



THE  
**MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY**  
OF  
**NEW SOUTH WALES INC**

C/o School of Natural Science  
B.C.R.I. Parramatta Campus, Western Sydney University  
Locked Bag 1797, Penrith South DC, N.S.W. 1797  
Website: [www.minsocnsw.org.au](http://www.minsocnsw.org.au)

**NEWSLETTER**

**OCTOBER 2016**

**The October Meeting will be held on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of October at 7.30 pm in the clubrooms of the Parramatta and Holroyd Lapidary Club at 73 Fullagar Road, Wentworthville.**

The program will commence with a talk to be given by Peter Williams on the

**‘Mineral of the Month - Native Copper’**

Members are invited to bring in specimens of native copper from any locations around the World to display and help illustrate the talk. Since native copper has been available to people since antiquity members are also invited to bring in any old or even ancient artefacts of copper to display.

The talk will be followed by a lecture to be given by David Colchester on : -

**‘4.6 Billion Years of Mineral Evolution’**

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**FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS**

- November 4<sup>th</sup> : Lecture on ‘**Meteorites**’ by Ross Pogson
- December 2<sup>nd</sup> : **Christmas Social and ‘Swap n’ Sell’**
- February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017: Lecture on ‘**Radioactivity and Minerals**’ by Geoff Parsons.
- March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017: Lecture on ‘**The Milton Lavers Collection**’ by Paul Carr.
- April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017: Lecture to be given by John Rankin on : -  
**‘19<sup>th</sup> Century European Minerals in the Australian Museum’.**
- May 5<sup>th</sup> 2017: Member’s **Mini-Auction.**

## The SOCIETY COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT:	Dieter Mylius	Tel: (02) 9477 1060
VICE-PRESIDENT:	John Chapman	Tel: (02) 9808 3481
SECRETARY:	George Laking	Tel: (02) 9636 7145
	E-mail:	<i>bglaking@tech2u.com.au</i>
TREASURER:	Graham Ogle	Tel: (02) 9868 4446
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COMMITTEE MEMBERS:	Peter Beddow	Tel: (02) 8810 8446
	David Colchester	Tel: (02) 9449 3862
	Geoff Parsons	Tel: (02) 9548 3289
	Simon Tanner	
	Edward Zbik	Tel: (02) 9638 6586
	E-mail:	<i>etzed@optusnet.com.au</i>

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## FIELD TRIPS

Ed Zbik is away overseas until after October but in his absence members could suggest field trip sites to visit or offer to organise a trip for a day or two to any locality of known minerals that they may have knowledge of, access to or have visited in the past. A notice with information must appear in the MinSoc Newsletter with contact details of organizer. Closing date for the newsletter is Friday of the week before the next General Meeting.

Similarly for the **2017 Field Trip Program**, if any members know a landowner with a mineral occurrence or have contacts with a commercial mining or quarrying company, we would like to hear from you. After October and Ed Zbik has returned from holiday information or inquiries can be directed to him on e-mail *etzed@optusnet.com.au* or phone Ed on (02) 9638 6586, Mobile: 0401 538 480.

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**The Tolwong Mine and Bungonia State Conservation Area Science License** has been extended to June 2017. Ed Zbik hopes to organise two reconnaissance trips and possibly three collecting trips between November 2016 and June 2017. These would involve backpack bush walking and camping within the Bungonia and Morton National Park. Minerals collected must be consigned to the Australian Museum as part of the research project. It is not permitted to take minerals for personal collections in National Parks and doing so may result in fines and other penalties.

**OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS.**

Contact Ed to be placed on the "Interested list".

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## MUTTAMA FIELD TRIP

The **Joint Field Trip** organised in association with the Illawarra Lapidary Club to **Muttama**, between Cootamundra and Gundagai, was held as scheduled over the 16/17/18<sup>th</sup> of September weekend and Geoff Parsons has provided the following report on the Trip.

## 2016 Field Trip to Muttama

The field trip organised between the Illawarra Lapidary Club and MinSoc NSW was held again this year in September. It was scheduled for the weekend (starting Friday) on the 16 - 18 September. There was some doubt due to the preceding wet weather but contact with the farmers gave us the go-ahead and it was decided to proceed.



*Crossing the creek on the way up to the low ridge.*

A total of eight people attended over various time frames. Three were from MinSoc NSW, three from the Illawarra and two from Canberra. The ground was saturated and boggy in some areas and the creek we cross was a little higher so the campsite and starting point was set up at a lower level than last year. That meant walking up to the low ridge where we dig for quartz crystals, a distance of about a kilometre.

