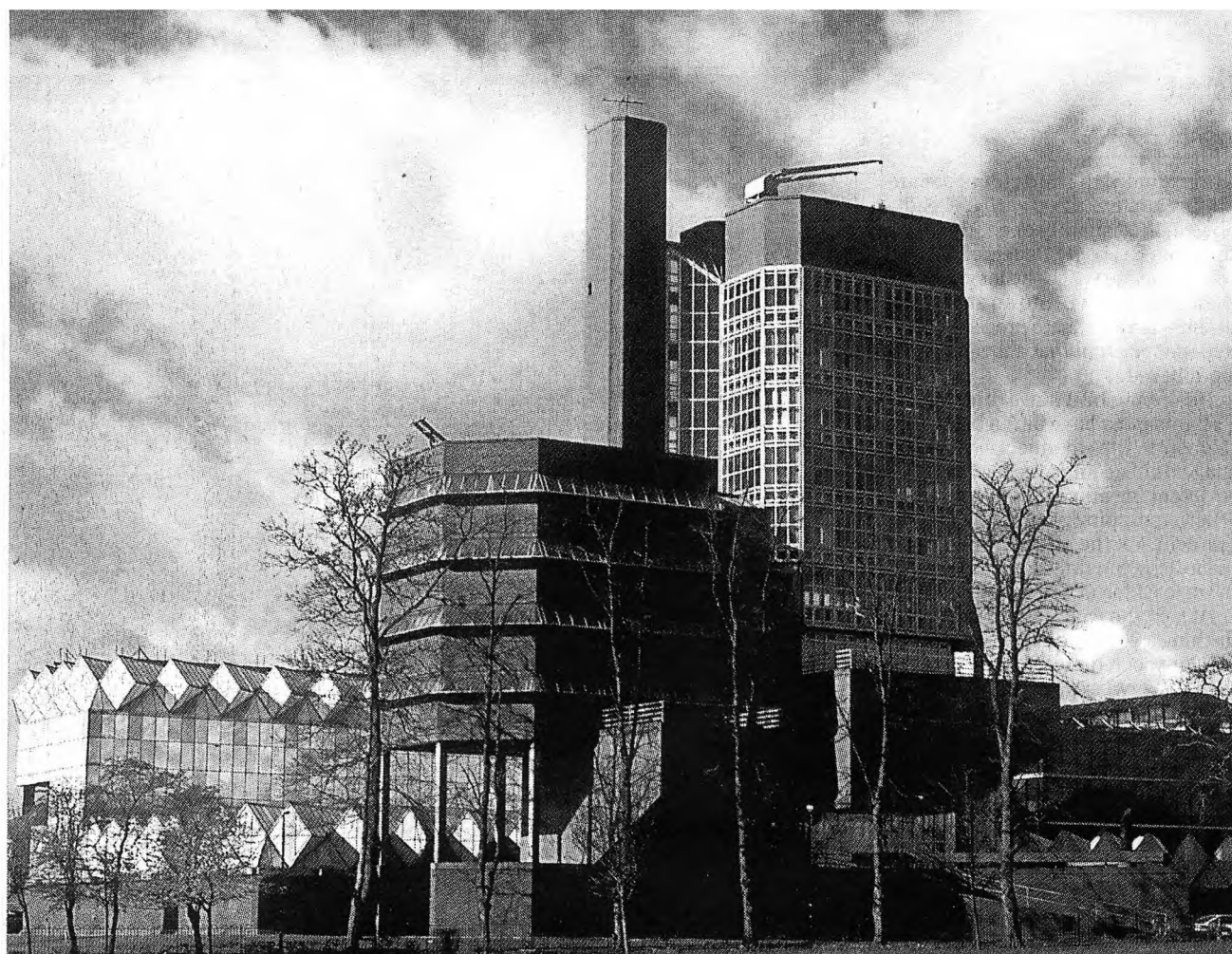


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BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY

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## Editorial:

### Earthquakes in Nepal, 25 April 2015 and 12 May 2015

By the time this Editorial is published the earthquake of magnitude 7.9 on the Richter scale which struck the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal with the tremor felt as far away as Bangladesh and in New Delhi, India at 11.41 a.m. (local time) on Saturday 25 April 2015 could well have faded from the newspapers and the consciousness of many, including many of those who read these words, and no doubt replaced in the newspapers by the small change of politics or by another natural disaster. Human beings, it would appear can only cope with one natural event at a time: on the news pages, the Nepal earthquake replaced the massive double eruption of the Calbuco volcano in southern Chile, near the towns of Puerto Varas and Puerto Montt, on Wednesday 22 April 2015 and Thursday 23 April 2015 when the sky turned red from ash, lava and smoke being thrown high into the atmosphere. The Nepal earthquake was followed by at least fifteen aftershocks of magnitude 5.0 or more, including two which measured magnitude 6.7 and 6.8 respectively and themselves of sufficient force to be considered major earthquakes. The first sentence in this paragraph was soon confirmed by where news about the magnitude 7.4 earthquake on Tuesday 12 May 2015 was positioned. *The Guardian* put news of the earthquake on page 19 but chose to place a large photograph of a prominent cricketer who had once played for England across the top half of the front page: trivia had replaced tragedy.

This sixteenth or seventeenth major aftershock had a different epicentre; it was triggered in an area east of Kathmandu whereas the first earthquake had been centred about 100 miles west of the Nepalese capital. To put the Nepalese experience in perspective, the earthquake which radiated from an epicentre in Dudley, West Midlands, at around 4.00 a.m. on Saturday 16 March 2002 was magnitude 3.9 or 4.0; it was an audible rumble which woke people up and the shockwave created felt as though a lorry or some other heavy vehicle had crashed into a nearby building. Overall, little structure damage was done around the epicentre and none in a town 50 miles from the epicentre. The Richter scale is logarithmic: each single unit projects a force ten times that of the previous full unit, thus magnitude 4.0 is ten times more powerful than magnitude 3.0. The earthquake which struck Kathmandu and most of the rest of Nepal in 2015 was one thousand times more powerful than the earthquake at Dudley or the more recently reported one in Kent.

But why, members may ask, is this issue of *British Brick Society Information* devoting its Editorial to the earthquake in Nepal? As both news paper photographs since the various earthquakes and Terence Smith in his note on 'Darkness Visible: More on Brickmaking in Asia' make clear one traditional building material in Nepal as elsewhere in South Asia is brick, in modern times used within concrete framing in medium-rise housing.

The damage to homes is stark. A report by members of the Nepali Engineers Association, drawn up within days of the earthquake and based on a random sample across different areas of Kathmandu suggested that one fifth of all dwellings in the country's capital, are no longer habitable and that no fewer than three-quarters of all buildings are unsafe and will need repairs before they can be used either as homes or workplaces. The Bal Mandir Orphanage occupied one wing of a former palace in Kathmandu. The principal architectural feature of the three storey building was two gabled bays pushed out from the main façade of stucco-covered pale red brick. The front of their portion of the former palace, in one of the gabled bays, had completely collapsed: television news showed pictures of the children's toys and teddy bears lying abandoned in the ruined building. As a former palace, this was building constructed to a high standard, both structurally and in the external finish but the apparent stability of its walls was no match for the forces unleashed by the earthquake. Surprisingly, the roof structure was little damaged although obviously the pantiles still remaining on the roof will have to be carefully removed and relaid. Photographs in issues of *The Guardian* in the final week of April 2015 and the first week of May 2015 show streets in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur where some façades are standing, superficially intact, whilst others are severely damaged with roof and floor timbers hanging over standing brickwork and yet more are not standing at all. The streets are covered with brick rubble. Both cities resemble scenes from London or Coventry, Hamburg or Dresden at the end of the Second World War.

It is worse in some villages in the valleys between the mountains where all the houses have been flattened and not one dwelling remains standing. A short report in *The Guardian*, 5 May 2015, records that not a single house was standing in Swarathok when a Nepalese migrant working in Saudi Arabia returned: his employer had the decency to pay his airfare home. The man, whose three-year-old son had been killed in the earthquake, commented “I couldn’t believe my eyes when I got to the village. How could an earthquake not leave a single house?” This man happened to be a driver, but there are thousands of construction workers in Saudi Arabia and the various states on the south side of the Persian Gulf. A United Nations estimate puts the proportion of households in Nepal with someone working abroad at one in three, all of whom remit a high percentage of their wages to their families. Nepal is one of several countries where remittances form a greater percentage of the gross national income than either receipts from foreign aid or wealth created within the country.

Monuments built of brick have been destroyed; they include many which western tourists travel thousands of miles to see. Nepal is not unused to earthquakes. The editor of the *Nepali Times* has commented: “Heritage can be rebuilt. Once every hundred years an earthquake has destroyed the palaces and temples but our kings have always restored them. That we can do. It is just a question of money”. Among the many-times rebuilt monuments is the Dharahara Tower in central Kathmandu, last reconstructed in the nineteenth century.

The previous three paragraphs illustrate three of the non-financial barriers to reconstruction. The scale of the damage is immense; the workers who may have the necessary skills are not all available because many are working abroad; and the basis of ten per cent, if not more, of the nation’s economy, namely tourism, has been destroyed. Brick has a relationship with all three obstacles.

Obviously in the days, weeks and months following the earthquake, the first priorities must be food, clean water and shelter, initially first tents and tarpaulins, for the survivors: following the Lisbon earthquake on 1 November 1755, the Marquis Plombal, the prime minister of Portugal, said “bury the dead and feed the living”. The Hindu and Buddhist traditions of cremation and the appropriate rituals are being followed in Nepal but there is great danger of water-borne disease, especially as the earthquake happened on the eve of the monsoon and the possibilities of landslides.

But there will come a period when the physical reconstruction of the built environment becomes the priority, if only to house the survivors. The children of the Bal Mandir Orphanage have found a temporary home in rooms in an undamaged government ministry building but it not the “only home” many of the children have known; many of the children had lived in the orphanage since they were three or four months old and some are now aged ten or over.

There are hopeful signs that thoughts are turning to reconstruction. The scale of the problem was assessed within a week: the earthquake happened on one Saturday, by the following Saturday the interim report on the scale of the damage by the Nepali Engineers Association had been prepared. Television pictures of clear up work on the rubble beside a stepped temple built of brick showed that after an initial clearance to see if there were bodies buried in the debris there a second clearance which involved the stockpiling in neat rows of the bricks and the stone fragments from statues of deities, less neat piles of the timber, and the carting away of the dust and mortar fragments. Also the people and the army have mounted a concerted effort to protect damaged cultural and religious artifacts — the two are almost synonymous — both in Kathmandu and in the Kathmandu Valley. Within less than a week, local groups had been formed to guard artifacts from damaged Hindu temples, thus deterring looters and the commercial pillagers intent on stealing these cultural treasures and illegally selling them on the western art market. The army does the same job from nightfall to early morning.

In individual streets and at individual buildings, as with the Bal Mandir Orphanage, damage is selective. An instance of this selective damage is the Changu Narayan Temple in Bhaktapur, a stepped pyramid of brick topped by a series of pagodas with the access stair flanked by stone statues of deities. The temple is severely damaged but could be repaired. The five roofs of the pagoda have collapsed together with the shrine but the basic structure of the stepped pyramid is relatively undamaged, even if covered with rubble and at least three of the paired statues of the deities are still standing. In due course, it could be rebuilt.

But will the skills be available? Nepal has a long tradition of building in brick. However, the most recent construction projects in Kathmandu have been in concrete and on Sunday 3 May 2015, the ‘Sunday’ programme on Radio 4 reported that only limited opportunities for learning brickwork skills, both brickmaking and bricklaying, were available and that Nepal had a shortage of bricklayers. Also

the tens of thousands of Nepali men working on construction sites in the small states bordering the Persian Gulf are building in concrete, glass and steel. They could be retrained and workers new to the building industry recruited, but both actions will take time.

On the morning when this Editorial was being drafted, Radio 4's 'Today' programme reported that the Nepalese authorities were considering re-opening trekking routes in the vicinity of Mount Everest. Being at least ten percent of the economy, tourism is vitally important. It gives employment, keeping tourist activities open brings outside money into one of the world's poorest nations, and reopening tourism, even on a limited scale, signals that the country has not given up hope for the future.

One must express the hope that once the dust settles and new homes have been provided, for the orphans of Bal Mandir Orphanage as well as for the many families left with no safe place to live, the Nepalese authorities will use the money promised by India, various European nations and UNESCO for the reconstruction of damaged monuments to rebuild temples like Changu Narayan and the Dharahara Tower so that the world can again appreciate the skills, both ancient and modern, of their builders and the people can continue to express their devotions to their gods.

During 2015, there have been at least three significant military centenaries which have either well-recognised or less obvious brick connections. The Second Battle of Ypres took place between 22 April and 25 May 1915. The Battle of Waterloo was on Sunday 18 June 1815 while on St Crispin's Day, 24 October 1415, was fought the Battle of Agincourt. Among the half centuries are the deaths of two war-time leaders: in England, Winston Churchill died on 24 January 1965, whilst in the USA Abraham Lincoln, who was shot by John Wilkes Booth at 10.13 p.m. on 14 April 1865 when attending Ford's Theater in Washington DC. President Lincoln died the following morning at 7.22 a.m. A further sesquicentenary in 2015 is the founding in 1865 of the Salvation Army, a body whose places of worship are mostly built of brick.

Two of the six anniversaries mentioned in the opening paragraph are referenced elsewhere in this issue of *British Brick Society Information*. In 'Winston Churchill, Bricklayer: a note', Terence Smith draws attention to one of the man's relaxations and hobbies. Churchill, quite sensibly, refused all honours bar the Garter and there was no suggestion that he was to be given an estate; perhaps, as Mr Smith points out, in peacetime he was just too controversial a figure.

Notes in 'Brick in Print' in this issue of *British Brick Society Information* draws attention to a two part article in successive issues of *Country Life* about the purchase and adaptation of Stratfield Saye, Hants., the estate and house bought by the nation for Wellington, and to a later article on Apsley House, Wellington's London home, which he had bought from his brother in 1807. The Battle of Waterloo, itself, also has a connection with brick. The site at Hougoumont, Belgium, was a farm. The now restored, two-storeyed gardener's cottage has white limestone walls on the lower part of the ground floor but above this is red brick, with the exception of the now blocked window surrounds.

Those who fell at the Second Battle of Ypres and have no known grave are commemorated in the 54,986 names engraved in the stone of the Menin Gate by Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1940). The side walls of the Menin Gate, through the site of which so many of them had marched, often to their deaths, are of red brick. One evening in July this year, the bugler sounded the Last Post for the thirty thousandth time; the memorial will continue to be sounded under the arch until every death has been commemorated.

Two brick buildings have direct connections with the death of Abraham Lincoln: Ford's Theater where he was shot and Petersen House where he died. A third, the building erected to administer the pensions of those who fought on the Union side in the Civil War (1861-65), is a direct consequence of the war Lincoln had to fight to save the unity of his country. After being the Pensions Building for over fifty years, this large structure had various uses before its present one as the National Museum of Building.

If the bricklaying at the Menin Gate, Ford's Theater and Petersen House, and Hougoumont Farm all represent a direct connection between brick and the event whose anniversary is being commemorated in 2015, the connection with brick of the Battle of Agincourt is less direct but no less important. On St Crispin's Day 1415, many French captains and nobles were taken prisoner. As

befitted their rank, these men were housed in suitable quarters in England but they remained English prisoners until their families or the impoverished French state paid the sizeable ransoms.

From these ransoms, not always paid as lump sums, and from the incomes remitted from the French lands allotted to them, either as a single annual payment or four quarterly ones for as many as thirty years, more than one English military captain gained the finance to build a brick house. Three of the best known are the king's brother, John, Duke of Bedford, at Fulbrooke, Warks.; Ralph, third Baron Cromwell at Tattershall, Lincs.; and Sir John Fastolf, at Caister Castle, Norfolk.

We have some idea of the *English* incomes of these three in the mid-1430s, two decades after the battle. Fastolf, the poorest of these three, declared a taxable income of £600 in 1436; his gross income in 1429 had been £719. Cromwell was quite a bit richer; the Lord Treasurer, who had devised the 1436 income tax, put his taxable income at £1007 in 1436, not greatly different from the sum he had received gross in 1429. Bedford does not appear in the income tax: he had died in 1435. However, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, his brother, does appear. His income, 4,000 marks (£2,666 13s. 4d.), even if a notional sum for his English lands would have been equivalent to that from the lands granted to Bedford.

This was at a time when a skilled bricklayer was paid 8d. per day or 4s. 0d. in a week when there were no saints' days or other days of obligation. But only about half the weeks of a year were without at least one day of religious holiday and some weeks had as many as three; no work was done for two weeks around Christmas. The skilled workman probably received no more than £10 0s. 0d. in a year, one fiftieth of what one building patron was receiving. This assumed that he worked throughout the year and that he had no time off for being sick or injured. Holidays, of course, were unpaid. More often he worked from Lady Day (25 March) through to Michaelmas (29 September) and then had to fend for himself for six months. In this case, a skilled bricklayer's earnings would not have exceeded £5 0s. 0d. in a year and was probably less, but he may have had other resources, like land, or engaged in some other trade for part of the year.

