

Advertisement, William Cornock and Son, 1853

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**WILLIAM CORNOCK AND SON,**  
TEAZLE DEALERS,  
*2, WINE STREET, near the COURT HOUSE,*  
**LEEDS.**

---

N.B. Consumers will find a large Stock of

*West of England,*

AND

*Every other Description of Teazles,*

Always on hand.

36

This, and a similar notice of 1857, suggests that West of England teazles were the main business originally handled by William Cornock. However, after about 1857, when he himself took over the concern, Thomas Bruce Cornock increasingly dealt in the cheaper French teazles as well.

(Leeds Library and Information Service / William White, *Directory and Gazetteer of Leeds*, 1853)

Thomas Bruce Cornock advertisement, 1861

1861.] LEEDS, &c., ADVERTISEMENTS. 59

THOMAS BRUCE CORNOCK,  
ENGLISH AND FOREIGN  
TEAZEL MERCHANT,  
ST. PAUL STREET,  
NEAR THE INFIRMARY,  
LEEDS.

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Consumers will find a large stock of French, West of England, and every other description of Teazels always on hand.

By 1861, Thomas Bruce Cornock had made French teazles into a speciality of his business. (Leeds Library and Information Service / *Post Office Directory of West Yorkshire, 1861*)

Cornock advertisement, 1875

ESTABLISHED 1799.

THOMAS BRUCE CORNOCK & CO.

English & Foreign Teazle Merchants,

LEEDS.

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CONSUMERS WILL FIND A LARGE STOCK OF FRENCH, WEST OF ENGLAND, AND EVERY OTHER DESCRIPTION OF TEAZLES ALWAYS ON HAND.

Thomas Bruce Cornock died in 1873 at the age of 51, after a full life in business and in civic and public affairs in Leeds. Over the next years, his firm went through a period of instability, to be last seen in 1882. (Leeds Library and Information Service / *White's General and Commercial Directory of Leeds, 1875*)

Victoria House, Burley Wood, Leeds, home of William North, teasele merchant



It was probably in 1875 that William North moved to Burley Wood, and this photograph, which was in Victoria House until recent times, may have been taken to mark their arrival. If so, the figures would have been: William North, then aged about forty-nine; his second wife Jane, about forty; his daughter Kate Emily, about fifteen; and his daughter Clara, then aged about twelve. He also had two sons both probably at their businesses when the photograph was taken. (Melinda D'Ambrogio)



Public drinking fountain, Woodhouse Moor, Leeds, presented by William North, 1879



William North was a Leeds town councillor and later, an alderman, and in his civic capacity, in 1879 he provided this amenity from the proceeds of his business as a teazle merchant. The clock was the gift of a different councillor. (Leeds Library and Information Service)

Woodhouse Moor, Leeds, 1897



William North not only paid for the drinking fountain, seen ahead here, but also for the bandstand, left, which formed a central feature of the walks. Both

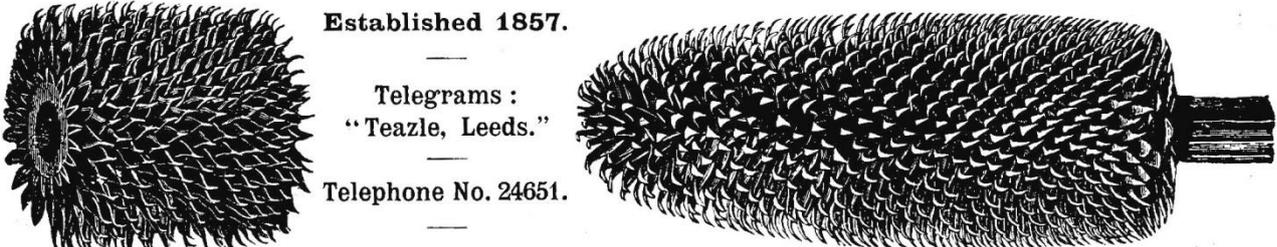
drinking fountain and bandstand have now disappeared.  
(Leeds Library and Information Service)

William North & Son advertisement, 1920

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Any Quantity, any Quality, any Length, any Diameter - English or Foreign - Supplied.

# TEAZLES.



Established 1857.

Telegrams :  
"Teazle, Leeds."

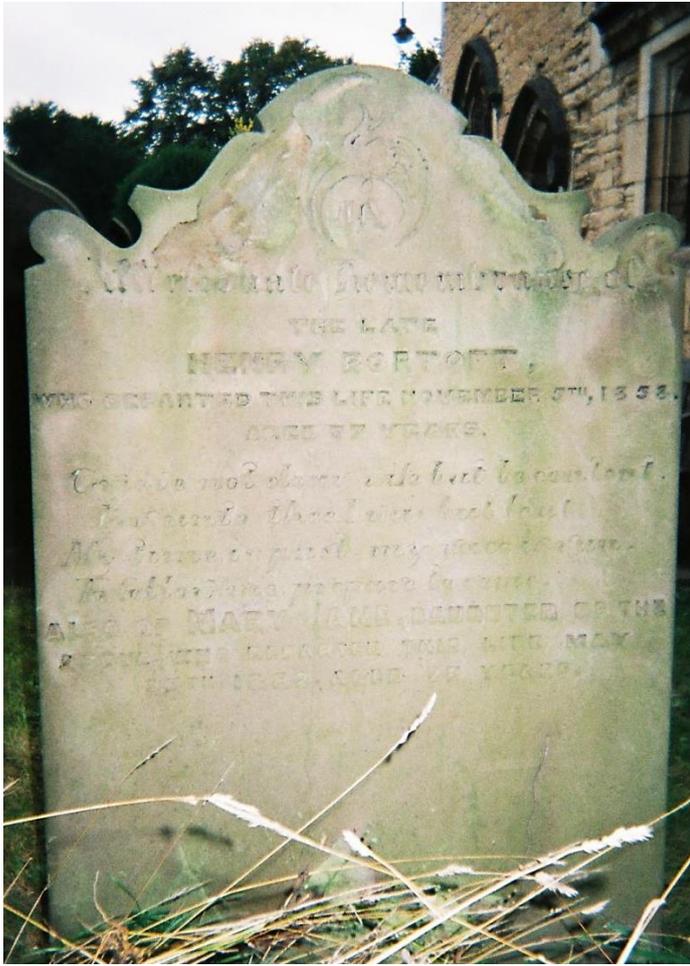
Telephone No. 24651.

SPECIALITY -  
UNIFORM DIAMETER FOR  
SPINDLE MACHINES OF  
ANY MAKE.

**WILLIAM NORTH & SON, TEAZLE WORKS, GELDERD ROAD, LEEDS.**

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In the first half of the 1870s, William North's son George Edward North became a partner in his father's teazle business. In the late 1880s and 1890s, probably under his auspices, the firm diversified into flour milling, at Wetherby, and then at Leeds, before moving to Gelderd Road, where their teazle works to process teazles was established. George Edward North was still running the concern in the 1920s. William North & Son closed around 1960.  
(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *The Yorkshire Textile Directory*, 1920-21)



Grave of Henry Bortoft, 1858, Parish Church of St Mary, South Milford

During the nineteenth century, several of the Bortoft family were teasle growers and dealers, some selling teasles in Leeds through attendance at the inns. Chief of these was James Bortoft, who around 1865 opened a store in Leeds. (Robert McMillan, 2009)

Wormald's Yard, Leeds



Wormald's Yard, where in the mid-1860s James Bortoft, the South Milford teasle grower and dealer opened a store, was a side street of warehouses and small works off lower Briggate. Seen here in 1945.





Gibson family headstone, St Mary's, South Milford

James Bortoft's wife Sarah was a Gibson, and their eldest son was named Gibson Bortoft. From 1886 to 1915, when he died, 'Gib' Bortoft ran James Bortoft & Sons, teazle growers, dealers and merchants of South Milford and Leeds.  
 (Robert McMillan, 2009)

The South Market, 1826, Hunslet Lane and Meadow Lane, Leeds



Between 1886 and World War I, James Bortoft & Sons of South Milford had a second store in Leeds, on the South Row, seen here along the left-hand side.

At the top left in this view is the New Cross Inn with its yard.  
(*Kirkgate Market*)



Headstone of Solomon Sloman, 1869, father of Jacob Sloman, Leeds teazle merchant

Solomon Sloman moved from London to Leeds, probably in the 1850s. By 1867, his son Jacob Sloman, then aged about twenty-seven, was selling teazles from the family home at 35 Trafalgar Street, Leeds.  
(Gildersome Cemetery / Robert McMillan)



Grave of Myer Ansell, chiropodist, Leeds, died 1875

Jacob Sloman's father Solomon Sloman, also a surgeon-chiropodist, was in partnership with Myer Ansell as Ansell & Sloman, at 10 Belgrave Street, the latter's address. Jacob Sloman may have named one of his sons after his father's business partner.  
(Gildersome Cemetery / Robert McMillan)



Cumberland Villa, Roundhay Road, Leeds

In the later 1880s, Jacob Sloman moved out to Roundhay Road, to a brick terraced house with a front garden, where in 1891, thirteen of the family lived. Seen here behind the store front built into the former garden.  
(Robert McMillan, 2011)

The Royal Exchange Chambers, corner of Boar Lane, Leeds, early 1900s



By 1892, Jacob Sloman was running his business as a teazle and cigar merchant from the Royal Exchange Chambers, an imposing and prestigious edifice opened in 1875 in the commercial heart of Leeds. J. Sloman traded from there until about 1905, handling mainly foreign teazles.



## Roundhay Road, Leeds



In the middle 1890s, Jacob Sloman and his family moved a few doors along, to a house adjacent to these, with stone-framed bay windows overlooking the front gardens. Two of his sons, Alfred and Solomon, who assisted him in his business as a teazle merchant, lived nearby. (Robert McMillan, 2011)

## Graves of Jacob Sloman and his wife Jane Sloman, Leeds teazle merchants



Jacob Sloman died in 1913, leaving his business as a teazle merchant to be continued by his family. Jane Sloman died in 1928, aged eighty-four.



276 ADVERTISEMENTS.

# TEAZLES.

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**J. SLOMAN,** ESTABLISHED 1850.

TELEPHONE No. 2445, CENTRAL. Exchange Teazle Works, 106, Skinner Lane, LEEDS.

