

## WARWICKSHIRE

Local terracotta production was crucial to the appearance of Warwickshire's, and especially Birmingham's, buildings. Just north of the city in Tamworth, Staffordshire, Gibbs & Canning pioneered the manufacture of terracotta for large architectural contracts by works located in coalfields. Their works was established in 1847, and the firm's terracotta was used for a series of major contracts in the Midlands - notably the Victoria Law Courts, Birmingham - during the 1880s. Gibbs & Canning was one of the four major British producers of terracotta. In addition Stanley Brothers of Nuneaton, established by Reginald Stanley, made terracotta in the form of simple architectural details and garden ornaments from 1881; the firm also specialised in finials, including the well-known dragon design. Stanley Brothers manufactured two-foot square terracotta plaques showing a relief bust of Queen Victoria to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 1887; the design was adapted to mark the 1897 Diamond Jubilee, the later version being much more common. George T. Noszlopy's *Public Sculpture of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull* (2003) suggests the relief of Queen Victoria may have been designed by the sculptor Henry Hugh Armstead (1828-1905), but gives no grounds for this attribution. Stanley's Jubilee plaques can be found throughout the country but the greatest concentration is in central and southern England; in Warwickshire, examples may be seen in Atherstone, five miles north-west of Nuneaton, and Knowle.

Apart from the all-pervading terracotta, also seen on the many Birmingham 'tile and terracotta' pubs, other Warwickshire highlights include a significant late fourteenth century secular tile pavement which was revealed in 2000 at Warwick Castle; the tiles came from the Chilvers Coton tilery near Nuneaton. One of the best of the few extant early postwar ceramic murals in Britain can be found in Coventry's Lower Precinct, and in the same city are the iconic 1960s buildings of the University of Warwick, the loss of whose Twintile cladding became a sorry story for the ceramics industry. In contrast, and just around the corner from the University, is the innovative blue Hathernware faience roof of the 1993 Cable & Wireless College.

Suggested reading: Alan Swale, 'The Gordon Cullen Ceramic Murals: Lower Precinct, Coventry', *Glazed Expressions* (2003), 46, pp14-15 and 47 pp14-15; *Birmingham Terracotta* (Birmingham City Council Planning Department, 2001); George T. Noszlopy, *Public Sculpture of Birmingham* (Liverpool University Press, 1998); TACS Tour Notes *Birmingham* (1989); Alan Crawford, Michael Dunn & Robert Thorne, *Birmingham Pubs 1880-1939* (Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1986). The *Gazetteer* entry for Warwickshire covers the administrative areas of Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council.

## ATHERSTONE

On the facade of **Primrose Cottage**, 176 LONG STREET (which runs south-east from the railway station) is a good example of the 1897 Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee terracotta plaques made by Stanley Brothers of Nuneaton; the plaques are about 2' square and 3½" thick.<sup>1</sup> Just to the north, outside the office of **Warwickshire Probation Service** in MARKET STREET, is a 1998 ceramic tile mural by Justin Sanders entitled *We are here*; it measures about 5' by 4' and the design, incised in grey and white on a dark ground, shows local scenes.<sup>2</sup> Further north on Sheepy Road is St Mary's Church, where the Minton tile pavement was donated by Herbert Minton himself in 1850.<sup>3</sup>

## BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham exemplifies, as much as any city or town in Britain, the rich contribution which 'fired earth' - bricks, tiles, terracotta and faience - made to Victorian and Edwardian building. Lacking a suitable local source of good stone in sufficient quantities to meet the growing needs of the city, developers turned to terracotta, initially to supply the dressings for buildings but ultimately for complete facades of block terracotta. Even before the completion in 1891 of Birmingham's most impressive terracotta edifice, the Victoria Law Courts, the city already possessed quite a display of terracotta on buildings designed by local architects such as Martin & Chamberlain and Essex, Nichol & Goodman. Martin & Chamberlain first used the material in 1879, and a whole spate of municipal buildings - libraries, public baths and schools - followed during the 1880s and 1890s. The excesses of some of the later terracotta buildings resulted in the publication of a letter headed 'The bane of modern Birmingham' in the *Daily Mail* of the 3rd November 1908; the writer pointed out that:

'Terracotta has a painfully hard effect, and lends itself so easily to cheap surface ornamentation that few architects can resist the temptation of covering their terracotta buildings with meretricious, meaningless and tasteless 'decorative' detail.'

Although there have been significant losses, the city centre retains a high density of terracotta facades, while several of the suburban libraries and baths have also survived along with good examples of the city's renowned turn of the century 'tile and terracotta' public houses. Some architectural practices tended to specialise in pub design, notably James and Lister Lea, who generally specified Hathernware terracotta (from Loughborough) and Minton tiles (from Stoke-on-Trent), and a house style is discernable amongst a number of pubs built for individual breweries such as Mitchells and Butlers.

