ISSN 1649-0894

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 24 OCTOBER 2003

Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

CONTENTS NEWSLETTER 24

PAGE

2 Harz Mountains Trip Report
6 P. Eggleston's video
6 Ballard Iron Mines
7 Allihies
9 NAMHO 2003

MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2003/4

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

SEE BACK PAGE REGARDING INSURANCE ISSUES

EDITORIAL

Over the first few years of MHTI's existence (then MHSI) activities were concentrated on visits to Irish mining sites and recording in this Newsletter any further details of them. The Journal (Vol. 3 due in December) now deals with most of the latter. Most Irish sites with surviving remains have by now been visited once, though for most a return is essential for the purposes of recording surface details towards completing the mines' inventory project. However, we have been prepared to spread our wings as the report on our visit to Harz indicates. We already have an offer for the Ruhrgebeit and suggestions about contacts in Agricola's Saxon mines. Does anybody else have contacts (essential) in other interesting historic mining areas – Linares, Rio Tinto, etc.?

Another first was our hosting of the NAMHO 2003 Conference (deferred because of foot and mouth disease from 2001). This massive job of organisation fell on the usual efficient few shoulders and everything ran smoothly. Summaries of the surface and underground field trips are related in this issue; the lectures will appear in the Journal. The other highly successful element was the post-conference visit to the major Irish mining sites which was availed of by a surprising number of our visitors. Those that missed it have a chance to inform themselves through Peter Eggleston's fine video film (see inside).

A major element in MHTI's activities (well mainly John Morris') has been phase two of the preservation of Allihies man-engine. As the summary inside indicates, this will now have to go to a third phase before completion. It is hoped that the lessons learned from this will be applied next year to the pumping engine at Tankardstown, assuming that Interreg money becomes available (more on which anon)

Des Cowman"Knockane", Annestown,Co. Waterford.☏ (051) 396157🖷 dcowman@iol,ie

WWW.MHTI.IE

MHTI FIELD TRIP TO HARZ MINING AREA: 22nd to 27th September 2003.

Five days allowed us to sample only parts of the rich mining heritage of this area, south of Hannover. There were thirteen of us – six Irish based and four from our colony of Shropshire (they might reverse this!), two from Cumbria and one from Bristol. We based ourselves centrally in the small town of Altenau.

Mon. 22nd. We were greeted at the Upper Harz Bergbau (Mining) Museum in Clausthal-Zellerfeld by the director, Herr Radday, Professor Bischof and the their personnel took us into some of the variously shored underground sections as well as demonstrating the complex methods of water control.

Tues 23rd: Back to Clausthal to the Geological Museum of the University, said to be the best in the world (presumably for academic research rather than casual browsing). Then across the road where Karen had got us a special invitation to visit the regional headquarters of the Mining Board. We were greeted and conducted by the director, Herr Lohff, who introduced us to this historic building and its

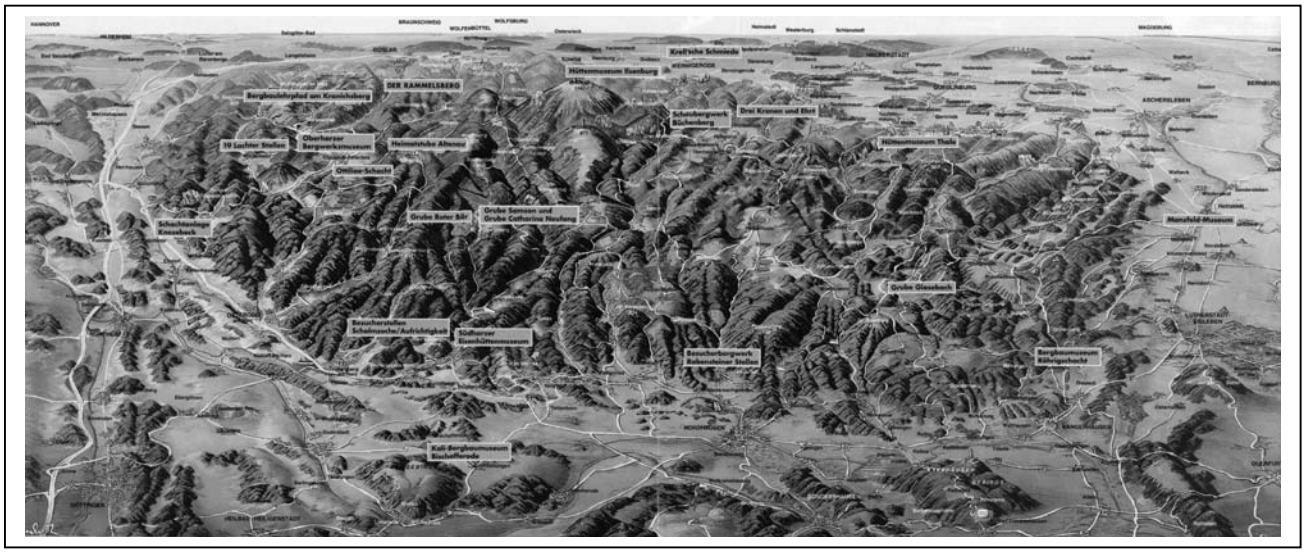


Figure 1. The many museums and mining displays in the Harz area; there was only time to visit four of them.

resplendently uniformed Herr Ravens who gave us a brief history of the thousand years of mining in the immediate area, the last mine closing in 1992. He then conducted us to the full-sized replica of a typical local mining operation. The shaft-top mechanisms included a man engine and we followed the various stages through the sub-surface water-wheel to the underground simulated workings. In sheds, because of the harsh local winter, were the other surface devices – horse whim, dressing apparatus, etc..

