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California
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The Lapidarian

Newsletter of

The *Rockatomics* Gem and Mineral Society

Please address Exchange Bulletins to:
Rockatomics Gem & Mineral Society
Linda Ralph, Editor



Rockatomics Gem and Mineral Society

P.O. Box 346 Canoga Park, CA 91305-0346

Or on the web at: www.rockatomics.org

Objective:

The objective of "**Rockatomics**" is to assemble a group of people who are interested in the geological, mineralogical, lapidary, gem craft and precious metal jewelry hobbies in an atmosphere of good fellowship, sportsmanship, and community service.

Affiliations:

The **Rockatomics Gem and Mineral Society** is under the auspices of The Foundation of Pierce College, Woodland Hills, California. **Rockatomics** is a member organization of the California Federation and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

General Meetings:

A monthly general meeting is held on the second Monday of each month at Pratt & Whitney Employees Rec. Park in West Hills. Meetings generally consist of a short business session, refreshments, and a program. Meetings are from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

2009 Officers and Chairmen of the Rockatomics Gem and Mineral Society

President	Antonio Buendia	
Vice-President	Gordon Ralph	
Treasurer	Cathy Buendia	
Secretary	Cathy Buendia	
Federation Co-Directors	Gary & Maureen Levitt	
Membership	Ken Pazera	
Bulletin Editor	Linda Ralph	
Web Master (Rockatomics.org)	Gary Levitt	
Historian		open
Librarian	Ken Pazera	
Publicity		open
Program		open
Amenities		open
Lapidary Shop		open
Silver Shop		open
Tail Gate Show	Gary Levitt	
Classes		open
Refreshments/Holiday Parties		Club Members
Field Trips		open



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Feb/March 2009

Rockatomics Gem & Mineral Society



Minutes of the Rockatomics Meeting for January 12, 2009

Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Vice President.

Pledge of Allegiance

Following topics were discussed:

- ❖ Program for Feb. '09: Gary can reach Mike, but arrangement @ Pierce are tentative and would like to push to March as it would be better and we need publicity.
- ❖ Publicity for Show: Television stations, newspapers. Linda will contact Virginia to see if she knows how to do this.
- ❖ Membership: Dues were collected and will be mailed to Cathy to be deposited.
- ❖ Show: Gary & Maureen need Help!!

A video presentation was made regarding the unique formation of gypsum crystals found in a cave in Mexico. The formation is due to a unique situation and was discovered when a company was mining and drained water from the caves. The temperature in the cave was well over 100°, the crystals turned out to be around 500,000 thousand-years-old, and the presentation was made by National Geographic. Gordon wasn't sure that the video would hold everyone's attention for more than 10 minutes but everyone seemed to be interested and enjoyed it.

Betty & Linda brought goodies to snack on during the video...yummy!

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Show Report

By Gary Levitt

While at Quartzsite for the Pow Wow back in January, we had a chance to talk to some of our dealers. And we distributed additional show flyers to our vendors. They are real excited about the show. And we met other dealers who want to do our show!

I have some great news about the show. Maureen and I spoke with Louise and Jim. And they will be participating in the show. They will be our Official Campground Hosts. They are planning to bring their camper down to the show and just enjoy themselves!

If you are like me, it is hard to imagine a Rockatomics tailgate without Jim and Louise participating. I am tickled that they will be there. I know we are getting close to having all of the ingredients for the show.

The one additional item we'll need for the show to be successful is you. Talk to me, we'll find a way for you to participate.

