

Brickmaking in Pocklington & District

by John Nottingham

This article has already been through 2 previous iterations, in 2010 and 2014, including further research into the early centuries of brickmaking in and around Pocklington. However, both offerings left quite a few questions unanswered in the later decades and I added an invitation to anyone able to add further detail which might assist in closing several loose ends.

This most certainly paid off, with 2 welcome and valuable inputs in early 2016; one from Marci Bagnulo in the USA whose husband is descended directly from the Ogle family who already figure in the article.

The other was from Les Waby of Pocklington who recently recovered an interesting range of bricks from a building being demolished in Chapman-gate. From the various trademarks imprinted in the frogs, these bricks had seemingly come from several Yorkshire brickyards, as well as the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works on Burnby Lane.

Both inputs triggered a further round of research into the topic and the combined results are presented in this third and much-expanded version of the article. Although still headed 'Pocklington & District', I have necessarily stretched 'District' towards the limits of all 3 Yorkshire Ridings!

During the 1800s, my maternal ancestors ran several brick and tile yards in the North Riding, so naturally I was intrigued to find my namesake John Nottingham being listed as a brickmaker at Pocklington in the [1879 Post Office Directory](#).

Until quite recently, I was unable to pin him down to a particular individual but, in digging for clues, I concluded that the Pocklington Brick and Tile Works located on Burnby Lane was somewhat unusual, as was the list of the 'brickmakers' in the local trade directories. Indeed, although most of them appeared to be owners of the site, they may have been from as far afield as Middlesbrough.

It also transpired that, during the 1800s, Pocklington was supplied with bricks imported from other brickyards, in both the local area and the much-extended 'district'.

At the time the original article was published on the Pocklington & District Local History Group website in 2010, it covered only part of the chronology of brickmaking in Pocklington. So following further research (with the invaluable help of several members of the History Group), this much-expanded version of the article gives a near-continuous record from the 1600s to recent times, although there remain several gaps in our knowledge from the late-1800s.

(Wherever "brickmaking" is mentioned, this includes the brickyards' related clay products, mainly roofing, flooring and culverting tiles, and – rarely mentioned – clay pipes for land drainage. All dimensions are given in Imperial measures.)

Up to the 1600s, before bricks became readily available, the majority of Pocklington's early buildings would be timber-framed, with extensive use of [wattle and daub](#) for the walls. The wattle lattice would be covered with a 'plaster' daub of clay, often mixed with animal dung, straw or horsehair, depending on the status of the building.

The significant exception is the stone-built All Saints' Church, erected in the 12th-15th centuries. As suitable building stone was not available in Pocklington or nearby, it is believed to have come from quarries at Acklam and Tadcaster, the only other known local resource being at Newbald.

The late-1600s

The earliest known reference to brickmaking in the Pocklington parish is dated 1684 when a York brickmaker, Robert Pickering, was granted a contract to make 100,000 bricks from clay dug in the Pocklington Ings – at the rate of 4s 8d per 1,000!

The size was specified as a rather bulky 10½"×5"×2½" (cf. the present-day metric equivalent of about 8½"×4"×2½" which reputedly was selected for relative ease of handling by bricklayers).

A potential site near the Bielby parish boundary has been identified but access is not possible and, to date, no evidence of this enterprise has been found.

However, this event was very likely the trigger for the early timber-framed buildings in Pocklington to be replaced with brick-built structures, generally on a piecemeal basis over the next 200 years and particularly in the 18th century.

The 1700s

The next reference to possible brickmaking in Pocklington comes in the [*Enclosure Act of 1757*](#), with mention of a 'Brick Kiln Close' sited in the Chapel Hill area. Unfortunately, the Act was published without a related map and, in any event,

there have been many subsequent changes to land ownership in that area. So from that, it isn't possible to locate the close accurately.

However, a later reference to the close, in a field survey (undated but probably from the early 1800s), puts its most likely location alongside Kilnwick Road, on the south side, and to the east of the present Woldgate College (illustrated below).

Presuming that the presence of the 'Brick Kiln Close' implies the existence nearby of one or more kilns for firing bricks, where would be the source of clay? There are several plausible clues:



- ❑ First, the general area to the south of Woldgate College is marked as a 'Clay Field' on various mid-1800s Ordnance Survey (OS) and other maps (see the graphic on page 2).
- ❑ Second, the surface of a particular close within the 'Clay Field' area, alongside the lane leading to Clayfield Farm, is noticeably lower than its neighbours by some 10-15" or so. The topsoil is very sticky ("clarty"), reportedly being difficult to work and with relatively poor cropping. That points to the likelihood of the original surface of this close having been 'skimmed' at some point as a convenient source of clay for the brick kiln(s). The field size is 18 acres so the volume of skimmed clay could support large-scale brick production over many decades.
- ❑ A third clue is a report that, when the new rugby ground alongside Kilnwick Road was being prepared, many 2" deep hand-clamped bricks were unearthed, suggesting the remains of one or more brick kilns or related buildings. These 'slim' bricks most likely pre-date 1780.

