

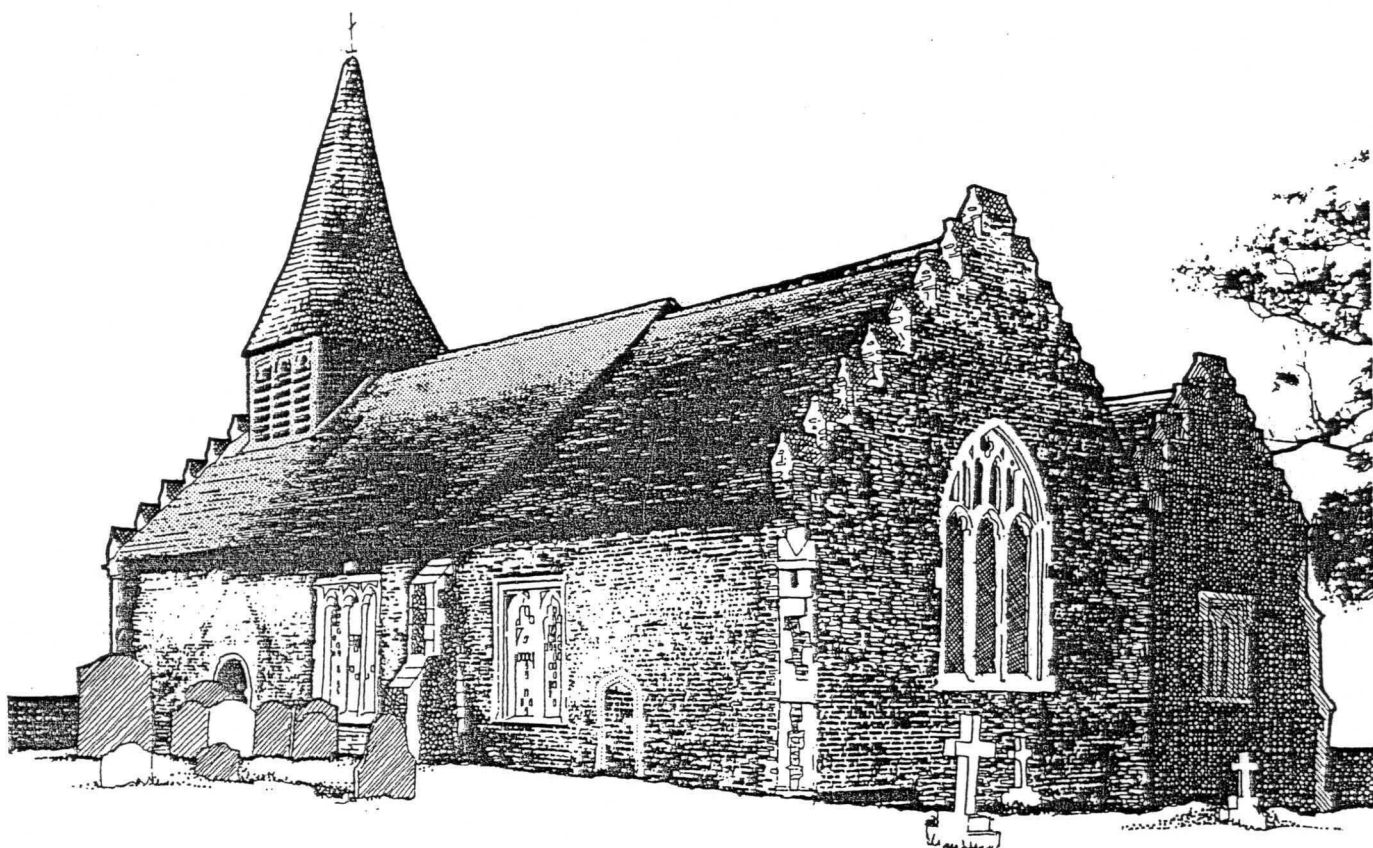
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BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY

# INFORMATION 77

JUNE 1999

BRICK IN CHURCHES ISSUE



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### Cover Illustration:

The brick church at Woodham Walter, Essex, was visited by the British Brick Society during its July Meeting in 1998. The church, built in 1564-65, is one of the few new churches built in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

## Editorial: Recognition for Brick Churches

The inspectors of English Heritage have published their latest recommendations for listed building status. Three 1960s churches have been awarded Grade II status: the concrete chapel of the Church of England covent at West Malling, Kent and two churches with brick walls in Sheffield and Birmingham, respectively Anglican and Roman Catholic.

It is therefore perhaps a little sad, but not altogether surprising, to read in the press (*The Times*, 19 February 1999) that

Creations in concrete and steel are now recognised as outstanding architecture.

Impressed by the internal fittings of St Peter's, Greenhill, Sheffield, which include a communion rail in stainless steel and wood and a stainless steel cross over the altar, the building's form and other materials take second place. Works in stainless steel seem entirely appropriate for Sheffield. However, the principal building material, brick, is not noticed. At least Sir Nikolaus Pevsner and Enid Radcliffe had the more discerning perspective when they described St Peter's, Greenhill, Sheffield, as

Curvaceous brick exterior, resolving itself into an interior with seating in three-quarter circle, and a flat east wall behind the altar. Over the altar-space rises, not well integrated with all the curves, a square spire on a low substructure

in the second edition of *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire: the West Riding* published in 1967. The idea of a centrally-placed altar-space was not completely unknown in the mid 1960s when Oxley and Bussey designed St Peter's. It was initially proposed for that remarkable church across the Pennines in south Manchester: St Michael and All Angels, Orton Road, Northenden. The architect, N.F. Cachemaille-Day, wanted a centrally-placed altar, where the two squares of the structure intersect, but the then Bishop of Manchester insisted on a liturgically-eastern setting. It is hard to remember that even in the late 1960s, it was not unusual for a priest in the Church of England, and not merely in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, to celebrate the Eucharist with his *back* to the congregation.

Another comparison between St Michael's of 1937 and St Peter's of 1963-65 is the way in which the walls are pierced to admit light. In the earlier building the details of the fenestration have weakly arched tops to massed four-light windows. In the later structure there are areas of glass set between walls in different planes.

St Peter's, Greenhill, Sheffield, must be one of the earliest buildings of the Church of England specifically designed to accommodate the idea of the Eucharist as a shared liturgical experience and not reinforcing the separateness of the ordained priesthood.

Contemporary in building with St Peter's and sharing the same liturgical mode in the Anglican tradition is St Matthew's, Perry Beeches, Birmingham, by Maguire and Murray. This 1964 church, listed in 1996, has a striking interior of plain brickwork relieved by concrete banding and flooring of brick pavements. Among the fittings is a brick font.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham has a cathedral by A.W.N. Pugin, in red brick, built in 1839-41 as a parish church but perhaps with the anticipation of the re-introduction of a Roman Catholic hierarchy as indeed happened a decade later. In the 1960s, the city and the archdiocese were particularly fortunate in the architects chosen for new churches, of which there are many of note.

Two are on the main road from the south into the city. On the extreme southern edge of the built-up area of Greater Birmingham is Our Lady of the Wayside, Shirley, by Robin Bush, opened in 1965. Brick interest includes the circular baptistry, the curving brick walls to the

worship space with a centrally-placed altar, and indeed the quality of the bricks themselves. In the city centre is Harrison and Cox's St Catherine of Siena, Bristol Street, of 1964-65, with a substantial tapering tower which like the circular body of the church is in a buff brick.

On the eastern outskirts of the city is 1960s housing at Tile Cross, near the centre of which is the church dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians, begun in 1966 and opened a year later. The church was designed by Richard Gilbert Scott of the firm then known as Sir Giles Scott, Son and Partner, although the architect of Liverpool Cathedral died in 1960. It is a squat brick structure with a remarkable roof. Externally, the roof which is concrete and glass resembles the ribs of a sailing boat from the Roskilde Fjord. Internally the octagonal crown with its blue glass reminds one how the crown of thorns was comprehended into a crown of glory. The brickwork is substantial masses, pierced by spaces filled with orange and yellow light. To the east it is a solid wall soaring to the sky.

Sir Giles Gilbert Scott built fine churches in brick for both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic traditions as the British Brick Society's chairman, T.P. Smith, showed in *BBS Information*, 38, February 1986. The Roman Catholic Church dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption at Northfleet, Kent, was built in 1914. St Paul, Stoneycroft, Liverpool, of 1916 in pale brick has a massive central tower with a pyramidal roof was for the Church of England, paid for by a single generous benefactor. Sixteen years later, he was again building in brick for the Church of England, but both times at parish expense: at St Andrew's, Blenheim Crescent, Luton, and at Golders Green, where the church of St Alban the Martyr and St Michael repeats the use of the pyramidal roof to a central crossing tower.

The tradition in the 1930s gave architects much less scope to experiment with the geometry of worship. The 1960s churches instanced here show how far the shape of the liturgy had moved in a generation. Elsewhere in England, evidence of that movement can be seen in the circular brick church built at Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, for the Clifton diocese of the Roman Catholic Church and designed by Peter Ware. It is dedicated to Our Lady and the English Martyrs.

This is the second issue of *BBS Information* to be devoted to the use of brick in churches and the Editor and the Chairman hope that it will be possible to put together another such issue in two or three years' time.

The society has begun its 1999 series of meetings, with visits to south Buckinghamshire and a walking tour of Leeds. Reports on these and the visit to Gainsborough Old Hall after the Annual General Meeting will appear in *BBS Information*, 78, October 1999, which will also contain a review of brickworks gazetteers. Further contributions to this and future issues would be welcome.

DAVID H. KENNETT

Editor, *BBS Information*

Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, 8 April 1999

## ST JOHN'S 1632 BRICK CHURCH, STANMORE, MIDDLESEX

M.S. Oliver

St John's church, Stanmore, Middlesex, is unusual in that the churchyard contains two churches. The church in use now, built of Kentish Rag and Bath Stone, was built to Henry Clutton's design in 1849-50, but the churchyard also contains the ruin of the brick church which it replaced, which was consecrated in 1632.

Before this date Stanmore had an earlier, Anglo-Saxon church, dedicated to St Mary, built half a mile to the south. By the early seventeenth century, a majority of the population had settled alongside the main road, away from the church, and the decision was taken to build a new church on a more convenient site. The land was given by Barbara Burnell, the lady of the manor, and the widow of John Burnell of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers, and by two other donors: St John's still retains its contacts with the Clothworkers' Company and the Burnell monument, now in the current church, is the only artefact to have been installed in all three churches.

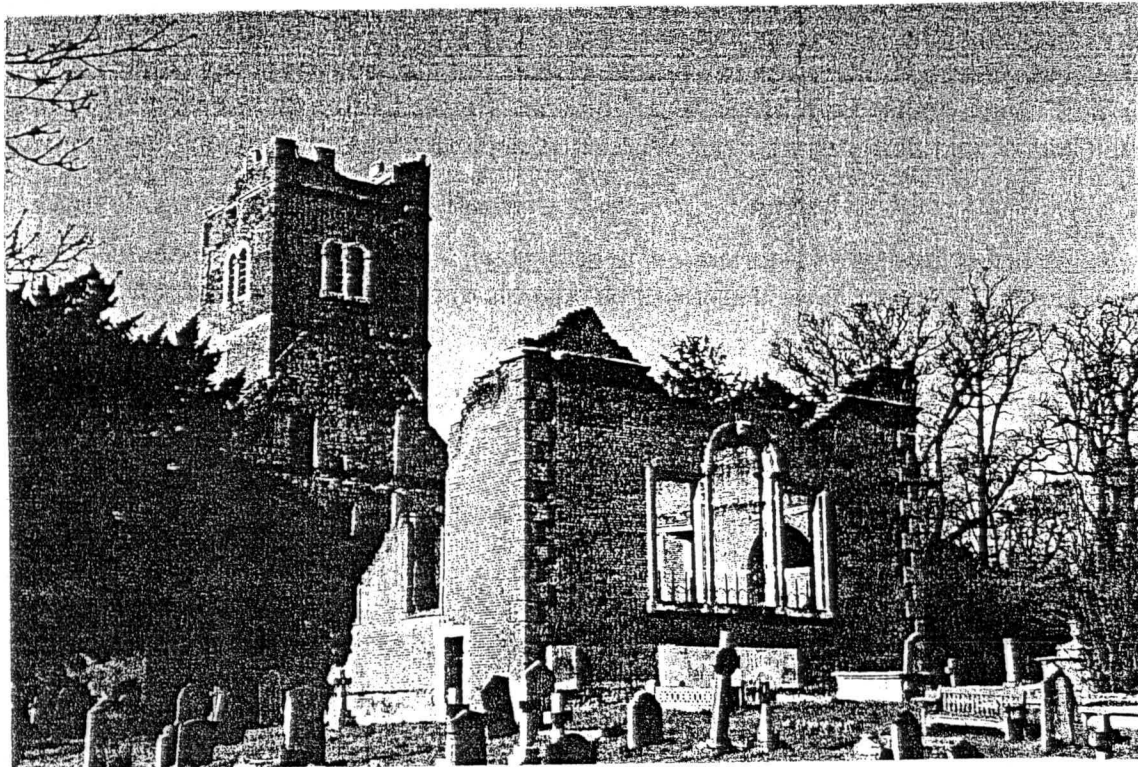


Fig. 1 St John's Stanmore, from the north-east, showing the Venetian window in the east wall.

