

ISSN 0960-7870

BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY.

INFORMATION 70

FEBRUARY 1997



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CONTENTS

Editorial:	Brick Among the Prizes	2
Obituary:	Henry Holt	6
Brick Newel-Stairs and Brick Technology:	An Alleged Change				
	by Terence Paul Smith	...	...	...	8
Brick For A Day					
	Brickmaking at Singleton				
	by Michael Hammett	...	...	...	13
	Eton College				
	by Claudia Hammett	...	...	...	13
	1997 in Prospect	...	...	...	15
Brickmaking Gazetteers:	Further Work in Progress	...			16
Brick Queries:					
	Varieties of Flettons				
	from B.L. Hurst	...	...	...	17
	Is It a Snail?				
	from Michael Hammett	...	...	...	21
	'Boswell' a brick architrave				
	from Nessa Roche	...	...	...	21
Cover:	Two-inch Fletton from Curzon Street, London				
	See 'Brick Query' from B.L. Hurst pages 17-20.				

NEW INDEX

With this issue of "INFORMATION" members are being sent a copy of a new comprehensive index of all issues up to and including No. 69.

The Society is most indebted to Mrs Patricia Ryan for voluntarily undertaking the considerable task of preparing this extensive index.

2

Editorial: Brick Among the Prizes

I owe to Patricia Reynolds, Keeper of Social History at Buckinghamshire County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury, information on the Museum of the Year Award for 1996.

When the museum in Aylesbury was refurbished in the early 1990s, new displays were installed. Instead of the usual format of individual rooms and/or cases about 'Rural Life', 'Natural History', 'Archaeology', etc., Buckinghamshire County Museum has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach. Eight themes were chosen one of which is Clay County. This includes reconstruction of part of a brickworks: Buckinghamshire has well over two hundred known brickyard sites in the modern administrative county. Visitors to the museum's display can listen to an oral history tape about brickworks, one of several possessed by the museum. There are two small displays of bricks. Going back in time the display includes medieval pottery from Brill and the geology of clay. The Clay County display does not neglect the natural history aspects of the landscape. Disused clay pits make excellent nature reserves.

The society's congratulations are offered to Buckinghamshire County Museum for the joint award in 1996 of the Museum of the Year Award. The other recipient also has connections with brick. Uppark, Sussex, is a house well-known because of the fire. The brick house was by William Talman, of c.1685-90, a very early work of this late Stuart architect: it is more than a decade earlier than his work in stone for the first Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, Derbyshire. Talman was responsible for south and east wings, the former with the chapel and state rooms, the latter with the Painted Hall, suspiciously like the former Elizabethan great hall, and the library, originally the gallery, and again suspiciously like an Elizabethan long gallery. Elizabeth Shrewsbury's great house, which her Chatsworth was, had no fewer than 78 hearths, a figure exceeded only by six other houses, to the best of my knowledge, and one of these was also built by the countess. Uppark is not on this scale: it dates to after the period for which Hearth Taxes survive. But a figure of around forty, perhaps a few less, fireplaces seems not unlikely. It is at the opposite end of the size range for late-seventeenth-century houses to Melton Constable Hall.

Uppark was unique in its interiors because the successive nineteenth-century owners, who were the employers of H.G. Wells' mother, felt unwilling and were financially unable to redecorate in the latest taste. Restoration of these interiors after the fire led to the joint award with Buckinghamshire County Museum.

While on the subject of prizes, the editor might be permitted an indulgence. In 1996, the Royal Institute of British Architects set up the James Stirling Prize, in honour of the memory of an humane architect, one whose buildings do add "Commoditie, Firmeness, and Delight". Certainly that is true of the Centenary Building of the University of Salford, jointly nominated in the educational buildings section and winner of the overall prize. Sitting in the refectory (equals downmarket student cafe!) of the Adelphi Campus one sees the new building across the courtyard and although brickless very fine it looks too. The Centenary Building houses the Department of Industrial Design.

Mention earlier in this editorial of both Melton Constable Hall and H.G. Wells was deliberate. Many members will have seen the listing of "The 100 greatest books of the 20th century" put out by the booksellers, Waterstones. Surprisingly neither H.G. Wells nor The Go-Between figure in the list. Wells wrote most of his best novels before 1900 which may account for the omission. But I like The Go-Between, a novel to which I was introduced thirty-seven years ago: it was an 'A' level set book. There was a radio adaptation in 1961 and the film followed about a decade later.

The house used as the country house in Norfolk was Melton Constable Hall, which was perhaps a little too grand for the family portrayed in L.P. Hartley's novel. One got the impression that this was a much more minor land-owning family: a home farm and one or two farms, of comparatively modest size, leased out. The house would have been more modest than Uppark. The real Norfolk house for Marcus' family in The Go-Between might have been Felbrigg, although the preparatory school suggests even this house may have been too grand; the family were not, by Edwardian standards, and trickle-down, especially wealthy.

At the lower end of the social scale were the Morels, the name D.H. Lawrence gave to his own family in Sons and Lovers: that was another book to which I was introduced in September 1960. It appears on the Waterstone's list surprisingly high at number twenty-eight. Perhaps it bears out the comment made to me by Russell Key, who taught both the chairman of this society and myself, that he knew Sons and Lovers would last but he was less certain about The Go-Between. The Morels, in the mining village, lived in a brick house, one no larger than those which still stand a quarter of a mile to the north of where this editorial is being written: they are the location of the street scenes of the television soap opera 'Coronation Street'; similar houses occupied streets opposite the editor's flat until the late 1980s. That is where the fabled Salford Quays is, with the large brick building, a clone of Holabird and Root's Chicago Board of Trade of 1935, which was awarded the Brick Development Association's Quality Brickwork Award as National Winner in 1994. Harbour City is almost sixty years younger than its Chicago progenitor.

Harbour City does have fine brickwork; on the dockside face with masses of blue glass it looks attractive and certainly well-proportioned. But "Commoditie, Firmeness, and Delight", I think not. I would think so of Melton Constable Hall or Uppark.

Houses are like books; they can be appreciated without knowing much about the subject matter. Anyone may read Far from the Madding Crowd or Sons and Lovers without knowing anything about the social history or rural Dorset or the mining district of the Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire borderlands in the late nineteenth century. As portrayals of these counties at that time, the novels are valid in their own right.

Similarly one may appreciate Melton Constable Hall or Uppark knowing little of the details of English architectural history in the late seventeenth century. Anyone may view 'The Blue Boy' or 'The Blue Lady' knowing little of Thomas Gainsborough or Pieere-Auguste Renoir. One merely visits the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California, or slightly more accessibly the National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff, for the latter to appreciate either as great paintings. The companion piece, 'The Pink Boy' by Thomas Gainsborough, is more easily viewed: it is in the Rothschild Collection, Waddesdon, near Aylesbury. Perhaps one might combine with a visit to Buckinghamshire County Museum

But where books are concerned, I am slightly at a loss to understand why that adaptation of Norse saga by a Professor of Old English should occupy first place in Waterstone's list. Does this, one asks, reflect the background of those customers who bothered to fill in their form! Or perhaps, it reflects a somewhat conservative and trendy cast of mind. It is the omissions which surprise: R.H. Tawney, J.M. Keynes, J.K. Galbraith, even F. Hayek with whose economic prognoses I profoundly disagree, W.H. Beveridge, all are names which strike this man as having contributed more to the twentieth century and its most significant literature. If you are going to read saga surely translation is better, if like the present writer the limited command of Old Norse and Old Icelandic has been lost through a lack of use.

