

# BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



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## EDITORIAL

It's difficult to open a newspaper these days without encountering advertisements for sophisticated computers, many of which are packaged with the necessary software and a modem, capable of accessing the much-acclaimed internet. I've been looking for an excuse to buy a modem for some time, and a short article in this Newsletter provides a very good incentive indeed! The internet now offers a number of bulletin boards for mineral collectors, and it is possible to set up exchanges of specimens, and conversations with other collectors, electronically. I suppose it was only a matter of time until this happened, but I must say I'm looking forward to giving it a try. All I need now is an even better reason to persuade Angela that we need a modem!

## THE TREASURES OF THE EARTH

Roy Starkey

Second hand book shops and book fairs potentially have much to offer the mineral collector. A few years ago I was fortunate to pick up a copy of *The Treasures of the Earth* by W. Jones F.S.A.. This is a compilation volume aimed, I guess, at secondary school children. My copy has a bookplate inside the front cover recording that it was presented to Master Fred Foulds, for attaining the Highest Number of Marks, at Slater Street Boys' School in Leicester. The presentation was made by Headmaster Thomas Adcock with Alderman Kempson in the Chair. Tucked between two pages was the printed card invitation for Fred and his parents to attend the prize giving on Friday October 17th 1879!

Apart from the obvious historical interest of such pieces of paper, the book provides several interesting accounts including: "A Glance at a Coal Mine", "The Copper and Tin Mines of Cornwall and Devonshire", "Anecdotes of Miners", "Mines Under the Sea (including St. Just)" and many others.

The following short passage may serve to illustrate the interest that abounds in old texts, and perhaps to encourage members to seek out the next book fair in their district!

"Haycliff mine, in Derbyshire, now no longer worked, once contained an extraordinary mineral, called in that part of the country slickensides. It is a species of galena (a metallic looking substance of a lead-grey colour, consisting of sulphur, lead, a little iron, and sometimes a small quantity of silver), and highly explosive. The effects of this mineral are not less singular than terrible. A blow with a hammer or a scratch with a miner's pick is sufficient to rend the rocks asunder, whenever it is found united to or embodied in them. The stroke is immediately succeeded by a crackling noise, accompanied with a sound not unlike the mingled hum of a swarm of bees. Shortly afterwards an explosion follows, so loud and frightful that even the miners, though a hardy race of men, and little accustomed to fear, turn pale and tremble at the shock. The greatest caution is therefore necessary in working mines where this mineral is found. To avoid the use of the common instruments of mining, a small hole is carefully bored, into which a little gunpowder is put, and exploded by means of a long fuse. The workmen then withdraw to a place of safety to await the result of their operations. Sometimes not less than five or six successive explosions occur at intervals of a few minutes, and occasionally they are so awful that the earth has been violently shaken to the surface by the concussion.

When the Haycliff mine was opened, a miner who was unused to the effect of this dangerous mineral, and who was of careless habits, was repeatedly cautioned not to use his pick in getting the ore, but, unfortunately for himself, he paid no attention to the advice of his fellow workmen. He struck the fatal blow, that, apparently by electrical communication, set the whole mass in motion, shook the surrounding earth to its foundation, and with a noise like thunder scattered the rocky fragments in every direction. Boards of ash, distant twenty or thirty paces, of enormous thickness, were perforated by pieces of rock. The poor man was dreadfully cut and lacerated, but, providentially, escaped with life, and he could never be persuaded afterwards to return to his mining employment."

So remember that, next time you're thinking about trimming a lump of Peak District galena!

## CUMBRIA FIELD TRIP, MAY 1994

Peter Smith

First of all, my sincere apologies to Malcolm for not having sent in this report earlier; it's almost a year since the momentous events recorded here occurred. This was, originally, a Norfolk Mineral and Lapidary Society field trip, but since most of the participants are also BMS members, it seems appropriate to publish the account here. I've absolutely no idea why I was nominated as scribe for this trip, and after the delay in getting this to our very patient editor, I doubt very much that I shall be asked again (crafty, crafty). Well, so much for the intro, so here goes..

The roll call. "Our Superb Leader" (Richard Belson), ably assisted by Martin Stolworthy, then Bob Snowball, Andy Castleton, Rachael Whitlow, Malcolm Southwood, Lloyd Llewellyn, and of course yours truly - Peter Smith.

