



# NEWSLETTER

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Iontaobhas Oidhreachta Mianadóireachta na hÉireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

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## MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2004

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

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July; Avoca 850 level (for those with full underground insurance only). For details contact Matthew Parkes 01-6782858**

*24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July : NAMHO 2004 Conference in Coniston, Lake District, England.*

## EDITORIAL

In the early years of MHSI (as it then was) simple visits to Irish mining sites had a priority as there were many that only a few had seen. It quickly became evident that recording such sites while we were there added to the value of such visits and thus was born the Mines Inventory. That many important buildings were in need of conservation and preservation led to the next logical step.

Hence MHSI had to become a Trust (MHTI) to draw down money for conservation. Illustrated detail of the work on the man-engine house at Allihies will also be published in the next issue of the Journal as will the work to be done at Tankardstown over the Summer. Thus much of the energies of MHTI have gone into these, into publications and in organising field trips such as to the Harz in 2003 and to Linares in 2004. Some may regret the virtual demise of the “day out” approach to mine heritage and anybody who is willing to organise one is welcome and will be featured here. Suggestions also welcome for a field trip abroad in 2005 – there is no shortage of interesting mining areas!

Many members will be getting this Newsletter electronically for the first time to help reduce burgeoning postage costs. If there are teething problems please let us know so that we can sort them out for the Autumn issue.

[WWW.MHTI.IE](http://WWW.MHTI.IE)

## AGM REPORT and FIELD MEET

The AGM was held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast. Apart from the usual formalities, the main issue on the agenda was the creation of a new type of membership. "Subscriber" are those who do not normally attend field meets and therefore the question of insurance does not arise. Those who explore underground need a separate cover from surface explorers. Thus three levels of subscription apply.

The following points of information arose out of discussion and will be dealt with in greater detail in the next Newsletter:

- The Castlecomer Colliery Project has received €75,000 from Kilkenny County Council towards developing the tourist potential of the area.
- Europamines (formally MINET) is being revived with six partners. MHTI has received a grant of €5000 from the Heritage Council towards its promotion.
- NAMHO 2004 Conference will be held in Coniston on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July.
- Dr. Peter Claughton, (current chair-person of NAMHO) gave details of a European Seminar he is organising in Dorking for 8-10<sup>th</sup> July 2005. Its title is "The Common Aspects of European Mining History".
- It was noted with regret that the chief initiator of MHTI, Dr. John Morris, has had to step down as director for personal reasons.

Before the AGM members visited Ireland's only working salt mine at Kilroot near Carrickfergus. The workings there extend over a thousand feet underground in a pillar and stall fashion. On the Saturday morning we visited Conlig mines near Newtownards. The next day we met Kevin O'Hagan at Newtown Cromlin to examine the iron mines of the area. A fuller report will be given in the next newsletter, but for the moment we would especially like to record our thanks to

- The Irish Salt Mining and Exploration Group, and especially Danny Quinlan and Jason Hobbs
- Dermot Smyth for leading us around Conlig
- Kevin O'Hagan for leading us around the Antrim iron mines



Antrim, Tuftarney, mine buildings and buddle. Full report next issue.

## FIELD TRIP TO LINARES, SPAIN 17<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> April 2004

### Introduction

Fourteen members of MHTI met in Malaga airport on 17<sup>th</sup> April and drove our four hired cars east along the Costa del Sol, north past Granada and Jaen before turning east to Linares. Between 1880 and 1970 this area was the world's greatest supplier of lead; there was also silver, zinc and some copper. There were some 1300 individual mines here, most probably having more than one engine house. Many are gone; some have only chimneys left and some only boiler houses. Nevertheless, it was possible to sample only a few of those surviving and these had been selected for us by our hosts to give a representative sampling of different types of mine.

These host were the indefatigable Colectivo who have been successfully working towards creating sign-posted mining trails with information boards at many points as well as pamphlets. Everything will be drawn together this autumn with the innovative and imaginative interactive Mining Interpretative Centre that will be opened in Linares as a start-point for these trails. And they are already thinking ahead to a metallurgical research centre in the La Cruz smelter!

