



NEWSLETTER

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Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

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MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2007-8

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

Mon Jan 7th Mineralogical Society Distinguished Lecture: "The subterranean machinations of explosive volcanoes" by Prof Jon Blundy, UCD Geological Sciences, Room G01, 5pm.

The IAEG will hold the AGM on Wednesday January 16th 2008 at the Newgrange Hotel in Navan, Co. Meath. Followed by lecture by Dr Norman Moles, an MHTI member.

20th April (Sunday) MHTI AGM, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary at 17.00, Abbey Court Hotel.

**20-24th April 2008
Green Mines Conference
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary**

17-18th May. Provisional date for fieldtrip to working modern goldmines of County Tyrone, and 19th century mines of the Slieve Gallion area, Cookstown. Led by Alastair Lings.

EDITORIAL

Since Des Cowman was away for a recent period, this newsletter has been compiled by Matthew Parkes, with assistance from Des Cowman, and all other MHTI Board members. Please continue to send any contributions to Des, on any mining history or heritage topic.

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2008 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your 2008 subscription invoice will be issued with your copy of the 2007 journal in a week or two once it is back from the printers, which will now probably be the first few days of January. Despite best efforts it was not possible to get these out before Christmas. All members are urged to send off their 2008 subscription NOW, whilst the idea is fresh in the mind. Not only will you save the MHTI officers a lot of work in generating individual invoices, but you will help facilitate the smooth running of an organization by its volunteer Board members.

We have an insurance scheme through NAMHO and ultimately through the British Caving Association which covers you for both surface and underground activities, meetings and fieldtrips etc for third party liability. The insurance is a substantial element of what you pay each year, but it is well worth it. It is also a case of strength in numbers – for the majority of the people out there who do not understand or appreciate what we are interested in, it is useful to stick together as a group and get the best cover possible. Our scheme also covers the mine owners and allows us to indemnify the Minister against claims from MHTI activities and thus assists in us getting permission from the Exploration and Mining Division to access underground workings, which are virtually all in the ownership and the responsibility of the State.

So please pay immediately so we can get the insurance cover in place as quickly as possible. See the website for current rates which remain the same as last year despite increasing costs for postage, envelopes, printing etc. Please send payments to the MHTI Treasurer, Ewan Duffy, c/o ERA, 36 Dame Street, Dublin 2. Wayne Cox has maintained our membership records very ably for quite a few years, but now has to pass on the duties, due to other commitments. Thanks to Wayne for the valuable work, and shortly after Christmas the database will be transferred to Brian Jones in ERA, who has agreed to take over.

What else do you get for your money? The 2007 Journal has a diverse mix of topics and we are sure you will enjoy the contents when it arrives with you shortly. For the small number of long time members who have not actually paid for 2007 – we can not afford to send you the journal unless we get your 2007 subs along with the 2008 payment. Please check the address label for dates if you receive a postal copy. If you get this newsletter by email, you will get a reminder if you have not paid yet.

The membership fee also covers your regular newsletters which we hope are an enjoyable read. Then there are fieldtrips and meetings which tend to get organized around some of the project activities MHTI is involved in or else if someone volunteers to lead or

organize an event. Why not let us know what activities most interest you and what you want to see going on? There is a great degree of behind the scenes representation on mining heritage and input to national and local consultations which is mostly done by a committed few. We need more help in day-to-day actions and so if you think you could do something, please say so!

Matthew Parkes

MHTI JOURNAL 2007

The new journal will be with you soon, with a diverse range of topics. Wicklow County Council have generously provided some support to this issue, which has a number of important papers on Gelndalough, Glendasan and their geology, mines and minerals.

If you have not paid your 2007 sub please pay immediately to ensure you receive the journal. If you have not paid, even though you may have been a long time member, we will be unable to send you a copy as there are significant costs involved in both printing and posting the journal.

The Journal will include an invoice for 2008 if you have not previously paid. PLEASE PAY YOUR MEMBERSHIP IMMEDIATELY.

MHTI AGM 20th APRIL 2008

The AGM for 2007 will be held on the Sunday 20th April at 5pm in the Abbey Court Hotel in Nenagh, Co Tipperary. This date has been selected to coincide with the Green Mines Conference for those who are able to attend, but we will also organize a programme of activities for the weekend immediately before the AGM. Put it in your dairy now.

