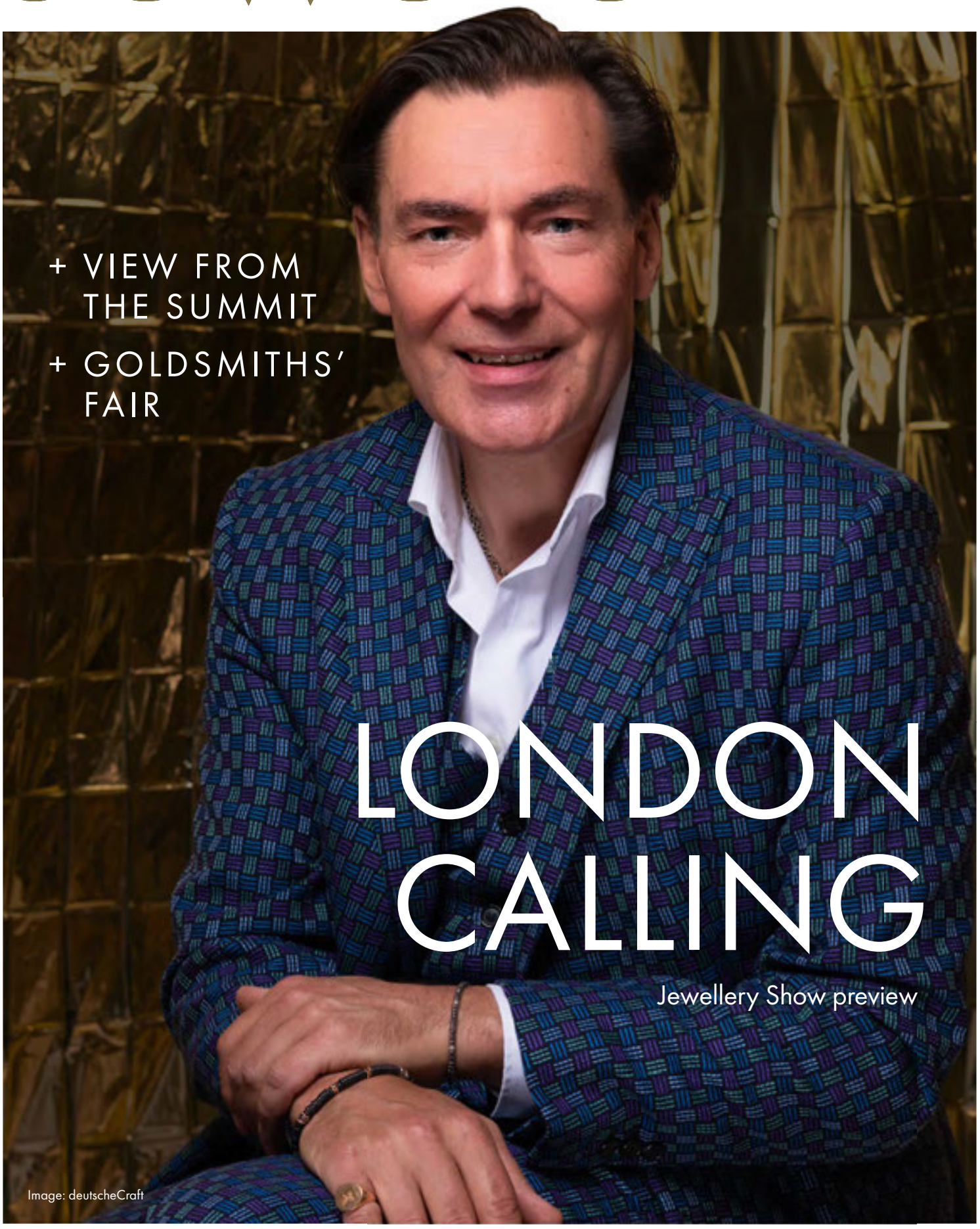
THE Jeweller

The National Association of Jewellers

TRADE JOURNAL

Autumn 24 Issue / £7.50



+ VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT

+ GOLDSMITHS' FAIR

LONDON CALLING

Jewellery Show preview

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TH March

The National Association of Jewellers

FROM

The Editor



Phew. Pulling together the final pages in *The Jeweller* so it's ready to go press on time is a wearisome business. It can turn a generally benign, cheery editor (me) into a nagging harridan (also me) – possibly discernible in some of my chivvying emails (despite the I'm-nice-really 'x' after my name). That's my way of saying the Jewellery Show preview on page 14 required a little pestering – lead times mean I'm chasing product images irritatingly early – soz, exhibitors! It's all worth it, though; my appetite (and yours too, I hope) is now properly whetted, and I can't wait to see all the new collections IRL.

If I was becoming a tad impatient to get up close and personal with beautiful jewellery and silverware, a trip to Goldsmiths North in Sheffield last month proved to be just the ticket. The splendid Cutlers' Hall was the backdrop to a curation of high-end contemporary makers – turn to page 20 for a selection of mouthwatering pieces that caught my eye (yes, a little retail therapy was involved). And now, back to the future – I'm looking forward to Goldsmiths' Fair in London later this month; see page 36 for a snapshot of another coterie of crème de la crème creatives.

Talking of the best of the best, the UK Jewellery Awards was, as ever, a lovely evening of high praise, plaudits and prosecco, set this year against the handsome backdrop of Old Billingsgate on the River Thames. Turn to page 24 for details and pictures of 2024's winners – many of them NAJ members. Expect more celebrations when, later this year, we hold the NAJ Awards: new categories, new date, new venue... same carousing and anticipation! See page 32 for all you need to know.

Never let it be said our industry's beautiful people don't know how to party, especially when the party combines with a weekend of intense learning and networking. The NAJ Summit in June offered three days of insights, information and inspiration as it brought together a solid slice of people from across the trade – the perfect opportunity for meeting up with friends and making new connections. (See page 10 for our report.)

Which, handily, leads me (ooh, I do love a segue) onto the subject of collaboration, a topic I look at on page 34. Collusions, alliances, working together... it's about people and businesses learning from each other and supporting each other for mutual benefit. It's a win-win thing. Do let us know if it inspires you to work on something in a similar vein. For an extra dash of inspiration, read about the difference a JET course can make (page 62) and the jewellery journeys of a few of our members (pages 40 and 48). And you can meet trophy-winning valuer Craig O'Donnell... he tells all on page 28.

Right, get on with your work, class. I'm off for a lie down.



Belinda Morris, Editor



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The National Association of Jewellers

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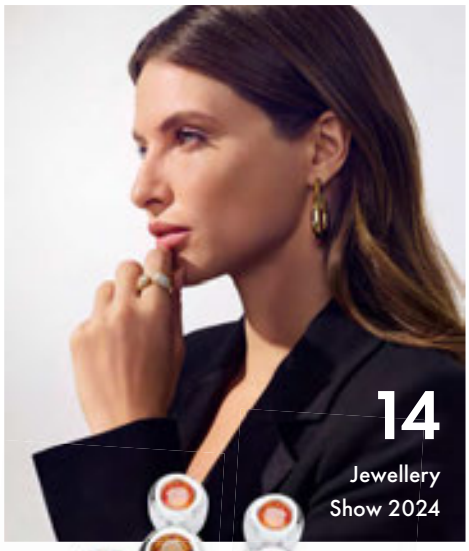
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PRISM DESIGN

Made in Bradford-on-Avon

Family roots



The future looks bright at Prism Design, where Sarah Milburn takes the helm at the business her parents started nearly 45 years ago. The Jeweller finds out more.

Wiltshire-based Prism Design is home to three brands: Milburn & Ley, a legacy collection of gold and gem-set pieces; Contour, hand-carved wedding bands designed to fit around and compliment engagement rings; and Ti2Titanium, a range of hand-crafted pure titanium jewellery.

In late 2022, owners Sally and Barry Milburn began to take a step back from the business they started nearly 45 years ago, and are now handing over management to their children. Sarah Milburn has taken over as managing director while Oli Milburn brings his graphic design and marketing skills to Prism, supporting his sister in promoting British-made jewellery and the unique qualities of titanium.

As managing director, Sarah will build on her parents' vision, producing hypoallergenic, ethical, UK-made titanium jewellery as an everyday alternative to the public.

"So many metals in jewellery cause irritation and discolouring of the skin" Sarah explains, "I think there is a real space in the market for hypoallergenic titanium. It's hard-wearing and doesn't cost as much as precious metals. Many people just don't know its an option."

With Sarah heading up the business and Oli taking an active role, Barry and Sally are looking forward to a well earned retirement - but the workshop will always be their second home. Keen to support their children, the couple will continue to work with Prism, albeit in the background.

Sally and Barry are looking forward to introducing Sarah to everyone this year. Prism Design can be found at stand F52.









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JS JEWELLERY SHOW
1 - 2 September 2024
Olympia London

STAND F52

Chair's Foreword



Hello reader,

This is a novel experience: my first foreword as NAJ chair. It feels strange to be on the other side, writing the foreword, having been a keen reader of the column over the years. I very much hope you find this and future forewords as interesting (and maybe even as helpful) as I found my predecessors.' Please read on, as there are opportunities for you to help shape the work the NAJ delivers.

REPRESENTATION

Representation is a crucial focus for the NAJ. In July, the country voted for a new government. With a new government comes new opportunities to foster closer ties and reassert our industry's challenges, opportunities and areas of support.

Back in February, then shadow minister for creative and digital, Sir Chris Bryant MP, now confirmed minister of state, working with Lisa Nandy, secretary of state for DCMS, invited the NAJ to host an industry-wide roundtable to better understand our industry. It was the largest gathering of its kind in decades, resulting in a much-needed collaboration within the trade. Unbelievably, the wider jewellery industry had never had a true cross-industry relationship with government to further our fantastic trade's interests. I'm delighted your NAJ took a leadership position in establishing this roundtable group and subsequent dialogue.

Recently, the roundtable reconvened for a second time to discuss progress made across the four facets identified during the initial roundtable: economics, people, process, and sector-specific issues. What has become quickly apparent with these new equitable meetings is that our challenges across the trade are quite similar. Large, all-encompassing meetings such as this can easily result in much talk and little action. Everybody in the group is determined to see tangible results emerge from these ongoing discussions for the betterment of the whole trade.

In this second meeting, we are exploring the development of a trade indicator tool to visually show the health of the trade across economic and sector-specific metrics. Supporting various ongoing projects, including the NAJ's codes of practice and the London Assay Office's Stamp It Out campaign, we are also exploring an enforcement project to improve trade standards, including hallmarking, intellectual property and diamond terminology. Clear guidance and policing to ensure standards will only help enhance consumer confidence in the jewellery trade. We're also working to make careers in the industry more appealing and to quantify exactly how much value our industry provides the UK and how this can grow.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Earlier this year, we made our codes of practice and guidance notes available to everyone in the UK jewellery trade, regardless of NAJ membership. We welcome the trade and our members to feedback on this move as we look to help raise standards for the whole industry.

We're currently working on new codes of practice. To ensure we focus on the areas that matter most to our members, our compliance and policy team would like to hear about your challenges and where we can improve our codes. Please email compliance@naj.co.uk with your views.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

This summer, we launched a new qualification to help equip new, existing and assistant managers with the knowledge and skills to thrive in a demanding role. Staff training can really boost your business – read more about the JET Management and Leadership qualification on p60 and get £100 off when you join the first cohort.

MEMBER BENEFITS

I'm delighted to announce the recent appointments of two new members to Team NAJ, both of whom are at the September Jewellery Show.

Matthew Hamilton joins the Association as commercial manager, overseeing all partnership and commercial opportunities. Paul Smith joins as the Association's new membership manager. Paul's keen to hear from members to understand what the NAJ can do to support them. Please reach out to Paul and the wider membership team at membership@naj.co.uk or make an appointment to meet them at the show.

NAJ EVENTS

In June, we hosted our fourth annual NAJ Summit (read more about this on page 10), and now the NAJ Awards are on the horizon! As you read this, we'll have just announced shortlisted businesses and individuals up for 15 categories. If you're one of the lucky finalists, congratulations! I hope to see you on October 10th in Birmingham. It promises to be a wonderful celebration of industry talent.

I'm getting dangerously close to my word limit for my first foreword, so I will leave it there. I look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months, especially in serving the trade and membership during my tenure as chair.

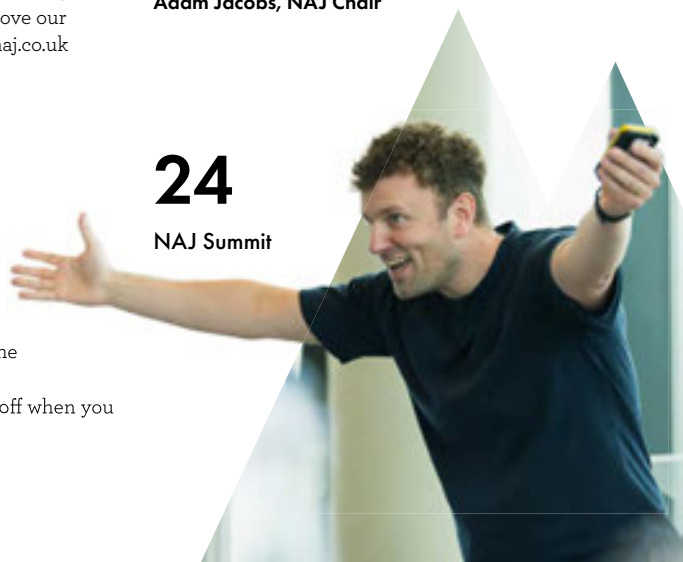
Until next time, have terrific summers.



Adam Jacobs, NAJ Chair

24

NAJ Summit



Recruiting the very best in raw talent

Queensmith Jewellery Academy launches in London's historic Hatton Garden



Queensmith, an award-winning jeweller renowned for its commitment to personal bespoke jewellery and artisanal excellence, launches the Queensmith Jewellery Academy this September. In the heart of London's Hatton Garden, the Academy promises to redefine craftsmanship in the jewellery industry through a pioneering three-year development programme.

