

# SMMP Meeting – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017

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## Hosted during the St. Marie-aux-Mines Mineral & Gem Show

*The SMMP are grateful to the organisers of the show, particularly Thomas Bellicam for facilitating an appropriate meeting space, required technology and for advertising the meeting and subsequent symposium*

*Meeting was called to order at 1:30pm in the CIAP Building.*

## Roll Call

Penny Williamson (Outgoing president) instigated a roll call, the following individuals were present:

- Penny Williamson (PW), University of Wollongong, Australia  
*(Outgoing President)*
- Eloïse Gaillou (EG), Musée de Minéralogie MINES ParisTech, France  
*(Vice-President)*
- Mike Rumsey (MR), Natural History Museum, UK  
*(Board Member, Minute-taker)*
- Anastasia Abramova (AA), Museum Samotsvety, Russia
- Dimitry Belakovskiy (DB), Fersman Mineralogical Museum, Russia
- Tom Costes (TC), [www.mindat.org](http://www.mindat.org), (Belgium/UK)
- Cristiano Ferraris (CF), Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, France
- Jean-Marc Fourcalt (JMF), Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, France
- Alessandro Guastoni (AG), Museum of Mineralogy University of Padova, Italy
- Farida Maouche (FM), Musée de Minéralogie MINES ParisTech, France
- Igor Mikhailov (IM), Museum Samotsvety, Russia
- Gian Carlo Parodi (GCP), Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, France
- Gail Spann (GS), Perot Museum & Peabody Museum, USA
- Jim Spann (JS), Guest, USA
- François Vigouroux (FV), Musée des Confluences, Lyon, France

*15 attendees (France 6, Russia 3, USA 2, Belgium 1, Italy 1, UK 1, Australia 1)*

*Katherine Dunnell, President, referred to in minutes as (KD)*

## Agenda

- 1. What is the Society of Mineralogy Museum Professionals?**
- 2. Why be part of the SMMP?**

A short Powerpoint presentation was given by EG that gave an overview of the purpose of the SMMP, its background and the benefits of being a member. The presentation was well received and had slides in a number of languages. It was noted that many attendees were likely to already be familiar with this information.

**ACTION (ALL):** There was a call for all members to think about opportunities where this presentation (or similar) could be given elsewhere to attract new members.

### 3. SMMP Facebook page

Due to inactivity on the SMMP facebook page it is hard to find and does not appear well in streams/searches. EG was regularly posting throughout the St. Marie show to promote the page better.

**ACTION (ALL):** There was a general call to provide information to the page relating to anything that was relevant to minerals and museums or activity within the society. This could be sent directly to any of the administrators, who would facilitate getting information posted.

**ACTION (ALL):** There was a call for members to experiment with 'the wall' to see how much/what could be posted without having to contact the administrators.

PW noted that one of the fb administrators was possibly leaving their institution, so an accurate/verified fb administrators list should be circulated.

**ACTION (PW/EG):** Verify fb administrators list and circulate.

MR raised the possibility of 're-branding' and having a logo that was not just typographic.

CF, EG & GS, supported the idea and highlighted it as an opportunity to create a more visible community, better web-presence and an overall 're-launch'... *"SMMP version 2.0"*

PW & GS, suggested that a colour scheme was important and that the society should think about having t-shirts that could be worn during relevant show days or SMMP events and PW asked all members to come up with ideas for a new logo/brand/colour that could represent SMMP.

**ACTION (ALL) BY SEPTEMBER:** Suggest logo ideas and or branding ideas to PW/EG/KD for discussion at SMMP Denver and a decision at the larger meeting in Munich, for roll-out in Tucson.

**ACTION (TC & MR):** Contact Jolyon about using Mindat contacts to print T-shirts/promote SMMP.

### 4. Open discussion

#### Museum representation at international shows

To start off discussions EG noted that there was very little European Museum representation with regards to display at the world's largest mineral show – Tucson, and went on to outline the reasons that her institution does not bring a display to Tucson. Mainly because Tucson show committee does not provide insurance for the specimens or funding to attend.

AG explained to the group that for his institution the problem for nearly all international displays was the amount of paperwork required.

CF noted that generally museums have no money so insurance was the biggest problem. There was a lack of understanding in show committee's that museum regulations do not permit specimens to be

hand-carried or for individuals to take personal responsibility for the specimens. CF further noted that for larger museums, there was a lack of understanding that the processes required to find appropriate funds, ship material, insure and potentially create a display may involve a number of different departments and individuals with different skills

MR reported that the NHM was the only regular European exhibit at Tucson and that in order to do this, the institution had funded the shortfall on the basis of increased outreach for its specimens – to an audience of 40,000 who would otherwise not see the collection. However, this was not likely to work any more in the current financial environment and AT LEAST the safe and appropriate transportation of display samples would have to be a cost neutral endeavour.

CF reported how the Paris museums were working better together, by co-ordinating shipments.

MR & PW felt that where practical, the SMMP was the perfect group to coordinate such collaboration, saving money in the long run for show organisers and be seen as pro-active/accommodating. But also appreciating the different working practices all the museums have.

