



NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 16
MAY 2001

***Nuachtlitir Iontaobhas Oidhreacht
Mianadóireachta na hÉireann***

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STATEMENT FROM CHAIRMAN NAMHO 2001 FIELDMEET in IRELAND

In light of the Foot and Mouth crisis, and after discussions with the MHTI committee, NAMHO and the Department of Agriculture, we have decided to cancel the NAMHO 2001 event. **See enclosure for details of alternative event.**

The proposed venue and all access to land containing animals (this includes most mine sites in Ireland) have been closed. The Irish Department of Agriculture has indicated that restrictions will stay in place until at least 30 days after the last UK case of FMD. This would make it impossible to organise, let alone operate the NAMHO conference.

The Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland very much regrets having had to take this step but felt that an early cancellation would remove the uncertainty before any travel bookings have been made.

MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2001

(While the worst of the foot and mouth crisis is expected to be over by the time members receive this, the advice from February to April was to curtail all outdoor activity. Therefore the following indoor programme for 2001 has been compiled).

2nd June: Collation of inventory material assembled to date. If you haven't had the opportunity to participate up to now, you'll be particularly welcome. In GSI 11.00 o'clock.

25th/26th August and 1st September: Preparation for the opening of National Mining Heritage Exhibition in GSI (a National Heritage Week activity).

2nd- 9th September: Opening of National Mining Heritage Exhibition in GSI

15/16th September ***"Mining History and beyond": NAMHO's 2001 Conference in Bradford (see enclosure).***

17th-22nd September (i.e. immediately following NAMHO Conference) Research session at Kew with visit to the steam museum during "steam-up" on Saturday 22nd September. The research will be on the Board of Trade records of Irish mining companies, full details of which will appear in the Journal.

MEMBERSHIP 2001

We would like to thank all those members who have renewed their membership for the current year, and to remind all those who have not, that their subscriptions are now due.

If the address label shows 2000, then your subscription is still due:

The forthcoming Journal will only be issued to paid-up members.

See the new, updated, and considerably expanded Society web site at:

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

MHTI

MINUTES OF THE 2000 AGM OF THE MINING HERITAGE SOCIETY OF IRELAND, SATURDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2001.

Attendance: Martin Critchley, John Morris, Des Cowman, Matthew Parkes, Nigel Monaghan, Éamonn de Stafort, Vincent Carboni, Eamon Lynch, Ewan Duffy, Ruth Delany, Peter Eggleston, Edwin Thorpe, Roger Gosling, Richard Amies, Mike Moore, Brian Pocock, Wayne Cox, Rob Goodbody, Nick Coy, Loreto Farrell, Kevin McGurk, Keith Geoghegan, Gay Cannon, Koen Verbruggen

Apologies: Lisheen Mine, Peter Claughton,

Susan Pyne, Patrick Wyse Jackson, Alastair Lings, Andrew Catt, Gerry Clear, Nick Southwick, Adrian Pearce, John Davies, Eamon Grennan, William Dick, Ken Brown, Ros Cundick, Mike Philcox, Mary Mulvihill, Karen Töebbe.

M Critchley (MC) opened the Society's 5th AGM and noted the Society's grateful thanks to the Director of the GSI, Dr P. McArdle, for the continued sustaining support and for use of the facilities of GSI.

Chairperson's Report: Today is the 5th AGM of the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland since our foundation in 1996. During these 5 years we have seen a transition from the look-see approach of the early years to the active participation in a wide variety of activities. Foremost of these have been the inventory, publications and, recently, conservation activities (such as that about to commence on the Man Engine House at Allihies). Matthew will be giving an account of this year's activity in his report. But I would just like to mention the archaeo-geophysical survey that was undertaken by Kevin Barton of N.U.I. Galway at Tankardstown Mine, Bunmahon this year. This is probably the first time that such methods have been used systematically on a mine site in Ireland or Britain and demonstrates the commitment of the Society to 'hands-on' activities. We are grateful to the Geological Survey for providing financial assistance with both these projects.

