

The Opal Express

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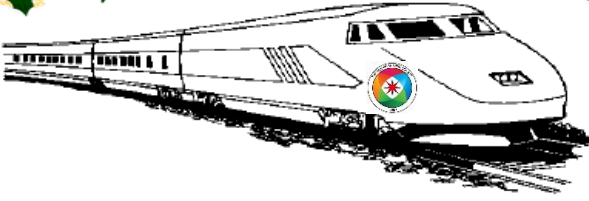


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President's Message

Holiday Greetings Opalholics!

First of all I would like to invite everyone to our annual Christmas Potluck. The festivities will be at the Masonic Lodge in Garden Grove on Monday, December 16th from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The Opal Society provides turkey, ham and beverages. Bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share with the group and enjoy an evening of camaraderie and holiday cheer. See address in upper right box.

As mentioned in the November Opal Express, we had a successful opal show. I want to personally give a BIG THANK YOU to all our volunteers: Jamie Cassidy-Curtis, LaVerne Christenson, Naomi Higuchi and Russ Madsen, who tirelessly manned the front desk. Pete Goetz did a splendid job of helping dealers with questions and restroom breaks, made sure the prize show case was filled and kept a watchful eye on the show floor and parking lot. Jay Carey brought the much needed coffee, donuts and water each morning. Thank you also to Jamie Cassidy-Curtis, Corey Kuepper, Russ Madsen and Jeff Tomasini for helping to get our electrical cords ready for the show. The Anaheim Beautiful Teen Ambassadors were a big help in modeling jewelry and pulling the tickets for our prize drawing. And a special thank you to Veronica Purpura for taking care of all the arrangements needed to pull this show together. Our dealers and demonstrators are a big part of the show and I thank each one of you for being a part of our show. We're looking forward to seeing everyone at next year's show!

As we come to the end of another year, the opal society looks forward to next year with many more opportunities to teach and share with others our passion for opal.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all our members, their families and friends!

Stan McCall
AOS President
Custom Creative Gem Cutting



Christmas Potluck

When: Monday, December 16th
Where: Masonic Lodge
11270 Acacia Parkway
Garden Grove, CA
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
*Turkey and ham provided Bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share!
Beverages will be provided.*

Members Only Website Password

USER NAME: opalsociety
PASSWORD: colorplay

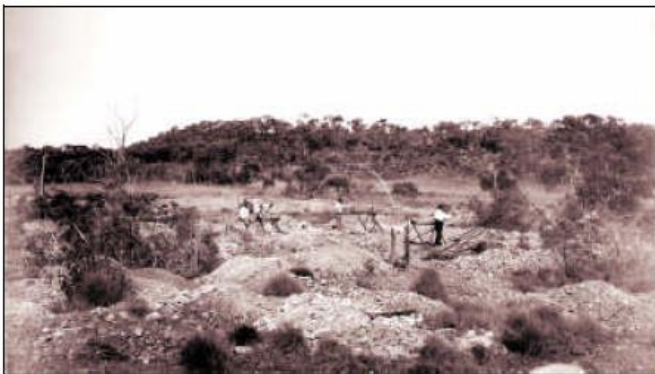
DUES NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

The AOS membership and dues clock are being restarted effective January 1st, 2020
With the January newsletter, each member will be provided their revised dues renewal date which will take into account the interim period, suspension of dues since October 1, 2018. Members who have paid dues during the interim period will be credited with a full year effective January 1st, plus any months from the prior period.

The Opal Society appreciates the patience and cooperation of everyone during this time.

Stan McCall
AOS President

Famous Gems The Imperial Opal



Working a small section of old ground at Opalton in 1906

By Len Cram

Opalton has produced some of the geological wonders of the world, and the "Imperial Opal" is no exception. Valued at £50,000 in 1901, an incredible amount, it weighed 250 carats. An astonishing piece of crystal opal, it was found in 1895 during the height of production and bought by Maurice Lyons, a leading Brisbane lawyer, also an entrepreneur heavily involved in land and mining ventures.

The only description we have of the gem is from the London Times of 9 March 1901, written after their reporter was invited to a special viewing:

"It was not the best sort of day on which to inspect such a magnificent jewel, the atmosphere being overcast and dull. Only the opal when taken out of its box and wrappings seemed to light up the room. Those present looked at it with a certain awesome joy, and handled it in the same spirit. 'How beautiful! How splendid!' said the ladies. Sir Horace Tozer said, of all the Queensland opals he had seen, this one was the finest."

"The gem has been cut into an irregular shape pending the ultimate decision as to the purpose for which it will be used. In its present shape it is two and half inches long and one and half in depth weighing 250 carats. It is not its size that is considered so remarkable, but its quality. Its brilliance almost approaches that of the diamond and has all the colours of the ruby, emerald and



Len Cram, Opalton, July 9, 2009

amethyst, which are clearly marked in a beautiful harlequin pattern. It was broken in two during mining, the smaller piece, less than half the size of The Imperial Opal, is also an extraordinary gem. The stone comes from Opalton, in the western district of Queensland, and was discovered six years ago."

