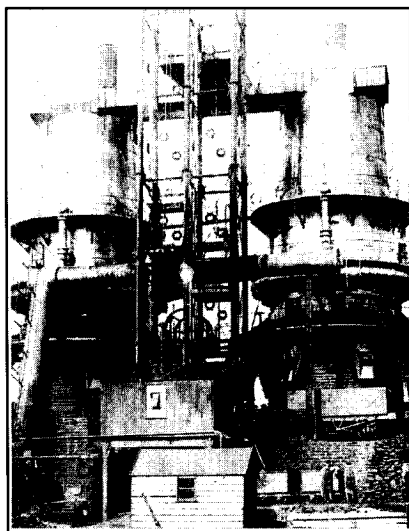


Sydenham was a compact system named after the farm of the same name on land to the east of the Adderbury-Aynho road on the high ground bounded by a loop of the Oxford canal. It was near to the previously mentioned Adderbury Quarries, which were worked-out by the 1890s.

Leases were obtained and mining started by 1914, no doubt accelerated by wartime pressure, and they were rapidly developed by 1917. During development, the quarries were equipped with five calcining kilns which were an improved design of kilns used at Astrop ironstone quarries north of Kings Sutton. They were between fifty to sixty feet high. These kilns dried the iron ore over three days to get rid of water and other volatile substances, with impurities, including lime and phosphates, being drawn off to be used as manure. The quarried ironstone was put in wagons and taken to the top of the kilns via a steam-driven lift where they were tipped. After the calcining process, the stone was purer and lighter. It was then taken by railway to the Springvale furnaces at Bilston. The resultant smoke and steam from the kilns must have made the scene reminiscent of the industrial Black Country rather than a quiet country corner on the border between Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire.



*Photographs 1 (above) and 2 show calcining kilns in operation. Photo 1 shows the kilns in close-up and clearly shows the steam-driven lift used to take the loaded wagons to the top of the kiln for tipping.*