

Sussex Mineral & Lapidary Society Newsletter

Issue 08 December 2024



Rhodochrosite, Photo Credit Thomas Spann

From the Editor

Welcome to the eighth edition of the SMLS Newsletter. We are delighted to have a number of new members and look forward to meeting you on Zoom. Thank you to all this month's contributors, I hope you enjoy the selection. Have a warm and peaceful festive season and a Happy New Year.

Samantha



Inside this issue

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Pg4-5 – News, a selection of articles covering, minerals, fossils, gemstones and more

Pg6-11 - Articles, topical selection for your interest

Pg12 – Sales



From the Chair



Dear Members,

The festive season has arrived, it does get earlier each year but after the hectic few months getting the show together it is a very welcome break. It was an amazing, successful show this year, record numbers attending, a hugely enjoyable family day out. The first children's talk in the morning attracted 70 youngsters, a record indeed. There were over 40 people involved in organising and running the event, a big thanks to them all. For 2025 we will require some new and some additional volunteers, so if you enjoy interacting with youngsters and families please let us know and put the date in your diary.

We have one more talk for December which should be a real treat if you like some of the best world class minerals. The 2025 program is linked on page 3, so plenty to look forward to next year.

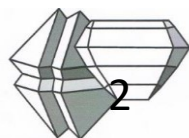
Finally a big thanks to the SMLS Committee for all their hard work, advice, and guidance during 2024.

Happy Yuletide holidays

Colin



Rainbow Mountains, Peru



Events

6th December – Club Meeting, Highlights from the Spann Collection by Gail & Jim Spann, Zoom [here](#)

3rd January – Club meeting “Minerals from Leicestershire” by Frank Ince. Zoom [here](#)

7th February – Club Meeting “The Charles Rashleigh Collection” by Phil Taylor, Zoom [here](#)

8th February – Lewes Fossil [Festival](#)

22nd February – Essex Mineral [Show](#)

5th March – Field Trip to Sheppey

7th March – Club Meeting “Mining Adventures in the Congo” by Tomek Praszki

15/16 March – South of England Mineral Show – Ardingly Showground RH17 6TL



Click icon for SMLS 2025 programme

Kerr and Charlotte did a grand job of their first show at Ardingly and are saddling up for two shows in 2025. You heard it here first.

South of England Mineral Show
March 15th - 16th 10:00 - 16:00
Queens Jubilee Hall, South of England Showground,
Ardingly, RH17 6TL
Crystals - Minerals - Fossils - Beads - Jewellery - Crystal Artwork

www.NatureUnearthed.co.uk



Next Club Meeting – Friday 6th December

Highlights from the Spann Collection, by Gail & Jim Spann, Zoom [here](#)

Background to the collection and minerals for [sale](#).
Courtesy - Collectors Edge



Top 20 International Shows in 2025 -
According to Kim Rix these are what's hot in [2025](#). I can't find any London one at the time of writing..... let me know if you do!

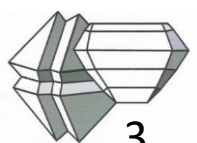

43rd Annual
ESSEX GEM & MINERAL SHOW
Saturday
22nd February 2025
10am to 4pm
North Romford Community Centre
Clockhouse Lane, Collier Row,
Romford RM5 3QJ
Within the ULEZ
TWO HALLS of: Minerals, Fossils, Gemstones, Jewellery, Books, Rock & Fossil ID

Serpentine Egg, The Lizard, Cornwall.

