



NEWSLETTER

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Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

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MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2006/7

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

Slieveardagh Field Trip – Saturday 14th - Sunday 15th April 2007

The outline programme for this field visit led by Phelim Lally is listed inside.

10th Annual General Meeting – Saturday 12th May 2007 18.00 hours/6pm

Glendalough Hotel, Glendalough, Co. Wicklow

A full field visit programme for the weekend will be circulated soon, once finalized.

Irish Geology Week 1st – 7th May 2007

For further details of events all around Ireland the following website [<http://www.habitas.org.uk/es2k/>] will provide the information as the programme is finalized.

EDITORIAL

This is the tenth year of MHTI and the Newsletter. A lot has happened in relation to mining heritage since their inception. Glengowla show mine had already come into existence but has developed greatly since then. Arigna has since opened to the public. In Avoca the Williams engine house has been conserved and mining trails are now being developed. A little to the north, the ex-miners of Glendalough and friends are developing their own heritage identity. Conservation of engine houses at Allihies and Tankardstown has been well reported here. More recently Galway's mining heritage has been the subject of a conference as is reported within and its Proceedings have been published. A similar conference is being mooted for Sligo or elsewhere. And, after years of endeavour, Castlecomer collieries are presenting themselves.

All this is in the context of the perception that "There are no mines in Ireland", the legacy of a widely used geography text book which had used that single sentence under the heading "Mines". People now know that mines are part of their local heritage. The 2006 Journal presents details on mines that had been hitherto just names adding another dimension for local people. And so the process should continue. By providing information, awareness is created and a pride in what had been lost aspects of local heritage.

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

WWW.MHTI.COM

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Enclosed with this newsletter is an invoice for your 2007 membership of MHTI. In order to ensure that your insurance cover is activated as soon as possible, please return your subscription immediately. MHTI depends on the membership subscription in order to fund the newsletter, the Journal, and other activities so your prompt payment will be much appreciated.

JOURNAL 6

This newsletter and subscription invoice had been held back in order to mail them with your copy of the 2006 Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland (no. 6). The journal is a benefit of your membership, but unfortunately unforeseen delays mean that you will have to wait another few weeks before it will be distributed. When you do receive it you will find a diverse mix of articles on mining heritage topics from all over Ireland. We hope you will enjoy it.

GALWAY PROCEEDINGS

We are pleased to include in this mailing to every member a copy of the Proceedings of the Conference, *Galway's Mining Heritage: Extracting Galway in Oughterard* on 26th and 27th August 2006. This is an extra benefit of membership made possible because of the highly valued support provided by Galway County Council's Heritage Office and by the NRA, through Galway County Council's Roads Section for the Conference Proceedings.

Further copies are available for sale – contact Matthew Parkes (087-122 1967 or mparkes@museum.ie).

MHTI PUBLICATIONS

A new revised list of all MHTI publications and others on Irish mining heritage which are available for sale from MHTI has been compiled. All postage rates quoted are for single copies so please enquire if you wish to buy more than one title as the total cost should be less. Special discounts may be available for members or for larger purchases. Trade rates also apply for retailers.

Copies are available by post or by email – contact Matthew Parkes (087-122 1967 or mparkes@museum.ie).

CORRESPONDENCE

Model Steam Engine

Russell Bennett writes from Falmouth reminding the editor that it was he who had sent the “anonymous” quotation about the model steam engine which appeared in the last Newsletter (apologies to him – I had allowed his letter to become detached from the photocopy he had sent). He quotes a letter of 2001 from Geoff Hayes to him saying that he had seen the model in UCD. Meanwhile, the following letter had come from **Mr. Hayes** from Scotland:

On page 4 of the Newsletter 34 there is mention the model of the 100 inch Harris Navigation Colliery Cornish pumping engine made at the Perran Foundry by Mr. Cornelius. To the best of my knowledge this model engine is still in existence. When I saw it, in 1990, the model was in a glass case on a balcony overlooking the atrium of the new School of Mechanical Engineering, University College, Dublin.

Maybe the old Royal College wanted a model Cornish engine because Trinity College already had one. This model also still exists at Straffan Steam Museum and is of Taylor's 85 inch engine built by Perran Foundry for United Mines, Gwennap, Cornwall.

