

11<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL KIMBERLITE CONFERENCE  
GABORONE, BOTSWANA  
2017



In September 2017 the 11th IKC was held in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, a country which was very poor on independence on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1966. By 2017, however, Botswana produced 23 million carats of diamonds, which was 15% of world production and had a value of US\$ 3.3 billion. Latest figures (2021) are again 23 million carats, but 19% of world production and a value of US\$ 4.7 billion. The Conference was held in the Gaborone International Conference Centre, which is part of the Grand Palm Resort, and is shown in **Figure 11 IKC-1**.



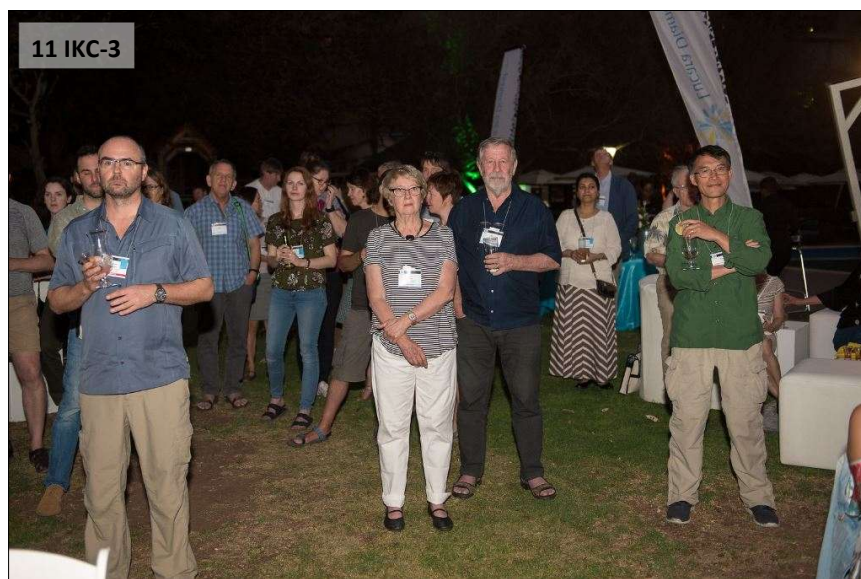
The activities at both the Conference and the principal fieldtrip to the major operating mines in Botswana were extensively covered by Conference photographers. To gain access, start with the home page for the 11<sup>th</sup> IKC, (<http://www.11ikc.com/>) then go to 11IKC photos, which provides 3275 pictures and a sixteen-minute video. This approach means that although the pictures are linked to a specific activity, none are further defined within that activity, so that with facial close-ups, for example, the viewer either knows, or does not know, who is in the picture. With the Conference proceedings, however, the pictures taken closely follow the Oral programme, (for the first 3 days only), and that programme can be found in 'Downloads' at the bottom of the home page information. Connecting pictures of the speakers to the programme helps people identification. The video further outlines Conference activities, from the reception, Conference proceedings, the Bush braai, to the Conference dinner.

The following pictures, therefore, are an eclectic selection, firstly from the Conference and secondly from the Major Mines field trip, which will further provide an overall appreciation of this excellent Conference.

**Figure 11 IKC-2** shows Jock Robey chatting to Manfred Marx at the Conference reception. Six-months after graduation from Cape Town University, Manfred found himself the discoverer of the Orapa mine.



**Figure 11 IKC-3** is Sue O'Reilly and husband Bill Griffin, recipients of the proceedings volume dedications, flanked on the left by Graham Pearson with Oded Navon and Janina Czas in the background and on the right Yingwei Fei.



Why Paddy Lawless and Roger Mitchell should be so concerned about a piece of paper In **Figure 11 IKC-4**, is a mystery.





Members of the Gemological Institute of America were well represented at the Conference, **Figure 11 IKC-5** showing Evan Smith and, in the queue, Karen Smit and Ulrika D’Haenens-Johansson chatting to Ingrid Chinn of DeBeers.



