



Benjamin Banks

Benjamin Banks was born in 17 Butchers Row, Salisbury on 14th July 1727. His father was a Master Butcher as were several of his family, they all lived in the same road, hence the name of the road. He was one of 5 siblings. At the age of 14 he entered into a 7-year apprenticeship with his uncle William Huttoft. He was a Musical Instrument Maker of New Sarum. William died in 1747, a year before Benjamin finished his apprenticeship. However he inherited the business in Catherine Street. He also inherited the business premises opposite the Lamb Inn area. He married Ann Burt in 1749. Benjamin and Ann had 10 children; several followed their father into the business when they were able to do so later on.

The earliest Banks instrument to be found was dated 1748. He began by making guitars, not the shape we know today, but more of a mixture of a banjo and violin shape. This instrument was only made for about forty years. He studied the design of Stradivarius

instruments and he would visit London. Here he had properties and would study violins from all around the world.

He made a variety of instruments and is known for his violins, but he made violas and cellos. He also tuned keyboards and harpsichords when called upon to do so. He also used to hire out instruments. He always made sure that his instruments were marked with his name and least twice and sometimes 3 times.

In 1784 he lost several hundred pounds of equipment due to a fire at his premises.

In 1786 his wife Ann died.

In 1795 he died and they are both buried in St. Thomas's Churchyard Salisbury, where he was churchwarden.



The plaque in Catherine Street