The Lord of the Rings and, to a lesser extent The Hobbit, are both based on the sagas of which J.R.R. Tolkien was an acknowledged master drawing pieces from the various Icelandic and Norse stories, histories and myths to make up his fantasy world. Of course, in this world of HEFC assessment spending one's spare-time inventing a make-believe world for personal profit would not fit with the external expectations of the life of a distinguished professor.

Tolkien was that if a little eccentric. He also came from Birmingham, a city the British Brick Society will be visiting on Saturday 17 May 1997. I do not know if Michael Troughton has Hagley Road among the places to be visited. I do know we have a very full day in prospect, including the interior of the Birmingham Law Courts by Aston Webb and Ingress Bell (1887-91). A recent article in The Manchester Guardian noted "the twin towers of Gondor" and asks if two structures on the skyline visible from the Hagley Road are its inspiration.

One is a brick folly constructed for an eccentric named John Perrott in 1758. The other is the Victorian waterworks, part of the Joseph Chamberlain improvements to his native city: municipal gas-and-water paternalism, later extended to electricity, a subject perhaps for future research on brick availability?

It is pleasing to know that brick has contributed to one group's suggested "greatest book of the twentieth century". Two brick towers symbolising different ideas for the material's use, built a century or perhaps a little more apart.

Brick has definitely been among the prizes.

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Having verbally assaulted the critics' choice, the writer feels obliged to offer his own: editor's licence, I am afraid. The authors I quote on the previous page all appear in a list which restricts itself to post-1918 items.

The list of authors began with R.H. Tawney. It is not just for Equality (1931) and The Acquisitive Society (1920) but for that intellectual tour-de-force, delivered as the Henry Scott Holland Lectures for 1922, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (1926). Its influence was considerable, not just on the generation educated between the two world wars but also for those, like myself, whose education was not completed until more than twenty years after 1945.

With J.M. Keynes it is difficult to know where to begin. Two volumes strike as of lasting significance: The Economic Consequences of the Peace (1919) and, of course, The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936), a volume, one may readily admit is dense to read, but, then so are many worthwhile books. Even though I profoundly disagree with its analyses, one does recognise the significance of F.A. Hayek, The Road to Serfdom (1947), and the significance this book has had for governments as they struggle to grapple with the problems of society and economic order in the past twenty years.

Those problems are considered from one angle by J.K. Galbraith, first in The Affluent Society (1958) and second in The Culture of Contentment (1991), and from another by David Marquand in The Unprincipled Society (1988). Much of the same ground is covered, less elegantly one feels, in Will Hutton, The State We Are In (1994). Post-1945 society in Britain relied for so long on the principles which underpinned a government report: W.H. Beveridge, Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services (1942).

The Five Giants - want, idleness, squalor, disease, ignorance - are as relevant today as they were in the culture which produced the Beveridge Report. The remedy is the same as it was more than half a century ago: bricks-and-mortar. Our field does have relevance to the "greatest books of the twentieth century".

Such as has been quoted becomes one's not-quite bedtime reading if one investigates the interesting question, "How far was David Lloyd George's promise of "a fit country for heroes to live in", the task he set government on 23 November 1918 in Wolverhampton, fulfilled in the twenty years which followed?"

That 4.15 million homes were built in the two decades between the two world wars was a considerable achievement. All were not brick-built, but the majority were; not all were houses, perhaps ten percent were flats and about five percent bungalows. But the great majority, over eighty-five percent, were family homes: the typical 1930s semi-detached. Assuming an outside dimension of 18 feet by 25 feet and all walls were of brick or brick-based products, this gives around 26,220 bricks per house. But with chimneys, which consume a lot of bricks for the floor area they occupy, and garden walls, an average of 30,000 bricks per house may be envisaged. For 4.15 million homes, this meant that between January 1919 and September 1939, somewhere in the region of 125,000,000,000 bricks were fired for homes alone, and no allowance has been made in that figure for losses in the kiln, distribution, or working. It gives an annual average of 62.5 million bricks, which suggests that in some years brick production exceeded 100 million bricks; exceptionally it topped 150 million bricks for houses alone.

Watch this space for further details of estimates of brick production 1919 to 1939.

All of which is a long way from "great books", but two by the same author have yet to be mentioned. Keith Thomas wrote first Religion and the Decline of Magic (1971) and then turned his attention to Man and the Natural World Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800 (1984). The latter, certainly, is of interest to those who study the humble brick.

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There are those who are still old-fashioned in the mode of communication and to whom the INTERNET is a mysterious piece of magic! Or alternatively, it is yet another manifestation of the degree of control being exercised on people's lives by the computer and its gurus.

However, some people like using it. I owe to Patricia Reynolds, Sandra Garside Neville and Penny Berry knowledge of the forthcoming event in Gent, Belgium, on the heritage of the brick and tile industry happening in Autumn 1997.

Further details will be posted in future issues of BBS Information.

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Sadly we have two deaths to report.

Many members of the British Brick Society will have seen the press notices of the death of Henry Holt. An obituary follows this editorial.

We will be keeping members informed concerning the disposal of the brick collection and the accompanying documentation.

The second death is not of a member but many will be aware of the brick sculptures which adorn the facade of Bristol Eye Hospital, Lower Maudlin Street, Bristol, opposite the exit to the bus station.

Walter Ritchie created his series of panels on the theme of Creation to fill the whole of the street facade on the ground floor of the Bristol Eye Hospital.

Brick was Walter Ritchie's forte. Panels were created by bricklayers to his precise specifications and he could then work on them. No fewer than fifteen hundred different kinds of brick are made in Britain. Our material provided richness of colour, unpretentiousness, and, above all, solidity in the making of a panel of carved brickwork, itself a part of the whole in a brick building.

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The next issue of BBS Information, number 71 (May 1997), will be devoted to 'Brick in Churches' now that material has been received on the topic from more than two contributors.

Both of these contributors submitted more than one piece. A further issue devoted to 'Brick in Churches' is planned. To given members time to research and write their pieces, this is unlikely to be before February 1999, which would be BBS Information 76 but may be BBS Information 77 (May 1999).

 Contributions are, naturally, welcome on all aspects of brick: the bricks themselves, their manufacture, aspects of brickmaking machinery, styles of bricklaying and other technical aspects of the craft, and all forms of brick buildings.

The length of this editorial has meant that one item, kept for several years in reserve, has been taken out, not for the first time. The editor is the author so no other contributor is made to feel left out.

However, the stock of contributions is almost down to those written by two persons and further items for use in 1998 would be welcome.

But as noted in the editorial to BBS Information 69 (October 1996), the editor does plan to move house sometime in 1997.

Members wishing to submit articles are therefore requested to telephone first (on 0161-743-0640) to check on the editor's address.

DAVID H. KENNETT

Editor

BBS Information

St Matthias the Apostle 1997

Obituary: Henry Holt

All members of the British Brick Society will be saddened to learn that Henry Holt died in December 1996 following the death of Mary, his wife, earlier in the year. It was in 1977 that Henry and Mary started writing to us after I had seen his picture in the paper. The couple first visited our home in 1979 and swapping bricks and information began. A Lancashire man, Henry had been a master builder as well as a farmer and was very knowledgeable about horses. He had also worked in the timber trade and I remember him describing journeys into Manchester with a horse and cart between the wars compared with similar journeys in the 1980s in his Range Rover to collect bricks.

