



About the project

Langholm Made sought to explore and celebrate ‘making’ past and present in Langholm — a town with a rich textile history that remains vibrant in craft and making today. For Langholm Made, artist and filmmaker Emma Dove collected stories and memories of the weaving industry, whilst maker Deirdre Nelson explored ‘making’ in Langholm in its widest sense.

Making Connections

Langholm Made formed part of a wider project entitled Making Connections, initiated by Upland with local partner organisations, The Langholm Initiative and OutPost Arts, to enable artists and makers to explore and highlight Langholm’s rich history and heritage in textile manufacture. Making Connections consisted of two artist residencies, undertaken by Dumfries & Galloway based artist Emma Dove and Glasgow based maker Deirdre Nelson, and a schools project led by Kirkcudbright-based textile artist Morag Macpherson.

About these booklets

For Langholm Made, Emma Dove recorded conversations with a number of local people who contributed stories and memories relating to the textile heritage of Langholm. This booklet is one of a set of seven, each containing a printed conversation transcript, existing as a way to capture and share the personal reflections and memories which celebrate a unique heritage, deeply embedded in people and place.

About the text

The conversations in these booklets have been transcribed using the ‘clean transcript’ standard, whereby ‘fillers’ (such as ‘um’) and repetitions are mostly edited out so as not to distract from the main content. However an effort has been made to try and keep as much of the natural flow of conversation as possible within the text. Any spelling or formatting relating to dialect has been transcribed as true to the spoken word as possible. Use of dialect words vary throughout each conversation (so for example the word ‘you’ might be spelled ‘you’, ‘ee’ or ‘yow’ at different points within one transcript). Spelling and formatting choices have been made at the discretion of the transcriber in each instance.

The start and end of some transcripts — as well as some short sections within the conversations — have been edited out when considered to be informal pre-amble, post-amble, or an unrelated tangent to the main conversation. In a very small number of instances, a word, phrase or sentence has also been retracted from a transcript if considered that it could cause unnecessary offence.

Glossary of Langholm dialect

a — I	ken — know	deef — deaf	faither / fither — father
mie — me	ee ken — you know	auld — old	freen — friend
ee / yow — you	ken't — knew	cald — cold	mucker — pal
hie — he	tell't — told	sair — sore	fook — folk
oor — our	ca' / caw — call	deid — dead	weemin — women
yir — your	ca'd / cawd — called	yince — once	booyee — boy
oo — we / us	ta'en — taken	ony — any	lassie — girl
ain — own	siee — see	nane — none	naebody — nobody
whee — who	gie — give	maest — most	thegither — together
yin — one	git — get	mair — more	maitter — matter
twee — two	mind / min' — remember	aw / a' — all	toon — town
thrice — three	cairry — carry	ae — always	heed — head
fower — four	hing — hang	wie — wee	hair — heart
twal — twelve	scoorin' — scouring	sic — such	han' — hand
hunners — hundreds	skelped — hit	stert — start	mooth — mouth
thoosand — thousand	dae / div — do	afore / afoor — before	moothfa — mouthful
nae — no	dae ken — don't know	after — after	soon — sound
aye — yes	dinna / daen't / divn't — don't	doon — done	threid — thread
an — and	didnae — didn't	lang — long	yairn — yarn
o' — of	disn't — doesn't	a'hint — behind	patren — pattern
eet — it	canna — can't	ower — over	coorse — coarse
tae / 'ae / 'a — to	couldnae — couldn't	wi' — with	claiths — clothes
fra — from	wid — would	forra — forward	dookie — swimsuit
fir — for	widnae — wouldn't	throw — through	caird — card
joost / jist — just	wouldae — would have	roon — round	barra — wheelbarrow
dae — do	wasnae / wan — wasn't	fer — far	reid — red
daein / dain — doing	werena — weren't	aff — off	cairt — cart
ga — go	wunna — won't	oot — out	pert — part
gan — go / going	hadnae — hadn't	doon — down	wa' — wall
hev — have	shaire — sure	affa — awfully / a lot	flair — floor
hed — had	wrang — wrong	oor — hour	hoose — house
teeke — take	feart — afraid	pun' — pound	tiee — tea
meeke — make	weel — well	mam — mum	breid — bread

Ann Hislop and Margaret Wilson

Recorded online, 20 May 2021

SPEAKERS

*Ann Hislop, Margaret (Mag) Wilson,
Judith Johnson, Emma Dove*

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|------------|---|
| Emma Dove | I guess just to get the ball rolling, I'd like to know, how did each of you both first come to work in the textile industry in Langholm? |
| Mag Wilson | Probably because there was nothing else at the time. That was the only thing that was really here in the toon. Ken, there was five or six — |
| Ann Hislop | Mills. |
| MW | — mills at the time, wasn't there? And we obviously picked the posher one than the rest. So... |
| AH | Mmhmm. In them days I mean, like Mag said, there was five mills. And it was really — well I picked Reid & Taylor's 'cause it was nearer my home to walk to. |
| MW | And I picked Reid & Taylor's, I think, because my mother worked there and my sister. |
| ED | Okay, yeah I was gonna ask, was there generations before you that were working in the mills? |
| AH | Yes. |
| MW | Aye, aye. |

ED And you say 'picked'. So it sounds as though it was fairly easy to get jobs in the places that you wanted to work?

AH Oh it was, mmhmm.

MW Oh aye. There was that many mills in the toon, there seemed to be jobs everywhere at the time, didn't there?

AH Mmhmm, jobs were ten a penny.

MW Aye.

AH And when we left school, there was five of us started oor apprenticeships at the same time. And maybe five in the summer had started. So I mean, there was plenty, plenty work.

MW Oh aye. Aye.

AH Overtime and shift work.

MW Oh aye. It was right across the board.

ED So if you wanted a job, it was there for you, pretty much?

AH It was there, certainly.

MW Yep. And that — I think that was just about in any mill to be quite honest.

AH Mmhmm. In them days, people came fra Newcastleton and Canonbie.

MW Longtown.

AH Aye, as far as Longtown.

MW Aye, 'cause we had freens in the mill throughout the year an that as well.

AH The mill had a van and the man would gan oot in the mornin' and bring the workers in and take them hame at night an... It was just so different, an you never thought — you always thought it was a job for life. And I think for the men, it was a job for life.

MW Aye.

AH And the women, well, I chose the darnin' because a thought if a ever got married and had a family, it was work ee could do in the house. That was how ee thought then.

MW And that's actually what did happen to me. A was in there, I got married, pregnant — and then they used to bring the pieces home. And even although a had a kid running aboot, I still had 70 yards — which was a lotta tweed — in my living room on one o' their great big tables. And that's the way we had tae work 'cause we

MW cont. needed the money.

AH Mmhmm.

MW Oh God, that makes us feel auld!

AH A know, aye. My wee boy used to get underneath the piece and play and...

MW Aye! They had the Lego underneath the pieces. My yins used tae use it as a tent at lunch time!

ED Undoing your hard work though?!

MW Oh it was hard work.

