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# NEWSLETTER

Number 22 Winter 1995

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Fellow Members,

I am writing this having just returned from a few days spent in the United States. While there I had the opportunity to visit Hopewell Furnace, in Berks County, Pennsylvania. My family expressed their expected reluctance at being ensnared into visiting another iron site, but were pleasantly surprised at what they saw.

Hopewell was an industrial plantation, where the furnace was established in 1771, together with dwellings and agricultural, as well as industrial, buildings to support a community of ironworkers, colliers and their families. We all enjoyed the setting; the landscape of the site with its white, weatherboarded buildings, the fields and surrounding woodlands with the glorious colours of the fall. What I also enjoyed was what the Americans do so well; the preservation of a historic structure in its setting. Hopewell is not merely conserved remains, but a restoration of the site as it was in the early-19th century.

Of importance is the fact that Hopewell has been recognised, nationally, as a significant element in Pennsylvania's, and America's, industrial history even though, technologically, the works was a dead end.

So where is the significance of Sussex's industrial past recognised? In a county where iron has been smelted since the second century BC, and where the first of over 130 documented blast furnaces and forges was built in 1496, there is no national recognition beyond the rather ineffectual scheduling of some sites as Ancient Monuments. Great things have happened at some of these sites, and they deserve to be appreciated for that; but, at present, who would know it?

It has been pointed out that the scant remains of Wealden ironworks would make for a dry public exhibit. So why not reconstruct? Why not take some existing remains and put back what the best information suggests has disappeared. Purists might complain that restoration compromises the archaeological integrity of the site. But it is worth considering whether the general public, the customer, gets as much pleasure and stimulation from preserved remains as from a faithful reconstruction.

The recent management plan of the High Weald Forum makes some recommendations in the direction of better interpretation of the Wealden iron industry, but is there the political will to see beyond the immediate needs of countryside management and rural community life, to the value of presenting the past in a more varied way - as they did at Hopewell more than fifty years ago?

On a different note, this Newsletter sees in a new Editor, Dot Meades, and I want to record my appreciation of the work, in that role, done by Granville Davies. He used his knowledge of desk top publishing for the benefit of WIRG, and produced newsletters which were lively, informative and illustrated. Also, since the AGM, the Committee has co-opted Dr Tim Smith, who is the editor of Steel Times, and who has already contributed some items of interest to past newsletters.

As always, one of the pleasures of being Chairman is hearing news of discoveries, whether archaeological or documentary, from members. Please keep them coming.

My best wishes for the new year

Jeremy Hodgkinson

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## AGM 1995

**In the singularly attractive setting of Kirdford in West Sussex, some fifty members attended the AGM on Saturday 22nd July. Guest speaker Peter Jerrome, Chairman of the Petworth Society, gave an interesting insight into the local iron industry and, in particular, some of its relatively well-known personalities. Hugh Sawyer reports.**

Unlike East Sussex where a powerful industry developed towards the end of the 15th century, with workers from the Pays de Bray settling in the Ashdown Forest, there was no record of iron activities in the western part of the county before the mid-16th century.

The dissolution of the monasteries brought about an upheaval, whereby a new class of landowners was able to acquire land to let out for iron-working. In Petworth, which was a centre of clothmaking, copyholders too

could acquire considerable capital to set up to make or deal in cloth; the town became wealthy. Meanwhile, the Earls of Northumberland who had previously fallen out of favour with Henry VIII, were required by Elizabeth to come down to the area in the 1560's. Their attention to their southern estates led to a downturn in industry, as copyholder leases were gradually resold at a higher price. This took capital out of the cloth industry and was a prime reason for its decline.

At that time, a number of personalities came to the fore. The Blackwells were believed to be friends of the Earls of Northumberland; Mr Blackwell was possibly parish clerk of Petworth, whilst his wife - 'a much suspected recusant' [E. Straker p.428] - owned a forge and furnace in Northchapel.

