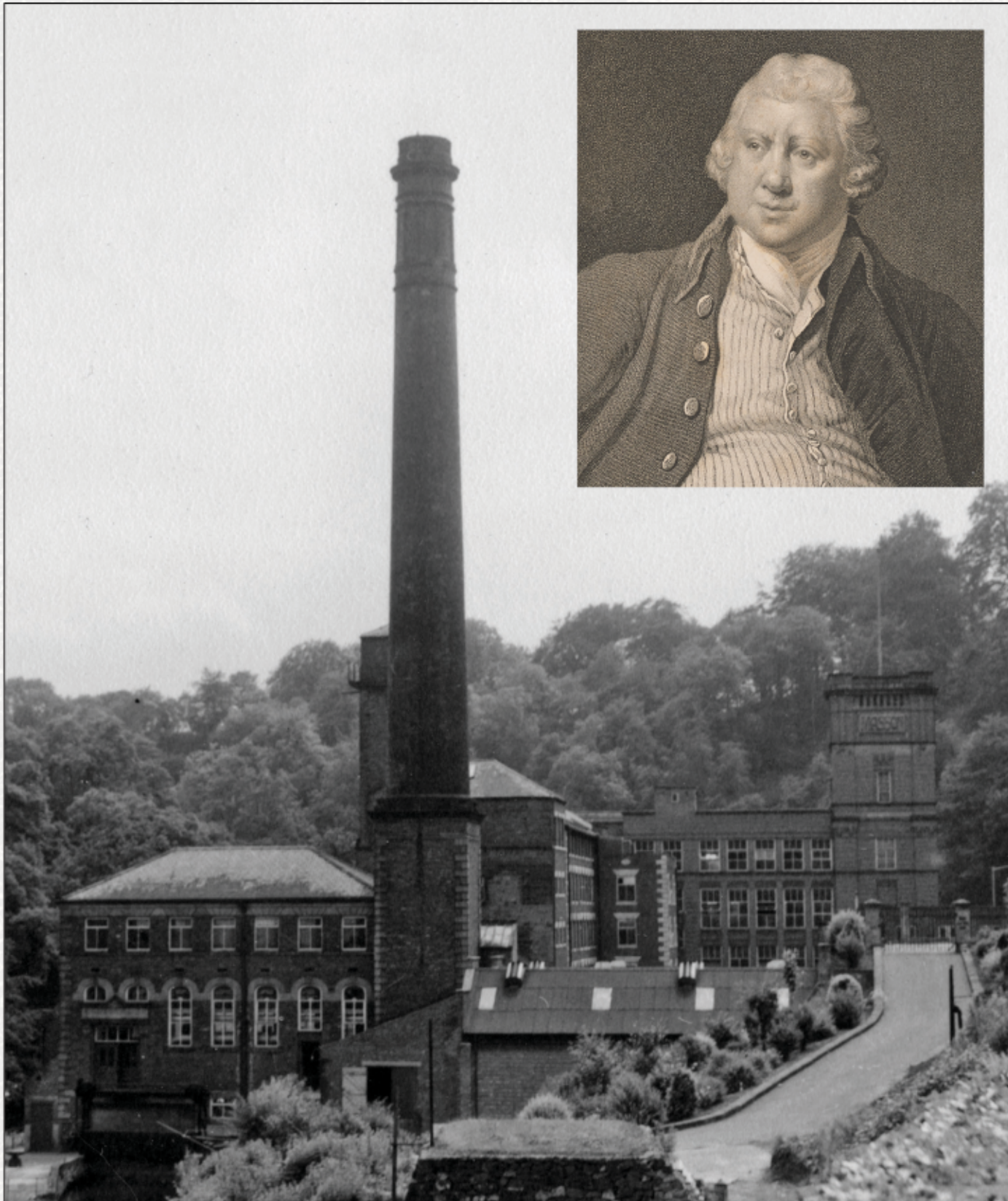


# Richard Arkwright

Few characters in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries embody the spirit of the industrial revolution like Richard Arkwright. Born in 1732 in Preston, Lancashire, Arkwright had a penchant for business development and industrial technology. Starting as a peruke (wig) maker, he went on to patent a spinning frame powered by water in 1769, enabling the mass manufacturing of textiles at a cheaper cost. Arkwright moved to Nottingham, a leading location for the textile industry, as the perfect site for this revolution in technology.

Arkwright's 'masterpieces' were the water mills at Cromford (1774) and Masson (1783) in Derbyshire. His successes were obtained at a price: working at these cotton mills was highly dangerous, and the workers included children. The cotton itself was an export of the British Empire, grown and picked by slaves.

Richard Arkwright died in 1792, but Cromford and Masson Mills continued to flourish into the nineteenth century with the increasing demand for cotton. Arkwright had emerged from humble beginnings to become a wealthy entrepreneur, and few monuments proclaim this as much as his grand home Willersley Castle, which overlooks Cromford Mill.



Photograph of Masson Mills, Matlock Bath. In the photographic survey *The industrial landscape of the East Midlands* (c.1959-1962)  
Research papers of Dr David M. Smith, MS 627/1/1

Portrait of Sir Richard Arkwright (1732-1792) by Joseph Wright of Derby, engraved by T. Wright, c.1842  
Printed portraits of men distinguished in the field of medicine, 1719-1928, MS 712/32