



# NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 13

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*Cumann Oireacht na Mianadóireachta*

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## EDITORIAL

In a dynamic four years MHSI has advanced from being a relatively small coterie interested in 19<sup>th</sup> century mining sites (mainly), to an activist organisation aiming for statutory status to fund the preservation of Irish mining heritage

Furthermore, this modest Newsletter which hitherto has carried a collage of immediate news, interpretation and research is to be subordinate to a Journal which will take over the last two functions.

These developments are reflected in various ways in this Newsletter. Members' comments are invited.

## MHSI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2000

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

**23/24<sup>th</sup> June: "Allies: The man-engine house and other conservation issues" with Alan Williams and John Morris. Meet at Catholic Church, Allihies 2.00 pm on Sat 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

*14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> July: NAMHO 2000, Conference in Truro. (Anybody interested in going, contact Dr. Martin Critchley for details).*

**30<sup>th</sup> July (Sunday): The mines of Glendalough. Meet at Upper Lake car park at 11.00 am.**

**19/20<sup>th</sup> August: The mines of Monaghan. Meet 11.30 Sat. 19<sup>th</sup> at Annyalla.**

**3<sup>rd</sup>-10 September: National Heritage Week.** Further notice will be sent about meets in Allihies, Avoca, Bunmahon, Glengowla and Silvermines.

23<sup>rd</sup> September: EGM of MHSI. (See page re Trust) Separate notices will be sent.

21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> October: "Remote Sensing of mine sites; the example of Tankardstown" a symposium and demonstration conducted by Mr. Kevin Barton. Meet at car park Bonmahon, 2.30 Sat. 21<sup>st</sup>.

October/November: a series of Inventory weekends for which notice will be circulated later.

### ADVANCE NOTICE

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2001: The NAMHO conference will be hosted by MHSI in Glendalough, Co. Wicklow.

## REPORT ON AGM

### **Draft Minutes of the 1999 Annual General Meeting of the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland. Geological Survey of Ireland, Dublin, Saturday 12th February 2000.**

Attendance: full list available from Secretary

Apologies: Ken Brown, Roz Cundick, Alan Williams

**Minutes of 1998 AGM.** Approved as read. Prop. Nigel Monaghan, Sec. Loreto Farrell

**Matters arising:** all matters were on the agenda.

**Chairperson's Report:** It was an interesting and exciting year. MHSI took an active role in conservation. There was increasing local and national awareness, which is good for the Society and for the sites. Links have been forged with international and national bodies. Although the core activity of the inventory has been slow, there has been progress made on some weekends, covering Silvermines, Connemara and Glendasan. More help is needed and John Morris is now co-ordinating and inputting data. The Architectural Inventory being undertaken by Dúchas needs our input. County Councils have Sites and Monuments Records in their planning system - we need to add our data to them. However, documentation is not protection as illustrated by the demolition of the Mine Manager's House at Allihies. Local initiatives are vitally important e.g. Bunmahon. The MHSI must continue to encourage and assist such activities. The Man Engine House Appeal at Allihies is our biggest project yet. These, and developments at Avoca show something can be done.

On the international front, the MINET programme has led to a valuable exchange of ideas thanks to John Morris and Eamon de Stafort. Although finished, the contacts need to be continued. Members also went to the NAMHO meeting and have volunteered to run a field based event for NAMHO in 2001. Help is needed.

MHSI is also seeking funding and recognition which have raised questions of the Society's status. One mechanism is to convert to a Trust, but members input is required.

**Secretary's Report:** A brief report on the various events and developments of the year was presented.

**Treasurer's Report:** John Morris presented the accounts and explained how aspects of them were calculated. They were adopted. Prop: Loreto Farrell. Sec. Edwin Thorpe.

**Membership:** John Morris then reported that we have 140 paid up members, of which 4% are corporate, 3% are institutional and 82% are full (see below). There were 25 non-renewals in 1999, compared to 7 in 1998, but some student member losses from the Ecology Workshop were expected. The non-renewal of institutional members is more a cause for worry. However, it was pointed out that in many cases, especially for Shropshire CMC, we are getting a healthy slow increase in new full members instead.

