

Mining History Society of Ireland

Cumann Stair na Mianadóireachta

Newsletter

No. 3. December 1996

PROGRAMME 1997

[Dates prefixed with # are provisional. Further notification will be sent to members].

- **8th Feb.**: Annual General Meeting in Geological Survey Offices, Beggars Bush, Dublin 4 at 11.00 am (see enclosures with this Newsletter). A review of some of the activities of the Society will be given including keynote slide presentations by Rob Goodbody on Ballycorus and video presentation on Killarney by Peter Eggleston (hopefully!).
- **8th March.**: Field meet at Ahenny Slate Quarries, Co. Tipperary lead by Dr. John Colthurst. Meet 12 noon outside church at Ahenny village, off Kilkenny - Carrick on Suir road [S412292].
- **12th-13th April.**: Field Meet at Allihies Co. Cork with Mr. Alan Williams (subject to availability) and Dr. D. Tietzsch-Tyler. (Details later).
- **3rd-4th May.**: Weekend workshop in Old Glengowla, Oughterard, Co. Galway on (i) Surveying surface remains; (ii) Clearing mine workings. It is hoped that out of (i) techniques will be developed for surveying other mines and that (ii) will represent the commencement by members of the society in on-going work there. (Details later).
- **16th May.**: Field meet at Newtownards and Conlig mines, Co. Down with Dr. Norman Moles. (Lecture and site visit will precede the joint IAEG and IMM conference on *Gold in Ireland*.) Meet at 11.00 A.M. on Fri. 16th at the Somme Heritage Centre car park in Whitespots County Park on the Bangor road about 2 kms north of Newtownards [J 349 376]
- **# late May/June.**: Workshop in Avoca, Co. Wicklow on the interpretation of architectural details in Cornish engine houses with Mr Kenneth Brown.
- **11-14th July.**: NAHMO conference (site/underground visits, lectures, etc.) near Matlock in Derbyshire. Members of the MHSI are welcome to attend.
- **7th Sept.**: National Heritage Day. (Details will be notified).
- **# early Oct.**: Workshop on the ecology of mining sites (fauna and flora).
- **1st November (Sat.)**: Talk by Ron Callender - "Gold in the Hills".

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EDITORIAL

As is apparent from the adjoining programme the MHSI's second year in existence will have some practical dimensions. Following our workshop at Old Glengowla mine it is hoped to begin a survey of all mining sites in Ireland. Martin Critchley has drawn up a draft record sheet in *MS Access* so that information can be kept on a standardised database. Members will be contacted anon about surveying the mines that interest them.

This recording of sites should also reveal threats to surviving mine structures, waste tips etc.. Some of those threats are already too apparent as the letters on page four reveal.

Preparations are proceeding for a joint publication on the Mineral Statistics of Ireland in conjunction with the Northern Mines Research Society. More specific details will be given in the next *Newsletter* Items for that *Newsletter* are now invited. Looking forward to hearing from you!

DES COWMAN, "KNOCKANE", ANNESTOWN, CO. WATERFORD, Ph. 051 396157. E-MAIL dcowman@iol.ie

SOCIETY NEWS

LOGO

Your committee, after some deliberation, have decided on Nick Coy's amended design above as the logo of the society. The motif of windlass, shovels, picks and powder horn is based on the "Cronebane tokens" issued by the Associated Irish Mining Company who worked the eastern side of the Avoca Valley between 1797 and 1811. This will be used on letter headings and future Newsletters.

PRESENTED TO THE SOCIETY

1. Mike Moore of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club, having watched our chairman John Morris videoing in the underground quarry at Valentia has kindly presented the Society with their Club's publication, *Underground Video Techniques* by Peter Eggleston (1996)!
2. A copy of *Northern Miner* (Toronto, 12th Sept. 1968) with anon article, "Mining surges ahead in Ireland: Production begins at Mogul's Silvermines Project", courtesy of Peter Powell.
3. A gift of surveying equipment per John Morris comprising a Fennel Kassel teodolite, a plane table, a tripod and ranging pole. These will be available to members conducting surveys of individual sites with tuition in their use to be given at the workshop in Old Glengowla.
4. Copy of *Tommy Turnbull - a miner's life* by Joe Robinson (Tups Books, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1996) per Judy Robinson. (See review below).

