

The Madeley Wood Brick and Tile Works

Not to be confused with the Madeley Wood Companies brickworks at Bedlam and Blists Hill this brickyard was located near Madeley Wood Green (SJ6790 0373) adjacent to Madeley Bank which was a turnpike road constructed between 1806. It was said to have been founded around 1716 but there are no records of the works until the early 1800s.¹

Originally part of the Madeley Estate in 1786 John Onions Snr. of Benthall purchased land from John Morris & Elizabeth his wife and Thoams Fletcher for £580 which comprised Great Willow through the Little Willow through and Dingle Leasow continuing an estimated 14 acres. This had been sublet in 1784 to Robert and George Ward for 11 years and was described as a meadow and pasture with a stable and other buildings. In 1802 Onions purchased 3 acres 3 roods and 17 perches of adjacent land called Clifton's Piece from Francis Phillips of Brockton, Gent, William Purton of Madeley Court, Gent and Willaim Benbow of Broseley, Gent for £300. It had been in the occupation of Willaim Purton and included houses &c. The Lord of the Manor had the liberty of hawking hunting and fowling & also all mines of coal ironstone & minerals whatsoever.² It seems strange that Onions, who was an iron and coal master with interests in Benthall and Broseley, should purchase 18 acres of land in Madeley. Fortunately for him, the lord of the manor did not have the rights to the clay and sand so when the brickworks were founded, they could be extracted free of royalty. The records of sale make no mention of clay extraction or brick and tile manufacture, so it seems likely that these did not start until after Onions purchased the land in 1786 throwing some doubt on the validity of the early 1700s date claimed by Davis.

In 1813 there is a reference to Thomas Davis and Thomas Rickus brickmakers at Madeley and the next year W. Morris a brickmaker and builder of Madeley Wood was declared bankrupt.³ In 1820 John Davis was baptised his father being George who was listed as a brickmaker. In 1822 Gorge and Thomas Davis left the partnership in the firm of the Woodlands Brick and Tile company leaving Samuel and Willam Smith to run the works along with Charles Lumley.⁴ It seems likely that this is the same Davis family who were to operate the Madeley Wood Works. The lease for land at Madeley Wood was in November 1824 so as the normal lease period was 25 years the works may have been run by them since 1803 if not before. However, they may have taken it on after leaving the Woodlands Works two years earlier. The lease was to George Davis of Madeley and Thomas Davis of Broseley Brickmakers with authority to build and erect kilns buildings etc on the pieces of land listed. They also had the liberty to use the clay and sand pits already made and the royalties for bricks being 1s and tiles 1½ d per 1000 (see Appendix 1). There is no mention of an existing brickworks but as one of the parcels of land is called Bricklin Pices one must have already existed however it is possible there were no permanent buildings on the land. A valuation of the estate of John Onions around this time lists a Brickkiln and about 2 acres let to Messrs Davies (sic) at a rent of £76.⁵

Pigott's directory of 1822 lists Thomas Davies of Broseley under Brick and Tile Makers with Robert Palmer as the only person with this occupation at Madeley Wood. In 1828 the directory lists both George and Thomas Davies of Broseley, but Plamer was no longer listed. The 1835 edition lists George Davies of Madeley Wood so it is possible that the Thomas and George listed in previous editions were the same people and that Thomas had either left the partnership or died. George (1780-1851) had two sons George Jnr. (1817-1871) and John (1820-1893?) who both became involved in brickmaking. It is possible that John took over the Tweedale Brick and Tile works in 1846 which he renamed Halesfield. These operated until at least 1853 but had been demolished by 1881.

¹ 1866 advertisement by John Davis. Wellington Journal 23rd June 1866.

² Shropshire Archives (SA) 1190/4/398.

