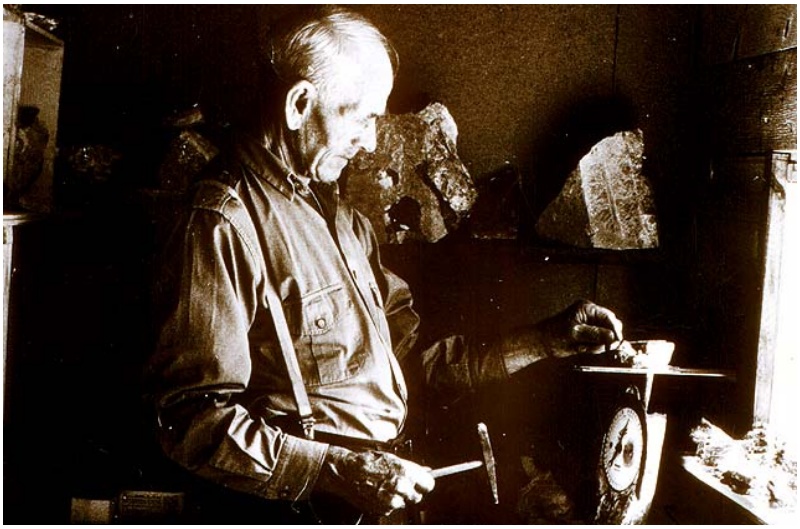
The Mineral Collection of Iveland Municipality

From a thick, hand written protocol from the board meetings of Iveland municipality, from the date of Juli 9th 1971, item 47, we can read the following;
" The heirs after Olaf Landsverk has offered Iveland municipality to aquire Mr Landsverk's large mineral collection for NOK 10,000.-
The board debated the offer, and the mayor proposed that the municipality acquired the mineral collection for the proposed amount of 10,000.- Nok, covered from budget item H.K.IX F.8, transfered from H.K. XIX A.2.
The proposal was carried unanimously.
End if meeting"

The protocol is solemnly signed by Olav A Vatnestraum, at the time both mayor and local police officer, as well as the remaing municipality board, including miner and mineral collector Bjarne Engedal.

Item 51, "The newly acquired mineral collection" is discussed on the following board meeting and " The municipality management has discussed the matter of location of the mineral collection, and will unanimously advise the board to decide the following: The mineral collaction, currently located in Evje, should be moved to a new location in the municipality building within Sept 1st 1971"



Olaf Landsverk (1887-1967) was one of the most prominent mineral collectors in the area. He had a collection of 500 species with 200 different minerals. In addition to his responsibility to maintain the local roads, he was an active miner at several locations. The mining was a joint effort between him and his sons Orest, Arthur, Ivar and Willy. High quality mineral specimens from the Landsverk collection is today represented in several geological displays throughout the world. His lifelong contribution in documenting and understanding the local geology and mineralogy earned him "HM Kongens fortjenestemedalje i gull" or "His Majesty the King's medal of achievement, in gold". He was awarded this honour in 1960, and the heirs have donated the medal itself and the diploma to Iveland, and they are today displayed with the mineral collection. The best of Mr Landsverk's minerals are yet today the backbone of the municipality collection.

This way, the municipality collection got off with a flying start, and it was purchased wooden cabinets with glass doors for some of the specimens for display in the municipality building. The remaining specimens where displayed on metal shelfs with glass cover in the municipality board room.

It is also worth noting that Sørlandet's Geologiforening played an active part in developing the mineral collection. Sørlandets geologiforening is the local society of mineral collectors,

and in their board meeting Oct 11th 1977, item 3 says: “The Mineral Collection of Iveland Municipality: The board of Sørlandets Geologiforening (SG) are aware that Iveland municipality has established a committee to manage it’s mineral collection. The board finds it an obvious task for SG to assist Iveland in maintaining the collection, and, if possible, develop the collection into a geological centre. The board appoints Einar Mykland to be responsible for this work on behalf society. The board is further of the opinion that SG should support this work financially, as far as possible.”

Further, Item 4 “ Mineral show, The Board supports the plans of arranging an annual Mineral Show at Iveland. Any surplus should be donated to the above item 3. Andreas Corneliussen, Salve Budalshei, Salve Øyna and Magnus Nateland was appointed to arrange the show. Mr Corneliussen is appointed chairman.”

The Board of SG contained the essense of amateur collectors and geologists. Besides mr.Mykland and mr. Corneliussen one could find names like Per Myrann, Torleif Aalvik, Ute de Lange Nielsen, Orest Landsverk, Salve Budalshei and Elisabeth Gjertsen. All very dedicated and knowledgeble collectors through several decades.

