

# An Appreciation of Sir Arthur Russell on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of his Death - 24 February 1964

Roy Starkey

roy.starkey [at] gmail.com

## INTRODUCTION

Sir Arthur Edward Ian Montague<sup>1</sup> Russell (1878 – 1964) 6th Baronet, of Swallowfield Park, Reading, Berkshire, was perhaps the greatest British mineral collector of the twentieth century. His tenacity and dogged determination in seeking out the very best specimens for his collection was comparable to the reputation of the Canadian Mounties in always “getting their man”.

The original version of this PDF document was produced to mark the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Sir Arthur’s death, and to pay tribute to his legacy. Extensive use has been made of hyperlinks to direct the reader to additional information and other sources, rather than reproducing verbatim transcripts of material published elsewhere.

A full obituary of Sir Arthur, by his great friend Arthur Kingsbury, was published in the *Mineralogical Magazine* (1966) Vol.35 : p673-677. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

A brief overview of his life has also been provided by Alan Hart and Bob Symes (1991) in the *Journal of the Russell Society*, 4 (1). [Download e-JRS copy](#)



Figure 1. Sir Arthur Russell at Swallowfield Park

There are various on-line resources which provide an insight to Sir Arthur’s long and interesting life, and a good place to start is the *Mineralogical Record* label archive [https://mineralogicalrecord.com/biographies\\_labels/russellsir-arthur/](https://mineralogicalrecord.com/biographies_labels/russellsir-arthur/) which, whilst reproducing much of the information from Kingsbury’s obituary of Russell, also includes good images of a range of Russell’s labels.

Wikipedia also has a short summary of information about Sir Arthur [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir\\_Arthur\\_Russell,\\_6th\\_Baronet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Arthur_Russell,_6th_Baronet) and includes links to biographical details about some of the people whose collections he gradually incorporated into his own, such as Philip Rashleigh, John Hawkins, Robert Were Fox, Alfred Fox, Sir Maziere Brady, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Sir Warrington Wilkinson Smyth, John Ruskin, Arthur Champernowne, J. H. Collins and Samuel Henson.

Jane Robb, as part of her studies for an MRes in Heritage Science from University College London, used social science techniques to interpret the perceived value (i.e. educational, historical, uniqueness...) of geological collections in museums. She undertook her research based around the Russell Collection at the Natural History Museum.

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<sup>1</sup> The correct spelling of Montague is with an “e” – as per Sir Arthur’s Will, and the annotated photo provided from his mother’s album (see Fig. 2 below). Arthur Kingsbury, in his obituary of Sir Arthur omitted the “e” and this error was perpetuated by Peter Embrey in his biographical notes in the reprint of Greg and Lettsom (Lapidary Publications, 1977), Hart & Symes (1991), and also on *Wikipedia*, and *The Peerage*.

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Jane notes that “*These insights were used to improve collections care in museums, but also to enhance my understanding of how people relate to science – knowledge useful when engaging audiences in science education.*”

A summary of the project were published in *The Geological Curator* Volume 9, No.10. December 2013 <https://geologistsassociation.org.uk/newgawpsite/archivedpages/downloads/GA%20mag%20pdfs/Vol%2011%20No.%202.pdf> (see page 20).

## FAMILY BACKGROUND

The Peerage website <http://thepeerage.com/p7928.htm> provides genealogical links and information to Sir Arthur’s family and descendants, and it was through help from Darryl Lundy, the compiler of this fantastic website, who is coincidentally based in Wellington, New Zealand, that I managed to trace one of Sir Arthur’s sons (Sir Mervyn Russell), and enjoy the privilege of meeting him and his son Ian back in 2012.



**Figure 2. Arthur Russell as a young lad (aged perhaps 6 or 7). Photo courtesy of Josephine Mews.**

Sir Mervyn recalled going on field trips with his father (Sir Arthur), travelling by train and visiting mines all over the British Isles as a boy during school holidays when he was about 11 or 12, and that he was employed to wriggle into places that Sir Arthur could not reach, to collect specimens. Mervyn had good eyesight and often found good specimens and told me that he was well rewarded! He also carried out various curatorial tasks for Sir Arthur, including mounting specimens and writing out catalogue cards. Apparently, Sir Arthur used to collect specimens for himself, and “a museum” at the same time, and some of the mine managers used to get a little fed up as he would come back looking for another sample for “another museum”. Sir Mervyn also told me that Sir Arthur used to get paid by some of the mining companies, to provide technical advice. Sir Mervyn Russell himself attended the Camborne School of Mines and worked for a time in mines in both Wales and Cornwall. Apparently Sir Arthur was not enamoured of having russellite named after him, and simply hated having his photo taken (which is presumably why there are relatively few surviving images of him). He did however enjoy a passion for steam engines and railways. There was a pretty constant stream of visitors to Swallowfield to meet Sir Arthur, and to examine his mineral collection, with some pretty famous people amongst them. Mervyn told me that Sir Arthur did pretty much everything himself with regard to the collection and that it was stored in large cabinets with his library being in a separate room. Sir Arthur evidently spent almost all of his time, whilst at home, in the mineral room wing of Swallowfield.

The Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford holds certain Russell family papers given by Sir Arthur Russell in 1952 <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/1500-1900/russell/russell.html> and <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/1500-1900/russell2/russell2.html>

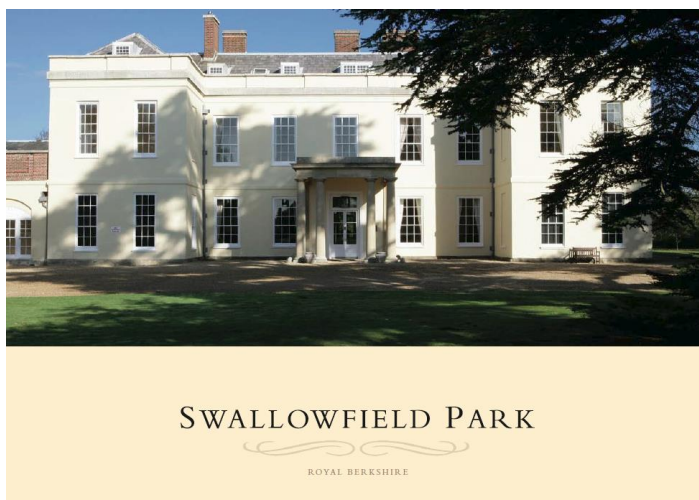
Josephine Mews (Sir Arthur Russell's great-granddaughter) kindly provided the following extract from the memoranda of his mother, Lady Constance Charlotte Elizabeth Russell, "*Mano's Memories and Memoranda*", page 85.

*"My second son was born at Folkestone, Mr Lewis attending for the event. He was christened at the church close to us, and his God-parents were H.S.H. Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, Lord Lorne (afterwards Duke of Argyll) and Lady Wynford (a daughter of my father's cousin Lady Georgina Baillie). He was given the names of Arthur Edward Ian Montague, the last of these names being the Christian name of Lady Wynford. He was unfortunate in his first nurse: she was called Corkran, and came from Devonshire very highly recommended, but there was some mystery about her and I had to get rid of her. After that he had a charming one called "Primmer," but she left me in 1880 to marry "Hoskins," then I had an equally nice one – "Smith," who left after six years to marry "Payne," followed by a bonnie braw Scotch girl – Christina – who married "Bliss!" The last nurse I had was Mrs Thomas, from Cornwall. We gave my second son the name of Arthur, after my only brother who died at Swallowfield in 1876. I have said little or nothing about him hitherto, as I hope to write a separate sketch about him."*

## SWALLOWFIELD PARK

Swallowfield Park is a seventeenth Century Grade II listed mansion dating back to 1678. The house was designed by architect William Talman, better known for his English baroque design at Chatsworth House (home of another famous mineral collector!), and a student of Sir Christopher Wren. The house is situated in 25 acres of traditionally maintained parkland, at the junction of the River Blackwater and River Loddon, and the private grounds offer a pleasant English riverside environment with water meadows, a bridge, lawns, pathways, ancient trees and a long approach driveway. The small red brick bridge over the River Blackwater bears the date 1722 and the initial of a subsequent owner, Thomas "Diamond" Pitt, great grandfather of former Prime Minister, William Pitt. In 1820 the house was purchased by Sir Henry Russell, in whose family it remained until 1965. Sir Henry's second son, Charles Russell, was MP for Reading from 1830 – 1837 and played an important part in pioneering the Great Western Railway.

**Figure 3. Front cover of the Sunley Heritage brochure on Swallowfield Park. Image courtesy of Mark King, Sunley Heritage.**



A detailed history of Swallowfield has been provided by Lady Constance Russell "*Swallowfield and its Owners*" (1901), and a copy is available on-line here <https://archive.org/details/swallowfieldand00russgoog>

For readers interested to learn more, there is also an interesting socio-economic historical case study of Swallowfield, available on-line from the University of Warwick here <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/research/eicah/houses/swallowfieldpark/swallowfield.pdf>

Swallowfield Park was sold, upon Sir Arthur's death, to the Mutual Householders Association, and subsequently divided into 34 apartments. The MHA evolved into the Country Houses Association which sadly went into administration in 2003. The property was later acquired by Sunley Holdings of Berkeley Square, and after several years of refurbishment there are now 29 apartments, sold on 125 year leases. You can take a virtual tour of the house here <http://sunleyheritage.co.uk/swallowfield-park-estate-living/> but please remember that the house and grounds are private property and there is no public access. I am very



grateful to Mark King of Sunley Heritage for granting permission to produce the following images of Swallowfield as it is today.



