

NEWSLETTER No. 19 – SPRING 2018



1. From the Chairman

Due to illness, this edition of the newsletter is slightly delayed. Because the April event will take place very soon, please book swiftly, and support the event, a walking tour of Whitehaven, led by Blue Badge Guide and CVBG member, Anna Gray. It promises to be a really interesting event. Brunskill used Whitehaven in his book, *Traditional Buildings of Cumbria*, to illustrate examples of urban vernacular style in Cumbria.

We are very fortunate to have so many skilled, experienced and enthusiastic members in CVBG. This year, several have responded to an earlier request to organise events. From the committee, Mike Kingsbury, Barbara Grundy, Claire Jeffery, Dan Elsworth, Richard Wilson, Helen Evans are taking a lead, as well as members Chris Craghill, Anna Gray and Alex Gibbons. Many thanks to all volunteers. In July and August, there will be two events.

This year, our Annual General Meeting will change from its regular Saturday, as has been our habit, to a weekday evening, Thursday, 13 September, at 7.30 pm. The venue, Hutton in the Forest, is not available on Saturdays, hence a weekday arrangement, but an evening session will give us private access to the house and its furniture collection. More details to come with the June Newsletter.

It is high time to form a CVBG Recording Group. Volunteers are invited to do the important work of completing the ever-growing backlog of building records. Whatever your level of skill or experience, please help with this work, even if you only contribute to one or two records. A form is enclosed, to be returned before 30 April, please. We are considering producing a publication about Cumbria's Vernacular Buildings and what we have discovered in our first five years. It would be good if this appeared in time for the study day in October. If you have a contribution in the form of an observation, photograph, a document or a more substantial paper, please send it to the secretary.

Please make every effort to attend the event on 23 May, to Ryedale Folk Museum at Hutton le Hole. It is based on a unique collection of re-erected houses, cottages, farm and industrial buildings brought from all over the North York Moors, and has a great deal to teach us about building history. It demonstrates the living standards, furnishing, plan-types, use of materials and techniques, room use and much more, in a really accessible form. Because it is some distance from Cumbria, we are arranging coach transport for those who prefer not to drive. We need at least ten people in the group, to qualify for party rate. See enclosed booking form ■

June Hill

2. Possible Warping Frame at High Newton – David Shore

June Hill led a walkabout at High Newton in July 2017. One of the houses visited was The Post House. In one of the rooms a tie-beam and supporting post was noticed to have a number of sawn off pegs with no obvious explanation.

A further visit showed the tie-beam of 12' 9" had 12 sawn-off pegs, fairly evenly spaced, and a supporting post, 6' 1" had 8 sawn-off pegs with 2 more, side by side at the base. See image for part of the structure, showing 3 sawn-off pegs in the tie-beam and 2 in the supporting post.

Suspicion that this was a possible warping frame was confirmed by a booklet produced by Kendal Town Council called The Pattern Book of 1769, produced for the exhibition of the Wool Pattern Book in Kendal around 2010. A simplistic drawing of a warping frame, (see page 8) typical of those used in the Kendal area, shows a long horizontal beam and a shorter post with pegs spaced at regular intervals.

