



NEWSLETTER

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Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

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MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2008

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

19th April (Saturday) Joint MHTI/IGA day coach trip from Dublin to Castlecomer Discovery Park and to Dunmore Cave. See page 2 for more details

20th April (Sunday) MHTI AGM, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary at 17.00, Abbey Court Hotel. See pages 11-12.

20-23rd April 2008

Green Mines Conference

Nenagh, Co. Tipperary

SEE www.planeteearth.ie for details

17-18th May. The mineral wealth of Co. Tyrone. Fieldtrip to working modern goldmines of County Tyrone, and 19th century mines of the Slieve Gallion area, Cookstown. Led by Alastair Lings. See page 2 for programme.

EDITORIAL

Matthew Parkes offers his apologies for a couple of omissions – items sent by contributors that got overlooked for the last newsletter by accident. Please send any items for inclusion in the next newsletter to:

Des Cowman, “Knockane”, Annestown, Co. Waterford. ☎ (051) 396157 📧 dcowman@iol.ie

WWW.MHTI.COM

FINANCE MATTERS

It is that time of the year again, when annual subscriptions are due. Despite ever rising costs, your board have agreed to hold the euro subscription rates steady for 2008. However, due to the weakening of sterling against the euro, it is necessary to raise the subscription rates for members paying in Sterling.

There are additional costs imposed on the MHTI by our bank for processing sterling receipts and accordingly, an exchange rate that is higher than the standard exchange rate is required to ensure that the MHTI is not put at a loss as a result of offering this convenience to members in the Sterling zone.

All members in the UK/overseas can, if they wish, pay their subscriptions in euro by means of a cheque/bank draft drawn on Ireland (non Irish euro cheques cannot be accepted, due to the absence of a common euro cheque clearing system) or by euro cash.

Ewan Duffy, Treasurer.

FIELD TRIP, 19TH APRIL, 2008 CASTLECOMER DISCOVERY PARK and DUNMORE CAVE

Castlecomer Discovery Park is a very new venture based on the mining heritage of the Castlecomer area. There is a geological museum and walks around the Park. We will have lunch here either in the new Jarroo Café (soup, sandwiches and light lunches) or bring a packed lunch and enjoy eating *al fresco*.

In the afternoon we will visit Dunmore Show Cave with an experienced caver as guide. The tour of the cave lasts an hour and we will be finished by about 4pm.

We will organize a coach from Dublin. The cost will be no more than €20 and, we hope, a lot less if enough members come along. **We need to have a good idea of how many will travel by coach so please contact Susan Pyne at 01-456 2301 or Angela Casey at acasey@galwaycoco.ie no later than 5pm on Friday 11th April.**

We have obtained reduced entrance fees to both venues, Discovery Park is €5 and Dunmore Cave €2.10

Meet: Castlecomer Discovery Park, 11.30am.

Meet: Dublin, Haddington Road, outside Geological Survey at 9.15am
Dublin, Red Cow Moran's Hotel at 9.45am.
Arrive back in Dublin around 5.30 to 6.00pm.

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 diary now.

TYRONE FIELDTRIP 17th – 18th MAY 2008

The mineral wealth of Co. Tyrone

This fieldtrip will explore Irelands only working gold mine (open pit), small workings for lead and iron, collieries and associated canals.

In a slight departure from normal engineering / geology type visits we will also tour Lissan House, near Cookstown: the home of the Staples family for almost 400 years, since 1620. The family were involved in iron and coal mining. Forges on the estate provided the pikes for Sir Phelim O'Neills uprising of 1641, and made the chains for the boom that prevented ships relieving Derry during the siege of 1689.

The House features a spectacular oak staircase, a hydropower plant, water gardens and a bridge designed by Daviso de Arcort, the engineer behind the tub boat canal at Coalisland.

There is the chance of a visit to the trial gold working at Curraghinalt (underground).

Members are requested to bring safety wellingtons, hard hats and hi-viz jackets for the open-pit visit (A limited stock of these items will be available), and lamps for underground visits.

Lunches should be available in Gortin, Cookstown or elsewhere.

Saturday 17 May 2008 am

Meet at 10:30 at the office of Omagh Minerals / Galantas Gold. Access through a gate where Falskey Road meets Botera Upper Road (H 401 713) Discovery sheet 12.

