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VACANCIES: PUBLICITY OFFICER PROJECT OFFICER EVENTS ORGANISER

Website: <http://www.coalcanal.org>

The Somersetshire Coal Canal Society was founded in January 1992 with the aim:

'TO FOCUS AN INTEREST ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE OLD SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL'

The Society is aimed at those people who are interested in finding out more about the history of the canal, preserving what is still there and walking the parts that are still accessible to the public.

The Society aims to preserve the remaining structures of the canal (Midford Aqueduct, Combe Hay Locks *etc.*) and to protect the line of the canal from decay, dereliction and vegetation.

Registered Charity N^o 1047303

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MEMBERSHIP FEES

(as at 1st June 2003)

£7-50 (Family / Individual) £5-00 (Senior Citizen / Student)
£150-00 (Life) payable by lump sum or four annual instalments

Membership Application Forms are available from

the Membership Secretary, **John Bishop**

73, Holcombe Green, Upper Weston, Bath BA14HY

☎ 01225 428738 *E-mail:* cesjtb@bath.ac.uk

Society Website: <http://www.coalcanal.org>

THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OR CONVEY THOSE OF THE SOCIETY

The Editor welcomes any letters, articles, photographs *etc* for inclusion in **WEIGH-HOUSE** and will try to include them in full, but reserves the right to shorten them if space is limited.

Please send articles and correspondence for the next edition of **WEIGH-HOUSE** to: Adrian Tuddenham 88, Mount Road, Southdown, Bath BA2 1LH

☎ 01225 335974 *E-mail (not HTML):* adrian@poppyrecords.co.uk

Thursday 24th March — 19:30

B.I.A.S. event — An Engineering Connection — James Brindley/Josiah Clowes

A talk which may be of interest to S.C.C.S. members.

Contact Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society for further details.

<http://www.b-i-a-s.org.uk>

Sunday 3rd April — 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Thursday 14th April — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “NO CAISSON TO ANSWER”

by Jeremy Gibson and Martin Horler

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens' Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Sunday 17th April — 11:00

WALK — SKINNER AND THE MENDIP BARROWS

Dr. Jodie Lewis, Senior Lecturer in Archaeology, University of Worcester.

Meet: Priddy Village Green. Bring a packed lunch. Suggested donation £2-00.

Sunday 1st May — 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Sunday 15th May — 10:00

WALK — SHAREHOLDERS IN BATH †

Meet: Sawclose, outside Theatre Royal

For further details please contact: *Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

Walks

These are all circular walks unless otherwise noted. You only need to arrange your transport to and from the meeting point. Any walks marked † tend to be in the form of detailed explanations of short sections of the canal and its relationship with the locality; and, as such, are less suitable for young children.

Dogs are normally welcome (except where indicated) and must be kept on leads at all times.

Check the website for any last minute changes: www.coalcanal.org

Work Parties

Venues are often arranged at short notice, always check with *Bob Parnell* ☎ 01225 428055

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EDITOR'S NOTES

I am pleased to have achieved the happy situation where there are so many interesting articles in this edition of Weigh-House that it leaves me hardly any room for the Editor's Notes. A few years ago I was struggling to find enough material to fill each edition, I now find that I am sometimes pleasantly embarrassed to have to ask our excellent regular contributors if they would mind having some of their articles held over to a later edition. That certainly isn't intended to imply that new authors or occasional contributors would be excluded; so, if you don't often contribute but feel that can add to our knowledge of the S.C.C. by writing an article, please send it in and I will do my best to make space for it.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Writing this with the snow falling on Monksdale Road and the temperatures well below zero it is sometimes difficult to remember that in July a work party sweltered away at Paulton Foundry and we had to be careful lest our bonfire set fire to the tinder dry grass and undergrowth. However it is a more recent work party that has propelled the society into the limelight: the visit of the Waterways Recovery Group in November, which is reported on Page 6 of this issue. This was arguably the biggest event in the history of the society and certainly one of the highest profile.

The Coal Canal also features in the latest edition of Waterways World, including photos of the W.R.G. visit. Again this is a significant level of national publicity for us. However, work parties need organisers and our incumbent, Bob Parnell has decided to step down after several years service. It falls to me to thank Bob for his efforts without which the canal would still be hidden at Combe Hay and the society would not have grown to the strength it is. Indeed without work parties I would not be chairman, for it was in June 2006 that I saw one whilst walking at Combe Hay and decided to get involved. Derrick Hunt has agreed to fill the gap temporarily, however, we now need a new work party organiser. The job mainly entails determining where each work party should be (in discussion with others) what tasks will be undertaken and letting the regulars know where they should meet. I would appeal to any members who may be interested to contact me or any other member of the committee.

