

Children of the Mills KS2+

Travel back in time and learn about life in Cromford before and after the arrival of Arkwright's mills!

Led by expert guides, enjoy a fully led, resourced, interactive, historical day. Your class will be immersed in the history of the mill, have a go at textile crafts and discover the hidden gems of Cromford village.

Pre-visit activities

We can send you a newspaper advert in which Richard Arkwright seeks new workers, especially children, for his expanding cotton mills. There are also videos available to watch; these introduce you to our mill workers Mrs Froggatt and Mrs Henstock – see your booking email.

We can adapt the day as necessary to match the priorities of your visit and meet the needs of all your learners. This is how a typical day with us could look like:

9.30 15 mins	Arrival and safety briefing Your guide will meet you off the coach and take you to the Education Room, your base for the day.
9.45 15 mins	The Arkwright Experience A short 3D cinematic audio-visual display in which Richard Arkwright appears and describes to visitors his achievements at Cromford.
10:00 45 mins	Introducing the mill... Your guide will also show you around the site, especially the first mill, our water wheel and machinery including a replica water frame - Arkwright's revolutionary cotton-spinning machine. Children learn about cotton production and child labour in the domestic system and in the mills.
10:45- 11.00	Break / loos
10:45 1 hr 30 mins 1 hr 15 mins with break	Travel back in time Children are introduced to the concept of role play and get into 18 th century costume (there are adult costumes for staff too!). A new life at the Mill Our Georgian mill workers are keen to share their experiences of working at the mills and talk to the children about what to expect in their new jobs, including wages, discipline, the conditions of work and their new house. The children, our newest apprentices, will act out various jobs such as scutching, doffing, picking and piecing. "Nimble fingers and quick learners" Guided by our Georgian workers, children rotate around textile activities. They will learn how to card the raw cotton, weave using a hand loom, complete the Doffer's Challenge, maybe spin yarn on drop spindles (hard skill) and sign their apprentice indentures using pen and ink.
12:15 30 mins	Lunch – either in the Education Room, or in nice weather classes can picnic near the canal or in the mill yard. Large groups may be able to use the marquee, in bad weather. Time can be given for a trip to the Mill Shop.
12:45 1 hr 30 mins	Where will I live? The new workers take a tour of Cromford village: They will see the workers' housing, the allotments, the marketplace & hotel, the old lock up, the 'Bear Pit', the houses where the Arkwright family lived, and the church where Sir Richard Arkwright is buried.
2.15 15 mins	Final thoughts A plenary session to give children the opportunity to reflect on the life of the 'Children of the Mills' and prepare to leave.
2.15-30	Prep & Depart from Cromford Mills

For larger schools, split into 2 groups, textile work & activities will be swapped with the village tour. One group will do as above, the other will do the village tour AM and the travel back in time, life at the mill and nimble fingers PM.

Please contact our learning & engagement officers if you would like more information, or to book a visit and/or pre-visit: learning@arkwrightsociety.org.uk; 01629 343058/53 (direct lines)