

Astley Abbots Brickworks

Unlike the nearby brickworks in Broseley, those at Astley Abbots were typical of small country works supplying local needs and probably the nearby town of Bridgnorth. The clay would have been sourced from open pits and the coal for burning the bricks may have come from mines nearby 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.

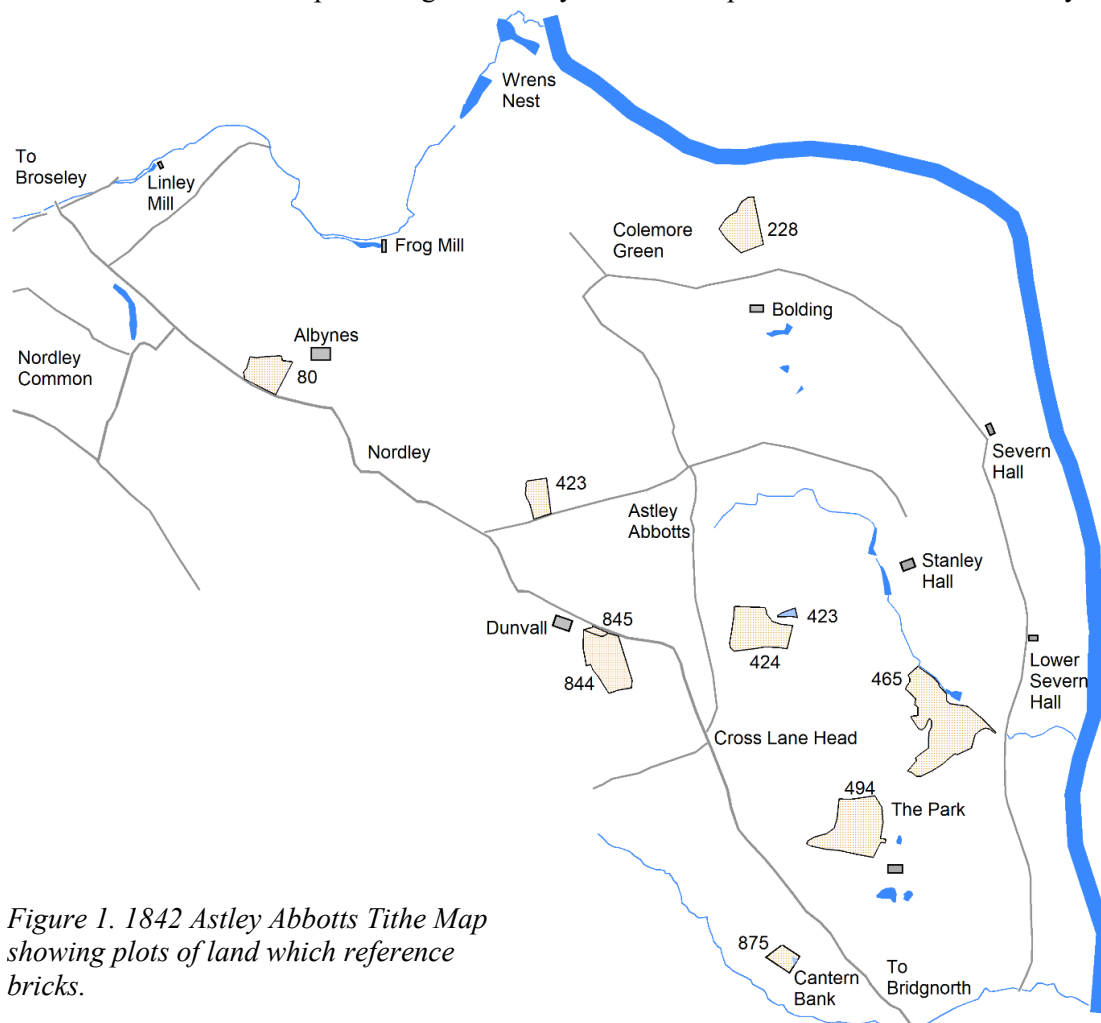


Figure 1. 1842 Astley Abbots Tithe Map showing plots of land which reference bricks.

