

BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER NO. 62 June 2002

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CONTENTS

Nick Talbott Auction	Roy Starkey	3
Trip to Llyncllys Quarry	David Green	5
From the Sunda Times	Roy Starkey	6
Occasional Micromounting Nibbles	David Roe	7
Mindat.org News	Jolyon Ralph	7
Crystal Growing	Austin Lockwood	8
2002 Micromineral Competition		9
South East Branch News		10
Rockwatch		10
Extract from "Rocks & Minerals"	Quintin Wight	11
Urgent Appeal for Help	Martin Gale	12
Chairman's Notes	Roy Starkey	13
Books for Sale		14
Explaining the Tilt		14
Membership News		16

NICK TALBOTT AUCTION - TRURO - 4 MAY 2002

Roy Starkey

Nick Talbott died tragically 4 years ago at the untimely age of just 46. Members who had met Nick will be aware of what an enthusiastic collector he was, of his dedication to his hobby which largely grew from his widespread interest in geology and his work as an underground surveyor at South Crofty Mine near Camborne. Many of the specimens came from localities no longer accessible either because they have been designated as SSSI's, become flooded, have closed or simply been obliterated. The collection was of very high quality, featuring many truly aesthetic specimens.



Reminiscent of the Maurice Grigg Auction held at Indian Queens back in November 1996, the auction took place at Ladock Community Hall near Truro (5 miles east of the City) on Saturday, May 4th commencing at 10am. The lots were available to view on Friday 3rd May from 10am until 8pm and on the morning of the auction from 8am. Potential purchasers were well served with refreshments in the hall, and available from the pub nearly opposite. Many people had obtained catalogues in

advance from Philip Buddell, the Auctioneer, and careful examination of the lots (over 800 of them in all) occupied the available two hours prior to commencement of the Sale.

Species represented in the Sale included quartz, dolomite, pyrite, hematite, marcasite, feldspar, siderite, fluorite, chalcopryite, cassiterite, bismuthinite, bornite, apatite, orthoclase, albite, selenite, galena, wavellite, smoky quartz, tourmaline, wolframite, wulfenite, native copper, garnet, topaz, amethyst, vanadinite, diopside, sphalerite, pinite, gilbertite, loellingite, arsenopyrite, natrolite, adularia, chalcedony, magnetite, analcime, olivenite, malachite, scorodite, albite, cuprite, ludlamite, opal, linarite, chalcocite, beraunite, cerussite, sphalerite, axinite, pegmatite, hornblende, francolite, botallackite, aragonite, gold and many others.

Some fifty or so bidders, including many Russell Society members, settled into a long day on those uncomfortable stackable polypropylene chairs, so beloved of schools and village halls. Auctioneer Philip Buddell gave a brief introduction to the days proceedings, and said a few words about Nick and his family. He explained that at a rate of 150 Lots per hour, we should be finished by 4.30pm - this did sound rather optimistic, but off we went.

Lot number 1, "A large cluster of quartz crystals to 2cm, with a dusting of hematite" from 260fm Level, New South Lode, South Crofty Mine, Pool Cornwall fetched £7. As the first fifty or so lots went under the hammer we saw prices ranging from £2 up to about £150, but most being in the range of £10 - £20. A fine siderite epimorph after fluorite, from 310fm level Pryce's Lode, South Crofty Mine, Pool, Cornwall made £140.

After the first hour we had just seen Lot 89 despatched, and it was clear that we would be in for a slightly longer day than planned. It was very difficult to predict prices, with my own estimates often being wildly wrong in both directions. For example, a single apatite crystal on orthoclase specimen from Chywoon Quarry, Longdowns, Maybe, Cornwall, which I had marked at £25 went for £150, and another similar specimen from Rinsey Cove which I had marked at £50, made only £30. It seemed



that the price paid certainly had more to do with how many bidders fancied the specimen rather than an objective assessment of its likely value.

Particularly notable specimens included:-

Lot 274 "Apatite on orthoclase - orange coloured Baveno twin crystal with coating of pale grey/green gilbertite and clay mineral, together with small quartz crystals and scatterings of well developed lustrous colourless transparent to blue zoned apatite crystals - 4cm x 2cm 2.5cm" from Porthcrew (Rinsey Cove), Breage, Cornwall", fetched £370

Lot 533 "Pyromorphite - magnificent specimen. Quartz gossan matrix with masses of small lustrous grass-green crystals - 10cm x 9cm x 4.5cm" from Wheal Penrose, Porthleven, Cornwall, went for £410.

