

Opening sometime after 1881 this was one of the last works to open in Jackfield and was located to the west of Ironbridge Road almost opposite the Holly Well from which it gets its name.<sup>1</sup>

## Wase & Co.

Initially, the works were operated by Josiah Wase who in the 1881 census listed his occupation as a brickmaker. In 1884 he supplied paving bricks to the local council however much to their disgust these were not made in Broseley.<sup>2</sup> Born around 1822 Wase called himself a roofing tile maker and lived in Workhouse Road. It is not clear where he found the capital to build and run the works, but he may have borrowed it from the local bank and his family. There is no record of Wase having operated a mine and he is said to have been using clay from nearby surface pits.<sup>3</sup>

The works only operated for a short time as Josiah Wase and Company went into receivership in late 1889 by organising a Deed of Arrangement under the 1887 act thus avoiding bankruptcy.<sup>4</sup> At this time the partnership comprised; Josiah with two of his sons, Homer Harry & Benjamin Wase trading in co-partnership under the name of Josiah Wase & Co.<sup>5</sup> The trustee of the Deed was Henry E. Roberts the manager of the local Broseley Bank. The net assets realised from the sale of the business were £314 2s 9d and the debts £651 with preferential claims of £60 17s 3d. The creditors were:<sup>6</sup>

Lloyd's bank	Broseley	£223
Meredith Charles	Broseley	£93
Evers S. & Sons	Cradley	£15
Edge & Sons	Shifnal	£16
Exley William & sons	Broseley	£19
Groves Mrs	Nuneaton	£33
Mills Alfred	Nuneaton	£17
Davis E	Broseley	£45
Wase E. J.	Broseley	£100
Do	Broseley	£14
And creditors under £10		
	Total	£651

In 1881 Charles Meredith (1828-1900) lived at Coalport Road and was an engine driver. He died in 1900 leaving over £200 with Homer Harry Wase being one of his executors. Samuel Evers & Sons made refractory retort bricks.<sup>7</sup> Edge & Sons amongst other things made chains and tile-making machinery. Edwin J Wase was Josiah's son and a roofing tile maker who in 1881 was aged 22 and living at home with Joseph so it is difficult to explain how he could be owed such a large amount as £100. The link

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<sup>1</sup> The 1880 Broseley railway plan lists the plot as Rough Pasture, wood and plantation owned by Charels Vanburgh Jenkins of the Broseley Estate and in hand (Shropshire Archives DP486) or the 1882 25" OS map. A. J. Mugridge, *The Broseley Heavy Clay Industry* (2001) give an opening date of 1870 by Peter Hopkins no reference to a Peter Hopkins in the area can be found

<sup>2</sup> Eddowes Salopian Journal 12<sup>th</sup> November 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Mugridge (2001)

<sup>4</sup> Wellington Journal 18<sup>th</sup> January 1890

<sup>5</sup> Commercial Gazette 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1890. Page 82

<sup>6</sup> Op Cit. page 34.

<sup>7</sup> Kelly's 1908 Directory

with Nuneaton is also difficult to explain. The only Alfred Mills was of the appropriate age living at Chilvers Coton, Nuneaton and was a Millers Clerk. There are no Mrs Groves of Nuneaton with an obvious link although the mining agent who advised the Broseley Estate was William Groves of Bilston.

In 1891 Josiah (69) was living on Workhouse Road and described himself as a Tile Presser and continued to work in the brick and tile works dying in 1915.<sup>8</sup> Homer Harry worked as a tile moulder and Benjamin emigrated to Toronto, Canada.<sup>9</sup>

### Oakes & Pumford

On closure in 1890 works were taken over by Edward Oakes and Abraham Pumford who were said to 'have well-known practical knowledge of the business.'<sup>10</sup> No record of the sale of Wase's assets has been found and Oakes and Pumford may have purchased the works by private treaty.