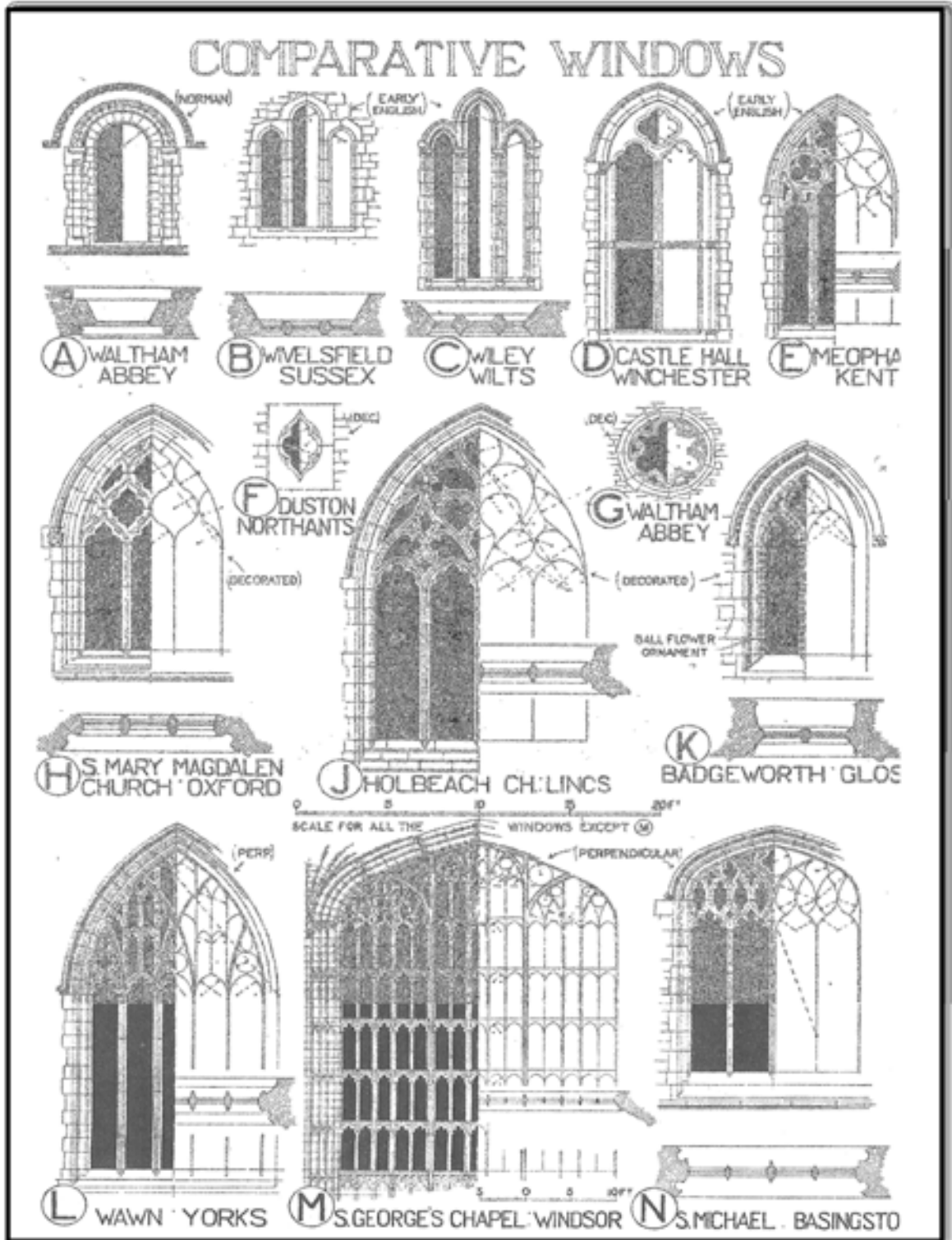
The location of the Post House is significant, because the field behind the house contains 3 platforms for large weaving sheds, as described by Mike Davies-Shiel, and he found evidence the field was known as Weaving Sheds Meadow, probably all owned by the flaxman Benjamin Hall, who built Greensyke in High Newton, dated 1754. It is possible that the looms in the weaving shed used the warps made in the Post House ■