A significant amount of digging by all attendees produced moderate finds. This included some clear crystal to about 3cm long, some with perpendicular secondary crystal growth and some plates of crystals. Numerous small, but clear, doubly-terminated crystals were found that exhibited a high brilliance in the sunshine. In general most finds were relatively small crystals.

With the prior rains, the area was very green so the view was very pleasant when one got tired of digging and scanning the dirt for that glint of a flat reflective crystal face. Also, a brown snake was observed on Saturday sunning itself over quartz rocks from previous diggings, not that far from where some of the group were digging. We did not bother it and it did not bother us.

On rechecking the weather forecasts, the predictions for Sunday were still for significant rains in the area so it was decided to leave the area on Saturday night. So all up, there was a day and a half of collecting in reasonable weather with some sunshine and only a few minutes of light rain. No one went away without quartz crystals of some description, although not as good as in years past.





*Digging with a view. The countryside was beautifully green but a bit soggy in places*



*A selection of quartz crystals from one digger on the weekend. The clear crystal at the left back of the picture is 30mm long and has multiple terminations under the base. Numerous small but clear doubly-terminated crystals that shone brilliantly in the sunshine were located. Microscopic examination revealed interesting inclusions in some crystals, including liquids with gas bubbles.*

G J Parsons  
September 2016

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## The SEPTEMBER MEETING

The September Meeting was opened by the President Dieter Mylius who welcomed the members asking them to take their seats and quieten down from the customary pre-program discussions. There was some delay to this until Noel Kennon told everyone to “Belt Up!” which worked quite well. At the commencement of the formal meeting there were a few announcements.

Ed Zbik drew member’s attention to a set of CDs available from the Department of Mineral Resources describing all the Mineral Occurrences in NSW, ... all 29,000 of them !. Ed also referred to the next **Field Trip** being held to **Muttama** over the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of September. The trip was to be led by Geoff Parsons who gave details of the trip schedule and assembly point.

Graham Ogle pointed out that the Society microscope had been set up on a table with a number of specimens for members to examine. These included five from Mt Vesuvius and Monte Somma in Italy. The next **Micro Group meeting** would be held at 1.00pm on the following Saturday week at Graham Ogle’s house. The topic would be advised by e-mail and any members wishing to be kept informed of the meetings and topics were urged to ensure that their names were on the e-mail address list.

John Chapman had brought in a box of **minerals** from an **old collection** to sell by **silent auction**. The specimens were part of a collection originally acquired in 1923 by H.O.Evans who was a manager of the Sulphide Corporation at Broken Hill. Another tray of specimens from the same collection had been brought in for sale previously. A description of the specimens written by Ross Pogson when it was examined by him at the Australian Museum many years ago was accompanying the tray being sold.

Dieter Mylius referred to the forthcoming **Joint Mineralogical Societies of Australasia Seminar** being held in Brisbane over the long weekend of the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of October during which it was expected that there would be discussions relating to the future of the **Australian Journal of Mineralogy**. Due to a number of difficulties that have accumulated with the Journal publication the AJM Operations Group, (managing and editorial committee), has notified all other Australian mineralogical societies that it had proposed to cease publication of the Journal and that the current operating association, AJM Publications Incorporated, should be wound up.

A **Special General Meeting** has been called by the Operating Group about the AJM future and will be held at the Queensland Seminar to discuss the proposal to wind up or discuss and suggest alternatives to a complete disbandment. Dieter Mylius would be attending the Special Meeting and asked that if there were any members with suggestions about the Journal they should inform him with the view to raising these at the meeting.

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Peter Williams had been scheduled to give a talk on Pegmatites but was unfortunately indisposed.  
The following talk was given as scheduled by Jim Sharpe.

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### **Triple Chance, Tess Alfonsi and the NASA Space Program**

#### **Jim Sharpe**

Jim Sharpe has visited and worked in a number of mines in his life but there is one mine which still leaves him intrigued, the Triple Chance mine in the Thackaringa District in western NSW near

Broken Hill. Starting about 35 klm to the southwest of Broken Hill there is a string of pegmatite deposits including the Triple Chance, Egebek and Lady Beryl mines with other deposits further into South Australia. Pegmatites basically are of feldspar and mica but may contain a number of other minerals which were the last to crystallise from a cooling magma. When forming the pegmatite would have been rich in water and accordingly may contain very large crystals. The Triple Chance mine deposit was composed primarily of the three minerals, feldspar, muscovite and beryl which provided the name and became particularly noted for the presence of large yellow beryl crystals, some over a meter in length.