Inside the museum itself were the spectacular scale-models made to pre-test various lifting and pumping techniques. The wide-ranging selection of material included a strong section on mining society. Herr Ravens put his own uniform into the context of a hierarchy of uniforms worn by the miners on ceremonial occasions (of which, see below).

In the afternoon there was an introduction to the 200 or so kilometres of leats that conducted water from artificial dams in this immediate area, about 50 kms of which were ducted underground. These were explained to us using a model in the water-board's museum and associations with the Dukes of Hannover in their role as kings of England, whose *Honi Soi* -- crest was over the door.

A feature that caught our attention in a corridor was a hand-drawn panoramic section across the underground and surface workings in the 17th century depicting, in minute detail, miners engaged in all sorts of contemporary activities. This has never been reproduced. Another revelation was the archives. Enviously for us, everything there has been kept from a 14th century transcription of 11th century mining laws, wages books, mine-records from the 16th century and intriguingly a visitors' book with famous names signing in for an underground visit including the neat hand-writing of James Watt.

In the afternoon with headed for Andreasberg and the famous Samson silver mine which operated from 1521 to 1910. This is the area that developed the steel cable which they used in their Fahrkunst (man-engine) in the 1830s. Again we were greeted by the director who escorted us first through a sampling of the workings, then to the self explanatory museum (again some fine models) and on to see the two great housed waterwheels the lower of which drove the cabled man-engine, still in use to bring engineers to check a power-plant underground. As with other mines in Harz, the upper wheel was reversible, having two sets of buckets.

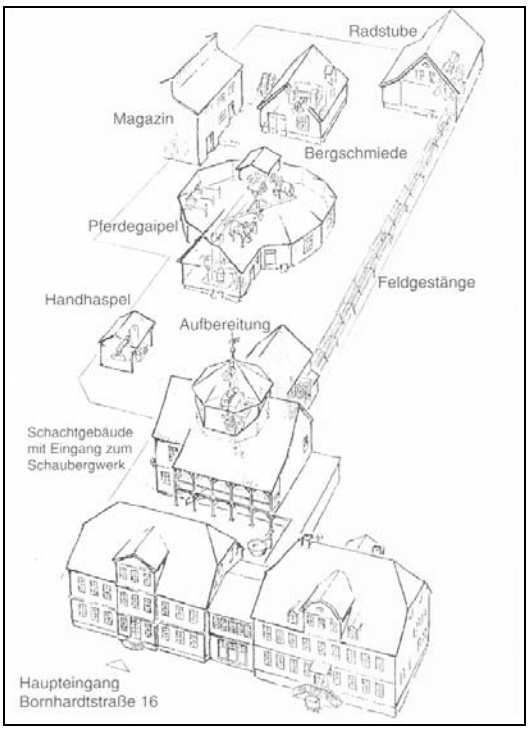


Figure 2. The mining museum at Clausthal -Zellerfeld with the buildings at the back replicating the covered surface of the working area.

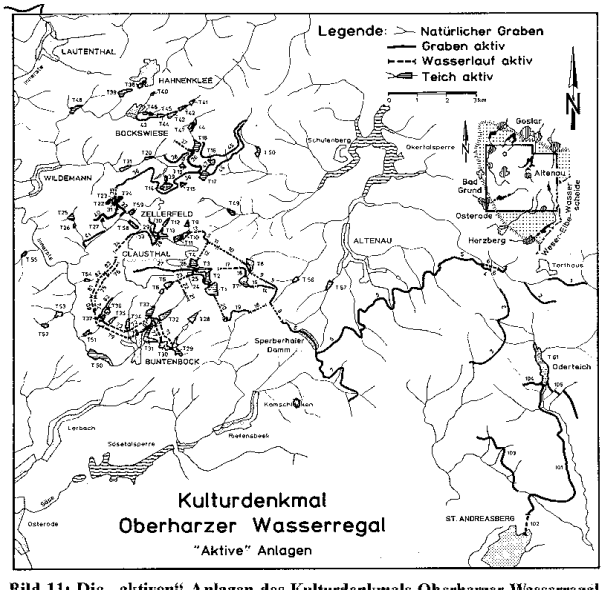


Figure 3. Some of the 200 kms. of water channel, the dotted parts of which are ducted underground. Altenau where we stayed is in the middle.

Wed. 24th: The ex-regional director of the Mining Board, Franz Joseph Roelleke, joined us for a visit to Roehrig mine at Wettelrode in the former East Germany. He explained that 30,000 people had been employed in this part of Harz in an uneconomical operation. All were closed down in 1990 following re-unification. Between the year 1200 and closure, a total of 1270 mines were worked in this Mansfeld-Sangerhausen district. Roehrig was kept as a show mine plus museum for the area and our guide there was an extrovert ex-miner.

First we were dropped by miners' cage 280 meters down the main shaft and then transported by train deep into the mine. The copper (with some silver) was almost horizontally embedded in shale and averaged only 25 cms. thick. Various simulations showed how this was exploited from the late middle ages onwards with miners wriggling through narrow slots in the rock at first. Blasting powder allowed greater space to be created and progressively the headroom was heightened with improving technology up to closure. The resultant waste we had already seen as vast hills in the undulating landscape.

