

The Potteries Tile Trail Burslem

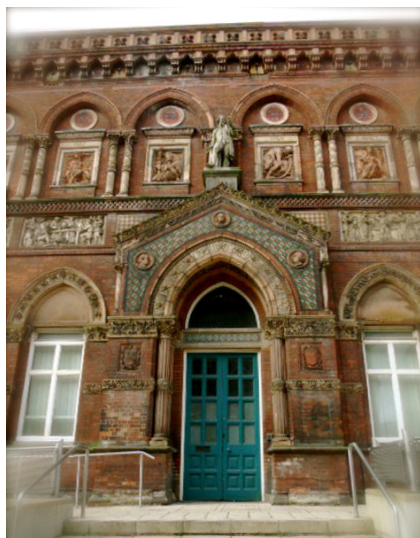
The Potteries Tile Trail is a pilot project that aims to celebrate tiles and architectural ceramics to be found in locations across Stoke-on-Trent. It aims to promote the city's built environment as well as its internationally significant tile and architectural ceramic industry.

The collection has been created in partnership with a volunteer research team, the local community and a wider constituency of online contributors. The trails can either be accessed using this digital document (PDF) or via our dedicated Historypin channel using the website or smart phone app. The digital documents can be printed out if required.

We have created a series of six introductory 'tile trails' - one for each of Stoke-on-Trent's famous six towns (Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton and Longton). The trails are aimed at local residents and visitors alike. They offer a selection of varied and interesting examples of ceramics to be found in buildings and public spaces in each local area. We hope the trails encourage more people to explore and enjoy the city's wonderful 'in situ' ceramics. We also hope they contribute to the collection by adding comments and photographs to the Historypin collection.

The Potteries Tile Trail project has been led by the national **Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society** (TACS) and funded by a grant from the **Heritage Lottery Fund** (HLF) All Our Stories initiative.

Further details about the project and trails can be found at: www.thepotteriestiletrail.org



1 The Wedgwood Institute, Queen Street

'The Potteries Palace' is an internationally important masterpiece of decorative tiles and architectural ceramics from the late 19th century. The bright red brick and buff terracotta of the 'Wedgwood Memorial Institute' came into being in 1869, amid smoke-blackened Burslem. However its complete repertoire of external decoration was not fully revealed until 1872. The Queen Street building was conceived with the intention of promoting the constructional use of terracotta, and was

designed as a combination of library, museum and art school.

Its original plan was designed by G. B. Nichols, although the facade was the result of a later competition, held to encourage the use of decorative ceramics and won by Robert Edgar and John Lockwood Kipling (Rudyard's father). In spite of this protracted design process a remarkable building was created, willfully ornate with beautifully modelled decoration including a series of figures representing the months of the year. The first pieces of terracotta for the facade of the two-storey building were produced by Blanchard & Co of Blackfriars, London, in 1866. In fact, Blanchards went on to manufacture all the Institute terracotta apart from the ten high-relief buff terracotta panels depicting the processes involved in pottery manufacture. These were provided by John Marriott Blashfield of Stamford, Lincolnshire. All modelling of the figurative panels was carried out by Rowland Morris, a Burslem man, although the design of the 'pottery process' panels was by Matthew Elden, who was a former student at Stoke School of Art. The Institute, completed after tortuous delays, also displays a statue of Josiah Wedgwood, modelled by Morris and fired by Blanchard's. The entire facade repays study; cats pursue birds through the terracotta foliage between windows, while the porch is tremendously ornate, using locally produced tiles as well as terracotta. A success, then, as a building, but a failure in terms of the prime ambitions of its begetters: encouraging local production of terracotta and its wider use as a building material. Eventually the latter did come to pass, but the Institute was not crucial to its development. (Courtesy of TACS Gazetteer)



2 St John's Square

Look carefully to see a simple but elegant 'string course' or decorative band of encaustic tiles above the first floor windows. The tiles are integral to the brickwork and add visual interest to this 19th century building - which is easy to miss amongst the rich architectural splendour of 'The Mother Town' (as Burslem is known in recognition of its pivotal role in the birth of what we now recognise as 'The Potteries'). The use of decorative tiles in brickwork was widely used and a wonderful variety of patterns and approach can still be found in many buildings throughout the city.