Other than that, it simply remains for me to wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

Patrick Moss

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mr. J. Kirk Wilson	Marlborough	Mr. D. Jessep	Bath
Mrs. J. Robinson	Radstock	Dr. H. Geake	Cambridge
Mr. W. Weeks	Radstock		

LEAVING A LEGACY TO THE SOCIETY

Recently the S.C.C.S. has benefitted from a number of legacies which have been put to good use in a variety of ways. With the change in the constitution, the Society is now able to contemplate major works which were hitherto impossible, such as the repair of structures or even restoration of short sections of the canal itself. These major works could not be undertaken with our current finances, but they would become possible if dedicated lump sums in the form of legacies could be used for specific projects.

If you would like to leave a legacy to the Society for a specific purpose or general funds, please contact Derrick Hunt or download a legacy form from our website.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY — 2011

Sunday 9th January — 10:00 [*Note: Dated changed from 2nd January*]

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Sunday 16th January — 10:00

WALK — COMBE DOWN and the RAILWAY TUNNELS (the Bath end)

(3 miles and hilly)

Meet: Bear Flat at junction of Wellsway with Bloomfield Road

For further details please contact: *Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

Thursday 20th January — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “THE ARCHÆOLOGY OF COMBE HAY” by Richard Hignett

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens' Club,

For further details please see website or contact: *Patrick Moss* ☎ 07736 859882

Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd January — 10:00

D&SC WORK PARTY — MURTRY AQUEDUCT [*See article on Page 18*]

For further details contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

derrick.johnhunt@btinternet.com

Sunday 6th February — 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Thursday 17th February — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “OPERATING THE COAL CANAL” by Patrick Moss

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens' Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Patrick Moss* ☎ 07736 859882

Sunday 20th February — 10:00

WALK — COMBE DOWN and the RAILWAY TUNNELS (the Tucking Mill end)

(4 miles and hilly)

Meet: Summer Lane, Combe Down (top of the De Montalt Mill steps).

For further details please contact: *Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

Sunday 6th March — 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Thursday 17th March — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “THE STRUCTURES OF THE DORSET & SOMERSET CANAL”

by Derrick Hunt

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens' Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Patrick Moss* ☎ 07736 859882

Sunday 20th March — 10:00

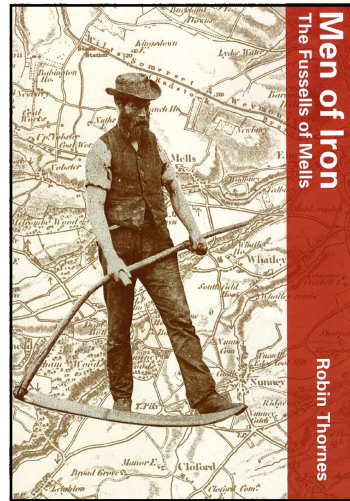
WALK — STRUCTURES OF THE DORSET & SOMERSET CANAL, a guided tour.

Meet: Radstock Museum, Waterloo Road, Radstock.

For further details please see website or contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

NEW BOOK

Dr Robin Thornes, *Men of Iron, The Fussells of Mells*
ISBN 978-0-9565869-1-9



Members may be interested to know that a new book on Fussells has recently been produced by Dr Robin Thornes. Although best known as makers of agricultural tools, the Fussells also had interests in the woollen industry, coal mines, railways and canals. This book traces the rise and subsequent decline of a family that played a significant rôle in the development of the Mendips.

It is currently available, price £11.50 from:

Frome Museum

Radstock Museum

Frome Tourist Information Centre

Hunting Raven Bookshop, Cheap St, Frome

Mells Post Office/shop

Nunney Post Office/shop

...or direct from the FSLs website at

www.fsls.org.uk or e-mail info@fsls.org.uk

...AND FINALLY



A strange object spotted beside the canal last Spring. We can guess what it is, but why is it there?

WATERWAYS 'NATIONAL TRUST'

For the last 18 months, British Waterways has been pressing for re-structuring into a charitable trust, similar to the National Trust. Finally, in October 2010, the Government announced its intention to transfer British Waterways' inland waterways in England and Wales into a new charitable body. The move will be the biggest shake up of the waterways since nationalisation in 1948.

Welcoming the announcement, British Waterways' chairman Tony Hales explained that, in the 50 years since British Waterways was established, the waterways have evolved from a moribund industrial transport system into a thriving environmental and leisure resource. British Waterways' 2,200-mile network of historic canals, rivers and docks is visited by 13 million people a year and now delivers an annual £11 billion in benefits to the nation, from amenity, flood relief and employment to green infrastructure, neighbourhood renewal and wildlife corridors. Allowing for due diligence, the Government intends to have the new body up and running by April 2012. Defra will further explore whether the Environment Agency's navigations should be included.

