The Dunge Brick & Tileworks SJ 6681 0115

These works are said to have been founded in 1811possibly in a field originally known as Knightly Croft which by 1840 was called Nickley Croft.[1] Land ownership in this part of Broseley was complicated comprising numerous small plots with multiple owners often being the remnants of medieval strip farming however during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there were various exchanges of land to consolidate these into larger plots. By the 1820s the Forester family of the Willey Estate had purchased most of the land around Dunge Farm including the site of the brickworks.[2] By 1840 there were two brickworks at the Dunge (SJ 6812 0118 and SJ 6808 0112) which were later combined when they were taken over by the Davis family.

Richard Poole (1789-1850)

This was probably the Richard Poole who was baptised in Madeley on 30th December his parents being Robert and Susanna. The first record of Richard Poole in Broseley was in 1802 when he was living at Raddle Hall and is listed as a wheelwright with a timber yard.[3] He was first listed as a brickmaker in 1818 Pigot's directory although he was not listed in the 1822 edition. This also may have been Richard Poole who was running the Fox pub in 1829 and who in 1832 is listed as a voter in the Wenlock Parliamentary elections indicating he owned or leased property.[4] By 1835 he was living in Duke Street and in 1840, when the Tithe apportionment was compiled, he leased from Lord Forester: a house and shop (plot 255a) at Duke Street, his brickwork & yard at the Dunge (1037), Nickley Croft (1035, a garden 1036) and the Little South fields (1059,60).[5]

During the 1840s he seems to have some difficulties with his business as in 1842 he owed the Willey Estate £27 royalties on his brick and coal works. Three years later he owed £1 2s 4d royalties for the half year to March and by September was £44 6s in arrears.[6] Richard died in 1850 aged 69 and was buried on 26th June at St Mary's Jackfield. There is no record of the sale of the equipment or stock at his works, but it may have been transferred to Robert Evans.

Robert Evans (1787-1852)

Robert lived at Dunge Farm renting around 103 acres from Lord Forester which included 10 acres of (mine spoil) mounts but also 16 acres from the Broseley Estate of Francis Blythe Harries. As well as being a farmer he had a brickworks at the Dunge and various mines including one at Cockshutt Lane.[7] The first mention of him owning a brick works is in 1835 Pigot's directory however the 1832 1" OS map appears to show his works which was located on the north side of Pound Lane. In 1841 Evans (55) described himself as a Coal Master and was living with his wife Letitia (55) who

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[1] Advertisement for G. F. Davis quoting 1811 as the foundation of the business. Tracing of Samuel Parsons Map of Broseley 1821. Nuffield Report of Jackfield & Broseley, Broseley Tithe apportionment 1838.

[2] Victoria County History Volume 10.

[3] Valentine Vickers valuation of Broseley Shropshire Arcives P44/V/1/1

[4] The 1831 reform act extended the franchise to people who leased land with an annual value of £10 or property with a yearly rental of £10.

[5] Present day No 4 Birchmeadow.

[6] Lord Foresters Rent Books 1842 & 1845. Copies in Authors collection.

[7] Particulars of Lord Foresters Property in Broseley Parish 1837. This was compiled to assess Foresters Tithe liability and lists Pool's brickworks but not that of Evans. Shropshire Archives 604/1. Broseley Tithe Apportionment 1840.

came from Ireland. The next year he was paying Forester £13 6s 2d for a half-yearly royalty on his brickworks as well as £62 10s for land in Broseley and £15 for land in Willey however he did not pay any royalties for coal and ironstone. In 1845 he paid £13 2s 6d for his brickwork and £29 3s 2d for coal and ironstone.[8] A year later he gave up his mine at Cockshutt Lane and auctioned off all the equipment.[9] In the 1851 census, he describes himself as 'Magistrate for the Borough of Wenlock, Brick & Tile manufacturer, farming 100 acres employing 3 men & 4 labourers.' As most of the labour at the brickworks would be on a casual basis and included family members this probably does not represent the actual number employed there. Robert Evans died in 1852 and was buried at Broseley on 19th November. As well as being a magistrate he was Mayor of the Borough of Wenlock in 1850 and 1851 and chairman of Broseley Anti Felons - an antiquated society formed to bring petty criminals to justice.[10] He left his estate to his brothers Edward, his nephew the son of his late brother George, and his friend Edward Glover Bartlam who was married to his niece. Perhaps anticipating his death, he gave up his business in May 1852 putting the assets up for sale:

> *To Brickmakers, coalmasters & others - Sale of stock in trade of Robert Evans who is relinquishing the business - Bricks, tiles, quarries &c. brick and tile utensils, cast iron rails and colliery implements. Also, a capital broad-wheeled waggon, nearly new, narrow wheel cart, strong cart and other effects.*[11]

After his death, his executors sold the farm animals and equipment as well as tiles and bricks.[12]

George Sr, George Jr. and Francis Davis (Davies)

In 1858 George Davis & Co. advertised themselves as:

