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The Iron Tsar: The Life and Times of John Hughes

Roderick Heather

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The Iron Tsar: The Life and Times of John Hughes Roderick Heather
In 1870, having worked his way up from humble beginnings in South Wales, John Hughes although only semi-literate, was a successful inventor, wealthy industrialist and family man living in London. At the age of 55 he decided to leave everything behind and move to the desolate Ukrainian Steppe, then part of Tsarist Russia, to set up a modern iron and steel works. Having negotiated a contract with the Russian government and raised the capital in England to finance the new enterprise, he set sail for the Ukraine. Interwoven with the story of Hughes and his company there are links with some of the most famous people of the time, including British entrepreneurs such as Brassey, Whitworth, Gooch and Brunel and in Russia, Tsar Alexander II, Lenin and Khrushchev. Hughes' contribution to industrialising the Ukraine and modernising Tsarist Russia was enormous and has largely been unrecognised in his home country. He wasn't the father of the Industrial Revolution in Russia but he was surely one of its most influential uncles. This is the remarkable story of the life and times of John Hughes, his company, fellow workers and the town that he founded.

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