



# CAPE TOWN GEM & MINERAL CLUB

FOR THE STUDY OF ROCKS, MINERALS & CRYSTALS

## *mineral chatter*

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

### JUNE 2015

DIARY	DATE	TIME	EVENT
	2323		Electrician is busy in the workshops
	30		Workshop booked out for courses - please see info under Workshop on page 8
JUNE	6	10-2.30	<b>OPEN DAY</b> Minerals, gems and jewellery to view and buy
	13	2pm	<b>Monthly Meeting:</b> Gemboree 2015 report back by Malcolm Jackson
	20		Workshop booked out for courses - please see info under Workshop on page 8
	27		Workshop open by arrangement
JULY	4	10-2.30	<b>OPEN DAY</b> Minerals, gems and jewellery to view and buy
	11	2pm	<b>Monthly Meeting:</b> Blesberg – Graham Harrison
	18		Workshop open by arrangement
	25		Workshop open by arrangement

### *What's inside this month?*



- ☞ *Committee Corner*
- ☞ *Events – past, present, and to come*
- ☞ *Interesting Internet links*
- ☞ *History of the House of Gems*
- ☞ *And much more.....*

An ancient Butterfly in Amber from the Dominican Republic



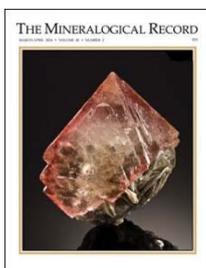


## COMMITTEE CORNER



*This month we welcome Michael and Judith Treloar, Ernst Schnaitmann, and the Morgan family who have joined us. We also welcome back Mark Beetge. There are a lot of small items of information to read this month, so we hope everyone will find something of interest. The raffle for the Boekenhoutshoek drusy amethyst was drawn at the May monthly meeting and was won by Graham Harrison.*

*We remind members that they are very welcome to bring their friends to Open Day, and also to a Monthly Meeting – these are both open to the public. Benefits of membership include the monthly newsletter, the SAGAM magazine, use of the library, the workshops and occasional field trips. We also exchange newsletters with other SA mineral clubs and societies. Should you wish to receive email copies of these, please ask Jo to put your name on that particular mailing list.*



*Do remember our library.....as well as many books on a variety of hobby related topics, we subscribe to The Mineralogical Record which is the leading mineralogical journal of the USA. Often free DVDs are included with these journals and they too are for loan from our library. The latest SAGAM magazine has arrived. Vol.47 No.1 Please collect your copy from the library.*

*<<< !! GONE MISSING – MINERALOGICAL RECORD NO. 2 OF 2014 – PLEASE CHECK YOUR SHELVES AND RETURN IMMEDIATELY!!*

*REMEMBER THE IN-HOUSE CABOCHON COMPETITION. Our workshop is running a cabochon competition to foster interest in lapidary work. Any Cape Town member may participate. Closing date is 1st September. Please see details under “Workshop” further below.*

*Have you visited our website recently? Do remember that Duncan Miller has most generously donated to our website a seventy page booklet he has written on the **Rock Art of the Northern and Western Cape**. This is a culmination of archaeological work done over many years, and is based on articles he wrote for the now extinct magazine Village Life. The link to this is to be found on the Home page of our website, under the paragraph on Field Trips, at: [www.ctminsoc.org.za](http://www.ctminsoc.org.za)*

*Another donation from Duncan consists of a box of 50 catalogued mineral specimens, some mounted in acrylic mounts, for study using the club’s binocular microscope. A few of them may be misidentified, which will make a nice challenge for alert mineralogists. The poster donation consists of a large colourful poster showing the characteristic appearance of several hundred minerals under the petrographic microscope, with details of their optical properties. This will be box mounted and hung above the microscopes in the office for reference. Many of you will have noticed the new table at the end of the office. This is awaiting a stronger top and will shortly be available for use.*

