

All the treasures have been found!

At least that's what I thought when I first set foot in the red dust of western Queensland, Outback Australia.

"Whatever is to be found in the ground has already been found!"... "Treasures are for Long John Silver, buried, dug up and lost again hundreds of years ago by pirates and men of adventure!"

Fancy being sent as a travelling minister to such a desolate God forsaken country. As if the isolation, the heat, the dust and the gravel road corrugations were not enough, there were those pesky flies. 'Don't worry about 'em!' was the experienced advice of the country bumpkins who didn't know there could be such a place without them.. "It won't hurt ya if ya swallow one or two with ya sandwich."

The skies in Western Queensland are very blue during the day and very black at night. I'm sure if Copernicus had aimed his telescope into the night sky of the outback, he would have discovered a lot more than he did. No light pollution here. Just one magnificent ebony backdrop, sprinkled with endless galaxies of stars.

Not that the wife and I saw much of the sky in the daytime. It was the sparkling things in the ground that held more fascination to us. Being confirmed rock hounds, It didn't take long to find out that we were travelling through some of the most famous gemstone country in the world. Gravel pits became treasure troves. Dried out creeks, Treasure Islands.

Oblivious to the fly's and the heat, we would have our heads tilted toward the ground while our eyes darted back and forth from one rock to the other, looking for agates topaz, onyx, petrified wood and anything else that exhibited the molten glass tell tale signs of a gemstone. On those very hot days, we would sit in the middle of a shallow creek sifting through the gravel.

But what happened to us when we hit the opal town of Yowah, will always remain in our memory. For the first time we encountered boulder opal in the form of what are known as 'Yowah nuts' Suddenly, interest in all other gemstones was pushed aside in favour of this amazing stone that changes color, encompasses the whole spectrum of the rainbow, and displays ever changing patterns that simulate pictures of mountain and ocean scenes, faces, all kinds of objects and abstract shapes that challenge the imagination.

Since then, I have written a CD on the subject, called 'The Ordinary Bloke's Guide to Opal', featured on my net site. www.opalmine.com. More details of opal and the Australian outback are shown at this site

Yowah is but one of a number of fascinating outback opal fields in Australia. The Australian 'bush' has captured our hearts, and to this day we must return again and again to savour its delights.

A Yowah 'Nut' - Western Queensland featured at www.opalmine.com

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'Opal Ridge' Australian outback opal fields Lightning Ridge

Peter Brusaschi is the author of the CD '**The ordinary Bloke's guide to opal**' and has sponsored the site <http://www.opalmine.com> with its opal chat forum, for the past 10 years. Peter has been visiting the Australian outback for the past 37 years and is an expert on the subject of opals, Australian outback travel, and ancient middle eastern history.