

The Newsletter of the International Fission-Track Community
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Editor: *Ruth Siddall*,
 Department of Geological Sciences, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, UK.
 e-mail: r.siddall@ucl.ac.uk

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On Track is a biannual newsletter of the international fission-track community. It is printed in the months of May and November. The views expressed in *On Track* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the fission-track community or the editor(s) of *On Track*.

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On Track will remain free, at least for the near future. However, to save costs we generally mail only one copy per lab so please be sure to pass *On Track* around your lab.

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PREVIOUS EDITORS:

Dave Coyle (1990-91), La Trobe University
Trevor Dumitru (1991-92), Stanford University
Rasoul B. Sorkhabi (1992-93) Arizona State University
Dennis Arne (1993-94) Dalhousie University
Richard J. Weiland (1994-95) The University of Texas at Austin

CURRENT EDITOR:

Ruth Siddall

Department of Geological Sciences, University
College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT,
UK.

Tel.: +171-387-7050 ext. 2758 / 2418

Fax: + 171-388-7614

e-mail: r.siddall@ucl.ac.uk

NEXT EDITOR:

Danni Stockli

Dept. of Geological and Environmental Sciences
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-2115
U.S.A.

Tel.: (415)-725-6155

Fax: (415)-725-6155,

E-mail: danny@pangea.stanford.edu

Editors' Notes

Welcome to the twelfth edition of *On Track*. This is rather a thin issue, I guess the pressures of Summer fieldwork commitments are showing. However, there is an article from **Dave Coyle**, introducing his new Web database for the international fission track community. As Editor of *On Track*, I suppose I could transcribe all the details I have on all of you and type them in... but no, It would be better if you do it yourselves, and Dave has sent the instructions on how to do it.

With the forthcoming workshop in Gent fast approaching, there is a final reminder of the whens and wheres, and a note from **Casey Ravenshurst** for the standards Committee members.

This is my last issue as editor of *On Track* and consequently I would like to introduce **Danny Stockli** as the next editor.

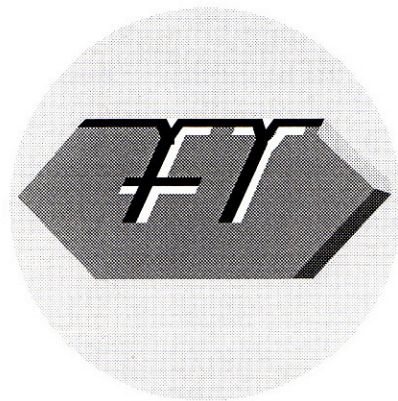
Danny finished his master's thesis at ETH Zurich, Switzerland in Spring 1995 on orogen-parallel extension in the Eastern Alps entitled "The southern continuation of the Brenner Line - A Structural and Thermochronological Study", under the supervision of Dr. Neil Mancktelow and Dr. Diane Seward.

He has now go on to join Elizabeth Miller's and Trevor Dumitru's FT Lab at Stanford University working on a Ph.D. project, entitled "Timing of Middle Miocene extension in the northern Basin and Range province - a thermochronological study using fission-track and Ar 40/39 dating".

Danny is also involved in other collaborative research projects using apatite and zircon FT thermochronology: e.g. Mary Leech (Stanford) on the exhumation of high-pressure rocks in the southern Urals, Russia; and Gary Axen (UCLA) on extensional tectonics in northern Baja California, Mexico.

So please note the change in editorship and send all further contributions to Danny.

8th International Workshop on Fission-Track Dating



As was preliminarily announced at ICOG (Berkeley) and the SSNTD conference (Duisburg), the 8th International Workshop on Fission-Track Dating will be held in

Gent, Belgium

The official workshop dates are

26-30 August, 1996

The Gent International Workshop has set as major ambitions to define the present status of the FT methodology and data interpretation and to identify future directions.

Organization of the workshop is a collaborative effort of the Geological Institute (Peter Van den haute) and the Institute for Nuclear Sciences (Frans De Corte) of the University of Gent.

For more information by contacting us at the address, phone, facsimile, or e-mail numbers listed below.

8th International FT- Dating Workshop
Geological Institute, University of Gent
Krijgslaan, 28, B-9000 Gent, BELGIUM.

Phone: +32 (0) 9 264/ 4592 or 6627
Fax: +32 (0) 9 264 4984
E-mail: FTWORK@inwchem.rug.ac.be



REMINDER TO FISSION-TRACK STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

from
Casey Ravenhurst

The Gent meeting is fast approaching and efforts to gather materials for distribution have stalled. At Berkeley we agreed to try to distribute either before, or at, the Gent meeting;

- (1) zircon and titanite (sphene) age standards, and
- (2) apatite, zircon and titanite reference material

Could all fission track standards committee members, advisors and interested others please review their notes and look back at the minutes of the Berkeley committee meeting (OnTrack, v.4, no.2/issue 9)?

