



Iron, Steam & Money: The Making of the Industrial Revolution

Roger Osborne

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In late eighteenth-century Britain a handful of men brought about the greatest transformation in human history. Inventors, industrialists and entrepreneurs ushered in the age of powered machinery and the factory, and thereby changed the whole of human society, bringing into being new methods of social and economic organisation, new social classes, and new political forces. The Industrial Revolution also dramatically altered humanity's relation to the natural world and embedded the belief that change, not stasis, is the necessary backdrop for human existence.

Iron, Steam and Money tells the thrilling story of those few decades, the moments of inspiration, the rivalries, skulduggery and death threats, and the tireless perseverance of the visionaries who made it all happen. Richard Arkwright, James Watt, Richard Trevithick and Josiah Wedgwood are among the giants whose achievements and tragedies fill these pages. In this authoritative study Roger Osborne also shows how and why the revolution happened, revealing pre-industrial Britain as a surprisingly affluent society, with wealth spread widely through the population, and with craft industries in every town, village and front parlour. The combination of disposable income, widespread demand for industrial goods, and a generation of time-served artisans created the unique conditions that propelled humanity into the modern world.

The industrial revolution was arguably the most important episode in modern human history; *Iron, Steam and Money* reminds us of its central role, while showing the extraordinary excitement of those tumultuous decades.



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