

LINCH AND ITS IRON RESOURCES

By LOUISE COCHRANE

The parish of Linch lies in the westernmost part of the Weald of Sussex and forms part of the Vale of Fernhurst. It is within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,¹ and one needs considerable imagination to picture the present woodlands as once having been the site of iron mines with men at work digging ore for blast furnaces. Traces of minepits still exist, however, and their location has been recorded on the detailed maps prepared by the Geological Survey team working in the area in 1957-60.

The sites are referred to by B. C. Worssam in the *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association* in 1964.² It happens that the map accompanying Mr. Worssam's article stops just short of the Linch boundary, but he mentions that 'scattered occurrences of pitted ground in the Vale of Fernhurst for three miles westward of North Park Furnace have been noted by Mr. S. C. A. Holmes.' With the permission of the Director of the Geological Survey, I studied the six-inch field maps which show the minepits in Elmers Copse, Pit Copse and Luckins Copse at SU 855281 to SU 865280.

The notes indicate in Elmers Copse old pits to a maximum of five feet; in Pit Copse, uneven loamy ground and old pits about five feet deep in sand with ferruginous sandstone. In Luckins similar old shallow pits occur in silt with fine yellow sandstone. Mr. Worssam's article explains the geological background of iron working in the Vale of Fernhurst and shows that furnace sites are related to the seams of clay ironstone which provided the source of ore.

The blast furnace at North Park (SU 879282) was just under a mile east of these minepits and another furnace at Inholms was just over a mile away (SU 856262) to the south-west. Earlier references to the history of the parish recorded that Linch had paid a tithe of iron ore in 1342 and Ernest Straker, the authority on Wealden iron, had suggested that there might be a bloomery site in Linch adjacent to these minepits.³ For this reason I decided that it would be interesting to trace the economic history of the parish and see what was the earliest date at which a relationship could be established between the prosperity of local residents and the existence of these mineral resources.

The first important result of my research was the discovery of a mistranscription in the early references to Linch tithes. The original

¹ Under the Provisions of Section 87 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

² B. C. Worssam, 'Iron Ore Workings in the Weald Clay of the Western Weald', *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, Vol. 75, Part 4 (1964), pp. 529-546.

³ Ernest Straker, *Wealden Iron* (1931), p. 427.

error was made by Dallaway, and subsequently Lower made the same mistake.¹ Referring to the Nonæ roll for 'Lynch', Dallaway italicised in his quotation '*Itm decima ferri ec'c'e pd'c'e valet p. annu' x s.*' In the text Dallaway stated, 'He [the rector] had likewise 10 sol as a composition for the tythe of iron-ore which was an early instance [1342] of minerals having been made subject to decimation.'

I have consulted both the official transcription² and the original membrane³ and found that the tithe paid by the parishioners of Lynch was the more familiar one of hay. FENI had been misread as FERRI. A full translation of the document reads as follows:

'Inquisition was held in the presence of Henry Husee and his colleagues assessors and vendors of the ninth of sheaves of corn, fleeces and lambs in the County of Sussex at Lewes Wednesday after the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary in the 15th year of our lord King of England and his second year as true King of France concerning the ecclesiastical value of Lynche which is valued at 8 marks after the oath of William the Woodman, Roger at the Wood, Ralph the Thatcher, and Richard Whitemay parishioners of the aforesaid parish who say on their oath that the ninth part of sheaf corn of the aforesaid parish is worth this year 41s. 8d. And the ninth part of fleece of this parish is worth this year 3s. And the ninth part of lambs is worth this year 2s. The total is 46s. 8d. and not more and it does not correspond nor is it related to the Surveyed value of tithes, and that the rector of the aforesaid Church has there one messuage with garden which is worth per annum 6s. 8d. and 20 acres of arable which is worth 20s. and 4 acres of pasture which is worth per year 8s. Item the tenth of hay of the aforesaid Church is worth per year 10s. and the tenth of cider is worth 20s. Item the aforesaid rector has pasture belonging to his church which is worth per year 6s. 8d. Item they say that there are small tithes of the aforesaid parish whose payment is worth per year 13s. 4d. Total 6 marks 4s. and 8d. And they say that there are not in the said parish any other cardinal benefits or merchants but parishioners who work of the lands and by their labours. In witness of this act then the seal of the aforesaid assessors and vendors and the seal of the aforesaid jury are separately affixed to the deed. Given at Lewes the above-mentioned day and year.'

