

All Saints, Boyne Hill, Maidenhead

THE ORIGIN OF THE BRICKS USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALL SAINTS

In the book 'George Edmund Street a Victorian Architect in Berkshire' published by Reading University is included a chapter on 'The Church of All Saints, Boyne Hill, Maidenhead' by Bridgeen Fox. The church was dedicated on 2 December, 1857. On page 50 she writes "True to his ideals of using local materials wherever possible, Street had considered using flint but it proved too expensive and the good, red brick produced locally by Messrs Silver and Sons was used instead. Moreover, Street had been very impressed by the brick churches of Italy and north Germany and was convinced that pure, red brick could be used to great effect in England".

Fig.1 All Saints church



But where **were** the brickworks of Silver and Sons?

East Berkshire contained many brickworks, in Maidenhead, Bracknell, Reading and Slough to name a few and there are references to their operations in books on local history in the Maidenhead and Reading libraries, and also the Berkshire Records Office, but the name Silver and Sons does not appear. Enquiries of the Brick Development Association and the Brick Directory also drew blanks. However, Kelly's Directory – the listing of all tradesmen and businesses throughout the country that used to be produced annually – came up trumps. On page 250 of the Directory under BUILDERS is recorded 'Silver and Sons, Tittle Row, Maidenhead', Tittle Row being less than a mile from All Saints, and is in All Saints parish.

Fig.2 Tittle Row, Maidenhead



Inspection of Victorian maps of Maidenhead in the public library show that, although part of the urban conurbation now, Tittle Row was then a small hamlet. The maps do not identify a builders' yard but on page 234 of the 1887 Kelly's Directory two residents of Tittle Row are named – James Edward Silver of Harwood, Tittle Row, and Joseph Silver of Fountain Villa, Tittle Row. These are surely linked to the firm of Silver and Sons.

Fig.3 Fountain Cottage, Tittle row – was this Fountain Villa?



Records show that Silver and Sons were the builders of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic church in Maidenhead.

From **A History of the Parish** - "In 1879 Canon John Scannell acquired a 'finely situate' acre of land as the site for a Parish Church and set about raising funds to erect a building to accommodate the town's growing Catholic population. The eminent architect Leonard Stokes was appointed and the builders were Messrs Silver and Sons and Filewood. Fearful of incurring large debts, only part of the original design was initially built and that at a cost of £3,018. The opening ceremony and dedication of the church to St Joseph was performed by the Bishop of Portsmouth, the Right Rev Dr Virtue, on 18th December 1884". Leonard Stokes was at one time a pupil in G E Street's Architect's Office.

Fig.4 St. Joseph's church, Maidenhead



Silver and Sons were also employed to build part of St. Luke's church in Maidenhead.

From **St. Luke's church, Maidenhead website** – “1894 Spire put up. Of Bath Stone, from designs by J.Oldrid Scott F.S.A.; built by Silver & Sons Ltd;”

