



# GRAND RIVER HERITAGE MINES SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 1997

## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

\*A happy, healthy 1997 to all our members! We have had many activities to report on since the beginning of October when you received your last newsletter. \*Michael has used his inimitable wit to write about our day on October 5th working on the **Cook family plot and our exciting potluck** at the village saloon in Alfie and Eileen's bush. On that day, Mary Nelles and I took off to her personal library and she shared some of the area history with me. By the way, Mike has offered to prepare a *Miner's Cookbook*. Select recipe name(s) and deliver or send it/them to him, **Michael O'Byrne at 676 Mount Pleasant Rd., Mount Pleasant, ON N0E 1K0.**

\*On October 10th, many of our members attended the **Paris Heritage Open House** where Chris Andreae spoke about Paris historical sites, mentioning its old bridges, mills and the gypsum mines.

\*Two of our members, **Paul and Gloria** tied the knot in October. We wish them all the best - health, wealth and happiness. It couldn't have happened to a nicer couple!

\*Ilse will relate to you about the **field trips** to mines at Lythmore, Cayuga, Paris, the Cleator mine (Brantford Township), the Merritt Mine (Gypsum Mines village), East River Road area (northeast of Paris), and her work on Brantford's Northwest. The team has had a busy season in spite of all the wet dull dreary weather!

\*Our **booklet** is progressing slowly. Mary Cassar has prepared some more drawings for it. People are anxious to see it in print. People have been busy with other activities - births, marriages, deaths, flu bugs, Xmas, etc. We will try to finish it this winter.

\*Our **Christmas Pot-Luck** on November 30th, at Ilse's, was a huge success, as always. She had her Christmas tree beautifully decorated to get us in the Christmas spirit. We had 27 people from as far away as Dunnville.

We devoured the delicious casseroles, breads, salads and heavenly desserts. After sharing photos, we saw a video of the Drumbo Gypsum mine underground workings, and Mike's excellent video of an early mine up north.

\*We are planning a **meeting** when the weather is better. We will inform members about the time, place and topic.

\*Members are reminded that **January is renewal month** for everyone. A form is enclosed to mail in. Please send or deliver it without any more reminders. We appreciate your support!

\*Our first **exhibit** of the year is at **Dunnville Heritage Day** on Saturday, February 15th, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. We have been asked to prepare a display on the Cayuga Mines. We would appreciate it if some of our members would show up to man the booth, Optimist Hall, Main & Cedar. Contact us if you can. Don't wait to be invited!

## THE SOCIETY'S OCTOBER POT-LUCK SUPPER, by Michael O'Byrne

As I am quickly learning, membership in our Society carries with it grave responsibilities and some unanticipated hazards. On October 5th, several of us met at Alf and Eileen Peart's place to do some work on the Cook Family cairn project. Sanko and Paul worked on prefabricating the plywood form for the cairn. While Serafin and I did the mining thing by digging out the foundation hole for the cairn, we uncovered several small pieces of the tombstones and one large piece which appeared to be a lower portion of one of the stones.

Ilse and Alf sort of co-ordinated the projects - providing technical guidance, periodically acting as arbitrators, and keeping the livestock away. Unsubstantiated rumours have it that Jean Farquharson and Mary Nelles left York and were observed terrorizing Caledonia. Considerable progress was made on the concrete form, the foundation hole is essentially completed, and Jean and Mary tracked down some more data. It was after lunch that things started to become unglued. My extensive reading background about rounding up livestock,

consisting largely of the complete works of Zane Grey and Louis L'Amour, led me to believe that cowboys used horses for this task. They were wrong. Alf had a little black pig critter that was forever attempting to escape to Indiana. Periodically Alf would come screaming up the driveway in his auto, blowing the horn, and sort of driving the pig back to the barn area.

At about 3 p.m., Alf and I left the construction site to fire up the stoves in his village saloon, the site of our pot-luck supper. For those of you who have never visited the village, it is remarkable. Located in a secluded woodlot, the village consists of perhaps four buildings constructed on a western frontier theme. [Ilse calls it a mining village.] The saloon is a great setting. It is a false-fronted structure consisting of two stories. The upper story has a balcony/loft and two rooms. The main floor contains a cooking area and a large room.

We fired up the stove in the main room with no difficulty. The kitchen stove was something else.! There was no problem getting it lit; the problem was that the smoke was pouring into the room rather than going up the chimney. Being a city kid, I knew we were in trouble when it was no longer possible to see each other. Both of us brilliantly concluded that the chimney was blocked. Alf figured that it might be a raccoon; I figured that it was Yoric the black pig getting back at Alf for trying to run him over.

Alf, being the technical expert and the head push on the project, believed that the stovepipe should have a draft control, which it did. The control had been vandalized so it was impossible to determine its position. Meanwhile, the stove was still pouring out smoke, Alf was getting mad, I was being asphyxiated and wanting to go home. Alf figured out that if we disconnected the stovepipe both at the stove and where it entered the chimney on the second floor, we could check out the draft control and set it right. Not being afraid of heights, I was put in charge of operations on the second floor. The pipe was lifted, the control set and the pipe reconnected to the stove. The chimney worked magnificently except that it was not connected to the chimney, was spewing out noxious gases and smoke that would make a coke oven envious, and I couldn't see anything.

