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# POCHINPOST

special anniversary edition

## 70th Anniversary Celebration - Pochin's Through the Years



POCHIN'S NOW

In the past 70 years, Pochin's has grown from a tiny operation run by two brothers under railway arches in Castlefield, Manchester, to a thriving £96m turnover company of diverse operations, employing 500 people and operating throughout the country.



POCHIN'S THEN

This growth has been in no small part due to the commitment of Pochin's team over the years and the loyalty of its clients, consultants and suppliers, all of whom have made this success possible.

In this special Anniversary edition, we chronicle the success of the Pochin Group and highlight the key milestones in its 70-year career.

### Humble Beginnings

In 1935 Cedric Pochin established Pochin's (Manchester) Ltd - a business that specialised in joinery and carpentry and was soon joined by his brother, Arthur. 24-year old Cedric became the driving force behind the business, having been educated at Altrincham Grammar School and Manchester College of Science and

Technology - where he studied joinery techniques and timber economics.

With less than £500 the two brothers set up a workshop employing one foreman, two joiners and two labourers. Their first job- making six toolboxes for Hans Renolds and a number of plywood lettering jobs for cinema advertisements - achieved £5,000 in sales.

### 70 Years On

The Pochin Group has become a more diverse organisation through the years and now consists of three core trading divisions - construction, property development and construction services. The Group has just enjoyed a record year with turnover up 45.8% on last year.

Our policy of investing in joint ventures and partnership agreements with local authorities, private developers and educational institutions has contributed significantly to the Group's growth in recent years - as have a high proportion of repeat business from existing clients and a strong management team.

All this underpins Pochin's continued commitment to building quality and customer value founded on reliability, expertise and innovation.

Says Pochin's chairman, John Woodcock: "Pochin's is a great company, founded on hard work, vision and investment in people and partnerships. We hope very much that our shareholders, staff and trading partners will all benefit from our continued progress during the next 70 years!"

AN OLD CONCRETE PUMP



A MODERN DAY CONCRETE PUMP

"70 years on, Pochin's has cemented its reputation as one of the region's leading construction groups, whilst retaining its strong values."

# Making History



CASTLEFIELD ARCHES

**1935** With just £500, Cedric Pochin sets up a workshop under the railway arches in Manchester and is joined by his brother Arthur, one foreman, two joiners and two labourers. Transportation is a handcart. Their first job is to make six toolboxes for Hans Renolds as well as a few plywood-lettering jobs for cinema advertisements, achieving a turnover of £5,000.

**1939** Pochin's increases its work with Sir Alfred McAlpine Limited including work for the RAF, accounting for £500,000 of the overall turnover alone.

**1947** The company is mainly working within the housing market, mostly in association with Sir Alfred McAlpine Limited. This eventually leads to large projects at Shrewsbury, Leek and Dudley for local authorities.

**1950** Pochin's continues to build up a substantial plant division and is one of the first firms in the north to introduce tower cranes on site. Another first is Pochin's obtaining one of the earliest private wave-lengths from the GPO for radiophones.

**1953** Pochin Plant is established.

**1957** Pochin's becomes one of the first companies outside London to have a tower crane.

**1959** Pochin's wins a Civic Trust Amenity Award for the Memorial Hall at Rydal School, Colwyn Bay.

**1960** Pochin's wins first design and build contract for the Bangor swimming pool.

**1964** Pochin's boats Anglesey I and Anglesey II both proven themselves in the International Daily Express Offshore Powerboat Race - driven by chairman Cedric Pochin. Anglesey II in 1964 wins the All British Prize.



ANGLESEY II



UMIST

**1965** The first Pochin Post is published and chairman Cedric Pochin said: "No doubt we shall improve as we go along but I should like to emphasise that it is the earnest wish of myself and my fellow directors that our little paper should never be used to preach to its readers. Information and leadership, yes, but never sermons." Pochin's goes public on the Manchester stock exchange and is valued at £875,000.

**1966** Cedric Pochin is named president of the Manchester Association of Building Trades Employers and Pochin secures £4.5 million worth of contracts including the Telford Suspension Bridge at Conwy, new warehouses at Trafford Park, a swimming bath at Shrewsbury, a hospital at Llanfairfechan, a mathematics and social sciences building at Manchester University, a school building at Colomendy, Mold and an RAF station development in County Durham.

