

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1981)

Heft: 1781

Rubrik: Focus on Ilford

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 08.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

FOCUS ON

ILFORD

A keen eye on the future . .

FOR just over a hundred years people have been turning to Ilford for the best in photographic products.

In 1879 the company had its origin as a one-man business in the quiet village of Ilford to the east of London, then far enough out in the country to offer a clean environment for making photographic plates.

Today Ilford is one of the world's leading makers of black and white films and papers, an international group which includes the Lumière company, whose illustrious name reminds us of its founding fathers, the pioneers of cinematography, as well as CIBA-GEIGY Photochemie in Switzerland.

In June 1980 Ilford's Chief Executive John Fraser announced a momentous decision for the group's operations in the UK, France and Switzerland: specialisation in black and white camera films and papers, as well as the Cibachrome range, the world's acknowledged leading products in colour copying. Following the decision to withdraw from "industrial products" such as X-ray film and microfilm, this commitment to *photo* products represents the Ilford of the future.

With the emphasis now firmly on camera films and papers, Ilford is investing £30 million in its Mobberley site in Cheshire alone, to make it its one centre of UK production. With such a strong eye to the future, Ilford aims to give its customers only the best in photographic products.



Alfred Harman, looking rather like King Edward VII, and dog, probably about 1900. His setting up business in Ilford a century ago was the first in a series of developments resulting in the multinational of today.

Restructuring makes good progress



John Fraser: "Future is secure"

CHIEF Executive John Fraser reports that the restructuring of the Ilford Group is making encouraging progress, both financially and in terms of operational activity. The reduction of group losses is ahead of budget, partly as a result of favourable external factors, but mainly because of lower personnel numbers and cost-cutting measures.

Ilford's parent company Ciba-Geigy reported half-year sales in 1981 of SwFr 254 million (about £64 million) by Ilford Group. This was less than the comparable 1980 figure because of the decision to discontinue its three "industrial" product

lines, but the drop was not as much as expected.

On the practical side of the restructuring project the construction work on Ilford's Mobberley site is well on schedule. The redevelopment of the site will be completed by the end of 1983.

"Careful planning," says Mr Fraser, "has ensured that the restructuring project will have no adverse effect on the supply or quality of Ilford photographic films and papers, nor on the continuing development of new products. With the support of Ciba-Geigy, the future of Ilford as a viable supplier of photographic goods worldwide is secure."

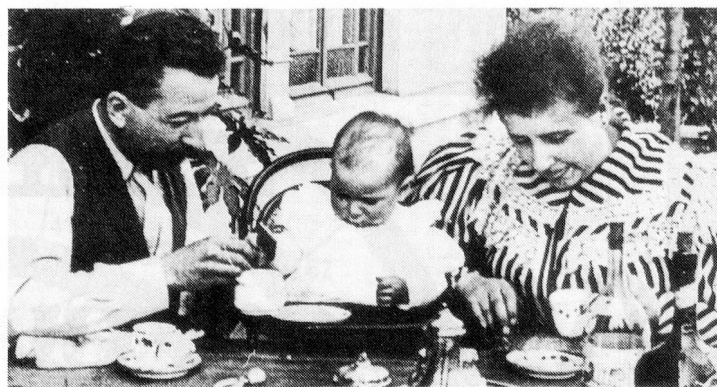
The European connection

BENEATH that very English name, Ilford has deep-rooted links with Europe in general and Switzerland in particular. To begin with, the Ilford Group functions as an operating division of Ciba-Geigy, the Swiss chemical multinational which is based in Basle.

But Ilford itself is multinational too. Before acquiring the UK company which gives its name to the whole group, Ciba-Geigy already had two other companies making photographic materials: Lumière SA in Lyon, France and CIBA-GEIGY Photochemie AG in Fribourg, Switzerland.

Lumière is a company with a long history in photography dating back to the end of the last century. Its speciality now is the production of photographic papers. CIBA-GEIGY Photochemie started life in the 1930s as Tellko and is now the centre of the group's silver-dye-bleach business, on which the Cibachrome range of colour products is based.

These companies are now all part of the Ilford Group, which also has selling companies around the world for its three-cornered European manufacturing base.



Home movies the Lumière way: In 1895 the brothers who founded today's Ilford Group company in Lyon were thrilling audiences with moving pictures. This still shows Louis and family at their summer house, filmed on a camera he designed and built.

**Realism
beyond
compare**

Magnified 30 times larger than the original (inset) this detail from a 35mm frame of XP1 film would almost certainly have been lost with a conventional film.



UNTIL the introduction of Ilford's revolutionary XP1 film in 1980, little had changed in the way black and white films work and the way they're processed since the turn of the century.

With XP1 came the world's first black and white film with silverless negatives: in other black and white films, at least 30 per cent of the precious metal is locked in the negative. XP1 uses colour dyes instead of silver to form the negative image, thus

enabling the silver to be recovered during processing.

Before XP1 a photographer had to decide if it was more important on the day to have a high speed film or one which gave a fine grain image. Now he can have both: rated as 400 ASA, XP1 gives fine grain right across the tonal range, while having an unusually wide exposure latitude.