Henry and Mary were a "team" when it came to brick collecting; venturing out together to collect the bricks and bringing them home to clean. They then researched the brick name and sketched and recorded the details and history of the brick. Photographs were taken of the find site and when possible of the brickworks. Their dedication to the written record in Mary's very neat handwriting is much admired and is a most valuable source of brick history for the country. I am told by Mr Holt's niece that the numerous files are now safely deposited with the Lancashire Museums Service.

Henry and Mary gave interviews for the press and worldwide coverage resulted in bricks arriving from Mexico, France, Germany, Canada, the U.S.A., New Zealand, Australia, and China. They have been interviewed on the radio, featured on television, and gave talks about bricks and brickmaking. Henry was very proud of the history of his local area and shared his great knowledge of the brickworks as well as of the quarries.



Fig. 1 Henry and Mary Holt of Rossendale, Lancashire, with some of the seven thousand bricks in their collection.

(Photo: W. Ann Los)

Henry began collecting in 1963 but Mary did not join in until 1968. When Henry died at the age of 82, the collection had grown to 7000 bricks and they had been visited by collectors from all over the world. The whole collection has been left to Lancashire Museum Service but as members of the society may have seen in the press and television coverage, only 1500 have been housed so far. The true value of the collection is its size and it would be a great shame if it had to be split up to be housed. I hope to be able to report in a future issue of BBS Information that the wall of Henry and Mary Holt will be preserved under one roof for future generations of brick historians. They both set a fine example for others to follow.

The press headlines sum up the situation with 'Museum hits brick wall in collection poser' and 'Bricks looking for a roof'. The credit the couple deserve is in the headline 'Collectors' Feat of Clay'

W. ANN LOS

BRICK NEWEL-STAIRS AND BRICK TECHNOLOGY: AN ALLEGED CHANGE

Terence Paul Smith

In his valuable study of the early Tudor country house, Maurice Howard develops the thesis that, in comparison with the use of brick in the fifteenth century, there is in the sixteenth century 'an apparent shift in what might be called the aesthetic use of the material.' There is, according to this view, a turning away from the exuberance of the Rye House, Herts. group of buildings (which Howard takes as typifying fifteenth-century brick architecture) towards a general simplification of brick façades; the 'available expertise is now deflected away from the building as a whole towards a concentration on brick "features", of which the famous early brick chimney-stacks are undoubtedly the most prominent survivals.' This thesis is linked with two others: first, following claims made much earlier by Eric Mercer, that by the mid-sixteenth century 'brick was beginning to lose its attraction among the élite,' and that 'most of the significant great houses initiated in the period c.1550 to c.1590 were built of stone'; and secondly, that the 'trend towards the use of simpler designs seems to have extended to building technology in brick in general.'

Although there is a grain of truth in the first of these theses - secular buildings did not, in the sixteenth century, continue in the manner of the Rye House group of buildings - all three involve serious over-generalisation from an insufficient sampling of the evidence whilst also failing to view that evidence against its appropriate historico-geographical background. It is hoped to return to both the first two theses on a future occasion.

The present paper, however, is concerned solely with the third thesis - that of an alleged change in brick building technology in the first half of the sixteenth century. The claim is based on a comparison of the brick-built newel stairs at Rye House, Herts. (c.1443) and Laughton Place, Sussex (probably of the 1530s).² This, it has to be said, is using selective evidence with a vengeance! About twenty brick newel-stairs are now known, ranging in date from the very end of the fourteenth century (Cow Tower, Norwich) to the mid-sixteenth century (Eastbury House, Barking, Essex and garden towers at Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle, Leics) (fig.1)³ Generalisation from just two out of so many seems almost bound to lead to false conclusions. In fact, an examination of the details of all the stairs wholly undermines Howard's argument. The Laughton Place stair, so that argument runs, 'is noticeably simple in design when compared with a fifteenth-century example of an all-brick stair. This shows in particular in the construction of its underside vaulting and in the lack of finesse in its detailing, such as the absence of a handrail incorporated into the brickwork.'⁴

There are, in fact, various ways of supporting the steps of an all-brick newel-stair, but the two most common are: (1) a semi-circular tunnel-vault, spiralling up beneath the steps and constructed of concentric courses of bricks in its outer half and of 'ploughshare' forms of cut bricks in its inner half; and (2) a series of shallow, three-centred arches radiating from the central newel and carrying the steps on their backs.⁵ The former method is used at Rye House, the latter at Laughton Place. Howard is right to see the former as involving the more sophisticated brickwork -

