

Sales Director, Peter Ingham, tells us about the 25 year history of East Lancashire Box Co and the critical investment decisions made and explains that their new folder gluer is so quick and efficient that after installing the Omega Bella the pressure has switched from manufacturing to pressure on sales to get more work!

"This year we are celebrating our 25th year in business. Initially, our family business was started in 1981 to service the buoyant local shoe trade with whitelined chipboard shoe boxes and lids. We continued to do this for about three years until the shoe trade took a dive due to the importation of ladies fashion shoes from the Far East. With the decline in demand for our boxes we had to change direction and find another market which we could service. By chance, Nick and I were in a

local 'Cash and Carry' and noticed the significant number of jars of coffee, cans of soups, beans, bottles and cans of soft drinks in 0422 die-cut self assembled trays which had been shrink-wrapped to hold the packs together. These products had been previously packed in 0201 corrugated cases. The supermarkets, with their desire to reduce the amount of board they handled, had encouraged their boxmaking suppliers to change from 0201 cases to an easy to handle form of self ready packaging.

"On examining the 0422 shrink wrap corrugated trays, we quickly realised that we too could manufacture these trays, but instead of supplying a product that needed assembling prior to packing, we

could 4 corner glue the trays making packing in the fast flowing food manufacturers factories far more practical. A new market was established and we quickly started to attack the local medium sized food companies. Luck turned our way and after acquiring a number of local accounts, word spread of our easy-to-handle product. The wonderful thing about our 4 corner glued trays was that nobody else seemed interested in supplying them — we had found a niche market."

"Initially we glued our trays on an old gluer and though slow and laborious, they always made good glued trays. As we won more accounts, we purchased refurbished gluers to keep up with

demand. At one stage we had six gluing lines. Demand continued to grow, which forced our hand to upgrade our die-cutting capacity — previously we had die-cut the trays on hand fed Rabolini platens. In 1987 we purchased our first semi automatic die-cutter, an S&S Die Master.

"It wasn't long before we had to speed up our gluing and so we purchased yet another folder gluer with better capacity. Business continued to expand and we had to continue our machinery investments. We acquired another S&S Die Master, this time with a single colour print unit in-line. We then added more print units, so we could keep up with the demand for more colours and better quality print.

In Detail

The Omega Bella 145 has been designed as an affordable and versatile solution for folding and gluing of E, B and C flute corrugated as well as solid board boxes between 300 - 1000gsm. It is able to produce a wide variety of box designs including crash lock bottom, inner partition, double wall and 4 and 6 corner boxes. The Omega servo backfold allows folding of all types of boxes within the machine specification, it is only necessary for the operator to input the flap length via the new touch screen panel. Allowances can be made for board grain, thickness and board type. Each job, if required, can be stored in the memory for repeat set-ups. This folder gluer is equipped with four energy efficient, whisper quiet Siemens AC drives, with independently adjustable motors for precise blank spacing.

The high specification includes pre-fold unit and adjustable speed folder belts to maintain squareness of high ratio boxes. Squareness of the glued blank is assured by pneumatic squaring devices, one after the final fold and the other at the stacker entrance to ensure perfect finished boxes. The touch screen control panels allow complete control of all functions and production parameters. Optional equipment includes motorised carriers with memory positioning and the modular side register unit, which squares boxes prior to passing through the pre-fold section.



EAST LANCASHIRE BOX INVESTS

OWNED BY TWO BROTHERS — NICK AND PETER INGHAM — EAST LANCASHIRE BOX CO. HAS RECENTLY INVESTED IN AN OMEGA BELLA 145 FOLDER GLUER.



Peter Ingham holding the Blackburn flag, Nick Ingham (front row left), Abdurrahman Kucukaras (General Manager of Duran Machinery) and Tugay (Turkish footballer in Blackburn) and staff from both East Lancs Box and Duran Machinery.

"In the mid 1990's we took the enormous decision to bring our factory into the 21st century.

"We put together a six year plan. In 1996 we again upgraded our die-cutting capacity with a TMZ automatic die-cutter. This machine could die-cut 5,500 sheets per hour rather than the 1,500 we were getting from the S&S's. In 1999, to keep pace with gluing, we sacrificed two of our older gluers and purchased a new machine from Korea that could glue at 12,000 trays per hour as opposed to the 2,000 we were getting from our older folder gluers.

"Further investment followed with the acquisition of a second TMZ die-cutter in 2002, this time we added two Cavifes print units.

"The Korean gluer opened up new avenues for us and we started to glue 'Crash Lock' and straight line die-cut cases. Other boxmakers heard of our gluer capabilities and we started to expand the business by doing trade gluing work."

Peter Ingham describes their decision to invest in the Omega folder gluer. "By 2005, with the supermarkets wanting

more and more self ready packaging, whether 4 corner glued trays or crash-lock displays, our gluing capacity was being out stripped. It was at this stage we realised that we needed another folder gluer and we approached Key Capital Equipment who recommended the Omega gluer from Duran Machinery. We visited Istanbul to view the Omega and during our stay, visited five other factories that had Omega gluers. Though all machines worked very impressively, what impressed Nick and myself most was the manner in which our Duran Machinery hosts were greeted at each factory they took us to.

"We placed the order in early December, went to view and test our machine in Istanbul in February 2006, and took delivery of it as promised on 16th March. On Friday 17th March we invited Tugay (a Turkish team member of the local football team) to officially unveil our machine. Less than 24 hours after taking delivery of the machine, he witnessed the first box coming off our new gluer.

"Our trust in Duran Machinery had been rewarded — they fulfilled every

promise they made with regard to manufacture, installation and training and we are now keeping pace with the demand for our glued products. From the sales point of view, these gluers are so quick and efficient that we now have to go out and get more work, so the pressure has switched from manufacturing to pressure on sales."

Abdurrahman Kucukaras, General Manager of Duran Machinery, was at the plant during the unveiling of the Bella 145. "When we first met Peter and Nick Ingham in Istanbul their initial concern was to find the right manufacturer who would provide a high quality machine at a good price as well as guaranteeing good after sales service. I believe Duran Machinery is the perfect supplier for these standards. Our economic line, Omega Bella, includes five sizes, ranging from 55 to 145. The Bella 145 is just the machine to meet the production requirements of East Lancashire Box, running both general solidboard and corrugated blanks for straight-line, crash lock bottom, double fold and 4 corner at high speed as well as providing easy and quick set-up."