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FINAL PALYNOLOGY OF BHP MINERVA #1, OFFSHORE OTWAY BASIN, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

BY

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FIGURE 1 : CRETACEOUS REGIONAL FRAMEWORK, OTWAY BASIN

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I SUMMARY

563.0m(swc) 1% dinos, 594.0m(swc) 3% : middle *diversus* Zone : Early Eocene : marginally marine

617.0m(swc) 6% dinos : lower *diversus* Zone : Early Eocene : marginally marine

627.0m(swc) 10% dinos, 651.0m(swc) 4% : upper *balmei* Zone : late Paleocene : nearshore marine

760.0m(swc) 3% dinos : lower *balmei* Zone : early Paleocene : very nearshore marine

783.0m(swc) 42% dinos, 810.0m(swc) dinos absent, 838.5m(swc) 6% : *longus* Zone (783m *druggii* dino Zone) : Maastrichtian : marginal, non-marine and nearshore upsection

897.0m(swc) 2% dinos, 954.0m(swc) 2%, 991.0m(swc) 14% : upper *senectus* Zone (897 upper *australis* dino Zone, 954m, 991m lower *australis* dino Zone) : Campanian : very nearshore marine

1054.0m(swc) 4% dinos, 1105.5m(swc) 6%, 1149.0m(swc) 8% : middle *senectus* Zone (all upper *aceras* Zone) : Campanian : very nearshore marine

1166.0m(swc) 13% dinos : lower *senectus* Zone (middle *aceras* dino Zone) : Campanian : nearshore marine

1179.0m(swc) 7% dinos, 1193.0m(swc) 17%, 1220.0m(swc) 12%, 1260.0m(swc) 16%, 1271m(cutts) (19%), 1298.0m(swc) 21% : upper *apoxyxinus* Zone (*aceras* dino Zone) : latest Santonian : nearshore marine

1325m(cutts) (15% dinos), 1351.0m(swc) 18%, 1398.0m(swc) 13%, 1410m(cutts) (24%), 1453.0m(swc) 8% : upper *apoxyxinus* Zone (1325m, 1351m upper *cretacea* dino Zone, 1398m, 1410m, 1453m lower *cretacea* dino Zone) : Santonian : nearshore marine

1502.0m(swc) 16%, 1510m(cutts) (31%), 1562.0m(swc) 8%, 1597.0m(swc) 8% : middle *apoxyxinus* Zone (1502m, 1510m upper *porifera* dino Zone) : Santonian : nearshore marine

1616m(cutts) (26% dinos), 1629.0m(swc) 12%, 1647.0m(swc) 22%, 1660.0m(swc) 7%, 1690.0m(swc) 14%, 1699m(cutts) (24%), 1723.0m(swc) 12%, 1747.0m(swc) 14%, 1766.0m(swc) 14%, 1790m(cutts) (22%), 1805.0m(swc) 15% : lower *apoxyxinus* Zone : Santonian : nearshore marine

1820m(cutts) (17% dinos), 1837.3m(CORE) dinos absent, 1838.1m(CORE) 3%, 1839.7m(CORE) 16%, 1840.3m(CORE) 13% dinos, 1872.5m(swc) 2%, 1889m(cutts) (5%), 1916m(cutts) (13%), 1947.5m(swc), dinos absent, 1949m(cutts) (4%), 2003m(cutts) (11%), 2027m(cutts) (14%), 2035.0m(swc) 33%, 2061.0m(swc)

12%, 2084m(cutts) (5%) : *mawsonii* Zone (2084m *infusorioides* dino Zone :
Coniacian-Turonian : mixed nearshore to non-marine

⁹⁹
~~2092~~2098.0m(swc) 1% dinos, 2093m(cutts) (17%), 2101.0m(swc) 16%, 2102m(cutts) (15%),
2105m(cutts) (15%), 2117m(cutts) (15%), 2123.0m(swc) 5%, 2142.0m(swc) 1% :
distocarinatus Zone (2089m, 2093m, 2101m, 2102m, 2105m all *infusorioides* dino
Zone) : Cenomanian : nearshore and marginal marine

2150m(cutts) dinos absent, 2157.5m(swc) absent, 2180m(cutts) (trace dinos) apparently
distocarinatus Zone but markers could be caved in the cuttings and are absent from
the swc : apparently Cenomanian : non-marine but possibly brackish at 2180m but
marine indicators could be caved

2212.5m(swc) almost barren, 2222m(cutts) (4% dinos but most are clearly caved),
2261m(cutts) (2% dinos possibly caved), 2270m(cutts) (trace dinos possibly caved) :
zone indeterminate : swc almost barren, cuttings lack diagnostic markers : possibly
brackish to very nearshore but saline markers may be caved

2294.0m(swc) trace spiny acritarchs, 2318m(cutts) (1% dinos clearly caved), 2321.0m(swc)
trace spiny acritarchs, 2324m(cutts) (1% dinos mostly clearly caved), 2333m(cutts)
(dinos absent), 2354m(cutts) (dinos absent), 2360.0m(swc) trace spiny acritarchs,
2392.5m(swc) dinos absent, 2408m(cutts) (dinos absent), 2412.0m(swc) almost
barren, 2425m(cutts) (dinos absent) : possibly *paradoxa* Zone but not typically so :
possibly Albian : non-marine to slightly brackish : depends on richer assemblages at
2294.5m, 2321.0m, 2324m, 2392.5m.

II INTRODUCTION

During drilling three batches of cuttings (12 samples) were studied on an urgent basis at Maitland. Following this, a two person team was placed offshore on the Byford Dolphin and studied a further 16 cuttings over eight days. These samples were reported in 10 faxed reports. After well completion, a further fifty four samples (50 swcs, 4 from core) were submitted for detailed study. All results are summarised herein.

Palynomorph occurrence data are shown as Appendix I and include the urgent and followup samples and form the basis for the assignment of the samples to sixteen spore-pollen and dinoflagellate units of Early Eocene to Cenomanian age.

Specimen counts were made on all assemblages and expressed in the raw data as percentages. In the running text, percentages from cuttings are always bracketed (5%) to show that they may be inaccurate due to caving.

The Cretaceous spore-pollen zonation is essentially that of Dettmann and Playford (1969), but has been significantly modified and improved by various authors since, and most recently discussed in Helby et al (1987), as shown on Figure 1. The Late Cretaceous zonation has been modified by Morgan (1992) in project work for BHPP (Figure 2). Tertiary zones are essentially those of Partridge (1976).

Maturity data was generated in the form of Spore Colour Index, and is plotted on Figure 3 Maturity Profile of Minerva #1. The oil and gas windows on Figure 3 follow the general consensus of geochemical literature. The oil window corresponds to spore colours of light-mid brown (Staplin Spore Colour Index of 2.7) to dark brown (3.6). These correspond to vitrinite reflectance values of 0.6% to 1.3%. Geochemists argue variations on kerogen type, basin type and basin history. The maturity interpretation is thus open to reinterpretation using the basic colour observations as raw data. However, the range of interpretation philosophies is not great, and probably would not move the oil window by more than 200 metres.

