

Gem and Lapidary

News

June 2014

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The **Gem & Lapidary News** is the official publication of the GEM AND LAPIDARY COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES, INC, PO Box 4233, Londonderry 2753. The executive and workforce of the Council are entirely composed of delegates from member clubs. Council is NOT an autonomous body. The Gem & Lapidary Council is a member of AFLACA (Australian Federation of Lapidary and Allied Crafts Association).

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 Webmaster Alex Maitland (please send updated information)

COUNCIL MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE: 4th Wednesday in the month
 MONTHLY: 4th Wednesday in the month, at 1.00pm
 The venue, unless otherwise stated,
 is at the Clubrooms of Parramatta-Holroyd Lapidary Club,
 73 Fullagar Rd, Wentworthville

Visitors are welcome to attend Monthly Meetings

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE GEM & LAPIDARY NEWS

\$20 if posted bulk to your club
 \$25 if posted to members private address
 \$30 for non-members of the G&L Council

ADVERTISING RATES per issue in Black and White.

Full page - \$40 per issue
 1/2 page - " " \$25,
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Please send payment with advertising booking and copy.

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NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday June 25th at the clubrooms of the Parramatta-Holroyd Lapidary Club 73 Fullagar Rd, Wentworthville

Please do come, you will be made very welcome

* DEADLINE FOR COPY for
July, 2014 issue *
Friday June 27th 2014

Club Editors; please add me to your mailing list to receive your Club newsletters. Ed.

Disclaimer:

Opinions expressed are those of the original authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, Gem & Lapidary Council or its members. Persons acting on any opinion, advice, fact or advertisement published in this issue does so at their own risk

Council News.

Competitions – Why?

1. *Competitions are important to Lapidary because they allow the work of Clubs and members to be displayed to the general public. This gives them an indication of the variety of activities that Clubs are capable of and support.*
2. *Competitions are important because they show the general public the quality of work that members strive to attain. This helps members when they are selling or displaying their work to indicate a standard of quality that is worthy of the price asked.*
3. *Competitions are important because they give members a standard goal to achieve for their work. Feedback and comments lead to the opportunity to grow and improve your skill in your chosen area. At Club level, it encourages support of new members and fosters greater satisfaction in achieving a given standard. At a State or National level, it portrays the interests and high standards of your Club to everyone.*
4. *Competitions are important because they indicate that items for sale are not just thrown together to make money but that someone has spent time and expertise on a particular item. It allows members work to be competitive for sale against commercial offerings.*
5. *Please think about holding club competitions and entering competitions at State and National levels. It is important to show viewing public or prospective members that Clubs offer a high standard of work in Lapidary and allied crafts. There are judges and tutors within Gem and Lapidary Council very willing to support you in these activities.*

See Gem and Lapidary Council Website for details of Courses that are offered.

Ed. Note. I will have more Council and Club news after everyone returns from Gatton and beyond.

GEMKHANA Report:

Note entry closing dates for some sections are early this year: Entry forms & postal entries – Friday July 25. Entries in person Saturday July 26 (10am-1pm) at Parramatta-Holroyd clubrooms.

Notes from Lapis – To Gatton. Joe Tahka

Blatherarm fossicking area is known for the odd topaz or two near Torrington. We found a promising looking creek bed in a lovely looking bush setting - lovely it might have been but the topaz were hiding for some of us at least. Ulrich found the most, Barbara and Tony a few and us others, well you know how it is! On our way back to camp we had a look at the old emerald mines and a very interesting arsenic mine called The Ottery. It is truly amazing what lengths they went to in the old days in the most inaccessible places. The most amazing workmanship went to establish these mines. The brickies had done a superb job on this arsenic mine.



Happy Hour in Gatton looked so inviting we had visitors from other clubs most nights.

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Fire Agate



Fire Agate, a variety of chalcedony, is a semi-precious natural gemstone found only in certain areas of northern Mexico and the south-western United States. Approximately 24-36 million years ago these areas were subjected to massive volcanic activity during the Tertiary Period. The fire agates were formed during this period of volcanism when hot water, saturated with silica and iron oxide, repeatedly filled cracks and bubbles in the surrounding rock.