The 1632 church was financed by Sir John Wolstenholme. Sir John had considerable political power under King Charles I, and was a "Farmer of the Customs". This role in the privatised Customs and Excise which then existed was important, as duties provided a source of revenue to Charles I that was outside the control of Parliament. Sir John was a founder

member of the East India Company; a Commissioner of the Royal Navy; and a member of the Virginia Company of North America. His overseas interests are commemorated in the names of settlements and features in North America which were named by the leaders of the voyages financed by Sir John. Early attempts to find a North West Passage to India gave names to Wolstenholme Sound on the west coast of Greenland and Cape Wolstenholme at the entrance to Hudson's Bay; a latter settlement in Virginia gave rise to the town of Wolstenholme.

The hundred years before Charles I's reign had been turbulent years for the church. Although they had been fertile years for the church's organisation and doctrine, very little church building had taken place over the period: only six churches were built in the whole of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, which lasted forty-four years. This situation began to change in the reigns of James I and Charles I, which first saw private chapels built as the result of private initiatives. One example is Oxhey Chapel, 6 miles from Stanmore, built in brick and knapped flint in 1612 and serving as a private chapel for the Altham family. Another, more distant, example, built in brick and also dedicated to St John the Evangelist, showing the religious tensions of the time, was built in 1625 by Sir John Parker of Groombridge Place in Kent. Prince Charles (as he then was) returned empty-handed from a visit to Spain whose purpose was to find him a (Roman Catholic) bride; Sir John Parker's church was built to give thanks for this fortunate event.

William Laud, who became Bishop of London in 1628 and Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, was a close confidant of Charles I and had a strong influence on both secular and religious matters throughout Charles' reign. Under Laud's influence there was a marked increase in the building of churches for public worship. Besides St John's at Stanmore, other examples of churches built in brick in what is now Greater London were at Charlton (1630), Malden (1620s), and Morden (1636). Further afield on the London to Cambridge road a brick church in the form of a Greek cross was built at Buntingford (1614-26) in circumstances which paralleled those at Stanmore. The population there had also settled along the main road and found their previous church (at Layston) to be inconvenient.

Church building was also taking place in London itself. Examples of churches built in the period are St Katherine Cree in Aldgate; St Paul's Church in Covent Garden; and the Queen's Chapel in St James' Palace. The two last were designed by Inigo Jones, who also designed the Banqueting Hall of Whitehall Palace and conducted repairs to the west front and nave of the pre-Fire St Paul's Cathedral. Nicholas Stone was Master Mason to James I and Charles I and collaborated in this work. Inigo Jones introduced innovations in both style and materials: St Paul's, Covent Garden, was built in an austere Tuscan style and Portland stone was then a new building material in London.

Nicholas Stone was also an architect in his own right, and his first commission was from Sir John Wolstenholme for the new church at Stanmore. This was built in red brick, in English Bond, with bricks 9 x 4 x 2 inches (230 by 100 by 50 mm), and walls 40 inches (1 m) thick. As the work took place long before a permanent kiln was established in the area, it is likely that the bricks were fired in clamps on the site. The church is rectangular in plan and Classical in design, with a bell tower with diagonal buttresses on the outer west wall, and with a Venetian window in the east wall. The Venetian window resembles those in the Queen's Chapel. The nave is 65 x 36 ft (20 x 11 m) and there was no chancel, so that the nave directly faced the altar on the east wall. Externally it had rusticated quoins and a moulded plinth in brickwork. There was a porch in Portland stone on the south side (now lost). Portland stone dressings are used for the south and west doors.

The new church was dedicated to St John, the new dedication no doubt being Sir John's preference, and was consecrated on 17 July 1632 by William Laud, as Bishop of London.

As Bishop and Archbishop, William Laud gave the Church of England much of the distinctive character it has today, but he was unfairly accused of having Roman Catholic

sympathies, a dangerous position given the religious tensions of the time. His political role and the secular assistance he gave Charles I when he governed without Parliament also made him unpopular. He was arrested in 1641, eighteen months before the Civil War broke out and was imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was charged with High Treason and one of the charges against him concerned the nature of the ceremonies he used during the consecration of the church at Stanmore. The prosecutor claimed that the church was Sir John Wolstenholme's private chapel, but William Laud refuted this. The trial was inconclusive but the House of Commons passed an Ordinance of Attainder, an arbitrary procedure to find him guilty, and they co-erced the House of Lords to do the same. William Laud was beheaded in 1645.

The prevailing ground conditions were not favourable for the stability of St John's brick church. Stanmore Hill to the north is substantially of sand and gravel, and St John's is built at the start of the London clay, in the position where the streams in the neighbourhood start. As a consequence, the building's stability was always a concern for St John's congregation and a drawing of 1768 shows that already four additional buttresses had been added to give further support to the bell tower, and a fifth to support the north-west corner of the nave.

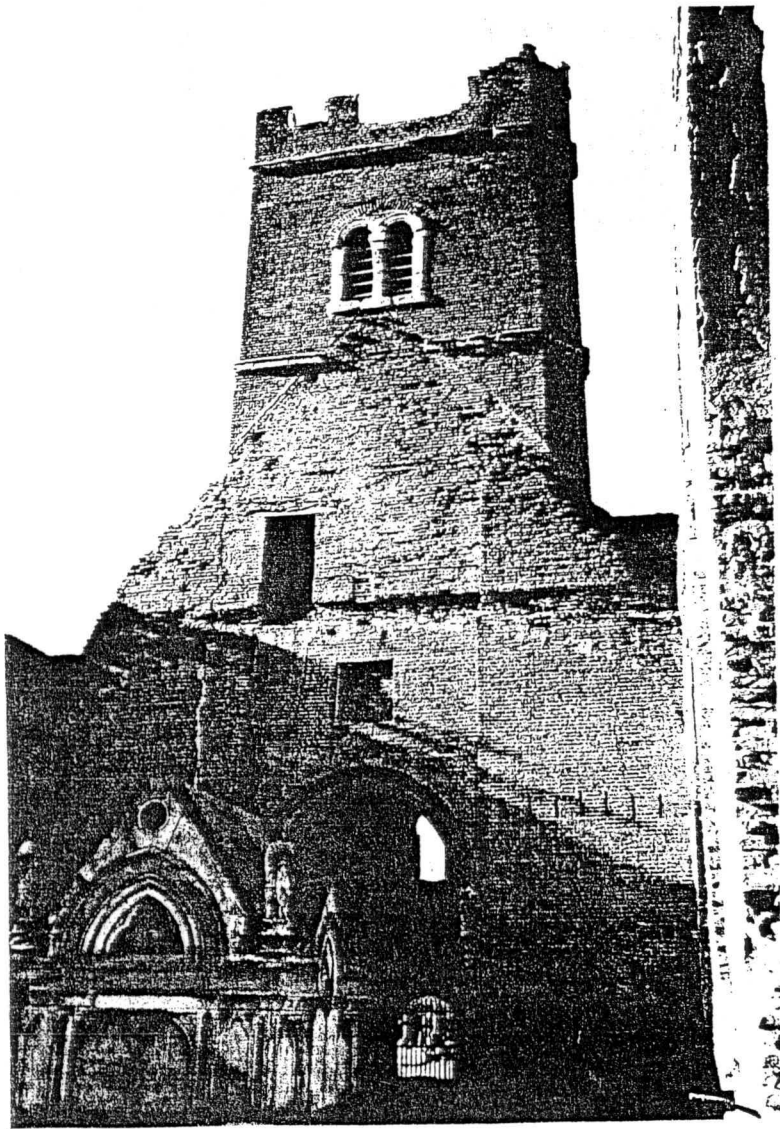


Fig. 2 The Victorian mausoleum, west wall and tower of St John's Stanmore, Middlesex.



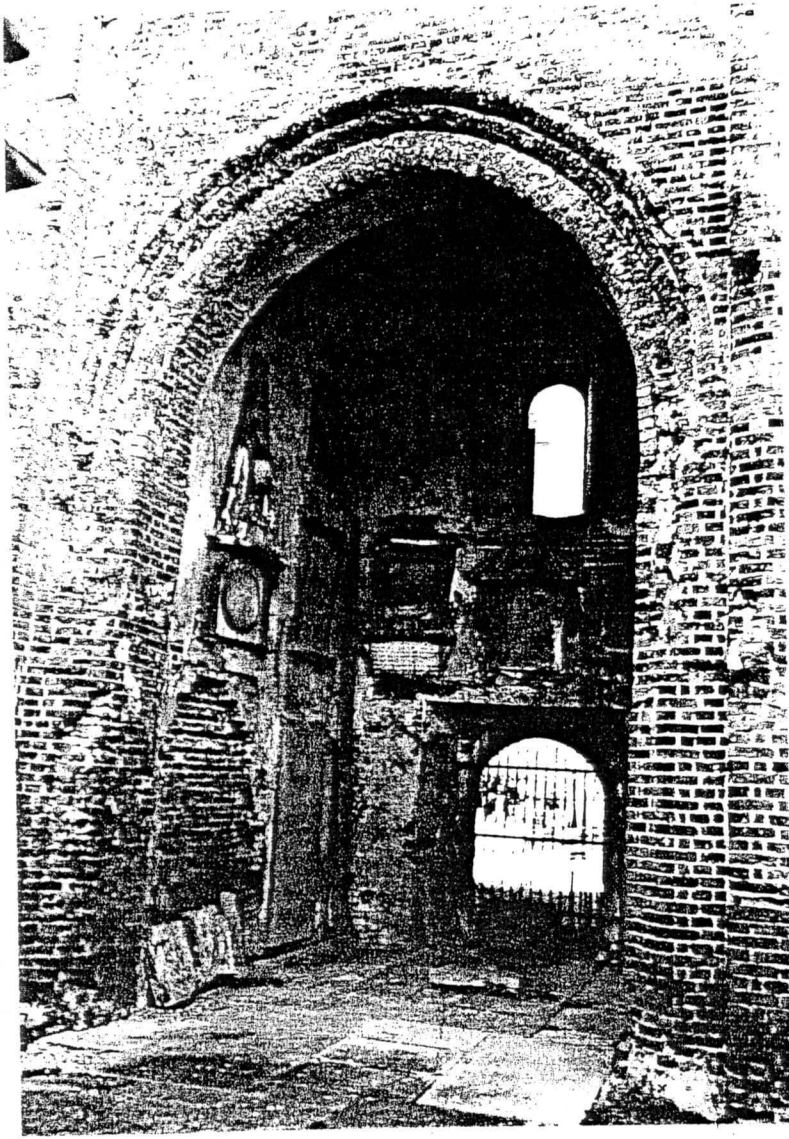


Fig. 3 St John's Stanmore, the entrance to the tower from the nave with the west door, in the tower, beyond.

By 1845 the church was considered unsafe, but it was also too small for the increasing population of Stanmore. Its design made it impossible to enlarge it; it already had galleries at high level. The decision was made to replace it. The present church was built in 1849-50 and a faculty was obtained to demolish the brick church. The work was started, the monuments were removed to the present church, the roof was removed, and part of the south wall was demolished; and then a local outcry prevented the work from continuing.

