



# NEWSLETTER

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Iontaobhas Oidhreacht Mianadóireachta na hEireann

Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

## MHTI PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2012/2013

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

### 2013

11 January	MHTI Board Meeting
8 March	MHTI Board meeting
9-10 March	Slieve Ardagh Fieldtrip led by Phelim Lally
<i>16 March</i>	<i>NAMHO AGM, Council meeting and informal fieldtrips</i>
<i>20-21 April</i>	<i>BCRA Cave Technology Symposium, South Wales</i>
11-12 May Sat-Sun	Silvermines, Martin Critchley
(11 May, evening talk.	
12 May Sun	<b>MHTI Board meeting (followed by AGM, probably on Sunday morning in a bit of a departure from previous custom)</b>
<i>18 May, Sat</i>	<i>NAMHO meeting: Archaeology of Mining and Quarrying in England, Yorkshire</i>
<i>24-26 May, Fri-Sun</i>	<i>European Minerals Day, <a href="http://www.mineralsday.eu/">http://www.mineralsday.eu/</a></i>
8-9 June, Sat-Sun	Avoca fieldtrip, led by Nick Coy
<i>28 June-1 July</i>	<i>NAMHO Conference, Aberystwyth University</i>
8 August, Thurs	MHTI Board meeting TBC
10-11 August, Sat-Sun	Wexford and Waterford, Des Cowman TBC
<i>20-24 August</i>	<i>"Stories written in stone": international symposium on chert &amp; other knappable materials, Romania. <a href="http://arheoinvestsymposium.uaic.ro/stone">http://arheoinvestsymposium.uaic.ro/stone</a></i>
<i>26 August-1 September</i>	<i>Heritage Week</i>
September date TBC	Parys Mountain & Great Ormes Head, Martin Critchley
<i>28 September-5 October</i>	<i>Australian Mining History Association Annual Conference</i>
8 November	MHTI Board meeting TBC

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 fieldtrips please register your interest, without commitment, so the organiser can keep you informed.

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WWW.MHTI.COM

# MHTI MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Newsletter 59 will issue in February. Contributions by end of January please.

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

## 2012 Journal

You should receive the 2012 Journal in the post shortly. Please notify the editor if yours does not appear by Christmas.

## United Stone Firms Brochure

Some years ago, someone kindly sent some quality copies of selected pages from a United Stone Firms brochure to Matthew Parkes. The copied pages included images and data on the company's operation at Mountcharles/Drumkeelan stone mines and also the various operations in the Doolin district of County Clare extracting Liscannor Stone in the early 1900s. It also covers their stoneyard in Belfast and the ships they invested in to transport their products. This has proved most interesting, and also more recently it has been useful to Alastair Lings in his further researches on the Mountcharles stone mines. However, I have no record, nor memory of who sent it to me. We would be most interested in hearing from anyone who recalls sending those pages, or who has a copy of the United Stone Firms promotional brochure. There may well be other aspects of interest to current research contained in its pages. Please get in touch if it was you!

Matthew Parkes

## MHTI on Facebook

Last year, the board decided to set up a free page for the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland on Facebook. The growing complexity of updating the MHTI website and the inability to disseminate information in a timely manner through the site made this an obvious stopgap measure.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Facebook, a "page" is different to a "friend" and does not require you to add them or even have your own Facebook account. The page is open and more crucially **public**, meaning that anyone can view it even if you have not succumbed to making a Facebook account of your own. Simply entering "Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Facebook" into Google will direct you to the page. At present the Facebook page is probably the most current and active source of information from the MHTI. The simplicity of Facebook allows members to upload photographs from fieldtrips to the "Wall" and post messages and interact with other members.

Of course, if you do have a Facebook account, please like the page to increase its visibility and receive notifications of any activity on the page. We would also encourage you to upload any photographs of fieldtrips to the page and feel free to start discussions.

## Library subscription offer to members

We are currently making a special offer to libraries who subscribe for the first time for 2013, of a very special deal on all previous journals and MHTI's own publications.

If you have any personal contacts in local libraries or local history based organisations whom you think might be interested in receiving details of the offer please contact Matthew Parkes, so we can send them the offer. We will also produce a paper copy to distribute with the journal in the next month.

Lastly, if you are a recently joined member and wish to avail of the offer please contact Matthew Parkes. If you are missing single issues or want a mixed selection we can also make a very special deal to let you complete your run of the journal.

## "The Miners of Wicklow"

Petra Coffey has recently donated a copy of a music score to the MHTI archive. This is a jig arranged for the piano by R.M. Levey, from 'The First Collection of the Dance Music of Ireland, consisting of upwards of one hundred national jigs, reels, hornpipes &c Arranged with East Basses for the Piano Forte (The treble line to suit violin or flute) by R.M. Levey'.

## Exhibition: Science at the Royal Irish Academy - Kirwan

Nigel Monaghan has recently contributed a significant component of an exhibition currently available to visit in the Royal Irish Academy, 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2. Covering 'Science at the Royal Irish Academy' and subtitled 'Uniting whatever is pleasing with whatever is useful', the exhibition has elements tackling William Rowan Hamilton, the development of scientific meteorology, natural history collections at the RIA and on Richard Kirwan, the chemist, philosopher and barrister. Nigel Monaghan has contributed a section on Kirwan, the mineralogist, who was instrumental in the acquisition by the RDS of the famous Leske Collection in 1792 for the princely sum of £1350. The Exhibition is accompanied by an attractive booklet available for €5 in the Academy. Admission is free and the exhibition runs until May 2013.

# EVENTS: NOTICES AND REPORTS

## Drumkeelan Mines

Article written by Anne Leonard,  
published by the Donegal Times,  
26/09/2012

(Original version on the Mountcharles Community  
Notices Facebook Page 17/09/2012)

“A short scarp of sandstone exposed in the Townland of Drumkeelan, northwest of Mountcharles in south County Donegal has a very long history of stone mining. Back to at least the late 12th century, it provided high quality stone suitable for monumental work and masonry. Some important public buildings, such as the National Museum of Ireland, the National Library and Leinster House (the Dail) and Sligo Town Hall used Drumkeelan stone in their construction. The mines are accessible today, but modern quarrying is destroying part of them.” *Taken from Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland, 2001.*

On Saturday 15th September there was a field trip organised by Alastair Lings of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland (MHTI) to examine the workings in the southern part of County Donegal.