Field Trip Report

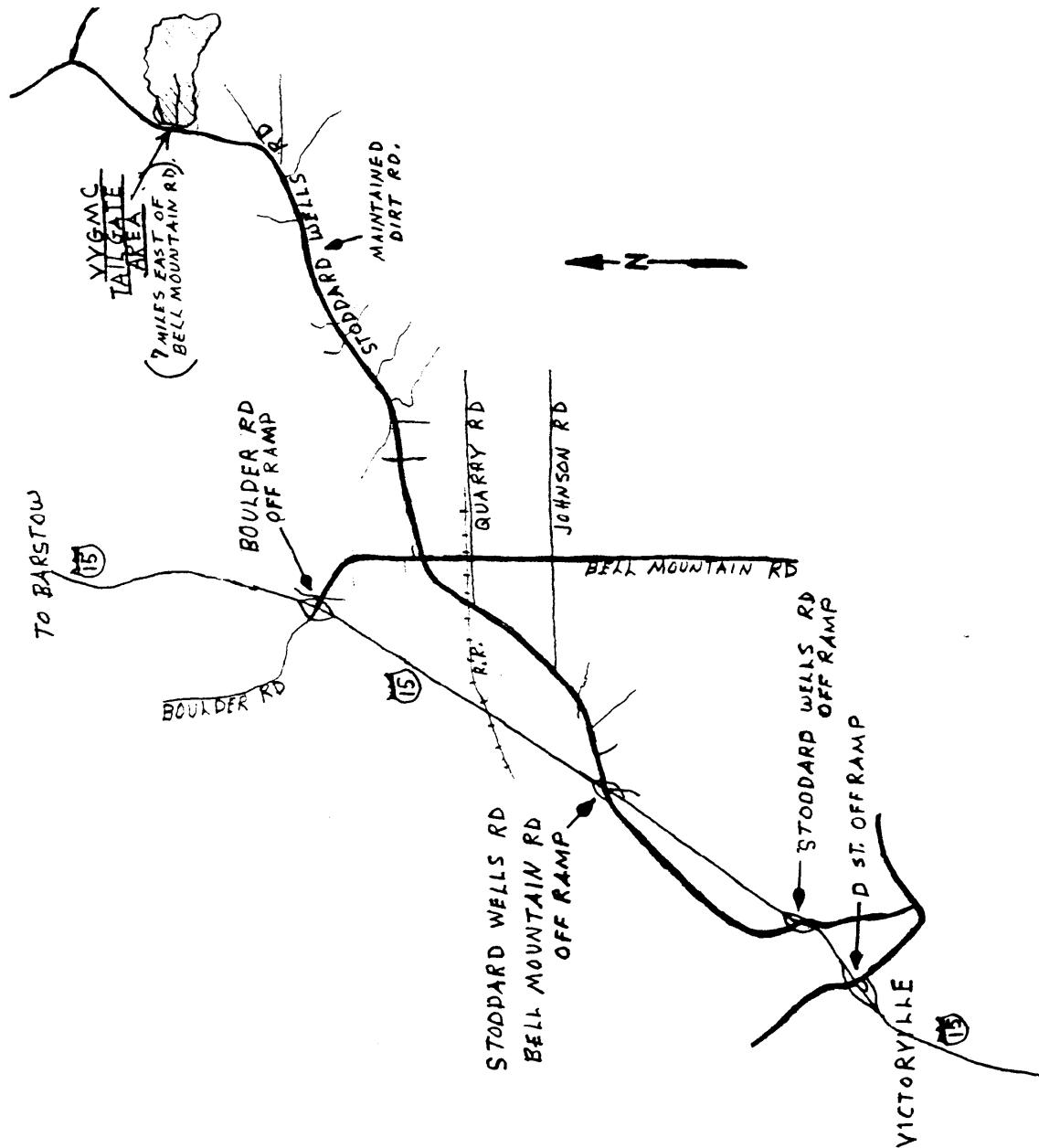
By Gary Levitt

At last month's meeting, we had discussed doing a field trip to the Sierra Pelona Travertine claim this month on Saturday March 14th.

I was informed by a friend that March 13th (Friday) through March 15th (Sunday) is the Stoddard Wells tailgate sponsored by the Victor Valley Club. See the map in the bulletin.

If you didn't make it to Quartzsite, here is a chance for a 'mini' Quartzsite experience. The Victor Valley Club also leads field trips over the weekend.

See ya' there?