*Fay Pierides has announced the **2015 THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN GEM CUTTING CHALLENGE**. Competition entries must be in by Tuesday, 24th November, 2015. The competition this year will require an entry fee per stone entered of R50.00 (\$6.00) non-refundable per person – contact the organiser for deposit details. (Please note for this year pensioners will pay a flat fee of R50 regardless of number of entries.) Details have been forward to our workshop groups and pinned on the notice board. Please contact Jo if you also wish to be sent the finer details of entry.*

**Jo4EXCO**

*“A club is its members, not its committee which must be an aide to those members*

## EVENTS

**PAST: 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY.** Geoff McLea came from Mactool in Montague Gardens. He showed us a selection of the carving bits, diamond polishing pads, cores, Bellinzoni polishes and other products that his company holds. 29 members attended this popular meeting and many questions were asked.

**TO COME: 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE.** Gemboree 2015. Report Back by Malcolm Jackson. This year's Easter Gemboree was held in Jozini in the far north east of South Africa. Malcolm Jackson and a few other eager Capetonians attended for the first time in that area. Malcolm is going to report back on what went on.

**TO COME: 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY.** Blesberg. As members of the club, most of us have probably visited the Blesberg mine in the Northern Cape at some point. This mine has been in existence since 1925 and through the years has produced some spectacular results for those prepared to work hard at that site. Anyone visiting the mine will automatically gravitate to hunting quartz, as there is simply so much of it there and the sizes of the specimens are good. What a lot of us miss are the other minerals that have made Blesberg so special to the few that have taken the time to look a little closer. Minerals like bismoclite (type locality) are to be found, together with others like phenakite and apatite. Graham Harrison's talk will cover a little of the history, a simple way to identify some of the minerals from the mine, as well as show a few pictures of both minerals and the mine as it was many years ago. Members will also be asked to bring their "best of Blesberg" specimens to display.



## A recent Volcano



General view of Chilean Calbuco volcano from Puerto Montt, 22nd April 2015. Due to the eruption of the volcano with a smoke column 20 km high, authorities declared a red alert and ordered the evacuation of around 1500 inhabitants of nearby towns. EPA/ALEX VIDAL BRECAS



An ancient Butterfly in Amber from the Dominican Republic

<http://www.schoolofgemology.com/ISGCommunity/content.php/90-What-s-the-Buzz-About-Amber>

## Libyan Desert Glass

Martine was very interested to read the article in the latest *Southern African Gems and Minerals* (Vol. 47, No. 1, March 2015, pp. 33–34) about South African scientists having recently discovered that **Libyan Desert Glass** was formed as a result of a comet impact. They said, to give some idea of the enormity of the event, that the black diamond-bearing pebble from the Libyan Desert glass-strewn field formed at temperatures of 1700–3500°C. An area 43 km in diameter was scorched and created an extinction event – a primate living in the region disappeared at that time. If anyone else is interested in reading more about this, they can follow the links below that Martine has shared.

Article on pages 3–4 of *University of Johannesburg Newsletter Nov 2014*:

<http://www.uj.ac.za/EN/Faculties/science/newsandevents/newsletters/Documents/Faculty%20of%20Science%20Newsletter%20June%202014.pdf>

and

<http://www.medioclubsouthafrica.com/tech/3505-cosmic-proof-of-comet-strike-on-earth>

<http://www.designntrend.com/articles/8434/20131009/behind-libyan-desert-glass-evidence-comet-striking-earth-embedded-controversial.htm>



## Historical Help Needed

**Sidney Pieters**

The current (since 2001) owners of the House of Gems in Windhoek, Namibia, would very much like your help in piecing together the history of the business, as well as that of Sidney Pieters.



Sidney Pieters' name has been synonymous with quality Namibian/South West African minerals since the 1940s but unfortunately not much historical information has been preserved throughout the years.

