

# STEEL PROCESSING NEWS



## INTRODUCING THE KRONOS

**A gantry-style cutting and drilling system, the Kronos is Ficep's latest innovation to arrive in the UK.**

The Kronos gives customers a reliable and high-quality cutting and drilling solution with a superior level of accuracy.



## KRONOS ADDS A FUTURE DIMENSION TO LAYCOCK'S HISTORY

**In the 1700s machinery for nail making was first introduced. Around the same time, John W Laycock started out making nails in Keighley, West Yorkshire, in 1740. Now led by Mark Sugden - fourth generation of Sugdens to be at the helm - the business is expanding as a steel service provider and has turned to Ficep UK to help build on its success.**

Scan to find out more about the Kronos.



JOHN W.  
**LAYCOCK**  
ESTABLISHED 1810

First Class Service in Steel



The firm raised a business case for opening a second site that would allow them to expand services. Says Mark Sugden: "Waiting for thermally cut profiles for fittings to arrive has been a sticking point in the past and we wanted to regain control, whilst still working with trusted suppliers. Investing in machinery will mean we can bring some of our profiling in-house which will be of direct benefit to customers in terms of lead time, quality and cost saving."

Mark approached Chris Berriman, Ficep UK Sales Manager, in October 2021 to discuss options. Chris recommended the Ficep Kronos due to its footprint and flexibility.

Mark continues: "Ficep has so much experience, knowledge and perspective. They have been supportive and attentive and understand our business and position in the marketplace. Backed by our own market research and due diligence, Ficep gave us the confidence to make the investment."

The new Ficep Kronos system will be set up in the basement of Laycock's new two-storey premises and will allow the business to drill and thermally cut up to 150mm thick material, providing a fast and quality service for new and existing customers.



# TAKING ADVANCED COLD-FORMED SECTIONS TO THE NEXT LEVEL



Investment in Ficep UK's automated drilling and profiling lines has helped ACFS to maximise its levels of factory prefabrication, reduce fabrication time, improve quality, and save significantly on material costs.

ACFS' investment in two new Ficep systems - the Excalibur 12 drilling system and Kronos 153 PC plasma profiler - comes as part of its continued commitment to driving innovation and meeting long-term sustainability objectives. The new Excalibur and Kronos systems are now installed at ACFS' 7900m<sup>2</sup> facilities in Wolverhampton.

Since purchasing the machines ACFS owner, Oliver Rogan, reports a 120% increase in output of materials and a significant reduction in welding time to produce its product range. The Excalibur alone has enabled ACFS to process a record breaking 60 tonne job in five days with only five welders, which is a first for the company. It also allowed the company to process sections that its stockholders were not able to process.

For ACFS, Ficep's software interface is also of huge benefit. The software allows for remote diagnosis that enables Ficep's service team to perform system diagnostics and routine checks. The additional option of the offline nesting software lets ACFS to nest individual



parts into bars for multiple processing with less handling and also reduces the stock length of material with optimised nesting for purchasing or from stock when required.

Says Oliver Rogan, ACFS owner: "We have been blown away by the impact the two machines and the software have made. The results have far surpassed our expectations. The systems help our welders to speed up production and reduce NCRs, giving us an end result that fits together seamlessly. As we continue to push ahead with innovation and sustainability, the Ficep systems also help us work towards reducing our carbon footprint."



## Vanguard vision for the future

Well-established metal fabrication specialist, ECS Engineering Services, is future-proofing its business and has selected the Ficep Vanguard automatic CNC drilling and saw line to support their journey.

ECS has a long-established relationship with Ficep UK since it invested in its first P803 plate punch machine, in 2003, and so Ficep was a natural choice when the company was looking to modernise and digitise its steel processing. With guidance from Ficep UK, ECS placed an order for the Ficep Vanguard CNC system – a three spindle direct drive high performance drilling and sawing line for drilling, scribing, tapping, countersinking and standard milling applications.

ECS MD Mark Watkins, who took the helm at ECS Engineering in 2020, has his sights firmly set on moving the business away from the heavy industrial operation it has been to a leaner and more modern processor, utilising robotics and automation. Mark says: "We are moving towards having smarter workshops and our investment in software and machinery will play a huge role in that. The Vanguard CNC drilling and sawing line will help us speed up our processes, increase our throughput and ultimately elevate our market position."



Ficep has provided the best solution at the right price point. Their willingness to communicate, on top of providing excellent technical support, made it an easy decision for us to make. We are excited to see what the future holds.

