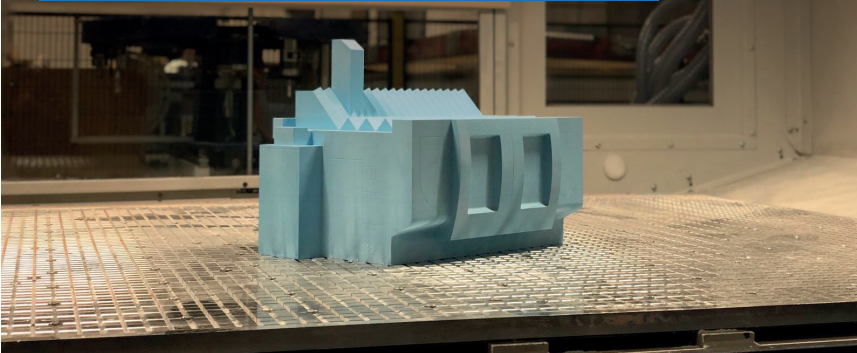


Arnold Engineering keeps the peace

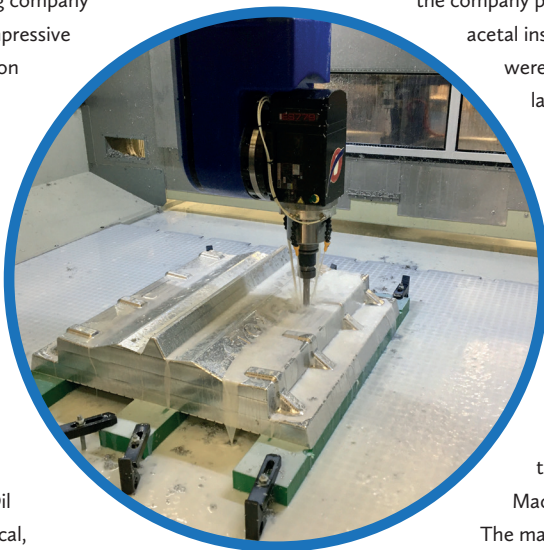


Originally established almost half a century ago as an engineering plastics raw material stockholder and distributor, Northampton-based Arnold Engineering Plastics has, over the years, evolved to become a key supplier of various services. Today, the 50-strong company operates from its impressive 30,000 ft² facilities on the Moulton Park Industrial Estate, where it produces public order equipment for a global market, signage and graphics for businesses across the UK, and subcontract engineering. Serving Industries such as Oil & Gas, pharmaceutical, transport/packaging, Aerospace, Marine and Formula One.

Manufacturing Engineer, Jonathan Hughes, outlines the different business streams: "For many years Arnold's have built up the police and public order side of the business, providing a range of personnel protective equipment, including ballistic visors, body armour and shields for police forces and civilian protectors around the world. We also purchased Freestyle Sign and Graphics, now a wholly owned subsidiary of the business and the two complement each other well for signs, point of sale displays and vehicle wraps; we provided the England football coach with a full vinyl wrap. We deliver extensive subcontract engineering

services, with Formula 1 making up a large part of that customer base. Arnold's are market leaders in thermoforming plastic materials using 2 large vacuum formers which also compliments the other areas of the business already mentioned."

The first Belotti installed included flood cooling. It was part of an engineering solution provided by Cannon Shelley to help



the company produce large acetal insulators. "We were looking for a large capacity 5 axis machine that could offer us flood coolant. Cannon Shelley were able to offer us the solution with their FLU 2617 Machining centre.

The machine worked well for this application and its utilitarian nature meant we could also use it for all forms of tooling be it aluminium, epoxy or Polyurethane," explains Jonathan Hughes.

"We already had a comprehensive range of plastic centric work we produced for the motorsports sector, but the Belotti took us in a new direction as its capacity was quickly filled up with aluminium components, Epoxy patterns & Rohacell foams. This resulted in significant investment for bigger machines to produce larger tooling and we now have three Belotti machining centres."

"Offering composite tooling was a natural progression for us as we already machined moulds for our two large vacuum formers on

site, so the skills were easier to extrapolate and use on patterns. We have grown this area year on year, notwithstanding this last year which has been a bit strange due to F1 development restrictions."

Arnold Engineering has a well-earned reputation for making ongoing capital equipment investments, with every area of the business getting additional capacity if it is required. As Jonathan Hughes recalls: "Even in the three years that I have been here this has been evident. Our Managing Director Peter Larkins does not want anything older than 10 years in terms of CNC machines as you lose performance and accuracy. We also want to keep up to date with the latest technology and all the increased functionality and efficiencies which come with it."

The latest victim of the 'old for new' philosophy was an ageing 5-axis machining centre that has been replaced by a Belotti Trim 2516. Although slightly smaller in working envelope than the FLU machining centres the new Trim has been highly specified with "all the bells and whistles", including an aluminium vacuum bed, probing system & dual zone functionality for maximum efficiency.

He Concludes: "We chose another Belotti due to the service Cannon Shelley provided us on our existing machines, the service from Rob Lornie and his team has been exceptional. If we have a problem I cannot think of a scenario where they were not here the next day, which is what we want when we have motorsports customers needing parts. Our reputation for fast turnaround and prompt delivery rests on this."

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