



Vern Evans began working at the potash shafts in Saskatchewan in the 1970s right when he was out of university. At the time, those mines were the most advanced in the world – and he has worked in shaft sinking ever since. Evans met Charles Graham on the job in the 1980s and later consulted for him when Graham was the managing director at CIMIRO Mining Division. Bemoaning the fact that innovation in lateral development had been stalled for the past 40 years, the two decided to look back further and see how shaft sinking had evolved.

The result was a six-part CIM Magazine series titled “The Evolution of Shaft Sinking,” which ran from 2007 to 2008 and proved itself a popular reference on the subject. The articles covered the history of shaft sinking from before 1600 to 2007, and now Evans has come back to the topic to write a seventh instalment, covering the years from 2007 to the present.

CIM Magazine spoke to Evans, a senior consultant at Stantec, about the original series, coming back to the topic after 13 years, and the future of shaft sinking.

CIM: How did you get interested in this history?

Evans: [Charles Graham and I] were mainly talking about lateral development at the time because he was trying to increase the rate of drill blast lateral development, so we got off topic a little bit and got into shaft sinking. I had more experience in shaft sinking than drill blast tunnelling, so we decided to [focus on the history of] shaft sinking. [We] started out writing one [article] and it evolved into a number of shorter ones.

CIM: How would you summarize the articles you've already published?

Evans: If you look at the series of articles, there was tremen-

