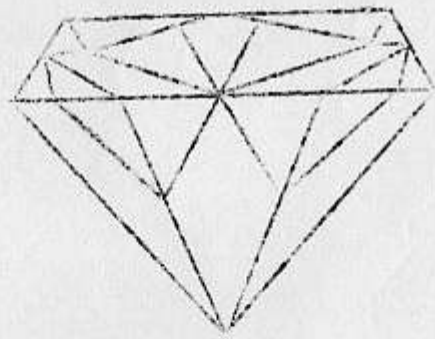


STONE
CHAT



NORFOLK
MINERAL
LAPIDARY
SOCIETY

In this issue we have a truly international flavour with items, not only about a Yorkshire cave system and the hills of Worcestershire, but shopping in the South of France and fossil collecting in Oman. It appears that our members are well travelled. Have you a story you can tell us of your travels? The next issue is due in June so get started now.

- By the time you read this we will have arrived at our A.G.M. and as far as we know, no earth shattering changes are likely to take place. However, our new committee will need more than ever to be a Working group for our Society to survive let alone grow.

One of the things we should start thinking about now is whether we should have a gems fair this year. If, as I hope, we do have one we will all have to agree to help - not just the usual half dozen or so. Why do we need a fair? I believe that, to survive, The Society must remain in the public eye to replace those members that leave us. We are now entering our tenth year - let us make it the best so far.

Most of our members cut stones, or at least tumble them, with modern equipment. At our meeting in April one of our members will be bringing his collection of stones fashioned by stone age man. He will be telling us how to recognise a tool, as distinct from a stone that just happens to be the right shape, and advise on how to date the genuine article. If you have secreted away in a drawer what you think may be an arrow head or some such bring it along to the meeting and Dennis may be able to advise you.

Have you a favourite speaker you would like to hear again? If so we would be happy to try and bring that speaker to one of our meetings in the coming year.

Please try to let John or Colin have your articles in plenty of time for the next issue of Stone Chat we know you are all writing them.

SHOPPING SPREE IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

My family, with two other families visited the South of France last year. We stayed not far from that "quaint old fishing village" St. Tropez - you may have heard of it.

Of our party I was the only member interested in minerals enough to buy and collect them. I didn't expect to find any mineral or lapidary shops in the area, but I was to find out that I was very wrong.

In the first few days I found nothing in the mineral line in the shops or in the country, that is when I could tear myself away from the beach. News came to me from one of the other families that they had seen a man selling specimens from a stall in the town of Frejus. The next day they took me to the spot and the man produced several out and polished agates and large pieces of azurite. There were also quartz crystals, hand made jewellery and other specimens.

The next day we revisited St. Tropez, arriving at about ten in the morning, to walk around the shops. We found a mineral shop with the specimens displayed on shelves lined with black velvet. The specimens consisted mainly of polished agate slices, malachite crystals and sulphur crystals in large masses. The agate slices ranged in size from 6 to 24 inches in diameter with a fine display of shade, colour and banding.

these two sources were the best I have found in the region with prices very much lower than can be found in Britain.

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POINTS TO PONDER

Years wrinkle the skin, but apathy wrinkles the soul.

They say that middle age is the time of life when your legs buckle and your belt doesn't.

School days are among the happiest days of your life, provided, of course, your children are old enough to attend.

CUTTING REMARKS

Ideas you might like to try

What do you do if, as often happens, a cab. develops a crack right across it?

Why not cut through the cab at the point of the crack, cut a strip of silver or nickel silver and stick with epoxy edge on, between the saw cut in the cab. Grind carefully and polish as usual.

You can take this idea one stage further and make a two stone cab. perhaps half and half or with a contrasting band in the middle. Use stone of similar hardness and finish surfaces to be joined perfectly flat.

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Do you always use dowel for your dop sticks? How about trying a large wire nail with a flat head and you will only need a small amount of wax.

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Try sanding your flat agate discs this way:

1. Use ordinary drill press
2. Use rubber sanding disc with an arbor with silicon carbide paper (100 grit or similar) all bolted together. Do not stick.
3. Use second fastest speed of drill press.
4. Hold agate lightly to revolving disc, this should soon remove marks.
5. After washing stone take straight to polish buff.
6. Use a face mask throughout the grinding and sanding stages.

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Have you transferred grit to your polishing buff by accident? Hold a strip of plywood firmly against the revolving buff. Grit will penetrate the wood and leave the buff clean.

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Have you any tips we could pass on in this column?

IT WASN'T MUCH OF A FIELD TRIP, BUT.....

It had been wet overnight, but the morning was bright with a slight nip in the air. The car started at the tenth turn of the key and we bumped down the rutted track from the pretty Elizabethan cottage that was our holiday home. We soon reached the Worcester road and were amazed at the number of black and white half timbered cottages on our route.

Through the historic city of Worcester and nearing Great Malvern on the A 449 we climbed the lower slopes of the Malvern Hills towards Worcester Beacon. We parked in Gt. Malvern on a car park carved into the side of the hills. The town itself clings to the steep slopes of the Malverns and the local springs produce the Queen's favourite mineral water.

After stopping for coffee at a small Italian restaurant and buying crisp rolls fresh from the oven at a nearby bakers, we left the town again by the A.449 driving south. About a mile from the town centre we turned right and followed the minor road cutting diagonally up the side of the hills towards Upper Colwall. A shout from the back of the car made me turn, and following the eyes of the others, joined in their surprise. Below us was a green patchwork of fields leading to the River Severn and beyond we could see the steep escarpment of the western end of the Cotswolds, Bredon Hill and the Vale of Evesham. Truly a beautiful sight.