MHSI ON INTERNET.

The address for the time being is -

[HTTP://WWW.iol.ie/~dcowman/mhsi.htm](http://www.iol.ie/~dcowman/mhsi.htm) text.htm

MEMBERSHIP - Welcome to new members -

Sqn. Ldr. A.E. Birt.
The Wheelwright's,
Fornham All Saints,
Bury St. Edmunds,
Suffolk, IP28 6JS.

Ms. Eileen Bowen.
27 Royal Oak Drive,
Leegomery,
Telford,
Shropshire, TFI 4SS.

Mr. Michael Carragher &
family.
11 Ferndale,
Navan, co. Meath.

Mr. Andrew Cassells.
2 Osborne drive,
Bangor,
Co. down BT20 3DH

Mr. S. Chester.
234 Wollaton Road,
Nottingham NG8 1HA.

Mr. Gerard Clear.
Boyne Road.,
Navan, Co. Meath.

Mr. N.N. Davin.
"Aswan"
36 Glenwood,
Carrigaline, Co. Cork.

Stephen Dowds
8 Cremore Crescent
Dublin 11
Phone: 01 8341717
Interests: various, including
Mountcharles sandstone
mines, Co. Donegal.

Mr. Fred Hammond.
75 Locksley Park,
Belfast BT10 OAS.

Mr. Alastair Lings
Kingsgate House,
Wittersham, Tenterden,
Kent. TN30 7NS

Mr. Patrick Long.
Monaghan County Museum,
Monaghan.

Mr. Tony Lowes & family.
Allihies,
Beara,
Co. Cork.

Ms. Rowena Magdan.
Greenfoot Barn,
Low Bentham,
via Lancaster. LA27EQ.

Mr. Redmond Morley.
c/o tara Mines,
Knockumber Rd.,
Navan, Co. Meath.

Mr Matt Murphy,
Sherkin Island,
Co. Cork.

Dr. William Nolan.
24 Kennington Rd.,
Templeogue, Dublin 6W.

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Peart.
Bridge House'
Straffan, Co. Kildare.

Mr. Brian Walker.
Tara Mines Engineering Dept..
Navan, Co. Meath.

Ms Tara Walsh.
Willow Tree Cottage,
Porridgetown East'
Oughterard, Co. Galway.

Mr. Richard Watson.
Marble Arch Caves,
Florencecourt,
Co. Fermanagh. BT91 1EW.

Mr. Terry Whitaker.
Greenfoot Barn,
Low Bentham,
via Lancaster. LA2 7EQ.

Christopher J Williams
65 Stancliffe Avenue
Marford, Wrexham
LL12 8LN. Wales.
Phone: (01978) 852601

Change of address

Nick Southwick.
2 Prospect Cottages,
Snailbeach,
Nr. Minsterley,
Shropshire. SY5 0LR
Telephone (01743) 790189

Address correction:

Mr & Mrs Dermot Mooney
24 Ailesbury Grove
Dundrum, Dublin 16

Apologies to:

Mr C.J William's (correctly
of) 65 Strancliffe
Avenue, Marford,
Wrexham, LL12 8LN.
(The address given in
Newsletter I was that of
his bank!).

Ph. 01978 - 852601.

Interests: Metal mining in
Wales, especially the
north-east. Retired
County Archivist of
Clwyd. Publications
include -*Metal Mines of*
North Wales (1980);
Industry in Clwyd
(1986); *The Lead Mines*
of the Alyn Valley
(1987); *Great Orme*
Mines (1995)

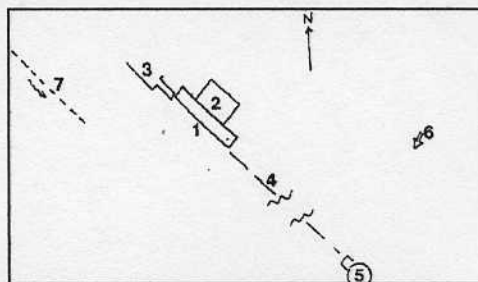
ARISING FROM NEWSLETTER II: LETTERS.