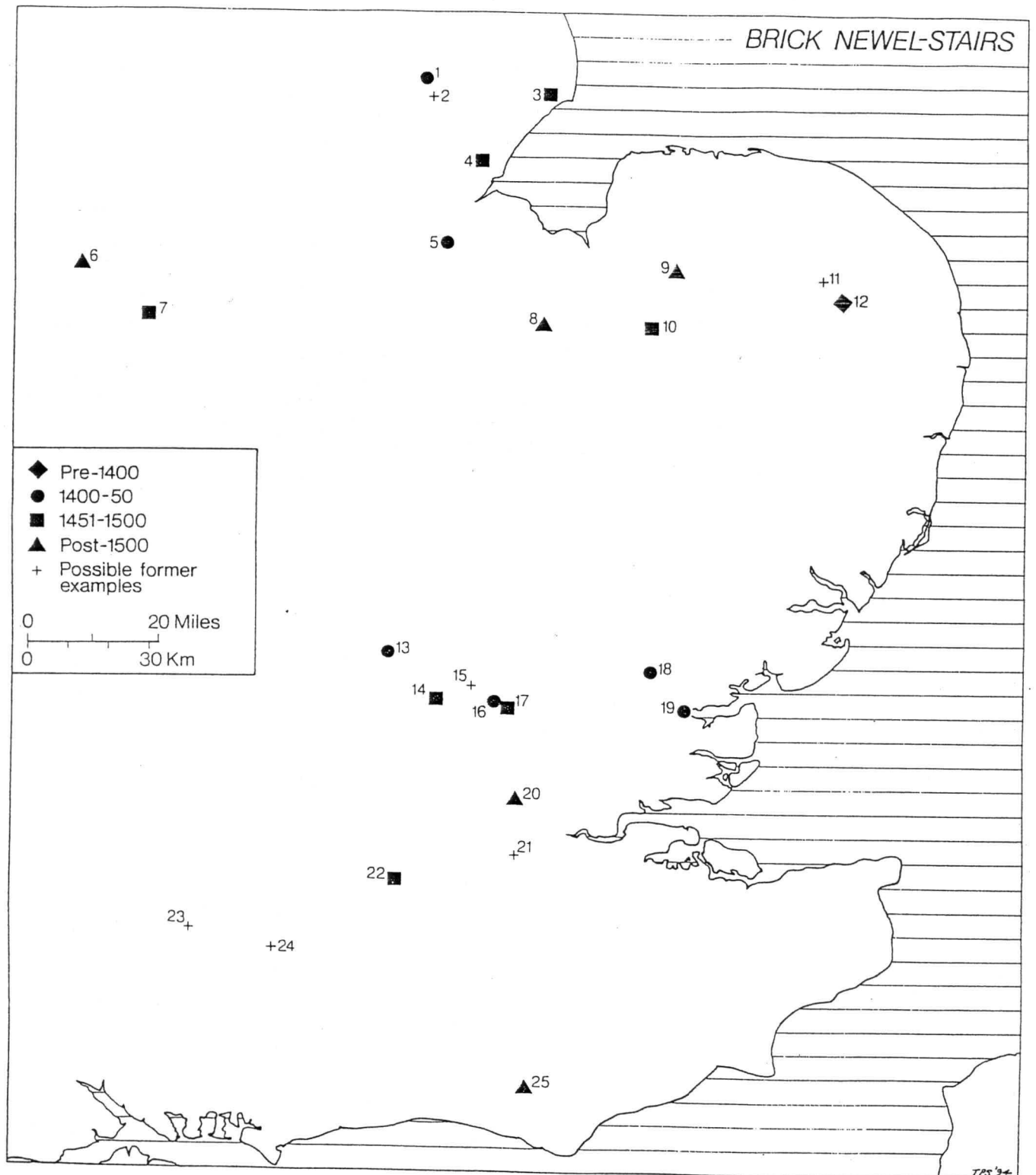


Fig. 1

Key: 1. Tower-on-the-Moor, Woodhall Spa, Lincs.; 2. Tattershall Castle, Lincs.; 3. Wainfleet School, Lincs.; 4. Hussey Tower, Boston, Lincs.; 5. Ayscoughfee Hall, Spalding, Lincs.; 6. Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle, Leics.; 7. Kirby Muxloe Castle, Leics.; 8. Upwell Rectory, Norfolk; 9. Castle Acre Priory, Norfolk; 10. Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk; 11. Drayton Lodge, Norfolk; 12. Cow Tower, Norwich, Norfolk; 13. Someries Castle, Beds.; 14. Hatfield Old Palace, Herts.; 15. Hertford Castle, Herts.; 16. Rye House, Herts.; 17. Nether Hall, Roydon, Essex; 18. Faulkbourne Hall, Chislehurst, Kent; 22. Waynflete's Tower, Esher, Surrey; 23. Basing House, Basingstoke, Hants.; 24. Farnham Castle, Surrey; 25. Laughton Place, Surrey.

and the more difficult to construct - although the latter is far from crude or degenerate: in fact, it is itself brickwork of a high order, if not as high as that of the tunnel-vault type. It was, after all, the method used in the fourteenth century for the splendid brick castle at Brederode, near Haarlem, in the Netherlands, where the builders were fully capable of constructing brick vaults.⁶

The use of the (relatively) simple construction at Laughton Place cannot, indeed, be taken as evidence of a change in building technology itself, still less of a decline in technological competence. In fact, the very first example of a brick newel-stair in England, at the Cow Tower in Norwich (c.1398-9), shows both types of construction: the lower half is of tunnel-vault type, whilst the upper half is of radial-arch type.⁷ In later buildings both types occur throughout the period during which brick newel-stairs were built; two mid-fifteenth-century buildings in Lincolnshire - the Tower-on-the-Moor at Woodhall Spa (probably of the 1440s) and the Hussey Tower at Boston (probably of the 1450s) - show the radial-arch type of construction,⁸ which then reappears at Laughton Place in the 1530s. Most other examples are of the tunnel-vault type, from the lower half of the Cow Tower at the very end of the fourteenth century to those at Eastbury House, Barking, probably of the 1550s, and including the two examples in the Rectory at Upwell, Norfolk, which must be more or less contemporary with that at Laughton Place. It is clear, therefore, that both manners of construction co-existed throughout the whole period of brick newel-stairs.

Exactly the same considerations apply to Howard's contention that the absence of a handhold at Laughton Place shows a 'lack of finesse'. Handholds, in fact, are by no means universally present in fifteenth-century brick newel-stairs. Once again, the earliest example - the Norwich Cow Tower - lacks a handhold. So does the Tower-on-the-Moor, although the Hussey Tower, despite being otherwise a virtual copy of the Tower-on-the-Moor, does have a handhold. (To add to the complexity of the picture, the Rochford Tower, Skirbeck, Boston, only a mile or so from the Hussey Tower, is of the same type, but in this case has a newel-stair of stone!) Perhaps most significantly, there is no handhold in either of the two brick newel-stairs in the surviving gatehouse of Kirby Muxloe Castle, Leics. (1480-84, unfinished), for there is no lack of finesse in this brick building, put up for one of the wealthiest (if ill-fated) of fifteenth-century magnates, William Lord Hastings, and designed for him by John Cowper, one of the leading architects of his day!⁹ (Once more, the fine brickwork castle at Brederode, Netherlands is a telling example, for this too lacks a handhold in its brick newel-stair.) The late examples at Castle Acre Priory gatehouse (1500±) and the garden towers at Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle (mid-sixteenth-century) do not have them. The earliest extant handhold appears to be that at the Moot Hall - formerly a private house of the D'Arcy family - at Maldon, Essex, of 1435-40. It established a pattern which was followed in all later examples down to the very last at Eastbury House, Barking.¹⁰ They consist of a semi-circular depression, spiralling up at a constant height above the treads, with a three-quarter-roll handgrip rising from its bottom. Precise details do, however, differ: some are made up of long units equal to a normal stretcher, others with short units equal to a normal header, and others again of a combination of both of these. What is important for our purpose is to note the persistence of the type down to the mid-sixteenth century, beyond the date of Laughton Place."

There is, then, no evidence of a change or decline in the technology of brick building in the sixteenth century. On the contrary, mid-sixteenth-century bricklayers were just as capable as their fifteenth-century forebears of putting up a staircase of

difficult, sophisticated brickwork. Nigel Nicolson aptly describes the Oxburgh Hall example as one in which 'bricks are used with an astonishing virtuosity to create a smooth winding ceiling above the steps, so ingeniously contrived that you wonder, even with the evidence before you, how it can hold together.'¹² Oxburgh stands just over halfway through the period during which such stairs were built, and Nicolson's comment could be applied equally to stairs constructed at the very beginning or, more significantly for our purposes, at the very end of that period.

Howard's underlying mistake lies in treating the Rye House group of buildings as typical of fifteenth-century brick architecture, which it never was. This inevitably affects the acceptability, or otherwise, of his first thesis too. Brick building of the mid-fifteenth century was extremely varied, with all degrees from the sober reticence of the Court style at Eton College to the brash display of Faulkbourne Hall. So too in the early sixteenth century: there is the stark simplicity of a Wormleighton, Warwicks. and the rich exuberance of an East Barsham Hall, Norfolk. And there is everything in between too. But all this is matter for another occasion - perhaps.

Notes and References

1. M.Howard, The Early Tudor Country House: Architecture and Politics 1490-1550, London, 1987, pp.172, 175, 174 respectively; the second thesis follows E.Mercer, English Art 1553-1625, Oxford History of English Art, vol.VII, Oxford, 1962, p.91. My differences with Howard and Mercer over the particular matters discussed here should not be understood as a general criticism of either man's book; each is an extremely scholarly and valuable work, and I should not wish to be thought of as underrating either.
2. For Rye House see: T.P.Smith, 'Rye House, Hertfordshire, and Aspects of Early Brickwork in England,' Arch.J., 132, 1975, 111-50; for Laughton Place see: J.Warren and C.Haslam, 'Laughton Place, near Lewes', Trans. Ancient Mons Soc., new series, 26, 1982, 146-56, and J.Farrant et al., 'Laughton Place: a Manorial and Architectural History...', Sussex Archaeol. Coll. 129, 1991, 99-164. These however do not describe the staircase, for which see: J.A.Wight, Brick Building in England from the Middle Ages to 1550, London, 1972, pp.388-9, with excellent photographs at pl.66, 68. There is an excellent photograph of the Rye House staircase in R.W.Brunskill, Brick Building in Britain, London, 1990, pl.106. Photographs of brick newel stairs appear in various places, but texts are often scanty in the details that they give. For this reason, most of what is included in the present paper is based on personal observation, and references are given only where texts do refer to particular matters of detail.
3. There is evidence, archaeological or documentary though not always conclusive, for former brick stairs at a number of buildings; they are included in fig.1. The present map supersedes and corrects previously published maps in Smith, 1975, fig.15 and T.P.Smith, 'The Early Brickwork of Someries Castle, Bedfordshire, and its Place in the History of English Brick Building', JBAA, 129, 1976, fig.3. The map does not include the much narrower stairs (vices) that are sometimes made of brick in church towers, particularly in East Anglia. As regards the larger stairs, I have almost certainly missed examples and would be glad to hear of any known to other BBS members.
4. Howard, 1987, pp.174-5; I assume that he has the Rye House

