

# New Grob machine is a big deal for Hampshire precision subcontractor

**PES Report**  
Dave Tudor

Spending around £1m on a new machine tool is a big undertaking by anyone's standards, but for Andover-based subcontractor R E Thompson, investment in a new Grob 5-axis machine – plus other items as part of a £2.2m+ package – will enhance the company's ability to process large components quickly, consistently, and more accurately than ever before. **Dave Tudor** reports.

**R**E Thompson is a precision subcontract engineering company established in 1948 with a long manufacturing heritage.

Its capabilities are extensive: on the machining side, all bases are pretty much covered from rapid prototyping through to low and medium batch sizes and high-volume manufacturing.

Through advanced pallet systems and robotic process automation, the business can offer 24/7 lights out production. Completing the service offering is design, gear manufacturing, assembly, and laser marking, and, through a trusted network of suppliers, ancillary services such as anodising, plating, chromate conversion, powder coating and passivation.

Two capabilities that potentially differentiate R E Thompson from the competition are stockholding and large capacity machining. With the former, the company holds around £250,000 worth of materials in-house to facilitate a rapid response to customer demands.

And we're not just talking standard materials either: as well as steels, stainless and aluminium, R E Thompson also keeps stocks of titanium, plastics, copper, bronze and magnesium.

## Machining muscle

With the latter, the recent investment in a Grob G750T 5-axis universal machining



centre will take things to a different level.

The machine is renowned for



its exceptional precision and accuracy and as previously mentioned, is part of a

whopping £2.2m+ investment package that, aside from the machine, also includes Keyence laser marking technology, a Zoller presetter and a Fastems 36 pallet automation system which will be installed later in the year. This alone represents an investment just shy of £900K.

R E Thompson will put the G750T through its paces manufacturing large parts and components. This is a strong, robust machine weighing in at a hefty 37 tons, yet it sports a compact design with excellent

operator access and highly efficient swarf evacuation capabilities.

The 'T' in the machine's model number by the way denotes 'turning' capacity making this a true universal machining centre. It will enable R E Thompson to machine large components complete, from start to finish and in one hit.

"The Grob G750T represents a significant milestone for R E Thompson," enthuses managing director Michael Thompson. "We're known for our commitment to delivering high-

quality engineering solutions for various industries and this highly flexible, advanced machine offers a range of capabilities that are perfectly tailored to meet the evolving needs of our customers.

"Whether it's aerospace, automotive, defence, or any other sector that demands precision engineering, we're now even better equipped to cater to the most complex and challenging projects."

## State-of-the art technology

On the large machining front, the Grob G750T is built from the ground up with rigidity and stability in mind. R E Thompson specified the machine with a large 1,280mm diameter table so it can handle big parts – but with a positional accuracy of 0.006mm in all axes, the G750T also delivers when tight tolerances are required.

On the subject of axes, the G750T offers 1,000mm in X, 1,100mm in Y and 1,175mm in Z. The horizontal spindle position enables optimum Z-axis travel and efficient swarf evacuation.

"We chose the Grob G750T over other alternatives in the marketplace because of its inherent state-of-the-art technology that ensures precise and accurate production of large parts and components," Michael Thompson explains. "This level of precision is critical for industries that demand uncompromising quality, such as aerospace, automotive, and energy."

"The machine's versatile capabilities also allow for the manufacturing of large components with complex geometries, enabling us to take on diverse and challenging projects with confidence. Its equipped with cutting-edge features and innovations that offer substantial advantages over other machines in the marketplace. Advanced automation and smart controls streamline processes, optimising production times and increasing overall efficiency."

"Grob's longstanding reputation for reliability and performance weighed significantly in our decision-making," he adds. "The G750T's robust construction and high-quality components ensure consistent and reliable operation, reducing downtime



and enhancing productivity. Its adaptability allows us to efficiently switch between various projects and production requirements. This flexibility is essential for meeting our customers' diverse needs while maintaining high standards of precision and accuracy."

As Mr Thompson reveals, specific aspects of the G750T's design played their part in sealing the deal: "The unique arrangement of the three linear axes minimises the distance between the guides and the machining point (TCP), giving the machine considerable stability," he affirms.

"The tunnel concept allows the largest possible component – even when using extremely long tools – to be swivelled and machined within the work area without collision. The three linear and two rotary axes permit five-sided machining, 5-axis simultaneous interpolation, as well as Grob Traori turning. With a swivel range of 230° in the A-axis and 360° in the B-axis, these machines offer the greatest possible positional flexibility."

## You get what you pay for

Michael Thompson is keen to exploit the potential of the new Grob machine and is looking forward to reaping the benefits it will undoubtedly

bring to the business.

"This represents a very significant investment for us but I'm a big believer in the philosophy of you get what you pay for," he says. "From a technological standpoint, the machine will unquestionably open new doors, not only because of the sheer size of the components it can handle

but also through its ability to maintain close working tolerances and produce excellent surface finishes.

"Fundamentally, the G750T will boost our efficiency and productivity through reduced cycle times and optimised production flows. Equally as important however is that the high-precision output will not

only enhance our reputation as a trusted partner, but also open doors to new projects and collaborations that demand the highest standards of excellence."

**R E Thompson**  
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