

## **Memorial and commemorative tiles of the nineteenth and early twentieth century church**

**Lynn F. Pearson**

A wide variety of materials has been used in the manufacture of church memorials, from the stone slabs and brasses of the medieval era to the massive marble wall monuments of the renaissance, and the inscribed tablets and opus sectile panels of the Victorian period. Most research has concentrated on early memorials, with even the relatively common Powell's of Whitefriars late nineteenth and early twentieth century opus sectile work being generally overlooked; listed building descriptions often include only pre-nineteenth century memorials. The plight of the Victorian ceramic memorial is worse still. To all intents and purposes these foot-square, diagonally-set ceramic tiles might as well have been invisible, poised as they are on the cusp of art and craft, neglected by historians of the church, ceramics and art alike. However, their geographical distribution, manufacture, design and use by the church community together constitute a subject worthy of serious study, to which this article is but a brief introduction.

In the medieval period there was some limited use of ceramic tiles to decorate tombs and record dates, for instance at Malvern Priory, where the sides and ends of a thirteenth century tomb (of a knight templar) were covered in armorial tiles, and a vicar's earthenware tomb-slab (1640) had a border of inlaid tiles bearing an inscription chronicling his death.<sup>1</sup> However, aside from a memorial tile bearing the date 1808 at St Peter's Church, Hayton, Nottinghamshire, tiles were rarely used again as church memorials before the gothic revival of the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century, individual encaustic and other tiles were occasionally being used for the decoration of gravestones (for example at Ilam, Staffordshire), but richer ceramic decoration of churchyard graves was rare, although terracotta had found acceptance as a suitable material for crosses, tombs and even mausoleums. The revival of the ceramic tile as a suitable material for church memorials and commemorative plaques resulted in the installation of a variety of such tiles in British churches, but the 12" square tile, set diagonally on the inner wall of the church, proved the most popular. This article will concentrate on the development of these 12" tile memorials, while setting them in the context of other types of inscribed and dated (not pictorial or biblical screeed) ceramic plaque, for instance lists of previous vicars, and the commemorative tiles designed by the architect Ernest Geldart for his many church restorations. An appendix to the article records the locations of all known nineteenth and early twentieth century memorial tiles which can be described as 12" square and set on the diagonal (abbreviated hereinafter to 'type A' tiles), as well as locations of other memorial and commemorative tiles, including a small sample of Ernest Geldart's work.<sup>2</sup>

Type A tiles are found in greatest profusion in Staffordshire, where installations of 25 or more memorials may be seen in Stoke-on-Trent at Hartshill, St Peter ad Vincula (Stoke), Trentham and Blurton churches, but they have also been recorded in Derbyshire (including a large installation at the former St Michael's Church, Derby), Devon, Essex, the Isle of Man, Shropshire and other locations in

Staffordshire, while 12” square floor memorial encaustic tiles have been found in Gloucestershire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire. It is highly likely that 12” wall and floor memorial tiles exist in many other locations, while smaller commemorative tiles, for instance those recording the initials of a benefactor, have been found in Northumberland and Essex. Single commemorative or memorial tiles could be set on the wall, windowsill or floor, but ceramic wall memorials were often installed as a set of individual tiles at dado height, and could also be set within a broader ornamental tiled band, for example at St Petrock, Exeter and Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent. In the case of large decorative installations, it is probable that the entire band of tiles was added as a whole, having been the subject of subscriptions raised at the church.

There are few design records for these memorials to assist in dating their manufacture, but St Catherine’s Church, Barmby Moor, East Yorkshire was the recipient of gifts of tiles from Herbert Minton in 1849 and 1851; the incumbent in 1850 was the Reverend Robert Taylor, brother-in-law of Herbert Minton.<sup>3</sup> The tile pavement includes inscribed memorial and commemorative 12” floor tiles recording Minton’s donation and other matters, so it appears that Minton’s were capable of making unglazed 12” memorial encaustic tiles by at least 1850. It is unclear when Minton’s first produced high-quality glazed 12” encaustic tiles suitable for wall memorials, but as the firm introduced a new line of majolica glazes at the Great Exhibition of 1851, a date during the early 1850s seems probable.<sup>4</sup> There appear to be no exact medieval precedents for the shape, size and design of type A tiles, which appear more akin to early square-set-on-diagonal memorial stone floor slabs and wall tablets.

