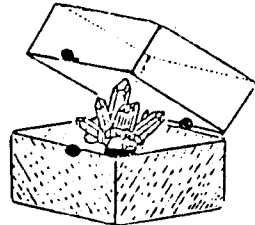


BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No.2 - November 1981

Hello again everyone! This is our second newsletter, and as you will see from the new heading the name 'British Micromount Society' has been adopted for the national organisation - by a 2 to 1 majority in fact. At this stage there is no need to elaborate our structure, and the workload is still within the capability of one person. Also, having investigated the possibility of opening a Society Bank A/C, at present we would incur considerable penalties in the form of bank charges because of our limited cash in hand balance. Therefore please make all remittances payable to 'R.E.Starkey' until further notice.

At the time of going to press 27 people have paid their £1 subscription for the year 1981. Please note that if an 'X' appears here your subscription is still outstanding, and SHOULD PLEASE BE PAID IMMEDIATELY - DO IT NOW BEFORE YOU FORGET! If you do not pay, this will be the last information you will receive from the Society. Subscriptions for 1982 are due as at the 1st of January, please pay promptly - preferably by return of post. It is simpler for everybody, and it would be a shame if the Society loses members so soon after its successful establishment simply through forgetfulness and loss of contact. Thankyou for your support.

BRITISH MINERAL & GEMSHOW 1982.

The Society will be putting on a stand at the Leicester Show on 27th & 28th March 1982. The stand will be in the Oak Room, on the ground floor, opposite the lifts to the Rutland Suite where the Club displays were last year. The Show organisers have kindly agreed to let us use the Warwick/Rutland Suite for one hour on the Sunday (28th) in order to hold an inaugural meeting of members. This will be a prime opportunity to get everyone together, meet the faces behind the names in the Directory, and discuss future plans. Please make a note in your diary, and try to be at the Show between 11.0am-12.00pm Sunday 28th March. Offers of help to man the stand on either day (short stints with rest breaks) will be very gratefully received. Also ideas as to what we might do with/on the stand are very welcome. Initial discussions suggest demonstrations of preparing micromounts and a couple of microscopes on hand (with owners) to allow visitors to view the attractions of our hobby - bring your own specimens. If you are interested in helping on the stand. PLEASE RETURN THE ENCLOSED SLIP as soon as possible, certainly before the end of December. Further details will be available in the next newsletter, due out early March, in time for the Show.

NEWSLETTER MATERIAL.

We have received several contributions for this newsletter, and thanks go to those of you who have responded. Everybody can write or contribute something - news, ideas, locality info., hints and tips, or longer articles on specific topics. Please DO try to send something, without your support there is no newsletter! Copy deadlines and issue dates for 1982 are as follows: Copy by 12th Feb. Issue date 1st March; Copy by 21st May. Issue date & 2nd Edn of Directory June 1982;

OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIP - A QUESTION OF POLICY.

Although the Directory has only been in existence for some six months, we have already received several enquiries from interested persons in other countries. This poses several questions, none of which is easily answerable, particularly with such a scattered membership throughout the UK. There are complications in terms of postage costs, handling remittances in foreign currencies, and the relatively long correspondence time unless via Airmail. Against this background of difficulties must be put some advantages - as Eric Otty rightly points out, we can learn much from others, and broaden our experience and ideas by overseas contacts, not to mention the increased opportunity for swapping and acquisition of new species. Mike Bayley suggests that admission of overseas members dilutes the value of the 'British' Directory, which I must agree does have a particular meaning, although he proposes that overseas persons can be listed in the newsletter - as per this edition bringing their interests to our membership's attention. Eric advocates the levying of an appropriately higher membership/registration fee to cover increased costs incurred. For my own part, I feel that there is a danger that if we do admit overseas members, our directory will become an extract of the International Directory which was not what was intended. The aims of the B.M.S. are to promote micromounting within the UK, and any overseas contacts which arise, or individuals care to develop are outside its scope. My suggestion is that we publish names and addresses in our newsletter on request, and sell the Directory at cost price, plus postage to anyone wishing for a copy. However, there is no doubt a case to be heard in favour of overseas members and we look forward to hearing YOUR views - please write and tell us. Roy Starkey.

BULK-BUYING OF MICROMOUNT BOXES.