Since then St John's has continued to be responsible for the brick ruin. It used the nave for burials and a massive ornate Victorian Mausoleum was built at its centre. The ivy which once covered the tower grew to cover the whole of the structure. Nikolaus Pevsner in *The Buildings of England: Middlesex* (1951) described it as one of the best ruins in the county. As, in due time, small saplings began to grow at the heads of the walls, and both St John's and its insurers became worried about the ruin's stability and their liabilities. This stimulated English Heritage to offer generous support to "consolidate" the ruin, that is to make it safe without substantial changes in other respects. In giving this support English Heritage were mindful of the church's

importance as an example of early Stuart brick construction and of its historical importance through its involvement in William Laud's trial.

After fund-raising in St John's and in Stanmore, and with generous support and technical advice and assistance from English Heritage, the consolidation was conducted between 1991 and 1993. As a result, the ruin has now been made safe with little change in its appearance, apart from the removal of the ivy. It is now open to the public on Saturdays in summer; and it was used for the BBC1 programme *Aquilla*, was transmitted in December 1997 with a second series in December 1998. St John's is now debating the long term future of the ruin and is considering vesting it in the Churches Conservation Trust. This body was formerly known as the Redundant Churches Fund; its role is to care for churches which are of national importance but are not in use. The Churches Conservation Trust already cares for Oxhey Chapel, mentioned above, and the Chandos Mausoleum, another treasure in Stanmore at the baroque church of St Lawrence, Little Stanmore.

## THE BRICK TOWER OF ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, CRONDALL, HAMPSHIRE

B.P. Day and D.H. Kennett

Cron dall is a small village in Hampshire, on the Surrey border: the postal address is Farnham, Surrey. The church, dedicated to All Saints, consists of a stone-built nave and chancel together with a north porch and, on the north side of the thirteenth-century chancel, a fine four-storey brick tower with square, clasping buttresses topped by brick pinnacles and dated 1659.

The tower replaces an earlier central tower which became unsafe in 1653. Instability in the old tower was first apparent after the placing of a new bell-frame in it in 1643. Ten years later, the tower was re-lead ed using 1,200 lbs (545.5 kg) of lead. It was then evident that the old tower had to be taken down and provision made for a new one. The old Norman tower (of 1170 or earlier) was taken down in 1657, although the stair turret remains.

Prior to work on the construction of the new tower, three Churchwardens were especially appointed to oversee its building. These three were Richard Chandler, William Baker of Swanthorpe, who is buried under the floor of the north porch, and Henry Frost. In compensation for the anticipated excess of work in this voluntary office, they were to be excused from serving in the office for thirty years. First they sought to find a suitable pattern. Several towers were viewed and the tower of St Matthew's, Battersea, was chosen as the best model.

Masons were sent to view this tower and to take measurements. The masons' expenses were 1s. 6d.; they paid 6d. to the parish clerk of Battersea church for attending on them, and it cost 4d. each way for them to be ferried across the river. The architect's fees and expenses were thus the very modest sum of 2s. 8d. in the money of the time.

The Churchwardens' accounts of the parish of Cron dall give a very detailed picture of expenses connected with building the tower. The particular volume ends in 1659, when it is signed by the three wardens and by the incumbent, who signs "Hum. Weaver, Minister". Until recently these documents remained in Cron dall, in the church chest, but an Order in Council has removed them to an archive office. Regrettable as this is, it is even more regrettable that the volumes of Churchwardens Accounts have been removed not to Winchester, where all the other parish records are kept, but to The Centre for *Surrey* History at Working. This does make them less accessible to the inhabitants of Cron dall.

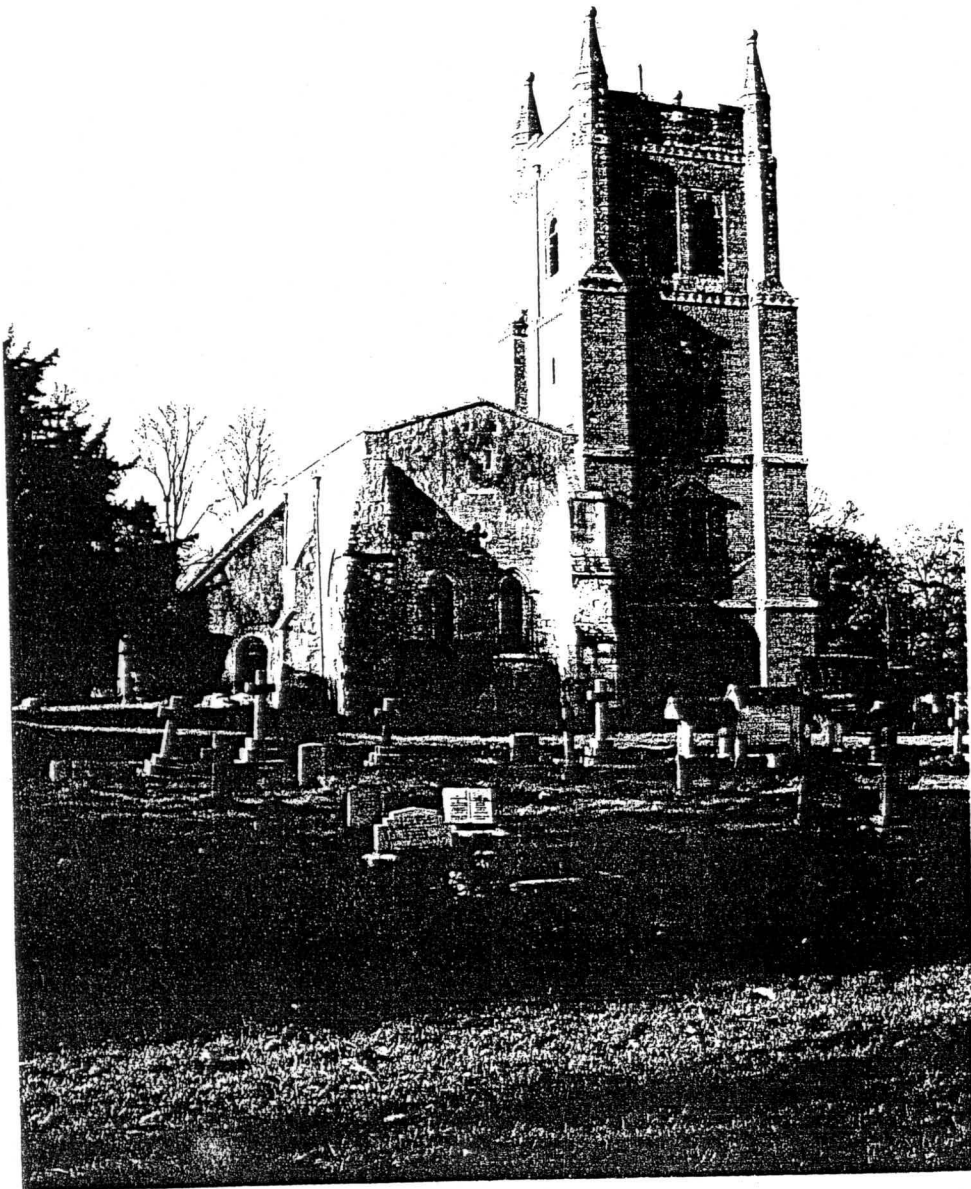


Fig. 1 The tower of All Saints' church, Crondall, Hampshire, built in 1659, with clasping buttresses and pinnacles.

A well-researched account of the building of the church tower was given by R.P. Butterfield, who was vicar of Crondall between 1932 and 1952, in his *Monastery and Manor*, (Farnham, Surrey: Langham, 1948), from which the details given here are taken.

Building work began on the evening of Friday 22 April 1659 and continued for three months, ending in July prior to all available labour being needed for gathering the harvest. In the first week, the workmen built up to the level of the water table. In the second week, from the water table to fifteen courses above.

Among the documents preserved within the accounts are the fortnightly pay sheets for the workmen, which give both their names and the times they worked. Thirty-two men were employed on the job. Most worked for 1 shilling a day, but others earned only 9 pence or even as little as sixpence; a few were paid at the higher rate of 1s. 6d. per day. For comparison an agricultural labourer was paid about two shillings and sixpence or three shillings a week and the usual rate for a money dole was between 8 d. and 1 shilling a week.

In the three months that the tower took to build a total of £428 was spent on its construction. The total makes the preliminary expenses of 2s. 8d. look exceptionally modest. Even with the supervisor's wage of 1s 6d. per day for eighty days, which would be £6 each for the three masons this was less than five per cent of the total cost. The total included both labour and materials. To build the tower sixty-two loads of sand, eighty-six loads of lime and 110,000 bricks were used. The bricks have a thickness of 2.25 inches (57 mm). The number of bricks seems low, but material from the old tower was probably re-used.

One item of re-used material was the then new bell-frame, of 1642, which remains in the bell chamber. This, with the bells on the third floor of the tower, and like the ringing chamber on the first floor and the cloakroom on the second floor, is reached by outside gangways from the Norman stair turret.

The rebuilding of the tower was financed by voluntary contributions. One of the most generous contributors was Mr Nicholas Love of Crondall Manor.

Apart from the tower at Crondall, other seventeenth-century red brick towers in north-east Hampshire include those at Avington, Odiham, and Old Basing. At Odiham, All Saints' church has a seventeenth-century brick tower in English bond with angle pilasters. At Avington, the seventeenth-century brick tower was the only structure retained when St Mary's church was rebuilt between 1768 and 1771. The original St Mary's church at Old Basing was partly destroyed in the siege of Basing House in 1645. Brick had been the principal building material of this large church which has a building inscription of 1519 at the east end of the north aisle. The mid- and late-seventeenth-century repair work was executed in brick. Also rebuilt because of Civil War damage was the parish church of Portsmouth dedicated to St Thomas a Becket (now the Anglican cathedral, consecrated 1927). The west tower of the parish church (now the centrally-placed tower of the cathedral) is brick.

There is a squat west tower of 1636 at St James' church, Bramley, and the top of the west tower at New Alresford had no more precise date than the seventeenth century. This church is dedicated to St John the Baptist. The west end of St John's church, North Badderley, was repaired in the seventeenth century.

Two Hampshire churches have brick porches. That at All Saints' church, Farringdon, is dated 1634 and has a pedimented entrance. The south porch at All Saints' church, Upper Clatford, is probably seventeenth century.

## THE TRANSIT OF VENUS: A BRICK CONNECTION

Many members will be enthusiastic watchers of the television programme 'Local Heroes' on BBC2 presented by Adam Hart-Davis. The Lancashire programme was repeated in the period when this issue of *BBS Information* was being prepared. There is a significant brick connection to one of the items presented.

Prior to his pioneer observation of the phenomenon, the Rev Jeremiah Horrocks, curate of St Michael's church, Hoole, Lancs., had predicted that the planet Venus would cross the disc of the Sun sometime on Sunday 24 November 1639. The twenty-one year-old Horrocks was then living at Carr House, Bretherton, in the adjacent parish to where his parochial charge was.

In addition to their significance for the development of astronomy, both St Michael's church and Carr House are important early brick buildings in the County Palatine. Carr House is the better-known. The house has an inscription of 1613 recording its building by

Thomas Stones of London, haberdasher, and Andrewe Stones of Amsterdam, merchant for their brother, John Stones.

It has flush quoins, lintels, mullions and labels of stone but is otherwise brick in a bond which is not totally regular. The observation in 1639 was made in the room at the top of the three storey porch; the rest of the house has two floors. In the same parish, Bretherton, is another brick house which dates to 1608 but was enlarged in 1832-33.

Built in 1628, St Michael's church, Hoole, may be the first church in Lancashire to use brick as the principal building material. The church is very small, basically a rectangle, and is built of red brick in English bond. The windows have stone mullions and a stone-faced tower was added in 1722.

