



Cumann Oireacht na Mianadóireachta

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Mining Heritage Society of Ireland

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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.

DES COWMAN {dcowman@iol.ie; ph +51 396157}

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.

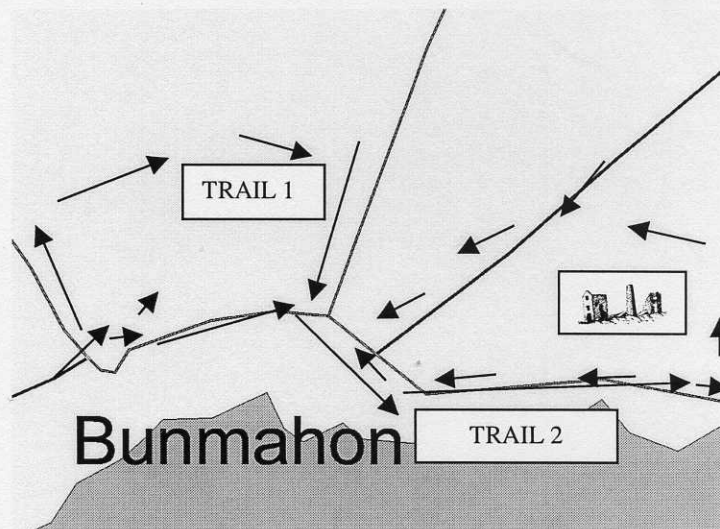
The walk was led by Rob Goodbody and he started outside the smelting works site where the origins of the mines and the smelting works were outlined. From there the group walked up the road alongside the smelting works flue, hearing along the way about the lead works, the millpond, the flue and the shot 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'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.

DES COWMAN

AVOCA

Heritage Day walk "Underground world of fire and brimstone" attracted a crowd of about 75 people to Avoca. About 70% from Dublin the remainder from Wicklow, Carlow, Wexford and Kildare in that order. Beautifully sunny day with the ochres, the oxides and sulphides all sparkling with tints of bright red and brown. Quite apart from any historical information they took away, those present saw and enjoyed Avoca at its stunning best.

NICK COY

AHENNY

Saturday 11th of September; the morning was wet but by the time the trip started at 2 pm we had a fine autumn afternoon. Twenty five people gathered at Delaney's pub or at the main Ormonde Quarry. What is known of the history of the Quarries which date back to 1337 was outlined. The party then walked down to road as far as Farnanaun, one of a number of ruined villages in the area which housed workers in the slate quarries.

A short car journey up the Lingaun valley took us to the Victoria Quarries where the two large flooded quarries were viewed. The engine houses, wheel pit and water supply system for the quarries were then examined and a tunnel to carry water from the higher to the lower water wheel across the back of one of the quarries was visited.

Those present, with the exception of the immediate locals, were surprised by the extensive nature of the quarry operations and the number of structures remaining. They were also impressed by the way that the Ormonde Quarries have been preserved due to the excellent efforts of the landowner, James Power. The Victoria quarries are also largely unspoilt except for the dumping of a relatively small amount of domestic rubbish.

JOHN COLTHURST

2. MHSI FIELD MEET.**CONNEMARA**

MHSI members met at the Corrib Hotel in Oughterard on a fine autumnal Saturday morning. Our first stop was at Clements Mine near Maum probably the most spectacularly located of all the Connemara mines. It overlooks Lough Corrib and Castlekirk, the picturesque island castle of Grace O Malley. With the kind permission of landowner Martin Thornton, we examined the lower adit level of Clements which is very accessible and dry underfoot. Except for a number of short crosscuts the only other significant feature in the level is a raise on a small quartz vein which only Matthew Parkes made any attempts to climb. The level appears to have been entirely exploratory and there is little evidence of mineralisation. Some large diameter drill holes at the end wall of the level would appear to be relatively modern. There are a number of large opencast workings at a higher level which appear to have been opened along faults where small stringers of pyrite, galena and chalcopyrite can be found. In the largest of these opencasts which is about 150m long, a short flooded level was examined. The most interesting feature here was what appeared to be a flooded inclined shaft in the floor of the level. A series of well defined steps are visible under the water descending into the darkness



on the northern side of the shaft. Other collapsed and now inaccessible levels and a filled in shaft collar were also looked at.

One of the more striking features of the mine is the imposing remains of a processing plant, which appears to have contained a crusher and other separating equipment. There is also a leat which runs from the nearby stream around the back of the building but those present could not quite figure out the operation of what appears to be a shallow but unusually wide wheel pit. Archive records indicate that the plant was water powered but interpretation of the remains at Clements will require further work. There is still some visible evidence of the remains of a tramway that carried tracked tubs using an endless rope system. It would appear to have run to the shore of Lough Corrib where the concrete supports of a jetty are still visible.

Most of the present remains at Clements would seem to date from 1907 when the mine was operated by Clements Lead Mines Limited. A report by the mine manager Mr. B. Bacon in November 1907 claims that 900 tonnes of high-grade lead ore had been mined in the previous three months and production was proceeding at 36 tonnes per day. However there is no further record of production for 1907. Cole reports less than two tonnes of ore raised in 1908. The GSI memoirs of 1878 name Sir Arthur Guinness Bart, as the owner of lead and sulphur minerals in Carrowgarraff townland where Clements is located. The group therefore retired to Keane's Pub in Maum where we toasted appropriately in deference to the former mineral owner.

