

The Coalmoor Sanitary Pipe Co. later Coalmoor Refractories, Horsehay Flat, Dawley.
SJ6684 0635

This works was founded by James Bacon around 1902. Born in 1842 Bacon originated from Swadlincote in Derbyshire where his father had been a coal miner. In 1861 the family were still near Swadlincote living at Church Gresley where James describes himself as a pipe manufacturer. Ten years later he was married with one child and had become a manager of a sanitary pipe works. In 1872 and 1873 he applied for patents for improved kilns and drying sheds but later let these lapse.¹ Shortly after in 1875, he was declared bankrupt by which time he is described as a Contractor and at the Albert Works, Ashby Wolds near Church Gresley, Brick, Tile and Pipe Manufacturer and Brick and Tile manufacturers in co-partnership with George Annis at Bagworth trading as Bacon and Annis.² He had greatly overreached himself having liabilities of £3978 8s 7d and assets of only £374 19s.³ The stock in trade of the Albert Works (SK 3017 1838) was sold off in 1878 in distraint for rent so it is possible James continued to operate it until this time. The sale included bricks, tiles, sanitary products as well as loose plant and furniture.⁴ This was quite a small operation having only two beehive kilns in 1882 and although it was surrounded by much larger concerns it continued operating until the 1970s. The Bagworth Brickworks (SK 4411 0946) was adjacent to Bagworth Station and in the 1880s this had a Hoffman kiln.

The family moved to Wellington where in 1881 he was managing one of the local brickworks. Ten years later they had moved down the road to St. Georges and he described himself as a Brickmaker and Contractor, which is the same as in 1875 when he was declared bankrupt. In 1892 Bacon and Jones were advertising themselves as the Horsehay Brick and Pipe Works and the next year he was living at Horsehay when Robert Smith got his hand entangled in a machine making pipes.⁵ He was still operating the works in 1896 and the site likely became Day's Works where a new factory was erected in 1898.⁶

Having given up the Horsehay brickworks for his next venture on 27th January 1899 James was granted a 21-year lease for land and mines by Lord Forester to the west of the Coalbrookdale to Wellington Road at Horsehay Flat and by the 1st April he was advertising house coal for sale from his Coalmoor Colliery.⁷ This was a small mine with a royalty of 28 acres and managed by J. O. Owen a mining engineer from Wellington which employed 30 men below ground and 7 above (see Fig.1).⁸ By 1900 the family had moved to Greenhurst on St Lukes Road, Doseley when his daughter Alice May married Alfred E. Evans the manager of the Lightmoor Brick-and-tile works. At his time, he took an interest in local politics being a member of the local council and school board and was also a prominent member and preacher at the Horesehay Primitive Methodist Church.⁹ By 1905 the family had moved again this time to The Woodlands Farm at Horsehay where he probably ran the farm in addition to the colliery. Here he hosted local events such as a picnic for the Lawley Bank Methodist School and a gala for the United Temperance League.

Always interested in making bricks and pipes in 1902 James was mining fireclay as well as coal and a year later he was advertising that 'fire bricks, chimney pots, land drains, sanitary tubes and garden vases, were available from his Coalmoor Works' which must have been recently erected.¹⁰ The works were on part of Woodlands Farm on the opposite side of the Wellington to Coalbrookdale Road to his

¹ London Gazette, 13th December 1872, 14th January 1873, 28th January 1876

² London Gazette, 27th April 1875

³ Derbyshire Advertiser 2nd September 1876

⁴ Derbyshire Advertiser 18th October 1878

⁵ Wellington Journal, 5th November 1892, 14th October 1893

⁶ Wellington Journal, 11th July 1896, 12th February 1898, The 1843 Dawley Magna Tithe Map shows this as the White Brickworks operated by the Coalbrookdale Company on land belonging to Robert Slaney

⁷ Shropshire Archives (SA) 1681/41/2. Wellington Journal 1st April 1899

⁸ Mining Inspectors reports.

⁹ Wellington Journal 23rd March 1895, 22nd July 1905.

¹⁰ Mining Inspectors reports. Wellington Journal 5th December 1903.