Around 1905, J. Sloman left the Royal Exchange Chambers for 106 Skinner Lane, where there was space not only for warehousing but for the processing of teazles for the mills. The name 'Exchange Teazle Works' preserved the prestigious link with the former premises. (Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *Yorkshire Textile Directory*, 1915-16)

244 ADVERTISE

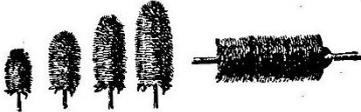
*Purchase your TEAZLES Direct from the Growers,*

## SMITH & CO.,

AVIGNON, VAUCLUSE, FRANCE.

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### FINEST FRENCH TEAZLES



*Assorted to Sizes, and cut for Moser's Machines.*

EXPOSITION  
D'AVIGNON  
1891.



EXPOSITION  
D'AVIGNON  
1891.

HIGHEST MEDAL Awarded by La Chambre de Commerce to

### SMITH & Co., Avignon.

AGENTS:—

ENGLAND:—JOHN J. WHALEY, 10, Colliergate, BRADFORD.  
PAISLEY:—JOHN RODGER, Glenellen, Barterholm, PAISLEY.

Advertisement, Smith & Co., teazle growers, Avignon, Vaucluse, 1911

Smith & Co. were established in one of the main parts of the French supply trade to Britain. This notice shows some of the stem teazle standard sizes, and also the arrangement of rotary or spindle teazles in threes. (Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *The Yorkshire Textile Directory*, 1911-120)

The Golden Lion, 1879, Briggate, Leeds



About 1870, Charles Yendole of Fivehead, a teazle-growing village in Somerset, moved to Leeds to set up as a teazle merchant. In the mid-1870s, he had storage in the yards of two inns, the Golden Lion, Briggate, and the Malt Shovel, Swinegate. Both were swept away by the building of the new Golden Lion of 1879. (Kathleen Kearney, 2010)

Scarborough Hotel, Bishopgate Street, Leeds



Scarborough Hotel, Bishopgate Street, Leeds, as rebuilt in the twentieth century. In the later 1870s and 1880s, Charles Yendole's office as a teazle merchant in Leeds was in the then Scarborough Buildings with his warehouse in the Scarborough Hotel Yard. In the 1880s, Edward Sterner, the Dewsbury French teazle importer also had

a Leeds office here.  
(Kathleen Kearney, 2010)

Mabgate Mills, Mabgate, Leeds, entrance



Mabgate Mills, Mabgate, Leeds



Mabgate Mills, where c. 1899-1905, McLaughlin brothers, growers and merchants of Skaneateles, NY, had warehousing in Leeds. This was part of an extensive

European marketing operation.  
(Robert McMillan, 2009)

Advertisement of McLaughlin Brothers, Leeds, 1913

**BUSINESS ESTABLISHED 1832.**

**McLAUGHLIN BROTHERS,**  
MACAULEY STREET MILLS, LEEDS;  
**GROWERS OF** AMERICAN, and  
MERCHANTS in ENGLISH,  
FRENCH & AUSTRIAN **TEAZLES**

*In all Qualities and Standard Sizes to suit any condition of Finish required.*

Telegraphic and Cable Address, "LAUGH, LEEDS." TELEPHONE No., 298y.

In 1904-05, McLaughlin Brothers moved from Mabgate Mills to Macaulay Street Mills in the adjacent street. The Leeds operation was run by Charles James McLaughlin, who from 1903 resided in the town, and who also promoted sales on the continent. The branch closed around 1920.

(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library, *The Yorkshire Textile Directory*, 1913-14)

Trade notice of S. Bumby, English and foreign teazle merchant, Beeston, Leeds, 1915

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ADVERTISEMENTS.



**S. BUMBY**

BEESTON, LEEDS, England.

**English & Foreign Teazle Merchant**

TEAZLES of Every Variety for all uses:--

**ORDINARY CLOTH GIGS; MOSER'S TEAZLE GIGS  
for Blankets & Flannels; and Pegg's, Harrison's, Black-  
burn's and Foster's HOSIERY BRUSHING MACHINES.**



Samuel Bumby appeared in business as a teazle merchant under his own name in 1908. His firm was the smallest of the Leeds teazle merchants. It eventually closed around 1960.

(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library, *The Yorkshire Textile Directory*, 1915-16)

Advertisement of 1923,  
J. Sloman, Leeds

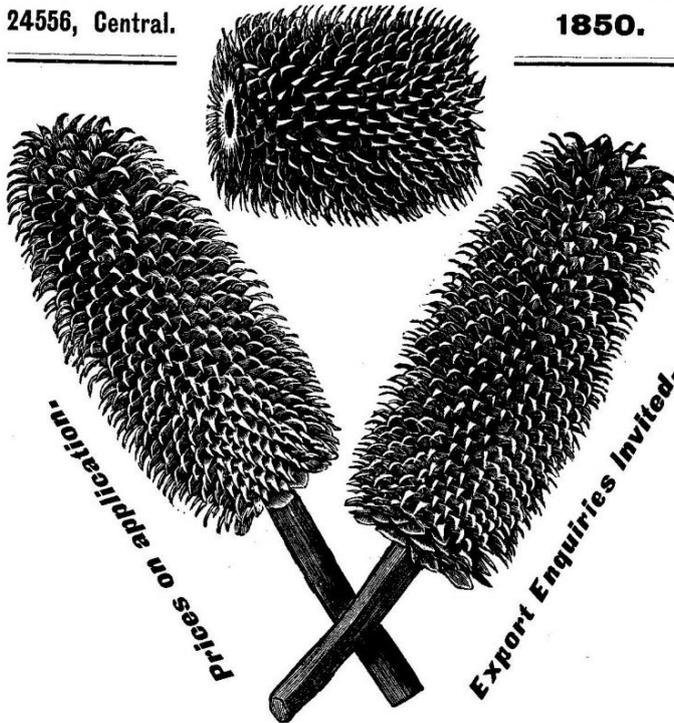
# TEAZLES.

ALL KINDS OF  
FRENCH, AMERICAN  
AND  
ENGLISH TEAZLES  
ALWAYS IN STOCK.

Telephone No.  
24556, Central.

Telegrams: "Punctual."

ESTABLISHED  
1850.



## J. SLOMAN

Exchange Teazle Works,  
106, SKINNER LANE,  
**LEEDS.**

After World War I, following a disagreement between Jacob Sloman's sons, Alfred and Solomon, the former severed his connection with J. Sloman, leaving Solomon Sloman to direct the firm towards the spindle teazle trade, which could be catered for using a smaller workforce.

(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *The Yorkshire Textile Directory*, 1923-24)

**THE PICK OF FRENCH & ENGLISH**

**YOU NEED RELIABLE, DURABLE TEAZLES.**

— Quantities — as invoiced are guaranteed to a Single Teazle. A vital item when comparing quotations.

**J. SLOMAN**  
EXCHANGE TEAZLE WORKS  
106, SKINNER LANE  
**LEEDS**

FOR SPINDLE

FOR ORDINARY GIG.

FOR ORDINARY GIG.

**TEAZLES**

TRY A SAMPLE ORDER AND BE FULLY SATISFIED.

PRICES AND SAMPLE ON REQUEST.

Prove for yourself that quality and guaranteed quantities pay to use.

★

**ESTABLISHED 1850**  
TELEGRAMS 'PUNCTUAL, LEEDS'  
TELEPHONE: 24556 CENTRAL

By the time this advertisement appeared, American teazles had largely disappeared from the international trade. This advertisement format was also used for the firm's packing case label. (Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *The Yorkshire Textile Directory*, 1934-35)

Letter heading of J. Sloman

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: "PUNCTUAL"

EXCHANGE TEAZLE WORKS.

TELEPHONE NO. 24556

*J. Sloman*

FRENCH, AMERICAN AND ENGLISH TEAZLE MERCHANT.

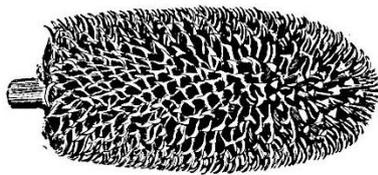
Low Fold, East Street, LEEDS. 9.

M

19

An older style, but in use after 1949-50, when the Exchange Teazle Works of J. Sloman moved to Low Fold, East Street, Leeds

(Mrs P. M. Smith, J. Sloman Ltd.)



# TEAZLES

OF EVERY DESCRIPTION

In the Best Growths of Normandy, French, Spanish, American and English

Always on hand for HOME and EXPORT TRADE.

SPECIALITIES:—Teazles with Stalks Cut Short ready for Immediate Fixing in all makes of Brushing Machines.

Out Teazles Bored any size for all Spindle Machines.

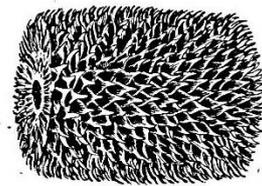
ALSO BUYERS OF ALL KINDS OF

**HOSIERY WASTE.**

LET US EXCHANGE YOUR WASTE FOR TEAZLES.

## A. & H. SLOMAN & SMITH

**BANK TOP MILLS, MILL STREET,**



Telephone No. Leeds, 27168.

Telegrams, "OUTSTALK, LEEDS." Codes A.B.C. 5th & 6th Editions & Bentley's.

### LEEDS.

By 1920, Jacob Sloman's son Alfred Sloman had set up his own business, initially in partnership with his oldest son Herbert, and then also with Mr Smith, possibly of the Avignon growers Smith & Co. After Alfred Sloman's death in 1941, his three sons ran the business, which closed in the middle 1970s.