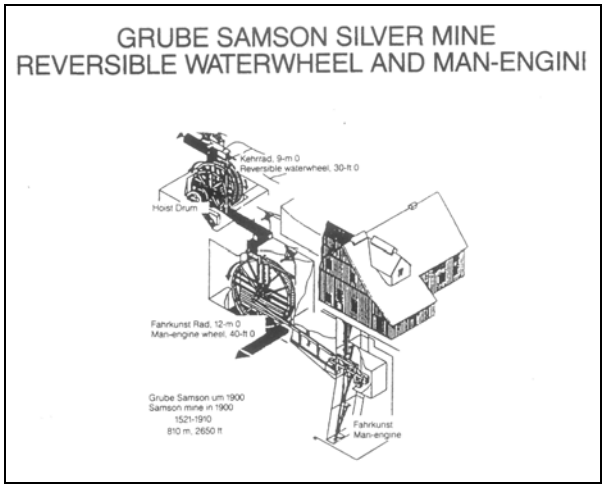


Figure 4. A re-erected waterwheel and the headframe over Kaiser Wilheim II shaft in background, this being now the headquarters of the Water Board.

Back on the surface the exhibits of the various mechanisms used up to closure were a technophiles dream. Once sated we headed to pay our respects to the son of a 15th century miner and visited the Lutherstadt, Eisleben, where the eponymous Martin was born (1483) and died (1546). The approaches to it are dominated by mine waste. The scenic journey back took in a steam railway although we did not coincide with the appearance of an engine.

Thurs. 25th: Rammelsberg boasts a thousand years of continuous mining, this reportedly being the first area to restart major mining after the end of the Roman

Empire. We were greeted by the director, Prof. Dr. Roseneck, of what has been since closure in 1989 a tourist mining complex which attracts 120,000 visitors a year. Dr. Brigitte Moritz-Heublein, archaeologist of the mines then took us over, presenting each of us first with a beribboned sample of the local ore.

Suitably outfitted, we were conducted by Brigitte, her husband Thomas and two others, through the levels of the show mine with its huge water-wheels and complex water systems. Fire-setting was used here into the 19th century, this being the cheapest way of working the hard rock. Then, helmet lights on and into the 16th century mine from which there was access to the earlier "coffin levels". This amazing experience was completed by a trip through a 19th century drainage level spectacularly encrusted with many-coloured stalactites and curtains. After three hours underground, we climbed our way back to the surface, blinking in the strong sunlight.

In the afternoon Brigitte introduced us to an archaeologist, Dr. Lothar Klappauf, and a geologist, Herr Arnold Quest, who are part of a major project examining the early history of mining here. The latter told us how the ores lay in different bands within the old lode and where it would originally have outcropped. It took over a thousand years before this lode was exhausted in the mid 19th century but in 1859 a massive deeper new lode was found which kept Rammelsberg going until 1989.

Dr. Klappauf discounted the tradition that the old lode was discovered in 968 when the horse of a knight named Ram pawed the hill-slope. He said that there was evidence of mining going back five hundred years earlier but that exploitation of the various minerals was sporadic up to the 16th century. He described the distribution of Rammelsberg silver both in northern Germany and over the Alps. (see book notified below). They then brought us to the hills above the present site where the medieval workings would have taken place. They had samples of the ore which the early miners had discarded because galena and copper were seen as waste, only lead and silver having commercial value. We were invited to help ourselves to souvenirs! He also showed us a medieval miner's shoe, dated to 1024, found among the waste and their hopes for other such finds.

Leaving there we were conducted by Herr Dettmer through the crushing and floatation plant which dominates the site at Rammelsberg. It was built in the 1930s up along the steep hill-slope. Ore was brought by wagons to the top and progressively reduced to a fine sludge as it descended, finally separated by floatation and dried ready for transport to smelters elsewhere. All this exhausted our time so we never got to the museum buildings on the site.

Fri. 26th: We were met outside the Royal Palace in Goslar by the multi-faceted Thomas Heublein whose love of his beautiful hometown was infectious. Goslar, he explained, emerged as a service centre for the mines and most of what now survives dates to the post-Black Death revival. His 'whirlwind' three hour tour of the town it would be impossible to summarise here as it was full of insights into the lives of the miners and those who profited from their labours.

We then proceed to the top of the hill to meet again Brigitte, his wife, and they gave us a different tour from yesterday's including possible settlement sites and an extraordinary road cut into rock with wheel marks (we'd seen a little bit under waste rock yesterday). While more of these have been traced and associated with the mines, their date is unknown. We shared a late lunch with them, expressed our gratitude for doing more than just guiding us, and went to brace ourselves for the night.

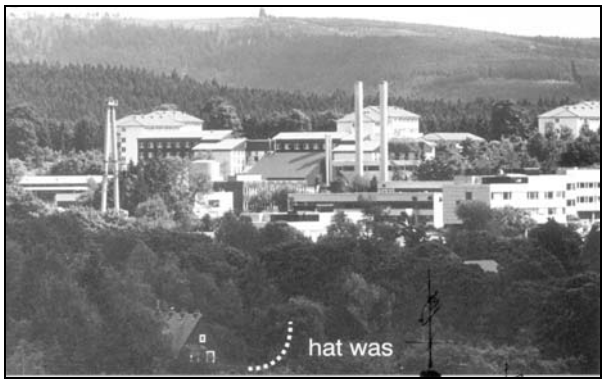


Figure 5. Clausthal-Zellerfeld.

We had been invited to the miners' 'Kommers' in Clausthal – a get-together of uniformed local ex-miners and their colleagues from other mines including a guest from the Czech Republic. They had different trimmings on their black uniforms and we felt a bit uneasy in our informal dress but were quickly set at ease. It was an unique honour to be thus invited and particularly for the three ladies of the party as this is meant to be an all male affair - our thanks to Franz Joseph Roelleke for arranging it. The main events of the night could be summed up as drinking, speeches, miners' songs, drinking, food, speeches, songs, drinking, etc., etc.. It was all very jolly and we left after midnight with the sounds of that oft-repeated chorus *Glueck auf, glueck auf, glueck auf* (the miners' salutation and farewell) ringing in our ears.