Do you have any photographs of Sid, or the House of Gems/Usakos Gem Store, or any quality mineral specimens from Sid that are accompanied by their labels or other documentation, or anything else related to him that might be of historical value? Any contributions would be most welcome - please contact Ernst Schnaitmann with details at: [eschnaitmann@gmail.com](mailto:eschnaitmann@gmail.com)

Photo of Sid Pieters which appeared in the first edition of *Namibia: Minerals and Localities* by Ludi von Bezing





With a hammer price of \$30,4 million, the 25,59-carat, pigeon-blood-red “Sunrise Ruby” obliterated two auction records at Sotheby’s Magnificent Jewels and Noble Jewels sale in Geneva on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

<https://thejewelerblog.wordpress.com/2015/05/12/sunrise-ruby-captures-two-records-at-sothebys-geneva-with-a-hammer-price-of-26-9-million/>



## LETTER FROM BARRYDALE

By Siegward Killat

A week ago I asked a club member a question: "What is soft water and what is hard water?" As usual I did not receive a clear answer even though the question seemed simple. Then there is also the question of heavy water and lighter water. How much does a 1 kg of water weigh?

Soft water and hard water? The difference is the content of calcium in it. When you wash your hair with soft water it is difficult to rinse the shampoo out of it. Hard water contains calcium and soft water little. Now is hard water heavier because of the calcium content per litre? Are we collecting water because of the mineral content? When you next buy a bottle of mineral water, read the label of it and see which mineral is collectable.

Soft water is water which has a relatively low concentration of calcium carbonate and other ions. The water that lathers with soap easily is called soft water. It describes a type of water that contains few or no minerals like calcium {Ca} or magnesium {Mg} ions.

Then there is the issue of the content of water and minerals in the air. The next time you go to Johannesburg have a look at how many drivers have their fingers up their nose. This can be problematic when your cell phone rings. I live in a little village where there is little dust and low humidity in the air - that means no collectables.

Heavy water (deuterium oxide ( $2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) or  $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ ), is a form of water that contains a larger than normal amount of the hydrogen isotope deuterium, (also known as heavy hydrogen, which can be symbolised as 2H or D) rather than the common hydrogen isotope (called protium, symbolized as 1H) that makes up most of the hydrogen in normal water.

## “WHAT WAS UP” IN MAY?

This is the new activity we would like to have at every Monthly Meeting, so that members may showcase and share with others any new books, specimens, cabochons or faceted gems, jewellery, art objects, machines, lapidary accessories . . . or actually anything pertaining to the gem and mineral hobby that they have recently made or acquired. Many of our members facet at home, get new specimens, obtain new books, or find a wonderful piece of rough during the course of the month and maybe tell a couple of friends about it at Open Day. However, Open Day is usually too busy for more detailed chat or discussion about things, so from now on during tea time after the speaker, we can let many more of our members see what fun many people are having behind the scenes. So, before you leave home to come to the next Monthly Meeting, just cast your mind back to what you have obtained or achieved over the past month and bring something along to share with us all.



The May “What’s Up” showcase included new books on *Amateur Gemstone Faceting* By Tom Herbst, a transfer cheat thingy designed by him, a natural Gravelotte emerald, and a variety of faceted stones (including an egg) Tanzanian garnets, zircon, cerussite, citrine, prasiolite, and cabs in clear quartz and chocolate opal.



## Club Cabochon Competition

Closing date is 1st September

All cabs must have been made by CT club members since the announcement of this competition. A photograph must be taken of the unworked stone, and then the finished cab. There is no limit to the number of your entries. Ideally the cab should have been made in the club’s workshop, but it is not compulsory. Any natural stone may be used. The cab must have a flat back and domed top, but may be any shape. Polishing of the back of the stone is optional. A folder of ideas and designs for cabs can be seen in the club’s workshop or follow the link to <http://www.barlowsgems.net/gemstone-cabochon-information/> Please make use of the Entry Form which will be available at the office shortly.

