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OUR JOURNEY

RFEL@20

2019 marks twenty years of engineering excellence for RFEL. Established in 1999 in the home of one of the founders, the company started with a handful of employees, some of whom are still with us now! From humble beginnings, RFEL has grown to employ over 30 people across two sites with a global customer base. Join us as we look back over those twenty years and celebrate our greatest achievements.

RFEL TIMELINE

RFEL's history has been marked with a number of significant industry awards including two Queen's Awards For Innovation.

1999

Established as **RF Engines Ltd.**
Formed out of Libra Design Associates.



2003

EIA Start-up of the Year Award

2006

EEIA Embedded System Innovation of the Year Award

2009

Won 1st Queen's Award for Innovation



2012

Won 2nd Queen's Award for Innovation.

Company rebranded & renamed **RFEL Ltd.**



2014

Won the Elektra Award for Company of the Year & Design Team of the Year



2019

Celebrating our 20th anniversary unveiled new corporate branding





20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

RFEL provides cutting-edge signal and video processing solutions to the defence, homeland security and communications markets.

Our field-ready products are ready to support mission processing directly at the sensor to provide enhanced mission data that is tactically relevant. Our technologies are ready to enhance our customer's products, providing a critical advantage in both function and time to market. From our UK-base, we operate across the world, delivering RFEL technology and products into the most challenging operational requirements.

RFEL was established in 1999 to develop high-speed, real-time signal processing technology. Since that time, the company has grown rapidly and now provides the leading-edge signal and video processing performance that is required by today's most advanced applications in the defence

& homeland security markets. Now, with 20 years' presence, the company has a diverse range of prominent customers worldwide.

RFEL's Mission Ready Technology is based upon our world-leading video and signal processing algorithms. When implemented on Field Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs) or System on Chip (SOC) devices, these provide low-latency and high-performance processing right at the sensor, delivering a critical advantage for our customers.

As well as providing turn-key products, our technologies are available as components, to support developers and integrators who are looking to advance their offering by embedding RFEL capability within their wider products.



EDDY FRY
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Eddy has had over twenty years' experience in radar and digital system design. Before joining RFEL as the Chief Digital Design Engineer, Eddy worked primarily in the defence industry for one of the leading defence electronics companies. In this role he was closely involved in several key programmes, including multi-function and tracking RADAR systems, and safety-critical Microwave Landing Systems design projects. Eddy leads the company technically, with a focus on Signal Processing solutions for EW.

Q. When did you join the company and what was your first task?

A. January 2001.

Can't remember my first task, but it was probably finding some space to sit in John Lillington's basement office.

Q. What's your favourite thing on your desk right now?

A. My stack of mouse mats with pictures of Ben dating back to when he was about two...

Q. If you could invent a new product tomorrow, what would it be?

A. A method of stopping puppies and kittens from growing up - I'd make millions from it!

Q. Biro, pencil or felt-tip?

A. Pencil of the propelling type.

Q. What's for lunch today?

A. Cuppa soup.

Q. If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?

A. No more interviews!

Q. What do you hope for the company in 10 years' time?

A. World-leading cash-cow products regularly going out of the door and a cutting-edge R&D department backing them up.

Q. What drives you mad in the office?

A. There's not enough room for all of my answers, but Tom's ringtone is one of them on most days.

Q. What do you do when it's payday?

A. Same thing I do every day, try to take over the world.

Q. What do you do with a long weekend?

A. Try to avoid doing any of the jobs that have been building up at home.

Q. RFEL in three words?

A. Challenging, complex and rewarding.



JANE ELLIOTT
HEAD OF BUSINESS SUPPORT

Jane is predominantly from a financial background with over 30 years' of experience in accounting and 25 of those within a management accounts role. Jane has been gradually increasing her areas of responsibility over the last 20 years to include HR, quality administration and security controller roles. Since 2008 Jane has also held the position of Company Secretary for RFEL.

