



# NEWSLETTER

**NUMBER 64****SPRING 2014****Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hÉireann**

## DIARY DATES 2014

- Apr 26-27** AGM, field trips and seminar on Bronze Age mining, Killarney, Co. Kerry
- May 10 Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland Conference: "Irish Industry and Railways Heritage", Louth County Museum, Jocelyn Street, Dundalk. See inside for the full programme. <http://www.ihai.ie/events.htm>
- June 18 Building stones of Queen's University. Belfast Geologist's Society evening field trip. <http://belfastgeologists.org.uk/>
- June 21 Scrabo Quarries, Newtownards. Belfast Geologist's field trip. <http://belfastgeologists.org.uk/>
- Jul 6-13 10th International Mining History Congress 'Past Heritages; Future Prospects' and 20th Australasian Mining History Association Conference, Charters Towers, Queensland, Australia. <http://www.ct2014miningcongress.com/programme.html>
- Jul 12-13** **Field Trip to the Connaught Coalfield**  
This field trip, to be led by Alastair Lings, will explore the iron mines and some of the remoter collieries in the area. We will meet at 10:00 am at the Arigna Mining Experience, on both days. Further information will be circulated in due course.
- Jul 13 Kerry Archaeological & Historical Society field outing to Valentia Island. Tetrapod, Cable Station, Slate Quarry and Grotto, led by Micheál Lyne. Meet at Skellig Interpretative Centre carpark at 2.30pm.
- Jul 25-27 NAMHO Conference, 'Mining Technology: technical innovation in the extractive industries', Bangor, Gwynedd, North Wales. For details see: <http://www.namho.org/news.php#26>
- Jul 25-27 Ancient Mining Landscapes: Research and Cultural Enhancement in Western Europe, International Symposium, Boticas, Portugal. <http://www.pmaeo2014boticas.com/>
- August 16-23. Walk from A to B. 4th annual community challenge, a 140 mile walk across the south of Ireland, from Allihies in West Cork to Bunmahon in County Waterford in the footsteps of our Copper Mining Ancestors. [www.WalkfromAtoB.wordpress.com](http://www.WalkfromAtoB.wordpress.com)
- Aug 23-31 Heritage Week <http://www.heritageweek.ie/>
- Sept 5-8** **MHTI Overseas Field Trip to the Banská Štiavnica World Heritage Site in Slovakia.**  
An updated programme of events will be published in the summer newsletter
- Sept 5-11 Association for Industrial Archaeology Annual Conference, Chester. Includes visits to Alderley Edge Mines, Minera Lead Mine, Poynton Coal Mining Landscape and Cheshire Salt Landscape. <http://www.industrial-archaeology.org/aconf.htm>
- Sept 13-14 European Heritage Open Days, in Northern Ireland  
<http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/niea/ehod.aspx>

Check with organisers of meetings before making any travel bookings in case of change of dates or arrangements. MHTI lists events in good faith but is not responsible for errors or changes made. For MHTI field trips please register your interest, without commitment, so the organiser can keep you informed.

[WWW.MHTI.COM](http://WWW.MHTI.COM)

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

## MHTI MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Notice is hereby given that an Annual General Meeting of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd. will be held on Saturday 26 April at 3.00 pm at the Killarney National Park Education Centre, County Kerry. See page 4 for more details.

#### Agenda

- 1) Presentation of the accounts for 2013
- 2) To appoint auditors
- 3) To elect Directors

Signed: Nigel Monaghan, Company Secretary

If you are unable to attend but wish to have a proxy form, please contact Nigel Monaghan. Alastair Lings, Stephen Callaghan and Barry Flannery are resigning at the AGM, as required by the Memo and Articles of the MHTI. Alastair and Stephen are willing to stand for re-election. We are always keen to receive nominations from people who would like to become Directors of the MHTI and who are willing to actively engage in projects or responsibilities. Please contact Nigel Monaghan if you are interested.

### Memorials Registrar

Stephen Callaghan has kindly taken on this role. If you know of any mining/quarrying related memorial in your area, then please contact him.

### Apologies to Lisheen Mines Ltd. - Corporate Supporter

It is with a terrible sense of annoyance with myself that I write this apology to Brian Keady and the Lisheen Mine. They have been loyal corporate supporters of MHTI for some years and due to my oversight, their name was left off the list of corporate supporters in the front of the Journal 12. When this omission was spotted I wrote an apology in a previous newsletter and now I must do the same again. In the transfer of journal templates and files to Sharron Schwartz, the new Editor of the Journal, I failed to correct this mistake. So Journal 13 appeared with the same list. I offer my sincere apologies to Brian Keady and to the Lisheen Mine for our error, and thank them for their continued support in 2014.

Matthew Parkes

### NAMHO 2016: *Mining and Social Change*

The MHTI has agreed with the National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) that we will host the annual conference in the summer of 2016, with the theme, *Mining and Social Change*, including lectures, surface and underground trips. As 2016 is the year of our 20th anniversary, this will be the perfect platform to showcase the various achievements of the MHTI over the last two decades. A NAMHO 2016 Working Group will be set up, so please contact any of the Directors to discuss ways in which you may be able to help. You do not need to be a Director to be a part of the Working Group.