It should be mentioned that some field drainage channels in that area presently pass through brick culverts, but on balance the culverting is thought to have been installed most likely in the 1800s. Nevertheless, putting the 3 bullet points together, although speculative, the graphic on page 2 illustrates the probability of there having been a substantial source of clay for firing, with one or more kilns located conveniently nearby in the 1700s, and with direct road access to Pocklington.

Other than the dropped level of the 'skimmed' field, there is no longer any residual evidence of these observations. But with no other information available, arguably it does suggest that Pocklington's requirements for clay products came from this site, very likely pre-dating the 1757 enclosure. This is supported by the discovery of the relatively thin 2" bricks unearthed by the rugby ground.

Early to mid-1800s

OS maps indicate that the limited-scale Pocklington Brick and Tile Works sited on Burnby Lane was not established until at least the mid-1850s and probably later, its relatively belated start date compared with most local brickyards being only one of several anomalies.

But if the brickmaking activity alongside Kilnwick Road had ceased by, say, the early 1800s, that would leave a considerable gap of several decades in what, for Pocklington, was a very busy period for building new properties and associated activities. So how was the requirement for bricks and related products fulfilled?

While there are a few references to builders and bricklayers in the first-available census returns (1841/51), it is not until the [1858 William White's Directory](#) for Pocklington that **Thomas Grant** was listed as a Builder & brick *maker*, while **Charles Ogle** was also listed as a Brick and tile maker, with an address at Union Street.

❑ **Thomas Grant**

[Thomas Grant](#) was born and lived his life in Pocklington. He had become the town's primary builder and a significant employer by the mid-1850s, and was still listed as a builder and contractor as late as the 1901 census (aged 77).

He was also the proprietor of the Brick Field at Bishop Wilton which operated from 1854 to 1886. So on that basis, it is convenient to presume that bricks and tiles were transported from Bishop Wilton after 1854 for use in Grant's business at Pocklington.

However, this is doubtful: the Brick Field was owned by the Sykes family of Sledmere, with Grant acting purely as their local manager. Correspondence between Grant and the Sledmere estate shows that Grant was being paid for his services at Bishop Wilton, rather than him paying the estate for bricks supplied to his business.

In any event, the Bishop Wilton site extended to only 3 acres, of which barely half were covered by clay diggings. The hatching on the 1892 and later maps indicates these were relatively shallow, as confirmed by present-day imagery which indicates that only $\frac{3}{4}$ acre or so was dug to any significant depth (illustrated on page 4). No kiln is evident on any map so firing may have been achieved using the relatively inefficient [brick clamp](#) method.

Putting all these points together, I conclude that while the Bishop Wilton site could support the needs of the host village, it is improbable that bricks and tiles manufactured there were being exported to support Grant's business.

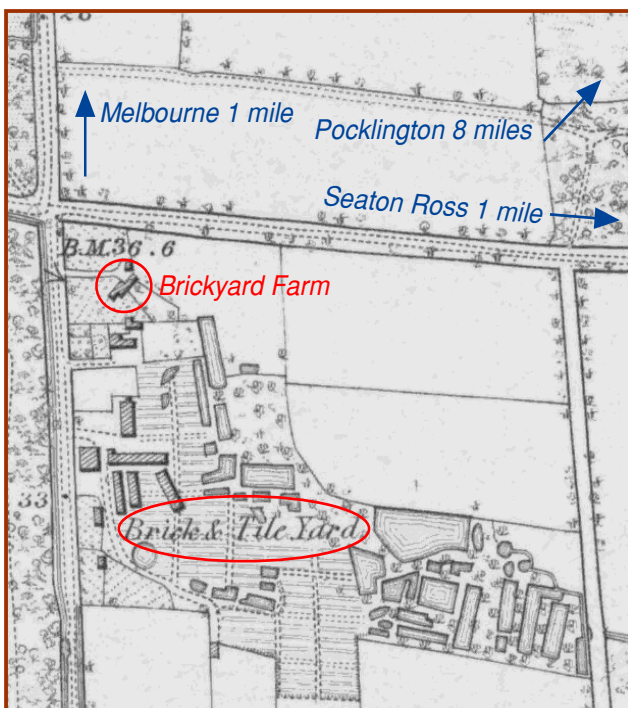


So once again, this fails to resolve the question as to where Pocklington sourced its expanding needs for bricks and tiles around the mid-1800s.

❑ **Charles Ogle**

The solution almost certainly lay with Charles Ogle who, although not recorded as a resident in any Pocklington census return, nevertheless was listed as a Brickmaker at Union Street in 1858.

Tracking down Ogle's residence was straightforward. In the 1841/51 censuses, he was returned as a Farmer and Brick & Tile Maker at 'Brickyard Farm', Melbourne, located a mile south of the village and some 8 miles from Pocklington.



In the 1861/71/81 censuses, evidently his widow **Charlotte Ogle** was continuing to run both the farm and the brickyard business with the help of 2 of her sons, plus brickyard employees who lived in 2 cottages on the site.

Compared with other local brickyards, the Ogles' Brickyard Farm was already very extensive by 1851, including numerous clay pits and wide-spread diggings of over 9 acres, and with plenty of scope for further expansion on the 98-acre farm.