example in mind since (1) he has used Rye House as the example of fine fifteenth-century brickwork in his earlier discussion (p.172), and (2) his note 24 (p.226) to the quoted passage refers to my own work on Rye House: Smith, 1975. His fig.47, p.84 is of the Oxburgh Hall stair (c.1482). The arguments on both sides would be unaffected by using Oxburgh Hall rather than Rye House as an example of a fifteenth-century brick newel-stair. Not so with the mid-sixteenth-century stair at Eastbury House, Barking, which Howard illustrates in fig.101, pp.166-7, for this supports my case and goes against Howard's, as we shall see.

5. Other methods are: a shallow vault spiralling up beneath the steps (Hatfield Old Palace, c.1480-90), a flat 'vault' spiralling up beneath the steps (Castle Acre Priory gatehouse, 1500±), and an arrangement of corbelled-out bricks beneath the steps (south-west garden tower at Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle, mid-sixteenth-century).
6. Personal observation of the stair. For the castle and some of its brickwork see, e.g.: P.E.van Reijen, Middeleeuwse Kastelen in Nederland, Haarlem, 1979, pp.77-81.
7. B.S.Ayers, R.Smith, and M.Tillyard, with a contribution by T.P. Smith, 'The Cow Tower, Norwich: a Detailed Survey and Partial Reinterpretation', Med.Arch., 32, 1988, 188. To be fair to Howard, his book was published in 1987 and the construction at the Cow Tower was observed for the first time only during consolidation work carried out in 1985-6 and was not published until 1988. On the other hand, fifteenth-century examples of radial-arch construction had been published earlier: see note 8, infra. Furthermore, twenty-five years ago, Jane Wight described the Laughton Place example and added: 'In the ruined Tower on the Moor, near Tattershall Castle, is another stair carried on ascending arches like this, but dating from the mid fifteenth century': Wight, 1972, p.86.
8. T.P.Smith, 'Hussey Tower, Boston: a Late Medieval Tower-House of Brick', Lincs.Hist. and Arch., 14, 1979, 31-7, where both the Tower-on-the-Moor and Hussey Tower are discussed. The construction at the Tower-on-the-Moor was first brought to my attention several years ago by Laurence Keen, who was responsible for excavations there.
9. C.Peers, Kirby Muxloe Castle, Leicestershire, official guidebook, 1917 and numerous later editions to date. For John Cowper's career: J.H.Harvey, English Mediaeval Architects: a Biographical Dictionary down to 1550, revised ed., Gloucester, 1984, pp.73-4. For a high assessment of Cowper's status: D.Knoop and G.P.Jones, The Mediaeval Mason, Manchester, 1949 ed., p.43.
10. Somewhat ironically, the best published photograph is that in Maurice Howard's book: see note 4, supra; there is also a good photograph in N.Lloyd, A History of English Brickwork..., London, 1925, re-issued Woodbridge, 1983, p.159.
11. This was noted by Nathaniel Lloyd, writing some seventy years ago: he noted at Faulkbourne Hall and Oxburgh Hall 'a moulded brick handrail ..., such as may be seen elsewhere in buildings dating well into the sixteenth century...': Lloyd, 1925/1983, p.86 (emphasis added).
12. N.Nicolson, 'Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk', in B.Ford, ed., Medieval Britain, The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain, vol.2, Cambridge, 1992, p.91.

Brick for a Day

The British Brick Society held two meetings in the latter part of 1996: the Annual General Meeting at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, Sussex, and the Autumn Meeting at Eton College.

BRICKMAKING AT SINGLETON

Following the society's 1996 AGM at the Weald and Downland Museum, Singleton, near Chichester, Sussex, members and their guests were able to enjoy the wealth of interesting exhibits. Since its inception in 1967, the museum has collected more than three dozen vernacular buildings from south-east England, carefully recording them prior to dismantling and apinstaking re-erection at Singleton.

Oak structural framing is a major feature of traditional building in the region and the jettied forms, characteristic of the technique contribute to very picturesque groupings. The object of our enthusiasm is in abundance too: it occurs in structural brickwork and as infill cladding to timber-framing.

Particularly interesting was the new visitors' entrance facility which combined scholarly and skilful dismantling and reconstruction with sensitive conversion. The building, Longport House, formerly stood on a site which is now part of the Channel Tunnel terminal at Folkstone, Kent. Meticulous attention had been paid to the brickwork - numbering each brick in every course and rebuilding them in their former relationships, reproducing all the bulges and irregularities as they had existed!

Brickmaking was well covered. British Brick Society member, Ron Ireland had set up a moulder's bench and his masterful demonstration of handmaking brick stocks was very popular. Ron told me that the rather fine late-eighteenth-/early-nineteenth-century drying shed that sheltered him had formerly been at the Causeway Brickworks, near Petersfield, Hants., where his father had worked before World War II. A pugmill house, complete with a horse-powered pugmill (but not a horse), was an interesting relic of brickmaking in a small rural brickyard. Another rare survival of a once common rural machine was the wind pump by the lake. It came from a claypit near Pevensey, Sussex.

An afternoon at Singleton is not enough to see more than an enticing sample of the fascinating collection built up over the past thirty years. Coincidentally, I visited the museum twice within a month of the society's AGM and so had two bites of the cherry - but there is a feast to be had there.

MICHAEL HAMMETT

ETON COLLEGE

The subdued atmosphere of scholarly pursuits was temporarily disturbed on 21 September 1996 when the British Brick Society took a tour of Eton College. The disturbance was not, however, caused by the descent of eighty-four society members and guests, but by the school holding a charity fair. Some of the boys had swapped their formal uniform for garish lycra shirts and others, in fancy dress, were crawling on their hands and knees back to the school from Windsor Castle to help raise money.

Due to the popularity of our meeting, we were split into five groups to go round the college. While the first tour set off, we took advantage of one of the offers of the charity fair: to take a peek into Evan's, one of the boys' houses. A pupil showed us the Dame's quarters and a selection of boys' rooms.

For the college tour, I was in a group conducted by Dr Goodman, an ex-housemaster of the school. We stood in the courtyard, where for the first minutes, Dr Goodman told us all he knew about the bricks. They were made nearby in what is now Slough where a brickworks was set up in 1440 expressly for the purpose, working with the well-known Brickearth of the Taplow Terrace of the Lower Thames. Bricks were also used in the, then, state of the art drainage system that comprised a sluice gate which twice a day allowed water from the Thames to flush through a series of channels washing slops and rubbish out into the river. Those specific brick details over with, he gave us a very thorough and interesting commentary on the history and running of Eton College. His enthusiasm and knowledge on this was outstanding and more than made up for any shortage of esoteric references to the brickwork.

