

Bringing the Page to Life

Social Activities

“Facilities were provided for the people.”

Many mills on the Water of Leith took responsibility for organising or sponsoring social events for their employees and those who lived in the villages where the mills were based. Most socialising took place locally and often was based in and around the mill. Annual dances were also organised by mill employees. These were either subsidised or paid for by the mills and were often held at the Glenburn Hotel in Currie or the Charlotte Rooms in Edinburgh.



There was little free time in general as mill employees did not get long holidays. In fact, paid holidays were only introduced in many of the Water of Leith mills in the 1930s. Christmas was not a traditional holiday in Scotland, so employees would work that day and have a couple of days off at New Year. In addition to this, they would only have two bank holidays and a week in the summertime when the mill closed for its annual shut, (closure). during this time essential maintenance and repair work was undertaken.



“They did not have holidays at that time and they used to in the summertime hire a train and it took all the employees away for the day.”

The mills sponsored annual day trips for workers and their families; places visited included Ayr and Largs. Galloway’s Mill also involved others from the local community, including the local postmaster and policeman. While most trips were subsidised by the mills, employees sometimes had to fund particular events. This was done through ingenious means, from running pools, a form of lottery, to selling scrap paper back to the mill for use in the papermaking process.

Aside from these activities, employees organised societies and teams; many mills had their own football team which played in the Edinburgh league. Woodhall mill had its own social committee, which ran various events including a golf club and a fishing club that visited many different areas in Scotland.

