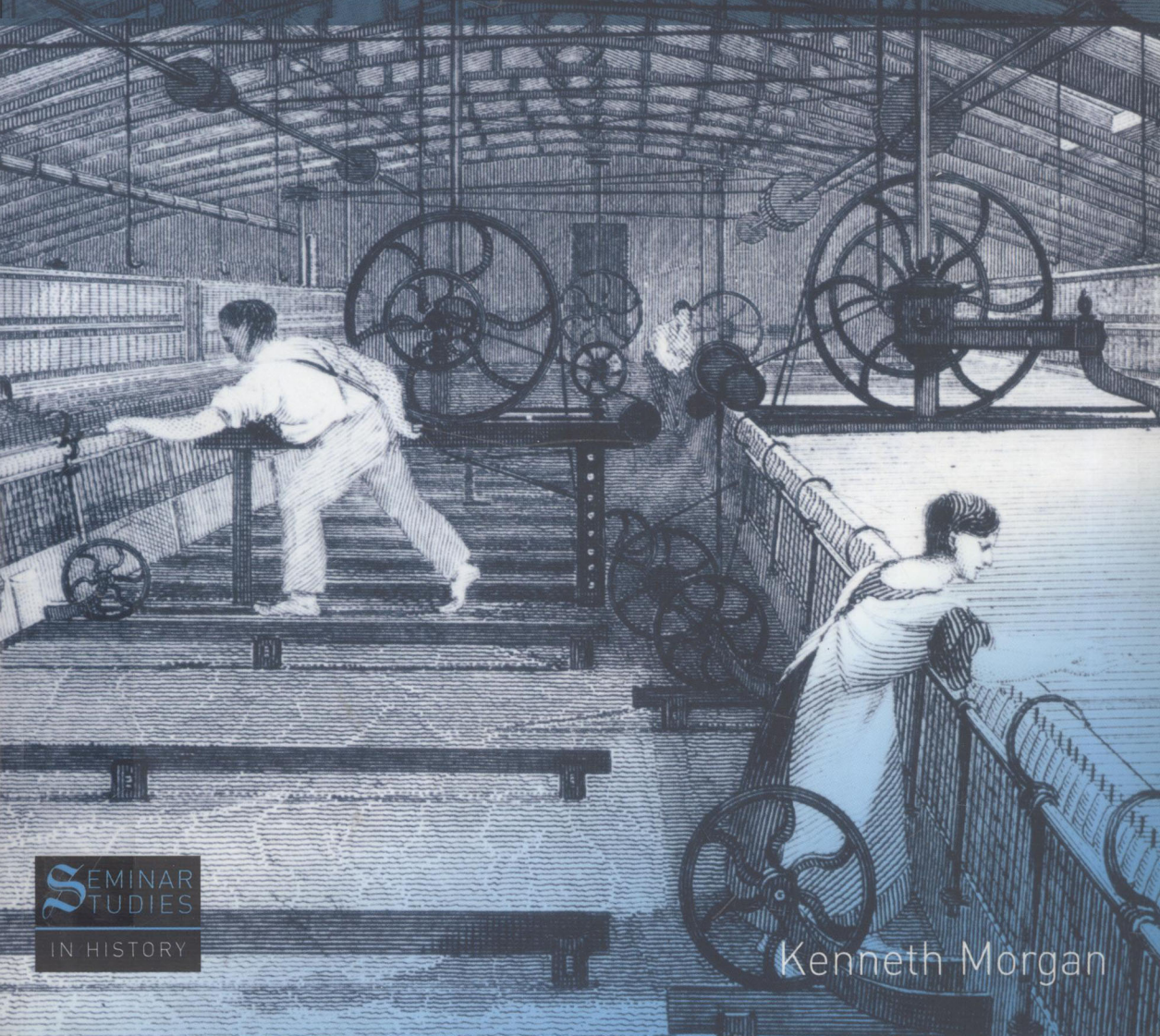


# THE BIRTH OF INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN

1750–1850

2ND EDITION



SEMINAR  
STUDIES  
IN HISTORY

Kenneth Morgan

# The Birth of Industrial Britain: Social Change, 1750–1850

Second edition

Kenneth Morgan



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## The Birth of Industrial Britain, 1750–1850

# Introduction to the Series

History is narrative constructed by historians from traces left by the past. Historical enquiry is often driven by contemporary issues and, in consequence, historical narratives are constantly reconsidered, reconstructed and reshaped. The fact that different historians have different perspectives on issues means that there is also often controversy and no universally agreed version of past events. *Seminar Studies in History* was designed to bridge the gap between current research and debate, and the broad, popular general surveys that often date rapidly.

