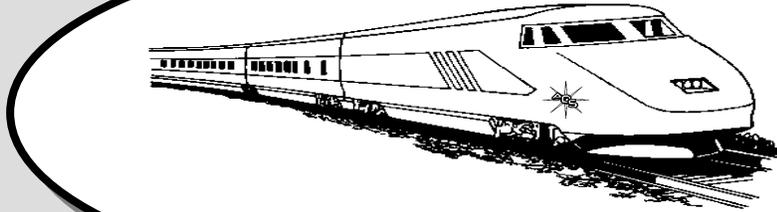


The Opal Express

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Opal & Gem Show Has Dealer Openings

The American Opal Society is pleased to announce their 44th Annual Opal Show on November 5 & 6, 2011. Show times will again be 10:00 AM -6:00 PM Saturday and 10:00 AM -5:00 PM Sunday.

We still have a number of tables open. Please return your contract for your table(s) as soon as possible so we can reserve your spot. Tables are \$200 for a six foot table for the whole show. Setup is from 5pm to 11pm on Friday, November 4th.

Our show location is at the **White House / West Wing Event Center** (<http://whitehouseeventcenter.com>), located at 1128 S. Beach Blvd., in Anaheim, California. The "White House" is located within the Hobby City / Adventure City complex. We are pleased to return to this excellent location, which received rave reviews from our guests and dealers the last two years. The location offers unlimited free parking, and is also quite attractive, having had a complete renovation in 2009. See the website for photos of the interior and exterior, showing its classy modern design.

If you need a copy of the contract, you can find one the website at http://opalsociety.org/Opal_Show_2011/opal_show_contract_2011.pdf or contact Pete Goetz, mpg1022@aol.com, (714) 530-3530, or Gene LeVan, fineblackopal@sprynet.com, (562) 208-7494.

Opal Cutting Workshop at Sept. Meeting

The AOS will hold an opal cutting session / workshop at the September general meeting. Multiple lapidary machines (Pixies) will be provided, along with instructors to help members cut their own opal. This is an excellent opportunity to "polish" up on your cutting skills.

**It's Coming!
Mark Your Calendars!**

The American Opal Society's 44th Annual OPAL & GEM SHOW

The Largest Opal Show in USA!

Sat. Nov. 5, 2011 - 10AM - 6PM

Sun. Nov 6, 2011 - 10 AM - 5PM

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

Same great location!

White House / West Wing Event Center

1238 S. Beach Blvd.

Anaheim, CA 92804

<http://whitehouseeventcenter.com>

Located at Hobby City

**Dealer Spots are Still Available! If
you are interested, contact us
ASAP!**

Contact Info:

Gene LeVan

(562) 621-1805, e-mail: fineblackopal@sprynet.com

Pete Goetz

Phone: (714) 530-353, e-mail: mpg1022@aol.com

OpalSociety Group on the Internet

The American Opal Society has an on-line e-Group called "OpalSociety". If is for members to communicate on club activities and as a discussion forum for all things opal. It is located at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OpalSociety/>.

All members are invited to join and by clicking on the button "Join This Group" on the web page to join.

Members Only Website Password

To log onto the website's members only area at: http://opalsociety.org/aos_members_only_area.htm type: Name: "member" and Password: "opallover".

Paperless Newsletter

Want to see color photos in your copy of the newsletter? Sign up for electronic delivery of the newsletter, and enjoy an added bonus by saving the club postage cost and a reduced membership fee! Also, you are saving paper. Simply contact Jim Pisani at editor@opalsociety.org.

Andamooka – A Brief History



Andamooka is situated approximately 360 km from Port Augusta. It can be reached by turning off the Stuart Highway at Pimba and travelling along sealed roads via Woomera and Roxby Downs.

Andamooka was one of the later opal fields found in Australia. Opal was first found on the Andamooka Station in 1930. As in all opal discoveries there are a number of claims as to who first discovered opal in the area but the most commonly accepted story is that Roy Shepherd and Sam Brooks, who were working at the Andamooka Station and shifting camp from one place to another, discovered opal in the area now known as Andamooka Opal Creek. They had climbed a hill to watch their horses and to fill in time were throwing rocks in a challenge to see who could throw the furthest. One of the rocks was covered in opal.

On the 29 th August they showed the opal to the then Manager of Andamooka Station Bruce Foulis who was very interested. He sent people out to investigate and did everything to keep the find a secret. The field was worked for 2 years with hardly anyone aware of it. Alan Treloar, one of the men sent out originally was the 1st person to take out a search license for opal at Andamooka. He was the storekeeper at Andamooka Station.

Around 1932, news of the find reached the miners at Coober Pedy and a small group set off to investigate. As they did not return it was rightfully assumed they had found opal and more miners left Coober Pedy for Andamooka.

It is very hard for us to appreciate the hardships faced by these miners. Roads were almost nonexistent the area is close to the harshest in all of the desert areas of Australia. Water and food had to be carted in atrocious conditions with miners having to virtually live off the land in order to survive. Despite this ,people did make the journey and when they did arrive conditions were no better. Many of the early miners had to live off rabbits shot in the area.

One of the early arrivals at Andamooka was Min Berrington, the 1st woman miner to arrive at Andamooka. She has written an early history of Coober Pedy and Andamooka called" Stones of Fire" which describes life in the early days of these opal fields. I have not had the pleasure of reading it as yet but hope one day to come across a copy. Min eventually became the 1st postmistress at the field but did do a lot of mining before that.

One of the biggest problems in the early days was the lack of water. Various bores were sunk but only limited supplies found. Other problems faced by early miners was the extreme heat in the summer period and many miners departed during the worst months when temperatures exceeded 45 degrees and plagues of flies and mosquitoes made life almost unbearable. Obtaining food was also very difficult as roads were almost nonexistent. The mail man originally brought in food supplies once per week by camel and later by two ton truck. He had to battle numerous sand dunes and dry swamps and was prevented from traveling when rains filled these swamps. Life was certainly not easy in these days.