A particularly colourful figure, one Thomas Smyth, allegedly laid waste orchards in digging for ore. As he was not over fussy about refilling, there were complaints of cattle falling down the side of deep pits and the ground which then attracted moss, lay useless for thirty years. Nevertheless, he was a man with expertise in different fields leasing out iron works (eg Shillinglee Furnace, Mitchellpark Forge) and mills (eg Fittleworth).

Thomas Smyth died, a comparatively young man, in 1579. An earlier Chancery case at Fittleworth mentioned his wife Barbara Bowyer. The Bowyers were a powerful force in Petworth and ironmasters in Hartfield; the 1574 lists speak of Mr Smyth as 'owning a furnace and forge in Halfield'. It is likely that the Smyths were a wealthy iron-working family.

Thomas Smyth was not a rough and ready man, but someone of considerable influence, and a man who moved in relatively exalted circles. He had a big house in Petworth but its exact location is unknown. A photograph taken in 1939 showed a splendid building, since demolished, which is also shown clearly on Treswell's famous estate map of 1610. Was this the residence of the enterprising Thomas Smyth?

HS

AGM business and Peter Jerrone's talk were followed by the usual excellent lunch, entirely masterminded by Dorothy Hatswell - grateful thanks to Dorothy (it is believed by many that her lunches are largely responsible for the excellent attendance at our AGMs!)

Certainly we were well fortified for the afternoon visit to the Ebernoe ironworks site with its many interesting features. A walk through the woods took us to a disused and partly refurbished brickworks which provided a useful insight into another industry.

The whole site is a nature conservation area and, quite apart from the iron site, was a delight to walk around with our very knowledgeable guide.

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## THE MAYFIELD GUN



*Reproduced with kind permission of The Courier*

Last August, a new plaque was unveiled by respected local historian Chris Trollope assisted by WIRG member Anne Dalton, WIRG Chairman Jeremy Hodgkinson and Don Clark.

WIRG had unearthed information placing the date of the gun's manufacture 90 years earlier than at first estimated. The new plaque, donated by the Royal Armoury recorded the revised date of the gun's manufacture: 1575.

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## REVIEWS

Those members who are interested in the British iron industry as a whole might like to read the following review by Tim Smith, editor of Steel Times. It was not only Wealden furnaces that went in and out of production; the iron industry has always been subject to erratic demand.

### A Blast from the Past

In 1788, there were 80 blast furnaces operating in the UK with a combined output of 66kt (averaging 825t/furnace). By 1920, the number had risen to 282 furnaces in operation producing a combined total of 8Mt (averaging 28kt/furnace). As a comparison, to-day, British Steel - now UK's only company operating blast furnaces - produces some 12Mt of iron from just 8 furnaces or an average of about 1.5Mt per furnace.

The historical data has now been brought together from a host of sources and published in one extensive volume 'British Blast Furnace Statistics 1790-1980'. This mammoth task has been painstakingly researched over many years by Philip Riden, Lecturer in Local History at the University of Wales, with later assistance from John Owen.

The 212 page A4 hardback volume contains 25 000 rows of data (the author assures us) listing output by region (14 regions); number of furnaces and total output by region, and companies operating in each region.

Thus, for example, the history of Brymbo steelworks in N Wales can be traced before its demise, from 1796 when the Ironmaster John Wilkinson built the first iron blast furnace there, through a succession of ownerships and names; Jones (1810); John Thompson (1825), Brymbo Iron Co (1841); Darby & Co (1858); reverting to Brymbo Iron Co (1863); to become Brymbo Steel Co Ltd (1884) changing to Brymbo Steel Works Ltd (1948); Brymbo Steel Works (1961); British Steel Corp. (1970) and finally Brymbo Steel Works Ltd once again (1973) (Since the publication lists to 1980 there is no reference to UES/GKN ownership).

The history of each ironworks is listed in such detail conjuring up such names as W & G Firmstone (Staffs), Kettering Iron & Co (Northamptonshire); Staveley Coal & Iron Co Ltd (Derbyshire). Each works is provided with a four figure Ordnance Survey map reference and footnotes for clarification where necessary. There is also a full index of ironworks, a Bibliography of sources and an extensive introduction explaining the reliability of sources.