By kind invitation of Eamonn Monaghan a group of people from the area met with the group from the MHTI to visit the Drumkeelan stone mine.

We decided that since Mountcharles had recently been awarded the title of Historic Village, its history being stone, what better place to meet the MHTI than the Green Pump in the centre of the village. The village was so well decorated; the visitors thought it was in their honour. We took great joy in telling them why our village was so decorated. We spoke a little about the history of the village and some people were able to tell us some stories of days gone by. I'm sure Seamus McMamus would have been proud to see the group at the pump where he told so many stories.

In a convoy of cars we set off for the stone mines. Eamonn met us at the gate. After the welcome and handshaking Alastair took over. We were told the geology of the mines. They were originally laid down in the Carboniferous period, about 340 million years ago. Then he explained the mining. It seemed to have been more economical to mine the stone rather than opencast it. Weaker material above the sandstone was removed first allowing blocks of stone to be removed. A high proportion of the stone was extracted, with the roof being supported mainly by a pack of waste stone. The Abbey Assaroe was built in 1180, so quarrying started around this time. A carved sandstone lamp found in the mine suggests mining started in the middle ages. Locally the stone was used to build the Killybegs

Coastguard Station, the Provincial Bank in Ballyshannon, the Town Hall in Sligo and St Eunan and St Columba Cathedral in Letterkenny. There was even a ship named “Mountcharles” built by the United Stone Firms (Bristol) who operated quarries across Britain and Ireland. The company was formed in 1909 and built the steam ship the following year to transport stone. The ship sank during bad weather in 1953 off the coast of Cornwall with no loss of life.

After that introduction we were ready for the short walk to the mines. As we passed a lovely little lake, Eamonn pointed out some backfilled workings, supported by a narrow, badly cracked pillar. Because of this he cannot graze his cattle in the area. We all had a torch and some hard hats. I was sorry I had a torch because when I walked in and saw the whole place lit up with candle light, I felt it was special and thought I might see Our Lady in the corner. It was only when I came out that I heard about a Cistercian Monk who stayed with the Monaghan family in 1984 carved a statue of a woman with a child holding a host and chalice. We were all in awe of it. Eamonn showed us round with pride and told us stories of days gone by. Another story I heard was the miners all went to the Monaghan house for their dinner and were called with the sound of a bell ringing. One day they heard the bell and went down for their meal. When they arrived the lady of the house asked them why they had come an hour early. The men explained that the dinner bell was ringing. After they ate and went back to the mine the place where they had been working had caved in.



The mines are completely sterile and are exactly the same as they were in the 1950's. We had a wonderful time talking and exploring with Eamonn, Alastair and the members of the MHTI. After two hours we said our goodbyes. The MHTI were going on to visit the workshop at McMonagle Stone, Kilrean, Glenboghil and the Welshtown Mines (Lead). But me thinks the sandstone mine at Drumkeelan was the highlight of their weekend.

So what about the future of the mines 2012?

The area at Drumkeelan is being quarried and this carries a threat of destruction to these historic and interesting stone mines. Modern day machines are being used and at Eamonn's quarry there are only two mine entrances left. Is it not time to create and promote an increased knowledge, awareness and appreciation of the natural sandstone mine in Drumkeelan? If we don't conserve it for future generations, what will we say when they ask us about the Drumkeelan Mines?  
**Anne Leonard**

## **Fieldtrip report The Mines of South Donegal (15-16 September 2012)**

On Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> September eight members rendezvoused at The Quay in Donegal town. Our first stop was to meet up with local people at the village pump in nearby Mountcharles. It might have been difficult to locate just one person wearing a blue anorak, but in the event 22 people were waiting for us. We headed off in a cortege of cars to the Lower Quarry at Drumkeelan, where we met Eamonn Monaghan whose family worked in the sandstone mines, and continue to work nearby quarries. After explaining the history and working of the mines, Eamonn showed us some of the mines. He had very kindly cleared a path through bushes to get to two of the mine entries. Outside one entrance was a winch, of the type used to haul fishing boats up on to a beach. At the entrance Eamonn provided a display of the oil lamps used in the mine, and other artefacts. Inside, he had the passages lit by candles, which was an amazing sight. With a solid stone roof and floor and walls of packed-stone it was almost like being in church. Elsewhere, Anne Leonard has described our visit to Drumkeelan as the "highlight" of the weekend: certainly the experience is unforgettable.

After a group photograph and a vote of thanks to Eamonn, the parties split and MHTI members continued their tour. The next stop was the head office and workshops of McMonagle Stone. This family company was formed in 1974 and currently operated five quarries in County Donegal: of granite, quartzite and sandstone including the Upper Quarry at Drumkeelan.

The company's founder Dan McMonagle showed us the exhibits of local and imported stone. The highly attractive stone on display makes one appreciate the beauty of stone buildings.

We were then shown around the workshop by Michael McMonagle. Most impressive was the computer programmed circular saw, which can receive instructions by e-mail, and can cut stone balls if required. Other equipment includes guillotines and saws for cutting cladding. Then we walked through the storage yard and saw graded stone awaiting processing,

and finished products ready for dispatch. It was fantastic to see the range of items that were being made.

We then headed north, and had lunch at the Highlands Hotel, Glenties, before visiting Kilrean Mine. This mine produced 13 tons of lead ore in 1855. We found the "Well" marked on the 1:2500 scale map (c.1900) and an adjacent area of spoil.

Next on the agenda was a mine on the shore of Loughnambraddan near Fintown. Unfortunately we failed to find any evidence of mineralisation, although John Hopkinson identified an area of graded-over spoil near a lime kiln. It is possible that limestone quarrying has removed any evidence of mining. One mile to the north-east is Glenaboghil Mine. The remains here consist of a series of excavations along a vein, with some spoil. On the line of the vein there is a small hole with cave-like features.