Both buildings are illustrated by P. Fleetwood-Hesketh in *Murray's Guide to Lancashire*, 1955, pl. 63 (Hoole church) and pl. 65 (Carr House).  
DAVID H. KENNETT

## BRICK IN PRINT

The individual item noted here reflects one use of brick in churches. It is hoped to make this survey of articles and reports a regular feature of *BBS Information*. The next survey will appear in *BBS Information* 78, October 1999. Members involved in publication or who come across articles are invited to send brief summaries to the Editor.  
DAVID H. KENNETT

1. P. Thompson, 'Deep and crisp and Eden', *Guardian Weekend*, 12 December 1998. Quarr Abbey, on the Isle of Wight, was designed by Dom Paul Bellot and built between 1907 and 1914. Bellot, a Benedictine architect-monk, drew his inspiration in part from one of Europe's cultural crossroads, Andalusia, and used materials almost exclusively from another: the twelve million hand-made, small, red bricks were brought to Quarr from Belgium. The architectural influence of the southern Netherlands, politically once Spanish and later Austrian, is reflected in the stepped gables above both the main and the church entrances. Stunning photographs of the brickwork illustrate this article about the transformation of the quadrangle into a garden. The reveal the variety of colour in the brickwork. There were also two television programmes about the garden, shown 29 and 30 December 1998.  
DHK

## FABRIC-MARKS, FINGER-PRINTS, AND OTHER FEATURES: Bricks in High Town Methodist Chapel, Luton

Terence Paul Smith

The Primitive Methodists, a breakaway group from the Wesleyan Methodists, first appeared in Luton, Bedfordshire in 1838. Initially holding open-air services, they soon acquired land in a growing part of the town, known from its elevation as *High Town*, and built their first chapel there in 1839. This became inadequate and was replaced by a larger chapel, the foundation stone of which was laid on 5 August 1852;<sup>1</sup> the older building was rented out as a British School.<sup>2</sup> In due course, even this new chapel proved too small for the increasing congregation and another was erected to its south, in a Byzantine-cum-Baroque *Rundbogen* style, in 1897-8.<sup>3</sup> The older chapel was then used as a church hall, a function which it still fulfils. It was listed Grade II in 1981 and refurbished and renovated under the direction of Roger Dixon in 1988-9.<sup>4</sup>

The 1852 building is interesting for its use of brick and for the features of some of the individual bricks. It was designed by a local architect, H. Holyoak, who was also responsible for other church buildings in the town. The engraving in Frederick Davis' history of the town, published in 1855, shows the chapel as originally built (fig.1), a striking design with a tension lacking in the chapel as it now exists. It is basically classical, with corner pilasters framing the principal façade and reaching to a heavy entablature, above which is an attic storey with scrolls in the re-entrant angles and topped by a triangular pediment. The slightly projecting entrance has twin round-headed doorways topped by an entablature but with no pediment. The round-headed doorways are echoed in the dramatic tall and slim win-

dows, rising almost to the entablature and with round-headed arches giving a somewhat Romanesque flavour to the otherwise classical façade. The side walls repeat this motif in a series of five such windows set within shallow rectangular recesses. They have cast iron frames, which were probably innovatory in the area at the time.

Even for its new (post-1898) use as a church hall, the original building was too small and a gallery was added. The light from the front windows then proved inadequate, so the ceiling was raised and the front face altered: a large central window was inserted and the windows either side were changed (fig.2). The result is pleasing enough,

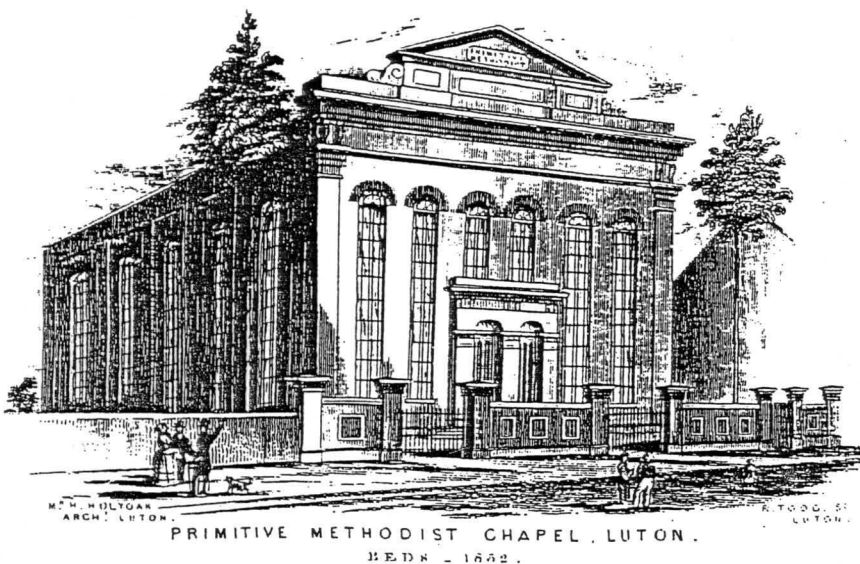


Fig.1 High Town Methodist Chapel, Luton (1852),  
as originally designed

though lacking the drama of the earlier version. The basic form remains unchanged, with flanking pilasters, entablature, and attic storey with scrolls and pediment, and with the slightly projecting entrance consisting of twin round-headed doorways and entablature. But the latter now carries a triangular pediment, added when the fenestration was modified, whilst the entrance itself is flanked by pilasters, echoing those at the angles and thus dividing the façade into three equal bays. The main entablature is broken over the central bay

where the large round-headed window, with keystone, has been cut through and reaches to the entablature of the attic storey. Instead of the twin round-headed windows each side of the entrance, there is now a single square-headed recess, each containing an upper and a lower window. The upper and lower windows have flat arches, with keystones, whilst between them is a panel with a decorative apron. In the refurbishment of 1988-9 the upper flat arches had to be replaced by concrete lintels with brick-slip facings.



Fig.2. High Town Methodist Chapel, Luton, as it now appears - drawing courtesy Planning Division, Luton Borough Council

The chapel incorporates three types of bricks: it is built, wrote Frederick Davis, 'of the best white perforated patent brick[s], with gray [*sic*] bricks for corner piers and cornice';<sup>5</sup> to this must be added the bright red bricks, many of them shaped, used for trim in various positions. The building also uses tiles and a small amount of stone.

The red bricks are used for the flat arches of the windows, for mouldings beneath the tile window-sills, for the capitals, for the surround of the central window, for some members of the entablature, for the surrounds of the pediments, and for the round arches in the side walls. The un-moulded bricks are 225 × 102 × 64 mm. A number of the bricks are shaped as cyma recta and other mouldings. They are probably moulded rather than cut and are

laid with thin joints using lime putty in place of mortar. Bricks of this sort were popular throughout the Victorian period.<sup>6</sup> The voussoir bricks used for arch-heads may be proper gauged work - that is, may be cut and rubbed to shape; Luton Greys (see below) were unsuitable for such work. By the Victorian period, however, *moulded* voussoirs were also available and were much used for pseudo-gauged work. The red bricks are not local, but their source is not known. There were numerous brickyards in various parts of the country manufacturing such products. Development of the bulk freight railway system greatly facilitated their movement from one part of the country to another, although at this period the nearest rail terminus to Luton was at Dunstable (opened 1848); the railway did not reach Luton itself until 1858, six years after the primary building of the chapel.<sup>7</sup>

Davis' 'gray' bricks are local Luton Greys, almost certainly from the builder's own yard near Christ Church, Stuart Street, Luton. They are dark red or purplish in colour, but crushed flint used in place of moulding sand and, sometimes at least, a post-moulding surface coating of road sweepings, dust, and lime results in a silvery grey finish. They were made from deposits underlying the clay-with-flints at a number of brickfields in and around Luton in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries.<sup>8</sup> Those in the chapel measure 232-5 × 110-12 × 74-6 mm; most are standard bricks, the only moulded units being plinth stretchers, and plinth internal and external returns. They are well made bricks with quite sharp arrises. Pressure-marks - resulting from stacking the bricks for secondary drying whilst they were still slightly too soft, so that one pressed into another - are rare on such bricks; on the chapel bricks a few are present: they are longitudinal, indicating that the bricks were stacked ('skintled') in a longitudinal arrangement. Kiss-marks - resulting from part of one brick covering another in the kiln and thus shielding it from the fiercest heat - are more common: those in the chapel are lateral, indicating that the bricks were placed at right-angles to each other in the kiln. The Luton Greys are used for the pilasters on both the principal façade and the side walls, for the piers of the entrance, and for most of the brickwork of the main entablature and the attic storey. They are laid in Flemish Bond.

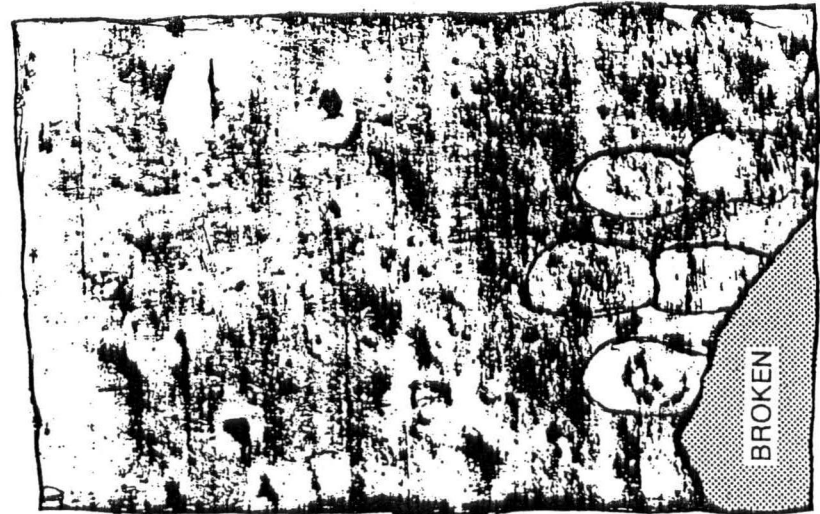


Fig.3 High Town Methodist Chapel, Luton (1852): rubbings of brick faces (scale: 1:1)



Davis' 'white perforated patent brick[s]' are the Gault bricks patented by Robert Beart and manufactured by his company at Huntingdon and at Arlesey in Bedfordshire.<sup>9</sup> The Arlesey works did not open until 1852, so that if the chapel bricks are from there then they must be amongst its earliest products; it is perhaps more likely that they came from the smaller Huntingdon works, which was established earlier. Those used in the subsequent modifications, however, are likely to be from Arlesey. The bricks are used as background to the other brickwork but also for the round arches of the windows in the east wall and for the slopes of the gable at the top of that wall. For the general walling they are laid in Flemish Bond. The earliest of Beart's bricks contained twenty-four perforations, their purpose being not to lighten the bricks in weight or to provide a mortar key, as is often supposed, but to enable better, more uniform firing and to allow moisture to escape the more easily, as noted in *The Builder* in 1852.<sup>10</sup> The result was a very hard, well finished brick, with sharp arrises. Perforations are only possible in bricks made by the extrusion, wire-cut process, a new production method in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Slight vertical marks on the faces of the bricks resulted from the pushing of the material through the aperture of the machine, which, in the case of Beart's works, was powered by steam. A number of the chapel bricks show this (fig.3 *bottom left* and *bottom right*<sup>12</sup>). The bricks in the chapel measure 223-5 × 104-5 × 74-6 mm. Despite the name 'white' applied to the bricks, they are in fact in various shades of cream to yellow, occasionally showing pinkish patches. Those in the chapel show few pressure-marks; those that are present are lateral, showing that the bricks were stacked at right-angles to each other for drying. Kiss-marks, on the other hand, are oblique, indicating a diagonal stacking of the bricks in the kiln.

The Beart's bricks in the chapel show two further features reflecting their methods of manufacture. First, a number of the bricks show the impression of some sort of fabric. Sometimes too there are distinctive marks caused by the rucking of the fabric, the rucks pressing into the soft clay. Fig.3 *top* shows a particularly good example of this, the rucks forming a series of 'eye-brow' impressions, the fabric itself causing diagonal marks indicating some kind of twill weave. This changes direction almost halfway up the brick face and the slight horizontal impression in that position probably represents the sewn join of two pieces of fabric. Beart's bricks were dried over twenty-four hours in specially constructed steam chambers.<sup>13</sup> Covering the bricks during outside drying was thus not required. It seems likely, therefore, that the marks were caused by having the fabric laid down on the floors of the drying chambers: the bottommost bricks would be pressed against this, the fabric thus leaving its traces in the brick faces. It is significant that the marks occur only in stretcher faces, for it is on these faces that the bricks would have been set for drying.