- Omagh Mine (gold, open pit) and mill, 2007-present.

Saturday pm

- Either Curraghinalt Mine (gold, underground), 1987-1989. (H570 867) Map sheet 13.

- Or Strabane Mine (lead, underground), pre 1758. (H351 967) Map sheet 12.

- Glenlark trial (lead, underground). (H595891) Map sheet 13.

- Pollanroe trial / Teebane West (lead underground), 1860s. (H581 833) Map sheet 13.

Sunday 18 May 2008 am

Meet at 10:30 at Lissan House (H797 823), using the entrance at Churchtown (H805 822) Map sheet 13.

-Lissan House, hydropower plant, water gardens and White Bridge.

-Coalisland Colliery (remains of buildings), 1924-1926. (H847 672) Map sheet 19.

Sunday 18 May 2008 pm

Meet at 14:00 outside the public library (Cornmill Centre), between Line Street and Main Street (H 841 666) Map sheet 19.

-Ducarts Canal, 1777-1840. (Aqueduct (H 818 673) and gravitational inclines (H812 665 and H826 671))

Coordinator:

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Further information on the above sites is available from:

Cliff DC & Wolfenden M, 1992. The Lack gold deposit, Northern Ireland. P 65-75 in Bowden AA et al, 1992. The Irish Minerals Industry 1980-1990. Irish Association for Economic Geology, Dublin.

Clifford JA et al, 1992. Gold in the Sperrin Mountains, Northern Ireland: an exploration case history. P 77-87 in Bowden AA et al, 1992. The Irish Minerals Industry 1980-1990. Irish Association for Economic Geology, Dublin.

Legg IC et al, 1985. Mineral localities in the Dalradian and associated igneous rocks of County Donegal, Republic of Ireland, and in Northern Ireland. Geological Survey of Ireland, Dublin. 87pp, 4 maps.

Old RA, 1974. The Strabane Lead Mine, Co. Tyrone. Irish Naturalists Journal Vol 18 , No 2, p41-43.

McCutcheon WA, 1980. The Industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland. HMSO, Belfast. (The Tyrone Coalfield, p325-348 + plates. Canals and Inland Navigation, p49-? + plates)

McIlvenna T, 2005. This wonder working canal – a history of the Tyrone Navigation. 416 pp.

<http://www.galantas.com/>

<http://www.tournigan.com/s/home.asp>

<http://www.staples-lissanhousecookstown.org.uk/>

Accommodation

B&Bs in and near Omagh include the following. The prices quoted are for a single person in 2007. Callers from the Republic can replace the 028 number with 048.

Ardmore B&B, Mrs Iris McCann

12 Tamlacht Road, Omagh, BT78 5AW. 028 8224 3381. £20.

Arleston House B&B, Mrs Rita Fox
1 Arleston Park, Omagh, BT79 7LJ. 028 82241719.
£25.

Ashview House B&B, Mr & Mrs P Douglas
38 Retreat Heights, Omagh, BT79 0HH. 028 8224 3062. £25.

Bankhead B&B, Mrs S Clements
9 Lissan Road, Omagh, BT78 1TX. 028 8224 5592.
£18.

Clanabogan Country House B&B, Mrs Mary Montgomery
85 Clanabogan Road, Omagh, BT78 1SL. 028 8224 1171. £25.
www.clanaboganhouse.co.uk

Golden Hill Guest House, Mrs Joyce Donnelly
32 Tattykeel Road, Omagh, BT78 5DA. 028 8225 1257. £25.
www.goldenhillguesthouse.com

Further information is available from Omagh Tourist Information Centre, 1 Market Street, 028 8224 7831, e-mail omaghtic@btconnect.com, and at <http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/default.aspx>

CORRESPONDENCE

Mick Carragher writes -

(i) Wartime Iron mining

Iron was extracted north of the village of Cloffoney, along the N17 in Co Sligo in the town lands of Bunduff and Creevyheel during the 2nd world war, according to my good friend Kevin Keogh 81 years. He remembers an iron ore pit, out of which they hauled tons of red sticky clay by horse and cart. This material was dumped along the side of the road. Trucks then came along and it was re-loaded and brought to the port of Sligo and Killybegs. Has any MHTI readers heard of what this material might be?,

(ii) Mine visit

A group of friends and I visited the Foss barytes mine operated by M. I. Great Britain Ltd. The mine is located ten miles North West of the town of Aberfeldy in Perthshire central Scotland.