British Blast Furnace Statistics 1790-1980, by Philip Riden & John Owen, 1995 ISBN 1 898937 05 2 published by Merton Priory Press, 7 Nant Fawr Road, Cardiff CF2 6JQ, UK Price £35

Tim has also written an excellent review for Steel Times of the new edition of our Group's book 'The Iron Industry of the Weald'.

Priced at £24-95 in hardback (discount to WIRG members if bought through the Group) it is half the price of the previous edition and is available post free from Merton Priory Press Ltd, 7 Nant Fawr Road, Cardiff CF2 6JQ, UK. Fax(01222) 761544

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## NEWS FROM ELSEWHERE

### Severn claims

#### 13TH CENTURY ORE CARRIER

A medieval boat dated by Dendrochronology to have been built 700 years ago, was excavated from the Severn estuary during the summer.

The boat foundered while carrying iron ore mined in the Forest of Dean, to an unknown destination.

The wreck was discovered by amateur archaeologist, Derek Upton, who was showing a group of German visitors around the area, not far from the present day steelworks of Llanwern, Newport.

Examination by Damien Hopgood from the British Museum, and Valerie Fennic, an expert on Viking boats, revealed the wreck to be that of a merchantman built with a high degree of carpentry skill using oak. Valerie described it as looking similar to a Viking boat but using a single square sail for propulsion.

About half of the 50 ft (15m) boat is still intact. A specially designed cradle was used to lift it from the mud with the aid of a crane lent by the builders of the new Severn crossing. Once the process of preservation has been completed, the boat will go on display at the National Museum and Gallery, Cardiff. TS

Why, I wonder, was the ore being taken away from the Forest of Dean, which has always had a reputation as an iron-smelting area? Schubert History of the British Iron & Steel Industry p123 mentions that there is evidence from 1222 onwards that the miners of the Forest of Dean were recruited for the royal armies to undermine fortifications. However, this boatful of ore suggests that there were still some miners left in the forest. DM

#### Cyrena Limestone

Jean Shelley has sent in three interesting documentary extracts about this interesting substance, which is also known locally as "Sussex Marble". Wirg members will know that it is often found in the Wadhurst clay, very close to iron ore deposits. It has been suggested that this may have been one of the "ores" mentioned in Straker (pp 102/4) as having been used at Ashburnham furnace. Some of the extracts clearly relate to burning the limestone for lime fertilizer but the last one directly mentions its use as a flux. Jean's extracts are as follows:

SP28/49 State Papers at Public Record Office (via K Prestley) fo.42v. Richard Page, constable at Worth - his accounts - 1647 Probat:

"Also owing to Sossex Mable the some of £4 3s 6d."

Ep VI/12/10 W Sx R O (via D. Chatwin) Court Rolls of the Manor of Ferring & Fure. 1641 Sarah Greenfield (tenant) granted a licence to dig marble stone at High Fure, and to burn it on her land and to sell the same already burnt. £10 (for licence.)

Ep VI/35/1-145. 1657 Richard Nye granted licence to dig up and sell Marble Stone in and upon his Customary lands in Billingshurst & Chilmington in any convenient places and the same to burn into lime, and the same so digged or burned into lime as aforesaid to dispose of at his will and pleasure for the term of 7 years, 20s.

Sussex County Magazine, Vol 14 No 8 1940 quoted in Sussex Industrial Archaeology Soc. Newsletter No86 p4 April 1995. E Wyndham Hulme quotes from the steel maker Henry Home whose "Essays in Iron and Steel" was published in 1773. This praised the Wealden Cyrena Limestone as a flux in smelting as it "deprives (the ore) in a great measure of that noxious arsenical sulphur which too often abounds in its composition".

**A continuing problem** of Wealden iron research is the difficulty of identifying the nature of the many pits which abound in our area. Cyrena Limestone, so-called marl and iron ore lie close together in the Wadhurst Clay.

