

for a time. At different levels there are different types of clay when digging down and they are mixed accordingly, as it was made into a stack, a layer of one type of clay would be dug and spread horizontally across it and then another type, and then another, layer upon layer of different types all in repeated orders, (due to the experience of past generations of brickyard workers) until it was approximately 12-feet high. When it was reloaded into barrows for transportation the Mill, it was dug in strips in a vertical direction so it mixed all the different clays together in a skip on a small railway line and transported to the Mill, where it was again remixed and churned up into the correct texture so it could be forced through the die in the shape of the brick in a long length. When it was at a certain length, the operator brought over a handle, in a half circle of movement with a frame of nine wires attached, (like a cheese-wire) all at the same distance apart.

The bricks had a set of holes in them for two reasons. First was for a wooden fork with the prongs made to fit the holes so they could pick up the bricks (three at once) because they were too soft to pick up by hand. With the fork these wet bricks were loaded onto barrows and wheeled into the drying sheds (each known as a chassis) and allowed to dry out naturally, no artificial heat, being turned over several times in the process until they were ready for the kiln, then to the kiln for burning. With the burning finished, and the kiln cooled after the fire had been allowed to go out, they were removed and stacked outside to for a further period of cooling before delivery to the builder.

When the clay digging finished and Brick-making began in April it was the same time the Pied Wagtails, often called "Willie Wagtails", would return to their summer nesting sites and could be seen on the clay stacks feeding on the insects that lived there. When the brick-yard workers first saw them, they said, "the 'Brick Makers' are back!!"

During the American occupation at Goxhill the USAAF had at times a need for bricks and sent their transport to collect them. One day in 1944, a Jimmy (nickname for their GMC trucks) went to Quebec for a load of bricks. On arriving, the GI who was riding with the driver got out and asked for directions where to load; he then got on the step at the side of the driver's door to direct

him to the bricks. They had to pass under the walkway that was used to gain access to the top storey of the Hoffman Kiln, where it was fed with coal for the fires, when the top of the canopy that covered back of the truck hit the walkway and dislodged some planks which fell down onto the truck hitting the GI on the step and killed him.

So now a piece of this once little-known village in Lincolnshire (now North Lincolnshire for Political reasons) is to become established on American soil by using a raw material of the village land in the form of Clay, then made into bricks by Goxhill Residents 70 years ago, built into a building and operated by our American Allies who helped us to defeat our common enemy in the 1940s, at the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA.

During the 1930s and beyond, Goxhill was known as "The last place God made and he forgot to finish it." When the United States Army Air Force arrived in June 1942, most of the personnel, especially those from the Southern States such as Florida and Texas, agreed!

On 12th November at Virginia Beach, VA, USA, the first stage of planning permission to rebuild the Goxhill Control Tower at the Military Aviation Museum was presented to the Council and was granted. On 9th December it went to the City Council for its final hearing and was granted with a nine-to-two majority. Test boring of the soil began on 7th January for the foundations. A German hangar from the Berlin district has also been transported in sections to the Museum and the planning permission included a clause that these two buildings were only to be used for their own aircraft. The Museum has 40 wartime aircraft, 35 of which are kept there, many of them Fighters including a British Spitfire & Hurricane - the largest private collection in existence.

Anyone who has further interest in this project and are on the internet can look up the Military Aviation Museum at Virginia Beach, VA, and Fighter Factory, Virginia Beach, which finds and restores wartime aircraft to airworthy condition. Also there is the Aviation Institute of Maintenance which trains students for jobs in the aircraft industry, all owned by Mr Gerald Yagen, Virginia Beach...

Ron Parker, January 2009