

Rockgrinders Gazette



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Club Rooms Opening Hours

Monday	9 am till 1 pm
Wednesday	9 am till 1 pm
Friday	5 pm till 9 pm
Saturday	9 am till 1 pm

December 2020 – Turquoise/Tanzanite/Zircon

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Message from the President

This has not been a good year for most of us. Having the club shut down in March, cancelling our events and worst of all, the loss of one of our members Nick Pastor. But we look forward to the new year, with hope of re-opening the club early in the new year.

We had a lovely picnic last Wednesday, again, great to see some familiar faces. Thank you to everyone who came.

On the plus side, our club looks amazing. Bob, Tim and their helpers have made the club look spic and span, painting, renovations, new benches for equipment, new casings for the machines. Myself and all our members will be so excited to see our renewed club and get back to grinding our rocks on the machines.

We will be having an executive meeting early in January to look at setting a date for the club to re-open. But, as we are aware this week, the situation with the virus is very fluid with the potential to

be sent back into full lockdown again if the latest outbreak spreads.

We look forward to a much better year next year. I wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and a great new year.

All the best
Suzy Brandstater
President



Thanks Again

Thanks to Bob, Tim, Hans and John C for continuing to upgrade the facilities in the Club, improving the look, safety, equipment, and working environment – recently installing new blinds and a kiln stand in the casting room, and a new workbench for the drill press, hand tools and rolling mill in the big room.



Monthly Bench Tips

Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books – [Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

Adjustable chuck for dremels

Many of us have a Dremel motor tool to use at home or when out to a class or workshop. The one thing that makes this tool much more productive is the addition of one inexpensive option, an adjustable chuck.

The basic motor tool as sold typically comes with a collet chuck. This means you have to use a wrench to change every tool bit, you have to switch collets to use different shaft sizes (3/32 or 1/8 inch bits), and you can't use ordinary drills at all - only the special ones that have a 3/32 shaft.

A simple and inexpensive (\$12) adjustable chuck solves all of this. It's available in most large local hardware stores or modelmaking outlets. Tightening the chuck is done easily by hand to any size shaft. No key is required.

Identifying Unmarked Solders

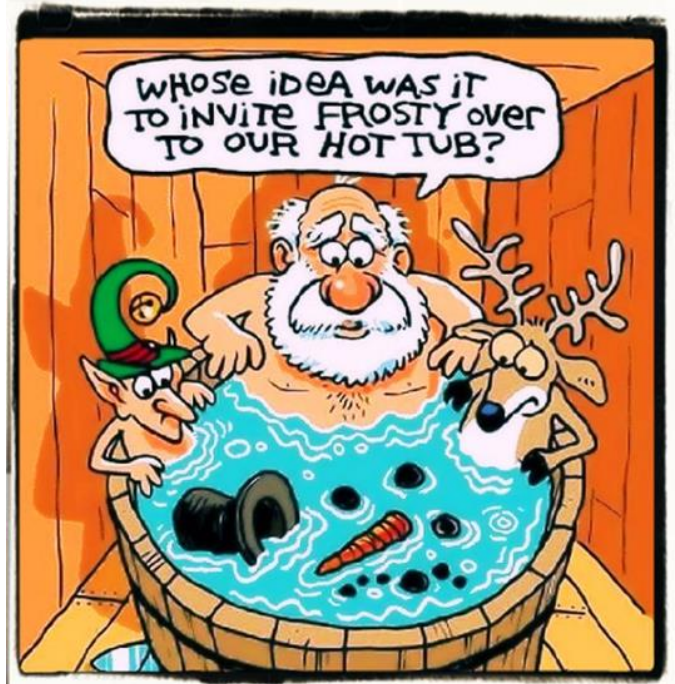
There are plenty of ways to mark your sheet or wire solders, but suppose you forgot to mark them and have a couple that you can't identify. The answer is to compare the melting temperature of the unknowns with that of a known solder.

What I do is take a thick scrap of copper or nickel and arrange several solders on it. Ideally, I would have a sample of easy, medium and hard known solders surrounding the unknown solder. Then I heat the plate from the bottom and watch the order in which the solders melt.

Smile Time

Try Before you Buy

Myra was going to the Christmas office party but needed a new party dress. In the clothing store she asked, 'May I try on that dress in the window, please?' 'Certainly not, madam,' responded the salesgirl, 'You'll have to use the fitting room like everyone else.'