The unglazed Minton’s memorial tile in the *British Galleries 1500-1900* of the Victoria and Albert Museum is dated 1861, although it could, of course, have been manufactured well after that date.<sup>5</sup> The tile is an irregular hexagon in shape, that is the top and bottom of a standard type A tile have been removed; it has a red body and is described as encaustic stoneware. The inscription is in white and gold on a black ground, and the general design of the tile is very similar to one shown in a Minton Hollins & Co catalogue dating from around 1870 and held by the National Art Library.<sup>6</sup> The earliest of the firm’s catalogues known to include illustrations of memorial tiles dates from around 1864, and shows two basic tile designs along with a drawing of a church interior where the tiles are used as a frieze, within an ornate tiled border, and also form part of the encaustic pavement.<sup>7</sup> A report on the ‘ceramic art’ exhibits at the 1873 Vienna International Exhibition spoke approvingly of the 12” square memorial encaustic tiles shown by Minton Hollins & Co,

‘designed chiefly for insertion in the walls of churches or chapels. They bear heraldic devices or simple inscriptions, and are variously ornamented and colored. Designs are furnished by them at the works, and any inscription to order.’<sup>8</sup>

In the mid-1870s Maw & Co were experimenting with four-tile floor memorials; early drawings in a design book (1874-97) at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Library show several attempts at layouts for lettering, with the encaustic tiles set diagonally and the lettering running across the joints between the

tiles, which proved the main design difficulty.<sup>9</sup> A memorial in this style has been found at Whittington Church in Derbyshire for one Samuel Atkin, who died in 1884.

Although many type A tiles are of relatively simple design, with an inscription on single colour ground, a standard format of an inscription set inside a frame eventually evolved: the frame comprised a square with semicircles protruding from each edge, thus giving a basically cross-shaped form which almost filled the tile. The border area between this form and the edge of the tile was often decorated. This standard format design was one of the two appearing in the 1864 Minton Hollins catalogue; one such tile, dated 1872 and marked Minton & Co (by then a trademark of Minton Hollins), was included in the *Fired Earth* exhibition catalogue.<sup>10</sup> The inscription was often topped by a cross, and a motif - a christian symbol, initials or a coat of arms - could be below, although there is wide variation. Most type A tiles appear to be encaustic, with an inscription in slip or enamel underglaze, but a few are wholly encaustic and some are low relief.

Although most memorial tiles would probably have been individually commissioned, a few, for instance those commemorating particular bishops and which would be purchased by several churches, had standard designs, for instance the Bishop Rowley Hill (1887) tiles found in Isle of Man churches, and the Bishop Lonsdale (1867) and Bishop Selwyn (1878) tiles seen in many Staffordshire churches. The Bishop Lonsdale tile is illustrated in the 1870 Minton Hollins catalogue. A very broad generalisation suggests that designs grew more complex from the 1860s into the 1880s, but there are many exceptions. The most unusual design on a type A tile was found at St Peter ad Vincula, Stoke-on-Trent: a buff ground tile of 1873 with a delightful hand-painted floral wreath surrounding an italic inscription. It seems likely that the tile manufacturers (and possibly firms specialising in church decoration) would have kept a variety of memorial designs in stock, including several standard borders. A complex border is shown in the Campbell Brick & Tile Co memorial tile for Colin Minton Campbell (1875), in the collection of the Gladstone Working Pottery Museum; this is a clear glazed, completely inlaid tile in black, red and buff.<sup>11</sup> At Patshull Church in Staffordshire is an even more decorative 1863 memorial, comprising an elongated diamond-shaped buff encaustic tile set within a colourful Minton majolica garland of flowers and leaves, in high relief and topped by white dove.

There is little information available on how the memorial tiles were installed, but it is known (from a scrapbook kept by the vicar) that Trentham's north wall tiles were installed by 'Mr Minton's workmen' on the 22nd October 1860.<sup>12</sup> The tiles, which had been purchased by individual families as a means of remembrance, helped to strengthen the wall. However, the dates of many of the tiles in the centre of the wall are post-1860, leading to the conclusion that spaces must have been left for the insertion of further tiles at a later date; perhaps some form of substitute was used until the tiles were available. As Minton's workmen installed the Trentham tiles, it seems probable that this form of wall tiling was seen as a potentially profitable market by the firm. All the stranger, then, that these type A wall memorial tiles do not feature in many of their trade catalogues.

