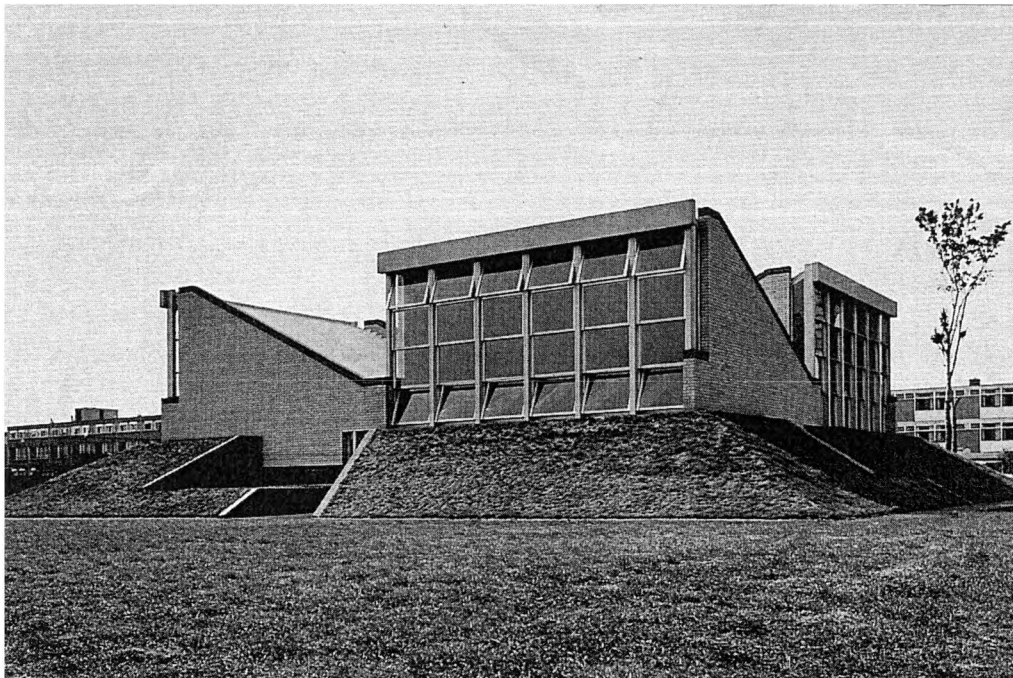


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Chairman Tel: 0115-965-2489 E-mail: pinfold@freenetname.co.uk	Michael Chapman 8 Pinfold Close Woodborough NOTTINGHAM NG14 6DP
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Editor of BBS Information (Receives all articles and items for BBS Information) Tel: 01608-664039 E-mail: kennett1945@gmail.com	David H. Kennett 7 Watery Lane SHIPSTON-ON-STOUR Warwickshire CV36 4BE
Web Officer E-mail: webmaster@britishbricksoc.co.uk	Richard Harris Weald and Downland Museum Singleton CHICHESTER West Sussex
The society's Auditor is: Adrian Corder-Birch DL Tel: 078616-362607 E-mail: adrian@corder-birch.co.uk	Rustlings, Howe Drive HALSTEAD, Essex CO9 2QL

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Editorial: Brick and the Imperial City

... when I try to imagine a faultless life
Or the life to come, what I hear is the murmur
Of underground streams, what I see is a limestone landscape.
W.H. AUDEN

Caesar Augustus (c.27 BC-AD 14) is reputed to have made the highly dubious claim that he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of stone. Even though this claim is patently untrue: the grandiose monuments in classical Rome may be stone but the markets housing for the masses were constructed of brick. Even Nero's House (burnt 64) was built of brick not stone. Nineteenth-century London and, to a lesser extent, New York late in the same century, each saw itself as the inheritor of the classical mantle, the Imperial City, a mantle assumed more fully by the American city as the twentieth century progressed.

Stone, whether Portland stone or another limestone or granite or sandstone, is perhaps what one would expect from the public buildings of an imperial city constructed during the late nineteenth or early to mid-twentieth century (say 1880-1940). One can think of London's Admiralty Arch (1905-11: Sir Aston Webb) or the London County Council's London County Hall (first phase, 1908-33: Ralph Knott) or the New York Municipal Building (1914: William Mitchell Kendall of McKim, Mead, White); all are buildings faced in limestone: Portland stone is a hard limestone very suitable for giving the impression of permanence and even more of imperial power. If you wish to see what this implied walk down London's Whitehall with its array of government offices nearly all of which are faced in Portland stone..

The great exception to limestone in Whitehall is at the north end on the west side: the whole series of buildings for the Admiralty, which spent the paltry sums available on sturdy ships not fancy buildings; for two and a half centuries it did not need the latter to project the very real power of the Royal Navy. In the eighteenth-century Old Admiralty (1723-26: Thomas Ripley), the Boardroom survives from the 1693 brick building by a carpenter, John Evans. In this room the Navy Board meets and it was here that the messenger delivered the immortal line — 'Sir, we have won a great victory but suffered a terrible loss' — referring to both the battle of Trafalgar, 21 October 1805, and the death of Horatio, first Viscount Nelson of the Nile, Vice-Admiral of the Blue. Also of brick are Admiralty House, originally the residence of the First Lord of the Admiralty (1786-88: S.P. Cockerell), and the vast Admiralty Extension (1888-1905: Leeming & Leeming).

No one seems to like the vast Admiralty Extension (fig.1): Alastair Service was quite mild when he wrote that the 'building has never attracted much admiration', adding that it 'is a crowded composition, vaguely Baroque in its manner but with oddly uncomfortable detailing and a quirky skyline', adding that it 'lacks splendour and it lacks repose.' It is worth enquiring from where the dislike stems. Was it the choice of materials: brick with too much stone? Was it the origins of the architects: two relatively young and unknown brothers from Halifax — John L. Leeming (c.1849-1911) and Joseph Leeming (1851-1922) — rather than an established London-based practice or even a fledgling one? Was it the many modifications to the original competition design of 1884 for joint offices for both the Admiralty and the War Office? Was it, resentment at the relatively open competition, even if the competition design was abandoned? Scuppered — or should that be scuttled — by the War Office, the idea of joint offices for sailors and soldiers was quietly dropped and the Admiralty steamed ahead alone but with insufficient space as the competitive arms race — 'We want eight and we won't wait' in regard to the Dreadnought battleships — grew in size and scope as did the clamour for its fulfilment. The agreed revised design of 1887 had to be extended in 1902 so as provide a forward set of offices, thus necessitating larger pavilions at either end.

The Admiralty Extension has a ground floor and basement of Portland stone and two floors of red brick subdivided by Ionic Columns on rusticated bases and also rusticated stone pillars marking changes in the plane of the façade. One thinks of it as a mess, but this is architecture by committee. The original vision had been lost in over two decades between architects' conception of the building in the competition and its final completion.

Sic transit gloria mundi: despite two new capital ships — the aircraft carriers *HMS Queen Elizabeth* and *HMS Prince of Wales* — the Royal Navy is no longer seen as the pride of Britain. So it is with the Admiralty Extension, much of the building is now occupied by middle- and lower-ranking officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office although Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth

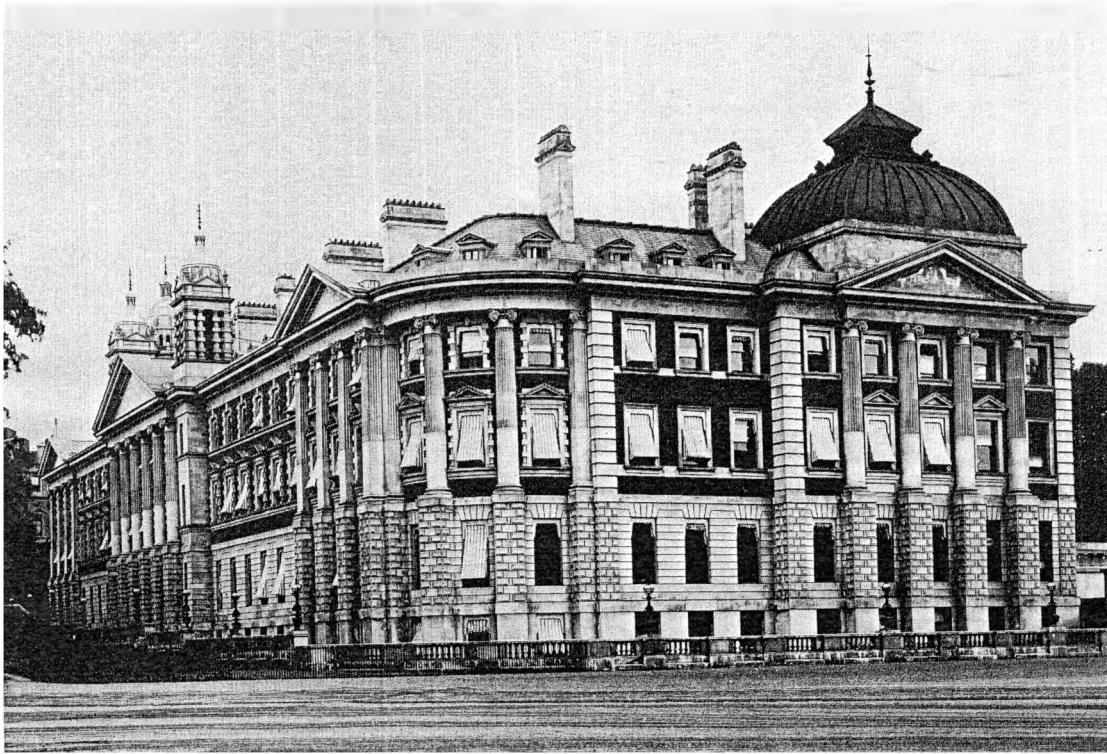


Fig.1 The Admiralty Extension, Westminster (1888-1905: Leeming & Leeming)

Affairs continues to inhabit the corner office which overlooks St James' Park in the actual building designed for the Foreign Office (1862-75: Sir George Gilbert Scott).

In the story of the Admiralty Extension, the breaking of a Great Power may be read. Not so, the eighteenth-century buildings; they are in contrast: symbolically, they embody of the making of a great power.

The change in government's priorities is aptly illustrated by the second building with a brick façade, Richmond House, 76 Whitehall, London. Richmond House built in 1987 to house the Department of Health, who moved out in 2017, subsequently rendering it a brick building at risk (see p.22).

The other great exception among the central government buildings is the New Scotland Yard (1888-90: Norman Shaw (1831-1912)), although technically the Metropolitan Police are a London institution rather than a national one. On the site of the aborted Grand National Opera House (1875: F.H. Fowler) and partly reusing its foundations, Shaw provided London's police service with a new headquarters. Since 1829, the Metropolitan Police's main offices had been in converted premises in Great Scotland Yard, part of the site of the London palace of the kings of Scotland from the 970s to the sixteenth century at the north end of Whitehall.

Shaw's North Building (fig.2) has four storeys above a basement and with a treble attic, the top two floors with tiny dormers rather than those of more usual size as is found in the first attic floor. The ground floor was constructed using grey Dartmoor granite, which had been quarried by prisoners, above which are three storeys of orange-red brick in Flemish Bond interspersed with bands of Portland stone. Quadrangular in plan, two wings terminate in gables of stone and brick with aedicules. The aedicules are topped by a segmental, broken pediment surmounted by an obelisk. At the four corners of the building are tourelles, rising through the second and third storeys and the lowest level of the attic; they have copper domes from which a thin spike rises. The roof is further enhanced by two massive chimney stacks on each face; these combine orange-red bricks with bands of limestone.

South of this, on the other side of Derby Gate, is the South Annexe (designed 1896: Norman Shaw). Construction between 1904 and 1906 was supervised by J. Dixon Butler (1861-1920), the Architect to the Metropolitan Police; it is in the same style with the same materials but is smaller. There is another significant difference, the tourelles have been replaced by gables.

Since 1973, six years after the police departed for Victoria Street, conversion of both North Building and South Annexe into parliamentary offices was accomplished over the following six years and these are now known as the Norman Shaw Building (North and South).



Fig.2 New Scotland Yard, Westminster (1888-1890: R. Norman Shaw)

Brickwork with bands of Portland stone and tourelles had a widespread influence and were taken up by many architects. In London, two buildings of note are the offices built above Moorgate Station of 1902-03 on the Metropolitan Line by George Sherrin (*d.*1909) and now demolished Shoreditch Library complex of 1904 by H.T. Hare (1861-1921). Shoreditch Library, Pitfield Street, combined a public library with a dustcart centre, and provided with an early incinerator designed to heat and provide electric light to the district, including the on-site public baths and washhouse.

Almost a decade before New Scotland Yard, in 1882, Shaw had designed the former Alliance Insurance Building, 1-2 St James's Street, Westminster (fig.3), which has orange-red brickwork interspersed with bands of stone, big stepped gables topped by a segmental pediment, substantial chimney stacks breaking a step-pitch roof but of plain not banded brickwork. The corner is marked by a five-storey, octagonal tower with a conical top. The ground floor is different from the later building: New Scotland Yard has the necessary verticality of a self-contained office block whereas Alliance Insurance has a series of arches behind which are shop fronts. In the Alliance Insurance Building, one detects the germ of the idea of New Scotland Yard. Members of the British Brick Society saw the Alliance Insurance Building on the visit to the St James' Square area in October 2007.



Fig.3 The Alliance Insurance Building, St James Street and Pall Mall, Westminster (1882-83: R. Norman Shaw)

But both imperial cities, especially London in its Edwardian pomp, are cities predominantly built of brick. This is particularly true of the residential quarters: Washington Square in New York, Russell Square in London, both being in the city centre. Some of the houses on Washington Square were the subject of a brief note in *BBS Information*, 133, April 2016.

On Monday 20 May 2019, in conjunction with an article on creating a register of the beneficial owners of empty properties in London, *The Guardian* carried a splendid photograph of Knightsbridge and beyond. The hotchpotch of buildings of the Victoria and Albert Museum were in the bottom right-hand corner with the dome of the crossing of the Brompton Oratory just beyond. In the middle ground was the great wedding-cake bulk of what the late Jacqueline du Pre called 'the corner shop', Harrods. Both Harrods and the Victoria and Albert Museum a brick buildings. Under a strong magnifying glass, the garden of Buckingham Palace was clearly visible north-east of Grosvenor Place. The photograph left the impression just how green a city central London is, something which walking through its squares distinctly reinforces.

Although in recent years, he has taken the bus, London for your editor had been a city through which to walk; five decades ago it was the twenty minutes from St Pancras Station to the back door of the British Museum via Woburn Walk, Gordon Square, and Russell Square. Other than the A Train, his limited experience

of New York has been on foot, initially to marvel at the terracotta façade of Louis Sullivan's Bayard-Condict Building at 65 Bleeker Street, whose side walls are common brick, then to visit Washington Square and walk up Broadway to 42nd Street to sample the grandeur of Grand Central Station and the beauty of the Chrysler Building, with its skin of light grey-green brick. The walk back to his hotel, along 42nd Street and Seventh Avenue, included viewing the exterior of the American Radiator Building, the subject of a possible future article in an issue of *British Brick Society Information*.

The 'great' buildings of New York in the 1920s and early 1930s were constructed with stone or brick frontages; the monsters of glass and steel took over only after the Second World War, some relatively acceptable like the Seagram Building in New York but not the majority, particularly in London: the Shard, the Gherkin, the Cheesegrater, and others which by their very names offend, and that is before we are forced to comprehend their overpowering visibility: their vulgar verticality punctured the horizon of the photograph noted two paragraphs earlier. The external services of the Lloyds Building at least had some logic in maintenance, easier replacement of the mechanical parts.

But the vast majority of buildings in both New York and London are less toxic than the monstrous results of the executed dreams of star-architects, women and men who began with sensible structures but migrate to creations that deserve to condemn their creators to one of the lower circles of Dante's *Inferno*. London and New York are like classical Rome not actually cities of stone — nor essentially ones of steel, concrete, and glass — but built of brick.

Brick was the preferred cladding material for the skyscrapers of 1920s New York and to a certain extent for those built in the early 1930s. Of the twelve skyscrapers in New York built in Manhattan after the Great War and completed before the 'Great Crash', only one had cladding of stone: the Fuller Building (1929: Walker & Gillette) is black granite and a light-coloured stone. Sixteen skyscrapers were completed in the three years after the 'Great Crash': seven had brick cladding to the steel frame and eight were faced in stone whilst the McGraw-Hill Building (1929-31: Raymond Hood) is finished in a blue-green terracotta. This is surely not a building in the so-called International Style, but rather a late example of Art Deco. Its presence in the Hitchcock and Johnson show of 1934 has always baffled this writer as has the almost universal acceptance of those writers' judgement. Four of the stone-faced ones were constructed for financial institutions, and one each as an hotel, a church, municipal offices, and a speculative office block. The last, the Empire State Building (1929-31: Shreve, Lamb & Harmon), has a brick curtain wall on to which the veneer of grey Salem limestone from Indiana is affixed. Many of the ten million bricks employed in its construction were used in building the brick skin. In contrast, the Chrysler Building (1928-30: William van Alen), undoubtedly the most beautiful of the skyscrapers of its era, is clad in a light blue-grey brick.

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973) lived in New York during the Second World War and for several years thereafter. The quotation which heads this Editorial is the final three lines of his 1948 poem 'In Praise of Limestone'; it prefaces Eric P. Nash, *Manhattan Skyscrapers*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005, the contents of which were the source of the data on the walling of 1920s and early 1930s skyscrapers in New York quoted earlier. Auden's home was in the Lower East Side, an area mostly of relatively low-rise houses populated by successive waves of relatively poorly-paid immigrants, and Auden was an immigrant albeit a relatively well-paid one.

On the morning of Saturday 18 May 2019, the British Brick Society held its Annual General Meeting at the Workhouse Museum, Ripon, followed in the afternoon by a tour of Ripon led by Richard Taylor, Vice-Chair of the Ripon Civic Society. Figure 4 shows the members of the British Brick Society and guests who attended the meeting and participated in the tour. An account of the tour is to be included in the next issue of *British Brick Society Information*, as will reports on the visits to the York Handmade Brick Company and the last Fletton brickworks, Forterra Ltd near Whittlesey. Due to the organiser's indisposition, the visit to Alvechurch, Worcestershire, has been postponed to a Saturday in September 2019.

* * * * *



Fig.4 British Brick Society members and guests outside the Workhouse Museum, Ripon, North Yorkshire, At the start of the tour of Ripon following the society's 2019 Annual General Meeting.

Initial planning of this issue of *British Brick Society Information* had envisaged a possible article on a New York building, hence the comparisons in this Editorial. But the paper on the American Radiator Building and its London counterpart, Ideal House, both designed by Raymond Hood (1881-1934) has been postponed owing to the variety of the contributions received on London. Returning to the research, as this issue of *BBS Information* was being put to bed, wider considerations of the use of brick in New York skyscrapers of the 1920s and early 1930s have suggested a wider conspectus would be of interest.

The editor of *BBS Information* is extremely grateful to several colleagues who have supplied more than sufficient material to fill a 52 page issue.

Owing to the editor being unwell for two weeks in March 2019 which was followed by an extended and continuing, if diminishing, bout of back pain meant using public transport was difficult, hence for a paper arising from examining the architectural and historical background of the building examined in some depth following the fire at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park Hotel, Knightsbridge, on 6 June 2018, it has not yet proved possible for the editor to complete the necessary fieldwork for 'Financial Ruin, Fraud, and Fire: Two Superior Blocks in Westminster'; hopefully, the paper arising from the research will be included in a future issue of *BBS Information*.

The two delayed contributions by the editor — papers on ‘New York and London: Two Buildings by Raymond Hood’ and ‘Financial Ruin, Fraud, and Fire: Two Superior Blocks in Westminster’ — do begin to suggest the possibility of having a further issue of *British Brick Society Information* devoted to brick buildings in London in about two or three years’ time.

The editor invites suggestions for contributions to the projected ‘Brick in London’ issue and on any topic involving bricks and/or brick buildings.

The British Brick Society regrets to announce the death of two long-standing members: Lawrence Hurst from Bushey, Hertfordshire, and Owen Ward from Bath. Both were contributors to *British Brick Society Information*. Short appreciations follow.