(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *The Yorkshire Textile Directory*, 1923-24)



'The Herbert Sloman Progress Trophy presented to the Leeds Camera Club 1955 for Annual Competition'

Herbert Sloman was a serious amateur photographer, becoming an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society. The trophy was competed for between 1956 and 1982 inclusive. (West Yorkshire Archive Service Leeds)

3/8/2011



## Huddersfield teazle dealers and merchants

The Cloth Hall, Huddersfield



The Cloth Hall (on the right), from an early nineteenth century painting. Several local teazle dealers c. 1830-1915 had warehousing nearby, sometimes in inn yards. (Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield)



The Reed, Yorkshire Street, Rochdale

Huddersfield was not the only place in the Pennine woollen region where around the 1820s-40s, local teazle dealers were to be found. In 1825, two dealers in teazles, indigo and sulphur were noted to be in business in Rochdale. One, Robert Woolfenden, was located at the Reed Yard. (Robert McMillan, 2011)



## The Market Place, Huddersfield



The Market Place, Huddersfield, where around 1853, the teazle dealer Joseph Cliffe sold teazles. His business started at Aspley, by the Huddersfield Canal, but was later secondary to his main trade as brewer and maltster at the Lion Brewery, Birkby. (Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield)

Advertisement of John Briggs, teazle dealer, Huddersfield and Milnsbridge, 1853

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**JOHN BRIGGS,**  
DEALER IN  
**FOREIGN AND ENGLISH TEASELS,**  
Pelts, Woads, Irish Moss, Waste, &c.  
OPPOSITE THE  
*Plough Inn, Temple Street, Westgate,*  
**HUDDERSFIELD,**  
AND  
**MILNES BRIDGE, LINTHWAITE.**

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John Briggs is the first teazle dealer in the West Riding known to have been selling foreign, presumably French, teazles.  
(Leeds Library and Information Service / William White, *Directory and Gazetteer of*

*Leeds, 1853)*

William Hick's former warehouse, Kirkgate, Huddersfield



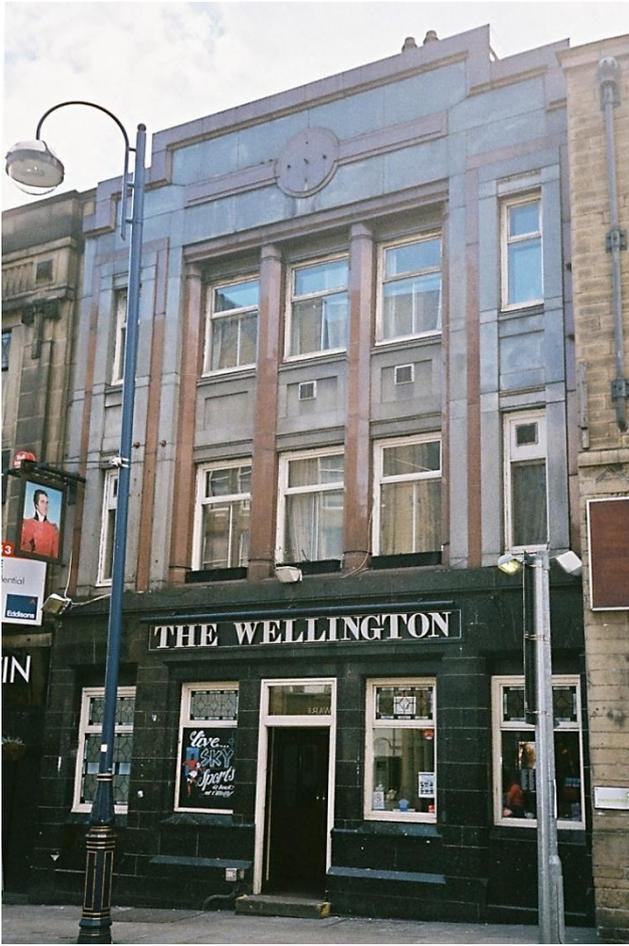
Joseph Hick, the first known Huddersfield teazle dealer was followed into business by his sons Henry and William. In the 1870s, William Hick moved to warehousing at 37 Kirkgate, originally the nearer part of the block occupied by the Huddersfield Hotel, extreme right. (Robert McMillan, 2011)



Beast Market, Huddersfield

William Hick's teazle warehouse had access at the rear into the small yard on the right farther down, below the Boy and Barrel. (Robert McMillan, 2011)





The Wellington, Westgate,  
Huddersfield

By the early 1860s, Edmund Taylor was selling teazles in the Yard of the former Wellington, (Robert McMillan, 2011)

Former teazle warehouses, Dundas Street, Huddersfield c. 1887-1915



About 1887, Edmund Taylor moved his teazle storage to 14-16 Dundas Street at the very top on the right-hand side. He also occupied the block below Sergeantson Street, up Dundas Street on the right. Photograph of 1929.



Former warehousing of Edmund Taylor, Huddersfield



Warehousing of Edmund Taylor, English and foreign teazle merchant, Dundas Street, Huddersfield c. 1887-1915. Now demolished.

Inscriptions on the stone course



On the stone course above the windows can be seen remnants of two different inscriptions relating to the business, and a lower ashlar block beside the entrance holds the words:

EDMUND TAYLOR  
TEAZLE MERCHANT

(Robert McMillan, 1973)

Former entrance of Storths Mill, Wakefield Road, Huddersfield



By 1922, Edmund Taylor had been relocated to Storths Mill, under the auspices of Shaws, vinegar brewers. The hoarding occupies the former entrance to the mill.  
(Robert McMillan, 2011)

Edmund Taylor (Teazle) Ltd. advertisement, 1941

**TEAZLES**  
ENGLISH & FOREIGN FOR ALL PURPOSES.  
Telephone 2375. Established 1849  
**EDMUND TAYLOR (Teazle) LTD.,**  
Chardon Mill, Carr Pit Road, **HUDDERSFIELD.**

At the end of the 1930s, Edmund Taylor (Teazle) Ltd. moved to Carr Pit Road. The name Chardon Mill acknowledged the handling of French imports.  
(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *The Yorkshire Textile Industry*, 1941-42)



Cyril George, teazle merchant, Huddersfield



## *Hot trade with Iceland*

WHILE the bulk of Kirklees industry battles against the biting wind of recession, one local firm has found a warm welcome for its products from an unexpected quarter — Iceland.

Teazles are the very special product of Edmund Taylor (Teazle) Ltd, based at Dalton, and order-book demand from Reykavik and other textile outposts has reached a pitch where it accounts for 20 per cent of turnover.

It would be a mistake to assume that Taylor's is not feeling the effects of the recession, the firm's product being so closely tied with the

hard-hit UK textile industry.

Demand from Taylor's customers is down 25 per cent on last year.

Another problem is that the native British teazle has fallen on hard times. Whereas 30 years ago, the Dalton firm handled 95 per cent of West Country grown teazles and imported only 5 per cent, today the situation is reversed.

Home-grown output has dropped to 5 per cent, with the rest being imported from France and Spain.

But it helps when Taylor's are the only

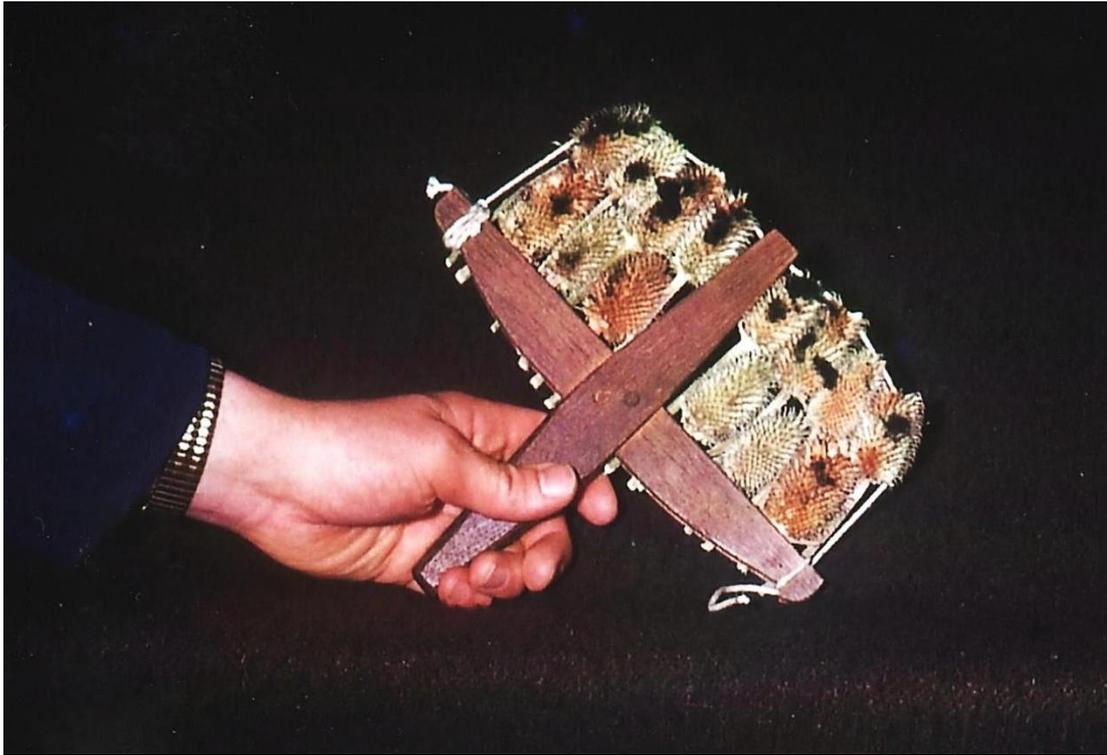
teazle firm in the country and when, happily, there is no sign yet of an artificial substitute taking the place of the natural teazle for raising the pile on fabrics like mohair, Cashmere, wool, billiard and tennis cloths.

Taylor's Icelandic connection was sparked off when Mr Cyril George, chairman and managing director, received a letter requesting samples from an agent. It was followed by an order for 5,000 teazles, and since then business has boomed with eight Icelandic textile firms now placing regular orders.