For example, in Fairwarp alone, we have three major iron sites, one Roman and two post-medieval; the digging of marl was formerly a customary right and also, one suspects, a commercial undertaking; in addition, the ground has been quarried for stone at least as far back as the 16th century.

One suspects that the people who are asking us to identify mine-pits which are securely related to furnace sites do not quite understand what they are asking.

Comments from WIRG geologists, and from anyone who can link a given iron site with its ore pits for inclusion in the next newsletter will be welcome.

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## ***SITE WATCH - WIRG NEEDS YOU!***

Recent severe damage to a scheduled site was reported to WIRG. We alerted English Heritage who, together with WIRG, were able to talk to the farmer concerned and limit any further damage.

English Heritage pointed out that the penalties for tampering with a scheduled site are now considerable and can even include imprisonment. However, they would always prefer to negotiate with owners and occupiers and arrive at a mutually satisfactory solution to any problems there may be.

If the farmer concerned had contacted English Heritage or ourselves, before starting work on the site it would have saved us several site visits, telephone calls, and letters; it would also have saved him from having to demolish the work he had done on the site and move it elsewhere. More importantly, a scheduled monument would have remained intact.

The field group does not have time to inspect all the iron sites in the Weald on a regular basis. However, many WIRG members, even if not actively taking part in the research, joined us because of their interest in sites near where they live. They could perform a very valuable service to iron archaeology by keeping an eye on their local sites and letting a member of the committee know of any untoward activity. We can then take appropriate action.

We realize that not all unscheduled sites can be saved but we may be able to negotiate with an owner to allow us to watch and record anything which may be uncovered and so increase our knowledge. Scheduled sites are protected by law and even minor works such as fencing require permission from English Heritage. Sometimes landowners and occupiers seem to be unaware even that they have a site on their land, so it is up to us to help to protect our heritage.

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## SMELTING NEWS!

WIRG members will remember the excellent series of bloomery smelts carried out some years ago by Roger Adams and his team. His contact with Ronnie Tylecote helped Roger with his Wealden experiments and also led him to build and operate furnaces for the investigation of iron and non-iron ores from other areas.

Unfortunately, for some years now Roger's health has not allowed him to continue with this work but he has very generously decided to allow WIRG to use his smelting site together with the tools and stores that were left there. This will make it possible for us to re-start experiments. Your committee decided to appoint Dennis Beeney to be in overall charge of the site as he is often in touch with Roger, and with a small team he has renewed the drainage and rebuilt a bloomery furnace there.

The aims of the experiments are, firstly to make iron and secondly, to make iron in the kind of furnace which we have excavated and to produce similar slag to that which we have found on sites such as Pippingford Bloomery and Cowpark.

### A helping hand returned

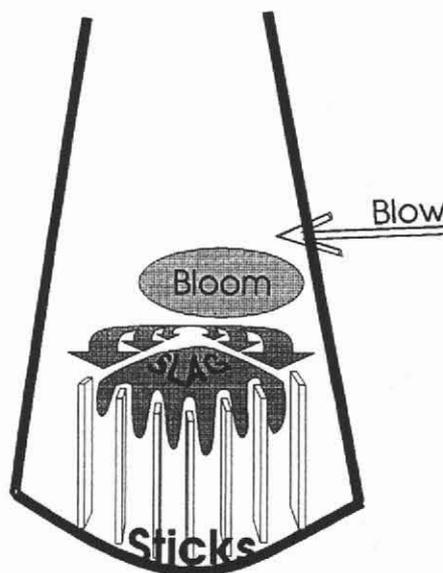
Whilst Roger was smelting, he was visited by Peter Crew, of the Snowdonia National Centre, who wished to begin his own smelting experiments in Wales. Peter still remembers how valuable Roger's advice was in helping him to start. In late October this year that help came full circle when Tony and Dot Meades attended a conference **Iron for Archaeologists**: A review of recent work on the archaeology of early ironworking sites in Europe. The event was organized by Peter and Susan Crew and we were able to see one of Peter's experiments.