Inevitably such 'hands-on' approach has to some extent curtailed the purely look and see visits which were popular during the first few years. I apologise for this and I recognise that for some members these types of trips were a valuable introduction to a mining site or district. Unfortunately, the limited resources at our disposal has led us to concentrate on the important inventory and conservation aspects. Of course we will not totally abandon the purely look and see visit as they provide a valuable forum for the exchange of ideas. All these activities could not have taken place without the commitment and personal dedication of those involved. In particular, I would like to

EDITORIAL

The accompanying report of the AGM and EGM make clear the dramatic transition MHSI has undergone in becoming MHTI, from a voluntary Society to a registered Trust with charitable status. The committee now become Directors of the limited company. The new Board and their responsibilities are therefore as follows:-

Chairperson:	Dr. Martin Critchley
General Secretary:	Nigel Monaghan
Treasurer:	Ewan Duffy
Membership Secretary:	Wayne Cox
Editor:	Des Cowman
Inventory/Conservation :	John Morris
Publicity/Web Officer:	Koen Verbruggen
Publications Secretary:	Matthew Parkes
Ordinary Directors:	Eamonn de Stafort; Norman Moles

thank the past and present committee of the MHSI and especially those who are now retiring at this AGM; namely Loreto Farrell and Nick Coy.

Despite the wide variety of activities that the Society has managed to perform during the last 5 years, we have not been without critics. On the one hand we have been criticised for neglecting academic mining history for mining heritage (that is the extant remains). On the other hand we have been criticised for not getting our hands dirty. I would refute both these criticisms; pointing to the forthcoming Journal as evidence of the Society's interest in mining history and activities such as the archaeo-geophysical survey at Bunmahon and the Allihies conservation as evidence of our hand-on

approach. Perhaps that we have been criticised from both quarters shows that the Society has taken a successful middle road where all angles of Ireland's mining tradition have been covered.

Even though the Society has achieved much during its first 5 years (including the increased awareness of mining heritage at a national and local level), we now stand at a cross roads in the history of the Society. It is clear that we have had difficulties in fulfilling all our aims due to pressure on the volunteers who make up the officers and members of the Society. For example the inventory is not yet complete, nor is it fully computerised. The Journal is also much delayed and funding for the Man Engine House at Allihies is far from complete. At the same time the Society has not been able to prevent the loss of some extant mining remains (such as the Mine Manager's House at Allihies) or damage to others (such as that caused by filming at Glendasan). These problems are typical of a voluntary Society that relies on the spare time of its members and which is mainly financed by its members.

At last years AGM, you mandated the Committee to investigate plans to convert the Society into a charitable company limited by guarantee. The main benefits of such a conversion would be a legal basis for the Society's activities, increased potential for funding and a limiting of members liability. We shall be discussing the proposal to transfer to a company later this morning. But I believe personally that such an approach is in the best interest of Ireland's mining heritage and in the membership of the MHSI.

Irrespective of the outcome of today's discussion on the transfer to company status, we have a number of important activities taking place this year. Foremost of these is the conservation work at Allihies and the NAMHO 2001 conference that will be held in Ireland for the first time this year. Our aims for Allihies have been well publicised. To date we have commissioned and received the results of a detailed design and costing of the required works from a firm of consultants who have wide expertise in such works in Cornwall. This study was funded by a grant from the Heritage Council, for

which we are very grateful. We have also been fortunate to avail of the invaluable interpretation and advice from Ken Brown. John will be giving more details on the proposals and costs later. But briefly, the Consultants' report indicates that there is in order of £130,000 worth of work needed to protect and conserve the Man Engine House. This excludes the cost of scaffolding (over £40,000) and re-roofing of the structure which could be done at the same time as the conservation work. To date we have raised or been granted about £50,000. There is a large shortfall in funds. Bearing in mind the large expense of scaffolding we hope that we can find ways to reduce the scaffolding costs and maximise the use of the available funds upon actual conservation work. Here again the conversion to Charitable Company may help in securing additional funds.

The NAMHO 2001 event is the annual field meeting of the National Association of Mining History Organisations, of which the MHSI is a member. The previous NAMHO meeting was held in Cornwall last year and attended by John Morris, Eamonn Grennan and myself. This was a bumper event but not one that we should try to emulate. The event in Ireland will be primarily a field trip event with one day of lectures and surface and underground trips. The venue will be Avondale House near Avoca and more details of the event will be given later in today's meeting. The organisation of an event like this requires a lot of work. Several persons have already been press-ganged and others are on the hit-list! We need all the help that we can get.

Finally, I would just like to re-iterate that the Society has seen a healthy growth and stabilisation during its first 5 years. We have achieved increased awareness of mining heritage and started actions on many of our aimed activities. However, it is clear that as a Society we are constrained by our limited resources and I would urge you all to consider carefully the proposed conversion to a Company.

