

BOBBINS AND SHUTTLECOCKS

What are bobbins and shuttlecocks?

A bobbin is a post used to hold thread. Bobbins come in all different shapes and sizes, but the ones used in textiles mills during the Industrial Revolution were long and thin. They were specially made to fit inside of shuttlecocks.

A shuttlecock holds the bobbin and unspools the thread as it moves through a loom. As the shuttlecock passes back and forth through a loom, it helps weave the thread to make fabric.

Shuttlecocks had sharp, metal tips so they could move through the loom more easily. On a hand loom, which was used before industrialization, a person would move the shuttlecock back and forth with their hand. But during the Industrial Revolution, inventors developed machines that moved the shuttlecock through the loom at high speeds.

If the thread on the bobbin broke, the shuttlecock could fly out of the loom and hit someone. That's one of the reasons working in a textile factory could be dangerous. You could get hit by a flying shuttlecock!



Bobbins
(with thread)

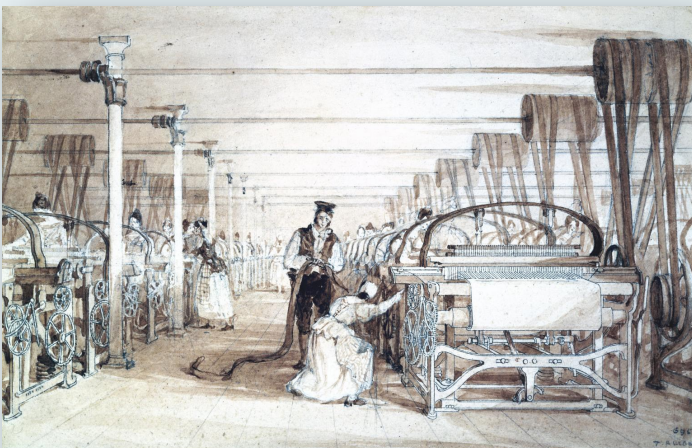


A Shuttlecock

(The bobbin is inside it, but there isn't any thread on the bobbin)



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Notice & Wonder

1. Why would working with bobbins and shuttlecocks (and the machinery used to make textiles) be dangerous?
2. How do you think the different colors of thread on the bobbins would make the fabric look when it was finished?
3. Would you rather use a hand loom or a mechanized loom? Why?



Factories that made cloth contained hundreds of looms like the ones pictured here. Each loom had its own shuttlecock.