

NEWSLETTER

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To encourage mineralogical study by amateur and professional alike and, in so doing, discover, document and preserve the Earth's and in particular Western Australia's natural history.



Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Inc.



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first MinSocWA Newsletter of 2023.

We have had a great start to 2023 and we are looking forward to more excitement as plans for an even bigger and better PGMS-2023 take shape. The field trip to Koolyanobbing and Marvel Loch in April is fully subscribed. Thanks to MinRes for this fantastic opportunity!



MinSoc continues to grow and new member Wendy Beets has volunteered to be the new Editor of the Newsletter. We hope you like the new format.

-Ed

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DUDS, FAKES AND WELCOME SURPRISES

-what to look out for in the mineral and fossil market

Sue Koepke, past MinSocWA President, long-time mineral collector and dealer for almost forty years, hosted an activity evening for members and friends on the subject of fakes and imposters in the mineral business.



Deceptions of many kinds are rife in the commercial sector and it is apparent from the many examples we were shown that “buyer beware” and technical scepticism should be primed when making purchases of specimens of minerals and gems. The internet provides a huge marketing opportunity through social media but also provides a vast arena for marketing fake specimens through seemingly friendly sites. As these items are collected for many reasons such as their aesthetics, colours, forms, degree of crystal perfection and rarity, with many sourced from remote areas overseas where origins are more difficult to verify, this is a business platform inviting all forms of deception. Collectors are also those keen to add to their specimens and are often unwittingly duped by what seems to be a bargain, an exceptionally unusual specimen or a novelty in the mineral world. The internet can provide a good start in researching materials but is also a trap populated with “pseudoscience” articles with a blend of what seems to be sound facts overlain with a metaphysical glossary.

As many members of the Society are grounded in Earth Sciences, deceptions in the market ought to be more easily recognised; however, purchases are made, deceptions revealed and lessons are learnt. Sue admitted that she was unprepared and untrained at the outset and has learned more of the trade in specimens by accidents and incidents along the way.



Specimens are often purchased as presentation ornaments for interior décor and the session commenced with the viewing of a photograph of a handsome matching pair of polished, sectioned ammonites. On investigation, it became obvious that many of the small fissures between areas of the concentric structure had been carefully cemented and it seemed likely that the ammonite specimen had either been repaired or assembled from fragments.

On the subject of 'glued' specimens, the example was provided of a Chinese cinnabar twin crystal turned up to have been glued to a quartz crystal matrix, with additional quartz crystals added to the matrix to make the cluster look fuller. Another example of the use of adhesives was that of a tourmaline crystal from the Greenbushes lithium mine mounted, apparently, on its host rock – detail of the workmanship showed the inaccuracy of its fit. These examples showed that sometimes some magnification is all that is required to uncover the fraud.

A good cleaning helps a lot, and we were shown a number of specimens that illustrated their true identities after baptism in the ultrasonic bath – the changes of colour as genuine dirt was removed from dark coloured "hematite" crystals revealing carborundum aggregates; changing the colour of 'artichoke' quartz crystals from golden citrine to colourless after the yellow 'muck' came off in the ultrasonic cleaner to reveal a very nice – albeit colourless – quartz crystal; dyed agates that lose all their attractive banded blue colour; Cumbrian rare orange dolomite that became white...





Mineral names and precise locations are an important part of labelling information, but some labels are not always accurate and buyers should beware when purchasing from deceased estates and other old collections. Whilst many are genuine and can be verified, some are mistaken identities.

Occasionally investigation can produce a welcome surprise: Sue had the example of black-coloured stibnite crystal specimen from the Telfer mine that was later proven to be the much rarer and valuable chalcocite. Specialist knowledge about the distinctiveness of specimens from specific locations can be important in establishing the source; an example of this was mimetite ($\text{Pb}_5(\text{AsO}_4)_3\text{Cl}$) allegedly from the Mount Bonnie mine in the Northern Territory that was actually from the Elura mine in New South Wales.

Many ornamental minerals, gems and decorative materials are marketed under commercial names, not all mineral names are good trading names and there are many examples of coined names. One example given was the material “Atlantisite” which is the attractive ornamental stone consisting of purple stichtite ($\text{Mg}_6\text{Cr}_3+2(\text{OH})_{16}[\text{CO}_3] \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$) within green serpentinite host rock from western Tasmania. Mineral names are easily verified from the many mineral literature references.

