

## 25 YEARS ON

**As this is our 25th Anniversary year, we thought we would celebrate with a little history of our life and times at Alne since 1988.**

It was then that the capital of the York Handmade Brick Company (previously the Alne Brick Co.) was acquired by David Armitage and Tim Bristow. A few years later David Armitage became the sole owner of York Handmade and was later joined by his son Guy who is now a Director of the company.

The progress we have made in the last 25 years would not have been possible without the loyal service and dedicated expertise of York Handmade's management team, which has now been in place for almost all of the 25 years and we owe the team a great deal.

In addition to this excellent team, York Handmade is lucky to have some loyal and skilled employees in the factory. For loyalty, hard work and dedication to the task in hand, you couldn't ask for a better team and this is the foundation upon which the Company rests.

On the Sales side, it is also very important to mention the services of our Sales team. Again the service which they offer has been one of the hallmarks of our success. It is our steadfast aim to provide a first-class service at all times that makes us stand out against our competitors.

When we started in 1988, we inherited a derelict factory. In fact, the factory was not even making bricks at all but was primarily engaged in the production of drainage tiles for agricultural purposes. Now, over £2m investment later, we have a dedicated modern handmade brick factory.

The plant installed in 1988 still stands and serves us very well, enabling us to produce up to 5 million handmade bricks a year, but it has been augmented by a £750,000 specials plant which has played a major part in the success of recent prestigious contracts which are mentioned in this newsletter, as well as on our website or in our product literature.

We are justifiably proud of this flow of FLAGSHIP contracts in these austere times.

Like every other SME in the construction industry, York Handmade has had to fight hard over the last five years to stay in business and to progress. We feel we have succeeded in that prime objective and are well placed to go forward for the next 25 years with confidence.

Finally I should just add that no brickworks can operate without a good supply of clay going forward. We are very pleased to have secured an option on a field next to our present factory,

which will give us another 40 years clay supply so that we can expect a great many more millions of York Handmade's famous bricks to come rolling off the production line.

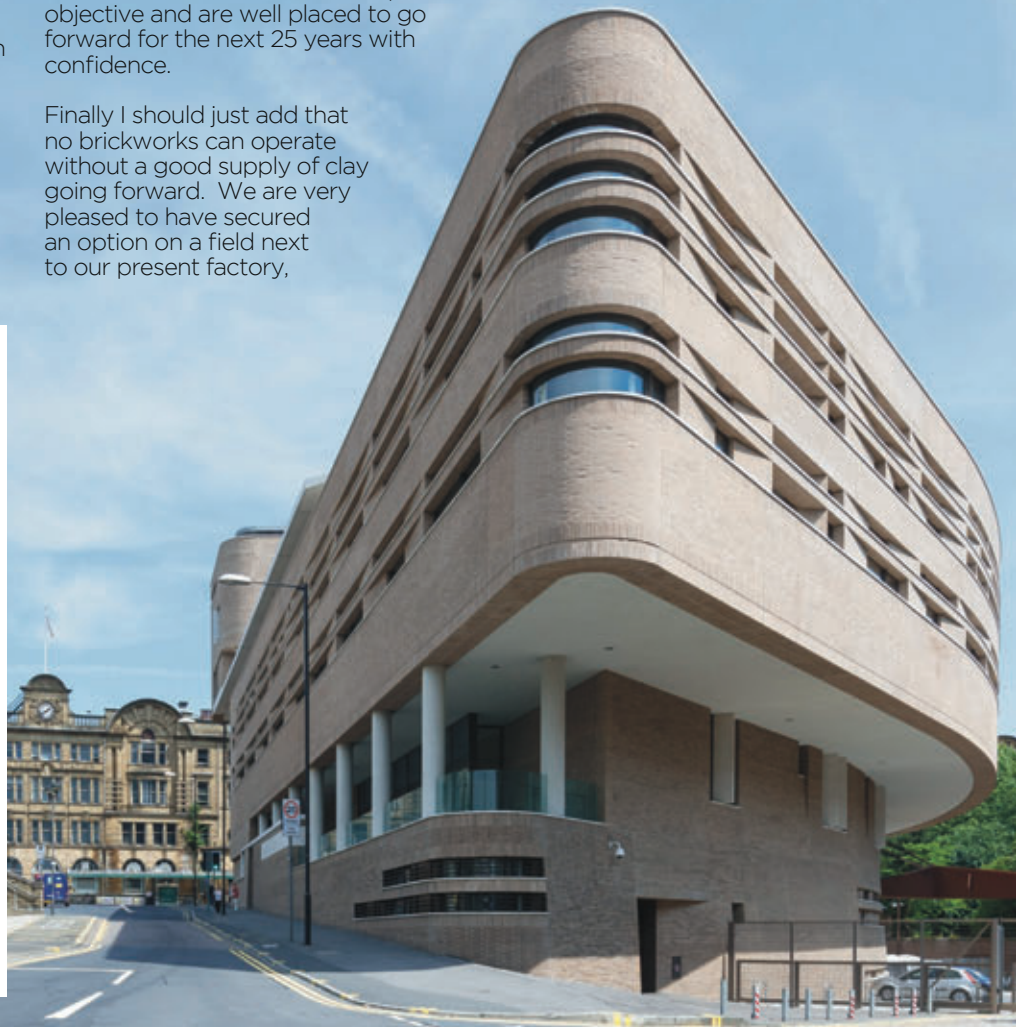
I would like to finish by thanking our customers, who range from the very smallest extension builder or floor tile user to the contractors and developers of large projects mentioned above, for their loyal support.