Caring for this 250-year old working heritage requires intense management and significant funding, some of which are restricted by British Waterways' 50-year old governance structures. Currently it funds its work through a combination of commercial income from property and licences, Government and third party grants, and partnerships with a broad range of public, private and voluntary sector partners. Future funding will come from a combination of: a guaranteed, long-term contract from Government; commercial income (such as receipts from a charity-locked property endowment, boat licences and utilities), and growing charitable income (e.g. donations and legacies).

For further information visit:

www.britishwaterways.co.uk/twentytwenty

MENDIP WALK

The Rev. Skinner of Camerton was an interesting character with many connections to the S.C.C.; but some of his other activities, in particular his excavations of prehistoric Mendip sites, will also be of great interest to members of the Society. We have been very lucky to book Dr. Jodie Lewis, Senior Lecturer in Archaeology, University of Worcester, to guide a walk for us around the Mendip barrows which Skinner 'investigated' (i.e. pillaged!) on Sunday 17th April. Dr. Lewis is a Landscape Archaeologist who has specialised in prehistoric Mendip and her talks are always well-attended.

DONATIONS

The Society wishes to thank the following members who have generously made donations:

Mr. D. Storey

Tewkesbury

Mr. J. Smith

Shipham

JOLLIFFE — A CORRECTION

Following the publication of the article on T.S. Jolliffe in Weigh-House 57, several erudite readers have taken the trouble to decode the Roman numerals "MDCCCVIII" which we gave as the inscription carved on the Ammerdown Column. They have pointed out that this corresponds to the year 1808, instead of 1853 as stated in the text. The inscription was, in fact, "MDCCCLIII".

NAVYING NOTES

The weekend of 20th and 21st of November 2010 saw an event which marked another step towards restoration of the S.C.C., when the “Bit In the Middle” section of the Waterways Recovery Group gave us two days of work on the area around Locks 5, 6 and 8.

The events began on the morning of Friday 19th with a small preparatory work party of S.C.C. and Wilts & Berks volunteers, who proceeded in an industrious way to tidy up the pound between Locks 5 & 6 and establish the core of a bonfire which was to last the entire weekend — and for several days after that. Later in the day the vanguard of the B.I.T.M. party arrived in the person of Simon Walker, on whose shoulders fell the main burden of organising the event.

For a work party the size of B.I.T.M., comprising at least 20 volunteers, planning in advance was essential. The landowner provided us with a sheltered area in his stable block, where water, electricity and a toilet were available; W.R.G. sent along one of their familiar red vans containing portable cooking equipment and all the kit which they knew from long experience would be needed for such an event. The job of finding accommodation had fallen to Patrick Moss, who acted as host on behalf of the S.C.C.S. He was just beginning to despair of finding something suitable when Derrick Hunt suggested the Bradford on Avon Rugby Club — and in no time at all, the club premises was booked and everything was arranged.

Friday night saw volunteers descending on the area from far and wide; some thought nothing of travelling from as far away as Nottingham and Watford for an event like this. On Saturday morning, without a hitch, the well-oiled (but strictly sober) W.R.G. machine swung into action. The rasp of chainsaws echoed down the valley as the three main work sites became hives of activity. A small S.C.C.S. contingent cleared the pound alongside Caisson House while the majority of the workforce was concentrated on the lock flight. Lock 5 had to be cleared of the debris that had built up since it was last tackled by a work party over 10 years ago, and the pound below that hadn't been completely cleared for even longer.

Down at Lock 8, a group of volunteers was tackling some heavy work that had been outstanding for years. A dangerous tangle of half-fallen and rotten trees had spanned the lower entrance and was now threatening to fall into the pound. The work party dealt with these cleanly and efficiently; then set about thinning out the vegetation in the pound and clearing off the top and inside of Lock 8 itself. Although this may not sound like a lot of work, it was actually an arduous task which took the rest of the weekend.

Meanwhile two independent groups had been working their way in opposite directions, up and down the canal from just below Lock 5. The upper group cleared the bridge, chamber and the area surrounding the top of Lock 5, whilst the lower, much larger, group worked their way towards Lock 6. By Sunday afternoon, the top of Lock 6 had been uncovered for the first time in decades revealing magnificent open views across the pound towards Caisson House... at least, there would have been some good views if it hadn't been for all the bonfire smoke.