Free Parking
Refreshments Available
Adults: £2
Accompanied Children: Free

For more information about the show please email: show@erms.org

Organised by:
THE ESSEX ROCK & MINERAL SOCIETY
WWW.ERMS.ORG





12 MYO perfect crocodile – photo credit RTE News

Fossils

Worlds oldest lizard fossil wins [fight](#)

Tiny worm makes for big evolutionary [discovery](#)

Did the world's best-preserved dinosaurs really die in 'Pompeii-type' [events?](#)

Fossil of huge terror bird [discovered](#)

Fossil hunters strike gold with new [species](#)

Bird brain reveals roots of avian [intelligence](#)

What “Lucy” has taught scientists since her [discovery](#)

Huge study of dinosaur [poo](#)

Hikers find reptile footprints in the [Alps](#)

12MYO crocodile found in [Peru](#)

Fossil Gets Its Name From a Revived Indigenous [Language](#)



Ninumbeehan dookoodukah – photo credit Fitch/Royal Society B

Minerals & Rocks

Minerals for the Christmas [Season](#)

London Gem & Mineral Show [Report](#)

Presioza Milan Show [Report](#)

17th Hong Kong Mineral Fair [Report](#)

Get your fluorescent fix here from the [FMS](#)

Rare minerals worth [\\$20bn](#)

Will Santa bring these? – a selection from The [Vault](#)

Corium – man made [lava](#)

Jacqui & Andrews \$30k gold [haul](#) (video)

Binge Munich 24 with these videos

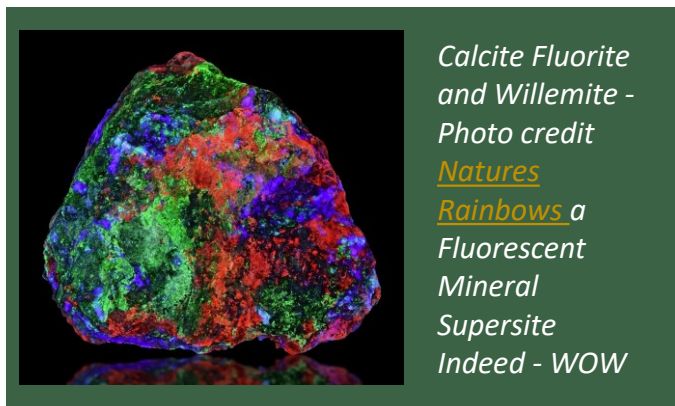
[Video 1](#)

[Video 2](#)

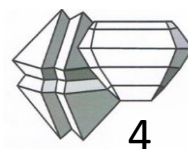
[Video 3](#)



What's in a mineral name, not very many women – study [finds](#)



Calcite Fluorite and Willemite - Photo credit Natures Rainbows a Fluorescent Mineral Supersite Indeed - WOW



Gems & Lapidary

Younger shoppers most likely to gift [jewellery](#)

The World of Solange [Azagury-Partridge](#)

Historic Treasures from a Spanish [Shipwreck](#) (GIA)

All about [Agates](#)

McKinsey sees future impact on market from lab grown [diamonds](#)

Cobaltite – all [about it](#)

Thirteen purple [gemstones](#)



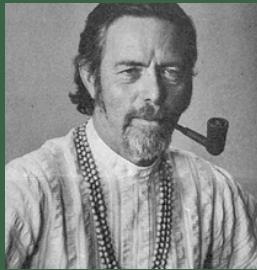
Multi-stone necklace - Photo credit Solange Azagury-Partridge/Edward Edwards)



Cobaltite – photo credit IGS/LiveAuctioneers

Quote of the month

All I'm saying is that minerals are just a rudimentary form of consciousness whereas the other people are saying that consciousness is a complicated form of minerals.



Alan [Watts](#)

Use Ctrl + Click on the underlined text to link straight to the articles.

