

HEREFORDSHIRE

The tile manufacturing firm of Godwin's, in its several manifestations, dominates the later ceramic history of Herefordshire, with Godwin encaustic tile pavements in churches throughout the county. Aside from Victorian encaustics, there are several significant medieval tile locations, while the unusual Sadler & Green transfer printed tile fire surround survives at Croft Castle, as do Minton block-printed tiles at Eastnor Castle in another fire surround, along with spectacular moulded terracotta panels on a seat in Eastnor churchyard. Suggested reading: Betty Greene, 'The Godwins of Hereford', *TACS Journal*, vol 1 (1982), pp8-16. The *Gazetteer* entry for Herefordshire covers the administrative area of Herefordshire Council.

ABBEY DORE

Dore Abbey was a twelfth century Cistercian foundation, its church (minus the original nave) now being known as **St Mary's Church**. Thirteenth century inlaid and impressed tiles found during the 1902 restoration of the church were relaid in the chancel and around the font; the inlaid tiles have heraldic motifs, while the impressed tiles appear to have designs unique to Dore Abbey (Fig 91).

CROFT

Croft Castle (NT) dates from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, but a Gothick facade was added in the mid-eighteenth century after the castle passed to Richard Knight, uncle of Richard Payne Knight of Downton Castle, which lies six miles north through rolling countryside. The fashionable interior decoration introduced by Knight includes one great rarity, a fire surround of Sadler & Green's transfer printed tin-glazed tiles dating from around 1765-75. The tiles used images taken from engraved copper plates and were printed in one colour, resulting in intensely detailed pictures, tiny scenes from everyday life which ranged from romantic ruins and high society to contemporary actors and actresses.¹ The thirty-two tiles of the Croft fireplace include rural scenes and society figures, and is one of very few such fire surrounds to have survived in its original location.

The parish church, **St Michael**, stands below the castle in Croft Park, and has an extensive collection of medieval floor tiles along the centre of the chancel and on the step risers. They date mainly from the latter part of the fifteenth century and may originate from a local tiler, a previously unrecognised late production centre.

DOWNTON ON THE ROCK

Almost completely cut off, down in the valley of the Teme, Richard Payne Knight's magic kingdom of Downton even has its own road signs, as well as the castle put up around 1772-8 to Knight's own designs, a mixture of picturesque exterior, all battlements and towers, and classical interior. Downton Castle and its park formed a Picturesque landscape, wild and rugged in contrast to the tame parklands Knight felt were produced by Capability Brown. The ruins of

Downton's medieval church stand in the village, and new **St Giles Church** was built in the park, about half a mile south-west of the castle, to complete a vista, although the castle is now hidden from view by greenery. This perfectly preserved estate church was built for Andrew Rouse Boughton Knight in 1861-2 and designed by the architect Samuel Pountney Smith of Shrewsbury. Pountney Smith built and restored many churches, and also had his own contracting business, whose high standards of craftsmanship may be seen at Downton. The church has a delightful conservatory-like porch with stained glass, and is tiled throughout with the products of Godwin's of Lugwardine. Plain red and black tiling in the nave changes to a decorative encaustic pavement in the chancel, and - unusually - a colourful, mostly geometric tiled dais. A little gem, miles from nowhere.

EASTNOR

Eastnor Castle, dramatically sited at the southern end of the Malvern Hills, was built in 1811-20 by Sir Robert Smirke for the 2nd Baron Somers. Behind the battlements is a lavish interior mostly created for Earl Somers by A. W. N. Pugin and J. G. Crace in 1846 and 1849-50, with some redecoration by G. E. Fox in the 1860s. In particular, the hugely ornate drawing room fireplace (1849), with a painted genealogical tree above it, is lined with Minton tiles bearing Somers heraldic emblems. These strongly coloured tiles were produced by the block-printing process patented by Collins & Reynolds in 1848; Herbert Minton bought an interest in the patent and was able to manufacture this type of tile by the following year, their earliest use appearing to be in the smoking rooms of the Palace of Westminster.²

Down on the village green is a **Well** erected by Lady Henry Somerset (Lady Isabella Caroline Somerset, daughter of the last Earl Somers, who married Lord Henry Somerset in 1872); she devoted her life to temperance work, and was president of the British Women's Temperance Association during 1890-1903. The late nineteenth or early twentieth century well has a brick rear wall with two good terracotta reliefs in Italian Renaissance style, now overpainted. In the north-west corner of the nearby churchyard of **St John the Baptist** is a spectacular seat, probably dating from the same period as the well, with five moulded terracotta relief panels, each measuring about 3' wide by 4' high. These impressive works show the sower, Ceres, an angel, Christ the King, and another angel holding a Christ child, and are said to have been modelled by hand by Lady Henry Somerset (1851-1921). The church itself, which was mostly rebuilt in 1852 by George Gilbert Scott, has two-colour Minton enamelled encaustic tiles in the sanctuary.