Lot 722 "Apatite - single lustrous, transparent, slightly yellow-green, terminated, upstanding zoned crystal on mica coated orthoclase. Excellent specimen. - 3.1cm x 1cm x 0.8cm" (principal crystal) - from Megilligar Rocks, Tremearne, Breage, Cornwall, made £220.

At 4.30pm we had just seen 550, an axinite from Botallack sold for £54, and there were still another 300 lots remaining.

The auctioneer, Philip Buddell continued his steady patter, and pressed on - Lot 576... Lot 591.... Lot 685. 6pm came and went, and it seemed the man was un-stoppable. By now the bidding was thinning, and some people had already settled their accounts and departed - but the best was yet to come - a whole series of small specimens from Megilligar Rocks, and a stunning suite of fluorites from Chywoon Quarry. The die-hards were on their feet now, clustered around the remaining Lots and paying close attention to the bidding so as not to lose track.

Lot 773 - a large display specimen of orthoclase, albite and fluorite from Chywoon Quarry, went for the surprising sum of £32, followed by another similar but smaller specimen for only £22. Then, suddenly, it seemed that the bidders had found new life, and the pace of things accelerated dramatically. A succession of very similar fluorite specimens from Chywoon made £65, £80,

£140, £130, and £170 as the realisation dawned that if you wanted one - there were only ... more remaining and you were going to have to PAY !

At last, the Auctioneer announced the final Lot sold at 7.35pm - a staggering 9 hours and 35 minutes since the beginning of the Sale. A resounding round of applause served to convey the thanks and admiration of all participants - the Auctioneer had not left his chair, eaten, stopped talking or taken a "natural break" since he first sat down at 10.00am that morning. The audience in contrast had been outdoors for sunshine breaks, been plied with teas, coffees and bacon sandwiches, and been free to come and go as they chose - what a true professional !

The whole proceedings were conducted in a very pleasant atmosphere, the preparation and general administration were superb, and a good day was had by all.

If you missed the Auction, both Neil Plummer and Sam Weller purchased large numbers of specimens, and if not already sold by the time this Newsletter appears, you may be able to catch up with some of them on their respective lists or Websites.

Photographs courtesy Roy Starkey.

TRIP TO LLYNCLYS QUARRY, OSWESTRY **David Green**



Following an interesting report by Austin Lockwood of a field trip to Llyncllys Quarry near Oswestry, nine BMS members gathered on 18th May for a follow up visit. Roy Starkey had organised the trip, and provided a geological map, which showed the blue colour of Carboniferous Limestone in the quarry area. The simple blue colour on the map translated to a complex sequence of limestones and mudstones, the limestones being extensively dolomitised and the mudstones displaying intriguing variations in colour, presumably due to iron minerals.

Copper minerals were found in several areas as small pods, and irregular vein infills. These were typically highly oxidised and could readily be spotted by the characteristic green colour of malachite. The malachite was for the most part rather amorphous looking when examined under the hand lens, although drusy crusts of acicular to blocky crystals and a few sharp isolated blocky crystals up to a millimetre in length were found. The primary copper bearing mineral present appears to have been chalcopyrite and, although it was mostly oxidised, a few hand specimens displaying the characteristic chalcopyrite disease texture were collected. Occasional malachite-stained chalcopyrite crystals were also present in ankerite-lined cavities in the limestone.

Toward the end of the day, after a number of members had left, a malachite-lined cavity about 20cm across, a metre high, and at least a metre deep was found. Fractures in the surrounding rock were stained green for some tens of centimetres around, and limestone clasts within the cavity were encrusted in poorly formed grey calcite crystals and powdery malachite. The cavity must at one time have contained chalcopyrite, but this had altered a low density limonitic gossan which was also abundantly present. Azurite was found in the area around the cavity, mostly as a blue rather porcellaneous crusts, but with occasional darker blue masses, some with traces of crystalline development.

For the most part the limestones in the upper part of the quarry were extensively dolomitised, and contained numerous cavities lined with small and rather dirty brown crystals (either ferroan dolomite or ankerite). A number of cavities associated with irregular veins in one of the more competent limestone beds yielded well-formed nailhead calcite crystals up to about 6 cm long, some stained red by hematite. Most of us collected a reasonable hand specimen, although the limestone was surprisingly tough and the crystals on the cavity walls were difficult to remove, at least on matrix. Close examination of the calcite revealed small cubic and octahedral pyrite.

