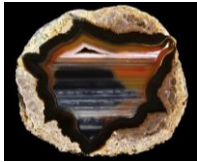








Tea Tree Gully Gem & Mineral Club Inc. (TTGGMC)
Clubrooms: Old Tea Tree Gully School, Dowding Terrace, Tea Tree Gully, SA 5091.
Postal Address: Po Box 40, St Agnes, SA 5097.
President: Ian Everard. 0417 859 443 Email: ieverard@bigpond.net.au
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Treasurer: Russell Fischer. Email: rfischer@bigpond.net.au
Membership Officer: Augie Gray: 0433 571 887 Email: teatreegullygmc@gmail.com
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**October
Edition
2019**

"Rockzette" Tea Tree Gully Gem & Mineral Club News

President's Report	General Interest	Club Activities / Fees								
<p>Hi All,</p> <p>Due to health concerns our current treasurer, Russell, will be resigning as at the November AGM. So, we urgently need a new treasurer.</p> <p>Cheers,</p> <p>Ian.</p>	<p>Pages 2 to 4: Augie's October Agate and Mineral Selections...</p>  <p>Pages 4 to 6: Augie's October Mineral Matters – Moroccan Septarian Nodules...</p>  <p>Pages 6 to 8: Ian's 2019 Agate Creek Finds Part 1...</p>  <p>Pages 9 to 14: 'Newcastle and Rail – The Never-ending Story' ...</p>  <p>Page 14: Members Out and About, The Happy Wanderers, Ellen and Gerry's European Rhine River Boating Safari...</p>  <p>Pages 15 to 19: General Interest, humour, etc...</p> <p>Page 20: Gem Quality Cabochons for Sale ...</p> <p>Page 21: Members' Noticeboard and Links...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p>	<p>Meetings Club meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of each month except January. Committee meetings start at 7 pm. General meetings - arrive at 7.30 pm for 8 pm start.</p> <p>Library <i>Librarian - Augie Gray</i> There is a 2-month limit on borrowed items. When borrowing from the lending library, fill out the card at the back of the item, then place the card in the box on the shelf. When returning items, fill in the return date on the card, then place the card at the back of the item.</p> <p>Tuesday Faceting/Cabbing Tuesdays - 10 am to 2 pm. All are welcome. Supervised by Doug Walker (7120 2221).</p> <p>Wednesday Silversmithing Wednesdays - 7 pm to 9 pm. All are welcome. Supervised by Augie Gray (8265 4815 / 0433 571 887).</p> <p>Thursday Cabbing Thursdays - 10 am to 2 pm. All are welcome. Supervised by Augie Gray (8265 4815 / 0433 571 887).</p> <p>Friday Silversmithing Fridays - 9 am to 12 noon. All are welcome. Supervised by John Hill (8251 1118).</p> <p>Faceting/Cabbing/Silversmithing Fees: A standard fee of \$3.00 per session applies – to be paid to the session supervisor.</p> <p>In the interest of providing a safe working environment, it is necessary to ensure everyone using the workshops follow the rules set out in <i>Policy No. 1 - 20/11/2006</i>.</p> <p>It is necessary that <i>Health and Safety</i> regulations are adhered to always.</p> <p>Everyone using the workshop must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that all club equipment (e.g. magnifying head pieces, faceting equipment, tools, etc.) used during the session, is cleaned, and returned to the workshop after usage. • that all workstations are left in a clean and tidy state; • that all rubbish is removed and placed in the appropriate bin; • and where applicable, machines are cleaned and oiled or dried. <p>NOTE: The Tea Tree Gully Gem & Mineral Club Inc. will not be held responsible or liable for any person injured while using the club machinery or equipment.</p> <p>Club Subscriptions:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">\$25.00 Family</td> <td style="width: 50%;">\$20.00 Family Pensioner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$15.00 Single</td> <td>\$12.50 Single Pensioner</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">\$10.00 Joining Fee</td> </tr> </table>	\$25.00 Family	\$20.00 Family Pensioner	\$15.00 Single	\$12.50 Single Pensioner	\$10.00 Joining Fee			
\$25.00 Family	\$20.00 Family Pensioner									
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\$10.00 Joining Fee										
<p>Diary Dates / Notices</p>										
<p style="text-align: center;">Happy Birthday</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Members celebrating October birthdays:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">05th – June Mabbitt.</td> <td style="width: 50%;">30th – Terry Deegan.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10th – Judi Crouch.</td> <td>31st – Cheryl Rudd.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24th – Campbell Morrison.</td> <td>31st – Mike Mabbitt.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30th – Liz Lane</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Are Your Subs Overdue?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Membership subscription renewals are due to be paid before September 30th, 2019.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peter Hill - Talk on Oak Dam at the meeting on Thursday October 5th, 2019.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2019 Melbourne Cup Luncheon at the TTGGMC clubrooms @ 12MD Tuesday November 5th, 2019. Bring a plate of food to share and join in with fellow members...see you there.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TTGGMC AGM at meeting on Thursday November 7th, 2019.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p>			05 th – June Mabbitt.	30 th – Terry Deegan.	10 th – Judi Crouch.	31 st – Cheryl Rudd.	24 th – Campbell Morrison.	31 st – Mike Mabbitt.	30 th – Liz Lane	
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<p>The Tea Tree Gully Gem & Mineral Club Inc. is not and cannot be held responsible or liable for any personal injuries, loss or damage to property at any club activity, including, but not limited to, meetings, field trips, all crafts and club shows. An indemnity is to be signed by all participants before each and every field trip activity they attend.</p>										
<p>Tea Tree Gully Gem and Mineral Club Incorporated, Old Tea Tree Gully School, Dowding Terrace, Tea Tree Gully, South Australia, 5091.</p>										

Augie's October 2019 Agate Selections – Turkey I.



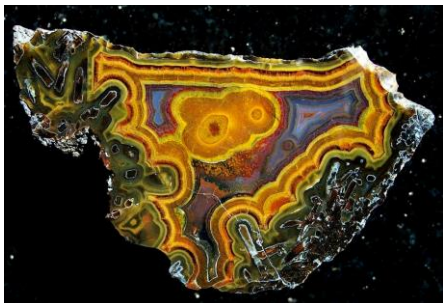
Turkey - 01.



Turkey - 02.