Secondly, a number of the bricks in the side walls show finger-prints from where the bricks were handled immediately after their formation (fig.3 *bottom left* and *bottom right*). Despite Beart's enthusiastic espousal of machinery, therefore, it is clear that the bricks had to be *handled* at some stage. The finger-prints observed in the chapel walls are on header faces, as one might expect. They show three marks - those of the index, middle, and ring (fourth) fingers - suggesting that the little finger was crooked whilst handling the bricks; the thumb would have been used against the stretcher face to steady the bricks, and thumb-prints occasionally appear on stretcher faces (fig.3 *top right*). It is clear too that the bricks were handled without the protection of gloves. The finger-prints - even allowing for shrinkage during drying and firing - are also very small, clearly those of children; they are therefore a reminder of capitalist exploitation in nineteenth-century brickfields of even very young children.<sup>14</sup> This is, of course, the other, seamier, side of 'Victorian values', including the much vaunted 'enterprise': Robert Beart was nothing if not *enterprising*. It is an aspect of the history of bricks which enthusiasm for the subject, natural amongst members of the British Brick Society, should not allow us to forget.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, the finger-prints seem not to appear on the bricks of the front face, suggesting that by c.1900 methods of production had changed - probably further mechanisation had been introduced.

The building also incorporates tiles. Roofing tiles top the entrance pediment, whilst large square tiles ('quarries'), 1 foot (= 305 mm) square by 2 inches (= 50 mm) thick, are used, set at a slope, for the sills of the windows in the front façade. More interesting are the shaped tiles used above each of the pilasters and against the face of the architrave of the main entablature. They are formed - whether cut or moulded is not clear - into large S-shapes (ogees) and set on edge and in pairs as plain scroll-like elements. They suggest

additional capitals in a classically incorrect position. This ingenious use of tiles by a local architect to hint at, rather than actually to create, classical capitals is intriguing, not least because it so resembles Post-Modern approaches to historical architecture.

There is a minimal use of stone in the building: for the steps in front of the entrance, for the date plaque (replaced in 1988-9) in the top pediment, for the scrolls in the re-entrant angles of the attic storey (though these are recent replacements of originals in mortar-covered tile), for keystones in the front windows, and for the sills of the side windows.

### *Acknowledgements*

I am grateful to Mr Roger Dixon, Senior Property Steward at High Town Methodist Chapel, Luton for his valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper; these have saved me from some errors and are incorporated into a revised version; I am grateful also to the Planning Division, Luton Borough Council for permission to reproduce fig.2.

### *Notes and References*

1. F.Davis, *The History of Luton with its Hamlets, Etc.*, Luton, 1855, pp.126-8; also J.Dyer and J.G.Dony, *The Story of Luton*, 3rd edn, Luton, 1975, pp.117-18.
2. J.G.Dony, *A History of Education in Luton*, Luton, 1970, p.18; the *British Schools* were Nonconformist, in contrast with the Anglican *National Schools*; on the *architectural* implications of this, specifically on the adoption of the 'Queen Anne' style for the London Board Schools: T.P.Smith, 'Beacon of the Future: an Early London Board School by Basil Champneys', *BBS Information*, 74, June 1998, 14-20 and especially 19.
3. Luton Planning Division, *Luton's Heritage: Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest*, Luton, n.d. but c.1993, pp.12-13; my fig.2 is taken from this publication.
4. Luton Planning Division, n.d., p.14, and *ex inf.* Roger Dixon.
5. Davis, 1855, p.127; the illustration was provided by the architect.
6. S.Muthesius, *The English Terraced House*, New Haven and London, 1982, pp.219-20.
7. Dyer and Dony, 1975, pp.123-4; Dunstable lies 5 miles to the west of Luton.
8. A.Cox, *Survey of Bedfordshire: Brickmaking: a History and Gazetteer*, Bedford and London, 1979, pp.33-4; for the 'road sweepings, dust, and ilme' see the tape-recorded reminiscences of Mr George Souster cited in J.Dyer, *The Stopsley Book*, Dunstable, 1998, pp.186-7 (Stopsley is a district of Luton); the bricks were much used in Luton itself, but were also sometimes transported for use in buildings in London: Dyer 1998, p.186; A.Cox, 'Bricks to Build a Capital', in H. Hobhouse and A.Saunders, *Good and Proper Materials: the Fabric of London since the Great Fire*, London Topographical Society Publication 140, London, 1989, p.14.
9. Cox, 1979, pp.37-9, 44-5.
10. *The Builder*, 9 June 1852, 385, cited in Cox 1979, p.45; later, the number of perforations was reduced to twenty-one; a brick laid on a stretcher face in the 1861 schoolhouse at the rear of the site, inserted by the caretaker to plug the gap left by a corroded air-vent perhaps 30 years ago, has twenty-four perforations; probably it was a left-over brick from the primary build which the caretaker found somewhere (*ex inf.* Roger Dixon).
11. M.Hammond, *Bricks and Brickmaking*, Shire Album 75, Princes Risborough, 1981, p.14.
12. Fig.3 reproduces (at full size) rubbings of some of the chapel bricks; in order to bring out particular features the rubbings have been 'touched up' in ink - without, of course, adding anything not actually present!
13. Cox 1979, p.44; Cox 1989, p.13.
14. The extent of child (and adult female) labour in the brickyards varied throughout the country: R.N.Price, 'The Other Face of Respectability: Violence in the Manchester Brickmaking Trade 1859-1870', *Past & Present*, 66, February 1975, 111-12; and see the whole discussion of working conditions, 111-32.
15. K.Marx, *Capital*, vol.1, trans. B.Fowkes, Harmondsworth, 1976, pp.593-4; E.F.Marsh and T.P.Smith, 'George Smith, 1831-1895', *BBS Information*, 36, May 1985, 18-19; A.Hulme, 'Bricks for St Pancras: the Cry of the Brick Children', *BBS Information*, 60, October 1993, 3-4; for pictorial evidence see the engraving of 1871 reproduced in, e.g., J. Woodforde, *Bricks to Build a House*, London, 1976, p.103; one of the great virtues of Woodforde's history is that it does *not* neglect this sorry aspect of the subject: see his chapter 10, pp.99-109. Roger Dixon reminds me (*pers. comm.* 7 April 1999) that Beart's use of machinery was 'a good trend towards the eventual reduction of child labour'; it undoubtedly was so, but I hope it is not *too* cynical of me to suppose that that is not *why* he introduced it. Child labour was not, of course, limited to *British* brickfields: see, e.g., G.B.Janssen, *Baksteenfabricage in Nederland 1850-1920*, Zutphen, 1987, pp.391-435: 'Vrouwen- en Kinderarbeid in de baksteenfabricage'.

## EDWARDIAN BRICK CHURCHES: A Lancashire Perspective

David H. Kennett

It was in Lancashire that the celebrated Victorian church architect, George Frederick Bodley, built one of his finest churches, St Augustine's, Pendlebury between 1871 and 1874. It soars above the surroundings to make a very definite statement about the place of the Christian religion in society.

In Lancaster, the ancient county town of the County Palatine, one of the finest practices specialising in churches had its office: originally in 1868 Paley and Austin but from 1895 Austin and Paley. They built in brick as much as in the native red sandstone. Much of Austin's best work in brick pre-dates the Edwardian decade, as for example their work in Salford: St Clement of Rome, Ordsall, Salford, built 1877-78 with a brick-vaulted chancel containing an integral flèche, and St James', Broughton, of 1879. In Bolton, Paley had rebuilt the parish church of St Peter before he was joined by Austin. Austin created four new churches: in brick are St Saviour, of 1882-85 but demolished, All Souls', Astley Bridge, with a tower, built in 1880-81, and St Thomas, Halliwell, a tour-de-force of unadorned brickwork of 1875, with lancet windows, but the only Edwardian church in the town by Austin and Paley, St Margaret's Halliwell, of 1903, is of stone.

In the Church of England, less money was available for church building in the twenty years before the Great War than had been generated in the boom years after the Great Exhibition of 1851. The money remained available, albeit at a diminishing rate, in the late 1870s and early 1880s. However, in the long term, the agricultural depression and trade downturn of 1873-1896 seriously weakened the finances of the Church of England to the extent that the idea of building expansively was not easily pursued certainly in newly-created dioceses in the 1890s and 1900s. In the Edwardian years, both Lancashire dioceses were of recent origin: Manchester dates from 1847 and Liverpool from 1880; a third diocese, Blackburn, was established for the rural north in 1926.

The effect of the more limited funds had its effects on architects' work. Architects like Temple Moore, Walter Tapper and Charles Nicholson, among church architects based in London, had to make do with far less than the generation which had trained them: George Gilbert Scott junior, G.F. Bodley, and J.D. Sedding. Of these, Temple Moore did work in Lancashire in brick is St Cyprian, Gorton, Manchester, of 1908-16, but his three other churches in the county are stone.

Essentially local figures, like R.B. Preston, the Manchester diocesan architect, often had even fewer resources particularly when working in the either Salford or Manchester.

The reduction in finance available is not consistent. Even in the Edwardian years, the Church of England retained patrons sufficiently wealthy to finance churches that are works of art. The comparison can be made from churches in traditions derived from southern France. A Manchester banker's money paid for the original complex at St Augustine's, Pendlebury, built between 1871 and 1874: church, school, parsonage (now demolished), and lodge. Edward Stanley Heywood was a partner in Heywood's Bank, St Ann's Square, Manchester, which had done well out of the great Victorian boom. St Augustine's has ten bays, external red brick and internally whitewashed buttresses, faced with stone on the internal edge and the arch. In this it echoes the Albi tradition; the great brick church at Albi, built of brick between 1282 and 1390, is the first with internally placed buttresses, giving a fortress-like appearance to the exterior. In

Liverpool, Douglas Horsfall, a stockbroker, paid for St Paul's, Derby Lane, Stoneybrook, designed in 1916 by the young Giles Gilbert Scott. Scott used pale brick to create a church in the tradition of St Front at Perigueux: a series of groin-vaulted bays framed by short pointed tunnel vaults in the aisles, with big square internal piers which incorporate low passages. Each bay of the exterior is marked by a set of three tall lancet windows set beneath a blank arch and a hipped roof. The centre has a massive tower with a pyramid roof. Scott was also from 1904 to his death in 1960 the architect of the new (stone) cathedral in Liverpool where, of course, no expense was spared. Interestingly, Douglas Horsfall had been Pearson's patron when the latter designed St Agnes and St Pancras, Sefton Park, Liverpool, in 1883-85, a church in red brick.

Like the earlier St Augustine's, Pendlebury, new Anglican churches in Edwardian Lancashire were often settings for Anglo-Catholic ritual, rather than as had been the case in the many Commissioners' churches, a hundred years before, where in galleried buildings Word and Sacrament were given equal prominence.

The intention of a raised sanctuary, often practical in being over a boiler house, and a balcony for singers facing a balcony for an organ beside the chancel can be seen in several of the churches by R.B. Preston. St Ambrose's, Pendleton, of 1909, exemplifies the tradition. The church originally had a west baptistry, a six-bay nave, two of which have become the internally-placed church hall, and three-bay chancel and sanctuary. Built in red brick and red unglazed terracotta externally, white brick combined in the arches with brown brick and brown sandstone is used internally for the arcades. The style was used before at St John's, Agnes Road, Stretford, of 1904-08, and reappears at St Thomas', Chapel Street, Leigh, designed and built between 1906 and 1910. Both are in red brick and, unlike St Ambrose's, have a tower, in both cases placed on the south side. Preston designed about fifteen churches in Lancashire between 1893 and 1914. Of those in the City of Manchester, St Werbergh's, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, of 1899-1902, is in stock brick - red stock brick is meant - and red terracotta; St John's, Harpurley, of 1908, uses plain grey brick; and St Andrew's, Levenshulme, again of 1908, is built of white brick and red unglazed terracotta. Preston used plain glazing to large plate windows in the aisles of his churches: the terracotta is used in the fenestration in his churches as well as in bands below them to relieve the large expanses of brick. Terracotta was used in conjunction with mathematical tiles at All Saints', Heaton Norris, overlooking the River Mersey and motorway separating Manchester and Stockport. Such Arts and Crafts touches are rare in Preston's work. The architect tended to be better served outside of Manchester and Salford, where stone was more often used and a tower intended. One was built at St John's, Thornham, of 1907, and one intended but not built at Holy Trinity, Colne.