During the Spring and Summer of 2015, the British Brick Society has held successful meetings in Oxford on Saturday 18 April 2015, in Battersea in south London on Saturday 27 June 2015, and examining brick churches and other buildings around the southern and eastern fringes of Milton Keynes on Saturday 25 July 2015. The society's Annual General Meeting on Saturday 30 May 2015 was preceded by a tour of the Black Country Living History Museum, Dudley, West Midlands. Reports on these meetings appear elsewhere in this issue of *British Brick Society Information*.

The society has one further meeting in 2015 at the York Handmade Brick Company, Alne, North Yorkshire, on Saturday 19 September 2015. Notice of this meeting is included in this mailing.

The British Brick Society regrets to report the death of two of its members, Philip Brown of Bristol and Stanley Cox of Elton, near Peterborough. The British Brick Society extends sincere condolences to their families.

DAVID H. KENNETT

Editor, *British Brick Society Information*,

27 July 2015

### *Cover Illustration:*

The Engineering Building at Leicester Union was designed in 1959-60 by the partnership of James Gowan and James Stirling and built over the next four years. This building was one featured in a review article, 'The March of Red Brick: Building English Universities in the 1960s' in *British Brick Society Information*, 121, September 2012. The building was awarded the Reynolds Memorial Award for Architecture in 1965. The modest and consequently under-appreciated James Gowan died on 12 June 2015.

# An Unusual Collection of Leicestershire Brickmaking Accounts, 1776-1809

Mike Kingman

## INTRODUCTION

Brickmaking accounts for the eighteenth century are not unknown. William Anson's pocket book for 1709-10 includes the volume and product of the Shrugborough estate kiln with details of the purchasers and the prices paid.<sup>1</sup> The steward of the Edge family estate at Sherbourne, Warwks., maintained production accounts from 1763 to 1788.<sup>2</sup> Many other members of the aristocracy and landed gentry recorded details of brick production particularly if they were required for a building project on their estates. Production costs, sales receipts, and profit and loss accounts over an extended period, however, are extremely rare and made even more unusual by the fact that these Leicestershire accounts are those of a relatively small-scale village brickmaker. Such accounts are of considerable historical value for they provide detailed information on brick production which was not influenced by a patron's provision of clay, coal, labour, or transport. The accounts were maintained by Richard Hoe of the small village of Hose, in the Vale of Belvoir near Melton Mowbray, close to the Leicestershire-Nottinghamshire border (see map, fig.1). Little is known of Richard Hoe (*d.*1827); he is recorded on the Enclosure maps of 1795 as the owner of a cottage and just over one acre of land at the western edge of the village. The map shows a small enclosed area at the end of his holding. Was this the original site of the brick kiln? The Enclosure schedule states that Hoe owned a further nine acres in two of the open fields, although this holding does not seem to be reflected in the new allotments.<sup>3</sup> The envelope which holds the documents is entitled 'Mount Pleasant Brickworks'. A farm of this name stands about one kilometre south-east of the village and has a brick at the rear inscribed 'T. Hoe 1793'.<sup>4</sup> The farm may reflect the success of the brickmaking enterprise and the removal of the kiln to this site.

The accounts are held at the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office in the form of 43 Xeroxed sheets each of which holds at least two or more original annual records per sheet numbered by the brickmaker from 4 to 60. Some are missing, for example pages 1-2 and 6-13, whilst the final ten sheets are unnumbered.<sup>5</sup> They are unusually presented in several ways (see below).

The initial pages contain little information on brick production, rather they would seem to be the records of the Overseer of the Poor, a position to which Richard Hoe was reappointed in 1805.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the parish Overseers Book only begins in 1783 which may explain the jotted records held within the brick accounts. Between January and December 1776, he 'Paid Sacley for his Father' £21 14s. 1½*d.* Between April 1777 and September 1788 'old Mr Dodson' was paid £17 19s. 0*d.* and a further £34 2s. 0*d.* between October 1778 and December 1782. There are also recorded twenty-seven payments of two or three shillings at roughly monthly intervals to 'Bro J' who is frequently described as 'in distress' and twice needs a subsidy of one guinea (£1 1s. 0*d.*) 'to buy coals'. The only significant record is that of the payment of a year's wages from November 1777 to two workmen of £7 0s. 0*d.* each. There are no further direct references to employees of the brickworks although the Overseers Book in 1798 records '[Paid] Rd Hoe for Sam White £5 0 0'. Was this payment for an apprenticeship?

The detailed accounts begin in October 1781 and on pages 14-62 there is an almost complete record of annual sales with the names of purchasers, the product and the quantity bought, working profit or loss, and a running total of total profit which seems to date from 1776, for when the accounts begin in 1781 Hoe recorded that a profit of £309 15s. 6½*d.* had already been earned. The records are difficult to interpret for they seem in some ways to be a summary of twenty-eight years of production rather than the more conventional annual accounts, so that every year from 1781 includes the annual profit described as 'In Pocket' (or as in 1783, 1785 and 1789 'Out of Pocket') but presented as a cumulative total which by 1804 was £1074 4s. 11*d.* The financial record is also complicated by accounts which in many years end in October, when the brickmaking season ended, and then include accounts for a further two months, other sums were added later as 'a page missed' or 'omitted by mistake'. The core of these records from the years 1781 to 1795 include the most detailed records of



annual sales to between seventy or eighty individuals. The uniformity of the way in which they are presented might suggest that they are copies of other documents. In October 1795, Richard Hoe recorded 'in Pocket before £839 3s. 10d.' and the profit for that year of £28 8s. 3d. The next entry is for 30 May 1804 when '6 years' had earned him another £215 12s. 10d. The accounts then return to 1798 and continue to 1809.



Fig.1 Mount Pleasant Farm, Hose, Leicestershire, built in 1793 by Richard Hoe

## THE PRODUCT

In the early years the products were mainly bricks with some pavers, quarries, tiles and ridge tiles; for example, in 1782 Hoe fired 147,750 bricks, 6,515 pavers and approximately 6,000 tiles. By 1809 Hoe was firing a more sophisticated and wider range of goods which perhaps reflect the demands of a wealthier and more refined market. Included in his range were '7 inch quarries', 8 inch quarries, 9 inch quarries', 'window bricks', 'long tiles', large coping brick', 'Pillare Brick', 'Suff[ough] Tiles for gates'. The scale of production was not extensive, on average about 170,000 bricks were sold each year with the lowest sales in 1796 of just 16,680 bricks and the highest of 236,520 bricks in 1805. Table 1 excludes pavers, quarries, tiles and other minor products.

The apparent reduced production of 1793 to 1797 could just be carelessness in recording or may result from the building of Mount Pleasant Farm (fig.1) in 1793 if it was, indeed, a new brickyard.

It may be significant that annual profits, although implicit, are not listed after 1795. To put the level of production into context; in 1793 following the burning of a farmhouse in Shropshire, it was estimated at between 63,000 and 67,500 bricks would be required for rebuilding.<sup>7</sup> In 1725, the estimate for 'Squire Herrick's Building' at Beaumanor Hall, Leicestershire, included 250,000 bricks.<sup>8</sup> In 1729, a more modest house of about six rooms in the Ingestre estate, Staffordshire, required 35,000 bricks.<sup>9</sup> Hoe's limited annual production for most purchasers was only sufficient to support the erection of a number of cottages and improvements to farm buildings. In 1757 Thomas Tayler's estimate for building work at Riddings Farm, Edgbaston, Birmingham, included 'Cow shade' [shed] 6,500 bricks, a 'bridge' at 3,500 bricks and a 'Pig sty' for 2,000 bricks.<sup>10</sup>

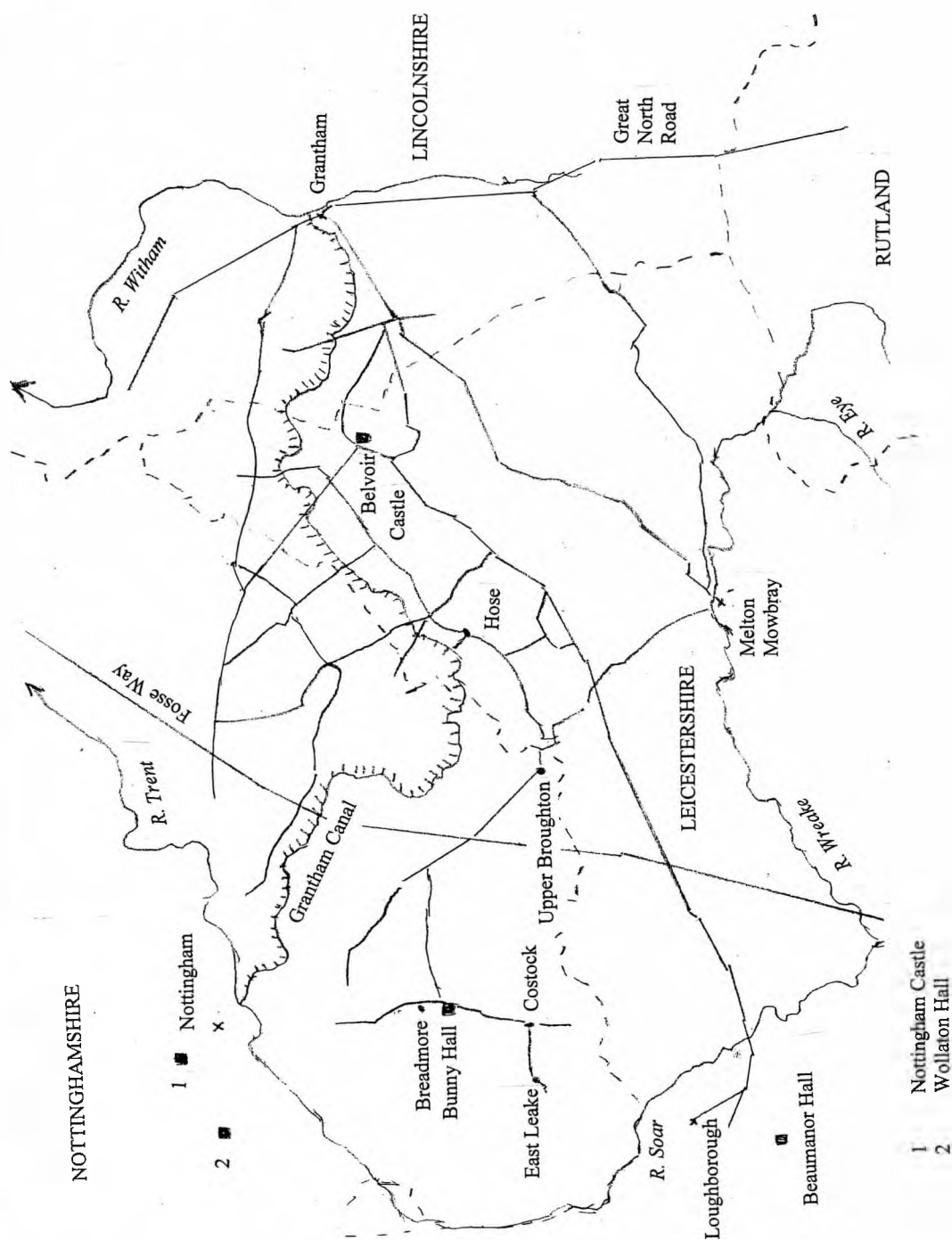


Fig.2 The country around Hose, Leicestershire, showing places mentioned in the text; roads are taken from the county maps in Thomas Moule, *The Counties of England*, 1837. Hose with its brick kiln is marked by a triangle; towns by a large circle; villages by a small circle; and country houses by a square.

TABLE 1  
ANNUAL BRICK PRODUCTION

Year	Bricks Produced	Year	Bricks Produced	Year	Bricks Produced
1781	168,000	1791	158,000	1801	137,000
1782	147,750	1792	191,200	1802	171,433
1783	161,850	1793	n.r.	1803	187,775
1784	192,150	1794	99,630	1804	184,160
1785	103,400	1795	84,000	1805	236,520
1786	164,475	1796	16,880**	1806	216,700
1787	171,350	1797	n.r.	1807	100,300
1788	190,675	1798	157,350	1808	116,800
1789	175,350	1799	152,520	1809	119,450
1790	214,650	1800	185,050		

Notes: n.r. no record

\*\* The accounts for 1796 list only nine purchasers between January and October.

## THE MARKET

The market for Richard Hoe's bricks has two quite distinct features. On the one hand is the provision of small quantities of bricks at regular intervals to local purchasers; alternatively, larger quantities of bricks were supplied at irregular intervals to local landowners, the local gentry or members of the aristocracy.

In 1781 there were eighty separate sales to seventy-four different individuals. Taken at random are two regular customers, a Mr Gad and a Mr Cross; their wealth and occupations are unknown, although a Mr Cross was 'a principal landowner' in nearby Upper Broughton, Notts. Their pattern of purchases of bricks, shown in Table 2, is typical of many recorded by Richard Hoe.

Historians seeking to explain the adoption of brick have traditionally emphasised such factors as fashion, style, social emulation, and price. Less emphasis has been placed in the availability of brick. Hoe's accounts suggest that in some villages and local communities brick building was a slow piecemeal activity spread over many years. Cross, a regular buyer over seventeen years, only twice bought sufficient bricks to build even a cow shed!

Larger purchases were made by local landowners and the aristocracy. The largest single purchases were those of a Mr Davys, Under-Sheriff of Leicestershire, who bought 35,300 bricks in 1787 and a Mr Duffy who bought 45,000 bricks and 3,600 'dressed bricks' in 1791. The local aristocracy were significant but irregular customers. For example, between October 1781 and April 1782, Lord Middleton of Wollaton Hall purchased 18,500 bricks and 1,800 pavers; he bought 17,000 bricks in 1783, 7,000 bricks in 1786, and 10,000 bricks in 1789. The Duke of Newcastle of Nottingham Castle and Clumber Park bought 3,200 bricks in 1786. Amongst the most interesting of the aristocratic customers was Sir Thomas Parkyns (*d.*1807) who between 1781 and 1788 purchased 94,500 bricks of which 73,400 were acquired in 1784-85, approximately 38 percent of Richard Hoe's production for that year. Parkyns was the heir of a famously eccentric wrestler and classicist father of the same name. The elder Sir Thomas Parkyns (*d.*1741)<sup>11</sup> had instituted a considerable building and rebuilding programme in brick on his estate, especially at the 'weird' Bunny Hall, and in the Nottinghamshire estate villages at East Leake, Bradmore, and Costock, and in Bunny village itself. The village history regards the Hall as 'unfinished' but a drawing by Thorsby in 1791 (fig.3) shows a completed south wing of a quite different and distinctive style; this was probably built with brick by Richard Hoe.<sup>12</sup>

Although the accounts do not provide information on kiln loads or the regularity with which the kiln was fired, they do provide evidence of the sale of bricks throughout the year. Historians have generally assumed that because it was technically illegal to fire bricks in the winter months and builders found it difficult to lay bricks in these same months then sales would tend to be confined to

the spring and summer months. Hoe's accounts, however, suggest that brick sales were unevenly spread throughout the year. For example in 1781-82 between 8 April and 9 October, 75,670 bricks were sold (in 54 parcels) and in the winter months, a further 99,390 bricks (in 41 parcels) were purchased, five of which were for more than 7,500 bricks. Between 3 April and 1 October 1782, 57,710 bricks were sold (in 45 separate parcels) and between 6 October 1782 and 2 April 1783, sales were 87,900 bricks (in 34 parcels). This would suggest that the larger parcels of bricks were purchased in the winter months although not necessarily for immediate use but rather that the bricks would be immediately available once the weather was appropriate. In the summer months bricks tended to be purchased in smaller quantities, perhaps for piecemeal repairs or as they could be afforded: in the early months of 1781, 41 of the 54 sales were for 1,000 bricks or less. The only reference to the influence of bad weather is in 1799 when 'Off Work in the Winter' was costed at £10 15s. 10d. and 'Off Work in the Summer' at 17s. 10d. The winter of 1798-99 was marked by heavy snowfalls, severe frost and subsequent heavy flooding in the Eye and Wreake valleys.<sup>13</sup> The flooding may be the explanation for the erection in that year of 'New Kiln, Hovels & Things for Brick Kiln'.

**TABLE 2**  
**PURCHASES BY MR GAD AND MR CROSS FROM RICHARD HOE**

Year	Mr Gad	Mr Cross
1781	925	600
1782		1,400
1783	3,100	
1784	600	
	300	
1785		
1786		
1787		5,000
		4,000
1788	4,000	700
		9,000
1789		1,000
1790	150	500
	1,400	
1791		400
1792		
1793	2,700	6,300
	1,800	
	1,000	
1794	1,400	
1795		2,800
1796		
1797		
1798		2,500
Total	17,375	35,600
Average Purchase	1,579	2,661

## PRODUCTION COSTS

The final pages are summaries of the annual production costs incurred with the accounts initially presented in a neat and tidy format of four years and later as one or two. Typically the costs are presented in the format shown on the following page:



Fig. 3 Bunny Hall, Nottinghamshire, in 1791: the south wing at the rear of the drawing was probably built for Sir Thomas Parkyns (*d.*1807) with bricks supplied by Richard Hoe. The tower and belvedere on the west side were erected for his father, the first Sir Thomas Parkyns.

