

JOBS IN A COTTON FACTORY

Name of Job	Where carried out	Description
Beamer	Winding Room	Takes cones of thread by the hundred and organises them to make the warp ready for weaving. The beam is a huge bobbin.
Beam twister	Weaving Shed	A Twister.
Beam warper	Winding Room	A Beamer.
Bobbin carrier	Weaving Shed	Carries bobbins of thread to the looms ready for use by the weavers. A weaver without a ready supply of thread would be most unhappy!
Bobbin maker	Workshop	Makes the bobbins used for holding thread. Usually wood with a steel core. An engineering job, involving a lathe.
Box tenter		
Card tenter	Card Room	A carder. Someone who tends a carding machine.
Carder or Card Room Hand	Card Room	Carding machines perform a combing operation, aligning the fibres so they will make a strong thread when spun. The process leaves the operator covered in cotton fluff. Seen as a low-status job by others in the industry.
Cloth hooker	Warehouse	Puts cloth from a roll onto hooks so that the cloth can be folded concertina-fashion, making a parcel ready for shipping.
Cloth picker	Warehouse	Removes the slubs (bits sticking up from the surface of the cloth). Also does quality control of the finished cloth.
Comber	Card Room	Another term for a Carder.
Comb maker	Workshop	See Reed maker
Cone winder	Winding Room	Takes thread from hanks (from spinning) and winds onto cardboard bobbins forming a cone of thread.
Cop reeler	Winding Room	Early term for a creeler.
Creeler	Winding Room	A creel is a bobbin of thread used either for warp or weft. If used for warp it went on to the Beamer, if for the weft it went straight to the weaving shed. Also known as a Quill. A Creeler winds thread onto these bobbins.
Crofter	Bleach Croft or Dye Croft	A croft is a piece of land where Bleaching or Dyeing is carried out. After processing, the cloth would be stretched and allowed

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		to dry in the open air. When the air became more polluted, these trades had to move indoors.
Doffer	Spinning Room	Unloads full bobbins from a spinning machine.
Doubler		
Drawer or Drawer-in	Reaching room	Organises the pattern of threads, taking threads from several beams of thread to form a pattern. The finished beam may have several different colours, forming stripes in the finished cloth. The actual work is done by a Reacher under his supervision.
Finisher	Bleach Works	Tidies up the surface of the cloth after bleaching.
Fly maker	Workshop	Makes fly shuttles. An engineering job.
Frame tenter	Spinning Room	Someone who looks after spinning frames.
Half-timer	All areas	A child who spent half the day at school and the other half earning money in a mill. Typically they would start work at 6am, work in the mill until 1pm, then go to school until 4pm. It was quite common for them to fall asleep during lessons.
Hooker	Warehouse	See Cloth hooker
Jack frame tenter	Card Room	A jack frame is a machine for lightly twisting the roving as it leaves the carding machine.
Jacquard operator	Weaving Shed	A Jacquard loom uses punched cards to control the production of fancy patterns in the finished cloth. In extreme cases, full colour pictures can be made this way. A higher status job than ordinary weaving, since the finished product is worth more.
Loomer	Weaving Shed	A weaver.
Masher-up	Bleach Works	Prepares the chemicals ready for bleaching the cloth.
Mule spinner	Spinning Room	A spinning mule spins a length of thread at a time, with a frame moving towards the operator as the thread is spun, then back again as the thread is wound onto bobbins.
Overlooker	All areas	Someone whose job is to keep the shop working smoothly. What is known these days as Middle Management.
Paperer	Bleach Works	
Piecer	Spinning Room	Mends broken threads during spinning.

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		Often called a “little piecer” because they started young. Usually employed by the spinner, rather than directly by the mill owners.
Plater	Warehouse	Mechanised equivalent of a cloth hooker.
Quiller or quilter	Winding Room	A quill is the metal spindle in a shuttle which holds the thread, otherwise known as a Creel. This person’s job is to wind the thread onto these quills.
Reacher	Reaching Room	Does the actual work for a Drawer-in.
Reed maker	Workshop	Reeds are fine-toothed comb-like devices used on a loom to push the weft into place against the previous row. Making these items is an engineering job.
Reeler	Winding Room	See Creeler.
Ring spinner	Spinning Room	Ring spinning uses a different action to the mule, generating thread in a continuous process.
Rover	Card Room	Roving is the name for the loosely assembled group of fibres before it is twisted to make a thread. A rover operates the machine which takes the mat of aligned threads coming from the carding machine and splits it into these groups of fibres.
Ruler	Winding room	Mis-transcription of Reeler
Scutcher	Card Room	Scutching is the separation of the valuable fibres from the woody seeds of the raw cotton. Considered one of the worst jobs in the mill – very low status!
Self-actor minder	Spinning Room	Operates a self-acting spinning mule, patented by Richard Roberts, which could be operated by semi-skilled personnel.
Sizer	Sizing Room	The beams of prepared warp sometimes need sizing. A sort of glue (like starch) is applied to stiffen the fibres and make the shuttle’s path smoother.
Spindle maker	Workshop	Makes the spindles used for holding thread on the looms
Spinner	Spinning Room	Operates one or more usually two facing each other, spinning machines, each with many spindles, to make thread. Because the floor beneath spinning machines was soaked in the oil from the cotton, spinners usually worked barefoot. Spinners normally employed their own piecers and paid them directly.

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Stitcher	Bleach Works	Joins the start of a roll of cloth onto the end of the previous one, so that the progress through the bleaching tanks can be a continuous one.
Stripper and grinder	All areas.	Maintains machinery. An engineering job.
Tackler	Weaving Shed	Someone who sets up a loom ready for weaving. Threads the warp in etc. In some places the name refers to someone who installs the machinery. The stereotypical tackler is possessed of more brawn than brain and is the butt of many jokes.
Tape weaver	Weaving Shed	Weaves cotton tape - up to a couple of inches wide.
Tenter	All areas	General term for someone who tends machinery.
Throstle spinner	Spinning Room	Runs a Throstle – a type of spinning machine named after the noise it makes. Throstle is an alternative name for a thrush.
Twist winder	Winding Room	
Twister	Weaving Shed	Joins the ends of a fresh beam of threads onto the warp already on the loom. A sitting-down job, sometimes done by people who were crippled.
Warehouseman	Warehouse	Still the same job today.
Warper	Winding Room	A Beamer.
Weaver	Weaving Shed	Runs one or more looms to weave cloth. The more looms, the more money. Weaving is a very noisy operation, leaving many weavers deaf. Whether deaf or not, most weavers will have learned to lip-read since this is the only way to hold a conversation in the weaving shed.
Weft carrier	Weaving Shed	Another name for Bobbin carrier.
Winder	Winding Room	Either a Beamer, or someone who winds thread onto the spindles used in shuttles