

## Geoanalysis 2015 – Leoben, Austria

The [Geoanalysis 2015](#) meeting was held 9–13 August at the Montanuniversität in Leoben, Austria, the ninth such gathering in this triennial conference series. These conferences are one of the core activities of the IAG, and they have, over the years, established themselves as a key forum by which IAG members and guests can exchange ideas on the latest developments and technique refinements in the field of analytical geochemistry.

Geoanalysis 2015 itself was a resounding success. There were 130 registered participants, thus maintaining the very healthy level of interest seen at the previous two Geoanalysis meetings in Brazil (2012) and South Africa (2009). Sunday, August 9th began with three optional workshops: “Portable XRF Instruments”, “Fundamentals and Applications of LA-ICP-MS” and “The GeoPT Proficiency Testing Programme”. Conference registration was also open for those not attending the workshops. The evening ice-breaker reception went on to set the tone for the remainder of the week: a barbeque on the city’s renaissance/baroque “Marktplatz”, including traditional Austrian dances demonstrated by a local dance troupe.



The youngest members of the Sunday evening cultural programme, held on Leoben’s central market square. PHOTO: K. STOCKER.



Geoanalysis 2015 provided much time for detailed discussion during the poster sessions, which were a major highlight of the conference

The Leoben meeting was well structured, with an emphasis on poster presentations for which ample time was included during the conference schedule. The talks were arranged to avoid parallel sessions, with an invited keynote presentation placed at the beginning of each day. On Monday, Thomas Prohaska (University of Vienna, Austria) presented a talk on isotope tracers in archaeological sciences. On Tuesday, Wolfgang Müller (Royal Holloway University, London, UK) gave a talk devoted to the analysis of teeth as a tool for archaeometry and forensics by laser ablation inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) and secondary ion mass spectrometry (SIMS). On Wednesday, Frank Melcher (Montanuniversität Leoben, formerly at the German Geological Survey in Hannover) outlined the current situation regarding the geochemical fingerprinting of conflict minerals.



Henry Longerich (middle) after receiving the award of Honorary Fellow of the International Association of Geoanalysts. He is congratulated for his long and highly productive career in geoanalysis by Doug Miles (founding President of IAG, left) and Thomas Meisel (President of IAG and Chairperson of the Geoanalysis 2015 organizing committee, right).

Thursday, the final day of the conference, was a particularly memorable one: it kicked-off with an invited talk from Henry Longerich, emeritus Professor of Earth Sciences at the Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. For those involved in the microanalysis of geomaterials, Henry is one of the great names of analytical geochemistry. His pioneering work over some three decades laid the foundation for laser sampling in conjunction with the inductively coupled plasma ion source. It is fair to say that the LA-ICP-MS technique, as we know it today, rests on methodology largely established by Henry Longerich's group in St. John's. In recognition of his great achievements, the IAG awarded him the status of Honorary Fellow. As one would expect at a Geoanalysis meeting, social aspects were also a major focus, with every day having something new on offer. In addition to the Sunday ice breaker, the conference also organized a trip to Leoben's Gösser museum and its adjacent brewery on Monday evening, where participants could witness beverage production on a massive scale. On Tuesday night an excellent classical music recital was given at the university's Rector's Auditorium. An amazing conference meal was enjoyed at a country estate that specialises in locally produced products. These events offered not only excellent opportunities to discuss science but also provided many enjoyable memories of Leoben, resulting in a very successful conference.



Group photo of conference attendees taken during the trip to the traditional southern Austrian restaurant Buschenschrank, where the conference dinner was held. PHOTO: K. STOCKER.