

Factory Communications Ltd

The Museum holds part of the archive of Factory Communications Ltd. The archive includes financial records, Hacienda guest lists, business correspondence, posters, videos and original artwork for record sleeves.

On 24 January 1978, local television journalist Anthony H. Wilson and his friend, the actor Alan Erasmus, founded "The Movement of the 24th of January" for the purpose of managing and promoting local bands. Wilson had previously used his late night music programme *So It Goes* to promote new music. The pair's first signing was The Durutti Column, a band which was formed around guitarist Vini Reilly.

Later in 1978, Wilson and Erasmus organised a Friday night event at The Russell Club in Hulme, Manchester, which they named The Factory. The night was similar in spirit to the punk clubs Wilson had visited in 1976 and 1977. The poster for the first event was designed by Peter Saville, then still a student. Although the poster was not ready in time to be used on the night it was recognised as the first Factory product, gaining the Factory catalogue number FAC 1. Saville later became a director of Factory, as did music producer Martin Hannett.



Factory Records Logo

The club night was a success and led to the release in January 1979 of the *Factory Sampler* double 7" EP (FAC 2). This EP marked the beginnings of Factory as a record label and featured bands such as The Durutti Column, Cabaret Voltaire and Joy Division. Factory was established as a record company with this release and set up its headquarters in Erasmus' flat on Palatine Road, Didsbury. It remained there until it was relocated to Manchester city centre in 1990.

In May 1980 Factory released its first major recording, Joy Division's *Unknown Pleasures* album. Joy Division's manager, Rob Gretton, became the company's fifth partner shortly afterwards. Ian Curtis, the singer in Joy Division, was found dead after committing suicide in May 1980. Joy Division was on the verge of international success. A second album, *Closer*, was released and the remaining band members decided to continue recording and performing under the name New Order. They were joined by keyboard player Gillian Gilbert. Their first album under this name was *Movement*, released in 1981.

In around 1981, ideas for a Factory venue emerged. The Factory Club had opened for a final series of Friday night gigs during April 1980. The name chosen for the new venue was the Hacienda and the Factory catalogue number was FAC 51. FAC 51 Ltd was created to manage the business side of the venture. A disused yacht showroom on

Whitworth Street, near the city centre, was acquired as club premises. The interior of the club was designed by award-winning designer Ben Kelly. The club was the cause of friction with Martin Hannett, who resigned as a Director, followed by Peter Saville shortly afterwards.



Original membership card for the Hacienda

The club opened for business in May 1982, opening seven nights a week. Attendance was initially poor, but the move into dance music, particularly Chicago House, and the success of New Order's 'Blue Monday' 12" single gradually increased the club's popularity. Monday nights were band nights, and performers included The Stone Roses, Primal Scream, The Fall,

Madonna and Happy Mondays. Other successes included the introduction of house DJs (Mike Pickering and Graeme Park) and themed club nights, such as Shine, Zumber, Nude and The Void. By 1988, the Hacienda was the biggest club in Britain.

Club culture was based less around alcohol as a stimulant and more around drugs such as Ecstasy. Local gangs moved in on the Hacienda, and a culture of violence developed. Factory fought and won against an attempt by Greater Manchester Police to have the club's licence revoked in 1990. However, the continued gang presence and violence at the club forced its closure in early 1991.

In April 1991, Martin Hannett died. During the same month, Peter Saville announced that he would no longer design for Factory except for the occasional New Order sleeve. In May 1991, the Hacienda re-opened with a new interior and added security aimed at tackling the gang problem. News leaked to the press in September 1991 that Factory was in financial trouble. Mute, London and Warner Brothers record labels all made unsuccessful bids to take over Factory Communications.

In May 1992, the Hacienda was opened to celebrate its 10th birthday. Six months later the Happy Mondays' single 'Sunshine and Love' was released - the last Factory recording. The Company went into receivership on 23 November, £2 million in debt. After the bankruptcy declaration, London Records took over existing band contracts and ownership of the entire Factory back catalogue, except New Order's catalogue. Rob Gretton and New Order's company, Gainwest, took over the running of the Hacienda.

For more information:

- Read** Mick Middles, *From Joy Division to New Order*. London: Virgin Books, 1996.
Jon Savage [ed], *The Hacienda Must Be Built*. London: International Music Publications, 1992.
- Study** 1999.16 Factory Communications Ltd archive, MSIM
- Visit** <http://home.dialix.com/~u3336/factory/index2.html>