The photocopy of the original membrane (Plate 1) shows how easily the mistake could have been made. This was especially true

¹ James Dallaway, *History of the Western Division of the County of Sussex*, Vol. 1 (1815), p. 300. M. A. Lower, 'Ironworks of the County of Sussex', in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (abbreviated hereafter to *S.A.C.*), Vol. 2 (1849), pp. 178, 214.

² *Nonarum Inquisitiones Tempus Edward III* (1807), p. 360.

³ P.R.O., E 179/189/17. Note: I am indebted to my neighbour Professor David Knowles for assistance with the translation.

since Dallaway was writing just as the Wealden iron industry was in its final phase.

The next important question was whether the existence of mineral resources was in any way related to the prosperity of rising yeomen in the 16th century, at the time of the expansion of the Wealden iron industry. Viscount Montague of Cowdray was well to the fore in this development. In lists of ironworks prepared for Queen Elizabeth's Council in 1573 and 1574 there are several references to 'another new furnace sett upp in Haselmore by my Lord Montague' and to 'the Lord Montague, a furnace called Pophall'.¹

Pophall in Linchmere, the parish adjoining Linch, was presumably the nearest furnace at this time. It later became a hammer and was probably operated in conjunction with the furnace in North Park. According to Ponsonby, Pophall was described as a hammer in the Linchmere court roll for 1615. North Park was established in 1614 according to his transcription of the Linchmere court roll:

'Item the homage do present the [honorable] Noble third Viscount Montagu and Thomas Gray, gent., for buildinge an Iron Mill on the above said coppiehold called Peerish and for makinge of highwaies through the said ground and for digging Myne pitts and for makinge of san [sawe] pitts and coale pitts to the great advantage of the Tennant to the same.'²

In 1582 the 1st Viscount Montague bought the manor of Linch.³ It had previously been thought that the existence of a medieval iron industry in Linch might have influenced his purchase. Now it is questionable whether the iron resources were a factor; it is more likely that Viscount Montague was interested in timber, of vital importance for the making of charcoal. At any rate he bought the manor at a time when he was selling off other portions of his estate and consolidating his position near Cowdray.⁴

By 1582 two very substantial leaseholds of ten thousand years each had been granted to yeomen within the manor of Linch. William Ayling had acquired the leasehold of Chalcrofts at Woodmans Green and must have been responsible for building the 16th century house known as Woodmans Green Farm which is described in the Victoria County History⁵ and listed as a building of special

¹ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* (abbreviated hereafter to *C.S.P.D.*) 12 Elizabeth. Vol. 95, nos. 48, 50, 51, 128, 131; Vol. 96, nos. 111, 113B; Vol. 117, October 1577. See also Straker, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

² Arthur Ponsonby, *The Priory and Manor of Linchmere and Shulbrede* (1920), pp. 152, 180, 182. At this date it was, however, the 2nd Viscount Montague; 'Noble third' should read 'honorable' and for 'san' read 'sawe'.

³ Edwin H. W. Dunkin (ed.), *Sussex Manors, Advowsons, etc. Recorded in the Feet of Fines Henry VIII to William IV (1509-1833)*, Vol. 1, Sussex Record Society (abbreviated hereafter to S.R.S.) Vol. 19 (1914), p. 288.

⁴ A. A. Dibben (ed.), *The Cowdray Archives*, Vol. 1 (1960), Introduction, p. 9. Viscount Montague had already acquired some lands in Linch through his inheritance of Easebourne Priory lands, Tanner's *Not. Mon.*, p. 563.

⁵ *The Victoria History of the Counties of England, Sussex* (abbreviated hereafter to V.C.H., *Sussex*), Vol. 4 (1953), p. 65.

architectural or historic interest by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.¹ My identification of this house as being the original Chalcrofts is proved in two ways. First it is the only house at Woodmans Green to have a cellar, and William Ayling, yeoman, who died in 1718 left seven barrels in his cellar, according to his inventory.² In his will, Chalcrofts was left to a niece, Sarah Ayling,³ who subsequently married John Butler, the man responsible for restarting the iron works at North Park.⁴ In John Butler's will Chalcrofts is still described under its old name⁵ but in his son's will it is described as Woodmans Green Farm.⁶ This is the second and conclusive proof.