Edward Oakes grew up at Salthouses where his mother had been a grocer. In 1861 he was a pupil teacher and by 1871 he was a commercial Clerk and encaustic tile factor also having a grocery business in 1881. By 1891 he had gone up in the world and was living at the Deanery on Church Street and styled himself as 'Encaustic Tile Manufacturer Cashier, Roofing Tile manufacturer and grocer'.<sup>11</sup> Oakes was also involved in local politics, and it seems likely that he was the main driver and financier of the concern. He continued to have other interests; in 1899 he was a cashier at Maws.<sup>12</sup> and by 1911 he was a Collector of Taxes.<sup>13</sup>

Abraham Pumford was born in Benthall in 1842 his father being a bargeman. In 1871 at the age of 27, he was listed as a lime merchant at Benthall. In 1888 he married a widow Eleanor sister of Edward Oakes and she may have put some money into the business.<sup>14</sup> She had married George Ball in 1867 and in 1871 they were living at the Severn Trow Inn with George being listed as a Licensed Victualler and draining pipe maker. George died in 1879 and she married Abraham at St Asaph in 1888. In 1891 Abraham was listed as an Encaustic Tile fireman so had practical knowledge of tile making and in 1901, he listed himself as an innkeeper at the Severn Trow. When his wife Eleanor died in 1907, he left the pub and returned to work as an Encaustic tile burner. In 1921 at the age of 79, he was still working as a general labourer at W&P Jones tileworks dying later that year.

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<sup>8</sup> 1891 Census – he was still in Workhouse Road. In 1911 he styled himself as a retired brick and tile manufacturer.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/27214201/person/330006894155/facts>

<sup>10</sup> Wellington Journal 18<sup>th</sup> January 1890

<sup>11</sup> 1881 and 1891 census.

<sup>12</sup> Wellington Journal 17<sup>th</sup> June 1899. In the 1901 census he was listed as: Grocer, Shopkeeper and accountant.

<sup>13</sup> 1911 Census

<sup>14</sup> On her death in 1907 she left Effects worth £900 5s. 5d.



# BROSELEY TILES.



## IMPORTANT NOTICE.

IN consequence of numerous persons representing themselves as Manufacturers of the "Celebrated Broseley Roofing Tiles," we, the undersigned firms, beg to inform the public that we are the only manufacturers of these Tiles at "Broseley, Shropshire" —the seam of clay from which they are made being only found at Broseley, from which place they derive their name.

BROSELEY TILERIES CO. (LIM.)  
COALBROOKDALE CO. (LIM.)  
DAVIS, G. & F.  
DOUGHTY JOHN & SON.  
EXLEY, W. & SONS.  
HAUGHTON, R. D.  
HOPLEY & DUNCAN.

JONES, W. & P.  
JONES BROTHERS.  
LEGGE, G. & SON.  
MAW & CO. (LIM.)  
MADELEY WOOD CO.  
OAKES & PUMFORD.  
PRESTAGE & CO.

*Figure 1 Advertisement for Kelly's 1895 directory.*

They never appeared to have joined the Broseley Brick & Tile Manufacturers association, perhaps because this required a £500 bond, but were listed in an advert in Kelly's 1895 directory.

## Clay

Oakes & Pumford are listed in the mining returns from 1890 to 1900 as working Stable Hill mine which in 1880 was being worked by Exley's.<sup>15</sup> H. Hill (1823-97) is listed as their manager, and this would have been Hiram Hill who ran the Half Moon pub and since 1854 and in 1890 had been running mines on his own account. At this time, he was also managing Maw's & Burton's mines. In 1896 they were getting red clay employing 4 people underground and 2 above however the mine is shown as standing in 1899 and 1900.<sup>16</sup> Prestage of the Milburgh Tileries stated in 1898 that his mines were being deluged with water from the Stablehill pit coal workings which may suggest that pumping had also stopped by this time.<sup>17</sup>

In 1890 the clay they were getting, presumably from Stablehill was said to be inferior and they hoped to work clay proved by Prestage of the nearby Milburgh Tileries. They had also considered clay at the old Astley Field pit which Hiram Hill said had 'clay which is thin, uncertain and inferior' and were requesting permission to search for red surface marl on the rough land between the Fish House and Red Church.<sup>18</sup>

In January 1898 they applied for a lease of Stablehill Clay & coal &c mines asking for OS plots 182,3,4,8,9,190,1,2,3,4.<sup>19</sup> As they had been working the colliery since 1890 perhaps under the lease for Wase & co presumably, they wanted a new to increase the area of minerals available. In March they learned that it was proposed to allot some of the area they wanted to Prestage which they stated would be fatal to their business. They also mentioned proposals to financially restructure the business on a fairly large

<sup>15</sup> Shropshire Archives DP486. It is also show as a coal and ironstone mine on the 1881-2 25" OS.