Thus ended a memorable trip to which a deeper dimension was given by the warmth of the reception we received and the level at which it was bestowed. We made new friends there and greet them through the copies of this Newsletter which is being sent to them. However, it did not just happen. John Morris and Martin Critchley did a lot of the arranging and then it

transpired neither could travel. Behind them, looking up the German websites, sending the e-mails, making the phone calls was Karen Többe. Fortunately, she *was* there, translating where necessary, double-checking arrangements and generally taking responsibility. Thanks to all.

Question of the week. *Well Mike, did you enjoy it?*
Response of the week. *It was excellent, except there was too much to eat.*

NEWS AND REPORTS

Insurance issues

Some members may be aware that the MHTI insurance scheme operated by the British Cave Research Association, covering third party liability, is coming to an end as part of a strategic refocusing of BCRA back to its original cave science remit. The functions it had taken on as a de facto national caving body in the UK have by agreement been transferred to the revised British Caving Association. However, despite having never had in claim in some decades, the insurers have been unwilling to co-operate with the agreed arrangements and negotiations are ongoing. At the time of writing a second extension of the scheme into November has been made, but some resolution is expected soon. One option is a scheme operated by the Derbyshire Caving Association on similar terms. However, despite a major contingent of insured people in Ireland both in MHTI and in the Speleological Union of Ireland (SUI) it is not yet clear, whatever cover is agreed in the end, if it will apply in the Republic of Ireland and or Northern Ireland.

The Directors are giving this serious attention as the insurance (and reassurance) which we can give to landowners of mines is under threat with potentially serious implications for MHTI activities.

The SUI offer an insurance scheme through the French Speleological Federation which covers for third party liability and legal costs but also includes significant cover for personal injury, rescue and repatriation, loss of work etc for a very wide range of outdoor activities including walking, climbing, and water sports as well as caving and mine exploration and travelling to or from the activity. This only costs €44 per annum, and has a high take up rate in SUI, but as the majority of MHTI members do not seem to be active in site visits and or underground exploration it may not be desired by many.

We hope to have more news with the next newsletter and Journal in December. However, it would be very helpful if members could email or write or phone Matthew Parkes (01-6782858 matthewparkes@gsi.ie) or Martin Critchley (01-6330516 mcritchley@era.ie) with details of any existing insurance cover they have that might be relevant or which might make additional cover superfluous. We may need to have one scheme for surface activities and a separate one for those doing underground work.

Book on Harz presented to MHTI.

MHTI has acquired an excellent book in English, *Aspects of Mining and Smelting in the Upper Harz Mountains (up to the 13th/14th Century) – In the early times of a developing European Culture and Economy* edited by Christine Segers-Glocke and Harald Witthoeft (published 2000 by Scripta Mercatura Verlag, St Katherinen) ISBN 3-89590-101-6.

Dr. Klappauf, who co-wrote the introduction and the opening chapter kindly presented it and signed the copy. There are seven other articles by various specialists. The titles of a sampling give the flavour of the content – “Archaeological Survey of monuments of early mining and smelting in the Harz Mountains”: “Early copper and silver production processes”; “Medieval metal trade in and about the Harz Mountains – markets and routes of transport”. Other articles deal with historical evidence, environmental impact and computerised measuring techniques. Given the seminal role of medieval mining here in the European metal trade, this book is a significant acquisition.

Roger Gosling adds: “Another excellent book on the mines and caves in the area, in German and English, is "*Bergwerke & Hohlen im Harz*" by Friedhart Knolle and Wilhelm Marbach, (published 1998 by Studio Volker Schadach, Goslar). ISBN 3-928728-24-5. There's a challenge for your local library!”

Journal 3, 2003.

The bulk of this will be devoted to background research into the thirty minute lectures given at the NAMHO conference relating to mining in the Wicklow area. However, there is still plenty of room for other articles researching the enormous amount of material available on Irish mines. However, the deadline for submitting material is very fast approaching. **Please contact Des Cowman or Matthew Parkes immediately if you have an article for the Journal.**

Glendalough Thesis

Linda Heidkamp who joined the MHTI this year and was heavily involved in leading trips at NAMHO has gone back to Germany to continue archaeology studies and we wish her well with that. Fortunately we have a copy of her thesis in the MHTI library on the mining landscape, and the miner’s sense of place at Glendalough and Glendasan,

New video film – "Land of Poets, Scholars and Mines"

Peter Eggleston digitally re-mastered this film from original camera tapes for the NAMHO conference 2003. He considered that Irish mining needed a general introduction, particularly for new visitors in order to give them something of the "big picture". As with books, there are excellent detailed histories of a few specific sites, but nothing about the whole subject of Irish mining heritage. Until one is published, this video will help to fill this gap.

This tape is a brief tour of some of the best Irish sites, both surface and underground. First visited are the beautiful mountains and glens of County Wicklow, starting at Avoca copper & pyrite mines with their Cornish engine houses, open stopes and large 20th century underground workings. The vales of Glendalough, Glendasan and Glenmalur each have fascinating remains of lead mining such as roller crushers, ore bins, inclines, levels, waterwheel pits, jigs, trommels and buddles.

Tara in County Meath, the largest zinc mine in Europe. We are brought underground to see the mining operations, including a huge radio-controlled 'scoop tram' loader working in a blasthole open stope whilst the miner drives it from the safety of the drift. On the surface, the processing plant crushers, ball & rod mills, flotation cells and filters are recorded. Deerpark mine at Castlecomer in Kilkenny was the main mine of the Leinster coalfield and its surviving details are shown.

The Silvermine mountains in County Tipperary were mined for silver, lead, zinc and barite from the 13th century until the 1990's. Recorded and presented are the many remains from the 19th and 20th centuries including kilometres of core samples, Cornish engine houses, kiln remains and opencast and underground mining at Shallee.

