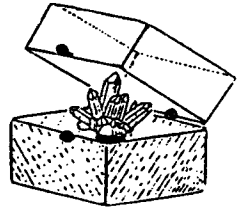


BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No.3 - March 1982

The British Micromount Society is now almost one year old - and it has been an eventful year for micromounting in the UK. We have received enquiries and correspondence from many collectors overseas, who it seems have somehow learned of our existence. The enthusiasm with which the venture has been received has been most encouraging, and we now have a good base from which to build a future. The second British Mineral & Gemshow at the Holiday Inn, Leicester on 27th & 28th of March will hopefully provide a good shop window for our activities, as the Society will be exhibiting with a stand in the Oak Room, on the ground floor. The organisers of the Show have also kindly agreed to our using the Derby Suite on the first floor for an inaugural meeting of the Society. This will take place at 11.00am on Sunday 28th March 1982. Please do your best to attend as we shall be discussing future activities and projects. We look forward to seeing YOU there!

MEMBERSHIP FEES

At the time of going to press only 19 people have paid their 1982 fees, and in spite of my request that outstanding dues from 1981 be paid we still have not received 1981 payments from 7 people. A red 'X' appears in the boxes below if you have not paid. Please PAY NOW - it is very tiresome to have to labour the point, and a small organisation like ours can ill-afford to support members who do not pay dues promptly.

1981 £1.00

outstanding

1982 £1.00

outstanding

(If payment is not forthcoming your name will unfortunately have to be removed from the Directory - applies only to recipients of red 'X' marking) Please do pay now, it saves all of us time and inconvenience. Thankyou !

PUBLICITY

Although we have achieved a steady increase in membership since last March, now standing at 46, the distribution of members across the country is very irregular, and clustered around the West Midlands and London. There are very few members in the outlying areas, and none in Wales. It seems unlikely that there are no micromount collectors in Cornwall & Devon, and equally so the Lake District and Northern England - say Sheffield, Manchester and northwards must surely be a source of potential new members. If you personally have any contacts, or have ideas as to how best we might publicise our existence, please let us know. If anyone would like to take over responsibility for publicity in the UK please volunteer !

ADDRESS LABELS

We are now producing computer printed address labels for newsletter distribution etc. Please advise us of any errors in your address, or the same mistake will continue to appear! The reference number in the top right hand corner of the label is unique to you, and will remain yours as long as you are a member.

ANNUAL FIELD MEETING

The details of this event will be finalised at the Leicester Show on 28th March, but provisionally it is suggested that a weekend meet be held in the mid-Wales area probably in August(14th/15th), and a camp site will be advised in the next newsletter for those wishing to stay for the two days. It may be possible to offer an underground itinerary on the Saturday, and surface collecting on the Sunday. If you are interested in this idea PLEASE let me know as soon as possible, particularly if you are unable to attend the Leicester Show. Roy Starkey.

DISCOUNTS ON EQUIPMENT

One of our members - Ted Lynch has been successful in negotiating a discount for members on microscopes and equipment manufactured by TOE e.g. Russian MBS-9, and surgical instruments - mounted needles, scalpels, curved and straight tweezers/forceps etc, supplied by Messrs. White & Wright, Liverpool. He is pursuing other possibilities, and any further successes will be advised in due course. The discount in each case is 10% off LIST PRICE. Please write to the suppliers direct if you wish to take advantage of this offer.

Microscope Division,
Technical & Optical Equipment Ltd.,
Zenith House, The Hyde,
Edgware Road,
LONDON NW9 6EE

White & Wright Ltd,
64, Renshaw St.,
Liverpool.
L1 4EN

Tel: 051-709-3236/7

Tel: 01-200-6505

Proof of membership is required in each case - i.e. your membership card - enclosed herewith if you have paid 1982 subscription.

MICROMOUNT BOXES

Mike Bayley, and Roy Starkey still have a quantity of boxes available for sale - 1" cube size from R.S., and 1" x $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep from M.B. Postage is £1.00 per hundred boxes, and boxes are £7.50 per hundred. If you want to pick up some boxes at the Leicester Show, and save the postage write to either of the above people, stating how many boxes you require, and ENCLOSING A CHEQUE for the correct amount. Boxes will not be available unless pre-paid for.