The volumes in the series are written by historians who are not only familiar with the latest research and current debates concerning their topic, but who have themselves contributed to our understanding of the subject. The books are intended to provide the reader with a clear introduction to a major topic in history. They provide both a narrative of events and a critical analysis of contemporary interpretations. They include the kinds of tools generally omitted from specialist monographs: a chronology of events, a glossary of terms and brief biographies of 'who's who'. They also include bibliographical essays in order to guide students to the literature on various aspects of the subject. Students and teachers alike will find that the selection of documents will stimulate discussion and offer insight into the raw materials used by historians in their attempt to understand the past.

**Clive Emsley and Gordon Martel**  
Series Editors

To Leigh, Ross and Vanessa Morgan

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# Chronology

**1748**

**18 October** Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle ends War of Austrian Succession.

**1752**

**2 September** Last day of the Julian calendar in Britain.

**14 September** First day of the Gregorian calendar in Britain.

**1754**

**March** Duke of Newcastle becomes prime minister.

**1756**

**17 May** Britain declares war on France.

**20 June** The Nawab of Bengal imprisoned 146 British captives in a prison cell at Fort William (the Black Hole of Calcutta).

**29 August** Seven Years' War begins in Europe.

**October** Duke of Newcastle resigns as prime minister.

**1757**

**23 June** Bengal passes into British control after the Battle of Plassey.

**July** Formation of the Pitt-Newcastle administration.

**1759**

**13 September** General Wolfe's victory over the French at the Plains of Abraham, Québec.

**1760**

**8 September** Montreal surrenders to Britain. Virtual loss of Canada by France.

**25 October** Death of George II and accession of George III to the throne.



- 1761**  
**9 March** Riot against the Militia Act, Hexham, Northumberland.  
**October** Resignation of the Elder Pitt. Formation of the Bute-Newcastle administration.
- 1762**  
**4 January** Britain declares war on Spain.
- 1763**  
**10 February** Paris peace treaty between Britain, France and Spain ends the Seven Years' War.  
**30 April** John Wilkes arrested for his attack on the King's speech in No. 45 of the *North Briton*.
- 1765**  
**22 March** The Stamp Act passed.
- 1766**  
**18 March** Repeal of the Stamp Act.
- 1768**  
**10 May** 'Wilkes and Liberty' riot in London.
- 1769**  
**February** Formation of the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights.
- 1770**  
**31 January** Lord North becomes prime minister.
- 1771**  
**August** Richard Arkwright began building Cromford Mill, Derbyshire.
- 1772**  
**April–June** Food riots mainly in East Anglia and the West of England.
- 1773**  
**16 December** Boston Tea Party.
- 1775**  
**19 April** The War of American Independence begins at Concord, Massachusetts.

- 1776  
**4 July** Declaration of American Independence.
- 1777  
**17 October** General Burgoyne defeated at the Battle of Saratoga, New York.
- 1778  
**17 June** War declared between Britain and France.
- 1779  
**July** The Penitentiary Act authorised the building of one or more national penitentiaries.
- 1780  
**8 February** Presentation of the Yorkshire petition for parliamentary reform to the House of Commons.  
**2–9 June** Gordon (anti-Catholic) Riots in London.
- 1781  
**19 October** Lord Cornwallis surrenders to George Washington after the Battle of Yorktown, Virginia.
- 1782  
**20 March** Lord North resigns as prime minister.  
**27 March** Formation of the Home Office.
- 1783  
**April–December** The Fox-North Coalition ministry.  
**3 September** Treaty of Paris ends the War of American Independence.  
**19 December** William Pitt the Younger becomes prime minister.
- 1786  
**26 September** Anglo-French commercial treaty (the Eden treaty) signed.
- 1788  
**18 January** First fleet of convicts reaches Botany Bay.
- 1789  
**January** The Regency Bill passed to deprive the Prince of Wales of power.  
**14 July** Storming of the Bastille, Paris marks the beginning of the French Revolution.

1790

**November** Edmund Burke publishes *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, warning of the dangers of the French Revolution.

1791

**2 March** Death of John Wesley, the main founder of Methodism.

**March** Thomas Paine publishes *Rights of Man*, part one.

**14–17 July** ‘Church and King’ riots in Birmingham against Dissenters.

1792

**25 January** Formation of the London Corresponding Society, the first artisan-based political society in Britain.

**February** Thomas Paine publishes *Rights of Man*, part two.

1793

**1 February** France declares war on Britain and the Netherlands.

1794

**October–November** Thomas Hardy, founder of the London Corresponding Society, and other radicals acquitted of high treason.

1795

**December** Seditious Meetings Act restricts public meetings and political lectures.

1797

**February** The Bank of England suspended specie payments.

**16 April–15 May** Naval mutiny at Spithead.

**12 May–16 June** Naval mutiny at the Nore.

1798

**23 May–12 October** Irish Rebellion, the largest popular Republican rising in Irish history.

1799

**12 July** Combination Act passed.

1801

**1 January** Act of Union, creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, came into effect.

**16 February** William Pitt the Younger resigns as prime minister.

**10 March** The first national census in Britain.

1802

*17 March* Peace of Amiens temporarily ends hostilities between Britain and France.