This tour of Birmingham concentrates on major ceramic locations in the central area, beginning and ending in VICTORIA SQUARE - next to the Town Hall and just south of the Council House (1874-9), whose main facade sports a Salviati mosaic - then looks at sites in the suburbs, taken alphabetically. There are many more buildings with decorative ceramics than can be described here, particularly in the intensely terracottary sectors around Newhall Street and the Law Courts. On the south-west edge of Victoria Square is **Queen's Chambers**, PARADISE

STREET, refronted - possibly in 1904 - by architects Mansell & Mansell; its tudor-gothic facade is entirely in shades of buff terracotta supplied by Doultons. The hooded central doorway features a bold relief of Queen Victoria seated on her throne, flanked by a lion and unicorn, while grotesque demons decorate the ground floor piers. Head north into CHAMBERLAIN SQUARE to find **Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery** (1884-9) on the right, with its fine collection of tiles. Mosaics dominate the museum's entrance hall, then geometric tile flooring runs from the impressive Round Room through the Ceramics Gallery to the restaurant, in a real showcase of municipal ceramics. The tiles complement their surroundings perfectly, although the airy ironwork of the galleries provides a welcome contrast to the huge acreage of muted ruddy-browns and fawns.

Turn right along Edmund Street, soon reaching MARGARET STREET; just to the left is the **Birmingham School of Art**, built in 1883-5 (architects Martin & Chamberlain), now part of the University of Central England; the CORNWALL STREET extension was added in 1891-3.<sup>4</sup> The exterior of the original section features an array of architectural ceramics, from glazed tiles and mosaics by Craven Dunnill to blocks of foliated terracotta tiles below the roof. Most conspicuous is the large rose window in buff terracotta with a pattern of lilies on a lattice background; this was modelled by the sculptor Samuel Barfield of Leicester and made by King & Co of Stourbridge. In the same Ruskinian gothic spirit, the Cornwall Street wing sports decorative tiling and terracotta putti, the latter representing the arts and modelled by Benjamin Creswick (1853-1946), Master of Modelling and Modelled Design at the School of Art during 1889-1918.

Continue along Edmund Street to meet NEWHALL STREET; at 19 is **The Exchange**, built in 1896 as a telephone exchange for Bell Edison by the architect Frederick Martin. The richly ornamented terracotta was supplied by J. C. Edwards of Ruabon, and the porch retains its tiling showing the Bell Edison logo. High up on the facade of **56-60 Newhall Street**, built for Birmingham Office Co Ltd in 1899-1900, are four buff Doulton terracotta panels designed by W. J. Neatby; they all show a figure engaged in conflict with a serpent. Now turn south to COLMORE ROW: at 166 is **Victoria House**, an office building put up around 2000 on the site of a Victorian hotel. Much of the facade is red brickwork, but contrasting decorative detail on the ground floor arches and columns is in Hathernware's architectural terracotta. Looking south, at 44 TEMPLE ROW WEST is the late nineteenth century tudor gothic fantasy of the **Birmingham Midshires Building Society**, originally Ocean Assurance, with well detailed buff terracotta including fish swimming beneath the architraves. Continue northward along Colmore Row; those wishing to visit the Jewellery Quarter (see below) should take Church Street, on the left. At the end of Colmore Row is Colmore Circus and the opportunity for a diversion north to **St Chad's R. C. Cathedral**, whose stark red brick facade overlooks ST CHAD'S CIRCUS. The cathedral is the work of A. W. N. Pugin and was mostly erected in 1839-41; the original and extensive Pugin-designed Minton pavement was removed during reordering in 1967, but some

tiles from the chancel and Lady Chapel were relaid in the former baptistery, now Chapel of the Oils, in the north aisle.<sup>5</sup>

Return to Colmore Circus and go left into STEELHOUSE LANE to see the former Birmingham General Hospital (1892-7, architect William Henman); the **Children's Hospital** took over the site in 1998. The original E-shaped complex was constructed of bright red brick and deep red terracotta supplied by Doulton's from their local Rowley Regis works. Unfortunately the open courts facing Steelhouse Lane were filled by later extensions and much of their terracotta elaboration has disappeared, including a Doultonware fountain and a series of female figures treading upon the Serpent of Death. However, a great deal remains, including terracotta ornament on the boundary walls, and some of the regrettable additions are now being removed.

Turn the corner into CORPORATION STREET, passing **Ruskin Buildings** (1899) then **Coleridge Chambers** (1887-1904) on the right. These two adjoining buildings are constructed of red brick with mostly light buff terracotta enrichment, although Ruskin Buildings, designed by Ewan Harper, has sturdy red terracotta columns guarding its central entrance; Coleridge Chambers has an attractive majolica-tiled interior with an elaborate mosaic floor. Ruskin Buildings was restored in 2000, the replacement terracotta being provided by Ibstock Hathernware. Across the road is the unmistakable vertiginous tower (from whose balcony sprouts a small tree) of the **Methodist Central Hall**, designed by the brothers Ewan and James A. Harper and built in 1899-1903 using rich red terracotta probably supplied by Gibbs & Canning, although as G. King of Stourbridge are known to have produced a series of detailed drawings for the supply of the material, there is some doubt about this attribution.<sup>6</sup> The grand entrance has a deeply recessed moulded arch, and high relief red terracotta groups of a female figure with children, in fact allegories of teaching. These reliefs may have been modelled by the chief modeller at Gibbs & Canning, John Evans, who could also have been responsible for the pair of buff terracotta relief panels in the porch; these show events in the life of John Wesley.<sup>7</sup> The building was unoccupied in 2002 and may be undergoing conversion.