DAVID H. KENNETT

Editor, *British Brick Society Information*,

July 2019

Obituary: Lawrence Hurst

Between 2009 and 2014, Lawrence Hurst contributed several articles to *British Brick Society Information*. It was his initial contribution that sparked the multi-authored ‘The Building of the New War Office 1897-1906: the Connection with Brickmaking at Arlesey, Bedfordshire’ in *BBS Information*, **115**, February 2011. Previously he had written on ‘Arches in Kitchen Garden Walls’, *BBS Information*, **111**, November 2009, and ‘Place Bricks — their making, properties, and uses’, *BBS Information*, **112**, April 2010. The latter he followed up with ‘Place Bricks — two postscripts’, *BBS Information*, **117**, July 2011. Later contributions were on ‘The Introduction of Wire-Cut Bricks’, *BBS Information*, **118**, October 2011, and his final, completely different, contribution to these pages: ‘Modern Brickmaking in India: a Photographic Essay’, *BBS Information*, **128**, November 2014.

Lawrence was always enthusiastic about bricks: his widow’s message on my answerphone said, ‘he loved his bricks’.

The British Brick Society extends its sincere condolences to his widow, Pamela, and his family.

Obituary: Owen Ward

Owen Ward was a man of the West Country. Living in Bath, he was also a leading member of the Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society, whose biennial Brunel Prize he organised and championed.

Joining the British Brick Society in the 1980s, he made five contributions to *British Brick Society Information*, the first two of which were brick queries: about ‘Hicknall & Co of Stourbridge’ in *BBS Information*, **55**, March 1992, and ‘Foster Kilns’ in *BBS Information*, **66**, October 1995. Later he provided a most useful ‘Review Notice: Brick and Tile Works in France’, *BBS Information*, **91**, July 2003; a note on ‘Mathematical Tiles in West’, *BBS Information*, **100**, May 2006; and an initial response concerning tall chimneys, *BBS Information*, **106**, February 2008.

To his son Andrew and other descendants of Owen Ward, the British Brick Society extends its sincere condolences.

BRICK IN THE NEWS: A HIDDEN COFFIN

St Michael's church, South Grove, Highgate, London N6, was built on the site of the demolished Ashurst House, a brick house which had been built in the late seventeenth century for the Ashurst family. The house was demolished in 1830 and the cartouche with the family arms transferred to no.42 Highgate High Street, a house built soon after this demolition. Lewis Vulliamy (1791-1871) designed the original church in 1831 and it was opened in the following year; the builders were William and Lewis Cubitt. To the aisled church, a new chancel using thin stock bricks, as in Vulliamy's building, was erected to designs by C.H.M. Mileham in 1878.

A memorial in the church is that to the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who died in the parish on 25 July 1834, aged 61; in the last four years of his life, he lived in a house opposite the church's west door. Coleridge had been born at Ottery St Mary, Devon, on 21 October 1772. The plaque, which states that Coleridge is 'buried beneath this stone', is an object of pilgrimage for literary pilgrims but the location of the coffin had become lost since the poet and his descendants were reinterred in 1961.

Now Coleridge's coffin has been discovered interred in the former wine cellar of Ashurst House, and could be seen through the ventilation spaces to the wine cellar, which adjoins the crypt of the church. For an oenophile, a wine cellar seems an appropriate resting place. As of April 2018, the crypt was a depository for bricks and other rubble from Ashurst House. This is to be cleared to provide the church with a meeting room. The proposed new use of the cellar would allow access to the wine cellar containing the lead coffins not only of Coleridge but also of his wife Sara (*née* Fricker) from whom he had had a judicial separation in 1808, his daughter Sara (1802-1852) a respected translator, his son-in-law, Henry Nelson Coleridge (1798-1843), a chancery barrister, and his grandson, the philologist Herbert Coleridge (1830-1861).

Initially, the five coffins had been buried in a vault in the now demolished chapel of Highgate School; The coffins were moved from the derelict vault in 1961 when the poet laureate, John Masefield gave the address at their reburial, something which seems highly appropriate: Masefield was a poet of the sea, *Sea Fever* and *Cargoes* being the best-known; Coleridge wrote *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in 1797-98.

The discovery of the coffins was the subject of a short article in *The Guardian*, 13 April 2018, which reprints an entry on the paper's website: <https://theguardian.com/books/2018/apr/12/samuel-taylor-coleridge-poet-remainsrediscovered-in-wine-cellar/>. St Michael's church is noted in B. Cherry and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North*, London: Penguin Books, 1998, pages 347-348.

D.H. KENNETT

Cover Illustration: Assembly Hall, Brunswick Park Junior School, Camberwell, London SE5

Following the construction of the brick-built flats at Ham Common, Richmond-on-Thames, London, built between 1955 and 1958, two comparatively young architects James Stirling (1924-1992) and James Gowan (1923-2015) continued 'their use of brickwork as the proper material for building modern architecture in a wet climate' in their 1958 design for the assembly hall at Brunswick Park Junior School, Camberwell, London SE5; the building was constructed over two seasons, 1960 to 1961. A striking design based on a plan of four squares, one with a flat roof lighted by a clerestory being the school kitchens, the other three have walls of white brick with red brick bands forming a right-angled triangle. These three quadrants meet at the a central point with the kitchens. The triangular walls extend below the landscaped mound within which three-quarters of the building the building sits: the two outer walls of the kitchen are not enclosed in the earth mound. Internal bracing terminating at the base of the windows supports the roof trusses of each quadrant. Within the mound, the open L-shaped structure is multi-functional, providing sufficient space for morning assembly, eating school dinners, gymnastics and games but can be divided off to give extra classrooms when required.

A Further (and Dated) Example of a Joseph Hamblet Brick Stamp

Terence Paul Smith

A previous contribution to these pages drew attention to brick stamps of two types, a larger and a smaller and with slightly different wording, in capping bricks at St James Street Station; Walthamstow, E17.¹ Dating (one may assume) from about the station's construction in 1870, they attest manufacture by the firm of Joseph Hamblet of Oldbury, West Bromwich, 'near Birmingham' (as the larger stamp states), and now within the Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell.

Examples of a further Joseph Hamblet stamp, including a date, have been observed in capping bricks on a wall built as the northern boundary of the East London Waterworks Company, formed in 1853 to serve the metropolitan Essex area.² The wall, at 2 Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 (NGR TQ350893), is in three sections flanking two entrances: an original now providing access to Thames Water Walthamstow Fishery and a newer one — created by demolishing a stretch of walling — forming the Forest Road entrance to the Walthamstow Westlands, E17/N17, a public facility opened in October 2017 and made possible by a £10.6 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Thames Water, and Waltham Forest Council.³

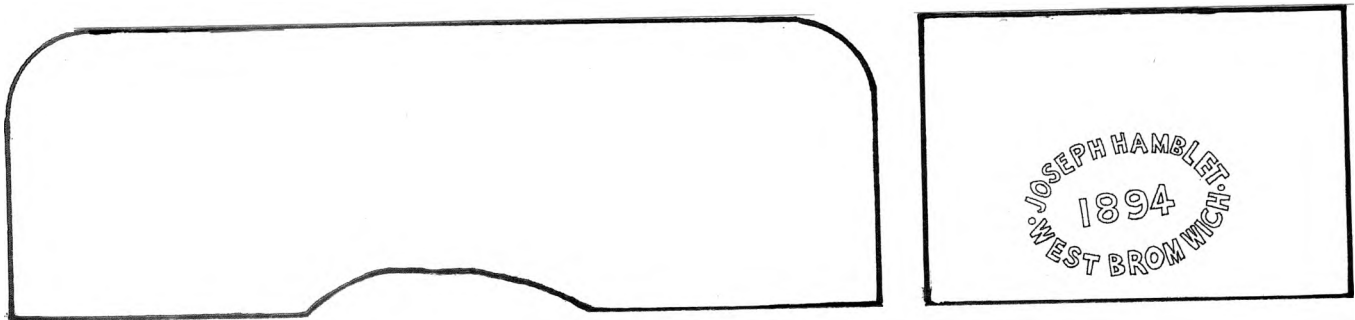


Fig.1 A capping brick with casually applied stamp at Walthamstow Wetlands, scale 1:4.

Once again the stamps occur in 'blue' (that is, virtually black) engineering fabric capping bricks. They top a wall of red bricks ($8\frac{3}{4}$ by $4\frac{1}{4}$ by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches; 222 by 108 by 63 mm) in English Bond, apparently rebuilt in part and with the capping bricks relaid. The latter (fig.1) are of double bullnose shape and measure 18 by $8\frac{3}{4}$ by 6 inches (457 by 222 by 152 mm), with a rough frog (about 6 by 1 inches; say 150 by 25 mm) scooped from the base.⁴ They are laid, as always and indeed necessarily, at right-angles to the wallfaces, their length corresponding to the width of the wall: hence their significantly larger size than those at St James Street, which top a wall of $1\frac{1}{2}$ brick thickness; those at Wetlands top a more complex wall 1 brick thick but with 2-brick thick buttresses (a half-brick each side) at intervals; between the pier-like buttresses the head of the wall is corbelled out each side (and with one dentilated course included) so that immediately beneath the capping bricks there is a 2-brick thickness.

Unlike the St James Street examples, and others that I have encountered on capping bricks, the stamps are placed not on the top but in one side — what would be a header face in a standard brick. As with the St James Street stamps, the inscription (fig.2) is in sanserif capitals arranged to form an elliptical shape but with the addition of a dot at each end of the major axis of the ellipse; the date, in slightly larger font, is enclosed by the lettering. The stamps measure $4\frac{1}{2}$ by 3 inches (114 by 76 mm), which is close to, but not identical with, the dimensions of the larger of the St James Street stamps.

As with other stamps in capping bricks, they were applied after demoulding, as is evident from their irregular placing, at slightly varying angles to the horizontal (e.g. fig.1): indeed, with stamps in the sides rather than the tops of the bricks, it would have been impossible to incorporate them within the moulds.

As in other instances, not all the bricks have stamps. There are 210 capping bricks in all. Of these, eight show stamps in the north face of the wall; only one has been observed in the south face, but this is inaccessible

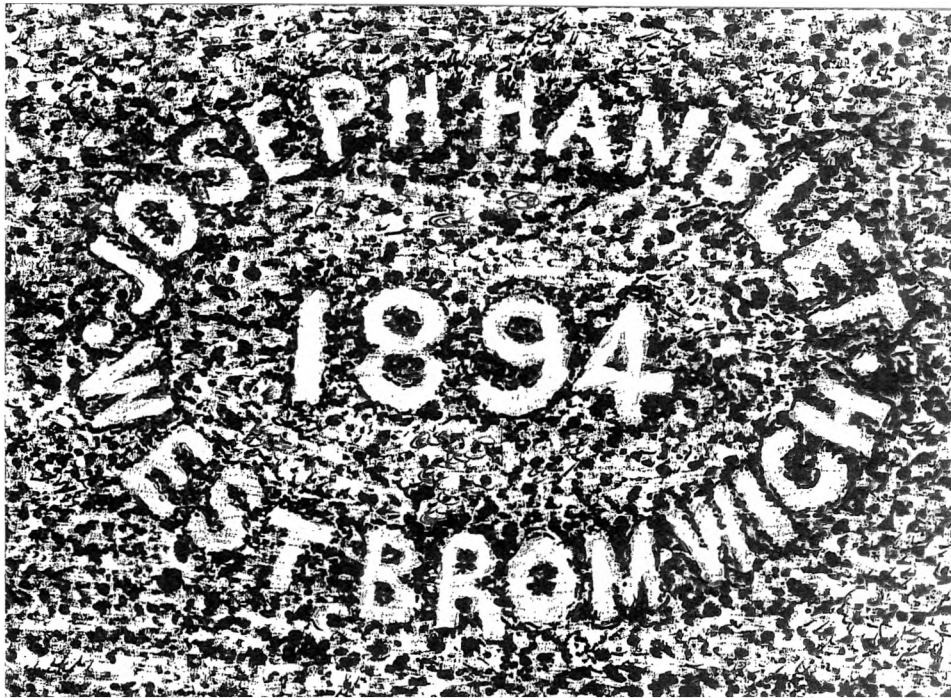


Fig.2 The brick stamp at Walthamstow Wetlands, scale 1:1.

for much of the majority of the walling. If, as seems likely, the capping bricks were laid randomly with regard to the stamps, then about sixteen of the 210 bricks will have a stamp, so that there is one stamp for every thirteen or so bricks, which is similar to the ratio of the smaller stamps to bricks on the down platform at St James Street; but the larger stamps there, which are closer in size to the Wetlands stamps, are much more frequent. It seems that Hamblet's manufactory (like others) had no policy on this matter and that the number of bricks stamped was left to the whim of employees; or perhaps some *foremen* were more insistent than others in demanding their placing.

An unusual feature of these stamps is the inclusion of a date: 1894.⁵ Interestingly — and surely not coincidentally? — it corresponds to the completion, by the water company, of the nearby Ferry Lane Pumping Station (1893-94) by the company's engineer, who was also responsible for some of the reservoirs, W.P. Bryan.⁶

Equally uncommon, in my experience, is the placing of the stamps in the sides rather than the tops of the bricks.⁷ But the perplexity remains: what was their *purpose*? Has anyone ever *looked* at these examples, other than a septuagenarian with nothing better to do?!

That same oldie's present domicile explains why the stamps mentioned here — two at St James Street, one at Wetlands — are all in Walthamstow. Joseph Hamblet products were used at locations far from E17.⁸ Transport was facilitated by the railway network, the brickyard being served by goods depots at the Great Western Railway's Oldbury and the London & North Western Railway's Oldbury & Bromford Lane stations.⁹

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. T.P. Smith, 'Brick Stamps at St James Street Station, Walthamstow, London E17', *BBS Information*, 136, June 2017, pp.22-24; p.24, n.10 notes some other products by the same manufacturer; see also *BBS Information*, 35, February 1985, p.20; Smith 2017 also mentions capping bricks of George Wood of Albion Works, West Bromwich, at Wood Street Station, also in Walthamstow.
2. D. Mander, *Walthamstow Past*, London: Historical Publications, 2001, p.97. Walthamstow (as part of the London Borough of Waltham Forest) became a constituent part of Greater London (*de jure* as opposed to *de facto*) only in 1965; before that it lay officially in Essex.
3. 'Wild Times at the Wetlands', *Waltham Forest News* (a council 'freebie'), 9 August 2018, p.4. The site is a commercial concern run by Thames Water and not all the reservoir pathways are accessible to the public.
4. For such frogs and their purpose: Smith 2017, p.22 with p.24, n.5.

5. But a very different Joseph Hamblet 'blue' engineering brick has a stamp including the date 1896: E.F. Marsh, 'Hamblet Bricks', *BBS Information*, **36**, May 1985, p.13.
6. Ferry Lane is a continuation of Forest Road, but is in Tottenham Hale, Harringey, N17, not Walthamstow. Conversion of the brick pumping station to a visitor centre, and replacing the demolished chimney by a chimney-like nesting site for swifts, formed part of the Wetlands project. Charles O'Brien, writing more than a decade before the Wetlands project but after the demolition of the chimney (1960), in B. Cherry, C. O'Brien and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 5: East*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005, p.752, describes the building's *roof* but ignores the rest, including a 1908 extension. Alas, this is not the only example of Pevsner's revisers failing to look at what they might reasonably be expected to examine: cf. T.P. Smith, 'Loughton Station, Essex: Unusual Bricks, Unique Design', *BBS Information*, **140**, November 2018, pp.43, 50, n.38.
7. Cf. Smith, 2017, p.23.
8. See locations in articles cited in n.1, *supra*.
9. W.P. Conolly, *British Railways Pre-Grouping Atlas and Gazetteer*, 5th edn, Shepperton: Ian Allan Publishing, 1967, map 13, inset (grid B2), with wider connexions at map 15; T. Dewick, *Complete Atlas of Railway Station Names*, Hersham: Ian Allan Publishing, 2002, map 13, inset (grid B2 with key noting that Oldbury & Bromford Lane is now Sandwell & Dudley), with wider connexions at map 15.

ADVERTISING YOUR INVOLVEMENT: HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, AMBLECOTE, STOURBRIDGE, WEST MIDLANDS

The last building examined on the British Brick Society's tour of Stourbridge on 16 April 2016 was Holy Trinity church, Vicarage Road, Amblecote (1841-42: Samuel Henning). The wide, aisleless seven-bay nave is lighted by lancet windows, several of which contain good quality stained glass, both nineteenth-century and twentieth-century. There is a west tower, half engaged by the angled bays at the west end of the nave. At the east end the chancel protrudes by a single bay and at some point after the church was opened, a south-east vestry was added, again in yellow firebricks but of a slightly different hue. Internally, there is a west gallery, supported on iron columns. Access to this is by means of an original stair in the north-west corner bay, which provides additional means of ingress and egress to the church. The main doorway is a west one underneath the tower.

Impressed marks indicate that the yellow firebricks, laid in Flemish Bond, with which the church was built, were supplied by J. & W. King of Stourbridge: several marked bricks have been seen, particularly on the north side of the building. These include individual bricks where the brick has been laid with the impressed mark upside down. One marked brick has also been seen in the black firebricks of the churchyard retaining wall. Joseph King was a founding member of this congregation and apparently donated the bricks used in the construction of the church.

This would seem to indicate that the practice of deliberately impressing an external face of a brick or a capping brick was not unknown half a century before Joseph Hamblet's bricks were used in Walthamstow. It may be significant that Hamblet and the other manufacturers noted above in Terence Smith's article were also from the western part of the modern West Midlands County.

D.H. KENNETT

Queen Victoria Jubilee Plaques from London and South-East England

David Thomas with David H. Kennett

Between December 1990 and October 2000, several issues *British Brick Society Information* carried notes on individual plaques incorporated in buildings erected in 1887 and 1897, the Golden and Diamond Jubilees respectively of the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland.¹ In *British Brick Society Information*, the only county survey of these artefacts gave details of those in Hampshire.²

Plaques erected in 1897 are often to be found on buildings erected as homes for nurses, Queen Victoria's express wish as the memorial to her long years on the throne. Many of these buildings are now in other uses: an example known to one of us is the plaque on the former nurses home on The Crescent, Salford, Lancashire, now the Working Class Library;³ it is along the road from the former Salford Royal Hospital.

In its August 2018 issue, the *Great London Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter* included a piece by David Thomas recording plaques from Greater London and the surrounding counties: the note included reference to plaques from Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, and Sussex.⁴ The listing produced by David Thomas with additions is reproduced as the Appendix to this note; this includes references to publication in both *British Brick Society Information* and the *Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter* (in the Appendix referred to as *GLIAS Newsletter*).

More than one manufacturer seems to have made these plaques. The source of the plaques erected in London and the south-eastern counties of England is usually thought to have been Stanley Brothers of Nuneaton, Warwickshire.⁵ They produced plaques for both the 1887 and the 1897 jubilees. At 'Jubilee Cottages', Great Wratting, Suffolk, both houses have plaques for 1887 but the majority of known plaques were produced for the Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

Plaques were a single piece of terracotta, measuring 2 feet by 2 feet (610 mm by 610 mm) and designed to be inset into a wall: a plaque added to a house at 152 George Road, Berkhamstead, Herts., stands proud of the main walling by 2 inches (51 mm) and is clearly an addition to an existing structure.

Plaques made by Stanley Brothers have the queen's head in profile showing her right side. The image is in the centre. There is a list of the great queen's external dominions and territories around and across the central image:

- Around the central image: VICTORIA 60 YEARS QUEEN / OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
- Across the central image: EMPRESS / OF INDIA
- Around the border: CANADA AUSTRALIA / N ZEALAND BURMAH / GIBRALR CYPRUS EGYPT / AFRICA W INDIES

All wording is in capitals; the list of those round the border is given from those at the top and working round the edge clockwise. The two side pairs are split by the ends of the central wording. The plaques for the Golden Jubilee read '50 YEARS'. Above the square plaque is a cartouche with the date, either '1887' for 50 years or '1897' for 60 years.

