



Circles: Fifty Round Trips Through History Technology Science Culture

James Burke

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From the bestselling author of *The Knowledge Web* come fifty mesmerizing journeys into the history of technology, each following a chain of consequential events that ends precisely where it began. Whether exploring electromagnetic fields, the origin of hot chocolate, or DNA fingerprinting, these essays all illustrate the surprisingly circular nature of change.

In "Room with (Half) a View," for instance, Burke muses about the partly obscured railway bridge outside his home on the Thames, a musing which sets off a chain of thought that leads from the bridge's engineer to Samuel Morse, to firearms inventor Sam Colt, and finally to a trombonist named Gustav Holst, who once lived in the very house that blocks Burke's view.

So it goes with Burke's entertaining and informative essays as each one highlights the interconnectedness of seemingly unrelated events and innovations. Romantic poetry leads to brandy distillation; tonic water connects through Leibniz to the first explorers to reach the North Pole. This unique collection is sure to stimulate and delight history buffs, technophiles, and anyone else with a healthy intellectual curiosity.

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