In 1440 King Henry VI realized a dream to found "The King's College of Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor", a school that would produce civil service and church leaders to rival those of France and the rest of Europe. Henry also wanted it to be a place for studying theology as he was a keen Marist - a venerator of the Virgin Mary. References to Mary are on the Lupton Tower, where there is a statue of Mary, and, worked into the brickwork, a decorative motif of lilies in a lily pot - a symbol of Mary. Eton quickly became a great place of pilgrimage and the Chapel acquired many relics including the brain of Thomas a Becket. Some of these relics can now be seen in the college museum where there is also a pilgrim's badge bearing a reference to Eton in the form of the Greek letter Epsilon and a picture of a tun (a small barrel).

In the early days, the school took seventy King's Scholars. Life was not at all comfortable; the boys were all housed in claustrophobic conditions in the east wing with a dormitory above and a classroom below. Now, every boy has his own room in one of the twenty-five houses of the college. We went into the classroom, the oldest classroom in Britain still in use. The room was very impressive with dark wooden panels and beams and long wooden desks with bench seats. It was the tradition that a boy would carve his name in the window shutters if he were to pass to King's College, Cambridge - another institution founded by Henry VI to nurture his elite. The boys took to this idea with great gusto and every available space had been carved with names, some in very elegant lettering.

In the upper classroom we became very conscious of the great history of the school. While we sat on spartan benches around the huge room Dr Goodman pointed out busts of ex-pupils above us: Shelley, Canning, Gladstone, Fielding, and many more. Again the names of former pupils had been painstakingly carved into every available wooden surface. This practice has had to be restricted and now a boy can only carve his name if he has at least two ancestors who were old Etonians.

Moving to the Chapel, we paused in the ante chapel where plaques and memorials to ex-pupils and staff killed in past wars covered the walls. Their poignancy was manifest when Dr Goodman told us that eleven thousand ex-pupils were killed in the Great War: effectively a whole generation of students! It was often the case that a boy who left school at the end of one term would have been killed in action by the end of the next. A French flag hangs there which an ex-master had taken one night from behind enemy lines in German-occupied France. He proudly presented this trophy to the school during his leave, but was killed in action during his next tour of duty. In the Second World War, too, many old Etonians were killed in action: sad statistics that are only partially offset by a proud record of Victoria Crosses - the most recent recipient being Col. H. Jones for his action at Goose Green during the Falklands conflict.

Going through the Chapel, we were shown the Grisaille artwork on the walls: very intricate late-fifteenth-century grey-and-white wall paintings illustrating scenes from the miracles of the Virgin. These are considered to be the finest surviving examples of Grisaille work in Europe. But I was more taken with the stunning Burne-Jones tapestry of 1895 behind the altar, the fine near-abstract

15
stained glass by John Piper of the late 1950s and the stained glass of the east window by Evie Hone, 1949-52, which replaced glass destroyed by bombing in 1940.

After the Chapel we went to the College Hall where the King's Scholars dine. These pupils are the school's academic elite and have passed an additional entrance examination. Recognition of their subsequent accomplishments is proudly displayed at the dining tables, which are groaning under the weight of numerous cups and trophies. It is the custom that the boys eat their meals surrounded by these prizes. I think it must be hard for the more accomplished ones to make conversation with their peers when they are fenced off by all the glitter.

The final stop of the tour was the college museum: a further glimpse into Etonian life, ancient and modern, and where we saw Dr Goodman's canes on show; he was pleased to tell us that he had never had to use them.

The number booking for the visit greatly exceeded expectations and not everyone was able to have the Eton tea. By all accounts the spread of sandwiches, scones, jam and cream, fruit cake, and tea was quite a treat. Our group, however, was not on the tea list; but we were able to nip back to Evan's house for tea and biscuits.

In all, it was a great day out; Dr Goodman was an excellent guide; the weather was fine; and the charity fair, which we were able to visit earlier, was also good fun. It was quite bizarre to be hustled, as in a Moroccan market, by eloquent boys in morning coats offering their Christmas cards, raffle tickets and a sporting chance on the Wheel of Fortune.

CLAUDIA HAMMETT

1997 IN PROSPECT

Plans and active preparation are already in hand for the society's programme for 1997 and 1998.

Saturday	12	April	1997	Northern Spring Meeting Brick in Liverpool guide: David H. Kennett
Saturday	17	May	1997	Spring Meeting Birmingham guide: Michael Troughton
Saturday	14	June	1997	Annual General Meeting Avoncroft Museum of Building, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire
Saturday	27	September	1997	Autumn Meeting Hatfield, Hertfordshire including Hatfield House guide for morning: T.P. Smith
Northern Spring Meeting			1998	Middleton and Oldham, Lancashire to look at the work of Edgar Wood guide: David H. Kennett

Details of the Northern Spring Meeting 1997 were included in the mailing of December 1997. Any member who has not received the notice or mislaid it should contact David H. Kennett.

Details of the Spring Meeting are included in this mailing.

The British Brick Society is always looking for new ideas for future meetings. Suggestions please to Michael Hammett or David H. Kennett.

The society has also received notice of a future event in Belgium which may be of interest to members. They are invited to make direct contact.

The Working Group on Industrial Archaeology of Department Architectuur, Hogeschool voor Wetenschap en Kunst, Campus St Lucas, Gent, is preparing a survey on conservation projects dealing with the heritage of the brick and tile industry: e.g. museums, brick and tile collections (public and private), historic brick and tileworks preserved or reused, research carried out by research institutes and other bodies, including volunteer organisations, kilns owned and preserved by local authorities or preservation trusts, companies that are still operating traditionally or who produce hand-made bricks and tiles.

A first version of this survey will be presented during a three day meeting on brick and tile heritage to be held in the autumn of 1997 in Gent (Ghent) and in the brickmaking region of Boom in Belgium.

Further details from

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Brickmaking Gazetteers: Further Work in Progress

Further to the information given in 'Brickmaking Gazetteers: Work in Progress', BBS Information, 69 (October 1996), 14-15, other members have contacted the editor with note of work in progress, in proof, or published. This note should be read in conjunction with the earlier reference.

In Cumbria, Ian Caruana has been collecting material on brickmaking sites in Cumberland and Westmorland for some years but is not yet in a position to have any plans for publication.

Pat Ryan has published Brick in Essex from the Roman conquest to the Reformation which is valuable for noting brick making in the county as well as brick building.

In Hampshire, a published gazetteer was omitted: A. Wright, A Gazetteer of Brick and Tile Manufacturing Sites in North-East Hampshire, (1980). This is at present out of print, but Mr Wright informs me that he hopes one day to issue a more up-to-date version.

An article on the brickworks of Hertfordshire by Lyle Perrins is due for publication in the issue of Hertfordshire Archaeology expected to be published in August 1997

Peter Tarplee has sent details of work on brickmaking in Surrey, published by the Surrey Industrial History Group. P. Tarplee, A Guide to the Industrial History of Mole Valley District, (1995), pages 3-12, deals with extractive industries including brickmaking. The Surrey Industrial History Group have also published similar volumes on Guildford and its Borough, Reigate and Banstead Borough, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath Borough, Tandridge District, Woking and its Borough. These are in print; out of print are guides to Runnymede and Waverley.

Thanks are due to these correspondents for knowledge of their work.