## MHTI Wins Prestigious Industrial Heritage Award



On the 12th February 2014 the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland received a framed certificate from the Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland (IHAI) for Outstanding Leadership. The award was presented to MHTI secretary, Nigel Monaghan, by Oisín Quinn, Lord Mayor of Dublin, along with Jim Dollard, Executive Director of ESB. Fellow MHTI Directors, Ewan Duffy, John Gibbons and Matthew Parkes, were present at the award ceremony which was held at the ESB offices, Merrion Square, Dublin. This award, for which the MHTI is most grateful, most certainly marks a milestone in the lifetime of our organisation and is welcome recognition from another important Irish heritage organisation for the hard work and dedication of our group to mining heritage in Ireland over the last two decades. Above images, © Alan Murphy.

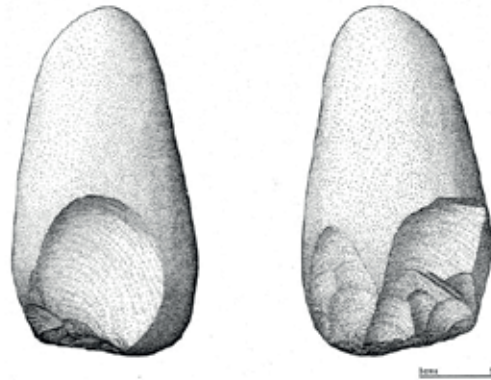
## EVENTS AND NOTICES

### MHTI AGM, FIELD TRIPS and SEMINAR: *The Bronze Age Revisited* 26-27 April 2014, Killarney, County Kerry

This year's AGM will be held at the Killarney National Park Education Centre and promises to be a highly memorable weekend. Following visits to the Beara Peninsula in County Cork in 2012 and last year's overseas trip to North Wales to inspect Bronze Age workings at Parys Mountain and Orme's Head, we have arranged a special seminar to report on current advances being made in the field of the archaeology of Bronze Age mining. Entitled *The Bronze Age Revisited*, we are delighted to announce that three leading academics investigating the Bronze Age in Britain and Ireland will be taking part in this seminar.

Our programme kicks off with a field trip with Ireland's foremost academic Bronze Age mining archaeologist, Professor William O'Brien of University College Cork and author of *Ross Island: Mining, Metal and Society in Early Ireland* (2004), to the Ross Island mines. Sited on the shore of Lough Leane near Killarney, Britain and Ireland's earliest known copper mines came into use about 2,400 BC and remained in use until 1,900 BC. Excavations carried out here between 1992 and 1996 by Professor O'Brien uncovered copper mines and tens of thousands of stone hammers used to work them. The mines were worked by lighting fires against the rock face and using hammers and other tools to detach the rock. The main eastern mine is flooded by the lake but the western mine is 10.8m wide and 2.7m high at the entrance and narrows as it extends over 8m into the limestone.

Over the five hundred years that they were in use, the mines may have produced up to 25,000-35,000 tonnes of arsenical copper ore. Immediately adjacent to the mines, a work camp was uncovered where the copper ore was concentrated. Here, at least eleven lightly built oval to sub-rectangular structures with walls supported by stakes and bedding trenches that may have had walls of wattles or animal skin, were identified. These houses were associated with mining tools, stone tools, animal bones and hundreds of sherds of Beaker pottery representing 25



vessels. The importance of Ross Island is that it is the earliest known copper mine in Britain or Ireland. Analysis has shown that it was the origin of a significant amount of the metal used in Ireland and probably in Britain in the early stages of copper use and clearly associates early copper metallurgy with the users of Beaker pottery.

Our evening lectures will feature Dr Simon Timberlake and Alan Williams. Simon has undertaken extensive excavation, field survey and geo-archaeological research at sites of early mining in mid-Wales, principally at Cwmystwyth (1986-2003) but also at Parys Mountain on Anglesey (1988) and at Alderley Edge in Cheshire (Chief Surveyor: Alderley Edge Landscape Project 1997-1999) and Ecton in Staffordshire (2008-2009). He has worked at Bangor, Manchester and Coventry Universities on early mining-related research projects funded by the Leverhulme Trust, and is now a senior researcher at the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (University of Cambridge).

Simon is interested in experimental archaeology and the reconstruction of prehistoric mining processes, together with the smelting of copper, tin and lead using primitive furnaces. He is a member of the Early Mines Research Group which has carried out archaeological fieldwork leading to the discovery of 11 Early Bronze Age (2,150-1,500 BC) copper mines; nine in Wales and two in England. Together with the workings on the Great Orme, some 12 Bronze Age mines have now been identified in Britain. The radiocarbon dates from these mines indicate small-scale mining/prospecting in Western Britain during the 2nd millennium BC, with most sites being abandoned by the Middle Bronze Age (1,500-1,100 BC). Simon has published (either singly or jointly) more than 40 papers on early mining or related subjects and has appeared on various TV and radio broadcasts. He will present an illustrated lecture entitled, 'A new light on the dating and exploitation of metal ores in the British Isles - the Bronze Age copper rush?'



Alan Williams will be known to many members as the author of *The Berehaven Copper Mines* (1991). Until 2012 he was chief geologist and head of the R&D raw materials and glass compositions department at Pilkington NSG, the international glass company. Alan has long standing research interests in prehistoric and historic metal mining, ores and smelting and has enrolled at the University of Liverpool to undertake a PhD to research ore mineralogy, ore geology, geochemistry and pyrotechnology. His PhD focuses on the Great Orme Bronze Age copper mine in North Wales, one of the largest surviving in Europe. The numerous Bronze Age copper mines that have been identified over the last 30 years in Ireland and Britain is an outstanding archaeological achievement. Their potential to cast more light on this shadowy period of prehistory is still being developed.

