

WORCESTERSHIRE

Inside many Worcestershire churches are still significant numbers of medieval tiles made at the Great Malvern tiliary. Great Malvern Priory itself has a superb display, including wall tiles which retain their original glaze, and there are interesting medieval armorial tiles at St Giles Church, Bredon, although these were made at Droitwich. Notable Victorian and turn of the century sites in the county include the Harris and Pearson office building (1888) in Dudley, where the firebrick manufacturers put on an excellent show of their own ceramic building materials. The Richard Eve Memorial (1902, Doulton) in Kidderminster is the country's best extant example of a polychrome faience memorial. In Worcester, George Gilbert Scott's 1864-74 restoration of the Cathedral included the installation of a beautiful Signs of the Zodiac pavement by Godwin's, while the unique Maw's cuenca-tiled waiting room exteriors at the city's Shrub Hill Station date from 1865. Indeed, apart from the Eve memorial and Dudley's massive 1937 Shaws faience Odeon, there is little of ceramic interest in Worcestershire from the twentieth century. Suggested reading: Nicholas A. D. Molyneux and John E. McGregor, *The Medieval Tiles at Great Malvern Priory* (Friends of Great Malvern Priory, 1997). The *Gazetteer* entry for Worcestershire covers the administrative areas of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council.

BREDON

St Giles Church has a fine collection of floor tiles, including 86 fourteenth-century heraldic tiles on the sanctuary steps; some of the 39 different coats of arms are clearly visible on the risers. There are also groups depicting the months of the year, and all were probably fired at the Droitwich tiliary.¹ The nave is paved with an attractive lozenge tile patchwork in red, yellow and black, the arrangement producing a three-dimensional effect; these tiles are identical to examples found over the border in Gloucestershire at Oxenton Church and nearby Tredington Court. The latter tiles have been found to date from the mid seventeenth to early eighteenth century, thus a probable date of around the late seventeenth century seems appropriate for the Bredon nave pavement.²

CALLOW END

Benedictine nuns moved to **Stanbrook Abbey** in 1838; their red-brick church, designed by E. W. Pugin, was built in 1869-71. Originally a Minton & Co tile pavement, which took E. W. Pugin and John Hardman Powell (1827-94) two days to design, ran throughout the church, but only the choir floor survives following re-ordering in 1971.³ Although the church is a listed building (grade II), the future of the site is in doubt as in 2002 the nuns decided to sell the Abbey and leave Callow End.

DROITWICH SPA

In the centre of Droitwich at **Salters Shopping Centre** (next to the Droitwich Carpets shop) is a 1975 ceramic mural by Philippa Threlfall and Kennedy

Collings which depicts the town's historic buildings; it is about 5' high and 12' long.

Witton

The **Church of St Peter de Witton**, ST PETER'S CHURCH LANE, has fifteenth century tiles around its font and late nineteenth century encaustic tiling by Godwin's.

DUDLEY

The former **Odeon Cinema** (since 1977 a church), CASTLE HILL, was designed by the Harry Weedon practice (job assistant Budge Reid) and opened in 1937. Its massive buff faience facade, by Shaws of Darwen, is broken up in the centre by a series of tall windows between rounded piers.⁴

Brierley Hill

The **Harris and Pearson** office building (1888), BRETTELL LANE, was saved from demolition by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and listed grade II in 1996; from 2003 it has been in the care of the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust. Harris and Pearson moved to the site in 1852; the firm made firebricks, used to line furnaces and kilns, from the high quality Stourbridge clay. Their office building, its every brick made at the works from local clay, uses a remarkable variety of architectural ceramics on its facade. There are glazed and unglazed materials in a variety of colours, unusual glazed fireclay sills to the windows and bold white glazed lettering reading Harris and Pearson, the latter a rare example of Victorian architectural graphics still *in situ*. Inside there are coloured glazed brick walls and good mosaic floors. All the ceramics were made by the company, thus the building acted as a piece of advertising architecture for the ceramics industry. In this respect it is rather more forceful than earlier examples such as the factories of Minton Hollins (1869) in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire and Craven Dunnill (1871-4) at Jackfield, Shropshire, and more akin to Doulton's 1878 Lambeth Pottery.