Speaking about the Triple Chance mine led Jim Sharpe to refer to a very resourceful and hard-working lady, Tess Alfonsi, or a 'Real Broken Hill Cowboy' as he called her. Tess was originally Teresa Bazziki and was born in Oneta, Italy, in 1907. She migrated to Australia with the rest of her family in 1915 to join her father, then in W.A. By 1921 she was in South Australia working as an interpreter thanks to her knowledge of 23 Italian dialects. She later moved to Broken Hill initially obtaining work as a barmaid and where she married a German mine-worker, Louis Kumm in 1927. The pair started mining mica from pegmatites in the district only to be robbed of their first load whilst it was awaiting pickup on a road.

Tess and her husband got back to work mining what became the Triple Chance mine and later the Egebek and Lady Beryl mines for mica and then for feldspar. There were quite a number of uses for feldspar then and now. For glass and ceramics certainly but also as a filler in plastics and as a scouring agent and even in toothpaste. For a while the pair did quite well but eventually Tess's marriage broke down due to her husband's drinking and the pair were divorced in 1954. Ten years later Tess married Dominic Alfonsi. Tess was only about 1.5 meters tall and weighed about 59 kilos but was a very hard worker, readily to be seen wielding a big jackhammer and in between her first and second marriages had managed the mines by herself. With her second husband they opened a total of 23 mines in NSW and at one point were supplying 90% of Australia's feldspar requirements. Tess also found time to amass a considerable mineral collection from the mines she worked and from the greater Broken Hill area.

In spite of being as tough as steel Tess Alfonsi had a soft side and involved herself substantially in charity work such as taking busloads of spastic handicapped children on picnics or to parties. After many years of charity work Tess was awarded the Order of Australia, OAM, in 1980. She and her husband finally retired to White Cliffs in New South Wales and she passed away there in 1986 aged 78.

In later years of mining the pegmatite mines near Broken Hill the presence in the deposits of beryl - beryllium aluminium silicate and bertrandite, - beryllium silicate, became commercially significant and of interest to NASA, the American National Aeronautic and Space Administration. After the Second World War and when the space race had begun beryllium had assumed considerable importance in spacecraft manufacture being the lightest metal with a high melting point and also having substantial strength, when usually alloyed with other metals, notably copper. Whilst beryllium minerals are common around the World the beryl from the Broken Hill area was apparently of particular interest to the Americans because the crystals from the Triple Chance mine were very pure. Beryllium from the Triple Chance mine may have been incorporated in components for the Apollo Space Program.

Given his interest in the Triple Chance mine and its founder the speaker had investigated the location of the Tess Alfonsi Triple Chance mineral collection which he had found was now housed in the Broken Hill Railway, Mineral and Train Museum. Jim Sharpe concluded his talk with a description of the properties of beryllium and emphasizing the story of Teresa Bazziki, a fairly diminutive but very capable lady from Italy, immigrating to Australia, becoming a significant person in the mining industry in the Broken Hill area and even contributing to the American space exploration program. The talk was illustrated with a number of projected images of mining scenes from west NSW, of minerals from the pegmatite mines and of Tess Alfonsi OAM.

Arthur Roffey offered some additional information about the Triple Chance mine and its owner. To his knowledge there had been only a very small amount of pale blue gem-quality beryl recovered from the Thakaringa pegmatites. He had met Tess Alfonsi many years previously at the Triple Chance and had swapped some Prospect prehnite for a specimen of beryl which he still had and brought to the meeting to display. During his visit Tess had taken him on a tour of the mine and pointed out a large beryl crystal eight feet long and two feet on its faces which was still embedded in the feldspar wall.

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## MINERAL QUIZ

### Noel and Ann Kennon

The second part of the evening program was the Mineral Quiz ably created, organised and supervised by Noel and Ann Kennon. There were 45 questions, two-thirds related to mineralogy and the remainder on quite varied random subjects. All the questions were presented on the projection screen mostly accompanied by an image of the subject of the question. Members were supplied with writing paper and pencils and at the conclusion of the Quiz and totaling the points several prizes were awarded to the members with the best scores.