Committee members are:

Casey Ravenhurst
Dave Foster
Dave Coyle
Bob Walter
Takahiro Tagami
Hideki Iwano.

Advisors are:

Barry Kohn
Andy Gleadow
Tony Hurford.

Please send any appropriate material to me or make arrangements to distribute it at the meeting in Gent. I have a complete(?) list of all (about 40) of the FT labs worldwide. I will not be attending the meeting in Gent. My address for the summer (June - July) will be:

Casey Ravenhurst
Fission Track Research Laboratory
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3J5
CANADA
E-mail: cravenhu@smith.smith.edu
Fax: (902) 494-6889
Tel: (902) 494-2372



The Virtual Fission-Track Address Book

by Dave Coyle

(dcoyle@goanna.mpi-hd.mpg.de)

Somewhere in Cyberspace...

Introduction

What is the best way to always have an up-to-date address book for the wider fission-track community? If you want to keep tabs on every last one of use, from the lowliest Ph.D. candidate, to the highest-flying great god of science, you're faced with a monumental task.

But wait! So is everyone else!

It would be fantastic if we could nominate some one person to keep all this info up to date for us. And that one person is usually the current editor of OnTrack. I know what it's like, and I can also tell you that this is one task (of many!) that the editor would prefer not to do. Let's face it, just going through and checking up on everyone is an ever-increasing task, and a thankless one at that.

Wouldn't it be nice if every Tracker could maintain their own entry in the great universal Fission-track address book? Hmmmmmm.....

Enter the VFTAB!

Well, with the magic of the World-Wide-Web, that should be possible. So I thought: Right, if someone's gonna do it, it may as well be me. Why not? I've been fooling around with the WWW from the day I got goanna [footnote: No, goanna is not a communicable disease. It is in fact the Hewlett-Packard 712/60 workstation sitting on my desk]. So I downloaded the free version of WebObjects from ftp.next.com, and set to hacking the DodgeLite example into just such a beast as is now called the Virtual Fission-Trackers Address Book.

The VFTAB is nothing more than an array of dictionaries. Really! Well, to be more explicit, it's an NSArray of NSDictionaries of NSStrings (but you really didn't want to know that). These are all objects in the programming sense, and not to belabor the point, I use them because they have the unique property of being able to write themselves to a file and read themselves again, without human intervention. That made creating the VFTAB pretty easy, because I didn't have to re-open my PERL programming book [another footnote: To make the point: this is a PERL script that I wrote to extract some age data from an ugly text file that was sent to me. Now, 2 months later, I have no idea how it works:

```
#!/usr/bin/perl -w
($Datafile, $FILE, $Type) = @ARGV;
# $FILE = $ARGV[1];
open (F, ">$FILE") or die "cannot open output file $FILE!\n";
# $Type = $ARGV[2];
print F "$Type data\n";
print F "Depth\tAge\tError\n";
while (<>){
    ($depth, $age, $error, $depth2, $age2, $error2) =
/./+s(\d+)?s(\d+,[,]?d*)s(\d+,[,]?d*)+s(\d+)?s(\d+,[,]?d*)s(\d+,[,]?d*)/;
    print "processing Line: $. \n";
    if ($depth){
        foreach ($age, $error) { s/(d)[,](d)/$1\.$2/g };
        print F $depth, "\t", $age, "\t", $error, "\n";
    }
    if ($depth2){
        foreach ($age2, $error2) { s/(d)[,](d)/$1\.$2/g };
        print F $depth2, "\t", $age2, "\t", $error2, "\n";
    }
}
```

PERL is like that....].



So how does it work? Well, that part is simple: you point your WWW browser (any browser, as long as it supports forms and tables) to:

<http://goanna.mpi-hd.mpg.de/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Trackers>

(Important!: Do not append a trailing slash! ie: ...jects/Trackers/ will not work!)

What you will then see is something like this:

Welcome to the Fission Trackers' Virtual Address Book!

[Today is Friday, February 23, 1996. The local time here in Heidelberg is 10:25 AM.]

Use the browser below select the person(s) you are looking for.

No selections defaults to all values.

Click 'Display Trackers' to see your selection.

<input type="checkbox"/>	David A. Coyle
<input type="checkbox"/>	Günther A. Wagner
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lu Fei
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paul Fitzgerald
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Seward

Edit Selected Record: ☐

To add a new record, "Clear" the form,
check the "Edit" box, and then click on "Display..."

