

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

September 2021 – Sapphire

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New members are welcome

Are you interested in: Lapidary, Fossils, Gems, Crystals, Beading, Silver Smithing or Lost wax casting in a relaxed and friendly environment? Give us a call on 9618 3206 and leave your details. Someone will get back to you after lockdown.

Annual Membership Fees

Enquiries to: ctownlapidarytreas@gmail.com

Adult – including insurance	\$15
Pensioner/student – including insurance	\$10
Family - excluding \$5 p/p insurance	\$20

From the President

Lockdown has been extended further. Hopefully most members are still able to do some creative activities during this time.

I have been doing so much wire wrapping and wire weaving that I have worn my fingernails down and have cuts on my fingers. But suffering for your art is acceptable.

If you have been working on a project at home, send some photos to Judy for the newsletter. It would be nice to see what people have been working on.

When lockdown is over, we will be opening as soon as practicable.

Due to Covid and lockdown, the September meeting and AGM will not be taking place. Open day in October has also been cancelled.

A big thank you for the club members who are still keeping things running, even though we can't actually go to the club. Judy has diligently published an interesting newsletter every month. It is so good to have some news from the club, even though we can't be there.

Margaret has been paying our monthly bills and is getting our financial year treasurer's report together. I really appreciate everyone who is doing their bit to keep the club going.

I look forward to seeing everyone when this lockdown ends.

Suzy Brandstater
President

From the Editor

Firstly, I would like to say a big 'thank you' to those of you who offered support and suggestions for improving the newsletter. I hope you find the changes in this edition relevant and interesting. It's an evolving process, so keep your eye out on upcoming editions, and I look forward to your continued feedback.

This month we introduce a new column, '*Our Human Gems and Fossils*'. Each month we will feature a club member so you can get to know a little bit about them.

If you would like to participate, but not sure where to start, a list of questions which you can use as a prompt is below. You may write your own story, or send in answers to the questions so we can put it together for you. Please include a 'head and shoulders' photo of yourself, so members can recognise you when they next see you.

Members will be featured in order of their profile submissions but we'd like to include everyone at some stage so I encourage you to make contact by email to: (ctownlapidaryclub.editor@gmail.com).

Please also make contact if you have a piece of work/project you would like featured in the new '*Show and Tell*' section.

Finally, please also let us know of any special news/items of interest/suggestions you'd like to share.

Profile questionnaire prompts:

- 1 When did you join the club?
- 2 Did you join alone or with someone else?
- 3 How did you find out about the club?
- 4 What was your main interest when you joined?
- 5 What is your main interest now?
- 6 What current involvement/s do you have with the club?
- 7 Have you been a committee member at any time? (if so, a little bit about it)?
- 8 Any significant contributions of skill or labour that you have made?
- 9 Any special skills? (what are they - related or non-related to club)
- 10 What is your favourite activity in the club?
- 11 What is your birthstone?
- 12 What is your favourite gemstone?
- 13 Did you have any interest/activities related to gems or jewellery prior to joining the club?
- 14 Do you (or family/friends) wear the jewellery you have made?
- 15 Have you sold any of your finished items? (some interesting details...)
- 16 Have you made a piece 'to order' for someone else? (some interesting details...)
- 17 Are you a collector? (of stones, fossils etc), and if so, tell us a little about it
- 18 If you are a fossicker, tell us about your best find/trip.
- 19 Do you have any other hobbies (what are they), Sports?
- 20 What is your profession/employment?
- 21 Where were you born? (If not Australia, how long lived in Australia?)
- 22 Other interesting tidbits about yourself to tell us about?

Our Human Gems and Fossils

Below is our first member profile with thanks to:

Clarice Stretch



Clarice is a veteran member having joined over 40 years ago with her late husband Eric after discovering the club through our Annual Exhibition and Open Days.

Her initial and continuing interest lay in beading and in social interaction; she particularly enjoyed Lil Klepser's workshops where learning to make beaded bracelets set her on the path to creating many cherished adornments. The bracelets remain her favourite items to make to this day.

She has a long-time love affair with opals and chose the colourful stone for her engagement ring in 1954, but she says it was not until immigrating to Australia that she saw how beautiful opals can really be.

She has taken part in many of the club's activities over the years and recalls her first fossicking trip with the club at Marulan where she found a royal blue sapphire that she claimed was just 'beginners luck'. Bob Pullam cut it for her and she had it made into a pendant.

Born in Manchester, England, she and her family came to Australia in 1971 when her husband took employment here. It was a big decision and a huge step to emigrate with 3 young sons but she claims it was the best thing they ever did. A retired laboratory assistant, she is now a widowed octogenarian enjoying her family of 3 sons and 2 grandsons and pursuing her interest in history as a member of the Campbelltown & Airs Historical Society.