We met too many of these wonderful enthusiasts to try to name individually but we must most especially thank the orchestrating figure of Antonio Angel whose day must be thirty hours long. The obliging Colectivo figure of José Maria a receptionist in our Hotel Cervantes, was a quiet tower of strength. None of it would have been possible without the organisational work of John Morris (who unfortunately could not be with us) and Martin Critchley (who fortunately was, bringing so many photocopied notes about the sites for us that he had to pay €40 flight surcharge!). And Ewan Duffy kept us in financial order.

### Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> April - La Carolina area

Our Spanish friends led by Antonio were ready for us at 9.00 am with four land-rovers to bring us to the La

Carolina area, in cold wind. La Manzala mine on the ten kilometre long Guido vein was first stop. It closed only in 1992 leaving 120 unemployed. How the mine operated was still quite clear and the wide tramway an easy walk to a 500m deep shaft. Having viewed the other remains (including the huge tailings "plateau") we moved into the wilderness to the two and a half kilometre Minador vein.

First stop the Los Curas - El Manto complex on workings on either side of a steep valley. Adits were entered in the former. Then to the Romans workings at Corillo del Plomo (the lead hills), stopping on route at another putative Roman site littered with unidentified glassy black smelter waste in the context of Roman-looking tiles on cobbled floors. The Corillo site has been archaeologically investigated and the Roman settlement discovered. Much of the current mining evidence, however, seems to be 19<sup>th</sup> century.

We bumped our way higher up the mountain and reached the mining town (at 800 meters) of El Centenillo with its abandoned mines "barracks" although the core of the place is vibrant and beautiful. From there we walked along the old mineral railway (quote of the day: Kelvin, on seeing its tunnel, "Oh look, it goes right through!") to Pozo Nuevo (the "new shaft") with its double winding engine for a 600 metre shaft. Added to the cold was now drizzle which added a mi/ystic dimension to the view of the steep valley below.

We finished at Pozo Mirador mine (ca 1890 - 1965) with re-used Cornish engine house amongst other stone buildings from an earlier phase and a whole lot of indeterminate concrete structures. Forty five minutes brought us back to Linares guiltily realising that we had not appreciated from the outset the trouble our Spanish hosts had gone to. Gates had to be opened and closed at either end of the wilderness area by uniformed officials driving ahead of us. The visit would have been impossible without 4-wheel drives. And they brought lunch boxes for us! We were privileged to experience what few have recently seen.

### **Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> April**

The protestant graveyard in Linares contains various English names as listed by the Colectivo historian. A visit there confirmed that only Tonkins and Kittos were recognisable to our group. The historian could tell about the local mining connection of people like the Hasseldons and Reginald Bonham Carter (d. 1906 aged 34 from a fall down a mine).

From there to Tortilla Mines owned by Thomas Sopwith (the family of -Camel fame). Near the main road, this is spectacularly up-lighted at night. This does not reveal the rich extra detail of collared shafts, bob pits, reservoirs and complex boiler houses with characteristic curved roofs.



The group (minus Karen) with three of Colectivo on right, Jose, extreme right. Bull engine house at San Andres behind.

In the afternoon Àntonio, José, and others of the Colectivo brought us to the secluded Arrayanés area, full of wild flowers and scenic hills but in its time produced nearly one and a quarter million tons of galena. Around here were Bronze Age and much later Roman mines. Our first stop was at the elegant San Andrés brick-built engine house of a Belgian company. It had a bull engine (no pun in relation to local livestock; named after Edward Bull of the 1790s) and a complex series of ducts. Then having looked at other engine houses (some at a distance - black bulls between!) we walked across slopes strewn with updateable small mine-waste tips, but various pottery shards may help. The San Ignacio mine buildings had all sorts of Roman features but clearly reflected late 19<sup>th</sup> century awareness of an older tradition.



The Arrayanes area with Zulueta engine house in foreground.