Alf struggled upstairs, fitted the elbow, and we both groped (probably politically incorrect) our way downstairs and outside. By 5 p.m., the saloon had cleared itself of smoke, Alf and I had resuscitated ourselves and gotten into the serious cooking stuff. Mary Nelles, Barb and Francis Topp and their two daughters, Paul, Serafin and his wife and son, Ilse, Sanko, Jean, Eileen, Alf and I enjoyed a marvellous meal in a unique setting. It was a fitting end to a productive day, a wonderful day.

To Eileen and Alf, sincere thanks for your hospitality and the use of the saloon. Sincere thanks to Alf for caring enough to restore the Cook Family plot. To the rest, sincere thanks for the food, supplies, help and goodwill.

In a slightly different vein, it occurred to me, based on our collective cooking expertise, that we could easily compile a cookbook on a mining theme. The bean dish would be called Miner's Strawberries (a coal-mining district term for baked beans). We could expand this to include Martindale Meatballs, Seneca Stroganoff, Peart Potatoes, Teasdale Trifle, Gypsum Mines Grits, Merritt Muffins, Dinky Train Delight, Eggs, Excelsior, Chicken A La Alabastine, Lythmore Lemonade, Domtar Dreams, Mile Hill Mush, Holme Hash, Torrance Toffee, Dreamer's Drift, Capron Capers, Driller's Delight, Raceway Rootbeer, Sinkhole Stew, Crown Crumpets, Westroc Wonders, Hamilton Ham, Coleman Coleslaw, Tennant Tea and Cook Cookies etc. The possibilities are endless and awesome. Send in your recipes, using some of these names, or your own. Amen.

## **FALL FIELD TRIPS, by Ilse Kraemer**

Owing to the rain we had nearly every weekend in October, the trips were cancelled. Mike and I managed one trip during the week to the **Lythmore Mine**. It was exciting trying to blaze a trail through the bushes and brambles in order to reach the old foundations of the mill. Remains of the crusher and heaps of weathered gypsum were still there. We discovered the calcining plant and two large water-filled holes, which were the openings to the drifts. Even part of the old dinky train track was still there. On the way back home we visited the deep mineshaft of **Dry Lake**. This area is very special; it is the only area where the Oriskany sandstone outcrops, and here rare trees, bushes, plants, and mosses grow. Since Mike had never seen the old Edwards mine in **Cayuga**, we had a quick walk over the grounds to observe the land steadily sinking above the mine.

Weather was kind in November, and we had a chance for many trips before the cold of winter. Cathy had discovered previously an opening in the **Paris** garbage dump area. A deeply wooded ravine on the south side of the dump showed an opening in the embankment with water gushing out of it. Part of the opening, blocked by tufa, would be easy to open again with a proper tool. South of this mine, on a little clearing, square cut chunks of tufa were piled up. This suggests the tufa was mined to be ground up and used as fertilizer in the Paris area. We observed large pieces of gypsum lying all over the ground.

Another trip was arranged by Jean with Barbara Topp from Dunnville. We met and walked the property of the **Merritt Mine**. This was the main mine in the Gypsum Mines area - the one later operated by the Grand River Gypsum Company. Barges and boats came and went up to the mining area from the Grand River by way of the Norton Creek. Merritt had built houses for the miners and established the village there. Barb and her husband previously lived in the miner's house that is still standing. The only signs of the other houses are mounds in the fields and lots of old pottery and glass sherds. Some cave-ins with an iron pipe sticking out of the ground suggests the location of collapsed tunnels and an airshaft. Close to the river, we discovered an old mining road. The turning basin for boats and barges had become a bulrush swamp.

Another research trip brought us back to the **Cleator Mine** north of Brantford on the west side of the Grand. Most of the corduroy road had been removed by the ice and floods we had last winter. A few logs here and there were the only indications left of the corduroy road, but we discovered a large section of cobblestone road in excellent condition. The corduroy road had been built over the wet, swampy section, and the dry area was laid out with cobblestones. The embankment with seven mine tunnels had changed a lot in the last year. We noticed a lot of slumping and cave-ins in the form of round hourglass-shaped holes. The hill appears to be very unstable, moving toward the river - a scary geological condition.

The next hike brought us to the **Glen Morris Hiking Trail** area off East River Road northeast of Paris. Cathy had again previously scouted around and located a large opening in the bedrock outcrop beside the river. Tufa chunks were scattered all over the place. At the top of the hill above the opening we saw sinkholes, probably indicating collapsed mine tunnels. When Katie poked her long stick down into the muck at the bottom of the water-filled sinkhole, it vanished. Continuing along the river's edge, we had to crawl along difficult spots where normally people wouldn't go. We discovered interesting things - remains of human activities from long ago, rare trees and grasses. We were thrilled when we encountered in an isolated area some Columbo roots, the nearly extinct *Swertia caroliniensis*. This plant belongs to the gentian family; some call it *green gentian*. It is a large showy plant up to two or three metres high with hundreds of green-white blooms.