Videos & Podcasts

Rapaport Jewellery Pro video channel – loads of great videos [here](#)

Digging for gems, has it been [doctored?!](#)

Ring of the month

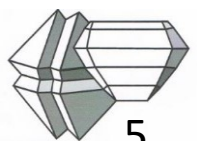
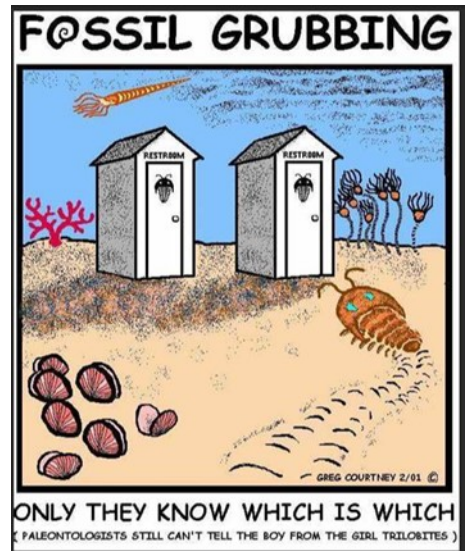


\$8M blue diamond ring leads Christies Magnificent Jewels [Sale](#)
Photo credit - Christies

Imperial Flame Topaz (332ct) – photo credit Perot Museum. Full article [here](#)



Chuckle Corner



Monster rough sapphire

I have just been offered a monster rough sapphire group. It weighs 8.5kg and is said to have come from the Himalayan Mountains. Purported to be Kashmir. Yours for a mere \$65,000. The eagle eyed amongst you may spot that the “report” is signed by someone called Jadeite Jade.....

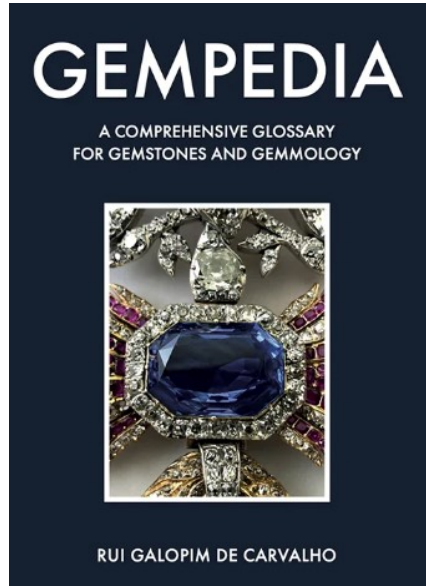


My favourite Etsy find this month – a very rare and natural crystal according to the seller. Yours for £47, so many positive reviews! Shop [here](#)

Gempedia – the ultimate guide

This collection of every industry term a gemmologist could ever need is a useful resource for beginners and scholars alike.

[Gempedia](#) is a collection of more than 7,300 terms and definitions gathered over decades by [Rui Galopim de Carvalho](#). A renowned professional gemmologist and consultant with more than 30 years of experience in gem testing, education and science communication within the gem and jewellery trade, the author has created a reference glossary.

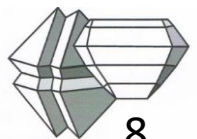


Gempedia – photo credit Rapaport

Dons Maps

Amazing [resource](#) for the study of Palaeolithic / Paleolithic European, Russian, Ukrainian and Australian Archaeology / Archeology

This is Don



Christmas Mine, Arizona

Nestled in the rugged terrain of Gila County, Arizona, the Christmas Mine and District represents a fascinating chapter in the state's rich mining history. Known for its distinctive name and historical significance, this region offers insights into the mining industry's development, the communities it shaped, and the unique geology that made it noteworthy.

Origins of the Christmas District - The Christmas mining district was established in the early 1900s, named after the date of its official claim filing on **December 25, 1902**. Situated near the Dripping Spring Mountains, the district's location was rich in copper ore, a highly sought-after resource during Arizona's mining boom. The district was part of the broader wave of mining activity that defined much of the American West in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Christmas Mine - The Christmas Mine itself became the district's centerpiece. Initially discovered by prospectors exploring the area's potential, the mine quickly attracted attention for its high-grade copper deposits. Early operations were challenging due to the rugged terrain and the lack of infrastructure, but these obstacles were overcome as railroads and smelting facilities expanded across Arizona.

