

# The Crucible



The quarterly newsletter of the Minor Metals Trade Association

Autumn 2006

## MMTA Dinner 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006 speech from the Chairman Charles Swindon

Firstly, I would like to welcome you all to our Anniversary Dinner. As it is my first one as your newly appointed Chairman, I would like to say how delighted I am that we, again, have record numbers of people attending, and we have been obliged to take the nearby bar area for the first time, in order to meet the extra demand of diners. Thank you Baroness von Posch for being so informative about the LEPROA Charity. I know that you have been working with this wonderful cause for about twenty years. I am delighted that so many people have contributed so generously tonight thanks to your stirring address.

It is a great privilege for the MMTA to have Shi Jianxin, Minister Counsellor of the Peoples Republic of China as our Guest of Honour. Indeed, the MMTA has specially long and deep ties with China as so many of the vital minor metals that our members trade in, are produced in China. Nevertheless, China is also a huge importer of so many of these metals, and our members are actively involved in this two-way trade. The MMTA greatly admires China and the rapid growth that its economy has demonstrated over the last fifteen years. We applaud the way that the Chinese Government has allowed the Reminbi to float and believe that such moves will help to create a fairer market. The MMTA looks to have closer ties with China and is keen to have an active part in Shanghai Expo 2010, which should turn out to be the biggest and most sustainable Expo ever.

The commodities and metals boom has been long-lasting and profitable for so many of our members. Minor metals prices remain well above the costs of production in most cases. However, in moving forward, it is clear that conducting business in many of the less developed countries brings a high degree of risk. Now, there are the new factors of international terrorism, war & political unrest in several places. In these demanding times our members must dig deep to their in-depth market knowledge borne of years of experience. This is what makes trading minor metals so exciting, and gives some participants an edge. Many of other members boldly trade in areas where others are afraid to go. You are the great buccaneers who should be applauded for your bravery. May you all continue to prosper in the year ahead.

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**LEPROA**  
healthinaction

The 2006 MMTA Dinner generously raised £1,250 (about \$2,400) for Lepra, the International Leprosy Charity.

Lepra was represented at the Dinner by Baroness Gerda von Posch.

For more information and to donate visit [www.lepra.org.uk](http://www.lepra.org.uk).

## WANTED PLANT OPEN DAYS

Want greater market visibility?

Want new trade opportunities?

Want new business contacts?

If so, then you need an open day for MMTA members!

The MMTA is looking to organize focused open days for members to promote trade in metals. All site suggestions and volunteers for hosting such an event please email [secretary@mmta.co.uk](mailto:secretary@mmta.co.uk).

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The Committee has been made aware that The London Bullion Market Association already publishes a newsletter called "**Alchemist**". To avoid any confusion the MMTA's quarterly newsletter has been renamed "**The Crucible**", a title we believe is not yet claimed for a metals journal.

Thanks to everyone for their suggestions. The winning name came from Barry Jaynes.

## **MMTA's International Minor Metals Conference on April 25-27 2007 at the Radisson SAS Hotel, Tallinn, Estonia.**

The MMTA's biannual conference will bring together the world's minor metals industry to discuss current and future trends.

The conference aims to focus on emerging technologies in electronics, automotive, energy and terrestrial uses, as well as the role of renewable resources and energy. These are all areas where there is the potential for exciting growth in demand for a wide range of minor metals.

The beautiful city of Tallinn provides a fantastic backdrop for socialising and networking opportunities, including one of the conference's central fixtures: the MMTA's gala conference dinner.

Tallinn is the European Capital of Culture 2011.



Tallinn's dragon welcomes our 2007 conference.

### Speakers include:

**"Germanium: a growing market in solar cells for terrestrial applications"**, by Carl Quaeyhaegens, Business Line Manager Substrates, Umicore Electro-Optic Materials, Belgium.

**"Recovering metals from the electronic waste stream: a sustainable and effective source of supply for the metals industry?"** by Professor Theo Lehner, Manager Business Development, Boliden Mineral AB, Sweden.

**"Hafnium, rhenium & zirconium -- future minor metals"**, by Anthony Lipmann, Managing Director, Lipmann Walton & Co Ltd, UK.

Additionally, on Wednesday April 25, **Toma Inc.** is kindly hosting a small group to visit its plant during the day. Toma is a processor of rhenium-containing scrap in various forms, recovering pure rhenium in the form of ammonium perrhenate. Space on this visit is extremely limited - please contact us for more information.

### To book your place:

The rates for bookings made by January 5 2007 are as follows:

MMTA Members	£595.00
Non-MMTA Members	£695.00

(If you become an MMTA member at the same time as registering for the conference you will benefit from the £595 rate)

There is a special rate for MMTA members who have 3 or more delegates from their group attending. Please contact Metal Events for details of group rates. The full registration fee is £750

To book please contact Metal Events or visit <https://www.metalevents.com/register.asp?id=MinorMetals2007>

### **Metal Events Ltd**

77 Oxford Street, London, W1D 2ES, UK.

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7659 2022

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7659 2111

E-mail: [sales@metalevents.com](mailto:sales@metalevents.com)

## REACH IN THE SKY



By Dave Willis, Aura Metals Ltd.

