

## SURREY

Surrey is a county with its own reserves of clay but only a relatively small number of tile and architectural ceramic locations; however, their quality makes up for their lack in quantity. The medieval tiles made on the site of Chertsey Abbey were some of the most technically sophisticated and ornate of the period, although few can still be seen *in situ* and most of these have been relaid.

Compensating for the lack of medieval tile locations is the lavish renaissance-style terracotta ornament of Sutton Place (1521-5), near Guildford, which is comparable with Layer Marney in Essex and shows how quickly the techniques of terracotta production were learned by English craftsmen following the example of Hampton Court.

There is a good (although small) Pugin encaustic pavement at Albury Old Church, while tile pavements, often by Minton, are the norm in the many churches built or restored by the gentleman architect Henry Woodyer (1816-96), who ran his practice from his home at Grafham, south of Guildford. Surrey is fortunate to have two churches with magnificent opus sectile decoration by Powell's of Whitefriars: Christ Church, Epsom Common and St Martin's, Dorking; the latter has a memorial to Arthur Powell, senior partner in the firm and local resident. Finally, the unique Watts Chapel (1896-1904), Compton, is a site of international ceramic significance, and is a thoroughgoing practical display of the arts and crafts ethos, albeit with its distinctive brand of Celtic art nouveau ornament designed and carried out by Mary Seton Watts. In architectural terms it led nowhere but the Compton Potters' Arts Guild, which produced the chapel's terracotta, flourished for half a century. Five or six miles away, on the western fringe of the county, home-grown production of ceramics continues on the site of the Farnham Pottery, established in 1872, while Redhill's Belfry Shopping Centre (1991-2) represents the largest use of faience in a postwar building project. Suggested reading: John Elliott and John Pritchard (eds), *Henry Woodyer: Gentleman Architect* (Department of Continuing Education, University of Reading, 2002); Veronica Franklin Gould, *The Watts Chapel: An Arts & Crafts Memorial* (Watts Gallery, Compton, 1993). The *Gazetteer* entry for Surrey covers the administrative area of Surrey County Council.

## ALBURY

The banker Henry Drummond (1786-1860) bought the much-altered Tudor manor house in Albury Park in 1819. Originally the manor house, church (**St Peter and St Paul Old Church**) and village stood close together, but by 1800 many of the cottages had been demolished and the population encouraged to move a mile or so west to the hamlet of Weston Street, now known as Albury. By the time of Drummond's arrival, little remained of the old village, although St Peter and St Paul still functioned as the parish church. By the mid-1820s however, Drummond had become deeply involved with the teachings of the Scottish preacher Edward Irving, which were to form the basis of the Catholic

Apostolic Church, established in London in 1832; Drummond withdrew from Albury parish church in that same year. Members of the Irvingite movement frequently met at his mansion, only a few hundred yards from the church, whose fabric was increasingly difficult to maintain. This odd state of affairs continued until the late 1830s, when Drummond conceived a plan to keep both villagers and Irvingites happy: he would build a parish church in the village and provide a new building near Albury Park for the Catholic Apostolic Church.

Thus the the Irvingite Church arose just north of the park in 1840 and the Church of St Peter and St Paul, a red brick romanesque structure, was put up in Weston Street, Albury in 1842; both were designed by William McIntosh Brookes. As to the Old Church, it must still have held some religious or historic significance for Drummond, as he brought in A. W. N. Pugin around 1846-7 to convert its south transept into a family mortuary chapel, the Drummond Chantry. Much of the decoration is by Pugin's own hand, including the exquisite Minton encaustic floor tiles, but he also employed some of the best craftsmen of the time, including William Wailes (stained glass) and Thomas Earley, who was responsible for the striking red, blue and gold stencilling of the roof and walls; this atmospheric chamber is one of Pugin's best works. There is no direct access to the chapel, and no electric lighting, but peering through the screen it is possible to see armorial tiles in red, white and blue representing the Drummond family and their ancestors, as well as more common buff and brown designs featuring wavy stripes, lion heads, floral spirals and shields (Fig 271).

Having resolved the problem of the parish church, Henry Drummond brought in George Myers, the building contractor regularly used by Pugin, who transformed the mansion around 1847-56; he topped the red brick gothic exterior with sixty-three ornate chimneys, all different and all copies of Tudor designs.<sup>1</sup> Drummond represented West Surrey in parliament from 1847 until his death in 1860, after which he was buried in the vault below the Drummond Chantry. It is ironic to note that of the three churches in which Henry Drummond had a hand, the new Albury church is still very much in use, while there have been no services at his own Irvingite Church since 1950, and the last regular services at the Old Church were held in 1861. It was then closed and left to decay, but since 1921 annual services have been conducted and from 1974 the building has been in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. Drummond's home, now known as Albury Park House, has been converted to apartments.