In winter the barytes is stock-piled due to snow and road conditions. Miners travel the gravel road for three and a half miles by snowtrak machines and keep production going. We were met on site by mine manager Bill Heron who brought us walking down the -8 decline to mine bottom at 560 level. Pumping is by submersible sump pumps. Drilling is by jackleg hand held drills and mucking is carried out by slusher and dux scoops and twelve ton toro trucks. Two

compressors on the surface provide air for the operations.

The return walk to the surface was a challenge for sunshine just in time to have tea with some of the miners who were having lunch break. Thanks to John Christie and Bill Heron who allowed our visit.

Irish Mining Migration I – Leadville, Colorado.

James Walsh is finishing a Ph. D. on the mines in Leadville, Colorado in which Irish miners featured. The following is his response to questions about recruitment and other aspects of the mines there.

I haven't found much evidence of recruitment for Leadville among the Irish in the US generally, but instead a strong oral tradition that people followed to more promising jobs and towns. These miners travelled to and from the same places and this extended community took care of each other.

The silver mines in Leadville were quite large. During the 1880s there were roughly 40,000 people living in the town, perhaps 20,000 of them miners. I'm studying two major strikes that took place there; one in 1880, one in 1896. Both were broken by the military.

There were many Cornish in Leadville, as well as in Central City, Colorado and Irish/Cornish conflict and violence was legendary. I have many references to the fact that within the miners' union, the Irish ran it and didn't trust the Cornish and vice versa.

Irish Mining Migration II – The North of England

As part of the above exchange, Don Borthwick sent the following based on his own researches into mining migration in the North of England.

Looking through my Tyneside and North East stuff revealed nothing of Irish migration interest. There was major immigration from Scotland and Ireland with the usual social problems prior to integration. Enquiries so far about the Northern Pennines suggest there were very few Irish names either in mining or other occupations. However, they were in Cumberland (now West Cumbria). It is closest to Ireland with established links, coal, iron and some copper mining (also lead but I have found no connection here).

Throughout the nineteenth century Cumberland was enriched by an influx of workmen from Scotland and Ireland and from nearly every county in England. Irishmen worked in the coal mines and in the 1840's found employment in railway construction and as dockers; there were 4,881 natives of Ireland in Cumberland in 1841 but they were outnumbered by Scots of whom there were 6,355. Ten years later the number of native Irishmen in the county had doubled to 9,866, these being a small part of the huge exodus which followed the great famine in Ireland. It was Ireland which provided the biggest supply of

immigrants and reached a maximum of 14,093 in 1881. Scots furnished the next largest supply of labour which also reached its maximum in 1881 with 12,207

As could be expected many Irishmen settled in the coastal towns where jobs were immediately available thus sparing them the hardship of going further afield in search of employment. Exactly how many Irishmen came to work in the collieries it is impossible to say but it is certain that a large proportion of these immigrants became coal miners. A witness stated to the Royal Commission on Mines (1862-4) that in the Cleator district, "*The trade . . . has developed so rapidly lately that there is a great deal of imported labour and a great deal of new labour which goes into the collieries is Irish labour and therefore you have generally speaking an inferior class of work people to deal with*". Cleator Moor became the home of the chief Irish community in Cumberland and even now it is referred to as "Little Ireland". ("West Cumberland Coal 1600-1982/3" by Oliver Wood in *Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society Extra Series XXIV 1988*, p181).

There was an established coal trade from the west coast mines to Dublin, hence an established communication route to pass along information about jobs.

Granite Quarrying in the Mourne Mountains

Stephen Moreton writes:

On a completely different topic, do you know of any publications about the history of quarrying in the Mournes? I vaguely remember, years ago, a local history type publication, describing the history of granite quarrying there, but cannot remember any more. It was once a big industry, and the streets of Lancashire were paved with Mournes granite. Maybe a note in the newsletter appealing for information on published sources would elicit a response from one of the Northern Irish members.