Clearly, this substantial brickyard far exceeded the needs of Melbourne village but, potentially, could satisfy the bulk of Pocklington's requirements for clay products, not only for residential and commercial properties, but also the extensive culverting of Pocklington Beck through the town which was also undertaken during this period (1826-55).

Transporting bricks the 8 miles to Pocklington, by unmade roads, would be expected to result in some 30% wastage through breakage. A more satisfactory alternative would be to move the bricks the mile to the Melbourne Arm loading stage on the 1818 [Pocklington Canal](#), and thence to Canal Head, only a mile from their destination.

Earlier press reports show that Charles Ogle was preceded by a Mr H. Ogle at Melbourne and previous versions of this article speculated that he was very likely Charles's father, **Henry Ogle**, then approaching retirement age.

In 1831, Henry advertised an "Established" Brick and Tile Yard for sale or letting (see page 5), suggesting the yard may already have been in operation in the 1820s or earlier. There may have been no long-term takers for the brickyard however as, in 1837, a Mr Jamieson of nearby Melbourne Hall also advertised 'Brickyard Farm' for letting, implying it was part of the Vavasour family's Melbourne estate, with Henry Ogle being their tenant.

In the 1841 census, Henry (aged 75) and his wife Mary were recorded as living in retirement in Melbourne village, but their son Charles Ogle was by then resident at Brickyard Farm, along with his wife Charlotte and their sons **Thomas Eastwood Ogle** and **George Henry Ogle**. Charles was aged only 20 in 1841 so Henry may have continued to work the brickyard through the 1830s until Charles was ready to take over the business.

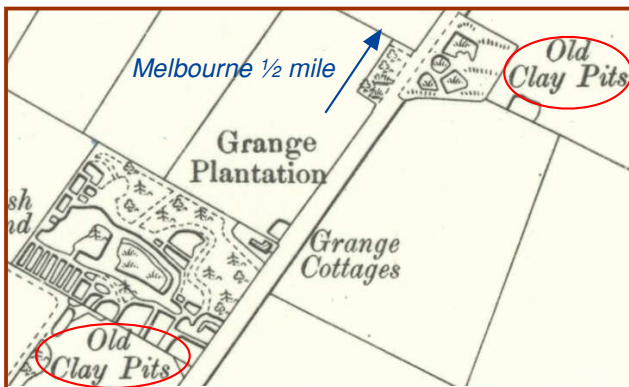
❑ *The Ogle family*

In the event, the valuable input from Marci Bagnulo in the USA confirmed that Henry Ogle was indeed Charles's father and, between us, we have since been able to deduce a detailed history of Henry and his family's significant involvement in our area.

The Ogle family were primarily brickmakers in Nottingham and Retford as far back as the 1600s but their descendants gradually migrated northwards, through Lincolnshire, all 3 Yorkshire Ridings and as far as Gateshead and Newcastle.

Henry Ogle was born in 1766 at a brickyard in North Lincolnshire but, by his early twenties, had crossed the River Humber, married Mary Dawson of Cherry Burton in 1789, settled at the complex of brickyards at Newport on the Market Weighton Canal and started their family.

They shortly moved to a brickyard on Carr Lane at Newton-on-Derwent, before moving yet again to another brickyard, at Grange Plantation ½ mile south-west of Melbourne village.



The move to Melbourne was most likely c. 1817 and perhaps timed intentionally so that they could conveniently supply bricks for the overbridges and locks on the Melbourne-Pocklington section of the Pocklington Canal which opened in 1818.

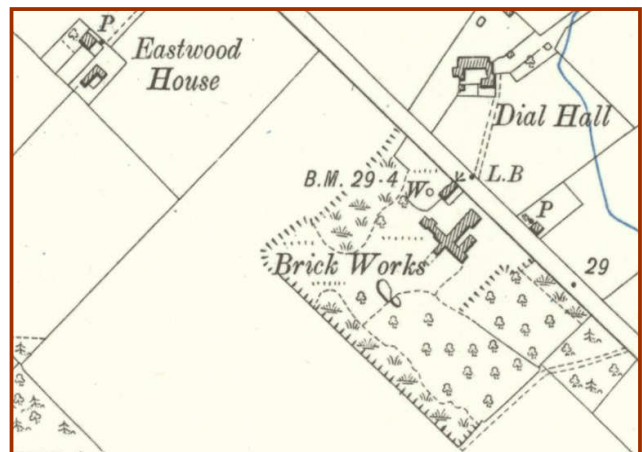
Like Brickyard Farm, Grange Plantation brickyard was probably also on part of the Vavasour family estate. This poses the question: was the 1831 sale notice for Grange Plantation, or the larger Brickyard Farm? The mention in the sale notice of "8 acres" and the "two cottages for labourers" signifies the latter. So on that basis, it appears that Henry Ogle and

family had moved to Brickyard Farm sometime before 1831, with Charles taking over the business when his father retired.

As the widowed Charlotte Ogle, her sons and the resident employees continued to work Brickyard Farm for some decades after Charles's death in 1859, we can see that 3 generations of the Ogle family were well placed to supply Pocklington's needs for bricks and related products, continuously from c. 1817 through to the later decades of the 1800s. The Union Street address in Pocklington may have been no more than an agency office.

