



NEWSLETTER

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Iontaobhas Oidhreachta Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

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MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2005

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

12/13 March 2005: Field meet in Arigna, POSTPONED Provisionally to 7/8th May.

Apologies for any inconvenience caused for lack of notice Sat 16th April 2005: 2.00 pm AGM of MHTI at Castlecomer Community Hall, Co. Kilkenny. See separate notice enclosed. Events to start at about 1pm onwards.

Thursday 5th May: "Mining through the Millennia: an exploration of 9,000 years of Irish Mining History". A joint lecture by John Morris, with IMQS and IAEG. Geological Survey of Ireland Lecture Theatre, Dublin, 8pm.

Sat 28th May 2005; Introduction to the archaeological finds and conservation work done at **Tankardstown, Bunmahon, Co. Waterford** and plans for its presentation within the Copper Coast European and Global Geopark Network context. Meet at car park, Bunmahon at 12.00 noon. A visit to Bannow and Caim lead/silver mines in County Wexford is also envisaged.

8-10 July 2005: NAMHO Conference in Dorking, Surrey. The theme is *European Mining History* with the emphasis on common mining aspects. For details check with P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk

September 4th-11th 2005: National Heritage Week (provisional). A programme of mine heritage/history events will be in NL 30.

Late Autumn 2005: It is anticipated that MHTI Journal 5 for 2005 can be issued early, as many of the articles are already available. However contributions are still invited. Contact dcowman@iol.ie

EDITORIAL

Any vibrant organisation keeps changing and this is true of MHTI. The first objective was to visit and record Irish mining sites with visible remains. Substantially, this has been done. The next step was to put them in context of wider European mining and this has been done with visits to Cornwall, the Harz Mountains, Linares and currently to south west Poland (originally part of German pioneering mining tradition). Involvement in Europamines is also part of this wider contextualisation.

The Irish dimensions is presented through publications such as the Journal. Some is on the website, but most of us like something less ephemeral to put on our bookshelves. The long saga of the Mineral Statistics of Ireland with maps, commentaries and bibliographies is now approaching completion and along with the reproduction of Cole's 1922 "Memoir" will give a complete overview for research into Irish mining. More specialist publications will follow including *The Making and Breaking of a Mining Community: The Copper Coast Co. Waterford c. 1825-1875+* which should be out before the next Newsletter.

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www.mhti.com

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

If you have not already paid your subscription for 2005, please do so as soon as possible. If your label with this mailing says 2004, you have not paid yet, unless it has been received in the last week or so before mailing this newsletter and journal.

We welcome new members: Martin Vaughan, Chris Hansen, Gary Talbot and Sophie Preteseille.

We also gratefully acknowledge the support of our corporate members

ERA Maptec

Exploration and Mining Division (EMD)

Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)

Lisheen Mine

Tara Mine

Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc

Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI)

The Heritage Council

[Unfortunately the Heritage Council were omitted from the acknowledgement at the front of the Journal, but they became corporate members in 2004, as well as supporting the MHTI Allihies Project with major grant aid for the conservation works.]

MHTI JOURNAL 4

With this newsletter you should receive a copy of the 2004 Journal, if you were a paid up member in 2004. The Journal has the usual mix of articles on diverse mining heritage topics, but is somewhat thinner than previous years. Due to circumstances, a range of articles planned for the volume have been held over and 2005's volume will be a bumper edition with a focus on Tankardstown. However, there is also room for other articles and submissions are invited as soon as possible. Due to funding constraints, the 2005 Journal will issue in the autumn so get those papers in to the Editor, Des Cowman, as soon as possible!

MINING HISTORY/HERITAGE RESOURCES

The MHTI in Spain (Cornish mines among the Olive Groves) and Land of Poets, Scholars and Mines (an introduction to the mining heritage of Ireland) DVDs by I.A. Recordings.

The first of this brings to dramatic life MHTI's visit to Linares in April 2004. This should have been reported on in Newsletter 27 or 28 but that did not happen for complex reasons. This therefore is the only record of an outstanding visit arranged by Antonio Angel and the Arrayanes Collectivo where we got to see an amazing

range of mines and their plans, since almost completed, for presenting their rich mining heritage. While this DVD has no commentary, it is richly evocative of the visit and the extraordinary mine sites amongst the bull pastures and olive groves. There are two versions of this: a participant's version running for 126 minutes and an edited version 93 minute featuring mines only. This latter is available for £16.10 sterling.

The second DVD vividly presents the major aspects of Ireland's mining heritage beginning with Avoca and north from there to the lead mining remains. Most of us will never have an opportunity to see what happens underground or on the surface in Tara mine and the disk would be good value if only for this alone. Castlecomer, Silvermines (including underground at Shalee), Allihies, Bunmahon and Ballycorus all feature and this provides an invaluable and permanent record of these as they were in 2003. It is very concise with a running time of just 47 minutes and good value at sterling £14.95.

