



THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC

C/o School of Natural Science
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NEWSLETTER

MAY 2012

The May Meeting will be held on Friday the 4th of May 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.

MEMBER'S MINI AUCTION

The May Meeting will start at 7.30 p.m. sharp and whilst there may be a short period of general Society announcements the auction will commence immediately after and will probably last about two hours. A list of 98 specimens to be auctioned will accompany this Newsletter and will be on display for examination from 7.00 p.m.

Members bringing in the specimens to sell at the auction should arrive well before 7.00 p.m. to lay out the specimens for inspection by buyers. The specimens should be clearly labeled with the owner's name as well as the species and the locality and before the sale commences specimens will be allocated the auction number corresponding to the accompanying list.

Prospective buyers should also arrive well before the sale commences to allow time to examine the lots and members who wish to bid will be allocated a bidding number. Please make sure you are given one.

A SILENT AUCTION will also be held. Members may bring a mineral or trays of minerals to sell. They should write their name on the tray or trays and on a bid form for each tray which will be provided. Bidders may examine the trays during the auction and then write their bids on the bid form. There is no need to notify details beforehand of the minerals in the flats, just bring the tray or trays to the meeting, register, and place the *Silent Auction* bid form on your box.

Transactions must be by CASH ONLY and paid directly to the vendor at the completion of the auction. There would be no cost to sellers, the Society will take no commission on sales, will not handle any money and will not take responsibility for ensuring transactions are completed or enter into any disputes should they arise. There will be no reserve on specimens but if a vendor is dissatisfied with the final bid, he or she can make a higher bid themselves in order to retain the specimen.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

June 1st : There will be a demonstration and talk by Penny Williamson and Doug Austen on diamond crystal forms and a lecture on 'Recent Additions to the University of Wollongong Mineral Collection'.

July 6th : There will be a talk to be given by Gary Sutherland on the Museum of Lead Mining at Wanlockhead in Scotland. It is hoped that this will be followed by the lecture by Larry Barron on 'Australian Diamonds'.

August 3rd : The Society Annual General Meeting will commence at 7.30 p.m. with the President's report for 2011/2012, the Treasurer's report and presentation of the annual financial accounts for 2011/2012 and the election of the Society Committee and office-bearers for 2012/2013.

The A.G.M. will be followed by the Betty Mayne Memorial Lecture to be given by Professor Peter Williams on : - 'Gazing into the Mineralogical Crystal Ball. Where is it all going?'

September 7th: Member's Forum: - 'Return to Kingsgate' Members will be invited to bring in specimens, information, collecting experiences and anecdotes from this significant and productive site. There may also be a talk to be given by Sylvia French on 'Gem Analysis'.

October 5th: Lecture and photographic display by Gary Sutherland on 'The Museums of England'.

November 2nd: Depending on circumstances and speaker availability it is hoped that there will be a lecture on 'Mineral Hill Update'.

December 7th: Annual Christmas Social and 'Swap n' Sell.

The SOCIETY COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT:	Dieter Mylius	Tel: (02) 9477 1060
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COMMITTEE MEMBERS:	David Colchester	Tel: (02) 9449 3862
	Gary Sutherland	Tel: (02) 9871 1379
	Penny Williamson	Tel: (02) 4221 4075

Committee member John Smedley has also had to resign from the Committee.

APRIL MEETING

The Meeting was opened by the Society Vice-President, John Chapman, who particularly referred to the forthcoming **Field Trip to Tambar Springs** over the 25th to 30th of April asking that all members who were definitely going on the Trip to confirm this with him unless they already had done so and to deal with any inquiries. There was no restriction on numbers attending and any other members deciding to join the trip now could do so, subject to their advising him.

Graham Ogle advised that the date for the next **MicroMineral Group** meeting had been changed since it would have clashed with the Field Trip and it would now be held on Saturday May the 26th. In due course he would send an e-mail to all Group members confirming the date.

