

STAFFORDSHIRE

Staffordshire is a county of great scenic contrasts, from the rolling moorlands of the north to the urban dreariness of the south, and - in between - the Potteries, the cradle of the ceramics industry. It is also the county of Minton and Pugin: St Giles Church, Cheadle, is the country's outstanding example of Pugin's medieval vision of modern worship. Although Minton's were pre-eminent, there were many other tile (rather than terracotta) producers based in Stoke-on-Trent, including Johnson's, Richard's and Wooliscroft's. However, despite this multitude of tile producers, these products at their creative peak are generally found *in situ* elsewhere in the country, in the great cities which Staffordshire lacks. Exceptions to this rule are those churches to which Herbert Minton donated tiles during the 1840s and 1850s; these early encaustic tile church pavements are a tribute to the inventiveness of the factory's artists and designers. Minton's own Hartshill Church, of course, is one of the best examples. This idiosyncratic county has also retained, in its southern sprawl, numerous ceramic pubs, their survival a testament to the lack of development of these areas, although Wolverhampton's excellent Elephant and Castle, with faience by Burmantofts, was demolished in March 2001 (Fig 240). Other outstanding sites in the county are the Wedgwood Institute, Burslem, the outcome of early enthusiasm for terracotta, which sadly set no local precedents; Lichfield Cathedral, Trentham Church and Wightwick Manor, the latter a supreme display of hand-made tiles, quite different from anything else Staffordshire has to offer. Suggested reading: TACS Tour Notes *Cheadle* (1984), *East Staffordshire* (2001), *Lichfield* (1991), *Stoke-on-Trent* (2000) and *Wightwick* (1986); Lynn Pearson, *Cumming Report: Minton Tiles in the Churches of Staffordshire* (TACS, 2000); Lynn Pearson, 'Memorial and commemorative tiles in nineteenth and early twentieth century churches', *TACS Journal*, 9 (2002); and Alan Swale, 'The Terracotta of the Wedgwood Institute, Burslem', *TACS Journal*, 2 (1987), pp21-7. The *Gazetteer* entry for Staffordshire covers the administrative areas of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and Wolverhampton City Council.

ALTON

Beyond the parish church in the gothic paradise of Alton is the **Hospital of St John** and St John's Chapel, now the R. C. Church of St John; its little north chapel (1840-2) has a pavement of Minton encaustic tiles decorated with emblems of the Earl of Shrewsbury, its founder (Fig 241). A. W. N. Pugin was the architect of the Hospital, a term then used in the medieval sense to describe an almshouse with communal facilities such as the chapel. Pugin described the Hospital tiles in a letter to Shrewsbury dating from December 1841: 'The tiles produce a most glorious effect and are certainly a cheap decoration. The floor of the hospital is exceedingly rich and most durable'. The cost was just under £34.¹ Across the moat from the Hospital is **Alton Castle**, also designed by Pugin for the Earl, on

which work began in 1844. The steeply-pitched roof of its chapel is clad in yellow and green ceramic tiles, specially requested by Pugin from Herbert Minton, who was asked to experiment with the production of coloured roofing tiles. By autumn 1848 Minton had succeeded, and Pugin wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury saying 'Minton has perfectly succeeded with the tiles....and I have ordered them for the chapel'.² This was the only building where Pugin used coloured tiles to make a patterned roof. Since 1996 the Castle has been run by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham as a residential youth centre, and the chapel roof has been restored with coloured tiles replicating the Minton originals.³

ARMITAGE

In this odd industrial village - home of Armitage ceramic sanitary ware - and perched above the Trent, stands the neo-Norman **St John's Church**, built in 1844-7 by the architect Henry Ward of Stafford to replace a genuine Norman building. Herbert Minton made three separate donations of tiles to the church during 1845-7, and the result is a spectacular but gloomy interior. The tiling is elaborate: in the chancel is a large Latin cross composed of roundels of the evangelists, while the main nave aisle has a mass of different geometric designs - many from Minton's first printed catalogue of 1842 - along with an unusual knotted design of border tile. There are also blue, buff and black fleur-de-lys tiles in the sanctuary.

AUDLEY

The **Church of St James** dates from around 1300 and was partially rebuilt by Gilbert Scott in 1846-7, with restoration continuing until 1856. It is an imposing structure which occupies a good vantage point, with views from the churchyard stretching back towards Newcastle. There are tiles throughout the church, resulting from four donations of tiles by Herbert Minton around 1846-54. The nave aisle tiles have been completely carpeted over, and the real ceramic interest lies in the sanctuary; its steps have tiled risers with lettering in white on blue ground. The sanctuary pavement combines tiles with four fleur-de-lys on each, in blue and brown, with a variety of designs showing symbols of Christ, the Passion Cycle and the Resurrection. The reredos has a vine leaf border, then the basic pattern is a tile with a single fleur-de-lys, on red or green ground, alternating diagonally with red and green blanks. The overall impression is one of great richness.

BLITHFIELD

The medieval church of **St Leonard's** lies deep in Blithfield Park and immediately north of Blithfield Hall, home of the Bagot family for 600 years. Its chancel was restored by Pugin in 1851 and Herbert Minton donated the chancel pavement in July 1852. The chancel roof was constructed to a Pugin design which supposedly recreated the thirteenth-century roof, and the east window also followed the exact pattern of the original. The tradition that Pugin reproduced faithfully what was there before does not seem to extend to the tiling, which is far from lavish, although there are colourful Pugin-style red, buff

and blue patterned tiles bordering the altar. Most strange, however, are the fleur-de-lys floor tiles in which ragged ventilation holes seem to form an intrinsic part of the design. It is difficult to say whether these holes were formed at the factory, and the tiles made specifically for ventilation purposes, or whether the tiles were pierced at a later date.

BREWOOD

The tall spire of **St Mary and St Chad** looks over the little town of Brewood ('Brood' to the natives) and out towards the Shropshire border. The expansive Godwin encaustic tile pavement was probably installed in the parish church around 1860-70; it is at its most attractive in the chancel, where a tide of decorative tiling laps around four substantial alabaster monuments to the Giffards of nearby Chillington Hall. Brewood was the centre of a strongly Catholic area, and **St Mary's R. C. Church** was built on the edge of the town by A. W. N. Pugin in 1844; it has a Minton encaustic tile pavement in its chancel and north aisle.

BROOKHOUSES

On the south side of THE GREEN (A521) in Brookhouses, on the western edge of Cheadle, stands the **Huntsman** pub, both its gable ends boasting impressive tiled panels showing rural scenes with a red-coated huntsman and his hounds (Fig 242). The expressions of the dogs in the larger of the pair, on the west side of the pub, are particularly well captured, while the glaze on the brown-framed, tube-lined panels has unusually rich combinations of colours. They probably date from between the wars, but the manufacturer is unknown; perhaps they were locally produced.

CHEADLE

On CHAPEL STREET, wedged into the tightly-knit back alleys of Cheadle, is A. W. N. Pugin's awesome **St Giles R. C. Church**, a revelatory vision of colour, decoration and delight (Fig 243). For Pugin, who was received into the Catholic Church in 1835, the structure of a church was religion in built form, and the intent behind St Giles was to produce a modern version of a fourteenth-century country parish church.⁴ The true church - pre-reformation Catholicism - would thus be housed in its true home, a Gothic church. His patron was John Talbot, sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury and the leading Catholic layman of the time, whose seat lay a few miles to the east at Alton Towers; Pugin began work there on a banqueting hall and chapel in 1837. The church itself was built in 1841-6, part of the multitudinous decorations on its soaring steeple being twin Talbot hounds; below it are the striking west doors, each bearing the family symbol, a golden lion within a scalloped border on bright red ground.