ACCESS TO OLD MINE SITES IN IRELAND

The MHTI has sought to enable surface and underground access to abandoned mine sites in Ireland. It has done this with consultation with land owners and the Irish State. It has also availed of third party public liability insurance for its members through the British Caving Association (BCA). Recently a delegation of Directors of the MHTI met with representatives of the State to clarify the access to abandoned mine sites.

The majority of old mine sites in Ireland are on private land and members are reminded to always seek permission before you access the land. The Avoca Mine site is on lands in the ownership of the State and access to these lands is currently only by prior arrangement with the Exploration and Mining Division (EMD) of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources through the Directors of MHTI.

All abandoned underground mine workings also come under the custodianship of the State. The Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland has negotiated access to underground workings on a strict case by case basis. All underground trips must be notified and approved by officials of EMD prior to the visit; again through the Directors of the MHTI. All underground visitors must be covered by BCA 'Cavers' insurance. If these rules are not adhered to then there is a serious danger that the State will not allow any underground visits to abandoned mine sites in Ireland.

Furthermore, because of the on-going studies in to the environmental and safety conditions at the Avoca mine site, then underground access at Avoca may be restricted at the moment. In particular no permission will grant for access to the mine workings via Farmer's Shaft.

Martin Critchley

ALLIHIES MUSEUM OPENING

Diane Hodnett writes

On another topic entirely - the President's speech that was in the last issue of the Newsletter, praising the 'Welsh' in Allihies. She most definitely said 'Cornish' on the day - I was only ten feet away from her, and heard her say it. A letter to the Aras elicited a very pleasant reply from Pres. McAleese's Secretary, saying 'of course' I was correct, and they would alter the President's website speech right away.

President's opening. Diane Hodnett, Kingsley Rickard, Camborne, (past President, Trevithick Soc.) . J. Arthur Osborne (Camborne), who supplied many old photos.



REPORT ON THE CO. DONEGAL FIELD TRIP (1-2 SEPT 2007)

The first port of call on Saturday morning was Carrowtrasna Steatite Mine, 3 km north of Churchill. The mine worked intermittently from 1860 to the 1940s. Early Ordnance Survey maps show the site was previously a corn mill.



The site lies in a small valley, whose stream was once been diverted along a leat, to the west. The valley has been infilled with spoil, through which the stream now drains. Access to the underground workings is very limited, and surface remains consist of millstones, concrete supports and other concrete structures. In the garden of a nearby house is a ventilation pipe from the mine.



There was no evidence that a railway track approached the concrete supports, and they probably carried a launder for the water turbine. Nearby engine beds were

probably for the two gas suction engines installed around 1912.

Future work at this site could include:

- making a surface plan, to aid in identifying features,
- searching archives for mine records,
- lowering a CCTV camera down the ventilation pipe to view the shaft and any adjoining workings, and
- examining the underground workings with a view to digging in to any adits.

The next mines visited were in the Glendowan area, 9 km to the south-west. At Inniskill mine there are the remains of an old mill, a collapsed level, a flooded incline, and a flooded shaft or adit. The present depths of the flooded incline and shaft / adit could be estimated with drain rods. The old mill site could be cleaned out and photographed. The trial level at Carrickatimpan was found to be about 20 m long.



Inniskill level

Crohy Steatite Mine, 7 km WSW of Dunglow, was visited on Saturday afternoon. On top of the cliffs are the remains of an inclined adit, access tracks and a small mill structure with chimney. Access to the beach is possible down a zig-zag track, which is eroded towards the bottom. Further north, at the back of the beach are short trials. At the north end of the beach is a rubble slope, from the top of which one can see six levels driven in the cliff. The rock is highly fractured and collapsing badly. Also visible from the top of the rubble slope is a sea cave.

The aim of the visit was to try to get into this sea cave at low water (0.4 m at Burtonport), and see if any workings were accessible from it. A party of swimmers managed to get in to the cave and found that it was far more extensive than imagined. The cave follows the line of the cliffs northwards for 100 m, and is up to 10 m high with polished walls. There was no access to mine workings from the cave. Forty minutes after low water (? 0.8 m at Burtonport) the Atlantic waves were running over offshore reefs, and made exit from the sea cave very difficult.