³ SA WB/F/1/3/2/3/9. London gazette 18th October 1814 page 2095

⁴ London Gazette 5th November 1822, Page 1813

⁵ SA 1190/4/496

In 1845 the partnership of George and John Davis of Ironbridge and Madeley Wood, brick and tile manufacturers and barge owners dissolved. We do not know if this was George Snr. or George Jnr and which of the partners left. The lease was renewed in 1849 for a further 21 to George Jnr and John Davis.⁶

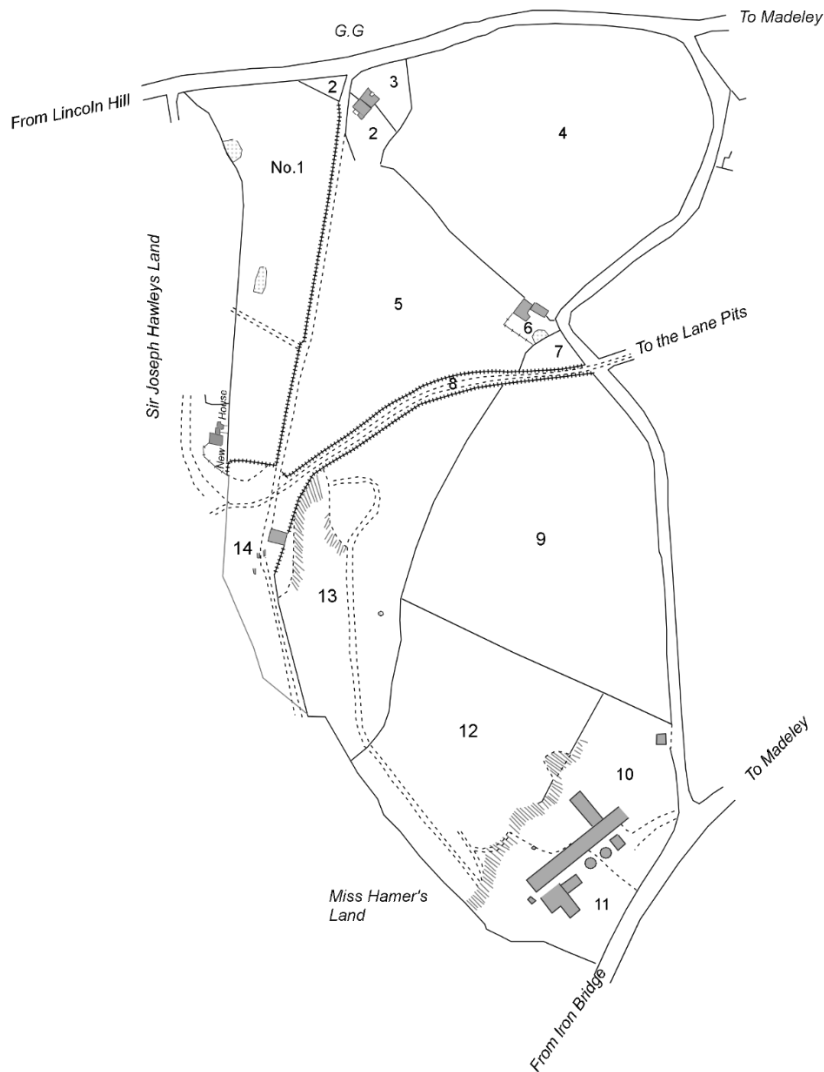


Figure 1. Plan from 1849 Lease (SA 1190/4/352). Shows two Beehive kilns. The trackway through lots 12 and 13 is shown as a tramway leading on the Tithe map leading to a clay quarry.

The 1851 census lists George (34) as a widower living at Madeley Wood Green with his daughter Prudence (6) and a servant. His occupation was as a Brick and Tile manufacturer. George was living at Lincoln Hill when he died in 1855 and his wife Sarah inherited his share of the works.⁷ She remarried and died in 1865. John Davis continued to run the business and in 1856 opened a yard on a wharf on the Shropshire Union Canal near the Goods Station where he sold Broseley Brick, tiles etc.⁸ Business must have been good as three years later was advertising for 20 to 30 brickmakers.⁹

⁶ SA 1190/4/352.

⁷ In the 1861 she lists her occupation as Brick Works.

⁸ Eddowes Salopian Journal 14th May 1856

⁹ Wellington Journal 16th April 1859

ESTABLISHED UPWARDS OF 150 YEARS.
BROSELEY BRICKS AND TILES.

GENTLEMEN, Architects, Builders, &c., are respectfully informed that they can be supplied with the ORIGINAL DAVIS BROSELEY TILES, CRESS, &c., at any Station between EVESHAM and GLOUCESTER, both inclusive, in Truck Loads of 4 Tons, BEST GREY TILES at 30s. per thousand, 5 per Cent off for Cash payments. Other Goods equally as low. Goods sent to any other station on any railway. For particulars apply to
JOHN DAVIS, Broseley Brick & Tile Manufacturer, IRONBRIDGE, Salop.

