



# THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC

Website: [www.minsocnsw.org.au](http://www.minsocnsw.org.au)

Please address all correspondence to :-  
The Secretary, 58 Amazon Road, Seven Hills, NSW 2147

## NEWSLETTER      APRIL 2020

There will be no Society General Meetings held at the Parramatta and Holroyd Lapidary Club until further notice, due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This also applies to all other Mineralogical Society activities including field trips, and any other societies or lapidary club activities, shows, sales events previously announced and scheduled and open-air events such as the Gemboree and the Canberra Rock Swap all of which are cancelled.

**However, the coming Friday meeting (April 3<sup>rd</sup>) will be broadcast using the internet-based meeting platform "Zoom".** This is a simple and free program, similar to Skype. To use it, members need to have an email address (so they can be sent the meeting link), and also have a computer that has sound. If you can watch and hear a news video on your computers, you should be able to view the meeting just fine in your own homes.

The Committee, none of whom are young IT geeks, used Zoom very successfully for the last Committee meeting.

**There will be a practice meeting so you can check that Zoom works on your computer on Tuesday evening at 7.30 pm.** Instructions and a link to the meeting will be sent out by a separate email from John Chapman. Graham Ogle will run the practice session and set up the Friday meeting as well. **Please join the practice session if you are not familiar with Zoom.** Phone support will be available as well from 4 committee members (Graham, John C, Dieter, Ed).

Then later in the week we will send the link for the Friday meeting.

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## FORTHCOMING PROGRAMS

The following list of meeting programs will be presented by means of the 'Zoom' facility until 'live' meetings can be re-instated.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> :      There will be a lecture to be given by Adam McKinnon on "The Dominion and Federation discoveries at Nymagee, NSW"

May 1<sup>st</sup> :      There will be a talk to be given by Dieter Mylius on '**Surprising Bismuth Minerals in the Australian Museum**'. The annual Mineral Auction is postponed.

June 12<sup>th</sup> :      There will be a talk by David Colchester on '**Datolite from the Cleary Bros Quarry, Albion Park**' and a lecture by Murray Brooker on '**Salt Lake Mineral Exploration**'.

July 3<sup>rd</sup> There will be a lecture by Garry Lowder on :- **A Journey Through the Elements: Memoirs of a Fortunate Geologist**'. The lecture will introduce the autobiographical book of the same name written by the lecturer. The 'Elements' referred to are Earth, Air, Fire and Water.

August 7<sup>th</sup> : The **Society A.G.M.** will be followed by the Mayne-Walker Memorial Lecture which will be given by Joanna Parr, research scientist of the CSIRO, on '**Seafloor Hydrothermal Mineralisation – The Where, Why, What and How of Mineral Formation at Seafloor Hydrothermal Vents**'.

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## REORGANISING Field Trips for 2021 and the Future

Three groups are forming to continue organising Field Trips. A number of people have already offered support to help.

These working groups are in their infancy and your ideas are welcome.

This is part of a succession plan as I would like to see the Safety group continue into the future.

Operations of the three groups would be by e-mail and video conferencing

Each group would need a core of 4 people, others will be on the distribution e-mail list for their group. Members can participate in one or all three groups. Most times you will be reviewing proposals for field trips.

If not enough members form the core group, Members may be asked to be rostered on for 3 months or 6 months until a vacancy is filled.

By being on the core group or e-mail listing, we want to develop a large core of members who can do field trips and short presentations at meetings. The Micro Group will benefit by being exposed to a wider range of minerals and localities.

### Field Trip Group Tasks

1. Participate in expeditions to find new sites. 2 Cars & 4 members, may involve door knocking
2. Have teams of 2-3 members lead a field trip
3. Administer the 'sign on' at each field trip
4. Write up a field trip report for the newsletter
5. At the MinSoc Seminar, help and guide small groups of 10-12 participants at various sites.
6. Determine which documents need to be simplified.
7. There are sites within 200 – 400km which can be accessed.

The aim is to form a number of groups to organise a field trip. Each group will have 2-3 people who will organise and manage the field trip to one site. The aim is to have five or more groups, each organising a visit to different sites. Each group will disband after a site has been visited and a new group may form with the same or different mix of people to visit another site.