© David Shore

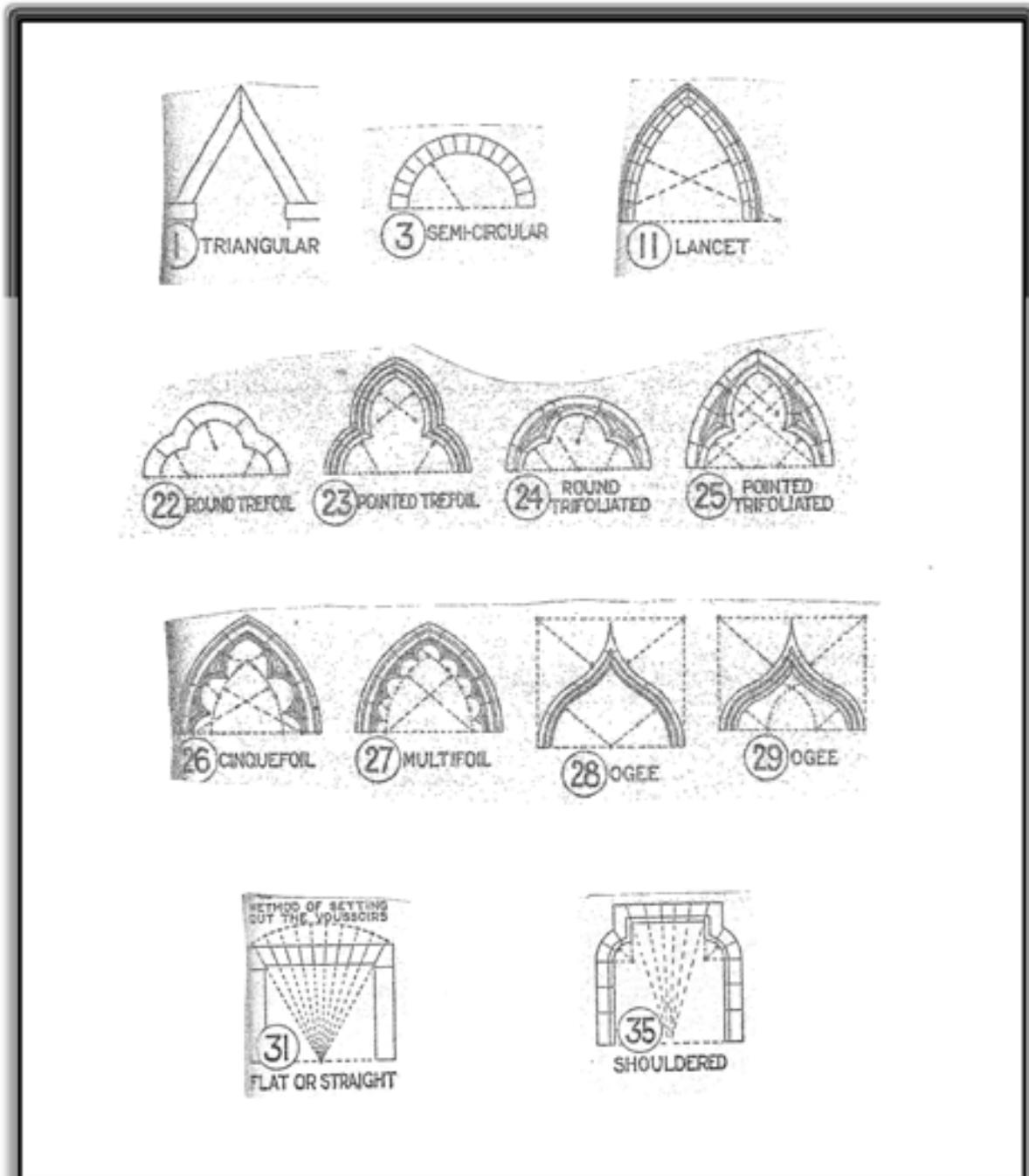
3. Troutbeck Study Day – 27th March 2018

It was a drizzly day in Troutbeck but the sun came out a couple of times after lunch for our jaunt around some of the village's fine vernacular buildings. The morning session comprised contributions from our Chairman June Hill (**The evolution of doors and windows up to 1500**) and visiting lecturer Andy Lowe (**An open and shut case: how to become a window and door detective**).



