PRESS RELEASE

VALVE COMPONENTS CLEANED EFFICIENTLY AND COST-EFFECTIVELY

At the Poole factory of Thompson Valves Ltd, a manufacturer of high quality valves and flow control products, an ageing, in-line washing system has been replaced by a batch cleaning machine that is proving much more versatile in operation. Called Elba, the aqueous machine is supplied in the UK by Turbex.

The superseded washing, rinsing and drying line, which was also water-based, processed components on a continuous belt and did not have the ability to rotate the parts. As a result, there was a risk of water being retained within the valve bodies and other components, causing staining and also oxidation while they were in storage. Other problems of the older system were its large footprint and difficulty in obtaining spares.

In contrast, the programmable Elba has the ability to use three types of cleaning cycle when a batch of components is in the machine. First, to prevent components clashing together, the basket is held stationary in its home position while jets run around it, spraying water from every angle. This is ideal for cleaning light, simple parts, perhaps with turned diameters that need to be protected.

- more -

A second cleaning program involves rocking the basket through ±10 degrees, affording extra access to components for better cleaning, while still avoiding contact between them and potential damage.

Third, one or several larger parts are fixed into a basket, which is rotated through 360 degrees. A patented feature of the machine is the ability to adjust the movements of the holding basket and spray jets individually, allowing them to rotate in the same or opposite directions. Such cycles provide excellent penetration into the most awkward areas of particularly complex valve components for the removal of oil, coolant, tapping grease, swarf and other contaminants from the previous machining processes.

Components range from 25 to 500 mm long and are produced from a variety of metals, mainly stainless steel, carbon steel, aluminium and brass. Stainless steel parts undergo a detergent wash and rinse cycle at 50ºC, followed by compressed air drying at 70ºC within the machine. Processing of the other materials omits the rinse stage for speed, as all components are in any case cleaned ultrasonically before assembly.

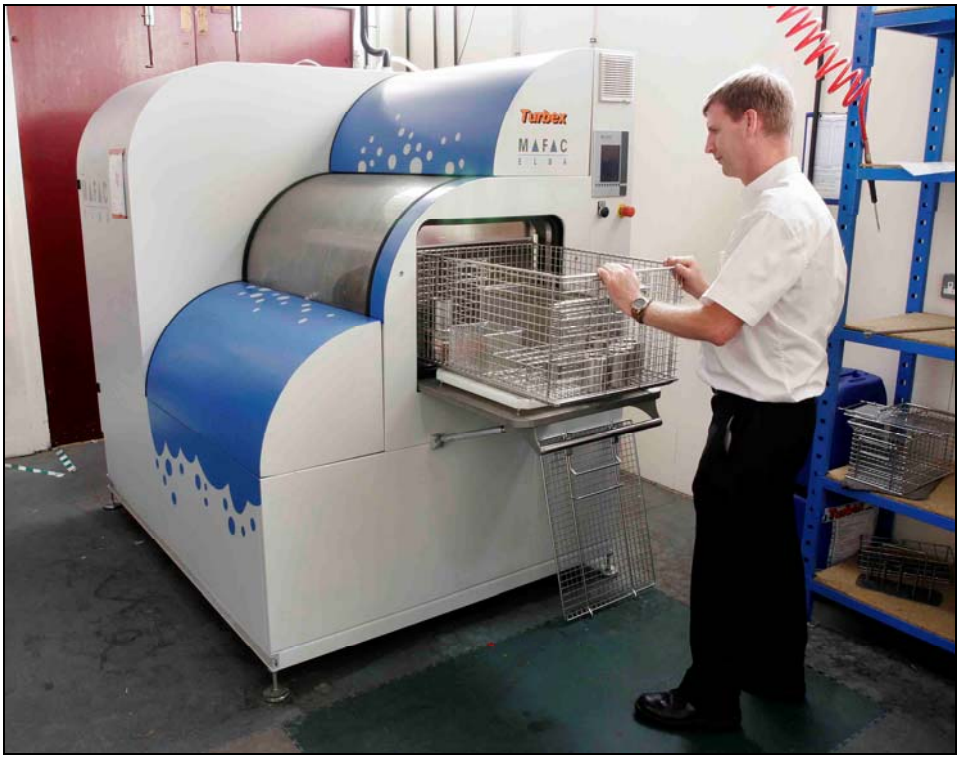
Richard Betts, production engineer at Thompson Valves in charge of the cleaning section, commented, "We chose the Elba for a combination of reasons based on its compactness, functionality and competitive price, which was a full £30,000 less than another model we looked at.

"The machine is quick to install, as the integral condensing system avoids having to fit extraction.