THE PRESIDENT OPENS ALLIHIES MINING MUSEUM



It is pleasing to report that the President, Mary McAleese opened the Allihies Mining Museum on the 12th September this year. The picture is supplied by Diane Hodnett, who has been instrumental in helping the Allihies group source items of comparative mining equipment from Cornwall and other places, where none existed locally which could be used in the museum.

MHTI wishes the Allihies group great success with the Mining Museum and its associated artistic and community resource space. Make sure to pay them a visit if you are in the district.

Remarks by President McAleese at the opening of Allihies Copper Mine Museum, Allihies, Beara, Co Cork, Wednesday 12th September

A chairde,

Tá áthas orm a bheith anseo libh inniu, agus ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil libh as ucht an cuireadh a thug sibh dom labhairt libh ar an ócáid seo.

I can't imagine a more beautiful place to be than here on the magnificent Beara peninsula, so blessed by nature with the drama of mountain and sea all around. I imagine for those whose tough and dangerous work was in the copper mines the sight of such beauty, the

freshness of the air must have been a tonic after a day's hard work. And today, long after their life's work is over and long after the copper mining has ended, a new generation has restored the miners' story to memory here in this fine museum.

I doubt very much if copper mining was ever a labour of love. But the creation of this museum definitely is and I thank Charles Tyrell and the board and staff of Allihies Parish Co-operative Society for inviting me to join this day of celebration when we officially open the Allihies Copper Mine Museum and crown with success their years of planning and fundraising and building.

Not only have you given a new lease of life to the old Church of Ireland building but in so doing you have revealed the unique history of this area that started with the arrival in the mid-nineteenth century of Welsh miners, to work these then- new mines and to teach the skill of mining. This was their Church built for them so, as a venue for the museum it holds a very special and direct link.

Now old and new blend elegantly together so effortlessly that it would be easy to overlook the huge amount of effort that it took to create this wonderful new facility. It is a credit to this community from whom the inspiration and energy came. It is a credit to West Cork LEADER Group and its support for innovative rural development. Now we have both a monument and a museum, a place where all can access this intriguing part of our nation's story.

These mines shaped the lives of your forebears. For many it shaped their deaths too, for the work was difficult, dangerous and physically very demanding. But the alternative was the emigrant ship and indeed there came a time when there was no choice but that dreaded voyage to America. If you were in Butte, Montana today you would meet there every single name you would meet in Beara for, as the mining tailed off and ended in one place, it began in another and the Irish miners, like the Welshmen before them, followed the mining jobs.

I visited Butte in May 2006, saw the mines, met the miners and their families, heard of their love of Ireland, the land they left and longed for, heard too of how the mining there had ended with the cruelty of high unemployment and environmental pollution on a huge scale. So many had been forced yet again to move on to places of new opportunity. Yet they had a proud memory of the heyday of those mines when Butte was prosperous, when the Irish in Butte were legendary for their fidelity to Irish culture, the Gaelic language and her freedom. It was in the library in Butte that I chanced upon a letter from Eamon de Valera, written from his cell in Kilmainham. In that letter he thanks his many friends in Butte for their support and tells them he knows they will remain custodians of Ireland's

destiny. In Butte they talk of Beara as if it was down the street. They talk of Ireland as home.

Those brave emigrants were true pioneers and this Museum captures an important part of their story, the start of their story. They too would feel a righteous pride in the accomplishments of the people of Allihies, their people, in being so faithful to their heritage, so careful of their memory. There is a huge enrichment brought to this community as a result of working together to bring this project to fruition and there is now a fine gift offered to all who come as visitors - a point of access through which we get to know better our past generations, their trials, their courage and their spirit.

I wish you all success in this very worthy venture. I hope that the future generations who come will be as enthralled by the story and as grateful for the sacrifices of the people who created the history of Allihies' copper mines as we are today.

Guím gach rath oraibh agus go n-éirí go geal leis an tionscnamh.

STEPHEN MORETON

One of our members, Stephen Moreton recently suffered a serious injury when a boulder fell on his leg. He will be several months at least recovering with repairs to the leg. MHTI Directors and members will wish Stephen the speediest recovery to full mobility and health in order to continue with his passion of mineral collecting. A paper by Stephen and David Green of Manchester Museum, on the mineralogy of Glendasan and Glendalough is included in Journal 7.