I have not been able to establish a connection between the 16th century yeoman and this later William Ayling who owned the house at the beginning of the 18th century.⁷ There is no question, however, that the first of this name to appear prominently in the district was a man of far greater importance. He was financially in a position to buy the manor of Woolbeding where he built a new hall, traces of which still remain in Woolbeding House.⁸ According to his will,⁹ Elizabeth, his wife, was to have the use of the chamber over the new hall in his house of Woolbeding for the term of her natural life. She was to have ten bushels of wheat, four bushels of rye, ten bushels of barley and ten bushels of oats yearly from the farms,

¹ Under Provisions of Section 32 Town and Country Planning Act, 1962. Provisional List 2246/11/A, p 37. It is noted that a photograph of the house is with the National Buildings Record.

² West Sussex Record Office (abbreviated hereafter to W.S.R.O.), inventory of the goods and chattels of William Ayling, late of Linch, yeoman, 8 August 1718.

³ Will of William Ayling of Linch, yeoman, 1718, Chichester Consistory Court, Vol. 32, No. 164.

⁴ W. W. Capes, *Rural Life in Hampshire* (1901), Appendix E, p. 273, gives pedigree of Butler family. Marriage to Sarah Ayling is noted in Linchmere court book, 1724, W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 264, p. 118.

⁵ Hampshire Record Office 10M50/195. Incomplete copy of the will of John Butler of Bramshott, proved 3 June 1775, P.C.C.

⁶ Hampshire Record Office 10M50/196, 52. Certified copies of will of John Butler of Bramshott, 7 September 1785; codicil 24 May 1790; no probate.

⁷ A pedigree of the Aylings is given in William Berry, *County Genealogies: Pedigrees of the Families in the County of Sussex* (1830), p. 208. No forebears are given for William Ayling, but it is possible that he is the son William mentioned in the will of Richard Ayling of Woolbeding, C.C.C., Vol. 5, Folio 133. If William Ayling of Linch, yeoman, who died in 1718 was descended from William Ayling of Woolbeding it could only have been through the marriage of Mabel Gray, granddaughter of William Ayling of Woolbeding, to Nicholas Ayling of Stedham, who died in 1641. C.C.C. M. Dean 9. The children mentioned in this will are recorded in Stedham and Woolbeding parish registers as those of Nicholas Ayling and Mabel his wife.

⁸ Provisional list No. 2246/11/A op. cit, p. 89.

⁹ Will of William Ayling of Woolbeding, yeoman, 1583, P.C.C. 21 Rowe. Inquisition post mortem in L. F. Salzman (ed.), *A Calendar of Post Mortem Inquisitions Relating to the County of Sussex*, S.R.S. Vol. 3, pp. 158-60. For acquisition of manor, see Dunkin, op. cit, S.R.S. Vol. 20, p. 503.

