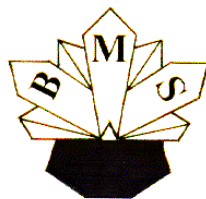


BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



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OBITUARY - SID FREEMAN
Ken Luff

Sadly, Sid Freeman, B.M.S. Treasurer, died suddenly at his home on 2nd May, 2003. He was 81 years old and Pearl, his wife, was with him at the time. His funeral took place on May 5th.

Sid's professional life was bound from an early age to accountancy and his experience as a Chartered Accountant would be used to the benefit of all Societies with which he became associated.

His association with mineralogy is first documented when he and Pearl joined the Amateur Geological Society in 1974, quickly becoming its Treasurer in 1975. He also became its Membership Secretary, News Editor and Show Organiser and was awarded Honorary Membership in 1993.

He and Pearl developed their interest in the hobby setting up a unique collection of aesthetic mineral specimens which was admired by their many visitors.

Sid became active in the organisation of the Federation of Lapidary and Geological Societies (F.L.A.G.S.) steering it as Secretary, firstly in 1978, and from 1982 continuously until his death. In 1982 he joined the B.M.S. and became its Treasurer in 1986. Those who attended the Symposiums have enjoyed his disarming presentations, taking us through the Statement of Accounts.

When approached by the G.A. in the '80s he was instrumental in encouraging Societies to support the successful FLAGS Exhibitions at the G.A. Annual Reunions.

A hospitable couple, he and Pearl enjoyed the visits of many hobbyists, national and worldwide, to see their collection and developed a penchant for inviting committees to hold their meetings at their home. His interest in FLAGS and the B.M.S. came from his enthusiasm for, and his belief in, the strength Societies can gain from working together, disseminating information, visiting each other both "at home" and on field trips.

Some in the genre would find him irascible and difficult but they had misunderstood his dry sense of humour and his instinct and enjoyment in debate. He always ensured that topics were suitably aired and that opposing viewpoints of view were discussed before decisions were taken and gained great respect for doing so.

A superb tennis player in his earlier years he became in later life a casualty to emphysema which slowly reduced his ability to participate in meetings away from home, particularly in the last few years.

Sid Freeman gave an outstanding contribution to the Mineralogical Societies with which he was associated, reciprocating the enjoyment and interest he obtained from them.

We send our condolences to Pearl Freeman, B.M.S. Membership Secretary, in her sad loss and look forward to her continued interest in our hobby.

KEMP MEIKLE AN APPRECIATION

Roy Starkey

As the years go by it is inevitable that we shall lose some of our longer standing members, but this year it seems that we have been hit particularly hard.

Kemp died in January after a prolonged period of deteriorating health, and would have been 85 in March of this year. I first met Kemp at Wanlockhead about twenty years ago on a collecting trip with Max Wirth. We soon became firm friends although separated by over 300 miles, and corresponded on many occasions about mineralogical interests. Kemp spent his professional career working in civil engineering, and his job took him to many different parts of Scotland, often resulting in the finding of interesting specimens.



Kemp was always enthusiastic and eager to share his latest news and specimens with others - often supported by his latest film of photographic prints - which in the early days were not always quite in focus ! An accomplished amateur lapidary and facetter, Kemp enjoyed all aspects of the mineralogical scene, and amassed a fine collection of material including both hand specimens and micromounts. The BMS was an important part of Kemp's life, and he had been a major donor of material to the National Micromount Reference Collection - over 130 specimens in total.

Recording his finds, and researching information had become a major interest for Kemp, and he contributed written articles to various publications. The Clyde Plateau lavas, and in particular the area around Hartfield Moss became topics of special interest. In pursuit of always wanting to know more about his specimens Kemp taught himself to use a polarising microscope and became quite accomplished in the optical determination of mineral grains. He was a regular visitor and donor of material to both the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow and the Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, where he was well known to John Faithfull (Hunterian) and the late Harry Macpherson, Alex Livingstone, Bob Reekie and Brian Jackson (RMS).

I always tried to call in and see Kemp on my way to or from the annual mineralogical pilgrimage to Scotland, and last saw him in June 2002. He had decided to dispose of all his duplicate material and I made arrangements to collect this and transport it to the Symposium in Leicester. The "Kemp Meikle Grab Table" was hugely popular, and will be remembered for a long time to come by those who were fortunate enough to acquire material.

Kemp is survived by his wife Jean, and will be sadly missed as our regular "Correspondent from North of the Border".

GEORGE RYBACK - CHEMIST AND MINERALOGIST

1936-2003

Richard S W Braithwaite

George Ryback was born in Russia on January 10th, 1936; just where is unknown; somewhere in the Ukraine is likely, but George once told the writer that he was born in Nizhni Tagilsk in the Urals, an appropriate birthplace for a mineralogist! Little is known of his early life, mostly in the Ukraine, he and his mother being reluctant to talk about it, but World War II caused major upheavals. His father was drafted into the Red Army and never returned, his family never being informed of his fate, which was normal in Russia, and their home was over-run by the Germans. When the Red Army advanced, young George with his mother Tanya and her mother, who came from the noble Razmovsky family, retreated into Bavaria. Here they experienced many nights sleeping in interconnected cellars to shelter from British air-raids. Soon after the end of the war they found their way to London, where they had some relatives in the De Freitas family. Tanya met and married a Ukranian émigré Baron who was the writer's godfather, who soon brought George and the writer together, particularly as we shared a keen interest in chemistry and minerals, for a friendship that was to last the rest of his lifetime.



We grew up together, visiting each other's home laboratories to perform horrifyingly dangerous experiments. Initially he understood very little English, but within six months he was remarkably literate. He attended St.Paul's School, Hammersmith, where he put the school's mineral collection into order, then proceeded to New College, Oxford for his degree in chemistry, with subsidiary mineralogy, and where he became friendly with Arthur Kingsbury of later significance. After graduation he stayed on to research for his D.Phil. in organic chemistry, mirroring the writer's career. He worked for a short time at the Medical Research Council at Mill Hill, then was invited to join the crack research team of Professors Cornforth and Popjak to work on biological organic chemistry, soon becoming an expert at manipulating minute quantities of material. Within this team, for example, he worked on mevalonic acid, and also isolated the hormone which causes sycamore leaves to fall in the autumn, determined its full stereochemical molecular structure and synthesised it. He had moved to Sittingbourne when the team became part of Shell Research Ltd., continuing advanced research, and when the team eventually broke up remained at Shell for the rest of his career.

Familiarity with infrared spectroscopy was a consequence of his organic research, and we teamed up early on to apply this technique to our interest in mineralogy. A scientific approach to topographical mineralogy was another aspect of our co-operation to the end of his life. This approach is exemplified by the application of his sharp faculties as Editor of the Journal of the Russell Society to processing papers submitted by a wide variety of authors, his refereeing work for other journals, and by his brilliant work in his last few years on the anomalies of the published work of his late friend Arthur Kingsbury, carried out by close examination of Kingsbury's collection in the Natural History Museum. His many published papers include one on a new mineral, mattheddleite, and a considerable number on species new to Britain and to Ireland.

George fell victim to bladder cancer, but operations and good medical care had this problem well under control, and he was able to resume his work at the Natural History Museum; however he

was rushed to hospital in late February with acute respiratory problems, and died in intensive care on Wednesday, March 19th., 2003, from an attack of pneumonia. He is survived by his wife, Anne, and their children Michael and Elinor.

George's well-curated mineral collection, his comprehensive British topographical card index of mineral localities, his databases and his collection of mineral infrared spectra have been left to the Natural History Museum, London.

He will be missed by many people and in many ways. His loss is tragic to his family and friends, but is also a loss to science and humanity. His sharp brain was a reservoir of skills and knowledge, and he was an unusually pleasant person, with a wonderful sense of humour, and completely incapable of evil; if only more people were like him the world would be a much better place in which to live.

VACANT POST

The sad death of our treasurer, Sid Freeman, means that this vital post becomes vacant and we must now look to fill the position as quickly as possible. Roy Starkey asks that, if anyone feels able to take on the role, they contact him to discuss the post on 01527 874101.



