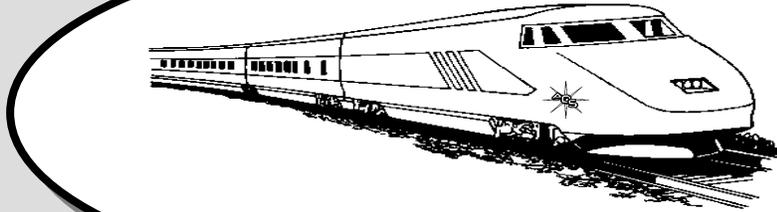


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September Speaker

Jim Bowden on the History of Gold Rushes of Southern California

This Thursday, September 12, Jim Bowden will be presenting us with a lecture about the history of the major gold rushes of Southern California. He will also be selling books and items after the meeting.

Jim will talk about the rushes that aren't so well known, such as Holcomb Valley near Big Bear and the area near Magic Mountain. Jim will also talk about the various types of gold mining and some of the techniques of mining.

He will also discuss some of the old mining towns.

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Members Only Website Password

AOS website's members only area: Name: "member" and Password: "opalyear".

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AOS Calendar for 2013

Below is the AOS Calendar for 2013.

American Opal Society Calendar	
Date	General Meeting Topic / Speaker
10-Jan-13	Opals of The Americas, Part 2 – Jim Pisani
14-Feb-13	Fluorescent Minerals and Opals - Jim Pisani
14-Mar-13	Michael Greyslock on Gold Detecting
11-Apr-13	Dr. Walt Johnson on Jewelry Making
09-May-13	Video on Opal Mining in Brazil
13-Jun-13	Live Opal Auction
11-Jul-13	Opal Show Working Meeting
08-Aug-13	Jason Zzyzx on Agates of Southern California
12-Sep-13	Jim Bowden, History of Southern CA Gold Rush
10-Oct-13	Dr Brandon Browne, CSUF, Mammoth Volcano
03-Nov-13	46th Annual Opal & Gem Show
04-Nov-13	46th Annual Opal & Gem Show
14-Nov-13	Opal & Gem Show Recap
12-Dec-13	AOS Christmas Party Potluck

It's Coming! The American Opal Society's 46th Annual OPAL & GEM SHOW

The Largest Opal Show in USA!

Sat. Nov. 2, 2013 - 10AM - 6PM

Sun. Nov. 3, 2013 - 10 AM - 5PM

Opal and Gem Dealers from the USA and Australia.
Rough and Cut Opals; gemstones; jewelry & supplies.
Huge Raffle many prizes of gemstones, jewelry, tools, etc.
Free Opal Seminars on Saturday with Paid Admission.
Free Demonstrations on gem cutting, jewelry making, etc.

New location!

The Phoenix Club - Festhalle

1340 S. Sanderson Ave., Anaheim, CA 92806

Dealer spots are still available!

If you are interested, contact us ASAP!

Veronica Pupura

(714) 974-3982 angeldragonflight@yahoo.com

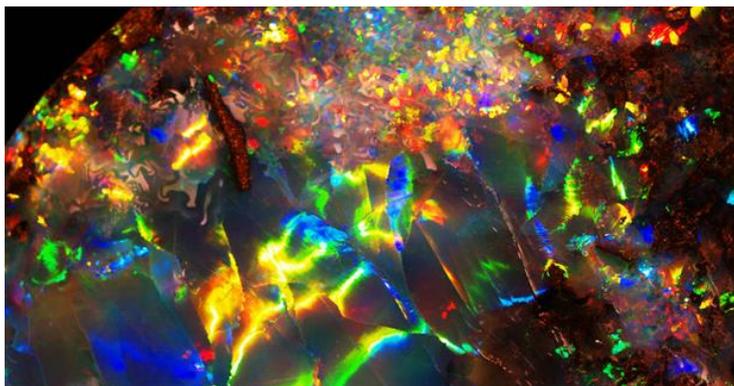
Jim Pisani

(714) 815-4638, editor@opalsociety.org

Uncovered: The Truth about Opal Formation

By: Amy Middleton, June-3-2013

The secret of how opals formed in Australia's Red Centre could shed light on the landscape on Mars.



Researchers say opals formed when Australia's rainforests receded over 90 million years ago. (Credit: Wikipedia)

NEW RESEARCH HAS EXPLAINED the mysterious formation of opals, found in abundance in Australia's red center, and the information could shed light on the environment on Mars.

Australia produces over 90 per cent of the world's precious opals, but before now scientists have never been able to explain precisely how the gemstones formed.

"Before this we did not know [opal's] origin, why it forms at such shallow depths or why it can be found in central Australia and almost nowhere else on Earth," says lead researcher Professor Patrice Rey, a geologist at the University of Sydney.

Opals formed by acidic weathering

Patrice says the findings, published this week in the [Australian Journal of Earth Sciences](#), reveal that opals formed during "an extraordinary episode of acidic weathering, during the drying out of the central Australian landscape."



Mars-like landscape near Coober Pedy, SA. (Credit: University of Sydney)

Between 100 million and 97 million years ago, a vast sea that covered 60 per cent of Australia – from Coober Pedy in South Australia to the Gulf of Carpentaria in northern Australia – began retreating.

This drying out of Australia's center increased the acidity levels at shallow depth, releasing silica through the weathering of sandstone. Further weathering then lowered the acidity to a level at which precious opal can form in the silica-rich gel.

Australia's Red Centre similar to Mars

Central Australia is believed to be the only place on earth where acidic weathering of this scale has ever taken place, although similar conditions have been observed on the surface of Mars.

Non-precious opal deposits were discovered on the Red Planet by NASA in 2008.

"If you look at Mars and the Red Centre, they share similar characteristics," says Patrice. "Similar rocks went through similar

weathering processes, so potentially precious opals might exist there."

Patrice says central Australia offers a "unique natural laboratory", where researchers can study biological processes that could potentially be present on Mars.