Almost facing the Central Hall is the red, red bulk of the **Victoria Law Courts** (1887-91, architects Aston Webb and Ingress Bell), its almost carmine terracotta replete with decoration emphasising the building's concern with law and order (Fig 286). It was the first major public building in Britain to be faced entirely in red terracotta, in this case supplied by J. C. Edwards of Ruabon; ochre terracotta blockwork by Gibbs & Canning provided the surfaces of most of the important interior walls. Much consideration was given to the design and execution of the modelling and sculpture, undertaken by a team of designers and decorative sculptors under the guidance of the architects. William Aumonier (1841-1914) and his London firm, which included his sons William and Percy Aumonier, carried out most of the decorative modelling, with Aumonier himself contributing some of the more important terracotta sculpture. In the course of

this he had scaffolding raised to the height of sixty feet at the Ruabon works, thus enabling him to work on a gallery then view the effect of the modelling from ground level. A few of the more prestigious works were carried out by specialists including the London sculptor Harry Bates, who was responsible for the statue of Queen Victoria over the main entrance, and W. S. Frith, who sculpted the figure of *Justice* on the main gable, and also undertook figurative modelling to the designs of Walter Crane.

The grand entrance is somewhat compromised by the usual security precautions, but once inside, the Great Hall is a breathtaking space dominated by two matching, ornate arched entrances massively surmounted by lions and unicorns supporting the Royal Arms. The window tracery is of course red, which makes for interesting junctions with the ochre terracotta of the interior. Decoration is mainly at the level above the entrance, and continues around the walls with a series of oriel-like openings separating the huge stained glass windows. Low passageways, defined by ochre terracotta arches receding into the distance, lead on to a square toplit crossing whose terracotta bears the words: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour'. This is a truly powerful building, the force of law made palpable.

From the Law Courts, head south along the west side of Corporation Street, crossing Newton Street, to find (at 153-161) **County Buildings**, also known as the Dean & Pitman Building or Murdoch & Pitman Chambers. Of pale red brick with light red and buff terracotta by Gibbs & Canning, County Buildings (1896-7) was designed by Joseph Crouch and Edmund Butler to cater for A. R. Dean, furnishers, and Pitman's Birmingham Vegetarian Hotel and Restaurant Limited. The activities of the occupiers are reflected in the main feature of the facade, a buff terracotta frieze over the ground floor depicting diners at table to the right, and carpenters at work to the left. This was by Benjamin Creswick, as was the buff terracotta allegorical figure group (representing Birmingham and Industry) on the gable.

Continue southward along Corporation Street, looking for UNION STREET on the left, which is connected to Union Passage by the **City Arcade** (1898-1901, architects Newton & Cheatle); originally there were four covered alleyways but the other three were demolished in 1971. Its external decoration includes a frieze of fantastic creatures in Doulton's buff terracotta, and within is a green and blue faience balustrade formed of entwined beasts; the sculptor throughout was W. J. Neatby. At the bottom of Corporation Street turn right into NEW STREET; the second block on the right (at 41-42a) is **Newton Chambers** (or Central Buildings), bordering Cannon Street. It was built in 1899 by architects Essex, Nichol and Goodman using buff block terracotta from the Hathern Station Brick and Terra Cotta Co. Interior tiling and murals from the original Kardomah café appear to have been lost in a 1998 refurbishment.

Further along New Street on the right is TEMPLE STREET and the **Trocadero** pub, built in 1883 but with a pretty, creamy-yellow faience and mosaic facade

dating from soon after 1902 when the premises were sold to The Trocadero Ltd. The faience was made by Maw & Co and designed by John Windsor Bradburn, Head of the Faience Department at Maw's.<sup>8</sup> The Trocadero was shown in the firm's catalogue published around 1905, which referred to the frieze bearing the pub's name as being of 'lustrous mosaics, richly iridescent'. Just across New Street is the bold white faience facade of the **Piccadilly Arcade**, built in 1909-10 as the Picture House and converted to a shopping arcade in 1926. Continue west along New Street to return to the start of the central tour, Victoria Square.

### Aston

In the best chamber (red room) of the Jacobean mansion **Aston Hall** (1618-35), Aston Park, TRINITY ROAD, is a fire surround containing 45 Liverpool tin-glazed tiles in purple and white. It probably dates from the redecoration and refurbishment of the Hall carried out between the 1740s and the 1760s by Sir Lister Holte, and could therefore be a rare surviving example of an original installation. The fireplace in the green Kidderminster-stuff chamber also has a tiled surround from the same period. Just west of Aston Park in WITTON ROAD is the **R. C. Church of the Sacred Heart and St Margaret Mary** (1922, architects Harrison & Cox), built in red and purplish brick with lavish grey terracotta trimmings; a campanile-style tower was added to the church in 1934. On the tower is a seven feet high grey terracotta statue of Christ designed by the architect George Cox and modelled by John Evans, chief modeller at Gibbs & Canning; it was his last major work for the firm.<sup>9</sup>

In the centre of Aston, close to the railway station, is the **Britannia PH**, 287 LICHFIELD ROAD. It was rebuilt in 1898-1900 by the architects Wood & Kendrick for Mitchells & Butlers, its facade combining rich brown faience and buff terracotta, with a terracotta figure of Britannia topping the central pediment. The tiling, by Maw & Co, can be seen in the public bar, on the stairs and in the passages, where Lewis F. Day designed the frieze tiles.<sup>10</sup> On the far side of the railway bridge is the **Swan & Mitre PH**, Lichfield Road, built in 1898-9 by architects James and Lister Lea for the Holt Brewery Company. Although the pub has been altered, a substantial amount of original tiling, probably by Minton Hollins, is still in place and has been restored. Also on Lichfield Road are the **Prince of Wales**, with much wall tiling, and (just north of the station at the junction with WATERWORKS STREET) the remains of the brown faience facade of the now-derelict **Church Tavern** (1900-1). Its colourful tiled interior, by Maw's, was one of the best in Birmingham.

