



Website Newsletter of the Cape Town Gem & Mineral Club



# January/February 2023



Northern Carmine Bee Eater – see this month's Curiosity

## DIARY

This monthly members-only letter is your primary source of club news and workshop information. Please keep it to hand.

<i>February</i>	4	10:00–14:00	<i>Open to the Public Day – Rocks, gems, jewellery, mineral specimens to look at, chat about, swap, sell or buy.</i>
	11	14.00	<i>To be announced</i>
<i>March</i>	4	10:00–14:00	<i>Open to the Public Day – Rocks, gems, jewellery, mineral specimens to look at, chat about, swap, sell or buy.</i>
	11	14.00	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b>

## Facetips

### EXCITING NEWS: “FACETIPS – A Gem Cutter’s Notebook” by Duncan Miller

The faceting articles published over the past few years in the Mineral Chatter have been compiled into a single 128-page document. The pdf file is available for download from <http://ctminsoc.org.za/articles.php> for those interested in saving all the articles together.



12 mm diameter Yin-Yang stones in various colours of quartz, cut by Duncan Miller

## We celebrated our 60th Anniversary in December

DURBANVILLE

# Tyger

BURGER

Woensdag, 11 Januarie 2023 | Tel: 021 910 6500 | e-pos: nuus@tygerburger.co.za

## Cape Town Gem and Mineral club turns 60

The Cape Town Gem and Mineral Club celebrated its 60th anniversary on 10 December.

The festivities were marked by a spit-braai at their premises at 16 Goede Hoop Street, Bothasig. Lunch was followed by a silent auction where beautiful gemological specimens donated by club members were up for grabs.

Founded in 1962 by a small group of enthusiastic mineral collectors, the club has gone from strength to strength, eventually settling in its current location in Bothasig in 1993. Officially registered as the Mineralogical Society of Southern Africa, the club became less formally known as the Cape Town Gem and Mineral Club in 2005, achieving Non-Profit Organisation status in 2008.

**SCIENCE RELATED TO LAPIDARY CRAFT**  
The club's motivation is to promote and support interest and knowledge of mineralogy, geology and all the sciences related to the lapidary craft.

On the first Saturday of each month, except January, the club holds an open day where its members display and sell various gem and mineral samples, including cut gemstones and jewellery. Members also have access to the wonderfully equipped lapidary studio to cut and form their creations. Visitors are welcome to learn more about this hobby at no charge.

In addition, the club offers talks and demonstrations relating to the mineralogy, geology, and lapidary, and publishes a highly informative newsletter for its members every month. Field trips are occasionally organised with rare access granted to mineralogical sites where members are invited to collect their specimens in the field. These outings can often take one to the banks of the Orange River and beyond, involving camping and invaluable imparting of knowledge around the campfire.

Anyone interested in learning more about our club can go to our website [www.ctminsoc.org.za](http://www.ctminsoc.org.za) or come to our next Open Day on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> February

## What's in a Name? Celebrity and Other Mineral Specimen Names

by Peter Rosewarne

### Introduction



We've had articles on the "best of" and "on first name terms" and this month's article seeks out mineral specimens of such beauty and/or character that they have been given special names to celebrate their existence. The examples selected here exclude famous mineral specimens such as The Snail (*rhodochrosite* on *manganite*), Rabbit's Ears (Blue Cap *tourmaline*) and The King of Kashmir (*aquamarine* on *quartz* and *feldspar*) as they have been featured previously and instead seek out some less well-known celebrity mineral specimens. Not surprisingly, none of these are in the Rosey Collection and so I have relied on photographs from publications, the sources of which are acknowledged. We are only looking at mineral specimens here so cut gems are excluded. At the end I have a go at my own nomenclature for distinctive mineral specimens. 😊



Talking of names, and digressing totally, reminds me of Lloyds insurance company where you could sign away your home and all your belongings as security to become a "Name" and do nothing but receive fat dividends every year. That all changed in the 1980s/90s when lots of upstanding people with more money than sense were wiped-out financially by poor underwriting practices, and with climatic extremes becoming commonplace, war and terrorism, I'm happy just to have a name rather than be A Name.

