

BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER NO. 42 OCTOBER 1995

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A VERY OCCASIONAL ARTICLE FROM NEWQUAY

Sheila Harper

A number of years ago, I brought up the subject of microscope evenings at a South West Branch Russell Society meeting. A certain committee member, now retired, pooh-pooched the idea, saying that micro's were the mineral equivalent of flat chested women! Needless to say, S.W. Russell Soc. now has 'scope evenings.

I took a specimen (collected in 1993) for identification to the Russell Society meeting early this year (we don't have a BMS group in Cornwall and most BMS members in Cornwall are Russell Society members as well so there!). Black, shiny and brittle sprays of needles and blocky euhedral crystals coating siderite and killas confounded the experts so our Chairman took some away for analysing. It turned out to be pyrolusite. Frank Sharpe has been looking at coatings associated with it and has some interesting findings which he will divulge in time. There is lead around so some interesting combinations could occur. There are archaeological implications - the siderite lode was possibly mined in the Iron Age. One wonders what the effect of manganese and plumbum would have had on smelted iron. Flory Island, Newquay is the source of the above find. It is a first for Newquay - and for Cornwall for that matter - in recent times. In all my years of surface collecting I have never seen the like.

Please Illuminite! Who told me about the new mine in Truro - Wheal Clamping - was it Chris Jewson? I had a phone call from Richard Bell. He has a micro with over thirty betaerolite crystals on it, from down Kennack way. Andy Castleton recently had a nice anatase specimen from down near Basset. Why mention it, well, a lot of collectors who come to Cornwall ignore chlorite veins. Don't! Those of you who have borrowed the Wheal Concord micro from the BMS collection will see what I mean. I have also had anatase from Poldice Mine dumps in the same matrix.

Another phone call I made, wearing a different hat, and found myself talking to Donald Dunkley of Truro. It turned out that his great great uncle was Talling, who of course had Tallingite named after him. What a thrill.

Footnote: As this is not the sort of article that the Ed. or you the reader for that matter might expect, I thought of writing under a pseudonym - Minny Micro - but I've just eaten a load of Cornish clotted cream. Lovely! Best wishes, Sheila Harper.

BMS SYMPOSIUM 1995: INTERESTING NEW MATERIAL ON DISPLAY

Mike Rothwell

This year amongst all the lovely specimens of species we have come to expect to see there were more than the usual number of interesting and exceptional ones; and it was good to see a wide geographical spread represented.

Starting in the extreme south west, that part of the country we northerners label "here be lironite and Chris Jewson", there was a selection of the very rare basic tin oxychloride, **abhurite** which Chris brought along. This had formed as colourless plates in small cavities in tin ingots discovered in the wreck of the SS Cheerful, lying on the seabed some 18 miles NNW of St Ives. Interesting material, but I will leave it to others to comment on its "purity" as a mineral specimen.

The Wallace family had some excellent micro **phosgenite** crystal groups from Gunver Head and some unusual **parnauite** from Penberthy Crofts. David Green brought along a **wulfenite** from Wheal Ludcott and Richard Bell some excellent **bertrandite** from Hingston Down Quarry.

From the midlands Neil Hubbard had a magnificent **wulfenite**, an orange transparent plate, c.2-3mm in size, from Snelston near Ashbourne in Derbyshire. The rock in which this specimen was found was collected some years ago but only recently broken down exposing the specimen.

Wales was represented by David Green's small hand specimens of **carbonate cyanotrichite** from Wedding Cave at Bwlch Gwyn near Wrexham and his very rich **ramsbeckite** specimens from Penrhiw mine, Ystumtuen. This locality was described in the *UK Journal of Mines and Minerals No. 15*. Richard Bell brought along a specimen of micro **langite** crystals on shale from the Lodge Park copper trial at Tre-r-ddol near Machynlleth. These are the nicest **langite** crystals I have seen from Wales.

