

Making it in Leeds

News release from Leeds Manufacturing

09 July 2010



New Home For War-time Skills

Equipment used to develop prototypes for the Dambusters' famous "bouncing bomb" has found a new home at Leeds-based jukebox manufacturer Sound Leisure.

Dawson's Pattern Works business has been acquired by Sound Leisure for an undisclosed sum and transferred to its Crossgates factory. And skilled pattern-maker David Whitehead, who joined Dawson's as an apprentice 46 years ago, has moved across the city with the equipment.

Established by Thomas William Dawson in Hunslet in 1915, Dawson's has been a major supplier of parts and cabinet-making patterns to Sound Leisure for over 30 years, after the Ministry of Defence became a top secret customer in 1943 for help in producing prototypes of the Barnes Wallis bomb.

Grandson of the founder John Dawson said: "We've had a long and happy trading association with Sound Leisure and couldn't have considered selling to anyone else. The deal was done on a handshake and equipment moved on that, prior to completion of the formalities."

Sound Leisure is a leading manufacturer of retro and modern jukeboxes and sound systems for the leisure, retail and entertainment industries. Managing director Chris Black said: "The acquisition dovetails neatly with our policy of sourcing locally anything we can't make in-house. David brings a new skill set to our business and will be able to trade experience with our team of apprentices."

Leeds City Council's chief economic services officer Paul Stephens said: "Sound Leisure is a highly successful Leeds manufacturing company that has combined traditional skills with the latest innovations in modern electronics to carve out a unique place in the market. It's great to see those skills and experienced passed to a new generation."

Ends

Photography: John Dawson (left) and Chris Black with the lathe that helped develop the "Bouncing Bomb" and the hand-written log book recording details of Dawson's customers through the years.

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