

# Envin Scientific



Optical thin film filter products are designed and manufactured for many different markets



Directors of Envin Pat Roberts & Mike Wright with a selection of gas detection and control instrumentation

**W**hen Pat and I bought Envin in 2000 the company had been supplying Optical Filters & Gas Sensors very successfully for over 20 years. Within a very short time two things were to have a major impact on the marketplace: The Internet and 'boom & bust' in the Telecommunications industry.

Insider knowledge of 'who can make what' became greatly reduced in value as technical and procurement professionals trawled the web to find the manufacturing source of the technical products which they required. The Telecommunications industry had grown exponentially, fuelling major advances in the technical performance of Optical & Electronic components. The crash resulting from overcapacity brought about lateral thinking which directed these advances into other markets.

With a modest turnover of £100,000 it was time to think again and respond to the changing market. Conclusion:-

- » Manufacture – design, produce prototypes & manufacture products.
- » Be technically innovative – exploit technical expertise and experience within the company.
- » Don't try and do everything – build partnerships

## Partnerships

- » Myself (Mike Wright) and Pat Roberts are the owners and Directors of Envin, based near Chester. In simple terms I head up the Optical Products side of the business and Pat the Electronic Products (Gas Detection). However we are both involved in all of the major decision taking in the company – two heads are better than one.

## FACTS ABOUT ENVIN SCIENTIFIC

- » Design and manufacture of Optical Filter & Gas Detection products
- » Based near Chester, Cheshire. Turnover £1.25 million with 17 employees
- » Independent private company owned by two directors
- » Unique products as a result of extensive R&D spend
- » Diverse and prestigious client base
- » Strong growth in European markets

## “Design and manufacture of custom products is our speciality”

- » We work very closely with our customers to find the optimum technical and economic solution. The majority of the resulting products have increased in sales volume over the years. Most of this has been achieved without the need for Non-Disclosure Agreements, which we regard as a sure sign of trust.
- » Our supplier base is relatively small but highly skilled. Long term and stable relationships with these key players enables Envin to achieve optimum cost of sales and high quality. Our preference is to use UK suppliers – good communication and speed of delivery is paramount.
- » Our website provider has been with us since our first website and we have just completed the latest format.
- » Our accountants have been with us since day one and continue to guide us through ever changing legislation including the very helpful R&D tax credit regime.
- » Employment law in particular is now draining for a small company – our legal advisors allow us to focus on the things which we are better at such as generating business.
- » Long term and inflexible leases on premises can be the death knell of small companies – we are fortunate to have a forward thinking landlord who has worked with us and our growth for 16 years.

Absolutely key are our staff. Be honest, not many people really want to go to work, so creating a supportive, low pressure, non-political environment is crucial to creating and maintaining a skilled, conscientious and flexible team.

And, of course... the banks! We could write a book on this alone. In essence your relationship manager is crucial but don't be afraid to change your bank.

### What then?

Over the following years we invested heavily in Research & Development and in sophisticated manufacturing and measuring equipment.

For a small company investment in capital equipment is difficult. Most lenders, even so called 'Asset Finance' providers do not recognise security in much other than cars! Considerable ingenuity and determination is required to achieve the goal. Government could and should assist with this if manufacturing is to grow in the UK.

Consistent on-time delivery of novel advanced technology products has gained Envin a reputation for solving customers' problems in both the Optical & Gas Detection sides of the business resulting in a prestigious client base. Custom products are our speciality.

Building expansion required to meet increasing manufacturing demands



## Optical Filter Products

Optical Filters modify the characteristics of the light which passes through or is reflected from its surfaces.

Optical thin film filters are used worldwide in millions of industrial, domestic and military products; from coloured lighting to Biotechnology instrumentation and security screening. The applications and demands are extensive and constantly growing. Envin optical thin film filters are to be found in many technically challenging environments. For example:

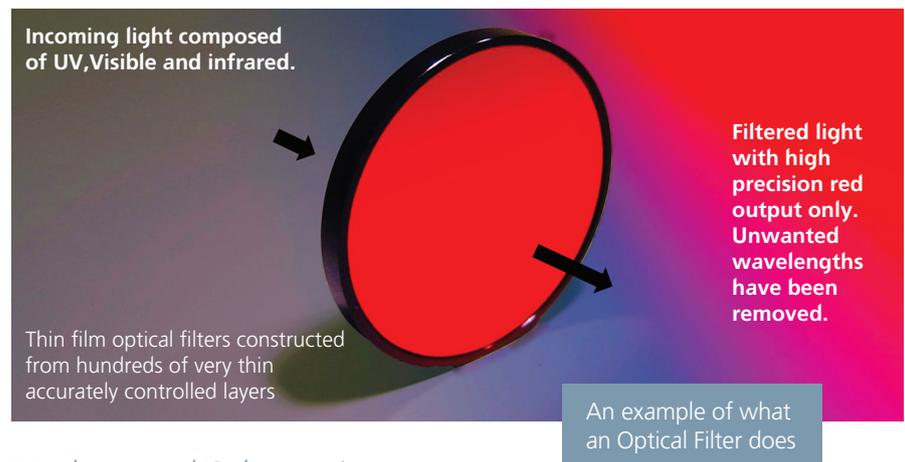
- » Installed in the European Southern Observatory's (ESO) Very Large Telescope (VLT) project in Paranal Chile;
- » Used in a Government research department (multiple laser wavelength stopping filters for pilot protection).
- » Within a Biotechnology instrument which can rapidly detect MRSA, Herpes & TB.

Hundreds of designs are already developed and proven, but R&D does not stop and continual development of new processes with higher and higher technical requirements is a fact of life.

## Gas detection Products

Gas detection is a rapidly growing part of society with products available to detect most gases but sometimes at unbearable cost. Problem-solving partnerships with a number of customers have resulted in Envin becoming a world leader in technology for the detection, control and safety monitoring of many gases, in particular ozone and refrigerants.

Hardware, software, complete assembly and testing are all undertaken at Envin.



## Markets and Sales regions

Diversity is a great safety net. Many different markets with customers who export worldwide together with a worldwide Envin customer base provides greater stability particularly in times of recession as seen a few years ago. Growth in Europe is a major focus.

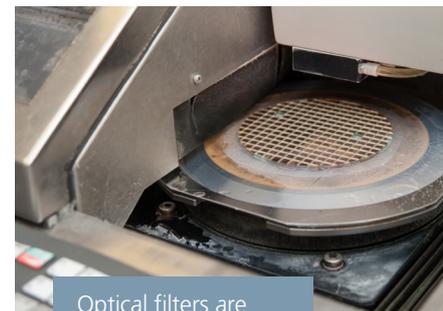
## The future

All of this activity has only been sustainable because of year on year profitable growth to a turnover of £1.25 million in 2015. This in itself generates cash and makes expansion and equipment finance a little easier. As an example we have just completed the acquisition, from an Envin customer, of the 'Pilot' range of LPG detection and safety products for boats.

Continued innovative, technical development is essential – we are supporting this with the recruitment of younger technically qualified staff.

The development of a new range of capabilities and products has left us short of space. Fortunately, together with our landlord, we had made a provisional plan for expansion when we moved into our current building seven years ago. This now being realised and we will be expanding into the adjacent building this year, thereby doubling our floor area and allowing us to manufacture more on site.

Without doubt, the future will be interesting !



Optical filters are machined to precise dimensions