As promised in Newsletter No.1 here is a report on our findings, and progress to date. I contacted several manufacturers and distributors in the U.S.A. - no British manufacturer produces boxes to suit our purpose, with the following results:

1. The common black base, clear lid 1" cube, hinged lid box is not manufactured in the USA although there are many close variants.
2. The 'Standard' USA micromounting box - $\frac{3}{4}$ " cube with clip on lid is available from Indplas, Conneautville, Pa 16406, at 13c each, with reductions for quantity orders of 30% for 1000, plus postage charged at 30% of Nett order value.
3. Althor Products supply a very comprehensive range of boxes, but none specifically suited to micromounting.
4. Various other suppliers were simply dealers for the above manufacturers.
5. We have located a wholesaler in the UK who imports boxes in bulk for the jewellery trade, and can supply the hinged lid, black base, clear top, 1" cube, and 1" square by $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep boxes, usually in less than three weeks or ex-stock, and without any difficulties of exchange rates etc.

Therefore, we have decided initially to obtain 1000 1" cubes, and 1000 of the $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep boxes, available on a first come first served basis. The price for this initial consignment is 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p per box - any quantity, but preferably in units of 100. If you cannot collect in person, the price will be PLUS POSTAGE. For the 1" cube write to Roy Starkey, and for the $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep box contact Mike Bayley (addresses in the Directory). Future stocks will be ordered only against firm orders from members. Cash with order please. Allow 3 weeks approx for delivery. R.S.

HELP WANTED !

We have received requests from the following people for exchange of micromount material. If you are interested, please contact the individuals concerned direct:-

Mrs Wynne Keller,
RFD 1, Box 507,
Solon, ME 04979,
U.S.A.

Robert F.Hoban,
480, Dorchester Road,
Ridgewood,
New Jersey 07450.
USA.

Mr Ronald B.Gibbs,
431, Vananda,
Ajo,
Arizona, 85321,
U.S.A.

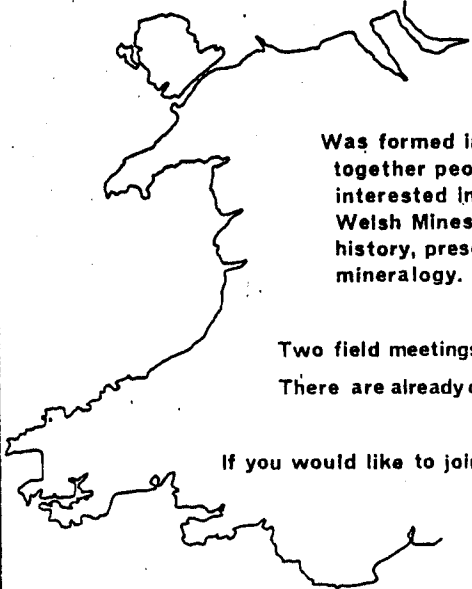
Mrs J.M.Parrish,
923, Gordon,
Reno, Nevada 89509,
U.S.A.

Mr John Reeve,
13, Buchan Place,
Hillarys 6025,
Western Australia,
Australia.

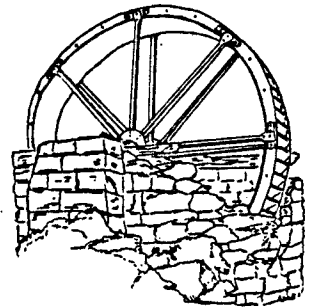
THE WELSH MINES SOCIETY.

Several members will already know of the existence of this organisation, which publishes a newsletter, and has held several well attended field meetings - at Cwmystwyth Mine, at Llangynog, Pandora Mine Llanrwst, and most recently at Van Mine, Llanidloes. The Society is actively pursuing preservation of mining sites in Wales and deserves YOUR support. Full details are shown below. Please mention our newsletter when writing

THE WELSH MINES SOCIETY



Was formed in 1979 to bring together people who are interested in any aspect of Welsh Mines, including their history, preservation and mineralogy.



Two field meetings a year are held and a newsletter is circulated.
There are already over 100 members and the subscription is £1 a year.

If you would like to join: please contact

D. Bick,
The Pound House,
Market Square,
Newent,
Gloucestershire. GL18 1PS

BOOK REVIEW. Gemstone & Mineral Data Book. JOHN S. HASKINS. FEB. 1972, Winchester Press, 460 Park Ave., New York. 10022. Last cover price US \$8. ISBN 0-87691-067-3.

