



TR PRESS PACK PRESS RELEASES

TR FASTENINGS IS RECOGNISED THROUGHOUT
THE INDUSTRY FOR WORLD CLASS PRODUCTS
& SERVICES

WE MANUFACTURE, STOCK & DISTRIBUTE
A VAST RANGE OF INDUSTRIAL
FASTENERS & COMPONENTS



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TR Press Release

TR Fastenings Cleans Up With New EBAC Washing Machines Deal



2017



TR Fastenings (TR) has secured a partnership with British firm EBAC, the only UK manufacturer of washing machines.

TR has been appointed as the company's sole supplier of fasteners and fixings for its new range of domestic washing machines, which is being rolled out throughout the country this year.

Until recently, EBAC, based in County Durham, was best known for designing and manufacturing dehumidifiers and water coolers, before entering the washing machine market. Due to the significant investments required to obtain the correct robotics and components for these products, EBAC needed to find a fastenings supplier with thorough knowledge of white goods and the specific parts required.

TR Fastenings approached EBAC to discuss providing not only the parts but also a consultancy service on selecting, testing and applying the most efficient fasteners for these machines. TR has a wealth of knowledge and experience in this field, thanks to its Italian sister firm, Viterie Italia Centrale (VIC), which specialises in supplying fastenings to the white goods industry. After initial meetings and a period of consulting and testing, including bringing experts over from VIC to assist with the process, EBAC appointed TR Fastenings as its sole supplier of fastening parts for its washing machines.

EBAC washing machines are currently available in several independent UK retailers following a soft launch at the end of 2016, and they will continue to be rolled out across the UK in 2017.

Don Lamb, business development manager at TR Fastenings, comments: *"This is a fantastic partnership for us, not only because we now have the privilege of supplying fastening parts to the only UK manufacturer of washing machines, but because it has also shown the strengths we have in consultancy and product knowledge. The nature of the robotics and processes involved in washing machine manufacture calls for very specific expertise, and we are thrilled that we and our partners at VIC have been able to deliver this for EBAC."*

Andrew Jordan, Logistics Manager at EBAC, adds: *"This is a hugely exciting time for EBAC as we enter a new market and showcase our skills as a leading hub of British design and manufacture. The washing machine market is technically challenging and it's vital that we source, test, and utilise only the best components and processes. Having TR and their Italian colleagues on board to advise us and supply the parts we needed and the expertise on how they should be used was invaluable."*

2017



Still learning after **40 YEARS** *– and proud of it*

**FASTENER
+ FIXING
MAGAZINE**

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Geoff Budd joined TR Fastenings forty years ago, as a temporary packer. Within ten years he was a director of the rapidly growing business. Today he is managing director at TR Europe as well as a Trifast main board director, and possesses an extraordinary knowledge of the global fastener industry. In four decades he's witnessed massive change – but is adamant some things really haven't altered.

Cut Geoff Budd and each corpuscle spilled would carry a TR logo. That's by no means blind loyalty – here is a man who can be disconcertingly critical as well as disarmingly generous, as his colleagues and extensive contact network across the global fastener industry will attest. Think rather of a deep rooted commitment to founding principles that, for him, have stood the test of forty years. *"When I started with TR Fastenings everyone in the company went to the Christmas party in a minibus – now we'd need to hire a cruise liner."* A typical Budd quip, perhaps, but an apposite one. TR Fastenings Limited was incorporated in 1973, the brainchild of the 'Two Mikes' – Roberts and Timms who, having worked at a fastener supplier in London, set up their own distribution business from their Sussex homes. Today Trifast Plc employs more than 1,200 people across the globe, with manufacturing and distribution businesses and customers ranging across Asia, Europe and North America.

For its 2015-16 year Trifast reported global revenues of GB£161 million (€188.8 million), reflecting five years of sustained growth and a 44% increase on its 2012 sales result. Underlying profits before tax were GB£16 million, more than three times greater than 2012.

Geoff Budd joined the business in 1976, aged nineteen. *"I wasn't doing anything of particular worth"* he says, *"and these guys seemed to know what they were doing"*. His first job was to pack a large export order of galvanised Unified bolts. *"That's when I learnt my first piece of technical information about fasteners – the difference between a set screw and a bolt."* Learning matters to Geoff Budd: A theme that will recur. *"None of the big UK manufacturers that dominated the market in those days exist any longer. Back then they were shipping 500 tonne orders to China for the rail industry and millions of brass wood screws to Japan."* A pause before he adds: *"Funny how things have changed."* The nascent TR business certainly did not share the complacency that marked many of these British behemoths for decline as the world of fasteners changed around them. *"The whole transactional process was slow. It took a week to get a delivery from Birmingham. That's why TR became successful. We ran around, short cutting all of that."*

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Still learning after 40 years – and proud of it



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Geoff Budd joined the business in 1976 aged nineteen, and thanks to the process of learning by osmosis, quickly progressed from the warehouse to the offices

It wasn't long before Geoff Budd deserved a permanent role. "I worked in the warehouse for a year or so and drove everybody nuts because I kept on reorganising it. Then I started in the office, booking the goods in and out. Then progress chasing – a funny role, phoning people for goods that should have been delivered already. Then on to internal sales." "It taught me about the products, simply by handling them. That's why it is still good for people who join the company to spend time in the warehouse, getting to know the differences between fasteners." That process of learning by osmosis – doing the job, seeing different manufacturing and distribution operations, travelling the world – still matters to Geoff Budd.