The now happier group eventually took to the road heading west to Leenane following the wonderfully scenic route along the shore of Killary Harbour, through Delphi and into the Sheeffry Hills. As the convoy of vehicles wound its way over the pass of Barnadarig the passengers were conscious of the "peculiarly romantic and picturesque character" of the area as described by Holdsworth in 1857. No doubt this romantic image was enhanced by the liquid component of the members' lunch in Maum.

The Sheeffrey Mines are located on a shear zone in Ordovician grits and slates in the townland of Tawncrower about 3.5 miles N.E. of Killary Harbour. The mines (trials would be a more accurate description) were probably started in the early years of the 18th century. A report to the Directors of the Hibernian Mine Company in 1825 refers to a mine having been opened on "a good lode of lead ore". However by June of the following year all operations at Sheeffrey had been suspended. It appears that five levels were driven on the lode one above the other over a strike length of about 400 metres. The first level is in the bank of the Glenlaur River and about 60m in length. There is a square flooded shaft just off the level close to the entrance which has been plumbed to 11m. Large quantities of ochreous or iron stained mud in the level made exploration a dirtier than usual exercise and required communal bathing in the Glenlaur River on our exit. Adit level No. 2 is about 200m uphill but has collapsed so entry was not possible. There is some spoil around the entrance and the remains of a small square drystone building which is said to have been a forge. About 70m upslope the entrance to Level No.3 has also collapsed. Level No. 4 is about 30m higher up. This level is about 50m long with an offshoot after about 10m. Close to the entrance is a dry shaft or winze. About 35m from the entrance there appears to have been a collapse into a small stope. Level No. 5 is approximately 30m uphill. It is about 40m in length there is a small stope about midway with an inclined shaft or stope at the end.

By this time the light was beginning to fade and we set out for Oughterard. An unofficial roadblock at Maum Bridge manned by Paddy and Keith Geoghegan required the consumption of several more glasses of Guinness in Keane's Bar before we made it back to Oughterard in the dark. On Sunday morning we met at Glengowla Mine which is now fully operational for visitors. Not having seen the place for a number of years we were very impressed with the ongoing development underground and the completed horse whim and other attractions on surface. Without any doubt of course the greatest asset at Glengowla are the Geoghegans themselves, Pat, Paddy and Keith. For genuine hospitality given with a smile they are without equal. Glengowla is certainly the friendliest mine in Ireland and if you have not been there make sure you do so sooner rather than later. In the afternoon, Paddy took us up to the Glan mines where he introduced us to Padraig Flaherty, now aged 82, whose father had worked in the local mine in Curraghduff. This

mine had been operated by the Hodgson family (also associated with Avoca and other places) who lived in the area. In fact the Hodgson family still live in the same house which is now a small hotel. Lastly we visited the site of Cloosh mine south of Oughterard where we found a rubbish filled shaft and some mine spoil.

A special thanks to Matthew Parkes for locating some archive material and OS sheets of the area and for providing the following references –

(1) Holdsworth J. Geology, Minerals, Mines and Soils of Ireland 1857 .(2) Sheefry Mines Report by M V O'Brien GSI 1950. (3) Hibernian Mining Co. Report Aug. 1825. NL MSS 658 .(4) Mineral Localities in the Dalradian and associated igneous rocks of Connemara Co Galway. GSI RS 90 12

NICK COY

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

NAMHO CONFERENCE, FOREST OF DEAN

Two MHSI representatives, chairperson and current editor, attended on Sat./Sun 25/26th September what was a wide ranging series of lectures, visits and underground trips running in parallel. It is therefore only possible to give fleeting impressions of the varied activity.

Many of the lectures were based on laws relating to mining, ranging from the current status of the Free Miners of the Forest of Dean back through the medieval origins. Comparisons were made with Roman practice and with mining custom in Derbyshire. Speakers included Crown officials free miners and local historians.

What impressed about the walks is how the forest has reoccupied the intensive coal and iron mining sites, whether they date from the early "scowles" (superficial diggings on the outcrop) to World War I. In one area (Bowslade: slade=valley) where coal is currently being worked by a single free miner (and his dog!) the present adit is surrounded by the ferns which will eventually obliterate all traces of it.

We also learned why so few of the openings are accessible underground at present. Over the past six years or so there has been a mysterious build-up of carbon monoxide in the workings and gates have now had to be placed over openings previously accessible. Nevertheless, our chairperson allowed himself to be winched two hundred feet down in Robin Hood Mine while this current correspondent quite happily visited the Clearwell Caves, a show mine.

The MHSI has agreed to host the NAMHO field meeting in Ireland in 2001 (most likely based at Glendalough). More details will be given in future newsletters.

DES COWMAN

MINET: FRANCE AND ITALY

MINET field excursion and workshop: Perosa Argentina, Italy and L'Argentiere-la-Bessee, France.

Not a Cornish Engine House in sight - the contrast with Linares could not have been more profound. But to start at the beginning. Eamonn de Stafort, Karen Tobbe, Andy and Marie Merrigan and I left Dublin on our way to Turin via Amsterdam in high spirits - only to have to contend with the cancellation of our connecting KLM flight to Turin and an enforced stop over of about 6 hours in Amsterdam - which might have been pleasant enough, except that all Karen's money and credit cards were stolen from her handbag outside the Central Station. This, together with the cancellation, put a serious dampener on our spirits, but we eventually arrived at our destination high up in the Alps after what seemed an interminable climb up a switch back road with sheer drops.

