

What about the workforce?

In 1900 Maw and Company employed nearly 400 people, but surprisingly at Craven Dunnill there were only 95 workers. 53 were men, 16 women and 26 youths.

The hardest and most dangerous job was preparing the raw clay. Steam-powered machines helped the men to break it down by grinding it, mixing it with water and pushing it through heavy sieves.

The more artistic workers decorated the tiles with the most highly skilled workers hand-painting the panels with animals, birds, flowers, nursery rhyme characters and people.

The size of it

Most Victorian tiles were made to a standard size of 6in x 6in. Other sizes and shapes included 8in x 8in, 3in x 3in, rectangles, triangles and diamonds.

Using the template below of a 6in x 6in tile, create your own unique tile design.

Lead Poisoning

The workers using glazes which contained lead were examined by a doctor every month for signs of lead poisoning.

This was quite unusual at this time as the health of workers was rarely a priority in Victorian Britain.

Workers were given an allowance of milk and some medicines to help to keep them free from lead poisoning.



Workers Beware!

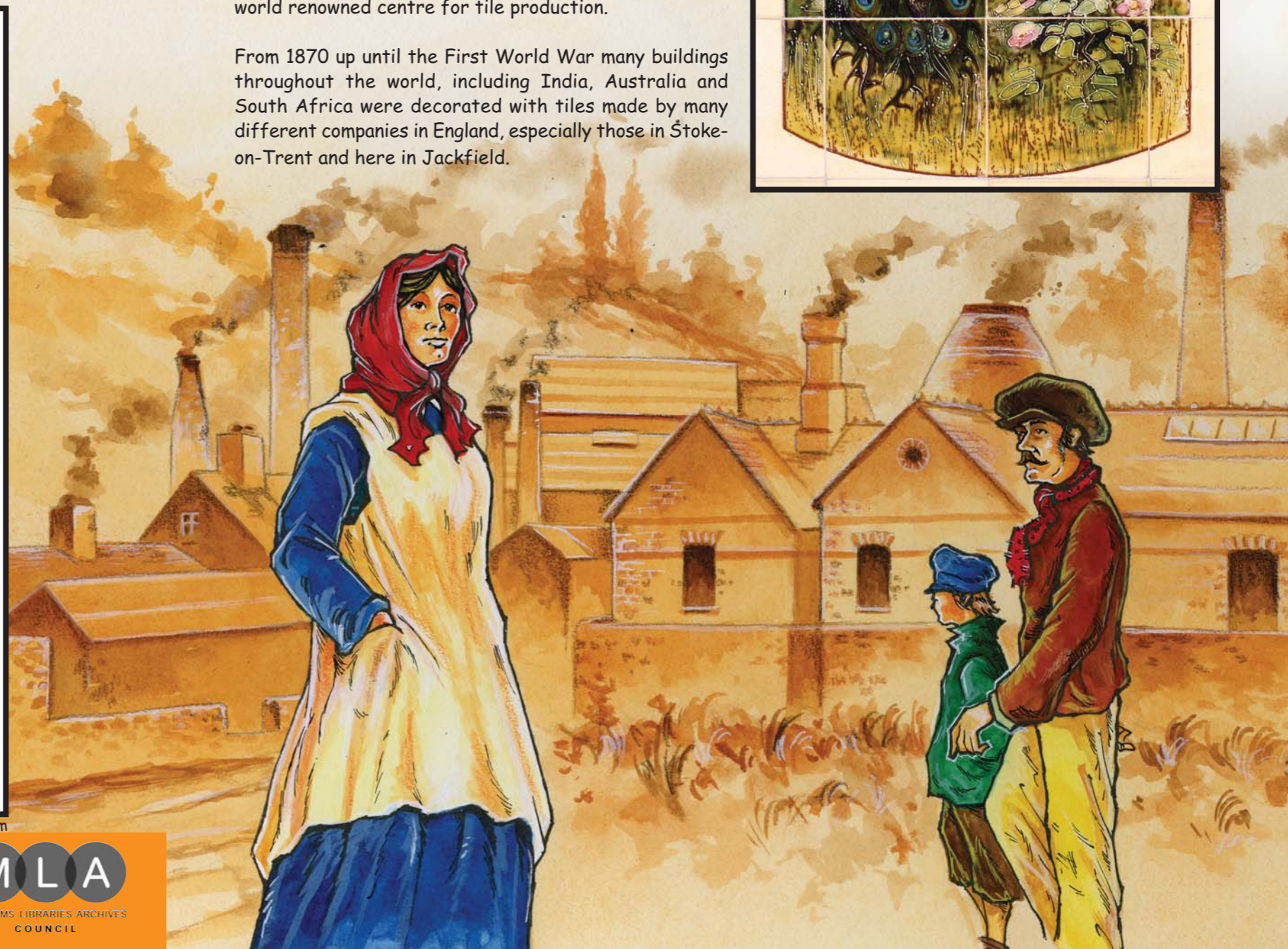
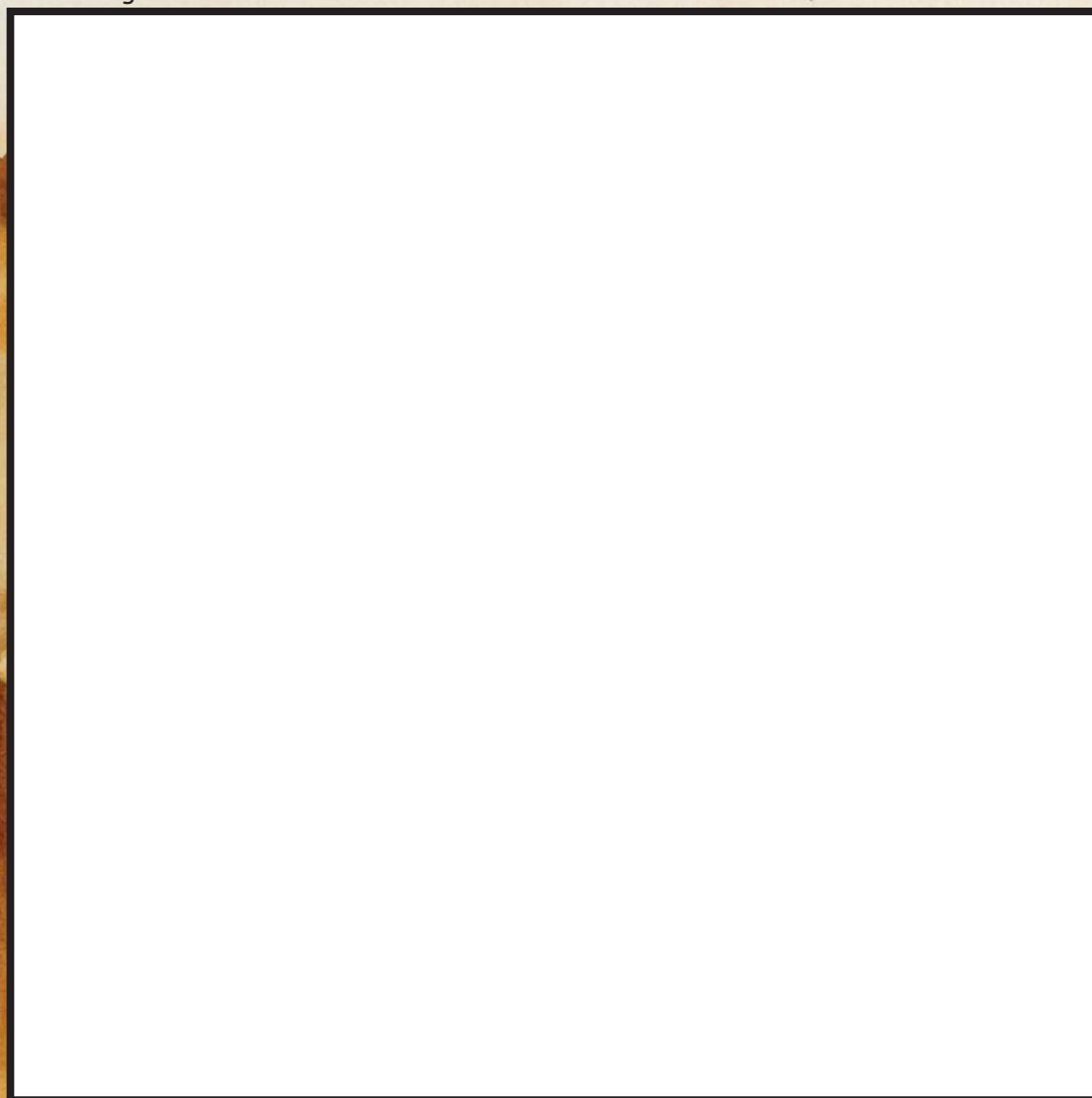
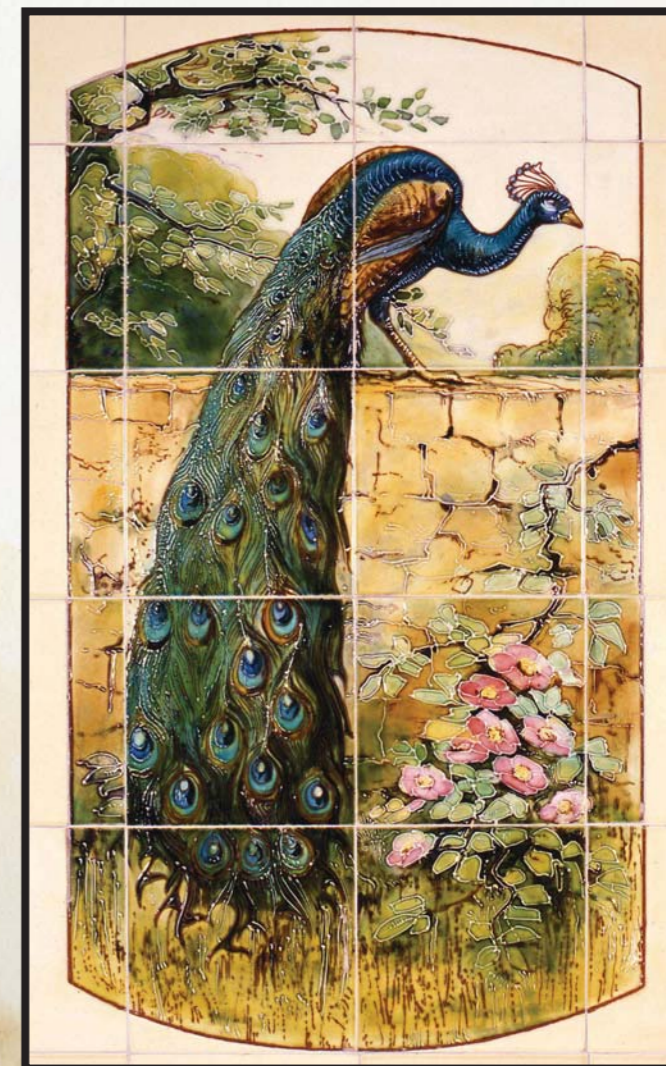
Jackfield Tile Museum