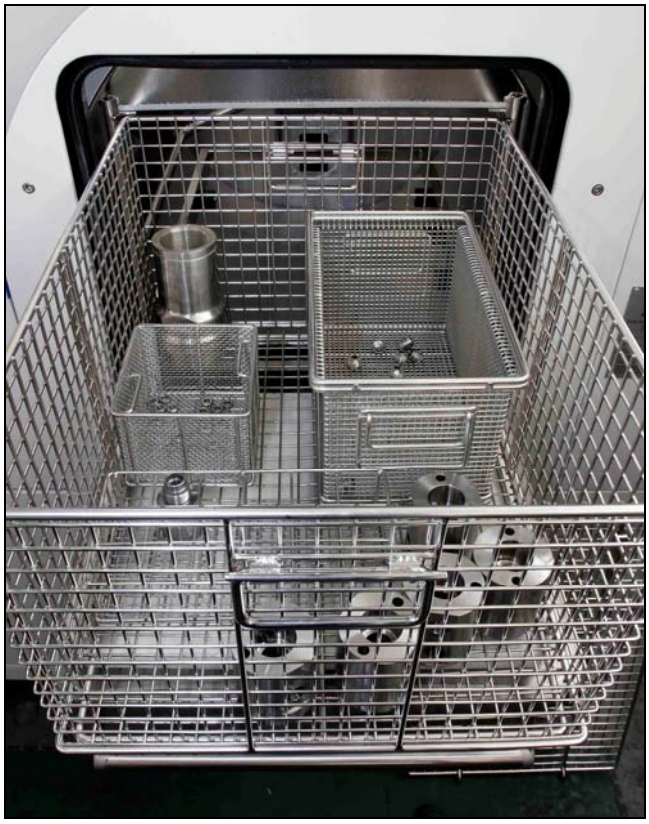
"It is also easy to operate using our suite of nine installed programs, each of which takes typically five minutes.

"Overall, it supports the effective cleaning of components for the manufacture of valves used for safety-critical applications in the nuclear, oil and gas, petrochemical and marine markets, which are the sectors that we mainly serve."

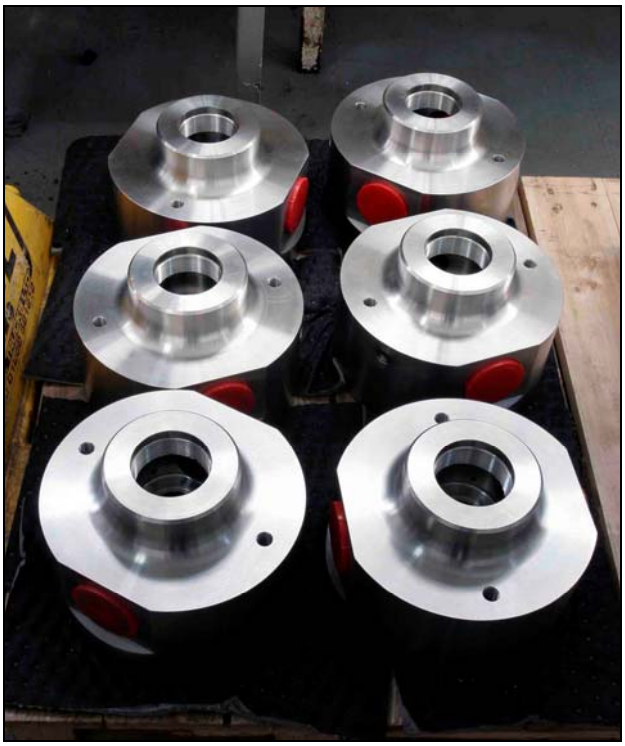
oooOooo



1. Richard Betts, Production Engineer at Thompson Valves' Poole factory, loads a basket of parts to be cleaned in the Elba industrial washing machine.



2. Close-up of the stainless steel basket of components, showing parts of different size, some contained in separate, smaller baskets, to allow a mixed load to be cleaned. (Baskets lids removed for clarity.)



3. Larger components are cleaned in the Elba individually, one per basket.

On behalf of: Turbex Limited, Unit 1, Riverwey Industrial Park,
Newman Lane, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2QL.
Tel: 01420 544909. Fax: 01420 542264.
E-mail: john.huntingdon@turbex.co.uk
Web site: www.turbex.co.uk
Contact: John Huntingdon, Managing Director.

Issued by: *THE RIGHT IMAGE Ltd*,
PO Box 42, Twickenham, TW1 1BQ.
Tel: 020 8891 0603.
E-mail: chris@therightimage.net
Contact: Chris Wright.

Release no: **1023(CS)**