DEREENALOMANE MINE - PIPES, PUMPS AND FLOWER ARRANGING

Diane Hodnett was most surprised recently to stumble upon this rising main pump pipe from the Dereenalomane Mine near Bantry in County Cork in the Sheep's Head Bar in Durrus. It is standard diameter 8 inch cast iron pipe, and is currently supporting some hanging floral decorations. The owner was unaware where it came from



GLENDALOUGH MINING SEMINAR AND FIELD TRIP 1st SEPTEMBER 2007



There has been a lot of activity in the Glendalough/Glendasan mines recently. The MHTI held its AGM there in May 2007 and also facilitated a field trip to the mines for the Historical Metallurgy Society on 17th September 2007. Other activities in the area include plans by the Glendalough Mines Heritage Group for interpretation boards and the development of a walking trail in Glendasan by the Wicklow Mountains National Park. Martin Critchley prepared and manned a stand at the recent Glendalough mining heritage seminar for Heritage Week.

HISTORICAL METALLURGY SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE – METALS AND METALWORKING IN IRELAND

About fifty people from the UK-based Historical Metallurgical Society were hosted by MHTI in the form of the wonderful background work done by Matthew Parkes who also provided an introduction to Irish mining. The opening session on Friday was in the National Museum, Kildare St. and the keynote speaker was its director, Pat Wallace. Next morning back at the museum we were escorted around the metalwork holdings, from Bronze Age to Viking with explanations as to the techniques used. Where the metals originally came from is still a matter of conjecture.

Interpretation of the archaeological evidence for the smelting of iron in Ireland formed themes of more than half the talks on Saturday afternoon, evening and on Sunday morning, reflecting the level of debate there is on the topic. Non-ferrous metal-working was mainly represented through detailed examination of artifacts though one contribution and display featured experiments on how copper might be smelted while another speaker spoke of evidence for copper smelting linked to Bronze Age and Medieval mining sites

MHTI members also lead two field trips. Rob Goodbody, who had already spoken on the relationship between the mine and smelter at Ballycorus, led a group to Glendalough mines. The guide to Avoca mines was our chairman, Martin Critchley. An abstract of most of the talks is available.

NAMHO CONFERENCE 2008 CHANGE OF DATE AND VENUE

Arrangements for the NAMHO Conference for 2008 are progressing well but we need to bring to your attention that the date and venue have changed.

The main conference programme will now take place at the Scottish Mining Museum - Lady Victoria Colliery site, Newton Grange, Midlothian, EH22 4QN, approximately 8 miles South of Edinburgh City Centre. The main event will be over the weekend 11th to 13th July 2008.

Title: **Mines People and Industries of Scotland**

Delegate Fee will be £27

There will also be a good range of surface and underground field trip programme which should accommodate all who might be interested in field trips over the weekend.

The field trip programme is being organised by Grampian Speleological Group (but only bookable via the conference programme). We are told that there will be plenty of local trips over the weekend – these will not generally involve SRT but some are very wet! It is also intended that there be trips over a wider area during the following week. Local camping and other accommodation is available close to the conference venue.

CORRESPONDENCE

Further to the article *The Ballycorus Leadworks* in the 2006 Journal, the author would like to add some clarifications.

The labelled works survey plan which appeared in Figure 9 is the work of Mr Ian Booth (originally of Shankill, Co Dublin), and is based on a surviving early 20th-century large-scale partially labelled architect-style plan of the works. The survey plan was drawn about 40 years ago, but never published.

The diagram showing the Ballycorus works grinding and levigating machinery used in Figure 13 was photocopied from the document collection of the late Mr Richard Pilkington, of Ballycorus Road, Kiltiernan. The original textbook source is unknown. (In April 2005 this writer interviewed Mr Pilkington – a lucid ninety-something year old with a profound knowledge of local history, and who at one time even built a model of the lead works. Sadly, he passed away in November 2006).

The photographic collection of the late local historian and archaeologist Patrick (Paddy) Healy, which includes several old shots of the Ballycorus works, is now available through the South Dublin Libraries Local Studies Section website: www.southdublinimages.ie. Some images from this source along with the authors more recent photos of the Ballycorus site, and a 1:1 photocopy of the original unsigned large-scale works plan in Mr Pilkington's collection, were lodged to the MHTI archive in December 2005.

