



# NEWSLETTER

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Iontaobhas Oidhreachta Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

## MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2012

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

**2012**

17-20 April, Tues-Fri. *International Mining History Congress. Johannesburg, South Africa.* <http://www.imhc.co.za/>

[*M Critchley & S Schwartz are each presenting a paper here*]

**19 May, Saturday MHTI Board Meeting (short one before AGM)**

**19-20 May, Sat-Sun MHTI AGM and fieldtrips around Castlecomer Discovery Centre. Leader Seamus Walsh**

25-28<sup>th</sup> May *Symposium Europa Subterranea 2012 (see inside)*

8 June, Friday *Copper Coast Geopark Workshop on animation of mining at Tankardstown Copper Coast Geopark Workshop on children of mining. Contact Joe Greene: 353 (0)87 7571392 E-mail: joegreeneml@gmail.com*

9-10 June Sat/Sun *Copper Coast Geopark Weekend on archaeology. Contact Joe Greene as above.*

16-17 June (**Changed date**) *Britannia Mine, Snowdonia (Welsh Mines Society)*

29Jun -1Jul Fri-Sun *NAMHO Annual Conference, Alderley Edge*

**12 July, Thurs MHTI Board Meeting**

**14-15 July, Sat/Sun Allihies. Leader Theo Dahlke**

**13 Sep, Thurs MHTI Board Meeting**

**15-16 Sept, Sat-Sun Metal mines of Donegal, Fieldtrip leader Alastair Lings**

22-23 Sept (**Changed date**) *Forest of Dean, Gloucester (Welsh Mines Society)*

**9 November, Friday MHTI Board Meeting**

10 November Sat *NAMHO Board Meeting, Shropshire*

**2013**

16 March, Sat *NAMHO Council meeting, English Midlands*

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WWW.MHTI.COM

# MHTI MEMBERS' BUSINESS

## 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 Lorimer Room, Castlecomer Discovery Centre, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny on Saturday 19th May 2012 at 17.00

### Agenda

- 1) Presentation of the accounts for 2011
- 2) To appoint auditors
- 3) To elect Directors

Signed: Nigel Monaghan, Company Secretary

### Proxy Form

If you are unable to attend but wish to have a proxy form, please let us know and we will supply directly. Contact Nigel Monaghan – [nmonaghan@museum.ie](mailto:nmonaghan@museum.ie)

## Election of Directors

Matthew Parkes, Alastair Lings and Nigel Monaghan are all resigning at the AGM, as required by the Memo and Articles of the MHTI. However all are willing to stand for election again.

We are always keen to receive nominations from people willing to become Directors of MHTI, and who are willing to actively engage in projects or responsibilities. [Contact Nigel Monaghan if interested.](#)

## EDITORIAL

It is timely to acknowledge the absolutely vital contribution provided by our corporate supporters who have been generous and committed in difficult financial times when every cent is precious:

**Conroy Diamonds and Gold plc**  
**Boliden Tara Mines Ltd**  
**Geological Survey of Northern Ireland**  
**Lisheen Mine**  
**Allihies Parish Co-op**  
**National Museum of Ireland**  
**Geological Survey of Ireland**

We plan to issue the next Newsletter in mid-June. If you have any contributions, please contact the Editor before the 1st June. Thank you.

Contact Matthew Parkes for newsletter contributions 087-122 1967 or [mparkes@museum.ie](mailto:mparkes@museum.ie)

## The future of MHTI

After the formal part of the EGM in November 2011 the future direction of the MHTI was discussed by members. The deliberations covered 10 themes.

### Members

We need to find out what members want from MHTI, perhaps by issuing a questionnaire or using the surveymonkey (or similar) website. The questionnaire could be made available on our website. Members are the key to the future development of MHTI. We welcome volunteers to assist in the running of the trust, people to organise events, and contributors to our Journal and Newsletter. It was hoped that the Area Reps would be a useful channel of communication between the MHTI Board, MHTI members, and their local communities.

### Newsletter

The timing of newsletters is important to give adequate notice of forthcoming events especially the AGM. Members welcomed the regular publication of the Newsletter.

### Journal

It was suggested that articles in the Journal should be "peer reviewed" to enhance its credibility and ensure its inclusion in citation indexes. Journal sales should be targeted at libraries in mining counties, and local studies libraries.

### Website

This could be a general portal to mining heritage in Ireland, not just to mining history. The website could give access to databases (e.g. genealogical) and provide links to mining heritage centres, local studies libraries and online resources such as the Mining Journal (when digitised) and the Genealogical Society of Ireland. To reduce the number of enquiries received by MHTI, guides will be produced to aid research in mining heritage and genealogy.