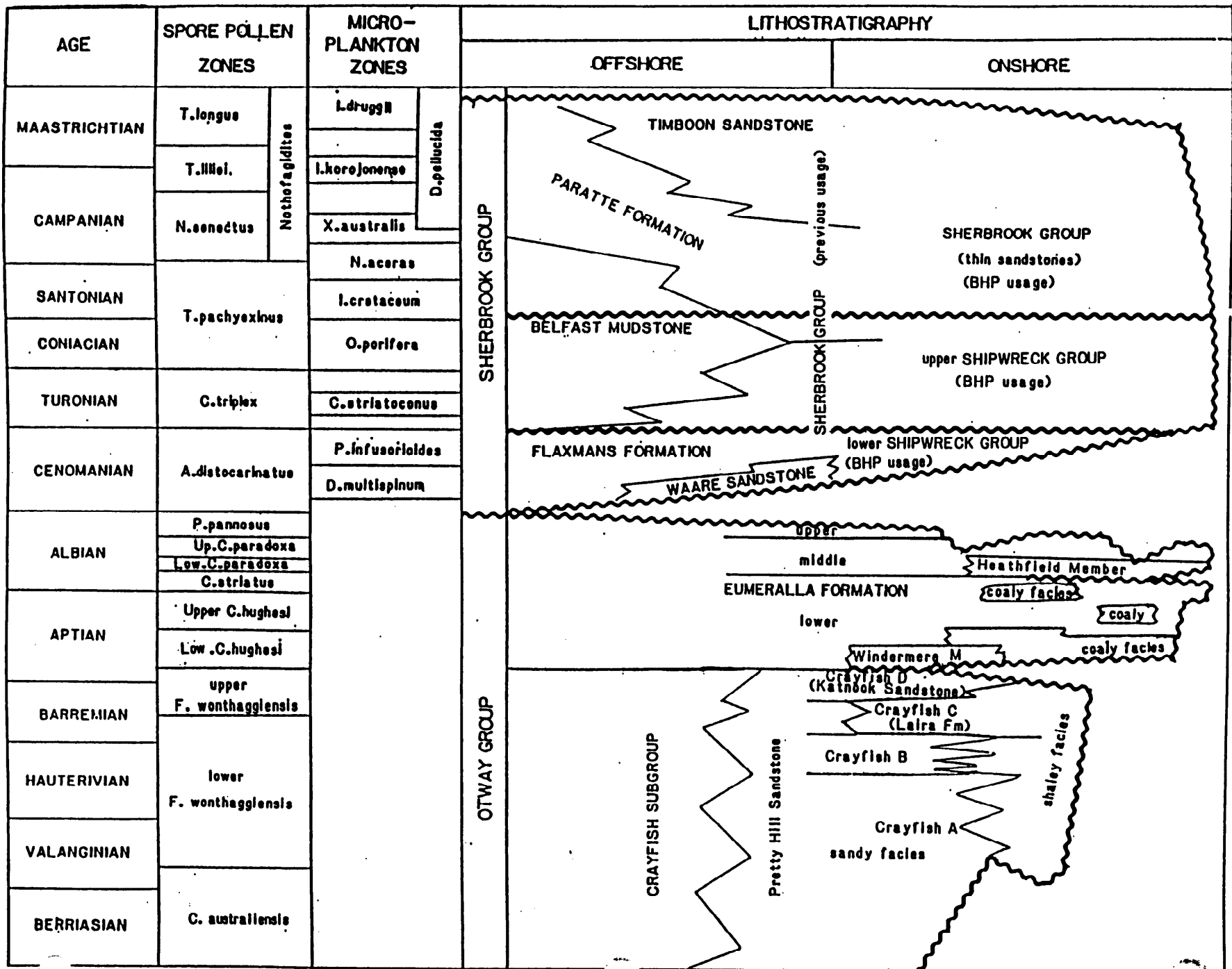


FIG. 1. CRETACEOUS REGIONAL FRAMEWORK, OTWAY BASIN

| SPORE-POLLEN ZONES | SPORE-POLLEN HORIZONS | DINOFLAGELLATE ZONES | DINOFLAGELLATE HORIZONS |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| LONGUS | upper T. confessus 1 T. sectilis G. rudata • 1b N. senectus • 1d | DRUGGII | M. conorata 1a M. conorata 1c M. druggii 1e I. pellucida 2 |
| | lower T. sabulosus 2a T. longus 2b | | |
| LILLEI | upper T. sectilis 3a | KOROJONENSE | I. korojonense 3 I. cretacea |
| | lower T. lillei 3b | | I. korojonense 3c I. pellucida |
| SENECTUS | upper G. rudata 7a | AUSTRALIS | upper X. australis 4 X. ceratoides A. wisemaniae A. suggestium 4a lower N. aceras 5 N. semireticulata X. australis • 6 |
| | middle T. sabulosus 7e | ACERAS | upper N. tuberculata 7 X. australis 7b N. tuberculata 7c N. semireticulata O. obesa 7d middle T. suspectum Heterosphaeridium 10%+ 8 Heterosphaeridium 20%+ 9 lower N. aceras 9b |
| | lower N. senectus 9a | | |
| APOXYEXINUS | upper A. cruciformis 1% A. cruciformis 1-4% 11 | CRETACEA | upper I. belfastense 10 A. denticulata Heterosphaeridium 20%+ 10a I. belfastense A. denticulata 11a lower I. cretacea 11b |
| | middle A. cruciformis 10%+ 12 | PORIFERA | |
| lower A. cruciformis 10%+ 12a | | | O. porifera 12b |
| MAWSONII | A. distocarinatus 12c | STRIATOCONUS | |
| | consistent 13 A. distocarinatus P. mawsonii 15a | INFUSORIOIDES | C. edwardsii 14 C. edwardsii • 15 C. edwardsii • 15b |
| DISTOCARINATUS | common saccates A. cruciformis | | dinoflagellates |

FIGURE 2 ZONATION USED HEREIN SHOWING THE NUMBERED HORIZONS AGAINST THE EXISTING FORMAL ZONATION.