Fire agates have beautiful iridescent rainbow colors, similar to opal, with a measurement of hardness on the MOHS scale of between 6.5 and 7 which prevent

issues of fading, cracking and scratching. The vibrant iridescent rainbow colors found within fire agates, created by the Schiller effect as found in mother-of-pearl, is caused by the alternating silica and iron oxide layers which diffract and allow light to pass and form interference of colors known as fire. There is no actual object inside the stone; this special effect arises from light interference within the microstructure layering of the gem.

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GEMBOREE LITHGOW REPORT

Here are some more of the jobs yet to be filled. If you think you could do one of these jobs or would like more info, please tell someone – your delegate or, if your Club doesn't have one, Joan or Arthur, or any other delegate.

Tailgating Chairman: This should be handled by a group of people, ideally a club. Marshall participants each day and collect fees, issue receipts and passes each day, as required.

Field Trips Chairman: These are usually in the hands of a local club, as it has the local knowledge to do this job. It should be able to let the Committee have details of the trips in time to be included in the booklet. The club will be responsible for conducting all aspects of the field trips. Mick Lane (Blue Mountains Club) has offered to do this.

Publicity/ Promotions Officer will compile the GEMBOREE booklet in consultation with the Competition Committee, the Dealer Chairman, and other members of the GEMBOREE Committee. It must be available at the GEMBOREE prior to ours (ie 2016). This is a new job.

Ground Activities Chairman: In recent times, this responsibility has been broken into two parts. Daytime Ground Activities and Nighttime Activities (presentation of trophies, etc).

Volunteers chairman: This is a new job. At the event people often ask where they can help when most of the organisers are busy with other jobs. Now such people can be referred to the Volunteers Chairman.

Newsletter Editor If the *G&L News* editor isn't at the GEMBOREE, someone will still be needed to publish the daily newsletter. It usually only consists of 1 sheet, and carries updating info and some of the doings of the GEMBOREE.

Many of these jobs will be too much for one person, a club or group of people would be a better solution. Even so, if one person takes on a role, it is expected he/she will assemble a group of helpers.

GEMKHANA

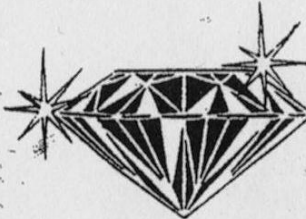
The Gem & Lapidary Council of NSW
(A Non-profit Educational Organisation)
Presents its Annual

GEM, JEWELLERY, BEADING, MINERAL SHOW & SALE

October 4, 5, 6, 2014

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Sat, October 4, 10am to 5pm
Sun, October 5, 10am to 5pm
Mon, October 6, 9am to 12 noon

ADMISSION:

Adult \$3 : Children \$1 : Families \$8

Contacts 02 9635 8218, 02 4572 5812



Dangerous Plants

The spectacular [Angel Trumpet](#) vine is native to the forests of South America, and delivers a dark triad of potent toxins—atropine, hyoscyamine, and the mind altering scopolamine. Angel Trumpet is less dangerous in of itself, than as a biological weapon in the hands of humans.

In 2007, Angel Trumpet was featured in the documentary “Colombian Devil’s Breath,” for its use by criminal gang members who refined scopolamine from the ethereal looking weed and used it to turn victims into zombies – literally. This “hypnotizing herb” leaves its victims unaware of the nature of their actions, but still completely conscious.

The documentary contained numerous horror stories of scopolamine attacks, including one eerie case where a man had scopolamine powder thrown in his face, and promptly emptied his entire apartment into the van of the robbers. Voluntary experimenters have seriously injured themselves in their psychotic state.



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About Iolite - History and Introduction



Iolite is a transparent gem-quality form of cordierite, a magnesium iron aluminium cyclosilicate mineral. Although the mineral has a history that dates back hundreds of years, the actual gemstone 'iolite' is considered to be relatively new and lesser-known. Cordierite was officially named after the French geologist, Pierre Louis Antoine Cordier in 1813. The first significant and exciting discovery of large transparent, gem-quality deposits of iolite was made in 1996 in Palmer Creek, Wisconsin (USA) by the American geologist, W. Dan Hausal. The world's largest iolite crystal was discovered south of Palmer Creek, in Grizzly Creek, Wisconsin. This record-breaking crystal weighs over 24,000 carats.