In its inaugural year, Queensmith Jewellery Academy offers 12 aspiring artisans a unique opportunity to embark on a career in fine jewellery making while learning on the job.

The Queensmith team is recruiting the very best raw talent as full-time employees to embark on a three-year programme, training under some of London's finest jewellers as they fully integrate with the workshop team.

Innovative education meets practical experience

Queensmith Jewellery Academy offers a unique educational experience designed for aspiring artisans seeking to refine their skills in goldsmithing and diamond setting. Unlike traditional courses, this has a dynamic mix of training modules, hands-on project work and personalised coaching, all while compensating its artisans with a competitive salary, a £10k retention bonus and other company benefits.

Brett Afshar, Queensmith founder and CEO, said, "We're not just teaching; we're crafting the future of jewellery making. Our Academy is a place where talent meets opportunity, and where the artisans of tomorrow can grow under the mentorship of today's best jewellers. We don't just make jewellery at Queensmith, we make the jewellers too."

Head of workshop learning and development, Astrid Jaroslawsky, added, "Unlike other development programmes, the roles are salaried, and successful candidates will be rewarded with loyalty perks throughout their Queensmith career. It's an incredible opportunity for jewellery graduates to set themselves up for a lifelong career in the fine jewellery trade, kick-starting with the intricacies of making exquisite engagement and wedding rings, among other fine jewellery."

Queensmith opened in 2016 and has since won the UK Jewellery Awards' Bridal Jeweller of the Year award three times. From a small three-person office to the largest retail space in Hatton Garden, Queensmith has evolved since its founding to become a modern-day stalwart of the historic jewellery district. Set over three stories, the immersive space invites clients to observe its resident goldsmiths at work before meeting with gemmologist consultants, then designing their own exquisite jewellery, in the tranquillity of a private meeting room.

Applications for Queensmith Jewellery Academy 2024 are now closed, but future aspiring artisans should contact: **academy@queensmith.co.uk.** For further information about Queensmith Academy and application details, visit **Queensmith Jewellery Academy.**



"We don't just make jewellery at Queensmith, we make the jewellers too."

Brett Afshar, Founder and CEO of Queensmith,

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Top marks!

This June, jewellery and watch valuers, retailers, suppliers and designers came together to learn and connect with likeminded individuals. If you weren't there, this is (just a snapshot of) what you missed.

Now in its fourth year, the NAJ Summit's three-day programme of events featured the Valuers' Conference, hosted by the Institute of Registered Valuers (IRV) and supported by headline sponsor John Pye Auctions, and the Retail Jewellers' Congress, hosted by the JET Business Network. The 2024 edition returned to the modern and centrally accessible Park Regis Hotel, Birmingham.

A total of 179 attendees (many taking part for the first time) were enlightened and entertained by 13 keynote speakers, and informed and inspired during 28 practical, hands-on workshops. Oh, and there was also a little eating, drinking, earnest discussion, light chat and general merrymaking.

NAJ CEO Ben Massey says: "It's important to provide an opportunity in the jewellery calendar that brings people together to share their knowledge and make meaningful connections. We're delighted this year's NAJ Summit did just that and was so well received by attendees.

"We're grateful to all the amazing attendees, speakers and sponsors who graciously shared their time and expertise. Without their support, this event would not have been possible."

Before the day got underway (but after coffee and cakes), IRV chair Heather Callaway presented the David Wilkins Trophy to this year's winner – Craig O'Donnell... cue much whooping in the room. This Award is the pinnacle of achievement for jewellery valuers, rendered more prestigious as it is voted for by peers and fellow IRV members and colleagues.

The Valuers' Conference

Held in the large, bright and airy Sky Gallery, the Valuers' Conference on Saturday was devoted to seven main presentations. **Kerry Gregory** of **Gemmology Rocks** got the party started with her fast-paced practical talk, Gemmological Minds: Gemstone Profiling to Catch the Offenders. Using her customary blend of wit and wisdom – with a dash of chiding – she advised us to "learn from the stone" to avoid wrongly identifying it.

Just as the FBI catches criminals by profiling and analysing the characters of people based on observation, behaviour and evidence, Kerry explained we can be gemstone profilers and become better gemmologists using similar techniques to identify gemstones efficiently and accurately. "Don't just pin things on the first suspect," she warned, because "not everything will look like they've described it in a textbook."

Passionate about her subject, **Sarah Fergusson**, senior specialist for watches at **Bonhams**, presented – Valuing Time: Pricing Watches in a Changing Market – an insightful mix of the history of watches at auction (a fairly recent thing, having started in the 1970s) and gave advice to valuers. Neo-vintage (covering the last 20 to 30 years) describes the grey market that has emerged: watches sold by owners within days of purchasing from new. This second-hand market was a direct result of the Covid bubble.

The story of older vintage watches, plus human context, can add financial value. She reminded us originality is vital ("neglect is king"); Rolex would put a modern replacement on an old watch for instance. Biography – the human element – always helps to sell an old watch. Photos add to its story, providing a place in history. At auction, vintage watches continue to rise steadily, "protected from the hysteria of hyped watches." NB: "Cartier can do no wrong in the second-hand market."

Two in-depth and intensive presentations on diamonds followed. **Branko Deljanin** is president and head gemmologist at **CGL** and director of **Gemmological Research Industries Inc**, Vancouver. An expert in identification of natural, treated and synthetic diamonds and gems for subsequent certification, he explored how diamond dealers, gemmologists, appraisers and retailers can use tools to help accurately identify synthetic diamonds in a challenging market.

Dr Thomas Hainschwang, a gemmological research expert with extensive experience in the complex topic of coloured diamonds, looked at the testing processes used at the GGTL Laboratories



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Pearls and prosecco at the Saturday night BBQ.

to determine whether colours in diamonds are natural or the product of treatment. It's especially challenging when testing highly priced rare green diamonds, as is determining the origin of coloured melée diamond.

Jewellery valuer and gemmologist **Anna Rogers** enjoyed Valuing Conditions, the talk given by **Joanna Whalley**, freelance conservator and restorer of jewellery, precious metal objects and carved gems.

"Joanna has an encyclopaedic knowledge of conservation and repair work on challenging art objects. My favourite subject was the issues of identification of authentic medieval and Renaissance jewellery from the 19th-century counterparts. The identification of such pieces is only the tip of the iceberg; the valuation is very challenging too – 19th-century forgeries became works of art, with their own provenance and history. The most fascinating part of Joanna's lecture was the restoration of a damaged Fabergé cigarette case. She explained what steps she took to approach such a challenging repair; the results she showed us were truly astonishing!"

Gemstone dealer and gemmologist "with a passion for minerals," **Charles Bexfield** gave us An Overview of the UK Gemstone Market, based on his experiences as a stone dealer. External factors such as war and politics, three elections (at time of writing) and the sale of De Beers, all affect prices by causing problems and uncertainty. Trends and issues include ethics (which means different things in different parts of the world), natural versus synthetic, colour, clarity, carat and cut (in that order) and the various treatments. He also looked at stone prices – ruby, blue sapphire, emerald, beryl, red and blue spinel, tourmaline and garnet – those doing shockingly well (spinel) to those harder to sell (yellow sapphire).

Dr Maria Maclennan's fascinating insight – Forensics: Jewellery, the Body and Identity – explored the link between them. The bench-trained, award-winning jewellery designer and educator, being a victim of jewellery crime, went on to research the forensic and criminal use of jewellery and gemstones. In the UK, there are 15 types of jewellery crime, encompassing mass fatalities, circumstantial evidence and missing person enquiries. As well as using jewellery to provide clues to a crime and the identification of a victim of crime, Dr Maclennan's work also involves the repatriation of pieces to a loved one, providing closure. Value is not always about monetary worth.



Left to right: Kerry Gregory, Sarah Fergusson, Branko Deljanin, Charles Bexfield, Dr Maria Maclellan, Dr Thomas Hainschwang, JBN Congress delegates

The Workshops

Summit delegates could choose from a very popular curated range of hands-on workshops, from Understanding Coloured Diamonds to Hallmarks: Fakes and Forgeries. Here's a taster of just a few:

Identification of natural and synthetic diamonds with standard equipment – Branko Deljanin

I attended Branko's sold out double workshop – with synthetic diamonds becoming increasingly popular, the more ways we can detect the synthetics from the naturals, the better. Having recently invested in a Yehuda Sherlock Holmes and learnt it's still not straightforward, I felt learning and recognising other detection methods would better equip me.

Following a presentation, there was plenty of time for hands-on practical testing using what we'd learnt. Branko took us through the three main pieces of equipment/methods: the polariscope and conoscope, an eye glass (or microscope) and the Gemetrix, explaining how to use each and what results to expect.

The workshop was extremely useful. I was aware of the Gemetrix method and analysing the fluorescence of a diamond in SW vs LW; however, I don't use it on a regular basis – I wasn't confident in reading the results. Now, having attended this workshop, I feel I can examine the fluorescent reactions and make a judgement on detecting synthetic diamonds. I wasn't aware the polariscope was a method and found it fascinating seeing the different results.

The workshop was well delivered; Branko is clearly very knowledgeable, and he carried a wide range of diamonds for the practical side, so we could experience different examples which varied in detection difficulty. Overall, thoroughly useful.

Charlotte Pickett, Pickett & Pursers

Understanding coloured diamonds – Graeme Thompson, LJ West Diamonds

This thoroughly enjoyable and informative workshop focussed on grading and pricing. It was less scientific than some of the other



GemA The Gemmological Association of Great Britain
CHARLES BEXFIELD FGA DGA EG
QUASTEL ASSOCIATES

workshops but extremely useful for valuers who may have to price coloured diamonds or understand how to read a coloured diamond report.

He explained the GIA grading system for coloured diamonds, covering 27 hues, 12 colour categories (blue, yellow, etc.) nine grades of saturation (faint to vivid) and over 90 secondary and tertiary hues (greenish, brownish, etc.). Combined, that is over 230 possible colour combinations. We looked at examples of famous coloured diamonds (slides sadly, not the real thing), which lead to a lively discussion and Q&A session.

It's apparent Graeme is fascinated with these stones and is extremely knowledgeable and experienced at handling and selling them. His awareness of current market trends and prices was impressive, and his openness and willingness to assist in future pricing enquiries means LJ West Diamonds are a must-have contact for all valuers.

Jules Proctor, Biagio's the Jewellers

How to spot fake watches the easy way – Ken Massow

All the workshops were enjoyable, but my favourite was Ken's. Since I received the schedule, I was keen to attend it, and it exceeded my expectations.

Being in the business of diamonds and watches, it's essential I learn the techniques, as there is no machine that can reliably detect fake and real items; it requires years of experience. Ken gave us many techniques and hands-on experience.

The workshop was interesting and well paced, but one hour was not sufficient. I really loved it, and all I learnt will be very helpful in my business. Ken Massow is a very nice, down-to-earth person. He even invited us to visit his home. I hope I get a chance to see him again and learn more from him.

Hiren Vadnagara, Aspeco, Dubai

The eyes have it – Kerry Gregory

Anyone who's attended a workshop with Kerry will know to expect a lot of useful hands-on, practical gemmology techniques in a short period of time – this workshop was no exception.

The workshop's aim was to get the delegates using their eyes rather than their testing equipment. As gemmologists, it's all too easy to put a stone on the refractometer and take the readings as gospel, with no supporting evidence and a high chance of misleading results. Good observation technique can also help you focus on which tests will be most beneficial, saving time and making your gem testing more efficient.

We had a brief run through of things to look for, such as colour and colour zoning, pleochroism, lustre and lustre differences, transparency, dispersion, shape, size and heft, internal and external features and temperature, and then it was on to assessing and identifying as many stones as possible from the 65+ stones available. Armed with only a loupe, tongs and our eyes and knowledge, it was a fast-paced session with frequent exclamations of delight at spotting a tell-tale sign or some particular feature never seen or noticed before.

This was a very enjoyable workshop: great fun, great teacher and an extensive collection of stones to view.

Jules Proctor, Biagio's the Jewellers

What to take with you on a valuation – Anna Rogers

This workshop was informative, engaging and relaxed. As an ice breaker, we introduced ourselves, noting if we valued in the office, at a jewellery boutique or at the client's home. Or a mix of all.

Then, we dived in. In determining what to take with you on a valuation, the first and the most important step is to have a conversation with the client. When you understand what and how many items the valuation is for, you can determine what equipment to use. In planning the valuation, Anna suggested Googling the address for directions and to ascertain if the area is safe. For safety, you should also tell someone where the appointment is and when you're expected back.

Anna suggested taking water and a packed lunch, as while some clients provide a full sit-down meal at the end of the valuation, others offer nothing.

Anna explained setting up as well as how to navigate tricky situations if the client wants to talk or is disruptive. A polite, "let me carry on with my work" usually works; however, wearing headphones is another trick to keep the client from disturbing you.

At the end, we shared our own insightful and hilarious stories. One valuer (me) told of a time she took all her equipment, laid it out and realised the loupe was missing. It was good to hear that this has had happened to another valuer. Another regaled us with being locked in the house while the clients went out, and another had to deal with family pets. This was my last workshop – a fantastic way to end the conference.

Mara Tegwen Hotung MIRV, Gem Voyager



Retail Jewellers Congress

Hosted by the JET Business Network (JBN), the Congress, which celebrates its 15th year, brings jewellery retailers together for a series of talks, panel discussions and exercises to advance businesses with actionable advice and inspiring experts. This year's theme was Think Different to be Different.

