

Giving business a good start

ONE would not usually associate a company which repairs torpedo parts for the Ministry of Defence with a firm which makes rugs out of carpets - but both can be found within yards of each other on a Stonehouse industrial estate.

Grundy and Partners Ltd and the Cotswold Rug Co are both tenants on the Bonds Mill Estate which caters for all types of enterprises in historic woollen mill surroundings.

Cristie Electronics Ltd bought the site in 1986, but a separate company - Bonds Mill Estate Ltd - has since been set up to run the estate.

and units vary from lock-up garages to Cristie's 15,000 square feet of modern spacious offices.

SUCCESS

Examples of the mill's success stories include Richard Arnold & Co, an engineering firm now based in Thrupp and R & O Joinery which was set up in 1980.

Initially R & O,

by Michael Harris

And around 300 people are now employed on the 120,000 square foot site which is serviced by a site manager, a site administration manager, and a full-time maintenance team.

IMPROVEMENTS

'The site had been run down for years before we came,' said Mr Gavin Paul, Chairman of Cristie.

'We spent in excess of £250,000 on improvements and repairs in the last four years while preserving the character of the site.'

The estate is particularly attractive to new and small businesses because short-term leases are available at a reasonable price and there are a wide variety of units.

Rents range from £2 to £7 per square foot

which makes door and window frames for the double glazing trade, consisted of just Alan Richardson and Tony Oakley.

They have since expanded and set up a separate company to make UPVC frames and will soon be moving from Bonds Mill to a larger single industrial unit which can cater for their 40 employees.

'It was an ideal start-up site because we could sign up for a lease of only one year initially,' said Mr Richardson.

LAYOUT

In fact the directors of the estate believe that the flexibility of the terms of tenure and the cheap rents offset any problems posed by the layout of the old



● Overlooking the Bonds Mill Industrial Estate are, left to right, Mr Rupert Burton, site manager; Mr John Hardcastle, financial director; Helen Ratcliffe, site administration manager; and Mr Gavin Paul, chairman of Cristie Electronics Ltd.

buildings and the awkward access.

'All our terms are pretty negotiable depending on what the prospective tenant is looking for,' said site manager Rupert Burton.

'There are a number of different types of accommodation at different rent levels.'

Two people who have taken advantage

of the estate's facilities are Paul Huiz and Richard Hall who run Spectre Etch.

Their business venture was initially prompted when Richard's wife bought him a chess set.

He decided to engrave a chess board on a glass table, and now with Paul he etches glass for all occasions, whether on mirrors,

coffee tables or wine glasses.

But the site also offers plenty of room for established businesses, with excellent communications offered by the nearby M5 and Stonehouse railway station.

Grundy and Partners first moved to the estate in 1969 and they still employ 60 people refurbishing Ministry of Defence equipment

including torpedo parts and the cockpits of Hercules transport aeroplanes.

And Cristie, who make computer equipment for home and overseas markets, now employs 60 people, three times as many as it did before its move from Stroud four years ago.

At present there are a wide variety of units to

let at Bonds Mill suitable for businesses ranging from high-tech light industrial to office space.

Anyone interested in renting a unit should contact Helen Ratcliffe, the site administration manager on Stonehouse 8829 or the site's joint agents - Andrew Watton & Co of Stroud and Sandces Commercial of Gloucester.