



NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 40

MAY 2008

Iontaobhas Oidhreachta Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

CONTENTS NEWSLETTER 40

P 2.
Tyrone fieldtrip
P 3.
Sligo field trip
P 4.
Membership,
2007 Journal,
2008 Journal
Copper Coast News
P 5.
Report on Castlecomer
trip.
Silvermines work.

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)

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.

19-20th May. Sligo field trip. Ben Bulbin (Monday) and Abbeytown Mine (Tuesday). See page 3 for programme.

June – Possible visit to Parys Mountain, Anglesey, North Wales. Check website www.mhti.com for details over next few weeks.

EDITORIAL

Please send any items for inclusion in the next newsletter to:

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

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd.
Registered Office: 36 Dame Street, Dublin 2.
Registered in Ireland as Company 340387

WWW.MHTI.COM

TYRONE FIELDTRIP, 17th – 18th MAY 2008

Tyrone Fieldtrip NEW PROGRAMME DETAILS

It now looks like we will be able to visit Curraghinalt Mine, but on the Sunday afternoon. The afternoon's meeting points have been interchanged, and will probably be as revised below. If you are planning to join the tour in the afternoons, please check the details with the coordinator nearer the time. In addition to hard hats and safety wellingtons, waterproof trousers/leggings are recommended for the Curraghinalt visit.

The mineral wealth of Co. Tyrone

This fieldtrip will explore Ireland's 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 also the rare opportunity 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 17 May pm

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

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

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

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.

Sunday 18 May pm

Meet at 14:00 outside the Pedlars Rest (cafe/restaurant), 66 Main Street, Gortin (H 496 857), map sheet 13.

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

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

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

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

Coordinator:

Alastair Lings

alastairlings@yahoo.co.uk

Home: (Scotland +44) 01896 757861

Mobile: +44 7763 850087

Further information on the above Tyrone 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 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>

SLIGO FIELDTRIP 19TH - 20TH MAY 2008

Mick Carragher has kindly offered to coordinate visits to Benbulbin and Abbeystown Mine, immediately after the Tyrone fieldtrip. Benbulbin Mine is spectacularly situated on a mountain ridge between Glencar Lough and the Gleniff valley. From 1875 to 1979 barytes was produced from a vertical vein averaging 1.2 metres in thickness.

Abbeystown Mine lies on the south side of Ballysodare Bay, and intermittently produced an estimated 1.1 million tons of zinc, lead and silver ore from the 1500s to 1961. The entrance to Abbeystown Mine is located within a working quarry and **the following is required: safety wellingtons, helmet, light, hi-viz vest /jacket, and valid BCA insurance card.** There may be a restriction on numbers able to visit Abbeystown, and members are asked to book their place with the coordinator.

Monday 19 May am

Meet at 10:30 where the mines road leaves the Gleniff Horseshoe Road (G 731 469), map sheet 16.

-Benbulbin Mine (underground and open pit) and mills.

Tuesday 20 May am

Meet at 10:00 at quarry offices of Harrington Concrete (Sligo) Ltd (G 662 295), map sheet 25.

-Abbeystown Mine (underground)

Coordinator:

Mick Carragher

michaelcarragher11@eircom.net

Home:(Co. Meath) 046 902 3280

Mobile: +353 86 366 5423

Further information on the above sites in Sligo is available from:

Anon, 1998. MHSI Field Meets: the Sligo area, 19th - 20th September. MHSI Newsletter No.9, p3.

Carragher M, 2005. Memories of Ben Bulbin Barite Mine 1973 - '79. MHTI Newsletter No.29, p4.

Creighton JR, 1990. Exploration Focus - Abbeystown. Geol. Surv. Ireland, Pamphlet Series 90/1. 4pp.

Enright J, 2003. Abbeystown Mines, County Sligo. MHTI Newsletter No.23, p6.

Hallissy T, 1923. Barytes in Ireland. Mem. Geol. Surv. Ireland. Stationery Office, Dublin. 81 pp.

Hitzman MW, 1986. Geology of the Abbeystown Mine, Co. Sligo, Ireland. P 341-353 in Andrew CJ et al, 1986. Geology and genesis of mineral deposits in Ireland. Irish Association for Economic Geology, Dublin.