The Lapidarian

Feb/March 2009

Rockatomics Gem & Mineral Society



Amethyst is the Birth Stone for February
(picture and Information from Wikipedia)

Lore: The Greek word "amethystos" may be translated as "not drunken". Amethyst was considered to be a strong antidote against drunkenness, which is why wine goblets were often carved from it. In Greek mythology, [Dionysus](#), the god of intoxication, was pursuing a maiden named Amethystos, who refused his affections. Amethystos prayed to the gods to remain chaste, which the goddess [Artemis](#) granted and transformed her into a white stone. Humbled by

Amethystos's desire to remain chaste, Dionysus poured wine over the stone as an offering, dyeing the crystals purple.

Chemistry: Amethyst is the violet variety of [quartz](#); its chemical formula is SiO_2 .

In the 20th century, the color of amethyst was attributed to the presence of [manganese](#). However, since it is capable of being greatly altered and even discharged by heat, the color was believed by some authorities to be from an organic source. [Ferric thiocyanate](#) was suggested, and [sulfur](#) was said to have been detected in the mineral.

More recent work has shown that amethysts' coloration is due to ferric [iron](#) impurities.^[3] Further study has shown a complex interplay of [iron](#) and [aluminium](#) is responsible for the color.^[4]

On exposure to heat, amethyst generally becomes [yellow](#), and much of the [citrine](#), [cainngorm](#), or yellow quartz of jewelry is said to be merely "burnt amethyst".

Composition: Amethyst is composed of an irregular superposition of alternate [lamellae](#) of right-handed and left-handed quartz. It has been shown that this structure may be due to mechanical stresses.

Because it has a hardness of seven on the [Mohs scale](#), amethyst is suitable for use in jewelry.





Aquamarine is the Birth Stone for March

(Picture & information from Wikipedia)

Aquamarine (Lat. *aqua marina*, "water of the sea") is a [gemstone](#)-quality transparent variety of [beryl](#), having a delicate blue or [turquoise](#) color, suggestive of the tint of [seawater](#). It is closely related to the gem [emerald](#). Colors vary, and in addition to blue, yellow beryl ([heliodor](#)), rose pink beryl ([morganite](#)), [red beryl](#) (formerly bixbite), and white beryl ([goshenite](#)) are also to be found.



Three Beryl Crystals (picture at left)

Center is rough Aquamarine

Composition: Aquamarine is a beryl with a [hexagonal crystal structure](#) and a [chemical formula](#) of $\text{Be}_3\text{Al}_2(\text{SiO}_3)_6$, a [beryllium aluminium silicate mineral](#). It has a [specific gravity](#) of 2.68 to 2.74 and a [Mohs hardness](#) of from 7.5 to 8. Aquamarine typically is on the low end of the specific gravity range, normally at less than 2.7. The pink variety exhibits a high specific gravity of around 2.8. [Refractive indices](#) range around 1.57 to 1.58.

Heliotrope: Another Birth Stone for March

The mineral **heliotrope**, also known as **bloodstone**, is a form of [chalcedony](#) (which is a [cryptocrystalline](#) mixture of [quartz](#) and its [monoclinic polymorph moganite](#)). The "classic" bloodstone is green chalcedony with red [inclusions](#) of [iron oxide](#) or red [jasper](#). Sometimes the inclusions are yellow, in which case the mineral is given the name **plasma**.



[Mohs Scale hardness](#) 6.5-7

[Chemical formula](#) SiO_2 ([silicon dioxide](#))

The red inclusions are supposed to resemble spots of [blood](#); hence the name "bloodstone". The name "heliotrope" (from Greek *helios*, Sun, *trepein*, to turn) derives from various ancient notions about the manner in which the mineral reflects light.

Sources: The primary source of the stone is [India](#). It is also found in [Brazil](#), [China](#), [Australia](#), and the [United States](#).

Legends and lore: Bloodstone is the original [birthstone](#) for March. Today, bloodstone, jasper and [aquamarine](#) are all considered the [gemstones](#) for March.

In the [Middle Ages](#) the red spots were thought to be the blood of [Jesus](#), and the stone was believed to have miraculous powers, including making its wearer [invisible](#).