As the work came to an end and the van was re-packed, the consensus was that it had been an extremely worthwhile weekend and one which ought to be repeated. Phil Honey, the landowner, enthusiastically supports the idea and Simon and Patrick are in the process of sorting out a mutually-agreeable date when the next B.I.T.M. invasion of Combe Hay can take place.

Patrick Moss

MILESTONE PLATES

Tucking Mill 1½ mile

The milestone plate from Tucking Mill has recently been ‘discovered’ on display at the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester by one of our members doing some research on canals. If you are visiting the museum, you will find it on the ground floor as part of a small display of mile plates. The Ref N^o is NWM 03195 and the label reads:- “Mile Marker — A cast iron plate from the Somersetshire Coal Canal”.



TUCKING MILL MILESTONE PLATE

Twinhoe Basin 3½ mile

The Society currently has on loan the milestone plate from Twinhoe Basin, the only one known on the southern branch of the S.C.C. Unlike those on the northern branch, this plate is circular.

This casting is about 7” diameter and nearly ¾” thick, with an interesting split boss on the back face.

With the permission of the owner, the Society plans to have a number of copies cast in iron, using this original as the pattern. Anyone who is interested in owning a copy should contact Derrick Hunt promptly. The cost will depend on a number of factors which will not become apparent until the foundry work is actually in progress, but it is likely to be in the region £60 each.



TWINHOE BASIN MILESTONE PLATE

MURTRY AQUEDUCT on the DORSET & SOMERSET CANAL

The weekend of October 23rd & 24th 2010 saw members of the SCCS work party enjoying a change from their usual haunts, working alongside the Dorset & Somerset Canal Society at Murtry Aqueduct. Although rain stopped play on the Saturday, the lost time was made up on Sunday and by nightfall a pile of ashes was all that remained of the impenetrable jungle that had grown up around the aqueduct in the past 10 years.



MURTRY AQUEDUCT AFTER CLEARANCE WORK — October 2010

As the picture above shows, visitors to the area can once again admire the fine ashlar support wall which connects the aqueduct spans with the foot tunnel under the canal bed.

Further clearance and conservation is planned for the Murtry Aqueduct site on Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd January 2011 starting at 9am on both days. Tasks range from tree clearance to light gardening; volunteers are needed to assist. Even if you are only able to help for one morning or afternoon session your help will be welcomed.

Please contact Derrick Hunt, preferably by email:
derrickjohnhunt@btinternet.com
or by phone on 01225 863066

Note: Derrick will be giving a talk on the D&S Canal on Friday 18th February 2011, 19:30, to Friends of the Trowbridge Museum at Roundstone Preparatory School, Courtfield House, Roundstone Street, Trowbridge BA14 7EG. Contact Derrick for directions.



THE BEGINNING

Looking from Lock 5 towards Lock 6, which is well-hidden in the undergrowth



THE END

Looking from the top of Lock 6 over the freshly-cleared pound towards the bridge over Lock 5

SHAREHOLDERS OF THE SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL

Charles Spackman

(1748 - 1822)

An energetic and ambitious entrepreneur, better known today as patron of the famous Bath artist Thomas Barker (1767-1847) and his family.



Victoria Art Gallery
Bath and North East Somerset Council

“Self portait by Thomas Barker” with his Preceptor Charles Spackman (*standing*) — 1789

Charles Spackman was raised in Marlborough, Wiltshire, where he set up a coach manufactory serving the Great West Road, but in 1773, while still in his twenties, he expanded his operations into Bath, going into partnership with Edward Morton, a Bath coach-builder, to run a carriage works by the Bristol Road at Nos 21-23 Monmouth Street. This proved very successful and Spackman was soon admitted to the Bath Freemasons (Royal Cumberland Lodge, at The Bear Inn in Stall Street). By then Bath had become an important coaching centre, and it is probable that Spackman acquired good business



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THE WEIGH-HOUSE AT MIDFORD c.1890

A boat weighing machine, where a boat complete with cargo could be weighed, was seen by some canal companies, including the S.C.C. as a more accurate and perhaps more efficient way of measuring and charging for the cargoes carried. This led to the S.C.C.’s decision to construct a Weigh-House at Midford.

In brief the Weigh-House worked as follows:

The boat would enter a lock where the water would be drained off and the boat would settle on a cradle suspended from the machinery, the machinery itself sitting on a frame, the frame being supported by pillars either side of the lock. An arm projected from the machinery carrying a weigh-pan upon which weights ranging from 1 lb to 60 lb (approximately 450 grams to 27 kilograms in modern weight) were added. The machine worked on a ratio of 112 to 1; this meant that a 1 lb weight on the weighing pan was equivalent to 1 cwt (just over 50 kg) on the cradle. Boats and cargoes of up to forty tons could be weighed.