3 Pack Horse Lane

Beautiful and distinctive ceramic street signs are integral to the walls of residential and commercial buildings across Stoke-on-Trent. This evocative gem forms part of the frontage of Fountain Place Works (Enoch Wood & Sons manufactory). It is highly likely that ceramic signs - including this one - were actually delivered by pack horse! - were actually delivered by pack horse!

4 The Liberal Club, Market Street

The Liberal Club is a fine red brick and terracotta facade of the late Victorian period. The ornate 'date stone' states AD 1892. The main gable is a chamfered red stone pediment with a decorative mosaic panel that includes the words 'Liberal Club' in script lettering.

Interestingly - what appears to the naked eye to be a beautifully restored gable mosaic is actually a high quality printed visual interpretation of the original panel. It was apparently installed after full restoration work was deemed too difficult and costly to be undertaken during refurbishment work. Inside, the Snooker Room is completely tiled above dado level, but unfortunately the tiles - which include panels with floral designs - have been totally over painted. (References courtesy of TACS & Clare White)



The Potteries Tile Trail **Burslem** continued



5 Over House Manufactory, Wedgwood Place

In his series of drawings and descriptions of The Potteries published in what was then the Evening Sentinel - Neville Malkin offered the following comment: "The carved inscription in stone above the entrance proudly announces that 'Edward Challinor commenced business here A.D. 1818 and rebuilt the premises A.D. 1869. Over House Manufactory'. This statement is surrounded by a variety of ornamental embellishments created from local materials such as ceramic tiles and colourful bricks."

In 1869, the old works - established and used by Thomas Wedgwood among others - were entirely taken down and a new and extensive manufactory was erected with all the latest improvements of machinery and appliances thus the gatehouse inscription. (Courtesy of ThePotteries.org)



6 Burslem Park, Moorlands Road

Each of the famous six towns is graced with a wonderful public park. Burslem Park is a gem. It has undergone extensive refurbishment and is well loved by local residents and visitors alike.

The park is a showcase of original architectural terracotta work and is worth exploring at more length. The ornamental drinking water fountain is an integral part of one of the impressive entrance designs. Original terracotta work throughout the park is believed to have been produced by Doulton's Rowley Regis works. The restoration and replacement work was undertaken by Shaw's of Darwin.



7 Moorlands Road (Residential 'Pediment' Tiles)

These 'pediment' tile designs can be found above every single door on this row of terrace houses. Although the design is the same for each of these homes - it is, never the less, specific to this row and marks these properties out as particularly different and distinctive.

8 Moorlands Road

(Commercial Doorstep)
Decorative tile doorsteps are a very common feature of residential and commercial properties throughout Stoke-on-Trent. This is a strong example and belongs to a business with offices on Moorlands Road.



9 Moorlands Road (Court House)

The inscription reads 'Staffordshire Potteries Stipendiary Commissioners'. This former Magistrates office and courthouse is an extremely fine example of highly decorative architectural terracotta. It is in very good condition. This building does not appear to be listed but, according to The Potteries Tile Trail, it is certainly worthy of protected status.

10 The Leopard Hotel, Market Place

This famous hotel has played an important role in Burslem life for at least 150 years. Josiah Wedgwood and engineer, James Brindley, used to dine here together, in 1765, while they were planning the Trent and Mersey Canal. The porch 'sign' mosaic isn't old enough to have welcomed the esteemed pair, but does provide a handsome threshold, for anyone entering this 'hallowed ground' where two entrepreneurial 'giants' once ate, drank and discussed their revolutionary innovations.

Cheers!





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