VAN DIEMENS LAND MINE BUILDINGS

- (i) Mr. Nigel Barnes of Ard Mhoin, Ballyogan, Barefield, Ennis, Co. Clare advances the following "Ashlar construction was used for the founds of machinery --. Each of the square cavities (called "crow holes") will be just large enough for a man lying on his back with a spanner. A vertical hole will be found descending into the top of each cavity into which the holding-down bolt for the engine would have been introduced. From inside the crow hole a washer and nut were screwed onto the lower threaded end of each bolt"

Mr. Barnes suggests that discarded chisels were used for tightening the nuts providing the origin of the name "crow bar".

- (ii) The **Mining Company of Ireland's** bi-annual reports indicated that they spend £2084 on an incline railway there between June 1869 and December 1870. Alternatively, could the holes in the picture have held cables for lowering and hauling wagons from the mine down to the dressing floor? If so, how would the winding mechanism have worked? [Ed.]



- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Water Wheel | 2. Crusher house |
| 3. Balance bob | 4. Flat rods |
| 5. Shaft | 6. Adit |
| | 7. Leat |

- (iii) Peter Clayton has surveyed Van Diemen's Land and interprets them as shown in the adjoining sketch plan. He would therefore consider the building illustrated in Newsletter II as being a water-driven crusher house

CORNISH ENGINE HOUSES - KILBRICKEN, COUNTY CLARE

Mr Barnes comments on Kenneth Brown's listing for Kilbricken stating that his own measurement of the main engine house there was 48 inches rather than 50. He points to the poor construction of this engine house particularly the load bearing bob-wall supporting the beam This was too thin and constructed of rubble stone which is strange considering the abundance of local limestone. Not surprisingly it has collapsed.

The stack appears outwardly more normal though it leans markedly towards the south west. However, when one looks inside it appears that the construction has been skimped so that the usual parallel internal bore inside a tapered external surface has not been adhered to. The bore in the lower section of the stack is too large and the walls too thin for thermal efficiency. He concludes that those who erected these building in the early 1850s were inexperienced in the application of Cornish techniques.

LISTING OF MINES - ABBEYTOWN, CO. SLIGO.

Mr John Higgins of Kabul House, Ferrybank, Arklow questions the omission of Abbeytown from the listing of mines in Sligo. He enclosed a cutting from the *Sunday Times* of 8th Sept. 1996 on the environmental threat posed by quarrying in the area. Mr Higgins worked in Abbeytown as a student in 1954 for Johannesburg Consolidated who had been mining a low grade lead/zinc deposit there since 1950. Pointing out a number of errors in the article, he queried the following -

"Lead and silver were mined at the quarry for more than 1000 years by monks until operations ceased in the late 1960s (recte - late 1950s). It was then taken over by the OPW as a place of historical interest because of a medieval warren of tunnels. It was delisted two years ago when an OPW inspector discovered that the tunnels had collapsed, possibly as a result of modern quarrying".

This report is obviously nonsense and, as Mr. Higgins points out, the "medieval warren" probably dates from the 1950s. However, it would be interesting to know the source of the supposed thousand years of mining (a local newspaper, possibly) and when the mine was first worked. The reason why it was not included in the mineral statistics is because there was no record of ore production from there in the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, there are various references to it at least being tested from the early 19th century though these probably produced little commercial ore.

LETTERS

1. Re Allihies and Derryginah

Mr. Mike Moore of the Shropshire caving and Mining Club writes of their visit to Kerry and Cork in September expressing concern about the Mountain engine house at Allihies. A number of cracks have appeared on it and emergency conservation is needed if it is not to suffer the fate of the pumping engine house which collapsed into the stopes there in the early 1980s. The dramatic siting of Mountain with its tourist potential and the fact that it was the only man-engine in Ireland render more grievous any threat of its loss. Mike also noted that a lot of the information signs had been broken or damaged.

At Derryginah the Shropshire group entered the water-filled adit and found an old valve wheel there. On the surface were remains of trucks, tubs, winding sheaves and part of a winder which the farmer told them came originally from Allihies. He said that a number of items had already been removed which makes more urgent the preservation of what remains.

2. re Mine sites and their dumps.