> *The Dunge Brick & Tile Works.*
> *George Davis and Co. (successors to the late Mr Robert Evans deceased) manufacturers of superior Building bricks, roofing tiles, crests, flooring goods, malt-kiln tile of three patterns, or made to order. The whole of the best quality and at moderate charges.*[13]

There were several brickmakers in the area with the name Davies or Davis not all of which had familial links. The Davies family associated with the Dunge originally came from Myddle with two branches of the family moving to the Severn Gorge during the second half of the 18th century. A distant cousin Thomas Davies (1785-1828) ran one of the works at Lloyds Head.[14] Between 1797 and 1802 when their first son Francis was born, John and Ann Davies moved to Broseley from Myddle and possibly John was working at Thomas Davies's works.[15] In 1824, their son Francis of Madeley Wood married Susanna Dawson (nee Hearn) at Buildwas. It was their sons George (1828-1903) and Francis (1829-1834) who took over the Dunge works from Evans and also dropped the 'e' from Davies to become Davis which according to one family member was to make the names sound more English. In 1841 the family were living at Hollows Way near Lloyd Head in Jackfield where Francis Senior described

[8] Lord Foresters Rent Books 1842 & 1845. Copies in Authors collection
[9] Shrewsbury Chronicle 20th March 1846.
[10] *John Craig*, Wilkinson Society Journal, No11 1983.
[11] Shrewsbury Chronicle 7th May 1852.
[12] Shrewsbury Chronicle 10th December 1852
[13] Shrewsbury Chronicle 27th August 1858.
[14] Davies family tree Trevor Instone & Valerie Hacket.
[15] Baptism of Susanna at Myddle 22nd January 1797.



Figure 1. George Davis Sr. Family collection.

himself as a brickmaker. This house was close to the Black Swan and was demolished when the Severn Valley Railway was constructed.[16] The eldest son John was a miner but the other children William (14) George (13), Francis Jr. (12) Elizabeth (10) and Ann (8) were also brickmakers. Before the Factory Acts banned the employment of children it was common for families to work together in the brickworks. In 1851 Francis Sr. was living at Lloyd's Head and described himself as a tile worker with his daughters Elizabeth and Ann both being employed as China painters. His son George is listed as a tilemaker, living at Lloyd's Head and the year before he had married Rebecca Lloyd.[17] Francis Jr. cannot be found in the 1851 census, but he married Ellen Oakley in 1856.

It is not clear how the family obtained the capital to take over the Dunge works however in 1861 the family included Francis Sr. who was living on Rough Lane near the works, Francis Jr. who was living at Lloyd's Head and George who was living on Queen Street with their families. The company was known as George Davis & Co. so presumably, George was the manager of the works with his brother Francis and father also having an interest. By 1867 the name had changed to George and Francis Davis when they had a brickwork and 6 acres of land and were paying £15 in rent with royalties on the products to the landowner Lord Forester.[18]

By 1871 Francis Sr. was still at Rough Lane and according to a family story he acted as timekeeper ensuring that any worker who was late had to stand aside for fifteen minutes and have that amount of pay docked from their wages.[19] He died in 1874 and was buried at Broseley. In the same year, the partnership was charged under the Factory Act for employing six boys: Robert Pinner (10), W. Lane, Thomas Shaw, John Chadwick (12), John Hall (11), and John Evans, all under 13 years of age, contrary to the Act of Parliament. Francis Davies appeared, admitted the offence, and was fined 5s. and costs in each case, amounting to £2 19s., or 14 days' imprisonment.[20] This seems somewhat ironic given they and their siblings would have been employed as child labourers in the brickworks.

Although they were listed as one of the makers of Broseley Tiles in adverts from 1881 to 1891 when the Broseley Brick and Tile Association was formed in 1889 they were not listed as one of the members, so they seem to have benefited without paying the required £200 surety.[21] Also not being a member meant that they were not bound to sell goods at the regulated prices set down by the association.

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[16] Deposited railway plans 1846, 1852. Shropshire Archives DP341, DP349

[17] Francis Jnr cannot be found in the 1851 Census. John was married and was still a coal miner living at Lloyd Head with his family.

[18] Shropshire Archives, Blakeway. Particulars of the estate of the Right Honourable John George Weld, Lord Forester

[19] *Trevor Instone.* History of the Davis family privately published.

[20] For children's employment see *George Smith,* The cry of the children from the brickyards of England. 1871

[21] The Building News 12st January 1881, Articles of agreement for the Broseley Brick and Tile Manufacturers Association. 20th April 1889. Shropshire Archives 1681/191/9

George's sons George jnr. and Samuel became involved in running the works with Samuel describing himself as a Clerk and George jnr. as the manager. Francis ran the Station Hotel for a short time in the 1870s suggesting that he left the running of the works to his brother. He retired from the partnership in 1897 leaving George and his sons as owners and is said that Francis could see no future for his children encouraging them to seek employment elsewhere.[22] By 1901 Francis had moved to Rhyl where he died in 1902.