The name 'iolite' originates from the Greek word 'ios' meaning 'violet'. Iolite's strong pleochroism earned it the misleading trade name of 'water-sapphire', a name now obsolete. From one direction, iolite can appear sapphire-like blue and from another, it can appear as clear as water. Furthermore, from the top view down, it can appear light golden or honey-yellow in colour. 'Dichroite' is another synonym for iolite in reference to its pleochroic ability; 'dichroite' is a Greek word which loosely translates as 'two-coloured rock'. Iolite is also known as 'the Viking stone' because according to Norse legend, Vikings used iolite as a polarizing filter to help them find the sun on cloudy days. It is believed that the Vikings discovered iolite deposits throughout Norway and Greenland.

Gem quality iolite varies in colour from sapphire blue to blue violet to yellowish gray to light blue as the light angle changes. Iolite is sometimes used as an inexpensive substitute for sapphire. It is much softer than sapphires and is abundantly found in Australia (Northern Territory), Brazil, Burma, Canada (Yellowknife area of the Northwest Territories), India, Madagascar, Namibia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and the United States (Connecticut). The largest iolite crystal found weighed more than 24,000 carats, and was discovered in Wyoming, US.

Iolite is considered to be fairly hard and durable, but it exhibits good cleavage which adds to its fragility. Extra care should be taken to prevent any hard knocks or blows. It is slightly harder than quartz, but softer than many popular jewellery gemstones (i.e., diamond, ruby and sapphire). It is best to refrain from wearing other types of gemstones together with iolite in order to prevent damage. Iolite should not be cleaned with heat steamers or ultrasonic cleaners. To clean your iolite gems and jewellery, simply use warm soapy water and a soft cloth. Be sure to rinse well to remove any remaining soapy residue. Avoid extreme climates, temperature fluctuations and prolonged exposure to heat and sunlight.

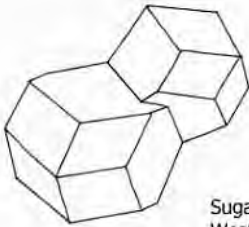
Why collect micro minerals?

The best reason is that they're really fascinating. The variety of crystal shapes, colours, and combinations is literally endless. Even the non-collector often does a double-take upon looking through that microscope.

Where to find micro minerals

Most well-known collecting sites yield interesting micro minerals of some type. Professional prospectors usually leave micro specimens behind because they aren't worth much money. It also can take a great deal of searching and work to recover them. This leaves you with the chance to find some attractive micros, even in heavily-collected areas.

Micro mineral specimens can be found in many common igneous and metamorphic rock environments, sometimes even in sedimentary environments. I found some decent hornblende (generic name for black amphibole), zircon, quartz, and pyrite micro crystals down the road from my house, in an otherwise "boring" area for collecting. Areas virtually barren of larger specimens can still yield good micro minerals



Sugar Grove,
West Virginia

Magnification opens up a whole new world. Using a 30x binocular microscope, I made this drawing of some crystals that appear to be harmotome, sitting in a basalt pocket. They are yellowish-beige or straw-coloured, translucent, and somewhat glassy.

What you can find.



This depends on where you look. The mineral species will of course be limited by the rock types, but sometimes you can find interesting things even in the middle of a sedimentary landscape.

Most "classic" collecting sites for larger minerals will of course have great micro potential. The beginning micro collector can find quartz, pyrite, calcite, and others just by looking carefully at rocks in the back yard, the woods, or down the road.

Specimen pictured was found in a seam running through some field stone.

I find micro mounts every bit as fascinating as fluorescents and cabinet specimens; even though some of my collecting buddies think micro mounters are a weird bunch. Maybe we are, but micro mineral collecting is still a fascinating hobby.

