

## ISLE OF MAN

As befits an island with its own government, the prime ceramic locations in the Isle of Man have connections with the Tynwald - the Minton encaustic pavement at the national church - and the Bishop of Sodor and Man, whose former home, Bishops court, has another Minton pavement. Many of the island's churches (which are generally open) have encaustic pavements of lesser importance, but several house lozenge-shaped ceramic memorial tiles dating from around the 1880s. A selection of shops and entertainment venues (the Waterloo Hotel in Douglas is especially striking) rounds off the island's sites, although the most unusual location is St Olave's Church in Ramsey, where two Maw & Co trade tiles form part of the sanctuary pavement, in full view of the congregation. Suggested reading: *The Grand Tour* (Isle of Man Victorian Society).

## BALLAUGH

The sanctuary tile pavement at **Ballaugh Church** (1832, architects Joseph Hansom and Edward Welch) is now hidden by carpet; all that remains is the teasing inscription on the chancel step recording that it was laid by James Daugherty in 1892 in memory of his parents. However, the church, which was restored during 1892-3, still has five lozenge-shaped ceramic memorial tiles, one for a naval officer and four commemorating local clergy, including Rowley Hill (1836-87), Bishop of Sodor and Man from 1877 until his death; Rowley Hill tiles, all of the same basic design, appear in several of the island's churches.

## BISHOPSCOURT

Extensive works were carried out at **Bishops court**, the home of the Bishop of Sodor and Man, during 1854-60 to improve the living accommodation, rebuild the chapel and extend the premises to form a theological school. The Chapel of St Nicholas, consecrated in 1858, has a rich Minton & Co tiling with a buff and brown geometric pavement at the entrance, a sanctuary pavement in red, blue, gold and white encaustics, and the altar dais in red, blue and buff foliate patterned encaustic tiling.<sup>1</sup> The chapel was designated a pro-cathedral around 1895 and served as such until 1980 when the house was sold. Although the chapel is still consecrated, Bishops court is now a private house and there is no public access to the chapel.

## DOUGLAS

Begin in the financial district on PROSPECT HILL, where a distinctive terracotta dragon corbel strikes an unusual pose high on **Kissacks Building**. Originally the dragon was not merely ornamental, but supported a structural member relating to a now-demolished tower. The rear of the building faces ATHOL STREET, where bulky **St George's Chambers**, built in 1898, displays ornate bright red Ruabon terracotta dressings on its complex corner site. Downhill into VICTORIA STREET to find a typical **Burton's** (1928, now Office World), designed by the Leeds architect Harry Wilson, who used Burmantofts white faience for its two-sided corner facade.

Turn north into STRAND STREET, one of the town's main shopping streets (running behind the Promenade), to see the ornate white faience facade of the **Strand Cinema** (1913). This little gem was designed by George K. Timperley of Manchester, who maximised the potential of a very narrow site: a pair of balconies, set one above the other, is flanked by angular, spindly turrets bearing brightly coloured leaded windows. The Strand (its auditorium demolished) now functions as the entrance to Littlewood's, and the change of use has resulted in a slightly characterless appearance. Also in Strand Street is the **Waterloo Hotel**, with an excellent facade of small, grey glazed bricks and green tiling, in which the pub's name is set in black on white ground; similar tiled lettering on the architraves directs customers to the smoke room or vaults (Fig 327). This facade probably dates from the interwar period but could even be 1950s.

