

# High performance fabrics for firefighter PPE

With fabric technology seemingly dominated by major multinational companies, the key contribution made by leading UK fabric supplier A W Hainsworth & Sons Ltd deserves to be placed in context. Long recognised by leading PPE manufacturers as a major innovating force in international markets, the company's long time commitment to investment in leading edge fabric design and manufacture has been rewarded by the pre-eminent market position it now holds with its Titan product.

In 2000 Hainsworth was successful in securing a DTI innovation grant to develop the Titan fabric which has at its heart the fibre layering and interlocking technology which are the keys to its superior performance. The product, in which Bristol Uniforms joined forces with Hainsworth as its lead partner, was launched commercially in 2002 and was quickly given international recognition by winning the DuPont Innovation Award the same year. In 2003 Titan went on to help the company win a Queen's Award for Enterprise in Innovation.

The unique alliance with Bristol Uniforms has led to the popularisation of the product both in the UK and in overseas markets and has established Bristol Uniforms as the largest user of Titan in Europe. Market acceptance began when Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service became the first fire and rescue service to adopt the fabric in Bristol's Jaguar fire coat and trousers in 2002. This success was followed by Cleveland and Essex fire services, whilst in Europe, the Madrid Fire Service specifies Titan and, more recently, Croatia's Zagreb Fire Service has taken delivery of the first 200 ensembles incorporating the technologically advanced fabric. Teh Projekt, Bristol Uniforms' distributor in Croatia, has been instrumental in securing this specification.

Commenting on its success, Hainsworth's Managing Director, Tom Hainsworth, said, "Our technology pedigree, coupled with the willingness of Bristol Uniforms to partner with us in this venture, has, I believe, demonstrated the continuing commitment of leaders in the UK's manufacturing economy to remain at the forefront of world innovation and to lead by example.

"Only through the stimulation of a free competitive environment in the provision of PPE in this country can we expect to see UK companies continuing to lead the world in providing advanced technological solutions."

