

J. Allcock & Sons

Recycling rubber around the world

James Allcock began his business, J Allcock & Sons Ltd, in 1924. The company started in Audenshaw, then in 1928 there was a move to Soapery Street, (later to become Textile Street), in West Gorton.

These premises were on the site of a former wood yard and a Chapel. Mr Allcock turned the Sunday School building into a warehouse for his business which provided chemicals to the emerging rubber industry in the Manchester area. The business was incorporated in May 1928.

The Second World War was a profitable time for Allcocks. The availability of natural rubber was much reduced, so demand for factice (a rubber substitute) was high and profitable. The high demand for proofed fabric meant that Allcocks could sell all that they could manufacture.

The founder's two sons continued the business, but the third generation had other interests. One of the founder's grandchildren, for instance, is James Allcock, the Radio Vet who also wrote magazine articles about animals. The family business was sold to the Anchor Chemical Company in Clayton. Before starting his own business James Allcock had worked for Anchor making factice.

As well as the production of factice, Allcocks started to sell other products required in the rubber industry.

Anchor ran its new purchase as one of its subsidiaries and used its facilities to make various factices. These rubber substitutes are used in the manufacture of soft rubber compounds such as erasers, proofed fabrics and hoses.



This process was continued and extended by Anchor who used Allcocks as a trading house for distributed products that would appear to present a conflict of interests with distribution agreements they had.

Mr R. S. Rushton, who eventually became chairman, worked his way up in the company from a post in the laboratory at Anchor



Chemical, through the position of Works Director. He became responsible for the running of Allcocks and decided to buy out the company and run it with his wife Margaret.

At the time the Rushton family took over, the firm consisted of a very small three-office building, the original warehouse, a second warehouse, a works and a portacabin used as a canteen. Mr Rushton ran the concern with three other staff and one part-timer.



Five years later, Allcocks acquired Truscott (or Diamond) Transport Company and its property next door. Allcocks also had its eye

on an area of waste land at the rear of their site and bordered by Ambrose Street, which in the past had been a Starch Works, then the Openshaw Brewery and then a paper mill. In 1982, an old chain factory became available, which was bought and a Rubber Recycling plant was installed to manufacture granules for sports and play surfaces, and rubber dust (we call crumb) that gets used back in all rubber compounds.

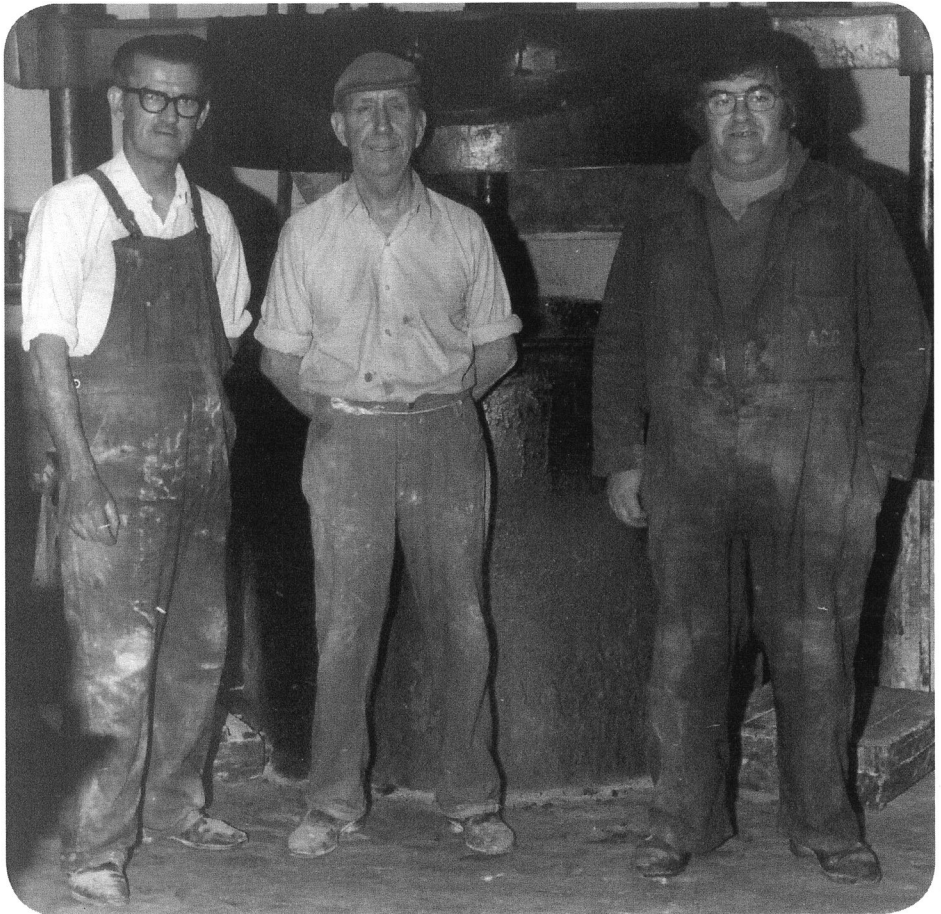
Top: J Allcock Snr., extreme left, and J Allcock Jnr., third left. **Above:** J Allcock Jnr., front with his motorbike. **Left:** James Allcock Junior who founded the business along with his father James Allcock Senior.