"My first Congress, it certainly opened my eyes and pushed me to consider new ways to think and do everyday tasks. After being in the business 28 years, I had perhaps got a bit set in my ways." **Susannah Lovis**

"Another great weekend, this year's Congress flipped on its head and focused on us as business leaders and how we can successfully lead and take care of ourselves." **JBNer**

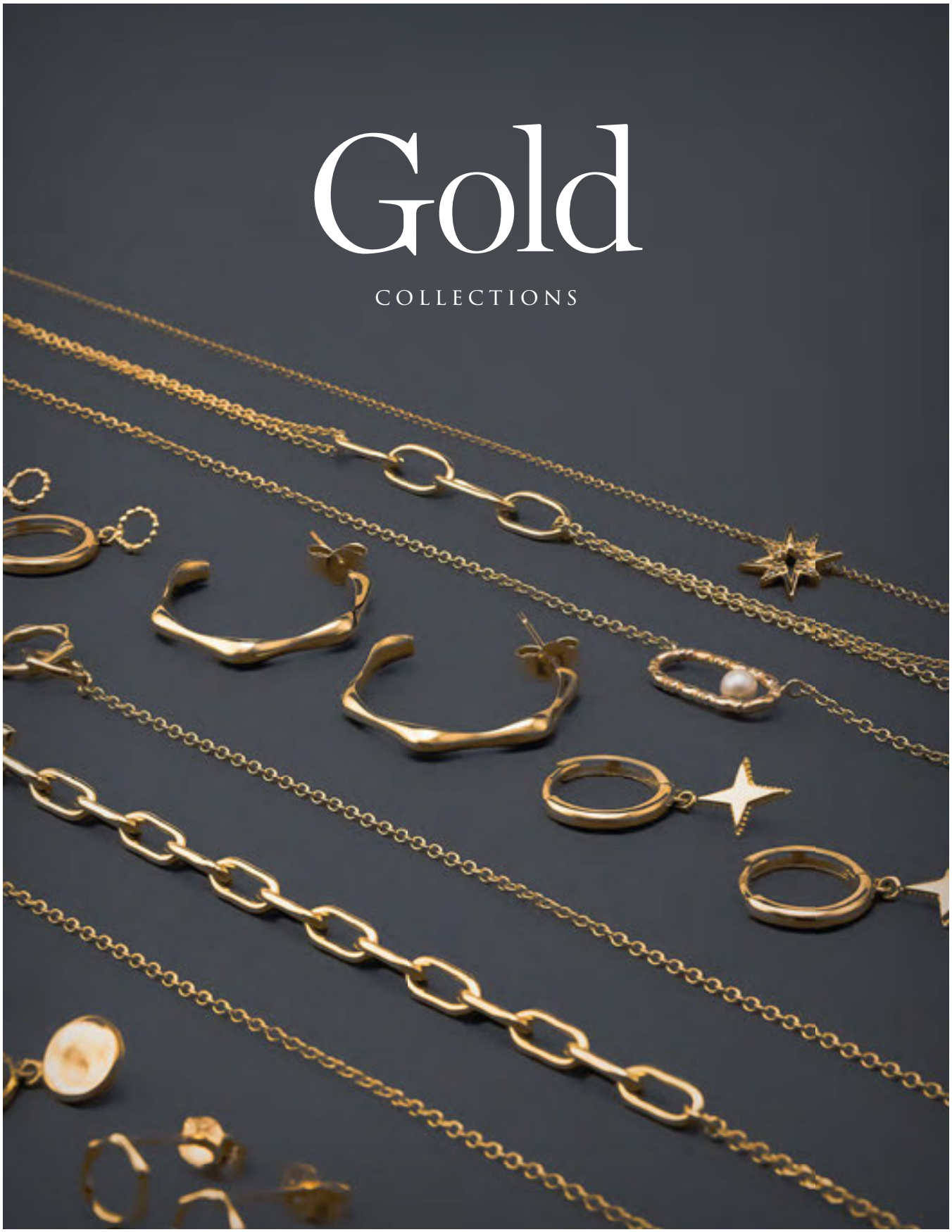
"Time away from my business to really think about my business." **Peter Green**

"Yet another great JBN Congress. I'm very proud to be part of such a 'brilliant' knowledgeable warm group. The speakers were bang on trend and extremely relevant. Thank you." **Peter Wong**

Read more about Congress and the JBN on page 56.



Nikolas Venios, The Ideas Agency at the Congress



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LINDA MACDONALD >

The Scottish designer will introduce a new collection, celebrating friendship and those held close to the heart. In silver with solid 9ct yellow gold detail, the pieces are made by the skilled team in Linda Macdonald's workshop near Loch Lomond. The fox and the moon, Ruben the Robin and You and Me heart motifs complete the range.



Show's Promise

There's much excitement as the trade returns to Olympia, London, for the Jewellery Show (1st to 2nd September). Over these pages are just some highlights to see and experience at the event.

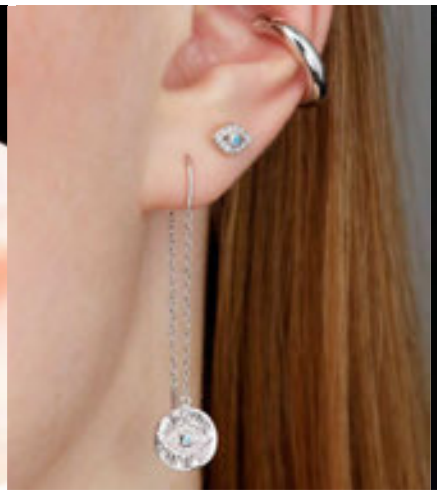
"It's great to see the Jewellery Show continue to grow in size and stature, becoming the premier jewellery destination in the autumn UK trade show calendar," says **NAJ CEO Ben Massey**. "I'm pleased to announce we have agreed a multi-year trade partnership to ensure NAJ members continue to receive significant discounts on exhibition space and a greater voice in the direction of the show.

"Please visit **Team NAJ** at stand **L54** at the show. We'll be happy to help with any membership, education, compliance or marketing questions."

TI SENTO ^

The new TI SENTO Autumn/Winter 2024 Collection will feature over 150 new pieces, including strong, rhodium-plated sterling silver and 18ct gold-plated jewellery that continue to push the core values of the brand – high-quality, exceptional design, innovation, commerciality and a few surprises. New family members to the Top 30, Top 60 and core lines collections will strengthen the brand's foundations.







LUCY QUARTERMAINE ^

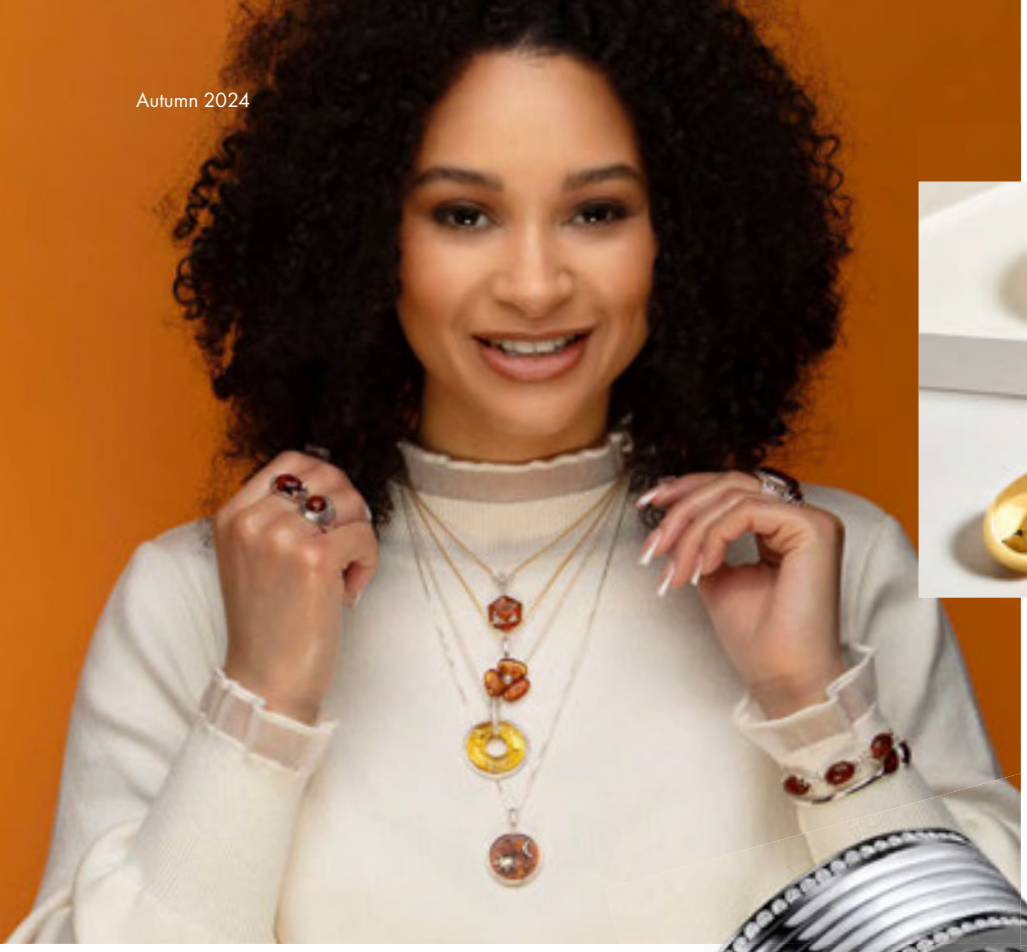
Recently named Commercial Designer of the Year, British jewellery designer Lucy Quartermaine has focused on a few statement designs for autumn/winter '24, as she feels there's a market gap for this bold style currently. "I like to design jewellery that stands out and is noticed by others. It is important to me that the wearer feels special when wearing my designs and receives compliments wherever she goes," she explains.

SCREAM PRETTY ^

New collections from this UK-designed, demi-fine sterling silver and gold-plated jewellery brand include Western, Evil Eye and Smiley Face. Updated signature favourites offer seasonless staples with a contemporary edge. The renowned curated ear designs – wear-all-day huggies, hoops, ear cuffs, crawlers and threaders – take centre stage. Sets of mismatched studs, pendants, layering chains and bold stacking rings are great to mix, match, layer and stack.

PRISM DESIGN ^

This year, Sally and Barry Milburn hand over Prism Design to their children after 44 years in business. At the show, they will introduce Sarah as the new managing director to current clients. The team will highlight the legacy collection, Milburn & Ley, as well as show new designs for Ti2Titanium and Contour Wedding Rings. After two years in the business, Sarah is feeling confident and excited about further developing Prism Design and its brands.





THOMAS SABO ^

Effortless luxury, classic silhouettes and stylish elegance – these are the characteristics of the new Bold Elegance collection. Rings, necklaces, ear studs and bracelets celebrate the minimalist style with organic shapes such as hearts, drops and waves with soft, rounded lines. Featuring highly polished recycled 925 silver, some with precious 18k gold plating. The collection combines precise craftsmanship with timeless sophistication and modern design.

CME JEWELLERY ^

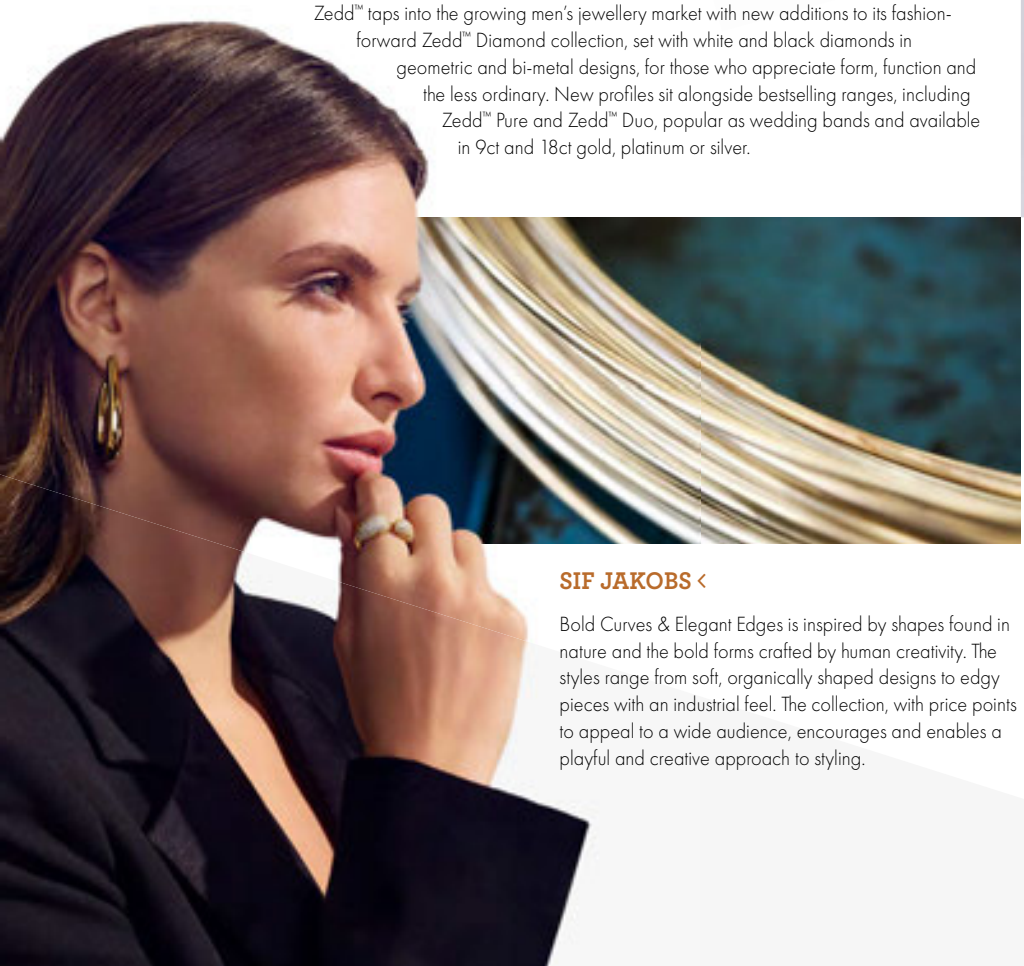
The extensive new lines include an expanded Moissanite range, with 1 to 2.5 diamond carat equivalents. Build collections with new pieces like celestial, sun, poppy, T-bars and heart motifs in amber. Beads, baubles and bows range from ball studs to multi-bead designs. All earring styles are trending – from everyday statement studs to puffed teardrops and evil eyes. Hoops are chunky, triple-looped or charm-dangling; CZ or exaggerated shapes in silver add drama.





