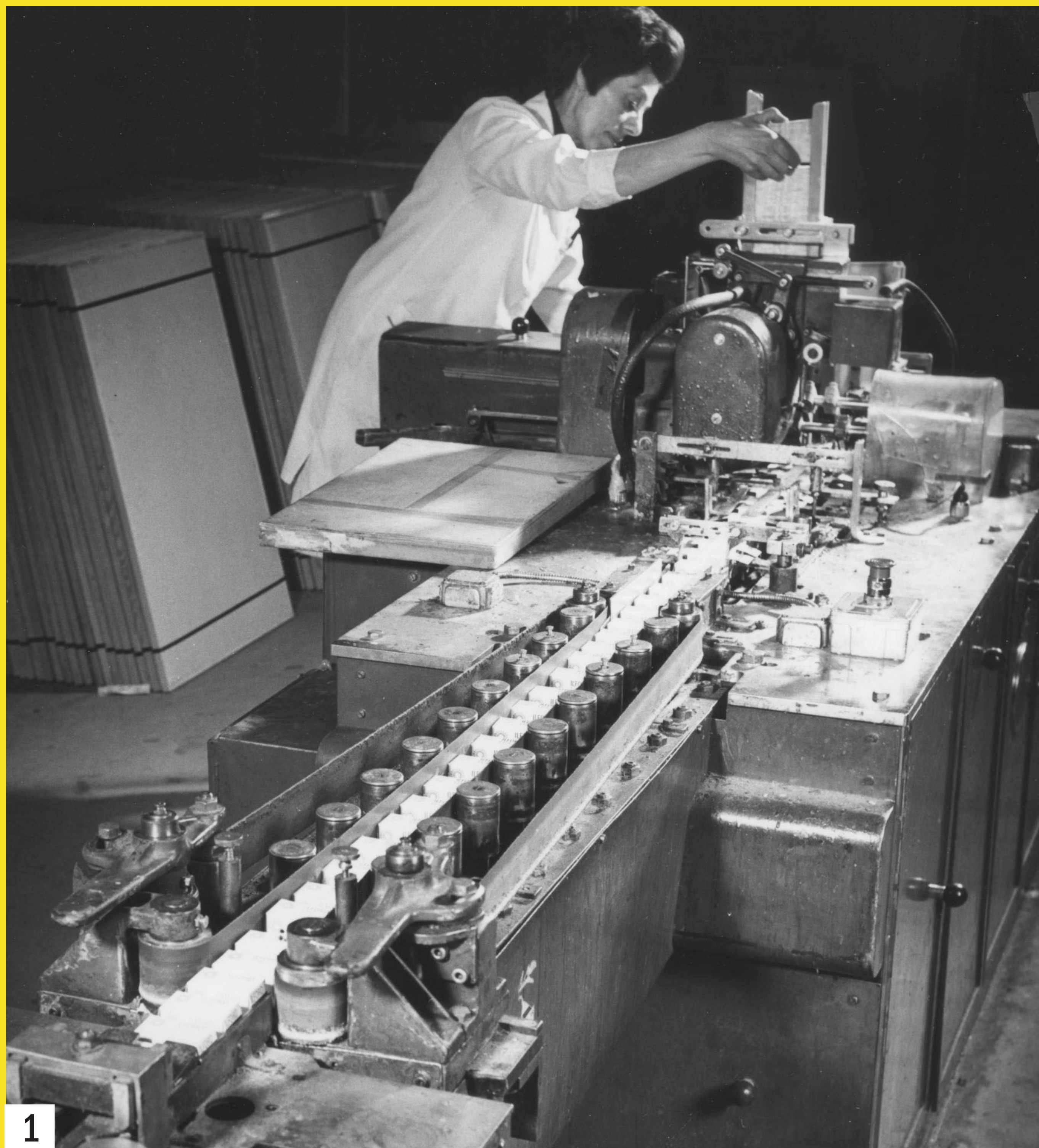


End of an Era

By the 1970s, Ilford was a heavily populated urban area which presented problems for future expansion and the production of photographic plates in a pollution free environment. Ilford Limited was an important part of the local area for 97 years but by 1974 the decision had been taken to move the company to Basildon where a new Head Office was being built.



For some employees the move offered exciting opportunities as they were consulted on the design for their new offices.

“... In '75, '74 we were busy working out what we wanted, they said ‘Do you want a studio?’ ‘Yes rather!’ So we designed the space. ‘What dark rooms do you want?’ So we could design the dark rooms we wanted, four black and white for film and four black and white for paper and x-ray dark rooms, graphic arts, microfilm, open plan offices all round, it was... it was a terrific move to the new place, yeah. Lovely building [...] this studio I had was amazing. It was in the basement [laughs] it was really, really terrific, there was a massive store room and lots of potential.” Keith Davidson