Finally to the most famous of Birmingham's ceramic pubs, the **Bartons Arms**, 152 HIGH STREET, Aston (actually the A34, on the cusp between Aston and Lozells). It was built in 1899-1901 for Mitchells & Butlers, the architect being one Mr Brassington from the James and Lister Lea practice (Fig 287). The opulent tiled interior, once populated by customers of the nearby Aston Hippodrome, includes a tile painting depicting a hunting scene (in the staircase hall); there is a Minton Hollins trade tile on the wall to the right of the bar in the smoke room,

where replacement tiles dating from alterations made around 1969 may also be seen. Wonderful ironwork, woodwork and stained glass complete this magnificent interior. Following many years of uncertainty about its future, and nearly two years of closure, the Bartons Arms was bought by Oakham Ales of Peterborough in 2002; after restoration work, the pub reopened in early 2003.

#### Balsall Heath

On MOSELEY ROAD is **Moseley Road Swimming Pool**, opened as the Public Baths in 1907 and currently in poor condition; the architects were William Hale & Son. Terracotta for the ornate exterior was provided by Jabez Thompson & Co, a firm of brick, roof tile and terracotta manufacturers from Northwich in Cheshire. The interior is rich in glazed brickwork, much of it patterned; this was supplied by Rufford & Co and the Stourbridge Glazed Brick Co, and Doulton faience was also used in the building.

#### Digbeth

The works of custard makers Alfred Bird & Sons (now known as the **Custard Factory**) on HIGH STREET DERITEND (A41) was built around 1901 using red brick and, unusually, Doulton's buff Carraraware dressings. There is some good detailing including much lettering.<sup>11</sup> On ALCESTER STREET, running south of this major highway, is the red brick cliff of the **Chamberlain Hotel**, built in 1903 as a working man's hostel. It became a Rowton House, providing accommodation for the homeless, before conversion to an hotel in 1993. Buff terracotta dressings include two large cherubs on the porte cochere; inside, the original dining room retains its pale blue and white glazed brick geometric-patterned dado.

The hotel is at the junction with MOSELEY STREET, on which stands (at number 210) the **Market Tavern**, built in 1899-1900 by James and Lister Lea for the Holt Brewery. There is much Minton wall tiling inside, and the pub is very similar to the **White Swan**, two blocks north at 276 BRADFORD STREET. This was built by the same architects in 1899-1900, but for Ansells Brewery, and also features floor-to-ceiling Minton tiling. Terracotta dressings for both pubs were supplied by the Hathern Station Brick and Terra Cotta Co. There is more Minton work at the **Woodman**, 106 ALBERT STREET, which lies north of the A41, just on the eastern edge of the city centre and close to Millennium Point; the pub was built by James and Lister Lea for Ansells in 1896-7. The striking polychrome sculpture above the doorway of the nearby Gun Barrel Proof House, Banbury Street, is apparently of stone rather than Coade stone.

#### Edgbaston

The **Church of St Mary and St Ambrose** (1897-8, architect J. A. Chatwin) stands on the PERSHORE ROAD just north of the major junction with Edgbaston Road. It has excellent bright red terracotta dressings, manufacturer unknown, and a spire in what appears to be glazed red brick. The **Edgbaston Cricket Centre** (2000), on the Warwickshire County Cricket Ground site in EDGBASTON ROAD, can be seen just to the east of the church. The artwork for its terracotta rain screen, which forms the end wall, was designed by Mark Renn and Mick Thacker, and includes

a poem by Simon Rae and an image of the globe. A quarter-mile north-east of the cricket ground, almost in Balsall Heath, is the **Edward Road Baptist Church** (1899), with excellent ochre terracotta ornament almost Moorish in its elaboration.

#### Erdington

The **Red Lion** (1899, architects Wood & Kendrick), STATION ROAD, Erdington B23 has a fine Craven Dunnill bar front, with intricate floral relief moulded tiles, wreaths and ribbons in pink, green, mustard and soft grey on a beige background (Fig 288). The whole design, with the upper part curving outward, is identical to the bar front at the Crown, Belfast; both were shown in an early twentieth century Craven Dunnill catalogue.

#### Five Ways

Just beyond Five Ways, on the south-western fringe of the city centre, is the **Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry** (1958, architect John Madin), a T-shaped office block at the junction of HARBORNE ROAD and Highfield Road; in the entrance foyer is a richly coloured abstract mosaic mural (1960) designed by John Piper; it measures around 10' high by 16' wide, and is signed by the artist on a single tessera near the bottom right hand corner. Although still very much in use, the building is currently (2004) under threat of demolition.

