

October 2009



The Rockhound's Bark

News

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Meetings are held the last Saturday of each month, September-November and January-May, 7:30 - 10:00 p.m. in the auditorium (Lower Level) of the N.S. Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St., Halifax.
Dues are \$20/year, payable in January of each year.

SOCIETY'S MAILING ADDRESS

The Nova Scotia Mineral and Gem Society
c/o NS Museum of Natural History
1747 Summer Street,
Halifax, N.S.,
B3H 3A6

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees were due in January. Please bring application form to a meeting or mail it to Terry along with \$20. We would like to be sure we have your most current information.

The October meeting has been rescheduled (due to Halloween) to October 30 and will be held at Doug Wilsons home instead of at the Museum. Please contact Doug if you need the address or directions and please make sure you let him know if you will be attending at doug@wilsonminerals.com.

If you know of anyone who is not getting the newsletter could you please let me know.

Don't forget, we now also have a Facebook group set up, so if you have any news, field trips planned, or just want to chat with other members, check it out. After you sign in, type Nova Scotia Mineral and Gem Society in the Search box.

The new website is now available at www.nsmgs.ca. However, it still does not show up on any of the search engines. If someone does a search they hopefully will see the Facebook page and that will direct them to the website.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions for the newsletter are welcomed. I will take stories, ideas, pictures, etc. If I cannot use them this month, I will save them for another one. Also, if you are looking for information on a subject, let me know and I will do some research and an article on the subject. Thank you to Bill and Vanessa for their contributions this month.

I would like to incorporate a Buy and Sell section in the newsletter also, so if you have specimens you would like to buy, sell or trade send me a small picture, description and price and I will post them in the newsletter.

I am also a member of the Metal Arts Guild of Nova Scotia and have been speaking to them about some cross promotion between the clubs as they often have members looking for stones etc for jewelry and we often have members who would like to have a particularly good find made into a piece of jewelry. They also do a lot of workshops on making jewelry for anyone who may be interested in doing some of their own work with their treasures. I will post a notice regarding workshops open to non Guild members in the newsletter if there is interest. Please let me know your thoughts.

The Fosses - 2009 season update

By Vanessa Foss



We truly had a very educational and well-rounded summer season this year. We would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to answer our questions and share their knowledge with us. We really appreciate it.

We started the season off early in May with a trip to French Cross, Kirk Brook, and Ross Creek with Bill Blinn and Victor. At French Cross we found some weathered stilbite, some agate and probably most exciting, a pocket of amethyst in the wall of the cliff discovered by Ethan. This was a good time for Bill to show us how to go about excavating a pocket, which we learned a lot from. Ross Creek was also very enjoyable, which I'm sure most of you know. If your wondering about Kirk Brook, its probably not worth your gas to drive there. But hey, you never know till you go look!

The trip to Ross Creek in June was again very enjoyable. Always nice to spend a day out with friends in nature. After Ross Creek, we went to the Kennetcook River with Bill Harrington. This is a trip worth making, if you don't mind getting dirty! We saw a lot of interesting things there that day, there was loose horn coral almost everywhere you look. We also saw a large plate of horn coral just weathering out of the rocks. I took a group of children there 2 weeks later, and it is simply amazing how quickly things erode. Julian also found a small, incomplete trilobite on this trip.

After our second visit to the Kennetcook, in early July, we went to hike Blue Beach. This is always a bountiful location for fossils! Most are the same common specimens, but sometimes you find something really exciting. Last year we found bones and teeth! Plus the people who run the fossil centre are extremely knowledgeable and friendly.

We made a brief visit to Point Aconi on our way to the Newfoundland ferry. The tides were not favorable but we got the lay of the land for next time.

In Newfoundland we visited some old mines, the old Daniels Harbour zinc mine, Baie Verte asbestos mine, and the Baie Verte miners museum which is located atop of the tailings of another old mine. We also visited the Arches provincial park which is an awe-inspiring thing to see. We collected some of the white marble Corner Brook is known for, and some trees which had turned to jasper along the banks of Brians pond in Daniels Harbour.