The workings visible from the rubble slope are probably inaccessible from above and below, due to the very weak ground. Future work at the mine could include making a surface plan of the site showing pedestrian access routes, haulage routes and the mill. Caving members may wish to examine the sea cave. Low water spring tides include Saturday 5 - Tuesday 8 April, 5 - 7 May, 2 - 4 August, 1 - 2 and 17 - 18 September.



On the way to Muckish on the Sunday morning MHTI members stumbled upon a tunnel opposite a church by

the N56 north of Creeslough. This turned out to be part of a former access route to the church from Ards House. The tunnel had ornate stonework portals, but the northern end was destroyed during road widening operations.

Muckish Silica Sand Quarry was worked intermittently from 1798 to 1954. The site consists of a quarry with the remains of a hut, loading shovel, compressor, tubs and jaw crushers at 585 m altitude. This is linked by the remains of a wooden chute to a washing plant and hoppers at the road head at 350 m altitude.



The quarry is impressive due to its position, history and remains, and it is worthy of further research. Practical conservation work could include recovering any small items of plant from streambeds, gullies (etc), and storing them where they will not be buried by landslides. Due to lack of time the visit to Keeldrum Lead Mine was postponed.

Alastair Lings

THE MINERS' WAY – UNDERGROUND AT BUNMAHON

This booklet, published by the Copper Coast Geopark, is to give people a sense of the spectacular mineralisation in one location there, as it is both very difficult of access and quite dangerous within. It begins by putting the mine workings into perspective through the mine plans. Most of the workings are below sea-level and therefore will never be accessible. Even the adit complex illustrated here is subject to flooding. However, a favourable opportunity was used to bring cameras and lighting equipment down which enabled Martin Critchley and Mike Sweeney to take a stunning series of photographs bringing out the vivid blues and greens which coat the mine walls. Brownish manganese and iron staining serve to emphasise the richness of the copper oxidation.

This booklet is a successor to Ike Wilson's pioneering *Beneath Our Feet*, long out of print. It is available from MHTI and from the Copper Coast office, Annewstown, Co. Waterford for €5 plus €1.50 for post and packing.

MINERALS – UNDERGROUND AT BUNMAHON

Below is the "Conclusions" section of a paper I have just had published in Journal of the Russell Society, (2007), vol. 10, p. 10 - 17, entitled "Copper-bearing silica gel from the walls of Tankardstown mine, Co. Waterford, Ireland." This is the result of detailed analyses I did of the blue and green coatings inside that mine. I have been able to show that they are silica gel with copper bound to the surface. If I had not been a chemist working for a silica gel manufacturer (so it was a speciality of mine) I doubt I'd have been in a position to tackle them. As these coatings are featured in publications on the Bunmahon mines, and the area seems to be generating a lot of interest, my paper may be of some interest to MHTI members. I can send you a copy of the whole thing, if you want but it is very technical!

"The soft blue and green coatings on the walls of Tankardstown mine, and probably also similar post-mining deposits in other copper mines, are composed of silica gel of high water content, with copper bound to the surface of the gel by cation exchange with the protons on silanol groups. Also present in variable amounts are malachite, and basic sulphate and chloride minerals of copper. These deposits form by the mingling of copper bearing solutions with solutions carrying silica sol leached out of siliceous wallrock. Their formation, at around neutral pH, is consistent with laboratory observations of the coagulation of silica sols by dilute copper solutions."

Stephen Moreton

COMMEMORATION AT SILVERMINES

Jean Archer of Nenagh enclosed a cutting from *The (Nenagh) Guardian* about the recent celebrations held in Silvermines Church to mark the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the closure of Mogul Mine, and of fifty years since the closure of Shallee Mine. Almost a thousand people turned up. Her accompanying states -

"Eamon de Stafort gave an excellent hour-long presentation on the history of Shallee Mine and of Mogul Mine emphasising the economic and social benefits of both operations to the local community, to the village of Silvermines and to the town of Nenagh.

