



Plansee Seminar 2017

Opening Session – Global hardmetal trends

Kenneth J.A. Brookes

Consultant Editor

When I decided to publish a World Directory and Handbook of Hardmetals, among my first actions was to talk to the Board of one of the world's largest hardmetal manufacturers regarding their cost-effective 'duty' to expand the total market, rather than simply buy up competitors.

But Metallwerk Plansee, founded years earlier by technical pioneer Paul Schwarzkopf in a picturesque valley of the Austrian Tyrol, was way ahead of me. Firstly by Schwarzkopf's and his collaborator Richard Kieffer's definitive reference book, '**Hartstoffe und Hartmetalle**', which, especially through its English translations, became a best-seller and the 'bible' of the industry. Secondly, the modest but technically brilliant house journal '**Planseeberichte für Pulvermetallurgie**', eventually superseded by Bernard Williams' '**Metal Powder Report**'. And thirdly, the regular **Plansee Seminars**, at first for friends and customers but eventually for international researchers and competitors who, thanks partly to its four-yearly intervals, rightly regard it as the 'Olympics' of the refractory metals and hard materials industries. We could even add a fourth, the **Plansee Society**, which comprised Seminar attendees and met, as far as I could tell, only at Plansee Seminars. It became the nucleus, if not of the EPMA, the European Powder Metallurgy Association, then at least its very active Hard Materials (EuroHM) Group.

1. Best ever Seminar?

Just as athletes save their best efforts for the Olympics, so do researchers into refractory and hard materials seek to complete

their current investigations in time for the next Plansee Seminar. Their equivalent to an athletics final is the accolade of an oral presentation. The majority of posters might have rated live performance at any other PM conference.

For regular attendees, their first view of the 2017 19th Seminar site was of an entirely new and apparently permanent building adjacent to the traditional Walter Schwarzkopf Hall, both located outside the high-security area comprising the Plansee plant and headquarters. Known as 'The Cube', this substantial two-storey construction was large enough to hold all the posters for comfortable viewing, a second lecture hall, a much larger restaurant for the fabled Plansee catering, and even occasional musical entertainment. Nevertheless, in spite of its air of permanency and obviously high cost, it was due to be dismantled and removed within a few days of the Seminar's closing.

Though Metallwerk Plansee (now part of the Ceratizit organization, which also embraces Luxembourg's Cerametal and is collectively owned by Plansee Holding) is dedicated to the wider education of users, producers, researchers and others within its technologically advanced industry, it draws a very sharp line between that and the vast amount of know-how hidden within its factory complex. In recent years, however, as the Seminar gained in importance and popularity, it has had to move some of this activity, including lectures and some posters, within the security area. Even using a bus to cover short walking distances, security guards on every corner and closed doors and windows, security in the face of invasion by determined competitors has been a substantial headache. According to rumour, the Board of Directors blanched when told of the temporary building's cost, but were rapidly won over when advised that, as a result, not a single Seminar attendee would pass through the security gate.

E-mail address: kenbrookes@intercarb.org.

2. Grand opening

Entertained on arrival by the traditional open-air brass band (Fig. 1) and orchestral stage performance (Fig. 2), the assembled enthusiasts filling the Walter Schwarzkopf Hall were greeted by Seminar Chairman Lorenz Sigl and Secretary, Heinrich Kestler (Fig. 3).

An official welcome to the 19th International Plansee Seminar at the Plansee Group headquarters in Breitenwang, Reutte, came from Executive Board Member Karlheinz Wex (Fig. 4). Once again, he told us, there was a full house of 450 scientists and others with interests in refractory metals and hard materials, from 28 countries. 90 oral presentations and 130 posters would receive their first public presentation during the next few days. After two years of preparation, it gave great satisfaction to Plansee and the organizing committees.

During the previous weeks and months the organization office had worked many long days and nights. They had prepared this

week alongside their daily work, supported by the scientific committee and the international liaison board.

The first Plansee Seminar took place 65 years earlier. When Professor Paul Schwarzkopf, the founder of Plansee, organized it in 1952, his intention was to bring together the academic and industrial world for a week to discuss material and technological innovations in the field of powder metallurgy and refractory metals. It was interesting, said Karlheinz, to note that the Plansee Seminar still gets record participation despite internet and social media. Plansee was proud that it was one of the largest powder metallurgical conferences worldwide. After 65 years the company still believed in the value that the Plansee Seminar brought to the powder metallurgical community.

In addition to the sessions around applications, materials and characterization, there would be special interest sessions on PVD technology for hard materials, numeric modeling of materials and processes as well as new production technologies.



FIGURE 1

In front of a new (but temporary) building, Plansee Seminar participants are greeted by sunshine and the traditional brass band.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/8010356>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/8010356>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)