

Water Power and the Cotton Factory: Richard Arkwright at Cromford

This factory was built by Sir Richard Arkwright in 1783-84 just outside Cromford. He built the mill in an architecturally elegant style with small lunette windows in the central bay set between Venetian windows. A cupola on top of the bay contained a bell to summon employees to work. The structure is a grade II* listed building.

Summary

Richard Arkwright, created the cotton mill. He invented the water frame in 1769 and successfully applied it to the mechanised production of cotton spinning in the 1770s and 1780s. At Cromford and Matlock Bath in Derbyshire's Derwent Valley he created hydraulic engineering schemes and built factories dedicated to the production of cotton thread. He also pioneered new ways of attracting and organising a workforce. Cromford was isolated, so Arkwright created a small town with a market, an inn and dwellings. The town provided a new way of living and working as employees had to adjust to the rhythm of the machine.

It is remarkable that this 18th century town survived virtually intact, when other monuments of early industrialisation did not, such as Matthew Boulton's Soho Works in Handsworth. Since 2001, Cromford has been part of the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site. This recognises its importance as a monument to Richard Arkwright and the factory system, but the town is also a physical record of industrial capitalism and the patterns of time management, work discipline and social control which form part of the contemporary world.

Malcolm Dick's exhibition is illustrated with photographs which he originally took in August 1981 before much of the site was restored. It explores the relationship between Cromford's factories, water supplies and the transport, commercial and social facilities which enabled the community to develop.

Sections:

9. The Mill Manager's House, Cromford, Derbyshire
10. Masson Mill, Matlock Bath near Cromford, Derbyshire
11. Masson Mill from Masson's Weir, Matlock Bath near Cromford, Derbyshire
12. Masson Weir, Matlock Bath near Cromford, Derbyshire
13. The Canal Wharf, Cromford, Derbyshire
14. The Counting House and Warehouse, Cromford Wharf, Derbyshire
15. The A6 at Cromford, Derbyshire
16. The Greyhound Hotel, Cromford, Derbyshire
17. Corn Mill, Cromford, Derbyshire
18. Water wheel at the Corn Mill, Cromford, Derbyshire.
19. Housing in North Street, Cromford, Derbyshire (1)
20. Housing in North Street, Cromford, Derbyshire (2)
21. Rear of Housing in North Street, Cromford, Derbyshire
22. Housing in The Hill, Cromford, Derbyshire
23. Housing in Victoria Row, Cromford, Derbyshire
24. St Mary's Anglican Church, Mill Lane, Cromford, Derbyshire
25. School, North Street, Cromford, Derbyshire
26. School and School House, North Street, Cromford, Derbyshire
27. Willersley Castle, Cromford, Derbyshire