Stanley Brothers had a variety of clays available and the colours vary from an almost cream light brown to the dark reddish brown of the plaque on Dundonald School, Wimbledon. Both Kathleen Clarke and David Thomas have pointed out that moulds for the Golden Jubilee of 1887 were reused for the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, with a recut '5' of the '50' being made into a '6' for the '60':⁶ the tell-tale sign is a more prominent '6' than other lettering. Miss Clarke illustrates a particularly obvious example from Romsey, Hampshire.⁷

Given their large distribution, we may call the Stanley Brothers plaques 'Type 1'.

A very different form of plaque, produced by an as yet unknown manufacturer, possibly local to where they have been reported — Claydon (fig.2) and Verney Junction, north Buckinghamshire⁸ — and perhaps even

the estate brickworks of the Verney family's seat at Claydon Hall. These plaques use two different clays. The main body and the edging sections are a creamy colour but the brick surround is red brick. The plaques, also 2 feet square, show the queen in profile but the left side and wearing a tiara, with her hair cascading over the rear. Produced in 1897, the lady looks considerably younger than her then 78 years. She is shown within a circular mount, analogous to the edge of a coin, within which are the words in capitals, VICTORIA DEI / GRA BRIT REG, either side of the head, with the date '1897' below the figure. Adorning the four corners of the plaque are the symbols of the four nations of the British Isles: a rose for England, a leek for Wales, a thistle for Scotland, and a shamrock for Ireland. These we call 'Type 2'.

A third manufacturer appears to have been the Comondale Brick and Pipe Clay Company, of Comondale, North Yorkshire, a village and railway station between Whitby and Middlesbrough.⁹ A plaque on display at Messrs King and Company, Northgate, Darlington, in the 1990s¹⁰ is thought to have been made by this firm as was the plaque in the North of England Open Air Museum, Beamish, County Durham.¹¹

These preliminary notes suggest that eyes need to be attuned to the possibility of jubilee plaques.¹² David Thomas accumulated the three examples from Greater London listed in the Appendix over several years.¹³



Fig.1 (left) An 1887 jubilee plaque from 'Jubilee Cottages', Great Wratting, Suffolk.

Fig.2 (right) The 1897 jubilee plaque from Dundonald Primary School, Dundonald Road, Wimbledon.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. K. Clarke, 'Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Plaques', *BBS Information*, **51**, December 1990, pp.13-14 ; D.H. Kennett and M. Hammond, 'Jubilee Plaques', *BBS Information*, **78**, October 1999, p.14; A. Cox, L. Perrins, and D.H. Kennett, 'Jubilee Plaques', *BBS Information*, **81**, October 2000, pp.26-27; R. Kennell, V. Montagu, and D.H. Kennett, 'Jubilee Plaques', *BBS Information*, **82**, February 2001, p.3; J. Schneider, 'A Jubilee Plaque from Verney Junction, Buckinghamshire', *BBS Information*, **102**, September 2006, p.10
2. K. Clarke, 'Victorian Jubilee Plaques from Hampshire', *BBS Information*, **86**, December 2001, pp.9-18. For different style of plaques also in Hampshire see K. Clarke, 'Decorative Plaques from Eastleigh, Hampshire', *BBS Information*, **91**, July 2003, pp.14-25.
3. Observed by D. Kennett on many occasions between January 1994 and September 1997: see D.H. Kennett in *BBS Information*, **82**, February 2001, p.3. The plaque from Beccles noted, *ibid.*, by Roger Kennell and Verity Montagu also has the letters NURSES HOME below the plaque; these are also inset.



Fig.3 The 1897 plaque from Claydon, Buckinghamshire

4. D. Thomas, 'Queen Victoria Jubilee Plaques — the last word ... for now', *GLIAS Newsletter*, August 2018. I thank Michael Hammett for forwarding this to me. All issues of the *GLIAS Newsletter* are available online: search for 'Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society' and click on 'News'.
5. A. Cox, 'Brick and Tilemaking in the Nuneaton Area', *BBS Information*, **114**, October 2010, pp.11-23, esp. p.20 for jubilee plaques. See also www.reginaldstanley.com, a website produced by the East Midlands Oral History Society.
6. Clarke, 2001, p.10; Thomas, August 2018.
7. The plaque illustrated Clarke, 2001, fig.2 with the building it adorned fig.3. Another obvious example where the mould has been recut is the plaque on the Jubilee Fountain, The Square, Torpichen, West Lothian, Scotland, illustrated L. Pearson, *Tile Gazetteer: A Guide to British Tile and Ceramics Locations*, Shepton Beauchamp, Somerset: Richard Dennis, 2005, p.426. This is the most northerly example of a Stanley Brothers' plaque.
8. Schneider, 2006, p.10 illustrates the plaque from Verney Junction; Thomas, August 2018 and R. Excell 'Jubilee Plaques', *GLIAS Newsletter*, June 2018, illustrate the plaque from Claydon.
9. J. and J. Cockerill, *Commendale Clay Bricks, Pipes and Pottery*, York: Yorkshire Museum, 1995, p.20 with illustration. From the illustration, it does not appear that the '6' is recut from a '5' of a decade earlier. Commomdale certainly later had the ability to make large plaques: Cockerill, 1995, p.18 illustrates two of the four terracotta plaques made by the firm to commemorate the men of Commomdale who died in the Great War and an undated price list of the Fine Art Terra-Cotta Ware manufactured by the firm lists 'plaques in red or buff for painting purposes' up to 16 inches square, see *ibid.*, p.58.
10. M. Hammond in *BBS Information*, **78**, October 199, p.14.
11. Noted by A. Cox in *BBS Information*, **81**, October 2000, p.26.
12. A. Sadler in *Out of Town*, June 1987 listed 45 plaques from 1897 and others from 1907. As yet DHK has yet to see this publication although its online catalogue informs him that there is a copy in the off-site store of the Bodleian Library. Miss Clarke, 2001, p.18, in her Acknowledgements noted that Mr Sadler had found or been informed of almost one hundred plaques. Apart from Miss Clarke's Hampshire survey, Pearson, 2005, p.189, n.14, cites A. Sadler, 'Victorian Commemorative Plaques', *Leicestershire Historian*, **35**, 1999, pp.1-2 as another county survey.
13. This note is a recasting of David Thomas' contribution to *GLIAS Newsletter*, August 2018, referencing back to his and other peoples' contributions to that publication. Mr Thomas' original words are used recast by David Kennett.

TABLE 1

JUBILEE PLAQUES FROM LONDON AND SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND

Plaques listed are those erected in 1897 unless otherwise noted. Reference is to an accessible publication. Entries preceded by an asterisk (*) have a photograph of the plaque in the publication noted.

GREATER LONDON

- * The 'New Inn', St Mary's Road, Ealing W5 – a public house rebuilt in 1897 (*GLIAS Newsletter*, February 2015)
- 2, Bedford Road, East Finchley, N2 (*GLIAS Newsletter*, 2018)
- * Dundonald Primary School, Dundonald Road, Wimbledon, SW19 (*GLIAS Newsletter*, February 2017 and June 2018)

BEDFORDSHIRE

76-78 Church Street, Leighton Buzzard (1902 for Edward VII coronation)

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

- * Claydon (Type 2) (*GLIAS Newsletter*, August 2018)
- * Verney Junction (Type 2) (*BBS Information*, 102, September 2006, p.10)

ESSEX

Agate Road, Clacton-on-Sea (*BBS Information*, 82, December 2001, p.3)

HERTFORDSHIRE

2 High Street, Baldock (Type 1) (*BBS Information*, 81, October 2000, p.26)
 152 George Road, Berkhamstead (Type 1) (*BBS Information*, 81, October 2000, p.26)
 Dyrham Park (variant form) (*BBS Information*, 81, October 2000, p.26)
 2-4 St James Street, Watford (Type 1) (*GLIAS Newsletter*, June 2018)
 'Les Villas du Jubilee', 4-6 Essex Road, Watford (variant design) (*BBS Information*, 86, October 2000, p.26)

KENT

No plaques have been reported for this county.

SUFFOLK

- * Former Nurses Home, Fair Close, Beccles (*BBS Information*, 82, December 2000, p.3)
- * 'Jubilee Cottages', Great Wrating (Type 1 - 1887) (*GLIAS Newsletter*, October 2017 and June 2018)

SURREY

No plaques have been reported from the modern remnant of this county.

SUSSEX

Former Post office, Midhurst (*BBS Information*, 81, October 2001, p.26)

Book Notice: *The Four Hundred*

Anne de Courcy,
The Husband Hunters: Social Climbing in London and New York,
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2017, pbk 2018
x + 307 pages, 16 plates,
ISBN 978-1-47460145-0, price paperback, £9-99.

Not a title that would instantly attract a brick enthusiast but this is the social background to houses designed by Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) in New York City and Newport, Rhode Island, and to the preservation of the country houses of impoverished English aristocrats to whom the daughters of American (mostly New York) wealthy families were married, sometimes forcibly against the girl's wishes: the curse of the pushy mother. The daughters of the Astors and the Vanderbilts were but two of the scions of the 'husband hunters'; their New York mansions, the mountains of Fifth Avenue commissioned by the matriarchs who controlled the social life of the city's highly-privileged elite, are among the buildings described and, in some cases, illustrated. These houses and the Newport "cottages" were built for a particular lifestyle, now little evident, presided over by, socially, the most significant *grande dame*, Caroline, the wife of Colonel William Astor, who with her major domo, Ward McAllister, produced the city's social catalogue, *The Four Hundred*, which defined the families eligible to be in 'society' in New York based not just on wealth but equally on length of the family's residence in New York and its distance from 'trade'. This was the world of the novels of Edith Wharton, who herself, born Edith Jones, came from the middle ranks of the class under discussion.

Miss de Courcy writes well and is particularly good on the contrast between the sophisticated, well-travelled, and highly educated, often multi-lingual, young ladies from New York familiar with Paris and other European capitals and the country-loving louts — all too often boorish, under-educated, and unsophisticated in their tastes — who became their husbands. Some unions worked and were happy but, deprived of the city and its pleasures and with few echoes of the life she had once led, with visits to the opera, good conversation, a new dress from Worth in Paris for every ball, many a young woman from New York found English country life stifling and restrictive; divorces were not unknown.

For enthusiasts for and scholars of brick, one successful union to be noted was that between Mary Leiter, daughter of the developer of Chicago department store buildings, and George Curzon, heir to Kedleston, Derbyshire, and later Viceroy of India and after 1919, Foreign Secretary. In India, Curzon introduced legislation to protect its monuments. Returning to England, he found no such legislation and set about ensuring the legislation was steered through both the House of Commons and personally in the House of Lords. It was Mary's money which ensured the triumphant return of the fireplaces and the subsequent restoration of Tattershall Castle.

The author has trawled a wide range of sources. From her bibliography there are obvious omissions: Eric Homberger, *Mrs Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, and the map of Fifth Avenue in Homberger's *The Historical Atlas of New York City*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005 edn, pages 100-101, should have been mentioned. Among works contemporary with the novels of Edith Wharton, Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899, deserved reference.

Two valuable works on Newport's buildings are a picture book, H.-R. Hitchcock, *Rhode Island Architecture*, Cambridge MA and London: M.I.T. Press, 1939, and, with longer descriptions of the houses, William H. Jordy *et al.*, *Buildings of Rhode Island*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004; both volumes, unfortunately, now out of print.

D.H. KENNETT

Christodora House, Tompkins Square, East Village, New York City

David H. Kennett



Fig.4 Christodora House, Tompkins Square, New York (1922: J.T. Pelton).
Left: from Tompkins Square; right: rear view from Avenue B.

The Editorial to this issue of *British Brick Society Information* noted W.H. Auden's residence in New York's East Village and the presence there of the great bulk of Christodora House, on the north side of the junction of Avenue B with Tompkins Square.

The Christodora skews the skyline of the East Village, hulking over a once-bohemian neighbourhood of New York City. Built in the 1920s as a settlement house for low-income immigrants, it fell into dereliction in the 1960s, the ruined apartments colonised by heroin addicts, before being reborn in the 1980s as luxury condominiums. A controversial symbol of the neighbourhood's increasing gentrification, [the Christodora is] the ideal setting for this sprawling, seething, sumptuous tale of the city's haves and have-nots under the long shadow of Aids.¹

So opens Oliva Lang's review of a new novel, *Christodora* by Tim Murphy;² it is accompanied by a picture of this brown brick, sixteen-storey monolith overlooking the low-rise row houses of one of New York City's green spaces, a vast Bloomsbury-like square of 12.6 acres (5.1 hectares) planted with elms, trees that have somehow survived Dutch Elm Disease. Laid out in 1850 and completed in 1878, Tompkins Square has Avenue B as its east side;³ one of the two formal addresses of Christodora House is 143 Avenue B: the other is 1 Tompkins Square.

Christodora House was designed by John T. Pelton in 1928 on the east side of Tompkins Square, separated by a single house from the *circa* 1849 four-storey, three-bay town house where the jazz saxophonist Charlie Parker (1920-1955) lived for four years between 1950 and 1954 in the ground floor apartment.⁴ The adjacent houses are five-storey dwellings.

On the third floor of Christodora House there was a concert hall; here George Gershwin gave his first public recital.

Pelton designed Christodora House just as the Classical was being abandoned by architects in favour of Art Deco influences. A great cliff of a building, with five bays facing Tompkins Square and nine along East 10th Street, it was faced in brown brick with stone used for the decorative elements. The top two floors are set back, the fifteenth by half a bay and the sixteenth by a further whole bay. In this low rise neighbourhood, sixteen storeys is somewhat excessive.

Built as a settlement house, a place for low-income families and one where immigrants could seek temporary refuge while hunting for work in a strange country, half a century before it was built, Christodora House was in the middle of the area of the Lower East Side of Manhattan between Rivington to the south and 14th to the north and bounded on the east by Avenue B, “the German boundary” and extending as far east as First Avenue where the population was Irish and German immigrants in about equal numbers.⁵

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The writer has mislaid the cutting with the review.
2. T. Murphy, *Christodora*, New York: Grove Press, 2016; paperback, London: Picador, 2017.
3. J.M. Barr, *Building the Skyline: The Birth and Growth of Manhattan's Skyscrapers*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp.69 and 354 (Table L).
4. N. White and E. Willensky with F. Leadon, *AIA Guide to New York City*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 5th edn, 2010, p.201, site 39b; *ibid.*, site 39a, for the Charlie Parker residence. This is also the source of the Gershwin reference in the succeeding paragraph.
5. E. Homberger, *The Historical Atlas of New York: A Visual Celebration of 400 Years of New York City's History*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005, pp.98-99; Barr, 2016, pp.96-98, 114-119, and 124-125 with the graph of Appendix I (p.351).

BRICK AND TILE AT RISK — A HAPPY RESULT THE VICTORIA WARD, BEDFORD GENERAL HOSPITAL

British Brick Society Information, **141**, April 2019, page 9 carried a report that the hospital authorities wished to remove the eighteen vertical ceramic panels of nursery rhymes, two horizontal panels depicting the stories of Dick Whittington and Cinderella, and the two horizontal panel stating the names of the sixteen ladies who were the donors. However, to do this they needed planning permission. Bedford Borough Council have refused to grant planning permission.

Correction: a guinea was £1 1s. 0d. (£1-05). At 21 guineas per panel, each panel cost £22 1s. 0d. (£22-05). The twenty-two panels in total cost 462 guineas (£485 2s. 0d.; £485-10), a considerable sum when the ward was built in 1897.

Further information on the tiles and their subjects, with coloured pictures of each tile, can be found in [Molly Taylor], *Rhymes & Reasons: Victorian Tiles With the stories behind the Nursery Rhymes*, Bedford: The Bedford Hospitals Charity, 2006. Each of the panels is illustrated and there is the accompanying text of the rhyme together with an explanation of its origins.

This spiral-bound book, an attractive present for one's children or grandchildren, is available from The Bedford Hospitals Charity, P.O. Box 342, Bedford, MK40 3XS, United Kingdom.

D.H. KENNETT

The Special Bricks at Loughton Station

Terence Paul Smith

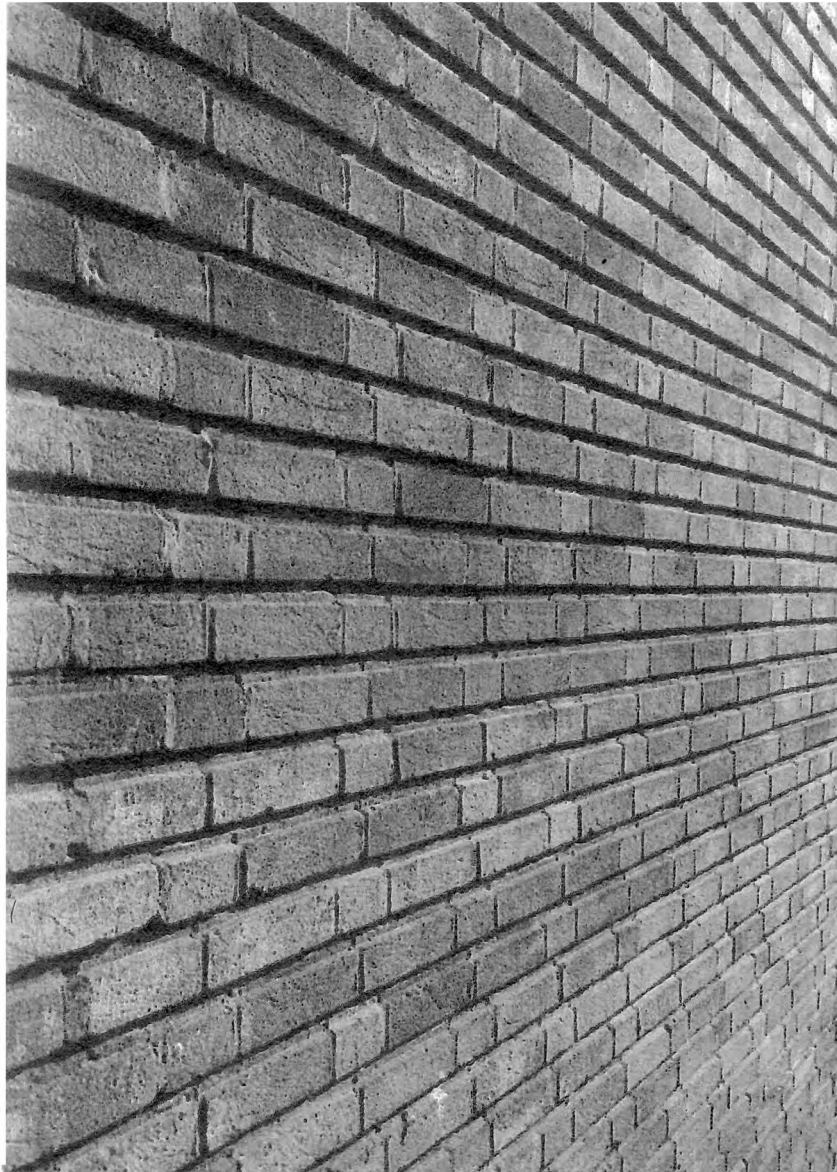


Fig.1 Loughton Station, Essex: the illusion of recessed joints in conjunction with Monk Bond.

In response to my 'Loughton Station, Essex: Unusual Bricks, Unique Design', *British Brick Society Information*, **140**, November 2018, pages 42-51, BBS member Jeremiah O'Mahony e-mailed four photographs of the brickwork of the station to David Kennett, who forwarded them (by snail mail!) to me. Three of them are reproduced here, appropriately in this issue since, although Loughton is in Essex, it lies within the M25 and thus belongs to what is considered unofficially greater (albeit not officially Greater) London.

Figure 1 is a view along the brickwork, showing the illusion of recessed joints as well as the use of Monk Bond, which has two stretchers between each header. The close-up photographs in figures

2 and 3 show clearly how the illusion is achieved using the rebated bricks together with flush pointing of the vertical joints.

I am most grateful to Jeremiah O'Mahony for augmenting my consideration of the brickwork with such excellent photographs.



Fig.2 The illusion is achieved by using the rebated bricks with flush pointing of the vertical joints; view looking along the joints.



Fig.3 The rebated bricks, a view looking directly at the brickwork.