Talk Time

Contribution from Margaret

OPAL

There are many types of Opal and although the majority of the world's Opal is found in Australia a small amount is found in other parts of the world. Opal is a form of silica and is found in compounds that range from chalk like to Ironstone. Common Opal does not have the multiple colours that are found in Precious Opal and is usually called Potch. Both Potch and Precious Opal are porous and have a Mohs' Scale of hardness of just over 6 so take care when cutting & Polishing. Opal is a marvel of Nature, turning light into an ever-changing rainbow of brilliant colours.

Opals are also named or grouped by the 'lay of the land' and therefore the type of 'bed' or sediment that the Opals form in. eg: Black Opal; swamp/sandstone area (only the background is black), Light Opal; sandstone of field and mountains, Boulder Opal: Sandstone, Iron stone boulders usually underground. Then there is Volcanic Opal from the Mountain rocks and tends

to crack and therefore is not very suitable for jewellery. The intensity of the "flash" and the colour of Opal adds to its value with Red being the most sought after. Opals should be soaked in clean water every now and then and kept away from dust and oils. However, if glue is present take care especially if glue is aged.

Where to find Opal: Mainly in Australia's Great Artesian Basin (this takes in parts of QLD, NSW, SA & NT)

Popular Opal mining areas are: Lightning Ridge NSW, White Cliffs NSW, Andamooka SA, Coober Pedy SA, Mintabie SA Yowah QLD. Opal is usually mined via a 'Shaft', and to a lesser extent using the "Open Cut" method.

Opal can also be found near Tintenbar NSW in basaltic lava but it is not suitable for gems as it cracks.

Some Types of Opal and places they are found but not limited to:

Boulder Opal	QLD	Opalised Bones	White Cliffs NSW
Yowah Nuts	Yowah QLD	White Seam Opal	White Cliffs NSW
Cunnamulla, Quilpie	QLD	Seam Opal	Coober Pedy SA and in other fields
Matrix Opal including Black found in quartzite.	Andamooka SA	Crystallised Opal including 'Pineapples'	White Cliffs NSW & Andamooka SA
Black Opal	Lightening Ridge, Surat Basin NSW	Opalised sea shells	Coober Pedy SA
Milk Opal, Water Opal, Jelly Opal	Coober Pedy SA, Andamooka SA	Concrete Opal (needs treating)	

Opals can be set as doublets (usually with a piece of black potch or similar glued to the back. They also are sold as triplets these have a very thin slice of opal with a clear dome glued on top and a piece of black glued on the back. Some people have tried to copy Mother Nature and one such imitation is called "Slocomb Stone".

Outback Miners Language (the style I can write about) Cat Stone, Concretion, Concrete, Conglomerate, Cretaceous, Dog Stone, Duffers, Floaters, Gibber, Gougiers, Mullock Heap, Nuts, Opal Noodling, Windlass.

This article is intended as a starting point for those members who are just discovering Opal and for those who have worked with Opal and would like to contribute to this discussion.

Want to know more? Check out our library books including The Opal Book by Frank Leechman & Australian Opal Safari by John Colahan. Both were used as a reference to write this article & many thanks to Rudi Golian for his assistance.

Margaret Bryant September 2008

Trivia Quiz

Answers at end of newsletter.

1. *Where is the opal capital of the world?*
 - a Virgin Valley, Nevada
 - b Queretaro, Mexico
 - c Coober Pedy, Australia
 - d Vernon, British Columbia

2. *No two opals are the same.*
 - a True
 - b False

3. *What is a Gilson opal?*
 - a A synthetic opal
 - b An opal found on Ernie Gilson's property
 - c Another name for potch
 - d An extremely valuable opal from Gilson, an outback town

4. *What sort of opal is often used when making a ring?*
 - a solid stone
 - b sonnet
 - c couplet
 - d free form

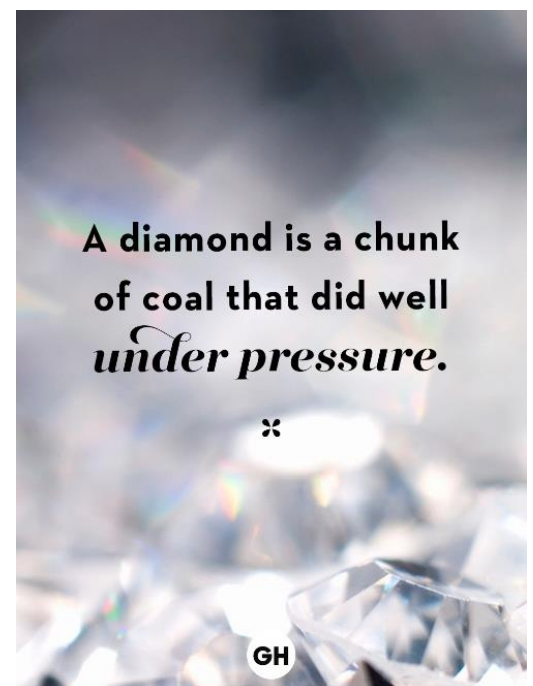
5. *Name the process of collecting uncut opals from the mounds of rock that have already been extracted*
 - a canoodling
 - b dry blowing
 - d panning
 - c noodling