One area of current research is looking at the potential of linking ore to metal. Understanding exactly what copper ores were being mined is critical. What scientific methods can be used to link the ore from the mines to actual copper or bronze artefacts? Ross Island mine has been convincingly linked to a lot of the early copper in Ireland and Britain. However, what about other major Bronze Age mines such as the Great Orme mine in North Wales, one of the largest in Europe? The latest scientific techniques are being used to characterise or 'fingerprint' the ores geochemically and isotopically. The effects of the smelting techniques used and metal recycling need to be carefully untangled to allow the link to metalwork to be convincingly established. In his presentation, Alan will demonstrate how his ongoing research holds the promise of revealing in greater clarity some of the remarkable exchange networks that existed during the Bronze Age.

On Sunday there will be a field trip to the Iveragh Peninsula led by Alastair Lings. Subject to the landowners' consent, this field trip will explore primitive mine workings to the south-east of Waterville, at Staigue (V 612 628); St Crohane's Hermitage, Behaghane (574 616); Coad (569 609) and Rath (533 576). The mines at Staigue and Behaghane are possibly prehistoric (Duffy). One primitive working at Rath may be 'a post-medieval surface trial' (O'Brien); however another working may be earlier. OSI Discovery Sheet 84 (Sheet 83 covers only the first three sites). The location of these sites and information (in PDF) can be found on the Archaeological Survey Database via the National Monuments Service website (Search County Kerry for "mines – copper"). <http://www.archaeology.ie/>

### **Bibliography**

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The Killarney National Park Education Centre is based in Knockreer House, the last of the Kenmare mansions, close to the town of Killarney and has spectacular views over the National Park. Directions to the Education Centre are given on the National Park's website:

<http://www.killarneynationalpark.ie/educentre.html>

*For catering purposes it is essential that you communicate your intention to attend the AGM and Seminar to Martin Critchley by Monday 21st April. Please also contact Alastair Lings to indicate your interest in the Iveragh Peninsula trip.*

## **PROGRAMME**

### **Saturday 26 April**

**10:00** Guided walk with Professor William O'Brien, University College Cork, to the Ross Island site. Meet at the car park to the site at 9.45

*Free time for lunch in Killarney*

**14:00** Director's Board Meeting

**15:00** AGM Business Meeting

**16:00-17:00** *Coffee*

**17:00-18:00** 'A new light on the dating and exploitation of metal ores in the British Isles - the Bronze Age copper rush?' Dr Simon Timberlake, University of Cambridge

**18:00-19:00** 'Linking Bronze Age Mines to Metalwork: New research on the Great Orme Mine', Alan Williams, University of Liverpool

### **Sunday 27 April**

**10.00** Iveragh Peninsula Trip. Meet at the car park next to The Church of the Most Precious Blood, Castle Cove (596 605).

### **Accommodation**

There is a wide range of hotels, B&Bs, self-catering cottages, hostels and campsites in Killarney and District. As this is a busy time of the year, people are advised to make bookings early to avoid disappointment. For more information on places to stay see: <http://www.kerrytourism.ie/>

### **Equipment**

Saturday's activities will be taking place inside the National Park and require no special clothing or footwear beyond a comfortable pair of walking boots and the usual rain wear.

On Sunday, depending on the weather, we will be exploring exposed hillsides. Full hill walking gear is recommended: boots and gaiters (or wellies), warm clothes, waterproofs, and a change of clothes.



# IHAI

## Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland

*'Railways and Industry in Ireland', One-day Conference*  
*Louth County Museum Dundalk*  
*Saturday 10th May 2014*

### CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

- 10:30 Registration
- 11:15 Welcome
- 11:20 Ireland's Mainline Railways 1834-1911  
Charles Friel
- 12:00 Agriculture and the Narrow Gauge Railways of Munster  
Edel Barry
- 12:25 The role of the IRRS in Railway Heritage  
Tim Moriarty
- 13:00 Lunch*
- 14:00 Ireland's Industrial Railways 1741-2014  
Andrew Waldron
- 14:50 The Role of Railways in Mining  
Martin Critchley
- 15:30 Quarrying at Carnlough, Co. Antrim  
Gerard Muldoon
- 16:10 Railways of Bord na Móna, Past and Present  
Sean Cain
- 16:50 Summing-up
- 17:00 Conference closes

### CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

**Charles Friel** is one of Ireland's leading railway historians, a founder member of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, and curator of Ireland's largest photographic archive of railways. His talk will review the development of the Irish mainline rail network from its inception to its zenith shortly before the Great War when no town was more than 10 miles from a railway. He will also consider the challenges of building the lines, the lingering influence of the Famine, rivalries between opposing schemes, and the impact of railways on daily life and on the movement of people, cattle and merchandise.

**Edel Barry** is a buildings archaeologist with particular interest in the archaeology of industry and transport, and in the social archaeology of the industrial period. Her talk focuses

on the narrow gauge lines constructed to serve the remote, marginalised areas in the west of Ireland and assesses their impact on the rural communities which they served.