Next morning dull and overcast - but what a view from our hostel. This was constructed originally as a TB Sanatorium by Mussolini, but is now used primarily as a residential summer school centre

(during our stay, as a classical music school for teenagers from all over Europe). Up and down that switch backed mountain road we went to see the sights in a region steeped in the history of the erstwhile Protestant enclave of the Waldensian communities. The "Scoprimeria" ("Discover the Mine") concept, managed by Gino Baral as part of the undertakings of the locally based Comunita Montana economic redevelopment organisation, is based upon the Miniera Paola tourist mine complex which acts as the hub to a series of trails and other sites in the region. The mine, converted almost immediately upon closure in 1995, thereby avoiding hefty restoration costs, provides both surface and underground tours 10 months a year. These are serviced from a museum, shop, video theatre and restaurant complex. The Italian flair for design is evident everywhere, not least underground where *son et lumiere* displays of blasting, drilling etc, recreate some of the atmosphere of a working mine, and where an open stope is used as a theatre to merge cultural attractions, such as plays and concerts, right into the heart of the mine. More than 20,000 visitors visited the mine in its first year of operation, a large proportion of these being school tour/educational parties, one of the key market groups.

Outward from this centre we visited one of the trails, to the Miniera del Maniglia, a lead-talc mine. Our irrepressible guide, Ivano Pons, led us along the lushly forested mountain trail to view and describe 18th and 19thC mining remains, offices, processing plant, an adit, very well marked here and there with explanatory signage. All this was interspersed with meetings, at one of which the idea of developing Mine Heritage as an European Cultural Itinerary was elaborated upon by Xavier Llovera from Andorra. The hospitality was superb, not least dinner one evening at a splendid, flood-lit Alpine lakeside taverna.

On our way to France, we stopped briefly at the Fenestrelle fortress - an incredible, c. 1km long bastion built down the length of a ridge to guard a strategic pass in the high Alps. Ownership fluctuated, with gun embrasures pointing both directions, but it eventually ended up in Italy. The fortress has been derelict for many years, but is now in the ownership of the Comunita Montana, who are gradually restoring sections. The first part has already opened as a visitor centre and next year some of the old barracks will be opened as a hostel.

Onward by bus and over the mountains, through the deserted ski resort of Sestriere, and on into L'Argentiere. Quite a contrast in scenery - from rather narrow and heavily wooded valleys into more open valleys with much less vegetation. Contrasts again in L'Argentiere itself, there remains of the now closed Pechiney Aluminium works built up around an old town which includes lovely paths weaving their way through semi-pastoral outskirts to the restored Chateau, built upon the vision and energy of many people, not least that of the Mayor of L'Argentiere. They saw the potential to create a focus for economic re-generation for the town, after the closure of the aluminium works, based upon an unlikely combination of white water sports and mine heritage focussed upon the Fournel silver-lead mine.

The centre is deceptive from the outside, but inside, and in adjoining buildings there are state of the art displays, lecture room facilities, computerised survey services, a reception area and museum. The centre acts as the base for tours up the mountains into the Fournel gorge, which, on account of the narrowness of the roads, are serviced by regular mini-bus services. These terminate at the head of a footpath leading down into the gorge and the vista of mine buildings, ruins and archaeological excavations perched precariously along both banks of the gorge. From a restored mine building, underground tours take visitors into the labyrinthine maze of medieval to 19th C galleries, stopes and workings - the site of a vast and ongoing archaeological excavation led by the municipal archaeologist, Bruno Ancel. The complex is quite incredible. Bruno's very detailed excavations and surveys reveal an organisational sophistication quite unexpected in a mediaeval mine - in particular the development of parallel passages to provide access, air ventilation and drainage. Other features include an underground water wheel, leats and pump rods, along with the site of experimental fire setting.

The contrast between the 2 centres could not be more pronounced - one based upon direct transformation of a working mine directly into a tourist mine, the other based upon thorough and meticulous mining archaeology to slowly and progressively reveal the organisational development

of a medieval mine. Both styles are equally valid in their own right - a contrast between a modern mine and an archaeological dig. And for visitors, a contrast between seeing how a modern mine operated, to watching other people working to discover how mining was done hundreds of years ago.

The reception organised here by Ian Cowburn was as warm as that extended to us in Italy by Gino Baral and his colleagues: dinner with a special performance by a local folk singer/musician and arguably most memorable of all, the final night session in the "Pizzeria" restaurant in the town centre. Copious quantities of wine were downed that final night (as Ian ruefully observed when he had to settle the bill later), to the accompaniment of a French "Irish group", ably assisted by Ian on the spoons, Eamonn's singing, and set dancing in the square - all captured on video. The *craic* was mighty - and this wasn't even Ireland! For me at least, and I suspect for a few others, the journey over the mountains back to Turin airport the next morning is best forgotten! And would I go back - you bet!

JOHN MORRIS

MINET: IRELAND 3rd-6th November.

The abstracts for this conference, compiled in advance by John Morris, comprise a substantial 100 page volume. A few paragraphs here can therefore do no justice to the range of issues covered. In brief therefore, the conference opened with a field meeting Bunmahon, then moved to an intensive two-day series of talks in Nenagh and concluded with a field trip to Silvermines/Shalee. It was attended by those interested in mine-tourism in UK, France, Italy, Spain and ourselves. Apart from the formal sharing of experiences and approaches, the informal meetings also stimulated ideas.

