



CAPE TOWN GEM & MINERAL CLUB

FOR THE STUDY OF ROCKS, MINERALS & CRYSTALS

mineral chatter

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2013

DIARY	DATE	TIME	EVENT
OCTOBER	26		Workshops open on request
NOVEMBER	2	10h00	Open Day – Minerals, gems and jewellery to view, buy or chat about
	9	14h00	Monthly Meeting – How old is the Earth, and how do we know? DM
	16		Workshops open on request
	23		Workshops open on request
	30		Workshops open on request
DECEMBER	7	10h00	Open Day – Minerals, gems and jewellery to view, buy or chat about
	14	14h00	End of year party/meeting
CLUB CLOSSES UNTIL LATE JANUARY			



What's inside this month?

- Committee Corner
- Events – past and to come
- My Collecting, My Collection
- Internet Article of the Month

< Antonio Grandi's Blesberg Phenakite as seen at the October Monthly Meeting



COMMITTEE CORNER

☞ **Welcome to Laura Yuan, Elijah Joseph, and Misty Read** who have just joined us.

☞ **It was lovely to see Maurice and Aletta Conradie on SABC 2 on 9th October, after the television programme, “Mooi Loop”, visited Philadelphia.**

☞ **Goodbye to another of our stalwart members who died on 10th October aged 80 years.** Freddy de Jager was well-known for his lapidary work and particularly the bead necklaces he made. They were unique in that he used southern African stones which he cut and worked himself, e.g. rhodonite, blue lace, garnets, unakite, sodalite, and diamond gravel pebbles. He also spent many hours teaching in the workshop, and was famed for his fund-raising bingo evenings. Several Club members attended his funeral to offer their sympathies to his family.

☞ **Very many thanks to Rob Smith** for the donation of some cerium oxide Ultralaps for the faceting room. We wish him all the very best for his forthcoming hospital stay, and hope he is soon completely back on his feet.

☞ **Jay Liebenberg made the successful bid for the Immelman silversmithing bench and tools** – congratulations. We hope you will have a lot of fun investigating what you have acquired and using the tools in the years to come.

☞ **The very, very, very, last faceting course of the year.** Duncan is willing to offer faceting classes on 23rd & 30th November, if there are enough takers. These can be for beginners or those wanting a refresher or more advanced lesson, say to cut an oval. Interested participants should let him know by Saturday 9th November. embo@telkomsa.net

☞ **“My Collecting, My Collection”.** Who will write for us next???

2014 – CHANGES ON THE HORIZON

☞ **Subscriptions.** It is the time of year when we must plan our budget for 2014. At its October meeting, EXCO agreed on a 5% increase in subscriptions for the coming year. These new fees are listed above those of 2013 already in this newsletter.

NB - If you have asked to receive the newsletter by post even though you get it by e-mail as well, we must now please ask you to pay the full cost of printing and postage which is currently R7 per newsletter, i.e. R77 per year. Members with no e-mail will receive them at a subsidised rate of R35 postage and printing for the year. We hope these increases will be sufficient to cover all potential costs as services and other day-to-day

prices continue to rise, but we shall always be most grateful for donations or help with any other fund raising activities to contribute to club funds.

☞ **WORKSHOP.** It is with much regret that we have learnt that Charlie Scharfetter will be leaving the Club in December in order to pursue new interests. He took over the Workshop “provisionally” in March 2009 after it had become dysfunctional, and since then, has revived its security, the upkeep and maintenance of the machinery, sought out and introduced the diamond lapping machine, and donated stones and equipment of his own for the benefit of members working there. At times he has been single-handedly available for two entire Saturdays every month to teach, encourage, and assist members gain a love for lapidary work. Even if only one member asked for access to the workshop, he was prepared to come in for the whole day.

We thank Charlie most sincerely for all he has done for the Club for so many years in the way of running the workshop and, earlier, the very active Field Trip Committee.

