

SNIPPETS

the monthly newsletter of the Gold Coast Lapidary Club

Jan 2026

Issue
506



Happy New Year to all our Club members and welcome to the January 2026 edition of Snippets. We're making some changes to the newsletter format over the next few months to try and bring you more information about the Club. Bear with us as we ring in the changes. 🧐

EVENTS

The Club Christmas party was successfully held in December, again at the Varsity Tavern. A slightly different setting for this year and we all enjoyed the afternoon. Once again, the meals & drinks were good value and the food was tasty. About 54 members attended and it was great to see our members enjoying each other's company.



It was particularly good to see Peter Carol at the function, on day-release from hospital after an accident at home scratched him up badly and slowed him down; however, it didn't stop him from attending with his wife and family and enjoying his time with us.



Thank you to all members who donated goodies for the Christmas Hamper raffle draw; from which we managed to make three Christmas Hampers. A great effort! All the Hamper Raffles were sold and drawn, with three excited winners of the raffles taking the Hampers home.

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Presidents Report

Welcome to 2026!

The start of a new year is always an appropriate time to reflect on the previous 12 months but more importantly to embrace the opportunities that the new year will provide.

2025 saw some significant milestones such as our 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Gold Coast Lapidary Club Inc., the renewal of our lease on our Pizzey Park property for another five years and successful grants allowing purchases such as three new VJ faceting machines at \$7800 each. We were also successful in obtaining several smaller grants which supported the day-to-day operation of the club. A new round of grants are now open and we will be actively pursuing these as they become available.

This is the time when the committee will be, with your input, identifying and prioritising projects to enhance your experience at the club over the next twelve months.

Our **largest activity of the year** is our annual Gem Show and a special show committee is already in place, with planning well in hand. More volunteers will be needed as we get closer to the event date.

I take this opportunity to remind everyone that **my term as President ends at the AGM** in May and that my offer for anyone considering nominating for the position is welcome to attend the remaining committee meetings as an observer to familiarise yourself with our meeting procedures and issues.

In closing I sincerely **thank all our wonderful volunteers** for the time they donate to the club on your behalf and especially to those who attended and completed the maintenance week over the holiday break. As a result, the club successfully reopened our doors on Monday 12th January.

I look forward to seeing your smiling faces in 2026.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Harle

President

Club Elections and AGM

We are on the run home to the club AGM and **we need to Elect a new club committee**. To keep the club operational and compliant with Queensland's legislation a new President, Secretary and Treasurer are required, as a minimum. Our existing management committee team and committee members are set out below for information. Please consider standing

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Management Committee Members: 2025/26

Position	Name	Email
President	Bruce Harle	president@goldcoastlapidaryclub.com.au
Vice President	<i>Open</i>	
Treasurer	Steve Madeley	
Secretary	Jan Lippold	secretary@goldcoastlapidaryclub.com.au
Membership Secretary	Ruth Holliday	
Publicity Officer	<i>Open</i>	

Sub-Committee Members

Position	Name
General Support	Ross Cochrane, Josh (Smiley) Ford, Kim Glasby, Garth, Hams, Joe Lockley, Wayne Schulz
Admin Support	Karen Gaunt
Bookkeeper	Glen Ives
Librarian	Mal Wanchap, Robert Keane
Membership Secretary	Ruth Holliday
Admin Support	Karen Gaunt
QLACCA Delegate	Steve Madeley
Facebook Administrator	Vikki Madeley
Maintenance Officers	Steve Madeley, Ross Cochrane, Wayne Schulz
Purchasing Officer	Gabrielle Curtis

Auxiliary Positions

Gemshow 2026

Position	Name
Show Coordinator 2026	<i>Open</i>
Showcase Stewards	<i>Open</i>
Show Coordinator 2026	<i>Open</i>
Showcase Stewards	<i>Open</i>
Show Judge – Faceting	<i>Open</i>
Show Judge – Silver	John Bostock
Show Judge - Cabachon	Mal Wanchop

General Support

Position	Name
Field Trip Coordinator	Luke Smith
Raffle Coordinator	Gabrielle Curtis
Editor - Club Newsletter	Ian Gray

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Out & About

Fossicking Trips

Most of the **fossicking trips at the Club are led by Luke Smith**, who takes on the responsibility of the pre-planning and coordination for each trip. This year he's planning to do some hikes to new spots around the region as well as revisiting some of the trusted favourites.