#### Handsworth

The **Red Lion** (1901-2), 270 SOHO ROAD, built by James and Lister Lea for the Holt Brewery Company, has a Hathernware facade and a spectacular tiled staircase hall. To the west is the **New Inns** (1881, extended in the early 1900s), HOLYHEAD ROAD, with tiling by Maw's including some De Morgan-style tiles set into the panelling of the staircase hall.

#### Hodge Hill

The **Church of St Philip and St James** (1967-8, architect Martin Purdy), HODGE HILL COMMON, built to act firstly as a social centre, has an unusual cubic font with glazed ceramic panels on each side. The floor and wall tiling was supplied by Cotswold Tile.<sup>12</sup>

#### Jewellery Quarter

Throughout the Jewellery Quarter, which lies about half a mile north-west of the city centre, there are numerous buildings with bits and pieces of ceramic decoration, for instance the faience-clad entrance to the **Gwenda Works** (1913), LEGGE LANE, and the (supposedly) terracotta pelican topping the **Pelican Works**, GREAT HAMPTON STREET, which was built around 1868.<sup>13</sup> However, the major ceramic locations are near the Jewellery Quarter Metro Station and clustered around Constitution Hill (just north of Snow Hill Station), where this mini-perambulation begins.

One of the best-known buildings in the Jewellery Quarter is **Sale's Works** (1895-6) at 1-7 CONSTITUTION HILL. This flat-iron shaped former die-sinking works, with its domed openwork corner tower, has a tremendous range of bright red terracotta ornament. On Constitution Hill itself is the **Bismillah Building**, a

former electroplating works, with a good red brick and terracotta facade. Now go left into Henrietta Street to pass beneath the Snow Hill Viaduct, turning right on to LIVERY STREET to see the **Vaughton Gothic Works** (1902, architect Sidney H. Vaughton) with its excellent terracotta details, especially the lettering. Turn left down Cox Street to reach St Paul's Square, then head west via Caroline Street and Warstone Lane to find the Jewellery Quarter Clock Tower.

Opposite, on the corner of WARSTONE LANE and Vyse Street, is the **Rose Villa Tavern** (1919-20, by architects Wood & Kendrick for Mitchells & Butlers), with a fine tile and faience interior by Carter's of Poole illustrating a midway point in the transition from vivid Victorian and Edwardian colour to the restrained decor of the interwar years. The theme is classical, with multicoloured swags along the frieze, hefty chunks of cream faience and a single pictorial panel (there were more) showing a group of dancing maidens.

#### King's Heath

**Highbury Hall** (1879-80), YEW TREE ROAD was designed for Joseph Chamberlain, MP and Mayor of Birmingham, by the unrelated John H. Chamberlain of the practice Martin & Chamberlain. It was Joseph Chamberlain's home during 1880-1914, and is now a conference centre. There are a few encaustic tiles dotted about the exterior, but it is in the hugely rich interiors where the real ceramic interest lies, with transfer printed dust-pressed tiles set into the panelled walls of the Great Hall and above the dado in the stairwell, and a variety of tiled fire surrounds throughout the house, some with hand-painted tiles.<sup>14</sup>

#### Kingstanding

One of the most spectacular and architecturally significant interwar cinemas was the former **Odeon** (1934-5, now Mecca), at the junction of KING'S ROAD and Kettlehouse Road, Kingstanding. It was designed by the architect J. Cecil Clavering of the Harry Weedon practice, and was the first Odeon to display all the elements which became associated with the Odeon style including a faience facade, rounded corners and a prominent vertical feature, in this case a triple fin. The buff and polished black faience was supplied by Shaws of Darwen.

#### Ladywood

In an isolated position on the middle ring road roundabout at the top of Ladywood Middleway is **Spring Hill Library** (1893), ICKNIELD STREET. One of the city's many municipal buildings by Martin & Chamberlain, its striking red terracotta detail includes traceried windows, coats of arms, angels and winged lions, as well as an extravagant clock tower. About a mile south in Ladywood proper is **St George's Church of England School**, PLOUGH AND HARROW ROAD, where Jeffrey Salter's buff and grey abstract ceramic cross (1970) overlooks the playground.

#### Lozells

The **Gunmakers Arms**, GERRARD STREET (not far west of the Bartons Arms, see Aston) was designed by the architect Matthew Butcher and built in 1902-3 for Ansell's. Apart from some relatively run-of-the-mill wall tiling, its outstanding

feature is the curving Craven Dunnill bar front of relief moulded tiles featuring grotesque heads, ribbons and garlands.

Half mile to the west is **St Mary's Convent of Mercy**, 98 HUNTER'S ROAD, designed by A. W. N. Pugin and built during 1840-1. There are Minton tiles in two locations: a pavement dating from 1860-2 in an aisle of the main chapel and, more significantly, tiles installed in the chapel in 1840-1 which have been relaid in the McAuley Oratoria (named after Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy). Several designs in the latter pavement appear in Minton's *Earliest Pattern Book* (which just pre-dated the firm's first printed catalogue of 1842), and there are also armorial tiles relating to John Talbot, 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, a benefactor of the foundation.<sup>15</sup> The tiles are mentioned in a rare surviving letter from Pugin to Herbert Minton, dated 19th September 1840.<sup>16</sup>

#### Moseley

Right in the middle of Moseley is the tall terracotta clock tower of the **Fighting Cocks PH**, ST MARY'S ROW; it was built in 1898-9 for the Holt Brewery Company by architects Newton & Cheatle, and is now known as the Goose. Inside is standard Craven Dunnill wall tiling; two large hand-painted tile panels of local scenes, thought to have been lost during 1980s alterations, were revealed again during 1991 restoration work.