There was no sign of the arsenate minerals (bayldonite or cornwallite) that were tentatively identified by the previous group to visit the quarry.

FROM THE SUNDAY TIMES 16 JUNE 2002

Roy Starkey

"To a man, the ideal rock weighs about a pound. Geologists collect samples of about this size, men prefer to throw 1lb rocks, and most hand grenades weigh about this, notes the archaeologist Alan Cannell. The ideal rock is that which can be thrown with most force - women prefer three-quarter-ponders. All this means that prehistoric rock caches could tell us how big the hoarders were, and whether rock-throwing preceded tool-making in human history, says Cannell."

One wonders what future archaeologists will make of the little heaps of tailings in current micromounters' back gardens!

SOME OCCASIONAL MICROMOUNTING NIBBLES

David Roe

Invasion of the white fibres. As a micromounter who still applies a stick to the stone and then paints it black I realise that the species is fast becoming extinct in the face of the slick operations of the blue-tackers and hot melters. Now I find a potentially terminal problem. Some of my ten year old samples appear to be growing a white fibrous mat across both the paint and the sample - is it spiders or fungi - and what is the cure? I call upon the spirit of Starkey and Braithwaite to come to my aid!

Anorak loves painted labels. I am paranoidly suspicious of the long lasting properties of adhesive labels. As a result my heart is set on some form of direct writing on the box lid using a suitable ink or paint. In order to achieve the opacity this would have to be some form of black or white pigmented paint or emulsion. There are a number of white fibre tip pens but these have very broad ends that are not improved by trimming to a smaller size. Paint brushes are hopeless. Ditto for the silver and gold pens. I have long used an old fashion pen nib and white emulsion paint but it is a very hit or miss affair - particularly getting the paint to wet out on the plastic. This is much improved by rubbing the writing surface on a suitable material - a trouser leg works well - which provides a static charge that helps the wetting out. I am currently using white emulsion which is thinned by 10% water. In order to keep it sufficiently fluid the nib needs frequent refreshment by dipping in water then emulsion. This gives sufficient script size for location, species and reference number.

Greening the Scorodite. Are these late nights causing me to hallucinate or is it my energy saving fluorescent light bulbs? My Scorodite (from a number of locations) appears to have transformed into apple green arthurite under these lights. Is it a known photoluminescence to a specific radiation wavelength from these bulbs?

House Proud. On a very mundane level - I have found the battery operated hand held vacuum cleaners costing around £20 an excellent quick way to clear up the smaller grain debris after a spot of exercise with the rock cracker - and it reduces the danger of rock splinters in feet.

Attaining Nirvana I have long pondered on the great challenges of the sixth level of micromounting - just below the supreme seventh level of hog's hair - mounting the 2-5 mm fragment. One method of making a suitable base is to sharpen the end of a dowel with a good pencil sharpener and then cutting off the cone which gives an aesthetically attractive and robust base.

MINDAT NEWS

Jolyon Ralph

It's been a long time since I sent out an email with Mindat news, mostly because it's been a long time since I actually did anything new for the site.

Well, after a spot of coding I've now added an alphabetical photo index to the site, you'll see the new A to Z options at the bottom of the page on mindat.org - please give it a try!

Coming very soon will be property searches (at long last) so you can search for minerals matching certain physical and chemical criteria. I just have to do some changes to the way mineral data is stored - should take a few days!

I have also updated the message board system on mindat.org with two new sections:

Firstly there is a 'Manual' section - we are building an online manual for how to use Mindat, how to edit entries and all the other tips and tricks we have accumulated. When this has grown and is finalised, I shall create a real manual that you can download, read and print.

Secondly, by popular request, I have added an 'Identify' section - if you have any unknown specimens, you can upload a photograph to the message board for people to comment on! Whatever your level of expertise if you have something you are not sure about then share a photo with us - we shall be delighted to help you!

CRYSTAL GROWING - BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES

Austin Lockwood

Many years ago June and I regularly attended the evening classes run by Dr Alan Timms and his colleagues at what was then known as the Geological Museum, South Kensington, now called the Earth Galleries of the Natural History Museum.