**Editor's Report:** 3 Newsletters were produced. It was noted that the early years had Newsletters with material that came ad hoc, including some research material which however is not in general indexes. In the future it will reflect more transient news as research material will be published in a Journal. Thanks to Des Cowman were offered.

**Publications:** The matter of a Society Journal was discussed at length with various sample prices and styles offered as basis for discussion. It was felt that the Society should produce a Journal which will become indexed and put in bibliographic reference databases, which the newsletter is not. Research based articles should go into the journal and the newsletter become truly for news. Decisions taken were that the journal should be free to members for 2000, but that a subscription increase may be necessary in 2001 to

cover additional costs. A basic production rather than full glossy expensive style was selected as most suitable. Specials may be produced with more colour or higher quality. Adrian Pearce is Editor, with assistance from Des Cowman. More sustaining memberships will be sought to aid production costs.

The '50 years of Irish Mining' book has had disappointing response so far, but Dave Naylor noted that most prospective authors will not write things down and information needs to be physically collected by tape recorder. The death of Pat Hughes emphasised the urgency of doing this. A video record was suggested by Mary Mulvihill rather than just sound recording.

The Website was demonstrated by Conor MacDermott and some of the possible improvements planned were noted. Members support in providing information is required.

The Mineral Statistics book is still in hand, but not yet complete.

**Future Status of the Society:** (See also below) John Morris outlined the view that the MHSI needs to change its status from a 'learned society' to a limited company registered charity and Trust, in order to develop for the future and be able to avail of the opportunities for funding support and other activities for which we are presently ineligible. This route has been taken by many others and offers new opportunities whilst not radically changing the aims and objectives of the MHSI. Ruth Delaney noted the Heritage Councils support of other trusts eg the Landmark Trust in a partnership arrangement, which may offer a model for MHSI to be supported by the Council. Extensive discussion of the issue was followed by the proposal by Eamon de Stafort, seconded by Nigel Monaghan, that the Committee should pursue this course and bring formal proposals to the membership at an EGM during the year 2000. This was unanimously supported.

**Allihies Appeal:** (See also below) John Morris outlined the recently launched appeal. The Chairperson thanked John Morris for all his efforts with the Allihies Appeal. Following discussion considered practical issues of immediate conservation actions that could be undertaken such as placing akro supports, and the issues of possible funding sources such as Wesdt Corkmen's Association in the USA and other American connections. Ruth Delaney clarified the Heritage Councils position in relation to grant aid under the Community Grant Scheme and the Buildings at Risk Scheme.

**Programme:** The programme was only briefly discussed since few events had been organised at the time.

**A.O.B.:** None.

Matthew Parkes

## FURTHER TO REPORT ON AGM

### MEMBERSHIP

We wish to express our appreciation to the following Corporate and Institutional Members for their ongoing support of the MHSI in 2000:

#### **Corporate members.**

Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc; ERA-Maptec Ltd; Geological Survey of Ireland; Irish Marine Oil Ltd; Lisheen Mine Ltd; Tara Mines Ltd.