**1967** Pochin's introduces Safety Corner in Pochin Post which begins the company's well established commitment to Health and Safety - first topic: best method of lifting boxes.

**1968** Pochin's jets to success with its Morava light aircraft, which is helpful on the contracting side to visit sites for the RAF and Isle of Man contracts.



MORAVA LIGHT AIRCRAFT

**1970** Pochin Plant acquires the mobile Putzcrete Concrete Pump, capable of pumping 68 metres vertically or 250 metres horizontally with an output up to 60 cubic metres per hour. Pochin Developments begins work on a development of 25 houses in Nantwich.

**1971** Pochin's completes the Maths building for UMIST, which completely changes Manchester skyline.

**1973** Pochin's builds Europe's most modern truck assembly plant for Fodens at Sandbach. Pochin's Social Committee is formed and the company holds its first golf outing at Sandbach Golf Club.

**1974** The Pochin elephant is introduced. The Arts Department of Manchester University designed it to symbolise strength and reliability, qualities necessary in any successful business. It has also earned the reputation of being a hard worker through the ages. They say an elephant never forgets. Our aim is to make sure that everyone remembers Pochin's.

**1979** Pochin's begins work on the BUPA hospital in Manchester with its site office located above the disused mortuary. Pochin's greets Her Majesty the Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh at the opening of the Queen Elizabeth II High School at Peel, Isle of Man.

**1980** Pochin's receives a RIBA award for its work at Manchester Polytechnic (one of only two awarded in the North West). Honorary Fellow of the Polytechnic, Bobby Charlton, presented the award. Sadly, Cedric Pochin dies unexpectedly.

**1981** Pochin's completes its first development at Middlewich Business and Industrial Park, which later becomes Midpoint 18.

**1982** Pochin's wins two Civic Trust Award commendations for an automatic telephone exchange for BT at Whitefield, Manchester and for Whitworth Park student housing and an amenity building for Manchester University, Oxford Road.

**1983** Pochin's upgrades its IT to the IBM System 36, which is smaller in physical size, but bigger in storage capacity to meet the requirements of the expanding organisation.

**1984** Pochin's celebrates its 50th Anniversary and Nicholas Pochin is appointed President of the North West Region of Building Employers Confederation.

MEETING THE QUEEN



BUPA HOSPITAL MORTUARY



BOBBY CHARLTON

## Then and Now

As Pochin's has matured over the years, so too have the individuals that represent the company, many actually growing up in front of our eyes. And like a fine wine, some things simply get better with age!



John Woodcock  
Chairman



David Shaw  
Chief Executive

**1985** Pochin's completes a £2.5 million factory for Metal Box in Wrexham in an impressive 40 weeks. Pochin's also delivers a £2.5 million divisional headquarters and training school for Greater Manchester Fire Service three months ahead of schedule. Concrete Pumping opens a London depot near Heathrow.



BUCKSHAW VILLAGE

**1986** Pochin's has the largest concrete pump hire fleet in Europe including the largest mobile pump ever seen in the UK and also begins work at the University of Salford for an Information Technology Institute block at the Peel Campus for its new information technology degree course.

**1987** Design and Build undertakes contracts worth more than £8 million and moves into new offices at Pochin's headquarters at Middlewich.

**1988** Pochin's profits for the year-end hit a record level for the second year running achieving £1.8 million on a turnover of £28.6 million.

**1989** Pochin's completes a £3.2 million design and construct contract for a road/rail transshipment and distribution depot in Trafford Park for Harris Distribution Limited, six weeks ahead of schedule. Contractors Plant North West Ltd changes its name to Pochin Plant and Pochin's also acquires a third site at the Middlewich Business and Industrial Park, more than doubling the size of the estate.

**1990** Pochin's helps make history when Concrete Pumping plays its part in the completion of the first immersed tube tunnel to be built in the UK, to cross the Conwy Estuary in North Wales. Arthur Pochin sadly dies at the age of 78 and staff plant a cherry tree outside the main entrance in his memory.

**1991** Pochin's expands its work in education and health with combined projects totalling £10 million including a £3 million development at Lymm County High School, construction of a new £2 million School of Physiotherapy at Manchester Royal Infirmary, a major refurbishment at the independent Newcastle-under-Lyme School, design and build contracts for a new hospital development in North Wales and student residences at Lancaster University and the Keele University Science Park. Chairman Michael Pochin passes away after a long battle with cancer.