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June focussed on the history of the arch, beautifully illustrated by slides of local and national examples of early openings, and plates from *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* by Sir Banister Fletcher (1945). As a former conservation officer for the Lake District National Park, Andy talked through the history of vernacular and polite doorway and window design, with slides of windows and doors of many lesser-known buildings in the region.



'Window' derives from the Norse 'wind-eye'; early narrow round-headed windows survive in church towers and in domestic and defensive contexts, they were small and unglazed, serving as look-outs, and also to create draughts to drive smoke from open fires and dissipate bad smells. Medieval cathedral-building drove forward stone-masonry technology, creating increasingly wider and higher arches- and thus, the lights that they made possible.

Glass-making technology proceeded hand-in-hand with that of stone-masonry and into the Perpendicular period (in church architecture parlance) of the 14th to 16th centuries, large mullion and transom windows emerged, of which there are some survivals in vernacular hall-houses. Most, however, are blocked or now span two floors where a first floor was inserted, often in the same period as the first chimneys were built.

Stone-masonry and glass-making technologies came together with more local concerns, which, in Cumbria, were mainly wind and rain-related. As Andy pointed out in his tour of Troutbeck farmhouses, their positioning on the sunny side of the valley, and the location of doorways in gable ends rather than along weather walls let in the most light in while also keeping the prevailing weather at bay.



High Fold, Troutbeck © Mike Turner

During the 17th century when many of our vernacular farmhouses were built, windows were constructed in relation to internal room height; often rows of three or more fixed narrow lights within stone mullions with hood mouldings. Like the many slate drip-courses visible in Troutbeck, these stood proud of the windows. In an era before guttering and downpipes, hood mouldings and drip courses drew wind-driven away from the windows and off the walls, helping to keep them dry. Into the 18th and 19th centuries, technologies as well as sensibilities moved on, increasingly larger windows were produced to hold increasingly larger sheets of glass, and in turn, people began to look through them, at polite and designed landscapes.

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Across high status buildings and relatively humble dwellings, doors and windows were the cheapest elements of a building to replace, or to upgrade when times were good. Both June and Andy highlighted the importance of windows and doorways as highly visible status symbols, the design of which followed national and regional trends. Over the centuries, changing tastes have meant that many early doors and windows have been lost, making survivals of vernacular forms all the more significant.



Thwaite © Barbara Grundy (edited from original)

Andy highlighted the importance of the like-for-like replacement of windows in old buildings (not just listed ones) and the harm done to the historic environment by allowing plastic windows to replace traditional wooden frames ■