Allihies in County Cork Cornish engine houses set in rugged mountain scenery are depicted as well as and the unique Mountain Mine man engine (see below).. Copper mineralisation can still be seen in the stopes above and below ground and there is one of the largest powder magazines ever built. The mines of Bunmahon and Tankardstown have given the Copper Coast of County Waterford its name. There are levels and shafts in the cliffs and a large engine house that has been featured in two films. Finally we visit Ballycorus in County Dublin with its smelt mill building, 1500m flue and very unusual chimney with helical staircase.

The running time is 47 minutes. Normal price £ 12.95 it to MHTI members at £10 or €15 from I.A.Recordings <peter@iarecordings.org> http://www.iarecordings.org/ (PO Box 476, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 4RB, UK). Putting Industry on Video - an Archive for the Future.

Please order direct from Peter, but we also hope to have a stock available from him, soon.

Minet Proceedings

These are still available to members at the bargain price of €7.00 plus postage (€1.50 Ireland, €2.20 to Britain)

Full price is €10.00 plus postage

Payment can be made by cheque in euro or in sterling at the conversion rate of the day.

Orders for this or any other MHTI publication should be sent to Matthew Parkes
Geological Survey of Ireland
Beggars Bush
Haddington Road
Dublin 4
Or email: matthewparkes@gsi .ie

Archival Donation

A further donation of material has been received from Chris Williams. Full details of this significant collection of maps and memoirs will now appear in the next newsletter

Ballard Iron Mines – belated report of a cursory visit.

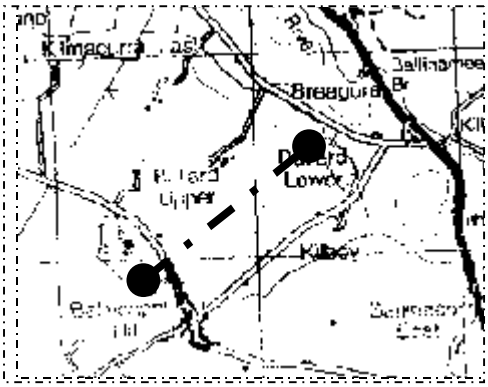
At the invitation of Rosemary and Pat Breen I visited Ballard on 24th October 1999 This area is quite isolated from the other mineralised parts of county Wicklow lying just off the N11 some 6 miles south east of Wicklow town. The townland itself slopes down Ballycapple hill to the north east and running approximately the same direction is evidence of iron mining there. The written evidence is very scant and somewhat contradictory. Argall (1880) states vaguely that there "are said to be" 17th century workings citing no authority, gives the date of the next working as 1850 and is more specific about mining here in 1876. The Mineral Statistics refer to the mine being open again in 1891 and mentions 235 tons of ore being exported from Wicklow in that year. Cole (1922) provides an analysis of tests carried out there in 1918.

It is difficult to equate the three periods of mining with what is on the ground although there are three areas of workings as it seems, each separately tree covered. To the south-west on the upper slopes in modern forestry (planted 1950s) running strangely at right angles (roughly NW-SE) lie a series of moss covered pits,

depressions and small quarry-like features. In one of the latter, at the south eastern end, a mine opening is visible in the overburden and in line with it a short distance away is a narrow shaft of about 8 foot depth to a chamber about six foot high. This is the only positively identifiable feature of mining. However, there is local memory of a small county council quarry being opened on the north-western end in 1948 revealing an adit sloping downwards into the hill. Its approximate location is known, opposite Breens' house. There is also memory of another shaft in which a donkey was buried. Could these represent the 1850 and 1876 operations? A third shaft was said to have been capped by concrete but is attributed to a more recent operation (the 1918 trial?)

Downhill in a grove of older pine trees is more extensive evidence of what seems to be more recent mining (1890s?) comprising a series of what are called locally "Clash holes". While clash means a pit or trench and is associated with mining in other parts of the country, this would not have been an Irish speaking area in the later 19th century. Nevertheless there is strong local memory of this operation including the field where the miners played football! There are about ten of these pits of varying depths at least one of which represents a collapsed shaft, because a pump-house built on one collapsed down into it in recent years. The iron pipe remains sticking out of it in evidence! There is also a pile of black heavy rock (quite distinct from the light slaty-shale elsewhere) which presumably is unshipped ore.

One field downhill from there is a "spring" called "The level" coming from a "cave". A steady stream of water sill issues from what may have been the drainage level (heavily overgrown when visited) indicating depth of the mine at 40-50 feet. That Argall gives the 1876/'77 as being 7 fathoms (42 feet) deep raises the possibility that the Clash holes date from them and what remains would not be entirely inconsistent with his description of two shafts connected by a level underground.



Solid O to O, approximate line of the workings. The Clash holes are about in the middle.

Near the bottom of the hill is a beech-wood. The only tradition of mining here is of a cow wandering into an adit and attempts to extricate him. Could this have been where 17th century mining took place and if so would the iron have been smelted there? It will require more than what was evident in this cursory visit to reveal a little more about the iron mining history of this picturesque townland.

References.

ARGALL, P.H. "Ancient and Recent Mining in the East Ovoca District", *Journal of the Royal Geological Society of Ireland,* (Vol. V, Pt iii 1879-'80) p. 162-3.
COLE, GRENVILLE A.J., Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Ireland (Dublin 1922, MHSI reprint 1998) pp 82-84.

The Man Engine House, Allihies: conservation works 2003

Considerable progress has been made this year on advancing the conservation of the Man Engine House, over two fortnight periods, end June/early July, and again during mid/late October. Once again this has been achieved by generous financial support from West Cork Leader and the Heritage Council, but, in particular, thanks to an extremely substantial donation from an Irish-American, who originates from Allihies. For the present, however, he wishes to remain anonymous.