Mike Snow, a minerals expert at the South Australian Museum, says the findings are compelling, and may well provide a glimpse into the landscape on Mars.

"The landscapes of Mars and the [Red] Centre both have large amounts of red oxidized iron," says Mike. "This is part of the opal story."

"Perhaps opal may well occur on Mars if it is similar to the Great Artesian Basin."

From <http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/journal/uncovered-the-truth-about-opal-formation.htm>

Keep an eye on the Mars Rover Curiosity's pictures – maybe we will see some color! The Editor

A National Travesty

By Ian McArthur, February 24, 2011

Opal has the power to eclipse jewellery lovers, says Ian McArthur – if only retailers would give Australia's national gem the treatment it deserves.

"I didn't think that I liked opal, but, wow, these are amazing!" I regularly hear this type of comment. Why is it that the Australian public think they don't like opal? Is it because retailers offer too little and charge too much, choosing to stock opals that have very little colour, or glassy-looking triplets in unimaginative settings?

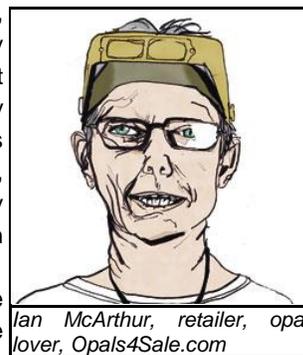
For too long the jewellery trade has left our national gemstone in the hands of specialty opal shops, where duty free signs and exorbitant prices have kept the Aussie public ignorant of its wonders.

Good opal at a fair price sells itself. Hand a \$2,000 sapphire and \$5,000 ruby to a customer, and then present them with an opal of equivalent value and see what happens. I guarantee they can spend far more time looking at the opal than the other two gems. And looking time is really important; if you can spend five or 10 minutes looking at a stone, you're getting real value out of it.

I bet most jewelers don't even know what gives opal its colourful characteristics. The colour in opal is created from light diffraction between spherical molecules that form the stone. So you could say that opal is the light of our great south land. And ain't that something to shout about?

This light has certainly eclipsed overseas buyers. There exists a small area in southwest Queensland that has recently become extremely popular with Europeans and Americans. Why? Because it produces ironstone matrix opal. These exquisite stones are creating quite a storm around the world, but get little mention in our mainstream jewellery trade and I see little, if any, of this material displayed here in Australia.

Maybe this is because jewelers don't think there's a demand for it in Australia? Or maybe it's because the trade, like the public, don't understand the product? And if the trade doesn't understand this gem, how can the public ever be expected to?



Perhaps our national gem hasn't had the marketing it deserves. Who was it that said opals were an unlucky stone? De Beers, that's who. After the second world war it launched a marketing campaign in Australia so powerful that it still resonates around the world today: opals are unlucky, they said, and every man should buy his fiancé a diamond that costs one month's salary.

So how can we reverse this national travesty? For a start, the jewellery industry could make more noise about opal. Do this beautiful gemstone the justice it deserves by promoting it, both in advertising and in shop displays. Posters of really interesting pieces can make a mesmerizing store centerpiece.

Education is also key. Most store staff don't even know that opal colour is diffracted light. How can they be expected to sell it if they don't understand it? Teach staff what you want them to show off and point to, and these stones will fly out of your shop.

In today's market, it's likely that the price of opal has been a sticking point in Australia. But it is the world market of supply and demand that sets the price. The Swiss demand for full colour center nuts drives the price well beyond what we dinkum Aussies like to pay, but if we want them, we must cough up.

Compared with opal from Lightning Ridge and Coober Pedy, Queensland Yowah nuts and ironstone matrix are still relatively inexpensive. A very pretty stone can sell for as low as \$20 or as high as \$20,000, whereas the Ridge stones start at \$20,000. Southwest Queensland opal does not cost a lot to stock, either. A decent display of loose stones is inexpensive relative to finished jewellery products.

Stocking loose stones gives your customers the chance to pick their own opal and then work with you to create a unique piece of jewellery, building a stronger bond with your customer. The shape, colour, and size of the stone will also help stimulate jewellery design ideas; it looks good in gold or silver, and coloured diamonds make great accent stones, from cognacs and yellows to greens.

Now here is some really good news that applies to southwest Queensland opal, and to no other product in the jewellery trade: ironstone matrix opal is so unique that the price for each piece is a one and only price: it can be priced according to desire. No one can say that it isn't a "fair price", or "that's too much". The pieces that I like I price high and the stones that I'm not so keen on get sold for less. They all sell; it's just a matter of time. This then gives the retailer total price control.

Now ain't that a bonus!

From <http://www.jewellermagazine.com>

Far Out: Ancient Egyptian Jewelry Came from Outer Space

By Denise Chow, Staff Writer, August 19, 2013

Ancient Egyptian beads found in a 5,000-year-old tomb were made from iron meteorites that fell to Earth from space, according to a new study. The beads, which are the oldest known iron artifacts in the world, were crafted roughly 2,000 years before Egypt's Iron Age.

In 1911, nine tube-shaped beads were excavated from an ancient cemetery near the village of el-Gerzeh, which is located south of Cairo, said study lead author Thilo Rehren, a professor at UCL Qatar, a Western Asian outpost of the University College London's Institute of Archaeology. The tomb dates back to approximately 3200 B.C., the researchers said.

Inside the tomb, which belonged to a teenage boy, the iron beads were strung together into a necklace alongside other exotic materials, including gold and gemstones. Early tests of the beads'

composition revealed curiously high concentrations of nickel, a telltale signature of iron meteorites.

"Even 100 years ago, [the beads] attracted attention as being something strange," Rehren told LiveScience.

But without definitive proof of the beads' cosmic origins, questions persisted over whether similar amounts of nickel could be present in human-made iron. By scanning the iron beads with beams of neutrons and gamma rays, the researchers found high concentrations of cobalt, phosphorous and germanium; these elements were present at levels that only occur in iron meteorites.