#### Nechells

Allegorical terracotta relief panels by Benjamin Creswick run along the facade of **Bloomsbury Public Library** (1891-3, Cossins & Peacock), NECHELL'S PARKWAY. Another Creswick terracotta panel, in this case a coat of arms, can be seen on the former **Nechells Public Baths** (1910, now a community centre), NECHELLS PARK ROAD.

#### New Oscott

**St Mary's College**, New Oscott, the seminary for the R. C. Diocese of Birmingham, was founded in 1794 and moved to its present parkland site (on the junction of Chester Road and COLLEGE ROAD, south-west of Sutton Coldfield) in 1835, the early buildings being designed by the architect Joseph Potter of Lichfield. A. W. N. Pugin was associated with the College from 1837, furnishing and decorating the chapel, which was consecrated in 1838, and creating several magnificent interiors which included early Minton encaustic tile pavements dating from around 1840. Pugin's work at Oscott was crucial to the development of his career; exposing the seminarians to the power of gothic revival architecture and decoration allowed his influence to spread rapidly throughout the Catholic church.<sup>17</sup>

#### Winson Green

The exterior of the grade II\* listed **Bellefield PH**, 36 WINSON STREET, is completely unremarkable, but its interior is a revelation, with colourful tiling in the public bar (by Carter's of Poole and possibly dating from 1913 or 1922) and the smoke room, where the green floor-to-ceiling Minton's tilework (probably installed in 1910) includes moulded frames for a series of engravings. In autumn

2003 the Bellefield was closed and boarded up, and the Victorian bar back was stolen in spring 2004; however, the pub has changed ownership and the interior is to be fully restored.

## COVENTRY

Much of central Coventry was devastated during the Blitz of 1940, the Cathedral itself being burnt out on the night of the 14th November 1940. Following this, Coventry was the first English city to embark on a comprehensive scheme for rebuilding its centre and suburbs, the plan for the city centre being produced in 1941 and revised in 1952. Its hub was a new shopping precinct, whose axis was pedestrianised in 1955, just before construction work began on the new **Cathedral of St Michael** (architect Sir Basil Spence, 1956-62) in PRIORY STREET, to the east of the precinct. The staggering display of decorative artwork in the Cathedral includes a mosaic-decorated ciment fondu panel (1960-1) by Steven Sykes, behind the altar in the Gethsemane Chapel, but no tilework as such.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, the shopping precinct boasts two tiled installations, the earlier in BROADGATE, the central square, its 1950s proportions still clear (as are those of the entire shopping precinct) despite later alterations. High on the wall of **Broadgate House**, on the south side of the square, is the *Godiva and Peeping Tom Clock* (sculptor Trevor Tennant, 1953). On the hour, Godiva emerges astride a white horse and reveals nearly all to Peeping Tom, who pops out cuckoo-clock style above, beneath a clockface; Godiva's backdrop is a panel of Carter's blue and white pattern-making tiles.<sup>19</sup>

Head downhill and west to the far end of the LOWER PRECINCT (1957-60). Just inside the Lidice Place entrance is the **Cullen Mural**, a superb pictorial tile mural designed in 1958 by the architect and town planner Gordon Cullen (1914-94) and made by Carter's of Poole (Fig 289).<sup>20</sup> It was commissioned in 1957 by the City Planning & Redevelopment Committee on the recommendation of Arthur Ling, chief architect to the corporation, to illustrate the spirit in which the reconstruction of the city was undertaken, and was originally sited on the ramp entrance to the Lower Precinct.<sup>21</sup> Redevelopment of the Lower Precinct in 2002 resulted in the mural, which had suffered from neglect (as well as the loss during the 1970s of the part showing a map of medieval Coventry), being restored and relocated. The restoration was supervised by Lesley Durbin of the Jackfield Conservation Studio, and involved cutting the mural into sections complete with its heavy concrete backing, then cleaning; matching replacement tiles for the base of the mural were supplied by Craven Dunnill.<sup>22</sup> The mural, which combines tube-lined and screen-printed tiles, is one of the best early British postwar tile murals still extant, and is certainly the most accessible of the few remaining, its strong colours and powerful forms dominating the brightly-lit entrance walkway.<sup>23</sup> It shows images relating to Coventry from prehistoric times up to the 1950s, culminating with the city's postwar masterplan on a detached section; especially attractive are an assortment of beady-eyed dinosaurs and a variety of bicycles representing the cycle industry.

Return through the precinct to find medieval **Holy Trinity Church**, which stands between Broadgate and the Cathedral off PRIORY ROW. There is a good Minton encaustic tile pavement in the sanctuary, with letter tiles in gold on royal blue fronting the risers of the three steps up to the altar; all this tiling dates from the 1854-6 restoration by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Running north from Holy Trinity and Priory Row is the walkway created during 2001-3 as part of the Phoenix Initiative, Coventry's millennium project. This involved the excavation of the medieval site of St Mary's Priory and the construction of the Priory Visitor Centre; finds on display include a well-preserved section of fourteenth century floor tiling from the refectory.<sup>24</sup> Some of the locally-made tiles show armorial motifs.