Today, tiles are produced in their millions in factories across the world. Everywhere we look the walls and floors are lined with clean, shiny, decorative tiles, adding style and glamour to our surroundings.

But where did this modern craze for tiles begin? The chances are the beautiful tiles we see in our town halls, shops, banks and museums today were made in Stoke-on-Trent or Jackfield.

Herbert Minton experimented in Stoke-on-Trent for many years before he produced good quality tiles. His example was followed by George and Arthur Maw in Ironbridge and in 1874 by Henry Dunnill, who opened his large Craven Dunnill factory in Jackfield. By 1883 Maw and Company had also moved to Jackfield making it a world renowned centre for tile production.


From 1870 up until the First World War many buildings throughout the world, including India, Australia and South Africa were decorated with tiles made by many different companies in England, especially those in Stoke-on-Trent and here in Jackfield.





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What are encaustic tiles?

Encaustic means 'in burnt', so the coloured decorations were pressed into the tile. There are three types of encaustic tile:-

 Plastic-pressed, two colour encaustic tiles were made from the 1830s onwards using clay in its plastic state, when it feels like soft modelling clay or pastry. A back-to-front pattern was cut into the surface of a mould and the clay was pressed onto the mould and left to dry. The clay was then pulled off the mould and the pattern was left in the surface of the clay, the correct way round. Liquid clay, or slip, was poured over the tile and it dried in the grooves. Once dry the excess slip was scraped off the surface and the beautiful patterns underneath were revealed. The tile was then cut to shape and sent for firing in a kiln.

