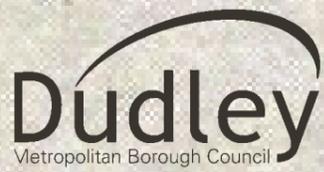


BAYLIE'S CHARITY SCHOOL

HERITAGE OPEN DAY



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BAYLIES'S CHARITY SCHOOL

Baylies's Charity School was established by Robert, Samuel and Anne Baylies in 1732. This was a period when many such schools were founded, for 'teaching, instructing and clothing 50 boys'.



1901 image of Baylies's Charity School

By indenture, dated 6 & 7 September 1732, Robert Baylies, a lime burner, of Dudley, his brother Samuel, an original trustee of the Unitarian Old Meeting House in Wolverhampton Street, and his sister Anne, conveyed various lands and property in trust, enabling trustees to:

"establish and set up a free charity school in the parish of St. Edmund, in Dudley, for teaching, instructing and clothing 50 poor boys, to be elected and chosen out of the parishes of the town and foreign of Dudley from such whose parents would not be able to give them learning ... [to be taught in] the new building lately erected by Samuel Baylies at the lower end of his garden, next to Pease Lane" (extract from original indenture).

Unitarian Old Meeting House



The 1732 indenture included that "...such boys to attend, every Lord's Day, at the Unitarian Meeting House...during Divine Service...". They were required to wear their distinctive blue coats.

The trustees for Baylies's Charity School included John Finch, who was, like Samuel, one of the first members of the Old Meeting House, and other fellow members including its minister.

By 1820 the charity was educating 200 boys and new premises became necessary. In 1824 the existing building, with its two costumed boys in the niches over the doors, was built, at a cost of about £1,200, in Tower Street - formerly Pease Lane - on part of the property originally settled by Samuel Baylies.

By the 1880/90s the school was annually educating up to 300 boys and clothing 75. It was reported in the mid-1880s that further classrooms, a playground and a gymnasium had been added. The trustees continued to include members of the Old Meeting House and local businessmen.

In 1894 it was reported that although not in receipt of 'Government Grant' the school was examined annually by a government inspector along the lines of the 'Government Code for Elementary Schools'. In addition to the usual subjects drawing was taught, and the school was successful in obtaining the 'Excellent' award from the 'Science and Art Department' three years in succession. Manual instruction was also given in woodwork in a purpose built room for 24 boys. The trustees also paid the fees for 12 boys who went to this school and wanted to continue their studies at the Dudley School of Art. They also paid the fees for a limited number of boys wanting to attend the classes at any other public institution.

The school was eventually closed, being taken over by state education, but the trustees continue to make educational grants to needy students from Dudley.

Ground Floor

MEMORIAL TOWER

DUDLEY BOOK SOCIETY

The society was founded in 1732 and is probably the oldest continuing book club in the world.



Samuel Baylies founded the society to further the cause of civil and religious liberty and to provide members with books which were 'difficult to purchase and dangerous to own', as a consequence of the persecution of Dissenters (or non-conformists such as Unitarians, Presbyterians and Methodists who refused to accept certain doctrines of the Church of England) in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. These seditious books were circulated among the members of the society using small boys to avoid detection by the authorities. The dissenting members were joined by other leading tradesmen of Dudley, some of whom were members of the established church but who sympathised with the ideals of the society.

Samuel Baylies

As well as gathering in the Saracen's Head to discuss business, politics and religion (where many schemes for the advancement of education and for the reform of local government and parliament were hatched), the members of the society held an annual dinner at which the toast to 'civil and religious liberty' was proposed.

Ministers of the Old Meeting House were generally the presidents of the society and for many years one of the masters at the Baylies's School held the post of secretary.