Unfortunately the Ambrose Street Works was destroyed by fire in May 1992 as the result of arson. Those responsible were never found. The fire started on the roof over the workshop. The pitch on the roof melted through and dropped into the storage area on to 110 metric tonnes of rubber crumb (dust) and granules. The resultant fire devastated the building. The insurers even wrote off the foundations. As well as the building and its contents, it demolished three fork lift trucks and a travelling overhead crane. Though damaged by smoke and water, the offices survived.

It took three-and-a-half years to settle the insurance claim before plans for the future could be made. The Works were rebuilt, on the Ambrose Street site. Meanwhile business had continued in rented premises in Mossley and thus a minimum customer base was retained.

At the same time sterling fell out of the ERM and, as the majority of distributed products were imported, prices went up by 20% overnight. The company survived all this and emerged stronger and more focused.

Today, the company is still deeply involved with the rubber industry but it also distributes compounding chemicals into plastics and surface coatings. We also grind and granulate cured rubber scrap so that can be recycled, using what we consider one of the most modern grinding facilities in the UK.



Above: The factice manufacturing team in 1973, from left, Jim Holmes, Joe Cuttle and Ted McCarley. **Below:** Ronald Rushton signing a distribution agreement with the world's largest silicone company, Dow-Corning in 1973.



The company provides problem-free deliveries of the correct material on the right day, with the right paperwork and at an economical price. Mr and Mrs Rushton retired from the day-to-day running of the company in 1989, although Mr Rushton remained as the company's chairman. Mr Bob Howard ran the company until his retirement at the end of 1996. Bob Howard was replaced by Andrew Rushton as Managing Director with his brother David as Works Director.



Above left: Mr Bob Howard who retired in 1996. **Left:** One of Allcocks wagons with a pallet of reclaimed rubber imported from Czechoslovakia.



