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Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland

FRONTIERS 2007

Following agreement among the councils of the three societies, the first ever joint meeting of the Mineralogical Society, the Mineralogical Society of America and the Mineralogical Association of Canada will be held in Fitzwilliam College Cambridge in June 2007. Under the overall theme of 'Frontiers in Mineral Sciences', the scientific focus of the meeting will be on recent advances in research into the properties and behaviour of minerals together with their geological contexts in rocks and biosystems.

Fitzwilliam College Cambridge

A list of plenary lectures and symposia is currently under consideration by the conference convenor Michael Carpenter and the organising committee. Suggested sessions already received (September 2005) include topics such as Interactions between minerals and organic molecules; Diagenesis and contaminated environments; Structural topology of minerals; Adsorption processes on mineral surfaces; Simulations of minerals: Advances and limitations; and Structural and microstructural origins of remanent magnetism. It is hoped that a decision on the main session topics will be reached by the end of 2005 so that people have plenty of time to focus on these and prepare their ontributions to one or more of the sessions. A list of the proposed main session topics will be published on the website at: **www.minersoc.org/Frontiers2007.html** as soon as they become available.

PROF. BEN HARTE ELECTED PRESIDENT FOR 2006–2007

Professor Ben Harte was unanimously voted by the Society's Council in June to be the next president of the Society. Ben Harte is professor of metamorphism in the Earth Science Department at the University of Edinburgh. He has also spent some time in other research establishments in Washington, Yale, Cape Town and Ehime University (Japan). His undergraduate and postgraduate education was Cambridge University. His research on the development and history of metamorphic rocks has led to more recent work on the distribution of mantle rock-types and inclusions in diamonds and their relationship to mantle dynamics. The Society welcomes Ben and wishes him well in leading it through a period of change and expansion into new fields. The Society also welcomes to Council Dr Terry Williams of the Natural History Museum and Dr Richard Harrison of Cambridge University.

WINTER MEETING, 5–6 JANUARY 2006, BATH SPA UNIVERSITY
MICRO- TO NANO-GEOSCIENCES: DEVELOPMENTS AND APPLICATIONS

The 2006 winter meeting will focus on the applications of techniques for imaging and chemical, isotopic and microstructural analysis of Earth and planetary materials at micrometer to nanometer scales. The accompanying commercial exhibition of instrument manufacturers will include Gattan, Hitachi, ISS Group, Carl Zeiss and Edax UK.

The meeting will highlight applications of these techniques through four complementary scientific themes: Organic–mineral interfaces, biomineralization and mineral surfaces; High spatial resolution isotope techniques; Mineralogy, microstructure and chemistry of finely crystalline materials; Extraterrestrial mineralogy and astrobiology.

Invited speakers include Conel Alexander (Smithsonian Institution), who will be giving the Hallimond Lecture, Laurence Garvie (Arizona State University), and Alain Manceau (Grenoble), who will be giving the George Brown Lecture. In addition the Schlumberger and Max Hey medals will be presented. For full details of the programme, the venue and how to get to Bath Spa University, see the website at: **www.minersoc.org/pages/meetings/Bath2006.html**

Martin Lee

THE SOCIETY'S SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS
THE VOLCANIC & MAGMATIC STUDIES GROUP (VMSG)

Kathryn Goodenough, of the British Geological Survey in Edinburgh and secretary of the Volcanic and Magmatic Studies Group, describes the history and work of this vibrant group.

The Volcanic and Magmatic Studies Group is a joint specialist group of the Geological and Mineralogical Societies, and is one of the oldest such groups in Britain. It was formed as the Volcanic Studies Group at Birkbeck College, University of London, on 4 December 1963, at the instigation of Dr A.T.J. Dollar and Dr G.P.L. Walker. The group became formally associated with the Geological Society as a specialist group in January 1964, and over the next two years held a few one-day meetings at Burlington House. The first major symposium of the VSG was held on 21–22 October 1966 in the Grant Institute at the University of Edinburgh, with the theme 'Origin and Evolution of Basaltic Magmas'.

Over the last forty years, the group has held its annual two-day meetings at a variety of locations around the UK. In 1997, the group became affiliated with the Mineralogical Society as well as the Geological Society, and at the same time the name was changed to reflect the wider interests of members of the group. The VMSG is an extremely active specialist group, with annual meetings regularly attended by around 100 people, including a vibrant mix of students and academics. Other meetings are also sponsored by the group, a recent example being the 'Soufrière Hills Volcano – 10 years on' conference in Montserrat. Bursaries are awarded to students who have presented at the annual meeting, enabling them to attend international conferences and to disseminate their science to a wider audience.

