



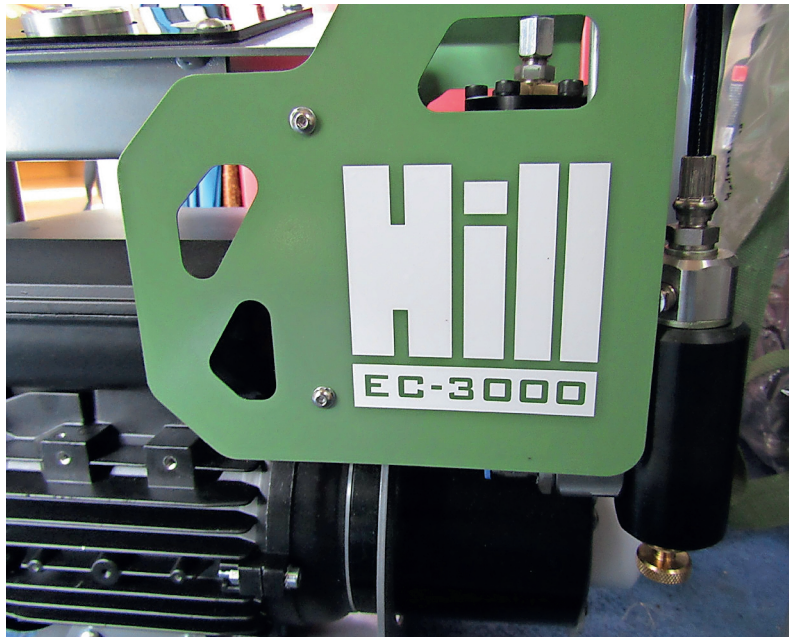
Maintenance Man **HILL PUMPS PART 1**

Welcome to the January edition of Air Gunner, and the start of a new year. As many of you will know, back in February 2021, I was looking at purchasing a compressor and after reading many reviews, I opted to buy a British-made unit from Earnest Hills in Sheffield, namely the EC3000.

In the June 2021 issue, I wrote an article titled 'Under Pressure - Filling Options' detailing the choices available for filling PCP air rifles, which featured both the Hills Mark 5 Stirrup pump and the EC3000 compressor. After using my EC3000 regularly over the last seven months, and getting some questions from customers regarding its build quality and credentials, I decided to contact Hills and ask for more information. I was very kindly invited to their factory site for a chat and a chance to walk round the factory to see each stage of the build process of the EC3000. My compressor had 20 hours of usage time by this point and it was suggested that I bring it along for a service.

The tour was given by the Sales Manager, Dom Hewins, who very proudly reminded me that the EC3000 is a Sheffield-made unit, with as many components as possible manufactured in house by Hill in Sheffield or their sister company Watsons Anodising of Barnsley or being sourced from manufacturers within South Yorkshire, and a few parts having to be sourced from further afield... Lincolnshire and Penistone, to be precise.

RIGHT: One of the best compressors on the market



BELOW LEFT: From the archives - interesting stuff!