#### BANSTEAD

The tile decorating firm **W. B. Simpson & Sons** was founded in 1833, becoming well-known for its hand-painted tiles in the late nineteenth century. They moved from central London to Camden Town in 1936, then Wandsworth in 1945; three further moves took place within London before the firm (now part of a larger group) moved to what is now St Martins House, Banstead Goods Yard, BANSTEAD ROAD in 1999. In the offices are several Simpson's tile panels,

including *Harvest Time* (1905), a pair of medieval-style figures painted on cast earthenware bodies, and an intricate hunting scene.

#### COMPTON

Mary Seton Fraser-Tytler was born in 1849 and brought up in Scotland, in her family's castle on the shore of Loch Ness.<sup>2</sup> Unusually, her father encouraged his daughters to follow their artistic inclinations, and Mary went on to study at the South Kensington Art Training School and the Slade. She was taught clay modelling by the French sculptor Aimée-Jules Dalou, who emphasised the sculptural properties of the material rather than its surface values, and she eventually went on to teach the subject, although she generally preferred easel painting as an art form. In 1887, when nearly thirty-seven, she married the well-known painter George Frederic Watts, then aged sixty-nine. This alliance of like minds allowed her creativity to flow in pursuit of the expression of complex ideas through symbolic decoration; they felt that art could be used to uplift and improve whilst bearing a spiritual message.

They soon moved to Compton, deep in the tree-lined hills of Surrey, where their new home was Limnerslease (1891, now flats), designed by the architect Ernest George. Mary proceeded to decorate much of the house with Celtic-inspired panels of what she described as gesso but should more accurately be called stucco, as her method was to mix steeped felt with plaster and apply it by hand rather than with a brush.<sup>3</sup> The couple were greatly concerned with handicrafts, seeing such work as bringing beauty to the lives of those otherwise deprived of such stimulation. Mary's chance to put theory into practice came in 1895, when the parish council bought land on Budburrow Hill to provide a new burial ground, Compton's old graveyard being almost full. Almost immediately Mary offered to build a mortuary chapel at the new cemetery; within months she had produced a model of her design and located a seam of gault clay at Limnerslease. In November 1895 she began to teach the villagers how to model clay and by 1898 the chapel's structure was complete; it was consecrated on the 1st July 1898. Everything had been made locally, including the little 1¾" red bricks, which came from Messrs E. and A. Miles at Guildford.

Looking at the **Watts Chapel**, standing tall above the winding path leading up through the cemetery from DOWN LANE, is a unique experience, from the brilliance and crisp cutting of its orangey-red terracotta to the copious Celtic art nouveau forms of its decoration (Fig 272). The whole was designed by Mary Seton Watts, although it is possible that an architect may have been involved at some stage. The plan is simple, a Greek cross superimposed on a circle, but unravelling the pantheistic symbolism could be a lifetime's task. Fortunately Mary Seton Watts (always, after her marriage, known as Mrs G. F. Watts) produced a key to this 'world of enchantment' in her book *The Word in the Pattern* (1904).<sup>4</sup> The domed chapel is unexpectedly lofty, the major decorative element on the exterior being a frieze symbolising the *Path of the Just*. This encircles the building but is split into four sections, the Spirits of Hope, Truth, Love and Light,

each section resting on three angel corbels, each holding a maze (for The Way), a boat (The Truth) or a tree (The Life). The maze is a copy of the early Christian labyrinth found on the floor of the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna.<sup>5</sup> Within the terracotta frieze, and bound together by a seemingly endless 'Celtic cord of unity', is a myriad of small animals and birds as well as much lettering. The Celtic theme continues on supporting columns and around the ornate doorway, where a semicircle of fifteen angel heads dares one to enter.

Inside is a dark, cool space; a stone bench curves around the wall, allowing one to sit and look upward at the mysterious and unsettling decorative scheme devised and carried out by Mary Seton Watts and her assistants. Her chosen material was gesso (as she termed it) covered with a ground of white metal leaf, on which she painted in tempera; the addition of yards of swirling, gold-lusted piping cord resulted in vibrant, barely believable colours. The forms of angels - elongated, drifting heavenward - dominate this outstanding Arts & Crafts interior which was completed in 1904. After G. F. Watts inspected the chapel in May 1904, Mary commented that 'He had not before realized what I had aspired to in the matter of this glorified wallpaper'.