"It's really exciting, because we were able to detect sufficient cobalt and germanium in these beads to confirm they're meteoritic," Rehren said. "We had assumed this was the case for 100 years, but it's nice to be able to put an exclamation mark on the label, rather than a question mark."

The X-ray technology also revealed that the beads had been hammered into thin sheets before being meticulously rolled into tubes.

"This meteoritic iron, it's very hard material that you find in lumps, and yet here we see it in thin beads," Rehren said. "The real question is, how were they made?"

Unlike softer and more pliable metals like gold and copper, working with solid iron required the invention of blacksmithing, which



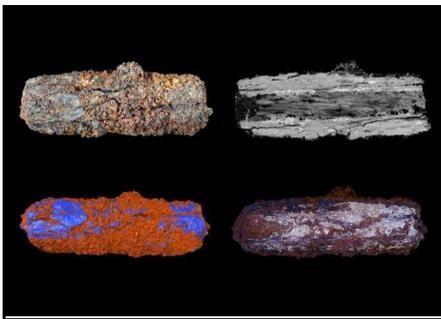
Meteoric iron beads (center) are pictured between ancient Egyptian necklaces that are strung with tube-shaped lapis lazuli (blue), carnelian (brownish/red), agate, and gold beads. Credit: UCL Petrie Museum/Rob Eagle

involves repeatedly heating metals to red-hot temperatures and hammering them into shape.

"It's a much more elaborate operation and one that we assumed was only invented and developed in the Iron Age, which started maybe 3,000 years ago — not 5,000 years ago," Rehren said.

The researchers suggest the iron meteorites were heated and hammered into thin sheets, and then woven around wooden sticks to create 0.8-inch-long (2 centimeters), tube-shaped beads. Other stones found in the same tomb displayed more traditional stone-working techniques, such as carving and drilling.

"This shows that these people, at this early age, were capable of blacksmithing," Rehren said. "It shows a pretty advanced skill with this difficult material. It might not have been on large scales, but by the time of the Iron Age, they had about 2,000 years of experience working with meteoritic iron."



An analysis of this Gerzeh bead showed it was crafted from a space rock.

This is not the first time beads from this Egyptian tomb have been linked to the cosmos. Earlier this year, in May, researchers at the Open University and University of Manchester published a paper in the journal Meteoritics and Planetary Science about the celestial origins of the ancient beads.

Other researchers have identified different artifacts that also have space origins. Last year, German scientists discovered a Buddha statue that was carved from a meteorite between the eighth and 10th centuries.

The detailed findings of the new study were published online today (Aug. 19) in the Journal of Archaeological Science.

Follow Denise Chow on Twitter [@denisechow](#). Follow LiveScience [@livescience](#), [Facebook](#) & [Google+](#). Original article on [LiveScience](#).

From <http://www.livescience.com-from-meteorites.html>

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From Rags to Riches

Chapter 38 – New Claim and Directions

By Peter Greisl

Being a glorious Sunday morning and everyone is up and busy doing nothing. I got up and had a hearty breakfast, Chris has been already washing, Beatrix is tending her Garden and Johnny has his head stuck under the Bonnet of the Ute. I decided I am having a lazy day in doing absolutely nothing other than scheming and dreaming, what to do about the place, the move to another claim, the birth of my new baby etc.

It is now November and we have been here already on the field 4 months, and the weather is getting warmer, some people have left the field already for annual holiday, in about a couple of weeks Klaus and Ludwig will be leaving the field also for their break. Since we don't have a place to go to we will be staying here on the fields and just continue the normal routine.

I am seriously contemplating to buy the shack of Harry and make some modification to it. I am sending them a letter and I will make them a offer just to save time of writing back and forth, and if they do not accept it then we have enough time to find other accommodations, maybe we have to move back to Dutton Village.

What I had in mind was something like Trevor said \$ 2,500 with \$500 down and the balance to be paid within 12 month, no set amount on any payments made, I am happy to offer a 5% Interest fee on the remaining balance.

I ran this by Christa and she said, if they accept it would be great. I told her well they have to move quickly as he has to take up the new position, and I am sure they do not have to rely on this money.

Chris acknowledged and just said well let's hope it works out.

After that I worked with pen and paper to work out the costing of the Toilet, the next I worked out to fence the place with two runs of plain and two runs of Barbed wire, with 8 Posts I would use railway sleepers, as corner and gate post, with Star droppers in between. It is amazing what I have learned in my past when i was working on a Stud Farm near Sydney and leaned about Fencing, brick laying, irrigation work etc.

Which helps me and saves me a hell of a lot of money, being able to do most of it myself.

After my calculation I knew I could afford to everything I have in mind.

I told Chris about my Ideas and she listened attentively and was happy with what I would do here.

She asked me about moving the claim; I told her I would not move until we have completely exhausted our options there other than the Cut.

But I will go and look at the Boundary Rider and pick and choose a claim for us. I will do this afternoon, as a matter of fact why don't you and Beatrix come with me, gets you out of the place for a while.

Chris said 'What about Johnny?' Well he can do what he likes this is not a Job what we doing, he don't have to come but I will ask him.'

Johnny said no if I don't mind he wants to have a good rest today. Which I thought was a great Idea.

Before we left I asked Johnny if he got everything cleaned yesterday, He said yes and there again is some great stuff, The Jars and containers are all in the Lounge behind the couch.

I went in and got the containers out and there was three large Cucumber Jars full of blue and green orange Jelly, there were three 250ml Epsom Salt containers with crystal chips, and the another two containers of one with Doublet material and one with solids.

I said to Johnny as he walked in you sly dog, why didn't you tell me, this is great stuff,' He smiled and said 'just a little surprise, I am sure there is enough good stuff here to pay for all the things you would like doing.'

'Have you got some weights on all that stuff,' Sure he replied and took a piece of paper out of his shirt pocket and handed it to me, I was astonished, there is about 40 ounces of Jelly, 7 ounces of top doublet material, 4 ounces of solids, ranging anywhere from 10 to 30 carats per rough stone, and a complete 250 gr Jar full of the most beautiful Chips.

