

# Children then and now



## How this links with the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site:

Children from as young as 7 years old worked 12 hour shifts in the mills as 'scavengers' (crawling under the machines) and 'doffers' (removing bobbins from the spinning frames when they were full and replacing them with empty ones). Arkwright advertised for large families to come and work in his mills in Cromford and all the mills had communities built up around them to house the workers. It was important that the children could do their 3 R's (reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic) so children were taught on a Sunday, sometimes in the attics of the mill buildings, and later taught in specially built schools. Life was very different for the children in the 1800s than it is for children today!

## You will need:

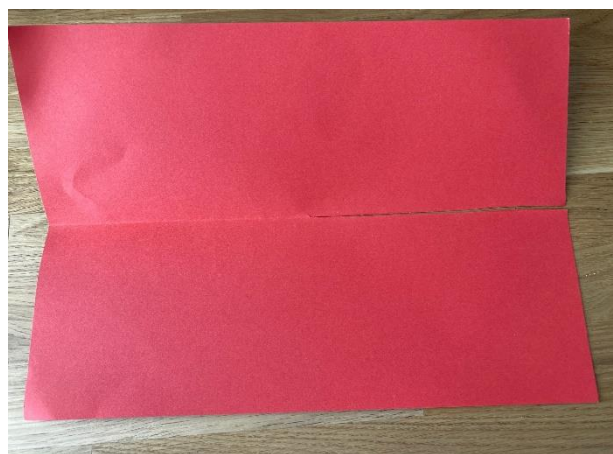
- Pencils
- Coloured Card
- Plain paper from sketch book
- Scissors
- Glue
- Wool
- Pencil crayons
- Inspiration pictures (see below)



## How to have a go:

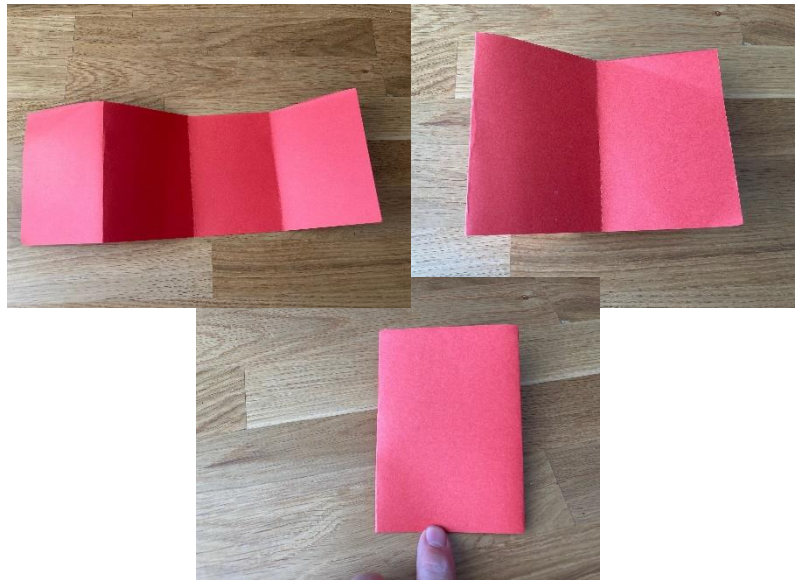
### Step 1:

- Take a piece of A4 card
- Fold it in half lengthways
- Cut down the middle to make a long strip

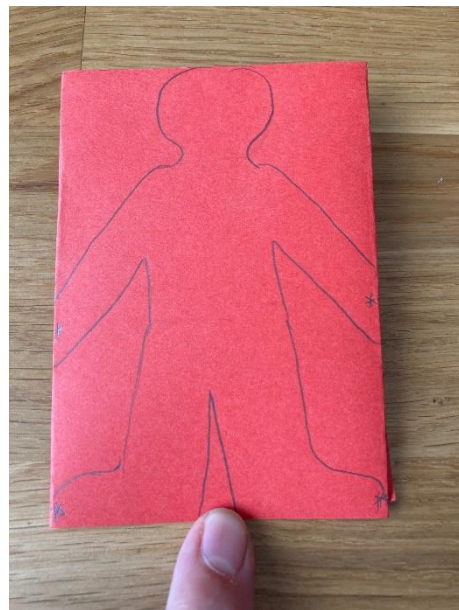


**Step 2:**

- Fold the strip in half
- Fold it in half again
- You will have a concertina of four pieces

**Step 3:**

- Draw the shape of a child onto your card.
- Make sure that the hands and feet touch the edges of the card (look at the \* on the picture)
- Keep the card folded and cut out the shape of the child
- Don't cut where the hands and toes touch the edge so the card stays connected on the folds.