WHO WILL OFFER TO TAKE OVER THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RUNNING OF THE WORKSHOP NEXT YEAR IN THE SAME COMMITTED AND RELIABLE MANNER?

☞ **Likewise, it would be so nice to have a club member take over the responsibility for the clubhouse and grounds.** You would not have to be a member of the committee, but just oversee the garden services or help with repairs, get together an occasional cleaning or painting party, and generally keep the place looking spruce. There are only five members on your committee who all have their allotted portfolios, and they are all pensioners! Our club needs some new youthful energies. Any suggestions or offers?

☞ **Fund Raising Raffles for Gemboree 2014.** The first raffle of a large red Orange River quartz donated by Colin Owen was drawn on 5th October. It was won by number 8, which belonged to Britha Padkin. The next item up for raffle is an extremely good piece of bladed calcite covered in prehnite. This is an early specimen from the Bloedsuikersfontein site at Calvinia. It was donated by Rob Smith, and tickets are R10 each. Watch out for it and buy your ticket next Open Day.

☞ **Martine has lost** one of a pair of tiny brooches that she wore to the Club recently. It is in the shape of a bunch of grapes, made of colourless stones, with silver-coloured metal at the back. The size is smaller than a R1 coin. Please let us know if you have found it.

EXCO

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

Diary of Events

PAST - Monthly Meeting, 12th October: “Bring & Brag”. To link in with our current newsletter articles on “My Collecting, My Collection”, we asked people to bring what they consider their best, or their favourite specimens to the club. Ten members took the trouble to pack and present their treasures. In the form of “a guided tour”, they explained what they had on show to the other ten people who came that day. There was a wonderful cross section of items from pyritic ammonites and opal, to tektites and Tsumeb, and both local and international pieces – all special to each individual who brought them. Photos of a few of them are to be seen below:



A self-collected Tsumeb smithsonite, and a large, clear and smokey, quartz Goboboseb fenster



A Los Lamentos wulfenite



Kuruman banded ironstone
with dendrite in chalcedony
coated vug



A sphalerite gemstone, and rough,
from Spain

TO COME – Monthly Meeting, 9th November: How old is the Earth and how do we know? Duncan Miller will be the speaker again this month, and as you all know his talks are always most informative. This time he will be telling us about historical attempts to estimate the age of the Earth, the current scientific estimate of its age, and how it is determined. This talk presumes no prior knowledge of geological dating methods, although it will introduce you to a few.

My Collecting, My Collection

Johan de Jongh

My “addiction” started when I was still a youngster at the age of ten. Living in Cape Town at that stage I had a huge interest in fossils, dinosaurs, evolution of *Homo erectus* and company. I also had a few rocks which I would not classify as mineral specimens.

I bought my first rock book in 1978: “Pride of South Africa – Gemstones” , and the authors were Jennifer Stodel and Pat Sydie. It was a very expensive book and set me back a full R1,25. I think I bought it at the Mine Museum in Kimberley. The visit to the historic mine just fuelled my interest further. At the back of the book a “COLLECTOR’S CHECKLIST” was provided and my first entry and sadly also the last, was the following: “Date: 1978-03-26.....Gemstone: ysterklip.....Notes: R10 naste by”. The “ysterklip” being of course a piece of galena and, yes, spelling was and will never be one my strengths. I still have the book.

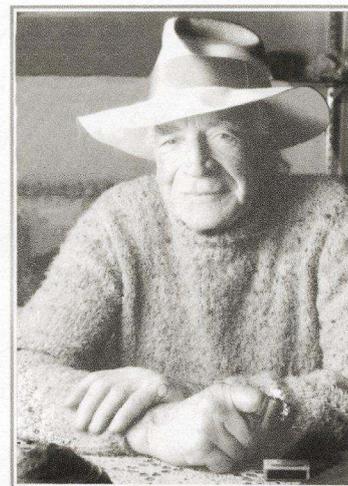
In 1979 my dad was transferred to the then Transvaal. Two of my cousins lived in Potchefstroom, one on a smallholding near Kayalami, and one in Mondeor, and they both collected minerals. The latter one’s dad was a geologist and the mine manager at a gold mine. So there I was, the youngest off all my cousins, with no hobby having a drawer full of Matchbox cars doesn’t count as a real hobby.