Fig.5 St Luke's church, Maidenhead

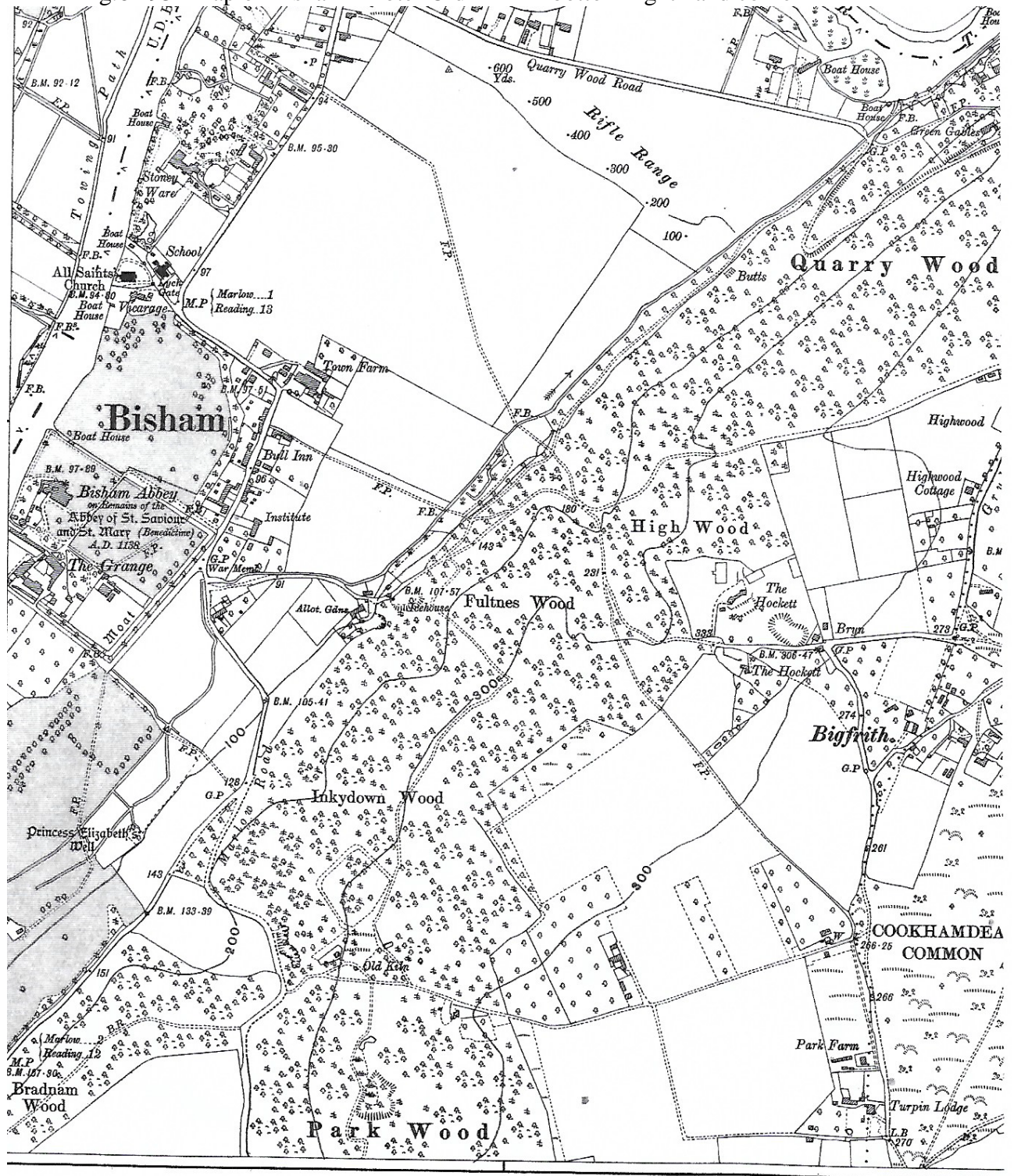


The main contractor that Street used to build All Saints was Joseph Mills of Stratford, according to Bridgen Fox, but she states that Silver and Sons manufactured the bricks.

On page 249 of Kelly's Directory of 1887 under the entry BRICK AND TILE MAKERS is recorded 'Silver and Sons, Bisham, Marlow', Bisham being a riverside village about two miles from All Saints. I understand that builders often owned brickworks as well so it is almost certain that this is the same company as the Builders of Tittle Row.

Having learned that the brickworks were in Bisham (somewhere) it seemed worthwhile to study large scale maps of the area, and on a 1931 map of the area, fig.6, we see in the bottom right hand corner, between Inkydown Wood and Park Wood, 'Old Kiln', the only such reference to kilns in the Bisham and presumably abandoned.

Fig.6 1931 map of Bisham – note 'Old kiln' in bottom right hand corner



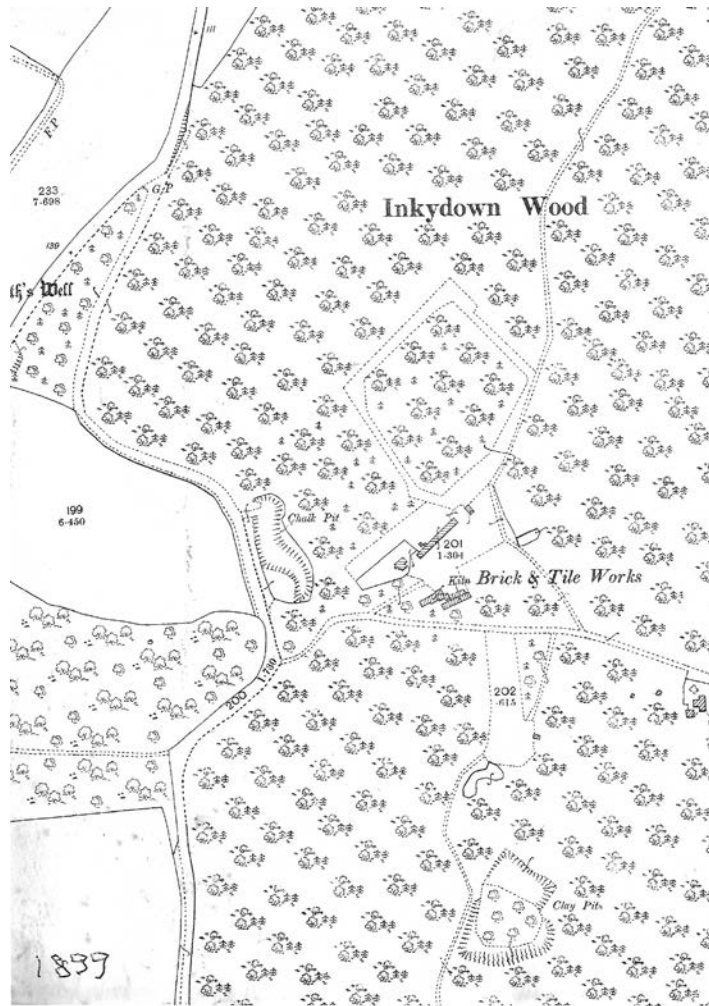
The site is to be found half way down the steep winding road that leads from Pinkneys Green to the Marlow Bypass roundabout, up a track on the right- hand side and about two hundred yards along on the left.

Fig. 7 The track to the site of the brickworks



A map of 1899, fig.8, shows that the site was almost certainly still operational at that time, and a 1914 map records it similarly.

Fig.8 1899 map of the brickworks in Inkydown Wood



The site is now completely covered in trees and undergrowth with no evidence of buildings – see Figures 9 and 10.

Figure 9 The entrance to the site today



Figure 10 The interior of the site today



However, there are examples of parallel mounds and trenches which are clearly man made- see figures 11 and 12. What would excavations and earth surveys reveal?1

Figure 11 Example of manmade construction



Figure 12 Example of manmade construction



But, above all, the clearest evidence of brickmaking is in the hardcore lying in the track leading to the site. There, in exposed patches, are areas of broken red hand-made bricks like those used in the construction of All Saints. – see figures 13,14 and 15.

Figure 13 Brick hardcore in lane



Figure 14 Brick hardcore in lane



Figure 15 Brick hardcore in lane



Silver and Sons – the brickmakers for All Saints church

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