The early miners lived in tents or constructed semi dugouts by digging a wide trench and covering this with a roof of beams and tin. Some of these still exist today.

As roads improved so too did the arrival of more building materials and a hotch potch of dwellings were erected. Building permits were obviously not required but this added to the interest of the town.

While some of these buildings still exist, modern Andamooka is fast changing. many people living there today work at the Copper mine in Roxby Downs, some 30 km away and commute every day. Modern houses are being built and there are even sealed roads being constructed.

When opal was first discovered it was found quite near the surface. As the field developed miners progressed up the hills and shafts were up to 30 feet deep which is relatively shallow compared to some other fields. Andamooka was a rich field with very stable opal. Many different types of opal were found including crystal, white opal, small quantities of black opal and matrix opal. Originally only the opal with red colour was considered valuable and the green and blue opal was often left in the dumps as was the matrix opal which early on had no value also. These dumps have mostly been sifted (noodled) and this opal removed.

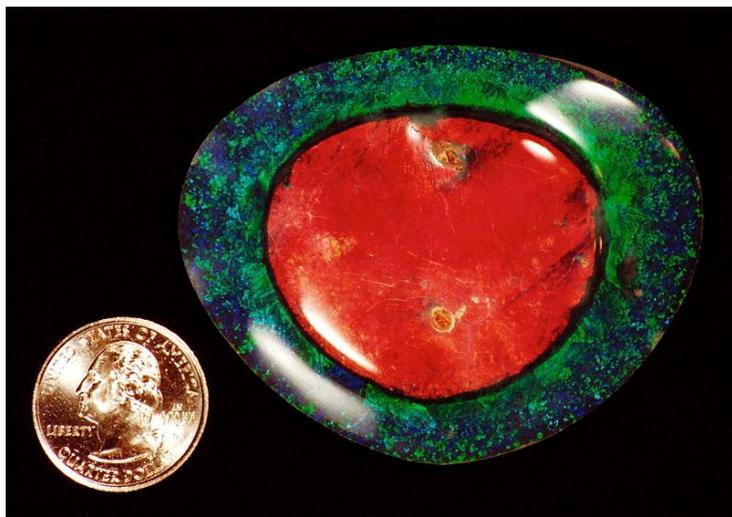
In 1954, the Woomera Rocket Range project commenced and miners were recruited to work there with many immigrants who were arriving. They were recruited as they were used to working in the extreme conditions and many could earn more than by mining at that time. Opal was reputedly found around Woomera and there are many stories of opal being unearthed in the "Prohibited Entry" areas of the Range.

Even in 1957 Andamooka was a very isolated town. There was only one shop and the owner did not sell food. This still had to be brought into town by the mailman. This shop was built of chicken wire, empty cartons and other miscellaneous items. It had a dirt roof which used to sag whenever it rained heavily.

This shop was rebuilt in 1959 and started stocking food. The new owners also bought a truck which was used to stock the store. Today there is a modern supermarket, post office , two hotels, a motel and a camping ground , so fossickers and tourists are well catered for.

the most famous opal found at Andamooka was the "Andamooka Desert Flame". This was found in 1969 during bulldozing operations and weighed an amazing 220 ounces. Later on it was cut up into many stones. It was considered one of the largest blocks of opal discovered in Australia. It was originally bought for \$168,000 dollars in 1969 and by 1970 was valued at over \$1,000,000 dollars.

The opal fields have expanded over time and now take in the area around the Andamooka township and White Dam some 11 km away. Open cut mining is largely used now. Bulldozers remove the overburden down to the opal layer where the modern miners carefully scour the surface looking for traces of the precious opal.



Andamooka Desert Flame

This is a very expensive operation with even medium sized machines using around 75 litres of fuel per hour. A lot of this overburden is removed and stacked in large heaps and fossickers can noodle over these areas and still find the odd stone.

It is impossible to calculate how much opal has been found in Andamooka or at any of the opal fields as most of the opal has been sold for cash and no accurate records kept.

It is well worth the trip to visit Andamooka. The road access is good and there are all the facilities a tourist could desire as long as you are prepared to rough it a bit. There are many of the original semi dugouts to see and of course there is also the chance to find a lovely piece of opal. If not, then there will always be someone to sell you one.

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Andamooka History Highlights

From ABC.net.au, [George Negus Tonight](#), broadcasted on 6/28/2004

The opal-mining town of Andamooka was built largely on the hopes and dreams of many of its residents, who had fled the political oppression and poverty of post war Europe. Most intended to stay only a short time, to try their luck. Thirty or forty years later, many still live in one of the country's most inhospitable environments, hoping to strike that ever elusive 'parcel' of opal.

GEORGE NEGUS: Finally, from one geographic and climatic extreme to the other. From Everest's icy slopes to the baking heat of Andamooka - that idiosyncratic South Australian town famous for its opals and its name. But many of Andamooka's dwellers were actually attracted to it by something quite different. And we'll let them tell their own stories.

ELEANOR LYONS: This is not your typical country Australian town. (Laughs) No way.

FOOTAGE OF CEMETERY. SIGN OVER HEADSTONE FOR TREVOR JOHN DIXON READS 'BIGGUS DICKUS'.

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ALEX MENDELSSOHN: You're not controlled by councils and regulations and laws and rules. You do whatever you bloody like, you know?

ELEANOR LYONS: It was hard work, it was hard living, hard drinking, hard loving.

BOBBY PANOCH: We could do whatever we wanted, go wherever we wanted, say whatever you wanted. That was real freedom.