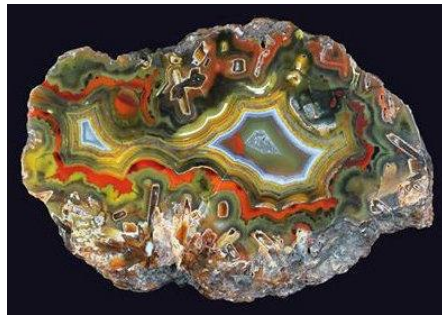
Turkey - 03.



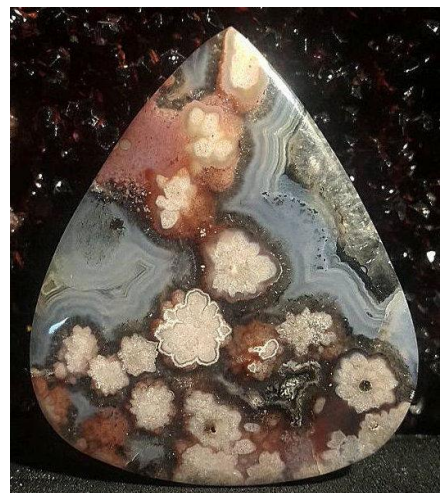
Turkey - 04.



Turkey - 05.



Turkey - 06.



Turkey - 07.



Turkey - 08.



Turkey - 09.



Turkey - 10.



Turkey - 11.



Turkey - 12.



Turkey - 13.



Turkey - 14.

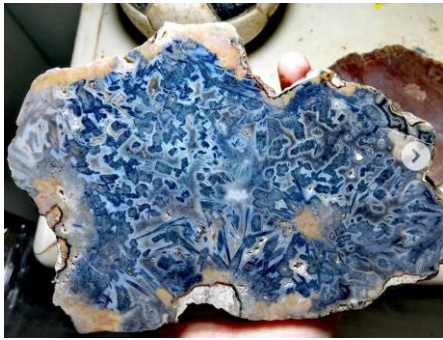


Turkey - 15.



Turkey - 16.

Augie's October 2019 Agate Selections – Turkey I. – Continued...



Blue Stick Agate, TURKEY.



Niksar, TURKEY.

Augie's October 2019 Mineral Selections...



Amethyst geode with Calcite.



Brad Cross's 'Hooded Owl' Apache Agate.



Azurite.



'Casper' Thunder Egg - Oregon.



Cumengeite - Boleo District, Mexico.



Cuprite & Copper with Silver - Poteryaevskoe Mine, Rubtsovskoe deposit, Siberia.



Fluorite - Namibia.



Malachite on Azurite.



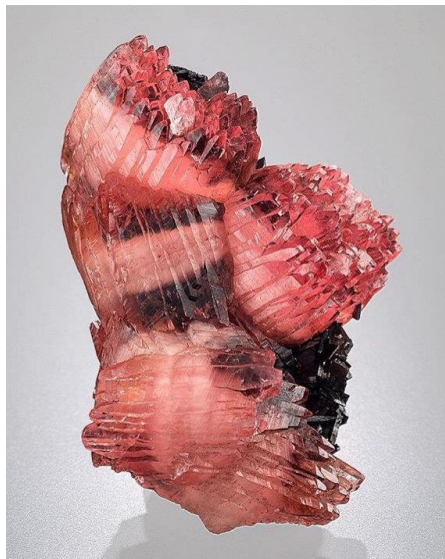
Pyrite - Navajun, Spain.

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Augie's October 2019 Mineral Selections – Continued...



Pyrite - Peru.



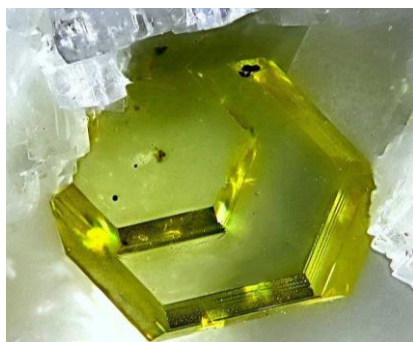
Rhodochrosite (wheat-sheaf) - N'Chwaning I Mine, Kuruman, Northern Cape Province, South Africa.



Selenite - Lubin Mine, Lubin District, Lower Silesia, Poland.



Spessartite Garnet on Quartz - Tongbei, Fujian Province, China.



Sphalerite - Spain.



Tourmaline - Barra do Salinas, Coronel Murta, Jequitinhonha Valley, Minas Gerais, Brazil.



Tourmaline - Pedreira claim, São José da Safira, Doce Valley, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Contributed by Augie Gray...

Mineral Matters Moroccan Septarian Nodules

Last month's "Mineral Matters" article introduced Utah Septarians. This month we'll be looking at the Moroccan variety, which essentially are "the same, only different".

The Moroccan Septaria are found in the Atlas Mountains (where a vast number of collectable mineral specimens of numerous species are also found). They differ from the Utah variety in that they are almost invariably solid, whereas the Utah nodules quite often form with internal cavities, which are often crystal lined. They are invariably smaller than their American counterparts, some being as little as 3 cm across. In addition, they do not have the yellow coloured Calcite arms that the Utah specimens have. The Calcite in Moroccan Septarians is white.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 01.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 02.



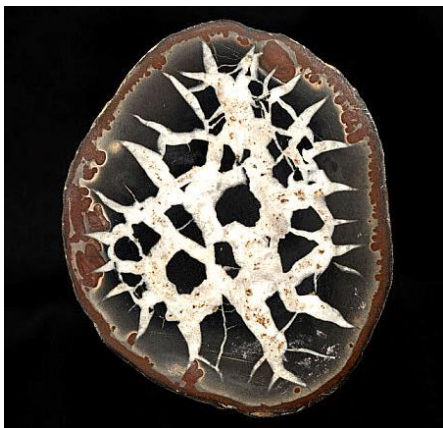
Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 03.

Continued next page...

**Mineral Matters - Moroccan
Septarian Nodules – Continued...**



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 04.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 05.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 06.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 07.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 08.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 09.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 10.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 11.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 12.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 13.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 14.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 15.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 16.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 17.

Continued next page...

Mineral Matters - Moroccan Septarian Nodules - Continued...



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 18.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 19.



Moroccan Septarian Nodule - 20.