It is not known when the S.C.C. decided to build a weighing-machine, but in 1831 an inspection took place of “. . . the Weighing Machine erected on the Somerset Coal Canal at Midford having been surveyed last week by several gentlemen connected with the Coal Trade, and some eminent engineers and Boat Builders, all present were satisfied that the Weighing of the boats was effected with great facility and without the least injury to the boats” . — *Bath Journal* 28 March 1831

This article will be continued in *Weigh-House 59*

* This photograph on this page, and others of the S.C.C., can be found in the new book *Queen Of Waters - A Journey in Time along the Kennet & Avon Canal* by Kirsten Elliot. Akeman Press 2010. We hope to publish a review of the book in the next edition of *Weigh-House*.

MIDFORD WEIGH-HOUSE - A HISTORY

Part 1

Following the recent Somersetshire Coal Canal Society talk in Radstock on the Midford Weigh-House it seems an opportune time to recall the history of this structure. Also to put on record the reason why the name 'Weigh-House' came to be used on this newsletter, with its image being reproduced on every copy since issue 1. The Weigh-House image also being used as the corporate logo of the SCCS. Roger Halse explains:

When the SCCS was formed in 1992 it was agreed that a newsletter for members was required and I, (being employed a printer) would design and print said publication. I looked at the various local canal society newsletters/magazines and some used a title name which related to their particular canal. The Wilts & Berks Canal having *Dragonfly* - the name of a boat used on the W&B, whilst the Cotswold Canals Trust had *The Trow* - a Severn Trow being a vessel that carried goods along the Thames & Severn Canal. The Hereford & Gloucester had *Wharfinger* and the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust *The Butty*. I was looking for something unique to the S.C.C. and the Midford Weigh-House sprang to mind, prompted by a splendid colour illustration from the dust jacket of *The Somersetshire Coal Canal & Railways* by Kenneth R Clew. "That's it!", I thought — and the rest as they say, is history.

I had always had an interest in canals, having been brought up in Bath and having walked past a very disused and neglected K&A canal in the 1960/70s. My first canal boat holiday with a group of friends in the late 1970s further spurred my interest, helped by the chance discovery of the S.C.C. via a Sunday afternoon walk in the countryside near the then girlfriend's house in South Stoke. The said girlfriend and I later parted company but by then the S.C.C. was becoming more of a permanent fixture in my life! I managed to purchase a copy of Ken Clew's book direct from the publishers David & Charles for the princely sum of £2.50 (which now sells for £35/40 on the second-hand/out-of-print market) and set about my research into the history of this long-gone but still intriguing canal structure.

The first question is: "Why build such a structure?". Canal companies throughout the canal age would generate their income through the tolls levied on the tonnages carried and distance travelled on their canals. The S.C.C. being authorised by Act of Parliament to charge 2^d per ton per mile for all Coal, Coke, etc. Boats travelling along the canal would be given a 'ticket' or 'permit' at the coal wharf stating the tonnage being carried, and this figure, multiplied by the distance of the wharf from Dundas, where the SCC joins with the K&A, would be used to calculate the tolls due to the toll collector. Alterations to these tickets and the fraudulent recording of the tonnages carried were commonplace, and the canal companies sought ways of counteracting these practices.

Canal companies would keep a Register of Boats using their canal, and no boat would be allowed to use their canal unless it was recorded in the toll collectors' ledger. The register would list the name or number of the boat along with detailed measurements used to calculate the tonnage of goods carried.

When the boat was empty, measurements would be taken of the distance between the water and the top of the hold at four fixed points, port and starboard, fore and aft; these measurements were known as the 'Dry Inches' for that boat. One ton of some suitable material was then added to the boat, evenly distributed, and further measurements taken and recorded; then another ton was added and the measurements taken again — and so on, until the maximum tonnage was reached. From then on, the ledger could then be used to calculate the tonnage being carried in that particular boat at any time by measuring the average of the 'Dry Inches'. This was the system which would have been used by the S.C.C. prior to the building of the Weigh-House.

connections with prominent coach operators such as Eleazer Pickwick*. In 1774 he Married Anne Pritchard of Marlborough, taking residence at 24 Kingsmead Street, adjoining his workshops. They had one daughter, Catherine.