HEREFORD

In 1852 William Godwin (1813-83) began making encaustic tiles at Lugwardine, just north-east of Hereford; production was in full flow by 1853, and in 1863 the firm began tile manufacture on an extensive new site at Withington, a few miles east of Lugwardine. Although the fortunes of the firm declined after Godwin's

death in 1883, there was production on the Withington site until 1988; the firm (and its successors) had a complex history, with splits and changes of hands. Almost inevitably local tiles feature strongly in the churches of Hereford and notably in **Hereford Cathedral**, BROAD STREET, for which Godwin of Lugwardine supplied tiles as part of George Gilbert Scott's 1857-63 restoration.³ The floors throughout were laid with Godwin encaustic and enamelled tiles, the chancel pavement being designed by Scott himself. As well as patterned encaustics there are large areas of plain tiling made up from red, green and black tiles; many of the green tiles have lost their glazing, rendering them buff, which does little for the visual quality of the cathedral. Scott's brilliantly colourful metalwork chancel screen, removed in the late 1960s (and now, after conservation, on display at the V&A Museum) would have enlivened the scene considerably.

Just beyond the north end of Broad Street is the HIGH STREET and **All Saints Church**, where the pick of the town's Godwin pavements may be inspected in an unusual setting, as the medieval church was partly rebuilt during 1992-7 to include a café, south gallery and various related offices (in free-standing 'pods') while still retaining all normal parish functions (Fig 92). The new installations, by the Hereford architectural practice Rod Robinson Associates, are brilliantly designed and allow the Godwin chancel pavement to be seen at its best. The encaustic tiles were made and donated by Godwin & Hewitt in 1892-3, and are laid mainly in groups of four (some of sixteen) divided by bands of plain black tiles; there is also a section where the tile groups form chevron shapes. The overall effect is densely patterned, due to the preponderance of buff in the various designs. A few medieval floor tiles survive, found during the 1890s restoration and now mounted in the north chapel.

East of All Saints on ST PETER'S SQUARE is **St Peter's Church** with yet more Godwin tiling, this time donated to the church by William Henry Godwin of Lugwardine in 1885.⁴ The design of the nave and chancel pavements was by Thomas Nicholson (1823-95), the Hereford Diocesan Architect, who was in charge of the 1884-5 restoration of the medieval church. The smaller Godwin pavement in the Lady Chapel dates from 1905. Just south of the church is the **Town Hall** in ST OWEN STREET, designed by the architect Henry Cheers, a specialist in municipal buildings, and erected in 1902-4. The exterior is bursting with baroque yellow terracotta; there are two openwork towers and a hefty canopy over the main entrance. Inside is a superb cream faience staircase and a dark brown relief tiled dado, with vine leaf and grape patterns, which runs through the porch and ground floor; the porch also has a good floor mosaic showing Hereford's arms. Continue south into GREEN STREET to find **St James Church**, built in 1868-9 and again designed by Thomas Nicholson, but burnt out on the 23rd December 1901. The original church had tiling by Godwin of Lugwardine, including both a chancel pavement and a reredos, the latter 'peculiarly rich in colour and harmonious in design'.⁵ After the fire, the church was rebuilt during 1901-3, with colourful tile pavements in chancel and

sanctuary (now partly covered by carpet); William Henry Godwin of Lugwardine supplied the tiles at half-price.

Following the death of William Godwin in 1883, the firm was taken on by his son, William Henry Godwin, and was in competition with the firm set up by Godwin's brother Henry Godwin in 1876, which eventually became Godwin & Hewitt. Both strands of the old Godwin company donated tiles to local churches, William Henry Godwin to St Peter's in 1885 and Godwin & Hewitt to All Saints in 1892-3, probably for a combination of commercial and family reasons. Although Henry Godwin sold out to Hewitt in 1894, it appears William Henry Godwin (a Baptist) still felt moved to generosity in the case of St James in 1901-3, when his business was in decline; he may have felt that charity would be followed by further orders, as was the case with Herbert Minton's donations of tiles to many churches.

HOARWITTHY

Coming upon the Italian Romanesque vision of **St Catherine's Church**, set above the Wye valley, is astonishing; the building was a bare brick chapel before being brought to life by J. P. Seddon in its conversion (which took place around 1874 to 1903) for wealthy local vicar William Poole. The Byzantine interior, inspired by Poole's knowledge of European churches, is rich in marble and mosaics, including mosaic pavements. G. E. Fox had overall responsibility for the interior decoration during the 1880s, but the powerful mosaic of the head of Christ in the semi-domed apse was designed by Ada Currey (1852-1913) for Powell's of Whitefriars in 1893. It took Currey 193 hours to produce the cartoon for this mosaic, which cost £350.⁶

LEDBURY

In Ledbury's HIGH STREET, opposite the Market House, is a handsome **war memorial** commemorating the dead of First and Second World Wars. The stone column was built by King & Co of Hereford and dedicated in 1920; at its base a pedestal, with three mosaics of a soldier, sailor and angel, forms the earlier memorial, while the upper and later section has a hand-painted four-tile panel showing a Biggles-like World War Two flying ace, complete with leather flying jacket, helmet and goggles, and two aircraft in the background. This unusual tile panel may date from the late 1980s. Nearby, on the west side of the High Street, is **St Katherine's Hospital**, whose medieval chapel floor has an impressive range of fourteenth and fifteenth century Malvern tiles mainly arranged in circles surrounded by lettering; some tiles show heraldic motifs or Christian symbols. The hospital, most of which was put up in the early to mid-nineteenth century, also has good Victorian encaustic floor tiling.