During a conversation while showing Sir James Dickson the gem in 1899, Lyons told him it was his intention to present the gem to Queen Victoria at the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament. As there were no Australian gems in the Crown Jewels he believed it would be a fitting representation of the new Commonwealth of Australia. Sir William George Herbert, another of his friends, named the stone, The Imperial Opal, after learning of his intentions.

In preparation to carrying out his plan, Lyons had the gem deposited in a London bank, with the intention that the Queen should have the first inspection, knowing her preference for opals. Unfortunately, due to her death, she never saw the gem, but Lyons, still wanting to present the gem to the Crown, offered the stone to King Edward. The London Daily Chronicle commented on his gesture in March 1901:

"Mr Maurice Lyons, of Queensland, is desirous of presenting to King Edward The Imperial Opal for inclusion in the Crown Regalia. His Majesty has not yet seen this magnificent jewel, but we believe that he has indicated his views on the matter, and takes the position that so valuable a gem could not be accepted as a gift from any individual subject to the crown. It is Mr Lyons' desire that The Imperial Opal should represent the Australian Commonwealth in the Crown Jewels."

Unfortunately, I have not been able shed any light on what might have happened to this incredible opal. I would appreciate it



Len Cram on the field in 1996

should any reader know its whereabouts or even a smidgen of its lost history.

Printed with permission from Len Cram and prepared especially for the American Opal Society

Synthetic Opals

Synthetic opals may pave the way to cheap electronic books and advertising displays. The "photonic ink" (P-Ink) can display any colour in the visible spectrum using very little electricity while mimicking the structure of opals. Mass production will be a daunting task involving perfecting the production of the gel's microstructure, but developers are hopeful that modification of existing techniques used to make flexible solar cells will hasten the process.

Science Bites,

Amanda Naam

http://theontarion.ca/viewarticle.php?id_pag=2218

Australian Opals - A Primer

By Gary Hocking

What has attracted people to opals over the centuries? Colour, colour and more colour! Opals change colour when you look at them from different sides and angles. Sometimes there is little colour at all and you move your head and suddenly a breathtaking burst of brilliant colour flashes from the stone. There are very few natural gemstones which do that.

Unless you are lucky the more you pay the better the quality is. But you can still get the high flashy colours for a lower price if you buy doublets or triplets. These are opal pieces reinforced with a solid backing of colorless opal. A triplet has a clear dome of quartz or other material on top.

Opal starts off as a silica gel which seeps through sedimentary strata and gradually hardens over millions of years and the process of nature. As an opal miner I have occasionally seen opal in this early stage where it is soft. Opals contain a lot of water as much as between 3 and 10 percent. On the Moh's scale of hardness it comes in around 5.5 to 6.5 and that is relatively soft.

Australian opals are classified in several groups:

Black opals which come from the Lightning Ridge area in NSW.

White opals and light opals which come from the Coober Pedy region in South Australia. These types also come from notable areas such as Mintabie and Andamooka.

Boulder opals come from Queensland.

Then there are some other minor areas which produce smaller amounts of high quality opal.

Black opals have a dark base and white opals have a white base whereas Boulder has opal which is on top of or through an ironstone base.

Then you get various levels of blackness you might say. So you might get an opal from either Lightning Ridge or Coober Pedy which has a grey base. That means that the stone has flashes of perhaps bright red and blue or other colours mixed inside of a grey base colour. This grey base might be light grey or almost black. When it reaches a very dark colour we normally call that a black opal. It is like some children's' marbles that you see.

Then we have Crystal opal. Crystal is transparent but the colours can leap out at you from this clear, see through base. We also have varying degrees of crystal opal. When we cannot see clearly through the crystal then we would classify it as semi crystal.

What does it cost? It is very difficult to say what opal is worth. We can weigh it and measure it but that doesn't help until we can establish the quality. We look for the best pattern in the opal, the brightest colour and the most vibrant colour. Red is generally the most expensive colour. However, a small bright, vibrant green stone will command much more than a larger dark and dull red stone. Since every opal is so different to the next it is very much a personal opinion. Of course, people with experience will easily point out the major characteristics of a good or not so good opal

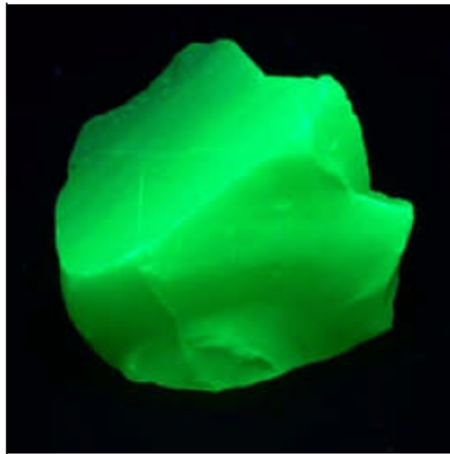
From <http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=GaryHocking>

Is it Unusual for Opals to Fluoresce?