At that time Bath attracted many aspiring English artists (Gainsborough, Lawrence, Hoare, Beach, &c), and Spackman became a connoisseur of art, accumulating a respectable collection of Dutch and Flemish masters. About 1781 Benjamin Barker senior, living nearby in Cross Lane, had been taken on by Spackman as a coach painter and decorator, and it was in the following year that Spackman recognised the talent of Benjamin's son, Thomas Barker, then 15 years old. In 1785 he took over Thomas's education and his apprenticeship as a painter, probably under the tutelage of Joseph Sheldon†, a bookshop owner, local artist and drawing master who also lived in Kingsmead Street, and who later became well known for his construction of a scale model of Bath.

In the late 1780s Spackman also started to branch out into property development and architecture, in partnership with banker and builder John Lowder of Monmouth Street, and the architect John Palmer who lived nearby in Charles Street - Spackman acting as 'projector' or agent for the supply of building materials. Their first works included Lansdown Crescent (initially known as

'Spackman's Buildings' or 'Lansdown Place'), together with All Saints Proprietary Chapel below. In July 1789, when the Bath Improvement Act was passed, Spackman and Palmer were appointed Improvement Commissioners, together with Dr. Henry Harington (Mayor) and other prominent citizens. It was during this year that Thomas Barker painted the portrait of Spackman with himself (see accompanying picture).

In 1790 Spackman opened a gallery to display Barker's work (probably the first in this country devoted to a single artist) at 23 Kingsmead Street, backing on to his own house, Thomas himself being sent off to Italy on the Grand Tour. Meanwhile Spackman entered into a joint undertaking with John Fielder, James Broom, Thomas King* and William and Richard Hewlett* to build St.James's Square (designed by Palmer) and to supply the upper part of the city with water. William and Richard Hewlett were prominent Bath builders and related to James Hewlett, a noted still-life painter and colleague of Thomas Barker.

In about 1791, after exhibiting Thomas's work at the Royal Academy, Spackman gave up his partnership in the coaching business to concentrate on his development projects and to set up a prosperous business as an Art and Property Appraiser and Auctioneer, his share in the carriage works being taken up instead by John Fuller, whose descendants continued to run the firm into the 20th century.

With the completion of All Saints Chapel in 1792, Spackman moved residence to the adjoining Chapel House, where he took over the artistic education of Thomas Barker's two younger brothers, Benjamin jnr. and Joseph. Benjamin later became a noted landscape painter, and carried out restoration work for the Rev. John Skinner of Camerton. Also at this time Spackman was appointed to the Committee of the Bath Society of Guardians, and in 1793, after the Walcot Improvement Act was

→

Biographical Details

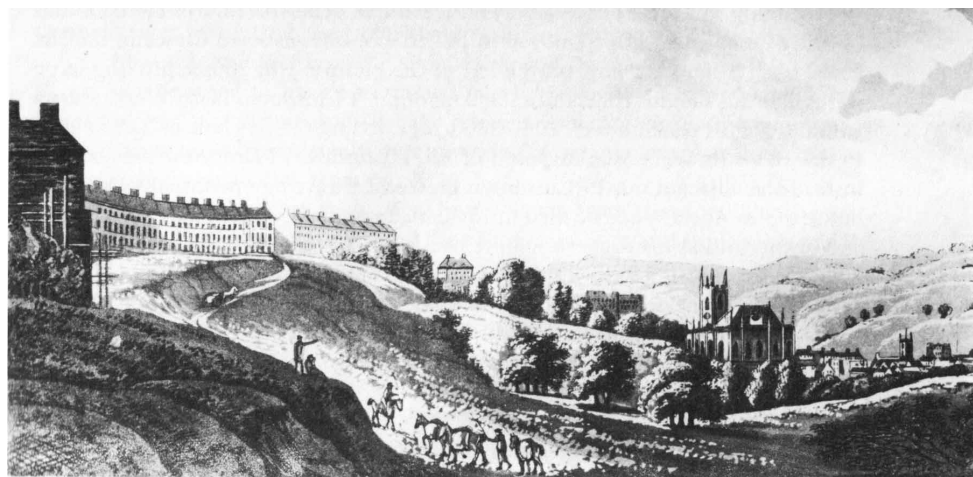
Born:
1749 (some sources state 1748),
Marlborough, Wiltshire.

Married:
1774
Anne Pritchard of Marlborough

Died:
1822

Family:
One daughter,

passed, again appointed Commissioner, along with his associates Fielder, King and Lowder and the City Architect Thos. Baldwin. By now Thomas Barker had returned from Italy and was carrying out much work for the Rev. Thomas Whalley† of the Royal Crescent, while Spackman put on a second Barker exhibition at the Kingsmead Street Gallery.



Lansdown Crescent when still incomplete: aquatint published by Archibald Robertson, 1792.