Kelly J, 2007. A history of Zn-Pb-Ag mining at Abbeystown, Co. Sligo. Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland No7, p9-18.

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~sligobarytes/index.html>

Sligo Accommodation

Hotels in Sligo include:

The Innisfree Hotel, High Street, Sligo.

071 914 2014, e-mail innisfreehotelsligo@eircom.net

B&Bs in Sligo include the following. The prices quoted are from 2007.

Lissadell, Mailcoach Road (off Pearse Road), Sligo.
Mary Cadden 071 916 1937. E30-36.

Lough Gill House, Pearse Road, Sligo.
Florrie Gilmartin 071 915 0045. E30-36.
www.loughgillhouse.net

Tree Tops, Cleveragh Road (off Pearse Road), Sligo.
Doreen McEvelly 071 916 0160 / 916 2301. E30-36.
www.sligobandb.com

Hostels include:
Eden Hill Holiday Hostel, Ashbrook, Pearse Road,
Sligo.
071 914 3204. www.edenhillhostel.com .

Harbour Hostel, Finisklin Road, Sligo.
071 917 1547. www.harbourhousehostel.com

White House Hostel, Markievicz Road, Sligo.
071 914 5160.

Further information is available from Sligo Tourist
Office, Temple Street, Sligo, 071 916 1201, e-mail
info@irelandnorthwest.ie , and at
www.irelandnorthwest.ie

2008 MEMBERSHIP AND THE MHTI JOURNAL 2007

With every mailing MHTI sends, such as the Journal for 2007 or the last newsletter (No 39) a few individual problems are identified with past payments, non-payments and new addresses. If you have not received your journal copy and you were a paid up member in 2007 please contact Ewan Duffy, Matthew Parkes or Brian Jones. We usually have a number of members who are well meaning and intend to remain as members, but who don't quite get around to sending in their subscription. The issuing of several reminders and repeat invoices, sometimes followed by personal calls or emails is an unnecessary burden on people's voluntary time for MHTI organization.

If you have not yet paid your 2008 sub please pay immediately to ensure you receive future issues of the newsletter and the journal. It is not possible to carry people for extended periods, and any people who have not yet paid for 2008 will receive no further MHTI publications or notices, as we bring the membership database completely into line with payments received.

MHTI JOURNAL 2008 – A REMINDER

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.

Contact Matthew Parkes, Natural History Museum,
Merrion Street, Dublin 2. Email mparkes@museum.ie

COPPER COAST NEWS – INCLUDING OFFER OF A FUTURE HOME FOR MHTI ARCHIVES

The Copper Coast Geopark has recently acquired the old church at Knockmahon, which played a pivotal role in the social development of the community during the period when mining was active. Conservation work is currently under way at the church, and it is intended to build an extension to the north of the building. The extension will provide a wide range of facilities including Bistro, meeting rooms, interpretation centre etc. Plans drawn up include a library and separate study area. The library will house key records and archival material for the area and beyond; with Des Cowman, John Morris and others including GSI making generous contributions. At the recent MHTI AGM the offer was made to provide a permanent and secure home for the MHTI archives within the library of the new Copper Coast Geopark building. It is also intended to build up a genealogy centre for mining related diaspora, this along with the MHTI archives would provide the Copper Coast Geopark with a link to the mining history of our island, tracing the workforce to and from each mining area. As the church has a history closely linked to the mining of the area it should prove be a good resting place for the archives!

The Copper Coast Geopark Toursim group have united with the other social groups in Bonmahon and are in the early stages of organising an Gala Day in the village of Bonmahon during the August bank holiday week. This is an ideal opportunity to introduce the old church as the new centre for the Geopark and as a community facility, bringing back the role in social development it once had. On this day the village will come alive again with activities, music, BBQ, but all with a sense of days gone by.

To celebrate the European Geopark Week (May 26th- June 2nd) the Copper Coast Geopark will host a variety of events to suit a wide range of interest such as:

Geology Course: "Introduction to geology, the study of Earth" May 26th- June 1st with Sophie Preteseille.