## “The Romance of the Stone?!”



- **excitement** at having found a special piece of rough that asks for faceting
- **carefulness** to get the right design for the rough
- **caution** by previewing the new design on GemCad first
- **fear** to start new designs or try different types of stones
- **bravery** to just do it
- **patience** to remove the initial surplus rough and reach the centre point and stone size
- **decision-making**, constantly, as how best to dop, size of stone, depth of cut, etc, etc, etc
- **trust** to follow the diagram, sometimes with no clue as to where you are actually going
- **surprise and relief** when suddenly a few cuts down the line, the whole design comes together
- **concentration** on accuracy in cutting at all stages
- **thrill** of cutting crisp tiers of facets on the stone
- **discipline** to go back and re-cut when you make a mistake
- **tenacity** to keep going
- **knowing** when it's time to take a break and go to water the garden
- **addiction** to return to the lap to continue constructing your stone
- **boredom** with girdles, particularly the polishing
- **frustration** when unable to get a polish on a certain lap
- **self-encouragement** to keep going, and to generate.....
- **determination** to get to the end
- **excitement** when the first polished facets appear
- **self-control** not to rush the polishing
- **irritation** when you have to go back and find the scratched facets for re-polishing
- **joy** when finally the finished stone is safely off the dop
- **pride** when you show a friend what you have achieved, however humble it may be
- **love of gemstones** to already be thinking of the next stone to cut.



## The Lapidary Workshop

The electrical repairs are almost finalized in the workshop and a couple of courses have been organised to get members going again. Below is the packed schedule for the next few weeks. Unfortunately the workshops are fully booked for the Saturdays listed, but immediately after that please feel free to book spots again to work your cabs or whatever. If you missed out on a course this time around, there will be plenty more opportunities.

Date	Event	Time	Team in charge on day	Cost p p	Participants
<b>Sat 23</b>	Electrical work underway in workshops				
<b>Sat 30<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Sphere course Day 1	9 am – 1.30 pm	Marsiglio, Malcolm	R150	Claire Vaskys, Philip Henry, Shamen Govender,
<b>Sat 30<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Workshop intro course Day 1 2	2 pm – 5 pm	Malcolm intro talk Rinda, (Philip)	R75	Riaan Morgan, Wayne Morgan, Claire Vaskys, Mark Beetge
<b>Sat 6<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Sphere course Day 2	9 am – 1.30 pm	Marsiglio, Malcolm		Claire Vaskys, Philip Henry, Shamen Govender,
<b>Sat 13<sup>rd</sup> June</b>	Workshop intro course Day 2	9 am - 2 pm	Tracy/Rinda		Riaan Morgan, Wayne Morgan, Claire Vaskys, Mark Beetge
<b>Sat 20<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Sphere course Day 3	9 am – 1.30 pm	Marsiglio, Tracy/Rinda		Claire Vaskys, Philip Henry, Shamen Govender,



### HOW DO I GET TO USE THE CLUB'S LAPIDARY WORKSHOP?

Most of us are aware that the club has a lapidary workshop. It is part and parcel of our love of stones that we learn to work with them as well as admire them. For the benefit of new members and a reminder for older ones, we would like to update you as to how to get to use the lapidary workshop, should you wish to do so.

As you know the club is totally run totally by volunteers. Tracy Hannath and Rinda du Toit have volunteered to oversee the general organisation of the lapidary workshop, and make themselves available (family commitments permitting) on at least two Saturdays of every month to open its doors. In order to ensure the safety of members and of the machines, it is necessary for either Rinda or Tracy to be present when members wish to work. Those using the workshop must also have taken the two-day Introductory Course to familiarise themselves with the methods of working with stones and the idiosyncrasies of different machines. After having completed this course, members may at any time ask to use the workshop – usually on either the last two Saturdays of the month, or possibly by arrangement on a week night.

However, Rinda or Tracy will not automatically be sitting at the club on a Saturday just in case someone decides at the last minute that they feel like going to the Club that day. As well as personal time constraints, their transport costs and availability must be taken into consideration. So, anyone wishing to use the workshop must communicate with BOTH Rinda and Tracy at least two days before the day that they wish to attend. This is only fair on those involved. Likewise, if you do put your name down for the workshop, and then for some reason cannot attend at the last minute, please do let them know as soon as possible, as you may be preventing someone else from attending who had to be turned away because all places were filled.

