

BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER NO. 63 October 2002

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CONTENTS

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY HELD AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ON SUNDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2002.**

The Chairman Roy Starkey opened the Meeting at 10.10a.m. There were 59 members present. Secretary Shirley Adrian.

Roy welcomed members to the meeting with the reminder that "Brevity is Good".

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Pearl and Sidney Freeman, David Green, Max Wirth, Bob Reekie, Trevor Bridges, Martin Gale, Robin Selley, Andy Coster, Malcolm Southwood and Mick Wolfe.

2. Minutes of the 2001 AGM.

Item 4. Austin Lockwood had proposed acceptance of the Accounts. His name had been omitted in error.

The numbering of items was incorrect from number 6 onwards.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes.

Archivist's report. It was confirmed that David Green still had the Rashleigh on loan.

4. Treasurer's Report.

Mike Leppington gave the report sent by **Sidney Freeman**.

The Society's funds had increased by some £600. Insurance costs increased last year because it had to be arranged through the Geologists' Association. We were now insured again with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Field Trip leaders should consult Sid or Austin Lockwood concerning a requirement to prepare a risk assessment. Various points needed to be clarified, and information on this should appear in the Newsletter. The 2002 bequest from Colin Horstman had been allocated to the production of the special Symposium Booklet, which would be distributed by the end of the year.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Austin Lockwood, seconded by Vicki Packard and agreed by all present.

5. Membership Secretary's Report.

Roy read the letter from **Pearl Freeman** saying that she was sorry that she and Sid could no longer attend the Symposium. Membership numbered 196, which included 24 family memberships, a total of 220 people.

6. Chairman's Report.

Roy Starkey said that this was a rather special year for the BMS, celebrating our 21st Symposium. While there are certainly older and more prestigious mineralogical societies, both professional and amateur, he doubted whether any was more friendly, more lively, more willing to welcome newcomers or to share information and specimen materials. We have enjoyed a very successful

21 years and in spite of many challenges the BMS continues to be vibrant and strong, finding new ways to develop and new avenues to explore. This year we have seen digital photography truly coming of age, and bringing the joys of mineral photography within the grasp of many more people.

Our “coming of age” was a moment worth marking, and it had been the intention to produce a special souvenir booklet for distribution at the Symposium. Unforeseen difficulties meant that we missed the deadline for printing but the project will be completed and the booklet mailed out to the entire membership, hopefully before Christmas.

Sadly we have to record the deaths since the last Symposium of members Dorothy Merritt and Robert Bowers, and also last weekend of Max Wirth’s wife Hazel after a long illness.

Last year we were fortunate to have Quintin and Willow Wight as our guests at the Symposium, and as a consequence have gained excellent publicity in both “Rocks and Minerals” and “The Mineralogical Record”.

Roy expressed his personal thanks to all the people who help to make the BMS special - the various Local Groups and their organisers, the members of the Committee and other Society Officers and of course the Symposium Team, Kevin Johns, Martin Stolworthy and Richard Belson, aided by Martin Gale and Andy Castleton. Roy said that Doug Morgan had given notice of his desire to stand down from the post of Curator and a suitable nominee was being sought to take over.

Roy also wished to record our thanks to the University of Leicester for the tremendous support that they and members of the Geology Department have given us over the years. The refurbishment of the department added to our comfort.

He hoped we could look forward to many more years of our mutual association with the BMS and all that it stands for, and thanked delegates for coming to the event.

7. Other Reports.

Newsletter Editor.

Mike Dannatt said that the last Newsletter was rather thin. He wants to increase the substance, but not from the internet - he needs material from members.

Curator.

Doug Morgan reported that the Collection is growing slowly, now containing 2299 specimens. During the past year 157 boxes had been requested, generally in groups, which he felt was a good idea. He had received 33 new specimens from Max Wirth and Frank Ince, and had help from Roy with descriptions. Details will be published in the Newsletter. He said his main problem was not coping with the minerals but with the computer database that Max had used. He was willing to carry on as Curator provided members were satisfied with his performance.

Archivist

Alan Edwards informed the meeting that it was now possible to find both the drawings and text of Goldschmidt on the internet. He was willing to photocopy specific pages to send to members, to avoid having to post the entire volume.

Branch Reports.

Austin Lockwood said he was pleased to report on the continued success of the South-East Branch and to have the opportunity to thank Peter Wallace for looking after the Branch finances and for reporting “what’s on the tables” at the quarterly meetings. The larger and more comfortable room at the Ringway Community Centre had unfortunately not been a sufficient attraction to prevent a slight falling off in attendance. Many of the members are now getting on in years and have difficulty in getting to the meetings. More young active members are needed. The Branch is proposing to mount a display at the Geologists’ Association Annual Reunion on November 2nd at University College London, in conjunction with the Ravensbourne Geological Society and the Russell Society with a common theme of “Calcite and Calcareous Rocks” and this may attract new members. Austin also thanked those members who help with setting up the tables and with the refreshments.

Peter Braithwaite reported that the Northern Branch had gained 2 new members as the result of a number of site meetings.

Kevin Johns said that the monthly meetings of the Norfolk Group continued to be good fun. Visitors were always welcome. He reported that they were finding new minerals in Norfolk!

Harry Critchley reported that the North-West Branch continues to meet on the third Thursday of the month. Two members have been lost recently to more northern territories.

Dick Smith reported that the Midlands Branch had held two meetings. At one Doug Morgan had dealt with chemical analysis, and the other had been a Field Trip led by Roy and reported on in the last Newsletter. The next meeting would be in November.

For the South-West Branch **Chris Jewson** reported that a small dedicated band met quarterly. Their numbers doubled when Norfolk members visited them.

Symposium Organisers.

