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HISTORICAL ARCHIVES. = = ===== =
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--- IBM IN GREENOCK.---

PLANT HISTORY :-

IBM's first manufacturing facility in Britain was established in 1951, the year IBM United Kingdom Limited was formed, at Greenock's Battery Park. Starting with just ten employees working in 7,000 square feet of space, the factory was equipped to assemble typewriters, keypunches, verifiers and sorters for marketing in the United Kingdom.

By 1954, Greenock's manufacturing had grown to such an extent that new premises were needed. The company leased a purpose-built factory at Spango Valley from the Scottish Industrial Estates Corporation, the forerunner of the Scottish Development Agency, and purchased the site in 1958.

Since 1954, the plant has grown out of all recognition. The plant's 250 employees in that year have grown ten-fold, to 2,500. It's space has doubled and doubled again until today IBM Greenock has approximately one and a half million square feet of manufacturing and office space. Its role has also grown - from producing purely for the British marketplace, the Greenock plant now manufactures IBM products for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Over the years the plant has advanced in step with technology. It has seen and absorbed the transition from electro-mechanical machines to electronics, from valves to transistors, and from transistors to integrated circuits.

The plant has similarly been through many phases in the products it has manufactured, these include accounting machines, printers, cash issuing terminals, data entry terminals and small scientific computers. Today, IBM Greenock is the company's key high volume plant in Europe for the complete range of IBM Personal Computers systems, which were sourced in Greenock in 1983, display systems and keyboards, producing all these different products in their tens of thousands, largely for export to Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

A recent major investment has seen the start up of a facility to manufacture Surface Mounted Technology circuit boards for the full range of products. This facility is at the leading edge of manufacturing automation.

With a net investment now in excess of \$100 million, the IBM Greenock

plant is a major contributor to IBM United Kingdom Limited's export earnings, and was a key factor in helping the Company secure the Queen's Award for Export.

One of IBM's recent major investments at Greenock was over \$20 million for an automated materials distribution centre (AMDC), one of the most advanced materials handling operations of its kind in Europe. The AMDC is capable of handling 100 incoming goods vehicles a day; its automatic storage and retrieval system, which is fully computer controlled, is capable of holding 24,000 pallets, each bearing one ton of material. A feature of the building is a two mile long conveyor system which feeds parts directly to the plant's manufacturing lines, many of which employ the latest developments in robotics and automated manufacturing techniques. Notable among Greenock's current range of products is the full range of IBM Personal Computers, including the prestigious PS/2 family of products announced in 1987 - aimed at individuals, small enterprises and large organisations with personal computing needs.

In 1986 the plant's ability to continually provide its customers with high quality products and services was recognised when it was awarded the British Quality Award by the British Quality Association.

Education is of great importance to the plant and its employees. In addition to establishing business relationships with a number of Scottish universities and colleges, the plant has invested \$5 million in employee education over the last five years.

This emphasis on education was the driving force behind a brand new concept in Further Education pioneered by the Plant and Strathclyde University.

As the result of an agreement signed in August 1988, Plant employees are able to study for a Master of Science Degree in Computer Integrated Manufacture, on site, with University staff visiting the Plant to hold courses. One of the unique aspects of the course is that it is open to employees who, under normal circumstances, would not have the relevant academic qualifications required for acceptance to the course.

1988 also saw the Plant win two major awards, one external, the other from within the IBM community.

The external version came in the shape of the Plant's third 'Fit for Work' Award. Presented by the Manpower Services Commission, the Award recognises the Plant's principle of equal opportunity for the disabled.

The outstanding achievement of 1988 however was the Plant's success in becoming the first winner of the Company's Leader in Manufacturing Award.

The award is open to all European plants and to win it, and Greenock had

to demonstrate excellence across every aspect of the Plant's activities.

At the commissioning ceremony for the new factory in 1954, Spango Valley was dubbed 'The Valley of Opportunity'. Today it has earned the title 'The Valley of Achievement'.

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