### Thursday

Richard called for me at 16.30 hrs and loaded my gear into his waggon. (I must admit at this point I was all keyed up and excited, this being my first real field trip and I was bubbling over with excitement and the anticipation of what was to come.) Anyway, enough of my rambling; off we went.

Our first port of call was at Peterborough to pick up Malcolm and Andy. We left there at 19.00 hrs, stopped on the way at a Little Chef for refreshments and arrived at Hesket Newmarket at approximately 23.30 hrs, parked the waggon, made our way to our digs at Denton House, where our gracious landlady was kindly waiting for us. After apologising for arriving so late, we retired for the night.

### Friday

We met for breakfast, where we ate heartily in preparation for the exciting day ahead. At 09.15 hrs we climbed aboard the waggon and set off for Dry Gill. After unloading our equipment we set off across the Fells. I couldn't help thinking at this point that my rucksack already felt quite heavy, what with wet weather gear, hammers and chisels, and some refreshments. Being a fledgling rock hound I was soon to find out what heavy meant. We arrived at the site, and each found a spot to start collecting.

After a while Richard asked me how I was progressing and I replied that as yet, I had not found very much of interest and what sort of matrix was I really looking for, (I thought, that should impress him!) so Richard very patiently explained the rudiments of collecting and said to look for anything that had some colour in it, brown, red, or green. He produced a chunk of rock and said, "Take a look at all these nice green crystals". Now this presented me with a major problem as I tend to be a bit colour blind, and I was hanged if I could see any green crystals at all. Admitting this proved to be my undoing as you will see later in this epistle.

The weather was absolutely superb, and we all collected some reasonable specimens of mimetite, pyromorphite, small campylites and baryte, etc., and then we moved on to

Driggith. We fossicked around for a while, (I don't really know what that means, but I've heard Richard say it), and then moved on to the Driggith Open Cut where we were joined by Martin and Rachael. Bob Snowball, who drove up from Norwich with them, had decided to stay at Sandbeds where we would meet him later.

Some excellent specimens were found here, at the Driggith Open Cut, particularly some nice pyromorphite, and it was at this point when I began to hear some disturbing remarks like "I've found some nice green stuff here - cor! look at these green crystals - this bit looks nice and green". Meanwhile I was getting green with envy, because I couldn't see a thing! Richard took pity on me and handed me a piece with some nice pyromorphite on it, though I must admit it looked more grey than green to me.

It was then that I began to notice that Malcolm always seemed to be eating something and had this happy look on his face. I made a mental note of this and decided to keep an eye on him.

We then moved on to Sandbeds. On route we heard someone hammering at some rock and over a small rise we discovered Lloyd Llewelyn bashing away at some rock at the entrance to an adit. After the customary greetings we carried on to Sandbeds, and with a bulging rucksack, I was by now beginning to understand the meaning of heavy.

Bob Snowball was waiting for us at Sandbeds, and was quite happy sitting amongst a pile of broken up rocks. We did a bit more collecting, nothing special, just a few common copper secondaries, although Lloyd was convinced that he'd found a specimen of philipsburgite.

17.30 hrs and back to Denton House. (My back was creaking by now, and I wished I had brought my trolley). We all had a welcome shower and rest, and then met next door at The Crown for dinner, drinks, and a very congenial evening. Jean Spence and John Dickinson joined us here for the evening and we talked shop until closing time. These country pubs never seem to close, so as you can imagine it was very late.

#### **Saturday.**

A trip to the Florence Mine near Egremont was arranged to start the day off, and was well received by all. A conducted tour of the mine proved to be very interesting, and we were each allowed to collect specimens of the hematite ore, which of course had to be paid for when we reached the surface. Some nicely crystallised specularite specimens, with barite, calcite, and very occasionally some pale blue fluorite were found.

I'm not too sure what Malcolm had been up to down there but he had that happy look again; it later transpired that the culprit was a Mars Bar!

A visit to Beckermeth mine dump was next on the agenda, and everybody managed to find some reasonable specimens; mainly of specularite, barite, and calcite.

