



Witwatersrand Gem and Mineral Club

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Wits Rock Digest

Newsletter of June 2013

In honour of our theme, Amethyst, we have a purple haze to warm up these spiteful winter temperatures . . .



Find us on Facebook :

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Witwatersrand-Gem-and-Mineral-Club/346437298736246>

Meetings



Visitors and new members are welcome at all club meetings.



A very special note of thanks and congratulations to **Rob Smith** of **African Gems**, on an outstanding Open Day. ... or perhaps we should say, Rob, the Gem Smith of Africa 😊. Rob, you are an institution!!! Even the weather came out in her finery for the occasion! Rocks were sold, alliances were formed, running shoes were put to good use and a great day was had by all at Southern Africa's little Tucson.



To those who haven't visited for a while, or who wish to join us for the first time, there is ample **FREE** parking available to the right of the gate, at the bottom of the hill.



Access to our club is wheelchair friendly, with ramps and lifts. So if you are a rockhound, collector or dealer, there's no excuse not to be where it's happening!!! **Rock n Roll time.**

THEMES... THEMES... THEMES...

The themes for this month's mineral meeting on the **Wednesday 12th June at 7pm** are:

✂ **Amethyst** and **Beryl** – worldwide localities for both

The name **Amethyst** originates From Greek "a-methystos", meaning not drunk.

This is rather coincidental as rough amethyst chips are often used to draw the sulphides from red wine. The pleasant result is no hang over.

Interestingly though, spirit quartz is named after the colour of **methyated spirits**, and we all know what the wayward gypsy folk of the hinterland do with **meths** ...

A purple variety of quartz. The colour is caused by iron impurities in the 10s to 100s parts per million. If heated, amethyst turns yellow-orange, yellow-brown, or dark brownish, and thus resembles the quartz variety **citrine**.

Photograph & specimen courtesy of Rom Koppert

I have chosen snowboarding as the wintry theme for my interpretation of the mineral formations ☺



The Beryl Group of Minerals, from the Greek "beryllos" which referred to a number of blue-green stones in antiquity.

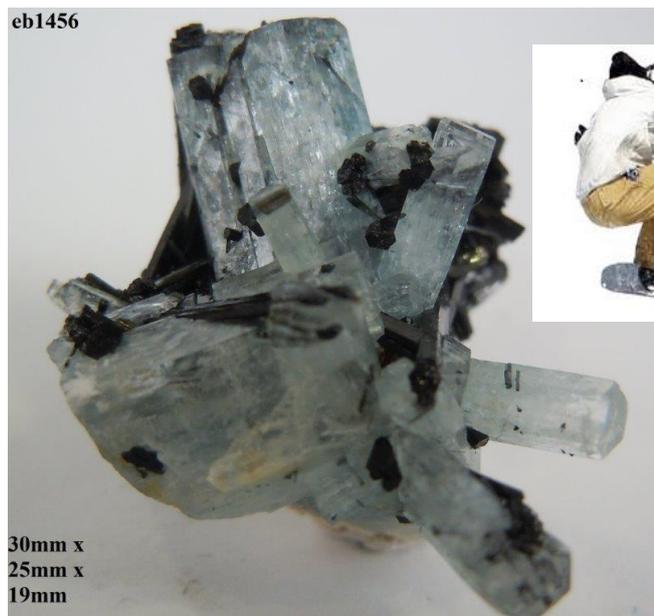
Crystal System: Hexagonal
Lustre: Vitreous, Sub-Vitreous, Waxy, Greasy

Colour: Green, blue, yellow, ...
Hardness: 7½ - 8 yet brittle

Beryl Group Members

Bazzite, Beryl, Pezzottaite, Stoppaniite ...

Beryl is a most alluring and popular mineral. It occurs in a diversity of colours, and has several important gemstone varieties. The green variety, Emerald, is one of the most precious gems. Only green Beryl with a deep green or emerald-green colour is called Emerald; light green Beryl is considered either **Heliodor** or simply "Green Beryl"). **Aquamarine**, another important gemstone, is the greenish-blue to blue variety of Beryl. Green Beryl from certain localities can be heat treated to produce **sky-blue Aquamarine**. Other popular gem varieties of Beryl are the **pink Morganite**, and the **yellow Heliodor** and **Golden Beryl**.



Photograph & specimen courtesy of Rom Koppert

A deep **red** variety of Beryl, known as **Red Beryl** (or **Bixbite**) is extremely rare, and only comes from

two localities in Utah. When in good specimens, Red Beryl commands an outstanding premium and is very difficult to obtain. **Pure Beryl is colourless (Goshenite)**. However, a wide range of impurities cause the diverse amount of colours and many varieties. The **green** colour in Emerald is usually caused by traces of the element chromium, and the blue colour of Aquamarine usually by iron. Beryl is naturally transparent, however inclusions and impurities may make it opaque. All gemmy transparent varieties are highly valued, but the other forms of Beryl in opaque crystals are much more common. Some of the largest natural crystals known are of Beryl, with enormous crystals having been found in several pegmatite occurrences. Beryl, in turn forms part of the groups: **Silicates** and **Cyclosilicates** ...