**Figure 4. Swallowfield Park as it is today.  
Image courtesy of Mark King, Sunley  
Heritage**



**Figure 5. The Locomotive name plate for "*Swallowfield Park*", and  
number plate "4007" preserved in the hallway of Swallowfield Park.  
Image courtesy of Mark King, Sunley Heritage.**

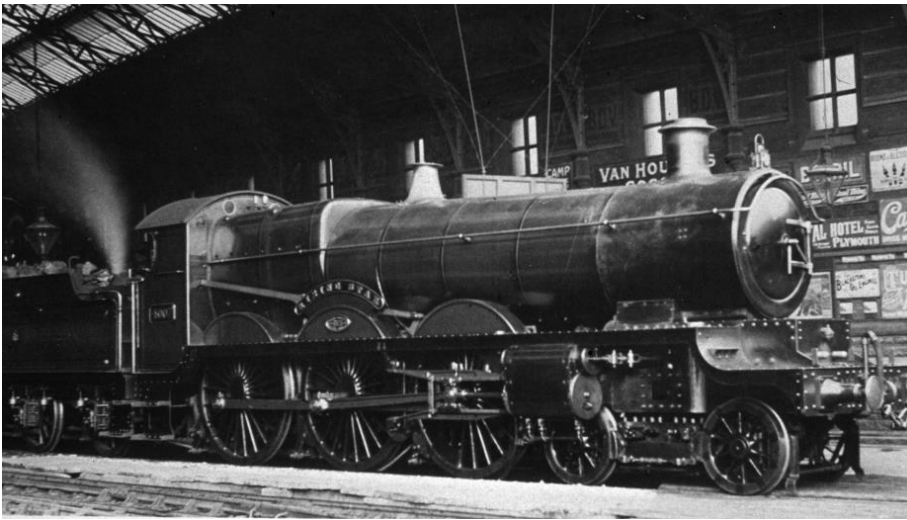
## PICTURE GALLERY



**Figure 6.** Arthur Russell with a lady, thought originally to be his mother, but this is uncertain, riding in a motorised conveyance at Swallowfield Park. Photo courtesy of Bob Symes.



**Figure 7.** Arthur Russell (in his hallmark Trilby) on the footplate of a steam locomotive taken during the General Strike in May 1926. Photo courtesy of Sir Mervyn Russell and Ian Russell.



**Figure 8. Steam Locomotive No. 4007 - Originally built as Rising Star, April 1907, and renamed “Swallowfield Park”. Withdrawn from service September 1951 – the nameplate is preserved in the hall-way of Swallowfield Park (see fig.5 above). Photo courtesy of Bob Symes.**



**Figure 9. “Anyone for tennis?” - C. Russell, Arthur Russell and B. Royds. Photo courtesy of Sir Mervyn Russell and Ian Russell).**



**Figure 10. Arthur Russell, with family. Photo courtesy of Sir Mervyn Russell and Ian Russell.**





**Figure 11. Arthur Russell striking a fine pose, with shovel, digging for pyromorphite on Bulmer's vein (Sir Bevis Bulmer) Leadhills, Lanarkshire. Photo from the author's collection, courtesy of Mrs Philippa Kingsbury.**



**Figure 12. Sir Arthur Russell in field gear at the Cheesewring Quarry, Linkinhorne, Cornwall on the International Geological Congress excursion to south-west England – 1948. Photo courtesy of Bob Symes.**



**Figure 13. Sir Arthur Russell (right) in the grounds at Swallowfield Park. Photo courtesy of Bob Symes.**

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## THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY

The Mineralogical Society was a hugely important part of Sir Arthur Russell's life. He was elected to membership at the meeting on 18 November 1902 [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#) (see page xxix), and was a very regular participant at Society Meetings in London, often exhibiting specimens, and reading papers (many, but not all of which were subsequently published in the pages of the Mineralogical Magazine).

The Mineralogical Society has digitised an entire archive of the [Mineralogical Magazine](#) from Vol.1 No.1 (1876) through to Vol. 63 (1999) which can be accessed via the RRUFF website. This is a fabulous resource, and means that almost all of Sir Arthur's published work is freely available on-line. (He also published a paper in the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* (1952) on Philip Rashleigh and another on John Hawkins (in 1954), in the same Journal, but these are not available in a digital format on-line).

The links below will guide you to abstracts, or the full text of his various papers published in the Mineralogical Magazine. Sir Arthur is the sole author unless otherwise listed:-

**On the Occurrence of Linarite and Caledonite in County Wicklow** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1907) 14 : 348-349. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Note on the Mines and Minerals of the Silvermines District, Co. Tipperary** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1907) 14 : 350-353. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On the Occurrence of the Rare Mineral Carminite in Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1910) 15 : 285-287. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Notes on the Occurrence of Zeolites in Cornwall and Devon** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1910) 15 : 377-384. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On the Occurrence of Phenacite in Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1911) 16 : 55-62. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Prehnite from the Lizard District, Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1912) 16 : 217-218. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Notes on the Occurrence of Dundasite in Derbyshire and Co. Galway** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1912) 16 : 272-273. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**An Account of the Minerals Found in the Virtuous Lady Mine, near Tavistock** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1913) 17 : 1-14. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Notes on the Occurrence of Bertrandite at Some New Localities in Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1913) 17 : 15-21. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On the Occurrence of Phenacite and Scheelite at Wheal Cock, St. Just, Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1920) 19 : 19-22. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On the Occurrence of Cotunnite, Anglesite, Leadhillite, and Galena on Fused Lead from the Wreck of the Fire-Ship 'Firebrand' in Falmouth Harbour, Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1920) 19 : 64-68. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Topaz from Cornwall, with an Account of Its Localities** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1924) 20 : 221-236. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**A Notice of the Occurrence of Native Arsenic in Cornwall; of Bismuthinite at Shap, Westmorland; and of Smaltite and Niccolite at Coniston, Lancashire** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1925) 20 : 299-304. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)



**Mineralogical Society (Instituted February 3, 1876.), Jubilee Celebration (September, 1926.) (See pages 124-128 – Southern Field Excursion led by Mr Arthur Russell) *Mineralogical Magazine* (1926) 21 : 99-148. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)** (This also includes a nice group photo of the party at the Roche Rock, Cornwall, with both Arthur Russell and Sir Charles Russell figured).

Arthur Russell and Prof. A. Hutchinson **On Laurionite and Associated Minerals from Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1927) 21 : 221-228. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On the Occurrence of the Rare Mineral Nadorite in Cornwall, and of Beraunite in Co. Cork, Ireland** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1927) 21 : 272-275. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Notice of an Occurrence of Niccolite and Ullmannite at the Settlingstones Mine, Fourstones, Northumberland; and of Serpierite at Ross Island Mine, Killarney, Co. Kerry, Ireland** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1927) 21 : 383-387. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On the Occurrence of Native Gold at Hope's Nose, Torquay, Devonshire** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1929) 22 : 159-162. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Notes on the Occurrence of Fluorite in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1936) 24 : 307-317. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Baryte Crystals from the Manvers Main Colliery, Wath-Upun-Dearne, Near Rotherham, Yorkshire** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1936) 24 : 318-320. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Notes on the Occurrence of Wulfenite at Brandy Gill, Cumberland, and of Leadhillite at Drumruck Mine, Kirkcudbrightshire** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1936) 24 : 321-323. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

Max H. Hey, F. A. Bannister and Arthur Russell **Russellite, a New British Mineral (includes pp 49-55 The occurrence and associations of russellite by A. Russell)** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1938) 25 : 41-55. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Notes on Some Minerals Either New or Rare to Britain** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1944) 27 : 1-10. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**An Account of the Struy Lead Mines, Inverness-Shire, and of Wulfenite, Harmotome, and Other Minerals Which Occur There** *Mineralogical Magazine* 1946 27 : 147-154. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**Baryte and Fluorite from Loch Bruicheach, Beaul, Inverness-Shire** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1946) 27 : 155-156. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On Rhodonite and Tephroite from Treburland Manganese Mine, Altarnun, Cornwall; and on Rhodonite from Other Localities in Cornwall and Devonshire** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1946) 27 : 221-235. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On Rashleighite, a New Mineral from Cornwall, Intermediate between Turquoise and Chalcocyanite** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1948) 28 : 353-358. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**The Wherry Mine, Penzance, Its History and its Mineral Productions** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1949) 28 : 517-533. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**John Henry Heuland** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1950) 29 : 395-405. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

Sir Arthur Russell and E. A. Vincent **On the Occurrence of Varlamoffite (Partially Hydrated Stannic Oxide) in Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1952) 29 : 817-826. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**On the Occurrence of Turquoise in Cornwall** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1952) 29 : 909-912.

