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Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland

FROM THE PRESIDENT



A colleague recently referred with approval to a 'wind of change' at the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and it has been exciting for me to have been President when the Society was eager for some change. When I commenced office there was a general realization that the Society was not increasing its membership and maintaining involvement with its members, and a

small group called the Strategy Committee met to discuss these and other matters. This group made a number of straightforward proposals which, with the strong support of MinSoc Council, we have put into effect in the last 18 months.

With the greatest pleasure, at least for the moment, we have witnessed the enrolment of nearly 150 new student members in 2007. I say 'for the moment' because this success is undoubtedly due to us offering something for nothing, namely free membership; nonetheless it remains a great pleasure to discover the interest of young people in our science. We hope that this involvement in the Society will continue and grow, and we encourage this by offering continuing student membership for only £10.

I think one of the inherent strengths of the MinSoc is the great breadth of its interests in mineralogy, petrology and geochemistry. These are pursued through seven special interest groups (SIGs), covering studies at the extremes of pressure and temperature as well as in the environmental and applied aspects of our science. Each of these groups provides a special community where people may hold formal and informal meetings, including lab-based and field-based workshops. At the same time, the SIG substructure leaves the parent society free to follow a more international programme. This was well demonstrated by the very successful Frontiers in Mineral

Sciences meeting, organized by the MinSoc and held in Cambridge in June as a joint meeting of the American, Canadian, French and British-Irish mineralogical societies.

Another pleasure in the last 18 months has been seeing the eagerness with which existing members are prepared to support the Society in its endeavours. This has been well shown in the creation of an Awards Committee and the re-introduction of a Distinguished Lecturer programme. Over the past two years, ten experienced members outside Council have readily agreed to form part of a committee assessing the nominations for the Society's Schlumberger and Max Hey Awards. Two Distinguished Lecturers, Jon Blundy and David Vaughan, are currently giving a schedule of presentations across the land, from Galway to East Anglia and Glasgow to Brighton (see opposite page for further details).

Support for *Mineralogical Magazine* and *Clay Minerals* has come from scientists being prepared to widen the board of associate editors. A new production editor has also been appointed. However, we do have to be wary that our journals, like those of other not-so-large learned societies, do not suffer from the current preoccupation

with impact factors. We must encourage members to submit papers to Society journals – I am putting a memo to this effect on my own desk!

Last, I wish to express the Society's thanks to Adrian Lloyd-Lawrence, our recently retired Executive Secretary, who promoted the activities and oversaw the affairs

of the Society for eight years. A dinner to pay tribute to Adrian's contributions was held in November. In his place we welcome Kevin Murphy. With Kevin as Executive Director and Michael Carpenter as incoming President, I am sure the Mineralogical Society is in good hands.

Ben Harte
President

SOCIETY MEDALLISTS FOR 2008

We are delighted to announce that the Society's medal winners for 2008 have been selected, with the assistance of the newly appointed Awards Committee, chaired by Michael Carpenter.



David Rubie

The **Schlumberger Award** winner for 2008 is Prof. David Rubie of Bayerisches Geoinstitut. Prof. Rubie started his career studying high-pressure metamorphic rocks, when he became fascinated by the processes and conditions of mineral transformations. In order to extend and advance his ideas into the deeper interior of the Earth, he was led into high-pressure experimental sciences, and he has remained at the forefront of research in that field for the past 20 years. To further his investigations, he built the first European multi-anvil laboratory at the Bayerisches Geoinstitut, which enabled him to diversify his interests into most aspects of mantle physics and chemistry, such as reaction kinetics, transport properties, phase transformations and element partitioning. In addition, through his conscientious efforts in funding this laboratory as a European User Facility, he helped high-pressure research to blossom and expand in Europe, not only in many aspects of Earth science, but also in materials science, physics and chemistry.



Diego Gatta

The **Max Hey Medal** winner for 2008 is Dr Diego Gatta of the University of Milan. Dr Gatta is well known for his high-pressure studies of natural zeolites. Despite the fact that zeolites are found in low-pressure metamorphic rocks (zeolite facies), the value of high-pressure studies of zeolites is that they allow the recognition of significant correlations between framework topology and physical behaviour, extending earlier work on feldspars and analcime. Three thematic papers by Dr Gatta on the structural behaviour of edingtonite illustrate his skill in making subtle yet significant insights into mineral behaviour. His work on zeolites has had a significant impact on research directions in this field and impinges on industrial applications of zeolite/microporous materials technology.

The medals will be presented at the conference dinner of the Society's 2008 annual meeting, 'Geochemistry of the Earth's Surface 8', to be held in London in August 2008.

