



The First Fifty Years

Diamond Valley Gem Club Inc.





Acknowledgments:

Dawn Lee

John Stevens

Keith Billing

Neil Crammer

Rahn Krammaer

Bendigo Bank, Fletchers Real Estate, Jenny Macklin MP, Banyule City Council, Victorian State Government and Commonwealth, and Victorian Gem Clubs Association INC.



Foreword:

In 1967 there must have been something in the water in the state of Victoria because during that year more than ten Gem Clubs were founded. One of them was the Diamond Valley Gem Club, which officially started in October of that year and was later Incorporated.

The club emerged from humble beginnings with Frans Zylstra as the first president. Workshops were held at the home of one of our members with limited equipment. Fifty-years later the club has progressed to having our own clubhouse at Grace Park in Greensborough, a healthy membership, good suitable and active doing their part to ensure that the club is around in another fifty-years.

Our club has always had two main aims: one is to provide the needed facilities and to pass on our lapidary craft knowledge to anyone who wants to join and learn new skills in varying areas, from faceting, cabochon cutting, jewelry making, silversmithing, lost wax casting, wire wrapping, jade carving and enameling. Some of these are quite different to others although they are all part of lapidary and this means that there is something at the club to satisfy people with many different interests. The other foundation aim of the club is that we are here to enjoy ourselves and have fun whilst practicing our craft. The friendships that have flourished at the club over the years is a great indicator that the Diamond Valley Gem Club Inc. is truly a happy place to be.

We are multicultural in that we have had members from many different countries around the world. We have similar numbers of men and women, and our ages have ranged from pre-teenagers to members in their nineties but really, we are all kids at heart.

We have been an active member of the Victorian Gem Clubs Association Inc. and over the years we have provided that umbrella organisation with a number of presidents and other office bearers. In recent years our members have been at the forefront of running V.G.C.A. Inc., National Gem Shows (Gemborees) and State Gem Shows (Gemkhanas) for the benefit of anyone in Southeastern Australia who has an interest in lapidary.

This book is by no way all-encompassing but it is designed to give some record of the various activities of the club over the years, fieldtrips, our annual shows, social activities, workshops, training sessions and working-bees are just a few of the club's activities over the half century.

We now look forward to the next fifty years.

Keith Billing,

President of the Diamond Valley Gem Club (1995-1999/2004-2018).

Presidents:

1968:	Frans Zylstra
1969-1970:	Jack Leaumant
1971-1975:	Tom Jenkins
1976:	Jack Brown
1977:	John Scholz
1978-1979:	Rupe Cuthbert
1980-1984:	Tom Boyce
1985:	Tom Boyce/Peter Wright
1986:	Peter Wright
1987:	Dirk Pendavingh
1988:	Daryl Graham
1989-1992:	Wyn Jenkins
1993:	Jean Carlyle
1994:	Steve Macaulay
1995-1999:	Keith Billing
2000-2003:	Wyn Jenkins
2004-2018:	Keith Billing



Honorary Life Members:

1968:	Don Sullivan
1968:	Ivy Sullivan
1976:	Tom Jenkins
1977:	Jack Brown
1978:	John Scholz
1982:	Rupe Cuthbert
1983:	Reg Henderson
1984:	Jose Hickin
1985:	Peter Brown
1986:	Peter Wright
1994:	Wyn Jenkins
1996:	Dirk Pendavingh
2000:	Keith Billing
2000:	Harry Dean
2000:	Harry Irvine
2005:	Barbra Kirkbride
2005:	Ron Kirkbride
2008:	Gunter Brazzoduro
2009:	Neil Crammer
2010:	Roger Williams
2011:	Ron Hewitt
2012:	Bettina Kargulewitz
2015:	Peter Stapleton

History of the Club

Frans Zylstra inserted a notice in the Diamond Valley News wishing to hear from any person interested in forming a lapidary group in August or September of 1967.

On the thirty-first of October 1967 five people gathered to form the first meeting of interested people. They were Frans Zylstra, Chas McKinna, Jack Leaumont, and Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan.

The minutes of that meeting were rather brief:

Business for the night:

- name declared for the club;
- membership fee of \$5.00;
- Mr. Sullivan to arrange for circulars to be printed.

The second meeting occurred on twenty-first November 1967 and was attended by an extra six members. Business included:

- methods of raising funds;
- Mr. & Mrs. Sullivan offered the club the use of their garage as a temporary clubroom.

The third meeting was on the sixth of February 1968 in the Greensborough Anglers Hall. Approximately one-hundred people attended. The purpose of the club was explained and the first annual meeting was underway. Office bearers were elected:

President:	Frans Zylstra,
Vice-President:	Helen Robinson,
Secretary:	Chas McKinna,
Treasurer:	Janet Winder,
Executive Committee:	Mrs. Hickling,
	Mrs. Sayers,
	Mr. Barham.

All members in attendance were declared to be foundation members.

On the eighth of February 1968 the clubroom was opened at the Sullivan's home in Montmorency.

The first newsletter was issued in May 1968.

In late 1968 the club held its first gem show, which in fact was the first national gem show to be held anywhere in Australia.

The first of May 1972, the club received its first Vice Regal patronage from the Governor of Victoria, Sir. Rohan Delacombe. He also accepted honorary membership of the Diamond Valley Gem Club.