February & March Celebrations

Birthday Greetings go out to:



Allan Kilkka
Roger Stegall
David Bunch
John Greenewald Sr.

February 2nd
March 2nd
March 11th
March 28th

Anniversary Congratulations to:

John & Lenore Greenewald
Tony & Cathy Buendia

February 14th
March 18th



What happened to the February Bulletin?



Well...everyone's special friend *Murphy* has been paying special attention to yours truly so far this year and my computer decided to take a dive. Now, I'm **not** a computer genius so this was not an easy task for me to resolve. Needless to say my old friend did not die a long painful death but is none the less dead and now I find myself suffering from the "getting to know you" stage of a new relationship with my new pal.

So, computer problems combined with the fact that my Mother took a fall and is now living with us for a couple of months prevented me from getting out the newsletter at the end of January. So, getting to the bottom of this tale of woe I decided that I would just combine February and March into one bulletin. Hope you all understand and didn't miss your issue of the *Lapidarian* too much. We should be back in stride from now on...God willing and the creeks don't rise!!



Field Trips-South: By Shep Koss & Adam Dean (From the CFMS Newsletter)

Greetings Fellow Rocknuts! No trips this month. Not for lack of places to go, but due to unreliable weather. For those who missed our last trips, please click on the Field Trips section of the website to see and read about those adventures. (And see the comments we received about the recent Calico trip, below.) Our next field trip will be a bit different. We'll be heading to Bakersfield and the richest Miocene marine fossil beds in the world to collect teeth from sharks and marine mammals, whale bone, and other rarities. (See Adam's write-up and directions at the end of this article.) For you lapidarists, fossil shark teeth can be worked into fine and unique jewelry. Other planned trips in coming months include the Ludlow area for Lavic jasper and southern Cady agates; the North Edwards area for the great onyx hunt for travertine, silver lace and honey onyx as well as agates, jaspers and palm wood. Stay tuned!

On another note, with the Omnibus Lands Bill on temporary hold, don't think we can relax our campaign to keep public lands open for collecting. This was just an umbrella bill, and the individual bills are very much alive. We must also keep working on our representatives to create California's first officially designated rock collecting park as other western states have. So many sites to choose from for this honor. We deserve a park for us, as well. Happy Hunting! Field Trips Future: Ant Hill in March

Field Trips-South will sponsor a trip hosted by Conejo Valley Gem & Mineral Club to Ant Hill near Bakersfield in March. Come for a fun day digging fossil shark teeth! Weather should be nice. The site is a 500-yard walk over semi-flat ground, then 100 yards uphill. Once there, most of the time you'll dig in a small area. In March, there's always a chance of rain, so bring the necessary clothing. If it is raining, we won't be digging. Also, an obligatory warning: this area is known for valley fever, caused by fungi in the soil. It can cause fever, chest pain, and coughing and, in extreme cases, has even been fatal. We don't want to overstate the danger; in fact, most who inhale the fungi have few, if any symptoms, but be advised! You may wish to wear a facemask while stirring up the soil, and should you feel like you've caught a cold after the trip, see a doctor right away. Effective treatments are available.

When: Sat., March 21, 2009, 10AM-3PM.

Directions: 5 Freeway North, to the 99 Hwy North; off at 178 Hwy East, near Bakersfield; go 8.3 miles to Harrell Hwy; turn Left (North); 3.5 miles on Harrell Hwy from the 178 Hwy. Site is on the Left (South) side of Hwy, in hills across from a soccer field. Look for Rob Sankovich's black Toyota truck with CVGM sign in the window. We'll be about 2.5 miles east of Hart Park. If you see an asphalt bike path going between the hills, you're at the right spot!

Tools: Rock pick, gad pry bar, hand sledge, sifter (quarter-inch), large pry bar, shovel, eye protection, newspaper to wrap fossils, collecting bags, wide-brimmed hat, sunblock, lots of water, lunch. There's no shade in the morning, and while it will probably be cool, it can get hot there, so dress in layers. After 1:00 PM, the dig site will be in the shade. I recommend a daypack to put your tools in. It's a bit of a walk, and it'll be easier to carry gear.

