

# SPOTLIGHT

## on the SAIMM branches

One of the important facets of The South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy is its service to its members. One way of achieving this objective is by pursuing an active branch structure. In this Spotlight, Richard Beck, Holder of the Regional Development Portfolio, gives the aims of the Institute's branches, with a short note on each branch prepared by the regional chairman.

### Aims of the Branches

The primary aims of the Branches of The South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy are those of the Institute itself: to further the interest of its members, to uphold the status of the mining and metallurgical profession, and to promote the image of mining and metallurgy. Beyond these 'high' objectives, the branches have a special function in providing a more intimate relationship between the Institute and its members. The branches enable members who live outside the Johannesburg area to participate in the affairs of the Institute to an extent that would not otherwise be possible and that they themselves can define. This is achieved through the holding of social events, colloquia, and visits.

The industry served by the Institute is multi-disciplinary, and communications across disciplines is most important. These can be achieved at branch meetings in a way that cannot be attained in the workplace or through other organizations. The barriers of hierarchy can be dropped at branch meetings, where the newly graduated member rubs shoulders with the seasoned professional.

The committee of a branch is elected annually at an annual general meeting through voting by a show of hands, and usually consists of a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, three members, and the immediate past chairman. Any member of the Institute may vote and serve on the committee—a privilege that is not solely the prerogative of corporated members.

Individual branches of the Institute are already forming their own particular characteristics through the various enthusiasms and activities of their members. Above all, a branch is what its members make it, and all members of the Institute are encouraged to take note of branch activities and to support them. A diary of branch activities is published regularly in the *Journal*, and members of the Institute are welcome to attend any meeting, whether they live in that specific geographical region or not.

### Johannesburg Branch

The Johannesburg Branch serves members in Johannesburg and the surrounding areas from the Jukskei River in the north, in the East Rand, and in the West Rand as far as Westonaria.

#### Committee and Office Bearers 1989/90

**Chairman** B. Moore, Gold Fields  
**Vice Chairman** P. Smith, Anglo American  
**Secretary** K.R. Greve, Gold Fields  
**Other members** C.C. Seymour, Steffen, Robertson & Kirsten

Dr E. Kirby, JCI  
Dr N. Gay, COMRO  
D.J. Milella, Rand Mines  
R. Meade, Anglovaal (co-opted)  
G. Lee, Gengold (co-opted).

### History of the Branch

The Branch was officially inaugurated at a general meeting held in Kelvin House on Monday, 18th January, 1988, at which Mr G.T.G. Emère was elected Chairman, Mr B. Moore Vice Chairman, Mr D.J. Milella Secretary, and Dr E. Kirby Treasurer. The current Committee was elected in June 1989.

The Branch enjoyed success from the outset, and holds regular general meetings. It concentrates on acquiring good speakers to address members on major mining-related projects that represent a cross-section of the technical professions involved from geology through to metallurgical beneficiation.

A notable feature of these meetings has been the attendant cocktail parties, which enable members and their guests to socialize. Numerous companies have generously sponsored these parts of the meetings, enabling many people from the industry at large to get to know one another better.

One-day and two-day excursions have also been organized, and the hosts have ensured that these events have been both technically and socially rewarding.

### Pretoria Branch

The Pretoria Branch primarily serves the area bounded by the Jukskei River in the south, Warmbaths in the north, Middelburg in the east, and Brits in the west.

#### Office Bearers 1989/90

**Chairman** Professor R.F. Sandenberg  
**Vice Chairman** Professor A.N. Brown  
**Secretary** P.C. Pretorius  
**Other Members** P.H. Botha  
C. Swart  
G.S. Esterhuizen.

### History of the Branch

The inaugural meeting of the Branch was held on Monday, 1st February, 1988, at the Sports Centre of the University of Pretoria. Its activities have been marked by the quality of speakers invited to address members, including Professor N.E. Wiehahn, Unisa; Dr D.C. Neethling, Chief Executive of the National Energy Board; and Professor R. Botha, Chairman of the Council for the

Environment. On 15th May, 1989, the Branch hosted the Hendrik van der Bijl Memorial Lecture given by Dr Louw Alberts, which proved to be an exceptional event.

### **Orange Free State Branch**

The Orange Free State Branch serves the OFS gold-fields, Allanridge, Odendaalsrus, Welkom, and Virginia.