We watched the furnace being fired, blown and loaded; the bloom was extracted whilst still hot and then smithed to a billet of iron. Whilst the furnace was smelting, we were able to watch a smith make a variety of small articles such as nails and arrowheads from a billet of medieval scrap iron which he had brought with him.

The conference included visits to an Iron Age hillfort and a medieval ironworking site. The rest of our time was spent listening to some very interesting papers on excavations and surveys of iron sites in various parts of Britain, Sweden, France, the Jura and Spain. Slags and surveying using modern techniques were also discussed.

### A new avenue of research for WIRG ?

Those attending the conference were invited to take with them samples of slags, so we took some from Pippingford Bloomery and from Cowpark. The Pippingford slags were found to be very interesting because they contained impressions of wood; apparently current investigations are linking the wood impressions with the way the furnace was constructed and worked. It is thought that the bottom of the bloomery furnace was packed with upright sticks and the slag allowed to trickle down between the sticks, presumably to keep the forming bloom/slag away from the cold, damp bottom of the furnace. Eventually, the sticks would burn away, leaving slag with these impressions. Twigs were also used to make a former around which the furnace was constructed. Two of our pieces of slag supported these ideas.



Rough plan of bloomery interior (not to scale)

Examples are known in Norway, Sweden, the low countries and from a site in Surrey. We were asked if there were any other sites which had yielded wood impressions and we had to say that these impressions are quite common in our bloomery slags; so this will be a possible new avenue of research for WIRG. (Those who have been present when we have trenched slag heaps for dating material will know that slags with such marks are not unusual). If anyone has any such slags and can remember where they were found, please get in touch, as we need to start a list.

The conference was superbly organized. When we arrived we were each presented with a file containing programme and other information plus a booklet with abstracts of all the papers to be presented. This was a great help as we had only to take notes of discussion points. -DMM

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## THE '94 TO '95 FORAY SEASON

We started in **October** with a visit to the hamlet of Cabbagestalk, between Forest Row and Hartfield. Here on the south side are several large mine pits. Some distance to the south, two new, medium sized, bloomery furnace sites were found, both on the edges of small streams; unfortunately, no dating evidence was found.

**November** took us to the New Bloomery Search Area, (NBSA for short), and the start of a very wet winter; this is a large area covering from Eridge Green to Frant in the north, and from Cross in Hand to Heathfield in the south. More exactly, the corners of this area are TQ5636; TQ6135; TQ5621; TQ6121. The following three forays are to the south and east of Mayfield. Quite fortuitously, the starting point was St. Dunstan's Bridge, presumably where He had his forge, and where he clapped his hot tongs over the Devil's nose! (This would have been some sort of smithing hearth because it happened well before the advent of the blast furnace with its associated conversion forge.) However, the only find west of the bridge, was one piece of bloomery slag in a pit. Some blast furnace slag was found scattered over a field, although well away from the river; nearby was the local sewage works where this material is used in the filter beds: so be warned!

The **December** foray returned to the NBSA, this time near Merrieweathers Mill and Sharnden Old Manor Farm, a moated site well off the beaten track. Although the metal detector suggested that there might be something in the stream flowing from direction of the Manor, no slag could be found. Possibly, rusty metal particles have come from the farmyard over the centuries rather than from an iron working site. Although some blast furnace slag was found in the stream near Merrieweathers Mill, nothing else could be found to indicate a furnace site and it was assumed that the material was brought in to help build up the bay.

In **January** the field group visited Cinderfield Farm, Horley, Surrey. According to Straker Wealden Iron p 456, 200 loads of ore passed along a nearby highway in 1371, So here was the perfect field-name with documentary evidence to prove it; well almost! Months later, we found out that an original name for the house was Synderforde Crofte. No doubt cinder for the ford

was brought in from elsewhere, which probably accounts for our being unable to find any evidence for iron-making. The ford has been replaced by a bridge over the river, which was close to flooding during our visit, so we were unable to inspect the riverbed.