My mother recently gave me a lovely necklace that belonged to my grandmother. It has a row of 9 little pear-shaped rubies and a scattering of tiny full-cut diamonds (also 9 of them), but mostly it's an opal necklace. 43 small pear-shaped opals, very fiery, mostly blues and greens. The sort of opals you see in Edwardian jewelry. I'm guessing the necklace is from the 1950s.

I was checking it with my little fluorescent flashlight out of curiosity to see whether the diamonds had fluorescence. About half of them have medium or strong blue; the rest don't seem to have any. I was interested, but not surprised, to see that all the rubies lit up bright red under the blacklight. What surprised me was that the opals seemed to fluoresce blue-green, too.

At first I thought they were just reflecting the purplish blacklight



This specimen of opal is from Ogdensburg, New Jersey, and is shown fluorescing under short wave ultraviolet radiation. Common opal from Australia exhibits either no fluorescence or pale blue fluorescence. Males (1973) attributed the difference to wide spread contamination of American strata by uranium. Webster (1983) and Arem (1987) attributed the green fluorescence of New Jersey opal to uranium minerals present in the opal as impurities or, to be more precise, to the uranyl group (UO₂).

of the flashlight. But when I turned it off in the dark after holding the blacklight close to it for a while, the

fluorescent diamonds went on glowing for a few moments, as fluorescent diamonds do—and so did the opals. (The rubies, on the other hand, were completely dark as soon as the light went off.)

Is this common behavior for opals? Are they often fluorescent, and do they often go on glowing after the blacklight's gone?

Fluorescence: The emission of

radiation (usually visible light) when a substance is irradiated by higher-energy radiation such as ultra-violet light.

Phosphorescence: The continuation of fluorescence after the activating radiation is turned off.

Source: "Rocks and Minerals" by O'Donoghue

I have seen a lot of Fluorescent Opal from the Virgin Valley of Nevada area, but I have never checked to see if it is Phosphorescent.

Joker....

Apparently American opals commonly have yellow-green fluor, and Aus opal is either inert or shows blue-white fluor with green phosphorescence...green fluor is thought to be due to uranium minerals as inclusions...

Got this info from "Fluorescence" by Robbins, p.171....learn something every day!

Gary – www.diamondexpert.com

From: <http://www.pricescopes.com/idealbb/view.asp?topicID=59842>

How History Is Changed

By Stephen & Mary Aracic

Are we just as guilty of standing aside and letting others reshape history for us by changing original names of mines, putting opal fields in wrong locations or wrongly classifying opal?

For instance, if you turn to p11 of a recent book, Opal: The Phenomenal Gemstone a picture of a specimen of Queensland boulder opal is incorrectly classed as Lightning Ridge opal. The caption states, "Layers of precious and common dark opal formed in this 12 cm long section of opal seam from Lightning Ridge, New South Wales, Australia. New research indicates that the type of opal seen in each layer reflects changes in the viscosity of the opal gel. The specimen is courtesy of the California State Mining and Mineral Museum; Photo by Jeff Scovil."

How could such a specimen with ironstone backing be described as Lightning Ridge opal when it's obviously not?

And do we laugh when we read in a nice colourful little book Opals - from the Fred Ward Gem Series (First printed 1997) which says "Quilpie is normally a hard three day dirt road drive from Sydney" a journey that becomes halved in a Revised edition printed in 2000 which says: "Quilpie is normally a one-and-a-half day drive from Sydney." But no mention is made of dirt roads in that edition.

The books are beautifully presented and are a credit to him, so perhaps the author ought to be forgiven for thinking, when researching for his books, that he'd brought the dirt road with him from Sydney, as he'd stepped off a chartered plane on "a private dirt strip in the middle of a large sheep station 50 miles from nowhere."

Of course we all know that Australia has some of the best sealed roads in the world. But it is thanks to miners like John & Gem Kelly in Queensland, who way back in the 1970's discovered the original Hammond's Mine. And this is how it happened.

They found evidence of an old campsite and a few shafts and trenches dug into the hillside by the old timers. It caused some confusion back then when the Kelly's sought to register their lease in the mining office. You see a miner had randomly named all the mines on Yeppara out of the early mines report. As a result he didn't get many of them right. Consequently some miners who had registered a mine as Hammond's had to be convinced otherwise by checking into the old records at the local Mining Warden's Office using the directions given.

