

It has been largely forgotten that the *Banbury Guardian* was the first newspaper in the country to print a full-colour photograph in its normal print run, produced at the Swan Close works of Papers & Publications, which were at that time in the forefront of printing technology with the first Goss web offset litho cold set presses in Britain. Many revolutionary new processes were developed and patented there, and indeed parts of the camera and plate making rooms were restricted areas to protect the highly secret processes.

I started my involvement in the printing trade at Papers & Publications at the age of eighteen as a copyholder in the reading department. Two years later I was offered and accepted an adult apprenticeship as a compositor with the company. It is a proud boast of mine that I was one of the last apprentices to be trained in hand setting with metal type at the case, and also one of the first to be trained in photo setting. I also was trained in traditional make-up techniques on the stone as well as paper make up on the light tables. As you may imagine at a time of flux in the printing trade, with old methods giving way rapidly to new techniques, looking back I feel that I was taking part in living history.

In the first instance Papers & Publications origination was by Harris Intertype hot metal typesetting machinery, with galleys of corrected type being pulled up on chromo paper to be pasted up with hot wax on the light tables. Hand set metal type and artwork blocks were also given the same treatment, whilst half-tone photographs were made into bromides in the camera room. Spot colour separations were done on overlays on the light tables and colour photographs were processed in camera.

As technology advanced it became apparent that this method of working was inefficient and time-wasting and so it was decided to try various ways of typesetting using photo setting. The first trials were with headline setting machines to replace hand setting at the case. These met with mixed success and indeed some of the equipment tested turned out to be slower than the traditional method!

Then came the first forays into computerised typesetting using an IBM computer linked to some of their daisy-wheel printers. This dispensed with one operation but did not save very much time as any corrections had to be reset and because of having to fit the measure and justification this could be a long and laborious exercise!

Meanwhile the printing and processing side of the company was rapidly expanding with the purchase of new and more technologically advanced printing presses, and the research and development of more