Figure 2. The Tewkesbury Register 28th July 1866

By 1858 Elizabeth the wife of John Davis died and by this time, as well as operating the brickworks, he was also farming at Nedge Farm near Shifnal.¹⁰ In 1871 he was still at the farm which comprised 110 acres and he was employing 3 men and 1 boy. He listed himself as a farmer with no mention of brickmaking. He left Nedge farm in 1873 when he was said to be 'removing to a distance'.¹¹

By 1867 when he let the Heart of Oak Inn on Court Lane, Madeley John's son Edward John was a partner in the Brick and Tile, Works.¹² Slater's directory in 1868 and Bagshaw's in 1869 lists Davis & Son (Broseley brick & tiles) Ironbridge.

On the death of John Onions Jnr. in 1859 his estate was managed by trustees on behalf of his daughters. In 1868, with the lease on the Madeley Works due to expire they decided to have the brickyard valued.¹³ The next year they had another valuation with the brickworks and 9 acres of land were valued at £1593 and the remaining 9 acres of land at £1829.¹⁴ Edward John Davis must have intended to purchase the works as sometime in 1870 a draft conveyance was drawn up with a sale price of £750. This is less than the valuation so must have comprised the brickworks only and not the associated land. However, the purchase did not go ahead and given his bankruptcy soon afterwards it is likely that he could not raise the money.¹⁵

At the end of the lease, the Davis family were responsible for dilapidations, but the Trustees had to pay for any work done to improve the works and any working plant they wished to purchase. Since 1849 in working the clay resources Davis had driven a water level 105 yards long from the Air Pit to the opening of the level. He had also erected three drying sheds with associated drying stoves. The plant comprised: a pair of (horse) rolls compete with machinery, two clay mills, two iron pumps and pit heads and a winding gin. There were three tile kilns as the dilapidations listed 'three kilns with arches over and side arches'.¹⁶ The working plant shows the lack of mechanisation which would have been typical of a brickyard from this period. The only machine was a brick machine and two pipe machines but these were hand-operated as there was no power plant. In addition, there were brick tables, standings for moulders barrows pipe benches and various moulds all giving the impression of a relatively small-scale works.¹⁷ Davis's valuation was £668 15s. 0d but after much discussion in January 1870 John Davis of Nedge Farm (not his son E J who ran the works) finally came to an

¹⁰ Shropshire News 8th July 1858

¹¹ Wellington Journal 23rd January 1873

¹² Shrewsbury Chronicle 8th march 1867.

¹³ SA 1190/4/355. 24th August 1868. To meet Mr J Aston & Mr Bathurst at brickyard, Ironbridge & making valuation.

¹⁴ SA 1190/3/358. W Wyleys valuation 28th October 1869

¹⁵ SA 1190/3/381

¹⁶ SA 1190/4/326. Valuation by S Nevett 17th December 1869

¹⁷ SA 1190/4/363

agreement and the Trustees purchased the fixtures machinery etc. for £350.¹⁸ A few days later the land and brickworks were put up for auction in two lots at the Tontine Hotel however they were not sold. In April Davis was removing materials and making claims for waste tile and stone walling not mentioned in Nevett's Survey.¹⁹

The works seem to have stood idle but in 1872 James C. Perry, Estate Agents enquired about leasing to them on behalf of one of their clients although a small part of the land had been sold off.²⁰ Nothing came of this enquiry however in 1873 George Legge of the adjacent Woodlands Brick and Tile Works purchased the works and some of the land.²¹

The census of 1871 lists Edward J (25) living at Madeley Wood with his wife Mary E. (22) and he is listed in Casey's directory as a Brick, Tile & crest manufacturer. In December 1871 he was declared bankrupt.²² In March 1872 there was to be an auction freehold property including a newly erected brick and tile works late in the occupation of E.J Davis with Shedding kilns, stoves stables and around 5 acres of land possession to be from Lady Day 1872. The auction also included four cottages at Brockholes, two dwelling houses and the Heart of Oak Public House in Court Lane. The houses and pub were probably owned by Davis, but the location of the brickworks is unclear. In 1874 John Edward Davies(sic), a brick and tile maker was in contempt of court for removing a machine that had been taken by the officers of the court and fined £5.²³ By 1879 he had moved to Kenilworth where he set himself up as a maltster and it appears that when he put a notice in the paper stating he was not accountable for the debts of his wife Mary.²⁴ His father John sold up at the Nedge farm in 1873 and also moved to Kenilworth where in 1881 he was running the Globe Inn.²⁵ Edward John died in 1889 when he was living at 43, Regent Street in Lamington Spa.²⁶