[\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

**The Rev. William Gregor (1761–1817), Discoverer of Titanium** *Mineralogical Magazine* (1955) 30 : 617-624. [\[Abstract\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

In addition to his many published papers, Russell was a regular exhibitor at, and contributor to, meetings of the Mineralogical Society. Thanks to the superb digitised archive of early editions of the *Mineralogical Magazine*, which include reports of meetings and extracts from Council Minutes, it is possible to gain an appreciation of quite how active Sir Arthur was, and to get a sense of his huge enthusiasm for the subject of minerals and everything associated with them. The following snippets have been pieced together from a trawl through the archive. One can almost sense the excitement (both that of Sir Arthur, and any potential participants at the meetings) at what he might be about to produce or lay out on the table at any given time – there must have been a considerable element of “fun” in all of this, as well as academic rigour. I understand from Bob Symes, that on “Min.Soc.” meeting days, Sir Arthur would almost invariably turn up at the Museum in the late morning to meet with Peter Embrey and Arthur Kingsbury, and any “visiting dignitaries” from the mineralogical world who might be “in town”. They would then go to lunch at Peter’s favourite Italian restaurant near the South Kensington Underground Station.

It is recorded in the Minutes of the Council Meeting, that Mr Arthur Edward Ian Montagu [sic] Russell was elected a member of the Mineralogical Society on 18 November 1902. Elected at the same meeting were Mr Herbert Stanley Jeavons, Mr Andrew Gibb Maitland, Mr John Smith Flett, Mr John Allen Howe and Mr Frederic Philip Mennell.

The first entry I can find relating to Arthur Russell relates to the “Anniversary Meeting” of the Mineralogical Society on 15 November 1904, “*Mr Arthur Russell exhibited a large specimen of “babel-quartz” which he had found at great Work mine, Breage, Cornwall.*” This was followed by the General Meeting held on 31 January 1905, at which “*Mr Arthur Russell exhibited a specimen of phenakite and one of aurichalcite from Cornish localities.*”

Mr Arthur Russell read a paper “*On some new mineral localities in Cornwall and Devon*” at the General Meeting on 15 March 1905, and the following year, at the General Meeting held on 20 March 1906, with twenty-four Members and one Visitor present, Mr Arthur Russell read a paper “*On the occurrence of Caledonite and Linarite in County Wicklow*”, and in addition to specimens shown by the authors in illustration of their papers ... “*Mr. Arthur Russell exhibited crystals of Brookite recently collected by him at Tremadoc.*”

At the general Meeting on 19 March 1907, the following papers were read .... “*On the minerals of the Silvermines district, Co. Tipperary: by Mr Arthur Russell*”, and “*Specimens were exhibited by Mr Butler [F.H.] and Mr Russell in illustration of their papers*”, but his next “appearance” was not until the “Anniversary Meeting” on 17 November 1908, which saw Russell presenting a paper “*On the occurrence of the rare mineral Carminite in Cornwall.*”

Mention is made of a display of “... *other minerals submitted by Mr. Arthur Russell*” at the General Meeting on 26 January 1909, but no details are given.

At the General Meeting on 21 March 1911, Russell presented a paper “*Notes on the occurrence of Dundasite in Derbyshire and Co. Galway, and of Bertrandite in Cornwall*”, and later that year at the general Meeting on 13 June 1911, Russell presented a paper “*On Prehnite from the Lizard District*”, and this too was supported by an exhibit of specimens.

In 1912, at the General Meeting on 12 March Russell presented a paper “*Notes on the minerals and mineral localities of Shropshire*”, and it is noted that “*Mr Arthur Russell exhibited in illustration of [his] paper a fine series of specimens recently collected in Shropshire.*”

The “Anniversary Meeting” on 12 November 1912 saw Russell presenting what is probably one of the finest Topographical Mineralogy papers ever written “*An account of the minerals found in the Virtuous Lady mine, near Tavistock*”, and it is further noted that “*Mr Russell exhibited a fine series of specimens from the Virtuous Lady mine in illustration of his paper*”, and it is noted in the following Council Meeting that “*Half the cost of the three plates illustrating his paper on the minerals found at the Virtuous Lady mine was defrayed by Mr. Arthur Russell.*”

At the General Meeting on 11 March 1913 Mr Arthur Russell read a paper on “*The minerals and mineral-localities of Montgomeryshire*” and exhibited “*mineral specimens from Montgomeryshire in illustration of his paper*”, and he was back at the “Anniversary Meeting” on 13 November 1913, where Russell presented a paper “*Notes on the minerals occurring in the neighbourhood of Meldon, near Okehampton, Devonshire*”, and at this meeting “*Specimens of minerals from Meldon, Devonshire, were exhibited by Mr A. Russell and Mr F. P. Mennell.*” Arthur Russell also exhibited “*Specimens of Heulandite and Prehnite from Wales.*”

At the General Meeting on 20 June 1916, Russell presented a paper “*Note on a new occurrence of gold in Cornwall*”, followed at the “Anniversary Meeting” on 5 November 1916, by the presentation of a paper on “*The chromite deposits in the island of Unst, Shetlands*”, supported by a display of “*a fine series of minerals from Unst by Lieut. Russell.*”

At the General Meeting on 10 February 1922, Russell presented two papers – the first, jointly with Dr A. Hutchinson, “*On laurionite and paralaunite from Cornwall*”; and the second as sole author “*On a discovery of pitchblende at Kingswood mine, Buckfastleigh, Devon.*” These papers were supported by a display - “*minerals from Cornwall were exhibited by Mr Arthur Russell and Dr. Hutchinson in illustration of their paper.*”

At the General (Anniversary) Meeting on 3 November 1925, Russell presented a paper on “*New British occurrences of alstonite and barytocalcite*”, and supported this with a display of specimens. There was then something of a lull in his reported activities until, at the General (Anniversary) Meeting on 4 November 1930, Russell presented the first of a series of five papers on “*An account of British Mineral Collectors and Dealers in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*”. [His manuscript notes which presumably formed the basis of these papers, are preserved in the Mineralogy Library of the Natural History Museum, and were used extensively by Cooper (2006) in the underpinning research for his *magnum opus* “*Robbing the Sparry Garniture*” now (February 2021) available for the bargain price of only \$10 from [https://mineralogicalrecord.com/book\\_list/robbing-the-sparry-garniture-a-200-year-history-of-british-mineral-dealers/](https://mineralogicalrecord.com/book_list/robbing-the-sparry-garniture-a-200-year-history-of-british-mineral-dealers/)

Some six years later, at the General Meeting on 9 June 1931, he continued this theme with a paper on “*An account of British mineral collectors and dealers in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (continued)*” [Part 2], and he followed this up at the “Anniversary Meeting” on 3 November 1931 - “*Mr Arthur Russell exhibited a fine nugget of gold from County Wicklow, which he had recently acquired.*”

Russell had evidently committed a lot of time and effort to this line of historical research and at the General Meeting on 19 January 1932 he presented “*An account of British mineral collectors and dealers in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (continued)*” [Part 3], shortly followed at the General (Anniversary) Meeting on 1 November 1932 by two further papers “*An account of British mineral collectors and dealers in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (continued)*” [Part 4]; and “*Note on occurrence of witherite at the Morrison North Pit, Stanley, Co. Durham*”, but apparently without any supporting exhibit.

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 15 June 1933 record that “*The Secretary reported that a very successful excursion was made to Swallowfield Park to see Mr. Arthur Russell’s collection of British minerals. This was attended by twenty-four members and guests, and the thanks of the Society were conveyed to Sir Charles and Mr Arthur Russell*”, and a further note marking this event appeared in the Annual Report of Council for 1933, where the date of the visit is stated to be 20 May and it is said the party “*spent a most interesting afternoon inspecting Mr Russell’s unrivalled collection of British minerals.*”



Russell read a paper at the “General (Anniversary) Meeting” on 9 November 1933 “*On the occurrence of harmotome at several new localities in the British Isles*”, but on this occasion it appears there was no accompanying exhibit, and in the Spring of the following year, at the General Meeting on 15 March 1934 Russell delivered what was to be the final instalment of his fascinating study “*An account of British mineral collectors and dealers in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (continued)*” [Part 5].

The General Meeting on 24 January 1935 saw Russell reading another of his particularly interesting topographic papers “*Notes on the occurrence of fluorite in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire*”, and at the General Meeting on 14 March 1935, the displays included “*A fine stalagmite of calcite from a cave at Cheddar, Mendip Hills: exhibited by Mr. Arthur Russell*” (although collecting speleothems would, of course, be frowned upon nowadays).