### **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April**

First stop the Antoñita mine, closed in 1974 but with cable on the head frame (made in Cornwall) descending to a cage still in the shaft. Various mine buildings remain as well as parts of dressing plant. Rivero mine, next visited, was worked from at least the 1780s and was taken over by Sopwiths in 1880. It has a masonry head frame and numerous other buildings. On to La Esmeralda with large steel head frame under

which the original cages are presented resting on girders above the shaft. Again there are numerous buildings and dressing plant. Four other steel head frames are visible from here. El Cobre was the last mine to close in 1991 and therefore much still remains intact.

In the afternoon we visited one of John Taylor's mines, San Francisco, with substantial remains of engine houses but evidence of a great deal more destroyed. From there to the eastward extensions of Tortilla mines where smelter, flues, 2 chimneys, shot tower (later used as grain silo) were all examined and debated.

### **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April**

We were received by the mayor in the Council Chamber and presented with mementoes of our visit. Martin emphasised the European importance of Linares' mining heritage and the mayor replied, mentioning the destruction of some sites and a need to "apologise to history". A visit to the local museum revealed various Roman mining artefacts.

For the afternoon we headed to a very different mining area, west to Cordoba and then north towards Alcaracejos. Substantial mining buildings were evident but carefully fenced off (as was the rest of that area) and so only limited visits could be made. However, this was a very substantial mining area, too recently closed to be registered locally as mining heritage and it was therefore most commendable of John Morris to travel so far to start recording it.

Roger's suggested short-cut back to Linares brought us through a spectacular sylvan landscape before dropping back into the olive columns that march into every Linares mining site.

### **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

The future of Linares' mining heritage lies in the cargo sheds of the abandoned Madrid railway. Youth employment people were working on this interpretative centre, due to open this autumn. Amazingly complete structural refurbishment and full interactive displays are being done for under € 600,000. This will be the starting point for the mining trails already in place

From there to the La Cruz complex comprising mines and smelter. The latter had date 1850 inscribed over the gate and finally closed in 1991 - there was still office material lying around. Much had been demolished but the shot tower was still there over a shaft (with shot lying around) and buildings which are intended to host a metallurgical interpretative centre. A large flue from here led to a chimney which once stood 100 metres high.

The mining remains there included a relocated head frame, houses, school, church, engine house re-used for

electrical transformers and a huge waste tip which formed a viewing point for a beautiful broad valley with dotted engine houses. On the other side of that



San Vincinto mine with its 1000 metre deep shaft under the headframe.

plateau lies San Vincinto mine with its kilometre deep shaft. This closed on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1967 on which day six miners, going down to bring up mines materials, plunged to their deaths and the shaft bottom was their final resting place. The head-frame and wheels is still intact over them.

In the afternoon we headed for the lovely little hill town of Baños de la Encina, snuggling under its



South of Alcaracejos, dominated by a huge tailings plateau.

Moorish fort. From there into the four-wheeled drives and we bumped our way through scrub, across clearings where the long-horned cattle stared curiously at this unlikely cavalcade and down on to a platform overlooking a scenic reservoir. A clamber brought us to a headland in it on which stand the spectacular remains of Peñalosa Bronze Age mining settlement, stone houses and streets clearly discernible. The walls marched down into the waters and somewhere below them were the actual mines. A magical place indeed and casual searching revealed plenty of pottery as well as stone mauls and quern stones. Another ride to the other side of that hill brought us to the putative Bronze Age mine openings at El Poligono (they are certainly not modern) although much of the evidence seems buried by modern mine waste.

That evening we had the pleasure of entertaining our friends of the Colectivo to dinner and again their generosity caught us unprepared. They presented us

with a lovely mounted model of a head-frame, suitable inscribed.



Martin conducting another interview with Antonio translating,

### **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April**

After a hectic five days of mine visits we took time off to look at Linares itself with its pedestrianised streets, tapas market, fountains and public monuments including those to its mining heritage. While the progressive closure of mines and smelters in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century undoubtedly brought depression, there is little sign of it now with bustling shops, new industrial estates and tower-cranes presaging further expansion.