Coalmoor Colliery.¹¹ Over the next few years employment in the mine reduced with only fourteen men being employed underground in 1905 and thirteen in 1906. In 1908 Bacon surrendered the lease on the mine in favour of the new company which was also going to take over the works. By 1910 the family had moved to Cornwall where he again took up his duties at the local Wesleyan Chapel.¹² In 1911 he was living at Pentewan describing himself as an Architect but ever active he was also a consultant to the Pentewan Block and Development Co. Ltd. in their unsuccessful attempt to make concrete blocks using sand from the beach.¹³ He did some farming and set up a short-lived concern making concrete posts which he sold off in 1923.¹⁴ James died in 1926 aged 84 and is buried at St Austell.

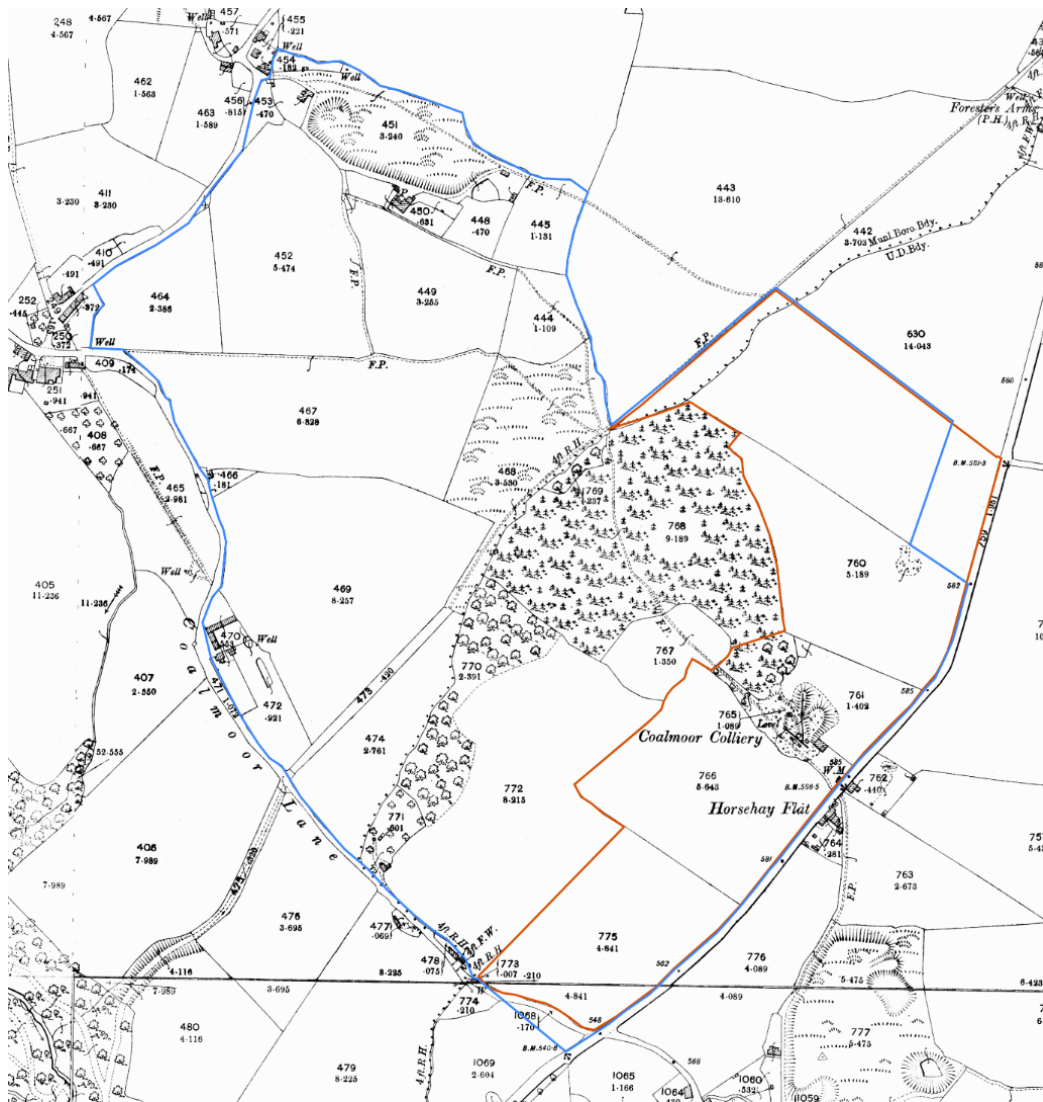


Figure 1. The area leased to The Coalmoor Sanitary Pipe Company is shown in blue with area the previously leased to James Bacon in red.

In 1908 Forester granted a lease of mines of coal slack and clay for 21 years to John Owen Jones of Woodlands, Horsehay, William Henry Thomas Haynes of Hounslow, Builder and Merchant and

¹¹ SA 1681/41/2. The memorandum states that he new lessees do not need ‘to erect any buildings shed or kilns upon the demised premises beyond what have been erected by the said James Bacon.’

¹² Cornish Guardian 3rd June 1910

¹³ St. Austell Star 20th June 1912. Lewis, M. J. T. *The Pentewan Railway*, Twelveheads Press (2018)

¹⁴ Cornish Guardian, 16th July 1920, 23rd December 1921, 2nd February 1923, 13th July 1923

William Thomas Sigger Lacy of Hounslow, Builder and Contractor trading in co-partnership as Sanitary Pipe and Fire Brick manufacturers under the style or firm of 'The Coalmoor Sanitary Pipe Company' (See Fig.1). The agreement was signed by Lacy on behalf of the partnership but the associated memorandum was signed by all three. They also agreed to pay arrears in rent on Bacon's lease.¹⁵ The rent was to be £43 per annum for 41 acres in Little Wenlock and 44 in Dawley. The royalties were 6^d per ton of coal and clay and 1/6 per 1000 common bricks with a dead rent of £150.¹⁶

