

OVERBERG GEOSCIENTISTS GROUP (OGG)

(OGG – Reg. No. 275-138 NPO)

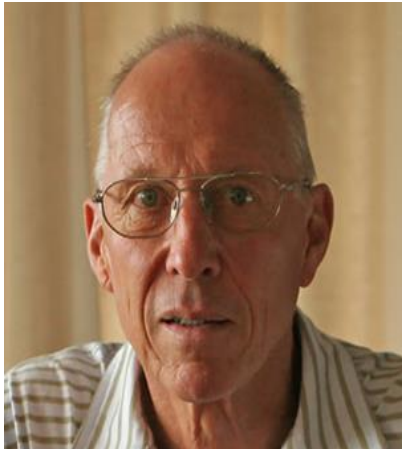
RUSSIA - Diamonds and Life

by

Ronnie Hazel

Wednesday 3 December, 2025: Onrus Manor Breakfast Meeting + Presentation
[Coffee at 09h30, B/fast at 10h00, Presentation at 10h30]

Ronnie Hazell graduated from Stellenbosch University in 1963 on the back of an AAC bursary that obliged him to enter their employment in 1964 as a Graduate Field Officer. He was posted to Oranjemund and spent six years in Diamond Areas 1 and 2 working on programmes to extend the mine reserves. This was followed by three years in “Rhodesia” doing kimberlite exploration.



He had by now changed his status and was a Geologist, albeit one with not much academic training. This was followed by a year in Botswana evaluating what was to become Lethlakane Mine, after which he moved to Kimberley and ran the field exploration programme in the Northern Cape and Free State.

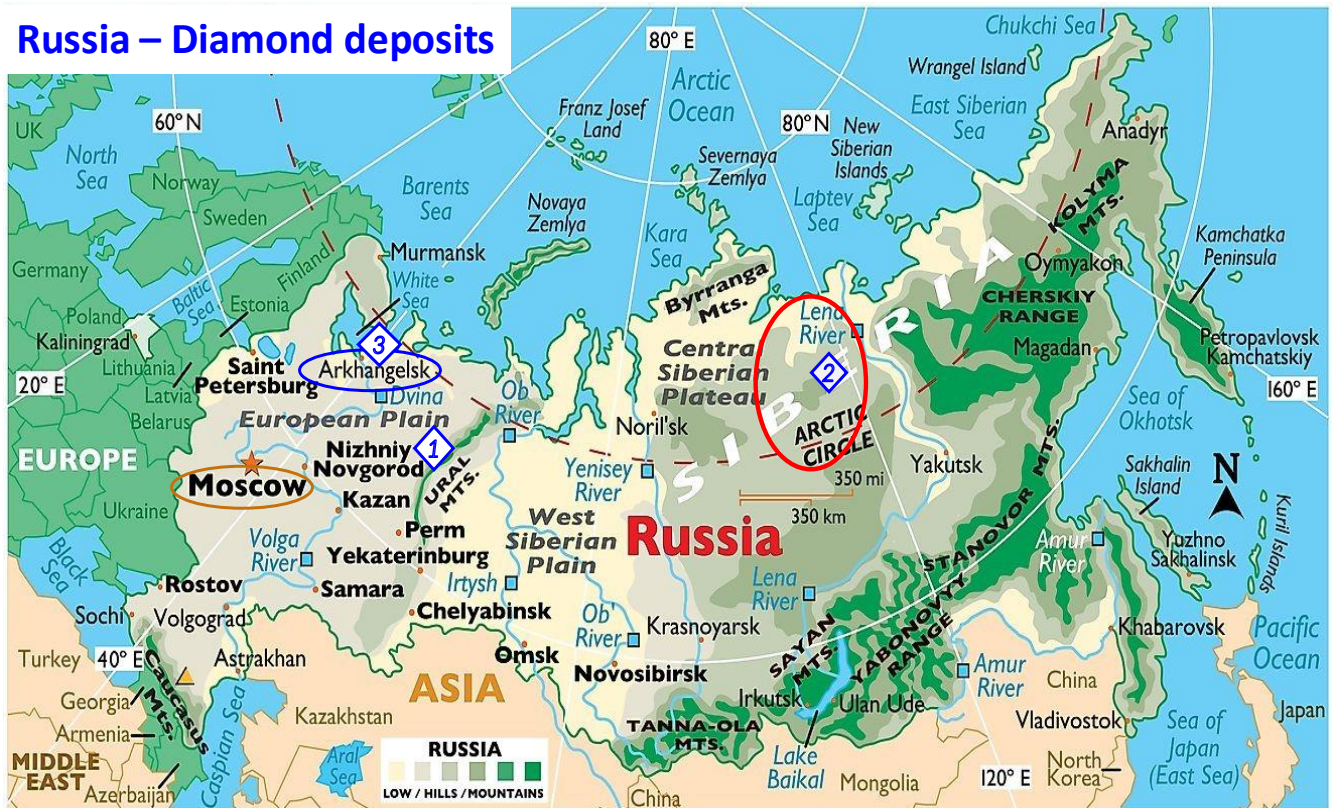
1975 saw the outbreak of war in Angola and De Beers brought back around 25 geologists, some of whom were senior to Ronnie and he had to give up his job to one of them. A transfer to the jungles of Venezuela threatened, but the tender failed and so he moved to Natal to mop up some false trails, before taking over as Chief Geologist in Kleinsee in 1978.

When Charles Stocken retired from CDM, Ronnie moved back to Oranjemund to replace him, looking after not only the geological function, but also Mine Planning and Survey. In 1991, he was appointed Consulting Geologist for De Beers and asked to look after Africa north of Botswana. He still had only a Bachelor’s degree! SA was still a pariah country and this was not an easy task, even with three passports.

In 1993 Ronnie moved to Moscow, having taken additional responsibility for De Beers’ efforts to ingratiate themselves in the Russian diamond industry, a job that seemed impossible from Johannesburg. Well, it was also impossible from Moscow, and after three years, he moved to Melbourne to take over the De Beers Australasian exploration programme, concentrating mainly on extending operations into new frontiers in India and China, whilst at the same time looking after an extensive programme in Australia, a challenging environment for diamond exploration.

In 1999 he shut down most of the Australian exploration and business and took early retirement to Hermanus, where, he says, he has forgotten what little geology he knew!

Russia – Diamond deposits



Russian Federation

Facts

- *Capital:* Moscow
- *Population:* ~142 million (USA: ~335 m)
- *Languages:* Russian (5 main, 35 official)
- *Currency:* Ruble
- *World's Largest Country:* 1/10th of all land masses
- *Area:* 17,075,200 sq kms (E to W ~9 000 kms; CT to London ~8 000kms)
- *Time Zones:* 11 across 2 continents (Europe & Asia)
- *History:* An extraordinary journey of conquest

Geography

- *Coasts:* On 3 oceans (Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic)
- *Topography:* Deserts, frozen coastline, tall mountains & giant marshes – **Steppes** comprising rolling, treeless plains make up much of Russia
- *Siberia:* 3/4 of Russia, sprawling pine forests (taigas)
- *Mountain Ranges:* Ural, Altay
- *Rivers:* ~100,000, some of world's longest & most powerful e.g. Amur, Irtysh, Lena, Ob, Volga, Yenisey
- *Lakes:* Many, including Europe's two largest: Ladoga and Onega
- *Lake Baikal (Siberia):* contains more water than any other lake on Earth.

Please Contact Hennie Greeff (hennie.greeff@gmail.com; m: 082 569 5314) for details if you wish to attend this event at Onrus Manor - Many thanks.