EVESHAM

There are extensive Victorian tile pavements at **St Lawrence Church**, which is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. Unusual hexagonal tiles and uncommon motifs are visible, and some designs are very similar to those of tile pavements in Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire. As the Dorchester tiles are by Godwin's, this suggests the same manufacturer was responsible for the St Lawrence pavements.

GREAT MALVERN

Great Malvern Priory was founded in 1085, but most of the original structure was swept away during the rebuilding of the church which took place between about 1440 and 1500. Around 1,300 tiles survive from this period, made by the tilers who set up their workshops and kilns in the precinct east of the priory church in the 1450s. Altogether there are at least ten different sizes of tile and over 100 different designs, some of tremendous beauty and complexity.⁵ The floor was paved with plain and two-colour tiles made from local clay; the

decoration, including intricate heraldic motifs, was designed specifically for the Priory. During the nineteenth-century restoration of the church these decorated tiles were mounted on the wall to the rear of the high altar, where they may still be seen today.⁶ The tilers also produced the rectangular wall tiles which flank the high altar's reredos, some of whose decoration featured the dates 1453, 1456 and 1458/9. As their glazed surfaces are still intact, they provide a rare glimpse of how the original floor must have appeared.

The Priory also illustrates the Victorian approach to church refurbishment. Following the discovery of the Priory's medieval kilns in 1833, the antiquarian and architect Harvey Eginton, County Surveyor of Worcestershire, attempted to find modern copies of the tiles. He supplied patterns traced from medieval tiles to his friend Walter Chamberlain of Worcester, who began the manufacture of inlaid tiles in 1836. Chamberlain's exact replica tiles, with their medieval-style rough finish, were used in the refurbishment of several religious institutions including Great Malvern Priory, where they are mounted on the back wall of the sanctuary (Fig 291). These Chamberlain & Co tiles date from the early 1840s. The spectacular Minton tile pavement on the steps leading up to the high altar probably dates from the 1860 restoration work undertaken by George Gilbert Scott. The opus sectile reredos, showing the *Adoration of the Magi*, was supplied by Powell's of Whitefriars in 1884 and is flanked by the same firm's glass tiles.

HALLOW

Just south of the village is the **Parkfield** estate, which was centred on a now-demolished nineteenth century country house. Parkfield's garden is listed in the UK Database of Historic Parks and Gardens, and several estate buildings remain, including two with ceramic interest, the former summer house and games pavilion, both built around 1870-80. The summer house has some exterior tiling, completely tiled interior walls and a patterned tile floor; some of the wall tiling bears images of faces of the gods. The games pavilion is in similar style but even more decorative, with three interior tile panels showing archery, badminton and croquet.

HANLEY SWAN

St Gabriel's Church was designed by George Gilbert Scott and built in 1872-4. Its reredos, showing Gabriel and Michael in opus sectile, was supplied by Powell's of Whitefriars in 1873 although the figures were drawn by Clayton & Bell, the London church decorating firm; this was the first of several Clayton & Bell orders received by Powell's. Flanking the reredos are large areas of unusual glassy floral tiling, probably also supplied by Powell's.⁷ Nearby, in what was once the grounds of Blackmore Park, is the **R. C. Church of Our Lady and St Alphonsus** (1844-6, architect Charles Hansom). The excellent metalwork was designed by A. W. N. Pugin, as was the fine Minton encaustic tile pavement.⁸

