

INNOVATION BORN OUT OF EXPERIENCE

'Innovation born out of experience' captures the story of one of the world's foremost suppliers of speciality industrial lubricants.

Houghton's history has been one of continuous technical excellence, created to respond to the needs of its market. It's also a story that reflects the international reach of the Houghton group and the increasing globalisation of its marketplace.



The seeds of the company were sown a century ago when a young Birmingham entrepreneur called Edgar Vaughan first set up the firm bearing his name. After becoming Houghton Vaughan for a time, the company is now known simply as 'Houghton'. Today, its name is renowned worldwide for its expertise, a distinction that reflects the Group's international standing in the marketplace.

The association between Edgar Vaughan and Houghton goes back to the dawn of the 20th century. It began when, on a business trip to Chicago, the young Edgar Vaughan had a chance meeting with two directors of the specialist oil company, EF Houghton – suppliers of Cosmoline, a vital lubricant used by the US army.

In 1909, Edgar Vaughan became the sole UK agent for EF Houghton products, including Cut-Max and Hocut metalworking fluids. By now, the firm had also set up premises in Legge Street, Birmingham – a location which remained the head office for many years.



EARLY SUCCESS

Throughout the early decades of the century, the alliance between the companies continued to strengthen, with the two sharing mutual technical advancements.

As the 'thirties dawned, EF Houghton, England set up its own manufacturing plant in Trafford Park, Manchester. The original site is near to our present day, purpose-built Technical Centre and Head Office, which provides some of the most advanced facilities in the fluids industry.



In 1940, the two companies decided to merge – paving the way for an organisation that would develop an unrivalled reputation for innovation in its field

PROGRESS BORN OUT OF ENTERPRISE

Wherever industry has led, from the first technical advances to the latest computerised technology, Houghton has kept in step.

If the company made great strides in its early years, the last five decades have seen progress on an unimagined scale. It was an era that saw Edgar Vaughan grow from a modest, though highly respected supplier of speciality products to one of the country's leading fluid and lubricant manufacturers, as part of the Houghton group.

As post-war industries expanded rapidly, the company rose to the challenge with high performance cutting oils for the aerospace and automotive markets. Developments in materials technology were matched by new and superior products created by a growing team of chemists and application experts.



Giant steps in safety as well as performance were also made possible by Houghton innovation. In the field of hydraulics, Houghto-Safe water glycol fluids minimised fire risks and still remain the industry standard for fire-resistant fluids.

These products also assured Houghton's role as a key supplier to the die casting and metal industries. Development has continued – first, with the launch of Hydrolubric high water-based fluids and, more recently, a new thickened micro-emulsion, Hydra-Vis.

In the field of metal heat treatment, Houghton innovation led to the replacement of animal fats by superior quench oils in the 1960s. A decade on, these were superseded by the advanced technology of Houghton's polymer based Aqua-Quench range.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Houghton was among the first to act as industry began to take greater responsibility for the environment – developing the world's first ever soluble oils in the 1950s. Its role as an innovator in this field was continued with biostable fluids in the 'eighties, and more recently, the unique Phase Control concept designed for central coolant systems.

In the 1980s, Houghton also had the foresight to acquire a small engineering services company called Fenland RLS – a move that enabled it to develop the provision of equipment and labour alongside its services as an oil company. This has since developed into FLUIDCARE, a concept that provides total management of a company's fluids and remains unique in our industry.





SUCCESS BORN OUT OF COMMITMENT

Today, Houghton is poised to respond to the ever-changing global market. The hub of the business is a new Technical Centre at Trafford Park, Manchester. The purpose-built facilities include state-of-the-art product development labs, where scientists have access to the latest academic, environmental and safety information.

Research is continuously carried out into novel raw materials – the use of vegetable oils and synthetic ester technology in all product areas has already given customers the opportunity to reduce the potential impact of fluids and lubricants on the environment.

In our microbiology labs, new approaches to microbial problems and product usage are being identified and solved. Innovative ways of protecting products from bacterial attack while in use, are constantly sought and implemented. At the same time, Houghton's growing number of on-site labs and field technicians are enabling us to bring this expertise to the heart of customers' own processes.

