

# ANCIENT IFIELD



As we've already learnt, Ifield has a deep connection with the iron industry, but this connection goes back much further than the advent of Bewbush Blast Furnace and the attaching forge at Ifield Millpond in the mid-sixteenth century. There is a confirmed Iron Age iron production site within the parish at Goffs Park and two confirmed Roman era sites within a quarter of a mile of the parish boundary, at Southgate West and Broadfield. With a confirmed Iron Age settlement and Roman era finds on the fields west of Ifield Brook it is highly likely that there was a site here too. This connection continued into the medieval period, with confirmed bloomeries (small smelting furnaces) and bloomery slag (the waste material) discovered alongside Broadfield Brook & the Dowster Brook in Bewbush, within Ifield Millpond on the bank of what was just a brook flowing through, at two sites in Ifield Brook Meadows and a major site at what is now Stumbleholme Farm.

To produce iron the raw ingredient; iron ore, must first be dug from the ground and the legacy of this extraction can be seen in many places within the parish. Ifield Common, in Ifield Wood, is littered with minepits (right) as is 'The Grove'; two sections of woodland near Granthams Bridge on Rusper Road (top).

When the pits were dug, the spoil from the next pit was used to fill the previous pit and over the centuries these infills have settled, presenting as shallow water filled pits in winter months and vegetation free depressions in summer. In open areas, the pits are less obvious as they have been ploughed or grazed out, but a large area of pockmarked fairway on Ifield Golf Course, which was woodland before the course was laid out, is visible when the sun is casting shadows.