Little is known about the period of Legge's ownership, but from at least 1879 he was advertising himself as running 'The Woodlands and Madeley-Wood Brickworks' and the the OS maps show little or no change to the site between 1882 and 1902.



Figure 3. Only known view of the works in operation. It is located at the top right-hand of the image. Centre left are the houses on the Brockholes.

¹⁸ SA 1190/4/366

¹⁹ SA 1190/3/374,375

²⁰ SA 1190/3/377

²¹ SA 1190/4/381

²² London Gazette 19th December 1871

²³ Eddowes Salopian Journal 10th June 1874.

²⁴ Kenilworth Advertiser 2nd April 1879

²⁵ Wellington Journal 23rd January 1873, 1881, Census

²⁶ Wellington Journal 3rd August 1889.

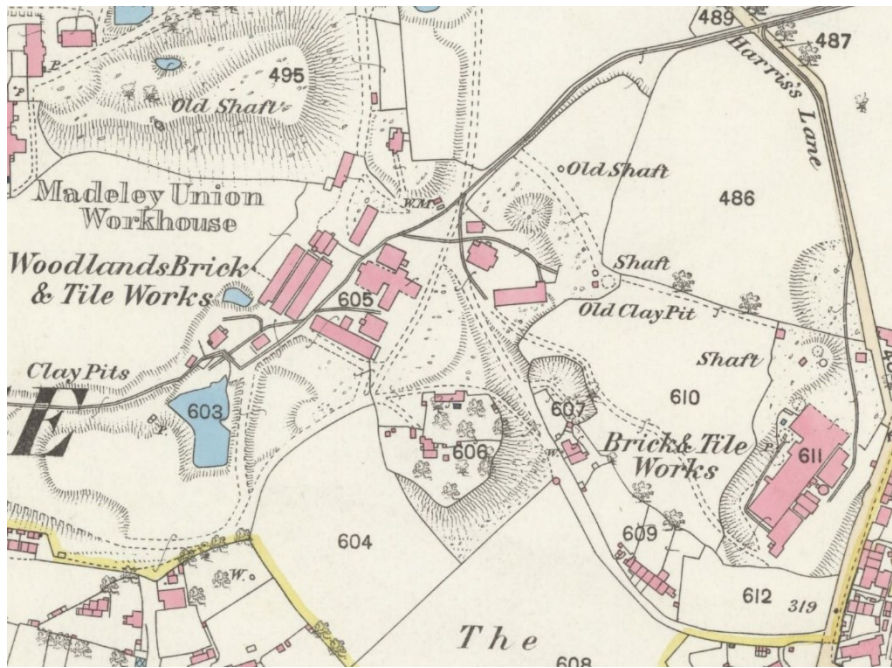


Figure 4. 25" 1883 OS map Shropshire XLIII.14. The works were run by Legge in conjunction with that at Woodlands. He had connected it to the tramway network putting in a link along Harris's Lane presumably to bring in coal and perhaps ship out goods. The Old Clay Pit has been absorbed into the Woodlands Works and buildings have been erected. Clay appears to be sourced from a shaft with horse Gin just to the north of the

works. The 1903 edition of the map shows a similar layout with little change.

Willaim John Legge took over the Madeley Wood Company brick and tile works around 1916 when it was sold in an auction.²⁷ By 1927 he had abandoned and largely demolished both the Woodlands and Madeley Wood works and at the latter site only the tile kiln and two buildings are shown. An Aerial photograph of the site in 1930 shows two buildings and the kiln. By 1962 a house called Sunnycrot had been built on the site and the building at the southern end of the site had been demolished. The remaining large building had been converted into a house (No.21 Madeley Road) and the small office was still standing.

