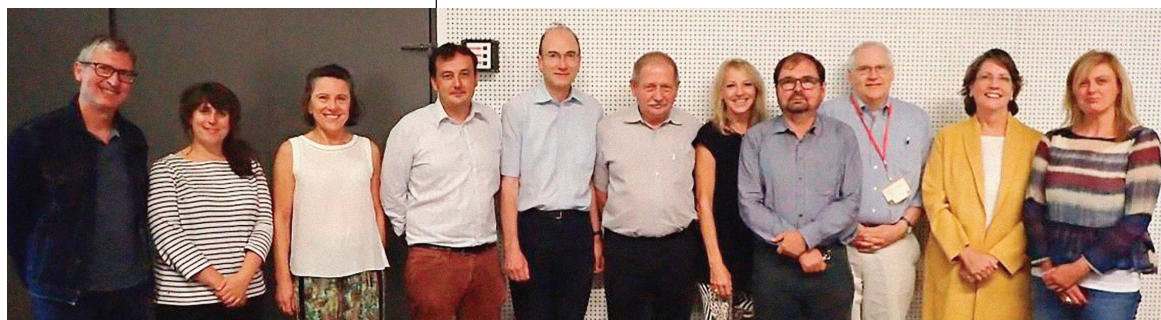




Daniel Frost

On 13 August 2017, the *Elements* Executive Committee met at the Goldschmidt conference in Paris. Representatives from 11 of the 17 societies that participate in *Elements* were able to attend the meeting and discuss the current state and the future of the magazine. There was a full agenda and plenty of discussion, which occupied the entire afternoon but fortunately ended in time for the Goldschmidt ice breaker. The Executive Committee is the main channel through which the member societies are represented in the management of *Elements*, and the committee serves to provide not only financial oversight but also guidance over new appointments and new initiatives.

Taking over as the committee chair from Barb Dutrow was, in many ways, quite daunting because she has done such a remarkable job in leading the committee and preserving the extensive corporate knowledge that has developed at *Elements* over the years. Barb has also been pivotal in providing continuity during the period over which Jodi Rosso took over as Executive Editor upon the retirement of Pierrette Tremblay. I am very grateful to Barb for her hard work, and I very much appreciate that she is still the committee representative for MSA and is involved in the Past Principal Editors advisory council, which seeks to hold on to the vital experience and collective wisdom of the previous *Elements* editors. It is actually quite fascinating to see inside the mechanics of publishing and to realize the costs and challenges that are faced. Of course, it is always nice to be involved in an enterprise that is doing well, and a clear outcome from the meeting is that *Elements* is in a healthy financial position. The *Elements* business model is functioning admirably and continues to be supported by sound advertising revenue, even at a time when some advertisers are switching away from print media. Jodi is doing an exceptional job of maintaining the quality of the finished product, following in the outstanding tradition forged by Pierrette Tremblay. The committee was impressed, for example, by the new website design that Jodi has developed and look forward to the development of a dynamic edition of *Elements* that will provide a newsstand quality version for mobile devices.



In the morning before the Executive Committee meeting I also sat in on the Principal Editors meeting where they selected proposals for *Elements* issues to be published in 2019. A key aspect in the success of *Elements* comes from the dedication of the Principal and Guest Editors in developing innovative and excellent topics for the bi-monthly issues. The Principal Editors were very thorough in their appraisal of the proposals, examining in particular whether they would find a suitably broad audience, whether there were potential gaps in the proposed articles, and if there was sufficient diversity in the proposed authorship. Here, the importance of the contrasting backgrounds of the editors became increasingly obvious as they switched from being experts on some proposals to being nonspecialists on others in order to properly critique the breadth and accessibility of the proposed topics. What emerged was an exciting and wide-ranging list of accepted proposals, which through the admirable efforts of the guest authors will no doubt serve to inform and inspire.

Society representatives at the Paris Goldschmidt *Elements* Executive Committee meeting. **From left to right:** Juan Jimenez-Millan (SEM), Hannah Hughes (MinSoc), Jacinta Enzweiler (IAG), Dan Frost (EAG, EC chair), Christian Chopin (SFMC), Marek Michalik (MS Poland), Barb Dutrow (MSA), Klaus Mezger (DMG), W. Crawford Elliott (CMS), M. Annie O'Donnell (GS), Costanza Bonadiman (SIMP).

In a time when it seems there has never been more apparent competition for our attention, *Elements* provides what many of the distractions of the internet ultimately lack: rewardingly solid and peer reviewed content in a readable hard copy format that is delivered into our hands, often in a timely fashion before a long flight or a faculty meeting. But in addition to the fascinating content that supports our research and teaching, a major aspect of *Elements* is that it keeps us in contact with our societies and our wider community, something which has never ceased to remain important. Would *Elements* still be as effective at doing this if it was only in digital form? Would you be reading this if this

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issue arrived only as a link in an email to a website for which you might not immediately remember the password? It is a divisive issue but, at least for the time being, the members of the Executive Committee were firmly of the opinion that *Elements* should continue for the foreseeable future as a printed magazine that will not end up competing for your attention against e-mails and other forms of messaging.

After the Executive Committee meeting, the members took away a number of action items to discuss with their societies and to subsequently vote upon. One of these items, which was later passed unanimously, was that online job advertisements hosted on the *Elements* website would now be free of charge. The website is a good place to advertise your available positions because it is now seeing a strong upturn in traffic. But the other main item that was subsequently passed by the societies was that, due to its continued firm financial footing, *Elements* is now in a position to reduce its membership cost. Currently, your society pays \$15 per year for you to receive *Elements*; but from 2018, this will be reduced to \$14. Which publication do you remember ever becoming less expensive, without this being an obvious strategy to force other publications out of the market? This means that each issue of *Elements* will cost about €2, which is less than the cup of coffee from my university subsidized cafeteria. As my colleague on the Executive Committee, Tom Bullen (IAGC), likes to point out – this is the best value for money in the business.

Daniel J. Frost

Elements Executive Committee Chair

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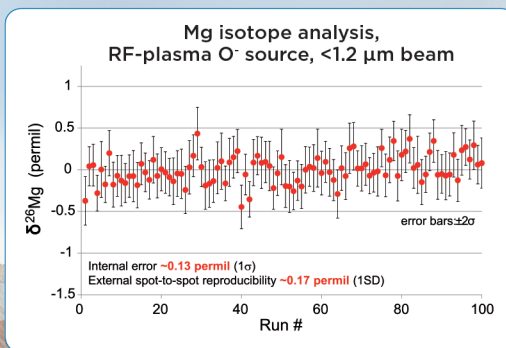


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