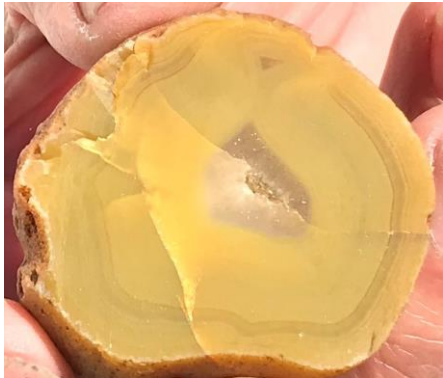


Moroccan Septarian Nodules - 21.

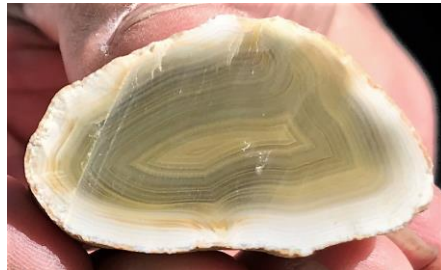
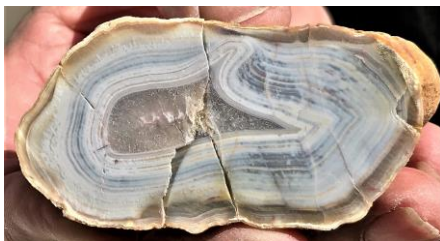
Ian's 2019 Agate Creek Finds - Part 1 - mainly from Simpson's Patch...



Ian's 2019 Agate Creek Finds - Part 1 -
mainly from Simpson's Patch – Continued...



Ian's 2019 Agate Creek Finds - Part 1 -
mainly from Simpson's Patch – Continued...



Contributed by Mel Jones...

‘Newcastle and Rail – The Never-ending Story’ by Garry Reynolds Part 12A of 24...



The Newcastle City waterfront today where Aborigines once fished from canoes, convicts hewed coal and a railway system developed and disappeared over a period of 160 years. Source: *Familypedia*.



Almost a clone for Canberra's new light rail cars, this is the next step in Newcastle's intimately linked railway and tramway story. Source: *NSW Government*.

While there has been destruction of the previous railway that ran into Newcastle since 1858 and construction underway of a new light railway where steam and early electric trams once ran, it is revealing to see how these major changes evolved through the decades.

The first tramways.



The extensive tramway network of Newcastle – red lines indicate tramways that were originally steam and then electric-powered; blue steam only; yellow electric only; green track in reservation; and the blue dots track built but never used. Source: *Wikipedia*.

The evolution of public road transport to complement Newcastle's railways.

The Newcastle Tram System operated between inner Newcastle and as far as the outer suburb of Speers Point on Lake Macquarie before the last line was closed in 1950.

However, before trams arrived in the Newcastle District, horse-hauled coaches or omnibuses dominated the road-based public transport.

Initially, many 'roads' were just dirt tracks. Those that were improved may have had some gravel spread across the surface and crushed stone on steep climbs. Tolls were often involved, and any substantial waterway usually involved a private punt.

But by the late 1880s, the demand for public transport had rocketed as Newcastle's population reached nearly 50,000 in 1887. In response, that year the first steam tram service in the Newcastle Region commenced. It complemented regular rail services from Newcastle to Plattsburg which was the rapidly developing neighbouring coal mining village to the more substantial Wallsend 11 kms West of Newcastle. Wallsend took its name from a coal mining town located at the end of the Roman

defensive structure – 'Hadrian's Wall' - in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England.

In the beginning.

Before the arrival of the tram, in the early 1860's a standard-gauge private railway line running into Wallsend was built for the local collieries' steam operations but services were also provided by the New South Wales Government Railways (NSWGR).

The Wallsend Railway branched off the Great Northern Railway at Hanbury Junction. Its main purpose was to transport coal from the 'Wallsend', 'Wallsend Borehole' and 'Elernmore' collieries to the Port of Newcastle. But on occasions, the Railway would also carry passengers, until 1939 when all rails were lifted.

Quaintly, the original railway level crossing gates at Wallsend remain in the busy shopping and restaurant precinct as does the old goods shed dating from 1877, although trains disappeared 80 years ago. Miraculously, the shed survived the devastating 1989 Newcastle Earthquake, unlike other 19th century buildings nearby.



Wallsend Railway Goods Shed in the early Post-WW2 period after line closure. Source: *Newcastle Herald*.

By the 1880s, collieries were being opened further out at West Wallsend. They were served by their own private railways from a junction with the Great Northern Railway near Cockle Creek. These lines were used for passengers as well and were in service from 1888 until 1930.

Interestingly, the passengers on the very first train to West Wallsend were 50 red-coated artillerymen equipped with a Gatling field gun and supported by 80 NSW Colonial Police. They were being carried to the 'West Wallsend Colliery' to protect strike-breaking 'scabs' brought in by the mine-owners from attacks by unionists during the 1888 General Strike.

Meanwhile, there was some public transport competition from double-decker, open-topped buses, drawn by four horses, carrying passengers the 10kms from the earlier-settled

Wallsend to West Wallsend before a steam tram service replaced it.

Surprisingly, with its commissioning in 1910, the extension of the tram line meant that the paying public could travel all the way from Newcastle through Wallsend to West Wallsend and Speers Point, on Lake Macquarie. This was reputed to be the longest suburban steam tramline in the world!



A coal-fired tram belching smoke at Wallsend – they were later fired with coke to reduce emission of smoke and cinders for passenger and residents' benefit. Source:

Still, you wonder with passenger services available on private colliery railways, why steam trams services often duplicated their routes. Essentially, observers at the time noted that the trains left a lot to be desired when it came to comfort and convenience. Even the standard of local services on the Great Northern Railway linking the private colliery railways into an ad hoc network prompted the Newcastle Chronicle to report:

"...great dissatisfaction exists among a great many of the travelling public as regards the ventilation and adaptability of some of the second-class carriages now running on the Great Northern Railway. The seats are uncomfortable and have no support for the back. There is no fresh air at all in the second-hand coffins. Brawny men smoke, babies scream, and the windows are screwed tight."

Despite the competition from trains and trams, horse-drawn omnibus services were expanding,

Continued next page...

'Newcastle and Rail – The Never-ending Story' Continued...

especially into newly developing areas and feeding passengers into railway stations. While one company operated 40 buses with 200 horses, omnibus travel was still challenging as extensive mining in the suburbs further degraded the primitive roads. Dangerous situations could arise, especially at night, when the road with a little weight on the surface could suddenly subside as it was undercut by an underground mining pit fall.

Boom Times lead to expanded rail and road networks.