1781

168,000 Bricks at 6s.	£50 11s. 0d.
8,856 Tiles at 10s.	£4 8s. 6d.
9,710 Pavers ay 8s. 6d.	£4 2s. 10d.
2,000 Suff [Sough] at 10s.	£1 0s. 0d.
268 Ridge Tiles at 6d.	£1 2s. 4½d.
55 Gutter Tiles at 1d.	4s. 7d.
Additional Wheeling	14s. 0d.
Kiln undrawn [i.e. left in the kiln]	£4 15s. 0d.
Tools Lading & Ale	£1 17s. 5d.
Clay getting and Off work	£16 4s. 1½d.
Coals	£46 12s. 0d.
[Total]	£131 11s. 9½d.

The production costs are defined in a very odd style. It would seem that the brickmaker allocated a particular cost to each of his products such as bricks at 6 shillings per thousand and tiles at 10 shillings per thousand, and then added additional costs for clay, coal, ale and other items. How this original cost price was defined is unclear. Conventional unit costs are determined by aggregating the total costs and dividing them by the number of articles produced. This brickmaker began his accounts with an apparently arbitrary cost allocated to the bricks and tiles. This price was not determined by production costs as the clay and coal were later additions. The price could have been determined by wages but 6 shillings per thousand would seem a very high price for moulding bricks. In this example the cost of all the fired products was £61 9s. 3½d. but additional costs came to £69 8s. 6½d. so that the total cost of all the fired products was actually more than double their initially allocated cost.

The accounts are important in providing evidence that the single most important cost was that of coal. Coal began to be used to burn brick from the mid-seventeenth century and economic historians have assumed that from that period the ideal location for the brick industry was where coal and clay were found in conjunction. Certainly this is true for the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when integrated coal and brick production became increasingly common. However, prior to this many landowners, perhaps fearing permanent damage to their land, were unwilling to lease land for joint production. Typical is a coal mining lease of 1761 from the Collegiate Church of St Mary, St George and St Denys, Manchester, (later the cathedral) which restricts brick production to 'the benefit of the Colliery ... the walling of the pits ... the erection of buildings ... and for no other purpose'.<sup>14</sup> The key locational factors in brickmaking were not coal but rather the presence of brick clay or brick earth and an adjacent market. Richard Hoe's accounts suggest that coal was about one third of the total costs of production. The first specific references to the 'carriage' of coal was in 1785 when '20 loads of Coals' cost £27 3s. 9d. which was 31.8 percent of the smallest annual expenditure

of £85 6s. 1d. in this the first year of the Brick Tax. In 1803, 'carriage' was £12 16s. 0d. for coal cost £54 2s. 10d. (25.6%). Presumably its cost had been previously included in the overall costs of 'Coals'.

Table 3 gives the cost of coal and its percentage of the annual expenditure, with 'carriage' where this cost is available.

There is a slight but noticeable decline in the proportion of the costs spent on coal after about 1798 when the Grantham Canal, which passes very close to the village, was opened and coal from the Nottinghamshire coalfield was regularly carried eastwards from Nottingham and the Trent. The initial proposal for the canal in 1792 was rejected through the influence of the coal carriers who maintained the road traffic.

## CLAY

Clay was locally sourced but its contribution to the overall costs is difficult to tease out from the accounts. In 1784, 1788 and 1798 'Clay getting' was specifically included with the Brick Tax return. From 1800 clay extraction is described in more detail, with the accounts for that year listing '692 yards of Clay getting', 'For the Clay £9 16s. 1½d.' and 'For Clay 6d. a 1000 £4 18s. 0¾[d.]'. In 1801 '600 Yards Clay getting at 4d. a yard' cost £10, and in 1802 484 yards of clay were dug.

## SAND

Sand was apparently not locally available, the first reference to its carriage was in 1782 but it was not until 1801 that more detailed information is available; from 1803 the cost of the sand and its carriage are separately given. The figures suggest that the cost of its transport approximately doubled the cost of the sand.

1803	Sand	32 loads	£3 2s. 0d.	Carriage	£4 16s. 0d.
1804	Sand		£1 10s. 0d.	Carriage	18s. 0d.
1805	Sand		£3 10s. 0d.	Carriage	£3 0s. 0d.
1806	Sand		£3 10s. 0d.	Carriage	£3 0s. 0d.
1809	Sand	11 loads	£1 18s 6d.	Carriage	£1 13s. 0d.

## THE IMPACT OF THE BRICK TAX

The Brick Tax<sup>15</sup> was imposed in 1784 to contribute to the costs of the War of American Independence and duty was initially set at 2s. 6d. per thousand bricks, 3s. 0d. per thousand plain tiles, and 8s. 0d. per thousand for ridge tiles or pantiles. In 1794 these were raised to 4s. 0d., 4s. 10d., and 12s. 10d., respectively. In 1796, the duty on bricks was increased to 5s. 0d. per thousand.<sup>16</sup> The impact of the tax on brick production and the costs and intensity of building construction has been the subject of debate. In a series of articles Terence Smith has argued, based mainly on London evidence, that the Brick Tax had no measurable effect on the production of bricks and was, therefore, of marginal importance in determining demand.<sup>17</sup> Robin Lucas accepts that national production continued to expand but suggests that in areas with a greater choice of wall and roofing materials brick production did not expand to a level which might have been expected.<sup>18</sup> He concludes 'The burden of the tax on bricks and tiles was ultimately borne by the brickmaker and added to the investment risks he was prepared to underwrite. That risk was increased by the method of collecting the revenue as the tax was levied on moulded bricks prior to firing. Losses sustained through accidental damage or inclement weather on bricks before they were fired had to be borne by the brickmaker, as did losses which were the consequence of misfiring. Brickmakers reported to the Parliamentary commissioners that 20 per cent of the bricks made and charged with duty were regularly lost'.<sup>19</sup>

TABLE 3  
COAL AS PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURE

Year	Total Expenditure	Cost of Coal	Percentage of Costs
1781	£131 11s. 9½d.	£46 12s. 0d.	39.4%
1782	£120 1s. 1d.	£39 17s. 0d.	33.1%
1783	£183 4s. 9d.	£50 11s. 2d.	42.0%
1784	£173 2s. 2d.	£55 15s. 2d.	32.2%
1785	£85 6s. 1d.	£27 3s. 9d.	31.8%
1786	£163 3s. 7½d.	£54 16s. 0d.	33.5%
1787	£183 12s. 8d.	£58 3s. 1d.	31.6%
1788	£186 7s. 11½d.	£65 13s. 10½d.	35.2%
1789	£175 18s. 7d.	£58 9s. 2d.	25.8%
1790	£213 18s. 11¼d.	£76 3s. 11d.	35.6%
1791	£182 2s. 3½d.	£66 0s. 5½d.	34.9%
1792	£161 17s. 0d.	£53 8s. 0½d.	32.9%
1793			
1794			
1795			
1796			
1797			
1798	£231 9s. 11d.	£67 2s. 5d.	28.9%
1799	£244 8s. 5d.	£63 4s. 8½d.	25.6%
1800	£248 2s. 8½d.	£71 4s. 3d.	28.6%
1801	£173 5s. 8½d.	£49 4s. 4½d.	39.0%
1802	£270 3s. 3½d.	£77 18s. 6d.	28.8%
1803	£262 14s. 11½d.	£54 2s. 10d.	25.6%
	'Carriage'	£12 10s. 0d.	
1804	£211 11s. 9d.	£52 9s. 1d.	21.9%
	'Carriage'	£13 0s. 0d.	
1805	£321 18s. 6½d.	£74 12s. 0d.	24.2%
	'Carriage'	£3 10s. 0d.	
1806	£258 19s. 2d.	£67 2s. 10½d.	32.1%
	'Carriage'	£16 1s. 0d.	
1807	£182 6s. 8¾d.	£42 5s. 1d.	22.5%
	'Carriage of Coals'	£12 16s. 0d.	
1808	£226 2s. 4d.	£49 0s. 7d.	22.9%
	'Carriage'	£2 15s. 6d.	
1809	£296 1s. 5d.	£62 14s. 11d.	28.0%
	'Carriage'	£11 7s. 0d.	

An additional expense was incurred in having to take the tax to the Excise Office at Grantham.<sup>20</sup> In 1792, 'The last Taxes taking omitted' was calculated at £1 19s. 0d. and in 1803 'Taking Tax 5 times' cost 7s. 6d.

Smith and Lucas have discussed the impact of the tax on national or regional production and Lucas emphasised that 'the Excise officers were not required to record how many brickmakers were forced into debt or, indeed, were obliged to abandon their livelihood as a consequence of the brick-tax'.<sup>21</sup> The Leicestershire accounts provide rare evidence of the impact of the tax on the annual costs of a small-scale village brickmaker. The amount paid in tax is not always clear for the accounts often include 'Tax things Clay getting' or 'Tax and things' as joint sums. Where the tax is clearly listed the sum paid and its percentage of the total costs is given in Table 4.

The accounts suggest that for Richard Hoe the Brick Tax was initially about fifteen percent of his total costs and rose to around twenty percent as the tax was increased. The augmented rate of the tax is reflected in his bigger outlay. In 1781 he costed brick at 6 shillings per thousand, by 1792 this had risen to 6 shillings 6 pence; in 1798 expenditure had risen to 8 shilling per thousand and in 1802 it was 8 shillings 3 pence. By 1805, brick was costed at 9 shillings per thousand. As was anticipated by



most contemporary commentators, he seems to have compensated for these increased costs by raising his prices. In 1781 his selling price for bricks was 17 shillings per thousand and it continued at this level until 1786, immediately after the introduction of the tax, when it rose to one pound per thousand. In 1793, the price was £1 2s. 6d., before any rise in the rate of the tax; in 1795, after the first increase in tax rates, he charged £1 6s. 6d. for a thousand bricks and, after the 1796 tax increase, his price reached £1 9s. 0d. for a thousand bricks. There were similar rises for all his other products.

TABLE 4  
BRICK TAX PAYMENTS AND PERCENTAGE OF COSTS

Year	Tax Rate per '000 bricks	Tax Paid	Percentage of costs
1784 1785	2s. 6d.	£12 18s. 2d.	15.1%
1794 1796	4s. 0d. 5s. 0d.		
1799		£41 4s. 9d.	16.8%
1800		£49 4s. 4d.	18.8%
1801		£38 3s. 11d.	22.0%
1802		£51 7s. 0½d.	19.0%
1803		£51 15s. 2½d.	19.1%
1804		£44 2s. 3d.	20.8%
1805		£72 9s. 9½d.	22.4%
1806		£79 1s. 1d.	30.5%
1807		£36 14s. 8d.	19.0%
1808 1809		£41 14s. 4½d.	18.0%

After 1804, the accounts seems to have been maintained by a different but similar hand, certainly they are presented in an increasingly sophisticated format. For example, in 1804 an allowance of £2 2s. 0d. was made for 'Stamps and Journes'. Most noticeable is the inclusion of the costs of capital depreciation listed as 'Ware and Tare' and noted in Table 5. On average these measured about five percent of the total costs with the exception of the unexplained amount in 1806.<sup>22</sup>

TABLE 5  
'WARE AND TARE' AND PERCENTAGE OF COSTS

Year	'Ware and Tare'	Percentage of costs
1805	£12 4s. 7d.	3.8%
1806	£72 6s. 5d.	27.9%
1807	£13 4s. 3½d.	6.8%
1808	£6 12s. 11½d.	2.9%
1809	£19 10s. 0d.	6.6%



TABLE 6  
EXPENDITURE, INCOME AND PROFIT

Year	Expenditure	Income	Profit
1776-			
1781	£1,095 11s. 10d.	£1,405 7s. 9½d.	£308 15s. 9½d.
1781	£131 11s. 9½d.		£33 2s. 2d.
1782	£120 1s. 1d.		£6 14s. 5d.
1783	£133 4s. 9d.		- £6 5s. 0d. [loss]
1784	£173 2s. 2d.	£253 7s. 11d.	£80 5s. 9d.
1785	£85 6s. 1d.	£152 11s. 0d.	£78 5s. 9½d.
1786	£163 3s. 7½d.	£78 5s. 9½d.	- £84 17s. 10d. [loss]
1787	£183 12s. 7d.	£270 6s. 4d.	£86 13s. 9d.
1788	£186 7s. 11½d.	£271 10s. 10½d.	£95 2s. 11d.
1789	£175 18s. 7d.	£164 0s. 9d.	- £11 17s. 10½d. [loss]
1790	£21 18s. 11¾d.	£319 9s. 8d.	£110 5s. 1d.
1791	£182 2s. 3½d.		£13 5s. 1½d.
1792	£161 17s. 0d.	£208 15s. 8d.	£46 8s. 0d.
1793		£264 4s. 5d.	£66 11s. 0d.
1794			£28 8s. 3d.
1795			
1796			
1797			
1798-1804			[£215 12s. 10d.]
1798	£231 9s. 11d.		
1799	£244 8s. 5d.		
1800	£248 2s. 8½d.		
1801	£173 5s. 8½d.		
1802	£270 3s. 3½d.		
1803	£262 4s. 11½d.		
1804	£211 11s. 9d.		
1805	£321 18s. 6½d.		
1806	£258 19s. 2d.		
1807	£192 6s. 8¾d.		
1808	£226 2s. 4d.		
1809	£298 1s. 5d.		

## PROFITABILITY

Running through the document like a thread are the profits of the whole enterprise. The figures given in Table 6 indicate that between 1776 and 1804 this brickmaking enterprise earned a cumulative profit of £1,074 4s. 11d. The annual profit was £59 13s. 7d., just over £1 3s. 0d. per week.

The accounts may in places be erratically documented but they provide exceptional information of a scale of enterprise which is rarely recorded. In eighteen years Richard Hoe supported both small-scale building and aristocratic improvements in the Vale of Belvoir, invested several thousand pounds, paid after 1784 at least £50 annually in tax, and earned before 1804 a weekly income which was on average about twice the earnings of an agricultural labourer.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Staffordshire Record Office, D615/P/(A)/1/5.
2. Nottinghamshire Archive, DD/E/117/116. DD/E/92/3/1 has records of clamp production, repairs and costings for 1785.
3. Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office (hereafter LLRRO), DE280/2. One close was called 'Potters Wong', was this the site of pottery or brick production?
4. British Listed Buildings, English Heritage Building ID190133.
5. LLRRO, M848.
6. LLRRO, DE2299/141.
7. Shropshire Archives, 587/68.
8. LLRRO, DG9/2136. Designed by John Westley Squire Herrick's Classical house was demolished in 1841 for the present building at Beaumanor Park. N. Pevsner, re. E. Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland*, 2nd ed., London: Penguin Books, 1983, pp.93-94 with pl.66 for the present house.
9. Staffordshire Record Office, D1386/2/1/5.
10. Birmingham Archives, MS2126/EB3/3.
11. R. Thoroton, *History of Nottinghamshire*, (1677), republished by John Throsby, 1790, Vol. 1, pp.140-141. Throsby's edition of Thoroton's *History of Nottinghamshire* was reissued Wakefield: EP Publishing in 1974.
12. N. Pevsner, revised E. Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Nottinghamshire*, 2nd edition, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976, p.87. Throsby, 1790/1974, vol.I, p.8.
13. LLRRO, DE10/2546. For an account of the winter of 1798-99 in a different part of England, Wiltshire, see J.M. Stratton and J. Houghton Brown, ed. R. Whitlock, *Agricultural Records A.D.220-1977*, London: John Baker, 1978, pp.92-93, incorporating the comments of Thomas H. Baker, *Records of the Seasons, Prices of Agricultural Produce, and Phenomena Observed in the British Isles*, of 1883.
14. Manchester Cathedral Archives, 2/A/Newt/16/6. The collegiate parish church became Manchester Cathedral in 1847.
15. H.A. Shannon, 'Bricks — A Trade Index'. *Economica*, new series, 1, 1934, pp.300-318, reprinted in E/M/ Carus-Wilson, *Essays in Economic History Volume Three*, London: Edward Arnold, 1962, pp.188-201. An earlier account is given by S. Dowell, *History of Taxes and Taxation from earliest times to 1885*, London: Longman, Green, 2nd edition, 1888, volume IV, section XIV. Mr Dowell was a retired high-ranking tax official.
16. N. Nail, 'Brick and Tile Taxes Revisited', *BBS Information*, 67, March 1996, pp.3-14, gives details of the rates levied at different periods by the Brick Tax.
17. T.P. Smith, 'The Brick Tax and its Effects, Part I', *BBS Information*, 57, November 1992, pp.4-11; T.P. Smith, 'The Brick Tax and its Effects, Part II', *BBS Information*, 58, February 1993, pp.14-19; T.P. Smith, 'The Brick Tax and its Effects Part III', *BBS Information*, 63, October 1994, pp.4-13.
18. R. Lucas, 'The Tax on Bricks and Tiles 1784-1850: its Application to the Country at Large, and, in particular, to the County of Norfolk', *Construction History*, 13, 1997, pp.39-48.
19. Lucas, 1997, p.39.
20. Neither Leicester nor Nottingham was a collection centre for the Brick Tax; the nearest centres for Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire were Lincoln, Grantham, Northampton, Coventry, Lichfield, and Derby. Grantham was the most convenient centre for Richard Hoe.
21. Lucas, 1997, p.48.
22. Capital depreciation was a rare accountancy practice at this period but was not unknown. Boulton and Watt allowed 5% on their machinery and 8% on steam engines.

