



# NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 47

MAY 2010

Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

## MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2010

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

### NOTE REARRANGED DATES

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2010 –**

**OPTION A:** Abbeytown Mine, Ballysadare, Co. Sligo, 10.00 in the morning and then join group in Arigna Coalfield for the afternoon.

**OPTION B:** Arigna coalfield – Kilronan Mountain (including Arigna Mining Experience), Slieve Anierin and Bencroy

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May – Arigna – Altagowlan Mountain, Creevelea, Lackagh Hills  
SEE MORE DETAILS INSIDE**

*NAMHO 2010 4-6 June, South Gloucester. See page 8 in Newsletter 46 for more details or <http://www.namhoconference.org.uk/>*

**4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> September 2010. Boulby Potash Mine, UK SEE INSIDE FOR MORE DETAILS**

**16-17 October 2010 Co. Down fieldtrip led by Alastair Lings**

**November: Holding on to your history – MHTI archives and records**

This meeting will be an opportunity to explore the archival collections MHTI has, and a chance to determine their future. **More details to follow**

## EDITORIAL

Organising field visits or events is always difficult to do with certainty. The organizer is usually someone very busy, trying to squeeze an event into their other activities. Sometimes, we have an event scheduled that no-one is able to satisfactorily take a lead on. Sometimes Icelandic volcanoes throw ash into the air and stop all air traffic. These things happen, but they make it difficult for you to decide on your participation.

When we advertise an event of any sort, it would be most helpful if you could let the relevant organiser know by email or by phone if you are potentially interested (with no commitment normally required). In this way if there are late changes or uncertainties about travel arrangements or other news you can be informed as part of a smaller group. There is often no time available to inform all members and a few of you are still not contactable by email and hence at a further disadvantage if a postal notice is sent out.

Contact Matthew Parkes for information 087-122 1967 or [mparkes@museum.ie](mailto:mparkes@museum.ie)  
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## ABBEYTOWN MINE VISIT SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2010

NOTE CHANGED DATE DUE TO UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES. THE TRIP WILL COMMENCE AT 10.00 (meet at the new office at new entrance to quarry on Ballina Road) AND WILL BE CONCLUDED BY 14.00. (**Subject to permission from EMD**).

John Kelly is to lead an underground visit to Abbeystown Mine, Ballysadare, Co. Sligo, by special arrangement with the Quarry operator Frank Harrington, Quarry Manager Michael Brogan and his staff. The mine is normally closed entirely and is being opened up especially for us. Limited to 8 places. Must have BCA underground insurance through MHTI or another group. If you want to see a taste of what the mine is like see the paper by John Kelly in MHTI Journal 7.

There are still a couple of places left so to book your place send an email to [mparkes@museum.ie](mailto:mparkes@museum.ie) or phone 087-122 1967.

It is expected that most of those attending will probably want to also continue in the afternoon to Leitrim/Roscommon and join the Connaught Coalfield trip led by Alastair Lings – see below.

## Connaught Coalfield Visit Saturday 15 – Sunday 16 May 2010

This fieldtrip will examine coal mining and related sites around Lough Allen. Legend has it that the Tuatha De Danaan landed on Slieve Anieran (Sliabh An Iarainn = the iron mountain), discovered iron and set to work making weapons. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century iron was worked in Drumshanbo, using charcoal to smelt the ore. By 1621 Sir Charles Coote employed 3000 workers at his smelting works at Arigna, Ballinamore, Creevelea and Garrison.

Gradually the supply of timber for charcoal production was exhausted and the iron works shut. Coal was discovered west of Lough Allen in 1765, and in 1788 the pioneering O'Reilly Brothers used it to smelt iron. The works at Arigna eventually shut in 1838, but coal mining continued to supply domestic, municipal and industrial requirements.

In 1920 the 4 mile Arigna Extension Railway was completed, linking the mines to the Cavan & Leitrim Railway. Coal was supplied to cement factories at Limerick and Drogheda.

In 1958 the Electricity Supply Board opened the Arigna Power Station, which used up to 55000 tons of coal annually, 65-85% of local production. This strong local demand for coal reduced the need for the railway, which closed in 1959. When the power station stopped

work in 1990, the coal mines shut. It is estimated that 29 million tonnes of coal remain unmined. In 2003 a show mine and purpose-built visitor centre was opened: the Arigna Mining Experience ([www.arignaminingexperience.ie](http://www.arignaminingexperience.ie)).

### Coordinator

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### Programme

#### Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May

Meet at 10:00 for coffee at the Arigna Mining Experience, G921142, Discovery sheet 26. Tour the show mine (at your own expense) then we visit mines on Kilonan Mountain-Carrane Hill, Slieve Anierin and Bencroy.

#### Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May

Same meeting time and place. Mines on Corry Hill and on the Lackagh Hills. Creevelea Furnace (G909293). On one day, Denis Flynn has kindly offered to show us a 1930s coal cutter he is restoring.

### Equipment

Members are requested to bring warm clothing, waterproofs and hillwalking boots or wellies. If going underground (subject to permission being granted), helmets, electric lamps, crawling (knee) pads and oversuit are recommended.

