



BHP Billiton Diamonds Inc.

Memorandum

Date October 21, 2005
To BC & Yukon Chamber of Mines Nominating Committee
CC Eira Thomas
From Jon Carlson, Exploration and Resources Manager, BHP Billiton Diamonds Inc.
Our Ref

Support Letter – Dr. John Gurney Nomination for Hugo Dummett Diamond Award

I am very pleased to offer my support to the nomination of Dr. John Gurney for the Hugo Dummett Diamond Award. I first met John in 1983 at the 3rd International Kimberlite Conference which was held in Clermont Ferrand, France. At that time, I had just started my career in exploration geology having recently been hired by Hugo Dummett who was heading up Superior Minerals diamond exploration projects. Hugo had involved John quite early in the evaluation of the Sloan pipe in northern Colorado in assessing the preliminary diamond results. The Colorado/Wyoming kimberlite field did not produce tangible economic results and Hugo began to push the project teams into new areas. He also forged a close relationship with Chuck Fipke of Kelowna, B.C. who had established an excellent laboratory capable of extracting kimberlite indicator minerals from large samples of alluvial or glacial material.

By about 1984, Hugo had instigated a microprobe installation in Houston for Superior Oil to analyse possible indicator minerals recovered from widespread sample concentrates run at Chuck Fipke's CF Mineral Research Ltd. About this time, Dr. Gurney had developed an ingenious geochemical method for evaluating the diamond potential of kimberlites by simply analysing a representative population of kimberlite indicator minerals, the so-called "G10" garnets. He had developed this concept after painstakingly analysing hundreds of diamond inclusions and studying their chemical compositions. Hugo would provide indicator mineral data from Superior's lab in Houston to John Gurney for comment. The subsequent reports and discussions with John Gurney were quite secretive as Hugo Dummett realized he had a clear edge on the competition. In the mid 1980's, Chuck Fipke and his partner Stewart Blusson collected a series of alluvial samples in the area of the Mountain Diatreme, an ultramafic intrusion that would later prove to have no diamond potential. However, they subsequently found out about a small diamond exploration camp operated by De Beers in an area called Blackwater Lake. Many Canadians know the story of how Chuck Fipke (and his partners) painstakingly traced the kimberlite indicator minerals to Lac de Gras, Northwest Territories and the eventual home of the Ekati (and Diavik) diamond mines. The part of the story that is rarely mentioned is the critical importance of Dr. John Gurney's G10 method in prioritizing this particular search as being likely to lead to a diamond mine. Hugo

Dummett periodically sent the key garnet probe data to Gurney in Cape Town to get his opinion on the garnet and oxide mineral compositions so that he could prioritize the search. It was clear from the first batch of data from the samples collected outside of Blackwater Lake that they were on to something important. It was John Gurney who was very positive in his assessment of the diamond potential of the early exploration samples. Hugo Dummett strongly trusted Gurney's assessment of the diamond potential of the indicator minerals and continued to press hard. Eventually, the prospecting team honed in on Lac de Gras and collected some very strongly anomalous samples on what would become the first diamond claims in the Slave Province. It was the mineral chemistry report by Gurney (and Moore) in 1990 that galvanized the area as a sure win. The discovery hole at Point Lake wasn't drilled until later 1991. Amazingly, Hugo Dummett was able to convince a sceptical mining giant, BHP Minerals, to invest in the project, almost entirely on the basis of the exploration sample garnet chemistries and their relationship to diamonds – thanks to the technological breakthrough of John Gurney. I have little doubt that eventually the Ekati diamond mine would have been found and developed. However, the history books would have been different and it's hard to imagine a better story than this one. The original Point Lake discovery precipitated the biggest mining rush since the early Klondike gold rush and the subsequent development of the Panda kimberlite cemented Canada's position as an important global diamond producer.

If only for John Gurney's early critical involvement in the discovery (and development) of the Ekati mine, I would recommend his receipt of this award. But John Gurney has done much, much more to contribute to diamond exploration in Canada. He has personally mentored dozens of students and young scientists involved in kimberlite and diamond work in Canada and elsewhere. The contributions of John Gurney and his Mineral Service team were front and centre at the 8th International Kimberlite Conference hosted in Victoria, BC. John Gurney and his group authored many highly significant research and exploration related papers and posters on the Ekati kimberlites and diamonds. John Gurney and his group continue to play a very important role in the exploration and development of kimberlites on the original ground that he helped to find and play a big role for the many smaller companies hoping to find the next diamond mine. John Gurney has continued to inspire young scientists and to train them on leading edge kimberlite science and exploration technology through workshops that have been very well attended by Canadian exploration geologists.

For these reasons, and many more, I can think of no more deserving person than Dr. John Gurney for this award and am sure that it would be a most fitting honour to Hugo's memory.

Regards,



Jon Carlson
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