The Conference ‘events’ were organised by the ladies in blue in **Figure 11 IKC-6**. Electra Vye (right) was in charge supported by Amy Crosbie. They formed a very efficient team and are seen here with Mary Lou Willows from North Arrow Mining.



On the Wednesday evening of the Conference there was a Bush braai which included traditional dancing and was recorded in some detail by Conference photographers.



Figure 11 IKC-7 shows five happy delegates.

Figure 11 IKC-8 some of the traditional dancers.



The farewell Conference dinner was another lavish affair, where the dress theme was 'black and white with a touch of elegance'. At this event Barbara Scott-Smith was presented with a scale model of the Lesedi La Rona diamond (4<sup>th</sup> largest ever found), recovered from the Karowe mine and presented by John Armstrong, Figure 11 IKC-9.





Wine was presented to the delegates to whom the Proceedings Volumes were dedicated, Gerhard Brey, Bill Griffin and Sue O'Reilly, **Figure 11 IKC-10**.

The 'old farts' sang the nodule song, **Figure 11 IKC-11** (Jeff Harris, Steve Haggerty, John Gurney, Herb Helmstaedt, Roger Mitchell, Barbara Scott-Smith, Volker Lorentz and Mal MacCallum), and the rest of the delegates had a good time.



After the dinner, the author, as master of ceremonies, found himself the centre of some charming company, **Figure 11 IKC-12**.

The final social event was a visit to the Mokolodi Game Reserve, some 10 kms south-west of Gaborone. Again, this event is very well covered by Conference photographers. An inquiring kudu sets the scene, **Figure 11 IKC-13**.



The popularity of the Major Mine Fieldtrip meant that the party was divided into two groups. The one considered here is the pre-Conference field trip 1A and firstly involved a visit to Orapa, Letlhakane and Karowe in the north and then Jwaneng in the south. Again, we were accompanied by Conference photographers, but note, only for the Jwaneng mine (see photo files).



The mine trip started with a visit to the Orapa observation platform. **Figure 11 IKC-14** shows the main pit area of the pipe taken from that platform. The bench heights are 10m and this gives some sense of the depth and size of this mine.



The party then went to the Orapa core shed, a large elongate building containing a lot of rock. **Figure 11 IKC-15** shows Karen Smit getting serious with this material with Thomas Stachel and Oded Navon far left and Chiara Anzolini and Antony Burnham behind Karen.





**Figure 11 IKC-16** shows the central part of Damtshaa, and **Figure 11 IKC-17** that of the larger mine at Letlhakane. Both mines were on care and maintenance, so access was not possible.



The Karowe mine, on the other hand, was very active as **Figure 11 IKC-18** shows and from the pit bottom.





Figure 11 IKC-19 presents a general view of the kimberlite.



The mining recovery process at Karowe differs from other mines, with autogenous milling, the large machine shown in **Figure 11 IKC-20**, and X-ray transmission technology which detects diamonds whilst still in the broken kimberlite.





**Figure 11 IKC-21** is a panorama of the Jwaneng kimberlite taken from the observation platform. Again, benches are 10m high.



In the Jwaneng pit bottom, **Figure 11 IKC-22**, the dumping of fresh kimberlite from a 130-ton truck, due to a tyre failure, firstly attracted a few, then more than few delegates. Kimberlite textures were of considerable interest but then the ultimate prize was found. After being passed around the group, the specimen was thrown back onto the kimberlite pile by security staff.





Like Orapa the core shed at Jwaneng was vast. **Figure 11 IKC-23** shows Ulrika D’Haenens-Johansson and Karen Smit (eyes closed as a fluke of the camera) with Thomas Stachel and Anetta Banas.



Finally, **Figure 11 IKC-24** shows Theetso Motsamai, a Motswana, with his supervisors at the Karowe mine. Theetso graduated with a Ph.D from the University of Alberta in September 2018, after studying the inclusions in diamonds from that mine. This project was the result of a most successful collaboration between the Canadian mine owners, Lucara Diamonds and Academia. Currently Theesto is a lecturer in the Botswana International University of Science and Technology, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences.