**1992** Tesco's £24 million warehouse takes Middlewich Business Park to Phase 4.

**1993** Pochin's launches its Midpoint 18 mixed-use development scheme.

**1995** Tesco's multi-million pound

distribution centre, designed and built by Pochin's at Midpoint 18, is awarded second prize in a national architectural award scheme (Robertson Architectural Award).



GRAND JUNCTION

**1996** Pochin's completes Phase I of its Millennium Gate office village at Crewe Business Park. Concrete Pumping wins Plant Hirer of the Year Award.

**1999** Pochin's acquires Avoidatrench Limited, the UK's market leader in trenchless technology.

Pochin's purchases a further 150 acres of land at Midpoint 18 making the Park one of the biggest, as well as one of the best located, in the north west. A joint venture partnership is formed with Keele University, known as Keele Park Developments, to develop the University's Science Park. Pochin's elephant symbol also celebrates its 25th anniversary.



KEELE

**2000** Pochin Concrete Pumping commences work on one of the country's tallest buildings - Citigroup's Tower Site at Canary Wharf - pumping concrete up to 42 storeys. The company enters a joint venture with Manchester Science Park - Manchester Technopark Ltd - to develop high quality office accommodation aimed at growing technology-based companies.



PROLOGIS



TECHNOPARK

**2001** Pochin's teams up with ProLogis to create the largest speculative building scheme in the north and also sponsors Chester Zoo's Elephant Centre Appeal, naming the newest edition Po Chin - 'Little Boy Warrior' in Burmese.

**2002** Pochin's wins a Quality in Construction Award for a £1.6 million contract to provide a new headquarters at Crewe Business Park for Health Shield Friendly Society. Concrete Pumping wins Plant Hirer of the Year Award again and achieves the RoSPA Silver Award and RoSPA Bronze Award for excellent safety records. Pochin's begins work on an £8 million contract to provide a new undergraduate medical school at Keele University.

**2003** Pochin (Contractors) Ltd nearly doubles turnover with large projects totalling £30 million, securing a contract for the construction of the new Carden Hall at Carden. Pochin Homes, a joint venture company with Bushwing, starts work on its first private housing scheme in Crewe.

**2004** Pochin's opens its Gateway mixed-use scheme at Crewe. Bannatyne Leisure and MMU Crewe are the first occupiers. Pochin also begins construction on two further innovation centre projects at Keele University Science Park in contracts worth over £10.5 million. The company leads the campaign to establish a British Standard for the safe use of concrete pumps and the abolition of bad practice on site and Avoidatrench named New Installation of the Year by the UK Society of Trenchless Technology for its work in Poole Harbour, Dorset for Halcrow Consultants. Concrete Pumping is named Plant Hirer of the Year for the third time.

**2005** Pochin celebrates its 70th Anniversary.



JOHN DALTON BUILDING



Ross Murray  
Construction Director



Jim Nicholson  
Property Development Director



Richard Buck  
Business Development Director



David Pochin  
Construction Services Director



# Our Chairmen



## 1931 - 1980 Cedric Pochin

Cedric formed a joinery company - Pochin's (Manchester) Ltd- with less than £500 capital and saw this business flourish under his command alone with the help of his brother. His knowledge and understanding of the industry was matched only by his own success in his business activities. Cedric's achievements are many, including the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal, President of the National Federation of Building Trades Employers and his achievements away from the industry as Master of the yacht Cordelia II and Auxiliary Coastguard.

He built Pochin's into a thriving and progressive concern whilst never losing the personal family touch, a tradition that is still very much alive in modern day Pochin's.



## 1980 -1982 Arthur Pochin

Arthur started work at the family chemical company before joining his brother Cedric to set-up what was to become Pochin's. The partnership that began in 1935 continued for 46 years until Cedric's death. As a team they complemented one another perfectly, with Cedric providing the charismatic driving force and Arthur the backroom caution and steadying influence.

Those that knew him described him as a gentle, kind and caring man who did everything with an all-consuming dedication. He knew only one way to do a job: the right way. He never sought the limelight, but when called upon to lead the company after his brother's death, he ably assumed the position of chairman of Pochin's, providing a much-needed figurehead for the company.



## 1982 -1987 WR (Ron) Verity

Ron completed an impressive 55 years service with Pochin's, joining the company in 1948 and was named chairman in 1982, a post that he held for five years. He maintained his position on the board until his death and was the first non-family chairman, but was still every bit a part of the company's success having formed a close-knit unit with its founders Cedric and Arthur early on.