If you consider yourself to be a member of the world-wide fission-track research community, you are encouraged to add your name to this address book. You maintain your entry yourself, so that other researchers will always have access to your current coordinates.

I think that the instructions are intuitive, but just to be clear:

Browsing Stored Entries:

Select the person(s) you are interested in by clicking on their names in the scrolling list. Your WWW browser should allow you to make a discontinuous selection (usually via a shift-click). Then click on the Display Selected Trackers button, and you will be rewarded with a screen like this:





The Virtual FT Address Book offers the following people that match your selection.

Tracker:	Günther A. Wagner
e-mail	gwagner@goasma.mpi-hd.mpg.de
Affiliation	Max-Planck-Institut für Kernphysik, Heidelberg
Personal URL	http://goasma.mpi-hd.mpg.de/
Telephone	(+49) 6221 516 289
Fax	(+49) 6221 516 540

Tracker:	Paul Fitzgerald
e-mail	kiwi@geo.Arizona.EDU
Affiliation	University of Arizona, USA
Personal URL	
Telephone	(520) 621-4052
Fax	(520) 621-2672

Adding a new entry:

If you are not yet in the directory, you need to add you data. To do this, you first check that no names are sleected in the list (if one is, you can de-select it by using the "Clear this form" button), then selecting the "Edit selected Tracker" checkbox, and then pressing the "Display Selected Trackers" button. You'll then be presented with a page for adding your data, as shown here:





Adding a record

To prevent malicious altering of other peoples' records, you must supply a password. Note that this is not transmitted securely, nor is it stored on the server in an encrypted form, so **do not use your own UNIX account password.**

My Password:

OK, now the details:

My full name:

My affiliation:

My email address:

My work phone number:

My work fax number:

My personal URL:

When finished, press the "submit" button. If your information was added successfully, you'll get the following alert panel:

Trackers Notice:

The following condition occurred: **The Dictionary was successfully archived!**

[return to main page](#)

Otherwise, you'll get an error notification, such as this one:

Trackers Notice:

The following condition occurred: **You must set a decent Password!**

[return to main page](#)



Important things to note:

- your password is not transmitted in an encrypted format, nor is it stored securely. So do not use a password that is in any way meaningful, such as the password for your regular UNIX account. I only added the password feature to prevent malicious tampering (so that, eg., someone doesn't change your personal URL to <http://www.playboy.com/>). Also, the password should be at least six characters long.
- The first three fields (name, affiliation and email address) must have information in them.
- if you get an error, you will be told and can start again...

Editing an entry:

To edit your personal entry, select your name on the main page, click the "Edit" checkbox, and then proceed as before. You'll get the same page as you did for adding a record [yet another footnote: Indeed, it is the very same page: the string "Adding" or "Editing" is set at runtime.]. Supply your password, change any fields that need changing, and then submit the form. that's all there is to it.

Summing up:

I think that the VFTAB is a great thing, but its usefulness depends not upon me, but upon you. If few Trackers choose to enter their coordinates, then the industrious ones who already did will have wasted their time. Don't disappoint them: they obviously want keep in touch with you. Also, if the service is unavailable at some time, or you encounter difficulties, please let me know rather than just say "Aw, this doesn't work". Errors do crop up, and the machine does need to be rebooted occasionally (taking it offline). Only if errors are reported am I able to find and fix them....

And a final note: I mentioned that I used a product called WebObjects to create the VFTAB. I don't want you to think that it only runs on my Hewlett-Packard workstations, though. The WebObjects Framework (and the free version of WebScript) does in fact run not only on HP-PA RISC, Intel x86, m68k & Sparc CPUs (using NeXT's Mach OS), but also on Sparc & PowerPC CPUs (using Solaris) and Intel CPUs using Windows 95/NT. So fetch it and take it for a test drive yourself.



Short Tracks: News

11th Himalaya-Karakoram-Tibet Workshop

Rasoul Sorkhabi and colleagues (Allison Macfarlane and Jay Quade) organized the 11th Himalaya-Karakoram-Tibet Workshop, in Flagstaff (Arizona) from 28 April-2 May 1996. The Himalaya-Karakoram-Tibet Workshops are international meetings held annually since 1985. This was the first time that a H-K-T Workshop was held in North America. 115 people from 12 countries attended the meeting; it was supported by a grant from US National Science Foundation. Selected, referred papers resulting from the meeting will be edited by the organizers and published as Geological Society of America (GSA) Special Paper.

Fission Tracks on the Web

Autoscan have a new homepage on the Web, their URL is <http://www.autoscan.com.au/~autoscan>

EU Fellowship

Raymond Jonckheere has joined the Gunther Wagner's lab in Heidelberg for 2 years on an EU fellowship