Although no iron-making site was found, there must be a one there somewhere which used the 200 loads of ore. We think the area merits a return visit. The report for this foray, along with all the evidence for this farm-house and its occupants, has been produced and will be lodged with Horley Library. All the documentary evidence in this report was supplied by Oz Brown, a WIRG member of many years standing, (ever since I gave a lecture to the Horley Local History Group).

By **February**, the forayers were showing signs of a revolt due to the wet weather. To crush this, an "indoor foray" was organised at Dot Meades house. In the morning, members spoke about their individual researches and we were able to look at various documents and extracts. After lunch we watched Mr Wright's video on the Wealden iron industry, in which some members of the field group had taken part. It rained most of the day, and was voted the best wet foray so far.

In **March** we visited Rowfant Supra Conversion forge. This has been exactly located because the name "Upper Forge" has been found on a map; see Cleere and Crossley 2nd ed. p 390.

The **April** foray saw us with a Spring in our step; back to the NBSA, this time between Merrieweathers Mill and Coggins Mill. Here, at last, we found our first new study area site, just upstream from Merrieweathers Mill. The slag was from a bloomery furnace, its form was very rounded and knobby and unlike any slag previously found. Also unusual was the fact that all the slag was at river level under the 8 feet high stream banks, with nothing on the land surface.

It is suggested that the "land" (Ashdown Sand) is slowly moving to make the stream narrower, but the river is washing away the soil at the same time; apparently keeping the status quo. As the full area of slag was impossible to see or probe, or even detect with the metal detector, it is not possible to give the extent of the site; however, the slag covered 50ft of stream.

An extra foray/dig was organised in **May** to section the London-Lewes Roman Road at Cobhambury Wood, near Edenbridge, Kent. This went well and the full width of The Road was completed on one very long day.

### Other visits

Reg Houghton and I, with Mr. Pollard of Springhill Farm, Benenden, Kent, made an interesting but

fruitless foray (from the iron point of view). A local field name of "Furnace Field", close to a bay, could not be associated with a blast furnace because there was no slag. Another nearby bay was dismissed for the same reason. It was noted that neither bay had a spillway to bypass floodwater. Even the field name "Ironsides", on a hilltop, could not be associated with iron making.

There is a history of fulling in the surrounding area, an industry that requires water power to operate the fulling hammers. However, Mr. Pollard has found an interesting local will where "...Wife Margaret to have the occupying of the furnace site & the pipes as long as shee keep house...". Although other items in the will suggest that it is associated with cider making, this process does not require heating. It is tentatively suggested that it may refer to "glass furnace" or "glass house", and that the pipes refer to those used for blowing gobs of molten glass into hollow ware. It is probable that these (blowing) pipes were made of wrought iron, this being the only material capable of withstanding the temperature of molten glass, and were therefore very valuable and perhaps difficult to make.

Two other "special" forays were made by Reg. Houghton and Myself for the Monument Protection Program, concerning pits (for iron ore) at Edolphs Copse, Charlwood, Surrey, and Crown Hill, Wye, Kent. One of our members, Mrs Jean Shelley, having lived in the Charlwood village all her life, knew that the pits in Edolphs Copse were the result of digging for limestone from the "Small Paludina Limestone" beds (a gastropod) in the Weald Clay. Nevertheless, we walked the area, finding many changes of level on the ground, about 20 small pits up to 10m across, a few larger ones and a one water-filled pit 15m wide by 100m long. It is thought that the limestone was used for building stone (e.g. Charlwood Church) and was not burned to make lime for agricultural use. Although several lime-kilns are known in the area, there are records showing that chalk was brought to the area from the North Downs, some 6 miles away.

The second batch of pits, at Wye in Kent, proved to be enigmatic, with no evidence to be found apart from one piece of bloomery slag. There are some 200 pits here, on top of the North Downs, Past excavations produced Iron Age pottery, and there are several Bronze age barrows close by. Unfortunately, nothing has been written-up or else it has been lost! The geologists suggest that iron ore does/did exist here in the sandy strata on top of the Downs, and that it was produced in "pipes" within the chalk, these being formed as the chalk dissolved (due to acid water). Another possibility is that they were sand-pits and the ore was an added

bonus, or that they might have been dug for flint, but this is all conjecture. Ask when the pits were dug? Blank faces all round! Can anybody help? Are there records somewhere?