• = frequent (4-10%) ● = common (11-30%)

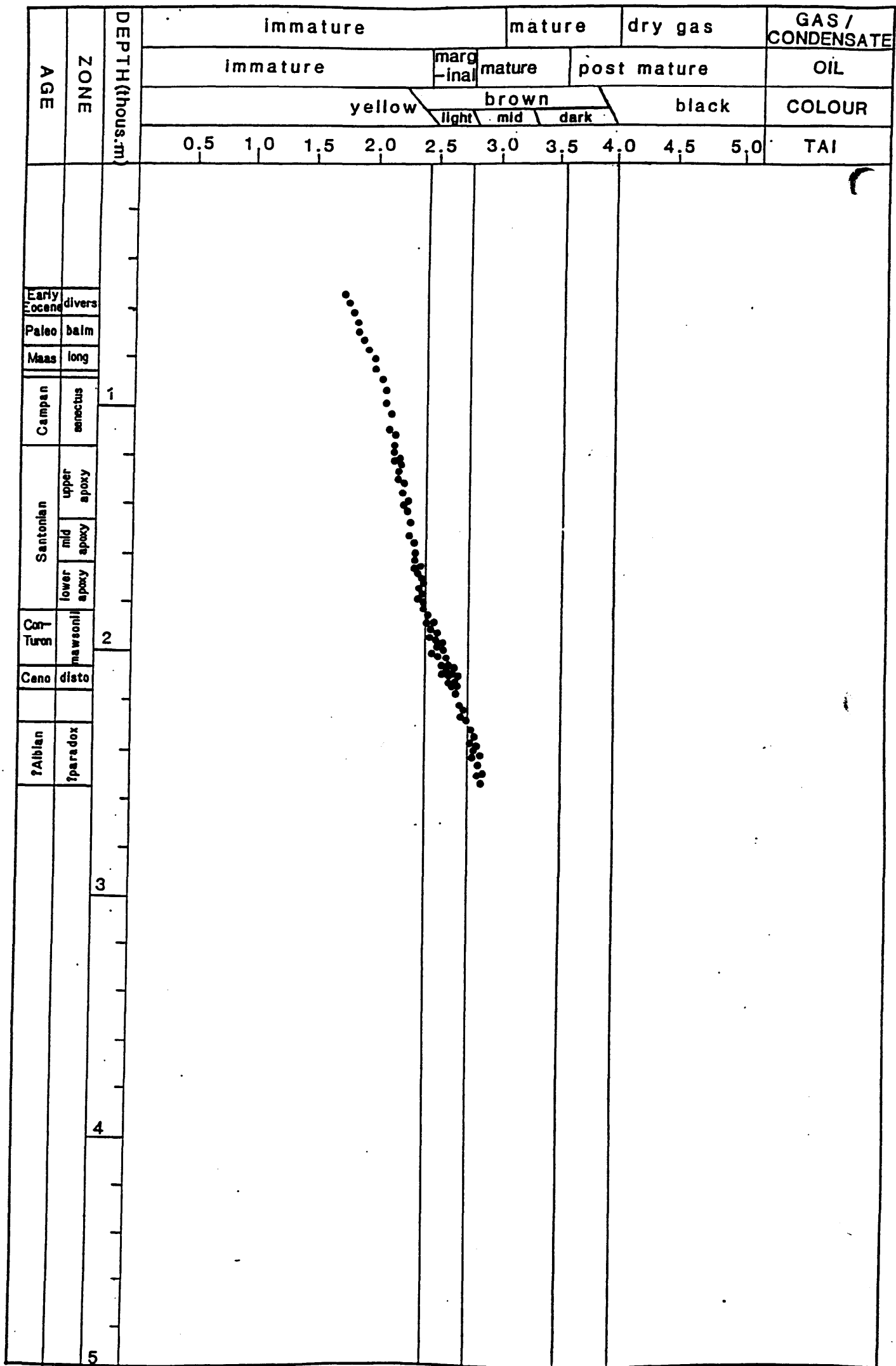


FIGURE 3 MATURITY PROFILE : MINERVA # 1

III PALYNOSTRATIGRAPHY

A 563.0m(swc), 594.0m(swc) : middle *diversus* Zone

Assignment to the middle *Malvacipollis diversus* of Early Eocene age is indicated at the top by the absence of younger indicators and at the base on oldest *Banksieaidites arcuatus*, *Proteacidites tuberculiformis* and *Triporopollenites ambiguus*. Common species are *Falcisporites similis* and *Dilwynites granulatus*, with frequent *Lygistepollenites florinii*, *Haloragacidites harrisii*, *Podosporites microsaccatus* and *Proteacidites* spp. Minor Permian and Cretaceous reworking was seen.

Amongst the rare dinoflagellates, *Deflandrea pachyceros* and *D. obliquipes* are consistent with the Early Eocene age.

Marginally marine environments are indicated by the dominant and diverse spore-pollen, abundant cuticle fragments, and rare (1% and 3% downhole) dinoflagellates and their low diversity. Freshwater algae (*Botryococcus* 6% and 3% downhole) indicate significant lacustrine influence.

Colourless palynomorphs indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

B 617.0(swc) : lower *diversus* Zone

Assignment to the lower *M. diversus* Zone of Early Eocene age is indicated at the top by the absence of younger indicators and at the base on oldest *Periporopollenites demarcatus* and *Malvacipollis diversus*. Minor downhole mud contamination is considered responsible for a single *Proteacidites pachypolus* specimen. Common taxa are *Proteacidites*, *Dilwynites* and *Falcisporites* while frequent taxa are *Cyathidites* and *P. microsaccatus*. Minor Permian reworking was seen.

Amongst the very scarce dinoflagellates, *D. obliquipes* is consistent with the Early Eocene age.

Marginally marine environments are indicated by the minor (6%) dinoflagellates and their low diversity, together with the dominant and diverse spore-pollen.

Colourless palynomorphs indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

C 627.0m(swc), 651.0m(swc) : upper *balmei* Zone

Assignment to the upper *Lygistepollenites balmei* Zone of late Paleocene age is indicated at the top by youngest *Gambierina rudata*, *G. edwardsii* and *L. balmei*, and at the base by oldest *Proteacidites grandis*. Common taxa are *Dilwynites* and *Falcisporites* while frequent taxa include *Proteacidites*, *Gleicheniidites* and *Cyathidites*. Minor Permian reworking was seen.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, *Deflandrea speciosus*, *D. truncata* and *D. dilwynensis* with *Alisocysta margarita* (627m only) and without *Apectodinium* spp, are consistent with the spore-pollen zone.

Nearshore marine environments are indicated by common and diverse spore-pollen and rare dinoflagellates (10% and 4% downhole) with frequent cuticle.

Colourless spores and pollen indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

D 760.0m(swc) : lower *balmei* Zone

Assignment to the lower *L. balmei* Zone of early Paleocene age is indicated at the top and base by the absence of younger and older indicators respectively. *Falcisporites* and *Dilwynites* are very common with *Proteacidites* frequent. *G. edwardsii*, *G. rudata* and *L. balmei* are consistent and indicate the zone. Very minor Eocene caving and mud contamination is evident by the presence of *Anacolosidites acutullus*.

Very rare dinoflagellates include *D. speciosa* and *D. dilwynensis*, consistent with the spore-pollen zone. *Thalassiphora delicata* and *Hafniasphaera septata* are rare distinctive elements.

Very nearshore marine environments are indicated by the dominant and diverse spore-pollen, abundant cuticle, and rare (3%) dinoflagellates of low to moderate diversity.

Colourless spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

E 783.0m(swc), 810.0m(swc), 838.5m(swc) : *longus* Zone

Assignment to the *Tricolpites longus* spore-pollen Zone of Maastrichtian age is indicated at the top by youngest *T. longus* supported by the dinoflagellates and at the base on oldest *T. longus* and *Tetracolporites verrucosus*. All three samples are lean of palynomorphs and dominated by inertinite. At 783m, oldest *Stereisporites punctatus* and the dominance of *G. rudata* over *Nothofagidites endurus* indicate the upper *longus* Zone while at 838.5m, *N. endurus* dominance over *G. rudata* indicates the lower *longus* Zone. Common are *Falcisporites*, *Dilwynites* and *Proteacidites*. *Tricolporites lillei* is very rare at 838.5m only. Very minor Permian and Triassic reworking were seen.