A visit to Kinniside lead mine dump was next. This had not been planned, but as we had time available and we were in the vicinity.... There was nobody home when we went

to ask for permission at the farm house, but as the dump in question was at the roadside, a couple of the party decided to look for specimens anyway, and after a few excited shouts, (especially "there is some nice green stuff on here Peter!"), the rest of us filtered onto the dump and spent an interesting half hour collecting pyromorphite and some of the strangest looking baryte I've yet to see. Martin later discovered small crystals of wulfenite nestling among the pyromorphite.

On the way back to Denton House we stopped off at Frizington for fish and chips. Very welcome they were too, I couldn't understand Malcolm being hungry though, as he seemed to be permanently tucking in to Mars Bars. We named him "chocoholic". Back to Denton House and another very enjoyable evening, I've never seen anyone consume so many Gin and Tonics as the good Mr Snowball!

### Sunday

Today's trip was to Roughton Gill. This was the one I had been waiting for, having heard so much about this place and all the other mines in the area, and guess what, Yes - you've got it, it was raining. We packed our wet weather gear and set off with high spirits at the prospect of a good day's collecting. We arrived at the parking place and donned our gear, (most people had this green coloured wet weather gear), and we set off, but not before our dear leader said, "put your green gear on chaps, then Peter won't be able to see us". Charming!. Bob decided to stay behind in his van until the rain eased off (wise man!).

Upon arriving at the site everybody split up and went their own way. On advice from Richard I proceeded to do some excavating on the main tip. By this time it was really tipping it down, and after a while Rachael decided enough was enough and legged it back to Bob's van. I looked at her disappearing in the distance and wished I was with her, as by this time I was also feeling cold and wet, particularly when I looked up from my digging (which had not been very fruitful anyway), and discovered that everybody had moved on to another dump. But I braved it out for another half an hour and gave up.

Back at the parking place, after removing my wet gear I was cordially invited into Bob's cafe (van) and was given a nice hot cup of tea and biscuits to eat. We spent the rest of the afternoon placing bets on the rain drops running down the windscreen. Richard, Malcolm, and Martin, arrived back at 15.40 hrs, Andy had decided to stay on for a while longer, and as the remainder of the day had been planned for a visit to the mining museum at Priests Mill, it was arranged to call back later for him.

Priests Mill was a pleasant place to spend a wet couple of hours, particularly their Homity pies in the restaurant, where we all tucked in to eats and hot drinks, (even Malcolm managed to stop eating Mars Bars for a while).

Mike Leppington turned up at the Mill and we were all invited to visit his place in the evening to view his collection. After collecting Andy from Fellside it was back to Denton House for showers and then next door for dinner. Afterwards we proceeded to Mike's place to view his wonderful collection, and in particular his Caldbeck Fells

micromounts under the scope. Cups of tea and coffee all round and back to Denton House to complete another rewarding day.

### **Monday**

Deer Hills was the first site on the agenda today, and the weather was a bit kinder to us, overcast but warm. We spent about half an hour at the first dump, and then on to the main dump where some excellent specimens were found. Rachael unfortunately tried to use one of her fingers as a chisel, (I always thought ladies didn't swear), but what was more surprising was the total lack of sympathy!

Finally we trekked across the fells to the last site for this trip, Potts Gill. Andy disappeared *en route*, he went ahead of the main party and went in the wrong direction, but turned up half an hour later, and joined in the foray amongst the rocks. There was plenty of material to crack open and again some nice copper secondaries were found. Rachael took pity on me and handed me a nice piece of quartz matrix with some gorgeous pyromorphites on it. Thanks Rachael!

All in all, another very pleasant day was enjoyed by all, Martin, Rachael, and Bob departed about 14.30 hrs. The rest of us packed our gear at 15.30 hrs and left for Denton House. After a wash and brush up, and a welcome cuppa we packed the trailer for the long trek home, said our goodbyes to our landlady and set off for home. Called at a Little Chef for refreshments en route, where Andy surprised us by only having one desert, as at every meal at the Crown it was always two, nearly as bad as chocoholic, who true to form, purchased two Mars Bars for the trip home.

Well that's about it. I trust you will forgive me for not mentioning all the various minerals found, but as you are aware, it's not until you get home and start cracking and scrutinising the interesting bits of rock you have collected, that you know what has really been found.

