

Minutes of the IMA-CM meeting September 1st 2014

IMA 2014 Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa

Attendees:

Frederico Pezzotta (Chair), *Italy*

Mike Rumsey (Stand-in Secretary), *UK*

Nicolas Meisser, (CTMS project leader) *Switzerland*

Dermot Henry, *Australia*

Yasuyuki Banno, *Japan*

Birgit Kreher-Hartmann

Joel Grice (CNMNC & IMA Council representative, present for some of the meeting)

Sam Yung (*delegate for chinese M&M8 proposal*)

Mr. Xiao (*delegate for chinese M&M8 proposal, Changsha representative*)

Hiroshi Miyajima, (*delegate for Japanese M&M8 proposal*)

Agenda:

No formal agenda was circulated prior to the meeting, the main business to be discussed were the presentations from the two potential host countries for the next M&M8 conference. Other matters arising were: Attendance at meetings, Type catalogue, Website and Future projects.

Note (MR): Thanks to the IMA conference organisers for providing us a small room and time slot in order to have the meeting, especially one that did not clash with other presentations. However it was unfortunate that the conference was attended by only a few international delegates from Museums and the number of voting members at the meeting was very small. As a consequence no decisions could be made through any voting or majority.

M&M8 meeting

FP: On noting the low attendance and realising the importance and effort that the two delegations from the proposed host countries had gone to in coming to IMA to present to committee members their vision for M&M8, It was proposed that the delegates return during the session for museum presentations and give their presentations at this time, so that a larger audience as available and any messages between colleagues could be passed onto to the relevant CM member for voting.

(MR :This was agreed, and the presentations were shown back to back after the morning session of the museum presentations on Friday, to a larger audience - about 30 people)

At this time the delegates presenting were invited to leave the meeting, leaving only CM members attending

DH: Noted that the decision process was already well behind schedule, having lost 2 years since M&M7 in Dresden and suggested voting should be done as quickly as possible.

ALL: Agreed with the above and a time scale for collating the votes before the end of September was suggested.

FP: Acknowledged that this was not ideal, but the circumstances were abnormal considering that the committee has recently changed Chairperson and in this interim period the Chinese proposal had been first suggested but not formally made available until quite recently (Tucson - Feb 2014).

ALL: It was suggested that future proposals to host M&M should be presented at the current M&M, and voting performed soon afterwards. Thereby the successful bid could have nearly the full 4 years to prepare for the conference.

- FP:** Gave his opinions on both proposals and gave some background to the Chinese bid which had come up through the desire to integrate the meeting with the Changsha mineral show and increase international and particularly institutional involvement within the Changsha show.
- FP:** Further suggested to the Chinese delegates at a previous meeting with them that perhaps Changsha could act as a forum for an Asian informal meeting of museum curators, much like the meetings in Munich and Tucson, that facilitate SMMP and European curator meetings. The Chinese delegates indicated that they felt they would be able to add at least 50 new active Chinese Museum professionals to SMMP or through a separate Asian group.
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Meeting Attendance

- FP:** Indicated that it was important that prior to each meeting an agenda and a list of who is attending is made available so that if there are issues arising that need discussion, but members can't attend in person - they can be brought up prior to the meeting by E-mail for discussion. Having approximate numbers will also help plan meetings better.
- ALL:** Agreed that this was imperative.
- MR:** Suggested that we should encourage getting members unable to visit and travel to international conferences and IMA events where IMA-CM meetings are being held to communicate museum issues to colleagues or other nationals who are attending and willing to come to the CM meeting and bring these points up for discussion if the elected member is not available.
- FP:** Indicated that this was a good idea and raised concerns that the lack of attendance had been seen as inactivity and was worried that the commission on museums might be changed to a working group by the IMA.
- JG:** (*Who sits on IMA council*), Indicated that this was not the case, the CM was considered very important by council alongside the likes of the CNMNC - and it is hoped that with new, more active

members it can tackle some large issues such as the systematisation of mineral names in conjunction with numbering systems - eg. Strunz/Dana as well as the type material catalogue.

Website

- FP:** Felt that the IMA website should host the IMA-CM webpages, and not the SMMP - It was also noted that there is as a consequence not a clear distinction between the two groups IMA-CM and SMMP. *(Action: FP, to investigate and discuss options with SMMP webmaster Tony Kampf)*
- FP:** Informed members that although some data has been recently updated on the website there is still some old or out of date information present and more needs to be done, there was a call for members to check the roster details and propose new members where members are missing. *(Action: All, to update details and contribute)*
- DH:** Suggested the website should also be the medium for distributing upcoming meeting agendas, distributing information, attendees and substitute attendees for future meetings.
- ALL:** Agreed that an active and useful website and E-mails via an e-mail list when appropriate should continue to be developed. *(Action: All, Contribute to development when/where appropriate)*
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Projects - 1. Type Specimens

- FP:** Indicated that this is the most important task of the group. Potential for a working group or workshops at future meeting to help populate data and educate about importance of types.
- NM:** Was hoping for involvement of the CNMNC, as by default all new minerals are requested to provide where type specimens are being deposited, therefore - database could populate automatically in the future if good communication and a process was set-up alongside the CMNMC. *(Action?: NM, to discuss with CNMNC members)*