Finally, thanks are due to Des Cowman and Matthew Parkes both of whom were extremely helpful to this author (more a local historian than a mining historian) while piecing together the story behind the Ballycorus site from the limited primary sources available. In addition, Dr Parkes very kindly supplied digital copies of the 1905 works photos in the GSI archives. Also, the interior photo in Figure 3 appeared courtesy of Henry Cairns of Bray, Co Wicklow. In the rush for copy deadline these acknowledgements were regrettably omitted.

Paul Normoyle, Shankill, Co Dublin

FOOTPRINTS IN THE COAL

The new 'Footprints in Coal' exhibition is now open in the Visitor Centre of Castlecomer Discovery Park. The centre opened to the public on Sunday 1st July with a special preview for local residents on Saturday 30th June. There was huge interest among the local population because the project has been underway for a number of years and the opening was eagerly anticipated.

'Footprints in Coal' tells the story of coal-mining in Castlecomer from the formation of the coal 300 million years ago to the final closure of the Deerpark mine in 1969. The first part of the exhibition explains the geological setting in which the coal was formed in the enormous swamp forests of the Upper Carboniferous. In 1864 a number of rare amphibian fossils were found by the miners and proved to be of great scientific importance. The exhibition uses models, reconstructions audio-visual presentations and fossil specimens to bring the past to life.

Castlecomer's mining history is the focus of the second part of the exhibition. Three hundred years of coal mining history are illustrated through the use of audio-visual presentations, photographs, displays of mining artefacts, mine models, information panels and video clips of interviews with some of the local miners and the families of those associated with the mines. There is even a simulated mine for children or adventurous adults to crawl through.

Visitors' reactions have been very positive with some visitors coming back more than once. The 'Footprints in Coal' exhibition appeals to a broad range of visitors from retired coal miners and local people with mining connections to those from other parts of Ireland and from abroad with no prior knowledge of either geology or mining history.

If you're planning a visit to the exhibition, you can also avail of the other facilities in Castlecomer Discovery Park. We have 80 acres of woodland, 6km of walking trails, picnic areas, toilets, giftshop, car and coach parking, children's playground and a design craft yard. We also cater for school tours.

The visitor centre, exhibition and other amenities are a tribute to the local community and the Board of Directors who worked for so many years to bring the project to life.

For further details see the website at www.discoverypark.ie or phone 056 4440707.



The Castlecomer Demesne Project is engaged in a joint marketing project part funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Ireland/Wales INTERREG IIIA Programme. It has also been funded by Kilkenny County Council, BNS Rural Development through the Leader EU Programme and NDP, and Pobal (Community Services Programme). The project has been developed under licence by Coillte.

IRISH POST MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

A chance encounter with an archaeologist, Richard Clutterbuck, who wanted to purchase a couple of MHTI publications for his own research, made me aware of this group I had not heard of before. There is obviously some overlap with MHTI in terms of interests and they have a link to MHTI in their own website. If you are interested in finding out more about them and their activities, the website for the Irish Post Medieval Archaeology Group is:

<http://www.science.ulster.ac.uk/crg/ipmag/>

They are organising a conference in Kerry in February 2008. The details have to be worked out but it will be advertised on the web site and in Archaeology Ireland and History Ireland in due course.

Matthew Parkes

BOOK REVIEW

***Thomas F. Walsh Progressive Businessman and Colorado Mining Tycoon* by John Stewart (Mining the American West Series)**

Don Borthwick sends a review of this.

Thomas F. Walsh tells the story of one of the West's wealthiest mining magnates—an Irish American prospector and lifelong philanthropist who struck it rich in Ouray County, Colorado. In the first complete biography of Thomas Walsh, John Stewart recounts the tycoon's life from his birth in 1850 and his beginnings as a millwright and carpenter in Ireland to his tenacious, often fruitless mining work in the Black Hills and Colorado, which finally led to his discovery of an extremely rich vein of gold ore in the Imogene Basin. Walsh's Camp Bird Mine yielded more than \$20 million worth of gold and other minerals in twenty years, and the mine's 1902 sale to British investors made Walsh very wealthy.

