

Matthew Boulton, 1728-1809

The 200th anniversary of Matthew Boulton in 2009 provided an opportunity to investigate the life and importance of this industrialist and Enlightenment figure who contributed significantly to the history of the West Midlands and the national and international economies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

A number of activities took place within the Centre for West Midlands History. At the end of 2008, [Peter Jones](/staff/profiles/history/jones-peter.aspx) published a major prize-winning book, *Industrial Enlightenment: Science, Technology and Culture in the West Midlands 1760-1820* (Manchester University Press), which placed Boulton in a wider context of industrial and scientific thinking and activity.

Sue Tungate, PhD student, contributed to two 2009 exhibitions, 'Matthew Boulton, Selling What All the World Desires', at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery and 'Matthew Boulton and the Art of Making Money' at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. Sue co-curated the Barber exhibition and co-edited a book with the same title (Brewin Books, 2009) with [Dr Richard Clay](/staff/profiles/historyofart/clay-richard.aspx). Peter Jones, Sue Tungate and another member of the Centre, Dr Sally Baggott also contributed to the catalogue of BM&AGs Boulton exhibition: Shena Mason (ed.), *Matthew Boulton, Selling What All the World Desires* (Yale University Press).

[Malcolm Dick](/staff/profiles/history/dick-malcolm.aspx) explored Boulton's contribution to the culture of industrialisation in 'Discourses for the new industrial world: industrialisation and the education of the public in late eighteenth-century Britain', *History of Education*, vol. 37, no. 4, July 2008. He also edited a volume of substantial essays about Boulton in *Matthew Boulton: a Revolutionary Player* (Brewin Books, 2009).

The culmination of events was an international conference, 'Where Genius and the Arts Preside: Matthew Boulton and the Soho Manufactory 1809-2009' organised by the Centre for West Midlands History, The Assay Office, Birmingham and Birmingham Institute of Art and Design at Birmingham City University in July 2009. Malcolm Dick and Sally Baggott are co-editing with Professor Ken Quickenden, BCU, a book of selected conference papers: *Matthew Boulton - Enterprising Industrialist of the Enlightenment* (Ashgate, forthcoming).

Peter Jones and Malcolm Dick have contributed to television documentaries about Boulton and talked to academic and general audiences about Mathew Boulton throughout the UK. Peter and Malcolm also served on Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery advisory board for 'Matthew Boulton, Selling What All the World Desires'.