



THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

C/o School of Natural Science
B.C.R.I. Parramatta Campus University of Western Sydney
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Website: www.minsocnsw.org.au

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2009

The May Meeting will be held on Friday the 1st 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 program will comprise the member's Mini-Auction. A catalogue of the specimens and other items for auction will accompany this Newsletter. There are 80+ lots offered for sale and it is hoped to sell these over two hours commencing at **7.30 p.m. sharp**. For the sale to run smoothly it will be necessary to work strictly to the planned program.

Members selling minerals should be at the University by 6.30 p.m. to allow time for setting up and inspection. Otherwise members attending to view and buy are recommended to arrive at the Meeting not later than 7.10 p.m. so that time is available for registration and viewing.

Members who wish to bid must register and will be given a bidding number. The owner as well as the auctioneer's clerk must note the purchaser's number or name on completion of the bidding for their specimen. Please bring a note pad and pen.

Transactions must be in CASH ONLY and paid directly to the vendor on the completion of the auction. The Society will not handle any money or levy a commission and will not take responsibility for ensuring transactions are completed or enter into any disputes should they arise.

Silent Auction. As well as individual specimens, a member can submit up to three boxes of specimens for a silent auction. There will be no need to pre-register your intention to sell or provide a list of the contents of the box or boxes. Just bring the box/es to the Meeting, register that you have done so with the auctioneer's clerk and place a *Silent Auction* form on your box/es.

If further information is required please phone Jim Sharpe on (02) 9871 2502

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Subject to circumstances some changes to the following schedule of program subjects and speakers may be made in due course.

June 12th, (Second Friday): Minitalk by Jim Sharpe on 'Malachite, Azurite, Chrysocolla and their Pseudomorphs' followed by a lecture on the 'Burra Mine' by David Colchester.

July 3rd: Talk by Bruce Myles on 'Zircons from Malawi' and a lecture on the 'Minerals of Mt Vesuvius' by Graham Ogle.

August 7th: Society A.G.M. and the Betty Mayne Memorial Lecture to be given by Peter Williams on 'The Sunny Corner Silver Mines'.

September 4th: Talk on 'Scheelite in Australia' by John Chapman and a lecture on 'The History of Copper Mining in NSW' by Dereck Dolstra.

October 9th, (Second Friday): Program not finalized.

November 6th: Lecture on 'Gold' by Paul Meszaros.

THE SOCIETY COMMITTEE

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	Graham Ogle	Tel: (02) 9876 5224
	Peter Williams	Tel: (02) 9685 9914

WELCOME

Welcome to new member William Butterfield of Thornleigh

APRIL MEETING

At the commencement of the April Meeting the Society President, Arthur Roffey, urged members to avail themselves of the information and registration leaflets for the **32nd Joint Mineralogical Seminar** to be held in Brisbane in June, copies of which had been distributed with the last Newsletter and there were also a number available at this meeting. Members expecting to attend the Seminar should note that the registration forms should be sent to the Queensland Mineralogical Society **by April 30th at the latest**.

Dieter Mylius gave a brief report on the **field trip to the Blue Hills quarry** in the Oberon District which had been held over the 14th and 15th of March weekend although most people attending the trip had made it a one-day trip on the Saturday only and on that day there were about two dozen people working in the quarry. Whilst not a great variety or quantity of specimens were found and from mid-afternoon through the evening on Saturday thunderstorms moved through the area causing people to run for cover periodically, the social aspects of visiting and working on the collecting site were felt to have been very worthwhile. Further, for the members staying overnight in Oberon there was a BBQ held at the Oberon dam picnicking area on Saturday evening, happily under adequate cover, which added to the social benefits.

Jim Sharpe referred to the latest issue of the **Australian Journal of Mineralogy** which had recently been published and distributed. There were a few spare copies for sale at this Meeting as well as a selection of previous issues. The current Journal presented a number of articles including one on the **Kingsgate field** which described the results thus far of work being done at U.W.S. by Society members on the primary bismuth and bismuth-lead minerals from the Kingsgate Wolfram pipe more species of which have been becoming identified over the last few years.

The first talk for the evening was delivered by Graham and Toby Ogle who described the work they had been putting in to design and build up information in the : -

Mineralogical Society Website

The Website is www.minsocnsw.org.au and has been designed and set up by Graham Ogle ably assisted by his son Toby. The site provides an amount of information on the Society and its activities. The home page has a number of sections including one providing the current and previous Newsletters. Another is the photo gallery of pictures provided by members mostly of mineral specimens but also features at the moment a few images of members visiting and selling minerals at the Canberra Rock Swap held over the previous weekend. Members were invited to submit more photographs of minerals for the Society Website photo-gallery with the suggestion that these should advisedly not be credited in the site to the owner so as not to advertise the ownership and location of choice specimens. Graham Ogle recommended to members that the Website could readily incorporate any mineralogical, mining or earth science-oriented information that members might submit.

