

THE 775th MEETING OF THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 13, 2002

THE JEWELBOX THAT IS PALOS VERDES

Larry Bruce

The very familiar bulge of hills at the southwest corner of Los Angeles County is known as Palos Verdes Peninsula. It is a cousin to the other Channel Islands that is merely presently landlocked. It has been an island before and likely will be so again. It has thirteen different wave terraces attesting to its rise from the deep. It is also nothing less than a mineral cornucopia blessed with cool breezes. The Department of Geological Sciences at Cal State Long Beach has described the Peninsula;

“The Palos Verdes Peninsula is a tectonic fault block of seafloor sediments and volcanics draped atop a submerged mountain of metamorphic rocks that began rising out of the Pacific Ocean 1.5 million years ago. The seafloor rocks are made of deep-water fine-grained sediments, which, in places, consist primarily of diatoms or volcanic ash. Lava flows erupted upon or within the ocean sediments during the early phases of deposition. “

The mineralization of Palos Verdes is secondary and is confined largely to infilled cracks and faults in the stone. Virtually every mineral guidebook describes, and every museum has a specimen of Palos Verdes' unique deep golden, translucent, heavy cockscomb variety of barite. The barite may be found in virtually all of the sea cliffs that ring the peninsula. One area that has been richly endowed is Long Point, the former site of Marineland of the Pacific. The parking lot is open to the public as are the trails down to the ocean. The only caveat is that they are absolutely serious about locking the gates at four o'clock p.m. One simply parks at the lower east end of the lot and follows the paved access road as it weaves around the weather worn aquatic tanks where Flipper once swam. Take the path out to the end of the point. Once there, it is necessary to tread carefully across rocks for about a hundred more yards. Keep your eyes open to see the bits of golden barite that are abundant. A small sea cave near the tip of the point obviously once was

completely encrusted with gemmy blades and still has some on the walls. It is the floor, though, that amazes. Due to generations of geology students doing "homework" out there, the chips and bits of barite are eighteen inches deep underfoot. A little further out on the point is a dirt area adjacent to a cliff face. Digging in the dirt produces fine fist size pieces of barite, much of it entombed by the dirt as rainstorms pulled both down.

One should use common sense out on the point. Do not dig into the cliffs in a reckless manner as some corporation owns the land above and probably would not appreciate your assistance in moving the ocean any closer toward the coast highway. Undercutting the cliff would be suicidal. This is prime spot for mineral collecting, however, with the waves and ocean breeze. Whales may be seen breaching offshore in winter. Porpoises are not uncommon. You are virtually assured of seeing seals on any day. I once visited Long Point a few days after a good rainstorm and found the collecting about as easy as stepping deeply into the muddy muck and then reaching down and pulling out barite.

Going or coming, pay attention to the large sea rocks that have been placed to retard erosion. Fine and quite showy blebs of quartz may be found which detach with but little taps with a hammer and chisel. It is likely that those blebs, often looking like crystallized fossil worms, did not originate on Palos Verdes but rather at some quarry inland.

An alternative way to access Long Point is the fisherman's parking lot just north of the point and located between Long Point and Point Vicente. There is free parking and a very steep but maintained trail down to the ocean. Either turn right toward Point Vicente and abundant more barite of the heavy cockscomb variety or turn left toward Long Point. At the first ridgeback of basalt that exits the cliff plunging directly into the sea (a very small island of basalt is a mere fifty feet offshore), pay careful attention to the cliff face. Numerous small holes are apparent along about a fifty-foot stretch of cliff. A mini maglight helps to look within, as you seek a void perhaps the size of a tangerine. Then some chisel work with a three-pound hammer reveals a completely different variety of barite, formed here in delicate flowers that have yellow and rust red edges on dainty blades. These offer an exquisite collecting opportunity and will reward the patient rockhound willing to do some work. You will only remove about a cup of matrix from the cliff and the ocean would have opened them up eventually. I don't lose any sleep worrying about harming the property. The cliff is clearly within the public domain below high tide line anyway. You will find a unique collecting opportunity here.

The Livingston Quarry is to the east of Long Point (toward San Pedro). One simply turns off Palos Verdes Drive south onto Forestall St. Proceed to the gate across the road about a mile up. Park and walk west along the decommissioned road and you will find yourself in the middle of a huge quarry. Building stone and gravel riprap for railroad and trolley lines was quarried here up until the late nineteen fifties. The collecting is considered best in the middle section of the quarry and fine clear and thick windowpane selenite is not uncommon. Dolomite and some barite are also found. The small hill that is toward the ocean has numerous trails bisecting it and is

rich in marine fossils. The far western end of the quarry is supposedly the primary locale of the heavy barite once mined here. I have seen the concrete footings of the old mine buildings but have never located any quality seams of the good golden barite. Livingston Quarry offers a fine winter's day collecting opportunity due to the fossil hill shielding the quarry from the on shore wind. The same attribute however can make a summer's day brutally hot without any breeze.