In the discussion over Glendasan, concern was expressed by several people at the damage done by a Disney film set use ("Reign of Fire") of the Glendasan site. Martin showed images of the damage and explained the lack of compliance with terms

of the film company's permission from the National Park Office. MC had submitted a detailed report to Dúchas and the situation is being monitored by them now, although mainly from a wildlife perspective, not by an industrial or other archaeologist. Mike Moore (MM) suggested that there may be an opportunity to get financial support for a publication on the site. Nigel Monaghan (NM) suggested that there ought to be a full survey paid for by the film company.

In discussion of NAMHO 2001, MC elaborated that the underground trips depend on final permission from EMD (Exploration and Mining Division, Dept. Marine and Natural Resources), having submitted our BCRA insurance details (for 12 sites) and safety plan to them. MM offered the assistance of SCMC (Shropshire Caving and Mining Club) member Steve Holding with SRT underground. The programme will be firmed up and publicised over the next few weeks, but more help is required. MM suggested giving priority for places in the Tara Mines underground trip (kindly offered by Tara Mines) to UK based members on a first visit. Loreto Farrell (LF) suggested that Galmoy Mine may be worth contacting again, since there was new management, who may be willing to offer an underground visit. It was noted that a conference dinner is booked for the Meeting of the Waters pub, with a Ceilidh band. MM expressed some concerns about the type of music that was wanted which may not be what we get.

Secretary's Report

This report was brief since the Chairperson's address had covered most of the activities of the Society in the year. Last year's AGM was followed by a trip to Castlecomer. Seamus Walsh gave us a fascinating tour of the area. During the year there were inventory type visits to the mines in the Monaghan area, led by John Morris (JM), and to the Glendalough area in July. A number of members went to the Inter NAMHO meeting in Truro, Cornwall in July, and MC and JM gave a talk about the MHSI's activities. As usual a good slate of trips were offered by the Society for National Heritage Week in September. Thanks are due to all the leaders of excursions during the year for their efforts. In addition a number of unprogrammed ad hoc visits to sites were made by different

individuals. Details of these are welcomed for inclusion in the newsletter.

Matthew Parkes (MP) then referred to a developing trend for public consultation from various bodies, with these organisations being very keen to receive mining heritage information. However, there is a need for individual members to spread some of the effort required to respond to these, particularly at a local level. Examples given were Coillte, western region who have looked for information. Furthermore, the Heritage Council supported Heritage Officers in local authorities are looking for such information and are a very good channel for the Society to ensure that sites are recorded and protected in the planning system. [SEE NOTE ON PAGE 12]

In discussion, Loreto Farrell (LF) pointed out that consultation requests should also be referred to GSI and EMD, for necessary responses. JM noted that in Northern Ireland a consultation on cultural heritage was underway, similar to that for the National Heritage Plan in the ROI. Ruth Delaney (RD) responded to a question from NM, noting there were now 12 Heritage Officers, but negotiations with individual authorities were slow. The Heritage Officers will be listed in the next newsletter with contact details. NM suggested writing to the local authorities with no Heritage Officer, as well as supplying information to those with an officer.

Treasurer's Report

JM presented the accounts for the year and outlined the key points.

In response, NM wanted to know that there were enough funds available to pay all creditors in the proposed transfer to a Trust company. JM noted a net cash balance of around £6,000.

Mike Moore (MM) noted that the Society could sit on the stocks of books, especially Cole, but to continually promote their availability and use them as special offers for events/membership.

Rob Goodbody (RG) suggested keeping account separately for book sales.

NM noted that the Heritage Council is very good for sponsoring publications, and also that keeping separate book accounts would show money impacts i.e. how much our mission is costing us.

In relation to the stock figures for the Cole Memoir, MM reported that the SCMC

ringfenced its publications, but made the journals self financing. He noted some major UK mining heritage societies who had roomfuls of unsold journals, and suggested keeping print runs to members/free/copyright etc and not overdoing the numbers. He considered that journals do not sell like books unless they are on a specific site.

JM agreed the low run-on cost for publications could be a false economy. A figure of about 300 was anticipated for the new journal, but as it will also be a profile development tool, extra copies might be printed.

MM noted that the NAMHO event in September 2001 could include the journal as part of the package.

NM noted that with the Irish Naturalists' Journal, which had stocks back to 1925, that there were still requests for each of them.

Des Cowman (DC) noted that the potential in Ireland was greater than the UK for locality based sales.

JM noted that a good profile was required for the journal.