South of Holy Trinity in BAYLEY LANE is **St Mary's Guildhall**, with medieval floor tiles in the oriel window on the west of the spectacular Great Hall. Upstairs, the Treasury is floored with re-laid medieval tiles which probably came from the Great Hall, and thus would date from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. Just south-east in JORDAN WELL is the former Odeon Cinema, which was built in 1928-30 and opened as the Gaumont Picture Palace in 1931; it is now Coventry University's **Ellen Terry Building**. The architect was Percy Bartlett, chief assistant in the Bristol practice of William Henry Watkins, which designed four Gaumonts during 1931-2.<sup>25</sup> Bartlett's impressive, basically white, modernist faience facade has colourful egyptianate pilaster capitals and a green faience frame to the large central area of fenestration. Next to the old cinema - and in contrasting Edwardian baroque style - is an ornate white faience facaded shop, topped with a balustrade and gleaming dome.

#### Rowley's Green

About a mile and a half of the walls bounding the dual carriageway PHOENIX WAY, about three miles north of the city centre, are faced with over 1.5 million bricks to a design by Derek Fisher. The colours and patterns, which reflect local history and culture, have a vertical emphasis in order to be seen clearly by drivers passing at speed.

#### Westwood Heath

In its early years, the site of the **University of Warwick**, GIBBET HILL ROAD, was a sea of red mud into which white Twintiles fell from the modernist, tile-clad Library and Science Buildings, erected by the progressive architectural practice Yorke, Rosenberg & Mardall (YRM). This was not how it was meant to be. Shaw-Hathernware's 9"x3" Twintiles were widely used in the 1960s to face concrete structures such as railway stations and shopping centres. White Twintiles became a YRM hallmark and the iconic University of Warwick Library won an RIBA award in 1967, the year before completion of the initial phase of building on the Warwick campus. In February 1969, however, the first signs of distress appeared when an area of Twintiles on the YRM-designed Rootes Hall was seen to be bowing out. Worse was to follow. A large slab of tiles and backing soon fell

from the Library, and a survey of the campus - which had been intended as a showcase for tile-clad architecture - revealed numerous areas of concern.

For some time students and staff went about their business in buildings hung with scaffolding, fencing and safety nets, as remedial work was delayed by disputes over liability and the campus became a prime test-case. Litigation dragged on until 1988 and the University eventually had to fund most of the remedial work itself. After overcladding in 1987-8, all that can be seen today of the white-tiled grid blocks, the original architectural conception, is the pristine pair of the Humanities Building and the Physics Building. The latter, completed in 1969, was given special aluminium copings to prevent water accumulation around windows; its appearance shows that properly fixed and protected Twintiles could survive in good condition.<sup>26</sup>

A mile or so north-west of the University at 320 WESTWOOD HEATH ROAD is the **Cable & Wireless College** (1993, architects MacCormac Jamieson Prichard), whose concrete facade is topped by a wave-contoured roof of Hathernware's high-gloss mottled blue faience slabs. This unique roof, which comprises over 27,000 extruded slabs, reflects the changing colours of the sky.

#### GALLEY COMMON

**St Peter's Church** in Galley Common, a few miles west of Nuneaton, was built in 1909 to the design of the influential arts and crafts architect Percy R. Morley Horder (1870-1944). Sir Alfred Hickman, owner of Haunchwood Colliery, partly funded the building, which is an aisled hall with rendered walls of hollow terracotta blocks apparently made in Italy at Rimini (rather than local Stanley Brothers terracotta). The blocks were left bare on the inside walls. The building has been under repair since 2001; amongst other constructional defects, the walls have cracked and distorted.

#### LAPWORTH

The Ireton Bathroom at **Packwood House** (NT) is lined with mainly seventeenth and eighteenth century blue and white Dutch tiles depicting children's games, soldiers, landscapes and biblical scenes, along with a few English eighteenth century delftware tiles. The tiles were probably installed during the 1930s.

#### LOWER SHUCKBURGH

**St John the Baptist Church** was built for George Shuckburgh of nearby Shuckburgh Hall in 1864, soon after he returned from the Crimean War, which ended in 1856. The architect was John Croft, who seems to have been asked to provide a colourful, orientally-inspired building, a contrast to the existing church at Upper Shuckburgh (see below), near the Hall, with its collection of family monuments. Croft's polychromatic interior combined limestone, blue brick and red terracotta, the latter also appearing as coffering in the vaulting; the tower and chancel vaults were clad in mosaic tiling. The Moorish arches, with their serrated edges, are of red brick and hollow red terracotta blocks, making this something of a 'pot church'. Croft may have come across architectural terracotta in Lincolnshire (John Blashfield's works moved to Stamford in 1859), where he built

All Saints Church, Cold Hanworth in 1861-2; this had Minton tile pavements as well as much exposed brick. It appears that Lower Shuckburgh Church is an example of the sporadic use of terracotta which occurred in the 1860s and 1870s, between the 'pot churches' of the 1840s-1850s and the later vogue for terracotta decoration.<sup>27</sup>

#### NUNEATON

Stanley Brothers produced terracotta at their Nuneaton works between 1881 and around 1920. On the southern edge of Nuneaton in HEATH END ROAD are **Sunflower Cottages**, the last remaining pair of several cottages built for Stanley's workers, with much red terracotta ornament including a lion below each finial and the terracotta equivalent of bargeboards. A good example of ornamental buff terracotta can be seen in the town centre at **Barclays Bank** (1896), 7 MARKET PLACE, which was probably built by Stanley's themselves; the architects were the West Bromwich practice Wood & Kendrick, best known for their public house work.

