



# Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Inc.

## July 2019 Newsletter

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### Editorial

At all meetings the Society's microscope and UV lamp are available for use by members.

We finally have our own lockable cupboard located in the Lapidary Club premises.

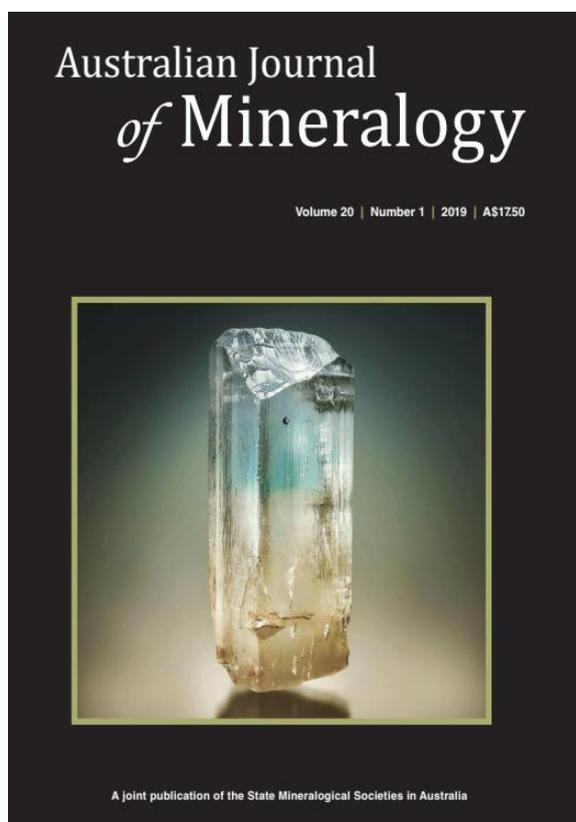
The policy that members may submit short advertisements free of charge will remain. Additionally, commercial advertisements will be accepted for a nominal charge.

### Our library

The Mineral Society library comprises numerous books, reports and journals that have been donated by members. Currently there are some 150 items housed in a lockable cupboard in the Lapidary Club premises. To access the books please see the Librarian, John Mill.

The library is currently undergoing an audit by members of the Committee and unwanted items will be made available to members in the near future, either for free or for a nominal sum.

The MinSocWA receives a complimentary copy of the Australian Journal of Mineralogy (AJM) and Vol 20(1) will be available shortly. These journals cover a wide spectrum of articles on mineralogy, ranging from descriptions of new minerals to book reviews, museum news and items of general interest to mineral collectors. MinSocWA members are regular contributors to the AJM.



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## Recent Activities

The General and Annual General Meetings of the Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Incorporated are now held at 7.30pm on the **second** Wednesday of every odd month at the WA Lapidary Club rooms located at 31, Gladstone Road, Rivervale (corner of Newey Street).

### General Meeting, Wednesday, May 8, 2019

The door prize for May was a specimen of pyrite crystals from Peru donated by Stewart Cole and won by Sarah Bundesen

In the absence of a President, the May 8 meeting was chaired by Sue Koepke, the current Vice President.

The meeting was followed by a presentation from Susan Stocklmayer entitled "Amber through time, geological and scientific".

Susan, a graduate in geology, has worked as a mineralogist and as a gemmologist in Zimbabwe, England and Australia. Now retired, Susan has maintained close links with both the British and Australian Gemmological Associations and is a long-time member of the Mineralogical Society of Western Australia.

Amber is not a mineral; it is fossilised resin from some extinct trees. It has a small range of physical and optical properties with an RI of 1.52 to 1.54 and an SG of 0.99 to 1.10 (floats in brine). It is transparent to opaque and generally yellow, orange or brown but green, blue and red examples do occur. It also fluoresces, usually a strong blue-white.

Amber comprises a fossil organic resin that has undergone maturation (amberisation) by burial in anoxic conditions under heat, pressure and permeating fluids. The resin becomes harder, with a lower melting point, and is less complex chemically.