Ownership of the Christmas Mine changed hands several times during its operational life, reflecting the fluctuating fortunes of the mining industry. By the 1910s, it was under the management of the **Shannon Copper Company**, which implemented more systematic mining techniques and contributed to the mine's peak productivity.



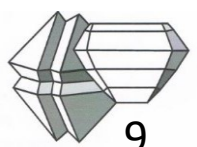
Photo credit Alan Levine/Flickr



Christmas Mine - Photo credit Mindat/Glenn Laidlaw

Economic and Social Impact - The Christmas Mine significantly influenced the local economy and social landscape. At its height, it provided employment to hundreds of miners, engineers, and support staff, fostering the growth of a small but vibrant mining community. This settlement, sometimes referred to as "Christmas," included housing, a school, and basic amenities for the workers and their families.

However, life in the district was far from idyllic. Mining communities were often isolated, and working conditions in early 20th-century mines were notoriously harsh. Despite these challenges, the Christmas Mine persisted as an important contributor to Arizona's copper output for several decades.



Christmas Mine, Arizona (continued)

Geology of the Christmas District - The Christmas District is geologically significant due to its association with the **Pinal Schist**, a metamorphic rock formation that hosts copper-rich veins. The region's geology is marked by the interplay of intrusive igneous activity and hydrothermal processes, which concentrated valuable minerals like chalcopyrite, azurite, and malachite.

In addition to these common copper minerals, the Christmas Mine also yielded four type locality minerals – Apachite, Junitoite, Gilalite and Ruizite and is known for its Kinoite.

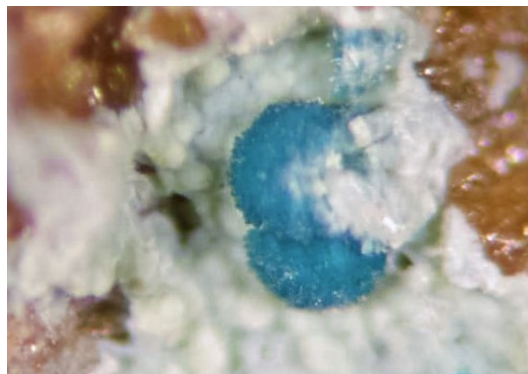
Decline and Legacy - The Christmas Mine's fortunes waned in the mid-20th century as the easily accessible copper deposits were exhausted and fluctuating copper prices made operations less viable. The mine closed permanently in the 1980s, leaving behind remnants of its infrastructure and a legacy deeply embedded in Arizona's mining history.

Today, the Christmas District is largely abandoned, its buildings weathered by time and its mine shafts sealed for safety. However, it continues to hold interest for historians, geologists, and mineral enthusiasts, who recognize its role in Arizona's mining heritage.

Challenges of Preservation - Preserving the history of the Christmas District poses unique challenges. As with many abandoned mining sites, environmental concerns like soil contamination and unstable structures complicate efforts to make the site accessible to the public. Additionally, the remote location and lack of formal preservation initiatives mean that much of its history risks being lost to neglect.



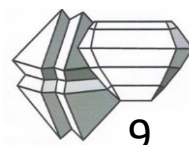
Kinoite - Photo credit Mindat/Marko Berkhardt



Apachite (TL)- Photo credit Mindat/Brent Thorne

Conclusion - The Christmas Mine and District exemplify the boom-and-bust cycle of mining towns across the American West. From its establishment on Christmas Day in 1902 to its peak as a productive copper mine, the district reflects the optimism, challenges, and complexities of mining life. While the mine is no longer active, its legacy endures in the stories it tells about Arizona's past, the minerals it produced, and the communities it shaped. For those interested in mining history and geology, the Christmas District remains a subject worthy of exploration and preservation.

