

## THE BRICKWORKS and THE VILLAGE



In the 1960s the village of Rowlands Castle was expanding. The development of the central land between Bowes Hill and Links Lane added many good quality homes. Few of these new residents would have been aware that a few hundred yards to the south of their prestigious developments was an industrial remnant, virtually unchanged from Victorian times.

This was a large area of brickyard workings, established during the 1880s, which had completely altered the landscape just out of sight of these residents. Here a small number of workers toiled daily in very harsh, almost Victorian primitive working conditions, mostly out of doors and in all weathers.

On the margins of these industrial workings were woodlands and ponds, some quite idyllic in appearance, mainly known only to the longstanding original residents of the village. These were often used as a recreational space.



The photograph shows Roma Sullivan with her father

The ponds were an ideal place for a spot of fishing and local schoolboys spent much of their leisure time there. Indeed, some of the fish stock had been imported to these ponds by local boys who had 'liberated' a bucket of live fish from Petersfield lake, managing to bring them back to Rowlands Castle on the train to improve their sport. If they kept out of the way of the brickyard foreman, they could pass many afternoons in the woods.

The ponds were popular as a space away from the village for young courting couples and workers from the brickworks, who also fancied their luck at a bit of lunchtime fishing. Although still there the ponds are now completely overgrown and masked by fifty years of self-sown trees, which also obscure the edges of the pit workings seen above as they appeared in the 1950s.



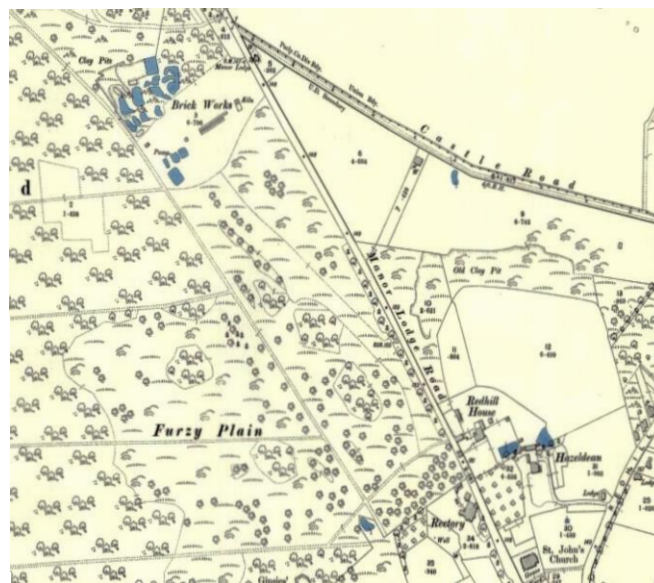
This view is looking across the fields towards Woodberry Lane.

The brickyard buildings have long been demolished (with only one original structure remaining). The site has been a builders' merchants for many years, although this may change to residential use in the near future.

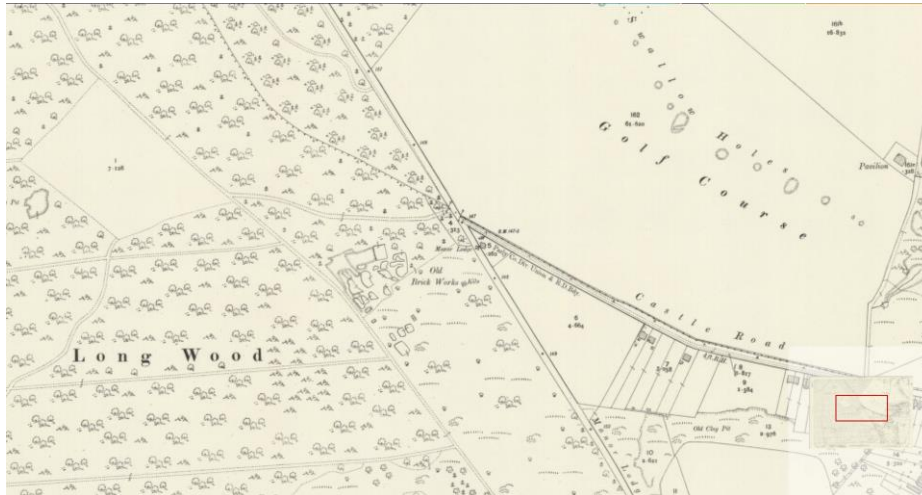


The ponds were probably man made and the result of earlier clay workings at the site before the establishment of 'Rowlands Castle Brickworks'. There are a number of ponds and old clay pits around the western edges of the village. Where the Charles Church estate is now in 'The Triangle' was the Red Hill brickworks (the clue being the obvious name of 'Red' Hill) visible on 1870 OS map above and a few yards into Havant Thicket opposite the end of Castle Road there are numerous man made ponds at either side of the track, running at right angles to the Havant Road.

These are still shown as brickworks on the 1895 OS map below.



But by the 1907 revision they have gone :



Some of these are the sites of seasonal brickworks, established where demand arose at, or near, planned brick buildings to make bricks on site, negating the need for transport of the very heavy bricks over poor unmade roads. The clay was dug from April through the summer and then left over the following winter to be broken down by frost, to allow it to be worked by hand. The winter made the clay soft and removed unwanted oxides. The bricks were formed in wooden moulds by hand and stacked into a clamp, dried and fired on site.

A brickworks in Durrants on the bends by the Rowlands Castle village sign, at the east end of Hammonds Lands Copse was used to build the second Leigh Park House.