Kevin Johns thanked Roy Clements and the Geology Department for all their help. He thought the Saturday evening meal had been good this year. Next year they planned to make a block booking of rooms at the Stonecroft Hotel, and also to introduce a system for tracking specimens brought to the Symposium. It was hoped that a CD of Ulrich’s photos would be available by next year. Information would be published in the Newsletter. Special thanks were due to Phyllis Stolworthy for supplying a superb Anniversary cake.

Andy Banthorpe proposed a vote of thanks to the Symposium Organisers.

Occasional Papers.

John Pearce thanked Kevin Johns for taking over from Tony Brittain and producing “The Formation of Secondary Minerals” in time for the Symposium. Two further papers are in

preparation, one on Zeolites and one on Radioactivity. Austin was working on "Mineral Names". John said that a paper on cleaning minerals would be useful, but an author was needed.

8. Founder's Cup.

Roy reminded members that the Cup was awarded in recognition of services to the Society and to mineralogy in general. This year it was to go to a distant member who would be known to many, yet probably met by only a few members. He had made a remarkable contribution to the BMS National Micromount Reference Collection and to specimen mineralogy. His expertise on the zeolites of Northern Ireland was known across the world and he had been responsible for exporting more basalt around the world, 10gm at a time, than any other individual, possibly rivalling the coated stone companies! This year's recipient of the BMS Founder's Cup is **Harry Foy**, of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Roy then tried to telephone Harry Foy to tell him of the award, but there was no answer.

[NOTE added after meeting – the Cup has been received by Harry who is absolutely delighted and writes as follows:

"Dear Roy

I was quite amazed to get your 'phone call telling me that I had been selected to hold the BMS Cup for the forthcoming period, for services to the N.Ireland mineralogical scene. The cup is now proudly displayed on my cabinet.

I cannot think of any good reasons why the award has been made to me ! But I take this opportunity to thank you and the Society and show my appreciation of all those who put my name forward.

Best regards

Harry Foy"]

9. Election of Officers.

The Officers were all willing to continue for another year. There had been no other nominations.

Mike Leppington was reappointed as Auditor.

10. Any Other Business.

Don Blake now has a working version of Max Wirth's mineral database in Microsoft Access format. This will be invaluable for members interested in thin sections, grain slides, etc.

Roy asked for help in manning the BMS table in the lobby at the Bakewell Rock Exchange. Mike Dannatt would be coordinating this.

Roy said that the question of a website for the Society had been postponed until now. It was agreed that the time had come to have a site, but that it was important to think about the content. The Russell Society's site had been commercially produced. He asked if there were any members with the necessary skills. Paul Monk said he was preparing one for his museum. Peter Braithwaite asked "Just what is a Website?" and professed a dislike of spiders!

Roy had received a letter from Bob Reekie to say that the Wanlockhead Museum would receive funding from the local Council for three years. This would enable him to seek further support

from the Scottish Executive. He was also launching an appeal to enable him to purchase a collection of Scottish gold nuggets for the Museum. £4,000 was needed. Richard Belson suggested that the Society donate £50 towards this. It was put to the vote and all were in favour.

Trevor Bridges had written to say that anyone seeking permission to collect on the Caldbeck Fells should take care to fill in all the boxes on the application forms, to avoid their application being turned down. John Dickinson said his application had been refused on the grounds that collecting for personal study was not scientific and that he had asked for too many days. Mike Leppington said that he had followed the style of Trevor's application form and had been granted a permit.

Peter Braithwaite reported that a new mineral to be called "redgillite" was being worked on in the United States.

Roy said that there was to be a one-day Conference entitled "Mineral Collecting and Conservation - hammering out a future?" on 16th April 2003 at the University of Salford. Anyone with views to air should try to attend.

Austin Lockwood said he wanted to encourage branches to think about attracting youngsters to the hobby. The Rockwatch activities in which he had been involved showed that the potential is there. This was endorsed by Vicki Packard, who said that parents had been supportive and often became interested themselves. Roy suggested that each local Group should try to organise something to encourage youngsters for one day in the coming year.

Doug Morgan said he had some inexpensive LED light sources in which members might be interested.

Kevin Johns said that the theme for the 2003 Symposium would be Radioactive Minerals. He reported that the Auction had raised £270 and the Raffle £80.

Publication of the book "Minerals of Scotland" was thought to be "imminent".

Oneta Wilson asked if Branches could please publish meeting dates well in advance to maximise the opportunity for members to attend.

Jamie Nelson is seeking samples of rare minerals that have been scientifically identified in order to add them to his Raman database.

The meeting ended at 11.10a.m.

21ST BRITISH MICROMOUNT SYMPOSIUM - 2002

Roy Starkey

Each year it seems that people arrive earlier in search of a parking place outside the Department of Geology. This time we had no minibuses departing on a field trip, just the security barrier operated remotely by persons unseen when you pressed a button on the intercom - anyway we were in!

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken in the Department of Geology during the past year, including a new automatic door which opens and closes as you approach it - a great

improvement on the previous arrangement, a smart new lift which talks to you (once you know the secret code!), and a completely refurbished lecture theatre, with carpet and a lectern which looks like a console off the flight deck of the Starship Enterprise.

As usual, welcome cups of coffee greeted members arriving from all over the country, before Roy Starkey (Chairman) opened the proceedings. Bob Reekie sent best wishes and apologies for not being able to attend. Trevor Bridges was unavoidably away (again!) overseas - this time in South Africa (but he's going to come next year - honest). David Green too was in foreign parts - taking a three month Sabbatical to Australia (sounds like there could be a talk and an article or two in the pipeline). Lastly Sid and Pearl Freeman had regrettably decided they would not make the journey this year. Sadly, Roy also had to report the death of Hazel Wirth (Max's wife) the previous Sunday.

Roy drew attention to the bumper selection of interesting Scottish material on the "Kemp Meikle Grab table" - a special for the 21st Symposium. He asked that people who had enjoyed sifting through the material on offer should please write to Kemp to say "thank you".