MARGOT DUKE: It was this lack of bureaucracy that still, to this day, encourages people to come and stay.

ALEX MENDELSSOHN: Where on earth you got places like Andamooka left now?

MARGOT DUKE: The opal in Andamooka was first discovered by a couple of boundary riders from Andamooka Station. They kept it secret for quite a while, though. It wasn't until the early '30s that they eventually had a big find and let the cat out of the bag. The town really started developing in the late '50s and the early '60s because that was when the first influx of the migrants came from Europe after the war.

BOBBY PANOCH: We all tasted the last war. I was there locked up for the last two years of the war, you know, in the concentration camp. I come back, serve my time, and communists took over. And that was dictatorship again. You had to do what you were told. Well, I wasn't going to.

ALEX MENDELSSOHN: Me and my friend, we practically were supposed to go to America. We were standing in the queue in front of the American consulate in Vienna, my friend came over and he said, "I found another America. "Bugger this," he said. "Let's go to Australia." I said, "Australia? Where the hell is that?"

BOBBY PANOCH: We picked Australia...mainly because they offered us a job. We were deaf and dumb, yet we had a job to go to, a place to live and tucker.

MARGOT DUKE: It was a huge challenge for the people that came here in those early days. My mum, when she came here in '64, we had no electricity, no running water, let alone the fact that they didn't speak the language of the country. They didn't have their families here. I don't know how they did it. They had a lot of courage.

RICHARD CLARK: Yeah, well, I lived in a tent right here. There was no other camps around as far as you can see. There wasn't any camps. So this was more or less the outer suburb. Nice and quiet, like I wanted it, but, of course, as you can see now, I've been built in a fair bit. (Laughs)

BOBBY PANOCH: You can build here anything you like. You can add something to your place, you can alter it. Nobody bothers about it. You don't have to go to the council to get a permit.

MARGOT DUKE: We don't have a council to this day. We don't pay rates.

ALEX MENDELSSOHN: Council are just a pain in the neck, pardon my English, you know. They create regulations and rules and regulations which are no need for anyway.

MARGOT DUKE: A lot of them hindered the development to a certain degree, because most of them came out here with this attitude that, "OK, this is the land of the free and we don't want to be told by any sort of bureaucracy what we have to do."

ALEX MENDELSSOHN: Free...whatever you want to bloody do or go wherever you want to bloody go. Free from all the bands and chains... It's a magnificent feeling.

ELEANOR LYONS: There weren't a lot of women. There were mostly a lot of young single men in their late 20s and early 30s. And the chap that had the wine restaurant used to bring batches of girls up for waitressing, and they'd filter out into the community, you know? Then they'd leave work and then you get another batch up. That's how the women got here.

RICHARD CLARK: A young fella had a row with his girlfriend. He's on the phone to her and they had a row, so he'd fix her up. He got half a plug of gelignite and put it in and blew the... (Laughs) ..the phone box that was out in the middle of the road, or what was left of it.

MARGOT DUKE: The town was fairly wild. In about '67 they decided they were gonna clean the place up and they brought in the whole academy - the young police cadets from Adelaide. But they didn't catch too many people because they had advanced notice and people disappeared down holes or went to Coober Pedy or stayed out of town for a couple of days. But as soon as the bitumen road came in, officialdom followed.

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Continuing with Chapters 11 & 12 of the book From Rags to Riches & Disasters

By Peter Greisl

Chapter 11 – The Tunnel

It was a brisk Monday morning, when I got out of bed; Chris had already prepared a thermos of coffee, and some sandwiches to take with me. I had a quick wash and had some scrambled eggs and a chop with toast for breakfast, drank my coffee and said to Chris I better get going so I don't miss Frank otherwise he thinks I don't come.

She wished me good luck kissed me and I got into the Mining Limo (Dodge Ute) which had all the gear on it and drove down to the co-op and there was Frank already sitting there waiting for me, he had an old medium sized suitcase with him, I commented by saying, You ready to leave town and smiled, he laughed and replied it's my explosives case which has Gelignite detonators and a roll of fuse.

He got in the Ute and started talking in a lecture type manner about what he is proposing to do and he was very firm about that I do exactly as he tells me at the time. I agreed and we arrived at the claim, he got out and wandered around to see how far our shaft is from any others surrounding our shaft.

Then he said, "Well let's see what we got and what we can do with it," He pulled up the rope and tied his case on to it and he climbed down, when he reached the bottom of the shaft he shouted, "Can you lower the case down, but gentle,"

I lowered the case and he untied the rope and said "you can come down now."

I climbed down and he was in the tunnel opening and ask me to switch places with him so he got the light from the shaft.

When he sat down he grabbed his case and opened it and he took out three sticks of Gelignite the roll of fuse and three detonators, he also had a 1/4 inch dowel about 8 inches long with a pointy end, he then cut three pieces of fuse one was 4 feet long the next was about three foot six and the last one was about three feet.

He then got out of his case a metal auger which had a hole at the end of the shaft so you could insert a dowel to use as a handle to turn. Right throughout this activity he has not said a word. No he said "you got the lamps ready" I replied "yes", we crawled towards the where the traces where, he had a close look and said, "Ok here is where we going to set the three charges, one to the left on the bottom and one on the right at the bottom and the last one about two

feet above which should blow out just about everything except the level or the seam.

He got the auger and angled it down wards and started twisting it to start the hole.

