From small independent workshop in Birmingham’s Acocks Green to a global supplier of high performance niche products to multi-national customers in highly demanding industries – the success of Indestructible Paint Ltd. is both notable and deserving of recognition as it celebrates its 40th anniversary this summer.

“As developer and manufacturer of high performance paints and coatings, we have always taken the view that reliability of supply and product innovation are fundamental – particularly when allied to a commitment to working closely with customers of all sizes and disciplines,” says Brian Norton, Managing Director of Indestructible Paint. “Because engineering and technology never stand still, coating performance is always in the spotlight – from corrosion or heat resistance to environmental improvement, such as our current
focus on finding alternatives to chrome-based coatings.”

Today, the company operates from a growing storage and manufacturing facility near central Birmingham – it has recently acquired adjacent premises that will allow it to double in size – where it employs some 50 people, yet still retains its independent family-owned status. Original founder Doug Norton, who was recently honoured for 50 years’ membership of the Oil & Colour Chemists’ Association (OCCA), fulfils the role of Chairman while Brian Norton, has now been joined by brothers Alan and Michael, and sister Jill who oversee financial, IT and logistics operations respectively.

“We continue to place great emphasis on our independent structure, not least because the last 40 years has seen us develop both an understanding of the industry and a genuine passion for meeting both our customers’ current needs and pushing the boundaries of future development,” adds Brian Norton. He points out that the company’s highly regarded research and development facility is at the heart of the latter, with many examples of products that have resulted directly from individual customer needs.

Indestructible Paint highlights much that has changed over the company’s 40 year history since Doug Norton first opened the doors of the independent company on 4th July 1978. Today, the operation exports to 65 countries worldwide, has active distributorship agreements from the Far East to the USA and includes leading manufacturers in industries such as aerospace, defence, marine and general engineering on its customer list.

“There is often much discussion that reflects the various benefits of localised activity and a genuinely global operation,” adds Brian Norton, “and we believe we are a prime example of success in both areas. We operate on very simple principles that all centre on ensuring our customers gain from a combination of reliability, creative thinking and product evolution, and the last four decades have proven that it is an approach that works.

“We could not have achieved this without the commitment and inspiration of everyone that has been involved with Indestructible Paint over the years and we have no hesitation in passing on our thanks to them all. It’s a proud history but, most importantly, stands us in good stead for the future,” concludes Brain Norton.

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IMF DIARY

IMF EVENTS

7TH SEPTEMBER – ENROLMENT

19TH – 20TH SEPTEMBER
SURFACE WORLD  NEC

31ST OCTOBER – 1ST NOVEMBER
ADVANCED ENGINEERING  – NEC

27TH NOVEMBER – AGM
COBDEN HOTEL BIRMINGHAM

SOUTHERN BRANCH

3RD OCTOBER – ELECTRONICS
GUERKA MUSEUM IN WINCHESTER

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NEXT ENROLMENT DATE FOR TRAINING COURSES IS

7th September 2018
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Karen
Tel 0121 622 7387
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GENTLE REMINDER

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SECRETARY GENERAL’S COLUMN, JULY 2018

Excuse me for feeling old, but I’ve just been reminded that August 12th marks my fifty years working in the paint industry; where oh where has the time gone? I have to say that it’s still quite fun, even though regulations and legislation has changed the way we work. Back in 1968 smoking was still allowed in the lab, and eating lunch sat on 5 gallon drums around the lab was accepted practice! I suppose we are better protected now, but perhaps we have lost something along the way?

What hasn’t changed is the constant requirement for better products at lower prices, but I expect that the way of the commercial world!

I mentioned in the last issue the recent meeting of the Cross-Sector Group. The minutes of this meeting have now been released, and to briefly precis, covers discussions reference biocides and CLP; environmental governance and principles, and the views of DEFRA, BEIS, and the HSE on REACH and linked legislation following Brexit, specifically in the case of a “no deal” scenario.

