

FAQ Are you anything to do with Robert Owen

Robert Owen was a noted philanthropic social reformer, textile manufacturer and founder of the co-operative movement. There is a good museum about his life in the centre of Newtown.

He was born in Newtown in 1771, in a building in Broad Street, where the HSBC is now located. He went away as a young man and his career was developed in the cotton industry – in New Lanark, a village on the river Clyde southeast of Glasgow. He took over his father-in-law's cotton mill there and wanted it to be a better place to work by providing good housing and education for his workers. In 1824 he travelled to America where he invested in a socialistic community which did not prove successful. He was influential in both the trade union movement and cooperative movement



He died in 1858 in Newtown.

As his business was in the cotton industry, he was not directly linked to the woollen trade in Newtown, but he was keenly interested in the working conditions of the workers, and in particular, the children, so one can suppose he maintained an interest in his home town and its circumstances as he had an extensive family in the town.

Are you a Newtown or a Textile Museum?

The primary focus of the museum is the hand-loom woollen industry in the 1800s. We aim to tell the story of wool from 'Fleece to Flannel' including demonstrating the techniques involved in the processes.

In addition, we tell the story of related industries in the town, and key people who played a major role in the town's fortunes.

However, we do not claim to be a museum telling the whole story of Newtown. As the town was established in the 1290s, there is much more

to its history than we can cover in our limited space. Our aim is to shed some light on an important era in Mid-Wales when Newtown was known as the 'Leeds of Wales'.

Why are you called a Textile Museum when you deal with wool?

The Museum has had this name since 1967 when it opened, and wool is clearly made into a variety of textiles. Many people know us now and changing the name would be very difficult.

Also Wales has another Wool Museum that is part of National Museums Wales. It is located at Dre-fach Felindre, Llandysul, Carmarthenshire. We need to be recognised separately.