<sup>16</sup> Mining inspectors' reports.

<sup>17</sup> Shropshire Archives 2867-7

<sup>18</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letter from Oakes and Pumford to Wm Grove 7<sup>th</sup> November 1890

<sup>19</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letter from Oakes & Pumford 27<sup>th</sup> January 1898 to Edward B Potts (Jenkins Solicitor)

scale.<sup>20</sup> This was the start of a protracted argument between the estate, Prestage and Oakes and Pumford for mineral rights.

It is not clear if the 1890 lease was granted but in 1902 the matter of a lease came up again and to meet the requirements of the mining inspector a second shaft was required at Stablehill. Oakes had persuaded Herbert Weldon, a civil engineer from Birmingham to invest in the works which presumably included the capital to sink the shaft.<sup>21</sup> There were various discussions with the solicitors for Jenkins of Cruckton who owned the Broseley Estate. In Broseley, he was using Potts & Potts to negotiate the general terms but his main solicitor was How & Son of Shrewsbury. They were advised by William Grove a mining surveyor and engineer for Bilston.

In November Oakes confirmed that Weldon had agreed to a joint interest with himself and Pumford.<sup>22</sup> Later that month Weldon's bankers refused to give a reference other than through another bank and Oakes had to clarify that he would only be providing financial assistance of (say) £10,000 and not taking a part in the running of the business. Oakes also suggested that Potts should not enquire as to Weldon's ability to provide the capital but just to 'his position and means for meeting the outgoings.'<sup>23</sup> Needless to say How & Son were not happy with this and still wanted a reference from Weldon's bankers in particular they were concerned with the amount of capital required to sink the new shaft which the mining engineer Grove had estimated at £3000.<sup>24</sup> In January Grove strongly advised How & Son to accept Weldon with Oakes & Pumford but they were still concerned about the absence of information regarding the capital.<sup>25</sup> In March 1904 a lease had been drawn up but never signed.<sup>26</sup> For whatever reason Weldon did not join the venture and no new capital was available as in November 1904 the works were at a standstill and How & Son were requiring dead rent from Oakes & Pumford.<sup>27</sup>

The OS maps show two shafts at Stablehill and Mugridge indicates one was used for pumping and the other for winding.<sup>28</sup> If this is correct it is not clear why another shaft was required. The requirement for a second shaft implies that the mine was not connected to other workings underground and the second shaft shown on the OS map may have been an air shaft as at Coneybury in which case it would not have been sunk to the full depth of the mine and connected to the main shaft. If it was an air shaft the small rectangle shown adjacent to the shaft could have been the ventilation chimney. The second shaft was never sunk, and Stable Hill seems to have been abandoned being shown as disused in 1902 and is not listed in the 1908 Mines

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<sup>20</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letter from Oaks & Pumford 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1898 to How & Son, 9 Swan Hill Shrewsbury

<sup>21</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letter from Herbert Weldon to Potts & Co 25<sup>th</sup> November 1902 Weldon's brother was a partner in Gibson & Weldon (1876-1962) a well-known law practice in Chancery Lane London

<sup>22</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letter from Oakes to Potts 25<sup>th</sup> November 1902

<sup>23</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letter Oakes to E B Potts 9<sup>th</sup> December 1902. Letter Howden to Potts & Potts 20<sup>th</sup> December 1902

<sup>24</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letters Howden to Potts & Potts 20<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> December 1902

<sup>25</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letters How & son to Potts & Potts 5<sup>th</sup> January 1903, W Grove to E B Potts 5<sup>th</sup> January 1903, How & Son to Potts & Potts, 7<sup>th</sup> January 1903

<sup>26</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/39. Letter How & Son to Oakes & Co 7<sup>th</sup> March 1904 enclosing lease and copy of lease.