An architect based in Manchester whose work extends into the Edwardian era was Alfred Darbyshire who is not noted as a church architect. One of his few churches is St Ignatius', Ordsall, a late work of 1900. It uses red stock brick and red glazed terracotta. The terracotta has various motifs, swirls and dog-toothing, designed to create a neo-Norman effect. The arched windows are grouped in threes under glazed terracotta arches and the principal door is within an arched setting of terracotta imitating the Romanesque. Yet the whole is flat extending the line of the small houses adjacent. Only the pyramid roof of the south-west tower makes the building stand out from the houses in stock brick alongside. The same architect's St Cyprian's, Taylorson Street, Ordsall, the church of 1899 abutting Ordsall Hall, was built for when the latter was used as an Anglican theological college; it was demolished between sometime between 1968 and 1994, although the theological college had been disbanded during the Second World War. The church was in red brick and red unglazed terracotta, like the south-east wall of the hall, part of Darbyshire's restoration of 1899, but in keeping with the original timber-framed hall adjacent, the clerestory was of timber and the west gable was timber-framed with a white infill.

Darbyshire had greater resources for his churches in Salford and Manchester than did

R.B. Preston but if one needs to examine the contrast in resources available to the designers of Anglican churches, Southport provides even better examples of the way in which money influenced the design and technological choices. R.B. Preston designed Emmanuel Church, Cambridge Road, in 1895: it was built in the course of the succeeding three years. The materials are red Ruabon brick and red sandstone, the style involves a major crossing tower and transepts with double gables. It is both more spacious and has a more opulent feel than his work in Manchester and Salford.

Taking nearly a decade to construct is a tour de force of red brick, white stone and red sandstone designed by Huon Matear and built on Manchester Road, Southport. Liverpool shipping money allied to cotton fortunes paid for Holy Trinity church between 1903 and 1913. There is a bold tower with an octagonal top; transepts and flying buttresses to the chancel mark this out as a most opulent creation. Twenty-five years earlier, when an assistant to Mellor and Sutton, Matear had designed another Southport church in red brick, St Luke's in a lancet style with a grand west front but with no tower. By the Edwardian era Southport had become fashionable for both Manchester cotton men and Liverpool shipowners.

In suburban Liverpool, stockbroking money, particularly from members of the Horsfall family, paid for more than one Anglican church. An early work by Giles Gilbert Scott, St Paul, Derby Lane, Stoneycroft, of 1916, with its exquisite pale brick showing the benefits of the freedom that a good budget permits has already been mentioned. Not all churches were so fortunate. Reasonably well-known, if only from its frequent television exposure, is St Luke's, Goodison Road, in red brick. The architect was J.F. Doyle; the Liverpool architect is not usually thought of as a church architect but his other church has far more panache. In Mossley Hill, St Barnabas of 1900-14 tries to fashion an exterior in brick patterning using full-sized bricks, half bricks and what are described as brick slabs. The church is big, having aisles and transepts but with a west tower; the interior is ashlar.

The big campaign by the Roman Catholic church to provide for the flock is mostly earlier: The main body of Salford Cathedral was completed in 1855: the south transept was added in 1884. With one exception, the other Roman Catholic churches in the city were extant, if not completed, by the same date. At St Joseph's, Ordsall, the upper part of the tower with the accompanying spike is more than two decades later than the body of the church which is 1871. The west front is in good quality red brick, but the body of this church is built of a local brick which shows carboniferous origins. On the west front, the north-west tower shows a slight change in brick colour where it starts to rise above the main structure. The new church of the early Edwardian years is St Sebastian's, Pendleton, by Simnott, Simnott and Powell. The firm is best known for its work in 1890 on St Augustine's, Preston, which adds Renaissance detail in stone to a classically inspired church of 1838-40 by A. Tuach. Between 1898 and 1901, the firm created St Sebastian's in a red stock brick in lancet style with a small south-west turret. Externally it is not an impressive building but internally the use of the Albi motif of internal buttresses pierced by low round-headed arches creates a powerful focus: the worship setting needs the processional approach to the ritual. The same firm used a lancet style for St Peter and St Paul, Pilkington Street, Bolton, in 1897. In red brick, this has a high tower.

In the nonconformist tradition, church building in the 1900s is characterised by the erection of large complexes in city centres. There is a large hall with a gallery capable of seating two thousand or more, at least one and often two smaller halls, together with vestries and office accommodation for church purposes, and the whole is wrapped within a street frontage containing shops and office accommodation to let. The rents from the commercial lettings paid for the upkeep of the building. This is irrespective of denomination: the Leysian Mission, City

Road, Finsbury, London, of 1903, and Salford Central Mission of 1907 were built by the Congregational Church; there are several Methodist central halls: refurbished in 1900 at Bolton, and newly built in Liverpool in 1904-05 and of 1910 in Manchester. A red brick Baptist Tabernacle of 1904 in Blackpool; designed by Manchester architects, W.T. Oldrieve and C.A. Hindle, it has not been in ecclesiastical use since the early 1960s. The same has also been true of the Methodist Central Hall in Liverpool since 1993.

The Leysian Mission can count as a Lancashire building: it was designed by John Bradshaw Gass and indeed before the Great War, the Bolton architects, Bradshaw, Gass and Hope, maintained a London office in the building. It is covered on the façade by unglazed, brown Bolton terracotta that was shipped to London packed in furniture removal waggons which could be either put on a dray or a flat railway truck, an early form of containerisation. In the centre of the street façade of the Victoria Halls, Bolton, is a tower of unglazed red terracotta in its upper part but the lower part of the entrance tower is red brick. J.B. Gass designed this to emphasise the building's presence, mostly behind a street frontage of existing small shops.

W.J. Morley of Bradford, better-known as a designer of textile mills in Yorkshire and Scotland, gave the disused Albert Hall, Peter Street, Manchester, a façade executed only in glazed terracotta: the colour can be described as light yellow, cream or even orange. The sides are in red brick with a matt finish. There is a tower at the northern end but it looks almost secular with its large plate glass showroom windows on the ground floor. The glass of the tower is coloured but not particularly religious in its themes. Like the buildings in Bolton and London, this is on a site with only one street frontage.

Where the building occupies an obtuse-angled site between two roads, the church entry is placed on a short side at the meeting point of the angle. This allows for additional foundations and greater wall width to permit a tower. Brick has a structural function as can be seen in J.B. Gass' Liverpool building. Decorative accent in grey terracotta is focused on the entry side on the red brick Salford Central Mission. This is an exposed building and one can see the darker bricks used for the side and rear walls quite easily. White bricks were used for the side walls of the big hall at the Leysian Mission. In contrast the rear of the Liverpool Methodist Central Hall faces a garden on Mount Pleasant and the decorative use of terracotta is kept up and a better quality facing brick is actually used here than on the main façade on Renshaw Street.

In the suburbs, various nonconformist denominations built chapels of varying quality. Some have real distinction, as is noted below. One of the relatively ordinary is the red brick Congregational Church of 1910 at Weaste, west of Salford. The tower over the entrance is clad in red unglazed terracotta. The demolished Wesleyan church, Bradford Street, Bolton, used red and yellow glazed terracotta as a decorative feature on a red brick background: the brick was Ruabon.

Nonconformity, in most of its forms, was a very social religion in contrast to the contemporary expression of the Anglican tradition. A demolished Methodist church on Langworthy Road, Salford, had a vast site, now used for housing. The one surviving building uses red brick and yellow terracotta; it was originally a two-storeyed schoolroom.

Quite outside the run of the mill is Chorley Old Road Methodist Church, Bolton, of 1903, by J.C. Topping, a local architect. This combines influences from the Byzantine, via J.F. Bentley's Westminster Cathedral which was then building, the American and the Palladian. The plan is basically cruciform, in the form of the equal-armed Greek cross. Where the arms cross is a shallow dome, originally with a timber lantern; there is nothing unusual in this, as a shallow, glazed dome is found at several central halls over the main hall. The main façade is recessed behind an elaborate tri-partite entrance set between a pair of low turrets topped by domes. In the upper part of these turrets is recessed fenestration fronted by unturned balusters reminiscent of those at the Auditorium, Chicago; a building becoming better known in the early 1900s. The

centre of the main front of the Bolton church is dominated by a large Venetian window flanked by paired pilasters with Ionic capitals. As with Edgar Wood's work, instanced below, the bricklaying is of the highest standard.

A remarkable façade is presented by the Fairhaven Congregational Church of 1907-12 at St Annes, which Briggs and Woltsenholme of Blackburn covered in white faience slabs, purely as a skin to a brick structure. In plan this is relatively conventional.

Edgar Wood has been mentioned. From 1885 to 1904, he worked alone or with only one assistant. Between 1904 and 1914, he was joined by J.H. Sellers, although they were not in a formal partnership. Wood designed two major church complexes. The earlier is Long Street Methodist Church, Middleton, of 1889 to 1901; the later is the building for which he is best known: the First Church of Christ Scientist, Victoria Park, Manchester, of 1903-08. The former remains in ecclesiastical use, the latter has passed to the Victoria University of Manchester and is now the Edgar Wood Centre.

Wood's two buildings have similarities and differences. Both are highly individual designs. Long Street is a complex grouped round an oblong courtyard; at the First Church there is a Y-shaped open entrance court. And while no one would take Long Street for other than a church, both are secular designs, particularly in their fenestration. The band of windows in the gable of First Church is a variant on the bands of windows on the first floor and in the gable front of Wood's own house, Redcroft, Rochdale Road, Middleton., of 1891. The long central window in First Church is in part derived from the central window of room on the other side of the courtyard to the street at Long Street Methodist Church. However, at First Church, the window is in the shape of a cross, almost the only external concession to ecclesiastical use. Both designs use the canted bay: on the porch and in a subsidiary room in Middleton, on both sides of the reading room in Manchester. Both designs have a variety of materials: stone, stock brick and rendering for Long Road, stock brick with stone dressings, and rendering on the gable for First Church. In both buildings, the worship space is aisled; in First Church the brick arcades support dormer windows.

Like Fairhaven Congregational Church, Long Road Methodist Church is within the architectural mainstream of nonconformist buildings in Lancashire, but is more highly individualistic; the First Church of Christ Scientist, partly because of the body which commissioned it, allowed a more secular approach. It also, of course, allowed the building to be easily converted to secular use.

With the more ritualistic approach to religious observance adopted by the Anglican Church in the period, this option may not easily commend itself to the ecclesiastical authorities. In Manchester and Salford alone, no fewer than fifty churches have been closed by the Church of England since 1945. Some, not necessarily of Edwardian date, were of high quality: St John the Evangelist, Oldham Road, Miles Platting, Manchester, of 1855 by J.E. Gregan, another benefaction of the Heywood family, was one such. It may not be to an individual's taste, but, within its own particular leaning within the Anglican tradition, it represents an honest attempt to meet the architectural demands of what Dom Gregory Dix called the structure of the liturgy.

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Most but not all of the churches mentioned can be traced through:

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## BRICKS AND FAITH IN CENTRAL AFRICA

### Traditional Brickmaking and the red-brick church at Blantyre

Michael Hammett

In the Summer of 1998, my wife and I visited our daughter in Malawi, who was there on a two-year Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) placement with the National Statistical Office. We were in the south, in the Shire Highlands, based in Zomba, about 28 miles (45 km) north-east of Blantyre and the former seat of government before its relocation to the new city of Lilongwe. Malawi, formerly the British colony of Nyasaland before its independence in 1964, is promoted as "the warm heart of Africa" and to us this was no hyperbole. Although the country is among the poorest in the world its people are charming and welcoming, the landscape from mountain to lake shore varied and attractive, and the variety of birds and animals extraordinary. We had a very enjoyable and exciting holiday, but as befits your Honorary Secretary bricks and brick buildings were not forgotten.

Indeed it would have been difficult to do so, for you cannot travel about and not be conscious of brickmaking: bricks drying in the open and brick clamps in various stages of setting, firing and deacking are very common sights. Sun-baked clay (adobe) bricks are used for some small structures in the villages but the more durable fired clay bricks seem to be dominant, presumably because although it is sunny and warm, and very hot in Summer, rainfall is high in the wet season (4-8 inches (100-200 mm) per month in December to February).



Fig. 1 (left) Preparing the clay  
(right) Filling the mould by packing.  
All photographs by Michael Hammett



## TRADITIONAL BRICKMAKING

We travelled in the south of Malawi where clay used for brickmaking seems to be abundant, relatively free of stones, and lies close to the surface. Making takes place in the open air. The clay is dug with an adze-like tool and is mixed with water to the consistency of soft mud. A wooden box-mould is used to form the bricks. It is wetted with water, to permit easy turning out, and the clay is packed in, not thrown as we do, and the top pressed flat by hand. The filled mould is then carried to an adjacent area with a compact flat surface and turned out to dry in the sun. To minimise cracking the rate of drying is controlled by covering the moist bricks with rushes.