KIDDERMINSTER

BRINTON PARK, a public park on the southern side of Kidderminster, was given to the town in 1887. Following the death of Richard Eve (1831-1900), a prominent

local freemason, a committee was convened to recommend a suitable memorial, and suggested a drinking fountain to be sited at the highest point of the park, near the bandstand. The Kidderminster architectural practice begun by J. T. Meredith (1834-98) and Joseph Pritchard provided a design which was commissioned from Doulton's of Lambeth. The sculptor John Broad provided the portrait roundel of Eve which sits within a magnificent polychrome faience fountain, and the **Richard Eve Memorial** was unveiled in 1902 (Fig 292). The structure is basically square in cross-section and 29 feet in height, with four inset relief panels depicting stylised fish and further panels giving details of Eve's life; the predominant colours are brown, green and gold.⁹ The cost of the memorial was £540.

Joseph Pritchard designed several other memorials in conjunction with Doulton's, but this appears to have been the first in the series. They collaborated on the Coronation Fountain at Leyton, which probably dates from 1903, and the Queen Victoria Memorial Fountain in Malacca, produced in 1904. It is certainly the most lavish of the extant Doultonware memorials, although other good examples remain at Burslem Cemetery, Stoke-on-Trent (Hulm Memorial, 1905) and Hartlepool, County Durham (Henry Withy Memorial Fountain, 1902). These memorials are smaller in size than Doulton's large-scale water fountains, notably their Victoria Fountain (Glasgow, 1888), but much more colourful. Given the significance of the Eve memorial, it is unfortunate that it has now fallen into disrepair and stands cordoned off behind metal barriers.

LITTLE COMBERTON

Amongst the collection of about 150 reset fifteenth century tiles in the sanctuary at **St Peter's Church** are two unusual square memorial floor tiles to Richard Neale (d1753) and William Neale (d1754), rector. They may have been produced by Godwin's, who made the encaustic tile pavement in the choir which was installed around 1886 when the original tiles were relaid. It has good four-tile and sixteen-tile groups reproducing medieval tile patterns (Fig 293).

NEWLAND

The architect Philip Charles Hardwick began work at Madresfield Court near Great Malvern in 1863, adding the chapel in 1867 (its arts and crafts decoration dates from the early twentieth century) and making alterations to the house for the Lygon family, the Earls Beauchamp. A mile north-west of the house in the village of Newland, Hardwick had started building **St Leonard's Church**, next to the Beauchamp Almshouses, in 1862; the church was completed in 1864. Its opulent interior is little changed, and includes a complete scheme of wall paintings as well as a striking geometric and encaustic tiled pavement running throughout.

TENBURY WELLS

Oldwood Common

The **Church of St Michael and All Angels** (1854-6) and its associated music college were built for the musician and composer Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley,

who found most of the £20,000 cost himself. The architect for all the works was Henry Woodyer, who provided his patron with a large church, its dramatic Minton floor of blue, black and white tiles becoming increasingly complex towards the east end; the sanctuary floor is mosaic.¹⁰ Although the college closed in 1985, the church continues as a parish church; it is situated in the hamlet of St Michaels, two miles south-west of Tenbury Wells, on the A4112 to Leominster at Oldwood Common.

WORCESTER

Worcester Cathedral, on COLLEGE GREEN beside the River Severn, dates back to the seventh century; although the present building was begun in 1084 and the crossing tower was rebuilt in 1374, much of its external appearance is strongly Victorian. The fine medieval tile pavement which floored the Old Singing School was recorded and published in 1858, but now the carpet pattern - a typical Malvern combination of foliage and heraldic designs - has completely worn away.¹¹ However, some inlaid tiles probably dating from the second half of the fourteenth century can still be seen in the passage leading to the Old Singing School. George Gilbert Scott restored the Cathedral in 1864-74, introducing a choir pavement of Godwin tiles set between bands of marble and stone. In the sanctuary is a superb circular Signs of the Zodiac tile scheme, also by Godwin, but which may be covered by carpet.¹²

