

NAMHO Newsletter

December 2011

A word from the Editor

Well this is my fourth and final newsletter. Don't panic Kevin and Nigel, what I meant to say was that it's my final newsletter of 2011, unless you know different! Just to say thanks to all those who have helped and assisted me since I "volunteered" for the role, especially Don Borthwick who does a sterling job behind the scenes. Special thanks also go to Matthew Parkes, Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland, for agreeing for his article on their 'Holding on to your history' workshop to be included here and giving us all food for thought on the matter of archives and how to deal with them. With 2012 nearly upon us, why not let the rest of NAMHO know what your organisation has planned for the coming year by including it in a future newsletter (contact details included later in the newsletter).

News and events

NAMHO Conference 2012

The 2012 NAMHO conference is being hosted by the Derbyshire Caving Club and will be held from 29th June to 1st July at Quarry Bank Mill, Styal near Wilmslow, Cheshire. The conference theme is "Copper, lead, cobalt salt coal, fireclay and limestone- Cheshire's mining history". A full programme of lectures is planned for the Saturday and Sunday, along with an extensive programme of surface and underground trips, including lesser-known parts of Cheshire and also North Staffordshire. Full details and booking information will be available at: <http://www.namhoconference.org.uk>

WRAP Cymru- "Welsh Quarry Restoration: A best practice showcase"

WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) works 'with businesses and individuals to help them reap the benefits of reducing waste, develop sustainable products and use resources in an efficient way. Established as a not-for-profit company in 2000, WRAP is backed by government funding from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.' WRAP Cymru is the Welsh division of WRAP.

On 2nd November 2011 Wrap Cymru organised a presentation at Pehnrhyn Slate Quarry, Bethesda, North Wales. The presentation (full title 'Welsh Quarry Restoration – a best practice showcase') was advertised as 'an interactive best practice demonstration showcase of extractive industry landscape restoration using PAS100 quality compost'. Dave Linton attended on behalf of NAMHO Conservation Officer Peter Claughton.

The attendees were from local authority (planning departments), extractive industries and commercial recycling/waste disposal companies, Environment Agency Wales and members of the landscape restoration business sector plus a couple of academics from Bangor University and interested observers.

The talks were:

1. Introduction: Alan Smith, Managing Director Welsh Slate
2. Background to Best Practice Guidance: Lance Jones Organics Project Manager (Wales) WRAP Cymru. Jones said that their aim was to help extractive industries restore land in accordance with planning

conditions placed on them by local authorities, rather than advocating wholesale landscaping of historic quarry sites. Consequently, it would seem that NAMHO's main concern should be with local authority planning departments rather than WRAP directly. In general he said the objective was to accelerate the natural vegetative regeneration of sites.

3. Practical application of 'The Good Practice Guide' at Welsh Slate and other projects: Paul Mathers, Managing Director Terra Resource Investment.
4. Specialist Landscaping Techniques using Quality Compost in the Slate Extraction Industry: Tony Heaney, Restoration Manager Welsh Slate.
5. Other Extractive Industry Applications in Wales 'The 2010 WRAP Cymru Trials': Lance Jones Organics Project Manager (Wales) WRAP Cymru. This was of particular interest as it included details of the WRAP trial at Brynposteg landfill site, Llanidloes, which used lead-contaminated waste brought from Dylife. A report covering this and other trials can be downloaded from http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Biofertiliser_and_Compost_Trials_on_Mineral_Extraction_Sites_in_Wales.23e1f95d.11231.pdf. The report details the Brynposteg trial (which was done with EA approval) and the environmental precautions taken, but appears to have nothing on possible environmental or heritage impacts at Dylife caused by the material taken for the trial, which concerns me somewhat.

The talks were followed by an outside demonstration of spreading (using a 360° tracked excavator) and incorporating (using a tractor-mounted rotavator) compost into previously near-sterile soil which had been brought in to the quarry in a previous restoration attempt. A method of encouraging growth on slate tips using balls of compost and fine slate waste containing pre-germinated seeds thrown randomly down the tip from the top was also demonstrated.

In general, I did not get the impression that there was a great desire to 'flatten and green' historic quarrying and mining sites (in fact it was admitted that mistakes had been made in this direction in the past). The main thrust of WRAP's work in this context appears to be concerned with restoration of major industrial sites such as the Ebbw Vale steelworks and other large extractive sites such as opencast coal working and bulk aggregate sites as required by planning conditions.

Dave Linton

'Holding on to your history' - A Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Workshop

On a snowy day last November, a hardy group of people turned out for a workshop called '*Holding on to your history*', organised by the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland (MHTI). For the MHTI it was a first step in taking seriously the issues of what to do with the accumulated records, books, archives and donations of material related to mining that have grown in 14 years of existence. For the MHTI perhaps, it is a bigger question to solve than for many others groups, but the questions raised and some of the suggested options are equally applicable to a host of other voluntary organisations in geology and other sectors, and so this brief article is intended only to get people thinking as to how the issues might relate to them or to their organisation, or indeed a small business.