However, the late-1800s OS maps show there had been relatively limited clay diggings at the brickyard after the mid-1800s, while the upper reaches of the Pocklington Canal became increasingly difficult to negotiate due to silting, so later supplies to the town were most likely limited.

By the 1881 census, Charles Ogle's son George Henry Ogle had moved a mile east to East Farm, Melbourne, and had become the owner of the nearby Seaton Ross Brick and Tile Yard. By 1891, both his mother Charlotte and elder brother Thomas Eastwood Ogle had moved to nearby Plantation House in Seaton Ross (renamed Eastwood House).



MELBOURNE.
TO BE SOLD or LET, and entered on at
Lady-Day, 1831, that well Established and Convenient
BRICK and TILE YARD, situate at MELBOURNE, within
a short distance of the Pocklington Canal, containing 8 Acres
of excellent Clay Land, and 6 acres if required. Also one Tile-
kiln with Cabins, two Tile-sheds and Mill house, one Good
DWELLING-HOUSE, with Barn, Stables, and all necessary
Out-buildings, with TWO COTTAGES for Labourers.
For further Particulars, inquire of Mr. H. OGLE, on the
Premises.

The Ogles are known to have supplied large numbers of drainage and sanitary pipes to local villages from their Seaton Ross Brick Works, but whether they continued to supply bricks and tiles to Pocklington is unknown (noting that the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works was by now in operation).

By the 1901 census, one of George Henry Ogle's sons, **Charles H Ogle**, had moved from East Farm to Brickyard Farm at Melbourne. However, he was listed only as a farmer, so brickmaking at Melbourne had probably ceased altogether by then.

To summarise, we can now reasonably presume that – having in effect become ‘the East Riding Branch’ of the Ogle family – Henry, his son and daughter-in-law Charles and Charlotte, and possibly their sons George Henry and Thomas Eastwood Ogle – had been the primary suppliers of bricks and allied products to satisfy the needs of Pocklington, very likely during the period covering the 1820s or before, and continuing towards the end of the century.

There is evidence to suggest that one of Charles's elder brothers, **George Ogle**, may have been a brickmaker at the complex of brickyards on Hall Fields in York (Henry Ogle is known to have owned properties in Redeness Street, off Layerthorpe; see page 7). But by 1830, no less than 5 of Henry & Mary Ogle's sons (3 of whom were brickmakers, including George) had emigrated to the USA; one of them, **Joseph Ogle** being granted a patent for a new type of brick kiln.

The late-1800s

The first evidence that the Pocklington Brick and Tile Works on Burnby Lane was in operation does not come until the 1871 census. **John Pinkney**, Foreman of Brickworks, was recorded as living on-site, but with only a small number of brickmakers showing up in this and later censuses (never more than 2 at any time).

Furthermore, by as late as 1892, the scale of clay diggings for making bricks and tiles at the Burnby Lane works was very limited as the larger pit nearest the road, although post-1851, turns out to have been an ‘Old Marl Pit’. Further clay was extracted towards the south-west, up to around 1910 but, by closure, the size of the dedicated Clay Pit never exceeded more than an acre or so.



Putting that into perspective, the scale of this ‘town’ brickworks was smaller than the village brickyard at Fangfoss, barely half the size of those at Elvington, Kexby, Newton-on-Derwent and Wilberfoss, and less than a quarter of the overall size of the Melbourne and Stamford Bridge brickyards, whose clay diggings alone each covered over 8 acres.

Nevertheless, the Burnby Lane brickworks had its own kiln, plus a windmill, most likely used for pumping floodwater from the clay pit into the disused marl pit.

‘Brick Kiln Closes’ appeared on late-1800s OS maps, further along Burnby Lane as far as the entrance to the present recycling site. But there seems to be no evidence to suggest these were a supplementary ‘clay field’, to be tapped as a source of clay for increased production.

To summarise, the Pocklington Brick and Tile Works on Burnby Lane cannot be considered to be other than a minor player in the history of brickmaking in Pocklington. As a late-starter, and very limited in scale, it probably only ever supplemented the more likely main sources: the Ogle family's Brick and Tile Yard at Melbourne; possibly also that at Seaton Ross; and, as we shall see, several others in the late-1800s.

The Burnby Lane brickyard had probably closed shortly after 1910 and, today, is the [Willow Waters Fishery](#). The other unusual feature of the site – the proprietors – is discussed later.