It really was a boom time in the Newcastle Region in the late 19th century when there was an absolute 'Coal Rush', especially around the South Maitland fields. The once quiet rural areas of Kurri Kurri and Cessnock were bustling and nearly every mine had its own railway. In time, these were aggregated into the privately-owned 'South Maitland Railways' network. It too offered passenger services culminating in the introduction of rail cars in the second half of the 20th century based on an English design but made by Tulloch in Australia.



South Maitland Railways diesel rail car in 1962. Source: Wikipedia.

In the latter 19th century, rail was spreading inland as well. Offshoots of the Great Northern Railway which reached the Queensland border in 1888, stretched further inland during the 20th century reaching Merriwa in 1917 and six years later the link to Dubbo was completed. Now, there was a web of spur lines connecting rural areas of the North West and the North Coast, feeding grain and other rural produce into the Port of Newcastle and its dense coal railway network.

To the South of inner suburban Newcastle, further new coal mines produced more private railways in the late 19th century. These served collieries such as 'Stockton Borehole', 'Rhondda', 'Killingworth' and the previously mentioned 'West Wallsend'. All joined the Great Northern Railway around Cockle Creek. It gradually became a major industrial node in the decades after the main line's extension from Sydney in 1889. Further South, the 'Newstan' mine also depended on its link to the Sydney-Newcastle line.

With all this development on the fringes of the Newcastle metropolis, the rail network funnelling into Newcastle Harbour was becoming more extensive than Sydney's. Inner Newcastle was also becoming more densely settled now land was being freed up as the original inner ring of mines was being worked out.

The rise of the motor vehicle challenge.

But it wasn't all the Railways' way. The first motorcar arrived in Newcastle in 1905 and motor lorries soon followed. Local trucking companies such as WE Brambles and Sons and AF Toll went on to become major national logistics firms.

After WW1, they became such a threat to some of the NSWGR's trade that in 1931 its Chief Commissioner urged citizens and businesses to boycott private motor transport. The controversial Labor Government of Premier JT Lang passed the 'Transport Coordination Act' to channel trade to the Railways and instituted a Board of Commissioners to do so.

This was dynamite in the depths of the Great Depression with NSW as close to revolution as it has ever been. Paramilitary groups such as the New Guard were even planning to kidnap the Premier. Still, it was the beginning of the imposition of a range of measures, including registration fees, petrol, and road taxes that were to severely impact the motor road transport industry, as they were designed to do, to protect the State Railways revenue base.

Newcastle city trams.



The original Newcastle tram sheds in the foreground with the railway running along the wharf feeding the ships at Kings Wharf. Source: Newcastle Herald.



Steam trams in Hunter St passing their shed near Newcastle Station in 1900. Source: Newcastle Herald.

A steam tram depot was initially established in Hunter Street, the main thoroughfare through the City. It was part of the Railway Yard when the Newcastle tramways were first under the control of the Railways.

Then in 1893, a new terminal and depot was established at Parnell Place situated on a headland with a panoramic view of Newcastle Beach, while the original depot was retained for light maintenance and repair work.

Initial rolling stock consisted of ex-Sydney steam self-propelled trams. As they were double decked, they had to be cut down due to the low AA Company rail bridge over Hunter Street and the overhead rail bridge to the Lambton Colliery. The top decks were removed, halving the cars' capacity from 80 to 40 passengers. In any case, the self-propelled

trams were not popular and were rarely used and eventually removed from service in 1896.



Parnell Place steam tram shed – it was damaged by a shell for Japanese submarine in 1942. Source: Tripod.

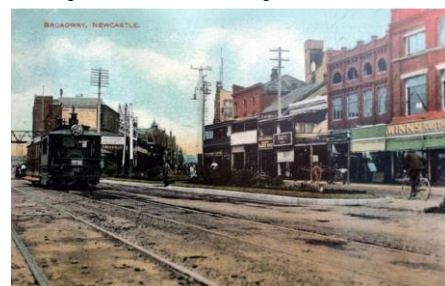


Proudly displaying a steam tram at Parnell Place Depot. Source: Newcastle Herald.



A Merewether Beach steam tram and trailer. Source: Tripod.

In addition to the self-propelled trams, American Baldwin-style steam tram locomotives were introduced. This followed the success of Sydney steam tram services and the Newcastle community's agitation for something better than horse-drawn buses. The locomotives originally required two men to operate but were modified in service to allow for one-man operation and hauled up to four trailers.



Colourised photo of steam tram near Newcastle Railway Station. Source: Newcastle Herald.

Six old electric tram cars were also brought from Sydney. Their electrical parts were removed, and they were used as steam tram trailers but were only pressed into service for events such as big race meetings.

The steam tram network had a long 'tail' made up of a string of support rolling stock, including ballast trailers for helping maintain track foundations; water trailers to feed boilers; breakdown trailers; coal/coke trailers for replenishing fuel; a water sprinkler car to keep

Continued next page...

'Newcastle and Rail – The Never-ending Story' Continued...

down dust on dirt roads; hearse cars to link with the Funeral Train which departed the Mortuary Station at Honeysuckle to service Sandgate Cemetery; and ash disposal trucks to remove waste after the steam tram firebox pans had been cleaned out.



A Mayfield line tram with unsealed right of way. Source: Newcastle Herald.



Sprinkler tram car for keeping dust down. Source: Tripod.



Steam trams were often used as feeder services to Newcastle Railway Station. Source: Flickr.

Meanwhile, slightly further afield, steam tram services between Maitland and East Maitland and the old port of Morpeth were introduced.



Steam tram 'tiptoeing' through the 1921 Maitland Flood. Source: Tripod.



Steam trams wait to pass in Maitland. Source: Tripod.



A colourised photo of Morpeth's steam tram. Source: Tripod.

Accidents waiting to happen.

In the Newcastle system, though, the hand-me-downs from Sydney's system could prove dangerous. Some serious accidents occurred involving loss of lives. Embarrassingly on the opening day of the first tram service from Newcastle to Plattsburg in 1887, it derailed, and the Mayor had to be brought back to the city by horse and cart!



Steam tram rollover at Edgeworth. Source: Tripod.



A toast-rack tram runs off the rails in Scott Street, Newcastle. Source: Newcastle Herald.

In the early days, until a critical fault was discovered, steam tram locomotives were frequently derailed until it was realised that when one end of the locomotive became lighter, depending on coal load and speed, wheels failed to contact with the rails properly. This was remedied by placing a weight on the light end of the locomotive tram car.