"His presentation took place in the Catholic church immediately before the commemorative Mass. Eamon's slides included hitherto lost photographs taken underground during the 1970s by a local farmer and amateur photographer. the late Kevin Bernal. who was the younger brother of John Desmond Bernal (190 I-1971) the great crystallographer (also champion of socialism and philosopher of science, who had also

played a pivotal role in planning the D day landings).. When some of Kevin Bernal's photographs appeared on the large screen, which was placed at the foot of the altar steps, muffled voices from amongst the miners seated in the pews called out the names of individuals in the photographs. During the mass special candles were lit in commemoration of the five men who died in the mine, during Mogul's time, by members of their family.

"The church was packed. Miners came from near and far. Outside the church, after mass, darkness had descended but light radiated from the faces of men as they met former colleagues with whom they had long since lost touch. The festivities continued in Hickey's Bar, where there was displayed a long list of the miners who had given advance notice of their intention to attend the celebrations. The organizers are to be congratulated for organizing an extremely successful event that was perhaps without precedent in the history of Irish mining.

"I might add that I felt a certain irony in being invited to this historic event. I have a recollection of the day that Mogul Mine closed. I was at the time engaged upon geological mapping the Slieve Phelim Mountains for the Geological Survey of Ireland. On the day the mine closed I was somewhere up the hills, but was aware of the air of gloom in North Tipperary. I was a geologist of Lower Palaeozoic purple rather than of Carboniferous blue. But the reason for my complete exclusion from the mine had nothing to do with geological orientation. I simply was the wrong gender. Mining was a man's world. There was no way I could obtain permission to go underground.

"My invitation to the Mogul reunion was as a latecomer to the mining scene in Silvermines. I acted as a technical adviser in the opposition to the proposed conversion of the opencast Macgobar Mine into a renege-waste disposal facility. What little I know about modern mining I learned from poring over plans of Mogul's underground workings. But that is another story."

NEW BOOK ON WEST CORK MINES – PHOTOS WANTED

Diane and Frank Hodnett, together with Paddy O'Sullivan, are writing a book on the West Cork mines, with photographs of all of them. If anyone has any photos, they would love to see them. They have trawled through all of the Irish archives, and those in Cornwall, too. However, there may be photographs in private hands that are relevant. Could you contact Diane please? Do not email photographs please! Email: mhti@eircom.net (Diane is the webperson).

As an example of what sort of thing is traceable we include a picture of Coosheen Mine, near Schull. Aside from a magazine little remains now.



Coosheen Mine, date unknown. Copyright: Failte Ireland.

ÉAMONN DE STAFORT STEPS DOWN

Greetings to all Board Members. I wish to inform you that I will not be standing for re-election of MHTI for the coming year. For family reasons I find I am unable to attend the meetings and in any case I have been a very poor attender for some time now.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the Board members since the inception of MHTI and to say how much I enjoyed my many outings with you as colleagues, including many memorable trips abroad. I have the utmost praise for MHTI and its many committed members and the sterling work it has done. Indeed, I rate the calibre of people among MHTI as the highest I have worked with throughout my career.

I hope to meet you all at the AGM and I wish you every success. I also hope and intend to continue my participation with MHTI work in Silvermines.

Le gach dea ghúí,

Éamonn De Stafort

On behalf of the membership, the Directors of MHTI would like to thank Éamonn sincerely for the long and valued commitment he has made to the work of MHTI, not just in Silvermines but on the national and international stage as well.

MHTI JOURNAL 2007

The last journal was recently posted out, and as a result there have been a few individual problems identified with past payments, non-payments and new addresses. If you have not received your copy and you were a paid up member in 2007 please contact Ewan Duffy, Matthew Parkes or Brian Jones. If you have not paid your 2007 sub please pay immediately to ensure you receive the journal.

MHTI JOURNAL 2008

As the last journal was posted out, attention turns to the 2008 volume which will be completed and posted out in the autumn (November) with 2009 invoices and newsletter. Contributions are sought for this so please get working on papers as soon as possible. The earlier they are received by the editor, the better it is for the whole process. Whilst a few contributions are in the pipeline, we need more. PLEASE SEND PAPERS – the journal is only as good as contributions received from members for possible publication.

IRELAND'S DISAPPEARING MINES AND MINERALS

We are all familiar with the loss of mine sites. Whether one's interest is historical, archaeological, mineralogical or even botanical, the ravages of time, or the actions of councils and farmers, are a source of much dismay. For the mineralogist many field trips result in disappointment, or at least fail to live up to expectations, as mine sites that were once productive are now mere shadows of their former glory.