- FP:** A suggestion to have a mixed CM and CMNMC meeting was discussed, in order to create this process and to discuss museum perspectives in regard to type specimens - particularly the propagation in recent times of 'types' in the hands of private collectors. (*Action: FP, to investigate joint meeting*)
- ALL:** It was felt that the CM should be able with the support of the CNMNC to draw up strong codes of practice with regards to 'types' and could enforce all new mineral types have to go to museums, if they are not in a museum, they are not a type.
- FP:** Suggested national representatives on the CM and CNMNC should be trying their best to discourage this practise - and should it be happening to report it at future meetings for discussion.
- MR:** Indicated that it was part of the collecting community to consider many 'types' of type, including 'structural types' - which should also be kept in museums rather than in personal collections.
- NM:** Suggested mindat.org could act as a better web-portal for the recording of type specimens.
- FP:** Was concerned, in view of the enormous quantity of information countinuously published, about the quality-control of information on mindat.org.
- MR:** Suggested a compromise that mindat.org could host a link on each page to an IMA-CM based definitive type specimen list. (*Action: MR, to discuss with Mindat founder Jolyon Ralph*)
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Projects - 2. Museum details

- FP & MR:** Suggested that website should be a portal to all national museum information relating to minerals. National representatives could be responsible for collating and uploading short narratives on all national museums with significant mineral collections to the IMA-CM website - this would also include links to host institutional web pages and details of main curatorial contact.
- FP:** Wondered if some of this could be gained from SMMP data

NM: Indicated that most of those links were dead, so it would be better to start from scratch.

DH: indicated the Commissions book, published some time ago now could be used as a starting point.

(Action: FP, To start organising a working group to obtain this data and facilitate through getting a volunteer to act as webmaster for the IMA-CM web pages)

Projects - 3. Specimen preparation

FP: Told the members present how the preparation of mineral specimens has now become a regular reality of curating and collecting minerals that all mineralogists, scientific and aesthetic, private and institutional need to be more aware of.

ALL: Agreed that this was an important area that regardless of personal opinion was now a regular feature of mineral collecting.

FP: The Milan museum is developing its own 'high-end' preparatory lab for mineral specimens and FP is collating all publications on the subject that he can find along with details and procedures passed onto him informally - He believes this could be the basis of a book, or at least guidelines for best practise on the subject which the IMA-CM can promote to all curators and museum staff.

FP: Would also like to develop the first Mineral Preparation conference as a project organised by the IMA-CM and invited members to discuss this in an open manner with him, it was still at this stage just an idea.

MR: Felt that this was an interesting and good idea, but wanted to see both the scientific as well as the aesthetic features of preparation covered. Perhaps even a debate regarding the positives and negatives of mineral preparation. (loss of scientific information vs aesthetics)

ALL: Agreed that there was not enough transparency on the subject as it stands within the mineral dealer community and that a good first step would be to establish a nomenclatural understanding of

the different terms used - eg, Reconstructed, repaired... etc.. and the basic methods applied.

ALL: Particular worry about undisclosed treatments - and how these needed to stop, perhaps the IMA-CM can take a strong role in promoting that this is bad practise within the dealer/collector community.

FP: Indicated that a conference would be a good opportunity to make these points and stress the importance of documenting all treatments and educating other museums attending to be aware of these processes and the processes available.

MR: Suggested controversial debating topics could be interesting, when and when not to 'develop' or trim a specimen.

FP: Commented that mineral preparation should be considered a new area of science, yet it was being almost completely undocumented at the present and performed by non-scientists. He felt, that consequently not only was there a need to record and discuss this practise but also the opportunity for future funding within museums to do so, due to the commercial angle that mineral preparation has.

MR: Commented that this is much the same as the gemmological environment, with large amounts of money put into understanding and developing synthetics, treatments and simulants. Perhaps looking at some of the gemmological approaches to a conference relating to treatments might be a good model for developing a mineralogical equivalent conference.

FP: Using his experience in Milan, if a specimen has had money spent on it, it is more likely to be treated well within the museum environment and is less likely to disappear or be poorly handled within the collection. FP believes not only is this a good way to make specimens in museums more like those at the high end of the dealer market, it is also a way to ensure their preservation within a museum as they are more readily recognised as an asset and promoted through popular/collector literature.

- DH:** Suggested that maybe a mineral preparation conference could be a whole session or day at the next M&M
- FP:** Indicated that he felt it could attract a wider audience, including gemmologists, dealers, collectors and those with commercial interests and thought it could be an independent IMA-CM organised conference.
- BKH:** Was unsure about mixing these groups of individuals - mixing commercial individuals, private collectors and scientists each often with very opposing views on this subject might be problematic, although it would give a good debate.
- FP:** Noted that most collectors would have a lot, if not as much as museums to learn on this subject as its almost completely missing in readily available formats - for instance there is nothing on mindat with regards to how to prepare certain species, what acids to use, which ones to avoid etc - which minerals are very brittle...
- MR:** Indicated he personally liked the idea of different groups each with a different opinion, but it would require very careful planning to produce a balanced conference agenda.
- FP:** Suggested that the IMA-CM should look to the future, and perhaps looking at the gemmological world, if mineral preparation was here to stay, we could be discussing things like certification and validation of best practise in years to come and the IMA-CM could take a leading role in this.
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