In 2006, the VMSG will celebrate 40 years since the first annual meeting with a conference in Leeds, at which the 1966 theme of 'Origin and Evolution of Basaltic Magmas' will be revisited, along with a variety of other volcanic and magmatic topics. Information about this, and other VMSG activities, is available at **www.vmsg.org.uk**

Kathryn Goodenough

ENVIRONMENTAL MINERALOGY
A Special Issue of *Mineralogical Magazine*

The October 2005 issue of *Mineralogical Magazine* (volume 69, issue 5) is the fifth in a loosely defined series of special thematic issues derived from conferences organised by the Mineralogical Society. The allied conferences in this case were 'Speciation and Toxicity' and 'Environmental Mineralogy, Geochemistry and Human Health', which took place during September 2004 in London, and January 2005 in Bath, respectively. A common thread to all these conferences has been the role of mineralogy in applied science and technology, and particularly in environmental science. The conferences have focused on the multidisciplinarity of modern mineralogy and (with the special issues) have been particularly successful in bringing along scientists from outside traditional mineralogy and Earth sciences. A primary objective for the series is to demonstrate mineralogy's extensive outreach. The series has, we believe, succeeded in giving the scientific community a sense of the wider role mineralogists can play. The thematic issues reinforce the conference series objectives by recording for posterity key presented papers in a published peer-reviewed form. An overriding objective of all issues is to publish papers of the highest quality, with a focus, and sometimes a foresight, for novel non-traditional areas of mineralogy.

The guest editors of this special issue were determined that the papers be published as soon as possible after the meeting, and we are very pleased to see the papers appearing in print in the October issue within 13 months.

This thematic issue contains 23 papers, including the Hallimond Lecture of the Mineralogical Society, which was delivered this year by Professor Catherine Skinner. She gives an authoritative and passionate account of biominerals, emphasizing their importance within the mineral kingdom, the unique features that set them apart from minerals formed abiotically and their role in life and evolution. From the wide range of known biominerals, which represent many of the 78 mineral classes, she chooses to present three examples – iron oxyhydroxides, calcium carbonates and calcium phosphates – offering a representative flavour of biomineralization processes at both the uni- and multicellular scale. Skinner predicts that the studies of biominerals will provide natural inspirations to current and future technological problems – a bright future for mineralogists!

The thematic issue also contains several papers on arsenic. In the Bengal Basin (Bangladesh and West Bengal), millions of people are at risk from drinking As-contaminated groundwater. The resulting humanitarian crisis has prompted an enormous interest amongst the mineralogical and geochemical community over the last decade or so, and studies of the biogeochemistry of arsenic, both in Bengal and elsewhere in the world, were a major focus of this meeting. Indeed we hope that the papers related to arsenic biogeochemistry not only highlight some of the analytical techniques and conceptual advances that might be of practical benefit in dealing with the arsenic crisis in Bengal, but also emphasize that arsenic-related health risks need to be evaluated in other regions of the world, including the European Community and associated states.

The image above, taken from the paper by Polya et al. in the special issue, shows the distribution of As in groundwaters in Cambodia. The red diamonds indicate As concentrations of >50 ppb, the orange squares 10–50 ppb, and the blue circles <10 ppb.

We dedicate this special issue to the memory of Robin Clayton, a contributor to the issue and an excellent isotope geochemist, who died suddenly during the final stages of preparation. Robin's quiet dedication to the geosciences will be sincerely missed by all who had the privilege to know and work with him.

A list of contents of this issue is available from the website below, and copies of the special issue (352 pages) will be available to non-subscribers for £50.00 including postage and packing. MIN SOC members will receive the usual 30% discount.
www.ingentaconnect.com/content/minsoc.mag

Eugenia Valsami-Jones, David Polya and Karen Hudson-Edwards

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Society's Annual Accounts for 2004/2005

The Society's annual accounts for the period from July 2004 to June 2005 show total income of £386,103 against expenditures of £369,226, providing a welcome surplus of £16,877 after two years in deficit. In addition, as a result of the stock market upturn, there was a gain in the value of the Society's investments (unrealised) of £58,887. The total value of all funds at 1 July 2005 was £1,144,813. A copy of the full accounts can be downloaded from the website and can be accessed via the 'Announcements' page at: **www.minersoc.org/pages/announce.html**

Call for Bursary Applications for 2006

A sum of £6,000 is available in 2006 for bursary awards to postgraduate students and qualified research workers to assist them in attending conferences to present their work or in carrying out fieldwork. This year an additional sum of £2000 is being made available to help postgraduate students attend conferences abroad to present the results of their research work. Preference may be given to members of the Society, but membership is not mandatory to receive an award, although, in the case of students, part of the award will be one year's membership in the Society. Bursaries are awarded up to a maximum of £500 or 50% of the total cost of the project whichever is less. Full details on how to apply for a Postgraduate Student or Senior Travel Bursary can be found on the website at: **www.minersoc.org.pages/awards.html** Applications should be sent to the Executive Secretary Dr Adrian Lloyd-Lawrence, to arrive by **20 January 2006**.

Mineralogical Society 2006 Medals Call for Nominations

Nominations are being sought from members for the Mineralogical Society's 2006 Schlumberger Medal. This award is given to recognise scientific excellence in mineralogy and its applications by a key worker. Evidence of such excellence should be in the form of published work by a currently active scientist. Nominations are also sought for the 2006 Max Hey Medal, awarded to recognize existing and ongoing research carried out by young scientists (normally under 35 years at the time of the award). Nominations with supporting evidence should be sent to The Mineralogical Society, 41 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5HR, UK, to arrive by 21 April 2006. Recipients of the awards need not be members of the Society. Full details of the awards and requirements for nomination can be found on the website **www.minersoc.org** under the awards button.