Q. When did you join the company and what was your first task?

A. October 2002

My first task... I can't remember that far back! - Probably some filing of purchase invoices... my first big task was to organise the shipping of marketing material to a trade show in the US - that was quite scary.

Q. What's your favourite thing on your desk right now?

A. Two screens - how I managed with one in the past, heaven knows.

Q. If you could invent a new product tomorrow, what would it be?

A. I'm not very innovative, I leave that to the guys in the big office

Q. Biro, pencil or felt-tip?

A. I like all three - a good smelly felt tip pen usually does the job!

Q. What's for lunch today?

A. Lo-Dough burrito - yummy

Q. If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?

A. To have zero calls from recruitment agencies.

Q. What do you hope for the company in 10 years' time?

A. Over 50 employees, larger premises, my retirement!

Q. What drives you mad in the office?

A. I'm sure if I was in the big open plan office it would be the noise of other people's chatter that would drive me mad but because I have a lovely office-for-two I keep quite sane!

Q. What do you do when it's payday?

A. Book my next holiday.

Q. What do you do with a long weekend?

A. What's one of those??

Q. RFEL in three words?

A. Challenging, friendly, positive.



L to R: John Summers, Eddy Fry and Simon Underhay

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

RFEL was originally founded in December 1999 as RF Engines Ltd. by John Lillington who, at the time, had a successful design consultancy.



The first RFEL office was in John Lillington's house where it operated until 2001. Back in these early days, the Dot-Com and tech bubbles were in full swing and the proposition of a new and radical approach to achieving very high-speed digital signal processing on programmable devices was appealing to investors. This investment allowed further development of signal processing products to be accelerated and the establishment of a broad scale marketing strategy.

"We were fortunate enough to still be at the tail-end of the Dot-Com boom with private investors looking for the next ARM or ARC and within a few months we were able to launch RF Engines Limited. The name came from

the concept of processing 'engines' which could also be used to displace many existing RF techniques. The other mantra we adopted was 'Demo or Die' which meant we had to have convincing demonstration hardware to convince investors to risk their capital."

John Lillington (CEO 1999-2005, CTO 1999 -2007)

Early adopters of RFEL products included UK MoD and Home Office and other primary defence companies in the UK, US, France and Germany.

During the early 00's, RFEL needed to recruit to support the growth of the company. Some of the people that joined at this point are still with us today, including Technical Director, Eddy Fry.

In these early years, RFEL presented technical papers at exhibitions and conferences across the US and Europe. RFEL also won their first Queen's Award in 2009, a prestigious and highly regarded award which they also had the honour of winning once more in 2012.

"The key elements of RFEL's growth from its start-up in 1999, were most certainly a strong belief in the commercial potential of the product, the enormous energy and determination from all of the team, and a preparedness to adapt to and overcome unforeseeable setbacks when they arose. In summary – an extremely challenging but exciting ride!"

John Summers (CEO 2005 - 2011)

RFEL moved into new offices at The Innovation Centre, opposite where the current RFEL offices are located. In 2011, John Summers retired and Alex Kuhrt took the position of Managing Director. During his time at RFEL, Alex has repositioned the company to design and manufacture off-the-shelf products and move away from its design consultancy roots. This change introduces a new capability; video processing. This exploited RFEL expertise as applied to a new application, and brought the TRAILBLAZER, ENHANCER and ATACAMA products to market, whilst maintaining the Signal Processing crown jewels.

In 2011 the UK saw the tail end of the financial crisis and the longer term impact it would have on commercial programmes which were the main source of income for RFEL as a design service business. It became apparent that it was time to re-invent RF Engines and to start developing our own software and hardware based products. RFEL took the bold decision to enter a new market, video processing, with both a new technology - FPGA system-on-chip devices, and a new business model whilst retaining the core signal processing business the company was founded on.