The planned visits may be up to two years ahead. Field trips would be arranged with the aim for at least one field trip a month. Some months may have two field trips if a noteworthy new site is discovered or revisited.

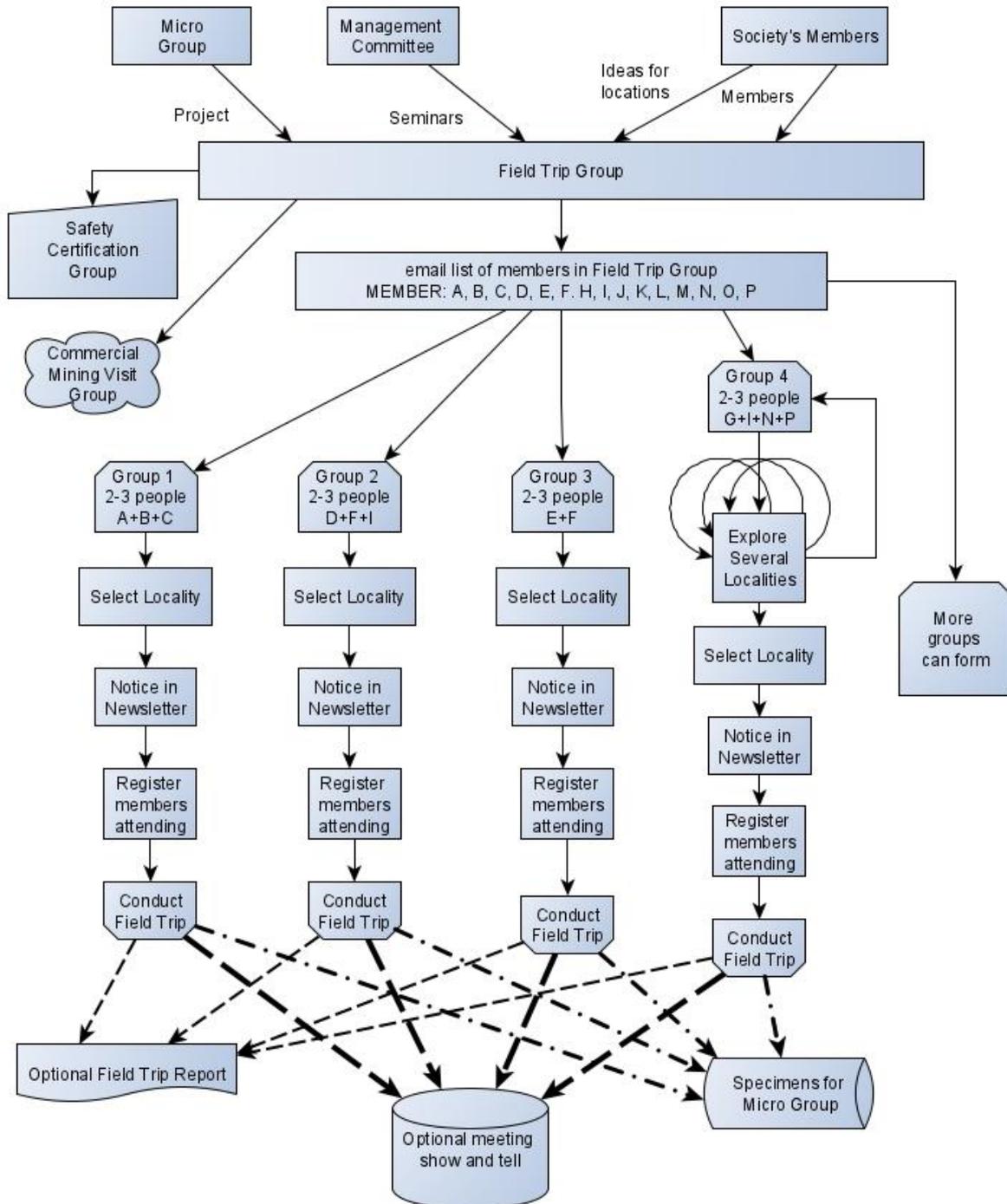
Groups may also form to explore several or more sites in a weekend to determine if any are worth visiting.

