



International Mineralogical Association

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MINERALOGY AND MUSEUMS CONFERENCE

The 6th International Conference on Mineralogy and Museums (M+M6) took place on the Colorado School of Mines campus in Golden, Colorado, September 7–9, 2008. Some 90 persons from 16 countries attended, representing Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Romania, Russia, the UK, and the USA. Two days of technical sessions included 32 oral and 28 poster presentations. Field-excursion participants visited the mining town of Leadville, viewed granite pegmatites in the Pikes Peak batholith near Florissant, and examined the Sloan diamond-bearing kimberlite pipe in the Colorado-Wyoming State Line kimberlite district. Other events included an opening reception at the Colorado School of Mines Geology Museum, a poster session and reception hosted by the Society of Mineral Museum Professionals, and a closing banquet and museum tour sponsored by the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Occurring during the weekend following the conference was the Denver Gem and Mineral Show, one of the world's largest such events; many conference participants chose to stay to attend it and brought exhibits from their institutions.

During the conference, the IMA Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification (CNMNC) and the IMA Commission on Museums held committee meetings. Previous M+M meetings have taken place in Paris (2004), Melbourne (2000), Budapest (1996), Toronto (1992), and London (1988). Possible sites for the next M+M meeting, in 2012, were discussed. They include Dresden (a presentation was made by Renate Schumacher, Bonn, about how a meeting there could include tours of mineral museums throughout southern and northern Germany) and Edinburgh. Decisions about the next M+M meeting will be made at the 2010 IMA meeting in Budapest.

I'll describe some of the highlights from the oral presentations. One recurring theme related to the varied challenges faced by mineral museums and ways in which these challenges are being met. Topics included the difficulties of moving a collection (Paul Carr and Penny

Williamson, Wollongong); sources of potential damage to collections, physical (Jean DeMouthe, California Academy of Sciences) and chemical (Chris Tacker, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences); creative ways to build a constituency to support and finance small museums (Virgil Lueth, New Mexico Tech, and Anton Chakhmouradian, Winnipeg); plans to modernize and revitalize the Royal Museum of Scotland (Vicen Carrio, Edinburgh); and a project to reestablish the Afghan Geological Survey Museum no less (Brian Jackson, Edinburgh). Online curation and databases were discussed by Carl Francis (Harvard) and George Harlow (New York). The uses of historic and modern collections for research and other *raison d'être* of a museum were described by Peter Downs, Perth (the Argyle Diamonds' Pink Diamond Collection); Mark Mauthner, Gemological Institute of America (the Edward J. Gubelin Memorial Gem Database); Lin Sutherland, Sydney (the Barrington ruby project); Lidia Trushnina, Boulder, Colorado (the Natural History Museum in Magadan); and Renato Pagano, Milan (the Camillo Gualteroni Collection). François Farges (Paris) described new studies bearing on the history of the Hope/French Blue diamond.

Field trips and their relation to museums were discussed by Renate Schumacher (building stones in Bonn) and Maria Alferova, Moscow (field trips to Baikal and Transbaikali). Historical aspects of mineral studies and mineral nomenclature were discussed by Lydie Touret, Paris (connections between the development of mineralogy in North America and Europe), and Erzsébet Tóth, Budapest (the historical evolution of celadonite and glauconite). Several papers addressed current issues in mineral nomenclature, and others dealt with novel aspects of unusual mineral occurrences. A presentation I found particularly insightful was that by Igor Pekov (Moscow State University) entitled "Amazing New Minerals: Freak of Nature or the Key for Solution of Nature's Enigmas?" The author pointed out lessons, connections, and insights from the chemistry, structure, and environment of occurrence of a number of newly discovered mineral species.

The titles of all papers given at the conference are available on the M+M6 conference website, www.mines.edu/outreach/cont_ed/ICMM6/.

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M+M6 conference attendees at the Green Center, Colorado School of Mines campus, Golden, Colorado. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GARY BAUGHMAN