What to save and mount

Lets suppose you find a tiny crystal of some mineral that happens to be on a piece of matrix smaller than your pinkie nail. That's okay if it's "just a quartz crystal". Save it! If it's from your back yard or some other "unusual" location, there will be collectors who will want it! Even in a place where good quartz micros are common, I find myself saving many of the nicer specimens for future mounting.

You may (unknowingly) find crystals which are too small to view with an ordinary optical rig... you'd need an electron microscope to see them. Don't worry about these minerals right now. Some specimens are better kept in their intact form. If you have one that's more valuable or nicer to look at just the way it is, don't break it up just to make it fit into a small box. Keep it as-is and just get a bigger box.

It is a matter of some discretion to decide what to break and what not to break. Generally, avoid breaking up a specimen when there's no good reason and especially when smaller pieces would be less desirable. There are, however, certain ones that are routinely broken up: Buckwheat dolomite, for example. Usually there aren't any big crystals in them. If you can't see them without 10x magnification or better, and there are no other redeeming display qualities, then go ahead and break the rock up into smaller pieces. Why leave a 10-cm hunk of otherwise barren dolomite intact, when the only interesting thing in it is a 1/2-millimeter synchysite crystal? That's the key right there: proportion.



The boxes at left have holes drilled in their centres. The area inside the box immediately around the holes should be roughened with a needle or other sharp implement so that the glue will adhere more strongly.

The holes should be a snug fit for the toothpicks or porcupine quills. These posts mustn't fall through when you're trying to glue them in place later.

Note the scribe marks used to centre the holes

COME ONE COME ALL

TO THE PARRAMATTA HOLROYD LAPIDARY CLUBS

OPEN DAY

AT 73 FULLAGAR ROAD WENTWORTHVILLE NSW

THE OPEN DAY IS ON THE 21 JUNE 2014

FROM 10:00 am TILL 4:00 pm

The day will include the sale of rough and slabs as well as novelties , jewellery plants etc & demonstrations. And we will hold an auction of machinery, rocks & minerals that will commence at

2:00 pm.

A sausage sizzle will be on hand for the princely sum of \$2:50 and Devon shire teas will also be there for a small fee of again \$2:50



Gluing the specimens onto the ends of toothpicks or porcupine quills can be the most difficult part. The specimen that's leaning very far to the left is that way on purpose; the toothpick was sawed at a steep angle because the specimen was also angular. We're taking advantage of gravity here, not fighting it.

The specimen at bottom right has its toothpick resting inside a clothespin until the glue dries.



When the specimens are glued to the toothpicks and the glue has dried, you can paint over the glued area and partway down the toothpick with black paint. If you go too far down, the paint will have to be scraped away when you do the final gluing into the box. The glue should contact bare wood, not paint.

The ones shown here actually have the paint going too far down. I scraped it a bit after taking this picture.

It is convenient to stick the toothpicks into an old eraser or a piece of styrofoam while the paint dries.



When the epoxy is still soft, you can support the box on a vial or other tall, narrow container. This accommodates the toothpick so the box can stand upright. The glue in the box on the left has become dry enough that the box can lie on its side.

Because torque is greatest at the end of a post, be very careful not to hit the end of the exposed toothpick on anything or subject it to force. It could tear the specimen loose.

Lately I've been using round toothpicks as posts, as shown above. I'll call this the "pull-through toothpick method"; this is a time-tested micro mounting technique used by some of the best-known collectors. It works like this:

1. Glue the specimen to one end of a toothpick and hold it in a clothespin while it dries. Then drill a matching-diameter hole in the bottom of an M511 box with inside bottom you have roughened up with a sharp object. To make the hole, use a drill bit that is the same size as the toothpick's fattest portion.



2. Pull the toothpick through the hole until the specimen is at the desired height. It should be a snug fit. Epoxy glue is a good choice to fasten it in place. In 24 hours when it's completely dry, use a razor saw to cut away the excess toothpick that protrudes out the underside of the box. Don't use excessive pressure. It's better to saw slowly and apply very little pressure; you don't want to break the glue loose from the plastic. Most glues have good pull strength but not much peel strength. They don't hold well when subjected to torque.



