

Macadamizing

"But who effected this improvement in your paving?" says Mirabel. "A party of the name of McAdam," is the reply, "but coachmen call him the Colossus of Roads."

JOHN LOUDON MCADAM changed the world with his road-building ways, pulling the practice out of its dark ages and ancient traditions, acting as the bridge between the Roman roads and today's asphalt ones. From the end of the Roman Empire to McAdam's day—the late 18th and early 19th centuries—little paving was done in Europe. His concepts were simple and radical—thin, flexible, water-resistant travel surfaces of crushed stone and gravel.

THE COLOSSUS OF ROADS

McAdam's determination to rid the world of "wicked ways"—meaning flawed roads, a term he applied to nearly every such surface in Europe—pulled road building out of antiquity. Roads paved with his namesake, macadam, helped to make the Industrial Revolution a reality.

"Few people seem to realize what McAdam did for this country. Had it not been for his roads the industrial revolution could not possibly have taken place for there would have been no means of transport to the new markets that were indispensable to its increased production," said Professor G. M. Trevelyan, author of *British History of the Nineteenth Century*.

In addition to aiding commercial trade, macadamized roads spurred English citizens to get up and out of their hometowns and travel as never before. The stagecoach and horse-breeding industries, grateful for an upsurge in their businesses due to his smooth roads, crowned him the

John McAdam became a household word by revolutionizing the age-old methods of road construction. Here the Scotsman is lampooned in an early-19th-century print.



MOCK-ADAMIZING - the Colossus of Roads.

Pub. by S.W. Fores - March 1, 1820
21, Piccadilly London.