For a couple of evenings we undertook crystal growing and both of us remember sitting at our microscopes, quite enthralled, as a rapidly-growing colony of crystals formed as the water evaporated from the solution, and mysterious patterns unfolded before our very eyes.

I recently read the chapter on Crystals in A. Laurence Wells book 'The Microscope made easy', published by Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd. (now sadly out of print), and realised that crystal growing was something that would interest the members of our two Rockwatch groups, many of whom now have their own microscopes.

A few of us got together recently and spent a couple of hours experimenting with various techniques using an assortment of chemicals from which to grow our crystals. At the Museum, we grew the crystals on glass slides, and whilst these are not too expensive (approx. 5p each) we are not happy with children handling glass for obvious reasons. If the group of crystals are to be preserved we would need a glass cover slip and suitable adhesive, adding further expense and adult supervision time. We came to the conclusion that it was best to grow the crystals in the shallow lid of a clear 'cheap' micromount box and that, 'if the crystals were worth preserving, then the box itself could act as a protective lid. If we are going to have lots of children growing these crystals, as part of an organised activity, then we would supply the boxes already labeled.

Some of the chemicals we used at the Museum may now be on the 'restricted list'. My notes show us using substances such as potassium sulphate, aluminium potassium sulphate and sodium thiosulphate, as well as the more common household cooking ingredients and medicines such as alum, rock salt, citric acid, Glauber salt, Epsom salts, boracic acid and washing soda. All of these produce clear crystals and, to add a little interest, the smallest drop of food dye can be added to the solution to produce a quite magnificent effect. Potassium permanganate and copper sulphate, of course, need no added colouring.

The secret appears to be in having as strong a solution as possible. The salts should be dissolved in warm water making what is known as a saturated solution. A small drop of the solution should then be carefully spread in the lid of the micromount box, using a fine artist's brush, and the

specimen examined under a x20 magnification. If a low-power lens is used the crystallization will appear to be very slow, on the other hand, with a higher-powered magnification, the crystals will seem to form too rapidly, shooting across the field at a fast rate. The effect is best seen with white paper placed under the lid.

Using a saturated solution of Epsom Salts, gradually out of the clear liquid, arrow-shaped crystals will develop, growing apparently out of nothing. Crystals from other parts of the fluid will encroach on those being observed to form incredibly beautiful fern like patterns. The crystallization process is assisted by the warmth generated by the microscopes light source.

Success does not always crown the first attempts to watch crystals form and we know that a lot more experimentation is needed. We are hoping to make up an assortment of saturated solutions in plain and assorted colours for future use. We are also aware that watching the crystals grow under polarized light will be even more dramatic and that the use of a video camera and monitor will allow a larger number of people to watch as the crystals form.

In his interesting book, A. Laurence Wells tells that oxalic acid crystals are contained in the juice of rhubarb and wood-sorrel and that when the juice starts to evaporate then the beautiful crystals will start to form. Apparently, the sap of many other plants forms different types of crystals and it will be interesting to see what we can find in our gardens.

We will obviously need to establish a Health and Safety Code for this work as clearly we can't have the children of Bromley and South East London walking about with giant crystals growing out of their ears. Of course it might start a new fashion!

NOTES FROM AUSTIN LOCKWOOD

2002 Micromineral Competition

Members are reminded that this popular event, now in its eighth year, will again be held during the Annual Symposium at Leicester University. Details of the Competition, including the Rules and Entry Form, will be sent out to all members with the Symposium notice.

If you are unable to attend the Symposium you can always ask a colleague, who is going, to take any specimens you wish to enter with him/her.

Last year we had 24 specimens entered for the competition so there is clearly a lot of interest. Search out those really nice specimens now and be ready to fill in the entry form when it is received.

South East Branch News

Despite our much improved accommodation and facilities at the Ringway Community Centre we had a rather disappointing attendance at our meeting on Sunday 12 May with only ten branch members present, the lowest number for many years. Subsequent enquiries revealed that many of our 'regulars' were either out of the country or on field trips that day and we hope numbers will be up again at our next two meetings scheduled for Sunday 11 August and Sunday 17 November 2002.

The Branch was pleased to be able to make a donation to the collection for a gift for Henry Dalorto, the retiring caretaker of the Community Centre, who received a gold watch for his past services. We were also pleased to make a donation of £50 towards the fitting out of the new building which is looking very grand indeed. There are now lots of folding tables and dozens of plush chairs to sit on - all we need now is the bums to put on the seats!

