

ECCLES AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

www.edhs.colsal.org.uk

**The Steam Hammer Man: James Nasmyth (1808-1890) by John Aldred.
Published by Eccles and District History Society, 2008.
ISBN 978-0-900999-19-2. £3 (£2 for orders of 10 or more) plus £1 p & p.**

August 2008 is the bicentenary of the birth of James Nasmyth, one of Britain's most famous engineers, famous enough to appear in the pages of "Punch". Born in Edinburgh, he established in 1836 works at Patricroft, Eccles, near Manchester, which became known as the Bridgewater Foundry. Here were constructed steam engines, machine tools, locomotives and the device for which he is best known, the steam hammer. He is credited with over forty inventions. Among them was a ladle for moving molten iron designed to be much safer than previous designs; Nasmyth refused to take out a patent for this invention in the hope that this would encourage the spread of the device and reduce the risk of accidents. His enterprise extended to astronomy and he had his own telescope for this purpose. His particular interest was in the moon. He made maps and drawings of the moon and wrote a book entitled "The Moon considered as a Planet, a World, and a Satellite". He was accomplished in drawing and also took an interest in photography.

This attractively produced booklet is the first to be intended to bring knowledge of his life and achievements to a wide audience. Its 62 pages contain diagrams, photographs and illustrations (some by Nasmyth himself). Parts of designs for machines and inventions from his sketch book appear on many pages.

Orders can be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Eccles and District History Society, Flat 2, 20 Victoria Crescent, Eccles, Manchester, M30 9AW (tel. 0161 788 7263). For information on the book and the Society consult its website.