Finally it was agreed that the mine discovered by the Kelly's was in fact the real Hammond's Mine. John pegged claims over the area and in 1974 he secured a Lease there. This puts John Kelly as being the second real owner since Ned Hammond leased it before the turn of the century (1880's). Thus a lovely bit of history is rightfully restored. (See p 305 Rediscover Opals In Australia, 1990)

But how do we put The Pride of the Hills Mine back into its rightful location, on Glen Valley property when, according to a beautifully illustrated book A Journey with Colour - A History of Queensland Opal - 1869-1978, published in 1998 by Len Cram and as evidenced by a picture on p31, he puts The Pride Of The Hills conveniently, albeit incorrectly, beside the road to Duck Creek.

The same picture features again on p4 of Beautiful Boulder Opal: the Exquisite Gem released in 2003 also by Len Cram under the heading "The Pride of the Hills. Australia's oldest opal mine, first registered in 1871." It goes on to say on p7 "For those who appreciate historical sites, this original lease is well worth a visit, as it's perfectly situated long side the Quilpie to Duck Creek road. The ideal plan would be to make a day's outing to Duck Creek opal field and back, and as a bonus, stop over at Pride of the Hills. You can't miss it; It's the only big mine on the road. Remember it's a mine, so use a lot of common sense, otherwise, don't stop."

Such good advise, but wrong mine. Coparella is the first field encountered on the Duck Creek road. Then comes Lushington's a short distance around the bend on the left and Brodie's Hill is on the right side of the road, just before Lushington's Mine.

Now according to the Jackson Report (featured in my book Rediscover Opals in Australia page 365) The Pride of the Hills is

located 12 miles NW of Duck Creek or 13 miles E of Toompine. And Lushington's Mine is 6 mile N of Pride of the Hills. Surely a government geologist like C.F.V Jackson wouldn't get locations wrong when he visited the fields back in 1901.

Anyone that has been to The Pride of the Hills will tell you that the going is rough & requires a 4WD vehicle to get there.

Mary & I made the journey from Duck Creek via the bore drain in Sandy Kent's 4WD with Mike Pasalic in the back with me. After a mud map got us to a fence, Sandy got us to the historical mine using his GPS directions.

We also went to The Pride of the Hills on another occasion with friends from Lightning Ridge, access being gained this time from Toompine via Glen Valley property having first asked permission from the manager to visit the mine and take a few pictures for our book Determined, (2003). We got as far as the first deep creek when we balked at our chances of negotiating it. So returning to the Homestead, we humbly asked the manager to take us there in his sturdy land cruiser. Having loaded us aboard, Mary and Marcia in the front, Don & I in the back, we took off on what was to be an exciting journey.

Bear in mind it was Sunday and his day off so our driver had had a couple of beers while listening to the footie on radio so little did we realise that he, being a commercial pilot and a good natured fellow, was out to have some fun. When we'd nose dived into the bed of the first creek, our intrepid driver stopped the vehicle butt end up, swung the door open and, much to the ladies surprise, shouted to Don and I, 'Hey mate, if you think this is deep wait until you see the others.' With that promise in mind he got us out of there and then duly got us bogged in the deepest one, telling us we'll never get out of this. But we did. By the time we'd rounded a cluster of trees in the middle of nowhere and continued by a bit of dilapidated fence the track was non existent. Our driver stopped again and screwing his face into a confused look shouted back at us, 'I'm lost mate. I can't find The Pride of the Hills!'

By this time Mary and Marcia, with tears streaming down their faces from laughing, yelled at him to get moving, that the cattle nibbling the branches were wondering what was going on. So, within minutes we were seated at the foot of the hill affectionately known as 'Pridie' having a good laugh and enjoying coffee and biscuits. We specked some pieces of colourful opal floaters eroded from the hill where an open cut was made. No mining was in progress at the time.

Our journey back was just as hilarious because our valiant driver stopped in the deepest creek again, back of the 4WD sticking perpendicular in the air leaving the ladies staring at the sandy bed. He then swung the door open and disappeared down the creek to check missing stock!

What could we do but laugh at our predicament. It was something to tell the family back home.

Perhaps readers of Metal, Stone & Glass could help put "Pridie" back where it belongs in the not too distant hills. But do take this bit of advice from Len Cram's beautiful books; because those historical mines are well worth a visit on a days outing to Duck Creek.

Just remember that the mines you will see beside the road are Coparella on the left and a short distance further on the right is Brodie's Hill and just around the bend on the left is Lushington's. But to get to Pride of the Hills, south of Lushington's Mine, you will need a 4WD and a GPS to get there. The going is rough, but well worth it and do bring water with you. Opal specking is good but records of rich opal finds are sketchy.

See p276 in Rediscover Opals in Australia for an actual picture of The Pride of the Hills Mine. The view is fantastic.

