



# NEWSLETTER

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Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

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## MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2009

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

**Heritage Week: THE MINES OF SOUTH-EAST CLARE**  
*A visit in association with the Clare Archaeological Society on Sunday 23rd August 2009. Meet in Quin outside the church at 2.00 pm. Leader, Des Cowman.*

**25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> September MHTI trip to Parys Mountain and Ormes Head– contact Martin Critchley and see outline programme inside**

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Survey and inventory at Luganure, Wicklow**  
**Contact Martin Critchley**

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> /Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Speleological Union of Ireland/Irish Cave Rescue Organisation Annual Symposium. Lecture by M Parkes on Irish underground mines – access, hazards and delights at 8pm Saturday. See [www.cavingireland.org](http://www.cavingireland.org)**

**Future events – see inside for draft annual programme**

## EDITORIAL

This newsletter comes with an apology for the extended delay in the issue of the 2008 Journal to members. This is simply due to a lack of sufficient time, on my part, to complete the editing and layout of the journal for printing. However it is currently being completed and I would anticipate getting it printed and distributed by the first week of September.

A secondary problem is the matter of papers. Whilst we have adequate material for the 2008 issue now, there have been delays with some promised material. In order to get the 2009 issue out within the actual calendar year, which has always been our intention, I need additional papers submitted now or in the next couple of months to achieve that target. If you have promised me material and not delivered yet, please prioritise completing it as soon as possible. If you are a new author or a potential author, please get in touch now to see how we can progress your idea into a journal paper.

Matthew Parkes

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## NORTH WALES FIELD TRIP 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009

### Provisional Programme:

Depart **Friday 25th Sept** Dun Laoghaire to Holyhead on Stena Line HSS at 13:30, arrive Holyhead 15:30

Visit Dorothea Cornish engine (still in-situ in an old slate quarry and dating from 1904) at 17:00 till 19:00. This is the only Holmans built Cornish engine still in existence. It is a very impressive engine (60") and although much of the engine and boilers remain it is under threat from lack of long term preservation. The visit will be lead by Dr. Gwynwor Jones who will explain the history of the engine and the background to the conservation issues.

Arrive guest house in Bangor at 19:30/20:00 (Eryl Mor Guest House)

**Sat. 26th all day at Parys Mountain Mine** parallel options. Meet in the public car park at the top of the mountain, beside the B5111 (Amlwch to Rhosybol/Llanerchymedd road). Grid Ref: SH438906. This is also the starting point of the surface Heritage Trail (car park sign refers to this), which is worth looking around if you have time. Please note that no mineral collecting is allowed on the surface or underground at Parys Mountain due to it being an SSSI.

1. Extreme underground visit (Parys to Mona through trip) which is limited to 6 experienced mine explorers.

2. Easy underground visit to Parys Mountain workings only (involves no SRT, but some ladders and steps). No specialist equipment needed (just wellies and helmet if you have one).

3. Surface visit to see the vast opencast workings, Pearl Engine House (oldest extant Cornish design engine house outside of Cornwall), windmill, precipitation pits.

It is hoped that we can visit Amlwch in the late afternoon to see the port from which the copper was shipped and the mining museum in the Sail Loft.

**Sunday 27th morning visit to Great Orme Bronze Age mines** (surface and underground)

**Sun. 27th afternoon**, to be decided, could include visit to Cwmorthin slate mine (underground non-tourist trip) - to be confirmed. This has very extensive workings see [www.cwmorthin.co.uk](http://www.cwmorthin.co.uk)

**Sun. 27th return by ferry** (Irish Ferries), departs Holyhead at 20:30, arrives Dublin Port at 23:45

Ferry: Please make your own bookings. Note that travel out is Stena Line from Dun Laoghaire and return is Irish Ferries to Dublin Port. Car transport will be

needed, but you intend to travel as a foot passenger then please contact me and will try to link you up with someone who is travelling with a car.

Accommodation: Eryl Mor Guest house B&B is £65 per couple sharing per night or £40 single. Please book direct with the Guest House and mention the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland trip and my name as the reference.

