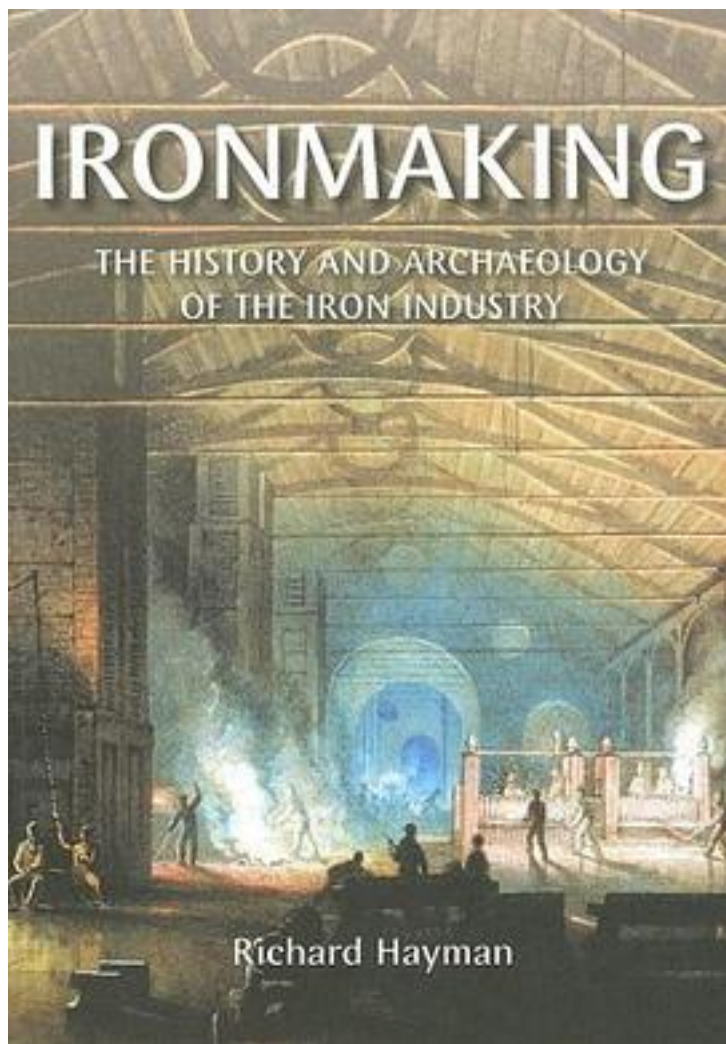


Ironmaking



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Iron was the catalyst of the Industrial Revolution - the material of Ironbridge, the Crystal Palace, railways, steam engines, ships. But what made it so important and why did Britain become the major producer of iron in the world? The iron industry sucked in a mass of skilled and unskilled labour, and transformed rural landscapes with mines, railways, and new villages and towns. Without iron there would have been no Industrial Revolution and few parts of Britain from the Highlands of Scotland to Cornwall have not been touched by the iron industry. Richard Hayman concentrates on the period when coal replaced charcoal as the industry's fuel source, discussing the changing technology, geography and economy of the industry as well as its social history. From those heady days at Coalbrookdale on the banks of the Severn to the decline of a once-mighty industry, he tells the story of iron and its place in history.

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