Thanks are due to Richard and Martin for organising a great trip, and we are all looking forward to the next one, planned for May 1995. But of course that will all be over by the time you get to read this.

### **SOUTH EAST BRANCH FIELD TRIP - MAY 1995** **Austin Lockwood**

The South East Branch of the BMS had already arranged their visit to the Isle of Skye when Roy Starkey's interesting article appeared in Newsletter No.40 and most of the sites he mentions were already included in our itinerary. I already had doubts about visiting Sgurr nam Boc [NG 361 407], but Roy's experience of having to jump into 4ft of cold water made this a definite 'no go' area. I was taking 23 people to the island and I was pretty keen on bringing 23 back!

June and I had spent 10 days on Skye in June 1994 visiting the various locations recommended by John Pearce and in the course of doing so we discovered a number of

interesting new sites. The weather during our 1994 visit can best be described as variable - from gloriously sunny days to horizontal sleet and snow and howling gales. At least the latter kept the midges away.

Statistically, May is said to be the best month to visit Skye, and I had arranged accommodation for the majority of our group in the small crofting village of Bernisdale [NG 400 508], from the 13th to the 21st May, although some of us went up a few days earlier. Bernisdale is situated on the A850 some 6 miles from Portree at the head of Loch Snizort Beag and is ideally situated for visiting the various zeolite locations in the north of the island. A few of us stayed at Suladale [NG 380 533] 2 miles further up the A850 towards Dunvegan. The accommodation was secured from between £18.50 to £20.00 per night bed, breakfast and evening meal. There were few complaints from the members other than that the breakfasts and evening meals were too large!

The weather on Skye is quite unpredictable and members had been advised to take sufficient warm clothing with them and, ideally, an additional set of waterproofs. Whilst drying facilities were available at the lodgings it is not pleasant to have to spend an afternoon in wet clothing. Balaclava helmets had also been recommended as being helpful in keeping ones ears warm. Included in the itinerary was a visit to the working marble quarry at Torrin [NG 584 204] and for this we needed the obligatory hard hats, high visibility vests and steel toe capped boots or wellies. [BTCV Enterprises in Doncaster can supply steel toe capped wellies - ladies size 3 to 6 for approximately £17.00 and mens size 6 to 12 for around £19.00 per pair]. In the event the weather during the visit proved to be exceptionally kind to us and there was only one afternoon when, due to persistent heavy rain, we had to abandon the planned visit to the disused marble quarries near Torrin [NG 619 198]. Fortunately, none of us were bothered by midges - they are no doubt waiting for the Sussex Lapidary & Mineral Society members who are visiting Skye for a week at the end of May!

Members were advised that it was essential to have in the car in which they were travelling copies of the two Ordnance Survey Landranger maps No.23 - North Skye, and No.32 - South Skye. Most had highlighted on these the main sites we were visiting to assist in finding the locations. We had arranged to travel in the minimum number of cars as some of the sites had very limited parking and we left Bernisdale around 9.15 each morning and travelled in convoy as far as practicable. The roads on Skye are excellent and although some of the minor roads are single track with passing places these occur quite frequently and, apart from the occasional ewe and her lamb in the middle of the road, one can get from place to place without too much difficulty. It is important, however, to follow the map and the sign posts otherwise you will end up trying to get to Talisker Bay via Glen Eynort which some of our members did.

During the week members visited Talisker Bay [NG 313 315], where the Rev. Wathen kindly allowed some of us to park in his 'back yard' at Talisker House and saved us the walk up the lane to where we normally park. We also visited Oisgill Bay [NG 135 495], Moonen Bay [NG 155 464], where we met David Green and a colleague (it's a small world), The Old Man of Storr [NG 445 685], the working marble quarry at Torrin [NG 584 204] where the manager, Mr. Herbert, kindly allowed us to collect off the waste tips, Kilchrist [NG 615 201], The Ouiraing [NG 445 685], where some of us made the

traverse along the inland cliffs to Leac nan Fionn [NG 453 704] and the subsequent descent to the A855 to meet the rest of the group at the roadside quarry near Flodigarry [NG 463 710]. Visits were also made to mineral collecting sites at Bracadale [NG 348 383], Glen Eynort [NG 383 241], Sligachan [NG 495 305], Camas Malag [NG 584 188], where the precise locations proved quite elusive, Dunvegan [NG 265 483] and Ros a' Mheallain, Bracadale [NG 384 412].

