

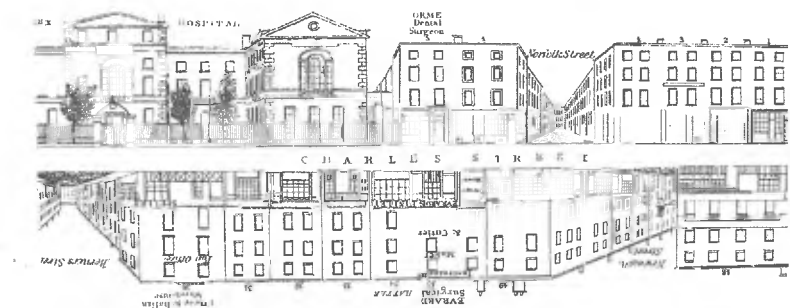
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BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY

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BRICKS AND LITERARY MATTERS ISSUE



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## Cover Illustration:

Norfolk Street and the Middlesex Hospital from Charles Street (now Mortimer Street, St Marylebone) as shown in John Tallis, *Street Views of London*, 1830. Charles Dickens spent two periods living at number 10 Norfolk Street: as a child of three and four in 1815-16 and between 1829 and 1831 when, as his business card shows, he was working as a shorthand writer. In the latter period he accumulated the experiences which he would later use in both *Sketches by Boz* and his early novels. The Cleveland Street Workhouse, exemplar for that in *Oliver Twist*, was twelve properties north of Dickens' home. In the illustration, the other side of Charles Street is shown with the ground floor at street level. Another of his early domiciles, 29 Johnson Street, Somers Town, where his family lived from 1825 onwards before they moved back to Norfolk Street was within sight of the great dust mountains on New North Road (now Euston Road between St Pancras International and west of Euston Station). For more than a hundred years before 1850 this was a major centre of brickmaking for north London.

## Editorial: Brick and Literary Connections

This issue of *British Brick Society Information* has a strong literary theme; the principal article examines the novels of Charles Dickens (d.1870) for comments on brickmaking. Charles Dickens who was born on 7 February 1812 is one of a number of well-known literary figures born two hundred years ago; their names are noted later in this Editorial.

In keeping with the strong literary theme and as the other major article considers two of the lesser-known novels by L.P. Hartley (1895-1972) — *The Brickyard* and *The Betrayal* — this Editorial can begin by asking a question which the writer has been trying to resolve since his first visit to St Louis, Missouri, almost five years ago.

Hartley was the son of the director of a Fenland brickyard and became a director of the same brickyard; similarly, the poet, playwright and essayist Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965) was the son of the director of an important brick company in St Louis, Missouri, USA. In 1874, at the age of 31, Eliot's father, Henry Ware Eliot (1843-1919), became company secretary to the Hydraulic-Press Brick Company of St Louis, Missouri, USA. When the bankers' panic of 1893 struck, as company secretary and treasurer he was one of the two signatories of the notice issued on 22 July 1893 of a wage cut from 1 August 1893 of ten percent for all employees "from the company president down to the smallest water boy". The brick company weathered the storm in which twenty-four Missouri banks closed, some only temporarily: four so affected had re-opened by 1 September 1893. On the retirement of E.C. Stirling, his co-signatory in 1893, Henry Ware Eliot became president (managing director in UK terms) of the Hydraulic-Press Brick Company, serving in that office until just after his seventieth birthday, 25 November 1913, when to retain his judgement and experience his fellow directors made him chairman for life.

In a brochure of the St Louis Hydraulic-Press Brick Company, *Suggestions in Artistic Brick*, issued in 1910 or thereabouts, there was a 'Foreword' by the Chicago-based architect Louis Henri Sullivan (1856-1924), which raises an intriguing question, to which the present writer has yet to find a satisfactory answer.

Twenty years earlier, did the Hydraulic-Press Brick Company of St Louis supply the bricks in 1890 and 1891 for the Wainwright Building, on the north-west corner of Seventh and Chestnut in downtown St Louis?

Sullivan was the design genius behind the practice of Adler & Sullivan of Chicago who designed the Wainwright — it was said by Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), then Adler & Sullivan's senior draughtsman, that it happened in a volcanic moment, actually three minutes — and also two other completed tall buildings in St Louis. In 1892, Sullivan designed a tomb for Ellis Wainwright's young wife, Charlotte Dickson Wainwright, in Bellefontaine Cemetery, St Louis' Protestant cemetery where T.S. Eliot's parents are also buried.

One of the few reports celebrating the opening of the Wainwright also giving the names of the suppliers of building materials and the contractors discovered by the late Richard Nickel (1928-1972), cataloguer of the works of Louis Sullivan, and at present the only one known to the writer, appeared in a local daily newspaper, the *St Louis Post-Dispatch*, on 16 January 1893. It records that 1,125,000 bricks were used in building the Wainwright, but fails to name the firm or firms which supplied them. The report names the St Louis Cut Stone Company, the Pickel Stone and Marble Company, and the Winkle Terra Cotta Company as amongst 'the local [*i.e.* St Louis] firms which contributed material and skill to this great structure'. It also notes the involvement of Chicago-based firms, not least the principal contractors, Thomas Clark & Sons.

WAINWRIGHT BUILDING  
ST. LOUIS MO  
ADLER & SULLIVAN CHICAGO  
GEORGE F. BARTCH ST. LOUIS ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

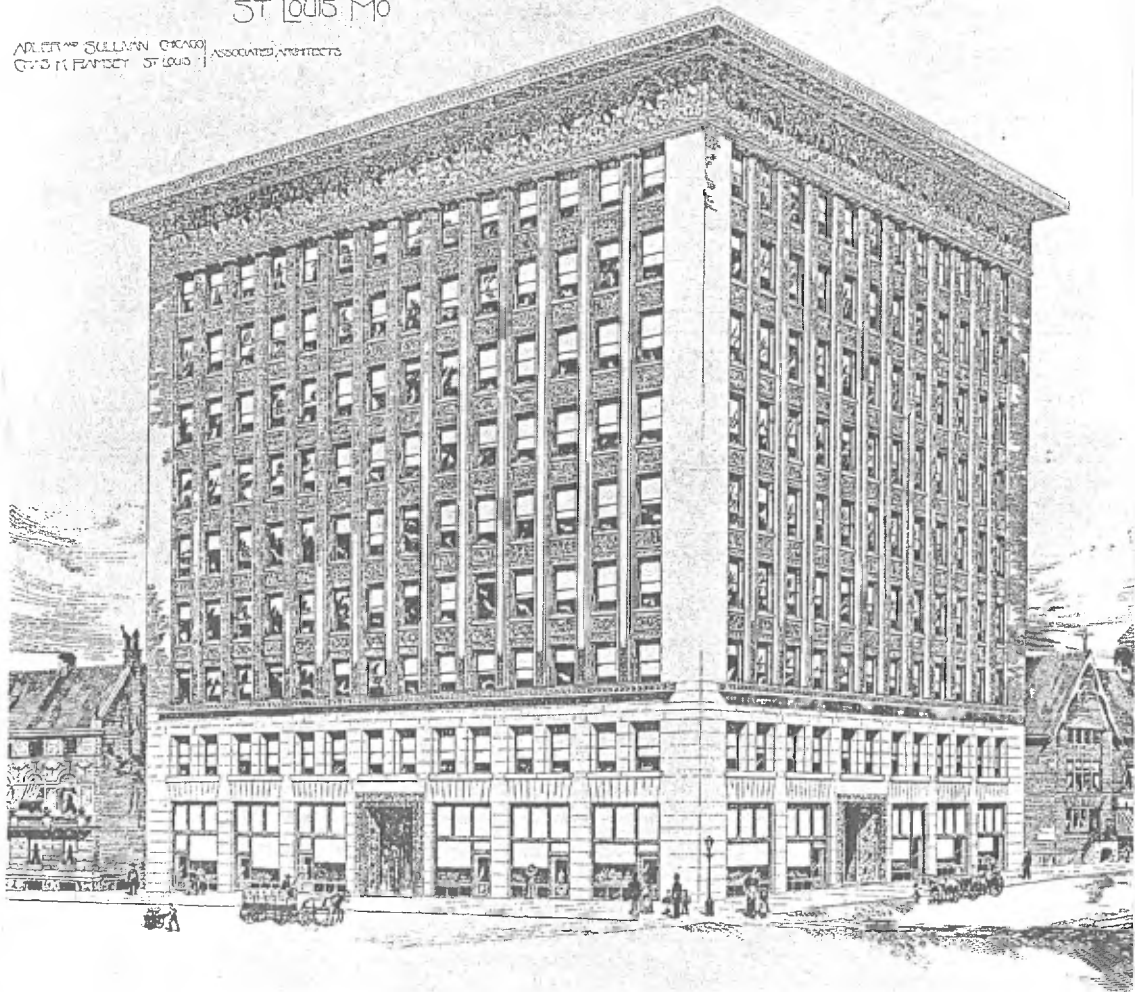


Fig. 1 The Wainwright Building, St Louis Missouri, USA (Adler & Sullivan, 1890-91). The terracotta was supplied by the Winkle Terra Cotta Company of St Louis but the source of the bricks is not recorded in the available accounts of the building's opening.

So were trainloads of bricks sent 282 miles (451 km) south from the brickyards of Chicago? This course of action seems both far-fetched and wasteful especially as there was a very flourishing brickmaking industry in St Louis, which according to the U.S. census of 1890 employed 1,200 workers. Equally, why should a Chicago architect, if not yet completely down on his uppers, at least by 1910 definitely not enjoying any contemporary success in that city and almost two decades since he last built a major structure in St Louis, be invited to contribute a 'Foreword' to a brochure issued by the St Louis Hydraulic-Press Brick Company?

One clue which may suggest that a major part of the bricks used in the exterior finish of the Wainwright Building were supplied by the St Louis Hydraulic-Press Brick Company is that the company are known to have supplied the bricks for some of the surviving warehouse buildings which make up Cupples Station, one of several freight stations serving the railroads within the city. The bricks on the walls of the former warehouses, conveniently situated just outside the downtown — now recycled as upmarket hotels and as lofts and apartments with the baseball and American football stadia almost on the doorstep — are very similar to those on the Wainwright Building. As the bricks for Cupples Station were supplied by the St Louis Hydraulic-

Wainwright Building. As the bricks for Cupples Station were supplied by the St Louis Hydraulic-Press Brick Company, it seems reasonable to suppose that the connection between the future poet's father and the literary-minded architect dates back to the early 1890s.

The Wainwright is ten storeys high, the first two being clad in Missouri granite with red sandstone used for the carved stone round the entrances, the next seven in red brick and red terracotta, and the uppermost one clad in red terracotta alone. The two masonry suppliers and the Winkle Terra Cotta Company have been mentioned; the brick company is not recorded. Bricks of three different style were supplied: high-quality facing bricks on the portions to be seen from the street, plainer red bricks on exterior walls not meant to be visible from the street, and white bricks within the exterior of the light court. On the portions visible from the street — the façades to Seventh and Chestnut, the return frontages visible from both Seventh and Chestnut — the brick piers, of which only alternate ones mask the steel frame, have moulded bricks at both edges, making the transition to the recessed fenestration with each storey separated by terracotta panels less stark. The inner wing of the U-shape is set back to provide an exterior light court behind the Chestnut Street frontage for offices on north side and has plain brickwork. As would be expected in a space facing north-east, the light court between the two wings is faced in white-glazed bricks to give maximum light to the offices facing inwards.

However, the evidence is not conclusive for a St Louis supplier. Towards the end of his career, Louis Sullivan designed the Farmers & Merchants Bank in the small town of Columbus, Wisconsin, in 1919. The bricks for this, his last “jewel box”, were not made locally. They were made by a brickyard in Crawfordsville, Indiana. Crawfordsville is 150 miles (240 km) south of Union Station, Chicago; Columbus, Wisconsin, is the same distance north of the station. In 1958, the bank wished to extend its premises and from articles about the opening of the bank located the original suppliers including the brick supplier. The Crawfordsville brick plant retained both their original machinery and the formulae used to create the bricks used in the building. They agreed to supply bricks for the extension on condition that the bank, as the customer, took a whole kiln load, some 50,000 bricks, of this special order. The Crawfordsville bricks were laid in Raking Stretcher Bond. The Farmers & Merchants Bank was equally fortunate in 1958 of being able to call on the records and expertise of the America Terra Cotta Company for further ornamental terracotta work to enhance their extension. It is very difficult to tell the new work from the old, except if you have in your hand a photograph of the bank before its expansion. Thus it is not unknown for substantial quantities of bricks to be transported 300 miles (480 km) for a project: in the case of the bank in Columbus, Wisconsin, both in 1919 and in 1958.

Two blocks down from the Wainwright is the other surviving skyscraper in St Louis designed by Louis Sullivan, the Union Trust Building (now the 701 Olive Building, named after its address). Alone of Adler & Sullivan's projects it has a light court to the front; facing west, this garners more sunlight during working hours and obviates the need for white glazed brickwork within the light court, which under its modern atrium the Wainwright retains.

Faced in white limestone above a much altered base, the Union Trust Building is a fourteen-storey building which has been extended and remodelled at least four times since its completion in 1893. The St Louis' architectural firm Eames & Young (William Sylvester Eames (1857-1915) and Thomas Crane Young (1858-1934)) added a three-bay extension at the east end of the south side in 1904; and in 1924 the exterior of the first two floors was totally remodelled. At an unknown date after 1924, the second floor, in American usage following the French one, was remodelled with half-hexagon windows, now removed, and in the early years of the twenty-first century, the internal arrangements were brought up to date.

Sullivan designed the lowest two floors as a unity: storefronts on ground floor with a principal arched entrance in the wide central bay below the space between the two wings. The second floor was covered with terracotta ending with two giant leonine beasts facing outwards

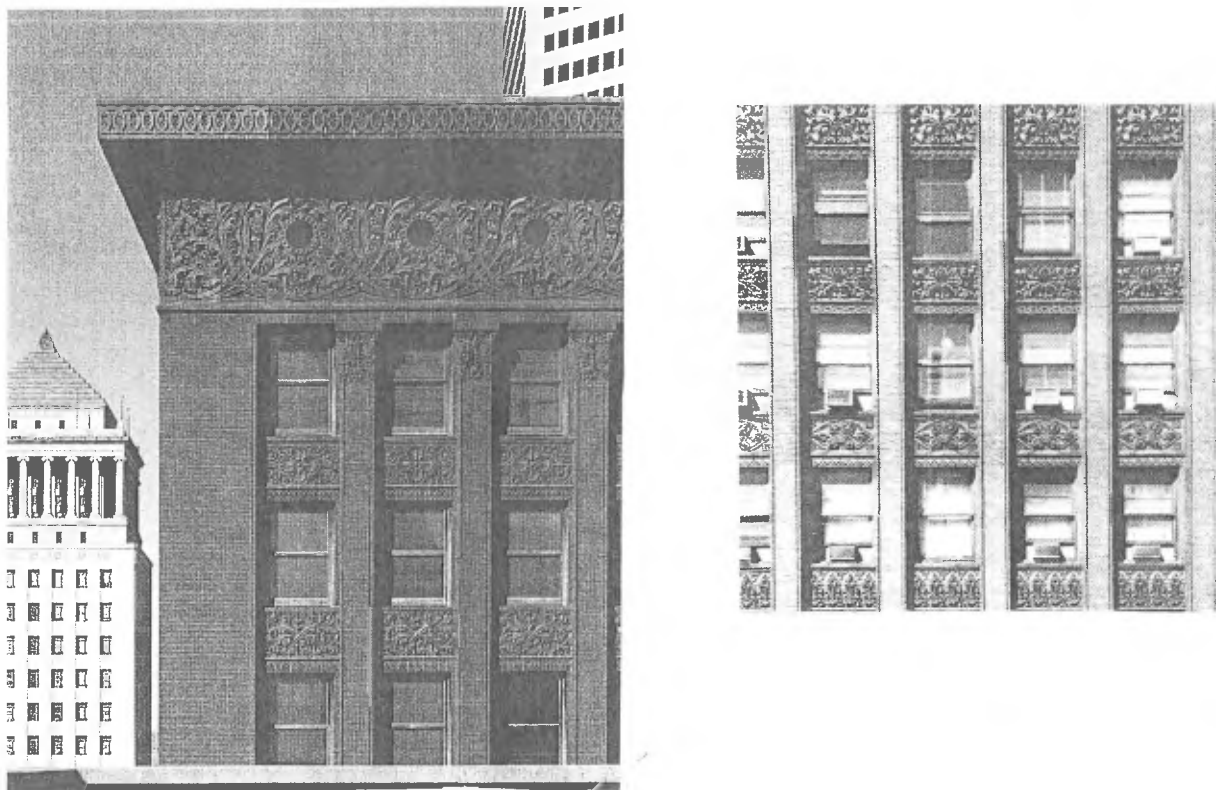


Fig.2 (left) Detail of the upper portion of the Wainwright Building, showing the terracotta on the uppermost floor below the cornice, the brickwork of the corner pillars and the intermediate piers, and the panels of terracotta between the floors. Only alternate piers hide the load-bearing steel frame.  
 (right) The six levels of terracotta between the floors are different in each case. All the terracotta was supplied by the Winkle Terra Cotta Company of St Louis.

at the corners. On the second floor the windows were set within large circular apertures. All of this has been swept away on the street façades, but on the side wall of the north wing facing the alley between the Union Trust Building and Henry Ives Cobb's Chemical Building of 1896-97, round window openings remain, but no terracotta; from the beginning these windows were set within a brick once of a dusky grey hue, now grime-darkened after a century and a quarter. The same brick is used on the rear wall, itself now covered with a mock fenestration and overlooking the parking lot which has replaced the demolished buildings on the quarter block to the east. Currently, the present writer has no knowledge of the suppliers of brick, stone, or terracotta to the Union Trust Building. One may suspect that the Winkle Terra Cotta Company was amongst the suppliers of building materials.