They are all important to us and, without them, we wouldn't be here. So thank you, customers, for your support.

**David Armitage**



**David Armitage: "I would like to thank our customers"** (Above)  
**Chetham's School of Music** (Right)



# 25 YEARS OF GLORIOUS BRICK



York Handmade has a remarkable record in the Brick Awards during the past decade. These national awards, run by the Brick Development Association in conjunction with Building magazine, are the brick industry's Oscars.



**Tuppill cellar:** the home of the famous Forbidden Corner. Winner 2012.

## A proud record in The Brick Awards

The company won three categories in the prestigious 2012 Brick Awards, the Oscars of the brick industry. We triumphed in Best Single House, the Best Craftsmanship and Specialist Brickwork Contractor categories.

The awards were presented at a glittering ceremony at the Marriott Grosvenor Square Hotel in London's West End. Chairman David Armitage said: "We are particularly proud to be involved in three fantastic projects this year, all of which have been honoured in the Brick Awards. This is our best result ever in these awards.

"Huge thanks are due to the management team and employees at York Handmade for their imagination, enterprise and hard work, which all combined to make this success possible," added Mr Armitage.

The buildings which won the awards for York Handmade were: Four Oaks in Little Bedwyn, Wilts (Best Single House); Tuppill Cellar, near Middleham, North

Yorkshire (Best Craftsmanship); and Chetham's School of Music, Manchester (Specialist Brickwork Contractor).

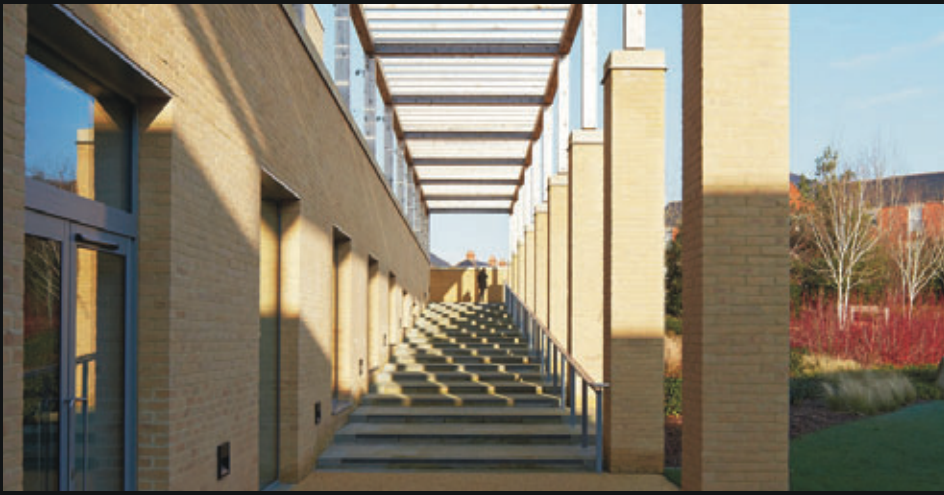
The judges paid tribute to York Handmade's work at Tuppill, the home of the famous Forbidden Corner tourist attraction, saying: "It was obvious to pick Tuppill Cellar as the winner of its category. It is magical to look at. A wide variety of handmade specials were personally designed by the manufacturer and the result is outstanding."

And the judges commended Chetham's School of Music for "being an outstanding showcase for brick. It is a tour de force of brickwork and the beauty of the design, choice of brick and impeccable detail are very difficult to find fault with." David Armitage added: "It is important to stress that our three winning entries were completely different jobs in design and execution, graphically illustrating our ability to work in a wide variety of colours and styles. We believe we can tackle any brickwork project successfully."

## Maxima Brick

In 2011 we introduced our Maxima range to the construction world. Maxima was originally developed by a competitor company in Denmark and we are now able to offer almost all of our colours in the Maxima format. These bricks are sometimes known as linear bricks and are characterised by their long, thin shape, which is becoming increasingly popular with leading specifiers in the UK and Europe.

Many of our leading projects mentioned in this newsletter have used these bricks - and there are more exciting projects in the pipeline. We consider this to be a most significant development in York Handmade's history because, in these more competitive times, specifiers and building owners are more concerned than ever to make sure they make their mark with something that is that bit different and superior to existing buildings.



In 2009 the company was short-listed for the Best Educational Building award for its work on De Grey Court at York St John University.

In 2007 the company was shortlisted for Best Refurbishment Project award for its

work on the Murrays' Mills development in Manchester. In 2006 it won the Best Landscape Project award for its acclaimed work on the walled garden at Broughton Hall, near Skipton.

(Pictured above) Said Buisness School.