One weekend I was visiting my two cousins in Potchefstroom and after some hinting I was given a couple of small diopside, azurite and amethyst specimens, if I remember correctly. I can remember that they had lots and lots of amethyst. The rest as they say is history.

The next couple of years my interest was kept alive by receiving a specimen here and there from a cousin, uncles, aunts and so on.

We then moved to George in 1981, and in 1983, while visiting the beautiful town of Prince Albert, I met Sigri and Lydia Barella by chance. We were visiting the museum and the lady working in the museum saw that I had an interest in the small mineral display and the mock display of the nearby gold mine at Spreeuwfontein. She referred me no longer to the “Frenchman” (Sigri was an Italian) across the road who had a mineral collection. As some of you might know, the Barellas had an awesome mineral collection. We immediately got along well and I bought my first real specimen, a diopside specimen from Tsumeb, marked R45. After my father did some wheeling and dealing with Lydia, she was kind enough to sell it to me for R38. I still have that specimen today, and it is still the best diopside specimen I have.

After this I became good friends with the Barellas and visited them frequently. In 1986 when I was in Grade 12, my uncle bought a tiny little shop in Prince Albert - one of those where people were still served from behind the counter. So after completing school that year, I worked for my uncle in the shop for a couple of months. Needless to say, I spent all the money I earned with my vacation job at the Barellas something that I do not regret at all. At the time the Barellas had a small restaurant and my uncle, aunt and I had wonderful evenings in the Seven Arches, with Sigri and Lydia being excellent hosts. We were of course entertained by Sigri with the most amazing stories about his early childhood in Italy, The War, all the places he worked in Africa, and of course all the souvenirs he brought back. We were also entertained with magical tricks that would even have had the great Houdini scratch his head. **Sigri Barrella >**



Then in 1988, Sigri asked me if I wanted to join him on a mineral collecting trip to the Northern Cape and Namibia. Of course I said yes. So there we were, off to then South-West Africa – me, and Sigri (then already 78 years of age) at the helm of his light powder blue Peugeot 504 station wagon, trailing his caravan (which we left at the border because we were getting 5 km to the litre), sporting a Lugar .44

or something like that, with lots of Italian marching music cassettes and a car full of smoke from Sigri's pipe – we were on fire!

During this trip I met lots of people in the mineral business, such as Jopie Kotze, Sid Peters, and Tony the Baker in Tsumeb. Visiting the town of Tsumeb was the highlight for me. I still get upset when I think back about the azurites I could have bought back then, but then I was still a student with little money. Come to think about it, not much has changed, except for the student part. I remember Sigri bought a huge single azurite crystal. I did buy some smaller crystals but nothing compared to Sigri's azurite crystal. Sigri taught me a lot about minerals and mineral aesthetics during that trip. The mistake I made, typical of being a new collector, was to buy many specimens of average to poor quality instead of one or two very good ones.

There was a small curio shop across from the mine which also sold specimens at very reasonable prices. Scratching on the bottom shelf amongst the real cheapies I was lucky enough to find a red cerussite marked R2! That trip was a wonderful experience and is something that I will always treasure and be grateful for to Sigri.

Sigri also introduced me to the Mineral Club round about that time. The first meeting I attended was still at the old Athenaeum Trust in Newlands. Sadly Sigri, whom I idolised as collector, passed away a few years later.

