



Henbury Meteorite Fragment

Age 4.56 billion years

Total mass > 1000 kg

Found in Australia in 1931

The core of an asteroid separated from its rocky mantle in the first few million years of our solar system's history, 4.56 billion years ago. It cooled and crystallised over the next 10 million years or so; you can see the crystal patterns. Later fragmentation produced a parent asteroid from which the Henbury meteorite was produced about 800 million years ago. The meteorite landed on Earth about 4000 years ago in Australia and was first reported in 1931.

The meteorite is made of an alloy of iron and nickel. One face of the meteorite has been cut and polished, to reveal the crystalline patterns of the two metallic minerals, kamacite and taenite, which formed in the slowly cooling core of the asteroid. The surface depressions called regmaglypts were caused by pockets of superheated air melting and vaporising the metal on entry into our atmosphere.