### Fieldtrips

Members welcomed the variety and regularity of fieldtrips. It was suggested that themed visits be organised, EG bronze age mining, perhaps with a visit to Wales after our visits to Cork. Excursions could be organised jointly with the IAEG, IGA, IHAI and academic bodies, and we must ensure that there are no clashes in the dates of meetings.

### Archive

We need to develop a plan for the archive, and to catalogue the contents. The ownership of the cinematographic film must be established, and then the film could be passed to the Irish Film Institute for safe storage. Green Mines funding could be used to convert

the existing film to digital format, which could then be made available on the website.

### Research

Support for research in to social and economic history may be available from Interreg. The widespread interest in genealogy was seen as a way for MHTI to increase its exposure and appeal to the public, although no one present had a particular interest in the study. A template will be produced to record the details of mining people for future inclusion in a database accessed via the website. Graveyards form part of a genealogical tourists itinerary. There may be scope for MHTI research or publications in this area, for example on the genealogy of large mining families.

### Conservation

MHTI has been instrumental in major conservation works at Allihies, Silvermines and on the Copper Coast. We need to draw up a list of priority sites for conservation work. Our fieldtrips could assess the conservation needs of sites. A fieldtrip to Avoca is planned to pilot this work.

### Funding

In addition to the Green Mines and Interreg funding mentioned above, other support may be available from Heritage Council. We should contact other heritage organisations to establish sources of funding, and consider publishing a guide to funding.

### Heritage Tourism

We should request that the mining heritage centres at Allihies, Arigna, Castlecomer, Copper Coast, Glendalough and Glengowla display our membership leaflets. MHTI could assist these organisations by providing a database of local mining sites.  
Alastair Lings

## MHTI JOURNAL 12

We have a few promised articles already, many of which we realistically expect to be included! Potential contributions include:

College Mine, County Armagh

John Morris

The Biggest Coalmine in the British Isles

Des Cowman

Ardmore Mine survey

Matthew Parkes *et al.*

Cregan Mine

Martin Critchley and Sharron Schwartz

An archaeological assessment of lead ore mining and dressing in Co. Wicklow

Sharron Schwartz and Martin Critchley

Mining Share Certificates II

John Morris

Lough Dan Mine

Matthew Parkes *et al.*

Topic TBC

Alan Thomas

Metalliferous mines of Co. Donegal

Alastair Lings

Changes in magnetic declination in Ireland 1600-2000

Alastair Lings

There is still time for YOU to submit an article, a note, a survey, exhibition review etc. Please advise us of your interest in submitting something to help with planning the journal. You can submit material to Matthew Parkes (see contacts on last page).

### Enquiry on mine plans

I am preparing an article for the Journal on changes in magnetic north in Ireland from 1600-2000. The earliest mine plan that I have seen dates from October 1793 by Rudolf Raspe. The plan and section depict workings at Cahirane, Killarney, and is reproduced in Billy O'Briens books "Ross Island: mining, metal and society in early Ireland" (p73) and "Ross Island and the mining heritage of Killarney" (extract on p19). If anyone knows of any earlier plans, please could they let me know? Thanks. Alastair Lings (contact details on back page)

### A pilot study at Avoca to prioritise structures for conservation.

One of the actions arising from the EGM last November was to draw up a list of priority sites for conservation work. Nick Coy (2011) organised a fieldtrip to Avoca to pilot this work. Objectives for the visit included:

“(1) To review the condition and status of the many mining features both natural and man-made.

(2) To evaluate the threats that those features currently face or are likely to face in the near future.

(3) To decide if these features are worth saving.”

Back in 1997 MHSI started work on an inventory of mine sites, and issued a Mine Site Inventory form. The form asked for a list of features, their condition and any threats they faced. Martin Critchley (1997) recommended five terms for a condition report from “perfect” through to “trace”, and suggested potential threats including instability, in-filling or development.

Under “Conservation issues” he asked “does the site or some of the features merit conservation. For example an Engine House may be unique in Ireland or may have historic connections, which makes it worthy of conservation. An adit or shaft may be providing access for bats.”

Given the previous work it was felt useful to continue with the terminology, and potentially incorporate the existing inventory work in to a new priority scheme. For the Avoca assessment we scored the condition and threats of each structure as follows:

Condition: bad (0.5), poor (0.75), fair (1), good (1.5) and excellent (2).

Threats: rapid decay/collapse (2), slow decay/filling (1.5), stable (1), in-use/maintained (0.75) and restoration underway/completed (0.5).

The significance of a structure was considered to result from one or more of the following characteristics: biological, geological, archaeological/historical, technological, or other reasons (e.g. landscape prominence). The significance of each character was scored as: commonplace (1), locally significant (2), regionally (3), nationally (4) and internationally significant (5). Originally the total significance of a structure was the sum of all the character-scores.

