

## CALCITE COLLECTORS PARADISE, II



*Kalsittstuff fra Kjørholt med noe pyrittnåler, 20 x 45 cm.*

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Foto STEIN/ghw*

As a result of the strong company support to preserve significant specimens, several crystal lined caverns in the mine are preserved both for their intrinsic beauty and as places for occasional collecting by guided guests. So it was that Lennart and I, guided by Gunnar, had the rare opportunity to see and collect some of the beautiful calcite crystals in this mine.

After gearing up we hopped into a shuttle vehicle with Gunnar and drove down the main ramp into the dark and somewhat dusty mine. At our first stop we found another vehicle with a hydraulic lift and enclosed platform which would be used to help us reach several caverns high on the walls and ceiling. Soon all of our collecting gear and my cameras were stowed and we were off to look at the first calcite cavern at the 190 level.

At 190 we pulled up to a cavern in the side of the drift where Gunnar instructed us to bring our collecting tools and wrapping material. On hands and knees we crawled into a 1.5 meter high tunnel strewn with blocks of calcite covered rock for a distance of 10-15 meters. Shining our headlamps around and toward the ceiling, we were rewarded with an awesome sight. Everywhere we looked we saw incredible calcite sparkling in the light. There were thin, hexagonal shaped white to almost clear blades everywhere. They covered other blocky, brownish colored calcite from just a few millimeters to 8-10 centimeters in size. Calcite grew on the walls. Calcite grew on the blocks that had fallen from the ceiling. Calcite grew everywhere. In places there were side passages that were narrow and then widened going up to the ceiling 3-4 meters above. Here the calcite stuck out in knobs from the walls and could be collected carefully without damaging the exquisite blades. The floor was littered with shards of broken crystals from falls or previous collecting.

We spent about an hour here savoring the beauty of the cavern and carefully collecting



specimens before Gunnar said it was time to pack our treasures and move on to the next spot. Lennart and I wrapped while Gunnar crawled back and forth from the cavern with a fragile specimen in each hand. Once we were back to the transport vehicle each piece was carefully stowed in boxes to be washed and sorted topside. One large plate that Lennart collected was truly a fine piece weighing about 6-8 kilos and measuring perhaps 40 centimeters across. It was covered with 3 generations of calcite starting with scalenohedrons protruding through blocky brownish calcite coated with many wafer thin white hexagonal blades. This piece now rests proudly in the collection of Dennis Holmberg in Kiruna, Sweden.

Our next stop took only a few minutes of driving down the drift. Here we found another tunnel leading to a large calcite cavern. At this location we would only look and take a few pictures as collecting was not allowed. The entrance in the side of the drift lead to a tunnel, this time a bit larger than the first, which we walked for about 15 meters. Once inside it was easy to stand and walk to the back wall after squeezing past a large block in the tunnel. At the back wall we gazed in awe at massive nailhead calcite to 20 centimeters across. The walls and ceiling of this cavern were literally made of crystals packed side by side and piled on each other. Most were a light milky grey color and sparkled in the light from our head lamps while some were coated with a bit of black caused by diesel exhaust in the mine. This cavern was one of the first discovered and is used as an underground museum where collecting is not allowed.

After looking around for a few minutes and taking a several pictures we moved on from the calcite cave to our next stop in a different part of the mine. This time Gunnar backed the transport up to the face of the drift, drop-

ped the support pads and said look up. We did, and above we saw another level with a drift parallel to the face. Lennart and I got into the bucket and were hoisted to the level above where we crawled out and waited for Gunnar to come up and join us.

This drift was huge with perhaps 10 meter ceilings and other side drifts branching off in several places. Following Gunnar, we soon arrived at another cavern with bluish chalcedony covering the walls, looking every bit like large dripping stalactites or frozen light blue ice. It was obvious that other had collected here as the floor was full of pieces broken from the wall. We enjoyed this different view and took a few minutes to collect several pieces of the blue chalcedony. When scrubbed up later, the bluish grey coating of diesel exhaust disappeared to yield some interesting and unique specimens.

Time was moving and we needed to move on to the next stop in a different part of the mine. After returning to our transport, Gunnar drove us through the mine and showed us several other spots with known collecting potential. Finally he pulled alongside the wall in a drift, stopped the transport, and said this was the place. We got out, looked at the wall and wondered where we would collect. At this point Gunnar pointed to the ceiling with his light and we could see a 2 meter opening high above.

This was our next collecting spot and an interesting one it was. The opening in the ceiling was reached by extending the boom to its full height and swinging it carefully in place with the three of us in the bucket. Gunnar has done this many times and his placement was perfect. At the top we looked into a cavern sloping gently upward into the ceiling. Here the walls were glistening with fine iridescent marcasite and nice light honey colored calcite, beautiful combination pieces.





*Stuff fra fantomdrusa, 13 x 14 cm.  
Merket detalj på neste side.*

To reach the specimens and collect it was necessary to step from the rail into the cavern which, it turned out, joined another drift through this ceiling passageway. Once inside it was possible to carefully collect plates of marcassite with calcite as second growth material on top of the original calcite matrix.

Being that I am the recipient of a hip replacement and do not have extended movement in certain situations, I waited in the bucket while Gunnar and Lennart collected this location. In 30 minutes they returned to hand me wonderful specimens of iridescent marcassite, some covered with perfect honey calcite and others solely marcassite plates. These specimens were carefully wrapped and placed on the floor of the bucket for our descent.

Once down, we were told that we had time for only one more spot but that we would stop briefly to check out a new blast on the way. As we headed out I glanced at my watch and found that we had been at this for about four hours. Strange how time passes so

quickly when one is doing something that they truly enjoy.