John Chapman referred to members maintaining their financial status with the Society and paying their subscriptions for this year, a number still being unfinancial, and urged those members to correct this as soon as possible. There were various Society activities and the provision of Personal Accident insurance which would be affected by the member's financial status.

Members' Forum – Return to Ben Lomond

Jim Sharpe commenced speaking to the Forum on the Ben Lomond mineral deposits. Basalts range from around Ben Lomond village across the New England highway to below Glen Innes. The source of the zeolites has been from two sites, one alongside the highway where a basalt quarry was established and exposed zeolites and another about two kilometres away, to the north of and near to the village itself where a railway cutting also exposed a zeolite occurrence. The speaker and Peter Williams first visited the railway cutting site in 1967 when the Glen Innes & Northern Tableland Express was still in operation. The best collecting was right on the edge of a cliff and the collectors had to hang on the edge to chip away at the exposed outcrop to collect, dropping a few rocks on to the rail line on the process.

One feature of the zeolites from the railway cutting deposit was the size of the chabazite crystals which some collectors such as David Vince from Victoria have asserted have been the largest Australian examples of that mineral which they had seen. Jim Sharpe has also collected apophyllite from the railway cutting although he speculated that most people with Ben Lomond material would have collected from the highway site which has also yielded nice chabazite as well as a few other zeolites. This site had been quarried for the basalt, work which has been long discontinued so there are no more vughs being exposed and according to Graham Delaforce the site has now been regenerated although there were still some large boulders on the site which could be investigated. One reason for the regeneration of the site had been to smooth off an awkward and dangerous corner on the New England highway.

A few comments from the members present indicated that their previous collecting visits had provided some calcite including nail-head specimens as well as various zeolites. In answer to a query Jim Sharpe advised that he had been back to the Ben Lomond deposits some years after his first visits and whilst the railway line is not now being used the zeolites at the cutting site were not exposed and some work would be needed to dig into the rock to find any.

Graham Delaforce also addressed the meeting describing his collecting experiences at Ben Lomond. He and Ian Graham had made many successful collecting trips to the sites. He only had one specimen, of aragonite with natrolite, to display from the railway cutting site but a lot more from the highway quarry including some nice chabazites which he had brought in to display. Many of his specimens were micros but

demonstrated a range of species. He advised that Brian England has written a number of articles on the zeolites from Ben Lomond, (and elsewhere in N.S.W.), which members could look up, some having appeared in the Mineralogical Record and the Australian Journal of Mineralogy.

Peter Williams advised that a few years ago he had given two large boxes of micro specimens from the Ben Lomond highway deposit site to Noel Kennon who could be asked if these were still available for examination by Micro Group members.

Brian Holden asked where the highway zeolite deposit was in relation to the speed camera along that stretch of the highway! He was advised by Graham Delaforce that this was about five kilometres away.

John Chapman introduced the speaker for the evening. Arthur Roffey has spent most of his life pursuing his interests in lapidary work, mineralogy, organising exhibitions and shows and collecting, not to mention his attending all but one of the Tucson Gem and Mineral Shows in the U.S.A. for over thirty years. In addition to substantial involvement with lapidary clubs and administrative work for them and the umbrella Gem & Lapidary Council of N.S.W. Inc he was one of the founding members of the Mineralogical Society and has played a major role in Society activities and Committee work over a long period. He has effectively spent a Lifetime with Minerals.

The following notes on his lecture have been provided by the speaker.

