
INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND NEWSLETTER

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Diary dates

16-17	Feb	Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland field trip, Bunmahon, Co Waterford
2	March	Mills & Millers of Ireland conference, Downpatrick, Co Down
23	March	IHAI AGM, Belturbet, Co Cavan
11-12	May	IHAI Spring Tour, Co Kilkenny
5-8	July	Mining History Conference, Aberystwyth

IHAI Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM takes place on 23rd March at Belturbet Station, Co Cavan. Nominations to the Committee and items of business should be sent to the Secretary as detailed in the enclosed forms. Please lend your support to the Association by attending and putting forward your views.

Belturbet Station was the terminus of two branch lines. The first, from Ballyhaise on the Cavan-Clones line, was opened by the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) in 1885. Two years later it also became the terminus of the Cavan & Leitrim's narrow-gauge branch from Dromod, on the main Dublin-Sligo line. Both lines were axed in 1959. The building has recently undergone an award-winning refurbishment as a conference centre.

Starting at 11.30am from the station, there will be a guided walk around the town led by local historian George Morrissey. This will be followed by a tour of the station and its collection of railway memorabilia. Lunch can be had at the nearby Seven Horseshoes pub from about 12.30 onwards (€4.50 for soup and sandwiches). The actual AGM starts at 2pm. There will be a charge of €1.50 for light refreshments.

Sadly, we must now travel by road to get there. Contact any committee member if you'd like to attend but don't fancy making the journey alone (contact numbers at end).

IHAI Spring Tour

This has been provisionally arranged for the weekend of 11-12 May and is being co-ordinated by Barry O'Reilly. It will be based in Kilkenny and take in many of the county's fine bridges, mills and other industrial sites (including the Castle-comer coalfield). More details will be in the next newsletter.

Mills and Milling Conference

The recently formed Society for the Preservation of Ancient and Traditional Irish Mills (reported in our Nov 2001 *Newsletter*) is hosting its first conference at Ballydugan Mill, near Downpatrick, Co Down, on Saturday 2nd March. This late 18th century flour mill has been restored by IHAI member and master craftsman Noel Killen and now operates as a hotel and restaurant.

There will be talks by Dr Colin Rynne ('Water rights in ancient and medieval Ireland') and Fergus Kelly of the School of Advanced Studies, Dublin. Proceedings start at 10.45am and the cost is €20 including lunch. Contact Ms Stephanie Bourke, the Society's treasurer, c/o Skerries Mills, Skerries, Co Dublin before 25 February if you plan to attend or require further details.

NAMHO 2002

The National Association of Mining History Organisations is holding a conference at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth on 5-8 July. The theme will be the application of water power in mining. For details contact the conference secretary John Hine, The Grottagge, 2 Cullis Lane, Mile End, Coleford, Glos GL16 7QF (please enclose a large s.a.e).

IHAI Cultra Visit

Saturday 24th November last was a clear dry day for the visit of a dedicated band of IHAI members to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra some 10 miles east of Belfast, writes *Ian McQuiston*

Those travelling by train from Dublin made an early start but the intention of arriving at the museum by local train was upset by the track works currently under way on the Belfast - Bangor line. A quick transfer to a bus substitution service at Holywood delivered the visitors safely, if a few minutes late.

The UFTM is a national museum and lies astride the A2, the main road from Belfast to Bangor. The Folk Museum is on the southern side and the Transport Galleries on the northern side, connected by a flyover.

The focus of the visit was to be the transport galleries - the Irish Railway Collection and the Road Transport Galleries - but a side excursion was made to the Folk Museum later in the day, where the downside of visiting museums out of season became apparent, many exhibits being closed. More seriously, the need for an early cup of coffee was thwarted because the tearoom was also closed!