THE RUSSELL SOCIETY



**MINERAL COLLECTING AND CONSERVATION – HAMMERING OUT A FUTURE?
University of Salford Wednesday 16th April 2003
Roy Starkey**

This conference aimed 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. The stated aim of the meeting was to open a debate rather than attempt to reach solutions and to provide an opportunity to share views and identify and discuss issues. Speakers were chosen to reflect a full range of views on the issues surrounding mineral collecting and included the statutory conservation bodies; professional, hobbyist and academic collectors; museums; landowners; and industrial archaeologists.

The meeting was co-convened by English Nature, the Geological Society's Geoconservation Commission and the Russell Society. Proceedings will be published by English Nature and will include written statements from delegates, providing a chance to express individual views.

The following account is compiled from my personal notes and should not be construed as formal record of the proceedings.

The opening session chaired by Peter Doyle (The Geological Society's Geoconservation Commission) included presentations from the following:-

Brian Young - British Geological Survey

The mineral resource: what it is, who collects it and why

Brian started by outlining the context in which the mineral resource should be seen, contrasting this with the need to preserve landscape, buildings, wild flowers etc. which is generally accepted by everyone. The UK has the most varied geology of any comparable area on the planet, and a very rich mineral heritage, and a long and distinguished history of mining and quarrying of minerals. The point was made that rocks are in fact composed of minerals and as such are every bit as important as the minerals themselves. Mining remains such as spoil tips, underground workings and mine buildings and other features attract attention from a wide range of interest groups - industrial archaeologists, bat enthusiasts, botanists as well as mineral collectors and geologists. Mineral specimens are not only objects of beauty, they are the basis for getting an "informed interest", and people collect them for a wide variety of reasons. Recreational collectors have been and will continue to be an important part of mineralogy, they are not the only people who collect, but also form part of the "resource". Today's collectors have access to equipment and facilities which could only have been dreamed of a few years ago - microscopes, fibre optic illuminators, photographic equipment, and so on. Collectors range from the sophisticated to the not so sophisticated, and collections may be well curated, some collectors document their finds and others even publish in the literature. There is still therefore an important place for the collector - he has served mineralogy well and will continue to do so. But, it is not all good news - collectors must "stick to the rules" - be responsible, pass important material to institutions, share information and enable others to take the job a stage further. He was able to cite examples where work undertaken by BGS would not have started had it not been for an interested collector flagging something worthy of investigation - even today people still walk in off the street with interesting material.

Differences exist between the amateur collector who may be primarily interested in what occurs where, and the professional whose collecting is designed to inform and underpin research projects, seeking to explain the "why" and the processes, not simply where something occurs.

Problems have occurred in certain areas e.g. Wet Swine Gill in the Lake District, where an important assemblage of antimony minerals in a 6" wide vein was soon destroyed by collecting activities. In another instance a tiny exposure of bismuth mineralization, 3" wide with a strike length of only 1.5metres was considered to be seriously under threat, and a rescue dig was organised between BGS, the landowner and English Nature to remove part of the resource for safe keeping. This material has been made available to researchers over the past few years.

An unfortunate side-effect of mineral collecting can be that the primary minerals themselves (quartz, pyrite, chalcopyrite, galena and so on), which are not particularly of interest to the collector, can get pulverised to a fine gravel in the search for more attractive supergene minerals. This can make serious research very difficult. Other threats include industrial archaeology, and a general lack of "joined up thinking" - whereby botany, geology and other interests seem to operate in a vacuum, and scheduling a site for its historical value does not necessarily protect its mineralogical interest.

Control is not a negative thing e.g. National Trust signs in Winnats Pass "for research facilities apply to the National Trust". Recent experience in the Caldbeck Fells has resulted in an undue furore, but there is a place for recreational collecting to continue with a measure of control.

Colin Prosser, English Nature

Mineral sites – legislation, conservation and co-operation

Colin explained that he was keen to hear what people had to say, having been involved with much work in the fossil collecting community over the past 10-15 years.

His talk aimed to look at the value of mineralogical and geological heritage, conservation principles and opportunities to work together, and to set this in a wider context.

English Nature have a duty to conserve both nationally and internationally important mineralogical sites. Over the past ten years the RIGS movement has moved forwards in leaps and bounds with support from the voluntary geological conservation sector. Users of sites include scientists, teachers, lecturers, recreational collectors, commercial collectors, industrial archaeologists, landowners, walkers, rambles, occupiers.

The requirement to conserve goes back to the Wild Life Conservation Special Committee (1947) which led to the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

English Nature are interested in developing the idea of "responsible collecting", that does not compromise the future of scientific or recreational collecting. There is strong scientific support via GCR, SSSI etc. for conservation, and a growing interest amongst volunteers. So far the GCR has identified 101 mineralogical sites in Great Britain and 87 mineralogical SSSI's. The SSSI designation is a legal document which planning authorities and owner/ occupiers have to take note of. Listing does not "freeze" the area, it just means that you have to consult e.g. for planning purposes if you want to carry out an activity at the site. There is a list of operations considered potentially damaging to the site e.g. No.25 - removal of geological specimens (including rock samples, minerals and fossils). This risk is actually quite rare on geological SSSI's, but more common on mineralogical sites. Management of sites is required, and this might for example include a requirement to re-expose, de-vegetate etc. in order to support responsible collecting. Grants may be available to owners/ occupiers for such work. The formal position is that consent is required for a "damaging activity", and an offence would be being committed if permission not obtained.

It is now an offence to knowingly or recklessly damage an SSSI. New powers are available relating to third party damage (collecting), and introduction of local byelaws is an option - this changes the picture but is not yet up and running.

The biggest threat in fact is coastal protection work - concrete defences covering over exposures, and the next most serious threat is landfill activities, followed by poorly sited development and neglect. Collecting is usually a minor issue, but can be more significant on mineral and some fossil sites.

RIGS sites do not have statutory protection, but do appear on Local Authority plans - damage is to be resisted wherever possible, and designation focuses on educational site use value. Geological conservation principles generally seek to maintain exposure - laterally or vertically, this tends not to be the case with mineralogical sites. Finite resource sites such as dumps, veins and the Ludlow Bone Bed (notch) need to be viewed in the context of having the resource available for use whilst maximising the scientific gain (involving academic workers and museums in collecting).

Examples of bad practice include Hope's Nose in Devon where rock saws were used in intensive un-consented collecting, resulting in no scientific gain and no material finding its way into museum collections. Whether the current situation in the Caldbeck Fells, Cumbria is good practice is debateable - it hasn't stopped collecting, it is within a National Park context, and has not been supported by all in the mineralogical community.

If the above is compared with the fossil collecting scene, a good dialogue and partnership has developed, with well thought out positions, meetings and conferences leading to publications. Trial collecting schemes are in place involving collectors, conservationists, museums and site owners.

Going forwards the aim must be to raise awareness of all stakeholders, including owners, managers and users of the legislation, generate discussion and be as inclusive as possible. The goal must be to achieve sustainable management of mineralogical sites through an agreed approach to responsible mineral collecting. A varied approach is required - not "one size fits all".

Responsible collecting must include the following:-

- Scientific/ Educational/ Recreational value and a need for conservation
- Permission from owners/ authority
- Compatible with site designation
- Conserve resource for future generations
- Site management plans which integrate collecting and conservation
- Need systems in place to keep records of material and key specimens
- Codes of conduct and pilot schemes where the theory of responsible collecting can be put into practice

People enjoy mineral collecting for a variety of reasons, today is a starting point, aim is to produce a Mineral Collecting Position Statement - join in the discussion and debate.

Don Edwards, Professional Mineral Dealer

The Dealer's Tale

Don opened his talk by saying that whilst his presentation was a personal view, he believed that he was reflecting the views of other mineral dealers too. It was particularly appropriate for a dealer to be speaking at the conference because dealers were conservationists long before "conservation" existed. Specimens had been provided by dealers to museums for many years. He had started out as a chemist, and thus had once been a scientist himself, but was now a dealer with some thirty years experience of attending international fairs and exhibitions. For the past twenty years he had specialised in E.Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union. Mineral dealing is a way of life rather than an employment - successful dealers are always passionate and knowledgeable, with a sound appreciation of the aesthetics of minerals. In general minerals are not readily available and so the dealer has to track down material - the motivation of course is financial reward. If a collection is put together at considerable expense, it is more likely to be disposed of carefully because of repute, and even more likely if the catalogue shows some update of the value.

