

Bankers and Public Companies in Birmingham

Image from: Bisset's Magnificent Guide or Grand Copper Plate Directory for the Town of Birmingham, 1808
[From Birmingham Central Library]

04. Bankers and Public Companies in Birmingham

The engraving presents a monument surmounted by an urn. Two female figures draped in classical dress stand on either side. Justice stands on the left. In her right hand she holds a pair of scales, which symbolise her capacity to weigh up the merits of a case. She is blindfolded and therefore blind to special pleading. Her sword, resting in her left hand, shows her ability to implement the law - to dispense justice. The figure on the right supports a shield advertising Swinney's Birmingham Chronicle. She also holds the winged staff entwined with snakes associated with the Greek god Hermes, known to the Romans as Mercury. He was the messenger of the gods and therefore his staff was an apt symbol for a newspaper, a conveyor of information. Various businesses have their names inscribed on the monument.

The top segment lists two weekly papers:

- Aris's Birmingham Gazette, Knott and Lloyd Proprietors, Printers and Publishers
- Birmingham Commercial Herald, R Jabet and Printing Company, Proprietors

The middle segment identifies six bankers:

- Coales Robert Wooley, Gibbins and Gordon
- Freer, Rotton, Lloyd, Lloyd and Onion,
- Galton, S, S T Galton and P M James
- Spooner, Attwood and Company
- Taylors and Lloyds
- Wilkinson, Startin, Smith and Smith

The Plinth contains the names of six firms:

- Crown Copper Company, Minories
- Union Copper Comp Congreve Street
- Birmingham Canal Company
- Birmingham Mining and Copper Company
- Rose Copper Company
- Warwick and Birmingham Canal Company