The last stop of the day was at Welchtown Mine, further down the Finn Valley, near Ballybofey. The first edition 1:10560 scale map shows an "Old Mine", which was probably worked in 1775. We planned to visit a more recent opencast to the north-east, on the slopes of Gorey Hill. Unfortunately the removal of field-boundaries and trees during the summer had eradicated all sign of the opencast. Although this visit was disappointing, we were rewarded with lovely views of the countryside. The drive back to Donegal through Barnesmore Gap was magnificent.

Our first visit on the Sunday was to Carricknahorna Mine. The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland possesses a mine plan, dated 1877, that shows two short levels at Carricknahorna. 30 tons of iron were produced in 1884. The remains consist of a concrete block mounting for machinery, a collapsing entrance to the western level, and an opencast for iron about 150 metres upstream. Quarrying activities have probably buried the entrance to the eastern level.

The next stop was Cashelard Feldspar Quarry which was worked during the World Wars. On site is a water-filled quarry with a prominent shot-hole, a spoil heap and an exploration trench exposing an unworked parallel feldspar vein.

We had a very pleasant lunch at the Abbey Mill Coffee Shop, Ballyshannon, in a lovely position overlooking a river, next to the remains of Assaroe Abbey. Trials for lead had been made in the area in the 1850s, with a shaft close to the cafe. We explored a 30 metre long adit, east of Catsby Caves, about 100 metres upstream of the cafe.

Our final visit of the day was to a lead and copper trial at Finner Camp, belonging to the Department of Defence. The trial may have been known to Samuel Lewis in 1837, and it is noted in Griffith's Catalogues of the 1850s. The site is marked on an old map of the



Geological Survey. By identifying the location on the online maps of Ordnance Survey Ireland as being close to the former 400 yard firing position on a shooting range, a grid reference was estimated. After we reported at the Guardhouse, we were escorted to the area of interest. As we parked our cars we could see nearby a small indented cut in the hillside which was probably the trial. Examination of the gorse-covered slope above the cut failed to provide further evidence. The ease by which we found the trial is a tribute to the mapping skills of a field geologist of c.1890.

Sadly we could not stay longer to enjoy the beautiful views of the sandhills and the River Erne. After hurried goodbyes, we headed our separate ways.

MHTI is very grateful to Eamonn Monaghan, Dan and Michael McMonagle and the Defence Forces for their kind help with the programme, and to landowners for allowing access to their properties. Members enjoyed the company of the people of Mountcharles, and look forward to meeting them again.

Alastair Lings

See this for more:

[http://www.mcmonaglestone.ie/About\\_Us/Default.223.html](http://www.mcmonaglestone.ie/About_Us/Default.223.html)



*Alastair Lings at Carricknahorna Mine*



*Cashelard Feldspar Quarry*



*MHTI Group at the Abbey Island Adit, Ballyshannon*



*Abbey Mill Coffee Shop, Ballyshannon*

## Tara Miners on tour

A small group of ex Tara Mines staff with only one MHTI member recently set off on a trip southwards, and paid an unscheduled visit to the now defunct mine workings at Gortdrum Co. Tipperary, close to Limerick Junction train station.

There we were greeted by Patsy Rae who very generously gave us a tour of the whole site and shared his very extensive knowledge of the history and workings of the mine. What was the original opencast pit of copper ore deposit, the site is now a crystal clear lake stretching over an area of forty two acres and 80 meters at the deep end! Sited on the lake is a modern fish farm which has been running for many years. Afterwards Patsy treated us to lunch at his lovely home. The group were taken on a tour of the now rehabilitated tailings area, where a herd of limousin beef cattle were grazing on the lush pasture. There are spectacular views northwards to the Slievefelim Mountains, and south to the Galtees. From this elevated site we viewed waste rock stockpiles consisting of more than two million tonnes, which are in the process of being crushed and screened, to be sold off site for road building. All-in-all a very successful one-man enterprise. We then travelled west to Drumkean where we were shown the large area of coresheds and logging by Mike McCarthy Jnr. Most if not all of this core came from Pallasgreen/Caherconlish finds.

Late in the evening in need of some spiritual renewal we visited Mountmellary Abbey in the foot hills of the Knockmealdown Mts. to bathe in the peace and tranquility of this mountainous retreat. Sadly there were no defections to the Trappist Monk's way of life!

Day 2 - We went over the mountains to Silvermines Village, our first call was to my good friend Eamon De Stafort, who was getting ready to travel to Russia the next day. He had a great Tipperary welcome for us and made us tea in the best cups in the house, sweet cake and all sorts. He is a real gentleman, not too many of him around. Before we left, he let us raid his orchard for lovely sweet apples. We took our leave and spent a few hours visiting the Mogul mine site Shallee, and Magcobar barytes opencast pit now long flooded and fenced off. With great satisfaction we viewed the restored engine houses, the extensive fencing and the good clean up which has taken place. Thanks to MHTI and Tipperary Co. Council we viewed the grassed over tailings pond from our vantage point near the remains of a large jaw crusher long gone out of use. There are sheds full of diamond drill core, and the vacant mine manager's house a reminder of times gone by. We had the use of a cottage near Tipperary town. The cold shower and toilet were outside, down-wind of the house of course! In the evening we had steak for dinner, a funny incident at the first meal - we asked for Coleman's mustard but the lady had none. The next

evening no one would go back there – 5 big steak meals lost for the want of a bit of mustard! All-in-all we had a great 3 days up in Tipp.

**Mick Carragher**

## Water power –from ice to hydro Sept 15<sup>th</sup> Copper Coast Geopark Centre

John Galloway, Chairman of Copper Coast Geopark Ltd. welcomed the capacity attendance and wished them success in their deliberations. The topic for the day was the historical and future use of water power in historic metal mining districts of Ireland and Wales.

