



NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

As is apparent from the summary of contents of this Newsletter above, a great deal of activity has been generated in relation to our mining heritage. Most of it would not have taken place here were it not for the existence of the MHSI. Since February 1996 an enormous amount has been achieved not least of which is the hosting of the MINET Conference in Ireland (see p7).

This emphasised what we already knew – the future is collaborative rather than isolationist. We are therefore actively considering hosting the (British) National Association of Mining Heritage Organisations (NAMHO) conference in 2001. Costings are also being got for a Journal that would be another major step forward by the Society. However, the most significant development being considered by the committee in creating an MHSI Trust which act as an agency for funding to support local groups.

Some intimations of the proposed changes are contained in the documentation that accompanies this Newsletter and others will be discussed at the AGM on 12th February next. Full details will be provided in Newsletter 13.

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MHSI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 1999-2000

(**Bold print** indicates finalised programmes; further details will be sent to members of events in ordinary print; *italics* indicates non-MHSI activities)

1999

12th December (Sunday): Inventory day at Glendesan (meet 10 am at car park near waterfall).

2000

9th January (Sunday): Castlecomer CANCELLED due to subsequent meeting after AGM

12th /13th (Saturday/Sunday) February: AGM & video diary of year's activities.

Field trip to Castlecomer (meet 11.00 at Newtown Cross on Athy-Castlecomer road, S261 795).

12 March (Sunday): Inventory day at Tassan, Monaghan (meet 10:30 at Annyalla village)

8th /9th April (Saturday/Sunday): Inventory weekend in Donegal.

14th-18th July (Friday-Tuesday): NAMHO Conference in Truro, Cornwall.

MHSI

FIELD MEETS

1. HERITAGE WEEK

BALLYCORUS LEAD MINES

A very wet morning boded ill for the Heritage Day visit to Ballycorus on Saturday 11th September but the weather turned out to be the opposite of last year's. Then a fine day turned wet just before the time of the meet. This time the downpour cleared up just in time and the sun was shining before the end. About thirty five people came along and most made it to the summit of a two and a half-hour tour of the mining and lead works sites.

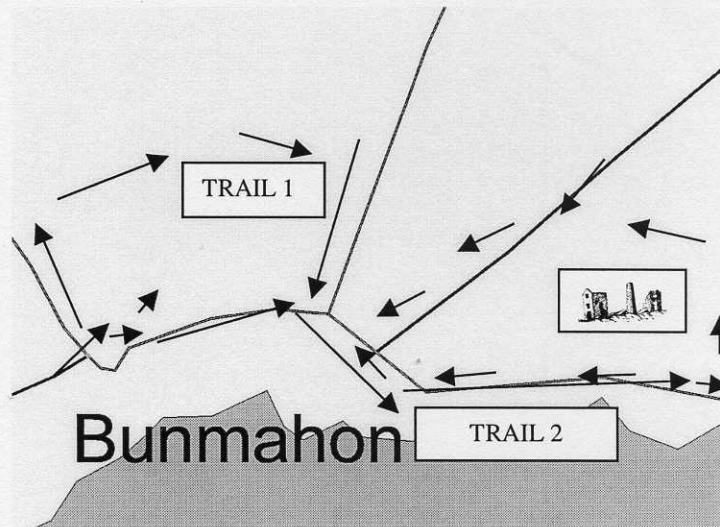
The walk was led by Rob Goodbody and he started outside the smelting works site where the origins of the mines and the smelting works were outlined. From there the group walked up the road alongside the smelting works flue, hearing along the way about the lead works, the millpond, the flue and the shot works before reaching the rougher ground of the hillside. Here there was more about the shot works before scrambling over the scree at the open cast mine site which is the earliest mining feature on the hill. Finally, the summit of the hill was reached and there the fine stonework of the lead works chimney could be seen, looking even better at close quarters than it does from afar.

The perpetual question was raised as to the purpose of the flight of steps around the chimney and the platform to which they reach. This year the conclusion was that this was purely a viewing platform in the light of the spectacular vista from this point. A new question was the mechanism whereby six of the granite steps close to the top could have broken off. It is known that the lower missing steps were deliberately removed but what about those higher up? The varied suggestions included one that they were smashed deliberately and that a sledge hammer could have done it. Another was that the steps were broken by the force of the falling bricks from the top section of the chimney. Once again we throw an enigma into the ether and await suggestions!

ROB GOODBODY

BUNMAHON.

On Sunday 5th September, in glorious sunshine (we've had other experiences on Heritage Day!) about 30 people gathered in Bunmahon Heritage Centre for an introduction to the heritage of the area. This included reference to the completed first stage of information plaques of the mining Trail 2. Reference was made to Trail 1 which includes some mining remains.



The walk took us past and the "mining cottages" and eastwards across river Mahon, stopping at the local Titanic memorial. Then eastward past mining tub along the site of Geological Garden and ogham solar alignment (to be ready for year 2000!) and on to mine manager John Petherick's house. Following the road round by remains of dressing yards on left and up-hill to slip viewing mine openings on cliff and copper staining. Then back to road past copper storage yard going uphill with main mineshafts at Knockmahon on right, past the railway ramp, on up the hill to Tankardstown Engine Houses and chimney on left with railway cutting on right.

