Unlike the nearby brickworks in Broseley, those at Astley Abbots were typical of small country works that supplied local needs, including the town of Bridgnorth. The clay would have been sourced from open pits. The coal for burning the bricks may have been dug on site or come from nearby mines at Tasley, where there were also brickworks.[1] They would probably have used clamp kilns, which were not permanent and thus not shown on maps, although there may have been a permanent kiln at the Nordley works.

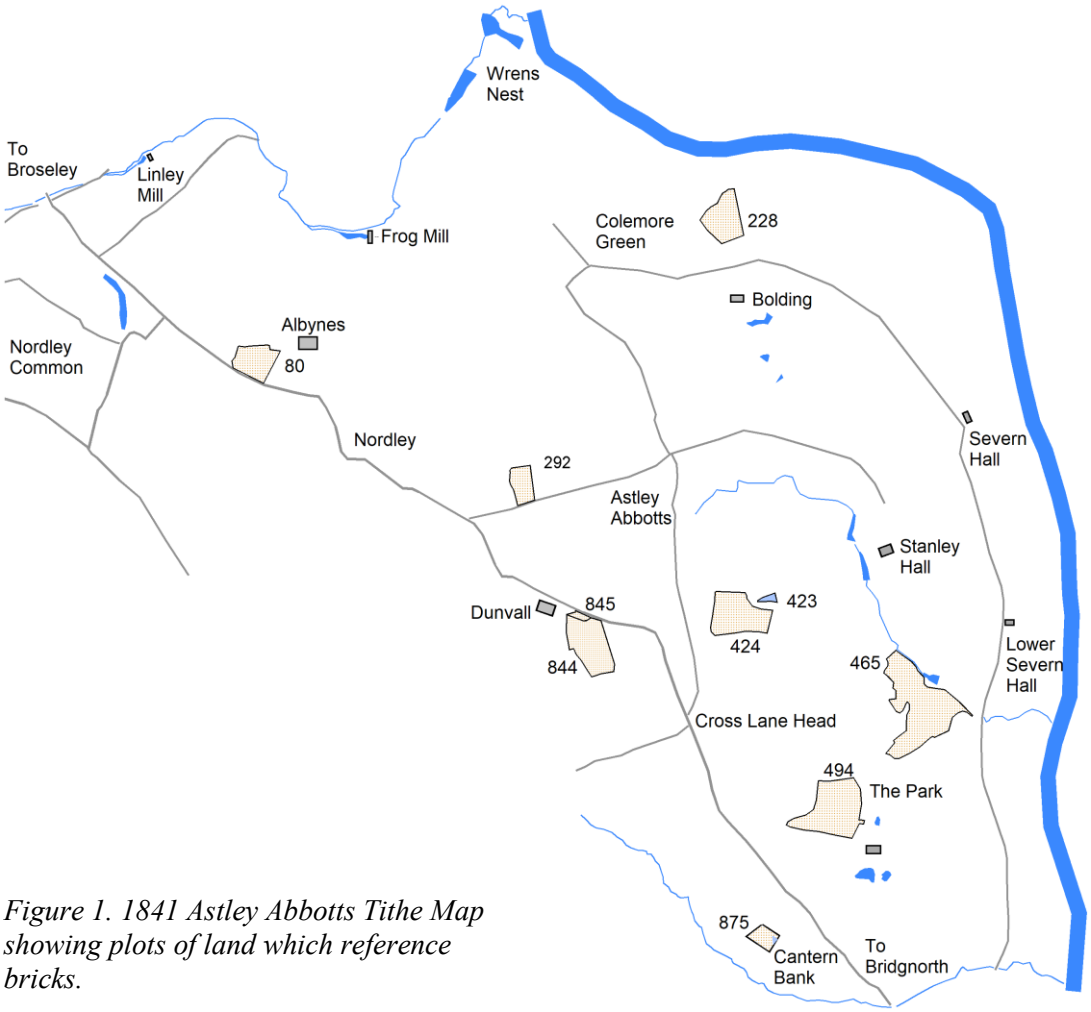


Figure 1. 1841 Astley Abbotts Tithe Map showing plots of land which reference bricks.

'Brick' field names from the Astley Abbots Tithe Apportionment (Plots 292 and 845 appear to be working brickyards.)

