

# The Potteries Tile Trail Tunstall

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](http://www.thepotteriestiletrail.org)



## 1 Harewood Street

Johnson Tiles (formerly H&R Johnson Tiles) is one of The Potteries' historical and - importantly - contemporary international success stories. This is the company's global headquarters. The highly skilled team based here continues to design and manufacture both quality mass-produced tiles as well as undertaking prestigious bespoke commission work for clients around the world.



## 2 Lascelles Street

"The orange square was on the wall of the old sliphouse at Highgate tile works. The orange square with black border was the symbol of H & R Johnson in the 70's and 80's. We tried to establish a worldwide Johnson recognition. Each

overseas factory had the same logo but in a different colour. India was Red, South Africa was purple. Australia was light blue."

Courtesy of David Malkin - former Head of Public Relations for H&R Johnson (and the last Managing Director of his family company Burslem based Malkin Tiles)



## 3 High Street

Decorative terracotta frontage created from off white blocks and decorative details including mannered foliage drapery designs and an integral commemorative plaque stating the building name and date - 'Bank Chambers' and 'AD1898'. Close to the Town Hall and civic heart of Tunstall - this relatively prestigious building was an important part of commercial and community life.



## 4 Town Hall, Tower Square

Completed in 1885 - Tunstall Town Hall takes a commanding position overlooking Tower Square. The grand and imposing facade offers fine decorative terracotta detail. It is unusual in that it was designed with the council offices located on the first floor with the ground floor premises for occupation by commercial and retail concerns. It is also incorporated the main entrance to the covered market.

# The Potteries Tile Trail Tunstall continued



## 5 Forster Street

Terracotta detail and signage adorn the frontage of this former school building. Terracotta is hollow but strong (structural) and can come in a variety of colours. It can easily be mistaken for stone but 'joins' and slightly irregular shapes (due to firing variations) are often a clue.



## 6 Phoenix Street

The great ceramic city of Stoke-on-Trent will rise again...



## 7 High Street

There was a time when decorative tiles were viewed as 'old fashioned' and very much out of favour. Tiles were dug up, ripped off, covered up or - as is the case with this example - painted over. It would be an interesting and relatively easy project to uncover the decorative tiles beneath this red paint. Sadly - it is quite common to see tiles that have been covered in paint. At least the tiles still exist - perhaps one day they will be once again valued and restored to their former glory.



## 8 The Boulevard

The Potteries' Borough Surveyor and Architect A.R. Wood designed the Victoria Institute and Jubilee Buildings to commemorate the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria. The building housed the public library and it was also home to an art and science school, a museum, public baths and even a fire station.

Fine terracotta work adorns the facade of Tunstall free library public baths. "Art and Science" proclaims one of the decorative panels. It forms an important part of Tunstall's civic core. Each of Stoke-on-Trent's famous six towns had a similar 'kit of parts' or combination including a church, town hall, civic square, market, free library, public baths and park.



## 9 Greengates Street

The Public Baths incorporate attractive decorative terracotta. Grapes and foliage drapery add visual interest and grandeur to this important building at the centre of historical town life.



## 10 Queens Avenue,

The Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart. Easily missed unless you are visiting the church. This stunning mosaic adorns the entrance doorway and is an image of Christ.

The church was the vision of Father P.J. Ryan, who in 1925 appointed prominent architect J.S. Brocklesby and issued him with a challenging brief: to build the biggest, most imposing and beautiful church in the area. The church opened its doors to worshippers in 1930. It was a remarkable achievement, particularly given that this was the time of the Great Depression. This architectural statement is a wonderful legacy and gift to Tunstall.  
(courtesy of [daveclayhead.blogspot.co.uk](http://daveclayhead.blogspot.co.uk))

