

## What We Bought - The History of Shopping by Bernard Mills.

A very interesting PowerPoint presentation was given by Bernard Mills on the history of shopping.



Bernard Mills – Archivist for Kays Co.

As the Archivist for the Kays Heritage Group and a former Senior Manager of the Kays Company, his talk was well illustrated with examples of products from the Kays catalogues from the last hundred years; these ranged from furniture to household items; from men's, women's and children's clothing to toys and tinsel and more. Archive photographs included photographs of workers inside the factories.

Kays of Worcester was founded in 1890 by William Kilbourne Kay, at No 4 The Foregate, Worcester with a staff of four. From its humble beginnings it grew to become a pioneer of mail order shopping and a national institution. Kay & Co Ltd was a major employer in Worcester from 1890 until its closure in 2007. Offering interest-free cash credit, Kays ensured that any customer could acquire the lifestyle on show in the catalogues and in the growing film and media industries.



Kays of Worcester at No 4 The Foregate, Worcester.



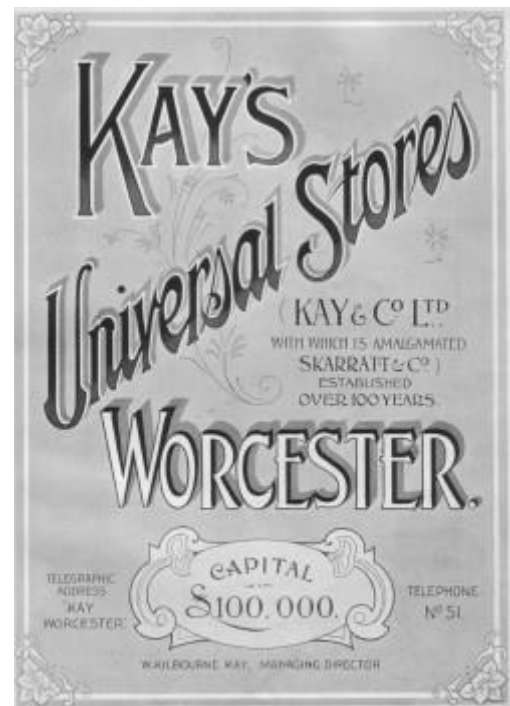
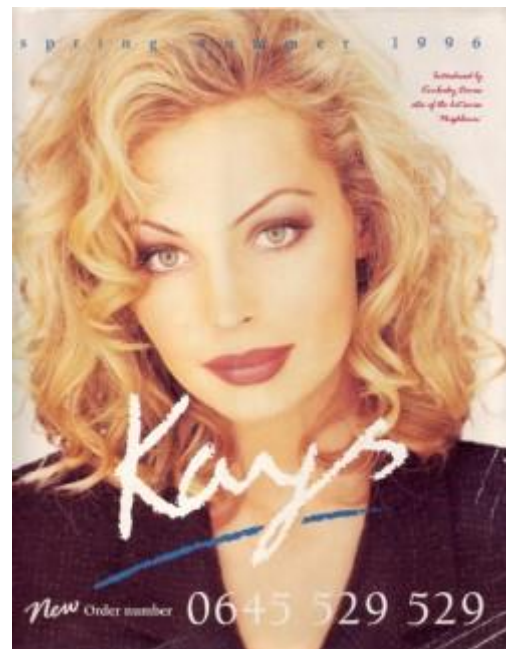
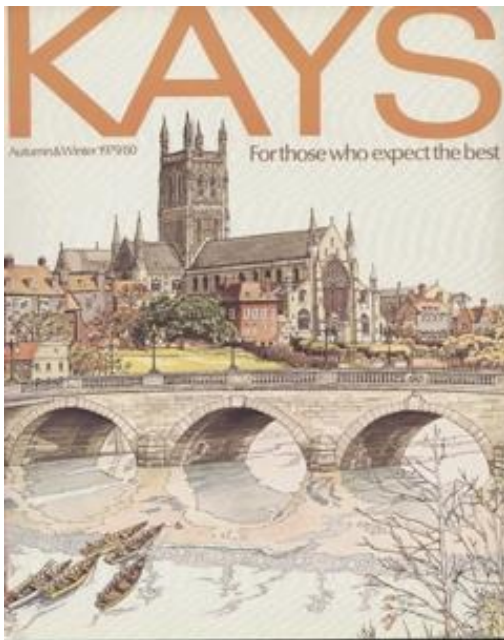
William Kilbourne Kay

The Company constructed many distinctive buildings around the city, the largest of which was their warehouse in the St John's area. This was so big it could be seen from the Malvern Hills, eight miles away. Work began demolishing this building in 2008, and the site was cleared two years later. In its heyday Kays promoted the development and use of artificial textiles and plastics.



The Men's Tailoring Department at Kays of Worcester in the early 20th Century.

The informative talk was a trip down Memory Lane for many, who appreciated the visual content, as items from the 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's were shown on the screen. It also gave a fascinating social history of Great Britain through the eyes of fashion and consumer articles via the medium of the catalogue.



Examples of Kays Catalogue covers through the ages.

Heidy Hague