<sup>27</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38. Letter from How to Oakes & Co.

<sup>28</sup> A. J. Mugridge. *Twelve mines in the Broseley Area*. 1997.

inspectors report.<sup>29</sup> In 1907 Prestage was complaining that Exley was to be given a lease on the clay previously leased to Oakes and Pumford.<sup>30</sup>

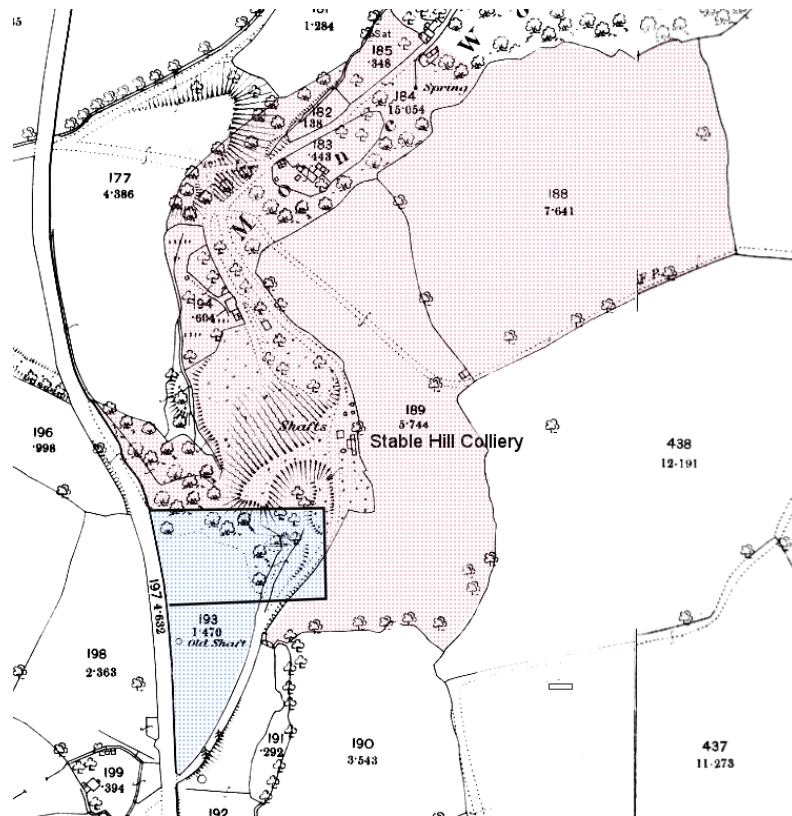


Figure 2. Plan showing the extent of the proposed mining lease of 1904. The original was based on the 1882 OS map and does not show the works. At the time the map was drawn Stable Hill Colliery was operated by Exley of the Rock Tileworks. From Shropshire Archives 1681/189/39

<sup>29</sup> Mines inspectors report 1908

<sup>30</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38 Letter to How & Son 27<sup>th</sup> May 1907