At 783m, abundant *Manumiella coronata* indicates the *druggii* dinoflagellate Zone of latest Maastrichtian age, correlative with the upper *longus* spore-pollen Zone. At 838.5m, the rare presence of *Isabelidinium korojonense* and *Isabelidinium cretacea* indicates the *I. korojonense* Zone of Campanian to early Maastrichtian age. This zone is usually seen up to the top of the *T. lillei* spore-pollen Zone but is here associated with the *T. longus* Zone. The difference is minor, and may represent minor caving or reworking, or fine tuning of the zonation.

Environments are different in all three samples. At 838.5m, marginal marine environments are indicated by dominant and diverse spore-pollen, minor low diversity dinoflagellates (6%) with significant freshwater algae (10%). At 810m, non-marine lacustrine environments are suggested by the dominant and diverse spore-pollen, absence of dinoflagellates, common freshwater algae (16%) and frequent cuticle. At 783m, nearshore marine environments are indicated by the very common dinoflagellates (42%) despite their low diversity, and frequent and diverse spore-pollen.

Yellow spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

F 897.0m(swc), 954.0m(swc), 991.0m(swc) : upper *senectus* Zone

Assignment to the upper *Nothofagidites senectus* Zone of lower Campanian age is indicated at the top by the absence of younger markers and confirmed by the dinoflagellates, and at the base by oldest *Gambierina rudata*, also confirmed by the dinoflagellates. The apparent absence of the *T. lillei* Zone of mid Campanian to early Maastrichtian age may be caused by unconformity or condensation, or it may

exist unsampled in the 58.5m sample gap. *Nothofagidites* are frequent to common (5-13%) in this subzone, but scarce (1% or less) beneath. Rare but consistent are *Tricolpites sabulosus*, *T. confessus* and *G. rudata* and *Tricolporites apoxyexinus* is present at 897m only. Overall, *Falcisporites* and *Proteacidites* are common, with *Dilwynites*, *Microcachrydites* and *Nothofagidites* frequent. At 991m, *T. sabulosus* is unusually frequent at 6% of the assemblage. Rare Permian reworking was seen.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, the upper *Xenikoon australis* dinoflagellate Zone is indicated at 897m by youngest *X. australis* above youngest *Nelsoniella aceras* and *N. semireticulata*. *X. australis* is rare but still the most consistent dinoflagellate species. At 954m and 991m lower *X. australis* Zone is indicated at the top by youngest *N. semireticulata* and at the base by the absence of older indicators and the continued presence of frequent *X. australis*, the only frequent dinoflagellate. Youngest *Areosphaeridium suggestium* at 954m is consistent with the assignment.

Environments are very nearshore marine as shown by the low dinoflagellate content (2%, 2% and 14% down section) and low dinoflagellate diversity. Clearly 991m is the most marine with highest dinoflagellate content and diversity.

Yellow spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

G 1054.0m(swc), 1105.5m(swc), 1149.0m(swc) : middle *senectus* Zone

Assignment to the middle *N. senectus* Zone of early Campanian age is indicated at the top by the absence of younger indicators and is confirmed by dinoflagellate data and at the base by oldest *T. sabulosus*, also confirmed by dinoflagellate data.

Common are *Falcisporites* and *Proteacidites* with frequent *Cyathidites*, *Dilwynites*, *Microcachrydites* and *Phyllocladidites mawsonii*. Consistent are *Amospollis cruciformis*, *N. endurus*, *N. senectus*, *T. confessus*, *Tricolpites gillii* and *T. sabulosus*. At 1149m, *T. apoxyexinus* occurs. Rare Triassic, Permian and Early Cretaceous reworking was seen.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, *Nelsoniella tuberculata* occurs in all samples, indicating the upper *Nelsoniella aceras* dinoflagellate Zone, correlative with the middle *senectus* spore-pollen Zone. Further, the presence of *X. australis* to the base indicates the upper part of this subzone. The most frequent taxa are *Spiniferites*, *Heterosphaeridium* and *X. australis* with *N. aceras* and *N. tuberculata* rare but consistent.

Very nearshore marine environments are indicated by the rare low diversity dinoflagellates (4%, 6% and 8% downhole), abundant and diverse spore-pollen, common cuticle and significant freshwater algae (1%, 5% and 2% downhole).

Yellow spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

H 1166.0m(swc) : lower *senectus* Zone

Assignment to the lower *N. senectus* Zone of earliest Campanian age is indicated at the top by the absence of younger indicators and at the base on oldest *N. endurus*. Very common is *Falcisporites* while *Cyathidites*, *Dilwynites*, *Gleicheniidites*, *Microcachryidites* and *Proteacidites* are frequent. *N. endurus* is rare. Minor Permian reworking was seen.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, the presence of *Nelsoniella aceras* without *N. tuberculata* and the presence of common *Heterosphaeridium* (10%) indicate the middle *aceras* dinoflagellate Zone. *Heterosphaeridium solida* and *H. heterocanthum* are the only frequent dinoflagellates.

Nearshore marine environments are indicated by the low dinoflagellate content (13%) and their low to moderate diversity, coupled with the dominant and diverse spores and pollen.

Yellow spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

I 1179.0m(swc), 1193.0m(swc), 1220.0m(swc), 1260.0m(swc), 1271m(cutts), 1298.0m(swc) : upper *apoxyexinus* Zone (*aceras* dino Zone)

Assignment to the upper *Tricolporites apoxyexinus* Zone is indicated at top and base by very rare *Amosopollis cruciformis* (1% or less) without younger or older markers, and is confirmed by dinoflagellate data. Large nondescript *Proteacidites* spp occur to the base of this interval, but not below it. A further interval of upper *apoxyexinus* Zone occurs below this point associated with the *cretacea* dino Zone. Overall, the assemblage is fairly bland with *Falcisporites* and *Dilwynites* common and *Cyathidites*, *Microcachryidites* and *Proteacidites* frequent. *Australopollis obscurus* is consistent at 1-2% of the assemblage to the interval base but very rare beneath. A single specimen of *N. senectus* at 1220.0m suggests extension of the *senectus* Zone

down to this point, but may also represent minor mud contamination. Minor Permian and Triassic reworking were seen.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, *N. aceras* occurs to the interval base without younger indicators and indicates the *N. aceras* dinoflagellate Zone. The subzone cannot be determined from these swc samples where *Heterosphaeridium* content is 3-7%. The major acme of *Heterosphaeridium* (20%+) may only be visible in cuttings. Of the dinoflagellates, only *Heterosphaeridium* and *Trithyrodinium* are frequent. Rare but consistent are *N. aceras* and *Odontochitina porifera* while rare but inconsistent are *Isabelidinium cretaceum* (1298m), *Odontochitina obesa* (1220 and 1260m) and *Areosphaeridium suggestium* (1193m).

