

TACS Gazetteer News

August 2000

Issue 7

Work In Progress

Yes, work is now in progress on the actual writing of the Gazetteer. Beginning with Staffordshire—as a follow-up to the research undertaken for the Cumming Report (see right)—the English counties are succumbing to the trusty quill pen of the Editor. Northumberland and Durham will be next, since they are in my backyard, and then London, on which a great deal of work has been done in terms of site visits. After that, it's an alphabetical tour through England, then on to Scotland and Wales.

I suspect that progress will now be quicker than originally anticipated, and I hope this will allow us to catch up to our original timetable. The production of the Cumming Report, and the sheer amount of incoming information needing attention, have combined to take up a lot of potential writing time. The website has also increased the number of queries (and the flow of data). But we still need information on many areas—if you happen to have done as much work as you can on your particular patch, but would like to continue the site inspection process (during these long summer days), then do get in touch and we'll see if there's another area near you which is bereft of volunteers.

You'll see the Database Site Count is now heading for 4,000, although the rate of increase has slowed. One estimate had the total of extant historic sites at about 5,000, so there are doubtless still many good ones to be unearthed!

Lynn Pearson, Gazetteer Editor

MINTON MAGIC

Minton Tiles in the Churches of Staffordshire

The long-awaited report on the research supported by the Cumming Ceramic Research Foundation, through its award of the Foundation's 1999 Scholarship, is now complete. The project concerned the Staffordshire churches to which Herbert Minton donated tiles between 1844 and 1858. Minton also presented tiles to churches and allied institutions in other areas and indeed other countries during 1844-58, but the Staffordshire gifts amounted to a third of his total donations. Although the identity of most of the churches to which Minton made donations has been known since 1859, the fate of the tiles themselves has never previously been pursued. The object of this research was therefore to investigate the location and design of the tiles donated by Herbert Minton to the churches of Staffordshire. The county's nineteenth century churches were described in the *Shell Guide to Staffordshire* as 'among its greatest glories'.



Research began with an analysis of the list of locations in order to determine the status of the tile donations, followed by visits to the churches which retained their Minton donations to photograph the tiles and investigate their design. Each location was properly documented. The relationship between tiles made for the restoration of existing churches and those made for newly-built churches was examined, and - in the case of restored churches - an assessment was attempted of the degree to which the Minton tile designs were copied from tiles already in place, or whether existing stock designs were used. The tile designs throughout the series of donations were then analysed and compared with designs donated outside Staffordshire, and designs at locations where tiles had simply been purchased from Minton's.

Some conclusions: the substantial corpus of 1840s Minton tiles found at the extant donation churches in Staffordshire represented a significant display of early, top-quality Minton encaustic tiling. It also illustrated the high standard of work carried out by the factory's artists in that period, in terms of the general layout of church pavements. Possibly around 80 Minton donation churches outside Staffordshire might still be extant. Given that some of these are likely to be churches where donations were made during the 1840s, it is clear that further research should concentrate on locating these possible early survivors with their potentially high-quality donations.

A summary of the report's text, with links to illustrations of the tiles, is given on the Gazetteer's website at www.gosforth3.demon.co.uk - go to the What's New page and click on the link to the Cumming Report. It is hoped to publish this well-illustrated report in full (all 15,000 words) in due course.

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Database Site Count

Date	Number of Sites in Database
August 2000	3766
January 2000	3485
July 1999	2571
March 1997	1443

SITES...SITES....SITES....SITES...SITES...SITES...SITES...SITES...SITES

Here are just a few of the latest offerings to come in from the TACS volunteer data collectors.

SHEFFIELD



This memorial panel, which commemorates Sheffield Postal Workers who lost their lives in the Great War, has just been relocated to the new post office in Castle House Co-op, Sheffield. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the design or origins of this opus sectile panel.

CORNWALL



A colourful butcher's shopfront in the main street at Lostwithiel.

STOKE-ON-TRENT



Part of the huge triptych by George Tinworth which dominates the sanctuary of St Mark's Church, Shelton. It was installed around 1896 and this section depicts the wise men opening their treasures. Note the camel entering stage right...

STOKE-ON-TRENT



Just a tiny section of the Minton Hollins tile scheme which runs throughout St Luke's Primary School, Hanley. The colours above are mainly muted – buff, brown, pale yellow, cream – but in the other building, where the tiles are overpainted, there are more than 50 different designs and who knows what colours; the children have recently made their own colourful tile panel for the playground.

TRING



At Tring Church in Hertfordshire is this Maw's pavement, with oodles of different geometric designs. The tiles were made especially for the church by Maw's, using patterns taken from old tiles dug up during excavations for its 1863 restoration.

LONDON



School tile panels seem to be fashionable just now, and what else would a millennium panel show but the Dome! This panel can be found on the outside wall of Lawdale Junior School, Mansford Street, Tower Hamlets; nearby is the Buxton Street School panel. You can see colour versions on the gaz-website, as well as the Hanley St Luke's panel.



loadsatiles!! on the gazwebsite at www.gosforth3.demon.co.uk