



Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland

www.minersoc.org

LONDON CALLING – A REVIEW OF PANDEMIC-AFFECTED TIMES

At the time of writing, some of us are entering our fourth “wave” of Covid-19 infections. We hope that this one won’t be accompanied by the extreme loss of life that was characteristic of previous waves. I have wondered when will be a good time to review the status of the MinSoc post-COVID-19. Will there really be a time when we can say that we are “post-COVID”? With that in mind, let’s have an interim review of our status. What have we lost? What have we gained? What have we learned?

On the debit side ...

- In-person meetings feel like a distant memory. My colleagues live inside my computer screen. No chats. No friendly cups of coffee between conference sessions.
- Researchers, in many cases, can’t go to the laboratory or into the field. Students on tight deadlines can’t get the research done that they need for thesis purposes. And students can’t go to a physical classroom to be with their lecturers.
- No data means no papers, right? Maybe.
- Grants to students have been limited by the restrictions on travel (both national and international).
- The awards that we give to shining lights in our scientific community have not been able to take place in the usual way.

So, not great really.


On the credit side, however ...

- We changed in-person meetings to virtual meetings. We still had great science, we had larger audiences than usual, and people who could not normally attend meetings found that they could. The Metamorphic Studies Group meeting in June 2021 was attended by people from 38 countries!
- Our journals have continued to flourish through the pandemic. We have ample content. In fact, submission numbers actually increased throughout 2020 and 2021. And both journals achieved improved impact factors, which were announced end-June 2021: *Mineralogical Magazine* attained 2.06 and *Clay Minerals* attained 1.48.
- Payments through our student grants system have been reduced but we have covered costs for attending virtual meetings. Our Mineral Physics Group created a “hardship” fund and used its funds to support some needy students. Normal service will resume in due course.
- We have selected awardees for all of our medals throughout the pandemic. Under normal circumstances, we present medals in person, and with some fanfare. Medals arriving as a small package in the post do not have quite the same impact! However, we now have plans to hold online seminars, where medallists can present their work, and where we can have an awards ceremony of sorts. This is not as good as being there in person and offering personal congratulations, but it does mean that we get to say lots of nice things about these deserving people to an appreciative audience. This seminar series will commence at the start of the academic year, so keep an eye on the Mineralogical Society website.

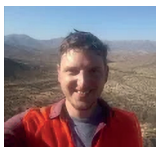


- The Student Award scheme is being run as normal. The best student from each relevant Earth science/geology/mineralogy department receives a prize from the MinSoc (and two years membership).

Any bonuses? Yes, a number.

1. Wherever possible, going forward, we will hold hybrid meetings (suitable for both in-person and virtual attendance). This will mean that attendance will be possible for all. Care will be needed that this new offering doesn’t break the financial model. Conference fees still need to cover the cost of hiring physical spaces, abstract volumes, etc. But we plan to make attendance free to people from Research4Life countries.
2. The MinSoc has not been alone in responding to equality, diversity, inclusivity (EDI) questions posed over the past 18 months. Staff, council members, society leaders, and others have all played important roles in thinking through our future role in EDI. We have recently finished our international survey of members and non-members, and there will be a report by the end of the year. It is clear that there are changes afoot to the ways in which we carry out most society activities. And we want all society members to come on board. Non-members who wish to join our activities will agree to abide by our Code of Conduct and other EDI legislation to be decided.
3. The society is rewriting its bye-laws. Hardly the world’s most exciting task, but this is not just a so-called “root and branch” review: we’re digging up the entire garden and replanting. We’re going as far as revising our mission statement – the very definition of why we exist. Opportunities for work like this do not come along very often and it is timely, given EDI considerations. It is also an opportunity to revise how our Special Interest Groups operate. Changes allowed by the new bye-laws will make for more dynamic, inclusive, and active groups. Remember that Special Interest Groups are only as productive as the people who lead them, so please consider offering your services to one (or more). Extra assistance is always welcome.
4. We have run two very successful webinar series, that of the Geomicrobiology Network and that of the Applied Mineralogy Group. Videos of almost all of these presentations are available now on Youtube through the society’s  YouTube website.
5. We have done considerable work developing our Youtube Channel and now have ~100 presentations available for download. View content *and* subscribe at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJLEvvFJEAtt2SRHozqd7LQ/videos>.
6. Stocks of all of our medals expired last year. We took the opportunity, when moving to a new supplier, to refresh the design for two of them. We look forward to awarding these to deserving scientists.
7. The Hazel Prichard Bursary ran as normal (though slightly delayed) in 2021. The three joint winners for this year are as follows: Alexander Taylor Kong, Eliot Jones, and Ethan Shaw, all of whom have been MSc students in mining geology at the Camborne School of Mines (University of Exeter, UK). Their three-pronged project was based on the Ben Buie Complex (Isle of Mull, Scotland) and had the aim of providing a greater understanding of magmatic differentiation and layering processes within the British Palaeogene Igneous Province, identifying key controls on the potential for Ni–Cu–Co–PGE and V–Ti(Fe) mineralisation within the region. The students investigated the geometry of the intrusion and the controls on mineralisation in this layered mafic–ultramafic complex.

8. We continue to work on our outreach plans. This is gaining momentum, with James Byrne, the MinSoc's new Public Relations Officer, leading representatives from the Special Interest Groups in deciding how best to achieve this.