The main source of specimens has been from mining and quarrying activity, where the specimen potential is hugely more than the dumps or outcrops. The dealer visits the area, develops contacts, educates the miners in what to look for and how to collect material without damage. By comparison it is almost impossible to develop any form of relationship with mining and quarrying companies. Sometimes the management have even sought to destroy material. Rescuing of specimens is often of dubious legality, where mining companies may have a strict regime of dismissal or prosecution for miners smuggling out material. Rare attempts have been made to enable legal collecting e.g. the former BSC mines in Cumbria, but the scheme was ill-conceived, where for each tomato tray of specimens brought to surface the company would put £1 into the miners welfare fund !

The ideal situation would appear to be to change the law, placing some obligation on operators to salvage and conserve specimens. In the league table of threats to mineral specimens, the extractive industry has to be at the top of the list. We should, therefore, be grateful for the tiny percentage of specimens which are saved or "stolen".

Don pointed out that there was no representative present from the extractive industries, and that effort should be put into persuading companies to implement practices to save specimens. In the final analysis, nature herself takes care of material in rocks - are we seeking to conserve, or to preserve relatively easy access to the specimens?

Roy Starkey, Amateur Collector

Mineral Collecting – Walking the Tightrope

Amateur mineralogists and mineral collectors have made a significant contribution to British Mineralogy. Whilst the majority of mineral collectors may act responsibly, there is a minority whom, for whatever reason, fall short of what might be considered desirable standards of behaviour.

The mineral collecting “scene” has changed markedly over the 200 or so years since Phillip Rashleigh assembled his fine collection of Cornish minerals. We have seen increasing pressure on what is inevitably a diminishing resource, as Britain’s extractive industries have gone into decline. Increasing leisure time and relative prosperity has facilitated ever more frequent field excursions. Coupled with the pace of land reclamation, construction work, or removal of material for hard-core, these pressures have led to some sites becoming over-collected, or even obliterated.

From the collector’s standpoint, a pursuit which many have enjoyed as a “right”, for as long as they can remember, is now seriously under threat. Increasingly burdensome health and safety legislation, and a growing reluctance by quarry companies and landowners to grant permission for access to mines and quarries has had the effect of further focusing pressure onto fewer sites, some of which have suffered serious damage as a consequence.

Mineral collecting by its very nature is an intrusive, potentially destructive activity. For the collector to build a collection, material must be removed from its place of origin, and may be subjected to cleaning and trimming, before being carefully curated and assimilated into the body of the collection.

Most collectors are not motivated by commercial greed, and in the main, mineral collectors take great care of and considerable pride in the material which they collect. Ultimately this latent resource will be re-circulated as collectors lose interest in the subject or die – witness the high esteem placed on material collected back in the heydays of 18th and 19th century British mining.

Amateur Collectors have made an undoubted contribution to British Mineralogy, not only through active fieldwork, mine exploration, discovery of new occurrences and even species new to science, but also directly via provision of material to museums and research workers. There must surely be a mechanism for preserving what has hitherto been a generally satisfactory and symbiotic relationship between the professional scientist/ curator and the amateur collector. It is time to engage in some serious debate for the mutual benefit of both “sides” of the mineralogical community.

After an excellent buffet lunch, proceedings resumed with Professor Alan Dyer (The Russell Society) taking the Chair.

The afternoon session included the following presentations:-

Bob Symes

The vital resource – mineral collecting by the academic

Bob will need no introduction to most of our readers, and this indeed was the introduction by session chairman Alan Dyer! The academic designates sites as important because of research potential for the future, and also does most of the identification e.g. SEM, X-ray etc. For example a 15 micron feature on a piece of limestone does not immediately seem important, but it can add to a database of resources and might have great implications. Agricola made the first records of central European mining techniques, and whilst no specimens remain from that period, there were collections. Nowadays it is much harder to find museum quality specimens, but in Cornwall we are fortunate that much was preserved. The collector is of course always looking for perfection - the question is "Are we getting the most out of minerals?". Why do we get the x,y,z form of calcite in W.Cumbria? Why do crystals twin? Have we got Black Smokers on the Lizard? Collectors need to think about the conditions of formation, and also recognise that the "non-pretties" are also important. Mineralogy can also be subject to "fashion", and just now environmental mineralogy is all "in vogue".

There are over 3500 mineral species, and around 50 more are added every year. Most have a distinct new structure or chemistry, and are mainly small and not of value, but may lead to an advance in materials science, for example, as catalysts, superconductors or in developing new alloy properties. The alchemist maybe didn't succeed in making gold, but contributed greatly to chemistry and our understanding of the natural world. We need to look at our specimens and think about the chemistry.

Brian Jackson, National Museums of Scotland

Mineral collecting – a museum's perspective

Why have mineral collections at all? Study is based upon observation, and the material therefore is found either in the ground or in collections, built up by collecting, exchange, donation or fieldwork. Museums generally have defined acquisition goals, and also aim to preserve access to specimens, put them on display and give access to interested parties. Safeguarding of specimens is paramount, and museums think of "for ever". It is also important that collections are dynamic, to reflect scientific and social development.

Growth via acquisition is always expensive and museums do not have the resources to compete on the international stage. The Munich Show attracts 35,000 visitors and Tucson 46,500 visitors. Some \$76 million was spent on minerals and goods at the recent Tucson Show. Museums must therefore grow their collections at low cost, and make use of volunteers to help them where possible.

The best science is "done in the lab", and therefore specimens must necessarily be removed from the ground, including sometimes "Rescue Collecting" where a resource is seriously under threat. Equally, preservation of sites as an alternative to collecting may be desirable in certain circumstances. Overall a "balanced approach" is required, only removing sufficient material for needs, but ensuring that breadth and range is accessible in museum collections. The de-facto curators of mineral collections are the public at large, and since mineral specimens do not reproduce, removal may offer the best protection if the correct protocols are observed..

Commercial and/ or self financing collectors have helped to build the great collections of the world. Private collectors are at the forefront of rescuing minerals from destruction e.g. in working quarries. Museums have to work to the highest standards, with Health and Safety, Legality of ownership, Stakeholder interests etc. uppermost in mind, to ensure that they deliver

the greatest possible benefit to the public. Mineralogical curators should get more involved in influencing policies, the scale of operations should be commensurate to the reward, and it should be recognised that private and commercial collectors are vital to museums.

Robert Reekie, Wanlockhead Museum Trust

Mineral collecting and industrial archaeology

Bob reviewed a number of Scottish localities, e.g. the Garleton Hills iron mine, where a pig farm has obliterated everything of interest to the mineralogist, and Mulreesh Mine on Islay, where there is now little to see. By contrast, the Leadhills/ Wanlockhead area was cited as a success story with its thriving small museum, although it is now difficult to get underground access because of water supply and health and safety considerations, and many spoil heaps have been covered over to reduce air-borne lead pollution to safeguard local children.

The Wanlockhead Museums Trust is keen to see active collaboration and cooperation, and collecting is not seen as a problem, providing that permission is sought from the landowners.

John Brooks, The National Trust

The view of a landowner

Based in West Penwith John began by saying that whilst he was not a mineralogist, he was gaining a passion for mineralogy as a result of his interactions with collectors and other bodies. The NT is an important land owning body, founded in 1907, with more than 3 million members, and owning 800Km of coastline and 300,000Ha of land. Its activities are controlled by various acts of parliament.

Landscape conservation is a major thrust, and in the south west of England this includes a hugely varied mix of resources. In 1995 the St.Just Project was launched, aimed at preserving mining heritage, and he drew our attention to the slogan of the National Trust - "For ever for everyone"

Mineral sites in the south west are mainly RIGS sites and they are not too worried about the nature of designations. The NT is working hard to put Cornish hedges around the tops of mineshafts so that the public are safeguarded but so that underground access may also be preserved for local underground research groups. Sadly, John highlighted the situation where he usually only receives letters of complaint, and meets "cowboys" on the ground in the field - this can lead to sheer confrontation.

