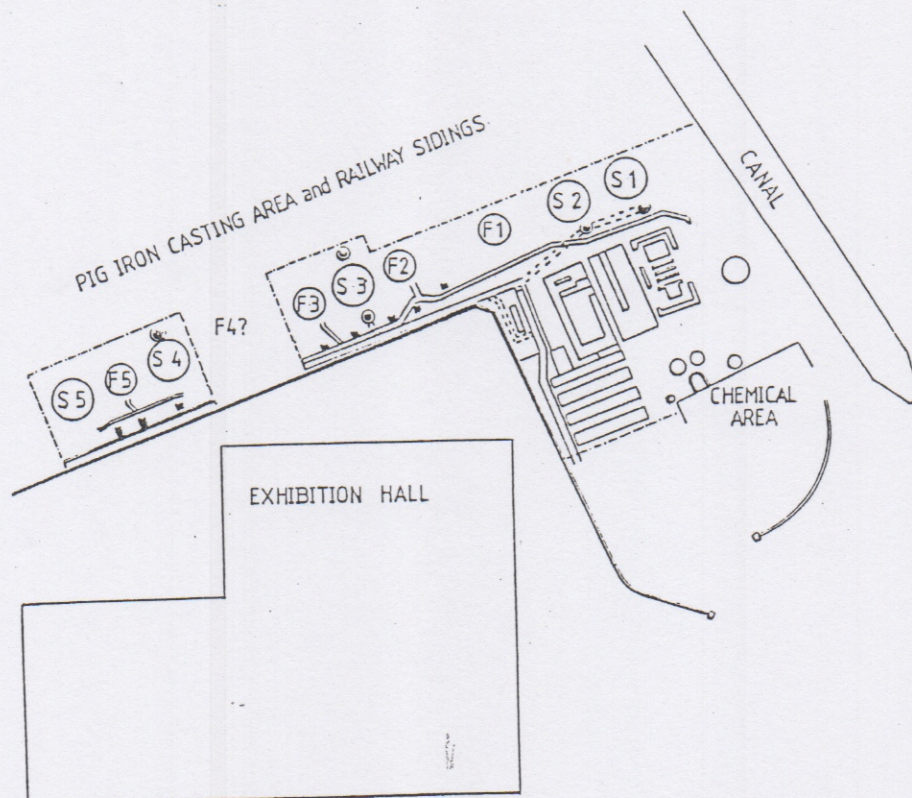


SUMMERLEE IRONWORKS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS 1985 - 1987

Summerlee Heritage Trust takes its name from the old Summerlee Ironworks which underly the new museum site. The remains of the Iron Works are gradually being recovered from the 6 metres of debris which were used to level the site following the demolition of the furnaces in the late 1930's. All aspects of the archaeological excavation are being carried out by people employed through the Manpower Services Commission. This includes the detailed planning of structures, recording stratigraphic relationships, site surveying, photography and interpretation. The revealed structures will eventually be preserved by consolidation.

This year's excavations have been concentrated on the range of furnaces and heating stoves running North South along the site. The foundations of building which would have housed such associated structures as the boilers and engines for supplying the air blast to the furnace were uncovered during the 1985 season.

The company (then Wilson & Co) started with 2 blast furnaces which were producing iron by 1836. The furnace numbers soon increased to 4 by 1839 and a maximum of 8 in 1868. It became known as the Summerlee Iron Company in 1857 and was operated as a family firm by the Neilson's. In the late 19th century it was briefly associated with the Mossend Iron Company, a malleable ironworks. Due to falling demand for pig iron the furnaces went out of blast sometime in the 1920's when coal became the company's main concern.



SUMMERLEE IRONWORKS EXCAVATIONS
1985 to 1987

LEGEND:

- S=HEATING STOVE
- F=BLAST FURNACE
- =PILLAR
- =SHAFT
- LIMIT OF EXCAVATION
- == UNDERGROUND FLUES