

## **PETER DAVID TIMMS**

David Timms was born in Rusape, Rhodesia in 1930 and his early years were spent on his parents' farm before he was sent off to boarding school. At Rhodes University in Grahamstown he was unsure of his choice of subjects but because he did well in Geology he chose it as a future career.

David graduated with Honours BSc, majoring in crystallography, at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. He was offered a job out of Bulawayo in Rhodesia to sample and assess a sandstone hill for its purity for making bottle glass. It turned out that it contained too much iron for glass making.

In 1953 African Associated Mines gave him the job of assessing blue asbestos. A famous geologist Alex du Toit noted in his book of an occurrence of blue asbestos found by the local Africans on the Skeleton Coast on the edge of the Kalahari Desert. David drove there in a Ford Rover and managed to drive over the sand dunes where he found the hole made by the locals and he crawled in to sample for asbestos. He could see the fibres waving in the wind and because he was so hirsute, he may have avoided having the fibres enter his nose and lungs. He was then asked to find another deposit of chrysotile asbestos for the Gaths chrysotile asbestos mine in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where he worked for a while before leaving to go to McGill University in Canada which had the best reputation for geologists. David requested writing a PhD on the Company's asbestos mine but while this was refused, the Company said that they needed a geologist for a new volcanogenic massive sulphide deposit they had just discovered at a place named Manitouwadge in northern Ontario. He was told that the temperatures would go down to 30 degrees below zero for three weeks and there were only 90 frost free days.

David arrived and lived in a tent camp for two years and the prolonged cold winters made the work difficult. The area was isolated so every requirement had to be flown in at great cost or hauled by tractor train over the snow in winter. Soon an access road was built to connect with Highway 17. Both the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways constructed branch lines to the north and south, so the silence of the bush was shattered by the whistle of laden ore trains. The mine site (named Willroy after the two discoverers William Dawd and Roy Barker) was three miles along strike from the major deposit, developed by General Engineering of Britain, called Geco. The rugged terrain offered a formidable challenge in the early days. The major danger while exploring in the forest were bears, timber wolves and moose in the rutting season. David had a close encounter with a black bear while he was setting up a picket line on top of a hill in the thick forest. He looked back and saw a bear with his head down sniffing his trail and coming up the hill towards him. When the bear got to about twenty metres away David decided it was time to shout. The bear stood up to its full height of about seven feet. Luckily David was standing on a stump on the top of the hill, shouting with his geological pick in his raised hand, and would have looked very tall and threatening to the bear. Luckily the bear turned and ran off.

One day in March the chief geologist Eric Hooke, David Marshall, a mining engineer and David set out on a snowmobile and after parking it they set out on snowshoes on crusty snow and followed a map showing lease pegs to explore the area. When the sun began to go down they tried to return to the snowmobile and became lost because the lease pegs shown on the map were not there. The snow had softened so walking became very difficult because with each step you had to also lift about eighteen inches of soft snow on top of the shoe. As a result each step was causing a sharp pain in the groin and utter exhaustion. This resulted in ever increasing stops of blessedly just lying on the snow and wanting to go to sleep and not caring if you would ever wake up! Total exhaustion set in and the men lay down and gave up. Eric shouted at them and persuaded them to keep going and by good fortune it was a moonlit night and they found the snowmobile and returned to camp. They fell into bed and slept for two days.

At the Willroy Mine, David was a junior geologist and carried out the daily face sampling to guide the miners in the drifts, stopes and raises. When Eric Hooke left, David became the chief geologist. The Willecho Mine was discovered followed by the Nama and Big Nama. By following the main ore bearing horizon and using the unique method of taking new shoots from the ubiquitous balsam bushes and roasting them and analysing them to determine where on surface was the key ore bearing horizon along strike. This method led to discovering the new mineable orebodies. The four copper-lead-zinc properties had an average daily production of 1,300 tons and concentration was carried out in the mill. The copper concentrates were shipped to Noranda in Canada while the zinc was sent to the U.S.A and Europe.

David married his family friend Jen in Manitouwadge in 1960 where Jen acquired a teaching position in the local primary school and they raised 3 sons in Manitouwadge and a daughter in Sydney.

Due to his success David was invited to head office in Toronto on a trial basis for six months to work as Exploration Manager. Jen and three young sons remained in Manitouwadge and travel was difficult so he seldom visited them. The family were finally united and the next four years (1968-1972) were spent in Toronto where they acquired their first home in Mississauga.

David's daily commute from Port Credit to Toronto resulted in his close association with fellow commuter Os Hachey who was promoted to head up an oil company AMOCO. A decision was made at head office to begin mineral exploration worldwide. David was invited to establish and manage an exploration arm to cover Australasia out of Sydney.

David became Exploration Manager for Amoco Minerals Australia division (a subsidiary of the world's fifth largest oil company, Amoco) late in 1972 and in 1973 the family moved to Sydney. A Joint Venture with Amax as operator in the Forrestania Nickel belt was the first project to successfully identify mineable deposits. Head office was in North Sydney and

David would work in Australia as well as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Philippines. He had an incredible team working with him and, to name a few - Bill Matthews, Bryce Roxburgh, Steve Collins, Bret Ferris, John Haggman, Graham Miller, Dave Ottoman, Peter Roberts, Paul Joyce, and George Miguel. Their successes allowed the company to progress. Every year Dave would travel to Toronto for budget meetings and have the necessary money allocated to explore for minerals. When budgets declined there was a scramble to find new JV partners. Finally budgets disappeared and fortunately a JB Were company, Arimco, was incorporated to fund exploration on all 30 properties in return for a 50% interest in the properties. Amoco couldn't sell its interests in the properties for a good price and decided in 1985 to roll all the properties into their largest acquisition, Cyprus Minerals, and give all its shareholders pro rata shares in Cyprus. Consequently Cyprus and Arimco were partners, sharing most of Amoco's properties plus some new ones such as Mt McClure, Didipio (Philippines) and Brocks Creek throughout much of 1986 – 1990. A list of all the properties follows.