ZEDD™ >

Zedd™ taps into the growing men's jewellery market with new additions to its fashion-forward Zedd™ Diamond collection, set with white and black diamonds in geometric and bi-metal designs, for those who appreciate form, function and the less ordinary. New profiles sit alongside bestselling ranges, including Zedd™ Pure and Zedd™ Duo, popular as wedding bands and available in 9ct and 18ct gold, platinum or silver.



HOCKLEY MINT ^

The new Blossom collection translates the natural beauty of flowers, with designs inspired by the essence of orchids, lilies, dahlias and tulips. Highlights include engagement rings, designed to pair with a Wedfit band, alongside matching pendant and earring sets, available in 14ct and 18ct gold (yellow and white), platinum, palladium and silver. The rings, with their solitaire appearance from the top and intricate floral designs from the side, offer a fresh aesthetic.

SIF JAKOBS <

Bold Curves & Elegant Edges is inspired by shapes found in nature and the bold forms crafted by human creativity. The styles range from soft, organically shaped designs to edgy pieces with an industrial feel. The collection, with price points to appeal to a wide audience, encourages and enables a playful and creative approach to styling.

COOKSON GOLD <

Founded in Birmingham over a century ago, this leading manufacturer and retailer of precious metal products, tools and equipment to the jewellery industry also offers a range of services, including bespoke manufacturing capabilities, stampings, scrap metal recycling, and innovations in precious metal printing and laser engraving. It aims to lead the way in high-quality professional jewellery-making supplies and services to the jewellery maker.





GIOVANNI RASPINI

5, South Molton Street - London

Chun Leung - c.leung@giovanniraspini.com + 44 7542 030 541



DONNS JEWELLERY

The fourth-generation family-run Manchester-based supplier of fine jewellery will show its 9ct contemporary collection of yellow gold and diamond necklaces and coloured gemstone and diamond sets. All Donns jewellery diamonds are approximately H/I in colour and SI in clarity, unless otherwise stated.

CHRIS LEWIS SILVER

Chris Lewis is a distinctively different designer of sterling silver. The jewellery line is ideal for retailers searching for that balance between sensible pricing and authentic quality design. The collections offer design innovation, timeless statement and are individually handcrafted with an uncompromising level of quality.

RAW PEARLS

Raw Pearls will promote its brochure – a comprehensive, user-friendly snapshot of the range in a hardback book. It displays all items at scale and shows all colourways. To suggest linking items into a set, it references all matching items. A go-to book to create or update your pearl range. To celebrate the substantial rise in baroque pearl sales, Raw Pearls will have a special offer exclusive to the show.



RE MORRISH

RE Morrish is excited to be back at Olympia this September. The family-run British jewellery manufacturer creates over 7,000 products. Specialising in antique reproduction ranges, from Roman to Art Deco, it has so many styles available, from gents' signet rings, solid patterns, CZ ranges, Celtic to contemporary. It makes everything in its Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter workshops.

MARK MILTON

At the show, British jewellery brand Mark Milton will present its entire line of 9ct and 18ct and platinum jewellery. It has been curated and stocked for efficient delivery to design conscious, forward thinking independent fine jewellery retailers. "We offer over one thousand designs, with emphasis on quality, sustainability and service."



CAVENDISH FRENCH

This independent designer of contemporary sterling silver and stone set jewellery will show its Starlight range of sparkling replicas of fine diamond and precious gem jewellery, but without the price tag – making it affordable to all. A unique collection of bold statement cocktail rings, set with vibrant coloured cubic zirconia gems, sits alongside a range set with a rainbow of coloured stones. Also new are many silver designs, plated in 18ct yellow gold.



GIA UK

Gemolite® NXT, GIA's new gemmological microscope, redefines industry standards. With high-clarity optics, its ergonomic features include an easy-use swivel base with a stationary power cord. This professional-grade microscope has all LED lighting, so stays cool to the touch. It was designed for optimal performance and customisation, whether grading diamonds or coloured stones. Learn too about GIA's range of lab classes (10% discount for NAJ members).

DIAMNET

The diamond aggregation platform will show its latest innovation: Hyper Drive – revolutionising the way jewellery retailers engage with customers. Integrating with the in-store experience, it offers sales teams instant inventory access to over 1.3m diamonds in front of customers. They can tailor diamond specifications on the spot: adjust carat weight, cut, colour and clarity to meet individual preferences, all while engaging with the customer.

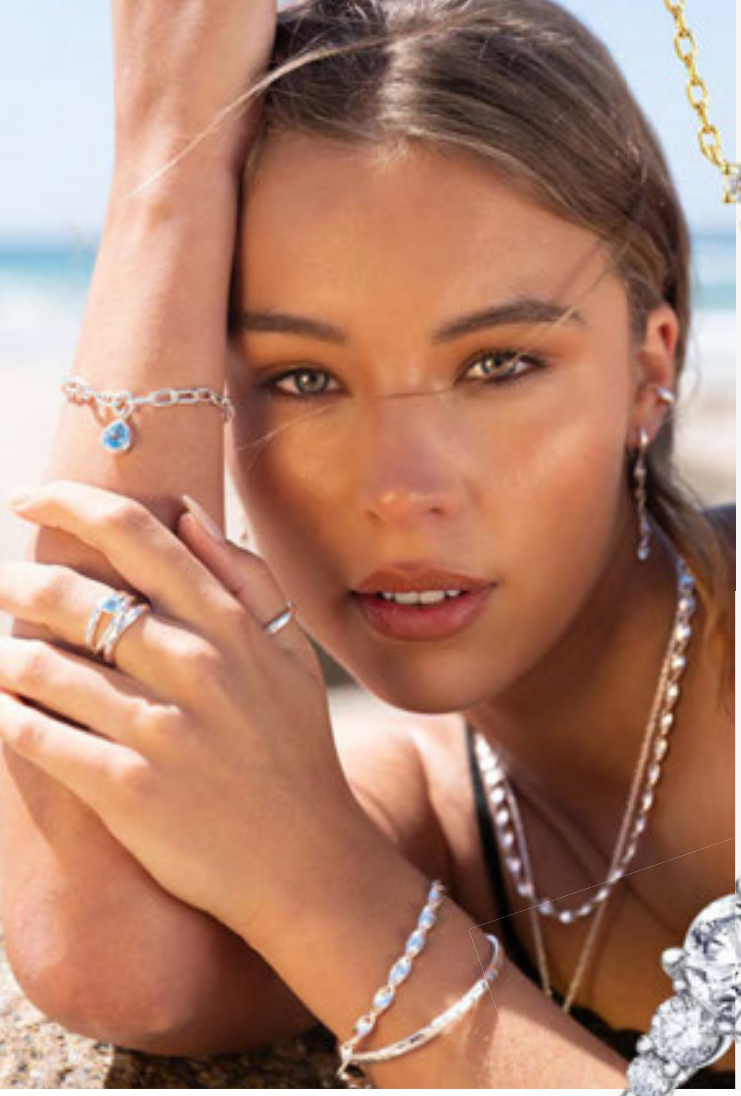
JEWELLERY SHOW 2024 CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

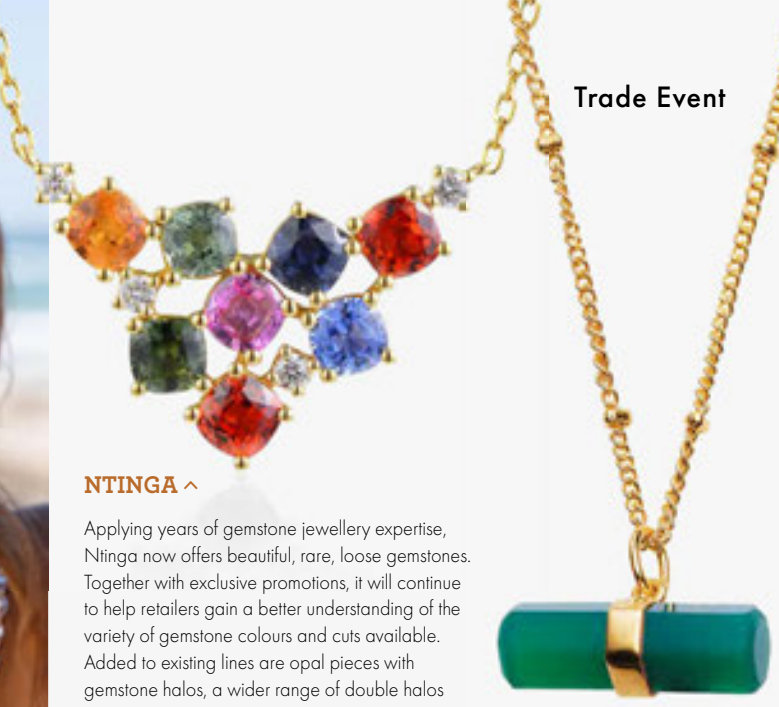
This year's conference programme will include a variety of expert speakers, dynamic panel discussions and informative sessions. There will be an emphasis on analysing the current state of the UK jewellery industry and discussing its challenges, opportunities and ongoing developments.

Among the topics under discussion are **Magnificent Jewels Auction Market Highlights in 2024 and Outlook for 2025; Opportunities and Challenges in UK Jewellery Manufacturing; Outlook for Precious Metals, Diamonds and Coloured Gemstone Markets; The Blue Economy. Pearls Diamonds, Kelp and Sustainability; The Future of Sustainability in Jewellery and Peace Diamonds and Peace Gold.**

The speakers include: **Kristian Spofforth, head of London Jewellery Department, Sotheby's; David Troostwyk, president London Diamond Bourse director, Salotro Ltd; Andrew Morton MD, Weston Beamor Group; Iris Van Der Veken, executive director, Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030 and Greg Valerio, founding director & CEO, PeaceGold Community Interest Company.**

For the full programme visit: **www.thejewelleryshow.co.uk/programme**



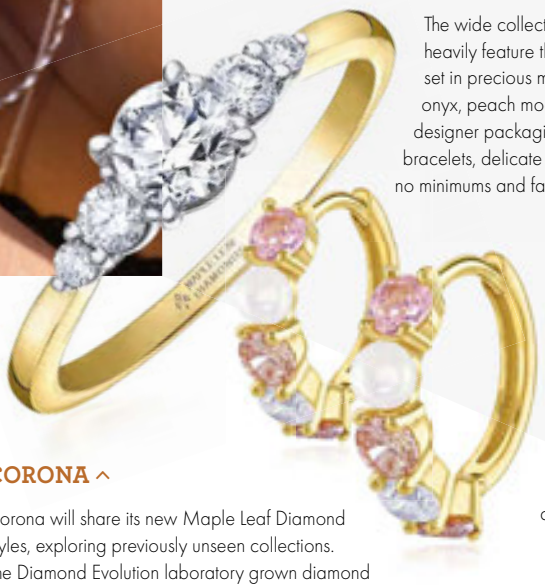


NTINGA

Applying years of gemstone jewellery expertise, Ntinga now offers beautiful, rare, loose gemstones. Together with exclusive promotions, it will continue to help retailers gain a better understanding of the variety of gemstone colours and cuts available. Added to existing lines are opal pieces with gemstone halos, a wider range of double halos with gemstones and diamonds and multi-sapphire cluster necklaces.

SARAH ALEXANDER

The wide collection of bestsellers and a new collection will heavily feature the signature use of rare hand-cut gemstones set in precious metals. And the aquamarines, amazonite, green onyx, peach moonstone, pearls and tiger's eye all come with designer packaging. The new collection includes on trend charm bracelets, delicate stacking styles and statement pieces. As usual: no minimums and fast delivery.



SEA GEMS

The Silver Origins collection features contemporary sterling silver with handcrafted charms. Attention to detail is key, with delicately textured and polished surfaces together with gold vermeil or coloured gemstones. Inspired by the brand's Cornish roots, wearable everyday creations feature striking organic designs, intricate beachcomber shells, botanical and wildlife designs, plus fun, whimsical motifs.

LIDO PEARLS

Lido's autumn/winter collection will have a great new range of lovely bezel set CZ and pearl pieces. The company has also featured many more gold plated options for winter, along with a selection of coloured CZ and pearl jewellery. Long Biwa pearls are becoming more popular as a contemporary option.

CORONA

Corona will share its new Maple Leaf Diamond styles, exploring previously unseen collections. The Diamond Evolution laboratory grown diamond range takes this brand to a new level. Full marketing back up on both global brands and all certified Canadian Gold and Canadian Diamonds are traceable to the mine of origin.





GVUK

Showing for the first time is BOFA fume extraction and filtration technology. Clean workshop – clean lungs HEPA filters capture 99.997% at 0.3 microns. Also: MatrixGold demos with Jack Meyer, test diamonds with the Yehuda Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, test-drive Coherent laser welders and engravers and learn about the 10-year warranty and service plan and 3D scanning training. There will also be special show promotions across the GVUK portfolio.

CONNOISSEURS

This jewellery and watch-care leader offers its latest innovation, the Watch Cleansing Foam Cleaner. Catering to the meticulous cleaning needs of smartwatches and luxury Swiss timepieces, the environmentally friendly formula ensures thorough cleaning without compromising the integrity of delicate watch components. The gentle yet effective solution safely removes dirt, grime and fingerprints; a precision pump and specialised brush ensures easy application.

The Jewellery Show – need to know

Date: 1st-2nd September 2024

Venue: Olympia, Hammersmith Rd, London W14 8UX

Opening times:

Sunday: 09.00 – 17.00
Monday: 09.00 – 16.00

deutscheCraft – a chain reaction



Jan-Christian Bostelmann has stepped up a gear or two since launching his UK-based jewellery import business in 2011. Today his carefully curated portfolio of German-made brands has a focus on fine jewellery... chains in particular.

Founded by Jan-Christian Bostelmann, NAJ member deutscheCraft Ltd is a family-run distribution business that specialises in high-end gold and diamond jewellery made in Germany. On the strength of helping to develop Quinn as a brand in the UK (at the time he was UK and Ireland sales and marketing director), Bostelmann has since enhanced his company by assembling a select array of German brands, with a strong emphasis on chains.

The hand-made and machine-made chains are available in 925 silver, 14ct and 18ct in all colours, with platinum another option. Retailers can choose from all lengths and a variety of clasps, bespoke designs are also possible and the minimum order for all chains is just one.