MY HISTORY IN LAPIDARY AND MINERALS

Arthur Roffey

“In 1958 I was approached by a Mr. Harry Peirce about the formation of a lapidary club at Katoomba. After an explanation as to what a lapidary was I agreed to attend a meeting at which the Blue Mountains lapidary club was formed. We met in the old Katoomba Tech School and were initiated into the art of cutting cabochon's and free-form stones. The club had a short life of about six years mainly due to members not wanting to brave the night-time elements during the winter months. There were about six members that lived in Blackheath and it was decided to form a club there. We met at member's homes and used my workshop as a cutting room. In 1967 my then wife and I organised a 14 day coach tour of some 2,500 miles through New South Wales and Queensland for some forty American lapidaries. This was a camping trip with the coach company supplying all the camping equipment. It was arranged that each night we would be hosted by the local lapidary club wherever there was one followed the next day by a field trip wherever this could be arranged. This proved a great success and many friendships were made. The final day home saw the group being hosted to a civic luncheon by the Blue Mountains Council. The final function of the trip was a visit to the Parramatta Lapidary Club where the club was given the deeds to one square inch of land in Alaska. The tour was again repeated about three months later to accommodate those who missed a place on the first tour. Sadly not long after this the Blackheath club folded again through lack of attendance however some years later the Blue Mountains Club was again started through the efforts of two people, Les Carrett from the Albury club and Harry Palmer from the Lapidary Club of NSW who were now residing in the upper Blue Mountains. I was once again a member of the Blue Mountains Club.

During these years I started doing field trips, some relatively close to home to Browns Creek, Sunny Corner, Beauchamp Falls at Blackheath, Kandos Quarries and Dunedoo. My first long trip took in places such Murrurundi for agate and natrolite, the rhodonite mine near Tamworth, Nundle for quartz crystals and the quarry at Attunga for aragonite. From there to Bingara for rutilated quartz and topaz at the old tin dredgings, then on to Glenn Innes and Kingsgate. Coperton was our next stop for 'Diamonds-Didn't-find-any' but we met a very interesting old prospector who said he made a living panning for diamonds and alluvial tin. He showed me around his campsite and very proudly showed me a faceting machine which was powered by

an old treadle sewing machine and constructed entirely from wood except for the shafts. Then on to Warialda for wood, Belata for agate, Edgeroi for opalised wood and then home. Over the years I did several other trips, including to Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. Not only were these trips rewarding with minerals and cutting material but also for the people that I met. It was during a trip to Nundle that I was made aware that Martin Zwer, the owner of the scheelite mine, had died. I had seen the scheelite crystals in Albert Chapman's collection. On making enquiries I found that no one had taken an option on the mining lease and so I decided to take it out. After several trips on weekends I had repaired the collar set and had made a new portable ladder, fashioned lighting which ran off the car battery and I was then ready for some serious collecting. But no, I received a letter from the Mines Department explaining that unless considerable insurance was forthcoming against damage to the catchment area the lease would not be granted. After talking with Albert it was decided that we would both visit the mine and see if it would be a viable proposition to go ahead. Well, on arrival we discovered that some group or groups had completely demolished the collar set searching for quartz crystals and allowing the surface water to flood the mine. We decided that the only way to collect there now would be to open cut and as this was going to be expensive with the use of a bulldozer I abandoned the project.

It was during the time that I was more into lapidary, that I was introduced to Brian Bown who I am sure some of you know. Brian's father conducted a business by the name of Frank Hambridge at Alexandria who were metal ore exporters. With the advent of lapidary Brian convinced his father that they should start to import cutting rough from overseas. By this time I was selling cabochon material to club members and at small shows and this was a great opportunity to buy at wholesale prices. About this time there were approximately 20 lapidary shops and businesses in and around Sydney. On my first trip to Brian's I was shown several large crates of what was imported as cutting material, but among it I recognised some with mineral collection potential. Wonderful plates of botryoidal malachite and rutilated quartz crystals. I was told to pick what you want, the price does not vary, so I would spend hours picking out the undamaged pieces. Brian and I still remember those days and we have remained friends to this day. The only other dealer in Sydney besides them and Albert Chapman that had a large range of overseas minerals was Australian Lapidary Supplies. They were importing large quantities of Mexican material cutting rough and minerals.

