

## **Notes on the use of the former Methodist Church at 62 Nile Road, Gorleston as a photographic laboratory.**

John Slater Photography Ltd of Newmarket, Suffolk was a successful photographic business that diversified into the developing and printing trade in the 1950s. Slaters were one of the earliest photographic processors in East Anglia to offer colour processing and were offering colour processing services from the early 1960s. They took over an old Maltings in Newmarket and converted it into an extensive photographic laboratory.

In the late 1960s colour photography had become very popular with the general public but black and white materials were still very much in use. In Great Yarmouth the photographic trade was seasonal and local firms like, C A Chadwick Ltd, A&S Yallop Ltd and J Barker & Sons Ltd offered a wholesale black and white developing and printing service to local shops. Turn around times varied but some shops negotiated fast turn around times on black and white services that could vary between a 2 hour and an 8 hour service. Colour processing took longer and 24 hour turnaround times were the norm in the late 60s.

Slaters ran a daily collection and delivery service from Newmarket to Great Yarmouth for the colour services. The Newmarket laboratory ran around the clock and colour work was processed and printed overnight. However the Great Yarmouth firms could offer very speedy black and white services but Slaters could not offer the fast black and white services that the local firms could because of the extensive area they covered.

The solution was for Slaters to have a black and white laboratory in the Great Yarmouth area and they leased the old Methodist Church premises in Nile Road, Gorleston from Sidney Yallop. A previous occupant of the old church was the screen printing firm of Repro Arts. The property was extensively damaged by fire in the late 50s or early 60s. After the fire the very basic structure was rebuilt in the style of an industrial unit and no longer had the look of a church. I believe Sidney Yallop ran a small screen printing business from the Nile Road site before leasing the building to John Slater Photography. Yellow pages advertising indicates that Slaters were at Nile Road from 1970 to 1975 but I believe they actually were operating from there from 1969. By 1975 the black and white developing printing trade was in serious decline and colour was the way forward. A small satellite laboratory was no longer needed and the black and white work was then taken to Newmarket for processing and printing from this time.

When operational as a black and white developing and printing laboratory, only small part of the Nile Road unit was occupied. The interior was painted white and the floor was painted red. The equipment was fairly old and it's assumed was surplus to the requirements of the Newmarket laboratory. There was an Ilford Roll Film processor with a home made wooden drying tunnel. At least two Kenprinters and an Agfa Vaiograd enprinter. Along with a Kennington paper processor and companion glazer. The laboratory was run and managed by a former Yallop employee Alfred Stacey and his daughter Jill.

Slaters continued to dominate the developing and printing trade in East Anglia but were taken over by United Colour Laboratories in the late 70s. UCL were eventually to become part of the London International Group. LIG are better known for their Durex contraceptives. By the 1980s UCL were trading under the name ColourCare.

Today in the digital age the conventional camera and its roll of film have been consigned to history. Slater's magnificent Newmarket Maltings are now an exclusive housing development.

Paul Godfrey 2016

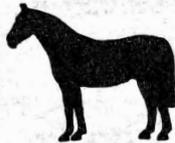
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