²⁷ Dawes, N.M. A History of Brick and Tile Production on the Coalbrookdale Coalfield., 1979 (IGMT library)



Figure 5. 1930 aerial view. Britain from Above EPW034285

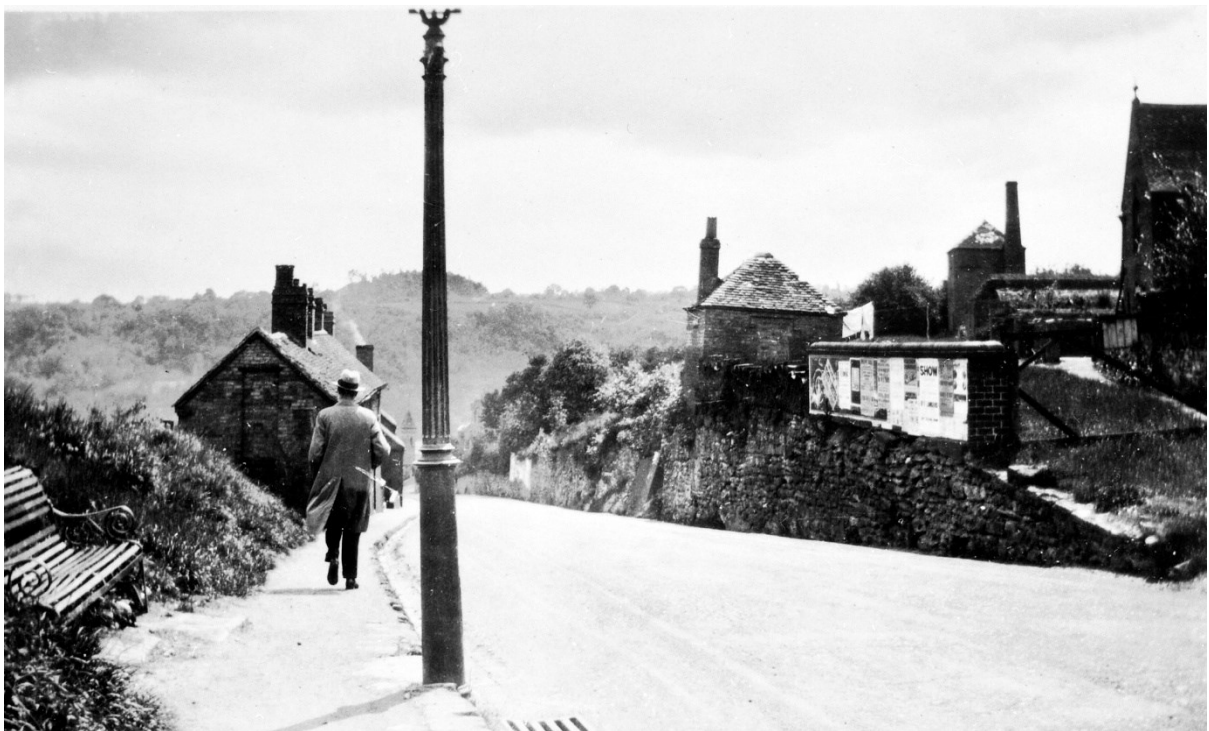


Figure 6. Looking south down Madeley Hill in the mid-20th century with the remains of the works on the right. The small building next to the advertising hoarding side may have been the office. Also shown are two larger buildings and the kiln in between. Ironbridge Gorge Museum 1998.1052

Appendix 1

Indenture 29th November 1824²⁸

between John Onions of Broseley Ironmaster and George Davis of Madeley brickmaker and Thoams Davis of Broseley brickmaker. Witnesses that for and in consideration of the rent royalties reservations covenants payment provision and agreements heroin after reserved mentioned and contained and agreed...