The Mineral Society kept a close dialogue with the municipality regading the mineral collection. A mineral show was arranged in the new school building next to the municipality building. In the 10th annual report from the mineral society says:” In time, the Iveland mineral show has become a cumpolsory event, and the board has decided that any surplus shall be dedicated a future mineral museum at Iveland.”

A total of 4 mineral shows was held in the time span from 1973 to 1980.

When Iveland got a new municipality building in 1987, no-one argued that the mineral collection should be displayed properly for the public. Special made displays was set up in the building entrance area.

The original collection had a simple, and often not complete catalogue, and contained local, norwegian and international species. It is obvious that the trading between mineral collectors and geological institutions was extensive. Since the collection was acquired, all specimens besides the local ones has been removed from the collection. Many of the international specimens was of a “simple” quality, presumably due to a different “rarity” of specimens from exotic areas. Consequently, the collection of today consists exclusively of mineral specimens from the Evje/ Iveland collection.

In our minds, people visit Iveland primarily to study local minerals, and being so selective improves the economical freedom to purchase local specimens both from new finds and old collections. We leave the nation wide collections to the national museums. The municipality board has decided that building the Iveland mineral collection is a continuous process, where new and improved specimens will replace older specimens with poorer quality. Due to an extensive trust and commitment from several directions, the collection is significantly expanded over the years. Being responsible for the collection over several decades, it has been an immense pleasure to witness the support from both the administrative and political management in Iveland. All of them have shared the understanding of the importance for Iveland to secure the treasures of our rocks whenever possible.

The collection has been enriched with specimens from minerl shows, auctions, donations from miners and the thorough and dedicated work of many local rock hounds.

Including the stored specimens, the collection comprise about 350 pieces, but still only 60% of the 110 minerals found in our area are represented in the collection. We all know all to well that several ov the black masses and rarities are found only in a limited number of pieces.

15 years ago, farmer, shopkeeper, preacher and miner Olav P. Tveit gave us a notice that some large blocks containing feldspar crystals was found in one of the quarries at his farm at Frigstad. He wanted to give these to Iveland municipality. Allied with the municipality's caretaker, and necessary machinery, I left for the Mr Tveit's farm. After a few days of trimming by the caretaker the block now measures 120 x 40 cm, with a number of crystals up to 25 cm beautifully exposed. It now stands in the entrance area of the muncipality building.

The landowner of the Ljosland quarries invited me to the Håland quarry at one of the "mining days" at Iveland. A particular area near the edge of the pegmatite was especially rich in large beryl crystals. We decided to drill holes in short intervals behind the crystals and use expanding explosives in an attempt to free a large block. During the drilling operation, the dust often showed a greenish colour, clearly indicating that several beryls was dressed as pendants. The next day, a large block had slid some centimeters down and we were able to move it away. The caretaker once again did a marvellouos job trimming the block. This piece is now placed in a specially designed display decorating the hallway in the municipality building. The main crystal is 70cm long. Also a part of the story is the fact that the crystal was even longer. The top piece had a good terminationand several transparent areas. This top part of the crystal is today in a privat collection. I have been promised a trade back the day I can find a piece of similar quality....

The mineral thortveitite was originally found in the Landsverk III quarry at Evje. When Olaus Thortveit sent a specimen to the geological museum in Oslo for testing, it became appearent that a new mineral had been discovered. Due to it's high scandium content, the mineral was highly priced on the world market. In the 50-ties and 60-ties some mines where run exclusively for thortveitite.

Quite recently, Tormod Kåbuland and Salve Eieland found richly crystalized thortveitite in the "Amerika" quarry at Frigstad. A beautiful specimen with thortveitite crystals was donated to our collection. The thortveitite crystals covered an area of 8,5 x 5,5 cm in a white feldspar matrix.

I have previously mentioned the miner and landowner Bjarne Engestøl, and his participation in aquiring Olaf Landsverk's mineral collection. In the late 80-ties, we purchased some dream specimens from his daughter, all found in the Knipane area. I would in particular mention a thortveitite crystal of 25 cm, beautifully placed in a pegmatite matrix.
A 17 kg golden beryl was also included. It's "neighbour" was cut and transfered into a large number of beautifully faceted gems.
I also include a 6 cm seagreen apatite crystal from the "Storesynken" mine.

The large mineral collection after Ragnhild and Albert Frigstad was sold in a large auction at Evje. Both the mayor and the administrative manager of the municipality joined the show. The municipality collection was enriched with a number of top class specimens that day. In particular, I would like to mention a 7,5 x 6 cm semi-transparent, blood red spessartine crystal. A 22 cm long doubly terminated smokey quartz crystal also deserves to be mentioned. It has a "normal" termination in one end, whereas the other end is teemed with small crystal terminations. Also from the auction, but through a series of unplanned events, we secured a very nice 12 by 8 cm fuorapofyllite specimen from the Flaat mine at Evje

Lother Other from Germany is a good friend of Norway, and has participated in a series of mineral shows here. He has also contributed with a large number of good specimens, and have provided valuable information on several others. In my mind a perfect 10 by 6 cm gadolinite crystal from Landsverk 1 stands out, together with a piece with several xenotime crystals from Kåbuland.