In the time since inception as the Mining History Society of Ireland in 1996, the group has become the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland (to encompass the bigger picture of sites and buildings) and then the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland. The latter is a charitable limited company, which enabled multi million euro grants to be awarded and major conservation projects at Allihies Man Engine House, Tankardstown complex, Copper Coast Geopark and at Silvermines to be undertaken. As well as an active programme of meetings and

fieldtrips, an annual journal has been published since 2000. Individual publications of some key mining heritage works have also made a mark, including a reprint of Cole's 1922 *Memoir of localities of minerals and metalliferous mines in Ireland* and the Proceedings of a workshop on the ecology of old mine sites. We also hosted the UK based NAMHO Annual meeting in 2003. This level of success has meant that many people have come forward with mining related materials that they have donated to MHTI, in the expectation that it will provide 'a good home' for the objects or records.

This pattern of donation has been random, but sustained, from year one. The style of offers include single items like a share certificate or a medal to 'a garage full of records and material salvaged from abandoned offices' from Tynagh mine. A UK based quarrying company donated all their mining books and Irish geology maps and other material after a decision to focus their activity. Their gift included a range of old 16mm films of Irish mines. In total, a wide range of mining books have been given, creating in effect a specialist library. Other members have given copies on disc of all their digital photographs from visits to Ireland. Another donation was of surveying equipment. In addition to the plans, books, ledgers, reports, certificates, photos, films, and so on, we have of course generated our own history, with minutes, correspondence, field trip guides, membership records, grant applications, reports, newsletters, journal and other books.

In almost all cases we have accepted material on offer rather than see it lost, thrown out or discarded. But it has been without a clear plan or strategy, with no policy guiding acquisition of materials. We feel that this probably reflects the situation in a host of other voluntary organisations and special interest groups. The situation often relies on one or more individuals who perhaps end up with, rather than electing to take, the responsibility for 'minding' the 'library' or the 'archive'. As with the MHTI, the goodwill of a third party may be critical to having a physical place to keep the 'archive'. In our case, the generous support for MHTI activities provided by the Geological Survey of Ireland has been critical over the years. This has included the author's office space in GSI which is now dominated by MHTI 'archives'. Whether it is a workplace office, a personal garage or shed, or a widely scattered selection of records in the homes and offices of present and past officers, the organisational memory is important and yet it often stays just out of sight and enough below the radar to be overlooked. It is only when a key person dies or retires, or after a major upheaval, the specialist group is forced to confront the issue.

In the MHTI, we are not in a crisis situation, but the phenomenal growth of the 'archive' has been such that we are obliged to consider the issue carefully, since the potential for continued growth is still there, along with significant existing holdings that require proper attention. The workshop held in November 2010 aimed to give members a sense of what actually existed in the archive, its scope and scale. It discussed definition – is what we have an archive, a library, a collection of objects or a mix? It provided some guidance from archivists on professional best practice and standards. It gave a few examples of approaches to the issues in the broader community. And then we focused in on specific options that could be applied to the MHTI's own archive. This article will briefly explore these options, as much for their generic principles as for the specific detail.

1) The do-nothing scenario is not an option.

The 'problem' will not go away. Material will continue to be offered to us and needs a responsible strategy and policy to be applied if material is accepted. If no further material was given and accepted, the existing archive requires attention. Although some is catalogued, it is not yet fully done. The author and other members with a sense of responsibility to it, are all under pressure for time, and need to have a thought out approach to both existing and new acquisitions. In addition the scenario of a loss of the current storage home

must be planned for, as it is only on a goodwill basis at present. Structural renovations planned for the GSI at some future time, would require removal of the MHTI collections.

2) Donate it onwards to a larger, like-minded body.

In the case of the MHTI archive, a large part of it is very similar to the historic mine records of the GSI. Potentially it could be integrated with them. However what happens to parts of the archive that do not fit into the GSI records? What about the wishes of the original donors? Do the GSI in fact wish to acquire endless variations on a theme of the plans of Tynagh Mine for example? And have they resources to catalogue and house them too? These questions were considered by the workshop, including a visit to the historic mine records, kindly hosted by Gerry Stanley, where a small section of Silvermines records are already boxed separately as an 'MHTI archive', catalogued by Phelim Lally in his spare time, after an earlier rescue.