That is if they still exist. Several more Irish mine sites have recently become history. In spring of 2005 the tiny tip of Sheshodonnell East mine, The Burren, Co. Clare, was pushed down what was left of the nearby shaft. This is tragic from the mineralogical point of view. Despite its tiny size this mine was famous amongst mineralogists for the remarkable smithsonite it produced, often in attractive combinations with purple fluorite. In the 1960s the shaft was still open and gave access to a stope full of the mineral. By the 1980s the shaft had been partly filled with rubbish, including a car wreck and animal remains. The farmer decided to fill it in completely after losing livestock down it.

Another loss occurred at Bunmahon. Here a shaft was still open as late as Easter 2003 in a field behind Trawnamoe Cove. It was surrounded by gorse-covered tips and was worthy of exploration. Other tips between this and the cliff top contained erythrite and possible lavendulan. I decided to investigate the site in summer 2005 only to discover it so thoroughly obliterated one would not know it, or the erythrite-bearing tips, had

ever been there. Lush green fields now occupy the site. Another tip (grid ref. X 42557 98270) was in the process of being cleared and there was no sign of the known lavendulan locality nearby. Again a loss to mineralogy, as well as mining heritage, has occurred in the name of land reclamation.

As these are all small sites it is, perhaps, unsurprising that they are vulnerable. Giant sites such as Tynagh should be safe – or so one would have thought. Anyone visiting Tynagh now will be confronted by a new power station, and access is not encouraged.

This is a recurring problem all over the country. I have listed here some examples I have come across during my quarter century or so of wanderings in search of Irish minerals. It is not complete as even I have not been to every single mine site in the country. The losses to Ireland's mineralogical heritage are considerable as many sites were once noted for very fine, or unusual, mineral occurrences. As there is almost no tradition in Ireland of mineral collecting very little survives from the majority of these sites. In some cases all we have are tantalising mentions in Victorian literature, even the museums being devoid of specimens, or with only a handful to hint at what once was. In some cases minerals may still be found, in spite of the site degradation noted, but one wonders for how much longer. It seems the moral for mineralogists is to collect and record what you can now, for tomorrow it may be gone forever.

Stephen Moreton

County	Mine name	Minerals of note	Fate
Clare	Ballyhickey	Potential for rare sulphosalts.	Tips cleared in 1983.
Clare	Carrahan	Erythrite	No sign of mining according to recent MHTI report.
Clare	Crow Hill	Erythrite	No sign of mining according to recent MHTI report.
Clare	Doolin	Fluorite	Shaft flooded and capped. No waste remains.
Clare	Kilbrekan	Type locality for geocronite.	Tips cleared.
Clare	Milltown	Iceland spar	Tips gone, opencast flooded.
Clare	Sheshodonnell East	Cadmian smithsonite, fluorite.	Tip pushed down shaft in spring 2005.
Cork	Coosheen	Fine malachite, pseudomalachite, possible torbernite.	Tips mostly gone, shafts filled, bottom level dammed to create water supply for golf course.
Cork	Derryginagh Middle	Micaceous hematite	Virtually nothing remains.
Cork	Dhurode	Arsenopyrite crystals	Adit flooded, shafts capped. Site being used as rubbish tip.
Cork	Glandore	Manganese minerals, type locality for corkite.	Little waste remains, opencast overgrown. Subsidence said to have occurred recently.
Cork	Killeen	Fine malachite	Level deliberately blocked ca. 1986 or later.
Cork	Marion's no. 1, Allihies	Potential for post-mining deposits on walls.	Level deliberately blocked in ca. 1996.
Cork	Roury Glen	Beraunite, iridescent goethite.	Site cleared by farmer.
Donegal	Keeldrum	Pyromorphite	Few tips remain. Those that do are weathered.
Dublin	Ballycorus	Native silver	Bottom level could not be located. What waste remains below the chimney is overgrown and weathered.
Kerry	Ardtully	Green aragonite	Tips cleared, possibly in 1970s.
Galway	Ballymaquiff	"Bismuth"	Completely obliterated.
Galway	Caherglassaun	Bournonite	Workings mostly infilled. Little waste. Very overgrown.
Galway	Cregg & Cloosh	Slender quartz prisms.	Little remains, site now a rubbish tip.
Galway	Derrylea	Barite, albite	Obliterated by road widening in 2006.
Galway	Glengowla	Octahedral fluorite	Tips removed, possibly in 1920s.
Galway	Inveran	Octahedral fluorite	Almost totally obliterated.
Galway	Tynagh	Most mineralogically diverse location in Ireland with over 100 different minerals.	Opencast flooded, tips landscaped and grassed over. A power station now occupies the site.
Kerry	Muckcross	Cobalt arsenides	Primary ores largely destroyed by post-mining oxidation in the tip.
Tipperary	Silvermines	Extensive supergene deposits in 18 th & 19 th century mines.	Tips reprocessed in 1950s. Little mineralised material remains.
Tipperary	Magcobar opencast	Fine pyrite and barite crystals.	Flooded.
Monaghan	Clontibret	Antimony minerals	Tips cleared in 1984
Waterford	Tankardstown	Rare secondary copper minerals in pit by engine house, cobalt minerals nearby.	Site used for fly tipping. Slowly filling up with rubbish.
Waterford	Trawnamoe	Erythrite, lavendulan	Tips cleared and shaft filled in 2004 – 2005.
Wexford	Barristown	Exceptionally argentiferous ores, some oxidised.	No tips remain.
Wicklow	Ballymurtagh	Native copper	Obliterated by modern opencast, then landfilled.
Wicklow	Cronebane	Native copper, auriferous gossan.	Obliterated by modern opencast.
Wicklow	Glendasan, Glendalough & Glenmalure mines.	Over 40 known minerals.	Most levels run in, shafts filled up. Tips weathered and those on steep slopes eroding.
Wicklow	Gold Mines River	Gold nuggets up to 22 oz from alluvial workings.	Large stretches densely overgrown by impenetrable forest and undergrowth