A provisional plan for this year's fossicking adventures is shown below; however all exact timing will be confirmed on the Club noticeboard.

Month	Dates	Trip type	Location	Looking for
January	9th - 11th	Overnight Fossicking	Ewinger State Forest, NSW	Smokey Quartz, Amethyst
February	tba	Day trip - rain dependent	Tweed Valley, NSW (1) Tyalgum pub (2) Hopping Dicks Rd Crystal Shop	Chalcedony, Agate, Jasper
March	6th - 8th	Overnight Fossicking	Minerama Glen Innes Torrington Elsmore stannifer	Sapphire, Zircon, Topaz
April	25th	Overnight Fossicking	Yowah, Quilpie, Chinchilla, Wandoan	Boulder Opal, Petrified wood
May	16th	Day trip	Lismore, NSW - Lismore Gem Show	Gem show
	23rd	Day trip	Brisbane (1) Mt Gravatt Gem Show (2) Ithaca crystals, Mansfield	Gem show / crystal shop
October	tba	Overnight Fossicking	Ewinger State Forest, NSW	Smokey Quartz, Amethyst
November	8th	Day trip	Mudgeeraba - Mudgeeraba gem show	Gem show

One trip Luke is considering this year is an overnight stay in the Hogarth Ranges of Northern New South Wales. The Hogarth Ranges are about 30km west of the town of Casino and about 2 and a half hours' drive southwest of the Gold Coast.

Day 1 would be looking for gem quality Labradorite wash in the local creek, before setting up an overnight bush camp and a meal & chat around the campfire. Day 2 would start back down the creek for an hour or two and then follow on with a walk to some local Pegmatites in the area for further fossicking.

There are lots of options for fossicking trips around Queensland and New South Wales, although some are more weather dependent than others, so flexibility can be required. Fossicking plans for this year will take account of geology, gemstone types, locality, and accessibility. Nothing that's too technical and generally suitable for most ages and fitness levels; however, it's important that if anyone has medical issues then please do let Luke know in advance of the trip so he can discuss and make sure of suitability.

Once again, keep your eye on the Club noticeboard for exact timing of all future fossicking trips.

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The Norman Donpon Lapidary Display - Miles Historical Village Museum, Miles, QLD

A treasure trove of lapidary information awaits you at the Norman Donpon Lapidary Display (NDLD) on the Western Downs of Queensland. The NDLD is in the country town of Miles, about 4.5hrs drive northwest of the Gold Coast. The museum's lapidary display showcases over 4000 local and international specimens of petrified wood, gemstones, minerals and fossils and is popular with paleobotanists, geologists and lapidary enthusiasts.



Left to Right: (1) Meteorite from NT, (2) Petrified Wood, Forest Floor and Pentoxylon slab specimens from Chinchilla and Miles QLD, (3) Topaz from Mt Surprise Qld – all displayed at the Norman Donpon Lapidary Museum, Miles Qld.

The collection houses many examples of petrified wood from the Chinchilla / Western Downs areas of Queensland with the petrified wood displaying an amazing array of earthy colours. Chinchilla district is known for producing a reddish colour petrified wood, dubbed “Chinchilla Red”, which is unique to the area. The stone is prized for its high quality of textural preservation and beautiful colour, showcasing the familiar patterns and textures of wood but feeling and weighing like stone. The hardness of the stone is typically between 7 (quartz) and 8 (topaz) on the Mohs Scale and it is commonly left in its natural state or slabbed and cut to cabochon.

The process of wood petrification takes place under appropriate geological conditions. After plants die and fall into the soils, soluble silica, moving with the water in silica-rich soils, can precipitate and settle within the cell spaces and structures of plants, depositing thin films of amorphous silica over the cell structure of the plant. Over time the organic structure of the plant decays and is fully removed, leaving behind the resistant inorganic silica and transforming the original wood to stone as either opal (closely packed silica spheres) or compact fibrous or granular microcrystalline quartz (chalcedony).



Left to Right: (1) Petrified Wood transformed into Opal (2) Petrified Wood transformed into Chalcedony

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Fossickers can also explore the Western Downs area for the rare petrified Pentoxylon, an extinct tree fern dating back to the Jurassic and Early Cretaceous time periods. These plants lived during the middle to late Mesozoic (around 100 – 170 million years ago) and can be identified by a characteristic five wedge pattern seen in the trunk. A recent internet search revealed an 8-inch wide petrified Pentoxylon slab on sale for US\$475 (around A\$750).