Chris came in and I said to her, 'Have a look at this Darling, 'She smiled and said I know, I helped Johnny weighing it.' Why didn't you tell me I asked, she replied 'for the same reason Johnny did not tell you,' and she smiled.

'You Guys know how to make a fellow feel real great and pleased with knowing what great people surround him' I am very happy with you Johnny, you are like my brother. 'Chris came up and hugged me, and just said we are Family, even if some of us not blood related.'

Well in that case, Johnny you better finish it off, go and sell it to Peter.'

I made some rough calculations and said to Johnny, don't accept less than \$5,000 but go for \$7,000.

From last experience we got \$60 per ounce for the Jelly, and \$250.00 for the doublet and triplet material, and we got \$ 480 for the solids.

I based my calculation on the last prices we received.

Johnny looked at my figures and said well lets go. I see you later, he grabbed all the bottles and shoved them into a bag and drove of to see Peter.

Chris said 'that was a very nice thing to do giving him this responsibility.' Yes I know it was time to test him on negotiations, and I am convinced he will manage all right.

Are you ready I asked Chris, she called Beatrix I shoved 8 pegs in the car I always like to have more on hand, you never know if you require them or not and a pick and we are off to peg a claim.

Chris and I we drove off on the way to the Boundary Rider, we saw Rob and Trevor's Backhoe and we pulled up and we walked to where Rob said about the claim, it was a open cut of course and someone sank a shaft halve way up the ramp, the cut is about 24 feet deep and I thought there must be some shafts here somewhere, I walked around and I found a shaft about 20 meters west of the cut, and I got closer and crawled on my belly towards the hole and looked down with my Torch and I could see at the bottom that it has been opened up. I decided to peg this claim as well as the one adjoining to Trevor.

Chris and Beatrix were noodling and picked up a couple of pieces of blue coloured potch.

I said to Chris, all done I pegged a couple claims, and I get Johnny to bring a couple ladders from the claim and we go and check this one here out to see what's happened there.

I said to Chris lets go down to Gus and Lottie and have a couple drinks.

Chris agreed and we drove down to the Opal Restaurant. Having arrived there were some people we knew and also Laszlo

and his wife, they asked us to join them and we had a very nice and refreshing conversation.

Time came for us to leave, we went home and there was Johnny sitting on the Veranda enjoying a cold beer.

Chris went inside with Beatrix and I joined Johnny, without me saying a word Johnny looked at me and pulled out of his shirt one of our famous linen bags we use for nice opal.

He handed it to me and it felt full. I opened the neck and looked in and saw lots of notes in there, I said lets go inside. We went in and I said Chris come and join us, which she did and I took the bag and emptied on the table, Chris's and my eyes just popped out and I started putting the notes into their right denominations and then counted it all.

I came up with a total of \$6,750 dollars.

I said o Johnny 'well done son, tell us what happened,' He said

When I went there, Peter was just going to go out and I told him that I have something here he should not miss out on. He took me inside and I pulled all the stuff out and as you know the ritual he goes through each bottle etc., finally he said how much do you want for it, I told him that You told me I am not to sell it for under \$ 7,500 if not then bring it home.

Peter said, No way all I can offer for it is \$ 6,000.00m' I said my partner kills me if I sell for this, I must have at least \$ 7,000, Peter said 'Johnny I tell you what, I give you right now \$ 6,500' 'I replied Peter you make it \$ 6,750 and I take the chance in telling my partner that's the best I could get for it otherwise I have to take it back.

Peter agreed and that's how it come about I got that amount for it.

Johnny I am proud of you, you did well, here you are my friend \$ 3,375 your share and you earned every cent of it.

'Chris get the bottle of the Champaign we got left from the Party at Gus's place and let's celebrate' Chris said 'I just put on some Chops which won't be long then we celebrate.'

Guy's let me tell you I can see my dream coming tom fruition. Johnny I hope you have a dream and not just live from one day to the next.

Dreams are what keep you alive and focused on your future.

You know what my dream is? I like to find an Opal Specimen which goes into a hall of fame of Opal, It is not the money it is the sheer delight in uncovering something Mother Nature has been hiding for millions of years. The Money is just a byproduct.

I want nothing more from life then to be able to give my family financial independence and financial freedom. And as long as my Bum hole points to the ground will I not forget that this is what I am striving for.

Many people which are in search of Opal are not Opalholics, no they are only interested in the money this great rainbow rock offers. And that is the sad part about it, every time either you or I sell a piece of Opal I am selling it in the hope and belief that it will bring other people the same Joy and pleasure as it does for me, you know, and you can ask Chris, I have a little vegemite jar of really great crystal opal chips, I change the water every second day or so, you will find it in my bedside cupboard, I take it with me to the dunny. I look at it every night when I go to bed. I get tremendous comfort and satisfaction from looking at it.

You most probably think I am a fruit cake, well so be it, but I love this Gem Stone and I always will have some or one at least which displays its magnificent colours.

Yes I am an Opalholic and proud of it.

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I'm glad to hear that we can still get Ethiopian rough! The Editor

Ethiopia: Rough Cut Ban U-Turn in Bid to Boost Mining Revenue

By Fortune Staff Writer, 4 August 2013

The Ministry of Mines (MoM) is backtracking on its plan to ban rough gem exports during the 2013/14 fiscal year. It is also lifting the May 2012 export ban on raw tantalum, in order to increase the export volume of mineral resources.

The Ministry's decision came after the export desk at Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn's office ordered all federal institutions dealing with exports to come up with more ambitious targets for the current fiscal year, Fortune confirmed from a senior official close to the issue and a mid-level expert of gemstones at the MoM. This is to offset the lag created in the country's exports over the past three years.

In order to comply with the request, the MoM has raised its revenue projections to a billion dollars, for 2013/14. This is a drastic jump up from its initial conservative target of 777 million dollars.

