

BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER NO. 24

NOVEMBER 1988

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BMS SYMPOSIUM 1988

Mike Rothwell

The 7th Annual Symposium took place on the 1st and 2nd October 1988 at the Department of Geology Leicester University. Once again numbers attending exceeded those of the previous year, so much so that latecomers, i.e. those that arrived on time, had difficulty in finding space to park their microscopes etc. The Committee are going to have to consider putting a limit on numbers for this popular event. After a quick cup of coffee the Chairman opened proceedings by welcoming one and all and in particular the nine members attending the Symposium for the first time and three guests : Alf Mayor from Bath and Cynthia and Jim Peat from Canada. Max Wirth then spoke for a few minutes about the Society reference

collection and also assured everyone that a bi-pyramid and an octahedron are somewhat similar. The first talk, by Mick Cooper, was on "wulfenite,". Mick described its occurrence, crystal habit and some of the better known wulfenite sites around the world. The talk was illustrated throughout by superb slides taken by the speaker. Mick was followed by a touch of the heavy stuff, some more chemistry from Trevor Bridges. Due to the organiser's poor proof reading there was some confusion as to what exactly chemistry Trevor was going to talk about but in the end all was revealed. Trevor talked about the chemistry of primary mineral formation and, as we have come to expect, made a complex subject seem relatively straight forward. Although he left us with a couple of enigmas he did manage to convince us that the yellow powder often observed on freshly broken surfaces of sphalerite is not greenockite. Nigel Hoppe brought us up to date on recent finds in Cornwall. Nigel, who has spent a lot of time in Cornwall recently, is well acquainted with currently productive sites. This knowledge Nigel kindly shared with us during his talk. As is now customary the afternoon was spent in buying and selling, exchanging, chatting and generally renewing acquaintances. There were two new attractions this year : John Faithfull had the University's SEM and energy dispersive X-ray analyser switched on, offering opportunity for delegates to see their specimens greatly magnified or to find out whether or not the unusual specimen was something interesting or otherwise; David Middleton held a competition to choose the most interesting micro. This was won by Roy Starkey with a zeunerite specimen from Cliggahead. The annual auction took place late on Saturday afternoon. The greatly improved quality of the specimens for auction was reflected in the handsome sum of nearly £170.00 realised for Society funds by John and Pam Pearce. Roy Starkey was auctioneer and he was helped by Trevor Bridges, Neil Hubbard and David Middleton. All deserve our thanks and congratulations for their splendid efforts.

On Saturday evening a buffet meal for 75 delegates was arranged in the Park and City lounges of the University Catering Department's,

Charles Wilson Building.

This was followed by a light hearted quiz organised and presented by Roy Starkey. The team with the winning score was made up of Trevor Bridges, Neil Hubbard, Ron Weaver, Mick Cooper, Max Wirth and John Betterton. They received a couple of bottles of wine to toast their success and a computer designed certificate apiece. Certificates were also presented to the team achieving their lowest score, my memory however cannot recall the names. Sunday morning saw delegates assembling early to make the most of the time available. The official proceedings commenced with the Society's AGM, details of which will be reported elsewhere. Bob Reekie then gave a very interesting talk on Dr. S. J. Shand who could be described as an early micromounter. Amongst other things Bob's slides showed some of the ingenious methods used by Dr. Shand to mount his specimens. The last formal presentation at this year's symposium was by Mike Rothwell who described two sites in North Wales, one on Snowdon and the other at Llangynog. The former is noted for an occurrence of cerium rich lanthanite (rare earth carbonate) and the latter for a wide range of copper, lead and zinc secondaries, especially aurichalcite. Roy Starkey then brought this morning's proceedings to a close with a short description of a meeting he had attended on the subject of "Mineralogy and Museums" and in particular the interface between the amateur and professional. An article written by Roy on this meeting will be published in a future issue of the Russell Society Journal. The Sunday afternoon was spent in final exchanges, signing the forthcoming activity sheets (field trips, museum visits, etc.) and having a last look at the exhibits on Topographical Mineralogy provided by Roy Starkey, on a Corundium occurrence on the Isle of Lewis - courtesy of Bob Reekie and the Royal Scottish Museum, and on Carrock Mine by Mike Rothwell, before packing for the journey home. The organiser wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the Symposium both in a practical way and by simply coming along. See you all next year, but please note the date is a week earlier, that is Saturday/Sunday 23rd-24th September 1989.

