

Rhodium Bicentenary Competition

Johnson Matthey is pleased to announce the winner of the Rhodium Bicentenary Competition. The competition held last year was to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the announcement of the discovery of rhodium in 1804 by William Hyde Wollaston. The competition was for a research project involving any aspect of rhodium science, preferably aimed at the development of a new application. It also aimed to encourage scientific interest in rhodium. The prize is the sponsorship of a Ph.D. studentship and a loan of metal.

Rhodium is a relatively scarce metal, most of it coming from the unique Bushveld Complex in South Africa, with smaller amounts coming from Russia and elsewhere. The relative scarcity and the complex metallurgical and chemical procedures needed to extract rhodium have contributed to its high cost, and this in turn has tended to discourage scientific research, resulting in relatively few uses, compared to the more abundant platinum and palladium. The main use of rhodium is in automobile catalysts, and as legislation worldwide is demanding ever tighter emissions standards, this has tended

to take up the majority of the metal in recent years.

When we ran the competition we had no idea of the interest it would cause, so it was very gratifying that in all some 31 research groups from around the world submitted proposals. All the proposals, covering many aspects of rhodium science, had merit and therefore it was very difficult to reach a decision. The proposals, judged anonymously, were scrutinised by a panel of experts representing all areas of platinum group metals technology. Aspects such as the novelty of the ideas and the likelihood of the research progressing further were taken into account.

In the end the panel settled on the proposal from Professor Robert H. Crabtree of Yale University, U.S.A., for the rhodium-based production of aromatic compounds and our congratulations are extended to him. To encourage further research and stimulate interest in rhodium, loans of rhodium metal or salts have been offered to some of the other entrants for their projects.

Johnson Matthey would like to thank all those who participated in the competition and wish them well in their work.

'Final Analysis'

Another pleasing task is to announce the start of an occasional new section in *Platinum Metals Review* – 'Final Analysis'. Here you will find some practical advice for working in platinum group metals science and technology, and information aimed at aiding research. Indeed, our readers may like to suggest what information they need that might help them in their work.

Our first contributor to this section is David E. Grove, who may be known to some of you in the U.K., North America and the Far East. David has had many years experience in the platinum group metals industry, both in primary and secondary refining as well as in the applications of platinum metals catalysts, and will be drawing on his knowledge of customer problems to help clarify some of the more common difficulties that can arise.

Susan V. Ashton