The Caldbeck fells is continuing to yield good material, mostly to Mike Leppington. Recently he has found a number of interesting specimens belonging to the **corkite-bendantite** series on Iron Craggs and some excellent **brochantite** with **tsumebite** on the Roughten Gill dump. Andy Castleton's **pyromorphite** on **plumbogummite** from the same dumps and his **wulfenite** from higher Roughten Gill were also worth admiring. Neil Hubbard had recently found a quite superb spray of **elyite** crystals on the 60 fathom dump at Driggeth.

From the Northern Pennines David Green brought along a recently collected small hand specimen of **alstonite** with **hydromagnesite** rosettes scattered over the crystals, from the high cross vein in Brownley Hill mine. Trevor Bridges had a number of **brianyoungite** specimens from the same location.

Currently the Isle of Skye is receiving quite a lot of attention from the serious collectors among the membership and David Green had some specimens of **heulandite** from Sgurr Nam Boc and **apophyllite** from Moonen bay clearly demonstrating why.

Although most material at the symposium is from the British Isles there is always a good selection of specimens from other countries for sale or exchange. Perhaps the best of the lot this year were not for sale or exchange. These were the microminerals from the Editor's collection of Tsumeb material.

A BARGAIN FROM RUSSIA

Trevor Wolloxall

Over the years I have owned several microscopes, all having good points and bad. During this time I have also spent many hours viewing micromounts at friends' houses and, of course, at the annual Symposium in Leicester. So it was no surprise when this summer a friend of mine from Holland, Wim Van den Berg, who is an avid micromount collector, visited me bringing along a Russian MBC 10 microscope he had been using at home.

I must admit that my first thoughts were that it would be a cheap, heavily made microscope with poor optics and limited scope. How wrong I was. The MBC 10 is made from lightweight alloy and is of sturdy construction. The central column which supports the optics is very generous in height, which allows larger specimens to be viewed easily without having to make back-breaking adjustments or turning your microscope head around from the base using a counterbalance. The base of the MBC 10 is in 2 sections, which allows specimens to be lit from underneath (although this is obviously of limited use to the average micromount collector). Most importantly, relative to cost, the optics are really excellent. The magnification ranges from X5 to X96 in stepped stages using X8 and X14 eye pieces, which are supplied as standard.

Also supplied as standard is a halogen type illuminator with a voltage reduction unit. Obviously this is not as good as fibre optic illumination but for "conventional" lighting systems compares favourably to most. I am also informed by Wim that, for a few pounds extra, a specially adapted bulb can be purchased which vastly improves illumination. A host of extras are also supplied as standard including arm rests, 8 x eye piece with "cross hairs", 2 spare illuminator bulbs and clear and dark base glass.

Now the crux of the matter - the price. At current exchange rates of 2.46 Dutch guilders to the pound, the MBC 10 costs £260 complete (£18 postage and packing).

Having used many different microscopes over the years, some costing several thousand pounds, I am convinced that the MBC 10 is comparable to most, having good optical quality, sturdy construction and having a good working height range. I would recommend it to both new collectors and experienced micromounters as real value for money.

Further details can be obtained directly from the suppliers - Educational Supplies, Korreweg 62a, 9715AD Groningen, Holland.

EDITORIAL: BRITISH MICRO LOCALITIES
Malcolm Southwood

Someone at the recent Symposium came up with the admirable idea of putting a table of contents on the front page of the Newsletter. Admirable because it means that I won't have to find something to write about to fill that space any more, and neither will you be obliged to read it! On this occasion, however, I do have something sensible to write about, and that is the issue of the series of articles "British Micro Localities" which I mentioned at the AGM.

Looking at the list of articles in Table 1, it seems that between 1983 and 1987, articles in this series were enthusiastically supplied. Then suddenly they ceased. Looking back through the old Newsletters, these were generally in the form of short, but very useful notes (usually with a sketch map) on how to get to the site. This would be accompanied by a couple of descriptive paragraphs, and a list of minerals found there.