Numerous internet sites can be used to find localities and mineral sites.

The Commercial Mining Visit Group could do one or two field trips to a commercial site.

A small group may form to do a field trip to a site.

A member may come up with a site, members in the e-mail list will be asked to assist the member to form a group to visit or conduct a field trip to the site.



## The Safety Operations Certification Group Tasks

1. Issue Certification and recertification Questionnaire to applicants
2. Record the return of Questionnaire
3. Issue Certificates using Excel and Word mail merge
4. Review the Safety Operations Procedure and Safety Works Methods Statement

## Commercial Mining Visit Group Tasks

1. The issue here is training up a core group of members to approach a mining Company or quarry
2. Approach a Company to do a visit
3. Arrange a date to visit
4. Prepare the SWMS for the site
5. Do the field trip. I will have this documented.

If you have training skills, you would be much appreciated.

Skills with Word with mail-merge and Excel would help. Assistance can be given.

With the COVID-19 emergency lockups and isolations, this may be a good time to look into the future activities for 2021 and beyond.

With the above in mind, I am looking to your feedback how the above might work

Please consider if you can join the above groups.

Members will be receiving a Survey request by e-mail from Edward Zbik

If you have any questions contact Edward Zbik,

By phone (02) 9638 6586

Mobile 0401 538 480

e-mail: ecjz@optusnet.com.au

ZOOM Video Conference, by appointment or invitation only, by using my PMI 319-090-7417

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## **The 2020 KIDS WITH CANCER SALE: THANK YOU**

Many thanks are due to all the members who brought in specimens to donate for this year's Kids with Cancer Sale. Yes, there were a few specimens left over unsold but the majority were purchased by members knowing that the monies would be helping an excellent cause. This year the sale made \$1380, similar to last year and with all the money to be sent to the Kids with Cancer Foundation Australia.

*'The Kids with Cancer Foundation Australia, (<https://www.kidswithcancer.org.au/>) is a non-profit Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and registered charity with the 'Australian Charities & Not for Profit Commission, (ACNC). All donations are 100% for family assistance and the cancer wards in children's hospitals with no management fees taken.'*

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## The SOCIETY COMMITTEE

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## The MARCH GENERAL MEETING

At the commencement of the Meeting the President, Dieter Mylius complimented all the members who had donated minerals for the **Kids with Cancer Sale** and the members who had bought the specimens. The Sale this year had provided \$1380 for the Westmead Foundation.

The President reminded members that the **2020 Mineralogical Seminar** would be held over the October long weekend. The Committee had been discussing and setting arrangements in place and inviting speakers. A preliminary program indicating the fee structure and dates and times of activities would be compiled and distributed fairly soon. It was intended to provide an extensive field trip program in association with the Seminar which would take up to a week of travelling to a number of sites.

Ed Zbik reported on two forthcoming **Field Trips**. For the immediate future there would be a trip to the Cordillera site at Tuena, half-way between Bathurst and Goulburn over the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of March. Then there would be a trip to Lowes Mt near Oberon over the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of May. In addition Ed was taking small groups of about five members on up to twenty short exploratory trips to knock on doors and find out if any sites were worth visiting and for which permission to access could be obtained. In April he was also taking a trip to Gumble, about 30 klm west of Orange to investigate sites. Members willing to help with the exploratory trips were invited to contact him by e-mail.

*[ Members Please Note: All the Field Trips which were described by Ed Zbik at the March General Meeting are cancelled until further notice ]*

Referring to the **Society Library** Ed Zbik reported that all books and magazines were labeled, on the Library shelves and available for borrowing. The Society received regular issues of the U.S. Rocks & Minerals Magazine and The Australian Journal of Mineralogy and the Library contained current and back issues of the magazines. Ed suggested that if any members wished to compile a book or magazine review they should discuss this with him after the Meeting..

With there being no more announcements the President asked Peter Beckwith to deliver the first talk of the evening.