Material to Collect: Fossil shark teeth of many types and sizes from the Miocene Epoch, 10-15 million years ago. There are other fossils (marine mammal bone and teeth). This is part of the richest Miocene marine fossil bed in the world. Fossils are found in a 3-foot layer of semi-

soft clay; you'll see exposed holes from previous digs. You'll dig out the biggest pieces you can, then carefully break apart to find fossils. I usually use a gad pry bar to dig out bigger pieces of clay (golf ball to baseball size). If I see any sign of a shark tooth or fossil, I'll wrap it in newspaper, and later I'll use dental tools or Dremel motor tools to remove clay and reveal the tooth. To make a nice display, I'll often keep some teeth in matrix. The main thing when working with fossils is patience.

Contacts:

Shep, freudonetoo@yahoo.com 661-248-0411;

Adam theagatehunter@verizon.net;

Rob, rmsorca@adelphia.net, (805) 494-7734.

If interested, please call in advance. Weather can change; without knowing if you're going, we won't be able to give you updates or notify you if the trip gets cancelled.

- Shep & Adam



News of Our Members, Our Club, Etc.

If you have any articles or news to share with our members, it would be appreciated. Please call, send or even email information of birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, promotions, retirements, illnesses, deaths, accidents, member news, selling of hobby materials, moving, etc., etc. You are part of our **Rockatomics** family and we want to hear from you and share your news!

Rockatomics Gem & Mineral Society

Linda Ralph

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Canoga Park, CA 91305-0346

lkralph@att.net

Deadline for all articles to be printed in the next bulletin is **March 20, 2009!**



Next Club Meeting

Monday, March 9, 2009 6:00 p.m.

**The Ranch House in Pratt & Whitney's Park
West Hills, California**



Shows

February 27 - 28, Northridge, CA
Del Air Rockhounds Club
United Methodist Church
9650 Reseda Blvd. (at Superior Street)
Hours: Fri. 3p.m. - 9:30p.m.- Sat. 10-5
Julie Marin (818) 886-7190
Website: <http://delairrockhounds.blogspot.com>

March 13, 14, 15 2009, Stoddard Wells, CA
Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club
33rd Annual Tailgate
Held off Stoddard Wells Road in Apple Valley
Hours: 10-5 Daily
Tailgate Map (Google): N34.670650 W117.108983
(760) 243-2330
Website: www.vvgms.org

March 14-15 2009, Turlock, CA
Mother Lode Mineral Society
Stanislaus County Fairgrounds
900 N. Broadway, Turlock
Hours: Sat. 10 -6 , Sun 10-5
Bud & Terry McMillin (209) 524-3494
Email: terry.mcmillin@yahoo.com
Website: www.motherlodemineralsociety.com
Show Website: www.turlockgemshow.com

March 21-22 2009, Escondido, CA
Palomar Gem & Mineral Club
Army National Guard Armory
304 Park Ave.
Hours: Sat. 9-5; Sun. 9-4
Van Lynch (760) 749-4164
Email: michelleandvan@hotmail.com
Website: www.palomargem.org

March 28 - 29 2009, Torrance, CA
South Bay Lapidary and Mineral Society
Torrance Recreational Center
3341 Torrance Blvd. Torrance, CA
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5, Sun. 10-4
Roger Mills (310) 377-6226
Email: roger_mills@acm.org
Website: <http://www.palosverdes.com/sblap/>

March 7 - 8 2009, Ventura, CA
Ventura Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.
47th Annual Gem, Mineral
Lapidary & Fossil Show
Seaside Park
Ventura County Fairgrounds
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5, Sun. 10-4
Website: <http://www.vgms.org>

March 14-15 2009, San Marino, CA
Pasadena Lapidary Society
San Marino Masonic Center
3130 Hunting Drive, San Marino
Hours: Sat. 10 -6 , Sun 10-5
Drew Wilson (626) 298-1534
Email: todrew@sbcglobal.net