Joe Greene introduced the participants to the Metal Links project, its aims and activities to date. The role of the ERDF in part funding the project through the Ireland Wales programme 2007-2013 was highlighted. He particularly thanked the speakers who had travelled considerable distance to contribute and looked forward to an enlightening series of talks as the focus for the forums discussions.

The forum was highly interactive with participants, many of whom had expertise and or working knowledge to impart, engaging in detailed discussion with speakers.

The ongoing work of Dr. Warren (GSI rtd.) on the geology of the Comeraghs and the effect of the last ice age on the Mahon and Tay rivers evoked considerable interest as did Dr. Rynne's discourse on the historical development of Waterpower in Ireland as the only local resource to drive Ireland's industrial development, there being no indigenous coal of any volume or quality. Much of this infrastructure still exists though not in the immediate area. A number of participants intend to explore this potential opportunity.

Dr. Hughes (RCAHMW) introduced an international element to the programme with discussion of use of water power in mining and smelting in Wales in the same period. Mid Wales especially relied on water power unlike the rich coal areas of the south. A number of old leats which still exist in Ceredigion are being redeveloped to drive modern hydro systems. He noted that compromises were necessary to achieve this and certain historical artefacts (clay lining) were lost in the process.

J. Flahavan (Flahavan & Son) discussed the use of water power in the last 300 years to drive the milling industry of the Mahon valley and the continued use of water power to drive a generator at his mill today. This unit, installed in the 1930's contributes to the overall operation but is limited by the relatively low head available. Participants discussed this point at some length as it would parallel potential sites in the area.



S. Murphy (Mahon Hydro) discussed the concept of Mahon Hydro, its technological evolution and design, its build, debugging and commercial success. The large head provided by the 3 kilometre pipe taking water from the Mahon River below the falls to the power house downstream is a considerable driver of its success. 850 KW max output can be achieved and the one million euro investment is expected to be paid back in 12 years. The project life of the system is 40 years. Many practical issues from appropriate materials in the bed under the pipe to the installation of a self-cleaning inlet pipe were explored in detail.

Participants also visited the Mahon Hydro project starting at the inlet on the Mahon river where the self-cleaning technology was observed in addition to further discussion on the physical challenges now evident to the group at a height of some 450 metres above sea level on very mountainous terrain. A visit to the turbo house where S. Murphy discussed the role of each piece of equipment and the computerised control system followed.

Prior to leaving the site participants visited the mill built during the famine (1840s) utilising the same water system to produce power for the industry of its day.

## Advance Notice The Archaeology of Mining and Quarrying in England

A one day conference to launch the publication of a three year assessment of mining and quarrying in England from prehistory through to the present day

**18 May 2013**  
**at the Coal Mining Museum for England,**  
**Caphouse Colliery, near Wakefield**

Invited speakers will cover all aspects of the extractive industries, from lead and coal to stone and slate, including the investigation of their underground archaeology.

Further details will be published on the NAMHO web site - [www.namho.org](http://www.namho.org) - and in the newsletters of our constituent groups. Registration fee will be in the region of £5, including lunch. Advance booking - contact Peter Cloughton - e-mail: P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk - Tel: 01437 532578

## National Heritage Week 2012

This year's National Heritage Week comprised of over 1400 events across Ireland. A number of events relating to the geosciences were held across the country comprising a range of fieldtrips, lectures and workshops.



*Photo: And they're off...*

In Wicklow a walking tour entitled Avoca "The Greatest of all Mines" led by Nick Coy of Avoca Heritage was well attended with over 50 participants including a number of familiar faces partaking in a leisurely walk over Ireland's most fascinating mining landscape. Nick Coy presented a fascinating presentation on the geology, flora, fauna, mine buildings and the social history of the area over three centuries.



*Photo: The presentation continues further along the route*  
With thanks to Marie Fleming, IGI.

# NEWS: IRISH NEWS/ISSUES/BOOKS

## Mining Records in the Guildhall Library, London

MHTI Journal No.1 included an extremely useful article by John Morris and Des Cowman, listing Irish mining companies whose records are held in the UK Public Records Office in London. They mention that information on companies is also held in the Guildhall Library, in the City of London.

An opportunity for me to visit that library arose recently. Locating information on companies was not particularly straight forward, but fortunately the staff were very friendly, helpful and efficient.

There are "Finding Aids" including a listing of all the Prospectuses held by the library from 1824 until 1939/40 and beyond. Locating a prospectus was straight forward if you knew the name of the company.

To find a company's Annual Report you need to check in the Stock Exchange Yearbook to determine which category a company is covered by (EG Mining). The entries in the Yearbook provide limited information on the company, for that year. Then you need to consult a listing of the annual reports to determine which box number your report will be in, and order up the appropriate box (e.g. Stock Exchange Company Annual Reports 1911-1912, for Commercial & Industrial Companies T-Z, Box 1190) Your annual report will be in a volume of bound reports. The annual reports can vary from a type-written statement up to booklet containing mine plans and photographs.

Apart from my own research I just had time to look through the listing of Company prospectuses for 1824-1901. I noted down companies that I thought had an Irish connection and these are listed below. The list could contain companies that never worked in Ireland, for example the Londonderry Gold Mine (1894) was in the Coolgardie Goldfield in Australia. Similarly there will be omissions from the list like the Gas Purification and Chemical Company Ltd (1874) which traded in bog iron ore.