"To make a clear statement we changed the company name from RF Engines to RFEL, changed the company branding and moved office. In hindsight, it was a big leap of faith. It was down to the excellent and highly motivated team that made it a success. However, ground-up product developments take many years and before receiving the first major contract it was a commercially challenging time.

Looking back over the last eight years, we have come a long way and now have four established product lines, good and strong customer relationships and are deeply embedded within the industry communities.

There is always more to do and the company is now at the brink of another major change by significantly expanding its manufacturing capability to satisfy the market demand. I would like to wish my successor, Richard Streeter, all the best with RFEL's next phase."

Alex Kuhrt (Managing Director 2011-2019)

So now in 2019, Richard takes over as Managing Director to drive RFEL onward. Previously operating as the Sales and Marketing Director, Richard joined the company in 2015 after 27 years at Thales. The company Richard takes over is a very different creature to the company that started off with such humble roots twenty years ago. The company now

exports worldwide and has globally recognised products. Our specialist signal processing core ChannelCore Flex is recognised as world-leading technology and our new video products are setting the benchmark against which others are being judged.

"This is a really exciting time for RFEL. The company has grown dramatically and we now have a portfolio of great products with three new products coming to market earlier this year. Alex and the team have skilfully positioned our video products to be a perfect fit to the market requirements and we are seeing huge potential in this area. And we are growing still, with the addition of new dedicated production and stores space which will be ready in late 2019. This will position RFEL to be ready to deliver these products in quantity, into the hands of our customers.

I'm looking forward to taking on the mantle of Managing Director and the challenges and opportunities this brings. It is fantastic to see the evolution of the company over the last 20 years, achieved through the dedication and hard work of all the MDs that go before me. I truly believe that we have a great team, developing great products and this can only mean the future for RFEL is looking very bright."

Richard Streeter (Managing Director 2019)

"Looking back over the last eight years, we have come a long way and now have four established product lines, good and strong customer relationships and are deeply embedded within the industry communities."

Dr Alex Kuhrt (Managing Director 2011-2019)





ROBERT FIFIELD

SENIOR DIGITAL SYSTEM DESIGN ENGINEER

Rob graduated from the UMIST with an MSc & BSc in Electrical and Electronic Engineering and began his career working for Philips Research Labs Redhill. During this time, he worked as a Wireless Systems Engineer developing digital front end solutions, involvement in ETSI standardisation and generating patents. Rob joined RFEL in 2008 as Senior Digital Systems Design Engineer initially helping to develop signal processing solutions for communication systems. He is currently team lead for a rapid prototyping system which enables users to receive and transmit RF signals and apply custom FPGA based processing over multiple platforms.

Q. When did you join the company and what was your first task?

A. Joined Sept 2008, first task was to buy cakes as it was also my birthday.

Q. What's your favourite thing on your desk right now?

A. Difficult question, torn between Garibaldis or Jelly Babies. Have to pass I'm afraid.

Q. If you could invent a new product tomorrow, what would it be?

A. I'm still working on the marvellous magical chocolate biscuit making machine but this is not yet on RFEL's roadmap.

Q. Biro, pencil or felt-tip?

A. Biro for chewing, pencil for winding cassettes, felt-tip for doodling, keyboard for writing.

Q. What's for lunch today?

A. Ham/cheese roll with ginger pickle, sweet chilli sensations and a few nibbles.

Q. If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?

A. I'm happy with today thank you as it's a Friday – however it could always be improved with a bacon roll.

Q. What do you hope for the company in 10 years' time?

A. Graceful expansion with more fresh faces whilst remaining agile.

Q. What drives you mad in the office?

A. What or who ;) Generally anything that stops me from doing interesting work.

Q. What do you do when it's payday?

A. Feed the children again.

Q. What do you do with a long weekend?

A. Explore another part of the island.

Q. RFEL in three words?

A. Agile, approachable and...



STEFANY POUNDER

SALES & PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR

Stefany joined RFEL in 2016 from a retail and print advertising background after graduating from university with a BA in Management and Marketing. In her role as Sales & Project Administrator, Stefany supports and works closely with the sales team in developing marketing materials and coordinating events and exhibitions for RFEL at home and overseas. Stefany is also the Compliance point of contact for RFEL.