John Owen-Jones was born around 1862 and in 1901 was employed as a bank clerk living in Huyton near Manchester. In 1902 he was the manager of the new Wellington branch of the North & South Wales Bank Ltd. which had branches throughout Wales. It merged with the Midland Bank in 1908.¹⁷ By 1909 Jones was farming at Woodlands Farm, Horsehay which included the site of the works, perhaps taking over when James Bacon left the area.¹⁸ Lacey had a successful building contractors' business and Haynes owned a builder merchants both were living in Isleworth. How these three came together and took over the works and colliery is unclear. In 1912 Jones sold up and left Woodlands Farm moving back to Chorlton, Manchester where he was again employed as a Bank Clerk.¹⁹ In the same year, Haynes was declared bankrupt owing £1,985 and soon after this he moved to Wellington and took over as manager of the works.²⁰ Lacy thus took control of the business of colliery owners, coal merchants, manufacturers and dealers in coal, glazed earthenware and other pipes, bricks and tiles forming The Coalmoor Sanitary Pipe Company Limited was incorporated in 1914 but dissolved a year later.²¹ The New Coalmoor Sanitary Pipe Company Limited was formed on 29th July 1915 with Lacey listed as a director. The capital was £1,500 in £1 shares with only two shares issued: one to Lacy and one the Edward Clothier, 7 The Square, Shrewsbury an accountant and dealer in shares.²²

The colliery continued very much as before employing 13 below 4 above in 1910 but most likely they were mainly working clay for the works. The report on mineral resources published in 1920 gives details of the workings of the Coalmoor Sanitary Pipe Co., Ltd, Horsehay: ²³

Works: About 1½ mile S.S.W. of the Inn at Coalmoor.

Mine: Day-levels adjacent to the works.

Geological formation: Middle Coal Measures. Two-foot and New Mine clays.

There are two chief seams of fireclay each about a yard thick, and each associated with a seam of coal. These fireclay seams are known as the Two-foot Clay and the New Mine Clay, the former being on top of the Two-foot Coal, the New Mine Clay lies below it.

