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er in the shop.
e worked here
or almost half
a century.



Welsh tapestry fashion
from the 60s and 70s



My father selling blankets on Waterloo station in 1967 as part of a Wales in London promotion



anket



— with some of the things
we make here at the mill



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knowledge of all our staff keep the tradition
welsh weaving alive at Melin Tregwynt



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Millshop: tel 01348 891 2
for catalogue: tel 01348 891 6
info@melintregwynt.co.uk
www.melintregwynt.co.uk

diff tel: 02

tel: 02920 224 997

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My grandfather Henry with Esther and their two sons Benjamin and Howard.

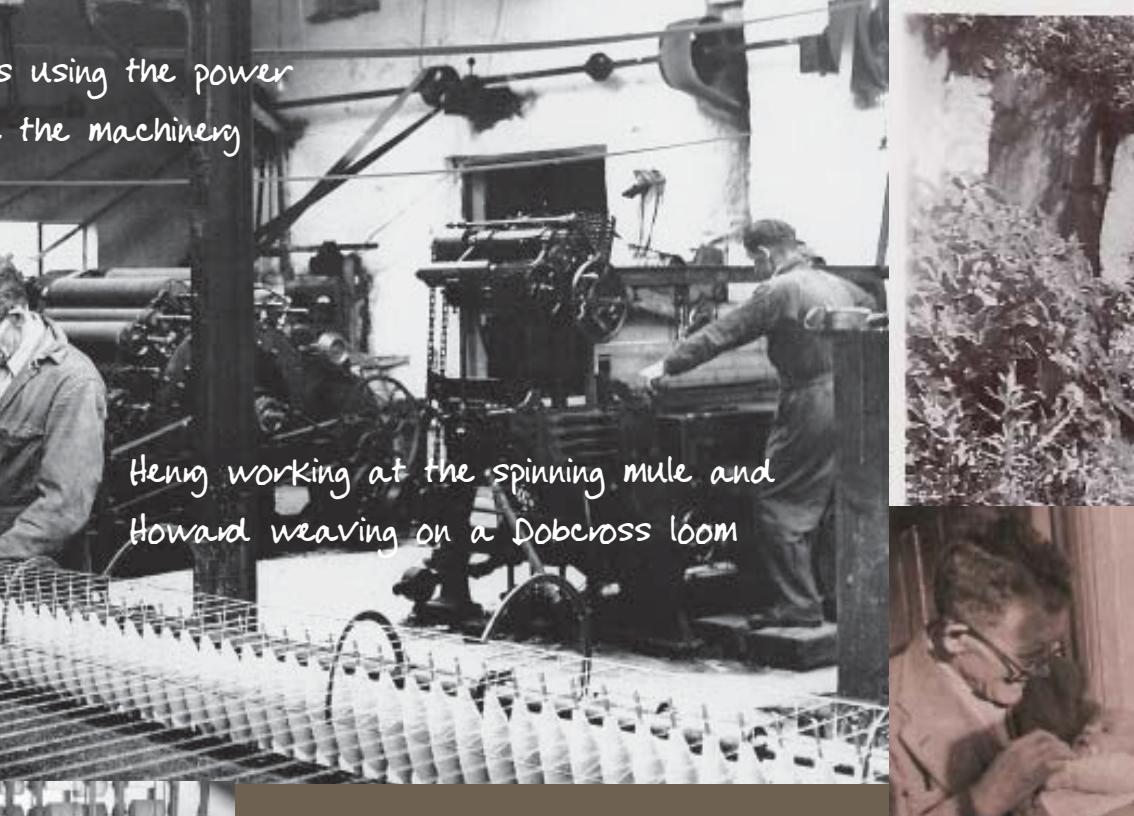


my father Howard as a young man

my mother Eluned was only 18 when she married my father and came to live at Tregwynt



you can see the leather belts using the power of the water wheel to drive the machinery



Henry working at the spinning mule and Howard weaving on a Dobcross loom



my father preparing a warp ready for weaving



the very first car at the mill, which replaced a pony and trap



I never really knew my grandfather, I was only a few months old when he died in 1954



me with mum and dad outside the mill



my parents decided to build a shop to supply the growing number of tourists that came to visit the mill



Our Mill dates from the 18th century. It was originally part of the nearby Tregwynt estate. At that time the Harris family of Tregwynt Mansion owned all the surrounding land, stretching from just above Fishguard to beyond Mathry. Originally a corn mill, records show that it became a fulling mill (also known as a pandy mill). Water from the local stream was used to drive hammers and beat the woollen cloth to clean and soften the fabric. In those days it was known as Dylfryn (Valley) Mill.

Later the water wheel was used to drive leather belts off which the carding engines and early power looms would run. You can still see these in the old part of the mill. Although the stream is small and has no name it used to power 4 mills in the valley. Only Tregwynt Mill is now still working and you can see the old mill wheel inside the original building.

When parts of the great estate at Tregwynt were sold off at the end of the 19th century; the sitting tenant bought the mill, and when she died it passed to her mill manager Mr Essex Maddox.

In 1912 Henry Griffiths bought the mill for £750 and moved from Efailwen with his new wife Esther. Henry's family originally ran a pub at Glandy Cross, but both his parents died young, so he went to live with his cousin Stephen who was a weaver and taught Henry how to weave. The 25 mile journey to their new home took a whole day by horse and cart. They renamed it Tregwynt Mill after the original estate. Their son Benjamin was born in 1914 and his younger brother Howard in 1916. Sadly Esther died young and at the age of 14 Howard left school to work with his father in the mill.

After shearing their sheep the local farmers would sell their fleece to the mill. Henry and Howard would wash the fleece, card and comb the wool and spin it into yarn. Most of this yarn was sold back to the local farmers for knitting and weaving. Any surplus was taken by pony and trap to sell in the local markets. The mill prospered and they were the first people in the area to buy a car.

During the 1939-45 war, wool for knitting was not rationed, and so much of the mill's production was given over to making knitting wool for local ladies to knit. After the war weaving of tweed cloth and traditional blankets and bedspreads began again, but now yarn could be bought from the wool marketing board rather than the local farms; and it became possible to buy a wider variety of different qualities of wool for weaving. Today the heavier Welsh wool is more commonly used for carpets.

In the 50s tourism in Pembrokeshire began to grow and Howard and his wife Eluned opened a shop in their living room. This became so busy that they decided to build a separate shop to sell direct to visitors. They also opened shops in St. Davids and Fishguard. The 60s and 70s were busy times for the Welsh Mills. Welsh Tapestry fabrics and clothing with their bright colours and strong designs were very popular and appealed to tourists and locals alike.

The 1980s recession saw many of the Welsh Mills close. Melin Tregwynt was lucky. Howard's son Eifion had come home to join the family business and began to develop markets further afield. New yarns and new designs kept the mill and its staff busy supplying customers all over the world. Fast rapier looms replaced the older flying shuttle looms and the mill developed a reputation for supplying high quality, beautiful designs in wool and lambswool, initially for the interiors market, but now also for fashion.

Over 20 local people work here at the mill and products from this remote corner of Wales can be found in design-led shops and hotels all over the world.