Table 1: Articles in the "British Micro Localities" Series

No.	Locality	Author	Newsletter	Date
1	Wheal Edward; St. Just; Cornwall	T. Wolloxall	5	9/83
2	Llandudno Copper Mines	K. Snell	6	12/82
3	Loanhead Quarry; Beith; Scotland	M. Wirth	7	3/83
4	Kit Hill Consols Mine; Cornwall	N. Hubbard	7	3/83
5	Porthkerris Quarries; Cornwall	P. Monk	7	3/83
6	High Down Quarry; Devon	D. Ifold	9	11/83
7	Wheal Drea; Cornwall	D. Clough	10	3/84
8	Clevedon Beach; Avon	R. Starkey	10	3/84
9	Anglezarke Lead Mine; Lancashire	K. Snell	12	11/84
10	Esgair Hir; Wales	S. Rust	13	3/85
11	Thurstaston Beach	J. Dickinson/M. Rothwell	13	3/85
12	Dyfnigwm Mine; Wales	S. & D. Rust	16	3/86
13	Isolation Mine; Derbyshire	D. Green	17	6/86
14	Wyndham Mine; Mid Glamorgan	I. Geldart	18	11/86
15	Bwlchreannaid Mine; Wales	S. Rust	18	11/86
16	Rhuba a' Mhill; Islay	D. Green	19	3/87
17	Little Duke Mine; Devon	D. Clough	19	3/87
18	Wheal Rose; Helston; Cornwall	D. Clough	19	3/87
19	Coatsgate Quarry; Beatock; Scotland	R. Starkey	31	11/91

Note: Article number 10 (Esgair Hir) was erroneously labelled "Number 12" in Newsletter 13.

In 1991 (Newsletter 19), Roy Starkey lamented the lack of contributions to this series in recent years, and tried to set the ball rolling again with his notes on Coatsgate Quarry. Unfortunately, this was the last such article in the series, which is rather a shame in view of its concise but useful nature.

So here I am four years later, (the same gap, incidentally, between the end of the series' halcyon days and Roy's 1991 appeal), suggesting we get things moving again. Any contributions?

**BRITISH MICROMOUNT SOCIETY.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.
Leicester University, 10.10a.m., 17th September, 1995.**

63 members were present. The Chairman was John Pearce.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Alan Dyer, Isabel Geldart, Jon Gliddon, John and Daphne Hall, Phil Jackman, Cynthia Peat, Bob Reekie, Bill Swindell, and Jean Terry.

2. Minutes of the A.G.M. of 18th September 1994.

Minutes of the 1994 AGM having been circulated in Newsletter no. 38 were taken as read.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes.

None were raised.

4. Treasurer's and Membership Secretary's Reports.

The combined report was given by Sidney Freeman.

Our 184 memberships include 28 family memberships, making 213 active members. There were 14 new members during the year and nine non-renewals, a net increase of five. During the Symposium we acquired another member bringing the total to 214. There are now four overseas members.

Sid then commented on various items in the Receipts and Payments Account. £228 had been received from the sale of Occasional Papers, outgoings being £192. Costs of £207 for badges and the Founder's Cup-winners' Trophies had been offset by £143 from the sale of badges (which are available to members at £1.80). Subscription receipts were up, but there was an overlap with the previous year. Recorded under the heading of "Sundries" were a small surplus from the Cambridge Workshop, and payments for affiliations and the Geology student Bursary. A copy of the new facsimile of Rashleigh's book had been purchased for the Society's Library. Changing to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers for insurance cover had considerably reduced costs. The increase in the Data-base expenses would be reported separately. On a cash basis funds had risen from £3,065 to £3,200 during the year, and the financial position was healthy.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Austin Lockwood and seconded by Mick Wolfe and supported unanimously.

The Chairman thanked Mike Leppington for auditing the accounts and asked him to act as Auditor for the current year.

