



The Trip Hammers and Shears

# The Finch Foundry Trust

and

## Sticklepath Museum of Rural Industry



STICKLEPATH

- OKEHAMPTON

- DEVON

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FROM 1814 until 1960 agricultural tools such as scythes, billhooks, shovels of a very high quality, and famous throughout the South-West of England, were made in the "Foundry" at Sticklepath, near Okehampton, Devon. The business was carried on by successive generations of the Finch family, of which, at one period, nine members were working there. The Foundry was of great importance to the life of the village and until the Second World War up to twenty local men were employed. Since 1960 the business has died, partly through competition with mass produced tools but also because hand tools are used less and less on the farm as time goes on.

The machinery, most of which is still in place, was powered by water from the River Taw. A pair of "trip" or "tilt" hammers, believed to be unique in the West of England, together with some ancillary machinery, were driven by one water-wheel. A second water-wheel powered a fan from which air was conducted through a system of underground pipes to the various forges. A third water-wheel drove the grinding mill where the tools were sharpened and finished and where the main object of interest is a large sandstone grinding wheel running in water over which the operator lay face down on a bench.

The machinery and water-wheels have been examined by persons eminent in the field of Industrial Archæology and are regarded by them as being of the greatest possible value from an historical and educational point of view, to be preserved at all costs.

Before 1967 the premises were roofless and derelict. Since then the walls of the main building have been repaired and it has been given a new roof. The three water-wheels have also been repaired, together with the mill-leat and its sluice-gate. The "launder" or aqueduct which carries the mill-leat over the water-wheels has also been restored. Most of the machinery is now in working order and the forges have been rebuilt.

The eastern wing of the Foundry has also been rebuilt. It contains an exhibition depicting the uses of water power through the ages. It is hoped to expand and enlarge this display as time goes on.

A charitable trust was set up in 1966 to raise funds and to organize the restoration of the machinery and building and to acquire for exhibition examples of the tools made, of which there are many

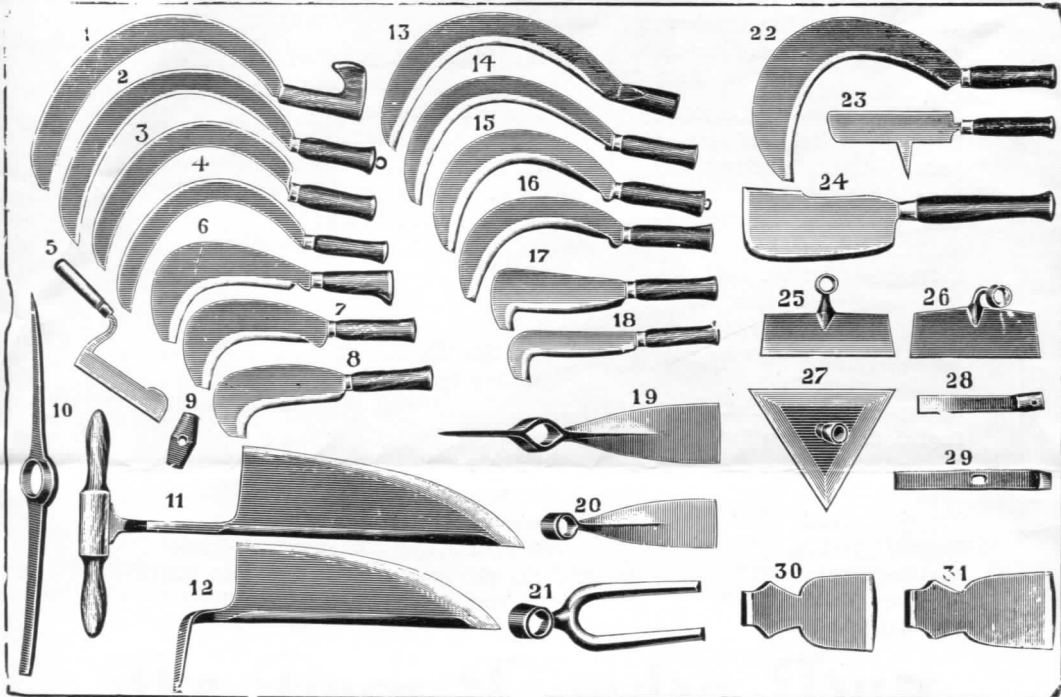
still in use. Officers of the Trust Committee are:—

Chairman—R. A. Barron, Esq.

Hon. Treasurer—Major F. M. Pyne.

Hon. Secretary— Mrs. M. F. Pyne.

The Trust, which is registered with the Charity Commissioners, is still campaigning for funds to complete the restoration and would be very grateful for your contribution. Cheques may be made payable to the Finch Foundry Trust Committee and sent to the Hon. Treasurer: Major F. M. Pyne, Tudor Cottage, Sticklepath, Okehampton, Devon.



Some examples of tools which were made at the Foundry

KEY to illustration above:

- |    |                               |    |                       |
|----|-------------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1  | Reap Hook                     | 17 | Bill Hook             |
| 2  | Rib Trimming Hook             | 18 | Spear Hook            |
| 3  | Crank Grass Hook              | 18 | Twibill               |
| 4  | Straight Grass Hook           | 20 | Mattock               |
| 5  | Devon Potato Chopper          | 21 | 2 Prong Digger        |
| 6  | Half Turn Hook (Knob handle)  | 22 | Cornish Furze Hook    |
| 7  | Half Turn Hook (Plain handle) | 23 | Mason's Zex           |
| 8  | Chop Hook                     | 24 | Devon Cleaver         |
| 9  | Stonebreaker's Hammer         | 25 | Straight Neck Hoe     |
| 10 | Pick Axe                      | 26 | Swan Neck or Bury Hoe |
| 11 | Cross handle Hay Knife        | 27 | Triangle Hoe          |
| 12 | Side handle Hay Knife         | 28 | Weed Iron             |
| 13 | Staff Hook                    | 29 | Bricklayer's Hammer   |
| 14 | Bramble Hook                  | 30 | Kent Axe              |
| 15 | Browse Hook                   | 31 | Ordinary Axe          |
| 16 | Straight Browse Hook          |    |                       |

THE FOLLOWING ARE AMONG THE MANY ORGANIZATIONS  
SUPPORTING THE PROJECT, BESIDES MANY INDIVIDUALS  
TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION, WHOSE HELP IS GRATEFULLY  
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Unicorn Industries Charitable Trust

**If you can help in any way please write to either of the following**

**Trustees:**

**MRS. M. F. PYNE or MR. R. A. BARRON**

**STICKLEPATH, OKEHAMPTON, DEVON**

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