Another section provides an archive of the General Meeting lecture summaries which are being added to the site as the text is checked and verified by the speakers. The expectation is that eventually some sixty lectures will be available through the site with about thirty 'onsite' so far. The lecture summaries at the moment appear as either 'Word' documents or as 'Adobe pdf' but the site could probably provide 'Powerpoint' versions also. Some lectures will not appear because the speaker may be intending to publish the lecture subject elsewhere.

There are also a number of links provided to other websites of mineralogical significance such as '*Mindat*' which is probably the best archive on the Web for mineralogical information and images of minerals. Another such site is '*Webmineral*' which is complementary to *Mindat*.

Not to be overlooked are the Websites set up by other mineralogical societies such as *The Australian Mineral Collector* set up by Tony Forsyth of the Queensland Mineralogical Society and the site 'www.crocoite.com' set up by Steve Sorrell in Tasmania.

The lecturer for the evening was introduced by Peter Williams. John Rankin's professional career has been mostly spent as a chemist and among other work he has been associated with analyzing mineral pigments. In reference to John Rankin's mineralogical interests Peter Williams noted that he has been very dogged in pursuit of information on his particular areas of interest. These have included a long and binding love of Broken Hill minerals and the historical background to mines, mining areas and mineral collections. Over the last two years Peter Williams has been working on a project studying the Sunny Corner mining area and John Rankin has been particularly helpful in providing and digging out of sometimes very obscure literature and reports an amount of very useful historical information and images relating to the mining at Sunny Corner. As a consequence of his work with U.W.S. over the past few years John Rankin is now an honorary research associate of the University.

This evening John Rankin was to speak about George Smith aka 'Specimen Smith' who had a long and illustrious career working both in private industry and for the state government. He was mine manager at the Broken Hill Consols mine in the 1890s when the mining was hitting the big bonanza grades and later went to work for many years as the Mines Inspector for the N.S.W. Geological Survey and the Department of Mines. He assembled and disposed of several collections in his lifetime, some of which were sold with many specimens from these ending up in the Australia Museum and in private collections. There is supposedly a mysterious George Smith gemstone collection which 'Sir' Howard Smith used to refer to although Peter Williams has never seen it and does not know whether it still exists or ever existed but if it des it would probably be very valuable.

George Smith was a collector with a very fine eye and was clever and smart enough to ensure that a fair portion of his collecting life ended up in either public repositories or in private collections where his great specimens would be preserved. George Smith specimens, preferably accompanied by his original labels, are prized by collectors and Society members will have a few of these.

'Early Collectors - George Smith' by John Rankin.

In conducting research into George Smith's life John Rankin had found that the mining engineer was a much larger figure than people might have thought. His contributions to and acquisitions of NSW minerals are unparalleled by anyone else and George Smith stands alone in that area. His birth name was actually George Kearns but his father died two years after George was born and when he was seven his mother married a Captain Smith whose surname George gradually assumed. In 1879 he took up his first employment with the English & Australian Copper Company at Waratah in Newcastle. Three years later he married a lady from Adelaide and a copy of the marriage certificate had been obtained by the speaker showing George Smith's name as 'George Kearns otherwise Smith'. In 1888 he became an ore buyer at Silverton and in 1890 started working at the Consols mine as an assayer and sub-manager. During their time in Broken Hill the Smiths had four children sadly losing the youngest child at fourteen months of age although the other three outlived their parents.

During his research John Rankin had examined documentation from the Australian Institute of Mining Engineers which was a very prestigious body. It was formed in 1892 at Broken Hill and on a document presenting the names of the Committee members George Smith's name is featured along with a number of senior figures from the managements of the several mines operating on the Broken Hill lode. The Proprietary Mine was then the biggest mine at Broken Hill and the general manager, assistant general manager, the two top metallurgists and the chief engineer of that company were on the committee of the inaugural A.I.M.E. In addition on the committee there were the general managers of the mines on either side of the Proprietary, and the Consols which was a much smaller mine than the others also provided its general manager - and George Smith !.

This indicated that George Smith had made a good impression and had made very good contacts with important people very early in his career which must have done wonders to assist his mineral collecting and his knowledge of what was happening in the mines. In January 1894 he became the mine manager of the Consols which was a silver mine only, it did not produce any lead and its high point in production had been 1892. This meant unfortunately that George Smith had taken charge of a gradually less successful mine and he left in 1898. During these years George Smith remained busy outside his mine management duties as a recent visit by the speaker to the Broken Hill Historical Society and examination of their archives established. The archives showed that George Smith had also become secretary of the Mining Managers Association which among other duties involved him sending out a number of letters to people chasing their money.

