

# SIR RICHARD ARKWRIGHT'S CROMFORD MILLS

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## Cromford Mills during Lockdown

Keeping you up to date with behind the scenes



We have lots of things in the pipeline for the celebrations. We will be keeping you informed, but for now, here are a couple of ways in which you can get involved.

When our Education Officer retired in December, he related a wonderful story about an occasion probably about 20 years ago, when contractors dug through a gas main on Mill Lane, and instead of telling people about it - they stuck a tree trunk in the hole and went home!! When staff finally smelt gas and called out the gas board, it was discovered that all the water culverts under the Mill were full of gas, and in danger of blowing the Mill and the people in it sky high!!

Everyone was evacuated and the gas board broke through doors and windows to ensure that all the buildings were aired. The story did not end there, as the police attended site that evening, and thinking that there had been a break in because of all the broken windows, searched the site for burglars!

This got us wondering if there are any other interesting or funny stories from your involvement with Cromford Mills, that we could use. Perhaps in these updates, or on social media. Please email any stories you have to Jo on [officemanager@arkwrightsociety.org.uk](mailto:officemanager@arkwrightsociety.org.uk)



As part of our birthday celebrations, the Derwent Valley Book Project is inviting all photographers to submit images for the first ever photo book of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. There will be cash prizes for the best photos and a touring exhibition.

<https://www.derwentvalleyimages.co.uk/about-the-project>

If you have a great photograph of our site, or any on the World Heritage Site, why not get involved.

Ashley Franklyn is leading this project - and this beautiful photo is one of his.



## Corona Virus Funding

As you know we were successful with several funding bids, and we wanted to keep you up to date with what we are spending it on. Amongst other things:

- We are currently upgrading catering equipment in both cafés. New counter surfaces, new dishwashers and new cooking equipment will make life and work flow easier for our hardworking team, and allow them to

present a wider range of foods in a quicker, more efficient way. For example, pull through dishwashers at counter height mean no more bending and lifting with heavy trays, and with quick wash times should really help with clearing tables at busy times.

- By necessity, most of the usable ground floor space at Cromford Mills is allocated to retail – both to provide us with an income, and to provide additional attractions for our visitors. Some of the COVID19 funding is therefore being used to provide storage solutions for the charity – somewhere to safely store popup gazebos, volunteer tools and events furniture, and the chance to tidy up the storage area at the back of the Mill.



After listening to advice, we have made the decision to keep the Counting House Coffee Stop closed until the situation improves. This closure is for the safety of our staff and visitors. We do not want to encourage anyone to step further afield than outlined in the lockdown guidelines, and we know how much people like to travel for a nice slice of cake!

## **Mill Matters: An occasional look at snippets from our history**

### **Why did Arkwright come to Cromford?**

Richard Arkwright came to Cromford in 1771, following on from his successful horse powered mill in Nottingham. Cromford was a very remote agricultural hamlet. It had poor transport links, was a long way from the markets of Nottingham and Lancashire and even further from the ports through which raw cotton was imported.

### **So why did he build this ground-breaking water-powered mill here?**

Cromford could provide a constant water supply from the Bonsall Brook and the Cromford Sough (pronounced suff). The sough was a drain from the surrounding lead mines and coming from underground, it had the advantage of not freezing in winter. Both water courses were fast flowing but small and could be used without expensive engineering which Arkwright could not afford.

Cromford's isolation might also have been an advantage because Arkwright wanted to keep the design of his new spinning machine secret to prevent people from copying it illegally.

Its success soon turned Cromford Mills into a "tourist attraction", with the Greyhound Hotel being built to house visitors, but even then the high walls and very few windows on the roadside, were all part of Arkwright's efforts to keep his copyrighted designs away from prying eyes.

SIR RICHARD ARKWRIGHT'S  
**CROMFORD  
MILLS**

**HOMESCHOOLING  
WITH A HISTORICAL  
TWIST!**

Discover more about the history of Cromford Mills and the life of mill workers with our free downloadable worksheets.

To find free resources from the Cromford Mills visit  
<https://www.cromfordmills.org.uk/learning-home>

An illustration of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a green t-shirt and red shorts, sitting cross-legged on a light blue background. He is looking at a yellow laptop. Above him, several books are floating in the air, connected to him by dashed lines. The books are in various colors, including yellow, green, and brown.

We have been working on creating a range of downloadable worksheets which are great for adding something different to your day and they support learning from home. Find them here:  
<https://www.cromfordmills.org.uk/learning-home>