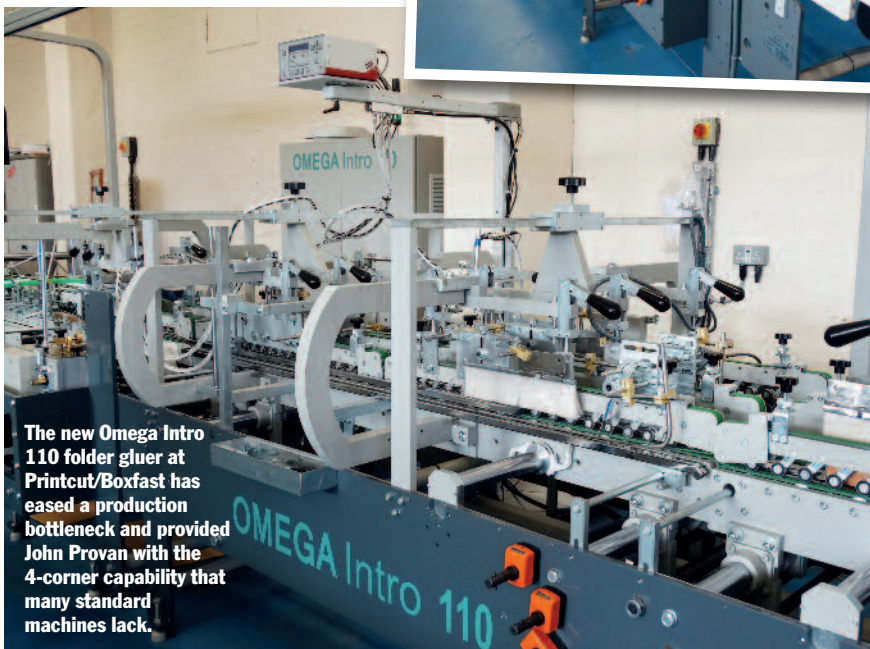
that Duran is customer-driven. There was none of the 'we know best' attitude that you often encounter from machinery manufacturers – they listened carefully and took action – after all, it's the customer who has to make it work and earn a living."

Situated in Birmingham, Printcut/Boxfast serves many of the small confectionary shops favoured by the local Asian community, where the demand for standard 6-corner boxes is high, but where run lengths can be small. A 20,000 run, sold off in lots of 1000 at a time, is not unusual, and while this work would not appeal commercially to many converters, for Provan it has become a real speciality. "We can run off 4-corner work at 19,000/hour and 6-corner at 12,000 with the new machine, and that makes us a valuable niche supplier to the market, especially with the spare capacity it offers," he

explained, adding that its speed on straightline work of around 75,000/hour posed handling problems at the delivery.

With a broad range of business from trade to direct customer work, Printcut/Boxfast has made its name by solving the problems that nobody else wants to get involved with. "We know our market, have specialist skills and equipment, and these allow

us to maximise our potential," he concluded, "and in Duran Machinery we seem to have found a kindred spirit." ■



The new Omega Intro 110 folder gluer at Printcut/Boxfast has eased a production bottleneck and provided John Provan with the 4-corner capability that many standard machines lack.

Editor's Footnote

For those with an interest in horse racing, the name and face of John Provan may be familiar. In 2014, his 11-year old 'Pineau de Re' won the world's most famous steeplechase, The Grand National, at Aintree, Liverpool. An amateur jockey in his younger days, Provan's other claim to fame is that he competed in races with Princess Anne, The Princess Royal.