In contrast we know that the Winkle Terra Cotta Company supplied the terracotta panels for the seven stacks of four storeys of bay windows on the St Nicholas Hotel, commissioned by Henry and Lucy Semple Ames in 1892 from Adler & Sullivan as St Louis' first first-class hotel: previously the city had lacked such a facility. Whilst the corners of the half-hexagonal windows and the building's corners were stone, much of the structure above the first floor was faced in red brick. Behind elaborate terracotta-clad balconies on the seventh floor, there was a two-storeyed grand ballroom beneath an ornate roof. Unfortunately, there was a fire here in 1903; reconstruction of the building, by Eames & Young replaced the ballroom with three floors to be used as offices. The building was pulled down in 1973 and the site is now a garden.

Sullivan's tomb for Charlotte Dickson Wainwright is dazzling white limestone; the joints are exceptionally tight; and the carved decoration is exquisite. Ellis Wainwright was a millionaire, having after 1892 an income in excess of \$60,000 per year just from the rents collected on the Wainwright Building, irrespective of his brewing and other financial interests.

Wainwright's various financial interests survived the economic downturns of 1893, 1907, and 1913; not so Sullivan's practice. In the mid-1890s there were other invitations to design tall buildings in St Louis, all of which in the bankers' panic of 1893 and its aftermath came to naught. Ironically, a completed Chemical Building might have been designed by Sullivan — perspectives of schemes for eight storey and fifteen storey structures exist — but for the suspension of payments in 1893 by the Chemical National Bank of Chicago, the prospective anchor tenant for the new building; in the aftermath of the panic, the bank was recapitalised and reformed as the Chemical Bank. The Chemical Building of 1897 was the final building in St Louis for more than half a century to be designed by an outsider: its architect was Henry Ives Cobb (1859-1931), then of Chicago but later moving to Washington DC and then in New York.

As noted above, the two papers in this issue of *British Brick Society Information* concern the connections between individual literary figures and brickmaking. A postscript may note other notable literary figures were also born in 1812. In addition to Charles Dickens on 7 February, the bicentenaries of the births of Robert Browning on 7 May, Edward Lear on 12 May, and Samuel Smiles on 23 December have been or will be celebrated with varying degrees of public exposure. There are few obvious connections between Robert Browning (d.1889) and brick, although the editor of *BBS Information* would claim no expertise in respect of his poetry or his life. The brick-built houses occupied during the long sojourn in Italy might be a topic worthy of further investigation. For the record Elizabeth Barrett Browning (d.1861) was six years older than her husband; she was born on 6 March 1806. Edward Lear (d.1888) has connections with Italy, writing is a guide book to Rome, a city of brick as the walls in the paintings of the graves of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) and John Keats (1795-1821) in the English cemetery make clear. The paintings (both Oxford: Ashmolean Museum) are by William Bell Scott (1811-1890).

A significant speech given by a poet took place two hundred years ago. Four days before publication on 10 March 1812, of *Childe Harold*, by George Gordon, sixth Lord Byron (1788-1824), an overnight sensation which established its author as a major literary figure, Byron had delivered his maiden speech in the House of Lords supporting and making a defence of the handloom weavers of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in their struggle against the new, steam-driven mills which threatened their livelihoods and the debasement of their skills. The mills, of course, had brick walls and, in Derbyshire, mills built in 1812 survive in Belper.

Samuel Smiles (d.1904), however, is another matter for the brick enthusiast. Smiles is best known for *Self Help* (1859), a manual of self-improvement based on uplifting accounts of the rise to the ranks of the respectable and the middle class of those who began life in the multitude — the word with strong biblical overtones used by the late Victorian upper middle class to describe the poor. However, for the British Brick Society, Samuel Smiles should be celebrated much more for the three volumes of *The Lives of the Engineers* (1861-62) and for his business biographies, which contain under-utilised material on bricks and brickmaking.

Architects born in 1812 include Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (d.1852), Richard Cromwell Carpenter (d.1855), Samuel Saunders Teulon (d.1873), each of whom specialised in churches although each had a much wider practice. In the next issue of *British Brick Society Information*, devoted to 'Brick in Churches', the Guest Editorial is an appreciation of A.W.N. Pugin.





Fig.3 St Nicholas Hotel, St Louis, Missouri, USA (Adler & Sullivan, 1892-93, demolished). The terracotta on the ground and first floors, the bay windows and the seventh-floor balconies was supplied by the Winkle Terra Cotta Company. Building remodelled after a fire in 1903 and demolished in 1973. One set of the four panels making up the terracotta ornament on the bay windows is in the Sullivan Collection of the Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Illinois.

Also born two hundred years ago was William Moffatt (d.1887), who was the partner of George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) from 1835 to 1846, the years during which they specialised in the design of workhouses including those at Old Windsor, Berks., and Great Dunmow, Essex. They were also responsible in 1842 for the design of Reading Jail. Modern extensions to the jail and recent building beside the train tracks have obscured the view which used to exist in the 1960s of Scott & Moffatt's jail as one's train sped into Reading from Paddington en route to Cardiff. Reading Jail was where Oscar O'Flahertie Wills Wilde (1856-1900) served the two-year sentence with hard labour imposed on him in 1895 for what *The Modern Cyclopaedia*, of 1908 calls "an infamous crime". As with many others in England's past who dissented, it was not just his supposed "crime" which landed Wilde in jail, it was the challenge he posed to the superficially self-assured but actually extremely insecure English establishment of the 1890s.

Moffatt's work with Scott has one importance about which it is not often remarked: Reading Jail and the various workhouses were built of brick. With rare exceptions — the jails at Abingdon, for Berkshire, and Oxford and the workhouse at Chipping Norton, Oxon., — this is also true of almost all of the workhouses and jails built in the last decade and a half when the Brick Tax was still being levied.

With Wilde and *The Ballad of Reading Jail*, of 1898, this Editorial may return to the literary connections of brick.

DAVID H. KENNETT

Editor, *British Brick Society Information*,

Shipston-on-Stour, 23 March 2012 and 27 November 2012.

## Exhibition Notice

Happy Birthday Edward Lear

200 Years of Nature and Nonsense

Oxford: Ashmolean Museum

20 September 2012 - 6 January 2013

The title of the exhibition marking the bicentenary of the birth of Edward Lear on 12 May 1812 belies his considerable output of landscape and townscape drawings and paintings. Lear worked in four mediums: pencil, usually as a preliminary to an inked drawing; pen and ink with colour washes; watercolour; and oil. The first two were for private use; the second two were often sold.

Lear is best-known for his illustrated nonsense verse and natural history lithographs which were hand coloured for publication. But he gave up natural history illustration in the late 1830s and devoted the last fifty years of his life to landscapes; Lear died aged 76 in 1888. Sales of the watercolours, drawing lessons, and the production of *Views of Rome and its Environs* (London: Thomas McLean, 1841) provided him with an income; aristocratic patronage provided the ability to travel around the Mediterranean, into the Balkans, to the Near East and South Asia.

One patron, Frances, Countess Waldegrave, commissioned large oil paintings. Two of these in the exhibition are of brick interest. In 1866, Lear painted a fairly conventional view of Venice for his patron, the Grand Canal and Santa Maria della Salute, and although the artist dismissed Venice as 'mere architecture rather than the glories and the beauties of Nature' he was able to capture the contrasting colours of brick and stone and to use his brush strokes to delineate brick courses. Brick courses are also shown by the same method on another large oil painting for the countess. In 1865, Lear painted the Tor de' Schiavi, a brick-built mausoleum on the north side of the Via Prenestina, east of Rome. The mausoleum has a large portion hacked out of it: sections are shown lying on the ground beside the building. The edge of the break within the brickwork of the standing structure has the ends of the bricks clearly shown. The round windows at the top of building are shown with individual bricks, which are like tiles in their width, clearly distinguished. One has a real feel of the building's form and structure.

Lear went to the Near East in 1858, visiting Hebron, Beriut, and Jerusalem. For Samuel Price Edwards on his retirement as collector of customs at Liverpool in 1865, Lear painted the last, and largest, of five oils of Jerusalem, relying on his sketches of seven years earlier and his recollections of the four previous oil paintings. Working in the Near East was difficult. Weather conditions were uncertain: Dir Mar Sabbas was 'like an oven' on 1 May but ten days later Beriut was cold. Earlier it had been 'abominably cold and wet' at Hebron where he records 'they threw stones at me wherever I drew'.

This comparatively small exhibition is delightful and for members of the British Brick Society a visit would be very rewarding.

DAVID H. KENNETT

# SUBURBAN SAHARA REVISITED: Charles Dickens and the Brickfields

Terence Paul Smith

## INTRODUCTION

Despite frequent prolixity and, sometimes, cloying sentimentality, Charles Dickens (1812-1870) not only created some of the most memorable characters in English literature but also offered social comment on early Victorian England.<sup>1</sup> He chronicled, with a piquant mix of humour and causticity, 'Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, / The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay, / The insolence of office and the spurns / That patient merit of the unworthy takes'.<sup>2</sup> Nowadays, as Simon Callow observes, 'there is a ... tsunami of scholarly studies of Dickens from every possible angle[:] Dickens and Women, Dickens and Children ...' — the list continues with a dozen further instances.<sup>3</sup> To that litany, the present contribution adds Dickens and the Brickfields. Mostly, he wrote of them *en passant* but in one case in a rather longer consideration.<sup>4</sup> This bicentenary of the author's birth provides an apt opportunity to examine what he had to say about them.

Unlike some others — the illustrator W.H. Pyne (1770-1843), for example — Dickens was at pains not to romanticise the brickyards.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, he regarded them as desolate places — the 'tract[s] of suburban Sahara' noted below. Indeed, this seems to have been his *principal* concern, and there are aspects of brickmaking — the treatment of men, women, and children, as well as of horses — which Dickens failed to address, except, minimally, on one or two occasions. This may seem surprising in view of his concern for the exploitation of the working classes, including working children, of which he had (brief) personal experience as a twelve-year-old boy at a blacking factory in London, where he was employed in the tedious job of sticking labels on bottles.<sup>6</sup>

## A TERMINOLOGICAL NOTE

Before proceeding, it may be noted that from medieval times in Britain, the terms *kiln* and *clamp* were used interchangeably. By the nineteenth century, *experts* in brickmaking, such as Edward Dobson (1816-1908), were making a distinction between temporary clamps and permanent kilns.<sup>7</sup> But non-specialist writers, such as the journalist Henry Mayhew (1812-1887), continued to use both terms without distinction.<sup>8</sup> It is safe to assume that Dickens did likewise, and in what follows, therefore, his use of the term 'kiln(s)' must always be understood in this ambivalent sense.

## THE GROWTH OF LONDON AND THE SUPPLY OF BRICKS

Except in *Bleak House* (1853), where the brickfield is set near St Albans, Herts., Dickens is concerned solely with London brickyards. London — the 'great Wen' of William Cobbett's (1762-1835) *Rural Rides* (1821) — grew prodigiously in the nineteenth century, an aspect of the metropolis noted by Dickens when he contrasted parts of north London in 1780 and at the time of writing, six decades later, in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841, chapter 4; cf. chapter 16).<sup>9</sup> He sometimes remarked on the unattractive appearance of all this building activity: 'fragments of unfinished

walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding, and wildernesses of bricks, giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing'; '... a labyrinth of scaffolding ... Loads of bricks and stones, and heaps of mortar, and piles of wood ...; bricklayers, painters, carpenters, masons: hammer, hod, brush, pickaxe, saw, and trowel: all at work together, in full chorus!' (*Dombey and Son*, 1848, chapters 5, 28; see also the description in chapter 6; but here Dickens may be carried away by his own rhetoric: how can a *hod*, for example, be 'in full chorus', even metaphorically?) The situation is nicely captured in George Cruickshank's (1792-1878) cartoon 'London going out of Town — or — The March of Bricks & Mortar' (1829), which has been reproduced several times and is included again here (fig. 1).<sup>10</sup>

It is sometimes claimed that the great increase in building activity in London and elsewhere in the later nineteenth century was due to repeal of the Brick Tax (introduced 1784) in 1850.<sup>11</sup> I am not persuaded, for reasons discussed elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> Nor is there convincing evidence that the Tax retarded brick production during the period of its imposition.<sup>13</sup>

In Dickens' lifetime bricks for more prestigious architect-designed projects might be brought into London from some distance, using, at first, the canal system, and, later, the railways.<sup>14</sup> But the vast majority used were the characteristically yellow-brown London Stocks, often used with red brick trim round openings or as cornices or bands at changes of floor-level, and sometimes with terracotta, stone, or moulded reconstituted stone elements.<sup>15</sup> Only late in the century, particularly in west London, did red brick begin to dominate aspirant housing — in parts of Kensington and Chelsea, for example, as noted by G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936) in his fictional 'Saffron Park ... on the sunset side of London, ... built of bright red brick throughout; ... the outburst of a speculative builder, faintly tinged with art, who called its architecture Elizabethan and sometimes Queen Anne, apparently under the impression that the two sovereigns were identical' (*The Man Who Was Thursday*, 1908, chapter 1).

London Stocks, and some other bricks, were supplied from two sources. The first comprised various brickyards at no great distance from London: in Middlesex, whence they were delivered *via* the Thames or by canal, and on either side of the lower Thames in south Essex and north Kent, whence they were delivered upriver by Thames barges.<sup>16</sup> Despite being intimately acquainted with the last area — part of his boyhood had been spent in Chatham and from 1857 he lived at Gad's Hill Place, Higham, north of Rochester — Dickens makes no reference, in the novels, to the north Kent industry.<sup>17</sup>

The other source comprised brickyards closer to London itself: 'Where'er around I cast my wandering eyes / Long burning rows of fetid bricks arise', as a local poet, Charles Jenner, complained of the Fleet River area in 1772.<sup>18</sup> These were generally worked until exhausted, and the land would then be built over, so that the yards themselves disappeared beneath the expanding metropolis.<sup>19</sup> This is reflected in several London street names incorporating 'brick', 'brickfield', and the like, and in a late nineteenth-century fictional example by George (1847-1912) and Weedon (1852-1919) Grossmith: Charles and Carrie Pooter live in a 'new house, "The Laurels", Brickfield Terrace, Holloway' in north London (*The Diary of a Nobody*, 1892, chapter 1).<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, as Adam Sowen pointed out on the BBS perambulation of Reading on Saturday 12 June 2010, that town — the Aldbrickham of *Jude the Obscure* (1892) by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) — has its own Brickfield Terrace and George Grossmith lived for a time in Reading. Interestingly too, it was the Pooters' Holloway to which Dickens referred in his last completed novel: 'Between Battle Bridge and that part of the Holloway district in which [Mr Wilfer] dwelt was a tract of suburban Sahara where tiles and bricks were burnt ...' (*Our Mutual Friend*, 1864-5, Book One, chapter 4). More pertinently, he refers to the temporary yards replaced by subsequent building during development in north London, where there was 'a new row of houses at Camden-town, half street, half brick-field [cf. fig. 1], somewhere near the canal' (*Sketches by Boz*, 1836, 'Shabby-Genteel People').<sup>21</sup>

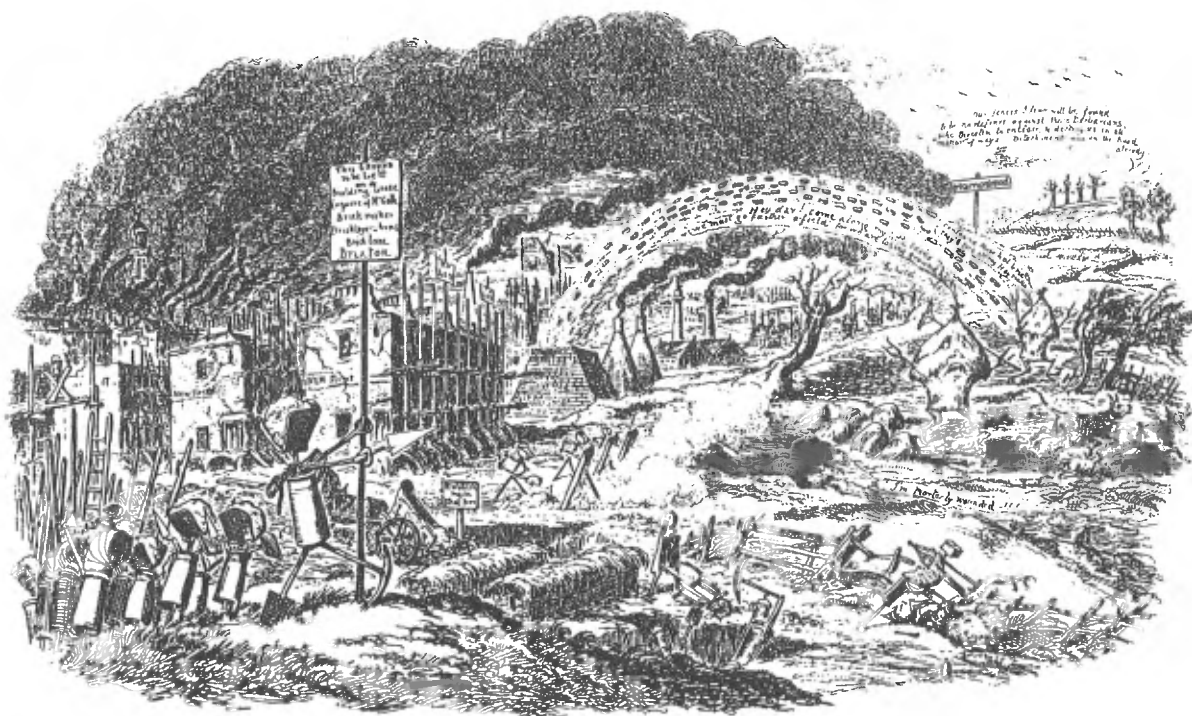


Fig.1. George Cruickshank, 'London going out of Town — or — The March of Bricks & Mortar' (1829): note the proximity of new houses (in scaffold), a brick clamp, and tile kilns — the 'half street, half brick-field' of *Sketches by Boz*. Bricks flying from the clamp land on (distressed) haystacks symbolising the destruction of London's rural hinterland by 'Bricks & Mortar'.