On the way to our final collecting spot we stopped so Gunnar could look over the new blast area. Here we saw light champagne colored calcite in blocky crystal habits stuck to the walls and in rock crevices in the fresh blast area. As much as we wanted to pick at the walls, we could only gather a few crystals from safe places on the floor since the blast area had not yet been cleaned up or barred down. The potential was high in this spot and I'm sure that Gunnar now has some fine pieces from this new location.

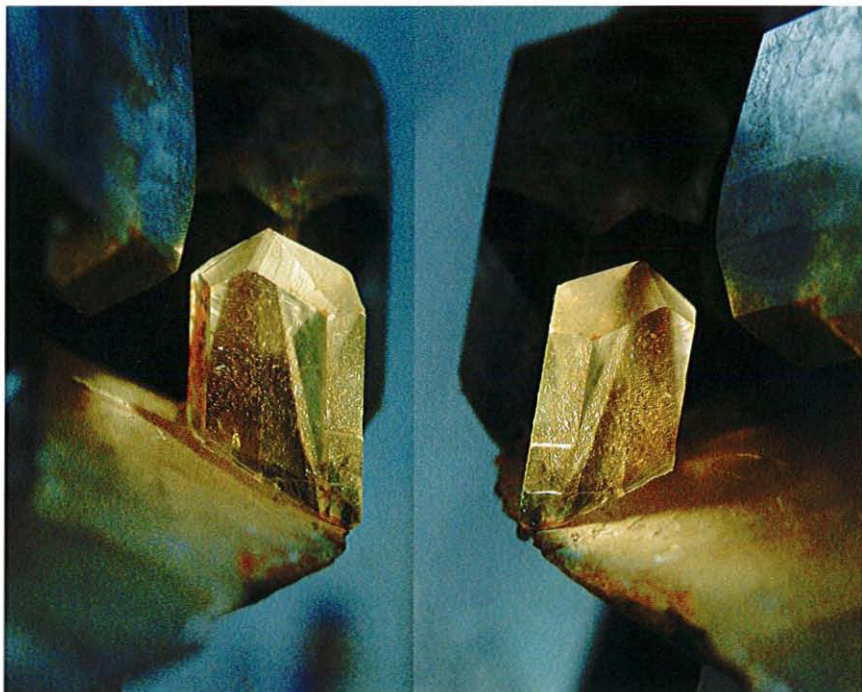
Arriving at our final collecting spot we observed an open cleft in the wall with a ladder leading up to the cleft. Here would be found the fine clear greyish hexagonal and white disc shaped calcite seen at the show in Eidsfoss. While Lennart climbed the ladder and entered the cleft to collect, Gunnar and I took a ride in the bucket to the walls and ceiling above. Once there I looked in awe at a wall of gray mud from which protruded exquisite white calcite discs and water clear hexagonal nailhead crystals. The wall and ceiling were literally a mass of crystal, loose and waiting to be picked. Some were perfect, some showed damage but it was amazing to just reach out from the bucket and help yourself to these flowers of the dark. With water dripping from the ceiling Gunnar and I could clean and selected singles and clusters to join the other specimens waiting below.

All too soon it was time to ride the bucket down to the floor, check on Lennart, and wrap our treasures for the ride to the top. Gunnar had promised and truly delivered a fine time touring and collecting in the Dalen/Kjorholt Mine.

As we parked the bucket transport and loaded our gear, specimen boxes and my cameras back into the shuttle bus I looked at



my watch again to find that what had seemed like mere minutes had in fact been a 5 hour and 45 minute adventure underground. In the land of the midnight sun it was still daylight as we loaded our boxes of specimens into Lennart's bus and cleaned up before joining Gunnar at his home for a fine meal of specially prepared sandwiches and deserts.



Time was moving too quickly but we still had a look at Gunnar's cases of calcite and other minerals. These specimens are absolutely superb and could grace the finest museum collections any where and take a back seat to none. Over the 18 years that he has collected, Gunnar has amassed a wonderful collection of calcite and other minerals from the Dalen/Kjorholt Mine for the on site NORCEM displays, the mineral museums in Kongsberg and Oslo, and for his personal collection. Gunnar specializes in calcite twins and phantoms with all calcite law twins being represented in his collection from this mine. His taste in minerals and specimens are impeccable.

After studying each specimen with wide eyed appreciation it was hard to pick a favorite since each piece in the well lit cases was perfect in every way, color, habit, and aesthetics. I had hoped to photograph some of Gunnar's fine collection for others to see but time was at a premium. It was drawing close

*Krystallet ved pila fotografert fra to ulike vinkler. Foto til høyre er speilvendt. Her sees pyritbelegget på fantomet tydelig. Legg ellers merke at fantomkrystallet går helt opp til spissen av det ytre krystallet.*

to midnight and we still had several hours of driving to get us closer to our early morning rendezvous with Einar Odegard the following day.

With heart felt thanks we shook hands with Gunnar Jenssen with the hope and promise to return again some day for yet another adventure in Brevik's Dalen/Kjorholt Mine. Now it was north to Oslo and a new adventure in our mineral meanderings.

*Vi valgt å ikke oversette denne del 2 av Bill Ms skandinaviabesøk. De av våre lesere som har motforestillinger til en slik praksis, bes melde ifra. Hvis vi ikke mottar innvendinger kan vi godt tenke oss å fortsette med dette. Bill vil gjerne ha kontakt med STEINs lesere på: [emp@fort-frances.lakeheadu.ca](mailto:emp@fort-frances.lakeheadu.ca) ghw/red.*