**Step 4:**

- Carefully open out the card
- You will have four children holding hands in a row.





**Step 5:**

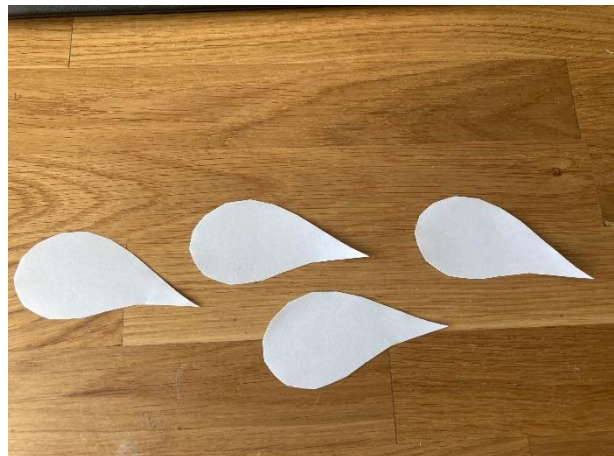
- Look at the pictures of mill worker children.
- The girls would wear aprons, long skirts and tops with frilly collars and the boys would wear woollen suits and often a flat cap.
- Decorate two of your children as mill workers from the 1800s. You can colour in, draw on, cut out pieces of paper and glue them on.

**Step 6:**

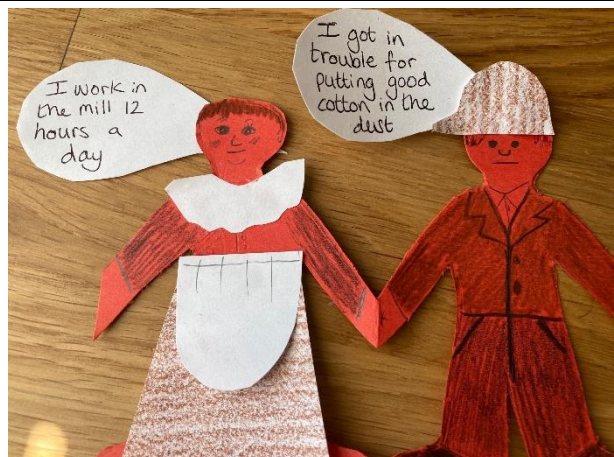
- Think about how children dress today.
- Using your crayons, wool, coloured card and pencils decorate the other two children to look like they are from the present day.

**Step 7:**

- Cut out four speech bubble shapes from plain paper.

**Step 8:**

- Write what each of the children might say in a speech bubble and stick it onto the back of their head.
- Think about how they would spend their time, what they might get in trouble for, what they might enjoy, what was easy or difficult for them.



### Step 9:

- Write the speech bubbles for your modern children. Again think about how they spend their time, what they like to do, what they get in trouble for, what they are allowed to do or not do.
- Stand up your mill and modern children and display them on a windowsill or shelf.



Mill worker children (Credit: Belper North Mill Trust)

**F**ORGING and Filing Smiths, Joiners and Carpenters, Framework-Knitters and Weavers, with large Families. Likewise Children of all Ages; above seven Years old, may have constant Employment. Boys and young Men may have Trades taught them, which will enable them to maintain a Family in a short Time. Two or three young Men who can write a good Hand, are also wanted. By personal Application at the COTTON-MILLS, Particulars may be known.  
SEPTEMBER 19, 1781.

Copy of an advertisement placed in the Derby Mercury in 1781.