Mindat [links](#)



Sussex Annual Show Report

The show is a club show, that is to say that as well as being a dealer led show, we, the Sussex Mineral and Lapidary Society also put on activities, exhibitions and talks to attract and entertain our guests.

This was one of our best shows ever with numbers of attendees up significantly on the previous year, much due to a significant increase in advertising, spearheaded by Sam Durrant and a campaign across all the local town and villages on their Facebook sites. Nick and Colin had also put on displays and mineral sales at two local fairs which attracted a lot of interest and allowed us to publicize the show.

The displays were varied this year, with Nick Hawes and Steve Burchmore doing displays of minerals from Lavrion from Greece, Ian Graham showing us a selection of his polished mineral sphere collection, David Alderton putting on an excellent display of Sussex fossils and Colin Brough showing minerals he collected on the SMLS Faroes trips.

The displays were all well received and the variety of items on display went down well with the public. The quality of items on display was also universally high and has hopefully inspired collectors of the future.

The ultraviolet room was crammed with visitors all day. The displays were magnificent as always and there was a real buzz about the room. The team were selling the last of the Gavin Malcolm collection to raise funds for SMLS and all the minerals were cleared by the team by close of play in a heroic piece of work.



Sussex Annual Show Report (continued)

Gold panning and Crystals and fossil hunting led by Catherine Foley and Peter Martin respectively were similarly snowed under with demand all day and the tombola sold out by 1pm in what maybe a record performance. The free raffle went down well too and Leonie Biggenden of the NHM just about wore out her voice talking to children and adults about items she had brought down from the museum.

John White was at a stand in the main hall demonstrating lapidary work and Rob Tripp held the fort for the day at the SMLS desk, seeking new members.

The main hall was filled with dealers. Sam Durrant has been successful in recruiting a number of new dealers and there is now a long waiting list of dealers wanting a table at our show. Feedback from the few dealers I have spoken to since the show indicates that they had a very good day with takings up significantly from the previous year.

A few highlights from the show for me included Mike Merry who had some wonderful Cornish pieces including several clinoclase specimens, a wonderful large chalcocite from Cornwall and a lovely Cornish rhodochrosite.

Neil Hubbard had evidently bought a collection or two and was doing a roaring trade selling his reasonable priced and interesting pieces. He had a superb topaz and aquamarine specimen from the Mourne Mountains, a Wheal Gorland cuprite and native copper, and a large zeolite geode containing good crystals of goosecreekite and a large clear calcite crystal, making a lovely combination.



Sussex Annual Show Report (continued)

Robert Lawson and Stephen Moreton had a selection of self collected material including some lovely pieces from the Mourne Mountains in Ireland and I was very pleased to pick up a magnificent fluorite thumbnail specimen from Hilton Mine showing clear gemmy yellow-green crystals with very well developed phantoms.

Ross Whitaker was continuing to sell pieces from his own and the JN Plummer collection including some nice pieces from the Tsumeb Mine.

There were minerals and fossils available at every price point. This, and the large numbers of guests, resulted in dealers selling right up to the end of the show.

The clear down went very efficiently and the hall was cleared by about 6pm, with SMLS kit loaded back either to Colin's house or our store at the Methodist Church. All that remained to be done was to head to the Farmers pub in Scaynes Hill for the post show dinner organized by myself. About 30 of us sat down to a total feast and had a marvelous evening. Just the thing to restore one's strength and muse over the wonderful things seen during the day.

Nick Hawes

Sussex Show report from Jolyon Ralph [Here](#)



Sales, Wants & Swaps

Need a last minute gift? Look no further than our own SMLS dealers without even leaving the house!

I found these handmade fossil mugs, they are a lovely blueish grey colour and have a three dimensional ammonite on one side and trilobite on the other. Very unique and a really good size (big), 9cm tall and 9cm wide. Boxed £20 each, contact me for details.



Wanted

Lab grown minerals and gemstones – I collect synthetic ones, if you have any that you would like to sell please let me know.



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