The planned special edition of the Symposium Booklet had run into problems at the eleventh hour and unfortunately would not be ready in time for the weekend. However, the Committee still intend to press on with the project and hopefully this will be distributed to all members sometime later this year.

A special welcome was extended to the various external guest speakers - Chris Jones of the Natural History Museum, Richard de Nul from Belgium, Ulrich and Sigrid Wagner from Germany, Richard Fry (Meiji Techno) and Peter Moore from the Sussex club. It had been hoped to have a display from Leica Instruments, but Stephen Goode was apparently not coming.

Finally, Roy wished to express his thanks to the Symposium organisers and their many helpers, and also to Dr Roy Clements and the Department of Geology for making us so welcome.

The first speaker was Dr Chris Jones of the Natural History Museum - Taking Rocks Apart. This turned out to be a fascinating insight to the world of petrological thin sections and the information which can be gleaned from them using the polarising microscope. Chris had a super selection of transparencies illustrating such features as metamorphic textures, twin planes in feldspars, isotropic minerals and various igneous rocks showing different cooling histories.

Next to take the stand was Richard de Nul, a collector from Belgium with a special interest in the slag minerals of Sclaigneux - an area about 150Km SSE of Antwerp. The mines produced lead and zinc, with a history of working as far back as the fifth century. Richard had amassed a formidable array of location shots, photomicrographs and historical data, and compiled all of this on a CD Rom. Copies of the CD Rom are available for purchase.

After a break for some lunch Ulrich Wagner, a very accomplished mineral photographer from Germany gave a fascinating insight into his technique for digital photomicrography, and what is possible using photo-editing software. Ulrich uses a Nikon Coolpix 995 which he strongly recommends - (this is a 3 mega-pixel camera) coupled to his microscope using a home built ocular system fashioned from old camera lens components. Then it was into the laboratory for some practical demonstrations, augmented by an excellent exhibition of equipment from Jessops of Leicester, and Meiji Techno.

The usual frenetic swap session in the main teaching lab saw literally hundreds, probably thousands of micros changing hands, to the usual background din and comments such as “have you seen Richard's...?”, “Andy’s got some really good ...” etc. Alas there is just too little time to get round everyone’s material and do it justice.

This year I managed to come home with 90 micros to add to my collection and five hand specimens - so the cataloguing backlog has worsened again!

The Annual Mineral Auction commenced at 5.00pm with Roy Starkey acting as auctioneer. This year there were rather fewer lots than in previous years - don’t know why. Anyway about £270 was raised for Society funds (up on last year), and The Raffle raised a further £80 - thanks to all those who purchased tickets.

Members retired to the Stoneycroft Hotel and Reynards Bar for a pre-dinner chat and drink, before enjoying a meal and social evening. The dinner was voted a great success and it is planned to return next year. As a special treat to celebrate the 21st Symposium wine was provided with the meal.

Once again Ken Luff stepped forward with the now traditional Mineral Quiz. There seemed to be a better mixing of teams this year and there was a clustering of marks at around 20 points. Chocolates seemed to circulate round most of those present and a good time was had by all. Many thanks again to Ken for another entertaining half-hour or so. Earnest conversation filled the bar until the crowds gradually drifted away towards midnight, leaving only the true enthusiasts to debate Life, the Universe and Everything into the early hours.

Sunday morning kicked off with a free hour to follow-up on the previous day's swapping and workshop activities, before we were all herded into the lecture theatre for the AGM. The Chairman set a target of 50 minutes for completion of the necessary business, but in the event we were done in about an hour.

The Minutes appear elsewhere in this Newsletter.

After a short comfort break and coffee members re-assembled in the Lecture Theatre To hear David Roe’s account of “What’s about on the tables”. David began by talking about Zen Buddhism which threw a lot of the audience completely, and wound up by concluding that it was basically about “nothing”. You can read how he linked this to the minerals elsewhere in this Newsletter!

Moving swiftly on, Austin Lockwood stepped up to run through the entries for the Micromineral Competition, which had been very well supported with 22 entries, and judged by four judges (thanks to Vicky Packard, Harry Critchley, Mick Wolfe and Paul Nicholson). The results were:- 1st Tom Cotterell (synchysite) 43.25 points, 2nd June Lockwood (sphalerite and galena) 42 points, and 3rd George Fletcher (pyromorphite on plumbogummite) 39.5 points. (Maximum possible score is 50 points).

Next Peter Braithwaite introduced the results of the Micromount Competition, saying that it had been very difficult to separate the entries this year. There were 6 specimens in all (still a poor showing from 80 members present - please let’s have some more MICROMOUNTS next year). The three judges had determined that Tom Cotterell’s labels were incredible for the neatness, detail and microscopic handwriting, but that the winner for 2002 was Roy Starkey, with a superb

little mottramite on baryte from Peldor Tor Quarry, Leicestershire. Peter invited Roy to take the trophy in his left hand and to pass it to his right hand whilst smiling for a photograph!

Following on from last year, it had been decided to run an additional lecture and workshop session after lunch on Sunday. We were very fortunate to have Peter Moore of the Sussex Mineral and Lapidary Society to make a presentation on Minerals of Namibia. Peter began by explaining that as a BIG SPECIMEN collector, it was an event of world importance to have him attending a micromount symposium. He went on to describe a trip made by himself and other members of the SMLS in 2001. Namibia, independent since 1990 has fantastic animals, the Namib and Kalahari deserts, spectacular scenery and a few interesting minerals. Somewhere in the region of 25% of the land area is "off-limits" due to the rich alluvial diamond deposits. The largest uranium mine in the world (Rossing) is in Namibia. The finest descloizite and mottramite in the world occurs at Otavi, Berg Aukas, Abenab and Karavatu. Last, but by no means least of course is the Tsumeb mine. Tsumeb boasts 242 mineral species, of which 40 are unique, 65 are the best examples in the world, and 52 were first described from Tsumeb. The group are planning a return trip in 2003, subject to the political situation in the country at that time.