Part of the reason for the low projections, aside from the fall in gold prices, was the MoM's assumption that no revenue would be recorded from rough opal and raw tantalum exports. These collectively brought in 13.8 million dollars during the last fiscal year.

In January 2013, the Ministry announced its intention to ban rough gem exports at the start of the new fiscal year. This was because of the considerably higher price a value-added stone would fetch when compared with the rough cut. Although the ban of raw tantalum for similar reasons came at an earlier time, it was not fully implemented in 2012/13, because the tantalum already in stock was exported.

Either way, the benefits of value addition are unlikely to be seen this year, since it takes time for exporters and miners to get the refining machine and develop the capacity to operate it, according to the senior official from the MoM. But, once capacity is developed, a kilogram of value-added gemstone, namely opal, which makes up to 98pc of all gemstone exports in Ethiopia, can fetch 40,000 dollars, as opposed to the 1,500 dollars for rough gemstones.

There are 50,000 artisan gemstone miners and over 200 exporters in Ethiopia, according to data from the MoM. Very few of them, however, have bought the machine that cuts and softens the rough gems, according to the senior official from the Ministry.

This fact led the Ministry to set a very low revenue projection for rough gems. This was based on the plan to export 250kg of value-added gemstones for 10 million dollars, while not making any projections at all for tantalum exports.

The sudden 223 million dollar leap in export targets, however, is forcing the MoM to devise ways to fill the gap. Its new plan targets an increased volume of production and export. Hence, the Ministry has now revised its export targets to include the sale of 15,000kg of gemstones, worth five million dollars, and the export of 180tns of tantalum, valued at 20 million dollars. Additionally, the MoM aims to considerably boost the production and export of gold.

The Ministry hopes that, aside from filling gaps in export volume and value, delaying the bans will give artisan miners and exporters adequate time to buy the gemstone refining machine, as well as developing capacity.

Out of the four exporters interviewed by Fortune, only one, Berhan Kassa, already owns the machine. According to Berhan, the government's initial plan was better, since the refining machine is affordable and capacity can be built in a reasonably short period of time.

Value-adding machinery can be bought locally for prices ranging from 4,000 Br to 70,000 Br, with Chinese-built machines being the cheapest and brand machines from Europe and America the priciest.

"The industry needs to get used to change and update itself," he told Fortune.

Molla Yehuala, an artisan miner and exporter who supplies Berhan, also owns an Ethiopian made modified machine, purchased for 35,300 Br. Selling refined opal on the local market alone has increased his revenue by as much as 1,100 Br a gram.

"If the ban starts now, they will be limited to selling to the local market, which will offer them a lower price because of the ban," he told Fortune. More time should be given, is his opinion.

The Ministry plans to get such inputs from miners and exporters on August 6 and 7, 2013, at Ghion Hotel. It has called a meeting here to inform partners and stakeholders of its altered plans and to set regional targets.

From <http://allafrica.com/stories/201308060037.html?viewall=1>

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California Visitor's Rare Find: A Star-Shaped Piece of Benitoite



An Austrian will go home with a five-pointed souvenir from the only site where the state gemstone is mined.

By Bob Pool, August 17, 2013

Forget the Hollywood Walk of Fame refrigerator magnet, the Mickey Mouse ears beanie and the postcards of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Tourist Karina Ille will have a much more memorable souvenir of her California visit when she returns Sunday to her native Austria.

Last weekend the 21-year-old Ille discovered a rare star-shaped piece of benitoite in San Benito County, where this country's only mining spot for the gem is located.

That exclusivity prompted officials to proclaim benitoite as California's state gemstone in 1985.

And it was that proclamation that led Ille and her boyfriend to a spot outside of the Central Valley town of Coalinga on Sunday, where she and Henry Carradine and his parents spent the day searching for the elusive benitoite by sifting through piles of rocks hauled out of the California State Gem Mine.

The mine's operators pull the rocks from their open-pit dig and charge visitors \$70 each to spend the day searching for the mineral. Once suspected benitoite is discovered, visitors wash the rocks and study them under black lights in a darkened room outside of the mine. They are allowed to take home in quart zip-lock bags what they find.

That's how Ille discovered what she had. "This looks like a star," she said when the tiny rock glowed florescent-blue under the black light. "The guy who runs the place got freaked out when he saw it."

Mine owner David Schreiner acknowledges he was astounded when he looked at her find. "I got really excited by seeing that. Benitoite is the rarest gem in the world, and stars are even more rare. I suggested she photograph it and sell posters of it. What she found is worth a lot of money," he said.

But Schreiner said he was reluctant to place a value on Ille's stone. "I'd probably put a price on it too low," he said. "It's worth more than a diamond."

The most sought-after benitoite star is the six-pointed "star of David," which can be worth as much as \$50,000. Only about two dozen of them are known to exist.

Ille's tiny star has five points. Schreiner gave her a cotton-filled plastic pill bottle to carry it in so its points would not be damaged by other gems in her zip-lock bag.

She plans to carefully pack her star and her other benitoite samples in her carry-on bag when she and Carradine return to Austria. Both are students and concert musicians studying and performing in Vienna — she is a violinist and he is a pianist.

Carradine is a member of the family of actors. When prodded, he explains that actress Martha Plimpton is his cousin, actors Keith Carradine and the late David Carradine are his uncles, and the late actor John Carradine is his grandfather. His father, Christopher, is an architect and retired Disney Imagineer, and his mother, Carolyn, is an actress and artist.

Henry Carradine, 22, said he was looking up state trivia on the Internet when he discovered that benitoite was California's official gem. Further research told him that benitoite deposits are known to exist in Arkansas and Japan, as well as Coalinga.

He said the four of them learned of the rarity of benitoite when Caroline Carradine checked the Internet during their long drive back to Malibu, where Henry's parents live.

Ille said she was becoming worn out from hours of rock-sifting before the group went into the darkened room to look at their rocks under the black light.

"I'd started to fall asleep. It was getting boring," she said. But the florescent gems' purple glow under the black light energized her.

