

After weaving, which was quite loose, it was necessary to Waulk or full the cloth. In addition to this the weavers had kept the oil in the flax or wool. It was therefore necessary to steep it to remove the oil. This came the process of waulking or fulling of the cloth. In earlier days, this was done by repeated steeping of the cloth in a hot alkaline solution ("the ley"), and washing it out, drying the cloth and then applying an acid ("the sour"). This was repeated until the cloth was as white as required. Originally stale urine was used for the ley although later wood, weed or kelp ash was used for the ley before chlorine was discovered and bran, or buttermilk was used for the sour, although by the 1740's sulphuric acid was used. If urine had been used it was normal to then use a mixture of mined clay, silica and aluminium oxide (fullers earth) to cleanse it of the smell.

Then the waulker, would tramp up and down on the cloth in order to fill up the holes in the loose weave until it was suitably evenly as a thick cloth. This would take seven or eight hours and was highly skilled to ensure that no holes or spaces were left in the cloth.

After this process, and washing in clean water, the cloth would be hung on a tenter frame. These would be placed on a hillside where the sun and wind could get at them. The cloth would have been heaved on to a tenter frame and held in place by hooks, the lower bar would then be adjusted to ensure that the material was properly tensioned, hence the saying to be on tenterhooks. This was the process carried out at Claverhouse mill and the explanation for the area round about known locally even today as the bleachfields. Dundee was not renowned for the quality of its bleaching.

This manual process of waulking was later overtaken by Waulk Mills, where heavy oak hammers powered by a water mill were used to full the cloth.

In 1726 the Convention of Royal Burghs set up a Board of Trustees to oversee the industry.

In 1727 a network of stamp offices was formed to guarantee the length and breadth of the web. This bore the stampmaster's personal seal, which bore his name, the place of his office and the length and breadth of the cloth. Stampmasters' were forbidden to have any personal dealings in the cloth they stamped. There was an office in Dundee. This regulation was repealed in June 1823.