AH It was aye, but it meant ee could work and no pay childcare or anything. It was there for ee, aye it was handy. And then the man would come and take the piece away and then bring another one.

MW Bring another yin, aye. And ee always had a wage at the end o' the week. Because really when oor kids were wee there was nae creches or anything like that [phone rings] — sorry — em, ee'd joost tae get on wi' it. Ken, so... And of coorse, well, a like nice things so — but no only that, I needed the money anyway. Ken, 'cause the money wasnae that great, you ken. It's no like nowadays a daen't think, ken, so...

AH No.

ED Did you carry on in that way then, working from home? Or did you go back at a certain point?

MW Well, yince mine went tae the school, a went back. A left just no long after ee were there?

AH Mmhmm, aye. Aye a went back when my boys were old enough — a went back tae work, aye, back intae the mill. But that was towards, just, nearing the end o' the mill then. You know, the work just wasnae as plentiful an you knew then that things were comin' tae an end.

MW Aye. I think when it got that it wasnae as plentiful, I think that's when I moved on?

AH Mmhmm, aye.

MW And a just happened tae work in a little cafe — a little local cafe in the toon — Pelosi's. A worked there in ma spare time at weekends an everything. So a job come up through the day an a thought well, I'll just take that now because the mill might no be there much longer. And — 'cause as I say, the work was stertin' tae fritter, fritter doon at that point, aye.

ED I was gonna just go back to when you first started if that's okay? And you said that you both started on apprenticeships, and I was wondering what sort of training did you go through when you first started the job? Or was it just learning as you went?

AH We started off — the darnin', you were given a piece o' canvas, you know, open mesh canvas, and you worked your stitches in that wi' different coloured threads. And ee sort o' worked on that and ee would learn how'a repair holes and things like that. And then ee would be brought onto a piece — you know, we talk about a piece — that's a length o' tweed.

MW The 75 yards.

AH 75 yards o' tweed. And ee would work on that. And then somebody would check your work, you know, and then you would — you would learn that way, you would learn from your mistakes. So your work was always checked over.

MW And it was very, very easy'a make a mistake.

AH Yes.

MW Very easy — ee hed tae have really good eyesight, ken, aye.

AH And Reid & Taylor's was a very — they were very fussy in their work. Your work had to be precise and accurate.

MW Well, in that... When we were there we were sorta workin' a lot for Norman, Norman Hartnell? Is that right?

AH Mmhmm. Aye.

MW Which is a famous, eh...

AH Designer, clothes designer, aye.

MW Designer in London, aye. There was a lot of stuff for him. And a lot for the Japanese.

AH And Germany.

MW A lot, aye — [phone rings] — [answers] A'm no in... Edit! Cut! [laughs]

AH An a mean the work, it was — I mean, ee could've maybe a wrong thread running right through the length o' that piece. And maybe an ordinary, you know, person wouldnae see that — but we were trained to look for that, and it had tae be repaired. So that thread had tae be taken right out and re-darned right through that piece.

MW 75 yards.

AH An a mean 75 yards... An it might've even went in — pieces in the loom, ee never got one, ee maybe got another one, another one, and it would go right through those pieces.

MW Aye, you could have three 75 yard pieces.

AH Mmhmm. And as we used to say — a blind man on a galloping horse wouldnae have seen it, but it had to be repaired.

Judith Johnson [laughs]

MW Mmhmm.

AH The work was very precise.

MW An a can remember one day a got this — it was black cloth, and it had scotty dogs on it in silver, and one o' the dog's legs [laughs] — it's leg wasnae right, so it had to be fixed. An a can remember a was actually cryin' tryin'ae get this right. And ma boss wouldnae let us give it tae anybody else 'cause they said I could do it...

AH Mmhmm.

MW But when the boss went away I got Molly Foster tae come and dae it [laughs], when

naebody else was lookin'.

AH But the apprenticeship, I mean, it'd be gan on for what, 18 months?

MW No, did we no dae thrie years?

AH Well, 18 months — ee got so much o' yir pay taken off ee, until ee went through the different sort o' phases, you know, and then... And how ee passed your test was they would give you a hole, and you had to repair the hole.

MW [laughs] Give ee a hole...

AH Well ee'd tae repair a hole. And that was sort o' you sayin' now that you were a qualified darner.

MW And that hole could be like the size o' your thumbnail. And we're talking aboot maybe 30 strings across, 30 doon the side. It was a big, big deal and it had to be exact.

AH It had tae be right, aye.

MW Or that was it. One wrong thing and you didnae pass, so...

AH I think girls before us, they used tae gan up tae the college at Galashiels —

MW That's right.

AH — and have a week's sorta intense work up there. But that really stopped before we started.

MW That's right.

AH Aw the training was done in the mill by another experienced darner. Aye. But I mean, in that time we had fun really.

MW Oh my god...

AH It's the fun times that we remember. I mean fun was just...

MW It was unbelievable.

AH The traditions and everything, you know.

MW And a was in Mr. Packer's office! [laughter]

AH On the carpet...!

MW On the carpet [laughing], because a boy was on top of me!

AH [laughing] That'll get edited!

ED It sounds though, as though it's such a precise task, that you kind of have to have fun to counteract how precise the work is? Like you need some kind of...

MW I think ee needed a laugh.

AH The boredom and aye, the everyday sort o' —

MW Monotony.

AH Aye — of it. It took, a think it took a lot to dae really. I mean, ee had to be that kind o' person, I think, or ee would never've stuck it. Aye.

MW And your head was down from eight o'clock to half past 12, half past one to five o'clock. And yes, they were strict, but they werenae unbelievably strict. But if you were away fra your table and yin o' the bosses says 'Eh, what are you doin?'

AH Mmhmm.

MW Ken, ee couldnae say 'Aw am chattin' tae ma pal here', ken? Ee had tae be there for a reason.

AH We worked on time and motion. So you know, oor pay was sorta gauged, you know, the more work ee did, the more pay ee got.

ED And you obviously had to keep up with the amount of stuff that's coming through?

AH Yes, certainly aye.

MW And there was a lot o' visitors come through oor shed as well — we caw'd it oor shed, didn't we? There was a lot o' visitors used tae come through oor shed, and they could stop at your table and you had to darn in front o' them. Was maestly Japanese, wasn't eet?

AH Mmhmm, Japanese visitors aye.

MW Aye, a had a few laughs wi' them... A was readin' a magazine yince. A was told they were comin', and a was ready wi' this special bit o' cloth — ready for them comin'. And the boss shouted 'aw they're running late, they're running late' — but a wasnae allowed tae touch this piece o' cloth until they came. So the next thing — a think a was readin' The Jackie? The Jackie, it was a magazine, because a'd nowt else tae dae at that point. And then aw of a sudden, these twee little faces come ower the top o' the table and took pictures of us, and here a was sittin' readin' The Jackie! So a threw ma magazine underneath the piece and just started darnin' the hole [laughs].

AH And then of course, we — the pieces were greasy, as we talked aboot, you know. And after we'd done oor work, they were taken away an scoored — that's like washed and dried — and then brought back again to the darner as clean pieces. And we still had another — we'd tae

check them over again. So there was a lot o' work went intae the pieces, you know.