Dr. Stephen Moreton of Warrington writes: *"I'm concerned at the number of mines sites, especially their dumps, that have been cleared in recent years in the name of land reclamation - e.g. Clontibret, Co. Monaghan; Ballyhickey, Co. Clare; Ardtully, Co. Kerry. This represents an irreversible loss to Ireland's mining and mineralogical heritage".* He wonders what steps can be taken to save such sites and instances the most recent threat to the smithsonite locality in the Burren. Stating that *"Ireland has no mining heritage centre but plenty of mining heritage"*, he cites Old Glengowla which could have gone the same way but instead is being turned by the Geoghegans into such a centre.

[ED. COMMENT: Both writers urge the MHSI to involve themselves in conservation.. For those sites under threat we can only act as a lobby group creating awareness, particularly locally, and supporting local initiative. Such has already happened at Avoca (see the next report) where thanks to Nick Coy's initiative, the Society is now in contact with the Vale of Avoca Development Association and the local authority to make sure that no further damage is done to Ballymurtagh/Ballygahan. As the programme on page 1 indicates, we are taking practical measures to support the Old Glengowla initiative. We'll move as fast as we can with the others.]

REPORTS ACTIVITIES

1. NATIONAL HERITAGE DAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER

AVOCA led by Nick Coy

Well over a hundred people started at Tigroney where the leader gave a general introduction to the mining history of the Avoca valley. The group then moved up the hill to Cronebane taking in a range of phases of mining from the 18th century deep level, to William's and Farmer's engine houses of the 19th century. The multifaceted nature of the site was clearly in evidence in the open pit of c.1980 at Cronebane on the wall of which could clearly be seen a 19th century level.

Looking across at the other side of the valley the group could see the late 20th century destruction currently being wrought on the mining remains at Ballymurtagh and Ballygahan. The speaker pointed out that west Avoca is being obliterated by the expansion of the

dump at Ballymurtagh. The originally stated objective of Wicklow County Council was to fill in the open pit there. This has long since been achieved by the council, in conjunction with the LIFE Programme. However, apparently in the course of site remediation trials the two remaining walls of the Tramway engine house at Ballygahan have been demolished. It is not clear what, if any,

Environmental Impact Study was carried out before this development but certainly no account has been taken of the area's rich mining heritage. It is hoped that Wicklow County Council will be prevailed to stop before any further damage is done to the surface remains.



Photograph from top of Ballymurtagh hill taken in 1980. A local farmer has since demolished the chimney on the right. The ivy-covered chimney to its left had the adjoining tramway engine house demolished in the course of site testing in 1995. The low structures on its left are also gone. One was a fan house partly made out of the upturned tanks of the 72" diameter Akilns spiral classifiers that had been removed from the mill grinding circuit. To their left is the chimney of a small whim engine which is now ivy covered. Across the valley on the left can be seen the Cronebane engine house. Much of the foreground is now covered by the County Council dump which plans sanitise and grass it!

SILVERMINES, led by Dr. Martin Critchley

The tour started at the village of Silvermines where the speaker outlined the geology of the area before moving to the nearby 19th century engine house. Next, the mill and rotary roasting kiln of the 1950s were examined followed by a visit to the great sulphur stopes which are 20 to 30 yards wide. The day ended with a surface visit to the 19th century workings at Shallee. Amongst those attending, fortuitously, were the director and his two colleagues from the Great Orme mine in North Wales.

OLD GLENGOWLA

Pat Geoghegan reports that she was very happy with the number of visitors and their very positive response to the potential the mine has for development. This has also led to an increased level of local interest, including a visit by the local school.

CAPPAGH AND BALLYCUMMISK, led by Dr. Tom Reilly.

Many of those who assembled at Cappagh were members of the local Archaeological and Historical Society. The speaker indicated the extent of the Audley estate which included Horse Island where Col. Hall had begun workings in 1813 near the older "Danes Mines". His unfilled opencast is still there as is Lord Audley's adit of 1820. Dominating Cappagh itself is the chimney of the 36" engine house with the engine shaft, mine captain's house and powder house, all dating from the Mining Company of Ireland's operation there from 1825-32. The mine was then closed for twenty years due to the notorious scandals involving Lord Audley and Joseph Pike. In telling this story the speaker stated that even on the eventual sale of the estate it looked as though further scandal would occur as the buyer, Thomas Saunders Cave had been involved in dubious dealings in British mines. However, he ran Cappagh quite successfully. The group inspected the chimney area for signs of adaptation for the 24" drawing and crushing engine which was installed there in 1862.

