

Electronic and Chip Industries

Electronic and Chip industries have represented an important sector in the development of Cambridge for more than a century. In the late 1800s William George Pye worked as an instrument maker at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge. In 1896, he resigned from his job and started his own business as W.G. Pye & Co making scientific instruments for universities and schools. His company expanded rapidly and in 1925 it diversified into radio broadcast receivers and later into television. The old W.G. Pye factory was built near St Andrews Road and dates from 1913 and became the original 'Pye Radio Works'. During the Second World War Pye Radio Ltd played an important role in the development of radar and military radio communications. Post war, the company used its expertise in the field of radio development to become even more successful and by 1960 it had become a large, vertically integrated group of 60 UK companies and 20 overseas operations. In 1967, it was taken over by Philips Electronics UK and grouped together as Cambridge electronic Industries.

When radio and television production ceased in Cambridge in 1965, the old site was adopted by Pye Telecom and became known as 'Cambridge Works'. Today, the remaining descendants of Pye Telecom, such as Sepura PLC and Team Simoco Group are still leading companies in the field of radio communications worldwide. The cluster of hardware and software companies in Cambridge that have followed on from Pye's success has been described as 'Silicon Fen.' The city has a history of technological prowess also due to its proximity to the science and engineering talent coming out of Cambridge University. Some examples of modern tech companies include Frontier Developments: maker of Rollercoaster Tycoon and ARM Holdings, a Cambridge-based chipmaker which has an enormous global market selling chips to business giants such as Samsung and Apple.