As this building activity took place, faint traces of former brickmaking might remain: 'Some London houses have a melancholy little plot of ground behind them, usually fenced in by four high whitewashed walls and frowned upon by stacks of chimneys, in which there withers on from year to year a crippled tree .... People sometimes call these dark yards "gardens"; it is not supposed that they were ever planted, but rather that they were pieces of unreclaimed land, with the withered vegetation of the original brick-field' (*Nicholas Nickleby*, 1839, chapter 2).

## ASHES, DUST, CINDERS

At his north London suburban house, 'The Bower', Mr Boffin ('The Golden Dustman') had a yard containing 'certain tall, dark mounds [which] rose high against the sky'; one of them, which has a crucial part in the plot, was 'his own particular Mound which had been left him as his legacy ...'; "I ain't a scholar in much, [he tells Mr Rokesmith] but I'm a pretty fair scholar in dust. I can price the Mounds to a fraction and I know how they can be best disposed of ..."; and elsewhere throughout London there were similar yards where 'dust was heaped by contractors' like Mr Boffin. (*Our Mutual Friend*, Book One, chapters 5, 15, 4 respectively). These mounds were dust, ash, and cinder heaps — smouldering, smoking, smelling — and were a familiar sight in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century London, to which Dickens occasionally refers elsewhere: at Camden Town there were 'frowzy fields, and cow-houses, and dunghills, and dustheaps' (*Dombey and Son*, chapter 6), whilst behind Tottenham Court Road, in the late eighteenth century, he claims, stood '[g]reat heaps of ashes ...' (*Barnaby Rudge*, chapter 4).<sup>22</sup>



Fig.2. A nineteenth-century engraving of a man and three women sifting and sorting at a dust heap; note the canal boat in the background

They played an important rôle in London brickmaking, for dust, ash, and cinders were added to brickearth, together with chalk slurry, in the manufacture of London Stocks. Although the material included street sweepings, gathered by the likes of Jo, the young crossing-sweeper of *Bleak House*, it came, principally, as Henry Mayhew noted, from ‘the residuum of [domestic] fires, the white [actually grey] ash and cinders, or small fragments of unconsumed coke, giving rise to by far the greatest quantity’.<sup>23</sup> It required sifting to separate the finer material (called ‘soil’) from the coarser material (‘brieze’ or ‘breeze’) (fig.2).<sup>24</sup> The former was used as manure and for mixing with the brickearth used in brickmaking; the latter was used as fuel, added in layers amongst the bands of ‘green’ bricks, in the clamps. The sifters had also to pick out ‘many things ... which are useless for either manure or brick-making, such as oyster shells, old bricks, old boots and shoes, ... old tin kettles, old rags and bones, etc.’<sup>25</sup> Once sorted, these odds and ends, had their own economic value: as the old saw has it: ‘Where there’s muck there’s brass’.<sup>26</sup>

The ash and the rest were delivered to the nearer brickfields by horse and cart and to the more distant yards, such as those of south Essex and north Kent, by those Thames barges already mentioned, for which reason the dust heaps were located as close as possible to rivers or canals. There thus developed a symbiotic relationship, since the barges which carried the ashes and the like, and which were typically owned by brickmasters, were also used to transport the finished bricks to the metropolis.<sup>27</sup> Dickens does not make direct reference to this in the novels, although he does quite often mention the busy Thames traffic, and one may perhaps be allowed to imagine that ‘the brown-sailed barges that were turning black’ in the darkening sky at Rochester were carrying either the ashes, dust, and cinders or the return cargoes of bricks (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, 1870, unfinished, chapter 10).





Fig.3. A nineteenth-century brickyard from *The Boy's Book of Trades* (1871). A man and woman (presumably husband and wife) are moulding bricks at a bench in a rough shelter of timber and thatch: a small boy (their son?) carries clay from the pugmill at far right, with the circular track walked by the horse also indicated; to the rear is a partly dismantled clamp and leaning against it are shelters which could be used on rainy days; at far left a man wheels away bricks on a barrow.

## THE BRICKFIELDS

Dickens saw the brickfields as offering a melancholy, desolate appearance (fig.3). Parts of north London, for example, presented 'only blighted country', where there were 'a few tall chimneys belching smoke all day and night, and ... brick-fields and the lanes where turf is cut ...'; and there were 'some very uncomfortable places, such as brick-fields and tile-yards' (*Dombey and Son*, chapters 33, 6). Here too was that 'tract of suburban Sahara where tiles and bricks were burnt' to which reference has already been made. The desolation lies behind Mr Swiveller's vindictive dream: he 'was fast asleep, dreaming that ... his first act of power was to lay waste the [pleasant] market-garden of Mr Cheggs and turn it into a brick-field' (*The Old Curiosity Shop*, Book One, chapter 8). And it is with obvious irony that Dickens notes that 'Mr and Mrs Butler are at present rustivating in a small cottage at Ball's-pond [north London], pleasantly situated in the immediate vicinity of a brick-field' (*Sketches by Boz*, 'Sentiment', my italics).<sup>28</sup>

The fullest consideration, however, occurs in *Bleak House*, which Dickens sets not in London but near St Albans.<sup>29</sup> 'I was glad when we came to the brickmaker's house; though it was one of a cluster of wretched hovels in a brickfield, with pigsties close to the broken windows, and miserable little gardens before the doors, growing nothing but stagnant pools. Here

and there, an old tub was put to catch the droppings of rain-water from a roof, or they were banked up with mud into a little pond like a large dirt-pie. At the doors and windows, some men and women lounged or prowled about, and took little notice of us, except to laugh to one another, or to say something as we passed ...' (*Bleak House*, chapter 8). Elsewhere (chapter 58), we learn that one (at least) of the houses was 'made of loose rough bricks' — presumably misfired products laid without mortar. It is an unpleasant enough place, somewhat reminiscent of the slums of Kensington, where too bricks were made and pigs were reared.<sup>30</sup>

Dickens' description, however, is restricted to the brickmakers' houses, and here and elsewhere he has little to say about the arrangement of a brickfield or about its components and equipment.<sup>31</sup> (This, of course, is not a criticism: see the Conclusion to this contribution, where, however, some other omissions *are* questioned.) Throughout the novels there are just a few passing references.

The first (in terms of the brickmaking process) is to 'the clay-pits', but nothing further is said of them (*Our Mutual Friend*, Book One, chapter 9). As mentioned above, the London brickfields were typically worked until exhausted. But with the larger ones this might take some time. As a pit was worked out, so a new one was opened on the same site. But there was no back-filling until the whole site was exhausted, and old pits were left to fill with water and to become deep and dangerous ponds. Dickens does not mention this, but a later writer, Jerome K. Jerome (1859-1927), does allude to it, recounting a boyhood incident which must have taken place *circa* 1870: 'I did a good deal of rafting in various [London] suburban brickfields, an exercise providing more interest and excitement than might be imagined, especially when you are in the middle of the pond and the proprietor of the materials of which the raft is constructed suddenly appears on the bank with a big stick in his hand'; those materials were 'boards' taken from the yard — presumably those used for covering drying bricks or clamps, or perhaps the planks used for barrow runs. (*Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)*, 1889, chapter 15).<sup>32</sup>

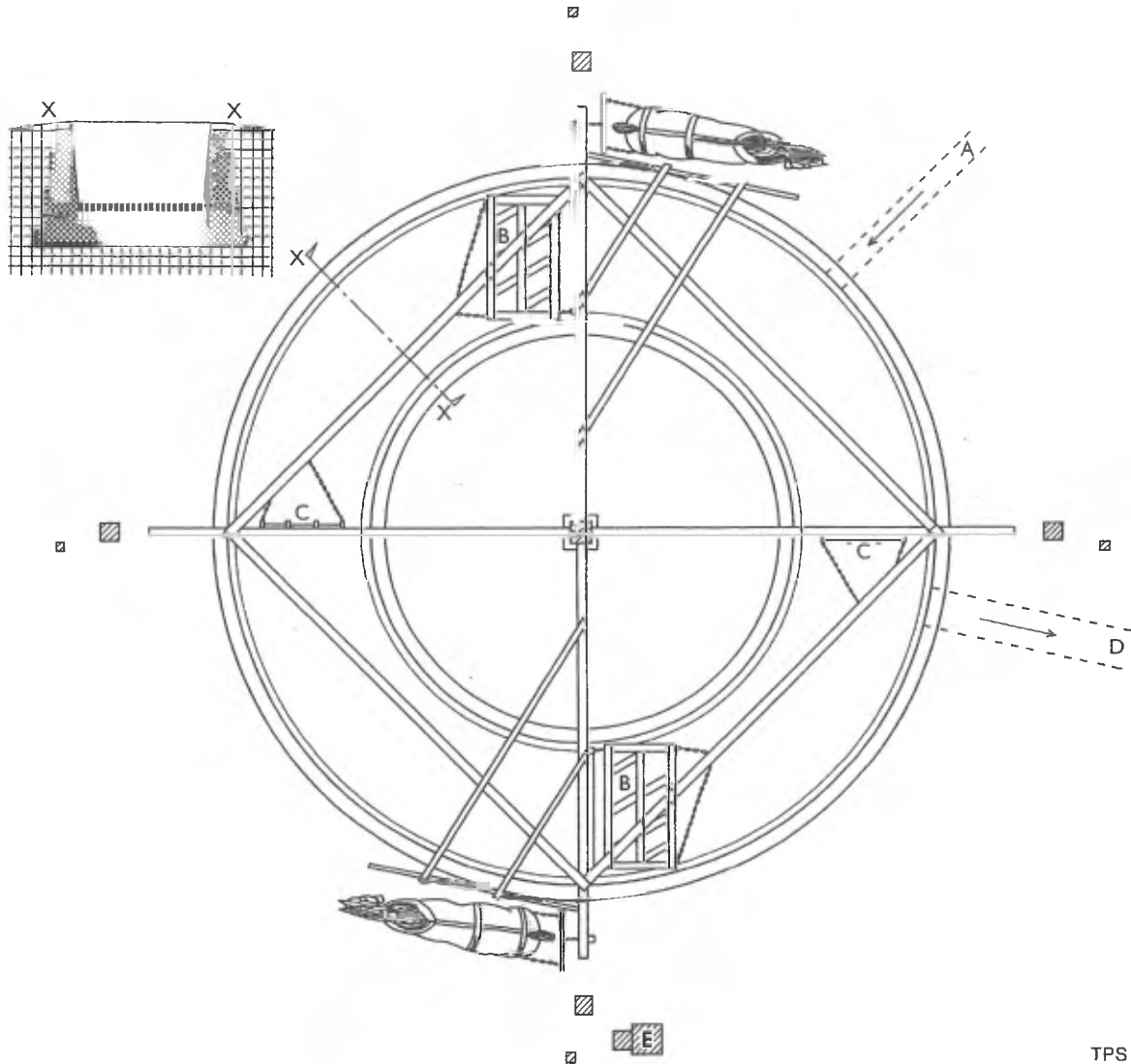
After being left over the winter, to be broken down by frost action, the clay from these pits had to be well mixed, together with any additives such as chalk slurry and ashes in the manufacture of London Stocks. The horse-operated apparatus employed is used by Dickens as a simile for a knitting-frame: Miss Litterton is 'making a watch-guard with brown silk', for which purpose she places on her small work-table 'a little wooden frame ... something like a miniature clay-mill without the horse' (*Sketches by Boz*, 'A Passage in the Life of Mr Watkins Tottle', chapter 2). Edward Dobson provides a description and illustrations (fig.4).<sup>33</sup> Dickens' simile is a testimony to his familiarity with the north Kent brickmaking industry.

Dickens says nothing about pugmills, the moulding process, or the setting of the bricks, although there is a passing reference to 'the piece of ground ... where the long rows of bricks were drying' (*Bleak House*, chapter 57).

In London, temporary clamps rather than permanent kilns were the norm. The fullest reference to 'kilns' is in *Bleak House*, where the yard is situated near St Albans; there is no description but there is a suggestive remark in chapter 31, when a small boy goes missing: 'every possible inquiry was made and every place searched. The brick-kilns were examined, the cottages were visited ...'. It seems unlikely that a child could hide, or be found dead, in a *clamp*, so that it would seem that Dickens had a permanent kiln in mind, suggesting that he really was thinking about somewhere outside London — perhaps, indeed, in the vicinity of St Albans.

There is nothing about sorting the fired bricks or about their transport. The former was necessary because the quality of the bricks varied, especially with the less easily regulated clamps; there were misfired and even partly melted and fused products, of no use except as rubble: one may recall those 'rough bricks' from which the St Albans brickyard house was built.<sup>34</sup> As cited above, transport, when not by barge, was by horse and cart, and this is implied





TPS

Fig.4. A horse-driven clay-mill of the sort used by Dickens as a simile for a knitting machine in *Sketches by Boz*. The clay was placed in a rectangular-sectioned brick-lined circular trough (XX); chalk slurry was fed in through a channel (A); the materials were mixed by harrows (B) and cut by arrangements of vertical knives (C); the prepared material was discharged through a further channel (D); E marks the vertical member of an overhead pump which supplied water to the clay and chalk slurry.

— though not explicitly mentioned — at one point: in the ‘back yard’ of his house in Wiltshire, Mr Pecksniff tells the young Martin Chuzzlewit, ““There are a cart-load of bricks, and a score of old flower-pots”” (*Martin Chuzzlewit*, chapter 6).

## BRICKFIELDS AS SHELTERS

From Elizabethan times, at latest, brickfields provided places of shelter for less fortunate members of society. On 14 January 1582, William Fleetwood, Recorder of London, reported to William Cecil, Lord Burghley that ‘the brick kilnes near Islyngton’ were a ‘chieff nurserie’ of the vagabonds then troubling the City, Westminster, and Southwark.<sup>35</sup> As David Paliser explains,

it was the ‘warmth of the Islington kilns [or clamps] ... that made them the most popular sleeping-place[s] for the unemployed looking for work in London’.<sup>36</sup> The situation continued in later centuries. Of the vast numbers of displaced persons who took refuge north of the City after the Great Fire (1666), many presumably sought shelter in the various brickfields of the region. And, somewhat later, ‘in the brickfields [of eighteenth-century London] vagrants lived and slept, cooking their food on the kilns [or clamps]’; and if an apprentice ran away and could not afford accommodation in a night-cellar or a common lodging house then ‘his natural resort was to sleep in an empty house, a market, or a brickfield’.<sup>37</sup> Immediately following the Gordon Riots of 1780, so Dickens noted in his first historical novel, some of the insurgents found overnight refuge ‘in the adjacent fields and lands and under haystacks or near the warmth of the brick-kilns’ (*Barnaby Rudge*, chapter 52).<sup>38</sup> Writing of his own times, he considers Mr Warden, a drunkard who ‘slept under archways, and in the brickfields — anywhere, where there was some warmth or shelter from the cold or rain’ (*Sketches by Boz*, ‘The Drunkard’s Death’).