OVERSEAS CORRESPONDENCE

We have established contact with collectors in Australia, New Zealand, Nevada USA, Arizona USA, Canada, and South Africa. The South African Micromount Society have written asking that we exchange newsletters, which we have agreed to do. Their latest issue contains an interesting article on the varied Uranium minerals from the famous Shinkolobwe deposit, and also details of their 4th Annual one-day workshop - an idea that we could perhaps adopt? The annual subscription is US \$5.00 - yes US dollars! The newsletter also contains names and addresses of collectors from other countries who want to exchange specimens. If you would like to join, write to Horst Windisch, 30 van Wouw Street, Groenkloof, Pretoria, South Africa.

Hatfield Goudey has just sent his latest listing, containing over 500 micromount varieties, available either mounted or unmounted, ranging in price from US \$2.00 to \$20.00 approximately. The list also contains an interesting discussion of specimen preparation. Copies of the list are available at US\$1.00 from 1145 West 31st Avenue, San Mateo, California 94403 U.S.A. Highly recommended - interesting reading for about 50p!

We have also heard from Rodney V. Lee of Simkev Minerals, 942 Chevrolet Street, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada. L1G 4H8. Simkev specialise in fine micromount specimens, and their latest list (No.5) includes species from all over the world - particularly USA, Canada, Germany and a few UK and Northern Ireland items. Rodney makes the following offer - if anyone, or a group of people likes to get an order together for \$100.00 (Canadian) worth of minerals, he will allow a discount of 10% to the Society. He also says that he is very keen to acquire good British micromaterial, and will either buy from you, or exchange items from his list. This is a very generous offer, and if you would like to take him up on it, please write to him direct.

As reported in Newsletter No.2, we recently received a copy of what I thought was an Italian Directory of Micromounters. Having now managed to get a rough translation, I can offer the following summary. The introductory page announces that the publishers represent Italian micromount collectors, and they thank all the organisations who have taken an interest and supported them. Each entry has a name and address, and also a brief list of dealers is provided. There is an advertisement for a magazine at L.10,000 per annum, published quarterly giving information on mineralogy, and edited by the Lombarda Mineralogical Group in collaboration with the Emilian Mineralogical Group. There are various book reviews - one of which looks particularly interesting "Guide to Collecting Micromounts". This apparently covers the techniques of micromounting, and has colour illustrations. The book has 60 pages and costs L.4,000, and is available from Calderini, Via Emilia Levante 31, 40139 Bologna, Italy.

MEMBERS' NOTES

Martin Stolworthy has sent details of the Grey 5/40 stereo microscope. The instrument comes complete with two objectives x1 and x2, mounted in a dustproof unit, and changed by a simple lever action. A selection of eyepieces are offered - x5, x10, x15, and x20, giving magnifications from x5 to x40. A high intensity focussing lamp is fitted, and the transformer is housed in the arm of the microscope. A large stable base is provided, and the price is circa £230 (two objectives and one pair of eyepieces). Additional eyepieces are approximately £50.00 per pair. Martin reports that he is quite satisfied with the instrument although the clamping mechanism for the light is not 100% effective, and also that at higher powers the illumination is not quite strong enough. This is a problem on many microscopes however - like driving at night - you would always like a 'little more light' !

It is often said that necessity is the mother of invention - and no less so in the field of micromounting. At a recent after dinner discussion when faced with the delicate task of picking up selenite sand roses - less than 7mm across, Brenda Monk leapt forward with the excellent idea of using a drinking straw and carefully picking them up by suction. This technique really works a treat. You must try it to appreciate the full possibilities !

Jean Spence would like some advice on trimming delicate materials from large attached pieces of matrix e.g millerite on calcite/toadstone from Fall Hill Quarry. Any advice will be gratefully received. (See article in this newsletter by Mike Smith Ed.)

Trevor Wolloxall has a selection of British micros for sale or exchange - please write to him at 29 Nuthurst Drive, Church Bridge, Cannock, WS11 3S2.