DHK

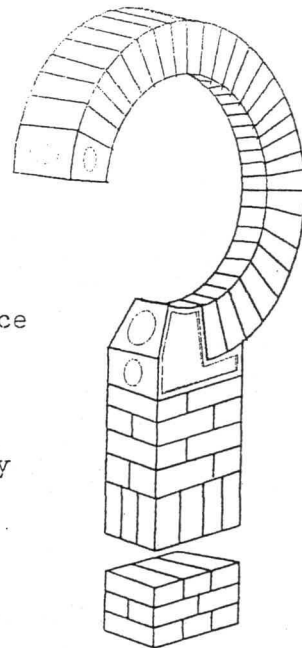
Brick Queries

From time to time the British Brick Society receives requests for information about bricks, brickmakers, brick buildings, and other matters to do with bricks. Some of these raise questions for which no obvious source of information is readily available.

These and answers or replies are printed in issues of BBS Information as space is available. Single queries are kept so that at least a page can be presented in any one issue of the newsletter.

The enclosed queries came to the editor in the latter part of 1996. All queries received by 30 December 1996 are reproduced below.

DHK



VARIETIES OF FLETTONS

The photographs included in these notes raise a number of distinct questions about different varieties of Fletton bricks which various members of the British Brick Society may be able to shed some light upon.

1. Two Inch Flettons

The photograph (fig. 1) shows 2 inch common Flettons discovered in the course of the demolition of a building in Curzon Street, London, built in 1939, where they had been used, on edge, to case steel stanchions and to fill shallow recesses in a party wall. The shallow frogs have been described as 'tadpoles'.



Fig. 1 Two Inch common Flettons from Curzon Street, London

My brother, Michael G. Hurst, tells me that he remembers the architect W.A. Forsyth being disappointed that 2 inch backing bricks were no longer available for his buildings for the University of Hull in the late 1950s, having used them a few years earlier.

These bricks were therefore, I surmise, available from LBC from the late 1930s to the mid 1950s, to back up and bond with the 2 inch facing bricks then popular with some architects.

Is anyone able to confirm this or to provide the true story?

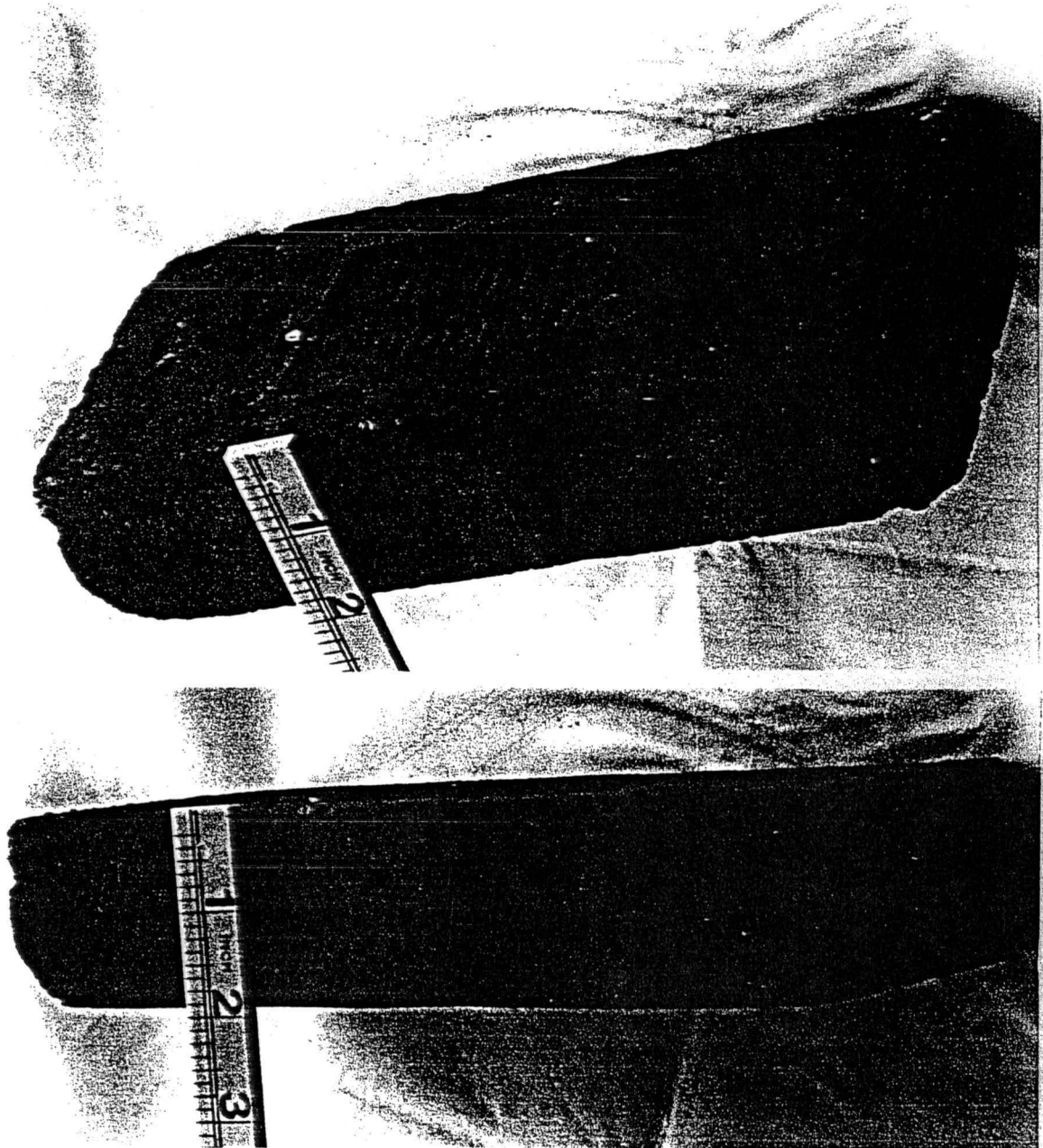


Fig. 2 Individual Two Inch common Fletton bricks showing depth of brick.

2. Yellow Flettons

The photograph below (fig. 3) shows yellow bricks used to face the rear elevation of a recently demolished building in Cork Street, London, dated on the front elevation 1910.

The clearly says LBC PHORPRES (fig. 4, overleaf). When broken the bricks show the crumbly texture characteristic of a Fletton, but they are yellow through and through (fig. 3, centre); fig. 5, right). The weathered faces are crazed in a way a contemporary Fletton would be expected to weather.

Can anyone shed light on this. Are they Oxford clay? If so how was the yellow body obtained? If not, what are they? They are clearly pressed and were made by LBC Did LBC make PHORPRES bricks from another clay?