Of the local specialities in the collection, you will find tombarthite, originally described from Høgetveit at Evje, and named after professor Tom Barth. Even though they are massive black lumps, and also radioactive they are considered very fine specimens.

When the Landsverk-brothers worked the Tuftane-quarry during the late 60-ties, 3-4 cm thick thortveitite crystals arreared when they removed the moss from the rock. They ran the mine for thortveitite, but several "big-bags" of gadolinite was also recovered. Willy Landsverk describes a large block of about 100 kg, which was shipped to Østerhus, the merchant. This particular block was however returned, as it was not gadolinite. The new mineral davidite-Ce had been found for the first time at Tuftane quarry, Frigstad, Iveland. We are thrilled to have 2 kg's of this material, even though it is just a black chump.

Other rarities are the white feldspar-like mineral tveitite originally described from Tveit in Telemark, only found there and at Birkeland in Iveland.

Often we have collector exhibitions, where local collectors allow us to display some of the best pieces from their own collections. Knut Mølland has been one of the regulars, displaying world class specimens of aeschynite-Y, spessartine and calcite from his quarries at Mølland. The largest group of aeschynite-Y crystals measures 10 x 20 cm. This marvelluous piece contains about 30 aescynite-Y crystals, the largest one up to 4 cm in length. A 30 x 35 cm specimen richly crystallized with spessartine crystals up to 5 cm, are highly appreciated.
Now we are delighted that we have been allowed to purchase these specimens.

The municipality have accessed high quality gadolinite crystals from the recent finds at Slobrekka.

Often good crystals are found nearby large mica slabs. In 2001, Arild Omestad and Frank Strømmen could not resist to investigate what was hid behind a large slab of biotite in the “Storesynken” quarry. They emptied the quarry for water and carefully placed dynamite aroound the biotite. Removing the biotite revealed a large area of beautifullt crystallized pyrite, the largest crystals measured 10 x 11 cm. In addition, georgious apatite and titanite crystals were found. Some of the best specimens can be viewed the the municipality collection.

The Evje Mineralsti has produced a number of excellent mineral specimens. A couple of years ago some marvelluous monazite crystals where found. By careful preparation, Ronald Werner was able to reveal beatiful display specimens. One of them containing 5 crystals up to 2,5 cm long.

Ivar Gautestad has prepared a few sets of a dozen differenlty coloured beryls from the area. All perfectly faceted by himself!. The colours range from deep aquamarine blue through bluish green, green, greenish yellow, colourless to the magnificent deep yellow golden beryl from Knipane.

When a new owner at Kåbuland was about to enlarge his yard area recently, a clay filled cavity lined with quartz crystals suddenly appeared in the outskirts of a pegmatite vein. The surface of the crystals was slightly weathered, and difficult to clean due to the clay. The colour ranged from transparent to dark brown, and some of the crystals contained phantoms of earlier growth. Our collection contains one of the best specimens.

Through the years, several we have enriched the municipality collection through guest shows. This summer we will have on display some of the best recent finds owned by private collectors.

Finally, I will present the mineral wealth of the municipality collection in alphabetiacal order:

Aeschynite-Y, albite, allanite-Ce, almandine, anchylite, antophyllite, apatite, bastnasite-Ce, bertrandite, beryl, betafite, biotite, bismuthinite, calcite, cerianite, chalkopyrite, chlorite, chrysoberyl, clinozoisite, crysotile, davidite-Ce, epidote, euxenite-Y, fergusonite-Y, ferrocolumbite, fluorapophyllite, fluorite, gadolinite-Y, gahnite, hematite, illite, ilmenite, ilmenorutile, keiviite-Y, manganotantalite, microkline, microlite, molybdenite, monazite-Ce muscovite, polycrase-Y, prehnite, pumpellyite, pyrite, pyrrhotite, quartz, rutile, Schorl, spessartine, stilbite, thorogummite, thortveitite, titanite, tombarthite-Y, topaz, tveitite-Y, uraninite, uranofane, xenotime-Y and zirkon.

We have still room in our displays for other and/or better mineral specimens, and if you have or know of specimens that wants or deserve a little place of their own in our collection, please do not hesitate to call me, the “municipality geologist” on (+47) 37961800/ (+47) 37961704.

I am very grateful for the support and guidance given by geologist Ole Fridtjof Frigstad.