He achieved national prominence, living with his family in mansions in Colorado and Washington, D.C., and maintaining a rapport with Presidents McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Taft, as well as King Leopold II of Belgium. Despite his fame and lavish lifestyle, Walsh is remembered as an unassuming and philanthropic man who treated his employees well. In addition to making many anonymous donations, he established the Walsh Library in Ouray and a library near his Irish birthplace, and helped establish a research fund for the study of radium and other rare western minerals at the Colorado School of Mines. Walsh gave his employees at the Camp Bird Mine top pay and lodged them in an alpine boardinghouse featuring porcelain basins, electric lighting, and excellent food.

John Stewart's engaging account explores the

exceptional path of this Colorado mogul in detail, bringing Walsh and his time to life. Stewart is an attorney in Denver. He completed a master's degree in history at the University of Colorado at Denver.

ISBN: 978-0-87081-870-7; Binding: Cloth; Pages: 272; Illustrations: 25 b/w photos, 2 maps; Price \$34.95
<http://www.upcolorado.com/bookdetail.asp?isbn=978-0-87081-870-7>

IAEG AGM and LECTURE

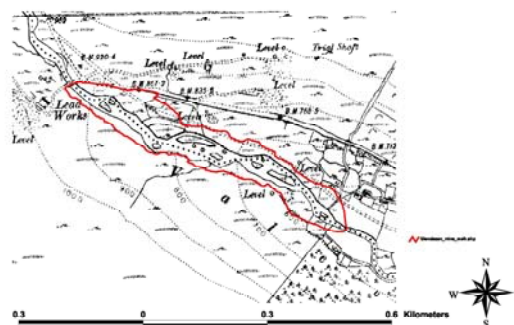
The IAEG will hold the AGM on Wednesday January 16th 2008 at the Newgrange Hotel in Navan, Co. Meath.

Prior to the AGM, Dr. Norman Moles of University of Brighton will present a talk titled "Geological setting of the Aberfeldy (Scotland) sedex barite - Zn-Pb-sulphide deposits and prospectivity of the Irish Dalradian for similar mineralization"

GLENDASAN

There has been a lot of activity in the Glendalough/Glendasan mines recently. The MHTI held its AGM there in May 2007 and also facilitated a field trip to the mines for the Historical Metallurgy Society on 17th September 2007. Other activities in the area include plans by the Glendalough Mines Heritage Group for interpretation boards and the development of a walking trail in Glendasan by the Wicklow Mountains National Park

Glendasan Mining Walk



AVOCA

The Celtic Copper Heritage project organized a workshop on Tourism and Sustainable Development, October 2007. The meeting was well attended by delegates from Ireland and Anglesey.

EUROPAMINES AGM

The 3rd AGM of the Europamines was held in the Czech Republic in September 2007 and organized by Dr Veronika Štedrá of the Czech Geological Survey. A very interesting and exciting programme of events enabled us to visit many sites, including Příbram and Kutná Hora that are of huge significance in the annals of European mining history and heritage.

As well as arranging the AGM meetings and excursions, Dr Štedrá also undertook to conduct a pre-AGM tour of the Ore Mountains and other sites in Bohemia, including Jáchymov, which Agricola is reputed to have visited, basing some of his observations for *De Re Metallica* from his experience of this and other mines.

BOOK PROPOSAL ON IRISH MINING DIASPORA

Bill Mulligan writes: Some time ago, I queried the Irish Diaspora list about interest in a volume on Irish miners in the Diaspora. Shortly thereafter, two other book projects that had been simmering required my more immediate attention. They are both out now and I am returning to this idea with enthusiasm. I will be contacting those who responded individually.

If you are interested in participating, please let me know. I see the book in these terms:

- Focus on hard rock miners, not coal miners or quarry workers.
- Essays of 30 pages (7500 words) maximum, most closer to 25 pages.
- Several chapters on mining/miners in Ireland.
- As full coverage of the Diaspora -- US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, continental Europe, et al. as the research currently being done allows.
- I will write the introduction, edit the volume, and write an essay on Irish miners in Michigan.

If you are interested, I'd like to have submissions of expression of interest, title of proposed essay, and 200 word abstract by March 1.

I will contact publishers, with the idea of final copy submitted within 12 months of agreement. Please let me know if you are interested or can suggest people that might be. If you have any question, also, just let me know.

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DONEGAL FIELDTRIP



A lack of time and space does not allow a full report on the Donegal fieldtrip, but it was certainly a most enjoyable trip. A more detailed report will appear in the next newsletter.