Cyril George of Edmund Taylor (Teazle) Ltd., Huddersfield, 1980, on the occasion of new business with woollen mills in Iceland.  
(*Huddersfield Examiner*)

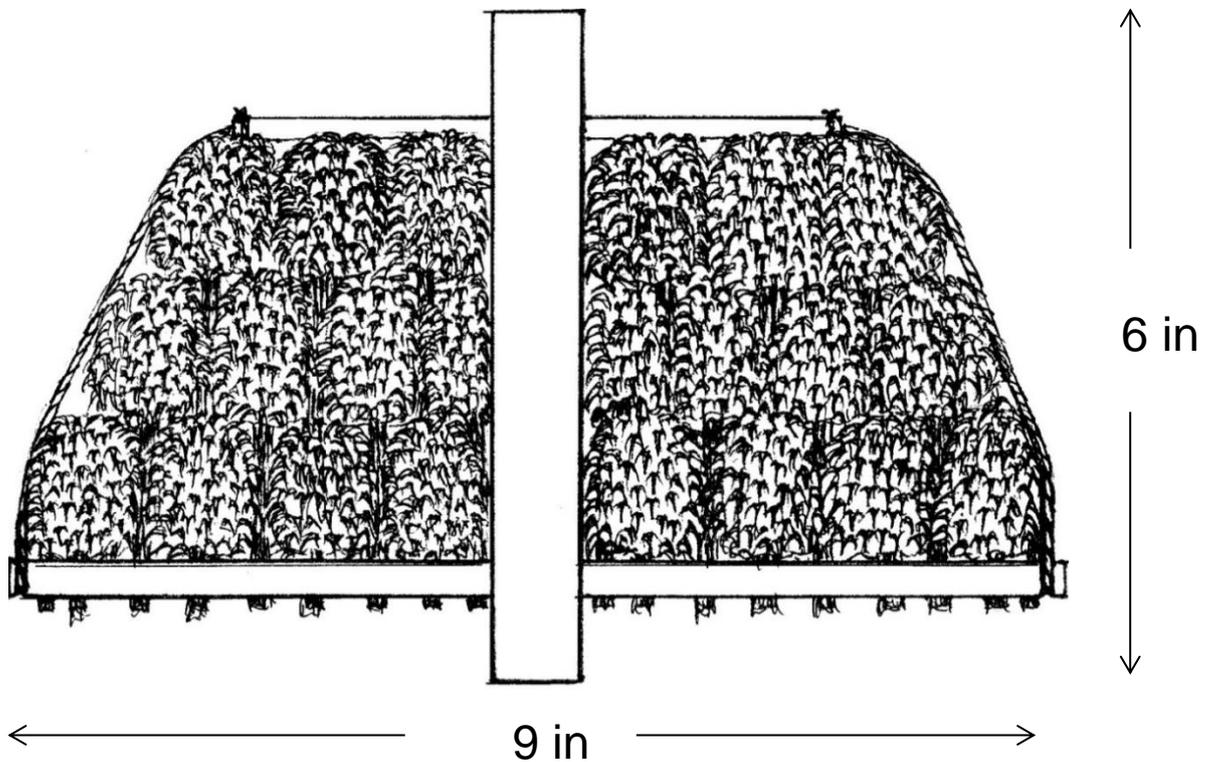
## Practices and methods

### Teazle handle



Teazle handle showing setting of teazles and buttons.  
(Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield)

### Handle for gig, after William Partridge, 1823



The dimensions and the three rows of teazles are from Partridge. There was also a hook and spring arrangement to hold the top.

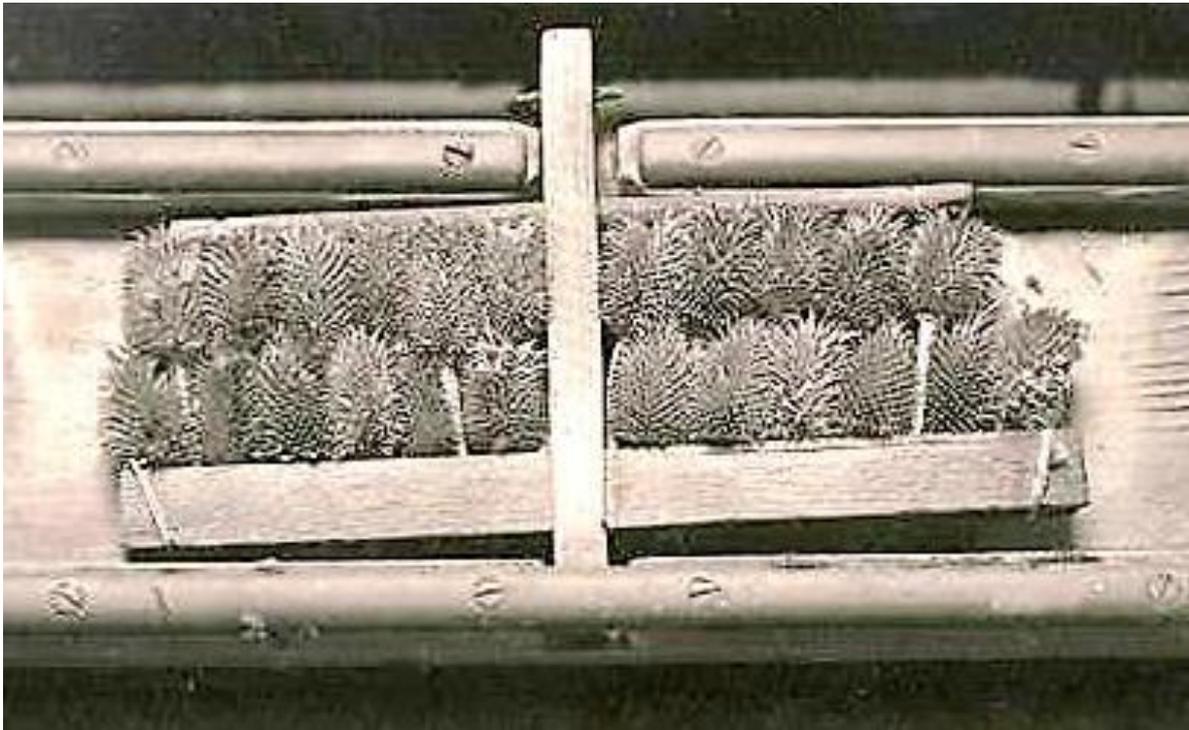
(Graphic, Kathleen Kearney, 2011)



West of England gigs *in situ*

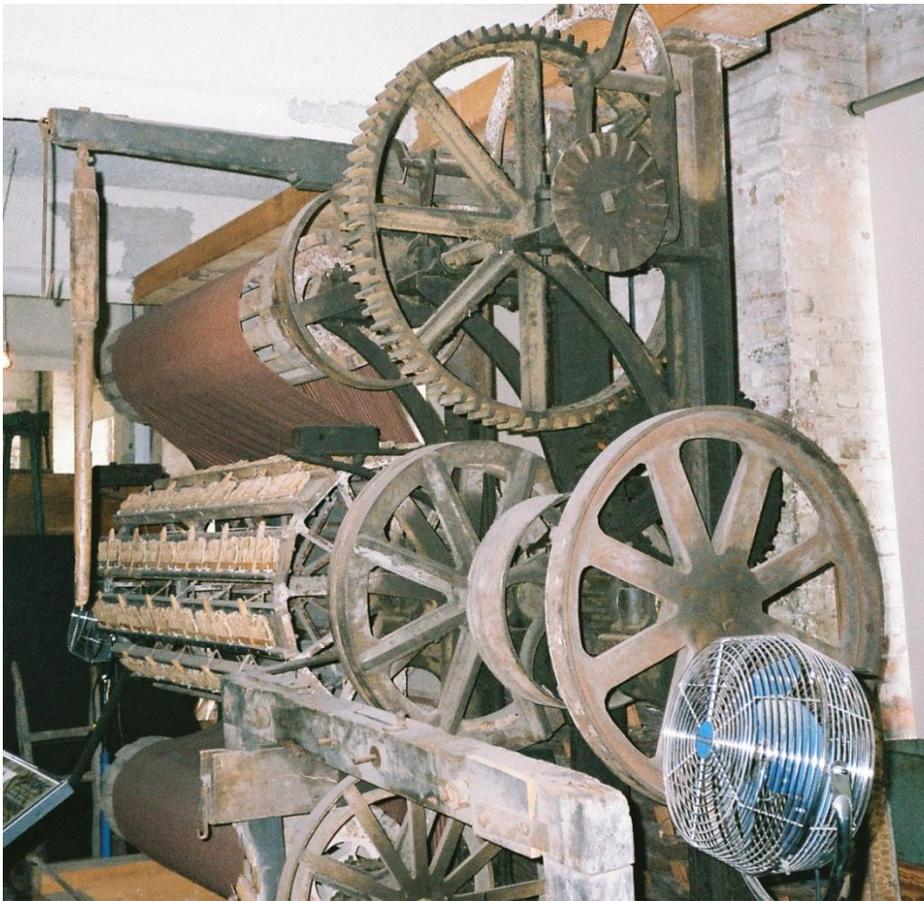
Gigs at William Playne's Longfords Mill, near Avening, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, 1990, prior to removal. Used up to the 1960s for brushing the finished cloth. (Stroudwater Textile Trust. [www.stroud-textile.org.uk](http://www.stroud-textile.org.uk))

Gig handle dated 1867



Dated handle from the gig seen above.





West of England gig from Longfords Mill, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, 1860s

Re-erected at Trowbridge Museum. Gigs like this continued to be made and used for raising West of England cloths into the nineteenth century. ([www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk](http://www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk))

### Gig handles



Although William Partridge recommended three rows of teasles, two were adequate for most ordinary work. The handles are much wider than the 9 in stipulated by Partridge.



## The handles and handle frames



Each of the twelve handle frames holds six handles, recessed into the bottom lip of the frame, and held at the top by a third piece of twine to a hook or spring within the barrel. ([www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk](http://www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk))

## The arrangement of the handles



In order to avoid lines on the cloth, the handles on alternate handle frames were staggered sideways slightly.



