



The Hancocks of Marlborough: Rubber, Art and the Industrial Revolution - A Family of Inventive Genius

John Loadman, Francis James

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This book began with the aim of telling the almost forgotten story of Thomas Hancock, the rubber developer who in his own day was acknowledged as one of the great scientific pioneers of the Industrial Revolution. But as research progressed, it was clear that Thomas and his five brothers, the Hancocks of Marlborough, together constituted a unique family which made a tremendous yet virtually unknown contribution to nineteenth-century science and art. Walter designed and ran the first steam carriages to carry passengers on the common roads of England and so began the age of mechanized transport. Thomas founded the UK rubber industry when he discovered how to vulcanize rubber reliably; his company survived for some 120 years before being taken over. Charles was a well established painter who was also instrumental in the manufacture of gutta percha-coated undersea cables, used by the electric telegraph to begin the global information highway. Other brothers, John, James and William all made significant contributions to the development of Victorian science and culture. This book tells the story of the family and the remarkable people in it, from the Great Fire of Marlborough in 1653 to the present day, using the Hancock family archive of many unpublished and previously unknown documents.

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