The AOS would like to thank Stephen for writing this article for our newsletter. Stephen Aracic is a well known author who lives in Lightning Ridge, Australia. He has written a number of books on opal and the outback, including [Rediscover Opals in Australia](#), [Fortunes from Australian Opals](#), [Discover opals: Before & beyond 2000 with surface indications](#)

What You Should Know about Buying Opal

Jewellery is special. It can last a lifetime. It can be an emotional and sentimental experience that evokes wonderful memories while still giving pleasure for years ahead. When buying for yourself or for others, it helps to have an understanding of the qualities and characteristics of jewellery, which is why the Jewellers Association of Australia (JAA) has produced this brochure.

A Guide to Opal

Nature has captured all the colours of the spectrum, displaying them in an infinite variety of shades, patterns and brilliance and locked them into this rare stone. Opals lie dormant in the earth until a miner chips the edge and light reaches the gem exposing the most beautiful dancing display of colour.

Since ancient times opal has been sought after by many famous collectors including Mark Antony, Pliny and Queen Victoria. This precious gem was even included in the crown of the Holy Roman Emperor. Australia produces at least 95% of the world's precious opal which, with its increasing scarcity, is amongst the most sought after and precious of all gems. Quality black opals can fetch prices equivalent to a good diamond on a per carat basis.

History states that Ancient Romans cherished opals above all other gemstones – not just because they were rare and beautiful gems – but because they were thought to bring good fortune. Indeed, fortunes were paid for these gems. Mark Antony offered Senator Nonius 100,000 sesterces for a brilliant opal (AUD\$1,000,000 in today's value). Nonius, however, would not part with his talisman, his own personal rainbow ensuring his lucky future.

Play of Colour: An opal's beauty is unique and made from the amazing 'play of spectral colours' in the gemstone. This originates from the breaking up of white light due to the three dimensional spherical shaped microstructure of the silica particles inherent in the opal (these can only be detected with an electron microscope). Similar phenomena of colour hues can be observed when oil lies on water, or in a rainbow.

Formation: Opal occurs where silica gel fills small fissures or voids in the earth. A large portion of Australia's inland was once covered by a sea, leaving deposits and creating an environment suitable for the formation of opal.



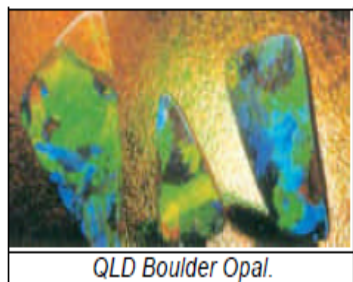
Boulder Matrix Opal

Types of Opal

Natural Opal is divided into the categories of black, dark, light, boulder and matrix opal. The classification of black, dark and light is determined by the body tone i.e. the degree of darkness in the background.

Black Opal is the most valuable and comes mainly from Lightning Ridge. High quality stones are very rare; this type is easily distinguished by the blackness of the base or background 'body tone'.

Black Crystal Opal is mainly mined at Lightning Ridge. These black opals show a degree of transparency, the colours are often brilliant and can appear to come from within the depth of the gemstone. Good black crystal opals are very rare.



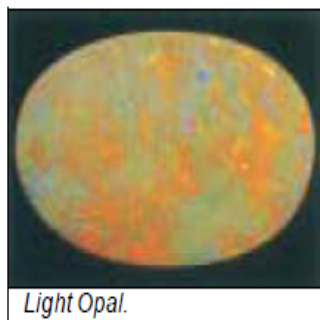
QLD Boulder Opal.

Dark Opal comes from all fields and is desirable because the colours are generally more brilliant, due to the dark background 'highlighting' their colours. This type of opal mainly comes from Mintabie (SA) and Lightning Ridge (NSW).

Light Opal is usually found at all opal fields but the bulk of the material has come from the South Australian fields of Mintabie, Coober Pedy and Andamooka, although the first material was mined at White Cliffs (1887). This opal has a light body tone.

Crystal Opal: This variety embraces opal which is transparent or very translucent and in the better qualities shows a distinct and very bright play-of-colour. This type of opal is found in most Australian opal fields.

Boulder Opal: This type, composed of opal naturally occurring on its host rock, is mined predominantly in Queensland. It is easily identified because, when cut, the host rock (a brown ironstone) is left on the back of the opal. Boulder opal may be light, dark or black. In the last twenty years this type of opal has become extremely popular as it can display the same darkness and brilliance as a high quality black opal.



Light Opal.