The earliest known use of such type A wall tiles appears to be at St Peter ad Vincula, Stoke, where the rector, Sir Lovelace Tomlinson Stamer (1829-1908),

initiated their use in 1859. Stamer, whose uncle had been the previous rector, took up the Stoke living in January 1858 and moved to Stoke in March 1858. It is possible that he was one of the large crowd of mourners who attended the funeral of Herbert Minton, who died on the 1st April 1858 and was buried at nearby Hartshill Church shortly afterwards. A memoir of Stamer, who later became Bishop of Shrewsbury, describes the introduction of memorial tiles to St Peter ad Vincula as follows:

‘Before concluding this chapter mention may be made of an interesting scheme that Mr Stamer set on foot as early as the beginning of 1859 for the better preservation of the memory of the faithful departed. It was in December 1858 that an old Wesleyan died at the age of eighty-three in Cross Union Street, Stoke. The Rector had visited him frequently and found him so godly that the teacher almost became the taught. To perpetuate this man’s memory the first memorial encaustic tile was placed in Stoke Parish Church by the Rector out of “reverence for this aged servant of Christ”, to use words written long afterwards by the Bishop of Shrewsbury. These tiles became a great feature of the church. They spread like a dado along the north, south, and west walls, and the names include men and women of every degree from bishops down to potters and people in humble circumstances whose example as faithful Christians is thus kept alive. No doubt just at first even this innovation was viewed with some suspicion. To-day the very fact of their having been originated by their dear old Rector would make every inhabitant of Stoke cry “Hands off!” should any one attempt their removal.’<sup>13</sup>

Hartshill Church was built by George Gilbert Scott for Herbert Minton in 1842. It may have had wall memorial tiles in the nave, and must surely have included some form of tiled memorial to Minton himself, but there is no evidence on this point as the church was burnt out in 1872, although rebuilt immediately afterwards. Robert Minton Taylor, who ran his Fenton tileworks from 1869 to 1875, installed the present wall memorial tiles (which include Taylor’s own memorial tile) from 1872 onward, while Herbert Minton’s floor memorial tile in the choir, above his tomb, also appears to date from the rebuilding. It is possible that if type A memorial wall tiles were indeed present at Hartshill prior to 1858, that this may have been the source of Sir Lovelace Tomlinson Stamer’s decision to introduce them at Stoke.

Apart from memorials, tiles have been used within churches to commemorate events such as the installation of new windows, as at St Mary Magdalene, Newark, in 1887 and 1890, and the restoration and rebuilding of churches; tiles recording the latter often formed part of the decorative schemes designed by the architect and priest Ernest Geldart (1848-1929), whose only parish was Little Braxted, Essex (1881-1900). Geldart, whose architectural career encompassed 163 projects, of which 57 were in Essex, worked for the firm of church decorators and furnishers Cox & Sons (later Cox, Sons, Buckley & Co), from at least 1881.<sup>14</sup> In their catalogue-cum-handbook of 1871, the firm offered hand-painted tiles as one of many decorative features which they could supply to ‘garnish’ a church.<sup>15</sup> In 1899, in a second revision of the handbook, now *A Manual of Church Decoration and Symbolism*, Geldart suggested that:

‘The record of the consecration, restoration, or enlargement of the Church, or a part of it, may be made in many ways: (a) by a carved inscription upon a stone inside or out, *flush* with the wall, and not a “tablet”; or (b) the record may be fixed on glazed tiles and built in. Such an example, by the way, exists in Malvern Abbey.’

Although it seems likely that Geldart had seen (or at least knew of) type A memorial tiles, his views on design, and lettering in particular, led him to use tiles in a rather different manner. On inscriptions, his *Manual* opines:

‘most beautiful... inscriptions are those... that are simply painted in one colour (preferably black) with, perhaps, red initials or border lines’<sup>16</sup>

