

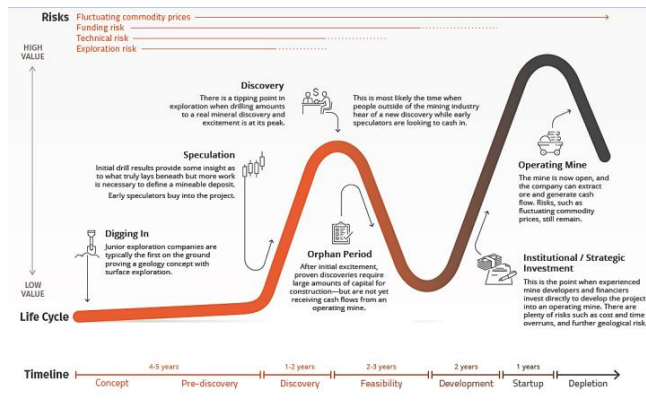
Dispatch from America



Our Dear Leader is on his travels again and has headed West to America which he has not visited for a very long time. He is not visiting the usual cities that are associated with investment banking but when has he ever done "the norm"? He told us he would spend the first weekend relaxing in Atlanta and to acclimatise to the US time zone. He tells us there is more to Atlanta than just Coca-Cola and civil rights museums, he was particularly impressed by their Beltline concept which is a 22-mile-long trail on a former railway corridor that runs around the city but also alongside the trail there has been urban rejuvenation and bars and restaurants thrive. The idea originated in a 1990 Masters degree thesis by Ryan Gravel to turn the old rail roads into the paved trails around Atlanta. Our Dear Leader can be seen here hiring a Lime e-scooter, which apparently are everywhere, about to circumnavigate Atlanta on it on the Beltline. VSA is a believer that this sort of concept will happen in many cities and towns globally and that e-scooters will become accepted in the same way as Boris bikes have been accepted in London; but upgrading infrastructure is required to accommodate these and for safety and that is why VSA is advising and supporting Ginger, a private UK e-scooter business.



Atlanta was really just the entry point into the USA for the main purpose of Andrew's visit. He is searching for the best producer of a large supply of Vanadium Electrolyte, and he believes it is in Hot Springs Arkansas and made by US Vanadium, a private company, but backed by Techmet the UK based technology metals fund led by Brian Menell. Techmet is also known for recently making a major investment in Cornish Lithium. The Cornish mining industry is slowly becoming quite a catchment area for investment as recently Sir Mick Davis and Vision Blue made a major £25mn investment in Cornish Metals which follows on from their investment in Ferro Alloys (LON:FAR), a vanadium project in Kazakhstan. It seems like Brian, Mick and Andrew are all chasing a similar theme. Our Dear Leader, as readers will know, does spend a lot of time at the Cornish lair and he knows a thing or two about Cornish mining! VSA acts for Tungsten West (TUN.L) and Godolphin Exploration Plc which Andrew says are the best ways to play as they sit at either end of the Lassonde curve and so where the best returns can be made for investors. (Goldolphin Exploration Plc is a proposed VSA IPO. Anyone interested can get in touch with their usual VSA contact). Andrew though has also been wandering around a lot of the old English china clay pits recently, most of which are owned by Imerys, the French industrial company, but the mica does contain a lot of potential lithium and Andrew believes enough to build a lithium hydroxide battery plant in the UK to service European EV manufacturers. He also has our team working through all of the near 1,500 past mining ventures that have operated in Cornwall as that is the clue to where to mine in the future.



Sadly it appears there is not much vanadium in Cornwall and so why Andrew has had to travel so far as if vanadium flow batteries grow as much as Andrew expects in the next 10 years, huge amounts of vanadium electrolyte will be needed. Andrew believes that LDES is a massive growth market and VFB's have to be part of the mix and so this is also why after his visit to Hot Springs he will be heading to San Francisco to spend time with the CEO of Invinity Energy Systems (LON:IES) as it appears that 2022 will be a breakthrough year for them as the US government is pumping vast sums of capital into the space and IES is positioning itself correctly to deliver into the massive US market opportunity.

Andrew tells us that he has been amazed by the global knowledge he has found regarding vanadium in Hot Springs but the reason is that Union Carbide built a vanadium process and chemicals plant here back in 1966 and knowledge of vanadium has been passed down through generations, Many staff members at US Vanadium Holding Company LLC ("US Vanadium") (which effectively acquired the Union Carbide plant) have worked at vanadium mines and process plants all round the world. Andrew was again back in the lab (if only his tutors at Oxford had realised how much he loves a lab) and seeing how the electrolyte is made and also ensuring a very high quality and with no impurities. Andrew reports he now truly believes he has found the elixir of vanadium electrolyte!



There is actually a crystal mining industry in Hot Springs, but it didn't quite catch Andrew's eye; instead he tells us stories of eating catfish which apparently is the local delicacy there, although whether it would ever usurp good old British fish and chips seems unlikely so don't expect catfish turning up at your local chippy.



Andrew Monk, Chief Executive Officer | T: +44 (0)20 3005 5001 | E: amonk@vsacapital.com
Andrew Raca, Head of Corporate Finance | T: +44 (0)20 3005 5004 | E: araca@vsacapital.com
Ollie O'Donnell, Head of Research | T: +44 (0)20 3617 5180 | E: oodonnell@vsacapital.com

VSA Capital Limited, Park House, 16-18 Finsbury Circus, London EC2M 7EB | www.vsacapital.com

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