

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

DAVIS, Charles

?Bath 1740–1805

Also Davies; painter and artists' supplier in Bath, and, according to Waterhouse 1981 (source unclear), a pastellist. An advertisement appeared in the *Bath chronicle* on 24.VII.1777, indicating his removal from Garrard Street to Westgate Street, with another on 23.IV.1778:

CHARLES DAVIS, Painter, the lower end of Westgate-street, near King's mead-square, sells on the best terms, All sorts of fine Colours, dry or prepared in oil or water...Crayons...N.B. A convenient House, with four rooms on a floor, situate in Westgate-Buildings, to lett.

The offer of the house was taken up by Thomas Beach, who made five portraits of members of Davis's family now in the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath (some in the Pump Room). He was a commissioner for lighting for the Abbey parish, and evidently a freemason: "Charles Davies, Painter, Bath" was a subscriber to Wellins Calcott's *Candid disquisition of the principles...of the Society of free and accepted masons* of 1769 (his finely bound copy bears the book label of "Charles Davis, Painter, Bath.

There remains some confusion about the family biography: from the registers of Bath Abbey, it appears that Charles Davis was born on 9.XI.1740 (not 1741 as Waterhouse gives), the son of a John Davis. On 10.I.1764, at St James's Bath, he married Hannah Rotten (1726–1782), from a Bath family; three children are recorded, Ann (1766–), who may be the "Jenny" portrayed by Beach as bride to John Langton of Cheapside, London whom she married at Bath Abbey, 18.IV.1782; Charles Davis, Jr (1769–); and Edward Favell (1780–), who became a captain in the army. Charles Jr married Lydia Winter on 21.IV.1790 (she is described in some sources as the second wife of Charles Davis); she gave birth to a number of children from 1793 on, and was the grandmother of the Bath city architect Major Charles Edward Davis. Charles Davis Senior was remarried, to a Miss Townby of London on 19.X.1792.

The firm of Charles Davis, coach-, sign- and house-painter, and supplier and gilder of picture frames is first recorded in 1763, and appears in the *Bath journal*, 30.IV.1764, at the Golden Boy, Horse Street. The firm became Davis & Son in 1784 and Charles Davis junr from 1794. In 1777 it moved from Garrard Street to Westgate Street and offered a full range of artists' materials. In the *New Bath directory...for 1792*, p. 16, Charles Davis, jun. appears as Agent to the Western Fire-Office, address Westgate Buildings, shared with Davis and Son, painters and colourmen. From 1794 Davis junr advertised also funerary achievements and picture restoration. Their advertisements included crayons.

Bibliography

Bath 2002; British artists' suppliers at npg.org.uk; Sloan 2002; Waterhouse 1981; Index of Bath artists