But the practice had its perils, due to the noxious fumes given off during firing: ‘The kilns were burning, and a stifling vapour set towards us with a pale blue glare’ (*Bleak House*, chapter 31). The danger is captured in a melancholy reflection later in the same chapter: “‘I don’t want no shelter,” [the boy] said, “I can lay amongst the warm bricks.” / “But don’t you know that people die there?” replied Charley. / “They dies everywhere,” said the boy.’ This was not mere fantasy: ‘Mr H.P. Pycroft, a Hampshire brickmaker and builder,’ John Woodforde noted in 1976, ‘can tell of a tramp who [in the mid-twentieth century presumably] was found insensitive from having gone to sleep hard against a clamp ... at a point where fumes were escaping’.<sup>39</sup>

It was not only in the brickmaking season — spring to autumn — that people might take shelter; a peripatetic beer-vendor recalls ‘one of the bitterest [winter] nights he ever felt, ’cept the night when the man was frozen to death in the Brick-field’ (*Sketches by Boz*, ‘The Streets — Night’). Presumably, the brickfield offered rudimentary — though in this case clearly inadequate — shelter even though, at that time of year, it provided no warmth from clamp or kiln.

## FIRE!

In season, however, brickyards not only offered warm shelter for the homeless, but also constituted an obvious fire hazard. It was for this reason, as well as because of the noxious fumes given off by the kilns or clamps, that in the Middle Ages brickyards had generally been banished to locations outside the towns themselves, from Italy to the Netherlands and including England.<sup>40</sup> It is surprising that one does not hear more about this danger in connexion with nineteenth-century brickmaking, in London and elsewhere — though this may reflect no more than a lack of relevant research. But at one point Dickens *seems* to reflect it, albeit in a somewhat elliptical passage: ‘brick-fields, skirting gardens paled with staves of old casks, or timber pillaged from houses burnt down and blackened and blistered by the flames ...’ (*The Old Curiosity Shop*, 1841, chapter 15; but does this actually mean that the houses were burned by flames from the clamps or kilns?)

## THE BRICKMAKERS

Young Oliver Twist thought he would rather read books than write them. “‘Well, well,” said [Mr Brownlow] ... “Don’t be afraid! We won’t make an author of you, while there’s an honest trade

to be learnt, or brickmaking to turn to” (*Oliver Twist*, 1838, chapter 14). Dickens here may be gently mocking his own occupation as a writer (of both fact and fiction), but for our present purpose the important point lies in that disjunction at the end of the sentence: an ‘honest trade’ or ‘brickmaking’. Dickens’ concern for those less fortunate than himself has frequently been stressed from the time of his inscription on his tomb in Westminster Abbey: ‘He was a sympathiser to [*sic*] the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed ...’. And yet, that sympathy was always *partial* — in both sense of the term — and tended to come *de haut en bas*.<sup>41</sup>

Certainly his view of brickmakers was *less* than sympathetic, as hinted at in the quotation from *Oliver Twist* in the previous paragraph. So too when he notes that May Day had once been an opportunity for celebrations by chimney sweeps, but by Dickens’ time they had (he alleges) been taken over by others, including brickmakers, using the occasion to beg for money: ‘We accuse scavengers, brickmakers, and gentlemen [the term clearly intended ironically] who devote their energies to the costermongering line, with obtaining money once a-year, under false pretences’ (*Sketches by Boz*, ‘The First of May’). Half a century before, in 1780, Edmund Burke (1729-1797) was equally disparaging of brickmakers (and others) when speaking of the corrupt and rapacious non-stipendiary magistrates earlier in the eighteenth century: ‘The Justices of Middlesex were generally the scum of the earth — carpenters, brickmakers and shoemakers; some of whom were notoriously men of such infamous character that they were unworthy of any employ[ment] whatsoever’.<sup>42</sup>

But again it is *Bleak House* that provides Dickens’ fullest (and decidedly Burkean) account, emphasising the drunkenness of the brickmaker, against which the self-righteous Mrs Pardiggle inveighs (fig.5). The St Albans brickmaker is, she says, ‘a very bad character’. When she and her companions enter the cottage they find, ‘in the damp offensive room — a woman with a black eye, nursing a poor little gasping baby by the fire; a man, all stained with clay and mud, and looking very dissipated, lying at full length on the ground, smoking a pipe; a powerful young man, fastening a collar on a dog; and a bold girl doing some kind of washing in very dirty water ... [T]he woman seemed to turn her face toward the fire, as if to hide her bruised eye ...’. Has the brickmaker, Mrs Pardiggle wants to know, read ‘the little book’ (a religious tract) that she had left. “No, I ain’t read the little book wot you left. There ain’t nobody here as knows how to read it. ... How have I been conducting of myself? Why, I’ve been drunk for three days; and I’d a been drunk four, if I’d had the money. Don’t I never mean to go to church? No, I don’t ... And how did my wife get that black eye? Why, I giv’ it her; and if she says I didn’t she’s a Lie!” (*Bleak House*, chapter 8).

This passage, which is quoted in an admirable social history of England,<sup>43</sup> is no exaggeration. A decade before the publication of *Bleak House*, *The Builder*, in one of its earliest issues, commented on the ‘degrading labour to which the brick-field has subjected our species’.<sup>44</sup> Karl Marx (1818-1883), drawing on official reports, describes some English brickfields, with more understanding than Dickens achieves — or *attempts*. Dickens may have mocked Mrs Pardiggle’s ‘do-goodery’ and Puseyite religiosity, but his attitude to brickmakers was not so very different from hers; it is a further instance of the author’s ambivalence on social matters. With greater sympathy, Karl Marx notes that because of the nature of the work and the conditions under which the brickmakers had to labour and live, it is ‘only natural’ that ‘excessive drunkenness is prevalent from childhood upwards among the whole of this class’.<sup>45</sup> Dickens, by contrast, seems too willing to dismiss the brickmakers’ failings as due to fecklessness: note his use of the accusatory ‘dissipated’. The poverty, degradation, and coarse language of the ‘brickies’ are also noted in official sources, and are reflected by Dickens’ slightly younger contemporary, Anthony Trollope (1815-1882): the parish of Hoggelstock, Bassetshire (possibly based on Wiltshire) ‘includes two populous villages, abounding in brickmakers, a race of men very troublesome to a zealous parson who won’t let men go rollicking to the devil without



Fig.5. The interior of the brickmaker's home near St Albans: drawing by 'Phiz' (Hablôt K. Browne) from *Bleak House*. The well-dressed little boys at left are Mrs Pardiggle's unattractive sons: the 'dissipated brickmaker' lies on the floor at right; facing him sits Mrs Pardiggle — tracts in hand and frowning with disapproval.

interference' (*Framley Parsonage*, 1861, chapter 4).<sup>46</sup> The problems continued in later years, and in 1895 Beatrice A. Dan commented on the 'coarse and vulgar' language, the 'low' ideals, and the 'drunken orgies' on bank holidays at a Kentish brickfield which she visited.<sup>47</sup>

It is worth adding that the official reports stress the lot of women and children in the brickfields,<sup>48</sup> as also in *The Builder* in 1843 which, when commenting on the 'degrading labour [in] the brick-field' noted that 'most revolting of all [was] to see women put to the drudgery of horses and engines; little children too, who in a country like this should be at school, disguised past recognition in the mixed sweat and plasterings of clay and mud which encumbered their attenuated frames'.<sup>49</sup> George Orwell commented that '[o]ne evil of his time that Dickens says very little about is child labour', the one exception being the semi-autobiographical account of a boy's work in *David Copperfield* (chapter 1).<sup>50</sup> This criticism might be applied to Dickens' treatment of the brickyards, which fails to mention child labour. This, however, would be unfair. In fact, the extent of both female and of child working varied greatly throughout the country: in south Staffordshire, for example, 75 per cent of the labour force were women and children, but Nottingham had no such labour; 'in south-east England there were clearly defined job divisions for the children, women and men', whilst in the Manchester area female and child labour 'did not play the major rôle' that they did in some other regions.<sup>51</sup> Where children *were* employed, their lot was often harsh, degrading, and desperate (fig.6). So if Orwell was unjust, Dickens missed an opportunity.

A further aspect of brickmakers' lives to which Dickens makes no reference is that of strikes which occurred from time to time.<sup>52</sup> His younger contemporary, Friedrich Engels (1820-



Fig.6. H. Johnson's 1871 illustration of child labour at a brickfield (detail). Note the children's bare feet and ragged clothing, as well as the heavy loads — clay or bricks — that they are carrying; also the pugmill at background left, from which the boy is collecting pugged clay. There is hardly space for a horse to work the pugmill: cf. fig.7; but this example may be operated by steam.

1895) recorded one in 1843 at Manchester, when troops from a nearby barracks opened fire and wounded several of the strikers.<sup>53</sup> Dickens cannot have read this since *The Condition of the Working Class in England* did not appear in English until 1886 — and then in the USA; it was first published in Britain in 1892. But he may have known of the incident from newspaper reports. He may have been unsympathetic, not only because of his general attitude to brickmakers but also because he had a horror of 'mobs'. 'The evident ambivalence of his attitude was the result [in part] ... of the clash between his instinctive radicalism and his characteristically Victorian fear of the strange and alien'.<sup>54</sup>

Nor does Dickens consider (in his novels) the harsh treatment of horses, whether employed in working the brickyard machinery (figs.4, 7) or in delivering the finished bricks to customers. But his younger contemporary, Anna Sewall (1820-1878), did address the topic in her only book, *Black Beauty* (1877). Chapter 20 tells how Beauty, ridden by Joe Green, 'came to the brickfield. Here we saw a cart heavily laden with bricks; the wheels had stuck fast in the stiff mud of some deep ruts; and the carter [who, we are later told, was 'the worse for drink'] was shouting and flogging the two horses straining and struggling with all their might to drag the cart out, but they could not move it; the sweat streamed from their legs and flanks, their sides heaved, and every muscle was strained, whilst the man, fiercely pulling at the head of the forehorse, swore and lashed out most brutally'. Verbally abused for his protest, Joe rides to the

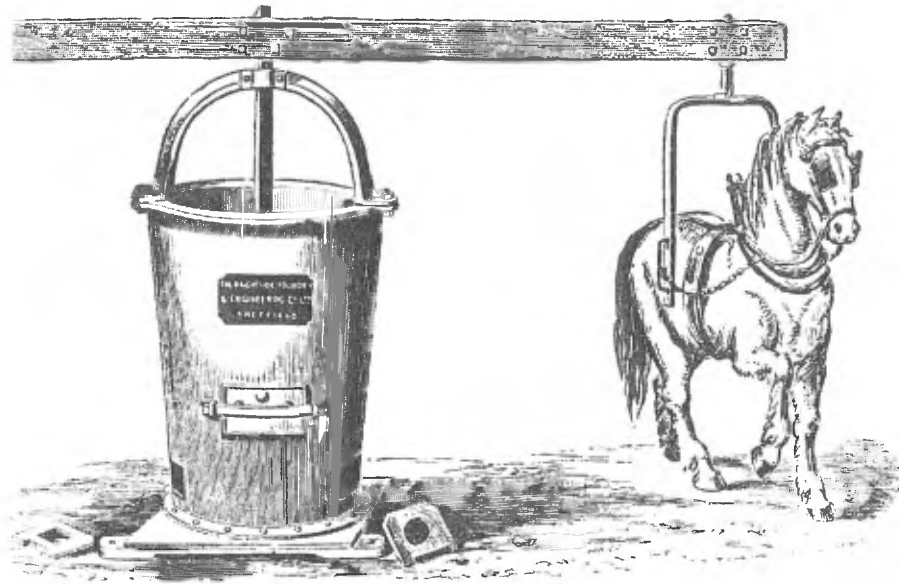


Fig.7. A horse working a pugmill, from E. Bourry, *Treatise on Ceramic Industries* (1901); the blinkers prevented the horse from becoming giddy as it walked round and round.

house of the master brickmaker, the appropriately named Mr Clay. The latter intervenes and ‘the carter was committed to take his trial’ before the magistrates. Thanks to Joe’s evidence, the carter ‘might possibly be sentenced to two or three months in prison’.<sup>55</sup>

Anna Sewall wrote from experience and it is likely that she witnessed a scene or scenes like that described. And there must surely have been other instances of cruelty to horses in Victorian brickyards, similar to that recorded from the early twentieth-century Netherlands: a brickmaker, under the pseudonym ‘Jaap’, recalled how a neighbour ‘had a thick stick with a nail in it and he used it to hit the horse with it .... We lifted the tail of the animal: it was just a mass of mincemeat ...’; the horses kept by the same man ‘got nothing to eat either. The boss kept pigs, and the horses were given pigswill instead of horse fodder .... The horses were reduced by hunger to eating rush-mats, and if they got the chance they used to eat your lunch bag too. / Ah, it’s a good thing for the animals ... that all that’s over and done with’.<sup>56</sup> This would have been in the first half of the twentieth century, when many had an affection for their horses — hence ‘Jaap’'s anger — and treated them well: ‘For many brickyard people’, one such reminisces, ‘that was the finest [*mooste*] time: that of the horses’.<sup>57</sup>

## CONCLUSION

From the novels of Charles Dickens, augmented by *Sketches by Boz*, it is possible to glean details of early Victorian brickfields and a little about those who worked in them. They are all the more valuable for being drawn from life, as Christopher Hibbert has observed.<sup>58</sup> Dickens was a restless, even frenetic, traveller — on foot, on horse, by carriage, by boat, by train — in and out of London, always observing, ever recording. It would be foolish and unfair to censure him for *all* his omissions: he was, after all, writing, here, works of fiction, not topographical accounts — still less setting out to provide material for one, a century and a half later, with nothing better to do than to mark passages in the margins! On the other hand, it is disappointing that he did not sympathetically consider the *human* blights of the brickfields, and that he was too ready to condemn rather than to analyse.

That said, we may be grateful for what he did provide in his novels and ‘sketches’. It is not *all*, by any means, and it may not be *much* — but it is not *nothing*, even with regard to that only partly explored ‘suburban Sahara’ of the early Victorian brickfields.<sup>59</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I should like to thank David Kennett, not only for accomplished typing from my handwritten copy, requiring little proof-correction, and for saving me from an ambiguity in one endnote, but also for supplying additional references.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Dickens’ writing career covers the first 33 years of Queen Victoria’s reign (1837-1901), thus more or less its first half. His loquacity is nicely captured in a cartoon, ‘Dickens’ Writers’s Block’, *Private Eye*, 1314, 18-31 May 2012, p.27, which shows a highly distraught Dickens lamenting, ‘What a dreadful day. I’ve only managed 60 pages’. The sentimentality was characteristic of the time but no less dyspeptic to later stomachs: as Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) wickedly remarked, ‘One must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing’: R. Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, pbk edn, London: The Penguin Group, 1988, p.441. Dickens, who enjoyed writing and performing melodrama, also had his sensationalist side, as Judith Flanders notes in *The Invention of Murder*, London: HarperPress, 2011, p.112n.: ‘Dickens is “literature” now, and it takes an effort to see him through different eyes. Yet the number of murders and otherwise unnatural deaths ... in his novels is astonishing’ — including one instance of spontaneous combustion!

2. *Hamlet*, III.i.71-4 (Arden edn, ed. H. Jenkins, 1982, p.279); ‘dispriz’d’ is *not prized, not valued*; the last phrase quoted may be paraphrased as ‘the insults which some people have patiently to endure from unworthy persons’.

3. S. Callow, *Charles Dickens and the Great Theatre of the World*, London: HarperPress, 2012, p.ix, which needlessly writes of a ‘non-stop tsunami’: when was there ever a *stoppable* one?

4. The Dickens *corpus* is vast, and this contribution is limited to the novels and to his first book, *Sketches by Boz*, a collection of stories previously published in various periodicals. (A few other stories which have been read include no relevant material.) Publication dates (given in the main text and on first occurrence only) refer to the first *book* editions. Because all have appeared in numerous subsequent editions, references are given (within the text) to chapters, or in *Sketches by Boz* to individual

‘sketches’, rather than to pages; so also with other literary works quoted.

5. See, e.g., Pyne’s illustration of loading horse-drawn carts with bricks, reproduced in J. Woodforde, *Bricks to Build a House*, London: Routledge for the London Brick Company Ltd, 1976, p.136, fig.73; also, at a larger scale, across half-title page verso and title page recto; also Pyne’s three unrealistically bucolic illustrations of brickmaking reproduced at p.5, fig.3. Pyne’s life, one may note, corresponded almost exactly with the period of the Romantic Movement in art, literature, and music, ‘roughly between 1770 and 1848’: unsigned contribution in M. Drabble, ed., *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 5th edn with corrections, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p.842. Other illustrators were more realistic: see e.g., H. Johnson’s 1871 illustration of children carrying clay and bricks, reproduced in Woodforde, 1976, p.102; also in A. Bristow, *George Smith: The Children’s Friend*, Chester: Imogen, 1999, p.21 and cover illustration; here reproduced as fig.6; cf. fig.3.