The Mining Heritage of the Copper Coast, 1st June 2008, 3pm: An introduction to the 19th Century mining history of the Bunmahon area with local trained guide Bruce MacDonald

Our Friend the Wind will be the feature of the day on Sunday the 25th May. When the Irish Grandfather of Kite Surfing Mr. Ed Humm will host a fun filled day on the beautiful sandy beach of Bonmahon, here you can relax, and enjoy watching the experts at work, or challenge the wind 'try & fly' yourself (Weather permitting), why not bring a picnic? This will be followed on Monday May 26th by a kite workshop for

primary school children who will learn the art of kite making and the uplifting experience of flying their own kites. Two sessions will take place lasting 1½ hours €10 per child.

Copper Coast Geopark coastline by Kayak: Take part in a sea view exploration of the Copper Coast Geopark coastline. The spectacular sea arches and caves of the Waterford's Copper Coast are accessible to anyone who can sit in a kayak! No experience required as our trips are all instructors led and all safety equipment is provided. For details, contact Seapaddling.com by phone: 051-393314 / 087-2686529 or email info@seapaddling.com

Explore the Copper Coast Geopark area using peddle power by joining in on a bike tour of the area, ideal family day out.

Birds of the Copper Coast Geopark area with Alen Walsh. Learn how to identify the feathered friends that share our cliffs and coast line.

(dates for the above will be available closer to EGN week as weather conditions need to be considered contact the office of the Geopark on 051-292828 e-mail info@coppercoastgeopark.com for further information.)

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

Fourteen members of the MHTI and Irish Geological Association met at the Castlecomer Discovery Park. The park is based around the old Prior-Wandesforde Estate yard which has been restored to a high standard, with a cafe, visitor centre and craft shops. After a coffee in the excellent Jarrow Cafe we toured the visitor centre. The "Footprints in Coal" exhibition uses dioramas, slides, photographs and sound recordings to describe life in the Carboniferous period (300 million years ago), the formation of coal, and local coal mining.



An excellent use of a semi-silvered mirror allowed one to superimpose a model of a small amphibian on its fossil. The diorama of the Carboniferous jungle could be described as inspirational. After touring the centre many members walked around the Lower Lake, stopping to admire a couple of (ornamental?) tunnels. As the visitor centre is not on a mine-site, a guidebook would be handy for people who want to see the nearby mines.

The next stop was Dunmore Cave, which is mentioned as Dearc Fearná (Cave of the Alders) in the ninth century Irish Triads, and in the Annals of the Four Masters. The latter text describes a viking attack on the caves. This has been substantiated by the discovery of the bones of at least 44 people in the cave, along with viking silver coins.

Access to the cave is via a new visitor centre, complete with a pavement of stone slabs from a variety of Irish sources. After an interesting audio-visual presentation, a guide led us around the 200 metres of publically accessible passage which now have LED lights and a new spiral staircase to access the "Town Hall". The high point of the tour is the "Market Cross", a pillar-like stalagmite 5 m high and 1.3 m in diameter. After returning to ground level and posing for a group photograph, we went our separate ways. Many thanks to Susan Pyne (IGA) for organising the visits and the bus transport from Dublin.

Alastair Lings

SILVERMINES

Conservation work is presently being undertaken on some of the historic mine buildings at Silvermines, Co. Tipperary. The works are being concentrated on the most important C19th buildings including the Cornish engine house at Ballygown, the calamine works at Ballygown and the Cornish engine house and crusher house at Shallee. Excavation of the small engine house adjacent to the calamine works has revealed that this was probably contained a small enclosed rotary engine; similar to that at Levant mine in Cornwall. The purpose of this engine is unclear; it might have driven air bellows or crushers in the calamine works. Another interesting finding is the presence of a back bob-wall on the engine house at Shallee. It would appear that the primary bob drove the crusher and stamps (see photograph in last MHTI journal No 7), whilst the back bob might have driven flat rods to pumps in the engine shaft.

The works at Silvermines are being undertaken by the Irish company InterClean and are financed jointly by North Tipperary County Council and the InterReg Green Mines Project

Martin Critchley



Inside the Calamine works engine house during excavation work



Shallee engine house with scaffolding ready for works.