To prioritise our conservation work we needed to identify the most significant structures that were in the worst condition and faced the greatest threats. One way was to multiply the significance score with a factor created out of the condition and threat scores. Using the values we chose, if we divided threat by condition we would end up with a factor within the range of 0.25-4, the highest value being for the structure in the worst condition with the greatest threats. This factor was called the Action Factor, and is probably a measure of vulnerability.

Although individual structures were assessed, it was envisaged that any conservation work would cover adjacent structures that were related. Our original scoring on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012 worked out as follows:

1. The Twin Shafts complex, 69.6 points,
2. New Western Whim Shaft (uncapped)(24) and Engine House (15), 39 points,
3. Ore bins (16) and timber stockwork /crib sets (21.3), 37.3 points,
4. Williams Engine House group, 36.8 points,
5. Baronets group including dressing floor, 35 points,
6. Forge group, 25 points,
7. The 850' Level (14) and Farmers Shaft (8), 22 points,
8. East Avoca Open Pit (15) and Grass Level (6), 21 points,
9. Whelans Shaft (capped), 20 points,
10. Tigrony Ochre Pits, 16 points.

Unfortunately multiplying the proposed significance scores by an action factor created a situation where commonplace structures (total significance 5) could end up with a priority value of 20, ahead of an internationally important structure (9) in fair condition facing slow decay/infilling, with a priority value of 18. Clearly the action factors needed to be reduced, or the range of significance scores extended.

The simplicity of the condition and threat scoring, and the derivation of the action factor seems reasonable, and this methodology has been retained. Awarding significance points for characteristics that did not exist, undermined genuine character-scores. For example no

useful purpose was served by assessing a building for its geological significance.

Therefore the individual significance scores were changed to a single overall significance score, and the range of possible scores was extended: commonplace (1), locally significance (2), regionally (4), nationally (8) and internationally significant (16). On this basis a commonplace structure in bad condition facing rapid decay/collapse would be prioritised the same as a regionally important structure in fair condition and stable. One probably would not expect to conserve a commonplace structure at all, but this illustrates how a vulnerable structure could be prioritised. Using the new scoring we end up with:

1. The Williams Engine House group, 45.3 points,
2. Twin Shafts complex, 43.7 points,
3. Ore bins (16) and timber stockwork/crib sets (21.3), 37.3 points,
4. Baronets group including dressing floor, 17 points,
5. Ochre Pits, 16 points,
6. East Avoca Open Pit (12) with Grass Level (2), 14 points,
7. The 850' Level (8) and Farmers Shaft (5.3), 13.3 points,
- 8=. Flat-Rod Tunnel (upper section) and Tramway Arch, both 12 points,
10. New Western Whim Shaft (uncapped)(8) and Engine House (3), 11 points.

For the area we assessed this seems a reasonable order of priority on which to progress any conservation work. Sites omitted from our pilot assessment included Ballymoneen Engine House & Shaft, Connary Engine Stack, Connary Shafts, Cronebane Shafts, Knight Adit, Kilmacoo Dressing Floors, and the pillars for the pumping-ropeway.

The assessment process and these results will be discussed at future board meetings, and probably after the AGM. Hopefully we will be able to refine and agree the process, and then extend our assessment to other mining areas. The Board will welcome any comments, questions or suggestions about the process that you may have.

Alastair Lings

#### References:

- Coy, N., 2011. Review of heritage aspects of the Avoca Mines. *MHTI Newsletter* 54 (Dec 2011), p2.
- Critchley, M., 1997. Mine site inventory. *Mining History Society of Ireland Newsletter* 5 (July 1997), p10-12.

## Welcome New Members

We are delighted to welcome several people as both new and returned MHTI members: Ainsley Cocks, Brian Keady, James N Logue, Brendan Morris, Alan Thomas, Geoff Warke, Mark Cooper, Kevin Barton.

## Meeting with Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

On the 20th March, Martin Critchley (representing the MHTI) and Marie Merrigan (Vale of Avoca Development Association) were invited by Andrew Doyle TD to make a presentation about the mining heritage at Avoca to the Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Fergus O'Dowd TD). The Minister was shown around the Avoca site by officials from the Exploration and Mining Division of the Department. Afterwards there was a presentation at the "Meetings" where Sharron Schwartz and Martin Critchley spoke about the conservation issues at Avoca, mining tourism in Ireland (and elsewhere) and opportunities for development. The similarities of mining heritage at Avoca to Rio Tinto, Parys Mountain (Wales) and parts of southern Australia were demonstrated. These overseas sites have similar issues to Avoca in terms of acid mine drainage, significant Cornish mining heritage and open pits but have nevertheless been turned into successful tourist attractions without the need for wholesale destruction of the mining landscapes (or infilling of the open pits as proposed in the recent report submitted to the Department by CDM). The recent field trip and audit undertaken at Avoca by MHTI members was reported upon. Martin on behalf of the MHTI sought better management of the site and promoted the idea of a partnership model for management. Marie Merrigan of VADA made a strong case for access to the site for walks and conservation of the mining remains by promoting an eco-museum approach - proven to work elsewhere.

