

Key Dates

1377	The first Flemish weavers settled in Bolton
1773	Population of Bolton 5,339
1779	Samuel Crompton invents the Spinning Mule
1780	The cotton industry in Bolton booms
1801	Population in Bolton 17,416
1812	Luddites burn down Westhoughton Mill
1819	Queen Victoria comes to the throne
1827	Samuel Crompton dies
1851	Population of Bolton 168,000
1853	First public library in Bolton opened
1873	Bolton Town Hall built
1883	Factory Act
1890	St. Catherine's school built
1902	Hall i' th' Wood opened as a memorial to Samuel Crompton
1920s	Cotton industry in Bolton starts to decline

Boomtown Bolton

Textiles have been produced in Bolton since Flemish weavers settled in the area during the 15th century, developing a wool and cotton weaving tradition. Bolton's growth largely coincided with the introduction of textile manufacture during the **Industrial Revolution**. It was a boomtown of the 19th century.

Bolton has a famous place in the history of the **Industrial Revolution**. The spinning and weaving of cotton was a vital element in Bolton's wealth in the past

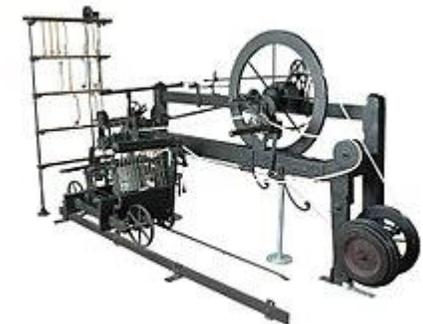
Lancashire's damp climate made it perfect for keeping cotton yarns moist and unlikely to break so it became the centre of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Lots of people moved away from the countryside to work in the **cotton mills**. The Bridgewater Canal, connecting Manchester with the port of Liverpool, was built to move large amounts of raw cotton and finished cloths around.

Samuel Crompton

His invention of the 'Spinning **Mule**' revolutionised the industry; there was less thread-breakage than with the spinning jenny, and it was also capable of producing very fine yarn. Bolton was also where Richard Arkwright had worked as a barber before going on to invent the cotton spinning frame and the carding engine.

Key Vocab

Mill town	a settlement that developed around one or more mills or factories, usually cotton mills or factories producing textiles
Boomtown	a community that undergoes sudden and rapid population and economic growth, or that is started from scratch.
Luddite	early 19th century English workmen destroying laboursaving machinery as a protest; now used to refer to someone who is opposed to change, especially technological
Industrial Revolution	The development of new machinery and technology in the nineteenth century, which caused major changes in the way of life of the people in Britain.
Cotton mill	a building housing spinning or weaving machinery for the production of yarn or cloth from cotton
Ancestor	Your ancestors are the people from whom you are descended – family from long ago
Mule	A type of spinning machine, used to make raw cotton into threads.



Samuel Crompton and his 'Spinning Mule'

Luddite

The **Luddites** were 19th-century English textile workers who protested against the machines developed during the period of industrial revolution, which meant that skilled labour was no longer needed. Less skilled machine workers could do the work for less pay.

Machine-breaking Luddites attacked and burned factories, and in some cases they even exchanged gunfire with company guards and soldiers. The workers hoped their raids would stop employers from installing expensive machinery

The British government stopped the uprisings by making machine-breaking punishable by death.

Luddites destroy Westhoughton Mill

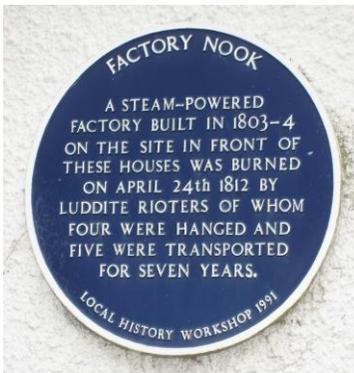
Westhoughton Mill was one of the first steam-powered textile mills in Lancashire.

It employed a large number of local people but because of the machinery, lesser skills were needed and it became a target for The Luddites

A boy, Abraham Charlson, was passed through a small window and opened the factory to the mob, who destroyed all the machinery, and set fire to the buildings.

As punishment four people were hanged and a further nine deported to Australia for seven years.

Abraham Charlson is an **ancestor** of Mrs Lightbown



A blue plaque on the side of a building in Westhoughton

What was life like for children in textile mills?

Huge mills were built in the 18th and 19th centuries. To produce cotton and woollen cloth, the mills needed a vast workforce which included children. Children were apprenticed at nine and were given lodgings, food and an hour of schooling a week. Hours were long and the mills were noisy, hot, dusty and dangerous places to work. Medical records reveal that accidents and disease were common.

1833 Factory Act

In 1833 the Government passed a Factory Act to improve conditions for children working in factories. Young children were working very long hours in workplaces where conditions were often terrible.



Factory Act 1833

CONTENTS:

1. No child workers under nine years of age
2. Employers must have an age certificate for their child workers
3. Children of 9-13 years to work no more than nine hours a day
4. Children of 13-18 years to work no more than 12 hours a day
5. Children are not to work at night
6. Two hours schooling each day for children
7. Four factory inspectors appointed to enforce the law.