Those involved, particularly Peter Eggleston, are to be thanked and congratulated for making these available. They can be had from I.A. Recordings, P.O. Box 746, Telford, Shropshire TF74RB; e-mail info@iarecordings.org. There is also a web-site www.iarecordings.org.

Jacinta Prunty, *Maps and Map-making in Local History (Dublin 2004 as part of Maynooth Research Guides for Irish Local History)*.

Jacinta Prunty is a respected historian and Maynooth has produced excellent studies in local history. While this is a new history of map-making, as a local history guide it is quite impenetrable with insufficient subsections and paragraphs over a page long. As an example, the Geological Mapping section is really a potted history ending with "*Contemporary geological mapping can act as an entry point to a range of study topics including the history of numerous small-scale mining enterprises through-out the country*". Of course, but that is true of any map which shows mine buildings and shafts indicative of the lay-out of the mine. What is needed is a listing of such maps and this is provided over four and half pages in Appendix VI but without the essential column giving date of publication.

On page 261-2 there is a paragraph on the holdings of the GSI plus references to MHTI's web-site and publications. The next paragraph deals with the British Library within a densely written fourteen page subsection called "Finding Aids: within the library". However, the index was good enough to uncover this under "mines".

Most people using a map as part of research into a mine, or anything else, unconsciously asks the question "What does this tell me that I did not know before?". This book has three pages of Appendices headed "Questions to be asked of maps" which do not include any version of this. "What is represented symbolically?," "Was it fossilised?" (whatever that means), etc. indicates an approach to maps too rarefied for mere mining history/heritage buffs.

A Woodrow, A History of Conlig and Whitespots Lead Mines (NMRS 1978).

This work has long been unattainable. The reason it is featured here is that Nick Southwick has kindly photocopied it and presented it to MHTI. Reading it for the first time one is struck by the author's sadness at the lack of respect for the heritage the mine represents and even before the book was published "the only surviving Cornish beam engine house in Ulster" collapsed "Thanks to the vandals and rotted timber lintels". He also bewails the destruction of records but then produces a wonderful range of them including extracts from a cost-book. There is also an extraordinary polemic which the mine agent published, mainly complaining about mine captain Rickard but revealing all sorts of otherwise inaccessible detail about the mid 19th century working of the mine and the tensions within it.

The section reproduced here is from the Abandonment Plan of about 1865. The windmill in the centre powered a crusher. Was this unique?

Industrial and Mining Histories published by Landmark Collector's Library.

The 2005 flier for these publishers contains much of UK mining interest with volumes on Devon, Yorkshire coal, Northumberland mining disasters, collieries of Somerset and Bristol plus North Staffordshire and Ecton copper 1760-'90. They also have a series of ten volumes on stationery steam engines, some in two parts, as well as a bibliographic series featuring people like James Watt (two volumes). Of direct Irish interest will be the May publication of Dorothy Bentley Smith's

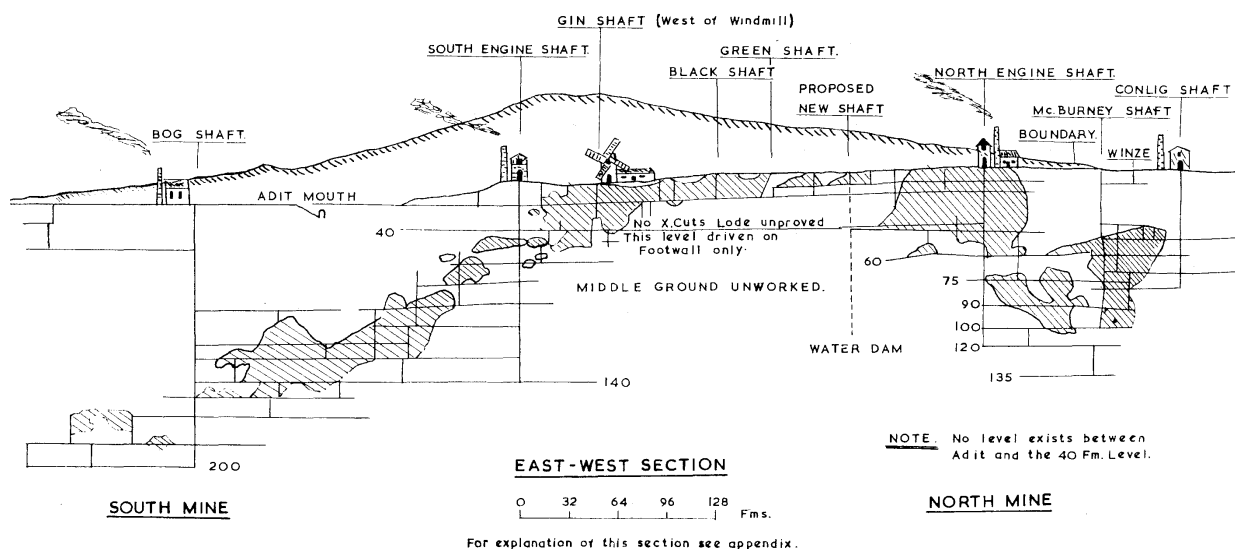
A Georgian Gent – The Story of Charles Roe and Co., of Macclesfield. They discovered Parys Mountain in Anglesey and when the lease expired there took over Cronebane and Tigroney in Avoca. From the summary it appears that these were only part of their wider interests.