Minutes of the 5th Annual General Meeting of the British Micromount Society held at Leicester University on Sunday 2nd October 1988 at 10.15 a.m. There were 72 members present.

1. MINUTES

The Chairman stated that the minutes of the 1987 A.G.M. had appeared in Newsletter number 21 and had been circulated before the meeting and asked that they be taken as read. This was proposed by Trevor Bridges, seconded by Nigel Hoppe and passed unanimously.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.01 **Membership fees**

Despite a small increase in expenses the financial position was sound and no increase in membership fees would be necessary this year.

2.02 **Reference Collection**

Max Wirth, the Curator, reported that the collection was used infrequently. To improve its utilisation a set of 10 superficially similar minerals from the collection was being put together along with accompanying notes on points of identification. This set would be circulated to interested members. A further suggestion to produce a catalogue produced a high level of interest.

2.03 **Field Meetings**

Due to the ever increasing numbers of members wishing to attend these no volunteers were available to act as leaders. The committee had, therefore, decided to hold several simultaneous field trips to different locations and restrict the numbers attending each to a manageable level. On this basis leaders had been found for trips to North Devon, Leadhills and the Caldbeck Fells. No volunteers were forthcoming for other suggested venues.

2.04 **Spring Meeting**

The suggested 1988 meeting did not take place due to the lack of an organiser. No one was prepared to organise a 1989 meeting either.

2.05 **F.L.A.G.S.**

Affiliation would continue for the forthcoming year.

2.06 **Goldschmidt**

The difficulties in photocopying if all 9 volumes were hardbound was discussed. A number of possible solutions were suggested and it was eventually decided that Muriel Tissington, the Archivist, should take responsibility for them loaning them out on application. Mick Cooper agreed to write an article in the newsletter explaining how to select and reference volumes.

2.07 **Amendment to the Constitution**

To assist the finances of the Society, the Treasurer made the following resolution.

That clause 10 of the Constitution be amended as follows :-

The words "shall be disposed of in accordance with the wishes of the meeting" be deleted and the following be submitted therefore :-

"shall be donated to Societies or Organisations whose aims and objectives are in the fields of Mineralogy, Geology or associated subjects or to some Registered Charity as agreed by the meeting."

Acceptance of this resolution was proposed by John Dickinson, seconded by Kemp Meikle and carried by 71 votes for, nil against with 1 abstention.

3. **OFFICER'S REPORTS**

3.01 **Membership Secretary**

Neil Hubbard reported that we had gained 17 new members, lost 6. The nett gain of 11 meant that the total membership stood at 154. There were no

members from Wales and only 2 from Scotland. Membership fees remained at £3.50 single and £5.00 family membership.

3.02 **Treasurer**

Sidney Freeman reported that as at the end of December 1987 - the end of the Society's financial year - the Society had £1350 in hand. Mike Leppington suggested a change to the closing date of the Society's financial year to bring it nearer to the date of the A.G.M. This was supported by the Treasurer and a date of 31st May was suggested. This date was proposed by Peter Wallace and seconded by Trevor Bridges. The vote was 68 in favour, nil against and 4 abstentions.

3.03 **Chairman**

Mick Wolfe reported that membership continues to grow with the finances in a healthy position. He expressed disappointment at the failure of the proposed Spring Meeting but announced the possibility of a 'Wet Chemistry' weekend at Salford University during the Easter Holidays 1989 if sufficient support existed. Mike Rothwell and David Green were prepared to organise this. Roy Starkey was invited to report on his conference paper regarding the relationship between the amateur mineralogist and museums. In an effort to build on this initiative the committee had sent to the 4 national museums and the B.G.S copies of newsletters 1 to 21. The Chairman reported that both the Royal Scottish Museum and the National Museum of Wales had replied, to date, requesting further copies as available. It was pointed out by Trevor Bridges that publication of a 'new find' in the newsletter may preclude its acceptance in more official professional journals at a later date. Max Wirth reminded members that grid references would be made available to the public by this new circulation. The Chairman continued by advising the meeting that five museum visits had been arranged for the winter