Good luck with your research.  
Alastair Lings

## Mining Company Prospectuses, 1824-1901

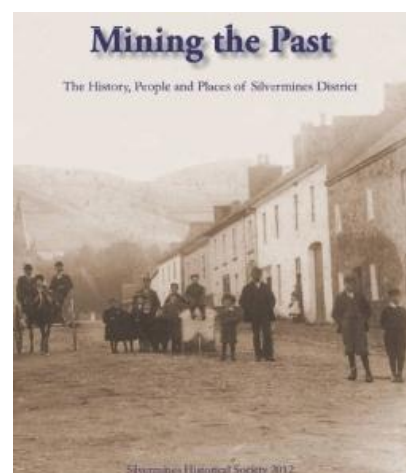
Barytes Company of Ireland, 1853  
Castletown New Copper Mining Company, 1859  
Classadaugh Copper Mining Company, 1852  
Clonakilty Consolidated Mining Company, 1854  
Cloncurry Copper and Smelting Company, 1883  
Cloncurry Copper Mining Company, 1868  
Connemara Mining Company of Ireland, (no date)  
Connorree Mining Company, 1859

Coosheen Copper Mining Company, 1887  
Deerpark Mining Company, 1871  
Dhurode Copper Mining Company, 1852 approx  
East Annagh Silver Lead Mining Company, 1853  
Errisberg Mining Company, 1888  
Evisnacrow Haematite Ore Company, 1872  
Glenariff Iron Ore and Harbour Company, 1873  
Great Cappagh Copper Mining Company, (no date)  
Greenore Granite Quarries Syndicate, 1898  
Irish Consols Mining Company, 1853  
Knockatrellane Copper Mines, (no date)  
Lackamore Copper Mining Company, 1853  
Mizen Head Copper Mines, 1851  
North of Ireland Iron Ore Company, 1872  
North of Ireland Mining and Pier or Harbour Company, (no date)  
Oola Silver Lead and Copper Mining Company, (no date)  
Peat Coal and Charcoal Company, (no date)  
Royal Hibernian Mining Company, 1852  
South Cork Copper Mining Company, 1852  
United Newry Granite Company, 1898  
Valentia Slate Slab Company, 1863.

## New Silvermines Journal

Ahead of our planned AGM venue in Silvermines (planned for the weekend of 11-12 May 2013) Eamonn de Stafort has let us know of a new publication. Silvermines newly formed Historical Society has just launched its first Journal, titled, MINING THE PAST. It's a good read of mixed interests. In the opening 10 page article of 'Mining the Past', Eamonn de Stafort tells the story of 20th century mining in the village, starting with the old Silvermines Lead and Zinc Company, launched in 1948, and culminating in the heady days of Mogul and Magcobar, when over 500 people from far and wide were employed there.

<http://www.nenaghguardian.ie/news-detail.php?article=4605CZ>





The journal is available for €10 plus €2 (postage) - just email the request to

[silvermineshistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:silvermineshistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

Or contact:

Betty Gleeson, Silvermines Historical Society

Tullamoylan

Dolla, Nenagh

Co Tipperary

## Allihies Copper Mine Museum News

- ACMM had a visit from the assessors recently for interim accreditation with the Museum Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI). After lots of preparation, it went very well.
- The museum received a grant to translate an audiotour of the museum into four languages. We will put this narration onto handheld units for museum visitors and make it available as a download on our website
- ACMM was delighted to receive a donation from Paul Stevens of five microfilms of the cost books, copybook of letters and ledgers from Puxley's mines (1818-1848). These records formed a significant part of R.A. Williams research for his book 'The Bearhaven Mines'. ACMM would be grateful to anyone to know of a microfilm viewer that is lying idle and might be donated to us.
- Plans for the opening of Mountain Mine are progressing. The mine has been visited by mining engineers and TD Leo Varadkar, and, most recently by Pat Griffin of the Health and Safety Authority. Plans are also afoot for holding an underground concert in the Horse Whim Chamber, of visiting choirs and storytellers, to tie in with The Gathering 2013.
- This summer saw the completion of our Survey of Mining and Industrial Heritage, funded by the Heritage Council. The survey was a huge success and thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of staff and volunteers we covered even more ground than we expected, managing to survey the areas of Duneen and Ballydonegan, as well as Mountain Mine. The survey revealed many items and structures of interest, some new things came to light and the report makes some interesting recommendations for small-scale excavations and further investigations.
- On November 30<sup>th</sup> ACMM will hold a seminar entitled 'Allihies Industrial heritage – A Village at Work', to present the survey results to the public. It is on from 7.30-9.30pm in the Copper Mine Museum. All are welcome. A condensed version of the survey report will be available on the 30th and later on ACMM's website.

Aileen O'Connor

## Additions to bibliography

Chapman, R., Moles, N., Warner, R., and Cahill, M., 2012. The hypothesis of the Mournes and early bronze age gold. *Archaeology Ireland* Vol. 26, No.2 (Issue 100), p52.

This article refutes the suggestion by Ian Meighan that the alluvial gold found near the Mourne Mountains was derived from the Sperrin Mountains (see: Meighan, I., 2011. The sourcing of Irish bronze age gold. *Archaeology Ireland*, Vol. 25, No.4 (Issue 98), p31-32.)

Lings, A., 2012. Quarrying on Muckish Mountain. *Donegal Annual* No.64, p8-22. (Journal of County Donegal Historical Society).

This paper is based on his article in MHTI Journal No.8, with additional information gathered from research, fieldwork and by interviewing former quarrymen. He proposes that a tiny quarry near Lough Agher was the source of marble for the statue of Viscount Castlereagh, 2nd Marquis of Londonderry (1769-1822). He believes in the legend about St Columbkilles Cross being quarried at Mamcross, and proposes that a detailed search is made of for evidence of quarrying in that area.

MORE Additions to bibliography:

Hand, A., 2005. The White Quarry, Ardraccan. *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, volume 8, p138-159 (The Journal of the Irish Georgian Society).

Hand, A., 2008. 'Doing everything of marble which can be done with it': some descriptive accounts of the Kilkenny Marble Works. *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, volume 11, p74-99 (The Journal of the Irish Georgian Society).

McArdle, P., 2012. Thomas Weaver: an early geologist at Avoca, Co Wicklow. *Earth Science Ireland*, 12, p14-16.

Moles, N., 2012. Mournes rare metals revealed. *Earth Science Ireland*, issue 12, p17-18.

Monaghan, N.T. 2012. Kirwan the mineralogist. In Fitzpatrick, S. (ed) *Science at the Royal Irish Academy, uniting whatever is pleasing with whatever is useful*. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

## Galmoy Mine, County Kilkenny (01/11/2012)

Mining operations were originally planned to end in May 2009, but finally ceased in mid-October 2012. Mine closure and rehabilitation work will continue until the end of the year.

