

# Press Release



Fermanagh District Council

7 July 2008

## Taylor-Woods Friends Reunited

Past employees of Taylor-Woods in Fermanagh were reunited with two of their former colleagues from Canada and the US who they had not met in decades. Primrose O'Reilly from Canada and Leona Stefanco from Pennsylvania in the US met with the Taylor-Woods reminiscence group last Tuesday at Enniskillen Castle.

Primrose O'Reilly who had travelled from Canada said:

*"It has been a wonderful day meeting my old friends and remembering our days working at Taylor-Woods"*

Leona Stefanco from Pennsylvania said:

*"Here we are a few decades older and we all still have such vivid memories of what it was like to work there. I think it is because the company was so good to work for and they treated their employees so well. I'm so pleased that I came here today to catch up and find out what everyone has been doing since the factory closed."*

The Taylor-Woods reminiscence group, who meet regularly at Fermanagh County Museum, explained their plans for the future. Not only have they helped to organise the 'Stitch-in-Time' exhibition which was displayed last year, they have further ambitious plans to produce a book recounting the tales of working for this world renowned company.

Speaking about their future plans, Evelyn West said

***“The exhibition has helped to bring us all together so we can keep the momentum going. We hope to create a book which tells the story of the Taylor –Woods phenomenon.”***

Sinead Reilly, Development Officer - Collections and Exhibitions with Fermanagh County Museum said:

***“The exhibition and reminiscence sessions have reawakened many of the old friendships of the past and I think it is wonderful that this active and ambitious group wish to capture their memories and share them with others.”***

The setting up of the Taylor-Woods factory in Enniskillen was a key event in the manufacturing history of Fermanagh. It was also to have a major impact on lingerie and hosiery design and production internationally. Taylor-Woods merchandise was in great demand, supplying high fashion outlets such as Harrods in London.

The story of Taylor-Woods began in the years just after the Second World War, with the continuing culture of ‘make-do and mend’. The availability of luxurious lingerie and stockings in such colours as ‘Pearl’ and ‘Topaz’ must have caused great excitement and pleasure. The ‘up-to-the-minute’ designs, developed under the direction of Mme Hélène Walster, provide an insight into the prevailing fashions of the time.

Taylor-Woods had a reputation for looking after its staff. Its forward-thinking practices could provide lessons to many companies today. The affection of the staff for their work place and the associated social events is very evident in the surviving photographs and the many fond memories that have been told.

For more information telephone 028 6632 5000 from NI or 048 6632 5000 from ROI.

## **Ends**

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