A few of us felt that we could not leave Skye without an almost obligatory visit or pilgrimage to the roadside quarry on the A855 near Skudaborg [NG 387 652] where Roy Starkey had his small accident last year. We were hoping to find a few blood stained rocks to put into the Symposium auction but these seem to have been collected up already. Do beware of imitations - if offered any for sale, check with a u.v. lamp only genuine Starkey blood will display the distinctive golden halo's!

In order to have a break from mineral collecting the itinerary included Wednesday 17th May as a free day and Saturday 20th May to visits sites we had been unable to access due to bad weather or wished to visit again. Most members spent both these days on further mineral collecting although there are numerous interesting places to visit on the island. It was reported that some of our group had even visited the Talisker Distillery! On the evening of Friday 19th May members met at the Skeabost Hotel near Bernisdale where we enjoyed a pleasant meal together in the Conservatory dining room and discussed where we might go on next years field trip - all agreed this should be an annual event.

When the weather is fine the Isle of Skye is a most beautiful place and whilst many of us had travelled over 650 miles to get there, we all agreed it was well worth while and the visit an experience we will always cherish. From our visit in 1994, June and I know that the members will have further delights in store as, when they start breaking up the various rocks they have collected they will discover the beautiful zeolite crystal groups nestling in the gas cavities of the basalt lava - no doubt we shall have an opportunity to see the best of these at the 1995 Symposium.

If any member would like further details of our visit and, in particular, of the accommodation we used, please let me know.

### **A FACE LIFT FOR WHEAL EDWARD...**

**Trevor Wolloxall**

As part of its centenary this year, the National Trust has embarked on its "St Just Coast Project", a major part of which is the preservation of the Wheal Edward engine house. Trevor Wolloxall visited the site in April, and found the building encased in scaffolding. What is of greater interest, however, is the fact that the Trust is using stone from the old spoil heaps as its basic repair material. In so doing, the dumps have been turned over and Trevor reports that a variety of interesting material has been uncovered. Unfortunately, his visit was cut short by bad weather, but it sounds like the site is well worth a visit if you happen to be down that way this summer.

## ...AND A NEW ATTRACTION AT EAST POOL AND AGAR

The National Trust is also planning a new visitor centre focusing on Cornwall's industrial and mining history. The centre will be housed by the old mine buildings at the East Pool and Agar, and will be developed and managed by the Trevithick Trust, in association with Kerrier Council. Meanwhile, the National Trust has applied for a redevelopment permit for the Perran Foundry, where it plans a working foundry and exhibitions to show how the great Cornish engines were built.

*The above information was supplied by Trevor Wollaxall, from The West Briton and Royal Cornwall Gazette, April 13, 1995.*

## SOUTH EAST BRANCH STUDY COLLECTIONS

Austin Lockwood

The South East Branch now has eight sets of micromount study collections in circulation amongst its members and expects to increase this to twenty sets by the end of the year.

The sets, donated by members from their duplicate material, are of micromounts from various U.K. classic sites and currently include zeolites and their allies from the Isle of Skye, and specimens from New Cliffe Hill Quarry, Penberthy Croft, Caldbeck Fells, Eaglebrook Mine, and Meadowfoot Smelter, as well as a set of native elements.

The collections are each housed in an 18 compartment, 'raaco' assorter box which can be obtained from 'DO IT ALL' d.i.y. stores at a cost of £3.77 each - on the 10% discount days. We spent some of the prize money we won for the best display at last year's FLAGS competition on buying our first 6 boxes. The compartments will accept all micromount boxes and the standard size 'Jousi' boxes, although the latter have to be put in upside down.

We stuck a thin foam lining to the bottom of each compartment to prevent the boxes from rattling about during transit and there is a card for each set showing the contents. The sets are borrowed, on signature, between our quarterly meetings.

These collections are proving to be very popular, particularly amongst the newer members. They are also being borrowed by the more experienced members intending to visit a site for the first time and wishing to see the type of material likely to be found and the matrix on which it occurs.