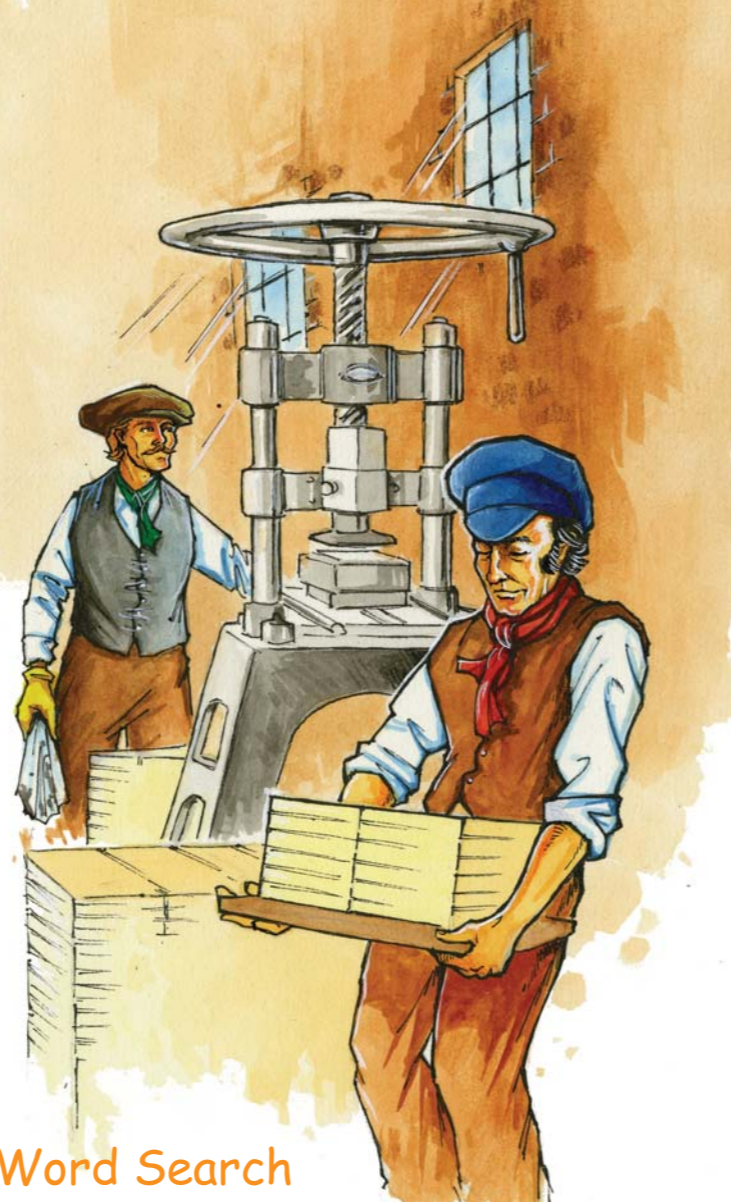
 Sandwich encaustic tiles were made in the same way as plastic-pressed tiles, but a thin layer of fine clay was pressed onto the mould, followed by a thicker layer of coarse clay and then another thin layer of fine clay. This strong clay sandwich was then filled with slip. Multi-coloured tiles could be made by pressing different plastic clays in different colours into parts of the mould, or by using coloured slips.

 Dust-pressed encaustic tiles were made in screw presses from 1863 and were the first tiles to be made by a machine. Different coloured powdered clay was pressed through patterns cut into metal plates. Once all of the powders were in place, the main powdered clay body was pressed over them. About 30 tons of pressure was applied to the tile and then it was ready for firing. Many more tiles could be made in this way making them less expensive, so that more people could afford to buy them.

World Renowned Factory

Jackfield had all of the raw materials needed for making ceramic tiles close by, as well as the river and railway for transport. When Maw and Company finally moved from Ironbridge to Jackfield in 1883 to be closer to the purpose-built Craven Dunnill factory, the number of tiles they made between them meant that Jackfield became the centre of decorative tile production. Maw's new factory was the largest in the world and when it finally closed in 1969 millions of amazing tiles had been made there for homes, banks, palaces, hospitals, swimming baths and even public toilets.

Activity - Have a look at some of the designs in the Museum and make a list of some of the designs you have seen.



Word Search


See if you can find some of the places where you will find tiles today.