MW Oh aye, before they got oot o' the mills.

AH Aye certainly. We would check them ower. Somebody else wid check them over after us, and then they got to the ware room and they were gan through their different processes — they were checked again.

MW There would be six to eight checks maybe on every piece.

AH That was the perfection you were aiming at. Certainly.

ED It sounds as though it was always a very manual job. And I'm just wondering, the role that you were doing as darners, would that have been much the same as previous generations? Were there any changes, or were you still using the same kind of tools?

AH Yeah, same tools.

MW And the funny thing is we had what we caw'd pickers. And they were like what you would use for your eyebrows now. Eh — a couldnae use Ann's pickers, and Ann probably couldnae use mine.

AH No, mmhmm. You knew them.

MW You got used tae your ain, you knew your ain. Ee could be blindfolded an they could put 10 pairs of pickers, and 10 — well the scissors were the same.

AH Aye, you picked them up, you knew they were your scissors, aye, by the feel o' them.

MW Aye, it was that precise a thing.

ED That's interesting. You kind of had a relationship with your own tools.

AH Wi' your tools, ee did certainly, aye.

MW Ee did, ee did. And we used to wear a thing on oor finger here, em, what did ee caw eet again?

AH We cawd it oor fing'er.

MW Oh aye it wis cawd a fing'er, that's right. And it was actually a piece o' canvas that we had to put on this finger here [points to right index finger], just at the bottom, to help the needle go through. Or ee wouldae ended up wi' a hole in your finger. Aye, it was cawd a finger.

AH Some o' them were made oot o' leather, and it was the way you held your needle,

you know, and worked eet along. And like Mag said it would press intae your finger. So that's what you had to wear. Now every — and people wore them as well, made the same way ower the generations.

MW Or ee would just cut a piece o' the cloth and ee made it yourself. And if ee lost your finger, you couldnae do any mare work until ee made a new one. Because that was yours.

AH That was yours, aye, that's right.

ED Just the right fit for your own hand?

MW Aye. Oh aye, you ken't your ain tools.

ED And what did you call that?

MW That was — it was called a finger.

AH We cawd it oor finger.

ED A finger, ok.

MW A finger, aye. Amazing when ee think about it.

AH Ken, aye.

ED And was there anything that changed in the job day to day, or was it kind of the same thing every day, you were doing

ED cont.	the same tasks?	MW	Mare sensible yins thegither, aye. And if we got chose for eet, we were wi' a more sensible person than us. 'Cause we were kinda a bit of a... We liked a laugh.
MW	Well, ee got, ee got different pieces. Once ee'd done a 75 yarder — if ee got another piece it was a good thing. Because efter ee'd darned 75 yards o' something ee didnae want 75 yards o' the same. So it was best if ee got a different piece.	AH	There was a lot o' chat as well. You worked closely together so ee could work and chat.
AH	Mmhmm, a different piece aye.	MW	Oh aye, aye.
MW	But you could have a piece for a week — that 75 yards for a week, ken.	AH	So the camaraderie was really good. You really built up relationships wi' people.
AH	Mmhmm. Depended how much work was in it, aye. And if a piece was really in a hurry —	MW	Oh aye, ee could be sitting darnin' —
MW	They'd put twee of us on wouldn't they?	AH	And talk.
AH	— they'd put two or three people on tae eet an spread eet over two tables. So everybody shared the work to get that piece away quicker. It just depended, you know, how they were running and —	MW	— and ee could actually shout to the other end o' the shed — aboot 15 tables doon — and the person would answer you and they were still wi' their heed doon darnin'.
MW	And if they were really busy, like they widnae put the likes o' me and Ann on thegither [laughs]. 'Cause it woulda — the work wouldnae have been fast enough.	ED	So you could still focus on the work?
AH	They always put a good worker — well, an older worker wi' a younger worker.	AH	On the work, yep.
		MW	Oh ee could be in a full conversation, aboot ten of ee.
		AH	Oh aye, what was on the TV last night...
		MW	Aye, or what are ee havin' for the tiee.

AH Or what are ee daein' at the weekend, and aye it was a great... And another thing that I always remember was when someone was getting married, it was a great thing. Getting nearer their marriage date, we would have a collection in the mill, you know, and it was only pennies but it built up and we would buy —

MW The whole mill used to put in.

AH Aye, the whole mill would put in something. But the darners would have a wee collection and we would buy things and do up their coat. Like clothes pegs — put clothes pegs roon their collar. We'd buy Brillo pads and dusters and wooden spoons.

MW Colanders — all the stuff that you were goin'ae use in the kitchen.

AH In your new home, aye. And we would dress the coat up. So the night that the girl left, you know before her wedding —

MW Which was usually a Friday.

AH Mmhmm, she would be paraded through the street wearing this coat — [phone rings]

MW Sorry.

JJ Mags is popular today.

AH An another thing we did — an a mean, I think the bosses just let us — at the tea break time, we would take that very unsuspecting girl down tae the back toilets with flour and eggs and cocoa —

MW Anything we could find.

AH Anything we could — confetti, and she would be smothered in —

MW Even doon her bra and pants.

AH Everywhere — wi' a' this.

MW And paraded roon the mill.

AH Yes. I think they sorta caw eet tarred — tarred and feathered, is it? — in other places. And men would get that as weel. But we never knew the men in Reid & Taylor's to get that done tae them.

MW No, nuh.

AH It was just the lassies.

MW And then on your Friday tea time when ee had to walk doon the street wi' your coat on, ee had to walk doon wi' a potty — a china potty — filled with salt and a candle in the middle [phone rings] — [answers]

MW cont. I'm sorry I'm busy at the moment — eh, wi a candle in the middle and ee would get to Smith's the drapery, which is now —

AH Near Wattie's Arch.

MW Aye, near Wattie's Arch. The candle was lit, and ee had to jump over eet three times. And it was — if it went out, that was one child you were goin'ae have. Then it would be re-litten three times — and maest of eet always come right, didn't eet?

AH Aye, it came true!

MW Sometimes it was yin, sometimes it was twee. There wasnae many fook that got three, for some unknown reason. They always used to stay at just one or two. And then... Oh, yince ee'd done that, you were paraded doon the street again. Then you were allowed tae go home, get washed and changed, then oot tae the pub and meet them a' again.

AH Mmhmm. That was just a tradition as well. That was a good tradition.

MW And another thing — on a normal Friday lunchtime, everybody went hame and put their curlers in. And ee came in on a Friday efternoon and ee've nae i—

[laughing] ee've nae idea! The amount o' curlers that ee seen in the room. Ee didnae even sice faces, it was just aw these curlers everywhere.

AH That wis you ready fir yir night oot ee see.

MW That was yow ready for the weekend. Aye. And then on the way hame on a Friday ee went intae Kyle's t'siee whit new styles they had. Shoes or claiaths...