**Tim Moriarty** is honorary librarian of the Irish Railway Record Society (IRRS). The IRRS was founded in 1946 and is based at Heuston Station, Dublin where its extensive archive is also housed. Tim's paper examines the role and work of the IRRS in railway history and heritage.

**Andrew Waldron** is a leading industrial railway historian and a member of the Industrial Railway Society, with a special interest in Ireland's industrial railways. Andrew will use his vast archive of documents, maps, illustrations and photographs to show the various industries that used such railways over three centuries, and the development of the traction they used. Some remarkable facts and firsts will be revealed along the way, and his talk will also highlight those industries still using railways and what survives on the heritage front.

**Martin Critchley** is a mining geologist who gained his PhD at the Royal School of Mines (London). He is a founding member of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland, maintains its inventory of Irish mine sites, and has published widely on abandoned mine sites in Ireland and the UK. His talk will examine mineral tramways and railways in Ireland including underground uses, inclined tramways, private tramways and mineral railways.

**Gerard Muldoon** is an amateur industrial archaeologist with an interest in quarries, mills, industrial railways and bridges. His talk will focus on Carnlough, on the NE coast of Ireland, where a limestone industry flourished for several centuries before the Londonderry Estate sought to exploit it commercially.

**Sean Cain** is a lifelong railway enthusiast and works at Iarnród Éireann's Traincare Depot near Portlaoise; he is also a volunteer with the Irish Steam Preservation Society at Stradbally. His talk focuses on the development of Bord na Móna's extensive operations at three peat-fired power stations and various smaller systems.

**Conference Fee: €40 / £35 Sterling which includes refreshments and a light lunch. Please book early to avoid disappointment.**

**Download a booking form from the IHAI site:**  
<http://www.ihai.ie/>

## **‘The Hills of Iron and Limestone’: County Antrim Field Trip Report, Saturday 8th – Sunday 9th March 2014**

This field trip explored laterite (iron) and bauxite (aluminium) mining sites, limestone quarries and their associated tramways, north and east of Ballymena. It might now look entirely rural, but this stunning landscape was once one of the most highly industrialised parts of Ireland.

On the Saturday, members of the MHTI and the Glenravel Historical Society rendezvoused at the picnic site south of Cargan where Alastair Lings, the coordinator, outlined the geology, mining history and transport networks in the area. Expert local knowledge and rock samples were provided by Kevin O’Hagan, the first Vice Chairman of the Mining History Society of Ireland.

Our first visit was to the cutting at the bottom of the “Drum Brae” inclined railway which linked the Crommelin Mines to the Ballymena, Cushendall & Red Bay Railway (BC&RBR) at Cargan. Because of the position of the cutting and its size, it has the appearance of being a quarry. Much of the stone extracted was probably used to build the embankment across nearby low ground. We then visited “The Drum” at the top of the incline, which is in a prominent position above Cargan, and makes a good viewpoint for the mines there and further away. The structure now consists of two parallel walls, but would have housed a pulley wheel and braking mechanism to allow full trucks carrying ore to descend the incline, while pulling up empty trucks. Nearby is the “Angel of the Drum” a metal plate sculpture erected in 2001.

Continuing up the Crommelin Siding we reached Tuftarney mine. The 1920 edition 25” to 1 mile scale map shows an Engine House and Chimney connected to, and almost in-line with, a stretch of the siding heading towards “The Drum”. According to E.M. Patterson (2006, p. 23) this engine “served the incline”. A mine plan shows a “Loco Shed” near where the Engine House would have been, and it is possible that the Engine House housed a locomotive, rather than a stationary steam engine. The existing remains bear little resemblance to what was depicted on the 25” map. Two parallel walls are in-line with an incline running up the hill to adits above the site. The walls would have housed the lower pulley wheel of that incline. Further along the track were the remains of an accommodation building and a row of ore hoppers.

Our next visit was to Ballynahavla Mine, where high grade iron ore was discovered in 1866 by James Fisher. Immediately after discovering the ore Fisher visited Edward Benn, the landowner, and drew up a mining licence on the back of an envelope: Kevin O’Hagan possesses that document. The group heard an account of the discovery of the ore, then gathered for a photograph around a collapsed adit, in the style of one taken during the working life of the mine (See Mckillop, p.107). We then used a hill track to get to an adit in Legagrane townland enjoying a view of Slemish Mountain, 25 km away, en route. The adit had been gated by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which manages the mines and minerals in Northern Ireland.



*MHTI and Glenravel Historical Society members pose by the blocked adit entrance of the Ballynahavla Mine*



*The iron ore furnace at Newtown Crommelin, erected in 1844*

Our last stop of the morning was at the furnace at Newtown Crommelin, erected by Nicholas de la Cherois Crommelin in 1844 to smelt recently discovered iron ore.

After an enjoyable lunch at Kearney's Supermarket and Garage in Cargan, we headed up to the Mountcashel Mine (1872-1918). The site includes a gated portal of a brick-lined adit, and the remains of buildings and processing plant. At the top of the site is a chimney: possibly the remains of a weighbridge. Nearby is a subsidence feature, probably caused by the collapse of the brick-lined tunnel below. Further to the north-east we could see the large spoil heap from mining operations during the First World War.