He then said, "The ground is mainly clay so it should be an easy task unless we hit a rock etc." I took the auger handle and kept turning it and I saw clay escaping and the auger sank deeper and deeper, the further I got in the harder the turning of the auger became. While I was drilling he took the pointed dowel inserted the pointed end in to the end of a gelignite stick till about half way of the stick, he then took a detonator pushed it over the end of the fuse and put it between his teeth and bit the end of the detonator together so it was wedged on to the fuse. He did this with the other two sticks of gelignite and the fuses, when he was finished he said, "Go and have a breather I carry on for a while. He completed the first hole in no time as he was as strong as an ox. He then continued the second hole on the other side again drilling down in an angle, he finished this hole all by himself and then he started the last one on the top of the others right in the middle and he drilled this one horizontal. He asked me to take over for a while and while I finished this hole he inserted the fuses in to the holes of the gelignite. When I was finished he got the explosive with the longest fuse and put it in one of the hole at the bottom he the dribbled dirt down the hole and used the wooden handle of the auger and rammed the dirt on top of the charge, when I saw how he hammered the dowel with a hammer down on to the gelignite, I started panicking and the words from Steve the Greek came back to me saying that Frank is crazy and dangerous, So I started to scream at him asking him if he has gone made and I scampered back to the shaft, He just laughed and said, "Listen I have been doing this kind of work for a long time and have not killed anyone yet," He did the other two charges the same way. And when he was finished with the ramming, he just grabbed the three fuse ends and held them together and said to me, Now you better get all the gear and put it into the shaft and get out, I am going to light the fuses and come straight up and then we listen for three bangs in 20 second intervals, so you better get going." I nodded and started to climb to the top.

About a couple minutes I can see Frank starting to climb up. He got out and we moved of the mullock heap and waited my heart was pounding I think louder than the bang I was expecting, just like he said there were three muffled thuds at about the interval he said. Well that's it he said, all done, I was going to climb down and have a look what happened. He stopped me by saying if you go down now you be dead in a couple of minutes with all the explosion fumes and gases, you have to wait at least one hour or more for the fumes to clear as there is no ventilation to be save.

We got up to the shaft and we looked across to where the other shaft was and I see smoke and smog pouring out of the shaft. I said to Frank, "what does that mean," he replied, "Shit we blasted through to the other claim we were to close." I asked "So we wasted the charges?" He turned around and replied, "If there are no Pegs then put another set of pegs in and stake this claim as well and you are safe and not claim jumping." I said I have a couple more sets." "Get them and we put them straight away in" he replied. I got the Pegs and we placed them in the ground of the claim at the approximate distance allowed.

Well at least you have ventilation he said, "Now let's go and have a look what's going on down there." We claimed down and there was rubble everywhere we crawled over the dirt toward the opening which we blasted and could see in not so far distance light shimmering which was from the other shaft.

I estimated there would have to be at least 10 or more buckets of dirt to be moved.

But there were no damage to the level which had the traces.

Frank had a good look and shone some light on the level and just said, "I don't think there is anything here, I tell you what Peter, I will not worry about anything from this blast, so take this blast as a favor from me to you, I have a lot of work on my claim anyhow, so if

you drop me to my claim I consider that as the favor returned, fair enough?" I said ok Frank, I do that for you and thank you for your help," to which he replied I wish the outcome for you would have been better, but Tee Tree Hill had been worked over and over." What I suggest is just clean up here as much as you can and see if anything got left behind, drop the level we exposed and if nothing move on to a another claim."

I did not elaborate about the pillar etc., and just said to him, "Well that might be what I have to do. We got in the car and I dropped him at Boundary Rider where his claim was. He got out and said "Good luck and next time you are at Gus Place you can buy me a Beer." I replied "Fair enough" we shook hands and I left to go back to my claim. It was about 11 am when I was back at the claim, and I was sitting there contemplating how I am going to attack the matter on hand.

I heard a noise of a car and looked around and Klaus and Ludwig pulled up right beside me. I shouted "What are you doing here?" Klaus said we had some problem.

With our compressor and took it down to Laszlo for him to fit a new Belt which drives the generator, could not get the belt adjuster undone stripped the thread of the bolt. So we thought you would be here and see if we can get this Claim into a operational stage with winch, ladders and Pipes." I replied "this is great guys as I am bit down in the dumps." "What happened" Ludwig asked. I told him what happened and he shook his head and said," I cannot understand that Frank used three charges with not knowing what was on the other side, well no good crying over spilled milk, let's get things organized."

He told me to get everything of the Ute which I could handle myself while he and Klaus lifted of the Winch, and placed it near the shaft, the they got the bottom plate which supports the mast and the mast and guy wires, once everything was in place and I had cleared everything of the Ute I joined them. Klaus was calling out to Ludwig to help him to move the winch till the pulley at the front was in the center of the shaft, while he was lifting the back of the Winch Ludwig placed the base plate center right under the flange which bolts to the mast. They both then lifted the winch to one side and Klaus got the mast and placed the bottom of the Winch mast on the plate. He told me to hold mast which I did, Klaus and Ludwig got one of the guy wires each and placed them diagonal from each other and pegged them down temporarily. They did exactly the same with the other two, when they were finished with that, Klaus took a look at the sky and said to me" turn the mast about 2 inches to the right." I did what was asked of me and did not question this action at the moment. Klaus and Ludwig then relocated the guy wires so they come off the mast in a straight way, they pegged them down again and got the 4 back axels which each had the large round disc on the end which stopped the guy wire loop from slipping of and also used for hammering it in to the ground with a sledgehammer, they went around all four guide wires and released the turnbuckles as far as possible.