BRICK IN THE NEWS: THE GRANADA CINEMA, WALTHAMSTOW, LONDON E17

For more than a decade and a half, the former Granada Cinema, Hoe Street, Walthamstow, London E17, has been empty and unloved, facing dereliction. Opened on 15 September 1930, this was the second 'Granada' cinema to be built: the first was in Dover in 1929. The Walthamstow cinema was designed by Cecil Masey (fl.1910-1940) as architect with Theodore Komisarjevsky (1882-1954) as interior designer: the distinction is important and this division of design responsibility was common in the Granada chain of cinemas. After his work at Walthamstow, Komisarjevsky became the principal interior designer for the Granada chain.

The Walthamstow cinema was built on an enlargement of the site of a music hall which became into a cinema; the 'Victoria', had opened in 1887, showed films from 1907, and was remodelled as a cinema in 1921. Closed in March 1930, it had the advantage that its hall was at a right-angle to the street, and the new cinema with a wide façade incorporating shops on the ground floor as well as the entrance foyer to the cinema adopted the same building footprint. The front was covered with stucco, but plain brickwork adorned the exterior of the auditorium. Without exception all newly-built Granada cinemas thereafter externally were brick boxes, sometimes with limited stone dressings. Above the shops to the left of the entrance to the Walthamstow cinema was the Granada Café Restaurant, four bays of double windows, these with spiral columns and circular tops. In the centre, with the cinema entrance on the ground floor was a taller section, lighted on the first floor by a tri-partite window with spiral columns and flanked by two narrow single windows; each of these windows had cusped Spanish-style window heads. Originally, this had a elaborate canopy which rose to a rounded peak, but this was subsequently removed. To the right of this was a single wide bay, with one double window of the same form as those left of the entrance with either side of it a single narrow window. The whole ended with a stuccoed wall.

The style of the exterior was Hispano-Moorish, loosely based on the buildings of southern Spain and this was followed by Komisarjevsky in designing the interior, but with the important distinction that whilst the decoration of Moorish buildings in Granada, Andalucía, Spain, is not flat, Komisarjevsky deliberately made his decoration flat, like a stage set. The idea was to give the auditorium an impression of Moorish Spain, but not, as Komisarjevsky wrote in issue of *The Ideal Kinema* for 9 October 1930, following any specific building. In the large, double-height entrance hall, Komisarjevsky 'chose decorations in the 17th century Spanish Baroque style inspired by the work of the architects Juan de Toledo, Juan de Herrera and Mora, who, under Philip II, built the royal palace of Aranjuez'.

Originally seating 2,697 patrons, from the 1970s onwards the cinema passed through a variety of incarnations. With a much-reduced seating capacity, the interior was divided into three in October 1973 and operated as such for thirty years. Ownership passed through several cinema chains until 2003, when the building was purchased by the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, but their plans to use it as a worship venue were fiercely resisted by campaigners. (Cinemas in both Oxford and Luton have had a new lease of life as places of Christian worship.)

In 2013, a planning enquiry decided that the former Granada cinema could be a viable arts and entertainment venue. In 2016, the grand foyer opened as a bar and small-scale arts venue. On 29 May 2019, *The Guardian* reported that plans, backed by comedians Eddie Izzard and Shappi Khorsandi, for a 1,000-seat comedy venue also suitable for music, theatre, circus, an annual pantomime, and the odd 'red carpet independent cinema opening. The London Borough of Waltham Forest paid £2.8 million for the site and the Grade II* listed building: it was listed on 24 February 1987. An estimate of £17 million has been given for the costs of restoration, renovation, and reopening, that date of which has yet to be announced.

Allen Eyles, *The Granada Theatres*, London: Cinema Theatre Association, 1998, pages 33-38, 182, 226-227, and 254 gives details of the Walthamstow Cinema. Brief notice with photograph of the present entrance section of the frontage, B. Cherry, C. O'Brien, and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 5: East*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005, page 760 with plate 95. *The Guardian*, 29 May 2019, reported on the plans to reopen and gives details of some of the musicians who have performed there.

D.H. KENNETT

Review Article: Capital Assets?

Simon Phipps, *Brutal London*,
[Tewkesbury]: September Publishing, 2016,
192 pages, numerous black-and-white photographs,
ISBN 978-1-910463-63-5, price £14-99, hardback.

We live in an age of surprises, most glaringly perhaps in politics, with improbable candidates from all sides elected to positions of leadership, one in particular springing to *my* mind.¹ But it applies also to the world of fashion, as indeed it always has: at one time, ‘a glimpse of stocking / Was looked on as something shocking’;² now, deliberately torn jeans are in vogue and, no less curiously, what used to be affordable school satchels have become expensive *à la mode* accessories: one quite like that with which I started at Luton Grammar School in 1957 was priced at £150 in London’s trendy Covent Garden in July 2018. Then there is the irritating penchant for performing classical music at breakneck speeds, a familiar piece by Mozart, for example, sounding more like *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*.³ So perhaps we should not be unduly surprised by the current acclamation, in some quarters, of the architectural fad, encouraged by ideological polemic from Rayner Banham and Alison and Peter Smithson — high priest and acolytes respectively — and known as ‘Brutalism’ and ‘The New Brutalism’.⁴ It is all now, of course, *old* Brutalism, and this book aims to record photographically London’s contribution to the genre.

Banham’s all too often pretentious language is reflected in Phipps’ at times scarcely literate introduction: ‘The implication of the repeated platonic [*sic*] forms progressing upward to sunlight and air suggest [*sic*] the aspirations of the building echo [*sic*] the lofty expectations and hopes of the post-war welfare state’ (p.7).⁵ Its infelicities apart, the statement is misleading and unconvincing. Not all Brutalist buildings ‘progress ... upward’ — some are markedly horizontal — and even when they do, it is not always, in the British climate, ‘to sunlight’! And do they really ‘echo’ the aims of the nascent welfare state? *Brutalism* is scarcely an *ideal* symbol for what William Lord Beveridge, Clement Attlee, Aneurin Bevan, Sir Stafford Cripps, and others expected of it. There are times when the rhetoric of an over-excited advocate can get the better of judgement and of historical understanding — as well as of English! As for those ‘[P]latonic forms’. I can only suppose that what he means are the Platonic *solids*: tetrahedrons, hexahedrons, octahedrons, dodecahedrons, and icosahedrons, though they have scant relevance to architecture — even (where they might seem most germane) to the Constructivist projects of early post-Revolutionary Russia. The Platonic *Forms* (Greek *Ideai*) are something entirely different: an attempt to explicate, say, the relationship between the perfect circularity conceived by geometers and the never-quite-perfect roundness of mundane objects — Frisbees, hoops, wheels, 2p coins, and even circles drawn with a pair of compasses, for example — and their relevance to architecture is restricted to those who accept the full Platonic ontology, in which *circularity* exists somehow, somewhere as an entity: which is to say, virtually none of us! And being, by definition, *unique*, each of the Forms can be dimly reflected in everyday objects, but not, as Phipps says, ‘repeated’. Those unversed in philosophy do well to leave such matters alone: ‘what one cannot talk of, one ought to keep quiet about’.⁶

Strictly, a book on *Brutalism* should not be reviewed in *British Brick Society Information* since the term comes from the French *béton brut* (raw concrete), referring to the poured concrete with the impressions of the timber shuttering left as a feature of the finished building.⁷ But this book on London’s contribution to the genre also includes buildings in which *brick* is either used within a basically concrete structure or even provides the principal material.

For entirely alphabetic reasons — Camden is the first borough included and the project begins with ‘A’: the first three photographs (pp.12-15; brief description at p.179) show one of the most uncompromising examples: Alexandra Road (more correctly Alexandra Ainsworth) Estate, NW8, by Neave Brown for Camden Architects’ Department (1972-78), stretching for 1,400 feet (425 metres) with its gentle curve following the adjacent railway. In view of that, and from Phipps’ black-and-white photographs alone, one might judge the project to be, as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) did not *quite* say, nasty, brutish, and — *long*!⁸ ‘Exciting but

scary,' is one judgement, probably referring specifically to the truly Brutalist form of the rear, cantilevered over the service road alongside the railway tracks.⁹ But Phipps' images, selected, so it would seem, to emphasise a kind of sculptural bleakness that he appears to admire, are grossly tendentious, ignoring, especially, the wide principal walkway (Rowley Way), paved with face-bedded red engineering bricks. When I first walked round the estate on a crisp autumn morning, again on a cold January afternoon, and yet once more on a balmy spring day, I was struck by the colour: that red brick paving, blue-painted railings, and greenery — even in winter: in Spring there were pansies and daffodils, provided (as Neave Brown intended) by the inhabitants, making use of the generous balconies. More important were the people of varying hues — black, brown, pink — strolling, with or without toddlers and/or dogs — and children playing and laughing. I did not feel in the least intimidated.¹⁰ So forget that 'scary': it *isn't*!

That is not always the case on modern estates, especially those with spurious 'streets in the sky', conspicuously lacking what *most* real streets have: lampposts, bus stops, pillar boxes, not to mention traffic and pedestrians just passing through. It is all the more galling that two of their most vociferous advocates chose — and could afford — to live in far more salubrious surroundings elsewhere.¹¹ Of course, the *social* problems can be solved when the inhabitants are well-to-do and access to all but the main walkways ('streets' if you want to call them such) is restricted by gates, as in the Barbican, City of London, EC2 (1962-82: Chamberlain, Powell & Bon for the Corporation of London; pp.166-9, 189), though that is small compensation for the drab, lumpish architecture.¹² There is also the difficulty of navigating routes through the complex, for example, from Moorgate Station to the Museum of London, even with the aid of the yellow painted lines — somewhat less romantic than Dorothy's 'Yellow Brick Road' in *The Wizard of Oz*!¹³

The Museum of London itself is included in the book at pages 174-175 and 189. Designed by the much-fêted practice Powell & Moya and built in 1976, the building's raw concrete is mitigated by a cladding of glazed white tiles — though, as one former Director of the Museum once stated at a staff meeting, the view from St Martin-le-Grand resembles an over-scaled public toilet! And that is not to mention the waste of space in the building's design, including the circular 'Rotunda', which contained awkwardly shaped workrooms which, when refurbished in the early twenty-first century were found to have water inches below the concrete floor. Edward Jones and Christopher Woodward are scathing: 'It's banal and utilitarian architecture ...'¹⁴



Fig.1 Lillington Gardens, SW1, 1964-71, Darbourne & Darke.

But these pages are meant to be concerned with *brick*, which thus far has made only a minor appearance — in the paving at the Alexandra Ainsworth Estate. The material can soften what might, in raw concrete, be oppressively overpowering. The best example included, so I believe, is the large-scale Lillington Gardens, SW1 (1964-72, Darbourne & Darke; inadequately represented by just one photograph at p.155, with minimal text at p.188)¹⁵ (fig.1). I first wandered round this complex some decades ago; to do so again recently was no less pleasurable, not only because of the warm brickwork but also because of the project's respect for the neighbouring houses (see background to figure 1) and for the adjacent brick church of St James-the-Less (1859-61) by G.E. Street (1824-1881), and no less too because of the thoughtful landscaping. My perplexity is thus not with the building itself but with why it should be included in a book on *Brutalist* architecture.

The same is true of a number of other works included — almost promiscuously it would seem — such as the Earlstoke Estate, EC1 (1972-76: Renton Howard Wood Lewin Partnership for the GLC; pp.67, 182), a sprawling, predominantly brick, project with raised narrow walkways, far less attractive than Lillington Gardens: but is it *Brutalist*? Even less convincing as an example of Brutalism is the largely brick-built Oakshott Court, NW1 (1976: Peter Tabori for Camden Architects' Department; pp.30-31, 180). Again, the largely brick-built Malabar Court, W12 (1966: Noel Moffett Associates for the LCC; pp.62-63, 182) may be rather silly, whilst Quaker Court EC1 (1967: LCC Architects' Department; pp.70, 182) and Sidmouth House, Cato Street, W1 (1972: Max Stewart for the City of Westminster Architects' Department; pp.163, 189) are as boring as they are lengthy. But none of them can aptly be described as 'Brutalist'. Given the choice, I would rather live in *any* of them than in the *undeniably* Brutalist, and ironically gardenless, concrete slabs that were Robin Hood Gardens, E14 (1969-72: Alison and Peter Smithson for the LCC; pp.138-140, 187). Here, they perpetrated those 'streets in the air' — in fact featureless walkways: surely one of the most cynical tricks ever played by cocksure bourgeois architects on hundreds of men, women, and children with no opportunity for redress?¹⁶ Thankfully, all but a small fragment (preserved by the Victoria and Albert Museum for some inscrutable reason) was demolished in November 2017.

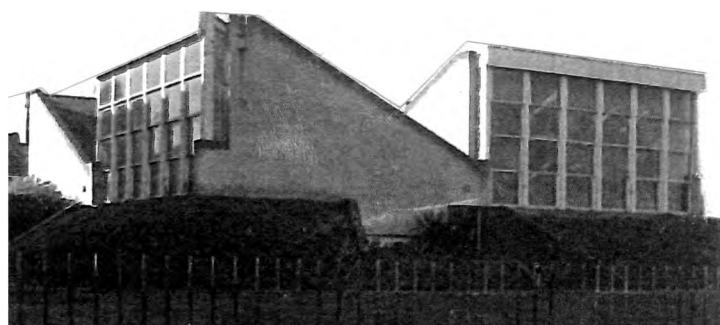


Fig.2 Brunswick Park Junior School, SE5, 1961-62, James Stirling and James Gowan for the LCC.

As a sixth-form pupil taking *The Architect & Building News* back in the early 1960s, I was fascinated by an illustrated assessment of Brunswick Park Junior School, SE5 (1961-62: James Stirling and James Gowan for the LCC; pp.114, 186), with its interlocked angular forms of white brick with a few red brick bands (fig.2). It is a modestly conceived building, well suited to its small users and not in the least brutal — let alone *Brutalist*. And why does the book include, for example, the brick St Paul's church, E3 (1958-60) by Robert Maguire and Keith Murray (pp.141, 188), a sort of post-Festival-of-Britain structure with, internally, a (then) faddish Anglican liturgical layout? Externally (fig.3), it is about as Brutalist as I am like the Incredible Hulk!

And that is my main complaint against this skewed book. It does indeed include — how could it not? — some undeniably Brutalist buildings: Denis Lasdun's raw concrete National Theatre, SE1 (1969-77: pp.93-94, 184) and its equally grim neighbour The Haywood Gallery (1963-68: LCC Architects' Department; pp.91, 184); and, also by the LCC Architects' Department, Thamesmead, Greenwich, SE2 (1967-74; pp.37-40, 180-



Fig.3 St Paul's church, E3, 1958-60, Robert Maguire and Keith Murray.

181), a series of dreary low ranges interspersed with looming tower blocks, the latter being what Horace Rumpole might describe as 'a sort of high-rise Lubianka'.¹⁷ Such excrescences make me think of the late Michael Flanders' monologue on Stonehenge: 'Well, if that's modern architecture, roll on the Ice Age, I say!'¹⁸

But, as noted, some buildings included scarcely warrant the description 'Brutalist'. Indeed, to apply the term to, say, the attractive house of black bricks at 23 Kensington Place, W8 (1966-67: Tom Kay; pp.80, 182), so respectful of its nineteenth-century neighbours without attempting to ape them, is to eviscerate the epithet of any meaning whatsoever. James Stevens Curl has drawn attention to the 'intellectual confusion surrounding the term'.¹⁹ But then, throughout his (mercifully brief) introduction, Phipps is profligate with language, as if beguiled by the youthful Yeats: 'Words alone are certain good'.²⁰ 'Moments of quietude,' we are told, 'descend as Piranesian elevated walkways, municipal squares and streets in the sky become reminiscent of the galleries and arcades of de Chirico's metaphysical paintings offering dreamlike spaces punctuated with high-contrast light and shadow' (p.7).²¹ Perhaps there is *something* meaningful amidst this verbiage, but I cannot pretend to divine what it might be: rather, I am reminded of Hamlet's reply to Polonius's 'What do you read, my lord?': 'Words, words, words'.²²

Apropos words, we have been told in recent years that the portmanteau word 'Brexit' means *Brexit*. With no less vacuity, it seems, 'Brutalism' means — well, *Brutalism*. One is reminded of Humpty-Dumpty sagely declaring, When *I* use a word ... it means just what I want it to mean — neither more nor less'. And in view of the variety of building types claimed as 'Brutalist' in Phipps' book and some other works (see that by Alexander Clement cited in my Appendix *infra*) one may also reflect on the perplexity in that same encounter: "'That's a great deal to make one word mean," Alice said ...'.²³

And then there is Phipps' curious assertion that photography in 'black-and-white removes the distraction of colour' (p.7), an attitude that informs the whole book. Credit where credit is due, many of the illustrations have a dramatic quality. But that is both their virtue and their vice: they succeed as examples of the photographer's art but not as instances of architectural illustration. That remark about the distractions of colour seems pointless when applied to what *should* be the book's proper concern, namely buildings in *béton brut*: colour photography would indeed be wasted on the drear achromatic Hayward Gallery and its like. But the greens and other hues provided by the residents' plantings at, say, the Alexandra Ainsworth Estate soften (as the architect intended) the harshness of the raw concrete: how then can colour be a *distraction*?²⁴ How, too, can it be such where the colour of bricks is an essential aspect of a building's design? It was not from Phipps' book but from my own visit that I saw that 23 Kensington Place is of *black* bricks, contrasting with the yellow-brown London Stocks around it: the colour contrast was the architect's intention. It is, I hope, not *too* naïve to reflect that bricks have different colours and that architects specify them for good reasons: to dismiss such colours as 'distractions' seems perverse.²⁵

Finally, should the disparate London buildings within this book be regarded as 'Capital Assets'? Some certainly are, whether of concrete, brick, or both. But as Sir Noel Coward (1899-1973) wittily quipped, when asked whether a summertime concert by various artistes should be called 'Summer Stars': 'Some are not'! And

why the author should be accorded the honour of hard covers is difficult to understand: a low-priced paperback would be more appropriate. As it is, this quite expensive small format (8 by 6 inches) book leaves me in a quandary. I cannot quite *not* recommend it: as mentioned, the monochrome illustrations are fine examples of the photographer's art. And they *do* provide a handy, if skewed, introduction to post-war London architecture. Of course, there is that pretentious introduction (pp.5-9), in which prolixity too often gets the better of both grammar and sense. But those five pages can easily be skipped. More irritating is the divorce of photographs from the brief details (address, architect/s, date and whether listed or not) and, in selected cases, description/assessment, all gathered together at pages 179-190, so that one has to flick from one part of the book to another. An index might have made the task a little easier, but none is provided. There is a brief bibliography. In fine, this is a curate's egg of a book. It is not hard to think of something on which £14.99 might be better spent!

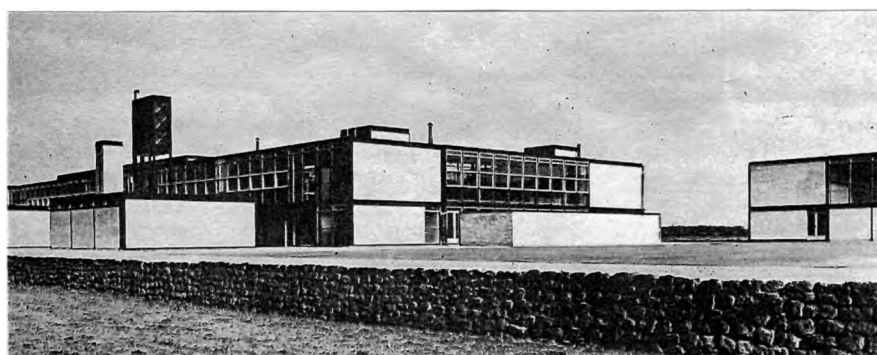


Fig.4 Hunstanton Secondary Modern School (now Smithdon High School), Hunstanton, Norfolk, 1950-54, Alison and Peter Smithson.

APPENDIX: SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL?

A consideration of Alison and Peter Smithson's iconic secondary school, and of its architects, is relevant to an examination of Brutalism. But because it is in Norfolk, discussion would be inappropriate within the principal text of a review article about buildings in London, and it was therefore relegated to an endnote. But like Topsy, it 'grewed' and soon became too long for such a note. Consequently, it has been repositioned as this appendix. (Spoiler alert: bricks *are* mentioned, but they are not the main focus of attention.)