AH Aye, ee got your wage. And in them days ee got your wages in a wee tin and it was brought up t'ee, you know wi' a payslip. A mean, ee just didnae get your wages paid in tae the bank then. So ee had the ready cash and then ee paid aw your dues, your raffle tickets an —

MW Aw, raffle tickets!

AH Ee hed hardly any money left when ee came oot the mill!

MW It was ridiculous! A can remember ma first wage was six pound, twelve and six. And be the time a got oot o' the mill — wi' aw the raffle tickets a'd bought — a only had five pound twelve and six! A must have bought an affa raffle tickets...

AH There's always something to pay, aye.

MW Aye, but it used tae get to the point ee'd say 'Oh no, here's some mare bloody raffle tickets.'

AH A know, aye.

MW Oh aye, the good old days.

AH They were, they were good days.

MW And the laughs — brilliant. And the funny thing was, we had twee aulder women in the shed we were in — a Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Cairns. And they loved us younger yins because we kept them gan.

AH We kept them gan, aye. We used tae, aye [inaudible]

MW Oh aye, tell them dirty jokes — and yin o' them was posher than the other. And if somebody tell't a joke, they'd say 'Dinna tell Mrs. Cook, dinna tell Mrs. Cook' — a says 'A'll tell Mrs. Cook!' — 'cause she always wondered what everybody was laughing at. And a says 'She's gan'a think we're laughing at her'. I says 'No, I'll tell her.' And she was always very shocked, wasn't she? She'd go 'Oh, Margaret! Margaret go away!' — but she always asked what it was.

AH Mmhmm. I mean, young and old, we a' got on thegither. It was great fun. It really was.

ED How many darners would there have been then, at that time?

MW Well there was two sheds.

AH Two, aye. More than 30 anyway?

MW Oh, yes.

AH Definitely. And then there'd be people, as we said, down the stairs working on the clean pieces. There would be, what we talked about, outside darners. That was the women that had, ken, left to have their children. They worked from home, they were the outside darners.

MW At yin point a would think there'd be about eighty?

AH Aye. Probably, aye.

MW Ken if you were putting the twee up the stairs, the clean, and the ootside workers.

AH Yeah, mmhmm — and at yin point, I think in the early '60s, Reid & Taylor's had what they ca'd a branch. That was another building in Langholm, where those other darners worked for, you know, for the

AH cont. main — it was really just lack o' space I suppose?

MW Where was that?

AH That was doon opposite the Health Centre in that auld church. That was a church — they ca'd it The Branch. And then latterly, well, there was darners at Annan, there was a branch over there.

MW Aye there was, aye, I mind o' that yin.

AH And I mean, it was — ee couldnae believe the work that there was. You know, and like I say, ee went in there thinking I've got a job for life.

MW Aye, ee did.

AH Ee did. Aye, ee did. Well, the men certainly would think that.

MW Aye, definitely.

AH And like you say, Margaret, there was, ken, aunties and sisters and mothers and cousins. I mean, a lot o' people in Reid & Taylor's were related to other people.

MW Oh aye, your uncle was probably working on a loom, or on the thread store or something. Everybody was related to somebody in there.

AH Aye, they were, aye.

ED And was it — I mean, I was interested in, sort of, the roles of men and women — were there any men that worked as darners, for example?

AH No, no, certainly not.

ED So there was always that kind of division between —

MW It was always the women were darners, but the weavers — although it was a man's weaving shed, they sometimes had women in there. Ken, it wasna very often, there wasna many, was there?

AH No. They had old Dobcross looms. An I think when the faster looms came on in the shift work, it maybe wasnae feasible to have women in, you know, for shift work and stuff like that. But no, there was certainly women weavers — but like you say, I think it was more an intricate job for women. You know, and — well ee had to have patience. Ee certainly had to have patience, and that was really, aye, it was really a women's work.

MW A woman's job. Aye, aye.

AH That was it, aye, certainly.

MW It was — I suppose in a sense, it was like a woman knitting, wasn't it? Ken, it was more of a woman's thing than a man's thing, ken. But as I say, soon the rest o' the mill there'd be like, 10 other kinda jobs maybe?

AH Aye, women and men were the same.

MW Women and men were, aye. But in the dernin' it was —

AH Women.

MW Aye, I can never think o' a man ever.

AH Nah, never. You know, we maybe had a young lad came, you know, maybe to sorta gan through the different departments to see the workings o' the mill, and he would maybe have a go. But ee just knew that it just wasnae a man's thing, certainly not.

MW Aye. They would maybe spend a day wi' us.

AH Aye, and try what we were doing, but it just didnae work.

MW Aye, and it was just really to look at the process o' what we were daein, for him'a move on if he was gan intae — with the management side or something — was about the only time ee ever got a man in

there. And we used to have a fella in that moved the pieces — he was called Spring Time, because in the summer he had the stinkiest feet [laughter] so we named him Spring Time.

AH Aye, the men would come and lift the pieces. But we would lift them — it took two women to lift a piece. Certainly. And if you were pregnant, ee had the honour o' somebody else would lift the pieces for ee. But certainly we would lift pieces as well. But the men would lift them and take them away and bring them in and what not, aye.

MW And we had a lift fra the bottom floor up to oor darning floor — only pieces — nae humans were allowed in it... Except for me [laughter]. I was walking by yin day and twee o' the boys threw us in it and pressed the button. And when I got to the top here was the boss walking by — I was trying'a hide in the pieces...!

AH And as apprentices, I mean, ee were sent to dae a' different jobs really. So if a darner had run oot o' yarn you would take — you were sent doon wi' the ticket to the yarn store to get more yarn. Well ee knew then that some boy or man was gonna jump oot on ee. I mean nowadays they would be jailed! [laughter] But in them days they got away wi' it and it was

AH cont. just part o' the thing ee had to put up wi'.

MW Some o' the lassies liked to get sent to the yarn store. But it was kinda horrendous really, wasn't eet?

AH Oh it was.

MW 'Cause it was frightening. Ee didnae ken where they were —

AH Ee didnae ken where they were gan'ae appear fra.

MW They were always daein things like, aye.

AH But, aye. [laughter]

MW We had some laughs.

ED Could women — like if you wanted to go into a management role, for example — were those kinds of opportunities open to the women as well, or was it mostly men that were in the management roles?

AH Well, oor supervisors were female. I think other mills had a male supervisor, but I dunno, I wouldnae have — I wouldnae have sort of liked that. I liked the female supervisors.

MW Aye. Well they actually — half o' the male fook in there widnae ken exactly what

we were daein. Ken what a mean? They would know we were darners, but they widnae ken the intricacy that we had to do.

AH But would she mean like a male supervisor for us? I wouldn't — no... Some mills had that, they had that at Neill's didn't they? Jimmy Barnfather was a male.

MW But it was always women in Reid & Taylor's, aye. I dinna ken why, but —

AH I dunno. Well, I suppose they've done the work, you know, an —

ED And just progressed up.

AH Mmhmm, aye.

MW Aye. And ee, in the — there was a pattern shop. And that's where they done the patterns. And when a first started, I can mind it was always men. But during the years, the women got into that as well. They could gan in'a the pattern shop, and, like...