Klaus went to his Rover and got a Spirit Level which he gave to me and said:

"Ludwig and I we each take a guide wire and start hammering the axle in the ground, while I am hammering Ludwig will be pulling on the opposite guy wire till I got this one secure, then we hammer in the other one, you must hold the mast firmly as there will be some pull." I nodded and they started, Klaus swung the sledgehammer with all his power and drove the axle with the guy attached right down in to the ground till only 6 inches protruded. He went then to Ludwig and he did the same there with Ludwig pulling with all his might. They went and repeated this action with the other two guy wires. The wires were fairly loose still so they tightened the turnbuckles till there was some tension on the wires. Klaus shouted "you can let go of the mast now,"

I let go, and there it was the first structure on my claim I was quite excited and forgot all about the mess below. Ludwig said,"

Peter put the Spirit level on the mast right under one of the wires, and see if the mast is in this direction straight."

I did that and said, "It's like a drunken sailor," Ludwig replied which way it is leaning towards me or in the opposite direction?" I said" towards you," he went to the opposite wire and started turning the buckle, once the mast was straight I shouted "That's it." He said "now do the same in the other direction," I said" its leaning away from you," He started turning this buckle and the mast straightened out. Again I shouted, "That's it."

Klaus said then "now we put some tension on it by each of us take one Buckle and give it three turns to tighten it more but it must be done on each opposite wire at the same time", I nodded my head and went opposite to Klaus while Ludwig was holding the Spirit Level under our wires on the mast, after three turns we went to the other wires and did the same, Ludwig also changed the position of the level.

When we were finished, Ludwig said, "It is absolutely perfect."

Klaus then got a collar and put it around the mast on which the winch is rotating.

He then looked at it and moved it up a little and secured it with four bolts and tightens them with a large shifting spanner. He said "So far so good, have you got some grease?" I looked stupefied and said "There is some stuff in of the buckets with the pegs for the ladder," I looked in the buckets and found an old tin which had some grease in it and also a gallon plastic container which looks like some oil.

I gave Klaus the Grease and spread some on the collar and then he rubbed some on the mast where you could see marks where the winch was rubbing. Now the fun starts he said, "let's fit the bastard, you grab the arm at the pulley Peter and we get the back and lift it on". So we did and we walked over to the Mast and lifted it on Klaus quickly put the couple of bolts in the flange which secures the winch to the mast. He said to me" Pull yourself up but not over the Shaft."

I did and there was no movement the winch was as solid as the rock of Gibraltar.

He told me to get a Bucket and put it on the Hook which has a safety device on it so the bucket cannot come off when I put the bucket on he swung the winch over the shaft so he could check the clearance, we had about 3 feet at the top after the bucket cleared the hole.

Well Peter there is your winch no let's see if it starts all right, I said I had no petrol yet, so Klaus got a container out of the Land Rover and poured some in the little round tank of the Villiers Motor he checked to see if there was oil in the sump which was, he pulled the starter cord couple of times slowly to prime the engine and then he pulled hard and it started straight away it blew a little smoke for a couple of minutes and then settled down to a nice steady pace.

Klaus swung the bucket over the hole and released the break lever and let the bucket go down the shaft while Ludwig was watching the see if it hits any walls or ladders etc., but Ludwig gave thumbs up. Klaus then pulled the lever back and the motor started revving up and pulled the bucket up.

"Well Peter there it is, she is ready to go," Klaus killed the engine and swung the winch away from the Shaft, and said "Ok what's the time? I replied "it is 2 pm."

Ludwig said "I can suffer a little longer for my drink so let's do the ladders and finish it once and for all." I said I got a question which I am dying to get answered, why did you ask me to turn the mast a couple of inches when I was holding it at the beginning?" Klaus just smiled "Well did you see me look at the sky that was so I can see where the sun was and would be coming from in the morning so I got you to turn the mast so when you or someone else operates the winch he is not having the sun shining in your eyes." I just replied," Bloody clever."

The Ladders did not take that long to set up, I pulled my Rope/Leather ladder up.

After everything was complete, I gathered all the rest of the equipment and put it in the Ute, covered up the Winch motor with a piece of tarp and tied it down to protect the Motor. And we drove off to Gus's place for a drink.

Chapter 12 – Hard Work

Finally I have a Claim which looks like a productive mine with my winch sitting there ready for work. I got to the shaft the next morning and I was ready to do some work. I lowered three buckets down, the first one I let down to fast, but I got the hang of it by the third Bucket. I climbed down the new ladder which was much easier than on my old rope ladder I moved the buckets out of the way and had a look what went on down here. All I could see was a lot of dirt, stones and gypsum. So I decided that I just had to fill the Buckets and climb up and down to empty them, which did not excite me but it had to be done to really see what went on and what is left.

I had pegs in the claim next to mine so it is also mine for the moment.

I grabbed a shovel and started filling the Buckets, when I finished I climbed up and started the Winch which kicked over straight away, I pulled the lever gently just like Ludwig showed me and felt the tension on the cable then the governor on the motor took over and brought it to the right revs to pull up the bucket, as soon as it cleared the shaft I instantly returned the lever to its neutral position and the bucket was suspended about 2 feet above the shaft, and the motor was purring like a kitten.

I was rather pleased with the setup and felt like a mining magnate. I put down a Pipe so I can slide the bucket easily to the edge of the mullock heap to tilt the bucket over the edge.

I lowered the bucket gently on to the pipe unhooked the carbine and pushed the bucket to the edge and tipped it over and the contents rolled down the side of the mullock heap. I put the bucket back on the cable swung the winch back over the shaft and lowered the bucket down; I was very pleased with myself.

I did this exercise for eighteen buckets before I was able to get to the opening of the blast. By that time I was absolutely knackered as I never ever in all my life worked so hard. I could hardly climb up the ladder. I couldn't give two thumbs of a bush wallabies tail if there was a 5 lb opal down there, all I wanted was to go home have a shower and die. And that was exactly what I did, I drove home and staggered in the door and just flopped on a chair and did not say a word. Chris looked at me and said "What on earth had happened to you?" I was covered from head to toe in dirt and dust, I replied, "I feel as if I moved a mountain, I am absolutely stuffed." I told her what I did and Chris replied, "Do you still want to be a Opal miner." I said more so now than ever before, I am not going to let it beat me." She hugged and kissed me and said, "Come on get these dirty clothes of so I can shake them outside, I have enough warm water here for a decent shower" After the shower I felt better and the hunger started to creep in, my stomach thought my throat was cut, I could eat a horse the jockey and his Strapper.