The Saracen's Head

The society currently has around 30 members who meet for dinner each year to hear a guest speaker propose the usual toast and to listen to a response from a Unitarian. The books purchased during the preceding year are auctioned off and any member who fails to attend the dinner, or fails to buy a book, is fined! The auction proceeds are used to purchase new books for reading and then auctioning off at the following year's dinner.

Acknowledgements

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Ground Floor

MEMORIAL TOWER

ARCHITECTURE OF BAYLIES'S HALL



The building in 2010

In recognition of its architectural and historical significance, the building was listed in 1949. It is a single-storeyed building in a simple classical style, comprising three windows in moulded architraves, the central window being a stone pilastered window of three lights. There are projecting rectangular porches at each side, with statues in the niches above. It has a rendered façade with simple cornice and blocking course and an inscribed panel to the centre below, showing in Roman numerals the date the school was established (as opposed to the date the current building was constructed).

The main building has remained largely unchanged over its 190 year life, although, it had lost its railings and was in need of repair.

The building has recently been restored (project completed 2012), with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund through the Dudley Townscape Heritage Initiative, to help secure the building for future generations.

The project included works to repair the roof. This involved some repairs to the roof timbers, retaining as much of the historic fabric as possible, but splicing in new material where necessary. It was then re-roofed in traditional slate, to replace inappropriate concrete tiles: concrete tiles are much heavier and can cause undue pressure on the roof timbers.



Left: Original roof timbers showing carpenter's marks



It was also discovered in the course of the work that the building was suffering from dry rot which had been caused from a combination of the long-term ingress of water and the cementitious internal plaster which trapped the moisture within the brickwork.

The cast iron rainwater goods were supplemented to provide the required rainwater disposal for the building and deal with the problems of water ingress.

The project also involved re-rendering the front elevation of the building in lime render to enable the building to 'breathe' and guard against future problems which can be caused by trapping water in the traditional brick building material. The façade was painted in a breathable, mineral paint, the colour reflecting the original colour scheme which was assessed through an analysis of the paint on the statues.



Internal brick wall showing dry rot beneath the cementitious internal plaster.

Ground Floor

MEMORIAL TOWER

COADE STONE STATUES

History of Coade stone

The figures of two charity schoolboys on the facade of Baylies's Hall, former Baylies's Charity School, are now the earliest surviving public statues in the town of Dudley.



Dudley's statues were produced by Coade of Lambeth, a firm which made 'artificial stone' sculpture and architectural ornament. Their boast was that this material had a property peculiar to itself of resisting the frost and consequently retaining that sharpness in which it excels every other kind of stone sculpture. The condition of this pair is testimony to the claim.

Coade stone is an 'artificial stone' and was so named as it was marketed by Eleanor Coade (1733-1821) of Lambeth from 1769. Finer than stucco and other available compositions, it was a type of pottery (stoneware) and was widely used for all kinds of architectural ornament from capitals and keystones to whole doorways.