The remainder of Sunday afternoon was filled by a superb slide show of digital images from Ulrich Wagner, and more on Sclaigaux from Richard de Nul. Members divided themselves roughly equally between the lecture theatre slide presentations, and yet more swapping and talking in the lab. Things were winding down by 4.30pm and the last few drifted away as 5pm approached.

Please do write in and tell us what you think about the Symposium format and content. It is your Symposium - we can do almost anything. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this year's event a great success, especially the organising team from Norfolk - they do a great job, and their regular helpers and behind the scenes team too. See you all again next year we hope.

AROUND THE TABLES IN 2002

David Roe

The 2002 Symposium is my second attempt to provide the service that was once carried out by Mike Rothwell and it is proving to be unexpectedly exhausting, stressful but fun - for me at least. Exhausting because there never was enough time at a Symposium to chat to friends, old and new, attend lectures and workshops and generally have a good time - now there is even less. Stressful because I am stuck in this accursed objectives and targets centred work ethic that blights my working life - "at 11am Sunday you will make a report on what's around the tables - without fail!" The reality is that at 10am Sunday I have only done a dozen people - so if I missed you - my apologies.

In my mind's eye I am looking for the BMS member who lives content in the knowledge that they are not world-class collectors, but who nurture the belief that every so often they will, by chance, stumble across some small trinket of a stone that will give them great pleasure. And having found such a stone they would like to share it with the rest of the BMS world.

As always at the start I am confronted by a lesson in Zen Buddhism - at each request for wisdom from my fellow micromounters I received a variant on "nothing". Nothing collected/ brought to

Leicester/ broken down to micromount size/ sorted/ labelled etc. As always my heart sinks as I scratch around for something - anything - to talk about.

But, like extracting winkles, they come forth. Ron Gibbons pushes me in the direction of Peter Todhunter's wulfenites - rather odd in that they festoon themselves on harmatome - which is in itself odd as they are from Rushwaite Lodge in Cumbria. As a sucker for wulfenites I personally do not care what, where or who they associate with. Cumbria brings us neatly to a non-mineral offering. Mike Leppington was offering an electronic listing of Caldbeck Fells mineral location at a remarkably cheap price. Back to harmatome locations again as they were determined to have their moment of glory - Dolyhir had yielded some splendid terminated witherites to Roy Starkey while Peter Todhunter continued his good year by finding some tiny orange yellow tablets of anatase there. Tiny was the word for this sharp-eyed find. Tom Cotterill has probably the sharpest eyes amongst us but they were not needed for his heartbreakingly blue anatase from the Blaenau area drove me once more in to a paroxysm of despair - after all these years, all these broken rocks, all these lacerated fingers -when will I find my first big blue A?

I then left the flashy end of collecting to the more sedate and secluded corners of mineral collecting - where would I be without my annual pilgrimage to the zeolite realm - ably led as always by Oneta Wilson who flaunted a scolecite from Lunga Treshnish in front of me. Lunga Treshnish is how the inhabitants of Mull spell the name when they are sober - after a few drammes they may spell it otherwise. Neil Hubbard attempted to trump this with a gismondine on philipsite from Oisgill Bay on Skye. Not to be outdone John Pearce thrust into my hand a fantailed epistilbite from Sgurr nam Boc. Confusion reigned for a few minutes as I thought John was claiming a South East Asian first occurrence from Vietnam but apparently this is a Scottish location.

"Secluded corners of mineral collecting" is surely not something that could be said of Norfolk and last year's strong showing was eclipsed this year by the first UK finding of bazhenovite. Peter Smith enthused to me about these strong smelling handsome orange crystals. Apparently they have only been found outside their USSR homeland in one other European location - Belgium. Need I say more?

The real contribution that we can make as amateurs was brought home to me by the enormous amount of careful detective work done by Alan and Sue Edwards on Slag Minerals from the Meadowfoot smelters. This has shown the undoubted presence of antimony minerals - and that opens up a veritable Pandora's box of questions about industrial archaeology since the nearest antimony location known is 20 miles away. The tempting prospect of an unknown little antimony trail in the vicinity of the smelter is worth considering.

Nick Peters unpacked a few tomato trays for me and I was really turned on by his glorious metallic hard edged triangles of tennantites from Gortdrum (Tipperary) which occasionally showed lovely pinky violet cinnabar giving a beautiful combination of steel and silk.

Every year I see one thing that captures the mineral replay button in my mind - and like last year it comes from a location that has been declared extinct by most of us. Wheal Remfry - the very name conjures up a vision of red and gray matrix full of holes containing anatase so small they put the teeth on edge and flashy white crystals of achroite, which is exciting for the first few minutes, but somehow doesn't have staying power. So what is this from Remfry on Andy and Melissa Banthorpe's rock pile? Classy little yellow to sherry coloured anatase (its that "A" word again) and ... lurid fluorescent tablets of autunite. Shades of Goonvean late 80's! They then show me a lump that starts with provocative green torbernite, shading into sheets of cacoxenite and finally

into a veritable glittering river of leucophosphite (or possibly cyrillovite) crystals. A pleasure to see and nice enough to eat - although on second thoughts the uranium might leave an after taste.

A final oddity was the poor little brachiopods brought by Austin Lockwood - I say poor because after death their rudimentary digestive systems reacted with the mineral soup in their graveyard to become rather attractive necklaces of calcite crystals. I have heard conversations by mineral collectors on what should be done with their collection when they pass over to the great rock pile in the sky. A minority consider the possibility of being buried with their mineral collection - Bronze Age style. The brachiopods open up another possibility - perhaps we should choose our burial place with mineral forming possibilities at the forefront of our decision making so as to maximise the mineralisation of our earthly remains for future generations. Personally I am attracted to turning into an assemblage of apatite, pyromorphite and phosgenite - I shall enquire about Mid Wales - perhaps the cemetery at Dylife.

