



***The Manganese Adventure—The South African Manganese Fields* by Bruce Cairncross, Nicolas J. Beukes, and Jens Gutzmer. Associated Ore and Metal Corporation Ltd.; order through Professor Bruce Cairncross, Dept. of Geology, Rand Afrikaans University, P.O. Box 524, Auckland Park 2006, Johannesburg, South Africa. 236 pages; 1997; U.S. \$90 plus U.S. \$15 surface**

mail; prepaid only, personal checks not accepted (hardbound).

When I first heard of this book, I had little interest in reading, much less purchasing, a book about drab, black, earthy ores mined half a world away. However, one needs only to look at this book's cover (a spectacular rhodochrosite specimen) to suspect that there is much of interest within. The book is a wonderful vehicle for a profusely illustrated, systematic presentation of the incredible minerals found in the world-famous Northern Cape manganese deposits, which include the great Kalahari manganese field and the Postmasburg region in general. The book is dedicated to Guido Sacco, father of Desmond Sacco whose well-known mineral collection figures prominently throughout the book.

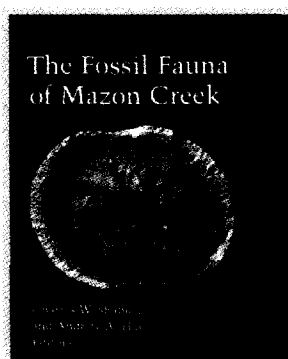
The Manganese Adventure is divided into seven major chapters, beginning with a good treatment of manganese and related iron occurrences, the historical use of these metals, and the South African context. This is followed by the history of the Kalahari and Postmasburg regions. Next, geology comes into play beginning with a chapter on regional geology that is essentially an excellent synopsis of the Transvaal Supergroup. This is followed by separate chapters on the geology of the Kalahari manganese field, the Postmasburg manganese and iron-ore field, and a short chapter that relates the individual fields to one another and to global tectonics. Finally, 110 pages into the book, we arrive at its major chapter titled "An Adventure into the Minerals." This chapter, which has a strong bias toward photographs rather than text, is divided into six parts that include an introductory "Highlights" section; a section on type-locality minerals; one on "famous" minerals for which the districts are so well known, including rhodochrosite, ettringite, hausmannite, hematite, inesite, sugilite, thaumasite, and xonotlite; an interesting section on rare minerals; and concluding sections on other minerals and Postmasburg minerals. The book closes with two tables, a bibliography containing 144 entries, and an index.

One of the many strengths of this book is its illustrations. It boasts more than 250 color photographs with at least one for every even remotely photogenic mineral found in the manganese and iron mines of the region. These are not tiny images crammed 20 to the page but large, carefully composed photos, each at least a quarter-page in size. In addition, there are 62 colored maps and diagrams used to illustrate the chapters on

geology. Early in the book there is good use of historical photographs and maps in the treatment of the deposits' discovery and development.

Finally, the volume has been produced to very high specifications, thanks in part to its corporate sponsorship. It is printed on Ikonofic Matt Art 135 g.s.m. paper. The quality of its color photographs and colored maps and diagrams is outstanding. Only twelve hundred copies of *The Manganese Adventure* were printed; of these, only one thousand are available for sale. It is strongly recommended for anyone interested in South African geology, history, and mining and is a key reference work with respect to mineral specimens historically and currently available from the Kalahari and Postmasburg mines.

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***Richardson's Guide to the Fossil Fauna of Mazon Creek*, ed. by Charles W. Shabica and Andrew A. Hay. Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago. 308 pages; 1997; \$101.25 (hardbound).**

At long last, after a fourteen-year wait, the much-anticipated work on Illinois' premier fossil fauna is here. It had been rumored to be coming out imminently for at least the last ten years. Dedicated to and deservedly named for the late Eugene Richardson, the guiding light of Mazon Creek fossil studies, this handsome work has a jacket with a striking arachnid photograph and attractively illustrated endpapers. It is unquestionably the most comprehensive work to cover what is probably the most significant Pennsylvanian fossil fauna known. Touching on almost all aspects of the geology and paleobiology of this fauna and including virtually all the major taxa known, it has a good preface and thirty-six chapters (but lists twenty-one) authored by twenty-five scientists, including such major students of the Mazon Creek Fauna as Gordon Baird and Fred Schram. The writing is usually clear, and the photographs in general are reasonably good, although a few are a bit too dark and at least one is upside down. It would have been nice to have the annelid figures somewhat larger in order to clearly see structures such as the jaws. Readers who already have a complete library of published works relevant to the Mazon Creek fauna may be a bit annoyed to find large amounts of material from previously published works in chapters 3, 4A, 4C, and 5A; however, this material will be a boon to those who don't have easy access to the scientific journals. It is a delight to see the descriptions and illustrations of the Mazon Creek fossils that had previously been scattered among numerous articles in journals or books in the United States and Europe all together in one place. A number of Mazon Creek fossil taxa, such as bivalve molluscs and acorn worms, are presented formally for the first time in this work.

There are a number of puzzling aspects of the work.