This is an excellent reference book - listing data, recipes, formulae, and instructions, designed specifically for use by mineralogists, gemmologists and jewellers. Extensive lists of gemstones and minerals - detailing R.I., S.G. and other diagnostic properties, are supplemented by a list of solubilities and/or cleaning instructions for over 1400 mineral species. Tips on optical effects, phosphorescence and fluorescence form an interesting and well presented reference source. This book is certainly well worth obtaining through the Inter-Library Loan Scheme, and may be one to purchase depending on what other volumes you have ready access to. R.S.

NEWS FROM ALDERLEY EDGE.

The entrance to the Engine Vein Mine at Alderley Edge Cheshire (SJ 859775) has now been sealed and the fencing removed so that it is now safe to explore the surrounding layers of mainly pebbly sandstones. There is plenty of malachite to be seen as a coating on the sandstones and after rain, malachite and azurite micros just jump out of the sandy ground all around the mine. These minerals are also to be found on pink barite which is more stable and colourful combination. There is also a great deal of wad and yellow pyromorphite. This is National Trust Property. E.Otty.

MICROMOUNTING IN THE U.S.A.

Whilst on holiday in Canada & the USA this summer, I made an effort to contact a few micromounters in Toronto - with some success. The kindness and hospitality of the families that I visited did much to reinforce our already favourable impression of the north American people. Not only do they take the hobby seriously, but they also seem to have the good fortune to have finance and resources to back it up. Several microscopes were not uncommon, and specialist storage cabinets were much in evidence. As mentioned in Newsletter 1 by Colin Horstmann, the north Americans generally use the smaller clip-on lid type of box, but both groups that we visited had a wide variety of boxes in their collection. The larger market in the USA means that materials are more readily available, such as acacia thorns, tapered corks specially manufactured for micromounting and a large number of outlets for microscopes and equipment e.g. fibre optic flexible light sources - recently advertised in the Min.Record. Trading with dealers for specimens at the major shows has yielded good bargains, without the need for parting with dollars to the full value of the specimen, and I saw several choice micros labelled as 'exchanged A.N.Other - Tucson Show' etc. Two dealers in particular were recommended to me, and I have received friendly correspondence from them. For the record, if you are interested:

N.G. MITCHELL
Microminerals International,
P.O. Box 649,
Gatlinburg,
Tennessee 37738
USA

Hatfield Goudey
1145 West 31st Avenue,
San Mateo,
California 94403,
USA

both supply excellent and interesting micromount listings, across a wide price range. Mitchell's list is free on request, Goudey's is \$1.00 US (send a \$1 bill - get at any bank). I would recommend visiting fellow micromounters to anyone travelling in the USA or Canada - it is quite an experience to see how far the art, or is it a science? has progressed.
Roy Starkey.

EQUIPMENT NEWS.

Eric Otty writes "I would like to mention that I am very pleased with a small stereo microscope which I bought at the beginning of this year from Lewis the camera shop, 20 Abbey St., Accrington, Lancs. BB5 1BB. It is the Tasco 996 - magnification x15, x30 wide field and x45. Hard coated lens, rack & pinion focussing, adjustable width eyepieces and a large working distance. Ground glass stage (removeable) with spring clips and centering cross line. Measures 7½" high and cost £67.62. Without doubt the best value for money in stereo mics is the Russian BM52-1 at £43.66 - a binocular microscope with fixed magnification of x8.75 which is adequate for most collectors."

Sam Weller has kindly forwarded information on the new top of the range Russian model, the MBS-9. The specification is essentially the same as for the older MBS-2, although packaged slightly different in a more modern type housing. The magnification range available is from x3.6 to x98 in 20 steps, and the system comes complete with a rheostat controlled high intensity lighting unit. The current price is £322.90 for the complete outfit, and an illustrated leaflet is available on request. See also the Test Report by one of our members - in this newsletter.

MEMBERS' NOTES.

Alan Pringle suggests the use of soap powder for packaging and transport of fragile unmounted specimens, and that this can easily be washed off afterwards. Obviously this is not a recommended practice for water soluble minerals. He also suggests that we should sell donated micros at the BM & GS in March to raise funds. There may be facilities to allow this at the Show - a table hired at £8 per hour. However I doubt that it would be practicable to recover the outlay in the time available by trading micros.

On the same topic, Mike Gough suggests that members with surplus material might like to sell it at a nominal price to those members who are unable to get out collecting as often as they would like, for geographic or any other reasons. What about it folks? Mike also asks for clarification of the 'box position', raising such interesting points as should we all use the same box, what size - inches or mm, hinged or clip on lids, and is there a place for magnifier lid boxes in the micromounting field? Please DO let us have your views on this matter - it could have some bearing on us being able to stage a National Micromount Competition.

