

# THE INFLUENCING MACHINE

BY MIKE JAY

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*One of the greatest books you've never read*  
– William Gibson

*I have never seen the logic of madness, of a particular delusion, presented so clearly and convincingly. The Influencing Machine is a wonderful book to read... beautifully written, with all the drama, the rich characterization, the subtlety, of a fine novel.*  
– from the foreword by Oliver Sacks

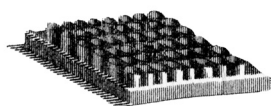
Confined in Bedlam in 1797 as an incurable lunatic, James Tilly Matthews' case is one of the most bizarre in the annals of psychiatry. He was the first person to insist that his mind was being controlled by a machine: the Air Loom, a terrifying secret weapon whose mesmeric rays and mysterious gases were brainwashing politicians and plunging Europe into revolution, terror and war.

But Matthews' case was even stranger than his doctors realised: many of the incredible conspiracies in which he claimed to be involved were entirely real. Caught up in high-level diplomatic intrigues in the chaos of the French revolution, he found himself betrayed by both sides, and in possession of a secret that no-one would believe...

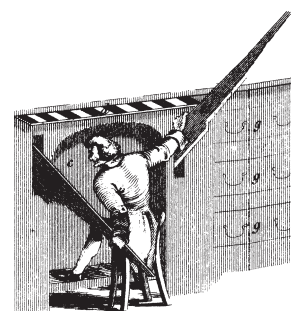
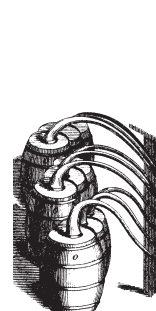
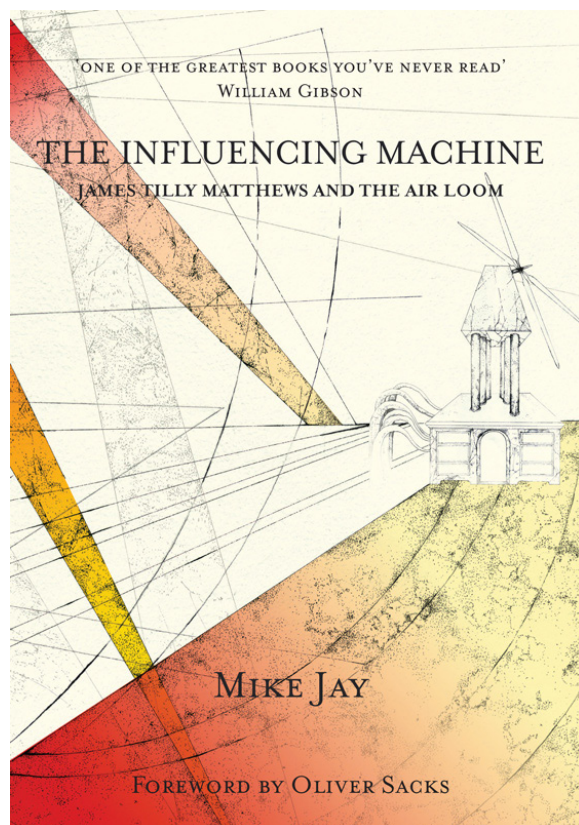
Originally published as *The Air Loom Gang* (2003), *The Influencing Machine* has been fully revised and updated, with newly discovered source material and previously unpublished illustrations.

## About the author

Mike Jay has written widely on the cultural history of drugs, madness and psychiatry. His most recent book was *High Society: mind-altering drugs in history and culture*, which accompanied the exhibition he curated at Wellcome Collection, London in 2010-11. More at [mikejay.net](http://mikejay.net)



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