2002 MICROMINERAL COMPETITION

Austin Lockwood

This popular event, now in its eighth year, was again held during the Annual Symposium at Leicester University. Judges were appointed from four branches of the Society and thanks are due to Vicki Packard, Paul Nicholson, Harry Critchley and Mick Wolfe who kindly gave up their time to examine, and award points, for each of the 22 specimens entered for the Competition.

As members may recall, judging is based on a maximum of 50 points awarded by each judge for features such as perfection of crystals, overall cleanliness, rarity of species and dramatic appeal. Part of my job as Competition Administrator, apart from organising the event, is to check the marking and to work out the average points awarded by the four judges.

As a judge, you have an opportunity to carefully examine each specimen, without distraction. The general view of the judges was that this years entries were, perhaps, not quite up to the usual high standard, only a few entries scoring high marks for rarity of species and dramatic appeal.

One of the Society's youngest members, Tom Cotterell, was judged to have submitted the best entry with a specimen showing a *synchysite-(Ce) rosette with galena, anatase and quartz* from a quarry near Blaenau Festiniog, Gwynedd, collected in 2001, which was awarded an average of 43.25 points. Tom came third in the competition last year.

June Lockwood took second place with a specimen showing *sphalerite crystals with a single galena crystal* from Callow Hill Quarry, Pontesbury, Shropshire, collected in June of this year and which was awarded 42 points.

George Fletcher came third in the Competition with his specimen of *globular pyromorphite on plumbogummite pseudomorphs after pyromorphite on plumbogummite*. The specimen was collected in 1971 from the area of the 90 fathom level dump, Roughton Gill Mine, Caldbeck Fells and scored an average of 39.5 points.

Following the announcement of the results on the Sunday morning, Roy Starkey kindly presented Tom Cotterell with the Maurice Grigg Micromineral Trophy to display at his home in Lydney,

Gloucestershire until next year, and a small trophy for Tom to keep to mark his success in this years competition.

It is encouraging to see the Micromineral Competition so well supported again and I would like to thank all those who entered specimens for this. I will remind you all in good time about next years Competition and perhaps, when you are sorting through your finds over the next nine months or so, you will put aside something special for this.

<http://www.micromounters.org.uk>

Roy Starkey

Further to the discussion at the AGM and agreement that we should establish a presence on the internet, several weeks of feverish activity have resulted in the BMS launching a website. Thanks are due to Andy Banthorpe who kindly volunteered to host the site and act as Webmaster, and Mike Dannatt who made the arrangements to register the domain name. They have been working closely with me to develop the site layout and content. By the time you read this I hope that the site will be up and running. If for any reason we are not quite there, please try again in a week or two.

What we need now is a regular input of news, ideas and photos from you, the membership. If you visit the site you will see that we are developing a couple of areas which will over time build to be a show case for British specimen mineralogy. We want the BMS website to be informative and useful - our emphasis will be on content and reasonable download times, rather than jazzy graphics and animations.

If you have ideas or things you would like to see, please get in touch with Andy or myself - we will be pleased to help.

We hope to offer a "classifieds" page where members can post "Wants" and "For sale" items.

Do please take a look and let us know what you think.

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL IN MICRO COLLECTIONS

David Green

In a recent article in the Mineralogical Record (2002), Quintin Wight pens a few paragraphs about the glues and adhesives used in micromounting. These outline the desirability of using "archival" quality adhesives and describe some of the products available to collectors in north America.

Archival quality products used in museums by curators and conservators are chosen because they have desirable "archival" properties. They are chemically inert, stable in the long term and in the case of glues used in repair and restoration they can be removed if necessary without damaging the specimen. Unfortunately, it's not always easy to find products that have all of these desirable characteristics and they tend to be expensive.

There is a confusing variety of adhesives on the market which, apart from the generally desirable property of sticking things together, may be chemically and physically very different. These include acrylic emulsions, polyurethanes, epoxies, formaldehyde based adhesives, hotmelt adhesives, cyanoacrylates, polyvinyl acetates and silicone polymers. Epoxies, formaldehyde based adhesives and silicone polymers are best avoided, and do not seem to be widely used by micromounters in any case.

Cyanoacrylates, better known as superglues, are esters of alpha-cyanoacrylic acid. They are rapid, irreversible and my own experience until recently was that the only thing they were really effective at sticking was skin. Following Quintin Wight's article in *Mineralogical Record* I tried them once again (I had problems getting a really effective adhesive to glue tiny specimens onto toothpick pedestals). The two standard superglues I tried on test specimens were not much good, but I happened to have a product called "Mitre Fix", normally used by picture framers, which comprises a superglue and activator. This was very effective, producing a strong bond between specimen and pedestal in 10 to 20 seconds. The technique is to place a small drop of the adhesive on the end of the pedestal, coat the base of the specimen to be mounted with a tiny drop of the activator and allow it to evaporate, touch the two together, hold for ten seconds and a strong bond is guaranteed. Conservators working in museums frown on superglues because they are very difficult to remove once set, (though they are extensively used in palaeontology by private preparators). Their irreversibility makes them less than ideal, but is perhaps excusable in the case of tiny micromounts which are unlikely to need removing from their pedestals once fixed in place.

Conservators often used (polyvinyl acetate) PVA glues because they are relatively inert, acid free and can be removed with little harm to the specimen. They can be a little awkward to work with in micromounting as they tend to be runny. I have used HMG B72 conservators adhesive for some time for gluing larger specimens to 6 mm diameter balsa wood pedestals. It is a heat and waterproof PVA product which can be removed by soaking specimens in acetone. Unlike superglues, it does not have instant grab, so specimens can be moved for some time after mounting. While it's not absolutely ideal for micromounting, it is of archival quality and is very useful on the rare occasions when it is necessary to repair specimens.