The oldest amber specimen found has been dated at ~300Ma ago, but most amber formed during the Cretaceous to Tertiary, sometimes referred to as "The Age of Amber". Because amber originates as a viscous, sticky resin, it often contains air bubbles as well as the remains of bacteria, fungi, algae and insects. Some of these are of immense scientific importance; a stingless bee was discovered in Dominican Republic amber carrying pollen of *Meliorchis caribea*, the first unambiguous orchid known to science. This enabled researchers to calculate the time of origin of the orchid family.

Amber is found in many places worldwide but the most productive area is in the Baltic where amber is mined from soft sediments, often using hydraulic mining methods. Other producing areas include the Dominican Republic and Burma. Recently, amber was discovered at Cape York in northern Queensland.

Amber has been used in jewellery since the Stone Age (about 13,000 years ago) and there have been many historical artefacts discovered worldwide. The most impressive of these must be the Amber Room located in the Catherine Palace in Pushkin, Russia that was constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> C and looted during World War II. Complete reconstruction of the Amber Room has recently been completed. However, these days, most amber is used in the manufacture of jewellery and artefacts for tourists (Photograph).



A small baboon carved out of translucent orange-brown amber.

Photograph by Susan Stocklmayer

### Mineral Cleaning Workshop, Sunday June 3

Des Lascelles ran a workshop on cleaning up minerals at the WA Lapidary Club rooms located at 31, Gladstone Road, Rivervale. A summary of this meeting will be included in the August newsletter.

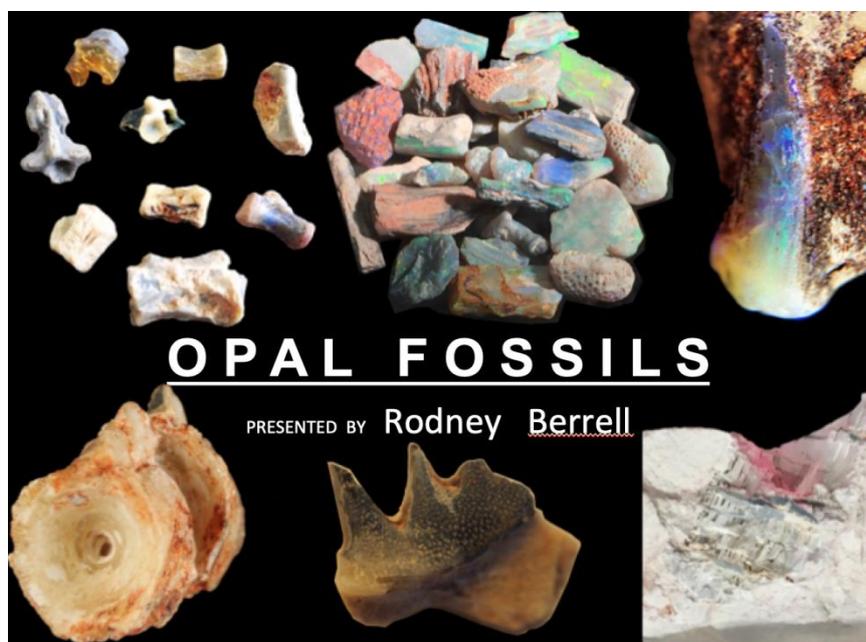
## Forthcoming activities

### General/Annual General Meeting, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Please note that the Annual General Meeting has been brought forward from September to July to allow a new president to be elected prior to the 42nd Joint Mineralogical Societies of Australasia seminar in early September. At the AGM, all Committee positions will be declared vacant and a new committee elected.

Prior to the AGM and general meeting, Rod Berrell will give a brief introduction to the geology and process of opal formation. This Australian centric talk will then look at the various plants and animals that lived, died and became replaced in precious opal.

About the speaker: Rodney is currently an exploration geologist working at Tropicana Gold Mine for AngloGold Ashanti Australia. In his 'spare' time he is currently completing a PhD in Applied Geology at Curtin University focusing on the fish that swam with the dinosaurs. Rodney's first encounter with opal was when he was 6 years old on a family trip to the Grawan Field of Lightning Ridge. With an intense interest in dinosaurs and fossils at an early age - Rodney soon discovered something better than opal - opal fossils.