At the General Meeting on 30 January 1936 “*Mr Arthur Russell exhibited specimens of withamite from the new road in Glencoe and of almandine from Loch Garve, Ross-shire, collected in 1935.*”

At the General Meeting on 11 March 1937 Russell read a paper “*On the occurrence of turquoise in Cornwall*”, this being accompanied by “*Specimens ... exhibited in illustration of the paper.*”

The General (Anniversary) Meeting held on 4 November 1937 saw a bumper display of “*Minerals from Castle-an-Dinas mine, Cornwall, including cassiterite, topaz, arsenopyrite, native bismuth, turquoise, scorodite on wavellite, and russellite; also bismuthinite from St. Wenn, and beryl and cassiterite from St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall*”, by Mr Arthur Russell. The meeting also included the reading of a paper by Dr F.H.Bannister and Dr M.H.Hey “*Russellite, a new British mineral.*”

The General Meeting held on 10 March 1938 was treated to an exhibit by Mr. Arthur Russell of “*A manuscript catalogue of Philip Rashleigh's collection of minerals with entries made by him between 1784 and 1804, on loan from the Truro Museum. Pages were shown containing descriptions of chalcophyllite, connellite and pharmacosiderite, written some fifteen years before these minerals were named.*” Russell also put on a display of minerals “*Specimens of hemimorphite from Millclose mine, Derbyshire; cassiterite from Minas Vella, Portugal; apatite and quartz from Bovey Tracey, Devonshire; withamite from Glen Coe, Scotland; wollastonite and idocrase from Okehampton, Devonshire; and chalcopyrite from Wanlockhead, Scotland.*”

Russell's next exhibits, at the General (Anniversary) Meeting on 3 November 1938, included “*A magnificent polished slab of rhodonite from Pencrebar, Callington, Cornwall; and a large crystal of ilmenite in schist from Craig of Dhoune, Glen Effock, Forfarshire*”, followed by a display with an international theme at the General Meeting on 9 March 1939, of “*Minerals from Mina da Panasqueira, Fundao, Beira Baixa, Portugal*”, this being mounted jointly with Dr W.R.Jones. He also read another of his landmark papers “*The Wherry mine, Penzance, its history and its mineral production*”.

The rather nice image below is reproduced courtesy of the Trevithick Society, who hold a copy. The original source of the photograph is unknown.



**Figure 14.** Arthur Russell (left) and Frank Claringbull inspecting the outcrops at the Wherry Mine, Penzance, Cornwall, at low tide. Photo courtesy of the Trevithick Society.

The General (Anniversary) Meeting on 9 November 1939 saw Russell, perhaps at the pinnacle of his mineralogical career, being elected President of the Mineralogical Society, and on this occasion he “*exhibited specimens of garnet, wollastonite, kyanite, zircon and magnetite which he had recently collected in Co. Donegal*”.

At the General Meeting on 25 January 1940, Russell read a paper on a subject close to his heart “*Notes on the occurrence of fluorite in the west Cumberland iron mines and in the Lake*

without the now “expected” accompanying

His new responsibilities as President did little to slow down his field activities, and at the General Meeting on 23 January 1941 he read a paper “*Note on some minerals either new or rare to Britain.*”

This was followed at the General Meeting on 5 June 1941 by “*Notes on some minerals new or rare to Britain. Part 2: Orpiment.*”

Russell’s term of office came to an end at the General (Anniversary) Meeting on 5 November 1942, with Dr W.F.P. McLintock proposing a vote of thanks to the retiring President and Ordinary Members of Council, which was seconded by Dr G.F. Herbert Smith. In his “parting shot”, “*Mr Arthur Russell, vacating the chair in favour of his successor, Mr F.N.Ashcroft, paid tribute to the latter’s untiring service for the Society.*” Russell’s contribution to the meeting on this occasion was an exhibit of “*a banded replacement of fluorite in limestone from Co. Durham.*”

At the General Meeting on 24 January 1946, the then President, Dr W.Campbell Smith “*exhibited specimens of pyrochroite, ganophyllite and native copper from Benallt mine, Rhiw, Caernarvonshire*”, and one imagines that Russell (now Sir Arthur) might well have made enquiries as to how he could get samples of these minerals!

Sir Arthur’s exhibit was of “*blende from Liruwie-n-Kano, Northern Nigeria, and from Trevaunance mine, St. Agnes, Cornwall; stannite and arsenopyrite from Cligga Mine, Perranzabuloe, Cornwall; beryl from Hawks Wood mine, North Hill, Cornwall; rock-cruystal from Dungiven, Co. Londonderry; and garnet, wollastonite, and diopside from Aphort, Aran Island, Co. Donegal.*”

At the General (Anniversary) Meeting on 7 November 1946, Sir Arthur put on a display of “*A selection of the original drawings, plates, and manuscript of Philip Rashleigh’s “Specimens of British Minerals”, part I, 1797, and part II, 1802*”, and also “*A small complete stone which fell in the roadway in Adare village, Co. Limerick, during the meteorite shower on September 10, 1813. He was unfortunately unable to exhibit the largest stone, said to weigh 65 lb., for which he had been searching during the past three summers and had at last traced only to be forestalled by a few weeks by another collector*” [C’est la vie!]

At the General (Anniversary) Meeting on 10 November 1949, Sir Arthur read another of his most interesting topographical papers “*An account of the antimony mines of Great Britain and Ireland and of the minerals found therein*”, which has never been published, but of which, a manuscript copy survives in the archives of the Natural History Museum, London.

The Excerpt Minutes of the Council meeting held on 7 October 1948 include a note that “*The President commented upon the success of the Society’s visit, with foreign guests from the International Geological Congress, to Sir Arthur Russell’s collection of minerals at Swallowfield Park, Reading. It was decided that the cost of transport from London be borne by the Society, and that a letter of thanks be sent to Sir Arthur Russell for his generous hospitality.*”

The Anniversary Meeting held on 1 November 1951 included a paper by Sir Arthur Russell and Dr E.A. Vincent “*On the occurrence of varlamoffite in Cornwall*”.

At the General Meeting on 24 March 1955, Sir Arthur read a paper “*Additional notes on rhodonite deposits in Devonshire*”, and later that year (at the Council Meeting on 9 June), “*The gratitude of the Council was expressed to Sir Arthur Russell for his most generous offer to bequeath to the Society a valuable collection of early works on mineralogy and mining, with special reference to Cornwall.*” Coincidentally, at the same meeting (9 June 1955), Sir Arthur presented (jointly with Frank Claringbull) a paper on “*Ceruleite,  $\text{CuAl}_4(\text{AsO}_4)_2(\text{OH})_8 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , from Wheal Gorland, Gwennap, Cornwall.*”

The last recorded active involvement of Sir Arthur at Mineralogical Society Meetings, appears to have been the reading of a paper on “*Cornubite  $\text{Cu}_5(\text{AsO}_4)_2(\text{OH})_4$ , a new mineral from Cornwall*”, presented jointly with Frank Claringbull and Max Hey at the General (Anniversary) Meeting on 7 November 1957, aged 79.

## LETTERS

In historical research, correspondence often gives intriguing insights into the personality of the writer, and tiny snippets of information can sometimes be gleaned, which help to build up an otherwise fragmented picture of the time. The following few letters perhaps help to give some impression of Sir Arthur’s character which was said to be always enthusiastic and encouraging, but of course above all, relentlessly determined in his quest for the finest specimens for his collection.

### Correspondence with Arthur Maurant of Guernsey

For much interesting information on Arthur Maurant, see

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=120-ncuacs85699&cid=-1#-1>

and an obituary here <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-arthur-maurant-1447112.html>



SWALLOWFIELD PARK,  
READING.

22/3/32.

Dear Mr Mourant

I write to remind You that I should be most grateful if You could let me have a specimen of *Onchophanes* from Jersey. I have specimens of the animal from nearly all the known localities in the British Isles but none from Jersey, and have always wanted one for my collection. I think ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> will thus be more than one bird. I would gladly purchase any bird specimens, or if there are any minerals You would let me know and we can do an exchange. I was sorry I did not see you again after the meeting the other night, but I had to leave early. I trust we may meet there again.

P.S. I hope you will call mind my asking you about this.

Yours sincerely  
Arthur Russell

Figure 15. Letter Arthur Russell to Mr Mourant, 22nd March 1932 (from a copy in the author's collection)

SWALLOWFIELD PARK,  
READING.

May 2/32

Dear Mr Mourant

I am exceedingly obliged to you for the mytilid specimens which arrived safely. They are all of the probat intest to me and are in fact the first and only Channel Island specimens I have. That from Gijoulande shall in my opinion be an especially good one and so also are those from Handois. The animal with the mytilid from the North West Quay, L'Etacq, is certainly pygidiate, also a mineral I had not got from the Channel Islands.

I have always wanted to visit Sark's Hope Mine and have for many years tried to obtain specimens of any of the rarer minerals recorded from there, but without success. I wonder if you have read Pringle's (the manager of the mine) paper <sup>note</sup> VI (Trans Royal Soc Cornwall Vol VII) and also that of W. J. Howwood (Trans <sup>note</sup> Vol II, Royal Soc Cornwall Vol VIII Part I) who both describe the mine and its contents. There are specimens of the ore in the Royal Cornwall Museum at Penzance, and presented by Pringle and also one or two in the Museum of Practical Geology, London but these are miserable ~~looking~~ looking things in which it is impossible to identify any particular silver mineral, and I rather doubt whether the mine ever produced any of these definitely crystallized, particularly pyridite (red silver) or cerussite (white of silver). If it would interest you to have a specimen of the ore such as I have seen I will try and obtain one from the Penzance Museum next time I am in Cornwall - I have no doubt I could do this.