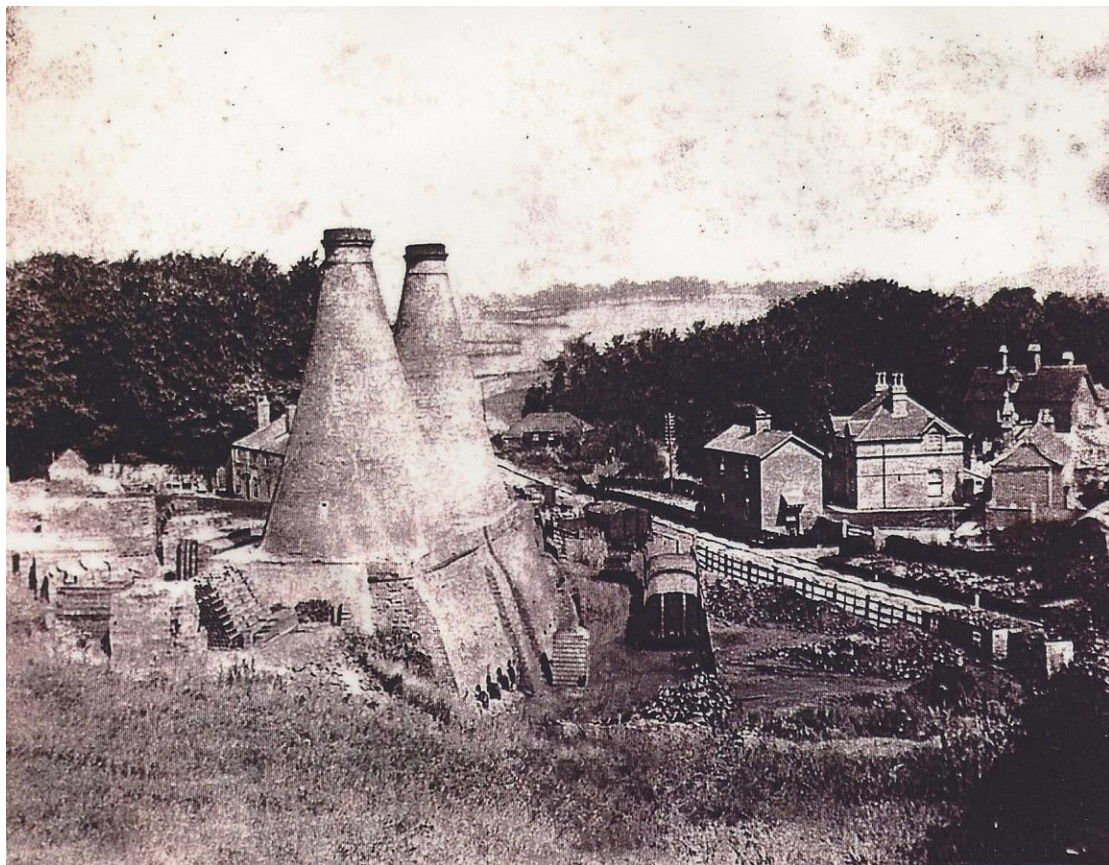


There was a clay pit, a clay mill and two kilns, which could still be identified until a few years ago. The fired bricks were taken by cart down a track to North Lodge and across Beacon Field to the building site.

This house was built by William Henry Stone. He bought the estate for £60,000 from the heir of Sir George Staunton, who had died in 1859. The new house was designed by a former university acquaintance of Stone, Robert William Drew. It was built on the highest point of the estate overlooking Leigh Water, by a Gosport firm Rogers and Booth. It was completed in 1865 and the original Staunton house was demolished. In 1868 a new drive and entrance were created to a new North Lodge, also designed by Drew, opposite the Staunton Arms. This still exists and shows the neo-gothic style of the new mansion house.

William Stone's mansion house was demolished by Portsmouth City Council just after the Second World War to facilitate the development of the new post war housing estate of Leigh Park.

Rowlands Castle brick was originally widely used in the South of England. Locally it can be seen in a number of village houses, especially in Redhill Road, where there are a couple of gable ends with terracotta decoration and some terraced company houses where some of the workers at the yard would have lived.



In the photograph there are the bottle kilns, which were thought to be used to make the fancy terracotta ornamental bricks and tiles and which were probably demolished in the early 1900s. There is a row of four company workers' cottages on the site visible behind these kilns which were two storeys high with back to back chimney stacks on the party walls. They are visible on the 1897 Ordnance Survey map. By the 1909 map it appears that the office (later known as the 'Samples House') was built adjoining the cottages, using their end wall as the back of the building. The cottages appear to still be there in 1932, but by 1963 they had been demolished leaving only part of one cottage adjoining the office.

On the Eastern side of the railway line are more workers' houses, known as Beechwood Cottages (long derelict and demolished in the late 1980s to allow the second phase of Glendale to be built). Old St. John's school records show Benjamin John Dennett living at these cottages called 'Brickfields'. Alongside these cottages is Glen House, which still exists as a private dwelling, but was originally the manager's house and is a great example of Rowlands Castle bricks. Both are accessed from Woodberry Lane past a pair of fine brick pillars, with terracotta decoration, which still exist and marked the original entrance to the works, using its own railway crossing to access the yard. (This access was stopped with the electrification of the tracking 1939 and the brickyard lane access used today for Keyline became the sole entrance).