## The maintenance of the gig



According to William Partridge, to ensure a continuous flow of teasles being used, turned, cleaned of flock and progressively dried, a gig needed thirty times as many handles as would fill the barrel once. For this gig, that would have meant 2,160 handles. This, therefore, involved a very large number of individual items to be dealt with, each with three lengths of twine to be maintained and kept in repair. ([www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk](http://www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk))



Yorkshire gig showing two of the iron rods set with teazles

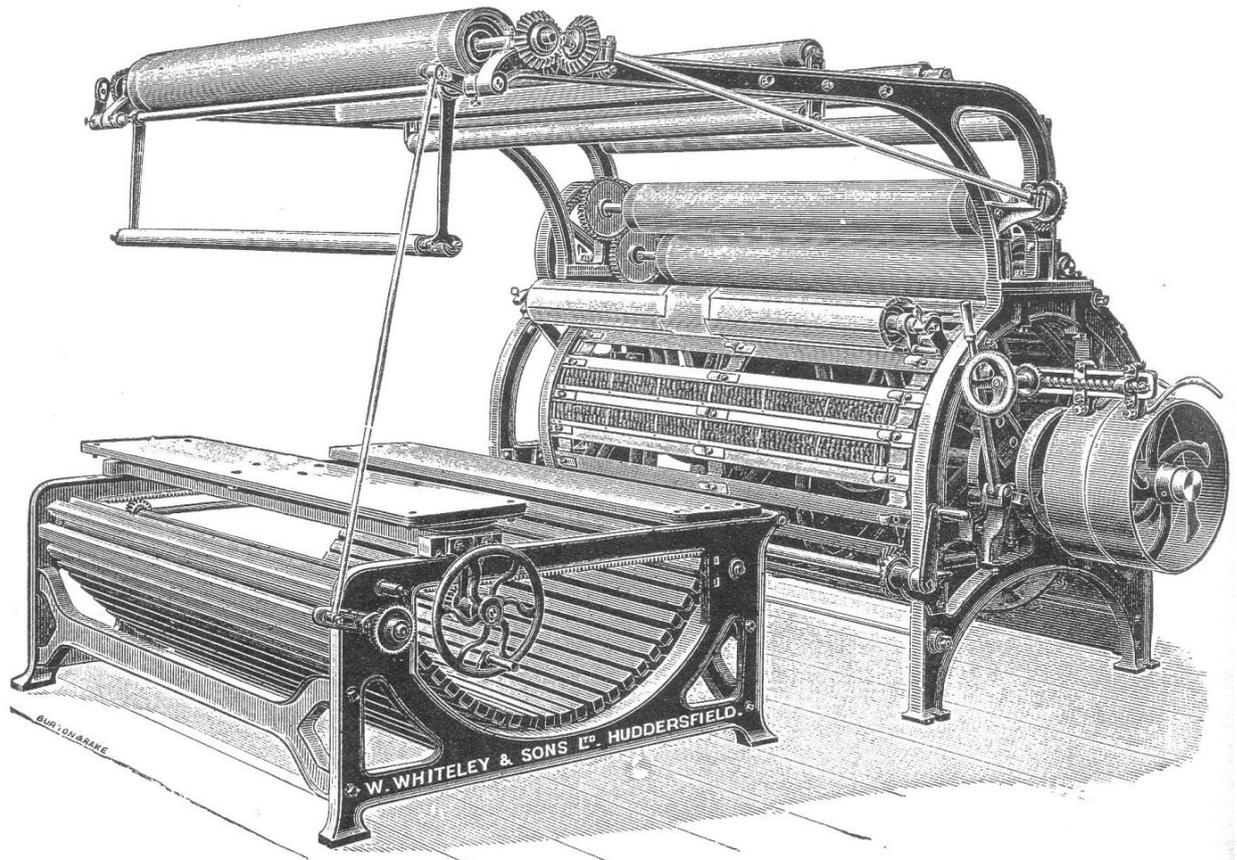


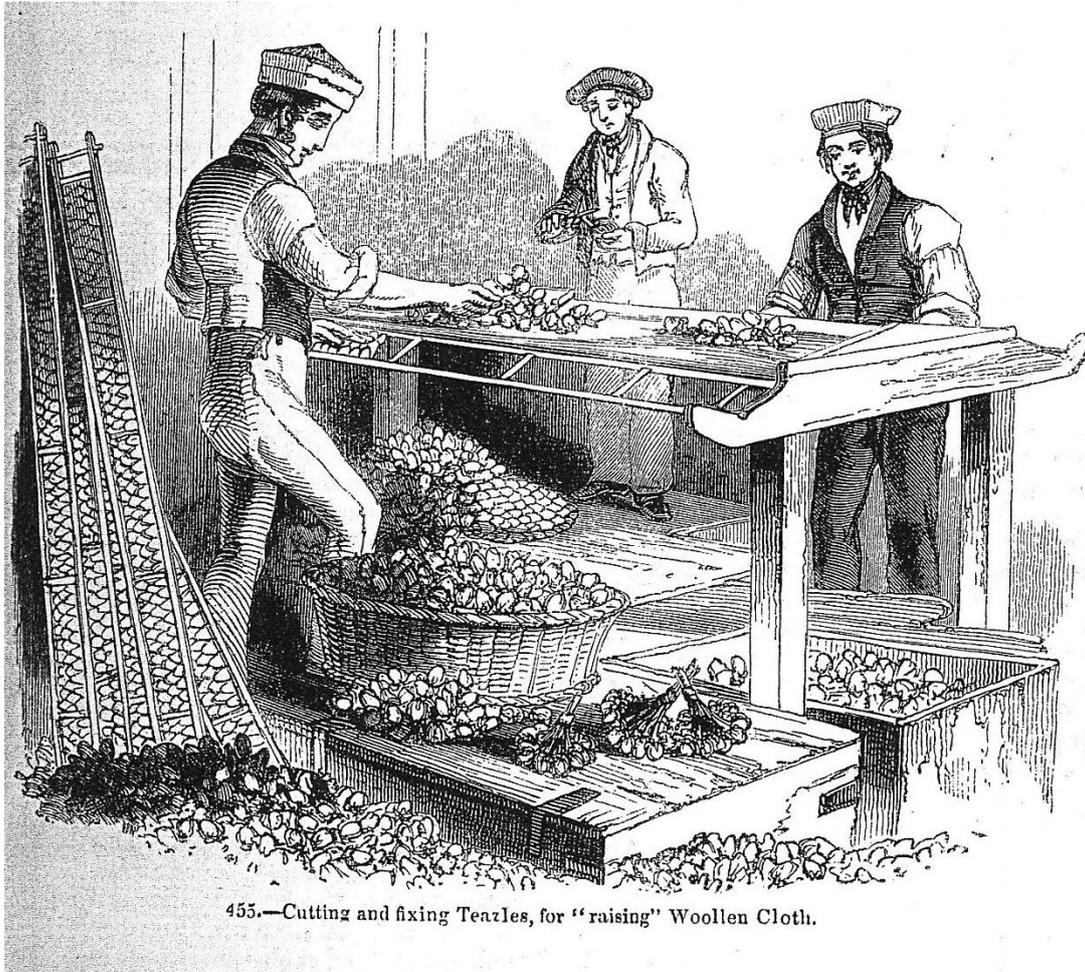
FIG. 33. RAISING GIG

(W. Whiteley & Sons, Ltd.)

The introduction by at least 1825 of the iron rod offered advantages of simplicity and efficiency in handling and maintenance compared with the use of hundreds of handles, each with three pieces of twine.

(L. J. Mills, *The Textile Educator* II, 1927)

Setters at work on iron rods, 1845



The young man at the back is cutting the teazle stalks to the length wanted here. 'Hats are the universal head-covering in England, even for working men... Anyone who does not own a hat folds himself a low, square paper cap' – Engels, 1845. (Leeds Library and Information Service – Charles Knight, *The Pictorial Gallery of Arts I Useful Arts*, 1845)



## Setting teasles

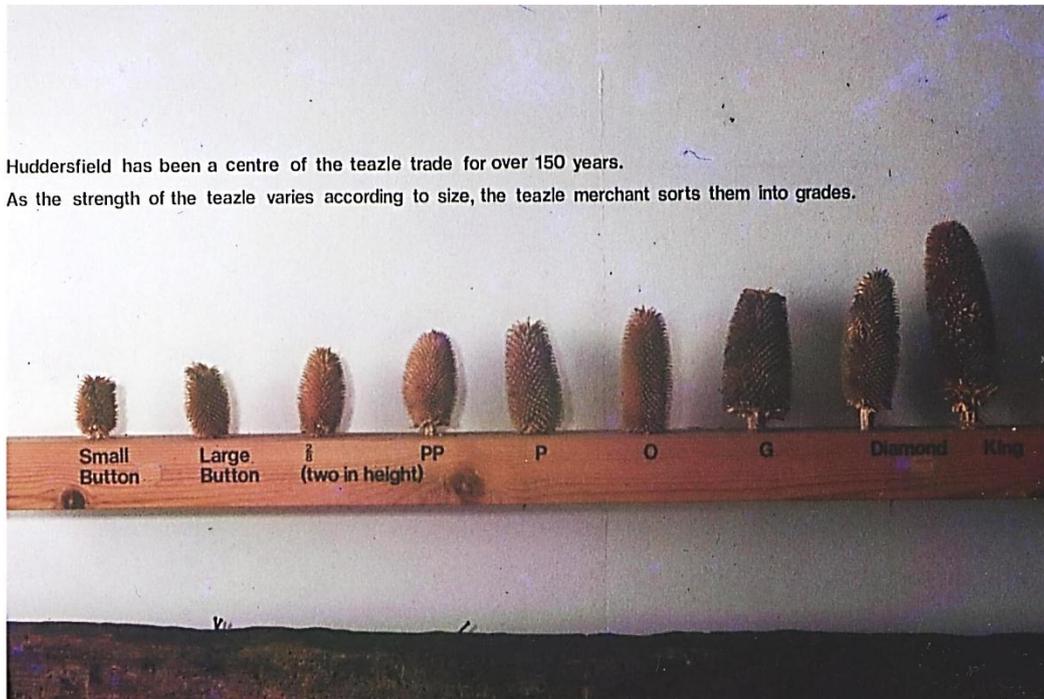
Close-up of setting with the iron in the right hand and protective leathers on the left hand.  
*(Country Life)*

## Setting bench, Wormald & Walker's, Dewsbury



Used by the teasle setter Norman Dawson when he began as a teenager in the earlier 1920s as part of a team of about five men and boys servicing around twenty-five gigs. (Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield)

## Standard sizes of stem teasles for gigs



The setting of rods required accurate grading. This is the range of 'English' sizes, with their names, from Edmund Taylor (Teazle) Ltd.

(Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield)

James Henry Firth of Huddersfield, temperance worker and onetime teazle setter.