In 1965 I answered an advertisement in the Australian Lapidary Magazine regarding what was being called a GEMBOREE being organised by the editor Norm Paterson. I thought this could be interesting and it was. A camping weekend was held in the Warrumbungles National Park in the shadow of Split Rock. There were about 100 people there and it was such a success that it was decided to have another the following year again organised by Norm. He then challenged the lapidary movement to take over the running of the event, which they did and now you can see what it has grown into. I can proudly say that I have attended all GEMBOREES except for one. Don't forget the 50th anniversary GEMBOREE to be held in Gatton in 2014. 1969 saw the first National Gem Show held in the Sydney Town Hall which ran for a full week and in 1976 was incorporated into the GEMBOREE.

In 1976 I became a GEMBOREE dealer and started to meet people in this circle quite a lot of whom have become good friends over the years. One of these was Kevin Davey who was instrumental in 1977 in my deciding to make my first trip to Tucson. He showed me around there and introduced me to the dealers. One of the highlights of the trip was when he arrived back at the motel at night to say that we had just bought 600 flats of mixed minerals to which I replied, "I can't afford that" and he said "what at a dollar a flat?". Well of course, my answer then was O.K. We decided to sort the wheat from the chaff before we shipped them home, packed the wheat and put the chaff outside our room with a notice on it 'FREE'. – and it was all gone the next morning. This gave me a great start in my mineral business. As well as meeting and becoming friends with many of the dealers I have met some very interesting people some of who were great field collectors. To name a few there was Joe and Mark Kielbaso who collected at both Brushy Creek and Elmwood mines, Neill Phaff who collected at Spruce Mountain, Stan Esbanshade who collected at Morenci, David Shannon collected all across Arizona, Rod Tyson collected at St Hilaire and Rapid Creek in the Yukon and John Siebel collected wherever his research led him to. Then there were the people who have had minerals named after them. Louis Leite for leiteite, Louis Menezes for menezite, Paul Dezatels for dezatelite, Al McGuines for McGuinesite and Dave Shannon for shannonite.

I was approached to run classes in lapidary at Springwood TAFE which I did until it was closed. It was during this time that I met Eric Stevens who really got me started on collecting minerals. We would send off combined orders to Botleys in England and to India for zeolites – 20 small cabinet-size specimens for US\$20, all top quality. Eric introduced me to Albert Chapman who I visited several times to listen and learn. Eric and I have remained firm friends ever since. It was after one of my visits to Albert's that on his suggestion I started to collect at Prospect Quarries.

Having no other club in the Blue Mountains, I decided to join the Parramatta Lapidary Club and held a few minor positions there including Exhibition Chairman. After a short illness and a recovery period I left and became a member of Blaxland Gem and Mineral Club. Here again I held several positions and was one of the prime movers in the building of the new cutting room and toilets. I am a life member of Blaxland. Then in 1974 I attended a meeting at the home of Albert Chapman to consider the formation of a mineral society. It was agreed to do so and it was to be known as the Mineralogical Society of New South Wales. In 1975 the Society was officially formed and I was nominated for the position of Exhibition Officer. In 1976 and 1977 I held the position of Vice President but due to work commitments I declined any positions for some years as I found it difficult to attend meetings on a regular basis. However when the Society decided in 1976 to become a member of the Gem and Lapidary Council of New South Wales I was given the position of delegate having been part of one of the many meetings with regards to its formation. I have represented the Society ever since and have for the past nine years served on the management committee of the Society.

In 1978 I was elected to the position of Vice President of 'the Council' and held this position several years before being elected as President which I held on three separate occasions for several terms. I have held every position on 'the Council' with the exception of that of Treasurer. At the moment I am in my 17th year as Secretary and Public Officer. I have served on every GEMBOREE Committee except one, including the Bicentennial GEMBOREE and on most GEMKHANA Committees. In 1978 I gained my judging certification in Cabochons and Faceting and in 1979 for Minerals and Showcases. In 2010 I was appointed chief Judging Steward. I have served on the Judging and Rules Committee since 1978 having held the position of chairman on several occasions.