The 1920s photograph shows Mr. Sullivan, the father of Mrs. Foster who still lives in the village and who is fondly remembered as the 'dinner lady' for many of the children at St. John's school in the 1970s and 80s. He lived at a railway cottage alongside the railway crossing. One of his jobs was to take the morning papers from the steam trains as they passed en route for London. They were then delivered to the village houses by Mr Joe Jacobs who still lives here.

The brick houses on the roadside along Woodberry Lane (near the 30mph sign) are thought to originally have been built as show houses for the company.

The front of the Robin Hood public house uses Rowlands bricks.

The Six Bells pub in Havant has a row of Rowlands decorative tiles.

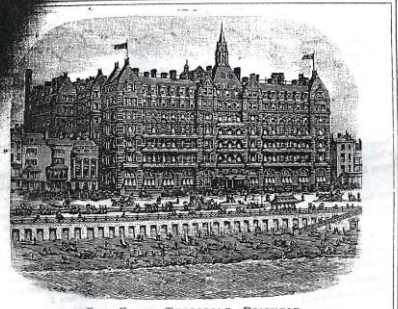
St. Andrew's church Eastney was built of Rowlands brick in 1905 and it is thought that St. Agatha's church in Landport, Portsmouth was built of Rowlands materials in 1894.

The brickyard' owner at the end of the nineteenth century, E.P. Bastin, published an illustrated priced catalogue, and a rather poor photocopy of the front cover which proudly lists more of the buildings using Rowlands Castle brick facings and its inner pages show the wealth of different designs produced.

BRICKS, TILES, AND TERRA COTTA. 55

**P. BASTIN,**  
BRICK, TILE, AND TERRA COTTA WORKS,  
ROWLANDS CASTLE, HANTS.

RED & RICH RED FACING & MOULDED BRICKS & TERRA COTTA



**GROS HOTEL METROPOLE, BRIGHTON.**

ARCHITECT: ALFRED WATERHOUSE, R.A. (PROPERTY OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS). THIS HOTEL BUILT FOR THE GORDON HOTEL, LIMITED, BY MR. THOMAS HOLLOWAY, IS ENTIRELY FACED WITH ROWLANDS CASTLE RED FACING BRICKS.

ALSO SELECTED FOR FACINGS

DITCHAM HOUSE, NEAR PETERSFIELD . . . . . MR. ARTHUR W. BLOMFIELD, ESQ. F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT.  
 LYTHE HILL HOUSE, HASLEMERE . . . . . G. MITCHELL, R.A., ARCHITECT.  
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 PALACE COURT, BAYSWATER, W. . . . . WILLIAM HARVEY, ESQ., ARCHITECT.

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A—BRICKS, TILES, AND TERRA COTTA. 57

**E. P. BASTIN,**  
ROWLANDS CASTLE BRICK AND TILE WORKS.

ABRIDGED PRICE LIST.

BEST DARK RED FACINGS, HAND-MADE		GOOD RED FACINGS	
THICK	MEDIUM	HARD RED PAVING BRICKS, 3 IN.	RICH RED PAVING, 5/4 INCH, AND 1/2 INCH.
per 1000	per 1000	per 1000	per 1000
10/6	9/6	12/6	11/6

PRICES OF THE ABOVE ON APPLICATION

**RED MOULDED BRICKS.**

PLATE I.—3 INCH MOULDED BRICKS AS HEADERS AND STRETCHERS.

Pattern Nos.	per 1000	per 1000
1, 2, and 3 per 1000	10/6	11/6
4 to 22	9/6	10/6
23 and 24	10/6	11/6

PLATE II.—MOULDED CILLS, JAMBS, PLINTHS, AND COPINGS.

Pattern Nos.	per 1000	per 1000
101, 102, and 103	10/6	11/6
104, 105, 106, 107, and 108	9/6	10/6
109 and 110	11/6	12/6
111	10/6	11/6
112 to 123	10/6	11/6
124	10/6	11/6

PLATE III.—MOULDED CILLS, JAMBS, PLINTHS, AND COPINGS.

Pattern Nos.	per 1000	per 1000
125, 126, and 127	10/6	11/6
128, 129, 131, and 132	9/6	10/6
133	10/6	11/6
134 and 135	10/6	11/6
136	10/6	11/6

PLATE IV.—PANELS AND KEY BRICKS.

Pattern Nos.	per 1000	per 1000
1, 2, and 3	10/6	11/6
4, 5, and 6	9/6	10/6
7, 8, and 9	10/6	11/6

PLATE V.—RIDGES AND ROOFING TILES.

Pattern Nos.	per 1000	per 1000
1, 2, 3, and 4	10/6	11/6
5	9/6	10/6
6 to 16	10/6	11/6

PLATE VI.—FINIALS.

Pattern Nos.	per 1000	per 1000
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68	9/6	10/6
69	10/6	11/6
70	9/6	10/6
71	10/6	11/6
72	9/6	10/6

PLATE VII.—CHIMNEY POTS, CHIMNEY DIVISIONALS, &c.

PLATE VIII.—IMPROVED TIE BRICK.

PLATE IX.—FLOWER VASES.

PLATE X.—GARDEN EDGING.

Illustrated Catalogue, with full-size Sections and full Price List, forwarded on application.

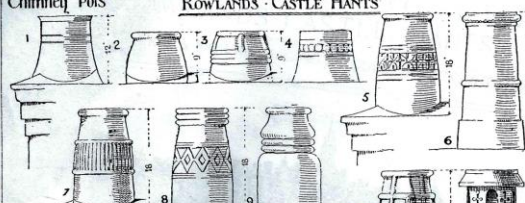
Delivered into trucks at Rowlands Castle, L. & S. W. Railway, the purchaser paying Railway Carriage. Available on the 10th of the Month following delivery, and are then subject to 25 per cent. discount.