MR noted that different shows had different attitudes regarding museums and display and that potential funding could even be inconsistent within the same show. It was identified that St. Marie show committee was positively engaged, providing insurance for specimens and contributions to cover travel, accommodation, subsistence.

PW reported that in the past Denver was brilliant for museums, with 70-80 exhibits from museums, institutions or local groups. There had been organised press and outreach for the museums involved that helped to justify attendance.

PW noted that Denver paid for her to attend (from Australia!), but that the number of engaged museums with the Denver show was now only about 20.

Most people in the room noted that Tucson was the most difficult to deal with, unlike the other shows, the help offered, for the quality of specimens expected fell well short of transport costs.

**ACTION GS:** To talk to the Tucson show committee to see what funding options might be possible.

**ACTION MR:** To continue discussions with Tucson show committee pertaining to appropriate exhibition loan documentation.

MR & PW – noted that the same problem isn't just limited to European museums in the US, but also other way around – There are few US/Canadian museums at European shows and few Asian/Australian museums at any shows.

PW mentioned a fledgling Australian Fine Mineral show.

MR reported on a meeting from the previous day that EG and MR had with Chris Keilmann of the Munich Show regarding what the SMMP/IMA-CM did, what the meetings achieved and how the society should pay for its meeting room at the Munich show. The payment was waived for this current year and a suggestion made that options be looked at for how to get funding for SMMP and museums from the more affluent parts of the collecting/dealing/publishing aspects of mineral collecting/display/preservation. It was stressed that the SMMP had to be more visible and clearly

contributing actively to the community in order to achieve this. An initial idea was to have a small stand and have a physical presence at the show. Details and purpose still to be discussed.

**ACTION (Board):** to continue discussions with Chris Keilmann and brainstorm some ideas for a physical presence.

GS felt that SMMP articles in the collector 'press' would be very useful additions to promoting SMMP and museums generally and potential show attendance or SMMP-run events at shows.

**ACTION GS:** to talk to Mineralogical Record about articles – potentially posing a question, which is then responded to by multiple museums/museum curators all part of the SMMP.

It was noted that the SMMP should push for free entry to all paid-up SMMP members at the large international shows.

### *IMA-CM & SMMP*

It was noted by the board and members that there was significant confusion regarding what the roles and differences were between the IMA-CM and the SMMP

Discussion was heated and a number of individuals presented their opinion to the rest of those present.

CF stated that the SMMP should focus on a relaunch of what it is, what it represents and not worry about the IMA-CM and its problems.

GCP explained that the IMA-CM (International Mineralogical Association - Commission on Museums) is one of a number of IMA groups and should not be confused with the IMA.

GCP, MR and DB who were present, are also part of the IMA-CM: The IMA-CM has about 30 members who are elected by their national academic mineralogical societies – with the goal of bringing up national museum issues for discussion and support at an international level often focusing on more academic and research related topics. In recent years, the most important/visible role of this group has been the organisation of the "Mineral and Museums" conference series. However, the subsequent cancellation of this has led to significant dissatisfaction with members of the SMMP and IMA-CM.

The instigation of a joint IMA-CM and SMMP meeting at Munich in recent years has further blurred the lines between the two groups.

PW commented that IMA-CM was perceived as a closed group, with little accountability and an undemocratic election and voting methodology, probably different in each country. A particular frustration was that this group, that has very few active members is responsible for organising the 'Museums' conference and the large voice of the SMMP is not well represented on this group.

**ACTION MR:** Will feed these perceptions back to the chairman of the IMA-CM.

PW commented that M&M9 had been announced to her by the chairman of the IMA-CM, however – this was news to all the IMA-CM members present at the meeting – and as such should not be accurate as this is supposed to be something voted on by the members.

**ACTION MR:** to ask for clarification from the IMA-CM chairman on ideas and current state of any M&M9 conference that might be in the pipeline.

#### **5. Next SMMP meeting in Munich**

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017 4pm

#### **6. Next SMMP meeting in Tucson**

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2018 – 4pm TBC

#### **7. Tucson talking groups:**

It was suggested EG & MR that there could be opportunity for smaller working groups at Tucson to discuss particular issues – a potential venue was suggested – ‘La Posada Hotel’ as there is already a significant number of curators/collections based researchers staying at that hotel (*NHM-London-UK, Harvard MM-USA, GIA-USA, Gem-A-London-UK, ROM-Toronto-Canada, Rice Museum-Oregon-USA, MINES Tech-Paris-France, LACNHM-Los Angeles-USA, Winnipeg-Canada*). However, due to time constraints this was not discussed in detail and will be left for Denver/Munich meetings.

#### **8. AOB**

There was no time for significant AOB – EG & MR noted that there were a number of other curators or collections relevant, institutional researchers at the show who did not attend the meeting. It would be good to understand why they chose not to attend or are not SMMP members.

#### **9. Symposium**

The symposium followed on from the meeting featuring 4 talks, three in French and one in English. The symposium was fairly well attended with around 25-30 people present. Parts of the symposium were streamed ‘live’ on the SMMP facebook page.