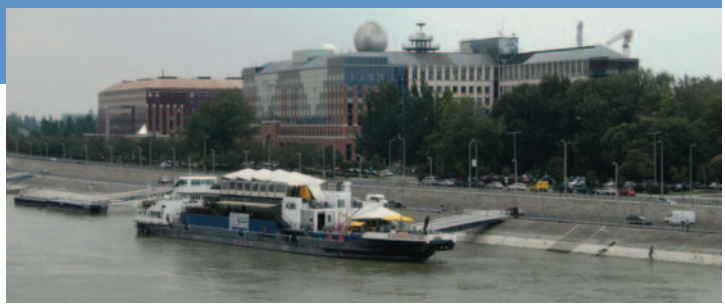
IMA 2010 – BUDAPEST



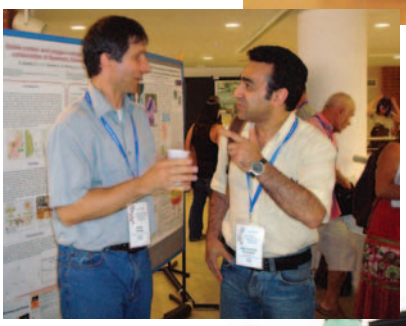
The conference buildings on the campus of Eötvös Loránd University

The 20th General Meeting of the International Mineralogical Association took place between 21 and 27 August in Budapest, Hungary. It was a great success, and I and everyone I spoke to seem to have thoroughly enjoyed themselves, not least because of the high standard of many of the presentations. The IMA General Meetings take place in different, interesting cities every four years, and the organizers always make a genuine effort to be truly international. These meetings have a feel that is different, more characterful, than many of the other big meetings I've attended. IMA 2010 was the biggest mineralogical meeting ever, with about 1700 participants from 74 countries. The organization was headed by Tamás Weiszburg from Hungary (Chairman of the International Organizing Committee), Ekkehart Tillmanns from Austria (General Chairman and Chairman of the Scientific Programme Committee) and Dana Pop from Romania (Secretary General). They orchestrated a consortium representing the mineralogical or geological societies of Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. That in itself was a considerable feat of organization, and it's good to see that mineralogy is thriving in countries that until not long ago had the misfortune to be behind the Iron Curtain.

The meeting took place in two huge, comfortable, modern buildings of the Eötvös Loránd University, on the west bank of the Danube (Duna in Hungarian). They were close together and it was easy to commute between them. The meeting was very efficiently run and had a number of special touches that made it memorable. Name badges to hang round your neck that were double-sided were a touch of genius. There was a small army of students, from many countries, in yellow 'Can I help you?' T-shirts, and the poster sessions were accompanied, not only by beer, but by live musicians. A young man played Bach and (I think) Bartok on the piano beautifully, and there was a wonderful soprano. An IMA 2010 Conference Choir performed at the ceremonies, and participants were invited to join them. On each day a very professionally produced full-colour news-sheet was handed out, commenting on the events of the previous day and highlighting the day's forthcoming events. There were all manner of sporting events to attend and a big programme of popular field trips.

High spots of the scientific parts of the meeting were the two daily plenary lectures, all of which were well attended. Six were 'Elements 5' talks, to mark this magazine's fifth year of publication. Five of these were given by young(ish) guest editors or contributors to successful issues, the sixth by Rod Ewing, the founding father and prime mover of *Elements*. A contingent of distinguished American mineralogists greeted his ascent to the rostrum with an outburst of whistles and whoops, which added to the festive feel. A second series of IMA plenaries, by household names in the world of mineralogy, included the presentation of the 2009 IMA Medal to Frank Hawthorne and the EMU Research Excellence Medal to Max Wilke. Olgeir Sigmarsson gave a beautifully illustrated account of the 2010 Eyjafjallajökull eruption, which caused much disruption in European airspace but obligingly went back to sleep in time for IMA.