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## NAMHO 2009, 19th-22th June

The National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) was formed in 1979 making this year its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The 2009 Conference was held in Derbyshire, hosted by the Peak District Mines Historical Society (PDMHS) who celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their formation earlier in the year.

The conference opened in the County Hall, Matlock. After the formalities of registration, and the pleasures of a buffet dinner, the proceedings started with a welcome, and a series of presentations with a local flavour: the formation of PDMHS, the legacy of lead mining in the Peak District National Park, the Barmoot Court and its administration of mining in the Peak District. The final presentation of the evening was a superb slide show of the local mines.

Saturdays lectures continued in the County Hall, covering a wide spectrum of interests from archaeology and ecology, to colliery winding and ore dressing. The regions covered were equally diverse: the Peak District, France, Spain, Germany, India, Australia, Mexico and Canada. The days activities ended with another buffet dinner and entertainment provided by folk singers.

Sundays presentations were held in the Pavilion at Matlock Bath, the home of the Peak District Mining Museum. Appropriately, the lectures were mainly concerned with mining museums. The day finished with an excellent barbeque held at the impressive remains of Magpie Mine, five kilometres to the north of Matlock.

The conference was accompanied by a superb selection of fieldtrips running from the Friday afternoon to the Monday morning. Archaeologists will have been fascinated by the visits to Engine Vein at Alderley

Edge. Roman mining activity is visible at surface and underground, and it now looks like copper mining started in the Neolithic Age. Other visits included a winch trip to Bage Mine, near Wirksworth, and deep wading in some of the long drainage adits of the area.



*Engine vein at Alderley Edge*

The NAMHO Conference is a great way of visiting new mining areas, seeing the mines, and learning about them, all in excellent company. MHTI members who attended NAMHO 2009 found the experience very rewarding, and are grateful to everyone involved in organising and delivering the event.  
Alastair Lings

## HERITAGE DAYS

EVERY autumn numerous cultural and historical events are organised across Europe under the European Heritage Days banner. The aim is to celebrate our heritage and, in particular, to encourage open days at historical buildings that are normally closed to the public. Few specific details have been revealed yet, but watch out for anything interesting happening locally in your area.

Those in the Republic of Ireland take place during the last week of August and include guided tours of Allihies Mines in Co. Cork and the

lead and silver mines near Quin in Co. Clare (both 22 August), East Avoca Mines, Co. Wicklow (23 August) and the Deerpark mine site, Co. Kilkenny (25 August). You also have a chance to visit the famous 'soggy dishcloth' formation in Pol-an-Ionain, as entry to the renamed Doolin Cave is free on 22 August. Finally, at 7pm on 27 August a talk about the Marble Arch Caves Geopark is taking place at Johnston Central Library in Cavan.

Further information on these events is available at [www.heritageweek.ie](http://www.heritageweek.ie).

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## Isle of Man, 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May

John Morris led a convoy of 28 people in five cars in a mini-rally around the island which is famous for its motor sports. But this was no ordinary rally, this was an Irish Geological Association (IGA/MHTI) fieldtrip looking at the geology and mining heritage.

Proceedings started at the Manx Museum in Douglas, where there is a large relief model of the island. John outlined the geology of the island, and then we toured the museums displays. After an excellent lunch in the Bay Room Restaurant, it was down to the Marine Drive for serious geology: folded Ordovician turbidites of the Manx Group, complete with flute casts. These

handy features are formed on bedding planes (layers) when new sediment infills grooves that have been eroded from the older underlying sediments. The flute casts allow geologists to identify the "way-up" of beds, in folded or overturned sequences of rocks.

After this crash-course in geology we headed to the south end of the island to view the spectacular remains of the South Bradda Copper Mine, which was worked intermittently from the Bronze Age to the 1850s.