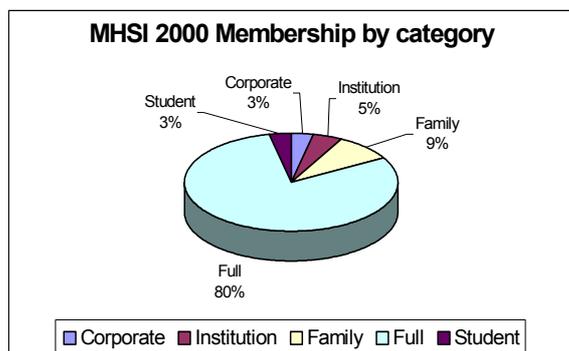
RD reported the arrangement that the Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland have with Wordwell (publishers of Archaeology Ireland and now Heritage Council books/reports). MP undertook to talk to them and consider a deal, as there was general agreement to a deal in principle. LF wanted to know if there were any liabilities at present in relation to NAMHO 2001 if it should be cancelled etc. There are none at present.

DC proposed the accounts should be accepted and RG seconded, unanimously passed.

Membership Report

The Treasurer (JM) then gave a breakdown (attached) of the membership statistics,

Corporate	5
Institution	7
Family	14
Full	124
Student	5



amounting to 155 members in 2000. This is a healthy figure, since non paying members have been struck off, and there has been a loss of some student members from the Ecology Workshop in 1997, but these have been to an extent balanced by new members. Membership now includes the first USA member and also Germany.

JM and DC have been invited to Butte Montana to give a talk on the Irish mining diaspora. This may expand interest in the USA. NM noted that in comparison with other societies it would be expected to get event based increases and declines in different categories of members.

MC noted the approximately 20% increase in subscription rates which are to cover the cost of giving the Journal as a membership benefit.

Peter Eggleston (PE) suggested that MHSI information notices at sites like Allihies could encourage interested people to join the Society, whilst NM suggested notices in local pubs could also be effective, and in museums. LF also suggested noticeboards and in local libraries.

Allihies Report

JM updated the members with the situation, and the budget requirements for conservation work, based on the assessment done by the John Knevitt partnership, a consultant engineering firm from Cornwall, experienced in engine house conservation. The Heritage Council funding for that assessment was gratefully acknowledged, as was their commitment to an additional £25,000 funding for the conservation works under the "Buildings at Risk" register scheme. Discussion followed on the topic of how to overcome the high costs of scaffolding, and whether in fact the contractors tendering for the work should actually have it, or bear the costs themselves, with their own insurance etc. Some concerns were expressed about the need to spend money this year, and the need to get activity started. In summary, it was apparent that the funding accumulated was adequate to commence phase 1, of building stabilisation, which may not need complete scaffolding.

Editor's Report

Des Cowman (DC) reported he was working

on Newsletter 16. He noted that earlier newsletters contained an eclectic mix of research material that does not appear in any national indexes, and that now there was sufficient material to sustain a journal, based on research, the newsletter will be more a vehicle for news items and ephemera. The first issue of the journal has twelve papers, all complete, but final production is still incomplete. MC concluded the report by thanking Des and Adrian Pearce for all the hard work they had done on getting the journal together.

Motions

MC briefly explained the reasons for the circulated motion to convert the Society to the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd, a company limited by guarantee, with the intent of registering for charitable status. Principal reasons were that the formal legal status would increase opportunities for grants and financial support presently impossible to access with no formal status, and that liabilities were limited to a maximum of £1 per member.

RD asked for clarification that the proposal was for a limited company and not a Trust *sensu stricto*, with a Board of Trustees. This was confirmed and it was noted that the 'Trust' in the name was to make the charitable status and the organisation more acceptable as a worthy group in public perception. In answer to NM, it was stated that there would be little practical difference in that members of the company were the same as members of the Society, but with directors elected by the membership, rather than a committee. The directors must comply with the Companies Acts, and submit audited accounts each year to the Companies Office. In answer to Mike Moore it was stated that the AGM would have the same format, but the directors would need to be rigorous in notice of meetings etc. JM made it clear that the conversion to a limited company was a structural change to manage funding and activities more professionally, but that there would be no core changes in things expected by the membership. The directorships would be a number elected by the members, to retain control even if major sponsoring bodies took up directorships offered to them in return for support.

SCMC members present agreed that one unified Trust is best, rather than a Trust for some activities and a learned society for

others.

Motion 1: The Membership agrees to ratify the establishment of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd as specified in the Articles and Memorandum of Association.