#### **Institutional Members.**

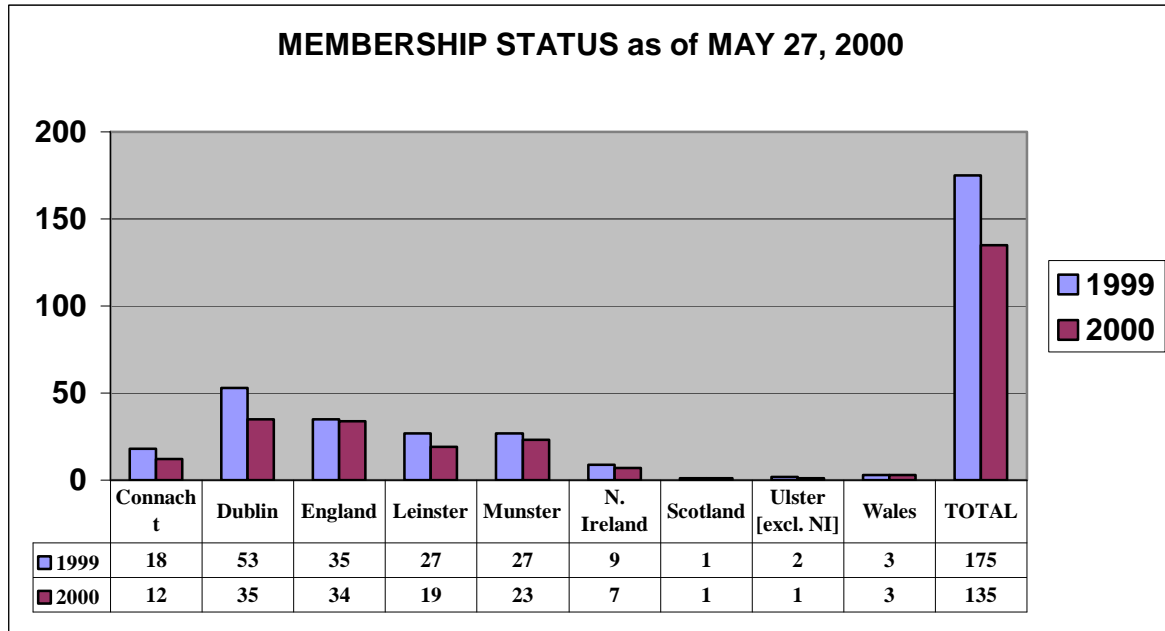
Allihies Parish Co-operative Ltd; Athlone Institute of Technology (Department of Mineral Engineering); Glengowla Mines; Glens of Antrim Historical Society; Wicklow County Council (Mr. B. Treacy).

#### **We welcome the following new members, who have joined the Society this year:**

Wayne Cox; John Butler; Russell Bennett; Simon Jennings; Ike Wilson; Paul Costello; Keith Ball.

The following table summarises the total paid-up membership as of May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2000, categorised by region. Several further renewals have been received since then. The overall drop in membership largely,

but not entirely, reflects non-renewal by students who joined at the time of the Ecology of Historic Mine Sites workshop. For those who still have not paid their renewals [indicated by the figure 1999 on the address label], this is your very last chance to do so before being struck-off ahead of the vote at a forthcoming EGM to transform the Society into a Trust Company, and Registered Charity [see advance notice elsewhere in this newsletter].



John Morris

### **ALLIHIES MAN ENGINE HOUSE CONSERVATION APPEAL FUND**

As all members will realise from various mailings to date, the Society has taken on the task of seeking to raise funds to conserve the unique Man Engine House in Allihies. Our Consultant Engineer estimates that this will cost in the region of £160,000, a Herculean task for a Society such as ours. But no one doubts, or questions the outstanding national and international value of this building. So how are we doing so far? The simple answer is reasonably well, though still extremely far short of the target. So far we have raised actual or committed financial contributions totaling approximately £16,000, out of which we have expended about £3,000 on the engineering report, and printing the flyer that each of you and many others have received.

In addition, we still have various funding applications in the pipeline, to:

- Cork County Council, for up to £20,000 under the Conservation Grant scheme for Listed Buildings;
- The Heritage Council, Buildings at Risk register, from which up to 50% of the total conservation cost might be provided [but not until 2001]
- and to the AIB “Better Ireland” Awards scheme which carries a maximum award of £20,000, though normally in the range of £1,000.

We have various other potential funding sources under consideration, and we have also “twisted the arm” of a fund raising consultant to help us. The appeal also features prominently on our new web site [[www.gsi.ie/mhsi](http://www.gsi.ie/mhsi)].

So what to do with what we have? One idea has been to buy and insert Acro props into the major, unsupported openings as a means of giving temporary support until such time as we had more major finance to do the “full Monty”. But Ken Brown, putting on his engineering hat, cautioned not to over-tighten such props, as, when we would come to remove them, the suddenly unsupported wall sections could collapse. So, we are now seeking estimates to fully re-instate the missing wall pillar in the north wall, and the two immediately adjoining, ground floor level, window and door lintels. This yawning chasm in the north wall is undoubtedly the single greatest threat to the survival of the building, no matter how many other features are crying out for attention – but our money will only go so far. This

conservation initiative, and other plans and ideas, will be discussed formally, and less formally over a few pints, during the course of the up coming weekend field meet in Allihies, in mid-June [see Programme for details].