At Ballycummisk the old dressing floor was tentatively related to Col. Hall's work there in 1814-'15. The group followed the fluccan course down to the adit. The foundations of the pumping, winding and crushing engine houses of Samuel Hyde's operation 1857-'78 were also examined. Finally, on looking over some of the old tips, many of the group found good mineral specimens to take home with them.

KNOCKMAHON AREA *led by Des Cowman*

About eighty people assembled at Ballydwan where the speaker outlined the geology of the mineralised zone spreading eastwards from there. Close by were the remains of the 18th century lead-silver workings of Thomas Wyse. A sea stack in the bay was pointed out. Through it is a square vertical shaft which was said, somehow, to have ventilated his undersea workings. The group then drove to Bonmahon where local historian and broadcaster, Julian Walton unveiled a plaque to the Knockmahon miners. It was erected by Bonmahon Tidy Towns Committee on one of their refurbished frontages to the miners' cottages. The upper part of the plaque comprises an etching of the Tankardstown engine complex and the inscription reads-

DEDICATED
TO THE MINERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
WHO LIVED HER IN THE 19TH CENTURY.
THE COPPER MINES WERE WORKED
BETWEEN 1824 AND 1877 BY THE
MINING COMPANY OF IRELAND.
IN THE EARLY 1840S UP TO
1500 PEOPLE WERE EMPLOYED HERE.



Julian Walton who unveiled the plaque left and Des Cowman speaking.

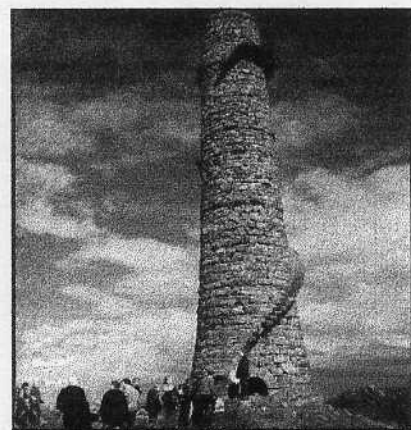
Following an outline of the lives and work of the 19th century miners by the speaker, the group then walked on across the Mahon river, past the destroyed dressing floors, to the shafts of the 1830s and '40s on the cliffs at Knockmahon and then to the engine house of the 1850s at Tankardstown. The failure of the lode there in the late 1860s caused the abandonment of the entire operation at Knockmahon.

BALLYCORUS FLUE AND CHIMNEY *led by Rob Goodbody*

As the Society had already visited Ballycorus this year there was an element of uncertainty about who might turn up. As it happened there was a good mixture of members and those who had happened to see the event advertised.

Unlike the May outing (reported in Newsletter 2) this group did not venture into the lead works. After a brief introduction to the Mining Company of Ireland and its smelting operations, we set out along the flue as it climbs the 1500 meters from the works towards the top of Ballycorus hill. Luxuriant growth of bracken during the summer had obscured the path, creating a minor difficulty. However, the group managed to see the remains of the capped shafts of the early 19th century lead/silver mine on the hill as well as the open cast and waste heaps before arriving at the summit.

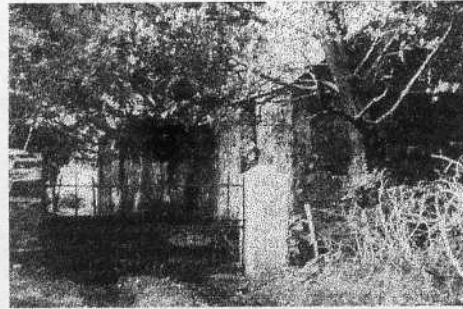
The usual question posed itself there. That there had been a complete spiral of steps up the chimney at the end of the flue was obvious - but why? A possible military solution was raised as it was such a vantage point. Could it have been a lookout or a semaphore station? What do other members think?