George Senior died in June 1903 after a long period of illness leaving George jnr. and Samuel to run the works however by this time the business was not in good shape. [23] In the early 1900s, there was a deep recession in the building trade and orders were hard to come by. There had been little investment in the works, and it was not in a good position to weather the downturn in trade. With George's death and poor prospects, in August 1903 the sons decided to put the works up for sale:

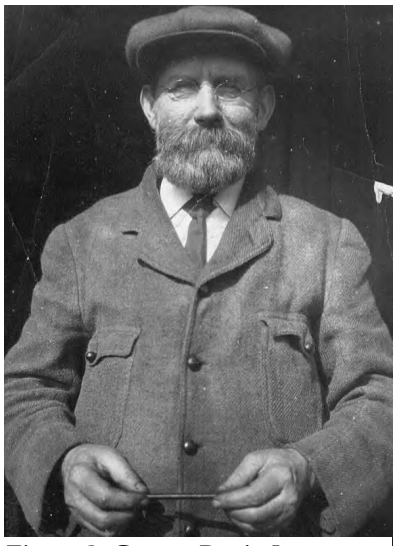


Figure 2. George Davis Jr.

To be Disposed of, as a going concern, a Brick and Tile Manufactory, in full work, comprising four kilns. six drying sheds and stoves, offices, engines, machinery, &c.; and also, the right to work the valuable beds of coal and clay lying under 32 acres or thereabouts of land adjacent to the works; the whole being held of the Right Honourable Lord Forester, upon a yearly tenancy. The Manufactory produces the finest quality of the celebrated Broseley Roofing Ridges, Hips, Valley, Draining Pipes, and other specialities. —Apply, in the first instance, to Messrs. Potts and Potts, Solicitors, Broseley.[24]

The sale was not successful and the sons soldiered on, however, things did not improve. At the end of 1903, George Sr.'s wife Rebecca died aged 73. In May 1904 they were moving a boiler and the packing on which it rested collapsed injuring Henry Roberts of Barber Street.[25] The next month they were in court for not examining the pumping engine boiler at their claypit and using two bricks to hold down the safety valve allowing it to be operated at 50psi instead of the rated 35. Their excuse was that it had to work continuously as they had been drowned out with water. They were fined £7 2s. 6d which seems a remarkably small amount for such a serious case however the reports of the case regarded this as a heavy penalty.[26] There was more trouble in 1906 when Samuel was fined £5 17s for employing a man in a mine with only one exit.[27]

Sadly, in April 1907 Francis took his own life by hanging himself in a small shed on Batches Lanes which presumably belonged to the works. At the inquest, his brother Edwin stated that Francis managed the works and had an interest in it and that "trade

[22] London Gazette. 8th October 1897, Trevor Instone.
[23] Wellington Journal 13th June1903.
[24] Wellington Journal 22nd August 1903
[25] Wellington Journal 7th May 1904
[26] Wellington Journal 18th June 1904.
[27] Wellington Journal 15th December 1906

had been bad, he and his brother had had difficulty in meeting the liabilities of the business."[28] Francis's widow Ellen died in May 1908 just over a year after his death.[29]

Three months after the death of Francis the business was again put up for sale using the same advert as in 1903 but there does not seem to have been any interest as a month later the plant and stock were auctioned off much of it being purchased by the owners of the other local works.[30] The works never re-opened.

George Jnr. left the area to manage a brickworks near Chapel-en-le-Frith however when his son Frank, who was the bookkeeper at the firm, was found guilty of false accounting they were both dismissed. As a result, the family split up and in the 1920s he 'spoke of his unhappiness, and very considerable poverty, trying to earn a few shillings by carrying out tests on samples of clay for his cousin Homer.' He died in 1932 and was buried at Erdington.[31]

Development of the Works.

There were three works in the Dunge area. The largest and oldest was the Broseley Tileries which had been founded by John Guest and later run by John Onions.