The way forward is to ensure a strong working dialogue with local collectors, and they now also take local schools to mine sites to educate them about their importance. A full survey of mineralogical sites has been undertaken, Colin Sparrow leads educational walks, and all actions are now linked to a watching brief on archaeological, natural history and mineralogical/geological interests. A recurring problem is managing change, generally visual impacts, but there is a need to monitor and "control" mineral collecting.

John outlined the National Trust bye-laws as applicable to mineral collecting, and highlighted the fact that, as yet, there is no policy on the collection of mineral specimens. There had however been a meeting to discuss a possible code of conduct. It can be argued that collecting can be for the "benefit of the nation" if it contributes to science, but this does not extend to commercial collecting. The way forward is to resolve differences and build bridges, to understand what it is that we have got, and to distinguish between finite and easily damaged sites, and those which are more robust.

John stated quite clearly that he wishes to see this recreational activity continue, subject to a set of guidelines. He hoped that landowners themselves would take on board finding what is there, and helping to maintain the resource, whilst contracting out specific tasks to the "experts" - us.

After a short break for tea, Peter Doyle summed up the main points raised by the various speakers and opened the Debate session.

- the Resource is not just the sites
- valuing the resource - finite or not?
- legislation as a backdrop to everything we do
- collecting vs in-situ, balancing the contextual issue (value), with the specimen
- threats and scale thereof
- dealing with threats - joined up thinking, dialogue, museum vs site, management, education
- health and safety issues - gaining access

The Quarry Products Association had been selected by English Nature to act as a gateway on policy for access to quarries. There was an awareness that insurance is becoming an issue and it may be that the Geoconservation Committee takes this up separately.

It is clear that museums in the UK cannot afford to buy specimens in the same way that wealthy Japanese and American institutions can.

"Weathering" is not always a good reason for collecting material, because of the "collateral damage" and loss of contextual data.

The resource which is presently in the hands of private collectors may eventually find its way into museum collections.

It was noted that we must not presume to make judgements for future people and their new approaches.

Zeolite science had spawned a multi-billion dollar industry, based upon an observation by a Swedish collector in 1740.

With regard to the contribution of amateurs vs professionals, it was noted that BGS makes no distinction in how it deals with enquirers, and that the contribution of amateurs is certainly acknowledged.

The risks posed to sites over time had been highlighted, but at least where a site was listed or designated in some way there should be advance warning of potential damage.

Ignorance is another threat e.g. politicians, governing bodies in museums etc.

What is "responsible collecting"? A horses for course approach is preferred, and it is noted that scientific collecting is not the only reason - aesthetics are also legitimate.

By analogy to archaeological collections the point was made that most people would not expect to have their own Lewis Chess piece - the same applies to minerals.

The incentive of providing tax breaks for bequests for museums is worthy of further discussion.

Ten years ago the fossil collecting community were engaged in very similar and heated debates. There is now a fairly well accepted position on responsible collecting.

It is hoped that conference delegates will put forward their views on what constitutes responsible collecting, based around the system now in place for fossils, this will vary from site to site, and hopefully each case can be considered on its merits.

NOTE: Formal published proceedings will be available at some future date - details will be made available once they are to hand.

CALDBECK COMMONS

Colin Eastham

Some members of the BMS may be aware that a number of fraudulent notices were posted at access points to the Caldbeck Commons. All members should be aware that the notices were **not** authorised nor posted by the Lake District National Park Authority. In the interests of clarity, the text of these notices is reproduced below:

Following further consultation with relevant bodies, notice is hereby given that the permit scheme has been withdrawn. It has been accepted that amateur collectors have an important role to play in the collecting and conservation of our mineralogical heritage.

It is also accepted that the mineral resource is more likely to be depleted by the action of the weather than by the actions of collectors. The permit scheme is therefore unnecessary and restrictive.

Accordingly the LDNPA wishes it to be known that responsible collecting, without a permit, will be allowed provided any excavations are back-filled afterwards. Underground access is at the individuals own risk and the LDNPA cannot be held responsible for any accidents resulting from this.

The weekend collecting and educational sessions already organized will go ahead as planned.

The last paragraph was repeated with Blencathra telephone number.

The only valid Lake District National Park Authority notice states the current policy as follows:-

MINERAL COLLECTING

The area of the Caldbeck commons is one of the foremost areas in Britain for mining, industrial Archaeology and mineral veins and for his reason the Commons are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

To prevent any further damage occurring to these Commons due to unauthorised mineral collecting, a policy has been agreed by the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) on land in the ownership of Dalemain Estate and the LDNPA.

This policy states that a permit is require to undertake mineral colleting. An application for a permit can be made via the LDNPA, Blencathra Centre Office.

Permits will be issued to an individual and must be carried by the person on the Commons. Failure to do so could incur a fine of up to £500,00.

A series of weekend collecting and educational sessions will be organised each year for those who do not wish to apply for a permit or are unsuccessful in obtaining one.

For further information please contact Blencathra Centre, Threlkeld, Keswick CA12 4SG (Tel: 01768 779633)

COLLECTING DOWN UNDER

David Green

In the autumn of 2002, building work at the Manchester Museum displaced me from my office and I got the chance to take some study leave in Australia. By a fortunate chance I had taken virtually none of my annual holiday and so was able to combine the study leave with five weeks of holiday, a total of ten weeks away.

To minimise the effects of jet lag I decided to travel westward around the world stopping in the western USA and Tonga on the way out, and Singapore on the way back. Each of these destinations in its way provided an opportunity to collect minerals or study in museums.

The western USA, compared to Britain at least, is a collector's paradise. There are lots of mines and other localities to visit, many of which are world famous for mineral specimens. I had already spent some time collecting in the Trigo Mountains in southern Arizona in the previous year (superb micro wulfenite and vanadinite), and so knew roughly what to expect.

The first port of call was Garnet Hill near the mining town of Ely in Nevada. I'd like to say I had researched and planned the visit there, but it happened quite by chance. A sign pointed down a dirt road announcing "state fossicking site" or something similar; and who could resist. Garnet Hill proved to be well worth the detour. It was a rounded prominence rising to about 7000 feet, with a dirt road to the summit. This was covered in scrubby trees and there was evidence of small scale working all around. Almandine garnets occurred in cavities in metamorphosed limestone. It was remarkably easy to collect specimens, and not just micros, nice hand specimens dotted with a few lustrous plane faced garnet crystals could be found, and in a couple of hours I had a good number. I chose a few, and in view of the dim view airlines take of excess baggage, left the rest for the next collector.

The Great Basin National Park 100 miles or so to the west of Ely is one of the western USA's gems, and it is little known as it is eclipsed by the Grand Canyon to the east and Yosemite to the west. Unfortunately there is absolutely no collecting on National Park land, so I had to be content with hiking the trails.

A hundred miles or so northeast, the Thomas Mountains have no such restrictions, and it was there I headed next. The Thomas mountains are world famous for topaz, red beryl and the rare mineral bixbyite. They are located about forty miles west of the town of Delta, the last five miles or so on poor dirt roads, which the hire car had some difficulty negotiating. I elected to wild camp a couple of nights in the topaz valley rather than make the drive back Delta, giving rather more

time for collecting and less miles on the tracks. Evidence of collecting on a rather grander scale was all around, someone was making a concerted effort to reduce “topaz knoll” (the name the local rock shop gave, not just my invention) in the centre of the valley to a pyramid of rubble. That they had not succeeded in this was largely due to the hardness of the rhyolite matrix.

Rhyolite occurs throughout the Thomas Range and it commonly contains cavities lined with sherry coloured topaz crystals. It was quite easy to find small crystals suitable for micromounting. The best topaz I found in a couple of days work was a little under an inch long, and of a nice sherry colour. There was also copious micro hematite, occasional bixbyite, quartz, pseudobrookite and others as yet unidentified, but no red beryl. Anyone collecting here should note the absolute necessity of several sharp chisels, topaz possesses a perfect basal cleavage which the blow of a hammer readily develops! It does not respond to shock at all well. The pleasure of collecting in an environment like this is to be somewhere so different to normal UK sites, not only mineralogically, but in terms of the scenery and wildlife. To give just one example, I had never before seen a tarantula and the slow almost robotic way these arachnids move their legs one at time was fascinating to watch.