## INTERESTING ADDITIONS TO THE BMS COLLECTION Nos. 1601-1650

Max Wirth

We have received some interesting zeolites from Skye. Isabel Geldart found phillipsite from Oisgill Bay (1602) and cowlesite from Kingsburgh. David Green found both these in Moonen Bay, not far away (1644 and 1646). If you are planning to go there, look at the map first because there is no adjacent motorway!

Also from Moonen Bay, David contributed very clean chabazite (1640), levynite (1642) and apophyllite (1643). Richard Bell found and identified delafossite (1607) at Tolvaddon mine. This appears to be related to goethite but contains both iron and copper. He also contributed nice sprays of colourless pyromorphite (1612) from Kinniside mine; dark brown, translucent siderite on quartz (1618) and golden sprays of goethite (1621), both from West Wheal Owles; stellate strontianite in a vug (1622) from Trearn quarry, a delightful scatter of little langite crystals (1625) from Yaughan mine in Wales; and fine diopside crystals from Thurstaston beach (1629), associated as usual with various other minerals. These are just a few of the 24 specimens Richard sent this time.

Dorothy Merritt sent a remarkable specimen of stellate smithsonite with sphalerite (1630) from the Carnetown coal spoil heaps in Taff Vale. A new member, Peter Hay, noticed the absence of melanterite in our collection and sent a bit (1632) from Cae Coch mine. He also found a minute spray of gypsum (1633) at Moel Ferna mine.

Roy Starkey, ever the one to notice the not too obvious, gave us a small but nice quartz crystal (1634). What makes it special is the liquid/gas bubble occluded in it as well as a negative quartz void, also containing liquid I think. Mike Rothwell contributed tyrolite (1638), confirmed by XRD, and mimetite (1639) from Gwaith-yr-Afon.

Both Roy Starkey and David Green found mottramite (1636 and 1647) from what is believed to be the type locality of Pim Hill mine in Shropshire (see Braithwaite, R.S.W., J.Russ.Soc.(1994), 5, (2), p.91-102).

David Green also sent us an interesting millerite (1649) from Brownley Hill. Although the crystals are broken, they are massive prismatic instead of the usual needles. From the Lodge Park trial (near Loveden mine, David contributed a scatter of cuprite crystals on slate (1650) as well as native copper (1651).

## **1995 BMS MICROMOUNT COMPETITION**

### **Peter Braithwaite**

As you will have seen from the notice announcing our fourteenth annual Symposium, it is intended to hold a micromount competition once again. The rules remain the same as in previous years and are reprinted below. The deadline for submissions has again been extended to August 15 (instead of the former two months before the Symposium). Once again the competition will be judged by Peter Braithwaite. Please support this competition!

#### **Micromount Competition Rules**

1. Entries will be judged on specimen quality, labelling and micromounting technique.
2. A maximum of two entries per member.
3. All specimens to be British and collected by the entrant.
4. Each entry to be contained in a box no larger than a 25mm cube.

5. Each entry to be permanently mounted and oriented for viewing, by microscope, in the horizontal position.
6. Each entry to be labelled with the name of the mineral and its source location as a minimum.
7. All entries submitted at the owner's risk and must reach the judge by the closing date of August 15. Each entry must be accompanied by a completed entry form.
8. The judge will be appointed annually by the committee and will not be eligible to enter the competition that year.
9. All entries will be returned at the Symposium. Please note that entrants not attending the Symposium need to organise collection of their entries on their behalf.

### **BMS MICROMINERAL COMPETITION** **Austin Lockwood**

Members may recall that at last years AGM, Austin Lockwood, on behalf of the South East Branch proposed that, in addition to the Micromount Competition which, obviously, everyone should continue to support, there should also be a Micromineral Competition.

It is recognised that many members have superb specimens of micro-crystal groups on matrix which, understandably, they would not wish to reduce in size in order to fit into a standard micromount box. The purpose of this new competition is provide an opportunity for members attending the Symposium to see these specimens, after judging, to determine the best entry.

The meeting agreed, by a show of hands, that such a competition should be held and Austin undertook to arrange for the South East Branch to organise this. The rules of the competition have now been established and are printed below. These may need to be revised if we experience any particular problems with this years event. Peter Reynolds, who has had considerable experience in administering such competitions through his connections with FLAGS, has kindly agreed to act as the Competition Administrator.

