



THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

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NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2011

The August Meeting is the Society Annual General Meeting and will be held on Friday the 5th of August 2011 at 7.30 p.m. in the LZG14 lecture theatre on the ground floor of Building LZ in the Science campus of the University of Western Sydney on the corner of Victoria Road and James Ruse Drive in North Parramatta.

2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The A.G.M. will commence at 7.30 p.m. with the President's report for 2010/2011 followed by the Treasurer's report and presentation of the annual financial accounts for 2010/2011 and the election of the Society Committee and office-bearers for 2011/2012.

During the A.G.M. any other business may also be raised and discussed.

The Election of Office-Bearers for 2011/2012.

In accordance with the Society Constitution the entire current Committee retires at the commencement of the A.G.M. and all positions are open for nomination and election. Nomination forms for election to the 2011/2012 Committee were circulated with the July Newsletter and nominations should have been received before the commencement of the A.G.M. A member can be nominated for but cannot hold more than one position. Only financial and Honorary Life members of the Society are eligible for nomination or allowed to participate in any voting.

After the A.G.M. has been concluded the **Betty Mayne Memorial Lecture** will be given this year by

Professor Paul Carr on : -

‘Minerals – Time Capsules for Earth’s History’.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Society Meetings will be held on the first Friday of each month through the rest of this year. Subject to circumstances some changes to the following schedule of program subjects and speakers may have to be made in due course.

- September 2nd: There will be a talk to be given by Jim Sharpe on 'An Occurrence of Campigliaite at Broken Hill' and a lecture by John Tottenham on 'A Prospector's Observations on Victorian Gold'.
- October 7th: Lecture by Professor Ken McQueen on 'Cinnabar (Mercury) Mining in Australia'.
- November 4th : Lecture by Adam McKinnon on 'Establishing a New Mine at Mineral Hill'.
- December 2nd : Christmas Social.
- February 3rd 2012 : Lecture by Dieter Mylius and John Chapman on the 'Landforms and Minerals of Iceland'.
- March 2nd 2012 : Lecture, (not finalised), on 'Metallogenic Mapping. Locating the Mineral Deposits of N.S.W.'
- April 13th 2012 : (Good Friday is on the 6th of April in 2012. The Society Meeting therefore will be held on the second Friday). There will be a lecture by Professor Peter A. Williams on 'Bronze Age Mining and Metallurgy'
- May 4th 2012 : Members Mini-Auction.

FIELD TRIPS

The **South Coast Excursion** to the Kiama-Wollongong area scheduled for Saturday 23rd July had to be cancelled due to the bad weather over that weekend. The excursion will be re-scheduled for later in the year. The **September** and **October Field Trips** are still on track. There will be a weekend trip to the Upper Hunter Valley / Scone area with an overnight stay over Saturday and Sunday, 3rd & 4th of September and a one-week trip to the Garrawilla area from Tuesday 4th to Monday the 10th of October.

Upper Hunter Valley Excursion. 3rd & 4th of September 2011

Possible sites to be visited include Bunnan calcite, Krui River zeolites and the Burning Mountain at Wingen. Saturday night accommodation will be in Scone. Further details will be provided in due course.

Please advise and register with John Chapman if you will be attending, and provide your mobile phone number (if applicable). John may be contacted on 9808 3481 (Home) or 0435 085050 (Mbl) or by email at chapman@optusnet.com.au. To facilitate car pooling please let him know if you want, or can offer, a lift.

Garrawilla Excursion. 4th to 10th of October 2011 (following the long weekend and Gemkhana at Cessnock).

An opportunity to collect zeolites from the Garrawilla volcanics. Possible sites to be visited include Portabella, Garrawilla, Glendowda and Mullaley. This trip will involve field camping. Members can attend for the full period or any days between the 4th and 10th of October. Further details will be provided in due course.

THE SOCIETY COMMITTEE

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The JULY MEETING

The evening's program had been changed slightly from that originally scheduled since the first lecturer, Peter Williams, had not been able to attend. John Chapman had been asked instead to display a montage of images of fine mineral specimens from the **John Dwyer Broken Hill Mineral Collection** which was shown after the lecture by John Rankin.

'Peeling Back The Past'.