Q. When did you join the company and what was your first task?

A. I joined in October 2016 and my first task was to organise the Christmas party. A baptism of fire!

Q. What's your favourite thing on your desk right now?

A. Probably my elastic band ball, I started it on my first day and it's still going strong.

Q. If you could invent a new product tomorrow, what would it be?

A. I can't think of my own but I would love Rob's chocolate biscuit machine, we should get that in the pipeline.

Q. Biro, pencil or felt-tip?

A. Nothing like a new Sharpie so it would have to be a felt-tip for me.

Q. What's for lunch today?

A. Leftover homemade pizza and Greek salad, literally haven't stopped thinking about it since I arrived this morning.

Q. If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?

A. It would be nice to see the sun again so I'd change it to be sunny!

Q. What do you hope for the company in 10 years' time?

A. To keep on expanding but keeping that nice, friendly feel. And to turn up at shows with our stand already made! That's my dream.

Q. What drives you mad in the office?

A. When no one tells me the milk's run out!

Q. What do you do when it's payday?

A. Buy things for my house!

Q. What do you do with a long weekend?

A. Go on a city break or spend time in my garden.

Q. RFEL in three words?

A. Approachable, friendly and innovative.

MISSION READY TECHNOLOGY

For twenty years RFEL has established world class expertise in the development of high-performance intellectual property (IP) for EW and video applications, where low-latency and high processing bandwidths are key.

Initially, we provided this technology in support of our customers' own product development, but in the last few years, we have broadened our offerings to the market with a range of in-house products that build on this IP foundation.

The journey has been a long one: in 1999 RFEL was founded upon Fast Fourier Transform and Channeliser designs. We developed and patented key IP in these areas and started to carve out a reputation for high performance, low size, weight and power (SWaP) signal processing expertise in the market. RFEL remain a highly regarded supplier of high-performance IP in the UK, Europe and world-wide.

Our knowledge around high-performance signal processing represents the core DNA of the company. RFEL's **Channeliser Design Suite**, incorporating RFEL's **ChannelCore Flex IP**, is still a cornerstone of our EW offer and is utilised by many governments and intelligence agencies in their missions. However, for the company to develop and grow it was clear that we had to make some revolutionary changes: moving away from just developing and selling IP cores and adding the capability to deliver these crown jewels as differentiating features of turn-key products that address the customers, and sometimes the end-users, specific needs.

Our video legacy was born. Focussing on two key market areas, RFEL made a five year R&D commitment to develop a suite of products addressing Long Range

Video Surveillance and Vehicle Video applications. The investment has been considerable, both in terms of financial commitment but also the reshaping of our teams, finding the necessary experts and developing our approach and concepts. Behind us, we leave an evolutionary line of breadboard prototypes, concepts and demonstrators and within them, a few failures. In front of us, we have three new fully-featured products, addressing a wide market with a host of possible applications:

ENHANCER draws on our extensive video IP library and combines both SDI and legacy analogue interfaces with low light image processing and high performance digital stabilisation. It delivers a plug-and-play, real-time high-definition video processor, providing users and integrators with best-in-class video enhancement technology for a visibly improved video image. Applications include fixed border and security surveillance installations as well as mobile platforms such as helicopters or UAVs with turret or gimbal based systems. And all this processing achieved in just 100ms or less.

ATACAMA takes real-time image processing one step further. Using a more powerful processing chip and an advanced algorithm developed with our partners at EM Photonics, ATACAMA delivers real-time mitigation of aberrations in the video caused by effects such as heat haze and scintillation. This is compatible with both HD digital and analogue video sources and delivers an enhanced image

in the presence of turbulent atmospheric distortion. By making a real improvement in the Detection, Recognition and Identification (DRI) capability of an electro-optic system, we enable the user to make better informed decisions.

