

Exploring Kett's Heights - Bricks

The walls throughout Kett's Heights are characterised by the range of building materials used to create them. This short guide identifies many of them. Can you spot them?



Named bricks found at Kett's Heights, built into Herb Garden seat



FI, CXX

A number of these refractory bricks can be seen built into walls at Kett's Heights, but no information on the company has been found to date.

NB Refractory bricks are ones that can withstand a high temperature and can, therefore, be used in kilns.

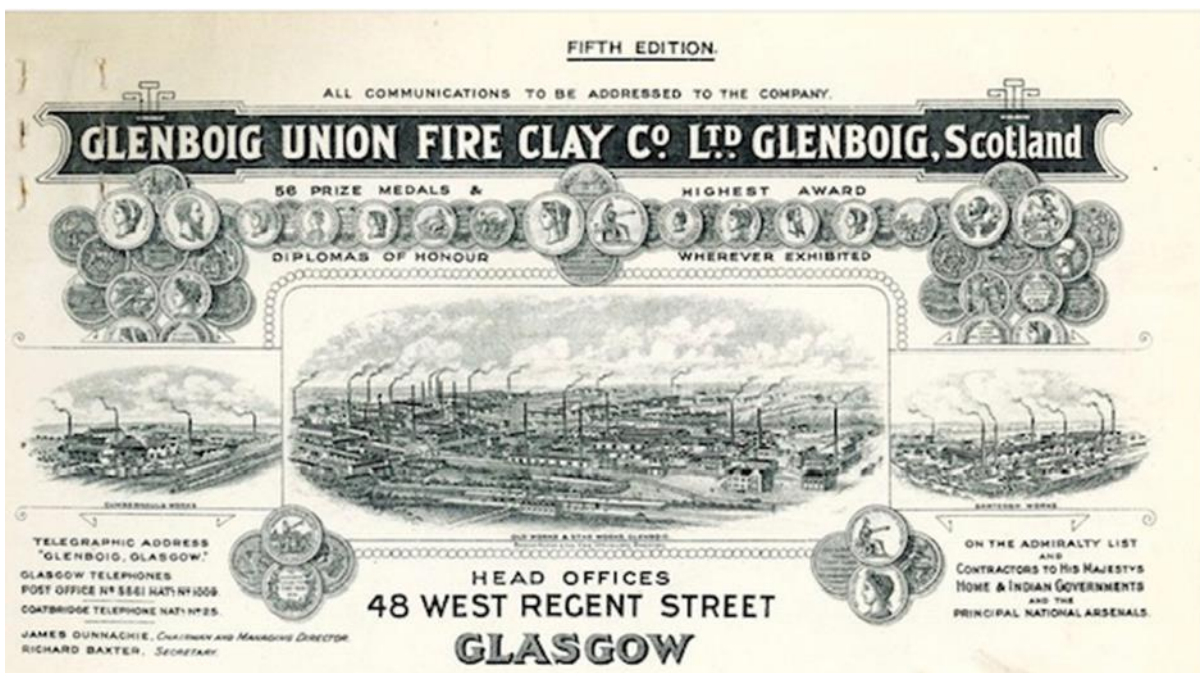


GLENBOIG STAR WORKS

Located in Glenboig, to the east of Glasgow. The first works was established in 1831, the Star works being established in 1876 at nearby Gartverrie. The brickworks was located close by to rich deposits of fireclay found in between coal seams. The business rapidly expanded

being fuelled by the demand for refractory products during the industrial revolution. By 1892, 50 moulders were producing 100,000 bricks per day and the works became the largest firebrick manufacturer in the world, eventually producing a quarter of a million bricks a day. They had a worldwide reputation exporting throughout the world. Production finally ceased in 1976.

Apart from refractory bricks blocks and retorts, they produced chimney pots, sewage pipes, decorative mouldings including garden edging and urns. They exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition.



CLIFF AND SONS

Located at Worley, near Leeds. In production from about 1840, later they became part of the Leeds Firebrick Company

Produced mainly refractory bricks, but the Cliff family also were iron producers and had a colliery in the 19th century.



ELLISTOWN COLLIERY AND BRICKWORKS

Located in Ellistown, near Coalville, Leicester. Started by Joseph Joel Ellis in 1874, was taken over by Hepworth in the 1960s and then Ibstock Brick in 1999, still in production as part of Ibstock.

Apart from house bricks they produced refractory bricks and clay pipes, they also operated a colliery.



COWEN

Located in the Newcastle on Tyne area, founded by John Anthony Cowen about 1819. Based on this early founding it could have been one of the earliest suppliers of refractory bricks and retorts to the gas works. Upon his death in 1874, his sons Joseph and John took over the business and introduced steam driven machinery. The main products were refractory bricks and retorts.

The works abutted both the River Tyne and the railway network, providing a good transport system for their products. The works closed some time ago.



MOBBERLY AND PERRY

(originally Mobberley and Bayley)

Located in Stourbridge, West Midlands. In production from about 1860, until the 1960s. Apart from producing refractory bricks, they also produced coal, fire clays and retorts. As can be seen with other brick manufacturers, clay was often produced as a by product from coal mining as it was found during mining operations.





GIBBON BROTHERS

Located in Dibdale near Stourbridge, started by Benjamin Gibbon in 1834. Apparently the clay produced especially good fireclay. After Benjamin died in 1863, his widow continued to run the business until she died in 1880, when her sons took over the business. Business declined following the discovery of undersea gas, with the consequence that retorts and refractory bricks for gas making were no longer required.

Their main products were refractory bricks and retorts, and apparently were one of the biggest suppliers in the UK. The company also mined coal and had an engineering business



STEPHENSON

Located in Throckley, near Newcastle upon Tyne, the work was established by William Stephenson in 1849. The works were expanded over the years and the brickyard eventually had 34 Newcastle-type kilns. In 1951 these kilns were replaced by a 20 chamber Staffordshire transfer arch kiln and produced six million bricks per year. In 1973, Gibbons of Dudley, took the works over. The Throckley brickworks is now owned by Ibstock plc.

Apart from refractory bricks and retorts, they also produced, common bricks and field drainage tiles.



G.H RAMSAY AND COMPANY

Located at Derwenthaugh, Newcastle-on -Tyne. Founded by George Heppel Ramsay around 1835. Following expansion over the years it was capable of completing seven million bricks per annum. Clay for the bricks came from the owners Swalwell colliery.

The company ceased trading around 1925. Their many products were firebrick and other refractory products.



HALL

Located in Stourbridge, no information about when the business started, but it moved to Cradley Heath in 1967 and closed in 2008. We do know they were producing refractory bricks and retorts for glass production in the mid to late 19th century. They were also a major supplier of firebricks used in the fire boxes of steam railways

The last owner of the business was John Edwards, a highly decorated Spitfire pilot in the Battle of Britain.



HICKMAN and Co

Located in Stourbridge, West Midlands. In production around 1896 producing fireclay and manufacturing coal, the firm employed 9 underground workers and 4 surface workers at the time. No date when it ceased production

Main products assumed to be refractory bricks.

Apart from the refractory bricks listed above, there are many other common and engineering bricks that have been found built into the walls at Ketts Heights these include:

- London Brick Company
 - Allen (Halifax)
 - Wealden
 - H. Doulton
 - Spring (Barnsley)
 - Tonbridge
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