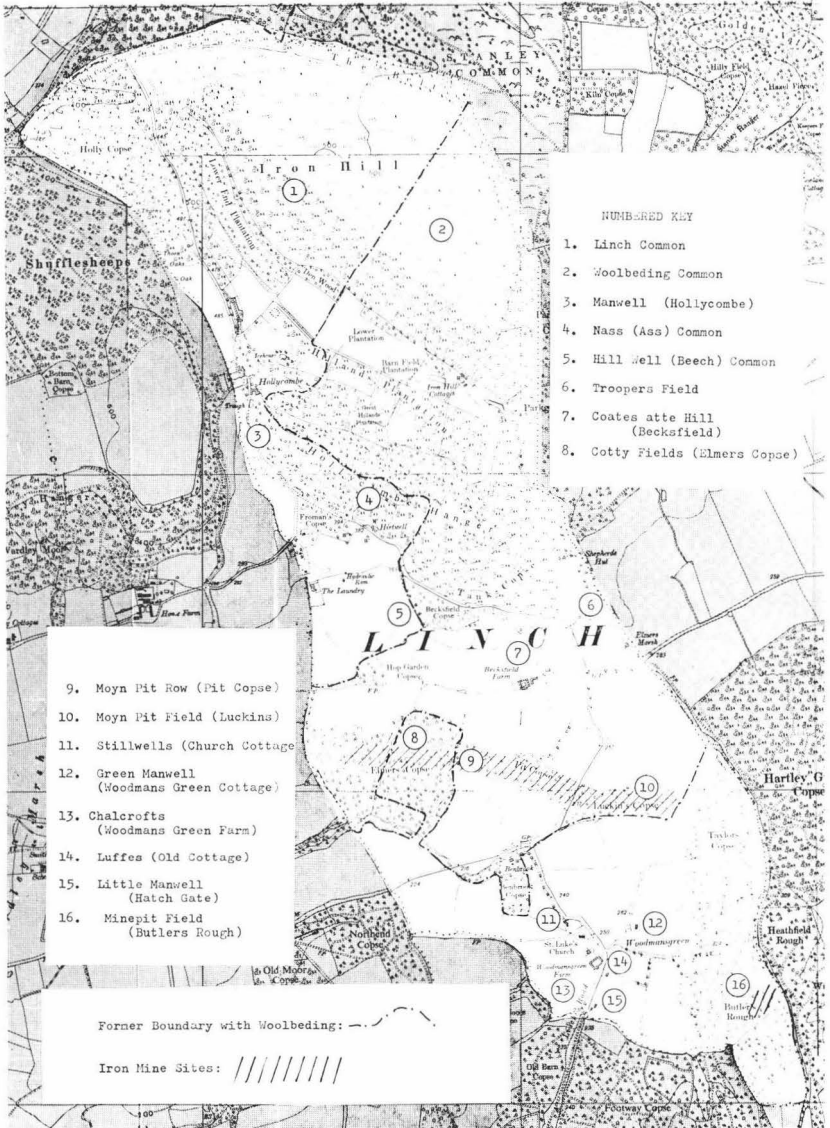


PLATE II. The Parish of Linch

*Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.
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the keeping of four kyne during her natural life, and £15 a year from a farm called Ruge Farm at Rotherwick.

William Ayling had no male heirs. His son John had died in 1578¹ and was buried in Woolbeding. His father requested that he be buried beside him. He then divided the rest of his property among his daughters. Joan, the eldest, who had married Edmond Gray in 1563,² received the manor of Woolbeding, Farthings and White Lynes Barn. Elizabeth, the wife of John Locke, received Baldwins, Hollist in Easebourne, and other properties in Easebourne, Graftham and Heyshott. Another daughter (also called Elizabeth) inherited tenements and lands containing eighty acres called Cottess att Hyll in the hands of Thomas Bettesworth, and a tenement occupied by Stillwell's widow purchased from Thomas Ayling of Stedham. Agnes (Annys), the wife of William Moser, inherited Chalcrofts:—

‘I give and bequeathe unto Agnes my daughter the lease of Chalcrofts otherwise Chailcroft which is now in the tenure and occupation of Thomas Ayling my brother containing by estimation four score and six acres of land be it more or lesse situate lying and being in Woodmans Greene in the Parish of Linch in the sayde Countie of Sussex, also one crofte of Lande containing by estimation four acres be it more or less and now in the tenure and occupation of my aforesaide brother lately purchased of Thomas Ayling of Stedham in the sayde Countie of Sussex to have and to hold the sayde lande and crofte of land with all and singular of their appurtenances as to the aforesaid Agnes and the heires of her body Lawfully begotten by her . . .’

The first reference to Chalcrofts in the Linch court book is the transfer of the property after William Ayling's death:³

‘28th Year of Elizabeth (1586) . . .’

‘To this Court came William Aylwyn having died, William Moser, his heir. William Aylwyn held Chalcroft or Chalcroft for ten thousand years . . . and his best living beast being due to the Lord on his death and no store beast having been added to his Lordship's cattle, William Moser, his heir, pays a fine.’

Three years later another transfer is recorded and Edmond Gray takes the property over from his brother-in-law.

There is no evidence that William Ayling's prosperity derived from any but agricultural pursuits. He was succeeded by his son-in-law as lord of the manor and in 1600 Edmond Gray's eldest son, Thomas, inherited the Woolbeding estate.⁴ Chalcrofts went to

¹ Will C.C.C., Vol. XII, p. 60.

² Transcript of Woolbeding parish register seen at Woolbeding House. I am indebted to Mrs. Edward Lascelles and Miss Alice Lascelles for help on Woolbeding records. A pedigree of the Grays is given by Comber, *W.S.R.O., Comber Papers*, Vol. 17, pp. 65-73.

³ W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 297, f. 2, para. 102.

⁴ Will of Edmond Gray, P.C.C. 12 Woodhall, 17 May 1600; proved 4 February 1600/1.