# Fisherman's Cottage, Deal, Kent

A query from Angus Neill

Responses from Richard Harris, Peter Minter and David H. Kennett

## EDITORIAL NOTE

This query was received by the British Brick Society's Enquiries Secretary, Michael Hammett, on 25 January 2015 and he subsequently asked a number of members with interests in Kent or brickwork of seventeenth-century date to comment on the basis of the photographs. Mr Neill's original query, subsequent emails to Michael Hammett, and the responses are printed in this issue of *British Brick Society Information* as it is felt that the whole of the membership would be interested either in this house or in the way in which the various responses are framed.

DHK

## THE ORIGINAL ENQUIRY

I am hoping to 'firm up' the dating of my seventeenth-century fisherman's cottage in Deal, Kent. What I do know is that it cannot be later than 1680 as there are a number of interior features such as pegged beams that were not used after that date. The original insurance plaque on the building (figs.1 and 5) has been dated to 1690. However, an architect specialising in conservation and restoration of old buildings has suggested that the cottage could be as early as 1650. He also suggested that I contact the British Brick Society as the brickwork may give some further clues. The photographs (fig.1-5) were taken at a time soon after the entire front had been repointed in lime mortar and hence are still looking very "white"; this will, of course, go darker over time.

Mr Neill was asked if the brickwork was the primary wall structure or cladding to a timber-frame. He replied that he had measured the width of the walls. Up to the first floor, the walls have a thickness of 17 inches (430 mm) and on the second floor they are 15 inches (380 mm) thick. They appear to be brick throughout as there are exposed areas of brick in the interior where the fireplace meets the back wall. He tells us that he has also spoken to his very experienced builder who has no doubt that the brickwork is a primary structure.

In respect of the timber jointing with the pegs, these pegs are protruding from three massive beams supporting the floors themselves (*ie* they are the floor joists).

Mr Neill is quite certain that the actual brickwork (*ie* the walls) is primary structure. He also informed us that the bricks were  $8\frac{7}{8} - 9\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$  inches ( $225-240 \times 105 \times 60$  mm) in size as used in the wall width of 17 inches.

## AN EARLIER DATING

The brickwork of Fisherman's Cottage is likely to have been built in the 1640s or 1650s. This is based on the dimensions and appearance of the bricks as well as features of the brickwork such as the lack of a consistent bonding pattern. Although there are several attempts at English Bond, particularly in the lower courses of the ground floor and below the protruding brick band, it is not a sustained attempt; by the mid-seventeenth-century Flemish Bond had become more popular. Also there seems to be a small number of bricks included in the brickwork which look older than the majority. There are the ones which are a bit shorter and more rounded.

PETER MINTER



Fig. 1 Fisherman's Cottage, Deal, Kent: general view.





Fig. 2 General view of one of the attempts at English Bond on Fisherman's Cottage, Deal

## A LATER DATING

While the brickwork is instantly recognisable as seventeenth-century, I do not think there is anything in the photographs or the measurements to determine the date with much greater precision. The brick height, 2.36 inches, approximately  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches, would generally be more consistent with a date in the second half of the seventeenth century but I do not have detailed knowledge of Kent buildings to back that up in this case.

As well as the height of each brick it is useful to know the course height. I generally measure twelve courses (top of brick to top of brick) so that a measurement of 2 feet 6 inches instantly gives me  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches per course, which is normal for the earlier seventeenth century. I would imagine that these would be more like  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Architectural style is a more powerful tool at this period, so it would be useful to know more about the building. For example, do we know the original form of the window and door openings and the joinery therein? Other clues could be gained from the fireplaces, if original, and from the timber floor.

RICHARD HARRIS

## A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DATE

Whilst I cannot be much help in offering a more precise date for Fisherman's Cottage, Deal, beyond supporting the notion of a date somewhere in the seventeenth century and supporting the idea that the brickwork is original, I do have a number of thoughts about the façade as shown in the photographs. My comments on the brickwork are more to raise questions than provide answers.



Fig. 3 View showing infill around the ground floor window of Fisherman's Cottage, Deal,

One is to comment on the two sets of straight joints approximately four bricks distant from the window on the first floor. The brickwork within the pairs of straight joints could be a replacement for earlier timber structures, although I can offer no clues as to what that timber structure embedded within the substantial brick walls of a house might have been except to suggest an original use for this room as a sail or net loft.

Second, the present windows look eighteenth century in style and possibly in date and are clearly replacements but are they replacing those of the same size? The ground floor window to the right of the door is flanked by straight joints, one stretcher away from the left-hand edge and one header from its right-hand edge. Some of the bricks below the relieving arch look to be modern, or at least no earlier than the twentieth century: they are of a different colour to the majority of the bricks in the house.

The use of bricks on edge above the first-floor window suggests that this course was inserted into the structure when the present window or, more probably, a predecessor was put in. The double set of closers on the left-hand side of that window might suggest more than one reduction in the size of the window, as separate renewals took place. The set of bricks on edge extends to the left of the present window. Clearly illumination to the upper floor has been severely altered more than once. One explanation for the irregularities in the brickwork might be that originally this area of the house was not domestic at all but served as a sail loft or net loft. I have a vague memory from my childhood, part of which was spent in Ramsgate, of a house facing the sea being cleared out where the former occupier, who had been an inshore fisherman, had used much of the upper floor as a sail and net loft. If the first floor was used as a sail and net loft at Fisherman's Cottage, the family could have slept in the attic, which from the three pots on the chimney stack seems to have been heated from when the building was constructed.

The dormer window in the attic in its present form is probably late nineteenth century but doubtless replaces an original.

The inconsistencies in the bond could be due to the brickworker having seen both English Bond and Flemish Bond and being a man unsure of how to use either correctly. The attempts at a more regular bonding show Flemish Bond, alternating headers and stretchers in each course (fig.2).

One clue to the date of the house might lie in the Hearth Tax. The chimney stack shows three chimney pots on the side servicing Fisherman's Cottage, presumably one for each floor, including the



attic. If this is an original feature, this implies that the occupier would have had to pay Hearth Tax at one shilling per chimney (technically per hearth) for each half year. Many living in one hearth and two hearth cottages would have been exempt because of poverty but anyone living in a house with three hearths would not have been. There are two ways in which the Hearth Tax could be used. First, if the deeds of Fisherman's Cottage go back as far as the seventeenth century and the owner lived there, and it was not rented out, which is highly probable, he should be identifiable from the tax record and thus the cottage can be presumed to have been built before 1664. Failing any direct documentary evidence for the occupiers of the house in the seventeenth century, if one could identify prominent building nearby, a large house or an inn, known to be seventeenth-century or earlier in date and count forward or back from this larger building to the present cottage, one may be able to identify an occupier of Fisherman's Cottage and hence be certain that it was extant in 1664.

DAVID H. KENNETT



Fig. 4 Brickwork on the left-hand edge of the front of Fisherman's Cottage, Deal.

# John Knowles & Company, Wooden Box, Leicestershire

Alan Cox

Terence Paul Smith in *BBS Information*, 129, February 2015, pp.12-13, records a firebrick made by John Knowles & Company found in London, on the site of the Midland Railway's Somers Town Goods Depot, adjacent to St Pancras Station. This has prompted me to give a fuller history of the firm.

In South Derbyshire and adjacent parts of Leicestershire, deposits of fireclay occur in the Coal Measures, particularly in the vicinity of Swadlincote, Derbyshire. What triggered the fireclay industry there was the opening of the railway line from Coalville, Leicestershire, to Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, in 1849. In addition, Woodville was only about a couple of miles from the Ashby Canal, which gave access, via the Oxford Canal, to the Grand Junction Canal, and thence to London. Over the years some forty or more firms in South Derbyshire manufactured clay products. Whilst most of these firms largely produced sanitary wares, some also produced firebricks.<sup>1</sup>

One such firm was John Knowles & Company, which was established in 1849 at Wooden Box, just to the south-east of Swadlincote. Wooden Box was a village which had largely sprung up after 1800, and derived its odd name, as Terence Paul Smith noted, from a wooden toll hut on the Burton-on-Trent to Ashby-de-la-Zouch turnpike road. In 1845 it became a separate parish called Woodville. The new parish straddled the Derbyshire-Leicestershire county boundary, and Knowles's works was actually then in Leicestershire. However, in 1897 the whole parish, including the works, became part of Derbyshire, although some of the firm's fireclay mines remained in Leicestershire.<sup>2</sup> To complicate matters further, the firm continued to use the old name of Wooden Box for its address, which, even more confusingly, is described as being at Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire.<sup>3</sup> Burton was, in fact, about six or seven miles to the north-west of Wooden Box.

The founder of the firm, John Marsden Knowles, was a railway contractor, who first came to the area to carry out work for Robert Stephenson on the Coalville to Burton-on-Trent railway. Whilst working on the tunnel south of Gresley Station, he discovered a bed of fireclay, and proceeded to purchase from the Marquess of Hastings an acre of land containing such clay, just over a mile east of the tunnel and south of the Wooden Box branch line, then still under construction. Having completed his contract, Knowles immediately set about working the clay on the land he had acquired. He erected a kiln and taking the local name for that vicinity his undertaking became the Mount Pleasant Works, on Occupation Road.<sup>4</sup> Knowles purchased and leased further land, and he discovered that, as well as the deeper seams of fireclay, there were shallower ones. These were ideal for making stoneware pipes, which he then began to produce as well.<sup>5</sup>

In 1853 John Knowles supplied firebricks for Beart's Patent Brick Company's new works at Arlesey, Bedfordshire.<sup>6</sup> Knowles also turned his attention to the London market, opening an office there in 1863.<sup>7</sup> By at least 1865 he had depots in London at Hawley New Wharf, Camden (on the Regent's Canal), and at the Midland Railway's coal yard, St Pancras Station.<sup>8</sup> The Midland had been forced to open this because the facilities which it had been using at the Great Northern's King's Cross station could no longer cope with the goods traffic generated by the two companies. This is, of course, before the Midland's extension from Bedford to St Pancras had been opened or the main terminus had even been started.<sup>9</sup> In 1865 Knowles advertised firebricks, fire lumps and tiles, as well as crucible and cement clays, and stated that 'These Goods are of superior quality, and have been supplied to many of the largest Armour-Plate and Steel-smelting Works in the country'. It offered 'An Illustrated List of upwards of seventy various shaped Fire Bricks sent free on application'.<sup>10</sup> An advert mentions that Knowles was by 1869 also producing 'Terra-Cotta Chimney Pots, Glazed Sewage Pipes, Closet Pans, Traps, Urinals'. Prices could be quoted to any railway station or port in England, while shipping orders would be 'Promptly Executed' and 'Goods Made to any Pattern on the Shortest Notice'.<sup>11</sup>

Knowles died in 1869 and his widow briefly carried on the business, being joined the following year by her two nephews, John and William Hassall, who took over the firm when she died in 1871.<sup>12</sup> By then the firm was insolvent, but thanks largely to John Hassall the business was soon turned around and became very successful.<sup>13</sup> For use with stoneware pipes, William patented 'Hassall's joints', which were, not surprisingly, then manufactured by Knowles.<sup>14</sup>



By 1876 the firm had become John Knowles & Company and it now had had another office in London at the goods depot of the London & North Western Railway at Old Ford, Bow.<sup>15</sup> By 1879 Knowles had an office and depot at No. 35 Green Lane, Sheffield, as well as additional depots in London at the Victoria Docks and West End, Hammersmith. It now also announced: 'Architects' Designs in Terra Cotta skilfully executed'.<sup>16</sup>

At Mount Pleasant Works the kilns were very largely round 'beehive' downdraught kilns. From the initial one kiln in 1849, there were about 12 by 1870, together with two clay-mills, one for bricks and one for pipes. Ten years later, the number of kilns had risen to 20, while steam replaced underfloor coal-fired heating. Steam was now also employed to power horizontal engines driving the two mills plus other smaller ones.<sup>17</sup>

A major rebuilding of the works took place in the first half of the 1880s.<sup>18</sup> By 1900 there was a new refractory plant, the fireclay for which was processed in a third mill known as the Pot Mill. There were then 27 kilns, a number which had risen by 1920 to at least 31. A new fireclay preparation plant was introduced in 1932, while a new works was opened on the opposite side of Occupation Road in 1938 to produce casting pit refractories for the steel trade. At the time of the firm's centenary in 1949, the works as a whole covered 17 acres and there were 33 beehive, three rectangular and two tunnel kilns.<sup>19</sup> The Mount Pleasant Works had its own railway sidings and its own narrow-gauge tramways, which snaked around the many beehive kilns.<sup>20</sup>

In 1884 John Knowles & Company are described as 'manufacturers of fire clay goods of various descriptions, steel pot crucible and cement clays, Staffordshire blue and red bricks &c.'. By then, in addition to those already mentioned, the firm had depots in London at the goods stations of the Midland Railway at Child's Hill & Cricklewood, and of the London and North Western's at Chiswick. Its chief London office was No. 8 Euston Road, at the front of St Pancras Station.<sup>21</sup> Two years later, the London and South Western's Twickenham station had been added to its depots.<sup>22</sup> An advert in the *Builder* in 1887 mentions that Knowles had also become 'Dealers in Cement, Lime, Slates, and other Building Materials' or, in other words, a builders merchant. It offered: 'Goods delivered by [horse-drawn] Vans in loads of not less than 30 cwt. To any part of London'.<sup>23</sup> The firm's 'chief London office' had moved by 1890 to 38 King's Road, St Pancras (subsequently St Pancras Way).<sup>24</sup>

By 1901 Knowles had addresses in Nottingham at Brougham Chambers, Wheeler Gate, and in Glasgow at 37 West George Street. On the Regent's Canal it now had the Star Wharf, also on King's Road, St Pancras. In addition to those railway depots already mentioned, the firm had railway depots at the Great Northern's Palmer's Green; the London Brighton & South Coast and London & North Western's joint station at Knight's Hill; and the London, Chatham & Dover's Bromley station. By this time the firm's stoneware goods were branded as 'Vitrifine' and it was still advertising Hassall's patent joints.<sup>25</sup> In 1901-02 Knowles supplied blue bricks and red coping bricks, or ridge copings, and plinth bricks for rebuilding parts of the boundary wall to Woburn Abbey in the vicinity of Husborne Crawley, Ridgmont and Eversholt, Bedfordshire.<sup>26</sup>

A letterhead used in 1907 has a splendid panoramic view of the firm's works at Wooden Box. Also illustrated is the firm's registered trade mark for fireclay goods, in the form of a small railway tank locomotive. Knowles had now added Sunderland Wharf on the River Thames at the Mall, Chiswick, to its London establishments. Further railway depots included Haringay, Muswell Hill, Totteridge and Winchmore Hill (Great Northern); New Eltham (South Eastern & Chatham); Addlestone (London & South Western); Wood Street, Walthamstow ((Great Eastern), and Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire (London & North Western). The letterhead also indicates that the firm was a contractor to the Admiralty, War Office and India Office.<sup>27</sup> In 1908 the firm was registered as John Knowles and Company (Wooden Box) Ltd.<sup>28</sup>

After the Second World War, as far as London was concerned, the firm seem to have been largely builders' merchants, and by the late 1960s their sole London addresses were both in the suburbs: Nos. 13-21 Knight's Hill, West Norwood, and a depot at the railway goods yard, Aldermans Hill, Palmers Green.<sup>29</sup> At the Mount Pleasant works, Woodville, the manufacture of clay pipes for sanitation purposes was abandoned in 1965, and the firm concentrated on fireclay products. In 1969 Knowles was taken over by an old established Yorkshire firm, Dyson Refractories Ltd and under the latter's name the works continued to operate,<sup>30</sup> although much of the old works fronting Occupation Road was demolished in May 1997. However, the works of 1938 was still in production and indeed had been extended northwards.<sup>31</sup> Since then, it has also closed down.