Inside the church, all is colour, ornament and pattern, from the encaustic tiles, which cover the entire floor area as well as the nave dados, to the gilded and painted roof. Work began on the interior decoration in 1844, and Pugin himself was responsible for the design of many of the church furnishings, including the majority of the tiles, which were manufactured by Minton's. The

tile pavement, ornate even at the west end where it includes several inscriptions, increases in complexity and lavishness to culminate in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament with its golden reredos of printed and painted tiles. The nave, porch and west tower floor tiles are all two-coloured encaustics (buff and red or buff and black) while those further east are multi-coloured; these latter are undoubtedly by Pugin. The tile designs used in the main body of the church appear in Minton's first printed catalogue of 1842, thus it might be argued that no direct connection exists between Pugin and these tiles. However, it appears likely that at least some of the nave designs were by Pugin's hand, including the Talbot symbol tile, number five in the 1842 catalogue.⁵

In sum, St Giles is a very English church; it was built by local men using local materials, all in the service of the only true church. With all its colour and richness, it was too English for the mid nineteenth-century Roman tradition of Catholicism; ironically, its influence - in architectural terms - weighed most heavily on the Church of England. As to its tiles, which saw Pugin's designs progress from the use of medieval motifs to a more individualistic and colourful approach, one can only echo the words of the future Cardinal Newman, overwhelmed by the sumptuous Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament at St Giles: 'This is the gate of heaven'.⁶

CHURCH LEIGH

The rebuilding of **All Saints Church** was completed in 1846 by the architect Thomas Johnson of Lichfield; the reconstruction was funded mainly by Richard Bagot of Blithfield, Bishop of Oxford (later Bishop of Bath and Wells) and former rector of All Saints. Another member of the Bagot family was the incumbent at the time of the rebuilding. The floor tiles, which run throughout the lofty church and have been attributed to Pugin, were donated by Herbert Minton in 1845; he also donated the reredos in 1851 (Fig 244). The aisles display repeats of common four-tile groups interspersed with single tiles showing an attractive griffin, while around the font are roundels decorated with the image of a pelican in her piety. The splendidly colourful chancel pavement comprises repeats of Richard Bagot's coat of arms as Bishop of Oxford; his arms lie within a frame including a bishop's mitre, and show a delightful picture of three medieval maidens in the dexter chief. In the rather less decorative sanctuary are tiles with the letters 'RB' and the bishop's mitre. The reredos is made up of moulded buff terracotta in a pattern of hexagonal and triangular pieces; the centres of the hexagons are overpainted in gold. This style of reredos is very similar to that produced soon after 1845 by Minton for St Stephen's in Westminster, and was based on the decoration of St Dunstan's shrine at Canterbury Cathedral.⁷

COTTON

Deep in the moorlands to the north of Alton lies another element in Pugin's Gothic transformation of Staffordshire. **Cotton College** originated as Cotton Hall, given to the Brothers of the Will of God (a band of Anglican priests who had converted to Catholicism) as a place of respite by the Earl of Shrewsbury in

1846. Pugin extended the buildings, erecting St Wilfrid's Chapel in 1846-8; its decoration includes Pugin-designed Minton tiles. The Brothers did not stay long at Cotton, eventually becoming absorbed in the Birmingham Oratory, and the site became a school in 1868.

DILHORNE

The sanctuary of thirteenth-century **All Saints Church** has a fine display of early Minton encaustic tiles donated by Herbert Minton to the church in 1851. Along with many familiar four-tile patterns from the firm's first printed catalogue of 1842 are roundels of the evangelists, altogether making an attractive sanctuary pavement.

ELFORD

Apart from its tower, **St Peter's Church** was rebuilt by Anthony Salvin in 1848-9; the south aisle and chapel were rebuilt by Street in 1869-70. Salvin's objective was to restore the church to its fourteenth century appearance. The nave aisles have unusual line-impressed tiles in buff or black with a circular relief pattern. These are described in a contemporary account of the church, which relates that Salvin:

'paved the floor with the buff and chocolate-coloured tiles, ancient specimens of which, arranged in the pattern carefully reproduced in the new pavement, had been discovered under the brick floor. These tiles, made by Messrs Minton, of Stoke-upon-Trent, have the advantage of being *indented*, instead of glazed, and so are much less slippery than the ordinary Church tiles.'⁸

Herbert Minton gave tiles to the church in April 1849, although it is not clear which tiles comprised the donation. At the east end of the centre aisle is a very ornate panel with roundels of the four evangelists in atypical frames, while the sanctuary is striking: the pavement is of blue and yellow tiles with a small star design, and the reredos is of moulded grey hexagonal terracotta tiles. These are partly painted in red and gold, with red and gold lettering above; this is very like the reredos at Church Leigh. Altogether this is a most unusual decorative scheme.

HEDNESFORD

There are two sites of ceramic interest in this little ex-colliery town, the first being a former Maypole Dairy, now **Images of Beauty** hair salon, in the HIGH STREET. Inside is a 24-tile Pilkington's panel showing dancers whirling around a maypole, typical of the panels used in Maypole shops during the 1920s-30s and which were probably painted by T. F. Evans.⁹ The panels were not all exactly alike, but the differences between them - which involved the type of maypole, the dress of the dancers, and the house and church in the background - were minor, not enough to identify the panels with an individual town. Not far away is **94 Market Street** where an unusual encaustic tile panel may be seen, apparently set in place of a window, on a wall of a house with startling polychromatic brickwork. In the centre of the panel is a good reproduction of the

Royal arms; although there is no date, this probably commemorates a Royal event, perhaps the coronation of George V in 1910 (or even his popular Silver Jubilee in 1935).

ILAM

The village of Ilam, in beautiful Dovedale, was bought in the early nineteenth century by a wealthy manufacturer, Jesse Watts Russell. He rebuilt Ilam Hall in 1821-6 then added the spiky, octagonal memorial chapel (commemorating his father-in-law) to the **Church of the Holy Cross** in 1831. George Gilbert Scott thoroughly restored the church in 1855-6, adding the encaustic tile pavement in the chancel; there are also four majolica memorial tablets, with dates ranging from 1867 to 1878, on an inside wall. These lozenge-shaped ceramic plaques seem to have become popular towards the end of the 1860s and are found chiefly in Staffordshire and, to a lesser extent, Derbyshire. In the graveyard are several headstones incorporating single tiles, all probably by Godwin or Minton. They are a colourful collection, although some are becoming worn, while the grave of James Slaney, died 1874, has its own memorial plaque similar to those inside the church.

KNIGHTLEY

The odd little white-brick **Christ Church** was built in 1840-1 by Thomas Trubshaw, although its chancel was added in 1882 by Nicholas Joyce; it has a good tiled chancel pavement and east wall.

LEEK

The architect Richard Norman Shaw said that **All Saints Church**, which he built in 1885-7, was 'the best and most satisfactory piece of work I have ever had done'.¹⁰ The church is long and low with a spacious interior, the decorative emphasis being on the chancel with its huge painted reredos; the partnership of architect and artists (including the Leek School of Embroidery) made this a crucial building in the history of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The ceramic interest here is relatively small, but unusual: a tiled memorial panel dating from 1902, made by Wooliscroft's and commemorating a member of the Wooliscroft family. Also notable is the terrace of houses (1877) immediately north of the church, which has some unusual terracotta decoration.

LICHFIELD

There is much to see in **Lichfield Cathedral**, which is fortunate in possessing important floor tiling schemes from both medieval and Victorian periods, as well as the most unusual hand-painted wall tiles of Bishop Selwyn's tomb. The most impressive medieval tiles are on the floor of the Library, which is an elongated octagon on the first floor above the Chapter House; this stands to the north-east of the crossing, but is not normally open to the public. The Library was built around 1246 and the tiles are thought to be c1290, the majority of the floor being as originally laid. The tiles are in a symmetrical arrangement of longitudinal bands, groups of patterned tiles alternating with plain red and black glazed tiles; a few tiles have some of their clear lead glaze still intact.¹¹

Lichfield Cathedral suffered severe damage during the Civil War and this may help to explain the poor survival of medieval tiles elsewhere in the building. Such medieval tiles as do remain are now mostly in the Consistory Court (south-east of the crossing). There are both line impressed and inlaid fourteenth-century tiles, although most are worn beyond recognition. They have been reset into an arrangement with Victorian red and black quarries; in the south-west corner of the room are several trade tiles impressed 'W Godwin Hereford', while a few large black tiles of Staffordshire coal complete this intriguing miscellany. George Gilbert Scott began major restoration work at the Cathedral in 1856, and the present floor of the Consistory Court probably dates from the very active period of work between 1856 and 1861. Scott was impressed with the quality of Godwin products and also used them in the restoration of Hereford Cathedral in 1857.¹²

But in the gloom of the choir is the complex pavement which presents the most spectacular display of Victorian floor tiles at Lichfield (Fig 245). A donation of tiles was made by Minton's to the Cathedral during its restoration, which ceased in 1861.¹³ A contemporary account attributes all the choir tiles to Minton, claiming that their patterns are copied from ancient examples found in the Cathedral; there is certainly a similarity between the design of the line impressed tiles in the Consistory Court, and those in the choir pavement.¹⁴ However, *The Builder* reported in 1862 that the incised pavement just west of the altar rail was by Clayton & Bell, a firm often associated with Scott but better known for its stained glass and general decorative schemes; it is possible that they had some supervisory role in the chancel's renovation.¹⁵ In addition, it is known that the area of pavement in front of the high altar, depicting biblical scenes, was given by Colin Minton Campbell, who continued Minton's china business after the death of Herbert Minton in 1858. This would suggest that the date of the gift of tiles to the Cathedral was the late 1850s or very soon after, following the death of Herbert Minton.

The overall design of the complex tile and stone pavement is almost certainly by Scott, who produced plans for the choir in 1857-8, immediately prior to its excavation.¹⁶ There are geometric and patterned encaustic tiles of a very elaborate nature, with inlaid medallions showing kings, bishops and scenes from the history of the diocese. Here, too, are bands of marble and large roundels of white stone inlaid with black mastic using the champlevé technique. This was developed in the Pas-de-Calais region of northern France in the second quarter of the thirteenth century; a resinous mastic composition is used to fill depressions or channels carved to form a design in a stone tile.