The Ballycorus chimney. Has anybody got any theories why the steps wind up around it?

THE LEAD MINES OF CO MONAGHAN, led by *John H. Morris*.

This field trip vied with the County GAA finals in Clontibret leading to a somewhat reduced attendance. After a brief overview of historic lead and antimony mining activities, as well as recent gold exploration in the Clontibret region, the few car loads headed off through twisting byways to the first mine site at Annaglough. Whatever about "Mineral Statistics" listing this mine in County Clare between 1852 and 1861, the party was more than satisfied that it is currently almost on the border between counties Monaghan and Armagh. Here, we were able to examine a fenced-off shaft (one of at least 5 on the deposit) almost filled to surface; various spoil heaps; the foundations of one of the two recorded engine houses on the site; and the footings of a chimney demolished some 25 years ago.



The office buildings of Tassan lead mine, erected 1853-'54

Annaglough mine appears to have been developed initially sometime before 1836, although documented production relates to the period 1852 - 1855. The presumed residence of the entrepreneur who developed the mine, James Skimming, (listed as the Chief Agent of the mine in "Mineral Statistics" of 1860) was viewed. He crops up again and again in connection with a number of the lead mines in this district, and also in connection with some in Co. Cork, (does anybody know anything about him?)

From there the group motored by yet more twisting byways westward to the Tassan Mine, which, judging from existing remains, in particular the office/workshops building (see photo), seems to have been one of the largest lead mines in this district. The earliest phase of development appears to have occurred prior to 1836, with more substantial development being undertaken by Joseph Backhouse between 1849 - 1851



Share certificate for five £1 shares in the Tassan company, 1857

on foot of a lease from Viscount Templeton. In 1853, a new Company was formed, *Tassan Lead Mines*, with registered offices in Blackfriars, London. They constructed the office building in 1853/4 and purchased an engine to wind and pump two shafts, including a new inclined shaft.

By 1855, the Company had run into trouble and, controversially, its management was taken over by a new committee based in Bradford with claims and counterclaims being reported in the *Mining Journal* through mid-1856. By 1857, it had been transformed into a Limited Company (see illustration of share certificate dated May 1857), but was put into liquidation in November 1858 and sold for £300.

Who bought the mine is not recorded, but by 1862 it was under the control of James Skimming (he of Annaghlough since 1860), who seemingly transformed it in 1864 into the *Castleblayney Mining Company*. Production records in "Mineral Statistics" suggest that this was the most productive period for the mine, with substantial quantities of lead and later silver being produced between 1859 and the last listing in 1866. The final depth of the mine as stated in 1877 was 145m beneath Tassan Lough. The area was bought in the early 1880's by a local family, the Pruntys, who used the office building as a home for several generations, until about 1940.

Apart from the office building, with remains of large firebreasts, some form of winding machinery survives along with several shaft sites. extensive spoil heaps (with good samples of galena for some); the engine house foundation and what was probably a large dressing floor. As a final historical note, at the end of the field meet, we by chance met one of the Prunty's who informed us that at some stage in the last century some of her antecedents migrated to Yorkshire, where they changed the spelling of their surname - to Brontë And thus was made connection from Tassan to *Wuthering Heights!*

2. FIELD MEET 12-13TH OCTOBER

Five weeks of Indian Summer ended dramatically en route to the Valentia Slate Quarries on 12th October. Hunched and hooded we ran through the cascades streaming down the rock face into the cavernous working. There, swathed in an eerie grey glow from the entrance we listened to Michael Lyne's history of the development of the "slate slab" from its origins in 1816 up to the current hopes in which he himself is involved. The visual evidence of the various phases of activity, including the current one, were examined and the hazards of rock-fall commented on. Eamonn Grennan, who had set up this phase of the field meet. conducted us to the local church yards to see examples of slate slab in use as headstones.

That evening Billy O'Brien prepared us for the next day's field trips with a series of slides showing archaeological progress to date at Ross Island. They proved to have been first worked for about 500 years with earliest evidence dating to 2400 B.C.. Another two and a half thousand years passed before there is evidence of Ross island being mined again, this time in the early Christian age (the only known working of this period in Ireland). The next mining there was in the late 18th and early 19th century for which both documentary and cartographic evidence is available. Both those point to the massive problems associated with holding back the lake waters.

