

ANCA's 'a way' to quality grinding

Based close to the M1 motorway in Sheffield, Lomas Engineering is a specialist, approved manufacturer of high-quality cutting tools to the demanding aerospace industry and its maintenance sector. The company is also an approved supplier to the marine, automotive, defence, communications, general engineering and medical sectors.

Lomas' comprehensive product portfolio is a direct consequence of the company's in-depth understanding of its customers' engineering requirements. Through the exploitation of advancements in materials, coatings, and the company's cutting-edge design capability, an on-going programme of pure and applied research has enabled the development of these tools. Lomas Engineering manufactures a wide range of styles and designs of threaded shank adapters, drills, reamers, spotfaces, counterbores, countersinks and radius tools, all available in a range of materials with a variety of coatings. On the rare occasion an application cannot be satisfied from the company's standard product range, Lomas is able to design cost effective 'specials'.

To keep pace with the growing global demand for the company's products, Lomas Engineering recently expanded its UK operations by moving to a high-tech administration and manufacturing facility

situated close to the Advanced Manufacturing Park (AMP) in Sheffield. The modern new factory gives the company the additional capacity required to enable it to satisfy current demand for its output and the space to accommodate the long-term expansion of the business. The company's larger shop-floor area has also enabled the purchase of further machine tools, including an RX7 from ANCA UK.

Managing director, Ian Lomas explains: "Having then seen the ANCA grinder put through its paces and been pleasantly surprised by the advanced capability of the RX7, we had no hesitation in placing the order. Our previous excellent experience with ANCA grinders, in terms of the quality of their output, speed and reliability; together with the exceptional back-up we have previously received from ANCA UK, also had a big influence on our decision."

"As expected, the installation process went without a hitch, and given the intuitive nature of ANCA's software, our operator training period was extremely brief. Now in full production, with the help of a robot feed, we operate the RX7 around the clock in a highly productive 'lights-out' mode, enabling us to keep-pace with the growing demand for our cutting tools. Given the machine's extremely high-yield and the high-quality of its output,

we are expecting a rapid payback period on our latest acquisition."

ANCA's RX7 CNC tool and cutter grinder is a compact tool manufacturing machine that delivers the power, strength and working envelope usually attributed to a much larger machine.

Ideal for both manufacturing and sharpening applications, the RX7 is equally efficient for single-tool or volume production. A double-ended spindle gives the option of using up to eight grinding wheels on a single job, whilst an optional wheel changer making 6 wheel packs available for increased versatility. A removable coolant manifolds allow wheels and coolant pipes to be set up off the machine reducing change-over times. A variety of automatic tool loading options are available to suit different industry's demands, as are a wide range of work holding and support tooling to meet individual needs. The RX7 also boast a wide range of options including a popup steady, a tailstock and a range of pneumatic or hydraulic work holding systems.

ANCA offer a tooling package for the RX7 which enables it to successfully grind small tools down to $\varnothing 0.5$ mm. Achieving consistent small tool geometry and tolerances requires specific equipment including, linear scales for increased axis positioning and laser probing for non contact tool measurement and compensation. For this application the RX7 also requires dedicated small tool precision work holding, temperature controlled coolant for improved thermal stability and a low powered HSK spindle.

The RX7 is able to meet a variety of industry needs by providing several loading options. The PLX is a high volume loader that allows hours of unmanned production possible. With a capacity of 840 tools with $\varnothing 3$ mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ " shank and 63 tools for $\varnothing 25$ mm (1" shank, the highly efficient pallet loader is suitable for the automation of cylindrical endmills, drills, burrs and similar tools.

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