An interesting note on the history of Broken Hill that has emerged from John Rankin's researches has been from his examination of a number of photographs of the early mines and mining operations only one of which, on the letterhead of the Mining Managers Association, shows the two Proprietary lead smelter smokestacks belching smoke. Lead pollution if not poisoning of the local population and countryside has always been a problem for lead mining in earlier days as well as today and in all other photographs of the early town that the speaker has seen the smokestacks are always shown apparently not in operation. The speaker surmised that there must have been some understanding among the mine managements over that time that any photographs being taken around the town and mines should not show the smelters in operation and producing smoke whereas the Mining Managers Association letters would only be seen by other mine managers so this did not matter.

In 1898 George Smith decided to move on, leaving Broken Hill and coming to Sydney with his family for a while before moving up to Chillagoe to be mine manager. The Chillagoe mine was experiencing various financial mismanagement problems over that time and after three years George Smith returned to Sydney where he stayed for the rest of his life. In 1902 he was issued with a mine manager's certificate of service, a copy of this being shown by the speaker and in 1904 he joined the Department of Mines as an Inspector of Mines. As such he traveled extensively in New South Wales inspecting mines every year. He was particularly active in the New England area from about 1912 to 1920. He had first traveled around in the west of N.S.W., starting off in the Condoblin and Cobar areas and also in the south but eventually concentrating on New England from where he was able to bring back a lot of specimens.

In 1907 George Smith sold part of his mineral collection then comprising mostly Broken Hill minerals to the Australian Museum and subsequently exchanged hundreds and hundreds of mainly New England specimens with the Museum. In 1925 he retired and the Department of Mines contracted him to write about the Mineralogy of New South Wales which he set about doing and which was published in 1926. This book is still a current bible for many people. In 1927 George Smith sold the rest of his mineral collection to the Australian Museum and effectively retired eventually dying in 1944.

John Rankin then referred back to George Smith's time spent at Broken Hill showing a number of images of the 1890s town and mines and an advertisement in the 'Silver Age' of 1889 about George Smith being a silver-buying agent at Silverton. George Smith had also built up a substantial collection of books and was sufficiently impressed with Dana's System of Mineralogy that he had an issue bound in leather and gold-embossed. When he died all of his books were given to the Australian Museum which unfortunately did not have room to display or store them and sent them all to Broken Hill where they were installed in the library of the Zinc Corporation. The Zinc Corporation Library was closed about fifteen years ago with any people allowed to take away all of the books. John Rankin had been fortunate to find the ex-George Smith-owned gold-embossed Dana book in Adelaide at what the locals called the Orange Lane Market. It had not been cheap at \$700 but the speaker considered himself lucky to have found this item of George Smith memorabilia. The book was signed in the front with 'Geo' Smith and has extensive penciled notations.

A concern that the collector in the 1890s would have was that since the Consols mine was a very rich silver lode a few cases went before the courts of miners stealing ore or silver in the form of specimens. There were never such cases brought by any of the other mines which whilst they did not want workers removing

specimens they never took anyone to court. However since George Smith wanted specimens and was also the assayer and assistant manager of the mine he had to do everything by the book. In obtaining specimens from the miners it had to be seen that he was not stealing silver so he would give the miners the same weight in silver in exchange for the specimen. Notes on these transactions proving that he had not stolen the specimens accompanied the collections sold to the Australian Museum. Whilst he was at Broken Hill and later George Smith exchanged minerals extensively with American collectors in the U.S. having made contacts through Americans working in the Broken Hill mines. Also over this time he donated to the N.S.W. Mining Museum as well as the Australian Museum and to the Adelaide University. Strangely enough George Smith never had anything to do with the British Museum. Up to 1880 the British Museum had been considered to be the premiere institution to send specimens to but they also apparently projected a superior attitude and George Smith preferred to deal only with other museums.

The Consols mine was owned by a British company and whilst John Rankin had not managed to locate an annual report or other company records he did find a testimonial written by the company chairman in London on the occasion of George Smith's resignation from the company in 1898 which read, "*He is one of the most accomplished mineralogists and metallurgists in Australia I might say in the whole world and he has been a most marvelous manager for us*". This was written in spite of the fact that the last four years of George Smith's tenure at the Consols mine had been economically poor for the company so he had obviously impressed the company directors as well as everyone else whom he met.

