

John Padmore: 18th Century Engineer and Polymath

Abstract

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(Saltford Brass Mill Project)

The name John Padmore is a little known today but in the early 18th century he was at the centre of engineering innovation in the Avon Valley and South Wales. He built Ralph Allen's railway, used to transport stone from Combe Down to the River Avon at Dolemeads on the River Avon in Bath. He built the cranes at Dolemeads, used to lift stone from Ralph Allen's Wharf onto boats in the river. He also built the Great Crane in Bristol used to load and off-load sea-going ships. He build the locks on the Avon Navigation, enabling boats to by-pass the numerous weirs on the River Avon between Bristol and Bath. He built an early floating harbour at Sea Mills. He built water powered battery and rolling mills in Swansea, applying technology that had been developed in the Avon Valley. And he built atmospheric engines used to raise water from the River Avon at Conham to supply Bristol, and to raise Spa Water at Hotwells.

The aim of the talk is to introduce people to this important engineer, who was working in the Avon Valley over a century before the arrival of Brunel and the Great Western Railway.



Courtesy, Victoria Art Gallery, Bath