This unique chapel was far from the sole product of these talented villagers, all seventy-two of whom were individually named in Mary's *The Word in the Pattern*. Some of them became highly skilled and, after the fashion of a medieval guild, Mary set up the Compton Potters' Arts Guild which was based at the Watts Gallery, a few hundred yards north of the Watts Chapel; this combined a display space for the paintings and sculptures of G. F. Watts with a hostel for the apprentice potters. The Gallery was designed by a local amateur architect, Christopher Turnor, and completed in 1904. The Guild successfully made terracotta wares including Celtic crosses, sundials, garden ornaments (note the fountain plaque on the gatepost opposite the Watts Gallery), frost-proof pots and headstones, continuing in production up to 1951. A wide range of the Guild's wares was shown at the 'Modern Celtic Art' exhibition of 1903, including a design by Mary Seton Watts for 'Tiles for a Sanctuary Floor', but it appears that this was never carried out. Several examples of the Guild's headstones may be seen in the Compton cemetery garden, where there is also a Celtic-style terracotta wellhead and the Cloister (1907), designed by Mary Seton Watts to house a memorial to her husband, who died on the 1st July 1904 (Fig 273).

The present pristine appearance of the chapel is, in fact, due to a programme of repairs and restoration work undertaken by the architect Nigel Hammett during 1995-7.<sup>6</sup> Fifteen 'River of Life' blocks forming part of the pilasters were replaced by matching blocks made by Mick Pinner of West Meon Pottery, replacements for about half the roof tiles were required, and the bell turret had to be completely re-assembled to incorporate steel supports. The curving terracotta seat outside the Watts Chapel is a perfect spot to contemplate this wonderfully renewed marriage of art and pantheism, clay and Celtic

mythology, possibly in the company of the cemetery's two cats, devoted guardians of Mary's spirit.

#### DORKING

Arthur Powell (1812-94), senior partner in the glassworks James Powell & Sons of Whitefriars, lived in Dorking from 1858 until his death; his firm was responsible for much of the internal decoration of **St Martin's Church**, its stone spire a landmark in the centre of town. The church was rebuilt in 1866-77 by Henry Woodyer and its series of opus sectile panels date from between 1891 and 1921. The great *Crucifixion* (1891-2) above the chancel arch was designed by George Woolliscroft Rhead (1854-1920), who had previously worked for Minton's and Doulton's. The flanking panels of archangels were installed in 1901-2 as a memorial to Queen Victoria, and are probably the work of Charles Hardgrave, who is known to have visited the church twice. Arthur Powell's own opus sectile memorial (1894) is at the east end of the north aisle. Other Powell's works include the Duchess of Marlborough's memorial (1910), designed by A. F. Coakes (who also visited the church) and a series of large panels in the south chapel.<sup>7</sup>

#### EPSOM

The Delaforce family of port wine merchants lived at Abele Grove (now the **Haywain**, 2-4 ST MARGARET'S DRIVE, off the A24 Leatherhead road) from 1920 until 1928; the building was used as a convent school during 1928-1992 before opening as a pub in 1997 (Fig 274). In the porch is a blue and white tile panel of the Virgin Mary, and inside are two larger panels, also blue and white, showing images of a merchant ship and grape harvesting; this pair are signed Fca Do Carvalhinho, Porto and dated 1920. The Carvalhinho factory was established in the late 1840s in Porto and flourished until the late 1920s. These panels, an unusual sight in Britain, were probably bought by the Delaforce family from stock, as the company specialised in this type of work.

#### Epsom Common

**Christ Church** (1876, architect Arthur Blomfield), Epsom Common has a Godwin tile pavement and a fine display of Powell's opus sectile work, glass tiles and mosaic on its east wall (Fig 275). The three-panel reredos (1885) of the *Transfiguration* was designed by Charles Hardgrave, as were the four evangelists (1887), two either side of the east window, which are shown within ornate canopies; the decorative scheme continues above the window, filling the remainder of the east wall.