Since the article began with surprises, perhaps one may mention that it is surprising that the Smithsons' reputation survived their ideologically conceived and negligently designed Hunstanton Secondary Modern School (now Smithdon High School) of 1949-54 (fig.4).²⁶ It includes Gault bricks (and much glass) in steel frames — more Miesian than Brutalist, albeit without Mies van der Rohe's finesse of finish and attention to functional considerations — but certainly *brutal* with regard to the children who have to endure it. Even the use of Gault bricks was insensitive when warmer *red* bricks might have been chosen. The extensive glazing, moreover, shattered as the steel frames warped, whilst the heating system makes the school 'freezing in winter, boiling in summer', as a caretaker complained fairly recently.²⁷ It is hard to credit, but true, that the architects did not even visit the exposed, windswept north Norfolk site on almost the highest point in Hunstanton. But then, why bother when you know *a priori* what is good for other people? Astonishingly, as late as the 1990s, a respected critic, Dennis Sharp, could still describe this flawed building as 'Technically ... almost perfect'(!),²⁸ echoing a much earlier and therefore more excusable judgement: 'Technically ... beautifully put together'.²⁹ Even as recently as 1997 Dan Cruickshank could describe the school as a 'masterpiece'.³⁰

Jonathan Glancey claims that the Smithsons 'redeemed themselves a decade later with the Economist Building, London [SW1]' of 1964.³¹ *Perhaps*: though am I alone in finding some of the fenestration uncomfortably ill-proportioned? I am reassuringly *not* alone in seeing an irony in a project which, coming

‘from almost any other [architectural] office ... would probably have been accepted as a creditable if colourless contribution to the city’s fabric’, actually coming from the supposed ‘*enfants terribles* of British architecture’.³² One might also note the superior materials — smooth grey aluminium and facings and panels of Roach bed Portland stone — as well as finely finished interiors, in contrast with materials, including bricks, used ‘as found’ at Hunstanton; nor do Economist Buildings’ workers suffer the extremes of temperature imposed on the school’s pupils and staff. So much for principles when Mammon is the paymaster! (Later than the Economist Building was the architects’ Robin Hood Gardens, London E1, now demolished, considered in the main text of this contribution.³³)

Curiously (or significantly?), the Hunstanton school receives only the scantiest of considerations in a work by Malcolm Seaborne and Roy Lowe and only a single sentence in that by Elain Harwood.³⁴ The best critical assessment is by Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson in the revised edition of *The Buildings of England: North-West and South Norfolk*³⁵ but even the former, the arch-advocate of Modernism, thought the interior, with its exposed bricks and beams, ‘perhaps a little austere for the children’.³⁶ In Wilson’s revised edition, this is strengthened to ‘much too austere for a school’.³⁷ But it is not only a case of (visual) austerity. The Smithsons must have known that plaster on internal walls is not a sort of ‘icing’ — as external rendering *may* be — but is functional, increasing thermal insulation and improving acoustics, rather important in school halls and classrooms! After Peter Smithson’s death, a former teacher, J.T.A. Shorten, mentioned these and some other shortcomings: ‘dreadful noise and congestion at lesson change ... , no available places for displays of pupil’s work, [and] no way of blacking out the assembly hall in order to show films’; and all that in addition to ‘the leaking concrete roof’.³⁸

(Regarding the showing of films, the late 1930s grammar school that our editor and I attended not only allowed blacking out but even possessed a projection room with facility for dimming the hall lights.³⁹ In later years, at another grammar school, I directed a number of ‘junior’ [now years 7-9] plays: the lighting effects would be impossible in the hall at Hunstanton. These matters, alas, were of no concern to the self-absorbed Smithsons.)

Bill Wilson retains Pevsner’s mention of the open-tread staircases, but omits his misgiving about whether they ‘are functionally the right thing for the bustle of a school’;⁴⁰ they are, in fact, unthinkingly irresponsible for such a context: decidedly hazardous for scampering young feet and contributing to that ‘dreadful noise’ complained of by Mr Shorten.

In the (unnecessarily) free-standing gymnasium (fig.4, far right), the Gault bricks predominate in the long walls, but the end walls were almost wholly glazed although the glass of the lower panels has now been replaced by black panels. But, as Bill Wilson observes, ‘One wonders if [in a school gymnasium] an entirely glazed wall facing a main road ... was ever quite the right thing’.⁴¹ One might indeed think it not only quite the *wrong* thing but even uniquely so, except that, three decades on, at the City of London Boys School, EC4 (1983-86) Tom Meddings of Corporation of London Architects & Planning Department placed the swimming pool along Queen Victoria Street, with long windows allowing public view of boys in swimming trunks. Even pre-Cyril Smith/Jimmy Savile revelations, just how crassly thoughtless could an architect be? There is, after all, *frosted* glass.

The Hunstanton school — ‘the forerunner of the Brutalist movement in British architecture’⁴² — was perceptively reviewed in *The Architects’ Journal* for 16 September 1954 as one which ‘seems often to ignore the children for which [*sic*] it was built’.⁴³ I doubt it was intended, but the reviewer’s substitution of ‘which’ for ‘whom’, implying that the pupils are objects rather than people, provides a nicely ironic comment on the Smithsons’ approach to the project, predicated on preconceived dogma, and violating one of Immanuel Kant’s more acceptable moral precepts: ‘So act that you use humanity ... always ... as an end, never merely as a means’;⁴⁴ surely a philosophical citation more pertinent to architecture than ill-digested references to ‘Platonic forms’? As that former teacher put it — pulling no punches — the school ‘illustrates the folly of allowing architects’ whims to flourish without consulting the people who will work in the resulting buildings’.⁴⁵

The word ‘iconic’, used in the opening sentence of this Appendix, is much overworked, but certainly applies to the Hunstanton school, as it does to one artist’s shark in formaldehyde and another’s unmade bed, however artistically questionable. But at least the latter two do not cause schoolchildren to swelter in summer and shiver in winter — or, potentially, become the focus of unhealthy voyeuristic attention.

John Grindod wryly observes, with a photograph, that the two functionally useless courtyards ‘have been colonised by mallard ducks’.⁴⁶ In itself that is no bad thing. But to *commend* a school on the grounds that it provides a habitat for ducks would be to damn with *very* faint praise. In a more distant prospect, Grindod also ‘spied a ... group giving each other piggy backs on the playing fields’.⁴⁷ And that at least is *something*: ‘The little victims play’.⁴⁸ Perhaps there is something about childhood that is proof against the excesses of even the most uncompromising of architectural ideologues.

I first saw those particular ideologues’ school in 1967, when I was, in the title of a Jamie Cullum CD, *Twenty Something*.⁴⁹ Only a dozen years since its opening, it was still much lauded; and I too was youthfully beguiled by it. By the time I saw it again, in 2005, I had come to regard it very differently. As the first track on that Jamie Cullum CD does not *quite* say: what a difference four decades made!⁵⁰

An onomastic perplexity is why the school was renamed not *Smithson* (as one might expect) but *Smithdon* High School. This is not a snub to the architects but reflects the catchment area of the school in the historical Smithdon Hundred in north-west Norfolk. At the eastern end of the county, the former Caister-on-Sea Secondary Modern School was renamed Flegg High School, echoing its hundred and catchment area.⁵¹

Is the Hunstanton school a ‘forerunner’ of Brutalism, as Bill Wilson claims, or is it the real thing? It is included as the latter by Alexander Clement in *Brutalism: Post-War British Architecture*.⁵² But that book also includes Coventry Cathedral (1956-62) by Sir Basil Spence (1907-1976).⁵³ And if *that* enervated building — the fag end of the Gothic Revival? — is Brutalist then almost *anything* is! A more perceptive judgement on the Hunstanton school comes from Jürgen Tietz: at the school, ‘all conduits for water, electricity, and so on ... were clearly on view,’ and that was ‘the point at which the Smithsons began to take leave of Mies van der Rohe’s carefully balanced and aesthetic architecture’.⁵⁴ (But not consistently, of course: a decade on, the Economist Building did not so wantonly display its private parts.)

My principal text quotes Humpty Dumpty and Alice on the meaning of words. The writer of *those* words — Lewis Carroll (actually, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, 1832-1898) — might have savoured the reflection that whilst, with a burgeoning population, we have long been accustomed to schools *metaphorically* bursting at the seams, it is rare to find one that threatened to do so almost literally! Carroll, an accomplished logician, was the master of the logical /semantic joke — “‘I’m sure nobody walks faster than I do!’ [said the Messenger]. / “He can’t do that,” said the King, “or else he’d have got here first”.’⁵⁵ — so I like to think that — much as one might enjoy advertisers’ (unintended?) ambiguities: ‘*Nothing* washes whiter than *Kleano*!’ — he might have relished the Delphic equivocation of the judgement that *nothing* is better than the Smithsons’ school architecture at Hunstanton.⁵⁶

TERENCE PAUL SMITH

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. “’Tis Caesar that you mean. Is it not ...? / Let it be who it is ...’: *Julius Caesar*, I.iii.79-80, Arden edn, ed. D. Daniell, 1998, p.190.
2. Cole Porter, *Anything Goes*, 1934 song, ll.1-2.
3. To which an apt response might be Ovid’s ‘*lente currite noctis equi* [run slowly, horses of the night]’: *Amores*, Bk I, no.13, l.40.
4. On the doctrinaire attitude of (Peter) Rayner Banham (1922-1988) and the Smithsons (Alison, 1928-1993; Peter, 1923-2003) it would be difficult to better James Stevens Curl’s strictures in J.S. Curl and S. Wilson, *The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd edn, 2015, pp.59-60, 713-14, following earlier editions.
5. Why is Plato deprived of his initial capital letter, as if one might write of ‘shakespearean drama’, ‘keynesian economics’, or ‘georgian/victorian/edwardian architecture’? Perhaps it is just a phippsian quirk! More seriously, the sentence is truly embarrassing: ‘implication’ is the subject and should be followed by ‘suggests’ — or more properly by ‘is’: implications cannot *suggest*; as for ‘echo’, the subject is presumably ‘aspirations’, the conjunction ‘that’ having been omitted after ‘suggest’; but one should not have to read a sentence three or four times to be (fairly) sure what a writer intends. It would be uncharitable to multiply examples of slipshod writing in Phipps’ short introduction, though one must wonder how houses that he does not like (and which he calls ‘clichés’) can be both ‘twee vernacular’ and ‘neo-modernist’ (p.8) — a sort of architectural square circle! Eight decades earlier, Agatha Christie provided an uncannily proleptic rebuttal of this oxymoronic nonsense: the bungalow known as Crow’s Nest ‘had no half timbering, no gables, no

excrescences dear to a third-class builder's heart. It was a plain white solid building': *Three Act Tragedy* (1935), London: Pan Books, 1983, p.11; it is still in print.

6. My colloquial rendering of *wovon man nicht reden kann, darüber muss man schweigen*: L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1928), German/English parallel text, London etc.: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, preface. For any interested in Plato's Theory of Forms, there are various introductions. One of the most lucid, if no longer easily available, is J. Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, London etc.: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1967, pp.355-360, the first edition of which served me so well in my undergraduate days. For the complexities, still valuable and still available after seven decades, is F.C. Copleston SJ, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, *Greece and Rome*, (1946), revised edn, reissued, London etc.: Bloomsbury, 2003 edn, reprinted 2018, pp.163-206; but it is not easy reading — and Greek words are not transliterated. A possible source of confusion is M. Weeks, *Philosophy in Minutes*, London: Quercus, 2014, pp.72-73, with one tiny page on the *Forms* facing an illustration of the Platonic solids. (This is one of a series of miniature books; in a culture of tweets and sound bites, they do, I suppose, provide milk for the unweaned.)

7. The derivation is secure, and Sigfried Giedion's concocted 'etymology', 'Brut[e] + Al[ison Smithson]' is as spurious as it is risible, even if one takes the first syllable as deriving from Peter Smithson's nickname, 'Brutus'. Cf. R[eyner] B[anham], 'New Brutalism', in V.M. Lampugnani, ed., *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of 20th-Century Architecture*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, p.246. But James Stevens Curl suggests that in *New Brutalism* the second element was 'perhaps ... a label of self-regard', being a tripartite derivation from BRUT[us] + AL[ison] + SM[ithson]: *Making Dystopia: The Strange Rise and Survival of Architectural Barbarism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp.449-450 (my italics).

8. T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), Part I, chapter 13; I have used the edition by C.B. Macpherson, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968, p.168. Hobbes held that without a 'commonwealth' under an authority with plenary powers — preferably but not necessarily a monarch rather than an oligarchy — life would be 'solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short'.

9. K. Allinson and V. Thornton, *London's Contemporary Architecture: An Explorer's Guide*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 6th edn, 2014, p.278. For the form of the building see the useful diagrams in C. Rogers, *How to Read London*, Brighton: Ivy Press, 2017, pp.204-5.

10. Phipps' monochrome photographs do not, obviously, show the colour. Nor do they include any *people*. I have been struck by both these omitted features on several visits in all four seasons. The warmth of some inhabitants was palpable on Open House London, 22-23 September 2018. Unforgivably, in pursuing his agenda, Phipps neither illustrates nor mentions the generous gardens that are an integral part of the project. My enthusiasm for the scheme, which Phipps seriously misrepresents, will be obvious. One should, however, add that it was an expensive undertaking; and it was claimed, some years ago, that 'not all the bills are in [presumably = settled] yet': D. Whitehead and H. Klattenhoff, *London: The Architecture Guide*, Berlin: Braun Publishing, 2010, p.233.

11. I am referring to the Smithsons, living successively in Chelsea and on the south edge of Kensington, just north of the Fulham Road. Nothing seems to be published on the Chelsea house where they lived in the 1950s; the two houses in Kensington are examined in M. Risselada, 'The Art of Inhabitation: The Smithson Houses' in D. van den Heuvel and M. Risselada, eds, *Alison and Peter Smithson — from the House of the Future to a house of today*, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2004, pp.135-165. From 1961 to 1971, they and their children lived on the top three floors of 2 Priory Walk, part of a terrace of twelve five-storey houses built 1850 to a design by George Godwin (1815-1888) before moving to a more spacious, detached four-storey house, Cato Lodge, 24 Gilston Road, of similar vintage, also by Godwin. The semi-basement and raised ground floor of both houses were the accommodation for their architectural practice. Both houses are mentioned B. Cherry and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 3: North West*, London: Penguin Books, 1991, p.550. The architects also owned and self-built a *gite* (weekend house) on the Fonthill Estate, Tisbury, Wiltshire, from 1961. I am grateful to David Kennett for information on the Smithsons' residences and for supplying the references. On the spurious 'street' nature of 'streets in the air/sky' cf. K. Frampton, *Modern Architecture: a Critical History*, London: Thames and Hudson, 3rd edn, 1992, p.272.

12. One might also mention the woefully unimaginative use of bricks for paving the high walks: cf. C.C. Handisyde, *Hard Landscape in Brick*, London: The Architectural Press, 1976, p.19, main text and caption to fig.4 at p.18.

13. Phipps presumably welcomes the perplexity, for at p.7 he compares the experience of walking round Brutalist buildings to '[Bernardo] Bertolucci's [film] *The Spider's Stratagem*, in which the protagonist is entwined in a cinematographically created labyrinth that becomes ever harder to leave'. And this is *commendation*! What can one add, except Jean Brodie's 'For those who like that sort of thing ... that is the sort of thing they like'? M. Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961) pbk edn, London: Penguin Books, 1965, p.31.

14. E. Jones and C. Woodward, *Guide to the Architecture of London*, London: Phoenix, 5th edn, 2013, p.163. I have to admit that my concurrence may be due to bias, not only because the public toilet comment was made by the best and most intelligent employer that I have ever worked for — Dr Simon Thurley CBE — but also because as a postgraduate

philosophy student at St John's College, Cambridge, I spent my first year in the same architects' Cripps Building (1963-67). Just four years after completion, the bronze window frames were already decaying: by a nice irony, the building had been awarded an RIBA *bronze* medal, and a bronze (harvest?) mouse entered my fourth-storey penthouse suite *via* the services ducts — an engaging enough little rodent: and yet ...! That suite, incidentally, was absurdly large for a single student. It might have suited a married (or otherwise) couple — except that the bedroom was too narrow to include anything but a single bed. And in any case, the college was all-male at the time! Cf. N. Taylor and P. Booth, *A Guide to Cambridge New Architecture*, London: Leonard Hill, 1972, p.5; also the acknowledgement of 'very expensive flaws' in 'this expensive building' in S. Bradley and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014, p.208: those who endured the 'flaws' might be less than satisfied with a sort of codicil to an otherwise laudatory assessment: pp.206-8. The Museum of London is due to move, by 2023, to a site half a mile westwards in Smithfield, EC1. Presumably the present building will be demolished. It will be no great loss.

15. There are better illustrations and assessments, most obviously in S. Bradley and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 6: Westminster*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003, pp.784-5 with colour photograph at pl.116.

16. See the comments in Curl, 2018, pp.298-301. Jones and Woodward, 2009, p.444, agree that it must have been 'a particularly depressing place to live in', though neglecting to mention that one of the authors assisted the Smithsons on the project: see B. Cherry, C. O'Brien, and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 5: East*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005, p.647. But there is a great deal of enthusiasm for the building in A. Powers, ed., *Robin Hood Gardens Re-Visions*, London: The Twentieth Century Society, 2010.

17. J. Mortimer, 'Rumpole and the Spirit of Christmas', in *The Collected Stories of Rumpole*, ed. C. Campbell, London: Penguin Books, 2012, p.156; On Thamesmead see Curl, 2018, pp.381-383; but overall this book offers an extremely dyspeptic assessment.

18. Flanders & Swan, *More out of the New Hat*, vinyl EP, Parlophone GEP 8900, 1964, side 1.

19. Curl and Wilson, 2016, p.122, following earlier editions.

20. W.B. Yeats, 'The Song of the Happy Shepherd' (1889) *l*.10; cf. *l*.43.

21. This passage, which seems to discern a none-too-obvious difference between 'elevated walkways' and 'streets in the sky', follows hard upon a dismissal of Prince Charles as 'a self-appointed expert critic'; but since the author himself is a photographer and 'graduate in sculpture' (p.192), he is clearly open to a *tu quoque* accusation of using an *argumentum ad hominem* which applies equally to himself: in other words, a pot calling a kettle black! It is, of course, entirely acceptable to criticise (*à la* Maxwell Hutchinson) the architectural opinions of HRH the Prince of Wales. Merely to cast a slur on the *holder* of those views is intellectual sloth.

22. *Hamlet*, II.ii.191-2, Arden edn, ed. H. Jenkins, 1982, p.247; one might also reflect on Romeo's 'The date is out of such prolixity': *Romeo and Juliet*, I.iv.3, Arden edn, ed. R. Weis, 2012, p.156; also Alexander Pope: 'Words are like leaves; and where they most abound / Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found': *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), *ll*.309-310.

23. L. Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (1872, and many subsequent editions to date), chapter 6.

24. Obviously, these meliorating colours are more apparent in months when pansies, daffodils and other flowering plants are in bloom; but even in winter there are numerous evergreens. Nor is that all: the balconies are generous enough to allow a colourful tent to be erected or colourful *bric-à-brac* to be stored. If you buy, borrow, or even steal the book and are struck by the grim aspect imparted by the photographs at pp.12-15, I strongly recommend a visit to the project itself: hopefully, you will be as delightfully impressed as I have been. See projects@alexandraroad.org.

25. Of course, there are black-and-white *films* where colour *might* be a 'distraction', but to apply the same judgement to (most) architecture would be like preferring a monochrome photograph of, say, a Mondrian painting to the colourful original or watching snooker on a black-and-white television set! With *brick* buildings, colour photographs are a considerable asset, as in, e.g., J.W.P. Campbell and W. Pryce, *Brick: a World History*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2003; W. Hall, ed., *Brick*, London: Phaidon, 2015; or P. Jodidio, *100 Contemporary Brick Buildings*, Cologne: Taschen, 2017.

