



Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland

www.minersoc.org

LONDON LORE

Richard Patrick, of the University of Manchester, has taken over the presidential hot-seat from Michael Carpenter. Michael made an outstanding contribution to the Society over the two years of his presidency, devoting a lot of time to all aspects of the operation of the Society and in particular to how we run our conferences. Many thanks, Michael. Richard, who has served a number of terms on Council, including a period as chairman of the Applied Mineralogy Group, is looking forward to his term of office. See the next issue of *Elements* for his 'vision' of where the Society will be going in the next couple of years.

The running of *Elements* and its finances are discussed on a regular basis by its team of principal editors and by the Executive Committee. Each page of *Elements* comes at a considerable cost, and so the space in the society pages must be used carefully. Some readers would rather not see reports of events which have already taken place. Others believe that the tables of contents from our journals shouldn't be included. These matters are, of course, subjective. It is Mineralogical Society policy to publish brief reports of its meetings and conferences in *Elements*, and in more detail on the Society website (www.minersoc.org). Publication in *Elements* serves two needs: (1) it provides an historical record of Society activities, and (2) it gives publicity to the online reports (which often include audio recordings and copies of presentations). Mineralogical Society pages will continue to include brief reports where possible. One of the reasons for societies to join the *Elements* family is the opportunity to advertise their 'wares' to a wider audience. Listing a table of contents for those who do not normally see *Mineralogical Magazine*, for example, is an important part of what *Elements* offers to the Mineralogical Society.

NATURE'S TREASURES II – 'THE WONDER OF MINERALS AND GEMS'

The second in the series of Nature's Treasures meetings took place in London in mid-December 2009. Over a hundred people gathered in the museum to hear eight high-quality talks from invited speakers. The meetings don't have themes per se, but speakers are encouraged to make presentations with significant visual impact and to speak at a level which can be accessed by all members of the audience. The NTII audience included youngsters in their early teens, several others who have used their retirements to advance their interests in mineralogy/gemmology and all sorts in between, including a healthy representation from amongst the professional ranks.

The opening talk on diamonds, by Alan Collins, was an excellent introduction to the subject and included a description of the properties of diamond which make it precious and attractive. Martin Feely spoke about a course he runs in NUI-Galway (Ireland). The course covers the cross-over area between mineralogy and gemmology, and indeed geology. Martin's happy hunting ground is the rugged west of Ireland. Chris Carlon spoke about the offshore mining activities of Anglo-American and presented stunning statistics about the amount of material now retrieved from the seafloor, even at a distance of 35 km from shore. Norman Moles spoke about his personal history – collecting minerals from basalt quarries in Northern Ireland and his job as editor of the journal of the Russell Society – as well as about the activities of that society.

During the lunch break, delegates had the opportunity to mingle, visit the various mineral displays and enjoy the excellent food. The afternoon session began with a talk by Ruth Siddall, who described how minerals are and have been used in pigments for thousands of years. She and her colleagues have examined how some of the colours were

made, the careful degree of grinding required, etc. She was also kind enough to display images of some of the beautiful paintings she has examined. John Faithfull of the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow gave a most entertaining talk about the 250-year history of that museum's mineral collection. He ended with the observation that, if you want your collection to mean anything to anybody in 200 years time, you must stick label numbers on your specimens and you need to make a catalogue now, giving as much information (name, location, cost, purchase details) as possible.

Jolyon Ralph, creator of the mindat.org website project, gave a fascinating account of the history of the mineral database, now the most used mineralogical website in the world. He revealed many astounding statistics, not least of which was that the database includes a quarter of a million images and that during the month of November 2009, it was visited almost half a million times. Jolyon also noted, with tongue firmly in cheek, that [mindat](http://mindat.org) is the 63,686th most popular website in the world (not bad out of a total of 156 million!).



Night workers leaving a lapis mine at Sar-e-Sang, northern Afghanistan. IMAGE COURTESY OF G. CLUTTERBUCK

and emeralds). Though his talk was about the business of gem purchasing, Guy also spoke movingly about the human side of dealing with people who extract/collect the precious stones under what are often very extreme conditions (of terrain, weather and politics).

The raison d'être of these meetings is to bring together people from three distinct groups (the Russell Society, Gem-A and the MinSoc). By doing so, each group is stepping out of its 'comfort zone' somewhat, thereby appealing to new people. The power of the combined Societies, though, means that we can spread the publicity about the meeting to a wide audience, and we attracted a healthy number of delegates (115) to the December event. Go to www.minersoc.org/pages/meetings/nature2/nature2-archive.html to read a full report and to view and hear the presentations.

Outreach to other groups is a common aspect of much of what we do in the Society. Our efforts include conferences, one-day special interest group meetings, publications, and co-operative ventures such as GeoScienceWorld and *Elements*.



