

Aviation sector sales fly high at Tyneside's Solar Solve

South Shields based Solar Solve Ltd has reported high sales to the global aviation sector during the first seven months of 2021.

The company, which makes window shades for ships, has diversified into the aviation sector, which has used downtime in the pandemic to carry out maintenance and upgrade projects.

Solar Solve, which is based at the Port of Tyne, was launched in 1975 by John Lightfoot, who developed the screens while juggling his roles as owner of a window blind shop and a marine engineer.

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The screens have been installed in military vessels around the world, as well as on cruise ships, rigs and cranes, as they cut glare, heat and ultraviolet light.

The firm said that the increase is “certainly significant” and in line with expectations, as the sector had been taking advantage of reduced demand for flights due to the Covid-19 impact.

Company managing director Julie Lightfoot said that as well as on the ground, there are lots of air traffic control towers on ships like aircraft carriers, fleet replenishment vessels, offshore vessels, offshore rigs and other structures.

Ms Lightfoot, who has been spearheading the growth of Solar Solve's aviation for the last decade, said: “We have supplied Solasolv Type Approved Roller sunscreens and Rolasolv Type Approved roller blinds to air traffic control (ATC) towers all

over the world.

“Sometimes we install them and sometimes a local contractor or world wide distributor installs them, and unlike the marine sector, ATC screens and blinds are often electrically operated.

“We have become so successful that we created a Solar Solve aviation division with its own logo to help promote the brand. This year, as well as supplying many UK-based customers, we have also sent consignments to Lithuania, Bermuda and Hong Kong.”

The firm said that, when the Covid-19 pandemic began, it also offered an opportunity for the team at South Shields to bring forward plans to upgrade the company’s Rolasolv range of roller blind products.

It said that changing the layout of the production processes during lockdown to speed up the manufacture of fabric roller blinds has been an “overwhelming success”.

Chairman John Lightfoot said the expected rise in future demand, plus the reduction in the cost of components and a wider choice of fabrics, have allowed the company to reduce its prices.

He added: “In the past, the Rolasolv range of roller blinds have been manufactured using inefficient processes that resulted in a higher price level. Now the new production facilities are in place, blinds are produced much quicker, using more efficient processes, that still ensure perfect Type Approved products, carrying a 12-month guarantee.”

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