From the Cathedral, head north along FRIAR STREET. At the junction with Pump Street is the ornate mostly brown and green faience facade of the **Eagle Vaults PH**, built for the brewers around the turn of the century; good lettering and heavy doorcases ensure this little pub makes the most of its corner site. Turn left along Pump Street then right into HIGH STREET to see another attractive and eye-catching building occupying a corner site, the former Cadena Café (probably early twentieth century, now **Alliance and Leicester Bank**) at 59-60 High Street; dark red terracotta dressings emphasise the entrance. In 1999 it was converted to flats and offices by DJD Architects, using replacement terracotta from Hathernware. On the right in CORNMARKEt is the **Exchange PH**, another essay in brown faience for Mitchells & Butlers albeit slightly less flamboyant than the Eagle Vaults. Continue northward along High Street to the corner of Sansome Street and THE FOREGATE, where the red brick and pinkish terracotta of the huge **Hop Market Hotel** towers above the road. It was put up in 1900 by a local building firm, Bromage & Evans; the terracotta has good lettering, swags and figurative plaques. Slightly west in THE BUTTS is the **Paul Pry PH** (1901, architect Frederick Hughes), its splendid central hallway tiled from floor to ceiling.

Just north of the centre in THE TYTHING, a continuation of Foregate Street, is **St Oswald's Hospital**, built in 1873-4 at the site of an ancient almshouse and designed by the local architect Henry Rowe, the city surveyor. The interior walls of the chapel (1878, also by Rowe), were finished in brick with bands of red and buff tiles, with the addition of porcelain tiles supplied by Messrs Grainger in the chancel; an encaustic tile pavement ran throughout.¹³

Shrub Hill

In what was the industrial eastern suburb of Shrub Hill is **Shrub Hill Railway Station**, where two linked waiting rooms of 1865 on platform two were built of cast iron framing (by the local Vulcan Iron Works) with colourful inset panels of cuenca tiles by Maw & Co, who left Worcester for the Ironbridge Gorge in 1852. Originally there were similar exotic structures on platform one.

Worcestershire Roundup

The mid-nineteenth century pavilions in the wall surrounding the forecourt of Hanbury Hall (NT), **Hanbury**, have colourful inner wall dados of Minton's majolica-glazed tiles. Godwin's manufactured the colourful 1867 encaustic tile pavement at St Michael's Church, **Little Witley**.¹⁴ Fifteenth century tiles from the site of the north transept were relaid in the south-east chapel of **Pershore Abbey** in 1862. St Nicholas Church (restored 1884-5), **Pinvin**, has a fine Godwin encaustic pavement including unusual four-tile and sixteen-tile groups; the squirrel motif is particularly notable. St Mary's Church, **Sedgeberrow**, was restored by the architect William Butterfield in 1866-8 and has colourful chancel wall tiling (even brighter than his usual work) and a pavement by Godwin's. There is elaborate terracotta decoration on the Hagley Road Centre of Stourbridge College, built as a library and technical college in 1903-4 and 1908-9; it stands on Hagley Road, **Stourbridge**. There is a large collection of fifteenth century Malvern tiles in the nave of St John the Baptist Church, **Strensham**, which is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

In addition there are numerous medieval tiles at the following churches: St James, Bredicot (porch); St Mary Magdalene, Broadwas (chancel); St Michael, Churchill, near Worcester (chancel); St John Baptist, Claines (displayed in north porch); St Leonard, Cotheridge (armorial tiles in chancel floor); St John the Baptist, Fladbury (also Victorian pavement); St Peter, Flyford Flavell (tower, also Victorian pavement); St John the Baptist, Halesowen; St James, Hindlip; St Martin, Holt; St James, Huddington; St Edburga, Leigh (also 1855 pavement); St Giles, Little Malvern (also known as Little Malvern Priory); St Nicholas, Middle Littleton; St Peter, Pirton; St Andrew, Shelsley Walsh; St Michael, South Littleton; St Nicholas, Warndon; and St Anne, Wyre Piddle.

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