Probably the most significant place we visited in Newfoundland was across from Flatwater Park just outside of Baie Verte. This is the only place you can find virginite. Its a very vivid green inside, but on the outside weathers to a muddy brown. You can find worked pieces in many of the craft stores in the area but there hasn't been commercial mining of it. In fact one of the local mines did some exploratory work there about thirty years ago, but didn't think it would be viable. Within walking distance of this deposit is an large slope entirely composed of a shiny, slippery variety of serpentine. The most common color is apple-green but you can also find white and dark-green to black pieces.



While in the area we also visited the Dorset Paleo-Eskimo soapstone quarry. Amazing spot. Especially when you consider these people travelled seasonally to quarry their product and then traded with other native people all through the Maritimes. All without the benefit of metal tools. The soapstone in this area is a light-green to grey and looks chalkier than the soapstone you see coming from Labrador.

If you are interested in lapidary and visiting the west coast of Newfoundland, its worth making a trip to Myers Minerals in Pasadena. The pieces they have in their shop are amazing, and you can watch the artisans at work. Plus the staff are super-nice. We hiked in Norris Point to see some of the slate the area in known for. Apparently it very fossiliferous but we didn't have any success that day. Next time I'm hoping to get a guide. However we did collect some interesting mineral specimens that I'm hoping for help identifying.

Upon returning to Nova Scotia we made a trip to Joggins, obviously not for collecting. However we have some excellent pictures from this trip and the Joggins fossil centre is FABULOUS! There should be more museums like that.

To finish off the summer we made a trip to Chevré with Bill Blinn. Chevré certainly deserves the praise it gets, because it is beautiful. We found an amazing variety of gypsum there and the white cliff with the water pouring out of it is unforgettable.



That's it, so much for the summer. As long as the weather stays good, we haven't given up all hope of getting another trip in. We are excited to see everyone and find out what they've been up to!

Collecting Minerals 101

By William Blinn

Why collect minerals?

First of all—you will learn something about this earth on which you are planning to spend the rest of your life. The elements such as carbon, silicon, hydrogen and others combine to make all plant life, animal life and the rocks and minerals of the earth. Learn more about minerals; learn about Geology, Petrology, Mineralogy, Geography History and Mythology. You will gain an amazing amount of knowledge, and it will actually be both fun and useful.

Another really great reason to collect minerals is that they bring us extraordinary beauty in a form that most of the time is very long lived. Most gems are extremely hard and durable, lasting centuries. Even the softer minerals that form crystals can provide specimens that, when cared for properly, will last many lifetimes.

Learning, knowledge, beauty and value: good reasons all to collect and enjoy the beautiful minerals of the planet Earth. However, the best reason is: "it's fun".

What is a mineral? Isn't it just a rock? Is there a difference?

Well, yes there is a difference. Basically a mineral is a specific chemical composition that forms a particular crystal structure. Rocks are conglomerates of minerals usually composed of tiny crystals of several minerals. Granite is a rock. Calcite is a Mineral.

How do I collect minerals?

We need to break this down into a couple of parts. First let's look at where one actually finds minerals, and then we will examine how to decide which ones to collect.

Where do I find minerals and minerals specimens?

Minerals make up the earth. There are about 4000 different ones, and many are extremely plentiful. However, they all don't come from the same place. In fact some areas of the world have a lot of different minerals and some have very few.

Mineral collectors collect where the minerals are found. In order to know where to find minerals, you need to do some homework. The Internet is an excellent source for the new mineral collector. There are magazines and books that have information on collecting locations.

Joining a club that has experienced members is probably the best source of information on mineral location. Rare and very nice specimens are of course available for purchase from a variety of sources. However, deciding what to collect is a different subject.

What minerals do I collect?

Ah, what you need is a theme. A theme is the basis of a collection. For example, you might decide you are interested in all the various minerals from the Bay of Fundy area or you may decide on collecting agate that also abounds in this region. Or you have decided that your main collection will be miniatures, mid-size or larger specimens, or a combination of all of these. Maybe your special interest will be in one and the different forms it takes like say Calcite.

Where can I learn more?

First of all explore the internet. The world is full of help. Start with a few good books. Get a subscription to a magazine or two. Or best of all, join a club and ask questions, most clubs have members who are only too glad to talk "mineral".