Mr Bennett adds:

May I conclude by saying how significant this model is. In my own personal opinion there were three great Cornish beam engine foundries: Harvey's, Copperhouse and Perran. The former 2 have extant engines but due to sheer misfortune no Perran engine has survived, the last being scrapped sometime in the mid-1960s. However, to be pedantic, there are the disconnected remains of a Perran engine lying in the shallows off a beach in the British Virgin Islands. So in short to have such a fine model of one Perran's greatest engines, one crafted by an actual employee of the foundry, is a real coup for Ireland. It should be considered a national treasure. The mysteries remain as to who commissioned it, why it was sent to Ireland etc and so I am sure there is a very interesting story waiting to be discovered.

He had written to UCD but got no reply and so hopes that someone in MHTI would go to the Belfield campus, check that it is still where it was in 1990, note its condition and photograph it for the next Newsletter. Any accompanying correspondence will not be lost!

Journal 5, Tankardstown

(i) Ken Brown writes re the article on the mineral railway: *With the suggested layout of the haulage arrangements as shown on page 73, there is the possibility that power was transmitted from the engine to the winding drums by endless wire rope. This system required a friction pulley, (a “Clifton” wheel) at the*

engine and a similar wheel at the winding drums. The endless rope was usually wound 2 or 3 turns around the Clifton wheels and a tensioning pulley was required somewhere suitable in the system. The winding drums were usually geared and clutched to the driven shaft. This method of haulage was widely used at collieries, often over considerable distances, both vertical and horizontal.

(ii) Peter Claughton points out: *The topographical and geophysical surveys presented by Barton are particularly informative; more so as they highlight a feature of any mine which has been missed by the other authors - how and where do you dispose of the spoil, the waste rock which is of no economic value.*

Familiarity with non-ferrous metal mining sites suggests there is something missing in the interpretation of the Tankardstown Mine featured on the cover of the Journal and discussed in detail on pages 35 to 38. The extent of the mine is well illustrated in Cowman's paper (Figure 7 on page 6) and a mine of this size produced not only large amounts of copper ore (Table 2 on page 7 suggests a peak at 9433 tons of c.10% concentrate in 1868) but much larger quantities of waste. Some of that waste was generated during the dressing processes carried out at Ballynasissla; for the ore, as mined, contained only a fraction of the metal in the concentrate sold for smelting. The majority was, however, the product of development work and the need to take away rock to provide access to the ore deposits.

Disposal of spoil was an important factor in any mine. Where possible, it was good practice to stack waste rock ('deads' in English mining terminology) below ground in areas where ore had been extracted in such a way that it would not impede further development, but not all waste could be disposed of in that manner - particularly during shaft sinking. Spoil heaps are therefore the most prominent features of most non-ferrous metal mines. So where are the spoil heaps at Tankardstown? Those familiar with the mine will be aware that there is very little spoil in evidence on the site - but Tankardstown had the benefit of the sea cliffs. Why spend money paying compensation to the landlord for ground sterilised under spoil heaps when the waste could be disposed of into the sea - a common practice on coastal mines. The evidence for that practice is there at Tankardstown but it is not included in the interpretation.

The topographical survey carried out by Barton illustrates the feature, an embankment (Item T4 in Figure 3 on page 17) aligned with a discontinuity in the wall of the mine yard, used to carry a tramway to the cliff edge. Reference to the plan used in the prospectus for the Knockmahon and Tankardstown United Copper Mines in 1898 (Figure 4 on page 55) shows the tramway as an unidentified linear feature

from Heron's Shaft to the cliff edge. As Barton notes on page 20 (commenting on the lack of any anomaly at S6 in the magnetic susceptibility diagram, Figure 5 on page 19), there is no evidence that the embankment led to an ore tipping arrangement onto the main tramway to Ballynasissla - an unlikely scenario given that the probable line of the main tramway can be traced into the mine yard adjacent to the collar of Heron's Shaft. There would have been a wooden overbridge across the main tramway leading to a gantry which allowed wagons to tip spoil over the cliff edge. Evidence for the gantry itself may be lost due to cliff erosion but some, probably in the form of post holes, might be uncovered on the site of the overbridge.