Colin Horstmann reports that on a recent visit to Washington D.C. (USA)

he was fortunate enough to spend some time in the 'projects room' at the Smithsonian Institution. Here, you can borrow a stereomicroscope and work your way tray by tray through their extensive micro-collection and also handle specimens from their reference/teaching collections. This is an excellent idea, and makes the best possible use of a museum's resources. Furthermore it brings the collections 'alive' and enables the enthusiast to undertake practical work under expert guidance, and using top quality equipment. Wet chemistry, Botany, and Zoology were also provided for in this 'hobbies' suite. How about a similar scheme for a basement room at the B.M.Natural History (London) ?

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:-

Gordon A. Auton
339 St. Andrew Street
Invercargill
Southland
New Zealand.

Mr Kevin Pritchard
Manager
Don Lodge Motor Inn
Don Street
Invercargill
Southland
New Zealand.

PRESERVATION OF PYRITE

The British Museum (Natural History), recently held its Centenary Open Days, mounting special displays and exhibits for invited guests from Universities, Colleges and interested Societies. One exhibit which although intended as a demonstration of palaeontological preservation techniques, illustrated the problem of pyrite decomposition. This is every bit as much a problem for the mineralogist and micromounter, and the following information may be of interest. Pyrite exposed to air may undergo apparent spontaneous decay to iron sulphates and sulphuric acid. Formerly it was thought that iron and sulphur oxidising bacteria were responsible 'pyrites disease', the idea in part arising from observations that the 'disease' rapidly spread throughout pyritic collections. Some specimens however were not affected and recent work has shown that certain types of pyrite, particularly those with a compact well crystallized structure, are very stable. Pyrite with a porous microcrystalline structure which often occurs in fossils has been shown to simply absorb atmospheric moisture when relative humidity exceeds about 60%, resulting in purely chemical oxidation. The general conservation of pyritic specimens is now achieved through environmental control by closely monitored air-conditioning in storage and exhibition areas. i.e. Maintain relative humidity below about 60% and your pyrite specimens should last indefinitely.

PRESS RELEASE - PRIOR S2000 STEREO MICROSCOPE

We have just received publicity relating to the new Prior S2000 series stereomicroscope. This microscope is designed on a modular system so that you can put together exactly the model you require. One or three magnifications are available in ranges from x5 to x80. Eyepieces are supplied as either x10 or x20, with the other power available as an accessory at additional cost. The 45° binocular head is fully

adjustable for interpupillary distance and has one focusing eyetube. Various lamp units are offered, and a choice of simple bench stand or long arm stand is available. A particularly useful optional extra is a trinocular photographic head enabling the coupling of an SLR camera to the microscope for through the lens photography. Prices range from around £120 - £220 according to the options selected. Further details are available on request from:- James Swift & Son Ltd., Joule Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England. RG21 2XE. Tel: 0256 24455/6/7.

This microscope does appear to offer everything the micromounter could wish for, and at very reasonable cost. If anyone decides to buy one please let us know and we'll print a test report ! Ed.

BOOK REVIEW. Cleaning and Preserving Minerals. Richard M. Pearl. Fifth Revised Edition. Earth Science Publishing Co., P.O. Box 1815, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80901. USA. \$2.75. (Available from R. Harker, Lythe Minerals, 2 Wellisc Lane, Rothley, Leicestershire. LE7 7QB. Tel-0533-303082)

This book is an invaluable reference source when it comes to cleaning specimens. Advice is given for a very wide range of species, and the merits of various different techniques in particular circumstances. Topics covered include general dust & dirt removal, smoke, soot & tobacco stains, rust, clay removal, silica and organic encrustations, and tarnishing of metallic minerals. Physical & chemical decay of minerals is discussed in some detail, and extensive references are made to articles in published journals and reference works. In the words of the author, "If you can recognise Barytes, for example, you should know whether you want to remove DUST or RUST or if the specimen has gone BUST and needs repair !"

NEWSLETTER MATERIAL

Please keep sending in snippets of information, articles, queries and news & views. All contributions welcome - critical or otherwise. We need more one page articles e.g. 'Your favourite mineral(s)', photographic techniques, identification tips, cleaning methods, locality news, dealer and supplier information, test reports on equipment and so on. Everybody quite literally can write something - even if it's only to say how awful you think the newsletter is - we'll print it ! Keep trying ! Deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter is 1st May, not 21st May as stated in No.2. This will hopefully be distributed with the Second revised and expanded edition of the British Directory of Micromounters. We look forward to hearing from YOU!

