



Visiting Satake Europe

with the North of England Flour Millers Association

by Rebecca Sherratt, Features Editor, Milling and Grain

In 2019 myself and Milling and Grain Group President Darren Parris had the pleasure of joining the North of England Flour Miller's Association for a fabulous visit to Satake's facility in Stockport, by Managing Director Mr Yoshihiro Kunimitsu and the North of England Flour Millers Association.

Following a pleasant drive up north and meeting all 26 participants, we sat down and began the morning meeting. Mr Kunimitsu began proceedings with a discussion of the impressive history of Satake, from humble beginnings 120 years ago with the founder first developing his initial rice milling machine in Japan. Since then, Satake has grown to reach unprecedented heights, with manufacturing facilities in over 10 countries including the UK, China, Thailand, Japan and the USA to name a few.

The North of England Flour Millers Association

As the leading organisation to represent millers in the North of England, the North of England Flour Millers Association are an integral part of the UK milling industry and also part of the National Association of British and Irish Millers (nabim).

During the visit to the Satake facility the millers association also held their 63rd annual meeting to discuss various updates such as electing their new chairman, the recent nabim awards, their financial report and future programme of events. The North of England Flour Millers Association meet four times annually, as well as for the occasional social event.

In the meeting, hot topics of discussion also included the fact that UK exports of flour hit an all-time high in 2018. The upcoming looming news of Brexit also entered discussion, as the association debated whether possible imposed tariffs, should a no-deal Brexit occur,

could possibly have negative consequences for millers throughout the UK.

One topic that especially intrigued me was the association's dedication to engaging younger audiences into this rewarding, but often ill-advertised industry. The North of England Flour Millers Association's Nick Hinton also presented on the associations upcoming plans to offer younger people the opportunity to join the industry with a five-year PR opportunity.

Described as a communications project, the scheme enables younger generations to enhance their milling profile, truly understand and get hands-on experience with the industry, as well as gain essential experience for future jobs within the sector.

Innovation through the years

Following the completion of the annual meeting by the association, various intriguing presentations were delivered to us by Satake, who were very eager (and rightly so) to inform us further about their various innovations for the milling industry.

First to speak was Peter Marriott, General Manager for Vision Systems for Satake Europe Ltd. In his presentation, Mr Marriott delved into the history of Henry Simon, the intriguing and recently-renewed joint venture between Satake and Alapala. From humble beginnings in Manchester, 1878, Mr Henry Simon created the first roller mill with gradual reduction, to soon be known as the 'Simon system'. Other innovations that can be originally traced back to Henry Simon include the very first oil-free differential drive, the first bulk flour loadout, commercial wheat debranning systems, food-grade plastic sieves and much more.

In 1988, after plenty of success, the Henry Simon brand was joined with Thomas Robinson to form Robinson



Milling Systems in 1988, which was then consequently bought by Satake in 1991. It wasn't until 2015 that Satake and Alapala then formed their strategic partnership, to combine their expertise, form mutual licencing and joint product development, which in 2017 became the renewed Henry Simon brand.

Now, with this innovative blend of Japanese and European technology, Henry Simon's latest factory is 60,000-square metres big and features only the best in robotic and precision machinery. Henry Simon now has 12 sales offices, over 400 turnkey plants and nine production plants.

HSRM Roller Mill

The specific innovative solution that Satake showcased to the audience was the HSRM Roller Mill- the very machine that took home the winning trophy for the 2018 GRAPAS Innovations Awards. The glistening trophy sat atop the boardroom table proudly for all to see, and it was very clear why the company are so happy with the achievements their product has given them.

With state-of-the-art new features such as touchscreen control, temperature sensors and automatic lighting that detects human presence nearby, the HSRM is incredible intuitive and easy to use. Mr Marriott played several videos to showcase the enhanced abilities and features of the HSRM and discussed its ability to change rolls in under 20 minutes, precise manual roll adjustment, central lubrication system, stainless steel bars and optimised sanitation.

Energy efficiency with Henry Simon

Following this delve into the specific solutions that Henry Simon have to offer, Satake's Neil Walker presented his discussion on Henry Simon and the importance they place on energy efficiency. In the milling industry of the twenty-first century, electric consumption is increasing faster than supply, a dangerous situation to be in, especially as the world demand for wheat is ever-increasing.

In an attempt to counter this issue, Henry Simon's range of solutions have all been built with sustainability at the forefront of their minds. Each solution features variable speed drives, high-efficiency motors and compressors linked to intelligent plant sensors for easy maintenance of the solution.

On average, roller mills and pneumatic fans are the biggest power consumers in mills, taking up 10.4 percent of all total electricity costs. With the HSRM, this number is significantly reduced, the same of which can also be said of all Henry Simon machinery.

Touring the Satake facility

Following the presentations, our team was split into groups and the given a tour around Satake's facilities. Guided round by Mr Marriott, as well as Warehouse Manager Paul Airey. Our first port of call was the process workshop, a bustling place where sieve covers of all shapes and sizes were being cleaned and refurbished.

With the vast amount of machinery created by Satake, it is no surprise that their spare parts section is so large it requires a whole other remote facility to store all their necessary parts. As we approached the shipping warehouse, the stacked boxes and crates of machinery was immense, all to be sent off and been received from all over the world.

Satake's Stockport facility is also unique in that it also features a testing room, exclusively available for students of nabim. The facility enables nabim students to get up close and personal with machinery that everyday millers need to utilise expertly, providing them a practical experience that no amount of studies can provide.

Inside the testing facility were a variety of solutions for familiarising students, such as debranners, polishing machines for rice, peas and maize, hydrators, mini roller mill models for trial runs, purifiers and sifting machines, to name but a few.



To complete our tour of the facility, we returned to the main showroom, wherein we were given practical demonstrations of Satake's REZ-range and Pikasen Alpha ranges of optical sorters. Senior Service Engineer Martin Dawson presented to us the different abilities and enhanced features of both models of optical sorter, which were both undoubtedly very impressive models.

Satake's sorters come in three, six and chute models with a processing capacity of up to three tonnes-per-hour. Mr Dawson ran the machines, showcasing the innovative features in the touchscreen interface, including the devices ability to individually photograph every sample placed through the chute, as well as showcasing the results of the analysis and displaying to us the removed samples, all carried out in record time.

An informative day of milling technology

Getting to meet the North of England Flour Millers Association was a valuable experience that really helped showcase to me the importance of millers meeting and discussing the latest issues in their industry. As the industry continues to develop and met changing demands the association seek to help millers achieve their best.

Also, a big thank you to Satake Europe for so kindly hosting us, their facility was polished, professional and their machinery always proves to revolutionise the industry. We are also very pleased to have Henry Simon's HSPU-Purifier in the GRAPAS Innovations Awards 2020, which is an incredibly strong start to the awards for the best milling innovation for 2020!

www.satake-group.com
www.henrysimonmilling.com
www.nabim.org.uk