Increasing the exposure to get a good gradation of highlights

and shadows no longer means increasing the grain as it does in conventional films. And even with ten-fold enlargements the grain remains practically imperceptible.

XP1 opens many doors to the professional and keen amateur photographer – good results under low lighting conditions, good rendition of textures such as skin tone for portraits, and greater detail of metal surfaces and other industrial subjects.

ILFORD GROUP FACTS FILE

1980 Group sales	£159 million
Total number of employees	3,700
Group operating companies	
ILFORD Limited	London, Mobberley (Cheshire) and Essex
Lumière SA	Lyon, France
CIBA-GEIGY Photochemie AG	Fribourg, Switzerland
Selling companies in	
Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, West Germany, Holland, Italy, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and USA.	

True colour copies

BESIDES being recognised by professionals as the definitive colour print material, Cibachrome's clarity and strength now feature in a copier system in its truest sense.

Cibachrome Copy is a real copier system, not a print system from a negative. It makes colour copies and enlargements directly from an original which can be a printed page, photographic material, a drawing or even a three-dimensional object.

The machine which makes this possible is the Cibachrome Copier KP 30/40, which, as well as being a repro-camera, is also a fully automatic processor, delivering Cibachrome Copy prints and A4 size transparencies at the touch of a button.

The result is not the more usual crude and garish copies available previously, but glossy (or matt) prints ideal for presentations, architectural drawings, promotions and many other applications.

Photographers will have it all their own way

ILFORD'S decision to concentrate on its photographic products will undoubtedly benefit the company and its customers alike, according to Head of Marketing Dr Albin Knecht.

After 20 years' experience of the photographic industry, starting with Ciba-Geigy's then newly acquired companies of Lumière and Tellko (now CIBA-GEIGY Photochemie), Dr Knecht is a Swiss who has devoted nearly all his professional career to making Ilford a stronger force in world-wide markets.

"Our marketing force is fairly small compared with some international competitors, so it makes sense for us to be able to concentrate on our more profitable product areas," says Dr Knecht, "but the customer will benefit too. We are now offering professional photographers and hobbyists a wide range of products and service second to none.

"In the market segments we have chosen our range of products is impressive, but if we are lacking any products we will buy them in to ensure that we offer our customers all they need.

"Up until now Ilford has been strongest in European markets, but the emphasis is now firmly on becoming a world force in its chosen field. Traditionally the Commonwealth has also been a large customer, particularly Australia, and Ilford already has a foothold in the Kodak-dominated US market.

"There are definite



*Head of Marketing
Dr Albin Knecht:
"We are now
offering
professional
photographers and
hobbyists a wide
range of products
and service second
to none."*

opportunities for us in Third World countries," says Dr Knecht, "particularly in films, where price, however, is a strong factor. But it is the high quality of our products and the range and service we provide which is the keynote to our operation, no matter what country.

"Three years ago 20 per cent of our marketing staff were actually in the field – now it's over 30 per cent and I want it to rise to 40 per cent. At the same time our specialisation in camera films and papers means more opportunity for pinpointing the customer's needs and ensuring he knows all

the merits and strengths of our various products."

Each Ilford salesman covers all the product ranges, whether his customers are dealers and hobbyists or industrial and commercial users. Ilfospeed photographic papers are still the group's biggest product, but the Ilford "image" is equally represented by its three principal films – FP4, the faster HP5 and now XP1, all top of their range.

Albin Knecht is naturally excited about XP1. "Black and white photography is a mature market in the industrialised countries, so when our research

department gives us not just a completely new technology but the best chromogenic monochrome film on the market, we all take a big leap forward."

Customers will also be seeing more of Ilfospeed Multigrade in the coming year – a "paper for all seasons," as Dr Knecht calls it. Low, medium and high contrast negatives can all be printed from the one box of paper.

On the colour side the Ciba-chrome Copy system will be one to watch out for, giving colour copies and enlargements direct from an original.

Another innovation is Ilford's Diaprint system, which is just being test marketed and will soon be generally available. This machine will print colour slides from positive to positive while you wait.

All of which brings Ilford a little nearer Albin Knecht's goal of providing professionals and hobbyists with a complete range of photo-sensitised systems. Like the vast majority of Ilford people, he's also a photographer himself – "but very much a hobbyist."

He even calls himself a beginner (though there is a small darkroom at home to counter that), but it could just be that he doesn't find the landscape and weather in the UK as stimulating as his native Switzerland.

The four minute print

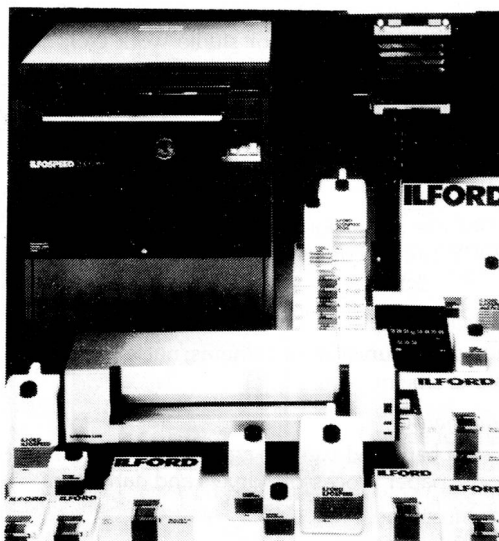
THE essence of the Ilfospeed paper systems, as the name implies, is to cut short print processing and drying times while giving the photographer the control he needs, particularly over the creative side of his work.