‘Brick’ field names from the Astley Abbots Tithe Apportionment.

Owner	Occupier	Name	Plot	OS
John Stephens	Francis Pigot	Bricklin Piece	80	SO 690 974
Eliza Tyrwhitt Jones	Samuel Pee	Lick Brick Hill	228	SO 714 974
Eliza Tyrwhitt Jones	John Onions	Brickkiln and land adjoining	292	SO 703 964
Eliza Tyrwhitt Jones	On hand	Brickkiln 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	Brickkiln Leasow	494	SO 714 949
John Ward	On hand	Brickkiln Leasow	844	SO 704 958
John Ward	On hand	Brickkiln	845	SO 704 959
John Stephens	On hand	Brickkiln Piece	875	SO 710 943

Only two sites mention a kiln suggesting they had been working recently.

¹ There was also a brickworks at Tasley. Poyner David, *Tasley Coal, Wyre Forest*. Below 2020.3, Shropshire Caving and Mining Club

Nordley Brickwork at Dunval

This was located 380 metres southeast of Duvall on the Bridgnorth Road and located at plots 844,5 on the Tithe Map the land being owned by John Ward. In the 1851 census, James Bradley (33) is listed at Nordley Brickwork between Duvall and Astley Abbots with an occupation of brickmaker. John Ward is listed as farming 200 acres at Nordley farm employing 3 labourers. Later the same year his estate was sold at 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 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 Abbots Tithe Map of 1841 showing the kiln location

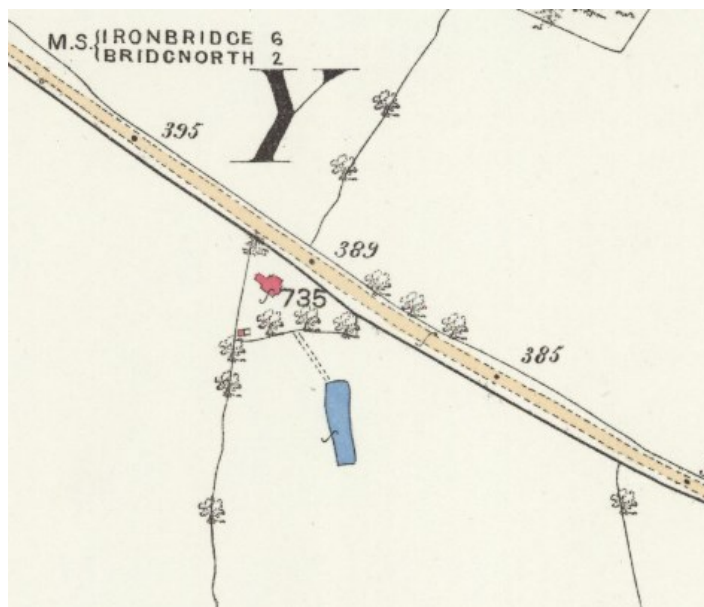


Figure 2 1883 25" OS map Shropshire LVIII.3(NLS).

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 Binnall

Listed as a brick kiln in the 1841 Tithe it may have been operated by Francis Pool who lived nearby. The land was rented by John Onions who owned Broseley Tileries so it would be strange if he operated a small brickworks at this location.

