

DRIVING SUCCESS

# ELECTRON TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

"I'm convinced we get the best combination of truck and service."

## Within two months of Electron Technical Solutions opening a second 28,000 sq ft factory in 2012, turnover had more than doubled.

A third building was added in 2015, with both original sites already working at near full capacity. "We handle around 60,000 items a week," says managing director, Steven Schofield, who founded the business in 1984. "They come in all shapes and sizes, but whatever it is, from here it usually goes straight onto a car."

The company delivers specialist painting services for plastic components to the UK automotive industry from its Runcorn base. There's also manual preparation and assembly operations, both for painted components and as a standalone service, allowing completed units to go straight to the assembly line.

### Top Marques

Typically supplied with technical, metallic, body-coloured and decorative finishes, the components are predominately grilles, trims, door claddings and glove box latchings for Jaguar Land Rover, but the company's expertise has also led them to projects for Bentley, FIAT and Toyota, amongst others.



Jaguar Land Rover's huge success has driven demand for Electron's specialist services.

Electron has facilities to cope with varying volumes, another benefit to customers, and has fully-automated painting cells to complement the manual painting of components. "In 2002, we had 13 sprayers working on eight hour shifts, and giving us a £4m turnover," adds Steven. "Today, we have five painting robots working 120 hours a week, and a £15m turnover."

### Quality Assurance

Electron is approved to TS 16949, the global standard for automotive quality management systems, as well as ISO 9001 & ISO 14001 and the company has recently become accredited as an Approved Supplier to Jaguar Land Rover.



Electron Technical Solutions' happy logistics manager, Chris Watson.

JLR's supplier performance measurement system, known as JLRQ, determines the performance of suppliers, and helps both parties in the pursuit of quality excellence.

Electron has invested heavily in quality over recent years resulting in the virtual elimination of defects. It has also carried out extensive in-house training of its workforce to ensure quality standards are adhered to and won various awards including the Northwest Automotive Alliance Supplier Excellence Award in 2014.

"We have been on the road to continuously improve quality for





“Customers may want different components, but they want flexibility and reliability too. It’s exactly the same for us.”

many years,” says Steven. “The recognition from Jaguar Land Rover isn’t the end of the journey. We are committed to further improving our performance as the company continues to expand.”

Tied into that improvement process is the upgrade of its own materials handling fleet. A customer of Carrylift for over a decade, the provision of forklifts and servicing has changed in line with the business’s growing demands, but in Steven’s words, the support rarely gets talked about because ‘we don’t need to’.

“We have timed collections from our customers, so we need the reliability, and we get it. There’s been a lot of consistency over the years and we know from past experience that if you get a supplier that’s not up to the mark, the whole business knows about it. I’m convinced we get the best combination of truck and service. What we get is worthwhile.”



**1984: Company formed by Steven Schofield**  
**Started in 750 square foot unit**  
**1991: Site expanded to 6,000 square feet**  
**1995: Accredited to ISO9002**  
**1997: Expanded to 25,000 square feet**  
**1998: First robot installed**  
**2002: Joined the WH Smith Holdings Group**  
**2006: Accredited to ISO/TS16949:2002**  
**2007: Opened a further 12,500 sq ft facility**  
**2012: 28,000 sq ft facility added**  
**2015: Third building added. Turnover tops £15m**

There’s also the desire to get more out of their existing equipment and infrastructure, a lesson perhaps learnt from the success of the automation process, the outright purchasing of equipment and the investment in expanding the premises.

### Doing More

“We always want to do more with what we’ve got,” says Steven. “We have made small changes and made relatively small increases. We’ve also made large increases by adding extra capacity, so it’s about choosing the right path.”



Carrylift’s Geoff Pearson says the reliability of the new TCM equipment has helped make life easier, but the quality of the equipment and support package is something which a business like Electron is quick to recognise.

Said Geoff: “It helps to have equipment that can be relied upon, as it makes our lives much easier. The new TCM 1.8tonnes LPG trucks have a closed-loop system, which improves reliability and delivers the best emissions standards available. That’s important to Steve and the team, when they are using trucks inside and out. It means excellent fuel economy too.”

“I don’t believe we can be beaten on quality, concludes Steven. “We do a good quality job and we can’t sell enough!”

“We offer a fair price and customers come here because they want a quality part, backed up with consistency. Different customers may want different components, but what they all share is a desire for flexibility and reliability too. It’s exactly the same for us, and that’s another reason we do business with Carrylift.”



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