

# PETE'S PAGE

## ROCK GEMS - A FASCINATING GAME

Dear Kids,

As well as a monopoly in koalas, kangaroos and kookaburras Australia has a unique place in the field of gem stones. Besides having a virtual monopoly on the loveliest semi-precious stone of them all, the opal, (see story page 5) we have a large variety of natural gemstones.

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### *The Baby and the Bunny*

**Wide-eyed little Tanya Oliphant photographed during a Baby Show at Grace Brothers, Parramatta, at the end of February. Tanya is the daughter of well-known singer, Lorna Beulah (Mrs. Tom Oliphant) of Toongabbie**



You don't have to be a kid from Lightning Ridge or Walgett—where the first black opal was found—to know that. Anyone who has gone bushwalking across country or even along a country road may have kicked aside with his toe many of these delightful examples of nature's artistry. But it takes a pretty keen and well-informed eye to spot them.

Indeed, even a close look may not indicate that what is apparently "just a bit of old rock" is really a thing of beauty and worth a place in a gem collection.

One of the simple tests that will often reveal the hidden character of a rock gem is to clean it in water. Whilst wet the inherent colours and pattern of the stone will be visible. To disclose the stone's full beauty however, is a task that takes considerable time but which is well within any handyman's capacity with the aid of comparatively simple polishing equipment.

The names of some of these stones are long familiar from Bible reading—Jasper, Prase (Chalcedony), Bloodstone, Beryl, Petalite, Rhodonite, Lace Agate, Moss Agate, Petrified Wood, Ribbon Stone, Gold Stone, Topaz, Obsidian (volcanic glass), Cairngorm and others.

I cannot think of any more pleasurable outdoor pastime than that enjoyed by a "rock hound" scouring the countryside at every available opportunity, can you?

There are many "rock hounds" who are now serious mineralogists. They have made a hobby of rock polishing. Polishing is the secret of bringing the rock gem to glowing life.

But one of the most fascinating parts of the hobby is the realisation that rock gems are many millions of years old.

I daresay many of you have picked up some fine specimens of rock gems in your time—and I don't mean stone bruises. But seriously, kids, I would like to hear from any among you who happen to be collectors.

Cheerio until next time,

*Pete*