*South Bradda Mine (on cliff)*

After the mining interlude it was back to serious geology at Port Erin. This time we saw thin (c. 10 mm) beds in the Manx Group, that gradually change from pale sandy layers to dark muddy layers. This graded bedding also helps determine the "way-up" or "younging direction" of rocks, the finer darker sediment being ever-so-slightly younger than paler sandy sediment. Following this spell of geological gymnastics, it was time to head back to our hotels for a well earned meal and rest.

After the intense geology of the Friday, Saturday was a little easier with a visit to the Foxdale Mines (1798-1892), a mecca for enthusiasts of engine houses. The Cross Mine has a Cornish engine house, while the Cornelly / Towns(h)end mine boasts a rare Bull engine house. Beckwiths Mine sports an extraordinary curved chimney. After visiting Tynwald, the site of islands open air parliament, we lunched in Peel, and then explored the newly identified Silurian Dalby Group rocks. At Traie Dullish Quarry, a disused slate quarry,



we looked at rocks of the Niarbyl Formation with ripple marks in the beds which indicated that they were formed by currents flowing from an area at present to the north or northwest of the quarry. Of mineralogical interest was a thin metabentonite bed formed by the metamorphism of volcanic clay.



*Beckwiths Mine (with curved chimney)*

Heading south, the next stop was Niarbyl Bay, the type locality for the Niarbyl Group. Of mineralogical note were thin manganiferous carbonate ironstone beds. Close to a shear zone we saw quartz “fish” which had started life as oval blobs and been deformed into Z-shapes, suggesting sinistral (leftward) movement across the zone. The significance of the shearing in the area has been hotly debated: it could be of major regional importance, or relatively minor.

Saturday's geology ended with a look at the Devonian Peel Sandstone Group, with its wind-blown (aeolian) and river deposited (fluvial) sandstones, gravel beds (conglomerates), dessication cracks and fossil carbonate-rich soils (calcretes). At last, geology that this land-dwelling creature could relate to!

If you think that Quaternary superficial deposits are dull and boring, then Shellag Point in the northeast of the island will be a revelation. Sunday's first locality provided a section through the Bride Moraine, which was formed when south moving Irish Sea ice met the Isle of Man and bulldozed flat lying sediments into a series of folds and thrusts. The 100 metre high cliffs at Shellag Point are impressive enough even before the geology is explained. One experienced geologist commented: if the whole lot was lithified, we would assume that the deformation had taken place at a great depth in the earth's crust, millions of years ago...such is the power of ice.

By way of contrast our next visit was to the Laxey Mines where lead and zinc ores were mined from the 1780s to 1929, down to a depth of 552 metres below adit (335 m below sea level). Half of the fieldtrip attendees toured the impressive site, including the magnificent Lady Isabella Wheel (22 m diameter). The remainder continued their exploration of the superficial deposits at Glen Wyllim and Glen Mooar in the west of the island.



*Shellag Point*

Monday dawned bright and sunny, and we were soon back to face the realities of Palaeozoic geology, near Castletown in the south of the island. First stop was Close-ny-Chollagh, a black marble quarry worked from the 14<sup>th</sup> century until the 1880s, and again recently. Further around the coast we saw “bun and keel” structures exhibited by pillow lavas: the narrow “keel” of a new lava flow squeezes between the rounded tops (“buns”) of older flows. Back at Poyllvaish Farm the Close-ny-Chollagh Formation contains beds of shelly limestone. Some of these shells were partially infilled with sediment before being lithified. This partial infill of sediment now provides geologists with another “way-up” tool.

After the joys of Close-ny-Chollagh we headed east to the Langness Peninsula. Apart from Carboniferous conglomerates resting on older Manx Group sediments at Dreswick Harbour, we saw the remains of the Langness Copper Mines, which were worked from 1845 to 1895. After lunch in the George Hotel in Castletown we headed south to the final locality, Scarlett Point. Here the Castletown Limestone Formation was probably quarried for building stone from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Records indicate that the production of lime here started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After seeing a small gunpowder house and a monoclinical (single bend) fold, it was time to head our separate ways. Those heading eastwards across the Irish Sea enjoyed distant views of the Morecambe Bay gas production platforms, illuminated by the setting

sun: a perfect end to a most interesting and enjoyable fieldtrip.

