



Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Inc. January 2014 Newsletter

Editorial

The Committee wishes all Minsocwa members a happy and healthy 2014.

The door prize of a lovely turquoise specimen from the famous Kingsman Turquoise mine in Arizona was won by Kim Macdonald.

The policy that members may submit short adverts free of charge will remain. Additionally, it was agreed that other commercial advertisements would be accepted for a nominal charge.

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Recent Activities

General Meeting held on November 20th 2013.

The General Meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Incorporated was on Wednesday 20th November 2013 at the WA Lapidary Club rooms located at 31, Gladstone Road, Rivervale (corner of Newey St).

The General Meeting was followed by a talk by Kevin Morgan on “Early Exploration and Mineral Collecting”.

Kevin's well illustrated talk was not about mineral species but rather of how exploration was conducted in the search for minerals by explorers, prospectors and mining companies. The talk covered some 6 of the so-called exploration booms between the 1950s and 1980s and touched on the life of an exploration geologist during this period.

Much has changed from the early days of the long periods spent in the field by the early explorers to the modern dash-in and dash-out methods common today. Incentives to explore were driven by the curiosity of "whats out there beyond the black stump" rather than merely by the rewards the work might bring.

In the 1950s Kevin was initially employed by two junior, cash-strapped oil explorers in Papua which was still an Administrated Australian Colony in those days. There, he mixed with a colourful list of crocodile hunters, traders, failed planters and other escapees from civilization as well as Australian administrators and Patrol Officers. Most of the locals were still living in their native style; dress was very informal.

Transport was initially by an old Brisbane River Ferry, canoe and walking, camping out every night. Later an old war-time airstrip was rehabilitated. Food supplies were supplemented by "bush tucker" such as crocodile and wild pig.

A period of mapping in the Mackenzie River area in Central Queensland located and identified a sandstone structure that Utah Minerals later utilized to locate the huge Blackwater coalfield. This was followed by a period of uranium exploration in the Rum Jungle and Mary Kathleen areas.

The 1960s were spent in the Western Australian Geological Survey looking for groundwater anywhere in the whole state. Geologists were expected to spend extended periods of up to six months in the field; living was rough with a Landrover, a 50 gallon fuel drum, a 20 gallon water drum, swag and the bare minimum of camping gear. There were no radios and messages were passed to the Flying Doctor via the nearest Station Homestead.

In those days most Aboriginal groups in the station country in northern Western Australia camped at or near stations or Missions and many became station hands. They were extraordinary acute observers of nature and people and excellent story tellers with long and accurate memories.

The early 1960s were also the start of the Western Australian iron ore boom after the lifting of the iron ore embargo. This was followed a few years later by the nickel boom after the discovery of the Poseidon deposit at Mt. Windarra. Along came a flood of peggers, entrepreneurs and a most colourful band of people crawling all over the goldfields.

With this rush came a plethora of new exploration methods including magnetic and electromagnetic surveys, geochemical sampling, high production laboratory assay techniques, photogrammetric mapping and many more.

These good times had their bad side; massive environmental damage, damage to heritage sites and the building up of distrust of the newcomers by the people of the land. Nothing was safe anymore and theft of equipment left in the field became common.

The nickel boom was followed by the uranium boom that began after the Yeelirrie carnotite deposit was discovered and the pegging ban lifted.

The early 1980s saw the resurgence of interest in gold helped by the development of such things as the metal detector, CIP extraction and a better understanding of the geology of the gold deposits.

Exploration has come a long way since the 1950s, but sadly the “smell-the-earth” way of prospecting has been replaced by “dash in and out” sampling and remote sensing methods. However, there is still a place for the modern prospector who is prepared to think outside of the box.

I am sure that many of you feel most at home where there are no fences, miles of stones and spinifex and no phones.

Micromount Workshop held on Sunday, December 1st 2013.