Providing an invaluable interface between UK jewellers and the German suppliers, deutschCraft offers a reactive and very customer-focussed support. In addition, all the jewellery is hallmarked in Edinburgh and despatched to customers from Northern Ireland – negating the issue of import tax – and invoices are in sterling.



SILHOUETTE

The Silhouette brand was born in the jewellery factory of Oscar Bentner (founded in 1893). Today this fourth-generation family business produces high quality, innovative fine jewellery and specialises in small series. In 2016 Silhouette joined the jewellery-quality Label Made in Germany, which guarantees at least 70 per cent of the labour time for a product takes place in Germany. The company's ethos has always been, and remains, to create affordable luxury products.

The art of achieving this aim results from sensing market trends, knowing the needs of the customers and bringing these together with the technical realisation of new ideas. Great satisfaction comes from succeeding in combining technically innovative jewellery pieces and sophisticated designs that will inspire Silhouette's customers.

Central to the Fine Diamond Jewellery Collection is Silhouette's unique Flex Collection, which comprises bracelets, necklaces and rings across six sizes. The line is available with diamonds or as a brilliant Rainbow Collection with sapphires, rubies and emeralds.

EUGEN RUHLE

Based in Pforzheim, Germany, Eugen Rühle draws on 130 years of experience. Founded in 1892, it has established a name as manufacturer of exquisite decorative chains, crafted in 14 and 18ct gold, silver and platinum, as well as fine jewellery with diamonds and coloured stones, available in all combinations and shapes. Eugen Rühle is known for its diverse chains collection and its high-quality finish, and the product range includes machine and handmade chains in all the popular and fashionable styles and colours. All lengths of chain and custom-made designs are also possible. The company sells to the jewellery trade only.





QUINN

Long-established German jewellery brand Quinn is now well established in the UK market, and while renowned for quality silver pieces. Gold jewellery is now also a key part of the supplier's quality repertoire. Whether crafting from silver or gold Quinn delivers on quality, creative energy and, importantly, adaptability.

One of its core strengths is flexibility. While there are separate collections in gold, if a customer wants to change the metal, or maybe the stones, of a particular style, it can be done.

Manufacturing in Germany allows for that flexibility. All styles are available in 14ct (unusual for the UK market) and 18ct gold, as well as gold-plated sterling silver. And while the designs – slightly more delicate and refined than those of the silver jewellery – demonstrate an Italian influence, the high quality of manufacture is, of course, purely German. Featuring diamonds (pavé-set in some cases), gemstones and Tahitian and freshwater pearls, the pieces are interesting, individual and, in some cases, statement-making. While not aiming to compete with the main gold wedding ring market, this is jewellery that makes for great window dressing.

HELENE APITZSCH

Based in Heimstetten, Germany, Helene Apitzsch has been designing and manufacturing distinctively elegant jewellery in platinum for 35 years. Motivated by creating high value, perfect designs, their collections encompass a variety of chains – machine- as well as hand-made – and available in all lengths and styles including curb, trace, snake, braid, ball, foxtail and anchor. Also in the company's repertoire is a large collection of platinum jewellery – bracelets, bangles, rings and necklaces – as well as jewellery sets featuring diamonds and coloured gemstones.

Bespoke platinum jewellery is also available.

As a true master with decades of experience, Helene Apitzsch understands the processing of this high value metal, with its special appeal to be formed into jewellery of lasting and timeless beauty. Platinum, the company reminds us, not only requires much time, effort and skill but allows for incredible designs.



Helene Apitzsch ring

BUELLING

Founded in 1975, Buelling is a gold chain producer based in Pforzheim in Germany. The collection includes 18ct gold necklaces with weights between 0.8 grams and 80 grams per piece. Included in the range are flexible wire necklaces, omega, trace, belcher, snake, ball and popcorn chains, just to mention a few. In addition there are pieces featuring pearls; a large collection of diamond pendants, earrings, rings and bracelets; flexible rings; plain gold bracelets and assorted clasps. Buelling also offers a variety of lengths for all the chains in the range. The company exhibits regularly at Vicenza Oro, Inhorgenta Munich, Inova Frankfurt and the Hong Kong Jewellery & Gem Fair.

deutscheCraft Ltd

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KARINA MARTUS >

Blue sapphire and blue and white diamonds ring



CONTOUR MAP COLLECTION >

Handmade silver pendant, a white sapphire marking home

Goldsmiths North 2024

In July, the magnificent Cutlers' Hall in Sheffield once again hosted a curated group of the finest jewellery makers and silversmiths for a three-day summer shopping experience. Belinda Morris was there.



GRAEME McCOLM ^

18ct gold earrings with faceted Tahitian pearls and diamonds

The grand, formal appearance of Cutlers' Hall belies the friendly, relaxed vibe of Goldsmiths North. Whether for visitors or exhibitors, intimidating it is not; it's the perfect shopping environment. Several designer makers I spoke to were showing for the first time.

"The exhibition was a real gem," says **Karina Martus.** "The organisers put so much love and care into making sure each jeweller had the perfect stage to showcase their pieces. The sense of community and support among all the jewellers was heart-warming, and I loved how each had their own unique style and approach to jewellery making."

"For me, the fair was not just a platform to showcase my work but also an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and passionate clients," says **Ellina Pollitt**. "The supportive atmosphere and the chance to engage directly with people who appreciate fine craftsmanship, made it a memorable event."





KRUMINS ^

Industrial inspiration meets sensual curves in this silver Flow ring

ELLINA POLLITT >

Zaha Hahid-inspired powder-coated, laser-cast parametric design aluminium set



SABINE KONIG ^

African hardwood ring, with silver sleeve and pearl and diamonds set in silver

ALEXANDER DAVIS <

Handmade ring using a special proprietary forged carbon technique and set with lagoon tourmaline in 18ct yellow gold



KATHERINE ELDER >

Faceted freshwater pearl drops set in 18ct yellow gold with Bubble stud tops set with amethysts and diamonds

MR SHERWOOD >

18ct hard gold stickpin with tsavorite-eyed, 14ct frog holding a freshwater 12mm pearl

Another first-timer, Darren Sherwood **(Mr Sherwood)** agrees: "I thoroughly enjoyed the event and experience. Sheffield has so many friendly and appreciative people, not to mention some absolutely brilliant craftspeople, in a mind-blowing location. Everyone was amazingly friendly and supportive; it was like a big family by the end of fair on Sunday."

"Goldsmiths' North was remarkable," says **John Ball, Brown & Newirth MD** and **Goldsmiths' Craft & Design Council** vice chair and trustee, who visited the fair. "The creativity, innovation and quality on display was inspiring.

I'm proud that the Craft & Design Council supports and promotes such a vibrant community of talented individuals. Events like this showcase the UK's exceptional design and craftsmanship, as well as foster connections and collaborations that drive the craft and design sector forward."

Judith Lockwood, Mesmeric Distribution and **GC&DC member and trustee**, was also there: "I feel Goldsmith's North is now a regular and anticipated fair and shopping experience, busy with collectors, lovers of jewellery and silverware and, importantly, people who buy," she says.



KARIN SHELDON ^

Silver Scribble necklace – a series of long links that appears to be a continuous loop



IAIN SAINSBURY ^

9ct gold sandcast ring, set with an unheated AAA Australian sapphire, two diamonds, blue/purple spinel and a smaller sapphire



ISABELLE CAPITAIN ^

18ct gold statement ear studs set with .23ct F-VS carré cut diamonds


Harriet Kelsall

Rewarding Excellence

The winners of the nationally recognised UK Jewellery Awards 2024 were revealed in a glittering ceremony on 26th June at Old Billingsgate in central London.

Now in its 32nd year, the prestigious UK Jewellery Awards, organised by jewellery and watch industry title *Retail Jeweller*, is this country's longest running trade awards event, established to recognise the achievements of those working in the jewellery and watch sectors. Returning as headline partner for the fourth year was the **Betts Group**, joined by sponsors the **CMJ**, **Hockley Mint**, **Pursuit**, **TH March**, **Studex**, **Windiam**, **Wolf**, **SMO** and **Retail Jeweller Festival 2025**. The **NAJ** was the event's official supporter, while **The Benevolent Society** was the charity partner.

With 20 targeted categories, the Awards cover every aspect of the industry, from jewellery design and ethical business practice through to customer service and successful retailing. We are happy to say there were several NAJ members among the winners, in particular:

Harriet Kelsall Bespoke Jewellery, which walked away with two gongs for Bespoke Jewellery Retailer of the Year and Ethical/Sustainable Jewellery Business of the Year.

Huge congratulations also go to:

TH Baker – Retailer of the Year (six stores or more)

Sonny's – Jewellery Retailer (five stores or fewer)

Daniel Christopher Jewellery – Bridal Jewellery Retailer

Lucy Quartermaine – Commercial Jewellery Designer

Camilla Jones – Store Design

Wongs Jewellers – Marketing/Social Media Campaign or Collaboration

F.Hinds – Retail Team

Susi Smither The Rock Hound – Creative Jewellery Designer

Beaverbrooks – Employer

Birmingham Assay Office – Service Supplier

Watcho – Watch Retailer (five stores or fewer)

Gecko Jewellery – Jewellery/ Watch Supplier

Helen Haddow, outgoing chief executive of premium jewellery buyers the Houlden Group, was recognised in the prestigious Outstanding Contribution to the Industry Award. Surprisingly, it is the first time a woman has received this accolade.

Ruth Faulkner, managing editor, *Retail Jeweller* said, "This year's UK Jewellery Awards saw over 600 guests join us for a night of celebration at the iconic Old Billingsgate venue on the banks of the River Thames.

"We received a record number of entries for this year's event, and our judging panel had an incredibly difficult task deciding on the eventual winners. Congratulations must go to all of our shortlisted finalists and, of course, our winners. They must be applauded as the leading lights in our sector. They really are the very best in the business."


Left: Lucy Quartermaine. Right: Helen Haddow with Ruth Faulkner



Beaverbrooks

Left: Birmingham Assay Office. Below: Watcho with NAJ CEO Ben Massey



Daniel Christopher





Camilla Jones



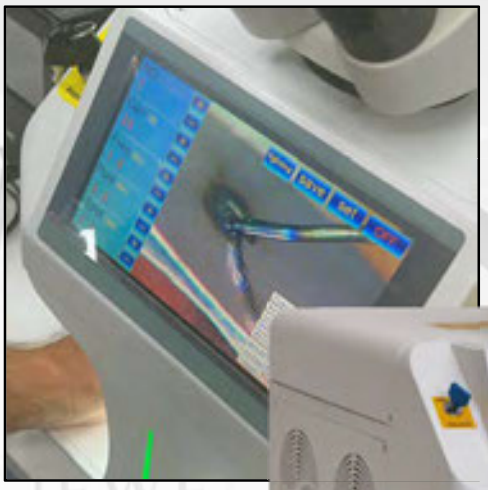
Above: Sonny's Left: Susi Smither The Rock Hound. Right: Domino Jewellery



JEWELLERY SHOW

1 - 2 September 2024
Olympia London

Stand D30



Laser Welding



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The 2024 David Wilkins Trophy Winner



At this year's Valuers' Conference, held during the NAJ Summit, Craig O'Donnell BA FGA, was announced as the worthy winner of the 2024 David Wilkins Trophy.

Passionate about jewellery and silver, Craig O'Donnell BA FGA is a valuer with SafeGuard Jewellery Valuation Service, silver specialist and curator of the Birmingham Assay Office silver collection.

What does it mean to you to win this trophy?

It was a great honour and privilege to receive the David Wilkins Award, especially since it's voted for by the members. I'm only the fourth non-IRV recipient (joining such exalted company as Alan Hodgkinson and David Callaghan), which indicates an acceptance by the membership of more non-conformist views. It does, however, mean I'll now have to become a member, as winning the Award was a personal goal before joining.

Can you pinpoint your qualities that have led to this award?

I've always tried to be generous with my knowledge. I have a huge personal library (some 3,000+ books on jewellery, silver, gemmology and allied wares), so if Google fails to give a satisfactory reply, sometimes the printed word has the answer. If I don't know off the top of my head, the research gives me great pleasure. It increases my knowledge, which I hopefully impart in a non-patronising way – arrogance is a pet-hate of mine. Although I can come across as bolshie at times, taking the roll of Devil's advocate, people less vocal than me have thanked me for giving an alternative point of view. I also strive for improvements in practical valuing skills and training across the valuing community, with the talks and workshops I deliver regularly.

Please describe your journey in jewellery, silverware and valuing.

I was employed front of house at Dewi Griffiths Jewellers in Cardiff, and gained experience dealing in antique jewellery, buying at auction and selling to the trade and through antique fairs. After gaining a BA degree in fine arts valuation, in 2000 I was employed by SafeGuard as a valuer, but now I am also an antique jewellery and silver specialist and curator of the silver collection.

The most rewarding part of my valuing role is probably the training: taking inexperienced jewellery professionals and enabling them to have the confidence to value items correctly and to further their valuing careers and ambitions. One of my proudest moments was being asked to serve on the Midlands Gem-A committee, subsequently becoming its chair.

I give regular talks at the office on the BAO's history, and this widened to encompass writing articles and giving talks on behalf of the office on hallmark history, silver spoons, Midlands Arts and Crafts silver and jewellery, vintage jewellery catalogues, cameos and many more subjects. I deliver the talks online and in person to the majority of jewellery and gemmology organisations in the country and even internationally.

Describe SafeGuard's valuing work.

The majority is for the trade, both independents and multiples, much like any other valuer. It ranges from the mundane (cultured pearl strands and 9ct chains) to the sublime (René Lalique brooches and spectacular quality gemstone pieces) and the bizarre (2ft tall Elkington silver epergnes and diamond set 18ct gold Bvlgari evening bags). Our clientele list is also varied and ranges from Joe Bloggs to Lord Joseph Bloggs and various professional footballers and athletes. I also get involved with home visits and valuation days.

What does your role as curator of BAO's silver archive involve?