An incline runs from the weighbridge down the side of the processing plant, connecting to the Mountcashel Siding, which joined the BC&RBR at Knockanally Station (Martinstown). At the top of the processing plant is a building that looks similar to an engine house. MHTI experts determined that it was not an engine house, but probably accommodated a crusher. There was no wheelpit, so the crusher may have been powered by a water turbine.

A circular feature was interpreted as a buddle for separating minerals according to density. A wheelpit in a nearby gully suggests that the buddle was powered by a waterwheel. The wheel may have been driven by water discharged from the turbine. Below the buddle were a series of settlement tanks.



*The Mountcashel iron ore mine which operated from 1872-1918. The building (centre) has been described as a washery that might have accommodated crushing apparatus. The circular feature in the foreground is a buddle for concentrating the ore; the masonry platform (bottom left) and wheelpit, might have been associated with a stamp battery*

These would have been used alternately to settle, drain and dry the iron rich sludge.

Mountcashel Mine is a fascinating place and merits a detailed topographic survey and interpretation of the structures and processes on site. This was the final stop of the day, and in a glorious evening we went our separate ways. The MHTI contingent drove north-east to Cushendall, via Parkmore Station, once the highest railway station in Ireland, and noting the remains of miners' cottages, the terminus of the Trostan Siding (1871-1874), and Retreat Station, the terminus of the BC&RBR.

On the Sunday the MHTI group drove southwards along the coast from Cushendall. The first visit was to Red Bay Pier. The pier was the terminus of an aerial ropeway that ran from Cargan 13km away. The ropeway operated from 1871 until 1872, when it was sabotaged. Nothing remains of the original terminus, but we were able to compare the present site with a contemporary photograph (See O'Hagan, p. 60; and Hamond, p. 21) Next we visited the terminus of the Glenariff Iron Ore & Harbour Company railway. The locomotive shed survives as part of a disused community hall. Nearby is a terrace of houses for the miners and railwaymen; the White Arch, a bridge over the Coast Road and the remains of Milltown Pier. Further south we viewed the Ardclinnis Incline. Iron ore from local mines was lowered to a loading bay at the bottom of the incline, then carted to a pier at Fallowvee.



*Creggan Quarry*

A major industry in Carnlough was the quarrying of Ulster White Limestone (chalk), and the production of whiting. We viewed the harbour which was developed to export limestone to Scotland and the north of England. To the south we could see Tullyoughter Quarry which was linked to the harbour by a railway line. An incline (1854) runs from the harbour up to the Gortin and Creggan quarries, above Carnlough. Near where the incline crosses the High Street is a Lime Kiln (1855), which has recently had ivy removed from it. We walked up the incline to the quarries, where we identified the remains of the inclines, bridges and other features, including a 40 m long tunnel. The quarries were in operation by 1809, and extensively developed by the Marquis of Londonderry from 1851, lasting until 1965. Returning to Carnlough we enjoyed an excellent lunch in the Coach House of the Londonderry Arms Hotel. The final stop of the weekend was at the tunnel in Glenarm, which provided access between the Town Quarry and the harbour.

*Alastair Lings*

*The MHTI is very grateful to the Glenravel Historical Society and to Kevin O'Hagan for their help in organising the field trip, for the information they provided, and for their very enjoyable company. We are also very grateful to the landowners for allowing us access to their sites in this beautiful part of the island.*

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*A lime kiln built in 1855 at Carnlough, seen here beside the trackbed of the old incline up to the Gortin and Creggan quarries, now a well-used community pathway*



## CORRESPONDENCE

### **Fears for Engine House Chimney at Hope Mine**

The MHTI was recently informed by John Ashton, Chief Mine and Exploration Geologist of Boliden Tara Mines Ltd., who had been alerted by a local resident, that the chimney of the Hope Mine engine house in County Monaghan was in such a poor condition that it might have to be demolished due to safety concerns.

The Hope Mine near Castleblaney was worked for argentiferous lead from at least the late-1850s when a rich lode was discovered by Captain James Skimming of Castleblaney. A steam engine was erected in the early 1860s by the Hope Silver-Lead Mining Company, one of a number to have been installed at mines throughout counties Monaghan and Armagh during this period. However, the concern was wound up in 1866 after a working life of just four years and the plant was placed up for sale at auction. It took over twelve months to sell. The history of this and other Monaghan and Armagh mines featured in MHTI Journal 12 (Schwartz and Critchley, pp. 57-86).

Today, the site is part of a working farm and the land is used primarily for cattle grazing. The distinguishing feature of the site is the extant chimney which was built by the Hope Silver-Lead Mining Company to serve a pumping engine house which has not survived. Constructed of local stone with a red brick upper section, this circular chimney is of typical Cornish-style and is the only visible reminder of a number of Cornish-type engine houses that were constructed in counties Monaghan and Armagh in the early-1860s.

The chimney is intact but is heavily covered by ivy which has been cut and has died back, leaving a tangled mass of dry debris on the stonework, as pictured in 2012. There are visible holes where blocks of masonry have fallen out of the lower stonework, caused by the weathering away of the lime mortar. Left unchecked, water ingress will severely weaken the structure. The brick upper section is in a particularly parlous condition with extensive damage to the flanged rim at the top. Loose bricks are visible, most are friable caused by spalling and there are numerous cracks and holes where the bricks have been dislodged. The chimney is presently highly vulnerable to further weathering caused by water ingress and the lack of a lightning conductor makes it susceptible to lightning strikes.