When dry and hard enough for handling the bricks are built into a clamp structure about 7-8 feet (2.1 - 2.4 metres) high, with stoking tunnels through the base. The outer vertical surfaces are then plastered with a thick rendering of mud. This conserves the heat of the fire and seals the wall surface so that the ingress of air is concentrated through the stoking tunnels.

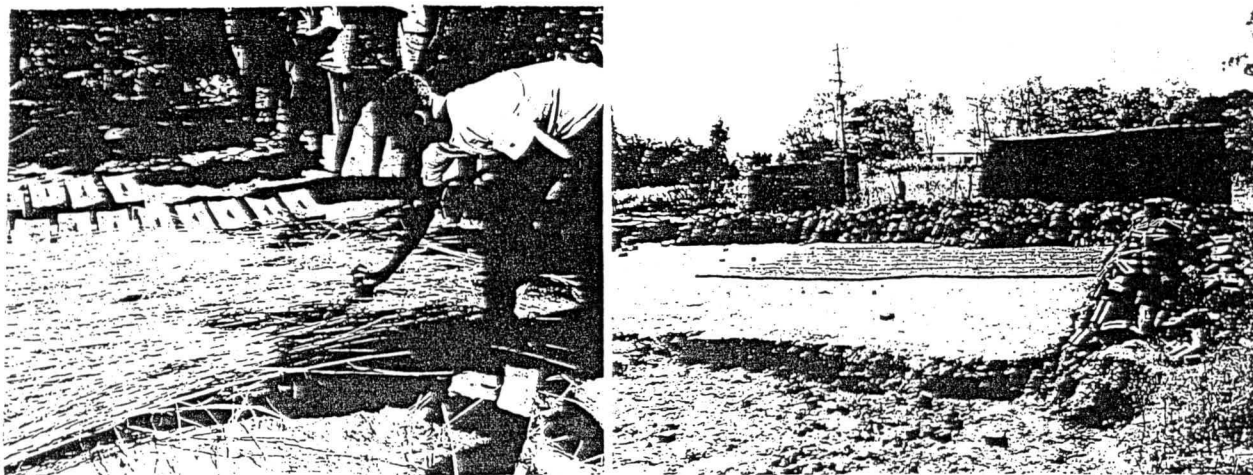


Fig. 2 (left) Laying rushes on top of green bricks during drying.  
(right) The clamp being built.

Firing is with wood, a commodity becoming more scarce as the predominantly rural population of Malawi increases. Coal is mined in the north, but economics prevent its transport 200 miles or more for general use in the south, especially for traditional brickmaking. Fanuel Chiundiza, the young man of the right of the photography of the kiln being fired (fig. 3 left), told me the following approximate costs of the enterprise (converted to sterling at the July 1998 exchange rate). It was his land and raw material. The clamp of 10,000 bricks took his four associates about two weeks' work to make and build; the wages would amount to about £10-£12. The wood for firing cost about £10 and the firing would take 24 hours of stoking, after which it would be left to burn out. The bricks would sell at between £6 and £10 per 1,000.

Traditionally-made clay bricks are used in the rural villages and also for commercial urban buildings and hotels for the tourist industry and very well they look. Perversely, because they are so widely available, a few misguided rich Malawians wishing to demonstrate an ability to afford the extra expense of something different build with concrete blocks!

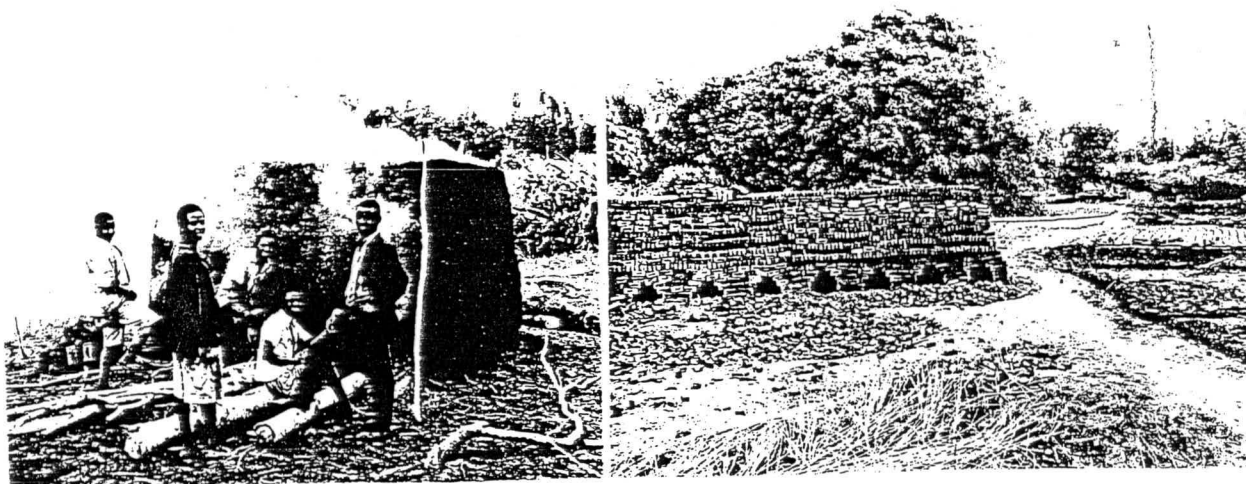


Fig. 3 (left): Firing the clamp kiln: Fanuel Chiundiza (on extreme right) and four associates.  
(right): The kiln ready for destacking; note the stoking holes.

### THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS AT BLANTYRE

The great European associated with Malawi is David Livingstone, the famous explorer and missionary. In 1876 he founded the first mission in the country at Blantyre (itself named after his birthplace), then the centre of regional society and communication. Within a decade, and particularly under the control of the Rev David Clement Scott, it became a focus for worship, teaching and medical care as well as an authority on matters of law, order and justice. Scott also aspired to build a major church. He had no previous experience of building construction, no knowledge of architecture, no access to workers with building skills and the congregation had only thirty African communicant members. Nevertheless, his vision was to build a church to seat at least 400 worshippers that would serve the community for centuries to come. The Church of St Michael and All Angels celebrated its first hundred years in 1991.

Scott had no drawings of his proposals before work started; indeed it is felt that if there had been any, the project would have been prevented by staff at the church headquarters in Edinburgh for being too elaborate and ambitious. Construction commenced in November 1888. David Buchanan, a builder in Blantyre, advised on and oversaw the work on foundations and the main structural elements and two Scottish craftsmen, a stone mason and a carpenter, supervised activities. But the vast majority of the work of brickmaking and building construction was done by Malawians. Even in the best times only eight builders were active and there were many setbacks, as for instance when lime gave out and kilns of bricks failed. Together architect and builders learnt and experimented as the church gradually took shape and, despite discouragement, faith prevailed and the structure was completed and dedicated in 1891.

All building materials were procured and prepared on the spot. The bricks were made of clay from ant hills nearby and water carried from a local stream. Hundreds of thousands of bricks were made: it is claimed that there are as many below ground as there are in the superstructure. Eighty-one different wooden moulds were used to make the variety of shapes and sizes as well as interesting decorative designs - e.g. studs, chevrons, foliage, fleur-de-lis, pineapples - to form features to window openings, capitals, friezes, eaves, parapets, etc.

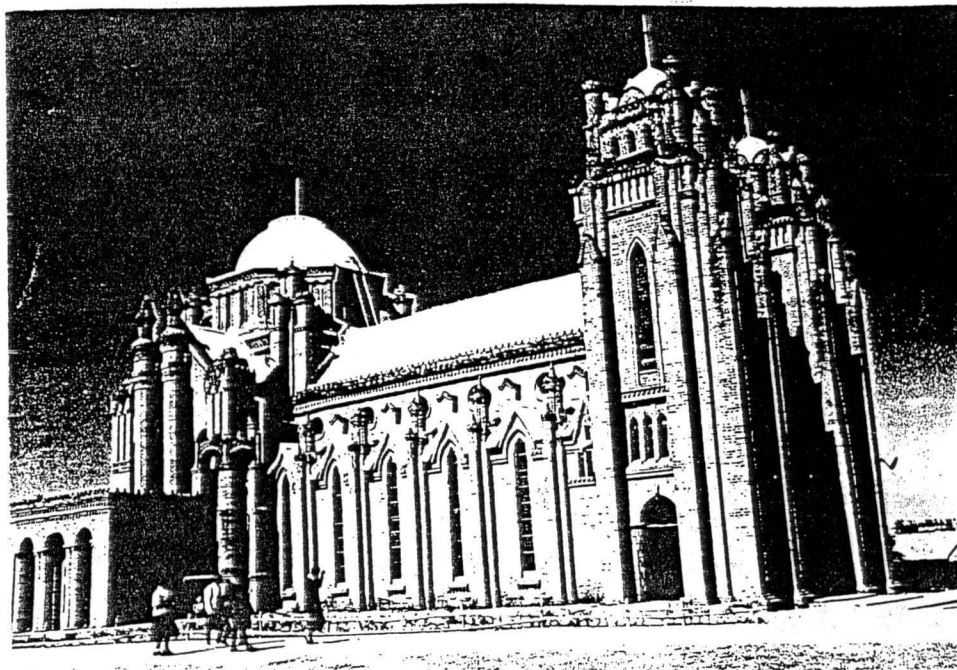


Fig. 4 The Church of St Michael and All Angels, Blantyre: general view from north-west.

The bricks are laid in lime/sand mortar, generally in English Bond (courses of headers alternating with courses of stretchers). The brickwork of the apse (fig. 7) is in Header Bond to create a smooth curved surface. Considering that the builders were Africans with no previous experience of bricklaying, the craftsmanship is very impressive, especially as the sometimes rather quirky decorative detail must have called for some inventive bricklaying. The plain work is well controlled and neatly set out. The numerous narrow piers of one-brick and half-brick widths are deceptively simple features as they call for particular care on the part of the craftsman. The bricks have to be selected for consistent size, jointing must be regular and well

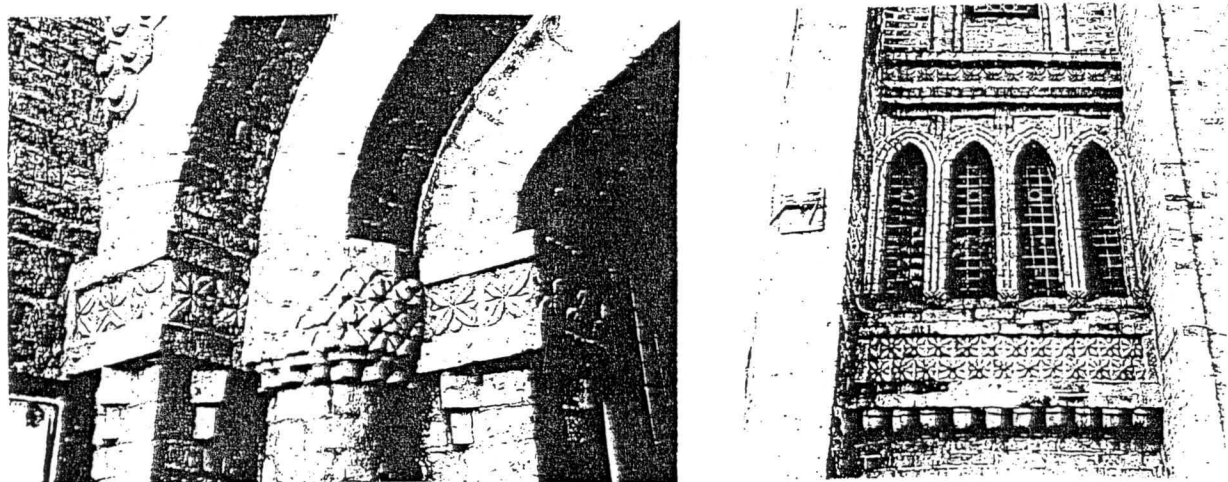


Fig.5 (left) The Church of St Michael and All Angels, Blantyre:  
Brick capitals at the west door.

(right) The Church of St Michael and All Angels, Blantyre. Brick detail on the north side of the north-west tower, with brick fireizes above and below multiple lancets.

aligned, and regular vertical gauging and accurate plumbing are essential. At Blantyre the craftsmanship evident in such piers is excellent. Those Scottish supervisors certainly knew their stuff and must have been great teachers.