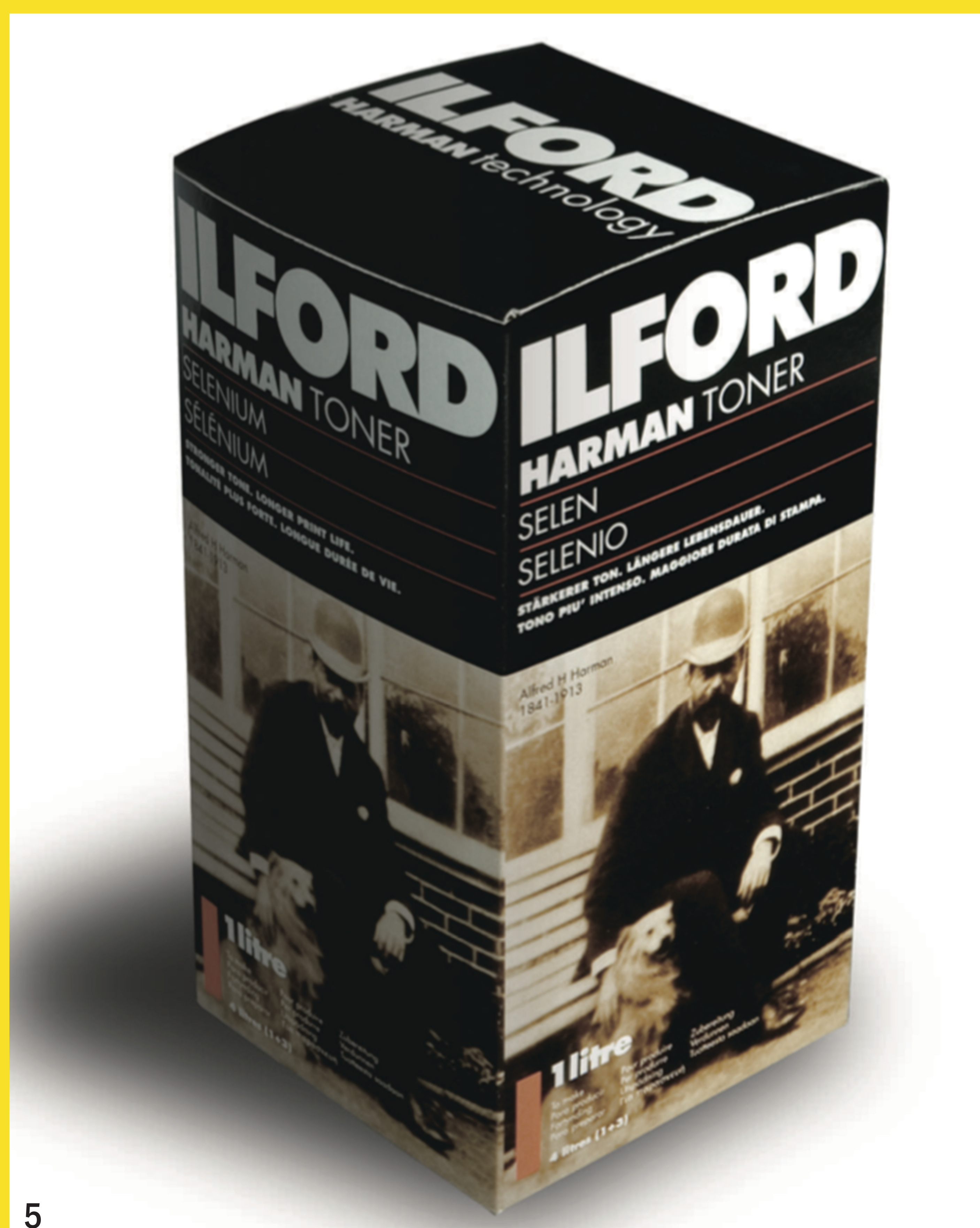
For others it signalled the end of their career at Ilford Limited.

“... I said I wouldn't mind moving into Basildon, but they gave you a choice and there was, one bedroom bungalows I think it was, one bedroom flats, but when quite a few of us went down to look, and they weren't bungalows, they were just like bedsits. And I didn't fancy that at all, so I elected to be made redundant along with loads of others.” Mary Davis



Since the closure of the Ilford site in 1976, the company has gradually downsized and is now based in Mobberley, Cheshire under the name Ilford Photo. However, for many of the former employees Roden Street in Ilford will forever be associated with the company.

“Everybody was upset about leaving the Ilford site, and I was particularly upset to see that nothing was left standing [...] Nowadays they might have kept the plate factory. It had catacombs all underneath it, you know, underground passages and things. Part of it might have been kept as a museum or something.” David Alcock



The Faces & Places

Pictures (top to bottom):

1. Decommissioning of equipment in the film spooling department, Basildon, 1976. Film spooling was already based on the Basildon site when the relocation occurred. Copyright Keith Davidson.
2. The relocation team, K. Williams, G.A. Jones, and H.R. Hug, 1974. Copyright Keith Davidson.
3. A model of the new head office at Basildon, 1973. Copyright Keith Davidson.
4. Central Technical Service team, Basildon, 1995. Copyright Keith Davidson.
5. Contemporary Ilford packaging, c.2010. Ilford Photo continue to draw inspiration from their rich heritage in Ilford. This box features the company's founder, Alfred Harman.

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