

**IMA
COMMISSION ON
NEW MINERALS AND MINERAL NAMES (CNMMN)**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO IUGS
FOR THE YEAR 2005**

(Prepared by the Secretary, William Birch)

1. COMMISSION ON NEW MINERALS AND MINERAL NAMES

Officers

Chairman: Ernst A.J. Burke (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Vice Chairman: Giovanni Ferraris (Torino, Italy)

Secretary: William Birch (Melbourne, Australia)

2. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The Commission on New Minerals and Mineral Names was established in 1959 to deal with all nomenclature matters in mineralogy. Its main roles are to ensure that strict procedures are followed before new mineral species can be established and before redefinitions and changes to nomenclature can be applied.

3. ORGANISATION

Officers for 2005

Chairman: Ernst A.J. Burke (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Vice Chairman: Giovanni Ferraris (Torino, Italy)

Secretary: William D. Birch (Melbourne, Australia)

Business meetings

The CNMMN holds its business meetings every two years, when its members participate in IMA General Meetings and Mineralogy and Museums Conferences, each of which are held every four years. The CNMMN last met in Paris in 2004 and will meet in Kobe in 2006. No meetings were held in 2005.

Main activities

The CNMMN partitions its workload amongst the three officers: the chairman prepares the new-mineral proposals, the vice-chairman handles the proposed changes to existing nomenclature (discreditations and redefinitions), and the secretary coordinates the subcommittees created to examine the nomenclature of mineral groups. There are 30 voting members of the CNMMN, representing national mineralogical organisations affiliated with the IMA. The members evaluate all nomenclature proposals (new minerals, changes in existing minerals, mineral groups) and cast their votes on a monthly basis for the new-mineral proposals and as they come for the other proposals.

Financial support

Now that the distribution of proposals and the subsequent rounds of comments and voting are carried out via the internet, postage costs have largely been eliminated. The costs of office supplies used by the Chairman are covered by the IMA, while the costs of members' emailing and internet time are borne by their respective institutions.

4. INVOLVEMENT WITH IMA AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

Nothing to report

5. CHIEF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2005

Activities

The CNMMN will handle 60–65 new-mineral proposals in 2005 (59 proposals in 2004, 70 in 2003, 67 in 2002) in batches of, on average, five proposals per month. Members will also decide on five proposals involving mineral nomenclature revisions, the most substantial being a new nomenclature system for the arrojadite group.

Seven CNMMN subcommittees were active during 2005:

1. Sulfosalts (Chairman: Yves Moelo, France)
2. Pyrochlores (Chairman: Scott Ercit, Canada)
3. Tourmalines (Chairman: Milan Novák, Czech Republic)
4. Alunites (Chairman: Peter Bayliss, Australia)
5. Epidotes (Chairman: Thomas Armbruster, Switzerland)
6. Amphiboles (Chairman, Bernard Leake, UK)
7. Unnamed minerals (Chairman: Dorian Smith, Canada)

The final reports of two of these subcommittees (epidote nomenclature; the status of unnamed minerals as published in the historical literature) have been submitted for members' comments. A number of the other subcommittees are close to finalising their discussions.

A list of about 1600 minerals published before the CNMMN was established in 1959 has been compiled. This list contains grandfathered names (names of minerals generally considered to be valid minerals), questionable names (names of minerals generally considered not to be valid minerals) and mineral names published after 1959 without approval of the CNMMN. Members have been asked to consider this list, with a view to reaching agreement on the names. The assistance of Jeffrey de Fourestier has been sought in this project. It is a formidable task, as there are numerous controversies on the orthography and the status of hundreds of 'traditional' minerals and their names.

Administration

A major development during 2005 was the in-principle decision to proceed, subject to a vote on a proposal by the IMA Council, with the amalgamation of the CNMMN and the Commission on Classification of Minerals (CCM). Members of both commissions have voted to approve this amalgamation, which will enable the new commission to extend its work into classification and to deal more effectively with such issues as the

nomenclature of groups. The General Meeting of the IMA in Kobe will vote on this matter.

Outreach

The Chairman regularly participates in discussion on minerals and their nomenclature in the Message Board of the website www.mindat.org, a forum aimed at collectors and amateur mineralogists. (See also Publications)

Technical meetings

No technical meetings were held in 2005.

Publication

The list of new minerals approved in 2004 was published on the CNMMN's website.