Monthly meetings were held in the Church of England Hall Greensborough and were well attended. Usually over one hundred members attended and if they did not arrive early they would not get a seat.

For some time the clubroom at the Sullivan's had been found to be too small for the club's workshops and Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan had also expressed the wish that they may like to put their car in their garage at times.

The council had been approached and in late 1974 or early 1975. It found new premises in Ivanhoe. Many Working Bees were undertaken by members to make the new rooms suitable for the club's needs.

On the thirteenth of July 1975 about seventy members went along to an open day at the new clubrooms, which were located at the western end of Stanley Street behind Storford Avenue in Ivanhoe.

As time passed the clubrooms in Ivanhoe became too small and it was also felt the Diamond Valley Gem Club should actually reside within the Diamond Valley.

The council was again approached and after Councilor Critcheley took the case to the council, new premises were found at our present location at 135 Henry Street, Greensborough.

Many members helped convert the house, which incidentally was originally the local church manse, into our clubroom. On the first of April 1979 the clubrooms were open for inspection.

At 11:00 on the twenty-first of October 1979 the new clubrooms were officially opened.

On the twenty-fourth of December the club received a personal letter from the retiring Governor of Victoria, Sir. Henry Winneke expressing his pleasure and honour at having been given an Honorary membership of the club during his term in office.

The club is proud of its diverse membership base with members coming from all walks of life and at its peak in 1975 had one-hundred-and-eighty-four members.

HISTORY OF THE DIAMOND VALLEY GEM CLUB

LAPIDARY COMPETITION ON A NATIONAL SCALE

REPRINTED FROM THE AUSTRALIAN LAPIDARY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 4 NO. 12 JULY 1968

THE CLUB WISHES TO THANK HARRY IRVINE FOR THE DONATION OF THIS MAGAZINE

“A notice has been received from the Diamond Valley Gem Club, Victoria, that a lapidary competition and show on a National scale will be staged at the R.S.L. Hall, Greensborough, Victoria, on 16th and 17th November, 1968.

The organizers are being very ambitious in their aims, and it goes without saying that their efforts should be rewarded by receiving the support of hobbyists throughout Australia.

Already, encouragement has been given the organisers by the way of several valuable donations towards the trophy list. However, the main support must finally come from the hobbyists themselves. Mrs. Sayers (the show secretary) will be happy to send you a copy of the show prospectus and entry forms, but please send a stamped addressed envelope.”

**THIS WAS NOT A BAD EFFORT FROM A CLUB THAT HAD ONLY BEEN
FORMALLY IN EXISTANCE FOR 7 MONTHS.**

STANDING ROOM ONLY AT THE GENERAL MEETINGS

Our Foundation Secretary, Chas Mc Kinna (Recently Rejoined) has spoken about the early monthly General Meetings that were held in the Anglican Church hall in Grimshaw Street Greensborough.

These meetings regularly had over 100 members in attendance and as there were only a limited number of seats in the hall, if you did not get in early, you had to stand around the edge of the hall, some nights up to 3 deep.

VERY WELL ATTENDED FIELD TRIPS

Documents that the club still has in its possession and that have been donated by members, tell of regular (at one stage they were held as often as once a fortnight, but were usually held every 3 weeks) “DAY LONG Field Trips” to locations over 150 kilometres from Melbourne that were regularly being attended by up to 60 persons.

Documents tell of members with their families travelling in up to 18 vehicles having very good days in the country, with fresh air, picnics, barbeques and apparently a lot of fun was had by all.

SOMETIMES THERE WAS ACTUALLY SOME FOSSICKING DONE

There are a large number of the early “Minutes of Meeting ” documents as well as other books and leaflets that have been found and collated into folders which are now stored in the cupboards under the display case in the meeting room. There are some very interesting articles in these papers and members are urged to read them at their leisure. Please be very careful when taking the documents out of their plastic covers to read them and especially when you are replacing them, they are very fragile.

**GRABBen GULLEN
SAPPHIRE FIELD DAY**

The residents of Grabben Gullen, N.S.W., have organised a committee with a view in mind to arrange an open field day for sapphire hunters. As is well known, Grabben Gullen is an excellent area for this gemstone, but unfortunately the greater number of hobbyists are not acquainted with the individual fossicking areas. In answer to this, the above committee has been formed for the express purpose of acquainting hobbyists with the prospecting areas, while at the same time encouraging visitors to the area.

If a satisfactory response is received to this promotion, arrangements have been made with property owners for otherwise prohibited fossicking areas to be opened to those attending the Grabben Gullen Sapphire Field Day, which will be held during the Labour Day week-end, October 5, 6 and 7, 1968.

There will be many sidelights to this week-end, including a barbecue, dance, and competitions. But let us not tell you about it; get the full details for yourself by writing direct to: Mr. P. Burns, c/o Grabben Gullen School, Grabben Gullen, via Goulburn, 2580, or telephone Grabben Gullen 220. Mr. Burns will be happy to send you or your club secretary a circular giving full details of the week-end.

**LAPIDARY COMPETITION ON A
NATIONAL SCALE**

A notice has been received from the Diamond Valley Gem Club, Victoria, that a lapidary competition and show on a Na-

tional scale will be staged at the R.S.L. Hall, Greensborough, Victoria, on 16th and 17th November, 1968.