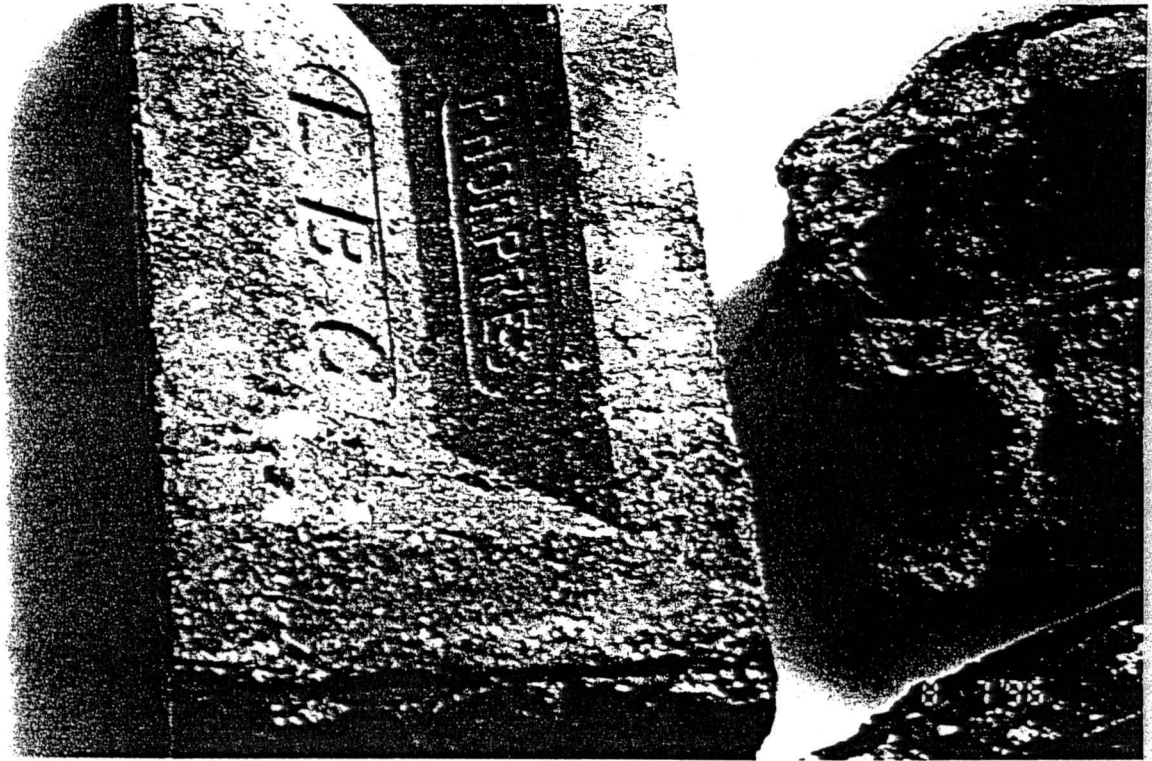


Fig. 3 Yellow Fletton bricks from Cork Street, London.

3. Fletton brickworks and frog marks

Is there a list of Fletton brickworks? Does this list include frog marks and the dates available? Is any list additional to material contained in The Clay That Burns?

I have observed FARCO and CENTRAL, both in a building from between the wars in Stoke Newington, and I suspect there must be others in addition to the well-known ones.

Replies to any of these queries to
 B.L. Hurst,
 Hurst Peirce & Malcolm
 Chartered Civil & Structural Engineers
 Celtic House
 33 John's Mews
 Holburn
 London WC1N 2QL



Fig. 4 Frog of yellow Fletton brick from Cork Street, London, from building dated 1910.

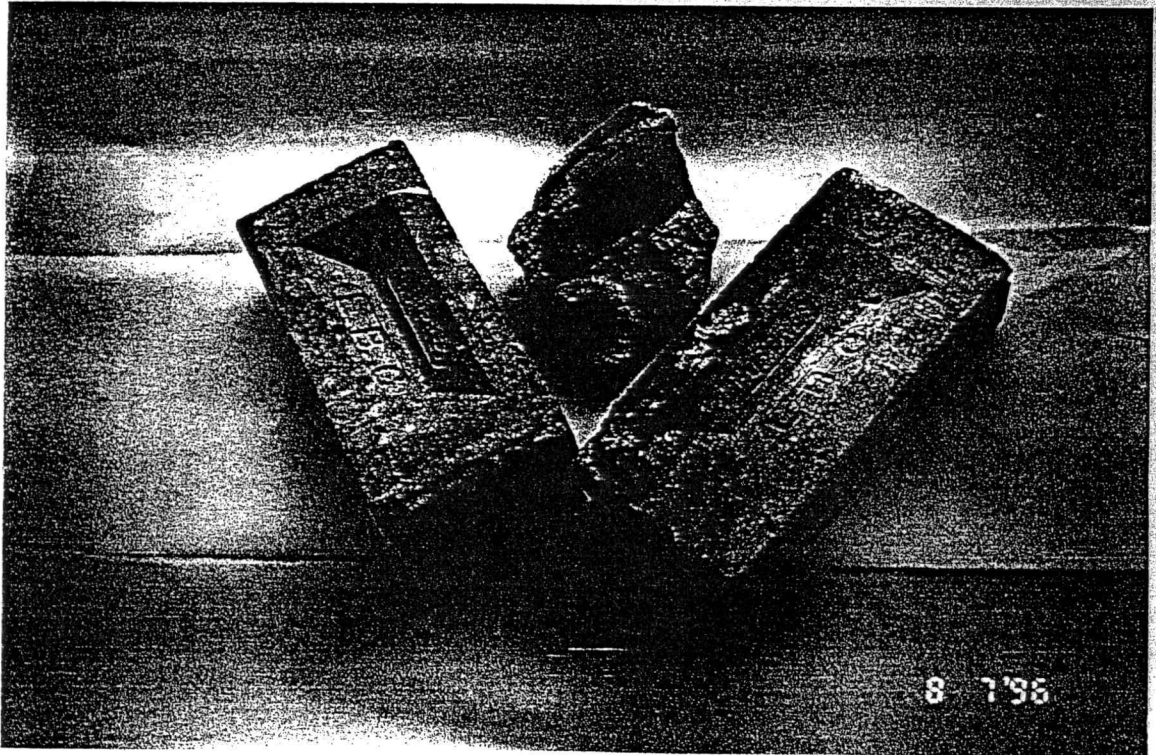
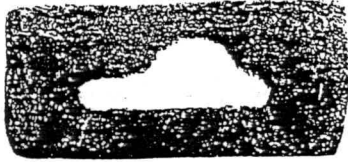


Fig. 5 Yellow Flettons from building in Cork Street London. Note texture of broken brick on right.

IS IT A SNAIL?



Can any member identify handmade bricks with a snail-shaped frog. Individual bricks are $9\frac{1}{2}$ in by $4\frac{1}{2}$ in by $2\frac{3}{4}$ in ; they weigh 7 lb. They were found in a collapsed culvert near a derelict brickmaking site at Lockwood, West Sussex, grid.ref. TQ 055326.

Were they made there?

The site is incorrectly noted as Brickyard Farm by Molly Beswick in *Brickmaking in Sussex* (1993) page 223. Mrs Beswick confirms that it should correctly be known as Brickkiln Farm.

Replies to

Michael Hammett
Hon. Sec. BBS
9 Bailey Close
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire HP 13 6QA

'BOSWELL': A BRICK ARCHITRAVE

In the course of my researches into the history of windows in Ireland, I have come across the term 'Boswell' in a building contract of 1672. 'Boswell' seems to be a definite description of the flat architrave typical of this period. It has not been noted other than in the reference given below. The term may be exclusive to Ireland, though the word boswell is not Irish.

The manuscript is transcribed in a paper by Brian de Breffny, 'The Building of the Mansion at Blessington', *Irish Arts Review*, 1988, pp. 73-77. The relevant extract is as follows:

to worke about every one of the upper windows a Boswell, fourteen inches broad and three inches projecting ...

The word is not to be confused with pilaster, as the contract also states that the artificer is to raise brick pilasters eighteen inches broad and three inches projecting on the first storey. As the house was destroyed by fire in 1798 and is only known from one amateur drawing, it is not possible to make any deductions.

If any members of the British Brick Society can throw light on this, I would be grateful for any comments.

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Ireland