Re-laying tram track with the earlier wooden block road foundations exposed. Source: Newcastle Herald.

Following the success of the initial Newcastle to Plattsburg Line, eventually, ten other suburban lines with 56 steam motors and 120 trailer cars were in operation at the Newcastle system's peak. However, the steam-dependent operation came with many downsides including suffocating smoke accompanied at times by ash and cinders for the passengers.

While it served Newcastle for over 35 years, the rather antiquated and inefficient system was electrified between 1923 and 1926, except for the long West Wallsend and Speers Point branch lines, which remained steam-operated until they were closed in 1930.



A toast track tram mixes it with the military memorials. Source: Newcastle Herald.

With the pending electrification of the tram system, construction of a new depot was commenced at Hamilton in 1918 and the very old Hunter Street and the Parnell Place depots were closed in 1927.



Hamilton Depot in 1950. Source: Noel Reed.

With the arrival of new electric traction there were no new tram cars though. Just old electric toast rack cars from Sydney with under-carriages dating back to the beginning of the century. Ninety-eight of these cars were used from the start of the service until its end.



A policeman controls tram, pedestrian and car traffic outside Newcastle Station. Source: Newcastle Herald.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s and mass unemployment in Newcastle's coal, manufacturing and shipping industries, those

Continued next page...

'Newcastle and Rail – The Never-ending Story' Continued...

Novocastrians with cars often had to put them up on blocks and use the electric trams which were a cheaper option.



A procession of trams in wartime Hunter St, Newcastle. Source: Newcastle Herald.

During World War 2, there was a spike in patronage with an increase in defence-related manpower in the City and the introduction of petrol rationing and bus service cutbacks inhibiting motor transport.



A tram pursued by its eventual nemesis – the double decker bus. Source: Newcastle Herald.

But after the War, the combination of ageing tramway rolling stock made up of cast-offs from the Sydney system coupled with the service rarely turning a profit, and an increase in car ownership plus the flexibility of buses as the population sprawled into new suburbs, led to the tram network closing. This was done in stages from 1948 to 1950.



Disused toast-rack trams in 1949. Source: Tripod.



Passengers give the last tram a send-off. Source: Noel Reed.

But in this story of trams and trains, perhaps the most fascinating line of all was the mere 4 km section from Fassifern, on the Great Northern Railway between Sydney and Newcastle, and the tourist haven of Toronto, on the shore of Lake Macquarie. Surely, any tramcar with a warning sign as that below has got to have a quirky tale to tell and it does!



Toronto tram car sign. Source: Toronto Coffee Pot and Tramway Museum Society Inc.

The Toronto to Fassifern Tramway/Railway.

During the economic boom of the 1880s, private tramways were proposed for various locations of the Colony, mainly to stimulate new land subdivision sales by property developers.



A great day out on the tram or the train to Toronto alongside Lake Macquarie. Source: Lake Macquarie Library.

The Excelsior Land Company opened the large lakeside Toronto Hotel in 1887 and prepared a town plan to encourage settlement in the large estate. Wishing to attract a greater tourist trade and expand its subdivision sales, Excelsior constructed the Toronto to Fassifern Tramway and purchased a 0-6-0 tank locomotive from the NSWGR to pull tram cars on the Branch after rail passengers arrived at Fassifern on the Great Northern Railway.



Tank Locomotive No.10 proudly being displayed at Toronto in 1899. Source: University of Newcastle.

While speed was restricted to 15kph as the Branch Line was unfenced, the Railway Commissioner decided to also run a daily steam train service from Newcastle and two on Sundays.

He even outdid the private company's marketing hype by stating that: "Toronto should soon become the popular resort of pleasure seekers from all parts of Australia."

A big call, for it was an unfortunate time to launch a tourist attraction with a large capital investment just as the country was plunging into the severe 1890's depression followed by the 'Sahara Drought'.



An excursion party dressed in their 'Sunday Best' enjoy boating after taking the branch line off the Great Northern Railway to Toronto in 1903. Source: Newcastle Herald.



A rough horse-drawn tram with trolley trailer working the private Toronto Branch Line. The Line was later converted to Government-run heavy rail. Source: Lake Macquarie Library.

By 1898, The Excelsior Land Company had to introduce severe economies. So, a horse-drawn tramcar was borrowed from the NSW Tramways and substituted for the steam train during the weekday services. However, this proved to be a short-lived experiment as the patrons were soon overwhelmed by the quality of the service. Along parts of the Line, the grades proved too steep for the poor horse. As part of their passage, male passengers had to get out and push!

Then it was discovered that the horse was averse to crossing the bridges on two creeks, so while the women and children remained in the carriage, the men had to alight again and not only push the vehicle across the bridges but the driver had to walk the horse through the creeks and re-harness it on the other side!

Sweat-soaked commuting businessmen and those 'hordes' of pleasure-seeking tourists were unimpressed. Similarly, Lake Macquarie fishermen who packed their catch into wooden boxes topped with ice were frustrated when the tram-loco wasn't available. They had to push the small freight trolley the 4kms to Fassifern to meet a NSWGR connection on the Great Northern Line for transit to Newcastle and Sydney.

Continued next page...

'Newcastle and Rail – The Never-ending Story' Continued...

To add insult to injury, in 1898, a small locomotive while travelling from Fassifern to Toronto ran into a cow on the approach to Blackalls Bridge and the engine capsized on the bridge, badly scalding the driver.

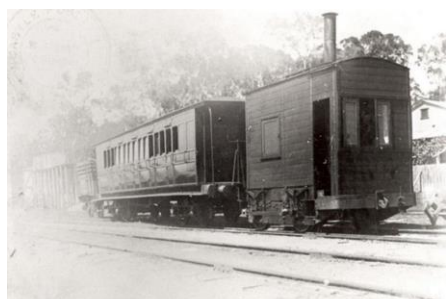


A Toronto tram departing for Fassifern. Source: Tripod.



Getting ready to board the afternoon train back to Newcastle Station from Toronto Station by Lake Macquarie. Source: Newcastle Herald.

In attempting to improve the appalling service, the Toronto Branch Line and the Hotel was leased for 10 years to a new company known as the Toronto Hotel and Tramway Company. In an innovative approach to introducing even further economies, it bought a steam tram bogie and added a quirky box like timber cabin over a vertical boiler. It was then used to pull the tram of a 60-seat passenger carriage and a flat top goods wagon between Toronto and Fassifern. Due to its unusual appearance, it became known as "The Coffee Pot" and achieved fame far and wide.