The organizers are being very ambitious in their aims, and it goes without saying that their efforts should be rewarded by receiving the support of hobbyists throughout Australia. Already, encouragement has been given the organisers by the way of several valuable donations towards the trophy list. However, the main support must finally come from the hobbyists themselves. In this respect you are asked to write to: Mrs. C. Sayers, Show Secretary, 93 Henry Street, Greensborough, Victoria. Telephone: 43-2522.

Mrs. Sayers will be happy to send you a copy of the show prospectus and entry forms, but please send a stamped addressed envelope.

IS THERE A BABY IN THE HOUSE ?

Rockhounds who work on flat laps, rubbing plates, etc., sometimes have trouble in keeping the various grits separate and free from contamination.

Baby powder tins are a great help. When empty, you can prise the lids off carefully with a small screwdriver, clean out the tin, put in your grit of a certain grade, and replace the lid. Be careful to mark the outside of the tin with the grade of powder it contains. You now have a dust-proof container with a shaker top and an effective lid.

If there are a few babies up and down the street, you will soon have a marked container for every size of grit.

— V. J. Hearnese.

FIELD TRIP

ELDORADO

**SATURDAY NOV 18TH
AND
SUNDAY NOV 19TH**

A FIELD TRIP IS BEING ORGANISED
FOR THE ELDORADO AREA -
NORTH EAST VICTORIA

**CRYSTALS AND MINERALS
SPECIMENS
POSSIBLY GOLD**

ACCOMODATION IS AVAILABLE AT THE
ELDORADO GEMSTONE CARAVAN PARK -
PRICES ARE SET OUT ON THE FOLLOWING
PAGES

OTHER TYPES OF ACCOMODATION ARE
AVAILABLE IN WANGARATTA - 18 KM AWAY



DIAMOND VALLEY GEM CLUB

**14th National Lapidary
Competition Show
EXHIBITION
of Gemstones,
Minerals & Crafts**

**SATURDAY, 30th MAY 10 a.m — 9 p.m.
SUNDAY, 31st MAY 1981 10 a.m — 5 p.m.**

**'LOYOLA'
Grimshaw Street, Bundoora**

Lapidary & Craft Demonstration
Also Trade Stalls— Hand Crafted Jewellery,
Novelties & Plants For Sale
Light Refreshments Available
Ample Off-Street Parking

**Admission: Adults \$1.00
Children 30c
Family \$2.00**

SEE ALSO ON DISPLAY a replica of
"THE HAND OF FAITH"
VICTORIA'S BIGGEST GOLD NUGGET
FOR OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS.



DIAMOND VALLEY GEM CLUB

12TH NATIONAL LAPIDARY COMPETITION AND SHOW

EXHIBITION OF GEMS

MINERALS & CRAFTS

SATURDAY MAY 31st 10am - 9pm

SUNDAY JUNE 1st 10am - 5pm

LAMBOURN ST HALL WATSONIA

LAMBOURN RD WATSONIA (NEAR KENMARE ST)

MELWAY MAP No 20 D4

LAPIDARY AND CRAFT DEMONSTRATIONS

TRADE STALLS

HANDCRAFTED JEWELLERY

NOVELTIES AND PLANTS FOR SALE

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

OFF STREET PARKING

ADMISSION - ADULTS \$1.00 CHILDREN 30c FAMILY \$2.00



**DIAMOND VALLEY
Gem Club Inc**

Registered No
A0007700S

Venue "Grace Irish Cottage" Postal Add: PO Box 335 Greensborough 3088

Cnr. Henry Str. and Duncan Ave., Greensborough

Visitors are welcome to all meetings, functions and events of the club

40TH ANNIVERSARY GET TOGETHER.

10th February 2008 from 2.00 pm

A REUNION OF PRESENT AND PAST MEMBERS OF THE CLUB IS TO BE HELD TO CELEBRATE OUR 40TH BIRTHDAY.

The reunion will be held at the Austrian Club on Sunday 10th February 2008 from 2.00 pm onwards.

**The Austrian Club is located at
76 - 90 Sheehan Road West Heidelberg**

The Austrian Club is open from 11.45 AM.

If any person is interested they may arrive early and have their midday meal at the club.

The meals are A La Carte and members may choose and select from a wide range of meals.

The reunion will take the form of a "A la Carte" afternoon tea and will be held from 2.00 pm

There is plenty of parking at the Austrian Club.

Any enquiries please contact The Diamond Valley Gem Club, by post at the above address, or one of the Office Bearers set out below as soon as possible.

OFFICE BEARERS

PRESIDENT - KEITH BILLING 94371356 VICE PRESIDENT - RON KIRKBRIDE 94382998
SECRETARY - BRUCE JACKSON 97174802 TREASURER - GUNTER BRAZZODURO 94377906

A reply acceptance sheet is enclosed and any person wishing to attend the function should fill it out and return it as soon as possible or by 31st January at the latest to the Club's P.O. Box (Address at top of this sheet)

DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR ACCEPTANCE FORMS



PRESENTED BY THE V.G.C.A. TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CLUBS TO COMMEMORATE THEIR 21ST BIRTHDAY IN 1988.