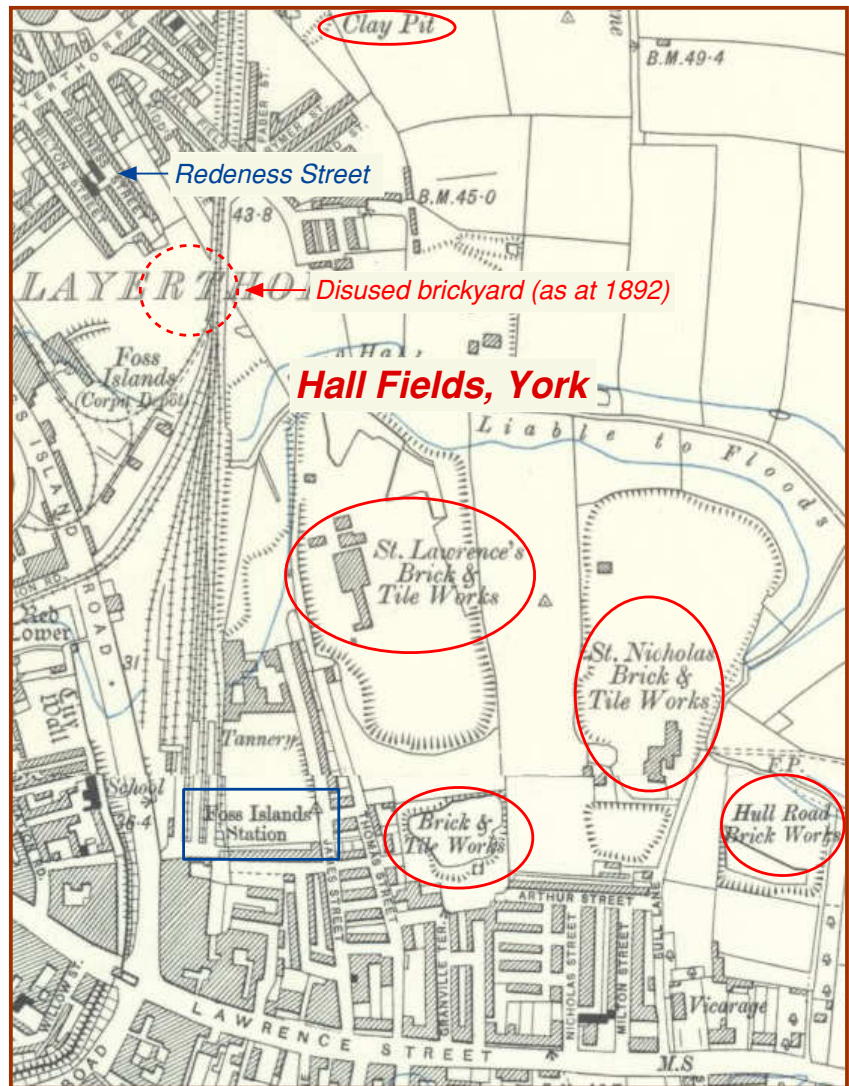
The 1900s to date

By the late-1800s, most ‘village’ brickyards serving their local communities were reaching the end of their natural lifespan, and Dr. James Campbell of Queen's College, Cambridge, has said that:

“... with the coming of the railways, the demand for brick – and the ease of transporting it – increased hugely ... By the outbreak of the First World War, most local brickworks had given way to large-scale industrial manufacture – and the days of local buildings being made from local clays was gone in favour of mass production.”

The railway came to Pocklington in 1847 but it may not have been until the late-1800s that bricks and tiles were imported to the town in any quantity by rail; although, in the event, bricks appear to have been sourced from several Yorkshire brickworks.

Relatively locally, the Foss Islands freight terminus had opened in York by the late-1800s, adjacent to the existing complex of brickyards at Hall Fields. (Note that the Foss Islands Railway passed through the site of the earlier brickyard to the south of Redeness Street where George Ogle may have worked; see page 6.)



From the early 1900s, the brickworks near Strensall station had its own rail spur and sidings. Furthermore, a remarkable resource in the period 1922-1929 was the privately-owned, narrow-gauge railway originally serving the Sand Hutton estate. After WW1, the track was widened and the line extended to become the [Sand Hutton Light Railway](#), including a direct link from the reopened Claxton Brick & Tile Works to exchange sidings with the standard-gauge, national rail network at Warthill.



From Warthill, bricks and tiles could be transferred, relatively safely and conveniently, just the few remaining miles to both Pocklington and Market Weighton. Unfortunately, the scale of reported supplies from the Claxton brickworks to both townships is unknown.

Known suppliers

To date, this article has looked at likely and potential suppliers of bricks & allied products to satisfy Pocklington's needs and, by and large, this covers from the earliest days to the late-1800s. That said, we don't have definite proof as, until recently, we didn't have any actual or proven examples to hand.

However, Les Waby's discovery of a range of different bricks from the demolished building in Champangate allows us to refine the previous discussion, particularly as all the 'imported' brick suppliers have been identified (with particular thanks to the excellent [Penmorfa](#) website).

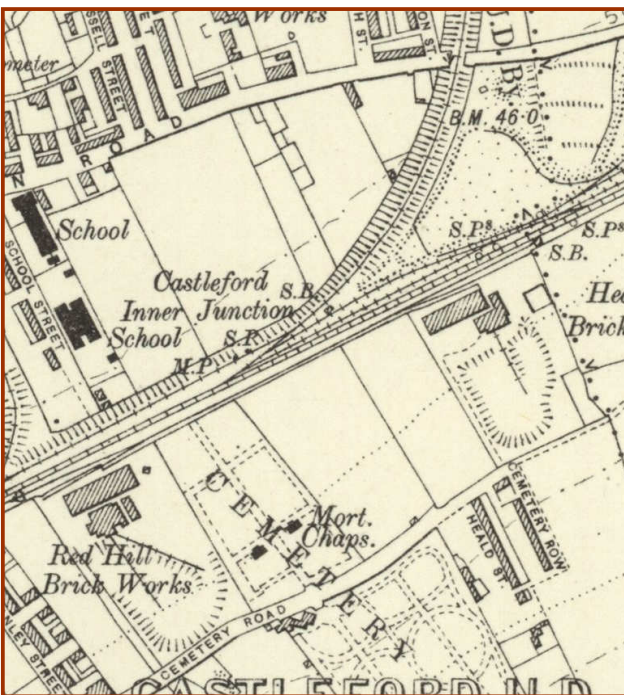
None of the bricks are dated but Les reports that evidently they all came from bricked-up doors and windows, so most likely are from late-1800s alterations to an otherwise early 1800s building.