<http://www.mineralsireland.ie/Publications.htm>

(Latest Industry News November 2012)

## Snippet from History Ballymurtagh Fete

*Extract from a letter from Rathdrum, Sept. 7.*

“Having been invited (though merely a stranger) by Mr. Camac to view the astonishing efforts he has made in completing the works at the Mines of Ballymurtagh, in the County of Wicklow, I cannot avoid observing, what every real friend to Ireland must discern with the keenest regret, that its subterraneous riches have been so long neglected. This country is well known to abound in valuable Minerals, particularly Copper; and yet, to our national reproach be it spoken, we are compelled to have recourse to our more enterprising and politic neighbours, for this essential article of home Consumption and foreign Commerce. The employment which a mine affords to various descriptions of people, and the rapid circulation of money which it occasions, are great national advantages, too obvious to be overlooked. Unfortunately for Ireland, men of large personal fortunes do not as yet seem to possess that enterprising and patriotic spirit, which equally consults and serves public prosperity and individual advantage. Mr. Camac deserves to be pointed out as a very honourable exception to this remark, he having embarked a large property in Mining. By his interest an Act of Parliament has been obtained, forming a Company with several important privileges; and to the Hibernian Mine Company, the Kingdom in general, and the County of Wicklow in particular, are highly indebted, for the zeal with which they have carried into effect the objects of their association. The valuable Copper Mines of Ballymurtagh, in this country (by which the late Mr. Whaler accumulated an immense property, and whose wealth appears inexhaustible) had been for many years entirely abandoned, and the water had gained so far upon the main stream, which communicated with the richest vein of ore, that any attempt to drain it was deemed desperate; the present Company, however, undertook the assiduous task, and I was happy to see that their persevering exertions have been rewarded with the most complete success.

“This day the recovery of that valuable vein of the mine was celebrated at Ballymurtagh. Messrs. Camac and Kyan invited all their neighbours to dinner. A whole ox, several sheep, with a due proportion of other provisions, plenty of all sorts of wine, five barrels of ale, and fifty gallons of whisky were provided. All the miners, their wives and children, with the neighbouring Gentlemen and Ladies, amounting to nearly 400, sat down to dinner on the hill where the vein was discovered. This hill commands one of the most extensive and beautiful inland views in the kingdom. After dinner, the Ladies and Gentlemen (with that Philanthropy which marks the county of Wicklow) joined the miners, their wives and daughters, in country dances; and, to the honour of the miners be it noticed, that not a drunken man was seen among them.

“After dinner the following toasts were drank, under repeated discharges of cannon:

*The King - The Queen - Prince and Princess of Wales - The Hibernian Mine Company - The Cronebane Mine Company - County of Wicklow, and to prosperity to it - The British Navy, and success to it - Prosperity and everlasting friendship between Ireland and Great Britain - Lord Camden - Mr. Pelham - Liberty without Licentiousness - May an honourable Peace conclude a successful War - The Infant Manufactures of Ireland.*

“At twelve o’clock, after an illumination of the new town (erected at the expense of the Company), and a mirthful dance around a bonfire, the miners concluded their rural repast with repeated chorusses of “God Save the King” and “Rule Britannia,” and then repaired to their respective houses in perfect harmony.”

Anon, 1795. Ballymurtagh Fete. *The Morning Post and Fashionable World*, Number 7382, 29 September 1795, p4.



*Ballymurtagh today.*



*Looking over Ballygahan engine houses to Avoca.*

## FEATURE: Heartlands, Cornwall's Newest 'Visitor Attraction': Seeing Through the Smoke and Mirrors?

Heartlands, in the former mining village of Pool, opened in March 2012. It has been developed around the Grade II\* Listed mining complex at Robinson's Shaft, part of South Crofty, the last deep lode tin mine to operate in Cornwall and which closed in 1998. It lies within the UNESCO designated Cornish Mining World Heritage Site (WHS), made up of 10 discrete Areas in Cornwall and west Devon and is to be one of three 'Key Centres' for the WHS. Heartlands is one of the largest urban regeneration projects in Britain in recent years, securing in November 2007 a £22.35 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks scheme, one of only three projects in the UK to be chosen. Funding has also come from Cornwall Council and the EU, bringing total investment to a staggering £35 million. The site is run by the Heartlands Trust set up in 2011; an endowment from the Big Lottery Fund has been put aside to maintain the park, play areas and public realm. Surpluses generated by bespoke events, parking, lettings and a café will support the running costs of the other parts of the site, principally the historic buildings.

But what exactly is Heartlands? According to recent publicity, 19 acres of largely 'derelict' [brown] site land has been developed into a parkland and community space that gives local people a village green. This 'visitor attraction' welcomed 100,000 people in the first three months after its opening and prides itself on its green credentials: sustainability (70% reduction in regulated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) and use of alternative energies. It boasts a mining exhibition in various restored historic surface mine buildings; an engine house with its 80-inch vertical high pressure steam engine (the last to work in Cornwall) still in situ; artists' workshops (live/work units); conference facilities; public art and sculpture; outdoor performance spaces; an eye-catching Diaspora Gardens (displaying flora from several regions of the globe witness to Cornish migration); a café and a giant children's adventure playground themed on Cornish mythology.

The former rural-industrial mining village of Pool is situated midway between the twin mining towns of Camborne and Redruth, which are surrounded by a constellation of other mining villages in an area once known as the Central Mining District, epicentre of Cornish industrialisation. Pool has been subjected to years of poorly planned and undesirable housing development, unsympathetic large out of town retail outlets and consequently suffers from traffic congestion and lack of green spaces, issues that the Heartlands project aim to tackle through sympathetic sustainable regeneration. So it seems rather odd that one of the key elements of the project, namely a

programme of house building (a point to which I will return below), is largely omitted in their publicity.