Tiny crystals perched on top of a toothpick which has been pulled through a hole in the bottom of a box. When the toothpick was pulled to the desired depth, epoxy glue was applied (you can see it under the paint). The glue sticks better if the plastic is roughened first. Paint was applied inside the box after the glue was dry. Save this step for last, after sawing the toothpick (see below). Don't get paint on the specimen!!

The toothpick will protrude out the underside of the box. Saw it flush only when the epoxy is completely dry.

Some of the epoxy got pulled through the hole and is on the outside of the box, but it doesn't stick out that far.

Note the scribe marks used to make sure the hole was centred. I used a Dremel Moto-Tool to drill this hole.

3. Glue (Keeping the post in place) If you're using pre-sawn posts instead of the pull-through toothpick method, you can glue the posts into the box without pulling them through a hole in the bottom and sawing off the excess. Toothpicks are too thin to stand upright by themselves even when sawn off square (hence, the hole), but thin dowel sections work well as pre-sawn posts. I use a wooden dowel that's 3 mm diameter.

As in the toothpick / porcupine quill method, make sure you "rough up" the plastic in the bottom of the box by cutting criss-crossed scratches into it so the glue will adhere better. You can use a pin or an X-acto knife for this purpose. After this, take one of the 6 to 8 mm lengths of thin dowel and put a drop of super glue or 5-minute epoxy on one end. Glue the "post" into the box, dead centre and perfectly upright if you can manage it, and let it dry. I use a "flexible", gel-form super glue that's available at Wal-Mart for about 3 bucks. It dries fairly quickly, so be careful you don't glue your fingers together with the stuff. Don't be too stingy with the glue; more glue takes longer to dry, but it also gives more support for the post. If you skimp on glue, the posts can break off. You don't want to go to all that trouble just to have this happen.

Lately I've been using epoxy glue to hold the posts in place. It seems to work better than anything else, but it's a little more work because it requires mixing prior to use. Don't mix too much at once or it will go to waste.

4. Painting the boxes

I've found that most plastic boxes are highly reflective and cause horrible glare when looking at a specimen closely. The clear ones are like mirrors... very distracting.

After I glue the posts into the boxes, I paint them on the inside with dull or flat black primer (such as that used to prevent rust). You could use some other colour if you really wanted to (not white, unless it's a dark mineral), but use one with a dull finish. Once the paint is dry, you are ready for the next stage... placing the actual specimen on the post. That is, unless you are using the pull-through toothpick method (see above), in which case you can glue the specimen to the toothpick first if you prefer.

With the pull-through toothpick method, you pretty much have to paint after the specimen is completely mounted anyway, because otherwise you'll have an area of fresh glue that has no paint on it. This will be shiny and distracting.

With the pre-sawn dowel method, you can glue everything in place, paint the inside of the box, and then perch the specimen on top of the dowel with some glue. The dowel is wide enough (ca. 3 mm) that the specimen shouldn't fall off before it dries. It still might, though.

5. Putting the specimen onto the post Now comes the potentially very frustrating part: mounting the actual specimen to the end of the upright post. You can glue it there, or you can use a small bit of "tack", With "tack" or putty, you can always reposition the specimen. Use tweezers if necessary. When you're gluing specimens permanently, you must TAKE YOUR TIME placing the specimen on the post. Mineral tack, on the other hand is obviously much more forgiving; you can move it at any time.

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If you really want to use glue and are sure you won't need to reposition the specimen later, try Elmer's glue. Put a tiny dab on the post and on the underside of the specimen. Let them dry partially and then stick together. Allow to dry for at least a few hours. Though it can be messier, you could instead use the epoxy or the super glue I mentioned earlier. I use this and it works well.

6. Label and catalogue that specimen!

This is the MOST important step after preserving your find. Stick-on labels are fine; fast-drying correction fluid written on with India ink is also effective. Either way, put it on the outside of the box which contains your specimen. If you put the label on the lid, make sure you also put one on the base of the box. Otherwise, you will forget and end up switching lids with other boxes when you're viewing your minerals.