The 'Coffee Pot Train' owned by the Toronto Hotel and Tramway Co on the Fassifern to Toronto Line. Source: Lake Macquarie Library.

But not having learned from the earlier experiences, this engine too was underpowered, and the businessmen who were spending summer at Toronto and commuting to Newcastle each day not only had to get out and push but arrived at Fassifern very sweaty often smelling of fish from the cargo.

Another engine called "Pigmy" was purchased, but still the service continued to miss...

connections at Fassifern. During 1907, 28 events at Toronto attracted 28,000 visitors, including 18,700 on a single day while the population of Toronto at this time was only 800 people.

Although up to eight trains per day operated on weekends, a disgruntled Government ceased using the Line in 1908 and the private tramway service wound up in 1909.

After a constant barrage of complaints and petitions, the NSWGR took over the line in 1910 and the NSW Government Tramways operated a steam tram service until 1911, when full-scale railway operations commenced over the rebuilt right-of-way using upgraded locos and carriages.



The locomotive 'Pygmy' by Lake Macquarie at Toronto in 1901. Source: University of Newcastle.



The ladies get ready to board the Pygmy-hauled carriage back to Fassifern. Source: Tripod.



A serious level crossing accident at Toronto. Source: Newcastle Herald.



The 'Coffee Pot' locomotive hauling coal from the Glenrock Lagoon Colliery. Source: Flickr.

It was not really until after World War 2 that Toronto took off as a tourist destination. The Fassifern to Toronto railway went on to function as part of the Newcastle suburban network until its closure in 1990.

And what about the 'Coffee Pot' Locomotive? Thomas Howley purchased it in 1910 to haul coal hoppers from Glenrock Lagoon Colliery to 'The Junction' near Newcastle. Due to restricted tunnel clearances South of Merewether Beach, the wooden body had to be tapered inwards above waist level making it look even stranger. However, not a lot of thought went into the very 'agricultural' renovation as it restricted room for the crew.

No problem! As the 'Coffee Pot' coal train approached the tunnels, the throttle was set. Then the driver and fireman jumped off while the train continued through the tunnels on its own and as it came out at the other end another crew jumped on board – easy!

Finally, the 'Coffee Pot' was cut up for scrap in 1949.



A 30-class tank engine with a trail of wooden 'Yankee' End Platform Carriages crosses from the Toronto Branch Line onto Main Northern Line at Fassifern Station in 1967. Source: Chris Nelson.



Locomotive 3003 with a string of end-platform cars enters Fassifern Junction Station from the Toronto Branch Line in 1970. Source: David Patterson.



Locomotive 5178 hauling end-platform carriages on the Toronto Branch Line. Source: David Patterson.



Locomotive 3503 hauling a non-airconditioned train on the main line at Fassifern. Source: David Patterson.

Continued next page...

'Newcastle and Rail – The Never-ending Story' Continued...



Tank locomotive 3013 hauling a local train with end-platform cars into Newcastle Station from Toronto. Source: Flickr.



Toronto Station. In the 1960s there was a mixture of 620/720 class rail cars, 30 class steam tank locomotives and 48 class diesels hauling wooden end-platform cars on the Hunter District trains. As electrification of the Main Northern Line in 1984 was not extended to the Toronto Branch, diesel railcars provided the short passenger service to Fassifern until services were withdrawn in 1990. The introduction into service of the Endeavour cars from 1994, and the Hunter railcars from 2006, allowed the final withdrawal of the long running 620/720 railcars. Source: David Patterson.

To be continued with Part 13 of 24 next month...

Contributed by John Hill...

Extract from: *New Scientist* Weekly

Military now controls Myanmar's scientifically important amber mines

[EARTH](#) 30 August 2019

By [Graham Lawton](#)



Red amber from Kachin

An internationally important amber deposit in northern Myanmar has been taken over by the country's military and is being looted to line the pockets of the generals, a report from a local non-governmental organisation confirms.

The amber mines in Kachin State have produced hundreds of scientifically priceless fossils dating from 99 million years ago,

including the tail of a feathered dinosaur, several complete birds, lizards, frogs and countless insects and other invertebrates.

As previously revealed by *New Scientist*, the fossils are mined in horrendous conditions, smuggled over the border into China and sold in a gem market in Teng Chong. Palaeontologists are important buyers and publish dozens of papers every month describing new specimens.

The Kachin people have been fighting for independence from Myanmar since 1962. Until 2017, indigenous people controlled the mines, but in June of that year the Myanmar military began a campaign to oust them and seize control. The offensive killed and displaced thousands of people and has been condemned by the UN as a genocide and crime against humanity.

The government claimed its action was to halt illegal mining and protect the environment, but the new report, by the Kachin Development Networking Group (KDNG), confirms that the military has resumed unregulated mining in the Hukawng Valley, where the richest deposits are found. The amber trade into China has probably now resumed, fuelled in part by scientific demand for specimens. The trade is worth an estimated \$1 billion a year, according to the KDNG.

They claim that around 3000 displaced people from mining villages are still living in makeshift camps and being denied aid by the army.

The report is based on in-depth interviews with 21 people from the region. KDGN is calling on the army to halt its campaign and allow displaced people to return home, and for foreign governments and organization to freeze investments in Myanmar and send humanitarian aid.

When *New Scientist* revealed the horrors of the Myanmar amber trade in May, Burmese amber expert David Grimaldi of the American Museum of Natural History responded by [calling for a strict boycott of Burmese amber](#).

The Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar London has not responded to requests for comment.

Magazine issue [3246](#), published 7 September 2019

Read more:

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2214875-military-now-controls-myanmars-scientifically-important-amber-mines/#ixzz5zyYtiVe3>



<https://www.mining.com/new-mineral-found-inside-gemstones-israel/>
Cecilia Jamasmie | January 7, 2019 | 4:42 am Education Asia Diamond

New Mineral Found Inside a Gemstone in Israel



A Mineral found in one of junior Shefa Yamim's gemstones has been recognized and approved as a new mineral by the International Mineralogical Association. (Reference image courtesy of [Parent Géry](#) / [Wikimedia Commons](#).)

Israel-focused precious stones junior Shefa Yamim (LON, TLV:SEFA) announced Monday a scientific discovery that may make its gemstones more valuable than they've ever been, as researches have confirmed the presence of a new mineral inside them.