From the western USA, the trip took me to Tonga, and I had the intention here of visiting one of the outlying volcanic islands to look for minerals. Here problems of access defeated me, the plane I needed to charter to go to the island just wasn't available. Instead I had to be content with sitting on the beach cooled by the wind blowing off the ocean, fine for half an hour, but who'd want to spend a week like that?

Australia is a big country with much of its wealth locked in minerals. I began my visit at the Melbourne Museum, a large modern building (think of an aircraft hanger, nearly, but not quite finished and you get the idea). The display at Melbourne is quite disappointing, just a few specimens are on display and even these are not particularly well labelled. The collection housed in the basement is superb, however. There are around 50,000 specimens housed in metal cabinets, they include not only fine Australian minerals, but superb British material as well. A fine twin calcite and barite from west Cumbria, matlockite from Derbyshire, bournonite from Cornwall – the usual suspects. And the collection manager, Dermot Henry, was kind enough to arrange a couple of field trips to the basalts on the south coast.

The coastal scenery south of Melbourne comprises low cliffs and bluffs made of black basalt which jut out into the ocean and zeolites and their allies are abundantly present in vesicles. At Phillip Island there was fine micro heulandite in typical transparent coffin shaped crystals along with radiating white ferrierite and occasional white platy barite. Further to the east near the village of Flinders, there was thomsonite, gmelinite and natrolite. The two museum volunteers who accompanied me here found one of the best gmelinite specimens known from this locality on the day we visited. Classic salmon pink pyramidal crystals to over an inch lined a vesicle about eight inches by four. Unfortunately it only broke into two pieces.

North from Melbourne the country changes gradually from lush pasture to scrub and eventually to desert. I'd arranged to attend a Mineralogical Society of Victoria Symposium at Broken Hill in early November, but rather than go the direct route I took in the Victorian Alps, Sydney and a couple of mines in northern New South Wales. The most interesting of these was the famous Kingsgate molybdenite locality, well described by Brian England in the Mineralogical Record. This is situated in dry eucalypt forest south of the town of Glen Innes. The workings are long abandoned, but collecting was still readily possible. Just outside the Old No. 25 pipe, a quartz vein yielded fine molybdenite crystals up to about two inches, along with abundant fibrous yellow

ferrimolybdate. The dumps were productive of yellow powdery betpakdalite, but so acid that a few shovelfulls was more than enough to deter further collecting.

West toward Broken Hill, the opal mining town of White Cliffs clings to existence in the fierce heat of the desert. This is truly outback, but if the miles of dirt road can be negotiated, the visit can be made more interesting by staying at the underground motel. Hacked from the loosely consolidated rock, this at least offers comfortable temperatures year round. Opals could be had readily from several shops and the miners in the local bar, they were surprisingly cheap, but not readily adaptable as micromounts.

Another 300 miles or so brought Broken Hill into view. I arrived in Broken Hill in the middle of a dust storm, with the temperature topping 38°C, and so was very lucky that neither the dust nor the temperature returned for the days of the symposium. The Mineralogical Society had organised trips to the Kintore opencut on the main lode, which roughly bisects the town of Broken Hill, and also to the Pinnacles Mine. The first day of the field trips was fine and clear and fifty or so cars assembled at the opencut. A digger had turned over the rock at the bottom of the pit and the seasoned collectors made their way to straight to the best spots. A vein of black coranadite had been uncovered and this produced a few superb hand specimens of smithsonite. The rest of the material found over the two days comprised micromount species familiar to any British collector who has visited Cornwall or the Caldbeck Fells. Agardite, adamite, beudantite, carminite, mimetite and many others of the arsenate suite beloved of UK micromounters, all in well crystallised specimens. The dumps of Pinnacles Mine were a little less productive, but also contained the arsenate minerals described above along with linarite, ktenasite other supergene copper minerals.

I was lucky to stay with Bernie and Margaret Day, Australian agents for the UK Journal of Mines and Minerals while in Australia, and to meet many members of the Mineralogical Society of Victoria. All were enthusiastic and keen to share their knowledge, and many were interested in exchanging for English minerals, particularly the more famous things from Cornwall and Cumbria. The superb collections which many had assembled, largely by fieldwork, is testimony to the mineralogical wealth of Australia, a large country with much potential. I had to point out that the UK was not quite so blessed on more than one occasion, especially since the demise of our hard rock mining industry.

To anyone who gets the opportunity to visit Australia I would say take your hammer along and make contact with the gem and mineral societies, they are always pleased to help.

18EME BOURSE D'ECHANGE INTERNATIONALE DU 4M(1)
ASSOCIATION DES MICRO MONTEURS DE MINERAUX DE MONTIGNY-LE-
TILLEUL
16th & 17th November 2002
Martin Stolworthy

This was the 18th year this event has been held in Montigny-le-Tilleul, and the second that a group of British collectors had attended. This year there were four, Martin Stolworthy, Martin Gale, Richard Bell and Bob Cheetham.

We arrived late on Friday afternoon to find the hall was set up and ready. We located our positions and unloaded the boxes onto the tables, but first we had to sample the beer!

After set up we were escorted to our hotel, some 7km away, and then taken for a meal in Charleroi.

Saturday morning saw us up bright and early, and on our way back to the hall. The problem was that during the night, roadworks in a nearby local village, had caused the road to be closed, and as far as we knew, our route back to the show. After a while we managed to persuade some of the workmen to escort us back to an alternative route, arriving just after 8.00am.

By this time the hall was a hive of activity, and by the start time of 10.00am, 120 delegates from all over Europe had arrived, and set-up their displays.

André Foucat, the President of the Association, read out the rules of the show in all the different languages, and the exchanges got under way. Each person attending is given a list of names and table numbers and positions in the hall. Also each is given small sheets of paper with their own table number on. These are used for making exchanges, by taking one of these slips to a table where a specimen has been found, placing it under the specimen, and then waiting for the owner to come to your own table to complete the exchange. This is a very civilised way to swap material, and causes very little complication. The exchanges are usually one to one, but more often than not, you get more than you give.

For Richard and Bob, it was their first visit, and it took them a while to get into swing of the procedure, but by mid-day they were busy running about with little parcels of specimens.

At 6.00pm the show closed and we adjourned to the bar, while the restaurant was set up for the evening meal. This lasted until quite late, when a group of us made our way to one of the local bars where we stayed until the early hours.

Sunday saw the hall with far fewer people, as some had only come for one day. The organisers had quickly rearranged the tables, and there were a few new faces attending for the Sunday only.

Some of us from the party the previous night were seen to be taking more than normal amounts of coffee, trying to clear heads before starting the swapping again.

By 3.00pm most of the tables had cleared, and we packed away our newly acquired goodies into the vehicles, leaving material we did not want to take back to the UK. This was quickly taken by members of the club to be used in the tombola next year.

The quality of the material for exchange is usually very high, and well presented. Everyone who attends must gain many new specimens for their collections. The only problem for us English is trying to interpret the labels, as many are hand-written, with different spellings of the minerals from those we are used to. This is all part of the fun, and gives many happy hours of research when going through the material later at home.

This had been another hugely successful and well organised show. We extend our thanks to André Foucat, Alain Loebart and Francis Hubert, and all other members of the 4M club, for the hospitality they had given to us and all the rest of the attendees. Roll on 15th & 16th November 2003

GRANDE-SYNTHE - 4/5 OCTOBER 2003

Tim Riley

Grande-Synthe, a town near Dunkerque, France, will be venue on the 4th and 5th October 2003 for the 20th annual meeting of the Association Française de Microminéralogie (AFM). In brief, a weekend of micromount exchanges with supporting slide-shows, competitions (optional) and food. Note that we allow exchanges only (on a one-for-one basis) - no selling and no buying.

Grande-Synthe, I am told, is easily accessed on the Eurotunnel rail/road network from London and elsewhere. It is about as near as we can get to Britain without getting our feet wet, so this is your big chance. You are invited! We hope that some of you will come and participate. Note that in 2004 we shall be in Bordeaux and Lyon is proposed for 2005.

Details of the meeting and, probably, ideas for accommodation will be available, probably in early summer, from the organiser:

Jean Leconte
17 Rue des Vignes
28500 MONTREUIL
France

Tel: 00 33 2 37 435305

E-mail: jeanleconte@aol.com

Meanwhile, you will find an outline of AFM and their exchange weekend in my article in BMS Newsletter 49 (February 1998). You can also visit their website at <http://www.micromineral.org>. (As an aside, in 2001/2002 over 349 days, 62,015 different computers visited the site - an average of 177 each day. Information from AFM Bulletin No.78, 2002.)