Motion 1 was proposed by MC, seconded by MP and carried unanimously.

RD noted that the Inland Waterways Association got permission from the Companies Office not to use the 'Ltd' in ordinary business, after following this route. MHTI needs to check the rules and do this too.

Motion 2: The Membership agrees to wind up the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland and transfer all its functions, assets and membership to the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd.

MC proposed an amendment to motion 2, that, subject to ratification of incorporation by the Companies Office, shall only take place from the date of registration of Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd. NM seconded and it was passed unanimously.

EGM OF THE MINING HERITAGE TRUST OF IRELAND

Following the vote to dissolve the MHSI, the committee resigned. Prior to election of directors, NM asked how frequent meetings would be and a regular schedule of every 2 months was suggested as a likely target. It was also considered that directors can be co-opted now but then approved at a subsequent AGM. An additional candidate, Ewan Duffy (ED) agreed to stand as a director, along with the advertised nominations. All nominated directors were accepted unanimously.

The meeting then discussed the motion to appoint Fieldings as **Auditors**, since there is a need for audited accounts to be submitted to the Companies Office. MC noted that they have done an estimated £1000 worth of work for free, in relation to setting up the Trust. The estimated audit fee is up to £700 per annum. MM questioned the move to a Trust in light of this high expense. NM considered that the high fees were a trade off against the benefit in gaining money from additional sources as a company, with a sounder footing for major income. The motion to appoint Fieldings as auditors was

proposed by DC, seconded by NM. It was passed with 19 votes for and 1 abstention.

There followed some discussion of the best timing for both the **financial year and the date of the AGM**. NM proposed that the determination of the financial year and the date of the AGM shall be determined by the directors subject to approval at a subsequent EGM or at the next AGM. It was seconded by Éamonn de Stafort (EdeS), and passed unanimously.

Discussion of the **logo** followed and an amended motion 3 was then proposed by JM, seconded by MC.

Motion 3: The membership agrees that the logo of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Ltd, shall be that of the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland amended to read "Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland"; retaining 1996 as the foundation date.

The Irish translation will also remain as an equal banner in the heading of the Trust's letterhead etc. Nick Coy was thanked for the original Cronebane token design.

JM then presented the **5 year plan** document for discussion. The non profit charitable status was pointed out as an important factor. MM considered that underground exploration did not clearly figure as a core activity, although it was included within the inventory objectives. NM viewed the website as a key element of reaching the wider public, non members, rather than a tool for contacting members. Other discussion considered the registered

company office, presently 36 Dame Street, but will need to be looked at if the Trust develops to the point of having employees etc.

The Journal contents were also discussed and it was decided that different papers should be intermingled rather than create a schism by separating 'history' and 'inventory' contributions. It requires 'flickability'. Offprints for authors and for subsequent sales in certain cases as pamphlets were thought to be a good idea.

In respect of the Mineral Statistics, MM noted problems with some other volumes where stock had been pulped. He also suggested that a policy to make a library should be set, and 'standard' mining references purchased now while they were relatively easily available, before they became hard to get.

JM discussed the options of conservation and restoration of old mine buildings, and NM noted the terminology of "adaptive re-use" for such ideas as reroofing engine houses as holiday apartments etc.

Roger Gosling (RG) pointed out that there is a blast furnace at Newtown Cromelin near Belfast, which may be as good as Creevelea. It was acknowledged that sites in Northern Ireland that need conservation may well have been missed off the indicative plan, but that there was a weakness of only a few members in Northern Ireland.

AOB: none

MC thanked everyone for attending and their input and closed the EGM.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM MINING HERITAGE TRUST OF IRELAND

Ecology of Old Mine Sites. Abstracts for a workshop organised by the Mining History Society of Ireland Saturday 18th October 1997. FREE TO MEMBERS

The Ecology of Old Mine Sites. Proceedings of a workshop on the ecology of old mine sites organised by the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland 18-19 October 1997 at the Geological Survey of Ireland. Special Issue of Biology and Environment. Proceedings of the Royal of Irish Academy. Vol. 99B. No. 1. ISSN 0791-7945. £8.30 + £1.20 p&p

Cole, G.A.J. *Memoir of localities of minerals of economic importance and metalliferous mines in Ireland. A facsimile edition of the Geological Survey of Ireland Memoir of 1922*. Published by the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland 1999. £9.50 (£8.00 for Members) + £1.50 p&p