6. *What is a triplet opal?*
 - a an opal mined with three strategically placed explosives
 - b an opal mined with a specific drill
 - c an opal with three different layers
 - d an opal with three different colours

7. *Which type of opal is iridescent - precious or common?*
 Answer _____ (hint: precious or common)

8. *Which of these is the most valuable type of opal?*
 - a crystal opal
 - b white opal
 - c black opal
 - d boulder opal

9. *What birthstone does opal represent?*
 - a December
 - b February
 - c October
 - d July



December Birthdays - Turquoise/Tanzanite/Zircon

Danielle Leikvold
 Rachael Jobson
 Dieter Klepatzki
 Ian Bundy
 Orlando Williams
 Cliff Corton
 Steve Bourke
 Kayleigh Goodsall
 Stuart Spencer
 Raymond Jones
 Kaye Allen
 Leanne Muir



Turquoise

Turquoise has an extremely long history of use by kings, shamans and warriors for protection and good fortune. This blue-green mineral rock's name is French. The French word turquoise meaning is "Turkish stone." Treasured turquoise gemstones were transported from Asia, where turquoise rocks were mined, to Europe by way of Turkey. Because of this, the French named them "Turkish stone" or turquoise. The blue-green gemstone was sacred to Aztecs, Chinese, Egyptians, Incas, Native Americans and Persians. To them, turquoise meaning was centred on luck, power and protection.

These copper hydrous phosphate and aluminium rocks are mined only for the purposes of making jewellery or ornamental statuettes and trinkets. Blue turquoise and green or blue-green turquoise are the most desirable turquoise colours. There are yellow-green turquoise gemstones but they are not as highly valued. Lengthy exposure to direct sunlight, heat, body oils, perspiration and cosmetic can alter the colour of turquoise gemstones.

Healing Properties of Turquoise

Turquoise is heralded as the stone of communication. It encourages enthusiasm, thus inspiring new projects and bringing to light undiscovered artistic abilities. Turquoise also provides understanding and encourages attention to detail while attracting prosperity and success.

The sprawling lines of coppery matrix provide a large amount of energy to its wearer. This may be one reason why the stone has long been prized as a powerful talisman with healing properties. It is believed that turquoise can help balance the blue throat chakra, enhancing the ability to communicate while increasing resistance to viruses, helping to relieve sore throats and allergies.

If you want to know more information on Turquoise, click the link below to go to the healing chest.com:
<https://thehealingchest.com/crystals-stones/turquoise-meaning/>



Tanzanite

The blue-violet crystals were discovered by a Masai tribesman in Merelani, Northern Tanzania at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro in 1967. Blue tanzanite was believed to be a gift from the gods. The gemstones were discovered by a group of Masai cattle herders, which is a big part of tanzanite meaning. These tanzanite rocks were noticed before but they appeared to be nothing more than brown rocks. It wasn't until after they were burned during a brush fire that they revealed their blue-violet crystal tanzanite colour. The brush fire was caused by a lightning strike, which is deeply engrained in tanzanite meaning.

The cattle herders shared their story of the blue-violet crystals with an area fortune hunter. Manuel d'Souza, the fortune hunter, wasted no time registering four mining claims on the lovely blue tanzanite deposits. At the time, he believed he had registered mining claims on a newly discovered sapphire deposit, since the blue zoisite crystals were such a deep sapphire blue. Little did he know that he had actually laid claim to a brand new gemstone that would take the world by storm. Word of Mr. d'Souza's new find spread and 90 additional claims were registered, all located within 20 square miles. They weren't even sure at this point what the beautiful purple-blue tanzanite rocks were. They just knew the blue-violet crystals had to be precious and valuable. No doubt, some of these investors were feeling the amazing tanzanite properties at the heart of tanzanite meaning.

Healing Powers of Tanzanite

Physical healing properties of tanzanite include detoxification of the blood, strengthening your immune system and increasing overall vitality. It's soothing, calming tanzanite powers encourage cell regeneration and healing of skin conditions, in keeping with tanzanite meaning. Tanzanite stone benefits the hair, supporting renewed growth of healthy hair. Tanzanite healing properties also calm and sooth side effects of medical treatments or surgery. Tanzanite may also assist in reviving someone who has been in a comatose state, perhaps due to its strong angelic connection and ability to bring about deeper thinking. It may also simply help with its calming, soothing vibrations, in keeping with tanzanite meaning.