Last in the Cathedral's astounding array of tilework is Bishop Selwyn's Tomb, the middle of three tiny chapels to the south of the Lady Chapel (Fig 246). The Minton Hollins wall tiling of 1878 - hand-painted in overglaze enamels - in this confined space displays an unusual use of Victorian pictorial tiles.¹⁷ The two panels showing Staffordshire miners in a pithead scene and Maoris are a tribute to Bishop Selwyn's work and links with both Staffordshire and New Zealand.

George Augustus Selwyn (1809-78) became bishop of New Zealand in 1841, and was a great influence on the development of the colonial church; he became bishop of Lichfield in 1868. Selwyn College, Cambridge, was erected in his memory and his life is memorialised by ceramic plaques found in churches throughout Staffordshire.

In the city beyond the Cathedral is **Lichfield Library**, THE FRIARY, home to a stone fireplace from the original Tudor friary, which is decorated with blue and white seventeenth (possibly eighteenth) century Dutch tiles. Gregory Stonynge built a brick house on part of the site of the medieval Lichfield Friary about 1545; it had an elaborate fireplace ornamented with his name and other decoration. The fireplace was incorporated into the Friary School during the 1920s, and is now resident in the Children's Library. The tiles, which are somewhat battered, show street and working scenes, mainly centred on a single figure. In the entrance hall of the Library is a ceramic mosaic panel depicting a bull's head; this was reconstructed at a smaller scale than at its original location as a stall riser of a butchers shop in Tamworth Street.

MEERBROOK

Up in the north of the county, the little village of Meerbrook lies in the lee of the grim, millstone-grit Roaches, beside the Tittesworth Reservoir. The interior of **St Matthew's Church** is more cheering; the church was built in 1868-73 by Norman Shaw, and its chancel decoration, which includes a colourful Hispano-Moorish style east wall dado of cuenca tiles, dates from around 1870. The tiles, which feature different colour glazes run into depressions separated from each other by small moulded ridges, have a distinctive palette including orange, green, blue and brown, all on a white background. The bold, four-tile pattern stretches the entire width of the dado and is topped by a frieze also using cuenca tiles, but here with a floral motif; the tiles have a plastic clay (rather than dust-pressed) body. Cuenca tiles appeared to become fashionable as church furnishings during the 1870s despite their non-Christian origins, although Moorish craftsmen certainly decorated many Christian churches in Spain. Shaw was an enthusiastic user of these tiles as he liked their handmade look and feel. They were produced by several of the larger manufacturers, but the Meerbrook tiles were probably made by Frederick Garrard of London, whose products were often used by Shaw.

NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME

In ceramic terms, there is one outstanding site in this rather anonymous town, and that is **St George's Church**, QUEEN STREET. St George's was built as a Commissioner's Church in 1828 and was designed by Francis Bedford. Everything in this magnificent building seems to be on a large scale, from the height of the vaulted roof to the size of the organ, and it is tiled throughout, from west porch to sanctuary. Herbert Minton donated tiles to the church in 1854, although some of the tiles must have been re-sited or replaced, as the chancel was extended into the easternmost bay of the nave in 1879-81. The central aisle

has an Escher-like border, in which reversed triangles of light and dark tiles almost induce an optical illusion. From the crossing eastward the tiling becomes more decorative, and the choir pavement is articulated by crossed bands enclosing nine-tile groups; at each crossing point is a fleur-de-lys tile. The tiles are notable by their sheer number and extent, and the use of general decorative motifs rather than the specific Christian symbols which appear in several nearby churches to which Minton donated tiles. Altogether, this is a very unspoilt example of Minton tiling in an unusual church. There is another encaustic tile pavement in the town, east of the centre at **St Paul's Church**, VICTORIA ROAD, which was built in 1905-8 and is tiled throughout. The tiles in the large, open interior probably originated from one of the three concerns spawned by Herbert Minton's firm: Minton Hollins & Co, Mintons China Works and the Campbell Brick & Tile Co.

OLDBURY

Outwardly, the **Waggon & Horses PH** in CHURCH STREET is just an ordinary - even rather dull - turn of the century pub, its red brick facade topped by a gable with a little buff terracotta decoration. However, its interior is richly tiled, using a combination of pale yellow, green and brown relief patterned tiles; in addition, the tile mosaic pavement still remains. No flashy picture panels or individualised tiles specific to the pub, but this is a good, relatively unspoilt example of an urban pub interior from around 1900.

PENSNETT

In the midst of the grim cross which passes for urban townscape west of Dudley, the setting of **St Mark's Church** is stunning, high on a hill in lush parkland with views all around. The church is reached either from VICARAGE LANE or through the park and then the churchyard, a mini-necropolis clambering up the steep hillside; the occupants include several chest tomb-type graves of black glazed brick, rather like massive black baths. This substantial, splendidly High Victorian church - known as the 'Cathedral of the Black Country' - was built in 1846-9 by John Macduff Derick (c1805-59), a relatively unimportant church architect from Ireland. He was a professional adviser to the Oxford Architectural Society, founded in 1839 by Oxford University undergraduates, many of whom later joined the ranks of the clergy; Derick probably obtained the Pensnett commission through these contacts.¹⁸ The cost of the large, stone church was £6,700, which was provided by its patron, Lord Dudley. The extravagantly decorated chancel - *The Ecclesiologist* criticised St Mark's 'needless profusion of ornament' - was originally intended to contain the family pew.¹⁹ Herbert Minton donated tiles for the church in 1849, and the well-preserved chancel tiles remain; there are also tiles around the font. Given the size and general grandeur of the church, the sanctuary tiles are a little disappointing, with no designs unique to the church, either letter or symbolic tiles. Altogether it is a rich if rather anonymous display, one which resulted, perhaps, from there being no personal connection between Minton and the church or its benefactor.

SMETHWICK

The **Waterloo Hotel**, SHIRELAND ROAD was built in 1907 as a flagship pub for the brewers Mitchells & Butlers, whose Cape Hill brewery stood less than half a mile away. The design was by the West Bromwich architects Wood & Kendrick, who built several Birmingham pubs for Mitchells & Butlers in the early 1900s. Behind the Edwardian baroque exterior, which includes good buff and red terracotta ornament, is a real ceramic heaven, with the public bar, hall and grill room all faced in Carter's tiles. The public bar has three green-tiled walls with a pink and cream frieze beneath a blue and cream-tiled ceiling, but much more memorable is the basement grill room, with its tiled, coffered ceiling and green-tiled walls around which floats a frieze of tube-lined galleons. The original cast iron grill is still in use, and the pub has also retained its tiled toilets with original Twyford's urinals.²⁰

STAFFORD

Right at the very centre of Stafford is the **Collegiate Church of St Mary**, in ST MARY'S GATE. The church originated about 1190, and was extensively restored by George Gilbert Scott in 1842-4; this was one of his earliest church restorations, a commission which he obtained through his friendship with Thomas Stevens, the curate of Keele. Although Scott felt that 'a more careful restoration...never was made', his attempt to replicate the thirteenth-century appearance of the church caused much controversy. It seems he was not as satisfied with the interior of the church as with the exterior. He stated that 'the fittings of St Mary's were not very successful', but it is unclear whether this remark includes the tilework, to which much attention was paid, especially in the sanctuary.²¹ The tiles were donated by Herbert Minton in 1844, and a contemporary report on the re-opening of the church describes the interior as follows:

'The greatest attraction among the internal decorations is the floor of the chancel, which is of magnificent encaustic tiles, gradually increasing in richness as they approach the eastern end. The portion of the east wall below the window is encased with still richer tiles enclosing different religious symbolical devices in gold, upon blue and other grounds. The designs, execution, and arrangement of these tiles is truly admirable - they are the work of Mr H. Minton, of Stoke-upon-Trent, by whom a large proportion of them has been munificently presented to the church.'²²

It is indeed a wonderful display; the tile pavement covers the three broad steps leading to the sanctuary and the sanctuary itself, while there is also a gorgeous tiled reredos with gold symbols on mainly light blue grounds.

Ceramic attractions elsewhere in Stafford are rather thin on the ground, but include the massive bulk of the **Shire Hall**, now an art gallery, which dominates MARKET SQUARE. This Classical pile was built by John Harvey in 1795-9 and shelters a pair of elegantly draped Coade stone wenchers within its pediment. They were modelled by J. C. F. Rossi, who worked for the Coades before leaving to start his own artificial stone business; the figures represent

justice and mercy.²³ In the main shopping street, GREENGATE STREET, is **Burton's**, whose 1930s Classical white faience facade, probably Hathernware, turns a corner with elegance and ease. West of the town, less than a mile along Newport Road, is CASTLECHURCH, where **St Mary's Castle Church** lies below the remains of the nineteenth-century reconstruction of a medieval castle. Apart from its tower, the medieval church was pulled down and rebuilt by George Gilbert Scott in 1844-45, work beginning before his reconstruction of St Mary's in the centre of Stafford was complete. There is elaborate patterned Minton tile pavement throughout the tower, nave, aisles, chancel and sanctuary, with an east wall dado including gold letter tiles forming an inscription. The whole is similar in style to the tiling in the Collegiate Church of St Mary, although rather less lavish.