Williams, R.A. (1998). *The Berehaven Copper Mines. Allihies, Co. Cork, S.W. Ireland. History of the commercial, social life and folklore of this region.* British Mining No. 42. First published by The Northern Mine Research Society. This edition published by A.B. O'Connor, Kenmare Bookshop, Co. Kerry. 228pp. £6.00 +£1.50 p&p [very limited stock at this price]

O'Brien, W. (2000). *Ross Island and the Mining Heritage of Killarney.* Published by the Dept. of Archaeology, National University of Ireland, Galway. 30pp, 33 figures, in full colour. ISBN 0 9535620 1 X £4.00 + 50p p&p

Walsh, J. and Walsh, S. (1999). *In the Shadow of the Mines.* Published by the authors. 220pp, scores of photographs and images documenting life of coalminers in Castlecomer. £10.00 + £1.50 p&p

For all orders or enquiries about titles please contact:

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Tel 353 (0)1-6041493 (direct), switch is 6707444 ext 1493. Home phone: 353 (0)1-8301850

The Secretary has received notice of three new publications of interest. The Landmark Collector's Library has recently published *Lead Mining in the Peak District* by T.D. Ford and J.H. Rieuwerts. 208pp, pb, £9.95 sterling + 10% p&p and *Lathkill Dale, Derbyshire: its Mines and miners*, £12.50 sterling. There are several other mining heritage titles, mostly related to the Peak District. Contact the publishers Landmark Publishing Ltd, 12 Compton, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE16 1DA UK, 01335 347349 or email: landmark@clara.net Alternatively ask the Secretary for a copy of the flier. *The Great County Adit.* Described as the most significant piece of engineering in the long history of Cornish Mining, this book is a detailed study. It costs £9.99 sterling including p&p for NAMHO members (which MHTI is, and therefore also you the individual member). For information or purchase (cheques payable to J.A. Buckley) contact Allen Buckley, 25 Carn Brea Lane, Pool, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 3DS. Tel 01872 562004 or email: books@cedha.freereserve.co.uk

REVIEW

“From Beara to Butte” by George Everett in *The World of Hibernia*, Winter 2000.

This beautifully produced American magazine carries a well researched article (not referenced, unfortunately). It starts with some interesting statistics. Fifty five percent of the Irish in Butte came from the four parishes around Beara. Of the 1700 people who left that area between 1870 and 1913, 1138 wound up in Butte. In 1908 there were 1200 (O')Sullivans in Butte.

Something of the strange world in which these Beara folk found themselves is discussed including the enormous accident rate not including the hidden deaths from silicosis. One accident alone in 1917 claimed the lives of 168 miners and there was an average of one fatality a week. However, for the survivors the rewards were comparatively great. Something of their religious cohesiveness is indicated by the fact that waste rock was known dismissively as “Protestant ore”.

There are some excellent illustrations including one of de Valera on a fund-raising visit to Butte in August 1919. A web address is given for those wishing to do further research into the Irish in Butte –<http://sweetgrass.mtech.edu/silverbow/archives/htm>. A copy of the magazine has been placed in MHTI archives thanks to Loreto Farrell.

Des Cowman

CONFERENCE IN NEWQUAY, CORNWALL, 27TH Jan. 2001. “Mining Communities And Culture”

This conference was organised by the Cornish Historical Network which aims at promoting social studies of mining communities. (see <http://www.ex.ac.uk/chn/>). The talks given dealt with aspects of Cornish and Welsh mining communities at home as well as in America and Australia. These have implications for comparative research into Irish Mining communities both at home and overseas.

Professor Roger Burt, speaking on Freemasonry among the Cornish mining communities made the point that when many miners were admitted to the Masons they headed for the States where their membership gained them instant employment. As an example he showed the enormous Lodge in Butte, expanded to embrace the many Cornish newcomers. The Irish mining “freemasonry” was likely to have been less formalised but equally effective at procuring employment. Professor Burt stated that the Cornish at home kept the best mines for themselves and that London investors were generally left with only the most marginal mines. Much the same could be said about most 19th century Irish mines as exemplified by the example of west Cork.

Sharon Schwartze’s contribution made it clear that Masonry was only one aspect of Cornish emigration to the US and that this had begun c. 1820. Remittances home were as much of Cornish life as they were of Irish. However, it is unlikely that Irish priests found it necessary to tour the Irish mining camps as Cornish Methodist preachers did from time to time.

