

Obituary

Eugen Friedrich Stumpfl, 1931-2004



Eugen died on 12 July 2004 and we have lost a great friend and leader.

Eugen was born in 1931, the son of Professor Friedrich Stumpfl and his Russian wife Dr Ludmilla Stumpfl. In 1940 they moved from Munich to Igls, near Innsbruck in the Austrian Tyrol, a place that he was to love deeply all his life. Eugen studied Geology, Mineralogy and Chemistry at Innsbruck and Heidelberg and he completed his PhD at Heidelberg under the distinguished ore mineralogist, Paul Ramdohr. Eugen Stumpfl came to England in 1958 to take up a post as Lecturer in Economic Geology and Ore Microscopy at University College London. There his interest in ore mineralogy, especially the platinum minerals and their genesis, led to him taking some samples to the BRGM in Paris to use their Cameca microprobe. With that instrument (*Mineralogical Magazine*, 1961, **32**, 833–847) he was the first to list a range of nine platinum and palladium antimonides, bismuthides, arsenides and alloys from the Dreikop Mine, South Africa including Geversite

(PdSb₂). That paper made a significant impact and he was able to acquire an early Cameca microprobe for UCL with the enthusiastic support of the then Head of Department, Sydney Hollingworth. This was the first of Castaing's commercially produced instruments purchased by a Geology Department in Britain, preceded only by Jim Long's prototype instrument at Cambridge. Eugen was very aware of the new applications that the microprobe would have in mineralogical research and with it he broke new ground in the fields of ore mineralogy and ore genesis. With Andrew Clark in 1965 he identified Hollingworthite (Rh,Pt,Pd)AsS from the Dreikop Mine which he named in recognition of Hollingworth's support. It was appropriate that Stumpflite Pt(Sb,Bi), one of the phases he observed in 1961, should be named after him (*Bulletin de la Société française de Minéralogie et Cristallographie*, 1972, **95**, 610–613). Later, the surname having been used, the mineral Ag₁₁Hg₂ (a cubic alloy with a large 10 Å unit cell) was named Eugenite by the Polish mineralogist Henryk Kucha ('A special mineral

for a special friend.’). It is a rare honour indeed for two minerals to be named after the same person. Chris Halls, as Eugen’s first PhD student, made good use of the microprobe to examine nickel-cobalt ores.

Eugen joined the Mineralogical Society in 1956. He served on Council from 1962 to 1965 and was on the Committee of the Applied Mineralogy Group from 1967 to 1979. He was the first Mineralogical Society Visiting Lecturer in 1996. He was a Fellow of the Geological Society and a Fellow of the IMM and served on the Editorial Board for *Transactions B, Earth Science Section* of the IMM from 1971 to 1999.

From University College London he spent a year in Toronto and established many N. American contacts. He then went to Manchester in 1966 as Lecturer in Geology where he carried out research on ore minerals from localities as diverse as Norway, Sierra Leone, New Brunswick and New Guinea. He was part of the Manchester team entrusted with the examination of the Apollo 11 samples. Most importantly it was while he was at Manchester that he met Valerie whom he married in 1970. Valerie, his two daughters and the four grandchildren will miss him most of all.

In 1970 Eugen was appointed Professor at the Institute of Mineralogy and Petrology in Hamburg where he continued his interest in instrumental methods and platinum mineralogy. He moved to Leoben, Austria in 1975 as Professor and Head of the Department of Mineralogy and Petrology, a position he held for 21 years until his retirement in 1997. Having returned to his roots in Austria and the mountains that he loved, he soon organized a worldwide network of contacts from his base in Leoben. Students came to Leoben from around the world and Leoben became an International centre for mineralogy, petrology and economic geology. From 1988–1993 Eugen was also Chairman of the Institute of Geological Sciences, Leoben. His contribution to the University of Leoben was remarkable. At the time of his appointment, mention of Leoben in discussions between Earth Scientists would often be followed by the question ‘Where?’ Today there is no need to ask that question, thanks to Eugen’s international reputation and the efforts he made to bring people there. A large part of that success has been due to the Stumpfl family who fully participated in his welcome to visitors and whose hospitality is remembered by many colleagues.