As a new member of MMTA I had the opportunity to meet other members at the recent lunch at the Coq d'Argent. For those who do not know this restaurant, like me, it boasts a magnificent roof top area in the heart of London with fantastic views over the city sky line. However in true British weather the heavens opened and there was no chance of dining outside.

Like all gatherings of this type the conversation got around to the minor metals and the implications of REACH and its affects on the future of the industry. Talking to some of the traders it became obvious to me that my experience in the base metals tended to restrict my knowledge on the uses and industries to which the minor metals are used. For instance I learnt that Cobalt is used in the paint industry and that arsenic trioxide is used in soft furnishings to give fire retardant properties. As this is one of the requirements for the technical dossier for materials I felt it would be useful to give an insight in to some of the more unusual uses to which the base metal industry have used the minor metals.

For example Antimony and Arsenic are used in the brass industry to prevent dezincification and used in products such as the water sprinklers in hotels and restaurants. Bismuth is being used in the water industry as an alternative to lead in brass alloys for taps. Cadmium and Chromium are being used in special aluminium alloys to improve machinability and shock resistance. Magnesium is used in the manufacture of door furniture and it is the reason for the ring pulls on the beer cans to "break" almost every time. Manganese adds strength to aluminium and is found around the house in the double glazing. Silicon, apart from the "chips" is used in the aluminium casting industry and is found in our cars and white goods and silicon is used in copper alloy for fine art castings. Titanium is flying around the world but for the many people who have suffered from a broken bone they will be carrying the titanium in the pins holding the bones together.

### **Aura Metals Ltd.**

9 Beauchamp Place  
SW3 1NQ  
London  
United Kingdom

Incorporated in Britain in 2001,  
Aura are traders in a number of  
minor metals.

Tel: +44(0)20 7052 0095  
Fax: +44(0)20 7052 0112  
Email: [enquiries@aura.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aura.co.uk)

It is fairly obvious that there is going to be a great deal of knowledge sharing for the preparation of the technical dossiers, but it is encouraging to see that the MMTA is well advanced in the effects of the implications of the REACH legislation. The support of the REACH READY team will help but it can be seen that the minor metals are playing a very important part of modern life. However we must not be complacent and the first thing to ensure is that all the existing materials have an updated Health and Safety Data Sheet in the new European format.

So having wined and dined, and still not seen the sky line, I pop in the indigestion tablet (another use of a minor metal - Bismuth) and leave feeling that with the support of the MMTA what could have been a daunting task alone can be used as a way of increasing our knowledge of materials within a team of experts.

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## Are you ready for REACH?



The MMTA has teamed up with REACHReady to offer our members a great deal. More details through [www.reachready.co.uk](http://www.reachready.co.uk)

Hurry though, limited MMTA places remain on the special introductory rate!

## **Chairman's Speech: MMTA Dinner 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006 by Charles Swindon**

*(Continued from page 1)*

As you know, the threat and now the impending reality of the REACH legislation has caused the biggest challenge ever to the MMTA and its members. We have responded through political lobbying, and a forceful public relations initiative. The EU, about to be enlarged to 27 members in January, with the addition of Bulgaria and Rumania, and a total population of 490 million, must respond to the competitive pressures of the global market place. Above all, the EU needs fair international competition, alongside secure and affordable energy. The problem will be the difficulty that the EU faces in gaining access to raw materials at a competitive price. Between 50% and 90% of the total costs of refined metals production comes from energy and raw materials. EU metals refiners and converters are under threat from REACH. In addition, we have the added consideration of high labour costs. Car-makers, so dependent on many of our minor metals, are having difficulty. For instance, Peugeot was only one large carmaker forced to shed 10,000 jobs throughout the EU. This, apparently, is all part of their larger recovery plan. The delays to the Airbus programme are causing concerns for the European aviation industry and also for those involved in producing and trading the vital minor metals needed for these planes.

Today, policy actions are needed to protect the interests of our members. Our voices are being heard in very large organizations such as the UK industry's, MIRG. Now, however, we must face the reality that REACH is about to be passed through the European Parliament for its final reading. Your MMTA has striven to achieve many amendments to the initial reading, which should make the whole process less onerous. The Priority Issues Paper should yield still more amendments to REACH which would be favourable to our members. We are in the stage of final activity and negotiation. A major vote on the second reading should have been taking place this evening in Brussels. I recommend you all, if you have not already, to join the Reach – Ready Service run by the CIA. Many MMTA members are already enjoying their Gold Service which includes up-to date news on REACH, technical news, the place where you might go to form Consortia for Registration, an insight into how much all of this will cost, and so on. I particularly like the REACH Matchmaker. No, it is not some Blind dating service for minor metals traders, but it will put you in touch with select service providers, who can provide a fully tailored service, ranging from consortia management, to data searching, to preparation of Chemical Safety Reports, to conducting to conducting chemical tests- in fact anything you need to get you and your products through the REACH process. Please contact Barry Jaynes to register for REACH Ready. Barry has been working hard as usual with all tonight's excellent arrangements as well as his wonderful efforts throughout the year in the daily running of the MMTA as our much appreciated Secretary.