Sue circulated many specimens during her workshop: tumbled iridescent bloomed quartz, tumbled stones with fibre optic cat’s eye reflective light bands, tektites, black tumbled rock with hypersthene crystals, “goldstone glass” with blue iridescence – all require close examination with a x10 lens to expose their nature.

Examination of specimens, using a x10 lens, a microscope and other standard instruments such as UV light, a magnet, a hardness probe, can reveal important information but knowledge and experience count for more success in identification.

A fitting finale to the activity was a magnificent stilbite crystal aggregation with a stellate finial of six crystals, dotted with green apophyllite, a fine ornament held together with adhesive and some blu tack TM.

Members and friends had an interesting evening and we thank Sue for her presentation and for sharing some of her knowledge and specimens. Hopefully we’ll all be a little wiser when acquiring our new mineral specimen!

-Report by Susan Stockmayer on the workshop held on the evening of Wednesday, 8th February 2023. Photos courtesy Sue Koepke.

The 2023 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show



by John Mill



Some superb mineral specimens in the Fine Minerals International's showroom

After 2 years of being in semi limbo, the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show (TGMS) fired up between 25 January and 12 February 2023. The 'show' is enormous and unlike many other mineral shows, it is not restricted to one venue. The 'show' is housed in 42 venues across the city of Tucson, some of which are open for the whole of the time and some of which open and close at various times within the TGMS window. It culminates with the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show at the Tucson Convention Centre from the 8th – 12th February 2023.

The venues include many temporary shows such as the Westward Look Show (not affiliated with the TGMS) and the Just Minerals and Crystals event which runs for three days only. In addition, there are many retailers / wholesalers such as Top Gem Minerals and Superb Minerals of India who are open in Tucson all year round. In addition, there are separate fossil shows, beading shows, jewelry shows, and tool shows.



The lower end retail area of Superb Minerals, a specialist in zeolite minerals from India



Some of the better zeolite specimens in the shop

Of course, the high-end mineral dealers include the crème de la crème of mineral dealers such as Rob Lavinsky's Arkenstone, Ian and Dianna Bruce's Crystal Classics and Wayne and Donna Leicht's Kristalle. The purchase of just one of the minerals on sale by these dealers would cost more than my net worth!



A display of dinosaurs – good if you have the space!



**Avant-garde art
for sale at a
Moroccan Dealers
Show**

Then there are the second-tier dealers, many of whom inhabit the 6 blocks of buildings off Oricle Road North. Mineral City is a new show that has taken over from the Inn Suites establishment and contains over 100 dealers in the high-end to mid-range price.

One of the newer minerals on offer is vivianite, a hydrated iron phosphate mineral, mostly coming from Brazil. One has to be careful when making a purchase. I obtained a nice specimen from a small dealer for \$150.00 USD but saw similar specimens on sale, from more up-market dealers, for \$12,000.00 USD. Let the buyer beware!

Last year there seemed to be quite a lot of pyramidal pyrite from the Huanzala Mine, Peru. This year, it was hard to find, partly because dealers get shuffled around and are not necessarily in the same place.

Finally, there are the wholesalers who specialize in selling wholesale flats of everything from Mexican wulfenite, Moroccan vanadinite, Peruvian pyrite and barite to DRC malachite. The variety is limitless.

The huge 22nd Street Mineral, Fossil, Gem and Jewelry Show is housed in an enormous white marquee and hosts hundreds of lower-end dealers.



**The 22nd
Street
Show from
Sentinel
Peak Park**



Jeff Scovil's photographic setup at the TGMS.

I also caught up with Terry Huizing at the Rocks & Minerals stand where he was selling the latest edition of the AJM (Australian Journal of Mineralogy – special issue on gold) for \$24.00 USD per copy. Unfortunately, Marie was indisposed at the time.

I was able to visit renowned photographer Jeff Scovil who had a room at one of the shows and was kind enough to let me photograph his setup.



Terry Huizing at the Rocks & Minerals Stand

I was only in Tucson for 6 days and was unable to attend all venues during that time, but was able to make a few purchases for sale at upcoming shows in Perth and a little for myself. Apart from minerals there are so many attractions in and around Tucson that it is not possible to visit all of them in the time available.

These include but are not limited to the following:

- The Tucson Desert Museum – a fascinating collection of desert plants and animals in an outdoor setting, including hummingbirds, reptiles, amphibians and even stingrays. A live fly exhibition of raptors occurs at 10 am, 6 days a week.
- The Pima Air and Space Museum – over 400 military and civilian aircraft from a replica Wright Flier, the super-fast SR-71, and even a Royal Flying Doctor plane.
- The Titan Missile Museum – A trip back to the cold war when the US and Russia aimed nuclear missiles at each other as part of the MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) philosophy.