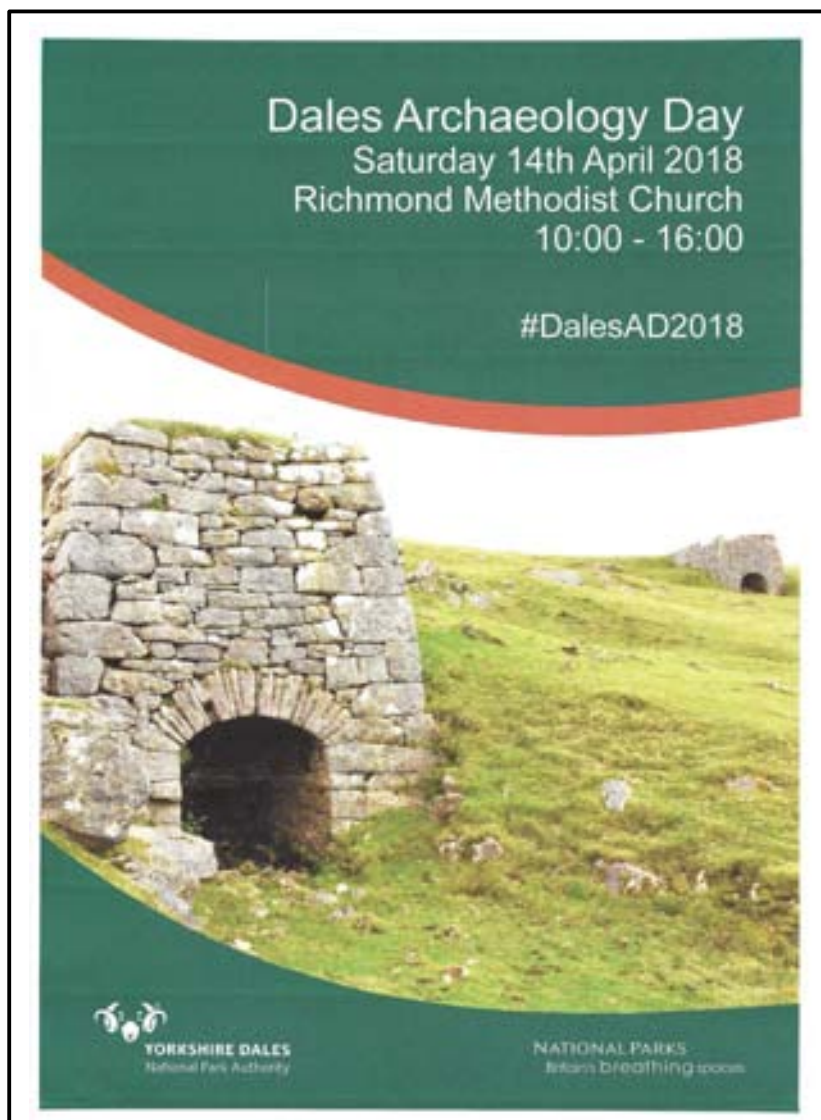
Recent Historic England advice is available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/>

Helen Evans

4. An appeal by Peter Messenger

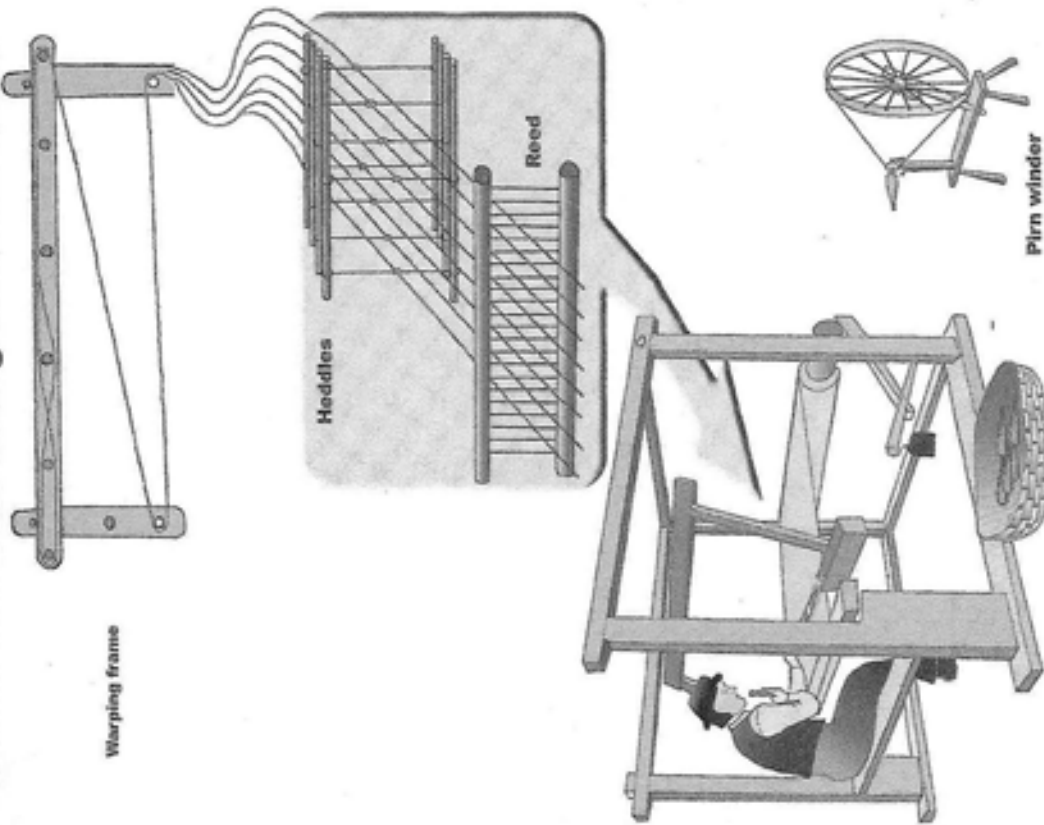
CVBG member, Peter Messenger, is researching Cumbrian farmsteads and would like to know of any surviving examples of planned or model farms in the county. English Heritage recorded 20 or so, all built by the gentry or nobility. If there are others in this category they would be of interest, but he would especially like to know of any that were built by ordinary, but presumably prosperous, farmers of the yeoman/statesman class. He can be contacted at pmessenger1@gmail.com ■