A copy of these minutes is available through Helen as required. The next meeting is scheduled for late October; if any members have any issues they would like me to raise, please let me know, preferably by the end of September.

Next month, the Oil and Colour Chemists Association (OCCA) are holding their Centenary Conference at Leeds University. This prestigious conference is scheduled to take place on the 12th and 13th of September. As Secretary General of the IMF, who OCCA regard as a complementary institute, I have been invited to give a “key note paper”, and my 50 years in the industry, and the trials and tribulations of a technical service manager over those years has been accepted as a suitable subject. For more information on this event, please visit the OCCA website.

Don’t forget the Institute is exhibiting at two trade shows at the NEC over the coming months. Surface World takes place on the 19th and 20th September, and our stand will be in the knowledge centre. If the last show is anything to go by, we can expect a large number of visitors who are looking for answers to technical problems.

Following on, Advanced Engineering is on the 31st October and 1st November. This is again a very well supported show.

If you can spare time to help man the stands at these shows, please get in touch with Helen at Exeter House so she plan coverage over both days at both shows. I hope the be on the stand at both shows, so would be happy to meet up with you all then.

Graham Armstrong
July 2018

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In my final look at my career in Electroplating, I did spend part of my working life “on the other side of the fence” when I ran the nickel and chrome department of a large plating company in Coventry, Chief chemist at a Circuit manufacturing company in the south and also in R&D at a piston ring company in the south. Sadly, all these companies no longer exist, whether that is because of me or in reality a sign of modern day times.

It was a different outlook on the industry than being a “rep” but what was good was being able to call in the supplier rep and put pressure on rather than the other way around.

My venture into the plating company at Coventry (Montgomery Plating) was down to a good friend of mine.

In my capacity as Technical Service representative for M&T, I spent quite a time there installing the nickel/iron process. These were times when the nickel market was proving to be expensive mainly due to the shortage of nickel metal and processes were springing up which replaced up to 30% of the nickel with iron.

Coventry became a second home to me and I was offered a position working on the Bright Nickel and Chrome lines of which there were 2 big semi-automatic lines. The bulk of the work was tubular steel (fashion for furniture) which played havoc with the nickels causing iron build up so these baths had to be treated on a regular basis. It is not the best of purifications, but as I was now in charge of the lines I could get someone else to do the work.

The other main product line was for the Triumph motor cycle company which was then based down the road in Meriden. Exhausts, downpipes, stanchions, handlebars were all plated here and the finish had to be perfect. Polishing was to be of the highest standard and the parts had to be coated in duplex nickel and chrome according to the old BS spec 1224.

It was good working there, but it did only last for 1 year as I was asked to go back to M&T which I did. The piston company (Wellworthy) in Lymington used M&T’s high-speed chrome solutions for all their hard chrome plating and I was asked if I would like to work in the R&D department on the development of the hard chrome for the piston rings.

Hard chrome was plated onto cast iron rings which were made into a mandrel composing of many layers of rings. These were shot blasted and plated for up to 12 hours in hard chrome then removed, rinsed and ground down to size on specially adapted grinding lathes.

The work was interesting and there were a few developments and modifications made to the processes which did help the final result and my time there was very enjoyable.

Wellworthy did give me the opportunity to go to China. Back in 1981, China (who had just opened its doors to the West) had signed an agreement with Wellworthy for technical know-how into chrome plating. The Chinese came over to the UK to learn all about plating hard chrome and during that time took many photographs of the plants and how we operated.

It was interesting because when myself and 2 others went over to China, standing and looking at the chrome plant was just like looking at one of our tanks back in the UK, they had copied them down to the last nut & bolt.
China certainly was an experience and one thing I learned was that, in terms of food, you did not ask what you were eating.

We spent 3 weeks in Changsha (which was where Chairman Mao was born) working with them on hard chrome & during the last week I’m afraid that I did succumb to a severe bout of dehydration ending up in a Chinese hospital.