According to an article published in the journal *Minerals* last month, the new mineral — named *Carmelazite*, after Mount Carmel in northern Israel — contains titanium, aluminium and zirconium.

The element, first discovered by Shefa Yamim, is now recognized and approved as a new mineral by the International Mineralogical Association, the company said.

It can be found within a certain type of sapphire, which the company calls *Carmel Sapphire*.



BS-1124 Carmel Sapphire 23.4 Ct.

Carmel Sapphires contain inclusions of a remarkable mineral association, crystallizing from trapped melts at the time of the explosive eruptions. Image courtesy of [Shefa Yamim](#).

Chief executive Avi Taub said the news confirmed the uniqueness of its gemstone.

"We are delighted that our Carmel sapphire has been recognized as a host to many rare minerals," he said in the statement. "In today's world, where the prices of gems are determined predominantly by their rarity, the Carmel sapphire is a unique discovery."

The independent research was conducted by a group led by geologist Bill Griffin at Macquarie University in Australia, and included academics from the University of Western Australia, Università degli Studi di Firenze and Università degli Studi di Milano.

In a bulk sampling program conducted recently at Mount Carmel, Shefa Yamim has reportedly found diamonds, sapphires and rubies.

Ellen and Gerry's European Rhine River Boating Safari 2019.

Our flight to Amsterdam was quite long as we had a layover in Singapore of about 8 hours. Arrived early in the morning in Amsterdam and took the train to our hotel in the outskirts of the city. As can happen with me, I took us on the wrong train and went into a wrong direction!! But, after a delay we found our way back to the Airport station and then arrived eventually at our hotel. They were very kind and gave us the room and that was about 9.30 in the morning. But, no rest for the wicked. We were told that there was the yearly Gay Parade on the canals for Amsterdam early afternoon and it was worth a visit. So, off we went, and boy was it worth it. There were nearly one hundred floats and thousands of spectators watching. It was just amazing to watch, and we were lucky to get a position right in front of one of the many bridges.



Amsterdam Transport.



Our boat – 'Travelmarvel Diamond'.



Cologne Cathedral 2



Amsterdam Cannabis Cakes.



Amsterdam Gay Parade 1.



Happy Birthday Gerry.



Cologne Cathedral 3

The fourth day was a fabulous day cruising the famous Rhine Gorge with its many castles and lovely scenery. We arrived at lunchtime in Ruedesheim, visited the very interesting Siegfried's Mechanical Music Museum and then had free time to stroll around the rest of the town.



Amsterdam Gay Parade 2.

The next day we strolled around the city and enjoyed the many little canal site streets. But we were back early because we needed to catch up on some sleep time. Monday we finally boarded our boat around lunchtime, and we are happy to say, it is great. The staff, the food, the accommodation, all excellent. On the Tuesday morning, we had an Amsterdam sight seeing and Canal Cruise and after that, our ship left Amsterdam and we were finally on our way. After the evening meal, Gerry got a surprise Birthday Cake with Birthday song and congratulations from the Captain, the Tour Director and everybody else. As you can see, he was a very happy boy!

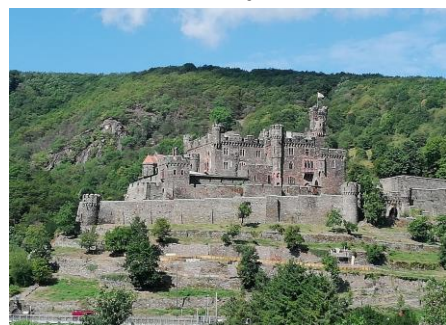
On our third day we arrived in Cologne in the morning, had a visit by bus to Augustusburg Castle and free time in the afternoon to visit the Cathedral and city of Cologne.



Cologne Cathedral 1



Rhine Gorge 1.



Rhine Gorge 2.

Continued next page...

Ellen and Gerry's European Rhine River Boating Safari 2019. – Continued...



Rhine Gorge 3.



Rhine Gorge 4.



Rhine Gorge 5.



Rhine Gorge 6.



Rhine Gorge 7.



Rhine Gorge 8.



Rhine Gorge 9.



Ruedesheim - Siegfried's Mechanical Music Museum.

On the morning of the fifth day we had a very interesting and entertaining Glass Blowing Demonstration on board, and in the afternoon was free time to visit the charming town of Miltenberg.



Glass blowing demonstration on board the boat.



Miltenberg 1.

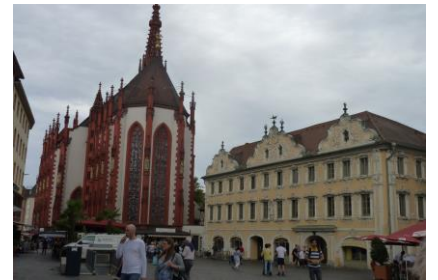


Miltenberg 2.

The sixth day which was today, we first were cruising along the Main Danube Canal and then had a guided tour of Würzburg and again some free time after to explore the city by ourselves.



Würzburg 1.



Würzburg 2.



Würzburg 3.



Würzburg 4.

The accommodation on board the boat is first class, the staff are wonderful, and the food is excellent. *'The Happy Wanderers'*

Contributed by Doug Walker...

A View of the Brexit Deal Yes/No or stay in, by Physicians

Physicians were unable to reach a consensus: Should the U.K. leave with or without a deal or stay in?

The Allergists were in favour of scratching it, but the Dermatologists advised not to make any rash moves.

The Gastroenterologists had sort of a gut feeling about it, but the Neurologists thought May had a lot of nerve.

Meanwhile, Obstetricians felt certain everyone was labouring under a misconception, while the Ophthalmologists considered the idea short-sighted.

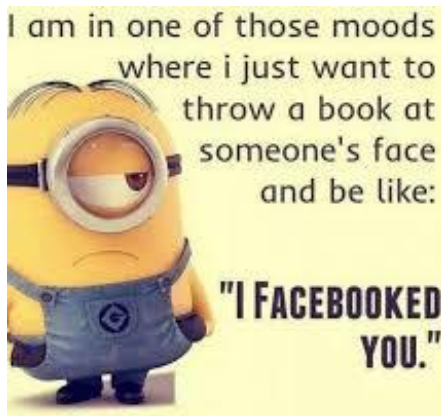
Pathologists yelled, "Over my dead body!" while the Paediatricians said, "Oh, grow up!"