You I know about the record of vulcanite from L'Etacq but have not seen the Chardai & Peltier's catalogue. Is it possible to buy copies of the Jersiaise Soc containing this, if so I should like to do so.

I feel I am greatly in your debt for the specimens you have sent me, and do not know how to repay you seeing you only collect local minerals. If either

Figure 16. Letter from Arthur Russell to Mr Mourant, 2nd May 1932 - page 1 (from a copy in the author's collection)

of those who from whom you obtained some of the specimens would care for them  
I would be only too delighted to send you specimens in return. I have I suppose  
the most complete collection of British minerals that do not have been made. Again  
thank you very much indeed - I hope we may meet again in time.

Yours sincerely  
Arthur Russell

Figure 17. Letter Arthur Russell to Mr Mourant, 2nd May 1932 - page 2 (from a copy in the author's collection)



SWALLOWFIELD PARK,  
READING.

Sunday May 15/32

Dear Mr Mourant

Many thanks for your two letters which are of much interest to me, especially your list of references. You may like to know of the following. (1) The Channel Islands by David T. Ansted FRS FGS & Robert G. Dalhousie FRS. London 1862 - this gives a list of the minerals without having indication of locality. (2) Townshend M. Hall FGS 'The Mineralogist's Directory' London 1868 p 78 - gives a list of minerals occurring in the respective islands and gives Ansted's list as a note. Prof A. Lacaze in his 'Minéralogie de la France Vol 5 Second supplément 1913' p 85 figures a crystal and gives brief description of Wulfenite from the quarry, Wulfenite mine at L'Etac. This specimen was given to him by P. Pelletier and is accompanied by wulfenite and small nodules of stibnite - a most unusual occurrence. The wulfenite etc are apparently white and of various sizes. Lacaze also mentions Wulfenite from Hendrix and Rencuz, Jersey; and alluvial in pyrometals from Jersey (Vol 4. 1910 p 711) quoting the original note of its occurrence due to Gaudart B.S.M. vol 29 1906 p 55. H. J. Howard in his account of the Sark & Hope mine gives an interesting section of the mine workings and there is a specimen preserved in the British Mus., London



a plan and section dated 1843. I am going to write for the Publication containing De Chardin and Pelletier's papers among thanks for letting me know of them. I should have added to the list of references Johnson & Vignier 'Report on the Sark Mine' 1842 - this is quoted by Howard. Since you ask me - I should be most grateful for any Channel Island minerals (not rocks) alluvial for instance if you have ever come across it. The wulfenite and stibnite would be most interesting if you could indicate it - it occurred apparently in small cavities in the granitic vein stuff. I could send you about any British Isles minerals should you want any thing in particular - but I don't expect you care for specimens outside the Channel Islands. I will certainly do my best to obtain you a specimen of the Sark's Hope ore though as I said it's very lousy stuff. Does the heavy epidote ever occur in that specimen? I am so interested in all this - Many thanks to you.

P.S. I enclose five of my little papers on British minerals.

Yours & sincerely

Arthur Russell

Figure 18. Letter Arthur Russell to Mr Mourant, 15th May 1932 (from a copy in the author's collection)

**Letters to the late Dr R. J. (Bob) King**, formerly of the University of Leicester, National Museum Wales, Cardiff, and founder of the Russell Society.

Reading 83276.

SWALLOWFIELD PARK,  
READING.

Monday June 21. 1954

Dear Mr King

Very many thanks to you for sending me the two  
specimens of oracrite. They are a most welcome addition to my collection  
and I am most grateful.

I stupidly sent a letter to you at your old address and also the famous  
specimen, the letter was returned but with the letter enclosing a copy  
of my paper on Philip's Rhabdites. I now send you another  
copy as your famous specimen came from that collection.

Now can you help me in the following — I have a large and  
rather nice specimen of celestite in dissolving plate crystals in  
a grey, septarian clay-like mass with brown calcite. It bears  
an old label Glen Parva, Leicestershire and was assumed to be  
gypsum. I can find no record of celestite from Leicestershire so  
should be grateful if you could throw any light on the matter  
what is the rock at Glen Parva?

Now let me know if there are any minerals you particularly  
want and I'll help if I can.

I should like to run up and see  
you some time and we might  
have a hunt at Glen Parva.

Yours sincerely,  
Arthur Russell

Figure 19. Letter from Sir Arthur Russell to Bob King, 21 June 1954. Courtesy of Sally King.



Reading 83278.

Swallowfield Park

Reading

Thursday January 12. 1961

My dear King

I am very glad to hear from you after all this time and should have answered your letter before, but have been laid up with a bad cold and sinus trouble since Christmas Day, and am still confined to my bed room. With regard to the botryoidal or nodular pyrite from Lord Ferrers mine at Staunton Harold - As as I expected my specimens of it have gradually decomposed and split up with a nasty efflorescence as this type of pyrite is so prone to do. Except for five, I have had to throw the remainder away. The largest one which Lord Ferrers gave me is gradually going, and the others will I am afraid do the same. I send you two with pleasure. They occurred between the limestone and shale in the roof of the old workings re-opened by Lord Ferrers in 1939 and were accompanied by blende and galena. By the way I am not too sure that they are pyrite and not marcasite.

~~By the way~~ In case you do not know of it there is in James Fowerby's British Mineralogy vol II 1806 plate 156 pp 105-107 a coloured plate of a most interesting specimen showing crystals of hemimorphite on blende, chalcopyrite with galena and pink barytes, from Lord Ferrers mine (the date of the plate being 1805).

If there is ever a chance of your being this way - come and see me, or we could put you up for a night.

Another thing I wanted to ask you

Two of my blende-galena-chalcopyrite-pink barytes specimens exactly similar to the Lord Ferrers ones are labelled

Ticknall - this is not another distinct locality is it? - They were bought at Melksham about 1850.

Yours & sincerely

Arthur Russell

Figure 20. Letter from Arthur Russell to Bob King, 12th January 1961. Courtesy of Sally King.



Reading 83278.

Swallowfield Park

Reading

Sunday October 29. 1961

Dear King

Yes do come here any time you like on Wednesday next I shall be delighted to see you and to have a talk. As a matter of fact I am a prisoner to the house at the moment with a mild attack of shingles but that won't matter. A bus for Swallowfield leaves Reading (outside the station) about every half hour and you get off at the Crown Pth at Swallowfield.

Yours very sincerely  
Arthur Russell

Figure 21. Letter from Sir Arthur Russell to Bob King 24 October 1961. Courtesy of Sally King.

Reading 83278

Swallowfield Park

Reading

Saturday July 13. 1963

Dear King

I am sorry to have been so long in answering your letter of July 5<sup>th</sup>, but have been unwell and am only now about again. I shall, all being well, be delighted to see you here on the afternoon of July 26 and I am glad you have been able to arrange a visit. We will have a good mineral talk and I want to hear about your trip to Ireland.

With my regards

Yours very sincerely

Arthur Russell

Figure 22. Letter from Sir Arthur Russell to Bob King, 13th July 1963. Courtesy of Sally King.

## SIR ARTHUR RUSSELL'S BEQUEST

The text below is an extract from Sir Arthur Russell's Will, directing that his collection should be given to the British Museum (Natural History) – now the Natural History Museum.

2. I BEQUEATH to the Trustees of the British Museum for the —  
Department of Mineralogy of the British Museum (Natural —  
History) my collection of British Minerals it being my wish  
without imposing any legal or equitable obligation upon them  
to do so that a decree is passed within twelve months of my —  
death substantially to the following effect namely that no —  
expense shall fall upon my estate by reason of this bequest  
and that my wish be observed that the collection be kept —  
intact as a single unit and be known as the Arthur Russell —  
Collection of British Minerals PROVIDED that the Museum may  
add specimens of British Minerals to the Collection from time  
to time as occasion may arise and I DECLARE that the receipt  
of the Secretary of the British Museum (Natural History) for  
the time being shall be a sufficient discharge for this —  
bequest

3. I DESIRE that my Trustees shall consult with and act in —  
accordance with the advice of Dr. G.F. CLARINGBULL Keeper of  
Minerals British Museum (Natural History) in all matters which  
may arise relating to the Administration and disposal of my

### Mineral Collection

The task of collating, organising and transporting Sir Arthur Russell's collection from Swallowfield Park to South Kensington, fell to Bob Symes and John Fuller. They stayed locally to Swallowfield, in "digs", and worked Monday-Friday for about 6 weeks, packing all of the specimens into the Museum's huge stockpile of wooden ammunition boxes. Vast amounts of packaging material were consumed – paper, cotton waste and the like (long before "Bubble Wrap"!), and they were instructed not to rush and to make sure that the specimens were well-protected. At the end of the packing phase a removals company came and moved the collection by lorry to South Kensington. Bob recalled that their boss, Frank Claringbull, made several visits during the project to see how they were getting on, and that Peter Embrey and also Reg Parkinson (mineral dealer of Shepton Mallett) called in as well from time to time. Parkinson got on very well with Sir Arthur and had been a regular visitor to Swallowfield. The "scene of the action" was the two main "mineral rooms" towards the right hand end of the brick-built wing of the house as viewed from the front (seen in Fig.24 below), and this was where the main collection, and some literature also, was housed in fine wooden cabinets (as now seen in the Russell Room). There was another room full of rather battered old cabinets, housing Sir Arthur's duplicate material, empty storage trays, offprints of published papers and the like.