BRITISH MINERAL & GEMSHOW - Leicester 27/28th March 1982

As already mentioned the Society is mounting a stand at the Show, and the response so far from people offering to help man it has been very encouraging. We could still do with more people to come along and talk micromounting to interested visitors at the Show, and particularly to bring along microscopes and specimens to demonstrate the practical side of things. The more support we can get, the better the Stand will be. We shall have quite a reasonable amount of table space, and power points are available for microscope lamps. If you are coming to the Show don't forget the meeting on Sunday morning - 11.00am in the Derby Suite on the first floor, and don't forget to BRING some micro material for exchange with other members. This will be the best opportunity so far in the UK for trading micros with other collectors - DON'T MISS IT ! If you can bring a microscope with you PLEASE DO SO. Last year's Show was a milestone in the history of the mineralogy hobby in the UK, let's help to make this year's effort even better. See YOU THERE! Please let us know if you are coming to the Show, and on which day(s). If you have still not returned the slip from newsletter No.2, please do so now. Thankyou. Roy Starkey.

ZEOLITES AS MICROMOUNTS by PAUL K. MONK.

Zeolites are a large group of minerals that are chemically similar and occur in similar environments. They are hydrous aluminosilicates, characterized by the ratio $(Al+Si):O = 1:2$ and a reversible loss of H_2O at low temperatures. The major cations are Ca and Na, with Ba, Mg, Sr and Li (?) occurring less commonly. In many ways they are similar in composition to the feldspar group.

They usually occur as secondary minerals, filling joint spaces, cavities, cracks and fissures in such rocks as basalts and lavas. They represent a final cooling down of igneous magmas. Analcime can be an exception, for example, occurring in a sedimentary environment in the Green River Formation of Wyoming U.S.A.

The group has 43 members, some are relatively common, others are extremely rare. Although most zeolites are white or colourless, it is form that makes them good material for micromounting.

A few areas of U.K. are renowned for their zeolite assemblages. Notably the vast basalt regions of Northern Ireland and Western Scotland have produced many and varied high quality zeolites. However zeolites are to be found in other areas. The Lizard in Cornwall has many localities; Botallack Mine, Cornwall has heulandite; zeolites are recorded from the Mendips, analcime occurs in several places in the Midlands, at least one Welsh mine produces harmatome and the mines at Strontian Argyll are famous for their brewsterite and harmatome.

Some of my favourite micros are zeolites. For example, from a piece of amygdaloidal basalt from the Antrim Coast, I have made four good micromounts - each representing different minerals. One mount is analcime, one natrolite, one gmelinite and natrolite. The last mount from this rock was originally identified as analcime and levyne. However with high magnification (about x60) it was obvious that the levyne was a series of rhythmic layers of levyne and offretite. Many zeolite specimens have, non-zeolite minerals associated with them, calcite being very common. However analcime and chrysocolla from Magheramourne Quarry Co. Antrim make an interesting combination, as does brewsterite on chalcopyrite from Whitesmith Mine, Strontian.

In some areas zeolites are relatively easy to find but they can be easily damaged (especially the fibrous zeolites such as natrolite and mesolite). So care with extraction and transport is essential. Zeolites tend to weather easily and so some work is usually needed to obtain good clean specimens.

I don't know why, but zeolites have formed the largest group in my collection. There are some members of the group I have yet to acquire, but hopefully they will come.

I would be pleased to hear from other members of the EMS who are particularly interested in zeolites, to exchange information, ideas and minerals.

ZEOLITES FOR SALE

A new Society member, Harry Foy, has a good selection of N.Ireland Zeolites available as micros. Please contact him direct : Mr H. Foy, 19, Wynard Park, BELFAST, BT5 6NS, N.Ireland, enclosing an S.A.E. Prices range from 30p - £1.00 approx. (Telephone 0232-795117 evenings).

A LOW - COST MICRO TRIMMER by MIKE SMITH.

This is a simple and cheaply constructed trimmer for the preparation of micromounts, the basis of which is a 4" handyman's 'G' clamp with the stock drilled out and a small chisel fitted.