### Bibliography

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- EastWest Mapping (compiler), 1999. The miner's way & historical trail: guide book with detailed 1:50,000 scale maps. EastWest Mapping, Enniscorthy. 36pp.
- Flanagan, P.J. 1966. Mining in Cavan. Breifne Vol 3 (No. 9), p100-107.
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- Kane, R. 1845. The industrial resources of Ireland (2<sup>nd</sup> edn). Hodges & Smith, Dublin. 438pp. (Reprinted by the Irish University Press, 1971). (Coal: p16-25. Iron: p 122-124, p 133-136, p144-148 and p157-158) \*
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areas of Cavan, Fermanagh, Mayo and Roscommon, to accompany the bedrock geology 1:100 000 scale map series sheet 7, Sligo-Leitrim, with contributions by K. Claringbold, D. Daly, R. Meechan and G. Stanley. Geological Survey of Ireland. 99pp. (Earth resources: p24-28)

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McParlan, J. 1802. Statistical survey of the county of Leitrim. The Dublin Society, Dublin. 382pp. (Minerals: p11-17) \*

Rigney, P. 2002. Report on the Arigna coalmines 1942. Breifne Vol 9 (No. 38), p509-516.

Rigney, P. 2004. Arigna coalmines and the emergency. Breifne Vol 10 (No. 40), p290-

Weld, I. 1832. Statistical survey of the county of Roscommon. Royal Dublin Society, Dublin. 710pp. (Collieries and ironworks: p33-77. Arigna Coal & Iron Company: appendix p.i-xxvii) \*

Wynne, P., 2005. Remembering the Aughacashel mines. p30-35 in Harvey, B., and Kennedy, S., 2005. Mountain Echoes: Sliabh an Iarainn's Story. 169pp.

Publications marked \* are available to download at <http://books.google.com>



*Winch gear, Gubbarudda*



*Old adit, Gubnaveagh, Bencroy Mine*



*Incline, Greaghnageeragh, Irish Mines*



*Hopper, Gubnaveagh, Bencroy Mine*



*Weighbridge & aerial ropeway, Kilronan Mountain*

### **ACCOMMODATION IN BELTURBET**

Barry and Catherine Flannery have very generously offered some free accommodation in a holiday home in Belturbet, Co. Cavan, a short distance east of Arigna. If you are interested in availing of this very kind offer please contact Catherine directly on 087-2930737 or Barry on [barryflannery@gmail.com](mailto:barryflannery@gmail.com)

## Accommodation in Drumshanbo

Berry's B&B, High Street. Nine rooms. 071 964 1070, mobile: 087 742 5907. [magscamp@hotmail.com](mailto:magscamp@hotmail.com). (Special rate for MHTI members 32.50 euro/single occupancy/night)

Belle Vue B&B, Church Street. Four rooms. 35 euro/single/night. 071 964 1800, mobiles: 086 378 5902 / 086 845 3132.

c/o Bernadette McKeon, Carrick Road. 071 964 1106. 45 euro/single/night.

c/o Betty McManus, High Street. 071 964 1128. Approx 35euro/single/night.

c/o Mairin Heron, Fraoch Ban, Corlough, (1 mile north of Drumshanbo). 071 964 1260, mobile 087 636 0446. [mh@fraochban.com](mailto:mh@fraochban.com). (45 euro/single/night).

The Yellow Ducati B&B, Carraig-na-mBreac. 087 777 4857. [taradeire@libero.it](mailto:taradeire@libero.it). 35 euro/single/night.

Maguires Cottages (self catering), Acres Lough. 071964 1033. Mobile: 087 137 9570.

### Nearby accommodation

Miners Cottage (self catering). Contact the Arigna Mining Experience, 071 964 6466. Sleeps 5 (max). 150 euro for the weekend.

## Irish miners in Silver Hill, North Carolina

Don Borthwick has kindly sent in a note about an article in the sixteenth Annual Journal of the Mining History Association in the USA, from 2009. The article is entitled: The Silver Hill Mine: First Silver Mine in the United States and supplier of lead to the Confederacy, and is written by L Michael Kaas, a retired mining engineer. Silver Hill Mine is in North Carolina. Don has highlighted a statement:

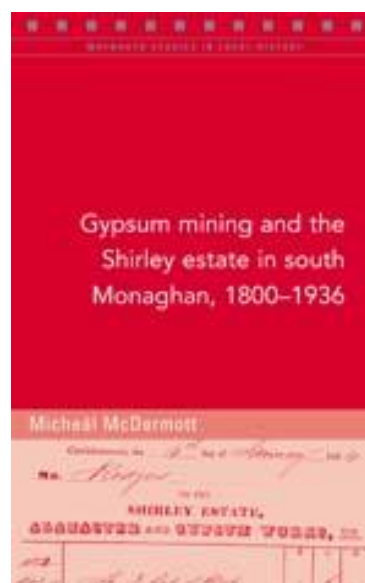
Silver Hill illustrates the dependence of early U.S. mines on European expertise and technology. Cornish mine captains were instrumental in the mine's initial underground development and its reopening at the time of the Civil War. The mine's workforce was heavily populated with English and Irish miners'.

