

BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER NO. 46 February 1997

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**ONE DAY WORKSHOP
ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE, EGHAM, SURREY.
SUNDAY 27TH OCTOBER 1996**

**"MINERAL IDENTIFICATION BY X-RAY DIFFRACTION AND
ELECTRON MICROSCOPY"
Peter Wallace**

Twenty members including a good contingent from the "Norfolk Mafia"(although it must be said that one of them arrived on crutches) presented themselves at the college on time at 10.00.am.in spite of the appalling weather conditions. We were greeted in the geology department by Dr. David Alderton, our tutor for the day with a very welcome cup of tea, coffee and biscuits.

Refreshments over we adjourned to one of the geology laboratories, where David outlined the structure of the workshop. The morning session dealing with electron microscopy followed by X.R.D. techniques after lunch. Members attending the workshop were invited to submit a sample of their own to David prior to the workshop, from which he would produce both an X.R.D. and an E.M. trace, which could be used for the practical exercise.

The theory of electron microscopy was discussed, with reference to types of x-rays given out by different elements, that these x-rays can be analysed by their wavelengths, "wavelength dispersive" (W.D.) methods, or their energy, "energy dispersive" (E.D.) methods. E.D. methods are cheaper and simpler than W.D. methods but not as sensitive. For the purpose of this workshop E.D. methods were used. Because the samples submitted for testing were mostly irregular in shape only qualitative analyses were possible. The sample is earthed and coated with a conducting material - in this case carbon was used as this does not interfere with a normal chemical analysis. The identification of elements present in the sample is done by matching the energy peaks with published energies for the elements, which can normally be done by the computer but for this workshop we were to do this manually. At this point David handed out an E.M. trace of cassiterite as a test exercise, before letting the members tackle the trace of their own samples. The next hour or so was spent by those present trying to identify their specimen using the E.M. trace and the reference tables of energies. In most cases people were successful in this exercise, even if one or two were surprised with the result. David pointed out that E.M. does have some drawbacks, very light elements are difficult to detect, and that the energy dispersive method suffers some peak overlaps. It was also noted that electron microscopy techniques only determine chemistry not mineralogy.

Lunch was taken in the geology department seminar room, with David once again providing liquid refreshment. Time was found during the break to view part of the extensive rock and mineral collections housed at the college.

The afternoon session started with David explaining that X.R.D. is used to obtain information about the structure of a mineral.

Crystals are made up of an ordered network of atoms - the faces of a crystals are an external representation of this network. When a beam of X-rays impinges on a crystal some of the X-rays are scattered in a process called diffraction. The angles at which the X-rays are scattered depends on the internal structure of the mineral.

Different X-ray wavelengths can be used, but for this workshop all the results were obtained using copper K-alpha radiation with a wavelength of 1.54Å. X-rays are directed at the sample and a detector or photographic film records the angles at which they are diffracted. The angles are then converted into d-values using a simple equation. The d-values indicate the distances between planes of atoms within the crystals. Each mineral has its own characteristic set of d-values which are recorded by the Joint Commission on Powder Diffraction Standards.

Knowing the relative intensities of the X-ray peaks and the "d-values" the data obtained on an unknown mineral can be compared with published data. This is the way in which minerals are identified.

The theory over, the traces of the samples submitted by the members were handed out. Using published tables, the group set about identifying their own specimens, once again with a lot of success.

As a little light relief we were taken downstairs to see the two x-ray machines in the department, the older one on which our samples were tested, and a much newer one which attempts to do the identification using a computer database. Drawing the workshop to a close David made one or two final points:

- if a mineral has a simple structure there will be few peaks,
- sometimes peak heights are not exactly as the tables suggest, and
- copper radiation is not very good for iron-bearing minerals.

Over a final cup of tea thanks were given to David Alderton for his enthusiasm and hard work put into presenting this workshop for the B.M.S.

N.B. David Alderton would like to convey his thanks for the speedy way all the washing up was done!

**WHAT'S NEW IN MINERALS?
LEICESTER MEETING, BMS, SEPTEMBER 1996
David Green**

Few new localities, even for micromount material, are now found in the British Isles, but known localities continue to turn up a variety of exciting new material. This article, based on a talk given at the 1996 symposium presents a summary of some noteworthy finds in the UK since the 1995 symposium. Grid references for all of the localities with the exception of Glen Ollisdal can be found in the BMS reference collection database. Anyone considering the trip to Glen Ollisdal should phone for a detailed map (01925 817273).

Epistilbite from the Isle of Skye, Scotland.

Only two specimens of epistilbite from the British Isles, one in the Royal Scottish Museum and one in the Natural History Museum, were known until recently. Both of these were old-time specimens collected on the 1850's at Talisker Bay. In 1996 significant finds were made at Sgurr nam Boc and at Talisker Bay.