I visited Heartlands in mid-October when members of the Interreg 4B *Metal Links: Forging Communities Together* project were kindly escorted around the site by Kate Turnbull, Marketing Manager. The consensus of opinion among our group was that Heartlands as a name is pretty meaningless (what exactly is it the heart of?) and that the branding for the site is surprisingly weak and inconsistent. Advertised as a free attraction, this is only partially true as the venue is certainly free to enter, but a car parking fee applies (a modest £2.90 per day). The Red River Café, once the carpenter's shop which cleverly preserves historic in situ machinery, is somewhat pricey with a Cornish pasty costing about £5. But if visitors wish to avail of public transport, bring their own lunch and picnic in the grounds with its incredible children's playground and water features including the Red River (constructed of red granite to imitate the former watercourse impregnated with effluent from the mill at South Crofty to Gwithian), then this is undoubtedly an inexpensive day out.

The Central Mining District witnessed a number of firsts - the trial of Trevithick's revolutionary steam locomotive; the first house in the world to be lit by gas; the invention of the safety fuse, and it also witnessed probably the most acute and sustained mining migration of any area in Cornwall - yet I felt that none of these themes are adequately explored within the interpretation centre which claims to be an 'immersion-scape', whatever that means! There isn't really much of a 'wow factor' within. The visitor is presented with a muddled, disjointed and somewhat incomplete narrative, magnified by the fact that there is no clear 'landing pad' to inform visitors of what Heartlands is all about and the visit bizarrely begins through the shop which contains several exhibits without any context, including a rare tin ingot salvaged from a wreck.

As a proposed 'Key Centre' (one of only three) for the WHS there is no obvious information as to why Heartlands has this prestigious designation, nor even what the Cornish Mining WHS is (in contrast to Geevor Tin Mine, also a WHS Key Centre, which does this rather well). Joint marketing of the WHS' other attractions, some of which are close at hand, including King Edward Mine and East Pool Mine, is not overt enough and the interactive map that would fulfil this need is currently not fully functional or sited prominently enough. Moreover, there seems to be some duplication of what other sites within the Cornish Mining WHS are already offering. This raises the question of saturation of the market for mining heritage which, it has to be remembered, is already a niche one: is there already too much in Cornwall and will the



‘free’ Heartlands site take away business from established, paying attractions?

I felt that the audio elements described as ‘a social history soundscape’ on offer within the buildings at Heartlands were rather long and would be well over most children’s heads, although there are some interactive displays and a dressing up area to keep them occupied. Overall, it was unclear whether this soundscape was focusing simply on the history of South Crofty Mine, or trying to tell the wider technological and social history of Cornish mining. The 270° multi-projection film ‘Frame of Mined’ is undoubtedly the site’s *pièce de résistance*. This short film is exceptionally well presented making excellent use of audio-visual elements to depict Cornwall’s rise as a powerhouse of innovation and dynamism in steam engineering and deep lode mining during the British industrial revolution. It charts the rise and decline of Cornish mining and the migration of mineworkers worldwide, a source of immense pride today among people of Cornish descent. What surprised me most was that it didn’t shy away from the contentious issues and problems associated with post-industrialisation that confront and often blight former Cornish mining communities like Camborne and Redruth. Hugely emotive, proudly and unashamedly Cornish, one criticism made by a member of our group was that it was blatantly nationalistic and indulged rather too much in flag-waving. My impression is that this film truly attempts to reflect the way in which the local population wishes to be identified and considerable time and effort were expended by the Heartlands Team in tireless public consultation, remarked upon by the Big Lottery funding body as one of the bid strengths.

If one takes the film as an example, then the voices and aspirations of the local inhabitants of this former mining community seem to have been heard and met. Yet, I can’t help but wonder at what price? Let us not forget that Heartlands is a multi-million pound urban regeneration project with three prongs: new housing, provision of live-work units and a mining heritage interpretation centre. Call me a cynic, but I suspect that the restoration of the Robinson’s Shaft complex, which I perceive has a good level of support among local people, was a calculated sop to them in order to obtain their acquiescence in getting the surrounding brownfield land passed for planning for housing (138 properties initially to be constructed this autumn as part of the ‘Trevenson Park South Scheme’, a quarter of which will be classed as ‘affordable’ homes for ‘local’ people). Nothing was said about this during our visit which focussed solely on the mining heritage elements of the Heartlands Project.

But I am well aware as a former resident of this area, that many indigenous inhabitants do not wish to see yet more houses, affordable or not, built in Pool. Whilst most local people accept that former mining communities cannot be preserved in aspic and that some development is necessary, many however,

harbour severe doubts about Heartlands’ claim that its project will support wider plans to establish Camborne, Pool and Redruth as a thriving area of innovation, quality and prosperity and provide a significant boost to the local economy. They see it as no panacea to the area’s perennial post-industrial problems of high unemployment, low income and loss of identity. When these new homes are eventually constructed in various stages (and the total number is difficult to ascertain, but it could be up to 600), the open vistas of the surrounding landscape that Heartlands currently enjoys will be partially or wholly obscured and Robinson’s engine house will be smack bang in the middle of a modern housing estate.

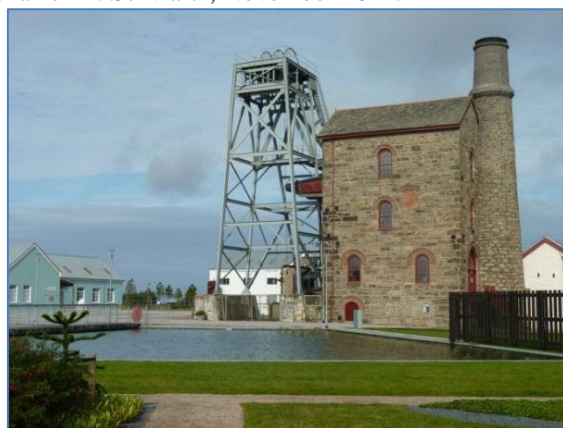
In summary, the preservation and conservation of the Robinson’s Shaft complex has been sympathetically completed to an extremely high standard (although the soon to be built housing estate will inevitably diminish its rural-industrial landscape context, but not enough to upset UNESCO which has the power to delist WHS’s for failing to adequately protect their authenticity and integrity). I also feel that Heartlands needs a stronger and more coherent mining history narrative and I have some concern that interpretation and opportunities for immersion in the industrial past might end up playing second fiddle to ‘inspired by’ activities such as public sculpture, art installations and performance events. However, in a deprived area of high unemployment and low income, a ‘cultural park’ that is free to enter is undoubtedly a welcome resource. And if a visit to Heartlands stimulates and encourages young and old alike to understand and connect with Cornwall’s proud mining culture, then that will go some way to making up for the insidious urbanisation which is irreversibly transforming the very character and fabric of this former Cornish mining heartland.