Ted Fowler, the main organizer of this workshop reported as follows:

Another Micromount Workshop was held at the Lapidary Club clubrooms on Sunday 1st December attended by 10 Minsoc members and one visitor. It was pleasing to see country member Alan Longbottom make the long drive from Australind to join us. We hope he can become a regular participant in future workshops.

There were 6 microscopes available to share on the day and we were able to examine a variety of minerals, from completed micromounts to specimens in various stages of preparation. Other material [untrimmed - as collected] and a number of larger specimens [to cabinet size] were brought along to view under magnification. On this latter material, we were then able to fully appreciate features like inclusions or tiny overgrowing crystals.



Micromounters at the workshop held on December 1st, 2013.

Photograph by Sue Koepke.

Ken Ireland also came with his USB Digital microscope with stand, clamp and camera, all linked to his laptop computer. This compact unit produced surprisingly acceptable results for an economical outlay. Minsoc members interested in learning more about one of these units or considering a purchase can contact Ken for more details. Digital photography through the microscope was the subject of much debate and interest among our group – to be followed up in the months ahead.

A variety of “give-away” mineral specimens and rough were shared among our group and the workshop concluded by 4pm.



An example of a micromounter's specimen.

Future Meetings

General Meeting on 15th January 2014.

Murray Thompson and Peter Downes will give an “Update on DeGrussa Minerals”.

Dr Peter Downes is a curator in Minerals and Meteorites at the Western Australian Museum. His research interests include the mineralogy of alkaline volcanic rocks such as carbonatites, kimberlites and lamproites, as well as the secondary minerals of the oxidised zone in Western Australian mineral deposits.

Murray has always had a passion for collecting minerals in the field, whenever that was possible; from the Burra mine in the 60s, White Rock Quarry in the 70s, followed by extended stints in several goldfields across WA, SA and Victoria. Nothing has changed, only now the holes are larger and the smorgasbord of options greater.

He now has the extraordinary blessing of being Curator of Minerals for Sandfire Resources whose board has to be one of the most forward thinking and generous that has been established on any field in Australia in recent times.

The DeGrussa VHMS deposit on Doolgunna Station in WA is without question geologically exceptional and a very rich deposit.

However the minerals recovered from the various oxide zones are not flamboyant but rather need to be gently teased from the smothering iron oxides to reveal their unique character and relationships.

This work has continued throughout the year, here after follows a short summary of our latest findings.

Peter and Murray trust you will enjoy the fruits of their endeavours as much as they had regarding the delights of discovery.

General Meeting on 19th March 2014.

Mikael Siversson will discuss “Fossil Sharks”.

General Meeting on 21st May 2014.

Marcus Sweetapple will talk on “Triplite, Triphylite, Triploidite; to Trip the Phosphate ‘Lite’ Fantastic”.

Future Events

Fifth Annual Frank Radke Memorial Auction.

The Vice-president of the Minsocwa, Geert Buters, compiled the following report regarding the forthcoming mineral auction.

While the nation ate turkey, watched cricket, and taught a few recalcitrant bottles a well-deserved lesson, the Minsocwa auction gnomes have been busy hammering away in their cave, building a bigger and brighter Auction Night. Everything is now almost ready for that annual grand night of fun and bargains, which this year will take place on Wednesday, February 19th, at the premises of WA Lapidary Club (of course). The doors will open for lot acceptance at 5 pm, while viewing commences at 5.45 pm and the auction proper starts at 6.30 pm.

The on-line pre-registration process, introduced by gnome Peter last year, has been stripped down on the lounge room floor, greased up, and put back together again. Hopefully we didn't really need those left over bolts, and it will run like the well-oiled gizmo we hope it is (fingers crossed). If sellers can be encouraged to pre-register their lots, it will take some pressure off the gnomes on auction night. It also means we can put your lots in the auction catalogue, and maybe feature your photographs in pre-auction publicity. You really don't want to leave registration till the night, and increase the chance of finding your items in the silent auction. You may even find that lot registration has closed, once we have all the lots we can handle (now here's hoping!).

While on pre-registration, this year we have extended it to buyers as well as sellers. It is not compulsory, but it will save you standing in a queue waiting to fill out a registration form, when you could be inspecting the bargains on offer.