The Minister appeared sympathetic to above proposals but the officials from his Department stated that public safety was their over-riding concern. Martin also mentioned to the Minister of the situation about poor protection of post-1700 archaeology and that MHTI would be making representation on this matter to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

It was agreed that the MHTI would provide the Minister and his Department with a copy of the Avoca audit when it is finalised.

## Copper Coast Geopark Progress at Monksland Church

The building works to restore and extend Monksland Church to make it visitor and community centre for the Copper Coast Geopark are progressing well and a summer opening is envisaged. These photos were taken on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April.



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

Copies of this book are now available to MHTI directly. They are priced at €10 including P&P. Contact Matthew Parkes. You can also request the current list of all publications available from MHTI.



# EVENTS: NOTICES AND REPORTS

## Leinster Coalfield visit Saturday 19 – Sunday 20 May 2012

This fieldtrip will examine coal mining and related sites around Castlecomer. Anthracite mining started about 1640, working the Three-Foot Seam. Around 1740 the Jarrow Seam was discovered. A Newcomen engine at Doonane Colliery was probably the first heat engine in Ireland. In 1782-3 parts of the engine were reused when Boulton & Watt constructed their first stationary steam engine in the country.

The Skehana Seam was discovered before the First World War, and was worked by the Deerpark Colliery from 1924 until 1969. There has been some small-scale and sporadic coal production since then at Loon, Slatt, Rossmore, Glen Mullen, Ardra, and Upper Hills. During the weekend Michael Conry will give us an entertaining demonstration of making culm balls.

There have been big developments at the Castlecomer Discovery Park including an aerial walkway through the trees and a climbing wall. During the weekend international choirs will be performing at the Park, so there should be something of interest to everyone.

### Coordinator

Seamus Walsh  
e-mail: [swalshminer@eircom.net](mailto:swalshminer@eircom.net)  
Home: 056 444 1504  
Mobile: 087 961 9793

In case of any changes to the programme, please let the coordinator know if you are interested in attending. Prior booking is essential for the evening meal on the Saturday.

### Programme

#### Saturday 19 May

10:00 meet for coffee at the Jarrow Cafe, Castlecomer Discovery Park, Grid reference S 538 732, Discovery sheet 61. A surface tour of the mines in the area.

16:00 Return to the mining museum for a tour / coffee / MHTI Board meeting.

#### 17:00 AGM in the Lorimer Room

19:00 Meal at the Castlecomer Golf Club. Three course meal from reduced menu available for E17.50. Please make bookings with Alastair Lings, before 11 May.

#### Sunday 20 May

10:00 meet at the Jarrow Cafe, as above. A further tour of the mines and a visit to Monegore Bog.

### Equipment

Members are requested to bring warm clothing, waterproofs and hillwalking boots or wellies. If going underground, helmets, electric lamps, crawling (knee) pads and oversuit are recommended. Please bring a packed lunch.

### Bibliography

- Bowie, G., 1978. Early stationary steam engines in Ireland. *Industrial Archaeology Review*, Vol.2 (No.2), p168-174.
- Fogarty, Martin (editor) 2001. *Coal Mining in Castlecomer*. Firoda National School, Castlecomer. 220 pp. Available from the editor on 087-2222113 or [mfogarty@iol.ie](mailto:mfogarty@iol.ie). See also: <http://www.sip.ie/sip019B/index1.htm>
- Griffith, R., 1814. *Geological and mining survey of the Leinster coal district*. Dublin Society. 135pp. Available at: <http://books.google.co.uk/books>
- McArdle, P. 1992. *Irish coalfields - technical developments in the 1980s*. p341-358 in Bowden, A.A., Earls, G., O'Connor, P.G. & Pyne, J. (eds) 1992. *The Irish minerals industry 1980-1990*. Irish Association for Economic Geology. 436pp.
- Stanley, G., Gallagher, V., Ni Mhairtin, F., Brogan, J., Lally, P., Doyle, E., and Farrell, L., 2009. *Historic mine sites and risk classification*. Environmental Protection Agency & Geological Survey of Ireland. Volume 1 (130MB) of the full report and other information is available via: <http://maps.epa.ie/EnvisionMinesViewer/mapviewer.aspx>. Even better click on the link to the Appendix 5 Full site reports, and select Leinster Coalfield (12MB, 27pp).
- Walsh, J. & S., 1999. *In the shadow of the mines*. Published by Seamus Walsh. 220pp. Available from Seamus, or Matthew Parkes.