The chimney is surrounded at its base by coarse mine waste and dense vegetation that obscures the footprint of the engine house. A waste heap is located in the trees to the northeast just north of the pumping engine shaft but this area is now completely overgrown and no definite trace of the shaft can be observed. A flat, grassed area to the west of the chimney, has the appearance and dimensions of a dressing floor.



*Extant Chimney of the Hope pumping engine house, pictured here in 2012, is the only surviving Cornish-type chimney in County Monaghan*

The possible demolition of this important industrial monument has once again highlighted the problems associated with national recognition for features of industrial heritage significance. The Hope engine house chimney is not included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) and it has not been entered on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for County Monaghan.

This lack of listing means that a highly significant industrial monument, the sole surviving feature which bears witness to a period of significant hard rock mining in County Monaghan, has no protection in statutory law.

We thank John Ashton for bringing this to our attention. The site has just been included in an audit of geological heritage sites in Monaghan, as a potential County Geological Site. But as this carries no statutory protection, MHTI intends to pursue its omission with Monaghan County Council to canvass for its inclusion in the RPS.

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### 'A Night at the Mine'

*By Ewan Duffy*

No, I haven't gotten the title wrong - this is nothing to do with the Ben Stiller film "A Night At The Museum"! In September last year, I had an experience that is hard to beat. I spent a night in a hotel room 500 feet underground in Sweden.

The Sala Silvermine complex in mid Sweden is impressive in its own right. Like most mines, the history of mining at Sala is of a stop/start nature, spanning the period from the early 16th century though to the 1960s. Nowadays, the site is owned by the local authority and is purely tourist in nature, with many historic buildings above ground, two different mine tours in this former silver/lead mine (60m and 155m levels) and two chambers in worked out sections of the mine that can be rented out for social functions. The smaller of these can be availed of for an overnight stay, as it contains a bed in an alcove of the chamber. All workings below the 155m level are flooded - modern day pumps keep the water from rising above this level.

We arrived in Sala mid afternoon on an express train from Stockholm and took a taxi out to the site - about 3 miles outside the town. After checking in (and settling the large bill for the privilege of a night underground), we were allocated a room in the hostel on site to use until our descent for the night. We were also given tickets for the 155m tour at 15:30.

The mine tour itself is interesting and well worth doing on

its own. Descending by lift to the 155m level after kitting out in mine helmets and warm clothes, the tour started by paying respect to the lady of the mine, by the customary method of three knocks on the side of the level at the designated point. Our guide (giving the tour in both Swedish and English) took us through the passages of the mine, explaining the features therein. There was nothing in her spiel that I found fault with - I took the liberty of identifying myself as having some knowledge about mining and adding a few explanations in English to her story.

For me, the highlight of the tour was when we entered one particular chamber and we were asked to turn off our torches. Standing there in the relative darkness, the guide started to sing. The chamber is renowned for its echo and the experience could only be described as spectacular. Our guide subsequently refused to acknowledge any particular singing ability on her part - rather modestly IMHO. After showing the tour the Victoria Hall - so named after a Swedish Princess - we proceeded back through the mine and the tour group were taken into the bedroom where myself and my girlfriend would be spending the night. Whilst in the room, our guide told the rest of the tour that two of the group would be staying here that night. This was met with complete silence. After this, we headed back up to await our night time descent, which we had agreed would be at 21:00.



*Dinner for two in the dining chamber of the Sala Silver mine, Sweden*



*A chamber fit for a king at the Sala Mine, Sweden*

***The overnight was fairly uneventful, although my significant other refused to walk the 50 metres to the toilet unattended – lest the lady of the mine was jealous and decided to take action against her!***

After an evening meal in another hotel outside Sala (Tinget Hotel), we headed back to the mine site and stayed in the hostel until Jacob, our guide for the evening descent arrived. We were offered one final chance to opt out of the underground experience, but turned it down. We headed back to the lift and Jacob escorted us to the mine suite. Awaiting us was a food basket with cheese, wine and other nibbles for the night. Jacob explained how the two way radio worked in case there was a need for emergency contact overnight. He also showed us where the toilet was - about 50m away along the level. Leaving us to our own devices, Jacob heading back up above ground.

We settled in for the evening with our solitude only disrupted by the sound of the water in the levels beneath us (immediately outside the chamber we stayed in, you could see the water in a worked out stope).

The following morning, Jacob returned with another basket containing breakfast, leaving us alone for another hour before returning again to bring us back to surface level. Notwithstanding my regular trips underground with the MHTI, the first thing I did was text my Dad and a work colleague to let them know that we were back above ground with no issues. After checking out, we spent the morning exploring the above ground museum before catching an afternoon train back to Stockholm.

To find out more about the Sala mine, visit:

<http://www.salasilvergruva.se/en/>



*Sala Mine, Sweden. Photo Riggwelter, 26 March 2006*

## IRISH NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS

### **Musical Show Brings Castlecomer's Mining Heritage Alive**

On 30th January 2014 a Kilkenny based group called 'The Hole in The Wall' (named after a pub in Kilkenny) came to Naas to perform their show 'So Deep Within.' This is a music and monologue show based on the history of Castlecomer Coal Mining and Seamus Walsh's book, *In the Shadow of the Mine*.