Malaga Cove on the western end of the peninsula presents more collecting opportunities. One parks on Paseo Del Mar where a trail is maintained down to the ocean. The inland side of the trail up and down the cliff is the place to look. Glauconite pebbles, some with electric colors, are closest to the beach. Diatomaceous earth deposits, epsomite, barite and chalcedony are in the cliffs and up in a little valley along the inland side. A good map to this locale may be found on the Internet at the following address:
<http://www.highdesertinsider.com/html/pvglauc.htm>

I've been told that Lunada Bay is worth examining and I will, one day. Old texts describe a very good quartz locale as being one half mile north of the Point Vicente Lighthouse. Since the coastline is south facing, the quartz would be located somewhere on the inland side of coast highway but I haven't found it. It is possible that it is a victim of the "concrete crawl" of development.

Old texts attest to mineralogical interest throughout the peninsula in road cuts. I personally haven't seen a lot that I would take home from any road cut but I probably haven't been diligent. Frankly, given the wealth of Long Point, Point Vicente, Malaga Cove and the Quarry, it will take me a decade more to feel much of an authority on this place.

Palos Verdes may be accessed by the Harbor Freeway (110). Drive south to where the freeway ends at Gaffey Street and turn left to continue on out toward Point Fermin. When you get to 25th Street, turn right. Continue on 25th past Western Avenue and the name changes to Palos Verdes Drive South. Simply continue west on PVDsouth. First you will pass Forrestal Street, then shortly afterward, Portuguese Bend, followed by the Crystal Chapel and then Long Point and Point Vicente. Malaga Cove is five miles further. It is possible to access the same places by driving south from Redondo Beach. For this, a map should be consulted.

MINUTES OF THE JULY 2002 BOARD MEETING

The July 14, 2002 MSSC Board meeting was called to order at 2:20 pm at Bill Besse's home by president Dave Smith. Present in addition were Larry Bruce, Jim Kusley, Charlie Freed, Janet Gordon, and Bob Housley. Available by phone were Ron Thacker and Rock Currier.

The first item of discussion concerned insurance coverage for our upcoming Show at LACMNH. Larry Bruce has been trying to get a copy of the CFMS blanket policy so he can advise us concerning the extent of coverage it provides. In his efforts so

far he has received conflicting interpretations of coverage from the CFMS insurance representative and the insurance agent that sold CFMS the policy. This points up the necessity for us to actually read the policy before deciding whether or not we should try to obtain supplemental insurance. It was moved by Larry Bruce and seconded by Janet Gordon that we authorize Larry to obtain a copy of the CFMS policy on our behalf. This motion passed unanimously. It was then moved by Bob Housley and seconded by Janet Gordon that Larry Bruce be elected as our CFMS Director to replace acting Director Bob Housley. This motion also passed unanimously.

We then took up a suggestion by Ron Thacker that we make a donation to the GIA Sinkankas Library Fund. After discussion it was moved by Larry Bruce and seconded by Charlie Freed that we donate \$500. This motion passed unanimously.

Finally we discussed our activities schedule for the rest of the summer. Normally we would have picnic in August and some time in September would have a work party to make sure that all our cases and other equipment are in top shape for the Show. Because of travel plans and heavy work schedules we were unable to identify anyone with time to do a good job organizing an August picnic. Eventually we decided that the best plan was to combine the picnic with the work party in September and have that in addition to our regular September meeting. That left us with nothing for August, but many people planned to be away anyway. It was moved by Janet Gordon and seconded by Charlie Freed that we not plan to have an August meeting and that we authorize the Bulletin editor to send out either cards or Bulletins in August at his discretion. This passed unanimously. All business being concluded we adjourned at 4:25 just as Carolyn Seitz brought over Show flyers for us to distribute.

Respectfully submitted by the secretary, Bob Housley

MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING

In Dave Smith's absence the meeting was called to order by acting Secretary Robert Housley at 7:35. As is customary we first had the program, which was a talk on the Grandreef Mine in AZ by Bill Besse.