This said, they are both more than willing to share their knowledge and assist all members to learn how to work with stones. Do not be shy and wait for them to contact you. Please email or phone them with your requests.

Their contact details are: [tracyhannath2@gmail.com](mailto:tracyhannath2@gmail.com) [rindadt@gmail.com](mailto:rindadt@gmail.com)

Rinda's cell no. is 0721 011 088 Tracy is currently without a cell phone

### CONTACTS

**TRADERS:** Contact Marion on 084 6060 233 or [mcoleman05@gmail.com](mailto:mcoleman05@gmail.com)

**LIBRARY:** Available on Open and Meeting days. Ask Carol or Duncan to unlock for you.

**WORKSHOP:** [tracyhannath2@gmail.com](mailto:tracyhannath2@gmail.com) AND [rindadt@gmail.com](mailto:rindadt@gmail.com) Please copy both names on your e mail

### YOUR 2015 COMMITTEE

Chairman	Malcolm Jackson	021 551 8009	<a href="mailto:jacksonhome@telkomsa.net">jacksonhome@telkomsa.net</a>
Vice Chairman	Ken Coleman	021 558 6308	<a href="mailto:kcoleman@telkomsa.net">kcoleman@telkomsa.net</a>
Treasurer	Carol Coleman	021 558 6308	<a href="mailto:kcoleman@telkomsa.net">kcoleman@telkomsa.net</a>
Workshop liaison	Tracy Hannath	021 559 2564	<a href="mailto:tracyhannath2@gmail.com">tracyhannath2@gmail.com</a>
Secretary/Newsletter Editor	Jo Wicht	021 976 3808	<a href="mailto:joanna.wicht@kingsley.co.za">joanna.wicht@kingsley.co.za</a>

### LINKED SOCIETIES

USA and UK FACETING GUILDS – Contact Duncan (embo@telkomsa.net) to join the faceting group if you want to receive these newsletters. This is open to Cape Town Gem & Mineral Club members only.

THE CAPE NATURAL HISTORY CLUB - Visit [www.capenaturalhistoryclub.co.za](http://www.capenaturalhistoryclub.co.za) Contact Sheila 021 782 1620

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY - Contact Lia at [xtrahand@iafrica.com](mailto:xtrahand@iafrica.com)

FRIENDS OF SA MUSEUM - Contact Maxine Davies 021 481 3913 (Wednesdays & Fridays only) [samfriends@iziko.org.za](mailto:samfriends@iziko.org.za)

### ADVERTISEMENTS



**MINERAL MARKET** (Trading as African Art & Gemstones). Established more than 25 years ago. We have an extensive range of African and global mineral specimens and products. We also stock an excellent range of African Art/curios. **Phone Maria or Rolf (geologist) on 0824582432** for personal service or visit our shop in Simon's Town, 126B St George's Street. [www.mineralmarket.co.za](http://www.mineralmarket.co.za)



**Duncan Miller** is the official southern African regional representative for **ULTRA TEC FACETING MACHINES** ([www.ultratec-facet.com](http://www.ultratec-facet.com)) and agent for **GEARLOOSE LAPIDARY PRODUCTS** ([www.battlap.com](http://www.battlap.com)). So if you are considering buying an Ultra Tec or Gearloose's innovative polishing materials, contact Duncan for a quote including shipping, tax, clearance fees, etc. Contact: 084 757 9830 or [info@xenolithos.com](mailto:info@xenolithos.com) **Precision custom faceting also available.**



**MAGIC MINERALS** in Philadelphia. Here you will find rocks, crystals, minerals, gemstones, jewellery, décor, gifts and collectables. Open: Tuesday to Sunday, 9h00 - 17h00. Phone: Shop: 021 972 1139, **Maurice**: 082 6966 161, **Aletta**: 072 2437 496. [magicminerals@telkomsa.net](mailto:magicminerals@telkomsa.net)