The driving force behind the idea is Dr Michael Conway, a Cardiologist from Kilkenny, who, in collaboration with Colm Gray, a Cuffesgrange singer/songwriter, conceived the idea. Dr Conway penned twelve new songs based on the Castlecomer story. The show is structured around Seamus Walsh's life story which he relates with an authenticity and conviction that can only come from personal experience. Each monologue is followed by a song from either Colm Egan or Breege Phelan, two fine singers with the group.

The show commenced with Seamus Walsh describing his working in the mine from the age of fourteen and the emotions he felt on the death of a young miner Ned Kelly as a result of a roof collapse. This was followed by a verse from Ewan Mc Call's 'School Days are Over' Other songs had titles like 'So Deep Within', 'Trammers and Gurl', 'Mr Rat', 'The Deepark Cat' and the 'Clintstown Line'. The background to each song was outlined by Seamus in his inimitable style.

Other aspects of the area's history, like the Wandesperde Family and the story of Nixie Boran's efforts to establish a miners' union, his visit to the Red International in Moscow in 1930 and the subsequent fallout in Castlecomer, made for fascinating listening. It was obvious from the reaction of many of those who attended, that this form of 'History Light' struck a note with people who would not normally attend a presentation on industrial heritage in a more direct form.

The only negative criticism I would make relates to a power-point presentation which ran throughout the show. The concept was good but the quality of the images was poor. This can be easily rectified for future shows.

One interesting aside came from a comment by Dr Conway. When he started working as a cardiologist in Kilkenny Hospital he had a number of patients attending his clinics who had dark blue/black markings on the backs of their hands. He found this unusual feature to be perplexing at first until he later found out that they were old Castlecomer Miners still carrying the marks of their working lives. Overall a good night out and full marks to all concerned, particularly Seamus, who seems to plough a lonely furrow for so much of the time.

*Nick Coy*

### **Copper Coast Geopark to Anchor East Coast Heritage Trail (*Dungarvan Observer* 21/1/2014)**

"The Copper Coast Geopark can become the anchor for the developing east coast heritage trail which will stretch from Dundalk to Waterford", declared Minister for Transport and Tourism, Leo Varadkar at the launch of a new map and guide at the Geopark's Visitor Centre in Bunmahon. The guide to places of interest and tourism facilities with its innovative map offering a helicopter view from the shore back towards the Comeragh Mountains, was produced by the Art Hand under the aegis of the *Metal Links: Forging Communities Together* project, an ERDF funded bilateral programme between Wales and Ireland 2007-1013 (Interreg 4A). "The production of the guide relaunches the Copper Coast as a significant heritage destination with national and international reach", claimed a delighted John Galloway, Chairman of Copper Coast Tourism.

### **That Sinking Feeling (*Kilkenny People*, 17/2/2014)**

A North Kilkenny farmer and his son are lucky to be alive after a sink hole appeared on their land in February, directly over the recently closed Galmoy Mine in County Kilkenny. Eddie Cavanagh was on his tractor less than 24 hours before a huge crater appeared on his farm directly above the mine shaft for the Galmoy mine which closed recently after 20 years of extracting lead and zinc ore from the land. It is about 15m in circumference and 9m deep and is located on a dry piece of land. A number of engineering assessments are being carried out to determine what caused the sinkhole.

### **The Wicklow Mines: An Under Valued Resource**

Martin Critchley and Sharron Schwartz have called for an increased awareness of the importance of Wicklow's historic mining landscapes as heritage and sustainable tourism assets. Addressing a meeting of Wicklow's County Councillors in March, Critchley stated that Wicklow's mining heritage is poorly understood and threatened, yet has the potential to add an alternative and complimentary narrative to the history of monasticism and military resistance to British rule for which the county is famous. Although Wicklow has been involved in bilateral and transnational mining heritage projects in the past, it languishes behind comparable regions such as Anglesey and Cornwall in terms of the protection and presentation of its mining legacy. Schwartz noted the importance of the international dimension to Wicklow's mining industry, most notably its close links with Cornwall which has achieved World Heritage Site (WHS) status on the strength of its mining landscapes. This has brought tangible socio-economic benefits to deprived areas there. The presentation was well received by the Councillors who acknowledged a paucity of understanding of the county's mining legacy and saw considerable potential for future sustainable mining heritage tourism products.

## New Heritage Guide for North West Mining Landscapes

The Miners' Way and Historical Trail is a 118-kilometre (73-mile) long circular route that begins and ends in Arigna, County Roscommon, in the north midlands. It is typically completed in five days and is designated as a National Waymarked Trail by the National Trails Office of the Irish Sports Council. The route was originally conceived by a local priest, Father Sean Tynan, and was built with funding from the European Regional Development Fund to encourage tourism in the area in the wake of the closure of the Arigna mines in 1990, which had been exploited for over 400 years for coal and iron.