Owner	Occupier	Name	Plot	OS
John Stephens	Francis Pigot	Brickiln Piece	80	SO 690 974
Eliza Tyrwhitt Jones	Samuel Pee	Lick Brick Hill	228	SO 714 974
Eliza Tyrwhitt Jones	John Onions	Brickiln and land adjoining	292	SO 703 964
Eliza Tyrwhitt Jones	On hand	Brickiln Pool	423	SO 712 978
Eliza Tyrwhitt Jones	John Onions	Bricklin Leasow	424	SO 711 957
Eliza Tyrwhitt Jones	John Onions	Brick Furlong	465	SO 718 954
Thomas Whitmore	Thomas Rose	Brickiln Leasow	494	SO 714 949
John Ward	On hand	Brickiln Leasow	844	SO 704 958
John Ward	On hand	Brickiln	845	SO 704 959
John Stephens	On hand	Brickiln Piece	875	SO 710 943

[1] There was also a brickworks at Tasley. Poyner David, *Tasley Coal, Wyre Forest*. Below 2020.3, Shropshire Caving and Mining Club. In 1950, the National Coal Board proposed boring at Dunval to search for coal suitable for open-cast extraction, but this was never carried out. According to the paper, the area covered would have been from the Fox and Hounds at Linley Brook to within a mile of Bridgnorth, *Bridgnorth Journal,* 31st March 1950.

It is reasonable to assume that bricks were made in these fields, but the works were probably temporary and opened up to build local houses, such as Stanley Hall, and then closed when the property was completed.

Nordley Brickwork at Dunval

This was located 380 metres southeast of Duvall on the Bridgnorth Road, at plots 844 and 845 on the Tithe Map, and was owned at that time by John Ward. In the 1851 census, James Bradley (33) is listed as living at Nordley Brickwork, between Duvall and Astley Abbots, as a brickmaker. John Ward is listed as farming 200 acres at Nordley farm, employing three labourers. Later the same year, his estate was put up for auction, and it included 'A Brick-kiln, and excellent mine of clay upon it … beside the Turnpike Road to Broseley and affords a charming Building site.'[2] John Ward was still at Nordley Farm when he died in 1859.

By the time the 25" OS map was surveyed in 1882, the works had disappeared, and the separate plot where the kiln was located had been incorporated into Brickkiln Leasow. Stone Cottage was built adjacent to the kiln site between 1841 and 1883, and the pool was enlarged between 1902 and 1927.