We'll start with royalty such as kings, queens and emperors and then move on to culturally-themed names and then just, er, names and finally some of my own creation.

### Royalty



The most expensive of royalty is *ruby* which, carat for carat, is the most expensive gemstone, and **The King of Mogok**. This is a 13 cm specimen of ruby on white *marble* as shown in **Figure 1**, and is, unsurprisingly, from Mogok, Myanmar (Burma). The area has been producing top-class rubies for over 2000 years. Other important sources are Sri Lanka and Mozambique.

**Figure 1: The King of Mogok: Ruby on Marble, Myanmar**  
(courtesy of The Mineralogical Record)

The **King Henry gold** nugget (**Figure 2**) was found in 2018 at the Beta Hunt mine in Western Australia. It weighs 93 kg and contains 1 400 ounces of gold. The Mineralogical Record of March-April 2021 gives a very interesting account of its discovery and all the work that went into trimming it to its current appearance.

**Figure 2: King Henry Gold Nugget, Australia**



The **Karrather Queen silver** nugget (**Figure 3**) was found in 2000 at the Elizabeth Hill mine in Western Australia. It weighs 145 kg and contains 3 620 ounces of silver. Both nuggets are on display at the Perth Mint.

**Figure 3: Karrather Queen Silver Nugget, Australia**

The **Emperor of China** rhodochrosite specimen was found in 2010 at the Wutong Mine in China and at 50 × 40 cm in size is certainly of regal appearance. The largest crystal is 22 cm across. The crystal morphology is quite different to the other iconic sources of brilliant rhodochrosite specimens, namely the Sweet Home Mine in Colorado, USA (rhombs) and the N’Chwaning II Mine in the Kalahari Manganese Field of South Africa (scalenohedrons).

**Figure 4: The Emperor of China**



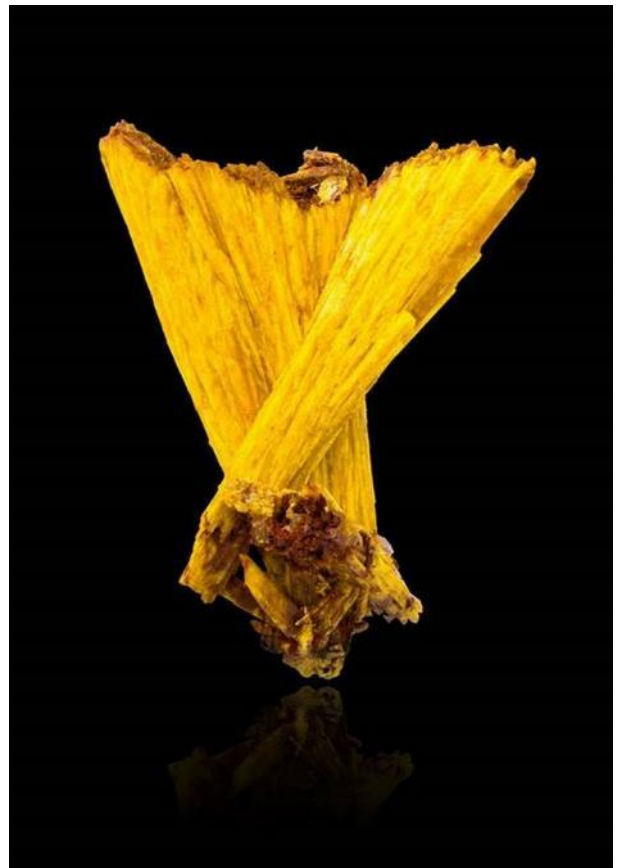


**Cultural**

*Rose quartz crystals* had never previously been found until a pocket in a small mine in the Minas Gerais district of Brazil was opened in the late 1950s. It was filled with deep pink rose quartz crystals draped over *smoky quartz*. One particular specimen was named **La Madonna Rosa (Figure 5)** for obvious reasons and measures an impressive 39 × 20 cm. It sold for \$662 500 at auction.