Better News from the Rockwatch Front

Despite some earlier misgivings the Geologists' Association, now totally responsible for running Rockwatch, report that they have now received funding from a number of sponsors which will enable the Club to continue through 2002 with its usual full-colour magazine, 'fact' cards and field events. The arrangements for subscriptions are being streamlined and annual events lists published.

They report that they are now almost up to date with the administration of the Club which is being managed by Geraldine Marshall who can be contacted by telephone on 020 7734 5398 or by E-mail on rockwatchatga@btinternet.com. Geraldine is only working part time for Rockwatch, but messages can be left and these will be dealt with as soon as possible.

Currently they are looking for helpers for the Rockwatch Display at Earth Alert in Scarborough over the Bank Holiday, 24 to 26 August 2002 inclusive. There is no doubt the event will be lots of fun, racing trilobites, casting plaster fossils, fossil rubbings, collage, making Jurassic models and lots more. Contact Geraldine if you would like to help.

However, more importantly, Rockwatch needs societies such as ours to organise regular activities and events for their members. I know from personal experience the enjoyment a child receives from being 'allowed' to look down a microscope for the first time, or from finding a sharks' tooth on the beach. We have the money and the expertise, surely there is a way we can put these to good use in encouraging young people to develop their interests in geology, mineralogy and related subjects.

Despite the clash of dates with the Kempton Park Mineral Show, the South East Branch is proposing to mount a display of microminerals at the Geologists' Association Annual Reunion which is being held at the usual venue at University College London on Saturday 2 November 2002. Our displays have always attracted a lot of interest from young people in the past and I am sure will do so again, particularly as we shall be close to the Rockwatch stand.

"ROCKS & MINERALS"

An Extract

The article which appears below is an extract from Quintin Wight's longer article "The year in Micromounting" which appeared in the May/June 2002 issue of Rocks & Minerals. It is reproduced with the kind permission received, through the Managing Editor, Marie Huizing, from the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation (1319 18th St., Washington, DC 20036), the publisher of Rocks & Minerals. The extract presents Quintin's impressions after visiting the 2001 BMS Symposium. (Quintin uses BrMS to distinguish us from the Baltimore society.)

For my wife, Willow, and me, the next few days were hectic, since we had to return to Canada from Baltimore, then fly to England in time for the twentieth **British Micromount Society (BrMS) Symposium in Leicester** the following weekend (22-23 September). The BrMS has not yet taken advantage of Friday evening as a formal part of the symposium, although there is a movement in that direction, since almost all of the out-of-town delegates stay at the same hotel, where many assemble in the dining room and bar on Friday evening. Membership in the BrMS is open only to British residents, but that restriction does not stem from any reluctance to associate with others. Rather it is because of the limited capacity of facilities at the university and because the society itself is structured as a federation of local chapters. Both circumstances make it difficult to accommodate offshore members, particularly since the society expects its members to work together toward the assembly of a representative suite of British minerals.

The university provides superb facilities, including a geology lab, lecture room, and refreshment room. The lab was equipped with standard benches, all of which were just about filled by the eighty-six attendees. Symposium organization was also top drawer. One feature that really impressed me was the bound copy of the weekend's program, handed out to each attendee. It contained a timetable, a list of delegates, photographs of the speakers and abstracts of their talks, minutes of the nineteenth Annual General Meeting, committee reports, a financial statement, and photographs of people and events from the preceding year.

The first speaker was Dr. Richard Herrington of the Natural History Museum in London. He spoke on black smokers, hydrothermal vents on the sea floor, in terms of their biomass (primarily vestimentiferan tube worms), then went on to point out that former black smokers on what is now dry land could be identified by those tube worms and bacteria, now fossilized. He gave examples from the Philippines, Cyprus, Soviet Republic of Georgia, and the Yaman Kasy Silurian deposit of the Ural Mountains, noting that researchers have identified similar evidence back as far as the Precambrian. I followed DL Herrington with a talk on the *Microminerals of Mont SaintHilaire*.

Peter Braithwaite is the British "Guru of Micromounting." He has written three pamphlets on the subject (they can be bought for a few dollars from John Pearce, john-pearce@lineone.net). Each year he presents a workshop on micro-mounting. This year, I was invited to sit in and add a North American view. Since we both believe firmly in rejecting sticky stuff and making a presentable permanent pedestal mount, it made for a harmonious presentation.