Professor Benson opened up an unexplored area in Irish mining when he took a revisionist view of the ill-famed “pit-clubs”. These were ostensibly miners’ insurance schemes set up by the coal owners who deducted premiums from wages, leading to suspicions of abuse. There is some evidence for this in Ireland – Dunally Mining Company in Silvermines ran such a scheme, 1802-’05. The Mining Company of Ireland had something similar at its coal mine in Slievardagh, Co. Tipperary but there is no evidence for them running such in their lead and copper mines.

Another unresearched area (or at least unpublished as far as is known) is the Irish miners in Australia. It is unlikely that they formed a cohesive unit such as the Welsh colliers did in the Newcastle area of New South Wales, as described by Leslie Walker. Their strong institutional entities included an Eisteddfod and Welsh language newspapers. William James and Phillip Peyton spoke on another aspect of such emigration, “Cousin Jacks”, the estimated 16,000 Cornish miners who went to Australia between 1839 and 1880. Their self-confidence as miners and engineers was emphasised as well as their cohesiveness. Irish miners were unlikely to have been there in such numbers or terms to share a similar esprit du corp.

John Rule dealt with another unrecorded area of Irish mining – folklore. He was particularly amusing on the theme “revelry” (invariably drunken!) amongst Cornish miners. There is plenty of written evidence in Ireland for this pre 1840 after which the temperance movement in both areas restricted this mass social phenomenon.

Kayleigh Milden spoke on the influences of Methodism on Cornish mining communities. While this does not apply to Ireland, the question was raised about whether there were different perceptions of popular religion among the miners than among their agricultural peers. Another area of Cornish research which cannot be applied to Irish mines was supplied by Bernard Deacon who examined the original household census forms for parts of 19th century Cornwall (the Irish ones were destroyed in 1922). One of his findings indicated that 91% of the sons of miners themselves became miners.

Des Cowman

MINING HISTORY ON THE INTERNET – An update.

Newsletter 5, July 1997 contained an article by Greg Fewer entitled “Irish Mining History and the World Wide Web”. Web sites have proved to be the most ephemeral form of record available. Sites come and go, change their names and change their content, This includes our own web site which has been radically altered (and will soon have to replace a H with a T) – www.gsi.ie/mhjsi. The following are of current interest.

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/mining-history.html>

The UK Mining History E-mail discussion list (moderator, Peter Claughton). A lively, sometimes very lively, e-mail discussion group for members to post information, queries, debate issues, notify events, sell books etc. Archived messages are available from Sept. 1998 onward. Follow instructions on welcome screen to join.

<http://www.ap.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/namho.htm>

The web site of the UK National Association of Mining History Organisations, of which MHSI is a member. News, events, topics of interest etc.

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~Rburt/MinHistNet/welcome.htm#ToC>

A site owned by Roger Burt which provides a wide range of useful information and contacts: discussion forum; list of mining historians; www links; mining history bibliographies, including Ireland, etc.

<http://www.ap.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/bmd.htm>

The British Mining Database site owned by Adrian Pearce. Lists sites in Britain and Ireland.

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~pfclaugh/mhinf/>

Another site operated by Peter Claughton, in this instance focused upon the history of mining in Wales and SW England, but also including information on mining elsewhere in Britain and Ireland.

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~jorbons/scms.html>

The web site of our friends and mentors from the Shropshire Mining and Caving Club.

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

The site lists a very wide range of industrial history/archaeology videos made by Peter Eggleston, including his offering upon Glengowla, Co. Galway. Links, reviews etc.

<http://www.celtic-copper.com>

The home page of the partners in a Trans-National LEADER funded project, linking Anglesey, Cornwall and Avoca.

http://www.mike.munro.cwc.net/mining/wms/wmsoc_hp.htm

A very informative page of the activities and field meet programmes of the Welsh Mines Society. 2001 programme already posted as well as notice of NAMHO 2002, including a call for papers.

<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/mha/mha.htm>

The home page of the Mining History Association (USA). Lists events, activities etc, including their next major meeting in Butte, Montana (the destination of many emigrant Irish miners and their families from Bunmahon and Allihies): June 14-17, 2001.

<http://www.untertage.com/indexe.htm>

The Home page of GAG, the German Society for Mining Archaeology. A subsidiary page [.com/fahr/tkfahre.htm] provides an excellent overview and world wide listing of Man Engines of all origins (German, Cornish etc), including our very own Man Engine House in Allihies.

<http://members.aol.com/arkmetal/ERMINA.htm>

French Mining and Industrial Archaeology home page which provides sections on history, research, internet links and a list of forthcoming international meetings, from 2001 – 2006, including NAMHO 2001 in Ireland.