John, the fourth son, who was presumably responsible for the 17th century additions to the house.¹ Through his brother there may have been some association with the North Park ironworks, founded by Thomas Gray and Viscount Montague, but no documentary evidence exists for this. Chalcrofts remained in the Gray family's possession until 1660.²

Another prosperous yeoman buying property in Linch in the middle of the 16th century was Thomas Bettesworth. In 1564, 'Henry, Earl of Arundel, joining with John, Lord Lumley and Jane his wife, demised certain lands in Linch called Little Manwell, Green Manwell and Hirtwell to Thomas Bettesworth, yeoman, for a term of ten thousand years. Herriot on death or alienation the best beast or forty shillings; and seven shillings for a relief.' Little Manwell can be identified as Hatch Gate, Green Manwell as Woodmans Green Cottage. Hirtwell still has its original name.³

The Thomas Bettesworth who bought the leaseholds in Linch does not seem to be the same as the even more prosperous Thomas Bettesworth of Trotton (or Milland, which was part of Trotton). He had a very big estate and died in 1594 seized of the manors of Iping, Deane (a manor which included Wardley), Rogate Bohunt and Milland.⁴ In his will he left instructions that he was to be buried at Tuxlythe, another name for Milland.⁵ The heir to this estate was Sir Peter Bettesworth of Milland. The estate became rather encumbered by 1635 and some was sold to Henry Hooke of Bramshott, the prosperous ironmaster then developing Waggoners Wells just over the border in Hampshire.⁶

I have studied both the will and the inquisition post mortem of Thomas Bettesworth, gent., of Milland, and can find no reference to property in Linch. It must have been just a coincidence that Linch produced its own Thomas Bettesworth at the same time. He could have been the Thomas whose father held Little Manwell in 1526.⁷ His property seems to have been divided between a son,

¹ W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives No. 297, op. cit. John Gray is recorded as having built a 'gateroome' at Chalcrofts, f. 6.

² Ibid, f. 13.

³ A document entitled MSS. B Cowdray is quoted by Dallaway op. cit., p. 299. I have not been able to trace it in the Cowdray archives but the court book references to these holdings would confirm its authenticity. My identification of these houses is based on references in the court book cross-checked against wills and inventories. Hatch Gate (17 cent.), Woodmans Green Cottage (17/18 cent.) and Old Cottage (17 cent.) are mentioned in the Provisional List aforementioned 2246/11/A. They were renewed or rebuilt, therefore, later than Woodmans Green Farm.

⁴ Chancery Inquest P.M. Series 2, ccxxxviii, p. 61. Summarised by F. W. I. Attree (ed.), *Notes of Post Mortem Inquisitions Taken in Sussex Henry VII to 1649 and after*, S.R.S., Vol. 14 (1912), p. 27.

⁵ P.C.C. 74 Dixey.

⁶ W. W. Capes, op. cit, p. 167.

⁷ W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 297, op. cit. f. 1. There were other noteworthy Bettesworths in neighbouring parishes. See W.S.R.O., Miscellaneous Papers, No. 335, 324-328. Pedigrees in Berry, op. cit., pp. 34 and 304.

William, and a son, Thomas. William died in 1591 and bequeathed Hirtwell and Green Manwell to his son Lawrence.¹ Thomas died in 1597 and the court book indicates that Richard then inherited Little Manwell after his mother's death.²

There are two other cottages at Woodmans Green whose early records I have investigated. The Old Cottage was probably one for which William Luffe paid 10*d.* heriot in 1586. Stephen Stillwell, who is mentioned in the court book in 1588, and in 1603 sought a licence to let a cottage (formerly a chapel) and garden at Woodmans Green, was probably responsible for the first building on the site of Church Cottage.

The church or chapel at Woodmans Green had been built when the centre of population for the parish moved from Linch Down, the southern part of Linch, to the Wealden outcrop at Woodmans Green. Both the original church near Bepton and the chapel at Woodmans Green completely disappeared. The fact that the church at Linch fell into disuse caused a certain amount of confusion, with the result that local residents occasionally described themselves as 'of Lynchmere.' The present³ church at Linch was rebuilt in 1700 under the leadership of Peter Bettesworth who lived at Green Manwell (Woodmans Green Cottage).

