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Lapidary Club produces book of gems

By ALEX ARNOLD (Reporter Illawarra Mercury)

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Illawarra Lapidary Club members (from left) Dorothy Sefton, David Hindmarsh and Dorothy McGonigle. Picture: KIRK GILMOUR (Illawarra Mercury)

Dorothy McGonigle and her fellow members at the Illawarra Lapidary Club like to cut, polish and work with rocks, minerals and fossils.

But for the past three years Ms McGonigle has been polishing, cutting and working with words in the lead-up to the club's 50th anniversary.

Tonight at the club rooms at the Tarrawanna Community Hall, in the presence of club members and invited guests, Ms McGonigle will launch her book *Fifty Golden Years*, which details the history of the Illawarra Lapidary Club.

Born out of the WEA in October 1962, the club has about 200 members, a committee of 40 and subgroups that focus on different aspects of lapidary ranging from fossicking through to cutting and jewellery making.

As expected, the book contains a few gems.

Among the chapter titles are *Whispering Diamond*, a reference to using the diamond wheel correctly; *The Thunder Egg King*, about club member Keith Tyssen; and

Affluent Aaron, a feature on one of the club's younger members and his "million-dollar collection".

Another gem is club member Dorothy Sefton who features on the cover. She has been the backbone of the club since its formation.

Ms McGonigle said she became involved with the lapidary club about 11 years ago when a neighbour suggested she might be interested.

"I found it rewarding, you get a piece of rock, it looks like nothing, then you work with it and it can become something fabulous ... you do need patience, just like writing a book," she said.

The club will hold its 50th anniversary exhibition on the weekend of November 3-4 at The Dapto Ribbonwood Centre.

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