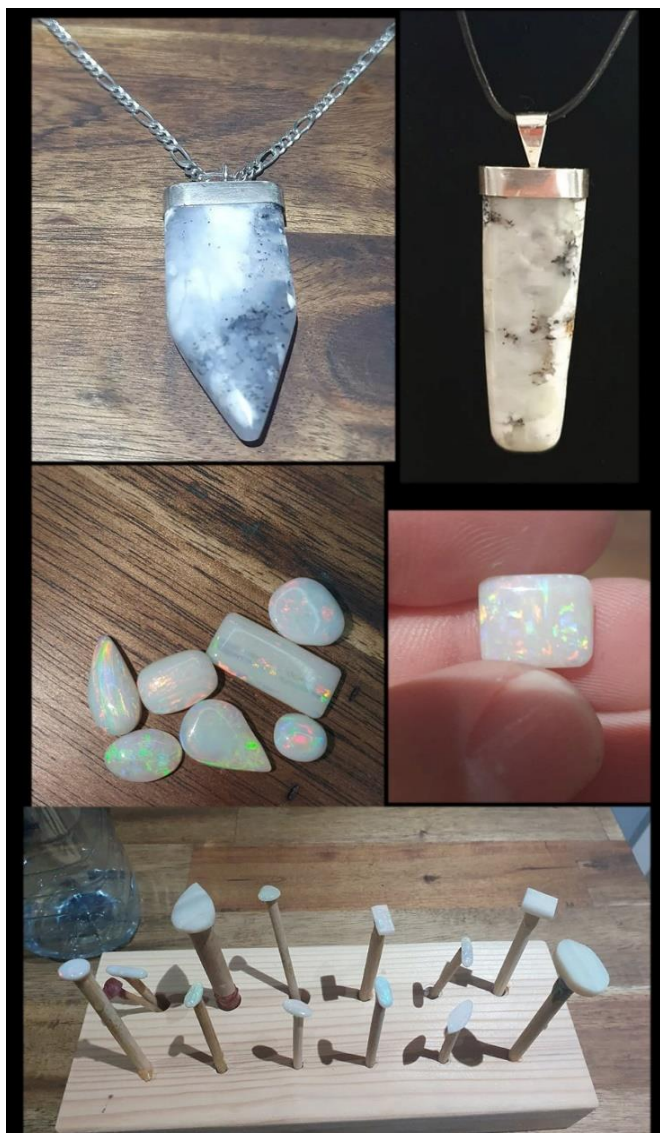
Show and Tell

Who's doing what – at home?

As mentioned earlier, we are encouraging members to submit a photo/s and a few words about their current or previous project they would like to share.

This month, we have contributions from Josh and Suzy.

Josh has been busy working on some beautiful opals, and also refining his silver working skills by making pendants for moss agate stones he has shaped and polished.



Thanks for sharing, Josh. Looks like you have been keeping busy, with great results!

We also have some contributions from Suzy, who has already explained how busy she has been with her wire wrapping activities.

Here we have three photos of Suzy's project showing different stages for a very intricately wire-wrapped pendant.



Thanks for sharing, Suzy. This looks like a very challenging activity, with wonderful results.

Handy Tips and Hints

<https://workingsilver.com/argentium/>

Argentium

Answer the following question:

Is Argentium

- the name of a Roman emperor
- a lost city like Atlantis
- a Superhero?

If you answered c, you are right! Argentium is superhero sterling silver, capable of creating beautiful jewellery without firescale or tarnishing. How does it do this, you ask?



Argentium bracelet

Traditional sterling silver is 92.5% silver and 7.5% copper. When it is heated, oxygen molecules can pass through and cause the copper to oxidize. When this occurs below the surface, it is called firescale. When the same chemical reaction occurs on the surface without the heat, it's called tarnish. Either way, it's a pain in the (fill in whatever body part you want!). Argentium (a trademarked and guaranteed sterling silver) is 93.5% silver, about 5.5% copper, and about 1% germanium. When Argentium is heated, germanium oxide forms as a transparent, protective layer on the silver, making it tarnish-resistant. Additionally, this layer of germanium oxide prevents firescale by oxidizing preferentially to the copper. That just means that it oxidizes first! Germanium oxide is also self-regenerating, which means that the piece is permanently protected from firescale. How cool is that!

Argentium was developed by Peter Johns at the Art and Design Research Institute at Middlesex University in London, England in the 1990's with the intention of making a silver alloy with increased resistance to tarnishing and firescale. In addition, it is more durable and has greater ductility. It can also be heat-hardened and has a brighter shine than regular sterling silver. Finally, Argentium is made with ethically sourced silver and is hypoallergenic. All this, and it doesn't cost a whole lot more than traditional sterling silver!