In my attempt to discover whether there was any relationship between the prosperity of local residents and the exploitation of iron, it was necessary to discover both where the common land had been situated and where the original boundary had been between Linch and Woolbeding. When William Ayling of Woolbeding purchased the manor of Woolbeding it had been held, as had that of Linch, by the Earls of Arundel for about two centuries. After Viscount Montague bought the manor of Linch it apparently became necessary to re-determine the boundary of Linch Common where it had become separate from Woolbeding. This was done in 1588 and duly recorded in the court book:⁴

'... and that we William Bettesworth, Thomas Bettesworth, Stephen Stillwell and William Bettesworth the younger doe present it to your worships as followeth viz:

First, from Freeman's corner eastward to Freeman's oak, and there directly to the upper way from plain north [a layne north] over the Quash (Guash) to Spicher's style, then directly to Law style, from Law style to Lyme oak westward to Chitteley corner to beside a mile stone, from beside a mile stone to the west end

¹ Will of William Bettesworth of Linchmere (*sic*) 1591, C.C.C., Vol. XIV, p. 221. Green Manwell and Hirtwell are mentioned in Lawrence Bettesworth's Inventory, W.S.R.O., Ep. I/29, 1624/25.

² W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 297, op. cit., f.3 and 119.

³ F. Vere Hodge, *Linch Parish Church and Iping Marsh Church* (1958), pp. 10-11.

⁴ W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 297, op. cit., f. 2, para. 113. Quoted by Dallaway, op. cit., p. 299. Dallaway gives 'plain north'; this should read 'a layne north'.

of Dean's bottom, from Dean's bottom south to Manwell, from Manwell to Freeman's lane end. These marks, names, and bounds, in our lifetime we have known to be true and do keep the same names to this day, and they be such as our forefathers have told us to be true, for the separating of Lynch and Woolbeding . . .'

Freeman's or Fromans still provides the name of a copse. A Luc [Luke] Fromund is mentioned in the subsidy lists for 1296. Manwell was just north of Fromans on Hollycombe Hill, near where Hollycombe House stands to-day. It is another name that dates from the 13th century.¹ 'Manwell' meant 'common spring' according to the late Eilwert Ekwall, editor of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place Names*. He was kind enough to reply to a query from me about this point shortly before his death. Green Manwell, he thought, might take its name from a common spring near a village green. This was of further assistance in identifying Green Manwell as Woodmans Green Cottage, the house adjacent to the former green.

Study of a map in the County Record Office of the commonable lands of Linch, dated 1812, has enabled me to establish (Plate II) where most of the original common land was before enclosure.² None of the iron mining sites identifiable to-day were on common land. Even more interesting, however, was the discovery that the principal sites were not in Linch but in Woolbeding, as evidenced by the tithe award maps.³ Ore was mined in adjacent fields called the Cotty Fields, now in Elmers Copse, and in one field in Linch called Mine Pit Field, on the tithe award map at SU 867273, but these are the only possible sites within Linch's boundaries at the time in question.

Having established the exact location of the sites with reference to the various holdings, however, I was naturally anxious to discover at what period the iron mining took place. There was no mention of iron in the wills and inventories of men living on the various holdings which might have been involved in the late 16th or early 17th centuries.

Some of the Woolbeding land involved undoubtedly formed part of William Ayling's holding called Coates atte Hill or Cottes atte Hill. The name might have been the basis for the fields called

¹ William Hudson (ed.), *The Three Earliest Subsidies for the County of Sussex in the Years 1296, 1327, 1333*, S.R.S. Vol. 10 (1910), p. 100.

² 'A Plan of Commonable Land In the Parish of Linch in the County of Sussex Belonging to Stephen Poyntz, Esq., Lord of the Manor, William Barlow, 1812.' W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 1698. A boundary stone on the present Linch/Fernhurst boundary is also recorded in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government List 2246/11/A, Map Reference No. 15, Sheet 3. The dates on the stone are 1679, 1791 and 1802. This must have been one of the boundary stones to show the extent of Woolbeding commonland.

³ W.S.R.O., TD/W76; W.S.R.O. TD/W152.

Cotty Fields. Coates atte Hill was later known as Hilllands.¹ The tenant of Mr. Gray's farm at Woolbeding called Hillhold was William Bettesworth, according to a mid-17th century reference in the Linch court book.² In his inventory, 1656, he had 20 bushels of oats, 18 bushels of barley and some fitches of bacon which were worth recording. Lawrence Bettesworth (of Hirtwell and Green Manwell) who died in 1624, had fat hogs, cattle and farm implements. His son Lawrence refers to timber in his will. The impression one gets is that the community was predominantly agricultural.³

Mining must have taken place, however, in the first half of the 17th century. A detailed map based on a survey of Thomas Gray's Woolbeding estate in 1652 lists 'the moyn pits', 'moynpit field row', and 'moynpit field',⁴ in Pit Copse and Luckins Copse exactly where the bellpits are recorded by the Geological Survey. The ore must, therefore, have been exploited during the first period of the North Park furnace.