At Sgurr nam Boc, epistilbite occurs as classic pseudo-orthorhombic crystals with chisel-shaped terminations. It also occurs as cauliflower-shaped crystal aggregates to 5 mm. The overwhelming presence of and specimens of stilbite, heulandite and other zeolites at this locality appears to have distracted micromounters from the small cavities in the same basalt blocks containing epistilbite. Micromount sized specimens of epistilbite are reasonably common at Sgurr nam Boc. They were first discovered by climber-collector Mike Wood who has a few larger specimens (cavities to 30 mm with crystals to 6 mm in his own collection).

Epistilbite occurs quite commonly in boulders about 200m south of the sea stack at Talisker Bay. In view of the large number of collectors who visit this site it is surprising that it has not been identified before now. This may be due to the inconspicuous nature of the specimens and the ease with which they can be confused with other zeolites. For photos and crystal drawings of epistilbite from Talisker Bay and Sgurr nam Boc see the forthcoming edition of *Journal of the Russell Society* 6(2). Neil Hubbard may still have a few micro specimens available for collectors.

Ramasaig to Macleods Maidens, Isle of Skye, Scotland.

This beautiful stretch of coastline is relatively inaccessible, and requires a long preferably sunny day if it is to be explored. Apophyllite, calcite and a number of zeolites can be found on the coast south of Glen Ollisdal. Specimens are not common, but the calcite and apophyllite are some of the best from Skye.

Access to the shore south of Glen Ollisdal is difficult, and a boat is probably the best bet. Those who try the land route are faced with a three hour walk from Ramasaig. The only way onto the beach is via a rock climb just north of the point where Glen Ollisdal Burn reaches the sea. The way south is then blocked by a deep gully about 4 m wide and 3 m deep in water, this can be negotiated at low tide by traversing back under the cliff to a point where the gap is less (about 3 m) and jumping. However, it is best to arrive at just after half tide in which case the only option is to take a light rucksack, a change of clothing and get wet. There are several lesser obstacles to negotiate on the way to the collecting area, which is roughly 800 m south of Glen Ollisdal. The rock pools here are magnificent and otters are a common sight.

Cliff falls on the coast south of Glen Dibindal have apophyllite, gyrolite, stilbite and a variety of other zeolites. This area although tidal is much more easily accessible than Glen Ollisdal and is a shorter walk from Ramasaig.

Pyromorphite from Force Crag mine, Cumbria.

Force Crag, the last operating mine in the Lake District, is known for a variety of fine primary minerals including barite, galena and sphalerite.

Specimens of brown pyromorphite from Force Crag mine have recently appeared on the specimen market. The best examples show lustrous prismatic crystals to more than 1 cm, some

with colour zoning, on brecciated quartz-sphalerite matrix. The find appears to be restricted to a few specimens with very few fine cabinet-sized pieces. The most interesting specimens from the find are undoubtedly the micromount-sized specimens. These typically display a few perfect interlocking crystals either on or off matrix. They vary from colourless to brown, purple-brown and black, while some crystals are zoned. The most common crystal habit is stout hexagonal prisms, while more elongated prismatic forms and radiating groups of acicular crystals also occur.

A number of BMS members have micro-specimens for sale or exchange. These include Richard Bell, Peter Briscoe, Neil Hubbard, Nigel Hoppe and Mike Rothwell. The larger specimens on my table at the symposium were collected by David McCallum, should anyone want a non-micro David has a few spare specimens (contact me for his phone number). Force Crag mine is now owned by the National Trust, to whom enquiries regarding access and collecting should be addressed.

Lodge Park Copper Trial, Central Wales

This site has been known for some time, euhedral cuprite crystals with native copper and occasional connellite, brochantite and langite can all be collected. A very unusual mineral suite for Central Wales. See article in forthcoming edition of *UK Journal of Mines and Minerals*.

Synchysite from Manod Quarry, Gwynedd

This well known locality for anatase also occasionally produces the rare-earth mineral synchysite. Synchysite occurs as rosettes of platy crystals to about 1 mm in typical alpine-type veins. It is rare, and recent specimens with crystals to more than 1 mm, exceptionally covering small hand specimens, are probably the best ever collected. The dominant rare earth element in most specimens appears to be cerium, but there is some variability in the composition - further research is underway

Diamond Rocks, Mourne Mountains, Ireland

Irish localities are described infrequently. Diamond Rocks in the granite of the Mourne Mountains is perhaps the easiest place in the UK to collect good micro specimens of topaz and beryl. The top of one of the granitic pulses which form the mountains is exposed at Diamond Rocks and it is for this reason that the granite contains a large number of cavities. Good specimens of quartz and feldspar are very easy to collect, but the locality is most notable for topaz, which occurs quite commonly as transparent lustrous crystals to 1 cm and beryl which is rarer but occurs as pale aquamarine-blue crystals to 2.5 cm. The site has been worked recently for hand specimens, but if anything this makes micro's even easier to find. It would be difficult not to find several good micro topaz crystals in a couple of hours of collecting.

