Sheet No. 10

The post war years

After the War both Odhams and Sun Engraving embarked on a period of expansion.

In 1954 Odhams built and opened No 4 building (now Mirror Colour Print; the 1930s factory is now Asda!). Around this time Odhams pioneered the use of gravure printed pages in daily newspapers; On the day of Princess Margaret’s wedding (May 1960) the Daily Herald published the first newspaper with colour pages – those pages were pre-printed at Odhams (Watford) Ltd.

During this period of expansion for Sun and Odhams, letterpress printing for catalogues and magazines was entering a terminal decline due to the introduction of off-set lithography, and a number of smaller printing businesses closed: e.g. Voss & Michael, W. J. Hill, County D & P Services, and Harold E Blower. Odhams closed its letterpress operations in the late 1960s, and Sun Engraving closed theirs in 1979.

Letterpress was in decline, but at this time new, high technology methods of producing gravure cylinders were being introduced. Sun Printers experimented unsuccessfully with laser engraving on to epoxy plastic printing surfaces. Odhams went from etched cylinders to those produced on a Helio-Klischograph electro-mechanical engraving machine.

 (Picture of Helio-Klischograph room at Odhams)