❑ **'Hartley & Co Castleford'**

Hartley & Co. operated at the Red Hill Brick Works located on Cemetery Road on the outskirts of Castleford.



Shipping by rail would be very straightforward as the brickworks had its own rail siding and, from there, a main line ran directly from Castleford to York and onwards to Pocklington.

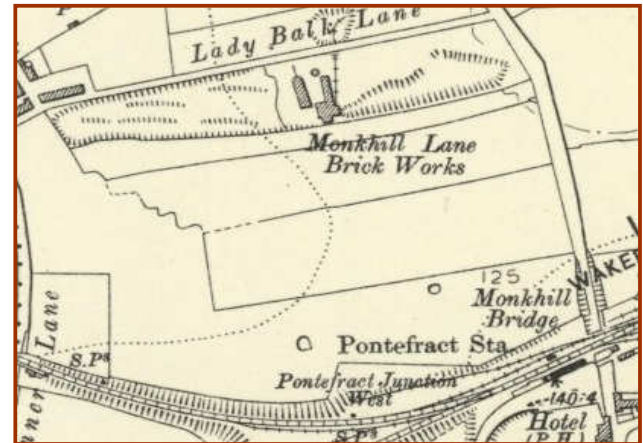


❑ **'Pomfret'**



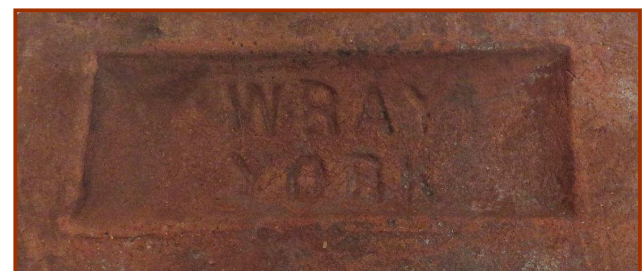
Not surprisingly, the 'Pomfret' bricks would have come from a Pontefract brickyard, namely Wilson & Walker's Brick Works alongside Monkhill Lane immediately to the north of the town.

The brickworks were close to a rail siding at Pontefract station, with a short link from there to the main line passing through Castleford and thence via York and onwards to Pocklington.



❑ **'Wray'**

Closer to home, the firm of Wray & Moss (later Wray & Sons) operated at various brickyards in and around York from c. 1890, initially at the south end of the complex of brickyards on Hall Fields (see page 7), so transportation to Pocklington could be either along Hull Road or (perhaps more likely) by rail via the Foss Islands freight terminus.



❑ **'J Hanks & Co Pocklington'**

On the face of it, this brick was 'home-grown', manufactured at the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works on Burnby Lane under the ownership of J Hanks & Co.



However, although 'Hanks & Co' are listed as being brickmakers at Burnby Lane in the [1889 Kelly's Directory](#), there is no known evidence to show that they might have been other than 'absentee owners' of the site (to be discussed). The same teaser applies to several firms also listed in the other directories.

But what are we to make of the 4 brick examples illustrated on page 8, clearly of different provenance although all found in the same building at Chapmangate? I think it safe to infer that, as they were used for relatively minor alterations, they were most likely leftovers from several larger batches purchased by a contractor for earlier building works.

This implies that, whoever was the contractor (maybe Thomas Grant?), he had sourced the bricks from such places as Castleford, Pontefract and York, either by choice or of necessity if the 'local' yards at Seaton Ross and Pocklington could not satisfy his requirements in the later decades of the 1800s.

Nevertheless, although a sample of the 'J Hanks & Co Pocklington' bricks is illustrated on page 8, other 'Pocklington' examples are available which link us to the names in the trade directories and who may – or may not – have been the proprietors of the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works on Burnby Lane at the time the directories were published.

So the next part of the Pocklington story is to consider who were these putative owners of the brickworks.

Pocklington Brickworks ownership

Once again, the enterprise seems to be abnormal in that, invariably, local brickyards were very much family affairs, with proprietorship and occupancy handed down through 2 or more generations, as exemplified by the Melbourne and Seaton Ross brickyards run by the Ogle family.

Equally, it was not at all unusual for a widow to continue to run the business, well into her old age and with the assistance of her family and employees, again as happened at Melbourne.

However, although the brickyard employees resided either on-site or elsewhere in Pocklington, at no time does the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works appear to have been a family-run business. Similarly, none of the 'Brickmakers' in the various Pocklington trade directories appear to have had any family links with each other and, with one late exception, seemingly were never

even residents of Pocklington, so were indeed most likely absentee proprietors of the Brick & Tile Works.