Above: Handwritten labels can be very attractive. Writing small enough to fit on these tiny boxes can be a challenge, though. The phrase "Buckwheat Dump" is only 17 millimetres wide and roughly 2.5 to 3 millimetres tall.

I bought a Pigma 0.30 mm "micron" pen and then, looking through a magnifying glass, I cut the tip even narrower with a razor blade. In the future I may try India ink and porcupine quills. One problem with writing very small is the tendency of ink to bleed into the paper and look fuzzy. Choice of paper can greatly affect this. Experiment.

If penmanship is not your natural inclination, you can use a computer to make the labels instead. One advantage is uniformity. You can also squeeze a lot of information onto a 3/4" x 3/4" square if you shrink the font down to 5 or 6 point:

If you can't fit all the information on the box label, just put a catalogue number on your label and make a corresponding entry on an index card or in a spreadsheet. Don't lose the cards! Be as specific as possible about where and when you found the specimen: State, county, town, name of quarry or mine, and date. If you found it in a newly-blasted area of a quarry, an old mine dump, or whatever, indicate this on your card. If you got it from another collector, include this information as well.

Mineral species can be determined later, but locality cannot. That's why, if you have no room for anything else on your labels, at least record the locality.

BLOODSTONE

Bloodstone is an ancient gemstone, and was historically regarded for its metaphysical aspects. Even today, many people find metaphysical significance in this gemstone because of its unique appearance and name. Although the modern-day birthstone for March is Aquamarine, Bloodstone is regarded as the traditional birthstone for March.

The red or brown spots in Bloodstone are formed by iron oxide impurities, especially Hematite. The solid green colour is caused by dense inclusions of Chlorite or amphibole minerals inside the Chalcedony. The base colour of Bloodstone may be solid green, but it often has an uneven colour distribution, with lighter and darker green zones, or even bluish-gray or dark yellow streaks and spots.

Bloodstone is most often cut into cabochons and beads, where it is used in bracelets and necklaces, and sometimes rings. It is only occasionally cut into other gemstone facets. Bloodstone has been traditionally used as a seal stone, and is sometimes carved into small carvings and figures.



Figure 1 Chinese Bloodstone



Figure 2 Madagascar Bloodstone

(courtesy of GemSelect <http://www.gemselect.com/>)

WHEN**WHAT****WHERE****June**7th & 8th

Canberra Lapidary Winter Show

14th & 15th &
21st & 22ndAnnual Gemstone Exhibition W.A. Lapidary & Rock Hunting Clubrooms
Cnr Gladstone Road & Newey St. RIVERVALE WA 610321st

Parramatta-Holroyd Open Day 73 Fullagar Road Wentworthville

21stDeception Bay Gem Show Community Hall Cnr Ewart St and
Raymond Terrace Qld28th

Gold Coast Gem and Craft 80 Pacific Ave Miami Pizzey Park Qld

July12th & 13thCampbelltown & Districts Greg Percival Community Centre
Annual Gem, Mineral & Jewellery Cnr oxford rd. And Cumberland rd.
Ingleburn**Sept**19th – 21stThe Bead Show Marrickville Town Hall Marrickville Rd
Marrickville.**Oct**4th-6thGEMKHANA Goulburn Showground,
Braidwood Rd Goulburn24th -26thNorthern District Gem Show Beecroft Community Centre
Beecroft Rd Beecroft.**Nov**1stCessnock Gem and Mineral Clubrooms, Hall Park, Stephen St
Cessnock.7th-9th

Parra-Holroyd Annual Exhibition 73 Fullagar Road Wentworthville

8-9thZeehan Gem and Mineral Show Zeehan Primary School
Zeehan Tasmania15th-16thCanberra Lapidary Club Epic – Mallee Pavilion Canberra
Spring Gemcraft and Mineral Show**GEMBOREE DATES****2015 -VIC JUNE 3****2016 -TAS MAR 25****2017 -NSW JUNE 14**

GEMKHANA 2014
GOULBURN
OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND
4TH, 5TH, 6TH



GEM, JEWELLERY, BEADING MINERAL

SHOW AND SALE

GEMBOREE LITHGOW 2017
YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW.