



# LAPIS

[www.ndlapidary.org.au](http://www.ndlapidary.org.au)

“SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE”

VOLUME FORTY FIVE - NUMBER SEVEN APRIL 2009

## CLUB NEWS

The next General meeting will be on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at 8 pm at the Club rooms - all members welcome. Our guest Speaker will be Colin Hazell.

Colin will be speaking on the "Phenomena in gemstones"

## New Members

We would like to welcome our newest members –

- Marilyn Hawkins – Frenchs Forest
- David Cushway – Castle Hill

We wish them many long hours of enjoyment cutting gemstones and enjoying the other aspects of our Club.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Club is keen to promote and revitalize the interest in faceting as a significant component of our Lapidary skills. Faceting is a very rewarding and satisfying subject where the rewards can be truly beautiful gemstones that are as good as anything that you would see in a jeweller's shop (sometimes even better!). Although many Club Members have attended faceting classes over the years, many have not continued with their faceting. The high cost of faceting machines has no doubt contributed to this decline and so to ease this cost the Club provides a faceting machine for use on a Casual Faceting basis.

The operation of the new Casual Faceting program is described in more detail below and it is hoped that it will provide a reliable and more hassle-free way for people who have reached a basic level of competency to get back into

faceting. The main cost to facetors will now be in providing their own basic dops and cutting/polishing laps and diamond grits. However this will eliminate the previous problem of cross-contamination of 'community' laps by multiple users. I would encourage our former facetors to consider rejuvenating their interest.

Brian Burns

## FROM THE COMMITTEE:

### SHOP SALES

Due to a number of discrepancies which have been identified by the auditors over the last few months the following procedure will be adopted:

In future, those persons handling the sales from the shop will be required to enter the purchase details, with the money totals in the sales book. They must then be check and countersigned by another member of the Club.

### Librarian

- Many thanks to Kevin Davey for the donated books.
- Latest addition to the Library:  
**Exploring Australia's Mining Heritage  
– A Visitor's Guide  
(W.G. Shackelton & M.N. Binne)**

It is a directory of historical mines and mining museums with descriptions and addresses of the venues.

Librarian.



## **Gem & Lapidary Council Snippets**

The 2009 Gemkhana will be held in October again at Goulburn.

The schedule for the Gemkhana is on the notice board at the Club. Entry dates for the entries will be announced shortly and will be in the next Gem & Lapidary News.

There is also a **Faceting Judging Course** which will be held on 23 & 24 May 2009 at the Northern Districts Lapidary Club rooms. This course will be run by Nelson Robertson. If you are interested, please contact Nelson on 43 85 4495.

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## **SAFETY ISSUES**

Last month I raised the issue of awareness of mineral names and groupings because of the health risks involved and because the potential outcomes can be so easily avoided.

### **To repeat the safety lesson:-**

- find out what the mineral is
- Don't cut it until you know its hazards
- Use an expert to help you identify the material and risks
- Use reference books to identify minerals and their hazards
- If you are mining or collecting the interesting and unknown, use a dust mask to minimise risk.

### **Continuing the theme of respiratory related problems within our hobby.**

Inert minerals can cause a health problem simply because they do not react or dissolve in the body (lungs), hence remain essentially unchanged.

The accumulation of fine dust particles over a long period of time is sufficient to cause loss of lung efficiency. The condition then becomes known as pneumoconiosis, or 'dusty lungs' (from the Greek) The mineral particles themselves may cause a change in the appearance of x-rays, either masking symptoms of severe problems or causing further tests to be done (expensive and worrying).

The outcome remains the same. The lung function will not improve while the dust remains in the lungs and there is no way to remove it.

Just to emphasise the point, just a few weeks heavy exposure without filtering or masks to silica flour (powdered quartz, 400 grit and finer) has been known to cause death from silicosis in about 2 plus years.

That is the reality of mining in some third world areas with inadequate safety standards

The same problem arises with dust from polishing compounds used in jewellery making. A lung disease called siderosis is caused by the inhalation of iron oxide (rust) particles. Rouge is nothing more than iron oxide in a wax base and can be directly inhaled or attached to fibre particles from buffing wheels.

Any of the other polishing compounds used in polishing stone or metal may also cause dusty lung if care is not taken to minimise dust.

Buffing metals also produces very small airborne metal particles.

Remember, anything finer than 400 grit has the potential to be readily airborne.

Here are a few polishes that spring readily to mind: Silicone carbide, tin oxide, cerium oxide, Tripoli, rouge, various sands, pumice, diamond dust, plus there's a whole raft of newer and specialised polishes.

Again, just to emphasise the point, grind and polish with lubricants (water or oil) as this minimises dust.

If mining, collecting, working stone where you can't use a liquid to minimise dust, then USE A MASK and continue to enjoy your hobby.

Colin Hazell

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## **FACETING in the CLUB**

The Committee is keen to revive and increase the interest and participation in faceting within the Club. The Committee greatly appreciates the work that Norm Savage has done in checking and repairing the Club's eight faceting machines, and his comments and recommendations in the recent report that he prepared.

The following is a summary of Committee's decisions at the March Meeting regarding the future direction of Faceting in the Club. The full text of the Committee report is available on the Clubroom Notice board, or on the Club's Website at [www.ndlapidary.org.au](http://www.ndlapidary.org.au).

### Machine Status

1. All of the Club's eight faceting machines have been thoroughly cleaned and overhauled and two will have their angle indicator lights repaired.

### Machine Usage and Requirements

2. Due to the high degree of supervision required for beginners, it was agreed that the optimum number of new students per class should be 3 (max-4).
3. The Club will provide and maintain 6 faceting machines – three for normal Classes, two for Juniors, and one for Casual Cutting (see below for details). This leaves two surplus machines for potential disposal/sale.
4. All machines will be numbered so that students can use the same machine each week. Each Machine usage is to be recorded in a log book where the user signs in/out and can record any mechanical problems for attention. It is the user's responsibility to see that their machine is properly maintained at all times.

### Casual Faceting

5. Eligibility –
  - Only members who have reached a satisfactory level of competence are eligible to use the Casual Faceting machine unsupervised. All others must be supervised by a faceting teacher or experienced faceter approved by the Faceting Review Panel.
  - The Committee will establish a Faceting Review Panel to determine or advise on competency and technical matters relating to faceting within the Club as requested by Committee.
  - A record of members who are eligible to undertake Casual Cutting unsupervised will be maintained by the Club.
  - Faceting Teachers, Faceting Judges and existing facetors who have competed at Intermediate or Open Faceting levels at a Gemboree are automatically deemed to be competent and are eligible to be a member of the Faceting Review Panel.
  - Faceting competence may be determined by:-
    - a) existing facetors may have their eligibility determined by

- b) producing several completed stones for assessment by the Faceting Review Panel; or
- b) a faceting teacher after a member has completed a faceting course.

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### FEBRUARY CASTING

Only a small group gathered for our end of summer casting weekend, being 6 in all. Five were old hands and a new member Marilyn. Very different styles were created from natural items from Bert, a beautifully carved ring from Eric which he cast in gold, and a classic textured pendant for a beautiful opal by Marilyn. All creations emerged, transformed in metal from the investment. And we all went home happily ever after.

Jean Macleay



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### HANDY HINT NO 33 DOPPING

We have all had the problem of a stone coming off the dop, sometimes repeatedly. It can be more common in winter when the wax is colder. Even the shellac / metho mix does not always work.

Next time you have this problem mix some shellac flakes with your dopping wax. Warm the wax on the dop stick, dip it into the shellac and then roll the shellac into the wax. Then dop your stone. It's worth a try.

**PS** There is a bottle of shellac flakes in the cupboard where we keep the grit.

## HANDY HINT NO 34 FLAT BACKS

Hanging on a hook, inside the sink cupboard in the cutting room is a steel rule.

It's on a bit of chain so it can't go for a walk and get lost! BUT what is it for ??

Well, take the rule and lay it across one of the bits of glass that we use when working the back of a cab. You might be surprised at how dished the glass can be in the middle. Not always but often is. If the glass is concave then the back of your stone will end up convex.

If the glass is dished don't use it, find a flat bit. We have plenty of glass, next time we have a working bee you can help cut up some new bits. When you are working the stone with grit and glass ensure that you work all over the glass including over the edges.

JW

## Chef's Corner

### CHOCOLATE COCONUT BARS

125g (4oz) butter  
½ cup brown sugar, firmly packed  
1 cup coconut  
½ cup plain flour  
⅓ cup self raising flour  
1 tbs cocoa  
1 egg

Melt butter over low heat,  
stir in sugar, coconut, sifted flours and cocoa  
then the lightly beaten egg.  
Pour mixture into a greased 28 cm x 18 cm  
laminton tin  
Bake in moderate oven 20 minutes or until just  
firm.,

Chocolate icing goes well with this

### HAWKESBURY SHOW

If you are interested in competing in this show  
schedules and entry forms are in the Club rooms  
near the shop.

The Lapidary section is within the Craft Section.

An excerpt from the "Lapidiary" March 09 the  
magazine from Parramatta-Holroyd Lapidary  
Club showing that all clubs have similar problems  
about saw blades.

#### *"Diamond Saws*

*Saw blades are expensive to replace, as we have  
found out with the replacement 24 inch unit.*

*Number 4 saw has also had the blades replaced,  
saws 1 and 2 both needed work being done of  
them due to misuse.*

*Management believes access to saws should be  
limited to a small number of qualified members  
experienced in saw procedure. Names would be  
displayed for anyone to make contact and arrange  
to have slabs cut."*

### SOME FACTS ABOUT AUSTRALIA

Did you know that the total area of Australia is  
2,966,253 sq miles or 7,682,300 sq km and the  
coast line is 22,868 miles or 36,735 km.

We do know that WA is the largest state of  
975,134 sq miles or 2,525,500 sq km or 32.87%  
of the total. It is then followed by QLD at 22.49%  
of the total with 666,898 sq miles or 1,727,200 sq  
km. Coming in third is the NT at 17.52% of the  
total with 519,788 sq miles or 1,346,200 sq km.  
Next is SA at 12.81% of the total with 379,937 sq  
miles or 984,000 sq km. Coming in fifth is NSW  
at 10.44% of the total with 309,510 sq miles or  
801,600 sq km. VIC comes in third last at 2.96%  
with 87,880 sq miles or 227,600 sq km. Second  
last is TAS at 0.88% of the total with 26,179 sq  
miles or 67,800 sq km. Last of all is ACT at  
0.03% of the total and with only 927 sq miles or  
2,400 sq km.

### *The Extreme Points of the Mainland and Tasmania are:*

NORTH – Cape York, Queensland. Latitude 10  
degrees 41 minutes south

SOUTH – South East Cape, Tasmania. Latitude  
43 degrees 39 minutes south

EAST – Cape Byron, NSW. Longitude 153  
degrees 39 minutes east

WEST – Steep point, Western Australia.  
Longitude 113 degrees 9 minutes east

## **Mountains:**

**The Highest Mountain is in:** NSW – Mt Kosciuszko at 7,316 ft or 2,230 metres.

**Highest Mountains in other states are:** VIC – Bogong at 6,516 ft or 1,986 metres

Tasmania – Ossa at 5,305 ft or 1,617 metres

QLD – Bartle Frere at 5,287 ft or 1,612 metres

SA – Woodroffe at 5,000 ft or 1,524 metres

NT – Zeil at 4,950 ft or 1,509 metres

WA – Meharry at 4,102 ft or 1,251 metres

**Lowest Point** is in SA – Lake Eyre at -49 ft or -15 metres.

**Highest Temperature** ever recorded was at Cloncurry, QLD 53° C (127.5°F) January 16, 1889.

**Lowest Temperature** ever recorded at Charlotte Pass -23°C (-9°F) (June 29, 1994).

**Wettest Place** (officially recorded): - Tully QLD, annual average 4,321 mm

**Driest Place** (officially recorded): Oodnadatta, SA annual average 117 mm.

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*After typing the information about Australia, curiosity got the better of me because while I knew where a couple of the listed mountains were, the majority I did not.*

*I do know where Mt Kosciuszko is. It is in Kosciuszko National Park in the snow fields of NSW. Mt Bogong, while not a big moth, is Victoria's tallest mountain and is in the Alpine National Park - just east of Mt Beauty.*