Tribute to ex-miner

Eamonn de Stafort sent a cutting from the *Nenagh Guardian* of 30th September 2006 reporting on a tribute to a man with a remarkable Irish mining record. Jack Hickey returned from England to work for Magcobar at Silvermines. Then with the launch of Mogul in 1968 he moved there working until closure in 1982. He then moved across the county border to work in Galmoy mine in Kilkenny but then moved back to Tipperary to Lisheen mine. He is thus probably unique in having worked in four Irish mines. The various tributes emphasised his concern for mine safety.

Find in Ballycummisk

Paddy O'Sullivan sent this photograph of items found in Ballycummisk mine probably dating from the early 20th century working. In the original bag, they comprise a measuring tape, claw-hammer and tamping mallet.



Further News from Tankardstown

The Tankardstown story was fully conveyed in *Journal* 5. Since then the area around the engine houses has been landscaped and planted, including the provision of an amphitheatre for summer concerts against their backdrop. The "shaft" has been recreated by a local inventive digger driver, Buddy Mooney, complete with shuttering and a divider section between it and the condenser pit. Unfortunately it has been necessary, for safety reasons, to rail off the danger areas. Information boards are in preparation.

FIELD TRIPS, CONNEMARA

These Field trips took place as part of the Conference, *Galway's Mining Heritage: Extracting Galway in Oughterard* on 26th and 27th August 2006. As Dr. Matthew Parkes had somehow got the *Proceedings* published in advance (copy included with member's mailing) the talks on 26th need not be further reported on except to say that the printed word does not convey the enthusiasm and humour from both speakers and audience.



On 27th the attendees assembled first at Glengowla show mine being welcomed by Paddy and Keith Geoghegan. The many improvements since MHTI's last visit were noted and it was a pleasure once again to go down the mine and to see how the lighting is now used to highlight various features. The Geoghegans outlined their plans for the future including providing accessibility to the deeper sections. Research still needs to be done on various facets of Glengowla's mining history and some suggestions as to the direction of further research are given below.

Next stop were the scant remains of Derrylea lead mine beside the Clifden road with the beginnings of the road widening which would destroy them. However, they have already been surveyed by MHTI (see Matthew Parkes in *Proceedings*). More interesting, perhaps, was

the causeway at the other side of the road running through a bog and into the distant trees (see below). Near its start (or end?) was the evidence of small-scale marble quarrying.

North of Clifden we saw the large-scale operations of Connemara Marble Industries Limited. A great smooth cliff of marble in three sections dominated the site and from the floor below one could identify how much had already been removed. Ambrose Joyce, the owner, whose guests we were privileged to be, explaining that all of this had originally been cut by a continuous wire, half a mile long going through abrasive sand to cut out a rectangular slab. This could take up to a year but the slab would then last several years.



All around the yard lay blocks of marble, some of it from other quarries. Ambrose explained the qualities of the differently coloured marbles and their uses. At present he makes jewellery and gift items from them. We saw the workshops where this was done as well as admiring samples of the finished products.



From there the next stop was part of the old Galway-Clifden line which we walked along until we hit the "Derrylea" causeway (above) where it emerged from the trees. Then south along it across bog until a double wonder was picked up. The first is at Matthew Parkes' persistence which lead him to this remote assemblage

of stone work. The second wonder was what this substantial investment was for. Every theory advanced could be refuted until there were no more theories left.

It is not marked on any OS map. That the rail line overlies the causeway implies it was pre-rail. An incomplete middle section of causeway suggests that it may never have been used for its original purpose. Portland cement plaster on two facing sides of pillars indicates a possible later adaptation, perhaps c. 1900. For photos and plans of this enigma, see the *Conference Proceedings*.

NEWS FROM CASTLECOMER

Seamus Walsh has recently sent a number of photographs of the progress of the new Mining Museum there. He writes: *“The building is progressing nicely. The first load of timber was brought on the Oct 16. Today (13th November), the roof is going on and will be done by next week”* Congratulations to Seamus and team that after many years of patient endeavour there is such a satisfactory tangible result.