Thus the list of previous vicars at St Nicholas, Little Braxted, written on tiles by Geldart himself and installed during the 1881-6 additions and alterations, followed these principles, as did his trademark tile panels at others churches, including St Martin, Colchester. The list of previous vicars was intended to emphasise the continuity of the church; other tiled examples, in different style (one signed Doulton) and of slightly later date, have been found in two Devon churches, Bridestowe and Mary Tavy. It seems certain that Geldart’s influence and views on the use of tiles played a strong part in the decision to begin the unusual tile frieze at All Saints, Brightlingsea; its 213 six-inch tiles were installed around the nave from 1885 as memorials to those connected with Brightlingsea who had been lost at sea. Geldart (who first used commemorative tiles in 1882) occasionally preached at Brightlingsea, having met its vicar for the first time in late 1884.<sup>17</sup> The Brightlingsea tiles, which are hand-painted overglaze on white ground, were initially supplied by Cox, Sons, Buckley & Co.<sup>18</sup> A similar frieze of memorial tiles, in this case to deceased communicants, exists at St Mary’s Church, Southery, Norfolk.

Although the more common type A glazed encaustic wall memorial tiles were probably being manufactured as early as the 1850s, and have been seen bearing dates as late as the 1920s, they enjoyed national popularity from the 1870s to the 1890s, during the lengthy mourning period of Queen Victoria following the death of Prince Albert in 1861. Opus sectile memorials, made by Powell’s of Whitefriars, were in vogue at the same time; being larger and more complex than individual tiles, they would inevitably have been more expensive. An angel, carried out by Powell’s in opus sectile in 1878, for instance, cost nine guineas, while the most expensive single memorial tile in the 1864 Minton Hollins catalogue was priced 25 shillings (the cheapest was fifteen shillings).<sup>19</sup> Opus sectile, and to a lesser extent tiles, were used in the design of First World War memorials in churches and in other public buildings, but the individual tile memorial disappeared from the post-1920s church, although the traditional square-on-diagonal shape is still being repeated in other materials, for instance a 1999 memorial brass wall plate at St Peter’s Church, Wolverhampton.

The need for commemoration of the individual persisted inside the later twentieth century church and was most often filled by the personalised stained glass window, but nothing ever took the exact place of the cheap, easily accessible type A memorial tile, which gave the less wealthy the chance to be commemorated within the church. Perhaps the nearest modern equivalent is the gravestone which bears a photographic portrait of the deceased. It seems likely that memorial tiles, which are

of increasing interest to family historians, will be discovered to exist in many more locations throughout Britain. Although it is clear that Minton Hollins & Co was a major manufacturer of these tiles, it seems likely that several other substantial late nineteenth century tile makers would have produced their own variations. It is hoped that this article will encourage further research into the design, manufacture, location and use of memorial tiles.

## **Appendix**

### **Nineteenth and early twentieth century memorial and commemorative tiles in British and Isle of Man churches: a descriptive list**

Abbreviation: type A tile - 12" square tile, set diagonally on wall.

- 1) Former St Michael's Church, Derby, Derbyshire: originally had well over 20 type A memorial wall tiles, many of which were removed (to Jackfield Tile Museum) when the church was converted to offices, although a good selection remains at the former church. One tile, with a colourful coat of arms beneath the inscription, is for George Augustus Selwyn (1809-78), First Bishop of New Zealand, Ninetieth Bishop of Lichfield.
- 2) Whittington Church, Derbyshire: in the Maw encaustic pavement is a four-tile buff and red memorial tablet (set on the diagonal) for Samuel Atkin (1884); the style of lettering and straightforward layout look very similar to tablets shown in a Maw & Co design book dating from the 1870s to the 1890s.
- 3) Bridestowe Church, Devon: 28-tile plaque in brown glazed ceramic frame bearing list of previous rectors, latest date 1889, signed Doulton of Lambeth, on north wall; the church was restored around 1890.
- 4) St Petrock's Church, Exeter, Devon: on the walls of this much altered church is a band of colourful glazed tiling (including many alternating red and green triangular tiles) with around five type A memorial tiles, highly glazed and with dates ranging from 1857 to 1925. All have the typical square and semicircles design, with dark border and pale blue ground under a clear glaze; above the inscription is a splay-ended latin cross, and below is a small flower in green and white. (This design is shown in the 1870 Minton Hollins catalogue.) It is likely that all, with the exception of the 1925 tile, were installed at the same time, perhaps the late 1880s.
- 5) Hatherleigh Church, Devon: single type A tile set on angled window surround in north wall, date 1877; unglazed tile with square and semicircles design (dark border, black ground, small white flowers above and below inscription), within highly glazed, mostly black frame, all flush with sill.
- 6) Mary Tavy Church, Devon: in the south porch is a 3' high by 2' wide turquoise-framed ceramic plaque, bearing a list of previous rectors ('intruders' during the 1649-60 interregnum in red lettering) within an ornate border, unsigned (although damaged where signature might have been), latest date 1892; the plaque was probably added in 1893 when the south transept was built.