Finally, **TRAILBLAZER** is our Mission Ready offer designed for hatches down driving in tracked and wheeled armoured vehicles, where the field of view is typically restricted or degraded. Other specialist vehicles such as engineering or special operations platforms can also benefit. TRAILBLAZER includes RFEL's own video fusion algorithm which produces an adaptive, optimum composite image from the daylight and infra-red (thermal) sensors. This provides a significant performance advantage over traditional blending methods, allowing our users to spot potential threats which would be otherwise hidden from view, especially when operating in degraded visual environments across all lighting conditions. Multiple units can be arrayed to provide total situational awareness. The video streams from each may be distributed over recognised open standards making the system easy to integrate in a Generic Vehicle Architecture (GVA) system, through HD-SDI closed circuit interfaces for conventional vetronics fits and to enhance or simplify safety case provision.

Each of these products are market ready and being delivered today, giving our customers the Mission Ready Technology they expect.

RFEL technology supports the broad range of our customers' missions. From deep space pulsar research through to providing enhanced night vision for drivers of infantry fighting vehicles, RFEL world-class technology delivers solutions to complex problems.

TRAILBLAZER ARMOURED VISION



TRAILBLAZER improves driver and crew effectiveness by extending the view beyond the daylight spectrum, even in adverse weather, obscured or low-light conditions.

Featuring very low-latency front and rear video camera units, it aids the driver in terrain negotiation, obstacle avoidance and route selection. Independent wide-angle situational awareness channel outputs give crew and commander a powerful surveillance and threat detection capability. TRAILBLAZER is GVA compliant and has both digital and analogue variants making it easy to integrate on a wide range of platforms.

KEY FEATURES

- Enhances operations in degraded visual environments
- Dual-band high performance sensors and optics
- RFEL Video Fusion™ technology maximises DRI
- Conventional and/or networked video connectivity
- Driver and local situational awareness channels
- Size, weight and power optimised for rugged operation
- Easy to integrate – GVA and DEF STAN 00-082 compliant



CHANNELISER DESIGN SUITE

Channeliser Design Suite can be used for a wide range of demanding applications including communications intercept, Electronic Warfare (EW), security, COMINT, SIGINT, sonar, research and radio astronomy.

A powerful channeliser design tool that allows users to develop, model and synthesize a wide range of channeliser configurations, using RFEL's market-leading **ChannelCore Flex™ Channeliser IP**.

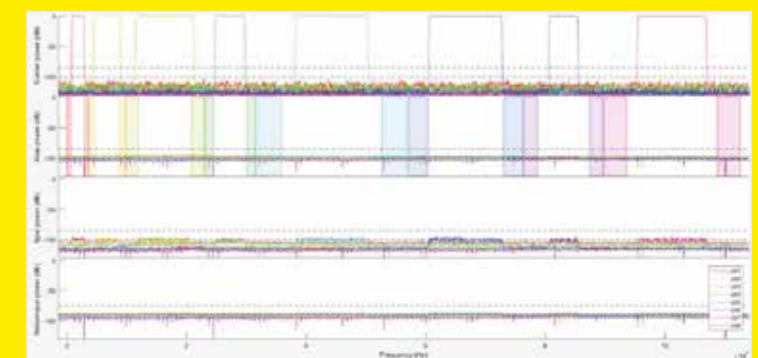
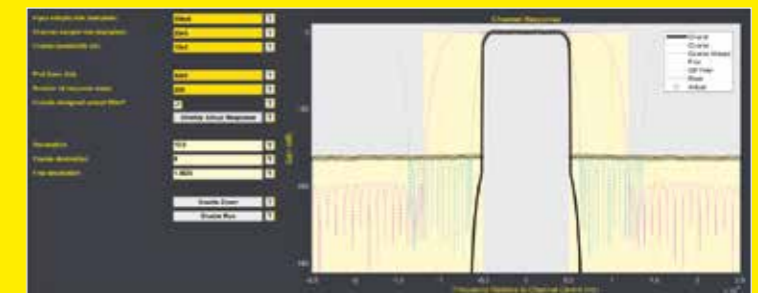
Cores can be configured with a range of build-time design parameters. Users can explore the trade-space quickly and easily and consider Features vs. Resource Utilisation vs. Cost. The tool provides a full bit-true model allowing RF behaviour to be analysed in detail. The resultant secure cores are synthesizable via native integration with Vivado IP Integrator.