### Accommodation near Castlecomer

Camping is available at the Discovery Park. If staying in one of the B&Bs listed it might be worth mentioning that you are with the MHTI.

Damerstown Farmhouse B&B. 3 km south. Four rooms. May & Liam Farrell, 056 444 1337.

<http://www.damerstownfarmhousebb.com/Welcome.html>

Wandesforde House. 4 km north-east. Five rooms. Michael & Anna McDonald, 056 444 2441.

<http://www.wandesfordehouse.com/index.html>

Byrnesgrove Farmhouse, Ballyragget. 5 km west. Three rooms. Laura & Jim Kenny, 087 975 1697.

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

## Irish Association for Economic Geology IAEG CONFERENCE 2012

Prospecting in Areas of Glaciated Terrain -  
New Solutions to an Old Problem?  
KNIGHTSBROOK HOTEL TRIM, CO.MEATH  
12TH & 13TH MAY

## **“Gold, Power and Allure”**

From Friday 1 June until Saturday 28 July (excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays) the Goldsmiths’ Company in London is holding an exhibition called “Gold, Power and Allure”. The exhibition includes mineral specimens from Scotland and Cornwall and many gold artefacts. Also on display will be borehole core from Ireland and some bronze-age lunulae, probably made from Irish gold. A book is being produced, based on the theme of the exhibition. On the 19 June a series of talks will consider aspects of the exhibition and its historical and cultural relevance. <http://thegoldsmiths.co.uk/>

## **Report on visit to Lisheen Mine 02 March 2012**

After the visit to Galmoy Mine members made their way to Lisheen Mine owned by Vedanta Resources. The approach to the mine is on a grand scale past a long tailings dam, through an area dotted with wind turbines. On arrival we were welcomed by Eamon Maher and kindly provided with lunch in the excellent canteen.

Mining & Technical Services Manager (and MHTI member) Brian Keady gave us a safety briefing followed by a high-tech presentation on the discovery and development of the mine, and some of the challenges encountered.

The mine was opened in 2000 by Bertie Ahern, and currently employs 390 people. It produces zinc and lead from massive pyrite-marcasite-sphalerite-galena orebodies hosted in carboniferous age dolostone (magnesium carbonate rock) and mineralised breccia. The host rock is highly fractured, and the mine makes a lot of water: between 60,000 and 80,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water is pumped to surface each day, seasonally dependent. In some places the mineralised ground is so weak that it has to be injected with cement before it can be mined. Nickel occurs in some of the ore, which is unhelpful in the smelting process. Rock samples from each face are analysed, and the mined ore is blended so that concentrates shipped from the mine meet the required parameters.

The mine has very high safety standards and organises a two-day safety exhibition each year for its staff and their families, and hosts safety equipment suppliers, Garda Traffic Corps, Road Safety Authority & many others at the event. Part of the safety process includes random alcohol testing at the point of entry for staff, contractors and any other personnel visiting the site, with appropriate levels of response.

After the presentation we were issued with disposable oversuits, helmets, lights, self-rescuers, safety spectacles and smoke-goggles. When we had donned

all the equipment we piled in to a 4x4 and headed underground down the 1.6 kilometre long incline, first visiting the Derryville Zone of the mine. There we saw a drilling rig in operation in the H50, an access drift to a new orebody, and observed some of the water inflows in one of the many fractured areas of the mine. Heading back to the Main Zone we saw a face prepared for blasting, the crusher and an Alimak Lift in the Fresh Air Shaft (205 m). This is used for emergency egress. After this we just had time to visit a high-nickel bearing face in the Oolite Zone. Unfortunately we could not access the actual face because it had not been made safe and mucked-out.

Then we returned to surface and handed back all our equipment. After thanking our hosts we headed our separate ways in glorious sunshine.

A big thank-you to Vedanta for providing the visit, and to our hosts Brian Keady, Eamon Maher and Padraig Barrett.

Alastair Lings

Further information:

Dillon, M., White, R., and Power, D., 2004. Tailings storage at Lisheen Mine, Ireland. *Minerals Engineering*, 17, p123-130. Available via: <http://www.tailings.info/lisheen.htm>

Fusciardi, L.P., Guven, J.F., Stewart D.R.A., Carboni, V., and Walsh, J.J., 2003. The geology and genesis of the Lisheen Zn-Pb deposit, Co. Tipperary, Ireland. p455-481 in Kelly, J.G., Andrew, C.J., Ashton, J.H., Boland, M.B., Earls, G., Fusciardi, L., and Stanley, G., (editors)2003. *Europe’s Major Base Metal Deposits*. Irish Association for Economic Geology. 552pp. <http://www.lisheenmine.ie/>

## **Report on Avoca field visit Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March**

On Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> of March we met at East Avoca to visit the mines and access the various remains of engine houses, chimneys and mine entrances. With a great turn out of 19 people including some locals we began the day by making our way to the wooden ore bins at Tigrooney. It was gathered that these ore bins are unique in Ireland and that there are no other examples anywhere else in the country. Close by to the ore bins was a flat rod tunnel which was in good condition. We continued on to an adit which wasn’t too far from the ore bins and made further assessments on its external condition.