General view of the man Engine House, fully scaffolded , July 2003 Photo: John Morris

For many, to see the entire engine house cloaked in scaffolding for much of June and July must have been something of a novelty, after many decades of seeing it only as a ruin. It certainly encouraged many to wander up and see what was happening. The second phase works focussed entirely upon the upper levels of the building and chimney stack. On the building, this involved replacing missing timbers across the top of the front wall; replacing window lintels; and re-building and sealing all exposed wall tops – with slate in the case of the two side walls.

Group photo beside reconstructed chimney top, Darrock and Brown crew, Arthur Britton, Shane Seedell, Sean May, Peter Merrifield and Peter Wherry, with Ger Tim O'Sullivan, Allihies, third from left. July 2003. Photo: John Morris

The chimney stack was more of a challenge – missing brick work, and repointing the entire brick construction upper section, repairing lightning strike damage and installing a lightning conductor. This was complicated by unusual size bricks, a match for which we were unable to source anywhere in Ireland, eventually having to import them from Cornwall. The missing top section of the chimney, about 6 courses of brick in total, was reconstructed to the style and proportions shown in an 1869 drawing of the building. The lightning conductor was subsequently installed inside the chimney, with a ring of conductor tips arrayed around the inside of the chimney, in order to minimise visual impact. Finally, the entire brickwork section was coated with a dilute, lime based milk and organic matter wash to enhance lichen growth and weathering effects. This will weather away over a period of years to the more normal brick colour, rather than the current streaky off-white colour.

The contractors, Peter Wherry, Arthur Britton and colleagues from Darrock and Brown Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall, returned to the site on Oct. 13 to resume conservation works for a further 2 weeks. This third phase focussed on weather sealing the top of the boiler house walls, re-inserting missing boiler house window and door lintels, and repairing the very seriously damaged masonry on the southeast side of the masonry platform at the front of the building. This was a major task in its own right as much of that side of the plinth had been undermined by removal of large sections of masonry, as well as lateral and longitudinal timbers, which acted as shock absorbers when the system was operational. Even to start these works involved removing a c.1 ton block of quartz which had fallen into a crawl tunnel, a task which took 3 of us over an hour to achieve using plug and feather drilling. The crawl tunnels were cleared out, masonry sections progressively reconstructed, and lateral and facing edge longitudinal timbers replaced/reinstated with Irish oak. That, at least, was the plan, and indeed it was all achieved – but far more rapidly than anticipated, which left Peter, Arthur and co. sufficient time to set to and complete conservation works on the almost equally badly damaged, northwest edge of the plinth. This was a remarkable achievement and we deeply appreciate the dedication and enthusiasm of the crew to do this, as it has effectively completed conservation of the entire, main engine house structure.

View looking down on slate weathering capping on both wing walls. July 2003. Photo: John Morris

All that now remains to undertake next year [2004], provided we have sufficient funds, is to complete repairs to the damaged masonry on the adjoining, isolated, winding drum pillar. We hope also to install uplighters on the building, in order to enhance its value as a community and regional icon, and to combine "switching-on" the uplighters with an appropriate ceremony to mark the completion of the conservation of the building, not only because of its international technical uniqueness, but also to serve as a memorial to the miners of Allihies, and their families. This will include unveiling a commemorative, tri-lingual (Irish, Cornish, English) plaque on the building, as well as performances by Irish and Cornish pipers, to additionally mark the occasion as an act of reconciliation between the two Celtic peoples, given the very fraught relationship which existed between the two communities during the 19th Century. And as far as reconciliation goes, the Cornish crew from Darrock

and Brown could have done no better than they did by enthusiastically immersing themselves in supporting and celebrating with the Allihies community the ultimate triumph of the local Gaelic football team, Garnish, when they finally won [on the third replay] the Beara Cup on Oct 26.

A full pictorial record of both 2003 phases of conservation works will appear in the MHTI Journal 3.

LINARES, Spain: a proposed field excursion in Spring, 2004

After the success of the recent trip to the Harz Mountains, Germany [see Des Cowman's report, this newsletter], we have been encouraged to continue looking further afield for enticing and alluring field excursion venues for members. And for those of us who have visited the area, Linares, Andalucia, Spain must surely rank as one of the most enticing. This was the venue for one of the MINET network field study visits in 1999, to an area which many of us then knew little about - and were completely taken aback, and overawed by the sheer scale and extent of Cornish mine heritage basking happily in the sun – lines of engine houses extending through olive groves and savannah like parkland, smelter complexes and even a Cornish miners graveyard. That visit gave substantial support to the local mine heritage group, the Proyecto Arrayanes, which has gone on to make significant progress on conserving many of these features, and to initiate a mine heritage centre.

So what better place and time to consider a visit. The local group have signalled their enthusiasm to help us organise and lead a trip to the region, and the visit could tie in neatly with a possible training event as part of the revitalisation of MINET as a Culture 2000 project proposal [under the name "*Europamines*", as the word MINET has unfortunate connotations in French, Portugese, and, so we have now just discovered, Polish also]. The local group would help with sourcing and arranging accommodation etc. We could fly in to either Malaga or Madrid, both served by low cost/budget airlines direct from Ireland and the UK, and rent vehicles at either airport. Malaga is about 3 or 4 hours from Linares, Madrid a bit longer [about 4 to 5 hours, if memory serves me correctly from the 1999 visit]. Spring is the preferred time for the visit, apart from the Easter period [April 9 – 12, 2004], in order to avoid excessive temperatures and costs.