The cooling, calming, soothing vibrations of tanzanite crystals help relieve headaches and migraines, as expected based on tanzanite meaning. You will feel the cooling, relaxing sensation on your forehead as soon as you apply the tanzanite gemstone.

If you want to know more information on Tanzanite, click the link below to go to the healing chest.com:

<https://thehealingchest.com/crystals-stones/tanzanite-meaning/>



Zircon

Zircon's reputation has suffered of late due to the introduction of a diamond simulant. So, for the record, zircon (zirconium silicate, $ZrSiO_4$) is **NOT** the same material as the artificial gem material Cubic Zirconia (zirconium oxide, ZrO_2). However, with that in mind, zircon has been used as a diamond simulant both for innocent and nefarious reasons. Zircon resembles diamond in lustre and fire and

colourless zircons have even been mistaken for diamonds by experienced jewellers. Zircon can make a very attractive and affordable gemstone.

Zircon is formed as a liquid out of acid magmas and is, therefore, found as a component of granites and syenites. It forms larger, usually double ended crystals in pegmatite. Natural zircon is usually brownish red to a brownish yellow. When natural zircon is heat treated the resulting stones can be colourless, yellow, green black or blue. Zircon crystals are transparent to translucent and has an adamantine lustre. Zircon can be found in Norway Pakistan, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Australia, France, Vietnam, Tanzania, Russia, Madagascar, Canada and the USA.

Zircon is known in antiquity as hyacinth and was used for healing. It was reputed to heal madness, make you resistant to temptation and strengthen the intellect. Blue zircon has been prized in jewellery for hundreds of years and was beloved by the Victorians as large ornate stones in rings and brooches, notably around the 1800s. In ancient times zircon was used to protect against robbery, lightning, bodily harm and disease. Each colour resonates with a different chakra.

Healing Powers of Zircon

Zircon stimulates the liver; it relieves pain and dissolves cramps in a gentle way. It will ease menstrual pain that is caused by hormonal imbalance. Zircon is beneficial for sciatica, insomnia, bones, muscles, vertigo, and the liver.

Zircon helps balance the adrenal glands and can assist in supporting the adrenals when you are overtaxed with work or stress. It is useful in clearing toxins from the body and can be used as a support through withdrawal from caffeine, tobacco or other substances. This stone will drive away nightmares and night terrors, encourage restful sleep and strengthen the heart. It is known to reduce fevers and repel contagious diseases. : <https://www.healingwithcrystals.net.au/zircon.html>

Words of Wisdom

Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter. – *Mark Twain*

What's On Or Not ??

Events are generally from the Gem and Lapidary Council of NSW <http://www.gemlapidarycouncilnsw.org.au/events/>
 Other contributions or back issue requests may be made to ctownlapidaryclub.editor@gmail.com.
 Alternately, download back issues from the Club's website.
 We are grateful for any and all submissions.

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
<i>Please note</i> all events are subject to rules and restrictions relating to Covid-19 pandemic.		
28 February, 2021	Illawarra Lapidary Club Inc – Rock Swap Time: 8 am – 1 pm	Venue: Stuart Park, George Hanley Drive, North Wollongong Club members and others will be selling Jewellery, Gemstones, Cabochons, Minerals, Opals, Findings, Beads & Fossils and maybe some Lapidary equipment. Come along for a great day. For details contact John on 02 4267 5618 http://www.illawarralapidaryclub.com.au/ or like us on Facebook
13 – 14 March 2021	Canberra 2021 Rock Swap	TBA
20 - 21 March 2021	New England Lapidary and Fossicking Club Inc 2021 30th Annual Gem and Craft Show Time: 9 am – 3 pm Entry: Free	Venue: Armidale Show Ground See a spectacular array of gems, rocks, jewellery, crafts, beads and lapidary books/supplies/equipment and much more. All on sale at the show. Raffle Tickets \$1.00 Great Prizes B.B.Q Breakfast & Lunch/Light Refreshment Available For details contact the organisers on (02) 6772 2161 after hours or Email info@nelc.net
2 – 5 April 2021	Gemboree 2021	Venue: HOBART Show Grounds, Glenorchy For details: https://aflaca.org.au/



Have fun, take care and stay safe!
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Trivia Answers - The correct answer is: Coober Pedy, True, Synthetic Opal, Solid Stone, Noodling, A stone with three different layers, precious, black opal, October