Arising from all this, some of the main issues were -

- There is no need to apologise for mine landscapes - all contemporary landscapes are artificial and they don't have to be homogenous.
- Promoting mining centre in such landscapes promotes awareness of mining heritage. The involvement of the local community is essential in this.
- Therefore, the various mine remains must be researched, interpreted and presented in their wider contexts including social and economic.
- However, the English experience shows that numbers of visitors are dropping. Multifaceted displays are required to stimulate return visits.
- The future of MINET may lie in assisting mine heritage centres through lobbying, promoting, co-ordinating and networking through a possible European-wide Mining Trail (non-ferrous).
- It was pointed out that new legislation (to be implemented from 1st January 2000) would have the effect of protecting all mine buildings and sites in Ireland.

DES COWMAN

TICCIH

The International Committee for the Preservation of the Industrial Heritage TICCIH has an international conference every three years. The Conference is a week-long event including a General Meeting, papers related to the theme chosen for the conference and visits to historic industrial sites. It is an opportunity to make contacts all around the world. TICCIH Conferences have been held every three years since the first in Ironbridge, England in 1973. The most recent was in Thessaloniki, Greece, in 1997.

The 11th International Conference on the Industrial Heritage will be held in England in 2000 to celebrate TICCIH's twenty-fifth anniversary. The conference papers are published subsequently, and can be purchased through TICCIH, or by contacting the National Representative of the host country. TICCIH also collaborates with other organisations on special conferences. Cuba 1998 examined the protection of industrial heritage in South America, and Hungary in 1999 studied the conservation of the heritage of mining and iron industries as well as the impact of industry on Eastern Europe. The location of a Mining Section Conference on non-ferrous metal mining is being discussed.

For further information see TICCIH home page <http://www.museu.mnactec.com/TICCIH/>

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CORRESPONDENCE and QUERIES

Re Alect Hewitt, mining engineer.

I have been trying to trace records of my grandfather. Apparently he was a mining engineer who qualified in Dublin between 1898 and 1901 before emigrating to South Africa. I have since discovered though, through Dr Cox, that there weren't any mining engineering courses in Ireland around the turn of the century, or indeed at any time. My grandfather's name was Alec Hewitt born 1874. I'm afraid not much else is known about him due to all of our family history being lost in a fire many years ago.

If we can get some hard evidence of his academic record we may be able to trace his birth or baptismal certificate, which is what I've been trying to track down for years now. Other avenues of research are not proving fruitful.

KIM ROBERTS

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Lead traces on Aran Islands

I am involved in an EU project looking at a high-resolution Holocene lake sediment core (calcareous) from Inis Oirr (Inisheer). The main emphasis is of course on reconstructing holocene palaeoclimate, but we have also recently found a very distinct Pb spike in the calcareous lake sediments, corresponding to an age of about 2,000 years ago. We assume that this is a long-range atmospheric signal from Roman lead mining, but there are also several Pb spikes in the past few hundred years that may be from more local sources.

The core is a sensitive recorder of these spikes because the normal background levels of Pb in the lacustrine carbonate is very low. I was wondering if readers know what the history of lead mining is in Ireland, and specifically what are the oldest records of this kind of activity in Ireland? Any help or a reference to something I should read would be greatly appreciated,

FRANK MCDERMOTT, UCD

[ED NOTE: *Matthew Parkes has already responded to the last sentence. The instrument must be certainly sensitive to pick up traces of Roman smelting in Britain. It is not surprising therefore that the 17th century smelter at Silvermines and the 18th - 19th century smelters around Dublin would also leave traces. The gap in the record corresponds with a period when there was little use for lead*]

Additions to bibliography

Member Alastair Lings has sent further additions to the Bibliography first published in *Newsletter* 3:

- MCCUTCHEON, W.A. "The Tyrone Coalfield" in *The Industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland* (HMSO Belfast 1980), pp 325-348.
- OLD, R.A., "The Strabane Lead Mine, Co. Tyrone" in *Irish Naturalist Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1974), pp 41-43..
- REILLY, TOM, "A Review of Vein Mining in South West Cork" in *Geology and Genesis*, (IAEG 1974).
- WOODROW, A., "The Cornish Badger in Ireland" in *Trevithick Society Newsletter*, 31 (Nov. 1980), pp 5-9.

Avoca personnel; Irish in Cumbria.

Roger Gosling asks about Hawkins, Jefferies, Weaver and Hodgson who mined at Avoca and states that the last of these was also involved in Cromhall Mine, Gloucestershire. He seeks

information also on Irish migration to the iron mines of Cumbria, particularly Cleator Moor (Clithermoor?).

[ED NOTE: *While research on Cumbria might prove difficult there is a great deal of indirect information available on the first three named in their roles of directors/shareholders in Roe and Company, later Associated Irish Mining Company, who held east Avoca from 1786. Hodgeson owned the west Avoca mines from 1822 and was uncle of the manager Edward Barnes of Ballygahan. While a more comprehensive history of Avoca is yet to be published, sources of information are listed in this editor's item in K. HANNIGAN & W. NOLAN Wicklow History and Society (Geography Publications, Dublin, 1994) p. 784-6]*

"Irish Row" in Glaisdale North Yorkshire.