#### *Office Bearers 1989/90*

<i>Chairman</i>	J.C. Steenkamp
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	D.R. Fleming
<i>Secretary</i>	H. Olinger
<i>Past Chairman</i>	J.H. McCallum
<i>Other Members</i>	H.M.W. Eschenberg W.J.N. Gelderblom Dr M.A. Orridge A.H. le Roux E.N.D. Westgate.

#### *History of the Branch*

At a general meeting of the Institute held in Welkom on 2nd July, 1959, a request signed by twenty-five members resident in the Orange Free State was handed in, calling upon Council to establish a local centre. This request led to the birth of the branch concept in the Institute. A set of rules for the conduct of 'a local centre' was prepared, and the inaugural meeting of the Institute's oldest branch was held at Harmony Gold Mine on 1st March, 1960, which was attended by 100 members.

In the mid 1960s, it was not unusual for more members to attend the Orange Free State meetings than the main meetings in Johannesburg. Regular meetings and visits on very varied topics have been held over the years. More recently, the two full-day colloquia and associated visits held in 1983 and 1987 were very successful.

### **Western Cape Branch**

The Western Cape Branch, as its name implies, serves that particular area of the country.

#### *Office Bearers 1989/90*

<i>Chairman</i>	Professor J.S.J. van Deventer
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Professor C.T. O'Connor
<i>Secretary</i>	Professor F.L.D. Cloete
<i>Past Chairman</i>	Professor J-P. Franzidis
<i>Other Member</i>	R.D. Knudsen.

#### *History of the Branch*

This Branch was inaugurated in November 1989 with the aim of creating a greater awareness of the mineral industry in the region, particularly among young job-seekers. The Department of Metallurgical Engineering at the University of Stellenbosch and the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Cape Town form the nucleus of the Branch.

The Branch has been very active since its formation, organizing technical meetings, visits, and social functions, as well as school days to advertise the various professions in the industry to high-school pupils. The main event in the calendar each year is the Annual Mineral Processing Symposium, which is held alternately at the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Cape Town. In 1989, in place of this Colloquium, the Branch organized

an International Colloquium on Froth Flotation. This successful event included six speakers from overseas.

### **Witbank/Middelburg Branch**

The Witbank/Middelburg Branch represents members in the eastern and southeastern parts of the Transvaal coalfield, between Secunda in the south, Middelburg in the northeast, and Witbank in the northwest.

#### *Office Bearers 1989/90*

<i>Chairman</i>	J.A.D. Britz, Goedehoop Colliery
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	L.G. van Biljon, Greenside Colliery
<i>Secretary</i>	B. Ford, Goedehoop Colliery
<i>Past Chairman</i>	A.M.P. Henderson, Middelburg Steel & Alloys
<i>Other Members</i>	W.J. Abel C.D.R. Galpin, Kleinkopje Colliery C.P. Goodale, AAC Prospecting T. Schmoll, Highveld Steel & Vanadium R.B. Smith, SA Coal Estates.

#### *History of the Branch*

The idea of forming this branch of The Institute of Mining and Metallurgy was first proposed by Mr Gerald Sowry, Manager of Wolwekrans Colliery, who during 1967 discussed his plans with other colliery managers, a large number of whom belonged to the parent body. Mr Sowry had managed mines in the Witbank area since 1945, and had been a keen and enthusiastic member of the Institute since joining in 1938, having presented several papers and contributed to many others.

Having received a favourable response, and supported by the necessary two members, he wrote to Council advertising that the establishment of a local branch would be welcomed. Mr Peter Mulder of Southern Cross Steel volunteered as Honorary Secretary and convened a meeting on 26th January in the boardroom of Rand Carbide in Witbank.

At this meeting, nine local corporate members were nominated and duly appointed by Council to form an inaugural committee, with Mr C.G. Sowry as Chairman. Mr J. Meintjies was elected Vice Chairman and Mr P. Mulder Secretary. The other members comprised Messrs A. Bain, A.W.L. Brereton, B.J. Hosking, B.R. Holz, E.J. Jackson, and J.H. Moore. In terms of the constitution they were, in due course, to hold an election for the membership of the next committee.

The inaugural meeting of the Branch was held in the Town Hall, Middelburg, on Thursday, 21st March, 1968, which was also the March General Meeting of the Institute. A large party, including 14 Council members and 4 Past Presidents, travelled through from Johannesburg. Altogether, 131 persons were present, of whom 55 were members.