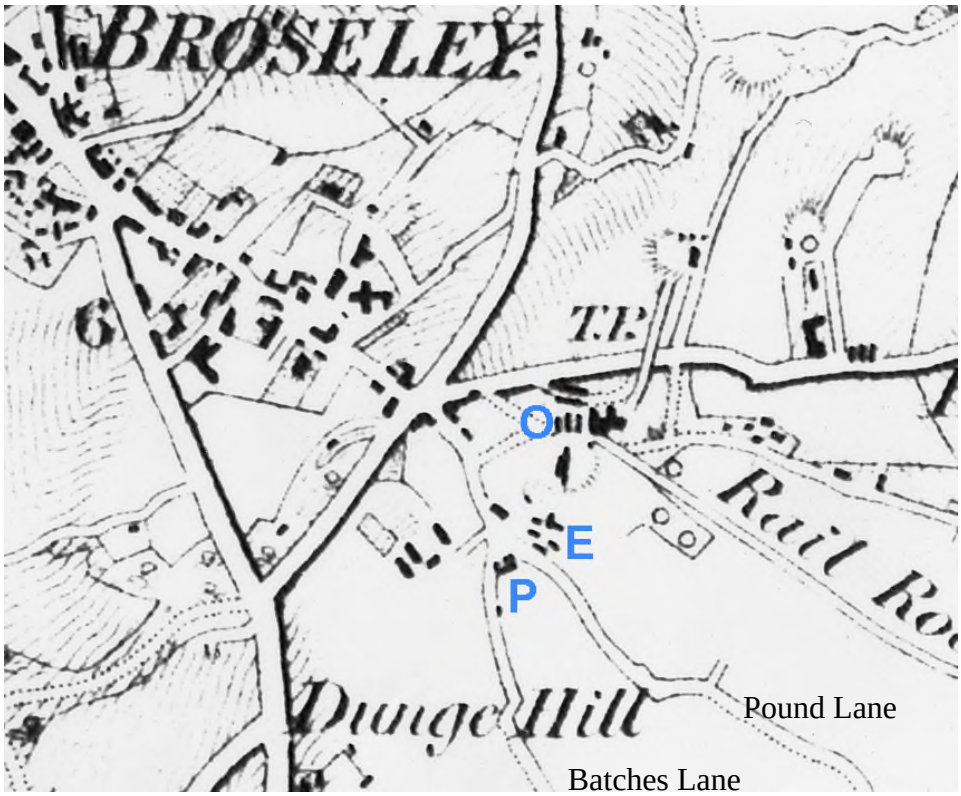


Figure 3. 1833 1" OS map. O-Onions, E-Evans Dunge Works, P-Poole's Dunge Works

In 1833 Pooles Works is shown as a series of buildings to the south of Pound Lane between Pound and Batches Lanes. Evans's works are shown to the north of Pound Lane to the northeast of Poole's works.

The next map showing the works is the works is the Tithe map of 1838. This shows that Poole leased a relatively small amount of land. There are two shafts shown which

[28] Wellington Journal 13th April 1907.
[29] Wellington Journal 2nd May 1908
[30] Wellington Journal 8th June 1907, 6th July 1907.
[31] Instone.

indicates he was mining clay as well as using surface quarries. It also shows the works buildings which are small in comparison with those of the nearby Onions works. Strangely there are no buildings shown for Evans's works. This may indicate that he was clamp-firing his bricks and tiles and using temporary shelters for the brick and tile makers.