I am interested in the ironstone mine & blast furnace at Glaisdale, North Yorkshire which were started about 1864 by J Snowden & Co.. The works were short lived, passing to other owners and eventually disposed of in 1874. I live in one of the miners' cottages in Anglers Quarters (formerly *Irish Row*) and would be very grateful for any information regarding the mine, the blast furnaces, the cottages and their Irish connection.

Being something of a novice regarding research into these matters I would welcome any suggestion as to where to look for information. I know that some local people have maps, plans & documents but would appear to prefer to keep them under wraps!

IAN PEARCE 114331.2154@compuserve.com

Patrick Crehan of Silvermines.

Thomas Crane writes of his great-grandfather who worked as a miner in Silvermines in the 1860s. He was born in 1844 and married Mary Cuddihy (born 1846) on 2nd August 1863 (i.e. he was 19, she 17). Their daughter Mary was born in Garrymore, Silvermines on 24th December 1864. There was also a Bridget Crane (Patrick's older sister?) who in 1854 had married a Joseph Lacy also in Silvermines.

About 1866 Patrick and Mary emigrated to America. It is possible to trace their migratory pattern within the States through the birthplaces of their children – Michael in Missouri in 1867, John and Bridget in New York in 1872 and 1874 respectively and John (the correspondent's grandfather) in Indiana in 1876. The family appear in the census of 1880 in Illinois where they settled as coal miners in the Springfield area. Ten children in all were born out of which only four survived into adulthood.

John, the youngest, married in Illinois and Patrick was born in Spring Valley there in 1900. That family moved to Chicago in 1913 where young Patrick married in due course and Thomas, the correspondent, was born there. By then the family were spelling their name Crane.

Thomas Crane would like to hear from anyone who has knowledge of this family. He wonders about their migratory patterns in the states and suggests that they might have entered there through one of the Gulf ports and travelled up along the Mississippi.

THOMAS CRANE

1354 Hirsch St., Calumet City, Illinois, USA 60409.

Cregganduff Lead Mine, Co. Armagh.

Mr. Michael Carragher, originally from Cullyhanna, Co. Armagh, came across some of the oral traditions associated with Creggan lead mine, gathered by a reporter and published in the *Dundalk Democrat* on 18th May 1901, nearly fifty years after the mines had first opened. The main source was a Terence McPartland whom the reporter encountered planting cabbages in the remains of the old engine house there! He recounted that he had started work there under a Captain Conn and his son in 1852. They lasted only a short time and the mine was taken over by an English company employing a Captain Bailey who seems to have been responsible for the engine house.

McPartland was disparaging about its location on top of a hill requiring a deeper shaft and a longer distance to pump. The shaft was 82 fathoms deep, 11 by 9 foot square and lined with nine-inch

timbers to the bottom, he recalled. Seven levels ran south from there through a rich but non-continuous lead vein. The ore was transported to Dundalk and coal brought on the return journey for the engine.

The failure of the mines was attributed to Captain Bailey whom it was suspected was selling the ore privately for his own gain. He is said to have plastered mud across the lead showing whenever a representative of the company called, to make the mine appear less rich than it actually was. The reporter makes the point that local belief in untapped ore in failed mines is common but that such might actually be the case in Creggan.

Mr. Carragher also sent an extract from *Silverbridge GAA Book* (1980) by Jem Murphy with information about the later fate of the mine (p. 113). An attempt was made to reopen it in 1924. In the Summer of 1931 the local landowner stripped the quoins for sale and a local contractor then quarried the walls for road dressing. Hence the only remains of the operation is the local place-name – Mine Hill.

[From MICHAEL CARRAGHER, 11 Ferndale, Navan, Co. Meath.]

BOOK NOTICES & ITEM

ECOLOGY OF OLD MINE SITES WORKSHOP – PROCEEDINGS

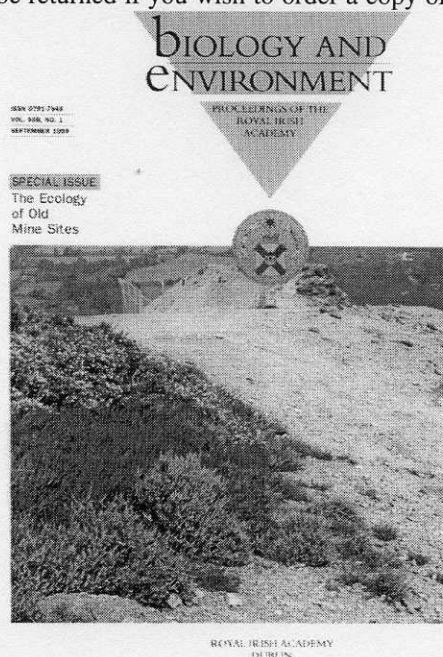
The 45 people who attended the field meet in Avoca back in October 1997, will by now have received their copy of the proceedings, published as a special issue of the journal *Biology and Environment*, published by the Royal Irish Academy. It includes papers from almost all contributors, and there are two additional related papers from authors who completed work during the lengthy interval between the workshop and publication of the proceedings. Topics covered include several aspects of wetlands as a way of reducing environmental impacts of mine wastes; the mycorrhizal associations of trees on spoil; beetle recolonisation of mine sites; soil and vegetation uptake of heavy metals at Shallee; mines as bat roosts; lichens at Wicklow mine sites; and others. Also included is a review article on the Avoca Mine Site, which resulted from an EU project, and which provides a valuable reference for future work at Avoca. The use of colour illustrations within the volume was generously supported by Minorco Lisheen, already one of our sustaining members, which we gratefully acknowledge.

