



The SA Gem and Mineral Club

Associated Member of F.O.S.A.G.A.M.S.

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LAST MEETING : 27th September 2012, at the Guineafowl Room at the Training Centre, St George's Hospital, Park Drive. There were 11 members present and 1 visitor, our stalwart Neil Bush.



Charming soapstone frog from Zimbabwe

Members showed much interest in the various items being set out on the display table before the meeting, amongst them a large "crystal ball" of selenite, also known as Satin Spar (S for September) belonging to Noldy Lennox, the brilliant chatoyance of which had apparently been damaged by water, the mineral being somewhat porous. There were some very nice examples of Lapis Lazuli, the stone of the month, as well as some delightful soapstone carvings. Another one of the



Selenite ball

NMMU's videos was shown, this time on "Plate Dynamics". Unfortunately there

was another one of those "technical" hitches as last time we had a film, this time the cables worked fine but the Secretary had forgotten to bring the remotes. Terrence Tee worked his magic again! The video was interesting and had some stunning images of volcanic eruptions amongst others. It was also interesting to hear again mention of the "mantle plume" which Prof Shone had touched on in his talk last month, a phenomenon which causes the land masses to rise, particularly in the case of Africa. After the film, there



'S' is for Shell!

was the usual enjoyable chit-chat and refreshments.



Terrence Tee, Eline Capell, Eva Blazey & Colin Towers

NEXT CLUB MEETING will be held on the 25th October 2012, at 7.30pm, at the Training Centre, at the back of St George's Hospital. Callum Anderson, a lecturer in the Geology Department of the NMMU, has kindly agreed to come to talk to us again, this time on the interesting topic of the geology and emplacement of the Bushveld complex and the platinum mineralization. The talk should take around 30-45 minutes. Stones of the month are Opal and Tourmaline; members also to bring anything beginning with "O" – eg Olivine, Oxblood (Coral), Onyx, Obsidian etc

NOVEMBER MEETING — LAST FOR THE YEAR : After the October meeting, there is one left for the year namely on November 29th. The November meeting is traditionally our "Christmas" meeting when we get together with snacks and drinks, and each person brings along a small gift to the value of roughly R30. A cabochon made in the club's own workshop would be a fitting gift. A draw will take place to pick the order in which each person can then choose which one of the mysterious parcels he/she would like to take. This is usually a light-hearted and informal occasion when we can spend more time chatting and socialising.



NOËL PEARSE : Most members will already know that our beloved Noël Pearse passed away on Sunday the 23rd September, after a long and gradual deterioration in health. Noël was the secretary of our Club for 25 years, only relinquishing the post in 2010. During that time Noël also produced the club's monthly newsletter on her battered old typewriter until in 2009 when the late Bryan Stone took over the production side by retyping it into his computer and sending it out. Gill Towers took over as secretary and newsletter editor in January 2010. Noël was made an Honorary Life Member in May 2010 in recognition of her long and devoted service to our Club.....see Page 2.

NOËL PEARSE : continued . . .

Rosemary Noël Pearse was born in Addo on the 24th December 1928, and was an only child. After school she went to the Johannesburg General Hospital where she trained as a nurse, specialising in midwifery. On her return to the Eastern Cape, Noël became a district midwife, travelling with another nurse into the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth to deliver babies at all hours of day and night. They would take enough money for a telephone call in event of an emergency, but were never seriously threatened — except perhaps by the odd drunk. Thereafter Noël worked for many years at the Sandford Maternity Home, where, to quote Eline Capell, “all my generation’s children were born”. Noël specialised in difficult births and was senior Sister in charge of the “complicated deliveries” section, where she ruled with a rod of iron and an exceptionally kind heart. Eline remembers Noël well as she also worked at the Provincial Hospital at the time, as a pharmacist.



Noel with Mike Karp, Sheila Bentley and Kate McIntosh, Reunion Tea at Club Workshop September 1990

Noël’s organised and sharp mind took her into many fields of interest - photography (she won many prizes especially for her pictures of sunsets and sunrises which appeared on calendars for several years), - stamp-collecting, through which she corresponded with many people all over the world who remember her with great affection - fossil-hunting and collecting, where she exchanged correspondence and collectibles with like-minded people in the USA and elsewhere — and of course gemstones which she made in the club’s and her own workshop, and collected. She was well-known at the Geology Department of the local University and had pen-pals all over the world many of whom she was able to meet on her numerous travels overseas. Prof Izak Rust, formerly of NMMU wrote *“I have had a long, long association with Noël, not only through our mutual interest in gems, stones and crystals, but for a long time she found for me through her international network postage stamps with the theme “Kites” which was at one time one of my hobbies. It was absolutely amazing how she managed to ferret out obscure (for me) stamps with pictures of kites on them. In fact, I think just about my entire collection of kite stamps came about through her efforts, so there is a nice thing to remember her by.”* And this was in the days before Google and other such inventions which make communication so much easier!

Ashley Diack of Natal wrote: *“Unfortunately I never met Noël; however, we did quite a lot of stamp swapping at one stage as we both collected stamps depicting Minerals and Gemstones. I got the impression that she was quite a personality!”*

Noël never married but for many years she and Sister-Tutor at Sandford, Pinny Fitchet, were able to share the benefits of pooling their resources by buying a home together. Some say Noel simply would not have had time for marriage and a family, she was just too busy! Pinny sadly passed away in 2000.



Noël Pearse and Norman Brittle, our two Hon Life Members, both now sadly missed

Noël’s courage in the face of adversity is an example to us all. She had beaten 4 bouts of cancer in her last few years. She just got on and did as much as she could - often to the consternation of her friends. A feisty and principled lady, Noël was a dependable and no-nonsense girl who will be remembered with respect and a wry smile for her forthright efficiency. Aside from her many friends all over the world, Noël will be missed by her cousins

Rod Pringle and Peter Pearse, and her god-daughter Roz Payne, to whom we send our sincere condolences. A memorial tea will be held at the Kruger Gardens Hall some time in mid-November, and members will be advised of details in due course.