



# NEWSLETTER

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*Nuachtlitir Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hÉireann*

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

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## EDITORIAL AND PROGRAMME

Because of the continued threat of foot and mouth disease field activities were cancelled during the Summer/Autumn of 2001. The major endeavour of Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland therefore concentrated on the exhibition *Mining through the Millennia* opened during National Heritage Week. It presents a wonderful cross-section of Ireland's mining story, beautifully presented and will continue until 2002.

It is expected that outdoor activities can be resumed again from the Spring of 2002. Meanwhile we continue with the indoor programme over the winter:

- Ongoing: *Mining through the Millenia* Exhibition in GSI during working hours.
- 10<sup>th</sup> November: *Delving the Records: Discovering Mining History* – three case studies in mining history (morning session) and an afternoon workshop on interpreting and presenting mining history. Formal launch of *Journal*. Details will follow.
- 16 February: AGM of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland in Bunmahon. This will include field trips (17<sup>th</sup> February) and the launch of the *Copper Coast* new entity as a European Geopark (info to follow) and a publication on the Bunmahon mines.

Don't forget to check the constantly expanding website: [WWW.MHTLIE](http://WWW.MHTLIE).

Make sure you are paid up to date. You will not receive the *Journal* if the envelope in which this has arrived does not have the date 2001 on top right corner.

## NEWS

**Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland:** All the tedious and time-consuming formalities necessary to make us into a legal entity have now taken place and we are now a registered company.

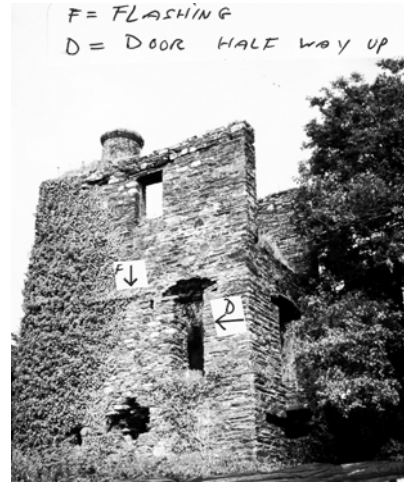
**Allihies:** Work on the man-engine had to be deferred due to the Foot and Mouth outbreak and the grant of £25,000 handed back with the understanding that it can be later reallocated once this crisis has passed.

**MHTI**

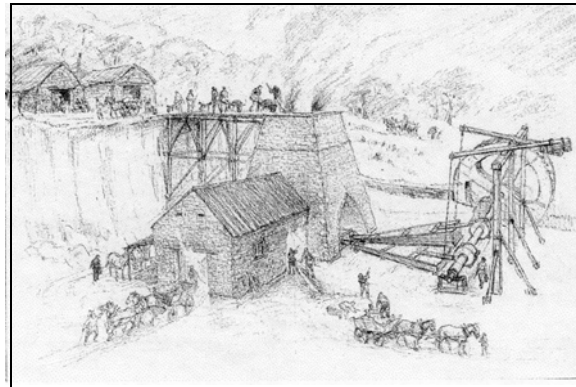
## CORRESPONDENCE

Mr Paddy O'Sullivan of Bandon has two main areas of mining interest –

**Glandore:** He has discovered a photograph from 1939 in a report on the engine by an engineer named Rundell for Pellew and Harvey consultants attributing its building to 1882. It is abutted by what seems to be a tall boiler house. At present (see photo) the flashing for this survives as well as an entrance from the first floor. Perhaps a reader might comment on why the entrance to the boiler house should be there and what precedents there are for having a boiler on the opposite long wall from the chimney.



In the course of a comprehensive survey of the area Paddy O'Sullivan has also gathered local folklore indicating that what may have been the ashes of Col. Hall's significant cupriferous turf-burning exercise of the early 1800s may have survived up to recent times. He has also found some samples of a very heavy metallic ore which has not been investigated yet. More recently he has explored the underground workings and a fuller report on that will appear anon.



**Dundaniel Ironworks**, east of Bandon. Paddy O'Sullivan has also hacked his way over this 17<sup>th</sup> century mining and smelting area. He has published his paper research in the *Bandon Historical Journal*, No. 4, 1988, "The English East India Company at Dundaniel". Subsequent ground searches have revealed possible furnace sites and quantities of an homogenous shiny blue-green flux which fractures like flint and has a coarse iron-coloured exterior. This too awaits examination. From his researches into 17<sup>th</sup> century smelting technology, he has commissioned recreated drawings of the works at Dundaniel, which he has kindly allowed us to reproduce.

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Tom Richards of Cornwall in the course of an investigation which he has titled "John Hobson Matthews (1858-1914, Cornish and Welsh Historian, Bard of the Gorsedd of Wales, Linguist and a natural Antiquarian" came across an unexpected Irish mining dimension. John Hobson's father had wide business interests and in 1883 bought **Dereenalomane** mine in West Cork. The twenty five year old was sent over to manage it and in the process he learned Irish and showed a flair not alone for the technicalities of mining and enjoyment of the local scene, but an artistic eye for capturing the mining scenario (his sketch is reproduced in the *Mining through the Millennia Exhibition*).

Derreenalomanne (which has several variant spellings) may be the Derrenala recorded in the mineral statistics as having produced barytes in 1852. It was worked again from 1862 to 1878 by Martyn Dennis and Co. in the last two years of which Charles Thomas is noted as agent. along with John T Matthews who is not recorded as owner until 1883 which is the first year with definite production figures.