"In truth you never stop learning. There's an almost infinite variety of parts: Always things you haven't seen before."

By the late 1970s Geoff was on his first customer visit. "I saw one customer in the morning, took another to lunch, and went to see another in the afternoon. Then, your days were planned around who you were taking to lunch." Lunch, sales technique or just the straightforward personability that remains a Budd hallmark, it worked, and he spent the next three years on the road. Then it was back into the office, initially in a key accounts role, then onto purchasing. By 1986

Geoff Budd was a main board director of TR Fastenings. TR's original specialism in smaller fasteners for the electronics sector was largely an accident of geography. *"To begin with the business was fairly local, which meant mainly electronic and light engineering."* In the mid 1980s one relationship was pivotal in TR's development. *"We got involved in supplying IBM because they wanted a small quantity of washers in a hurry."* Characteristically, somebody in TR jumped into a vehicle and drove to Havant, Hampshire, with them. *"That opened the door to us supplying fasteners to the computer disc drive industry."* *"Not the disc drives of today,"* adds Geoff. *"The centre screw was an 8mm socket cap made in Sweden from a specially heat treated stainless steel. They had to be polished until you could see your face in them."* Installation was in a Class 100 clean room so there could be no contamination whatsoever. The next generation of drives required smaller screws until eventually the diameters were too small for the Swedish manufacturer. *"That presented an opportunity for TR,"* says Geoff, *"and we started making them ourselves in Telford"*. That was his personal introduction to fastener manufacturing, as the factory became his responsibility. It was also TR's introduction to supplying licensed fastener products. *"We obtained a TORX® licence from Camcar® and developed the drive system into the electronics industry."* That led to new relationships with other major computer manufacturers.

The IBM relationship, however, was transformational in another way. *"We were not a perfect supplier to them. I think they took the view we were the best of a bad bunch so they decided to train us to meet their expectations. They wanted zero defects and nil overdues – fairly commonplace now but, at the time, we thought 'you've got to be joking, how are we going to do that?'"* At that time most customers placed an order schedule, we delivered it, they would inspect it. IBM didn't want any of that. They wanted assured product delivered to the point of use." An object lesson in what was to become a core TR customer offer – vendor managed inventory. Ironically without a computer system of its own, TR had to eliminate potential errors in its current working methods and develop manual systems that underpinned the required service levels. *"Over time,"* explains Geoff, *"I laid down many of the manual processes that were eventually integrated into the computer software we introduced in 1989"*.

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The advent of the fax machine improved long-range communication, although Geoff Budd admits initial doubts. *"I couldn't see them catching on because nobody had one."* The demise of the telex, however, was painful in other respects. *"They were made in Brighton and that was good business for us. When they went out of fashion we suffered from technology change for the first time."* Next stop Taiwan, for the first ever fastener industry exhibition held in Taipei. *"That is where many of our long-standing relationships with Taiwanese manufacturers were formed."* Geoff recalls a salient lesson in sourcing at the time. *"We placed an order in India for cheese-head machine screws and I think they sent the slots separately from the screws. It demonstrated the importance of going to see the people."* It's significant the reference is to people not plant. For Geoff Budd it is as much about building the trust relationship as about auditing the physical capabilities of a factory.

"We probably put as much store on our relationship with our suppliers as with our customers. If you are fair and reasonable, if you are prepared on occasions to compromise to reconcile issues, you will be rewarded in the long run." In 1994 Trifast became a public company. Three years later it made its first, significant acquisition in Asia.



"One of our key competitors was in Singapore. We explored the possibility of buying parts from them and that led eventually to acquiring what became TR Formac." Not all acquisitions worked out so well in the short run. *"We bought a company in Holland because we had contracts to supply a customer there. We were all ready to go and the customer decided to shift all manufacturing to a sub-contractor. We had a business and no customer – but over time that business became very important in TR accessing the automotive market."*

Other acquisitions were more directly successful in either reinforcing TR's role in a particular sector or in providing an important bridgehead to diversify into others. *"We acquired manufacturing in Taiwan and Malaysia, which has been very important in developing our capabilities for the automotive sector. More recently we acquired VIC Srl in Italy, which has great manufacturing expertise and gave us real access to the domestic appliance sector."* Geoff Budd is convinced that the best acquisitions emanate from relationships and mutual trust.

