

Celebrating 90 Years:

Occasionally a smaller company appears which has fallen under our radar. Such a company is Lantex Manufacturing in Accrington.

Lantex used to be Scapa Manufacturing established in Haslingden in 1918, precisely 90 years ago. Tom Hindle one of the original Directors announced that, as an engineer he would prefer to make broad looms rather than just weave on them, so Scapa Dryers was born and ultimately employed over 10,000 staff worldwide.

Scapa Manufacturing sold the name of the Company to Scapa Dryers in the 1980s and called the Company Lantex employing just 6 staff!



Other than its 90th birthday Lantex has something else to celebrate.

Under the LEGL scheme certain wards in Accrington can attract financial assistance if it leads to jobs being created or protected. Happily Lantex is situated in a qualifying ward so a new storage floor has been erected and sewing machines have been delivered.

Lantex has evolved to be a merchant convertor with expertise in sourcing fabrics but has set its sights on making niche products with the ability to produce relatively small quantities with a very short lead time.

Lantex is capable of making specialist products made to customer requirements alongside its regular lines of aprons, towels and various types of bags.

The new sewing machines will extend the range of products and Lantex hopes that its new websites will attract business from the UK and Europe especially supplying industrial filters and specialist garments.

Lantex Chairman David Hardman says:

“We hope to forge links with more sister industries for example aerospace. We will recruit more staff this year and with training, extend the skills of existing machinists. With our new capability we look forward to celebrating our centenary”

Northwest Innovation

The North West continues to be at the forefront of technical textile innovation. One recent example is being developed by John Dower and his fellow directors at Marine Systems Technology Ltd (MST) of Winsford in Cheshire.

Set-up in as 2004 the company has attracted the attention of the Royal Navy because of its development of a product called COMFIRE. This synthetic composite material is composed of a recycled glass-based core and covered with a laminated surface. As well as being lightweight it is, crucially, non-combustible, non-toxic, fire-resistant, and does not generate smoke. The product fulfils all the highly demanding Safety of Life at Sea requirements. COMFIRE appears in a vast range of products on board the destroyers including doors, lockers, furniture, toilet units etc.



The contribution of MST, however, does not end there. They see considerable possibilities in other areas including, aircraft carriers as well as commercial markets at home and overseas. Director John Dower has been working on similar systems for many years and envisages a significant increase in turnover in the not too distant future. In 2007 the company acquired a modern engineering operation which, provides an “in-house” source of high quality stainless steel fabrications, affords the opportunity to supply services such as laser profiling and engineering design in areas outside the marine market



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