WORKS: "BASTIN, ROWLANDS CASTLE."

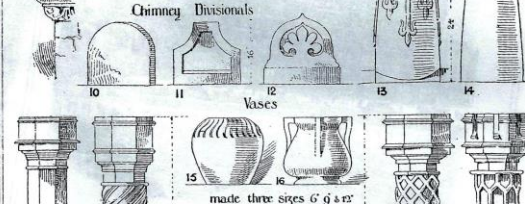
64 A—BRICKS, TILES, AND TERRA COTTA. PLATE 7.

**THE "ROWLANDS CASTLE" BRICK & TILE CO.**  
ROWLANDS CASTLE HANTS


Chimney Pots




Chimney Divisionals



Vases



Garden Edging



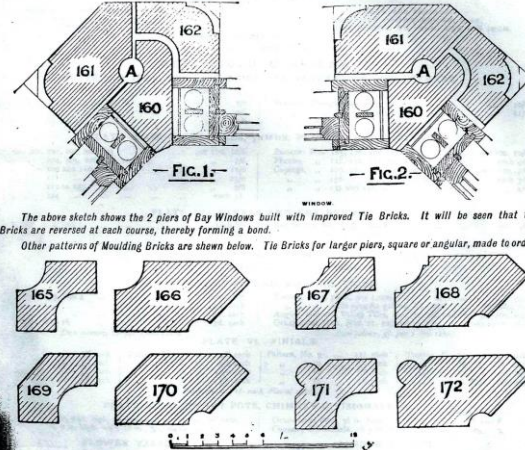
John S. Gorder

A—BRICKS, TILES, AND TERRA COTTA. 65

**E. P. BASTIN,**  
ROWLANDS CASTLE BRICK & TILE CO., HANTS.

IMPROVED TIE BRICKS FOR PIERS OF BAY WINDOWS, ETC.

HOLLOWAY & BASTIN'S PATENT APPLIED FOR



SCALE OF INCHES.

The above sketch shows the 2 piers of Bay Windows built with improved Tie Bricks. It will be seen that the Bricks are reversed at each course, thereby forming a bond.

Other patterns of Moulding Bricks are shown below. The Bricks for larger piers, square or angular, made to order.

Improved Tie Bricks for the construction of angle or square piers, specially adapted for projecting bay windows, &c. The piers may be further strengthened by iron bars built in the brickwork if desired in the recess marked A.

**ADVANTAGES.**—No cutting of bricks and no waste of bricks for forming inside piers, great saving of time. The Tie Bricks are made reversible and headed so as to ensure a good bond at every course, and when built in cement will form a strong and solid pier as one of wrought stone work of the same section.

Perfect shape, the faces and angles being quite true, every brick repeats itself in each course with accuracy.

The ordinary construction of piers rubbish or shapless bats are often worked in, which instead of giving strength are actually dependent on the strength of the cement or mortar used, to keep them in position.

By specifying the use of the Improved Tie Bricks Architects may feel assured that the Piers throughout will be equally strong and will have the appearance of soundness.

These patterns of Bay Windows Tie Bricks are kept in stock, any other patterns will be promptly made to order.

**FOR PRICES SEE ACCOMPANYING PRICE LIST.**

Many of the bricks were stamped RC in the frog, but some have the imprint Bastin after the managing director of the time, and some roofing tiles had Rowcas imprinted on them.

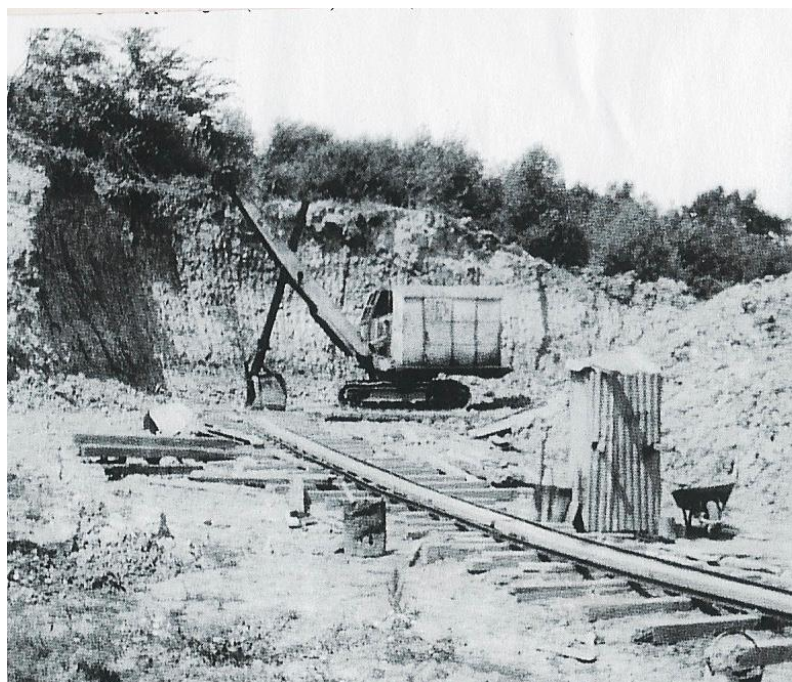


The terracotta and mounded brickwork production appears to have been relatively short lived as there are no buildings constructed in the twentieth century with these decorations, presumably accounting for the bottle kiln demolition in the early 1900s.