So at this juncture, we would like to express our gratitude to the following organisations, groups and individuals who have contributed to the Appeal fund – thank you to each and every one of you (and my apologies in advance if I have inadvertently omitted anyone):

Major contributors:

The Heritage Council (Community Grants Scheme);  
the Geological Survey of Ireland;  
an International Fund (which wishes to remain anonymous for the present).

Groups:

Shropshire Caving and Mining Club; Shropshire Mines Trust; Athlone Institute of Technology; Carn Brea Mining Society

Individuals (in no particular order):

Roger Gosling; Dave Smith; Karen M. Sullivan; Matthew Parkes; Padhraig Kennan; Mike Moore; John Higgins; Tony Lowes; Alan Thomas; Cathal O’Sullivan; Michael Carragher; Chrissie and Seamus Walshe; Gerry Foley; Jean Archer; Mike Dillon; John Morris; Stuart Chester; D. Borthwick; Phil Saundry; Stuart Mousdale; Deirdre Lewis; Walter Raftery; Ewan Duffy.

John Morris

**MHSI TRUST**

Subsequent to the lengthy discussion of this topic at the last AGM, and the endorsement of those present to pursue the concept, the Committee has drawn up a Draft Memorandum and Articles of Association. This is now being actively developed, with the intention that the draft document will be completed at a special Committee meeting on July 1st, after which it will be forwarded to our professional advisors for completion of formal drafting and approval in principle by the Companies Office and Revenue Commissioners.

Thereafter, an Extraordinary General Meeting will be convened at which the proposed change of status of the MHSI will be put formally to the members for decision. We are endeavouring to hold that meeting in September, though the date is currently uncertain as it is subject to completion of all formal registration procedures. All members will be advised of the actual date in accordance with the terms of notice specified in the Constitution.

John Morris

**OBITUARIES**

It is our sad duty to have to record the deaths of two members, Ros Saundry, wife of founder member Phil Saundry, and Mr. William Morrissey, who had a particular interest in the history of the Ahenny slate quarries and joined the Society after our first trip to Ahenny.

To each of their families, we extend our sympathies.

**MHSI MINE SITE INVENTORY**

Well you’ve waited a long time for this – but it’s now almost there! You might have noticed that several recent inventory weekends have been postponed, partly due to a determination to get this often spoken about show on the road. So, to get the ball rolling, we have compiled four separate databases, initially as Excel spreadsheets, prior to transfer into MS Access, which is currently in progress.

The first, and main database lists close on 500 sites, derived primarily from an 1854 catalogue prepared to accompany Sir Richard Griffith’s geology and mineral deposits map of Ireland, published in 1855 [an exact copy of the 1854 Catalogue will appear in the first issue of the MHSI Journal]. To this we have started to add information from other sources, principally from Cole’s memoir, as well as other information, such as grid references, which will facilitate development of a GIS interface. This primary site inventory is connected to other, more specific databases:

- A list of Mining companies which are known to have operated in Ireland. This accommodates such information as sites operated by the Company, directors and officers, fiscal history and will

include images of historic share certificates wherever known. We have listed about 170 companies so far, but for most we have very little information.

- A biographical list of mining entrepreneurs and personnel connected with mine developments. This lists names, occupation, a biography of their work or associations, where born, died, and Monumental inscription information where known. Again, this is only in its infancy.
- A list of steam engines which operated at Irish mines: manufacturer, engine size, function, when acquired, sold onward etc. Ken Brown's lists in various MHSI Newsletters have provided the starting point for this list.
- And finally, and by no means least, another, yet to be constructed database, which will provide detailed information about the current state of the sites, features, survey information, photos etc.