Initially Noel Kennon pointed out that there are two types of Quiz, a Fun Quiz and a Serious Quiz, the latter more usually termed an Examination but that the evening's Quiz was for Fun. It was not a Trivia Quiz, every question would deal with something which was important to someone, somewhere. He suggested that it should be easy to find an answer to every question but that members should read it carefully. Most questions, and the answers to be supplied after all the questions had been asked, would be informative and all members would probably learn something from the quiz. Most of the answers should be obvious, sometimes not and some were tricky. Questions were colour-coded on the projection screen, fifteen coloured blue required 'true or false' answers, fifteen coloured green gave the opportunity for multiple choice answers and fifteen coloured orange required guesses or were obvious.

Getting underway the Quiz questions were projected on the screen with members allowed what Noel Kennon determined should be sufficient time to answer and given a five second warning before the next question came up. The Fun part of the Quiz came when after a break at the end of the presentation of the questions Noel Kennon started working through the answers. There were some surprises, some unexpected answers, some tricky ones and some items of information freshly learned.

One interesting item amongst a number of others was that after providing the answer to one of his questions 'When was the Cullinan diamond discovered?' (1905), Noel Kennon volunteered the information that what was now the second largest gem-quality diamond to have been found in the World was a currently un-named 1,111 carat stone found last year in the Karowe mine operated by the Canadian Lucara company in Botswana. The tennis-ball-sized diamond was offered for sale earlier this year in America with a reserve of US\$70 million but has remained unsold. The same mine has recently produced the World's sixth-largest diamond and Botswana is now the World's leading diamond producer and becoming very wealthy. (Substantial uranium reserves have also been discovered in the country).

At the end of the Quiz points were totaled up and prizes handed to the members with the best scores. The Quiz had been very thoroughly and thoughtfully prepared and compliments are due to the Kennons for the amount of work they put in to create it.

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## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

### **THE 39TH JOINT MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES OF AUSTRALASIA SEMINAR.**

From the 30<sup>th</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 with the formal proceedings being held over Saturday, Sunday and Monday the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2016.

Hosted by The Mineralogical Society of Queensland.

#### **‘Mineralogy - Science and Passion’**

Venue: In the theatrette of the Queensland Museum on the corner of Grey and Melbourne Streets, South Brisbane, (Southbank).

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### **GEMKHANA 2016**

#### **Being held over the October long weekend at Clarendon**

The Annual Gem & Mineral Show and Competition of Lapidaries from all over NSW will be presented by the Gem & Lapidary Council of NSW Inc. in the Hawkesbury Showgrounds on the Windsor Road at Clarendon, directly opposite the RAAF base, between Richmond and Windsor, turn-off on to Racecourse Road.

To be held over the Labour Day weekend, Saturday to Monday, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2016 from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm on Saturday & Sunday, and from 9.00 am to 12 noon on Monday.

Quoting from the Gem & Lapidary Council of NSW Inc. Website:

‘Sales and Displays, Demonstrations, Jewellery, Gem Faceting, Gemstones, Gem Identification. Minerals, Gemstone Carving, Crystals, Fossils, Beads & Equipment. Local and interstate Gem, Jewellery and Mineral Dealers. Demonstrations by experienced club members, activities for children Raffle, Wheelchair access, Refreshments, Plenty of parking’.

As a special treat the Museum of Comparative Zoology will provide for display a model of the fierce Albertasaurus, along with other pre-historic models.

‘We hope to see a good number of tailgaters again this year but please note some changes to insurance requirements. We cannot offer insurance at a daily rate, tailgaters now need to arrange to have their own Public Liability Insurance. The new arrangements are described on the Council website:-

*[gemlapidarycouncil.org.au/gemkhana/](http://gemlapidarycouncil.org.au/gemkhana/)*

Further information on insurance may be obtained from the Council’s brokers, - Webster Hyde Heath at (08) 8362 5553 or *[www.whhib.com.au](http://www.whhib.com.au)*’

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## EMMAVILLE GEMFEST AND SWAP MEET

Being held over the October long weekend, Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> to Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> of October  
in the Emmaville caravan park on Park Road, Emmaville.

Stall-holders and tailgaters in the caravan park, two full days for fossicking trips visiting sites for topaz, sapphires quartz, tourmaline, tin and copper. Lunches provided subject to booking and paying each morning.

For information and booking accommodation in the caravan park phone Donna on 02 6734 7240 or 0429 347 249.

Accommodation also available at the Tattersalls Hotel, Emmaville. Phone Rob or Dot on 02 6734 7309 or the Riley's Club Hotel, phone Barry and Dot on 02 6734 7304.