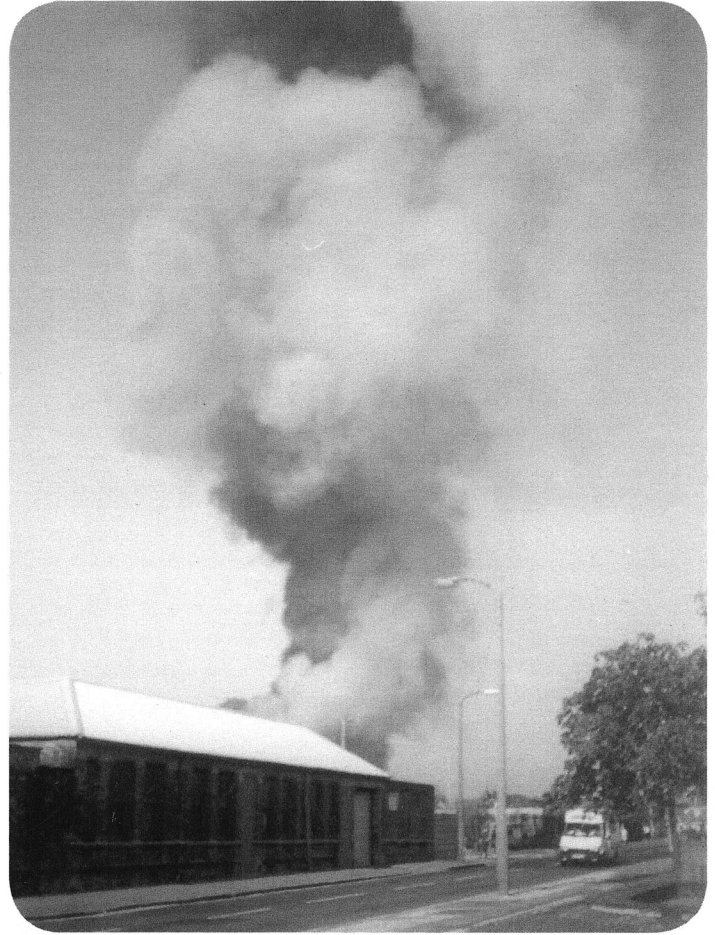


Above: Land acquired in 1980 for the expansion of the company. **Right:** The fire which destroyed part of the factory on the 16th May 1992.

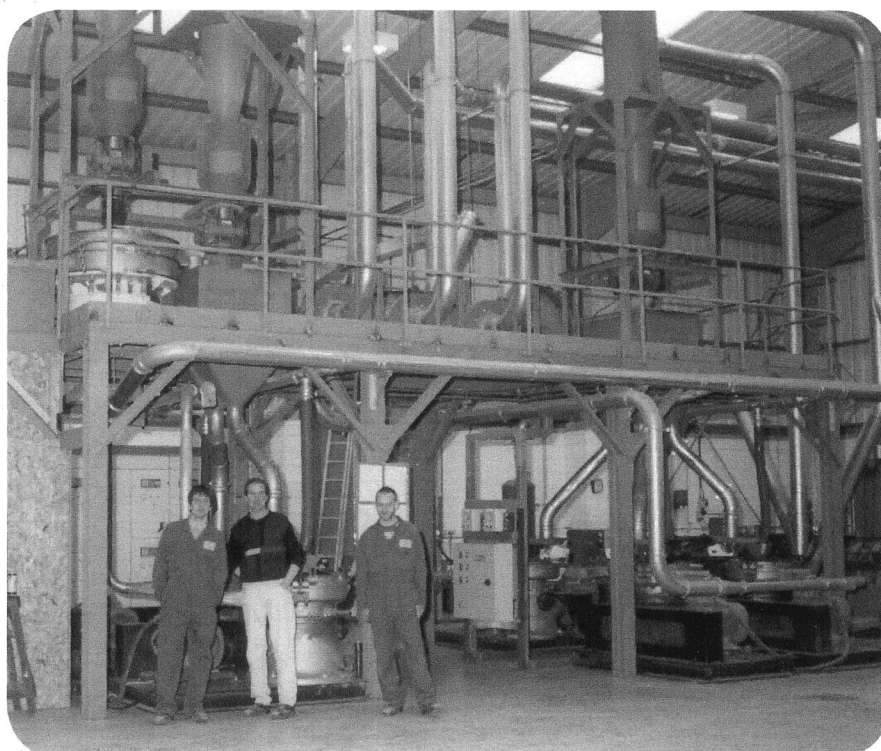
In 1997 the company's commitment to quality was reinforced with the attainment of the first Quality Standard of BS5750. This has been kept and improved ever since and in 2016 the company achieved ISO 9001-2015 and are the first and only Rubber Recycling Company to achieve this standard.