Originally all the machinery used in operating the brickyard was steam driven and because of its age, steam was visible leaking from all the pipe work running throughout the buildings in the 1950s. The first day worker arrived on site at 5 am to fire up, getting up steam in the boiler for work to start at 7.30 when the main body of the workforce arrived (although the leakages often meant that it took until 10 am for the mill to start properly).

In later years some of the workers came from Leigh Park, which had started to be built in 1949, mainly as a Portsmouth overspill and as a replacement for bomb damaged homes. In the initial years of the estate there were limited working opportunities locally, the first factory not opening in South East Leigh Park Industrial estate until 1954 (Minimodels Ltd.).

H. Winnicott, a Portsmouth builder, had bought the brickyard in 1959 (having already bought the large house, Deerleap, just to the north of the brickyard in 1939) and modernised the machinery with the addition of a large 175 hp electric motor, which drove the main mill by a belt.

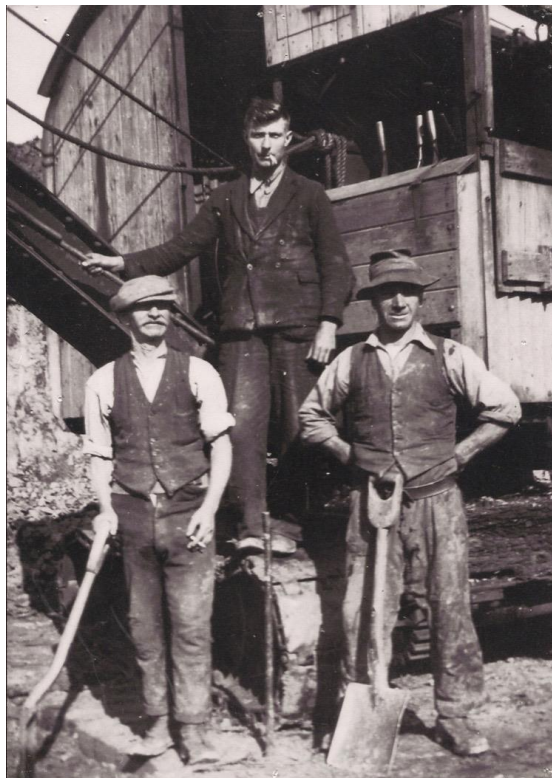




The brick making process started in the pit, where conditions could be dreadful, with the ground sticky and covered in puddles. There was no real shelter, apart from a tin shack with a bench and there were no toilets. In the winter the workers would light a brazier made from an old oil drum to keep warm.



The clay was beneath the top soil, and the first job was to remove this manually (a couple of inches to about two feet in depth) to prevent soil and grass getting into the clay and spoiling the machinery. The clay was dug out using a 10 ton 19RB Ruston Bucyros digger, with a lift up bucket to remove it from the pit, which had a face almost thirty feet deep.





Curiously there was an association between the company and the London Brick Company in the 1950s. In the above photographs Jim Price, the digger driver, who lived in Finchdean, was the only employee under the LBC wing. He would go by train to their London office to hand in his time sheet every Friday night.



Clay is put into a side tipping metal wagon. Each one would hold enough clay to make 500 bricks, about a quarter of a ton in weight. These wagons were pushed by a pit boy solely by manual effort along a two foot narrow gauge industrial style rail track, erected on the pit floor and moved as clay extraction progressed across the pit area. Due to the extremely uneven pit floor, the track had to be constantly packed under the sleepers to try to obtain a reasonably stable, level surface.

The wagons were pushed to the bottom of the incline, which led to the mill, a distance of up to 400 yards, depending where on the pit face clay extraction was operating. If the wagons gained momentum on a downhill slope, the pit boy would jump on the back of the wagon and control the speed by a rudimentary wooden block jammed against the wheel to slow progress. There was no proper brake on these wagons.

It was not an unusual occurrence for a wagon to derail, usually remaining upright, but with the front or rear wheels off the track, causing a halt to proceedings. A shout of "skip off" would see workmen running from other jobs until enough were gathered to manhandle the wagon and its contents back

on track using crow bars. Occasional impromptu afternoon breaks were engineered by sabotage 'allowing' wagons to derail!

There was a siding at the foot of the incline to let full wagons pass empty ones.



There would usually be three wagons, one loading, one full ready to be hauled up the slope and one unloading into the mill.

Part of the incline was curved and the wagon rope was guided by central rollers to enable the wagons to stay on the track.



The wagon was attached to a wire hawser and pulled up the incline by steam powered machinery, until the electric motor was installed, to the top of the two storey crushing mill building. (The lower part of this building is still visible and is the last remaining original brickyard construction. It is used at the time of writing as a store by Keyline, builder's merchants.)

The mill buildings were mainly of brick with leaking corrugated iron roofs and with many broken windows and poor lighting.

The mill building then had three storeys and the incline let the clay start at the top storey.

It was tipped into a hopper which led to a pair of 38 hundredweight rollers produced by a Derby firm of clay working equipment, Bennett and Sayer. A similar grinding mill is at Bursledon brickworks.



The rollers went around in large trays with grills in their bases. The grinding mill broke up any lumps in the clay and this then fell onto a grating (3/4 -5/8 inches in size). The clay was pushed through this by rotating scrapers. There were few stones in the clay and these were also crushed by the rollers. The clay then passed down a shoot to more slow worm fed rollers, which produced a thin clay sheet. However as the rollers and machinery wore, the gap between the rollers grew and the thin sheet became much thicker than intended. (So much so that towards the end of the brickyard's life a fist could fit between the rollers).