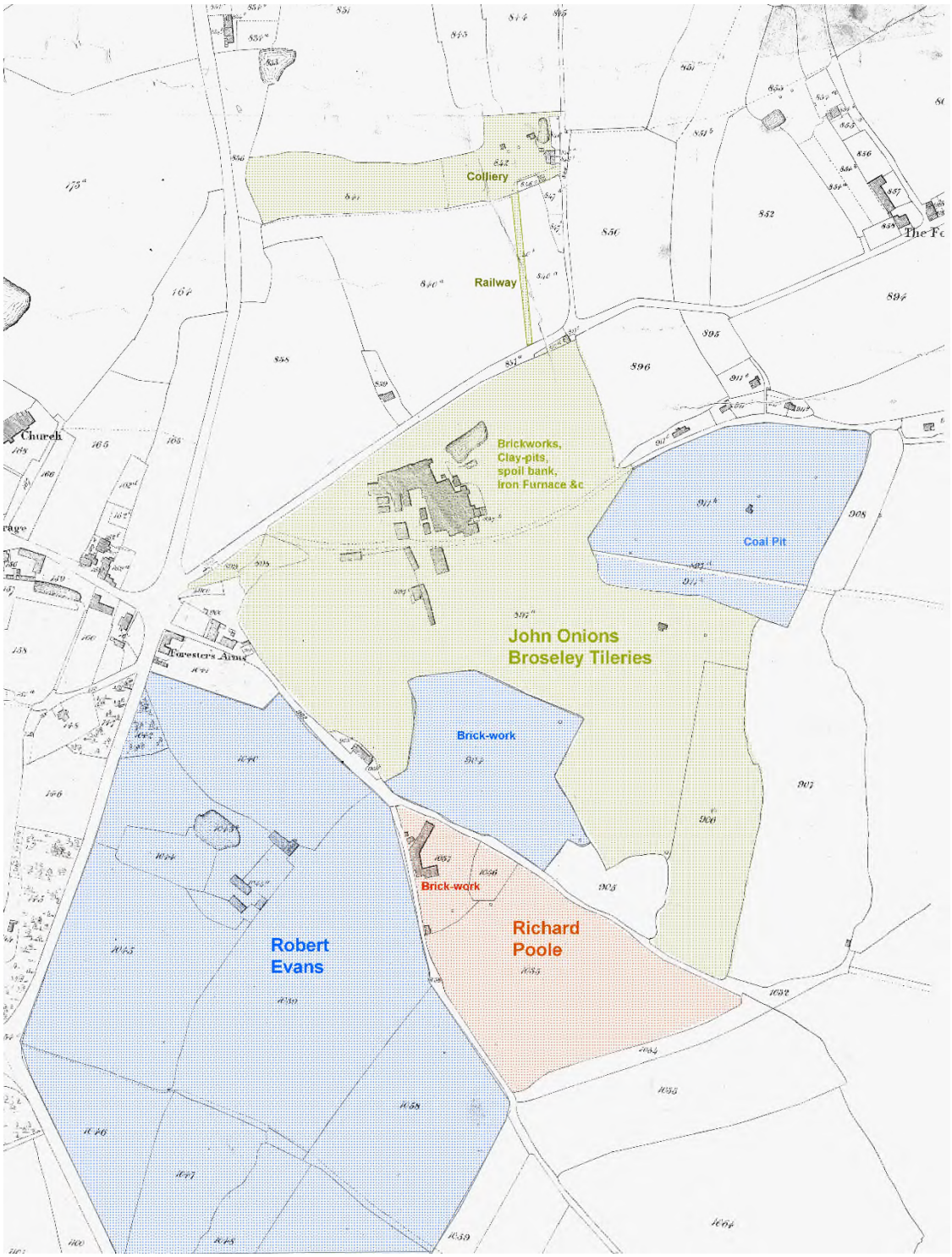


Figure 4: Broseley Tithe Map 1838 showing the three tile works at The Dunge and the land leased or occupied.

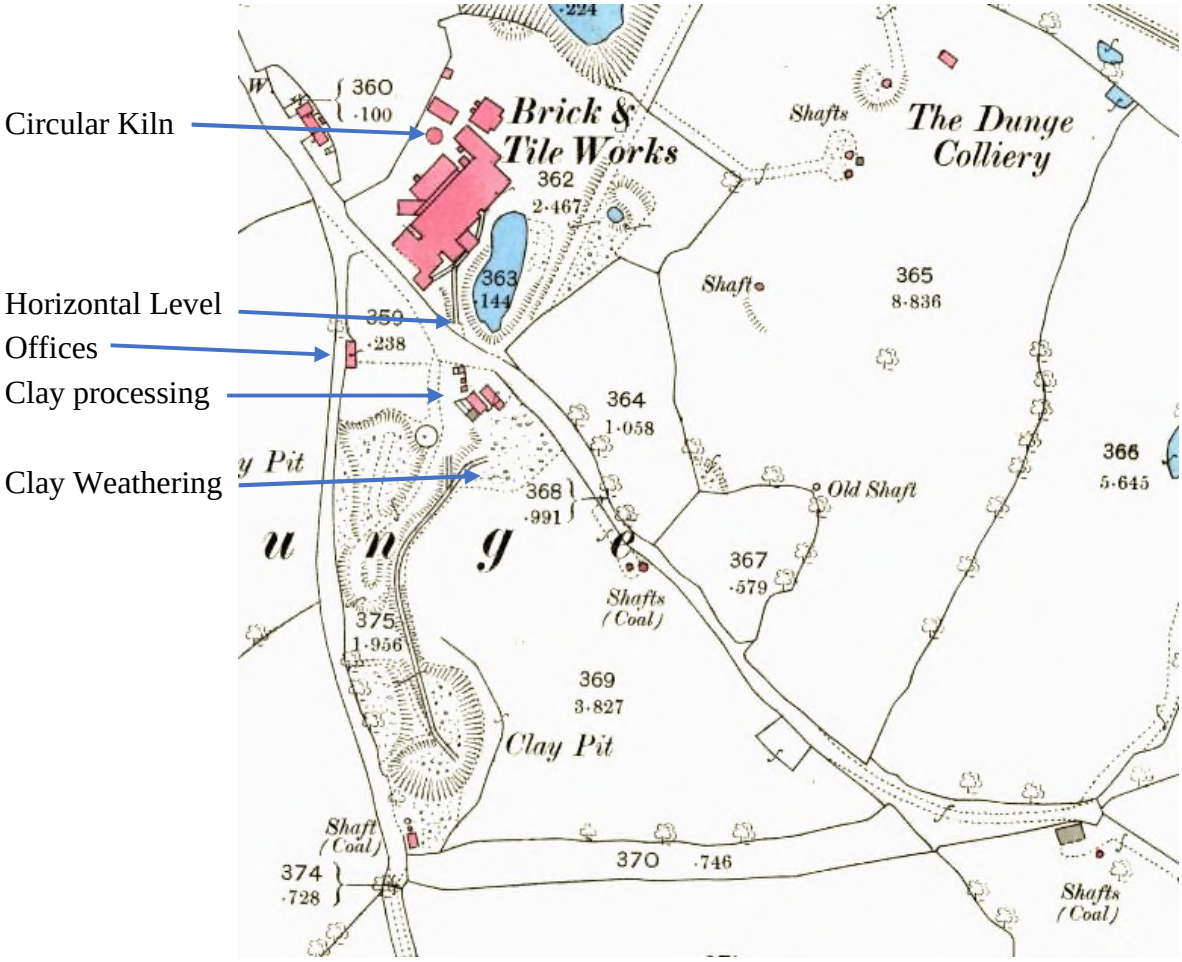


Figure 5. 25" O.S. Map Shropshire LI.6 1882 (NLS)

