

Victorian Forts Network RESOURCES

Topic:	Brickwork and Masonry
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Author:	Lewis Sharp - with information and photos from Kevin Casey of the Diving Museum at Stokes Bay Battery no. 2
Content:	Step Tile at Battery no. 2

1. Background

The battery is home to The Diving Museum and in 2025 the battery is undergoing a major restoration and refurbishment of the battery and the museum. A large proportion of this work is related to restoration of the fabric of the battery.

Construction of Stokes Bay Battery no. 2 was started in 1858 and, like most fortifications of the period, it went through a number of updates during its operational life. In 1899 its roof level sea facing armament was upgraded to two six in BL mk. VVI guns. It is the area around these guns, and specifically a number of lights of steps, that this good practice relates to.



6 inch BL Battery - steps on the left

2. Doulton Step Tiles

The Problem

The access steps of the 1899 battery include a series of treads faced with "Doulton's Patent Improved Silicon Tread" tiles from the Doulton Lambeth works.

Many of these step treads had been damaged. The nature of the damage indicates vandalism as the cause rather than any lack of durability.

The product is discontinued by the original supplier which has evolved into the current Royal Doulton ceramics company.



A new supplier

Replacement tread tiles were sourced from Craven Dunning Jackfield of Ironbridge Gorge, Shropshire. The specialist responsible was Gemm Ball.

<https://www.cdjackfield.com/>

In researching this good practice, another source of reproductions of this particular product was found. The small Gabriel Nichols pottery located in Barton-upon-Humber.

<https://gabrielnichols.co.uk/>



Reproduction step treads from Craven Dunnill Jackfield

More Details

You can get more details on the products and techniques used by contacting the suppliers or Kevin at The Diving Museum or via: enquiries@palmerstonfortssociety.org.uk

For outdoor applications, you need to ask for evidence of frost resistance durability.



From Grace's Guide, dated 1898