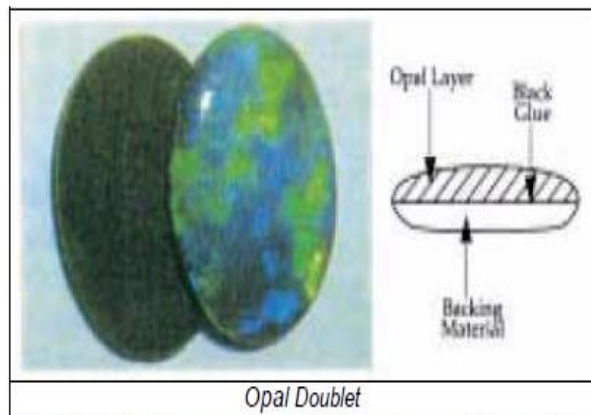
Matrix Opal: There are two common types of Matrix Opal in Australia:

- Boulder Matrix Opal** is usually found in Queensland. The opal is intimately diffused with the host rock, (usually ironstone). The host rock is quite obvious in the presentation face of the stone.
- Matrix Opal** from Andamooka has opal intimately diffused throughout the host rock, a sandstone which is often porous and can be treated, turning the material dark resembling black opal.

Composite Natural Opal

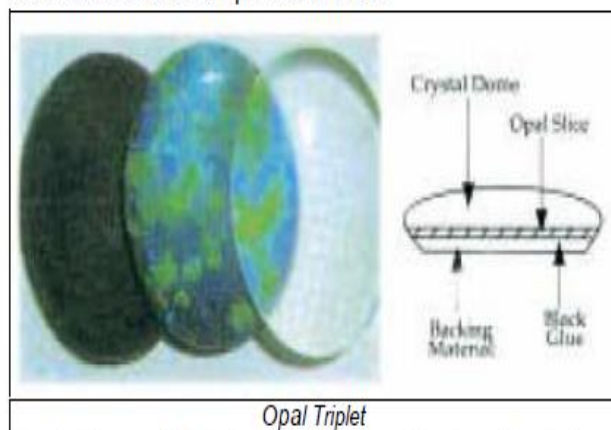
Composite natural opal consists of a natural opal laminate, manually cemented or attached to another material. There are three main forms of composite opal:

Doublet Opal: A composition of two pieces where a slice of natural opal is cemented to a base material.



Triplet Opal: A composition of three pieces where a thin slice of natural opal is cemented between a dark base material and a transparent top layer (usually of quartz or glass).

Mosaic and Chip Opal: A composition of small flat or irregularly shaped pieces of natural opal cemented as a mosaic tile on a dark base material or encompassed in resin.



Synthetic and Imitation Opal: Occasionally offered for sale; however, the laws in Australia require the retailer to inform the purchaser of this fact. Most opal sellers do not handle synthetics or imitations.

Factors determining the value of all types of Opals

The Brilliance of colours is of paramount importance – the brightness of an opal is directly related to price.

The Patterns of colours when combined with brilliance may increase value many times.

Colours: the number of different colours affects price, although this rule should be used with great care. An opal with all the colours of the spectrum is not always more valuable than one displaying red/blue or green/blue alone, because the major determination of value is brilliance and pattern.

Shape: usually cut *en cabochon*; a stone with a domed surface will be more valuable than a similar stone with a flat surface. Opal which is too thin could fracture on impact. While oval stones may show a great demand, boulder opals often cut in free shapes can lend themselves to more distinctive designs.

Marks: most opals, particularly black, have sand in the back of the stones. This usually does not affect value. However, marks or cracks that are fairly noticeable in the face of the stone will drastically affect value.

Looking after your opal

Although opals are a magnificent and unique gem, they do not have the resistance to breaking or scratching that diamonds or sapphires have. If you protect the stone from heavy blows, and abrasive materials, and don't subject it to extreme sudden heat changes, your opal should last forever.

If you have an opal doublet or triplet, never immerse it in detergent (and preferably not even water), as this may break down the adhesive quality of the glues that have been used and cause separation (or 'lifting').

Opal – an investment

Opal production has decreased over the last decade. Demand has risen. More people are working the opal fields with greater mechanisation. Opal is like other resources – we are exhausting the existing known supplies and hoping new strikes will be found. The mining of opal is done by individuals or syndicates – no large companies are mining at any of the fields. Stockpiling of the gem therefore cannot occur; this means that prices are a true reflection of market demand.

This brochure has been prepared by the Jewellers Association of Australia (JAA) with the assistance of Andrew Cody, Tony Smallwood and Dr. Grahame Browne. Photographs courtesy of Cody Opal (Australia) Pty Ltd, Ruby Weber and the Australian Opal and Gem Industry Association. Email: info@jewellers.asn.au, Website: <http://www.jaa.com.au>