In the afternoon, some visited more engine houses, others went to the historic sites and a few conducted a sociological survey in the local Irish pub.

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Foot notes - (i) literally. Karen tripped and damaged her foot. José Maria took over and we experienced the efficiency of the Spanish medical system in Linares hospital. It was free - but she had her E 111. Many of us hadn't ...!

(ii) Our visit stirred considerable local interest and featured on local newspapers, radio and television based on interviews with Martin.

(iii) What possible correlation can there be between engine houses and the invariable fig trees growing in, on or around them?

## **NEWS**

### **ALLIHIES**

The last phase of work began on the 24<sup>th</sup> May. There will be a full report of this in the next Newsletter.

### **TANKARDSTOWN**

Archaeological work at this Waterford engine house complex is expected to begin in June based on the geophysical study already completed. It will be carried out by Dr. Colin Rynne and a team from University

College, Cork. This is preliminary to conservation work to be undertaken in the autumn which will include the insertion of a stairs and viewing platform which should provide stunning panoramas along the coast and inland to the Comeragh Mountains. Interpretive and explanatory panels will convey something of the history of the mines in the context of the Copper Coast, European Geopark.



Tankardstown engine houses to be conserved.

### **CASTLECOMER**

Developments have taken place here with money set aside for a new coal mining museums within the Wandesford Demesne. It will contain an interpretation of the mining history as well as the significant Wandesford archive which will be available for research into all aspects of the running of the colliery including the social dimension. The miners' baths will also be used to house a display of the heavy industrial machinery used in the coal mine such as haulers, tubs, etc.

All this is within a wider tourist context involving the development of Castlecomer and the Wandesford estate as a tourist destination, This involves the cleaning and restocking of the two lakes, presenting the ornamental gardens and the creating of accommodation within the estate including self-catering chalets. The stables are being converted into craft-centres and office space. Total investment is €700,000 and a project manager has already been employed to administer it. One tour operator has already expressed interest in the varied package of walks, lake fishing, museums and local heritage.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

The Spring 2004 issue of the free Earth Science magazine ES2K has three items of mining interest. One is on the Copper Coast in general and another specific to the mines there. The third features a visit to Kilroot salt mine in Antrim. Available from the Geological Survey of Ireland or see the ES2k website: <http://www.habitas.org.uk/es2k/index.html>

## MHTI ARCHIVE

Thanks to Nick Southwick for copy of an article simply called "Tynagh" which appeared in the journal *Mining and Mineral Engineering*, January 1966, pages 10-24. It comprises four sections by different contributors. "Discovery and Ore Body Development" by Consulting Mining Engineer, G.W. Moore, has a subsection on the drilling programme plus a layout of the mine and plant. "Geology" by Chief Geologist, G.R. Clark, has plans and sections of the rock structure. "Mining Operation" by D.H.B FitzGerald, Mine Superintendent, contains a sub-section called "Mining System" and a flow chart showing the operation from open-cast to shipping from Galway with emphasis on the mill. "The Concentrator" by Mill Superintendent, R.F. Down, is subdivided into "Crushing and washing", "Slimes Treatment", "Sand Treatment", "Galway", "Tailings disposal and water reclamation" and "Assaying". The article is accompanied by a good range of photographs of the operation.

## HISTORIC CONTRACT FOR VALENTIA SLATE

Valentia Slate Ltd has secured a €10,000 contract to supply the slate to replace sections of the floors in corridors in the Houses of Parliament, Westminster. The original floors, which were laid in the middle of the 19th century, also contain Valentia slate.

It was first opened, in 1816, by the Knight of Kerry, Valentia's slate products included roofing slates, flooring slabs, fire-surrounds, snooker tables, sills, lintels, water troughs and steps. The slate became internationally renowned and was used in Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral and St Paul's Cathedral. It was also used in 21 miles of shelving in the Public Records Office in London. The slate featured in the Paris Opera House and in many of the main underground railway stations in London, including Waterloo, Charing Cross and Black Friars, and as railway sleepers in San Salvador Railway, South America.