26. [The essays in van den Heuvel and Risselada, eds, 2004, seem to imply that the Smithsons' reputation has survived their deaths. DHK.] But contrast Curl and Wilson, 2016, pp.713-14, and Curl, 2018, pp.297-301.

27. Quoted in J. Grindrod, *Concretopia: A Journey Around the Rebuilding of Postwar Britain*, Brecon: Old Street Publishing, 2003, p.139; cf. Curl, 2018, pp.297-8.

28. D. Sharp, *Twentieth Century Architecture: A Visual History*, London: Lund Humphries, 1991, p.199,

29. G.E. Kidder-Smith, *The New Architecture of Europe* (1961), pbk edn, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962, p.58.

30. D. Cruickshank, 'Hunstanton School', *RIBA Journal*, January 1997, p.51.

31. J. Glancey, *C20th Architecture: The Structures that Shaped the Century*, London: Carlton, 1998, p.193; cf. p.215.

32. D.J. and R. De Witt, *Modern Architecture in Europe: a Guide to Buildings*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987, p.176.
33. Cf. n.16 *supra*.
34. M. Seaborne and R. Lowe, *The English School: Its Architecture and Organization*, Vol.II, 1870-1970, London etc: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, pp.xv-xvi, 209, 214 n.42, which, it has to be said, is not a very good consideration of its subject; E. Harwood, *England's Schools: History, Architecture and Adaptation*, Swindon: English Heritage, 2010, pp.76-77. But there is a *slightly* longer consideration in A. Saint, *Towards a Social Architecture: The Role of School Building in Post-War England*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987, pp.185-186, 235; I am grateful to David Kennett for this last reference.
35. N. Pevsner and B. Wilson, *The Buildings of England: Norfolk 2: North-West and South*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, pp.444-446, plan on p.445, which, however, omits the gymnasium block. Curiously, schools feature only intermittently in the two volumes by Pevsner and Wilson [DHK].
36. N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Norfolk 2: North-West and South*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962, p.215.
37. Pevsner and Wilson, 2002, p.444.
38. *The Times*, 19 March 2003, quoted in D. Kynaston, *Family Britain 1951-57*, London: Bloomsbury, 2009, p.415. Bill Wilson, in Pevsner and Wilson, 2002, p.444 notes that the school 'had bequeathed a maintenance headache in a class of its own' — with a pun on 'class'? Such problems have *not* affected the building's inspiration: Mies van der Rohe's Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, of the 1940s onwards, which the Smithsons knew only from photographs. Mies, the son of a stonemason, in whose yard at Aachen he loved to work as a youngster, was always concerned with constructional details. At Hunstanton, the Smithsons, with no such experience and with little thought for the users of their building, were beguiled solely by *appearance*.
39. For an architectural assessment of this building see T.P. Smith, 'The 1930s in One Town: Brickwork in Luton', *BBS Information*, 81, October 2000, pp.8-8 with figs.5 and 6. When this was written, the building had already been mutilated; now, its most impressive elements (including the hall and projection room mentioned above) have been wantonly demolished and replaced by the KSS practice (2008-10).
40. Pevsner and Wilson, 2002, p.444; Pevsner, 1962, p.215.
41. Pevsner and Wilson, 2002, p.446.
42. Pevsner and Wilson, 2002, p.444.
43. Quoted in Seaborne and Lowe, 1977, pp.xv-xvi; in Saint, 1987, p.186; in Pevsner and Wilson, 2002, p.444; and in Kynaston, 2009, p.414.
44. I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. M. Gregor and J. Timmermann, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, revised edn 2012, p.41.
45. Kynaston, 2009, p.415.
46. Grindod, 2013, p.143.
47. Grindod, 2013, p.144.
48. Thomas Gray, 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College', l.52.
49. J. Cullum, *Twenty Something*, CD Universal Classics & Jazz, 2003.
50. The song is actually 'What a Difference a Day Made' by Stanley Adams and Maria Grever.
51. I am grateful to David Kennett for elucidating the derivation of the name change.
52. A. Clement, *Brutalism: Post-War British Architecture*, Marlborough: The Crowood Press, 2011, p.47.
53. Clement, 2011, pp.141-145.
54. J. Tietz, *The Story of Architecture of the 20th Century*, Cologne: Könemann, 1999, p.62.
55. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, 1872, chapter 7.
56. For any interested, the logical joke involves treating the *quantifier* 'nothing' as a *referent* — that is, using it as if it refers to *something* called 'nothing', much as Lewis Carroll uses 'nobody' to refer to *somebody* called 'nobody'. But for some existentialist philosophers it is *no* joke, notably Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), with his abstruse dicta such as 'The nothing itself nots'. Even if here were the place for it, I am unable to explain this. I suspect that few *could* without tying themselves up in *nots*!

Tate & Style:

The Switch House Extension: Tate Modern, London SE1

Terence Paul Smith

Some years ago in these pages I offered a warm assessment of the conversion, in 1997-2000, of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's brick-built Bankside Power Station (1948-60) to Tate Modern, Bankside, London SE1 by the Basel-based architectural practice Herzog & de Meuron.¹ What particularly impressed me back then was the respect the architects paid to the former turbine hall, with its single chimney, that they so skilfully adapted to a new use.

Over the last decade and more the same architectural practice — now having reached the giddy heights of stardom — planned, and recently have realised, an extension south of the turbine hall, occupying the site of the former switch house, which name, as Switch House, is applied to the new structure. It opened in June 2016 and, like Macbeth, 'bought / Golden opinions from all sorts of people'.² The subterranean circular oil tanks have been refurbished as galleries/performance spaces, but otherwise this is a wholly new building (fig.1).



Fig.1 The Switch House, Tate Modern: the pyramidal appearance from the south.

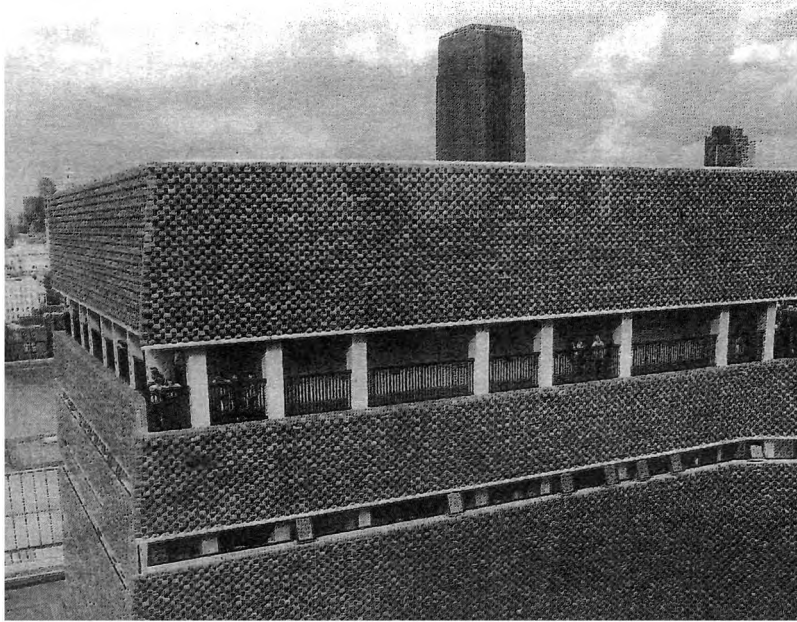


Fig.2 The Switch House, Tate Modern seen from the NEO Bankside apartment blocks and showing the flat roof and the viewing gallery.

Herzog & de Meuron have always had a quirky side: in their native Basel in 1992-95 they wrapped a railway signal box with broad strips of (expensive) copper, and at Yountville, California, in 1995-97 they constructed a winery of cages filled with stones — in both cases a sort of architectural equivalent of wearing a baseball cap back-to-front to show you're one of the lads: it does no real *harm*, but one is left wondering: what's the *point*?³ But in the Switch House extension this zaniness — or chutzpah — is carried to new levels: literally so, for this bulky ten-storey building rises to the height (64.5 m, 212 ft) of Scott's chimney, thus over-towering the turbine hall, like a Goliath to a David.

The original proposal — which takes some believing — was something like the present structure but clad in *glass*, presenting an even more strident clash with Scott's restrained brick building. We have, thank goodness, been spared *that* self-indulgent excrescence, for the design was refigured in brick, 'a nod to Scott' as Kenneth Powell puts it.⁴ Powell was writing before the building was completed, but he clearly does not share the 'Golden opinions'! Neither do I, though the brickwork, it has to be said, is intriguing.⁵

Jacques Herzog waxes lyrical on the topic: 'on the one hand,' it is 'solid and traditional, blending in with the former power station [;] on the other it appears like something light, almost like textile or knitwear'.⁶ Quite apart from questioning whether the new building really does blend with the old and wondering whether a building *ought* to resemble knitwear, one may also be struck by the breathtaking disingenuousness of the assertion, suggesting that the use of 'traditional, blending' brick was a first choice rather than a backdown following complaints about the originally preferred non-traditional glass! And even with the substitution of brick close in colour to that of Scott's building, the contorted angularity of the Switch House surely presents more of a clash than a blending with its strictly orthogonal companion?

The contortions result in the familiar pyramidal appearance (fig.1), although in other views — as from the neighbouring luxury apartments (see further below) the building is seen to present a flat top (fig.2). This is also apparent from a distance — say, from the north-west across the Thames in New Bridge Street, EC4. From there, too, the texture of the building is less obvious, so that there is no resemblance at all to knitwear — a cardigan for Gog or Magog, so to put it.

That effect is, of course, a result of the brickwork, an attractive medley of buff and light brown products measuring 210-215 by 112-115 by 70-72 mm: they are laid in what we may call 'Twin-coursed Flemish Bond' (fig.3).⁷ Interestingly, mortar is omitted between some of the bricks whilst elsewhere it is flush with them and of a closely matching hue. 'Special specials' are employed to negotiate the various changes of direction. At higher levels — above what may be considered a sort of sloping plinth or socle — some headers are slightly

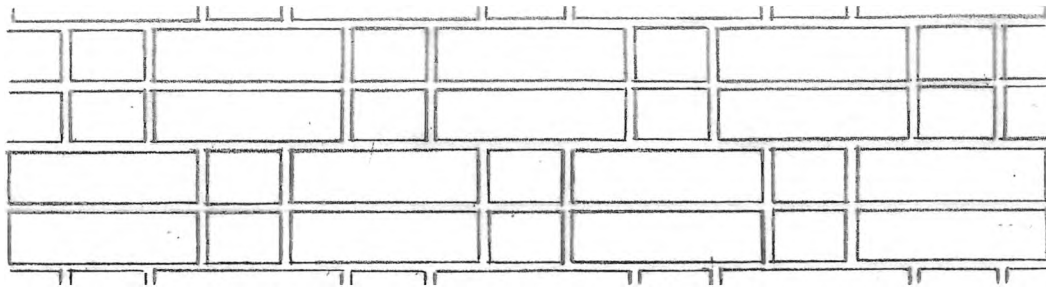


Fig.3 The Bonding Pattern used in the Switch House.

recessed, creating a textural effect. More often, however, they are omitted, imparting a honeycomb appearance, which animates the sloping brickwork planes (fig.4), and gives, from some viewpoints, a strong diagonal pattern. Inside the building the omitted headers admit light, *via* internal glazing, to the interior.

That interior is itself striking, revealing that the structure is of steel and concrete, to which the brickwork is mere cladding. I don't want to cavil at this, though it is a measure of how far current architecture has come from Modernist (or Puginesque) ideals of 'honesty of construction'. The sweeping spiral stair is sculpturally impressive, but ineluctably results in some wasted space — as, indeed, throughout the building — whilst sometimes presenting head-banging hazards: I *nearly* came a cropper! And the treads of the stair are disconcertingly wide, leaving one unsure — like a child learning how to go upstairs — whether to take one or two steps to negotiate them. But that is what happens when architects are more concerned with *form* than with potential users — whether providing a secondary school in Hunstanton, Norfolk, or a footbridge across the Thames to provide access to Tate Modern.

In the media, much was made, by some, of the former oil tanks above which the new building rises. In truth, they are just big concrete spaces, so one should not get *too* excited: you can find much the same in many an urban underpass without obvious enjoyment. Some of the former tanks are used for 'Living Sculpture', which on my first visit (19 June 2016) involved a small group of youngsters of both genders draped around each other. Quite apart from the fact that that *too* is something one can see in many an urban underpass, I could not see the *point* — though to be fair, I only stayed a minute or two, and left singing, *sotto voce*, Stephen Sondheim's, 'There ought to be clowns Don't bother, they're here'. (For sheer pointlessness one might have hummed a Steve Reich composition — but his works do not stay in the mind like Sondheim's. Does anyone ever have a minimalist earworm?)

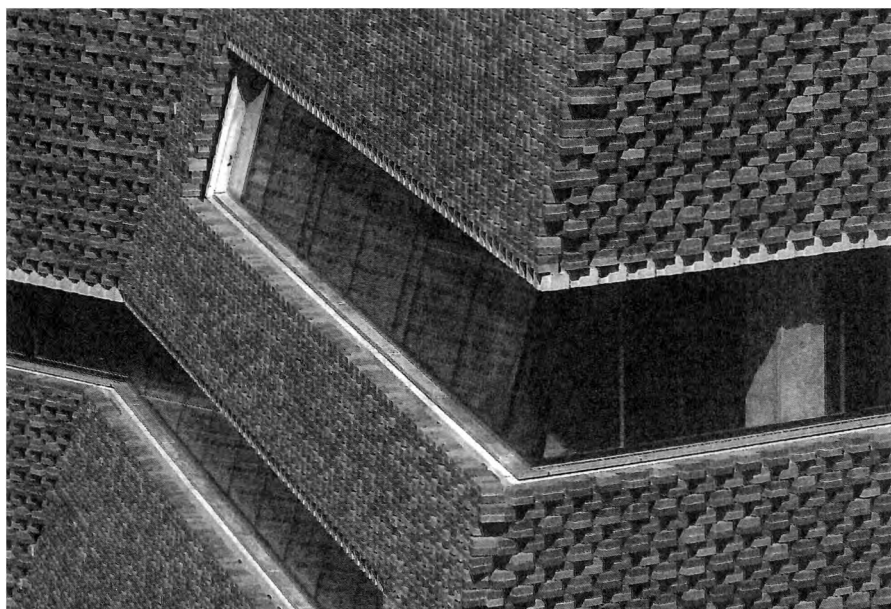


Fig.4 Detail of the Switch House brickwork showing the honeycomb effect of omitted headers.



Fig.5 The Newport Street Gallery, Lambeth, London SE11.

Of course, it is — or ought to be — what goes on *inside* the building that is important. But all too often there is a feeling of being taken for a ride: in the gallery labelled ‘Between Object and Architecture’ (whatever that means) on Floor 2, for example, I came across Carl Andre’s rectangular block of 120 firebricks, *Equivalent VIII*.⁸ There are also a number of other works that an all-too-clever-by-half Sixth Former might create, including an ‘electrical installation’ that I at first took to be an air conditioning system. Of course, there are things worth seeing in Tate Modern — the Switch House and its predecessor: I particularly like works by Marc Chagall (1887-1985), Henri Matisse (1869-1954), and Piet Mondrian (1872-1944). But, it has been observed, the ‘irony, given Tate’s runaway success, is that the permanent collection has always been rather underwhelming: it can’t hold a candle to that of, say, MoMA [the Museum of Modern Art] in New York’; and of works by leading artists not many are ‘absolutely top notch’, an exception being the Seagram murals by Mark Rothko (1903-1970).⁹

But whatever the quality of the works displayed, the question arises whether museums or galleries should be designed to celebrate their *contents* or the buildings in which they appear — the latter titillating the egos of the architects concerned. That latter approach is excruciatingly exemplified by the Centre Pompidou, Paris (1977: Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers): ‘the highly visible [not to say risible] and colourful exterior elements made exhibitions of art — its chief mission — difficult, so that a second interior rectangular box had to be erected to screen out the exterior and provide sufficient wall space [for hanging pictures]’.¹⁰ Much earlier was Frank Lloyd Wright’s Guggenheim Museum, New York (1959), its spiralling form not only clashing with the orthogonal buildings around it but, more seriously, obliging visitors to stand on a sloping floor in order to view horizontally hung pictures. But then, as Jonathan Glancey observes, ‘probably more people visit the Guggenheim to see the building itself ... than [to view] the art works on display’.¹¹ One suspects that Wright, never the most modest of men, would not have been displeased! Very similar words are applied to the Guggenheim’s much younger sibling in Bilbao, Spain (1997), by Frank O. Gehry, acknowledging that ‘[s]ome curators complain that the galleries are hard to work with’.¹² Gehry was doubtless as satisfied as Wright.

One may contrast Francisco Asensio Cerver’s comments on the Gagosian Gallery, New York (1994), by Richard Gluckman, who believes that the *art* should dominate the space, with the architect ‘playing only a supporting role and merely providing a stage’.¹³ Such an approach has been taken by Caruso St John Architects in their Newport Street Gallery, Lambeth, London SE11 (2016; fig.5), adapting a Victorian industrial brick building to its new use. But a new section, also in brick, has been added at each end of the original. That to the north, which includes the entrance, echoes industrial architecture in having a sawtooth roof providing (entirely practical) north lighting. The southern addition includes a balcony at a high level. A huge laser display panel has been added atop the northern half of the original structure: it advertises current exhibitions and is visible

from the railway, which is parallel to the gallery. There have been more changes internally, including the insertion of impressive spiral staircases, easier to walk up than that at the Switch House.¹⁴

These examples have been mentioned because at Tate Modern, Herzog & de Meuron have displayed both these disparate approaches: a self-effacing, respectful approach in their adaptation of Scott's power station and a self-promoting, far from reticent approach in their addition. With regard to the latter, one is reminded of another example of architectural hubris: 'Come, let us make bricks ... let us build ... a tower ..., and let us make a name for ourselves'.¹⁵

The overall form of the building at the Switch House is slashed by various lengthy ranges of windows (fig.1), reminiscent of the work of Daniel Libeskind, and including the viewing gallery at its topmost level. The latter has been admired for its stunning views of London; but it seems a somewhat backhanded compliment to commend an art gallery for what you can see *from* it. For me, on the other hand, there is a benefit, for I am reminded of a remark from Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893): asked why, when in Paris, he always dined in the Eiffel Tower restaurant he replied that it was the one place in the city from which one could not see the Eiffel Tower!¹⁶

But there are those who are less pleased by the views from the Switch House. Before the Battle of the Pyramids, 21 July 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte reportedly addressed his troops: 'Soldiers, think of it: from the height of these pyramids forty centuries gaze upon you'.¹⁷ There are those upon whom, from the height of this (sort of) pyramid, not indeed 4,000 years but thousands of visitors — bored, perhaps, with some of the exhibits — may gaze. They are the inhabitants of the multi-million-pound NEO Bankside apartments (2012: Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners), which face the Switch House; and some of them are decidedly unhappy.¹⁸ That they lack privacy, however, is not the fault of Herzog & de Meuron but of the architects of NEO Bankside.¹⁹ The hi-tech building provides floor-to-ceiling picture windows, so that 'the occupants appear as if in a goldfish bowl, i.e. on show'.²⁰ I have to confess that I am not entirely sympathetic: those who choose, and can afford, to live in such mind-bogglingly expensive glass houses ...!

Some London buildings — like others elsewhere — have acquired nicknames: the Gherkin for 30 St Mary Axe, EC3 (1997-2004: Foster & Partners), the Shard for the London Bridge Tower, London Bridge Street, SE1 (2000-13: Renzo Piano Building Workshop with Adamson Associates, architects, and WSP, engineers), the Cheese Grater for 122 Leadenhall Street, EC3 (2014: Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners), and the Walkie-Talkie for 20 Fenchurch Street, EC3 (2014: Rafael Viñoly).²¹ So far as I know, the Switch House has not acquired an unofficial moniker, although Oliver Wainwright, in a well-presented critique, aptly described it as 'an aggressive brick Dalek'.²² So the Dalek it may be. But in view of the building's dun colour and the way that, from some viewpoints, it twists up to a point, my own — rather indelicate — suggestion is the Dog Turd. I am, of course, biased against this at best rather twerpish and at worst egregiously self-promoting building.