The clay then passed onto a receiving bed where it was extruded into a continuous brick sized sausage, lubricated by used diesel oil. This was a very messy job.

The workers' name for this was the 'bow-wow mouth'. Another man cut this into 6 foot lengths, which was pushed sideways through cutting wires to create the bricks. Sometimes these wires would snap,

especially if there was grass or flints in the clay. The bricks were often distinctively marked if the wires were not clean. The photograph shows the mill wire cutting machine.



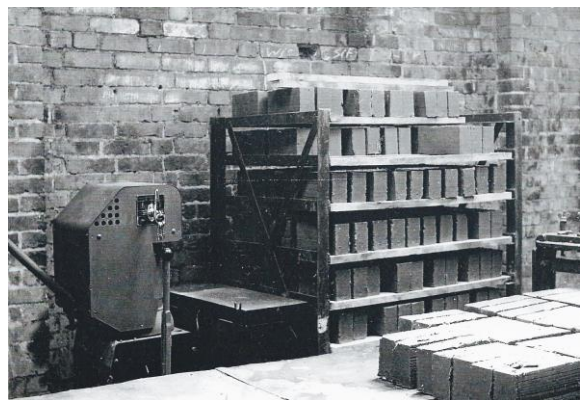
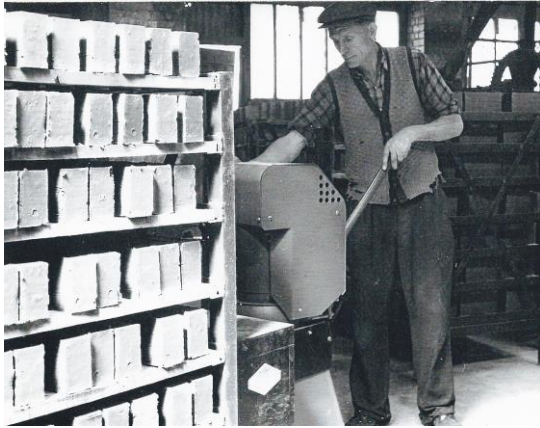
The bricks were originally loaded 60 at a time onto barrows and taken to the drying room to be stacked in pyramids. Care was necessary in loading and unloading the unstable barrows or the

worker could be caught rather painfully by an upending barrow. Once mastered workers could run pushing the barrows the fifty yards to the drying rooms. (Occasionally workers would put lumps of clay in the path of their friends' barrows causing them to upend).

In the late 1950s Mr. Winnicott asked Phillips Ironworks at Finchdean to make iron stillages on wheels to replace the wheelbarrows. The iron frameworks to make these came from Harry Pounds scapyard in Portsmouth (the site of which is still visible to the East of the M275 and now only contains two enormous ex Vietnam war LARC American amphibious vehicles, each weighing 100 tons).

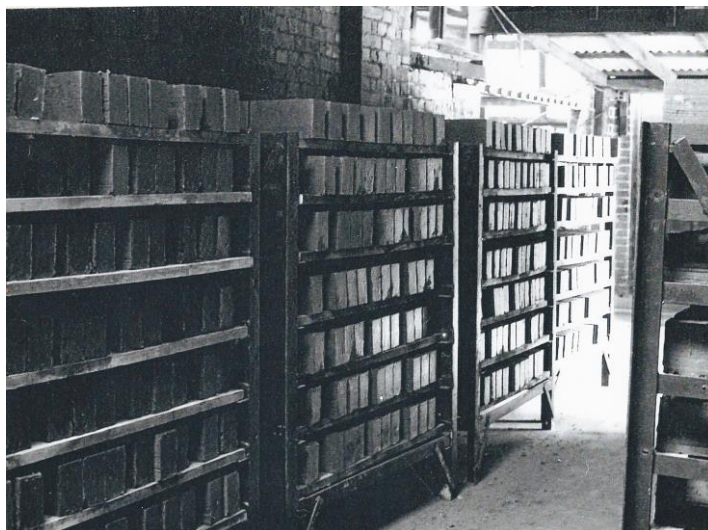


Pound's yard had a mountain of ex army beds and these had their springs chopped out on site to make a square iron frame. Phillips would then cut the ends off the beds with an oxy-acetylene cutter and take them back to Finchdean by lorry. They were then cut to length with a guillotine cutter and spot welded to make the stillages, which were then transported to the brickyard. Each stillage would hold 150 bricks laid on strips of 2" by 1" timber to allow the air to circulate.



The stillages were towed by battery powered trolleys, unless they had not been charged or had broken down, when the old hand barrows had to be used again.

The drying facilities at the yard were poor despite Mr. Winnicott installing drying heaters.



'Setters' would walk up and down the drying room selecting the bricks for the kiln. Ideally the 'leather hard' bricks went at the bottom of the kiln chamber and the wet at the top. A chamber would be 12 to 13 feet deep and often contained only wet bricks. The weight of the bricks then caused the bottom ones to go banana shaped.

The main kiln was the 'Hoffman' style. It had 16 interlinked chambers and the fire was continuous and stoked from above every 20 minutes with half a shovelful of coal, or more often latterly with coal dust to keep the fires going. There was a screw handle opening plate in each corner of the kiln to increase the draft to keep the fires going. If, as was common, too much wet instead of dried clay was in the kiln a large amount of steam would be produced, which made it difficult to keep the fire in. The firing point was slowly moved around the chambers.