Our next port of call was to William's engine house, an important Cornish style engine house. With keys and kind permission from EMD we were able to get to the engine house and inspect the site, suggestions were made that the area could possibly be tidied up so the site can be seen better from the road and that the ivy which is slowly covering the engine house should be removed.

After some uphill walking we made our way to ochre settling ponds, which were quite overgrown and in need of some attention. From here the Baronets engine house could be seen and that is where we made our way to next. The engine house itself is already being supported by a metal frame, although the chimney is in better condition, both structures are covered in ivy and suggestions were made that it could be removed. Encroaching ivy seems to be the fate of many mine buildings around Avoca.

The more modern East Avoca open pit was our next stop, the giant size of the pit over shadows the smaller 18<sup>th</sup> Century workings that were exposed during the recent mining. The older workings are seen as small dark spots in the face of the rock, from across the pit. After a group picture we made our way back to our cars and drove to the West Avoca mines.



After a spot of lunch, we started accessing the mining remains of West Avoca, taking into account the remains at the Twin Shafts, which included some concrete building remains from the 1940's. Also examined were the tramway, the tramway arch and the Ballygahan engine house.



At the end of the day and field trip, we thanked the leader Nick Coy for showing us around. In all it was an enjoyable day and useful information was gathered on the condition of the mining remains.

Stephen Callaghan



# NEWS: IRISH NEWS/ISSUES/BOOKS

## New Journal

The latest Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland (No.11) was distributed to members in January. It includes the following articles: A survey of bryophytes and metallophyte vegetation of metalliferous spoil in Ireland; The Cappagh Mine share certificate vignette; Copper mining near Belderrig, County Mayo, with a note on Martin Boundy; Ballymurtagh Mine, Avoca - a history; Unearthing the past – the rediscovery of Blundell's Mine(s), Edenderry, County Offaly; Philip Henry Argall (1854-1922) – the remarkable life and career of a Cornish-Irish mining manager, engineer and metallurgist; Mining and mineral working in the Belleek area, in County Fermanagh; Ringing the blews – the Avoca "mine bell"; Conservation of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century mine heritage buildings at Silvermines, Co. Tipperary. The Journal is available from the editor Matthew Parkes ( [mparkes@museum.ie](mailto:mparkes@museum.ie) ), or in Great Britain from Alastair Lings ( [alastairlings@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alastairlings@yahoo.co.uk) ).

## Snippets from History: The London Lead Company in Ireland 1722-1741

The Snippet in Newsletter 54 outlined some of the problems that the LLC faced with its operations at Silvermines, including "a weak manager who allowed a Tippling House keeper to get control and give absurd wages for poor work".

A book by William Rees sheds some more light on the period:

"In Ireland, the Company, in conjunction with Richard Champion of Bristol and the Bevan Brothers (Timothy and Sylvanus Bevan), was engaged in mining operations in County Tipperary, probably at BALLYRIGAN. The works were in the charge of Richard Spencer but so unsatisfactory was the conduct of affairs that William Barker, brother of Anthony Barker, senior, who was said to be competent in the technique of mining and in the Company's methods of refining and smelting, was sent to Ireland to recover the position there. The works had of late been unprofitable, partly through the inability of Spencer to keep strict accounts and partly through the laxity of control which had enabled 'self-seeking persons, like William Gilstrap, who kept a tippling-house, to secure direction of affairs', with serious results for the Company's finances. By 1729, the Irish mines (described as The Silver Mines) were still unprofitable and William Barker proved unable to keep down costs or 'to introduce the frugal management present in the Flintshire Works'. Not until 1733, after the discovery of a new vein, were the Irish mines again showing

promise, low-level drainage making possible the re-opening of the flooded workings. Success, however, continued to elude the Company who, in 1735, sent over its Trelogan Agent to investigate. Again, a breakthrough, especially after pumps had been installed, seemed imminent, but by 1740, the Irish Agent, Thomas Marshall was replaced by John Sheldon of Trelogan. In all its centres of activity, the Company was experiencing a run of ill-fortune." (Rees, p518-9)

An article by Des Cowman and John Morris in Journal No.3 includes "A drawing of the mines produced by Thomas Dineley who visited the mines on his tour of Ireland in 1681". The image shows a single storey building in the foreground, annotated "O. The new Inn at the mines" (Cowman & Morris, p30) This may have been the "tippling house" from where Gilstrap directed refining operations.