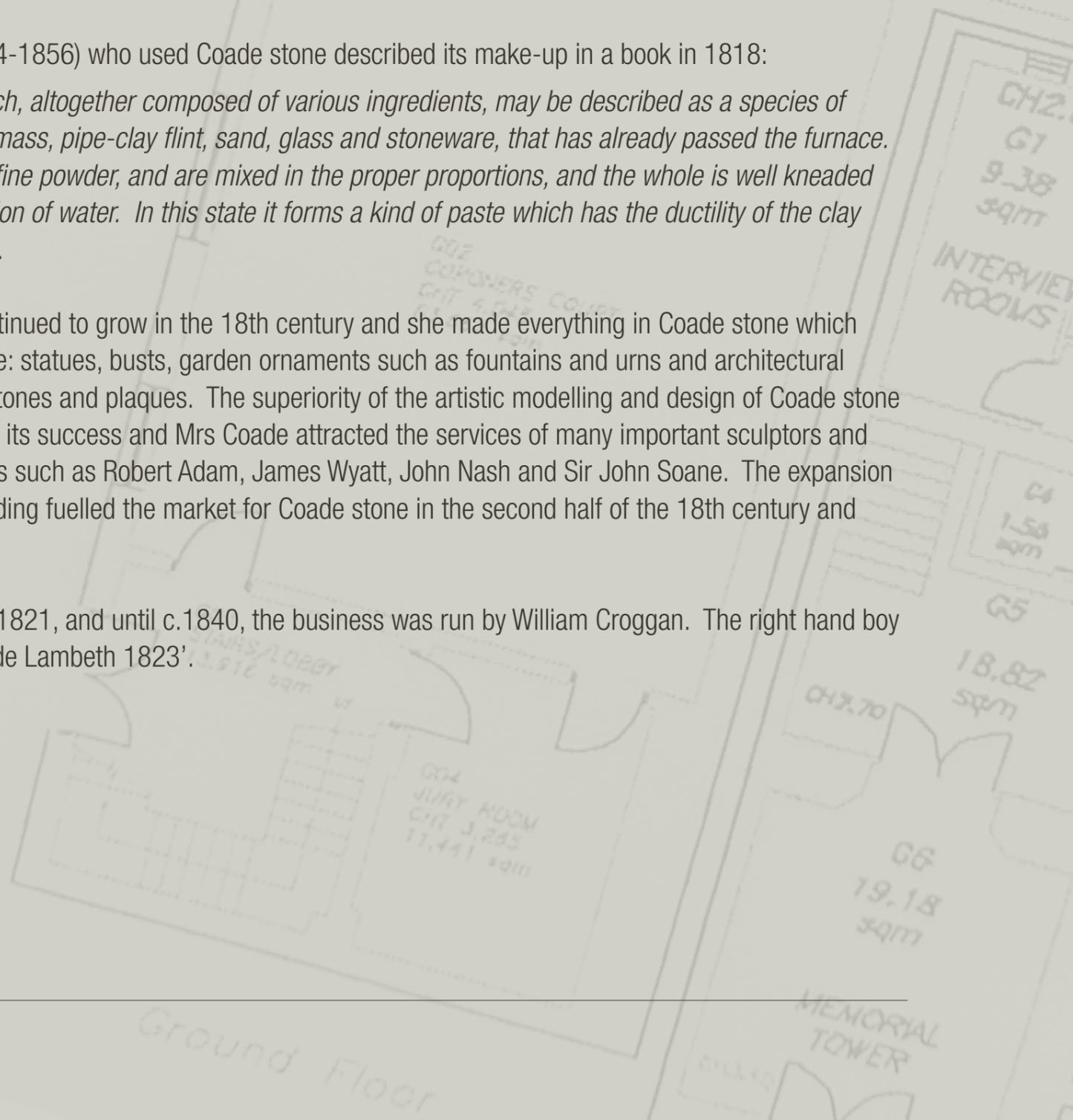
Coade stone was different from other forms of artificial stone, such as stucco and cement, which was cast 'cold'. It was made up of a special composition of fired clay which was passed through the kiln at very high temperature, transforming it into a type of stoneware impermeable to rain and frost.

The architect David Laing (1774-1856) who used Coade stone described its make-up in a book in 1818:

"Coade stone is a material which, altogether composed of various ingredients, may be described as a species of terracotta. It combines in one mass, pipe-clay flint, sand, glass and stoneware, that has already passed the furnace. These are then ground to very fine powder, and are mixed in the proper proportions, and the whole is well kneaded together by means of the addition of water. In this state it forms a kind of paste which has the ductility of the clay usually employed in modelling".

Eleanor Coade's reputation continued to grow in the 18th century and she made everything in Coade stone which could be carved in natural stone: statues, busts, garden ornaments such as fountains and urns and architectural detailing such as capitals, keystones and plaques. The superiority of the artistic modelling and design of Coade stone was another important factor in its success and Mrs Coade attracted the services of many important sculptors and the interest of leading architects such as Robert Adam, James Wyatt, John Nash and Sir John Soane. The expansion of country and town house building fuelled the market for Coade stone in the second half of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century.