It is unlikely you will ever know everything about every mineral. A good mineral collector knows quite a bit about minerals in general, but most make a study of a theme. As you explore this hobby, you will find that minerals are classified by their chemical composition and by their crystal structure. Learning these classifications will enable you to follow most discussions and allow you to understand where certain minerals fit in the natural world. It will help you sort minerals out and understand how one mineral relates to another in nature, which will aid you in locating other mineral specimens.

What is it?

The most often asked question by experts and non-experts alike when confronted with a new specimen is "what is it?". As soon as you have your first specimen and show it to someone who knows, you will be on your way to learning mineral identification. I have found learning identification by comparing one specimen with another is very useful. Remember, the location of the find is as important as the specimen in the identification process.

What determines a specimen's value?

Most of all it depends on how you feel about it. On a commercial scale the supply and demand for the specimen and ones like it and the issue of rarity. The rarity might be the rarity of the mineral, size of the crystals, color and shade of the crystals, and of course the quality. I suggest you develop a simple scale for yourself for the minerals in which you have an interest. For example you might use, color and shade, lack of damage, shape of crystals, aesthetics and of course "do you like it". I myself have an avid interest in specimens with more than one mineral present.

Don't be afraid to ask other mineral collectors for advice or identification of your specimens most like to show-off their knowledge.

Events

**NSDCC
Christmas Craft
Show
Nov 20-22
Cunard Center**

**Deadline for the
November Newsletter
is November 15**

**Send submissions to
driscoll@allstream.net**

2009 EXECUTIVE

President:

William Blinn

Vice President:

Fred Walsh

Secretary/Bark Editor:

Arlene Driscoll

Treasurer:

Terry Collett

Librarian:

Herb Malle

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER MEETING

By William Blinn

Members were welcomed back and one new member was welcomed. It was somewhat disappointing that such a small number of members showed up for this first meeting of the year.

Bill reported that Victor had suffered a stroke on Thursday Sept 17th. but he seems to be doing fine. All members present wish him well.

It was reported that two field trips had taken place this summer, Ross Creek and Kennetcook River. Both went well and those members attending seemed to enjoy. Thank you to the leaders and to the participants.

There is still no word on crests, Mrs. Stewart pointed out that the crest on the Bark page would perhaps be the way to go as it was picked years ago. Bill said he will continue to look into it.

The website is up and running but the URL has changed, concern was raised on how people who search for the old site get to the new one.

Bill reported on the Parrsboro show and thanked everyone who showed up to help. It was greatly appreciated. He asked members to come up with a theme for next

years show and promised to organize better in terms of a schedule so everyone wouldn't be there to man the site at once.

New:

Meeting themes for the coming year were discussed. October will be the video Geologic Journey, a part of the CBC series on this subject. November is of course our Mini Mineral & Gem Show.

Hopefully January will be a presentation on florescent minerals. Bill suggested a presentation on Geology by someone from one of the Universities and Doug will look into getting someone.

Any suggestions are welcome.

It was noted that the Fundy Museum is undergoing a renovation and the Club will send off an email to Ken Adams, to offer any assistance we can give.

A request was made that Arlene be asked to make sure all members receive the Bark. Some members do not have email and Arlene is asked to snail mail them a copy and will be reimbursed by the club for the cost.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

If you have found any good sites, please let me know and I will add them to the list. A great site I recently found for kids is www.rockhoundkids.com.

<http://nsminerals.atspace.com>

<http://museum.gov.ns.ca/fossils/>

<http://www.mindat.org>

<http://vuprocks.com>

<http://gis3.natr.gov.ns.ca/MODB/>

<http://gis.wvdep.org/convert/>

<http://www.bayoffundytourism.com/tides/times/>

<http://www.rockngem.com/>

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/MEB/pdf/ic66.htm>

<http://www.rockhounds.com/rockshop/nssites.html>

<http://www.42explore.com/rocks2.htm>

<http://www.allaboutgemstones.com/>

<http://www.rockhoundkids.com>

<http://mineralcollecting.org/>

<http://www.galleries.com/>

<http://www.minerals.net/>