H	T	A	I	R	P	O	R	T	S	T	A	W	E	R	T	Y	T	U	I
N	O	B	V	C	V	C	X	Z	T	A	S	D	F	F	G	E	P	O	L
M	K	U	L	T	H	U	I	Y	R	H	E	W	Q	X	M	Y	M	K	O
T	T	S	A	P	U	O	Y	U	I	E	Y	T	P	V	C	N	M	N	
Y	H	T	T	E	T	T	R	T	E	W	T	A	L	I	O	U	Y	R	D
U	E	R	Q	W	S	T	T	C	R	E	T	E	T	G	M	H	K	J	O
B	T	Q	N	V	X	O	T	T	H	T	M	G	W	R	O	R	T	G	N
V	I	W	E	R	D	S	F	O	I	E	O	K	J	S	E	E	G	J	U
S	T	W	P	T	G	T	W	P	A	N	S	Z	P	E	R	S	L	K	N
A	A	D	E	U	V	Z	K	D	A	X	C	I	T	T	Y	L	K	U	D
E	N	H	I	S	B	Q	S	G	V	R	T	B	N	Q	W	E	R	Y	E
Q	I	J	G	S	W	S	S	F	D	A	L	U	I	O	U	T	R	S	R
W	C	K	E	R	T	T	E	T	L	K	T	I	J	H	G	F	D	W	G
S	Y	O	O	A	R	F	R	S	O	I	J	T	A	K	N	J	G	K	R
I	J	M	T	B	N	C	Z	A	S	D	G	H	Y	M	T	U	M	O	O
S	E	I	W	Q	F	L	K	T	R	E	W	Q	S	D	E	E	K	P	U
D	O	F	H	A	R	R	O	D	S	A	Q	W	E	R	F	N	H	J	N
N	Z	X	C	V	B	N	H	U	R	T	E	W	Q	O	P	J	T	K	D
Q	B	A	N	K	O	F	E	N	G	L	A	N	D	W	E	R	Y	U	I
S	V	B	N	M	J	B	U	S	S	T	A	T	I	O	N	S	K	L	O


- Bus Stations
- Airports
- The Titanic
- Harrods
- London Underground
- Temple Meads Station


- Bank of England
- Churches
- Hospitals
- Houses of Parliament
- Pubs
- Theatres


Tiles of Distinction


 Both Jackfield factories were carefully laid out so that raw clay arrived at one end and it was transformed through all of the various stages into the finished, decorated and fired tile by the time it reached the other end. The tiles were then packed into railway wagons and sent all over the world. Maw and Company had an amazing list of customers, including His Imperial Majesty Alexander II of Russia, His Highness the Khedive of Egypt, the Maharaja of Mysore in India, as well as Queens, Dukes and Corporations. Everyone wanted some of the 20 million tiles produced each year in Jackfield's two huge factories.

What made the tiles so special?

 The fantastic designs established Jackfield as world leaders in tile manufacture. The Victorians used three methods to print onto their tiles.

 Transfer Printing - intricate designs were engraved or etched onto a copper plate, which was covered in ink and a thin paper rolled over it. The paper absorbed the ink and the pattern could be transferred to the surface of the tile.

 Block Printing - for each colour used a zinc metal plate was covered with a different coloured ink. These were transferred to a thin sheet of paper and once the sheet of paper was covered in all of the colours it was placed on the tile. The paper was rubbed, leaving the colours on the tile surface.

 Lithography - designs were drawn onto special limestone using a waxy ink. Weak acid was applied to the surface, which fixed the design onto the stone and it was covered in printing ink. The stone was washed, leaving the ink sticking to the design, and then transferred to paper to make a transfer print.

What is tube-lining?

The outline of a design is put onto the tile by hand or by 'pouncing'. This involves drawing onto a piece of see-through paper and pricking small holes around the outline of the design. The paper is then placed on the surface of the tile and charcoal is rubbed through the holes, creating a series of dots underneath. The dots are used as a guide, so that a small bag containing slip with a nozzle can be used to trace the pattern. Different coloured glazes are applied using the lines as a guide to stop them from mixing together during firing.



Have You Noticed?
Have you noticed not all of the tiles in the Museum are flat? See how many designs you can see which have moulded or embossed patterns on them.

Why did the Victorian tile industry do so well?

The Victorian tile industry supplied exactly what people wanted and in the quantities they demanded. If tastes changed then they responded. Greek, Medieval, Persian, Japanese, Islamic and art nouveau designs influenced them and tiles made at Jackfield complimented many of the grand designs of the Victorian era.

Activity - How many words of 3 or more letters can you make out of Encaustic Tiles?