But let us finish on a lighter note. A Chris Madden cartoon shows a couple looking at the building with its honeycomb brickwork. There are a few human figures scaling it and birds in flight around it. 'It's very popular,' one observer is saying, 'with pigeons and free climbers'.²³ There are times when a cartoonist can burst a bubble more effectively than any amount of critical assessment.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. T.P. Smith, 'Comment: Tate Modern', *BBS Information*, 81, October 2000, pp.23-25.
2. *Macbeth*, I.vii.32-33, Arden edn, ed. S. Clark and P. Mason, 2015, p.167.
3. At least in *origin* the reversed baseball cap has a *reason*: the catcher wears a protective face mask of stout wire, impossible with a cap the right way round, and it has to be worn back-to-front, as by the delightful Beethoven-loving Schroeder in Charles M. Schulz's *Peanuts* cartoons.
4. K. Powell, *21st Century London: The New Architecture*, London and New York: Merrell, 2011, p.100.
5. Whatever one makes of the building, one can have nothing but praise for the stunning colour photographs, including general views and details, in P. Jodidio, *100 Contemporary Buildings*, trilingual text, Cologne: Taschen, 2017, vol.1, pp.228-237.
6. J. Herzog, 'Welcome to the Switch House', *The New Tate Modern*, supplement to *Tate Etc.*, 37, June 2016, p.9.

7. 'Double Flemish Bond' would be a more succinct term, but this already has a different signification: see, e.g. R.W. Brunskill, *Brick and Clay Building in Britain*, London and New Haven: Yale University Press in association with Peter Crawley, 2009, p.91.
8. Or did I? If it was a forgery, how could one know? On this particular piece of nonsense see my 'Editorial: *Equivalent VIII Revisited*', *BBS Information*, 90, February 2003, pp.2-4.
9. M. Prodger, 'Cathedrals of the Modern Age', *New Statesman*, 17-23 June 2016, p.58; the article, pp.56-59, contrasts the Switch House with an equally distinctive and contemporary extension to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) by the Norwegian practice Snøhetta.
10. D. Ghirardo, *Architecture after Modernism*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, p.86; at p.82 she comments on the exterior colour-coding of elements — red for escalators, lifts, and stairs; blue for air conditioning and heating; green for water; and yellow for electrical systems: 'Rarely has such uninteresting information been communicated on a facade with such chromatic aggressiveness'. (I believe that, on Piano's insistence, the interior modifications have now been removed.)
11. J. Glancey, *Eyewitness Companions: Architecture*, London: Dorling Kindersley, 2006, p.478.
12. Glancey, 2006, p.491.
13. F.A. Cerver, *The World of Contemporary Architecture*, Köln: Könemann, 2000, p.298. The examples above are drawn from an unfinished essay on museums and galleries, which also includes warm appreciations of works by, *inter alia*, Louis Kahn, David Chipperfield, and Tadao Ando.
14. The new brickwork is of some interest. The bricks measure 210 by 100 by 65mm. Those of the ground floor are brown semi-glazed products, many with distinct kiss marks. At the northern end they are laid in Header Bond along Newport Street and in Stretcher Bond around the corner in Lollard Street; likewise at the southern end they are in Header Bond on Newport Street but in Stretcher Bond in a short (about 1 metre) stretch of the southern end wall. The rest of this wall, and all other new brickwork above the ground floor, is of buff to pinkish orange brick with similar frequent kiss marks. They are laid in Flemish Bond. (Presumably all the bricks were made together and then some given a second firing after application of a glazing agent.) The non-glazed bricks match in colour, and all are close in size to, those of the original, which are laid in Flemish Bond. The original also includes segmental arches to the windows, comprising dark red bricks laid as three courses of headers on-edge with fine joints. There are excellent colour photographs of the gallery in E. Heathcote, A. Sanvito, and R. Schulman, *New London Architecture*, London, etc.: Prestel, 2017, pp.140-143.
15. Genesis 11.3-4 (NRSV). The obvious comparison is the form and brickwork of the London School of Economics Student Centre, Portugal Street, London WC2, named for an LSE alumnus Prof Saw Swee Hock of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. But there are differences: the building, though distinctive and unmistakable when encountered, is far less dominant than the Switch House, even appearing rather coy from some viewpoints; it is not designed to house artworks which it might threaten to overwhelm; and it is a student centre, so that a certain playfulness is entirely appropriate. The work warrants a whole book: J.S. Robinson, ed., *Saw Swee Hock: The Realisation of the London School of Economics Student Centre*, London: Artifice, 2015; good photographs in Jodidio, 2017, p.433-437.
16. I have tried, unsuccessfully, to trace where I first came across this story, but it is available on several websites.
17. G. Gourgaud, *Mémoires*, 1823, vol.2, *Égypte — Bataille des Pyramides*: 'Soldats, songez que, du haut de ces pyramides, quarante siècles vous contemplent' (my translation in text).
18. See, e.g., Hannah Ellis-Petersen in *The Guardian*, 20 April 2017, p.10; cf. Prodger, 2016, p.58.
19. 'M'Lord Rogers', as the late Gavin Stamp was wont to refer to Richard George Rogers, Baron Rogers of Riverside, is a *Labour* peer all too prepared to design homes for the unimaginably wealthy. I say no more.
20. K. Allinson and V. Thornton, *London's Contemporary Architecture: An Explorer's Guide*, 6th edn, London and New York: Routledge, 2014, p.116.
21. Those elsewhere include the Flatiron for the Fuller Building, New York (1901-03: D.H. Burnham & Co.), the Mersey Funnel or Paddy's Wigwam for Liverpool Roman Catholic Cathedral (1960-67: Frederick Gibberd), and, my favourite, a Scrum of Nuns for the Sydney Opera House (1956-74: Jørn Utzon with Ove Arup & Partners).
22. O. Wainwright, 'Onwards and Upwards', *The Guardian*, 5 December 2016, p.17.
23. *Private Eye*, 1421, 24 June-7 July 2016, p.19.

Brick for a Day: H.G. Matthews Brickworks, Bellingdon, near Chesham, Buckinghamshire

Michael Chapman



Fig.1 Members of the British Brick Society outside the offices of H.G. Matthews Ltd.

The visit to the H.G. Matthews brickworks at Bellingdon, near Chesham, Buckinghamshire, on Saturday 18 September 2018 attracted a record number of members of the British Brick Society and their guests (fig.1), who were all very keen to learn about the innovations and products introduced by the company, which have transformed it into a progressive business capable of survival in a modern environment, and all whilst being able to maintain its key heritage ethos.

Since the society's last visit in May 1999 many important developments have taken place in the methods of manufacture, unique additions to the product range and overall business methods. These changes have ensured survival through very difficult trading times, allowed the business to meet new environmental and sustainability challenges, transforming itself into a business offering a unique and traditional product range, all supplying a growing sector in the construction products market place.

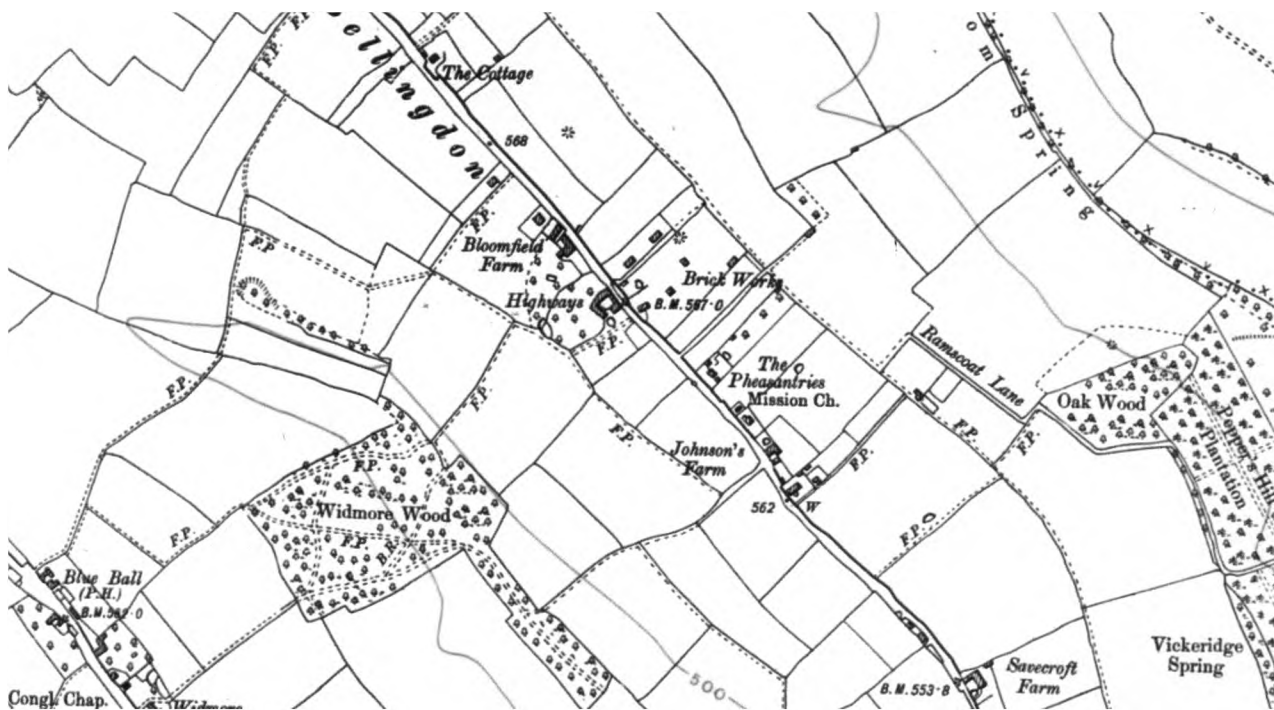


Fig.2 1920s Ordnance Survey 6 inches to the mile map of Bellingdon, with the H.G. Matthews Brickworks clearly marked.

The original company was established in 1923 by Henry George Matthews, a local builder who wanted to ensure a supply of bricks to his various projects. He was able to purchase a farm with suitable clay-bearing land and to set up the brickworks.

The clay, itself, is classified as 'clay-with-flints formation', a superficial deposit of clays and silts very suitable for its ease of quarrying and the production of hand-made clay products, principally bricks and roof tiles, and giving a rich red fired colour. These clay beds have been used by brickmakers since the sixteenth century: on the day of its previous visit to H.G. Matthews Ltd, the British Brick Society also visited Chenies Manor House, where there is the inhabited surviving portion of a major early-sixteenth-century brick house.

In the 1920s and 1930s, some twenty brickyards are recorded as working in the vicinity of Chesham. On a 1930s Ordnance Survey map of Bellingdon, the H.G. Matthews Brickworks is clearly marked (fig.2).

Historically, brick manufacturing has been a very labour-intensive activity, with the Bellingdon works being no exception, with manual labour and horse-power integral to all parts of the process, as is shown in the sequence of 1920s photographs in figures 3-6, taken at both Matthews' and the nearby Kirby's brickyards. The features shown in the photographs would have been typical of all the brickyards in the local area and throughout the Chilterns. Figure 3 shows the winning of the clay whilst in figure 4, the importance of horse power is emphasised in the photograph of the pug mill. The bearing-off barrow in the same photograph likewise demonstrates the variety of manual labour involved in securing the raw material for bricks in the 1930s. Figures 5 and 6 show outdoor drying hacks in the 1930s and still in use in May 1999.

In recent years the number of brickyards in the vicinity of H.G. Matthews' brickyard has dwindled from three to one. The other two operations, Dunton Bros. and Bovingdon, fell victim to a lack of suitable clay and the effects of the last recession. H.G. Matthews is the sole survivor.

The visit to H.G. Matthews was to clearly show how this business has not only survived but is growing and prospering, whilst still retaining its heritage perspective. A key factor in its success is access to a sufficient and secure clay supply, a mix of clay and sandy loam which produced a high-quality product with little overall waste.

The raw clay (fig.7) is initially screened to remove any undesirable flints (fig.8), then stockpiled prior to adding water and pre-pugging the clay so as to minimise the further pugging operation (fig.9). The individual



Fig.3 (left) Clay getting in the 1930s.



Fig.4 (right) Horse-drawn pug mill for hand-made brickmaking with bearing-off barrow for transporting the green bricks to the drying hacks.



Fig.5 (left) Outdoor drying hacks in the 1920s.



Fig.6 (right) Similar outdoor drying hacks were in use in 1999. Note the wind pump to the left, use for supplying water to the pug mill.



Fig.7 (left) Clay supply.



Fig.8 (right) Flints and other stones removed from the clay-with-flints, the principal source of clay in the Chilterns.

mixes are tailored to suit the product range, with, for example, anthracite from South Wales being added to get a multi-colour upon firing. High-speed rollers, secured behind safety guards (fig.10), reduce the clay mix down to 1 millimetre diameter, prior to it being fed to either the handmakers' benches (figs.11 and 12) or to a Berry Machine (figs.13 and 14). The latter produces machine-made stocks.



Fig.9 (left) Pre-pugging using a mechanical shovel, with the wetted clay in the right-hand bunker.

Fig.10 (right) High-speed crushing rollers, secured behind the safety guards.



Fig.11 (left) Hand-making special shapes.

Fig.12. (right) Hand-making facing bricks.



Fig.13 (left) 'Bearing-off' from the Berry machine table on to the dryer stillages.

Fig.14 (right) A Berry machine.



Fig.15 (left) The insulated drying room.

Fig.16 (right) Wood-fired boilers and heat exchangers.



Fig.17 (left) Wood chip store for the biomass boilers.

Fig.18 (right) Wood faggots store for kiln firing.

One of the major changes introduced since our previous visit, twenty years ago, has been the changes to the drying method. The open air hack drying (fig.6) has been replaced by the use of indoor drying rooms, with actual drying achieved by using hot air (fig.15). This air, generated from a biomass-fired boiler-cum-heat exchanger system (fig.16), is circulated around the drying rooms using a programmable computer controlled system. This allows variable drying programmes to be used for different sizes of product and ultimately results in faster turnaround times, with minimal wastage.

The actual biomass material is wood chip (fig.17). The wood used as feed stock is obtained from local sources and is then chipped by a contractor, prepared, and fed into the five-boiler system. The installation was part-financed through a government sustainable development fund, and has produced considerable benefit over the old open air hacks.

The best wood to use comes from broad leaf woodlands which are managed to improve their overall biodiversity.

Another change has been the introduction of a hand-made clay roof tile range, using the same clay as for brickmaking, so that the different product complement each other. The tiles are dried flat, so as to minimise warping and then fired in one of the wood-fired kilns. Wood for the kilns is stored as faggots (fig.18).

Firing of the main brick ranges is, as was done in 1999, in one of three traditional updraught Scotch Kilns, each about fifteen years old and designed to accommodate a fork lift truck delivering the stillages of dried bricks to the hand setters who actually fill the kiln (fig.19). The firing process is achieved by using a mix of diesel oil and compressed air raising the temperature to 1200 degrees Celsius over a 24-hour period.

Bricks are sorted and selected to produce unique premium blends to fulfil customer requirements (fig.20). This particular innovation has proved very successful in overall sales and profit margins.



Fig.19 Fork lift truck delivering a stillage.



Fig.20 (left) Sorting fired bricks into bespoke premium blends.



Fig.21 (right) Shrink-wrapped bricks ready to leave the factory.

A further and very significant addition to the product range has been a true wood-fired kiln stock, which successfully replicates a fired colour range, once very typical of rural-based brickyards. The use of wood as a fuel for kiln firing had been in long-term decline, with a 1968 quotation from *The British Clayworker* saying:

In 1946 an anonymous writer stated that it was doubtful if there were a dozen brickmakers in the country who still used wood fuel.

With the last recorded yard using wood being Ashburnham Park in Sussex which ceased production in 1968, it is a tribute to the determination of Matthews that the technique has been successfully re-established.

After much research and with the assistance of British Brick Society member, Dr Gerard Lynch, together with referral to the Colonial Williamsburg Living History Museum, Virginia, USA, a unique range of wood-fired products has been introduced. By displaying the grey/blue bar marks on the face and distinctive glazed headers (fig.23) the range is an exact match for period brickwork and is therefore in great demand for both restoration and new build projects.

Handmade bricks are set into separate Scotch Kilns, which are fired using dried faggots (fig.18) introduced into side feed holes (fig.22). The smoke from the wood causes deposits of potash to chemically combine on to the exposed brick surfaces producing the distinctive grey/blue colours (fig.23). Once fired the kilns are then emptied and sorted by hand into a distinctive blend.

Separate from brick and tile production, Matthews have developed a range of alternative building products firmly aimed at the sustainability market and to provide a bespoke range of colours.

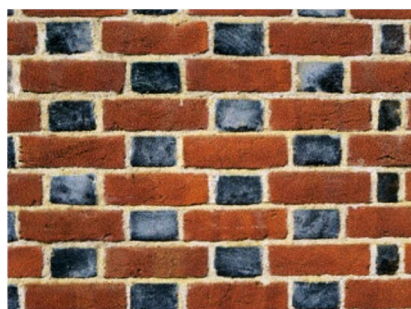


Fig.22 (left) Green set bricks, with the feed holes and refractory gates. Note the wood ash on the floor.

Fig.23 (right) Wood-fired glazed headers set in a wall with red bricks in Flemish Bond. Note the closers with wood-fired headers.



Fig.24 (left) 'Eco Blend' blocks, on table, marketed as 'Strocks Blocks', using a clay straw mix.

Fig.25 (right) Statement of intent as to 'Strocks Blocks'.

Firstly, an 'Eco Blend' range has been introduced, achieving its own environmental credentials. This is a straw/clay mix marketed as Strocks Blocks, manufactured from the company's own clay, straw from the family farm, pressed into blocks using a modified Berry-type press, and then dried using heat from the biomass boiler system (fig.24). The blocks are the key components in a composite and highly insulating building system, made externally weather proof by a clay-mix render.

In addition to this range, further work is on-going to use a clay and hemp mix with the hemp sourced from the Matthews family farm. Finally we were shown a range of glazed brick, using a specially formulated ceramic glaze, and fired on to the surface of the product. A distinctive colour range is available for internal wall decoration.

The British Brick Society is extremely grateful to Mr Jim Matthews for allowing us to visit the works and for conducting us all around on the tour. There is no doubt that since our previous visit in May 1999, the company has made great strides in its overall business approach, one that has ensured its survival and continuing future growth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

- Black and white photographs: H.G. Matthews Ltd and Dr Gerard Lynch.
- Colour photographs: Mike Chapman.
- Account of May 1999 visit to H.G. Matthews brickworks: Roger Kennell, 'The H.G. Matthews Brickworks, Bellingdon, Buckinghamshire, *British Brick Society Information*, 78, May 1999, pages 20-21.

- Quotation on wood fired kilns: *The British Clayworker*, LXXVII, 1968, page 54.
- Ashburnham Park Brickyard: M. Beswick, *Brickmaking in Sussex: A History and Gazetteer*, Midhurst, Sussex: Middleton Press, 1993, pages 28-30. M. Beswick, *Brickmaking in Sussex: A History and Gazetteer*, second edition, Midhurst: Middleton Press, 2001, pages 28-30. See also K. Leslie, 'The Ashburnham Estate Brickworks 1840-1968', reprinted in K. Leslie and J. Harmer, *Brick and Tile-Making at Ashburnham, Sussex*, Singleton, Chichester: Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, 1991, esp. pages 13-20 for full description of wood-firing a Scotch kiln. K. Leslie's paper was originally published in *Sussex Industrial History*, 1, 1970-71.
- Ordnance Survey map for location of H.G. Matthews brickworks: National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

BRICK IN THE NEWS: HOLLOWAY PRISON

The current buildings at Holloway Prison, Parkhurst Road, Islington, London N7, were built between 1970 and 1977 to designs by Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners and closed in 2016. The red bricks of the 1970s buildings and the high, outer brick wall can be described as 'wire-cut, sand-faced red' facing bricks, which were supplied by Redland Bricks Ltd from their Southwater and Holbrook, West Sussex works. The Southwater closed in 1978 and the Holbrook works was eventually bought by Wienerberger and operates as their Warnham works, producing machine-made, stock bricks.