I have not traced any detailed records with regard to John Gray's or Thomas Gray's involvement in the local industry. North Park apparently ceased to function in the middle of the century. Whether this is connected with the Civil War must be a matter for conjecture. In December 1643 William Waller's forces surprised the Cavaliers occupying Cowdray, left their own garrison there and went on to besiege Arundel. According to Mrs. Roundel, Cavalier forces hid in the woods near Fernhurst and harried Roundhead outposts. The control of various Wealden ironworks was of considerable importance to Cromwell, so there would have been sound reasons

¹ A list of lands belonging to Thomas Gray, Esq. (great nephew of Thomas Gray of Woolbeding who succeeded Edmond Gray in 1600—see Comber Papers, op. cit.) mentions 'All that Messuage, tenement or farm of the said mannor called Coates at Hill alias Hilland.' The list is included in a copy of the *Abstract of Title of the Right Hon. Lord Robert Spencer to the Manors and Estates of Woolbeding and the Advowson of the Church*, which Mrs. Lascelles of Woolbeding House allowed me to consult.

² W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 297, op. cit.

³ W.S.R.O., Ep. I/29, op. cit. Lawrence Bettesworth, 1624; William Bettesworth of Woolbeding, 1656. Will of Lawrence Bettesworth 1677, C.C.C. Vol. XXVI, 128b.

⁴ 'The Survey of the Demesnes of the Manor of Woolbeding situate and lying in the Parish of Woolbeding in the County of Sussex surveyed in the year of our Lord 1652 together with a farm lying in the North part of the Manor which have been severally particular as Bendbrook, Webbs, Becksfield, Elmers Mill land, Hedgers and Readons both taken by Thomas Ayling for Thomas Gray Esq. and now redrawn into one draft for the Right Worshipful Sir John Mill Bart. by me Nicholas Ayling.' (Sir John Mill married Thomas Gray's daughter.) Shown to me by Mrs. Lascelles of Woolbeding House.

A map, 'Platforme and Contents of Estate of Thomas Gray, Esq., 1652,' W.S.R.O., Add. MS. 1052, does not give details of this northern part of the estate, but includes an excellent miniature drawing of the 17th century Woolbeding House.

for military activity. The map names Troopers Field and Cavalry Quarters also serve to reinforce this local tradition.¹

William Yalden, Viscount Montague's steward at the time of the Civil War, arranged with the Commissioners to lease the Cowdray estate.² The Yalden family, as ironmasters, enjoyed a considerable period of prosperity judging from Lord Leconfield's book.³ William Yalden of Blackdown became M.P. for Midhurst in 1659.⁴

In 1664 North Park appears on a list of ironworks as 'ruined'.⁵ Apparently there was anxiety that an industry which had once employed a large number of workers was threatened by foreign competition; and that with the renewed Dutch war there was justification for reviving ironworks which had been allowed to fall into disuse. Pophall was listed as continuing, but in need of encouragement.

An estate map for North Park in 1660 describes Moynepit Field and Furnace Field as arable, so it would seem to confirm the fact that mining had ceased. Some minepit and coppice land was reserved, however, and not let out to farm.⁶ Seventeenth century blast furnaces needed a great deal of timber for charcoal and it is likely that a period of re-growth for the coppices was required.

A terrier and map prepared for Sir Richard Mill of Woolbeding in 1724 shows that the farm where the 17th century iron ore was mined had continued as part of the lord's demesne.⁷ This means that at the time of John Butler's revival of the industry, the Woolbeding estate would have benefited again if further ore was mined. John Butler, meantime, acquired other property in Linch in addition to Chalcrofts, and he owned the Cotty Fields.⁸ These fields are in present day Elmers Copse where old bellpits are discernible. The only field called Minepit Field in Linch at the time in question lies within an area now known as Butler's Rough. According to S. C. A. Holmes, this was also a geologically possible site, and some traces of iron mining pits remain to-day.

John Butler was a successful entrepreneur and became a very significant property owner in Hampshire, where his second wife

¹ Mrs. Roundel, *Cowdray, the History of a Great English House* (1884), pp. 80, 154. Cavalry Quarters appears on Ordnance Map; Troopers Field on Tithe Map of Woolbeding, op. cit.

² C.S.P.D., Vol. G 105, p. 515.

³ Lord Leconfield, *Petworth Manor in the 17th Century* (1954), pp. 93-103.

