



Federation of Southern African Gem and Mineralogical Societies Federasie van Suider-Afrikaanse Siersteen en Mineralogiese Verenigings



FOSAGAMS Newsletter 2 2016

www.fosagams.co.za

Passion is one great force that unleashes creativity, and in celebrating the existence of FOSAGAMS 50 years, we could all stand together and be part of something special.

It was an excellent opportunity to break away from the busy hustle and bustle of our daily lives. Being productive and having fun at the same time are all part of the benefits of doing something that you love.

FOSAGAMS achieved a great deal over the past 50 years. Examples are the Gemborees (where we will be celebrating our 50th Gemboree next year), tours to Namibia and Zimbabwe, establishing clubs, the Southern African Gems and Minerals magazine (formerly South African Lapidary Magazine), the FOSAGAMS website, newsletters, participation in shows and symposiums, being on Facebook, Twitter and Toeter.

Our most sincere appreciation to all the clubs for their efforts and participation in promoting our exciting hobby.

FOSAGAMS truly appreciate and value commitment, dedication, hard work and loyalty shown by everybody involved. We would like to show our gratitude to previous management teams of FOSAGAMS as well as our associated clubs.

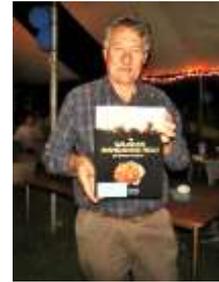
GEMBOREE 2016 - PRIESKA RE-VISITED HILDAGARDE HULLEY

Looking back, waaaay back, I remember the first Gemboree I attended in Kimberley, many years ago. As I walked around all the sales tables, I was surrounded by all these really weird people happily excitedly discussing new finds of this and deposits of that running out, characters whom I would later learn to know and love, and I thought "Wow!!! At last I feel normal!" And I was hooked for life! It has been quite a few years since I have managed to get to a Gemboree, Uis was the last one I attended and it felt great to be back!



And what a great one it was, hosted by FOSAGAMS to commemorate the 50th year since its inception. Linda Stone, President of FOSAGAMS & her team Dave de Villiers, Di de Villiers, Ockie Schoeman and

Janet Saad (co-opted on the committee: visual presentation) need to be commended for the professional way that they put together a very successful Gemboree hosting 161 Gemborites.



This is the third time that Prieska has had the dubious honor of hosting the Gemboree, the first one being the “Prieska Party” which most of those who attended, will surely remember was truly a party! As far as I am concerned this time round it was just as successful, one of the main reasons being that most of the Gemborites were either housed on site or very nearby. It is not always possible to do this but if you can get it right, it is great for creating atmosphere and cohesion in the group, and this Linda and her team truly succeeded in doing.

Another important factor is to have a place where people can gather, chat, compare loot, sip a glass of wine, have dinner, sip another glass of wine, shelter from the rain, browse around the sales tables, have a shot or two of snakebite, pick older and wiser rockhound brains, and forge friendships that can last for decades! Here again the organizers succeeded admirably. The fridges and freezer for campers are also a must, and much appreciated.



Hats off to the ladies who did the catering too! Being able to get all ones meals catered without having to sell the house, is a great advantage; after all, Gemborees are for collecting rocks, catching up with fellow rockhounds, and making new friends, not cooking! If you have an obliging spouse, or partner who has not been bitten by the bug and is prepared to do the honors, good luck to you! Having fed many large groups of people in my years as Home Economics Teacher, I am well aware that this is no mean task, especially when the food is cooked elsewhere and has to be transported to site (Soon le Roux Youth Camp)! As always on occasions such as this, there were a couple of small glitches, but on the whole the food was excellent and served with a smile! Well done Mari Kuhn, Ronelle Laubscher and Marna Smit (lunches)!



The success of any Gemboree relies very largely on the field trips and how much loot the often over enthusiastic Gemborites manage to accumulate over the weekend.

I have always had to beg rides on most field trips because of my usually low slung street vehicles, but this time I expropriated my husband's beloved BT50 4x4 3.2 one TON bakkie, and could for once in my life GIVE lifts (did I mention how much more loot one can get into a bakkie than a normal car?). And I had great passengers! Mark & Louis from African Gems & Minerals, and my old friend Althea, who carted me all over Namibia on the Uis Gemboree. Those of you who know Althea, will know that we laughed most of the time, never a dull moment!



I really enjoyed the off road driving except for the corrugations on the piece of road just outside Griekwastad, and being left behind to boot, but by the grins on some of the driver's faces at the jasper site I was not alone! We did our best to completely change the colour of the vehicle, and really enjoyed doing it! (Not too sure about the passengers in the back seat though! They were awfully quiet & I couldn't see their faces), but it must have been quite an experience for people not used to driving street cars, off road. Although if you are a serious rockhound you *will*, quite soon, get used to the off road thing! Like Alex and Ana Marcu (Natal Mineral and Gem Society) in their Mercedes, that went everywhere that BT went! (well almost everywhere)



The Saturday field trip did seem at times to be a bit of a race, but a few words from Malcolm Jackson had us all back on track and the next day things were a considerably more sedate.