The Two-foot Clay is the darker of the two in colour and is used for firebricks. The New Mine Clay is mainly utilised for drain-pipes. The beds are nearly horizontal and not much faulted. On the same property (but not worked) there are also the Clod Coal, Randle Coal, Best Coal, and the Little Flint Coal.

Reserves: Underground reserves are considered ample for present demands and possible extensions. They are limited in the direction of the rise to the north-east of the property by the outcrop of the Millstone Grit; in the direction of the strike there are large areas not worked. There is also a large reserve on the tips.

¹⁵ Shropshire Archives 1681/41/1.

¹⁶ Shropshire Archives 1681/41/21

¹⁷ Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_North_and_South_Wales_Bank

¹⁸ Wellington Journal 12th February 1902, 23rd January

¹⁹ Wolverhampton Express 25th November 1912. 1921 Census.

²⁰ Uxbridge and West Drayton Gazette 12th January 1912

²¹ National Archives BT 31/14255/137592 Company No: 137592;

²² Westem Mail 6th August 1915. Companies House register

²³ Memoirs of the Geological Survey. Special reports on the mineral resources of Great Britain . Vol XIV. – Refractory Materials Fireclays Resources and geology. HMSO 1920. Chapter CII Coalbrookdale and the Forest of Dean

Mode of working: Both clay and coal are worked on the pillar-and-stall system and reached by day-levels.

Treatment: The clay is mined and is weathered on the tips according to circumstances up to 1½ years. The grog added is sand from a decomposed Coal Measure sandstone obtained from a sandhole about 250 yards south of the works.

Little is known about the company during the 1920s, 30s and 40s. The 1921 census lists 48 people being employed by the company. Of these fourteen were employed in getting coal and clay, Haynes was manager, his daughter Lizzie Maud was employed as the clerk in the works and Charles Kendrick from Wellington was a Traveller.

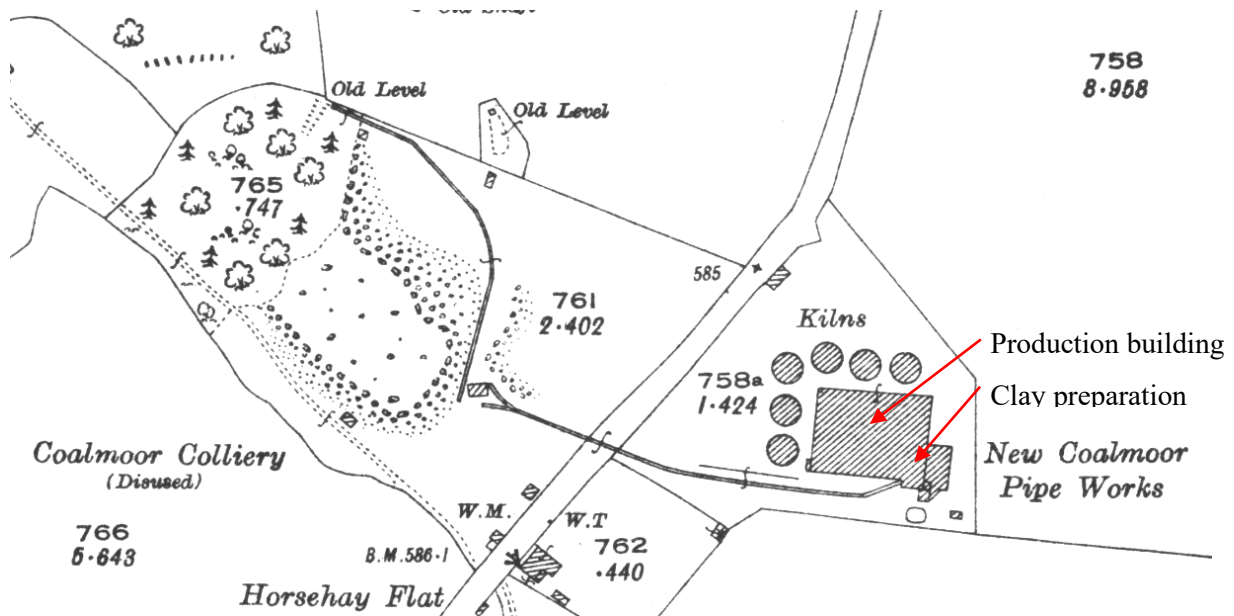


Figure 2. The 1927 25" OS map shows the works with six circular kilns and a tramway connection across the main road to the mines at the site Coalmoor Colliery where the clay would have been weathered. During this period various shafts were opened to access the minerals. Salop sheet XLIII.