James Byrne

So, all in all, a reasonably satisfactory state of affairs. We look forward to a return to more "normal" (I'm beginning to hate that word) activities, but also to bringing with us those new tricks that we've learned during the adverse, Covid-19 conditions.

Kevin Murphy, Executive Director

GEOMICROBIOLOGY NETWORK RESEARCH IN PROGRESS MEETING

Date: 15–16 September 2021

VENUE: This year's Research in Progress meeting will be held virtually via Zoom. We will use Gather.Town for our poster session.

SPEAKERS WILL INCLUDE: Arwyn Edwards, Kenda Lynch, Jon Lloyd and Ana Santos.

The abstract deadline is 1 September 2021; the registration deadline is 10 September 2021.

There is no charge to attend, but registration is required at <https://www.minersoc.org/geOMICROBIOLOGY-network-rip-2021.html>

NEW TOPICS IN MINERALOGY 2: THE MINERAL–MICROBE INTERFACE THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

2–3 December 2021

Burlington House, London

The Mineralogical Society is delighted to announce a two-day New Topics in Mineral Sciences meeting that will focus on the importance of the mineral–microbe interface. Topics explored will be diverse and include the role of mineral surfaces in the emergence of life on Earth (and potentially other planets), and the key role that this mineral–microbe interface plays in controlling modern global biogeochemical cycles. Recent advances in the fundamental understanding of these important processes will be presented, alongside more applied aspects of the mineral–microbe interface. The latter will include the new biotechnological innovations that underpin sustainable mineral bioprocessing, biomineralisation, bioremediation and energy applications. We are planning a hybrid meeting, with presentations from international leaders in the field, alongside contributions from early career researchers working across the "geo" and "bio" disciplines.

At the time of writing, we are hoping that an in-person, hybrid, event at Burlington House will be possible. Status updates are expected throughout the remainder of the summer. If we must, we will switch to an all-virtual presentation, but for now we're hoping to see some fellow scientists for real!

MEETING REPORTS

Metamorphic Studies Group 40th Anniversary

A report of this meeting is available at <https://www.minersoc.org/msg-rip-2021.html> and a montage of the people involved in the group (some since its foundation) has been created by current chair, Catherine Mottram. An enlarged version is available on the website.

The best student poster award went to Stefania Corvò ("Unravelling the Evolution of a Major Extensional Lower Crust Shear Zone from Val d'Ossola (Ivrea-Verbano Zone, Western Alps, Italy)"); the best student oral presentation went to Sophie Miocevic ("How did the Archaean Crust Evolve? Insights from the Structure and Petrology of the Lewisian of Scotland"); special mentions went to Madeleine Murphy ("The Si Isotope Composition of Archaean Continental Crust from ~3.8 Ga West Greenland Rocks") and to Andrea Maffei ("HP–UHP Fluid Inclusion Evolution Predicted by Molecular and Electrolytic Fluid Models: Implications for HP–UHP Metamorphic Fluid Composition").

Geochemistry Group Research in Progress Meeting

This meeting (<https://www.minersoc.org/ggrip-2021.html>) was held virtually on 22–23 June 2021 and included two days of presentations (oral and poster). The Annual General Meeting was also included at which a new committee was elected.

The following prizes were awarded:

Zeiss Prize

- Faidra Katsi (University of Nottingham, UK) for using the chemical fingerprint of pollen as an alternative method for classifying of grass species.

Poster prizes

- Madeleine Murphy (University of St Andrews, Scotland) for the Si isotope evolution of the continental crust using spatial and temporal trends from glacial diamictites.
- Chunyao Liu (University College London, UK) for tracing silicate weathering in estuaries using lithium isotopes.

Oral presentation prizes

- James Kershaw (University of Bristol, UK) for analyzing the Ba/Ca ratios of stylasterid coral skeletons and the implications for palaeoceanography and coral biomineralisation.
- Peter Methley (University of Cambridge, UK) for using pyrite to explore the diagenesis of the Kimmeridge Clay Formation
- Caroline Soderman (University of Cambridge, UK) for investigating global trends in novel stable isotopes in basalts.

Clay Minerals Group–Environmental Mineralogy Group Joint Annual Meeting

There was also the joint meeting "Minerals in the Natural and Built Environment" from the Environmental Mineralogy Group and the Clay Minerals Group.

This one-day meeting included the keynote presentation by Prof. Karen Hudson-Edwards (University of Exeter, UK) entitled "Minerals in Contaminated Environments: >25 Years of Research, Reflection and New Ideas", and the annual George Brown Lecture, this year given by Prof. David Manning (Newcastle University, UK) and entitled "Mineral Stabilities in Soils: How Minerals can Feed the World and Mitigate Climate Change".

Recordings of these talks are available from the Meeting Report section of the MinSoc's website.

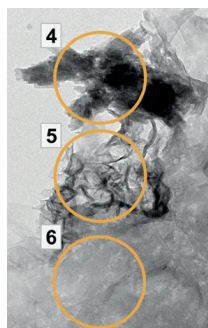
Prizes were awarded as follows:

Environmental Mineralogy Group

- Best Oral Presentation: Callum Robinson (University of Manchester)
- Best Poster Presentation: Jody Grassby (University of Exeter)

Clay Minerals Group

- Best Oral Presentation: Harry Brooksbank (Newcastle University)
- Best Poster Presentation: Maggie White (Newcastle University)



Biomerall