Next time she returns to California, she'll go back to the benitoite mine, she says now. "It was fun."

From the [Los Angeles Times](#)

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Interesting old article on gemstones in the USA. The Editor

Topaz, Amber, Pearls, Gold, Emeralds And Jade

(Originally published 1962)

A Texas rancher found a blue topaz weighing approximately seven hundred carats! This was many years ago at a spot near Mason, Texas.

Not too long ago, in Mason County, also in Texas, three men searched and worked for three days to make a topaz "find." Finally, tired and discouraged, they gave up. They put their equipment back in the car convinced that luck was against them. Yet, one woman along on the hunt decided to take a walk-and found a blue topaz weighing over two hundred carats!

A topaz can be valuable if it is a perfect stone. Finding a perfect topaz can be a lucky thing for the treasure hunter even in modern times, although in ancient times the hunter had an even more important reason to hunt topaz than we do. For the topaz not only had monetary value, it had the supposed power to avert sudden death!

In the United States we have found colorless, blue, yellow, and sherry-brown topaz. And there are more to be found-if you know where to look.

Watch for topaz at Mason County, Texas; at Topsham, Maine; at Nathrop and the Tarryall Mountains north of Lake George in Colorado; in the Thomas Mountain district of Utah, and in San Diego County, California.

Almost everywhere there is some sort of bauble to watch for even the organically fossilized gum on extinct trees, such as amber, a good sized lump of which can be worth as high as \$1,000.

Watch for amber in Richmond County, New York; Cape Sable, Maryland; Mercer, Salem and Camden Counties, New Jersey; and in Dukes County, Massachusetts.

Also, while you are watching for topaz and amber, do not forget the pearl. You do not need to go to exotic isles or foreign shores to find pearls. You can look for them right here in your own backyard.

Precious pearls can and have been found in America. They are produced by *Quadrula*, a fresh-water mussel. Chances are, of course, that the fresh-water pearls you find will not have the same value as marine pearls, but fresh-water types can be precious pearls.

Watch for them in the rivers of Michigan and Wisconsin. Try the Mississippi Valley, Tennessee, Iowa and Arkansas. Watch for them in Kentucky, New Jersey and Illinois.

Way back in the 1850's a farmer was chasing a cow. His foot struck a rock which, with the impact of his foot, broke off; when he stopped to look at it he saw that it was spotted with gold. Another discovery had been made, and, before it was over, over \$1,000,000 in gold had been taken out of the spot where the farmer had stumbled over the rock. And only a hundred and fifty feet away they took \$4,000,000 worth of gold out of the ground!

Anyone who vacations has a chance to find gold by panning in the stream beds of the gold country. Even the Boy Scout on a camping trip can come home with gold. All he needs is his gold pan, a little luck-and a little knowledge.

The yellow of gold is known to everyone. To find gold in a stream is an easy thing. When you see it, you know it, instinctively. It may be shaped as a grain, a nugget or sometimes fine as sand. But it is gold.

When you are not sure of what you have, or you just want to know for sure, write to the United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. They have information on gems and minerals-and if they do not have the information you want, they can tell you who to ask. However, do not ship them your samples of gems or gold, just ask for information.

There are also local gem and rock clubs for you to contact. Almost any town of any size has one of these clubs, and the members are almost always kind and courteous and willing to help.

Also write to the United States Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C., asking for a list of the booklets they print pertaining to gems, etc. These pamphlets are sold to the general public for a minimum fee and they contain some of the finest and most complete information.

Remember, anything that glitters is worth at least an investigation. With a rockhound's pick, a gold mining pan (even an old pie pan will work in an emergency) and the help of the United States Government, you might come home from your vacation with a fortune!

If you can find an emerald which is of good quality and large in size (over six carats), its value would be greater than that of a diamond.

The dark green of the emerald is among the most beautiful sights on earth, especially to the finder. To find a stone of gem quality is a very rare thing, though emeralds have been found in the United States. In North Carolina there are so-called emerald mines in several areas, but they are not active. There have also been reports of emerald finds along the Bowen River in South Carolina.

It is possible that you might be the one who finds an emerald within the United States-possibly along the banks of the Bowen River. And certainly if you could spot the superb grass green of a large gem emerald, its value would be great. The grass green of the emerald is a magnificent green-but there is only one true imperial green. This is the imperial green of jade, the green which is the most highly prized although jade comes in all shades of green.

We always think of jade as being associated only with the Orient; yet not too many years ago a huge jade boulder weighing over one thousand pounds was found in California near the area of the Trinity River. The boulder was one solid mass of every shade of green imaginable-and some of it was thought to be imperial green. And in Mendocino County, California, a large deposit of jade was found.

Jade, in both varieties, jadeite and nephrite, ranges in colors from white to dark green, but the imperial green jade is the most highly desired. A necklace of matched imperial beads has been valued at \$100,000.

The finding of just one piece of jade can turn family picnics into wild scrambles in search for more. Watch for both nephrite and jadeite-although jadeite is rarer and therefore has more value. But watch for both of them along the beaches and in stream beds, and also watch for deposits of jade.

Watch for the rare jadeite at the North Fork of the Eel River, Trinity County, California; Clear Creek, San Benito County and in Cloverdale and Valley Ford, Sonoma County, California.

Watch for nephrite at the North Fork of the Eel River, Trinity County, California; southeast of Lander, Wyoming; and Marin, Monterey and Tulare Counties, California.

The West seems to have all the best of it when it comes to jade hunting, but in North Carolina they have found rubies. Everyone knows the value of the ruby, especially the prized pigeon's blood color. The deep, deep red of the most highly prized rubies defies description, and the value of a fine ruby is higher than that of a diamond-if you can find it.

Watch for gem-quality rubies in stream beds and stream gravels especially. Watch for them at Cowee Valley, Macon County, North Carolina; and at Yogo Creek, Judith Basin County, Montana. Also watch for them in both Wyoming and Colorado. In Wyoming, gem rubies have been found at Marion Claim, Fremont County; in Colorado, they have been found at the Calumet mine, Salida.