Choosing a good glue (and recording what you use in the front of your catalogue) is just one of the things its worth thinking about when considering the long term future of your collection. I have not been able to find any information on the stability of plastic micromount boxes. Thirty-year old boxes of the hinged black base - clear lid type in my collection appear as good as new apart from minor scuffs and scratches produced by careless handling, but some polymers degrade over a period of decades, and PVC is particularly to be avoided. I would be interested to know if any members have boxes that have begun to get brittle.

Labels are vitally important to any collection and a great deal of research has been done on the preservation of paper labels. Looking at early mounts in my own collection it is clear that some self adhesive sticky labels were quite unsuitable. They have begun to peel after a few years and in a few cases, the inks have reacted with the adhesive layer rendering the handwriting illegible. Archival quality self adhesive labels are available from museum suppliers as a quick trawl of the internet will reveal. Rotring rapidograph drawing pens used with black rotting inks come in a variety of nib widths (0.18 mm and 0.25 mm are probably best for micromounts) and are excellent for labelling specimens.

Collectively, the 200 or so members of the BMS hold in excess of 100,000 mineral specimens, a significant percentage of Britain's geological heritage. These include superb specialist collections

and much material worthy of research. With the diminishing supply of specimens from some areas it is important that what we already have is preserved as carefully as possible. Archival quality products are not always easy to get and can be more expensive, but they are worth it in the long run!

**MINERAL COLLECTING AND CONSERVATION
HAMMERING OUT A FUTURE
UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD 16TH APRIL 2003
Roy Starkey**

Mineral collecting is scientifically and educationally important and a hobby enjoyed by many. However, many mineral sites are finite and the issue of sustainable collecting on mineral sites is becoming increasingly important. Collecting is fundamental to mineralogical research, and for educational, commercial and aesthetic purposes, but indiscriminate activity can deplete or destroy a mineralogical site. This conference aims to discuss the different aspects of mineral collecting and the best way of conserving the available mineral resource for future use by all interest groups.

I have been invited to speak at this conference, jointly organised by the Russell Society, English Nature and the Geological Society's Geoconservation Commission.

The title of my presentation is to be "Mineral Collecting and the amateur collector".

I am interested to gather views and opinions from fellow collectors, and whilst in 20 minutes there will be time to make only a few points, I would like to hear your views. Please do get in touch if you have something to contribute to the debate.

Thanks for your support – I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Conference.

Registration is £25, inclusive of parking, coffee/tea and lunch, and a copy of the proceedings. Please register by 31st March. Numbers are limited. If you wish to attend please write to Jennifer Yau, Environmental Impacts Team, English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough. PE1 1UA. (01733 455504)

**BMS OCCASIONAL PAPERS
John Pearce**

Despite the frenzied activity throughout the Symposium weekend, many members found time to browse through the BMS Occasional Papers and purchase past numbers and/or the latest paper, number 14. Over the weekend 51 BMS Occasional papers were sold and complete sets of the papers were presented to the Belgian and German visitors and to Roy Clements, Head of the Geology Department at Leicester University.

We have now produced 14 papers and there are 3 further ones in preparation:

Zeolites

by Oneta Wilson

Mineral Names by Austin Lockwood
Radioactive Minerals by David Green

Also I should very much like to find an author for a paper on "**The Cleaning of Minerals**". **Please contact me if you are interested.** It would probably be a 2-3 year project drawing on ideas, techniques and experiences of other members.

The 14 papers which have now been produced are detailed below:

1.	An Introduction to Micromounts	Roy Starkey	£1.00
2.	Determining the Optical Properties of Minerals	Max Wirth	£1.50
3.	Minerals are Chemicals	John Pearce	£1.50
4.	Paper Chromatography	Max Wirth	£1.00
5.	Using the Mineralogical Literature	Roy Starkey	£3.00
6.	Stereomicroscopes	Mike Edwards	£2.00
7.	Photography of Minerals through the Microscope	Elsie Hansford	£1.00
8.	A Guide to Micromounting: Part 1, Collecting	Peter Braithwaite	£1.50
9.	A Guide to Micromounting: Part 2, Micromounting	Peter Braithwaite	£1.50
10.	A Guide to Micromounting: Part 3, Cataloguing	Peter Braithwaite	£1.50
11.	Chemical Testing of Mineral Grains	David Green	£2.00
12.	A Select and Personal Bibliography from the Mineralogical Magazine	Roy Starkey	£2.00
13.	Minerals are Chemicals Part 2: The Periodic Table	John Pearce and Austin Woodbridge	£3.00
14.	The Formation of Secondary Minerals	David Alderton	£1.50

Occasional Paper 14 - *The Formation of Secondary Minerals by David Alderton (Royal Holloway College, London University)* - was launched at the 2002 BMS Symposium. An abstract is given below

Many of the most colourful and spectacular mineral crystals have been formed by a process of secondary mineralisation, due to the effects of weathering. This paper considers how the alteration of primary ore minerals and the subsequent mobility of different elements are influenced by varying conditions of acidity and oxygen concentration. The important role of pyrite in producing acid is stressed both in the process of secondary mineralisation and in the production of toxic mine waters as a result of post-mining weathering.

If you are interested in purchasing any of the above papers, please write to :
John Pearce: 7 Condor Way, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 9QB.
(or telephone 01444 233958). Cheques payable to BMS please.

Postage and packaging should be added at the following rates:

<i>Up to 3 copies</i>	<i>£0.75</i>
<i>4 to 10 copies</i>	<i>£2.00</i>
<i>11+ copies</i>	<i>£3.50</i>

ROCKWATCH AND THE BMS

Austin Lockwood

It is suggested that the Society should make positive moves to encourage young people to take an interest in mineralogy, and microminerals in particular and, to this end, perhaps each branch could endeavour to include in their annual programme one meeting a year for young people.

Rockwatch is a national club for young geologists, run by the Geologists' Association, and currently has a membership of around a thousand children, together with a number of adults and institutional members.

