

Geoanalysis 2003 – Rovaniemi, Finland



Over a hundred geoanalysts (dare one say, a thoroughly heterogeneous sample!) came from all corners of the globe to Rovaniemi in early June for Geoanalysis 2003, the fifth in a series of hugely successful IAG conferences that started at Grandview in Ontario in 1990. The local organisation on this occasion was handled with friendly efficiency by staff from GTK, the Geological Survey of Finland.

Rovaniemi is, perhaps, best known as a popular winter destination for visitors to Santa Claus and the winter wonderland of Lapland, as it is situated on the edge of the Arctic Circle where snow lies for six months of the year. Recently developed attractions include Santa Claus Park and the Arktikum Centre, the museum of the arctic. Rovaniemi boasts the most northerly McDonalds restaurant; it also provides a base for many tourists who come to explore the wilderness of forest, bog and lakes that is Lapland. For many delegates this was the furthest north they had ever been and it was quite a novelty, at this time of year, to experience nights that didn't get dark and, on clear nights, the rays of the midnight sun.

Delegates who arrived early had the opportunity to attend a number of pre-conference workshops on the Sunday afternoon. Themes included sampling uncertainty, reference materials, microprobe reference materials and proficiency testing. In the evening there was a buffet reception at the town hall when the conference chair, Lars-Martin Westerberg of GTK, introduced the deputy mayor of Rovaniemi, who warmly welcomed delegates. We were ushered into the council chamber and shown a short film that gave us an introduction to Rovaniemi and Lapland. Later that evening there was the first opportunity for delegates to practice (and much practice was needed!) their singing from the Geoanalysis Song Book.

The conference proper opened at 8.30 a.m. the following morning. It was an early start for many, but well worth it for a superb pictorial presentation illustrating the progression of the seasons in Lapland and the beauty of the colour and texture of nature through the year, with quite amazing photographic images. The morning session was devoted to plenary talks. In the first, Phil Potts, President of IAG, gave us a revealing survey of analytical trends, and a salutary reminder that it's never been easier to generate poor data so rapidly. Only too true! This was followed by plenary presentations from Detlef Gunther (Future challenges in microanalysis), Mike Ramsey (Future challenges in sampling and uncertainty) and Clemens Reimann (Future

challenges in environmental geoanalysis). In the afternoon, delegates had a choice of sessions on Techniques for geochemical exploration or Sampling and uncertainty.

The evening meal was at the Hotel Lapin Pohtimo, a 27 km coach ride through attractive, sparsely populated countryside mostly covered in forest. Before dinner, guests were greeted by two performers dressed as Shamen who put on an energetic display of mock fighting and dance.



After dinner sing song at the Hotel Lapin Pohtimo

During the traditional after dinner sing song, Sophia Wang, who received an IAG bursary to attend Geoanalysis 2003, captured a little bit of IAG and Geoanalysis history with this picture showing (standing left to right) Gwendy Hall organiser of the first Geoanalysis, Doug Miles wearing the T-shirt lovingly saved from that Geoanalysis 90 conference held at Grandview, Canada, Jenny Cook Honorary Secretary of the IAG, and Mireille Polvé Joint Editor of *Geostandards Newsletter*. The piano is being expertly played by IAG Council Member Mike Ramsey on whose musical skills every Geoanalysis conference has relied for the last thirteen years.

On Tuesday there was a full day of talks, focusing on geoanalytical techniques in the morning, with parallel sessions on environmental geoanalysis and reference materials in the afternoon. There were also many very well produced and presented posters on display. In the afternoon the conference organisers dropped a bombshell for many delegates. Apparently, Finnair's staff were on strike and anyone whose return bookings were with that airline would be unlikely to get flights out of Rovaniemi on the Wednesday or Thursday as planned. To everyone's relief, the organisers made great efforts to keep delegates informed and helped those affected to make alternative travel arrangements.



Lars-Martin and Anna (first and second left) with delegates at the conference dinner

In the evening, the Conference Dinner was held at the Sky Hotel, a short coach trip away. The hotel is located at the top of a hill overlooking forest, lakes, rivers and the town of Rovaniemi. The meal was followed by presentations of mementos from the IAG to the organisers and to session chairs, this being an opportunity for delegates to express their thanks and gratitude for the hard work put in by GTK staff and others to make the conference such an enjoyable and memorable experience. After the meal, we were all invited onto the roof of the hotel to savour the panoramic view of hills, lakes and forest by the orange glow of the midnight sun.

On Wednesday, the final day of an all too short meeting, large-scale geochemical mapping was the flavour of the morning. The conference was closed just prior to lunch, which gave an opportunity to say goodbye to friends both old and new. Anyone with free time on Wednesday afternoon could make use of their complementary ticket to see the museum and discover more about the Arctic, its character and the changing way of life of its people.

Good company, great surroundings, efficient organisation, interesting talks and a truly memorable experience — what more could you want from Geoanalysis 2003.

A [Virtual Special Issue](#) of *Geostandards and Geoanalytical Research* brings together 23 original articles and two guest editorials originally published in the journal across two issues arising from Geoanalysis 2003. A notable group of papers deals with the determination of the platinum-group elements in a variety of natural ore samples and geological reference materials by several contrasting analytical techniques. There are detailed reports on a diverse suite of reference materials, including Re-Os molybdenites, zircon (the 91500 Harvard crystal), slate (OU-6 Penrhyn Slate), soil and sediment samples. A further group of papers tackles statistical techniques in geoanalysis, such as analytical bias and sampling theory.

Based on a meeting report written by Peter Webb and John Watson (The Open University)