

# The **ESSEX**

# *Countryside*

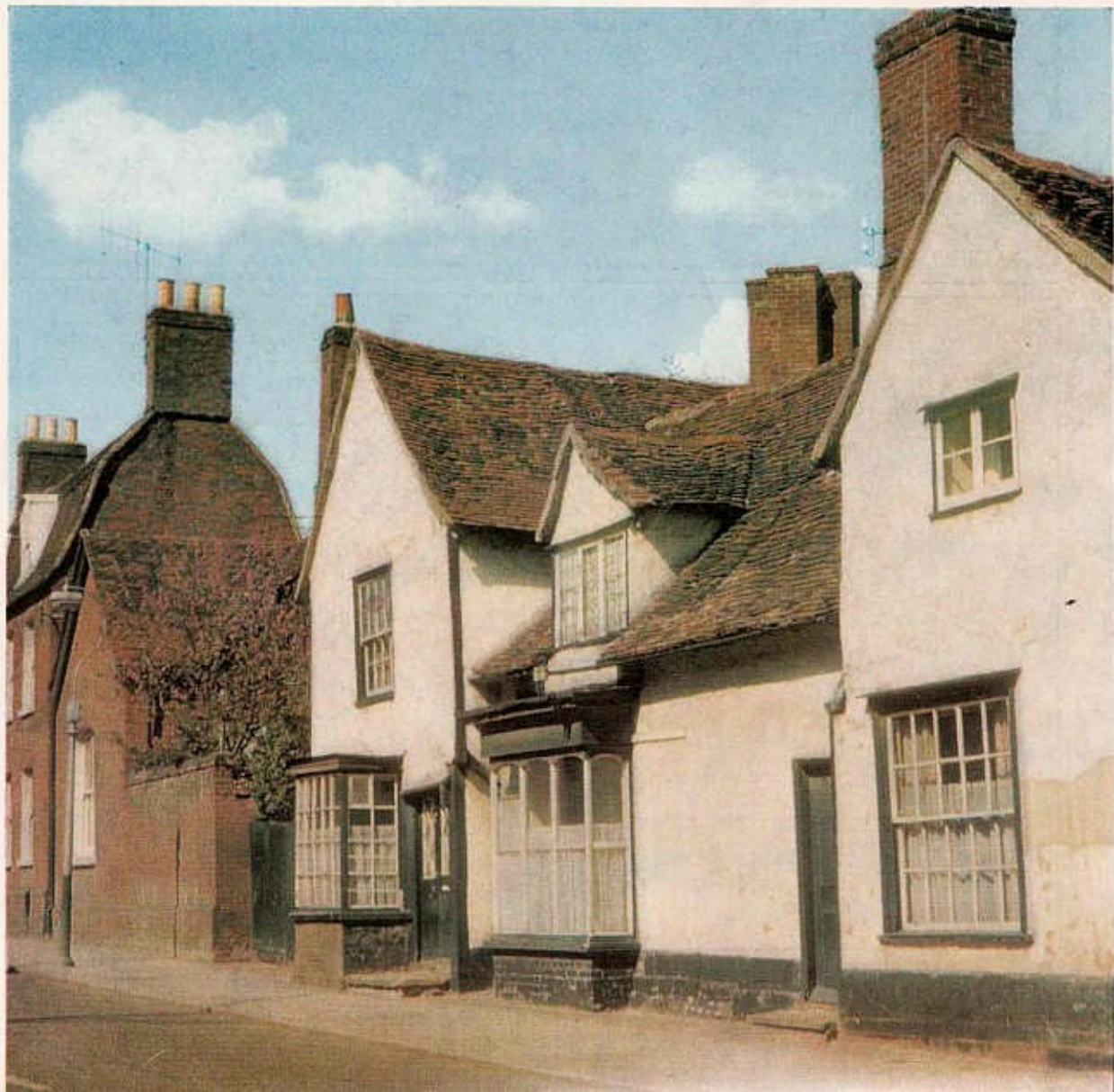


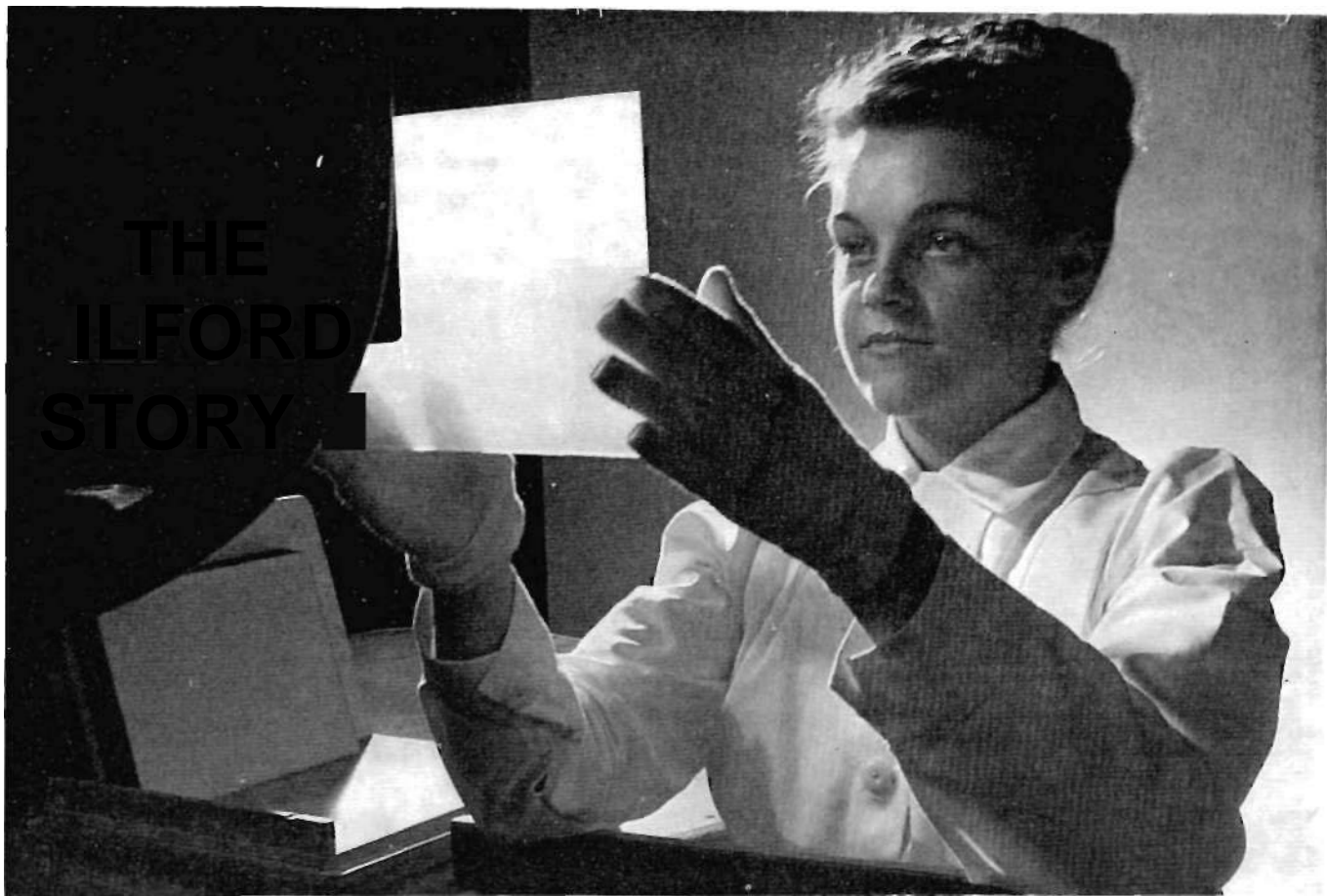
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*Examining finished plates in the dark room at Messrs. Ilford Limited.*

**T**HE story of Ilford Limited, the largest British-owned business engaged in the manufacture of photographic materials and equipment, dates back to 1879 when Alfred Harman first worked in the basement of his own house in Cranbrook Road, Ilford, manufacturing dry plates some seven years after Dr. Maddox invented the dry-plate process.