Knowles, unlike many other firebrick makers, neither operated a colliery nor offered coal for sale. Nevertheless, it did extract some poor quality coal: a lease of 1876 on 24 acres of land permitted the firm to work the coal which overlay the fireclay deposit purely for consumption in its works. It continued to extract coal for this purpose until at least 1900. After the nationalisation of the coal industry in 1947, Knowles was licensed by the National Coal Board to extract coal from a thin seam above the fireclay it was working. Again its was only to be employed for its own use, as boiler fuel at the works or for equipment at one of its fireclay pits.<sup>32</sup>

There were other firebrick manufacturers at Woodville who had entries or adverts in the London Post Office Directory (LPOD) and/or had a London office. In 1875 Hosea Tugby & Company of the Albion Works, Woodville, had a full-page advert in the LPOD.<sup>33</sup> This has a long list of the firm's products, including firebricks, and stated 'Prices Quoted for Delivery to any Railway Station or Port'. The Woodville Sanitary Pipe and Fire Brick Manufacturing Company Ltd built a works beside the railway at Woodville about 1883, which had its own siding.<sup>34</sup> The firm is listed as a firebrick maker in the LPOD at 3 Lothbury in the City of London between 1884 and 1905, while in 1910-15 their address is given as 11 Ironmonger Lane, also in the City. In 1845 Edward Ensor of Lyme Regis took over, and in 1851 bought the Pool Works, Woodville, a small firebrick works built in the late 1820s. His firm went bankrupt in 1880 but was re-formed as Ensor & Company Ltd. Again, the works had its own rail connection.<sup>35</sup> By 1895 products of the firm included firebricks, chimney pots, drain and land pipes, air bricks and ornamental vases. Three years later, in 1898, a London office was opened, which was subsequently formed into Ensor Sales (London) Ltd.<sup>36</sup> Tooth & Son, which is listed as a firebrick maker in the 1870 LPOD, with a London address of 8 Gracechurch Street EC, is probably Tooth & Company, Woodville, with its own railway siding.<sup>37</sup> Two further Woodville firms are listed: from at least 1921, the Albion Clay Company (until at least 1935), with its 'chief London office' at 133 to 136 High Holborn; and from 1915 Thomas Wragg & Sons Ltd (until at least 1946), at 39 Victoria Street, Westminster SW1. The Albion Clay Company works was served by its own railway siding, while Wragg's works was alongside a railway line.<sup>38</sup>

Near to Woodville, at Swadlincote, James Woodward was a long-standing firm, which is listed and had adverts in the LPOD in the 1890s, claiming in 1899 to have been established over a century. A wide range of wares, including firebricks, was produced. Woodward reappears in 1930, with a London address of 66 Victoria Street, Westminster. Its works was adjacent to the Midland Railway's branch line from Leicester to Burton-on-Trent, and the works and the claypit were served by separate sidings.<sup>39</sup>

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# Bedford Greys

Alan Cox



Fig.1 The Gillette Factory, Great West Road, London: general view

I came across a short report in the *Brick Builder* for September 1936 about the Gillette razor-blade factory on the Great West Road, Brentford, West London, designed by Banister Fletcher. It stated that the facing bricks on the principal elevations of the building consisted of 2-inch 'Bedford Greys', laid five courses to a foot, with a base of 2½-inch 'Dark Bedfords', both supplied by Proctor and Lavender of Solihull, Warwickshire.<sup>1</sup> Eighteen months later, in March 1938, the same periodical carried an advertisement of this firm, which described Bedford Greys as 'The Finest Hand Made Bricks in England To-Day'. The advert also mentioned that the firm was established in 1899.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, I assumed that Proctor and Lavender were the manufacturers, but why would a Solihull firm brand its bricks as Bedford Greys? However, I subsequently found out that, according to Peter Lee, in 1923 Harold T. Lavender was a travelling salesman for the Birmingham district on behalf of the Haunchwood Brick & Tile Company of Nuneaton. In the course of his work he met and married the daughter of one of his customers. As result, he was made a partner in his wife's family firm of builders' merchants, which then became Proctor and Lavender.<sup>3</sup>

It seemed reasonable, therefore, to assume that Proctor and Lavender were the distributors of Bedford Greys rather than the manufacturers. So, where were these bricks made? Could they, after all, have been made in Bedfordshire? Certainly, attractive grey bricks were produced in South Bedfordshire, in Luton and the nearby area. Yet I have never come across them described as Bedford Greys and it seemed inherently unlikely that any Luton grey would be labelled in this way.

In November 2013 I went to look at the Gillette factory. At that time the building was empty and fenced off, but it was possible to see the brickwork quite well and take some photographs. From this visit, it was clear that neither type of brick on the main elevations had the purpleish body, the consistency of colour, or the texture characteristic of a Luton grey. Interestingly, again according to Peter Lee, the Haunchwood Company also provided bricks and flooring blocks for the Gillette building.<sup>4</sup>



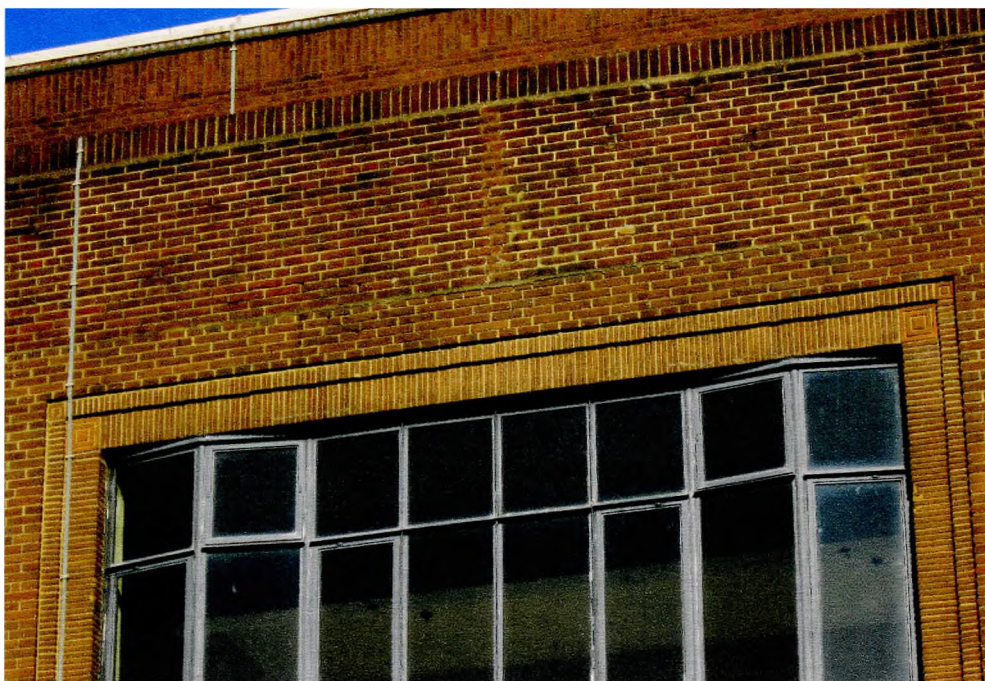


Fig.2 The Gillette Factory, London: detail of the brickwork above and surrounding upper levels of the windows.

The next clue came in a printed publicity letter of Proctor and Lavender, dated 10 November 1955, deposited in the London Metropolitan Archives. This described them as 'Makers & Merchants of Fine Facing Bricks, Solihull, Birmingham', with two brickworks: Charnwood Forest (see below) and Royal Forest of Dean. The letter drew attention to the very recently opened Birmingham Central Technical College of Art (architects: Ashley and Newman), now part of the University of Aston. Two of Proctor and Lavender's range of handmade facings had been chosen for the main elevation of the building: 2½-inch Bedford Greys and 2½-inch Golden Greys. Both types of brick had been produced at the Forest of Dean works, from a seam of engineering clay which tests showed had an abnormally low absorption rate of 1% and a high crushing strength of 8,000 lbs per square inch.<sup>5</sup>

The Royal Forest of Dean brickworks, Gloucestershire, is that still operated by the Coleford Brick and Tile Company. This firm was incorporated in 1925 to acquire from the O & C Syndicate the Marions brickworks, just to the north-west of Coleford, on the way to Staunton. In 1936 the company decided to build an entirely new works on a site at Hawkwell, and this was completed in 1938. This is what is now the Royal Forest of Dean brickworks, situated north-west of Cinderford, on the south side of the A4136 Gloucester to Monmouth road. However, at first, this latter works only operated for a short time, closing down in 1942 because of wartime conditions, and it seems that the company's other works at Marions also closed during the war.

After the Second World War, it was decided not to re-start the Marions works, and in June 1946 a company meeting discussed whether to restructure the firm or, alternatively, to make financial arrangements with outside interests. It was reported that H. T. Lavender of Proctor and Lavender was exploring the second option with his associates in Birmingham, on the basis that his firm would be given sole rights for all sales of Coleford goods outside the London area and that Lavender himself would be made a director of the Coleford company. He must have been successful in his endeavours since he joined the board of Coleford in October 1946. In December 1948 the Coleford company's headquarters were transferred from Marions to Hawkwell, and in May 1950, it was decided to sell off the plant at the former works or move it also to Hawkwell.<sup>6</sup>

By at least 1955, as mentioned above, the Hawkwell works had been given its present name. The Coleford Brick & Tile Company still manufacture pavers and floor tiles at the Royal Forest of Dean works, while their current range of handmade facing bricks includes Mixed Bedford Grey/Brown and Dark Bedford Multi.<sup>7</sup>

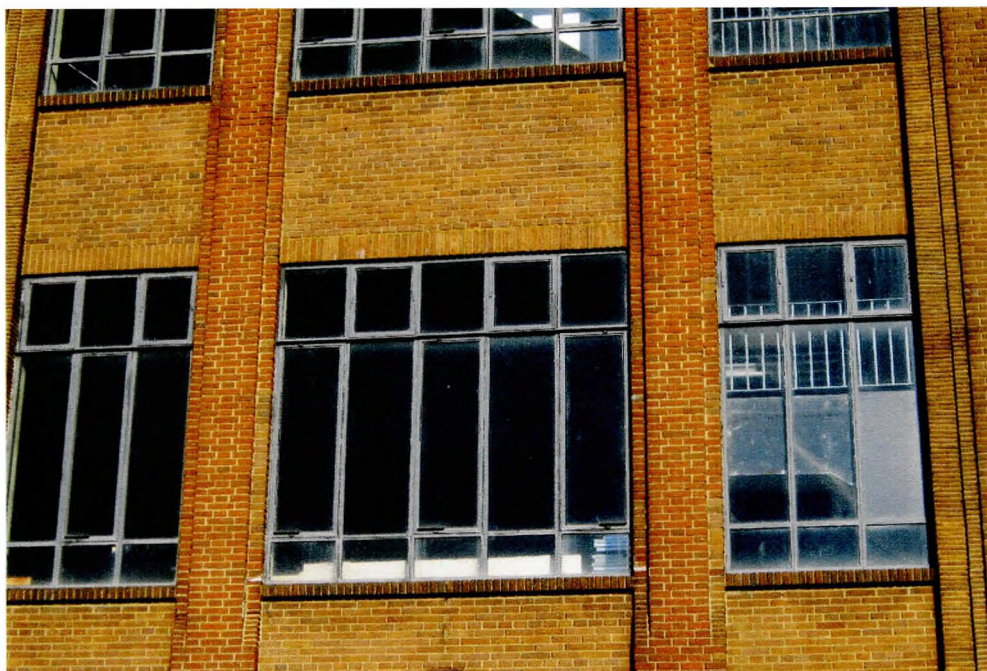


Fig. 3 The Gillette Factory: detail of the brickwork of the window surrounds between floors on a protruding end bay of the factory.

Sadly, Proctor and Lavender went into liquidation on 12 January 1997, owing debts of 3.7 million pounds.<sup>8</sup> The Charnwood Forest brickworks at Shepshed, just west of Loughborough, Leicestershire, which opened in 1887, is still operating, as part of the Michelmersham group of brickworks, and also manufactures handmade bricks.<sup>9</sup>

How and why do bricks made in the Forest of Dean come to be marketed as Bedford Greys? I have yet to find that out.<sup>10</sup>

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10. A written enquiry to the Coleford Brick & Tile Company failed to elicit a response.





Fig.4. (top) The Gillette Building: detail of brickwork at lower part of fenestration on central two floors and of the ground floor.  
 Fig.5 (below) The Gillette Building: oblique general view.

## Winston Churchill, Bricklayer: a Note

It is, I think, well known that one of the several hobbies of Winston (later Sir Winston) Churchill (1874-1965) at his Kent home at Chartwell was *bricklaying*. The late Kingsley Martin recorded meeting the politician, trowel in hand, when arriving to conduct an interview in pre-war 1939 (*New Statesman*, 19 January 1930, reprinted 9-15 January 2015, p.25). In the first of ten short programmes on 'Churchill's Other Lives' (BBC Radio 4, 19 January 2015) Prof. Sir David Cannadine considered 'Churchill the Bricklayer'.

He noted that Churchill bought Chartwell in 1922 and soon began bricklaying to create garden walls and small cottages, including a one-room cottage for his youngest daughter, Mary, to play in — surely, one may add, the ultimate in Wendy Houses? Sir David thought this activity 'perhaps the most surprising of all Churchill's other lives', although he noted that in *My Early Life* Churchill claimed that instead of his actual career — or *careers*: soldier, journalist, politician, historian (of sorts) — he would rather have been apprenticed to a bricklayer. One may not be sure quite how seriously to take that rhetorical flourish; but he certainly took the *hobby* seriously, even joining the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers.

The bricklaying, Sir David suggested, was part of Churchill's need to achieve something tangible every day, complementing his writing as an outlet for his creative urges: brick upon brick, as one might put it, word upon word, in both cases resulting in more than a mere sum of the parts. It was also noted that Churchill had the leisure to follow both pursuits (and others) because he had servants to do those basic chores which most of us have to do for ourselves. Even when he was 'impoverished' he was so at *Chartwell*: in a later programme (29 January 2015) Sir David noted that one attempted financial 'sacrifice' was cutting down on champagne and cigars. To echo a celebrated wartime Churchillian pronouncement in the USA: some *sacrifice*, some *poverty*!

Churchill died half a decade before the British Brick Society was founded. Otherwise, ... who knows? Certainly one of our founders was a man with the *chutzpah* to invite the eminent statesman to become its patron. For better or worse, that could not happen. But one can still visit Chartwell and examine Churchill's bricklaying. It is certainly competent, just as his wartime leadership was competent — indeed much more than that: *inspiring*: even the left-leaning A.J.P. Taylor described him as 'saviour of his nation'. As for the rest of his political achievements, before and after World War II, well ....

T.P. SMITH

## POSTSCRIPT: CHURCHILL: BRICKLAYING AND PAINTING

For the fiftieth anniversary of Churchill's death, *Country Life*, 7 January 2015 reprinted its account by H.A. Taylor of Churchill's funeral entitled 'Homage to Sir Winston Churchill' from the edition of 4 February 1965 with an introduction, 'The Day the World Mourned', by Clive Aslet (pp.50-56). The issue of 7 January 2015 also included an article, 'Plenty of water, bricks and mortar', on Chartwell (pp.58-61). George Plumptre's article had as its sub-heading: 'For the restless Sir Winston Churchill, his country garden in Kent was not just a place of solace and artistic inspiration, but also where he experimented with water engineering and honed his skills as a bricklayer'. The first photograph (p.58) shows Churchill laying bricks. Whether one should use a medium weight hammer to level off is a matter of some dispute.

The article also reproduces Churchill's painting 'Chartwell: Landscape with Sheep' (p.58) as well as photographs of the brick house and its brick garden walls. About the time that Terence Smith's note was received *The Guardian*, 11 March 2015 reported that 37 paintings by Churchill had been accepted in lieu of inheritance tax from the estate of Mary Soames, Churchill's youngest child, who died in 2014 aged 91. Amongst the paintings is 'The Terrace at Port Lympne' which incorporates a view of the front gable of one wing and the lower part of the other gable. The brickwork of the house is recognisable and Churchill had a good sense of perspective. All except two of these paintings by Churchill will remain at Chartwell.

DHK



## Darkness Visible: More on Brickmaking in Asia

*British Brick Society Information*, 128, November 2014, was devoted to 'Brick in Asia'. Much of it was celebratory, but a compilation by the editor (pp.14-18) and a further note (p.18) drew attention to a far darker aspect of current brickmaking in some Asian countries: virtual slavery of workers, child labour, and cruelty to animals, reminiscent of conditions in Dickensian Britain.<sup>1</sup>

An issue of *The Guardian* newspaper, 13 February 2015, kindly brought to my notice by David Kennett, once again drew attention, not least through its photographs, to the appalling conditions in some Asian brickyards — specifically in Burma and Nepal — in the twenty-first, not the nineteenth, century. The harrowing photographs make this darkness all too visible: hence the title of this contribution, from *Paradise Lost* (Book I, line 63) by John Milton (1608-1674).

Especially poignant is a photograph of a baby in a makeshift hammock suspended amongst drying bricks. It seems almost obscene to note that the bricks are clearly extruded products, each with eight perforations. What do such details matter when faced with a photograph captioned 'A [baby] boy waits [*recte* is left] while his mother works at a brick kiln in Rangoon', Burma?