Channeliser Design Suite provides step-by-step configuration of RFEL's ChannelCore Flex™ channeliser IP, with over 1 billion possible configurations. A real-time resource estimation is provided as functions are selected providing a useful FPGA fit guide.

ChannelCore Flex™ uses a novel architecture that implements a large number of Digital Down Converter (DDC) channels very efficiently.

FPGA DSP and logic resources are utilised in proportion to the log of the number of independent DDC channels, enabling thousands of channels to be implemented in a moderately-sized FPGA.

SINGLE CHANNEL RESPONSE SIMULATION



MULTI-CHANNEL RESPONSE SIMULATION

ATACAMA is ideal for integration into any security, surveillance and situational awareness systems, it will improve system operational effectiveness, without compromising the original system size or performance'.

ATACAMA

REAL-TIME VIDEO PROCESSOR

Compatible with HD digital, analogue or recorded sources, ATACAMA applies world-leading video enhancement technology for a visibly improved image in the presence of turbulent atmospheric distortion such as heat haze and scintillation.

This product has taken the world leading video processing software ATCOM, by EM Photonics Inc., and re-engineered it to operate on a small, embedded platform. This has resulted in an in-line, real-time, small form-factor video pre-processor, providing specific functions to mitigate the effects of atmospheric turbulence. Its size and integration features make it ideal to incorporate at the sensor, where the original data is most available, and where vital but low-level visual data has not been lost in any back-haul compression process.

RFEL was proud to partner with EM Photonics, Inc. to include the patented ATCOM technology within this product, and to optimise it to RFEL's HALO streaming-video architecture, exploiting the latest system-on-chip processing technology that RFEL's expertise can offer.





TARQUIN BENJAMIN
FPGA DSP DESIGN ENGINEER

Tarquin joined RFEL in 2017 fresh from Portsmouth University with a 1st class degree in Electronic Engineering. Working within one of the larger teams at RFEL, Tarquin has been involved in a variety of areas including VHDL coding, Matlab modelling and scripting, tcl scripting and technical documentation.

Q. When did you join the company and what was your first task?

A. I first joined RFEL in January 2017 shortly after graduating from the university of Portsmouth.

Q. What's your favourite thing on your desk right now?

A. My headphones. Nothing helps me focus more than some good music.

Q. If you could invent a new product tomorrow, what would it be?

A. A symbiotic suit or exoskeleton with the capability to protect, sustain, and enhance the wearer. Mainly focusing on counteracting or reversing degeneration and providing various physical enhancements. I haven't thought about this much, clearly.

Q. Biro, pencil or felt-tip?

A. Typically, Biro but I am partial to a good felt-tip.

Q. What's for lunch today?

A. No lunch today, but Vietnamese style cuisine for dinner.

Q. If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?

A. Hotter, sunnier and an outdoor office with a bar, pool, and live music. Too much to ask for?

Q. What do you hope for the company in 10 years' time?

A. Continued success, growth and recognition equal to the hard work put into each and every product and service provided by the RFEL team as a whole.

Q. What drives you mad in the office?

A. Any flying insect around my face! They are welcome to cohabit the planet, the city, even the building, but not my personal space.