In 1999 Allcocks made its first acquisition when they were approached by Mr. David Birkett who owned the Wellington Rubber Co. Ltd in Leeds and was the son of the founder. He was of an age when he wanted to take a step back and start planning for a much deserved retirement. He thought Allcocks ethos fitted in very well with his own and suggested Allcocks might be interested in acquiring the business. Wellington Rubber Co. was a 100% rubber recycling unit, able to sell everything they managed to produce and so understandably, this was of great interest to Allcocks.

Wellington's main business is buying buffings from Truck Tyre Retreaders. Every Truck Tyre gets retreaded a number of times in its life. They buff off the old tread and what comes off is called buffings. They buy over 3,000 metric tonnes per year that they process into different sizes. In the ensuing months, Wellington



Rubber Co. was incorporated into Allcocks and relocated within the Manchester site in 2002, allowing David Birkett to gradually let go of the reigns until in 2005, he retired. Wellington Rubber is now run by Adrian France who used to work for a similar company who were a competitor, a supplier, a customer and a friend all in one. Wellington Rubber Co. has become so successful that they have had to move that business to a bigger site at Wimpory Street and they are looking to expand further.



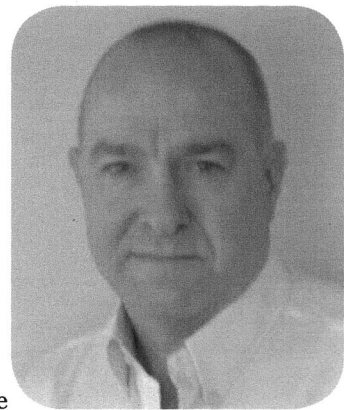
From 1999 onwards our main aim has been to strengthen our position in the recycling of rubber. The old rubber industry in this country was changing and the lower quality, lower price work was moving abroad. So we had to adapt our position. We became suppliers of higher value niche products and started to investigate ways to recycle the new lower volume higher value rubbers that were starting to be used.



Left: The new crumb plant. **Above:** Mr. Andrew Rushton (left) and Mr. David Birkett (right).



The majority of export business comes from custom grinding of our customers own scrap. We call this our "Laundry Business". Customers segregate and deliver the rubber they want recycled. We grind it to the agreed size and then sell them back the reprocessed rubber. They then add this back into their products.



DEVULCANISATION - In 2006, RAPRA (Rubber and Plastic Research Association) invited Allcocks and a number of other like minded rubber people to join a consortium to investigate the Devulcanisation of rubber. This has been something scientists have been striving for years to achieve. As we already had some knowledge of the chemistry required and the small success we had achieved to date, we joined forces. The first collaboration was so successful we agreed a second consortium with the name REMOULD. This also was so successful that Allcocks along with two other rubber companies bought the equipment and installed it in Manchester. We now can take customer's own scrap and turn it back into a useful raw material that can go back into the products they make without lowering the quality but at a lower price.

Allcocks and Wellington Rubber Co. now import from Brazil, Czech Republic, Germany, India, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden, and export all over the world. In fact now 40% of our turnover comes from our export business.

Andrew Rushton now has been joined by Keith Devine, who, with his engineering background, is now Operations Director over both Allcocks and Wellington Rubber Co. Government / EU legislation on WASTE put both Companies in a strong position, already having the recycling framework in place; as demand for our services has grown relocating Wellington Rubber Co. has allowed us to increase capacity and efficiency.

Andrew's ability and willingness to react and even anticipate difficult times approaching, was shown in 2017 when the Silicone business was upended globally resulting in shortages and long lead times. By a commitment to stock we have a large increase in the number of silicone customers. Andrew has continued to achieve strong and stable growth – riding the storm of recessions when many around him failed and each time, coming out the other end stronger. His willingness to look further afield to maintain business, both for supplies and sales, has reaped rewards.

Top left: Mr Rushton, the Chairman of the company pictured with his wife Margaret. **Above:** Mr Andrew Rushton, the current Managing Director. **Below:** An aerial view of the premises as they are today.