6. See, e.g., C. Hibbert, *The Making of Charles Dickens*, pbk edn., London: The Penguin Group, 2000, a masterly study from the doyen of popular historians of Dickens’ first 33 years; for the blacking factory see pp.51-2, 53, 55-7, 71. For a qualification regarding Dickens’ attitude to the downtrodden, and working children in particular, see below, especially the citations from George Orwell, nn.45, 50, 54. For Dickens’ ambivalence about social matters see P. Ackroyd, *Dickens: Public Life and Private Passion*, London: BBC Worldwide, 2002, p.111-15. A quarter century after Dickens’ death, Arthur Morrison (1863-1945), in his novel, *A Child of the Jago* (1896), could draw attention to the lot of poor children, in an empathetic way that Dickens rarely achieved.

7. E. Dobson, *A Rudimentary Treatise on the Manufacture of Bricks and Tiles*, 2 vols, London: John Weale, 1850, available in slightly reduced facsimile, ed. F. Celoria, as *J. Ceramic Hist.*, 5, 1971, *passim*.



For a modern treatment of clamps and kilns see R. W. Brunskill, *Brick Building in Britain*, new pbk edn, London: Victor Gollancz in association with Peter Crawley, 1977, pp.27-33. On the problems of clamp-firing see L. Lefèvre, *Architectural Pottery*, ET by K.H. Bird and W.M. Binns of *La céramique du bâtiment*, London: Scott, Greenwood & Sons, 1900, pp.191-7; cf. M. Beswick, *Brickmaking in Sussex: a History and Gazetteer*, revised edn, Midhurst: Middleton Press 2001, pp.48-50.

8. H. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (4 vols, 1861-62), selections ed. V. Neuburg, London: The Penguin Group, 1985, p.228: 'the kiln or "clamp",' the punctuation making it clear that the two terms are being used as equivalents — a doublet — as in the United Kingdom passport's 'without let or hindrance', the two nouns being synonymous.

9. H. Clout, ed., *The Times London History Atlas*, new edn, London: Times Books, 1997, pp.88-9, with useful map. The topic is treated in various histories of London. For the built environment specifically see especially the essays by Chris Miele and by Susie Barson in A. Saint, introd., *London Suburbs*, London: Merrell Holberton in association with English Heritage, 1999, pp.31-59, 61-101; see also J. White, *London in the Nineteenth Century: a Human Awful Wonder of God*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2007, pp.67-98. For maps contemporary with Dickens' early novels see A. Baynton-Williams, *Moule's County Maps The East and South-East of England*, London: Bracken Books, 1994, p.9 (town plan of London), pp.38-9 (Middlesex), pp.40-41 (Environs of London). Cross's map of London in 1844, is reproduced in P. Whitfield, *London: A Life in Maps*, London: The British Library, 2006, pp.156-7, with accompanying text 'Dickens's London', pp.157-9. Valuable in charting the development of London during Dickens' lifetime are three maps made at different times in the nineteenth century reproduced in F. Shepherd, *London, 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1971, pls.3, 8, and 31.

10. For example, in Woodforde, 1976, pp.100-101, fig.49; Clout, 1997, pp.88-9; J. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1978, pl. opp. p.24; and L. Clarke, *Building Capitalism: Historical Change and the Labour Process in the Production of the Built Environment*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p.139, pl.7. In the mid-1830s Cruickshank was the illustrator of *Sketches by Boz*; he drew the 24-year-old Dickens in 1836: reproduced in Hibbert, 2000, opp. p.131. Wilkie Collins (1824-1889), Dickens' younger contemporary and friend, offers a kind of commentary on the illustration: '... the modern guerilla regiments of the hod, the trowel and the brick-kiln': in *Hide and Seek* (1854), quoted in C. Hibbert, *London: the Biography of a City*, revised edn, pbk,

Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980, p.190.

11. Implied in R. Dixon and S. Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1978, p.15, and asserted explicitly in C. Powell, *Discovering Cottage Architecture*, Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 1984, p.73, and in M.J. Lewis, *The Gothic Revival*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2002, p.110, caption to fig.97, which also wrongly gives the date of repeal as 1849. For a brief note on the repeal of the Tax see D.H. Kennett, 'Editorial: The Brick Tax Revisited', *BBS Information*, 84, June 2001, pp.2-4; a fuller consideration is given in S. Dowell, *History of Taxes and Taxation from Earliest Times to 1885*, London: Longman, Green, 2nd edn, 1888, vol.4., section XIV.

12. T.P. Smith, 'The Brick Tax and its Effects — Part III', *BBS Information*, 63, October 1994, pp.4-6. Four years after Dixon and Muthesius, 1978, S. Muthesius, *The English Terraced House*, New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1982, p.30 was far more cautious: 'the effect of ... abolition [of the Brick Tax] is difficult to assess, as the fluctuations in price due to other factors, such as transport costs and the change in demand generally, could be much greater than the tax proportion'.

13. As implied in C.G. Powell, *An Economic History of the British Building Industry 1815-1979*, London and New York: Methuen, 1980, p.38. which also includes the much repeated error that mathematical tiles (brick-tiles) were not subject to the Tax, as also in D. Austin, M. Dowdy and J. Miller, *Be Your Own House Detective*, London: BBC Books, 1997, p.68 inset. That mathematical tiles were not exempt from the Tax is made clear in N. Naill, 'Brick and Tile Taxes Revisited', *BBS Information*, 67, March 1996, pp.3-14. For brick production during the period of the Brick Tax see the graph in Smith, 1994, p.4, fig.3, with discussion at pp.4-5; at pp.5-8 this also questions the contention that the Tax inhibited the development of brick machinery, a charge made at an early date: H. Chamberlain, 'The Manufacture of Bricks by Machinery', *J.Soc.Arts*, 4, 185, 1885-6, p.493, and repeated more recently: e.g., Burnett, 1978, p.27; A. Cox, 'Bricks to Build a Capital', in H. Hobhouse and A. Saunders, eds, *Good and Proper Materials: the Fabric of London since the Great Fire*, London: RCHM (England) in association with the London Topographical Society, publication 140, 1989, p.13; and K. Ferry, *The Victorian House*, Botley, Oxford: Shire Publications, 2011, p.8. H. Hobhouse, *Thomas Cubitt Master Builder*, London: Macmillan, 1st edn, 1971, p.308 notes 'The period 1820 to 1850 was one of technological advance in the building industry, and this is reflected in the number of processes and machines for manufacturing bricks and tiles patented during those years. Between 1791 and 1819 some 22 brick patents were taken out, 15 in



the next decade, 28 between 1830 and 1839, and 66 during the 1840s.'

14. For the national situation see Muthesius, 1982, pp.204-5. For London see Clarke, 1992, pp.95-104; Clout, 1997, p.133; and P.E. Malcolmson, 'Getting a Living in the Slums of Victorian Kensington', *The London Journal*, 1, 1, May 1975, pp.36-7.

15. For a contemporary treatment of London Stocks see Dobson, 1850, vol. 2, pp.1-50; several other sources are listed in T.P. Smith, 'Westminster Cathedral: its Bricks and Brickwork', *BBS Information*, 110, July 2009, pp.24-5, n.31.

16. The barges also took ash and cinder from the metropolis to the yards, where they were used in brickmaking: see further below. For the Middlesex situation see P. Hounsell, 'Up the Cut to Paddington: the West Middlesex Brick Industry and the Grand Junction Canal', *BBS Information*, 93, February 2004, pp.11-16.

17. For Gad's Hill see Hibbert, 2000, pp.6-37, 253-4, 269, with photographs opp. pp.34, 35, 227; there are brief descriptions in J. Newman, *The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969, p.314; London: Penguin Books, 2nd edn, 1976, p.327; New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 3rd edn, 2012, p.298. For the description of Gad's Hill in Newman, 2012, see this issue *BBS Information*, p.39. It later became an independent girls school and is now an independent co-ed school.

18. Quoted in Clarke, 1992, p.95.

19. See the consideration of St Pancras in Clarke, 1992, pp.100, 129-140; it is instructive to compare the map of St Pancras in 1800, showing several brickyards, at p.98, plan 4, with a modern map of the same area. See also J. Proctor, K. Sabel, and F.M. Maddens, 'Post-Medieval Brick Clamps at New Cross in London', *Post-Med. Archaeol.*, 34, pp.187-200; also Malcolmson, 1975, p.37, n.33: 'The [Kensington] brickfields were built over from the 1860s to the 1880s and despite the fact that the land, like all former brickfields was poor, covered with water-logged pits and heaps of rubbish, the houses erected provided some of the best working class housing in the area'. John Ruskin (1819-1900) wrote in the late 1830s of incongruous 'Swiss Cottages falsely ... so entitled, dropped in the brick-fields around the metropolis': E.T. Cook and A.D.O. Wedderburn, eds, *The Works of John Ruskin*, vol. 1, London: George Allen, 1903, p.6; Ruskin was a rhetorician and 'Swiss Cottages' — even in Swiss Cottage! — were scarcely the norm: houses like the Pooters' (see immediately below) and, even more, simple Stock Brick terraces were.

20. The edition introduced by Christopher Matthew, Stroud, Glos. and Wolfeboro Falls NH: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1991, is helpfully augmented by numerous period photographs.

21. The canal is the Regent's Canal, opened in 1820; it runs from the Paddington Canal through Camden Town to join the Thames at Limehouse: D. Pratt, *London's Canals*, Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 2004, pp.36-46; A.H. Faulkner, *The Grand Junction Canal*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972, pp.79-80. The Paddington Canal connects with the Grand Union (formerly the Grand Junction) Canal, at Little Venice. Bob Cratchit, Ebenezer Scrooge's clerk, had a house in Camden Town (*A Christmas Carol*, 1843, staves 1, 5). As a boy, Dickens himself lived there between 1822 and 1823 and again in 1824: Hibbert, 2000, pp.37, 47, 64, with photograph opp. p.34. For a list of Dickens' addresses before 1835 see R. Richardson, *Dickens and the Workhouse: Oliver Twist and the London Poor*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp.310-311.

22. The painting by E.H. Dixon, 'The Great Dust Heap at King's Cross next to Battle Bridge and the Smallpox Hospital, 1837' (London: Wellcome Collection) is reproduced in R. Cox *et al.*, *The Filthy Reality of Everyday Life: Dirt*, London: Profile Books in association with the Wellcome Collection, 2011, p.178. A much enlarged reproduction of the watercolour appeared in *Saturday Guardian Review*, 19 March 2011, pp.16-17. In my childhood, 'dustman' was still the current term for what are now called 'refuse operatives': cf. L. Worsley, *If Walls Could Talk: an Intimate History of the Home*, London: Faber & Faber, 2011, p.198.

23. Mayhew, 1885, p.218; the collection, sifting, and use of 'dust' is considered at pp.218-19. with brickmaking at pp.227-9; another contemporary account is R.H. Horne, 'Dust; or Ugliness Redeemed', *Household Words*, 13 July 1850, reprinted abridged Cox *et al.*, 2011, pp.178-182. There is an illustration of the Somers Town (north London) dust heap in 1836 in Clarke, 1992, p.99, pl.1; also in Cox *et al.*, 2011, p.183; Dickens considered the ash heaps and the use of ash in brickmaking in the journal *Household Words*, cited H. House, *The Dickens World*, 2nd edn, London: Oxford University Press, 1942, pp.166-7. Cf. the discussion in P. Ackroyd, *London: the Biography*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2000, pp.340-1; also p.225 for 'the great dust mountains ... [which] had the appearance of volcanoes'.

24. As well as fig.2, see also the photograph of women sifting dust in Ackroyd, 2000, unnumbered pl.6 between pp.664 and 665.

25. Mayhew, 1885, p.228. For contemporary description and illustrations of London clamps see

Dobson, 1850, vol. 2, pp.26-37. There is an excellent 1880 photograph of a London clamp (with a little girl perched on the bricks!) at Wood Street, Walthamstow (now London E17) in G. Weightman and S. Humphries, *The Making of Modern London 1815-1914*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1983, across pp.126-7. Clamps were more suited than kilns to the temporary nature of the London brickfields: '... bricks were often manufactured ... on building sites where the erection of expensive equipment [such as permanent kilns] would have been inappropriate'. Malcolmson, 1975, p.37, n.22.

26. Horne's story (n.23) centres on the discovery by a young deformed dust worker, Jem Clinker, of a gold frame for a miniature; Cox *et al.*, p.180-1.

27. R.-H. Perks, *George Bargebrick Esquire: the Story of George Smeed, the Brick and Cement King*, Rainham, Kent: Meresborough Books, 1981, p.3 and *passim*. For carrying by cart see Mayhew, 1985, p.228.

28. The Balls Pond brickfield was real: an eighteen-year-old orphan recalled that as a child he 'used to work in the brick-fields at Ball's-pond ... I earned 18s. a week, working from five in the morning until sunset'; after the death of his parents he lost his job; he 'tried to work in brick-fields, and couldn't get it, and work grew slack': Mayhew, 1985, pp.389-90. Dobson, 1850, vol. 2, p.41 mentions two Balls Pond brickyards: 'Ambler' and 'Messrs. Rhodes, Thos. and Wm.': William Rhodes is mentioned as taking out a patent for a method of building brick clamps in 1824 by Hobhouse, 1971, p.308.

29. For attempts to locate this brickyard in St Albans or elsewhere in Hertfordshire see T.P. Smith, 'William Bennett: a Mid-Nineteenth-Century St Albans Brickworks Proprietor', *BBS Information*, 105, October 2007, p.27, n.17: but as noted there, 'it would be rash to suppose that [Dickens] is providing an *exact description* of any specific location'. And it is worth remembering that Dickens' original intention was to place Bleak House near Rochester: House, 1942, p.19. n.2; so perhaps he was thinking of the Kentish yards.

30. Malcolmson, 1975, pp.33-7; White, 2007, p.88; 'at West Drayton [Middx] the pig was known as "The Brickie's Bank", his protection against winter distress': R. Samuel, 'Mineral Workers', in R. Samuel, ed., *Miners, Quarrymen and Saltworkers*, London, Henley and Boston MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, p.63. Mid-nineteenth-century brickmakers' homes, at least in the Fenland, might be no more than converted disused kilns: S. Marshall, *A Pride of Tigers: a Fen Family and its Fortunes*, pbk edn, London: The Penguin Group, 1995, p.73.

31. Dobson, 1850, vol.2, fig.1., shows the layout of a typical brickworks in 1850, with description,

*ibid.*, p.5; the sketch is reproduced redrawn and annotated in Hobhouse, 1971, fig.16. Hobhouse, 1971, p.310 describes Thomas Cubitt's land purchases in Kent for brick-earth and gives a plan c.1856 (as her fig.19) of his mechanised brickworks at Burham Vicarage beside the River Medway.

32. This is a work of fiction, but is presumably based on real experience. In my boyhood in Luton there were old water-filled brickpits in the suburb of Stopsley: because they were dangerous, a primary school friend and myself were forbidden to play there — so, of course, we did!

33. Dobson, 1850, vol.2, pp.5-13, 47-8; Dobson's plan is in two halves on facing pages (10,11); I have redrawn it, complete, and have added the second horse (which Dobson omits) in my fig.4. Dobson, 1850, vol.2, p.12, fig.6 shows the operation of the clay-washing mill in cross-section, reproduced redrawn in H. Hobhouse, 1971, fig.17.

34. At various places in and around London, and as far east as Canterbury, one may see the melted and fused London Stocks used as building blocks and resembling rough, undressed rubble stone. They were occasionally used for small utilitarian buildings but much more for boundary, mostly garden, walls.

35. R.H. Tawney and E. Power, eds, *Tudor Economic Documents*, vol.2, *Commerce, Finance and the Poor Law*, London, New York and Toronto, Longmans, Green & Co., 1924, p.338; cf. S. Inwood, *A History of London*, London, Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 1998, p.164. The term 'kilnes' probably refers to *clamps*: see 'A Terminological Note', *supra*, p.6.

36. D. Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth: England under the Later Tudors 1547-1603*, 2nd edn, London and New York: Longman, 1992, p.247.

37. M.D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, pbk edn, London: The Penguin Group, 1966, pp.105, 277; cf. Woodforde, 1976, p.4 for much later instances.

38. The Gordon Riots, which affected London and its environs, were led by the eccentric Lord George Gordon (1751-1793), President of the Protestant Association, in protest against the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, presented to Parliament in 1778. Nominally a 'No Popery' movement, it was also a social insurrection mingled with an unattractive jingoism. Like most such movements before and since it attracted those whose sole interest was in mindless destruction, pillage, and violence, an aspect which Dickens captures in his novel. For the Riots see C. Hibbert, *King Mob: the Story of Lord George Gordon and the Riots of 1780*, London: Longmans, 1958; also

Whitfield, 2006, pp.104-5 with map of where the troops were stationed, p.104.

