

Corrigendum to the comment by J. v. Laun, *Historical Metallurgy* 55(2), pp. 81–85.

John van Laun

Preliminary note: All references to Devon Archives 1160 can be followed in full in Jelf, O. (2025). The origin of Henry Cort's iron-rolling process: assessing the evidence. *Historical Metallurgy* 55, 70–80. doi:[10.54841/hm.674](https://doi.org/10.54841/hm.674)

In the above paper I discussed the exchanges between the Jamaica Assembly (Stephen Fuller) and the British Government regarding John Reeder's claim for compensation. This followed the dismantlement of Reeder's Pen as a precaution against impending invasion.

In order to consider this the British Government asked for details around three points - 'Want of iron', 'Want of coals' and 'The difference of Labour' (Devon Archives M/C/J/20, see p. 83). Further examination of my paper makes it clear that there is greater depth to be drawn from the sources, such are those that can be perceived as 'fact' or alternatively those that might be perceived as 'desirable' and therefore open to the compensation sought if followed up. Such is the case with the 'Want of iron' – 'In answer to which more than three thousand Tons [scrap] in Jamaica useless to its Owners' is a statement of fact whereas 'Pig Iron may be obtained

from the Ore on easier terms than it can in England from the abundance of wood being near to the Ore, which is very rich' implies the long redundant use of charcoal as fuel rather than coke as introduced by Abraham Darby in 1709. This then contains a certain naivety; possibly a hangover derived from bloomery practice and known to have been practised by indigenous Jamaicans.

Likewise, in the case of 'Want of coals' it is stated that they 'may be imported from Wales & Newcastle at a lower price than they are sold at in London'. This is followed by a backup statement concerning the 'low price of wood and Charcoal with Loam on the spot' which, because of the availability of loam, may refer to casting.

Much of the above is drawn together by the importation of skilled artificers (possibly from Shropshire) who trained-up a local workforce in what must be the use of the often-mentioned reverberatory furnaces (Devon Archives 1160 M/C/J/30). Furthermore the mention of 'machinery for making barr Iron' and 'proper people' for its repair from England does suggest something approaching the Cranage brothers process (Devon Archives: 1160 M/C/J/1) (see p. 84).



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