#### EWELL

Henry VIII began building Nonsuch Palace in 1538; although construction was finished in 1541, its elaborate decorative scheme was still not complete at the time of the King's death in 1547, and the Palace was demolished in 1682-3. **Nonsuch Mansion House** (1802-6, architect Jeffry Wyatt) now stands in Nonsuch Park, EWELL ROAD, on the north-eastern edge of Ewell. Soon after the house was acquired in 1936 by a consortium of local authorities, a small outbuilding - until

recently used as a toilet - was decorated internally with Delft wall tiles, originally 500 in number (reduced to 480 by theft) and with 180 different design types. They include Dutch tiles from the mid seventeenth to the mid nineteenth centuries, London designs from around 1700-40 and Liverpool designs from 1740-90. The house is now used for functions and weddings.<sup>8</sup>

#### EWHURST

The mansion Woolpits (now the **Duke of Kent School**), PEASLAKE ROAD, was designed by the architects Ernest George & Harold Peto for the ceramics manufacturer Henry Doulton and built during 1885-8. Doulton, who was knighted before its completion, used the full range of his firm's skills, allied to George's enthusiasm for terracotta, in the construction of the house. Much buff terracotta detailing remains, along with a single relief panel by George Tinworth and a tiled bathroom, but the rest of the lavish ornament, including pictorial panels painted by John Eyre and a faience billiard room by Arthur Pearce (who designed most of Doulton's exhibition pavilions), have long since disappeared.

#### FARNHAM

The **Farnham Pottery** was established at QUENNELLS HILL, Wrecclesham (on the south-west edge of Farnham) by Absalom Harris in 1872. Initially the wares were horticultural and domestic, but from around 1880 until the First World War green-glazed wares were produced and marketed as Farnham Green-ware. From the 1920s production concentrated on large terracotta horticultural wares; the Harris family were still working the pottery in the late 1990s, although about two-thirds of the site had been sold. The Farnham (Building Preservation) Trust now cares for this fine example of a Victorian country pottery, much of which was built using Harris's home-produced terracotta, bricks and tiles; even the window frames were terracotta. The best of the remaining structures are the bottle kiln, the carved brick chimney stacks and a weird faience arch depicting an owl with outstretched wings.

#### LINGFIELD

On the north wall of the lady chapel in the **Collegiate Church of St Peter and St Paul** are two unusual monuments, a pair of rather worn incised effigial slabs made from what appears to be a ceramic material with a pale buff body.<sup>9</sup> The design, with each figure beneath a canopy, is reminiscent of brasses, and indeed incised slabs were developed at least a century before brasses. The better preserved of the two is about 3' 6" high and shows a fashionably dressed male who is likely to have been a lesser member of the local gentry. The slabs, which probably date from around 1500-10, were originally laid on the floor but were moved in order to protect them from damage; some of their red, black and yellow colouring remains.<sup>10</sup>

#### PEPER HAROW

A. W. N. Pugin worked at **St Nicholas Church** around 1847, adding the north aisle and mortuary chapel for Lord Middleton. The church is partly floored with Pugin-designed Minton & Co encaustic tiles, some of which bear the Middleton

arms while others have 'M' for the Virgin Mary. In the churchyard is a terracotta grave memorial (1914) for a child, in the form of a diminutive angel.

#### REDHILL

The **Belfry Shopping Centre** in Redhill was built in 1991-2 for the Burton Property Trust; the design was by Leslie Jones Architects. One inspiration behind the use of faience as cladding for this large complex was the traditional use of faience on many Montague Burton stores during the interwar years. For the Belfry, Shaws of Darwen supplied about 9,000 units of block and 50mm thick slab faience in nine different shades of glaze, mimicking the colour variation of older ceramic facades; the project was thought to constitute the largest single postwar use of faience in Britain. Despite all the attention to detail, the overall effect is bland and very unlike typical thirties faience facades with their combination of uncompromisingly modern design and inventive decoration; here all we have is overblown postmodern detailing.

#### REIGATE

The **shop** at 27 LESBOURNE ROAD was built in 1907 as the dairy for the Reigate Industrial and Provident Society; the architects were Baker & Penfold. Its tile-lined interior features two pictorial wall panels by Carter's of Poole, one showing a rural scene with cattle, the other depicting a milkmaid. This unusually well-preserved shop has also retained its free-standing marble counter and marble shelving, along with its red terrazzo mosaic floor.

#### STAINES

The **Watermans Buildings** office development on the Thames riverside at Staines was completed in 1991; the architects were Twigg Brown and Partners. In the washrooms are twenty-seven 3' by 4' tile panels showing local heroes and institutions. These murals were an early commission for Tiles of Stow - Odette Wells and Sebastian John - who used a combination of hand-painting and stencilling to produce the series.