He was known as a hardworking man who led by example, setting a furious pace. He originally joined Pochin's on a temporary basis as a quantity surveyor, but luckily for the company, decided to stay a little longer. He was Nicholas Pochin's first boss at Pochin's and the two forged a long lasting relationship.

He was known for his incredible mathematical brain, often working out complex sums in his head well before his colleagues did, using calculators.



## 1987-1991 Michael Pochin

Michael, son of Arthur Pochin, joined the family business in 1959 and never looked back. He became director in 1965, managing director in 1982 and chairman in

1986. He was responsible for the purchase of Pochin's first mobile concrete pump and his leadership ensured that

Pochin's was among the world's largest single-owned fleets, heavily involved in most major UK building and civil engineering projects.

Among his other major successes was his foresight in acquiring for the company the land which has today become Midpoint 18. This shrewd investment continues to play a major role in the success of the Pochin Group and in the development of the region. He had much to be proud of during his career, but when the Post Office issued a stamp featuring the Physical Sciences Building at the University of Aberystwyth, a project on which he had worked as site agent at the age of 23, he was especially pleased.



## 1991 - 2004 Nicholas Pochin

Nicholas, son of Arthur Pochin, retired from the company in 2004 after serving as chairman for 13 years. He joined Pochin's as a junior engineer in 1962 and started on a scheme at Bangor University where Pochin's was constructing a Chemistry Building. The majority of Nicholas' work from this point was on higher education schemes and he soon became contracts manager on the construction of a Mathematics Building for UMIST - which at the time was the third tallest in Manchester at 21 storeys - before going onto work on a project to construct Manchester University's School of Architecture.

Nicholas was appointed to the main board whilst still acting as contracts director on a number of projects, prior to being appointed as managing director. The death of his brother Michael in 1991 saw Nicholas become chairman.

His subsequent retirement was a result of his love for sailing, something that he is now pursuing as he embarks on a two-year around the world trip on his boat the Festina Lente, literally translated to 'more haste, less speed'. Nicholas is joined on the trip by his partner Gillian.



## 2004 -Present John Woodcock

In 1967, a 32-year old John joined the company as project manager. The future chairman spent his early days at Pochin's tackling some difficult jobs,

most notably a project at Llanfairfechan Hospital in North Wales where he was tasked with being contracts manager.

Renowned as determined and a man of his word, John delivered on every project and was appointed a director of Pochin (Contractors) Ltd in 1973, before joining the main board in 1980 when a role as marketing director for the group evolved, something that John achieved through becoming the 'face of Pochin's'. A true 'networker', John built up an immense contacts base for the company and became a reputable name in the industry.

This long-term commitment to both Pochin's and the industry led to appointment as a director of Pochin Developments Ltd in 1987, where he was responsible for some of the company's major developments such as Tesco at Midpoint 18 and numerous other major projects. John's appointment as chairman in 2004 came after nine years as joint MD with Peter Walker and three years as chief executive upon Peter's retirement in 2001.

Colleagues and clients still cite John's hard work and selfless dedication as a contributing factor to the company's success.

## A client's view: Robinson's Brewery



Pochin's has enjoyed a successful 30-year relationship with Robinson's Brewery and it seems appropriate that Robinson's director Mr William Robinson gives his opinion on Pochin's in its 70th year of business.

One of the first collaborations for the two family run businesses was Robinson's bottling plant in Bredbury back in 1974, which boosted production from 5,000 to 12,000 bottles an hour, a major accomplishment at the time. Since that contract, Pochin's has carried dozens of successful projects for Robinsons - so many in fact that both companies have lost count!

Throughout this time, the two companies have strengthened the relationship, which was started by Sir John Robinson and Michael Pochin. Mr Robinson explained: "Over the years our relationship with Pochin's has grown on the back of working successfully together on new build as well as refurbishment projects.

"I would say that consistency has been a strong factor in the success of our relationship, which comes from having a family-run business. Individual relationships have formed that span decades, rather than years, because we all bring a lifetime of service to the table as family members.

"We share similar values, knowing that everything we do carries our family name and there is a certain amount of pride and responsibility that goes along with that."

The relationship is set to continue through the years, even though 70-year-old Pochin's is considered a mere teenager compared to Robinson's 167-year history! Robinson's will be embarking on a series of projects in the New Year and will be looking to Pochin's to help in the process.