INTERESTING ADDITIONS TO THE BMS COLLECTION

Nos. 1801-1850 Max Wirth December 1996

Richard Bell gave us black, velvety goethite (1803) as tiny stalagmites (or -tites) and cacoxenite (1804) from Stowe's Shaft. From the same site he had a 1994 specimen (1805) looking like dark malachite sprays, but which turned out to be libethenite (I presume his identification by 'other' means, means EDAX by Mike!).

From Wheal Basset Richard collected a remarkably clean, yellow bismutite crystal (1807) as well as siderite (1809) in the unusual habit of triangular faces. From Croft Gothel he gave us a photogenic specimen with monazite (1810). The monazite is a brown rosette but the association is quartz and vermicular chlorite. Also from Croft Gothel came a clean specimen of hetaerolite (1811) and if it is any consolation, I did not know what it was either!

As most of you will know, we acquired a number of specimens from the Maurice Grigg collection which Chris Jewson let us select. They come mainly from the Gunheath China Clay Pit. The most interesting are: variscite (1821) as slightly pink prismatic crystal rosettes with wavellite needles or as small white spherules (1819); chalcociderite (1820), a photogenic specimen of green prisms on a brown background with a few yellow cyrilovites; an excellent specimen of apatite (1824) as a group of randomly oriented grey prisms; dufrenite (1826) as discrete black spherules with yellow cyrilovite and a few green chalcociderite crystals; an unusual apatite habit (1830) showing parallel clusters of thin prisms grown from each end of a larger tabular prism, this specimen is graced by a few torbernite blades; libethenite (1836) on the crystal tips of a crust of leucophosphate.

All these make a fine addition to the many specimens we already had from Gunheath Pit which is now very well represented in our collection.

At our 1996 meeting in Leicester, somebody gave us a specimen of a few wulfenite tablets bedded in pyromorphite (1843) from Pandy mine. I neglected to note the donor, will he please own up!! Peter Wallace found hetaerolite (1844) from Kennack Sands and possible rozenite (1845) from Stowe's Shaft. At Penberthy Croft Peter also collected bubbly, white mansfieldite (1847), another new mineral for our collection.

Isabel Geldart gave us an interesting smithsonite (1848) from Blackcraig quarry near Newton-Stewart, the crystals are shaped like ant eggs.

Finally, Roy Starkey surprised us all with a specimen from the Isle of Man, stibnite (1850) from Niarbyl.

Footnote: 319 of our 1850 specimens have been authenticated by hi-tech. methods, showing that we take our collection seriously!

1801 MAHLMOODITE	Kerriack cove	Porthowan, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1802 CACOXENITE	Stowes shaft	Linkinhorne, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1803 GOETHITE	Stowes shaft	Linkinhorne, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1804 CACOXENITE	Stowes shaft	Linkinhorne, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1805 LIBETHENITE	Stowes shaft	Linkinhorne, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1806 APATITE VAR.	South Wheal Basset	Redruth, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1807 BISMUTITE	Wheal Basset	Redruth, Cornwall	Bell,R.