Top marks, and many thanks to John Morris for leading the fieldtrip, and to the IGA for organising the accommodation and transport for the weekend. Thanks also to Pete Geddes of the Laxey Mines Research Group for guiding us around the Laxey site.

The last visit to the Isle of Man by MHTI was in 1999 (see Newsletter 11). It is hoped to organise another visit to the island next year.

Alastair Lings

## New geological map

In July the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland published a 1:50 000 scale map of the Cushendall area, County Antrim (sheet 14). The map shows the bedrock and superficial deposits, as well as many of the adits that were driven in search of the interbasaltic iron (laterite) and aluminium (bauxite) ores. The publication also includes well illustrated panels summarising the geology of the area, and describing the mining heritage of mid-Antrim.

## 2009 SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you have not yet paid your membership subscription invoice for 2009 please do so as soon as possible

For the immediate future please send any outstanding subs to:

Brian Jones,  
C/o Eason and Son, 41 Lower O'Connell St, Dublin 1

## ANTRIM FIELD TRIP 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> JULY 2009

Full report to follow in the next newsletter

## NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL MINING HISTORY BOOK

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*Jacquo Silvertant*

The underground Quarry at Glennes (Aisne – France)

*Christelle Sosson, Alain Devos, Olivier Lejeune & Alain Marre*

Recognition of different quarrying Techniques at the “Zonneberg” Quarry in Maastricht, the Netherlands,  
*Kevin Amendt*

The Dating of Mine Gallery Profiles

*Stephan Adlung & Martin Straßburger*

Avoiding the Damaging of Mining Relics by means of the innovative “Wood-move” Technique, *Jens-Uwe Eder & Jochen Babist*

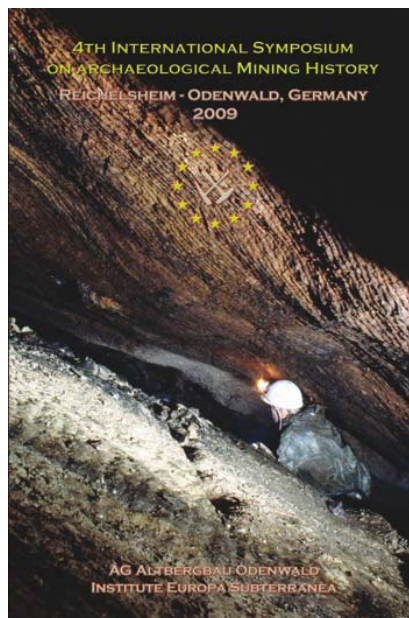
The „Hohestolln“ Mine at the Freiberg Central Region (Saxony, Germany)

*Stephan Adlung*

Contributions on Research Methodology concerning the Reopening of narrow Mines,

*Jochen Babist, Ekkehard Rieder, Albert Pfeifer & Jochen Rietdorf*

The Medieval “22, Berkelstreet” Quarry beneath Valkenburg Castle (NL) revisited and documented,  
*Jacquo Silvertant*



We have received a copy of the above proceedings volume as part of our exchange with the Institute Europa Subterranea, and it is a very fine publication. It is available to loan to members or can be purchased directly from the Institute.

## Proposed annual events programme template

Jan – Lecture/workshop

Feb - Inventory/Surveying

March - Weekend field trip

April - AGM + field trip

May - Overseas (Europe or elsewhere)

June - Underground training (or Dalkey Quarry) and NAMHO (usually June)

July - Weekend field trip

August - Heritage Week (end of August)

September - UK visit (possibly with other UK group)

October - Inventory/Surveying

November - Lecture

December - No event (holidays)

Currently the Board is trying to firm up plans for events in the remainder of 2009 and for 2010 on this basis so that members can plan ahead and know exactly when activities are going to take place. Any comments and ideas or offers are welcome, but expect a further newsletter with many more details soon.