The database will be "unveiled/demonstrated" [Computheo, the malevolent God of Computers, permitting!] at the NAMHO 2000 meeting in Cornwall in July – but you'll have to forego some of the Saturday evening revelries if you want to get the full benefit – at 9:30am on Sunday morning! Thereafter, and subject to access to, and availability of appropriate web database software, we hope to upload the database onto a web server, such that it is accessible through the Society web site: a summary level of information accessible to any body, and a more detailed level available only to paid up members.

Once again, we'll be looking for "volunteers" to start fleshing out various parts of the databases – but more about that another time.

Martin Critchley and John Morris

## CORREPENDENCE

### **TYNAGH MINE, GALWAY and MR. GERALD JAMES MCGINN**

I am hoping to find details of Mr Gerald James McGinn. He was born in Assiniboia, Sask. Canada September 23, 1926 and died in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, July 30, 1985. His wife was Maureen Patricia McIvor and they had five sons, James , Sean, Paul, Joseph and William along with daughter, Mary. Gerald's father was James Joseph McGinn, B. May 17, 1891, d. September 27, 1965. His mother was Margaret Irene O Connor, b.December 18, 1890 d. October 1, 1976. Gerald grew up on the family farm at Valor. He attended high school at Campion College in Regina and obtained a degree in Geological Engineering from the University of Sask. During his university years he worked for Eldorado Mines at Uranium City, Sask and Beaverlodge, Alta.. After graduation he accepted employment in Ireland with Northgate where he is credited with discovery of Tynagh mine near Galway.

In 1956, he married Maureen McIvor of Saskatoon at St. Marys Church in Dublin, the home of her aunt. After several years in Ireland, they returned to Canada to live at Elliot Lake, Ont., Don Mills, Ont. and Hansport N.S. where Gerald was involved in the mining and exploration industry. In 1965 they moved to Calgary where Gerald established his own consulting firm. I am hoping to come in contact with anyone who may have known Gerald or anyone with information regarding his involvement with the mining industry.

Kathy Vick - [kvick@sprint.ca](mailto:kvick@sprint.ca) - Canada

### **LEAD ON INIS OIRR**

Have just received the MHSI December Newsletter and was interested to read the comment on the lead found in cores from Inis Oirr. To an English reader, the gap between the Roman spike and the 17th century is remarkable and should not be dismissed as corresponding to "a period when there was little use for lead". Here, the mediaeval period saw lead being widely used for building castles and monasteries. As these were also built in Ireland, why is there a gap?

Mike Gill

President and Recorder of the NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY Britain's foremost mining history society at: <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~RBurt/MinHistNet/NMRS.html>

## **BOTALLACKITE CRYSTALS FROM WATERFORD.**

While researching the mineralisation of the Tankardstown mine at beach level we discovered an outcrop which revealed a complex of quartz veinlets carrying chalcopyrite. Supergene alteration of the chalcopyrite has produced small pools of thin veinlets of massive cuprite with traces of native copper in fractures in the vein quartz and rimmed with malachite. The latter is also found in cavities and fractures as small patches of bright green needles.

In some places associated with this material, botallackite crystals were found. These vary from deep green transparent to pale blue-green and near opaque. The sizes range from 2mm long to microcrystalline. The larger crystals tend to be separate, in small clusters or in parallel growth complexes and lie flat on the quartz surfaces of fractures but project into cavities. The smaller crystals sometimes form rich crusts superficially resembling Devilline. The only other known location in Ireland for Botallackite is Duneen Mine, Allihies, County Cork.

Ike Wilson and Richard Braithwaite.

### **MINING TOURS 2000 from Atalaya.**

Atalaya Tours Ltd., Ceiniolfa, Capel Dewi, Aberystwyth, SY23 3HR send notice of forthcoming guided tours they are organising to mine sites in the following areas:

- ◆ Mines of Northern Spain and Portugal from 23<sup>rd</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> July.
- ◆ Germany (Harz Mountains and the Freiberg/Erzgebirge region) from 15<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> July.
- ◆ Western Britain (Wales, Devon, Cornwall) 29<sup>th</sup> July to 8<sup>th</sup> August.
- ◆ Peru (Central Highlands with possible extension to Cuzco and Sacred Valley) from 19<sup>th</sup> August to 2<sup>nd</sup> September.
- ◆ Greece and Cyprus (to coincide with 5<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress) from 17<sup>th</sup> to 24 September.