In October 2002, we held our 19th annual meeting in Rosenan, near Mulhouse, Alsace, lying close to several international frontiers. We had good participation from German, Belgian, Italian, Swiss and one Spanish micromounter to add variety to the French representation. No need to be a member of AFM to take part. However, as usual, no British. - living in France I don't count.). Let's make 2003 the year that **you** enter Europe!

PS Bring a screwdriver. Your plugs don't always fit our sockets.

MINERALS OF SCOTLAND, PAST AND PRESENT, LIVINGSTONE, A.

Kevin Johns

NMS Publishing Ltd, Edinburgh, 2002. 240pp, 132 colour and 78 b/w photographs and illustrations. Price £35. ISBN 1 901663 46 9

Following the foreword by Dr Richard Pattrick, Reader in Mineralogy, University of Manchester, there is a brief introduction by the author in which he explains the contents of the book and also points out what the book would not include; 'For the minerals, emulation of Heddles' two volume classic... was never intended.'

There follows brief details of Scotland's divergent physical landscape, followed by a more detailed account of its geological history.

The first major section of the book, Collectors and Collections (83 pages), describes the important role that collectors and their collections have made to the understanding of Scottish mineralogy. The importance is stressed of the relationship that should exist between amateur and professional mineralogists enabling important mineral discoveries to be available for further research. Through this relationship many important collections have been donated to the various museums to form the national collections. Details of a group of contemporary collectors are also included, including Kemp Meikle, a BMS member who was awarded the Founders Cup for 1992/93.

The second major section, The Minerals (48 pages), describes and gives brief histories of some species and their occurrences. Excellent photographs alongside the appropriate text form the basis of this section. Following this are 12 colour plates of common and unusual minerals not featured in the text.

There follow three appendices; first an up-to-date glossary of the 552 species known to occur in Scotland, second a list of minerals first discovered in Scotland and third a list of minerals realised to occur in Scotland between 1991 and 1996 following extensive literature searches and personal communications with other collectors by the author.

The book is concluded by a very useful list of references and bibliographies.

Within the remit which the author set himself I found the book well laid out, the photographs clear and sharp although I was disappointed with the photo of the type specimen of caledonite, lanarkite and leadhillite which was blurred. The text was informative, especially with regard to the history of Scottish collectors. Parts of the information about the contemporary collectors seemed a bit 'wooden'. Detailed locality information together with the minerals found there, such as laid out in 'Minerals of the Caldbeck Fells', would have been useful but this was not in the context of what the author was trying to achieve. If this had not been the case, there could very well have been a mass migration of collectors north this summer armed with new locality details!

This said, I have looked forward to the book and have not been disappointed. It is apparent that Alex has devoted many hours of research and consulted many people and authorities. He is to be congratulated on completing a very important account of Scottish mineralogy and recording the history of its collections and collectors. I thoroughly recommend this book to anyone interested in British mineralogy and, as there was only a short print run (1000 copies), I would advise he or she to get a copy soon.

CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS
Roy Starkey

From the Sunday Times 2/2/03

An article about winning a place at private secondary schools featured a piece about selection procedures. The article says "One school asks candidates to bring along an item of interest to talk about. Why don't you take along your mineral collection, I suggest, thinking this will give an impression of a studious hobby. Naah, Cal replies, I'll take my judo kit. Good call. The boy who went in after him was clutching a very boring-looking piece of quartz".

Commission on Museums Website

The Commission website is now permanently hosted as a sub-site of the Society of Mineral Museum Professionals - the address is www.smmp.net/IMA-CM. This site hosts the catalogue of Type Mineral Specimens. Members may be interested to visit the Site and learn more about British Type material.

Recent Papers from the Mineralogical Magazine of Interest to Mineral Collectors

C.G.Smith and E.R.Phillips, 2002. Cumingtonite in the Dalradian of NE Scotland. Vol.66, p337-352.

F.C.Hawthorne, M.A.Cooper, J.D.Grice, A.C.Roberts and N.Hubbard, 2002. Description and crystal structure of bobkingite, a new mineral from New Cliffe Hill Quarry, Stanton-under-Bardon, Leicestershire, UK. p301-311.

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

Tim Riley

David Green's article on "Archival material" in the last Newsletter (no.63) prompts this note:

The labels and glues on my micromount boxes are of all sorts and, because the majority are obtained by exchange, of unknown composition and characteristics. However, I don't want to re-box or re-label, as this in itself would reduce the archival interest of the collection. Don't forget also, that the label you want to remove is usually the one that resists all attempts up to disintegration. However, one can compensate in part for this inherent failing in archival worth.

Plastic micromount boxes can be easily scratched - engraved if you like - with a suitable tool. Using a small pointed cold chisel - perhaps burin is a better word - I scratch the catalogue number of the specimen on the side of its box **and** lid, always in the same place if feasible relative to the labels and therefore quickly found, but almost invisible to casual inspection. My chisel resembles a pencil-stub and is stamped "habero C.V.LUFTH. GERMANY" - but no doubt there is already something suitable in your toolbox.

The numbers engraved are immune to damp - the bugbear of labels - and give an identity if the latter ever float away. Short of chemical attack or meltdown, they are permanent. Of course, all is lost if your collection and catalogue become separated - as happens!

In the short-term, identically numbered boxes and lids are enormously useful when examining several specimens simultaneously - such that each finds its proper half afterwards. Ideally, one numbers the boxes as the collection grows. If not, you will have to start from scratch!

REFERENCE COLLECTION

While updates to the collection are listed in subsequent pages, Max Wirth writes to say that he has now entered the BMS database into EXCEL '98. This is the full list of specimens as well as the comments on each one. This takes up about 800 Kb. If any BMS member would like a copy, please send Max an empty disc and he will let you have it, free of charge. (Maybe a stamp would be nice!) Small samples of the table are shown below illustrating two different sort sequences using Excel's sorting facility.

Sorted by Mineral Name

2052 ABHURITE	Bann's Shoal	St.Ives Cornwall	Jewson C.	SW 500.400
889 ACANTHITE	Boyleston quarry	Barrhead Scotland	Meikle K.	NS 249.659
2115 ACANTHITE	Hilderston mine	Bathgate Scotland	Meikle K.	NS 990.715
2120 ACTINOLITE	Downings Pier	Donegal Ireland	Foy H.	C 009.309
2186 ACTINOLITE	Shap granite q.	Cumbria	Leppington M.	SZ 290.920
94 ACTINOLITE	Scourie	Sutherland Scot.	Meikle K.	NC 180.439
1089 ADAMITE	Driggith mine	Carrock Cumbria	Cooper M.	NY 327.352
1519 ADAMITE	Sandbeds mine	Caldbeck Cumbria	Wirth M.	NY 332.362
1072 ADAMITE (CUPRIAN)	Deer Hills area	Caldbeck Cumbria	Bell R.	NY 313.366
958 ADAMITE (CUPRIAN)	Driggith mine	Caldbeck Cumbria	Dickinson J.	NY 327.354
923 ADAMITE (CUPRIAN)	Driggith mine	Caldbeck Cumbria	Hubbard N.	NY 327.354
867 ADAMITE (CUPRIAN)	Netherrow Brow	Caldbeck Cumbria	Rothwell M.	NY 323.371

Sorted by grid reference

474 SULPHUR	Old Millclose m.	Matlock Derbysh.	Braithwaite P.	SK 258.618
1716 MARCASITE	Millclose mine	Derbyshire	Neall T.	SK 258.624
605 MALACHITE	Middleton Flats	Derbyshire	Wolfe M.	SK 275.570
1374 HEMIMORPHITE	Masson Hill q.	Matlock Derbysh.	Braithwaite P.	SK 285.592
1100 WULFENITE	Ball Eye mine	Matlock Derbysh.	Rothwell M.	SK 286.574
2283 HEMIMORPHITE	Ball Eye m. Cromford	Derbyshire	Ince,F.	SK 286.575
2284 HEMIMORPHITE	Ball Eye m. Cromford	Derbyshire	Ince,F.	SK 286.575
1211 WULFENITE	Ball Eye mines	Cromford Derbysh.	Ince F.	SK 286.575
1212 WULFENITE	Ball Eye mines	Cromford Derbysh.	Ince F.	SK 286.575
516 AURICHALCITE	Black Ox mine	Matlock Derbysh.	Braithwaite P.	SK 286.592

BRANCH NEWS

DEVON AND CORNWALL

Chris Jewson

The following dates have been booked for the remaining meetings in 2003 (all Saturdays):

13th September and 29th November

The meetings will be held in the Long Room at Liskeard Public Rooms, 3 West Street, Liskeard. They will start at around 1:30pm and we aim to finish at about 5:00pm. There will be a charge of £1.00 per head to cover the cost of room hire and refreshments.