If you should discover a gem similar to a ruby but which is some other color, and especially if it is a cornflower blue, do not throw it away. It may not be a ruby-but it could be a sapphire. Both rubies and sapphires are corundum-and both are worth your search. The red is ruby-but sapphire can be pink, green or yellow, salmon, cornflower blue, or colorless.

Watch for sapphires in Montana at Dry Cottonwood Creek deposit, northeast of Butte, Deer Lodge County; the Rock Creek deposit southwest of Philipsburg, Granite County; Missouri River deposits, northeast of Helena; Quartz Gulch, in Granite County; also in Chouteau County; Pole Creek, Madison County, and Browns Gulch, Silver Bow County.

Watch for sapphires in Indiana in Morgan County. In Idaho, watch for them in Washington and Adams Counties. Look far them in Colorado in Fremont County, and in California at Barstow, San Bernardino County.

Sapphires have also been found at the Calumet iron mine in Chaffee County, Colorado, and at the Corundum Hill mine, Macon County, North Carolina, and the Sapphire and White Water mine, Jackson County, North Carolina.

You might find a cornflower blue, that most prized sapphire! Buried in the anonymous rocks of a river deposit, or coated so with dirt that unless luck is with you, you might pass it by.

This almost happened to one of the world's most famous gemstones, the Australian Andamooka Opal, now belonging to Elizabeth of England. The gem is now magnificently set as the main stone of a necklace with matching earrings. But, originally, the opal, over four inches long and two inches wide in the rough, was so dirty that not even the miners recognized it for what it was until one of them accidentally chipped it with his pick.

So if, here in America, you chance across a dirty stone but which, if you look closely, shimmers and dances with inner fires, hang on to it. It could be opal-for opal too has been found here in America.

In the state of Nevada there is a place called Virgin Valley, where at some time in the eons of the past barks of trees, pine cones, and driftwood were covered by volcanic ash. Today, if you look carefully enough, some of them have become opals.

This Virgin Valley is noted for its precious opal, the most valuable of the opal gems. Also look for precious opal in lava flows of the Columbia plateaus in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

The so-called common opal, less rare and less valuable, can be found in Oregon, New York, Florida, New Jersey, Georgia and North Carolina.

The rarest of all the opals, of course, is the black opal, but more familiar to most of us are the white opals and the fire opals, aptly named because their inner flame resembles a rainbow fire unequalled in any other gem in the world.

The opal is known throughout the world as a "bad luck" stone, but certainly no treasure hunter would consider it bad luck to find a prize gem, an opal of fine quality. If he is extremely fortunate, however, he will find an emerald, a ruby, or a piece of imperial jade.

From <http://www.oldandsold.com/articles02/article1068.shtml>

From *Antique Digest – Lost Knowledge from the Past*

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September 2013 Gem & Mineral Shows

More shows can be found at <http://www.rockngem.com/show-dates-display/?ShowState=ALL>

30-2—FORT BRAGG, CA: Show; Mendocino Coast Gem & Mineral Society; Town Hall; Main and Laurel; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-9, Mon. 10-4; free admission; contact Jane Webb, PO Box 868, Fort Bragg, CA 95437, (707) 964-7182; e-mail: ejwebb@mcn.org

7-8—DOWNEY, CA: Annual show; Delvers Gem & Mineral Society; Downey Women's Club; 9813 Paramount Blvd., Paramount and Lubec; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; cabochon- and sphere-making demonstrations; contact Jon Fults, 3914 Mistral Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92649, (714) 846-7548; e-mail: jhfults@verizon.net

7-8—ROSEBURG, OR: 43rd annual show; Umpqua Gem & Mineral Club; Douglas County Fairgrounds; 2110 Frear St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission, donations appreciated; contact Janet Stringfellow, (541) 643-4037; e-mail: soldbyjanets@yahoo.com

20-22—SAN RAFAEL, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Marin Center; 10 Avenue of the Flags; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults and students (12 and up) \$7, children (11 and under) free; fine jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, exhibitors, on-site jewelry repair; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

21-22—CHICO, CA: Annual show; Feather River Lapidary & Mineral Society; Chico's Silver Dollar Fair Grounds; 2357 Fair St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$2, children (16 and under) free; giveaways for kids, dealers, opals, rough

rock, crystals, fossils, jewelry, minerals, demonstrations, wire wrapping, jewelry making, flint knapping, silent auction, door prizes, raffle, kids' games, Wheel of Fortune, grab bags; contact John Scott, 1288 Glenwood Ave., Chico, CA 95926, (530) 343-3491; e-mail: jweazel@sbcglobal.net; Web site: www.featherriverrocks.org

21-22—CHICO, CA: Annual show; Feather River Lapidary & Mineral Society; Silver Dollar Fairgrounds; 2357 Fair St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$2, children free; geode cutting, raffle, silent auctions, door prizes, arrowhead necklace for kids, crafts, junior rockhound dig, more than 30 dealers, fine jewelry, polished rocks, minerals, fossils, demonstrations, gemstone cutting, silver smithing, rock-crushing machine; contact John Scott, (520) 321-6331; e-mail: jweazel@sbcglobal.net

21-22—REDWOOD CITY, CA: Annual show; Sequoia Gem & Mineral Society; Community Activities Bldg.; 1400 Roosevelt Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, children (12 and under) free with adult; contact Preston Bingham, (650) 368-6351; e-mail: preston.bingham@att.net; Web site: http://sgms.driftime.com

28-29—FRANKLIN, NJ: 57th Annual Show; Franklin-Sterling Gem & Mineral Show; Franklin School; 50 WA Ave.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$7, children \$4; more than 30 dealers, fluorescent displays; contact Pat Seger, 22 Palomino Trail, Vernon, NJ 07462, (862) 266-4472; e-mail: pesolutions.minerals@gmail.com; Web site: http://franklinmineralsshow.webs.com/