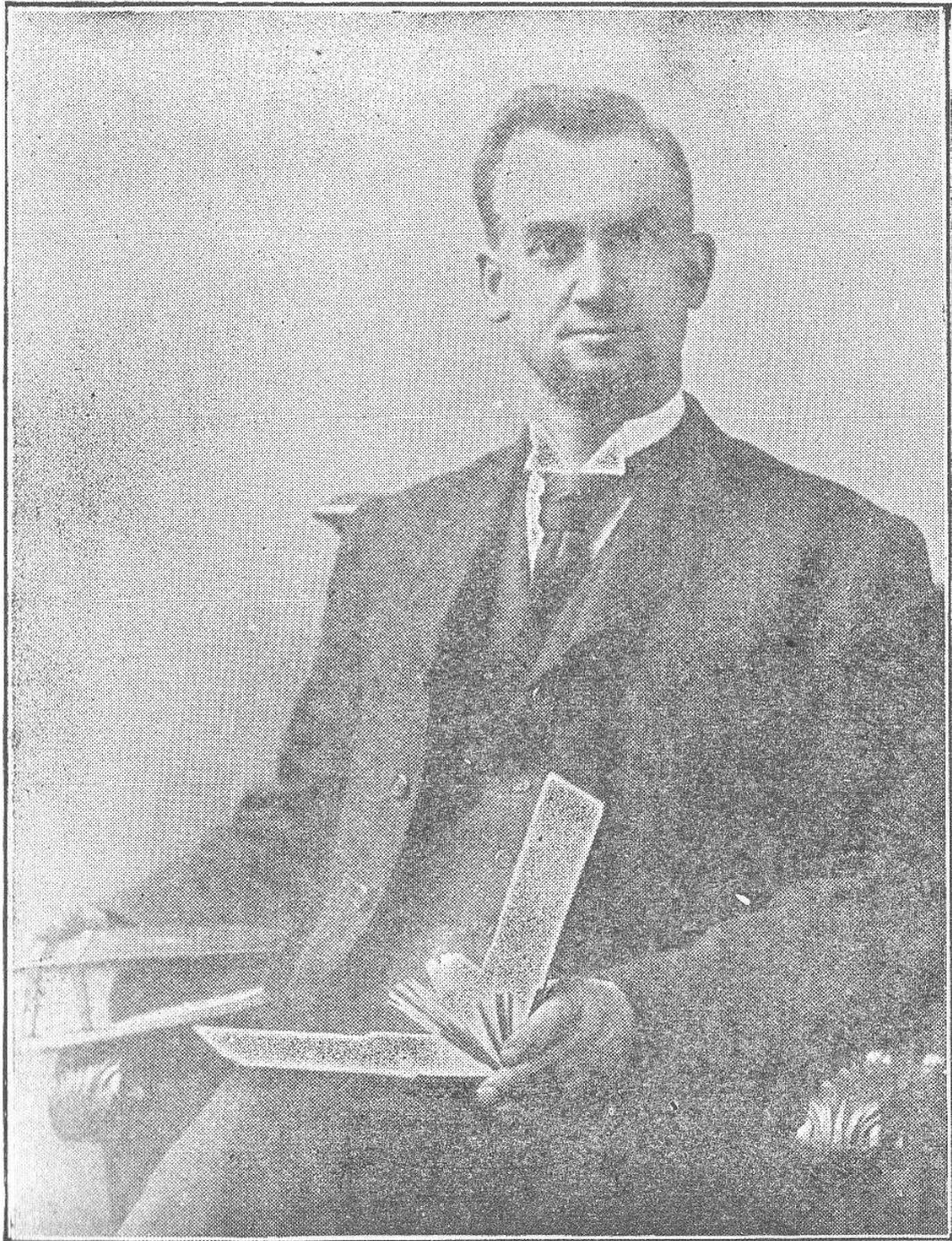


**J. H. FIRTH.**

In 1873, in America, between jobs as a weaver, J. H. Firth worked for a time as a teazle setter in a woollen mill at Franklin, New Hampshire, for about \$10 a week. Back in Huddersfield, in the mid-1890s, as a reformed drinker, he obtained in one year 1,000 pledges to abstain from alcohol. Two of the stub books of these are shown in the photograph from the biography produced to mark his achievement, following a meeting in Huddersfield Town Hall in March 1897.

(Sykes, *Life of James Henry Firth*, 1897)

James Henry Firth of Huddersfield, temperance worker and onetime teazle setter.



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In 1873, in America, between jobs as a weaver, J. H. Firth worked for a time as a teazle setter in a woollen mill at Franklin, New Hampshire, for about \$10 a week. Back in Huddersfield, in the mid-1890s, as a reformed drinker, he obtained in one year 1,000 pledges to abstain from alcohol. Two of the stub books of these are shown in the photograph from the biography produced to mark his achievement, following a meeting in Huddersfield Town Hall in March 1897. (Sykes, *Life of James Henry Firth*, 1897)

# Teaseling up a major sporting contract

THE craftsmanship of 70-year-old Bill Aston has helped a Pudsey firm to win a contract to supply billiard cloths for this year's premier event on the snooker calendar, the Embassy World Professional Championship.

Mr. Aston is the most skilled teasel-setter at the Hainsworth mill in Pudsey where some of the world's finest billiard cloths are manufactured.

The teasel for which Mr. Aston has such an affinity plays a vital part in the numerous finishing processes which go into the making of a championship cloth. The heads of the plant — a kind of thistle chiefly grown in France — are fitted on to a large circular drum which brushes and raises the surface of the cloth. No other device will perform this task as well as the teasel. In fact, one firm went bankrupt trying to make plastic imitations.

Mr. Aston's skill plays its vital part when the teasel heads are set into a jig. Using only the judgment of hand and eye, gained from years of experience, he must ensure that each row of teasels on the jig is perfectly level so that they raise the nap evenly across the cloth. One teasel not properly aligned and a roll of cloth may be damaged or even ruined.

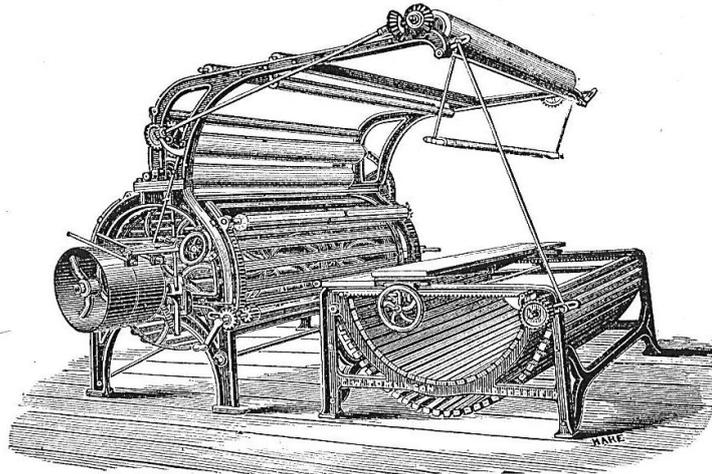
Mr. Aston's interest in teasels does not end with setting. His son Michael grows the teasel on a farm in Belgium



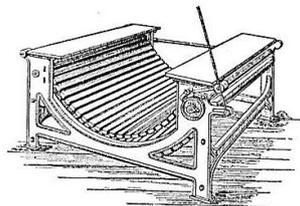
Bill Aston, with the unerring hand and eye born of experience, sets the teasels.

Bill Aston, journeyman teasel setter, setting teazles at Hainsworth Mill, Pudsey, Yorkshire, for raising billiard cloths, 1979.  
(Yorkshire Post)

Conventional gig width, 1896



B. 1—Raising Gig, with revolving turn-table scray and expanding breast-roller.



Raising Gigs may be fitted up in several ways—

- (1) With plain scray.
- (2) With revolving scray, with or without turn-table.
- (3) With plain or expanding breast-roller.

Unless stated to the contrary quotations are made for a revolving scray without turn-table, and for a plain breast-roller. The usual width of a Gig is 65in. on the Teazle. Twenty-four teazle-rods are required for one Gig, but they are not included in quotations unless specially mentioned. The rods can be filled with teazles, if desired.

Speed, 150 revs. ; Pulley, 18in. diameter 6in. broad.

Space required, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ ft. by 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ ft. by 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ ft. ; Cubical Contents, 158ft.

Net weight, 36 cwts. ; Gross weight, 43 cwts.

The conventional width for the raising gig by G. W. Tomlinson of Huddersfield was 65 in 'on the Teazle'.

(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *Catalogue of Finishing & Dyeing Machinery* made by G. W. Tomlinson, Huddersfield, 7<sup>th</sup> edn. 1896)

Variations in gig and rod lengths, 1895

Lot.	Description.
409	66in. RAISING GIG with scray
410	96in. do. with copper steam chest and scray
411	sets Gig Rods, 96in.
412	sets do. 66in.

Wider clothes required wider gigs and rods.

(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *Catalogue of Finishing & Dyeing Machinery*, Nortonthorpe and Cuttlehurst Mills, near Huddersfield, 1895)



Working teazle raising gig,  
Dunkirk Mill, Stroudwater  
Textile Trust, Gloucestershire

A characteristic Yorkshire gig,  
originally from a mill in Wales.  
To save wear on the cloth,  
only every alternate rod is fitted.  
The rods are 88 in long.  
(Stroudwater Textile Trust /  
[www.stroud-textile.org.uk](http://www.stroud-textile.org.uk))