Those who remember the cramped conditions in the former Transport Museum in Witham Street, east Belfast, would have been very pleasantly surprised at the new galleries at Cultra. The large Railway Gallery is housed in a massive arched building reminiscent of a railway station building where, following a short film introduction to Irish railways by William Dargan (ho ho!), the visitor is free to descend into the world of railways accompanied by an ever changing background sound curtain of steam, whistles, voices, clatter, etc. The layout is well interpreted and the visitor can walk along platforms and enter carriages or stand on footplates.

As is often the case many visitors remember being on the exhibits in real life, whether the Causeway Tram or the narrow gauge Donegal railbus. The central attraction, the massive engine *Maeve* had a particular attraction for at least one

member who remembers working her on the Cork run; many photographs were taken.

The neighbouring Road Transport galleries are cleverly laid out. The visitor gradually descends through exhibits which cover cars, bicycles, motorcycles, etc, often displayed with other contemporary artifacts. Everything was here from pennyfarthings to De Loreans. Out of season the galleries were uncluttered, but the design and layout is such that a return visit in high season should still be rewarding and should allow for that necessary cup of coffee. Those who visited this time left at the end of a long day, satisfied if weary.

MHTI Workshop and Journal

As always, our friends at the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland have been extremely active. Last November they hosted a workshop in the Geological Survey, Dublin entitled 'Delving the Records: Discovering Mining History'. Several IHA members turned out as part of the 22-strong audience.

Rob Goodbody gave, as always, a first-class presentation, this time on the wealth of local history sources relevant to mining research. Seamus Walsh, author of *In the Shadow of the Mines*, then recounted his experiences at the Deer Park Colliery, Castlecomer. John Morris took us on a virtual reality trip, delving into mining-history@jiscmail.ac.uk in search of James Skimming, a mine agent at Tassagh, Co Monaghan.

After lunch, Phelim Lally described the archival data held by the Geological Survey. Des Cowman then led two workshops. In the first, he presented us with data relating to Caime lead mine, Co Wexford. These we had to synthesize into a concise history and explain why it closed. The second workshop focused on the Carysfort Mining Company, Co Wicklow. Using the company's prospectus and other data, we had to decide whether to buy shares (no!). Finally, Pat Power reviewed the various sources for mine research in Wicklow.

This inspirational workshop was followed by the launch by Ruth Delany (in Heritage Council guise) of the Trust's new *Journal*. This attractive A4-sized publication contains well-researched and illustrated articles on mines and quarries throughout Ireland and much else besides. I cannot do justice to it here and recommend you send off for a copy from Dr Matthew Parkes, c/o GSI, Beggars Bush, Dublin 4 (€14 incl p&p). Everyone involved in this new venture is to be commended for their foresight and endeavour.

Copper Coast Geopark

On Sunday 17 February, Ireland's first European Geopark will be launched at Bunmahon, Co Waterford. Known as the Copper Coast, this district boasts numerous mining remains, all of which have now been linked by a self-guided thematic trail. Its opening coincides with the Mining Heritage Trust's launch of *The Mines and Miners of the Copper Coast* by Des Cowman, and *Beneath your Feet*, an illustrated guide by Ike Wilson to the underground workings at Tankardstown. More details on the Trust's website, www.mhti.ie.

MHTI updates

If you're on the net and would like to be kept abreast of Mining Heritage Trust activities, send an email marked 'IHA subscribe' to Nigel Monaghan at nmonaghan@museum.ie.

Owen Foy, Miller

It is with regret that the death is reported of Owen Foy, Ireland's last traditional oatmeal miller. His cheery disposition and enthusiasm will, I'm sure, be remembered by all who were at the 1999 Mills Conference in Enniskillen.

Your editor recalls visiting his watermill at Bunnoe on a November day in 1985. Finding it was not straightforward, tucked away as it was in the heart of the Cavan countryside west of Cootehill (near Lisboduff to be exact). The sprightly Owen was hard at work, turning the oats on the peat-fired kiln and producing pinhead oatmeal by the sackful.

Bunnoe Mill is apparently now up for sale and one can only hope that its new owner will be inspired to maintain it in an operational state.

