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.

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,