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COURTAULDS IN SPONDON

The Spondon site, first occupied by the British Cellulose Manufacturing Company in 1916, was built to produce cellulose acetate and acetone to waterproof the fabric covered wings of the first war fighter planes.

At the end of the war an alternative outlet was needed and development began to extrude, through fine spinnerettes, a continuous filament of cellulose acetate yarn. Its lustre drape and eventual acceptance of disperse dyes soon established this new fibre as a competitor to real silk and viscose rayon.

By 1923 the brothers Dreyfus, Henry and Camille, renamed the company British Celanese under which name it traded until 1982. Courtaulds Acetate then continued this business as part of Courtaulds plc. The site initially converted cotton linters to cellulose acetate. Woodpulp from farmed softwood has now largely replaced cotton as the raw material.

First to develop on the site was the textile business in the 1920s, the site employing 8,000 by 1927. The extrusion of the yarn was soon followed by twisting and warping operations and by weaving, knitting, dyeing and printing. The name "Celanese" became synonymous with lustrous, draping fabrics for lingerie and outerwear.

In the late 1930s an acetate film business was developed for packaging, protection of record sleeves, sheet film, moulding compounds and patterned sheet for spectacle frames. At this time the employees totalled 18,000.

The most recent development in the 1950s was the development and production of acetate filter tow used in the manufacture of filters for the world tobacco industry. This has been a continuously expanding part of our business.

Reorganisation of Courtaulds Acetate in 1987 aligned to market requirements resulted in the setting up of four business units.

Courtaulds Cellulose Flake produces the basic cellulose acetate for the other businesses and for worldwide export to manufacture textiles, plastics and photographic film. Dexel moulding compound is used to produce tool handles, toothbrushes, combs etc.

Courtaulds Speciality Plastics produces Clarifoil acetate film for the packaging and print industries. More recent innovations have included Integuard, a tamper evident seal and film for holograms. 1990 saw the Queen's Award for Export and 1991 BS5750/ISO 9002 quality registration.

Please note that all export sales are made through Courtaulds Exports Ltd.

Courtaulds Chemicals (Holdings) Ltd
Registered In London Number 217201
Registered Office 50 George Street
London W1A 2BB

Courtaulds Filter Tow. The filter tow meets the high standards demanded by the world's tobacco industry for filter materials and has achieved BS 5750/ISO 9002 quality registration.

Courtaulds Filament Yarns produces Dixel and Tricel for knitting and weaving into a variety of fabrics from high fashion to linings. Acetate taffeta is used for surgical plasters and post operative wound dressing, acetate fabrics are the main base for garment labels. This business is now part of an Anglo-Italian company, Novaceta, which is 50 per cent owned by Courtaulds.

At the beginning of 1992, Courtaulds Acetate was merged with Courtaulds Fine Chemicals and adopted the name Courtaulds Chemicals.

The Fine Chemicals section of the business manufactures fire retardants and chemical products for a wide range of industries including food, pharmaceuticals, oil and textiles.

It has manufacturing bases at Spondon and three other sites in the UK.

DETAIL

The site in 1992 occupies 360 acres, the largest Courtaulds site, employs 2,000 people and is the third largest employer in the Derby area. There are 50 independent companies utilising buildings on site. The site is self-sufficient for power and steam. Upto 45 million gallons a day of water for cooling and process are extracted from the River Derwent on our boundary.

The site has modern training facilities, has an Open Learning Centre, medical care, occupational health, fire, security and catering facilities. The transport fleet travels up to 1 million miles per year.

We take our good neighbour policy seriously, organising open days, site visits and school links in line with national curriculum requirements. The site has a 26 acre nature reserve with lakes, woodland and bird observation hides to which employees' families and school parties are regular visitors.

Courtaulds have been sponsors of many local events particularly for young people and with Derby City Council are the major sponsors of Project Riverlife a five year programme to achieve the economic and environmental regeneration of the River Derwent South of Derby.

The amount of capital investment has grown considerably in recent years to improve efficiency, to expand and improve product quality. We have a major cogeneration of heat and power project under consideration at the present time.

We are also looking to the development of unwanted land for the provision of a business park. The investment in environmental protection has increased three-fold in response to the needs of current legislation.