*'The Emmaville Gemfest is sponsored by the Emmaville Community Centre.  
All proceeds go towards the upkeep of the Old Court House.'*

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## CENTRAL COAST GEM & MINERAL FESTIVAL

Presented by the Central Coast Lapidary Club in the Mingara Recreation Club, Wyong Road, Tumbi Umbi over Saturday from 9am to 5pm and Sunday 9am to 3pm on the 8th to 9th of October.

Free entry. For further details please phone 02 4362 2246.

Or Festival organizer Rob Scott, - phone number 0405 904 881

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## GEM SHOW AND LAPIDARY EXHIBITION 2016

Presented by the Northern Districts Lapidary Club.

To be held over Friday 28<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in the Beecroft Community Centre,  
on the corner of Copeland and Beecroft Roads, Beecroft.

*'Lapidary Competition & Display of Gemstones, Sale of Minerals, Slabs, Jewellery, Books, Plants,  
Enjoy Club Tours, Light Refreshments. Kid's fossicking area. Entry \$4, children free.'*

*<http://ndlapidary.org.au/gem-show-at-beecroft/>*

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## GEM & MINERAL SHOW

Annual Gem and Lapidary Exhibition presented by the Northern Districts Lapidary Club.

In the Beecroft Community Centre, on the corner of Beecroft and Copeland Roads,  
Beecroft, over Friday to Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of October

*'Gem show and exhibition, lapidary competition and display, gemstones, minerals, slabs, jewellery,  
book stall, plant stall, some machinery, club tours, refreshments. Kid's fossicking area.'*

Further information from the website : - *<http://ndlapidary.org.au/gem-show-at-beecroft/>*

## **CANBERRA SPRING GEMCRAFT & MINERAL SHOW**

Presented by the Canberra Lapidary Club in the Mallee Pavilion in the Epic Showground, Northbourne Avenue, Canberra, over Saturday and Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> of October. Entry \$5 adults, \$10 'Minerals, fossils, jewellery, rough & cut gemstones, opals, beads, lapidary equipment & supplies. Other activities : Sieve for sapphires Displays of members' collections, free sessions on fossicking & gold detecting, cabbing, faceting & jewellery making demonstrations.'

Information from : - [www.canberralapidary.org.au](http://www.canberralapidary.org.au) Email : [canberralapidary@gmail.com](mailto:canberralapidary@gmail.com)  
Phone: 02 6260 5322

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**ILLAWARRA LAPIDARY CLUB INC presents the**

**2016 - 54<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION**

**JEWELLERY, GEMS AND MINERALS FESTIVAL**

Over Saturday 5th November 9am - 4pm and Sunday 6th November 9am - 2.30pm.  
Being held in the Heininger Hall, 109 Princes Highway, Dapto. (Part of the Ribbonwood Centre).  
Parking access from Heininger Street off Fowlers road.

Featuring: Mineral Group, Jewellery Valuations, Cabochon Cutting, Jewellery Making, Gemstone Faceting, Silvercraft, Club and Fossicking Information, Refreshments.

Dealers selling Lapidary Supplies, Jewellery, Minerals, Findings, Crystals, Fossils, Beads and Opals.  
\$3 admission - Children under 12 free - Lucky Door Prizes - Children's games – Raffle  
Information: David 02) 4234 1468 or <http://www.illawarralapidaryclub.com.au/>

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## **ANNUAL EXHIBITION**

**By The Parramatta And Holroyd Lapidary Club**

Over Friday to Sunday, the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> of November from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm each day  
in the Clubrooms at 73 Fullagar Road, Wentworthville.

'Demonstration of Club Activities; Rocks & Minerals for Sale; Members Work for Sale; Activities for the Kids. In case it is possible this year we are Featuring Fossils.  
We will have a sausage sizzle with onions and plenty of rocks and minerals and fossils for sale as well as jewellery.'

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## **WINDSOR GEM & MINERAL FAIR**

Over Saturday and Sunday November 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, of November at the Windsor Function Centre, Dight St, Windsor, on the corner of George & Dight Streets, Windsor.

Entry fees \$7 for adults and children under 18 accompanied by parents are free.  
Gem, mineral, jewellery & lapidary dealers. Minerals, fossils, jewellery, rough & cut gemstones, opals, beads & supplies. Lucky door prize as well as the club raffle held by the Hawkesbury Valley Lapidary Club. Displays of member's collections, cabbing, faceting and jewellery-making demonstrations.

For more information email Peter Beckwith at [peterrare@optusnet.com.au](mailto:peterrare@optusnet.com.au)