STOKE-ON-TRENT

Following the federation of Burslem, Fenton, Hanley, Longton, Stoke and Tunstall in 1910, Stoke-on-Trent became a city in 1925. However, this administrative fact has made little difference to the visitor's experience of the six towns. Busy roads criss-cross the hills which the collection of towns occupy, with Hanley (the uppermost) as the nominal city centre. There are several unique buildings in this low-density, low-rise city, and the gazetteer concentrates on the more substantial sites, although porch tile panels and indeed other small-scale ceramic detail can - unsurprisingly - be found throughout Stoke-on-Trent.

Burslem

The bright red brick and buff terracotta of the **Wedgwood Memorial Institute** materialised into the smoke-blackened gloom of Burslem in 1869, although its complete repertoire of external decoration was not fully revealed until 1872 (Fig 247).²⁴ The QUEEN STREET building, now a public library, was conceived with the intention of promoting the constructional use of terracotta, and was designed as a combination of library, museum and art school. Its original plan was by G. B. Nichols, although the facade was the result of a later competition, held to encourage the use of decorative ceramics and won by Robert Edgar and John Lockwood Kipling. The eventual result of this protracted design process was a remarkable building, wilfully ornate with beautifully modelled decoration including a series of figures representing the months of the year.

The first pieces of terracotta for the facade of the two-storey building were produced by Blanchard & Co of Blackfriars, London, in 1866. In fact, Blanchards went on to manufacture all the Institute terracotta apart from the ten high-relief buff terracotta panels depicting the processes involved in pottery manufacture; these were provided by John Marriott Blashfield of Stamford, Lincolnshire. All modelling of the figurative panels was carried out by Rowland Morris, a Burslem man, although the design of the 'pottery process' panels was by Matthew Elden, a former Stoke School of Art student. The Institute, completed after tortuous delays, also displays a statue of Josiah Wedgwood, modelled by Morris and fired by Blanchard's.²⁵ The entire facade repays study; cats pursue birds through the terracotta foliage between windows, while the porch is tremendously ornate,

using locally-produced tiles as well as terracotta. A success, then, as a building, but a failure in terms of the prime ambitions of its begetters: encouraging local production of terracotta and its wider use as a building material; although the latter did eventually come to pass, the Institute was not crucial to its development.

Just north of Queen Street is the imposing red brick and terracotta facade of the late Victorian **Liberal Club** (now offices) at 28 MARKET PLACE; its Dutch gable is topped by a colourful mosaic panel. Inside, the Snooker Room is completely tiled above dado level, but unfortunately the tiles - which include panels with floral designs - have been totally overpainted.

Half a mile east of Burslem's centre, on MOORLAND ROAD (opposite **Burslem Park** with its terracotta water fountain), is **Haywood House**, built in 1886-7 as the Howard and Richard Haywood Hospital following an endowment of £30,000 for the 'sick poor of Burslem' in Howard Haywood's will of 1875. The brothers Haywood owned a brick and tile factory at Brownhills in Burslem. Their hospital was expanded in 1891 and 1907, then relocated to a new site in 1930.²⁶ After proposals for its demolition, the original hospital building, complete with central pediment depicting the Haywood coat of arms in red terracotta, was taken over by the Burslem Community Development Trust during the 1990s. Inside is an unusual 70-tile monochrome brown panel measuring 5' by 3'6", set within a yellow-glazed moulded frame; it shows Jesus surrounded by children, beneath an arch inscribed 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not'. The panel was made by the Burslem firm Malkin, Edge & Co around the end of the nineteenth century, and painted by Frederic J. Harper, a local artist, teacher and shopkeeper; it won first prize in the Davis Testimonial Competition. The significance of the competition is lost to us now, but happily the panel has been rescued and restored, with the addition of new edging tiles donated by H. & R. Johnson.

At the end of Moorland Road is a complex junction where HANLEY ROAD leads off southward; the entrance to **Burslem Cemetery** is on the west side of Hanley Road. In the centre of the wooded burial ground is a small chapel, with encaustic tiling over its door, and just beyond is the dramatic - albeit rather battered - dark green Doulton faience tomb of Thomas Hulm (1830-1905) of Longport. Hulm was organist of Burslem Sunday School for forty years, chairman of the school board for ten years, and a member of Staffordshire County Council; *He loved Burslem* reads one of its many inscriptions. This tomb, a rare survivor from a fairly small number of Doultonware memorials, was sculpted by John Broad and is unusually ornate; although its crowning urn has vanished there are reliefs of local buildings and even an upstanding angel holding what appears to be a musical instrument. It is, however, in poor condition and appears vulnerable (Fig 248).²⁷

Fenton

Fenton **Town Hall** (1888-9), in ALBERT SQUARE, has a tiled entrance hall; inside nearby **Fenton Library** (1905-7), GLEBEDALE ROAD, is much art deco tiling.

Hanley

In tune with Stoke-on-Trent's diffused nature, the ceramic attractions in its city centre, Hanley, are scattered widely. Beginning with the main shopping area, in STAFFORD STREET is a mid-1960s C&A store (now **Wilkinson's**) with an attractive full-height exterior ceramic panel, its abstract design based on squares (Fig 249). This little-noticed panel is composed of 6" surface-textured tiles in a variety of muted tones, mainly greens, purples and blues, some with geometric reliefs. The mural is unusual because it is one of the few surviving installations produced by Malkin Tiles; at least one of the motifs is from their 'Turinese' range marketed during 1961-8 and designed by Leonard Gladstone King, Malkin's art director.²⁸ Malkin's worked with H. & R. Johnson from 1964 before formally becoming a part of the company in 1968.

Just east at 1 UPPER MARKET SQUARE is the **NatWest Bank**; inside, at the top of the escalators, is a brick relief entitled *Hanley Girl* by Walter Ritchie. It shows a languid female figure holding back a Staffordshire bull terrier, and was executed in 1976 using 10" handmade Shepshed bricks. Continue north across the ring road to OLD TOWN ROAD and the **Golden Cup** public house with its excellent 1912 ceramic facade. The basic dark green faience is enlivened by the words 'Bass Only' on the fascia, a cup and the pub name on a panel at first floor level, and lifebelt-style Bass symbols below the two front windows. The manufacturers of these facades are notoriously difficult to identify, but this one could well be the work of the Campbell Tile Co.

In WELLINGTON ROAD, a quarter mile east of the ring road, is **Hanley St Luke's Church of England Aided Primary School**, a pair of uniquely tiled buildings put up in 1893 for the Hanley School Board, although the original Infant School is now in non-school use. The two large halls and seventeen classrooms have lavish wall tiling by Minton Hollins, remarkable both for its extent and its variety. There are over fifty different tile designs, ranging from stylised foliage and geometric motifs to birds and cherubs, the colour palette being a generally muted combination of browns, buff and cream. Within the dados are large panels of single tile designs, almost giving the impression of extracts from a manufacturer's catalogue. Despite much of the tiling in the Junior School being overpainted (four dado panels were revealed by a TACS working party in July 2002), the buildings are unusually complete, with good stained glass complementing the tilework.²⁹ The tiles play such a significant role in the life of the school that in the late 1990s the pupils were inspired to design and make two of their own multi-tile panels, colourfully depicting local scenes, which were fired by H. & R. Johnson's and mounted on the playground wall.

Back in Hanley's centre, running south from Stafford Street is PICCADILLY and the white faience Art Deco facade of the **Regent Theatre**, built in 1929 as a cinema for Provincial Cinematograph Theatres Limited; its architect was W. E.

Trent. The well preserved faience, maker unknown, includes the letters 'PCT' and the cinema's name along with masks of comedy and tragedy. The cinema closed in 1989 but was lavishly transformed into a theatre, re-opening in 1999. To its rear in ALBION STREET is the **Victoria Hall**, where a circular hand-made tile mural was installed in 2003. The mosaic-style mural was the work of community artist Philip Hardaker and local schoolchildren, and colourfully depicts Stoke's creative and cultural activities. MARSH STREET runs north of Piccadilly, and at its junction with TRINITY STREET is **Telephone Buildings** (now a bar), built around 1900 as a telephone exchange with ornate terracotta detailing including floral motifs and lettering; the architect was L. A. S. Stokes. The interior decoration includes Minton Hollins wall tiling in the entrance foyer and stairwell. Southward beyond Piccadilly is Broad Street, where the striking brick and terracotta frieze which proclaims the presence of the **Potteries Museum & Art Gallery**, BETHESDA STREET comes into view (Fig 250). The frieze, ranging from pale buff to dark red in colour, was designed by the potter and sculptor Frank Maurier and installed in 1980; it runs across most of the Bethesda Street frontage and depicts work in the pottery industry, from mining clay to firing in bottle ovens.³⁰