Granulation

Argentium ring


What can you do with it? Pretty much anything you do with traditional sterling silver. Argentium Sterling is available in sheet, wire, bezel and gallery wire, tubing, solder and casting grain, so any projects you make with sterling silver can easily be made with Argentium. Argentium really likes itself and FUSES well for Granulation pieces or jump rings. All the jewellery pieces featured on this page were made using Argentium Sterling and FUSED instead of soldered.

Because of the brightness, Argentium makes beautiful, clean-lined modern jewellery. Because of the germanium oxide, liver of sulphur and silver black do not create a patina on Argentium the way they do on traditional sterling silver.

Since it is so bright and white, try boldly coloured stones with it, such as garnet, amethyst and lapis which will pop against the clean shine of the Argentium. Or just focus on texture and design.

However you use it, Argentium Sterling will become your Superhero, Up, Up and Away!

September Birthdays – Sapphire

Ray Moulang	Sapphire The September birthstone is sapphire – a gem that’s been cherished for thousands of years. Although the term sapphire usually refers to the blue variety of corundum (ruby is the red variety), this birthstone comes in a rainbow of other colours. Sapphires have been long associated with royalty and romance and are also said to symbolize fidelity and the soul. “Sapphire” comes from the Greek word sappheiros and blue sapphire is one of the most popular coloured stones.	 SEPTEMBER SAPPHIRE
Ahmed Nasser		
Kamilla Shepherd		
Elaine Dean		
Ron Dean		
Mario Desillas		
Cassandra Ridding		

The September birthstone has traditionally symbolized sincerity, truth, faithfulness and nobility. For countless centuries, sapphire has adorned royalty and the robes of the clergy. The elite of ancient Greece and Rome believed that blue sapphires protected their owners from harm and envy. Clerics of the Middle Ages wore sapphires because they symbolized Heaven. Ancient Persians believed the earth actually rested on a giant sapphire, which made the sky blue.

The September birthstone was reputed to have healing powers as well. Medieval Europeans believed that sapphire cured plague boils and diseases of the eye. The sapphire birthstone was also thought to be an antidote to poison.

Famous sapphires include the Rockefeller Sapphire, a 62.02 carat (ct) rectangular step cut stone that was unearthed in Myanmar (Burma). Acquired in 1934 by financier and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874–1960) from an Indian maharaja, the gem was recut and remounted over the years. The sapphire was first set as a brooch and later as a ring featuring two cut-cornered triangular diamond side stones. Perhaps the best-known sapphire in recent years is the 12 ct blue gem surrounded by diamonds in the sapphire engagement ring first worn by Princess Diana and then given by her son to Kate Middleton, now Duchess of Cambridge.

The September birthstone is relatively hard, ranking 9 on the Mohs scale. It has excellent toughness and no cleavage, which is a tendency to break when struck. This makes it a great choice for rings and other mountings subject to daily wear.

Note, though, that sapphires are often treated to improve their colour or clarity. Heat treatment is common – and the results permanent – so it is well accepted in the trade. Less common treatments such as lattice diffusion, fracture filling and dyeing may require special care. In some cases, the colour induced by lattice diffusion is so shallow it could be removed if the stone was chipped or had to be recut. Fracture-filled and dyed sapphires can be damaged by even mild acids like lemon juice. Before you buy a sapphire, always ask if it is treated and by what method.

Warm, soapy water is always a safe choice for cleaning the September birthstone. Ultrasonic and steam cleaners are usually safe for untreated, heat-treated and lattice diffusion–treated stones. Fracture-filled or dyed material should only be cleaned with a damp cloth.

<https://www.gia.edu/birthstones/september-birthstones>



What's On Or Not ?

Hopefully will have come out of “lock down” and be free of travel restrictions by the scheduled time.

Events are generally from the Gem & 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
<u>Please note</u> all events are subject to rules and restrictions relating to Covid-19 pandemic.		
TBA	Campbelltown & Districts Lapidary Club Annual General Meeting Time: 9.30 am	Venue: Lot 1 Bensley Road, Ingleburn
30 – 31 October 2021	Canberra Lapidary Club Spring Gemcraft & Mineral Show. Time: Sat 10 am to 5 pm Sun 10 am to 4 pm	TBA

Words of Wisdom

Be grateful for what you have – and for what you don't have. - *Robert W Bly*

Have fun, take care and stay safe!

When you move too much & the snapchat filter comes off



Let me know what you think

ctownlapidaryclub.editor@gmail.com.