5. Chairman's Report.

John Pearce admitted to amazement at the efficient operation of the Society's affairs using such an informal organisation. The Symposium is organised from Norfolk; the Newsletter is edited in Cambridgeshire; the Occasional Papers are edited somewhere in the Leeds/Manchester area; the Database grows in Kent; the Directory is up-dated in the Midlands; our "Reprographics" centre is very busy in the North-West; distribution and treasury operates out of North-West London and secretarial services from South-East London. Amazingly, it all works.

A new edition of the Directory was published this year thanks to the efforts of Mick Wolfe and Mike Rothwell. Several BMS Projects are becoming established, particularly the Occasional Papers, and the U.K. Mineral Database. Study Collections are being developed by the South-East Branch and proving very popular. Peter Wallace organised our first one-day workshop at Cambridge University on Conservation of Mineral Collections. Reports on these will be given later.

This year's major problem was an attempt by Max Wirth to resign from the Committee. This was considered by the Committee and found to be unconstitutional since the Curator of the Reference Collection is *per se* a Committee member (1994 revision). Max bore the decision bravely!

A member in the Midlands has asked about the possibility of forming a new BMS branch in the area. The Chairman asked the meeting for opinions on promoting the formation of new branches. It was felt that groups generally formed due to the enthusiasm of one individual, that an initial grant from central funds should be available if necessary, but that a branch should/would soon become self-supporting.

John said that we were all extremely sorry to learn of the death of Jim Wooldridge, and thanked David Roe for his moving tribute in the last Newsletter. He also thanked Chris Jewson who accepted the Micromount Trophy in Jim's name. He felt sure Jim would have been proud of both those tributes.

The Chairman thanked the Officers, Committee members and all those members who had contributed in various ways during the year, with a special mention of Elsie Hansford who, with help from Peter Wallace, had once again mounted a display for the BMS at the FLAGS/GA Reunion and on this occasion had won the Trophy for best exhibit.

6. Other Reports.

.01. Newsletter Editor.

Malcolm Southwood thanked past contributors and asked for MORE. He said it would be nice to revive an earlier series of one page notes on localities. He would like to form an index to the Newsletters on a computer database. Muriel Swindell said that she had

a card index to some of the early Newsletters. Malcolm said any help with the spadework would be very welcome. The Meeting felt that this would be very popular. Muriel or Mike Rothwell could send copies of back numbers or individual articles on request.

6.02. Curator.

Max Wirth reminded members that there IS a Reference Collection. There had not been many new additions. He thanked Dorothy Merritt for looking after a duplicate index. He has managed to collate literature references for about 200 species which amounts to some 14pp and is held on disk (ASCII). Mike Rothwell said that the Catalogue of specimens 1001-1500 has been prepared and will go out with the next Newsletter. He would be prepared to provide both sets of data on disk. Max said that with the acquisition of 3 specimens at the Symposium there are now 1684 in the collection.

.03. Archivist.

Muriel Swindell reported that the volumes of Goldschmidt had been in constant use and that the newly acquired Rashleigh was out on loan already. She reminded members that borrowers must pay for postage in both directions - about £3.50 by Recorded Delivery (twice). The books will be at the Symposium next year. She felt that scripts of the talks should go into the Archives and asked that this should be borne in mind next year. She will prepare a list of what is available to members.

.04. Branch Reports.

(a) Austin Lockwood reported that about 50 members were in the S.E. Branch, and there were generally about 30 at meetings which are held quarterly. The Norfolk members continue to support the meetings and Fred Cornwall comes from distant Sidmouth. There are now 8 sets of micromounts to aid identification of finds from various sites. He hopes to assemble 20 sets and would be grateful for contributions. Materials used for the sets was provided by the £30 prize money won at the FLAGS Exhibition. The Field Trip to Skye has been reported in the Newsletter. He was pleased with the number of entries to the Micromineral Competition. He thanked Peter Reynolds, June Lockwood and Peter Wallace for their help.