CLAY MINERALS GROUP MEETING ALUMINIUM AND SILICON IN SOILS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The meeting is being held to commemorate the life and work of V. C. Farmer who during his career at the Macaulay Institute made major contributions to our understanding of the mineralogy and chemistry of aluminium and silicon in soils, as well as pioneering the use of infrared spectroscopy in the identification, characterization and reactivity of the amorphous or poorly crystalline secondary minerals involved. The latest developments in these issues will be addressed by a number of eminent keynote speakers. More details from www.minersoc.org/pages/groups/cm/cm.html and in forthcoming issues of *Elements*.

SOCIETY BURSARY REPORTS

The Society offers £6000 per annum in student and senior bursaries to be used for field work, travel to conferences, etc. Below are extracts from reports received from three recent awardees. Their full reports are available at the Society's website www.minersoc.org/pages/awards/bursary.html.



Ping Luo

Ping Luo of Nottingham University (UK) attended the 3rd International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology 2007, which was organized by the American Academy of Sciences. This four-day conference was packed with 15 major platform sessions, two poster sessions and four registration exhibitions. Ping's talk on permeable reactive barriers was well received, and she has forged links with colleagues in a number of other institutes as a result of attending the meeting.



Robert Hough

In June 2007, Robert M. Hough (CSIRO) travelled to Europe from Australia for the Frontiers in Mineral Sciences meeting in Cambridge, UK, and the International Applied Geochemistry Symposium in Oviedo, Spain. The bursary contributed towards his flight from Australia and provided assistance for his attendance at both meetings. He gave two oral presentations at each of these meetings and, in addition, two poster presentations at the Frontiers meeting. The talks and posters were based on detailed studies of gold, both primary and secondary. In particular,

he detailed a new occurrence of colloidal, nanoparticulate gold, attracting widespread attention and acclaim at both meetings. While in the UK, Robert also visited London, where he gave an invited talk at the Earth Sciences Department of Imperial College on new developments in gold research in Australia.

Victoria Vry

Victoria Vry (Imperial College, London) used her bursary to attend the SGA (Society for Geology Applied to Mineral Deposits) meeting in Dublin where she presented her poster 'Microanalysis of Ore-Forming Fluids at El Teniente, Chile'. Victoria welcomed the opportunity to meet with many industry representatives present at the meeting.

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Landmark Papers
Metamorphic Petrology

NUMBER

The key benefit in the Landmark series is the commentaries by guest editors. Bernard Evans, in this case, places in context the chosen works and describes how they contributed to the advancement of the science. He weaves a fascinating tale. "Many metamorphic rocks are attractive in appearance, in hand specimen and in thin section under the microscope. Their aesthetic appeal touches senses beyond the merely scientific, a pleasure that most geochemists forego. Added to this is the satisfaction we derive as they reveal each new instance of nature's fidelity to scientific laws. But the aesthetic appeal comes at a cost. Metamorphic petrologists need to be adept in very many things: crystal chemistry, physical chemistry, phase equilibria, microscopy, textural analysis, regional geology, structural geology, geodynamics and geochronology."

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The Mineralogical Society
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ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

At the end of 2007, Ben Harte (President), Neil Fortey (Treasurer), Andy Rankin (Custodian Trustee), and Andrew Kerr and Jim MacDonald (Council members) will complete their terms of office (which vary from two to six years in length). We are hugely indebted to them all for the time and energy they put into the Society. Progress in the many facets of the Society's activities would not be possible without the efforts of these people.

Michael Carpenter (President), Chris Stanley (Treasurer), Adrian Jones (Council), Norman Moles (Council), and Tony Law (Council) will fill the vacancies from the beginning of 2008, though some have already become involved in the workings of the Society.

In September 2007, two new staff members joined the Society. We welcome Martin Hughes (Administrative Assistant, admin@minersoc.org) and David Mole (Production Editor, david@minersoc.org), who join Russell Rajendra (Finance Manager, russell@minersoc.org) and Kevin Murphy (Executive Director, kevin@minersoc.org).



GEOCHEMISTRY OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE 8 (GES8)

Updated information on this meeting is provided elsewhere in this issue of *Elements* (see ad on page 427) and also at the conference website (www.ges8.com) where online registration will be available beginning on 1 January 2008.

MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY
DISTINGUISHED LECTURER PROGRAMME

The 2007/2008 Distinguished Lecturer programme is well underway. Professor David Vaughan of the University of Manchester completed his tour of four UK and Irish universities (Brighton, Cambridge, Liverpool and Galway) in November, where he delivered a lecture entitled 'Minerals, Metals, Molecules and Microbes: Environmental Mineralogy and Sustainability'.

Prof. Jon Blundy will commence his programme early in the New Year with a lecture entitled 'The Subterranean Machinations of Explosive Volcanoes'. His schedule is as follows:

7 January 2008
University College Dublin

4 February 2008
University of East Anglia

13 March 2008
Lancaster University

14 March 2008
Glasgow University

Full details are available at the Society's website:

www.minersoc.org/pages/announce/announce.html