Apart from looking and seeing the stunning array of mining features in the area, we would hope also to use the visit for more serious purposes, in particular as a training opportunity, specifically on interpreting and recording Cornish Engine House features. Ken Brown has very kindly signalled his willingness to provide such guidance, and, in return, MHTI [and/or perhaps the *Europamines* project, if funded] would cover his and Roz' travel and accommodation costs. We would hope also to undertake a "Monumental Inscription Record" from gravestones in the Cornish miners cemetery, if such a record has not already been undertaken. And, for the more adventurous, we might also include a side visit to Alcaracejos to see some of the Cornish Engine Houses I have discovered in that area over the last 2 years – including the remains of a 75" Cornish pumping engine house, the biggest of its type so far known in Spain.

So to help the planning of this trip, it would be very helpful to get some feedback from members of their likely interest in such a trip, which could be for up to 10 days duration [though individuals could stay for longer or shorter periods as they wish]. The optimum period would be late February – mid-May, apart from the Easter period [April 9 –12, 2004].

Could those interested in participating in this trip respond, ideally with preferred period(s), directly to John Morris by end-November if at all possible, and preferably earlier, at:

john.morris@dcmnr.ie

NAMHO 2003

In June of this year we hosted the annual conference of the National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO). This was the first time that the event had been hosted in Ireland (although we had previously planned the event for 2001, but had to cancel due to the Foot and Mouth crisis). The main event was located at Avondale House, Co. Wicklow over the weekend of the 7th and 8th June and over 100 persons attended. Avondale House was the home of Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish Parliamentarian and supporter of home rule in C19th., who also had mining interests. Local historian, Paddy Power, gave a well researched talk on the Friday evening about Parnell and his mining links. This was accompanied by a reception in the foyer of Avondale House hosted by the Geological Survey of Ireland and followed

immediately by the worldwide premiere of Peter Eggleston's impressive video tour of Irish Mines entitled "*Ireland – land of Poets, Scholars and Miners*" – see elsewhere in this newsletter for further details on this video.

A comprehensive lecture programme was arranged for the Saturday; with talks mainly having themes concerned with Irish mining. Nick Coy and Rob Goodbody provided introductions to the two main mining districts in the locality (Avoca and Luganure); whist Ken Brown shared with us his knowledge and research on the Cornish beam engines which operated at Avoca in the C19th. In particular, Ken explained about the unusual back beam used on the William's Engine to drive the air pump of the condenser which was located at the back of the engine house due to restricted space in front of the bob wall. The next two talks were concerned with gold mining in the Wicklow hills. Numerous pre-historic gold artefacts, now housed in the National Museum of Ireland, are thought to be made from alluvial gold from the Wicklow hills. Norman Moles and Rob Chapman discussed ideas on the sources of the Wicklow gold; whilst Peadar McArdle recounted the gold rush which took place here in the 1790's. Following lunch, a series of three talks concentrated on the important copper mining district of Avoca. Ewan Duffy described how a network of mineral tramways and railways was used to transport the ore to shipping port of Arklow. The mines at Avoca worked a series of bedding parallel mineralization on both sides of the Avoca River. Note only were the mines on the east and west of the river operated separately, but there was also a succession of different owners and operators. Not all of these operations were always legitimate and Des Cowman gave us an insight into some the stories of "small mines and large scams" at Avoca. Perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects of mining at Avoca in the late C18th was the issue of copper coins. During this period there was a shortage of low denomination coins throughout the British Isles. Several large companies began to pay their employees with coins or tokens issued by the company. The coins were intended mainly to be used in shops operated by the issuing company; however many of these coins gained greater circulation with the general public. The Cronebane half-penny token issued by the Irish Associated Mining Company in 1789 was perhaps one of the most widely circulated of these coins. John Morris described the background to the token, its rival issued by the Camac, Kyan and Camac Company and the links to tokens issued at Parys Mountain Mine in Anglesey. The final event of the lecture session was a round-up of conservation activities being undertaken the MHTI at Allihies and VADA at Avoca, plus the plans for work at Tankardstown, Bunmahon. This was followed by an open meeting of the NAMHO committee and the conference dinner.

In parallel with the Saturday lectures and all throughout Sunday there was a series of surface and underground field trips. These concentrated mainly on mines in the Wicklow region at Avoca, Glendalough, Glendasan, Glenmalure and the gold mining district.

Glendalough second adit. Photo Brian Jones

Several of the underground trips had only recently been opened up in preparation for the NAMHO event. In the following week we also organised visits to mines more distant parts of Ireland. On the Monday saw a trip for the lucky few to the active Tara mine (the largest lead-zinc mine in Europe); whilst others were equally well treated by Seamus Walsh to a tour of the Castlecomer coal field (including a visit to Ireland's only working underground coal mine). Tuesday 10th saw a large group of devotees descend upon the small village of Silvermines, Co. Tipperary where Éamonn de Stafort and I lead the group around the surface remains and underground at Shallee. From here a long drive down to Allihies saw the group re-assemble for a surface tour of the workings lead by John Morris and an explanation of the conservation being undertaken on the Man Engine House. Four individuals (including myself) descended the man engine shaft to explore the mine workings on the adit level. Our final event was a visit to the Bunmahon mining district, Co. Waterford on the Thursday.

The group at Silvermines

In parallel, a smaller group of Shropshire based members took a northerly tour to Marble Arch Cave in Fermanagh, then met up with Matthew Parkes and Mick Carragher for a visit to the barite mine on the Ben Bulben plateau. They then went on to visit other mine sites in Northern Ireland and southern Scotland on their tour.