"An exceedingly rare Cristal mixed with fine fibrous Asbestos which is grown into the crystal." So reads the original label. This sample sold in 1777 for £15 and 15 shillings. At around the same time, William Hunter also bought a Rembrandt oil painting for a mere £12 12 shillings." Read more on the painting at <http://tinyurl.com/oba5a4>.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR SOCIETY MEDALS

The nominations deadline for Society medals is 30 April 2010. Ask any of the 1000 or so members of the Society to name a mineral scientist they admire and each one will be able to do reel off a half dozen names. In short, there are hundreds of deserving candidates out there. Nomination is easy. You need a copy of the nominee's CV, a letter of nomination, and a couple of letters of support. Please nominate somebody today – don't leave it to somebody else!



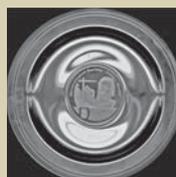
Mineralogical Society Schlumberger Medal

To recognize scientific excellence in mineralogy and its applications, mineralogy being broadly defined and reflecting the diverse and worldwide interests and membership of the Society with its various specialist groups. Evidence of such excellence should be in the form of published work by a currently active scientist. Nominations on behalf of both younger scientists and well-established workers would be welcomed. Nominees do not have to be members of the Mineralogical Society.



Max Hey Medal

To recognize existing and ongoing research of excellence carried out by young workers, within the fields of either mineralogy, crystallography, petrology or geochemistry. Evidence of excellence should be in the form of work published in highly regarded, international scientific journals. Nominated candidates do not need to be members of the Mineralogical Society. On the closing date for nominations, candidates must normally be under 35 years of age, except where there has been a career break, detailed in the nomination, in which case the committee chair may agree to accept nominations from older candidates.



Collins Medal

The Collins Medal is awarded annually to a scientist who, during a long and active career, has made an outstanding contribution to pure or applied aspects of the mineral sciences and associated studies. Publications, teaching, outreach and other activities leading to the promotion of the mineral sciences, in the broadest sense, will be taken into account in making the award. Nominees do not have to be members of the Mineralogical Society nor nationals of Great Britain and Ireland.

MEETINGS, COURSES AND FIELD EXCURSIONS – ANNOUNCEMENTS



<http://gfacmg2010.obs.ujf-grenoble.fr/>

2 PROCESS MINERALOGY OF METALLIFEROUS ORES: AN INTRODUCTION FOR GEOLOGISTS

A workshop hosted by Camborne School of Mines, University of Exeter, United Kingdom, and supported by the Applied Mineralogy Group.

22–25 June 2010. See <http://tinyurl.com/yekprkn> for details. Interested delegates may wish to combine the workshop with the field trip described below.

3 MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY FIELD EXCURSION TO CORNWALL, 28 JUNE–3 JULY 2010

The excursion will provide an introduction to the wide range of geology found in Cornwall, including the tectonics of the Devonian metasediments, the granites, the Lizard Ophiolite and the classic Sn, W, Cu and kaolin mineralisation. More information is available at www.minersoc.org/pages/meetings/cornwall-fieldtrip/cornwall-field.html. Registration is now open.

MINERALOGICAL MAGAZINE



We are very pleased to announce that *Mineralogical Magazine* is back on its publication schedule. Content from the December issue went online in December. Anyone involved in publishing a journal will know how easy it is to lose a month from the schedule, but how difficult it is to make it up. Many thanks go to Mark Welch, the team of Associate Editors and Pete Hill (Production Editor) for working so hard to catch up.

Journal Archive

You will have noticed that the Society journal archive has been temporarily disabled. By the time this article reaches you, we hope it will be back up and running. The problem was caused by a web-space problem and the need to relocate the entire site to a new host. This has now been done, following a careful review of the options and costs. It is gratifying to see how many people use the archive. During the down period we received up to a dozen messages per day from people seeking copies of material from the archive, which is freely available to all.

Some Papers from the December 2009 Issue

How low can you go? – Extending downwards the limits of plastic deformation in pyrite

C.D. Barrie, A.P. Boyle and M. Salter

Perovskite from the Dutoitspan kimberlite, Kimberley, South Africa: implications for magmatic processes

R.C. Ogilvie-Harris, M. Field, R.S.J. Sparks and M.J. Walter

Complex relationships among coexisting pyroxenes: the Palaeogene Eskdalemuir dyke, Scotland

B. Bagiński, P. Dzierzanowski, R. Macdonald and B.G.J. Upton

Megacrysts and salic xenoliths in Scottish alkali basalts: derivatives of deep crustal intrusions and small-melt fractions from the upper mantle

B.G.J. Upton, A.A. Finch and E. Slaby

Kevin Murphy, Executive Director