By 1882 Pooles brickyard had been demolished and a substantial brick and tile works erected on the site of Evans's works. There are three open clay pits (plot 362, 375) two of which are being worked and a tramway from the pit to the weathering area, Plot 363 is probably a flooded clay pit. Buildings for clay processing which would have included a pug mill possibly driven by a steam engine are adjacent to the clay weathering area. To the west of the processing building a circular object is shown on the map which may have been a horse-driven pug mill for clay grinding. Three of the mines associated with the works are shown on the portion of the map all of which are labelled as working coal. Just south of the works, the tramway enters a horizontal level which would have led to the clay workings.

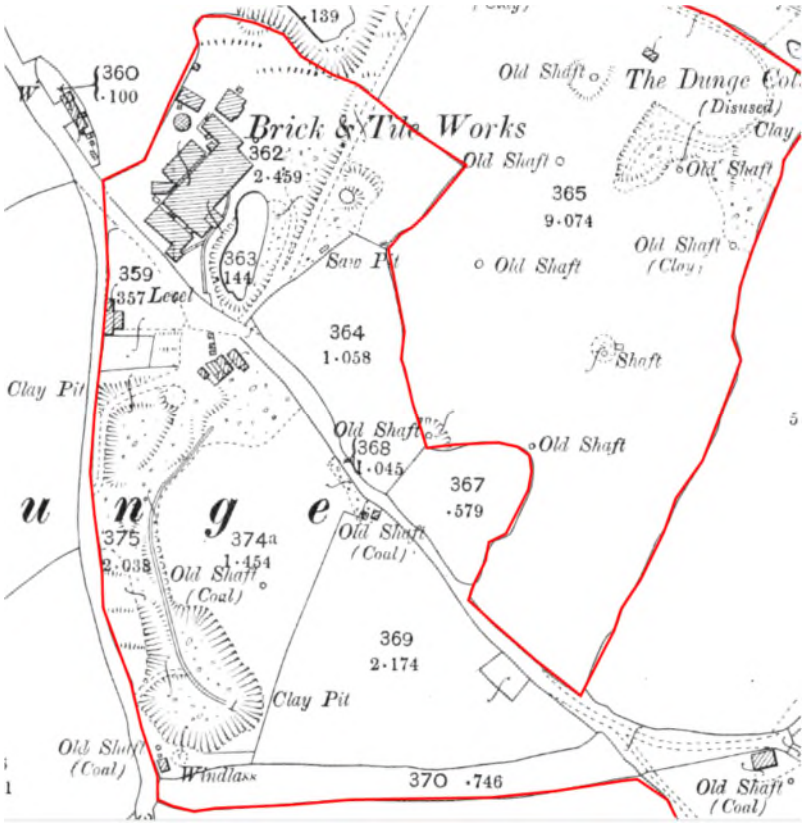


Figure 6. 25" O.S. Map Shropshire LI.6 1902 (NLS)

The 1902 map shows that works had not changed from that shown in 1882 other than a small extension at the rear of the office. The three coal mines are shown as disused with windlass having been erected at the mine shown at the southwest of the plot. An additional disused shaft is shown on plot 364a so this must have been sunk after 1882. The southern clay pit has expanded to the west.

The 1927 OS map shows that all the works and mine buildings had been demolished except for the office. Only one disused shaft is shown indicating that the other had been filled and the level is not labelled.

The office and clay processing building survived until the late 1990s but have subsequently been demolished. The clay pits have been filled and the land restored. The site of the works buildings lies under Hurst Close on the Tileries Estate.

Mining

These tile works were located at the outcrop of the brick and tile clays on the upper side of the Broseley Fault, where they were worked at and near the surface.[32] There were numerous shallow mines associated with the works as well as an open quarry.

[32] Randall.