REACH is only one of the many developments that are here today. We have so many challenges and new opportunities in front of us. The MMTA has therefore decided to recruit an able person who will work alongside the existing Secretariat. The mandate for such a move has been given to the Committee at this year's Annual General Meeting. For the first time in its history, the MMTA feels that our members need and expect a full time executive who will be able to devote him/ herself to the MMTA full-time. These new responsibilities will include active public relations in expanding the profile of the MMTA all over the world. He will become the executive through whom issues like REACH will be directed. He will have good technical knowledge of the minor metals, and how they are traded. As a result, it is envisaged that conferences and seminars will take place more frequently. The job specification for this Executive will be on the MMTA website very shortly, and will also be advertised elsewhere.

The MMTA is in its current robust state largely due to the great efforts of the previous Chairman, Anthony Lipmann. He did so much to strengthen the MMTA, and prepare us for our next stage of growth. I thank him for all his continuing support. All the MMTA Committees are hard at work with their different agendas. The newly formed Strategy Committee, under the Chairmanship of Gunther Maasen, has held a highly stimulating first Committee meeting in Brussels, which is going to be followed up with a major brainstorming with the Main Committee next month. We are going to be better prepared for all the new opportunities of the future, and put the MMTA on a broader more international footing. I would like to thank all my Committee for their unstinting support and hard work. I would also like to thank all of you who are on our sub-Committees- it is really appreciated all the hard work that you are doing in order to contribute to the MMTA's success and well-being.

It is great to say that our membership has never been so large. We have a record 82 members from 19 different countries. More large quality producers and corporations have joined the MMTA because they see us as the best voice to represent them and their interests in minor metals. Please nominate some more new members so that we can quickly announce that we have surpassed 100 members. Once you become a member, please become involved in our activities. It is your involvement which will help to make us more effective and successful. So, join a Committee that interests you, be an active contributor to our new quarterly news letter, take a part in our website and its development, or offer your services in another way.

Next April promises to be a marvellous MMTA Conference in the beautiful city of Tallinn. We have decided to work with the very professional Metal Events in helping us to organize next April's Conference. The conference is set to focus on emerging technologies and how they may impact on minor metals. Like a TV advertisement, I have to tell you to book your spaces now before they run out.

Just another quick date for your diaries is the Christmas General Meeting on December 7th, followed by lunch. If our programme of activities is fully achieved by then, the General Meeting should have a very full agenda and be action packed.

I am delighted to have as our guest speaker Robin Oakley. I am sure that he is very well known to many here in the UK from his days at the BBC, and his time patrolling the corridors of power. Now that Robin has moved to CNN, I expect many of you have woken up in your hotel rooms around the world to see his cheerful face beaming at you. I am sure that we are going to hear a most informative speech from our guest speaker. Afterwards, Robin has kindly agreed to answer some questions.

Thank you.

### **Forthcoming Dates for you Diary:**

MMTA general meeting	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2006
Christmas Lunch at The Royal Thames Yacht Club, London Ivor Kirman, Chairman of MIRG, will say a very few words about REACH, as it reaches its final climax in Brussels, before Christmas.	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2006
Spring Quarterly Lunch at Bilderberg Parkhotel, Rotterdam	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2006
Conference 2007	25 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2007

[Chairman@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Chairman@mmta.co.uk)  
[ViceChairman@mmta.co.uk](mailto:ViceChairman@mmta.co.uk)  
[Treasury@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Treasury@mmta.co.uk)  
[Secretary@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Secretary@mmta.co.uk)  
[Arbitration@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Arbitration@mmta.co.uk)  
[Conference.membership@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Conference.membership@mmta.co.uk)  
[Contracts@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Contracts@mmta.co.uk)  
[Lobby@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Lobby@mmta.co.uk)  
[Marketing@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Marketing@mmta.co.uk)  
[Social@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Social@mmta.co.uk)  
[Strategy@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Strategy@mmta.co.uk)  
[Warehousing@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Warehousing@mmta.co.uk)  
[Website@mmta.co.uk](mailto:Website@mmta.co.uk)

- Charles Swindon, RJH Trading  
 - Tom Abrahams, Wogen Resources  
 - Roy Walton, Darton Commodities  
 - Barry Jaynes, MMTA  
 - John Price, Trident Traders  
 - David Craik, AMC Group  
 - Roland Chavasse, SFP Metals (UK) Ltd  
 - Charles Swindon, RJH Trading  
 - Gladys Smith, SANAB Ltd  
 - Barry Jaynes, MMTA  
 - Gunther Maassen, Haines & Maassen  
 - Tom Abrahams, Wogen Resources  
 - Anthony Lipmann, Lipmann Walton & Co