Delaney's Mill for Sale

This mill near Rathfeigh, Co Meath (11km north of Ashbourne) is for sale through Sherry Fitzgerald, *writes William Hogg*. The adjoining millhouse has already been sold and converted to guesthouse accommodation.

The water-powered cornmill, parts of which may date from the late 1700s, is largely intact despite the ingress of rain. The adjoining kiln is in sound condition and the complex is of regional significance. The whole 2.5ha (1 acre) setting provides a fine opportunity for a sensitive preservation project and is within easy reach of Dublin.

Anyone seriously contemplating this mill might also be interested in a conservation report commissioned by the Heritage Council in 1998.

National Railway Heritage Awards 2001

Two Irish railway stations were highly commended at the NRH Awards at Merchant Taylors' Hall, London on 11th Dec last. These awards are sponsored by Railtrack and Ian Allan Publishing amongst others.

Belburbet Station was praised for the sensitive manner in which the Belburbet Community Development Association has retained its character during its refurbishment as a conference centre. As you will have read earlier, this is the venue for our AGM on 23rd March.

Dundalk Station, as many of you who travel the Dublin-Belfast line will know, has been the focus of major engineering works in connection with the upgrading of the Enterprise service. Despite modernisation, Irish Rail has retained its original yellow-brick station buildings, one of which now houses a small exhibition illustrating the line's development. A redundant signal box has also been relocated to the station platform as an educational resource.

Carrickfergus Railway Station Restored

Carrickfergus Station, on the Belfast-Larne line was reopened by Translink (NI railway operators) on 30 Nov last after an £850,000 refurbishment. The original station was built by the Carrickfergus & Larne Railway Co in 1862, but destroyed by fire in 1895. It was replaced by the present building, erected by the Belfast & Northern Counties Railway. Clay roof tiles, half-timbered walls, and deep platform canopy supported on ornate cast-iron columns give it a special character, recognised in its Grade B listing. These and other features have been retained in the recent works.

Kilbeggan Canal Award

Long-standing IHAI members may recall our 1998 AGM at Kilbeggan, when we were shown around a restored warehouse beside the canal basin. The group behind its restoration - the Kilbeggan Grand Canal Harbour Amenity Group - recently won an ESB/CVI Community Environment Award. This was their second award in 2001, the first being the coveted Inland Waterways Association of Ireland Endeavour Cup. Let's hope that their perseverance will eventually be rewarded with the reinstatement of the canal itself.

Spotlight on the Ulster Canal

Ewan Duffy reports that he has posted photographs of the Ulster Canal (between Lough Neagh and Lough Erne) on http://members.lycos.co.uk/ihireland/canals/Ulster_Canal.htm. This canal will also be the focus of the Ulster Waterways Group's 2002 Conference, details of which can be obtained from the UWG Secretary, 4 Brown's Brae, Holywood, Co Down BT18 0HL.

Liffey Bridge Restoration

Dublin's famous landmark, the Liffey (or Ha'Penny) Bridge was erected in 1816 as a single 138ft span cast-iron span. It was re-opened on 21st December last after a €1.9 million refurbishment, *writes Ron Cox*.

Following a structural assessment by Mott MacDonald EPO Ltd, the main contractor, Irishenco Construction (part of the Mowlem Group) supervised its refurbishment over nine months. Overall management and funding were provided by the Roads and Streets Division of Dublin Corporation.

Sub-contractor Gabriel Hughes Contracts undertook the task of cleaning the superstructure and railings. This entailed removing all existing paint by hydro-blasting, followed by dry blasting to remove rust scale and prepare the surfaces for re-painting. The superstructure was carefully examined and all cracks repaired by Metalock UK using micro-stitching techniques. Eight new cruciform bracing members were installed to replace broken bracings. New masonry flanking walls to match the existing quay walls were provided. The railings, which were in a particularly poor condition and would have failed modern safety standards by a factor of six, were dismantled and dispatched to Harland & Wolff in Belfast; around 98% of the ironwork was salvaged.