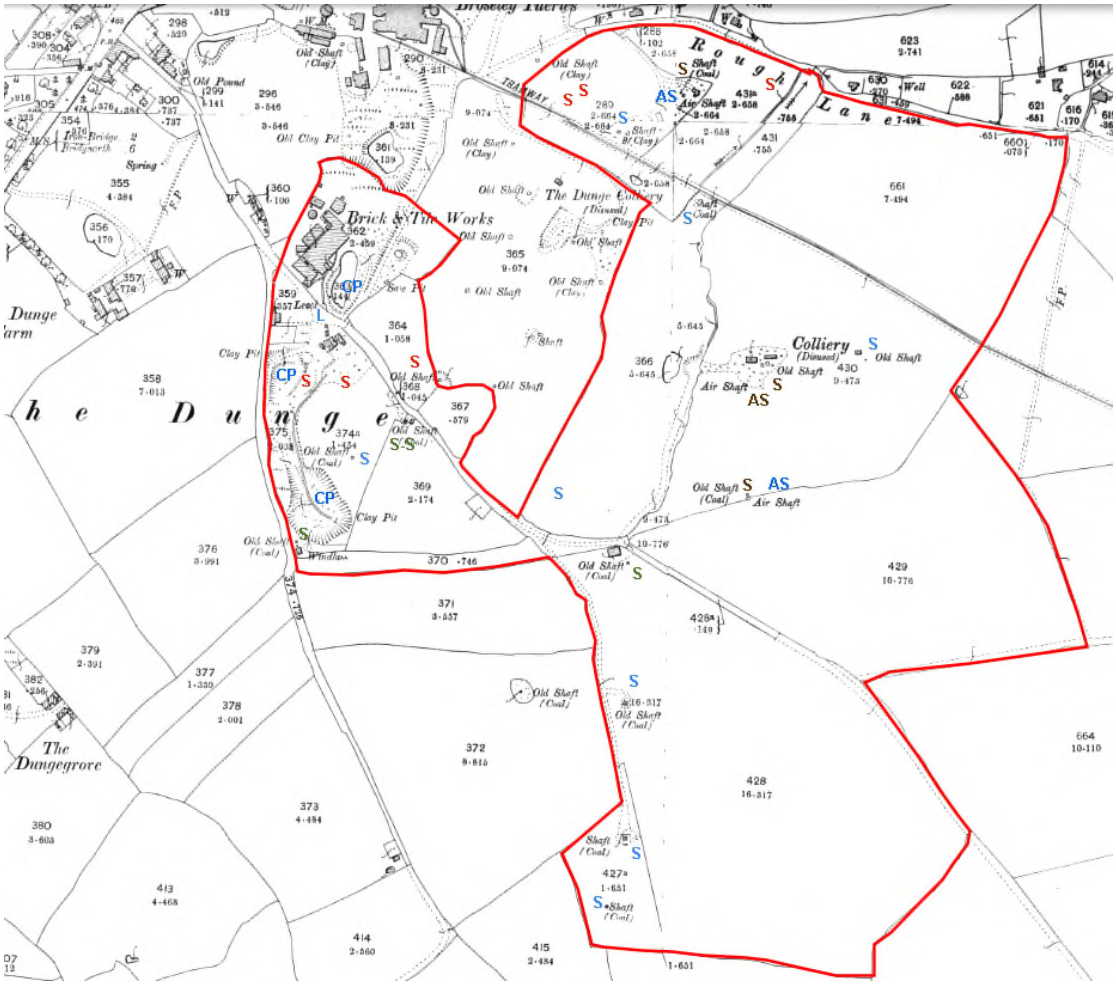


Figure 7: Mining & Quarrying at the Dunge. The area mined for red clay by 1906 is outlined in red. This is probably the area leased with the works.,
Key: S=Shaft, AS = Air Shaft, CP=Clay Pit. Red - shown on the 1838 Tithe map. Brown is shown on the Tithe map and 1881 OS map. Blue is shown on the 1901 OS map. Green – shown on 1882 & 1901 OS maps.

There are 23 shafts shown on maps between 1838 and 1901. They were relatively small in diameter being only 4 or 5 feet and the depths varied from 57 to 72 feet. Dunge No.1 pit was 72 feet deep and had 5 feet of tile clay under 7 feet of brick clay and in 1906 they were fined £5 17s with £2 costs for not having two shafts or outlets at this pit.[33] The underground conditions were poor with the roof being weak and needing a lot of support so as the clay was not very deep underground it was easier to sink several shafts rather than work from just one. Air shafts were needed to improve ventilation and three of these are recorded on maps. There was one horizontal level near the brick works which is shown on the 1881 and 1901 maps, but this is only recorded as being worked in 1906 when it was employing 4 men having been reopened in September 1906. From 1894 to 1896 the manager of the mine was George Howells and they were employing sixteen men underground and four above which was only a couple fewer than the much larger adjacent Broseley Tileries so business must have been good.[34]

[33] 1907 abandonment plan. Shropshire Archives 5607/2/28.
Wellington Journal 15th December 1906.
[34] Mining Inspectors returns. National Coal Mining Museum.