(b) Jean Spence reported that the Northern Branch had had a Field Trip to Cornwall. Their next meeting would be in Bircotes Library on Saturday 4th November. A small charge was made at each meeting but this was non-profit-making.

(c) Kevin Johns reported that the Norfolk Group numbered about 15. They meet once a month, generally on the third Thursday of the month.

.05. BMS Projects.

(a). Occasional Papers.

David Green reported that 3 Papers had been produced this year. Mike Edwards had contributed one on Stereo Microscopes, Elsie Hansford one on Photography of minerals

through the Microscope, and Roy Starkey's popular talk "Let Your Fingers Do the Walking" formed the basis for his Paper on Using the Mineralogical Literature. A further 4 or 5 Papers are in the pipeline for next year including one from Peter Braithwaite on Micromounting techniques. John Pearce said that the series had a fine Editor and was of a very high standard.

(b). Database.

John Pearce said that the absence of both Harry Day and the 4 copies of the Database promised for this weekend was pure co-incidence. The deadline had had to be postponed. Nearly all the site/mineral information from the literature is in the database. A halt will be called at Christmas, and, after checking, copies will be issued to the 4 branches early in 1996. Mike Rothwell has kindly volunteered to run off copies from the disk. This will complete Phase 1. Phase 2 will be to obtain information from experienced collectors, probably restricting ourselves to minerals which have been identified by more than visual recognition, and then to produce the database on 3.5" disks which could be for sale to BMS members. The Chairman thought that the vision, energy and perseverance involved in this project were amazing, and a credit to the society. A unanimous vote of thanks was given to Harry Day.

(c). Workshops.

Peter Wallace reported that the Workshop at Cambridge had been a success. He had been able to re-negotiate terms when it became clear that the number attending was smaller than anticipated, and no subsidy had been needed--there was a small surplus. Two workshops were possible for 1996:-with Dave Alderton at the Royal Holloway College, on diagnostic techniques, (SEM; XRD), at the end of summer, for 12-15 members, and another with Frank Ince at Loughborough WEDC on wet Chemistry.

(d). Study Collections.

John Pearce said that these collections initiated in the S.E Branch by Austin Lockwood were out on display in the Lab., and recommended members to look at them.

(e). Proposed Computer Database for Mineral Sites.

Austin Lockwood said he would like to compile a database of mineral collecting sites with information that would be useful to Field Trip Leaders. This would include means of obtaining permission to collect, ease of access, lists of possible finds, etc. He would like to do this in conjunction with the Russell Society, there being a considerable overlap of membership. He asked for opinions from the meeting.

Peter Braithwaite was concerned that information would be too widely circulated, especially abroad, and was not in favour. Mike Leppington supported this view having seen what had happened to Caldbeck Fells sites since the publication of the Cooper/Stanley book. Roy Starkey felt that it would lead to over-use of sites and loss of access, and that confidentiality would be impossible to maintain. During further discussion other dangers such as breaching the terms of the new Data Information Act or adversely affecting individual collectors were pointed out.

In summary the Chairman said that although the Society was sympathetic to the aims of such a project, the lurking dangers, especially with regard to confidentiality, ruled it out.

06. Symposium Organisers.

Kevin Johns reported that there were 83 delegates at the Symposium, 7 fewer than in 1994. He asked for "feed-back" on the new menu! This was felt to be an improvement, although hot meals would have benefited from being served on hot plates. Kevin expressed our thanks to the Geology Department Staff who had been helpful and interested. He also thanked Mike Rothwell for producing the brochure; Ken Luff for his after-dinner Quiz; Trevor Bridges for acting as Auctioneer; Pam Pearce, Dorothy and Cyril Merritt for the Auction organisation; the speakers and Workshop leaders, especially Eddie Foy and Steve Burchmore who had brought their New Cliffe Hill Quarry specimens for delegates to see; Peter Braithewaite, Peter Reynolds and the judges of the Micromineral Competition; and last but not least, Mike Edwards, who had worked all through the weekend rendering first-aid to our microscopes.