The off-white colour of the restored bridge is as close to the original as possible. It corresponds with a decree by George III that all new iron bridges in his Kingdom should be painted white to assist riverine navigation.

Around ten million pedestrians per annum now use the bridge, sufficient to generate 35,000 euros if the halfpenny toll was still in place!

Anna Liffey Mill, Lucan

Fingal County Council, the new owners of this mill (also known as Shackleton's after its long-time owners) has just completed a programme of roof repairs. This will ensure the survival of the building fabric for many years to come. Norman Campion has also rescued some portable flour milling equipment from the soon to be redeveloped Dock and Boland's mills, Dublin. These are now in storage at Lucan. The Council is now about to commission a Conservation Plan which will be a framework for the future management and development of this important site. Watch this space!

Ah Dew!

According to a recent press release, the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre, where we had our 1999 Conference, welcomed more than 9,000 visitors from all around the world during 2001. As part of the company's commitment to keep the exhibition attractive and up-to-date, it was revamped over a four week period starting in early January last. An introductory audio-visual film will be added along with several short videos and new interactive activities. By the time you read this, it should have reopened. A review would be welcomed by the editor from anyone visiting.

Flying Foynes

The *Inland Waterways News* for Winter 2001 carries an informative article by Guy Warner on the flying boats of Foynes. Under the 1935 Montreal Agreement, all transatlantic aircraft had to put down at an Irish airport. The Shannon at Foynes (between Limerick and Tralee) was chosen as the landing site because there were no conventional strips long enough to cope with large intercontinental planes. Commercial flights started in 1937 and ran for 12 years. The building of a runway at Shannon brought flying boat operations to an end in 1949. This pioneering era in Irish aviation is recalled in the Foynes Flying Boat Museum, housed in the original terminal.

Heritage Officer Update

Ruth Delany notes the following changes to the list of local authority heritage officers published in the Feb 2001 *Newsletter*:

Carlow: Lorcan Scott, Carlow CC, County Buildings, Athy Rd, Carlow. Tel (0503) 36209 or (0503) 70300; fax (0503) 41503; email heritageofficer@carlowcoco.ie

Limerick: Tom O'Neill, Limerick CC, County Buildings, 79-84 O'Connell Street, Limerick. Tel (061) 318477; fax (061) 318478; email toneill@limerickcoco.ie.

Roscommon: Nollaig McKeon, Roscommon CC, Courthouse, Roscommon. Tel (0903) 37100; fax (0903) 37108; email nmckeon@roscommoncoco.ie

Cork County: Sharon Casey c/o SWRA, Inismore, Ballincollig, Co Cork. Tel (021) 4878166; fax (021) 4876872; email sharoncasey@ireland.com

---- BOOK REVIEWS ----

LINEN ON THE GREEN - AN IRISH MILL VILLAGE, 1730-1982. Wallace Clark. £17 (incl p&p). ISBN 09509042-0-1. Obtainable from the author at 115 Kilrea Road, Upperlands, Co Derry BT46 5SB.

This book traces the development of the Irish linen industry as it unfolded at Upperlands, home of William Clark & Sons, linen manufacturers. Well illustrated with diagrams, line drawings and photographs, this publication serves a useful purpose in describing the process of linen manufacture and the social history of this area of east Co Derry. The author also manages to weave local events into those of national or even international significance, such as the Boston tea party and the 1798 rebellion. It also includes a useful glossary for those of us whose primary interest in industrial heritage lies elsewhere.

Ewan Duffy

THE MILLERS: A STORY OF TECHNOLOGICAL ENDEAVOUR AND INDUSTRIAL SUCCESS, 1870-2001.

Glyn Jones. £20. Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing. ISBN 1-85936-085-8.

This book represents an immense amount of scholarship and research into this enormous subject; nothing like it has been attempted before. To anyone involved in the industry it is fascinating to follow all the many steps taken on the way from a rural industrial process to present day gigantic flour mills.

Glyn's presentation and fluent writing style, as well as his clear descriptions, make it easy to follow the developments in the design of machinery. Fascinating is the manner he describes the many wrong turns that were taken in the evolution of modern milling.