Opal Cultural Beliefs and Historic Timeline

- 4000 B.C. Ethiopians: Symbol of wealth, magical qualities and limitless possibilities to its owner. Hypothetical origin of opal gems
- 2000 B.C. Greeks: "Opallios"- to change color; Symbol of hope, and prophecy
- Romans (First to sell opals, creating image of a rare and exquisite gem): Hope and purity
- 476 Some thought of opal as the "eye Stone," stating it helped with good eyesight. Also, it was thought to protect hair color on blonde women. It was heard to give possible invisibility to its owner.
- 1700-1800 Europe: Some claimed opal to be bad luck-associated with pestilence, famine, fall of monarchs. Queen Victoria, though, was a lover of opals and made opals highly fashionable. The highest quality opals were found in Australia, where mines began popping up all over continent.
- 1849 Discovery of Opals in Australia – Johannes Menge
- 1890s Queensland opens major fields: Koroit, Yowah and Opalton. Another mine opens up called White Cliffs; Opal now being sold on World Market.
- 1895 Lightning Ridge originally known as Wallangulla
- 1907 First cutter, Charles Deane Old Town on Lightning ridge
- 1915 Coober Pedy Founded
- 1930s Although mining had slowed, more men were willing to get into the occupation in hopes of earning money during the Depression.
- 1932 Eastern European mines unable to compete with Australia and mining slows for Europe.
- 1946 New Findings bring opal mining back up to speed
- 1956 Opaline Australia founded by George & Zoe Christianos-Eight Mile Field, mining spread throughout Australia and was carried on by son, Peter Christianos
- 1985 Seminal work by the Geological Survey of New South Wales leads to better, more scientifically controlled exploration for opals
- 1998-1999 Estimated value of opal production in the States is about \$44 million. New South Wales (and Australia) is a leading world producer of opals.
- 1999-Present Australia mines more than 50% of the world's opal.

From <http://users.wpi.edu/~tlufkin/Geology%20Website/history.htm>

Opal Lore

Opals are lucky! All the evidence demonstrates that throughout history opal has been regarded as the stone of good fortune. In Roman times, the gem was carried as a good luck charm or talisman, as it was believed that the gem, like the rainbow, brought its owner good fortune.

Is the Cufflink Dead?

By Gary Hocking

Cufflinks are amusing things to wear. When you buy a pair of earrings you only need ears to use them and when you buy a necklace you only need a neck to wear it but when you buy a pair of cufflinks you need a special shirt to wear them with and when you buy a shirt with cuffs you have to buy a pair of cufflinks or you cannot wear that shirt.

Before buttons men and women tied the ends of their sleeves with cord so that the wind and cold couldn't get in. More elegant dress clothes were tied with ribbons.

But is the cufflink dead? Hell no! There is a cufflink museum in New Hampshire USA, and a National Cufflink Society. There are people who are obsessed with collecting cufflinks. Take Derek Anastasia who has a collection of almost 17,000 pairs of cufflinks. Anastasia believes that cufflinks made a resurgence in America when Regan came to power and wore cufflinks a good deal. Gene Klompus president of the National Cufflink Society has more than 35,000 pairs!

The first cufflinks were chains, really called cuff fasteners, and as they became more elegant they evolved into items of jewellery and bits were added to the chains.

During the period of the Industrial Revolution in England there was an explosion in the presence of cufflinks as manufacturing methods went from hand made one-off pieces to mass production.

When I see someone wearing cufflinks I always take notice of them. Those cufflinks are making a statement about that person and that person is making a statement about themselves. They are telling me that they are proud of themselves and that they are making an effort to dress to impress.

You can dive out of bed, drape a shirt around you and toss your coat on and rush off to the office and hardly even know what you have done, but the moment you start to put those cufflinks through your sleeves something magical happens.

It is a kind of ritualistic thing where now you are adorning yourself in order that other people will notice you. Now you start to think is this shirt the right one? Is it ironed well enough? Should I wear another coat? You cannot simply snap cufflinks on or push them through your cuffs hastily without thinking. The act makes you slow down and forces you to think about why you are wearing cufflinks. No, the cufflink is far from dead!

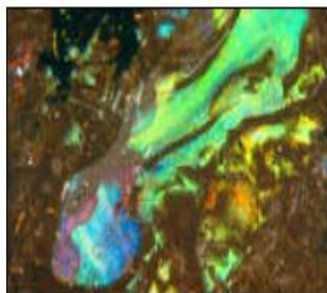
Gary Hocking is an Australian manufacturing jeweler who has his own website: <http://www.jewelleryexpress.com.au> You are free to copy this article as long as you leave the live link to his website. Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Gary_Hocking



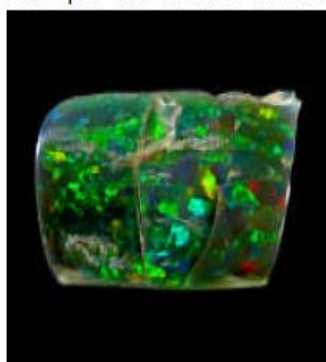
Opal Formation

Formation Models

In general, opals are created when weathered silica seeps into cracks as a gel. The silica gel, containing large amounts of water, flows along faults and fractures within the rock. The water then begins to evaporate and the silica gel hardens. The rate of evaporation determines the opal's stability. Gem quality opals usually contain less than 10% water, meaning their water has evaporated more slowly.