1808 CYANOTRICHITE	South Wheal Basset	Redruth, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1809 SIDERITE	South Wheal Basset	Redruth, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1810 MONAZITE	Croft Gothal mine	St.Hilary, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1811 HETAEROLITE	Kennack Sands	Cornwall	Bell,R.
1812 ORTHOCLASE	Dean quarry	St.Keverne, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1813 SPHALERITE	Kessels Down quarry	Mabe, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1814 CHILDRENITE	Drakewalls mine	Calstock, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1815 ERYTHRITE	Penberthy Croft	St.Hilary, Cornwall	Bell,R.
1816 TETRAHEDRITE	Herodsfoot mine	Liskeard, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1817 MALACHITE	Greystones quarry	Lezant, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1818 CASSITERITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1819 VARISCITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1820 CHALCOSIDERITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1821 VARISCITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1822 CASSITERITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1823 SCORODITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1824 APATITE	Goonbarrow Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1825 CASSITERITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1826 DUFRENITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1827 COPPER	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1828 TOURMALINE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1829 CHALCOSIDERITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1830 APATITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1831 CONNELLITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1832 APATITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1833 WOLFRAMITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1834 CACOXENITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1835 PSEUDOMALACHITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1836 LIBETHENITE	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1837 QUARTZ (VAR. OPAL)	Gunheath Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1838 TOURMALINE	Dorothy Pit	St.Austell, Cornwall	Grigg,M.
1839 SMITHSONITE	Ladywash mine	Eyam, Derbyshire	Belson,R.
1840 CORNWALLITE	Pendeen Consols	Cornwall	Belson,R.
1841 CONNELLITE	Coronation lode	Geevor, Cornwall	Belson,R.
1842 AURICHALCITE	Coronation lode	Geevor, Cornwall	Belson,R.
1843 WULFENITE	Pandy mine	Dyfed, Wales	?
1844 HETAEROLITE	Kennack Sands	Lizard, Cornwall	Wallace,P.
1845 ROZENITE ?	Stowes shaft	Wheal Phoenix, Cornwall	Wallace,P.
1846 BROCHANTITE	Stowes shaft	Wheal Phoenix, Cornwall	Wallace,P.
1847 MANSFIELDITE	Penberthy Croft	St.Hilary, Cornwall	Wallace,P.
1848 SMITHSONITE	Blackcraig quarry	Newton-Stewart, Scotland	Geldart,I.
1849 SMITHSONITE	Blackcraig quarry	Newton-Stewart, Scotland	Geldart,I.
1850 STIBNITE	Niarbyl, Traie Vri	Dalby, Isle of Man	Starkey,R.

(MORE) INTERESTING ADDITIONS TO THE BMS COLLECTION

Nos. 1701-1750 - Max Wirth - December 1996

Here at last comes the missing link.

Graham Riddell found cuprite (1705) at Ramsley mine and galena (1708) from Frank Mills mine, the galena forms a scattering of tiny cubes on calcite or on larger galena crystals. Both these sites are in the same area as the better known Meldon aplite quarry and may merit further visits. Also from Frank Mills mine he sent us chalk-white pyromorphite (1709)... I think!

Dorothy Merritt found an interesting habit of siderite (1712) from Redmoor in Cornwall. They are hexagonal prisms, the pinacoid only being coated with limonite (i.e. an unknown rust).

From the Wooldridge collection came a piece sporting dundasite (1713) from the Susanna vein in Leadhills. If this was not a 'collector's xenolith' then it was a first for Scotland and a specimen was left with the RMS.

From the Mexico mine at Roughton Gill, Mike Rothwell collected nice little pyromorphite crystals, but the interest is that they are growing on a crystalline crust of corkite (1714/15).

Tim Neall always finds unusual minerals at Needle's eye such as novacekite (1718) which forms thin, colourless, transparent blades.

I am inclined to pester people who write up new finds in the Journal of the Russell Society. and on the whole it pays. Jeremy Hooper sent us a specimen of morinite (1722) from Gunheath Pit which not many of us would have recognised and a well crystallised covellite (1724) from Hanover Cove, St Agnes.

Mike Rothwell, with his superior technology, recognised synchysite (1727/8) which he found in the Manod quarry in association with the blue anatase.

I have entered another specimen of arthurite (1730) mainly because it is an old Sam Weller bit, it is also well crystallised.

Looking through old specimens, I came across a trace of paralaurionite (1734) from the Merehead quarry and given to me by Morrison Thomas. To my shame I had given away many bits of the nice fluorite (1738) from the Shap granite quarry but none to the collection. This I have now rectified.

We should not be collecting slag minerals (or should we?) but Andy Castleton gave us a nice elyite (1739) from the slag dumps at Stoneycroft, Newlands Valley (not Leicester!).

David Green was pressed into giving us a specimen of native silver (1741) from Alva in Scotland and to this he added a fine pyromorphite (1742) from underground at Force Crag near Keswick.

Mike Leppington gave us an excellent senarmontite from Wet Swine Gill and at our Leicester meeting he brought 'gypsum' from there as well. If any of you bought a piece of his 'gypsum' then you are lucky because it is actually claudetite, a rare mineral and only the second example in the UK. It is arsenic trioxide but does contain a little antimony (Mike Rothwell). The equivalent

antimony trioxide would be valentinite, however David Green's X.R.D. confirmed it as claudetite.

... Now I will need some more contributions!