3) Donation to a recognised museum

Mining heritage is a national affair. Almost all counties have some old mines and potentially any County Museum could possibly become a home, but they usually have a local focus and their own policy on acquisition may go against a whole national collection. The National Museum of Ireland has a Natural History Division, which includes very substantial and significant geological collections, despite having no place to display these collections to the population. The author looks after these collections and along with Nigel Monaghan, the Keeper of Natural History, is a Director of the MHTI. Incorporation into the earth science collections of the Natural History Division was an option for the MHTI archive which was also discussed at the workshop. National Museum acquisition policy and the physical resources to look after it are all considerations.

4) Donation to or hosting in a specialist centre

This option has been considered long before the MHTI was formed. A serious plan was developed in the early 1980s to create a National Mining Heritage Centre at Shallee, near Silvermines, but unfortunately the capital funding could not be raised at that time. At the present time there are three mining heritage centres (Glengowla Mine, Castlecomer Discovery Centre and Arigna Mining Experience) all of which have interacted with MHTI over the years. Two are based in coal mining, one in metal mining, and all three do a fantastic job of presenting the importance of past extractive industry to a largely ignorant public. However all three have a local focus, a commercial basis and, I believe, do not aspire to hold large collections beyond what they can usefully display to their visitors, and what is of purely local relevance. In recent years the Allihies Copper Mine Museum has opened and very successfully developed an excellent exhibition in a former protestant chapel, with an adjoining extension combining community space and art gallery and cafe. However, their resources and space are limited and the focus is essentially historical, and local, other than the strong links with Cornish mining. 'Modern' mining archives are not relevant to their scope or presentation.

One option was presented by John Morris at the workshop, revolving around the Copper Coast Geopark in County Waterford. A disused Protestant Church at Monksland, near Bunmahon has been acquired by the Geopark. The group plan to renovate the church and to build an annex alongside which will provide a multi-purpose facility for the local community. In the proposed annex John Morris (instigating founder on the MHSI in 1996) and Des Cowman (also a founder member) have included an archival store room, and a research room, with a view to the MHTI archive finding a permanent secure home in the Copper Coast, and it becoming a primary national resource for all mining heritage research, including genealogical information. Since many more people are interested in their family history than in the intricacies of engine houses or mineral veins, this is a good strategy for increasing the relevance of mining heritage to a broader audience.

Whilst this was well received by the workshop, it remains a potential option, rather than a definite solution, since the renovation of the Monksland church and the building of the annex are dependent on receiving sufficient grant aid from Leader and other sources to undertake the work. Whilst the economy is in depression, there can be no certainty of getting the capital, despite, it seemed, having been in sight and almost in hand, based on progress with applications to date.

'Holding onto your history' was an extremely useful workshop involving a spectrum of people with different perspectives on archives, in the broadest definition of such collections. I would especially like to thank all the speakers and everyone who attended since everyone made an active contribution towards the day.

[Note this was written some months ago but never concluded for publication in the newsletter or journal. It stands as a record of the day, but we hope to find time to continue with the theme. We need to develop a policy to guide decisions about what we do and what we can manage in terms of mining heritage materials.]

Matthew Parkes, MHTI

Mining and Quarrying Archaeology in England: A Research Framework for the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries in England.

The work on a Research Framework is now entering its second phase and as the assessments from phase one are completed, they are being posted on the Internet on the Research Framework pages of the NAMHO website. <http://www.namho.org>. We need you to read the assessments, comment on their content and express opinions in advance of seminars. Please send any comments to Phil Newman, the project officer.

A series of seminars have been arranged to present a summary of the findings and discuss the results. We want to hear your comments and we need to hear your opinions about the directions for future research. At each seminar, Jon Humble, Senior National Minerals Adviser & Inspector of Ancient Monuments at English Heritage will speak about the National context of the legacy of mineral extraction. We will also include presentations about some of the work on the Assessments. Following a buffet lunch, we will facilitate group discussions about the results of the assessments and the possible directions for future research. The seminars are free to anyone wishing to attend and the dates are as follows:

Saturday 21st January 2012 at the National Coal Mining Museum, Caphouse Colliery, Wakefield, WF4 4RH. Starting at 10-30 for 11-00.

Saturday 11th February 2012 at Sidcot School, Winscombe, North Somerset, BS25 1PD. Starting at 10-30 for 11-00.

This is your chance to help shape a national research agenda and to promote whatever aspects of it you believe to be important. This is a great opportunity and should not be missed! Full details of the separate seminars will be posted on this website shortly.

Please visit the Research Framework pages of the NAMHO webpage for latest information.
<http://www.namho.org>

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Mining Heritage success at the English Heritage Angel Awards 2011

Launched in June 2011, and co-funded by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, these awards aim to celebrate individuals and groups who have saved a historic building or site that was at risk of being lost forever.