Yet another foray, this time geological, was a visit to Cliff End, Pett, Sussex, with Reg Houghton and our Australian members Mr and Mrs Mather. His main interest is with English iron ores, especially from this locality. It was news to us that iron ore may be seen in the coastal cliff at Pett, and that it may be picked-up from the beach. The geology here is Wadhurst Clay, where the bottom 10m above the Ashdown Sand is solid sandstone. This should be compared to the quarry at Sharpthorn, Sussex, where the similarly positioned strata are clay and shale with three levels of iron ore. At Cliff End, a layer of ore can be seen at eye level for 50m or so, eventually dipping below the surface to the east.

Each of these forays has been written-up in more detail. If a copy is required, please state which area, and send a couple of 2nd. class stamps to cover costs.

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## REQUESTS

Anne Dalton is seeking a copy of History of The British Iron and Steel Industry from 450 BC to AD 1775.

Dot Meades would like to find a copy of Percy's volume on iron (the reprint, not the original which is antique and no doubt fabulously valuable.)

Please contact the editor with details, including prices, if you can help.

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## TEBBUTT RESEARCH FUND

Applications are invited from individuals and groups for grants towards research in the Wealden iron industry. It is anticipated that approximately £200 will be available from the fund in 1996 and anyone interested in receiving a grant should write a suitable letter of application, giving details of themselves, together with relevant information about the research envisaged.

Applications should be sent to the Hon Secretary of WIRG, Mrs S. Broomfield, 8, Woodview Crescent, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9HD, to reach her by 31st March 1995.

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## FIELD GROUP 1995/96 FORAYS

As usual, forays are on the 2nd Saturday of each month:

**October 14th** Crown Hill, Wye, Kent .

**November 11th** Groombridge Place.

**December 9th** Bloomery search in study area.

**January 13th** Bloomery search and/or trenching in study area.

**February 10th** Ebernoe furnace site, Kirdford.

**March 9th** Bloomery search in study area

**April 13th** Bloomery search and/or trenching in study area.

The study area (begun last year) is a north/south strip roughly between Mayfield and Heathfield, to the east of the bloomery study area already completed, . (See Cleere & Crossley The Iron Industry of the Weald Appendix 2, p 280). We hope for better weather this year. As before, we aim to inspect both streams and fields wherever possible and examine the slag beds of a proportion of the sites we find for datable material.

Field names are often valuable clues to the location of sites. We should be pleased to hear from volunteers who would undertake to search for these either in their own area, or in the study area, using the 1841 Tithe Award maps and schedules or other maps and documents. Their findings would then be followed up by the field group. If you would like to do this but need help to get started, please let me know.

### Your new Field Group Secretary

Hugh Sawyer has kindly agreed to take on the work of field group secretary, to allow me to spend time on the newsletter. Please, therefore, send any outstanding ticked copies of the initial foray notice to Hugh at 14 Springhead Way, Crowborough, TN6 1LR.

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## THE 1996 WINTER MEETING

This will be held at Nutley Memorial Hall on <sup>2</sup>7th January at 2pm. One of our members, Jamie Kaminski, will give an illustrated talk "The Roman Iron Industry around the High Weald" based on his own research. His talk will be followed by the usual delicious tea, provided by our honorary super-caterer, Dorothy Hatswell. A small charge will be made for this.

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### NB

We have a very full newsletter this time, thanks to all our contributors. I hope that the newsletter will continue to reflect all the diverse "iron-based" interests of our membership. So please keep sending in your news, views, discoveries and ideas to me, Dot Meades, at Brackenside, Normansland, Fairwarp, Uckfield, E Sussex, TN22 3BS ASCII text if possible, with each item on a separate file on the disc. Typed or legibly written items are also acceptable.

All good wishes for Christmas and the New Year. May we always foray in the sunshine!

Dot Meades.