Kevin reported that the Raffle had raised £137 and the Auction £197, an increase on last year. John Pearce thanked all three Organisers for a successful weekend with a palpable "buzz".

7. Founders' Cup.

The Chairman said it was pleasing that numerous members were strong contenders for the Cup, which is awarded for contributions to the BMS and/or Mineralogy. This year's winner fulfils both criteria. He has been an officer of the BMS, is an experienced and skilful collector and always willing to help others. He has published widely, and reports on the U.K. scene for the "What's New in Minerals?" articles in the Mineralogical Record. John then presented the Cup to Neil Hubbard, who being a man of few (spoken) words, declined to make a speech but consented to having a photograph taken.

8. Election of Officers.

No nominations having been received and the present office holders being prepared to stand again, the Chairman requested that the vote be taken *en bloc*. This was proposed by Peter Reynolds, seconded by Mick Wolfe and carried unanimously.

Chairman	John Pearce
Treasurer	Sidney Freeman
Membership Secretary	Pearl Freeman
Secretary	Shirley Adrian

All other Committee members automatically remain on the Committee.

Newsletter Editor	Malcolm Southwood
Curator	Max Wirth
Archivist	Muriel Swindell
Symposium Organisers	Kevin Johns, Richard Belson and Martin Stolworthy

Branch Co-ordinators

North	Jean Spence
Warrington	Isabel Geldart
South-East	Austin Lockwood
Norfolk	Kevin Johns

9. Any Other Business.

Provisional dates for the next Symposium were given as ~~14th-15th~~ ^{21/22} September 1996.

Mike Leppington on behalf of the Society thanked John Pearce for all his efforts for the BMS, and loud applause ensued.

The meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.

SOUTH EAST BRANCH NEWS

Austin Lockwood

Twenty-eight members attended a meeting of the South East Branch at Grove Park, London on August 13, 1995. Following the success of our recent collecting trip to the Isle of Skye in Preliminary plans were discussed for another field trip next year, with Weardale, the Northern Pennines, Mid- and North Wales, and Cornwall as possible destinations. A final decision will be taken at the Febuary meeting.

As usual, some interesting new finds were on display at the meeting. Peter Wallace and Austin Lockwood both had hemimorphite with aurichalcite from Judkins Quarry, Nuneaton. Martin Stolworthy had some nice azurites with aurichalcite from Ecton Hill, and some material provisionally identified as smithsonite from Ladywash Mine in Derbyshire. From the West Country, excellent torbernite and pale blue apatite was shown, recently collected from Goonbarrow and Gunheath china clay pits by Fred Cornwall, while the Wallace family had good quality phosgenites from Gunver Head.

The South East Branch of the BMS was the first to form and is undoubtedly the most successful. This is due to the high level of support given by our members. Our fiftieth branch meeting will be held on November 19, and we shall be having a glass of wine and a piece of cake to celebrate the event!

1995 MICROMINERAL COMPETITION

Austin Lockwood

This new event, which was held at the recent Symposium in Leicester, proved to be quite popular with twelve members submitting entries. By a margin of only one point, Maurice Grigg was judged to have submitted the best entry, with a beautiful specimen of tourmaline and libethenite on quartz from Gunheath China Clay Pit.

In second place was Eddie Foy with a superb specimen of vesignieite from New Cliffe Hill Quarry. There was a tie for third place between Pam Wallace and Bob Snowball, Pam having submitted a very nice caledonite on quartz from Roughton Gill, with Bob entering a lovely quartz lined cavity containing golden goethite sprays from Wheal Drea.

Maurice was duly presented with the Competition Trophy by John Pearce following the announcement of the results. Well done Maurice but keep an eye on Eddie Foy next year!