Environments are nearshore marine with low dinoflagellate content (7%, 17%, 12%, 16%, (19%), 21% downhole) and low to moderate diversity, abundant and diverse spore-pollen and rare algal acritarchs (absent to 3%).

Yellow spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

**J 1325m(cutts), 1351.0m(swc), 1398.0m(swc), 1410m(cutts), 1453.0(swc) :
upper *apoxyexinus* Zone (*cretacea* dino Zone)**

Assignment to the upper *T. apoxyexinus* Zone is indicated by rare *A. cruciformis* (1% or less) without younger or older markers and is confirmed by dinoflagellate data. Large *Proteacidites* spp are absent here, but consistent above. *A. obscurus* occurs rarely (1% or less) to the interval base but not below. Otherwise the assemblage is nondescript with very common *Falcisporites*, common *Dilwynites* and frequent *Cyathidites*, *Microcachrydites*, *Podosporites microsaccatus* and *Proteacidites*. Small *Proteacidites* comprise 2-7% of the assemblage but are extremely rare or absent in section beneath. *T. apoxyexinus* occurs at 1398m and 1453m.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, youngest *Amphidiadema denticulata* and *Isabelidinium belfastense* at 1325m(cutts) and oldest *A. denticulata* and *I. belfastense* at 1351.0m(swc) indicate the upper *Isabelidinium cretaceum* dinoflagellate Zone. Youngest *Chatangiella victoriensis* and *Trithyrodinium glabrum* at 1351m are consistent. Below this, the absence of younger indicators at the top and oldest *I. cretaceum* at the base indicates assignment of 1398-1453m to the lower *cretaceum* dinoflagellate Zone. *Heterosphaeridium* spp continue to be the most frequent dinoflagellate, but with consistent diverse *Trithyrodinium* spp.

Nearshore marine environments are indicated by low dinoflagellate content ((15%), 18%, 13% (24%), 8% downhole) and low to moderate diversity, coupled with dominant and diverse spore-pollen assemblages.

Yellow spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

K 1502.0m(swc), 1510m(cutts), 1562.0m(swc), 1597.0m(swc) : middle *apoxyexinus* Zone

Assignment to the middle *T. apoxyexinus* Zone is indicated at the top by youngest consistent to frequent *A. cruciformis* (2-4% compared with 1% or less above), and at the base by the absence of older markers. Within the interval, *Cyathidites*, *Dilwynites*, *Falcisporites* and *Microcachrydites* are all common to very frequent. *A. cruciformis* is frequent (4%) in all except the shallowest sample (2%). *Ornamentifera sentosa* occurs at 1502.0 and 1510m. *Proteacidites* are extremely rare to absent. Minor Permian reworking was seen.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, *Isabelidinium rectangulare* occurs at 1502 and 1510m, indicating the upper *porifera* dinoflagellate Zone. Youngest *Circulodinium deflandrei* occurs at 1510m and confirms the spore-pollen subzone. Oldest *O. porifera* occurs in swc at 1453m. *Heterosphaeridium* and *Trithyrodinium* are the most common dinoflagellates.

Environments are nearshore marine as shown by the low dinoflagellate content (16%, 31%, 8%, 8% downhole) and their low to moderate diversity, with dominant and diverse spore-pollen.

Yellow spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

L 1616m(cutts), 1629.0m(swc), 1647.0m(swc), 1660.0m(swc), 1690.0(swc), 1699m(cutts), 1723.0m(swc), 1747.0m(swc), 1766.0m(swc), 1790m(cutts), 1805.0m(swc) : lower *apoxyexinus* Zone

Assignment to the lower *T. apoxyexinus* Zone of Santonian age is indicated at the top by the downhole influx of *A. cruciformis* ((11%), 4%, 9%, 8%, 9%, (15%), 3%, 1%, 9%, (12%), 8%) compared with 2-4% above, and at the base by the base of this acme and the absence of older indicators. Within the interval, saccate pollen are common

to very common, especially *Falcisporites* and *Microcachrydites*. *Dilwynites* are frequent to common towards the top (5-15% in the interval 1616-1723m) but are common to very common towards the base (24-40% in the interval 1747-1805m). *A. curciformis* is very frequent to common in most samples although apparently more common in the cuttings than the swcs. *Cicatricosisporites australiensis* is rare but consistent. A single specimen of *Appendicisporites distocarinatus* occurs at 1805m but may be slightly reworked. *T. apoxyexinus* was not seen but is always extremely rare.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, *Heterosphaeridium* spp and *Circulodinium* spp are the most frequent with *Trithyrodinium* spp fairly consistent to the interval base. Single specimens of *Cribroperidinium edwardsii* at 1647m and 1747m are considered reworked. Youngest *Aptea* sp occurs at 1747m and youngest *Chlamydophorella ambigua* at 1790m and are consistent with the spore-pollen zone. *Conosphaeridium* spp occur rarely as single specimens (*C. striatoconus* at 1616m and 1790m both cuttings, *C. tubulosum* at 1647.0m swc) are presumably in place and consistent with the spore-pollen zone. The existing formal dinoflagellate zones cannot be crisply recognised on these criteria.

Environments are nearshore marine with low dinoflagellate content ((26%), 12%, 22%, 7%, 14%, (24%); 12%, 14%, 14%, (22%), 15%) and low to moderate diversity, coupled with abundant and diverse spores and pollen and mostly inertinite dominated kerogen, occasionally with frequent cuticle.

Yellow to light brown spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

M 1820m(cutts), 1837.3m(CORE), 1838.1m(CORE), 1839.7m(CORE), 1840.3m(CORE), 1872.5m(swc), 1889m(cutts), 1916m(cutts), 1947.5m(swc), 1949m(cutts) 2003m(cutts), 2027m(cutts), 2035.0(swc), 2061.0m(swc), 2084m(cutts) : *mawsonii* Zone

Assignment to the *Phyllocladidites mawsonii* spore-pollen Zone of Coniacian-Turonian age is indicated at the top by youngest consistent *Appendicisporites distocarinatus* (supported by the decline in *A. cruciformis*) and at the base on oldest *P. mawsonii*, supported by oldest *Clavifera triplex* in swcs at 2101.0m. Within the interval, saccate pollen often dominate with *Falcisporites*, *Microcachrydites* and *Podosporites* all common. *Cyathidites* and *Dilwynites* are also frequent to common, although many samples in this interval are of cuttings and may be contaminated. *A.*

distocarinatus, *C. triplex* and *P. mawsonii* are rare but consistent and *Cyatheacidites tectifera* and *Coptospora pileosa* are extremely rare. *A. cruciformis* is rare to frequent (2-5%) in cores and swcs above 1872.5m, and very rare to absent beneath. In cuttings, *A. cruciformis* can be common but is considered caved.

