



# The S A Gem and Mineral Club

Associated Member of **FOSAGAMS**  
13 Bathurst Crescent, Taybank, PE South Africa, 6025

Chairman: Reinhardt van Vuuren: Cell: 0742408053 [sagemclubpe@gmail.com](mailto:sagemclubpe@gmail.com)

Secretary: Angie van Vuuren: Cell: 0748874557 [sagemclubpe@gmail.com](mailto:sagemclubpe@gmail.com)

Phone calls preferably after 17:00 weekdays

Est. 1954

**LAST CLUB MEETING** : Thursday 26th June 2014 at the Conference Room, St Saviour's Church Hall, Cnr Villiers Road and 1st Avenue Walmer at 7:30pm. We had a total of 14 members and 1 visitor. We had a lovely informative talk from Nicolette Kerspays about Pearls.

She explained about how pearls are formed, what they are made of and also explained about cultured pearls and pearl imitations.



There were lovely examples of both Pearls and mother of pearl items on display, we even had a life sized Pearl in the form of Derek's wife Pearl she was however not on the display table :-).



After the talk we had a short question

session before the night commenced with lovely cake and tea/coffee and of course lots of interesting conversation.

**NEXT MEETING** : 31st July 2014, at the Conference Room, St Saviour's Church Hall, Cnr Villiers Road and 1st Avenue, Walmer, at 7.30pm. We will be having one of our new members Mr Johan van Biljon giving us a talk and demonstration on Micro Mounts as an introduction to the Big world of Tiny Micro Mounts. This is going to be a meeting you don't want to miss, it is a facet of your hobby that most of us have not had much or any exposure to and should prove to be very interesting.

The Birthstone for July is Ruby members are asked to bring examples of these as well as any red stones examples are Garnet, Jasper, Rhodochrosite ect.

**CLUB OUTING** : We are currently busy planning a club outing to the Maidlands Galina Silver mines more about that at a later stage.

**MISSING BOOK** : I spoke to one of our members Ziggy Klotz in the week, and he explained to me that he had borrowed a beloved book on faceting to someone perhaps a club member and that he can no longer remember to whom he borrowed it to. He explained that it is a beginners faceting book and that it has often proven invaluable to him in the past, if anyone recalls borrowing it from him I'm sure he will be much delighted to be reunited with it.

**SA GEM CUTTING CHALLENGE** : Yip it's that time of the year again when we hone in our cabochon cutting skills for the Annual Gem Cutting Challenge. I would like to encourage all our members to give it a bash you never know. Please don't be fooled in thinking this is a competition for only the professionals, the competition is open to all including you. Entries

## About Ruby

Ruby is one of the highest valued coloured gemstones, in fact, large rubies can fetch higher prices than equivalently sized diamonds. Ruby has been prized for centuries because of its excellent Mohs scale hardness of 9, along with its treasured rich red hue and vitreous lustre. Ruby is a variety of corundum that gets its red colour from chromium. Corundum that occurs in other colours is classified as sapphire. In its pure form, corundum is colourless. The word "corundum" comes from the Tamil "kurundam", meaning "ruby sapphire". In the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit, ruby is called "ratnaraj", which translates as "king of precious stones". Ancient Sanskrit texts, the Bible and other historical writings refer to ruby as a precious gem, indicating the rich history and abiding appreciation of ruby gemstones. Ancient Hindus believed that by making an offering of a ruby to Krishna, rebirth as an emperor was assured. Burmese warriors believed that rubies would make them invincible, and even inserted rubies under their skin for this purpose.

According to the story of Marco Polo, Kublai Khan offered the King of Ceylon a city in exchange for a large ruby. The English name "ruby" comes from the Latin word "ruber", meaning red. The most desirable ruby colour is a rich deep red with a hint of blue that is known as "pigeon's blood". In Thailand, ruby is known as "tabtim", which means "pomegranate" in Thai. This is because these shining red gems look like the edible seed coats found inside a ripe pomegranate.

The colour of ruby is its most important quality factor. The most sought after colour is a strong pure red to red with a hint of blue. This vibrant red hue is known as "pigeon's blood". When the colour of ruby is too light, it is classified as pink sapphire, but the line between pinkish-red ruby and pink sapphire varies by region. Some mining areas consider pink ruby to be ruby. The strong red fluorescence of ruby means that ruby has a glowing colour.

Ruby is often mixed-cut, with brilliant-cut crowns and step-cut pavilions. The most common shapes are ovals and cushions. Other cuts are also available, such as round, triangular, emerald-cut, pear and marquise cuts. However, these shapes are difficult to find in larger sizes, since they do not preserve the rough weight as well as ovals and cushions. Rubies of over one carat are rare, so price increases greatly with size. Ruby that displays asterism (the star effect) is typically cut en cabochon, to showcase the optical phenomenon. Rubies with rutile inclusions (such as star rubies) exhibit a silky lustre, whereas transparent rubies mostly exhibit a vitreous lustre. Lapidarists usually orient rough ruby so as to minimize orangey-red pleochroism, as long as this does not cause too much of a loss of carat weight.

One of the most famous gemstones in the world, the Black Prince's Ruby is one of the oldest of the Crown Jewels of England. Its history dates back to the middle of the 14th century and it has belonged to the British Crown since 1367 when it was given to its namesake, the Black Prince, Edward of Woodstock.

The stone is currently set above the 317.40 carat Cullinan II diamond on the front of England's Imperial State Crown but it has known other homes. Henry V wore it in a gem-encrusted helmet during the Battle of Agincourt and Richard III wore it at the Battle of Bosworth. James I had the stone set into the state crown near the turn of the century. When the monarchy was overthrown, Oliver Cromwell sold the Black Prince's Ruby along with most of the crown

jewels. It was purchased by a British jeweler and then sold back to the crown after the monarchy was restored in 1660. The stone is about the size of a chicken's egg and weighs about 170 carats. But the most intriguing thing about the stone is that the Black Prince's Ruby isn't a ruby at all - a discovery made in fairly recent times. The stone is actually a large, semi-polished octahedral spinel - one of the largest gem-quality spinels in existence - but not a ruby. Until fairly modern times, all red stones were referred to as rubies. The rarer ruby is slightly harder and denser than the more common spinel. So, what is the value of the Black Prince's Ruby? Given its history, priceless. Its place in the most famous gem collections in the world makes the Black Prince's Ruby the world's most famous impostor.