The hospital was interesting to say the least. I must admit that they were very kind to me and realised what the problem was, so they put me on a saline drip. This was not in your modern day collapsible plastic bottle but a glass bottle which had a special air feed to ensure that the solution was being fed to the arm.

Although this slowly got me through the dehydration, the nurses & doctors in the hospital soon realised that there was an English person there and everyone kept coming around to try and see if I would teach them a few words of English. Now when you are not feeling quite the ticket, the last thing you want is people who could not speak English (and I certainly could not speak Chinese) constantly coming around, so the two words (which cannot be used here) which I would have liked to use were muttered many times under my breath.

It was an interesting experience and although a distant memory still makes me appreciate the faith that Wellworthy put in me.

My last employer was in Southampton and this was BICC Vero. I left Wellworthy for Vero and they were moving into a brand new factory where I was responsible for the laboratory and advising on new plant & processes.

It was a good place to work and never a dull moment. At the time I was (and still am) very interested in photography. There were several other people interested so we started a photographic club which ran every alternate Monday after work. We were allowed the use of the darkroom and were never short of models when we had portrait events, I must admit that having the club did seem to bring everyone closer together and made for a good working relationship.

Although Vero was great to work for it also was nearly my demise.

One Thursday in October, I was working on a new black oxide process in the lab and had several small beakers of chemistry lying around. I decided to get rid of them but, because of their nature (a powerful oxidiser and chlorite based) I looked at disposing them as described by the data sheet.

To cut a long story short, the chemistry was to be reduced using sodium thiosulphate and this was being carried out in the fume cupboard.

After the second small addition there was a sudden violent reaction and the whole solution exploded (the noise being heard the other side of
the factory) spraying all over my arm.

I knew that this was strong in caustic soda, so I headed for the shower and drenched myself. Even though this was a hot October afternoon the cold water was a shock to the system but an even greater shock was to happen when George (first aider) suddenly shouted “grab his arm” and it was then when I looked down at the water it was now a river of red.

My first reaction was that this does not look good and to say all hell broke out was an understatement. George put a tourniquet to stem the bleeding and about 5 minutes later I was in an ambulance on my way to Southampton General.

During the journey I must admit that I was getting light headed but I was determined to make sure that I did not pass out.

Fortunately, I knew my blood group and when they finished filling me back up I was told that I had lost 3 pints of blood.

Once stabilised, the doctor came to see me and found that I had glass in the left side of my chest which had just missed puncturing my lung and that the artery in my arm had been cut by the flying glass. He treated the chest glass but when he came to the artery he said that because of the position he may have to take me down to the theatre and knock me out in order to sort it.

Now this was an issue for me and I asked him if this was the case when would I be out of hospital. He said that it probably be best to stay until the Monday, but I said that this was not an option as I had booked to go and see The Shadows (my favourite guitar instrumental group) at the Bournemouth BIC and I was not going to miss it. The outcome was that I did see The Shadows and if it wasn’t for the staff at the hospital I may not have seen them ever again.

Obviously, there were many questions asked during my time off from work with a lot of supply houses ensuring that their data sheets and MSDS were all in correct order but as they say I am still here to tell the tale.

I have really enjoyed my 52 years in the business. I have been to places abroad that I would never have gone to and there have been good and bad times but certainly mostly good but what is sad is the way the industry has shrunk so much and also some of the constraints that have now been put on companies in terms of Health & Safety etc.

I hope you have enjoyed my nostalgia in electroplating and perhaps someone else would like to put their memoirs into print.

John Burgess
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A-Gas Electronic Materials have acquired all the assets of Elga Europe of Daventry in Northamptonshire. Elga Europe are the sole dry film distributor of Ordyl film in the UK – used extensively in printed circuit board manufacturing and currently produced and slit in Milan at Elga Srl.

A-Gas Electronic Materials are based at Rugby, Warwickshire. A-Gas EM Managing Director Jon Sellars said: “We are delighted that Elga Europe are now part of the A-Gas stable and this purchase is a significant milestone for our business. The Ordyl product complements our existing dry film portfolio and places us as the number one distributor for dry film in the UK.