39. Woodforde, 1976, p.4. On the 'nauseating fumes' given off during clamp-firing of London Stocks in the twentieth century see A.B. Searle, *A Rudimentary Treatise of the Manufacture of Bricks and Tiles based on the Work of Edward Dobson*, London: The Technical Press, 1936, p.72.

40. R.A. Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: an Economic and Social History*, Baltimore MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp.181-2; J. Hollestelle, *De steenbakkerij in de Nederlanden tot omstreeks 1560*, 2nd edn, Arnhem: Gybers & Van Loon, 1976, pp.144-7; T.P. Smith, *The Medieval Brickmaking Industry in England 1400-1450*, Oxford: British Archaeol. Rep. British Series, 138, 1985, p.61.

41. Proud of his status as a 'gentleman', Dickens kept secret from his public and even from his wife and children the facts that his father had been imprisoned for debt and that his twelve-year-old self had worked in a blacking factory. Only posthumously did they emerge in John Forster's biography of the author. Forster (1812-1876), a friend of Dickens, published his biography in three volumes from 1872 to 1874; an abridged, and beautifully illustrated, edition is now available, ed. H. Furneaux, New York: Sterling Signature, 2011; the boyhood incidents occupy pp.30-40. The relevant section of Forster's biography is helpfully reproduced as 'Appendix I' in the edition of *David Copperfield* (1850), ed. J. Tambling, revised edn, London: The Penguin Group, 2004, pp.893-905. George Smith (1831-1895; see n.5 *supra*), by happy contrast, never made a secret of his humble origins: Bristow, 1999, *passim*.

42. Quoted in S. Halliday, *Newgate: London's Prototype of Hell*, reissued Stroud, Glos.: The History Press, 2010, p.149.

43. C. Hibbert, *The English: a Social History 1066-1945*, London: HarperCollins, 1987, pp.590-1.

44. *The Builder*, 27 May 1843, p.195, quoted Hobhouse, 1971, p.310. *The Builder* was published weekly from early in 1843.

45. K. Marx, *Capital: a Critique of Political Economy*, vol.1 (published in German in 1867), trans. B. Fowkes, London: The Penguin Group, 1990 edn, p.594; see also the reports quoted at pp.593-4. All these examples emphasise the long hours and degrading conditions under which men, women, and children had to work. Dickens does not consider these issues; indeed, he too readily accepts that things would be well enough if only those in charge would be more kindly — like the Cheeryble brothers in

*Nicholas Nickleby* or old Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol*. 'There is no clear sign,' it has been observed, 'that [Dickens] wants the existing order to be overthrown, or believes it would make very much difference if it were': G. Orwell, 'Charles Dickens' (1939) in *George Orwell: Essays*, London: The Penguin Group in association with Secker & Warburg, 2000 edn, p.37.

46. For a selection of relevant documents see E.R. Pike, ed., *Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age 1850-1875*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967, pp.131-2, 211-15; also Hibbert, 1987, pp.589-90. For the hardships caused by the seasonal nature of brickmaking see Mayhew's poignant account from 'the little daughter of a working brickmaker', not included in Neuburg's selections (see n.8) but quoted in E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, revised edn with new preface, London: The Penguin Group, 1991 edn, p.349. During the winter 'off season' some brickmakers might find alternative employment in, e.g., gasworks: E.J. Hobsbawm, 'British Gas-Workers 1873-1914', reprinted in E.J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968 edn, pp.162, 174-5 n.23; but there was no *guarantee* of other work. A no less poignant story (if true) is that told by 'Another Unfortunate' in a letter to *The Times*, 24 December 1858: her father was a brickmaker and both parents were drinkers; she lost her virginity at thirteen and turned to prostitution at fifteen: White, 2007, p.309; but see the author's caution at p.526, n.34: such letters 'are always suspect because not a few were the work of clever hoaxers'.

47. B.A. Dan, 'A Kentish Brickfield', *Good Works*, 36, 1895, p.674, reprinted in *BBS North Midlands Bull.*, 1, October 1974, unnumbered pp.9-14 (this ref. p.12); see also R. Samuel, "'Quarry Roughs": Life and Labour in Headington Quarry, 1860-1920. An Essay in Oral History', in R. Samuel, ed., *Village Life and Labour*, London and Boston MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, pp.139-263 *passim*, but especially pp.185-6.

48. For child labour in the brickyards see Bristow, 1999, pp.9-79.

49. *The Builder*, 27 May 1843, p.195, quoted Hobhouse, 1971, p.310.

50. Even this chapter is criticised: 'Dickens is right in saying that a gifted child [= David Copperfield = Charles Dickens] ought not to work ten hours a day pasting labels on bottles ...; what he does not say is that *no* child ought to be condemned to such a fate, and there is no reason for inferring that he thinks it. David escapes from the warehouse, but [his fellow child workers] Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes and the others are still there, and there is no sign that this

troubles Dickens particularly': Orwell, 2000, pp.39, 40; this last point is echoed in M. Fido, *The World of Charles Dickens*, new edn, London: Carlton Books, 2012, p.47. But this may be unfair, and for a more positive account see H. Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood*, London: BBC Books, pp.149-152; C. Tomalin, *Charles Dickens: a Life*, London: Viking, 2011, pp.149, 342; and M. Slater, *The Genius of Dickens: The Ideas and Inspiration of Britain's Greatest Novelist*, new edn, London: Duckworth Overlook, 2011, pp.75-83. Orwell's view is skewed by exclusive consideration of the novels, ignoring Dickens' journalism. For Dickens' genuine concern, see, for example, his article, co-written with Henry Morley (1822-1894), 'Boys to Mend', *Household Words*, 129, 11 September 1852; the opening words are quoted, but attributed to Dickens alone, in H. Amy, *The Street Children of Dickens's London*, Stroud, Glos.: Amberley Publishing, 2012, p.82.

51. R.N. Price, 'The Other Face of Respectability: Violence in the Manchester Brickmaking Trade 1859-1870', *Past and Present*, 66, February 1975, p.111. Local studies rarely consider this matter; a worthy exception is A. Connolly, *Life in the Victorian Brickyards of Flintshire and Denbighshire*, Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2003, pp.61-3.

52. See P.S. and D.N. Brown, 'Industrial Disputes in Victorian Brickyards: I The 1860s', *BBS Information*, 99, February 2006, pp.6-9, and '... 2: The 1890s', *BBS Information*, 101, July 2006, pp.14-19; also Connolly, 2003, pp.68-72. For unions and industrial action, including machine breaking, in the Manchester brickyards in 1859-70 see Price, 1975, pp.110-132.

53. F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (published in German in 1845), ET by V. Kiernan, new edn, London: The Penguin Group, 2005, pp.234-7; or introd. E.J. Hobsbawm, London: Panther Books, 1969, pp.252-3.

54. Hibbert, 2000, pp.286-7, n.7; see Orwell, 2000, pp.40-44; and House, 1942, pp.179-80. In *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens seems unable to distinguish between (incipient) trade unions and mob violence; but then as Orwell (p.40) comments, he was 'hostile to the most hopeful movement of his day, trade unionism'.

55. This is a powerful story and it is a pity that it has been so sentimentalised in most of the television

and film versions. The exception, and the best, is certainly the Warner Brothers 1994 version, directed by Caroline Thompson (DVD 2008).

56. M. De Koninck and H. Marijnissen, ed. L. Vlind, *Steenovensvolk*, Amsterdam: Link Uitgeverij, 1988, p.91 (my translation). For horses in Victorian Britain see D.H. Kennett, *Victorian and Edwardian Horses from Historic Photographs*, London: B.T. Batsford, 1980, pp.vii-ix and *passim*; pl.87 shows a horse working a portable pugmill at a Norfolk brickyard in the 1880s, from which consideration of the ill-treatment of horses is omitted. For this see Peter Hollindale's introduction to the World's Classics edition of *Black Beauty*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp.xiii-xx; also Anna Sewall's novel. Dickens, to be fair, does mention cruelty to horses in other contexts: e.g., in Southwark he saw 'odious sheds for horses, and donkeys' and 'a starved old white horse who was making a meal of oyster shells': letter of 7 January 1853 to Angela Burdett-Coutts (later Baroness Burdett-Coutts; 1814-1906), in J. Hartley, ed., *The Selected Letters of Charles Dickens*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p.251; White, 2007, pp.252-3.

57. De Koninck and Marijnissen, 1988, p.239, figure caption; for the continued use of horses in Dutch brickyards see the dated photographs at pp.90 (c.1925), 97 (1940), and undated photographs *passim*. The situation was similar in Britain: F.G. Willmott 'Bricks and Brickies', privately published, Rainham, Kent, 1972, p.36, fig.22.

58. Hibbert, 1987, caption to ninth unnumbered plate between pp.450 and 451, reproducing a late-nineteenth-century painting of a Lancashire brickfield.

59. There may be more material in Dickens' journalism, letters, and speeches. But having worked my way through fifteen novels, *Sketches by Boz*, some other stories, and the *selected* letters (Hartley, 2012, which, at p.408, has two disparaging glances at a brickmaker), I am not inclined, unlike *Oliver Twist*, to ask for more! And I have some sympathy with Inspector Dutt, reading *Pickwick Papers*, in a George Gently crime novel: "'I've been having a go at this Dickens bloke ... they must have been a rum lot in his day! I reckon he overwrote, you know. Blinking great paragraphs and long sentences" / "It went down well when he wrote it[.]" [said Gently]': A. Hunter, *Gently Sahib*, London: Cassell & Co., 1964, reissued London: Robinson, 2012, chapter 8.

## Stranger than Fact: L.P. Hartley and *The Brickfield*

ALAN COX

The writer and novelist, Leslie Poles Hartley (1895-1972), is best remembered for coining the phrase 'The past is a foreign country' as the opening words of his most well-known novel, *The Go-Between* (1953). Two of his lesser-known novels are *The Brickfield* (1963) and its sequel, *The Betrayal* (1966), subsequently published, as the original intention had been, together as one volume.

Like others of Hartley's books, *The Brickfield* is about an ultimately doomed relationship, in this case between two teenagers, Richard Mardyke and Lucy Soames. The story is related many years later by an ageing Mardyke, by then a writer and still a bachelor, to his younger live-in secretary and companion, Denys Aspin.

*The Brickfield* is Hartley's most autobiographical novel and Richard Mardyke is clearly a fictionalised version of Hartley. It is set in the Fens, where Hartley spent his childhood, with Whittlesey, where he was born, being renamed Fosdyke in the book, while Peterborough is given its Anglo-Saxon name, Medehampstead.

There are two brickmaking strands in *The Brickfield*. At the opening of chapter two Mardyke recounts:

My father was a Bank manager in Fosdyke, a small town in the Fens, near Medehampstead, and besides being a Bank manager, he had an interest in a brickworks, quite a small affair it was, and he regarded it at first, I seem to remember, more as a hobby than as a source of income. It just paid its way. Later, when I was of an age to understand such things, he told me it brought in on an average £500 a year which, with his salary, gave him an income of nearly a thousand, which seemed to me a great deal, and was a good deal, in those days.<sup>1</sup>

Hartley's father, Henry Bark Hartley, was, in fact, a solicitor, who set up home in Whittlesey in 1891, when the Peterborough Fletton-brick industry was just beginning to take off.<sup>2</sup> He acted as solicitor to two of the pioneers in the local industry, the brothers Arthur James and George Keeble. Hartley senior soon realised the possibility of the Fletton brick, and together with two other local legal men formed in 1898 the Whittlesea Central Brick Company Ltd. The firm took over an existing small brickworks in Whittlesey, owned by John W. Andrews, which became the No. 1 Works. This was virtually doubled in 1908, when an adjacent brickworks was purchased from A.W. Itter.<sup>3</sup> Like Mardyke's father, the family of Hartley's father thought his investment in brickmaking was merely a hobby, but, in fact, it brought him considerable wealth.<sup>4</sup>

At one point Aspin says to Mardyke: 'I should have thought that there was a lot more that counted, Richard. Your money from the bricks, for one thing'. Mardyke's reply reflects Hartley's own ambivalent attitude to his brickmaking inheritance:

Oh That? Yes, it did count, thank goodness, or where should you and I be? ... Through thick and thin he held on to the brick-works ... For nearly forty years it paid its way, and then it paid my way. I've been its pensioner for thirty years — I'm the same age as it. We were both my father's children, and he made me a director of the Company, but I can't say I ever helped him with it.<sup>5</sup>

Hartley realised that the money generated by his father's brickworks had given him the financial



Fig. 1 Leslie Poles Hartley, 1895-1972.

independence to pursue a career as a writer. On the other hand, he was guilty about his lack of interest in the brickmaking business, and felt that somehow he has disappointed his father.<sup>6</sup> In *The Betrayal* Mardyke admits that 'when he enjoyed the "warmth" that money gives, he didn't get it from his own efforts, but from the smoky chimneys of the brick-kilns at Fosdyke'<sup>7</sup>

Mardyke's father had bequeathed the bulk of his shares in what is called in *The Betrayal* the Fosdyke Fundamental Brick Company to his son. 'He didn't stipulate that Richard shouldn't sell them, but Richard knew that he didn't want him to; they were to be an heirloom'.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, he is persuaded to dispose of his large block of shares, but feels that he is betraying

the firm and his father. 'He began to feel that all the mistakes and wrongdoings of a life time were summed up in the betrayal of the Brick Company'.<sup>9</sup> In fact, L.P. Hartley remained a director of the Whittlesea Central Brick Company for over forty years and attended its final board meeting on 3 March 1966 at Peterborough, when it was decided to sell out to the National Coal Board.<sup>10</sup> Various records of the company are now in the Archives and Local History Section of Cambridgeshire County Council in Peterborough Central Library, reference 681/B1-151.

The other brickmaking strand in Hartley's two novels is, of course, the brickfield itself. In the novels it is situated in the small Fenland town of Rockland, and is where the young Mardyke and Lucy can meet in secret, and where, although there are no explicit descriptions, it is very clear the couple have a physical relationship. But when Lucy wrongly believes she is pregnant, without revealing this to Mardyke, she says that they must end their relationship. However, she agrees to meet one last time at the brickfield. When he arrives there, he cannot see Lucy and begins searching for her. To his horror he finds her dead, lying face down in one of the flooded clay pits. He immediately thinks she must have committed suicide but then he notes a muddy skid mark leading into the pit. Has she slipped in and was it a terrible accident? At the inquest the verdict is accidental death and their physical relationship is never revealed. Mardyke keeps his secret until he relates the whole episode to his male secretary.

In reality Rockland is based on Crowland, a small country town in Lincolnshire, between Peterborough and Spalding. Mardyke's grandparents live at Rockland, just as Hartley lived at Crowland, at St James's Lodge, in an area to the east of the town known as Postland.<sup>11</sup> Close to St James's Lodge is what is marked on the 1888 and 1891 Ordnance Survey 25-inch maps as St James's Brickworks, at the junction formed by what were the A1073 and B1166 roads (NGR TF/263117). This was operated by John Elger, who was a brick and tile maker at Crowland by 1856 and whose address was subsequently given as Postland.<sup>12</sup> He continued to be listed in Kelly's *Directories for Lincolnshire* until 1889. This is obviously the inspiration for Hartley's fictitious brickfield.

Mardyke gives a long description of the latter:

There was complete privacy within the Brickfield. ... A dyke divided it from the main road, a dyke with a bridge over it. ... There were, I suppose, about ten acres — spoilt acres — of the brickfield, all unfit for cultivation. The company that worked it had dug out the clay.

So far this seems an accurate description of the real brickworks at Crowland. This is far from the case when Mardyke goes on to describe the kiln:

Somewhere towards the centre was a plateau on which stood the remains of the brick-kiln, blackening and ruinous, crowned by its broken chimney.

... Round the kiln still ran the metal pathway on which the men had wheeled their barrow-loads of bricks for burning.

... As for the chambers where the bricks were burnt, at first we gave them a wide berth, for some had fallen in and others looked as if they might collapse at any moment. You could still see the holes, tunnelling in to the sky, though which coal-dust had been poured to keep the bricks alight, and the flues through which the fire ate its way from chamber to chamber.

... The chimney-stack had been a hundred feet high.