LUGWARDINE

It is no surprise to find the products of William Godwin's Lugwardine tile works, founded in 1852 on a site just north of the church, used in and around the village. **St Peter's Church** itself was supplied with a Godwin pavement, probably in the course of its 1871-2 restoration, and in the churchyard is a tomb (dated

1872) with a colourful Godwin glazed encaustic tile set into its headstone. William Godwin lived in Porch House, opposite the church, while his son William Henry Godwin, who probably joined the firm during the 1860s, built two houses on the main road (A4103) midway between Lugwardine and the new works at Withington, two miles to the north-east.⁷ The interior of **The Ferns**, put up in 1870 using polychrome brick with stone dressings and bands of decorative tiling, was embellished with a wild variety of decorative and letter tiles, the latter in all sorts of colourways: white on black, buff on red, white on blue and its reverse; there are also masses of different four-tile groups jammed together higgledy-piggeldy. **Penkelly** (1875) is rather less ornate, although its gateposts bear Godwin glazed encaustic roundels of the Four Seasons (Fig 93). Finally, a sampler floor in the main chapel of **Lugwardine Chapel**, LUMBER ROAD contains around 5,000 Godwin tiles in a huge variety of different designs.

WIGMORE

In the sanctuary of **St James Church** is an important encaustic tile pavement by Chamberlain & Co of Worcester, including several of the designs featured in the firm's first catalogue, which was issued in 1844, along with four-tile panels of the evangelists and another panel dated 1845.

WITHINGTON

Henry Godwin (1828-1910) worked at Maw's in Worcester before joining his brother William Godwin in their tilemaking venture at Lugwardine in the early 1850s. The firm opened a factory at Withington in 1863, and Henry built his villa '**Mayfield**' (no public access) adjoining the site in 1863 or shortly afterwards. The house retains copious amounts of Godwin tiling, including panels on the facade, a complex pavement running throughout most of the ground floor and friezes with many different tile designs. The house seems to have acted as a showroom for the firm's wares.

YAZOR

Part of the exotic and colourful decorative scheme of **St Mary the Virgin Church** (1843-55) is a richly patterned tile pavement in the chancel. The church, which is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, was built for the Price family of the nearby Foxley estate, a few years after the death of Sir Uvedale Price (1747-1829), theorist of the Picturesque.

Herefordshire Roundup

St Lawrence Church, **Canon Pyon** has a Godwin encaustic pavement including an uncommon design in the sanctuary, a four-tile group centred on four hearts within a circular border. A thirteenth century tile depicting a man digging, a 'labour of the month', is one of several medieval tiles relaid on the north wall of St James Church, **Colwall**. The walls of the dairy (c1783) at Berrington Hall (NT), a mile east of **Eye**, are faced with plain tin-glazed tiles bordered by Liverpool printed tiles bearing a Greek key pattern. Restoration of St Mary's Church, **Fownhope** in 1881 involved the laying of an extensive Godwin encaustic

pavement including many decorative four-tile groups, mostly in common designs; there is also a memorial tile dated 1881. At Hergest Croft Gardens, **Kington** there is a De Morgan tiled fire surround in the old dining room (now tea rooms) of the house, which was built from 1895 onward. Unusual terracotta tiles form the chancel pavement of St James Church, **Kinnersley**, restored in 1868; the rich chancel decoration was designed by G. F. Bodley and executed by the incumbent. The Priory Church of St Peter and St Paul, **Leominster** has a small but important collection of medieval floor tiles in a recess at its west end, in the south nave; some tiles bear a lion motif (a pun on the town's name) while other designs are unique to this site. A Powell's opus sectile reredos of the Virgin and child, with flanking panels of glass tiles, was installed in 1912 at St John the Baptist Church, **Whitbourne**.

References

1. Hans van Lemmen, *Delftware Tiles* (Laurence King, London, 1997).
2. Paul Atterbury and Clive Wainwright, *Pugin: A Gothic Passion* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994).
3. *The Builder*, vol 21, 11th July 1863.
4. Margaret A. V. Gill, 'A Munificent Benefaction: Godwin tiles in St Peter's Church, Hereford', *TACS Journal*, 9 (2003), pp24-34.
5. Margaret A. V. Gill, 'Godwin tiles in St James' Church, Hereford', *Glazed Expressions*, (2001) 43, pp5-7.
6. Dennis Hadley, 'Ada Currey (1852-1913): a forgotten artist', *The Journal of Stained Glass*, 24 (2000), pp29-37.
7. Betty Greene, 'The Godwins of Hereford', *TACS Journal*, 1 (1982), pp8-16.