“I would like to take this opportunity to welcome John Homer from Elga Europe to the business. John was Elga Europe managing director and brings with him a wealth of experience and industry knowledge. John and I have worked together previously and have known each other for nearly 30 years. The acquisition of Elga Europe will allow us to meet all the needs of the current customer base while strengthening our technical team.”

A-Gas EM’s existing dry film product, Laminar, is currently manufactured in Taiwan by the Eternal group and is then shipped and slit at Elga Srl before being transported to A-Gas EM. A-Gas EM will now supply both products to customers.

INDESTRUCTIBLE PAINT’S COATING TECHNOLOGY HELPS KEEP THE FAMOUS VULCAN AIRCRAFT RUNNING

The products and expertise of coatings specialist, Indestructible Paint Ltd., have now helped to ensure the historic Vulcan bomber can continue to please crowds and enthusiasts for the next 20 years. That is the period that the Vulcan Restoration Trust has earmarked for an aircraft to maintain ground running capability – a tribute to the dedicated commitment of all concerned.

“The Vulcan XL426 is the latest in a series of celebrated restoration projects with which we have been involved and clearly owes much to our global involvement in, and understanding of, the aerospace industry,” says Brian Norton, Managing Director at Indestructible Paint. “Fully supported by our knowledge and laboratory expertise, we have supplied a number of specialist coatings to the Trust who deserve full credit for bringing the aircraft back to the condition it can be seen in today.” He points out that the work is the second Vulcan restoration project with which Indestructible Paint has been involved – the company also provided materials for Vulcan XH558, based at Doncaster airport, which undertook its final commemorative UK-wide flight in 2016.

The B2 Vulcan – XL426 – is now stationed at London Southend airport in Essex and its ongoing engine ground running and taxi runs will act as a dramatic reminder of Britain’s aviation heritage. Indestructible Paint provided a total of eight types of specialist coatings for its restoration including products for the jet pipes and Rockhard paint for the first stage compressor blades.

Importantly, where no current coating was available, the technicians at Indestructible Paint have been able to analyse and recreate bespoke products that match the original specification. “That’s a process that reflects the skills of our laboratory team who are well versed in developing performance coatings that meet the needs of very precise applications,” continues Brian Norton.

The famous delta wing of the Vulcan is not only widely recognisable but also one that is associated with a proud – and often vital – role. From holding the pre-Concorde Atlantic crossing record of four hours and five minutes, to its dramatic involvement in the Falklands conflict, the aircraft has been a longstanding part of this country’s history. “We hope now that our contribution will help this heritage continue for many years to come,” concludes Brian Norton.
“ELECTRONS TO SWORDS”

Date: Wednesday 2nd October 2019 (17:30 — 21:00)

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PANEL DISCUSSION:
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Exhibitions: 17:00 — 18:45

Space will be available for anyone interested in exhibiting and if you are interested then please contact:
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Cost:
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Buffet:
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Registration:
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Coventya appoints technical engineer to strengthen its support team

Speciality chemical company Coventya announce the appointment of Mohan Patel to their UK team.

Coventya have appointed t to their UK team in the role of Technical Service Engineer. He is responsible for providing technical service and customer support in the Midlands region.

Moe is a highly experienced and respected plating technician, having worked for a number of applicators and chemical suppliers in the electroplating and surface finishing industry. He has over forty years of service to the industry, and is a Member of the Institute of Materials Finishing.

Sales Director Paul Wynn commented on the appointment “Moe is a well-known figure in the Midlands, and brings a wealth of practical experience to our team. I am delighted he decided to join us and wish him every success”.

With a 90 year heritage, Coventya is a recognised technology leader in the development of specialty chemical products for electroplating and surface finishing. Established in the UK March 2012, the company operates from its facility in Four Ashes near Wolverhampton, which is the group technical centre for cataphoretic lacquers. Products manufactured in the Four Ashes plant are exported around the world.

Mr Mohan (Moe) Patel
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