



# 35 Years and counting



**Fairport Engineering** is not resting on its laurels, and is continuing to actively adapt to change to ensure its future success.

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**F**ounded in the late 70's but registered in 1982, and currently preparing to celebrate its 35th anniversary, Fairport Engineering mirrors the changing face of the UK's industrial landscape over the last four decades. Fairport has developed and grown over this period by pro-actively adapting to change – both technologically and business-wise – in such a manner that it is now one of the few remaining full service consultants and contractors in the UK bulk minerals and materials processing and handling sector. Successful and pre-eminent in this niche market Fairport has developed this total capability in a sustainable manner over a considerable time.

Originally created from a management buyout of Fairclough Materials Handling & Structural Steelwork, Fairport Engineering has operated from offices and factory works at Adlington, Lancashire since 1985. This capability was directed towards the coal and cement sectors. Work on coal projects spanned the entire range of surface activities, including:

- Headgear & Catchgear,
- ROM Coal Handling & Storage,
- Coal Preparation, and
- Road & Rail Loading Systems.

Much of Fairport's success in headgear and catchgear was due to its unique "SELEDA" Cage Arrestor safety system. In parallel with these activities in the coal sector Fairport was also undertaking significant projects in the domestic cement industry ranging from:

- Blending, Crushing & Handling Plants, to
- Grinding Mill & System Retrofitting & Refurbishment, and
- Sack Filling & Palletising Plants.

Patently the bulk materials processing and handling technology used in the coal and cement industries was similar and allowed synergy to be achieved but Fairport's appointment by Ventomatic of Italy as its UK partner provided even greater access to the cement industry. Ventomatic is one of the world's leading suppliers of complete plants and single machinery for high accuracy and high capacity packaging and dispatching of powder and granulated products such as cement, dry mortar, lime, gypsum, sand, carbonates and talc.

Notwithstanding these on-going business activities, the mid-1990's saw Fairport break through into the quarrying sector with the delivery of major flagship crushing and screening projects at Stancombe and Cornelly.

A key component of this success was the assimilation in 1997 of an in-house electrical and systems control capability enabling Fairport to deliver a full multi-disciplinary engineering service into the early stages of the

new millennium.

A marked increase in demand in building and concrete products caused the quarrying companies to increase their production capacity in these markets – particularly the advent of "dry silo mortars" and paviers and aerated concrete blocks. Fairport with its proven major project capabilities and significant in-house resources was well placed to maximise its involvement in this expansion.

The new millennium saw Fairport continue these business streams in a successful and sustained manner. Cement projects driven by environmental concerns, quarrying projects to provide a raw material for higher added-value building and concrete products and biomass fuel substitution for coal at power stations provided an enviable portfolio of projects being delivered by the company.

As will be evident it is not the norm for Fairport to rest on its laurels, and over the first decade of the 21st century many new innovative opportunities were considered and some implemented. Perhaps the most exciting being the research and development of new patented technologies to process municipal waste. Fairport developed a novel and unique process and associated equipment that would process residual household and commercial wastes to recover recyclables and a range of biofuels.

The initial phase of development resulted in the build of a small-scale pilot test machine, which successfully confirmed the chemistry of the process. The next stage involved the design and build in 2008 of a full sized demonstration plant in the UK, which was capable of processing operational levels of waste up to 80,000 t/a. This new venture into waste processing coincided with the worst global recession since the 1930's. Capital expenditure was cut to minimal "stay in business" levels and Fairport was fortunate to have a rump of major projects to sustain itself through the worst of these times. Surprisingly the largest of these projects were two high end recycling systems for "ELV's" (End of Life Vehicles). One at Worksop for MBA Plastics and the other at Oldbury for EMR. Both plants were based on traditional minerals processing technology and represented an investment of over £100M.

The early twenty-teens saw an upsurge in Fairport's key industries; no more so than alternative fuels and in particular the significant drive by coal fired power stations to convert to biomass, mainly wood pellets. Equally, due to Fairport's specific process knowledge it was

appointed as Saloro's Engineering, Construction & Management Partner to undertake the design & build of a Scheelite concentrator in Spain.

As with any on-going business concern that operates in essentially capital investment driven markets Fairport relies on identifying a pipeline of viable future projects for its continued livelihood. For Fairport this position is based on a resurgent UK market for significant development and delivery projects and three new initiatives introduced into the company's portfolio during the last two years. One being, the establishment of a smaller projects capability, the second being a targeted initiative into the export market offered overseas and the third, an in-house non-proprietary equipment design and manufacture offering both in the UK and overseas.

The smaller projects capability was introduced in 2014 as a market driven means of accessing contracts from Fairport's traditional markets but undertaking them by means of a single dedicated resource team. During 2015 some £1.75M of

smaller contracts were undertaken and a current order book of some £2.0M has already been secured for 2016. This smaller projects capability in tandem with the newly established equipment offering has combined to include a recent repeat order for a 6th mobile unloading hopper.

Cultivation of opportunities in Nigeria began during the second half of 2015 and to date has achieved some non-proprietary equipment supply contracts, with a total value in the order of £2,000,000.

During recent years Fairport's competition has reduced considerably with the demise of many of its traditional competitors. In parallel the underlying supply chain to Fairport's traditional industries has also diminished. To this end Fairport has formed an "Engineering Partnership" with FL Smith to exploit their new TURBUFLOW<sup>®</sup> pneumatic conveying technology and in parallel is currently assessing potential associations with other technology providers. It is believed that these "Partnerships" can lead to a variety of CE, EPCM and EPC opportunities in the future, as it has in the past.

So the scene is set for another few years in the on-going, successful story that is Fairport Engineering Ltd. ■

**For more information, please visit: [www.fairport.co.uk](http://www.fairport.co.uk)**