AH They had different, aye, different roles.

MW Different kinna roles and that, aye. But as I say, when I first went, it was a' men.

ED Did it change over time, like what was open to women, I guess?

MW Well, it must'a been, aye. A would think sae lass, aye.

AH Mmhmm. Ee got female designers coming in, you know, young girls. So it did change I suppose, aye.

MW It did change, aye. As I say, 'cause it was a' a man's thing to start wi', aye. So of course fashion was stertin to change then, of course.

AH Aye, uhuh.

ED I was gonna ask about — I was thinking about the sort of repetitive nature of the work. And for me, for example, I sit at a computer all day and I get a very sore back. And I just wondered what sort of strains it put on your bodies, doing that work all day long. Was there anything that you — how it affected your own body, and then also how you would kind of counteract that I suppose, like the — as you mentioned, your fingers.

MW Your normal thing was a high stool. A high stool — but yince you've been there a while, you ended up bringing in your ain chair. And some fook were kinda sittin' on easy chairs, weren't they? Ken, because

you're sitting on a high stool, your back had to be straight and everything. As I say it was hard work, even hingin' onto the stool at some points.

AH I think your eyesight must have suffered, certainly, your eyesight. You know that constant strain must've took toll on people.

ED 'Cause it's close up all the time.

MW Oh, very, very close.

AH Certainly.

MW Very close work.

AH An a mean the lighting wasnae always the best — you only had a fluorescent light above ee. There was very few windows in one o' the darning flats, you know, so I mean, it must have been — it must have took its toll.

MW Oh aye, aye.

AH I think even the background noise must have took its toll on your hearing, certainly.

MW Aye because even where we worked, away up in the top —

AH It was still noisy.

MW — you could still hear the looms and everything fra doon the stairs. Or if there was an accident or something, ee knew something had happened, ‘cause there was always noise, wasn’t there?

AH Aye, certainly. So aye, but in them days you never thought o’ that. You know, ee never thought that — how ee’re gonna be in years to come.

MW That’s probably why I’m half deaf and half blind.

AH Well I am, I think my hearing’s affected. Definitely, I think sae.

MW Oh definitely, aye.

ED Right, so even when you were on the top floor, you’ve still quite a lot of noise coming up?

MW Oh, yeah. Because the weaving shed was doon there. And then there was the bit wi’ them big metal things — a dae ken what they done? A dae ken. But, oh aye there was always noise. Always.

AH And the heat in the summer was — oh it was like working in a greenhouse in the summer. It really was.

MW Yin year they actually let us gan in at six o’clock in the morning, and finish at two?

AH Aye, that hot summer o’ ‘76.

MW Was it ‘76, aye?

AH Mmhmm. I mean, you just couldnae work, the heat was just —

MW Ee couldnae have your needle because your needle was starting to... Rust in your hand.

AH I’ll tell you how hot it was — we used to grow tomato plants on the windowsills.

MW Aye we did.

AH That’s how hot it was, and we grew tomato plants.

MW That we werena allowed to grow, but we grew them.

AH But that was the conditions that we were working in. So like Mag said, we started at six and finished at two.

MW But they only let us do that for sae long. It had to be above — 80 was it?

AH Aye the temperature, aye.

MW If it was above 80 we could gan in at six and finish at two.

AH The ice cream van would come and we were allowed oot to get a free ice cream. [laughter]

MW Aye. That was oor excitement. A wonder whee ever paid for them ice creams? It must've been the mill?

AH Musta been the mill aye —

MW Ah but it didnae last for long.

AH — to keep ee happy! [laughter]

MW To keep ee there, aye.

AH So no it was very horrendous conditions.

ED Yeah I can imagine. And were there any — you mentioned there, if there was an injury — was there any sort of work-based injuries that were kind of common?

AH Maybe more so in the weaving shed.

MW Like, if in the weaving shed, if one o' the shuttles flew out, it could get somebody in the face, the body. And if you were hit wi' one o' them, you knew you were hit.

AH Aye, there was mare danger there.

MW Oh, aye. There was nae danger wi' us — except to yin another. [laughter] Aye, that was aboot the maest dangerous thing, a flying shuttle.

ED Right, and you said —

MW But I was never allowed doon there. [laughs]

ED You said earlier about your Friday afternoon, or your Friday lunch breaks, and going home and putting your curlers in. What did you do in general on your breaks? How did you spend your breaks and where did you spend them? Did you go out, or what did you do?

MW Well, wi' livin in the town, a went home. And as soon as I got my card clocked in an oot — well, oot — the fag was in me mooth. But you were actually gettin' tonnes o' smoke fra other fook — everybody seemed 'ae smoke in them days, ken. And like, I was one o' them that always had to have four fags in that one hour and have my lunch as weel. But then on a Thursday... [laughter] On a Thursday — I got a fag, I got home, a'd tae dust the whole hoose — nae dinner! — the whole hoose had to be dusted and hoovered by me mother and me sister and meself. Have a fag on the way back, and my mother would shove us a sandwich, so that I was having'ae eat

MW cont. that in my piece. So the whole hoose was cleaned within that hour on a Thursday. But aye, every day we would gan hame, aye.

AH Aye, well at Reid & Taylor's we were lucky I think — we had the Scott Hay Gallery as our canteen. You know, and when we started there was two ladies would come in in the morning and make the tea for the tea breaks. And that went on a few years and then latterly at the very end, lo and behold, was one o' these, you know —

MW Stupid machines, weren't eet?

AH Aye, a hot drink machine. But in them days you had your hot drinks made for ee. And ee had a time limit — ee'd 10 minutes to get your break and back up again.

MW But that was ridiculous. We were away in the furthest place and the buzzer would gan off, you couldnae gan oot before the buzzer.

AH No. Time ee got doon, went to the toilet —

MW And your fag.

AH — and your queue for the tea, tea time was nearly up! [laughter]

MW Ee'd get yer tea on'a the table — the buzzer just went. [laughter] Runnin' oot the door. And you had to be back on your table on time.

AH Certainly, aye. Or there was faces made.

MW Oh aye sometimes I would just get yin moothfa a' tea. I didnae take a biscuit or a sandwich, 'cause there was nae time for that, was there?

AH I know, and that was the only break. You'd maybe have a toilet break in the afternoon. But that was your break.

MW Aye, that was it. And as a say, it aw had to be done within ten minutes.

AH Oh aye within the time, mmhmm.

MW Or ee were in the office.

ED I guess one of the good things about the working from home as well — getting your work at home — is that you can sort of have your own schedule a little bit more?

MW Oh, yes.

AH Probably aye.

MW But when ee were in the mill, it was a' the fun that went along wi' it, wasn't there?

AH Aye, it was the camaraderie and everything, and the joking.

MW Aye, I mean, there would never be a day really when it was that boring. Something was always happening, ken. And if somebody died, well, it was roon the mill in twee minutes wasn't it? Ken, if there was a birth or a death, the whole mill knew within two minutes.