After the demonstration, I was back on stage with my second talk of the day, *Theorie and Practyse of Micromounting*, an outline of the development of the hobby. That took us to five o'clock, and since we were already in the lecture theater, we swung directly into the annual auction. The high point of the day for me, however, was being called back to the front to be presented with a magnificent watercolor of the Levant mine in Cornwall, a real treasure painted by the multitalented Peter Braithwaite.

The BrMS does have a Saturday evening banquet, although it is held in the Stonecroft Hotel, not at the university. The banquet is a working one, however, for with dessert comes division into teams and a stiff quiz paper presented by member Ken Luff. The questions are geological, paleontological, and mineralogical-and not easy. Take question two, for example:

"An earthquake occurred in El Salvador, South-Central America, in January. Which tectonic plates caused the incident?" (The answer: Cocos and Caribbean.) The winning team, with a score of 15.5 (out of a possible 20), got a large box of chocolates. It is significant that the average for all teams was about 14 - the level of knowledge is high in the BrMS.

Sunday was marked by the annual general meeting, during which the winners of the micromount and micromineral competitions were announced. The micromount winner was a fine quartz and hematite from the Florence mine, entered by Martin Gale. Austin Lockwood then stepped up to run through the entries for the micromineral competition, which had been very well supported. The results from the four judges were: first place, Robin Sellars (chalcophyllite 44 points); second, George Fletcher (pyromorphite 43.75 points), and third, Tom Cottrell (serpierite 43.25 points). Finally, David Roe provided a review, *What's About on the Tables?*, giving his opinion of the quality of the material he had seen while going 'round to check what everyone had on hand. The members of this group exercise considerable humor and badinage in dealing with each other, but they also pay close attention to maintaining standards.

Following lunch on Sunday, Alan and Sue Edwards gave a talk on their two mineral collecting trips to Chile. Accompanied by fine photographs and entertaining anecdotes, it illuminated the difficulties faced by the collector in that forbidding country. The symposium closed slowly on Sunday afternoon, with diehard micromounters still working away in the lab at 4pm

(The article was illustrated with three photographs taken by Willow Wight. The first was a general view of the main laboratory, the second of the "British guru" running his workshop and the third of Roy Starkey presenting Quintin with a watercolour of the Levant Mine by Peter Braithwaite.)

URGENT APPEAL **Martin Gale**

Members who attended the 2001 Symposium will recall that a decision was taken that we should produce a commemorative booklet for the 2002 Symposium. The principal theme will be mineral photography. In order to make this as successful and as representative of what members are doing as possible, I would like everyone to let us know of any successes - and failures - so that others may learn. If you are prepared to produce a short write-up with or without examples this would be most welcome.

Other items, including For Sale advertisements in advance of the Symposium, would be very welcome.

Please send any contributions to me or to any of the other organisers. My e-mail address is:
martingale@btinternet.com

or telephone me on 01376 520606.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Roy Starkey

Mineral Collecting and Conservation – hammering out a future?

English Nature, The Geological Society's Geoconservation Commission and The Russell Society are co-convening a one-day conference with the above theme. This conference aims to discuss the different aspects of mineral collecting and the best ways of conserving the available mineral resource for future use. Its aim is to debate the issue rather than conclude it.

Speakers will include those representing all aspects of collecting including amateur and professional collectors, museums, academics, conservation organisations, mineral dealers, landowners and industrial archaeologists.

The meeting will be held at the University of Salford on Wednesday 16th April 2003 – please put the date in your diaries now!

Minerals of the Mendips

This is an excellent 52 page soft-back publication produced to accompany the Russell Society AGM Weekend this year and edited by Gary Morse – details available via the Russell Society Web Site - <http://www.russellsoc.org>

Return of the Jedi (2)

Sam Weller has re-entered the mineral dealing circuit (see elsewhere in this letter N. Talbott Auction). His latest List under the banner "Investment Collectables" contains about 200 specimens mainly in the £20 - £100 price range. Item 09B may be of interest to readers "Azurite/Malachite. This late 19th C. specimen from my families (Henson/Knight/Weller Collection) was catalogued by my mineral dealer Great Grandfather (in his own collection) as Phoenix United Mines, Liskeard, Cornwall. It is certainly rather magnificent for Cornwall. Recently I have become persuaded that it was in fact a 19th C. American specimen probably Morenci Mine, Greenlee Co., Arizona. In either case it is equally magnificent and valuable! A vuggy Limonitic Jasper matrix carrying extensive infill crystallisation of sharp, brilliant, blue twinned and untwined monoclinic crystals. The upper (display) surface forms a linked series of cavernous trenches all completely crystallised and carrying a 50% partial over cover of lustrous dark-green coloured silky acicular crystals. Beautiful late 19th C. display specimen. 75x60x35mm. £175.

