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The S A Gem and Mineral Club

Associated Member of **FOSAGAMS**
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SEPTEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

LAST CLUB MEETING : Thursday 9th September 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 13 members. Derek Scotney shared some photographs that he and his wife, Pearl took on their holiday. We then watched part 1 of Into The Lost Crystal Caves of Mexico. Members were amazed to see how hot it was in the Crystal Caves when it looks so very cold.



The night commenced with lovely cake and tea/coffee and of course lots of interesting conversation.

HOBBY FAIR : Was held at Summerstrand Villiage Shopping Centre on 6th September 2014. We had a table set up representing our Club and a step by step process of how to cut a cabochon made by Gill & Colin Towers together with a display box of the late Bert Harrison Prize winning stones with a few other pieces on display. Hoping to get a few new members. Michelle Be-zuidenhoudt from AfriGems was so kind to share a table with us. She had many beautiful items for sale. Thank you to those members who came to support us, was good to see you all.



WORKSHOP : We have officially moved the Workshop to 34 Heath Street, Sydenham. The residence of Reinhardt and Angie van Vuuren. Thank you to Colin, Reinhardt and fellow helpers for a successful move. We should be up and running within the next two weeks. Which brings me to my next subject.....

SA GEM CUTTING CHALLENGE : We encourage all our members to give it a bash. Our Club members have done very well in the past. The competition is open to all. Entries need to be in by the 22nd of November 2014.

NEXT MEETING : 25th September 2014, at the Conference Room, St Saviour's Church Hall, Cnr Villiers Road and 1st Avenue, Walmer, at 7.30pm. We will be watching the last part of The Lost Crystal Caves of Mexico.

The Birthstone for September is Sapphire and Moonstone, members are asked to bring examples of these as well as any other interesting items for display.

Moonstone is the most well-known gemstone variety of orthoclase feldspar, a potassium aluminum silicate. It is a transparent to opaque oligoclase, a variety of plagioclase albite and sheet mica. Moonstone is known to exhibit a distinct sheen under certain lighting conditions, and it is the sheen which renders moonstone one of the most remarkable gemstones available today. In fact, its name is owed to the almost magical, bluish white shimmer it exhibits, which closely resembles that of the moon. Gemologists refer to the shimmering phenomena as 'adularescence'.

The optical effect of adularescence is a result of moonstone's unique structural pattern. Tiny inclusions of albite, a sodium aluminum silicate are intermixed with host rock layers of orthoclase, a potassium aluminum silicate. The alternating layers of different feldspars form a lamellar (scaly) structure which causes the interference of light as it enters the stone. Thin layers of alternating silicates tend to refract more attractive and colourful sheens, whereas thick layers of silicates produce less attractive, white to colourless sheens. As light enters the stone, it is refracted and scattered, producing an extremely unique and attractive play of both color and light. With moonstone, the aura of light actually appears to glow from deep within the surface of the stone.



World-famous Moonstone

Moonstone was extremely popular in the times of "Art Nouveau", which took place more than 100 years ago. It was used to decorate a striking amount of pieces of jewelry created by the famous French Master-Goldsmith, René Lalique, as well as many of his contemporaries. His rare pieces are typically only found in museums or in well-guarded private collections.



Moonstone can be identified by the presence of adularescence. Other gems with a similar appearance do not have the phenomenal presence of adularescence which makes identification of moonstone fairly easy.

Moonstone is a potassium aluminum silicate and can be easily identified by composition. Many similar materials, such as labradorite, are actually plagioclase feldspar, whereas moonstone is by composition a potassium feldspar. Testing for hardness is often one of the easiest methods for distinguishing moonstone from other materials. Other similar gems, such as opal, chalcedony or ammolite, are significantly harder or softer than moonstone. Top quality moonstone can show an incredible "three-dimensional" depth of colour, which no other gemstone can replicate, making moonstone almost unmistakable.