- All that piece or parcel of land situate in Madeley Wood adjoining the west die of the New Turnpike road leading from Ironbridge to Madeley called **Brickkiln piece** and containing by measurements with the garden therein 1 A 1 R and 28 P. and now in the occupation of **Richard Cotton and Thomas Evans as tenants** to John Onions together with ways, waters, watercourses, paths, passages beds veins or strata of **clay and sand under** land and also in or under those several pieces of land.
- **Dingle Leasow** (part of) occupation of **William Parton** containing 1A. 1R 19P. Pitmounds Pools railway in **Dingle Leasow** in occupation of **Madeley Wood company** 1A 1R 15P.
- **Barn Leasow** in occupation of **Willaim Parton** 5A 2R 2P. Garden in occupation of Thoams Edwards and Jane Ellis 32P.
- **Cliftons Piece** in occupation of **John Wilcox** 3A 2R 32P
- **The Meadow** in occupation of **Richard Cotton** 3A 2R 36P
- **Willow Threw** in the occupation of **William Parton** 2A 36P

Authority to build and erect kilns, ovens and any other erections and buildings and to make hearths and to do all and every other necessary act and acts on the said several pieces or parcels of land herein before mentioned or any of them for the purpose of making and burning bricks tiles and quarries or for the using or enjoying any of the power and privileges hereby demised.

Liberty to use clay and sand pits already made and sunk in lands before described. At owne costs make pits erect engines and gins for drawing and draining getting digging and raising clay and sand Doing as little damage

Royalties: 1000 bricks 1s tiles including draining and kiln tiles 1/-s per 1000. Dozen barn floor brick, quarries, cress tiles hip tiles and gutter tiles 1/6s. Ton of sand 6d. £35 minimum half-yearly royalties. Give up in working condition

Appendix 2

1869 Sale of stock on John Davis handing works over to Son Edward John²⁹

Tuesday 20th April – Brick & Tile Works Madeley Wood near Ironbridge

John Davis (having relinquished business in favour of his son Mr E. J. Davis who will in future carry on the trade) had instructed Mr Barber to sell by auction, the surplus stock on the premises above (which are situated about half-a-mile from Ironbridge Station, on the Severn Valley Railway, and one-and-a half miles from Madeley Market on the London and Northern Western Line) Comprising about

100,000 Gray and red bricks, including 80,000 common and 20,000 pressed.

100,000 best and seconds grey roofing tiles

15,000 Dressed flooring tiles

5,000 Chequered and stable blocks

3,000 Brewhouse flooring bricks

1,200 Dozen quarries of various sizes

200 Dozen of Barn-floor bricks and quarries

120 Dozen of plain and ornamental long slating crest

100 Dozen of 4,6,9 inch Glazed Flange pipes

50 Dozen of Gutter and Hip tiles, and a lot of 2,3,4, and 6 inch draining pipes, coping and round end bricks, garden tiles, gutter bricks &c &c.

²⁸ SA 1190/4/351

²⁹ Bridgnorth Journal 10th April 1869

The above will be divided into lots to suit purchasers.
Sale to commence at half-past eleven o'clock for twelve prompt.³⁰

Appendix 3

1870 January-Auction of Brick & Tile works with Land³¹

Madeley, Salop, to brick and tile manufacturers, building societies & Others. To be sold by auction by Messrs Nock 7 Wilson at the Tontine Hotel Ironbridge on Thursday the 27th day of January at four o'clock in the afternoon in tow or such other lots as may be agreed upon at the time of sale, and subject to conditions to be then produced-

Those well-situated and valuable Brisk and TILE WORKS with kilns, drying sheds, and all necessary buildings requisite for the carrying on of an extensive trade together with six pieces of excellent accommodation Pasture Land, under which there is a very valuable bed of clay suitable for the manufacture of first-class brick-kiln goods; TWO COTTAGES, buildings &c to whole containing 17a 3r 23p or thereabouts.

The above property has a very considerable frontage, and part of it is well adapted for building sites, being situate within a short distance of Ironbridge and Madeley.

Lot 1

All that old-established, well-situated and valuable BRICK WORKS called and known by the name of the Madeley Wood Brick and Tile Works, together with kilns, drying sheds, buildings, and appurtenances. Also three pieces or parcels of excellent pasture land adjoining now in the occupation of Messrs Davies (sic) and Co. and Mr John Johnston containing together 9a 0r. 34p.

Lot 2

All those Three Fields of excellent Pasture Land, adjoining Lot 1 together with buildings, rickyard and road now in the occupation of Mr B Wilcox, two good cottages and gardens in the occupation of Robert Rogers and William Jones; also a tramway, waste and stable in the occupation of the Madeley Wood Company containing together 8a 2r 29p.

