

Holy Trinity Church, Ashford-in-the-Water Godwin & Co Tile Installation

The ceramic tiles in Ashford Church were made by Godwin & Co of Lugwardine, near Hereford – one of the leading suppliers during the Victorian era.

Godwin tiles were reputed to be favoured above those of other manufacturers by the architects George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) and George Edmund Street (1824-1881) in their church restorations¹, and they can be found 'in no fewer than fifteen cathedrals, and many thousands of churches, public buildings and mansions'.² Cathedral and abbey installations include Carlisle, Christchurch, Colchester, St David's, Exeter, Edinburgh, Gloucester, Hereford, Manchester, Milton, Rochester, Salisbury, Tewkesbury and Winchester.

The tiles at Ashford were installed during Revd JR Luxmoore's restoration of the Church in 1868 – 1870. They feature an attractive geometric arrangement including 'encaustic' tiles, that incorporate inlaid patterns of different coloured clays.

Progressing from the chancel arch towards the east end of the church the patterns become more complex; more colours are introduced; and the floor level is elevated via a series of steps. The intention of this architectural scheme was to focus the congregation's attention on the altar where the priest celebrates the Eucharist.



A restoration of the installation in 2023 required work on around 150 tiles, including their removal, repair or replacement, reinstatement, consolidation, and grouting, followed by cleaning, sealing and polishing. This work was made possible by a legacy left to us by our late friend Jim Storr – a loyal and longstanding member of the congregation of Holy Trinity Church. We are confident that he would have been supportive of this project, and delighted with its outcome.

See photographs of restored installation following ...

¹ <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9195/tile-godwin-william/>

² Betty Greene, Betty. *The Godwins of Lugwardine, and the Other Hereford Tile Makers*. *Industrial Archaeology Review*, 5(3), 1981, pp 241-252.

WILLIAM GODWIN, LUGWARDINE, HEREFORD,

Begs to inform the Nobility, Clergy, and Gentry of the United Kingdom, that after expending great time, trouble, and expense in the prosecution of

EXPERIMENTS IN THE ENCAUSTIC ART,

he has succeeded in Establishing a Manufactory for this description of

TILES, FOR THE PAVING OF CHURCHES, HALLS, PASSAGES, &c.,

and is ready to attend to all orders with which he may be favoured, with punctuality and dispatch.

In a Supplemental Number of the *Clerical Journal*, published in December, 1853, and devoted to the subject of "Church Furniture and Decoration," the Author (the Rev. Edward L. Cutts, B.A.) treats of this Art, and of its recent revival. He refers to the fact of the generality of the designs being copies of the old Roman specimens; and after adverting to the too highly glazed state of some tiles, and the practice of copying the old designs, gives an illustration of one of Mr. Godwin's Original Devices, which he says he "selected because it is not imitated from an ancient tile, but gives an idea of the characteristics of modern design."

The *Hereford Journal*, in noticing the visit of the Sydenham Palace Commissioner to Hereford, says:—"Several fine specimens of Clay, and the materials into which it is manufactured—Flower Pots, Piping, Moulded, Guttering, Draining Tiles, &c.—were furnished by Mr. William Godwin, of Lugwardine. The Commissioner was agreeably surprised to find here, in active operation, and in a county which he had always been taught to look upon as purely agricultural, a manufactory of Encaustic Tiles, in as high a state of Art as any he had seen, several of which he was pleased to take with him for Exhibition in the Museum."

A large number of Churches and other Public Buildings have been paved with these Tiles, and numerous communications have been received by the Manufacturer expressive of satisfaction and approbation.

W. G. WILL SEND DESIGNS WITH ESTIMATES TO ANY GIVEN SPACE
POST FREE ON APPLICATION.

LUGWARDINE BRICK & TILE WORKS.

PATENT, PLAIN, & ORNAMENTAL BRICKS;

SQUARES, CULVERTS, GUTTER BRICKS,

DRAINING TILES, AND PIPES.

EVERY DESCRIPTION OF

BORDER TILES FOR GARDENS;

RIDGE, CRESS, PLAIN, AND PAN TILES;

AND EVERY OTHER KIND OF CLAY WORK MADE TO ORDER, AND
SENT TO ANY DISTANCE REQUIRED.

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