	FOUNDED
SHEPPARTON & DISTRICT LAPIDARY CLUB INC.	20-1-67
DANDENONG LAPIDARY CLUB	3-2-67
WESTERN DISTRICT GEM CLUB	22-2-67
CASTLEMAINE & DISTRICT GEM CLUB	31-3-67
GEELONG GEM & MINERAL CLUB INC.	11-4-67
HORSHAM & DISTRICT LAPIDARY CLUB INC.	13-4-67
NUNAWADING & DISTRICT LAPIDARY CLUB INC.	18-4-67
BENDIGO GEM CLUB INC.	18-6-67
MORDIALLOC LAPIDARY CLUB INC.	25-6-67
BAIRNSDALE LAPIDARY CLUB INC.	6-8-67
VICTORIAN GEM CLUBS ASSOCIATION INC.	16-9-67
SUNRAYSA LAPIDARY CLUB	20-9-67
BALLARAT & DISTRICT LAPIDARY CLUB INC.	29-9-67
DIAMOND VALLEY GEM CLUB INC.	31-10-67



ANNUAL REPORT OF DIAMOND VALLEY GEM CLUB.

The Diamond Valley Gem Club was formed in October 1967, by Mr. Frans Zylstra. The first meeting was held on the 31st of October, 1967. This was attended by five people, at this meeting the name The Diamond Valley Gem Club was decided upon. In February 1968 the first Annual General Meeting was held. This was attended by approximately 50-60 persons interested in joining the club. All office bearers were elected on a 2 year term. Also at this meeting Mr. & Mrs. D. Sullivan kindly offered the use of their garage as a club workroom and lent a sum of money to equip it with enough machinery to suit the clubs needs.

In November 1968 the club held its 1st National competition. The only lapidary competition held in Australia on a National basis.

During the year the Executive Committee organised field trips, guest speakers, and cutting courses for all members. By the end of the year membership had grown to 100 and at the Christmas breakup Mr. & Mrs. D. Sullivan were made Honary Life Members for their help in forming the club.

February, 1969. The first general meeting saw us start the year with 60 members a drop of 40%. In April, 1969, Mr. Frans Zylstra decided to resign as President owing to business pressures, and Mr. Jack Beaumont was elected President for the remainder of the year.

In November, 1969, the club held its 2nd National competition which was regarded by our club and other clubs throughout the state and interstate as a great success.

November also saw the instigation of a new and more comprehensive constitution. By the end of 1969 our membership had grown to 120 members.

During 1969 the club has had field trips once a month, guest speakers, various functions organized by the Social Committee. The club also has Fire Insurance and a Public Risk Policy.

The Executive Committee is sure you have been able to develop your lapidary skills as well as make a lot of new friends through the club.

We thank you for your support throughout the last two years, and feel sure that the Diamond Valley Gem Club will continue to improve and become one of the best Gem Clubs in Victoria.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.



Insite

CLUBS & ENTERTAINMENT

Showcasing a gem of a collection

By Goya Bennett

GEM lovers would have to have rocks in their head to miss this month's show hosted by the Diamond Valley Gem Club.

Club treasurer and mineral-mad rock-hound Gunter Brazzoduro said members hailing from Whittlesea and surrounds would be displaying their wares in all their brilliance.

His shining passion for fossicking minerals - at home and abroad - has left Mr Brazzoduro with a 300-strong collection and every one of them a gem.

"I do collect minerals and there's so many good ones, but I do like crocoite. "Once I retired I was introduced to the club by a friend.

"In the beginning I was a novice, but since then whenever I go overseas I go rock shopping. We always look at the ground, not at the sky."

The club, formed in 1967, has attracted hundreds of members who enjoy collecting, cutting, polishing,

'... whenever I go overseas I go rock shopping. We always look at the ground, not at the sky.'

Gunter Brazzoduro

faceting and enamelling gems. Many transform their rock crystal and opal finds into pieces of jewellery.

Mr Brazzoduro said sometimes a rock "looked like a potato" until one

started cutting away the surface to reveal a beautiful agate.

"Come winter, some of our members travel north to enjoy the warmer climate while fossicking for opals, sapphires, agates and zircons.

"Every year in May, a gem exhibition is held by the club, which will feature gem, jewellery and mineral stalls organised by members and dealers, showcases of member's gem collections, an opal game, gem identification and various demonstrations."

The Diamond Valley Gem Club annual show will be held at the Watsons Community Hall on May 28-29 from 9.30am-5pm. Visitors are invited to chat to club members about gems. For more information, call Gunter Brazzoduro on 9435 7906.



Rock-hound: Club secretary Neil Crammer faceting a lemon quartz.

DIAMOND VALLEY GEM CLUB NEWSLETTER.

Subscription 60c.
Dec. 1969.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.
10th Feb.

The Annual General Meeting of this Club will be held at 8pm, Tuesday, 10th Feb. 1970, at the Church of England Hall, Main St., Greensborough.

EXECUTIVE MEETING.

Wednesday 4th Feb. at Mr. J. Leamant, 157 Nepean Street, Greensborough.

FIELD TRIP.

22nd Feb.

Our first field trip for 1970, will be held on Sunday, February 22nd. Destination "Surprise" Convoys to leave "Safeways" at 9.30am, plenty of rocks for the old hands and also new chums alike. This trip will be to a location not yet visited by our club so lets see a good turnout to start the year off.

CLUB ROOMS.

No.6, McFarlane St. Montmorency.
RE-OPEN..... Tues. Feb. 3rd.
THURSDAY..... 7.30 till 10pm.
FRIDAY..... 7.30 till 10pm.
Sat..... 2pm till 5pm.

