



NEWS

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Rambler On The Road To Reopening ... At Last

By Rob Davie

At a rough guess some of the most desired items in the mining industry right now must be pumps. Many old mines are being re-evaluated and the first thing that has to be done is dewater the mine. That is happening all the way from Canada to the equator and the most recent case that Minesite has come across is the Rambler mine in Newfoundland. This old mine had two spells in production; one in the seventies and one in the nineties and has now been closed for over a decade. This property became part of Altius in 2001 who transferred it to Rambler Metals & Mining ahead of the AIM listing in early 2005, leaving Altius with a 30 per cent interest. These two companies fall within the Harry Dobson empire and he is chairman of Rambler. One of his long-time colleagues is Brian Hinchcliffe and as a fellow board member he was able to give Minesite an overview of the project.

The Rambler copper-gold property contains the former producing Ming and Ming West mines. The Ming mine last operated in 1982 and the Ming West mine came to a halt in 1996. The property is located on the Baie Verte Peninsula of North-East Newfoundland and one of the first things the new owners did was to consolidate the holdings. In the past mining at Ming stopped at a property boundary even though it was in massive sulphide ore because there was no agreement with the title owner. At the same time the overall land package was increased to give it a much larger area.

Drilling from surface in 2005 by way of initial exploration yielded encouraging results from the Ming Footwall Zone and the Ming Horizon such as 122 feet at 2.13% copper and six metres of 18% zinc. These were sufficient justification to start dewatering the mine so as to open up drill positions underground at the 500 level that would give better access down to the 3,000 level. Once access has been opened and drilling starts the goal is to have a 43-101 compliant resource established by the summer. Dewatering is being done from the ramp that extends to 820 metres although the mine also has shaft access down to 650 metres as well.

While there is a mill on site Brian is quite blunt and says it is obsolete, but declined to be drawn on the likely scale of the capital expenditure that might be required to build a new one. That would depend heavily on the size of any resource that might be identified and how rapidly it could be mined. Historic production from the mine was 2.1 million tonnes at a grade of 3.5% copper, 1.05% zinc and 2.2 g/t gold and the mill process 1,500 tonnes per day. Having such good underground access is obviously a huge benefit, but whether it is in the right place to access new material is a different issue.

Drilling so far has identified a new structure, known as the Upper Ming Footwall Deposit that sits between the Ming and the Ming Footwall Zone. It has a thickness of six to fourteen metres and is open across strike and down plunge. Although the Ming and the Ming West Zones together were known to contain about 400,000 tonnes of mineralised material at closure this won't be enough to warrant re-opening the mines. That relies on finding new orebodies and so far the story looks promising as the new discovery shows. Rambler is only capitalised at £25 million , but has £4 million in the treasury to fund its drilling programme. Its location in a politically stable part of the world will certainly work in its favour if it can prove up sufficient resource to justify taking it to the next stage.

A quick word with Harry Dobson elicits the fact that he is sufficiently confident of the outcome to have recruited George Ogilvie as vice president, operations. George has plenty of experience of running underground mines. He graduated in mine engineering at Strathclyde University, which would have endeared him to Harry, and then went to South Africa to work for Anglo American at the underground Vaal Reefs gold mine. He then moved to Canada, still with Anglo, and gained more experience at the Flin Flon mine in Manitoba before joining Dynatex to become mine manager of the McCreedy West mine. He is not joining Rambler just to help de-water it. He is going to be responsible for increasing the resource, underground rehabilitation of the Ming mine, integrated mine planning for the Ming Footwall Zone, extensions to the Ming massive sulphide deposit and the newly discovered high grade zone between the Ming mine and the MFZ. Rambler is on the move at last.

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