Most likely John T. had an interest in the Martyn Dennis operation and bought the mine outright in 1883 sending the young John H. over to get it restarted with the help of Charles

Thomas. Other names associated with this restart were Messrs Coates and Eddy (1884-'86) with W.B. Stephens as manager in 1886. They may have been running the mine after John H left, with Charles Thomas simply calling in from time to time. They traded from 1884 under the name Durrus Barytes Company. The production and employment figures from the *Mineral Statistics* are as follows-

	Tons Barytes	Number employed
1883	150	42
1884	1000	36
1885	800	30
1886	-	16
1887	400	19

These tonnages suspiciously seem rounded. There could be any number of reasons why this enterprise was abandoned in 1887 and apparently lay idle for 12 years. From 1899 it seems to have been worked continuously by four successive companies up to the time when the mine equipment was sold off in 1920. There are no production records after 1907.

## ACTIVITIES

### Visit to BALLYKNOCKAN GRANITE QUARRIES (11<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2001)

The visit to the Wicklow granite quarries in Ballyknockan began in Blessington where Seamus O Maitiu showed us the legacy of 18<sup>th</sup> century and gave us the historical background to the granite structures there. From there we went to the strangely Mexican Valleymount church of 1803 built of the local granite.

At Ballyknockan we gazed through the netting wire at the present quarry. Derelict machinery lying around included a hand operated crane, apparently complete, though the central timber was very rotten. Recorded operations here date from 1824 when most of its output went into the building of Dublin including St. Francis Xavier Church, Gardiner St. Fusiliers arch, Stephens Green, Dun Laoghaire railway station, Westland Row church and the Civic offices, Wood Quay.

The stone was extracted using a feather and plug technique. All stone was part or fully dressed on site and then carted to Dublin by the Bog road (now drowned beneath Blessington lake) and thence through Blessington to Dublin (stopping off at the Embankment pub for refreshment). According to local tradition the carters left at about 5.00 pm, arriving in Dublin c. 10.00 am to delivery on site. Then back, with the carters nodding off – the horses knew the road.

Lying nearby was a lion part finished and reputedly ordered for Stormont but returned as outline of the lion's belly did not bulge as it would have done in real life. This apparently was a cover story to hide the fact that there were no stone masons in Belfast to finish the carving. The lions now gracing Stormont were carved from Ballyknockan granite, presumably finished on site and transported north. Another noted monument, ironically, is the Michael Collins memorial slab of granite from Hollywood area, carted to his birth place by Ballyknockan stone masons.

Seamus O Maitiu and other local residents told us something of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the quarry community including the brass band that lasted up to the 1930s. Evidence of their lives is still to be found in the elaborate granite gate piers and individualised front porches to their houses. One puzzling feature, however, was the massive and extremely impressive rough/partially dressed stone walls lining Horse Lane down to the Bog Road

comprising intricately fitted blocks, at a distance resembling the closely fitting stone masonry of Macchu Pichu.

The pride in the stone-working tradition of this relatively isolated community is reflected in the community's presentation to us and in the welcome we received in Ballyknockan. They celebrate it themselves in a local Granite Festival in June or September. We would hope to return to join with them. Our thanks to Seamus O Maitiu for a fascinating visit.

### **RESEARCH VISIT TO PRO, KEW AND GUILHALL LONDON.(17-22<sup>nd</sup> September)**

John Morris and your current editor, joined for a day by Dave Smith, got through some 129 records of Irish mining companies in the Public Records Office (PRO). Some time was also spent in the Guildhall Library. The fruits of this research will appear in due course but the lessons learned have wider application and the hope is that someone else will pursue the new possibilities opened.

The mining material in the PRO has all come from the Company Registry Office in London and therefore comprises mainly the forms filled in by the English companies that held Irish mining rights. Many were short-lived and may never actually have mined. The standard format was an initial application to register with names of directors and share arrangements. An annual return then gave the share capital and list of shareholders. If those have not been returned or a formal dissolution has not taken place then a warning is issued to the company and a copy of this kept. This is followed by two other warnings before the company is dissolved by being listed in Stubbs Gazette.

The Guildhall Library, on the other hand houses the London Stock Exchange records. These divide into three categories for the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Easiest of access are the microfiche Prospectuses, most of which have not otherwise survived. Both index and fiche are on open shelves but the originals have to be ordered. More difficult, as they need to be ordered a day in advance, are the records in the Manuscript Room. There is a card index available for these comprising applications for listing on the Stock Exchange. Needing two days advance notice are the Annual Reports of companies listed.

The last two have not been looked at. The Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland would be grateful to anyone who could spend time in the Guildhall Library (St. Paul's tube station). Day one could be spent finding exactly what Irish mining companies were listed on the London Stock Exchange through the *Stock Exchange Year Book* taking for instance five year intervals from initial year 1876. *Burdett's Official Intelligence* from 1882 gives a convenient tabular summary of each company registered and might prove more useful.

Armed with a list of Irish companies one can go the Manuscript room, get the number in the card index and order the original applications of the company for the next day. Then back to the main reading room and order at the desk the annual reports for the second next day. The rest of day one can be spent happily looking at the microfiche prospectuses and taking notes (or getting a microfiche reader with a printer).

All this raises the issue of what records the Irish Stock Exchange holds and the Company Registry Office in Dublin Castle. If anybody has done work on either of these, or is prepared to do so, then both of us would be extremely interested.

**\* A detailed paper by John Morris and Des Cowman tabulating all the information gleaned from this and earlier research is included in the forthcoming Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland. Make sure of your membership copy by paying your 2001 subs if you haven't already done so. Check your address label !**