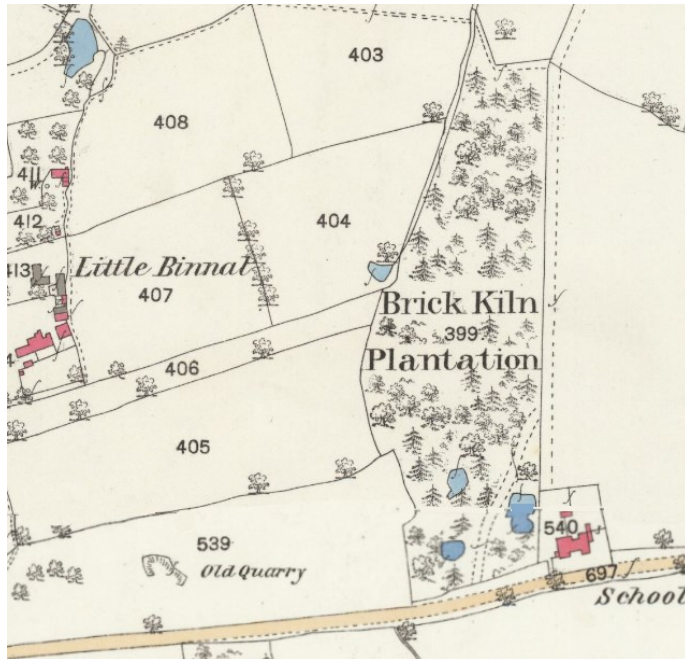


Figure 4. 1883 25" OS map Shropshire LVIII.3 & LI.15 (NLS).
The three pools in Brick Kiln Plantation would have been the clay pits. The kiln would have been located close to these near the lane.

Stanley Park

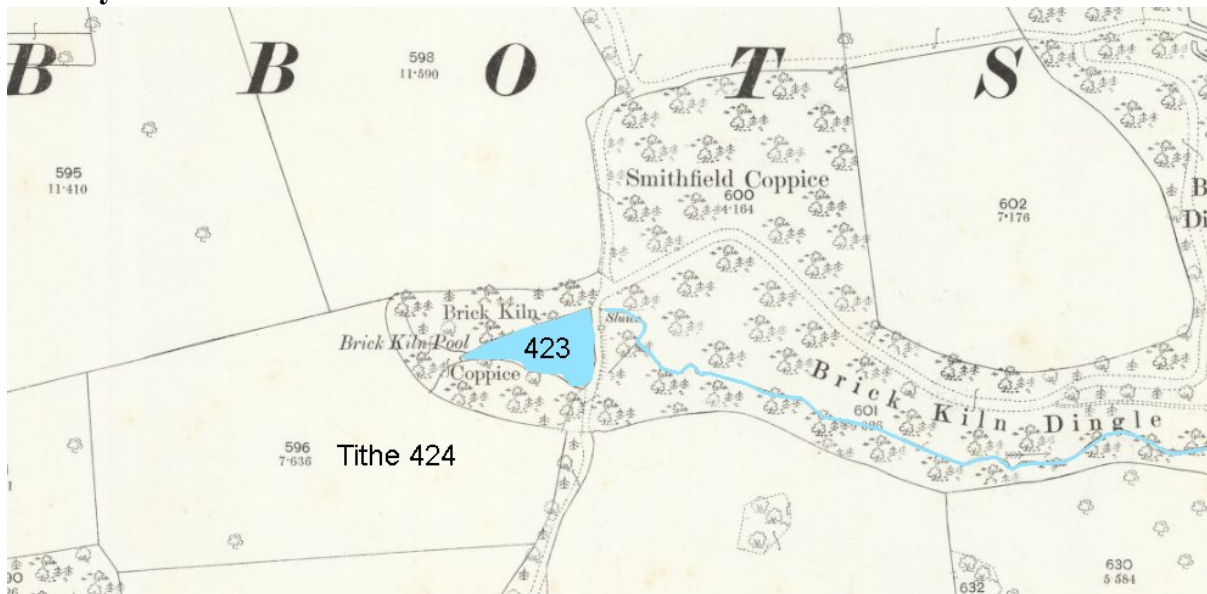


Figure 5. 1883 25" OS map Shropshire LVIII.4(NLS).
Brick Kiln Dingle is listed on the Tithe Apportionment as Smithfield Wood and Plantation and plot 424(596) as Brickkiln leasow. The pool may have been the clay quarry, but the shape suggests it is a dam with an earth wall at the east end.

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 from Jackfield is listed as a brickmaker living in Astley Abbots parish in 1861, 71 and 1891 and in 1881 he was a brickmaker in Birmingham. 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 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