Drive and end view of  
Yorkshire gig, Dunkirk Mill,  
Gloucestershire



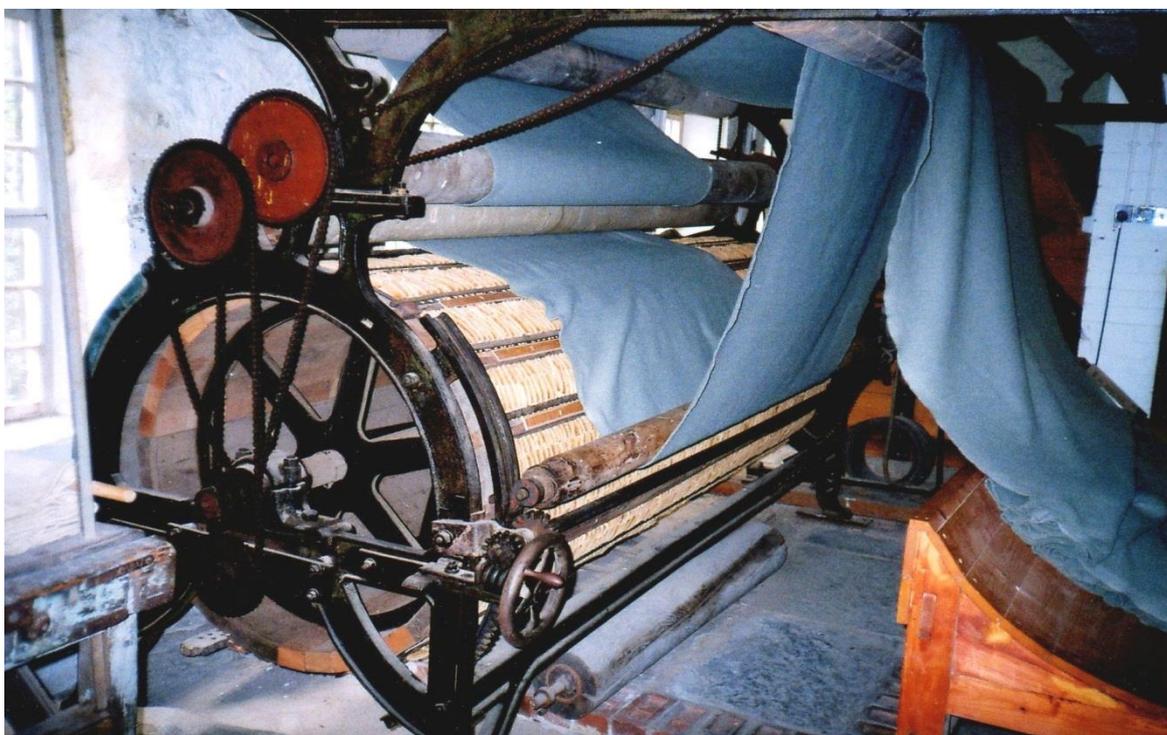
The gig is driven by line shafting  
off an 1855 waterwheel. The  
shafting and fast and loose  
mechanism came from Longfords  
Mill near Avening,  
Minchinhampton, which closed in  
1990.  
(Stroudwater Textile Trust /  
[www.stroud-textile.org.uk](http://www.stroud-textile.org.uk))

Teazle raising gig, Helmshore Mills Textile Museum, Rossendale, Lancashire



This heavily built gig, with rods 120 in long on the teazle, was intended for the raising of the heavy woollen cloths, woven to a greater width, which were made in this area. (Helmshore Mills Textile Museum / [www.lancashire.gov.uk/museums](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/museums))

The Helmshore gig with cloth



The cloth passes over the rollers of the overhead delivering system of this Yorkshire gig. The breast roller across the front adjusts the degree of contact.



## The setting of the rods



The space in the rods for the teazles is almost twice as high as that in the conventional rod, enabling very large teazles to be set two in height, to give a very heavy weight of raising.

(Helmshore Mills Textile Museum / [www.lancashire.gov.uk/museums](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/museums))

## The gig rods



Because of their exceptional length, the rods are divided up into eight separate sections, compared with the usual six.





The fixing of the rods

The iron rods are held to the barrel by an arrangement of pins and slots.  
(Helmshore Mills Textile Museum / [www.lancashire.gov.uk/museums](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/museums))

The panelled back of the Helmshore gig



The panelling may have been intended for safety, or to stop the flock from wafting about too much, or both.



## Teazle gig, Armley Mills Leeds Industrial Museum



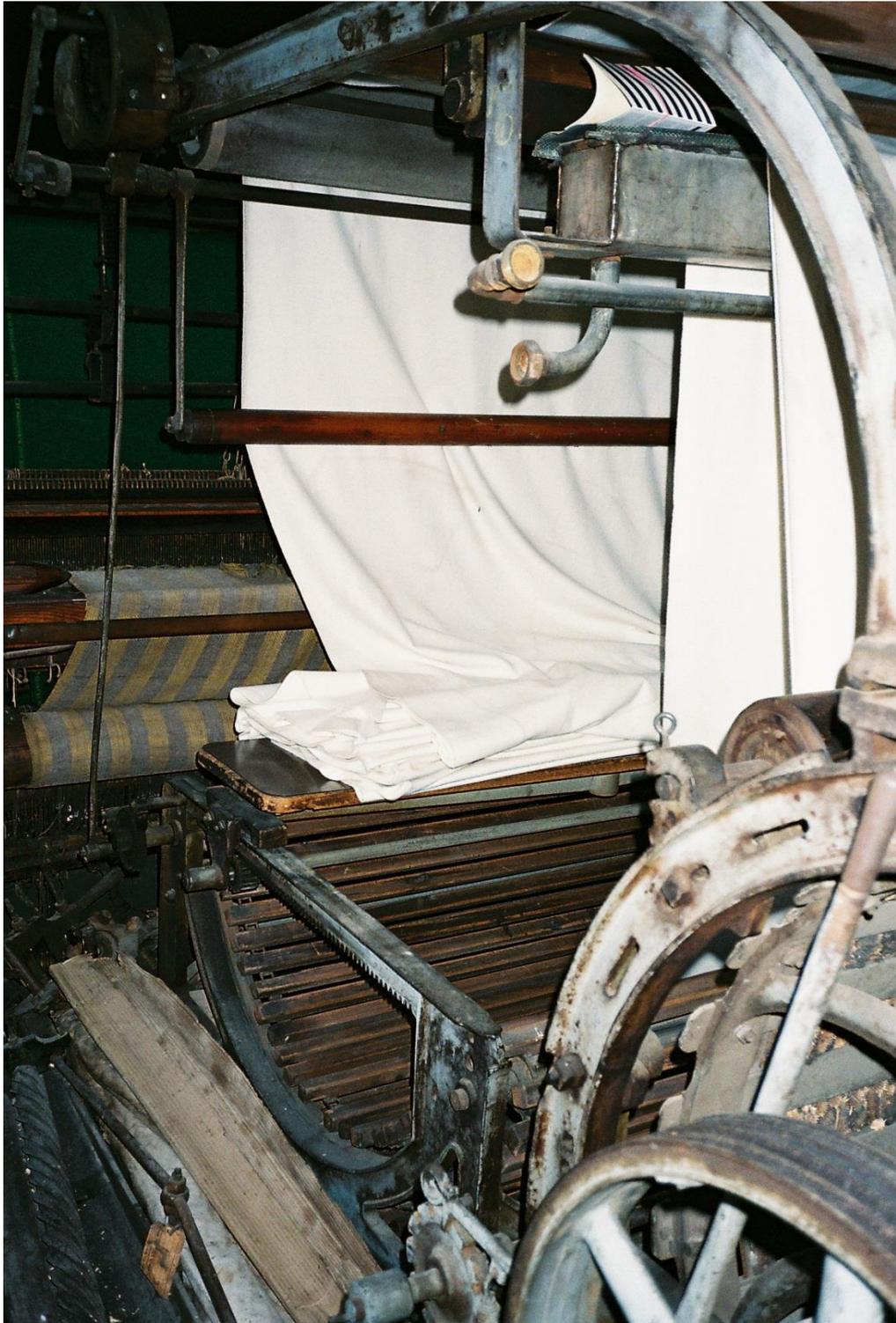
A considerably later gig than the Helmshore gig, with one or two different features. A Yorkshire gig, set up with cloth, though the ends of the cloth have been left unjoined. This gig too, is panelled at the back.  
(Armley Mills Leeds Industrial Museum)

### Close-up of rods

The rods are of the conventional height, and appear here to be held by flat springs, possibly a later idea. They are probably 72 in nominal length.  
(Armley Mills Leeds Industrial Museum)



## Piping on the gig



This gig appears to have a water tank, fed by pipes, presumably to wet the cloth during operation. The Rees, 1815 representation of a gig shows a water spray across the bottom. Seen below are the wooden slats of the moving endless belt of the scray, onto which the cloth fell, being then brought forwards to be raised again.  
(Armley Mills Leeds Industrial Museum)

Set of gig rods, Armley Mills, Leeds



A set of rods for a wider gig, possibly nominal length 84 in.  
(Armley Mills Leeds Industrial Museum)

PLATE XXI.

**THE PREEMER BOY.**

THIS may be considered as the first humble step to the more exalted situation of a Cropper. These boys are usually apprenticed at a very early age, and, though their proper legitimate occupation is *preeming*, they are always considered as the general and convenient little drudges of the dressing shops. They run every errand, sweep the premises, fetch liquor for the men, and but too often suffer from their coarse manual wit or ill governed passion. Preeming is the operation of detaching, by means of an iron comb or preem, the flocks or bits of wool from the teasels lately used. The word is no doubt a corruption of *preen*, which is the act of trimming feathers, and very similar in every respect. Two men in the back ground of the Plate are using the teasels for the purpose of what is technically termed rooing the cloth.

The cleaning of the teasles of flock was always an important subsidiary concern.

(George Walker, *The Costume of Yorkshire*, 1814)

Specifications for a preening brush, 1896

**B. 6—Preening Brush** used for cleaning Gig-rods and removing the flocks which adhere to the teasles.

**Speed**, 300 revs. ; **Pulley**, 9in. diameter by 2½in. broad.

**Space** required, 9¼ft. by 7½ft. by 2ft. ; **Cubical Contents**, 12ft.

**Net weight**, 5 cwts. ; **Gross weight**, 7 cwts.

By at least 1850, integral brushes were available on gigs, to clean the teasles. The preening brush was a separate machine for the task.