(1) Pentoxylon specimen slab from Chinchilla Qld, displayed at the Norman Donpon Lapidary Museum, Miles Qld.

If you're interested in fossicking for Chinchilla Red or other petrified wood specimens, (you'll need the appropriate fossicking approvals and licenses), it's helpful to visit the lapidary display so that you're aware of what you may encounter whilst out in the field. The Historical Village Museum in Miles is about a 30-minute drive from the two general permission fossicking areas in Chinchilla and most specimens are easily found on the ground or just below the surface.



Left to Right: (1) Earthy colours of Petrified Wood from Chinchilla Qld (2) Larger chunk of Chinchilla Petrified Wood

The Great Artesian Basin interpretive centre building is also sited within the Miles Historical Village Museum, beside the NDLC. The centre contains a large graphic illustration of the cross section of the eastern part of the Great Artesian Basin with geological time scales and core rock samples from over 1500m below the earth's surface. Visitors can sit down, relax and enjoy an educational 5-minute video explaining the geological formation, location of water and its connection to modern day mining and agriculture of the Great Artesian Basin.

The Museum also houses many other historic collections and displays such as the Shell Collection, Streetscape Collection and the War Museum. At the time of writing, the entrance fee is \$24 for adults, \$21 for Seniors and \$12 for students, children under school age are free. For more information about the Miles Historical Village Museum go to www.mhv.org.au.

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Club Lookahead

Meetings	
Sunday 22 February 2026	General Meeting
Sunday 31 May 2026	Annual General Meeting
Annual Gem show	
Saturday 20 June 2026	Annual Gem Show 80 Pacific Avenue, Miami

GCLC Session Times & Instructors - 2026

Set out below are our 2026 session types, times and instructor contacts for each session. Most sessions take place on week days between 10am and 3pm, but we also have evening cabbing sessions (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and a cabbing day session on Saturday.

DAY	Monday			Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
09.00					Mal Wanchap - 0410 249392						
09.30											
10.00											
10.30											
11.00											
11.30	Tomio Taguchi - 0410 148038 Mike Beacall - 0403 545381 John Bostock Gabrielle Curtis - 0474 031934 Chika Murata Karen Baraket	Robert Keane - 0417 141950 Ross Cochrane - 0418 189941	Steve Madeley - 0419 021253		John Grice - 0400 755698 Gary Gale - 0403 043412	Alex Toro - 0411 805378 Peter Markwell - 0451 461590	SmileyFord - 0427 308058				
12.00											
12.30											
13.00											
13.30											
14.00											
14.30											
15.00											
NIGHT	Monday			Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
18.00	Mike Beacall - 0403 545381			No evening classes	John Casson - 0451 818343 Jay Neville - 0433 691025	No evening classes	John Casson - 0451 818343	No evening classes			
18.30											
19.00											
19.30											
20.00											
20.30											
21.00											
LEGEND	Cabbing		Opal		Silversmith		Wire wrapping		Faceting		Casting

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THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr. Ray Stevens, MP



We would like to thank and acknowledge Mr. Ray Stevens MP, Qld State Government Representative for Mermaid Beach, for his continued support of the Club.

Thanks Ray, for the printed Marquee that has been delivered to the Club

Cr Nick Marshall, OAM



Thank you also to Councilor Nick Marshall, OAM, for his continued support of the Club's Annual Show with approval of a discretionary grant to assist in preparation and running of the event.

Club Maintenance

A serious *"THANK-YOU"* to those club members who helped complete the maintenance program over the Christmas and New Year period. Your help was greatly appreciated as it allowed the programmed jobs to be completed, giving us some reassurance that our lapidary machinery will run effectively over the coming months. Additionally, the general clean-up that was completed around the grounds, premises and storage areas makes the Club look and feel fresh. Once again Thank you for your time and commitment!

Member Contributions – Snippets

Many thanks to our club members who contributed their time preparing articles for this month's edition of Snippets.

- **Luke Smith** - Fossicking Trips
- **Marina Mattson** - The Norman Donpon Lapidary Display

Last, but not least, if you've a hankering for writing or feel like contributing any lapidary or Club related articles please feel free to send them in for inclusion in future editions of our newsletter. Either:

- Directly send to the Editor - ianangray@outlook.com
- Or via any of the Club committee team.

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