Directors of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd.

The following are Directors of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland; as elected at the 2006 AGM held in Glendalough in 2007.

- M.F. Critchley *
- M. Parkes
- D. Cowman *
- N. Monaghan
- E. De Stafort **
- B. Jones
- S. Walsh
- E. Duffy
- M. Carragher
- A. Lings

- * Resigning Director, eligible for re-election and willing to offer for re-election
- ** Resigning Director, not available for re-election

We would welcome any other nominations for Directors. A person nominated as a Director can only be an existing member and they should be proposed by two other members using the form below:

.....

MINING HERITAGE TRUST OF IRELAND Ltd.

Directors Proposal Form

Name of Proposed Director	Proposed Signature	Date
Name of Proposer	Proposer's Signature	Date
Name of Seconder	Seconder's Signature	Date

This form must be with the Secretary (Mr Nigel Monaghan, National Museum of Ireland, Merrion Street, Dublin 2) at least 48 hours before the AGM (20th April 2008).

[Please photocopy this form or request a duplicate copy if you want to keep Newsletter intact]



Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland / Iontaobhas Oidhreachta Mianadóireachta
36 Dame Street, Dublin 2

Notice of

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that an Annual General Meeting of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd. will be held at the Abbey Court Hotel, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary on Sunday 20th April 2008 at 5 pm.

Agenda

- 1. To receive the accounts of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd. for 2007**
- 2. To appoint auditors**
- 3. To elect up to 3 new directors**

Signed,

**Nigel Monaghan,
Company Secretary**

.....

MINING HERITAGE TRUST OF IRELAND Ltd.

Proxy Form

I/We....., of in the County of being a member/members of the above named Company, hereby appoint or failing him of..... as my/our proxy to vote for me/us on my/our behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the Company to be held on 20th April 2008 and at any adjournment thereof.

Signed

Dated

This form must be with the Secretary (Mr Nigel Monaghan, National Museum of Ireland, Merrion Street, Dublin 2) at least 48 hours before the AGM (20th April 2008). Proxies do not need to be members of MHTI.

Directors: D. Cowman, M. Critchley (UK), E. De Stafort, E. Duffy, B. Jones (NZ), N. Monaghan, M. Parkes (UK), S. Walsh.
Registered in Ireland. No. 340387. Registered Office: 36 Dame Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.