Day to day, I deal with customers' makers' marks queries by cross-referencing our registers (all the assay offices have their own registers). I sort out loans and queries regarding the silver collection, which includes valuing the collection (some 1,500+ items, ranging from a 1480 diamond ring to fantastic items of Boulton and Fothergill hollowware as well as Birmingham toys and commemorative Birmingham silver). Then there's cleaning said silver!

I love what I do and hope this positivity and passion comes across in my day-to-day interactions with fellow professionals.

THE DAVID WILKINS TROPHY

David Wilkins (1931-1994), former chair of the National Association of Goldsmiths (the NAJ's predecessor) Valuations Committee, had a distinguished career in the jewellery industry and was well respected for his outstanding personal qualities and expertise. In particular, he encouraged high standards of conduct and professionalism in valuations. The annual award he sponsored is his legacy in promoting those aims.

The NAJ's National Committee awards the David Wilkins Trophy for outstanding skill, dedication or service in jewellery valuation. While there is no official list of criteria, nominees will exemplify such key attributes as consistently producing valuations of exceptional standard to giving help and guidance to colleagues or members of the public. The award, first presented in 1994, comprises an Elizabethan-style silver dish, which is inscribed with the winner's name.

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Anna Rogers, FIRV (Educational Trust beneficiary)

Helping Hands

As 2024 marks the National Association of Goldsmiths (now the National Association of Jewellers since 2015's unification with the British Jewellers Association) turning 130, we also celebrate The Benevolent Society reaching 100 and the 30th birthday of the NAJ's Educational Trust.

They're all significant anniversaries and the perfect excuse to look back at the launch of the charities in particular. They have both helped and continue to help so many people on their way.

THE EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Over the years, the Educational Trust has helped many students train to become professional qualified jewellers and valuers. Through its bursary scheme, those with funding problems can apply for financial support, many receiving 50 per cent of the course fees cost.

Retail company members of the NAJ are invited each year to donate to the Trust when they renew their membership. Last year, the Trust received over £14,000. Because so many students applying to the Trust wish to become valuers, the IRV Professional Community Group has recommended the NAJ extends the voluntary donation requested to include IRV members from 2024.

The Trust exists to provide scholarships, awards and assistance towards training and work experience opportunities for those who derive or intend to derive their main livelihood from the jewellery trade. To qualify, applicants need to be employed or working in the jewellery industry or working in the education sector on programmes directly relevant to employees in the jewellery industries.

MIRV Alexia Taylor FGA DGA said, "I shall be eternally grateful to the Trust for the financial support it has given me in recent years, enabling me to obtain not only my Gem-A Gemmology Diploma but also my Diamond Diploma – both enabling me to go on and gain my MIRV status.

"I've really loved developing my knowledge and skills with the Trust's assistance, and I now really appreciate how these courses have helped develop my career. It not only supported me financially but also encouraged my passion for gemmology which I, in turn, will pass on to others in our industry."

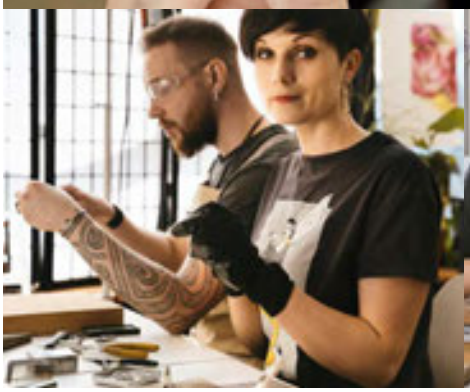
"Help and support while studying is important," adds FIRV Anna Rogers of Almaz Valuations. "Families might help you cope with studies and everyday commitments, and employers could adjust working schedules to accommodate class attendance. Financial support is also vital. Obtaining a gemmology diploma and further professional qualifications can be financially overwhelming – it's essential to know where to ask for help."

Harriot McClemont was employed by Ryedale Auctioneers as a junior cataloguer and valuer when she was introduced to gemmology. Wanting to learn more, she discovered Gem-A, who suggested she contact the NAJ for help with funding as she could not fund herself. "Receiving the partial funding from the Trust was hugely significant in boosting my career in the jewellery trade. I've found my studies so far very challenging but also fascinating, and I can't wait to further my knowledge and understanding of the subject."

> "Obtaining a gemmology diploma and further professional qualifications can be financially overwhelming – it's essential to know where to ask for help."
>
> **Anna Rogers, FIRV, Almaz Valuations**

NAJ Educational Trust
Supporting Jewellery Education Since 1994









Benevolent Society chair, Gay Penfold

THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

The Benevolent Society came into being on 2nd June 1980 through the joining of the former British Jewellery and Giftware Federation Benevolent Fund (formed in 1939) and the Leathergoods Benevolent Society (formed in 1924) and came about as a result the British Leathergoods Manufacturers' Association joining the (then) British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, which is now the British Allied Trades Federation (BATF).

In 1924, there was no welfare state, of course – no pensions (and certainly no works pensions), no social security and no national health services. These were all introduced over time, but even today, many who have worked hard all their lives find that, in their retirement or because they cannot work due to ill health, they struggle to survive. It is not true that the welfare state provides adequately for all – it provides well for some, ok for most and not very well at all for others.

It is, therefore, singularly appropriate for the trades covered by the BATF to ensure that old and worthy personnel, who have given long and faithful service, have a particular charity to whom they may turn in case of need. Applicants need only to have worked in the trades covered by the Federation and can apply whether or not their employer(s) were members of the BATF and related trade associations.

"We are all very well aware that the past few years have, to say the least, been challenging for many," said the charity's chair, Gay Penfold, when she spoke at the BATF AGM this summer.

"In 2023, we made over £154,000.00 in regular payments to beneficiaries: cost of living support grants, one-off grants for items such as white goods, disability aids, essential home repairs and bursaries.

"We financially support with monthly payments over 40 individuals who have worked in the giftware, jewellery, surface engineering, travel goods and fashion accessories industries. Since 2015, we have also been supporting individuals starting or progressing their career journeys, by providing bursaries. In the past nine years, we have supported over 80 individuals with their career progression and studies."

She explained The Benevolent Society's income depends on monies from fundraising activities and the annual voluntary donations of £30 from BATF members who choose to contribute when they renew their trade association membership. "£30 buys very little today, so please, if for any reason you have decided not to donate, we ask that you please reconsider and reinstate your donation," she added. "We could not do what we need to do without the support of each and every member of each and every trade association."

"We financially support with monthly payments over 40 individuals who have worked in the giftware, jewellery, surface engineering, travel goods and fashion accessories industries. Since 2015, we have also been supporting individuals starting or progressing their career journeys, by providing bursaries."

GayPenfold, Chair, Benevolent Society

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

For those seeking financial support from either The Benevolent Society or the NAJ's Educational Trust, visit **naj.co.uk/financial-support** for full details and the relevant application forms.

Talent and Trophies



Book your place at the 2024 NAJ Awards, with headline sponsor, Curteis, championing professional excellence and membership milestones.

By the time you read this, the NAJ will have announced the deserving shortlisted businesses and individuals that make up the finalists for this year's NAJ Awards. While the finalists practice their winner's walks and winning smiles, the awards are also a great opportunity to come together, let your hair down and have a party (and the jewellery trade does love a good party!).

The jewellery industry is brimming with inspiring stories, companies and people. This year, we have expanded the Awards format to recognise initiatives, individuals and collective efforts, uncovering excellence wherever it is.

Great Ideas

- Community Engagement of the Year
- CSRI of the Year (sponsored by Responsible Jewellery Council)
- Innovation of the Year
- Collection of the Year
- Store Design of the Year

HEADLINE SPONSOR

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Great People

- Salesperson of the Year
- Workshop Professional of the Year (sponsored by At The Bench)
- Rising Star of the Year (sponsored by the British Academy of Jewellery)
- Designer of the Year (sponsored by RWK Goodman)
- Unsung Hero of the Year

Great Businesses

- Jewellery Retailer of the Year (sponsored by Vulcan Jewellery)
- Bespoke Retailer of the Year
- Manufacturer Supplier of the Year
- Service Supplier of the Year
- Team of the Year (sponsored by TH March)

Happy Anniversa-yay!

This year's NAJ Awards celebrate excellence over the past 12 months and the dedication of long-standing members of the Association. We welcome into the Member Milestones Club those celebrating significant anniversaries with the Association. Many of these enduring members, who have been with us during the times of the NAG and BJA, exemplify the Association's Honesty, Integrity and Professionalism, and we want to pay tribute to their continued commitment to the trade.

Members celebrating a special Association anniversary will receive a 10 per cent discount on individual ticket prices and 20 per cent off full table bookings. If you're unsure whether you're celebrating a membership milestone this year, don't worry – we will contact eligible members by email about the discount.

Tickets, please!

The 2024 NAJ Awards will take place on Thursday, October 10th, at the Burlington Hotel in Birmingham. The venue is a stone's throw from New Street railway station, so members from north and south can attend and be back home on the same day. If you feel like sticking around to dance the night away with the nominees, you're more than welcome to do so!

To ensure the awards are inclusive and accessible for members, we have competitively priced tickets at £125 + VAT per person for NAJ members and £175 + VAT per person for non-members. A 10 per cent discount is also available for full table bookings.

We hope to see you there!

The NAJ Awards 2024

When: Thursday, October 10th 2024

Where: Burlington Hotel, Birmingham

To book your tickets, visit: **naj.co.uk/awards**

Any questions?, email: **events@naj.co.uk**



Who is Sylvera?*

Sylvera is the new fine jewellery brand launched this year by mine-to-market business London DE. Belinda Morris spoke to founder and director Philip Spencer to learn more.





Above: Sylvera emerald jewellery
Left: 'Despres' pink sapphire ring

The first thing you need to know is Sylvera is Phil's affectionate nod to his daughters – Sylvie and Petra. The close second is that this new branding represents "a personal touch, a refresh, a less corporate" moniker for the bespoke arm of London DE. "We've been working on a big marketing push with digital marketing agency Neon Corporation [who built Victoria Beckham's website]; the rationale was to make Sylvera more relatable as a brand," explains the founder and director of the Hatton Garden-based B2B and B2C business, which is now in its eleventh year.

While Sylvera has a limited RTW line, the focus is its consumer-facing bespoke business, which has a strong emphasis on coloured gemstones, Colombian emeralds in particular (plus Burmese rubies and sapphires from Sri Lanka), which London DE has sourced and supplied since its inception.

> "Trust and reliability are very important watchwords for us.
>
> **Philip Spencer, London DE**

"Emeralds are at the apex of their value and desirability now, and the prices have steadied, post-Covid," says Spencer. "The biggest ring we worked on recently was a Colombian emerald cocktail ring – a self-purchase."

The company has a strong international focus, with offices in Dubai and Bogotá, Colombia and London. "We buy from small-scale artisanal mines – they are family concerns and as we are certified by the Responsible Jewellery Council, we're naturally very keen on responsible sourcing," he adds. "Yes, we do get asked about laboratory-grown diamonds, which we will sell, but always with in-depth conversations about value. Trust and reliability are very important watchwords for us." The monthly blogs keep customers informed on issues such as ethical practices as well as "bringing an engagement ring dream to life."

With the new Sylvera website up and running and social media channels busy, the brand is experiencing strong sales of Phil's personal favourite Art Deco-style jewellery, with rings accounting for almost 80 per cent of sales, followed by earrings and bracelets. While wedding and engagement rings make up the majority of sales, life event gifts are strong sellers, and the offer also includes white label luxury watches.

"We're a relatively traditional business, but of course we work with the clients' own ideas as well as base bespoke designs on our own pieces. Sylvera has recently taken on a new design team – Charles Benoliel Consulting, which also works with De Beers and Graff in Australia – which will inject its own aesthetics into the mix, so watch this space."

Sylvera aside, there are two other channels to the business – sister brands London DE (LDE), which supplies coloured gemstones and gold direct to the trade, and London Gold Xchange (LGX), which specialises in direct-to-consumer bullion and coins. A very comprehensive and informative June blog on investing in gold is a great example of London DE's drive to educate and inform consumers and the trade. Monthly blogs throw light on many aspects of the gemstone and jewellery industry.

"In 2020, we opened the London DE Colombian subsidiary in the heart of Bogotá's emerald district," Phil explains. "That presence allows us to ensure we buy our stones and materials from the top of the supply chain and always know the exact source of our materials. This approach promotes transparency in our mine-to-market chain and cuts out any intermediaries. Opening our Dubai Multi-Commodities Centre gave us direct access to one of the fastest-growing luxury retail markets in the world," he adds.

Through its Dubai office, LDE supplies part-refined gold doré from small, artisanal miners. Building on its unique industry relationships, it also delivers gemstones at a price well below that of traditional high-street retailers and works exclusively with a small circle of trusted suppliers with whom it has long-standing relationships.

*With apologies to W. Shakespeare

The notion of workplace collaboration isn't new, but it's increasingly seen as a hitherto underexplored initiative in the jewellery retail and supplier sectors.

Wholly (Useful) Alliances


Sofie (Domino Jewellery)

Brand collabs have been big in fashion retail for a while – what with influencers, celebrities, designers or other brands. But we're talking here about fundamental collabs involving training, learning, exchanges of ideas, inspiration... people working with other people.

"We know good things can happen when members collaborate, especially around skills transfer," says NAJ CEO Ben Massey. "Skills need to be passed on, and the membership is lucky to benefit from so many good businesses providing varied experiences and approaches.

"Please do register an interest with us if you would like to host a workshop for others in the trade to pick up skills, experiences and approaches. Only by working together can we really support one another, whether in the workshop, on the shop floor or in the office."

DOMINO JEWELLERY AND VIPA DESIGNS

What prompted the initiative to swap apprentices?

Andrew Morton (Domino): It came from a conversation between Peter and me at the Goldsmiths' Centre. We wanted to support our goldsmith apprentices and provide them with access to the best training and insights into different businesses' processes across the industry.

Peter Crump (Vipa): There were two parts; first, it was down to the apprentices, who have been so rightly encouraged by the Goldsmiths' Centre to develop a strong sense of community. They all take a great interest in each other's pathways. Secondly, Andrew and I recognised this unique cohort and realised opening our workshops to other apprentices would enhance their experience.

What skills/processes were involved?