DOES THIS MEAN YOU.

With many thanks to the "Flyriter," the monthly newsletter of the Dallas County Rock Club, located in Adel, Iowa, U.S.A., we print the following and ask all members to read it, and maybe, read it again.

Are you an active member:-
The kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list.
Do you attend the meetings
and mingle with the flock,
Or do you stay at home
And criticize and "Knock"
Or are you satisfied
To only just belong?

P.T.O.

DIAMOND VALLEY GEM CLUB NEWSLETTER.

Subscription 60c.
Dec. 1969.

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Do you ever visit
A member who is sick,
Or leave the work to just a few,
and talk about the clique?
Think this over member,
You know right from wrong,
Are you an active member:-
Or do you just belong?

As you all will be aware by now, our first meeting 10th Feb. is our annual meeting and therefore we will be calling for nominations for the following:-

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

PRESIDENT.
VICE PRESIDENT.
SECRETARY.
TREASURER.

Plus 1 committee member per 20 members excluding office bearers shown on the members roll 21 days before the annual meeting.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE.

5 Committee members. 1 of these members shall be a delegate from the Executive Committee.

SHOW COMMITTEE.

5 Committee Members. 1 of these members shall be a delegate from the Executive Committee.

The following committee members are available for re-selection.

Mr. C. McKinna.
Mr. T. Jenkins.
Mr. J. Leamant.
Mr. C. Paravoni.

P.T.O.



DIAMOND VALLEY GEM CLUB NEWSLETTER.

Subscription 60c.
Dec. 1969.

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All nominations should be submitted in writing to the Secretary, Mr. C. McKinna, 4 Elsie St., Greensborough, before the 10th Feb. and must be signed by both the proposer, seconder and nominee.

PRESIDENT NOTE.

Firstly I would like to thank all the committee members and members for their support during the past few months. I would also like to take this opportunity of wishing each and every one of you the compliments of the season and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of the report from the outgoing committee plus a financial report.

Looking forward to seeing you all again on Feb. 10th.

DON'T FORGET THOSE NOMINATIONS.

PRESIDENT. Mr. Jack Leamant, 435-6835,
157 Nepean St., Greensborough.
SECRETARY. Chas. McKinna,
4 Elsie St., Greensborough.
TREASURER. Janet Winder,
19 Elsie Court, Eitham..

So long for 1969.....HAPPY NEW YEAR.

" THE COPY BOYS."



Club Activities

Wire Wrapping

I became involved with the Diamond Valley Gem Club twelve years ago when my daughter Therese became interested in gem stones. Keith Billings took Therese under his wing and taught her to cut cabochons and as she was a minor I sat and watched her cut beautiful stones. I became a member soon after, envious of her creations.

The next course we did together was wire wrapping. Wire wrapping is capturing a stone in silver sterling wire by twisting and wrapping the wires together. It was here that I found my true creativity. When I got home I googled 'wire wrapping' and found there was a much more to learn. The following week when I went back to the club and showed my fellow members what else was being done and somehow became the wire wrapping teacher the following week.

I have shown wire wrapping and taught many classes over the years for the Club. My favourite part is the look on students faces as they look at their creation with satisfaction and disbelief. They have cut a stone into a cab and now they are able to wear it with pride.

A class goes for six hours and in that time students learn how to wrap a 30 x 40 oval cabochon and a free form cabochon, make a pair of earrings and a ring. Many people have done the course several times. I have also taught more advanced classes when required. Each person gets written directions to continue their work at home. The club has a few sets of tools that can be used while at the club.

Clare Gleeson

Wire Wrapping Teacher

Faceting

Welcome to the fascinating world of faceting. I have only been with the club for a few years and have moved from doing cabochon work to faceting gemstones. As anyone who has done this work will know, it is challenging and cannot be completed in minutes. It is at times frustrating, but hugely satisfying when the final product emerges.

The greatest joy comes from cutting stones that you have found by fossicking. Whilst faceting is not generally competitive, one gets great satisfaction when showing off a well-cut stone to other club members.

I have shown numerous people how to facet with satisfactory results. This helps keep this ancient and ongoing artform alive in the club. We are a happy group ranging from veterans in the field to beginner's eager to uncover the mysteries of this art.

John Milner,

Faceting Teacher

Silver/Jewellery

The purpose of the silver/jewellery course is to pass on the basic skills of silver soldering and the fabrication of jewellery pieces in silver/brass/copper to club members.

With the substantial number of cabochons and faceted stones that are made by club members, this course should give them some extra ways to make jewellery items.

I have been involved in the metal working trades most of my life and I enjoy passing on some of these skills before they become a thing of the past. It gives me a lot of pleasure to see people's joy in their finished work.

Mike Griffin

Silver/Jewellery Teacher

Lost Wax Jewellery Casting

Lost wax jewellery casting has always seemed like magic to me. You take a piece of wax, heat it, cut it, mould it, shape it, blow holes in it, melt it and inject it into a mould, press stones into it to make a setting or add small pieces to make a claw setting, so why wouldn't you want to pass the skills on to allow others to be creative?

I've taught lost wax casting to many people for over forty years. Some have started businesses, one ex-student won an award with his opal and gold cast pendant, and many have used their skills to display jewellery in unique ways.

Every year I teach two or more classes at the Diamond Valley Gem Club which I find personally rewarding, for it inspires me to be creative and explore interesting ways of displaying my cut stones.