Chris had made the most delicious Szegedina Goulash which is a Hungarian dish with Sauerkraut, and junks of beef but she had none so she substituted it with Lamb, added tomatoes, capsicum and lots of paprika and slow cooked it.

Very nice meal.

We ate and talked for little while and she got some deep heat muscular cream and gave my aching joints a good massage. As soon as the massaged areas got hot I drifted of to the most exhausting sleep.

The next morning a felt like a million dollars and was ready for action. Chris prepared breakfast and my play lunch ha-ha and a thermos of coffee. A quick peck on the cheek and I was off like a bucket of prawns in the hot sun and headed for my Opal Bonanza.

I arrived at the co-op and got some petrol for the Winch, and I purchased a couple of hurricane lamps and kerosene. Upon arrival at the claim I put all my gear in a bucket and lowered it down, I climbed down and at the bottom I filled the Hurricane Lantern with

Kerosene and lit them and also my carbide lamps and I was ready for action, I placed the Hurricane lamps in such a position which gave me best visibility of the tunnel etc. Armed with my hand pick and a Carbide lamp I went to the blast opening which was quite large due to fact it blasted right through to the other claim. I could see day light at the end as it blasted through in the shaft of the other now my claim. I looked around and notice the brown seam which had underneath not more than about six inches of sand stone, which was not much, in that aspect Frank did a good job as the level were intact. I had about 4 feet across and going in about six feet towards the shaft, the height was just high enough so I could work on my knees but towards the shaft it got lower and I would have to take out more to give me the same height.

I thought to myself well it's now or never. I spread my sheet under the area where I was going to drop the opal level, gentle I started picking away just above the level and broke of small junks and let it drop on my sheet. I was watching carefully with my carbide lamp to see if I can spot any colour, when I had enough on the sheet I dragged the sheet to the shaft were my buckets were and lifted the sheet in and emptied in to the bucket, I repeated this till I had all three buckets full then I did exactly the same as I did yesterday, I climbed up and winched the buckets up but I did not empty them. I got my sheet and spread it out on top next to the buckets and tipped one bucket on to it, then I started looking each large piece of the level to see if there is any colour. Some of the pieces I had to break with my hammer, but no colour and some pieces carried some potch but colourless. Once I was satisfied there was no colour in the larger pieces I threw them away and the rest of the smaller material I put back in the bucket for me to take home sieve them and wash the rest. I did this with all three buckets and that made it lighter so I could lift them on the Ute. It was about 1pm and I decided to have a break before continuing by taking out the shallow part of the tunnel towards the other shaft.

Another charge would make it much easier but I don't have any gelignite or other tools to set a charge or the ticket to use any explosives. I went to the Ute to get water bag as a Land Rover drove up and out got a guy with overalls on and a floppy hat he was wearing glasses, he came over to me and Introduced himself as the Mines Warden, he asked a few questions and ask me for the miners right which I had in the Ute, I handed it to him and he walked around the claim and inspected the Pegs stepped out the distance between a couple of the pegs then came back to me and handed me back my miners right and said, "you know you have to register the claim after three month, and you must work the claim at least 20 hours per week, if you don't and someone wants the claim he could lodge a complaint that you don't work the claim according to the Mining Rules and Legislation he could get the claim allocated to him." I acknowledged what he told me and at the same time I did ask him how I can obtain a License or ticket to work with Explosives. He said, "Come to the Police Station in town next Tuesday I am there you have to answer some security questions, I give you an application form for you complete and I take it with me and return the following week, and if everything is ok you get the ticket when I return." I thanked him and he drove off.

I finished my lunch and I was ready for action, I went down and started Chipping away on the roof of the tunnel towards the opening to the shaft, I noticed that the brown seam continued the and it showed a great deal of potch no colour of course.

I kept digging away and shoveled everything to the back towards my shaft, I don't have buckets available so after I got all the dirt back I decided to quit here for the day and go back and look what I have in the buckets.

I drove back to Dutton Village and picked up on the way a few groceries, said hello to Johnny who asked me how things are going and I told him not to good at the present, but things can change I continued. He asked me if we still work together, I assured him that we will. I took my couple bags of groceries and headed home.

When I got home Chris was outside Steve and Stella's place, with Beatrix.

She came straight across and asked me if I had any exciting news, unfortunately not I replied.

I took of the three buckets and went beside the shack where the shower is, I had a bench there and my washbowl and the sieves, I checked the water I had left in the Drums and they were full, I asked Chris when the Tanker was here as I did not see him, she told me he was here today, "Great I replied, I have to use a bit as I like to wash some dirt." I washed all the dirt from the three buckets, and found nothing what could be termed a salable piece of opal, lots of potch some with a fain hue of blue but very sparse. I was disappointed as did expect something out of this lot as there were some colour traces. Well there is only one thing to do and that is follow the seam and dig out about three feet along the walls, I noticed that this was about the distance in some areas without any collapse of the roof. Un fortunately I don't have a explosive ticket or the right knowledge of setting charges for the safest and most productive way, so I have to do it like a lot of miners, the hard way.

One thing is for sure there is still something there and I am determent to find it.

This week finished without any success, I moved dirt and dug on my own as much as I physically could. I came home every late afternoon dead tired, and kept my families spirit up with promises that it will change. Fortunately they believed in me

And that was more on my mind which kept up my determination of not throwing in the towel.