Our thanks are due to Peter Reynolds for undertaking the duties of Competition Administrator and for collating the results of the judging and announcing these at the AGM. We must also record our appreciation to the three members who kindly undertook the judging, namely Shirley Adrian, Gillian Goltz and Andy Castleton. They and Peter Reynolds spent several hours dealing with the competition judging and it is hoped that the small problems they experienced this year can be overcome for future events.

Whilst the twelve entries submitted was a good number for the first year of the competition, unfortunately, the entry forms were only sent to those members attending the Symposium, whereas the original intention was that the whole membership would be eligible to enter. It is appreciated that people not attending the Symposium would need to make arrangements for the delivery and collection of their specimens and this was stated in the Rules. Next year the entry forms will, hopefully, be sent out with the Newsletter so that everyone will have an opportunity to enter.

The rules require that the entry forms should be submitted to the Competition Administrator 14 days before the Symposium which will enable the judging forms to be made out before the event. Several entry forms were submitted with the specimens on the Saturday, which made additional work for Peter and delayed the start of the judging. Whilst some licence was allowed this first year, we will need to insist this requirement is complied with in future.

The other problem was the lack of privacy for the judges in the examination of the specimens. It is felt that the judging should be carried out in a separate room where this important work can be undertaken without disturbance and could, as a result, be completed in less time. We may have difficulty in finding judges if they find they have to spend too long on this work which may possibly preclude them from taking part in the other activities of the Symposium and enjoying the weekend as most of us are able to do.

Our thanks are also due to all the other members who took part in the competition and particularly to those who actually read the Competition Rules and complied with them!

GET MOUNTING! Austin Lockwood

It was disappointing to see that only six members submitted entries for this years Micromount Competition, despite there now being some 213 members in the Society.

Clearly, some members are just not interested but there are many others who would be prepared to submit an entry but find some difficulty in following the conventional way of micromounting. That is where the specimen is first attached to a balsa wood or similar pedestal and, subsequently, the whole assembly is glued into the box.

In order that the viewing of the specimen is not detracted by light reflection, it is usual to paint the inside of the box, and the pedestal, with a matt black acrylic paint such as Tamiya Colour.

With the conventional system, some members find that they have difficulty in fixing the pedestal and they either get glue, or paint runs in the wrong place, both of which are difficult to remedy. After a few attempts many people give up the idea of mounting their specimens altogether, other than on 'blue-tack'.

Having now received, what almost amounts to a 'Royal Seal of Approval' at the recent Symposium, I feel that other members may be interested in my 'un-conventional' method, which is by using countersunk aluminium rivets as pedestals. These are obtainable in a variety of sizes, but I find that 10 mm long is generally suitable, with diameters of 1.6 mm, 3.0 mm or 5.00 mm being selected to suit the particular specimen. If you buy the rivets in reasonable quantities you should obtain the smaller diameters for around 1p and the larger for 2p each.

I normally use the hinged lid type micromount box, but the system will work equally well with the smaller loose lid type. It is best to work on a 'production line' basis preparing say, twenty or thirty boxes at a time.

The countersunk head of the rivet is glued to the centre of the box using a minimum of 'UHU' clear adhesive. By the time you have placed the last rivet in position the first will have dried sufficiently for you to start painting the inside of the boxes, using a No.3 artists brush. Normally two coats are necessary but, unless you are used to working in a 'sweat shop', the first coat will have dried sufficiently for you to apply the second.

I usually leave the boxes for a day or so before I scrape any residual paint off the top edge of the box and from the top of the rivet. The boxes are now ready to receive your micromount specimens which should be attached, again by the use of 'UHU' clear adhesive. This procedure is best carried out under the microscope and there is plenty of time to orientate the specimen for best viewing.

I find the rivets provide an exceptionally strong and neat form of pedestal which can be fitted without untidy glue runs. I accept that the specimen cannot easily be removed from the box, as with some loose base types, but not everyone would need to do this.