**Figure 5: La Madonna Rosa, Brazil (Heritage Auctions)**

The Aztecs ruled over what is now central Mexico up to 1521 until being defeated by those arch-imperialists, the Spanish Conquistadors. The former's name is remembered in the form of the two finest *legrandite* (zinc arsenate) crystal groups ever found, at the Ojuela Mine in Mexico in 1977. These are the **Aztec Sun** (18.7 cm) and **Aztec Club** (23 cm), the former shown in **Figure 6**. The Aztec Sun was a signature specimen in the collection of the legendary Mexican collector, Miguel Romero (1925–1997).



**Figure 6: Aztec Sun, Ojuela Mine, Mexico**

### Just Names

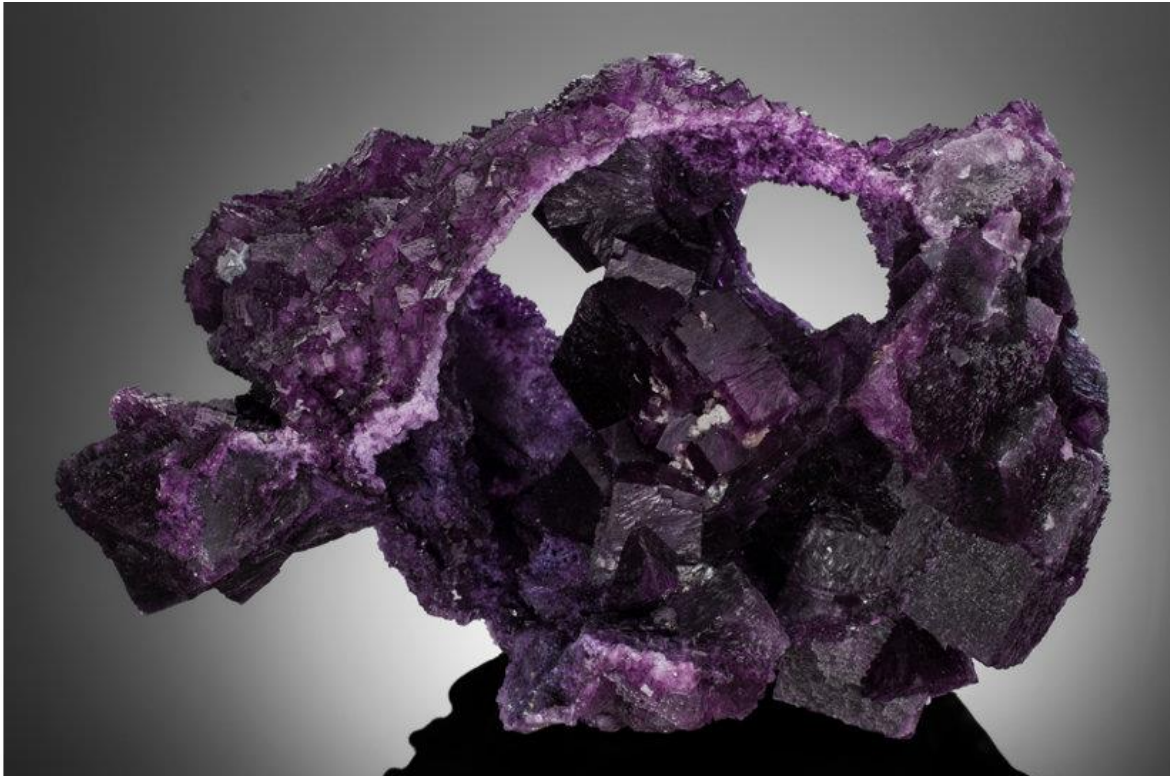
**The Beer Cans** *elbaite* specimen (**Figure 7**) comes from the Himalaya Mine in California, USA. It is 12 cm in height and also pretty thick at 10.3 cm. It is unusual in that most *elbaite* specimens from this mine are single crystals while this one has three.

**Figure 7: The Beer Cans, USA**



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

**The Helmet** (**Figure 8**) is an unusually sculpted piece of *fluorite* from the Illinois Fluorspar District, USA. The fluorite grew over globular *barite* which later dissolved under changing chemical conditions. It measures 22 × 14.5 x 13 cm.



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

**Figure 8: The Helmet, USA**

Naming mineral specimens didn't seem to be a very taxing undertaking so, by way of a distraction, I've tried my hand at naming some un-named mineral specimens and came up with the following for your edification. See what you think.

