

SCARLETS FU. and FORGE

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WEALD IRON RESEARCH GROUP

Winter 1973/4 scheme for revising information on water-powered sites included by E. Straker in Wealden Iron (1931).

The following points are designed to produce a rapid survey of these sites, many of which have not been visited in recent years. You will be aware that Straker's site-comments were unsystematic, and, beyond this, modern developments such as tree clearance or planting, bulldozing, or building, have made major changes.

Please ensure an adequate National Grid Reference.

1. Name of site. State if that used by Straker is in any way misleading.

SCARLETS FURNACE and FORGE. COWDEN

2. National Grid Reference (2 letters, 6 figures).

W.I. 13.224-5

T.Q 443401

3. Access. State problems of terrain or land-use. (If the name of owner and tenant is easily available, this could be useful.)

Mr. Jackson, Scarlets, Furnace Lane, Cowden, Kent. a foot path runs across the site with a bridge broken down in 1965 but still accessible. Mr. Jackson disputes that it is public. He has always granted access if asked.

4. Features on the ground.

Main Dam Length c. 75 yards

Height (estimate from both upstream and downstream sides if possible.)

Upstream c. 5 feet

Downstream c. 10 feet.

Condition (i.e. gaps, erosion etc; are there any good cross-sections in bulldozed gaps? If so, do these show the construction materials used at different stages?)

Accessed in the flood of Sept. 15th. 1965, when the long bank at about the middle and a deep channel was cut through it, and the working area below it. A section through the bank showed an original bank of clay which had been raised by soil containing black furnace slag. The face (upstream) of the bank was revetted by a wall c. 2 feet thick the bottom of which is built of stone and the top of brick (normal thickness).

Pen-ponds - is there any evidence for dams upstream from the main supply pond?

No

Mine pits - are there any close by?

many along the valley

The area below the dam

Clear indications of buildings, wheel-pits, sluices, etc.

There is a weir and sluice of fairly modern construction on the S side of the dam, and the stream from there is separated from the rest of the working area by a bank. A wheel pit is noted, brick lined with timbering, but probably relating to a corn mill.

Surface irregularities

5. Slags and cinders. (Keep samples.)

- Blast furnace slags (glassy). How much?

What is the general colour range? (In particular are there significant quantities light in colour?)

Glassy slag in great quantities on a large area below the dam. About every colour from dark to light and sticky.

- Forge cinders (generally rusty, bubbly, but varying widely in form.)
How much?

Yes

Are there many large cakes ("Furnace bottoms") over, say, 18"x 18"?

None seen

- Ore - any scatter?

- Purple shelly limestone - any?

Other surface finds (pottery, clay pipes, timbers, etc.) Note these
after the flood, Lambeth Delft ware (found) found in
rill worked down from pond,

6. Are there any buildings, industrial, domestic or agricultural, apparently dating from the likely period of the site? Note briefly.

Opposite the bog on the N. side (across the rubber road) is a
very fine Elizabethan house which the owner says was
built in 1571, and was obviously connected with the furnace.

7. Has the site been re-used (e.g. corn or fulling mill)?

The owner says that it was definitely used later as a corn
mill and that the sections exposed by the flood showed 2
levels of floor etc.

Shroton does not refer to a mill here

8. Do you know of any published or unpublished excavation which may have taken place? Note details, in particular of the excavator and location of finds in the case of unpublished work.

A gun-casting Furnace at Scarlets, Cowden
Kent. D.W. Crossley.

Post. Medieval Arch. 13(1979) 239-50

9. Is the site apparently threatened in any way?

The owner intends to clear up the site sometime and enclose it. Has no title or preference but says he will ask advice when he starts.

10. Do you know of any documentation missed by Straker? State details and whereabouts, if known.

11. Other comments.

The land shows a great deal of settling and the owner says that the well is 14 feet deep.

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Supplementary information on Scarlets' Furnace
and Forge.

Visited foray May 1979

Map reference TQ 44304005.

Samples with B.K. Herbert.

Mr. Jackson of Scarlets is the owner.

Very little can be said about Scarlets
Furnace and Forge as it has been so
modified by the latter corn mill.

There is a vast amount of Blast Furnace
slag but no sign of forge bottoms were
noticed. Several small pieces of iron
were picked up but it is doubtful if
they will be of interest.

One piece of "scarlet" slag was
found.

It is said that a "steam cultivator"
was put into the washed away part of
the bay, in the 1920s, to make a
foundation for re-building.

The owner of the site ~~measured~~
Jackson has done a certain amount of
excavation and clearance, and is now
waiting for expert advice before
continuing.

EDWARD DANIELL, FOUNDER, AND SCARLETS FURNACE M.J. Leppard

East Grinstead parish register records the publication of the banns of marriage of 'Edward Daniell, founder of [this] parish, & Mercie Desper of Cowden in Kent' on 14 June etc. 1657 and their marriage at an unspecified date in July that year.

There are no references to Edward Daniell in the published literature on the Wealden Iron industry or in any other East Grinstead sources. The surname Daniell is not found in the parish under thirty years either side of 1657.