AH And leading up to the Common Riding — that was a great thing in the mill. The Common Riding was a big thing. We used to reenact the Common Riding. We would make a flag and we would have a thistle and we had our spade, you know, and we would play music — play the Common Riding tunes and play music — have dancing. And in them days the Cornet would come roon the mill, you know, and we would greet him and everything an —

MW And let him see that we'd made a' oor banners.

AH The bunting and oor banners and what not. So that was good, and I mean the management let you away wi' that — that was part o' the Common Riding week, I think. Aye certainly.

MW As long as ee were still daein yir work, you were allowed your little bit o' —

AH Aye, you were allowed your wee bit o' fun like.

MW Camaraderie, aye. That was one week o' the year, aye. Ee'd to behave yoursel' the rest...

AH And at Christmas, we would decorate oor lights and ken —

MW Oor tables.

AH We'd have oor ain little decorations, aye.

MW Oh our lights used to be hinging wi' tinsel an everything.

AH Aye tinsel an everything, so we had a bit o' fun. Aye...

ED Em, I've got a few more questions.

MW Nae bother.

ED So I guess in terms of the town during that time, when there was — you said there was about five or six mills at that time. What was the — how was the town different? Did the town kind of function differently than it does nowadays, do you think?

MW	Can you repeat that last bit?	AH	Aye. There would be a bus running. The bus would come — where the Co-op now is in Langholm, that was a mill. Now the bus would run from there right up to Holmwood wi' —
ED	The town itself — how did the town feel? Did it feel different, and did it sort of function differently than it does now?		
AH	The town? You mean the town?	MW	The mill workers.
ED	Yeah, the town.	AH	— maestly female workers, women. They would go home and maybe prepare their evening meal and then back on the bus and back doon, you know to work again.
AH	Oh yes.		
MW	Well there was mare shops. Like I dae 'hink there was an empty shop on the street.	MW	And that bus fra Neill's Mill, went to every mill — we were last weren't we? — every mill and picked the workers up to get to Holmwood.
AH	And when the mills came oot —		
MW	Came oot at five o'clock.	AH	To take them home.
AH	The street was —	MW	To take them home — five o'clock it started, aye.
MW	Heavin'.		
AH	Heavin' wi' people.	AH	But like you say, I mean, the high street was just chock a block wi' people.
MW	And it was — everybody was gan in different directions, 'cause the mills were a' in different directions. And like, your best pal could work at another mill, ken, and ee'd say 'see you in half an oor', shoutin' — there was a lot o' shoutin' across the street.	MW	Aye.
		AH	When we were kids, we were told — we knew the time, when the mills came out ee knew the time — ee knew then tae come home for your tea. When the mill workers were coming home.

MW	Aye when you seen the mill workers, aye. I'll never forget one day, we were coming across the Langholm bridge — there was mie and Elaine, and Violet Brannan she's ca'd, she was Violet Clazynski — and a jet flew over the monument. And she says, 'He's just showing off 'cause he knows the mills are out!' [laughter] A was like that, 'A dinna think sae!' — but she thought hie knew the mills were oot so hie was showing off wi' his jet gan ower the monument. That fair amused mie, a can remember.		the mills when you were walking down the streets?
		AH	Yeah, you could hear the clacking of the looms.
		MW	I think every mill ee would walk by, you could hear the machinery gan.
		AH	The looms clattering, aye.
		MW	Whether it was looms or something else —
AH	And ee know, there was a lot o' men then that rode bikes, you know. A lot o' men had bikes in Langholm, travelling back and for'ad tae their work. Mmhmm, that's right aye.	AH	Aye, certainly.
		MW	— was always machinery at every mill, that ee could hear ootside, aye. And some o' them mills at yin point would be running 24 hours a day.
MW	We could never afford a bike in oor hoose. A wasna lucky enough tae get a bike. Nuh. There wasna the money then...	AH	Mmhmm, night and day they worked, aye.
AH	[laughs] Aye.	MW	'Cause I can remember, me husband — he was night shift. Cannae remember what mill he was in at the time. So some o' them mills would be working 24 hours a day, and there would be a clatter up for 24 hours.
MW	God a soond ancient, divn't a?! [laughter]		
ED	Could you hear — I'm just curious in terms of the sound, because you said you could hear the sound when you're working up at the top of the mill. But from outside — like from out on the streets as well, within the town — could you hear the sounds of	AH	The looms were constant, aye.

MW That's how busy they would be at one point.

AH Mmhmm, aye. Ee canna believe that now, can ee? Ee canna think that that was what it was like. Nuh.

MW And we can still remember eet, Ann.

AH Aye. I know.

ED And it's — it's that sound, you know, not being there —

MW Oh aye. It was — I can remember when Reid & Taylor's shut. What I found really sad when ee passed Reid & Taylor's — it wasna the mill — it was the canteen, the Scott Hay Gallery. Because we had a lot o' fun in there, didn't we?

AH Mmhmm. Mill socials and —

MW Oh aye, we had oor nights oot and everything in there. An I think when that went, it was like the finish o' everything, ken. It was a real shame when that went, aye.

AH It was a lovely building.

MW Oh it was, it really was.

ED And was that an art — was it an art gallery as well?

MW At one point it was.

AH It was. It was built in memory of Scott Hay — he was a Director o' Reid & Taylor's away back in the '60s — and the art clubs did use it as an art gallery. And it had a lovely wooden floor and just lovely —

MW The floor was that — what div ee ca' it?

JJ Parquet.

MW Oh aye. And oh it was polished tae — Doreen Fletcher, she had a machine and that, that was polished every day.

AH It was always kept lovely. And that lovely lawn was always kept nice. Everything was nice.

MW Nice, aye.

ED And what happened to that building, is it still there?

AH Still there, it's just in disrepair now. It's just fallin'a bits.

ED Can you see it out your window Judith?

MW I could imagine the parquet flare now'll no be parquet. I think it'll just be all drift wood.

AH Aye. Terrible.

ED Have you been in at all, have you had a chance to go in since it closed?

MW Since I left work, they sometimes had sales of work and things. And it was actually quite a thrill to gan'a a sale o' work, because ee went in'a the Scott Hay Gallery. And the bit you werenae allowed in was the sick bay where the phone was. And it was great if somebody was selling claiths, 'cause it was the only bit you could gan try the claiths on — ee werenae allowed to take 'em to the toilet. So — were you ever in the sick bay?

AH No.

MW No, I daen't 'hink I was ever in the sick bay. But it was big excitement because we couldnae gan into the sick bay when we worked there. But if we were trying somebody's dress on we could gan into the sick bay.

AH But a gan past Reid & Taylor's and look through the gates and it's just so, so sad — it really is. It's so sad to see it the way it is now.

MW And the thing is, we'll no be the only yins that feel that. The amount of fook — there was thoosands o' fook worked there, ken.

AH It's sad, it really is.

MW It's thoosands o' family — well no thoosands o' families.

AH Generations. Generations o' people.

MW Generations, aye. The whole family would work there, and grandparents.

AH It's the same wi' every mill — a' the generations that would work there.

