

Processes in Geochemistry: A Copenhagen Goldschmidt Retrospective

The rotunda of the Geocenter buzzed every afternoon, when most of the 1500 conference participants assembled for posters and discussion. After a full day of deciding between 10 parallel sessions, one could choose between 5 floors of posters, with a beer in hand, or wander in the exhibition hall. The largest sessions presented the latest results on weathering and on the geochemistry of oceans. The most recent Mars data caused quite a stir and there was lively interest in the sessions on biogeochemistry, environments for early life, mineral surface reactivity and metals in the environment. We used an optimisation, based on a list that each participant submitted beforehand, to minimise session overlap, but it was still impossible to select among the 53 symposia and not miss something interesting. On the program were presentations that defined processes ranging from the atomic scale to the cosmic and that aimed to explain events from the dawn of time, from the development of the Earth and from now, with changing climate and concerns for the environment.

The long Nordic days showed themselves at their finest. In the light evenings, many Goldschmidt backpacks could be seen wandering the streets of Copenhagen or at one of the many social events. These included visits to the mineral collections from Greenland, a concert of folk music in a historic church, and the conference dinner, which began by bringing participants on a boat tour of the canals, to dinner and dancing in the renovated cannon repair hall, and for some of us, ended with a walk back downtown as the sun rose again.

Plenary Day, a new event this year, was a festive occasion that celebrated our science and our award winners. Five specially invited speakers gave exciting talks on topics of general interest, such as Rod Ewing who put the problems of nuclear power into perspective and Dorthe Dahl-Jensen who presented climate history as revealed by the Greenland ice-core drilling in relation to the current focus on global warming. Later in the afternoon, the awards of the sponsoring societies were presented against a background slide show highlighting the recipients and the topics of their research. The celebration ended with an evening in the famous Tivoli Gardens.

Theme plenary sessions were held each morning in the large auditorium of the Geocenter. In these well-attended events, this year's award winners presented longer, more general talks that put their research into a broader perspective.

Forty volunteer young researchers worked from early morning to midnight, loading talks into the central computer, keeping the projectors running, answering questions at the help desk, pouring beer at the poster sessions and running for the hundreds of other tasks that kept the conference going smoothly.

From the feedback we have received, both during the conference and in the many emails later, the people who came to Copenhagen enjoyed themselves - perhaps almost as much as we did.

Susan Stipp, Convenor

Børge Svane Nielsen, Technical Coordinator



Poster sessions, exhibitions, beer and discussion in the Geocenter Rotunda (all photos, except where noted, Børge Svane Nielsen).



During the poster session.

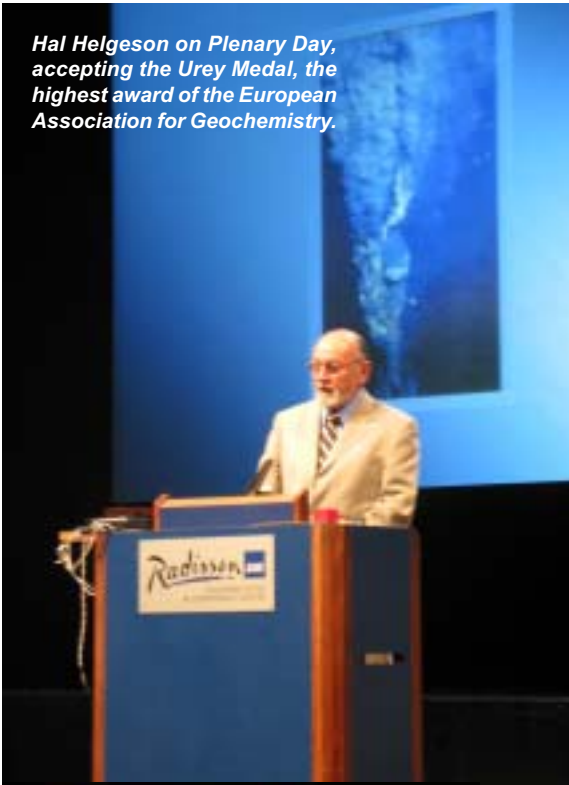


The Geocenter rotunda, center of the conference.



Picnic lunches, available to all on-site, encouraged wandering in near-by parks and relaxed discussion.

Hal Helgeson on Plenary Day, accepting the Urey Medal, the highest award of the European Association for Geochemistry.



Exhibitions showcased the latest technological advances.

One of forty young scientist volunteers, who helped make Copenhagen Goldschmidt a success, checking a presentation during transfer to the central computer.



Plenary Day featured general talks on hot topics. Rod Ewing discussing problems related to Pu (photo: Morton Lech Hjuler).

