

The Factories Acts

Introduced sequentially to improve hours and conditions in factories. Charles Patrick's role was to enforce these.

Factories Act 1833 (3&4 Will. IV c.103)

- Children (ages 14–18) must not work more than 12 hours a day with an hour lunch break. Note that this enabled employers to run two 'shifts' of child labour each working day in order to employ their adult male workers for longer.
- Children (ages 9–13) must not work more than 8 hours with an hour lunch break.
- Children (ages 9–13) must have two hours of education per day.
- Outlawed the employment of children under 9 in the textile industry.
- Children under 18 must not work at night.
- Provided for routine inspections of factories – 4 inspectors appointed

Factories Act 1844 (7&8 Vic c. 15)

Applied to the textile industry and extended the above provisions to women

- Children 9–13 years could work for 9 hours a day with a lunch break.
- Women and young people now worked the same number of hours. They could work for no more than 12 hours a day during the week, including one and a half hours for meals, and 9 hours on Sundays.
- Factory owners must wash factories with lime every fourteen months.
- Ages must be verified by surgeons.
- Accidental death must be reported to a surgeon and investigated.
- Thorough records must be kept regarding the provisions of the act.
- Machinery was to be fenced in.

Factories Act 1847 (10&11 Vic c 29)

- Applied to textile mills except silk and lace
- Women and children under 18 could work a maximum of 63 hours/week
- Reduced May 1848 to 58 hours/week
- Effectively the working day became limited to 10 hours
- Led to the introduction of two 10 hour shifts/day

Factories Act 1850 (13 & 14 Vict c 54)

Defined hours of work

- Children and Women could only work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the summer and 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the winter.
- All work would end on Saturday at 2 p.m..
- The working week was extended from 58 hours to 60 hours.
- Hours of work for age 9 to 18 was changed to 10.5 hours night and day (reduced to 10 hours/day in 1856)

“The Factory Inspectors’ Reports of the middle decades of the nineteenth century give yearly evidence of wilful evasion of the Factory Laws and of a somewhat unfeeling exploitation of the workforce. The starting before and working after legal hours, the employment of children under age, or without allowing them to attend school at ages when the Factory Act required them to do so, seem to have been common practices which the penalties imposed by the magistrates, who were too often themselves magistrates, were too small to suppress.”¹

¹ Tupling, *Economic History of Rossendale* p. 219

Industry²

Developed in Rossendale following the introduction of new spinning/weaving machines better suited to cotton than wool, together with the easing of import restrictions favouring cotton, together with suitable water supply

Patents:

1748	Louis Paul	Carding Machine
1764	James Hargreaves	hand jenny – 8 threads
1775	Richard Arkwright	spinning by rollers
1780	Samuel Crompton	spinning mule – span both warp and weft
1769	James Watt	steam engine

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the emergence of local capitalists with direct connections to the overseas cotton markets.

1st cotton mill in Rossendale recorded 1770

1826 anti-power loom riots involving over 300 people and damaging 4 cotton and 3 woollen weaving mills between Chadderton and Bacup 1801-1851 -

by 1830 – 40+ weaving sheds, mainly hand looms

40-50 spinning mills

1830-1880 gradual replacement of domestic/shop weaving

1844 over 100 cotton or woollen mills

1801-1851 population of Rossendale increased x3

1861 cotton famine secondary to the American civil war. Most cotton workers were either on short hours or unemployed.

Woollen manufacture led to the development of felt and hence slipper manufacture. Felt was first made in Rossendale by Mr Edward Rostron, who began to make it at Myrtle Grove in 1854. Within a short period of time there were several other makers including Messers Mitchell of Whitewell Bottom, Ashworth of Shawclough and Stansfield of Lumb Holes. These manufacturers later united to form Mitchell Ashworth Stansfield or MASCo.

Increasing industrialisation and the development of steam power led to both easier extraction and an increased demand for coal and enriched the colliery owners. Coalmining in Rossendale was located mainly in the moors between Bacup and Burnley. Coal seams in the moorland outcrops ranged from a few inches to 5' in depth and had been mined on a small scale from the C16th.

Quarrying was located mainly south of the Irwell, enhanced by the development of the Manchester – Bury – Rossendale railway in 1844.

² From Tupling, *Economic History of Rossendale*, pp 192-219.
Bacuptimes <http://www.bacuptimes.co.uk/waterfoot.htm>