Tuesday arrived and I went to the police station and met up with the mines warden, he ask several questions and I completed the application and he looked at it and said "you seem to be a nice, sincere and honest person so I cannot see any problems in issuing you with a Use of Explosive Certificate," "Normally it would have to go to Adelaide with my either recommendation or my refusal."

I was very happy when he told me that, he handed me a little booklet about the use of gelignite and various safety precautions."

Now I am a fully-fledged Opal Miner.

After that I drove out to White Dam to Klaus and Ludwig's claim, to ask if they can give me a few pointers and hints of setting charges etc.

When they saw me they stopped for a while and I explained what happen and what I did. And they said no problem; we will show you not in theory but in practice.

"How about on Thursday, we have to go to Laszlo again for some welding job."

I said "that's great that gives me a couple of days and I can finish what I wanted to do at the shack".

+++++

September 2011 Gem & Mineral Shows

More shows can be found at <http://rockngem.com/showdates/>

2-4—SANTA BARBARA, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Earl Warren Showgrounds, 3400 Calle Real; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7 weekend pass, children 11 and under free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

3-5—SILVER CITY, NM: 28th annual show; Grant County Rolling Stones Gem & Mineral Society; Grant County Business and Conference Center, Hwy. 180E, next to Ace Hardware; Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; mineral ID, Wheel of Fortune, silent auction, dealers, rough rock, minerals, handcrafted jewelry, field trips, special exhibits; contact Marcia Andre, (575) 534-0006; e-mail: rollingstonesgmsshow@gmail.com; Web site: <http://rollingstonesgms.blogspot.com/>

9-11—FERNDALE, CA: 7th annual show, "Wildcat Gem Fest"; Wildcat Gem Society; Humboldt County Fairgrounds, 1250 5th St.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; door prizes, games, raffles, silent auction, more than 40 dealers, gems, minerals, fossils, crystals, jewelry; contact Mike Martin, P.O. Box 189, Miranda, CA 95553-0189, (707) 943-1575; e-mail: micknorma@directv.net

10-11—DOWNEY, CA: Annual show; Delvers Gem & Mineral Society' Women's Club of Downey, 9813 Paramount Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; free admission; more than 20 dealers, displays, demonstrations, books, grab

bags; contact Guynell Miller, 7315 Cloverlawn, South Gate, CA 90280-2819, (562) 633-0614; e-mail: guynellallen@sbcglobal.net; Web site: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/delvers>

10-11—NEW MILFORD, CT: Show; Danbury Mineralogical Society; New Milford High School, Rte. 7; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; contact John Pawloski, (860) 354-0296; Web site: www.danburymineralogicalsociety.org.

10-11—ROSEBURG, OR: Annual show, "OR Really Rocks"; Umpqua Gem & Mineral Club; Douglas County Fairgrounds, I-5 Exit 123; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; contact Eileen Paul, (541) 672-5229; e-mail: beadpatch@cmspan.net

10-11—WALLA WALLA, WA: 42nd annual show; Marcus Whitman Gem & Mineral Society; Walla Walla County Fairgrounds Community Center, 9th St. and Orchard; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, kids under 12 free; dealers, rough, slabs, gems, minerals, beads, fossils, jewelry, equipment, silent auction, door prizes, raffle, demonstrations, knapping, gold panning, wire wrapping, rock cutting, interactive kids' section; contact Warren Rood, (509) 522-2330; e-mail: warrenrood@yahoo.com

16-18—SAN RAFAEL, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Marin Center, 10 Avenue of the Flags; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7 weekend pass, children 11 and under free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

17-18—CASTLE ROCK, WA: 46th annual show; Southern WA Mineralogical Society; Castle Rock Fairgrounds, A St. and Cowlitz River; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; contact Dave Furuli, (360) 430-4092, or Jackie Furuli, (360) 431-0059; e-mail: jfuruli@yahoo.com

17-18—PASO ROBLES, CA: Annual show; Santa Lucia Rockhounds; Pioneer Park Museum, 2010 Riverside Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; dealers, exhibits, raffle, youth activities, silent auction, demonstrations, games, fossils, shark teeth; contact David Nelson, 5453 San Anselmo Rd., Atascadero, CA 93422, (805) 423-0188; e-mail: L7Nelson@yahoo.com; Web site: www.srockhound.org

23-25—SALT LAKE CITY, UT: Show and sale; Mineral Collectors of UT, Trolley Square, 600 S 700 E; Fri. 12-9, Sat. 9-9, Sun. 9-5; free admission; dealers, exhibits, hourly drawings, identifications, demonstrations, Touch Table, membership sign-ups, Wheel of Fortune, grab bags; contact Curt Forrester, 7792 N. Kookaburra Ct., Eagle Mountain, UT 84005, (801) 789-6325; e-mail: fossilmin@dcdi.net; Web site: <https://sites.google.com/site/mincolUT/home>

23-25—SANDY, UT: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; South Towne Exposition Center, 9575 S. State St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7 weekend pass, children 11 and under free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

23-25—SANTA FE, NM: Annual show; Palace of the Governors, NM History Museum; Palace of the Governors courtyard, 113 Lincoln Ave.; Fri. 9-7, Sat. 9-4:30, Sun. 9-4:30; free admission; dealers, specimens, talks, demonstrations, contact Inessa Williams, 113 Lincoln Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501, (505) 476-5106; e-mail: inessa.williams@state.nm.us; Web site: www.nmhistorymuseum.org

24-25—MISSOULA, MT: Show, "Amber"; Hellgate Mineral Society; Ruby's Inn and Convention Center, 4825 N. Reserve St.; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; contact Bob Riggs, 14 Holiday Ln., Missoula, MT 59801, (406) 543-3667