... As a landmark it must have rivalled Rockland Abbey. ... only the blackened stump, no taller than the encircling vegetation ... It was square, not as the brick-chimneys of today are, round, and the summit ended in a jagged spike.<sup>13</sup>



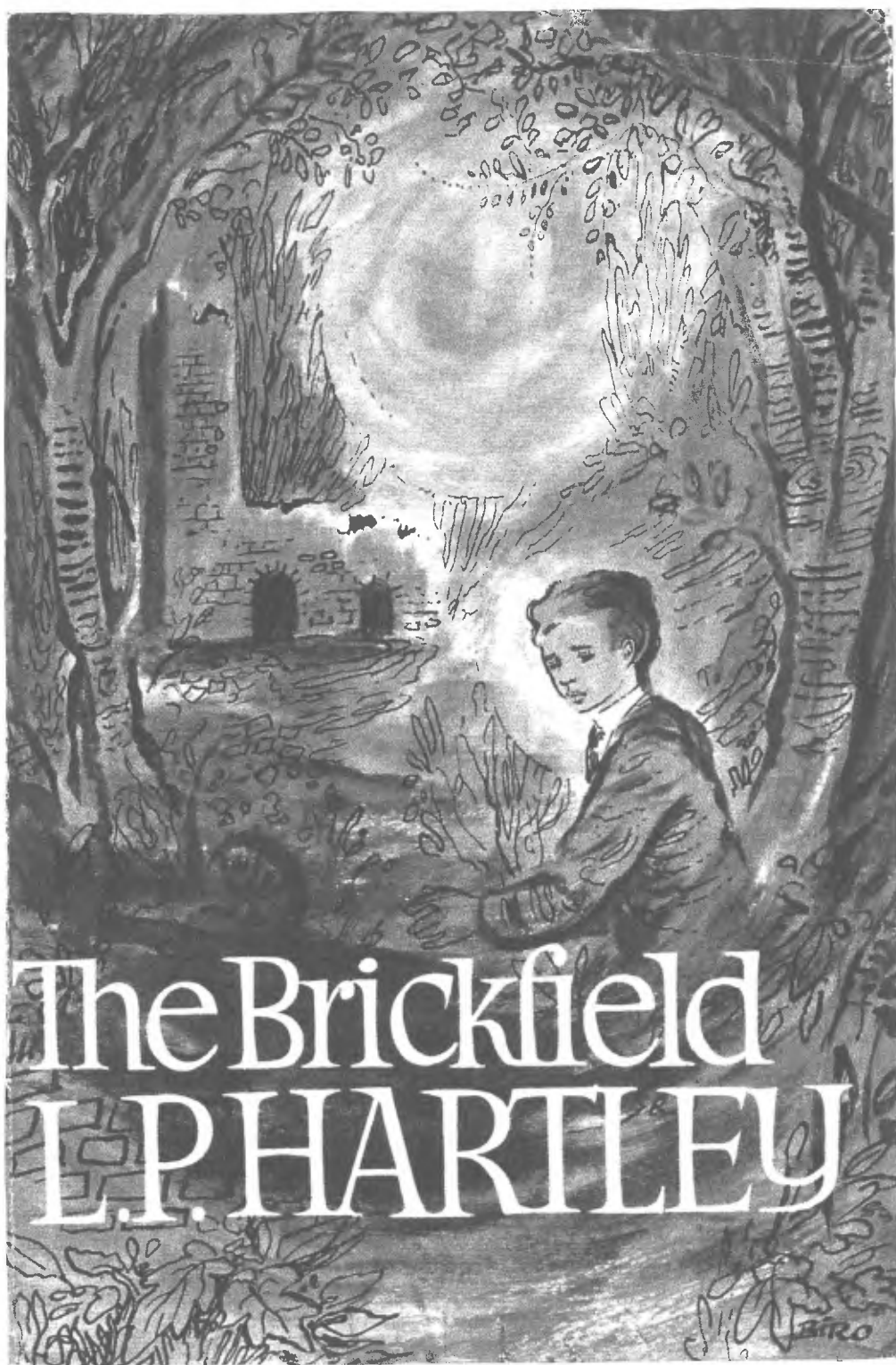


Fig. 2 The image on the dustjacket of L.P. Hartley, *The Brickfield*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963.

In the real-life brickworks at Crowland, the 1888 and 1891 OS maps show the kiln not in the centre of the site but in the south-west corner, together with associated buildings (probably moulding and drying sheds). The kiln in the book is clearly a Hoffman multi-chambered, continuous-firing one, which Hartley would have known from the Fletton-brick industry. It is a



fragment of this type of kiln showing the arched entrances or wickets of two chambers and the ruined remains of the chimney, which appears on the coloured illustration on the dust-jacket of *The Brickfield*. This is signed by the Budapest-born book illustrator, Val Biro. The kiln on the OS maps is almost certainly a much smaller Scotch kiln, with no chambers and no chimney. By the time of the next Kelly's Lincolnshire directory after 1889, in 1896, John Elger is no longer listed as a brickmaker and on the OS 25-inch map of 1904, although the site of the brickworks is still discernable, the kiln and associated buildings are no longer shown. So Hartley must have been born at about the time when the St James's Brickworks had closed in the early to mid-1890s, and probably by the time he knew it, the kiln had been demolished and it was more no than an overgrown piece of ground, covered in vegetation.

This it has remained to the present day, although from being in a fairly remote setting, it now finds itself close to the recently rebuilt and re-aligned section of the A16 Peterborough to Spalding road. Again, this is unlike its fictional counterpart. In *The Betrayal*, Mardyke, when he finally returns to Rockland, is shown the site of the old brickfield but fails to recognize it, until his cousin explains that he has had it bulldozed, cleaned up and flattened, so that corn now grows on it.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Sue Jackson, who knowing I was after a copy of *The Brickfield*, managed to purchase one for me in Northumberland and presented it to me.

I also thank Stephen Coleman, who tracked down the map reference of the St James's Brickworks, Crowland, which allowed me to locate it on the old Ordnance Survey maps. Finally, I am grateful for the facilities and helpfulness of the staffs at the Archives and Local History Room, Peterborough Central Library, and at Bedford Libraries.

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14. *The Betrayal*, pp.270-1.

*Book Review:*  
*Charles Dickens and the Workhouse*

Ruth Richardson, *Dickens and the Workhouse: Oliver Twist and the London Poor*  
370 pages, 44 illustrations,  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012,  
ISBN 978-0-19-964588-6, price £16-99, hardback.

In November 2010, there was a spirited exchange of letters in *The Times* concerning the fate of the former Strand Union Workhouse on Cleveland Street, London W1, in that month threatened with imminent demolition. Built between 1775 and 1777, the Cleveland Street Workhouse is the best-preserved Georgian workhouse in London: one of only two surviving north of the River Thames; the other is the Manette Street Workhouse for St Anne's, Soho, designed by James Paine (1717-1789).



Fig. 1 The Strand Union Workhouse on Cleveland Street, St Marylebone, originally the workhouse for the parish of St Paul Covent Garden. Before closure, it was used as the Outpatients Department of the now demolished Middlesex Hospital.

Built as the workhouse for the parish of St Paul's Covent Garden — where the brick-built church with a stone portico to the square was designed in 1620 by Inigo Jones — the Cleveland Street Workhouse last use was as the Outpatients Department of the Middlesex Hospital, itself sited not far to the south as Horwood's 1799 Map of London (Richardson, fig.15) shows; her figure 8, a photograph of Norfolk Street, taken in 2011 after the demolition of the hospital, with the cleared site exposed, demonstrates the closeness of the two institutions. The much rebuilt Middlesex Hospital was erected in 1757 and closed in 2005/06 with demolition following relatively soon afterwards.

Richardson examines the three interlocking strands of the story relating Charles Dickens' place of residence in his youth and its relationship to the Cleveland Street Workhouse with the genesis of the novel *Oliver Twist*. Richardson is a medical and literary historian who has turned herself into a building detective. Her discoveries reveal that the young Charles Dickens twice resided with his parents and siblings in rooms above and below a shop at number 10 Norfolk Street, in St Mary-le-Bone parish, first between 1815 and 1817, at the ages of three to five and then between 1829 and 1831. He was on the verge of manhood, seventeen and a wage-earner when the second sojourn began, already accumulating the experiences which would surface

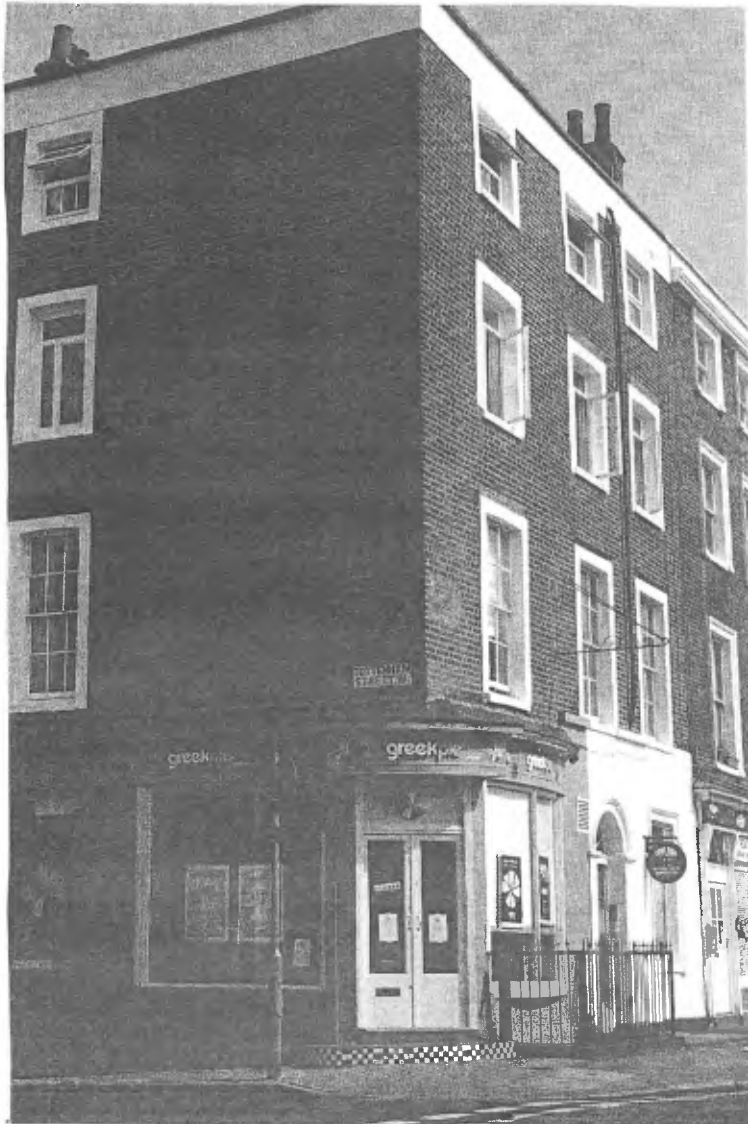


Fig. 2 The childhood home of Charles Dickens at 10 Norfolk Street (now 22 Cleveland Street), London. Visible on the side of the house on Tottenham Street are windows on the three upper floors and the entrance to the shop kept by the landlord, Mr Dodd. The first three bays of the terrace on Norfolk Street comprised Mr Dodd's property, with an entrance to the domestic quarters in the central bay. Dickens lived here twice, in 1814 and 1815 aged three and four and from 1829 to 1831 at the ages of seventeen to nineteen.

in his early works. The address given on the calling card of 'Charles Dickens / Short Hand Writer' is '10, Norfolk Street, Fitzroy Square' (Richardson, fig, 28).

Number 10 Norfolk Street is now number 22 Cleveland Street but will herein continued to be referred to by its former address, as is Richardson's practice.

Dickens, himself, in the lost *Autobiographical Fragment*, which was seen and apparently directly quoted from by his first biographer John Forster, informs us that his family's first lodgings in London were "in Norfolk Street, Middlesex Hospital" (p.7). Another clue to the location is that Norfolk Street is now part of Cleveland Street. In 1830, as at the onset of the nineteenth century, this was a respectable but not high class neighbourhood; Harley Street and the gated roads and squares east of Cleveland Street were the latter.

Number 10 Norfolk Street was constructed at the northern end of a wedge of land on the upper part of Newman Street (the portion later called Norfolk Street) which is clearly shown as not built up on Horwood's *Map of London* of 1799 (Richardson, fig.15). Rate books and other records show the Dickens' parents' landlord, a cheesemonger and grocer named John Dodd, as resident in the house from 1804 to at least 1831. The late Georgian house is a four storey building with basement and attic and is three bays wide on Norfolk Street. The northern bay of the ground floor was given over to a shop on the corner with Tottenham Street; there is a parish marker for St Pancras parish on the wall of number 49 Tottenham Street which abuts the back of Mr Dodd's house (Richardson, fig.6) and there are ground floor shop windows on the return wall to Tottenham Street. The shop door is on the street corner. Presumably the present fenestration replaces late Georgian originals: glass manufacture in the 1800s confined window glass to small panes. In the centre of the Norfolk Street frontage is the entrance to the domestic accommodation with the single bay to the south being a parlour. Number 10 Norfolk Street is the most northerly of a group of four (numbers 7-10 Norfolk Street, consecutive). Each had a bow-fronted shop window and separate entrances for commercial and domestic purposes; in three cases (including number 10) an open area giving access and light to the basement survives: the last had been cemented over for number 9.

The Cleveland Street Workhouse has been noted as a 1770s building; the land on which it was built was Culver Meadow in St Pancras parish, then owned by the Duke of Bedford, who was the patron of Covent Garden parish. One reason for building the St Paul's parish workhouse there was to provide a burial ground for the poor of the 'landlocked parish', something which could be done within the enclosure measuring 200 ft × 167 ft (61 m × 50.9 m). The building envelope itself measured 84 ft × 90 ft (25.6 m × 27.4 m) for the original H-shaped building, sited 20 ft (6.1 m) from the street front on Cleveland Street.

Remarkably, for all that happened to London in the twentieth century, both buildings — the workhouse and Dickens' childhood home — survive, only superficially altered, not more than 200 ft (61 metres) away from one another. Combining clues of property uses in the 1820s and 1830s with the names of shopkeepers, the street's inhabitants in 1836 included a Mr William Sykes, oilman and tallowchandler at number 11 Cleveland Street, opposite to the workhouse, and further south at number 15 Cleveland Street was a pawnbroker, Richardson traces the links between the characters, incidents, and shops in *Oliver Twist* and those in the locality where Dickens himself had spent part of his more formative years (pp.246-303).

The detective work outlined in the book and its valuable account of one late Georgian house complete with internal as well as external photographs is worth the purchase price alone, although the importance of its subject will doubtless bring a paperback edition in a year or two. That the Cleveland Street Workhouse is now recognised as 'The Most Famous Workhouse in the World', to quote the title of Richardson's final chapter is for members of the British Brick Society an added bonus.

The British Brick Society's 2013 London Meeting will include both Dickens' childhood home on Norfolk Street and the Cleveland Street workhouse. Also, the morning session, concentrating on buildings around Soho Square, will include the Manette Street Workhouse.

DAVID H. KENNETT

## BRICK IN PRINT

During 2012, the Editor of the British Brick Society received notice of a number of publications likely to be of interest to members of the British Brick Society. 'Brick in Print' now a regular feature of *BBS Information*, with surveys usually two or three times a year. In keeping with the literary theme of this issue of *British Brick Society Information*, a number of items with a connection to Dickens or are about buildings in the counties with which he was most familiar had been held over to be included here.

Members 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 editor.

DAVID H. KENNETT

1. Mark Bills, editor, *Dickens and the Artists*,  
xii + 188 pages, 111 illustrations.  
New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press in association with Compton:  
The Watts Gallery, 2012,  
ISBN 978-0-300-18988-9, price £15-00, paperback.

Much will have been written about Charles Dickens during 2012; this contribution accompanied the exhibition 'Dickens and the Artists' held at the Watts Gallery, Compton, Surrey, between 19 June and 28 October 2012. After an introduction (pp.1-9) by the editor, the essays are arranged in two parts. 'Part the First: Dickens as an Art Critic' has essays by Nicholas Penny on 'Dickens and Philistinism' (pp.11-33) and Leonée Ormond on 'Dickens and Contemporary Art' (pp.35-65). 'Part the Second: The Influence of Dickens on Artists' has three essays. Hilary Underwood writes on 'Dickens Subjects in Victorian Art' (pp.69-109). Mark Bills considers 'Dickens and the Painting of Modern Life' (pp.111-153) whilst 'Dickens and the Social Realists' (pp.155-181) is the subject of the essay by Pat Hardy.

In 1862, William Powell Frith (1819-1909), one of the many artist friends of Dickens, produced a series of three oil studies — 'Morning - Covent Garden', 'Noon - Regent Street', and 'Night - Haymarket' (pp.122,126) — which echo three of the four etchings, later published as engravings, made in 1738 by William Hogarth (1697-1764). Whereas Hogarth's 'Morning' (p.123) shows the buildings of Covent Garden in considerable detail, the sketches by Frith are less distinct when it comes to buildings. In contrast, George Cruickshank (1792-1878) in his etching, 'Morning' of 1836 (p.124) shows the buildings of Covent Garden far more clearly. However, the opulence of the classically-inspired buildings of the fashionable square in Frith's 'The Crossing Sweeper', an oil painting of 1893 (p.139), is precisely delineated.

The brick shot tower on the south bank of the River Thames appears in two of the more poignant paintings in the exhibition: 'Found Drowned' by George Frederic Watts (1817-1904) of c.1848-50 (p.157), and 'Past and Present No. 3' (p.158), an oil painting of 1858 by Augustus Egg (1816-1862), the final image in a series showing the descent from comfortable affluence to indecent penury and death of an adulterous wife.

