



# International Association of Geoanalysts

<http://geoanalyst.org>

## EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER AWARD

This year the IAG granted its 4<sup>th</sup>-annual Early Career Researcher Award for excellence in analytical geochemistry. As in previous years, the 2009 award was based on abstracts submitted to the Goldschmidt Conference, which was held in Davos, Switzerland. Award eligibility is limited to scientists who are currently pursuing a higher degree in a field related to geoanalysis or who have completed their university education within the past five years. The award promotes the careers of young scientists who have either developed innovative analytical methods or provided new strategies to improve data quality as applied to the chemical analysis of geological or environmental samples.

This year a total of 614 abstracts were submitted to the IAG for consideration. A three-member panel made up of association members was then tasked to identify from this large and highly diverse pool the ten entries that most closely reflect the IAG's goals and objectives. This was a daunting challenge, which was made even more difficult by the high quality of many of the submissions. This short list was then forwarded to the IAG's Governing Council, which made the final selection at its March meeting in London.

It is with great pleasure that the IAG announces that **Adrien Mestrot** is the 2009 winner of the IAG Early Career Researcher Award, for his abstract entitled "**Biovolatilisation of arsenic: Validation of a low level, field deployable, chemo-trapping technique.**" Adrien is currently conducting research for his PhD at the Institute of Biological & Environmental Sciences at the University of Aberdeen, under the supervision of Profs. Andrew Meharg and Joerg Feldmann. He has taken up the challenge of developing and characterising a novel approach for the direct



Adrien Mestrot, winner of the IAG's 2009 Early Career Researcher Award

field sampling of volatile arsenic species, which marks a significant advance beyond previously available methods. Adrien's method, based on silver nitrate-impregnated silica gel tubes, provides information beyond total arsenic flux and can actually identify arsine ( $\text{AsH}_3$ ) and a number of organo-arsine compounds, thereby providing further information about environmental cycling. Equally important to the geoanalytical community is the great effort by Adrien to validate the reliability of his new approach. The IAG congratulates Adrien and his colleagues on their research results, and we wish Adrien all the best in his future endeavours in the field of analytical environmental chemistry.

## IAG WEB PRESENCE

Last year Paul Bédard, IAG webmaster, took on the challenge of restructuring our Association's web presence. As a further improvement to our presentation, both the [www.geoanalyst.org](http://www.geoanalyst.org) and the [www.iageo.com](http://www.iageo.com) websites have now taken on a new look, prepared by a professional web designer. All researchers interested in analytical geochemistry are warmly invited to check out our new look.



## LA-ICP-MS U-(TH)-PB GEOCHRONOLOGY

As announced in the June edition of *Elements*, the International Association of Geoanalysts has established the Working Group on LA-ICP-MS U-(Th)-Pb Geochronology as a special interest group within the Association. The core activity of this new group will be defining and promoting current best practice in acquiring, processing and interpreting laser ablation ICP-MS U-(Th)-Pb geochronology data. A key component of this will involve developing guidelines to help both new and established users acquire and process laboratory data in a manner commensurate with a robust and reliable geological interpretation. The working group will also function as a contact point for analysts interested in salient issues related to the acquisition, handling and interpretation of ICP-MS U-(Th)-Pb data. Although initially focussing on the LA community, it will work closely with the SIMS and TIMS user communities to seek common solutions to generic problems. When issues are found to cross-cut analytical approaches, we will strive to identify common solutions, which will be communicated across analytical disciplines.

Examples of specific activities of the working group will be the investigation of the true temporal resolution of LA-ICP-MS U-(Th)-Pb geochronology, the assessment of various data reduction packages, the promotion of regular inter-laboratory proficiency tests, the definition and promotion of acceptable standards for the publication of LA-ICP-MS U-(Th)-Pb data, cross-discipline (ICP-MS/SIMS/TIMS) collaboration on common problems, the convening of workshops to highlight progress on key issues and, not least, the hosting of short courses to disseminate best practice within the user community.

We intend to establish time-limited discussion forums via the IAG website, which will solicit active contributions influencing the formulation of guidelines on key issues. Registration of e-mail addresses and interest in the activities of the working group will also be possible, along with information about current priorities and a calendar of upcoming events.

Contributions to the group are most welcome from all researchers interested in U-Th-Pb dating. Further information can be obtained from members of the management committee. Interest in the activities of the group should, in the first instance, be registered with Matt Horstwood ([msah@nigl.nerc.ac.uk](mailto:msah@nigl.nerc.ac.uk)).

### WG MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

- Matt Horstwood (NERC Isotope Geosciences Laboratory, British Geological Survey)
- Jan Košler (University of Bergen)
- Simon Jackson (Geological Survey of Canada, Ottawa)
- Norman Pearson (Macquarie University, Sydney)
- Paul Sylvester (Memorial University, Newfoundland)

### COMMUNITY PARTNER REPRESENTATIVES:

- Dan Condon (TIMS – NERC Isotope Geosciences Laboratory, British Geological Survey)
- Michael Wiedenbeck (SIMS – Helmholtz Centre Potsdam)

