

FAQ Occupants and workers

How many people worked here?

The top 2 floors would have had 22 windows originally, with a loom at each window. Each loom would have had one operator, and possibly some assistance from a child.

It took 5 spinners to provide the wool for one loom. Much of the spinning was done in the home, and presumably some of this was carried out in the cottages below the looms. The supply of wool was seasonal so work was not available all year round.



Residents in Penygloddfa (the area around the museum) in 1841 – the first year that the census recorded occupations, - include men and women into their 70s working as weavers and spinners. Teenage children as young as 14 were also recorded as working in the woollen industry.

Up to 10 and often as many as 7 or 8 people are recorded as living in these small houses which were therefore very overcrowded. Preliminary analysis of later census data provides similar detail.

Did children work here?



Most children did not go to school in the 1830s, and in any case not after they were about 12. This is a school book we have from 1847. We have yet to trace the boy!.

They would have worked both officially and unofficially with their parents. They worked long hours in difficult circumstances, but it was not quite so dangerous working with the hand looms as in the big mechanical factories.

What food did they cook and how?

Almost all of the food would have been locally produced. In the early years, there were allotments where families could grow vegetables. Their diet, which was generally poor, would have included potatoes, eggs, mutton, milk, and bread. Food was more readily available than in big cities. As the water from the well was frequently contaminated, they often drank beer. They cooked on the open fire in their cottages.

Where did they get their food?

The flannel manufacturers often owned the local shops- known as 'Tommy shops' or 'Truck shops' and their employees were obliged to get their food there, often at inflated prices or in exchange for tokens given for work. Allotments were gradually lost as housing and weaving factories were built in the area.

When did the last families live here?

The six small houses, converted into three in the late nineteenth century were still occupied until 1990. From the time the Museum opened in 1967 until 1990, one of the three houses was frequently the home of the museum caretaker.



How original is the furniture?

None of the furniture is specifically from this building but has been chosen to represent the period. The room at the bottom of the stairs shows a time when there was only one living room for the whole family. The room next to Reception is of a later style perhaps after the cottages were combined so that each family had 2 living rooms.