

From The

Jaws Of Defeat

It's now 12 months since the Winfield Engineering Group purchased Red Rhino, so what has happened since? **Malcolm Bates** visited Grantham wanting to be impressed. And he was.



There are several strands to this story, so bear with me while I try to get them into some sort of order. You may remember the original Red Rhino company. It was more famous for some impressive marketing – from a huge inflatable red rhino to a fleet of rather over-the-top-red American pick-up trucks – than for getting the actual engineering right.

In other words, unlike the majority of British-owned manufacturers (tragically lacking in marketing expertise, but hopefully able to screw a

product together), the Red Rhino brand became famous for a well-marketed product that was short on reliability and even shorter in acceptable levels of after-sales service. The result? The original company crashed.

So who on earth would want to buy the remains of a company with a reputation like that? It wasn't a very long list, but Simon and Tracy Winfield, the directors of Winfield Engineering, saw the potential. They purchased the remains from the receiver and moved the whole operation from Aylesbury to their HQ in Grantham. Yes, that's right... just

as the worst recession ever in the construction equipment market took hold!

There are several key questions we need to ask Simon and Tracy, of which the first one on my list is "are you mad?" But before we get to that, perhaps we also ought to ask why you should be as interested in compact crushers as me, or the Winfields? We then need to explore how such kit could help boost recycling ratios and add value to waste and recycling operations. And after that, I ought to pull some of the latest Red Rhino kit off the production line and photograph

The Red Rhino crusher range will shortly cover seven different jaw size and tonne-per-hour classes up to the 40 tonnes per hour 7000. Smaller machines can be trailer, fork or tractor hitch mounted. This is the tractor hitch-mounted 3000 model



it in the pouring rain just so you can get an idea of the new model options on offer. So let's crack on...

While I'm driving up to Grantham to ask the "are you mad?" question, how about we run through the reasons why adding mobile compact crushers to your fleet might well be worthwhile? The idea is quite simple: leaving aside the complications of HAUC trench re-instatement procedures, there are still dozens of reasons why a mobile compact crusher can earn its keep in your operation. For a start, builder's waste and civic amenity site waste all tend to contain bricks and concrete. Disposing of such material without picking is little short of criminal, but just piling it up in the corner of the yard is equally shortsighted. True, as it is, with lengths of rebar in it, it's useless. But add a mini excavator, a dumper (or wheeled loader) to a compact crusher and what have you got? You've got a valuable source of material for fill, roadway or base construction that doesn't require further depletion of the world's resources.

A team effort: from lower left, anti-clockwise, Simon and Tracy Winfield, Julian Mik, James Anderson, Will Sawyer and Tracy and Simon's son, Job

Carbon Brownie Points

THERE ARE massive cost savings, too. Don't take my word for that – several progressive waste and recycling companies, including Jack Moody, Pearsons and Countrystyle Recycling, to name just three – have saved themselves thousands of pounds by reprocessing building and demolition waste when building new facilities, rather than order new supplies from the quarry. Then there are the considerable "low carbon" advantages and resulting PR brownie points to consider. Interested now?

So why compact crushers? Easy. Until recently, nearly all the crushing, shredding and screening that took place in the UK was in the hands (er, make that "the jaws") of large quarry industry-type machines. Big machines with several hundred horsepower, expensive to buy and often needing "special types" of advance warning for transportation on the public highway. They were – and still are – perfect for what we might call "production jobs" where the machine is being fed all day, every day by several hundred tonnes of material. But what about the smaller quantities?

Unlike its bigger cousins, a compact crusher can instantly be taken to where the material is, allowing it to be processed on-site, eliminating cross-contamination. You've

now got material that is worth money. It can be used on-site or delivered more economically. Or there's Plan B, where one or more compact crushers can be set up at civic amenity site to process the material that local builders and DIY-ers bring. This material can then be sold back at a profit. How brilliant is that? It's so brilliant that several forward-looking contractors, such as Bullmores, have been quietly doing just that for several years, helping local people and reducing the levels of fly-tipping in the process. Spot the "local" reference there? That'll be increasingly important as transport (and disposal) costs escalate.

Hire Or Buy?

THE TROUBLE is that compact machines are available in a bewildering number of model size/capacity options and configurations. We'll get the SP on Red Rhino machines in a bit, but to emphasise the versatility of compact crushers, it's worth noting that many models can be ordered as a skid-mount (with forklift pockets and crane lift eyes), on a fast-tow trailer chassis, with three point linkage tractor mounting with hydraulic PTO drive, or as a self-propelled crawler skid machine. To which we could also add the prospect of a skip truck, or hooklift demountable unit for



The 2000 model can be supplied for Q-hitch mounting, using the Bobcat "Bob-Tach" system



the larger machines. Why the diversity? To enable you to get the unit to where the material is in the most efficient manner. And if you still don't get it? That's OK – you don't have to buy such a unit – there's already a useful population of them around the country available for hire, so you can run a trial first.