Ilfospeed processing takes just four minutes: one minute for development, a brief rinse, 30 seconds for fixing, a two-minute wash and finally a few seconds in one of the Ilfospeed dryers.

Within the system there are the materials to cater for all the photographer's needs. The standard Ilfospeed papers come

in four surfaces – glossy, semi-matt, silk and pearl – as well as six grades of contrast, while the newer Ilfospeed Multigrade papers offer seven steps of contrast all in the one box.

This means that negatives with high, medium or low contrast can all be processed perfectly to give prints with a variety of finishes. And using an Ilfospeed dryer, which also dries prints in a fraction of the time taken by conventional dryers and glazers, those four-minute prints always come out evenly glazed, without marks and flecks.



From essential materials to a sophisticated processor (for those who want top quality results without getting their fingers wet), the Ilfospeed system has all you need.

MOBBERLEY IS ILFORD'S RISING STAR

TO the passer-by at Ilford's Mobberley site in mid-Cheshire there is little hint of the rapid development work that has been carried out since March 1981 and which will be complete by the end of 1983.

While it's been business as usual making the emulsions for and coating and finishing Ilfospeed, Ilfobrom and other black and white photographic papers, Mobberley employees have seen the first stages of a £30 million investment project start to transform the 35 acres of Ilford land to the north of the existing site.

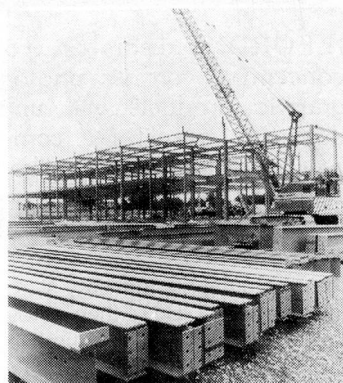
Mobberley has been making photographic goods since 1903, but the restructuring project will see it become Ilford's one manufacturing centre in the UK. Work has started on new buildings for film

production and finishing, warehousing, effluent treatment and energies, with administration offices, laboratories and engineering to follow.

The film-coating plant at the heart of the operation is just about as sophisticated and sensitive as the films it will be producing, and this will require the special attention of Ilford engineers when it is moved from Brentwood in Essex.

Thanks to careful planning, the restructuring project will not affect the supply of any of the company's photographic films or papers.

Ilford black and white papers will continue to be manufactured at Mobberley, and when film making is transferred from Brentwood in Essex in 1983, the two sites will run in parallel until Mobberley's film is right up to standard.



Work goes ahead on the film coating building.

Testing, testing

ILFORD'S photographic materials, all "top of the range" products, are the result of continuous original research and development at the group's main research centres in Warley, Essex and Fribourg, Switzerland.

Once in production, however, all of the materials are still subject to stringent quality control. Every batch of film and paper is sampled to ensure that it is free from flaws and has the correct properties of photo-sensitivity.



Here at Fribourg, the production centre of the Cibachrome colour materials, an important part of the quality control section's work is test exposing Cibachrome prints.

Recognising excellence

THIS perfect study on Ilford FP4 film won Christopher Birks two major prizes in the 1980 Ilford Photographic Awards, the principal event in the UK's professional photographic calendar.

As winner in the Portrait category and as Young Printer of the Year (a new award for under 23 year olds), Christopher shared handsomely in the £10,000 prize money and trophies presented by Lord Lichfield in London in November 1980.

There were also categories for

News, Industrial, Press Folio and General Folio, as well as major individual awards for Ilford Photographer of the Year and Ilford Printer of the Year. The independent judges for each category were drawn from leading representatives of the press and photographic media.

This year sees the reintroduction of the Sports category, bringing the total prizes up to £11,500, and the Industrial and Portrait categories will be broadened to "Commercial" and "Social."

A comprehensive range

Black and white papers

ILFOSPEED and ILFOSPEED Multigrade (resin coated papers)
ILFOBROM and ILFOBROM Galerie (conventional fibre-based papers)

Black and white films

ILFORD XP1 400 (new high speed fine grain chromogenic)
ILFORD PAN F (low speed, fine grain for studio work etc)
ILFORD FP4 (medium speed all-rounder)
ILFORD HP5 (high speed for press work etc)

Colour printing materials

CIBACHROME-A (print enlargements from transparencies for the hobbyist)
CIBACHROME II (for the professional)
CIBACHROME COPY (direct copies from original prints and transparencies)

Scientific and technical

Film for aerial cameras and surveillance cameras; nuclear emulsions; scientific plates.

Chemicals and equipment

Developers, fixers, stop bath and wetting agents for black and white films and papers; paper processors, dryers and dark room accessories.