Dinoflagellates are generally scarce with *Heterosphaeridium* spp the most frequent but with age diagnostic taxa generally absent. Caving from younger zones is consistent in this largely cuttings sampled interval including *N. aceras*, *A. denticulata*, *O. porifera*, *I. rectangularis* and *Trithyrodinium* spp. At the base, youngest *C. edwardsii* at 2084m indicates the *Palaeohystrichophora infusorioides* dinoflagellate Zone for that sample only.

Environments appear to be mostly nearshore to very nearshore with occasional non-marine beds. Dinoflagellate content is generally low ((17%), absent, 3%, 16%, 13%, 2%, (5%), (13%), absent, (4%), (11%), (14%), 33%, 12%, (15%)) with low to moderate diversity, but this could be an overestimate caused by caving of richer overlying marine section. Environments may therefore be largely non-marine to marginal marine. Spores and pollen are common and diverse with common to abundant cuticle, and significant to common freshwater algae (often 3-10% *Botryococcus*).

Light brown spore colours indicate marginal maturity for oil generation, but immaturity for gas/condensate.

N 2093m(cutts), 2098.0m(swc), 2101.0m(swc), 2102m(cutts), 2105m(cutts), 2117m(cutts), 2123.0m(swc), 2142.0m(swc) : *distocarinatus* Zone

Assignment to the *A. distocarinatus* spore-pollen Zone of Cenomanian age is indicated by the presence of *A. distocarinatus* without younger or older indicators. Within the interval, swc yields are variable. In the swcs, *Falcisporites* are very common with *Cyathidites* and *Microcachryidites* common and *Dilwynites* frequent. In the cuttings, *Dilwynites* tend to be more common but are considered caved. Oldest *C. triplex* in swcs occurs at 2101m. *A. distocarinatus*, *A. tricornitatus* and *A. cruciformis* are consistent throughout. Minor Permian and Early Cretaceous reworking was seen.

Amongst the dinoflagellates, *C. edwardsii* occurs in the upper part of the section indicating that 2089, 2093, 2101, 2102 and 2105m all belong to the *P. infusorioides*

dinoflagellate Zone. *C. edwardsii* is most common in the cuttings at 2102m. Of the other taxa, *Heterosphaeridium* and *Spiniferites* are the most frequent.

Nearshore and marginal marine environments are indicated by the low to very low dinoflagellate content (1%, (17%), 16%, (15%), (15%), (15%), 5%, 1% downhole) and their low diversity. These dinoflagellate contents may be too high, as most of the higher values are from cuttings and may be caved. Other features include the dominant and diverse dinoflagellates, common cuticle and significant freshwater algal content (5%, 4%, 1%, 7%, 4%, 12%, 3%, absent downhole).

Light brown spore colours indicate marginal maturity for oil but immaturity for gas/condensate.

O 2150m(cutts), 2157.5m(swc), 2180m(cutts) : apparently *distocarinatus* Zone.

The swc is very lean and lacks zone markers and the two cuttings samples contain *A. distocarinatus* without younger or older markers, suggesting the *distocarinatus* spore-pollen Zone of Cenomanian age. This marker could however be caved into these cuttings. *Phyllocladidites eunuchus* also occurs to the interval base but not below. Overall, *Cyathidites*, *Falcisporites* and *Microcachryidites* are the common taxa with the simple fern spores *Gleicheniidites* and *Laevigatosporites* common in the swc only. Minor Permian reworking was seen.

Dinoflagellates only occur at 2180m in cuttings, consist of a single species (*C. edwardsii* suggesting the *infusorioides* dino Zone) but may well be caved.

Non-marine environments with strong lacustrine influence are suggested by the frequent to common freshwater algae (6%, 14% and 4% *Botryococcus* downhole), absence of dinoflagellates (except for 2 possibly caved specimens in cuttings at 2180m) and dominance of rich and diverse spore pollen.

Light brown spore colours indicate marginal maturity for oil and immaturity for gas/condensate.

P 2212.5m(swc), 2222m(cutts), 2261m(cutts), 2270.0m(swc) : indeterminate

The swc is extremely lean, almost barren, and cannot be assigned. The cuttings contain a fair assemblage lacking *A. distocarinatus* and the spore influx seen below

and so are very nondescript and not similar to the interval above or the one below. They are considered indeterminate here. *Falcisporites similis* is abundant with common *Cyathidites* spp and *Microcachryidites* and frequent Araucarian pollen and *Osmundacidites wellmanni*. Minor Permian reworking was seen.

Dinoflagellates occur in all three cuttings samples but include obviously caved taxa such as *O.porifera* and *Trithyrodinium* spp. Clearly the entire assemblage may be caved.

Environments appear to be brackish to very nearshore marine with dinoflagellate content of barren, (4%), (2%), (trace) downhole, but the presence of frequent freshwater algae (barren, (4%), (absent), (8%) *Botryococcus* downhole) suggests possible non-marine environments with the dinoflagellates all caved. Common cuticle and dominant and diverse spore-pollen are consistent.

Light brown spore colours indicate marginal maturity for oil, but immaturity for gas/condensate.

Q 2294.0m(swc), 2318m(cutts), 2321.0m(swc), 2324m(cutts), 2333m(cutts), 2354m(cutts), 2360.0m(swc), 2392.5m(swc), 2408m(cutts), 2412.0m(swc), 2425m(cutts) : possibly *paradoxa* Zone

Assignment of this interval is not straight forward. Several samples within the interval (2294.5m swc, 2321.0m swc, 2324m cutts, 2392.5m swc) contain richer spore assemblages than above, including youngest *Coptospora paradoxa* (in 3 swcs only), *Crybelosporites striatus*, *Foraminisporis asymmetricus*, *Trilobosporites tribotrys*, *T. trioreticulatus*, *Triporoletes reticulatus* as well as a downhole influx of *Cicatricosisporites australienesis* (5-10%). The swcs also lack *A. distocarinatus*. Usually this richer spore flora is associated with a change to spore dominated assemblages at the top of the Otway Group. Here, however, spores are still mostly minor with assemblages still dominated by saccate pollen (*Falcisporites* and *Microcachryidites*). Thus, although the assemblage is not typical, assignment to the Albian *Coptospora paradoxa* Zone is possible. The unusual assemblages may be related to the lean and unusual sandy lithologies.

Cuttings in this interval generally do contain *A. distocarinatus* and do not contain *C. paradoxa* or the spore influx, and so favour *distocarinatus* zonal assignment. These may however be largely caved into the lean sandy lithologies. The swc at 2412.0m is

extremely lean reflecting the unfavourable lithologies. If shale interbeds had occurred, the data may have been more definitive.

Dinoflagellates are extremely rare, present only in the cuttings samples and are probably all caved. Many are obviously caved, including *C. striatoconus* and *Isabelidinium* spp.

Environments are non-marine to slightly brackish as shown by the total absence of dinoflagellates or spiny acritarchs from some samples, and the presence of only very rare spiny acritarchs in others. The rare dinoflagellates are almost certainly all caved. Spores and pollen are common and diverse in most microfloras.

Light to mid brown spore colours indicate early maturity for oil and early marginal maturity for gas/condensate.