We have only a limited number of copies available for sale to anyone who did not attend, but would like the proceedings. The flyer enclosed can be returned if you wish to order a copy of this issue. Otherwise please send a cheque for £9.50 which includes postage and packing, payable to The Mining Heritage Society of Ireland (MHSI) - c/o Matthew Parkes (MHSI) Geological Survey of Ireland Beggars Bush Haddington Road Dublin 4

IN THE SHADOW OF THE MINES

by Joe and Seamus Walsh (1999)

January 28th, 1969. A date of perhaps little or no consequence to many - but not to the coal mining community of Castlecomer. The date that Castlecomer Collieries Ltd laid off its workforce and finally closed the doors of the Deerpark Colliery for good, ending a 45 year tradition upon which the economic and social infra-structure of an entire community had been



ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY
DUBLIN

based. Throughout Joe and Seamus Walsh's book, *In the Shadow of the Mines*, this date recurs again and again as the low point in the fortunes of that community. Their recollections and anecdotes of the mining community, coal mining activities and the company sweep up and down across the decades to that date, like a series of ebbing and flowing tides - a story uninterrupted by headings or chapters. It is a poignant, often melancholy story, laced throughout with humour and stories of good times, and, above all, of companionship forged in the toil of the pits.

This is a story of a family memory, and that of friends and colleagues, of life and times in the Deerpark Colliery, owned and operated by the Prior Wandesforde family. A brief introduction to the history of coal mining in the Leinster (Castlecomer) coal field is followed quickly by an account of the early years of the mine from its establishment in 1924 up to a watershed in October 1932. For the Castlecomer miners this was the crucial stage in a period of industrial action between 1930 - 1933 to achieve better reward for their efforts. Vilified widely, but supported by a Distress Committee, they stuck to their principles through very tough times, only to be finally rewarded by a meagre 1/2d increase in tonnage rates.

Looking back from our time in 1999, it is perhaps difficult for us to grasp how grinding the life style of the miners was - up to 12 hours a day working on their sides on faces as little as 18" high, soaked, with no changing or drying facilities, and some living in corrugated iron roofed sheds, with mud insulated walls. The book describes in graphic detail other underground conditions: rats, the source of mine waters infected with Weil's disease, the "gobbins" (sewers in old workings), pneumoconiosis, roof falls ("shuttins") one reverentially termed the QE 2 on account of its size, death and injury. There are also extensive accounts of operating methods, both underground and on surface. The whole story is leavened throughout with the light moments, the good times: dances, the pubs, sports, pranks in the bath house and so on.

While the history extends to briefly take in work at the Rossmore Colliery, and a moving account of the death of Joe Walsh in one hospital while his wife was in another hospital in Dublin, the story really revolves around the closure of the Deerpark Colliery. The walling up of the entrance adit by Joe in 1970 and the progressive abandonment and increasing dereliction of the site, a poignancy well matched by the tone of accompanying photos. The story is recounted in the first 77 pages of the book, the remaining 138 pages filled with copies of documents, photos and maps of all types, but above all by an extensive photographic archive of an enormous number of the miners who had worked in the colliery.

The book is a tribute to them all and, not least of all, to the authors themselves. It is a monumental piece of work, a milestone in the recording of Irish mining history. In some ways, the gaunt ruins of the colliery visible today appear very similar to what we can see at many other historic mine sites around the country. But here, through the efforts of the Walshes, we can see through the veil of the ghostly ruins and the walled up mine entrance, into what was once a living world. Their final paragraph says it all: "Dusk is falling as the shadow of evening spreads across the Deerpark yard. The noise of the machines has grown silent, the laughter has stilled, settled back into the old stone as the sigh of memory's sleep descends."

JOHN MORRIS

LADY'S WELL BARYTES MINE, DUNEEN, WEST CORK.

In Newsletter 10, p. 7 amongst Items Received by the Society was a list of documentation given to Dr. Tom Reilly by Seamus Harte of the Lady's Well Barytes Mine Company. This item is the editor's compilation based largely on on this documentation.

Reportedly barytes was used in the early 19th century as a dressing for calico manufactured in Clonakilty (which had its own linen hall) and was brought there from Duneen in baskets or bags on stepping stones across slob land prior to the building of a causeway as a famine relief scheme. However, there are no specific details of mining until the mid 1870s when it was opened in July 1875 by landowner W.B. Beamish who may have been responsible for the 12,000 tons of barytes sold from there over the next two years. Nevertheless it was leased in 1877 to Robert Bell of

London and two years later to Duneen Bay Mining company Ltd who may have been a subsidiary of Cameron Swan and Co. of Newcastle on Tyne. They apparently marketed Duneen Barytes as "Shamrock Brand".

This operation continued until 1902 with some gaps in production, being latterly worked to the 40 fathom level. Apparently there were deeper workings because when it was taken over eight years later (1910) by the Liverpool Barytes Company they unwatered it to a depth of 60 fathoms. They mined Duneen up to 1918 in what seems to have been a quite intensive operation as, for a period at least, they were working three shifts a day. Various technological reason were give for their closure then but there were also economic reason. One is suggested by the escalation of wage rates over the war years as indicated in Table 1 with the tensions implicit in successively higher labour demands.