AM: The aim was to broaden the apprentices' skill base and their understanding of different businesses across the industry. Businesses all operate slightly differently, and there's an opportunity to learn from one another.

PC: Vipa and Domino have quite different apprentice models. Sofie from Domino Jewellery is specifically a setter, whereas Dan (from Vipa Designs) is a production apprentice, so sees all aspects of a goldsmith's journey. Sofie was privy to all aspects of our business, from CAD to casting to a full clean up and finish.

How many days were spent in the businesses?

AM: The initiative is driven by the apprentices; they are responsible for arranging their role swaps and the days they visit the different sites. Sofie spent two days with Vipa Designs, with focused training on mounting skills and has since also visited Thomas Lyte, where she experienced specialist polishing training. She looks forward to doing similar apprenticeship swaps with other goldsmith apprentice companies, learning from inspirational goldsmiths.

How successful was the initiative?

AM: Speaking of the experience, Sofie says, "I feel incredibly grateful for the opportunities Domino Jewellery and the wider Weston Beamor Group have made possible for me. It's a privilege to be part of such an encouraging and supportive trade. Visiting Vipa Designs and Thomas Lyte – sharing skills and knowledge and learning in such a positive, genuine and hands-on environment is truly inspiring.

"Advocating these kinds of collaborative working relationships between companies and their apprentices is one of the biggest benefits of being a goldsmith's apprentice. It encourages growth and discourages the stagnation and loss of skills. The freedom to experience other workshops has been one of the most valuable contributions to my time as a goldsmith apprentice."

PC: The first phase went very well, with Sofie visiting us. She was a delightful sponge – she thoroughly enjoyed every aspect we showed her. The second phase is being worked out now with Dan to visit Weston Beamor.

Will you be repeating the exercise, perhaps involving other businesses?

AM: We would certainly do it again and are open to collaborating with other UK jewellery manufacturers. The concept is in its early stages, but we can see how beneficial it will be to both the individuals and the businesses. I believe it's a great concept for the trade and demonstrates how we can break down the barriers, supporting one another. The threat from overseas suppliers enhances the importance of upskilling our workforce and providing them with opportunities, allowing our UK jewellery industry to grow and thrive.

PC: Based on phase one, this is a massively worthwhile exercise. We have already been in touch with [London-based jewellery designer] Tine Bladbjerg, who also has a goldsmith's apprentice, to work out an exchange.

Would you encourage others in the trade to do this?

AM: Definitely. As an industry, we need training initiatives and career opportunities for our younger generation. We should encourage anything that creates a broader interest in the industry. Beyond manufacturing, there's a vast offering of job opportunities across our industry, and I'm a strong believer businesses would benefit from sharing their knowledge.

PC: Under the banner of the apprentice programme, we feel this is a safe exchange. However, we understand the scepticism some people might have over freely allowing employees to work in/visit/experience other businesses. Done correctly, we can see only benefits in this exchange.

AINSWORTH JEWELLERS AND JESSOP JEWELLERS

A different sort of collaboration took place earlier this year when **Helen Dimmick** and **Philip Ainsworth** of **Ainsworth Jewellers**, welcomed **Sophie Jessop**, and the **Jessop Jewellers** team into their Blackburn store for a two-day training and note-comparing session.

"Delivering training is always a mutually beneficial exercise," says Helen Dimmick. "My team from Ainsworth also attended, and the interaction and sharing of ideas was inspiring for all. On a personal level, it was great for me to focus on ensuring I practise what I preach!

"As a director of Ainsworth Jewellers, I no longer have as much time for my consultancy and training, but Sophie and Jessop's Jewellery are our professional and personal friends, so this was a mutually beneficial exercise. The aim was to deliver a luxurious, client-focused consultative sales experience with support for developing highly engaged members of the team and increasing market share of the company overall."

Sophie adds: "I hold Helen and Phil in the utmost regard; they're industry titans, and I'm incredibly proud to consider them as mentors. Since I joined the family business in 2019, they've extended boundless support and industry guidance. Helen joined us at Jessop Jewellers last October and hosted training sessions with our team across two days. It was so brilliant. When two new team members joined us this year, I was eager for them to enjoy the same experience."



Sophie Jessop (centre) and Helen Dimmick (far right) at Ainsworths Jewellers

For Sophie's team, there were four aims: to create confidence in sales professionals positioning the unique qualities of Jessop Jewellers; to learn from customer feedback and integrate best practice into everyday sales techniques; to respond to the challenging current market and have confidence to sell the romance of diamonds, gemstones and fine jewellery and to ensure every high-street sale is delivered with a luxury experience to improve customer service when positioning high-end jewellery.

"Separately, Helen led our general manager and me through people-focused modules, including Coaching for Performance," she adds. "Altogether we enjoyed really open but structured days; lots of listening and exchanging ideas, plenty of talking about how we can apply these in store.

"The team thoroughly enjoyed it and has relished applying learnings to consultative selling opportunities with customers since then. We hold at the forefront of our minds that "customers want sales professionals who are like friends with inside knowledge," and we love this insight. The continued success will be underpinned by regularly revisiting the materials to retain and grow the language, mindset and behaviours," she says.

She also feels there's "enormous merit" in a collaborative approach between independent jewellery retailers. "Helen's training is outstanding, and undoubtedly equips a sales team with a mindset that can deliver your business a competitive advantage in this ever more challenging landscape."



JBN meeting

JET BUSINESS NETWORK (JBN)

On the subject of retailers sharing experiences, **JBN** facilitator **Michael Donaldson** adds his thoughts on the merits of collaboration:

"Collaboration can take a number of forms. The NAJ's JBN for independent jewellery retailers can offer one particularly effective variation – the Educational Store Visit (ESV)," he says.

"In my time, we have completed 34 member ESVs and considerably more Competitor Mystery Shops. The ESVs are not a jolly, even if our time together is certainly very sociable. The ESV host has to give a good reason for requesting the visit and needs to provide that reason in a comprehensive brief covering their business background, their perceived strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities and specific areas for feedback.

"The feedback is provided round the table, is fully minuted and supplied to the host, who is responsible for reporting back to the group what they have or haven't done with the feedback, at the next meeting. Generally, each ESV provides the host with between 70 and 140 unique tips, suggestions and observations.

"Who better to provide feedback on your retail jewellery business than another retail jeweller!"

Want to join the JBN? The group is looking for retailers in the following towns...

Scotland: Aberdeen, Inverness, Berwick upon Tweed, border towns and west coast towns

North West: Blackpool, Bolton, Carlisle, Manchester, Morecambe and Warrington

North East: Bradford, Durham, Grimsby, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds, Middlesborough, Newcastle, Scarborough and Scunthorpe

West Midlands: Coventry, Stoke-on-Trent, Stratford upon Avon, Wolverhampton and Worcester

East Midlands: Leicester, Lincoln, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Peterborough

South West: Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, Portsmouth and Swindon

South: Crawley, Eastbourne, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

London: East London and North London

Home Counties: Chelmsford, Harlow and Stevenage

Goldsmiths' Fair 2024

This year, 20 shining examples of jewellery and silver making join the industry's crème de la crème in Goldsmiths' Hall in London (week one 24th to 29th September, week two 1st to 6th October)

XINYI CHEN <

This year, Goldsmiths' Fair has launched the Emerging Business Bursary Scheme, which was created to celebrate and nurture talent in the design and making of jewellery and contemporary silver. It is for makers who have started their jewellery/silver business in the last six years.

The 10 recipients receive a free stand at the Fair, a £1,500 grant to help prepare for the event – to cover materials, display props, travel or accommodation – a series of professional training sessions from the Goldsmiths' Centre and an optional interest-free silver bullion loan of up to £3,000.

One recipient is NAJ member Genevieve Schwartz, who explains: "I read about the bursary in the Goldsmiths Fair's newsletter. I was very excited by it and that it was open to people like me, who have set up their brands after working in other companies and roles. This bursary has provided me with so much already – useful skills training, data analysis and, of course, the opportunity to exhibit without the usual fee. It has all contributed greatly to my preparation."

JESSIE HARRIS >

New Exhibitor

She has worked on many new products to showcase at the Fair. The largest part of her product development is in her Golden Futures range, which will include a new line of pieces featuring hidden symbols and talismans. "And of course I will have lots of Watermelon Sugar on display!"

We preview some of those lucky recipients here, as well as some of the ten makers who will show at the Fair for the first time.

www.goldsmithsfair.co.uk



KRISTINA MERCHANT >



AKI MORI
New Exhibitor

MARCEL SALLOUM
New Exhibitor

GENEVIEVE SCHWARTZ



LARA STAFFORD-DEITSCH



PEARL NG
New Exhibitor



ALICE CICOLINI
New Exhibitor



BALINT SAMAD

"This bursary has provided me with so much already – useful skills training, data analysis and, of course, the opportunity to exhibit without the usual fee."

Genevieve Schwartz, NAJ member

Vicenzaoro 2024



Hans D Krieger

Organised by IEG, the much-anticipated high-end jewellery and watch fair Vicenzaoro takes place from 6th to 10th September.

At the fully booked Vicenza exhibition centre, approximately 1,200 brands will present new jewellery creations and innovations spanning the entire goldsmithing supply chain, from high jewellery collections to gold manufacturing, wristwatches, semi-finished products, components, gemstones, packaging, services and accessories. The offerings will be further completed with ready-to-sell stock products, hosted at the Palakiss exhibition centre.

The most authoritative opinion leaders and major national and international trade associations, including CIBJO (World Jewelry Confederation), will present talks, seminars and market insights. The event will also feature the world premiere of the new edition of Trendbook 2026+ by Trendvision Jewelry + Forecasting, IEG's independent observation of contemporary jewellery.

AN INTERNATIONAL BOUTIQUE SHOW

With 40 per cent of the exhibitors coming from outside of Italy, Vicenzaoro September will host 35 nations, including Turkey, Germany, Thailand, Belgium, China and Hong Kong. An unrivalled stage for Made in Italy jewellery and goldsmithing, the show will host all the Italian manufacturing districts: Vicenza, Arezzo, Valenza and Campania with Torre del Greco, renowned for their product and service excellence. Business matching will be a focal point, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and by Italian Trade Agency's incoming programme.

Among the exhibitors and representing Made in Italy jewellery will be top brands **Damiani**; **Roberto Coin**; **Crivelli**; **Fope's** with elasticated chains; **Annamaria Cammilli** with silhouettes inspired by floral lightness; **Palmiero** with its artistic, sculptural creations; the dynamic versatility of **Roberto Demeglio**; **Serafino Consoli** with its rings that become bracelets; the ultra-light geometries of **Gismondi 1754** and **Marco Dal Maso**, **Zancan** and **Barakà** for men's jewellery.

European and international high jewellery companies will include **Schreiner Fine Jewellery**, **Hans Krieger**, **Giloy**, **Breuning**, **Niessing**, **Jörg Heinz** and **Heinz Mayer**, **Yana Nesper**, **Al Coro** and **Stenzhorn** from Germany; **Dámaso Martinez**, **Carrera y Carrera** and **Facet** from Spain; the French brands **Akillis**, **Djula** and **La brune et la blonde**; **Fullord** from Switzerland; **Terzhian** from Turkey; the American Mumbai-based **Sutra** and the Hong Kong-based **Butani**. Lastly, Australia's **Autore** and the UK's iconic **Fabergé**. New exhibitors will include Italy's **Daverio 1933**, the Greek brand **Dionysios** and **Artur Scholl** from Germany.

FOCUS ON WATCHES

VO'Clock Privé returns to the foyer on the first floor of the Vicenza exhibition centre, running from September 6th to 8th. This contemporary watches lounge is open to the public, offering timepiece enthusiasts and collectors an opportunity to engage with sought-after brands and partake in immersive watch culture experiences. Showcasing will be renowned brands such as **Zenith**, **Speake Marin**, **Franck Muller**, **Frederique Constant** and **Wyler Vetta**. These will be flanked by unique creations by the Maestri (Masters); independent watchmakers from the **Académie Horlogère des Créateurs Indépendants** (AHCI) in Geneva, with names such as **Vincent Calabrese**, **Seryn Watches**, **Lederer Timepieces**, **Meccaniche Orologi Milano**, **Matthias Naeschke**, **Khemea hcl Taine**, **Marc & Darnò** and **Miśnik**. Completing the offer will be the Avanguardie (Avantgarde) area dedicated to emerging brands revolutionising the sector, such as **Furlan Marri** and **Inceptum**, both attending VO'Clock Privè for the first time.



VIOFF

Continuing the celebration of 70 years of goldsmithing tradeshows in Vicenza, the city centre will be the scene of VIOFF, the Vicenzaoro off-show, featuring events and cultural initiatives in collaboration with the Municipality of Vicenza.



Fope Bubble Bracelets

John Pye Auctions, established in 1968, is the UK's largest commercial auction house. Our dedicated Luxury department, formed in 2014, holds over **100 online sales annually**, featuring high-end watches, jewellery, fashion, antiques, and collectibles.

Our team of specialists boasts **80 years of combined experience** in luxury assets, fine art, and antiques. GIA and NAVA qualified, we provide appraisal, valuation, marketing, auction, and private treaty services to some of the UK's largest manufacturers and distributors of new and pre-owned goods. Our professionals have a proven track record of delivering **exceptional service and expertise** to private, commercial, and government clients.







John Pye Auctions

Our weekly online auctions, based at our Nottingham salerooms, include **high-end items** from Patek Philippe, Audemars Piguet, Rolex, Cartier, and Tiffany & Co. Additionally, our luxury auctions feature designer clothing, accessories, and shoes from brands like Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Christian Louboutin.

Partnering with us ensures your assets have access to our **customer base of over 784,000** registered accounts and extensive marketing channels.





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You will be assigned a dedicated client account liaison who will guide you through every step of the process, from appraisals and valuations to secure transportation, storage, marketing, online auction and private treaty sales.

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NAJ Newcomers


The Jeweller

In this issue, we throw the spotlight on four businesses that have recently joined the Association.