- 7) Ardleigh Church, Essex: the chancel encaustic tile pavement, which includes examples of the 'Green Man' design, is by Godwin's and was part of the 1882-3 scheme of restoration and decoration; there is a single personal commemorative 6" buff tile in the choir pavement, dated 1890, with black gothic lettering. On the wall below the south chancel window is a highly glazed 7-tile plaque installed during the completion of the chancel decoration in 1894-5 by Ernest Geldart. Its black lettering on cream ground is largely a commemoration of T. W. Perry, who was vicar in 1872-91 and was responsible for Ardleigh's restoration.
- 8) All Saints Church, Brightlingsea, Essex: extraordinary series of 213 six-inch tiles (hand-painted overglaze on white ground) installed as a frieze around the nave from 1885 as memorials to those connected with Brightlingsea who had been lost at sea; the earliest is dated 1872, the latest 1988. In the tower is a single memorial wall panel, comprising a four-tile square set on the diagonal, the design being an enlarged version of the square and semicircles with dark border and buff ground, and clear glaze; the inscription, commemorating restoration of the tower and dated 1886, has a cross above and fleur-de-lys beneath.
- 9) St Martin's Church, Colchester, Essex: restored by Ernest Geldart 1890-1; an ornate 8-tile plaque was installed at the west end of the north wall in 1892, recording the partial destruction of the tower in 1648. A smaller glazed tile plaque in the south aisle records the restoration date (1891) and the names of the churchwardens in strong gothic lettering.
- 10) St Nicholas Church, Little Braxted, Essex: additions by the rector, Ernest Geldart in 1881-6; the 'before' and 'after' plans are recorded on a single 6" tile in the vestry. A vicars list inscribed on glazed tiles, in Geldart's own handwriting, is on the west wall of the north aisle.
- 11) Rawreth Church, Essex: rebuilt by Ernest Geldart in 1880-2; glazed tile plaque with inscription recording donors of the reredos (this was Geldart's first use of his trademark tiled plaques, in 1882).
- 12) St Mary's Church, St Briavels, Gloucestershire: two memorial tiles set in plain geometric pavement.
- 13) Andreas Church, Isle of Man: single type A memorial wall tile to Rowley Hill (1836-87), Bishop of Sodor and Man; clear glaze, inscription on cream ground above coat-of-arms, decorative border. All the island's Rowley Hill tiles have the same central layout, although there are slight differences in the borders.
- 14) Ballaugh Church, Isle of Man: five type A wall memorials, including a Rowley Hill (1887), three local clergy (1777, 1876 and 1894), one of whom translated the Bible into Manx, and a Royal Navy petty officer (1904), the design of the latter incorporating an anchor beneath the inscription. Apart from the Rowley Hill, the borders of the tiles all have the same design, the inscriptions being on pale ground under clear glaze.
- 15) Bride Church, Isle of Man: four type A tiles, all dated in the 1880s, including a Rowley Hill.
- 16) St Paul's Church, Foxdale, Isle of Man: single Rowley Hill tile set proud of wall.