Mother Lode Mineral Society's
ROCK & GEM SHOW
MARCH 14 & 15TH


Saturday 10 am-6 pm
Sunday 10 am-5 pm
Admission \$5.00 - 12 & under free

- Dinosaur & Fossil Exhibits
- Free Kids Activities
- Demonstrations
- Great Food
- Gem & Mineral Dealers
- Educational Exhibits
- Fluorescent Display
- Jewelry, Beads & Tools
- Speakers for Children and Adults




Turlock Fairgrounds
900 North Broadway Turlock CA
www.turlockgemshow.com
Contact: Bud & Terry McMillin 209-524-3494

* CRYSTALS * JEWELRY * MINERALS *
* BEADS * FOSSILS * GEMSTONES *
47th Annual
Gem and Mineral Show



Roseville Rock Rollers
Gem and Mineral Society



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March 28 & 29, 2009

Saturday 10 am - 5 pm Sunday 10 am - 4 pm
Roseville (Placer County) Fairgrounds

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Lectures, Identifications, and
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Ventura Gem, Mineral, Lapidary, & Fossil Show

The Ventura Gem & Mineral Society is holding its 47th annual show March 7 – 8, 2009 (10AM – 5PM, SAT.: 10AM – 4PM, Sun.) at the Ventura County Fairgrounds in Ventura, California (10 W. Harbor Blvd. The show is free. Kids will enjoy “paint-a-fossil”, grab bags, and a variety of kids’ activities. There also will be demonstrations of lapidary arts and exhibits from wonderful private collections of rocks, minerals, fossils, and lapidary work. Raffle prizes will be drawn at the end of the show, and a silent rock auction will be held continuously throughout the show. More than 15 dealers in fossils, minerals, lapidary equipment, slabs, etc., will be on hand, along with a country store featuring flea market items, used books and magazines, and plants. For further information, contact Jim Brace-Thompson, (805)659-3577, jbraceth@roadrunner.com. See out website at www.vgms.org.



Dues Schedule

- Annual dues for an individual - \$10
- Dues for additional individuals residing at the same address - \$7.50
- “Subscription” to a mailed copy - \$11
- Still no charge for membership or bulletin for life or honorary members



THE BLARNEY STONE

Information from www.blarneycastle.ie

The Stone of Eloquence

For over 200 years, world statesmen, literary giants, and legends of the silver screen have joined the millions of pilgrims climbing the steps to kiss the Blarney Stone and gain the gift of eloquence. Its powers are unquestioned but its story still creates debate.



Some say it was Jacob's Pillow, brought to Ireland by the prophet Jeremiah. Here it became the Lia Fail or 'Fatal Stone', used as an oracular throne of Irish kings – a kind of Harry Potter-like 'sorting hat' for kings. It was also said to be the deathbed pillow of St Columba on the island of Iona. Legend says it was then removed to mainland Scotland, where it served as the prophetic power of royal succession, the Stone of Destiny.

When Cormac MacCarthy, King of Munster, sent five thousand men to support Robert the Bruce in his defeat of the English at Bannockburn in 1314, a portion of the historic Stone was given by the Scots in gratitude – and returned to Ireland.

Others say it may be a stone brought back to Ireland from the Crusades – the 'Stone of Ezel' behind which David hid on Jonathan's advice when he fled from his enemy, Saul. A few claim it was the stone that gushed water when struck by Moses.

Whatever the truth of its origin, we believe a witch saved from drowning revealed its power to the MacCarthys.

A dictionary definition

'Blarney': He has licked the blarney stone; he deals in the wonderful, or tips us the traveller. The blarney stone is a triangular stone on the very top of an ancient castle of that name in the county of Cork in Ireland, extremely difficult of access; so that to have ascended to it, was considered as a proof of perseverance, courage, and agility, whereof many are supposed to claim the honour, who never achieved the adventure: and to tip the blarney, is figuratively used telling a marvellous story, or falsity; and also sometimes to express flattery. Irish.

(Definition taken from The 1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, originally by Francis Grose)