If you have tried, and have been disappointed with the conventional method of micromounting, do have another attempt using the aluminium rivets. I am sure Peter Braithwaite will not object to receiving many more specimens for judging in next years Micromount Competition. So come on - get mounting!

WARRINGTON BRANCH NEWS

Isabel Geldart

Six of our members went on an adventurous mineral collecting trip to south-west France in July, but were all bitterly disappointed at the lack of minerals. The accomodation and food were very good but the field trips were not well organised at all and very little was found. On their return, they complained and were given a small refund, but they felt that this hardly compensated for a wasted eleven days.

Three lady members went for a week's field trip to southern Scotland and the Lake District. Blackcraig Mine at Newton Stewart produced very nice smithsonite, some langite, aurichalcite and lots of chalcopyrite crystals. After calling at Moorland Minerals in Castle Douglas to visit their beautiful gallery, they went on to Needles Eye, where they found connellite etc.

That evening was spent at a Caldbeck farm and after a look around Priest's Mill next morning, we set off for Potts Gill. It was the first time we had visited this location and we didn't expect to find too much after all the previous collectors who have been there. However, much to our surprise a boulder produced some phillipsburgite and agardite.

Roughton Gill was headed for next day and a nice hemimorphite and rosasite was found by Anne. Moving on to Keswick, we called on John Broughton at Cockermouth to see his museum. He very kindly invited us upstairs to see his private collection. Beautiful! John gave us directions to find Pallaflat mine, but we still couldn't find it, and went to Kinniside mine instead, where we found pyromorphite, wulfenite, and barite.

Next day we went to Eskett quarry, and asked for permission to go on the dumps at Agnes mine. There was plenty of material lying around including dolomite, calcite, aragonite, barite, and specular hematite. Our last day was spent at Hartsop mine, and specimens of hemimorphite, linarite, wulfenite and cerussite were found, all as nice micros. All in all we had a very successful week, and were quite delighted with our finds, some of which were good enough to enter in the local micromount competition.

The Warrington Mineral and Lapidary Society has formed a Junior Section, and some of the members are very keen and would like to join the BMS. They meet at our rooms once a month and have been taken on several field trips with their parents. The most recent of these trips was to Roughton Gill, where Beryl Taylor, leader and founder of the group, collected some really nice hemimorphite in the form of little blue balls.

BMS OCCASIONAL PAPERS
John Pearce

Since the 1994 BMS Symposium three further Occasional Papers have been produced:

OP5. Using the Mineralogical Literature by Roy Starkey

An introduction to the use of the mineralogical literature is provided, together with a review of sources and a practical literature research methodology. An extensive bibliography and worked examples to guide the newcomer make the paper easily accessible to all readers.

£1.50 (£2.00)

OP6. Stereomicroscopes by Michael Edwards

The stereomicroscope is a specialised form of the familiar compound microscope which gives the operator a real sense of depth when observing specimens with a solid structure, and generally operates at low magnification. Stereomicroscopes are especially useful for the study of objects in their natural, unprepared state, for manipulation and dissection, and for tasks such as small component inspection, where large depths of field, three-dimensional imaging and long working clearances are advantageous.

£1.50 (£2.00)

OP7. Photography of Minerals Through the Microscope by Elsie Hansford

Micromounts are among the most visually spectacular of mineral specimens. However, microscope photography has many pitfalls and first attempts are commonly disappointing. Experimentation over many years has led the author to a reliable method of microscope photography described in this paper.

£0.75 (£1.00)

Prices in brackets are for non-BMS members.

Copies can be ordered from John Pearce, 7 Condor Way, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9QB (p & p £0.75 per three papers).

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(Please note that the deadline for articles for Newsletter 43 will be February 1, 1996. Please let me have contributions as soon as possible in order to spread the typing load. Many thanks.)