Entry forms will be sent out with the Symposium notice and are to be submitted to Peter by the 1st September 1995. It is important for him to know how many entries will be submitted well before the event.

It is hoped that members of the Society will support this competition by submitting an entry and allow us the opportunity of seeing some of the prized micromineral specimens that have been collected over the years.

A suitable trophy will be presented to the winner, similar to that provided in the Micromount Competition.

#### **Micromineral Competition Rules**

1. Entries will be judged on specimen quality only and are restricted to one per member. Specimens are to be British and to have been collected by entrant.

2. The size of the specimen is restricted only by the practicality of handling and viewing under a conventional binocular microscope.
3. Specimens should be submitted in a rigid container, placed right side up for viewing and provided with suitable packing to prevent movement and damage.
4. An entry form will be sent out to all members with the Symposium notice and this is to be completed and returned to the Competition Administrator 14 days before the Symposium.
5. All entries to be submitted at owners risk and are to be handed to the Competition Administrator no later than 11.00 a.m. on the Saturday of the Annual Symposium.
6. Entries are to be legibly labelled with the name of the entrant, name of mineral/s and source location as a minimum. Entry numbers will be allocated by the Competition Administrator and specimens will be known only by these numbers until after the final judging.
7. The panel of judges will consist of an appointed representative from at least three of the Branches. None of judges will be eligible to enter the competition that year.
8. Judging will be based on a maximum of 10 points awarded by each judge in respect of each of the following features:
  - a. Perfection of crystals
  - b. Aesthetic appeal
  - c. Rarity of species
  - d. Overall cleanliness.
  - e. Correctness of identity
9. The Competition Administrator will announce the results of the competition at the A.G.M. on the Sunday morning and will invite the Chairman of the Society to present the winner with a suitable trophy.
10. All entries will be returned at 3.00 p.m. on Sunday (after allowing members a reasonable time for viewing) Entrants not attending the Symposium will need to organise delivery and collection of their specimens.

**RASHLEIGH**  
**John Pearce**

Since the last issue of the Newsletter, a copy of Phillip Rashleigh's famous *Specimens of Some British Minerals* (of which only 75 facsimile reprints have been produced) has been purchased by the BMS and is held by our archivist Muriel Swindell. We had thought of buying a second copy as the raffle prize for the Symposium, but after calculating that tickets would have to be £5 each, decided that it was too big a risk.

## **MINERAL TRADES "ON LINE"**

**David Staska**

Recently I began using the on-line information networks to conduct research and communicate with others who are interested in minerals and geology. I found that within a short time I was subscribed to two discussion groups and had access to a third, all of which deal with minerals, fossils, or geology. I then realized, being a student of the earth and a mineral collector, that this may be a way to trade some mineral specimens.

I began by simply posting a message to each group stating my desire to trade a few minerals with other collectors from different parts of the country or even the world. The response I received was almost immediate, and within the last few months I've received numerous new specimens while trading with people from Michigan, Virginia, Texas and New Mexico.

From my experiences I offer the following suggestions about trading specimens through the use of computer discussion groups or computer bulletin boards. For the sake of brevity, the following suggestions are for those people already established within or having access to geology and/or mineral (rockhounding) computer groups or bulletin boards. An article about getting started from scratch is under consideration for the future.

### **Submitting a Post/Message**

Begin by making sure a post or message to trade specimens is appropriate to the group you are subscribed to. Submitting a post which doesn't fit into the group's format may get you some nasty messages! In your post simply introduce yourself and your background or interests, to the group. Keep it simple; long messages are frowned upon. Offer a general list of specimens you have for trading and what specimens you desire in return. Don't go overboard. If you find others interested, you can send complete lists through your e-mail without cluttering the discussion group.

From here on, simply follow the normal rules of postal trading!

Ed. note: This is a truly international article. The author is at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, 515 Palmerston Hall; 501 E. St. Joseph; Rapid City, SD 57701-3995, USA. The article appeared in the South African bulletin "Micro News and Views". It has been edited by Muriel and Eric Wood of the Canadian Micromount Society to eliminate the 'selection and packaging' sections which apply to any mail trade.