1701 MIMETITE/BARITE	Potts Gill	Caldbeck, Cumbria	Wirth, M.
1702 LANGITE	Wheal Basset	Redruth Cornwall	Wooldridge, J.
1703 WROEWOLFEITE	Wheal Basset	Redruth Cornwall	Wooldridge, J.
1704 BROCHANTITE	Wheal Basset	Redruth Cornwall	Wooldridge, J.
1705 CUPRITE	Ramsley mine	Okehampton, Devon	Riddell, G.
1706 PYROLUSITE	Westdown mine	Ilfracombe, Devon	Riddell, G.
1707 PHARMACOSIDERITE	Hemerdon Bal	Plympton, Devon	Riddell, G.
1708 GALENA	Frank Mills mine	Hennock, Devon	Riddell, G.
1709 PYROMORPHITE	Frank Mills mine	Hennock, Devon	Riddell, G.
1710 ANALCITE	Totherick quarry	Dunlop, Scotland	Meikle, K.
1711 ADULARIA	Totherick quarry	Dunlop, Scotland	Meikle, K.
1712 SIDERITE	Kelly Bray	Redmoor, Cornwall	Merritt, D.
1713 DUNDASITE	Susanna mine ?	Leadhills, Scotland	Wooldridge, J.
1714 CORKITE	Mexico mine	Caldbeck, Cumbria	Rothwell, M.
1715 CORKITE	Mexico mine	Caldbeck, Cumbria	Rothwell, M.
1716 MARCASITE	Milleclose mine	Derbyshire	Neall, T.
1717 BISMUTHINITE	Needle's Eye	West v., Solway	Neall, T.
1718 NOVACEKITE	Needle's Eye	West v., Solway	Neall, T.
1719 URANOPHANE	Needle's Eye	West v., Solway	Neall, T.
1720 CHALCOMENITE	Botallack, Wheal Cock	St. Just, Cornwall	Belson, B.
1721 TALC	Carleon Bay	Lizard, Cornwall	Hay, P.
1722 MORINITE	Gunheath pit	St. Austell, Cornwall	Hooper, J.
1723 MOTTRAMITE	Dean quarry, St. Keverne	Helston, Cornwall	Hooper, J.
1724 COVELLITE	Hanover Cove	St. Agnes, Cornwall	Hooper, J.
1725 AURICHALCITE	Greystones quarry	Launceston, Cornwall	Hooper, J.
1726 ANALCITE/CALCITE	Dean quarry, St. Keverne	Helston, Cornwall	Hooper, J.
1727 SYNCHYSITE-CE	Manod rhyolite quarry	Gwynnedd, Wales	Rothwell, M.
1728 SYNCHYSITE-CE	Manod rhyolite quarry	Gwynnedd, Wales	Rothwell, M.
1729 RUTILE	Tan-y-Grisiau	Gwynnedd, Wales	Hay, P.
1730 ARTHURITE	Hingston Downs	Callington, Cornwall	Weller, S.
1731 WULFENITE	Dry Gill	Caldbeck, Cumbria	Bartlett, N.
1732 SCORODITE	Mulberry openw.	Lanivet, Cornwall	Starkey, R.
1733 EPIDOTE	Ben More	Isle of Mull, Scotland	Sutherland, G.
1734 PARALAURIONITE	Merehead quarry	Frome, Somerset	Thomas, M.
1735 HEMATITE	Shap granite quarry	Shap, Cumbria	Wirth, M.
1736 MALACHITE	Millrigg Knott	Kentmere, Cumbria	Wirth, M.
1737 LEADHILLITE	Whyte's Cleuch	Wanlockhead, Scotland	Wirth, M.
1738 FLUORITE	Shap granite quarry	Shap, Cumbria	Wirth, M.
1739 ELYITE	Stoneycroft, Newlands	Castleton, Cumbria	
1740 APATITE (VAR.)	Boswedden mine	St. Just, Cornwall	Hanton, A.
1741 SILVER	Silver Glen	Alva, Scotland	Green, D.
1742 PYROMORPHITE	Force Crag	Keswick, Cumbria	Green, D.

1743 SENARMONTITE	Wet Swine Gill	Mosedale, Cumbria	Leppington, M.
1744 CLAUDETITE	Wet Swine Gill	Mosedale, Cumbria	Leppington, M.
1745 EPIDOTE	Pitscurries quarry	Pitcaple, Scotland	Starkey, R.
1746 ARAGONITE	Esgairfraith	Dyfed, Wales	?
1747 PHARMACOSIDERITE	Hemerdon Bal	Plympton, Devon	Wooldridge, J.
1748 HETAEROLITE	Eastern Cliff	Kennack, Cornwall	Starkey, R.
1749 HEMATITE	Eastern Cliff	Kennack, Cornwall	Starkey, R.
1750 GOETHITE	Oakwood Mill	Forest of Dean	Starkey, R.

BRANCH NEWS

BMS Branch Meetings in **Norwich** will take place on the following dates:

February 20th	March 20th	April 24th	May 22nd
June 19th	July 24th	August 21st	September 25th
October 23rd	November 20th	December 18th	

Meetings start at 7:30pm and are usually over by 10:30pm; anyone wishing to attend is asked to telephone a local member - numbers are in the current list of members.