BRITISH MINERAL COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION.

The BMCA was formed at the Leicester Show in March of this year, and was the BMS. The aims of the Association include the promotion of interest in mineralogy, advice and guidance to its members, to encourage responsible & systematic collecting, and to publish a Journal - The Mineral Kingdom, six issues per year. The Journal is a well produced publication, with B & W illustrations and photographs, and so far has included articles on Wheal Gorland, Red Gill Mine, Collyer underground, Bubble inclusions in Fluorite, Millerite from S. Wales, and the Photography of Minerals. Many of our members are already subscribers (£6.00 per annum), and anyone requiring further details should contact Mr D.R. Neal, 27, Lower Meadow, Harlow, Essex. CM18 7RD.

MINERALS FROM LEADHILLS - WANLOCKHEAD.

The Mineralogical Record Vol. 12 No. 4 (July-Aug 1981) carried an excellent article on this area, with full colour plates. Highly recommended. The Min. Record is available from R. Harker (see Directory).

(Abridged from an article by R.Waller, National Museums of Canada, Mineral Sciences Division, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0M8 Canada)

The method to be described takes advantage of the fact that ferrous (Iron II) hydroxide is not only much more soluble than ferric (Iron III) hydroxide, but is also appreciably more soluble over a wider pH range.

Three sodium salts are employed in this technique: sodium citrate (Na-citrate) to sequester ferrous ions; sodium dithionite ($\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_4$), to reduce ferric to ferrous iron; and sodium bicarbonate (NaHCO_3) as a buffer to maintain pH near the optimal value of 7.3. Because $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_4$ is oxidised in solution the formulation cannot be stored in an entirely pre-mixed state, but it is convenient to keep the Na-citrate and NaHCO_3 as a stock solution. This is prepared by dissolving 71g Na-citrate and 8.5g NaHCO_3 in 1l of water.

The specimen to be treated is placed in the smallest available container into which it fits safely. A premeasured volume of the stock solution, enough to cover the specimen is then poured into the container. Next, 1g of $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_4$ for each 50ml of stock solution used is added. 50ml of stock solution is capable of dissolving about 0.5g of ferric oxide, and consequently the volume of solution required to cover the specimen often exceeds that required to dissolve all the rust present. It is then possible to dilute the solution by as much as 2 parts water to 1 part stock solution, and still achieve satisfactory results. Solutions diluted more than 2:1 tend to lose their ability to buffer, and should not therefore be used to treat pH sensitive minerals.

Stirring once every 30 minutes is recommended, or some means of automatic stirring may be devised. Most materials will be cleaned in 4-8 hours, although the solution will remain active for up to 12 hours. After 12 hours the $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_4$ will be completely oxidised, and if rust remains, the treatment must be repeated with fresh solution.

Following treatment, the specimen should be set in distilled water to rinse, and 3 changes of water at 12 hour intervals is usually sufficient.

In addition to removing rust stains and coatings, this method is also useful for macerating rust cemented matrix, and dispersing many clays and soils adhering to specimens.

The method described above has several advantages over traditional Oxalic acid treatment - it is more effective, less toxic and also can be used on minerals where oxalic would dissolve the material to be cleaned. As with all cleaning methods BE SURE to try out the solution on a test piece from the SAME LOCATION as that to be cleaned before risking a valuable specimen.

The following list of minerals so far treated with the Citrate-Dithionite-Bicarbonate Rust Removal Method should be taken as a guide only:-

DAMAGED: Calcite, Calcium minerals in general, Messelite.

UNHARMED: Apatite, Augelite, Barite, Edingtonite, Fluorite, Kulanite, Lazulite, Marcasite, Quartz, Rhodochrosite, Siderite, Stilbite, Wardite, Whiteite, Childrenite.

NOTE: If you try this method please let me know what materials you have treated, and with what results. Thankyou. R.Starkey.