The demand for these "Ilford" plates became so great that Harman decided to set up his own selling organization, and in 1886 he established the Britannia Works Company. He soon built up a flourishing business and production had to be transferred from his own house to larger premises. These consisted of a cottage on the Clyde estate within the area occupied by the present plate factory at Ilford and a terrace of three-storied houses facing the River Roding.

In 1891 the business was converted into a private limited liability company, and in 1898 this in turn became a public company with a capital of £380,000. In 1900 the name was changed to Ilford Limited.

In the autumn of 1958 I.C.I. obtained a thirty per cent interest in Ilford Limited and at the same time concluded an arrangement whereby research information is exchanged.

Such has been the success of the enterprise since those humble beginnings that the company now employs almost 5,000 people in Great Britain alone, and produces a wide

range of products with an established reputation for quality throughout the world.

Credit for the success must go largely to the progressive outlook of the company and the excellence of its technical achievements. Research laboratories have been established at each of the company's production units, three of which are in Essex—at Ilford, Brentwood and Basildon.

The name Ilford means for many people simply a range of amateur films, cameras and materials which are known for their

quality and reliability. The name, however stands for much more, and is equally well known in the medical, industrial and scientific worlds, in addition to the administrative side of commerce and industry where document copying and reproduction systems are used.

The Ilford record in the field of nuclear research is one of which the company is justifiably proud. For a number of years Ilford was virtually the sole supplier to the western world of the special emulsions which



*Racking coated plates for drying.*

## The firm that made the name Ilford world-famous

are needed in fundamental research in nuclear physics. Nuclear emulsion is usually used in the form of a stack, layer upon layer of the emulsion without any base support being built up to form a block, which, as it travels in the atmosphere, is bombarded by cosmic particles and records their course. Such stacks, frequently weighing over 200lb. and containing as much silver as would be found in 200,000 or more roll films, have travelled by balloon, in aircraft, in the nose capsules of rockets and in satellites orbiting in outer space.

Substantial contributions towards increased safety have been made as a result of faster X-ray films manufactured by Ilford. The use of these films has meant that when people require an X-ray they are exposed to radiation for much shorter periods. The range of X-ray materials is wide and covers all medical needs in addition to industrial requirements for the detection of structural imperfections and other weaknesses in mechanical components, welded tubes and vessels, and aircraft wings and fuselages.

The established reputation of the company in the field of black-and-white films has been supported by recent large-scale marketing operations to launch three new colour films



*Above: the works manager and assistant works manager inspecting washed glass.*



during the past year : Ilfochrome 32, which produces colour transparencies ; Ilfochrome 25 double-8 cine film ; and Ilfocolor negative film, from which colour prints can be made. All of these are produced at the Ilford factory at Brentwood. The processing of these films is carried out at Basildon, where one of the largest and most complex colour processing units in the country has been established. The value of the Southend airport has not been overlooked, and daily consignments of exposed Ilford colour films are flown in from the Continent for rapid processing and return by the same route.

Determined to reduce the cost of photography, the company has achieved some remarkable price reductions by a combination of improved production techniques and increased turnover as a result of skilful marketing. Rigid inspection to ensure quality control during manufacture, and later at the processing stage, has been maintained.

Looking confidently to the future, Ilford

*Control bridge. Keeping a careful watch on the control instruments, this process worker checks solution temperatures and rates of solution flow. If they are wrong, he makes the necessary adjustments.*



*Control panel of air-conditioning plant at an Ilford factory.*

many printed boxes and cartons which the company uses are also a part of the modern £2,750,000 factory at Basildon.

