

THE BRITISH AND IRISH METEORITE SOCIETY (BIMS): PREPARING FOR A FALL

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About Us: The British and Irish Meteorite Society is a group of over 100 UK and Irish meteorite researchers, curators and collectors. The Society was formed in 2004 by Mark Ford, Dave Harris and a number of likeminded enthusiasts. With a clear focus on sample research, collection and curation, we are the only such group in the UK and one of only a handful of similar groups worldwide.

The aim of the Society is to bring together all those involved with meteorites in the UK under one roof, with a view to educating the general public, furthering the interests of meteorite study, and preserving any new or old UK meteorite material for science. It is also an ideal place to share our interests and meet other people with a similar passion for space rocks.

Members are distributed over the whole of Britain; our main form of communication is via the Internet. Until recently we used an email based mailing list, we have now begun using a web-based forum. New members are always welcome and may join by completing the form on our website.

Outreach: BIMS members are well informed and committed to promoting an interest in meteorites. We give talks and presentations, put on exhibitions and help with identification of suspected meteorites found by the public. Our members have been involved in the Brighton Science Festival and have given presentations to groups of children from nursery to secondary school age. In 2005 the Society was able to donate a substantial meteorite collection to the South Downs Planetarium. In the past two years our members have also had a number of articles published in *Meteorite*. Members regularly meet up and have organized visits to the Natural History Museum, Manchester Museum and Open University. Our website is frequently updated and contains numerous useful resources. We cover the basics of identifying meteorites and classification; have sections on British and Irish meteorites, in addition to a growing number of articles written by our members.

New Falls: After the Almahata Sitta fall, 45 students and staff volunteered from the University of Khartoum to begin the search for material [1]. Following the Buzzard Coulee fall many Royal Astronomical Society of Canada members and ConocoPhillips Canada employees aided in the search [2]. The success of these searches validates the use of volunteers in the recovery of new material. Given the size of our membership and their geographical spread across the UK and Ireland it is hoped that in the event of a new meteorite fall in the area we would play a key role in the location and recovery of material, assisting and working with other organizations to preserve as much material as possible for science.

References: [1] Shaddad, M. H. et al. 2010. *Meteoritics & Planetary Science*, 45: 1557–1589. [2] Hildebrand A. R. et al. 2009. Abstract #2505. 40th Lunar & Planetary Science Conference.

Additional Information: For additional information on the British and Irish Meteorite Society please visit our website at <http://www.bimsociety.org> or email the chairman Mark Ford at britishmeteorite@gmail.com.