From my experience of running two Rockwatch groups in Bromley and South East London I know that many of our young members are extremely interested in rocks and minerals. Our current workshop programmes include such subjects as 'Polished semiprecious gemstones from around the world', 'Minerals and how they form', 'How to become a mineral detective', 'Early mining and the use of metals' and 'Microminerals - make your own collection'. Our programmes for 2003 also include a range of mineral related subjects.

Our first workshop on 'Microminerals - make your own collection' was held at the Crystal Palace Park Information Centre on Saturday 14 September 2002 with about 16 youngsters and their parents/guardians attending. We had 12 microscopes available and a selection of micromineral material from six classic sites around the UK. The children were taught how to examine and identify the different minerals, how to mount these in a box with mineral tack and how to carefully glue the pre-printed and cut identification labels on the base. At the end of the morning each member of the group had their own small collection of microminerals and they were quite delighted with these. Many of the children now have their own MX-1 stereomicroscopes and I shall be ordering ten more from Brunel Microscopes in time for Christmas. Brunel allow me a 10% discount when I order ten or more. With a separate quartz halogen light source and a smart photographer's carrying case from Homebase, the whole outfit costs less than £100. Mum can now thread her needles and Dad can get the thorns out of his fingers in less than no time.

Whilst the BMS is not experiencing any difficulty in maintaining its membership we do need to look to the future as none of us are getting any younger. Youngsters are obliged to leave Rockwatch at the age of 16 and they may not wish to join the Geologists' Association itself, or a local geological society. We need to catch these young people before they find other interests such as football, golf or girls/boys. I am sure many of our members have children, or grandchildren, that they would like to encourage in the subject of mineralogy if only the opportunity to do so was available.

I suggest that all branches of the Society should make an effort to provide the occasional activity for young people interested in rocks and minerals. Your event can be publicised in the Rockwatch magazine or in 'Down to Earth' and I think you will be surprised by the amount of interest that is shown.

BAZHENOVITE

Peter Smith

The first reported occurrence of the rare mineral Bazhenovite in the United Kingdom.

The first world occurrence was in Russia, from the Coal-bearing basin of Chelyabinsk, Monts Urals. The mineral is usually found in burning ground, like old coal dumps and in metallic slag. A gentleman by the name of CHESNOKOV discovered this mineral in 1987 and the name of Bazhenovite is dedicated to the Russian Petrographer A. G. BAZHENOV, and to the Russian chemist L. F. BAZHENOVA.

Bazhenovite was recently found for the first time in Belgium by members of Association 4M. This material was from the old coal area of La Duchere, Montignies-sur-Sambre, Charleroi, and Hainaut, Belgium. Identification of this mineral was obtained thanks to the co-operation of Mr Christian Demaret who works in the Crystallography Department at the University of Louvain la Neuve.

Formula and Chemical Composition. $\text{CaS}_5\text{CaS}_2\text{O}_3\cdot 6\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2\cdot 20\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

For more information go to the web site: <<http://membres.lycos.fr/quatre/bazhenovite.html>>

The Story of Discovery

Members of the BMS may well remember the now famous 'Elephant Dig' at West Runton, Norfolk, 1995/96. During the period of excavation of the almost complete skeleton of a Mammoth Elephant, members of the Norfolk Mineral & Lapidary Society were requested to provide security patrols for weekends and evenings to protect the site from the public.

It was during these patrols that I found pieces of material on the beach that looked interesting. The first piece that I cracked open released a very pungent smell very much like bad eggs, however upon further investigation under a microscope, very small vugs in this material revealed small prismatic pale yellow blades.

Further investigation was called for and more of this material was collected in due course. Some of the pieces were small and some very large but most contained crystals of varying sizes and shapes. An analysis of these crystals was arranged but, because of the seemingly lack of interest in what were termed 'slag minerals', the find was dismissed as unknown.

Recent information came to hand in June of this year (see the web site above) and interest in the West Runton material was renewed, to the extent that further trips to the site were arranged, and yes, there was still an abundance of the material to be had. Some of the pieces I brought home contained much larger crystals than previously found.

I contacted Francis Hubert (the author of the web site) and exchanges of what I had discovered and bazhenovite found in Belgium was arranged. He later confirmed that visually my find was exactly the same as the bazhenovite found in Belgium.

The material that I found at West Runton during June and July of this year contained larger vugs and superb pristine orange/yellow crystals of bazhenovite to 8mm in length. I brought some of my material to the 2002 BMS Symposium and in spite of a poster on the notice board complete with pictures proclaiming what I felt sure was a first recorded find of bazhenovite in the UK, it did not seem to arouse any interest.

I talked to David Roe during his round up of 'What's on the Tables' and he seemed quite interested and I thank him for giving it a mention at the AGM. He queried whilst describing the crystals colouring "is it a mineral?" Well! I can now confirm that it is a mineral as Dr Richard Braithwaite very kindly offered to have a sample analysed. I duly gave him a piece from the

material I had brought with me and a phone call from him two weeks later confirmed that what I had found was bazhenovite. He also said that the spectrum showed something else was present though very small and of no significance. I rather suspect that it is portlandite as this mineral is also present in the material, as is ettringite.

Bazhenovite is listed in the 1998 Fleischer Glossary of Mineral Species so therefore it is a true mineral.

Where does it come from? The material is only found at West Runton. North of West Runton is Sheringham and south is Cromer, this material cannot be found on either of these two beaches. In 1995/6 large quantities of this material was found in one place, quite close to the overhanging cliff at a concrete runway down to the beach. We, that is members of the NMLS and I, therefore deduced that this material must have been tipped over the cliff.

Investigations revealed that up to, and during 1995, there used to be a large water and sewage treatment plant at the top of the cliffs. This was broken up and a new plant installed. We believe that chemical changes taking place within the old holding tank had formed this material and then crystals had formed in the vugs. The old holding tank had been there for many years.