First up in **Figure 9** is a clump of *native copper* crystals from Michigan, USA, that I've dubbed **Chocolate Delight**©. Next, we have a cluster of lustrous green *vivianite* crystals from Bolivia in **Figure 10**: I give you **The Multiple Rocket Launcher**©.



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com



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**Figure 9: Chocolate Delight, Michigan, USA**

**Figure 10: The Multiple Rocket Launcher, Bolivia**

With the next one you can almost hear that menacing dum-dum-dum-dum music as the monster shark bears down on its next victim in the movie *Jaws*. I was spooked for days after seeing that movie. **Figure 11** is **Jaws**©, *calcite* crystals (sharks-tooth this time not dogs-tooth) within an *amethyst* geode from Brazil.

And finally, **Figure 12** is a sand-calcite sculpture from Fontainebleau, France, for which I could only come up with **The Kama Sutra**© but perhaps I need to see my therapist.



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

**Figure 11: Jaws, Brazil**



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

**Figure 12: The Kama Sutra, France**

Anyone with a fancy mineral for naming can send me a photograph via stamped addressed email and I will apply my mind for a reasonable fee and supply a suitable name on an embellished certificate bearing the Rosewarne coat of arms for authenticity.



Thanks to Heritage Auctions for reproduction of many of their very fine photographs.

### References

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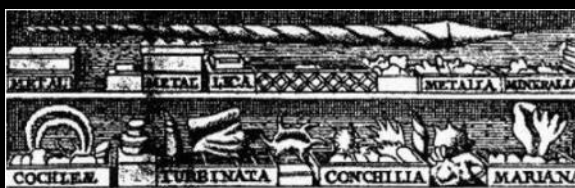
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## From the Cabinet of Curiosities



This month's curiosity is **Current Bedding** in this case in the left bank of the Kavango River a small distance downstream from Popa Falls in Namibia. I visited Nunda River Camp in early November 2022 to twitch a very rare bird, **Northern Carmine Bee Eater** (For a photo see page 1) and found it nearby amongst the colony of local Southern Carmine Bee Eaters, who have excavated into the bank for their nesting burrows. Current bedding, as its name implies, results from the successive deposition of sediment by a river. In this case the river is eroding down through previously deposited layers and one can see a complete bedding set at the base of the

bank with successive truncations of the bedding sets upwards with erosion surfaces visible between the ever-thinner sets. **PR**

## Lapidary

### Bumble Bee Stone from West Java, Indonesia



Cut from Bumble Bee stone bought in Wales in the UK



*Website Newsletter of the Cape Town Gem & Mineral Club*

While in the UK in 2022 I followed the Cape Town WhatsApp group and saw that Theo posted a beautiful Bumble Bee “Jasper” pendant that he had cut.

On a visit to one of several Rock and Gem shows I visited while in the UK, I decided to buy a piece from the show in Wales, I bought a colourful piece to cut on my return to Cape Town.

I soon realised that although it is commonly known as Bumble Bee Jasper, it is not a Jasper at all. It’s too soft and the texture and colours made me question its mineral content.

I did some digging around and found an article in a magazine <https://gem-a.com/jog-volume-36-issue-3> page 228 Because I wasn’t sure of the stone’s makeup, and as there are several minerals that are poisonous , some containing arsenic etc, I was careful to wear a face mask and used water when grinding, I would suggest that anyone cutting unknown material take the same precautions, ask at the club for information on your material, think about your health and the health of those that may be also working in close proximity, wear a face mask and avoid dry grinding, grind using water to cool the material and avoid dust and remember to make sure no one else is in close proximity. I managed to get some nice pieces out of the stone I bought so If you would like to see the cut stone just let me know.

Wishing you all the very best for 2023, Happy Cutting.

**Malcolm**

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Chairman: Malcolm Jackson (e-mail: [jacksonhome@telkomsa.net](mailto:jacksonhome@telkomsa.net)) Secretary/Newsletter Editor: Jo Wicht (e-mail: [joanna.wicht@kingsley.co.za](mailto:joanna.wicht@kingsley.co.za))

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Instagram. @capetownmineralclub