John Rankin continued to display a large number of views of the early Broken Hill mines and mining operations as well as notes and documents written by George Smith listing and describing his specimens and the people with whom he was corresponding about them. There were also assay reports on ore samples and analysis of specimens and detailed catalogues of the specimens many of which went to the Australian Museum. The Museum eventually received some 1,600 George Smith specimens from eastern Australia, mostly N.S.W. and Queensland and a few from Victoria and South Australia. About 300 or 18% of these have since been traded out by the Museum with notable collectors such as Albert Chapman obtaining about 25 and Martin Ehrman who was the leading U.S. mineral dealer in the 1970s obtaining 15. Most of the remainder were obtained by two mineral companies which traded extensively with the Museum. Many other George Smith specimens had been traded out to collectors elsewhere, many in the U.S. so there must be many of his specimens sitting in collections around the world. John Rankin suggested that ideally all collectors should be able to boast of having at least one of his specimens in their collection although the challenge is to find another collector who will part with one.

John Rankin also displayed the book written by George Smith, 'A Contribution to the Minerals of New South Wales' which was published in 1926 costing then three shillings and threepence. Finally the speaker displayed a large number of images of George Smith specimens, mostly of Broken Hill and New England minerals and mostly from the Australian Museum collection, some of which are on display in the Museum today.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

19th Annual LISMORE GEMFEST

Presented by the **Lismore Lapidary Club** over Saturday and Sunday the 16th and 17th of May 2009 at the Lismore Showground, Lismore. The Club display will again follow the theme of the '**Rainbow Region**'. The Show will feature handcrafted jewellery, Gemstones and Minerals, Rare Fossils and Meteorites, Metaphysical and Healing Crystals, Stalls and displays undercover, Demonstrations of Lapidary Crafts, free parking, refreshments available, Show entry fees \$4.

The following information on the Gemfest has been provided by the organisers.

'GEMFEST is one of the largest Lapidary, Mineral, Jewelry and Fossil shows in Australia. Last year there were 27 dealers in the main pavilion and more than 100 tailgaters in the show grounds. The Show offers fantastic opportunities to select that special piece of jewellery, beautiful crystals, opals, beads, mineral specimens, rare fossils and lapidary related equipment and material. It is always a fun weekend to join in the many club activities and demonstrations by club members from Lismore and neighbouring clubs. These include sphere making, PMC demonstrations, opal carving, jewellery making, silversmithing, faceting and wire wrapping.

There are so many beautiful items on sale with so many choices – a special mineral specimen, jewellery ready to wear or select, such as a beautiful exotic, cut or faceted gemstone and then take it to a jeweller in the main pavilion, select a gold or silver setting and have it set on the day.

There will be a variety of top line commercial dealers (housed in the main pavilion) as well over 100 tailgaters (hobbyists and stallholders who trade on the grounds in the open). All of these participants aim their displays at the jewellery, mineral and lapidary field.'

Dealer and general inquiries may be made to Bruce Copper at : -

The Lismore Lapidary Club, P.O.Box 743, Lismore, N.S.W. 2480,

by e-mail to bcopper@bluemaxx.com.au

or general information on <http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au>.

Inquiries about tailgating may be made to Jan Thompson at the same address or by telephone to (02) 6621 4703.

Information leaflets and tailgating registration forms for the Gemfest have been provided by the organisers. Copies of these will be at the next (N.S.W.) Society meeting or available from the Secretary, George Laking.

32ND JOINT MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES OF AUSTRALASIA SEMINAR JUNE 6th to 8th 2009

The 32nd Seminar is being held this year over the usual period of the Queen's Birthday long weekend in June, from Saturday 6th to Monday 8th of June. Associated activities will be held on Friday 5th and Tuesday the 9th of June. The Seminar will be hosted by the Queensland Mineralogical Society on the theme **Minerals, Mines & Collectors** and held in the Theatre of the Queensland Museum, Southbank, Brisbane. Seminar presentations will be held through Saturday and Sunday with a Swap and Sell held on the Monday morning. The Seminar dinner will be held on Saturday night at a venue within easy walking distance of the Museum. Registration will be \$60 per person, \$30 for students and the Seminar dinner \$35 per person. Field trips have been organised for Friday the 5th, Monday the 8th and Tuesday the 9th.

The Queensland Mineralogical Society has distributed parcels of Seminar information and registration forms to all state societies. These will be mailed to (N.S.W.) Society members receiving hard-copy Newsletters or can be accessed by Internet-enabled members from the Queensland Mineralogical Society Website, - '*The Australian Mineral Collector*' or through the Website www.mineral.org.au. The forms will also be available at the Society General Meetings or by mail from the Secretary, George Laking, however members wishing to attend this year's Seminar are advised that registration forms **must have been received by The Queensland Mineralogical Society by April 30th at the latest.**

The following details about the Seminar have been reproduced from the Queensland Mineralogical Society information leaflet.