Some years ago Bill did the fieldwork for his master's thesis at this mine and spent a lot of time there over a period of about a year. The mine is situated in the vertical face of a fault scarp in Laurel Canyon, Aravaipa District, Graham County AZ. Bill started with maps of the area and then showed some spectacular pictures of the region surrounding the mine. These led up to several pictures of rock exposures that are blue with linarite making up the back wall of the upper bench. Interesting minerals can be found by breaking loose rock in that area, but the rock is very hard.

Bill then told us about the history of the region. The mine was never worked on a large scale, but did produce a lot of silver. One of the early owners was the Mackay of later fame for the Mackay School of Mines in Reno. The last major development

effort was around 1969. At that time a haulage adit intersected the reef at near stream level, but it is sealed now with a steel door. Bill was last there about three years ago. At that time the area around the upper bench provided the best collecting. The access road may have washed out near the mine since then.

This mine has produced several new species of lead halide minerals, some of which were first described by Tony Kampf working with material collected by Bill. One is appropriately named grandreefite, one pseudograndreefite, and one aravaipaite. Unfortunately I neglected to write down the other names and the compositions.

Bill showed pictures of the outstanding specimens of linarite, cerussite, and anglesite produced by the mine as well as micrographs of the rarer minerals. This seems like an interesting area in which to collect and one the merits further study.

Following the talk Janet Gordon bought us up to date on preparations for our upcoming Show. We then adjourned for coffee and ice cream bars and pleasant discussions about minerals.

Respectfully submitted by the secretary, Bob Housley

MINUTES OF THE JUNE MEETING

The 773rd regular meeting of MSSC was called to order at 7:35 by Bob Housley, since president Dave Smith had informed us that he might arrive late. The meeting room was packed with over 30 members and guests. Bob immediately introduced Scott Ritchie, our speaker for the evening, who talked on recent developments at Queen Mountain near Pala CA.

The historically very productive Tourmaline Queen and Tourmaline King mines are located on private land on Queen Mountain. Scott and partners have recently formed a company and obtained the financial backing to acquire the land on which the mines are situated and begin a systematic development. Prior mining activity basically followed the dikes inward and downward from gem pockets that were exposed at the surface. Mining in this manner rapidly became more expensive with depth and was eventually given up as uneconomic when no more gem pockets were encountered.

However making the reasonable assumption that gem pockets are randomly distributed throughout the dikes, and taking into account their known lengths and depths Scott estimates that about \$300 million worth of gem tourmaline remain in the mountain. His plan is to build an access adit entering near the lowest accessible portion of the Queen Dike and to systematically mine out the dike material in an economical manner.

Current work is in the early stages of development with road building, surface clean up, and legal activities predominating. Still Scott had some very nice new crystals and gems of pink tourmaline to show us that were encountered during the surface

excavations. The talk generated a lot of excitement and the question and answer period lasted until about 9:30. Scott has also produced a website <http://www.socalgem.com> that people can go to for more information.

Following a brief Show Committee report by Carolyn Seitz and also a field trip report on the spectacularly successful Mothers Day Blanchard Mine trip the meeting was adjourned for coffee and cookies at 9:35. Vigorous discussion continued until we had to leave.

Respectfully submitted by the secretary, Bob Housley

MINUTES OF THE APRIL BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors meet at 2:00 p.m. on April 14, 2002, at Rock Curriers' home. Dave Smith, Larry Bruce, Rock Currier, Ron Thacker, Bob Griffis, and Janet Gordon were present. Janet Gordon gave the treasure's report including the successful resolution of questions the California Franchise Tax Board had raised about the Society's 1992 return. A motion was made to appoint Jim Kusley to fill the board position vacated by the resignation of Steve Shailer. The motion carried.

Various aspects of the upcoming show were discussed. Larry Bruce expressed concern that our insurance coverage was adequate and had suggestions for our contract with the Natural History Museum. The Board agreed that we should obtain a show telephone with a menu of messages about the show and our meetings. Janet Gordon agreed to arrange this. The meeting was adjourned for refreshments and a mineral viewing session.

Respectfully submitted for the secretary by, Janet Gordon

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST

3 - 4 Arroyo Grande Central Coast Treasure Hunters Assoc.
15th. Annual Treasure Hunt
Brush Poppers Arena
John (805) 489-1079 or
Frank (805) 438-3125

9-11 Nipomo Orcutt Mineral Society
St. Joseph's Church
298 S Thompson Avenue
Hours: 10 - 5 daily
Dick Shields (805) 937-0357 / Shields6@ix.netcom.com



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