

The Hosiery Business in the Greyfriars Townscope Area



Stocking frame that was used to knit women's stockings and they were first used and introduced in Leicester in 1680

Hosiery Machinery



Deteriorated stocking frames from a factory that had closed down

Hosiery = stockings, socks, and tights collectively.



Scan the QR code to visit the Greyfriars Townscope Area website and find out more about the area



How hosiery transitioned from being made in homes to factories

During the latter part of the sixteenth century hosiery manufactory was performed by framework-knitters who would work from home or in shops that contained several frames to ensure fast production. By 1845 domestic workers started to reduce and there was a rise in factory workers, factory organisations became more popular due to the new ways of production, the lack of need for hand frames and other types of specialist work.

The transition from home to factory caused factory wages due to the difference in production costs and the speed in which different types of hosiery could be made. Women went from 2 or 3 shillings a week to 9 and men earned between 12 and 15 shillings a week. Buildings were repurposed, for example a factory in the city centre now known as 'The Hosiery Factory' was made into student accommodation to accommodate the rise in student living in Leicester.

Percentage of employees in different wage groups

Wage	Employees' evidence		Masters' evidence
	Net wage	Gross wage	Net wage
Under 10s.	73	42.3	45.3
10s.-15s.	23	25	21.6
15s.-20s.	4	25	19.5
20s.-25s.		3.8	10.6
25s.-30s.		3.8	2.7

Employee Lives

There was an irregularity of their employment, that caused the workers to suffer. Thomas Toone, a worker in the glove branch, stated: 'I have been out as much as five or six weeks together and never earned a farthing. Some years, I have known the time when I have been out six months and never earned a halfpenny; other years, I have been employed or partially employed the year round.' A worker (child) that worked in seaming had no set times to work like those who did winding, where the worker had to be present while the frame operative was working, they would have worked between twelve and sixteen hours a day, sometimes more.

Greyfriars Townscope Hosiery Factories



36 Millstone Lane – still in use as a factory today



Wycliffe Street – used to be a hosiery factory but now it's used for offices, bars etc.