The December Newsletter of the **South East Branch** has a distinctly European flavour with a note of a visitor from Holland at the November meeting and moves afoot to try to organise exchange meetings with the French Society of Micromounters if suitable venues close to the respective Shuttle terminals can be found. Meetings continue to be well attended with over 30 in November and the standard of specimens on display looks to be impressive. Watch this space for a report on the Branch Micromount Workshop which was scheduled to take place in January. It is also encouraging to see the Branch taking steps to try to boost the number of competition entries for the Symposium. Branch meetings for 1997 have been scheduled as follows:

February 16th	May 11th	August 10th	November 16th
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These Sunday meetings start at 3:00pm - venue details from Austin Lockwood.

The next meeting of the **Midlands Branch** will take place on Sunday March 23rd at St Ninian's Church Hall, Solihull and will commence at 2:30pm. Roy Starkey has agreed to introduce the theme of the meeting - Penberthy Croft. The Branch will be pleased to welcome any visitors and, indeed, be grateful for the support. Further details about meetings and the venue from Dick Smith on 0121 308 1217. A field trip to Mid-Wales has been provisionally arranged for the weekend of 21/22 June.

OTHER NEWS

The latest issue of Micronews, the newsletter of the Canadian Micro Mineral Association, reports that, in future, it will be the chosen medium for the dissemination of new information on the minerals of Monte Ste Hilaire, Quebec. Although significant changes, including closures, have taken place in various Canadian Mineralogy institutes, work is continuing on this important site and it seems that agreement has been reached to use Micronews because of its wide circulation to CMMA members and other Societies such as our own.

A copy of the FLAGS list of Mineral Fairs and Shows for 1997 is enclosed with this Newsletter.

AUCTION OF THE MAURICE GRIGG COLLECTION

John Pearce

Why should anyone drive through the early hours of Saturday morning and spend a weekend at the end of November in a dank and cold hall in Indian Queens in Cornwall? Well 57 enthusiastic collectors, mainly Russell Society and BMS members gathered on Saturday November 30th and around 30 stayed on for the Sunday. I suppose I had two main reasons to attend. This was a farewell to Maurice by some of his mineral friends and a chance to buy a Grigg specimen to remember him by; also it was interesting to consider the wider question: "What should happen to my collection when I die?".

This question is not an easy one to answer. 10 - 15 years ago many collectors were keen to donate their collections to one of the major mineral museums, however, I sense a shift in collectors' attitudes since then. The ideal situation would seem to be:

- the collection should be purchased so that your estate benefits,
- the specimens should be well curated and kept in optimum conditions,
- important specimens should be kept together,
- interested people should have access to them, and
- some should be on public display.

Since most museums have limited funds and their storage/display space is limited, it is difficult for them to fulfil many of these criteria.

Parts of Maurice's collection, for example the Gunheath and Greystones minerals, were important. There have been attempts to keep some of these specimens together, but many will now pass onto individual collectors. However a large morion quartz was donated to the Truro museum and a pig lode chalcocite and single long prismatic crystal of vivianite to the Oxford University museum. Also the newly opened Cornwall Geological Museum in Penzance have purchased over 1000 specimens from the Gunheath and Greystones quarries, including 150 of the very best cyrilovite/leucophosphate/dufrenite material and they will be available for research purposes.

The auction took place almost 12 months after Maurice died and John Jones, assisted by Chris Jewson had worked extremely hard in order to put this auction together. This is obviously one important consideration when deciding on the disposal of your collection. Can you find someone who will outlive you and is prepared to do a great deal of work to mount an auction? John organised and ran this auction most efficiently and with good humour and everything went like clockwork. The specimens were on display before the auction for viewing with stewards available to pick up and pass specimens to interested collectors on request. Everyone marked their catalogue carefully at this time so that they were sure they were bidding for the appropriate specimen during the auction. (I must confess to acquiring an amazing foreign mineral which I do not remember bidding for, but it is very attractive and interesting).

It was clear that the foreign specimens would not be in high demand and to a Cornish man, Devon is foreign. This proved to be the case, the Cornish cassiterites, their pseudomorphs, bournonites and tetrahedrite, apatites, jackstraw cerussite, clinoclase, lironite, pharmacosiderite, scorodite, calcites, fluorite and a fine monazite were keenly contested and commanded good prices. I was delighted to acquire a cogwheel bournonite at a most reasonable price, but from the Julcani mine in Peru, not a Herodsfoot classic. However it does have Barstow and Grigg labels.

The specimen which stood out to me in the catalogue was a small ludlamite:

Lot 122. Ludlamite, Wheal Jane, Baldu. A prismatic quartz crystal 15mm high with a 13mm long green ludlamite crystal sitting on the termination with another 6mm crystal protruding at right angles from the larger crystal. A further (8) ludlamite crystals cover one prism face towards the base ('A superb micromount') Micromount.