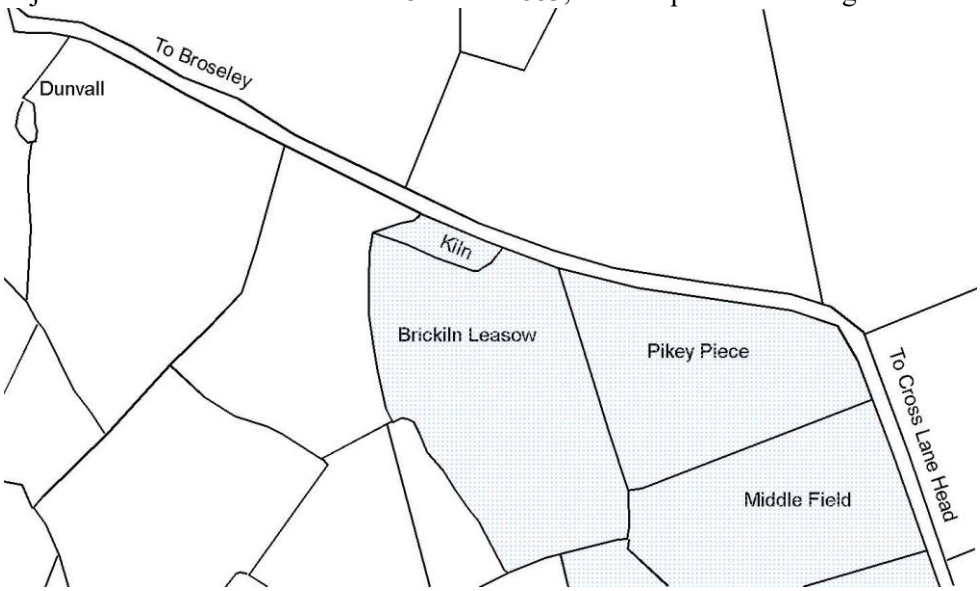


Figure 3. Astley Abbotts Tithe Map of 1841 showing the kiln location

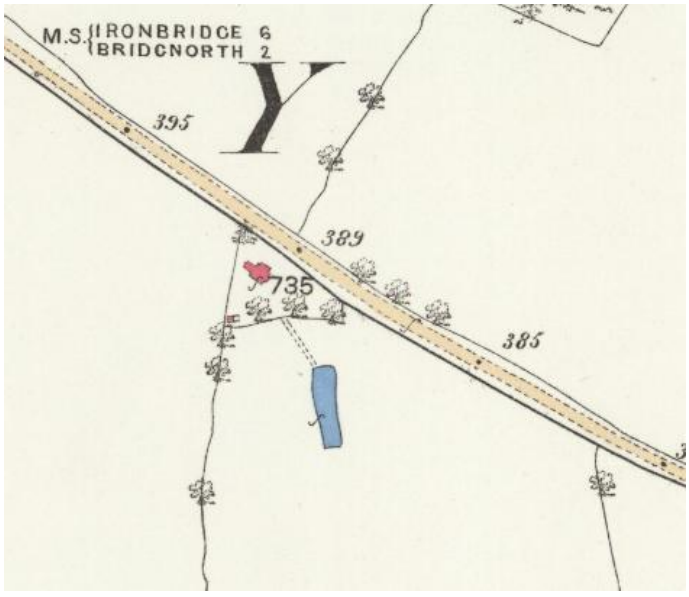


Figure 2 1883 25" OS map Shropshire LVIII.3(NLS).
Plot 735 is Stone Cottage which was built between 1841 and 1882. The pool to the south would have been the clay pit and the kiln would have been to the northeast between the pool and the road. Between 1902 and 1926 the pool was considerably enlarged

[2] Birmingham Journal 4th October 1851

Little Binnal

Listed as a brick kiln in the 1841 Tithe, it may have been operated by Francis Pool, who lived nearby. Although the land was part of an estate rented by John Onions, who owned Broseley Tileries, it is unlikely that he operated these brickworks.

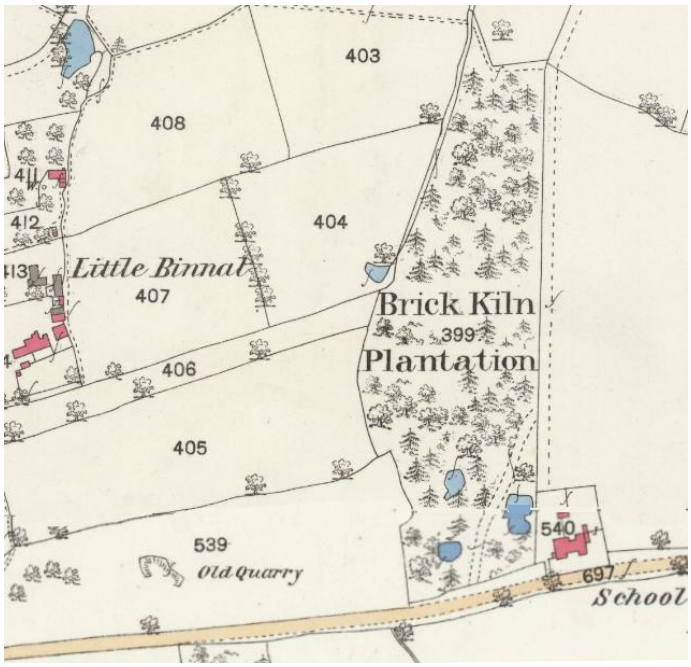


Figure 4. 1883 25" OS map Shropshire LVIII.3 & LI.15 (NLS).
The three pools in Brick Kiln Plantation would have been the clay pits. The kiln would have been located close to these near the lane.

Brickmakers

In 1841, Francis Poole was the only brickmaker listed in the parish, and he was living near Binnal Cottage at Nordley. Poole was still at Astley Abbots in 1846 and may have died at Jackfield in the same year.[3]

James Bradley (33), who was born in Broseley, is the only brickmaker listed in the 1851 census at Nordley Brickwork.

Benjamin Burgess (b1822) from Jackfield is listed as a brickmaker who by 1848 was living in Astley Abbots parish. He was there in 1851, 61, 71, in 1881, he is listed as a brickmaker in Birmingham, but 10 years later, he was back at Nordley boarding at the Swan Inn. It is possible that he was employed at Nordley and left for Birmingham when it closed. He married Elizabeth Knowles (1823-57) at Astley Abbots, which perhaps explains why he chose to live there, particularly as he had two young children when his wife died. He seems to have been something of a character. In 1860, he was said to be a brick burner from the Smithies when he was found guilty of stealing two bags and a quantity of potatoes from Richard Hughes of Astley Abbots and sentenced to seven days of hard labour.[4] He was in court again in 1869, together with Richard Griffiths, accusing a gamekeeper of assault.[5] A year later, he was convicted of assault in Bridgnorth and fined £1 and costs 18s 8d.[6]

S. Dewhirst

[3] Shropshire quarter sessions. https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=XAUTO%2FFHS%2FSHROPSHIRE%2FQUA%2F00289511&tab=this
[4] Wellington Journal 19th November 1859, Eddowes Shrewsbury Journal 11th January 1860
[5] Shrewsbury Chronicle 30th July 1869
[6] Eddowes Shrewsbury Journal 16th November 1870