IV CONCLUSIONS

At the top, the sampled section is Tertiary (Paleocene to Early Eocene) in very nearshore marine and marginally marine environments. Conformably beneath this, the entire Late Cretaceous appears to present although the mid Campanian to earliest Maastrichtian *lillei* Zone is either condensed or lost by unconformity. This section is mostly very nearshore marine to non-marine towards the base (Cenomanian to Coniacian *distocarinatus* to *mawsonii* Zones) and nearshore marine above (Santonian to Maastrichtian *apoxyexinus* to *longus* Zones). At the base, the Albian *paradoxa* Zone usually seen in the Otway Group may be present but unfavourable lithofacies preclude confident assignment.

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26th May, 1994

NOTE TO: FILE
FROM: SIMON HORAN
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PALYNOLOGICAL SAMPLES PROCESSING AND SAMPLE EXAMINATION METHODOLOGY

Following discussion with Roger Morgan, the sample processing techniques and sample examination methodology used in palynological studies of the Fergusons Hill-1, Ross Creek-1, Mussel-1, Pecten-1A, Triten-1ST, La Bella-1, Eric the Red-1, Minerva-1, Minerva-2A and Loch Ard-1 is listed below.

Sample processing usually involves the following steps. Extra techniques are only used if required:

- a) digest about 10gm of crushed rock in 50% HF overnight
- b) wash out several times over 10 micron polyester sieve. Acidify with conc HCl if fluorosilicate gel forms
- c) heavy liquid separation used concentrate $ZnBr_2$ with SG of 2.0
- d) wash out float fraction over 10 micron polyester sieve. Acidify if $Zn(OH)_2$ precipitate forms
- e) mount a sieved kerogen slide
- f) oxidise in Schutze Solution (conc 30% HNO_3 with crystalline $KClO_3$)
- g) wash out over 10 micron polyester sieve
- h) add 5% KOH to dissolve humic acids
- i) wash out over 10 micron polyester sieve
- j) examine under microscope for satisfactory oxidation. Repeat steps (f) to (g) if required
- k) heavy liquid separation using $ZnBr_2$ solution (SG of 20.)
- l) wash out float fraction using polyester sieve. Acidify if $Zn(OH)_2$ precipitate forms
- m) dehydrate onto coverslip
- n) mount microscope slides using Eukitt medium

Sample examination usually involved the following steps:

- a) scan two traverses at a x10 to log the bulk of the assemblage and get some idea of age
- b) scan at x40 and count the first 100 specimens to get percentage contents for each species. From this, saline "Microplankton Content" (%) can be developed to provide an index of marine influence. Where the sample is too lean to provide 100 specimens, frequency is estimated from the specimens

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- seen with A = abundant, C = common, F = frequent, R = rare
- c) return to x10 to scan at least two large coverslips to log rare species, and finalise age conclusions. Log more slides if required
 - d) develop "Salines Microplankton Diversity" by counting up total species identified of dinoflagellates plus spiny acritarchs, as a second index of marine influence. This count includes species seen both inside and outside the court
 - e) develop "Freshwater Microplankton Content" by totalling all freshwater algal elements (*Botryococcus*, *Schizosporis*, *Paralecaneella*, *Leiosphaeridia*, *Nummus*)
 - f) examine sieved kerogen slide for specimens of *Cyathidites* to establish spore colour for Spore colour Maturity Index

BASIN: OTWAY SPORE-POLEN ZONES

ELEVATION: KP _____ GU _____

WELL NAME: MINERVA-1

TOTAL DEPTH: _____

| AGE | PALYNOLOGICAL ZONES | HIGHEST DATA | | | | LOWEST DATA | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|---|
| | | Preferred Depth | Rtg | Alternate Depth | Rtg | Preferred Depth | Rtg | Alternate Depth | Rtg | |
| NEOGENE | Plei | T. pleistocenicus | | | | | | | | |
| | Plio | M. lipsus | | | | | | | | |
| | Mio | C. bifurcatus | | | | | | | | |
| | | T. bellus | | | | | | | | |
| | Olig | P. tuberculatus | | | | | | | | |
| upper N. asperus | | | | | | | | | | |
| PALEOGENE | L.Eb | mid N. asperus | | | | | | | | |
| | Mid B | lower N. asperus | | | | | | | | |
| | Pabl | P. asperopolus | | | | | | | | |
| | | upper M. diversus | | | | | | | | |
| | Eb | mid M. diversus | 563 | 2 | | 594 | 0 | | | |
| | | lower M. diversus | 617 | 2 | | 617 | 0 | | | |
| | | upper L. balmei | 627 | 0 | | 651 | 0 | | | |
| | Pale | lower L. balmei | 760 | 2 | | 760 | 0 | | | |
| | | upper T. longus | 783 | 0 | | | | | | |
| | LATE CRETACEOUS | bas | lower T. longus | | | | 839 | 0 | 870 | ? |
| Camp | | T. lillei | | | | | | | | |
| | | N. senectus | 897 | 2 | | 1166 | 0 | | | |
| Sant | | up T. apoxyexinus | 1179 | 2 | | 1453 | 2 | | | |
| | | mid T. apoxyexinus | 1502 | 1 | | 1597 | 2 | | | |
| Con | | low T. apoxyexinus | 1616 | 3 | | 1805 | 1 | | | |
| Ar | | P. mawsonii | 1820 | 3 | | 2089 | 0 | | | |
| Can | | A. distocarinatus | 2098 | 2 | | 2142 | 0 | 2279 | 4 | |
| EARLY CRETACEOUS | | Alb | P. pannosus | | | | | | | |
| | | | upper C. paradoxa | 2294 | | | | | | |
| | lower C. paradoxa | | | | | 2425 | | | | |
| | Apt | C. striatus | | | | | | | | |
| | | upper C. hughesi | | | | | | | | |
| | lower C. hughesi | | | | | | | | | |
| L.Ne | F. wonthaggiensis | | | | | | | | | |
| E.Ne | up C. australiensis | | | | | | | | | |

Environments :

- 0 lacustrine (algal acritarchs).
- non-marine (no or very few 5% algal acritarchs).
- * brackish (spiny acritarch, no or very few dinoflagellates 1%).
- *A marginal marine (1-5% very low diversity dinoflagellates).
- A nearshore marine (6-30% low to medium diversity dinoflagellates).
- A/A intermediate marine (31-60% medium diversity dinoflagellates).
- A/A offshore marine (61-80% medium to high diversity dinoflagellates).
- far offshore marine/oceanic (81-100% high diversity dinoflagellates and/or planktonic forams).

Confidence Ratings :

- 0 : good to excellent with numerous zone fossils in core/svc.
- 1 : fair with rare zone fossils in core/svc.
- 2 : poor with non-diagnostic assemblage in core/svc. Often occurs next to a distinctive 0 to 1 rating, lacking the zone fossil seen adjacent.
- 3 : good with extinction event (top range) in cuttings.
- 4 : poor to fair with inception event (base range) in cuttings and therefore may be picked too low if caved or too high if swamped by cavings.
- 5 : poor with non-diagnostic assemblage in cuttings. Usually seen adjacent to a higher rating and picked on the absence of key zone fossil.
- 7 : no confidence. Picked as a best guess in very poor data.