28-29—LODI, CA: Annual show; Stockton Lapidary & Mineral Club; Lodi Grape Festival Grounds; 413 E. Lockeford St.; Daily 10-5; adults \$5, children (under 12) free; contact Jerold Kyle, 327 Del Mont St., Lodi, CA 95242, (209) 368-9411; e-mail: jeroldkyle@yahoo.com; Web site: www.stocktonlapidary.com

28-29—MONTEREY, CA: Annual show; Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Monterey Fairgrounds; 2004 Fairgrounds Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3.50, seniors \$2.50, children free with adult; contact Janis Rovetti, 1047 Roosevelt St., Monterey, CA 93940, (831) 372-1311; e-mail: janis12@sbcglobal.net; Web site: www.cvgms.com

28-29—SANTA ROSA, CA: Annual show; Santa Rosa Mineral & Gem Society; Wells Fargo Center for the Arts; 50 Mark West Springs Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, children (under 12) free; "Astronomic Discoveries": meteorites, tektites, fulgurites, fossils, gems, minerals, jewelry, gold panning, books, kids' stuff; contact Jolene Coon, (707) 849-9551; e-mail: jolene4srmgs@gmail.com; Web site: srmgs.org

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American Opal Society Membership Application

FILL IN APPLICABLE INFORMATION		DUES / FEES)	AMOUNT PAID
DUES: SELECT ONE	RENEWING MEMBERS	\$30	
	NEW MEMBERS	\$40	
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (All addresses <u>outside</u> of USA)		\$10	
PRINTED NEWSLETTER FEE (Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail)		\$5	
ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your First Badge is <u>free</u> when joining)		\$10	
TOTAL PAID DUES plus International, Print or Badge Fees if Applicable:			

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 An optional, quicker method of payment is via the Internet. To pay, just visit the membership page on our website at http://opalsociety.org/aos_application_by_web.htm and complete the form. You may pay with a Credit Card or via PayPal account. The transaction is completely secure and the AOS never sees your credit card number. The AOS PayPal account is membership@opalsociety.org.

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NAME BADGE ORDER FORM:
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MEMBERSHIP ROSTER: The AOS publishes a membership directory once per year in its Newsletter, the *Opal Express*. Your name will be included. Please check what additional personal information that you want listed for other members. If it is different from the information above, please note that on the application.

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Are Your Dues Due Now?
 PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or NEWSLETTER E-MAIL. There should be a date that shows the current month/year of your membership. If the date is older than the current date, your dues are overdue. A warning will be stated if you are overdue.
 A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. Please note, however, that as the system is now set up, if your renewal is not received you will be AUTOMATICALLY dropped from membership thereafter. It is your responsibility to assure your dues are current.
 Thank you,
 The Editor

The Opal Express

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**Volume #46 Issue #9
September 2013**

Some Topics In This Issue:

- The Truth about Opal Formation
- A National Travesty
- Far Out: Ancient Egyptian Jewelry Came from Outer Space
- From Rags to Riches: New Claim and Directions
- Rough Cut Ban U-Turn in Bid to Boost Mining Revenue
- A Star-Shaped Piece of Benitoite
- Topaz, Amber, Pearls, Gold, Emeralds And Jade

Important Dates:

September 12 - General Meeting:

Jim Bowden on the Gold Rushes of Southern California

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

2nd Thurs. of the Month
7:30 pm - 9:30 PM

Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
9501 Chapman Ave.
Garden Grove, CA 92841
(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

MEETING ACTIVITIES

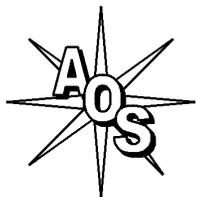
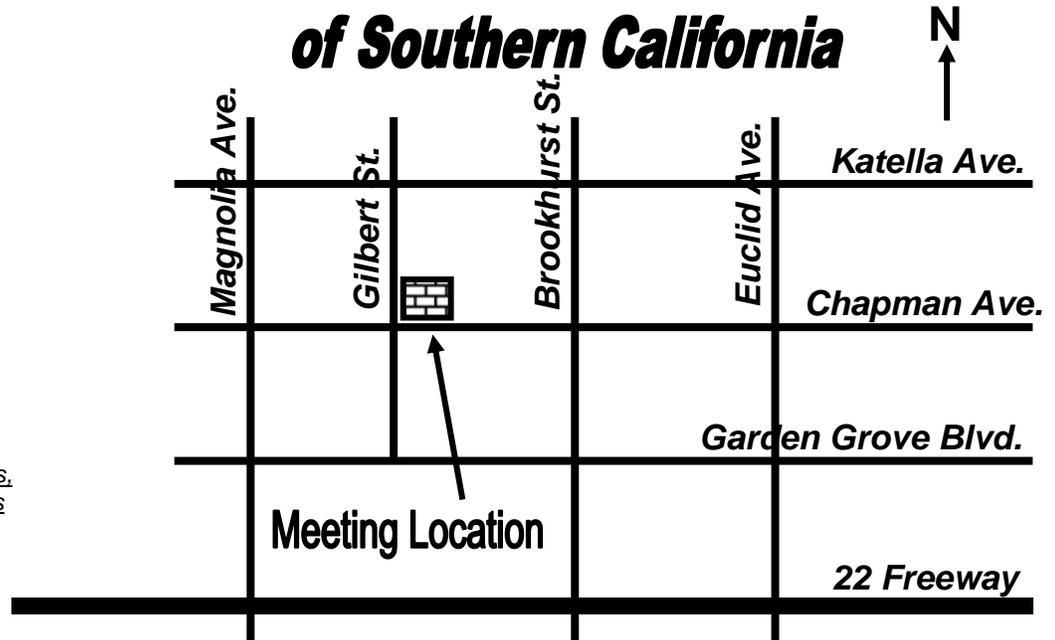
Opal Cutting, Advice, Guest Speakers,
Slide Shows, Videos, Other Activities

TO:

September 12 Meeting

Jim Bowden

on the Gold Rushes of Southern California



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<http://OpalSociety.org>

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