The caption to another photograph connected with a major article on Nepalese workers and showing adults and children unloading a brick kiln states that '28,000 children work in brick factories in Nepal': being open places rather than enclosed sites, these factories are in fact brickyards. And according to the report, children 'as young as eight are working 15-hour days making bricks that have been used in major international development projects in Nepal, including a World Food Programme (WFP) project funded with \$3.2m (£2m) of UK aid money' from Britain's Department for International Development (DfID). That situation has now, apparently, been superseded; but western tourists still benefit — to be fair they can hardly do otherwise — from such exploitation, since bricks from one of the yards have been used for work at Kathmandu's international airport.<sup>2</sup>

The article refers to 'blood bricks', a term previously used in these pages.<sup>3</sup> It is a chillingly appropriate expression — not, or not *just*, referring to the *colour* of the products, as with 'Accrington Bloods'. Of course, there is a *pun* on the redness of the bricks. Puns can be excruciating ('Oh, si-ir!') or delightful (One thinks of Thomas Hood, 1799-1845: 'His death, which happened in his berth,/ At forty-odd befell:/ They went and told the sexton, and/ The sexton toll'd the bell.');

but they can sometimes be pointed and bitter, as with this particularly telling phrase.

Of the (estimated, but *expertly* estimated) 28,000 children, half are said to be under fourteen. But the abuse affects not just children: 'tens of thousands of adult workers [are] potentially trapped in conditions amounting to forced or bonded labour'. Living conditions are appalling, homes (*homes!*) typically being small shacks in the brickyards; and there are no contracts to guarantee fair wages. A photograph shows one of these hovels — no place to keep animals in, let alone a dwelling for men, women, and children.

The article on Nepal ends with a poignant comment from Bishal Thing: 'I don't know what will happen. I'm already broken.' Bishal is a boy of sixteen: remember when *you* were sixteen and everything lay before you? Earlier in the report Bishal is quoted as stating that sometimes his younger brothers cry because of the cold. One of them, fourteen-year-old Prem, works wearing only 'shorts and a pair of flip-flops over his socks'. But, says Bishal, 'We [adults and children alike] can't eat if we don't work'.

It is another reminder that the enthusiasm of British Brick Society members for our subject should not blind us to the fact that there has been in Britain in the past and is still in some parts of the world a far harsher aspect to our interest: 'darkness visible'.<sup>4</sup> For those of us 'Away in the loveable west', it is all too easy to ignore the working conditions of those, small children included, in the East, whether making bricks or stitching expensive brand-name trainers.<sup>5</sup> Which makes it not *so* loveable: few of us can be complacent — certainly not one who buys goods from some well-known stores and books printed in various Asian countries — under what conditions?

As if to underscore the point, a further *Guardian* report, by Jamie Elliott (31 March 2015), drew attention to young girls in Cambodia who use fake IDs claiming that they are older than their actual ages. This is in order to obtain work, without which their families could not survive. *Inter alia*, those in a Phnom Peng factory make shoes for 'brands such as Geox and Asics'.<sup>6</sup> It is some — but not

much — comfort that this wrinkly has heard of neither and has never bought their products, at least knowingly: though in these days of conglomerates trading under various names, who *knows*?

As I correct an early proof of this contribution, I hear on Radio 4 news of the increasing death toll from the Nepalese earthquake, which happened at 11.41 (local time) on Saturday 25 April 2015 and was followed by after shocks and then by yet another major earthquake, adding, in theologian's language, *natural* to the *moral* evil already mentioned. These pages are not the place to pursue the metaphysical implications.

T.P. SMITH

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Cf T.P. Smith, 'Suburban Sahara Revisited: Charles Dickens and the Brickfields', *BBS Information*, **122**, December 2012, pp.9-26.
2. Of course, tourists could 'do otherwise' by refusing to visit the country, as, presumably, many *will* following the 2015 earthquakes (*vide infra*). But then, the economy will suffer, hardly improving the lot of the exploited: Catch 22!
3. T.P. Smith, 'Blood Bricks', *BBS Information*, **128**, November 2014, p.18.
4. See especially D.H. Kennett, 'Brickmaking in the Indian Sub-Continent: Working Conditions in a Rural Industry', *BBS Information*, **128**, November 2014, pp.14-18; also D.H. Kennett 'Working Conditions in Asia: Brickmaking and Building', *BBS Information*, **104**, July 2007, pp.19-25, and T.P. Smith, notice in 'Brick in Print', *BBS Information*, **114**, October 2010, p.30.
5. The quotation is from Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), 'The Wreck of the Deutschland', Part the Second, stanza 24, line 1. Of course, the poet was contrasting his Welsh domicile with the Kentish Knock, off the coast of Kent, not the Occident with the Orient.
6. My thanks again to David Kennett for this cutting.

## BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY AT LEEDS INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL CONGRESS, 4-7 JULY 2015

The British Brick Society held session 702, 'Medieval Brick Buildings: Patronage and Construction', at the Leeds International Medieval Congress in early July 2015 at which David Kennett spoke on 'Shared Assumptions or Conflicts of Interest: Patron and Brickworker in Fifteenth-Century England' and Michael Tutton on 'Robert Darcy 1391-1449 and the Patronage of Brick: The Moot Hall, Maldon, Essex'. The latter paper is to be included in the next issue of *British Brick Society Information* due to be sent to the membership early in 2016. It is anticipated that the Editor's own paper will appear in a subsequent issue of this periodical. As has been the case for several years, the society mounted an exhibition at the 'Historical and Archaeological Societies Fair' held on the Thursday of the four day congress. This attracted considerable interest and several new members.

DHK

## BRICK FOR A DAY

In the Spring and early Summer of 2015, the British Brick Society held three visits: to Oxford south and west of the town centre on Saturday 18 April 2015, to Battersea on Saturday 27 June 2015, and to examine churches and railway stations on the fringes of Milton Keynes on Saturday 25 July 2015. For each of these visits, buildings notes by the undersigned will be available on the society's website. The society's Annual General Meeting at the Black Country Living Museum was held on Saturday 30 May 2015 and was preceded by a tour of the museum site. Reports in this section are by the Editor.

DAVID H. KENNETT

### OXFORD: SOUTH AND WEST

With the building of Oxford Castle in 1071, the western half of the quadrangular late Anglo-Saxon town of Oxford became the outer bailey of the castle. This had important implications when the teaching activities of scholars began to coalesce into the idea of a university from the 1190s onwards: the medieval and sixteenth-century collage foundations are either in the eastern part of the town or outside the city walls. Only two late medieval students' hostels, New Inn Hall and Frewin Hall, were established in the area of the former castle bailey, both on New Inn Hall Street. The former site is now taken up by the buildings of St Peter's College. These include student accommodation faced in red brick and erected in the 1930s, the 1950s, and the 1990s. Brasenose College who use Frewin Hall as their postgraduate centre have erected a small accommodation block in buff brick on St Michael's Street and taken over various nineteenth-century houses in stock brick on New Inn Hall Street. The group also looked at the buildings of the Oxford Union on St Michael's Street. Around the St Ebbe's Street area, student residences for Pembroke College, built within the last five years, were seen.

Otherwise the visit was Oxford 'Town not Gown', taking in buildings on Queen Street, on St Ebbe's Street, and on George Street. The streets house the retail, industrial and commercial buildings of a prosperous town of the nineteenth century and beyond: in 1937, Oxford was one of the three most prosperous towns in England and today the city has the contrast of various highly affluent areas, the popular image, with several much poorer neighbourhoods.

Members commented on the difference in the quality of bricklaying seen in the Stretcher Bond of the light buff brick of the Westgate Centre (1970-76: Oxford City Architects) with how the red bricks in Flemish Bond were laid on an adjacent nineteenth-century building on St Ebbe's Street to the detriment of the twentieth-century work. Other more recent retail buildings, such as the red brick building on the south-east corner of the Queen Street/St Ebbe's Street junction, exhibit a far higher standard of workmanship. Indeed the brickwork of the last quarter of the twentieth century on both sides of Queen Street is of a high standard. But the buildings on both Queen Street and George Street suggest a major change in the choice of bond that happened within the twentieth century: in the last fifty years bricks have been laid in Stretcher Bond rather than in English Bond or in Flemish Bond. The solidity of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century work was evident in the various former clothing factories; multiplicity of steam-driven sewing machines needed not only solid floors but also walls of sufficient strength to hold them. In the afternoon walk, the marmalade factory On Frideswide Square demonstrated the same attention to ensuring that the structure could bear the weight of the machines placed within it.

The pre-nineteenth-century brickwork seen was mostly that was connected with the Tawney family: brewers, bankers, and prominent town council members and mayors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Richard Tawney built his house beside the Mill Stream, outside the castle precinct and in 1797 endowed almshouses next door. Another Richard Tawney in the 1830s was the Surveyor to the Oxford Canal Company and in 1827 built 'Canal House' overlooking the two Oxford basins (one now the site of Nuffield College, the other now the Worcester Street car park). Canal House has a fine stone frontage including a west-facing portico on two sides, but the north and east sides are of red brick in Flemish Bond.

The meeting ended with an examination of two buildings way out west on the edge of Oxford. Seacourt Tower is within the city boundary. This remarkable building began as a multi-storey garage

with an office tower above consisting of four fins. It is now completely offices. Outside the city boundary is Botley church.

## THE BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM, DUDLEY

The society's tour of the buildings of the Black Country Living Museum was expertly led by Selwyn Owens, Construction and Facilities Manager of the museum, assisted by John Beckerston, the Senior Curator, who gave a short talk on the history of the museum. After the talk members were able to view the superb drawings of two of the largest buildings on the site, the former Rolfe Street Public Baths, Smethwick, and the former Workers' Institute, Cradley Heath. These show every brick, terracotta panel, window, door and chimney on the building and include plans, elevations and sections.

The Rolfe Street Public Baths are to the left of the modern museum entrance. The Smethwick Board of Health built the baths with two swimming pools, twenty-eight baths, two showers, and a municipal laundry in 1888. The six-bay front with separate entrances for men and women had round-headed fenestration on the ground floor and paired lancets on the first floor; four bays of the second floor had flat arches to the paired windows whilst the second and fifth bays were surmounted by gables with paired lancet windows. Within the gables were terracotta panels with swans. Bricks and the generous use of terracotta on the building, as for example in the columns beside and within each pair of windows in the bays of the first floor, all came from local manufacturers.

The Workers' Institute, now in use as one of caf  s on the site, is a living memorial to the strike of the women chain makers in Cradley Heath in 1910. In 1909, the Liberal Government had passed the Trade Boards Act setting up boards to regulate wages and conditions in many low-paid industries. The employers of female labour, who were outworkers in their own homes, were reluctant to pay the new prescribed rates, even going so far as to claim back the iron rods which had been delivered. Women made small chain while the men made heavy chain, such as the anchor chain of the *RMS Titanic*; the women were paid far less than the men. The women found a leader in Mary Macarthur (1880-1921) who called out on strike all those not receiving the new rates. Their campaign won national support and donations came to keep body and soul together in the chain making community. When all employers settled at the new rates on 22 October 1910, the surplus from the donations amounted to  1,500. Mary Macarthur suggested that a 'centre of social and industrial activity' be built with this money. Local architect Albert Thomas Butler (1872-1952) designed the building in the Arts and Crafts style, popular at the time. Its two-storey entrance front has a central gable whose eaves slope down to the top of the ground floor but there are side arms which provided committee rooms. The brickwork has rusticated corners both here and at the rear of the building. Prominent in the centre of the fa  ade is the building's name on a panel of green-glazed terracotta. Opened on 10 June 1912, from 1915 to 1933 the building's large auditorium was used as a cinema. The Workers' Institute was threatened with demolition in 2004 and the museum was approached to save it; a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2006 enabled the building to enter the museum.

Along the road from the Workers' Institute is a row of shops taken from locations in Hall Street, Dudley, and Birmingham Street, Oldbury, set out with their interiors as a street of shops in the 1930s. The business displayed are Hobbs & Sons' fish and chip restaurant; Harry Morrall's gentlemen's outfitters; Humphrey Brothers builders' merchants supplying grates, curbs and sanitary ware; A. Harthill & Sons, motorcycles which includes machines made between 1929 and 1934' all of which can be ridden; Alfred Preedy & Sons, wholesale and retail tobacconists, established in Dudley in 1868 and with branches throughout the Black Country; and James Gripton's radio shop. The buildings are much older than the 1930s. Hobbs' was originally built around 1700 but this three-storeyed shop and house was refaced in bright red pressed brick in 1889; inside the shop is a multi-coloured terracotta panel showing a fish within green terracotta edging. Morrall's is two-storeyed with an entrance way sufficiently wide for a cart in the bay where Morrall's adjoins Hobbs'. Humphrey Brothers is a three-storey building, two bays wide but with a wide entrance topped by a timber-faced room to one side. The remaining shops are all two-storeyed and date, and with Humphrey Brothers' premises to between 1850 and the early 1870s.

Opposite these is a builder's yard with a stone hovel from Bilston. A brick office was added to the hovel in the 1850s but this, with its relatively limited stocks of bricks, chimney pots, drain pipes,

sanitary fittings, was typical of the small-scale building firms of the nineteenth and early twentieth century where often the yard was a space behind the builder's house, whether relatively grand or extremely modest.

The shop group and the Workers' Institute entered the museum between 2006 and 2008: the writer had observed their reconstruction in progress in September 2009. A much earlier group of acquisitions is the group of brick buildings between the canal, the canal basin and its arm servicing the lime kiln, an existing feature on the site before the museum was established. These buildings came into the museum in the 1970s. On one side they are the Darby Hand New Connexion Chapel of 1837; a pharmacist's shop in a building of 1886; an anchor maker's house, one of a pair of 'byelaw houses' built in about 1885; and a pair of houses of the late nineteenth century converted into a double fronted general store in the decade before the Great War. Opposite, another row of brick buildings has a three-story building of 1829 with a hardware store and an ironmonger's shop on the corner but the other buildings are two-storeyed. One row of 1848 houses a greengrocer, a small fish-and-chip shop, and a pawnbroker, the last a common feature of working class areas. The gable wall of the latter had several straight joints suggesting that the bricklaying was done by a man who did not understand the rules of bonding. The baker's shop and the sweet shop occupy a pair of purpose-built shops with family accommodation above. Railway workers' cottages of 1848 and two-storeyed back-to-backs of 1852 are also part of the reconstructed village. With at the end of the street, the local public house, 'The Bottle and Glass Inn', a building from Brierley Hill probably built at the same time as the adjoining Stourbridge Canal was cut in 1776 to 1779, this represents two phases of nineteenth-century building but gives a continuous impression of the rigours of life throughout that century. Despite the sometimes haphazard style of bricklaying, these brick buildings are not merely evocative of a vanished landscape, in their rebuilt state they preserve construction details of the nineteenth century, sometimes surprisingly intricate details. The back-to-backs have proper lintels over the windows and arched brickwork above the doors and the passage entry.

There are many other features of the museum, equally interesting, which are not brick.

## BATTERSEA

The object of the visit to Battersea was to examine buildings beyond the infamous Battersea Power Station. The meeting looked at several of the Anglican churches and their incumbents' residences, the three Roman Catholic churches and Battersea's Welsh Presbyterian chapel. One feature of the borough is the civic and educational buildings designed by Edward Mountford. The group also saw some interesting recycled industrial buildings and the department store built for Arding and Hobbs.

Battersea has three Roman Catholic churches: the route taken meant that they were viewed in order of construction. Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Joseph with its accompanying former convent and educational buildings was begun in 1868 to designs of C.A. Buckler; he produced the church's lady chapel with a apsidal east end. The main body of the church, south of this, was designed in 1879 by J. Adams and also has an apsidal sanctuary. Both parts of the church building are in London Stocks with red brick used as window and door surrounds. The accompanying three-storey buildings are distinguished by the use of stepped gables and have been converted into domestic and office premises. The second church to be built, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is in dull red brick and was designed by F.A. Walters in 1892. It is a powerful building with a prominent tower, square at first but octagonal in its upper stages below the spire. There is a good extension of 1970 by Greenhalgh & Williams. The third of the church was John Kelly's second London church. Dedicated to St Vincent de Paul, it was designed with a south-west campanile but the latter was not built: the scar in the brickwork where it was meant to be was clearly evident.

Four current and one former Anglican churches were viewed, together with two former and one current vicarage. Battersea was originally a riverside village. The parish church, dedicated to St Mary, is beside a bend where the River Thames turns east. The building was designed in 1775 by the churchwarden, Joseph Dixon: his brown brick preaching box above a basement, is crowned by a west tower and spire. Population increase in the nineteenth century led to the establishment of seventeen new churches, including those dedicated to St Saviour of 1870, the Ascension of 1876 to 1898, St Stephen of 1886, and the replacement of 1976-1978 of the 1882 building of All Saints.

St Saviour, a thriving congregation, is not brick but ragstone. Its interest lies as much in the former and current dwellings of its incumbent. John Oldrid Scott designed an extremely large, three-storey house overlooking Battersea Park for his cousin, Stephen Gilbert Scott, then the incumbent. The house is in header bond, mostly in grey brick — possibly Luton Greys — but with red brick used as diaper. The present incumbent has a much smaller, detached modern house in yellow brick adjacent to the church: a cross in black brick in the gable marks it out as church property.

The church dedicated to the Ascension is a striking building atop the highest point on Lavender Hill: it would have been even more striking if the south-west porch tower had been finished. James Brooks built a morning chapel, correctly orientated above a basement room and with an apsidal east end, in 1876, but in 1882 J.T. Micklethwaite began the main body of the church with an apsidal east end with an ambulatory extending into the windowless aisles of the nave. Only the clerestory has single lancet windows. The porch was constructed in this building phase. The west end was not completed until the 1890s but became site of the war memorial after the Great War.