## A SMALL THANKS TO A REALLY NICE MAN - JIM WOOLDRIDGE

David Roe

Jim Wooldridge died in the style he would have wanted. He had been out on a mineral collecting trip during the day and was delighted that he had been able to share his enthusiasm with a new club member. On his return home he had a surprise visit from friends and family, and after socialising in his normal affable way, he went upstairs to do a couple of hours gem faceting. Later in the evening he came downstairs and after a glass of "amber fluid" he fell asleep and died peacefully in that sleep.

I first met Jim in the early '80s when my boss told me he had a new neighbour whose house was "full of stones". Within days I was invited over to meet Jim and his wife, Connie. That evening I entered the spare "bedroom" in which only the rocks slept and where over the next few years I was to spend some of my happiest hours. The 20-odd years age difference between us made no difference with Jim who was at ease with all ages, all classes and all levels of education. We were both newly arrived at Worcester and Jim was champing at the bit to explore this new area that would be a cornucopia of mineral riches.

Jim possessed an unquenchable optimism that life was like an eternal Christmas Stocking - it was bound to be exciting and rewarding - it only required one to unwrap the parcels and find out. Despite any evidence to the contrary he always exuded an enormous enthusiasm for what *might* be found on the next mineral trip - and if that proved to be a disaster, then it was certain that it just needed to be visited again with a larger hammer.

Our first field trip together was to Derbyshire - I knew that Jim's heart was not good and so felt obliged to escort him gently into the quarry. Within half an hour I knew Jim better as he politely elbowed me aside with a murmured remark to the effect that I needed a rest and he felt he ought to assist with the sledge hammer work - it was my first experience of a dedicated "hard rock man". Jim had such a genuine uncomplicated enthusiasm for life - I will always treasure a memory of him in Mid-Wales, hammering "seven bells" out of some uncomprehending rock in his search for "hens teeth" disguised as wulfenite - completely oblivious to the snow flurries, piercing gale force wind and to his senior citizen status.

We discovered the magic new world of micromounting together and were lucky enough to have had our baptism in fire at the time of the first discoveries of vanadinite, mottramite and other rarities at Judkin's Quarry - Jim became hooked for life. Jim also introduced me to the wonders of a good whiskey and proved conclusively that this sharpened the mineral recognition techniques quite markedly. On winter nights we explored our new found treasures from Mid-Wales together and spent many slightly inebriated hours peering down microscopes, struggling to distinguish between cerussite and anglesite. It was then that Jim began to reap the reward of his dogged persistence and increasing skill as a micromounter and mineralogist. He would announce with a twinkle in his eye that he had "been doing a bit of work" and "was I interested in a couple of leadhillite micros?". In these circumstances his generosity was unbounded - he always made sure that specimens were available for the Oxford club, the Hull club, the micro-mount symposium, a network of friends across the world and when all else failed the poor of the parish.

A trip to Cwm Orog in search of harmotome was aborted when his heart gave him another warning, but within weeks he was grimly fighting his way back to fitness - and the driving motive was to get back out there amongst the rocks and among his fellow enthusiasts. If the problems with his heart meant he was running life's race with one hand tied behind his back, then so be it, but he was going to keep in sight of the leaders and he was going to enjoy the race. He threw himself at various projects and unstintingly gave of his gifts of charm, gentle humour and level headed business acumen to any person or group in the mineral fraternity that needed help. Yet this enthusiasm was touchingly unselfish - he did it because someone needed help - not for his own aggrandizement. He was almost naive in respect for experts, never considering that many thought him the expert, especially in the field of gem cutting. In fact he was the supreme expert. For it was Jim who had learnt how to live life to the full, who could still capture the childlike wonder of the new and the unknown, and instinctively knew that true wealth comes from the sharing of riches.

His funeral was unique; I suspect that most of the family and friends gathered did not feel a loss in the usual way. It was more of a celebration of his life and how it had touched us. Jim was a person who had lived with such a zest for life that one felt privileged to have known him, and his personality was such a bright flame that it has become clearly etched on the memory - it is, and will be the memory of a really *nice* man.

**Please note the following changes of address:**

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**NEW MEMBERS**

New members are urged to inform the editor should any of their particulars (as noted below) be incorrect:

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(Please note that the deadline for articles for Newsletter 42 will be October 7, 1995. Please let me have contributions as soon as possible in order to spread the typing load. Many thanks.)