- 17) Laxey Church, Isle of Man: single Rowley Hill tile.
- 18) St Olave's Church, Ramsey, Isle of Man: single Rowley Hill tile.
- 19) Hilgay Church, Norfolk: tiles dating from around 1898-1902 record departed communicants.
- 20) Southery Church, Norfolk: Ernest Geldart worked at the church during 1899-1919; there are two tiles in the porch, recording its building and dedication (1904), while another Geldart tile concerns the organ (1899). In addition, a series of tiles installed from around 1895 (in a band around the nave and into the chancel) records deceased communicants, while other tiles record gifts and events, including the floods of 1916.
- 21) St Mary's R. C. Cathedral, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland: a tile frieze runs at windowsill level around the body of the cathedral; it was added in 1901-2. The frieze, mainly in mauve and yellow, carries names of Northumbrian saints (south) and English martyrs (north) on scrolls and within canopies. Most of the martyrs were priests and many have now been canonised. The maker of these idiosyncratic tiles is unknown, but is likely to have been the stained glass and church decorating firm Atkinson Brothers of Newcastle upon Tyne.
- 22) St Lawrence Church, Warkworth, Northumberland: choir has plain red and black tiling apart from four 6" encaustic tiles, one near each corner, bearing the letters JC and four roundels in buff on black ground; these are probably the initials of the benefactor who funded the extensive 1860 restoration of the church. The patterned encaustic pavement in the sanctuary has typical Minton designs.
- 23) Hayton Church, Nottinghamshire: memorial tile dated 1808.
- 24) St Mary Magdalene Church, Newark, Nottinghamshire: at least ten commemorative and memorial floor tiles dotted about throughout the church, set diagonally into the tile pavement or stone floor. Most are the square with semicircles design, unglazed, although two, concerned with installation of glass in the tower (1887) and clerestory (1890) windows, are plain buff encaustics. Some have black ground with a red border: 1885, 1886, 1908 and 1914, the latter being to the borough surveyor, while others (1905, 1916) have dark red ground within a decorative border.
- 25) Diddlebury Church, Shropshire: several groups of four 6" (or smaller) tiles set in a Godwin encaustic tiled pavement; each group set on the diagonal. These Victorian tiles are a memorial for an earlier death and include dates involving the change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, which took place in September 1752.
- 26) St Chad's Church, Prees, Shropshire: tile above south doorway records the 're-edifying' of the church in 1864
- 27) Shrewsbury Abbey, Shropshire: single type A tile on north wall of nave, towards east end, to clergyman (1887), colourful with coat of arms. Highly glazed and lettering appears to be raised, in marble frame.
- 28) Holy Cross Church, Ilam, Staffordshire: four 8" square majolica wall memorial tablets dated 1867, 1873 (two) and 1878; also on at least two graves

- in churchyard, a single 6" glazed encaustic tile, set on diagonal, with inscription in buff on red ground (1866, 1874).
- 29) Christ Church, Lichfield, Staffordshire: single type A memorial wall tile at rear of church, 1883, ornate lettering and border, standard square and semicircles pattern.
  - 30) Patshull Church, Staffordshire: unusual diamond-shaped buff encaustic memorial tile set within colourful Minton majolica garland surround, in high relief and topped by white dove; set on north wall of chancel. The plaque is a memorial to the youngest child of the 5th earl of Dartmouth, who died in 1863 when aged just over one year.
  - 31) Blurton Church, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: series of approximately 25 type A tiles with the standard square and semicircles pattern; set in two rows, one above the other, within a broad, highly glazed band along south wall. The memorial tiles have buff ground within a darker border, and the band also includes plain black and red tiles. Dates are between 1863 and 1902 for all but two memorials at the east end; these, dated 1910 and 1922, are actually four-tile groups although of the same size and basic design as the rest. The display includes a Bishop Selwyn tile, identical to that found at St Michael's Church, Derby, and a Bishop Lonsdale (1867) tile, both bearing a coat of arms. This is a surprisingly large installation for a small church.
  - 32) Bucknall Church, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: a few tile wall memorials including one for Bishop Selwyn.
  - 33) Dresden Church, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: three type A tiles (1899, 1903 and 1915) set separately on south aisle wall, each within a broad tea-pot brown glazed ceramic frame. All with similar, relatively plain design, standard layout with buff ground and brown border.
  - 34) Hartshill Church, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: north and south nave walls dominated by highly glazed frieze of around fifty type A tiles within a brightly coloured dado. There is also a floor memorial tile in the choir to Herbert Minton (1793-1858), whose grave lies beneath. The church was built in 1842, but burnt out in 1872 then restored immediately afterwards; the memorial tiles were added by Robert Minton Taylor from 1872 onward. The tiles, many of which have a pale blue ground, are of standard format but much more ornate design than those at nearby St Peter ad Vincula, Stoke. The memorial tile frieze also covers the sloping window ledges, although these tiles are smaller, plainer and have buff ground. The dado tiles on north and south walls appear to have been installed at different times. The (probably) earlier wall has standard format type A tiles with no frames set on a band of square and triangular red, black and pink tiles, with a geometric, mostly red and black, band below. On this wall, the memorial tiles include one to James Buckley (1864), a 'faithful servant' of Herbert Minton & Co, a Bishop Lonsdale (1867) tile of the usual design but with pale blue ground, and an attractive Bishop Selwyn (1878) tile with buff border and raised lettering on a rich deep brown ground. In contrast, memorials (dates 1860s to 1880s) on the opposite wall concern parishioners and others directly connected with the church, and are all of the same basic design (pale blue ground) but within