Passport holding visitors from the United Kingdom will be welcome.

SOUTH EAST

Austin Lockwood

(EDITED NOTES OF THE 79th MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2003 AT THE RINGWAY COMMUNITY CENTRE, BARING ROAD, GROVE PARK, LONDON.)

The branch invited a number of members of the two local Rockwatch groups to the meeting. Ten enthusiastic youngsters attended the meeting many of them bringing their own microscopes and light sources. Branch members kindly provided a good supply of micromount material for the children to sort through and, at the end of the afternoon, each Rockwatcher had a little pile of 'Jousi' boxes, with their selected specimens duly mounted on mineral tack, and all properly identified.

In addition to our own raffle, we organised a separate 'free raffle' for the children and we just happened to have ten prizes available in the form of mineral specimens, so there were no tears.

Richard Belson kindly mounted a display of fluorescent minerals, in the blacked out kitchen, which aroused a lot of interest, not only from the youngsters and their parents, but also from our own members. Thank you Richard for the trouble you took in explaining these to us. I would also like to thank all the members for giving the children and their parents such a warm welcome at the meeting and particularly those who brought along 'freebies' for them.

The children and their parents thoroughly enjoyed the visit and there is no doubt that the venture was a complete success. I suggest that in future years we make our February meeting a Rockwatch meeting organised on the same basis. What do the members think?

(I have been able to obtain some useful publicity for Rockwatch by securing the front page editorial of the March issue of *Down to Earth* under the heading 'Putting young people first'. It is my view that well established mineral societies, such as the BMS and the Russell Society, should be encouraging young people to take an interest in mineralogy and associated subjects.)

As a further step, some of the local Rockwatch members were invited to attend the Russell Society South East Branch meeting on Sunday, 6 April 2003 where Bob Maurer was due to give a

talk and display presentation on 'Mineral and fossil collecting in Bolivia'. We just happened to have one of our Rockwatch members who comes from Bolivia and he attended the meeting with his family

The dates established for our remaining meetings in 2003 are as follows: Sundays 10 August and 16 November. Meetings commence at 3.00 p.m. but we start setting up at 2.00 p.m. and, at the same time, we put the kettle on.

OUTSIDE EVENT



Vicki Packard manning the BMS display, mounted by the South East Branch at the Geologists' Association Annual Reunion held at University College London on Saturday 2 November 2002

AN APOLOGY Mike Dannatt

New members and the more observant longer standing members may have noticed that there has been a long gap between newsletters. This has been entirely my fault and I must offer my apologies to everyone for letting you down. I am afraid that a number of personal issues not unconnected with taking a decision to apply for early retirement - OK not all that early - kept me very much preoccupied during the first four months of the year. When it got to May, I suggested to Roy that I should combine the normal February issue with the June issue. I can now report that my application has been approved to take effect before 31st October 2003. There should be no

excuse in future so please keep those articles coming in! (*This isn't tucked away inside for any reason other than the newsletter required tight editing to keep it to a multiple of 4 pages!*)

WOOD SORREL, OXALATES AND STONES

Max Wirth.

Wood sorrel is a nice little herb that we find in the woods (where else). Its 'academic' name is oxalis, the Greek name for sorrel and derived from the Greek *oxys* for acid (oxygen generates acid). Rhubarb (the foreign rhu, rhu of the barbarians) leaves contain oxalic acid, I once tried to clean a pyrite by boiling it with rhubarb leaves; it did not work. What on earth has this got to do with minerals? Well, consider weddellite, calcium oxalate, one of the few minerals derived from an organic acid (whewellite is another and is also calcium oxalate). Steve Rust found weddellite at the Milltown quarry near Ashover (I like to boast, so did I). Steve described it in the UK Journal of Mines and Minerals (No 10, p.18), which also tells us that this mineral was first recorded from a deep sea core bored in the Weddell Sea of Antarctica. Hence the name! Where else is it found? Well, believe it or not, in some people's kidneys as kidney stones. Kidney stones, 'academic' name calculus, because stones were used for calculation on an abacus, (calculus Latin, small stone). So, where else does one find calcium oxalate? I found it hard to believe, but I read the following in the New Scientist (December 21st 2002, p.72). John Corner, a botanist in Singapore heard that beroks (pig-tailed macaque monkeys) loved picking things off the canopy of the rainforest. With the help of his trained berok he gathered and identified hundreds of new plants and trees. One day however his monkey must have picked something dangerous and died later. He had eaten the fruit of the fishtail palm. The fruit and leaves of this are covered in highly irritant, needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate.

Next time you clean a specimen with oxalic acid, remember there is more to it than meets the eye.

Oh, by the way, if anyone has a spare whewellite for the BMS, or better still for me, let me know.

ADDITIONS TO THE BMS REFERENCE COLLECTION

A. Doug Morgan

Since my last report on the reference collection there has been a considerable number of additions from members as can be seen from the database printout, and putting these into the collection has occupied me for some time at the expense of getting a note in the newsletter, for which I offer my apologies. This has not been without problems, particularly with my handling of the database which I now believe I have got the master of, and easing of box lids which Neil Hubbard has now cured with a new supply of boxes.

Having read David Green's article on glues for labels and the printing thereon I wonder if I should be worrying about the UHU paper glue I use for sticking the labels inside the boxes? I have examined the early specimens archived by Max and so far their labels are not showing signs of deterioration.

The new additions were donated by the following members:

Max Worth sent a nice set of micros which included synchysite-ce, allanite, and bertrandite from the Shap granite quarry and also a specimen of wavellite from Kit Hill, Callington, Cornwall.

Peter Hay supplied an atacamite specimen from Lelant foreshore, and these were followed by twenty seven specimens from Frank Ince, several of these having at least two associated minerals per specimen. These include specimens of woodwardite and vesignieite. Then came an interesting collection of ettringites and a gypsum from John Betterton who described the finding of this on page 13 of News Letter 59. I believe there is some shuddering of the purists about this being derived from weathered concrete and not from a natural mineral source but since the collection is a *reference* collection of what might be discovered in Britain these have been put into the Collection.

Those of us who knew the late Cynthia Peat of Canada must have envied her superb mineral collection. She was collecting micros in Cornwall several years ago, and left a quantity of rock from Wheal Gorland to the BMS which her husband Jim asked me to take back to England during my visit last year. By sorting this in the laboratory of my son-in-law Prof. W. Woodward at Guelph University very late one night (he has a good Zeiss stereomicroscope) and leaving most of my clothing back in Canada I was able to bring a few kilos back, from which I extracted three clinoclase and one scorodite micros. These are not wonderful specimens, but Cynthia would have liked these to be in the Collection.

Then came the *pièce de résistance*, a fine collection of fifty four specimens from Peter Braithwaite collected from the Cavendish Mill Dump, Stoney Middleton in Derbyshire. The source of the dump material was the Milldam Mine at Great Hucklow, Derbyshire, which is now closed and flooded, and the dump no longer exists. Peter says that his fascination with this site is the wide variation in the form, colour, and associations of the minerals, fluorite for example coming in over 25 variations, most of which are included in the donated collection. Also included are examples of smithsonite and barite, together with wulfenite and anglesite which are extremely rare for this locality.