5. Event Reminder



Telephone: 01969 652343 or herinfo@yorkshiredales.org.uk

The linen and the wool goes to the weaver



1 adding
2 adding
3 adding
4 all parts
5 ready
6 ready

Illustration by Martin Rowley

The Weaver

When delivering his completed piece of cloth to the Crewdson factory our weaver would collect whatever yarn was needed for his next piece or the one after that, and for the first time the linen and wool yarns would come together in the weaver's cottage. It is likely that the weaver will have woven the same cloth many times before but, when asked to make a new design, he will take the two threads and make calculations as to how many warp threads are needed for each inch in the width of the cloth. Next he will make the warp from the linen yarn. Linen is good for this job as it is stronger than an equivalent weight of woollen thread and will not break so often in the loom. A broken warp thread is annoying and considerably slows the weaving process. There is a warping frame either on the side of his loom or on the back wall of his cramped room. The pegs of the frame are arranged so that the threads can form a cross at each end of the warp. This keeps the threads in order and stops them tangling. For the finest cloth the warp would commonly be 22 yards (20m.) but longer if the cloth was coarse. This was about the length that could be woven in one week.

Warp made, it is now time for him to "dress" the loom. The warp is wound onto the beam at the back of the loom and then, if it is a repeat pattern, the new warp will simply be tied on to the end of the old one. If this is done well, he can weave on thus wasting no yarn and no time. For new designs, however he will need to pass each of up to 2000 threads through the "heddles." These are arranged on 4 "shafts," and which shaft he chooses will determine the design of the cloth. Up to 16 shafts would be needed for the most complex designs and threading these correctly is a time consuming job. Next each of the warp threads needs to be "sleyed" or threaded through the reed (so called because they were originally made from reeds). This not only spaces the warp out to ensure the cloth retains the correct width but also beats down each weft thread next to the previous one. The final job before weaving is to tie the warp ends on to the "cloth beam" at the front of the loom.

He will need the wool weft thread wound onto "pirns" which fit into his shuttles. All the children would be needed to help as this was a full time job, for a good weaver can use a pirn almost as quickly as it can be wound. Our weaver will select which shafts he wants raised by pressing one of up to eight foot pedals. This would lift certain of the warp threads but leave others flat. The gap between the raised and flat threads is known as the shed and it is through this gap that the shuttle is "thrown". With the number of weft threads being as many as 72 for each cm. of weaving, our weaver would have to throw the shuttle 144,000 times before his piece of cloth was complete. It would now be cut off the loom, checked for mistakes which would be mended, washed and pressed by his wife for the better it looked the better rate he would be paid when he finally delivered the cloth to Mr Crewdson. For the whole piece he would be paid 12 shillings which is one week's wage for himself, his wife and children. If he had worked in Mr Crewdson's factory he would be likely to be paid one shilling per day.