

I couldn't resist writing this little story about a great guy who is a lot of fun to work with and is obviously totally absorbed in what he does.

## DIGGER DOUG – D9 IN DISGUISE

So there he was in the city doing all the normal city things including his very professional career with computers.

Day dawned and Doug decided to take his hobby to the next level wanting to discover just how exciting it would be to find the gems in the rough then facet them and finally see them as exquisite pieces of jewellery. **The 'complete deal'.**

After kitting the Kombi out and contacting Pete & Pam at **Mt Surprise Gems** to check out the possibility of some sort of work he headed north for the season – April to October. Leaving all his comfort zones behind.

Of course it wasn't a straight forward trek north as there are many fossicking areas that just must be seen and tried. So it was at his leisure that he finally arrived in Mt Surprise ready to check out O'Brien's Creek a place Doug had read and heard about from afar.

Settling in was easy – he enjoyed being with like minded people and was given the job of running a fossicking tour four days a week. Couldn't be better he says, 'just what I wanted to do'. He quickly learned about the flora and fauna, geology and finer points of the gem stones found in the area. Being so keen it was easy for him to absorb it all.

At first the Topaz eluded him and much time was spent faceting large beautiful stones from material already in his possession. As stock dwindled his yearning to find good **Topaz – Aqua – and Smokey Quartz** grew stronger.



The guys at **Mt Surprise Gems** gave him time off so up in the hills he went. Digger Doug was more like a D9 in disguise as he soon started to sort through the rubble unearthing the most beautiful pieces of Topaz. This spurred him on. There was no stopping him now. The Smokey Quartz with its wonderful depth of colour. The Topaz crystals clean and sparkling some with that unmistakable powder blue through them. Alas, though the Aquamarine with its strong green/blues and clarity beyond belief still can not be found.



At the campground close to O'Brien's Creek where Doug spends his days off he got palley with many of the old time diggers, most of whom are 'social' diggers now. Doug is keen and young he soaked up all the info offered so freely by this happy bunch. Off once more traipsing over the hills till he finds a spot where there is no sign of diggings. He sets out to right this and tools in hand starts digging. He's in his element now. And what a spot it turned out to be. Several days of hard work revealed a fine stash of good sized beautiful coloured Topaz. Several with a yellow hint plenty of clear and some really nice icy blues. Alas the Aquamarine still alludes him which is made a little harder to take as several cuttable pieces have since been found by would be fossickers on his tours to the claim owned by **Mt Surprise Gems!**



The days are getting hotter now and fewer people are wanting to 'give it a go'. The last burst of happy fossickers take to the claim with Digger Doug at the helm. Its school

holidays the perfect time to get those kids to use their pent up energies. Everyone is digging away to their hearts content so Digger Doug decides to clean up a patch ready for more people. He's not really looking hard or sieving just doing his job.

There's plenty of banter going on from other holes where small pieces of Topaz are being unearthed. Suddenly a hew and cry stopped everyone in their stride – Digger Doug couldn't believe his eyes or his luck. A huge (well maybe not quite that 'huge' but still pretty good) long Aquamarine crystal just fell out at his feet. Amongst all the excitement Doug was careful to hang onto it. Let's see it everyone was saying. Doug washed it with pride in the creek before holding it high for all to see. The best specimen he had seen from O'Brien's Creek and Mt Surprise Gems claim and it was his. All season he had tried hard to find one and now as his work here comes to a close he finds the most unbelievable Aquamarine. The question remains now will he facet it or keep it as part of his collection as his first Aqua specimen. Maybe next year he will get the opportunity to find a bigger and better one. Till then Digger Doug walks with a new skip in his stride and a smooth look of contentment on his face.

The season is quietening down now and soon the field will be devoid of people. Doug will have to move into the next phase of his life and sadly earn a quid.

But next year he swears he'll be back to help the tourists making sure they find good stone.

Secretly I think he just wants to play at being that old D9 again like he used to do when he was a little takka.

**Profile** – Digger Doug

Where - Mt Surprise Gems

When – April - October

Why – Digger Cutter Topaz Tour Guide extraordinaire