We have changed how commissions are charged. The seller margin has been reduced to ten percent, but we have introduced a new buyer margin, also of ten percent. This way the burden of costs is distributed a little more equitably. So when you are bidding, remember, the price you pay will be ten percent more than your bid.

After we analysed the results from last year it was obvious that commissions only help to cover costs. What makes this event worthwhile as a fundraiser are the generous donations of lots from businesses and private individuals alike. So, think about making a donation yourself. Gnome Sue has the marketing to get business support well in hand, and some of the results are starting to appear on <https://facebook.com/groups/minsocwa>. Take a look – there are some very desirable specimens there. Then think about what contribution you would like to make!

This year sellers have the option to nominate an estimated value for their lots. We thought it might help buyers arrive at their own estimate of value. In another change we have added a slightly more formal set of auction terms and conditions, so be sure to read them. Admission will again be \$5, the same as last year, and that includes all your nibbles and refreshments to get you in the mood. The format will also be very similar to last year with the live auction having an intermission during which you can make your bids on the silent auction items.

The Auction Flyer will be emailed soon with all the information and links you need to get yourself registered. Gnome Ken is also putting a dedicated auction page on the minsocwa website with all the links you need, in case you lose the flyer. It is going to be a great night with lots of hilarity and bargains. Put the date in your diary, tell your friends, and don't forget to bring bags of cash to pay for your purchases. See you there.

Whilst on the subject of the auction, it has been decided to hold an "Easter Hamper" raffle during the night where one (or more) hampers full of delicious goodies will be won.

If anybody has a packet, bar, bottle or box of something nice that they really don't want, think about donating it to the raffle instead of giving it away to some ungrateful person or the dog. We would prefer nice biscuits, chocolates, wine and nibbles rather than half-eaten mince pies or an old tin of sardines from the back of the cupboard. Donations can be brought to the General Meeting on the 15th January and given to any Committee member.

Thank you.

Welcome to 2014 evening.

As a reminder, the following e-mail sent to all members by the Secretary is reproduced.

Vernon and Susan Stocklmayer cordially invite Members of the Mineralogical Society to a BYO BBQ at their home at **13, Cameron Close, Lesmurdie** on Saturday 18th January from 7pm onwards.

Please bring your choice of meat or whatever you would like cooked on the BBQ, your drink and a salad or speciality dish to share with others as a buffet.

We do have microscopes, books and other gemmological paraphernalia available that people can use to examine/exhibit specimens of interest, if you have specimens you would like to show to others.

Kindly RSVP to this invitation by email to nyanga@icenet.com.au.

Items of Interest

International Year of Crystallography, 2014.

Check this out on the web. Organized jointly by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Union of Crystallography.

Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be held at 15 Colin Grove, West Perth on Saturday 11th January, 2014 at 10am.

Field Trips

Western Australia Lapidary and Rockhunting Club Inc.

By arrangement, members of the Mineralogical Society are able to go on field trips organized by the Western Australia Lapidary and Rockhunting Club Inc. If you are interested in attending these field trips please put your name on the notice board at the Lapidary and Rockhunting Club for the relevant field trip.

Planned events for the beginning of 2014 are as follows:-

- January 25th, 26th and 27th. Greenbushes for a visit to the tantalum mine?
- February 16th. Around the houses.
- March 16th. Moora Quarry.
- April 18th to 21st. Easter trip to Paynes Find.

Please register with Minsocwa Field Trip organizers prior to attending any of the field trips to confirm event details.