A NOTE ON GLENGOWLA

The Mineral Statistics (MS) first show production here in 1851 and '52 with 110 tons of lead 70-80% rich plus 140 ozs. silver. Reference to such workings crop up in the Mining Journal (MJ) in Jan. and Feb. 1853 (pps.34 & 81) If there was other production it is not recorded though the MJ index suggests that lead and silver along with barites were being worked in 1856 (MJ 1856, p.773: 1857, p. 10). In the early 1860s it was still regarded as a "mine", under the ownership of F. O'Flaherty though the index to the Mining Journal suggests that no activity took place. The MS suggest the mine languishing until 1874 when taken over by a consortium called *Galway Mining Company*. Their nominal agent was Gibb followed by John (&/or R.) Floyd whose stewardship seemingly lasted to 1881. These may have been responsible for the 149 tons of barites produced from "Oughterard" in 1882. This possibly came from the waste tips of the 1850s operation when no practical use could be made of barites.

There is silence again until 1907 when a "Hodgeson" mine emerges with ownership being attributed to Messrs Symington and Blair and then (1908-1911) to Galway Mines Ltd. Under the heading of lead, the MS merely states "no detailed returns" but show 22 people employed between 1907 and 1909, all on the surface and therefore picking over old waste tips. It is likely therefore that Glengowla remained flooded following closure c. 1856 until pumped out by the Geoghegan's in the late 1990s.

ARIGNA MINING EXPERIENCE

Valerie Stenson, Manager of the Arigna Mining Experience Ltd, at Derreenavoggy, Arigna, Co Roscommon has sent some promotional material about the underground experience guided by a miner in the formerly working coal mine. We hope to organize a formal MHTI visit to the mine and surrounding sites during the year, but in the meantime find more information at www.arignaminingexperience.ie or phone 071-9646466 if you wish to visit independently.

SLIEVEARDAGH FIELDVISIT OUTLINE PROGRAMME

This field trip will be led by Phelim Lally, of the Irish Historic Minesite Characterization Project, Geological Survey of Ireland Ph. 01 6782763
E-mail phelim.lally@gsi.ie

If you are interested in attending please contact Matthew Parkes to keep up to date with the

Saturday - meet at crossroads in Ballingarry at 10 a.m.

Copper Chimney (1957) - spectacular, high, stone draught chimney

Lisnamrock Colliery engine house and chimney (1894)
Gorteen (late 1980's) - largest recent colliery in the coalfield: waste mountain, spontaneously combusted duff, washing and screening gantry, specialized flora, plugged adit

Ballynulty Drainage Level - arched tunnel from which mine waters still flow

(Optional industrial archaeological interest: Ballynulty Grain Mill - family restoring mill with fine furnace draught chimney, flues and gears)

Sunday

Mardyke Colliery (19th C) mine house, Cornish engine house and chimney

Knockanglass Opencast (1970-80's) - steep rockface showing strata, pit lake, walkabout observing effects of mining on landscape

Commons Colliery picturesque mine buildings (1897) and shaft

Earlshill Colliery (1881) quaint mine manager's house, and chimney.

The dates above are abandonment dates.

MINING HERITAGE TRUST OF IRELAND LIMITED



Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31st December 2005

	Notes	General Funds 2005 €	Restricted Funds 2005 €	Total (Note2) 2005 €	Total (Note2) 2004 €
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Subscriptions / Grants		4,479	69,474	73,953	14,421
Donations		355	-	355	5,076
Profit on Sales of Publications		404	-	404	248
Deposit Interest Received	2	5,238 3	69,474	74,712 3	19,745 7
Total Incoming Resources		5,241	69,474	74,715	19,752
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Administration Expenses	3	4,314	-	4,314	4,120
Development Projects		-	31,262	31,262	29,018
Total Resources Expended		4,314	31,262	35,576	33,138
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR PERIOD					
		928	38,212	39,140	(13,386)
Accumulated surplus at beginning of period		14,289	(7,947)	6,342	19,728
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>15,217</u>	<u>30,265</u>	<u>45,482</u>	<u>6,342</u>

The income and expenditure in the period arose solely from the continuing activities of the Company. The Company has no recognised gains and losses other than as disclosed above.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON 21ST SEPTEMBER 2006

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

Martin F. Critchley

Ewan Duffy

The attached notes form part of these financial statements