Overlooking Douglas Bay from HARRIS PROMENADE is the **Gaiety Theatre**, reconstructed by Frank Matcham from an existing music hall and opened in 1900; there is a mainly geometric pavement in the foyer, while a green and brown relief tiled dado slopes down the auditorium. The dado tiling was made by Minton Hollins & Co and installed by Thomas Quayle, a local monumental mason and tiler. A little further north on CENTRAL PROMENADE is the imposing **Castle Mona Hotel**, built in 1801-4 by George Steuart as a residence for the Duke of Atholl and bearing four round heraldic Coade plaques. Nearby on the promenade is the **Crescent Leisure Centre**, designed by the local architects Lomas & Barrett in 1930 as the Crescent Cinema and again faced with sparkling white classical Burmantofts faience. Finally, above the town centre is the **Manx Museum and Art Gallery** on CRELLINS HILL. It was built in 1886-7 as Noble's Isle of Man Hospital, using Ruabon bricks supplied by J. C. Edwards; the architects were Cubbon & Bleakey of Birkenhead. At its side entrance is a pretty little encaustic and geometric tile pavement; this was part of the original building, although the mosaic section bearing the Museum's name was inserted in 1922 when the building was converted to its present use. Above this colourful pavement the entrance is marked by a terracotta archway topped by the Manx arms.

#### LAXEY

On NEW ROAD, within sight of the great wheel and near the Manx Electric Railway Station, is a former butcher's shop, originally part of the Laxey Industrial Co-operative Society premises (Fig 328). It is decorated inside and out with mainly plain blue and white tiles, although pictorial tiling in the open porch shows a good bull's head within a blue wreath. The manufacturer of the tiles, which date from around 1920, was probably J. & W. Wade of Burslem.

#### PEEL

**Paradise & Gell**, MICHAEL STREET has an ornate red terracotta facade, with a pair of lion heads on its parapet; the shop was designed by the Ramsey architect J. T. Boyde. **St German's Cathedral**, TYNWALD ROAD, was built in 1879-84 (architects

T. D. Barry & Son of Liverpool), although it was awarded cathedral status only in 1980; the sanctuary has a complex encaustic tiled pavement by Maw & Co.

#### RAMSEY

There are two most unusual tiles in the sanctuary pavement of **St Olave's Church**, BOWRING ROAD, North Ramsey: a pair Maw & Co trade tiles, about six feet apart and set directly in front of the altar. These 2" square plain tiles, one black, one dark brown, are both marked 'Maw & Co Broseley' in low relief, and lie within an encaustic and geometric pavement which includes several repeats of a fleur-de-lys design encaustic tile. Although it is not unknown for trade tiles to appear in a church, the position in the sanctuary is most peculiar. The church was built in 1861-2 (architect M. P. Manning of London), although it was not consecrated until 1881; there is also a memorial tile to Bishop Rowley Hill.

**St Paul's Church** (1818-22) stands in the MARKET PLACE at the centre of Ramsey. It has a Minton Hollins (trading as Minton & Co) encaustic tiled pavement (1884) in its sanctuary, the design including an alpha and omega, symbols of the four evangelists, and another symbol now hidden by carpet; there is also a tiled pavement around the font, at the rear of the church.

#### ST JOHN'S

The **Royal Chapel of St John the Baptist** is the national church, used for the annual Tynwald Ceremony every July. It was built in 1847-9 and designed by the Manchester architect Richard Lane (1795-1880); the island's records confirm that Minton's encaustic tiles were supplied for this prestigious location.<sup>2</sup> The designs, many of which come from Minton's first catalogue, include symbols of the four evangelists and a pelican in its piety in the sanctuary pavement, while the chancel pavement has groups of four and nine decorative encaustic tiles separated by diagonals of plain black tiles.

#### Isle of Man Roundup

Tony Brown Electrics (formerly Cubbons'), 5 Arbory Street, **Castletown** has a pair of amber-tiled stall risers with strong lettering in brown. In **Port St Mary** High Street the lustrous black tiled facade of the former chemist's (now Dorian Hill Classic Cars) probably dates from the 1930s, while Corrin's butcher's shop has a fully tiled interior by Carter's of Poole with a coloured relief pattern frieze (possibly 1890s); its doorway mosaic reads T. Clague.

#### References

1. *Manx Sun*, 4th September 1858.
2. Manx Society, 'Records of the Tynwald and St John's Chapels', 19 (1858).