Two papers dealing with decisions of the CNMMN were published in the scientific literature during the year:

1. Burke, E.A.J. and Ferraris, G. (2005): New minerals and nomenclature modifications approved in 2004 by the Commission on New Minerals and Mineral Names, International Mineralogical Association. *Canadian Mineralogist*, **43**, 829-835.
2. Burke, E.A.J. and Leake, B.E. (2005): "Named amphiboles": a new category of amphiboles recognized by the International Mineralogical Association (IMA), and the proper order of prefixes to be used in amphibole names. *American Mineralogist*, **90**, 516-517.

The CNMMN considers that its work is important not just for professional mineralogists and petrologists but also for the thousands of amateur collecting enthusiasts. Consequently, when issues are raised in popular collecting publications that relate to the commission's actions and decisions, every endeavour is made to respond. The Secretary, William Birch, and Chairman Emeritus, Joseph Mandarino, submitted articles explaining how the CNMMN reached its decisions, in response to a critique published in the mineral collectors' periodical *Rocks and Minerals* in 2004. The two responses were published in 2005.

The Chairman, Ernst Burke, submitted an article entitled *New Minerals: Help or Hindrance* to the new international magazine *Elements* (volume 1, no. 3, June 2005). The article explained the work done by the commission and its significance for mineralogy. This article was reprinted in the Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California, volume 75, no. 7 (June 2005).

6. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN 2005

Generally the work of the Commission proceeded smoothly in 2005. However, the Chairman drew attention to the consistent failure of some members to vote on new mineral proposals and the absence of detailed arguments to support many YES votes. Attempts are being made to discover why this is occurring, although in part it may reflect the heavy workload of the members.

7. WORKPLAN FOR 2006

Activities

It is anticipated that the number of new mineral proposals, nomenclature revisions and discreditations will remain at much the same levels in 2006 as in 2005. The nomenclature scheme proposed for the epidote group and the list of undescribed minerals will be subject to voting early in the year. It is expected that the subcommittees on the tourmaline, sulfosalt, pyrochlore and alunite groups will submit their first reports during 2006.

Administration

The Chairman has foreshadowed changes in Commission officers over the next few years. The current Vice Chairman and Secretary have both indicated they will retire by 2008. A second Vice Chairman's position will arise if the amalgamation between CNMMN and CCM takes place; the appointee will take over the role of coordinating the various subcommittee reports, a task now undertaken by the Secretary.

Should the amalgamation proceed, the aims and objectives of the new Commission will need to be appraised.

Two CNMMN business meetings are planned for the 19th General Meeting of the IMA to be held in Kobe in 2006. These are yet to be scheduled and agendas have not yet been prepared. The Commission will also sponsor the scientific session *New Minerals and Mineral Classification* at this meeting.

Communication

It is anticipated that the list of agreed mineral names published before 1959 will be finalised and placed on the Commission's website in 2006.

8. PREPARATION FOR IMA BUSINESS MEETINGS IN KOBE

Officers

A new Vice-Chairman will have to be appointed in Kobe 2006 and a new Secretary at Mineralogy and Museums Conference (M&M6) in 2008. The amalgamation between CNMMN and CCM will involve the appointment of a second Vice-Chairman. The current Chairman will serve a second term until 2010.

National representatives

The amalgamation between CNMMN and CCM will probably involve an enlargement of participating countries (some countries having members in the current CCM are not represented in the CNMMN) and the member countries will have to decide on their representative in the new CNMMN.

Sponsoring of conferences

The CNMMN will sponsor scientific sessions at M&M6 in 2008 and the IMA meeting of 2010.

Activities

Besides the normal duties of the CNMMN (new-mineral proposals, changes in existing nomenclature, classification of mineral groups), two new major projects need attention in the coming years: 1) attempts to rationalize the existing nomenclature, with the main problem being the amphiboles; 2) discussions within the CNMMN on

the voting system. Both projects will be started during the CNMMN business meetings in Kobe 2006.

Communication

The website of the CNMMN publishes on a monthly basis its decisions on new minerals and changes in nomenclature. Some reports on mineral groups will also be published on the website soon after their approval. After agreement on the status of the pre-1959 mineral names and the non-approved post-1959 mineral names, a major revision of the list of mineral names will be published on the website.

9. OFFICERS AND NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

(see attached list)