MW Oh, every mill in Langholm, aye.

ED Yeah. So many memories.

AH I know, mmhmm. As somebody said, you should write a book on your memories! [laughs]

MW Oh dear...

AH Well, we're maybe gonna get there!

MW [laughs] This is the stert of eet, Ann!

AH This is the stert o' the book!

MW Well listen, mine would be banned...

ED That's the one everyone wants to read!

MW Oh well, ma Packer tale... Mr. Packer — there was aboot five of us in the canteen at the time. And when the buzzer went — you ran. Get to your table, ken. Well, twee o' the boys were messin' aboot. And yin o' them jump on top o' me. Well he was sittin' there, he had his knees over me arms — so his crotch was mare or less in my face [laughs] — and he was ticklin' us. Well the buzzer had went and the next thing there's this knock on the door, and it was a glass door, and I looked up, an a says 'It's Packer, it's Packer!'— Well, it was Mr. Packer. Well hie wis the big man then, the big cheese. And he says 'Up to my office now!' — and the boy thought it was somebody else, so he kept ticklin' us, ken. Well I was laughing but I was greetin' at the same time, 'cause I could see Mr. Packer's face, ken, looking through the glass. And when the boy — Steven he was ca'd — realised that Mr. Packer really was there, he jump off the top of us and we'd to gan up to the office.

Well, Mr. Packer had walked into the office and the door slammed when we were coming along the corridor. So anyway, we knocked at the door — and he was really quite posh wasn't he? — we knocked at the door and 'blah-blah-blah' and 'come in.' And a said 'What did

hie say' — 'A dinna ken'. So we knocked again, and aboot 10 minutes later — aw we could hear was 'blah-blah-blah' and 'come in'. Well there was nae door handle on the door, and we were shovin' the door... But then we realised — in his temper, he'd came and opened the door, and he says 'Can't you read?' I thought, oh my god, somebody's been sitting on top of us, now I canna read... And there was a buzzer thing at the side o' the door. It must've been some kind of fashion thing for the posh people. And he pressed this little blue thing, and the door opened, ken. And I can mind us standing there and sinking in'a his carpet, ee ken, wi' me heed bowed and me hans a'hint me back. It was actually like a bit like Colditzzy ken, like. It was like as if ee were gan'a get shot. Ken, oh, my mother — I got a hemmering when I got hame — 'cause she worked in the same bit — because I wasnae at my table at the right time... 'Cause somebody was lyin' on top of us [laughter]. He was nice lookin' tae! Aye, he was nice lookin'... There was some fun.

ED Are you up for a couple more questions?

MW Aye.

ED You're happy to keep going? Okay, I'm just having a wee look at my list... You said that you did have relatives that

ED cont. had worked in the mills, you know, kind of generations before you, and I'm wondering if you remember any stories that they used to tell about their time working in the mills? Is there any kind of stories that have stuck with you?

MW Well, my mother, she worked in the mill. She was late every day [laughter]. Every day. But the latest that she ever was — ee had to be in at your table at half past one — the latest she was ever, was ten to two. And the boss came through — and it was Mr. Johnny Innes at the time. Well in front of everybody, hie says 'Right Mamie, I've had enough. It's every day you're one or two minutes late, and the day it is just too much — you're 20 minutes late.' And she says 'I've had a really bad time, Johnny' — 'What's wrong?' he says. 'Well, I was coming doon the Kirk Wynd, and this couple were looking for the gallop' — looking for the gallop — so she says 'By the time I told them a' aboot the Common Riding, this is how I'm late', she says 'ee canna just walk away fra fook.' And — but she says 'Anyway Johnny, that's why I'm late', and she says 'and furthermore, they werena asking aboot the gallop — the Common Riding — they were asking where the house 'The Gallop' was.' It was on the same street — but my mother thought she had to explain the Common Riding, [laughter] and it took her 20 minutes.

AH What about the story — there was somebody in the mill would maybe take money every week, and put it away as a holiday fund.

MW That was mam.

AH Aye — but at Neill's or wherever — and they would take the money, and they knew not to bank Mamie's money on the Monday, because by Monday she would ask for the holiday fund to be taken back oot again.

MW Aye, that was me mother! [laughter] If she needed a pun o' mince — 'Can I get ma holiday fund back again.' And then my mother sterted up this thing — it was, what was it ca'd?

AH What the Shillan Draw, no?

MW No, the... Ee ken, ee joost threw anything intae eet, and ee didnae ken how much ee had.

AH Aw, dae ken.

MW Diddly. The diddly. On a Friday, sometimes in your tin, in your thingabob tin, some folk always put their change into this diddly. And it didnae maitter whether it was two pence or two and six, or — it was what change they had in their tin. My

MW cont. mother used to have cards, and whatever ee gave her she put it on the card, and ee didnae get your card to the finish. She would put it on the card and then at the summer time for your summer holidays, ee got your diddly oot, and — aw that sounds pretty [laughs]... Eh, you always got your diddly oot, that was your spendin' money. And I canna think o' anybody that was ever, ever disappointed — they always had mare in their diddly than they thought. So they always had, like, it was like spending money.

AH Aye for their holidays.

MW For their holidays, aye.

ED That's a good tip there, I might do that myself.

AH Aye!

ED And I've already asked you about the men and women, so... I guess, it's just in general, how you feel looking back on that time now. Whether, you know — what your kind of fondest memories are and what sort of things that you miss, but also the things that you don't miss, or the things that, you know, are your least fond memories of that time. I guess a bit of both.

MW I really — I have to be quite honest. I've mare fond memories o' working like that. And you were like, although you were working on your own, you were working as a team.

AH You were like a big family.

MW You were like a big family, and everybody looked aft— if yin lassie hadnae got something, ee a' helped her. It was just like, aye, it was like a family.

AH I think for me the worst thing was the workin' — the heat, the heat in the summer. Certainly, having'a work in them conditions, it wasnae nice. No, that was the worst thing, I think.

MW I canna really think o' any bad times when we were at Reid & Taylor's, really.

AH Nuh, no really. No.

MW Ken, and that's what I'm saying — it was really, really sad if somebody died, because they had been there a' the time ee were there. Ken, normally... And even if ee'd been there six months, and just say that yin o' the aulder yins died, they had probably been there 20 years. And it was, it was always a right sad time, wasn't eet?

AH Oh aye. We worked through — well I worked through the three day week, you know, and that sort o' thing, the Miner's Strike.

MW Aye, a mind a' that, aye.

AH We still battled on through that.

MW Aye a mind a' that, an the black oots.

AH Aye, the black oot, and havin'ae work by light fra the window, which was hard, but ee just did it, ee never thought any mare about it.

MW It's because ee had to dae it an when ee were on piece work —

AH Aye, ee just had to.

MW Well, I got married when I was in Reid & Taylor's, so I mean, I had a mortgage. Ken, there was nane o' this gan'a the dole office and they'd gie you a wee bit something, ken. I needed to work. And then anybody that had a mortgage and then had kids as well, ken, which was the likes o' me aulder sister at that point. Aye, it was...

