

The Vesta Stove

The success of the Chunk Stove quickly led to Richard and John James Rippon collaborating in the development of another version of the stove. This version they named the Vesta Stove after the Roman goddess of the hearth. Not only was the name more attractive, the new stove also featured several ornamental designs, in an attempt at elegance for the Victorian parlour.

THE VESTA STOVES,
Protected by Royal Letters Patent.

Prices, for Cash when ordered,

No. 3. 16in. 140s.

No. 4. 17in. square, £11.; 20in. do. £13. 13s.

No. 5. 14in. dia. 80s.; 16in. 90s.; 18in. 100s.

No. 6. 14in. 85s.; 16in. 95s.; 18in. 105s.

The ADVANTAGES of the CHUNK PATENT STOVE are similar to those of the VESTA, *entire freedom from dust or smoke; very great economy of fuel; and perfect safety from fire.* It has no door, and does not produce any of the unpleasant effects upon the atmosphere which have been experienced in the use of all others except the Vesta. It has been found a *source of great comfort in the bedroom of the invalid*, affording a uniform temperature throughout the day and night, with on'y one supply of fuel, and without attention; while the most delicate chemical test cannot detect anything arising from its use which is injurious to health. As there is no fire or heated substance in contact with the outer case of the Stove, it merely warms the air without decomposing it; and as there is no door, none of the gases generated can pass into the apartment, and *that dryness of air produced by the use of all others (except the Vesta) is entirely avoided.* Price, Plain, 60s.; Fluted, 70s.

More importantly the new stove incorporated what would now be called a major selling point in the "very ingenious contrivance for replenishing the Vesta stove with fuel" which avoided "entirely that annoyance of dust occasioned by throwing fuel into the stove" (Mechanics' Magazine 9th January 1841). This was achieved by means of a removable bucket or hod incorporated within the top of the stove which fed the lower furnace through a hole opened externally by operating a sliding cover. This hod could be filled with fuel outside the Victorian parlour. How easy it was for the servant responsible for doing so we do not know, he or she would not have avoided the dust nor probably the risk of burnt fingers if the hod had not been allowed to cool down. As "the fire may be kept lighted the whole season" this was clearly not considered a risk of concern to the servant's employer.

Mechanics' Magazine,
MUSEUM, REGISTER, JOURNAL, AND GAZETTE.

No. 909.]

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 1841.

[Price 3d.

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Fig. 1.

THE VESTA STOVE.

Fig. 2.

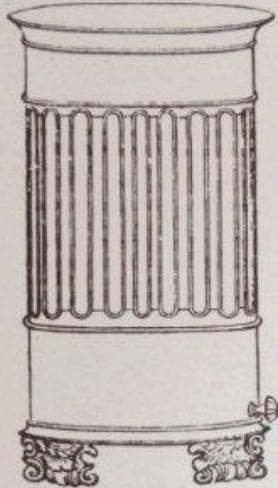


Fig. 3.

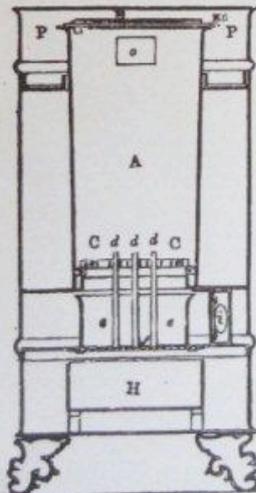
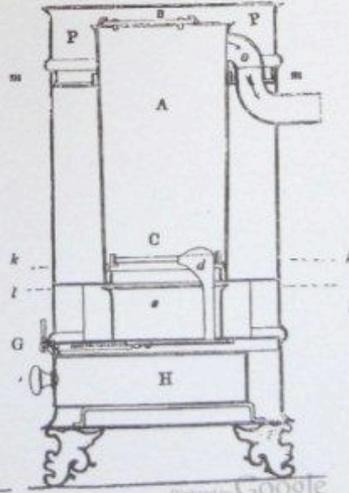


Fig. 4.



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The Vesta stove had other attributes which according to the Mechanics Magazine set it apart from other stoves then being marketed, in particular, an absence of doors "from which the gases or impure air can escape, as they do from every stove having doors"; an adjustable aperture to regulate the intake of air and therefore the rate of combustion which if used correctly made the stoves very economical; an efficient and clean method of removing ashes.

The Patent specification covers more than one version of the stove to cater for different installation requirements including a version for the forcing house of a Victorian kitchen garden.

The initial protective Patent was granted to Richard and Rippon jointly on 17th June 1840, it was entitled "Apparatus for Heating Apartments and Cooking" and was granted for 14 years conditionally on the specification being enrolled within 6 months. Enrolment took place on 17th December 1840 but the Vesta Stove was being widely advertised before then.

The first announcement of the new stove appeared in the London press in early October. Referring to the "extraordinary excitement" and "unparalleled patronage" arising from their introduction of the Chunk Stove, Rippon & Burton explain the improvements incorporated in the new Vesta version including that demanded by some customers who complained of the "absence of sufficient ornament". The Vesta would also be made in different sizes varying from a large unspecified size suitable for Churches to an unlikely 6 inch diameter version for travelling carriages. The Victorians were of course intrepid travellers.

The Vesta stove was more expensive than the Chunk. In fact some of the more ornate Vestas were priced in excess of £10. Whether Richard earned royalties on each sale is not known, and he may have sold his interests in the Patents outright to Rippon and Burton. He certainly must have done well financially out of the Chunk stove invention and also had a good business relationship with Mr Rippon, as on 11 June 1840 his second son was christened George Rippon Prosser at his baptism at St Martins in the Bullring in Birmingham. The baptism took place a week before the initial grant of the Vesta Patent.

The "Cooking" version of the stove mentioned in the title of the Vesta Patent does not appear to have been marketed. The description in the Patent specification is cursory and the drawing is simplistic. Perhaps it was included to prevent others adapting the Vesta for cooking purposes.