There were four categories:

- § The best craftsmanship employed on a heritage rescue
- § The best rescue of a historic industrial building or site
- § The best rescue or repair of a historic place of worship
- § The best rescue of any other entry on the 'Heritage at Risk register'

Mining heritage was represented by the Colliery Winding Engine House, Bestwood Country Park, Nottingham and Pleasley Pit, near Mansfield, with both being included on the short list for "best rescue of a historic industrial building or site". The winners were announced on the 31st October at The Palace Theatre, London, and we should congratulate the Friends of Pleasley Pit for picking up the award for their hard work over the years in preserving and restoring the headgears, engine houses, chimney and steam winding engines.

Industrial Heritage at Risk

According to research carried out by English Heritage, listed industrial buildings are more at risk than almost any other type of heritage. This research also highlighted the fact that "only 40% of listed industrial buildings at risk could be put to sustainable and economic new uses", whilst "the remaining 60% entirely dependent on voluntary effort, private philanthropy and increasingly scarce public funding". Perhaps the most relevant findings to NAMHO is that "lead, tin, copper and coal mines are the industrial sites most at risk on the Register" and that "most industrial heritage sites at risk in the North East are things which are not capable of being converted to new uses, indeed 54% are connected to various forms of mining". All in all things aren't looking too good for mining heritage in some areas, but English Heritage is looking to do something about the situation. Plans are underway to fund an Industrial Heritage Support Officer to build capacity for industrial sites to be preserved as visitor attractions, as well as a grant scheme to encourage local groups to take on industrial buildings in association with the Architectural Heritage Fund.

More details can be found at:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/industrial-heritage-at-risk/>

Publications

Mining History Association (USA) Spence Award of Best Book on Mining History, 2011-2012

Every two years the MHA choose a best mining history book which a committee considers to meet the documentation and narrative standards set by the works of Clark Christian Spence, professor emeritus, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Clark Spence was an early mining history writer; his work became the benchmark for others that followed.

Two books shared the award for the best book in mining history published during 2009-2010.

Congratulations to *Ronald Limbaugh* for *Tungsten in Peace and War, 1918-1946* published by University of Nevada Press and *Duane Smith* for *The Trail of Gold and Silver: Mining in Colorado, 1859-2009* published by

University Press of Colorado. *Sheila Kelly* also received special recognition for her book *Treadwell Gold: An Alaska Saga of Riches and Ruin* published by University of Alaska Press. Ron Limbaugh's book was noted in the March newsletter. Duane Smith has researched, taught and written about Colorado history (much of it on mining) since the early 1960's; it is probably the first mining history book also available in e-format.

A century ago, Treadwell, Alaska was the largest hard rock gold mining operation in the world. The mammoth lode of low grade ore discovered in 1880 on Douglas Island opened up Alaska to trade and tourism and put Juneau on the map. Process refinements increased production and profits and also accelerated underground caving. On April 22, 1917, on a high tide, the waters of Gastineau Channel gouged a hole in the weakened surface and poured into a sinkhole, flooding the mines. Overnight the fabled town became a footnote in history.

UK Site Directory

Sub Brit has published a directory of around 250 underground sites in the UK that are open to the public. Sites range from Neolithic flint mines to nuclear bunkers. Many sites are open year-round; admission to others is sometimes limited to special visits arranged by local groups. A brief description, location and contact details are listed for each site, along with a breakdown by county.

Available from their website www.subbrit.org.uk priced at £5.

History of Flotation by *Alban Lynch, Greg Harbort, and Mike Nelson*, Published by AusIMM in 2010, 364 pages. Available to Non-Members either as 'Hardcopy' \$AU 110 or as CD-ROM \$AU 90

The improbable process of flotation transformed the non-ferrous mining industry-100 years ago; no one could have predicted that floating highly specific gravity particles on water would become one of the world's greatest technologies.

This book chronicles the early days of flotation and the evolution of this technology, as well as the engineers, managers, and financiers who supported flotation experimentation and development. Flotation practitioners will enjoy learning about the history of flotation machines, the ingenuity applied to this process, and the competitive tensions between manufacturers. History of Flotation includes chapters on Coal Flotation, Early Flotation Theory, and Technological Research. www.ausimm.com.au

Don Borthwick

Dates for your diary

2012

21st January: Archaeology of the Extractive Industries Research Framework: Phase 2 Seminar, Coal Mining Museum for England, Caphouse Colliery near Wakefield.

11th February: Archaeology of the Extractive Industries Research Framework: Phase 2 Seminar, Sidcot School, Winscombe, Somerset.

17th March: NAMHO AGM and Spring Meeting, Astley Green, Manchester, full details will be circulated later.

29th June-1st July: 2012 NAMHO Conference, Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, near Wilmslow, Cheshire.

March 2012 NAMHO Newsletter: Copy for inclusion to be forwarded to the Editor by 28th February please, via:

Email, (with Newsletter as the subject), to secretary@namho.org

Or by post,

C/o NAMHO Secretary, Peak District Mining Museum, The Pavilion, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR

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