The church dedicated to St Stephen was one of six in Battersea designed by William White; it is now the place of worship of a Pentecostal congregation, the Assemblies of the First Born. It is in yellow brick with red brick used extensively.

There was a fire at F.W. Hunt's 1882 church dedicated to All Saints. Its site, on Queen's Circus, was sold for housing and a new church, designed by David Gill, was built beside the vicarage in 1976. The vicarage is a substantial red brick building contemporary with the original church.

One prominent nonconformist building was seen, the Welsh Presbyterian Church in red brick. It takes full advantage of its sloping site and has social facilities in the lower ground floor.

Edward Mountford, born in Shipston-on-Stour, was resident in Battersea for much of the early part of his career. He won three architectural competitions for major buildings in the newly-formed London Borough: the Public Library in 1888, Battersea Polytechnic in 1890, and the Municipal Buildings in 1892. In these one sees the evolution of his style from the carefree expression of the purpose of a library, very much like the aims of the BBC — to educate, to inform, and to entertain — in his first civic to a more formal expression of civic pride in the two later buildings. Full expression of the Edwardian Baroque would surface in the Central Criminal Court (the Old Bailey), completed in 1906, the year before he died. If the library is jolly, the former municipal buildings show considerable sadness: there was a major fire at the Battersea Arts Centre in 2014. For the brick enthusiast, this allows construction of the gables to be seen beyond the hoardings and above the scaffolding. To support the roof, the end gables of the main hall were four bricks thick.

A much earlier fire, in 1909, had destroyed the old buildings of Arding & Hobbs. The directors called in James Gibson, the London architect who had just designed new premises for Debenham & Freebody: the Battersea store is now a branch of Debenhams. Gibson produced a steel-framed building but with internal walls of load-bearing brick. The ground floor is replacement plate glass windows but the first floor retains the original fenestration of the store. The upper two floors are red brick with much stone. The firm did not stint round the back; the rear wall uses the same high quality red brick as is used on the other street frontages, even if there is no stonework on this purely functional frontage. The café is complete with its original stained glass windows and glazed dome.

## THE FRINGES OF MILTON KEYNES

The tour was designed to examine the various eighteenth-century village churches on the southern, western and northern fringes of the City of Milton Keynes.

At Fenny Stratford, St Martin's church was built in red brick in a Gothic style between 1724 and 1730, when this three-bay building with a west tower in red brick was constructed as a memorial to his grandfather, the celebrated physician, Thomas Willis I, by the antiquary Browne Willis (1682-1760). Willis' building was extended southwards in 1823 but this south aisle, now the nave was replaced in 1866 by a more substantial structure designed by William White; externally this is red brick, internally it is polychrome brickwork. In 1907, a new south aisle, in the same materials was added to White's nave by John Chadwick. The bricklayers at Browne Willis' church employed Flemish Bond; their successors used English Bond.

At Little Brickhill, an ironstone church, the north transept blew down in the great storm of 1703; it was blocked up externally in ironstone but internally in brick. The east end was also rebuilt at the same time. Late in his life, Browne Willis repaired the east end of Bow Brickhill church: a thick ironstone base with red brick used above.

Richard Busby had been headmaster of Westminster School where his pupils included the celebrated Richard Hooke. For his old schoolmaster Hooke designed the church at Willen in 1678 and it was built over the next four years. The three bay nave with a west tower is crowned with pineapples on the tower and on the corners of the west end. The tower is flanked by two small rooms, one a vestry and the other housing Busby's parish library. The east end is now apsidal; Hooke gave his building a small square chancel.

At Great Linford, the church is oolitic limestone; the windows with mullions and transoms are an early-eighteenth-century renewal within the spaces of the medieval fenestration. The church has a group of other early-eighteenth-century white limestone buildings near it: the manor house and its lodges and six single-storey almshouses with a former school in the centre. The latter has two storeys.

A paper is in preparation for a future issue of *British Brick Society Information* devoted to 'Brick Churches' entitled 'Browne Willis and the eighteenth-century churches of north-east Buckinghamshire'.

## THE RANDOLPH HOTEL, OXFORD

On Friday 17 April 2015, the day before the Oxford Meeting, an iconic Oxford's brick building, the Randolph Hotel, Beaumont Street, caught fire, apparently due to an over-enthusiastic chef when flambeeing beef stroganoff: according to the preliminary fire report, the splash of cognac was delivered too speedily and in too great a quantity. The fire rapidly spread upwards through the central portion of the front of the hotel to the roof, the part of which over the entrance was severely damaged as were the floors. However, on the morning after the fire, the white brick of the exterior was intact and appeared to have suffered little damage other than smoke discolouration. The white brick, on first inspection very similar to London stocks, was actually the product of a local works, Gray's Brickyard, situated beyond the houses at the northern end of Woodstock Road: its clay pit can be seen at the foot of the hill on Elizabeth Jennings Way.

The hotel was designed in 1864 by Oxford architect William Wilkinson (1819-1901) and built during the next two years. In *Oxford: an architectural guide*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, Geoffrey Tyack comments that the Randolph was "large and luxurious, with rooms for 68 guests: an assertively uncompromising symbol of the transition from the coaching age to the age of the railway." An extension was constructed on 1952 using the same materials and following the same gothic style, Second Pointed, to a design by a little-known architect, J. Hopgood.

As this issue of *British Brick Society Information* goes to press, the hotel is open and running smoothly and rebuilding of the centre of the main front is proceeding smoothly. The majority of the hotel was untouched by the fire. Its brickwork remains intact even if part would benefit from a sensitive clean.

DHK

## BRICK IN PRINT

Between April 2014 and June 2015, the compiler and the Editor of the British Brick Society received notice of a number of publications of interest to members of the society. 'Brick in Print' has become a regular feature of *BBS Information*, with surveys usually two or three times a year. Members who are involved in publication or who come across books and articles of interest are invited to submit notice of them to the editor of *BBS Information*. Websites may also be included.

Unsigned contributions in this section are by the compiler.

TERENCE PAUL SMITH

- 1 Anon., 'Roz Barr Architects: Lillie Road [London SW6]', *inhabit*, Spring 2015, pages 22-25

This uncredited article in *inhabit*, an imprint of *Architecture Today*, considers the conversion to domestic use, by Roz Barr Architects, of a former public house, together with additions, in Lillie Road, London SW6. New bricks were supplied by Ibstock. But for the most part the new work uses salvaged London Stocks, matching the surrounding domestic buildings. An inserted wooden staircase cuts ruthlessly across some primary brickwork (London Stocks with a few bullnose 'blue' engineering bricks: photo p.23). Otherwise, the rigidly orthogonal additions, though seeming to waste a great deal of space, are not unattractive. And if that seems like damning with faint praise that is not the intention: there are times when architectural reticence is called for. It makes a welcome change from the architectural onanism of so many globe-totting architectural superstars.

The same issue of *inhabit* includes discussions of Sanderson House, an extension to a late Victorian house using red brick slips by David Kohn Architects (pp.6-9), and of Esher House by Groves Natcheva Architects, making some use of Staffordshire 'blue' bricks (pp.10-12). Infuriatingly, in neither case are we given the location of the building: Sanderson House, we are told, is in 'north London' — a somewhat extensive area! — and is Esher House in Esher, Surrey? It doesn't have to be. Of course, inhabitants' privacy has to be respected. But other journals *do* give locations, and it is hard to believe that *inhabit's* circulation is such that gawping hordes will be encouraged to visit.

There is also a double-spread advertisement (pp.38-39) for Ibstock Brick, illustrating three projects using its products.

- 2 Isabel Allen, 'Land Art: Art Gallery, Bruton, Somerset, England: Luis Laplace' *Architectural Review*, 1411, September 2014, pages 66-75;  
Riyal Patel, 'Country Hauser', *Icon*, 136, October 2014, pages 138-145.

The Swiss gallery owners Iwan and Manuela Wirth (Hauser & Wirth) have prestigious art galleries in Zurich, London, and New York. Now, at Bruton, Somerset, to which the Wirths moved some years ago, a sprawling eighteenth- and nineteenth-century farm has been converted to a gallery 'designed to attract the public as much as the super-rich' (*Icon*, p.140). The farm buildings are of coursed rubble with red brick and ashlar dressings, the neo-Gothic farmhouse of red brick. The conversion to artists accommodation, educational space, offices, restaurant, and workshop has involved some red brick blocking of original apertures and the provision of some new giant doors to large entrances, all carried out with admirable sensitivity.

The same approach is displayed in the two new galleries on an L-shaped plan to the north-east of the original farm buildings. They are of light buff bricks in Stretcher Bond, with concrete pillars and lintels and pitched metal roofs (fig.1) — *AR* calls them 'aluminium' (p.73), *Icon* calls them 'zinc' (p.140: which are they? Whichever, these new buildings beautifully complement the originals, contrasting but not clashing with them.

The whole — conversion of old and provision of new buildings — is the work of Paris-based Argentinian architect Luis Laplace (called La Place in the *Icon* article which adds, at p.140, that he worked with local practice Benjamin & Beauchamp). A self-effacing architect, Laplace here, as in



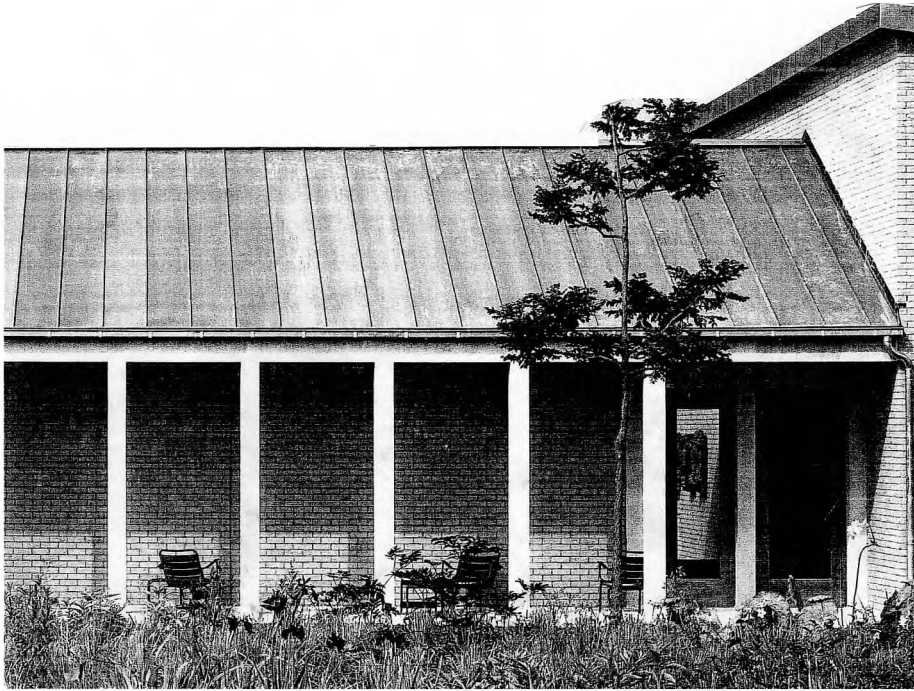


Fig. 1 Part of the new brick building at Hauser & Wirth Gallery, Bruton, Somerset.

others of his projects, has provided space for art works without seeking to celebrate *himself*, an aspect stressed in both articles: a gallery ‘without the pull of statement architecture by the likes of David Chipperfield’ (*Icon*, p.145), though I think this is unfair to that particular architect, and, more fairly, ‘an anti-Bilbao [gallery], if you will’ (*AR*, p.74), referring to Frank Gehry’s self-celebratory Spanish Guggenheim Museum of 1991-97. Hauser & Wirth Bruton, due to open in 2016, is a remarkable achievement.

3. Amanda Damero (Editor-in-Chief), *Material Sourcebook*, *dwel*, special issue, n.d. but April 2014.

This special issue of an American journal features a number of houses for wealthy (some very wealthy!) clients. They are considered by the principal building materials used: wood, metal, glass, concrete, ‘earth’ (rammed or fired), stone, plastic, and fibre. Some of the designs are stunning, all are distinctive, and some, perhaps inevitably, are quirky. Only two are of brick and they are among the most briefly considered. But their interesting designs and simliarty of conception, despite being in different continents, make them worth consideration here.

The first, examined in Blair Kamin, ‘Brick by Brick’ (p.159), is Brick Weave House, Chicago, USA, by Studio Gang Architects, designed for advertising executives David Hernandez and Thereasa Surrat. The house is a conversion of a former stable, the name deriving from ‘its most distinctive feature, a tall, two-sided, technically adventurous brick screen that shelters a walled garden while letting honeycomb patterns of natural light pour inside’. This is achieved by omitting stretchers from the Stretcher Bond brickwork to create numerous rectangular honeycomb panels. ‘At night, the brick screen becomes a dazzling light box’. It is made of Norman bricks — that is bricks of standard width and thickness but some 4 inches or 100 mm greater in length.

Honeycomb panels, but here vertical and created by omitting headers from a Flemish Bond wall of narrow brown bricks, occur also in the façade of House BVA, Turnhout, Belgium (fig.2) by Tom Verscheuren of the Mechelen (Malines) practice dmva Architecten for Yves Borghs and Katleen van Ammel, and considered in Jane Sitza, ‘Knitted Pattern’ (p.167). The brown roof tiles echo the bricks, and the whole presents ‘a monochrome look relieved only by the red door frame’ which takes the place of one of the vertical panels and, one might add, by the red-framed roof-light. I find it hard to warm to this blank-faced and excluding façade. Perhaps it is a *Belgian* trait. The Dutch, by contrast,

love clear windows — inviting passers by to look in. (I cannot forget that huge stuffed toy polar bear lolloping on a sofa in a house which on several occasions I passed between my hotel and a tram-stop in Den Haag — and clearly intended to be seen and admired!)

An interview with Thomas Phifer by William Lamb is accompanied by photographs of some of the architect's projects using glass. At p.75 is an illustration of a house in Madison, WI, USA, deploying reflective glass embedded in serpentine walls of salvaged red bricks, inspired we are told by Thomas Jefferson's garden walls on the University of Virginia campus.

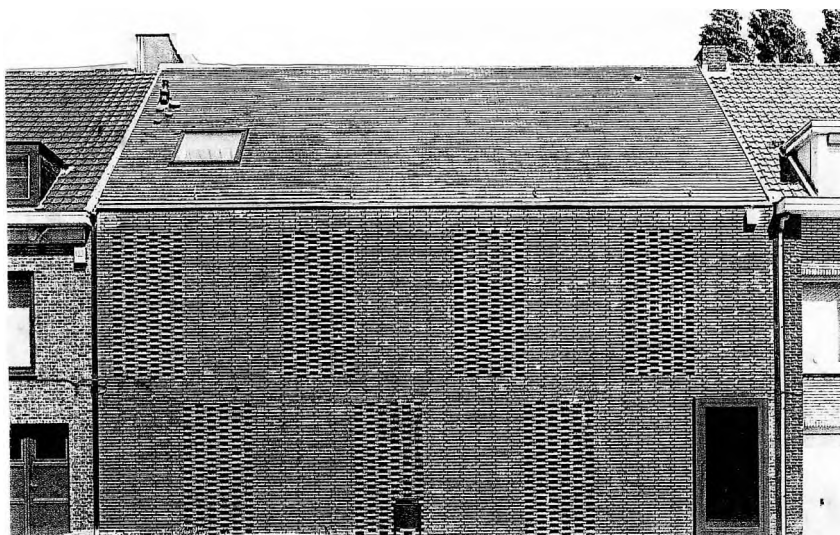


Fig. 2 House BVA, Turnhout, Belgium.

4. John Goodall, 'A Home for a Hero: Stratfield Saye, Hampshire, part I', *Country Life*, 8 April 2015, pages 48-56;  
John Goodall, 'Back to the Future: Stratfield Saye, Hampshire, part II', *Country Life*, 15 April 2015, pages

In 1814, a grateful nation wished to reward its army commander, Arthur Wellesley, soon to be created Duke of Wellington. One aspect of the reward was to find a suitable estate on which to build a suitable palace, just as a century before John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, had been given the former royal hunting ground at Woodstock, Oxfordshire. Goodall's first article details the search for an estate and the idea of a palace, including relationships with the duke's trustees. Benjamin Digby Wyatt was both Wellington's agent in the search for an estate and his potential architect for the putative palace.

The estate that was found was Stratfield Saye, on the borders of Hampshire and Berkshire, on which there was an H-shaped brick house built in the 1630s which had been internally modernized in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Originally intended to be a temporary residence while plans for the palace were finalised, the duke settled down to live in the existing house but apart from some redecoration did little to the fabric until after his wife's death in 1831. The second article provides insights into the duke's mind as he contemplated making changes to house. In 1838, he commissioned a conservatory and in 1841 had water closets fitted into the bedrooms, each set within the corners of the rooms in an airtight closet. Queen Victoria was impressed. In 1846, additional wings, in the style of the original house, were added outside the existing house. For this major extension, the architect was Philip Hardwick, whether the father or the son is unclear.