"PSEP in Malaysia was known to our Asian management, so there was already a basis for trust. We've had great success in acquisitions where people approached us with genuine reasons for sale, perhaps family circumstances, and had a unique or special proposition, giving us access to a market or skills we needed."

"Going back to the two Mikes, it was always about inspiring people and that theme runs through TR just as strongly today. Look after your people, look after your customers, look after your suppliers. There isn't a whole lot more than that, except having a reasonable amount of common sense about what you are selling."

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"We've adapted to the needs of the market. On three occasions there have been sharp adjustments in the business because of changes with customers or the general economic climate. We've become a global business and supply customers in three continents – an ability few have achieved."

"You always have to be outward looking. I've not learnt anything from sitting behind a desk. TR senior managers believe in getting out there and seeing what is going on. That's how we encounter the issues and learn to resolve them."

Geoff is still keen to learn. *"I set out to know as much about this business and technically about the products as I could. I still don't know everything but I find it interesting and enjoy sharing that knowledge."*

In the final analysis, though, *"the most important thing, absolutely, is the relationship with the people. If I prize anything in life it is the friendships and relationships I have across this industry. Working with TR has provided not only a good lifestyle but also a mechanism to live my life – to travel, to meet people, to see things, to have a reason to go."*

"To be a part of one of the great success stories in our industry is fantastic. That success comes from people doing the right things, even when others aren't looking – working hard, knowing what they do, and being honest."

TR Press Release

TR Fastenings strengthens sheet metal offering with Press-Form and Haeger partnership



2017



TR Fastenings is cementing its position as a full-service supplier for sheet metal customers via its special relationship with Press-Form Machinery Ltd. Press-Form is the UK's official agent and service partner for Haeger Insert Presses.

With over 25 years' experience in the field, Press-Form also offers official agent support for corner formers, laser cutters, punch machines, coil handling equipment and power presses.

Haeger is a long standing client of TR Fastenings, using and promoting TR's sheet metal fasteners range in exhibition demonstrations throughout Europe. The relationship between TR and Haeger accounts for a significant proportion of TR's clinch fastener sales across the region.

The three way partnership between TR, Press-Form and Haeger means that sheet metal customers have access to a full service package combining high quality parts, industry-leading machinery and second to none experience and consultancy.

Paul Standing, Commercial Products Manager at TR Fastenings, says:

"We live in a changing world where businesses and customers are all facing new challenges and industry developments. At TR, we are always looking for ways to improve what we do, how we do it, and how to offer an end-to-end, full service package for our customers."

"When you have strong and long-lasting relationships with other companies within the supply chain, as we do with Press-Form and Haeger, it makes perfect sense to join forces and offer customers a fully-rounded experience which combines all of our collective expertise."

Andy Meachen, Managing Director at Press-Form, adds:

"Our partnership with Haeger is a hugely successful one, and the addition of TR Fastenings into this mix will only serve to strengthen this relationship and allow it to evolve and adapt to market changes and industry demands."

"The fact that we can offer a one-stop-shop for sheet metal customers means that we can give them the support and confidence they need to grow and strengthen their own business performance."

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TR Fastenings Enters World of 3D Modelling with Brand New Product Animations



2017



TR Enters World of 3D Modelling with Brand New Product Animations

Global fastener firm TR Fastenings is upgrading its online product catalogue with the introduction of exclusive new 3D models and animations to its website.

The models and animations, which allow users to move the product images around and see how they are installed and used with other materials or components, are hosted on Sketchfab.com, a VC-backed platform which acts as an online library for 3D models and virtual reality (VR) content.

TR embarked on the project in 2016, and so far there are 68 interactive animations and 553 product animations online. TR will be adding new models to the site over the coming months and aims to have a 3D interactive model for each one of its 800 products uploaded by the end of 2017.

The videos not only show the products in a new and innovative light, but are also extremely useful for sales and customer service teams needing to demonstrate how the fasteners work to existing and prospective customers when they are not in the same location. The interactive models are more effective than static images, as customers can move around the model and see the product in detail from any angle.

With regards to the animations, the files are much smaller than traditional videos and work on any device. No plug-ins are required and the animations have been designed with all browsers in mind.

Keith Gibb, Head of Web Development at TR, comments *“3D models are becoming more and more popular and we are very excited about offering this feature to our customers, partners and visitors to our website. The interactive element is invaluable when demonstrating products remotely, and the hosting technology provided by Sketchfab is a real find. This is a huge step for us and we are thrilled to be leading the charge in terms of engineering companies using this technology to showcase our products.”*



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