European Association of Geochemistry

www.eag.eu.com

SIX QUESTIONS TO ROB RAISWELL

Rob Raiswell

Rob Raiswell gained his research degrees from the University of Liverpool (UK), and his first academic position was as a Lecturer in Sedimentary Geochemistry at the University of East Anglia (UK). In 1983, he moved to the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Leeds (UK) and remained there until retirement. The Earth sciences department became the School of Earth and Environment, and he is now an Emeritus Professor in the school. Rob believes he has been very fortunate to have held a variety of visiting positions in some of the best schools in the USA – Yale University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and the University of California, Riverside – and has been elected a Fellow of the European Association of Geochemistry and of the Geochemical Society. He still retains research interests in the geochemistry of glacial systems and the polar iron cycles.

Rob Raiswell co-authored with Don Canfield the first issue of *Geochemical Perspectives*, 'The Iron Biogeochemical Cycle Past and Present', and he is regularly involved with creating the EAG cartoons 'Black & White'.

1. What or who inspired you to become a geochemist?

I became a geochemist mostly through a series of lucky accidents. I had an undistinguished academic start, only acquiring an ordinary degree in chemistry at the University of Liverpool at the second attempt. Fortunately, I was able to persuade the Geology Department to allow me to do a research MSc (and later a PhD), largely thanks to Mike Atherton who was a metamorphic geochemist in the department. Mike was farsighted enough to see the potential of low-temperature geochemistry and was prepared to take a risk on me as a graduate student.

2. How do you think the field has changed since you were a student?

There has been a huge expansion in low-temperature geochemistry, whereas igneous and metamorphic geochemistry were dominant when I started research. Now there seems to be an ever-expanding group of talented low-temperature geochemists. However, competition has also hugely increased and this has resulted in individuals to become more focused. Consequently, our different science communities are becoming introspective and reluctant to search outside existing paradigms. The corresponding growth in literature also makes it difficult to read widely, which also discourages cross-disciplinary exchanges. The best geologist is the one who has seen the most rocks … and this is also true for geochemistry!

3. Which career choices were the most important?

I was fortunate to start my academic career in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia, where my chemistry degree plus geochemistry research background was in keeping with their emphasis on inter-disciplinarity. The university also supported my study leave with Bob Berner at Yale University [USA], which brought me into contact with a fabulous group of PhD geochemists that included Don Canfield, Tim Lyons and Bernie Boudreau. I had seen Bob Berner's early papers and thought his 1964 *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta* paper on modelling porewater sulfate [v. 28, pp 1497-1503] was an exciting use of kinetics in sediment diagenesis.

4. What has been your greatest obstacle?

Having to continually remind too many chemists and geochemists about the fundamental role of mineralogy in Earth surface systems. For example, existing views of the modern iron cycle are hampered by a failure to grasp the significance of mineralogy at the colloidal and nano-level.

5. What inspires or motivates you?

I enjoy working on large-scale geochemical problems. The textbooks by Garrels and Mackenzie on *The Evolution of Sedimentary Rocks* and Garrels, Mackenzie and Hunt on *Chemical Cycles and the Global Environment* were my inspiration for this approach.

6. What qualities do you look for in a potential PhD student?

Enthusiasm, way ahead of exceptional academic qualifications. Willingness to learn new skills, problem-solving ability and persistence. Research is more about perspiration than inspiration!

EAG MEMBERSHIP: TO ENJOY A FULL YEAR OF BENEFITS, JOIN OR RENEW NOW

The EAG has developed a comprehensive set of membership benefits at a very affordable price, suiting early career scientists or more advanced ones, anywhere in the world.

- Member registration rates to **Goldschmidt** conferences
- Print and online issues of ***Geochemical Perspectives***
- Print and online issues of ***Elements***
- Reduced subscription rates to ***Chemical Geology*** and ***Geofluids***
- **Sponsorship of students** attending workshops and conferences in Europe
- Ambassador Program, **supporting early career scientists** based in Europe to attend conferences outside of Europe
- Sponsorship of member-led **workshops and conferences**
- **Member rates for print publications** of the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland (MSGBI), the Italian Geological Society (SGI), the Italian Society of Mineralogy and Petrology (SIMP), and the French Quaternary Association (AFEQ)
- **Member rates to publish** open-access articles in *Mineralogical Magazine* and *Clay Minerals*
- **Member rates to attend events** organised by the MSGBI, the International Association of GeoChemistry (IACG), the International Society for Environmental Biogeochemistry (ISEB), the Society for Geology Applied to Mineral Deposits (SGA), and the European Association of Geoscientists & Engineers (EAGE)
- Receipt of monthly newsletters
- Access to networking through the EAG blog, social media, information about jobs, conferences, geochemistry related news and other activities of interests to geochemists

Membership Rates

Student 1 year	15 Euros	**Professional 1 year**	25 Euros
Student 3 years	35 Euros	**Professional 5 years**	100 Euros

Did you know that **institutional membership** is also possible? Check www.eag.eu.com/membership for more information or contact our business office.

Focus on EAG Partnerships

With the aim of strengthening geochemistry internationally, the EAG has partnered with many learned societies. These include international, national, or specific discipline–focused societies. Such partnerships increase visibility and allow a sharing of information with different audiences; they also benefit members of both the EAG and the partner society at the individual level.

For example, partnership with the MSGBI allows EAG members to purchase print publications of MSGBI at the reduced member rate. The same applies to print publications of SGI, SIMP, and the AFEQ. Members of the EAG are also able to attend events organised by MSGBI, ISEB, IAGC, SGA or EAGE at the reduced member rate. And as noted above, members of the EAG can benefit from the MSGBI member rate to publish open-access articles in the journals *Mineralogical Magazine* and *Clay Minerals*.

These partnerships also allow members of all the partner societies listed below to benefit from the reduced member rate when registering at Goldschmidt conferences in Europe.

You can find all the details of each partnership agreement online at www.eag.eu.com/about/partnerships. And of course, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

GEOCHEMICAL PERSPECTIVES LETTERS IS MOVING TO ONLINE FORMAT ONLY

As announced in the preface of our last published issue of Geochemical Perspectives Letters (GPL), we will now move to an electronic format only. This move was planned at the inception of the journal and allows us to readily expand the number of manuscripts published and the speed at which we can publish without incurring additional fees. We hope this will make GPL a yet more attractive place for our community to share its latest research so please submit your next high impact manuscript to GPL.