The quarry was run by various companies until 1911 when a rockfall at the mouth closed the mine. It has been re-opened by a company formed by three local businessmen, in 1998. Valentia slate is back in demand for modern architectural works and has been used in the national heritage restoration buildings. The quarry is believed to be the only one of its kind currently operating in Ireland.

## EON O'MAHONY BURSARY

The Royal Irish Academy has recently advertised this bursary in commemoration of Eoin O'Mahony (1904-1970) to enable recipients to consult material which is essential for their work, but which is located overseas.

Applicants need not be university graduates but the work must constitute a scholarly contribution to an historical or educational subject. Special consideration will be given to those who have been active in local learned societies.

The fund is worth €1500, and a number of awards may be made. The bursary application deadline is Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July. For further information visit [www.ria.ie/awards](http://www.ria.ie/awards), or email [admin@ria.ie](mailto:admin@ria.ie) or telephone +353 1 6764222.

As Eoin O'Mahony was a well known historian and genealogist, research such as on the migration of Irish mining communities must surely be a worthwhile subject that would be worth an application by anyone engaged in such a project?

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1. **The NAMHO 2004 Conference** will be held in Coniston on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July.

2. **The NAMHO 2005 Conference** is to take place in Dorking, Surrey on 8-10<sup>th</sup> July. Its title is "The Common Aspects of European Mining History" and as the name suggests it is intended to be trans-European. Preliminary notice has already gone out in French German and Spanish and papers are invited on this theme.

Contact Peter Cloughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, Wales UK, SA66 7RE, [P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk).

3. **"Entertainment and Education Challenges and Reality for Industrial Museums"**

An International Symposium hosted by the Rhineland and Westphalian Industrial Museums. **24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> June 2004**. This conference will begin with an opening address at 10.00 am on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June in the **Rhineland Industrial Museum in Oberhausen**. The following is the order in which topics will be covered by named speakers followed with a discussion by a distinguished panel. English translation will be provided.

*"Industrial Tradition and the History of Museums"* Past and present.

*"Industrial Heritage - Cultural Heritage- Preservation of Historical Monuments"* European perspectives.

*"Media, Myths and Museums"* Making sense of history and creating collective identities.

(These will be followed by a reception in the museum)

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June

*"Client, User or Visitor?"* Researching and defining target groups.

*"Mind and Money"* New funding methods.

"*Food and nutrition*" A new challenge for museums  
Running parallel to these are a series of workshops, in German only, to be held in Bochum (colliery), Waltrop (ship lift), Dortmund (Colliery) and Hattingen (iron and steel works). The lectures and panel discussion move in the afternoon to the **Westphalian Industrial Museum, Dortmund**

"*Networks or Cooperative Alliances?*" Regional and European cooperation

Saturday, 26 June 2004

Guided Tour Zollern II/IV Colliery

Lecture: *Museums - A future for our past*

"*Museums in the Event Society*" Politics and Society and their expectations of Industrial Museums in the 21st Century. (This will be followed by an excursion)

The fee for this is €80 (students €50) covering meals, bus transfers and all conference papers. Further details from the conference office, Rheinisches Industriemuseum, phone 0049-208-8579138; fax 0049-208-8579101; e-mail, [gregor.isenbort@lvr.de](mailto:gregor.isenbort@lvr.de). For further details, see website [www.kongress-industriemuseen.de](http://www.kongress-industriemuseen.de).

## **Membership Matters**

Thanks to everyone who has renewed their 2004 MHTI membership and also to new members Catherine and Barry Flannery. MHTI would like to invite all those members who have not yet renewed their subscription to do so as soon as possible. Those members who have not renewed by 31 July 2004 will regretfully be deleted from the MHTI membership database. Unfortunately, MHTI can no longer sustain the rising costs incurred from mail shots to its former members.

Many members will be receiving this Newsletter electronically for the first time. If there are any teething problems, please contact [matthew.parkes@gsi.ie](mailto:matthew.parkes@gsi.ie), so that we can sort them out for the Autumn issue.

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