To find out more about Heartlands, visit their website:

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

*The opinions expressed in the above are purely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any public or private organisation.*

Sharron P. Schwartz, November 2012.



*The newly restored Robinson’s engine house at Heartlands, one of Britain’s largest urban regeneration projects, is set in attractive parkland on former brownfield land that features a giant adventure playground for kids and Diaspora gardens*

## OTHER NEWS

### Obituary: Richard Williams MBE

It is with great sadness that we report the recent death of Richard Williams, MBE, who lost his long battle with cancer. Richard will be well known to some MHTI members as he was involved in the Europamines Project some years ago. A native of Redruth, Richard began his long association with Cornish mining at South Crofty where he learnt his trade as a hard rock miner. He later graduated with a Master's degree from the Camborne School of Mines and was for a number of years heavily involved in Cornish tin streaming, working at the very cutting edge of the industry. Richard was a keen and highly knowledgeable mineral collector and also became deeply involved in all aspects of mining heritage, setting up a consultancy in Camborne and later assuming the role of Managing Director of Poldark Mine near Helston. Fourteen years ago he first travelled to the state of Hidalgo in north eastern Mexico to advise officials there how best to preserve their mining heritage and worked tirelessly ever since then to develop lasting ties between Cornwall and Mexico. Earlier this year he was appointed MBE for services to UK/Mexico relations. Richard was a larger than life character, driven, passionate about mining, hugely entertaining and at times intractable which he readily acknowledged to be a very Cornish trait! With his passing, Cornwall has lost a great champion for her mining heritage and he will be very sorely missed.



### Mining History News Sept & October 2012 (to 16/11/2012):

#### Halton Lea Gate surface mine, Northumberland (15/09/2012)

On the 7<sup>th</sup> August the Planning Inspectorate allowed an appeal by HM Project Developments Ltd, and granted planning permission for the extraction of 140 000 tons of coal close to the border between Northumberland and Cumbria. Local people have set up a fund to oppose the opencast mine, and have hired a leading human rights lawyer to fight their case.

There is a lot of information about the development on Northumberland County Councils website, especially on the following page: Planning>Halton Lea Gate Planning Inquiry>Core Documents > Section 1 - Application Documents > Environmental Statement - Appendices. The documents include reports from the Coal Authority and plans of disused mines.

<http://www.journallive.co.uk/topics/halton-lea-gate-opencast/>  
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=14230>

#### Mining remediation in Midlothian (10/10/2012)

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October BAM Nuttall started a 26 week programme to stabilise abandoned mine workings ahead of the construction of the Borders Railway from Edinburgh south to Galashiels. The Project Director for Network Rail said "Along the route of the Borders Railway, we have carried out extensive ground investigations and identified the locations which require support before construction of the new railway."

Border Telegraph, 10/10/2012

#### A Gazetteer to the Metal Mines of Scotland (10/11/2012)

The third edition of this most useful book was published in 1993, by the Wanlockhead Museum Trust. With a lot of new information available on the internet the author, J.G. Landless, is working on an update, hopefully completed in the spring, 2013. If you think any of the existing grid references are incorrect, please could you contact the author via the AditNow link below.

<http://www.aditnow.co.uk/community/viewtopic.aspx?t=7463>

#### Mines Exploration Calendar 2013

The AditNow full-colour, A3-size calendar is now available. The 12 pages of photographs cover different

mines across England and Wales, and incorporate some historical information. The calendar is available via the link below for £16, with profits distributed to the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society or the Devon Cave Rescue Organisation.

<http://www.aditnow.co.uk/static/mine-exploration-calendar-2013.aspx>

### **Aberpergwm Colliery, South Wales (04/09/2012)**

Low coal prices and the possible development of a wind farm has forced Walter Energy to scale back their development plans for Aberpergwm Colliery near Glynneath. Development of the wind farm might sterilise the area for mining. Letters have been sent to staff at the Colliery warning of possible redundancies. It is feared that up to 90 jobs may be at risk.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-19474837>  
<http://walterenergy.com/operationscenter/canada/uk.html>

### **Allerton Bywater, West Yorkshire (08/09/2012)**

A £30 000 cage-shaped memorial has been unveiled at Allerton Bywater to commemorate the 87 men and boys who died at the local colliery during its 117 year period of operation ending in 1992. The sculpture was designed by former miner Harry Malkin, and it depicts mining images on its four sides.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-19529857>

### **Bersham Colliery, North Wales (11/09/2012)**

The North Wales Miners Association Trust has drawn up an agreement with Wrexham Council for access to the area around Bersham Colliery Engine House. The Trust held an open day at the engine house on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September.

<http://www.wrexham.com/news>

### **Chalk mines stabilised, Reading, Berkshire (12/09/2012)**

A £4.3M scheme to stabilise collapsing chalk mines has been completed after 12 years. Subsidence affected houses in the Field Road and Coley Road areas of the town in 2000.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-19571302>

### **Parys Mountain, Anglesey, North Wales (21/09/2012)**

Bill Hooley, Chief Executive Officer of Anglesey Mining PLC says "Micon are finalising an updated resource for us, and we're not going to be discouraged with what they come up with for us...That'll come out within the next few weeks. And we're also doing a scoping study which hopefully should be out before the end of the year." In 2007 the resource was estimated at 7.76 MT at 2% copper, 2.9% lead and 4.9% zinc.

<http://minesite.com/pub/archives>

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