On Friday Pieter Smit took us out to a new Mugglestone and banded ironstone site. I nearly killed myself rolling a giant boulder down the mountain side until some kind gentleman nearly killed himself *carrying* it the last 20m, and lifting it into the back of my bakkie. Thank you so very much for that! While waiting for my passengers to return from the Mugglestone site, I was delighted to find, right beside the road, what I believe to be a great example of a mid to late stone age hand scraping tool made from green chalcedony, not available at that site. I showed it to Ludi who confirmed my suspicions. I also saw a piece of what I believe to be Nontronite, (the only other piece I have ever seen is in my own collection) collected by a

novice, Alida Schwan (Pretoria Gem and Mineral Club), who was intrigued by the piece of lime green “tigereye”. Very well done! I would like to go back and look for some more of that myself!

I must say a very big thank you to Pieter for the two outings on Saturday as well. The tiger eye was probably the best quality that has been made available, free, to rockhounds for many years. I personally have only bought stuff like this from some older members over the years, and I can only hope that some of what was “mined” makes its way to other club members who are not in a position to come to the Gemborees, and our younger members.

Thank you Pieter for the pit you excavated for us, and the tools you left for us to use, although I am sure that if you hadn’t left the tools, similar would have emerged from various car boots as soon as the pit was discovered! Rockhounds are very resourceful and surprisingly well equipped!

The Jasper site was also great, and if you didn’t manage to fill your already loaded boot, you could buy a boulder or two of top grade ore at a very reasonable rate from the farmer.



Sunday saw us heading off to Angelier’s Pan quarries, lead by our stalwart, Ludi von Bezing, to look for garnets and quartz xls. While everyone was happily scratching around down below in the hole, some of us encountered a serious problem on top. There are some bodily functions that are really not for general public view. It didn’t seem to matter how far one wandered off, there was always someone who could see you! The bushes are barely knee high at best, and 66yr old bones are very reluctant to stoop lower. Getting down is not the problem – it’s getting up again!!

Then one has the rockhound who wisely reasons that if an old hand like me is heading off somewhere they must have inside information, and hurry over to see what treasure is being sought! We are definitely going to have pool our infinitely resourceful minds to solve this problem next time!

Marilize van Zyl, a junior member of the Pietermaritzburg Gem and Mineral Club picked up a quartz crystal weighing 8,7kg measuring 25x14x20cm!



For those who collect mineral crystals there was a lot on display for sale and the prices were really very reasonable.



Once again our old friend Rob Smith of African Gems and Minerals supported the Gemboree by sending Mark and Louis with a selection of items for sale and donations to the auctions. Danie Gouws from the Cape Town Gem and Mineral Club exhibited some very interesting knives using semiprecious stones as handles. It was also good to see Ashley & Gail Diack who also brought a selection of items for sale. Henri Schramm had a wonderful display of minerals and there were some real bargains from Ludi von Bezing. Paul Botha had a great selection of minerals including trays of Aegerine with Quartz and Feldspar specimens from Malawi, amongst others. By the way Paul, great idea with the tent *inside* the hall!



The Mayor of Prieska, mr Piet Papier, made a comment which really resounded with me: "It is not just the rocks, but the people as well" How true that is!

It was so good to see some old friends and some of my rock hounding heroes like Ludi von Bezing, and at the same time the sadness of the missing faces, the incomparable Horst Windisch, the indomitable Mary Neethling, the unstoppable Pat Murfin and many others who are no longer with us, or can no longer attend these gatherings. It is also good to know that I now have some new kindred spirits who have become friends. People who have all become an integral part of the memories which hide in the smile that creeps onto ones face at the very mention of the word "Gemboree".



We should never underestimate the value of the Gemboree. It is here and on field trips that the addiction is sealed and where the deep love and fascination for the hobby is forged. The fascination that infects others and ensures that the treasures of the earth that we have uncovered will have protectors when we are no longer here to protect them.



So, hats off to Linda and her team and till the next one... hope to see you there!

Acknowledgement to the following photographers: Di de Villiers, Hildagarde Hulley, Margaret Jackson, Janet Saad, Linda Stone and Marietjie van Zyl.

More information on this Gemboree and other Gemborees can be obtained by paging to www.fosagams.co.za / Information /gemborees. Pictures are available on www.fosagams.co.za / galery

Winners of the following competitions are:

- ☺ Guessing the correct weight of the crystal: Len Freeman

- ☺ Guessing the correct amount of tumbled stones in the jar: Dave de Villiers

- ☺ Winner of 'The Kalahari Manganese Fields' written by Bruce Cairncross and Nicolas Beukes: Dirk Wassenaar

Finally, let's go along and praise every idea, be creative, participate and most of all – have fun!

Linda Stone

President FOSAGAMS