*I have to admit that the rest of the mountains needed research, and as a first step I searched Tasmanian maps looking for Mt Ossa. This did not take long (Tassie being a small state) and I found Mt Ossa in the Cradle Mt Lake St Clair National Park - north of Derwent Bridge.*

*Next came Queensland and I spent a lot of time scanning the maps looking for Mt Bartle Frere (my excuse is that QLD is a lot bigger than Tassie). Searching systematically I finally found the mountain right near the town of the same name in Wooroonooran National Park. If I had used the index I would have found it a lot earlier!!!!*

*South Australia's highest mountain is Mt Woodroffe. Having now become wiser I used the index but to no avail. So again I searched the maps and found it just south of the NT border in the Musgrave Ranges.*

*That left Mt Zeil in the Northern Territory. After searching for an hour or more using the maps (boy there are a lot of mountains in NT!!!) I gave up and resorted to a "Google" search and found it is in the West Macdonnell Ranges.*

*Western Australia was easier and I went straight to Tom Price on the maps, and there in Karijini National Park was Mt Meharry.*

*So now MY curiosity has been settled, and we are all infinitely wiser because of these pieces of Trivia.*

*Ed.*

~

## **FELDSPAR**

The word feldspar is derived from the German word *feld*, meaning field, and the word *spar*, that describes a shiny rock that is easily cleaved. The original German word for feldspar was *fieldspar*. When this word was introduced into English literature, it became *feldspar*, as the 'i' was inadvertently dropped from the spelling of the original German word.

Feldspar is the group name applied to several crystalline aluminosilicate minerals that are found in abundance in the earth's crust. The feldspar group of minerals are found, commonly in pegmatites, in many localities throughout the world.

## **Labradorite**

This name was derived from the Canadian peninsula of Labrador where this stone was first found in 1770. It shows a play of color (*labradorescence*) in lustrous metallic tints, often in blue and green. Although some specimens have the complete spectrum these specimens are known as *Spectrolite* in the trade. The *labradorescence* is caused by interference of light on twinned lamellae. The stone is sensitive to pressure.

There are deposits in Canada (Labrador, Newfoundland), also in the Malagasy Republic,

Mexico, Russia, USA and Finland with deposits of the spectral colour.

In Australia we have the colourless to straw-yellow labradorite which are suitable for faceting. These are found in two areas one in New South Wales at Hogarth's range which is in Northern part of the State and the other is in Springsure, Queensland

### **Sunstone**

This is also known as Aventurine Feldspar and has a metallic glitter, which is red. Less often it is green or blue; and is caused by light interference on tiny haematite or goethite platelets. There are deposits in the US, India, Canada, South Norway, Russia and in Northern Territory, Australia.

The Sunstone is found in Harts Range NT which is North East of Alice Springs.

### **Moonstone**

Moonstone is so named for its blue-white sheen which is caused by lamellar twinning, known as the schiller effect. It can also produce moonstone cat's eye. This stone is sensitive to pressure. There are important deposits in Sri Lanka, also in Australia, Burma, Brazil, India, Malagasy Republic, Tanzania and the US.

In Australia the most well known site is located at Moonstone Hill, which is found on the Eastern side of the Kennedy Development Road north of Hughenden in Queensland.



### **Funnies**

#### **Importance of walking**

Walking 20 minutes can add to your life. This enables you at 85 years of age to spend an additional 5 months in a nursing home at \$7000 per month.

My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was 60. Now he's 97 years old and we don't know where he is.

I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

I have to walk early in the morning, before my brain figures out what I'm doing.

I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 bucks. Haven't lost a pound. Apparently you have to go there.

Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

I do have flabby thighs, but fortunately my stomach covers them.

The advantage of exercising every day is so when you die, they'll say, 'Well, he looks good doesn't he.'

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

I know I got a lot of exercise the last few years,.....just getting over the hill.

We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

AND

Every time I start thinking too much about how I look, I just find a Happy Hour and by the time I leave, I look just fine.



### **SIGNS**

#### **In a Podiatrist's office:**

'Time wounds all heels.'

#### **On a Plumber's truck:**

'We repair what your husband fixed.'

#### **On another Plumber's truck:**

'Don't sleep with a drip. Call your plumber.'

#### **On a Church's Bill board:**

'7 days without God makes one weak.'