Continuing down Broad Street, the tower of **St Mark's Church**, SNOW HILL, Shelton, beckons; it is a church full of ceramic interest, belied by its stark exterior (Fig 251). St Mark's was one of the 'Waterloo' churches, built in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars to cater for the large number of people who had moved to new centres of industry in search of work. The ceremonial laying of the foundation stones, on St Mark's Day 1831 - 25th April - was accompanied by a display of ceramic tiles, two porcelain, one in ironstone, and one of earthenware, made at the pottery of Hicks, Meigh & Johnson in Broad Street. Each bore an inscription relating to the church and the dignitary laying the stone, and they were intended to be placed in niches beneath the four corner stones. However, one of the porcelain tiles escaped burial and has been preserved by the church. It shows a view of Shelton with Cliff Ville, the seat of John Tomlinson, patron of the church, in the distance. Clay dug from the foundations was used to produce items of pottery made by John Simpson at Dimmock's Pottery, and one of these jars is also retained by the church.³¹

The church, designed by the architect John Oates, was completed in 1834 and was one of the largest in the diocese, originally seating 2,100; it later underwent extensive alterations, including the rebuilding of the chancel in 1866-7. The sanctuary has a tiled floor by Minton & Co with several memorial plaques, including a small one to 'William Ireland choir boy' and another unusually decorative example to Bishop Selwyn of Lichfield. The three mainly gold pictorial mosaics on the front of the altar were the gift of Mary Ann Boothman in memory of her father Edward Duncan Boothman, vicar during the 1895 improvements.

But the glory of the church is its stunning reredos in the form of a massive Douulton terracotta triptych, a masterwork by George Tinworth. Its central panel, depicting *The Crucifixion*, measures 5' by 10' and weighs 1.25 tonnes; it is supported on steel girders and dates from 1896. The two side panels, each measuring 7' by 3', were added in 1902 and illustrate *The Visit of the Wise Men* and *The Visit of the Shepherds*. A smaller low relief panel by Tinworth entitled *The Holy Family in Egypt* can be seen in the Lady Chapel; this dates from 1899. The central triptych panel was unveiled in 1897, as part of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, while the side panels may commemorate the coronation of Edward VIII.³² The sheer size and undoubted complexity of the reredos make it extremely unusual, as does the fact that it remains in the setting for which it was designed. It has been overpainted in grey, giving it a strange, dour appearance; the triptych is certainly staggering, but visually is somewhat unappealing.

Tiled porch panels are everywhere in Stoke-on-Trent, but those in the substantial late Victorian terrace of **The Parkway** (opposite HANLEY PARK and about half a mile east of St Mark's) are rather better than run-of-the-mill since they include picture panels as well as patterned tiling, along with paving tiles. The full height porch tiling has an inset low-relief deep yellow panel above the dado, showing a woman dancing in front of a shell-shaped niche; the immediately adjoining porch displays a complementary panel of slightly different design. The tiles were manufactured at the Minton Hollins Patent Tile Works, which included one of the panel designs in their 1903 catalogue.

Finally, on the western edge of Hanley in what remains of Etruria is the **Wesleyan Methodist Chapel** (1820), ETRURIA OLD ROAD. Inside is a substantial brown and white glazed ceramic wall memorial to James Mainwaring (d1891). The central panel of this unusual memorial is a relief bust of Mainwaring in brown faience; to either side are descriptive panels and above is a segmental section. The ornate classical frame, in white faience, features urns, ionic pilasters and an angel below.

Longton

Almost under the railway bridge in the cramped centre of Longton is the **Crown Hotel**, KING STREET, whose impressive and colourful porch tiles may be by Gibbons Hinton, or could even be of American origin; the designs include vivid golden-yellow sunflowers. Across TIMES SQUARE is the **Town Hall**, whose grand staircase has a green-tiled dado; immediately behind is the airy **Market Hall** and an unusual clock (1877) with an encaustic-tiled face. Leave the market by the TRANSPORT LANE exit to find a small block of 1970s **public conveniences** faced with Carter's industrial tiling and made to stand out from the dreary surroundings with a dark green geometric pattern on white ground; these relief tiles were designed by Ivor Kamlish. Turn right into the **Bennett Precinct** (1965) where a colourful 1994 tile panel by Kenneth Potts shows a Spitfire in full flight (Fig 252); it commemorates the aeroplane's designer, local man R. J. Mitchell (1895-1937).

To the south is the **Longton Centre**, formerly the Sutherland Institute, in LIGHTWOOD ROAD (Fig 253). The red-brick pile was built in 1897-9 by local architects Wood & Hutchings, and has a fine salmon-pink high-relief terracotta frieze stretching across its facade. This dates from 1908-9 and its subjects, not surprisingly, are the pottery and mining industries; it includes a total of 28 labouring workers centred on an enthroned figure.

Even further south on Lightwood Road is the junction with UPPER BELGRAVE ROAD; the **Church of the Holy Evangelist**, Normacot, is a quarter mile along (Fig 254). The little church was built in 1846-7 by George Gilbert Scott at the expense of the Duke of Sutherland. Herbert Minton donated the tiles, comprising a sanctuary pavement with fleur-de-lys tiles and evangelist roundels, and two coats of arms in the pavement at the rear of the nave. The arms, in buff and red encaustic tiles, are dated 1846 and 1847, and are those of the Duke of Sutherland and the Earl of Lichfield; they face the north doorway in what was originally the aisle between banks of pews.

A mile or so to the west in Blurton is **St Bartholomew's Church**, CHURCH ROAD; although there is now no sign of the tiles donated to the church by Herbert Minton in 1851, there is a fine collection of highly-glazed 12" square memorial tiles forming a dado on the south wall.

Stoke

Trekking beneath the tracks at **Stoke-on-Trent Railway Station** is made immensely more attractive by the colourful tube-lined majolica murals beckoning the passenger at either end of the subway (Fig 255). They were installed in 1994 and were the result of a creative partnership between the railway company, local organisations including schools and the council, and H. & R. Johnson's, who produced the murals at their Highgate Tile Factory, Tunstall. The lively designs, featuring trains and all manner of Stoke people and places, were by artist Elizabeth Kayley in collaboration with local children.³³

Opposite the station in STATION ROAD is the **North Stafford Hotel**, where the abrupt tiled sign for 'Lavatory' points downstairs into a handsome fully-tiled Art Nouveau gent's, probably dating from the turn of the century; the scheme, mainly in green and white, runs down the stairs and throughout the toilets (Fig 256). The hotel itself, a Tudorbethan expression of railway self-confidence, opened a year after the station in 1849, and both were designed for the North Staffordshire Railway Company by architect H. A. Hunt of London. The pair define an exceptional station square, now blighted by continuous cross-traffic. The hotel was such a success that it was extended in 1878, and it later starred as the *Five Towns Hotel* in an Arnold Bennett novel, probably around the time that the gent's tiling was installed.³⁴ The remains of the **Minton Hollins & Co** factory, now converted to offices, can be found west of the station by the roundabout in SHELTON OLD ROAD. It was built soon after 1869 for Michael Daintry Hollins by the architect Charles Lynam, who incorporated the radical principle of linear production in its design.³⁵ The factory was also intended as a showpiece and

included a museum as well as being decorated with the firm's wares; although only a small part of the original extensive building complex is extant, several panels of encaustic tiles - tiny vertical geometric pavements - can still be seen on the facade.

The parish church of **St Peter ad Vincula** lies south of Stoke's centre in GLEBE STREET; it was built close to the site of its medieval predecessor in 1826-30. It was the first of the new nineteenth-century churches in the Potteries and was supported by many enthusiastic subscribers; the interior, renovated in 1888, is impressively colourful, with much visual interest (Fig 257). It is notable for the sheer quantity of its memorial wall tiles, commemorating parishioners and others connected in some way with Stoke, which form a dado around the nave. These tiles were first installed in 1859 by the rector, Sir Lovelace Tomlinson Stamer (1829-1908), grandson of John Tomlinson, patron of St Mark's Church, Shelton; this is the earliest known use of such memorial tiles. Stamer, whose uncle had been the previous rector, took up the Stoke living in January 1858 and moved to Stoke in March 1858; he remained at Stoke until 1892. He may have attended the funeral of Herbert Minton, who died on the 1st April 1858 and was buried at nearby Hartshill Church. There may have been wall memorial tiles at Hartshill Church, but there is no evidence on this point as the church was burnt out in 1872 (although rebuilt shortly afterwards). If memorial wall tiles were present at Hartshill, that may have been the source of Sir Lovelace Tomlinson Stamer's decision to introduce them at St Peter ad Vincula.³⁶

Although some tiles have been removed from the south wall of the nave, 289 memorial tiles still remain at St Peter; a few are upright rectangles, but most are the typical lozenge shape, mainly in cream with red lettering. They date generally from the 1860s and 1880s, but some are as late as 1908. Occasional tiles are more decorative, for instance with a green floral band around the edge. The tiles were overpainted but have been cleaned and are now described in the church guidebook as being 'of some rarity and historic value'. Amongst the tiles at the rear of the church is an olive-green faience memorial plaque including two high-relief figures; this dates from around 1903. There is also an attractive tile pavement in the sanctuary, with many differing patterns and some unusual mauve tiles as well as striking armorials; there are several memorial tiles set in the floor, including at least two to members of the Stamer family, buried beneath. Out in the churchyard, near the tomb of Josiah Wedgwood, is a Gaudiesque blue ceramic bench installed to mark the Queen's Jubilee in 2000. Its design, by artists Helen Sayer, Philip Hardaker and Edgar Ruddock, was based on ideas suggested by local schoolchildren; the images, which include the footballer Stanley Matthews, relate to St Peter's and to Stoke's industrial history.

Across Glebe Street, the old entrance to **Stoke-on-Trent Civic Centre** (formerly Stoke Town Hall) has good wall tiling and an imposing Boer War ceramic memorial panel of 1904 with a pronounced green faience frame. A little further south in LONDON ROAD is **Stoke Library**, purpose-built by the architect

Charles Lynam in 1878. His innovative design featured a series of large, porthole-like windows with tile panels above and a continuous frieze of windows beneath the eaves. The tile panels, which show flowers in urns, are now very faded, making the building appear shabby; venture inside, however, and the basement - originally the Reading Room - is a revelation. Beneath the wallpaper, its walls turn out to be tiled with a near-comprehensive collection of the various, mostly twelve-tile, pictorial series produced by the prolific designer John Moyr Smith, who worked for both Minton & Co and Minton Hollins. Although only a few picture tiles are currently visible, there are probably about two hundred of them hidden in this fascinating room, which is now a toy library but may once have served as a canteen for council workers.

HARTSHILL ROAD leads westward and upward from Stoke's centre to Hartshill and Herbert Minton's **Holy Trinity Church**, its hilltop spire a landmark for miles around (Fig 258). Minton also paid for the adjoining parsonage and school, and a group of houses near the church, as well as giving land for the churchyard. MINTON STREET runs to the rear of the church, which was designed in mid-1841 by George Gilbert Scott, and built in 1842. Much of the detailing, including the square-ended chancel, was taken - apparently at Minton's insistence - from Lichfield Cathedral. Colin Minton Campbell rebuilt the chancel in memory of his uncle, probably in 1862, but the church was almost entirely burnt out in 1872. It was then restored by Scott on much the same lines as his 1841 design, albeit with a longer apsidal chancel and a south chapel (Fig 259). Most of the chancel tilework, therefore, dates from 1862 or - rather more likely - 1872, although Holy Trinity's nave pavement is entirely original. Many of the nave designs appear in Minton's *Earliest Pattern Book*, itself a forerunner of Minton's first printed catalogue of 1842.³⁷

Altogether it is an astounding ceramic display: tiles are everywhere, right from the little vestry by the north entrance to the remarkable chancel, and on the walls as well the floor (Fig 260). Beginning in the chancel, the east end wall, almost hidden by the altar, turns out to have vividly coloured, highly glazed tiles in a diagonal arrangement. It includes the twin bird design in buff on red ground, with yellow enamel over the inlay; these are by Minton & Co. The altar dais riser has letter tiles in red and buff: 'Do this in remembrance of me'. On the south wall, twin sedilia are set on highly glazed deep red tiling delineated with black bands. The surprisingly plain sanctuary pavement comprises black bands delineating green, buff and red geometric patterns. The choir is much more decorative, mixing buff and red patterned tiles with plain tiles in green and buff; in the centre of the choir is a lozenge-shaped memorial tile to Herbert Minton, who is buried beneath.

At the head of the nave is a large square of ornate buff and red designs including some armorial tiles. The entire nave floor is tiled using a huge variety of red and buff designs displaying much Christian symbolism. In the side aisles are four-tile groups including the rose window, but these aisles are dominated

visually by the brilliantly glossy wall tiling, comprising a frieze of ornate memorial tiles above a largely red dado, the latter partly of the same design as the sedilia tiling in the chancel. The memorial tiles, added by Robert Minton Taylor from 1872 onward, are much more colourful and complex than those of St Peter ad Vincula in Stoke, leading to the suggestion that they were used initially at St Peter's; however, it is impossible to come to a firm conclusion on this point as there is no evidence concerning the existence of memorial tiles at Hartshill prior to the 1872 fire.

Finally, in this breathtaking array, at the west end of the nave are tiles showing delicate fish within undulating lines, representing waves; the fish are in both black and buff, and are so detailed that their scales are visible. These are of a later date than the main nave pavement, probably 1872, and were manufactured by the Campbell Brick and Tile Co. It is unfortunate that Holy Trinity, a monument to Minton and the industry he did so much to create, remains so little-known. Normally locked, as with most urban churches, its exterior gives no indication of the ceramic wealth inside. The interior is a revelation.

Cross Hartshill Road, and heading towards Penkhull along QUEEN'S ROAD we find **Ceram Research**, built in 1947-50 as a research centre for the former British Ceramic Research Association. The lobby of this stripped Classical structure has very unusual large-scale cream relief cushion-style tiles within framed borders. There is also an encaustic tiled panel probably made by H. & R. Johnson around 1980, similar to those used in the refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster. In the centre of Penkhull, in the square off NEWCASTLE LANE, is the **Church of St Thomas**. It was built by Scott & Moffat in 1842, largely at the expense of Herbert Minton's brother, the Reverend Thomas Webb Minton. The incumbent was Samuel Minton, son of Thomas and nephew of Herbert Minton, who donated tiles for the church in 1845 and paid off the debt which Samuel had incurred during its construction. The tiling, in the choir and sanctuary, is unusual although relatively small in area (Fig 261). Large panels of an agnus dei and a pelican in her piety dominate the choir, while a series of small, sky-blue tiles bearing symbols of the Passion Cycle lie across the sanctuary. Behind the altar - and presumably intended to be seen by the incumbent alone - is a design which appears to be unique: a white, octagonal star-shaped tile showing a golden chalice. The tiling has been restored by the Heritage Tiling & Restoration Company.

Tunstall

Stoke-on-Trent's northern outpost is marked by its rather Germanic **Clock Tower**, which dominates the smaller-scale buildings beside it in TOWER SQUARE. The tower, erected in 1893 in commemoration of the local Smith Child family, is basically an octagonal column clad in buff terracotta; it is topped by a bellcote and carries large clock faces. Just east is the **Town Hall**, which has a good encaustic tiled floor. To the north on HIGH STREET is the **NatWest Bank** (ex-Manchester and Liverpool District Bank), a fine towered corner building in

ornate buff terracotta, dating from 1899; next door is **Barclay's** (ex-Bank Chambers), built in 1893 and displaying a series of double-height bay windows faced in a slightly paler - but just as ornate - terracotta.

About half a mile south-west of Tunstall's centre is the HAREWOOD STREET works of **H. & R. Johnson Tiles Limited**, opened in 2002. In the foyer of the office block is a colourful 10' by 12' tile mural designed by interior design students Andrew Cheung and Alex Forster, winners of a 2001 competition to create a design for the site.

STONE

A substantial Catholic settlement was founded in Stone in the mid-nineteenth century, its various buildings standing on the corner of MARGARET STREET and the High Street. There is a large, towerless church, built in 1852-4 and dedicated to the **Immaculate Conception and St Dominic**, as well as a small chapel designed by A. W. N. Pugin in the garden of the convent. This is an example of the very simple type of church Pugin planned for newly-founded missions. St Dominic itself has a Minton sanctuary pavement, partly of plain tiles in buff or black but with additional blue, buff and black tiles displaying the initials 'SD' twice over. There is also a small Minton pavement near the chapel. An excellent array of Minton encaustic tiles may be found in **St Michael's Church**, CHURCH STREET, where symbols of the Passion Cycle are incorporated into an unusual chevron arrangement.

TAMWORTH

The local terracotta manufacturers, Gibbs & Canning, produced the faience facade of the **Tamworth Cooperative Society** building on COLEHILL, as well as its colourful tiled entrance and stairs.

Glascote

St George's Church, BAMFORD STREET was designed by the architect Basil Champneys and built in 1880 of brick with an interior including much (now largely overpainted) Gibbs & Canning brownish-red terracotta. This was donated by C. Canning, who gave the church £150 and terracotta worth a further £100. North across Bamford Street is **Glascote Cemetery**, where there are two terracotta memorials, one of which - a miniature Albert Memorial in style - was erected around 1902 by Gibbs & Canning workmen in memory of one of their fellows.

TRENTHAM

The **Church of St Mary and All Saints** was built by the architect Sir Charles Barry in 1842-4, soon after his completion of the adjacent and palatial Trentham Park, erected in 1833-42 for the second Duke of Sutherland and largely demolished in 1910-12. The Duke of Sutherland's visit to Minton's Works, then in the charge of Herbert's father Thomas Minton, led to the Duke and Duchess becoming enthusiastic patrons of Herbert Minton's products, and Minton donated tiles for the nave, aisles and chancel of Trentham Church in 1844 (Fig 262). The church is approached from the main road, where a hulking mausoleum

reminds the visitor of the lost empire of the Sutherlands. Beyond is a dramatic bridge, and then the little church set amongst Italianate remains of some grandeur, both sad and magical. Behind its anonymous exterior, the church exhibits a spectacular array of tiling. There are floor tiles (some now covered by carpet), memorial wall tiles and even a large Doulton terracotta panel by George Tinworth, dating from 1885, which is a memorial to the fourth Duke of Sutherland (Fig 263).

In the Sutherland Chapel, the floor is of glazed tiles with very vibrant colours; the decorations appear to date from 1870, and the floor tiles have been attributed to Minton Hollins & Co. Here two distinct pattern elements repeat alternately, a coat of arms and a set of initials, while the border has a rose and thistle design. The sanctuary tiles, a striking combination of black, buff and red designs, include the Sutherland coat of arms, while in the choir are some memorial floor tiles, including one to the apparently ubiquitous Bishop Selwyn. The central nave aisle has some large memorial specimens; the most easterly, next to the chancel, is dedicated to Herbert Minton. Completing this sumptuous display is a frieze of highly glazed memorial tiles on the north wall, installed (at least partially) by 'Mr Minton's workmen' on the 22nd October 1860; this includes some uplifting lettering on its borders.³⁸ With the decorative elements of the church saved from its predecessor on the site, including a startling rood screen, the whole is pure delight.

WALSALL

The short twentieth century, as Eric Hobsbawm defined it, did not do much for the urban fabric of Walsall. Its centre became just another extrusion of identical facades from the sausage machine of corporate design, while good new architecture was rare. Gone was the confidence which saw the opening of the **Institute of Science and Technology** (now School of Art), BRADFORD PLACE, in 1888. On either side of the main gable, above lashings of ornate buff terracotta, stand the bear and ragged staff, Walsall's crest. This substantial building looks down on a typical turn-of-the-century pub, the **Tavern in the Town** (now 2 Toes), in BRADFORD STREET. It has an elaborate brown, green and yellow faience facade, probably by Burmantofts, with unusual scalloped sections in the ceiling of both porches, which presumably would have taken light fittings. If the ordinary pubs of the town were colourful, then so were the everyday offices: close by in BRIDGE STREET, both **Imperial Buildings** and **King's Court** (built in 1904) have tiled dados throughout ground and first floors, with the tiling in Imperial Buildings being especially elegant as it curves serenely up the stairwell. Also in Bridge Street, **Tudor House** (1926, architects Jeffries & Shipley) has an interesting Gibbs & Canning grey terracotta facade with much low relief decoration including Tudor roses.

But after years of relative decline, Walsall has a new image, and it is clad in grey terracotta tiles: the **New Art Gallery**. This monumental building, which overlooks the canal from GALLERY SQUARE, right in the town centre, was

commissioned by the local council and funded by the national lottery; it opened in early 2000 and houses the Garman Ryan Collection as well as community facilities. Its architects, Caruso St John, clad the exterior with large terracotta panels in subtle grey tones, the panels being bolted to the inner skin of the building and diminishing in size towards the top. The effect is very cool, more like 1960s ribbed concrete or even wood shingles than traditional terracotta, but appealing, especially when viewed across the canal in winter gloom. The reflection dissolves the stark structure, leaving only bands of light floating on the water. And Walsall's sudden enthusiasm for the shock of the new has not stopped with the New Art Gallery; in 1999 the bus station was transformed into a dramatic soaring space roofed by a visitation of flying saucers, resting awhile on spindly white stalks. These are surely the iconic concrete mushrooms of Frank Lloyd Wright's Johnson Wax Building, revived by the organic architecture of the new millennium. Welcome to Walsall.

WALTON-ON-THE-HILL

The **Church of St Thomas**, Berkswich, in the parish of Walton-on-the-Hill, is about two miles south-east of the centre of Stafford; it stands just off the A513, a little way beyond its junction with the A34 at Weeping Cross. The church was originally a chapel of ease, built in 1842 by Thomas Trubshaw, and Herbert Minton donated of tiles for its altar space in 1844. The interior displays an excellent range of tiles, including many designs from Minton's first printed catalogue of 1842; the chancel tiles are particularly lavish and colourful. There are several memorials to the Levett family of nearby Milford Hall, whose initials can also be found in unusual blue and buff tiles.

WEDNESBURY

The *Shell Guide* called Wednesbury a 'shapeless, straggling town' while Pevsner described its art gallery as 'funny', but do not be deterred. **Richards Art Gallery** (1890-1, architects Wood & Kendrick), at the end of a row of substantial public buildings on the HOLYHEAD ROAD, turns out to have a striking and unusual facade dotted with busts and relief portraits by Doulton's George Tinworth. Just east is the former **Science School** (1896) with an ornate terracotta facade, and further along is the ex-**Birmingham Gas Board** offices (1899, by Wednesbury architects Joynson Brothers) with more terracotta decoration. Turn south into BRIDGE STREET to find the **Coachmakers** pub, with a fine dark brown Doulton faience facade featuring a colourful 28-tile panel on which an upstanding beefeater advertises Woodhall's Old English Ales (Fig 264). Samuel Woodhall's was a West Bromwich brewery active between the 1870s and the 1930s; the tile panel, which is in poor condition, probably dates from around 1910. Minton's also designed tile panels for Woodhall's, although probably at a later date.³⁹ Then north to the MARKET PLACE and the old **Talbot Hotel**, built in 1879 with yet another interesting terracotta facade; a further half a mile or so northward is the **Horse & Jockey** on WOOD GREEN ROAD, with a terrific art nouveau glazed ceramic bar counter in green, white and shades of brown.

WEST BROMWICH

The main ceramic interest in West Bromwich lies west of the market area, on the HIGH STREET. First in a series of memorable facades is the former offices of **Kendrick & Jefferson**, an 1883 structure fairly dripping with pinky-red terracotta detailing. Next is **Sandwell Central Library**, whose monumental classical facade hides one of the most spectacular interiors in the Midlands, or further afield for that matter (Fig 265). Once through the grand ionic portico, the visitor is transported to a pristine world of faience and mosaic, resulting from a 1993 renovation of this Carnegie Library, designed by the little-known Birmingham architect Stephen J. Holliday and opened in 1907. The foyer is lined with glistening pale green and yellow faience, some in relief designs, which stretches up the curving stairway and along the first floor gallery; chunky, brightly coloured ceramic mosaics are set into the faience. Borrowers pass beneath a ceramic lintel as they enter the library proper, itself lined to dado level with faience, which also covers the supporting columns; the whole effect is bright and airy, if rather surprising for a library.

Next door to the Library is the **Town Hall** (1874-5, architects Alexander & Henman of Stockton-on-Tees), its germanic tower a landmark amongst the clutch of civic buildings at the western end of the High Street. A rather dull, albeit patterned, Maw & Co encaustic tile pavement runs throughout its ground floor.⁴⁰ A more decorative tile pavement can be found across LODGE ROAD at the **West Bromwich Institute**, built in 1886 and designed by West Bromwich architects Wood & Kendrick, best known for their ornate turn-of-the-century Birmingham pubs. The institute's tudorbethan exterior is richly ornamented with dark red terracotta.

At the northern end of the High Street on CARTERS GREEN stands the **Farley Clock Tower**, unfortunately now overlooking a grim road junction (Fig 266). This red brick gothic tower was built in 1897 and bears a series of pinky-red terracotta relief panels, signed A. Hopkins, which show local buildings - the Town Hall and sixteenth-century Oak House - and a bearded gentleman. This is, in fact, Alderman Reuben Farley, three times mayor of West Bromwich. He saved the Oak House from decay, employing Wood & Kendrick to oversee its restoration, and in 1898 presented the building to the town for use as a museum.

Well to the east of central West Bromwich, the **Hawthorns Metro Station**, HALFORD'S LANE, has decorative red terracotta tiling (1998) by David Mackie set into the north platform retaining wall. The tiles have a relief of leaves and appropriate lettering in six designs: palmate, pinnate, cordate, truncate, ovate and needle. The theme relates to the variety of trees planted along the Metro tracks, and the manufacturer was Istock Cattybrook (Bristol).

WHITMORE

The medieval church of **St Mary and All Saints** was restored and partly rebuilt around 1880, leaving its interior very much a testament to late Victorian taste. Unusually, a glazed tile dado runs throughout the church, and in addition there

is a tiled reredos; all this is probably by Minton Hollins & Co, given that there is a Hollins family connection with the church. The little estate village is attractive, with only a tree-lined avenue separating the church from Whitmore Hall, home of the Mainwaring family, who are commemorated by several monuments inside the church.

WOLVERHAMPTON

We begin in the densely-packed centre at LICHFIELD STREET, where the University of Wolverhampton now inhabits the old **Post Office** building, a three-storey mass of brick encrusted with pale buff terracotta by Dennis, Ruabon. It was completed in 1898 by Sir Henry Tanner of the Office of Works, an architect responsible for many post offices. The string courses are very thin, emphasising the bright, pinkish-red colour of the immaculate brick facade. Decorative terracotta detail includes several Classical motifs in crisply modelled reliefs, seen most conspicuously on the imposing, heavily ornate entrance. Further west on Lichfield Street is the **Posada**, a pub with an excellent faience facade in the form of a single curving bay; it also sports the pub name in vertical lettering on pilasters in the twin porches. Almost opposite is **St Peter's Church**, set back from Lichfield Street in ST PETER'S CLOSE; at the rear of the church, set on a wall above the stairs, are six memorial tablets of the 1860s and 1870s, five typical lozenge-shaped plaques and one smaller, glazed square tablet in green and white. Returning eastward, on the corner of Lichfield Street and STAFFORD STREET is the **Royal London Building**, built in 1902, with three interesting blue and buff relief terracotta plaques by Carters above the entrance; their maker's mark and date has been incised into the base of the plaques, where it can still be seen clearly. Across Stafford Street, the **Hogshead** (ex-Vine) and the old **Drill Hall** both display unusual amounts of terracotta enrichment, notably on the pub's pilasters.

Broad Street leads from Stafford Street towards the infernal ring road, but as the traffic looms ahead we reach the junction with FRYER STREET and **Amar House**; its completely improbable interior was probably designed as a showroom for the hardware merchants John Shaw & Sons. Through arches, up stairs and around corners, highly glazed cream and yellow faience with delicate sky blue floral relief panels make a spectacular scheme which looks very Burmantofts and probably dates from around 1890, when the Leeds firm is known to have supplied Shaw's with ceramics for their Wolverhampton premises (Fig 267).⁴¹

South of the city centre in SKINNER STREET is the former **Odeon Cinema** (1937, architect P. J. Price of the Harry Weedon practice, now Mecca Bingo) which still retains its unusually colourful finned facade with faience in black, red, green and cream. Further south in SNOW HILL is the **Central Library**, completed in 1902 and designed by the architect Henry T. Hare, who specialised in public buildings. Built from bright red brick and buff Doulton terracotta, the greatest mass of the latter is employed at ground floor level, where it serves to form the massive corner entrance. Above is a terracotta frieze including the royal and municipal arms, while at first floor level terracotta panels bear the names of

prominent authors. Far outside the northern bounds of the dual carriageway on CANNOCK ROAD is the **Waggon & Horses**, a 1950s pub with a large tile panel of the waggon and two white horses above its front entrance.

But away from the centre, two star attractions lie far out in the western suburbs of Wolverhampton; the first is **Wightwick Manor** (NT), temple of the Arts and Crafts movement, standing just off the Bridgnorth Road at WIGHTWICK BANK. Wightwick Manor was built for the industrialist Samuel Theodore Mander, partner in a varnish and paint manufacturing concern. It was erected in two phases, the main house in 1887 and the east wing six years later; both were by Edward Ould of Liverpool, an ex-pupil of John Douglas of Chester, grand protagonist of the half-timbered revival. It is therefore no surprise to find that Wightwick's exterior is emphatically black and white neo-Tudor; indeed, Girouard describes the 1893 extension (built to cater for house parties) as 'an anthology of half-timbering'.⁴² While the external appearance was intended to reflect the style of the early sixteenth century, the internal decoration is a Victorian vision of early seventeenth century taste, full of pattern and artistic eclecticism. Morris & Company and C. E. Kempe are particularly well represented in this Old English interior.

At the time the Manor was built there was a fashion, particularly among the artistic middle-classes, to decry the mass-produced tiles of the Staffordshire potteries in favour of the products of craft workshops, such as William De Morgan's designs and hand-made tiles imported from Holland.⁴³ The largest range of Dutch tiles was available from Thomas Elsley's shop in London. Elsley was primarily an iron and brassfounder, but at some time during the 1880s he acquired the rights to a range of Dutch tiles previously marketed by Marks & Durlacher Brothers. Elsley's catalogue showed fireplaces, tiled and untiled, and nearly one hundred Dutch hand-painted tiles in both 5" and 6" sizes. The domestic market in Holland would have had no requirement for the larger size, which was made specifically for export, to fit British cast-iron grates. The tiles in Elsley's catalogue are a mixture of traditional Dutch designs and those inspired or commissioned by the British Arts and Crafts Movement. There is no firm evidence that the Dutch tiles at Wightwick were obtained from Elsley, although all but two of them appear in his catalogue.⁴⁴

The fireplaces throughout the house include not only the well-known tiles by William de Morgan, but also other good quality English and Dutch wares. Best known of the William De Morgan tiles are those set in the Italian Renaissance chimneypiece of the drawing room.⁴⁵ They are the potter's typical fantastic animals, the forms of which, in an Oxford fireplace, are said to have inspired the characters in Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*. De Morgan tiles are also found in a bedroom, its adjoining boudoir, the morning room and possibly the hall, where the plain green oblong tiles arranged in a chevron pattern in the fireplace may also be De Morgan's work. Tiles in the library fireplace, one of Maw & Co's Anglo-Persian patterns, also show his influence.

The inglenook fireplace in the Billiard Room is furnished with Dutch tiles with a design derived from Morris's *Daisy* pattern; however, this version is certainly Dutch, and was probably made by either Ravesteijn of Utrecht or Tjallingii of Harlingen. The majority of the fireplaces contain Dutch tiles illustrated in the Elsley catalogue.⁴⁶ Although the tiles in themselves are exceptional, the essence of the Wightwick experience is the overall vision, the expression of contemporary taste through furnishings and decoration, a very English pastime.

Finally to **St Bartholomew's Church**, CHURCH HILL, PENN; the steep hill allows an unexpected and welcome view of open country to the south. Although this medieval but much-altered church was presented with a reredos by Herbert Minton in 1851, the only surviving tiling is the sanctuary pavement. The lower part has a fish design in buff on red ground along with smaller, triangular, buff and green tiles. The upper area provides a real puzzle: here is a large and attractive group of picture tiles, clearly five of the Minton designs copied from the Westminster Abbey Chapter House floor. In Minton's first printed catalogue they are numbered 14-18 and show St Edward the Confessor giving his ring to a beggar, an abbot, King Henry III, Queen Eleanor holding her falcon, and two minstrels. The tiles were originally laid in the sanctuary, but were moved to the vestry following alterations in 1871, then relaid in the sanctuary in 1928. These tiles pose several questions: could they have been an unrecorded donation to the church by Herbert Minton, or were they simply purchased from Minton's? When were they installed? Were the designs chosen (by Minton or the purchaser) because of the association of the name Penn Church with the medieval tiler at Penn in Buckinghamshire? And what was the design of the Minton reredos, lost when the chancel was extended in 1871? There appear to be no archival sources which can provide information on these matters, so Penn Church remains an enigma.

Staffordshire Round-Up

There is rich terracotta decoration (including a nicely moulded cherub) on the facade of the former Technical School, Mount Pleasant, **Bilston**, while the town's otherwise anodyne 1960s Jobcentre, High Street, has an excellent exterior panel packed with references to the local steel industry; it appears to be made mainly of sculpted brick. A mile east of **Cheadle** on the B5417 is the Les Oakes architectural salvage centre, where several buildings erected in the 1980s and 1990s include substantial rescued terracotta panels and ornament. In remote **Gratwich**, the tiny Church of St Mary has an impressive display of tiles donated by Herbert Minton; motifs include the Latin cross and evangelist roundels. The choir vestry, beneath the tower of St Werburgh's Church, **Hanbury**, has colourful 1883 Minton tiling showing symbols of the Passion Cycle. Dunwood Hall (1871, architect Robert Scrivener), **Longsdon**, was built for Thomas Hulme, a partner in the Burslem pottery of James Macintyre & Co; its double-height galleried hall has an elaborate and extensive Minton encaustic tile pavement. St John's Church,

Marchington Woodlands has a brightly coloured sanctuary pavement, again donated by Minton; it was laid on the diagonal. Inside **Patshull Church** (SJ801006, access by footpath only) is an unusual 1863 wall memorial, an elongated diamond-shaped buff encaustic tile set within a colourful Minton majolica garland of flowers and topped by white dove; the tile pavement is by Maw & Co (Fig 268). A pair of unusual, highly-glazed tile panels decorate the east wall of St John the Baptist, **Stowe-by-Chartley**; the panels, and also the sanctuary pavement, are probably by Colin Minton Campbell. St John's Church, **Tixall**, was built for the Hon. John Chetwynd Talbot in 1848-9, with the intention that it should eventually become his mausoleum; the Minton floor tiles include a group of nine different specials (mainly monograms) at the nave crossing which commemorate the consecration of the church in 1849. The 1877 chancel of St Mary the Virgin, **Uttoxeter**, has an oddly coloured glazed encaustic tiled reredos by Maw & Co, including an image of Judas and symbols of the Passion Cycle (Fig 269). St Peter's Church, **Yoxall**, restored by the architect Henry Woodyer in 1865-8, has a patterned Minton encaustic tile pavement in the sanctuary.⁴⁷

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