I am left wondering if this surge in donations to the Collection signals a change in the thinking of our senior and more experienced Members, who are now substituting quality for quantity in their bulging cabinets and also we hope mounting them as *micromounts* in true fashion, and wish to dispose of a proportion of their hard won specimens. Should this be the case, the Curator may need to add some form of selection to his/her fascinating workload. In this respect, as with Max, although I have no complaints at present, I would like to emphasise our request that donors should fill in a file card for each specimen, in legible writing, including the NGR. and not leave this for the curator to do.

Incidentally, our Website now has general pictures of the Collection, and I understand there is a move to photograph choice specimens from the 2000 plus available and include these. I also wonder if a true Curator and archivist should back up these modern electronic databases and digital photos with tried and trusted file-cards and photo negatives. I think Max had the right idea with his file cards!

(A table of new specimens appears on the next two pages.)

No	Species	Location	Area	Donor	Nat Grid Ref
2267	MILARITE	Shap granite Quarry.	Cumbria	Wirth M.	NY 558.084
2268	SYNCHYSITE-CE	Shap granite Quarry	Cumbria	Wirth M.	558.084
2269	ALLANITE	Shap granite Quarry	Cumbria	Wirth M.	NY558 084
2270	BERTRANDITE	Shap granite Quarry	Cumbria	Wirth M.	NY 559.084
2271	CARPHOLITE	Kit Hill Callington	Cornwall	Wirth M.	SX 374.713
2272	WOODWARDITE	South Caradon Liskeard	Cornwall	Ince F.	SX 266.700
2273	GOETHITE	West Caradon Liskeard	Cornwall	Ince F.	SX 264.700
2274	LIBETHENITE	West Caradon Liskeard	Cornwall	Ince.F.	SX 264.700
2275	SIDERITE	Pryce's lode South Crofty	Camborne Cornwall	Ince F.	SW 667.414
2276	AZURITE	Wood mine Alderly Edge	Cheshire	Ince F.	SJ 995.776
2277	LINARITE	Porth Neigl Llanengan	Abersoch N Wales	Ince F.	SW 295.267
2278	SCORODITE	Wheal maid. United Downs	St.Day Cornwall	Ince F.	SW 739.425
2279	PHARMACOSIDERITE/ SCORODITE	Cligga Head Peranporth	Cornwall	Ince F.	SW 738 538
2280	PYROMORPHITE	Moss Rake Bradwell Moor	Derbyshire	Ince F.	SK 14- 80-
2281	AURICHALCITE/ BARITE	Mouldridge Mine Pike Hall	Derbyshire	Ince F.	SK 194.516
2282	HEMIMORPHITE	Mouldridge Mine Pike Hall	Derbyshire	Ince F.	SK 194.516
2283	HEMIMORPHITE/ FLUORITE	Ball Eye Mine Cromford	Derbyshire	Ince F.	SK 286.575
2284	HEMIMORPHITE	Ball Eye Mine Cromford	Derbyshire	Ince F.	SK 286.575
2285	AURICHALCITE/BARITE/ CALCITE	Judkins Qry. Nuneaton	Warwickshire	Ince F.	SP 346.940
2286	DOLOMITE/GOETHITE	BuddonWoodQuarry	Mountsorrell Leics	Ince F.	SK 565.152
2287	VESIGNEITE /CALCITE	New Cliffe Hill Quarry.	S.u. Bardon Leics	Ince F.	SK 456.110
2288	CUPRITE	New Cliffe Hill Quarry	S.u. Bardon Leics	Ince F.	SK 456.110
2289	MALACHITE/CUPRITE	New Cliffe Hill Quarry	S.u. Bardon Leics	Ince F.	SK 456.110
2290	MALACHITE/BARITE/ CALCITE	Longcliffe Qry. Shepshed	Leicestershire	Ince F.	SK 493.171
2291	BARITE/DOLOMITE	Newhurst Quarry, Shepshed	Leicestershire	Ince F.	SK 485 180
2292	AURICHALCITE/CALCITE	Newhurst Quarry	Shepshed Leics.	Ince F.	SK 485 180
2293	SMITHSONITE/CALCITE	Newhurst Quarry	Shepshed Leics.	Ince F.	SK 485 180
2294	CERUSSITE	Newhurst Quarry	Shepshed Leics.	Ince F.	SK 485 180
2295	MOTTRAMITE	Newhurst Qry Shepshed	Leicestershire	Ince F.	SK 485 180
2296	DOLOMITE	Newhursy Qry. Shepshed	Leicestershire	Ince F.	SK 485 180
2297	CERUSSITE	Thieveley mine Dean Scout	Holme Chapel Lancs	Ince F.	SD 873 277
2298	CERUSSITE/BARITE/ FLUORITE	Darlton Tarmac quarry	Derbyshire	Ince F.	SK 216 755
2299	CERUSSITE/BARITE/ FLUORITE	Darlton Qry Stoney Middleton	Derbyshire	Ince F.	SK 216 755
2300	ETTRINGITE	Edgcumb Park Crowthorne Edgcumb Pk Clinker dump	Berkshire	Betterton J.	SU 643 828
2301	ETTRINGITE	Edgcumb Park Crowthorne	Berkshire	Betterton J.	SU 643 828
2302	ETTRINGITE	Edgcumb Park Crowthorne	Berkshire	Betterton J.	SU 643 828
2303	ETTRINGITE	Edgcumb Park Crowthorne	Berkshire	Betterton J.	SU 643 828
2304	ETTRINGITE	Edgcumb Park Crowthorne	Berkshire	Betterton J.	SU 643 828
2305	GYP SUM	Edgcumb Park Crowthorne	Berkshire	Betterton J.	SU 643 828
2306	CLINOCLASE	Wheal Gorland St Day	Cornwall	Peat C.	SW 731 427
2307	CLINOCLASE	Wheal Gorland St Day	Cornwall	Peat C.	SW 731 427
2308	CLINOCLASE	Wheal Gorland St Day	Cornwall	Peat C.	SW 731 427
2309	SCORODITE	Wheal Gorland St Day	Cornwall	Peat C.	SW 731 427
2310	ANGLESITE	Cavendish Mill Dump	Stoney Mid. Derby	Braithwaite P.	SK 177 781
2311	BARITE	Cavendish Mill Dump	Stoney Mid. Derby	Braithwaite P.	SK 177 781
2312	BARITE	Cavendish Mill Dump	Stoney Mid. Derby	Braithwaite P.	SK 177 781
2313	BARITE	Cavendish Mill Dump	Stoney Mid. Derby	Braithwaite P.	SK 177 781
2314	BARITE	Cavendish Mill Dump	Stoney Mid. Derby	Braithwaite P.	SK 177 781
2315	BARITE	Cavendish Mill Dump	Stoney Mid. Derby	Braithwaite P.	SK 177 781

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New members

Peter Brindle	The Rectory, Town Street, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 8PN	
Gary Davies	10 Gaudi Walk, Mount Pleasant Walk, Rogerstone, Gwent, NP10 0AG	01633 660937
Gordon Freeman	45 Lansdowne Road, Laleham, Staines, Middlesex, TW18 1HH	01784 453402
Vernon Marks	56 Rochester Avenue, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3DW	0208 460 2354 vernonmarks1@aol.com
Andy Tindle	11 Gladstone Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks, MK16 0EU	01908 653732 a.g.tindle@open.ac.uk

Changes of address, telephone or e-mail details:

Member	New or corrected details.
Richard and Bridget Belson	<i>New e-mail address: dickbrid.11waldemar@bt.openworld.com</i>
Peter and Pam Fitzgerald	74 Palmeira Way, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA7 4UX <i>Tel: 020 8304 1722</i>
Sheila Harper	<i>To add e-mail address: sheila.harper@virgin.net</i>
Tony Lee	Lower Pennant Farm, Lanlivery, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 5DD <i>Tel: 01208 873584</i>
John Powers	7 Woodland View, Holsworthy, Devon, EX22 6DD <i>Tel: 01409 253490</i>
Malcolm Southwood	<i>New e-mail address malcolm.southwood@bigpond.com</i>
Roy Starkey	<i>Please note that Roy's e-mail address will change at the end of June with a new address t.b.a. If you have problems please telephone.</i>

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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The deadline for articles for Newsletter 65 will be 1st JuneOctober 2003. Please let me have contributions as soon as possible. Articles or reports on PC disc are welcome - preferably saved in RTF - rich text format. Articles sent by E-mail can either be "attached" or be 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.