Maryse Ohnenstetter relaxes at an IMA gala dinner with husband Daniel at the end of her term of office as IMA Secretary



Attila Demeny and Amir Mortezo in discussion during a poster session

Austro-Hungarian grandeur

The mighty Duna is impressive, with an endless succession of immense barges transporting coal and goods across Europe. You can enter the Rhine from the North Sea at Rotterdam, and thanks to some relatively short connecting canals, emerge from the Danube on the Black Sea at Sulina, 3500 km away. I'm sorry to have to report, however, that the Danube at Budapest is not blue! I enjoyed a week of good meals with good friends in very pleasant restaurants, and as I walked unsteadily back to my hotel late at night it was good to see young people on the streets with no sense of threat or hostility. To a Briton, services seemed cheap and efficient, and my hotel, where a pianist played Mozart on a white grand piano in the lobby, was modern and comfortable. For me, a final meal with the officers of the IMA, in the grand Hotel Gellért, was to be transported back to the elegance and style of the Austro-Hungarian empire, a memorable end to the meeting.

As a one-time president of IMA, I would like to end by thanking all the organizers, and their yellow-shirted helpers, for their immense amount of hard work and for providing us with such an imaginative, well-run meeting. As a past *Elements* editor, I'd like to thank them also for giving our plenary lecture series such prominence. As I write, the delicate swallows and house martins in my garden are swooping about, preparing to make their great autumn journey to South Africa. In 2014 we can make the same journey, in our clumsy jets, to the next IMA meeting. If I'm spared, I'll be there!

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11th INTERNATIONAL PLATINUM SYMPOSIUM

Every 4 years or so since 1970, academic researchers, government geologists, and industry geologists have gathered to discuss current research on the geology, mineralogy, geochemistry, and origin of platinum group element (PGE) and nickel–copper–(PGE) deposits. Past meetings have been held in Melbourne and Perth (Australia), Denver and Billings (USA), Pretoria and Rustenberg (South Africa), Toronto (Canada), Espoo and Oulu (Finland), and Moscow (Russia).

The 11th International Platinum Symposium (IPS) was held in June 2010 on the Laurentian University campus in Sudbury, Ontario (Canada) and was attended by 295 participants (244 professionals and 51 students) from 26 countries. It was hosted by the Mineral Exploration Research Centre and Department of Earth Sciences at Laurentian University (LU) and by the Ontario Geological Survey (OGS).

Three premeeting workshops were held: PGE in Mantle Melts, organized by Steve Barnes (CSIRO) and Marco Fiorentini (U Western Australia); PGE–Chromite Connection, organized by Jim Mungall (U Toronto); and Layered Intrusions, organized by Jim Miller (U Minnesota Duluth) and James Scoates (U British Columbia).

The three and a half days of technical sessions included 86 morning and afternoon oral presentations and 57 late-afternoon poster presentations. They were arranged according to the following themes: PGE Deposits (organized by Dave Peck, Consultant, and Gordon Chunnett, U Witwatersrand); Ni–Cu–(PGE) Deposits (Michael Lesher, LU, and Peter Lightfoot, Vale); PGE Geochemistry (Sarah-Jane Barnes, UQAC, and James Brenan, U Toronto); and PGE Mineralogy and Beneficiation (Michelle Huminicki, Brandon U, and Paul Sylvester, Memorial U). The meeting was opened by Christine Kaszycki (Ontario Assistant Deputy Minister of Mines and Minerals), and keynote speakers included Tony Naldrett (U Toronto/U Witwatersrand), Jean-Pierre Lorand (CNRS-Paris), Ed Ripley (Indiana U), and Louis Cabri (Consultant). Ray Goldie (Salman Partners) gave an evening public lecture. The meeting was dedicated in honour of Reid Keays, who coorganized the first IPS in Melbourne and who has been a world leader in PGE research.