Seminar Registration: Registration forms are being distributed. The cost is \$60 for delegates or \$30 for students and the Seminar dinner is \$35. Delegates wishing to sell or swap at the mineral bazaar on Monday 8th June can indicate this on the registration form and also whether they wish to participate in any

of the other field trip and Museum visit activities. The registration forms with fees must be received by The Queensland Mineralogical Society, P.O.Box 15020, City East, Brisbane, QLD 4002, by April 30th next.

The Seminar venue: The Queensland Museum theatre, Southbank, is situated on main transport corridors and is easily accessible by bus or train from the CBD or an easy 10 minute walk from the CBD across Victoria Bridge. Also within the precinct is the Queensland Art Gallery, State Library and the newly opened Museum of Modern Art. Adjoining the Museum is Southbank itself, with over 80 hectares of gardens, walking paths, restaurants and a large swimming lagoon. Entry to all areas is free.

The Seminar dinner: The Queensland Mineralogical Society has booked a private function room at the Ship Inn, an historic hotel dating from the 1880's. Located within Southbank, it is about a 10-minute walk from the museum through the Southbank gardens to the Ship Inn, or one stop on the rail line which is about 100 metres away. The Ship Inn looks over the Queensland Maritime Museum which houses a number of displays, as well as an historic dry dock holding the decommissioned frigate HMAS Diamantina.

The Minerals Heritage Museum: For those delegates in Brisbane before or after the seminar, a visit to the Minerals Heritage Museum is worthwhile. Located in the foyer of 61 Mary Street in the Brisbane CBD, it has four large cabinets of mineral specimens on display. These include many high quality Australian pieces. The display can only be accessed Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm (not on public holidays). A selection of MHM specimens will be on display at the seminar venue.

Field Trips: There will be field trips on Friday June 5th to the Julius Kruttschnitt Mineral Research Centre in Indooroopilly, home of the University of Queensland Experimental Mine. On Monday June 8th there will be a trip to Laidley, about 80kms west of Brisbane for creek fossicking and on Tuesday June 9th to Toowoomba to fossick on dumps from a road tunnel.

Inquiries may be made to: - The Queensland Mineralogical Society Inc.
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2009 FESTIVAL OF TREASURES

Presented by the Australian Fossickers Association over the Queen's Birthday Long Weekend.

Friday JUNE 5th to Monday JUNE 8th 2009

9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Friday, Saturday & Sunday, 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. on Monday.

The **Festival of Treasures** Show has been held for a number of years in the Gosford Showgrounds but is now to be held on a site on the corner of Hue Hue Road and Wyee Road, Wyee, N.S.W. The site is central to the Wyee area and a short way from Wyee rail station but motorists please note, whilst the Sydney to Newcastle freeway is a short distance from the Show site there is not an exit there and cars would need to turn off the freeway further south at the Tuggerah or Toukley turn-offs.

Featuring: Meteorite display by G.E.O. Discoveries, Central Coast Lapidary Club display, gemstone, jewellery, fossil, mineral and other collectable sales and dealers, 'Tailgate Alley' sales and small dealers.

Free car parking, refreshments, entry \$3.

Inquiries to the Australian Fossickers Association,

P.O.Box 9095, Wyee, N.S.W. 2259
or telephone 02 4399 2457.

The WINDSOR JEWELLERY, BEADING, GEM & MINERAL SHOW
Proudly supported by the Hawkesbury Valley Lapidary Club

Saturday & Sunday, June 13th & 14th 2009
Saturday open from 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. & Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

At the Windsor Function Centre on the corner of Dight & Macquarie Streets, Windsor.

'Demonstrations including faceting gemstones, wire wrapping of stones, precious metal clay beading and hand-made jewellery. Displays from private collections including of mineral specimens, cut & polished stones, carvings, gemstones and more !. Sales of jewellery, gemstones, beads, opals, gem, rough, carvings, fossils & findings. Mineral specimens from all over the world. Tools and equipment for lapidary and beading. Metaphysical and Healing crystals.' Admission \$5, light refreshments available.

BLAXLAND GEM & MINERAL CLUB GEM SHOW

Over Saturday and Sunday August 15th and 16th 2009. 8 am to 4 pm Daily

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

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

Displays of lapidary work and gem, mineral and crystal sales.
Refreshments available. Entry: Adults: \$3.00, Children \$1.00.