In 1979 I was invited to attend a meeting of AFLACA, (the Australian Federation of Lapidary and Allied Crafts Association) Judging and Rules Committee to help formulate the judging rules for minerals. Since that time I have attended all AFLACA Judging and Rules meetings and seminars. In 1989 I was made New South Wales delegate to AFLACA and have held that position ever since. In 1994 I was elected to the position of Vice President and in 2001 to Senior Vice President. In 2008 I was elected President in 2010 was made a life member.

In 2003 I sold my mineral business to Peter Beckwith and the following year accompanied him on his first trip to Tucson. After 33 consecutive years of buying it was time to introduce Peter to my suppliers, hoping this would give him a good start. In 2006 I was invited to exhibit at the Tucson main show part of my lapidary collection in the following year 2007 which had the theme 'Minerals From Down Under'. As well as the two cases that I personally exhibited I helped John Chapman put together exhibits from the Department of Mineral Resources and the Mineralogical Society of New South Wales, both of which were well received.

Peter called me one day to enquire if I knew anything about a collection owned by Elio Ree saying that it was on the market and that he could be interested. Having known Elio for quite a long time and watched his collection grow I said "Well you better be thinking six figures". When we arrived at Elio's home and saw what was being offered I told Peter that it was not the collection but excess stock from his business. But it had some wonderful finds, for an example a full apple case of old Broken Hill specimens still wrapped in old Broken Hill newspapers and some with Albert Chapman's handwritten labels.

One sidelight that I found interesting was that after my marriage to Chris she told me about her mother's father who was not only the editor of one of the oldest newspapers in Sydney, the Bulletin, but that he also had a diamond mine at Copeton. She found that her father now had a great deal of documentation regarding this and so it came into our possession. I read that Cluff Developments were prospecting the old areas that included this mine 'The Mount Ross Diamond Mine' and so I contacted them explaining the situation and asked if it would be possible to locate the old mine. They were eager to see the old paperwork

and we made arrangements to visit the site. We had a great day showing them the documents which they photocopied and looking at the diamonds they had recovered and then see the mine, now just a depression in the ground. The shaft on reports was only about 500 meters deep but water was the problem once they hit granite bedrock. While it was operating it was profitable with stones at three carats being recovered but unfortunately at that time they were some of the toughest known. Don't try to find Mount Ross, there is no such place. It took us a while to realise it but once we had read some of the original documents we found the reason. The mine was named not after a mountain but after its founders, - Mr Mount and Mr Ross!. At the 2012 GEMBOREE I was informed by the President of the Inverell Lapidary Club that Cluff Developments had abandoned the lease, that the club was taking up the option and that when this was completed it would be open to fossickers at a small fee.

There is a sad side to my collecting activities when you are asked to do a valuation on a collection, either because of a death or personal reasons. I have over the years done several of these and usually when you find one of your old dealer labels with a specimen, it tends to bring back the memory of the sale, even though it may be in the distant past. Some of those collectors were friends, - Barry Cole, Jack Cooper, Barry Thompson, Laurie Lawrence, and Barry Jenkins, all of who have passed away.

I have enjoyed my life among minerals and have met many great people both here and overseas and could not have wished for a more fascinating and interesting hobby and thank you for giving me the opportunity of sharing it with you."

At the end of his lecture Arthur Roffey answered a number of questions. In answer to a query from Lin Sutherland about the current interest in lapidary the speaker insisted that whilst over the years some clubs have folded due to gradually diminishing attendance and membership, others have flourished. In particular he stressed that anyone who had been to the Gemboree at Bundaberg as he had over the previous weekend would have been assured that the interest in lapidary was very much alive.

Finally Gary Sutherland thanked Arthur Roffey for a very interesting autobiography which had also provided a lot of background and description of the history, development and organisation of the Gem and Lapidary clubs in Australia as well as the founding of the Mineralogical Society.

TAMBAR SPRINGS FIELD TRIP

John Chapman

Sweeping valleys clothed with soft yellow grassland, rolling hills clad with woodlands, punctured here and there with conical volcanic plugs. This was the setting for our excursion into the Garrawilla volcanics to collect zeolites. Close up it was more like hard rubbly basalt, grass seeds, blackjacks and burrs. But there was zeolite everywhere. Just find a likely spot and dig.