Right, time to ask exactly why the Winfields took on Red Rhino... and then spent a whole year redesigning the products, totally revising the entire production, and then spent months explaining to the market that the "born again" Red Rhino was not only worth another chance, but was back as a force to be reckoned with? "There was no question in my mind that compact crushers have a big future," Simon Winfield explained. "The Red Rhino branding was excellent, even if the engineering wasn't. But Winfield has been in business for 40 years, so we figured we had both the expertise and experience to put the product right," he added.

Simon is being modest here. The product design was a mess; the general industry feeling being that machines were not designed and built for the hammering they would get. To make matters worse, in the days of the original company, sub-contractors, mostly in India, did all Red Rhino production. "The problem was, if changes needed to be made in production, the process was out of the control of the UK company. We sorted that out by bringing the whole design and

The unit is powered by the host machine's auxiliary circuit and is ideal for recycling small quantities of material

The 3000 and 4000 models are both easily transported and make an ideal working partnership with the compact 360 excavator, wheeled loader or mini-dumper

production back into the UK," Simon explained. All of it? "Yes, absolutely. Why not? We are engineers. This is what we do."

In fact, Simon is still being modest. Winfield might not be a name you've heard of before, but the company was behind much of the fabrication of Barford equipment in the early days, before diversifying into manufacturing Niftylift access units and Simba agricultural machinery. In fact, Winfield is not so much a sub-contractor in this context; the company also has an in-house design facility headed-up by Alan Hardisty, robot welders, plasma cutters, a full-sized machine spray booth and finish-off shop, so it already had all the elements it needed to manufacture a product line of its own, as Simon explained: "It was the fact that we had all the manufacturing capability we needed in-house that made the acquisition of the Red Rhino brand seem like such a logical step. We'd already decided to diversify in order to protect the company from fluctuations in our sub-contract work. With Red Rhino, we can control how much to invest in R&D, we're in control of manufacturing quality and we are also responsible for setting up a dealer and after-sales

service network. That's great because it gives us a direct link to the end-user," he added.

The Pace Of Change

IN OTHER words, the Red Rhino crusher being built today should be a much better machine than the one you saw a couple of years ago. The pace of change – in terms of re-engineering the existing single toggle jaw 2000, 3000 and 4000 machines, the move to total UK-build and the introduction of the new 5000 and 7000 models – all within a 12-month period has been breathtaking. But that's only half the story. A key element of compact crushers is that you get to specify how the units are configured. Do you want the unit powered by diesel, a hydraulic powerpack, or even electricity? Do you want fully mobile fast-tow trailer mounting to enable "hit squad" units to go out to small rural civic amenity sites, or would a tractor linkage mounting, or self-propelled tracked unit be better for moving the unit around a larger recycling facility?

Add all the various spec options up – including the tough new "poverty spec" 5020





At present Winfield has concentrated on simple controls for reliability. The 5000 currently has wander lead controls, but full remote control is available on the 7000

model with simplified electrics – and there are now getting on for a dozen models in the range. There will be a brand new 6000 model (fitting in between the three-tonne machine, 37hp Deutz diesel-powered 5000 and the 10-tonne, 67hp Deutz 7000) introduced during this year. Oh, and a new 360 excavator-mounted crusher bucket too. Did I mention that Winfield has also designed, and is building in-house, its own crawler base units for track-mounted machines, rather than import and

modify the units from elsewhere? Or that the smaller 2000 model can now be specified with the Bobcat “Bob-Tach” attachment coupling? Each one of these developments would be impressive for a large multinational in the current economic climate; for a UK-based company employing just 40 staff it’s an amazing achievement. But to achieve all of that within the first 12 months and without a single “foreign partner” being involved is... well, it’s an all-too-rare

Diversity range: aside from trailer-mounting, the 2000 models can now be configured for skidsteer loader mounting. The tracked 4000 (centre) is just 775mm wide, while the re-engineered 1660mm-wide 5000 is now joined by the 5020, 7000 and, shortly, a 6000 series machine

bit of good news for British manufacturing.

By the time you read this, Red Rhino will be well on the way to appointing a new dealer network (the “old” Red Rhino tried to sell direct) while increasing overseas sales. It’s significant to note that some top-notch plant and machinery dealerships and hire companies are already in the frame, so with 30 or so dealers across the UK, you should never be far from back-up.

So one last question remains: do you need a compact crusher as part of a multi-waste stream waste collection and recycling policy? Well, yes. The recycling of brick and concrete has massive potential, both in cleaning up the environment and in revenue terms, so you could argue that setting up a system now will stand your operation in good stead as the economy improves. **MVO**

Contacts

www.redrhinocrushers.com

www.winfieldengineering.com