Red Dome in Mungana in north Queensland mined for gold, silver and copper. The mine is still in operation.

Selwyn-Starra in north west Queensland mined for gold and copper (1988-2003)

Junction Reefs south of Orange in NSW. Gold mining ended in 1990.

Gidgee near Sandstone in WA. Mined for gold from 1987-2005.

Mt McClure north east of Perth. Production for gold went from 1992-2001.

Brocks Creek south of Darwin in NT. Mined for gold, copper, silver, zinc.

Moline 200 kms south of Darwin in NT. Mined for gold, lead, silver.

Golden Cross in New Zealand mined by Oceana Gold from 1991-1998. A reef extension was discovered and is currently being mined underground.

Gold Ridge in the Solomon Islands on Guadalcanal east of Honiara. Volcanic hosted gold was mined by Ross Mining from 1997 – 2000.

Didipio on the island of Luzon in the Philippines was mined underground for gold by Oceana Gold.

Emily Ann in WA, mined for nickel from 2001 to 2009.

Johnston Lake in WA, 440 kms east of Perth. Mined by Poseidon Nickel from 2011 and is now under care and maintenance.

Prices Creek in WA mined for gold.

Flying Fox in WA. Mined for high grade nickel from 1992.

Diggers Rocks east of Hyden in WA. Mined for nickel from 2008.

In 1990 Cyprus Minerals closed operations in Australia putting all the employees out of work. David decided to start consulting and also gave tennis lessons. He promoted the Lewis Ponds gold-base metal deposit to Tri Origin Exploration Limited, a listed Canadian based exploration company and became one of Tri Origin's initial directors. He was given several consulting jobs overseas. Using Timmsco Pty. Ltd as his vehicle, David and his son Daven began pegging projects in the Lachlan Fold Belt. David continued his proven philosophy – stick to areas of proven prospectivity with high metal endowment. David and his son Daven floated Golden Cross Resources in 1996 raising over 7 million dollars from 1,200 shareholders. Several junior geologists were hired and many projects were worked on. The geologists working alongside David included Chris Torrey, Bret Ferris, Robyn Hee and Gordon McClean. Lindsay MacAlister was their first chairman and Kerry McHugh was a board member. Listed below are the tenements owned by Golden Cross Resources.

Kempfield contains silver, lead, zinc. Sold to Argent Minerals.

Sunny Corner contains zinc,copper,lead, gold,silver. Argent Minerals has a 51% share.

Cargo - Drilling in 2013 located copper and gold. Sold to Copper Gold Resources.

Copper Hill near Molong. Golden Cross Resources owns 100%. Large reserves of low grade gold and copper.

Pipeline Ridge near Cobar.

Adelong west of Tumut. Contains gold. Sold to Tasman Goldfields Ltd.

Mulga Springs near Broken Hill contains copper, nickel, lead, silver. Sold to Impact Minerals. Golden Cross Resources have a 1% production royalty on metals.

Alpha, south of Perth, contained lead.

Pine Creek, 90kms from Katherine in NT. The open cut gold mine has closed.

Wagga Tank has high grade zinc. Since acquired by Peel Mining.

David also started his own company called Endeavour Minerals. He purchased the Commonwealth Mine near Wellington NSW and acquired the Rangitira Gold project in the south of the Lachlan Fold Belt in NSW. David also had the rights to farm into 2 mineral projects namely Broken Hill Platinum for which Endeavour Minerals could have earned 80% in a Joint Venture by spending \$3 million by November 2015. The second property was Mulga Tank and Endeavour Minerals could have acquired a 50% share with a Joint Venture partner. He eventually sold Endeavour Minerals to Impact Minerals, acquiring shares in Impact Minerals.

David has been a great mentor to many geologists throughout his 60 years associated with the industry. Many owe their careers to his persistent encouragement and positive attitude to mineral exploration and innovative geology. The list of strategies David adhered to are: a) Add value by cost effective exploration. b) Select the best people (mine finders). c) Develop a multidisciplinary team. d) Devise meaningful incentive schemes. e) Explore in ore-permissive areas. f) Design long term programmes. g) Drill more holes into selective areas.

See: [David's Powerpoint Presentation on his Exploration Philosophy](#)

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<https://smedg.org.au/multinational-major-to-junior-explorer-david-timms-golden-cross-resources/>

In September 2016 David was awarded the first SMEDG Life Member Award and in November 2017 he was awarded the Lifetime Exploration Achievement Award from Gina Rinehart at the National Mining and Related Industries Gala Dinner to celebrate National Mining Day. David's family were present but it was a total surprise to him.

Forty-three years ago David organised the first Amoco Sydney harbour cruise which evolved into the current twice yearly events for the mining industry. They have been named the David Timms Harbour Cruises in his honour. David continued, as long as he was able, to attend mining related meetings and enjoyed catching up with others in the industry.

