

Anglia Components the flagship of the Fens Special feature in The Eastern Daily Press

Search

search for part number
search entire site

Manufacturers

Select one of our dedicated
manufacturer sections

Cree announces industry's most energy-
efficient neutral and warm lighting-class
LEDs



[Click Here](#)

You can now follow us on
Blogger, Twitter, WordPress or
Live Journal by clicking on the
logos below.



Rate this page

1: Poor 5: Excellent

1 2 3 4 5



Distribution Centre operative Anne-Marie Drew at Anglia Components which has long links with Far East Manufactures

How many firms can boast that you are never likely to be more than 20ft away from one of their components? That's the proud claim of Anglia Components. Its products are in hundreds of everyday appliances, ranging from fire extinguishers and electrically operated shop doors to burglar alarms.

You could even find them in a Norfolk field - Anglia's components find their way into some of the hi-tech mechanisms used in tractor cabs.

Quite why Britain should be able to nurture some of the world's finest electronics engineers cannot be properly explained by Anglia's managing director Steve Rawlins. It just happened, so embrace it. That is his philosophy.

But quite why Wisbech has become home to the UK's seventh largest electronics components distributor - and the 15th largest in Europe - is more easily explained. One of those engineers happened to move to the Fens and so started his company there.

Bill Ingram founded Anglia Components in 1972 and never looked back, building the (still) privately run company into the formidable world leader it is today.

One of those he employed four years after launching Anglia was an enterprising and talented young northerner, Steve Rawlins, who joined as a salesman, was promoted to sales manager seven years later, and ascended the corporate ladder to become managing director in 1997. He became managing director of the Anglia Group of companies six years after that.

This week the company announced that Mr Rawlins is to succeed Mr Ingram as chief executive. Mr Ingram will continue to hold a majority stake in Anglia and will become president of the company in changes which reflect his reduced day-to-day involvement.

Mr Rawlins, who becomes a shareholder in the trading company, said: "In the end the success of this business has been built on one thing and one thing only - the staff. Hiring the right people at the right time has been fundamental to our growth. Sure we have the land available for expansion, sure we have the space, but it's not that, not the logistics or the workload. It's getting the right people."

Which is always a constant battle as Anglia has to raise its head, quite frequently as it happens, above the cultural parapet to encourage newly skilled workers to discover Wisbech and the Fens.

"Many people still think they have to go to Peterborough or beyond to work in electronics," says Mr Rawlins. "We have to work hard to remind people of the opportunities that are available, right here and right now."

Those opportunities cover a multitude of skills, and Anglia is embarking on a recruitment drive to add to its key skills base. Vacancies are arising for sales, technical, field staff and engineers that will help them cope with a burgeoning order book.

"By the end of this year we expect to have recruited up to 20 extra people," he says.

Workers have recently been celebrating as they collected a prestigious award. Anglia invested £200,000, and spent two years, preparing for the trusted kitemark award to show the firm is compliant ahead of stringent new EU safety guidelines.

In fact Anglia is among only four companies out of a potential 20,000 to so far achieve the BSI safety standard, which reflects a commitment to reducing toxicity in its components.

Malcolm Grant, quality manager, accompanies his boss on our guided tour, reeling off some of the impressive facts and figures that comprise the Anglia story.

Anglia, for example, occupies 55,000 sq ft of office and factory space in Sandall Road, has an adjacent empty shell totalling 30,000 sq ft for further expansion, and there is even a 'spare' 100,000 sq ft close at hand which is currently sub-let.

"Our customers can choose from some 250,000 product lines," says Mr Grant as we explore the highly sophisticated warehousing where components arrive from abroad ready for distribution or reworking into specialised circuits for resale to any one of 3500 manufacturers in the UK and Europe which form Anglia's customer base.

Anglia ships in something like 1.5 billion components a year, which equates to some 3pc of a market which in turn is worth £1bn a year. Anglia is set for a bigger slice of the action, as it provides its customers with specialist knowledge, design strengths and product development to add to its primary wholesaler strategy.

Part of the company's strength came in the way it foresaw manufacturing capabilities of the Far East, creating strong links with China more than 20 years ago. Anglia now has a network of suppliers across China, Malaysia and Thailand, creating strong partnerships with its core suppliers.

Mr Rawlins says: "Twenty-five years ago when most others weren't even in China or even considering it, we were there. We have built up excellent rapport with them, seen excellent quality products, and the logistics are now down to a fine art."

But while quality of production is one thing, Mr Rawlins is anxious to return to the skills base of his workers in Wisbech, and to the fact Anglia has some of the highest staff retention statistics both locally and industry wide.

Mr Grant says: "I have been here 14 years and, when I started, the company only employed 60 people. Yet even today there are 35 people who have been here longer than me. I think that gives you some form of perspective."

Anglia fosters important community links through such events as its annual staff fun day or participation in the Wisbech Rose Fair.

And there cannot be too many employers, locally or anywhere else, which provide staff with a cavernous room at lunchtimes with not one but two full-sized snooker tables, and an adjoining billiards room, with which to relax.

Mr Rawlins is a keen admirer of the Marks & Spencer philosophy of nurturing its business through close contacts with its suppliers, and monitoring manufacturer, distribution and logistics right through the supply chain.

And while he accepts some of the difficulties of being located in Wisbech, even he would concede that his chief executive's decision to start there, and expand from there, is firmly non-negotiable.

"It is easy to walk round Wisbech Market Place, see the large number of charity or discount shops there and think that's it. However, that's only a very small part of Wisbech and the sum total is much more impressive," says Mr Rawlins.

"Anglia's ambition, if you like, and given our hi-tech status, is to become the flagship of the Fens."

[back to company news](#)

28/1/11

This news article was originally published in The Eastern Daily Press dated 1st March 2006.

[anglia designs](#)[anglia displays](#)[anglia embedded](#)[anglia green pages](#)[anglia Hi-Rel](#)[anglia lighting](#)[anglia M2M](#)

Copyright © 1995-2011 Anglia Components Ltd.

Please read our [Privacy Statement](#) in conjunction with the [Terms and Conditions](#) of this Website.

28/1/11