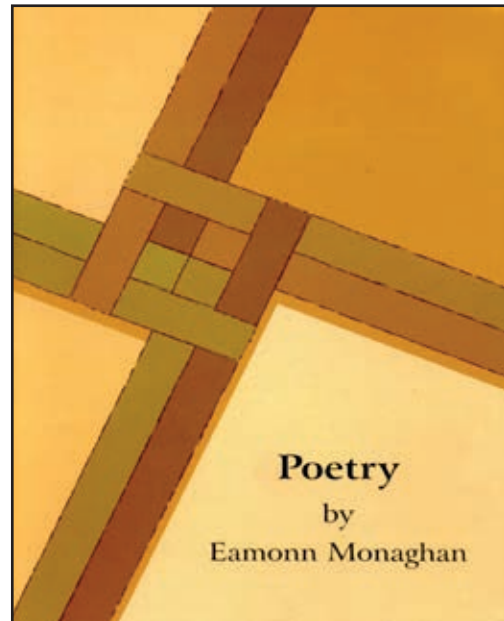
The trail, which was opened in July 2000, is very varied and consists of three looped routes that travel through neighbouring parts of Counties Roscommon, Leitrim and Sligo passing by Loughs Allen, Arrow and Key and traversing three low mountain ranges: Corry Mountain, the Curlew Mountains and the Bricklieve Mountains. The village of Arigna was the centre of the mining history and walkers can visit the Arigna Mining Experience, an interpretative centre which includes an underground attraction.

The Miners' Way is 62 kilometres (39 miles) long and follows paths used by miners working in the Arigna coal mines and makes a circuit via Keadue, Ballyfarnon and Corrie Mountain. The Historical Trail is 56 kilometres (35 miles) long and makes a circuit of Lough Key and Lough Arrow via Keadue, Lough Key Forest Park, Boyle, Carrowkeel, Castlebaldwin, Highwood and Ballyfarnon. A third trail makes a circuit of Lough Allen via Drumkeeran, Dowra and Drumshanbo. Some sections of the Miners' Way and Historical Trail also form part of the Beara-Breifne Way.

Hot off the press is the new Miners' Way and Historical Trail Walking Guide, packed with all the information needed for an unforgettable walking experience. Download your PDF copy from the following website: <http://unabhan.net/walking.htm>



## Poetry by Eamonn Monaghan



Those who have been to visit the sandstone mines at Drumkeelan, near Mountcharles in County Donegal, are very likely to have met with Eamonn Monaghan, a local stalwart in the promotion and protection of the historic stone mines. Eamonn has other talents, as a new book of his poetry and songs reveals.

MHTI has been given a copy by Eamonn, and it is available to borrow on request. Many of the poems and airs have mining themes, reflecting Eamonn's deep interest in the local stone mines and there are colour illustrations included of various parties on visits to the stone mines. Eamonn's 70 page publication was supported by Donegal Leader and the resulting book is a lovely production. Congratulations Eamonn!

*Matthew Parkes*

## Additions to Bibliography

Monaghan, Eamonn, 2010. Donegal Town's architectural gem: 75th anniversary of the building of St Patrick's Church of the Four Masters. *Donegal Times*, 10th March 2010, pp. 6-7. (Includes a list of 17 sandstone miners).

## Geological Heritage Sites in County Waterford

View the high resolution Historical Geological Map which was mapped by the Geological Survey of Ireland between 1845-1887. Six-inch to one-mile scale (6 inches on the map to 1 mile on the ground 1:10,650). For information on the Geological Heritage Sites in County Waterford, click on the map to bring up detailed reports about each site. To find out more visit:

<http://www.gsi.ie/>

## Online maps

The Northern Mines Research Society (UK) has published online maps showing (at the moment) the coal mines and non-ferrous mines in Ireland. The work is ongoing, so if you spot any missing mines, please get in contact with them. See:

<http://www.nmrs.org.uk/mines/maps/index.html>

## OTHER NEWS

### **Poldark Mine Up For Sale at £350,000**

*(Western Morning News, 21/3/2014)*

One of the most iconic heritage attractions in Cornwall has been put up for sale. Poldark Mine, near Helston, which has been valued at £350,000, has entered administration following a downturn in visitor numbers in recent years. The site, transformed into a mining heritage attraction in 2000, includes the 18th century Wheal Roots, Cornwall's top underground tourist mine, a car park, museum, visitors' centre and café, and employs four people as well as casual staff in the summer. The sale is the result of a steady downturn in seasonal visitor numbers over recent years which had culminated in a build-up of creditors and insufficient funding to effect necessary capital expenditure to permit continued trading. The situation was undoubtedly exacerbated by the death in October 2012 of the managing director and 'life force' of Poldark, Richard Williams, despite the concerted efforts of his wife Pam Williams, staff and mine enthusiasts to maintain the site's viability. Originally called Wheal Roots, the mine's name was changed to reflect its connections to the hit 1970s TV period drama, *Poldark*, for

which it provided the setting for a number of scenes. Indeed, it is hoped that the mine can be sold as a going concern as the BBC is about to start filming a new adaptation of the *Poldark* series in Cornwall and Poldark Mine will have a whole new resonance for visitors. The underground workings are a part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.

### **Storms, Sinkholes and Landslides**

*(British Geological Survey News, 27/01/2014)*

The exceptional winter storms encountered both in Ireland and the UK this year have contributed to an increase in the incidence of sinkholes and landslides. The British Met Office has confirmed that this winter has been one of, if not the most, exceptional periods of winter rainfall in at least 248 years, resulting in an increase in the number of natural sinkholes and collapse subsidence features reported in February: eighteen compared to a long term average of two per month. However, according to the British Geological Survey (BGS), eight of the recent events in the UK are collapse subsidence features which can be attributed to previous mining activity.

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