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TECHNOLOGY

Firm's magnetic role in making the Hadron Collider a success

Exclusive

By Nick Ames

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THE role a Kent company played in one of the most exciting scientific break-throughs in a generation – the discovery of the so-called God particle – has emerged.

Hythe firm HV Wooding were chosen ahead of competitors around the world to help construct the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland.

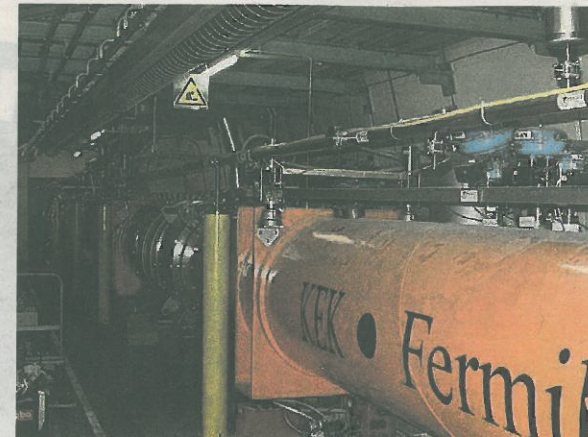
It was built to investigate the very origins of the universe and proved the existence of the Higgs boson (see box).

The Hythe firm created the vital yokes to hold in place magnets which generate the particles used to get a better understanding of the fundamental laws of nature.

The scientific trade secret was revealed when business minister and Sevenoaks MP Michael Fallon visited the company's Range Road Industrial Estate plant.

"You helped to discover the God particle – and from a small business in Kent," said a clearly astonished Mr Fallon.

Harry Wooding, managing director of the family firm which has been operating since 1966, said: "This shows that our business is, quite literally, at the cutting



ACHIEVEMENT: Michael Fallon was impressed to learn HV Wooding provided parts used in the generation of particles necessary for discovering the previously elusive Higgs boson

edge of science. What is also gratifying is that we beat off competition from companies across Europe – because the physicists working on the Hadron were confident we could deliver the precision engineering they required."

HV Wooding started work on the particle physics project – which is housed in a 17-mile long circular tunnel 175 metres below the countryside of the Franco-Swiss

border, close to Geneva – in 2011.

The firm has since completed around £400,000 of business with its operators, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), and further contracts are expected, with Wooding staff frequent visitors to the experimental facility.

One £70,000 deal was reached as the Hythe company's tender was just £50 lower than its nearest rival.