TABLE 1.	PRE 1914	SEPT. 1918	MARCH 1922
Millers	4/-	5/-	8/4d per 10½ hour shift
Miners underground	3/6d	5/2d	10/- per 8 hour shift.
Store dressers	3/4d	4/10d	per 10½ hour shift
Labourers	2/10d	4/1d	6/8 per 10½ hour shift
Boys	1/6d	2/-	4/2d per 10½ hour shift

In 1920 the mine was taken over by Cookson Barytes Company who bought new pumps and endeavoured to work it over the next three troubled years of Irish history. They *"encountered a lot of trouble from the hands for some time after the works had reopened --- occasionally sectional strikes took place."* Conceding demands lead to wages escalating even faster in the midst of labour and political unrest (Table 1). An example of this was the problem the company had to transport the milled barytes four miles to the railhead at Clonakilty – *"considerable difficulty and trouble with the carters --- on one or two occasions there were strikes"*. As a result they bought two new Sentinel steam wagons which reduced overall transport costs to 4/6d per ton in 1920 rising to 6/7d in 1921. However, there were problems with the lorry drivers that year, as stated rather obliquely by the company *"—a certain amount of trouble was experienced with them and the working of the lorries was shut down on one or two occasions for a week or so owing to dissatisfaction with the working of these men"*.

By May 1922 the Cookson company tried to cut back on costs and discontinued paying bonus. They then successfully appealed to the labour court to reduce wages by 10%. The company's comment on the consequences is somewhat circumspect! *"An amount of discontent prevailed and a section of the workers went on strike, but after consideration, all the workers agreed to abide by the award. However, the company made exceptions ---"*. While the report goes on to detail the exceptions, it says nothing of the resultant tensions.

Between November 1922 and April 1923 they shipped barytes from there to Liverpool and Bristol indirectly from a jetty they had built at Muckcross. The mine then closed making ninety-nine men redundant only nine of which are recorded as miners. There were also 3 trammers, 6 muckers, 2 pumpmen, 4 bankmen, 3 winding enginemen plus 2 "spare men". Twenty four others recorded as lorry drivers, blacksmith, etc.. Table Two gives something of the overground wage rates and structures in early 1923.

TABLE 2.

Mill	1 foreman	£4 weekly wage	"Selectors" 2 boilermen	£3.15/- per week
	2 millers	8/4d per 8 hour shift	2 foremen	£4 per week.
	6 baggers	4/1d per 8 hour shift	15 men	£3 per week
Drying	12 men	£3 per week	5 boys	£2 per week
	1 boy	4/2 per 8 hour shift		

Most of this workforce reported came from west Cork and lived in Clonakilty, walking the four miles to and from the mine. On its closure in 1923 most emigrated. About a quarter of a century then passed before any active interest was taken in the mineral potential of the area.

First, in 1945 the old dumps were reworked by a local consortium and 2000 tons extracted. Then in 1954 a rearranged consortium of local people headed by Seamus Harte with his uncle John Harte as well as landowner, David Goggin and his sister prospected, at first for lead and copper, but then concentrated on barytes and established the Lady's Well Barytes company. They exported 300 tons from Ring pier to Bristol in the 1950s. In 1962 they unwatered and repaired the old shaft to a depth of 315 feet at a cost of £7000. Two years later they sold the mine to Milchem Incorporated of Houston, Texas.

Fifteen years then passed in preparatory exploration before the official opening of Lady's Well mine on 14th July 1979. They exported the barytes to New Orleans where it was blended with other barite ores (including Irish Base Metals' production from Tynagh) for use in oil drilling. It is not clear when that operation closed down.

Little is left now to indicate such activity on the two parallel lodes which are about 130 yards apart following the strike of the country and conforming to the cleavage of the rocks. The principal one is to the northeast and was worked from the sea shore inland for about 330 yards at widths averaging ten feet. The southwestern lode is narrower, being only from two to five feet wide. Both were worked opencast as well as underground. The acid water in the mines tended to corrode pumps and piping, being laden with free sulphuric acid and ferrous sulphate.

OBITUARY: Patrick J. Hughes (1924 – 1999)

“The Uncrowned King of Irish Mining”

January of this year saw the passing of one of Ireland's most charismatic personalities and the father of its mining industry in the modern era. Born in Keady, County Armagh on the 14th March 1924, Pat Hughes moved to Newry Co Down in 1938 with his parents and two sisters, Mary and Teresa. Two years later his father, a builder, died leaving him the family breadwinner at the age of 16.

During his adolescence in Newry he became close friends with Joe McParland. Joe had been born in Canada and saw it as the place to go to seek fame and fortune. On the 30th March 1949, at the age of 25, Pat, along with Joe and another friend Matt Gilroy from Derrylin, County Fermanagh, boarded the Ulster Monarch en route to Liverpool and onwards to Canada. On the morning of the 5th of April they arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Pat continued on to Montreal, where, failing to find any work and with only nineteen dollars left in his pocket, he took the train to Toronto where he soon found work as a bricklayer, at two dollars an hour. He later met another young Irishman, Mike McCarthy from Skibereen,

Co. Cork who was also working in the building trade. Hughes, McCarthy, McParland and Gilroy formed a contracting company working around the Turner valley and the Leduc oil fields of Alberta. Working hard and playing hard, the four men established a friendship and a loyalty to each other that was to last to the end of their days

One of their first major building contracts was at Port Radium on Great Bear Lake for the Eldorado Mining and Refining Company. Working in this environment Pat took his first real interest in rocks and minerals. He became a weekend-pro prospector, eventually taking a course in mining at the Hailebury School of Mines.