John Rankin

The background to John Rankin's lecture was derived from the establishment over the last few years of a very comprehensive and extensive Internet information facility called 'Trove'. The facility has provided the historical researcher with greater and easier access to a wealth of information which in years past would have been much more difficult to find and collect. In the course of researching references to Australian mineral specimens and collections and their history the speaker had latterly found his work considerably enhanced by the Trove facility and he was to describe it and some of his findings in his lecture. Working with the new facility and searching for information contained within it has constituted quite a detective story. In particular the speaker was to describe his work and methods investigating by means of 'Trove' the history of two mineral specimens which he had found in the Australian and South Australia Museums and which did not have virtually any information with them and also a gold specimen which he personally acquired some years ago. As a result of the research which is on-going the speaker has been able to turn over to the museum mineral collection curators a considerable amount of information about the particular specimens which they had not previously possessed. The lecture was thoroughly illustrated by images of newspaper reports and other articles available through the 'Trove' facility and of the mineral specimens being researched.

"This evening's lecture was about trying to go back in time to work out what we can about mineral specimens that we have today. Up until a couple of years ago this was pretty hard because all that the researcher had were books which had to be found in libraries and which would usually not speak about specific mineral specimens. A researcher could also try and trace the history of collectors, finding out when they passed away, and what had happened to their collections. This would involve finding newspaper obituaries, often only available from newspapers published in the towns where they died which might be small towns with limited newspaper circulation and availability, after which the research and sources of information would become very scratchy."

“Two years ago the National Library in Canberra launched an Internet information service called ‘Trove’ which is the digitisation of Australian newspapers and it is really a wonderful facility. The work is on-going with information still being actively added. The workers are copying all the major newspapers of the capital cities plus representative country newspapers from when these commenced publication in the 1800s and up to 1954.”

The first specimen that John Rankin presented information about that he has found using ‘Trove’ was a large specimen of Peak Downs malachite in the Australian Museum, an image of which was shown. He had noticed the specimen located in the Museum mineral storeroom sitting on the floor in a box. Unfortunately there was no information to be found about it other than that it was from Peak Downs. The current Australian Museum catalogues only start at 1887, records before that date having been very inadequately kept. The speaker briefly pointed out the location of the Peak Downs copper mine in central Queensland which was discovered in 1861 and was the first successful copper mine discovered up to then outside South Australia.

The first clue that the speaker discovered that there might be information in ‘Trove’ on the Peak Downs malachite was during his performing a search on mineral specimens when he happened upon a letter published in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1872 by Gerard Krefft who was then the curator at the Australian Museum. The writer was bemoaning the fact that the Museum received very few donations of mineral specimens. He might receive a gold specimen about once a year and usually would need a magnifying glass to see the gold in it. At the end of Krefft’s letter he spoke about having a specimen from Peak Downs on display at the Museum that a Mr. Jules Joubert had donated.

This led the speaker to search further for references about donations to the Australian Museum and found that the Sydney Morning Herald used to publish lists of donations every month with a list in August 1865 indicating that two large specimens of copper ore from the Peak Downs mine had been donated. Further searching established that there had actually been three specimens donated. A little information was also available about the donor, Mr J. Joubert, who lived in Hunters Hill. He was on the local council and became mayor of Hunters Hill for a period. He was also in commerce and was the chairman of the Parramatta River Steam Company. At this time in 1865 the Peak Downs Copper Mining Company held its meetings in Sydney and their half-yearly meeting was going to be on the 30th of June that year. The company secretary then was a man named George Spaight who was also secretary of the Waratah Coal Company and five days before the meeting he absconded with a subsequent report in the Herald indicating that some £300 to £400 was missing from the Coal Company. As a result Mr J. Joubert became secretary of the Peak Downs Copper Mining Company in George Spaight’s place.

At this time all the Australian states had their individual customs systems and lists of imports and exports were published for each state. One of these indicated that three cases of copper specimens from the Peak Downs Copper Mining Company had been sent from Rockhampton to Sydney two days before the six-monthly company meeting. Further searching located a gem of information printed in the Maitland Mercury newspaper which had repeated an article originally published in the Peak Downs Telegram from June 17th 1865 and which provided the whole story of where and when the malachite specimen had come from. The report even gave the depth of the mining shaft where it had been found, that the specimen had been broken into three pieces and was sent to Sydney to impress the shareholders. Presumably soon after the Peak Downs Copper Mining Company meeting on 30th June 1865 the specimens were donated to the Museum by the new secretary, Jules Joubert. The three specimens were still in the Museum, the one noticed originally by John Rankin in the mineral store-room, another elsewhere in the mineral department and one in the meteorite store. As verification the speaker displayed an image of a page from the catalogue which Gerard Krefft put out in 1873, ‘*The Minerals of the Australian Museum*’, which indicated that the three specimens were then ‘on display in the centre room of the first floor of the new wing’.