I had marked my catalogue "£25/£30 with five stars", but soon got caught up in auction fever and finally withdrew at £50. There were two people who both passionately wanted that specimen. The bidding continued: £61/62 ... £63/64 ... £84/85 ... £90/91.

It reminded me of Wimbledon: deuce ... advantage Mr X ... deuce ... advantage Mr Y. A deathly hush fell in the hall and necks turned to and fro to see if and how the players would give their next return: £104/105 ... £145/146 ... Nobody could remember a micromount (or maybe it should have been more appropriately called a miniature) commanding such a price. Eventually at **£176** the final and successful bid was made. It really is a magnificent specimen.

John Stevens, a BMS member now living in Canada had asked Pam and me to bid for him. Pam was sitting by the side of the auctioneer keeping the accounts and when John Jones, the auctioneer, indicated that Pam was bidding for a Canadian, you could sense the thinking in the hall: "Canadian, North American, big dollars: \$\$\$\$\$", so as soon as Pam started some serious bidding, the opposition crumbled and John obtained all seven of the north of England fluorites he wanted!

On the Sunday morning the quartzes and chalcocites were auctioned. There were a wide variety of quartzes from Restowrack, Trethosa, Goonvean, Wheal Remphrey and Treviscoe clay pits. The jet black morion quartzes from Treviscoe were much sort after, partly perhaps because they were the specimens which one associated most closely with Maurice. I was particularly pleased to see Sheila Harper bid successfully for a crown of quartzes from Trethosa Claypit, St Stephen - a real museum piece. As Sheila said "that's my Maurice memorial" and so many of us foreigners will hopefully have the opportunity to see it when we stay with Sheila and Steve at the Chichester guest house in Newquay when we return on our annual pilgrimage to collect in Cornwall.

The Cornish chalcocites from the Pig lode level 9, Geevor mine were auctioned last. They were not as expensive as I had anticipated. Maybe everyone had run out of money by this stage and I managed to acquire a very nice thumbnail.

It was a nostalgic weekend which I would not have missed for the world and I am sure Maurice would have been pleased to see his minerals going to so many of his friends who will treasure and enjoy them. But should they have stayed together as the "Maurice Grigg Collection"?

BMS OCCASIONAL PAPERS

OP9, Making a Micromount Part 2 by **Peter Braithwaite**, was published in 1996 at £1.00 (£1.25 to non-members) - plus 50p p&p for one copy. It can be obtained from John Pearce. The content may be summarised as follows:

Preparing a micromount so that it is attractively mounted in a box is a skill which requires little time and patience to perfect. In this, the second of three papers on micromounting, the equipment, materials and techniques used in the specimen mounting process are described.

Peter is working on OP8.

BMS DATABASE

Copies of the database are available to members at £10.00 (plus £1.50 p&p) from Harry Day. This includes the computer disc and the accompanying instruction manual. 40 copies have been sold to members who have all been requested to look out for omissions and errors and to feed them back to Harry. Since the BMS Symposium, various members have agreed to extract data from a variety of UK Journals on a regular basis and a small number have been requested to feed in information from their personal databases. Harry Day has been helped by Martin Stolworthy taking a role as assistant controller, which means that he too can add to the database.

BARGAIN BASEMENT

Mick Cooper

Ikea, the Swedish furniture chain, are offering an excellent special at the moment. It's a storage unit called "Sture". It has 18 drawers and is 25x35cm by 132cm high. 12 drawers are 3cm deep and the remaining 6 are 8.5cm. It'll hold a lot of rocks. It's made of unfinished plywood with strong dovetailed joints. It's normally 89 quid, but is currently available to Ikea Card holders for £69. A very good price for such a neat and simple unit. (*Editor's Note: IKEA's Birmingham store advised me that this offer would be valid during February only but Mick has already got his! But even at £89 it sounds like no bad deal.*) Those familiar with Ikea will know that most of their stuff has odd and apparently meaningless names (drawer units called "Moppe" for instance). However, mineralogists will enjoy playing spot the mineral among the stock. I noted things called "Amfibol," "Kuprit," and "Olivin" on a recent visit. And, yes, I now have an Ikea card...

Another great bargain is the excellent "Minerals" a glossy picture book by George Robinson with superb photos of excellent specimens by Jeffrey Scovil. Brilliant value at the original asking price of £19.00, this is available in remaindered bookshops at £7.99. Not to be missed if you're remotely interested in inspirational mineral photography or just looking at excellent specimens. It's a good read too.