The trimmer can be made for under £3.00 and will save many valuable micros being lost by hammer shock. The diagram is self explanatory, and the following items are required:-

- 4" 'G' clamp (size is optional, but 4" is appropriate)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ " cold chisel
- $\frac{1}{4}$ " ball bearing
- 3" steel bar (to replace existing tommy bar)

Proceed as follows:

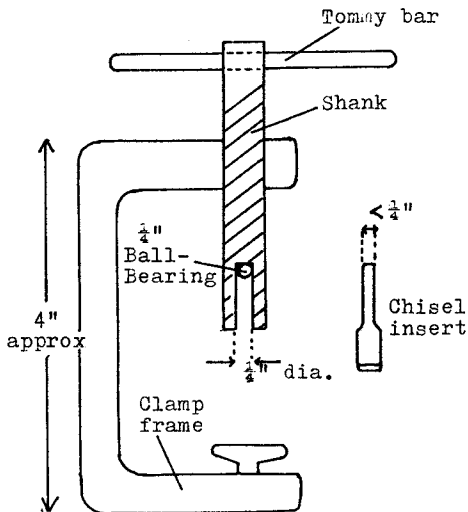
1. Cut off existing tommy bar and discard, or alternatively may be re-used.
2. Screw shank out of clamp and cut off rotating head. This leaves in effect a threaded rod.
3. Centre punch, cut and drill out $\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter hole to a depth of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in the shank.
4. Insert ball-bearing, which should be a tight fit.
5. Shorten the chisel to an overall length of about 2" and grind the diameter down to about, or just under $\frac{1}{4}$ " to be a sliding fit in the clamp shank.
6. Replace shank of clamp into frame of clamp and replace or fit a new tommy bar.

NOTE.

It is very important that the chisel point can rotate freely in the shank or the micro-specimen will twist round when pressure is applied.

A small application of grease on the shank of the chisel will help rotation, and also retain it in the stock.

I have been using a trimmer as described for several years, and reduced the mortality rate of lost micros by about 90%!



WANTED ! Any man-made micro-material e.g. furnace products, slags etc. Please contact M. Smith, 17, Kilwick Garth, Pocklington, YORK.

CLEANING TIP No.3 'CALGON' AS A CLAY REMOVING AGENT.

Calgon can be bought from most branches of Boots the chemists, sold as a water softener. In fact it is Sodium Hexametaphosphate, a chemical that acts as a wetting agent.

I have found two major uses for it:

1. In a strong solution it will readily break down clays.
2. On glassy minerals such as Quartz it removes marks such as finger prints.

P.K.Monk.

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY - 28th March 1982

AGENDA

1. Introduction to the Society.
2. Membership Report a. Home (UK)
b. Overseas - and policy formulation
3. Financial matters - Administrative Costs
Membership Fees
Overseas Membership - higher rates?
4. Annual Field Meeting - Venue ?
- Date - proposed 14/15th August 1982
5. National Micromount Competition - Aims of / and support for.
- Categories & Rules
- Date & Venue
- Trophy/Awards ?
6. Weekend Micromount Symposium - Suggested Venue Birmingham or Leicester.
- Date - Autumn 1982 ?
7. Members' Contributions and Any Other Business.
(If you have a topic that you would like discussed, and which is not covered by the above headings, please write to me immediately, outlining your question/proposition) R.S.

CLEANING TIP No.4 'BLU-TACK' AS A DUST REMOVER

Blu-tack when drawn out into a fine fibre and used as a 'needle' acts like a magnet for dust. Tiny particles or fibres can be swiftly removed from delicate crystals or from between crystal mattes without damage to the specimen. Try this simple method - the beauty of it is that it really works! Peter Braithwaite.

FINAL REMINDERS

Have you paid 1982 subscription yet - if not please do so NOW ! Have you still not paid 1981 subscription? Please check the front page of the newsletter, and if you have any outstanding payments PUT A CHEQUE IN THE POST NOW. £1.00 is very reasonable for 3 newsletters a year plus the Directory. We don't want to lose your membership so help us to help you - and pay promptly.

Don't forget the Leicester Show in March, if you're coming - bring some swap micro material, and if you possibly can bring a microscope. If you can be there for both days great ! If not, try to be at our inaugural meeting on the Sunday morning at 11.00am. We look forward to seeing you!



BMS March 1982.