Plenty of frustration and dud holes but everyone got something in the end and all seemed happy with their finds. The main minerals found were stellerite, laumontite, heulandite and drusy quartz. Some spectacular pieces of stellerite were unearthed and much material awaits cleaning to reveal its worth.

But that was only half of it. It was a great social event with 17 members from afar as Orange and Inverell staying at the comfortable Tambar Springs pub, the Royal Hotel. Our excellent trip leader, Ken Mitchell, was tested with a couple of member disappearances but handled everything with calm aplomb. Thanks Ken for a fantastic trip and we are all hoping you can do it again next year.



Vicki Golin, working hard.



Ken Mitchell examining a specimen of stellerite on basalt which he had unearthed.



The Field Trip party assembled outside the Royal Hotel, Tambar Springs. (John Chapman was also present but behind the camera taking the picture).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The 22nd Annual Lismore GEMFEST

Being held over Saturday and Sunday the 19th & 20th of May 2012 in the Lismore Showgrounds.

'The Show is now in its 22nd year and is dedicated to lapidary and allied crafts. A large number of dealers and tailgaters provide minerals, fossils, cutting material, cut stones, jewellery findings, tools, machinery and finished jewellery. More than half of the trading is under cover, providing a safeguard against poor weather. There are also club displays and children's activities such as gem sieving. A variety of food is available from several caterers. On site camping registrations are obtainable at very economical rates, giving you the chance to enjoy a visit to the Northern Rivers as well as attending the Show. Anyone wishing to trade is advised that pre-booking is essential, since all available space has been committed in recent years and current occupants will be given the chance to book first.'

Information: Postal enquiries to P.O.Box 743, Lismore, NSW 2480, from bcopper@bluemaxx.com.au or visit the Website www.gemclublismore.org.au.

The Canberra Lapidary Club Gemcraft & Mineral Show

Over Saturday and Sunday the 2nd and 3rd of June. From 10.00am to 5.00pm
In the Exhibition Park (EPIC), Flemington Road, Mitchell, Canberra.

Minerals, fossils, opals, rough & cut gemstones, Lapidary equipment and supplies, Beads, jewellery and findings, Displays of members' collections, Demonstrations of cabochon making & faceting, FREE fossicking and gold detecting sessions, Food and drink available. Information available from : - www.canberralapidary.org.au

The WINDSOR JEWELLERY, BEADING, GEM & MINERAL SHOW

Saturday & Sunday, June 16th & 17th 2012
At the Windsor Function Centre on the corner of Dight & Macquarie Streets, Windsor.
Next door to Windsor Public School.

Saturday open from 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. & Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.
Admission \$5, children \$1. Light refreshments.
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.
Inquiries to Peter Beckwith on 0412 333 150.

Blaxland Gem & Mineral Club Gem Show

Over Saturday and Sunday, the 18th and 19th of August 2012

Being held in the Glenbrook Community Hall, Great Western Highway, Glenbrook, NSW
(Next to Glenbrook Theatre). Just west of Information Centre.

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

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

8 am to 4 pm Daily. Entry: Adults: \$3 Children \$1

GEMKHANA 2012

In the Showground at Mudgee over the long weekend Saturday, September 29th 10.00am-5.00pm;
Sunday, September 30th 10.00am-5.00pm; & Monday, October 1st, 9.00am to midday.

'We are returning to Mudgee Showground this year. The competition brings entries from all across NSW and quite a few from interstate. Dealers and tailgaters will attend. We will have children's activities. Refreshments will be available. There is wheelchair access and plenty of parking. On-site camping is available.

Contacts are :- Una (Co-ordinator) 02 4759 2440, Marilyn 02 9635 8218, email to : -
[gemlapidarycouncilnsw.org.au](http://www.gemlapidarycouncilnsw.org.au) or Website *<http://www.gemlapidarycouncilnsw.org.au/gemkhana.html>*