ROCK EUTHANASIA

Janet Whitaker

Rocks, those innocent little fellows you see by the roadside, have a dark side to them. Once you stop your car, they call to you, but your ears refuse to hear, your heart hears through, those plaintive calls echoing in your heart and head, "Take me home. Take me home." You walk on, bravely stepping over them, then you hear it again, "Pick me up." You automatically follow orders and before you know it, you are home again. When you open your trunk to get out a couple of rocks you picked up, you are amazed to see that they have multiplied into a trunk full of happy, giggling rocks.

As your wife walks by, she says that you are banging your rocks together, but you know that it is the rocks giggling. Sure enough, some of them have slipped into your house. Now it seems that every time you look, there are more rocks-outside, inside, under the sofa, in the garage, in the kitchen, and in the bathroom. You know you couldn't have put them there. They must sneak around at night while you are asleep.

Finally, they have taken over the entire house. One of you has to go. Will it be you, or the rocks? No question, you are staying, so what is there to do? It is time for ROCK EUTHANASIA. Now that the decision has been made, how you proceed? What are your opinions?

Sell them: Can we sell them? They aren't slaves, but we have become their slaves.

Give them away: Trying to give them to your friends is a serious problem. You will run out of friends long before you run out of rocks. Remember they don't stop multiplying just because you want them to.

Youth Groups: Youth groups always want rocks; but I worry about my rocks. Will they be loved and get the tender loving care that I have given them? Some youths want to make astronauts out of them, sailing them through the air. The rocks have not had sufficient training for that, and have disastrous crash landings.

Abandon them: You could just go away and let them lay here. If you do that, they could become delinquents. When that happens, they tend to break windows and generally get into trouble. Can you be arrested for creating delinquent rocks?

Make a rock garden: You can try planting them in a rock garden, but all of the times that I have tried it, no matter how diligently I water and fertilise them, they just will not grow or blossom. I don't know why they call it a rock garden. They multiply much faster in the garage.

Landscaping: You might line the borders or your driveway with them. That sounds like a good idea, but the rocks must not like it. When your car tires get too close, the rocks bite them and let out all the air. Then you have to worry about how to deal with angry tires, too.

Construction: I tried incorporating my rocks into bench. I thought that was a good idea, but the birds didn't like, I guess. They regularly sat on the bench and did unmentionable things on my friends.

I guess the only solution is to get a bigger house and more storage. If the trend continues, I will not need to have a cemetery lot, just bury me under my rocks.

Reprinted from the October 1995 "PICKIN'S & DIGGIN'S"

EDITORIAL
Mike Dannatt

I would like to take a little space to say how pleasantly surprised I have been by the regular flow of contributions - and, in particular, by the fact that so many have been received on disc - or through the Internet. Without wishing to push my luck, I can say that the job has involved very little typing for my first two issues. This has enabled me to stick to a strict deadline for the current issue although, having said that, I just know that something will arrive tomorrow! PLEASE do not let this be the signal to relax - I still depend entirely on you, the readers and members, for the articles and I am sure that those written freely will be so much more interesting than those written under duress!

It may be helpful if I say a word about laying out your work on disc, although most of it will be obvious. So far I have tried to stick to a familiar style and to a particular typeface both of which I can easily sort out so the font and paragraph style is unimportant. I am also ready to check out the spellings and double check the mineral names whenever possible. The simplest layout for me is to receive work in any of the following Word Processing formats:- Microsoft Word 6, Word for Windows 2, Microsoft Write, WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS, Rich Text Format (RTF) or unformatted ASCII (plain text) - all on a standard 3½" PC disc of course.

Within the text it is most helpful to follow the standard typing rule of leaving TWO spaces after every full stop (or other end of sentence marker such as an exclamation mark) and ONE space after other punctuation marks such as commas within sentences. (Word processors are simple beasts and will not recognise a full stop which is immediately followed by a capital letter!) Please avoid putting a space in front of a full stop. In common with most typists I know I also put two end of paragraph markers (Return or Enter key) at the end of every paragraph. Other than that, the simpler you keep the formatting the better! If anyone wants to produce data or text in tabular form I can provide some simple additional guidelines. I hope that this is helpful for anyone thinking of preparing an article.

On another topic, I inherited, from Malcolm Southwood, a card index which appears to cover issues 3 to 19 of the newsletter. I have now transcribed this to disc in such a way that I can sort it by mineral type or locality where appropriate, other subject matter and author. I would be happy to complete this and bring the index up to date from the remaining issues in order to make it available if this would be helpful. All I would need is access to copies of issues 20 through 39.

Finally, in trying to stick to the publishing deadline I ended up with just one blank page which I just managed to fill with the article which I found on the Internet and which I received permission to reprint. I'm sure that there will be many like my wife who found that it struck the odd chord - or two!

