

## McGeorges

In the Kirkcudbright Postal Directory of 1921-22, it identifies a Billisons Glove Factory in the Tolbooth, with a Miss Anderson as Manager.

The next we hear of the factory is in 1946 when a small grain store was rented from Mr Hastings by McGeorges, Dumfries. In these days glove making was taught by Miss Gould with a mechanic John Glover making a weekly visit from Dumfries. Although the gloves were knitted in the factory the fingers were often finished off by homeworkers. In the early years of intarsia Argyle half hose were produced and there is an advertisement for the “Kirkcudbright Stocking” in the Museum. The popularity of this design led to special request orders including one from the Duke of Windsor for 15 pairs, designed by him.



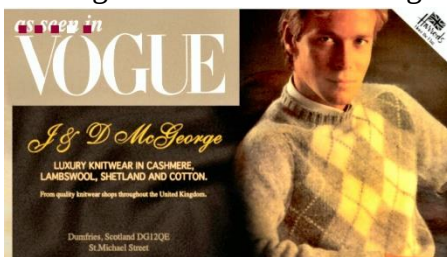
Working hours were hard as the girls worked from 8.00am – 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and 8.00am to 12.30pm on a Saturday. These hours changed over the years. Many of the girls worked straight from school, finishing at the Academy on Friday and starting in the factory on the Monday. At that point there were approximately 25 machines. Each girl was given a bag with wool and the pattern she had to work from that week. They were paid by piecework.

The complicated intarsia work was done in Kirkcudbright with the garment being completed in Dumfries. When there was a new pattern the designer would come down and watch this being knitted so that it could be costed. Once the garment was completed, it was brought back down to Kirkcudbright for the girls to see the final article.

About 1968 McGeorges was taken over by Joseph Dawson Holdings and a year later was relocated to a new building behind Victoria Place on Dee Walk, with approximately 40 machines



The intarsia work, which was now produced, was very popular and the firm supplied high quality retailers such as Pringles and Harrods. Some girls were sent down to demonstrate their work in Harrods.



The intarsia patterns became more complicated over the years. Some of the former workers remember working on designs of golfers with their bag and also The Clubhouse at St Andrews. “They were like pictures when we finished them” one said.



Avril McTaggart winding yarn



Nora O'Grady (Supervisor) and Cathie Wilson



Debbie Shorland at a 12 needle machine

Once they had a family many of the girls were given a machine so they could work from home, the bags with their weekly allocation being brought by Jimmy Farrell.

All former employees say there was a good working relationship with the management and a good working atmosphere. They sang to the wireless and when a girl was getting married she was walked round the town with a hand bell being rung. The manager in the Mill was Alice McMillan followed by Nora O'Grady and then Sandra Ceary before the factory closed in 1991 due to competition from China and Japan.

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