Atalaya Tours are also contactable by fax/phone at +44 (0) 1970 828989; e-mail at [atalaya@aol.com](mailto:atalaya@aol.com) and their web site is [www.atalaya.co.uk](http://www.atalaya.co.uk).

## **NEWS FROM IRISH MINING SITES**

### **ALLIHIES:**

Steps to conserve the man engine have already been noted. The meeting noted in the programme is for is very important in this context. Also an interesting appeared in *Archeology Ireland*, Vol. 14, no. 1, Spring 2000 "The Berehaven Copper Mining Industry – a maritime perspective" by Clare Callaghan and Wes Forsythe. The new information it contains relates to a survey of Puxley's quay and storage facilities at Dunboy. It is hope that we will be able to visit these on

### **BUNMAHON 1.**

A great deal has been done here since the opening of the Heritage Centre with its "mining experience" in May 1999.

- ◆ The mining display in the Centre has been augmented with models of Tankardstown above and below ground courtesy of Ike Wilson plus artistic interpretations of engine houses and dressing floors executed by local artist Suzanne Brophy. (see samples).
- ◆ The Geological Park has been completed (almost!) with plaques identifying the beds of local stone. One aspect of the lithic motif is the use of two locally found ogham stones which have been placed in a solar alignment with a stone "throne" for a mid-summer festival centred around a legend of the "Baidhb". Thanks to John Morris and Turlough Cowman for their work on this.
- ◆ The "Mining Trail has a complete set of plaques identifying various mining remains to the east of the village. This is supplemented by a walk guide of the two trails, this being one of a series of such guides for the "Copper Coast.
- ◆ Agricultural work has revealed further details of the dressing floors including a paved area. This will be surveyed in due course.
- ◆ An architectural survey of the buildings of Tankardstown engine house complex have been completed, the next step was a non-intrusive survey of what lay beneath the surface. (see below)

Des Cowman

**BONMAHON 2. -****A pre-disturbance archaeo-geophysical survey at Tankardstown Mine site, Bunmahon, Co. Waterford.**

A series of geophysical remote sensing techniques were used to map the mine site and its environs. The objectives were to add to the knowledge of the layout and function of the site through the use of non-invasive, non-destructive methods. The work was carried out under a geophysical survey licence granted by Dúchas – the Heritage Service, Dublin.

The survey was carried out in May 2000 and built on preparatory work in November 1999 by Des Cowman and Kevin Barton. This latter work resulted in the siting and surveying in of a series of survey control stations in an arbitrary local grid and a simple map of the major site elements. The May 2000 survey commenced with the use of a Global Positioning System to convert the co-ordinates of the survey control stations into Irish National Grid (ING) co-ordinates. Using ING co-ordinates will allow the geophysical maps and sections produced to be integrated with Ordnance Survey and Geological Survey of Ireland mapping.

The first mapping surveys carried out were topography and magnetic susceptibility. These surveys were carried out to provide a detailed basemap of the site and to map zones of industrial activity. Building on the previous surveys, a magnetic gradiometer survey was targeted on the anomalies found and also the working area between the winding engine house and the pumping engine house. This survey provided increased spatial resolution of anomalies identified and mapped new, buried site elements. The area of the now concealed shaft was surveyed next using a resistivity imaging technique to provide depth cross-sections across the shaft area in order to define the shaft edges. An area where a buried flue was thought to run was also surveyed with the resistivity technique. Finally a series of ground penetrating radar transects were run over the shaft and possible flue in order to provide high resolution cross sections.

From a preliminary look at the raw data all techniques have provided additional information on the layout and function of the site and also have identified a number of new site elements. The data are currently undergoing final processing and interpretation which will result in a report to the project sponsors.

Kevin Barton and Louise Geraghty, Applied Geophysics Unit,  
National University of Ireland, Galway

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