**AFRICAN GEMS AND MINERALS**. Fine Mineral Specimens. Facet rough, Gemstones, Stunning Crystals. Fossils. Jewellery. Antiques. Lapidary equipment. We have it all!! In Cape Town you can find us at Shop 2, Protea Assurance Building on GREENMARKET SQUARE (next to the Standard Bank) Cape Town CBD and Unit 8 Prosperity Park c/r Computer and Omuramba roads in Montague Gardens - only 3km from the MinSoc Clubhouse! We have been around for 35 years. Stores in Johannesburg, Germiston, two in Cape Town, and Auckland, New Zealand. **Call our CPT branch manager on 073 531 2667 or 078 888 0416** for expert advice. [www.africangems.com](http://www.africangems.com)



**101 JEWELLRY EMPORIUM** - Suppliers of silver beads and findings. Also stocking a vast range of semi-precious gem stones and beads. For more details contact: **Vadim Petzer on +27 82 7714954** or [zeneffects@intekom.co.za](mailto:zeneffects@intekom.co.za)



**GEMCUTTING (FACETING)** undertaken by **GRADWELLS GEMS** In the Cape Town CBD. Expert faceting and quick turnaround times. Please contact **Neil Gradwell on cell 083 2616543** or email [neilgrad@iafrica.com](mailto:neilgrad@iafrica.com)



**HARRISON MINERALS**, we buy and sell mineral collections, lapidary machinery, rough rocks for cutting and polishing, as well as anything else "rock" related. Contact **Graham** on 082 561 9825 or [nick.nog678@gmail.com](mailto:nick.nog678@gmail.com)



**SUNBIRD CREATIONS** for beautiful semi-precious gemstone and silver jewellery. Please visit Helen Crowther's website at [www.sunbirdcreations.co.za](http://www.sunbirdcreations.co.za)

**Advertising is free to club members. Contact Jo to place an ad.**

### 2015 MEMBERSHIP FEES

**TOWN MEMBERS:** **Single:** R300 e mail ( R35 extra if newsletter is posted because you do not have e mail)

**Family:** (Principal/partner/with dependent children under 21) R390 e mail (R35 extra if newsletter is posted)

**COUNTRY MEMBERS:** (Living more than 50km as the crow flies from central Cape Town) **Single:** R225 e mail (R35 extra if newsletter is posted because you don't have e mail)

**Family:** (Principal/partner/with dependent children under 21) R275 e mail ( R35 extra if newsletter is posted)

**STUDENT/AFFILIATE:** (Age under 25, registered full-time at *bona fide* college or university, or dependent child of existing member) R150 e mail only

**ONCE OFF JOINING FEE FOR NEW MEMBERS:** (R20 per application, single or family)

**If you ask for the newsletter to be posted and you do have e-mail you must please pay an additional R75.**

Club bank a/c for payments is ABSA - Table View - account no. 405-975-5822 Payments must be made to THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA not CT Gem & Min. Please make a direct payment where possible, and identify your transaction with your name as the beneficiary reference.

The opinions expressed in the articles above do not necessarily reflect those of the Executive Committee. We welcome all contributions related to our hobby and everyone is welcome to send articles for inclusion in the Mineral Chatter.

This newsletter is the property of the Cape Town Gem & Mineral Club and no articles may be reproduced without the permission of the Editor.

Chairman: Malcolm Jackson (e-mail: [jacksonhome@telkomsa.net](mailto:jacksonhome@telkomsa.net)) Secretary: Jo Wicht (e-mail: [joanna.wicht@kingsley.co.za](mailto:joanna.wicht@kingsley.co.za))

The Mineralogical Society of Southern Africa, PO Box 28079, Goede Hoop Street, Bothasig, Cape Town, 7406, registered Non-Profit Organisation No. 61-850, trading as The Cape Town Gem & Mineral Club. Affiliated to the Federation of South African Gem & Mineral Societies.

Website: [www.ctminsoc.org.za](http://www.ctminsoc.org.za) Facebook: [Cape Town Gem & Mineral Club](https://www.facebook.com/CapeTownGemMineralClub)