The plan form is a conventional Latin cross with short arms (transepts), and beyond a domed crossing there is a short choir (or chancel) with a semi-circular apse. The nave is flanked by arcades of eight arches bearing on brick columns with narrow aisles beyond and clerestory windows above (fig. 4 shows the latter externally). Although the church is rather narrow, it is comparatively high - 37 feet (11.25 metres) to the mahogany panelled ceiling - and this loftiness together with daylight from the clerestory gives the interior a light and airy feeling.

Externally the dome over the crossing and the twin towers flanking the entrance are dominant features. Although at first sight the twin towers appear to be a matching pair, they are not, reflecting Scott's design philosophy that "symmetry means poverty of ideas".

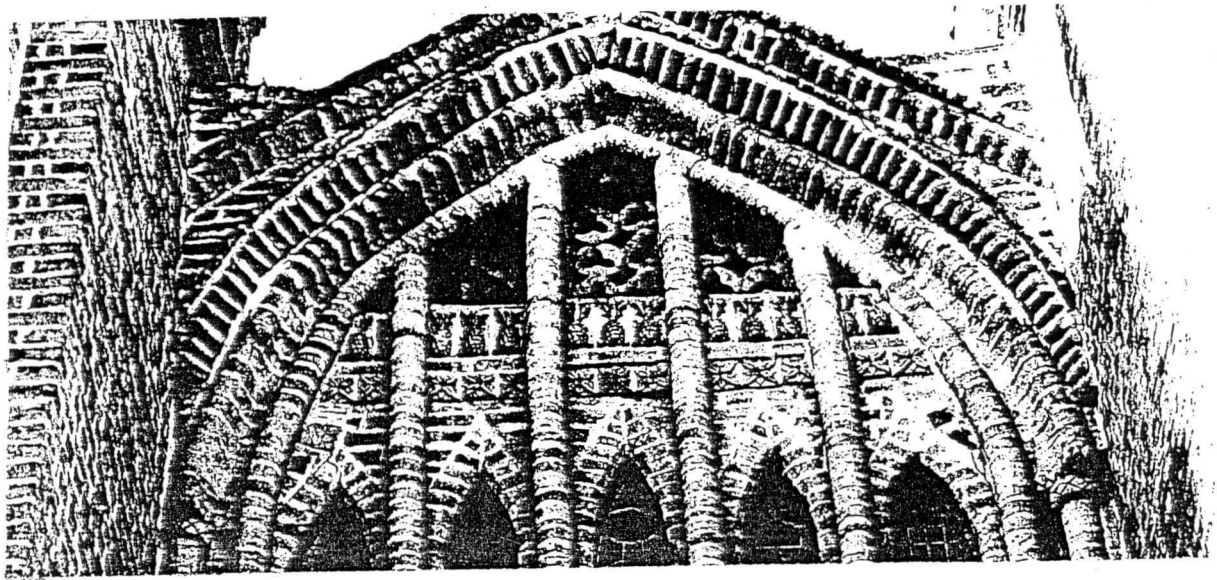


Fig. 6 The Church of St Michael and All Angels, Blantyre. West window with brick frieze of pineapples above the lancets.

Today modern international building styles pervade the towns and cities of Malawi, if not the rural villages, and so, standing by the church now, it is difficult to appreciate the surroundings into which it was built in 1891. As it neared completion many rumours circulated about the purpose of this strange building. Some thought it was to be a house for the head of the mission, or an important new European soon to come up the River. Hearing of a proposed dedication service others imagined there might be human sacrifices and other gruesome rituals. The dedication took place on 10 May 1891 followed by a week of celebrations.

The completion of the Church gave new impulse to the missionary work, the rate of conversion accelerating so that by 1894 there was concern that the Church was too small!

Scott's desire was to build "the African Church - not Scottish or English - but African". That intention is certainly fulfilled in the red-brick church of St Michael and All Angels, Blantyre. Its design follows the Christian tradition in the broadest sense, but in the matter of its inception and in the manner of its construction and decorative detail it was a truly African act of faith. It belongs to the red soil of Malawi on which it stands.

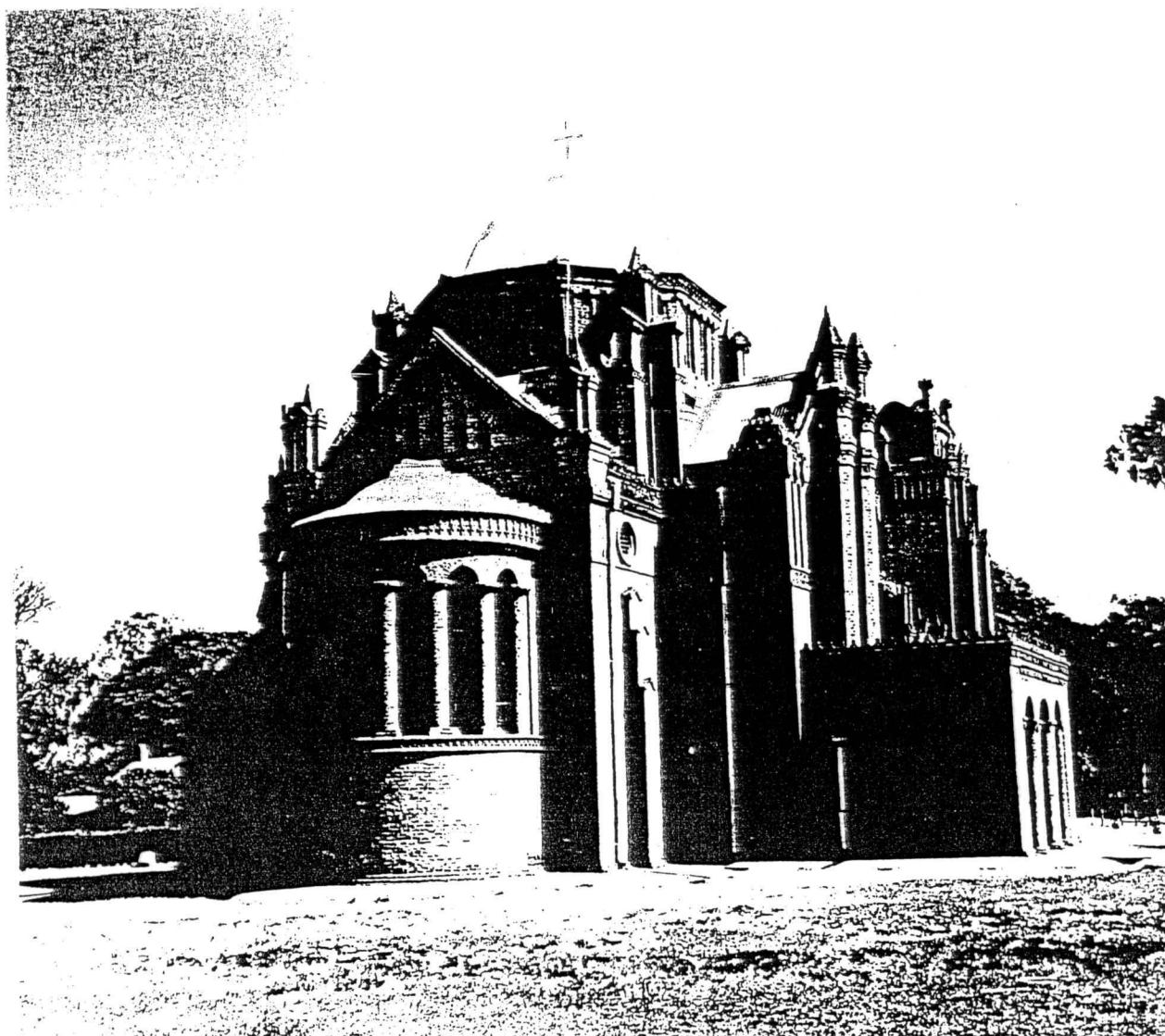


Fig. 7 The Church of St Michael and All Angels, Blantyre. general view from the east showing the apse beyond the short chancel.

## BRICK EVENTS

The British Brick Society does not organise a Lecture Series. Members of the Brick Section of the British Archaeological Association are invited to meetings of the association and the association welcomes non-members to its lecture series. One meeting in the 1999-2000 lecture series is of particular interest.

Wednesday 3 May 2000

*Millennium Review Lecture Series - 4*

*This lecture will be given in memory of Nicholas Moore.*

'English Historical Brickwork since Nathaniel Lloyd'

by Mr Terence Paul Smith

The British Brick Society has also been given details of a number of brick events and courses in late Summer 1999.

*BURSLEDON BRICKWORKS, HAMPSHIRE*

The remaining 1999 Open Days are:

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Saturday 20 June 1999                                      | Tractors and Stationary Engines |
| Sunday 18 July 1999  | Commercial Vehicles             |
| Saturday 11 September 1999 and<br>Sunday 12 September 1999 | Historic Building Construction  |

Opening times on these days are 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.. Otherwise Bursledon Brickworks is open to the public on Thursdays until 23 September 1999 between 1.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m.

*CHILTERN OPEN AIR MUSEUM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE*

Chiltern Open Air Museum, Newlands Park, Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire, have events most weekends during the summer. Events cover a wide range of topics from birds of prey, the blacksmith's craft and brass rubbing to the Victorian farm and woodworking. Most events take place at weekends but some are week-long. Of specific interest to British Brick Society members is:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Saturday 10 July 1999 and<br>Sunday 11 July 1999 | Hands on! Try your Hand at Brickmaking;<br>at Didcot Cart Shed |
|--|--|

Members may also be interested in:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Monday 9 August 1999<br>to Sunday 15 August 1999 | A Feel of the Forties; at the 1940s Pre-fab. |
|--|--|

Opening times are 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Tuesday to Sundays (daily in August) until Saturday 30 October 1999. Full details from the Chiltern Open Air Museum, telephone 01494-871117 (office hours) and 01494-872163 (24 hours recorded information).

*WEALD AND DOWNLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM, WEST SUSSEX*

Practical workshops and seminars suitable for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) include courses on building conservation and the use of traditional building materials, brick. Further details, including costs, from Diana Rowsell, telephone 01243-811363.

Dates are:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Monday 12 July 1999<br>to Wednesday 14 July 1999  | Traditional Gauged Brickwork                      |
| Thursday 15 July 1999                             | Lime Mortars: traditional preparation and uses    |
| Thursday 22 July 1999                             | Traditional Brick, History and Development        |
| Monday 18 October<br>to Wednesday 20 October 1999 | The Repair of Traditionally Constructed Brickwork |

## BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY IN 1999

Five visits and meetings have been arranged for 1999. The remaining meetings are given below. Full details of the first two were enclosed with the Annual General Meeting papers and details of the Autumn Meeting are in this mailing.

### Annual General Meeting

Saturday 12 June 1999

Gainsborough, Lincolnshire

Annual General Meeting at Trinity Arts Centre, Gainsborough, with an afternoon visit to Gainsborough Old Hall, an important brick house whose earliest brickwork dates to the 1480s.

### July Meeting

Saturday 17 July and Sunday 18 July 1999

Beverley and Hull

The society wishes to take advantage of the Open House weekend in Hull in connection with the Seven Hundred Years of Brick Exhibition. There will be an opportunity to view the Ann Los brick collection at Woodmansey, Beverley, on this weekend.

### Autumn Meeting

Saturday 25 September 1999

The western part of the City of London. Walking Tour led by T.P. Smith.

Future meetings are in preparation. Provisional programme for 2000:

Northern Spring Meeting      Saturday 8 April 2000

Wigan, Lancashire. Walking Tour led by D.H. Kennett.

Spring Meeting      Either Saturday 11 May 2000 or Saturday 18 May 2000

Venue to be announced.

Annual General Meeting      Saturday 10 June 2000

Kew Palace

July Meeting      Saturday 15 July 2000 (to be confirmed)

Essex, including Coggeshall Abbey and possibly Layer Marney Tower.

Full details of all meetings in 2000 will be included in the next mailing.

Ideas for urban venues in future years include Blackpool, Coventry with a brickworks visit, King's Lynn, Oxford including Keble College, Rugby including Rugby School, Stafford, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Wolverhampton, and Worcester.

A visit to rural south-east Warwickshire is being planned and will include the brick kiln of the Oxford Canal at Fenny Compton, where there was a tunnel at the canal's highest point. It is planned that the society will visit sites in south Suffolk in the near future.

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