Q. What do you do when it's payday?

A. Save as much of it as I can.

Q. What do you do with a long weekend?

A. Travel, various activities/hobbies, relax, and more than likely get some overdue errands completed.

Q. RFEL in three words?

A. Technology, Growth, Precision.



MARK SMITH
SENIOR DIGITAL DESIGN ENGINEER

Mark joined RFEL in 2003 from Plessey Radar where he had started his working life as an apprentice. Mark has experience in all aspects of the RADAR production process, finally specialising as a digital design engineer. Mark has had an almost exclusive focus on signal processing at RFEL and has worked on projects for a variety of applications, often for EW solutions.

Q. When did you join the company and what was your first task?

A. 6th May 2003. A 16k-point dual channel FFT (for a company called Spectrum Signal, 5450_012 ... I think? ... I am rather old now!)

Q. What's your favourite thing on your desk right now?

A. A toss-up between my little metal calendar or my rubber band ball.

Q. If you could invent a new product tomorrow, what would it be?

A. My mind is a bit of a blank on this one ... a low latency, high resolution signal detector and signal reconstruction design ... is a given work one.

Q. Biro, pencil or felt-tip?

A. Pencil (old fashioned wooden one that needs a sharpener).

Q. What's for lunch today?

A. Apple, Banana, and Bachelors Super noodles (curry flavour).

Q. If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?

A. Waiting for Tarquin to get access to UltraScale+ hardware to test my core.

Q. What do you hope for the company in 10 years' time?

A. To still be here, hopefully delivering good quality solutions and/or products to our customers.

Q. What drives you mad in the office?

A. The noise!!! It is like a chimps tea party in here some days and trying to concentrate is impossible.

Q. What do you do when it's payday?

A. Same as every other day bumble along.

Q. What do you do with a long weekend?

A. These days it will be family time or fishing related, depends on how much of the other one I've done lately ;-)

Q. RFEL in three words?

A. Pays for Fishing

Oxford signs up RFEL for SKA

The University of Oxford and RFEL are developing an FPGA based signal processing architecture for Square Kilometre Array's (SKA) antenna processing hardware. The team will create a configurable, fixed point Matlab model, in which channelisation parameters and beam forming strategies can be entered. Stimuli can be presented to allow performance to be monitored against FPGA resource usage and power dissipation. With a total collecting area of one square kilometre, the SKA will have an image resolution quality 50 times that of the Hubble Space Telescope.



▲ New Electronics, 25th February 2014

Isle of Wight County Press 1st Apr 2010

At RF Engines Ltd, Newport, the duke is given a run-down by, from left, CEO John Summers, John Walker and William Wyatt-Millington.

0310-p40555



Firm 'IW can be proud of'

▲ Made in Britain Project article
Isle of Wight County Press 07 Oct 2011

AN INNOVATIVE electronics company has been selected to repre-

Enhanced processing
RFEL (Hall 5A, Stand CD820) is presenting its Enhancer digital processor. Using FPGA accelerated image and the latest system-on-chip processing technology, Enhancer releases a powerful digital processing capability onto the live video stream, with digital stabilisation removing unwanted camera shake, and contrast enhancement boosting visibility in low light or poor weather conditions. Enhancer has a high-quality, slimline form-factor and a choice of control interfaces.

Queen's Award for Innovation in 2009. Mr Turner added: "It is a company the Island can be very proud of."
The Made in Britain project is organised by the Associate Parliamentary Group to highlight excellence in manufacturing across the nation. Dr Alex Kuhrt, chief executive of RF Engines, said: "With so much superb competition on the Island, we are delighted and honoured to have been selected to represent the IW in such a prestigious project that highlights the best of British."

▲ Jane's Defence Euroatory Daily
June 2018

▲ Isle of Wight County Press 02 Nov 2008

Faster than Formula 1

KEVIN WILSON MEETS A COMPANY WHICH SERVES CHIPS WITH EVERYTHING



When the team at RF Engines start talking about going faster than the competition, you could be forgiven for thinking they're competing in Formula 1.