Unfortunately, we are unable to cast our wax works due to space constraints at the club but by sending the waxes to be commercially cast, students can be guaranteed of a perfect casting in almost any metal of their choosing.

I'm glad that in this automated and pending robotic world, creative skills such as the ancient art of lost wax casting is still being learnt and passed on to others.

Leigh Carbines

Lost Wax Jewellery Casting Teacher

BBQ, Christmas Parties and Social Events

The club organises numerous social event that include social BBQs and Christmas parties, which we always encourage new and old members to attend.





Fieldtrips

The Diamond Valley Gem Stone Club has conducted several fieldtrips to sundry locations over many years.

Flinders Island Field Trip March 1991



Beechworth Fieldtrip April 1992



Stratford Field Trip January 2000



Gem Shows

The Diamond Valley Gem Club hosted its first gem show in 1968, which was the first national gem show to be held anywhere in Australia. Subsequently annual shows have been hosted by the Club every year. These shows have been highly successful, attracting thousands of visitors over the years.

The following traders have contributed to the success of our shows over the years:

Ron Kirkbride, Chris Ware, Claire Gleeson, Tracy Biagioni, Rocks on Fire, Anne Brewster, Yani Moediman, Rumage Crafts, Carol Kirby, Pristine Minerals, Trevor Warren, Christine Deprince.





Current and Previous Members Prospective

Letter from Leigh Carbines

Joining the Diamond Valley Gem Club was not something I had imagined doing. Both my wife, Amrei and I joined after attending the Club's Annual Show in Greensborough in early 2000, after a jeweller friend recommended seeing and buying gem stones from club members. I had been making jewellery as a hobby since the early 1970s – 'Hippy Stuff' as one of my friends described it but I was always reliant upon other people's stones, mainly from jeweller's supply shops, and this had always been a limitation to my creativity.

Imagine the joy when told I could easily cut my own stones. It was like a whole new world opening, with club members willing to share their knowledge freely whilst often providing stones to cut.

The club ran Bingo Nights once a month for many years, which was a great social way of getting to know other members. The continuing special activities like the annual Christmas party and the weekly Tuesday luncheons enable the sharing of stories of rock fossicking, show-and-tells and life experiences that club members/friends have had. Sadly, some of the members are no longer with us, but their memories and the enthusiasm with which they shared their skills remain. I became secretary of the club as finding members willing to volunteer on a committee seems to be an enduring challenge with many clubs.

In the last seventeen years the club's equipment has improved with the introduction of diamond cutting wheels, polishing belts and the addition of more faceting machines.

It was only this year, 2017, that Amrei and I have been able to fossick interstate which we enjoyed so much that we will continue next year. By the way, we found, even in remote places, if you mention you are a member of a gem club, the doors open magically. In other words, joining the Diamond Valley Gem Club was a very good decision.

Letter from Neil Crammer

I joined the Diamond Valley Gem Club during 1973 and I am now a life member. The reason I joined the club was due to extensive travelling in Australia with my work. I was in areas that allowed me to collect rock specimens from these locations. My interest in minerals and lapidary was started. I attended the Monthly meetings at the Anglican Church Hall in Greensborough and was welcomed by Tom Jenkins (president), the husband of Wyn Jenkins, (club president In waiting).

Unfortunately, work, family commitments and Baseball took over and did not allow time to attend the club and use the facilities there. My interest grew with our Caravanning Holidays and work travel with visits to Interstate gem clubs and gem shows.

I built up my own Lapidary equipment for home use.

When my sporting days had finished, my Saturdays were free and with pressure from Wyn Jenkins who had a Gem Shop in Hawdon Street, Heidelberg, and was president of the club. I used to call in and see her and she asking me when am I coming back? I started working in the club on Saturdays.

I recall helping to shift Drums of chrysoprase and equipment from the Ivanhoe club rooms to our current club room. I attended a number of Christmas-breakups and our gem shows over years.

I Joined the committee and became a duty officer on the Saturday.

Membership was low at that time, due to lack of members coming forth and with Wyn Jenkins in declining health. I became secretary, public officer, minutes writer and eventually newsletter editor. Together with our Treasurer, Gunter Brazzoduro, we carried the club through this challenging time.

Finally, at our annual general meeting we elected a new president, Keith Billing and a new committee. The club once again became a viable and happy lapidary club.

From 1997 onwards there was an important change in my life. I retired from work. Together with my grandson, Ryan and my daughter Lisa, we became involved in the club. We attended bingo evenings, worked on and manned gem shows and went on fieldtrips with the club.

I was taught faceting by a club member in the shed outside the club in the heat and cold. I used to pick him up from his home in Greensborough with his oxygen bottle. When I made a mistake in faceting my stone, he would get upset with me and grab his oxygen mask. We would both sit there until he calmed down and then we would proceed with the faceting lesson. He was a very good teacher. At this stage, I moved my faceting machine into the Club rooms to work. Later, I undertook a second Faceting Course conducted by Eddie.

My final faceting course was with Ron Hewitt. I enjoyed my time with Ron and when he tragically died it was a great loss to the faceting group.

Both John Milner and I took up the reins of continuing the faceting group, with John Milner undertaking teaching of new members.