## **Report on Tucson 2020**

### **Peter Beckwith**

Peter Beckwith had found the Tucson Show this year to be a very interesting experience, as it usually was. Unfortunately the “dollar was not too kind to us” - meaning that the AU\$ to US\$ exchange rate was poor. This meant that there was quite a lot of harder negotiating to be done when purchasing specimens and the speaker had to walk away from a few deals which he would have liked to have made.

There were a number of both new and old specimens to be seen. His favourite purchase from the whole show was a specimen of very bright pyrite from Peru which he had brought to display to the Meeting. It was not for sale being intended for his own collection and he was not willing to pass it around but did pass on a smaller specimen from the same location.

Peter Beckwith had brought a tray of specimens to refer to during his report and display to the Meeting. He noted that the Chinese mine Yunnan Ching had been producing new specimens some of which were very striking. The specimens were being advertised through the Internet by Chinese dealers but at outrageous prices and the speaker recommended that the best way to buy Chinese specimens was through an American dealer. He had acquired a few specimens and showed a nice example of a Yunnan Ching fluorite with arsenopyrite on quartz. He had seen a few sulphur specimens from Bolivia which had much better crystallisation than he had seen before from that source.

There seemed to have been a recent very large find of amethyst from Vera Cruz with a number of specimens on display and for sale. Prices were generally high but there were a few smaller pieces at reasonable prices. One very nice large specimen of Vera Cruz amethyst that Peter Beckwith noticed had a price tag of US\$3500 which seemed not too bad for the size but upon asking the dealer about it he was told that the dealer had failed to add on an extra zero to that price tag!

There was an amount of Moroccan vanadinite for sale, also starting at the beginning of the day with high prices but the dealers proved negotiable later in the day because as Peter Beckwith said, one has to play the game with the Moroccan dealers and be prepared to bargain for a time when one can then make a better deal. There was an amount of tremolite from a farm location in New York State, a new find because it was found on a neighbouring farm to an old previously-known site for the mineral.

Peter Beckwith advised that with any new find if one waits a year or two things become cheaper. About 4 to 5 years ago the Argentinians found amounts of pink amethyst which were offered for sale at outrageous prices but which have now reduced and he had now acquired a few examples. There were some nicely crystallised specimens of azurite from an older site at San Carlos Canyon in Chihuahua in Mexico which were quite cheap. China continues to produce a range of fine specimens but one notable and new type of specimen that the speaker noticed being displayed for sale was an amount of sharp octahedral fluorite specimens which were found to be natural octahedrons and not cleaved pieces. They were also not too cheap since being natural crystals they had attracted the attention of the specialist crystal collectors.

In general Peter Beckwith thought that Tucson was possibly a little quieter this year compared to previous years no doubt due to concerns over the coronavirus but otherwise the Show as always was great. There was the opportunity to meet people who would only be seen once a year and the chance to socialise through the evenings. An additional feature of the speaker's trip this year was to have done some travelling away from Tucson after the show which since February is winter in the U.S. he had the rare for him experience of driving some 80 miles through two feet of snow which took him three hours!

Peter Beckwith had returned from Tucson with 211 kilos of air freight and just under two and a half tonnes of sea freight. Much of the specimen material would be on sale at his forthcoming shows, at Turramurra over the following weekend and his big show in April, the ‘National Gem & Crystal Expo’ in

the Hawkesbury Indoor Stadium in South Windsor. The speaker expected the Hawkesbury Show to be the biggest indoor mineral show in Australia. There was parking for about four hundred cars at the Stadium.

Peter Beckwith had invited the Mineralogical Society to set up a display table at the Show which John Chapman would be organising. The speaker also invited any members who were prepared to display a part of their collection at the Hawkesbury Show to make arrangements with him and for which he would provide an appropriate display case.

*[ Members Please Note: Unfortunately but in line with all other events the Hawkesbury Show has had to be cancelled until further notice ]*

After the Tucson report Peter Williams introduced the main speaker for the evening, Professor Ken McQueen of the University of Canberra who was to speak on 'The Mineralogical and Geochemical Evolution of the Cobar Landscape'. The lecture was extremely thorough, very detailed and well-illustrated with projected images.

A report on Professor McQueen's lecture will be provided in a subsequent Newsletter.

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