This may also go to explain why the turnover of the likely proprietors listed below – and their employees – was far higher than would normally be the case with a family-run business.

❑ 1879 – John Nottingham

At last, the 'phantom' **John Nottingham** has finally been identified and located. Born in Bedfordshire, he resided in the village of North Ormesby near Middlesbrough in the late-1800s.

Although recorded in several census returns as a *bricklayer*, he became a near-neighbour not only of a *brickmaker* named James Hanks at North Ormesby but also several brickyard labourers, all of whom most likely worked at the South Bank Brickworks only a mile away (described in the next section).

So although by no means confirmed, it may be that John Nottingham had a business relationship with James Hanks and, through him, may have become involved in the Pocklington brickworks, either as the proprietor in his own right, or perhaps acting for Hanks in a managerial capacity.

By 1881, Nottingham had moved to Blake Street, Hull, still recorded as a bricklayer. But if he had become the proprietor or maybe manager of the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works as listed in the [1879 Post Office Directory](#), he had reasonably convenient access to the site by rail as Hull Paragon Station is only ½ mile from Blake Street. His 'workforce' on-site at Burnby Lane would be father and son Watson and Thomas Hayton, living in Regent Square, Pocklington.

Although not identified by maker's name, the 'Pocklington' brick illustrated below may possibly have been manufactured at Burnby Lane during John Nottingham's proprietorship.

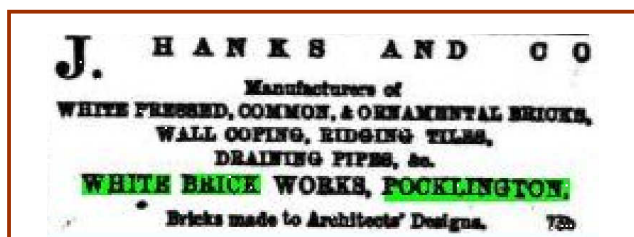


Nottingham appears to have had an unhappy relationship with Thomas Grant – very likely his main client – as they were mutually involved in a breach of contract dispute, with Grant suing Nottingham for alleged failure to supply bricks on the agreed terms of payment; judgment was in Grant's favour.

John Nottingham's fortunes went further downhill as, by the 1891 census, he was recorded as a 'Pauper' (and retired bricklayer), resident in the Hull Workhouse where he died in the same year.

❑ **1889 – Hanks & Co. Burnby Lane**

Although 'Hanks & Co' are listed as being the proprietors of the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works in the [1889 Kelly's Directory](#), the following advertisement in The York Herald dated 5th January 1884 suggests that, if John Nottingham had ever been the proprietor, he had evidently been superseded at least 5 years earlier.



However, the probable answer to *Who Was Hanks?* is by no means simple. In the 1881 census, a grocer named **James Hanks** was living in Nelson Street, Normanby, another village near Middlesbrough, so is seemingly a non-starter. But by the 1891 census, and at the same address, somewhat bizarrely he had become a grocer *and* a 'Brick Manufacturer'... Whilst in the 1901 census, having moved to nearby North Ormesby, he was recorded simply as a Brick Manufacturer.

The Normanby History Group have helpfully advised that, by 1889, Hanks had for some time been the proprietor of 'J Hanks, Livens and Hanks' and running the North Eastern Brick & Tile Works (later renamed the South Bank Brickworks) outside the village of South Bank, near Normanby.

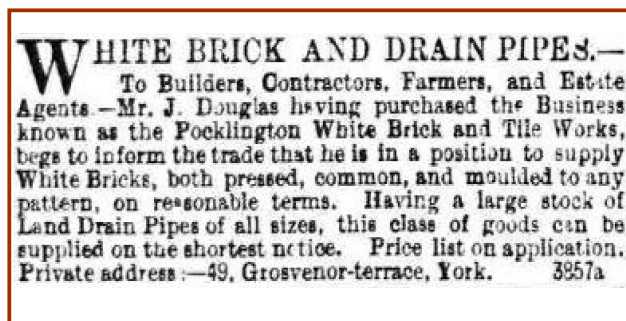
So although speculative, a credible solution is that John Nottingham and James Hanks – being near-neighbours in North Ormesby – were acquainted and, as a bricklayer and brickmaker respectively, may have had a commercial relationship which included the consecutive proprietorship of the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works.

This deduction is supported by the brick illustrated below, similar to the one shown on page 8 and, apart from the imprint 'J Hanks & Co.' on the frog, identical to the one on page 9.



❑ **1889 – J Douglas**

Another York Herald advertisement, dated 29th July 1889, was placed by a Mr J Douglas of Grosvenor Terrace, York, the recent purchaser of the 'Pocklington White Brick & Tile Works'.



Nothing is known of Douglas; he does not appear in any York census, Grosvenor Terrace is some distance from any York brickworks and the next Pocklington trade directory in 1892 makes no mention of him. Nevertheless, the 2 references to "White Brick" in the advertisement are revealing and the implications are discussed later.