months. Members wishing to attend should add their names to lists pinned up. The Chairman expressed the Society's regret at the sudden death of Ted Lynch earlier this year and recorded the Society's sympathy to his widow and family. He reminded members that the Society cannot condone unauthorised entry to sites by members and emphasised that such action was their personal responsibility. The Chairman then brought to the attention of members present the apparent 'northern' bias growing within it. He cited as examples the majority of committee members and contributions to the newsletter over the last 12 months. He reminded them that it was the British Micromount Society. In conclusion he thanked the committee and members who had helped him during his first year in office.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 4.01 24 nomination forms had been returned all nominating existing officers with the exception of the Secretary who was standing down. The existing Chairman, Treasurer and Membership Secretary were re-elected unanimously as proposed by Richard Belson and seconded by Peter Reynolds. The Chairman called for a volunteer for the position of Secretary and Shirley Adrian agreed to stand. Roy Starkey proposed, Richard Bell seconded and she was unanimously elected.
- 4.02 Other members holding honorary posts Mike Rothwell - Symposium Organiser, Mick Cooper - Newsletter Editor, Max Wirth - Curator, Muriel Tissington - Archivist & Mike Leppington - Auditor, all agreed to stand again for re-election for a further year and were re-elected unanimously.
- 4.03 Mike Rothwell suggested that the 1989 Symposium should be brought forward to the last weekend in September i.e. 23rd/24th. This was put to the vote and carried

with 3 against and 7 abstentions.

- 4.04 Trevor Bridges proposed a vote of thanks to all who had helped in the organisation of the Society in the last year. This was carried unanimously.

5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 5.01 Dorothy Merritt proposed that the Society either buys or borrows a microphone for use by speakers at the next Symposium as not all lecturers could be heard adequately at the back of the auditorium. This was seconded by Rex Bingham and carried unanimously.
- 5.02 John Betterton said that he could photocopy information on new minerals published since 1975.
- 5.03 John Aldridge proposed that the Society make a bulk purchase of micromount boxes for sale at the next years Symposium. This was carried by a small majority with 14 abstentions.
- 5.04 Ken Luff raised the need for insurance cover for members whilst on field trips and indoor meetings. The Chairman agreed that the committee would look into this.
- 5.05 Bob Reekie said the Royal Museum of Scotland were hoping to establish a Micromount Collection.
- 5.06 It had been decided by the Committee with the approbation of all members present that the Founders Cup this year would be presented to Mike Rothwell for his contribution and hard work for the Society as its Symposium Organiser.
- 5.07 A presentation was made to Roy Starkey in appreciation of his time in office as founder and Chairman of the Society from a collection made with the members of the B.M.S. Thanks and a small gift were also made to his wife Mary.
- 5.08 Certificates were presented to the top (and bottom) teams in the quiz held after the buffet on Saturday evening.

5.09 David Middleton proposed a vote of thanks, seconded by the Chairman for Elsie Hansford on her retirement as Secretary for the work and for the time and effort she had put in during her period as Secretary. This was passed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 11.35 a.m. The next A.G.M. will be Sunday 24th September 1989 at Leicester University.

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EASTER MINI SYMPOSIUM

Mick Wolfe

Peter Braithwaite has kindly agreed to organise a mini symposium at Leicester University during their Easter Holidays 1989. This will be a less structured two day meeting than our usual Autumn Symposium and thus will give members more chance to chat, exchange, buy and sell. Those interested in attending should fill in the enclosed form and return it to Peter Braithwaite as soon as possible to enable him to make the necessary arrangements.

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1989 FIELD TRIPS

Mick Wolfe

Three field trips have been organised for the 1989 Mayday weekend so far. They are to North Devon with David Ifold, to Wanlockhead with Jean Spence and David Green and to the Caldbeck Fells with Mick Cooper. I was hoping that more members would come forward to organise field trips to Mid Wales, North Wales, Derbyshire, Mid Pennines, Leicestershire, Cornwall etc. There is still time if anyone is prepared to organise one to get it circulated. As indicated at the symposium all field trips will have a restriction placed on the numbers attending due to problems of organisation, parking, site access, etc. Because of this the trips to North

Devon and Wanlockhead are already oversubscribed but vacancies still exist for the Caldbeck trip. Anyone interested should contact Mick Cooper direct.