## Using Belper British Girls School Strutt School Admission Records – April 13th 1818

Names	Age	Residence	Father's trade	Admission	Left on	Observations, reasons for leaving
Davies Susan	8	Long Row	Employed in coal pit	July 6 1818	Jan 1822	Went to the Mill
Davies Eliza	5	Long Row	Employed in coal pit	Jul 6 1818	Sept 1818	Wanted at home
Davies Harriet	5	Short Rows	Collier	May 23 1818	Mar 1831	Gone to the Mill
Furnace Lydia	9	Long Row	Labourer	March 1823	April 1825	To the Mill
Frost Frances	9	Field Row	Stockinger	March 5 1826	March 16 1827	Gone to the Mill
Ford Alice	3	Clusters	Overlooker	May 1 1827	June 3 1831	Gone to the Mill
Flint Emma	8	Common Side	Nailer	Oct 4 1829	March 4 1831	Gone to the Mill
Ford Eliza	11	Mount Pleasant	Weaver	April 1821	June 1821	Went to work
Davies Sarah	7	Cluster Buildings	Collier	Nov 29 1825	May 20 1826	Wanted

## Using Strutt School Admissions of Belper British School for Boys 1818-1839

Names	Age	Residence	Father's trade	Admission	Left on	Observations, reasons for leaving
Bond George	7½	Short Rows	Bricklayer	May 18 1818	April 20 1821	Gone to work at Mill
Bond John	5	Short Rows	Bricklayer	May 18 1818	Nov 12 1822	Gone to work at Mill
Bridges Benjamin	4	Long Row	Tailor	January 2 1832	Sept 15 1838	Wanted
Bridges William	3	Long Row	Tailor	March 1 1830	August 10 1834	Gone to Mill
Bridges John	3	Long Row	Tailor	March 30 1841	Oct 29 1841	Gone to work with his father
Booth Joshua	7	Short Rows	Nailer	July 20 1835	Dec 20 1839	Gone to work
Burgess William	3	Long Row	Soldier	March 28 1837	March 2 1839	Left town
Booth George	4	Cluster Buildings	Wood turner	May 22 1836	March 1 1844	Gone to the Mill
Barlow John Thomas	1	Long Row	School Master	June 13 1831	March 24 1840	Gone to the Mill

### Factory Rules and Forfeits – Keeping Control

When people first came together to work in the cotton mills, the employers felt they must control their workforce by having very strict rules of behaviour. The overseer kept discipline and gave out fines for any bad behaviour. These lists are some of the activities that got people into trouble. Their misdemeanours were recorded in the wages stopped books.

#### Absence:

- Running away
- Being off drinking
- Off without leave at wakes
- Being off at Heage Feast with a pretence of being ill
- Off at Derby Races without leave.

#### Theft of Mill property:

- Stealing candles and oil
- Stealing yarn
- Making good yarn into waste and pocketing it
- Stealing nails.

#### Destruction or damage of Mill property:

- Breaking a Drawing Frame
- Setting fire to a lamp cupboard
- Tearing roller clothes willfully
- Stuffing a stove tunnel up
- Putting good cotton in the dust.

#### Failure to do work as required:

- Leaving her machine dirty
- Leaving his dust room dirty
- Weighing sorts wrong and being saucy when told of it
- Tying bad knots
- Neglecting their work.

#### Failing to comply with Mill discipline:

- Idleness and looking thro' window
- Calling thro' window to some soldiers
- Riding on each others back
- Telling lies to Mr Jedediah
- Sending for ale into the room.

#### Misconduct outside working hours:

- For putting Josh Haynes' dog into a bucket of hot water
- Rubbing their faces with blood and going about town to frighten people
- Attempting to defraud Messrs Strutts by changing bad money for good.

## **Please let us know what you think of this activity and share your work with us**

When you have had a go at this activity, we'd love to hear what you think, or see your work. Please send us any feedback below by 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

**Post us your work** – If you would like to post us any of your work or let us know what you think of this activity with a note with your name and address (and age if you'd like to share that). We are hoping to have an exhibition in the Autumn on one of the mill sites of the work created by people all along the valley. We will return all your work to you after the exhibition.

### **Postal address:**

Georgina Greaves (DVMWHS Creativity Packs)  
Derbyshire County Council  
North Block S7 - County Hall  
Matlock  
Derbyshire DE4 3AG

**Send us a photo** – Email a photo of your creation to [info@derwentvalleymills.org](mailto:info@derwentvalleymills.org)

**Social Media** – If you use social media use #DVMWHS Creativity and post the images of your work and tag us at:



Facebook: @DerwentValleyMillsWHS



Twitter: @DVMillsWHS



Instagram: @DerwentValleyMillsWHS

**Hope you enjoy doing this craft activity!**