⁴ Mrs. Roundel, op. cit., p. 156.

⁵ J. L. Parsons, 'Sussex Ironworks', in *S.A.C.* Vol. 32 (1882), p. 19.

⁶ W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 1640.

⁷ 'A Map of the Manner of Wolbeding in the County of Sussex being part of the estate of the Honourable Richard Mill, Bt. surveyed in 1724.' The terrier accompanying the map includes a perambulation of the manor of Woolbeding which lists in detail the exact boundaries between the manors. Seen by kind permission of Mrs. Edward Lascelles at Woolbeding House.

⁸ W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives No. 297, op. cit., ff. 43-57, gives details of Butler holdings.

was the eldest daughter of the lord of Bramshott.¹ At the death of his son the property in Linch went to a daughter married to John Newland, surgeon of Petworth. Chalcrafts was sold to John Turner and must subsequently have been bought by Sir Charles Taylor, as it became part of the Hollycombe Estate. Sir Charles Taylor acquired the Cotty Fields in Linch direct from Newland.

Lord Ponsonby had thought that the earliest Linch ironworkings had something to do with the furnace at Inholms Copse.² In an attempt to discover whether any early mention of mining in Inholms Copse existed I spent considerable time on Stedham records, since Inholms is in fact in Stedham. The earliest reference to the digging of mines in Stedham which I could trace was in 1739.³ Moreover, S. C. A. Holmes in a report to the Geologists' Association describes a field trip to Inholms in June, 1962, and in connection with it records

'An examination of one-inch and six-inch Ordnance Survey maps and detailed maps by Gream (1795) and Greenwood (1825) shows that, though not in existence when surveys were made around 1775-1795, the lake was fully established before 1813 and remained fully in being at least until 1823-24; after this it was eventually drained, to be restored as an amenity, some time after 1872 and before 1910. The hammer-pond and furnace, with some bellpits nearby, were located not on the main outcrop of sandstone with associated clays with ironstones, but on an inlier of these beds, very restricted in lateral extent, and supplies of ironstone must soon have been exhausted. Was this furnace indeed only a late and short lived enterprise? The topographical evidence of Gream's survey, whereon this site is shown as open fields, certainly suggests this.'⁴

This is indeed interesting because it is an indication that iron-working continued in the district for some time after John Butler's death in 1775. This is borne out by the fact that copies of leases for North Park and Pophall subsequent to John Butler's tenancy exist in the Cowdray archives. In November 1769 the ironworks were leased to Joseph Wright and Thomas Prickett for 21 years, and in 1774 a similar lease is drawn up for James Goodyer.⁵ This might mean that there was still an industrial aspect to the community when Sir Charles Taylor had a cottage ornée built at Hollycombe

¹ W. W. Capes, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

² Ponsonby, *op. cit.* p. 183.

³ W.S.R.O., Stedham court book, Add. MS. No. 729.

⁴ S. C. A. Holmes, 'Field Meeting to Midhurst: A Traverse of the Western Part of the Vale of Fernhurst, Sussex', in *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, Vol. 74, Part 1 (1963), p. 87.

⁵ W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives No. 1443, 1444. There has previously been some confusion about where John Butler's ironworks were, as they are usually referred to as in Fernhurst. Another furnace site is located at Surney Hatch. The North Park works involved land in both Fernhurst and Linchmere. These leases refer specifically to terms previously accorded John Butler in his lease of Pophalls and North Park.

from designs prepared by Nash. Since Sir Charles Taylor subsequently acquired the manor of Stedham,¹ he may also have acquired the ironworks at Inholms which later became part of the Hollycombe Estate.

It is my hope that one day further records for both North Park and Inholms will come to light, so that a more detailed picture of their operation and their economic role can be produced. Beyond the leases I have mentioned the only other documents in the Cowdray archives which might be related to the local industry are a statement of disbursements made for carriage of coal, iron, sows, etc. to Pophall Hammer dated 1683-86,² an 18th century account of the cost of converting a ton of scrap iron into bar iron, and the cost of wood necessary for such an operation.³

As for those first successful yeomen whose families built the houses in which a number of residents in Linch still live, presumably they derived their opportunity from the misfortunes of the Earls of Arundel in the time of Elizabeth I and their money from their 'work of the lands and by their labours', without the added benefit of iron resources.

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¹ V.C.H. *Sussex*. Vol. 4, op. cit., pp. 65, 89.

² W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 5128.

³ W.S.R.O., Cowdray Archives, No. 96.