The last two images in the book explore links between Dickens, artists and the sea-borne trade of Victorian London, both by James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). One is an oil painting, 'Wapping' (p.178), done over four years from 1860; the other is an etching, 'The Pool' from 'The Thames Set' of 1859 (p.179). Both depict people, ships, and, in the background, buildings. In the painting brick is obvious from the pinky colour of the left-hand one; in the etching, the variety of useful buildings, not all of highest quality, some quite ramshackle, some more sturdily

constructed, erected alongside the south bank of the River Thames between London Bridge and Greenwich, is obvious: the river was workaday not falsely pristine and gentrified.

These essays can be supplemented by that on 'Dickens and Frith' by David Trotter in Mark Bills and Vivien Knight, editors, *William Powell Frith Painting the Victorian Age*, New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 2006.

2. Martin J.P. Davies, *A Distant Prospect of Wessex: Archaeology and the Past in the Life and Works of Thomas Hardy*,  
viii + 218 pages, 46 (unnumbered) black-and-white photographs, 1 map,  
Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012,  
ISBN 978-1-905739-41-7, price £15-99, paperback.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) could not be called a contemporary of Charles Dickens (1812-1870); Hardy's first published novel, *Desperate Remedies*, appeared only in 1871. Hardy had trained as an architect; several years earlier, he supervised the removal of the graves from churchyard at old St Pancras, an event which, as Davies points out (pp.102, 190, 198), made no small impression on him. Davies reviews not the architectural work of Thomas Hardy, which was the subject of Claudius J. Beatty's *Thomas Hardy: Conservation Architect*, Dorchester: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 1995, but his archaeological knowledge and activities and their relationship with his novels. Whilst the whole *oeuvre* is surveyed, particular attention is paid to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, originally published 1886, and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which first appeared in 1891.

In the account of the post Annual General Meeting tour of Reading in 2010, in *BBS Information*, 116, April 2011, p.20, Terence Smith pointed out that whilst in *Jude the Obscure* Hardy may have called the Berkshire down 'Aldbrickham' — a suitable name for a place with a flourishing brickmaking industry — the novelist makes no direct reference to the trade. As with Charles Dickens (above pp.9-26), a correlation of the references in Hardy's novels to bricks, brickmaking and bricklaying would enlarge knowledge of the industry in the second half of the nineteenth century. *Jude the Obscure* in 1895 was the last prose fiction Thomas Hardy wrote and an examination of Hardy's novels could contrast his literary treatment of brick with how he deals with the products and activities of the stonemason's trade.

Davies' book is well-produced and well-illustrated. Amongst the illustrations are Max Gate, the brick house Hardy designed for himself on the outskirts of Dorchester (p.39), and the south wall of the south chapel of St John the Baptist church, Bere Regis, Dorset, the chapel of the Turberville family (p.101). There is much brick in this wall; the upper half being two courses of brick alternating with two courses of rubble, and with brick round the windows. The walls of the south porch again are alternately two courses of brick and two courses of rubble. The use of brick is due to rebuilding of the south side of the church after a fire in 1760.

3. John Goodall, 'Seat of British Diplomacy: Chevening House, Kent',  
*Country Life*, 29 February 2012, pages 52-56.

From the early eighteenth century, Chevening was the estate and house of the Earls Stanhope. The house is now the setting for high-level diplomatic meetings as the new table in the Tapestry Room (Goodall, fig.8) makes clear. The house is now the property of the Chevening Trust, established to provide a retreat for a person nominated by the Prime Minister of the day, often the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, by a bequest from James Richard, the seventh and last Earl Stanhope (1880-1967).

The seventh Earl Stanhope held various government offices in the two inter-war decades,

entering the cabinet in 1936: his final post was as First Lord of the Admiralty between 1938 and 1940. Beyond politics and his estate, his interests were the National Portrait Gallery, which his grandfather, Philip Henry, the fifth Earl Stanhope (1805-1875), had been instrumental in creating and of which he was a trustee, and the establishment of the National Maritime Museum, of whose trustees he was the founding chairman.

In 1717, the seventh earl's ancestor, General James Stanhope (1673-1721) bought the estate which included a house probably built for Richard, the thirteenth Lord Dacre (1596-1630), who *may* have employed Inigo Jones (1573-1652) as his architect. It is well-established that Jones' pupil and former assistant John Webb (1611-1672) provided wainscoting in 1655 for the dining room on the ground floor (Goodall, fig.3): the kitchen, as a 1679 plan makes clear, was then in the south-east corner of the semi-basement

The original, very tall house, two and a half storeys with a semi-basement and an attic with hip-roofed dormers, is now partly hidden beneath later additions. However, barely 5 miles away is St Clere, Kemsing, whose chapel was consecrated in 1633. St Clere is red brick in English Bond; its windows have raised architraves. The unaltered Chevening was red brick in English Bond; its windows have raised classical architraves. St Clere is double pile; Chevening is triple pile. The estate map of 1679, from which our knowledge of the unaltered Chevening derives, usefully provides plans of the basement and the first floor, but not the ground floor, as well as the celebrated view of the north and west fronts.

The general — who became Viscount Stanhope of Mahon on 3 July 1717, in recognition of his military prowess in defeating the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion and in recognition of his political position as Principal Secretary of State — soon set about improving his property, employing the joiner and surveyor Thomas Fort (d.1745) from the Board of Works. Fort added concave quadrants terminating in pavilions — for a new kitchen and the stables — to the north front and side projections to the main block. Fort used red brick but replaced the hip-roofed attic dormers with a pediment (Goodall, fig.1). The general, by now an earl, died suddenly in 1721 while in the House of Lords but Lady Stanhope continued the improvements, including the spectacular unsupported wooden stair in the entrance hall devised by the former military engineer Nicholas Dubois.

Subsequent earls also left their mark on the house. Philip, the second earl (1714-1786), transformed the great chamber in the centre of the first floor into the tapestry room (Goodall, fig.8). Late in the eighteenth century, Charles, the third earl (1753-1816), employed James Wyatt (1746-1813). Wyatt worked at Chevening for a decade from 1786, adding pilasters and grey mathematical tiles to the exterior and a new attic storey to the centre. In the early nineteenth century, the fourth earl, an enthusiastic gardener, did much planting. After 1875, William Young (1843-1900), who built up an extensive country house practice, added a billiard room and remodelled the drawing room in the style of Robert Adam for Arthur Philip, the sixth earl (1838-1905).

Since 1967, Donald Insall & Partners have been responsible for refurbishment of the house. Wyatt's additions of the mathematical tiles and the raised attic storey have been removed. The north front gained a pediment, to agree with the one added by Thomas Fort. The interior has been refurbished, particularly the tapestry room, and the Berlin tapestries, the subject of a separate article by Helen Wyld on pages 57 to 60, cleaned and rehung. The tapestries were given to the first earl in 1720 by Friedrich I of Prussia in recognition of his work in creating the alliance which brought the Great Northern War to its conclusion.

An alternative account of Chevening is given by John Newman, *The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald*, New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 3rd edn, 2012, pages 166-169, with the view of the house from the 1679 estate map on p.167, and plates 66 and 67 (illustrations of details). St Clere, Kemsing is considered *ibid.*, page 329.

- 4.. Edward Handley, 'My Recollections of Handley's Woodside Brickworks, Croydon', *Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, **5**, 2, 2012, pages 161-177.

Paul W. Sowan, 'Brick-clays, Brickfields and Brick-making in Croydon', *Proc. Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, **5**, 2, 2012, pages 179-192.

Volumes of the *Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society* are issued in annual parts. This part is subtitled 'Of Bricks and Men'. Edward Handley has written a memoir of his time at Handley's Woodside Brickworks in Croydon. From a long-standing brickmaking family, Edward Handley divides his account into several sections: 'My Father's Company', 'The Second World War and the Estate', 'Post-War Developments', 'Reprieve', 'Staff', 'Closure', adding 'Personal'. There are some brief 'Editor's Notes' on firms mentioned in Edward Handley's text.

Edward Handley's father purchased the Woodside Brickworks in either 1910 or 1912 and it continued operating under his direction until he died in 1946 aged 79; as a limited company, it had other shareholders and directors and so continued operations in the prosperous years after the Second World War. Edward Handley himself became a director in 1957, when aged 23. The firm continued operating as Woodside Brickworks (Croydon) Ltd until autumn 1963, when as part of the distribution of a family trust, it was sold to Hall & Co, a major building supplies and contracting firm. After Hall & Co were taken over by Ready Mixed Concrete in 1972, brickmaking continued only for four years.

There are many points of interest in the memoir. One concerns the removal of the spoil of London Clay from the excavation for the Victoria Line, the clay being transported by lorry to the works, dumped in a vacant clay pit and then re-cycled for brickmaking. Some of the bricks made from the clay were used to line the tunnels of the Victoria Line.

The article is illustrated by both colour and black-and-white photographs supplied by Edward Handley. Seven colour photographs of aspects of work at the brickworks appear on the covers and inside covers.

The article by British Brick Society member Paul Sowan accompanies Edward Handley's 'Recollections ...'. It notes early brick buildings in the town: the fifteenth-century archiepiscopal Old Palace and Archbishop John Whitgift's foundation, the Hospital of the Holy Trinity, built between 1596 and 1599. The geological background is explored in some depth (pp.180-2, with map p.178) with an account of the use made of different formations for brickmaking. The author lists the locations of brickfields in Croydon. Even as late as the Edwardian decade, the bricks for the houses on the London County Council's Norbury Estate of 1906-1910 were 'made from London Clay dug, moulded and clamp-fired on the site' (p.184). There is an account of the brickmaking process including a note on how a Hoffman kiln operates (pp.186-9); the interior of the kiln is illustrated on page 179. There is a valuable list of references (pp.190-2).

Copies of *Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, **5**, 2, 2012, are available from the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society, 96A Brighton Road, South Croydon CR2 6AD, price £3-50.

5. Maev Kennedy, 'One door opens on Dickens as another closes for a makeover', *The Times*, Friday 16 March 2012, page 11.

The Charles Dickens Museum in Doughty Street, London WC1 has been closed for much of 2012, as it is due for refurbishment and had raised the money but with time restrictions on the use of the grant. Its closure sparked incredulity in many; stories are reported of Australians who had saved up for years to visit London in the bicentenary year coming to London only to be disappointed. Partly in compensation, Gad's Hill Place, Kent, Dickens' last house — one he is



known to have coveted as a child and bought in 1856 for £1,700 — opened for a month in June 2012, with admission by pre-booked ticket.

Now a school, it was temporarily furnished with Dickens' furniture; but this was a trial run for a more permanent opening in future years. The article is illustrated by four photographs, one contemporary and three historical; these include a view of the south front of this red-brick house. John Newman in *The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald*, New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 3rd edn, 2012, p.298, describes the house as follows:

Gadshill, ... Famous for being the home of Charles Dickens. Built, however, in 1779 for a mayor of Rochester, Thomas Stevens. Red-brick N front, of three wide bays. Two storeys with frieze, parapet, mansard roof, and delicate open cupola. The central window of debased Venetian form. The side windows in two-storey bays.

The mansard roof is visible at the rear of the small black-and-white photograph of the south front of the house accompanying Kennedy's article

6. Patrick Monahan, 'Temple of the Muse: Lamb House, Rye, East Sussex', *Country Life*, 18 July 2012, pages 44-48.

The novelist Henry James admitted that he coveted Lamb House (p.46), not least for The Garden Room, a banqueting house of brick with stone quoins erected in 1743; it made the perfect writer's workroom. It did, of course, offer privacy. James' technique was to declaim his work to his secretary who typed as he spoke; according to E.F. Benson, James had a very booming voice. Benson also records that earlier James had made elaborate notes as to the course of the novel in progress from which he spoke the words to appear on the printed page. Sadly, The Garden Room was a victim of the Second World War, taking a direct hit in 1940 during the Battle of Britain. In this room James wrote *The Awkward Age*, which uses the house as the basis of Mr Longdon's house, and *The Portrait of a Lady*. Later *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors*, and *The Golden Bowl* were all composed within its walls.

Lamb House was built in about 1723 for James Lamb, thirteen times mayor of the small Sussex town of Rye between 1723 and 1756, and inhabited by three succeeding generations of the Lamb family before it was bought by a local banker, Francis Bellingham, whose son initially leased and then in 1897 sold the house to Henry James. James was in residence for the last nineteen years of his life; the literary connection continued to 1940 as the new lessees were the novelist E.F. Benson and his brother, A.C. Benson. The latter, the Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, who used it in the university vacations, died in 1925 but the novelist was the tenant for another fifteen years: his 'Mapp and Lucia' novels were written in The Garden Room, which features strongly in these novels.

Lamb House itself is brick-built double-pile house set in an acre of garden. The brickwork is in Flemish Bond. Decoration on the street frontage is confined to carved brackets supporting the entrance canopy and four recessed panels in the parapet (p.46): sadly these features do not merit illustration in the article.

The house was gifted to the National Trust in 1950 and so is open to the public.

7. Jeremy Musson, 'Bricks and mortar to immortal ink', *Country Life*, 22 February 2012, pages 48-53.

Brick country houses feature in the life and novels of Charles Dickens. In his childhood, he saw the Elizabethan Cobham Hall, Kent, from afar; as a celebrated adult, he dined there with Lord

Darnley. John Forster, friend and first biographer of the novelist, noted that Satis House in *Great Expectations*, the home of Miss Havisham, was modelled on Restoration House, a sixteenth-century building on Maidstone Road, Rochester, whose centre between the two wings of a 'U', was remodelled in the middle decades of the following century. Musson's figure 4 is a colour photograph of the centre of the house with its cut and moulded brickwork.

Dickens himself made sufficient money from his writing career to purchase a small country house, Gads Hill Place at Higham, near Gravesend, Kent (Musson, fig. 7). Musson claims that aspects of this house and Great Nast Hyde, Hertfordshire, a brick house of the 1590s near St Albans (Musson, fig.6), were combined to make the eponymous *Bleak House*.

Musson's article mostly comprises photographs — two full page and three at half page or more, plus two smaller ones — which suggests room for a more extended study of Charles Dickens' connections with brick houses.

8. Jeremy Musson, 'Rare Elizabethan Treasure: Loseley Park, Surrey', *Country Life*, 9 May 2012, pages 78-83.

Sir William More (d.1600) inherited Loseley Park from the family purchaser, his father the lawyer Sir Christopher More. Between 1562 and 1568 at a cost of £1,660, Sir William built a house fit to receive a queen: Elizabeth I visited in 1569, 1576, 1583 and 1591; James VI and I came in 1608. Directly employing the workmen, Sir William kept meticulous accounts, extracts from which were edited for publication in *Archaeologia*, **36**, 1855.

Of two storeys with full-height attics, the main front shows three gabled projections, the left-hand one the entrance, alternating with three gabled dormers of full height. The house is brick with stone quoins, mullions and transoms. The stone could be newly quarried at Guildford but much was derived from dissolved monasteries: rubble from Waverley Abbey and ashlar from the Dominican Friary in Guildford. Extant correspondence shows that Sir William's workmen were much sought after by his neighbours. The quality of the workmanship is revealed in plaster ceilings and ornate chalk chimneypieces (Musson, figs 1 and 5).

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the estate twice passed to daughters. After 1777, Jane More-Molyneux often let the house but her *Memorandum for taking care of Loseley House & Premises* of 1779 shows that repairs to the roof were urgent; the west wing had decayed beyond repair and was demolished in the 1820s. After 1850 James More-Molyneux, who inherited in 1823, set about restoration, employing Henry Woodyer (1816-1896) in the 1860s and again in 1877. Restoration in the twentieth-century was continued first by Major James More-Molyneux and then by his son with much assistance from their wives.

## BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY MEETINGS in 2013

Saturday 18 May 2013

*London Meeting*

Soho Square and Charles Dickens

Buildings on Soho Square and in the vicinity in the morning, including the two brick churches for London's French communities, the Manette Street Workhouse and other buildings in the vicinity of Soho Square; with in the afternoon, the Cleveland Street Workhouse (the model for the workhouse in *Oliver Twist*), Charles Dickens' childhood home on Newman Street, and the polychrome brickwork of All Saints church, Margaret Street by William Butterfield, 1850-59.

Saturday 22 June 2013

*Annual General Meeting*

Beverley, East Yorkshire

with walk to see the brick buildings of historic Beverley in the afternoon

Saturday 20 July 2013

*Summer Visit*

Leamington Spa

The Pump Room, Town Hall, Museum/Public Library (now in educational use), cinemas, and St Mark's church and former vicarage by George Gilbert Scott the younger.

*Details of the May meeting will be included in the February 2013 mailing.  
Details of the 2013 Annual General Meeting will be sent in April/May 2013*

There is projected visit to the Tilbury Forts in August 2013, which may be a midweek visit for which details have yet to be finalised. It is hoped to include a brickworks visit on a Saturday in September 2013.

*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.*

### 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.