I would like to thank all of those who attended the NAMHO 2003 meeting; especially our overseas visitor from the UK (and the far remote land known as Cornwall!). The success of the event was only brought about by the hard work of the organisers, speakers and trip leaders. In particular, I would like to thank John Morris, Nigel Monaghan, Matthew Parkes, Marie Merrigan and Ewan Duffy for helping to put the event together and Des Cowman for arranging the lecture programme. Mike Moore and Sally Bassham of NAMHO committee gave us invaluable support and advice. Many people helped out with the field trips; including John Ashton, Nick Coy, Norman Moles, Marie Merrigan, VADA, John Morris, Matthew Parkes, Seamus Walsh, Éamonn de Stafort, Brian Jones, Richard Shaw and Linda Heidkamp. We are grateful to Jean Costello and Coillte Teo. for the smooth running of the events at Avondale and for the use of the facilities and to Peter Moore and the staff at the "Meetings of the Waters" for the excellent conference dinner on the Saturday evening. I would like to thank the Minister of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources for granting permission to visit the abandoned mine sites and to Tara Mines for the allowing the visit Tara Mine and Larry Power for the visit to Coolbaun coal mine. We are also especially appreciative of the financial sponsorship given by Tara Mines and the Geological Survey of Ireland.

Finally, I would like to remind members that the next NAMHO conference is being hosted by the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society and will be located at Coniston, Cumbria on the weekend on 23rd to 25th July 2004. For further details contact Sheila Barker, The Rise, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3DB email: sheila.barker@cybermoor.org
web: www.catmhs.co.uk

Martin Critchley, Chairperson, MHTI

Email distribution of newsletter

Due to rising costs on all fronts, the Directors are looking at ways of saving money, including on postage, and the next newsletter will be available to members as a digital file (pdf). **If you have provided us with an email address we will send the newsletter to you by email, unless you have definitely indicated a preference to receive the newsletter in a traditional paper copy. If you would prefer it sent by email as a Word file rather than a pdf, please email to let us know now: matthewparkes@gsi.ie**

It is also hoped to open a password access members only section of the MHTI website and Brian Jones is looking at the options for this at the present time.

Mining through the Millennia Exhibition Transformed: Mining Heritage of Wicklow

The Mining through the Millennia exhibition put together in 2001 has received a new lease of life recently and has been on display in Wicklow. A good number of new panels on Wicklow's mining heritage have been created, using material from NAMHO 2003 work. These cover Glendalough, Glendasan, Glenmalure and the Gold Rush of the late 1700s. There are also panels on Ballycorus, done for a different exhibition on geological heritage of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, but of course Ballycorus was where most ore mined in the Glendalough area was sent for smelting. For the month of September it was on display in the Wicklow County Council Offices in Wicklow town. During October a small part of it, just the Wicklow panels were displayed in Greystones Public Library and during November Bray Public Library has the slim version of the exhibition.

All the panels are also now available to view on the GSI website www.gsi.ie, thanks to the work of Sophie Preteseille in the Geological Heritage Section, working with Matthew Parkes and John Morris.

Insurance News

As this newsletter was ready for printing, the following letter was received from the British Cave Research Association (BCRA), who were the prime organizers of the thrird party liability scheme that MHTI, along with all NAMHO clubs and all Irish and UK cavers. This situation means that for the moment we must suspend any field based activities until some resolution can be found, at an affordable price. Other options are being investigated, but we are clearly not alone in being unable to find satisfactory third party liability cover at a reasonable price.

Many BCRA members will know of the difficulties the Association has been having in finding ongoing cover for our Public Liability insurance scheme and all members received notice via the August 2003 Newsletter that PL insurance would no longer be included as a member benefit from 1 October 2003.

We had been hoping that, by finding replacement cover, we would be able to sustain our commitment to individual PL cover for BCRA members until the renewal date of each individual'ssubscription. However, I am afraid I am writing to tell you that we have been unable to find alternative cover for the scheme and so as of midnight tonight (7 November) all BCRA members and members of clubs who are insured through the BCRA scheme will be uninsured until alternative arrangements can be put in place.

This is not the place to provide a detailed explanation of the history which has brought us to this point, or an account of the actions which I and other members of BCRA council have taken to try to avoid this situation coming to pass. I will publish that information in due course, but for the moment, suffice to tell you that BCRA's cover was originally due to expire on 30 September 2003.

On 5 September, St Paul International, our underwriter, told us via our broker (Jardine Lloyd Thompson) that they would not be offering new terms but that they would extend the cover for one month to allow us to find an alternative source. We were then granted a further extension of one week, but that extension runs out at midnight tonight.

In August, we had been given an indication that St Paul would be offering renewal terms this year. In fact, we have been unceremoniously dumped after 20+ years of claims-free business.

Over the last few weeks we have put an enormous effort into trying to find replacement insurance with suitable cover and costs for the UK caving community and all leads have ultimately drawn a blank. So far as we are able to determine we have explored all of the possibilities available in the UK. While on the face of it there are many people offering cover, in practice many of these schemes are underwritten by the same insurers and in fact there are very few places who will even consider covering caving, and none will consider it properly. Some who say they can provide cover will only do so on the basis of silly terms which do not in fact satisfy any of our needs.

Council now intends to take stock of the situation and think carefully about what we are trying to achieve and what we can afford before moving forward. We have some ideas of places that individuals and clubs may be able to use as sources of cover and will be circulating these in the next few days. These will not, however, provide landowner indemnity, cover for the actions of club officers or for national body functions such as the NCA training schemes, all essential parts of the cover for our current BCRA and NCA structure (and future BCA structure).

We are still talking to one broker/underwriter and are hopeful that replacement cover will be offered but the current thinking is that this will take weeks rather than days to be confirmed. I will obviously be in touch with more information as soon as it becomes available.

Finally, may I thank everyone who has sent me suggestions, comments and messages of support over the last few weeks. I hope you will understand that I do not have time to respond to every message personally right now, but every message is read, and will be acted on if appropriate.
Regards
Nick Williams
BCRA Chairman.