Another very important project concerns the manufacture of film base. Only a few years ago virtually all the base used by British photographic manufacturers was obtained as a finished product from hard-currency countries, mainly the U.S.A. Now practically all Ilford films are coated on British-made base produced by Bexford Limited, a company jointly owned by Ilford and B.X. Plastics. At this £2,500,000 plant at Brantham village, facing Manningtree across the start of the mud flats of the Stour estuary, some of the very latest film-casting machinery has been installed. This is the only film-base manufacturing plant in the Commonwealth.

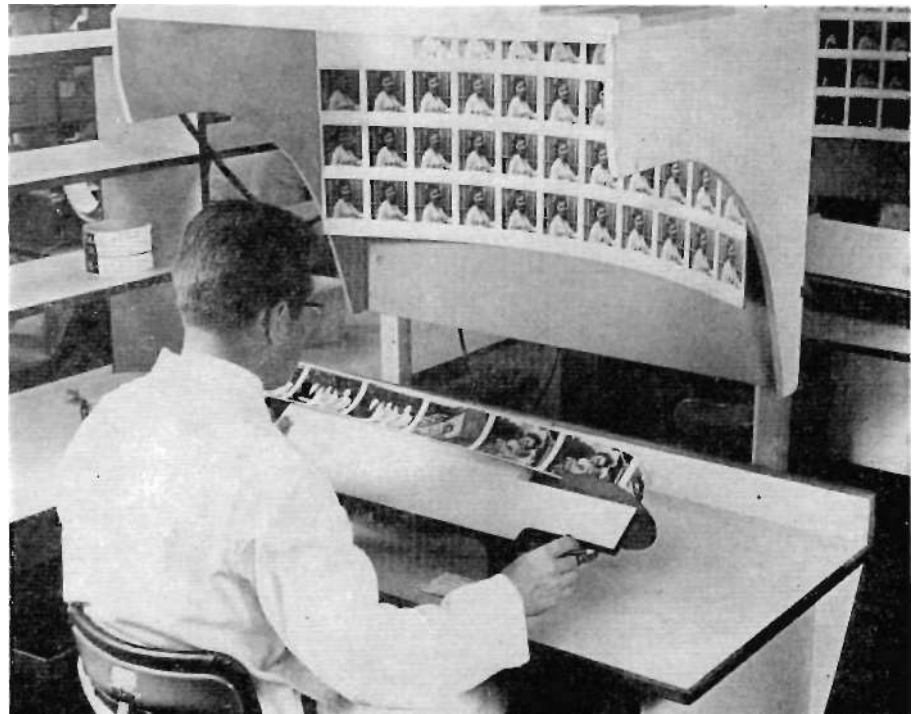
The immense programme of investment in production equipment, designed to enable the company to continue to produce products of the highest quality at competitive prices, together with the substantial research facilities essential in such a highly technical field, means that Ilford Limited are now in a stronger position than ever before to serve photography in all its branches.

From very small beginnings nearly eighty years ago, the company has grown to be one of the world's principal photographic manufacturers, with a universal reputation for the high quality and excellent performance of its products. In achieving this the many thousands of people from Essex who have served Ilford Limited so well have made a special contribution,

Limited has engaged in a major investment programme and much reorganization. Small factories located on different sites have been moved bodily and brought together to form a new production group at Basildon.

Apart from the colour processing laboratories, at Basildon will be found a new chemical packing factory for the production of packed developers, fixers and other processing chemicals on a very large scale and the establishment of an important department for the production of Azoflex material, a range of Diazotype products with a very wide application in the copying of drawings, plans and documents, both in the engineer's drawing office and in commerce. Here also is the accessories unit, which handles the production and servicing of a wide variety of ancillary equipment required in connection with photography.

A light engineering unit and a completely self-contained factory, operated by a subsidiary company, for the production of the



*Ilfocolor prints being checked for quality by an examiner who specifies any correction that may be required.*