Titan 2 rocket,
now fortunately
decommissioned



- A trip up Lemmon Mountain to overlook Tucson from an altitude of 9,000 feet from a ski field. The 29-mile road trip takes one through 4 major ecological zones from saguaro cactus forest to a sub-alpine pine forest.
- A trip to the quaint town of Tombstone with its wild west history, including the gunfight at the OK Corral, featuring the Earp Brothers and Doc Halliday against the McLarty's. The historic site of Boot Hill where many of the victims of the times are buried is well worth a visit.
- An extension of the Tombstone trip is to the colourful, art deco town of Bisbee and an underground trip into the historic Queen Mine. A view of the abandoned Bisbee open cut is available through a mesh fence.
- The huge Mission Copper Mine also offers tourist trips of the mine and treatment plant.



The main street of Tombstone – just missing the gun fighters.

Koolynobbing – Marvel Loch Field Trip

21st to 23rd April 2023



Dear MinSoc Members,

A Field Trip to Koolynobbing and Marvel Loch has been organised by Mineral Resources (“MinRes”) and its subsidiary Minjar Gold. They have generously offered us their resources and expertise so that we can spend time being shown around these mines and also to fossick in designated areas.

The itinerary involves departing from Perth on Friday afternoon the 21st of April at about 1:00PM. Travelling by bus to Marvel Loch and staying overnight for both Friday and Saturday night. All accommodation, meals and travel will be provided by the company.

Saturday will be spent around Minjar Gold sites at Marvel Loch. Their manager will organise some of their staff to show us around. Sunday morning, we travel to Koolynobbing being shown core etc and fossicking in the dumps again. On Sunday afternoon we would travel back to Perth on the bus.

The FIELD TRIP IS NOW FULLY SUBSCRIBED. Please note the following conditions for those MinSoc WA members attending:

1. PPE, namely, steel capped boots and high visibility long sleeved shirt and long pants. MinRes can supply some shirts if necessary. The company will also supply helmets.
2. The trip is limited to 17 patrons so places have been allocated on a first to reply basis. In addition, priority will be given to those that haven't been on the previous Koolynobbing trip.
3. If you find you can't make the trip after expressing interest, please let me know as soon as practical so that I can give your spot to someone else. Note also that it is a requirement for this field trip to be a financial member of MinSoc WA and have a WA Miners Right. See the website:
http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Documents/Minerals/Miners_Rights.pdf.
4. The company requires all attendees on the Field Trip to complete a “Site Entry and Travel Form”. This will need to be accompanied by a copy of your Driver's Licence.

If you are interested in attending the trip, please reply no later than Monday 3rd April with:

- Names of people interested in attending
- Confirmation that you have a WA Miners Right.

Finally, be aware that drug and alcohol testing may be undertaken at the sites.

Regards,

Frank Doedens - Field Trip Coordinator



From the Library

DIGITAL ACCESS to The Mineralogical Record is available to members. Please contact the Secretary for details.

THE MINERALOGICAL RECORD

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What's New in the Mineral World?



Report #65
November 15, 2022

by **Thomas P. Moore**
The Mineralogical
Record
TPMoore1@cox.net



Tom Moore's popular online column about mineral news is available here:
mineralogicalrecord.com/whats-new

UPCOMING MINSOCWA EVENTS
10 May 2023
Aubin Causson will be presenting on
the fluorites from St Jacques d'Ambur



SAVE THE DATES!

November 2023 - 45th Annual Seminar of the Mineralogical Societies of Australasia
in Tasmania. Talks welcome.

October 2023 - Perth Gem and Mineral Show (PGMS)
at Perth Conference and Exhibition Centre

MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

The Mineralogical Society of WA would like to welcome the following new
members:

Wendy Beets
Eleanore Dowling

All members are asked to ensure that your contact details are up to date. If
you change your email address or phone number, please let the Secretary
know so that you continue to receive all MinSocWA communications.
Membership forms can be downloaded from the MinSocWA web page
www.minsocwa.org.au/membership.

Please also note that receipts for membership subscriptions are available at
the door at each meeting.

Meetings of the Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Inc. are usually
held from 6.30pm on the second Wednesday of every odd month
at
WA Lapidary & Rockhunting Club
31 Gladstone Road, Rivervale (corner of Newey Street)
A Show & Tell, refreshment and socializing are followed by a talk starting at
7.30pm.

The Society's microscopes, UV lamp and refractometer are available for use
by members.