## The Site

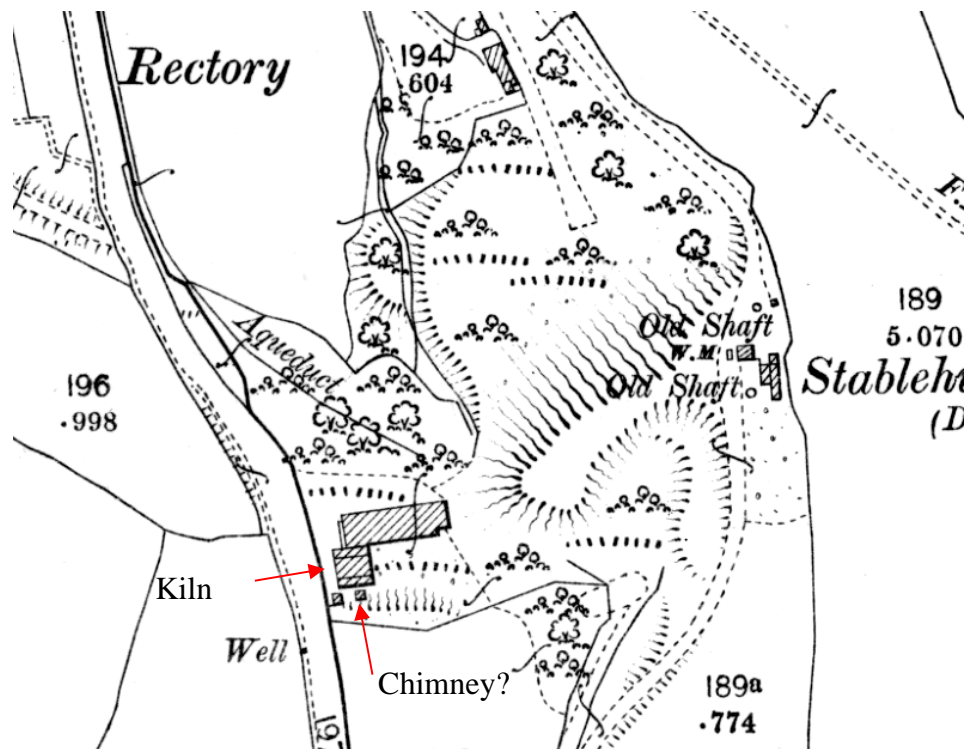


Figure 3. 1881-2 25" OS Map Shropshire LI.2. The Tileworks is not mentioned by name. Stablehill Colliery is shown as disused.

The OS map shows a small works with one kiln with what appears to be a chimney for the downdraught kiln to the south. To the west of the chimney is a small rectangular building which may have been tile display roofs.<sup>31</sup> The long building to the north of the kiln would be where the clay was prepared and the tiles manufactured. The standing chimney is not shown but is located at the eastern end of the long building and would have been for the drying floor.

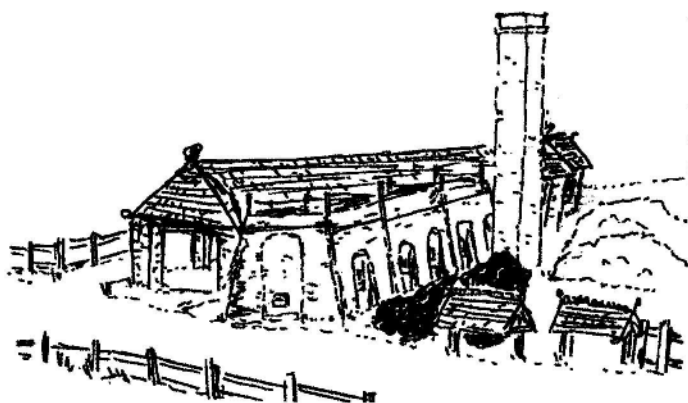


Figure 4. Conjectural view of Hollwell tileries around 1905. A. J. Mugridge

The clay used when the works started is said to have been sourced from the weathering yard at Coneybury Brickyard and later from a quarry in Mone Wood which could explain the poor quality of the bricks used in the surviving chimney.

<sup>31</sup> A. J. Mugridge (2001)



Later it came from Stablehill Colliery but there is no obvious direct route for transporting the clay from the mine.

Donald Prestage of the Milburgh Tileries leased a 'Piece of land being the site of Hollywell brickworks' in August 1910.<sup>32</sup> Although the works were said to have been demolished in the 1940s by the Mr Dereck Roberts who then owned the land the 1927 OS map shows the site had been cleared by this time presumably by Prestage after he acquired the site.<sup>33</sup>

Today all that remains is the chimney for the drying floor, a few unmarked roof tiles and poor-quality bricks probably from the demolished buildings.



*Figure 5. Truncated drying floor chimney.*

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<sup>32</sup> Shropshire Archives 1681/57/5. Land valuation 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1919.

<sup>33</sup> A. J. Mugridge (2001)



*Figure 6. The base of the chimney is constructed of poor-quality bricks. The flues from the drying floor are visible at the base of the chimney.*