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RG Jones: 90 years in business

Part of the pro audio vanguard, RG Jones celebrates 90 years of business in style. LSi reports . . .

UK - This year RG Jones is celebrating its 90th year in business. It's a remarkable achievement given that the average life expectancy of the top Fortune 500 companies is only around 45 years, and even more impressive when set against an industry background that is increasingly characterised by mergers, takeovers and acquisitions.

While many of the most familiar companies in the pro audio industry were founded and grew up during the years immediately following the Second World War, Ronald Geoffrey Jones established his company in 1926 (long before television), based on an inspired desire to make electronically amplified voices more easily heard over a noisy market crowd - an invention that he turned to his advantage as a salesman.

Let's get this in perspective: RG Jones is one of the oldest sound reinforcement companies in the world, and ranks as one of the founding institutions of our industry. The only sound company in the UK to hold the Royal Warrant, the firm was for all of its first 80 years operated continuously as a family-run business, and still maintains its original focus on professional audio. Although one of its near rivals, California-based Swanson Sound Service, was founded in the same year, RG's panel trucks with his roof-mounted horns preceded Swanson's similar offerings by almost a year.

RG Jones' directors and staff celebrated the 90th landmark year in true audio industry style with clients and suppliers at a party held at the home of one of its closest clients, the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Club, at the end of November. Over 100 industry figures gathered at the Debenture Lounge to hear a speech from the longest standing member of the RG Jones empire, sound designer Simon Honeywill, before enjoying private access to the Wimbledon Museum and the iconic Centre Court.



↑ RG Jones directors Gerry Kitchingham, John Carroll, Sarah Gellas and Andrew Williamson

→ Simon Honeywill presents at the company's 90th anniversary celebration

↓ Communications director Sarah Gellas with sound engineer Fred 'Gumby' Jackson



"No company can stand still and hope to prosper . . ."

- Andrew Williamson

Having gained the respect of the industry for its longevity and historical achievements, during the event the company revealed some of its recent highlights and hopes for the future. So, what has changed since RG

Jones attained its last historic milestone a decade ago? A very great deal, as it turns out . . .

Just as RG himself was adept in grasping - inventing, even - emerging technologies during the pre-war years as

'professional audio' as we know it came into existence, so the modern RG Jones continues to implement the latest high-tech equipment and methods in pursuit of a better customer experience.

↑ RG's panel trucks with roof-mounted horns pictured with the Home Guard in 1940

"No company can stand still and hope to prosper," says joint managing director Andrew Williamson. "Over the last decade we've aligned our services with more of a one-stop-shop model, enabling us to not only retain all our clients, but also win new projects. Naturally, we will always specialise in audio, however, it makes sense to offer additional services such as audio-visual, networking and video - principally because some customers are more comfortable dealing with a single, trusted supplier."

There's also been a huge step forward in technology and in product design and quality due to the digital age,



and as a result the company has streamlined its services significantly to cater for these fundamental changes in the market. "We don't just talk decibels, we talk code," notes Williamson. "I believe our reputation for high standards

and quality is based on our insistence on one-to-one client relationships, the highest quality equipment tailored to meet specific requirements, engineering skills borne out of a wealth of experience, and professional logistical and

technical support."

Sales and installations director Jon Berry agrees that the market has changed immeasurably. "Everyone wants a lot more for a lot less," he explains. "Expectations are much higher, budgets

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