Enquiries made with the East Anglian water authorities confirmed that they were responsible for the old holding tanks and their removal, but would not admit to depositing any material on the beach. Quantities of concrete accompanied the material on the beach which we believe also came from the old holding tank.

My grateful thanks to Martin Stolworthy for bringing the web site to my attention and for his assistance in getting this project up and running.

BRANCH NEWS

South East Branch

Twelve members were present at the 77th meeting on the 11th August at the Ringway Community Centre, Grove Park, London.

There was a larger number of specimens submitted for Peter Wallace to report on at this meeting. From Callow Hill Quarry, Pontesbury, Shropshire, Austin showed a specimen with a cavity lined with very nice yellow sphalerite, on which sat a bright cubo-octahedral crystal of galena. Still in Shropshire, Austin also had an unusual 'lath' shaped form of chalcopyrite collected from the dump at Tankerville Mine. Moving to South Wales, Austin had a very nice specimen of goethite collected from Creigiau Quarry on a Russell Society field trip.

Richard Belson, who usually turns up something unusual, showed yellow to orange bazhenovite, a rare calcium silicate/sulphate hydroxide hydrate $\text{CaS}_5 \cdot \text{CaS}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot 6\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 20\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (see Fleischer' 5 Glossary of Mineral Species 1999). This specimen was collected from near the sewage outfall on West Runton beach, Norfolk. Would this be classified as an organic mineral? Richard also had some very nice specimens of erythrite from Tynebottom Mine, Cumbria and also specimens of olivenite and possible torbernite from Hemerdon Ball, Plympton, Devon.

Staying with Hemerdon Ball, Jean Terry had a fairly large 'matrix' specimen with numerous cavities containing scorodite, pharmacosiderite, 'francolite' and various other species yet to be identified.

The recent Symposium was again a very successful and well organised event. I am pleased to say that both the food and the standard of service were excellent at the meal on Saturday evening.

I am still proposing to arrange for the South East Branch of the BMS to mount a display of microminerals at the Geologists' Association Annual Reunion which is being held at its usual venue at University College London on Saturday 2 November 2002. We are arranging for the BMS stand to be alongside that of the Russell Society and the Ravensbourne Geological Society so that they can all be manned with fewer people. There will be a common theme of 'Calcite and Calcareous Rocks' and the BMS will be showing, as microminerals, various forms of calcite and some of the associated minerals.

The next Branch meeting is at 3.00 p.m. on Sunday 17 November 2002. Please bring to this meeting, in addition to your microscopes and specimens for study and discussion, any minerals or geologically related items for sale, swapping or as freebies. Items for the raffle will also be appreciated.

Austin Lockwood - Branch Co-ordinator

Northern Branch

The next meeting will be held at 2pm in Bawtry on Saturday 7th December. Further details from Jean Spence.

PHOTOGRAPHING MICROMINERALS THE EASY WAY

Mike Dannatt

Equipment used: MBS-10 microscope using 8x eyepieces.
Euromex Fibre-optic Halogen Light Source EK-1 with
annular fibre-optic adapter for the MBS-10
Nikon Coolpix 950 digital camera

After just one attempt to attach my old Minolta SR1S camera using an adapter normally used for a 300mm telephoto lens, I concluded that I could be heading for a lot of wasted time and money - and a lot of frustration. If I had access to a digital camera I was sure that I could prove how feasible it was to use my Russian MBS-10 for photography. After all the annular fibre-optic light source seemed ideal - particularly in view of the fact that any of the light points could be covered to give directional lighting.

The Nikon Coolpix Camera has a lens housing which is practically the same diameter as the eyepieces on the MBS-10 and a few minutes experimentation holding the camera by hand suggested that I may be able to achieve acceptable results by mounting the camera on a tripod.

The vertical post of the tripod and the vertical focussing arrangement of the microscope were aligned and the camera set at the correct angle to marry up to one barrel of the microscope. The disadvantage of the arrangement was that the camera had to be moved away to refocus the microscope and then put back in place.

The procedure for each specimen was to move the camera away before putting the new specimen under the objective, compose, select magnification and refocus - all by eye - and then replace the camera taking care to match up the lens to the microscope (taking care to minimise stray light) before taking several exposures at different light levels.

The camera had some difficulty focussing on fibre-like specimens such as agardite. In most cases, focusing was easily adjusted by recomposing and trying again. Composition could always be readjusted on the computer of course. A number of photographs taken this way are on the new web-site - judge for yourself!

The results suggest that improvements could be made by using an adapter to attach the body of the camera to the body of the microscope (see Chairman's Gleanings in issue 59).

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New members

Stephen Birtwhistle	13 Braddyll Road, Over Hulton, Bolton, Lancashire, BL5 1DY	01204 64879
Philip Greaves	4 Combe Common Cottages, Woodside Road, Chiddingfold, Surrey, GU8 4QR	01428 684740 phil.greaves@bllpharma.com
Mark Oddy	Bryanston, Langton Road, Speldhurst, Kent, TN3 0NP	01892 862746 mark@oddym.freeserve.co.uk
Rick Turner	The Drey, Allington Track, Allington, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 oDD	01980 610537 rick.turner@dial.pipex.com

Changes of address, telephone or e-mail details:

Member	New or corrected details.
Beryl Taylor	Tara, Kishorn, Lochcarron, Ross-shire, IV54 8XA 01520 733414

AN APOLOGY AND A CORRECTION.

My premature report of the demise of Bill Mason was unforgivable and, having apologised to him profusely over the telephone and in person, I am pleased to restore him to full active membership of the BMS.

In the obituary I should have reported that Henry Woolgar, a member since 1993, had passed away. My sincere apologies to his family

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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The deadline for articles for Newsletter 64 will be 1st February 2003. Please let me have contributions as soon as possible. Articles or reports on PC disc are welcome - preferably in RTF - rich text format. 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 the spelling of site and mineral names.