John Rankin commented that he felt that he was unlikely to see again such a fulsome description of how and when a specimen was discovered.

Fortunately for the researcher whilst the ‘Trove’ facility has not copied all the smaller country newspapers and the Peak Downs Telegram is not part of ‘Trove’ the practice in the 19th century of the larger country and capital city newspapers of copying and repeating articles from the smaller country ones has ensured that newspaper information has been preserved and is accessible.

The second specimen referred to was a totally different story. It was a large Burra Mine malachite coated with azurite crystals weighing some 78lbs, (35kilos), currently on public display in the South Australia Museum in Adelaide. Accompanying the specimen was a medal awarded for its inclusion in the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. The specimen was actually acquired by the S.A. Museum about 20 or 30 years ago being bought for the Museum by the Friends of the South Australia Museum society from a dealer. From his research John Rankin had found that at the time of the Exhibition the specimen had been owned by a veterinarian R.S.Crabb. In reference to other exhibition catalogues it was apparent that the owner in addition to sending it to the Philadelphia Exhibition had also exhibited it elsewhere around the World and in Australia during the late 1800s before he died in 1906.

A friend in Adelaide had advised the speaker about a Website, ‘*The Philadelphia Free Library*’ which had a large collection of photographs of the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. A number of images were shown to the meeting of the Exhibition which included displays by both New South Wales and Victoria as well as the one by South Australia which among a number of exhibits had the Burra malachite specimen in a glass case on view. Confirming that it was the same specimen as the one currently on display in the S.A. Museum had taken the speaker a little time with the need for him to obtain as clear a copy of the images from 1876 as possible, the pictures on the ‘*Free Library*’ website being in low resolution of about 150 kilobytes. However by contacting and discussing this with the Museum and after two months of communications to and fro John Rankin was able to get an improved-resolution image of the Philadelphia Exhibition display of 33 megabytes. This made it clear that the specimen on show then in the display at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition was the same one on show today in the South Australian Museum.

For further confirmation John Rankin had continued searching through ‘Trove’ for references to the Burra specimen and found that the Adelaide newspapers being appropriately patriotic had reported substantially on the S.A. Museum display in the 1876 Exhibition in the U.S., reports noting that “*in the middle of the table was a solid mass of malachite encrusted with blue carbonate. Around it were grouped specimens of native copper... etc*”. As far as the speaker has been able to find out the Burra specimen is the only specimen in any 19th century exhibition which has been photographed and which can be related to the same specimen today.

An interesting aside to the research into the Burra specimen history was the speaker turning up an intriguing story involving the sending of the collections to the 1876 U.S. Exhibition. Upon the consignment of S.A. exhibits arriving in the U.S. it was found that some of them had become wet and it gradually transpired that the American ship transporting the collection had taken on water. This had happened due to an attempt by the captain to deliberately scuttle his own ship !. The reason he did this was because the ship was also transporting all of the Victorian exhibits for the Exhibition including a box of very valuable gold specimens which the captain kept in his cabin. During the journey from Australia to New York the captain obtained an auger from the ship’s carpenter and bored a one-inch hole in the floor of his cabin hoping to flood and sink the ship, in the process expecting to save himself and the box of gold specimens. He ordered the crew not to man the pumps but they did so anyway and realising that his attempts to scuttle had failed the captain plugged the hole with a candle and the ship limped into New York Harbour to be put into a dry dock. The captain was relieved of his command and disappeared to England where he was eventually arrested in London and a trial held but apparently he was acquitted.

Turning up an amazing story such as this is all the more possible these days with facilities such as ‘Trove’ although the researcher has to be alert to finding and using key words to locate a news item which might be buried quite deeply.

