

NEWSLETTER
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The final talk of the evening was given by Peter Williams on : -

‘The Lost Mines of Kingsgate’.

The Greater Kingsgate mining field contains over sixty workings, pipes and deposits most of which are either only slightly or not at all mineralised. Some however have been very productive for molybdenum and bismuth during the last century and for a period in about the middle of the 1900s piezoelectric quartz from Kingsgate mines was important for the radio industry. The more productive mines have of course also been important as sources of very fine mineral specimens. In the course of his talk Peter Williams provided a historical description of the area particularly referring to the less well-known, if not virtually unknown mines, pipes or deposits of the southern Kingsgate field and to a number of the companies which have investigated the area.

Referring back to reports in the literature from 1884 it is apparent that even the earliest reports mentioned mines in the south of the Kingsgate field collectively referred to as the Yarrow River Deposits. There are clusters of pipes mapped by the North Broken Hill Company with names such as the Comstock and ‘Pretty Valley’ groups. Very few of these groups of pipes in the southern part of the greater Kingsgate field carry much molybdenum or bismuth mineralisation. An exception was the Maurer’s mine which apparently produced about one and a half tons of molybdenum, very little by commercial standards but it was a producer whereas the speaker had visited the Gold diggers Creek mine which was also supposed to have been a producer but could detect no signs of mineralisation other than a few smoky quartz crystals.

Peter Williams next referred to some of the unusual quartz specimens which have been found in the southern group of Kingsgate mines and was able to show a few specimens to the Meeting. There have been unusual flat crystals, some double-terminated with the pyramidal terminations showing only four faces. Typically of some of the Kingsgate deposits are doubly terminated crystals with one end of the prism showing a single pyramid and the other a multiple pyramidal form. There are also some examples of very weird parallel overgrowths of quartz that have been found where new quartz has grown over previous forms producing very unusual habits. Cleavage is very unusual to find in quartz from anywhere but examples have been found from the southern Kingsgate ‘lost mines’.