The road cuts the Malverns in two at Upper Colwall and we were soon driving along the western slope of the hills. I was looking for traces of dis-used quarries that once potmarked these hills. Contrary to some mineral books the best sites for obtaining epidote are on this side of the hills NOT on the eastern slopes in my opinion.

The Malvern Hills Conservators have organised car parks along the side of the hills at this point and I turned the car into one of these running parallel to the road.

The view from this point was every bit as good as the one that we had already seen. The Black Mountains were away to the west with the southern reaches of the Malverns on our left and the Severn Estuary in the far distance.

Our boys shot up the slopes as soon as they were released from the car leaving their sister and myself to wonder along behind casting about for evidence of mans influence on the hillside. We soon found traces of a former quarry, the very one I had been looking for. It was much overgrown but we were able to select a few specimens of native rock containing epilote without any digging and a pink and white rock I have yet to identify.

Returning to the car for a picnic lunch we ate our rolls and at the same time admired the view right across Herefordshire to the west. It was no wonder that Elgar got the insperation for much of his music whilst roaming these hills. The view was even enhanced by the sight of an R.A.F. jet fighter flying along the valley floor BELOW us.

All to soon we returned to the car and follwed the road full circle back to Gt. Malvern leaving behind that marvelous view.

I shall be retuning to the Malverns as I have heard that there is a spot were garnets can be found in them there hills. It hadn't been much of a field trip that day but

IT WAS WORTH IT FOR THE VIEW.

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POINTS TO PONDER

The goal of criticism is to leave the person with the feeling that he has been helped.

Nothing seems to discourage hard work so much as having a job.

FOSSIL HUNTING AT FAHUD OMAN

Fahud is the main old camp in Oman about 200 miles from the sea. The terrain looks as if it was thrown up from the seabed by volcanic action.

The area in which most of our fossils were found was discovered during one of many drives out into the surrounding area. This was covered in cleared tracks made by the oil company who were test drilling all over the area in their search for more oil. We only had about a 25 minute search over these tracks to the search area on the sides of the hills in one particular place. This was very rich in clam type fossils and what looked like cowrie fossils in their shape and form. The rarer ones were the large whelk like ones of which I have known of only three being found, one of which I have. The nautilus fossils were also to be found in the area together with several types of winkles.

We got to the state with most of these fossils that we would throw away all but the best.

We had a walk in a different direction one day, leaving all of our vehicles behind, and just across the road from our accommodation to have a look in the area very close to camp. The stop was so close, in fact, that we hadn't formerly given it a thought. We found several very small geodes which were of not too bad a quality; the larger ones were very poor most having been broken and full of sand.

GLOBE TROTTER

POINTS TO PONDER

ONE LINERS

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Busy souls have no time to be busybodies.

If it's good, they'll stop making it.

A penny saved is probably a rare coin.

Labour stimulates, laziness stagnates.

PLACES TO GO

STUMP CROSS CAVERNS - between GRASSINGTON and
PATELEY BRIDGE, NORTH YORKS

The old turnpike road (now B 6265) crosses the high moors and passes the cave entrance at over 1200 ft. The nearest village is Greenhow Hill, the old lead mining centre, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the east. Within a few years of their conquest of this area, the Romans were mining for lead. Three pigs of lead of that period have been found locally. The monks of Fountains and Byland Abbeys had mining rights in the area before 1200 and work continued throughout the Middle Ages.

Mining was continuous in the area from 1800 to 1870, the Stump Cross Cave System being discovered by accident in 1858 by prospectors looking for lead. In fact they had stumbled upon a natural limestone cave system, not so unusual perhaps, except that it contained some of the most beautiful stalagmite and stalagmite formations to be found in Britain.

The carboniferous limestone of the Dales was formed some 200 to 300 million years ago when the whole area was covered by sea. Caverns were formed later in the limestone by rainwater containing dissolved carbon dioxide (slightly acid) became more acid as it passed through peat deposits. This water percolated through cracks in the rock dissolving them as it went and as the water table lowered sand and gravel suspended in the water aided the scouring action.

The part of the system open to the public is well lit and you pass through several caves and passages seeing many stalagmite formations that have been given fanciful names. There is the Butcher's Shop, the Twins, the Jewel Box and the Sentinel: the latter 9ft 6in high and 10 - 15,000 years in the growing. One cavern of special note is the Cathedral with its flowstone deposit the Organ, and roof containing numerous straw stalactites and the Wedding Cake a perfect stalagmite column. This is a cave system not to be missed when next in the area. For further information ring Harrogate 780459.

GYPSUM FROM SHELFORD SAND PIT

Shelford sand pit is situated on the north side of Canterbury, Kent on the road that runs from the City to the A 291 Herne Bay road

The age of the deposits at Shelford are of the Cae-
nozoic or Tertiary Era and the system that of the Lower Eocene period. The deposits are known as the Oldhaven Beds which pass up into the marine London Clay beds.

Gypsum is found there in three different forms:-

1. In the clay can be found crystals of the clear variety called Selenite.
2. Lower down in the beds of sand there are forms called Sand Roses which are formed by sand and gypsum joining together.
3. Another form of Sand Rose which is a combination of the previous two. This is found in a bed of iron-stained clay and sand looks like stars. The edge of the crystals being very fragile.

In the sand pit can be found sharks teeth of the sand shark *Odontaspis*.

This is a working sand pit and permission should be obtained before entering.

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POINTS TO PONDER

Exhilaration is that feeling you get just a great idea hits you, and before you realise what's wrong with it.

The Inland Revenue people know what to give the man who has everything. An audit.

Car sickness is what occurs when you see what the new models cost.

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Meetings

First Tuesday of each month (except August)
7.30 for 8 pm at the Crome Centre,
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Workshops

All other Tuesdays also at the Crome Centre.