The Psychiatrists thought the whole idea was madness, while the Radiologists could see right through it. Surgeons decided to wash their hands of the whole thing and the Internists claimed it would indeed be a bitter pill to swallow.

The Plastic Surgeons opined that this proposal would "put a whole new face on the matter." The Podiatrists thought it was a step forward, but the Urologists were pissed off at the whole idea.

Anaesthesiologists thought the whole idea was a gas, and the Cardiologists didn't have the heart to say no.

In the end, the Proctologists won out, leaving the entire decision up to the assholes in parliament!



Contributed by Doug Walker...

Paddy's Memorial Stone

Paddy died. His will provided \$80,000 for an elaborate funeral.

As the last guests departed the affair, his widow Colleen turned to her oldest and dearest friend and said, "Ah well, Paddy would be pleased."

"You're right," replied Mary, who lowered her voice and leaned in close. "So, go on, how much did this really cost?" she enquired.

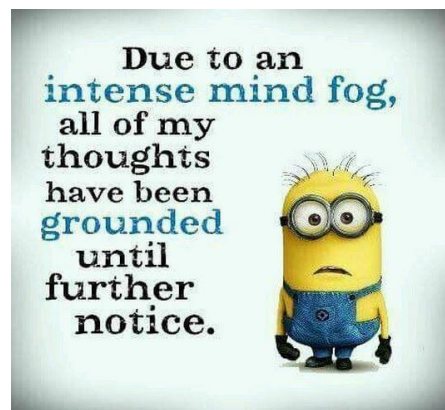
"All up, it cost \$80,000!" exclaimed Colleen.

"Aw No! Not really?", Mary exclaimed, "I mean, it was very grand, but \$80,000?"

Colleen replied, "The funeral was \$13,000. I donated \$1000 to the church. The whisky, wine and snacks were another \$1000. The rest went for the Memorial Stone."

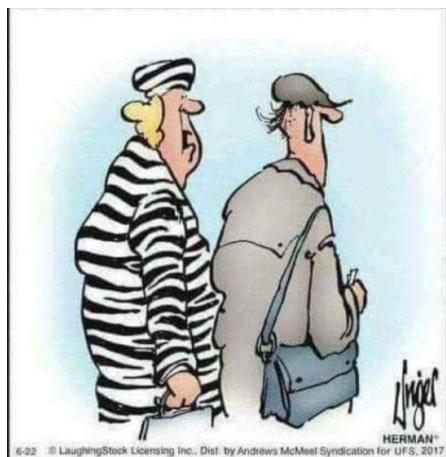
Mary computed quickly. "For the love of God Colleen, \$65000 for a Memorial Stone? How big is it?" she asked.



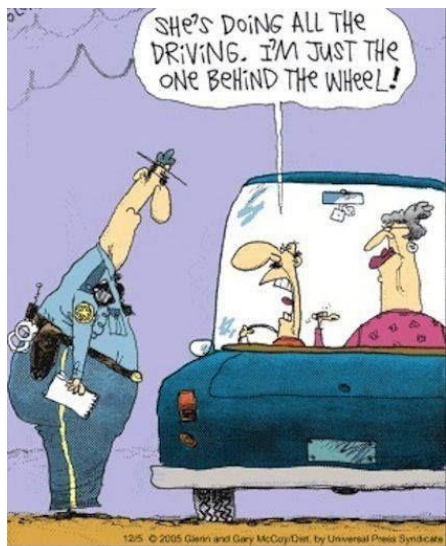


Contributed by Doug Walker...

Subject: Love you??



"First you buy me a new coat and now a trip to Lion Safari Park. What's got into you lately?"



"Is that the dress you wore on our honeymoon?"

Contributed by Doug Walker...

Ageing a little levity



An 84-year-old man is having a drink in Harpoon Harry's. Suddenly a gorgeous girl enters and sits down a few seats away. The girl is so attractive that he just can't take his eyes off her.

After a short while, the girl notices him staring, and approaches him. Before the man has time to apologize, the girl looks him deep in the eyes and says to him in a sultry tone: "I'll do anything you'd like. Anything you can imagine in your wildest dreams, it doesn't matter how extreme or unusual it is, I'm game. I want \$100, and there's another condition."

Completely stunned by the sudden turn of events, the man asks her what her condition is. "You have to tell me what you want me to do in just three words."

The man takes a moment to consider the offer from the beautiful woman. He whips out his wallet and puts \$100 dollars into her hand. He then looks her square in the eyes and says slowly and clearly, "Paint my house."

Our needs change as we get older, and we tend to look for bargains.

Contributed by Doug Walker...

Satnav – A new poem by Pam Ayres.

I have a little Satnav; it sits there in my car. A Satnav is a driver's friend it tells you where you are. I have a little Satnav; I've had it all my life. It's better than the normal ones, my Satnav is my wife.

It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive "It's sixty miles an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty-five". It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake and tells me that it's never ever, safe to overtake.

It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene. It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear. And taking this into account, it specifies my gear.

I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device. For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice. It fills me up with counselling, each journey's pretty fraught. So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?

Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm properly fed. It washes all my shirts and things and keeps me warm in bed!

Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff, I only wish that now and then, I could turn the bugger off.



"I hope I'm facing in this direction when I wake up in the morning."



"Want me to get you a shopping cart?"

Contributed by Augie Gray...



Yesterday I did nothing and today I'm finishing what I did yesterday.

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Dendritic Opal	Obsidian (Silver Sheen)	Pyrite in Quartz	
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Adelaide Gem & Mineral Show 2019

October 12th & 13th

Payneham Library Complex
Corner O.G. Road & Turner Street, Felixstow.

Saturday 10.00 am to 5.00 pm
Sunday 10.00 am to 4.00 pm

- Exhibits of gems, minerals, fossils, jewellery, lapidary machinery and more, most being for sale.
- Interstate and local dealers attending.
- Activity Centre open to adults and children.
- Canteen open for light meals, snacks & drinks.



Adults \$5.00
Pensioner/concession \$3.00
Children FREE under 12 with an adult

- If you would like to present a showcase for the show please contact the secretary.
- Raffle tickets for this year's show will be \$2 each with a total of 500 tickets.
- Raffle tickets will be available for sale at the show. Prizes TBA soon.

Southern Rockhounds

Dig it up, Clean it up, Cut it up & Polish it up



Please enquire about any event by using our contact page.
We will reply to all enquiries.



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and 10am till 4pm - Sun.
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