❑ **1892 – (Clare &) Clement Walker**

No prospective **Clare Walker** is listed in any local or other census, so the forename is assumed to be a misprint in the [1892 Bulmer's Directory](#). Most likely it was **Clement Walker** who was raised at 'Moiser's Brickyard and Pottery' on Stockton Lane, York (alongside the present dual-carriageway eastern bypass), and which was occupied by his father in the 1881 census.

Although a gardener at the time, Clement Walker had become the brickyard manager by 1901, although it was a small affair with very limited clay diggings. But how he evidently came to be involved with the Pocklington works, as the putative proprietor, is a mystery.

❑ **1905-1913 – James & Alban Dunwell**

The involvement of brickmakers **James & Alban Dunwell** (father and son) with the Pocklington Works is – yet again – unclear. Hailing from Leeds, the Dunwells were recorded as living at Egton Bridge in the 1891 census, so were probably commuting by rail the few miles to and from the substantial Eskdaleside brickyard immediately north of Grosmont station.

In principle, Eskdaleside bricks could have been transported conveniently from Grosmont to Pocklington by rail via Pickering, Malton and York. But on balance, this is thought to be unlikely as, by the 1901 census, Alban Dunwell was recorded as living on Burnby Lane, Pocklington (near the Workhouse), so presumably was managing the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works on behalf of his father's trustees.

The only other recorded brickmaker at the time was George Beckett of Pocklington, who was living on-site at Burnby lane.

An example of the Dunwell product is illustrated below, noting that once again apart from the proprietor's imprinted name, it is identical to the ones illustrated on pages 8-10.



Specifically, while the distinctive frog design – the uncommon chamfered corners plus the 'screwheads' – may not be exclusive, the last 3 examples are of an unusual light-grey colour. The several similarities must surely be more than coincidence.

❑ **1911 – George Henry Ogle?**

For completion, and although not mentioned in any trade directory, Charles and Charlotte Ogle's son George Henry Ogle had moved from East Farm at Melbourne (near the Seaton Ross brickyard) to Yapham Mill north of Pocklington by the 1911 census and, although aged 70, was still listed as a brickmaker and employer in the census return.

Whether he retained ownership of the Seaton Ross brickyard, or had now assumed ownership of the Pocklington Brick & Tile Yard (the nearest brickyard – Fangfoss – having closed in the late-1800s), is presently unknown. George Henry Ogle died at Yapham Mill in 1916 and no other brickmakers are listed in the 1911 Pocklington census return.

[As an aside, one of Charles and Charlotte Ogle's grandsons, also George Henry, later built the garage on the main road, east of Barmby Moor and at the crossroads with Feoffee Common Lane and Sutton Lane, now Hewson & Robinson's. This George Henry Ogle became best known as the main agricultural implement supplier for the area, with an impressive stand at local shows.]

'Pocklington' bricks?

Finally, we need to consider whether the range of bricks with the 'Pocklington' trademark imprinted on the frogs, illustrated earlier, were physically manufactured at the Pocklington Brick & Tile Works on Burnby Lane. Or were they perhaps made elsewhere at the putative owners' own brickyards (J Hanks & Co at South Bank near Middlesbrough; Clement Walker's brickyard near York; and possibly even the Dunwells' brickyard at Grosmont) and transported to Pocklington.

On balance, the general consensus is that the 'Pocklington' bricks were indeed produced over a period of some decades at the relatively small-scale brick & tile works on Burnby Lane, albeit in limited quantities. This diagnosis is arguably supported by the following observations already discussed:

- ❑ From the census returns, at no time does it appear that there were more than 2 brickyard labourers at the works, resident either on-site or elsewhere in Pocklington.
- ❑ The putative proprietors of the Pocklington brickyard mostly appear to have been 'absentee owners', the one late exception being Alban Dunwell who resided on Burnby Lane for a time.
- ❑ Apart from the trade-names imprinted on the 4 'Pocklington' bricks illustrated on pages 8-11, the distinctive frog designs (the chamfered corners and 'screwheads') are otherwise identical.
- ❑ Similarly, apart from the uniformities in the frogs, the notably light-grey colour of the 'Pocklington' bricks illustrated on pages 9-11

is self-evidently common to all 3 examples. To process clays from a normal 'brick red' colour (e.g. the Hanks & Co' example shown on page 8) to light grey would require copious quantities of chalk or similar material to be added to the underlying clay mix. To replicate the same shade, consistently, and at several different brickyards, is highly improbable.

The last comment leads us to a likely reason why both J Hanks & Co. and J Douglas should advertise their holdings as the 'Pocklington White Brick & Tile Works' (page 10). So although still not conclusive, it is felt that the variants of the 'Pocklington' bricks were indeed manufactured at the site on Burnby Lane, albeit under the direction of several absentee owners.



The photo shows the Moor Monkton Brick & Tile Works c. 1912 with the owner and his workforce, their tools and their products (note the drainage pipes)

(From 'Moor Monkton & its People' by Dr P. R. Newman; photograph courtesy of Miss Mary Haithwaite)

Although much-revised and extended, this article still represents the story of brickmaking in Pocklington and the local area from the sometimes restricted information found to date. So as ever, I would be extremely grateful to hear of any further detail, either by [email](#), or via the [History Group](#); thank you.

John Nottingham August 2016