Eugen examined platinum deposits from the Driekop, Onverwacht and Mooihoek Pipes and

the Merensky and Bastard Reefs, South Africa, the J-M Reef, Stillwater, USA, the Troodos Ophiolite, Cyprus, the Duluth Complex, USA, the Freetown Complex, Sierra Leone, Abu Swayel, Egypt, the Eastern Alps, Austria, and New Norcia, Western Australia. It was his early experience with the Driekop samples which not only allowed him to recognize new mineral phases but also to challenge the received wisdom that all platinum minerals were the product of purely magmatic processes. He dared to suggest that hydrothermal or metasomatic alteration processes contributed to the formation of the platinum minerals in hydrous surroundings. Initially this suggestion was considered by some to be heretical, but today Eugen’s pioneering ideas are now universally accepted. He wrote extensively on the role of fluids in mineral formation and followed with interest and enthusiasm the logical extension of his ideas to the Kupferschiefer and surficial deposits. With a characteristic breadth of interest he wrote on deposits containing antimony, arsenic, barium, carbon, chromium, copper, gold, lead, molybdenum, nickel, silver, tellurium, thallium, tin, tungsten and zinc. These interests led to a significant body of publications (GeoRef lists 153 titles) over 47 years.

It was typical of Eugen’s interest in new ideas and their practical application that one of most recent contributions was to organize a workshop on ‘New PGE Data and Concepts: their Relevance to Exploration’ at the Fourth Fennoscandian Exploration and Mining Conference at Rovaniemi, Finland, December 2003. That was one of his last public appearances and the energy and enthusiasm he expressed then, provide a lasting memory of him.

In 1997 Eugen received the Schneiderhöhn Award at the Naturhistorisches Museum in Mainz for his outstanding contributions to Economic Geology. He was Correspondent of the Geological Survey of Austria, Corresponding Member of the Austrian Academy of Science (1987), Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (1992) and he received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Oulu, Finland (2002). He held the Consolidated Gold Fields Silver Medal (IMM 1985) and he was an Honorary Fellow of the IMM (1993) and an Honorary Fellow of the Austrian Mineralogical Society (2001). Eugen served on the Council of the Austrian Mining Association (1976–2004), the Scientific Committee of the IGCP programme,

the Advisory Board of *Mineralium Deposita*, the Editorial Board of *Applied Geochemistry*, and on the Board of Reviewers, German Research Council, (1988–1994). He was Secretary and later Chairman of the Commission on Ore Microscopy (1978–1986), Regional Vice-President, Europe, for the Society of Economic Geologists (1987–1995), IMMM Official Correspondent for Austria (1990–2004), a Representative on the Council of the Austrian Research Foundation (1988–1995), a Member of the Evaluation Board for the EU Transfer and Mobility of Researchers Programme (1995–2004), President of the Society for Geology Applied to Mineral Deposits (1997–1999), Vice-Chairman, Commission on Mineral Raw Materials, Austrian Academy of Science (1998–2004), a Member of the Steering Committee of Geodynamics and Ore Deposit Evolution, European Science Foundation (1997–2004) and a Board Member of the Austrian Mineralogical Society (2002–2004).

Eugen was Managing Editor of *Mineralogy and Petrology* for 25 years and continued working on manuscripts from his hospital bed until a few days before his death.

It was a mark of the high esteem in which he was held by his colleagues and a need to recognize the kindness and friendship of many years that prompted 120 friends to gather in Leoben on 15–17 April 2005 for ‘a symposium in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the scientific community’ and social events in his honour. Friends and colleagues came from fourteen countries (Australia, Austria, Canada,

England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Russia, Scotland, Switzerland, USA). Their comments: “There are three generations of his friends here”, “All of his students have become Somebody”, “This gathering is the best proof of Eugen’s creativity and hard work”, “Our dearest friend and colleague”, “Sorry you are not here, we are missing you”, “A true gentleman and loyal friend”, “Like a godfather, guiding my career”, “I cannot believe he has gone”, “And above all he was fun”. Friends remember the sense of fun which was never at the expense of others. He had a quick wit, a great sense of humour and enjoyed playing with words, dialects and languages. It was a tribute to Eugen and an indication of his character that at the Symposium everyone spoke of him with genuine admiration and affection. Eugen would have been delighted that so many of his friends, colleagues and relations met in such a convivial and constructive way.

Eugen Stumpfl was a man of great gentleness, warmth and generosity in his personal dealings, immense dedication and integrity in his work and elegant and charismatic in his communications. It was his readiness to accept new ideas and to encourage them in others that will be particularly remembered.

JOHN BOWLES
with help and contributions from Valerie Stumpfl and Andrew Clark, Günther Friedrich, Udo Haack, Chris Halls, Henryk Kucha, Aberra Mogessie, Heiki Papunen, John Rucklidge, Pamela and Roye Rutland, Oskar Thalhammer, David Vaughan, Jack Zussman.