At the September meeting, which has been moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month (18<sup>th</sup> September) to avoid a clash with the Seminar field trip, Francine Payette will give a talk on feldspars. In November, Craig Bosel will talk on the Munich show and John Mill will talk on Tucson.

### 42nd Joint Mineralogical Societies of Australasia - seminar update

#### ***Traps in mineralogy: pseudomorphs, look-alikes, fakes and synthetics!***

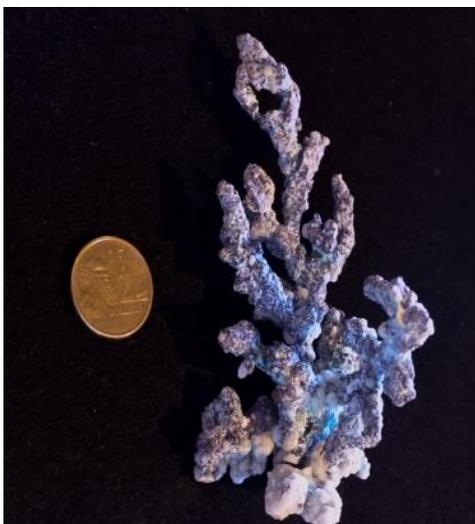
Only two months left before the 42<sup>nd</sup> seminar in Perth, on August 31 and September 1!

The final touches are being put on the program, with talks covering a wide variety of topics and localities. Many specimens have been received for the live and silent auctions that will take place during the conference dinner (thanks to all the donors, see specimen pictured), and all tables are booked out for the mineral market – join us for the chance to grab a nice specimen at a bargain price!

Submission for the photo competition is now closed, but spaces are still available for the Micromount session on the Friday before the seminar. And a few more activities have been added to the overall schedule:

- *A morning at the Museum* on Friday 30 August at 10.15 for 10.30am. Led by Dr Peter Downes, this tour will take you behind the scenes to inspect rarely displayed parts of the mineral collections of the Western Australian Museum. It is limited to 8 people (a second tour could be organised for the Monday after the seminar, if there is enough interest). Contact Lee Hassan on [lee\\_notebook@msn.com](mailto:lee_notebook@msn.com) if you would like to attend.
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- *Perth Core Library and HyLogger* visit, Monday 2 September at 10.30am. Led by Dr Lena Hancock, this tour of the huge Perth Core Library will showcase cores from mineral exploration drillholes and how modern technologies assist in mineral identification and exploration. Contact Lee Hassan on [lee\\_notebook@msn.com](mailto:lee_notebook@msn.com) if you would like to attend.
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- *Desert Fire Designs* tour, Monday 2 September in the afternoon. Led by Murray Thompson, the visit to this workshop will showcase some of the finest specimens of Western Australian mineral and lapidary material. Contact Lee Hassan on [lee\\_notebook@msn.com](mailto:lee_notebook@msn.com) if you would like to attend.
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Join in for the opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones in the mineralogical collecting community. Register for the seminar at [www.trybooking.com/ZVTK](http://www.trybooking.com/ZVTK). See you in Perth soon!



An auction Item.

An arborescent copper specimen from DeGrussa; it is both elegant and rare.

Donated by Sandfire Resources NL

## New Members

Mitch Elphick and Casey Clifton have applied for spousal membership; Sarah Bundesen, Luisa Biando, Donna Franich, Kara Pitts and Wallace Maillot have applied for membership. All applications were accepted at the last Committee meeting. Welcome all.

## Committee Members

The Committee for 2018/2019 is shown below.

President		
Vice President	Sue Koepke	0417990688
Secretary/Treasurer	Lee Hassan	93975197
Field Trip Leader	Rodney Berrell	0407081025
Committee Member/ Newsletter Editor	Vernon Stocklmayer	92919043
Committee Member	Angela Riganti	92437472
Committee Member	Peter Willems	0467040409