Those who have been intimately involved with the subject during the past half century will find answers to many questions. Indeed, they may well find it impossible to put the book down once embarked on the odyssey.

I have but one quibble. I would have liked to have seen a final chapter summing up the situation in 2002, and compare it with what obtained in, say, 1870, 1914 and 1939. In the Republic of Ireland in 1939, there were 35 mills in operation. By 2001 there were but three. A similar situation exists in Great Britain and, no doubt, in every other country.

Mr Jones has done a great service to many grateful readers.
P.J. Murphy (former director of Boland's Mill, Dublin)

THE CAVEHILL WAGON LINE: BELFAST'S FORGOTTEN RAILWAY. Stewart McFetridge. £5.95 (incl p&p). Obtainable from the author at White House, Belfast BT37 9SQ.

This privately published book covers the operation of the Belfast to Cavehill tramway, officially known as the Belfast & Cavehill Railway Co Ltd. Incorporated in 1834, this mineral line opened in 1840 and closed 56 years later in 1896. At 4'9" gauge, with horse and gravity as its motive power, its purpose was to transport limestone from a quarry on the southern flank of Cavehill on the north-western outskirts of the city to Belfast Harbour where the company had a depot.

One weakness is the lack of a map, to scale or otherwise, showing the location of the line, no trace of which remains today. That the author has deviated from the course of the railway's history and brought in other aspects of industrial heritage is another point, albeit minor. Perhaps a better title along the lines of *Cavehill, an Industrial and Social History* should have been adopted. Nonetheless, even with these caveats in mind, this book is an interesting account of a little-known railway, with information on other industrial heritage aspects within its geographic area.

Ewan Duffy

DANCING THE CULM. Michael J Conry. 2001 Carlow: Chapelstown Press. €50/£33 (incl p&p). ISBN 0-9535876-2-6 Available from the author at Avila, Chapelstown, Co Carlow.

Michael Conry is, by profession, a soil scientist of international standing. In addition to an interest in coal mining, he also has a wide interest in the vernacular. He devoted many years to researching this book and his study of the ways in which culm was used led him to a broad knowledge of the lives people lived in coal producing areas.

Culm is the fine dust residue of anthracite, the coal most commonly found in Ireland, mainly in the districts of Castlecomer and Arigna. This book not only sets out the history of its use as a domestic and industrial fuel, but, through the relating of personal experiences, gives a vivid description of society in these areas in the early 1900s.

Conry traces the ways in which people adapted culm into a cheap form of fuel, especially when money was short. It was combined with a variety of sticky binding materials and formed into convenient 'balls' or 'bombs'. This work was shared by both men and women. The men were mainly involved in the 'dancing', ie the working of the mixture with their feet, whilst the women shaped the balls which were then laid out to dry and harden. The many interesting illustrations show the types of fires used to dry the balls and also a wide variety of vernacular architecture. There are also descriptions of cooking and baking methods such as the making of boxty from raw potatoes.

This book is an excellent example of the importance of documenting techniques which are no longer practised, while there are still people from that generation alive to describe them. Industrial archaeologists, mining enthusiasts and, indeed, social historians owe a debt to Michael for this fascinating study of what could otherwise become a lost element of our past.

Ruth Delany

My thanks to Norman Campion, Brian Coggin, Ron Cox, Ruth Delany, Ewan Duffy, William Hogg, Ian McQuiston, P.J. Murphy and Derek Young for their contributions to this newsletter. Items and news of industrial heritage interest and reviews of any recent relevant books will be gratefully received by the editor, Fred Hamond, at the address below. The next issue will be out in **April** and copy would be appreciated by the end of March. Better still, bring it along to our AGM in Belturbet.

IHAI Committee, 2001-2002

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- ◆ *Vice-Chairman:* Norman Campion, Inver, 1 Kilgobbin Rd, Sandyford, Dublin 18 (01-2942981).
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