AH No, there was never any really bad times.

MW Nuh, nuh. And as a say ee a' helped yin another, an if something went wrong —

even although you werenae 'pal pals', it was like, work pals — and you would a' stick in for yin another, like, wouldn't ee?

AH Aye, mmhmm.

MW And likes of mie and Ann — we dinna gan to yin another's hoose for a cup o' coffee or anything, but when we meet yin another, efter a' these years even although we went to school thegither, we can stand in the Co-op for half an oor and have a laugh.

AH We still share our experiences, aye.

MW Aye. And that often comes up — Reid & Taylor's, actually. 'Cause oh, there's some stories... [laughter]

ED You need to write that book.

MW A dinna ken what the title would be. [laughter]

ED And how do you feel about the legacy of the industry now? Because I know that a lot, you know, a lot of the mills have gone and the town's very different, but there is also a lot of stuff that's still there as legacy of the industry, but also different things that are going on now in different ways. People working with textile in more modern ways and things. So how do

ED cont. you feel about the work that's happening now?

AH I think it's a good thing, aye. I mean, we'll never ever get that kinda day — them days o' that work back. But I think it's a good thing that they're still keeping the tradition going, you know, as best they can. Aye, I think it's —

MW But there's very little of it now.

AH I know, but you know, there's still something there. It would be a shame to lose it completely. It really would.

MW Well, where's left now?

AH Well, just Trussler's.

MW Trussler's, that'll be it.

AH And the Elliott man that has his wee, ken, his wee loom thing. But I see in the Langholm paper the day — Hawick are wanting a Weaver. So I mean, you know, hopefully it's still gonna be there. But it'll certainly never ever be back to what it was.

MW Oh nuh. Nuh.

AH Never, nuh. We've seen the best days, I think.

MW Oh definitely. Definitely, aye. In fact, a dae think I would like to be a youngster now roon here, because you've no got the pleasure o' ken that we would — when ee leave the school, you have a job — there's always a job in the mill. Nowadays the school kids —

AH They've got to travel somewhere.

MW Aye. The work isna here.

AH There's nothing, aye.

MW But as a say, in oor day, ee knew — even if ee'd two legs hingin off, ee were gan'a get a job at something, didn't ee?

ED But it seems like there's a lot of people that do still work with textiles, maybe it's more just in their own homes or through their hobbies or through kind of community groups and activities. But I get the sense there is a lot of, you know — in terms of the legacy of the industry, people still work with textile, you know. Maybe more in a, not for their 'work work' but in making —

MW Such as what? If ee dinna mind us askin'.

ED Like people who are making clothes...

AH Like Alan Miller wi' his teddies and a' that.

MW Oh yes, aye.

AH Aye that's still...

MW Which is great, which is great. Aye, we have a Langholm tartan now.

AH You see a' the skills are gonna die away as the people leave, retire and die. Them skills will never be back. They're gonna die with them.

MW Aye, the likes o' the darnin', that's gan tae die off.

AH Aye certainly, an it's no a job that you can just walk into. You need a lot o' training for that.

MW And decent eyesight. Because if your eyesight was a bit iffy, ee couldnae dae the job at a' could ee?

ED Right. And it's not the sort of job that a machine can just take over. It needs to be a person, doesn't it?

AH No — of a' the jobs, you'll never get a machine that'll darn.

MW Never, never. But I can remember yince in Reid & Taylor's, they got a machine that cost thousands — now a canna remember how many thousands it was at the time

— thousands, to dae the work o' four people, and it took four people to work it. [laughter] 'Cause that really, really amused me. I thought, well that's a big waste o' money, is it not? Aye it took the work o' four people, and it took four people tae work it. And they musta had extra money that week or something because it was kinna stupid. But I can mind, I can even remember what the machine — it was at the bottom o' the stairs before we went up to the shed. Aye. Jeff Ireland was on it.

ED What happened to the machines? What happened to the tools and everything? Do you know where all of that stuff kinda went to?

MW My scissors and my pickers, I think are still in my sewing box.

AH Ah but is she meaning the looms — are you meaning the looms an—?

ED No, well —

MW Anything.

ED That, anything, just all of the tools.

MW They would a' get sold off intae other mills.

AH They would get sold off to whatever mills were still going.

MW Aye, an a lot o' them will probably be lying derelict now.

AH Probably, aye, scrap.

MW But as I say, my ain tools I think I've still got in my sewing box.

AH Mmm, I've still got my pickers.

ED Do you ever use them?

MW No, no.

AH Nuh. No even to pluck my eyebrows.
[laughter]

MW I think Stan's used mine for pickin the, eh... [laughter].

JJ The fish?

MW [inaudible] The bones oot o' the salmon. A'right Judith?

JJ Yes, the fish. Yes, I said, the fish!

MW The fish — takin' fish bones oot. Ee were actually dreadin' what I was gonna say there weren't you? [laughs] 'Cause she kens a'm a bit of a character.

ED Well I think you've behaved yourself very well.

MW Oh d'you think so!

ED Judith, is there anything that I've missed? Is there anything that you think it would be good to ask?

JJ I don't think so. I think it's been absolute gold. A lot of the things I did know a little bit about because of the play that we did last year. And, Ann, you thought that was really close to real life, didn't you? All the sort of things that was in the play.

AH Oh certainly. Certainly.

JJ But you've really brought it to life. It's really lovely.

AH It's been good fun, aye. I was kinna apprehensive but it's been good fun.

MW So was I. And then when I was on the way hame, hie phoned us and he says 'Ann's here.' A says 'what for?' — 'Well, you're daein that thing.' I says 'Ann never got back to mie' — 'Aye a did! Aye a did.' — We sterted arguing! I says 'Right, a'm four miles away, I'll put me foot doon.'

AH Aye. So that was good.

MW Aye, so it's actually been a pleasure.

AH It has, aye it's been good.

ED Yeah, it's been a real pleasure listening to
you and your stories. And I really think
you should write that book.

AH Yeah, well, you never know.

ED You've made a start now.

MW But we'll have tae gan intae the X club yin
— 'cause there's a lotta X stuff! [laughs]
An it — oh that was a thing — if anybody
was doing wi' anybody, right?

AH Daein'.

MW Daein wi' anybody — they ae met in the
yarn store. Were ee ever in the yarn store?

AH No! [laughs]

MW Naw, neither was I — naebody fancied
mie! But if anybody was gonna be daein
wi' anybody, it always happened in the
yarn store. A dae ken why. Maybe they
liked the cones [laughter]. Must've been
nice to lie on or something.

ED [laughs] Great, well it's been lovely to chat
to you.

AH Yeah, and to you.

ED Thanks very much for taking part.

AH Okay then.

MW You're very welcome.

ED I'll let you get on.

MW Right, Judith. This is your fault my
husband's no got any tea so get up here
and get the tea made!

JJ Send him to the chip shop!

MW Aw your gan'a Judith's? — S'aright, he's
coming roon for the tea!

JJ Right. Okay.

MW [laughter] Right, bye!

JJ Bye!

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