

From an article by Anthony Steven, in 1936
(probably from the Oxford Times or Oxford Mail)

Coopers (Wheatley) Brickworks, Ltd. is a flourishing concern, employing some 67 men and turning out between 150,000 and 160,000 bricks a week. These go as far as London, Brighton, and Southampton, and are remarkable for their fine quality. For, although some are machine made, over two-thirds of the facing bricks are hand-made.

HOW BRICKS ARE MADE

I was shown over the works by Herr Habla, a charming Austrian, who will shortly reorganise the whole process, modernising it and so improving the quality of the products. Together we explored the pit face and the giant machinery, and I was shown how the bricks are hand-made.

"It is vorth our while to make hant-mate breeks. The price they fetch is excellent." Herr Habla explained. I saw men busy working raw clay with their hands and putting it into moulds and cutting it with wires. "Exactly as they mate them 4,000 years ago," said Herr Habla.

Outside in the sunlight the scene was busy and the effect magnificently pictorial. Men in gaily coloured shirts trundled past with barrow-loads of golden bricks, their background huge kilns and the great chimney-stacks with their rolling streamers of black smoke.

As Herr Habla pointed out, Belgium sold something like 500,000,000 bricks in this country last year. It is a golden age for English brickworks, and the products of Wheatley, whether they be common wire-cut bricks or bullnose, squints or special shapes, find a ready market.