



Heroes of Invention: Technology, Liberalism and British Identity, 1750-1914 (Cambridge Studies in Economic History - Second Series)

By Christine MacLeod

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This innovative study adopts a distinct perspective on both the industrial revolution and nineteenth-century British culture. It investigates why inventors rose to heroic stature and popular acclaim in Victorian Britain, attested by numerous monuments, biographies and honours, and contends there was no decline in the industrial nation's self-esteem before 1914. In a period notorious for hero-worship, the veneration of inventors might seem unremarkable, were it not for their previous disparagement and the relative neglect suffered by their twentieth-century successors. Christine MacLeod argues that inventors became figureheads of various nineteenth-century factions, from economic and political liberals to impoverished scientists and radical artisans, who deployed their heroic reputation, not least to challenge the aristocracy's hold on power and the militaristic national identity that bolstered it. Although this was a challenge that ultimately failed, its legacy of ideas about invention, inventors, and the history of the industrial revolution remains highly influential.

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Heroes of Invention: Technology, Liberalism and British Identity, 1750-1914 (Cambridge Studies in Economic History - Second Series) By Christine MacLeod Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2623971 in Books
- Published on: 2010-06-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x 1.06" w x 5.98" l, 1.53 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 476 pages

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"...presents numerous insights that will fascinate and enlighten those with more encompassing interests in social attitudes, perceptions and representations of technology and culture, during the period of industrialization in Britain." -B. Zorina Khan, EH.NET

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Journal of Modern History, Jordanna Bailkin, University of Washington

About the Author

Christine MacLeod is Senior Lecturer in Economic and Social History at the School of Humanities, University of Bristol. She is the author of *Inventing the Industrial Revolution: the English Patent System, 1660-1800* (1988).

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