After Eleanor Coade's death in 1821, and until c.1840, the business was run by William Crogan. The right hand boy is inscribed 'Crogan Late Coade Lambeth 1823'.



Conservation of the Coade stone statues



The Coade stone statues of two schoolboys in the niches on the facade of Baylies's Hall are remarkable survivals, but after 190 years were in need of attention.

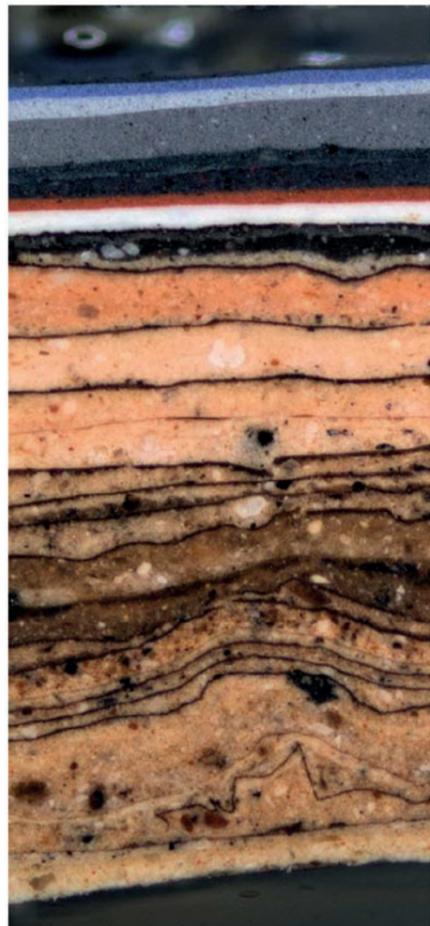
The statues had been repainted on a number of occasions. The painting scheme prior to their conservation (pictured left prior to their repair and repainting), was intended to appear more realistic. The polychromatic treatment shows the boys in the blue uniform in which they were clothed and which gave rise to the term Blue Coat children. However, it became clear through paint analysis carried out on the Coade stone statues during the recent repair project that this was not the original paint treatment.

Coade was considered to be a durable and suitable substrate material which could be either left unpainted to simulate a terracotta, painted in a stone colour, painted to imitate bronze or lead, or painted in a realistic manner. The full research of the historic paint schemes (see cross-sections) which have been applied to the figures throughout their history shows that for the majority of their history the figures were painted in a warm stone colour with the intention to suggest a carved stone figure.

Although this is a move away from the 'realistic' treatment of the figures and from the colour of the facade within recent years, it is not unusual to find this type of decoration at this period. The use of the stone coloured lead oil-paint for both the figures and the render is again a known and standard treatment which effectively harmonized the appearance of the facade suggesting a high quality stone building.

Baylies's Hall Charity Children - representative paint cross-section

Child 1 - coat. Left hand chest area



General description of paint schemes applied:

Recent phase (prior to recent conservation project): Modern mid blue alkyd resin based oilpaint

Phase 2: schemes 19-22. All post 1950 modern paint systems. At scheme 19, the first 'realistic' treatment is adopted and the coat is painted very dark blue. This was continued for a total of 4 decorations.

Phase 1: scheme 1-18. Traditional lead based oilpaints. This consists of 18 schemes of warm stone coloured lead oilpaints. These were applied uniformly over the figures to replicate the appearance of a stone statue. During this first period there is no evidence for the colourful realistic treatment adopted at a later stage.

Substrate: Coade Stone

As can be seen from the paint analysis above, the stone treatment has been the predominant paint colour applied to the figures for the majority of their history. The stone-coloured paint on the facade and the statues applied in the recent repair project and seen today presents the building as closely as possible to its original appearance.