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The S A Gem and Mineral Club

Associated Member of **FOSAGAMS**
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NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2015

LAST CLUB MEETING : Thursday 28th May 2015 at the Conference Room, St Saviour's Church Hall, Cnr Villiers Road and 1st Avenue, Walmer, at 7.30pm. There was a total of 12 members and 3 visitors present. We watched a slide show of some of the most beautiful minerals from South Africa and surrounding countries. It was most encouraging to see how many members participated in the Mosaic project. Well done guys and girls, they were all unique and beautiful.

The members and visitors then spent some time looking at some items on display and enjoyed Fiona's wonderful tea, coffee and cake.

FAREWELL LUNCH FOR THE TOWERS :

On Sunday the 7th June 2015 the CLUB took Gill and Collin Towers for lunch at the Bluewaters Cafe' on the beachfront. Our dearest friends you will always be remembered for your friendship and dedication to the Club as a wonderful married couple that compliment each other in everything you do.

(The photograph says it all) We all love you dearly and will miss you both.



CLUB PROJECT : Looking forward to seeing the hand made pairs of Gem Stone Earrings due on 30th July 2015 at our Club meeting.

CLUB WORKSHOP : Members are encouraged to come and join us for Workshop on Saturdays 2—5pm. Please contact Angie or Reinhardt first.

GEELONG : 30th September 2015. We feel that we need to take this opportunity as a Club. Collin Towers, Reinhardt and Angie are entering so far. Collin has already handed his Competition stone in. We might have a chance for the trophy after all :-)

SOUTH AFRICAN GEM CUTTING CHALLENGE : 24 November 2015. This means we need to get cracking on our Competitions stones.

Please don't hesitate to contact Reinhardt if you are considering in entering in the above mentioned Competitions and please make use of the Club Workshops on Saturdays.

NEXT MEETING : 25th June 2015, at Angie and Reinhardt's home, 34 Heath Street Sydenham, at 7.30pm. The birthstone for June is pearl, moonstone and alexanderite. Members are encourage to bring any of these or any other interesting items for the display table. See you all soon :)

Alexandrite:

Alexandrite is one of the rarest of all coloured gemstones available today. More specifically, it is an extremely rare colour change variety of chrysoberyl (a cyclosilicate). Despite its name, chrysoberyl, which is an aluminate of beryllium, does not actually belong to the beryl mineral group, but rather, it is classified as its own independent mineral group.

The history of alexandrite is quite controversial, dating back to the times of Imperial Russia. It is said that the stone was named after the Russian tsar, Alexander II (1818 - 1881), but was discovered by a French mineralist called Nils Gustaf Nordenskiöld (1792 - 1866). When Nordenskiöld first discovered alexandrite in 1834, it was initially thought to be an emerald because it was discovered in emerald mines located in Russia's Ural region, near the Tokovaya River.

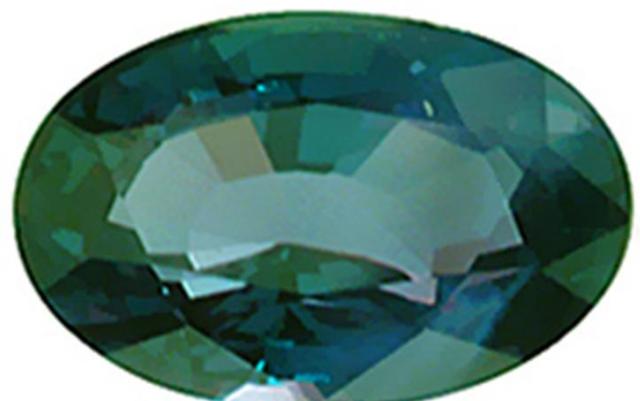
The specimen was later identified as a chromium bearing, color change variety of chrysoberyl. Legends claim that the discovery of alexandrite was made on the very day the future tsar of Russia became of age. Inevitably, the red and green color change stone was to be declared the official gemstone of Imperial Russia's Tsardom.

The colour change phenomenon seen in alexandrite is referred to as the 'alexandrite effect'. The change in colour can be observed under certain lighting conditions, typically under daylight and incandescent lighting. Alexandrite is also a strongly pleochroic gem. It can display emerald green, red, orange and yellow colours depending on which angle the stone is viewed from. The pleochroic properties of alexandrite are completely independent from its unique color change ability. Typically, alexandrite exhibits an emerald-green colour in daylight, and raspberry-red under incandescent lighting. Alexandrite can also occur with yellowish and pink colours, and extremely rare specimens can exhibit chatoyancy (cat's eye) effects when cut en cabochon. The colour change 'alexandrite effect' is a result of the strong absorption of light in the yellow and blue portions of the colour spectrum.

Alexandrite's green hue is a result of chromium impurities. Chromium is the same colouring element found in emerald, the green variety of precious beryl. Sri Lanka (Ceylon) alexandrite is known to exhibit a khaki to brown colour change. Alexandrite with Zimbabwe origin usually has very little colour change and they are typically darker in colour with tints of purple. Tanzanian specimens tend to occur with lighter tones and possess moderate to good colour change. Brazilian alexandrite is known to be highly saturated and exhibits a blue to purplish colour change. The most desirable alexandrites are those with pure hues and a strong colour change ability.



Incandescent Light



Daylight