Figure 23. Swallowfield Park as it was in the mid-1960s at the time of relocating Sir Arthur's collection. The mineral collection was housed in the room directly above the porte cochere of the main house. Photo courtesy of Bob Symes.



Figure 24. Swallowfield Park as it was in the mid-1960s at the time of relocating Sir Arthur's collection. Photo courtesy of Bob Symes.

Figure 25. This fine gold nugget, together with a letter to Arthur Russell describing its discovery, and his characteristically detailed hand-written label, formed part of the Gold exhibit at the 50<sup>th</sup> Munich Show in October 2013. Roy Starkey Photo.





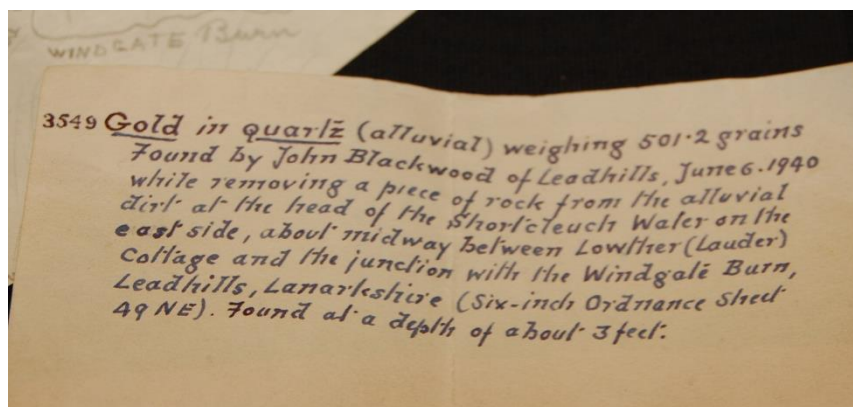


Figure 26. Close-up detail of Sir Arthur's label from the image above. Roy Starkey Photo.



Figure 27. Chalcopyrite from Tincroft Mine, Illogan, Cornwall, accompanied by a characteristically detailed label in Sir Arthur's beautifully regular italic script. Photo courtesy of Bob Symes.

The “Russell Room”, high in the east tower of the Natural History Museum in London, is, for many, the pinnacle of British Mineralogy. It has the aura and feel of an “inner sanctum” and it is indeed a treasure trove of all that is finest in specimen mineralogy. The privileged few who have entered this repository over the years to study and research Sir Arthur’s specimens will all have been over-awed by the breadth and depth of his collection, and the sheer determination of the man who needed “the best” of everything to do with British Mineralogy, and worked tirelessly to achieve this goal.

The range and pedigree of the collections he acquired over some seventy years of active collecting is quite simply amazing. Of course, it must have helped to have had the financial means, and the time, to pursue such a quest, but the dogged perseverance and sheer tenacity of the man shine through above all else. Collectors today can only dream of the sort of opportunities which presented themselves to Sir Arthur, and those who take time to review the pages of the *Mineralogical Magazine*, and gain an appreciation of Russell’s contemporaries, revealed by those pages, will come to appreciate that he indeed lived in a “golden age” for British specimen mineralogy.





**Figure 28. Andrew Clark (left, in white shirt) showing visitors through the Russell collection . Roy Starkey photo.**



**Figure 29. Pearl Freeman looking at the display cases on top of the cabinets in the Russell Room, Natural History Museum, London. Roy Starkey photo.**

**Figure 30. A fine drawer of fluorite specimens from St Peter's Mine in Sir Arthur's collection. Roy Starkey photo.**



Note: Jesse Fisher published some excellent images of classic British fluorites (one of Sir Arthur's favourite minerals) in his article 'Fluorite From the North Pennines Orefield England' in *Rocks and Minerals* magazine, volume 95, July/August 2020, pages 306 – 345 ([available here](#)), and mentions the famous find at the St Peter's Mine of bright apple-green fluorite during the 1930s, adding that most of this find was acquired by Sir Arthur Russell, and was donated to the British Museum of Natural History, where it remains today (fig. 30).



Figure 31. A particularly colourful drawer, full of fabulous specimens of liroconite, in Sir Arthur's collection. Roy Starkey photo.

## SPECIMEN GALLERY

The following images have kindly been provided by a number of fellow-collectors (individually acknowledged below), and are of so-called “Russell Duplicates”, of which there must have been huge numbers, and which were formerly used for exchange by staff at the Natural History Museum in London, and have found their way out onto the commercial market over the past fifty years.



Figure 32. Pyromorphite Wheal Penrose - Photo courtesy of Steve Plant



Figure 33. Chalcocite, Carn Brea mine - Photo courtesy of Roger Robinson



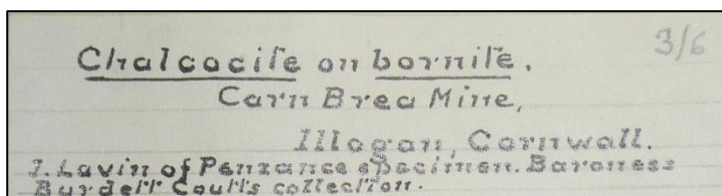


Figure 34. Russell Label for Chalcocite, Carn Brea mine - Photo courtesy of Roger Robinson



Figure 35. Chalcocite - Photo Courtesy of Ben Grguric

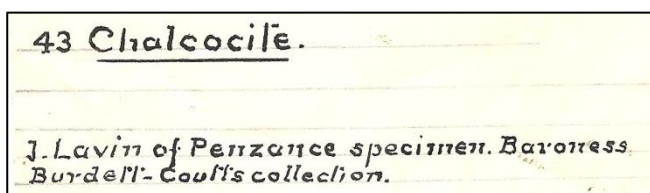


Figure 36. Russell Label for Chalcocite - Photo courtesy of Ben Grguric



Figure 37. Chalcocite, Carn Brea mine - Photo courtesy of Ben Grguric

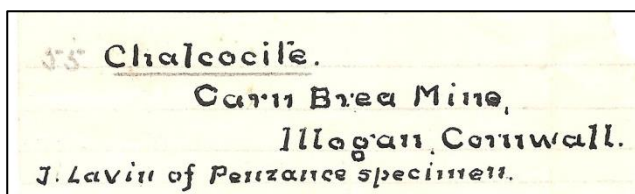


Figure 38. Russell Label for Chalcocite, Carn Brea mine - Photo courtesy of Ben Grguric



Figure 39. Datolite, Parc Bean Cove - Photo courtesy of Ben Grguric

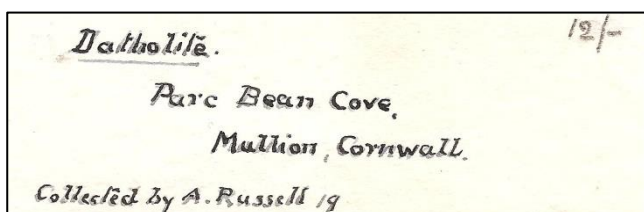


Figure 40. Russell Label for Datolite, Parc Bean Cove - Photo courtesy of Ben Grguric



Figure 41. Native Copper, [Relistian mine?] Photo courtesy of Brian Lloyd



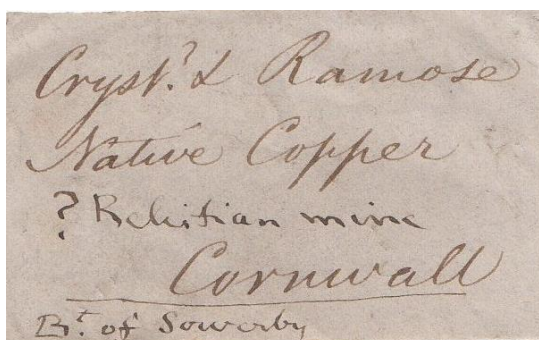


Figure 42. Old Label accompanying Native Copper, [Relistian mine?] Photo courtesy of Brian Lloyd



Figure 43. Russell Label accompanying Native Copper, [Relistian mine?] Photo courtesy of Brian Lloyd

Richard Braithwaite reports that “Sir Arthur sold off some of his “spares” to a branch of Rayner’s, the opticians in New Bond Street, which sold minerals for a very few years in the 1950s. I attach the labels and photos of the Russell specimens I bought (for a few shillings each!).”