After the duke's death on 14 September 1852, the house was little altered in the succeeding hundred years. Gerald Wellesley, who unexpectedly succeeded as the seventh duke, in 1943 was both a diplomat and a trained architect; he was also Surveyor of the King's Works of Art. With great sensitivity, in the course of thirty years, he updated the house, installing modern bathrooms, reusing the first duke's closets, and electricity, with redecoration of the principal rooms. In a notebook once owned by Mrs Arbohnott, the first duke's intimate friend, the seventh duke kept meticulous record of

his work. Since November 2001, the present duke and duchess, on discovering the notebook and using the 1853 inventory of the first duke's possessions, have sought to return the interior of the house to its appearance when it was occupied by the first Duke of Wellington.

For another account of Strafield Saye see M. Bullen, J. Crook, R. Hubbuck, and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire: Winchester and the North*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010, pages 5-6-510, with plan, and plate 70.

D.H. KENNETT

5. John Goodall, 'Fortune's Feast: Apsley House, London'

*Country Life*, 17 June 2015, pages 94-97.

This issue of *Country Life* was a special commemoration of 'Waterloo: the Day that Changed Europe', on 18 June 1815. Goodall considers the battle itself on pages 88-91; the present Duke of Wellington 'reveals lesser-known aspects of his ancestor's character on pages 92-93; and pages 98-99 report on 'Still with us: the Iron Duke's Legacy', including a photograph of Wellington College. This was established in 1859 by Queen Victoria as a national monument to the duke originally for the sons of deceased army officers but since 2006 open to boys and girls of deceased service personnel of all three services regardless of rank. The brickwork of the college is exceptionally fine. The building was designed by John Shaw jnr (1803-1870).

The article by Goodall about Apsley House points out that the house was originally a much smaller brick house designed by Robert Adam for Henry Bathurst, Baron Apsley, in 1771. The five-bay house was completed in 1778. The lease was bought by Wellington's older brother, Richard, Marquess Wellesley, in 1807 but while he upgraded the mansion he was heavily in debt. Arthur Wellesley bought the lease in 1818 and engaged Benjamin Wyatt to add a dining room. Whilst Wellington was prime minister from 1828 to 1830, Apsley House was further extended by another new dining room, the Waterloo Gallery, housing the duke's picture collection and providing a suitable grand setting for the annual Waterloo Dinner attended by officers present on the day: on 18 June 2015, a re-enactment of the first dinner was attended by descendants of the officers attending the first dinner. Pages 94 and 95 are taken up by a photograph of the setting for the 2015 dinner. During 1828 and 1829, both the old house and the new work were encased in the Bath stone we see today.

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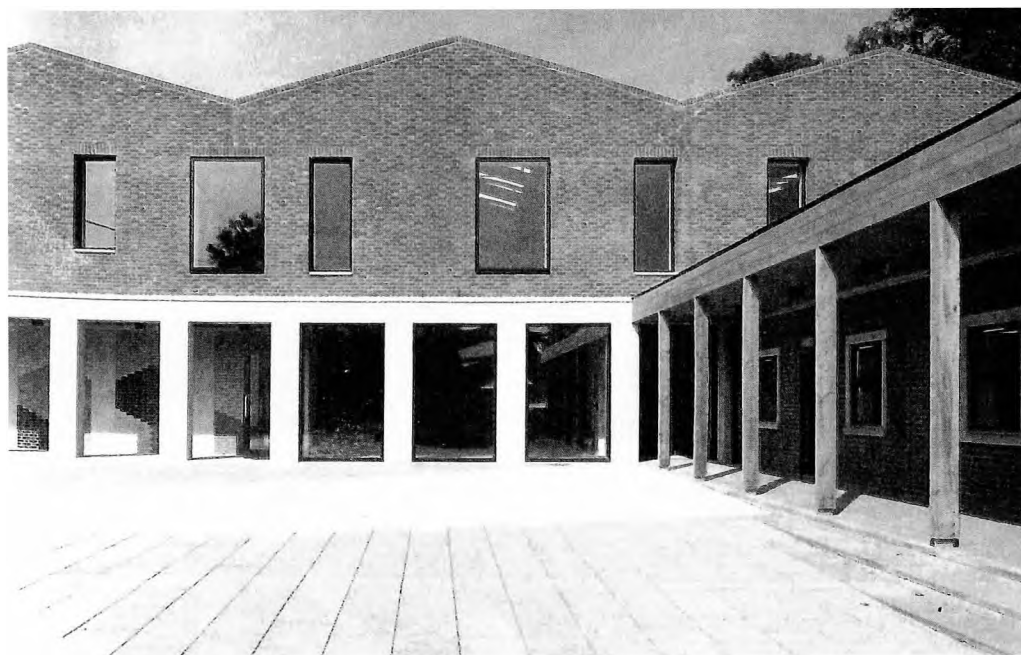


Fig.3 Hazlegrove Preparatory School, Bruton, Somerset: the new building.

6. Jan-Carlos Kucharek, 'Divine Inspiration',  
*RIBA Journal*, May 2015, pages 18-23.

Hazlegrove, Bruton, Somerset, is a mixed preparatory school linked to King's School in the same town. London architects Fielden Fowles were chosen, from an invited competition, to provide a new teaching block amongst a ragtag of buildings centred on a former seventeenth-century manor house.

Eschewing the native stone, they designed in variegated red brick and white concrete, adding a timber colonnade in front of an older building at right-angles to the new 'cloister' walk (fig.3). The brickwork is in Flemish Bond, and within the 'cloister' are hexagons and part-hexagons in variously coloured bricks, adding a playful note to a building for young children. The large windows, sans glazing bars, have a somewhat gaping look: one could be clever and see this as reflecting a child's wide-eyed curiosity — but perhaps one had better not! Their lack of relationship — even a carefully syncopated one — to the stripped Classical, if ill-proportioned, 'cloister' below is discomfiting. As for those shallow gables, are they a nod to English vernacular or to Classical pediments? (The left of the photograph at pp.18-19 suggests that one *end* of the building has merely decorative gables that do not correspond to actual pitched roofs.) Even within an architecturally incoherent context, one might have hoped for something better than this vacillating, indeterminate addition.

The brick is not expressed internally, where there is some fine detailing. A large segmental window is 'influence by the [Bethnal Green] Museum of Childhood round the corner from [the architects'] ... office' (p.20). The main atrium, with its wide dual-purpose staircase (the children can sit on the steps to watch dramatic and other performances), also draws on the museum. Which is all very well for the architectural cognoscenti, but how many of the pupils will appreciate — and if they do appreciate, will *appreciate* — the quotation? The less-privileged children of Bethnal Green, of course, are unlikely to get the chance to make the comparison.

The title of the *RIBA* article — a rather desperate one, and for Christians, I imagine, verging on the Blasphemous: *divine intervention* by a headmaster and two London architects? — reflects the fact that the school, which charges £6,000 a term, 'emphasises ... Christian and family values' (p.19). Regarding that concatenation, here is not the place to reflect on Luke 14.26 or Matthew 19.24.

The same issue of *RIBA* also has (pp.24-28) consideration of a development in brick by Barking Council, East London. But since it is intended to offer an assessment of the project in a future issue of *BBS Information*, a précis/evaluation is here prescinded from.

7. Rob Wilson, 'UR on the Ruhr: State Archive, Duisberg, Germany: O&O Baukunst',  
*Architectural Review*, 1407, May 2014, pages 62-71.

Duisberg lies on the River Ruhr and this domineering building by O&O Baukunst (formerly Ortner & Ortner) is designed to house the muniments of the *Land* (state) of *Nordrhein-Westfalen*. It comprises a huge twenty-storey red brick tower with a pitched roof rising from within an adapted seven-storey grain silo, also of red brick and dating from the 1930s and in a Nazi-approved vernacular style (fig.4). The roof of the new tower is itself of *bricks*, not tiles, carried on the steel-frame structure — an intriguing, if pointless, technical innovation.

The tower is entirely without fenestration, whilst doorway and window openings of the silo have been blocked with brickwork: access is via the much lower extension (see below). The whole has a formidable, even minatory, aspect. Some relief is provided by the patterning of the walls and roof-slopes with alternating rows of vertical and horizontal lozenges created by projection/regression of different groups of bricks. 'This patterning becomes more pronounced at certain times of day as sunlight catches the surface' (p.67, caption to fig.6): which is to say that on sunless days — and this is northern Germany — it will be virtually indiscernible and the whole particularly dour, notwithstanding the similarly patterned brickwork blocks of the silo apertures.

The new bricks, both for the tower and for the blockings, are of lighter hue than those of the 1930s silo, but are intended to merge with them, 'although with less coal-fired pollution ... this may take some time' (p.67). One may, perhaps, hope that it will not happen at all, since it will make the complex even more forbidding.

Rob Wilson, never averse to inflated rhetoric, describes the building as looking 'like a kind of Ur-house' (a *primeval* house, that is, from the German *ur* = 'primitive' — gosh, isn't he clever!), but also as 'a transplanted ziggurat of Ur [of the Chaldeans (Genesis 11.29) in modern Iraq: gosh, isn't he

even cleverer!]' (p.64). Of course, quite apart from the fact that a primitive house could scarcely rise twenty storeys, the building could hardly resemble *both*. In fact, it resembles *neither*. And I suspect that those *faux* comparisons were concocted solely to provide the assonant pun of the text-message-style heading 'UR on the Ruhr'. Had the resemblances been veridical, it would have been (quite) astute.

But they're not, and we may look nearer home for resonances: the Nazi-era silo and the brick architecture, particularly the fortress architecture, of medieval northern Germany and what is now Poland ('East Prussia'), which — together with those blocked windows suggesting deliberate exclusion of light and/or closed eyes — leaves this writer with the queasy feeling that Adolf Hitler might have approved of this minacious Teutonic pile.

To the east, ancillary services are housed in a six-storey sinuous extension, which for reasons of cost saving — so much having been lavished on that brick patterning which will only be apparent *some* of the time — has walls of red render. The serpentine form creates rooms of awkward shape, and the extension does not meld well with the brick behemoth. But at least the Führer would have hated it. And in some words of a Kingsley Amis poem, 'even that's not nothing'.

The combination of dominant presence and simpering companion is far from felicitous: a sort of architectural Batman and Robin. And if that seems strained, it is less so than contrived Germanisms and inapt (and inept) references to Mesopotamian archaeology.

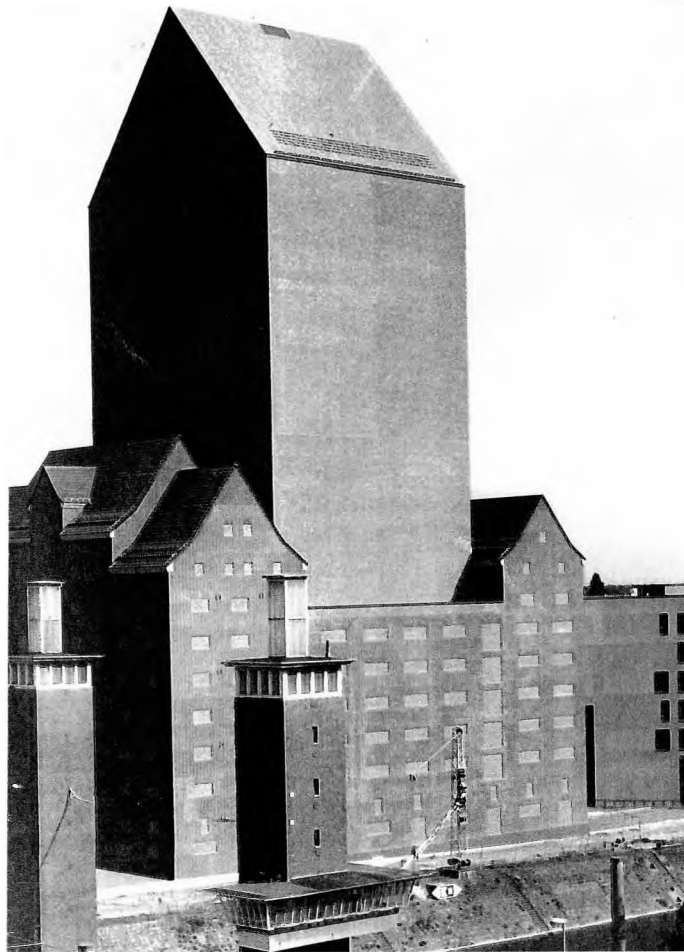


Fig. 4 The State Archives Building, Duisberg, Germany

## THEMED ISSUES OF *BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY INFORMATION*

*British Brick Society Information*, **130**, April 2015, was the sixth issue of this periodical in the last twenty years to be devoted to aspects of the use of 'Brick in Churches'. Earlier issues on 'Brick in Churches' were *BBS Information*, **71**, June 1997; *BBS Information*, **77**, June 1999; *BBS Information*, **123**, February 2013; whilst *BBS Information*, **92**, September 2003, was also an issue devoted to 'Brick and its Uses in Churches' although it was not so named on the cover. *BBS Information*, **110**, July 2009, had 'Westminster Cathedral Issue' on the cover and the articles and reviews examined the Roman Catholic cathedral and other churches of all denominations.

It is extremely unlikely that *British Brick Society Information*, **130**, April 2015, will be the last time that an issue is devoted to 'Brick in Churches'. The requirements placed on authors, including the editor, of submission deadlines and space, have meant that articles on 'Brick and its Uses by the Church of England: The Archdeaconry of Cleveland, Yorkshire' and on 'Browne Willis and Brick in the Churches of North-East Buckinghamshire' were left unfinished and so omitted from the last issue; the article will form the core paper for the next issue of *BBS Information* devoted to 'Brick and its Uses in Churches'. Research is also in progress on the use of brick in Methodist Chapels in South Warwickshire for a paper for a future issue of *British Brick Society Information* examining 'Brick in Churches'.

*British Brick Society Information*, **128**, November 2014, was devoted to 'Brick in Asia' and although the articles included were mostly on brick and its uses in South Asia — the Indian sub-continent of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh — the issue included items on Burma, China, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The editor is collecting material on 'Brick in Asia' to form the basis of a future issue of *BBS Information*, probably one to be sent to members in the early part of 2018. As noted in the 'Editorial' to *BBS Information*, **128**, a series of pre-1914 photographs of brickmaking in India was held over from that issue, hopefully to accompany a transcript of a near-contemporary article in one of the weekly issues of the now defunct periodical *Building News* in April 1884.

Included in the February 2015 mailing sent to members of the British Brick Society living in northern and north midland England — Lancashire, Cumbria, Northumberland, County Durham, and Yorkshire, plus Cheshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire — was a letter from the editor of *BBS Information* inviting contributions to a future issue of *British Brick Society Information* to have as its theme 'Brick in Northern England'. The letter was also sent to members known to the editor who have either a family connection or an interest in one or more of these counties. In response, three contributions have been received and three other papers have been offered.

The editor of *British Brick Society Information* invites further contributions for the special issues of *BBS Information* to be sent out in late 2016 on 'Brick in Northern England', at some point in 2017 on 'Brick in Churches', and early in 2018 on 'Brick in Asia'. He, of course, welcomes papers, notes and book reviews on all aspects of brick and would like to see a wider group of authors.

DAVID H. KENNETT

Editor, *British Brick Society Information*,  
March 2015

## Changes of Address

If you move house, please inform the society through its Membership Secretary, Dr Anthony A. Preston at 11 Harcourt Way, Selsey, West Sussex PO20 0PF.

The society has recently been embarrassed by material being returned to various officers from the house of someone who has moved but not told the society of his/her new address.

# BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY MEETINGS in 2015 and 2016

*Note:* The dates given in 2016 are provisional

Saturday 19 September 2015

*Brickworks Meeting*

The York Handmade Brick Company, Alne, North Yorkshire  
Plus visit to Beningborough Hall in the afternoon.

Saturday 16 April 2016

*Spring Meeting*

Stourbridge, West Midlands

Nineteenth-century brick churches, schools and public buildings in the town with the only complete surviving and working glassworks cone in Britain.

Saturday 21 May 2016

*Annual General Meeting*

Chichester

To be followed by tour of the brick buildings of the town, many of which are Georgian.

Saturday 18 June 2016

*London Meeting*

Chelsea Embankment from Vauxhall Bridge to Lots Road  
OR Bedford Park and Chiswick

Saturday 16 July 2016

*Summer Meeting*

Derby

Railway buildings including the Roundhouse, new station, warehouses, and a hotel; the Silk Mill and other early industrial buildings; late 1930s County Hall and bus station; Market Hall; big nineteenth-century hospital.

*Details of the Brickworks Meeting are enclosed with this mailing.*

*Full details of the meetings in 2016 in future BBS Mailings*

*The British Brick Society is always looking for new ideas for future meetings.*

*Suggestions of brickworks to visit are particularly welcome.*

*Offers to organise a meeting are equally welcome.*

*Suggestions please to Michael Chapman, Michael Oliver or David Kennett.*

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