But the 21 staff at one of the Island's most impressive success stories are engaged in an equally compelling race... to satisfy the growing demand for ever more powerful, faster, and cheaper computing systems. And it seems that they're way out in front, designing computer chips including the Hyperspeed Plus which are capable of blowing - and world leading - data transfer rates.

The staff rest room also bears witness to its success, with of the tables filling up with a range of industry awards. One of its proudest moments was being nominated to represent the Island in the Government's Made by Britain project, which celebrates the best of British innovation.

RF Engines CEO Alex Kuhrt said: "We were pleased, and we surprised, to be put forward. The Island is full of excellence across so many sectors."

The company was formed in 2000 by a small group of staff from Pascal Electronics, backed up by funding from a group of investors including Eddie Fry, who is now the Technical Director. A period of steady expansion up to 2009 led to its purchases of one its biggest customers, the German giant Rheinmetall, which RF Engines is now a wholly-owned but independent operating subsidiary turning over around £2 million a year.

▲ IOW Business Magazine Dec 2011

High-tech firm wins double bonus

THERE was double cause for celebration at RF Engines Ltd, the electronics design company based at the Innovation Centre on the St Cross Business Park in Newport.

By Martin Neville

The company not only enjoyed its best monthly order intake, receiving contracts for almost £700,000, but it was recognised by the European electronics industry as the Start Up Company of the Year.

John Lillington, chief executive and chief technical officer for RF Engines, said: "We are pleased a UK high technology company can compete internationally and win in such a specialist technology area."

The RF Engines team are, from left, Chris Bridges, Antonio Russo, Kate Lillington, Mark Smith, Nick Henning, John Summers, Eddy Fry, John Lillington, Jane Elliott, Lindsay Swan, Simon Underhay, Pete Wilkinson and Ian Ventress. CONTRIBUTED.

"We still do have world beating entrepreneurial talents in the UK but these individuals and companies need to continue to be given selective government support in the very early formative stages."

▲ Isle of Wight County Press 10 Oct 2003

New jobs created at award-winning firm

By Martin Neville
martin@iwcprma.co.uk

AN ISLAND specialist in high-specification electronic systems is doubling the size of its office and launching a recruitment drive.

RFEL, based at The Apex at St Cross Business Park, Newport, intends to increase its current staff of 23 to 30 by the end of next year due to the success of its video processing technology, called HALO.

Chief executive Dr Alex Kuhrt said: "Our HALO signal processing and digital image enhancement technology is not only winning awards but also contracts because it sets new standards in video stabilisation and enhancement."



RFEL staff outside the new building at the Apex Centre, St Cross Business Park. 0715-F155842

information on the nature of the latest commercial and security classification reasons but John Summers, sales and business development director, said one of the major contracts was for a European advanced communications monitoring system and the second for a new spectrum analyser test instrument design.

RF Engines was formed three years ago as a spin-off from Libra Design Associates, a highly successful electronics design and consultancy company run by Mr Lillington.

The company currently has 13 employees, most of whom already lived and worked on the Island, and the intent is to continue to recruit people from within the specialist electronic design skills required.

The Start Up of the Year award, open to companies that had started trading within the last five years, was held at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Park Lane.

The judging criteria included the company's

image, the originality of the product range, a clear corporate business plan and the likelihood of sustained long-term commercial success.

Receiving the award, Mr Summers paid tribute to the team effort that had enabled the company to succeed through one of the toughest periods that the electronics industry has ever experienced.

Mike King, enterprise and investment director for the IW Economic Partnership, said: "This award is a testament to what can be achieved when you combine great ideas, with skills, expertise and the right environment."

"The Innovation Centre was set up to nurture dynamic young businesses through the early years of trading, providing high quality accommodation, facilities and business support."

▲ Isle of Wight County Press 10 Oct 2003

Profits up tenfold as contracts are signed

NEWPORT-based company RF Engines Ltd had a ten-fold increase in profits and a doubling of turnover in the past year. After securing a number of contracts, including world-