Figure 44. Baryte, Cow Green mine - Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite

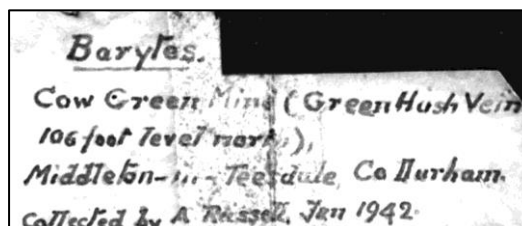


Figure 45. Russell label for Baryte, Cow Green mine - Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite



Figure 46. Cuprite, Phoenix mine - Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite

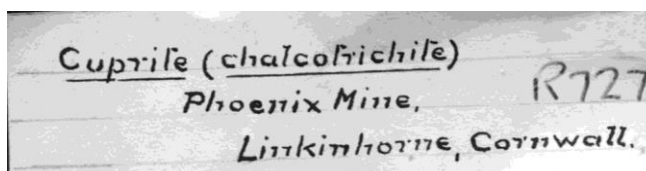


Figure 47. Russell label for Cuprite, Phoenix mine - Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite



Figure 48. Erythrite, Schneeberg – Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite

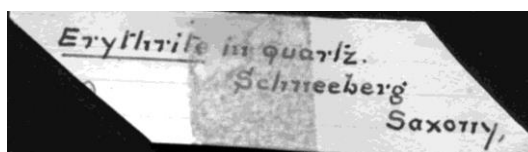


Figure 49 Russell label for Erythrite, Schneeberg – Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite



Figure 50 Goethite, Restormel Iron mine - Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite

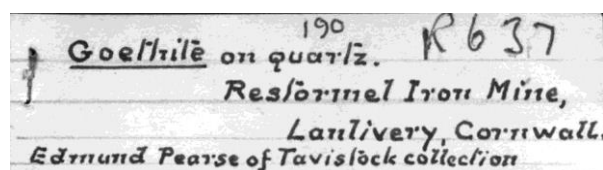


Figure 51 Russell label for Goethite, Restormel Iron mine - Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite

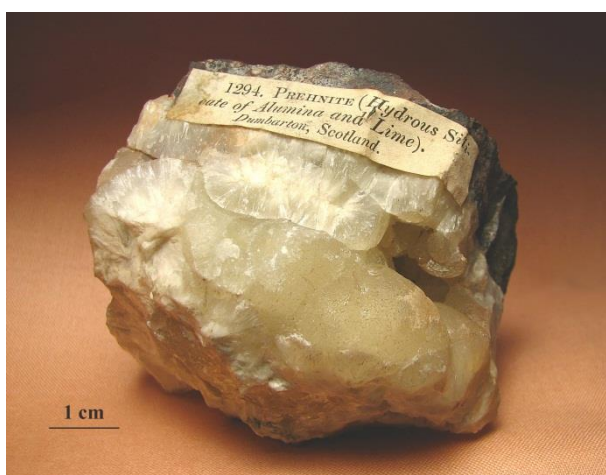


Figure 52 Prehnite, Bowling Quarry - Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite

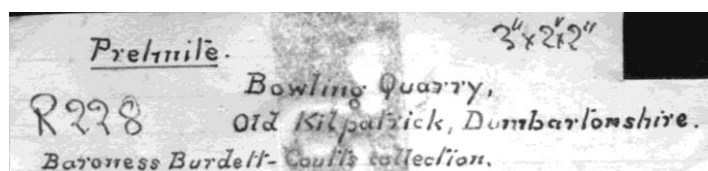


Figure 53 Russell label for Prehnite, Bowling Quarry - Photo courtesy of Richard Braithwaite

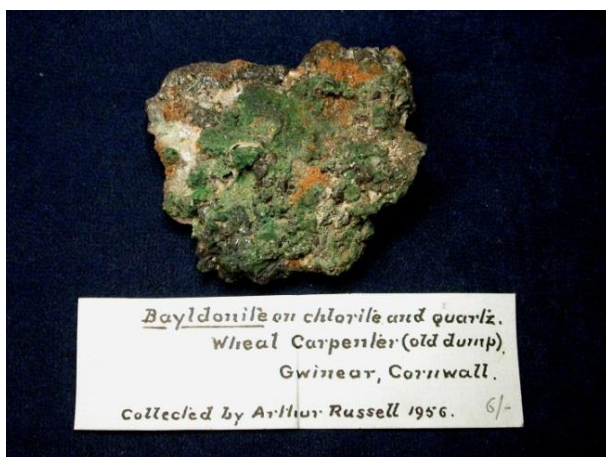


Figure 54 Bayldonite, Wheal Carpenter - Photo courtesy of Frank Ince

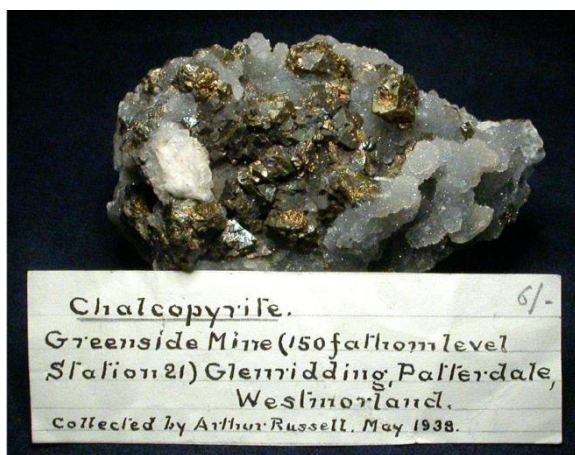


Figure 55 Chalcopyrite, Greenside mine - Photo courtesy of Frank Ince

The following label scans are all courtesy of Neil Hubbard, and provide an interesting selection of historical data concerning other collections which Russell acquired, and evidence of his travels around the UK.

Wavellite and raschleithite  
Castle-an-Dinas Wolfram Mine  
 (North section), St Columb Major, Cornwall.  
 Collected by Arthur Russell. November 1938.

Apatite, gilbertite, and orthoclase 4/6  
 Colcerrow Quarry,  
 Luxulian, Cornwall.

Pyromorphite 7/-  
 Wheal Rose,  
 St Ithney, Cornwall, circa 1860.  
 J. Lavett of Penzance specimen. Baroness Burdett  
 Gault's collection.

Cassiterite, fluorite, chlorite and 5/-  
a trace of erythrite.  
 Dalcoath Mine,  
 Camborne, Cornwall.

Libethenite 5/-  
 South Wheal Frances,  
 Illogan, Cornwall 1860.

Apophyllite on pectolite.  
 Copthill Quarry,  
 Cowshill, Weardale, Co Durham.  
 Collected by Arthur Russell. 1937.



513 Apatite or orthoclase. 3/-  
Maen Quarry,  
Constantine, Cornwall.  
Collected by Arthur Russell 19

5/-  
Topaz  
Diamond Rock, Slieve na Gable  
Mourne Mountains, Co Down,  
collected by Arthur Russell 1928.

25/-  
Cassiterite pseudomorphs with  
the form of Carlsbad twins of  
orthoclase.  
Wheal Coates,  
St Agnes, Cornwall.

Cassiterite 7/-  
Parka Mine  
St Enocher, Cornwall.  
J. H. and H. F. Collins collection No 528.

Native Bismuth and fluorite.  
Dolcoath Mine,  
Camborne, Cornwall.  
J. H. Collins collection No 438.

5/-  
Olivine.  
Wheal Unity,  
Gwennap, Cornwall.

W. Semmons collection.

104 Chalcocite.  
St Ives Consols Mine,  
St Ives, Cornwall.  
J. Lavie of Penzance specimen. Baroness  
Burdett-Coutts collection.



Wolfram

St Michael's Mount (from boulder on  
south shore)

Marazion, Cornwall.

Collected by Arthur Russell October 1948.

Hausmannite

25/-

Wyndham Pit,

Bigg's, Cumberland.

Collected by A. Russell May 1938.

Wolframite.

Treburland Mine,

Allanun, Cornwall.

Collected by Arthur Russell

Garnet (A.  me) and muscovite.

from a boulder  an Achaidh Mhoir,  
Ross-shire.

R170 Loc.  Collected by Arthur Russell July 1935. 8/- lw

90 Tennantite.

7/-

Wheal Jewel.

Gwenap, Cornwall.

J. Lavie of Penzance specimen. Baroness Burdett  
Coult's collection.

27 Bornite crystallized.

Carn Brea Mine,

Illogan, Cornwall.

J. Lavie of Penzance specimen. Baroness Burdett-Coult's  
collection.

Harmotome.

Cwm Orag Mine (old dump).

Llangynog, Montgomeryshire.

Collected by Arthur Russell 1914.

Chalcopyrite.  
 Greenside Mine (Isafalholm level,  
 Station 21) Glenridding, Patterdale,  
 Westmorland.  
 Collected by Arthur Russell May 1938.

Figure 56 Russell duplicate labels - Photos courtesy of Neil Hubbard



Figure 57 Apatite, orthoclase, quartz, Maen Quarry -  
 Photo courtesy of David Green

Apatite, orthoclase, quartz. 6/-  
 R297 Maen Quarry,  
 Constantine, Cornwall.  
 Collected by Arthur Russell 1923.