TALKS...TALES...PRESENTATIONS...



June's topic on **Wednesday 12th** is OPALS. Renowned Gemmological Consultant, **Arthur Thomas**, has very kindly agreed to share a 40 minute adventure with us.

Arthur has been in the jewellery industry for over half a century. His hobby, passion and business has taken him to far flung locations which include the United Kingdom, Northern Rhodesia, Los Angeles and New York. In 1974, he was appointed Director of Education to the Jewellery Council of South Africa, and in 1982 chaired the working group that established the Gemmological Association of Southern Africa. Arthur has published books and provides training for gemmologists.

Thank you Arthur. It is guaranteed to be a jewel of an evening for all who attend!



I am delighted to announce that we have speakers and presentations linked up for the remainder of the year, so let's roll out the red carpet on the last Wednesday of every month at 7pm ...

Here's only a taste, more information will follow in due course.

July

Prof Nic Beukes

Professor of Geology at UJ and Co-author with our Prof Bruce Cairncross, have produced a magnificent book: The Kalahari Manganese Fields. If you have already purchased a copy, do take this opportunity to get yours autographed. Nic specializes in sedimentology and stratigraphy, with emphasis on understanding the origin of iron.

August

Dr Sabine Verryn

X-ray diffraction – used for mineral identification – and there's so much more to this topic than just light.

September

Peter Fels

Swedish minerals and an opportunity to view magnificent and sought after Swedish calcite, among others. Peter will be visiting our country briefly and has kindly agreed to squeeze us into his exciting itinerary

October

Kathleen Kuman PhD - Associate Professor

Oldowan to Early Acheulean to Middle Stone Age,
Her work focuses on rock properties and shapes as well as their influences on tool types. School of Geography Archaeology and Environmental Studies & Institute for Human Evolution. University of the Witwatersrand / Origins Centre

November

Celebration Time

It is customary for Club Members to enjoy an informal, interactive social evening at the usual venue.

RAFFLE AND AUCTION DONATIONS

Thank you to members who have donated worthy beautiful specimens to the club for auctions and raffles. These funds contribute toward our year end function. Donations need not be limited to mineral specimens!!! As long as the subject matter is vaguely related to rocks, crystals and klippies ...  Raffles take place at month-end meetings ie the last Wednesday of every month. Tickets are on sale at meetings and you will be alerted to this. If you sell minerals at the club, please donate a nice rock to the raffle. Contact Keith Bailey in this regard at club meetings.

MEMBERSHIP

Yes yes, we'd love to have you on board, the more the merrier . . . for those wishing to join the club, let Bruce Cairncross have the following:

- 2 passport sized photographs
- R25.00 in cash, and to.
- a certified copy of your ID Document or passport

He will arrange an access card for you.

The fees are payable to the Treasurer, Jono Hotz.

The **WGMC Banking Details** are as follows:

Standard Bank	Cheque account
Account number:	200551744
Branch code:	630522

OTHER EVENTS & OUTINGS

The Wits and Pretoria clubs have a reciprocal arrangement to participate in the outings arranged by each club. Please refer to the PGMC Newsletter which is available to members in our DROP BOX. They can also be found on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/groups/57175197494

FRIENDS & ACQUAINTANCES

The Cape Town Gem & Mineral Club exchanges newsletters with a number of societies. Should you be interested in reading up on any of them, please contact Jo who will email them on to you. If you wish to join any of the clubs, or attend their lectures and outings, their contact details are as follows, or view the Cape (or any other Club's) Newsletter in our Dropbox:
Astronomical Society - Contact Lia at xtrahand@iafrica.com
Friends of SA Museum - samfriends@iziko.org.za
 Maxine Davies 021 481 3913 (Wed & Fri only)

CLUB DOCUMENTS

By now we really hope you've popped your heads into our Dropbox. It's basically a virtual club library, rather like a website. Every month I add a new folder and pop all the newsletters and mineral related information in there for mineral minded folk to enjoy, without having to clog up one another's emails or waste unnecessary data downloading oodles of emails.

Under the heading of **WGMC**, monthly folders have been created up to **JUNE**. There's a long list of documents, emails and other trinkets to wade through.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Club has several vacant committee positions and would welcome new volunteers. Committee members for the year beginning 1st March 2013 are as follows:

Chairman	Vacant	
Vice Chairman	Vacant – possible volunteers	
Mineral Section	Vacant – possible volunteers	
Treasurer	Jono Hotz jonohotz@gmail.com	0824449628
Librarian	Massimo Leone mass@thefacetingstudio.co.za	082 372 0328
Scribe / Newsletter Editor	Sharon Flax Waddington Lifeisthepresent@gmail.com	082 9 234 794
If you're unable to reach my cell, please use Rom Koppert's Cell		083 227 5634

Other Club Contacts

Raffle Master	Keith Bailey
Access cards	Bruce Cairncross

If you have received this newsletter in error or wish to be added to or removed from the mailing list, please email me with UNSUBSCRIBE WGMC in the subject line.

Sharon Flax Waddington

May 2013

E&OE