The meeting was opened by the President of the Institute, Mr P. Lambooy, who, after completing the official business of the general meeting, attended to the matter of the formation of the Branch. He concluded that it was fitting that a branch should be inaugurated in such an industrially active area of such high potential. Mr H. Britten, Past President of the Institute, addressed those present, and the newly elected president, Mr C.G. Sowry,

then spoke. Two papers—on chromium and ferrochromium—were presented at the meeting, which was preceded by a visit to RMB Alloys and Southern Cross Steel Company.

In due course, Mr Sowry was transferred to Johannesburg, and Mr Meintjies was elected Chairman and Mr Bain Vice Chairman. During Mr Meintjies' chairmanship, Mr Mulder was transferred and Mrs Bain became Secretary. At the 1971 AGM, held in the Boulevard Hotel, Witbank, Mr Bain was elected Chairman and Mrs Bain continued as secretary.

During these early years, the Chairman regularly attended executive meetings in Johannesburg, and the Branch visited interesting operations in the area. Committee meetings were held in the boardroom of Rand Carbide, and other meetings at venues that suited the occasions. Some of the early papers presented included papers on water purification in Windhoek, blast furnaces and their design, and the use of plastics in coal mines.

#### **Vaal Triangle Branch**

The Vaal Triangle Branch serves members in the towns of Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging, Sasolburg, Heidelberg, and Heilbron.

#### *Office Bearers 1989/90*

<i>Chairman</i>	Professor M.D. Brayshaw
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Dr M.J.U.T. van Wijngaarden
<i>Treasurer</i>	M.A.L. van der Walt
<i>Past Chairman</i>	K.R.E. Beard
<i>Other Members</i>	A.M. Saayman B.J. Lodewijcks P.R. van Wyk P.A. Taljaard A. Maass J.A. Terblanche.

#### *History of the Branch*

The Branch began during January 1987 under the leadership of Mr Dieter Rümelin of Iscor; indeed, it was at the request of Iscor and with their backing that the Branch made a strong start. The Committee was very strong, and had representation from Iscor, Usco, and other major companies in the Vaal Triangle, together with representation from the University of Potchefstroom.

Mr Darryl Wilson took office as Chairman for the following period (1987/88). The Committee was again very strong, with representatives from local industry and Potchefstroom University. The following events were successfully organized: a symposium on the offshore Mossgas Project, a seminar on the fire safety of polymers, a cocktail party at the Vereeniging Mayor's parlour, and visits to New Vaal Colliery and EMSA.

Mr Ken Beard took over the chair for the 1988/89 session, which was again very successful. A major collo-

quium (on ferrous pyrometallurgy) was hosted at the Vaal Technikon, two visits (to SA Breweries and the Iscor CAL line), and a short seminar (on Christian education conducted by Mr A. Sparrow) were all very successful.

Perhaps the most important feature of this Branch is the contrasting approaches adopted by a succession of very strong committees. The present Committee has made a commitment to improve the support given to its functions and to expand its activities. The Branch looks forward to a rich and rewarding future in the metallurgical-based industrial region in which it is situated.

#### **Namibia Branch**

The Namibia Branch, as its name implies, serves the interests of members in that country.

#### *Office Bearers 1989/90*

<i>Chairman</i>	P.N. Vernon
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	S.B. Kesler
<i>Secretary</i>	C.C. Lindsay
<i>Local Organizers</i>	C. Kihn (Windhoek) A. Knowles (Swakopmund).

#### *History of the Branch*

A local section of The Institution of Mining and Metallurgy (IMM) was brought into being by the efforts of Mr Gordon Freeman (who was then General Manager at Rössing), and it received an approved constitution from the Council of the Institution in London in 1985. When Namibia was being considered as a locality for a branch of the South African Institute, it was decided that there was no room for two sections with identical objectives. An approach was therefore made to the local section of the IMM, who whole-heartedly welcomed the involvement of members of the South African Institute.

Regular meetings are held both in Windhoek and Swakopmund, with occasional meetings at Tsumeb.

#### **New Branches**

There are a number of areas not served by branches of the Institute in which potential branches could be founded. However, the Institute has no wish to conflict with existing associations that have similar aims to those of the Institute.

In this spirit, the Institute made an approach to the Association of Mine Managers of the North Western Transvaal and to the Barberton Mining Association, and members of the Institute have been assured of a warm welcome at the meetings of these two organizations. Accordingly, the activities of these organizations will be included in the diary of branch activities.

Moves are now afoot to establish a branch of the Institute in Natal in the near future.