In March 2019, the Holloway Prison site was sold to Peabody, the housing association. Part of the purchase money was £42 million from the Mayor of London's land fund. Peabody propose to demolish the 1970s buildings and redevelop the site for a thousand homes, most of which will be let at affordable rents: it is envisaged that 420 of the new homes would be let at a social rent, reflecting local incomes, and a further 180 at the slightly higher affordable rent. The other two-fifths of the new homes would either be sold through shared ownership or let at a London Living Rent on three-year tenancies, after which there is an option to buy. Construction is expected to begin in 2022, after demolition of the former prison is complete and building work on the 10-acre (4 hectares) should be finished by 2026.

The sale brings to an end the use of the site as a prison. The original Holloway Prison, designed in 1849 by John Bunstone Bunning (1802-1863), Architect to City of London, as the City House of Correction. It became a women's prison in 1902 and in the years before the Great War housed hundreds of suffragettes including Emmeline Pankhurst, her daughters, and Emily Davison. Bunning designed the prison on the radial principle, with four wings radiating from a central tower. The wings contained 436 spartan cells and large workrooms. There were also two front wings behind a formidable looking gatehouse. The replacement of the 1970s, surrounded by a high wall of red brick, was less austere. It was a series of cell blocks, three to five storeys in height, built of red brick, and informally grouped round landscaped courtyards. Bridget Cherry claimed it resembled 'a hall of residence rather than a prison': B. Cherry and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North*, London: Penguin Books, 1998, page 672.

The sale of the site was reported *The Guardian*, 9 March 2019. For the prison and successive buildings on the site see A. Brodie, J. Croom, and J.O. Davies, *English Prisons: An Architectural History*, Swindon: English Heritage, 2002, pages 97-98, 158-161, and 214-216.

D.H. KENNETT and M. CHAPMAN

BRICK IN PRINT

Between June 2018 and May 2019, the Editor of *British Brick Society Information* became aware of a number of books and articles of interest to members of the society. 'Brick in Print' has been a regular feature of *BBS Information* for several years with surveys usually appearing twice a year. Those chronicled here mostly concern London and New York, the theme of this issue of *BBS Information*. Members who are involved in publication or who come across books and articles of interest are invited to submit notice of them to the editor of *British Brick Society Information*. Websites and television programmes may also be included. Unsigned entries in this section are by the editor.

D.H. KENNETT

Stephen Alford, *London's Triumph Merchant Adventurers and the Tudor City*,
London: Allen Lane at the Penguin Press, 2017,
xx + 316 pages, 20 plates, 4 maps,
ISBN 978-0-241-00358-9, price hardback £25-00.

Though primarily a book about trade and expansion of 'empire' (a word then meaning places where contact had been made beyond the European country), there is a chapter, 'So fair a bourse in London' (pages 105-115) about the building of Sir Thomas Gresham's Royal Exchange (plate 8). This was built of brick but to objections from the Company of Tylers and Bricklayers, Flemish bricklayers were employed (page 108): Sir Thomas Gresham (1519-1579) was Elizabeth's agent in Antwerp, then Europe's financial capital. Gresham had brick houses: Osterley Park, Middlesex; Mayfield, Sussex; and his London House in Bishopsgate, where Elizabeth, herself dined in January 1571 before visiting the Exchange and declaring it 'The Royal Exchange' (page 110). The design of the building was inspired by the bourse in Antwerp.

One of the chief promoters of the Royal Exchange was a Welshman, Rhisiart Clwch, better-known as Gresham's right-hand man, Sir Richard Clough (c.1530-1570), who used his wealth to build one of the earliest brick houses in Wales, Plas Clwch.

Alford illustrates two Tudor maps in double-page spreads. Plate 5 shows a detail, primarily of London Bridge, from Anthonis van den Wyngaerde's panorama of London in the 1540s but suffers from the depth of the gutter. Plate 16 is from one of the surviving portions of the Copperplate Map of London of the 1580s that showing the suburb developing along Bishopsgate and the uncolonized Moorgate Fields.

Michalis A. Bardanis, 'Family Business in the Brick and Tile Industry in Athens, 1900-1940',
The Historical Review / La Revue Historique, 15, 2018, pages 89-129.

From 1900 to 1940, family businesses in the brick- and tile-making industry of Athens and its port, Piraeus, were a notable institution that played an important role in the development of the sector and its transformation from artisanal to factory production. They formed a dense network of small and medium-scale units, from which more than 20 big factories would emerge after the 1920s. A strong and constant antagonism between them, on the one side, and the few European-scale large industrial units, on the other, developed. Within this framework, the story of the Athens brick industry in this period can be vividly interpreted through the function and evolution of familial firms (which were under control of nuclear, extended, or multigenerational families) and the actions of their owners.

AUTHOR'S ABSTRACT

Michael Hall, 'Pure and Simple: The Italian Embassy, No 4, Grosvenor Square, London W1',
Country Life, 10 October 2018, pages 98-104.

Michael Hall, 'An English Phoenix: Hinton Ampner House, Hampshire',
Country Life, 17 October 2018, pages 46-50.

Lord Gerald Wellesley FRIBA (1885-1972) is one of the many architects whom the history books ignore; the man who became the seventh Duke of Wellington in 1943 filled many roles in his lifetime: diplomat, architect in partnership with Trenwith Wills (1891-1972) from 1924 to 1945, member of the House of Lords, Lord Lieutenant of London, country gentleman, and head of a great estate. These two articles survey different facets of his architectural work, much of which was in the field of country houses and London town houses. As a younger son and unlikely to inherit his father's title and the family estates, centred on Stratfield Saye, Hampshire. As a child he wanted to be an architect, but his parents were against it and steered him to the diplomatic corps.

His work at no. 4 Grosvenor Square, in the heart of the Grosvenor estate, involved the reconstruction of the former town house of the Earls Fitzwilliam, as the Italian Embassy. The house had been designed in 1867 by Thomas Cundy III (1821-1895), the third of his family to be Surveyor to the Grosvenor Estate. To the square it presents a five-bay front with a rusticated ground floor with the three upper floors in white brick with stone dressings below a stone balustrade (I, p.102). The estate was not keen on stucco.

The interiors are lavish, with walls hung with pictures and eighteenth-century mirrors; originally the pictures were from major Italian collections but these have been returned to the galleries which lent them. They were replaced by others of no less artistic quality.

The second article examines the double reconstruction of a Georgian country house; Hinton Ampner House had been savaged by Victorian additions. Its resident, Ralph Dutton (1898-1985), spent 1935 to 1950 restoring the house to an original appearance but with gap during the Second World War only to see his painstaking restoration go up in smoke on Sunday 3 April 1960. Wellesley and Wills had been his architects, sourcing items in the 1930s from London houses on the verge of demolition: two houses by Robert Adam — Derby House and the Adelphi — provided a pier glass and doors, respectively, for the dining room, (II, p.49); the demolished Adelphi provided chimney pieces and a cast of the plasterwork of no.38 Berkeley Square, another Adam house, the ceiling decoration. The ceiling of the dining room was reconstructed after the 1960 fire but its roundel paintings, perhaps by Angelica Kauffmann, were too damaged and were replaced by ones by Elizabeth Biddulph. The 1930s reconstruction of the house was the setting for Dutton's collection of eighteenth-century and Regency furniture and paintings, much of which did not survive the 1960.

Ralph Dutton was a bachelor, without relatives to inherit; he bequeathed the house and its collection together with the garden and the estate to the National Trust. At his death, it was the end of nearly four centuries of family association with Hinton Ampner: an ancestor is recorded as the leasee of the Bishop of Winchester in 1597. The late Tudor house was demolished in 1793, replaced by a brick box, more a hunting lodge than a family home; Ralph's grandfather, John Dutton (*d.* 1884), then employed a local builder, Hory Kemp of Alton, to create a monster, a sort of Victorian statement in Tudorbethan style, which Ralph's father, Henry Dutton (*d.* 1935), would not alter or improve. Ralph Dutton, himself, was more than an aesthete and certainly not a dilettante: he researched and wrote on Victorian country houses, albeit negatively; his preference was for a modernised version of the eighteenth century.

The main part of the house is red brick, of two storeys and seven bays on the garden front (p.48) with the two outermost bays semi-circular, each with three floor-to-ceiling windows on the ground floor. There is a service wing to one side which is lower. What Gerald Wellesley and Trenwith Wills created, with the aid of Ronald Fleming (1896-1968) a noted interior designer, was a translated ideal of the century which captivated the client but in a mid-twentieth-century idiom. Its reconstruction after the 1960 fire shows how much could be preserved.

One other aspect of Gerald Wellesley's work is brought out in the second article: the Eton connection. Dutton went to Eton; Christopher Hussey, the architecture editor of *Country Life* was an exact contemporary; Gerald Wellesley was half a school generation older. For the school generations at Eton in the 1890s, those who fought the Great War, school was the over-riding connection.

Anne Lancashire, 'Crossing the Bridge: The Coronation Entry of Margaret of Anjou, 1445
The Ricardian, 29, 2019, pages 1-12.

In *British Brick Society Information*, 141, April 2019, Terence Smith wrote on 'Winter Bricklaying in Early Tudor London: Working for the Bridge Wardens 1547-1538'. The income from the rents the Bridge Wardens received was used for the upkeep of London Bridge. One ceremonial use of the bridge in the fifteenth century was to be part of the route of the formal entry into the City of a king awaiting his coronation or returning from foreign wars or of a queen-designate on the eve of marriage or her coronation.

Such spectacle had a building aspect: sand and gravel were spread on the bridge deck whenever notables on horseback were part of a procession across it. Pageants, too, were staged on the bridge to welcome the new queen, Margaret of Anjou, who by proxy had been married to Henry VI at Titchfield Abbey on 22 April. The procession involving crossing London Bridge had begun at Eltham Palace, where she had arrived on 18 May, and proceeded to the Bishop of London's house at St Paul's where she would stay the night before her formal coronation procession from the Tower to Westminster on 29 May and her actual coronation on Sunday 30 May 1445.

London Bridge as it looked in 1635, almost two centuries after the events elucidated in Lancashire's article, is shown in figure 1.



Fig.1 London Bridge in 1635: from the Matthaeus Merian view.
Reproduced from M. Merian, *Die Schönsten europäischen Städte*, Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1963, opposite page 22; the series of town views was originally published in 1635.

Jeremy Musson, 'An Artist's Vision: Olana, New York State',
Country Life, 15 August 2018, pages 54-59.

Frederic Church (1826-1900) was the foremost landscape painter of late-nineteenth-century America. A pupil of an immigrant from England, Thomas Cole (1801-1848), in his passion for an harmonious landscape, Church created his own idyllic setting above the Hudson River and facing the Catskills, frequently the subject of his paintings. But it was his travels in the Near East, something he shared with Edward Lear (1812-1888), which influenced the construction and the style of his own house, initially without its accompanying studio.

Built after returning from the cities of the eastern Mediterranean in May 1870, Olana was initially sketched by the artist as a quasi-Moorish fantasy (p.55); the English-born and English-trained architect Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) turned these ideas into a buildable reality. The lower floors have external walls of brownstone laid fairly regularly but irregularly coursed. The polychrome upper parts are a golden yellow brick with red brick and wood painted red for the framing of balconies and windows respectively but red brick with yellow brick edging on the inner faces of the balconies (p.59). The truncated pyramid of the tower roof is covered with tiles making a mosaic.

Initially only one of his own paintings had hung in the house: *El Khasné Petra*, that first glimpse of the rose red city half as old as time, magical in its mystery (p.58). But in 1886, on the death of his sister, the paintings the artist had given to his parents reverted to Church. Two years later, he designed a studio tower west of the house and connected to it by a wide corridor, also open to the view of the Hudson. From the studio, another wooden balcony gives a view down the Hudson River, but protects the room from glare: the principal window in the studio faces north.

On the death of Church's daughter-in-law in 1964, a fund-raising campaign was launched to buy the house and the rest of the property, the surrounding farms and woodland, the latter mostly planted for Church. In 1966, sufficient had been raised for Nelson Rockefeller, then Governor of New York State, to declare Church's legacy preserved as a State Historic Site.

John Martin Robinson, 'Departed Rococo Splendours: Norfolk House, St James Square, London SW1',
Country Life, 6 June 2018, pages 98-102.

The dukes depart; the houses are let, then cannot be let, and so are demolished. Norfolk House, the London home of the Dukes of Norfolk, was almost the last to go, demolished in 1938 for the present building on the site, an office block designed by Gunton & Gunton for Rudolph Palumbo. This 'dull neo-Georgian block' in red brick was viewed by members of the society on its tour of St James Square in October 2007.

Recently a series of black-and-white photographs taken in the 1870s by Bedford Lemere have been unearthed which depict the rooms on the first-floor *piano nobile*, the public face of the great house; three are illustrated on pages 100 and 101, and a cutaway drawing on pages 98 and 99 shows the layout of the floor. The sequence was anteroom adjacent to the great stair, then at the front of the house the Music Room, the Green Drawing Room, and Crimson Velvet Drawing Room, whilst the Great or Tapestry Room, the State Bedroom, the State Dressing Room, and the China Closet formed the second half of the sequence at the rear of the double pile house. The family lived on the first floor with the basement used for kitchens and other rooms in the servants' domain and the second floor for the servants' bedrooms: even the chaplain had his quarters on that floor, accessed only by the back stairs.

The eighth duke's trustees had purchased bought St Alban's House for £10,000 in 1722 and his brother, the ninth duke, acquired Belasyse House to the north in 1738. The two properties gave a street frontage of 109 feet (33.25 metres); a decade later, in 1748, he had Matthew Brettingham snr (1699-1869) of Norwich construct a nine-bay house of white brick from Norfolk with Portland stone used principally for the corners and the alternate triangular and segmental pediments to the first floor. The cutaway drawing shows the principal rooms at the front each occupied three bays. The only decoration to the exterior indicated the most significant floor within. Construction was completed in 1752.

Responsibility for the interiors, directed by the formidable ninth duchess, Mary, *née* Blount, was given to the Piedmontese architect, Giovanni Battista Borra (1713-1770) who worked on Norfolk House for four years before returning to Turin in 1756.

Robinson points to a comparison with any of Paris, Rome, or Vienna, a list to which he could have added Turin, all places where in the 1920s and 1930s the domestic urban palaces of those who had once formed the power elite became embassies and educational institutions. If Norfolk House had survived another year, when the Second World War intervened, it would have been listed in 1945 and preserved. But the style of aristocratic life for which it had been constructed had ceased to exist as had much of the influence peers once exercised.

Simon Schaffer, 'Mechanical Monstrosities',
BBC4, Wednesday 8 August 2018

The blurb suggested a re-evaluation of "the engineering wonders of the 19th century, including computers made of cogs", the latter being Charles Babbage's difference engine, inspired by the calculations of Anne Lovelace.

Another of the wonders shown was the great beam engines at the Crossness Pumping Station, designed to emit London's sewerage into the North Sea. There were good shots of the elaborate polychrome brickwork of the outside of the Beam Engine House, within which is Albert, the only beam engine in working order remaining from the quartet of itself, Victoria, Edward, and Alexandria.

Built in 1864, the pumping station has an outer skin of good quality polychrome brick. The main brick used was London stocks but red brick was used for the for the arcading on the façade of the boiler house, both for the heads of each of the triple arches at ground-floor level, for each of the three arches above these, and as a means to accentuate the three gables of the structure. The side walls have six arches with red brick arcading. The four triple arches of the blind arcades of the four outermost bays and the five arches of the central bay of the beam engine house have red brick arches and on the chimney are twelve bands of red brick and over the openings being three single-light windows and one two-light window on each outer wall.

For accounts of Crossness Pumping Station see P. Dobraszczyk, *Into the Belly of the Beast: Exploring London's Sewers*, Reading: Spire Books, 2009, pp.118-122, 169-185; S. Halliday, *The Great Stink of London: Sir Joseph Bazalgette and the Cleansing of the Victorian Metropolis*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999, pp.92-99; and pamphlet (no author stated), *The Crossness Engines*, London: The Crossness Engines Trust, no date.

BRICK AT RISK: THE BUILDINGS OF TIMBUKTU, MALI

A recent two-part television programme on BBC4 charted a journey from Fez, Morocco, to Timbuktu, Mali. Timbuktu is currently (2019) in a war zone, posing obvious dangers to its people and its buildings. But the greatest threat to the buildings is not from acts of deliberate sabotage and the destructive effects of armed conflict but from the natural environment. Timbuktu is on the edge of the southward advance of the Sahara Desert, which coupled with the ferocious winds of the area, is damaging the mud brick buildings. The wind whips up the sand which drives into the base of the mosques, the libraries, and the other buildings to such an extent that the damage is clearly visible and not easily repaired.

A future issue of *British Brick Society Information* will include an article on the dangerous work of collecting clay for the bricks from which the new buildings of Mali's capital city, Bamako, are constructed. The city is undergoing a building boom, unlike the ancient capital, 800 miles to the north.

D.H. KENNETT

Colour Printing and *British Brick Society Information*

At the Annual General Meeting of the British Brick Society on Saturday 18 June 2019, the suggestion was made that the society may wish to consider printing *British Brick Society Information* with the illustrations in colour. As an experiment, this issue of *British Brick Society Information* has been printed with almost all of the illustrations in colour (those not in colour were submitted in black-and-white). This has obviously cost more than printing the pictures in monochrome. Currently the society pays £350-00 for printing in black-and-white throughout; using colour printing for this issue has cost the society £610-00.

Whilst the society can perhaps afford to print using colour for one issue in six (*i.e.* once every other year) without invoking a subscription increase, to move to colour printing for all three issues of *BBS Information* in a year would cost the society an extra £800-00 above the cost of printing in black-and-white for three issues. To move to colour printing and to cope with successive annual increases in postage costs, this would probably entail raising the subscription to a minimum of £16-00 per annum.

In the light of the annual increase in postage costs from £1-10 in 2015 to the current level of £1-32 for members in the United Kingdom and the likely postage increase in March 2020 of another six or seven pence on the postage per mailing, the committee have informally discussed (using email) a proposal for a subscription increase from 1 January 2021, necessitating all members to update their standing order forms.

The last subscription increase was operative from 1 January 2012.

This mailing invites comments from the membership on using colour printing and on the level of subscription which members would be prepared to pay for all issues of *British Brick Society Information* to be printed using colour printing.

British Brick Society Membership

The attention of members of the British Brick Society is drawn to the important resolution passed at the Annual General Meeting in Ripon on Saturday 18 May 2019:

That from 1 January 2020 the British Brick Society will have only one class of Membership and ceases to offer concessionary subscriptions to members of the British Archaeological Association, both Ordinary members and Life members.

The subscription to the British Brick Society for all members currently is £12-00, payable on 1 January annually.

Changes of Address

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

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

BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY

MEETINGS in 2019 and 2020

Saturday 14 September 2019

Autumn Meeting

Alvechurch, Worcestershire

Nineteenth-century brick buildings including church with polychrome brick interior by William Butterfield and a variety of houses, together with buildings and structures on the Birmingham and Worcester Canal.

This is the meeting postponed from Saturday 22 June 2019, due to earlier indisposition of the organiser.

Contact David Kennett, kennett1945@gmail.com

Saturday 16 May 2020

Annual General Meeting

Bridport, Dorset

Town Hall; rope factory; seaside buildings at West Bay

Contact Mick Oliver, micksheila67@hotmail.com

Planning for possible visits in 2020 is in progress and dates will be announced in a future mailing: it is hoped to arrange a visit to either or both Banbury and Cardiff Bay and to include a visit to a brickworks in the 2020 programme. Visits to Tewkesbury and the industrial area of Worcester are being planned for future years.

At the 2019 Annual General Meeting in Ripon it was agreed to hold the 2021 Annual General Meeting in Lincoln, on a Saturday in May 2021.

All meetings are subject to attendance at the participant's own risk. Whilst every effort is made to hold announced meetings, the British Brick Society is not responsible for unavoidable cancellation or change.

Full details of future meetings will be in the subsequent BBS Mailings

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

Suggestions of brickworks to visit are particularly welcome.

Offers to organize a meeting are equally welcome.

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

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