Data recorded by : Roger Morgan and Nigel Hooker Sept 83

Data revised by : Roger Morgan April 94

MINERVA #1 - palynological data -

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CLIENT: BHPP

WELL: MINERVA #1

FIELD / AREA: OTWAY

ANALYST: ROGER MORGAN

DATE: JULY '93

NOTES: ALL DEPTHS ARE IN METRES

FIGURES REPRESENT PERCENTAGES BASED ON 100 SPECIMEN COUNT

"X" INDICATES RARE PRESENCE OUTSIDE THE COUNT

IN UNCOUNTED SAMPLES "A"= ABUNDANT "C"= COMMON "F"= FEW

"R"= RARE

"X"= VERY RARE

RANGE CHART OF OCCURRENCES BY % & LOWEST APPEARANCE: grouped

Index numbers are the columns in which species appear.

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269 TETRACOLPORITES OAMARUENSIS
247 TETRACOLPORITES VERRUCOSUS
117 THALASSIPHORA DELICATA

125 DEFLANDREA OBLIQUIPES
128 DEFLANDREA PACHYCERAS
113 DEFLANDREA SPECIOSA
118 DEFLANDREA TRUNCATA
201 DENSOISPORITES VELATUS
97 DICONODINIUM PUSILLUM
157 DICTYOPHYLLIDITES
173 DICTYOTOSPORITES COMPLEX
242 DICTYOTOSPORITES FILOSUS
216 DICTYOTOSPORITES SPECIOSUS
158 DILWYNITES GRANULATUS
227 DILWYNITES TUBERCULATUS
1 DINOFLAGELLATE CONTENT
98 DINOGYMNIIUM ACUMINATUM
121 DIPHYES COLLIGERUM
82 DISPHAERIA MACROPYLA
114 EOCLADOPYXIS PENICULATA
239 ERICIPITES SCABRATUS
74 ESCHARISPHAERIDIUM SP
102 EUCLADINIUM MADURENSE
26 EXOCHOSPHAERIDIUM PHRAGMITES
139 FALCISPORITES GRANDIS
140 FALCISPORITES SIMILIS
126 FIBROCYSTA BIPOLARIS
122 FIBROCYSTA VECTENSE
38 FLORENTINIA DEANEI
159 FORAMINISPORIS ASYMMETRICUS
184 FORAMINISPORIS DAILYI
160 FORAMINISPORIS WONTHAGGIENSIS
202 FOVEOGLEICHENIIDITES
169 FOVEOTRILETES PARVIRETUS
7 FROMEA FRAGILIS
244 GAMBIERINA EDWARDSI
243 GAMBIERINA RUDATA
236 GAMBIERINA TWISTED
92 GILLINIA HYMENOPHORA
119 GLAPHYROCYSTA DIVARICATUM
123 GLAPHYROCYSTA cf MEDUSETTIFORMIS
174 GLEICHENIIDITES
115 HAFNIACYSTA SEPTATA
261 HALORAGACIDITES HARRISII
241 HERKOSPORITES ELLIOTTI
32 HETEROSPHAERIDIUM CONJUNCTUM
17 HETEROSPHAERIDIUM HETEROCANTHUM
93 HETEROSPHAERIDIUM LATEROBRACHIUS cf
18 HETEROSPHAERIDIUM SOLIDA
77 HYSTRICHODINIUM FURCATUM
35 HYSTRICHODINIUM PULCHRUM
127 HYSTRICHOSPHAERIDIUM TUBIFERUM
223 INTERULOBITES INTRAVERRUCATUS
78 ISABELIDINIUM BALMEI
56 ISABELIDINIUM BELFASTENSE
45 ISABELIDINIUM COOKSONAE
19 ISABELIDINIUM CRETACEUM
68 ISABELIDINIUM KOROJONENSE
106 ISABELIDINIUM PELLUCIDUM
63 ISABELIDINIUM RECTANGULARE
90 ISABELIDINIUM RECTANGULARE CONTRACTUM
75 ISABELIDINIUM SP
94 ISABELIDINIUM THOMASII
95 ISABELIDINIUM TRIPARITA
175 ISCHYOSPORITES PUNCTATUS
39 KIOKANSIUM POLYPES
107 KIOKANSIUM SP
141 KLUKISPORITES SCABERIS
191 LAEVIGATOSPORITES OVATUS
185 LEPTOLEPIDITES MAJOR
170 LEPTOLEPIDITES VERRUCATUS
233 LILIIACIDITES
196 LILIIACIDITES KAITANGATAENSIS
179 LYCOPODIACIDITES ASPERATUS
245 LYGISTIPOLLENITES BALMEI
229 LYGISTIPOLLENITES FLORINII
101 MADURADINIUM PENTAGONUM
270 MALVACIPOLLIS DIVERSUS
266 MALVACIPOLLIS SUBTILIS
108 MANUMIELLA CORONATA
109 MANUMIELLA DRUGGII
20 MICRHYSTRIDIUM
142 MICROCACHRYIDITES ANTARCTICUS
42 MICRODINIUM ORNATUM
52 MICRODINIUM SP
47 MILLIOUDIDIUM
53 NELSONIELLA ACERAS

117 THALASSIPHORA DELICATA
76 TRICHODINIUM
240 TRICOLPITES "MINOR"
230 TRICOLPITES CONFESSUS
222 TRICOLPITES GILLII
248 TRICOLPITES LONGUS
235 TRICOLPITES SABULOSUS
218 TRICOLPITES SP
212 TRICOLPITES VARIVERRUCATUS
258 TRICOLPITES WAIPAWAENSIS
278 TRICOLPORITES
221 TRICOLPORITES APOXYEXINUS
249 TRICOLPORITES LILLIEI
254 TRILETES TUBERCULIFORMIS
163 TRILOBOSPORITES TRIBOTRYS
147 TRILOBOSPORITES TRIORETICULOSUS
171 TRIPOROLETES BIRETICULATUS
172 TRIPOROLETES RADIATUS
148 TRIPOROLETES RETICULATUS
164 TRIPOROLETES SIMPLEX
279 TRIPOROPOLLENITES AMGIBUUS
250 TRIPOROPOLLENITES SECTILIS
99 TRITHYRODINIUM
79 TRITHYRODINIUM FINE GRANULATE
30 TRITHYRODINIUM GLABRUM
84 TRITHYRODINIUM MARSHALLII
34 TRITHYRODINIUM MARSHALLII PSILATE
85 TRITHYRODINIUM PUNCTATE
61 TRITHYRODINIUM RETIC "THICK"
69 TRITHYRODINIUM SUSPECTUM
70 TRITHYRODINIUM THICK VERMIC
149 VELOSPORITES TRIQUETRUS
259 VERRUCOSISPORITES KOPUKUENSIS
15 VERYHACHIUM
176 VITREISPORITES PALLIDUS
80 XENASCUS CERATOIDES
86 XENIKOON AUSTRALIS
49 XIPHOPHORIDIUM ALATUM