If you are interested in receiving future lists you can email Sam at MauriceGWeller@aol.com

I guess the only appropriate comment would be "caveat emptor"!

Bob King Honoured by New Mineral

The Mineralogical magazine, April 2002, Vol.66(2), pp301-311 carries a paper by Hawthorne, Cooper, Grice, Roberts and our very own Neil Hubbard "Description and crystal structure of

bobkingite, $\text{Cu}_5^{2+}\text{Cl}_2(\text{OH})_8(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$, a new mineral from New Cliffe Hill Quarry, Stanton-under-Bardon, Leicestershire, UK.”

It occurs as very thin (<5µm) transparent plates up to 0.2mm across, perched on a compact fibrous crust of malachite and crystalline azurite attached to massive cuprite. Crystals are tabular on {001} with dominant {001} and minor {100} and {110}. Bobkingite is a soft pale blue colour with a pale blue streak, vitreous lustre and no observable fluorescence under ultraviolet light.

The mineral is named for Robert King, formerly of the Department of Geology, Leicester University, prominent mineral collector and founding member of the Russell Society.

BOOKS FOR SALE

1. F.D. Bloss (1981). The spindle stage: principals and practice, 340pp. Cambridge University Press. £35 + p & p. Hardback. Excellent condition.
2. A. Johannsen (1918). Manual of Petrographic Methods, 649pp. Mc Graw-Hill Book Co. £30 + p & p. Hardback. Very good condition.

Please contact John Betterton on: 01344 771477 after 7pm.

EXPLAINING THE TILT Ivor Bintuder-Chichester

With continuing concerns about the inexorable downward tilt of the landmass of England to the east, a new explanation has been found. If proven, it means that something could possibly be done to stop the tilt increasing further and, taken a stage further, to reverse it.

The background is that, on surveys extending over several years a major gravitational anomaly was noticed centred on Cornwall. Specifically, a statistically significant decrease was found. Further study showed that the magnitude of the decrease was getting bigger annually. Widening the study further to other areas, an almost matching reverse anomaly was detected in East Anglia. In other words, there appears to be a significant annual shift in the pull of gravity *from* Cornwall *to* the northern half of East Anglia.

Close study of the annual cycle of change has shown that it begins with a very large step change in March, with smaller occasional sudden changes at various times into late autumn. Hardly any change at all occurs over the winter.

The effect is now known to be related to a large change in mass, decreasing in Cornwall and increasing in Norfolk. The explanation of this movement in mass is that large quantities of rock are being moved from the south west to the east coast.

The authority responsible for the Thames flood barrier has made a special appeal for the Norfolk mineral collectors to return all of their specimens to the western side of the Tamar. It will not be necessary to take them to the exact site where they were collected.

(Thanks for another excellent week, Sheila and Steve!)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New members

Philip Greaves	4 Combe Common Cottages, Woodside Road, Chiddingfold, Surrey GU8 4QR	01428 684740 phil.greaves@bllpharma.com
Rick Turner	The Drey, Allington Track, Allington, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 0DD	01980 610537 rick.turner@dial.pipex.com

Changes of address, telephone or e-mail details:

Member	New or corrected details.
Roy Starkey	roystarkey1@aol.com
Bill Mason	“Treceda”, Redmoor Road, Kelly Bray, Callington, Cornwall PL17 8EJ 01579 384546

It is with regret that the death of Bill Mason is announced. Bill joined the BMS in 1993. His death was reported to us by his sister, Mrs Betty Bishop. Our condolences go to Bill's family

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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The deadline for articles for Newsletter 63 will be 1st October 2002. Please let me have contributions as soon as possible. Articles or reports on PC disc are particularly welcome. Articles sent by E-mail can either be “attached” or part of the body of the E-mail message. Clearly *printed* documents are acceptable and can be scanned and read into the PC. Hand-written items should be as clear as possible please paying particular attention to site and mineral names.