24-25—MONTEREY, CA: Annual show; Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Monterey Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairgrounds Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3.50, children free with adult; more than 50 displays, gems, minerals, fossils, 15 dealers, jewelry, cut and uncut gemstones, beads, crystals, rough and polished rocks, mineral specimens, fossils; demonstrations, jewelry making, sphere making, rock grinding, polishing, silent auction, kids' activities; contact Janis Rovetti, 1047 Roosevelt St., Monterey, CA 93940, (831) 372-1311; e-mail: janis12@sbcglobal.net; Web site: cvgms.com

24-25—OSHKOSH, WI: Annual show; Oshkosh Earth Science Club; Sunnyview Expo Center, 500 E. County Rd. Y; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$2, students with ID \$1, children under 12 free; Rocks, Minerals, Fossils, Lapidary Arts, Jewelry, more than 80 dealers, demonstrators, exhibits, kids' events; contact Wanda Timm, (920) 231-2332; e-mail: wjijt656@msn.com; Web site: www.oesclub.org

30-2—DEL MAR, CA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Del Mar Fairgrounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7 weekend pass, children 11 and under free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

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JPG 009. Andamooka Matrix & Opal .732oz - \$300	JPG 010. Andamooka Matrix & Opal .732oz - \$300	JPG 011. Andamooka Miners Hoard Super Gem 1ct - \$310	JPG 012. Andamooka cut Gem 6.19cts - \$945
			
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	NEW MEMBERS	\$40	
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ADDITIONAL BADGES (Your First Badge is <u>free</u> when joining)		\$10	
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Please make check or money order payable to "American Opal Society". Mail payment and application to:
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 An optional, quicker method of payment is via the Internet. To pay, just visit the membership page on our website at http://opalsociety.org/aos_application_by_web.htm and complete the form. You September pay with a Credit Card or via PayPal account. The transaction is completely secure and the AOS never sees your credit card number. The AOS PayPal account is membership@opalsociety.org.

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

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

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 Editor-Jim Pisani
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 The Opal Express C/O
 Jim Pisani
 P.O. Box 4875
 Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875
 E-mail: editor@opalsociety.org

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

The Opal Express

American Opal Society
P.O. Box 4875
Garden Grove, CA 92842-4875

Volume #44 Issue #9
September 2011

TO:

Some Topics In This Issue:

- Opal Show Has Dealer Openings
- Andamooka – A Brief History
- Andamooka History Highlights
- From Rags to Riches & Disasters
Chapters 11 & 12

Important Dates:

August 29 Board Meeting

September 8 - General Meeting:

Opal Cutting Seminar - Expert cutters will show members how to cut their stones. Cutting machines will be provided.

November 5 & 6 – Opal & Gem Show

— GENERAL MEETINGS —

2nd Thurs. of the Month
7:00 pm - 9:00 PM

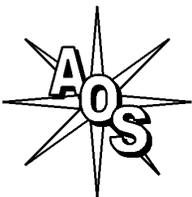
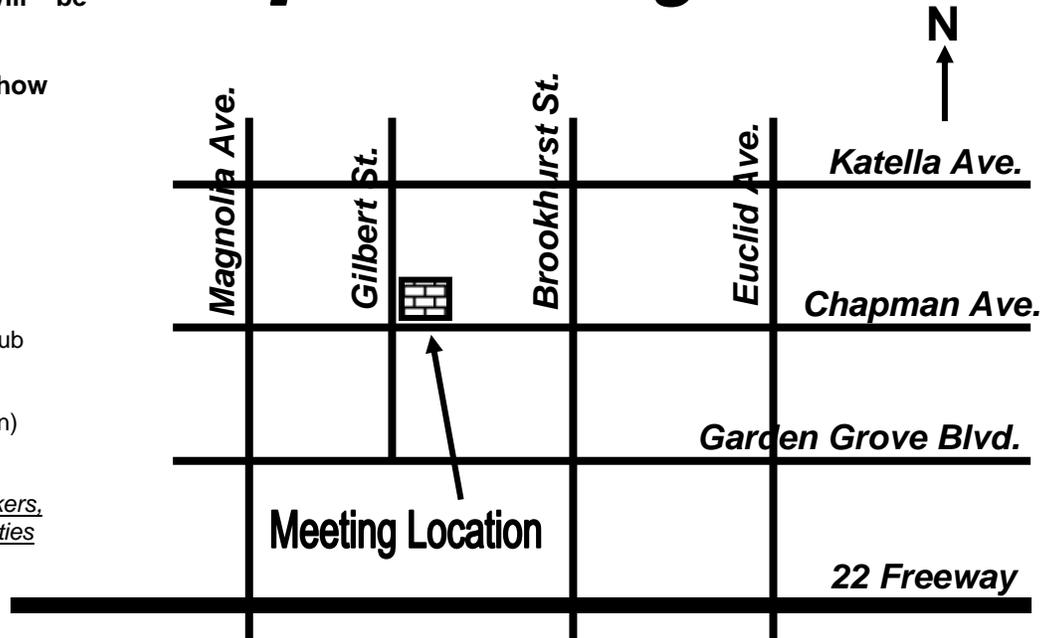
Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
9501 Chapman Ave.
Garden Grove, CA 92841
(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

MEETING ACTIVITIES

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

August 8th

Opal Cutting Seminar



The American Opal Society <http://OpalSociety.org>

Pete Goetz
LaVerne Christenson
Jim Pisani
Gene LeVan

President (714) 530-3530
Treasurer (714) 531-4041
Editor & Webmaster (714) 815-4638
Show Chairman (562) 208-7494

email: mpg1022@aol.com
email: laverne@socal.rr.com
email: editor@opalsociety.org
email: fineblackopal@sprynet.com