A reference in Guy Ewing's *A history of Cowden* (Tunbridge Wells, 1926), however, enables us to locate the furnace at which he worked. On p.111 Ewing quotes from the schedule to the Private Act of Parliament concerning the estates of Leonard Gale passed in 1761, inter alia: 'a Messuage or Tenement called Scarlets and ground on which stood a Furnace called Scarlets Furnace, and the Founders House with the site of a forge and 1 other messuage and water corn mill, gardens, orchards, etc. 110 acres, formerly in the occupation of Thomas James and Edward Daniel, now of Wm. Berry, Richard Turner and William Harris'.

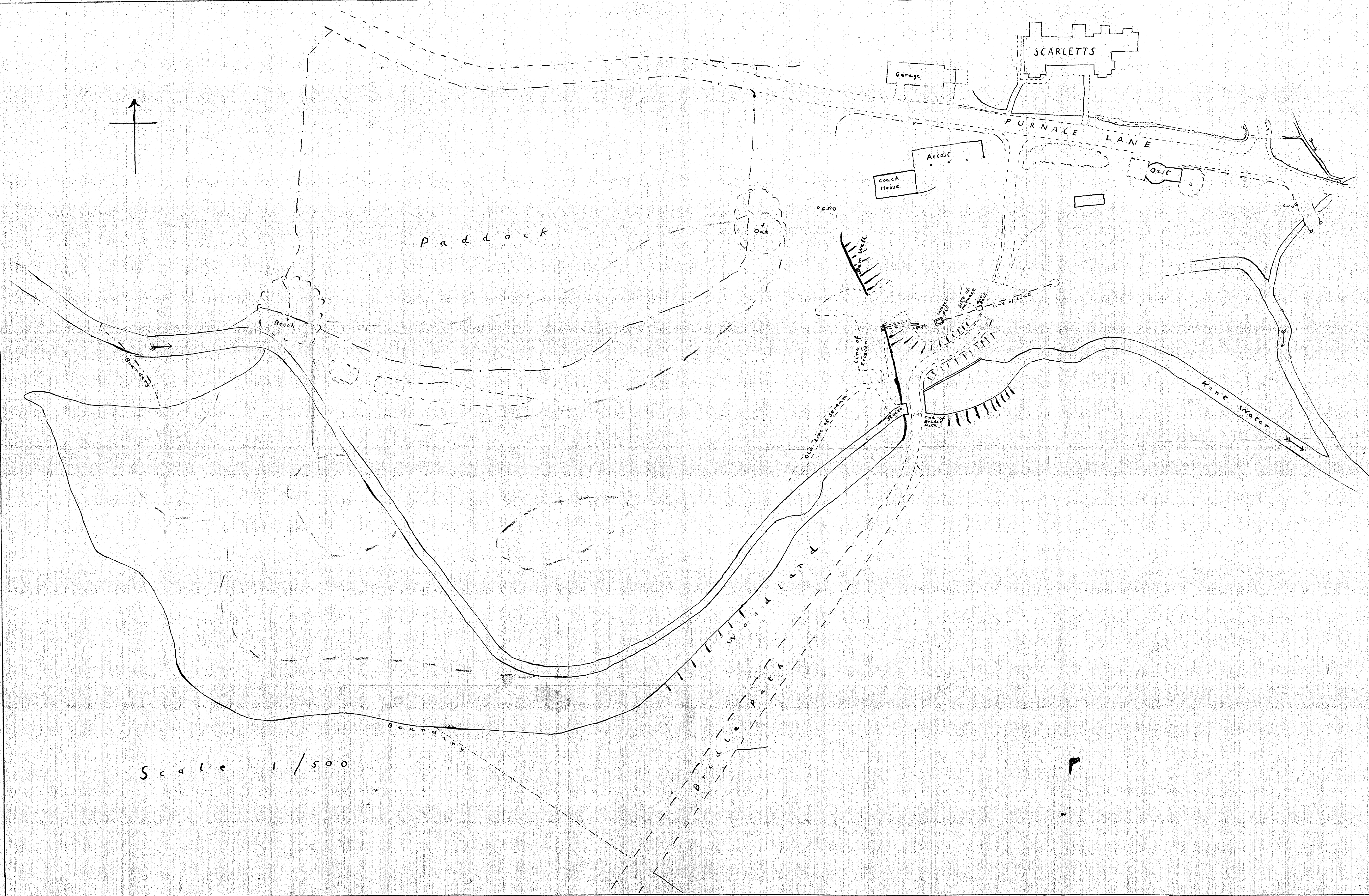
Since the boundary between East Grinstead and Cowden runs through the furnace pond there is no problem in Daniell's being of the former parish in 1657 while working in the latter. On p.85 Ewing comments that in Cowden 'the Iron-masters, and their workmen, do not seem at any time to have been natives of the Parish'.

The James family were gentry, with property in East Grinstead as well as Cowden, so Thomas James is unlikely to have been a founder. He was probably the occupant of the property after it went out of use.

In 1707 the Cowden churchwardens 'allowed Mr. Gell [Gale] for the tax of his furnace that was not paid on arrear, 6s. 6d.' (*Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. 20 (1868), p.118).

Ewing shows, on p.107, how the Gales were related by marriage to the Knights, previous occupants of the site, and the Johnsons, who had Wire Mill.

I know nothing about the family of Mercie Desper.



246 In this plot you may observe that all the out-
standing hedges are topped with little greenie tops &
serve to distinguish these hedges which belong to this
land from them that belong to the land adjoining
for where the greenie tops turn inwards that hedge
belongs to this land, & where the greenie tops turn out-
wards that hedge belongs to the land adjoining