BELOW MIDDLE: The Sphinx was one of the first

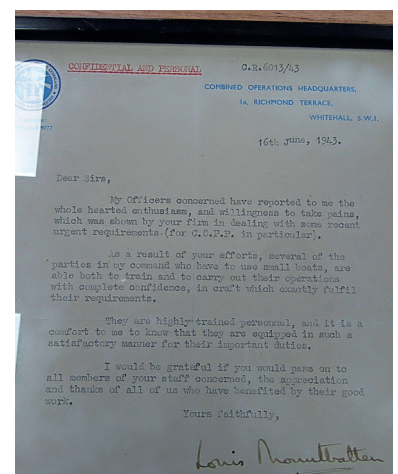
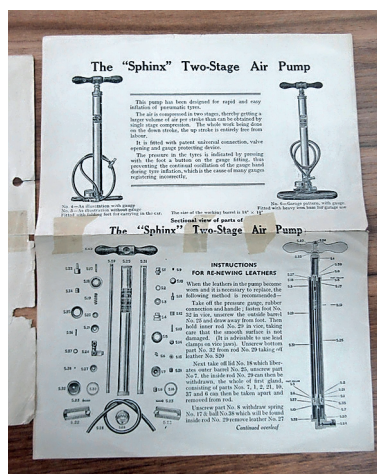
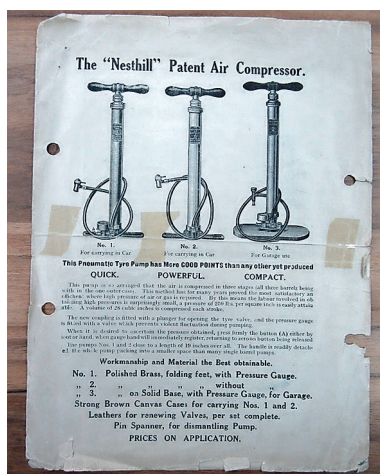
BELOW RIGHT: From Lord Mountbatten, no less!

A BIT OF HISTORY

Hills was established in 1841, and started its business with the production of pumps. The two- and three-stage pumps were produced before the advent of the motor car. Ernest Hills played an important role in the Second World War, providing silent bilge pumps, of their own design, for covert missions using collapsible dinghys, as detailed in a letter from Lord Louis Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations. I was very privileged during my visit to be shown this letter, from June 1943, which had only recently been released from the locked archive after over 70 years. I was also shown original documentation from their 'Nesthill' Patent Air

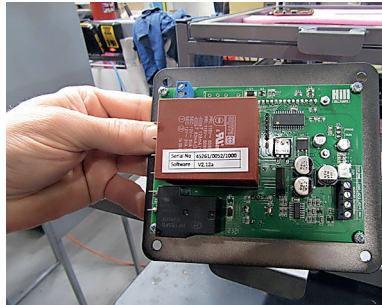
compressor, and The Sphinx two-stage air pump. These are the very early incarnations of the mark 5 stirrup pump that we use today.

Hills has a very proud local history and is keen to keep the industry as local as they can, thus promoting the economies around it. It has been at its current premises in Halfway, Sheffield, for around five years now, its earlier years being housed in the centre of Sheffield. The facility houses both the manufacturing and business departments. Hills is a global business, sending its many products, all over the world. All are designed, built and shipped from the Sheffield site. As previously mentioned, components are sourced as locally as possible; the software





Richard Nash takes a tour of the Hills factory to gain an insight into the world's most famous stirrup pump producer



LEFT: Electrical components are essential for the compressors



RIGHT: Everything is constructed in house



LEFT: There's some serious machinery in here!

is from a company in Barnsley; circuit boards are from Foundry Electronics, Sheffield; motors from TEC Motors in Penistone; and the hoses from Lincolnshire. All other parts required are manufactured or made on site.

FACTORY TOUR

During my walk around the factory, I was shown all aspects of the compressor build, from forming of the framework, powder coating, pump building and sticker application ... yes, the stickers are made by

BELOW LEFT: Everything is checked and double checked

BELOW RIGHT: They've even got a powder-coating facility on site

BOTTOM RIGHT: Ready for testing

Watsons in Barnsley, and applied by hand to the finished product. The initial build component is the forming of the frame that houses the compressor, and the covers that fit to the frame for the screen etc. These are manufactured in-house from both tubular and sheet steel. They are then welded together and powder coated ready for the motors, compressor heads and electrics to be installed.

The build process then moves to the coming together of parts from external companies and in-

house manufacturing. The motors, compressor heads and circuitry are all assembled by hand in the Sheffield factory and the final stage of the build is installing the electrics, including the screen, and every unit is tested before being packaged, ready for despatch anywhere in the world. ■

INFO

For more details, visit:
www.hillpumps.com