By 1952, the huge demand for uranium to feed a rapidly growing nuclear industry had created an exploration boom mainly in the North West Territories. The Hughes group, with the assistance of local Indian guides, staked claims all over northern Canada, eventually discovering high-grade uranium mineralisation in an area near Tanzin Lake on Laird Island about fifteen miles north of Uranium City. They sold the claims to a Toronto based company for

cash and shares and with this capital they formed a new company which they called Tara Exploration and Development Limited.

Polarisation were introduced into Ireland by the group.

Reconnaissance work continued



(L to R) Mrs Loretta Hughes, Pat Hughes and Taoiseach Sean Lemass at the official opening of the Tynagh Mine on Friday 22 October 1965. (photo courtesy Irish Base Metals)

During return visits to Ireland, mainly during the hard Canadian winters, the group began to look at old Irish mine records and reports in the Geological Survey. In 1953, Tara Exploration took out its first prospecting licence at Beauparc in County Meath where copper had been mined in the early part of the century. In 1958 they bought a controlling interest in Kirk Hudson Mines, a dormant mining company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, and changed its name to Northgate Exploration Limited. Soon afterwards, Irish Base Metals Limited was formed as the exploration arm of that company.

By 1959, Tara Exploration and Irish Base Metals had active exploration programmes in Counties Meath, Galway, Clare, Donegal and Tipperary. New mineral exploration techniques such as soil geochemistry, and recently developed geophysical techniques such as Induced

throughout Ireland in the following years until a major lead anomaly in soil was discovered near "a very ancient silver mine" in Carhoon townland in east Galway in 1961. The subsequent first drill hole was collared in November of that year and in the following 16 months a further 160 holes were drilled. Pat Hughes and Irish Base Metals had discovered the Tynagh orebody, the first new major Irish mineral discovery of the twentieth century.

By 1963, the 11.5 million dollars required for the development of the mine at Tynagh had been raised in Canada where Hughes continued to pursue his exploration interests. His hands-on approach to exploration almost cost him his life in 1965 when his greatest achievement in Ireland was about to come to fruition. In August of that year, Hughes then aged 41, was working on a copper prospect in British Columbia. While crossing a glacier late in the evening, accompanied by Julian Perksha, they slipped into an ice crevasse.

Hughes became trapped with a broken arm and other injuries but Perksha, using pieces of ore he was carrying, dug handholds in the ice and worked his way to safe ground. He got help from the mining camp half a mile distant and pulled Hughes to safety. In October of that year when Taoiseach Sean Lemass officially opened Tynagh Mine, Pat's arm was still in a sling.

In 1966 Pat Hughes was named Ireland's man of the year by the country's financial community for the contribution of his companies to the revitalisation of the Irish economy. On 3rd February 1970, Northgate Exploration was listed on the New York Stock Exchange and Pat Hughes was honoured by the top names in mining, banking and finance from Dublin, New York and Toronto.

The discovery of the Tynagh lead-zinc-copper-silver orebody encouraged other international mining companies to commit funds to mineral search in Ireland. By 1962 there were 55 companies exploring an area of about 2,000 square miles. The further discoveries of a zinc-lead ore-body at Silvermines by International Mogul and a copper-silver-mercury orebody at Gortdrum in County Tipperary by another Hughes company in 1963, provided additional encouragement.

The discovery of the massive zinc orebody outside Navan in County Meath by Tara Exploration and Development Company Limited in 1970, put Ireland into the major league of metal producers. Pat Hughes and Mike McCarthy were once again the driving force behind this discovery, the largest lead-zinc mine in Europe, the sixth largest in the world. After an investment of 150 million dollars, the Navan mine came on stream in June 1977.

On 5th April 1974, twenty-five years from the day he arrived in Canada, Pat Hughes opened an office on Park Avenue in New York, adding to his global network in Toronto, Dublin, London and Perth. The mineral exploration company Irish Base Metals which he founded in 1958 was the largest and most active in Ireland for

nearly thirty years, and was always at the forefront of developments, setting standards which others were to follow.

For those who had the pleasure of meeting Pat Hughes his memory will long survive. One writer described Pat and his friends as "Unassuming, shrewd, hardy men". He was a trailblazer in Irish mining in the twentieth century and is owed a debt of gratitude by many for careers and fortunes made in that industry. He was a larger than life character and those who met him could not but be impressed by him. A modest man in many ways he thought deeply and had a strong loyalty to his family, his friends and his faith. He had an open mind and heart and never forgot his Irish roots. We shall never see his like again.

Pat Hughes died at his home in Clontarf, Dublin on the 27th of January 1999 and is buried in St. Fintan's Cemetery, Sutton, under the shadow of the Hill of Howth. He is survived by his wife Loretta, his son Fr. Michael and his daughters Mary, Seana, Loretta and Ann.

NICK COY.

REMINDER

The AGM is in the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), Beggars Bush, Dublin 4 on Saturday 12th January with a field meet at Castlecomer collieries, Co. Kilkenny the next day.

Items concerning the AGM (including enclosures) to Dr. Matthew Parkes, GSI.

Subs for 2000 may now be paid. £10 to Dr. John Morris at the GSI.

Items for the *Newsletter* to Des Cowman, "Knockane", Annestown, Co. Waterford, +51 396157, dcowman@iol.ie.