This was dramatically illustrated for us next morning when we arrived at Ross Island. Torrential rain during the night meant that much of what we had seen in the slides was now underwater including the dam that had been built in the early 19th century to hold back the lake! Indeed our friends from Shropshire had had even more direct experience of the Killarney weather when their mini-bus was blocked, not only by flood waters, but by two large tourist coaches stranded in it. Nevertheless, we saw everything that was above the water line we ranging from the Bronze Age anvils to the 19th century engine shaft.

That Sunday afternoon, having waded barefoot through further floods we reached the 18th century Muckcross mines which mainly comprised a line of shafts along the water's edge. Some fine pieces of malachite, azurite and a few samples of cobalt were picked up there. Returning to Muckcross house as the rain resumed the thanks of the society was conveyed to Billy for guiding us to and interpreting for us what would have been otherwise a meaningless lakeside jumble even if we could have found the sites. Despite the weather this was a memorable field trip, rendered the more enjoyable by renewed acquaintance with our Shropshire visitors.

ITEMS, BOOKS AND SOURCES

1. LOUGHSHINNY COPPER MINE, CO. DUBLIN

[This is an amended version of part of a talk given by Mr. George Pratt of 95 Strand Street, Skerries to the Loughshinny and Rush Historical Society in November 1995]

The first mention of a Copper mine at Loughshinny dates from 1760 when a Martin O'Connor, who had been operating at Silvermines, lucratively sold his shareholding there and took a lease on the north Dublin mineralised zone. Roque's map of that year shows four buildings on the site which may be associated with O'Connor's enterprise. However, in the process of developing the copper mine he decided that he had discovered a more promising resource there - coal! His mining lease apparently did not cover this and being refused an extension he petitioned Parliament unsuccessfully for the right to develop a colliery here to serve Dublin. A copy of this is extant in the National Library along with O'Connors other mining aspirations [NLI mf 4034]. This petition dated January 1762 states that having sunk a 62 foot shaft he discovered that the coal was "*after the manner of metallic veins, whether sloping or perpendicular, is to be worked in a different manner from coal that lies in flat beds*". Presumably this was mainly shale.

This seems to have ended O'Connor's involvement in the area. From 1771 a Benedict Arnold of Seafield was reported by Ruddy to have raised some tons of copper from there in what must have been a short-lived enterprise on a vein he described as "thready and small". Fifty six and three quarter tons of ore are recorded as exported from that custom's area in 1771-'72. Thirteen years later the new landowner, John Dempsey had leased the mineral rights to a London consortium headed by a Richard Kilby and William Tebbs. This lease of 1785 survives [Reg. Deeds, 400-333-263743] but there is another lease of the following year (dated 16th May 1786) re(?) -letting the mineral rights to Charles Frizell, a Dublin surveyor [reg. Deeds 376-285-251061]. The custom's records indicate that 150 tons of copper ore were exported from the area in 1785-'87 so it is difficult to interpret what was happening. The 96 tons of copper exported sporadically between 1788 and '99 were probably Frizells as he continued to hold the mining rights up to 1813. A report by Thomas Weaver in 1824 (NLI ms867) shows that either Kilby and Tebbs or Frizell drove a 320 yard adit from the cliff at right angles to one of the earlier workings (i.e. either O'Connor's or Arnold's. presumably). This still survives (see illustration). It was "poorly worked, but very rich ore was got" according to the "Itinerant Geologist" of the Dublin Society in 1800 (D.S. *Transactions*, vol. I).



The entrance to the adit from the cliff reported on by Thomas Weaver as having been driven sometime between 1771 and 1799 into an earlier 18th century working. (Photo courtesy of Dr. M. Parkes).

The *Mineral Statistics* show a further 91 tons exported from Loughshinny in 1807-'8 and the name Prout and company is association with this short-lived operation. There may have been a connection here with the Associated Irish Mining Company working in Avoca at the time as Loughshinny ore is mentioned in their records (NLI ms16308). Certainly there is a Wicklow connection with the next recorded working there some thirty years later. In 1836 a Nicholas Kempson of Avoca Cottage obtained a 31 year mining lease for both copper and coal on adjoining sites from the landowners, James Hans Hamilton and Sir William Henry Palmer. Two years later Kemson passed the lease on to John Perrin of Wicklow town [Reg. Deeds, ref. nos. mislaid].