Nine pre- and post-meeting field trips, organized by Michael Easton (Ontario Geological Survey) and Dave King (Quadra-FNX), were held: Levack Mine and North Range of the Sudbury Intrusive Complex (SIC), led by Steve Dunlop, Steven Gregory, and Renée Parry (Quadra-FNX) and Walter Peredery (Consultant); McCreedy West Mine and North Range SIC, led by Roger Lichty, Mynyr Hoxha, and Thomas Maxwell (Quadra-FNX) and Walter Peredery (Consultant); Podolsky Mine and Whistle Offset, led by Judd Fee and Chelsey Protulipac (Quadra-FNX); Sudbury Footwall Deposits, planned by Jake Hanley (St Mary's) and led by Mike Sweeny (Xstrata) and Attila Péntak (Wallbridge); Sudbury Contact and Offset Deposits, led by Paul Golightly (Consultant) and Ed Pattison (Consultant); Abitibi Komatiites and Ni–Cu–(PGE) Mineralization, led by Michel Houlé (Geological Survey of Canada), Sonia Préfontaine (OGS), and Brian Atkinson (OGS); Lake Superior Ni–Cu–(PGE) and PGE–(Cu)–(Ni), led by Jim Miller (U Minnesota Duluth) and Mark Smyk (OGS); and River Valley PGE–Cu–Ni, led by Mike Easton (OGS), Richard James (LU), and Scott Jobin-Bevans (Caracle Creek).

Laboratory tours were also given: Ontario Geoscience Laboratories (OGL), led by Ed Debicki and Marcus Burnam (OGL); MIRARCo 3D Virtual Reality Theatre, led by Bob Anderson and Pavel Vasak (MIRARCo); and the LA-ICP-MS Geochemical Fingerprinting Laboratory, led by Balz Kamber and Thomas Ulrich (LU); and the Xstrata Process Support facility, led by Lori Kormos.

Readers interested in receiving information about future PGE and Ni–Cu–(PGE) meetings should contact Sarah-Jane Barnes (sarah-jane_barnes@uqac.ca), who manages the MAGSUL_L list server.

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AquaTRAIN FINAL CONFERENCE

The AquaTRAIN (www.aquatrain.eu) Marie Curie Research Training Network's Final Conference was held at the BRGM (www.brgm.fr), Orléans, France, July 5–10, 2010. This international conference on the theme "Geogenic Chemicals in Groundwaters and Soils" was attended by around 80 delegates, including nearly 50 international visitors from Bangladesh, Canada, Cambodia, India, Japan, New Zealand, and the USA, as well as from several European Union states.

The AquaTRAIN project, funded by the European Union, focuses on geogenic chemicals. These elements are naturally found in groundwaters and soils. Despite their "natural" origin, the concentrations of these geogenic chemicals, notably arsenic, selenium, fluoride, and manganese, can be high enough to cause significant environmental and health risks. For example, in many parts of circum-Himalayan Asia, over one hundred million people have been chronically exposed to arsenic-bearing groundwater, used extensively for drinking, irrigation, and cooking, with devastating health consequences. In Europe, exposures are generally lower but there are still significant concerns. It is important, therefore, to understand the occurrence, and the controls on the occurrence, of geogenic chemicals and to explore remediation options and the implications for policymakers and regulators. These key aspects fall within four major work areas within the AquaTRAIN Marie Curie Research Training Network as well as other groups in Europe and elsewhere.

The objectives of this international conference, incorporating the final AquaTRAIN workshop, were:

1 To present state-of-the-art developments in these 4 aspects of geogenic chemicals in groundwaters and soils: speciation, occurrence, remediation and implications for policy

2 To enable exchange of ideas between European- and non-European-based researchers, for example, to see how remediation, mapping, microbiological and speciation methods developed in Europe can potentially be applied to other areas, and to explore how studies of highly impacted aquifers in Asia can inform studies in Europe

3 To identify key research questions and objectives and explore potential for collaborative research to address these objectives.

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