

Marking the establishment of Lapp's first very own cable factory fifty years ago

Lapp celebrates the 50th anniversary of cable factory

Stuttgart, 27 September 2013

Oskar Lapp (1921-1987) was not only an ingenious inventor, but he was also a passionate entrepreneur: he developed the first industrially manufactured control cable with coloured cores and, with the support of his wife Ursula Ida, he ensured that within a very short space of time his new product became absolutely indispensable in the mechanical engineering and plant construction industry. Ground-breaking was also the idea to give the invention the brand name ÖLFLEX® – a name which is internationally synonymous for connection and control cables still today.

In fact, it could be said that Ursula Ida and Oskar Lapp made history. In 1963, just four years after the establishment of U.I. Lapp KG, they started their first own production plant and, in doing so, laid the foundation for the globally successful family business it is today.

The Stuttgart-based Lapp Group celebrated the 50th anniversary of Lapp GmbH Kabelwerke on 27 September together with employees, family members, numerous other guests. In addition to guided tours around the cable factories, there were also a number of opportunities for children to experience the cable factory in a playful way. "We wanted to have a family celebration. Ultimately, a sense of family is also one of our most important family values even today," explains Member of the Board Siegbert E. Lapp.

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The early 1960s were characterised by a spirit of optimism and rapid growth. After the ÖLFLEX® connection and control cables had been manufactured by a company in Wuppertal (Germany) on behalf of Lapp, Ursula Ida and Oskar Lapp set up the cable factory in 1963 in a rented hall on Galileistraße, Stuttgart. In 1965, the firm U.I. Lapp KG moved from the family's residential building to where they are located today in the Stuttgart-Vaihingen industrial area. In those days, the company already had 30 employees working for them. "My parents built on green land. Back then, we were the pioneers in today's industrial area Stuttgart-Vaihingen," remembers Member of the Board Siegbert E. Lapp. A short time later, cable production was moved from Galileistraße to their own building on Breitwiesenstraße, which was situated directly behind the company's headquarters.

Encouraged by the healthy development they saw, the family of entrepreneurs opted to construct a new cable factory, which was opened in 1983, on what used to be called Gewerbestraße (now Oskar-Lapp-Straße), directly opposite the company's headquarters. The production plant measures around 7,000 square metres, of which 5,500 square metres are purely production areas. Soon after, Contact GmbH moved into the top floor of the building, which was originally used as a parking level. Contact GmbH is a Lapp Group company, which specialises in the manufacture of industrial connectors. Lapp Systems GmbH, which manufactures custom-made cable and piping systems, was also housed in the same building.

In the cable factory alone, 120 people are employed today – 90 in production and 30 in administration. Approximately 15,000 kilometres of cable are produced there every year using modern machinery. This almost equates to the distance between Stuttgart and Beijing and back. In Stuttgart, cables are specially manufactured to meet customers' individual requirements. High-volume products with production lengths of up to 100 kilometres roll off the production lines in Forbach, France.

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However, innovations and process optimisations are also first developed, tested and implemented in the Stuttgart cable factory. This is why the building also houses high-performance test facilities. There, forces up to five times the gravitational acceleration can be simulated and multiple million bending cycles can be run in a cable carrier for the cable to be tested.

Today, the Lapp Group operates a further 16 production sites around the globe in addition to their cable factory in Stuttgart.



Ursula Ida and Oskar Lapp lay the foundations for today's Lapp cable factory building in Oskar-Lapp-Straße 5

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Today the Stuttgart cable factory produces mainly to customers' individual requirements

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About the Lapp Group:

Headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, the Lapp Group is a leading supplier of integrated wire, cabling and connector products and solutions. Its offering includes electrical and fibre optic cables, industrial plug-in and screw connectors, cabling solutions, automation technology and technical accessories. Lapp Group's core markets are in the mechanical and plant engineering and electronics manufacturing sectors, with rapid market expansion in the renewable energy, mobility and life science industries.

Lapp Group has remained in continuous family ownership since it was founded in 1959. In the 2011/12 financial year, it recorded total consolidated sales of 860 million euros. It employs some 3,150 people, operates 17 production sites and 41 sales companies and cooperates with approximately 100 national partners worldwide.

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