

Acceptance of the Mineralogical Society of America Public Service Award of 1999

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Mr. President, Fellows, Members, and Guests:

I am very conscious of the significant honor you are bestowing on me—and thank you, Paul, for your kind words, which were over-generous, but much appreciated.

After completing my Ph.D. at Cambridge, my first academic post was in Manchester. Alex Deer, the Head of Department there, has long been contemplating writing an undergraduate text book on petrological mineralogy and soon both Zack Zussman and I were invited to collaborate with him in this venture, each of us to write primarily on mineral groups on which we had personally carried out research. But it grew and grew until it eventually became the five-volume series which was mentioned by Paul. The success of *Rock-Forming Minerals* can be attributed partly to the fact that it appeared at just the right time, when physicists having developed such instruments as the mass spectrometer, and X-ray fluorescence and microprobe analytical techniques, mineralogists were beginning to exploit these developments. Our five-volume text differed from most in the integration of the mineral data with detailed considerations of the parent rocks; in the analytical tables, the analyses were chosen not only for their quality but also to specifically demonstrate the range of both the compositions of the minerals and their geological paragenesis.

Eventually we returned to our original aim of producing a student text. This took time as by then the “three pamphleteers” had split up—Deer to the Cambridge chair, Zussman to a Readership at Oxford and myself to a Readership at Kings College London. I had some difficulty explaining what a Reader was to my two small boys; eventually the elder said to the younger “You know Daddy writes books; now that he’s a Reader he’ll read them aloud to his students”—which was a little bit too near the truth!

So it was not until 1966 that the *Introduction to the Rock-Forming Minerals* appeared. The review in *Geotimes* is still ranking: “They said it could not be done—they were right.” Be that as it may, the first edition sold an amazing 110 000 copies worldwide, and since then the second edition has added another 15 000 or so.

As Paul has reminded you, we are now embarked on a second edition of the major work, in which the original five volumes will be replaced by ten. Five of these have been published and two others are well on the way. But as our publishers have pointed out, at the rate of one new volume every four or five years, the original authors will have to live to be 100, and we are urged to seek new recruits. This is in hand, but we are likely to need help with the feldspathoids—any volunteers, please see me afterwards!



I chose to publish my research results on the Madras charnockites in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, purely and simply because that journal had nice large pages for tables of geochemical data. But after a year or so I had the temerity to complain of the lack of abstracting coverage (*Mineralogical Abstracts* had not covered it at all, and *Chemical Abstracts* reported 43 new mineral analyses—two years’ work in those days—as “the chemistry is discussed”). This led to me being recruited to the team of abstractors for both of these journals, and to my continuing concern with the proper presentation of results in abstracts. For a time, I also prepared abstracts for *Analytical Abstracts*, and more recently have been producing abstracts for *Gems and Gemology*. I am greatly tempted to wander off into a plea for more informative author abstracts (often the only a part of a paper that gets read) and to castigate those authors who use different initials on different papers, but time does not allow. Sometimes, however, I feel that there are not enough words in the English language to really express one’s meaning; to be told that dysprosium becomes ten times more concentrated in a particular mineral sounds more exciting than it really is when one realizes that the concentration the author is talking about is one part in a hundred million—or less. Some commercial journals allow/encourage their authors to write far too long abstracts to their papers, which surely defeats the object. Almost as bad are titles which go rambling on into subjunctive clauses. I recall one such paper on an aspect of the geochemistry of the Hawaiian eruptions: the three-line title ended with a question “Does the mercury content of these emissions constitute a danger to the

environment?" It gave me great satisfaction to write my shortest abstract ever—"No".

My main contribution to mineralogy may thus be indirect, in the production of reasonably prompt and above all informative abstracts of the world's literature. These also provide, as you will be aware, the cornerstone or starting point for the compilation of data for DHZ. A fundamental aspect of the latter work is the authors' wish to present mineralogy not in a vacuum but to link the occurrence of minerals to the chemical compositions of their parent rocks and the relevant conditions of pressure and temperature. In a discussion in the University of London some years ago on the importance of the teaching of mineralogy in a petrology-oriented course, I appeared to upset

some of my colleagues by stating that if you take away the minerals the rocks would fall down. Think about it!

Finally I must, of course, give thanks to all those who have continued to offer moral and practical support, with reprints and answers to queries; I am grateful to Joe Smith also for persuading me into using a word processor. My colleagues are currently urging me to get with it by getting on to E-mail, which I hope to do quite soon. Paul slipped in a puff for *Reviews in Mineralogy*, so I shall respond by urging you to actively support and use *Mineralogical Abstracts*. Members of MSA are entitled to receive this journal for the very low current rate of \$48 per year. So please think about that as well.

Thank you again for the honor you have done me today.