The writing and production of 'The First Fifty Years of the Diamond Valley Gem Club' by Ryan and myself has been a challenge but an enjoyable trip down memory lane, for me. My hope is that with work and dedication by current and past members this club will still be going strong in future years.

Letter from Roger Williams

In the early days of the Diamond Valley Gem Club; about forty-five years ago, my two sons were asking questions about rocks and materials, which I could not answer, so we joined the Diamond Valley Gem Club.

The monthly meetings were held at the Anglican Church Hall on the corner of Grimshaw Street and Main Street, Greensborough. The clubrooms were at a garage behind a private house in Montmorency. The club then rented a small factory in Stanley Street, Ivanhoe and later our present clubrooms in Grace Park, Greensborough.

Same as now, we had an annual gem show, the first we went to a was in St. Mary's Church Hall in Grimshaw Street. Other gem shows were held over the years at various venues: Loyola College, the Watsonia Community Centre, the Diamond Creek Masonic Hall and the Greensborough Masonic Hall.

The club held fieldtrips and some that I remember were to Buchan, Flinders Islands in Bass Strait, the Ovens Valley (we stayed in Eldorado), Morisons, Heathcote, Phillip Island, Mansfield, Trentham and the local Bundoora quarry now, which has since been filled.

One of our members was second in charge of the old Preston Trams Workshop and a lot of our equipment was made there. The eighteen-inch diamond saw is still going strong. It is said that not only was our equipment made like a tram, that it was made from trams!

In conclusion, I wish the club all the best for the next fifty years.

Letter from John Neville

Hello my name is John Neville, I have been a member of the Diamond Valley Gem Club for over thirty years. Initially when I joined the club I wanted to find out the names of the minerals I had collected and the club satisfied this area of scientific interest.

Lapidary can be a challenging and very satisfying hobby and the club has since catered for all my lapidary needs. At the clubrooms, many lapidary courses are offered to members. These courses include: cabochon cutting, faceting, silversmithing and the creation of wire wrapping jewelry. The club also has a gem show once a year, where the members can exhibit their lapidary items and inform the public about what is happening at the clubrooms. My family always gain considerable enjoyment at this yearly event.

To promote this outdoor activity of collecting lapidary items to use in the clubrooms for various courses. The club has also organised many varied fieldtrips. One particular highlight was a club fieldtrip to Flinders Island for a week to look for topaz. During this week club members enjoyed many fossicking and social events.

In conclusion, through the hard-work of its members over many years, the Diamond Valley Gem Club has been a community initiative of immense social and community importance to the lapidary community and the general public.

Letter from John Stevenson

I first joined the club with my father, George in late 1968. A few months later the club was formed. Initially that workshop was located under a covered carport in a private house in Montmorency. Work days were chaotic with many of stories told, a lot of tea and coffee being drunk and numerous stones being worked on. I met my wife in August 1970 and had other things to occupy my time for a number of years, namely our three boys. Joy and I rejoined the club in the late 1990s and had a great time on fieldtrips to the Avon River and Castlemaine, where a lot of really good stones were found and carried back to the vehicles and then transported home. This requiring a great deal of toil and effort. Unfortunately, by some mysterious process most of these wonderful stones had changed during their travels from exceptional to 'leaverite' (leave it right where you found it). Neil's grandson, Rahn was very good at this, and it is reputed that his 4x4 needed a lot of room to stop on several occasions on the way home from Avon River. One of the highlights of the club was Saturday evening Bingo nights and barbeques, organised by Ron and Barbara Kirkbride, which there a resounding success. My time at the club has been very enjoyable and I have been a duty officer and club secretary for various periods of time.

Interview with Frans Zylstra

A phone interview was conducted with Frans Zylstra, the foundation convener and first president of the Diamond Valley Gem Club Inc. on the 11. June 2007. He explained how he was a diamond sorter and cutter and operated his own business.

The idea of forming a Club arose from Frans's desire to connect with likeminded individuals and establish a lapidary club. He placed an ad in the local newspaper, which he believed was the Diamond Valley News in May 1967. He invited interested people who had contacted him to a meeting at his house. Four or five people attended.

Nine months after the meeting the club was formed. They held their first show, which was opened by well-known ballerina Cathy Gorman. Frans thinks the great interest in gem stones and the startup of all the clubs at that time was due to many articles in the Melbourne daily papers about gem stones and lapidary. There were a number of interstate Gemborees held at this time.

Frans had full page advertising in the local papers for his business. He had an import export gem business and travelled extensively and had up to eleven shops and at one time had six gem cutting apprentices so his business was quite large.

Much interest in Australian gemstones was shown from abroad, particularly from the United States of America and several club members had contacts with overseas gem enthusiasts.

Frans also helped set up the Dandenong club.



Letter from Dawn Lee

Approximately 10 years ago it was suggested to me that I should be cutting my own stones instead of buying them. I was told about the Diamond Valley Gem Club and where to find the clubrooms. I made a visit the following day and made the decision to join. I am so glad that I did! I did the Cabochon Cutting course with Keith Billing, the Wire Wrapping course with Claire Gleeson and also the Jade Carving course with an instructor who visited us from New Zealand. From that point on, I have enjoyed learning new ways of working with some amazing minerals and mixing with some wonderful people. In 2012 it was decided that we needed new premises to hold our annual Gem Show. It was then that the Masonic Hall in Greensborough came to our notice, so Claire Gleeson and I made an appointment to see the venue and found it to have great possibilities. The Committee was in agreement that this could be an excellent place for us to continue with our annual Shows. We have operated from there every year since then and I have taken great pleasure in being the Show Co-Ordinator during this time. We have such a wonderful group of traders, some of whom are also our Club members. I am truly appreciative of the different Committees and individual members who have supported me over the past six years and have helped in so many ways to make our Shows so successful.