Figure 58 Russell label for Apatite, orthoclase, quartz, Maen Quarry - Photo courtesy of David Green



Figure 59 Calcite, Boltsburn mine - Photo courtesy of David Green

Calcite (These superimposed crystals grew  
 upwards from the floor of the cavity). 3/- ~~1/-~~  
 R571. Boll's Burn Mine,  
 Rookhope, Wear Dale, Co Durham.  
 Collected by Arthur Russell 1932.

Figure 60 Russell label for - Calcite, Boltsburn mine - Photo  
 courtesy of David Green



Figure 61 Calcite, Herodsfoot mine - Photo courtesy of David Green

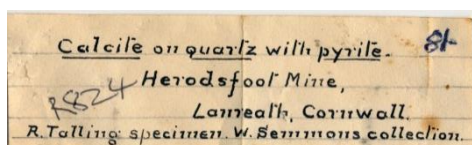


Figure 62 Russell label for - Calcite, Herodsfoot mine - Photo courtesy of David Green



Figure 63 Chalcopyrite, Greenside mine - Photo courtesy of David Green

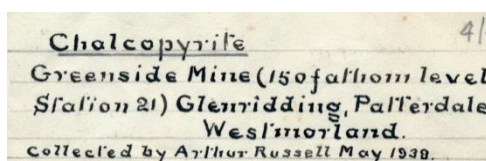


Figure 64 Russell label for - Chalcopyrite, Greenside mine - Photo courtesy of David Green



Figure 65 Manganodolomite and hausmannite - Wyndham Pit - Photo courtesy of David Green

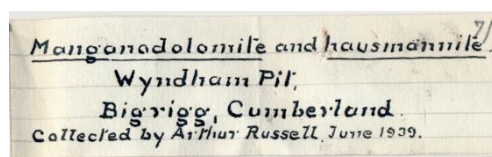


Figure 66 Russell label for - Manganodolomite and hausmannite - Wyndham Pit - Photo courtesy of David Green





Figure 67 Libethenite, South Wheal Frances - Photo courtesy of David Green

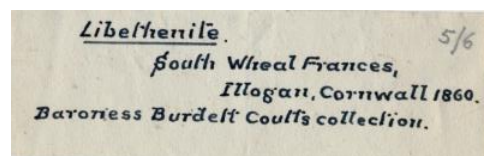


Figure 68 Russell label for - Libethenite, South Wheal Frances - Photo courtesy of David Green



Figure 69 Olivine, Wheal Gorland - Photo courtesy of David Green



Figure 70 Russell label for - Olivine, Wheal Gorland - Photo courtesy of David Green

### And Finally ....

I'd like to share with you a story related to me by Brian Craik-Smith, who, back in 1983, had the good fortune to purchase a mid-nineteenth century walnut-veneered mahogany mineral cabinet (with 40 apple drawers and ebony handles) for the princely sum of twenty pounds. Many of the stuck drawers were to prove more interesting than the cabinet itself, which was reportedly one from Swallowfield Park, purchased by the company Rayner of 100 New Bond Street, London. [Interestingly this aligns with information received quite independently from Richard Braithwaite (see above)].

The drawers turned out to contain a wide selection of old labels (and some accompanying specimens) – the sort of serendipitous outcome which most of us can only dream about. Brian has done some detective work and analysis on various of the labels and plans to publish an article on his findings in due course.

In the course of discussing this with Brian, he happened to mention that John Willmouth had also acquired a number of cabinets, and so I thought I should follow that up too. John kindly provided the following notes.

*"I was actually given 3 of them by Ollie Fisher (surviving partner of R.F. Parkinson, Doultong, near Shepton Mallet), but the third had dry rot in the carcass, and I had to burn it. However, the drawers of that one survived and are now incorporated into a couple of cabinets made by a friend and they look superb!"*

*My partner used to live next door to Ollie Fisher in Doultong when I first met her, and in passing (she knew nothing of Ollie's involvement with minerals) she mentioned that I had minerals ('rocks and bits of brick and concrete' as she so charmingly referred to them in those days!) everywhere and need a place to keep them (and it was a comparatively small collection then!). She was told by Ollie to have me present myself to her, which I did, and was closely examined on a rather small range of common minerals. I came to realise that*

An Appreciation of Sir Arthur Russell on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of his Death - 24 February 1964.

Text updated, minor edits and broken links restored 23 02 21.

*Ollie knew a lot about a few minerals. It was at this time she told me that she had started as a part-timer with Parkinson some 35 years previously and finished up a partner in the company, surviving RFP.*

*She then gave me the keys to the premises, and told me that in such and such a room I would find three cabinets, and if they were any good, I could have them. I guessed that they were proper mineral cabinets, but didn't know the history at that point. In fact I'm not sure I knew of Russell at all at that point. I had only been collecting for 10 years, most of that time in the Army serving in Germany.*

*When I saw them I was appalled! There are 30 drawers to each cabinet (15 per side). The drawers consisted of (obviously) front, back and two sides. These are a yellow wood, and even a local (well respected) hardwood merchant (Oskar Windybank) couldn't identify what wood, past a guess that it was a slow growing fruit tree. The bases were two sheets of oak fitted in a groove with quartering around the inside of the drawer. The carcass is a mahogany. Each drawer is individually hand-made with dove tails on the corners. Out of the 60 drawers they will only fit one way - and they were basically all in pieces. It was an enormous jigsaw. The other cabinet was all mahogany, so easy to identify, and surprisingly most drawers on that were intact. It took me a long time (and a lot of wood glue) to restore it even to its present condition.*

*I got bits of info from several sources. Ollie was able to tell me a little, I got more from Brian Woods who used to run the shop in Dulcote Quarry, and there were a couple of others, but just who escapes me. I remember Brian because in his (very dusty, dirty) shop there was a small chest of drawers with yellow drawers and mahogany carcass (a miniature version although one sided of about 8 drawers of mine). Really what caught my attention was the dove-tailing (after matching around 240 of them I was becoming a bit of an expert!). Brian started the ball rolling really when he said that it came from Parkinsons place (only 10 miles away) and that it had belonged to Russell. By this time I knew of Sir Arthur. I went back to Ollie and she said she had heard that, but that Parkinson had found them on a skip outside the old Geology Museum in London, asked for them and they had arrived in Doultong. She didn't remember how they actually got there. But someone who knew Brian Woods (and I have a feeling he is/was an expert on the Mendips) told me that they were the original cabinets made for Sir Arthur Russell, which he very quickly grew out of, and had more made, which are now in the Russell Room at the Natural History Museum. These he gave to his friend Dr Kingsbury (?) who used them until his death, when they were bequeathed to the Geology Museum with the collection. There was a label in the bottom of one of the drawers which was stamped 'GEOLOGY MUSEUM, KENSINGTON' I believe."*

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

Our story should perhaps conclude with the publication of "*Arthurite a new copper-iron arsenate from Cornwall*" by R. Davis and M.H. Hey in September 1964, described from Hingston Down Consols, based on a specimen collected by Sir Arthur some ten years previously in 1954, and submitted for examination. The mineral was named jointly for Sir Arthur Russell and his great friend Arthur W.G. Kingsbury [[Abstract](#)] [[PDF](#)]. It seems a strange quirk of fate that the paper was first read at the Mineralogical Society meeting on 12 March 1964, just a couple of weeks after Sir Arthur had died on 24 February 1964.

His memory of course lives on, in the name of [The Russell Society](#), his many publications, and through his magnificent collection and research papers, now preserved at the Natural History Museum in London. It is often said of people that "*we shall not see his like again*", but in the case of Sir Arthur Russell that is almost certainly the case.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I am grateful to the following people who have contributed images or information for this project. Rob & Jan Bellamy, Richard Braithwaite, Brian Craik-Smith, Jesse Fisher, David Green, Ben Grguric, Alan Hart, Neil Hubbard, Frank Ince, Brian Lloyd, Darryl Lundy, Josephine Mews, Mike Rumsey, Bob King, Mark King,

Sally King, Jane Robb, Roger Robinson, Mike Rumsey, Ian Russell, Sir Mervyn Russell, Bob Symes, John Willmouth and the various on-line resources and websites mentioned throughout the text.

I hope that you have found this “scrapbook” of information about Sir Arthur Russell interesting, and that it will perhaps encourage you to research some of his publications, localities and /or specimens. I would be pleased to receive any additional information or images relating to Sir Arthur Russell and his collection.

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

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**POSTSCRIPT added 23 February 2021**

If you have enjoyed reading this article you may be interested to know that I am currently working on a definitive biography of Sir Arthur Russell which will hopefully be published in 2022, depending on how restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic impact progress. The book will be profusely illustrated with images of specimens from the Russell Collection and will include previously unpublished archival information and family photos.

I will be posting periodic updates on progress on my website [here](#) towards the end of 2021. If you would like to be notified when the book is available, please contact me via email roy.starkey [at] gmail.com Thanks. Roy Starkey.