## HISTORY IN THE MAKING



We value our customer relationships and have many which stem back over decades, such as that we have with Cairnhill Structures, part of the Watson Towers group. It started in 1980 when former Cairnhill Structures Managing Director, Jack Sanderson, bought the first Ficep system to be sold in the UK – a small gantry system – and our relationship has gone from strength to strength.

The Watson Towers group has invested in five Ficep systems since 1980, including the Ficep P51 CNC punching machine; the Orient drill saw line which years later was upgraded to the fully CNC Endeavour; and their first state-of-the-art Ficep Gemini CNC and plasma machine. The firm has recently added a second Ficep Gemini system to its 125,000 sq ft factory in Coatbridge, Scotland, on the back of the success it has seen with its first.

Employing over 150 staff directly, Cairnhill Structures has created some of the most significant steel structures across the UK, operating in sectors including nuclear and power; oil and gas; rail; bridges; offshore and piling. Group Director, Steven Hendry says: "We must be agile and able to react swiftly in the markets in which we operate and the Ficep systems allow us to do that. Having two Gemini systems helps us to manufacture steel

quickly, accurately and efficiently. Our Geminis are currently working 17 shifts per week and the Endeavour is also working at full capacity.

"The scribing function is particularly invaluable to us as our customers need each part to be individually traceable.

It automatically marks all reference points, including fit up lines and reference point indication, for all fittings. The unit even marks the part number of each fitting at the point where it is attached to the job, which is a great time saver during our fabrication process."

If a company delivers on its promises, which Ficep has done over the years, and our customers are given the very best then we are keen to remain consistent and favour those who know our company well. We are constantly looking at ways to future-proof our business, be more innovative, provide the best for our customers and Ficep's service and systems tick every box.





# FURTHER PRODUCTION AND EFFICIENCY GAINS FOR BILLINGTON STRUCTURES



**Billington Structures, one of the UK's top steel contractors, says that proven efficiency and productivity gains from existing Ficep machines have led to their most recent Ficep orders.**

The business, which operates out of three sites based at Yate, Wombwell and Shafton, has recently invested in two new Ficep systems - a new Valiant and its second Gemini - taking its total number of Ficep systems, across all sites, to seven.

The new Gemini CNC plate machining system is to be installed in its 11,032m<sup>2</sup> facility in Shafton, which Billington uses for fabrication and processing. This machine will be added to the existing Gemini bed to increase the length and capabilities which Billington anticipates will further increase its efficiency and productivity. The Geminis can work independently or in tandem.

The heavy-duty Valiant drill and saw line was purchased for Billington's site in Wombwell, a 5,082m<sup>2</sup> facility used for fabrication, shotblasting and painting. The Valiant drill and saw line will replace its existing Ficep drill and saw line which had served the business well

for over 23 years. The new Valiant's efficiencies and capabilities are expected to further enhance the site's performance.

Billington Structures' Production Director, Simon Barnes, says: "We have installed numerous Ficep machines over recent years, including saw and drill lines, plate machines, plate girder lines and a shotblast machine. All these have been installed within programme and have been effective. We've found Ficep personnel professional throughout the procurement, installation and more importantly, after-sales process.

"All these machines have made our business more efficient, flexible and productive over the various applications they were purchased for. It's been a pleasure to see our company develop and innovate over the years and Ficep has played an integral part in the production process. I am sure our future investments will involve Ficep."

## FICEP AND PARTNERS

We work closely with our agency partners which are integral to our full service offering, giving customers the widest range of steel processing machinery on the market today. Our partners include:



## New Ficep innovations for the future

**We continue to invest in new designs and innovations in new technology, to bring customers the very latest equipment, developed to further enhance the fabrication processes. Here are three of our recently launched systems:**

### TIPO D50-F

enables the processing of miscellaneous sections such as angles, flats, structural tubes and channels. This line features the integration of drilling, scribing, marking and mitre cutting of a wide range of structural profiles used in fabrication - a truly flexible machine offering the ability to process different shapes on one machine rather than on several different ones.



### Nozomi

is our first anthropomorphic coping robot for the fabrication of structural shapes and round pipes. With Hypertherm latest XPR 300 plasma cutting technology its capabilities also include part marking, layout locations with orientation and weld symbols all within the same processing cell. Its high-definition plasma capability provides superb quality holes and cope shapes in section, pipes and box profiles, even flat bar processing is achieved, a versatile machine for any shop.



### Energy

is a CNC machine for steel plate edge milling, predominantly used in turbine and pressure vessel production. The machine offers drilling, milling, and scribing if required. The automated Energy machine has been developed to handle extremely large and heavy steel plates - up to 30m in length and 4m in width - ideal for use in the wind energy sector.



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