<http://www.isle-of-man-newspapers.com/mines>

New Web site of the Laxey Mines Research Group. MHSI had memorable experience of their “hands-on” approach to “mine research” in 1999 (see Newsletter 11). Web browsers may now make a more leisurely visit to the mines of the Isle of Man.

<http://www.stonequarries.freeserve.co.uk/> The site of Bath Stone Mines (Quarries)

John Morris

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Glengowla: Following a busy Summer 2000 and positive public reaction, the winter has been spent on further development underground as well as creating an exhibition area and shop. Amongst the visitors was a group from the IAEG and a number of students from Athlone Institute of Technology spent a week mapping the underground workings. We would hope to see some of our friends from MHTI over the coming Summer.

Bunmahon

The final report on the Geophysical survey of Tankardstown is expected soon. Meanwhile there have been other developments. FAS have agreed to pay a mature worker (previously we had been relying on students) to act as curator of the Heritage Centre for at least the next six months. The person employed is most innovative and her presence will make a great difference to Bunmahon Heritage Society.

The Bunmahon mining area is also the centre of a tourism marketing network comprising five local community groups using the collective name “The Copper Coast”. Under that title, an application has been made for the status of “*European Geopark*” and a substantial submission made in its support. If granted it will give a European dimension to the local mining heritage as well as to the general geology of the area. We hope to hear around the end of June.

Glendasan

Anybody who has passed from Glendalough to the Wicklow Gap recently will be shocked to find an enormous medieval tower house and the walls of a medieval town have sprung up right across the mine works with their buddles, wheel pit, buildings and leats. It seemed impossible that any of these could have survived when the site was visited in mid-April as the building of the massive film-set (“Reign of Fire” it is called) proceeded with about two hundred workmen on site.

We had every reason to be apprehensive, as when Martin Critchley visited here in January damage had already been done by preliminary track-laying. His report on this was sent to the various agencies concerned and cognisance was certainly taken. Though most of the sensitive

area lies within the “town walls”, the trackways within skirt them and where there has been any threat a protective membrane has been laid over them. Therefore, if a huge film set had to be built here (which begs a question), then great sensitivity has so far been shown towards the mining heritage. Assurances have also been given that equal care will be taken in the Autumn when the set is being demolished.

Avoca

John Morris has acquired some very interesting post-cards of early 20th century Avoca which we hope to reproduce in the next newsletter. Scanning and enlargement shows the sheer-legs still in place in the Williams engine house.

MHTI MEMBERSHIP

We would particularly like to thank our Corporate sponsors,
Conroy Diamonds and Gold plc, The Lisheen Mine and ERA-Maptec Ltd;
 and our Institutional supporters,
**Shannon Heritage, Allihies Parish Cooperative, Athlone Institute of Technology
 (Department of Mineral Engineering), Glengowla Mines and ERA-Maptec;**
 for their continued support.

Change of address.

Mr. Alan Williams.3 Alexander Court, 10 York Road, Birkdale, Southport,Lancashire PR8 2AD.We would like also to welcome the following new members who have joined the MHTI since January:

Bill Mulligan (USA), Richard Amies (Wales), Redmond Tobin, Nick Peters, Andy Sleeman, Roisin Doherty, and Seamus O’Maitiu.

We also say farewell to Mike and Catherine Dillon, who have returned to North America and won’t be able to join in on Trust activities in the future. We wish them well in the future.

HERITAGE OFFICERS

Many local authorities have now appointed Heritage Officers to their staff, part funded by the Heritage Council. Whilst the MHSI had some contact with individuals, and have supplied some information on historic mine sites in the counties concerned, it is hoped that individual members will make contact and establish links with these Officers on a local basis. The benefits of this for the mining heritage could be many, and if there are situations of threat, damage or other problems at sites, the prospects for a successful outcome are better if we have kept these Officers informed about the important sites in the counties and the present status of them. Please make the effort NOW to get to know the Heritage Officer in your county if you are a lucky one. If you have not got one, perhaps an enquiry to the Council may help the case for them having one. A full list is given below with contact details.

A full list of these officers will appear in the next Newsletter. They have been appointed for the following areas and members in the meanwhile can contact them through their County Councils or corporations:

Kerry, Tipperary N.R., Leitrim, Galway (Corporation and County Council), Dublin (Corporation), Clare, Wicklow, Sligo, Laois/Offaly, Longford/Westmeath, Carlow and most recently Limerick. Matthew Parkes