- individual frames on a red and black zigzag band, with mostly red tiling below. They include a tile to Robert Minton Taylor (1842-85), reading 'He interested himself in this church'; indeed he was Hartshill's honorary organist during 1860-78.
- 35) Penkhull Church, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: single type A tile (1870) of standard square and semicircles format on a gravestone in the churchyard; pale blue ground with buff and red border, splay-ended cross above inscription and white flower below. The design is very similar to that of Minton Hollins wall tiles at St Petrock's Church, Exeter; there are slight differences between the borders.
- 36) St Mark's Church, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: the sanctuary has a tile pavement by Minton & Co with memorial tiles of standard format to Bishop Lonsdale (1867), the same design as at Blurton although here within a largely blue floral motif frame, and an unusually decorative example to Bishop Selwyn (1878), within a similar ornate frame. In the choir are two memorial tiles: one of standard format to a chorister (1882), on buff ground with the winged lion of St Mark below the inscription, and a smaller tile (standard format, buff lettering on red ground) to 'William Ireland Choir Boy' (1872). The chancel was rebuilt in 1866-7.
- 37) St Peter ad Vincula, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: dramatic display of well over sixty type A glazed wall tiles in a double row around nave of church, with further square and type A wall tile memorials in the porch and several floor tile memorials (mostly an unusual mauve colour) in the sanctuary tile pavement. The wall tiles commemorate parishioners and others connected in some way with Stoke, and were first introduced in 1858 by Sir Lovelace Tomlinson Stamer, rector of Stoke during 1858-92. The memorials are dated between 1848 and 1908, with many from the 1860s and 1870s (normally plain buff tiles with decoration only at the corners) and the 1890s (standard format with strong border patterns, buff ground). In the double row of type A tiles, the newer (generally 1880s onward) memorials form the upper row, so it is possible that the tiles were installed singly, the lower row being first; the interior of the church was renovated in 1888. The most unusual memorial is a type A buff tile (1873) with a beautifully hand-painted floral wreath surrounding an italic inscription; this is on the north aisle wall in the lower row, tenth tile from the east end.
- 38) Wellington Church, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: there are wall tile memorials here, but they are hidden behind wooden boarding.
- 39) St Mary and All Saints Church, Trentham, Staffordshire: the church was built in 1842-4, and has a frieze of around 35 type A highly glazed memorial tiles on the north wall, within a red and black tiled band having biblical quotations (in buff on red) above and below. The memorial tiles are mainly of standard format with buff ground, but six have dark ground (brown or black) and are more decorative; there is also a single tile with pale blue ground. Dates recorded range widely, from the 1780s to the 1880s. At least some of the tiles were installed on the 22nd October 1860 by Minton's; however, given that the dates of several tiles are post-1860, it seems that spaces must have

been left in the arrangement for the insertion of further tiles. The body of the tiles was red clay from Cobhurst. A series of floor memorials form part of the centre aisle tile pavement; at the east end is an unglazed encaustic tile to Herbert Minton, followed by six to Trentham's vicars and curates. The first two (1884, 1908) are unglazed encaustic tiles, the next three (up to 1958) are brown mosaic, imitating the style of the tiles, and the last (1977) appears to be marble. There are also unglazed versions of the standard Bishop Lonsdale (1867) and Bishop Selwyn (1878) tiles in the nave pavement.