In 2005 York Handmade was shortlisted for the Best Refurbishment Project for work on Millington Hall, a 16th century heritage public house and restaurant in Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire and in 2004 the company won the same award for the acclaimed walled garden and new restaurant at Scampston Hall, near Malton.

York Handmade was also shortlisted

in the Best Refurbishment Project category of the Brick Awards for its work in restoring Myton Bridge, near Boroughbridge, to its former Victorian glory in 2003 (pictured above), and also won the Best Single House award for a private house at Chirk, near Wrexham, in 2003. York Handmade won the Supreme Brick Building award for St Brigid's Church, Belfast, in 1995.



We were tremendously honoured to supply 70,000 bricks to the iconic 87-storey Shard in south east London, which is now Europe's tallest

commercial building (pictured above and right). David Armitage commented: "This was a very prestigious contract, which really put York Handmade on the



map. Our ability to produce attractive bespoke bricks to order means we are now on the radar of influential architects and builders across the country."

25 YEARS OF GLORIOUS BRICK

# The York Connection

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By a very happy coincidence, York Handmade has been fortunate to be based very near to the city of York for our entire history. We very much value the interest in our products and our culture from architects and conservationists within the city of York and the surrounding area. With its rich heritage of historic brick buildings, York needs a manufacturer of traditional clay products within its catchment area and this we can provide.

The company welcomes an annual session for members of the terracotta and brick course at the Department of Archaeology at York University.

This kind of feedback and a regular dialogue between these and other bodies, such as the York Consortium for Conservation and Craftsmanship, which embraces most of the conservators on the architectural side but also manufacturers of other traditional products which fit well in the group of respected and renowned producers.

Our recent York projects include the De Grey Court Building at York St John University on Lord Major's Walk and two town houses on St Marys (just off Bootham) and one inside the City Walls near the Minster.



(Pictured above) The De Grey Court building at York St John University.

## Key employees over 25 years

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**Steve Pittham:** Works manager. Has been a vital part of the company since its inception, overseeing much of the capital works and also developing the new technology now in use.

**Mark Todd:** Assistant works manager and specials manager. A self-confessed brick "anorack", who joined the company when he was 16, Mark has personally led the growth of our new special products section which is rapidly expanding.

**Tony Hebdon:** Electrician. Tony has been our highly-skilled electrician for 25 years and is continuing with us part-time in his retirement.

**Paul Barker:** Responsible for all our panel and sample presentation as well as working as a setter.

**Denis Throup:** Quality and Health and Safety Manager, who joined the company in 1995. Started out as a gamekeeper but has adapted very well to his new life

**Jock McMillan:** Our clay preparation charge-hand, who has worked here for 25 years, having had the good sense to move from Scotland to Yorkshire and marry a local lady.

**Nick Barker:** A key skilled operative in our maintenance department, responsible for much work in the improvement of our plant over the years.

**Pete Swiers:** Head sorter in the brick blending team Pete played a crucial part in the award-winning De Grey Court project for the University of York St John.

**Dave Ward:** Senior setter and our longest-serving shop floor employee. A great Liverpool and Led Zeppelin fan.

**Mark Laksevics:** Sales manager. Mark has worked in the brick industry all his life and now sits in the promotional steering group of the Brick Development Association.

**Alun Nixon:** Area sales manager. Originally worked on the factory floor, before going elsewhere, Alun returned as sales office manager and is now our area sales manager for Yorkshire, Humberside and the East Midlands.

**Liz Inchboard:** Sales office manager. Liz joined us after school and has worked her way up to sales office manager.

**John Sheard:** Yard chargehand. His patience with customers and willingness to help with even the smallest enquiry typify what York Handmade is all about.



**Guy Armitage** has recently been elected as the Deputy Chairman of the International Clay Technology Association (ICTa). He commented: "This is a great honour, both for myself and York Handmade. The ICTa does a tremendous amount of good work, notably in the area of training, and I am delighted to be part of such a significant organisation within the brick world."

## Welcome to the future

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The last five years or so have been difficult trading times for the company but we feel that we have moved forward in that time in terms of the strength and breadth of our market. Prior to 2008 we had only supplied a small proportion of our bricks to non-housing schemes. The base of our market was self-build homes augmented by RMI (repairs maintenance and improvements), which were supplied either direct or through one of the merchant outlets.

Recently we have been working on a number of prestigious non-housing

schemes, notably the Said Business School in Oxford, The Shard in Southwark and the adjacent London Bridge Place. We are currently supplying Carmelite House, another significant commercial development on the Victoria Embankment by the Thames. It is this wide mix of projects which has strengthened the company's position in the market place and helped to ensure our future after some difficult years.

This period has also brought into play our £750,000 specials department. For a while this was very quiet but we

are now getting going and a very important part of our turnover is now being transacted through this part of our operation. There is much more to do in the future and we could, for example, offer more of a designer-buy service and possibly branch off into roofing products. All these things are there for the future – no decisions have yet been made. What we have proved, though, is that we have extreme flexibility within our brick-making facility and we are looking forward to the future with optimism.

**David Armitage**