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WET CHEMISTRY WEEKEND

Mick Wolfe

As was announced at the symposium Mike Rothwell and David Green have agreed to organise, courtesy of Alan Dyer and Oneta Wilson, a 'hands on' wet chemistry weekend at Salford University during May or June. The change of date is due to the recent inclusion of a mini symposium at Easter. So far some 16 members have expressed an interest in attending. If anyone else would like to come along would they please contact Mike Rothwell.

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MUSEUM VISITS

Mick Wolfe

Five 'behind the scenes' museum visits have been arranged to take place in 1989.

Leicester Museum on Saturday 14th January at 10.30 a.m.

Sheffield Museum on Saturday 21st January at 10.30 a.m.

Liverpool Museum on Saturday 28th January at 10.30 a.m.

Wollaton Hall (Nottingham) Museum on Saturday 28th Jan at 11.00 a.m.

Oxford Museum date to be advised but probably not till late Spring.

Will anyone interested in having their names added to the lists already prepared at the Symposium please contact the organisers direct. Details of how to find each museum will be circulated nearer the time.

The organisers are :

Leicester - Mick Wolfe on behalf of Gill Weightman

Sheffield - Mick Wolfe on behalf of Tim Riley

Liverpool - Mike Rothwell

Wollaton Hall (Nottingham) - Mick Cooper

Oxford - Roy Starkey (Note new address)

B.M.S. NORTHERN GROUP MEETING

Eric Otty

The meeting on 3 September was attended by 18 members and friends. There was much discussion about the specimens found on the weekend visit to Scotland and veszelyite crystals were admired. Mick Cooper showed slides of his holiday in Alsace including a visit to the Ste. Marie-aux-Mines mineral show where much material was brought in by the truckload to be sold by the kilogram ! Max Frier of the Doncaster Mines Research Group demonstrated the use of a camcorder to project images of small minerals on a television screen and then showed video tapes of an underground trip in the Carrock mine followed by a visit to the Amsterdam Mineral Fair. Some 20 members and friends met again on the 12th November. The main discussions were about recent finds in Cornwall and Cumbria. Max Freier of the Doncaster Mines Research Group brought along a number of tomato trays of surplus material collected over recent years. These were quickly acquired and disappeared into car boots. Mick Cooper showed some slides of unfamiliar minerals followed by Peter Braithwaite whose slides were of Millclose Mine specimens in his collection. Mike Rothwell rounded the slide show off with shots of recent trips to Snowdon and Cumbria. Jean and Muriel provided the usual spread of excellent refreshments on both occasions and the meeting broke up with arrangements being made to see one another again on the 18th March 1989 at Bircotes.

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THANK YOU

Roy Starkey

Just a short note to formally say 'thank you' to all the members of the Society who so generously contributed towards the camera presented to me at the Symposium. I really was quite overwhelmed by the presentation which came as a total surprise. Mary has asked me also to thank everyone on her behalf for the present of Boots gift vouchers, which was very much appreciated. As I sure you know, we have both derived enormous enjoyment and satisfaction from our involvement with the BMS, and we look forward very much to a continuing association over many years.

GOLDSCHMIDT'S ATLAS DER KRYSTALLFORMEN

The modern 9 volume facsimile reprint of this massive work was purchased by the BMS over a year ago, and is presently distributed among various interested members. This distribution is coordinated by Muriel Tissington : anyone wishing to consult a volume should contact Muriel to discover its whereabouts. It is to be hoped that members will avail themselves of these valuable volumes, however it is apparent from a show of hands at the recent AGM in Leicester that the majority of the membership do not understand what Goldschmidt's magnum opus is all about (despite the same majority having voted enthusiastically for its purchase at a previous AGM) : a few words of explanation may be useful. As originally published there were 9 volumes of plates each with a companion volume of text. The new reprint combines each pair of books into one volume of plates plus text. The plates were, mostly, collated from already published crystal drawings and are organised by species in alphabetical order. It is very important to realise that the species name used is the German name current between 1913-1923 when the books were first published. Thus you will not find azurite under A : look under "kupferlasur". Hemimorphite is under "kieselzinc". There are many other examples. Unfortunately there is no concordance available between Goldschmidt's names and the modern names. Anyone wishing to research a given species would be advised to check for the old German name in the 6th and 7th editions of Dana's System; Hey's Chemical Index also gives some synonyms. Once you have found your species, what then ? You will find one or more reproductions of crystal drawings. Just how many depends on many factors; common well-crystallised species may have scores of drawings, indeed volume 2 is almost all of calcite. The drawings are grouped according to habit shown and are reproduced with the original author's indexing on the faces. This is sometimes very confusing since several systems of indexing may be represented, depending on the vintage of the publication from which the drawings were taken. In the corresponding text section a table is given that correlates all the different indices to the Miller system which is in general use today. However, even this does not guarantee a match with a modern drawing of the same species since over the