For further particulars apply to the Auctioneers, Messrs Gordon Nicholls, solicitors or Mr H. J Wyley, Land Agent and surveyor all of Bridgnorth

September to brickmakers and others to be sold by Private Treaty³²

all those valuable brick and tile works situate at Madeley Wood, in the parish of Madeley, in the county of Salop, with the kilns, drying sheds, two cottages and all necessary buildings requisite for carrying on an extensive trade, together with several pieces of very excellent accommodation land (under which there is a valuable bed of clay) the whole containing 13a 2r 21p or thereabouts. The above works are now in perfect order, and doing a large business. – Further particulars may be obtained from Mr. H J Wyley, land surveyor Bridgnorth; or from Mr Henry Martin Bathurst Broseley.

Appendix 4

1872 Sale of E.J. Evans assets³³

Valuable Freehold property at Madeley Wood and Madeley near Ironbridge. Brick and Tile Works, Clay, Sand, Beer House and Houses to be sold by Auction, by Mr Leadbetter at the Tontine Hotel Ironbridge, on Friday 8th March 1872 at three for four o'clock in the afternoon punctually, in the following or such other lots as agreed, and subject to conditions:

Lot 1

Newly erected and conveniently situated **Brick and Tile Works**, situate in **Madeley Wood**, with all needful shedding, kilns, stoves, stable, and other conveniences; and about 5 acres of land, containing very excellent beds or seams of Clay and Sand, and late in the occupation of Mr E J Davies(sic). The

³⁰ Bridgnorth Journal 10th April 1869

³¹ Shrewsbury Chronicle 14th January 1870.

³² Shrewsbury Chronicle 19th September 1870

³³ Shrewsbury Chronicle 1st March 1872

above forms an excellent opportunity for investment or occupation the clay being of first-rate quality, and suitable for turning out first-class goods. Possession at lady-day next.

Lot 2

Four well-built cottages, situate at Brockholes, near Ironbridge with gardens and out-buildings, in the occupation of Mark Baugh, Samuel Hammonds, Ann Sheldon and Richard Hammonds.

Lot 3

Two well-built and roomy dwelling houses, with gardens, brewhouses, cellars and other conveniences situate in Court-lane Madeley, near Ironbridge, in the occupation of Mr Joseph Jones and Mr John Bennett.

Lot 4

W well-built and well-accustomed Berr House, known as the "Heart of Oak" situate near last lot, containing Kitchen, Club Room, Bart, parlour, back Kitchen, good Cellars, garden good supply of Water and other conveniences in the occupation of Mrs Fowler.

The Tenants will show the Lots, and any further information may be obtained from the Auctioneer, Broseley; Mr George Burf, solicitor, Ironbridge; or Mr Onions Solicitor, Market Drayton, Salop

Appendix 5

28th October 1869³⁴

W Wyleys valuation of J Onions deceased Madeley property.

No	Description	Quality	Quantity	Value
Lot 1				
1885	Part of Barn Piece	Pasture	2 0 22	
1901	Brick kiln Piece	Pasture	1 3 26	
1884	Near Barn Piece	Pasture	3 0 37	
1902,3	Brick Works &c		1 3 29	
Total			9 0 34	1593 2 6
				350
				1943 2 6
				1193 2 6
Lot 2				
1881	Tramroad and waste (Part only)		3 27	
2701	The Pool Piece	Pasture	1 3 18	
2714	The Barn Piece	Pasture	2 1 24	
2715	Rickyard		13	
2716	Buildings & yard		13	
2717	Upper Barn Piece	Pasture	3 2 32	
2705	Stable		1½	
2711	Garden		9	
2713	House and Garden		22	
2712	House and Garden		24	
Total			9 1 23½	1829 1 3
				1650 0 0

The property is a very compact and valuable property the greater portion of the lands being excellent pasture, and under which lie very valuable beds of clay. There are extensive brickworks on Lot 1 and the Property possess a very important length of frontage. I estimate the Fee principal value of lot 1 to

³⁴ Shropshire Archives 1190/4/358

be as before stated One Thousand five hundred and ninety-one pounds two shillings and sixpence and that of Lot 2 to be One thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine pounds one shilling and three pence. These values include the clay timber and buildings but are exclusive of mines and minerals reserved to the Lords of the Manor.

W Wyley, Land Agent & Surveyor Bridgnorth 28th October 1869