



## **SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE – COLONEL CROMPTON (1845-1940)**

### **The UK's First Engineering Works**

Chelmsford became home to the United Kingdom's first electrical engineering works established by Colonel Rookes Evelyn Bell Crompton.

Crompton as he was better known was a leading authority of electrical engineering and was a pioneer of electric street lighting and electric traction motors within the UK. Crompton installed electric street lights around the town centre to celebrate the incorporation of the Borough of Chelmsford in 1888. Although this made Chelmsford one of the earliest towns to receive electric street lighting, the Council later decided to have it removed because gas was cheaper and the Council owned the gasworks. Crompton supplied the traction motors for the first electric trains on Southend Pier. The company also manufactured electrical switchgear, alternators and generators for many power stations in the UK and worldwide.

Crompton set up his original factory known as the 'Arc Works' in Queen Street in 1878. After a fire there in 1895 he built a huge new electrical engineering factory also called the 'Arc Works' in Writtle Road. The firm was called Crompton and Co. and in 1927 became Crompton Parkinson after Colonel Crompton formed a business partnership with fellow British electrical engineer Frank Parkinson. During World War II, the factory was frequently targeted in German bombing raids. In 1969 Crompton Parkinson Ltd was downsized and operations moved elsewhere after a takeover by Hawker Siddeley and the site was taken over by the Marconi Company and became the base for the newly formed Marconi Radar Systems Limited.