The inspector's returns for coal mines give some details and there were various pits for both coal and fireclay. Numbers 1&2 were probably opposite the works. Numbers 3, 5 & 6 were on Green Lane which could be the lane shown on the OS map just to the west of the Coalmoor Colliery (see Appendix 1).



Figure 1. The site in 1946 showing six beehive kilns. The mines on the opposite side of the road appear to be disused. (National Archives RAF 106g 1483)

Lacey's sons Herbert and William took over the family building contracting firm and William Thomas Lacey died in 1955 leaving £40,729. They had disposed of the Coalmoor company by 1954 when the managing director was Alfred J Allen of Womborne and it may be that he had acquired the concern in the late 1940s.

The company expanded taking over the Broseley Tileries site in the late 1940s and the Lightmoor Tile Works in 1951 when they were sold by G. H Downing of Stoke on Trent who had purchased them in 1935.²⁴ In 1950 the name was changed from The Coalport Sanitary Pipe Company Limited to Coalmoor Refractories Limited and then in 1951 to Coalmoor Refractories (Horsehay) Limited eventually concentrating production at Lightmoor. The associated Clay Colliery Company of Horsehay took over the site using the production buildings as workshops. The area on the opposite side of the road, previously occupied by the mines was opencast by Clay Colliery for clay and coal.

The company stopped making refractory products in 1984 when the company was purchased by Istock and the name changed to Istock Brick Telford Limited and they modified the factory to make block paving.²⁵

²⁴ The Lightmoor and Shutfield Tileries had been put up sale in January 1951. Birmingham Daily Post 26th January 1951.

²⁵ The Time Index, 1984. Photograph of leaflet, Ironbridg Gorge Museum 1993.1



Figure 2 The site in 1953. Production had moved to Lightmoor but only one kiln has been demolished the site appears to be intact. Since 1946 the main production building has been re-roofed and incorporates skylights. (National Archives RAF 82_769_v_005)



Figure 3. The site in 1961. At this time, it was being used as a depot by the Clay Colliery Company in association with the Opencast site on the opposite side of the road. The kilns have been demolished and the clay preparation area is unroofed. The main production building is being used as a garage. A weighbridge has been constructed at the north end of the site adjacent to the main road.

In 1982 Clay Collery sold the Coalmoor site at auction for £63,000 to Hughes Transport of Ironbridge.²⁶ In 2014 Hughes Transport Ltd was granted outline planning permission for the site at which time the main building was described as being constructed in a mix of breeze block and brick and set beneath a pitched roof finished in profile sheeting. The application did not refer to the previous use of the site.²⁷ At some time the site was split into two.

Rob Hughes Transport Ltd of Unit 2, The Garage, Wellington Road, was dissolved in 2015 at which time it was licensed to operate four vehicles.²⁸ The site was later put up for sale.²⁹



Figure 4 The site in 2023 is used as a depot using the production building as a garage. The roof is still the same as that shown in 1961. Google.

Archaeology

Shropshire Historic Environment Record 07230.

The main building is likely to be the production building constructed in the early 20c when the works were first started.

Foundations of the clay preparation area at the rear of the main building are likely to remain.

Foundations of the six beehive kilns are likely to remain and are worthy of recording.

Bibliography

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²⁶ Sandwell Evening Post 16th November 1982.

²⁷ Telford and Wrekin Council planning application TWC/2013/0902.

²⁸ Companies House. <https://haulage-index.co.uk/hauliers/view/46056>

²⁹ <https://www.movehut.co.uk/property/492387-hughes-transport-premises-wellington-road-telford/> Undated