Letter from Bruce Jackson

The Secretary, VGCA
PO Box 4076
MELBOURNE VIC.3001

10 November 2007

Dear Secretary

Will you please include the following information in the next issue of 'Pointer'

Diamond Valley Gem Club Celebrates 40 Years

The Diamond Valley Gem Club began with an advertisement in the Diamond Valley News around May 1967. Mr Franz Zylstra, a local Diamond sorter and cutter, placed the advertisement asking any parties interested in starting a Gem Club to contact him.

A small group of 4 or 5 attended a meeting at his home in Greensborough some weeks later, followed by further meetings at his home before moving to the home of Chas McKinna in Watsonia. Mr McKinna became the first Secretary of the club and has recently rejoined the Club.

The first Annual meeting was held at the Anglican Church in Greensborough attended by approximately 100 persons and became the meeting place for further meetings. The Club workshop was located in 'Sullivans' in McFarlane St, Montmorency.

In May 1975, the club moved to Stortford Ave, West Ivanhoe, which was basically a 'brick building with a concrete floor, electricity and water connected'. All the fittings and benches were constructed by the members.

April 1979 saw a further move to our present premises at 135 Henry St, Greensborough, where all meetings and club activities now take place.

We currently have 109 members, many of whom have 20 years or more service.

The Club's current activities cover the making of Cabochons, Faceting, Silver-smithing and Jewelry making, however we do have the facilities to carry out enamel work and tumbling should the need arise. Instruction is provided in the current activities, if required.

The club is going very well with a social night held each month and occasional field trips throughout the year. We hold an annual show each May to display the skills of the members and as an invitation to prospective members to join.

An afternoon gathering has been arranged on Sunday, 10 February 2008, to celebrate our 40 Year Anniversary. All past and present members are invited to attend. For details, please contact the Secretary, Bruce Jackson on 9717 4802.

Yours Faithfully

Bruce Jackson
Secretary
Diamond Valley Gem Club

The 40th year Anniversary of the Diamond Valley Gem Club



Letter from Max Harker

My parents began a life outside of farming in the early 1970's, after all of the kids had finished school and the drain on capital resources waned, allowing time for my parents to enjoy interests outside of our tiny universe.

Dad had always had a touch of gold fever, bringing back some powdery flecks, gleaned from mud and sand with the aid of an aluminium mess tin, from Bouganville on his completion return from military service in 1946.

For years, in the company of his brother, occasionally with family in tow, they would head into the Victorian hills and spend the day panning for gold in clear soon to be muddy cold waters. As a child there was a history of little places: Blackwood, Whroo, Tounbalup, Rushworth, Bright, Porpunkah, Beechworth and in between.

Just after the formation of the Shepparton Gem Club, Cyril Kovacs began organising a few "fossicking trips" around Australia. Dad took time out and went up the east coast. A year or two later, he had managed to persuade my mother, a trip around Australia and, hobby became passion.

Mother was not a "rock-hound". Every Tuesday afternoon she would accompany my father into Shepparton so that he could attend the club and learn how to facet. She would sit patiently chatting to other members, many to become great long lasting friends however, she eventually found her own niche in town, mastered the art of china painting and continued to paint and sell pieces of china for many years.

In 1980, piqued by the stories, photos and specimens that my father began to arrange around one of the farm garden sheds, I became a member of the Mitchelton Gem Club in Brisbane and a temporary "honourary" member of Shepparton when I was able to get back in Victoria and join in on one of the Shepparton field trips. So began my foray into the world of rocks, thunder-eggs and minerals.

In 1983, I moved to Melbourne and it was here that I joined the Diamond Valley Gem Club. What was surprising was that Reg and Betty Henderson were DVGC members and Reg was my father's faceting instructor, whenever the Faceter's Guild met in Shepparton or was in reach of dad's travel itinerary. This connection allowed a few jointly organised field trips between Shepparton, Euroa and the Diamond Valley clubs.

Joint trips were arranged from Shepparton to:

Berrigan (smoky quartz), Boho South (smoky and amethyst), Ruffly Boat Hole (faceting quartz), Rochester (blue barite), Lake Boga (quartz, apatite, mica and uranium phosphate minerals), Colbinabbin/Corop (jasper)

Joint trip arranged by DVGC:

Powelltown (faceting quartz), Flinders (zeolites), Bundoora (calcites), Lilydale (calcite, flos-ferri), Kinglake (fossils)

The clubrooms were at Henry Street where they are now however the monthly club meetings were held at the Macleod High School under the guise of Tom Boyce and the exhibition was the last at Loyola that first year that I attended.

Back then the enthusiasm of the members was as deep as the dirt that they could stand in. Reg and Betty Henderson were stalwarts in the field, as were Rupe Cuthbert, Jose Hickling, Jack Browne, the Pendavins. Tom Boyce, Tom and Wyn Jenkins ran the administration and where would we have been if Peter Brown had never been around to keep the competitions, mail and newsletters in perfect order.



