

CHADBURNS HISTORY:

1870. London, 01 September 1870 - patent No.2384 applied for, in the names of Chadburn,C.H. and Chadburn,William. Thus started the business for: telegraphs, mechanical - for use in ships, but also in railway stations, mines, buildings etc..The joint inventors hailed from Sheffield, Yorkshire, as opticians, with at least 50 years experience!

1875. The first vessel fitted with their Telegraph appears to be SS IONA III, built in Glasgow 1864.

1884. By this year, 3000 installations had been made.

1898. CHADBURN'S (SHIP) TELEGRAPH CO. LTD was formed and the brass pedestal telegraph was by now well established. It included vertical levers and scales for Bridge use, with a reply telegraph in the Engine room, but also steering and docking telegraphs.

1900. 6000 commercial and 850 naval vessels (400 in the Royal Navy) had been fitted, The cumulative record of 90,000 installations was publicized in the mid-1930s, to coincide with the launching of ocean passenger liners such as "Normandie".

1903. A large four storey factory was acquired in Bootle, a harbour town just north of Liverpool, and a non-ferrous foundry was built nearby. Innovations such as: steam whistles, engine revolution counters and rudder angle indicators were also designed and registered. The company sales areas now included the Americas, Russia and the Far East (mainly the Japanese navy). Famous liners, i.e."Mauretania" and "Lusitania", used Chadburn instruments.

1920. Electric telegraphs, steam whistles and fog bells were developed to meet demand from new motor ships - by now competition was discernable, but Chadburn still held a 75% monopoly worldwide. The company also made oil separators and milling machines. Searchlight controls also proved a success. William's son, Roy Chadburn took over the helm as M.D. as World War I ended and he was the instigator of these two product lines; he left to start up a sister company in Canada eight years later.

1930. With a workforce in excess of 450 the company was still family controlled

1941. A traumatic year, due to enemy action over Merseyside. The expansion, with 24 hour working at Chadburns, came to a sudden halt when the factory was bombed in the final night of the week long air raid on 07 May. All records, tooling and stock were destroyed. Drawings had to be re-couped from customers, including the Admiralty. Fortunately, all the employees survived

1946. Production had been scattered in a number of small premises for five years. now was consolidated in their 5 acres/2 hectare single storey plant at Park Lane, Bootle. To offset changes in demand from marine to land-based industries, the Company also built cranes and made rod gearing etc.. The name was soon to be changed to CHADBURNS (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Post-war the 'Synchrostep' telegraph/rudder position trademarks were now registered. Bridge control for the engine room could now be foreseen. The Company acquired a competitor,Mechans Telegraphs of Glasgow, and re-organized the branch network in the UK. As the post-war boom continued there were more than 100,000 installations of their mechanical telegraphs

1968. The well-known aircraft and boat controls maker, Bloctube of Aylesbury UK, was acquired and relocated to the main factory and HQ. Soon afterwards the other local telegraph engineers A.Robinson & Co. joined the Group. The marketing company was now named CHADBURN BLOCTUBE LTD.,and remained under this name for the next 20 years. There was a third Liverpool manufacturer, J.W. Ray's telegraphs,well respected even though their telegraphs were fitted to the ill-fated "Titanic", and her two sister ships.

1980-1988. During the shipbuilding crisis in the UK and EU the Company inevitably suffered a decline, and the last director/chairman, Denby Chadburn Bamford, retired in 1983. Bloctube was spun off from its plc owner. The Company moved to Leeds, where an instrument company led by a Swedish businessman incorporated the marine division under one roof, in a modern, high-tech factory. Appropriately, the firm was named BLOCTUBE MARINE LIMITED, as successors to Chadburn Marine Development.

In 2006 the business is still making telegraph systems and electronic instruments, sold predominantly for export. It is directed by Yorkshire people - the company has returned to the roots it first started and flourished in Victorian times!