[Nigel Monaghan has pointed out that: Thomas Dineley's manuscript of this trip is in the National Library of Ireland and available online at [http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/history/dineley\\_1681/dineley\\_index.htm](http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/history/dineley_1681/dineley_index.htm)

The National Museum of Ireland owns a chair of his <http://www.museum.ie/en/exhibition/list/17th-century-furniture.aspx>]



Alastair Lings

Cowman, D. and Morris, J.H., 2003. An history of quarrying and mining in Ireland up to 1700. *Journal of the MHTI*, 3, p25-32.

Rees, W., 1968. *Industry before the Industrial Revolution*. University of Wales Press, Cardiff. 2 volumes, 698pp

## **Cavanacaw Mine, County Tyrone**

**23/02/2012**

Omagh Minerals Ltd has received planning permission to export surplus rock from its open pit gold mine. The rock will be used locally as aggregate. The company hopes to develop an underground mine. Roland Phelps (of parent company Galantas Gold Corporation) said "Recently OML applied to construct a 'cut and cover' type adit within back-fill of the worked section of the open pit and a determination is awaited. The adit will allow potential access to gold mineralisation below the Kearney open-pit, subject to a successful planning application for an underground mine. The underground mine application is being finalised with a pre-consultation exercise in place and Environmental Impact Assessment being completed."  
<http://www.galantas.com/news/galantas-announces-planning-permits/>

## **Derryginagh Barite Project**

**06/02/2012**

Sunrise Resources PLC are hoping to develop a mine east of Bantry in West Cork (Ireland), producing filler-grade barite. A drilling programme has recently been completed and Patrick Cheetham, Executive Chairman, said "these results confirm that high-grade extensions to the Derryginagh barite vein system exist well below the old mine workings, and below the level of previous drilling carried out in the 1980s." Photographs of recent underground exploration, and a section of the mine are at:  
[http://www.sunriseresourcesplc.com/derryginagh\\_project.html](http://www.sunriseresourcesplc.com/derryginagh_project.html)

## **Bronze Age Gold**

Issue 98 of *Archaeology Ireland* (Winter 2011) includes an article by Ian Meighan on "The sourcing of Irish Bronze Age gold" (p31-2). The magazine had previously carried an article entitled "The gold source found at last?", which proposed that the source of gold for early bronze age ornaments was in the western Mourne Mountains (Issue 88, Summer 2009, p22-5). The author claims that substantial gold mineralisation in the bedrock of the Mourne Mountains is unlikely, and instead he suggests that the gold in the area was transported there by glacial action from a bedrock source in County Tyrone. He also claims that this model of transport would explain why no gold is found in the eastern Mournes.

(Editors note: maps showing the distribution of gold in soils and stream sediments are available at [http://www.bgs.ac.uk/gsni/tellus/map\\_viewer/index.html](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/gsni/tellus/map_viewer/index.html) and a map browser showing bedrock and superficial geology is at [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/gsni\\_geoindex/](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/gsni_geoindex/) )

## **Bronze Age Copper**

The most recent issue of *Archaeology Ireland* magazine (Spring 2012, Volume 26, No 1) includes a most interesting article by William O'Brien and Nick Hogan on 'Derrycarhoon: a Bronze Age copper mine in West Cork'. Following excavations and numerous radiocarbon dates from secure stratigraphical positions in the workings, they have established working of the site in the thirteenth century BC, in the middle Bronze Age when older workings at Ross Island and then Mount Gabriel had ceased.

The workings, including 4m deep trenches in steeply dipping bedded sandstones are the first known which were not worked by firesetting. They have survived a short phase of working in 1846 on.

## **Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary**

A website with a lot of interesting history of coal mining in Slieveardagh has come to our attention:  
[http://www.ballingarry.net/Slieveardagh%20history/the\\_mines.html](http://www.ballingarry.net/Slieveardagh%20history/the_mines.html)  
Thanks to Margaret O'Brien of the Community Group in Ballingarry who contacted us recently.

## **Snippets from History: Derena Mine, Spiddal, Galway**

Ewan Duffy writes: I have started going to the Dublin City Council library on Pearse Street. With no particular objective in mind, I am reading their available copies of the *Illustrated London News* to extract anything of industrial heritage relevance. I came across the following which might be of interest for inclusion in the next newsletter:

"Mr. Tyndell, of London, a member of an English Company, who have undertaken to work the leadmines of Derena, near Spiddal, in Galway, has arrived there within the last few days, for the purpose of commencing operations without delay. The mines in question are particularly rich, and the benefit accruing to both the company and the locality must consequently be very great."

