

## THE STAFFORD BRANCH CANAL / RIVER SOW NAVIGATION

### LOCK HOUSE ARTIFACTS

#### THE "P B Co Ltd" BRICK

Researched and written by

**David Jones**

One of the items uncovered during an SRL Work Party in 2016 was a brick with the letters "P B Co Ltd" stamped in the top face. See the photograph below.



(Photograph courtesy of Geoff Hales and Yvonne Plant)

The creamy-pink brick was found among the rubble at the site of the former Lock House.

Its dimensions are approximately:

Length: 9"

Breadth: 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

Height: 2 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

The letters "P B Co Ltd" impressed in the frog<sup>1</sup> indicate that the brick was made by one of the companies that belonged to the *Potteries Brick Co Ltd*. This appears to have been a Marketing and Sales Company with an administrative office in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent (17 Albion Street, Hanley) which at one time consisted of seventeen brick producers:

Berry Hill Brickworks Ltd.,  
Birchenwood Brick & Tile Co. Ltd.,  
Bean's Brick & Marl Co.,  
Cobridge Brick & Marl Co. Ltd.,  
D.Duddell,  
Fenton Collieries Ltd.,  
J.Hewitt & Son (Fenton) Ltd.,  
Leigh & Sons,  
J.Noden & Co. Ltd.,  
Wm. Palmer,  
Patent Hydraulic Sagger Brick & Marl Co. (1927) Ltd.,

Stafford Coal & Iron Co. Ltd.,  
Staffordshire Brick Co. Ltd (Wall Grange),  
Sneyd Collieries Ltd.,  
Stephens Bros. (Fenton) Ltd.,  
T.E.Walley Ltd.,  
Thos W Ward Ltd (Apedale)

In all probability the Company had arrangements with the respective producers to impress the bricks with the "P B Co Ltd" logo.

This particular brick also has what looks like the letter "A" centrally positioned below the "P B Co Ltd" logo. It is thought that any extra letter or letters pressed into the bricks showed which manufacturer had produced the bricks.

The Company supplied common and facing bricks. It must have been an important business, the office had 6 telephone lines to handle the volume of trade and in 1942 apparently had a capacity of producing 3 million bricks a week.

It is unclear when the Company was founded but *P B Co Ltd* bricks are found in many buildings and structures dating from the latter part of the 19th century. The company was dissolved in 1966.

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### **Footnote**

(1) The *frog* is the indentation on the top of a brick. This feature was introduced in the 1850s and helps the mortar key onto the brick.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The article contains some information about the *Potteries Brick Co Ltd* found on the Penmorfa.com Website.

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### **FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT BRICKS**

- *Bricks and Brickmaking* by Martin Hammond; Shire Album 75, Shire Publications Ltd., 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1990. ISBN 0 7478 0067 7.
- *Old Bricks – history at your feet*: [www.penmorfa.com/bricks/index/html](http://www.penmorfa.com/bricks/index/html) .
- *The Brick Directory*: <http://brickdirectory.co.uk/index.html> .
- *Brick*: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brick> .
- *Brickwork*: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brickwork> .
- *Bricks and Brass*: [http://www.bricksandbrass.co.uk/design\\_by\\_element/](http://www.bricksandbrass.co.uk/design_by_element/) .
- *Grace's Guide to British Industrial History*: [http://www.graceguide.co.uk/Main\\_Page](http://www.graceguide.co.uk/Main_Page) .

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