The home of Reginald Stanley (1838-1914), founder of the firm, was **Manor Court** (now a nursing home), MANOR COURT ROAD, which has much Stanley's terracotta decoration, some of which is illustrated in the firm's catalogue. Most attractive is a horse's head on the stables (now a flat in the grounds), supposedly modelled on one of Reg Stanley's favourite horses. Off the same road is **Manor Hospital** (1893), also with a good display of Stanley's terracotta wares, while the chancel pavement of **St Mary's Church**, Manor Court Road, includes fragmental remains of medieval tiles in the form of a wheel of fortune. Finally at ABBEY GREEN, at the north end of Manor Court Road, is a **ceramic column** (of blue glazed bricks and terracotta sunflowers) by Tracey Heyes dating from 2002; it was put up as part of the regeneration of the Abbey Green area.

#### STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Right in the centre of Stratford, on the corner of CHAPEL STREET and Ely Street, is the **HSBC Bank**, built for the Birmingham Banking Company in 1885 (architects Harris, Martin & Harris). Its elaborate external decoration includes fifteen red terracotta relief panels showing detailed scenes from Shakespeare plays; these were designed by the sculptor Samuel Barfield of Leicester, who produced terracotta reliefs for the Leicestershire Banking Company's building in Leicester during the early 1870s and worked on the Birmingham School of Art in the early 1880s. In **Red Lion Court**, a modern shopping precinct, is a set of three tile murals showing the former Flower's Brewery (closed 1968); further from the centre, carved into the wall of the **Fire Station** in MASON ROAD, is a brick relief of a fireman (1951) by the local artist Walter Ritchie (1919-97).

To the south is **Holy Trinity Church** (the burial place of William Shakespeare, restored 1888-92 and 1898), OLD TOWN, where several eight-inch armorial tiles are set into the encaustic tile pavement of the sanctuary. Continue by the river along WATERSIDE to the **Royal Shakespeare Theatre** (1932, architect

Elizabeth Scott), which has five allegorical brick reliefs by the artist Eric Kennington (1888-1960) on its front facade; the bricks were made by S. & E. Collier's of Reading. Nearby is the old theatre (1874-9), now the **Theatre Museum**; a wing containing a library and art gallery was added in the early 1880s, and on its facade are three terracotta reliefs dating from 1886 and portraying *Comedy, History* and *Tragedy*; the sculptor was Paul Kummer (1882-1913).

#### SUTTON COLDFIELD

Half a mile south of the town centre is the Odeon Cinema, Birmingham Road, a mountainous faience-clad structure built in 1935-6 and designed by J. Cecil Clavering, assistant in the Harry Weedon practice which produced ten new Odeons for Oscar Deutsch's circuit during 1936.<sup>28</sup> Its buff faience cladding was supplied by Shaws of Darwen and covered most of the facade, apart from a huge brick slab tower from which a faience fin protruded. The Sutton Coldfield contract was one of thirty-one cinema commissions (including seven Weedon-designed Odeons) carried out by Shaws during 1935-6.<sup>29</sup>

#### WARWICK

There are late fourteenth century tiles, probably originating from the Chilvers Coton tiliary near Nuneaton, in the apartments of Guy's Tower (completed 1394), **Warwick Castle**. Many of the tiles, which have a distinctive pinkish body, bear heraldic designs including the emblem of Warwickshire. The pavement, which was revealed in 2000 and has been conserved by the Jackfield Conservation Studio, is one of the few such intact floors to have been found at a secular site. In the town itself, there is a Godwin tile pavement in the Beauchamp Chapel of **St Mary's Church**.

#### Warwickshire Roundup

The chancel of St John Baptist Church, **Brinklow** has unusual Victorian tiling. There are three medieval tiles on the ledge of the north-east nave window at the Church of St Nicholas and St Peter, **Curdworth**; one tile bears the alphabet (with lines running right to left), another a king's head and the third a flower. A Stanley Brothers 1897 Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee terracotta plaque may be seen on the outside of Jubilee House, 17 Kenilworth Road, **Knowle**. There are decorative wall tiles either side of the wooden reredos at St John the Baptist Church, **Lea Marston**; there is also a Coade stone monument to Mrs Adderley (1784). On the east wall of St George's Church, **Lower Brailes**, are six memorial tiles of a slightly smaller size than normal. There is a brick sculpture entitled *Rugby's Industrial Heritage* (2000) by John McKenna on the outside of the public toilets in North Street, **Rugby**. The interesting sanctuary pavement of the Church of St John the Baptist in the Wilderness, **Upper Shuckburgh**, is probably by Minton's.

In addition, medieval tiles may be found at the following churches: All Saints, Burton Dassett; St Mary and St Bartholomew, Hampton in Arden; St

Nicholas, Kenilworth; St Michael, Maxstoke; Our Lady, Merevale; St Botolph, Newbold-on-Avon; St Editha, Polesworth; St Mary Magdalene, Tanworth-in-Arden; All Saints, Weston-on-Avon and St Peter, Wormleighton.

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