**Illustrated London News, 10th July 1852, p19**

# OTHER NEWS

## Peak District Mining Museum

The Matlock Bath Pavilion Group has taken on a three year lease of the building that is home to the Peak District Mining Museum, in Derbyshire, England. The Group hope to renovate the Pavilion with grants of £2M, and have an option to buy the building at the end of the lease.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-17013814> <http://www.peakmines.co.uk/>

## Cononish Mine

The mine received planning permission from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority in October 2011. A financial package totalling £2M has now been agreed between the Authority and the developer, Scotgold Resources Ltd. As part of the package Scotgold will give Strathfillan Community Development Trust £200 000 towards the development of a mining exhibition and interpretative facility. Development work at the mine in central Scotland is expected to start in the second half of 2012.

<http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/>  
<http://www.scotgoldresources.com.au/>

## Chalk mines in Hatfield

Welwyn Hatfield Council in Hertfordshire (England) has received £1.9M from the UK Government to investigate and repair old chalk mines in Chantry Lane, Hatfield. At Briars Lane £4M was spent stabilising mines between 2003 and 2008. Chalk was worked at depths of five to ten metres in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, ending in about 1920.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-16960432>

## The York Potash Project

Sirius Minerals Ltd have planning permission to drill deep boreholes at 13 sites in North Yorkshire (England). They hope to develop a mine which would become one of the worlds largest producers of sulphate of potash. It is likely that the mine will be situated within the North York Moors National Park.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-16635060>  
<http://siriusminerals.com/york-potash-project>

## Rusha opencast coal mine

Banks Mining have started preparatory work for a new surface coal mine near Breich in West Lothian (Scotland). Up to 50 jobs may be created at the mine, which has permission to operate for seven years.

<http://www.banksgroup.co.uk/work-starting-at-rusha-surface-mine-site/>

## Parys Mountain

Anglesey Mining PLC are in the middle of a programme of drilling four boreholes to trace the Engine Zone mineralisation to shallower depths. Near the bottom of the Morris Shaft the Zone is an important mineral bearing structure.

<http://angleseymining.co.uk/news/?p=227>

## New book

“The Drift” by Ian Macmillan describes the small Hay Royds colliery in West Yorkshire from 1908 to the present day. It includes photographs by Ian Beesley and it is published by the National Coal Mining Museum for England. It costs £18 and is available from Ian Beesley at Hawthorn House, 1 Arthurs Lane, Greenfield, Saddleworth, OL3 7BD.

[http://www.shieldsgazette.com/lifestyle/entertainment/digging\\_through\\_coal\\_mine\\_s\\_past\\_1\\_4251546](http://www.shieldsgazette.com/lifestyle/entertainment/digging_through_coal_mine_s_past_1_4251546)

## Brightling Mine, East Sussex, 01/03/2012

British Gypsum’s Brightling Mine featured in the third (South Downs) episode of the BBC1 series The Great British Countryside. A four minute clip can be seen at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00pfdsy>

## Park Lane Quarry, Wiltshire, 09/03/2012

Ham & Doultling Stone Ltd want to reopen the underground mine near Neston Village, to extract Bath Stone. The mine was last worked in the 1960s. At present there are three mines working Bath Stone.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-17271407>

## Poldark Mine, Cornwall, 10/03/2012

One of two Cornish Stamps at Poldark Mining Museum have been stolen. Richard Williams, Chief Executive, said “We’ve had thefts of scrap metal, which are in fact quite important historical artefacts, from the site. The sad factor is that some of these items are quite unique.” Security has now been improved at the site. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-17324902>

Despite this loss the MHTI would like to congratulate Richard Williams for the award of an MBE for services to relationships between the UK and Mexico in the UK’s New Year Honours.

## **Cleveland Ironstone Mining Museum, North Yorkshire, 22/03/2012**

This mine featured in the Hartlepool to Whitby episode of the BBC2 series Britain's First Photo Album. At present only a very short clip is available to view at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00q4wnf>

## **National Coal Mining Museum, Yorkshire, 23/03/2012**

The museum was faced with a reduction in direct government funding, but it has now received a grant for £2.6M from the National Museum of Science and Industry, based in London. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-17495710>

## **Prince Edward Mine, 30/03/2012**

Over the last weekend of March the mine hosted the 34<sup>th</sup> International Mining Games, organised by the Camborne School of Mines. 36 teams of students from across the world competed in seven contests including hand mucking, hand drilling, and machine drilling with an air-leg. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-17569510>

## **Galston Mine, Ayrshire, 30/03/2012**

The Scottish Government has published a report in to the 2008 Galston Mine Incident, in which Alison Hume tragically died. HM Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Authorities makes four recommendations, three of which are linked to the Fire and Rescue Framework published by Scottish Ministers, and one relates to operational command. According to the Coal Authority there are 23000 mine entries in Scotland, with 14 collapses of shafts notified since 2004.

Report:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/03/3230>

Annex:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/03/5545>

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