Continuing his research into the history of the Burra specimen John Rankin found a reference in an Adelaide newspaper from 1861 describing a “*A fine specimen of malachite enclosed in a glass case going to the Great Exhibition in England in 1862 weighed 78lbs...*” This led to looking at the catalogue of exhibits for the International Exhibition in England in 1873 where the specimen was also described. A report about the specimen being on display for the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880 was also noted. A few other references from this period indicated that the owner had been quite keen to send the specimen regularly to England and America for exhibitions. These reports still did not indicate how Crabb had originally acquired it.

Then in the process of performing a word search for ‘malachite’ in ‘Trove’ John Rankin found an article in a 1929 Burra newspaper written by a Frank Treloar who was interested in history. The article referred to a Mr Crabb coming from Adelaide in about 1850 or 1851 to check on the horses at the smelters of the Burra mine and whilst there was given a fine malachite specimen. The circumstances of the acquisition, whether it was a gift or purchase and the exact date of this were not given but the article at least indicated how R.S.Crabb had obtained the specimen. In continuing searching through ‘Trove’ the speaker turned up a report about a court case held on May 23rd 1851, where Crabb, (his name then being spelt with an ‘e’), had been taken to court by someone for the loss of a horse which had unfortunately died after Crabb had treated it. The statement was made in the court that “*Mr Crabb had been absent at the Burra for nine days*”. Since the court case would have been held one to two months after the complaint arose the nine days referred to was presumably the period during which Crabb had gone to Burra to check on the smelter horses. This was the nearest date that John Rankin had been able to get to the actual Burra malachite acquisition.

The misspelling of R.S.Crabb’s name in the one newspaper report illustrated the care that a researcher had to take in looking for information which might be in the ‘Trove’ archive when relevant items would not come up if there was a misspelling. The researcher cannot always assume that in typing the word ‘malachite’ or ‘Crabb’ that this would automatically bring up all references. In the older newspapers words might be blurred as well as misspelt so accordingly in order to locate all the possible information the researcher would need to widen his search parameters.

An image was displayed of the obituary of R.S.Crabb which the speaker had originally tracked down before using ‘Trove’ noting that Crabb was a Cornishman and that “anyone to do with mining in South Australia always came from Cornwall”. The obituary had provided the speaker with several of the references of exhibiting the Burra specimen such as the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition and Paris in 1878 to help him in tracking down further information. He had also found an advertisement placed by Crabb describing his veterinary work.

Referring to some of his other ‘Trove’ discoveries relating to mineral specimens the speaker mentioned finding a report on the loss in a hotel fire in 1894 of the Charles Marsh mineral collection of some 800 specimens, possibly including examples of the original marshite. This was the first time that the speaker had found out what had happened to the Marsh collection and curiously whilst the fire was reported in the Broken Hill ‘Barrier Miner’ local newspaper, which is copied in ‘Trove’, the loss of the collection was not but was found to have been reported upon more fully in an Adelaide paper. Another indication that the searcher has to look as widely as possible. In performing a ‘Trove search for references to marshite not as much information will come up than if the term ‘cuprous iodide’ is used.

A novel report found in ‘Trove’ about Broken Hill was that apparently in the 19th century churches used to have harvest festivals in February when the churches would be decorated with flowers and examples of the local harvests. At Broken Hill the church held such a festival decorating, as elsewhere, with flowers and fruit and with mineral specimens from the Barrier mines, minerals of course being a form of local harvest in that part of the country. Another newspaper report referred to the first big strike at Broken Hill in 1892 when an Otto William Baxter was apparently a ‘scab’ working at the Proprietary Mine and so the strikers burnt his house down. At a subsequent inquest the report made the point that whilst the house was lost his mineral collection kept in a room about fifteen yards away was saved. This seemed to indicate that a lot of people at Broken Hill at that time collected minerals.

The last mineral specimen referred to was a small gold in quartz specimen which John Rankin had picked up in Adelaide. It had an old cardboard label with it saying only 'Auriferous Gold from the Shackles, N ? Nash Ward'. At the time of acquiring the specimen the speaker did not know anything about the Shackles or Nash Ward and just put the specimen away. However when 'Trove' came along he commenced a search applying a selection of key words and a certain amount of information came up on the Shackles Gold District in reports in Darwin newspapers. Initially a report from 1882 was found referring to the warden of the Shackles , C.W.Nash. which indicated the period when the gold specimen obtained by the speaker was originally found. Searching further turned up more reports including one from 1885 which mentioned that the Shackles was closing down and Warden Nash moving to Burrundie so the gold specimen pre-dated that year. Then another report from 1882 described a South Australia parliamentary delegation traveling to the Northern Territory to tour the mining fields. The report indicated that the Shackles was apparently then on its last legs and that the deputy warden of the mine was one C.W.Nash who was also the resident magistrate. John Rankin has presumed that the gold specimen he acquired was originally presented to the delegation in 1882 by Nash which was why his name was on the label.