Since then, I have met and made many new friends at the Club. If you ask me what minerals I would like to collect the answer to that is very simple: it is normally all the beautiful specimens in other people's collections, and specimens that are for sale and which I can't afford. On a bit of a more serious note, my interest lies with the minerals from Namibia, specifically Tsumeb and the minerals from the Kalahari Manganese Fields. I would probably rank azurites, smithsonites, cerussites, mimetites and rhodochrosites as my favourites. JdJ (all photos courtesy of JdJ)



Barites from Rosh Pinah



Dioptase from the Congo



Mimetite from Tsumeb



Azurites from Tsumeb



Best Internet Article of the Month



In keeping with this particular issue on favourite mineral specimens, try the link below. What determines a good Mineral Specimen? Do you buy for the “wow” factor to impress your friends, because the specimen is rare, or expensive “so it must be good”, for its locality, for lack of damage and perfect crystal points, for its re-sale value, for its size or its colour, or simply because it keeps calling you back to the sales table and insists you must take it home.

<http://blog.treasuremountainmining.com/2011/02/23/what-determines-a-mineral-specimen%E2%80%99s-value/>

CONTACTS

LAPIDARY WORKSHOP: Contact Charlie Scharfetter on charliescharfetter@gmail.com (or 083 700 6777 only if you do not have email) or Rinda, see below under Faceting Workshop

FACETING WORKSHOP: Contact Rinda du Toit on 072 101 1088 or rindadt@gmail.com

TRADERS: Contact Marion on 084 6060 233 or mcoleman05@gmail.com

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

YOUR 2013 COMMITTEE

Chairman	Malcolm Jackson	021 551 8009	jacksonhome@telkomsa.net
Vice Chairman	Ken Coleman	021 558 6308	kcoleman@telkomsa.net
Treasurer	Remo Ciolli	021 975 6059	remo@ciolibros.co.za
Assistant to Treasurer	Carol Coleman	021 558 6308	kcoleman@telkomsa.net
Secretary/Newsletter Editor	Jo Wicht	021 976 3808	joanna.wicht@kingsley.co.za

LINKED SOCIETIES

We exchange newsletters with the following societies. Should you be interested in reading any of them please contact Jo who will e-mail them onto you. If you wish to join any of the clubs, or attend their lectures and outings, please contact the person listed below:

WE ALSO RECEIVE E MAIL COPIES OF NEWSLETTERS FROM THE OTHER FOSAGAMS CLUBS. SHOULD YOU WISH TO HAVE THEM FORWARDED TO YOU, ASK JO TO PUT YOU ON HER SPECIAL MAILING LIST.

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 Contact Sheila 021 782 1620

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY - Contact Lia at xtrahand@iafrica.com

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

W.CAPE BRANCH OF THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SA - website: <https://sites.google.com/site/gssawcb/>

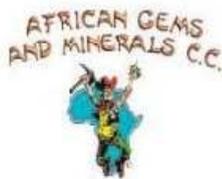
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For vast range of semi-precious beads and cut stones at excellent prices contact Vadim Petzer of the **101 Jewellery Emporium** at 082 7714954.

A new crystal shop opened in Bellville in January this year. Come and visit **Avalon**, situated at 6 Sarel Cilliers Street, Bellville. We stock a large variety of crystals and various other interesting items. We are open Mondays to Saturdays, 10am-5pm. Contact Rocky: 072 697 4076

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

2014 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 R77.

Club bank a/c for payments is ABSA - Table View - account no. 40-5975-5822 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.

2013 MEMBERSHIP FEES

TOWN MEMBERS: Single: R290 e mail (R30 extra if newsletter is posted)

Family: (Principal/partner/with dependent children under 21) R370 e mail (R30 extra if newsletter is posted)

COUNTRY MEMBERS: (Living more than 50km as the crow flies from central Cape Town) Single: R215 e mail (R30 extra if newsletter is posted)

Family: (Principal/partner/with dependent children under 21) R260 e mail (R30 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) R145 e mail only

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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.

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

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