1803

*16 May* War resumes between Britain and France.

1805

*21 October* Nelson defeats the Franco-Spanish fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar.

1806

*23 January* Death of William Pitt the Younger.

1807

*25 March* An act to abolish the British slave trade passed.

1811

*March* Beginning of Luddite disturbances in the Midlands.

1812

*January* Luddite disturbances spread to Yorkshire and Lancashire.

*8 June* Lord Liverpool becomes Tory prime minister.

*19 June* The United States declares war on Britain.

1814

*24 December* War between Britain and the United States concludes with the Treaty of Ghent.

1815

*20 March* Parliament passes the Corn Law.

*9 June* Treaty of Vienna ends the Napoleonic wars.

*18 June* Defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo.

1816

*2 December* Spa Fields riots, Islington, London.

1817

*28 January* Mobbing of the Prince Regent's coach, London.

*10 March* March of the Blanketeers gathers in Manchester.

*9 June* Pentrich rebellion, Derbyshire.

1819

*16 August* Peterloo Massacre, Manchester.

**1820**

- 29 January** Death of George III. George IV becomes king.  
**23 February** Apprehension of the Cato Street conspirators.

**1824**

- 21 June** Repeal of the Combination Acts.

**1825**

- September** Opening of the Stockton and Darlington railway.

**1827**

- 9 April** Lord Liverpool resigns as prime minister.

**1828**

- 9 May** Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

**1829**

- 24 March** Catholic Relief Act grants Catholic Emancipation.  
**29 September** Formation of the Metropolitan Police by Robert Peel.

**1830**

- 26 June** Death of George IV. William IV becomes king.  
**August–October** ‘Swing’ Riots against agricultural machinery.  
**15 September** Opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway.  
**22 November** Earl Grey becomes Whig prime minister.

**1831**

- October** Reform Bill demonstrations and riots at Nottingham, Derby and Bristol.

**1832**

- 7 June** Great Reform Act becomes law.

**1833**

- 29 August** Factory Reform Act passed.

**1834**

- February** Foundation of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union (GNCTU) by Robert Owen.  
**18 March** Six Dorset farm labourers (the Tolpuddle martyrs) sentenced to convict transportation to Australia for trade union activities.  
**1 August** Slavery abolished in most of the British Empire.  
**14 August** Poor Law Amendment Act passed.

1835

- 9 September* Cruelty to Animals Act passed.  
*21 October* Municipal Corporations Act passed.

1836

- 26 June* London Working Men's Association formed.

1837

- 20 June* Death of William IV. Accession of Queen Victoria.

1838

- 6 August* The People's Charter adopted at a mass rally in Birmingham.

1839

- 7 May* Presentation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chartist petition to Parliament.  
*4 July* Riots at the Bull Ring, Birmingham.  
*4 November* Rebellion at Newport, Monmouthshire.

1841

- 30 August* Sir Robert Peel becomes Conservative prime minister.

1842

- 2 May* Presentation of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chartist Petition to Parliament.  
*10 August* The Mines Act passed.  
*August* 'Plug' riots in the Midlands, Scotland, Yorkshire and Lancashire.

1844

- 7 June* Factory Act passed.

1846

- 25 June* The House of Lords repeals the Corn Laws.  
*29 June* Sir Robert Peel resigns as prime minister.

1848

- 10 April* Presentation of 3<sup>rd</sup> Chartist petition to Parliament.

1851

- May–October* The Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, Hyde Park, London.

# Who's who

**Arkwright, Richard** (1732–1792): Industrialist and inventor. Originally from Lancashire, he patented the water frame in 1769 to speed up the mechanisation of cotton spinning. He was the proprietor of Cromford mill, near Matlock, Derbyshire, the first major cotton factory in Britain.

**Bell, Andrew** (1753–1832): Inventor of the 'Madras' system of education in which the older, clever pupils taught younger pupils under a monitorial system. This was adopted by the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, founded in 1811.

**Bentham, Jeremy** (1748–1832): Utilitarian philosopher and social reformer. Bentham wanted reforms that brought in the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. He made numerous important contributions to ideas about legal and prison reform. His advocacy of centralised bureaucracy, efficient administration and inspection influenced the operation of the New Poor Law.

**Birkbeck, Sir George** (1776–1841): Doctor, philanthropist and academic. Pioneer of adult education for the working man who founded mechanics' institutes for the advance of scientific knowledge.

**Brougham, Henry** (1778–1868): Scottish Whig lawyer, politician and statesman who became Lord Chancellor between 1830 and 1834. He was an opponent of the slave trade, and promoted the education of the poor and legal reform.