In conclusion John Rankin spent the last few minutes of his lecture describing and answering questions about aspects of using the 'Trove' facility including printing images and stressing how competent the search engine of the facility was, the best the speaker has seen compared to others with which he has had experience. It was important to apply key words or phrases to look for information which could then be narrowed down by applying more and more qualifying words to select a specific item.

The John O'Dwyer Mineral Collection

John Chapman

John Chapman was asked to deliver the next segment of the program, not a lecture as he advised but essentially a slide show of photographs of specimens taken by him of the John O'Dwyer Mineral Collection. The speaker had been asked some time ago by John O'Dwyer in Broken Hill to photograph the entire collection. The collector wanted to use good-quality photographs to incorporate in his Website with the view to selling them. The O'Dwyer collection of over 500 specimens of Broken Hill minerals is world-famous. John Chapman spent two weeks in Broken Hill photographing the collection and showed selection of 120 of them to the meeting.

[The John O'Dwyer collection with individual specimen pictures, descriptions and prices may be viewed on the [John O'Dwyer Collection Website](#)].

The show commenced with a few views around the town of Broken Hill, some views of the countryside and subsidiary mining operations such as the Potosi and a picture of the collector himself. John O'Dwyer was a miner and is now retired, spending his time with minerals and fishing.

The slide show was set to run automatically, gradually working through the selection of very impressive specimens with John Chapman providing a few words of description or comments on each one and also answering a large number of queries from members about the images as he went along. At the end of the photo show the speaker also answered a number of questions about his mineral specimen photographic techniques.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

BLAXLAND GEM & MINERAL CLUB GEM SHOW

Saturday & Sunday, August 20th and 21st 2011

Displays of lapidary work and gem, mineral and crystal sales.

Refreshments available.

Glenbrook Community Hall

Great Western Highway, Glenbrook, NSW

(Next to Glenbrook Theatre) Just west of Information Centre.

<http://www.freewebs.com/blaxlandgemmineralclub/BGMCshow.htm>

8 am to 4 pm Daily

Entry: Adults: \$3 Children \$1

CUMBERLAND GEM & MINERAL SHOW

Over Saturday and Sunday the 27th and 28th of August 2011
in the Roselea Community Centre, Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford.

SALES of jewellery, gemstones, beads, opals, mineral specimens from all over the world,
tools and equipment for lapidary and beading work, metaphysical and healing crystals.
Displays of mineral specimens, cut & polished stones, carvings & gemstones.

GEMKHANA 2011

The NSW State Gem, Jewellery & Mineral Show

To be held at Cessnock over Saturday to Monday, the 1st to 3rd of October 2011 in the
Cessnock Indoor Sports Centre, Mount View Road, Cessnock
Saturday and Sunday, 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday 9.00 a.m. to Noon.

Featuring displays of gemstones stones, jewellery, carving, enameling, minerals & fossils.
Dealers. Tailgaters. Displays. Demonstrations. Field trips.

Inquiries to Doug Endersby on telephone (02) 4990 3837
or e-mail d.endersby@bigpond.com.au
or to Arthur Roffey on telephone (02) 4572 5812

GEMBOREE 2012

AUSTRALIA'S 48TH NATIONAL GEM AND MINERAL SHOW

Easter 2012 from the 6th to 9th of April 2012.

In the Bundaberg Showground, Burrum Street, Bundaberg, Queensland.

Hosted by the Bundaberg Gem & Mineral Society Inc on behalf of the
Queensland Gem Clubs Association and AFLACA.

Lapidary traders, tailgating stalls, entertainment, refreshments,
working demonstrations, displays, lectures, tours.

Everyone Welcome

Camping available on site. Booking enquiries to P.O.Box 5886 West Bundaberg 4670
or e-mail *bundygemboree@yahoo.com.au*