- 40) St John's Church, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire: two type A wall memorial tiles in the east wall of the south chapel (behind curtain). One is a standard Bishop Lonsdale (1867), the other - to the incumbent of St John's (1857) - has black ground under clear glaze, with a coat of arms (in slip colours) below the inscription. Both have narrow encaustic tile frames.
- 41) St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton: on the west wall, above steps leading to west gallery, are five type A and one 8" square (set square) wall memorials. The single small tile (1877) has a highly decorative design in pale green and white, painted overglaze. Of the five type A tiles, two (1866, 1879) are unglazed with buff lettering on almost black ground and very little decoration; one (1875) has white ground in the form of a cross and is glazed; the remaining two have the standard square and semicircles format: one is unglazed (1864) with white lettering on black ground, the other (1874) glazed with sky blue ground.
- 42) St Catherine's Church, Barmby Moor, East Yorkshire: the church (nave and chancel rebuilt in 1850-2) was the recipient of gifts of tiles from Herbert Minton in 1849 and 1851, the latter comprising tiles for the nave and aisles; the chancel is also paved. The incumbent in 1850 was the Reverend Robert Taylor, brother-in-law of Herbert Minton, and the church contains inscribed floor tiles recording Minton's donation (a standard 12 inch square and semicircles format unglazed floor tile) and commemorating members of the family who died during 1843-61, including Catherine (1805-61), the wife of Robert Taylor. Assuming Catherine was a Minton, the tile manufacturer Robert Minton Taylor may have been the child of Catherine and Robert Taylor.
- 43) St John's Church, Rhosymedre, near Ruabon: the church was extensively restored during 1885-8, part of the funding coming from J. C. Edwards, owner of the nearby Trefynant Works, which produced encaustic tiles amongst other wares. Edwards died in 1896, and the colourful glazed tile reredos (1906) was made at the Trefynant Works and presented to the church in his memory. It includes a two-tile panel recording details of its donation.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank James Bettley, Chris Blanchett, Jean Foster, Roger Hensman, Tony Herbert, Sue Hudson, Joan Jones (Royal Doulton Museums Curator), Hans van Lemmen, the Scouloudi Foundation (in association with the

Institute of Historical Research) and the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, for their help in the preparation of this article.

## References

1. Arthur Lane, *A Guide to the Collection of Tiles (Victoria and Albert Museum)*, 2nd ed., (HMSO, London, 1960), p35; William P. Blake, *Ceramic Art*, Van Nostrand, New York, 1875, p78.
2. I am greatly indebted to James Bettley for allowing me to include information from his research into Ernest Geldart.
3. Lynn Pearson, *Minton Tiles in the Churches of Staffordshire*, (Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society, 2000).
4. Joan Jones, *Minton: The first two hundred years of design and production*, (Swan Hill Press, Shrewsbury, 1993), p174.
5. Victoria and Albert Museum collection; the tile is museum number C14-1999.
6. Minton Hollins & Co, *Patterns of tile and mosaic pavements, wall tiles*, (Minton Hollins, Stoke-on-Trent, 1870), V&A National Art Library, TL.MIN4.1.
7. Minton Hollins & Co, *Mosaic pavements*, (Minton Hollins, Stoke-on-Trent, 1864), V&A National Art Library, TL.MIN4.2.
8. William P. Blake, *Ceramic Art: A report on pottery, porcelain, tiles, terra-cotta and brick*, (Van Nostrand, New York, 1875), p77.
9. Maw & Co Collection, D/MAW/9/2 Modern Encaustic Tile Design vol 4, (1874-97), design numbers 611-613; Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Library.
10. Hans van Lemmen and John Malam, eds., *Fired Earth - 1000 Years of Tiles in Europe*, (Richard Dennis Publications and TACS, Shepton Beauchamp, 1991), catalogue number 164.
11. D. S. Skinner and Hans van Lemmen, eds., *Minton Tiles 1835-1935*, (City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, 1984), catalogue number 195.
12. June Steed, *Trentham: A church through history*, (Panda Press, Stone, 1994), p71.
13. F. D. How, *A memoir of Bishop Sir Lovelace Tomlinson Stamer*, (Hutchinson, London, 1910), pp77-8.
14. James Bettley, "'The Master of Little Braxted in his prime": Ernest Geldart and Essex, 1873-1900', *Essex Archaeology and History*, 31 (2000), pp169-194.
15. Edward Young Cox, *The art of garnishing churches at Christmas and other festivals*, 3rd ed., (Cox & Sons, Ecclesiastical Warehouse, London, 1871).
16. Ernest Geldart, *A Manual of Church Decoration and Symbolism*, (A. R. Mowbray, Oxford and London, 1899), pp62, 67.
17. Personal communications, James Bettley, 25th August 2002, 17th September 2002 and 7th October 2002.
18. Alfred L. Wakeling and Peter Moon, *Tiles of Tragedy: Brightlingsea's unique maritime memorial*, (Ellar Publications, Stockton-on-Tees, 2001).
19. Dennis W. Hadley, *James Powell & Sons: A listing of opus sectile, 1847-1973*, (2001).