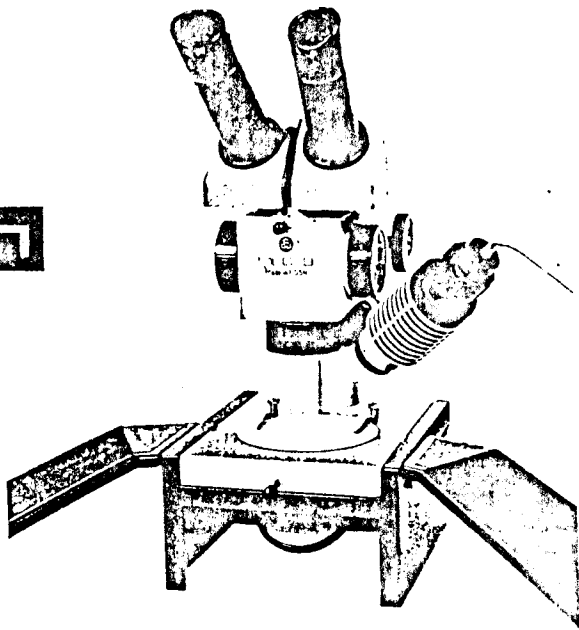
TEST REPORT - RUSSIAN MBS9 STEREO MICROSCOPE. By DOUG MORGAN.

This model supercedes the older MBS-2 microscope, which is no longer available. The first thing one notices about the MBS9 is its packing case! This is a well-made, metal-bound wooden box measuring 18" x 12" x 12" deep. Inside is the microscope, sealed in plastic with drier packs, together with transformer, rheostat and lamp unit.

The microscope itself is a modern stereoscopic instrument giving an erect image in either reflected or transmitted light. It has a revolving indexed drum in the optical head of the microscope, which in conjunction with an objective lens of focal distance 80mm, gives magnifications x0.6, x1, x2, x4, and x7. This Galilei system of using lenses mounted on a revolving drum for obtaining various magnifications is very rugged and stable, and also allows better optical correction and resolution than that obtainable with normal zoom lens optics. Wide field eyepieces x6, x8, x12.5, and x14 are included, and the range of total magnification is from x3.6 to x98. This is ideal for examination of micromounts.

zenith

MBS-9



In common with many Russian scientific instruments, the microscope is sturdily constructed and has first class optical parts. It lacks finish however, and would not compare with the high class hard chrome and enamel finish of Western optical instruments. The paint finish is applied to as-cast surfaces which are slightly rough. This does not in any way detract from the use of the instrument, but may collect dirt on the surfaces, which would be difficult to remove.

The focussing is by rack and pinion, and the body unit is mounted on a vertical column adjustable for height. The rack and pinion slides were lubricated with a very stiff grease. I cleaned this away, lapped the slides with a brass lap and optical polish, and relubricated with microscope grease to give a much improved smooth action.

Apart from these minor criticisms I was sufficiently pleased with the instrument to purchase it. Since then, I have used it practically every other day, such is the fascination of this subject, and have no further criticisms of the instrument. The list price is about £450, and represents good value for money.

Editors note: We would welcome any similar 'Test Report' articles from owners of equipment - whether recently purchased or not, and of course, about any genuinely 'new' items on the market which would be of interest e.g adhesives, mounting materials, lighting units, microscopes etc.

The British Mineral and Gem Show.

MARCH 27th & 28th 1982

Richard W. Barstow
Brian E. Brett
Broughton Minerals
Caverswall Minerals
Caving Supplies
P. Chen Ham
Simon Cohen
(Fossils)
Rex Cook
Hilary Corke Mins.
Cumbria Mining and
Mineral Co.
Dennis Durham
John Fisk

THE HOLIDAY INN
ST NICHOLAS CIRCLE,
LEICESTER.

◇ ADMISSION 65p ◇

Information

Mr Ivor D. Thurgood
131 Spencers Croft.
Harlow, Essex.
CM18 6JS. Tel. 411952

"Gems"
Isis Minerals
John Keeley
Brian Lloyd
Lythe Minerals
Rohinten D. Mazda
Mineralcraft (Essex)
Steve Rust
Bob Simmons
Tideswell Dale
Rock Shop
George Wilson
Allan Winrow

The show organised by collectors, for collectors.

SWAPS/WANTS LIST Only four contributions have been received so far. This should be a useful & interesting exercise. Please consider sending yours in - any further offerings will be included in the next newsletter.

ITALIAN DIRECTORY We have just received a copy of what I think is an Italian Directory of Micromounters. Unfortunately it is all in Italian, and has no covering note whatsoever in English. I hope to get a translation shortly, and will report in the next issue. R.S.

FINAL REMINDERS Have YOU paid 1981 subscription yet? Please DO so! Don't forget to send in contributions for the next newsletter - all items gratefully received. Please let's have 1982 subscriptions in promptly. Please return the BM & GS reply slip - we need your support. Lastly, have a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to hearing from you, and hopefully to meeting everyone together in March at the Leicester show - DON'T MISS IT !