

# Bringing the Page to Life

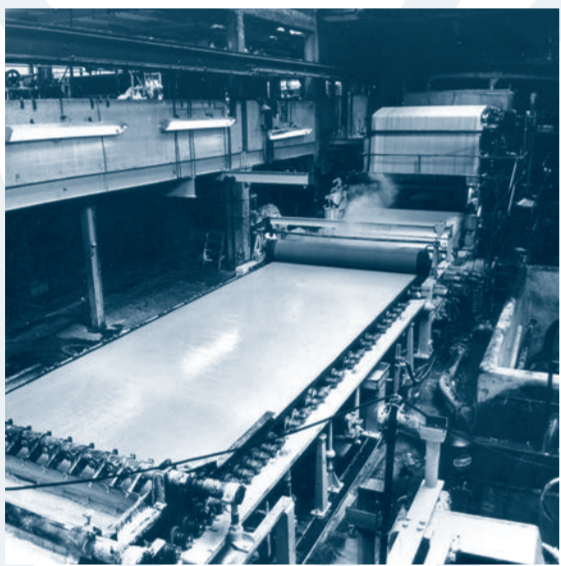
## Health and Safety



**M**ills were dangerous places to work in and the accident rate was high in comparison with other related industries such as printing. Machinery was fast moving. Accidents happened quickly and would often prove fatal.

*“I remember it was when I was a kid when someone got dragged into the calenders. And I mean the horrendous stories you get as a child coming back, you were having nightmares.”*

Under industrial legislation, mills had a duty to safeguard dangerous machinery. Many machinememen, however, trained in less stringent conditions, found the new safety regime problematic, claiming it



slowed them down, made their jobs harder to do and decreased productivity. Accidents continued to happen.

*“At the time I was there, there was two men killed. And I got my hand caught in the machine a couple of times. I got burnt with it. Och, there was always accidents of some sort.”*



*“You used to stack them as diligently as you could. But, well to cut a long story short, actually a bale of waste paper fell in top of the guy. And he wasn’t dead, but he died in hospital.”*

The continued level and seriousness of accidents on the machine floor ensured that by the 1960s Health and Safety became a major consideration when mills on the Water of Leith began overhauling working practices and setup. First aid provision began to appear in mills: Galloway, for example, employed a full-time industrial nurse and welfare officer, instituted an accidents committee that met regularly, investigated incidents within the mill and worked towards implementing best practice. Despite increased legislation and many improvements, mills could still prove to be a dangerous workplace.