Unfortunately, in 1795 (the year after the S.C.C. Act was passed) there was a severe building slump in Bath, and Spackman, having overstretched his resources like many others, was declared bankrupt. Thomas Barker opened a gallery in London, but conditions just then were not favourable for artists, and two years later he returned to Bath where he remained for the rest of his career. About 1800 Spackman also moved to London where he built up a new and relatively successful career as an Art Dealer, but always retained contact with Bath and the Barker family until his death in 1822. However, other members of his family stayed in Bath, particularly Henry Spackman who went on to found a firm of architects, surveyors and land agents which continued in business in Terrace Walk up to the 1950s.

The coach-building business also continued to flourish, although the carriage collection was eventually dispersed, as the firm, under S&A Fuller, evolved into motor builders and dealers from the early 1900s onwards. However, during the Bath 'Blitz' the Monmouth/Kingsmead Street area was so badly damaged that it was completely redeveloped in the 1960s, the coachworks site being occupied by the office block now known as Plymouth House. Although the firm found new premises in Circus Mews, it was finally taken over by Hartwell Motors in Newbridge Road in the 1980s. Nor did All Saints Chapel below Lansdown Crescent survive the 'Blitz'. Having been burned out by incendiaries, it too was subsequently demolished.

Mike Chapman

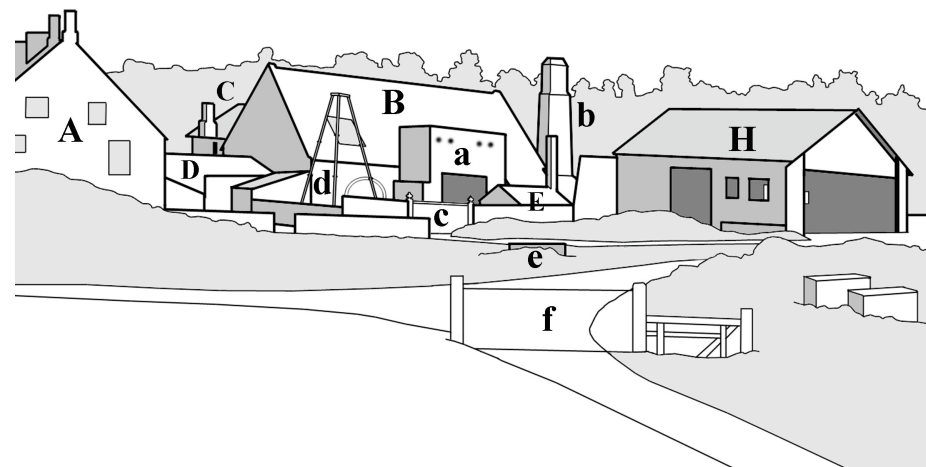
* SCC shareholders

† Probably related to SCC shareholder

Bibliography

1 'Thomas Barker of Bath; The Artist and his Circle' by Iain McCallum, Millstream Books ISBN 0-948975-67-9. The book is still available from Millstream Books at £20. Contact Tim Graham 01225 425181 email: tmgraham@mac.com

2 Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry for Thomas Barker contributed by Susan Sloman.



E. Blacksmith's Forge. The small building with tall chimney in front of the Casting House is characteristic of a blacksmith's workshop and forge. No surface remains appear to have survived.

F. Stable Range. (Not visible in the photograph) Except for the back wall, this building was demolished to serve as the entrance drive (still paved with the stable pitching) to the Dwelling House (G, below).

G. Dwelling House. (Not visible in the photograph) Appears to have originally been built as two cottages, but combined into a single building, possibly as an overseer's house with offices.

H. Wagon Shed. Built in the mid-19th century. The delivery wagons were presumably housed here, close to the roadway, as also (possibly) the canal boat. Only a few courses of its southern wall can now be identified.

a. Cart Entry and Porch. The entrance to the Casting House has an extension over the porch which presumably housed lifting gear for loading the wagons, as indicated by the four ties or braces in the front.

b. Furnace Chimney. The Foundry furnace was evidently situated in the south-west corner of the Casting House, with an external stepped chimney, prominently shown in the photograph.

c. Foundry Yard Gate. The photograph appears to show that the double-gate through the wall of the Foundry Yard was provided with the decorative iron gate-posts, made in the Foundry, that can still be seen today throughout the neighbourhood.