As he notes, the information about the miners came from the 1860 census at which time they lived at the settlements of Silver Hill and Healing Springs. This may provide a useful lead to someone trying to trace family or track migration patterns.

## Gypsum mining and the Shirley estate in south Monaghan, 1800-1936 by Micheál McDermott

In the early 1800s a fruitless pursuit of coal on the Shirley estate in south Monaghan led to the discovery and the intermittent exploitation of gypsum on the estate lands. In portraying the inter-related fortunes of the Shirley family, the mines and their community, the study places this trinity on a journey which is signposted by significant political, social and economic developments. The changing balance of power between landlord and tenant, as crystallised by the Land Acts and a growing nationalist democracy, had profound implications for this industry. The establishment of the Farney Development Company (1921-27) at Lisnabo, Co. Meath, in the southern section of the gypsum field, was the major result of these changes. Despite the collapse of this company and further initial setbacks, the gypsum enterprise, Gypsum and Bricks, was eventually relaunched in the 1930s.

This study owes its compilation to a broad range of sources but it is chiefly indebted to the estate papers of the Shirley family, the records of the Geological Survey of Ireland and the National Archives, Dublin.



**Micheál McDermott**, a resident of Navan, is a native of the Kilmainhamwood district of north Meath, parish of Kingscourt. Over many years his work has embraced a broad spectrum of primary education. He is currently attached to Saint Mochta's National School, Clonsilla, Dublin.

## **BOULBY MINE VISIT Saturday September 4<sup>th</sup> to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September**

Neil Rowley of Boulby Potash Mine in north-east England has kindly offered MHTI Members a visit to Boulby Potash Mine on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September. He has additionally offered to lead us around some other local mines to make a weekend visit even more interesting.

Below are his provisional suggestions for accommodation and sites to visit. **AS PLACES FOR THE BOULBY POTASH MINE VISIT ARE LIMITED YOU ARE REQUESTED TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST IN THIS TRIP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THAT TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE CO-ORDINATED. IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT RETURN TRAVEL TO IRELAND WILL BE ON TUESDAY MORNING FROM NEWCASTLE OR DURHAM AIRPORT AS THE TRIP ON MONDAY WILL BE A FULL LONG DAY.**

[contact [mparkes@museum.ie](mailto:mparkes@museum.ie), 087-122 1967]

**“Accommodation** - I am trying to use some local contacts to negotiate a reasonable rate on a large holiday house in Staithes, but we are still in peak tourist season so they may be looking for weekly rentals rather than just weekend. I'll let you know how things progress.

- Things to see - We have many options - **The one fixed point is Monday when I can take 8 underground at the potash mine.** Other than that I suggest we can try to fit in some or all of the following:-
- Port Mulgrave Mine (iron)
- Ginkle Mine (iron) and area.
- Boulby Alum quarry - a fascinating place on top of the seacliffs.
- A walk along the foreshore between Staithes and Port Mulgrave, this is a classic geology walk with many mining remains - it could only be done in the late afternoon as high tide is 1pm.
- Honey bee nest underground whinstone mine - tight entrance moderately strenuous.
- The Iron mines in the Goathland, Beck Hole, Grosmont area.

Plus there are always the North Yorkshire Moors Steam Railway, Whitby, some excellent coastal scenery and plenty of other mining remains.

If the group want to split up to do different activities then we can call on people with excellent local knowledge to act as guides – Simon Chapman and Tamsyn Naylor have volunteered their services.

Cleveland Potash can provide lamps, helmets, overalls, boots etc - so no need to bring them on the plane.

Neil”

## **EPA – GSI HISTORIC MINES INVENTORY PROJECT**

There is not room or time to do this project justice here, but you are advised to have a look at the recently published report characterizing historic mine sites throughout the Republic of Ireland. Immense detail and aerial photos and maps are included making this a really useful resource for mine historians and heritage enthusiasts.

The EPA website has links to the full report (in bite sized chunks), and a map viewer:

<http://www.epa.ie/news/pr/2010/name.27950,en.html>  
<http://maps.epa.ie/EnvisionMinesViewer/MapView.a.spx>

A link on the map viewer will take you to the "Appendix 5 Full Site Reports". There's some useful stuff here. If you click on the "Full historic mines inventory project report" link you'll get the whole report, all 130 MB, which may be too much for some.

## **NEW GLENGOWLA DVD**

Peter Eggleston and Industrial Archaeology Recordings have produced a new DVD on Glengowla Mine for the Geoghegans. More information and review to follow in next newsletter.

<http://www.iarecordings.org/>

## **COPIES OF GRIFFITH'S GEOLOGY MAP OF IRELAND FOR SALE**

The Geological Society of London are selling copies of Griffith's 1855 Map.

Best wishes, Alastair Lings

<http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/gsl/site/GSL/lang/en/page6574.html>