The fires were stoked all day. During the night a solitary worker stayed on site to maintain the fires and wheel barrows of coal to make piles in readiness for the day shift. It is thought that Mr. Winnicott would some nights sit in his Deerleap study to look for the puffs of smoke created every twenty minutes or so, as the fire was stoked. The brickyard had its own railway siding, facilitating the delivery of coal for the fires and the transport of bricks towards their destination.

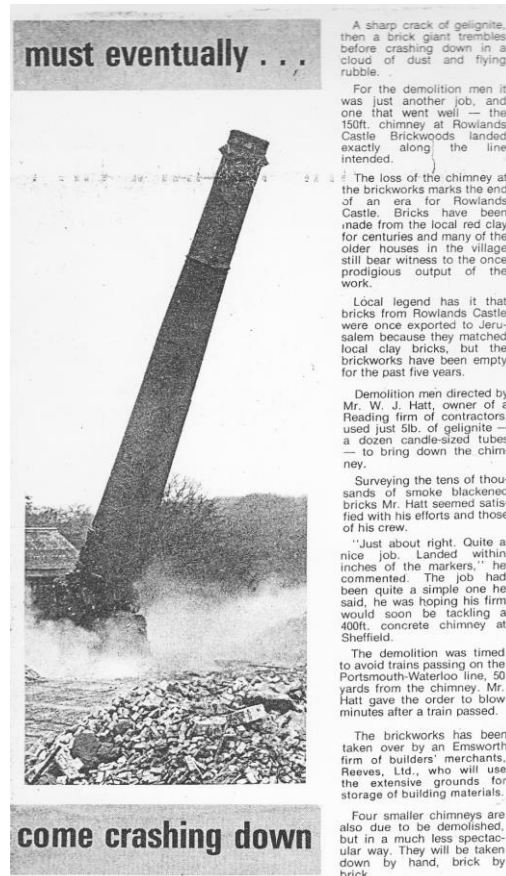
Although in its heyday there were as many as one hundred workers, by the early 1960s there were 30 workers in the yard.



Roughly 3 were in the pit, 6 in the mill. There was a foreman, a driver, 5 setters and 5 drawers. These latter selected the bricks to be taken from the cooling chambers of the kilns after the fires had moved on. The bricks were stacked into heaps and then loaded onto lorries by hand to be transported to their final destination. Sadly in later years the quality was not the best and the brickyard struggled to compete with new, large brick manufacturers together with new developments in building technique using less brick and more concrete, which had originally been used solely for flooring. By the mid 1960s workers would often be laid off, to be only taken back on when a new contract for bricks was



obtained. Like many other small brickyards it was finally forced to close, shutting the gates the last time in 1968.



A sharp crack of gellignite, then a brick giant trembles before crashing down in a cloud of dust and flying rubble.

For the demolition men it was just another job, and one that went well — the 150ft. chimney at Rowlands Castle Brickworks landed exactly along the line intended.

The loss of the chimney at the brickworks marks the end of an era for Rowlands Castle. Bricks have been made from the local red clay for centuries and many of the older houses in the village still bear witness to the once prodigious output of the work.

Local legend has it that bricks from Rowlands Castle were once exported to Jerusalem because they matched local clay bricks, but the brickworks have been empty for the past five years.

Demolition men directed by Mr. W. J. Hatt, owner of a Reading firm of contractors, used just 5lb. of gellignite — a dozen candle-sized tubes — to bring down the chimney.

Surveying the tens of thousands of smoke blackened bricks Mr. Hatt seemed satisfied with his efforts and those of his crew.

"Just about right. Quite a nice job. Landed within inches of the markers," he commented. The job had been quite a simple one he said, he was hoping his firm would soon be tackling a 400ft. concrete chimney at Sheffield.

The demolition was timed to avoid trains passing on the Portsmouth-Waterloo line, 50 yards from the chimney. Mr. Hatt gave the order to blow minutes after a train passed.

The brickworks has been taken over by an Emsworth firm of builders' merchants, Reeves, Ltd., who will use the extensive grounds for storage of building materials.

Four smaller chimneys are also due to be demolished, but in a much less spectacular way. They will be taken down by hand, brick by brick.



The 154-foot-tall brickyard chimney was finally demolished in 1971. It was used to exhaust the waste gases from the Hoffman kiln, and which in its day was the only obvious external sign visible from the village that the brickyard existed. To avoid crushing the surrounding buildings, which hemmed the chimney stack in on three sides, it had to be dropped into a narrow gap towards the railway line and finding the right demolition expert initially proved difficult. Reeves, builders' merchants at Emsworth, intended to use the site as storage space and employed Faulkners Public Works of Waterlooville to clear the site.

The Hampshire Telegraph article above shows the demise of the main chimney.

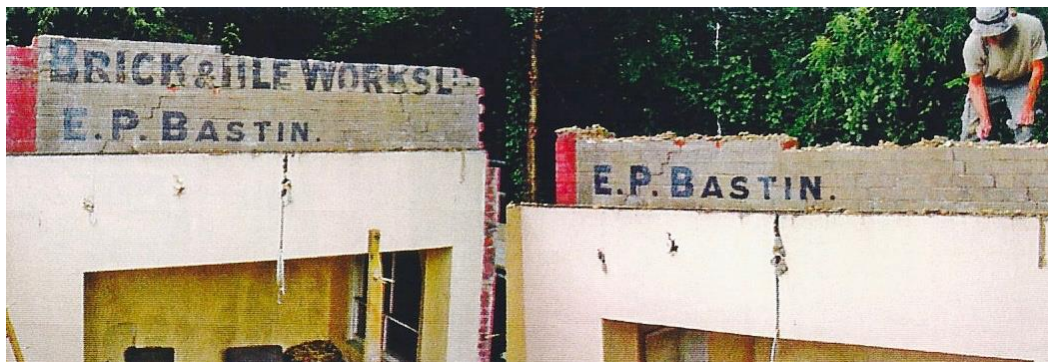
Four smaller chimneys were demolished by hand, but the main chimney was demolished using gelignite charges by W.J. Hatt Ltd. of Reading. They had a 22 minute window to effect demolition between the 3.11 and 3.33 trains passing by.