(Kirklees MBC Huddersfield Local Studies Library / *Catalogue of Finishing &*





Drum of rotary or spindle  
teazle raising machine, Kendal

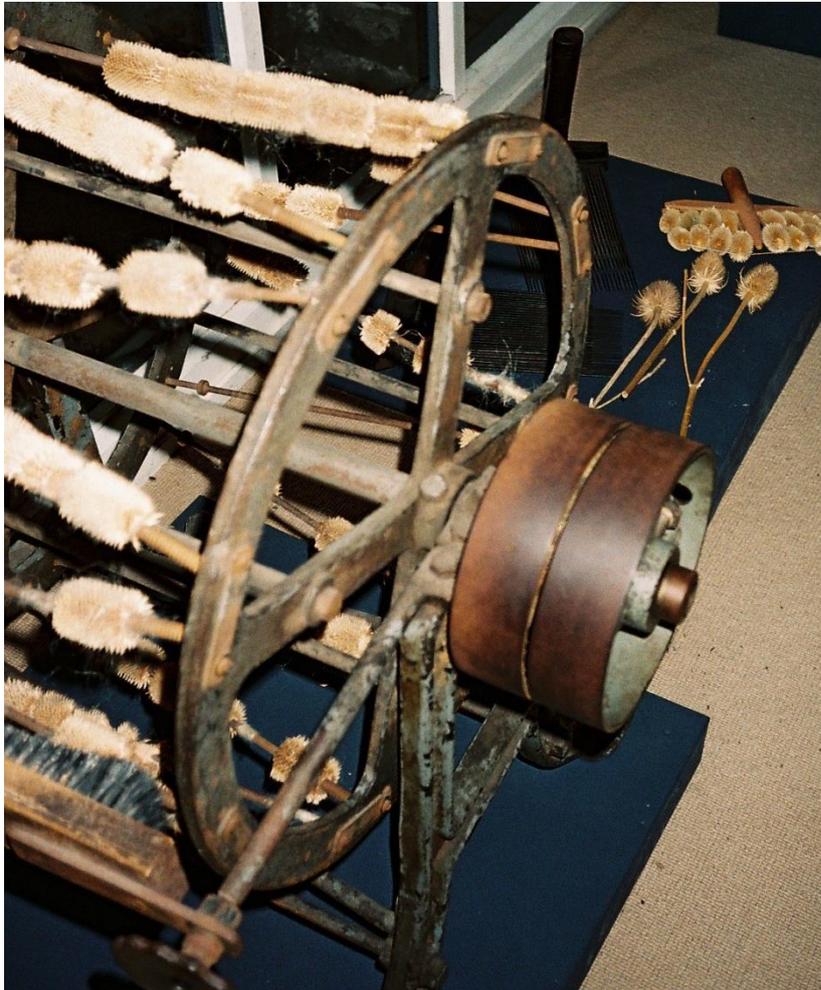
Nineteenth century spindle teazle  
raising machine, probably used in the  
woollen stocking or knitwear  
manufacture at Kendal.  
(Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry,  
Abbot Hall, Kendal)



The arrangement of the teazles

The seven 5 cm spindle teazles were  
held centrally by a spring at one end  
and a nut at the other. The width of  
the drum is no more than 15½ in and  
the diameter of the end pieces is 22½  
in. The whole unit is very small.  
(Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry,  
Abbot Hall, Kendal)

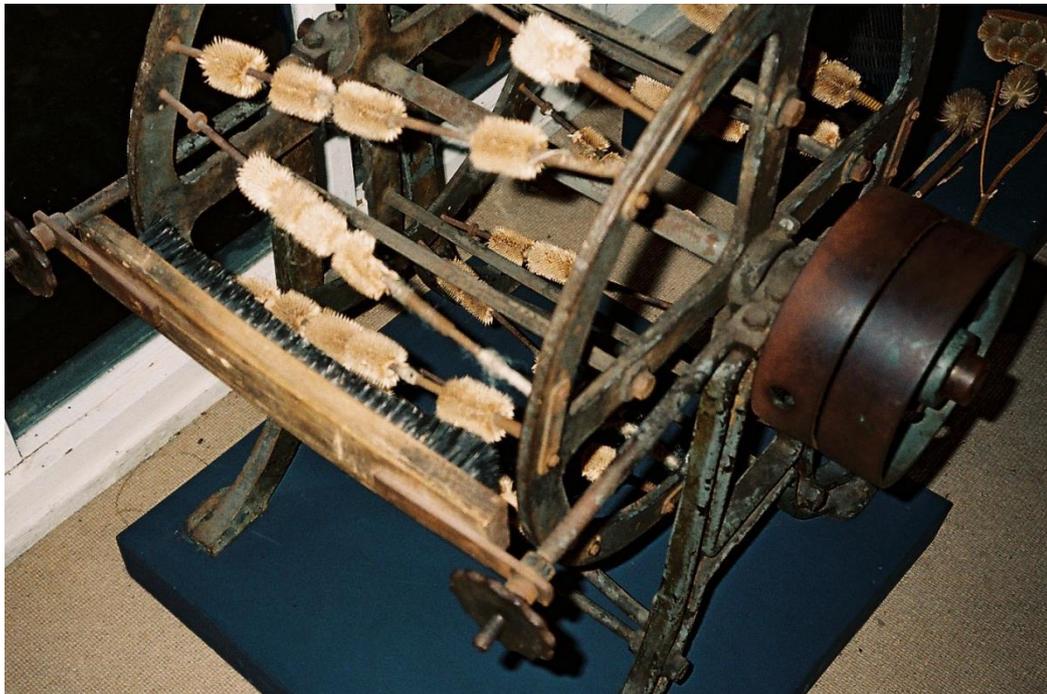




Double belt-drive

The delivering or feeding apparatus to present the fabric to the drum as it turned must have been a separate item placed next to or above the drum. There may, therefore, have been a second belt from here to drive the delivery system at the same time as the drum with the teasles turned.  
(Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry, Abbot Hall, Kendal)

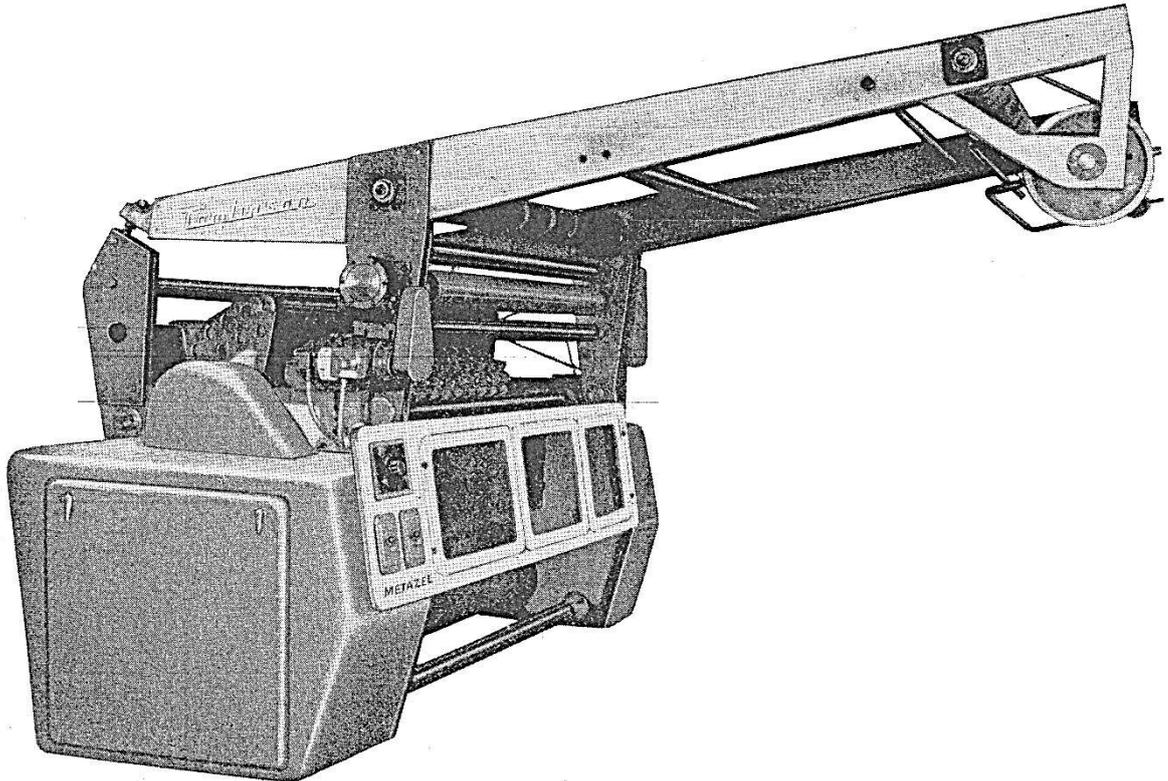
Cleaning brush



Across the drum there is a brush of bristles on the inside of a wooden beam that can be adjusted by two large knurled wheels or nuts. This was probably for cleaning the teasles, when necessary, while the drum was turning.

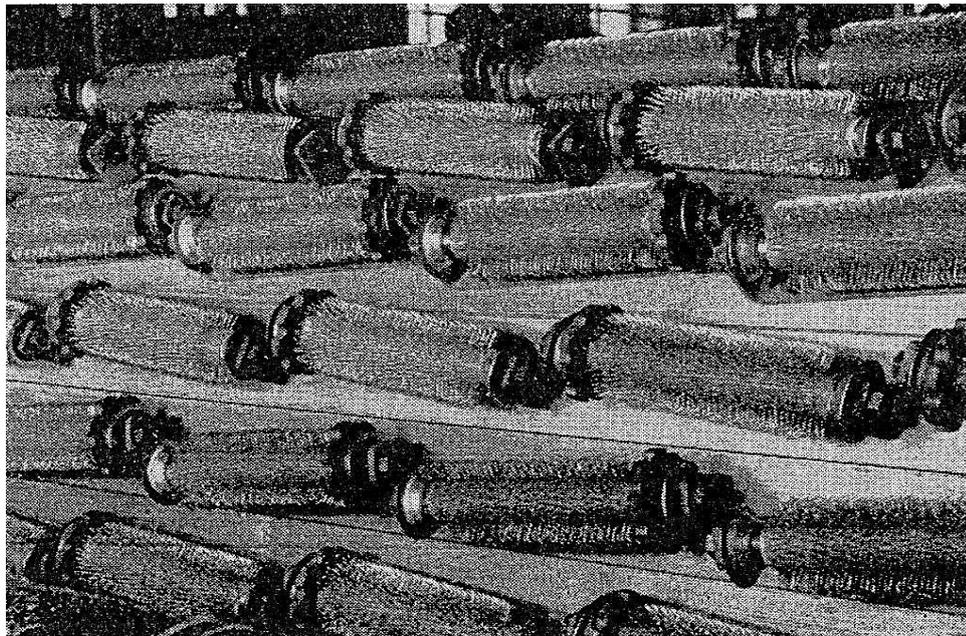
(Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry, Abbot Hall, Kendal)

The New Super Metazel rotary teazel machine, Tomlinsons (Rochdale) Ltd., c. 1960



Tomlinsons first raising machine of around 1860, was a rotary teazel machine using natural teazles. This machine, equipped with metal teazles, shows the layout, with the cylinder, here within the housing, and the cloth feed assembly.  
(Touchstones, Rochdale / Tomlinsons (Rochdale), Ltd.)

The arrangement of the teazles round the drum



Wire card fillet teazles on a hardwood former. On a machine using natural teazles each spindle would have held three teazles. This machine had a pneumatic cleaning system to remove the flock.