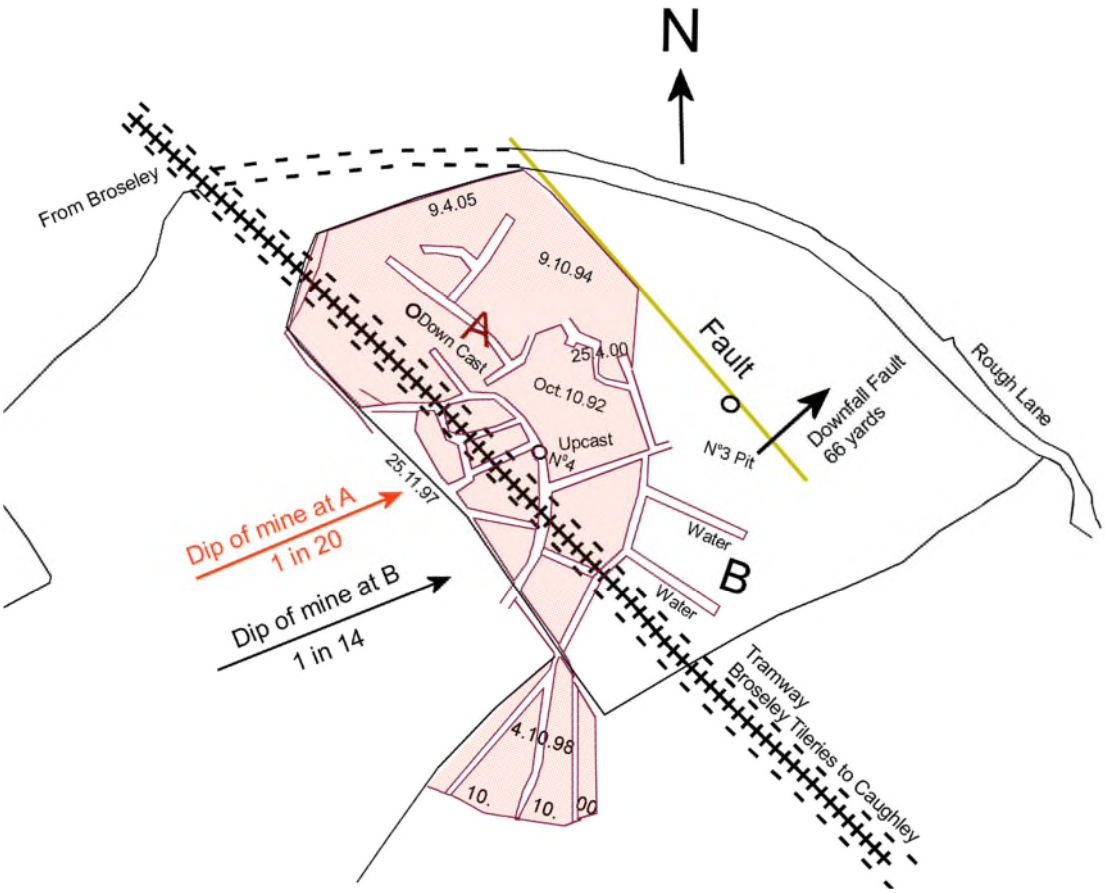


Figure 8. July 1907 abandonment plan for Dunge No. 3 pit. Also shows the No.4 Pit and a downcast Air Shaft. Based on Shropshire Archives 5607/2/28

There is one recorded fatal accident at the Dunge Pit on 23rd November 1892. Henry Aston was working at the Dunge coal pit setting some timber close to the coalface when a large quantity of debris fell from the roof on him and crushed him to death. He had worked at the coalface for 14 years and was a steady and careful workman. At the inquest the mines inspector could not find fault with Aston's work in timbering the workings but that the 'roof was a bad one' and no blame attached to anyone. He left a widow and nine children five of which were under ten.[35] There was another accident in 1904 when two youths were lowering the overman down using a 'windlass' they loosened the handle, and the overman was injured badly in the fall. The younger youth who was only 17 let go of the handle and the other youth could not control it. The inspector concluded that they were "unaccustomed to the work" [36]

Mining Inspectors returns

Before 1890 Clay miens were not listed.

1890 Dunge pit. Operated by G&F Davis. Manager J. Davis.

1891 Dunge coal & clay workings. Three shafts:
5ft diameter, 66 feet deep,
5ft diameter, 70 feet deep
4ft diameter, 57 feet deep.

[35] Wellington Journal 28th November 1892
[36] Shropshire Caving and Mining Club Below 2004.1. Broseley Local History Society Journal 1980

1894 Dunge pit. Operated by G&F Davis. Manager J. Davis. Working the Sulphur coal and Red clay with 16 workers underground and 4 above.

1895 New shaft at the Dunge.[37]
Return otherwise the same as 1894.

1896 As 1894.

1899 Dunge pit. Operated by Geo Davis senior. Nos 3 & 7 pits were operating and managed by John Brown with 14 workers underground, and 4 above ground.

1906 Dunge pits. Operated by Geo Davis senior and managed by Jas. Pope
No 3 mining Red clay and closed Feb 1906,
No 7 Mining Sulphur coal employing 5 men underground and 2 above. This was abandoned in April 1907.
Clay level employing 4 men underground. It had re-opened Sept 1906 and was abandoned in April 1907.

[37] *Ivor Brown*. Shropshire Caving and Mining Club Below newsletter.