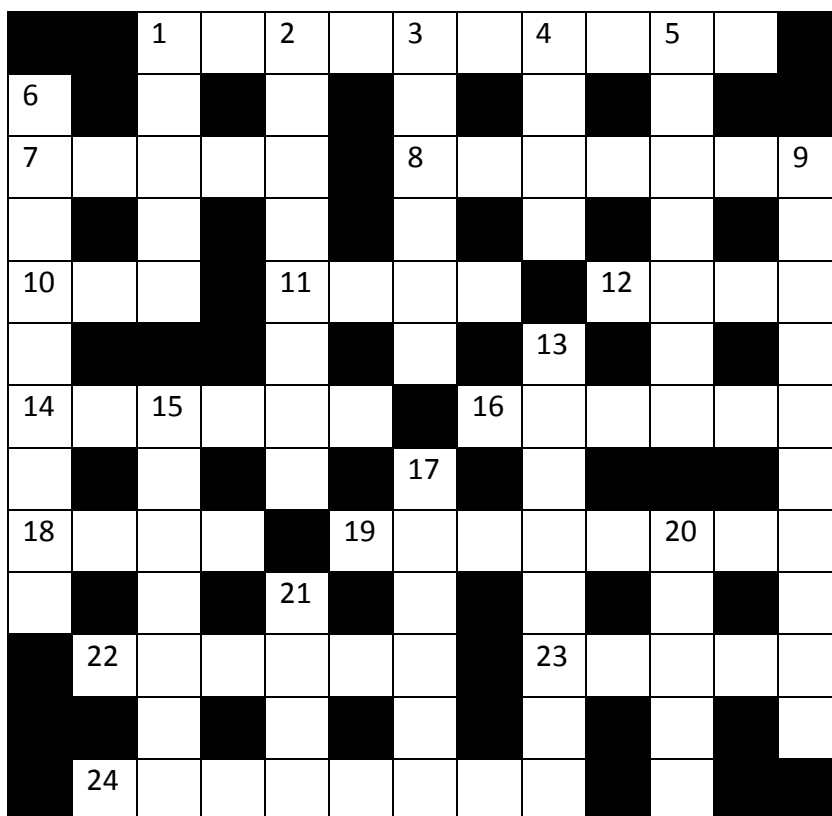
Committee Members

The following committee members were elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Committee Members	
Stewart Cole - President ph 0414 904 169	Nimal Perera - Social Officer/Field Trips Leader
Sue Koepke - Secretary ph 0417 990 688	Vernon Stocklmayer-Newsletter Editor ph 92919043
Ken Ireland - Treasurer	Ida Newton
Geert Buters - Vice President	
Society e-mail addresses	
All correspondence (excluding the newsletter): minsocwa@hotmail.com	
Mineralogical Society WA Newsletter : minsocwa.newsletter@hotmail.com	
Website: www.minsocwa.org.au	

We need a Treasurer to join the Committee. Anybody interested?

Crossword.



ACROSS

1. WA's eponymous tantalum mineral (10)
7. Endlessly emanating from most camp dunnies (5)
8. A silver telluride from Romania (7)
10. The attribute of a colour; ... and cry (3)
11. A learner; an apprentice micro-mounter perhaps (4)
12. From the Dutch "the worst quality of the hardest mineral" (4)
14. Light-coloured heavy mineral with an SG of 4.4 (6)
16. Yellow or red, usually iron-rich oxide cap (6)
18.balloon, pencil or pipe (with Col. Mustard in the kitchen) (4)
19. country where one finds large crystals or pachyderms (8)
22. Banded microcrystalline silica from vughs (6)
23. Malachite is found in this small mine near Nanutarra in the Ashburton Shire (5)
24. A land where one expects to find great happiness (and large crystals?) (8)

DOWN

1. Soft, fissile sedimentary rock (5)
2. Usually occurs as orange needles containing Cl, As, Pb (8)
3. German word for dark tourmaline (6)
4. You need a good one to sniff out nice crystals (4)
5. Three-cornered depressions on crystal faces (7)
6. One of the major groups of rock-forming minerals (9)
9. Anisotropic minerals and dinosaurs exhibit this (10)
13. Formed by elements or found as twinned crystals (8)
15. Ore of arsenic; from the Arabic "dust in the caves" (7)
17. Rounded pebbles in a conglomerate (6)
20. Of gold (5)
21. The teensy-weensiest part of a chemical element (4)