Opal in Lava



Opalized Tree Limb

Fire opals are found in ancient volcanic regions that consist of rhyolite, a silica rich rock. They are formed when gas cavities in the host rock were filled with silica-rich solutions.

There are three specific models for opal formation.

1) Deep Weathering Model

During the Tertiary period rocks experienced substantial weathering. With time, small amounts of silica were leached from sandstone by water which passed through more rock until

it became trapped in underlying layers of claystone. Under the proper conditions, opal was produced from the trapped water left in porous areas. Faults would have served as a great path for silica to flow along.

2) Syntectonic (Pecover) Model

Opal was deposited by heated water under pressure from the ground. This water flowed along faults, leaving opal nearby.

3) Microbe Model

The claystone in which water and silica became trapped contained lots of fine fossilized organic matter. The feeding and waste production of these microbes created favorable conditions for opal formation.

Places

Geological Events Leading to Formation

In Australia, erosion has removed sufficient amounts of the older profile



Hungarian Opal



Queretaro Region, Central Mexico

which allowed silica to collect and precipitate as opal within voids in the ironstone host rocks.

Geological processes such as folding and faulting that have occurred to the present have either completely removed the weathered profiles or left remnants of them as flat-topped landforms or low rises.

In regions such as Virgin Valley, Nevada, canyon rhyolite was filled with layers of volcanic ash, like

sediments and debris from pyroclastic flows. Over time the layers were buried by forests and hot ground water was then able to seep through the layers of ash, picking up silica rich deposits and permeated the buried wood.

The carbon molecules were slowly replaced by the hydrated silica creating perfect opalized replicas of the original material.

Occasionally, the silica gel would form in pools which completely immersed the wood, preserving it perfectly. Limb casts formed as the gel filled the cavities left by previously buried wood, long decomposed. Under the right conditions, some of

this opalized wood could develop into precious opal. This requires a stable, quiet environment which allows the cristobalite spheres to line up in formation. This unique alignment of the hydrated silica molecules creates reflection and refraction as white light passes through. This is the secret to the rainbow effect of the precious opal. The entire area has been uplifted and eroded, exposing the opal deposits in certain clay beds of ancient volcanic ash. The precious opal bearing layers may be as much as 10-30 feet below the surface and

range in thickness from 2-12 feet. Common opal is abundant throughout the successive layers of clay and ash,

but only specific conditions produce the spectacular play of color which characterizes the precious opal.

Presently, opal is being mined from inland and arid environments.

From <http://users.wpi.edu/~tlufkin/Geology%20Website/formation.htm>



Virgin Valley, Nevada



Australia

American Opal Society Membership Application

FILL IN APPLICABLE INFORMATION		DUES / FEES)	AMOUNT PAID
DUES: SELECT ONE	RENEWING MEMBERS	\$35.00	
	NEW MEMBERS	\$45.00	
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (All addresses <u>outside</u> of USA)		\$15.00	
PRINTED NEWSLETTER FEE <u>(Paper copy postal mailed instead of PDF file by e-mail)</u>		\$10.00	
ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your First Badge is <u>free</u> when joining)		\$15.00	
TOTAL PAID DUES plus International, Print or Badge Fees if Applicable:			

Please make check or money order payable to "American Opal Society". Mail payment and application to:

American Opal Society; PO BOX 4875; Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875

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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BUSINESS NAME		
ADDRESS		APT. # OR P.O. BOX
CITY		STATE
ZIP or POSTAL CODE		COUNTRY (IF OUTSIDE USA)
PHONE – Home ()	PHONE – Business ()	FAX ()
EMAIL		
WEBSITE		
OCCUPATION		HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

NAME BADGE ORDER FORM:

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME AS YOU WISH IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR BADGE using up to two (2) lines of text for your name, nickname, or name of your opal related business.

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.

Address ☐	Phone ☐	E-mail ☐	Website ☐
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Please sign here: _____ Date _____

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Are Your Dues Due Now?

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL or NEWSLETTER E-MAIL. The date in the upper right corner shows the current month/year of your membership. If the date is older than the current date, your dues are overdue.

A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided.

Please note, 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

(revised 08/29/19)

The Opal Express

American Opal Society
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— GENERAL MEETINGS —

4th Wednesday of the Month
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Anaheim Community Center
250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805

MEETING ACTIVITIES

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

TO:

**Due to our Christmas Party Potluck, there will be no
Board Meeting or General Meeting in December.**

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays Everyone!



General Meeting Location at:

Anaheim Downtown Community Center

250 E. Center Street
Anaheim, CA 92805

The next Board Meeting will be on Monday, January 6th at 7:00 p.m. at Pam's house in Huntington Beach.

Please join us at the next General Meeting, Wednesday, January 22nd at the Anaheim Community Center at 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served - hope to see you there!

American Opal Society

Website: <http://OpalSociety.org>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/opalsociety>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanOpalSociety>
Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/opalsociety>
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