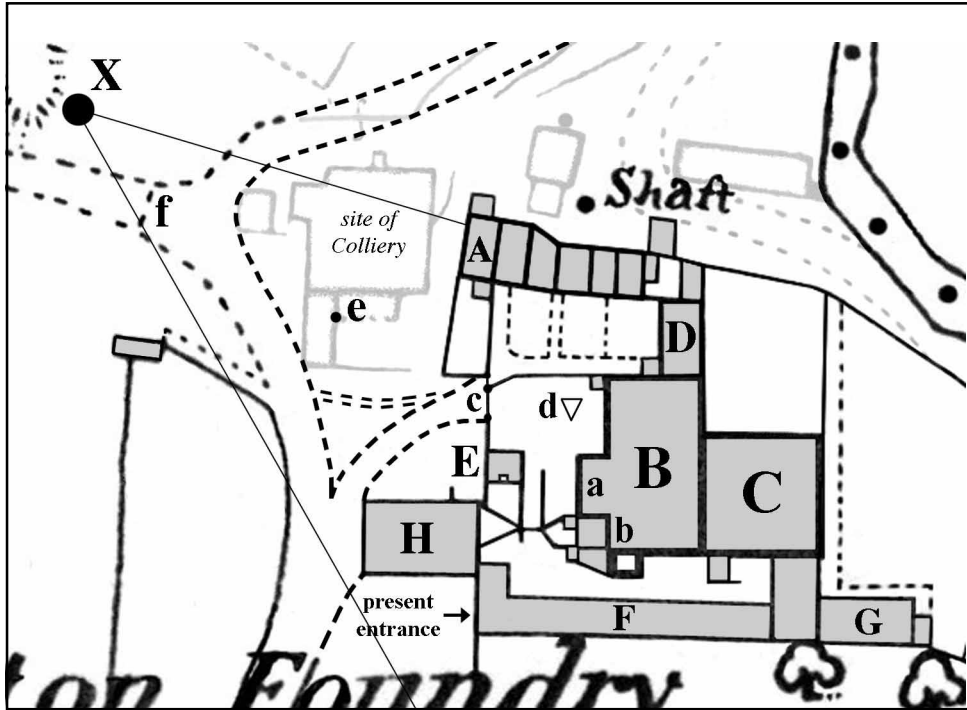
d. Iron Gin or Sheerlegs. The pyramid-shaped frame in front of the Casting House appears to be an extra piece of lifting gear. Behind it can be seen one of the (blocked) arches of the Casting House.

e. Site of Lower Engine Pit. The open space in the foreground was the site of the colliery, demolished some 20 years earlier. The photograph shows a piece of masonry in the centre, which may be the seating for the pumping engine which can still be seen today in the cottage garden.

f. Gate to Upper Engine Pit. There is still a gate to the trackway today, but moved, together with the fence, slightly westward, towards the photographer. The track followed by the cyclist has been replaced by a footpath on the west side of the fence - more or less over the spot taken by the photographer!

Mike Chapman

This photograph appears to have been taken in the early years of the 20th century, viewed from approximately point X, at the eastern end of Paulton Engine colliery spoil heap, near the gate to Upper Engine Pit. The angle of view is indicated in the accompanying plan based on the 1883 map, with individual features identified by letters, as described in the **Key**.



A PLAN OF PAULTON FOUNDRY BASED ON THE 1883 MAP

Key

A. Colliery cottages. Built after the foundry, but before 1838. Although recently rebuilt as a single dwelling (having fallen into a ruinous condition) the gable-end shown in the photograph is still recognisable today.

B. Main Casting House. This large building, resembling a tithe barn but with arched openings in the side walls, would have provided plenty of floor space, possibly with room in the roof for the pattern shop (the photograph shows a roof-light at the left, northern, end of the building). Although the roof has gone, much of the arched walling still survives.

C. Eastern Extension. Built in the mid-19th century, possibly as a finishing shop. In the photograph the roof and chimney of this building can just be seen behind the main Casting House. Again, the roof has gone, but much of the walling and windows (with iron lintels) still remain.

D. Boring House. This low building, extending towards (or over) the colliery leat, presumably housed the water wheel which drove the boring machinery. Only the lower courses of the walls have survived.

PAULTON IRON FOUNDRY PHOTOGRAPH

As we went to press with Mike Chapman's article on the history of Paulton Iron Foundry in W.H.57, one of our members, who lives in the area, obtained a hitherto unknown photograph which shows a view of the foundry in the early 1900s. The copyright owner of the photograph has now generously allowed us to publish it and Mike Chapman has produced an interpretation of it on the following pages.



PAULTON FOUNDRY SITE —December 2010
The cottage is the only remaining landmark visible from this viewpoint



THE WAGON SHED
Detail from the historic photograph overleaf, enhanced to show an object inside the shed which is barely visible in the original picture.



PAULTON FOUNDRY c1900
(See Pages 14, 15 for details)

Picture courtesy of: Terry Goodman