years axes have been reassigned in some cases. Following the crystallographic data Goldschmidt gives a tabulation of the original, and any later, publications in which the drawings were used. So how do you use this book ? There are two main ways : the first is to use the given drawings as a guide to the likely appearance of a species; the second is to follow through the bibliography to the original reference for further descriptive data. There are, of course, problems in both approaches that may confuse the unprepared user. I'll deal with the bibliography first : Goldschmidt's citations are abbreviated and rudimentary and the user needs some knowledge of the mineralogical literature and access to a good general bibliography. "Best buy" in the latter category is the listing in the volume 1 of the 7th edition of Dana's System which gives alphabetical lists of all major mineralogical journals by title and the classic literature by author and date. Once you have traced the probable source you can let Interlibrary Loan do the rest ! As for the crystal drawings these must be used with care. It must be realised that each drawing is probably an idealised synthesis of several measured crystals and that a natural crystal is unlikely to be so symmetrical or to have all the illustrated faces (even when from the same deposit). Crystal habits may vary enormously from locality to locality or even on the same specimen ! A correlation between your unknown and a drawing of known species does not guarantee their identity. The pitfall was clearly demonstrated to one BMS member at the recent symposium when he claimed to have hedyphane from Brandy Gill, Caldbeck (where, indeed, it does occur) on the basis of a similarity between his crystals and the drawing of hedyphane from Franklin, New Jersey, in Dana's System. Unfortunately for our optimistic fellow member the habit of Brandy Gill hedyphane is about as different from the Franklin material as it is possible to get and his material is almost certainly mimetite which is common at Caldbeck in that habit. Goldschmidt is a great browser's book; a unique compilation that cannot fail to impress even the most casual reader with the astonishing variety of habit in natural crystals.

NEW FINDS

Steve Rust has advised the newsletter of the following :-

- Mimetite** $Pb_5(AsO_4)_3Cl$. **Dylife Mine, Dylife, Powys, Wales**
As almost colourless to golden yellow single acicular crystals to 0.75 mm and as very rare divergent groups.
- Chalcophyllite** $Cu_{18}Al_2(AsO_4)_3(SO_4)_3(OH)_{27} \cdot 33 H_2O$.
Same location.
As typical green hexagonal platy rosettes to 0.5mm and encrustations associated with brochantite and serpierite.
- Namuwite** $(Zn,Cu)_4(SO_4)(OH)_6 \cdot 4 H_2O$
Dyngwm Mine, near Staylitttle, Powys, Wales.
As translucent platy blue/green hexagonal like crystals in masses to several mm on partly altered sphalerite associated with schulenbergite.
- Leadhillite** $Pb_4(SO_4)(CO_3)_2(OH)_2$ **Esgair Hir Mine, Dyfed, Wales.**

All the above are British Museum (Natural History) confirmed.

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EXCHANGES

Joe Pfeifer is interested in exchanging micro-minerals with members of the B.M.S. Joe can be contacted at : 9483 South Mumford Drive, Sandy, Utah 84094, U.S.A.

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HOME COMPUTERS

Mick Wolfe

At the symposium those members who attended were asked to indicate on a notice if they had a home computer they used for mineralogical purposes. The idea was to enable an interchange of ideas, programmes, etc. between owners of compatible machines. To make the list as comprehensive as possible would anyone else willing to participate please send details of their computer, make and model, to me.

BRITISH DIRECTORY OF MICROMOUNTERS

This is the final reminder for any member who have not yet returned this questionnaire to Martin Stolworthy. We hope to issue the directory in the new year so time is running out for your entry to be included.

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SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Subs for 1989 are due on January 1st and are £3.50 single and £5.00 married couple. If you managed to avoid Neil at the symposium or were unable to attend please send them to him direct.

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