**Chadwick, Edwin** (1800–1890): Social and legal reformer. A disciple of Jeremy Bentham. He played an important role in formulating social policy in Britain between 1832 and 1854, when he retired. He made important contributions to poor law provision, public health and factory reform.

**Crompton, Samuel** (1753–1827): Lancashire-born inventor of the 'mule', a spinning machine used in cotton factories from 1779 onwards that achieved greater productivity than Arkwright's water frame.



**Eden, Sir Frederick, 2nd baronet** (1766–1809): Writer on poverty and social investigator. His *State of the Poor*, 3 vols (1797) gathered comprehensive information on the labouring classes in England.

**Engels, Friedrich** (1820–1895): German social scientist, author and political theorist, closely associated with Karl Marx, with whom he co-authored the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). He was the author of *The Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844*, based on his experience working for a textile firm in Manchester in the early 1840s.

**Fielding, Henry** (1707–1754): Combined the roles of lawyer, magistrate and author of plays and novels. He was Justice of the Peace for Bow Street from 1748, where he tried to reduce crime and disorder.

**Fielding, Sir John** (d. 1780): Magistrate and half-brother of Henry Fielding. Active in tackling robbery and other types of crime in London.

**Frost, John** (1784–1877): Welsh Chartist and leader of the Newport Rising in 1839. Found guilty of high treason and transported as a convict to Australia. He was eventually pardoned.

**Fry, Elizabeth** (1780–1845): Quaker who was active in the reform of London's prisons, paying particular attention to the relief of women prisoners and to educational and religious schemes for inmates.

**Gilbert, Thomas** (1720–1798): Poor Law reformer and MP. He promoted legislation in 1782 (Gilbert's Act) which permitted two or more parishes to unite to form poor law unions.

**Gordon, Lord George** (1751–1793): Politician who became President of the Protestant Association. The anti-Catholic Gordon Riots (1780) are named after him. After these riots, lasting six days, he was tried for treason and acquitted.

**Graham, Sir James, 2nd baronet** (1792–1861): Politician and statesman. Originally a Whig, he joined the Conservatives in 1837. Home Secretary between 1841 and 1846 in Sir Robert Peel's Conservative government.

**Grey, Charles, 2nd Earl** (1764–1845): Whig leader and prime minister in 1830–34. His main achievement was to steer the Great Reform Bill through Parliament in 1831–32, which redistributed some parliamentary constituencies and extended the franchise while retaining aristocratic influence.

**Hanway, Jonas** (1712–1786): Philanthropist who founded the Marine Society, London, in 1756. This helped poor boys from the metropolis to enter a naval career. Involved in other reform initiatives, including support for the Foundling Hospital.

**Howard, John** (?1726–1790): Sheriff in Bedfordshire and prison reformer. His visits to gaols formed the basis of his influential indictment of prison conditions in *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales* (1777).

**Hunt, Henry** (1773–1835): Radical reformer known as ‘Orator’ Hunt because of his ability to address large open-air crowds effectively on the need for parliamentary reform. Advocated universal manhood suffrage, annual Parliaments and use of the ballot box at general elections.

**Kay-Shuttleworth, Sir James, 1st baronet (originally James Phillips Kay)** (1804–1877): Educationalist and politician. Trained as a doctor, he worked in the factory districts of Lancashire and later became an important contributor to factory reform and to popular education. He jointly founded in 1839–40 the first British training college for school teachers in Battersea, London.

**Lancaster, Joseph** (1778–1838): Educationalist and nonconformist. Established a school in Southwark, London in 1798 which was free for those unable to pay. His monitorial system was widely adopted in non-denominational schools throughout the nineteenth century, particularly under the auspices of the British and Foreign School Society.

**Liverpool, Lord, Robert Banks Jenkinson** (1770–1828): Tory politician and prime minister between 1812 and 1827. Opposed to radical agitation and parliamentary reform, his administration brought in repressive measures to counteract popular protest in the difficult peacetime years immediately after the end of the Napoleonic wars.

**Lovett, William** (1800–1877): Chartist leader. Founder of the London Men’s Working Association in 1836, Lovett is best known for his Chartist activities. He was a ‘moral force’ Chartist who advocated the spread of literacy and political education for the poor and their children.

**Lowery, Robert** (1809–1863): Chartist based on Tyneside. Originally a tailor who opened a political bookshop in Newcastle, he travelled widely as a radical politician. He advocated teetotal Chartism.

**Malthus, Thomas Robert** (1766–1834): Social thinker, clergyman and population theorist. Malthus published numerous works on political economy but is best known as the author of an *Essay on the Principle of Population as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society*, first published in 1798 and revised in 1803. Malthus was the first notable thinker to explain mortality and fertility in relation to wages and food prices.

**Marx, Karl** (1818–1883): German philosopher, social theorist and political economist who wrote influentially on class consciousness, capitalism and