For further information contact Landmark Publishing Ltd., Ashbourne Hall, Cokayne Ave., Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE61EJ; Tel +1335 347349, Fax + 1335 347303; e-mail landmark@clara.net; web-site, www.landmarkpublishing.co.uk

ON-GOING WORK AT TANKARDSTOWN

This will be reported on more fully in the 2005 Journal. At present work on the pumping engine is complete except for replacing the remains of the granite block on to which the engine was bolted. The viewing platform will then follow. About two thirds of the brick top of the chimney have been replaced and already it has become an icon, visible for miles around.

NEWTOWNARDS LEAD MINES.



Work on the remains of the winding engine has concentrated on stabilising it but, in the process, renewing the bed on which the engine sat. The view of this will be from crawl –hole level which will nicely counter-balance the view of the pumping engine which will be from cylinder level. Explanatory panels will make all this clear with a parallel series of leaflets. All this is funded by Interreg IIIB, North West Europe.

Least members who have not been there think such concreting work to be out of tune with 19th century technology, well perhaps, but it will not be visible. The lime-mortar restorations of the walls, once they are weathered, will only be distinguished by the superior quality of the stone-work (the original was quite crude). Here credit must be given to the sensitivities of the Lithuanian masons working on the project.

Memories of Ben Bulben Barite Mine 1973-‘79

Mining on Ben Bulben had ceased in the 1950s. An American Company took over the lease of the old mine in 1973. They made a new road up the north side of the mountain, to gain access to the main adit at the 1400 foot level which had been abandoned for some eighteen years. I was appointed Mine Foreman by the Manager Gerry McNaughton. Robert Bailey was General Manager at the time followed by Richard Clarke.

The mine office was at Wine Street, Sligo. Prior to my appointment, a Fritz Van Nest of the parent company Halliburton of Houston Texas came to Ireland and purchased all the mining equipment and compressors from the Keel mine of Longford. With these we set out and cleared the mine, driving new cross cuts into the Barite. We also enlarged the portal at the 1400 level from five and a half feet to eight foot eight inches. We laid all new twenty four inch-gauge rail tracks, for haulage with a half ton Oldham locos and side tipping mine cars.

We worked two shifts 8.00 to 4.00 dayshift and 8.00 to 4.00 night shift. Sonny Connor from Glencar was in charge on night shift. Quite a few miners preferred night work to days because they could fit in some farming as well. All drilling and blasting was carried out on day shift. The headings were mucked out by the night crew using Eimco 21B rail-mounted rocker shovels. We replaced the old two-inch air line with six-inch to give more volume and pressure.

We started development work on a shaft at Block 1 and three winzes at Blocks 6-15 and 18. All these sinkings used de-watering pumps and winches which used up lots of compressed air. We also had two diamond drills with air motors and flush pumps. Expert timber crews were responsible for the installation of man-way

ladders and stagings. They constructed hoppers for the loading of mine cars. Round log sets and packing were placed for ground support where necessary. Old workings were barricaded off for safety reasons and to assist the through flow of ventilation.

Two open cast pits were producing Barite which was excavated by mechanical diggers and loaded onto off the road trucks. This was hauled to our new washing plant to remove unwanted material. All our Barite was hauled by truck to Sligo Docks where it was shipped to Scotland for processing. Cyclones de-slimed the water which we could use over and over again. Waste limestone was used for road maintenance.

The work force were mainly drawn from the locality some of whom had worked on Ben Bulben twenty years before and many coming from 19th century mining backgrounds. These were good men to work with and it was a local tragedy when a drop in the demand for barite lead to closure in 1979.

MICHAEL CARRAGHER

Family information wanted - Berehaven Mines

Information and anecdotes sought relating to JOHN THOMAS HALAHAN (1823 - 1920), Dean of Ross and Church of Ireland rector of Berehaven for more than 60 years. Is there any memory of him among mining families? In 1897 his daughter, JANE ELIZA HALAHAN, married HENRY EDMUND LAVALLIN PUXLEY (d. 1900).

Please contact: reverend.mother@slg.org.uk

Slievardagh Grand Jury Map 1818

Some current work on cleaning and care of the GSI's Archives includes cleaning of an 1818 Grand Jury Map of the Slievardagh area. This map has a wealth of information on coal mining in the district and it is strongly recommended that anyone with an interest in this area should examine it. It is however about 2m by 1.25m in size so you will need to visit the GSI. A very small illustrative section is shown below.