The only production recorded in the *Mineral Statistics* is 18 tons of low grade ore (worth only £70) in 1844 and presumably comes from Perrin's operation. However it would seem that there had been considerable expectation and investment in the mine as "a powerful high pressure steam engine on the Boulton and Watt principle" had been installed there. This and other mining equipment was advertised for auction at Loughshinny for 26th September 1848 [*Mining Journal* 16th Sept. 1848]. That ended mining there.

By way of postscript it might be added that a belief later grew that the area was riddled with old mine workings and that at one stage a man ploughing had disappeared into one along with plough and horse. However, in February 1961 the ground did open right beside where Mrs Ferguson had been hanging out her washing near the old coastguard station. Another collapse took place on the popular cliff walk. Fortunately, in neither case were there casualties.

2. SOURCES.

a).NOTICE. *Tommy Turnbull - a miner's life* by Joe Robinson (Tubs Books, 30 Lime St., Newcastle upon Tyne, 1996, £st 8.99). Joe and Judy Robinson have lived in Wexford on the banks of the Slaney at Polehore, Killurin, via Enniscorthy for the past quarter century. He is a nephew on Tommy Turnbull and was born in Tommy's mother's house in South Shields. She was a Kelly from Sligo and according to him about half the colliery workforce in his locality near South Shields were first or second generation Irish in the 1920s and '30s (a social phenomenon that surely merits further investigation). However, the appeal of this particular insight into a mining community is that it is universal.

The story is a reconstruction of what Joe Robinson was told by his uncle and is rich in graphic detail particularly for the 1920s and '30s. The authoritarian and arbitrary attitudes he describes on the part of "them above" seem straight from the middle ages (complete with instant inquisitions) as do most aspects of the lives of the mining communities which seem to have been accepted with a medieval fatalism and fortitude. The detached descriptions of the casual hazards (defecating at the wrong place and wrong time) and incidental horrors (a

failed lamp, utter blackness, rats, flying roaches) render the images more appalling. While it is clear that these people were brutalised by the regime that was forced on them (and the irony that this was otherwise a progressive time is illustrated by citing the ads that were appearing in middle class newspapers and the declarations of Labour representatives) what emerges is their sheer humanity. If they could afford to help the weaker sections of their community they did; if they couldn't (because of policies outside their control), then it was survival of the fittest.

This then is not just about coal mining in Durham. This is probably a social metaphor and is equally applicable to any situation where miners were exploited. It is hauntingly evocative analogy of the lives of most mining communities up to very recent times. With incidental alteration of detail this is 18th century Avoca or Arigna, or 19th century. Copies available through publishers or via Wexford (ph. +53-28181).

b). ADVERTISEMENT: Notice has been given in the previous two newsletters of the share certificates Brian Moore has for sale. Additional to the Irish shares mentioned in *Newsletter 1* he has the following for sale: **Hollyford Copper Mining Company Ltd.** of 1864, Crt. (£35); **Dunraven-Adare Coal and Iron Company Ltd** illustrated certificate of 1872... He has placed in our columns the following ad.:

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3. PUBLISHED WORKS ON IRISH MINING 1955-1995.

(a) Periodicals and anthologies

This is an amended extension of a bibliography originally compiled by Dr. Roger Birt of Exeter University and published in the *Institute of Mining History and Archaeology*, Newsletters, Thus far it comprises all known mining references over the past forty years in journals, magazines and research collections. It does not include newspaper items (would anybody like to try a comprehensive listing of these?!). The start date is because earlier references are comprehensively listed in Hayes' *Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation*, Vol. 7, Massachusetts. 1970.

The convention of listing alphabetically by author is followed here because it can be collated easily into existing indices. However, as this listing grows into the future (as surely it must!), it will become increasingly difficult to span it visually to search for one's area of interest and more desirable to use computer search programmes. Therefore, where the wording of the title does not indicate the contents, key words relating to location, period or mineral, are put in square brackets, plus any warning where the title is likely to be misleading.

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