Two days later I decided to do more research in this area, and found another spot where there grew this elusive plant. Cory, my dog, was the trail blazer, and she led me skillfully through deep growth until we found an old road. Since we had already hiked for over five hours, I started to worry about whether the dog would have to carry me back or vice versa. We slept well that night! The research group needs to go back for further exploration. I later compared notes with the MNR's biologist when he visited me. He donated many large-scale **topographical maps** on which we can now record our mines and other finds. He also lent us **aerial photos** of the Grand Valley, and I was surprised that all the mines showed up from the air.

Shortly before Christmas I had a meeting with the **City of Brantford's engineer, Mr. Alf Gretzinger**. We discussed the Northwest area where we had discovered possible mines and related features. He gave me geotechnical data of one of the boreholes in this area. It shows a cross-section of the geological strata right down to the Salina formation. At the same time, Mr. Gretzinger offered our society other geotechnical data, and also help, if needed, from a geotechnical engineer. This will be extremely helpful for our research group. In the name of the Grand River Heritage Mines Society, thank you, Mr. Gretzinger for your generous offer. We include the cross-section on the last page of this newsletter, for your interest.

**This newsletter is edited by Jean Farquharson. Submissions are welcome. We are not responsible for errors. Please send correspondence to: R.R. 3, Paris, ON N3L 3E3. Phone 519/442-2156, FAX 442-2373**

# RECORD OF BOREHOLE 1

SHEET 1 OF 2

BURUNDI DATE 1971

LOCATION SEE FIGURE 1

BOF

LOCATION SEE FIGURE 1

SAMPLER HAMMER, 63.5kg, DROP, 780mm

SAMPLER HAMMER, 63.5kg, DROP, 780mm

DEPTH SCALE METRES	BORING METHOD	SOIL PROFILE			SAMPLES		
		DESCRIPTION	STRATA PLOT	ELEV. DEPTH (m)	NUMBER	TYPE	BLOWS/0.3M
-1	CME-66 BOMBARDIER-MOUNTED POWER AUGER MACHINE HOLLOW STEM AUGERS						
0		GROUND SURFACE		207.81			
		Black silty TOPSOIL.		0.00			
				207.35			
				0.46			
1		Loose to compact, brown SILTY SAND, trace organics.			1	50 DO	10
2				206.68	2	50 DO	7
				2.13			
					3	50 DO	19
3		Compact to very dense, brown SAND AND GRAVEL, occ. cobbles.					
					4	50 DO	47
4					5	50 DO	68
				6	50 DO	22	
5			202.63				
			6.18				
6	Compact, grey and brown SILT, trace sand, trace clay.			7	50 DO	16	
			201.32	8	50 DO	46	
			6.49				
7	Very dense, brown, fine to medium SAND, trace to some silt.						
				9	50 DO	10	
			200.19				
8	BOREHOLE CONTINUED ON SHEET 2		7.62				
9							
DEPTH SCALE							
1 50							

SOIL PROFILE										RESISTANCE, BL		
DEPTH SCALE METRES	BORING METHOD	DESCRIPTION	STRATA PLOT	ELEV. DEPTH (M)	NUMBER	TYPE	BLOWS/0.3M	SHEAR		LENGTH		
								Cu. kPa				
7	ROTARY DRILLING / POWER AUGER BORING NXL ROCK CORE / HOLLOW STEM AUGERS	CONTINUED FROM SHEET 1		200.19								
		Very dense, brown, fine to medium SAND, trace to some silt.		7.62	10	50 DO	58					
8				199.68								
		Very dense, grey SILTY SAND with clayey silt layers, occasional gravel.		8.23	11	50 DO	81					
				198.91								
9		Hard, brown, interlayered SILTY CLAY and SILT.		8.90	12	50 DO	64					
				198.08								
10		Very dense, brown, fine to medium SAND, trace to some silt, occasional gravel.		9.75	13	50 DO	66/150mm					
					14	50 DO	60/100mm					
11					15	50 DO	103/160mm					
					16	50 DO	67/150mm					
12		Very dense, grey SILTY SAND, trace clay, some gravel (TILL)		11.89	17	50 DO	100/25mm					
					18	NXL	T.C.R. 90%			S. 6		
13		Slightly weathered to fresh, thinly bedded to laminated, light brownish-grey, argillaceous, gypsiferous DOLOSTONE.		13.32	19	NXL	T.C.R. 97%			S. 8		
		Gypsum filled vugs common below Elev. 193.18m. Large gypsum filled vugs below Elev. 192.71m. (SALINA FORMATION)										
14												
15		END OF BOREHOLE			16.24							
16												
17												
								0 10 20 PERCENT AXIAL 10				
DEPTH SCALE										Golder A1		
1 50												