#### SUTTON PLACE

**Sutton Place**, about three miles north of Guildford, was built in 1521-5 for Sir Richard Weston, a protégé of Henry VIII, who had been granted the Sutton estate in 1521. The house shares with Layer Marney in Essex, built from around 1520, the early and lavish use of renaissance terracotta ornament. Work on these two great houses began about seven years after the start of construction at Hampton Court, where terracotta roundel busts were commissioned from the Italian sculptor Giovanni da Maiano in 1521. The walls of Sutton Place are of load-bearing brick with elements such as window mullions, transoms and door surrounds of terracotta; it is almost certain that the terracotta window components at Sutton Place were made at the same (probably English) workshop as those of Hampton Court.<sup>11</sup> The 'antique' terracotta ornament of Sutton Place includes a total of thirty-eight winged cherubs. Courtiers of the time vied to build ostentatious houses in imitation of Hampton Court, although a statute of 1522 prohibited men below a particular rank from employing foreign craftsmen,

inadvertently ensuring that foreign-style decoration became a sign of the elite. Sutton Place is now known to have reached its final form in 1720, when original and copied materials were used in combination.<sup>12</sup>

By the late 1980s the terracotta was showing signs of decay, and a five-year programme of conservation began under architect Julian Harrap, who had to deal with irregular block sizes and colours, and coarsely mixed clay bodies pierced by air holes, as well as blocks which had been overpainted or relocated. Replacement terracotta blocks were supplied by Hathernware, who produced eighteen different colour blends to reflect the original work, much of which was cream in colour; the total cost of restoration was over £12 million.

## WOKING

The pedestrian bridge connecting the town centre with **Woking Railway Station** is lined with a Shaws Twintile mural showing railway engines and probably dating from the 1960s or 1970s. Just west of the centre on VICTORIA WAY is another ceramic mural, in this case celebrating the town's links with the writer W. G. Wells and featuring scenes from his *The War of the Worlds*.

Nearly a mile east of the station is the **Shah Jahan Mosque**, 149 ORIENTAL ROAD; it is set in its own grounds, to which there is restricted access. The Shah Jahan (or Shah Jehan) Mosque, in appearance a tiny Moghul pavilion, was the first purpose-built mosque in Britain; it was erected in 1889 and designed by the architect W. I. Chambers to serve Muslim students studying at the nearby Oriental Institute, Maybury. On its facade are unusual six-inch square 'tiles' - actually hollowed-out 'bricks' nearly three inches thick - in green and buff (originally red and blue) with a fan-shaped motif, which form a pattern of overlapping circles when laid together. The mosque, which was restored during the late 1990s, stands next to a modern building with tiling of a similar design.

## Surrey Roundup

Grinsteads butcher's shop in High Street, **Bramley** has a tiled stall riser, probably interwar, with three pictorial panels of farm animals. Henry Woodyer's 1859-60 rebuilding of St Mary's Church, **Buckland** included the addition of floral tiling on the east wall and a Minton tile pavement. St Peter's Church, Guildford Street, **Chertsey** has Coade stone aisle window tracery (1806) stamped Coade and Sealy, and a few Chertsey Abbey tiles in the chancel. St Mary's Church, **Chiddingfold** was rebuilt by Henry Woodyer in 1869-70, the Minton tile pavement in the nave being a part of these works; in the chantry chapel are two Doulton terracotta panels designed by George Tinworth. There is a rich Minton tile pavement in the sanctuary of the chapel (1868-9, architect Henry Woodyer) at Cranleigh School on the northern edge of **Cranleigh**. Either side of the reredos at St Lawrence's Church, **Effingham** are pictorial panels of mosaic and terracotta (1911) by Caesar Czarnikow. On **Egham** High Street are two shops with ceramic interest: the facade of number 65 (formerly Clarke's butcher's) sports two majolica cow's heads, while number 72 has tiling inside and out. The Church of St Peter and St

Paul, **Godalming** was restored by George Gilbert Scott in 1880; the works included the installation of a reredos and dado of Powell's glass tiles and mosaics in the north chapel, where there is also a Godwin tile pavement (Fig 276). The Powell's opus sectile reredos of the *Last Supper* at St Margaret's Church, **Ockley** dates from 1873 and was designed by Harry Burrow. In St Mary's Church, **Stoke D'Abernon** is a Powell's opus sectile panel of three angels playing musical instruments; it was designed by Gerald P. Hutchinson (b1876) and dates from 1902. St James Church (1860-1, architect John Loughborough Pearson), **Titsey**, has a good Minton encaustic tiled pavement. At Sainsbury's, Limpsfield Road, **Warlingham** are two mosaics (2000) designed and made by Oliver Budd; these replaced his original 1994 mosaics, lost when the store was enlarged in 1999-2000.

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