

Nordimpianti System Srl, 66100 Chieti (CH), Italy

# Production enhancement at Creagh Concrete in Northern Ireland with the supply of two new EVO2 Extruders

Creagh Concrete has been at the forefront of precast concrete production in the UK for over 50 years and is now a leading manufacturer with factories and offices in Northern Ireland, Scotland and England. Creagh operates to the highest quality standards with ISO9001, ISO14001, and ISO45001 certifications, offering products and services that are safe, reliable, and of the highest calibre, with a constant focus on policies to reduce environmental impact and to increase sustainability.

Founded as a family business in 1974 the company's current CEO is Seamus McKeague. Seamus is also internationally known in industry circles as chairman of the International Prestressed Hollowcore Association (IPHA), a role to which he has been passionately committed to for 15 years and to which he has recently been joined by his son, Kevin.

Creagh Concrete offers a complete portfolio of precast concrete solutions, designed to meet the needs of different construction sectors. Included in these are residential single-family houses and multi-storey flats, commercial offices, schools, university campuses, agricultural applications, multi-storey car parks and more.

Starting in the 1990s, the company began producing prestressed hollow core slabs, a sector in which it now boasts a production capacity more than 600,000 m<sup>2</sup> per year, thanks to several highly specialised production lines. Product quality and innovation in production technologies have always been the cornerstones of Creagh Concrete's industrial approach.

At first the production was based on the use of slipformer machines but as business developed Creagh was keen to incorporate the ever-increasing benefits being offered from the new extrusion technology. Slabs produced by the extrusion process are lighter with a weight reduction of 20% or more for the same slab height and at the same time the process offers major production efficiencies. The system optimises the use of raw materials by using a leaner concrete mix resulting in cement savings of around 15% and labour cost reductions. For reasons of continuity Creagh looked to its existing supplier to dip their toes in the water and fulfil their initial demand for extrusion machines.



*Aerial view of Creagh Concrete production site*

It wasn't long though before sector growth and strong demand for hollow core slabs led Creagh to re-evaluate what new developments were available to them and to find the best solutions to meet their production requirements.

To this end Creagh contacted Nordimpianti, one of the global leaders for over 50 years in the design and supply of machinery and plant for the production of prestressed concrete elements. Creagh wanted to evaluate the use of the most advanced machines, particularly the EVO2 Extruder, with the aim of increasing production efficiency thanks to a higher casting speed compared to the machines already in use. Creagh was already aware of Nordimpianti's respected reputation.

However, the decisive moment came at a technical visit organised by Nordimpianti to one of Nordimpianti's Italian customers. They were using a Nordimpianti EVO2 Extruder in the same configuration being requested by Creagh. During the visit it was possible for Creagh to see the extruder in operation in the production of hollow core slabs with heights of

120, 150 (standard and dense), 200 and 250 mm, all made with the same 7-hole forming insert.

The visit made it possible to closely evaluate both the technical machine characteristics claimed by Nordimpianti and for Creagh to see for themselves the high quality of the products obtained. The observed results exceeded expectations, showing a significantly higher performance than the existing extruders. Not only pleased with the efficiency and productivity of the EVO2, the Creagh representatives were clearly impressed by the casting speed of the machine as well as its solidity during operation, so much so that the agreement to purchase two complete units was signed over lunch that day. Creagh's staff and management then made a visit to Nordimpianti's headquarters and factory in Chieti, Italy, where they were able to appreciate the efficiency of the company organisation and the structuring of the different departments. During the visit, they witnessed the assembly phases of components and the assembly of machines in the workshop, directly observing the quality of the production processes. Particular attention was also paid to the spare parts department and the efficient after-sales service.



*On the right: Mr. Seamus McKeague, CEO of Creagh Concrete, during the visit at Nordimpianti's factory*



*The two EVO2 Extruders at Creagh Concrete's plant*

The two new Extruders were delivered to Creagh Concrete's plant in Ardboe, Northern Ireland. Nordimpianti sent its own specialist technician to take care of the commissioning and testing of the machines. This phase is essential to adapt the

machines to the specific raw materials available on site and, if necessary, to adapt and optimise the concrete mix to be used in production.



*7-holes hollow core slab produced by Nordimpianti's EVO2 Extruders*

During the start-up and commissioning of the two new EVO2 Extruders in their various configurations, which took place in a few days, the new machines demonstrated the validity of the purchase decision, confirming their excellent quality and high performance, to the utmost satisfaction of Creagh's staff and management.

An added bonus was the use of high-performance spare parts, such as the two-part screws (exclusive to Nordimpianti) and side formers with tungsten carbide inserts at the point of most wear, which extend the service life by up to five times compared to conventional parts. This, together with the oil-bath gear drive system (another Nordimpianti exclusive), will result in a considerable reduction of maintenance costs and plant downtime. The success of this new supply means that the collaboration between Creagh Concrete and Nordimpianti was set to continue into the future with promising new growth prospects for both companies. ■

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

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