Although the majority of the buildings were demolished to make way for Reeves and later Travis Perkins (Keyline), in 1971 the small brickworks office remained on the site buried beneath undergrowth.

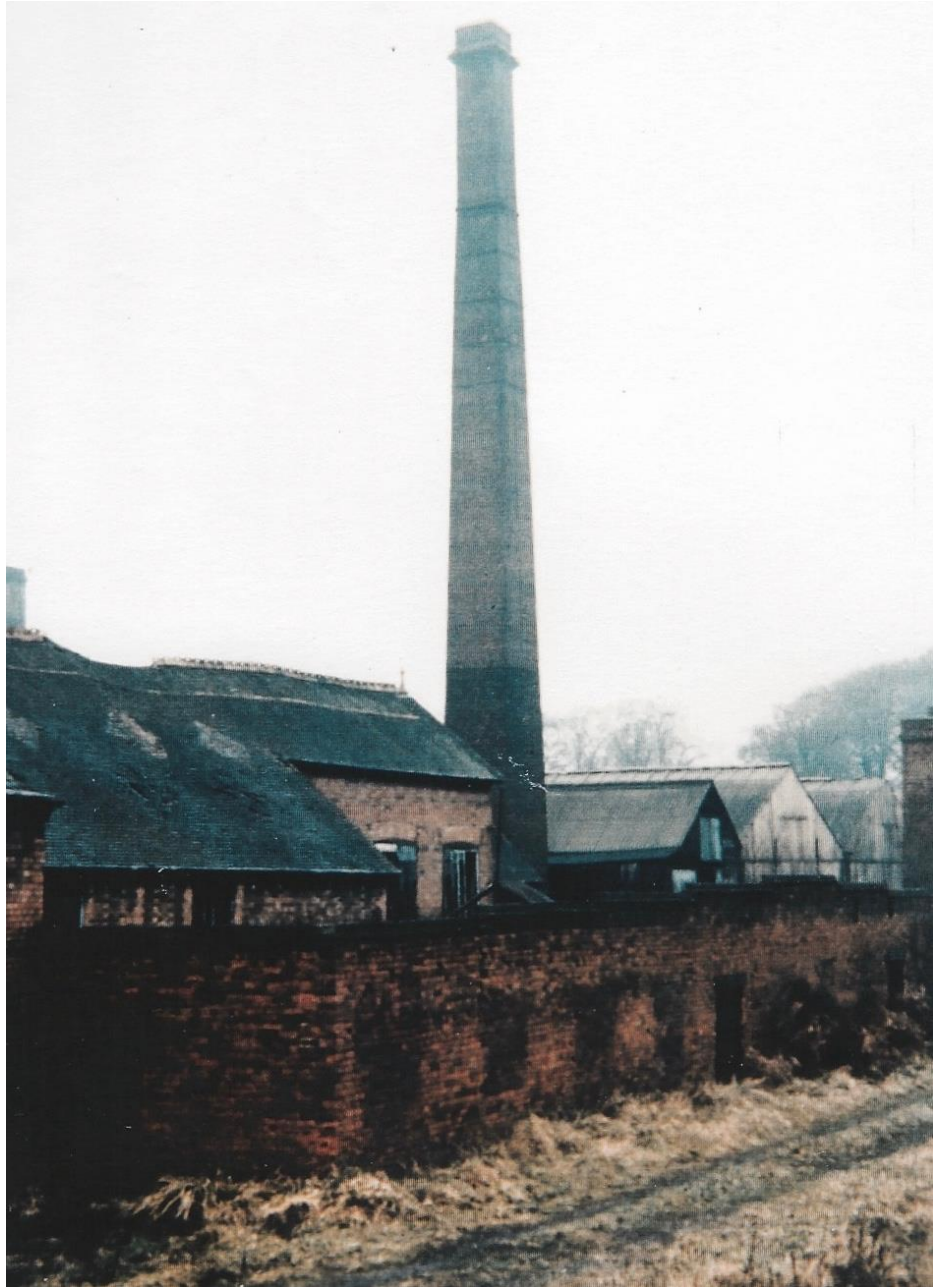


This building has more recently been called the Sample House, because it incorporated many pieces of the brick and terracotta produced by the company, but appears to have been constructed after the manufacture of terracotta bricks and tiles had ceased at the works.

The building was carefully dismantled with the intention of re-erecting it at Bursledon Brickworks museum. The end wall of the original workers' cottages, which had formed one wall of the office, was exposed and still bore the sign of the brickworks painted at the end of the nineteenth century, before the office had been added.



Unfortunately, the building still remains at Bursledon piled onto pallets, awaiting funds for construction.



THE BRICKWO'RKS and THE VILLAGE was researched and written by Malcolm Smith, a local resident. Malcolm wishes to thank Ted Redsull and Paul Marshman for their support in preparing the article, and for access to their personal archives.

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