DIALOG – Ben Umbers, sales director

Dialog is the world's first subscription service for retailers in the diamond and jewellery industry to merchandise their loose and mounted diamond inventory. We offer a convenient and cost-effective way to access premium mined diamonds, laboratory-grown diamonds and jewellery through a flexible subscription model. Launched in November 2020 with only loose diamonds, Dialog is now in over 200 doors around the world, with its expanded offering.

As the diamond industry continues to evolve, Dialog wants to remain at the forefront of innovation as a trusted source for all retailers' diamond needs. This means taking our time to find the right synthetic product, and we're proud to have both loose and mounted Clarity Diamond™ available on the Dialog platform. Recognising a gap in the market, Clarity Diamond™ creates premium quality laboratory-grown diamonds with a difference you can see, in premium shapes and sizes.

Who can benefit from your services/products?

We work with multiple-location retailers as well as independent retailers with one brick-and-mortar location. While they directly benefit from Dialog, their customers also benefit as retailers can carry loose diamonds and diamond jewellery they perhaps wouldn't have been able to carry previously.

What makes Dialog stand out from others in the field?

We identified a gap in the industry and envisioned a better way for businesses to manage inventory – to give everyone the opportunity to have the best selection of diamonds and diamond jewellery in their store, without capital commitment and without the burden of dead inventory. We're constantly finding new and different ways to support our retailers through their Dialog subscriptions – we don't succeed unless our retailers do.

Why is being an NAJ member so important?

The NAJ's core values of Honesty, Integrity and Professionalism wholly align with Dialog's, so becoming a member was an easy decision. Our goals are to be honest, reliable and helpful. Therefore, being a member of the NAJ is important to us because it supports retailers – just as we do. As an NAJ member, we have an avenue to connect with likeminded industry professionals and retailers, providing them with another way to streamline their business operations.



SANTA LOMAS: Maria Lomas' journey from African inspiration to London's Mayfair

Santa Lomas, the vibrant gemstone and jewellery company born from South African inspiration in 2019, has quickly established itself as a major presence in London's prestigious Mayfair district.

Founded by Maria Lomas, who transitioned from banking to become a certified gemstone expert, Santa Lomas offers a wide range of gemstones, from garnets to diamonds. The company specialises in East African coloured stones and works with jewellery brands to create their collections.

"We're not just selling gems, we're sharing stories," says Lomas. "Each piece carries its own tale."

Santa Lomas stands out for its commitment to fair trading and support for emerging designers. The company recently launched a fellowship programme, providing support to new talents in the UK and worldwide.

In recent developments, Santa Lomas took part in the Tokyo Lifestyle Show and unveiled its newest jewellery collection for men. The company has also chosen to join the NAJ, underscoring its commitment to industry collaboration.

"At Santa Lomas, we believe UK jewellers can shape and change the industry for the better by working together," Lomas explains. "That's why we've chosen to be part of the NAJ community."

> "We're not just selling gems, we're sharing stories, each piece carries its own tale."
>
> **Maria Lomas**

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HARLE PARIS – Anson Law

The name was a serendipitous amalgamation: 'Harle' from my beloved Harlequin pet rabbit; Paris because it's a city of romance and a place talented artists gather.

I pursued my interest in gemmology as an undergrad and postgrad at Birmingham City University. I also have a strong interest in fine arts and design. Combining the two was the beginning of my bespoke journey.

All gemstones are precious. In our bespoke work, we're passionate about empowering our clients to explore gemstones; there's such a mesmerising variety of gems out there. We want to help clients educate and express themselves.

Bespoke is a deeply intertwined concept in Harle Paris; we pride ourselves on creating authentically unique pieces through our exclusive in-house designed collections and bespoke jewellery service.

I recently undertook a heartfelt project, designing a fairytale-themed ring for a bride – my childhood friend – incorporating her favourite gemstones, tanzanite and amethyst, which hold personal significance for her. While I typically use natural diamonds in my designs, for this special piece, they opted for laboratory-grown diamonds at the groom's request. This underscores our versatility in offering options.

Our latest minimalist collection features platinum. This durable metal is perfect for creating heirloom jewellery, with a beautiful weight and hypoallergenic properties that ensure comfort and longevity. We're also committed to the artistry and authenticity of using in our collections conflict-free, natural, earth-mined diamonds, sourced with care.

We're passionate about supporting initiatives that foster excellence in the jewellery industry whenever we can. As an NAJ member, we can contribute to and uphold the highest standards of craftsmanship; being associated with the Association is an honour.

At Harle Paris, we deeply value craftsmanship and invest significant time enhancing our skills. I'm currently learning stone setting, reflecting our unwavering commitment to continuous improvement. Our team of dedicated designers, gemmologists and assistants collaborates with talented artisans and craftspeople.

Beyond quality, we collaborate with gemstone and metal companies that uphold the principles of fair trade, sustainability and ethical business practices, ensuring our jewellery supports responsibility within the industry. By adhering to these standards, we aim to create beautiful pieces and contribute positively to the environment and communities involved in their creation.





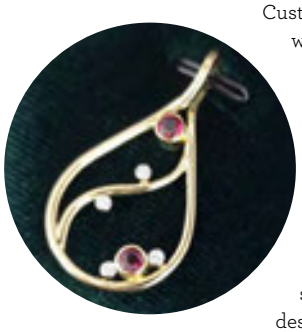
GOLDEN SNOWDROP, SHAFTESBURY – Stephanie Dowthwaite, founder

We launched in October 2020 – just before the Covid lockdown. Fittingly, snowdrops symbolise new life, hope and the ability to overcome challenges. Also, symbolism had always played its part in my designs, and we wanted it to tie in with the local area. Shaftesbury is renowned for this delicate, resilient flower – even hosting the annual Shaftesbury Snowdrop Festival – and our picturesque Gold Hill from the Hovis ad. We also discovered there's a rare variety of gold snowdrop.

The shop was my dream when I started in the trade as a teenager, and becoming a valuer gave me the skills and inspiration to achieve that dream. I began as a jewellery sales assistant after A levels while I decided what I wanted to study at university. 15 years later and the degree's been forgotten.



Jewellery grabbed me instantly. I completed my JET while learning as much about antique jewellery as I could. This led to my fascination with antique styles, symbolism and the sentimentality behind jewellery – and to my appreciation for gemmology. I began dabbling in simple bead and wirework jewellery and learned pearl restringing to create affordable antique-inspired pieces, mostly for myself. I later paused this sideline to focus on becoming a valuer. I obtained my FGA, DGA and CAT while continuing retail work.



While learning more about valuing jewellery, a new understanding of manufacturing techniques and processes opened up to me. I did a short goldsmithing course and watched tutorials, determined to know exactly how "that Art Deco-inspired pavé set panel ring" had been assembled. My awareness of what a horrible solder seam looked like kept me making and perfecting techniques. I launched an Etsy shop, then rented an office space in a gallery. I displayed my work, put a bench in the corner for quiet valuing days and gathered custom orders based on my design ideas.

A mindset turning point followed. While at the IRV Conference, I listened and later talked to Harriet Kelsall, then NAJ chair. She'd just launched *The Creative's Guide to Starting a Business*, which I bought and devoured. I saw that growing a retail jewellery business organically was achievable, and I was already on the right track.

Customer experience is at the forefront of what we do. Every piece created has meaning and value beyond the intrinsic; it's precious because of the story behind it. Bespoke is much of our work, and we also offer our own in-house collections – small-scale UK-production, hand-made, finished or assembled and from recycled materials. We also offer a small selection of local jewellery designers' pieces. I was acutely aware how many designers had lost their revenue streams during the pandemic and wished to support my fellow makers. It also enables us to offer a greater variety of styles and designs without compromising on our core values.

I've been a personal member of NAJ since the beginning of my jewellery career; it's educated, inspired and supported me. It seems only natural that now it will be there to do the same for my store.

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Featured item: 124773

NEW FACES

From the warmth of gold tones to shots of colour and urban black... our edit of this season's horological releases.



1. TIMEX

The Waterbury Traditional Chronograph calls back to early Timex. Inspired by the 1854 Waterbury Clock Company, the style echoes in its details, nuanced finishing, stainless steel construction and ageless aesthetics. The metallic indices bring depth to the midnight or silver tone dial, while the stylised W logo graces the dial, crown and sweeping second hand. Available with either a sustainably sourced black leather strap or a stainless steel bracelet.

2. MAURICE LACROIX

The reimagined Fiaba model keeps its distinctive character while adding a dose of urban chic. Feedback from focus groups has led to the creation of a smooth, ergonomic wrist-hugging bracelet. The underside of each link has a small recess for extra wearer comfort. The watch comes in different sizes, dial colours and, in some cases, has a moon phase display. The centre of the dial features a circlet of 46 SI diamonds (0.1242 carats), for added glamour.

3. G-SHOCK

G-SHOCK's new Metal Covered 2100 features standout faces in sky blue, forest green or black, with Bluetooth and Tough Solar technology. The unique metallic watch face design is achieved using vapour deposition, while a phosphorescent finish enhances readability in the dark. Water resistant to 200m, the watch has an alarm, stop watch, countdown and mute functions, automatic calendar, displays world time and has a bio-based resin band.

4. FREDERIQUE CONSTANT

To mark the 25th anniversary of Frederique Constant's Highlife collection, the brand has introduced two new variations of the 41mm Chronograph Automatic. The first has a rose gold-plated case and a midnight blue dial. The second, limited to 1888 pieces, features a steel case with an opaline dial and green counters for a contemporary sporty look. Both are powered by the FC-391 calibre, with a 60-hour power reserve and have interchangeable straps.

5. BELL&ROSS

Following 2022's launch of the Artline collection, the new 40mm BR 05 Artline Steel & Gold (limited to 99 pieces) features the same strong design inspired by the Art Deco movement, with the exclusive and refined touch of precious metal. The 18ct rose gold bezel and central links of the integrated bracelet are fluted for a distinctive look, reminiscent of the aluminium fuselages of 1940s cruise planes. The second hand is also gold.

6. BREMONT

Bremont introduces the Terra Nova field watch collection, referencing and inspired by early 20th-century military pocket watches. It has all the hallmarks of these original timepieces: rugged elegance, practicality, simplicity and functionality. The contemporary stainless steel geometrical cushion case has a combination finish of brushed and polished texturing. New quick release stainless steel bracelet, NATO strap and leather strap are available.



7. EMILE CHOURIET

The stainless steel 41mm Challenger Cliff Skeleton combines a striking, sporty aesthetic with the functionality synonymous with the collection. Inspired by the rugged terrain of the Swiss Alps, the new open dial reveals the Swiss automatic mechanical movement. Water resistant to 50m, the watch has a three-link steel bracelet, Super-LumiNova hour markers and a minimum power reserve of 38 hours.



8. ORIENT

Orient has introduced four new Orient Bambino 38 models to its Classic Collection, featuring a small seconds subdial and a thinner case to enhance wearability. Available in classic black, silver and ivory, it has a dial featuring a subtle sunray finish and matte coating for a gentle warmth. The calf straps accompanying all models complement the colours. The new models are powered by an automatic in-house calibre and come with time and date indicators.



9. JUNGHANS

The new Pilot Automatic continues the aviation–timekeeping bond. A milestone in the history of Junghans' aviation timepieces, this is the pilot's wristwatch the company developed in the 1950s for the then freshly established German armed forces. This new model incorporates the iconic design of the historical watch, with a reduced number of display and large numerals, for increased legibility. The stainless steel cases are matte black or satin finish.



10. MEISTERSINGER

MeisterSinger watches show the time without the minute and second hands of conventional versions, encouraging a relaxed approach to time. Two new Unomat models feature a blackened DLC case and crisp, clear dial optics in deep blue and orange with intense luminosity. With a screw-down crown, extra-strong steel case back, 30 bar water resistance and antimagnetic protection, the Unomat is the sportiest watch in the MeisterSinger collection.



11. RADO

The new versions of the Captain Cook High-Tech Ceramic Skeleton and True Square Skeleton come in urban shades of late-night blue. The big bold case of the latter has, for the first time, a blue rubber strap that matches the case and a newly designed clasp using a high-tech ceramic cover, also in blue. A R808 calibre with a Nivachron™ hairspring, chosen for its resistance to shocks, temperature fluctuations and magnetic fields, ensures absolute precision.



12. OMEGA

The Speedmaster 38mm collection, launched in 2017, has expanded to include eight new models – two in Omega's 18ct Sedna™ Gold with brown dials, two in 18ct Moonshine™ Gold with green dials (seen here) and four in stainless steel with a choice of two dial colours. As well as a diamond-pavé bezel, each watch has three diamond-ringed oval subdials, a vertical oval date window and diamond-polished rhodium-plated Super-LumiNova hands.

13. SWISS MILITARY BY CHRONO

The new Chronograph Quartz watch features a robust stainless steel case with a sunray dial with luminous hands and indices, and it has a durable and scratch-resistant sapphire crystal. The rotating bezel's colour matches the dial – black, cobalt blue and red. This newest addition to the family incorporates a split-second counter, a 30-minute counter and a 10-hour counter in the three sub-dials and a date display at the 4 o'clock position.

14. TISSOT

Tissot introduces two additions to its sport special edition lineup: the PR 100 Tour de France and the PR 100 La Vuelta a España, completed by standard models in the PR 100 collection. All have a sleek design and minimalist aesthetics, and the two special editions have cases in 316L durable and resistant stainless steel. The dials feature an asphalt-grained black and a bicycle-shaped second hand in the iconic yellow of the Tour de France or red of La Vuelta.

15. SEIKO

The Presage Cocktail Time GMT collection features three new watches, with GMT functionality for the first time. Skydiving, Rusty Nail and Acacia are inspired by Japanese cocktail culture and drinks from the Star Bar in Tokyo's Ginza area. The hour hand is inspired by a cocktail glass stem; the second hand, by a cocktail stirrer. With Arabic numerals, the watches track two time zones simultaneously and are powered by an in-house calibre, with a 41-hour power reserve.



16. ZEPPELIN

This men's automatic watch with GMT and leather strap features a Citizen-Miyota 9075, 24 jewels movement. With a stainless steel, 42mm case, the classic style, the made-in-Germany timepiece is water resistant to 5 bar and has a K1 safety mineral glass. The beige night-glow dial is off-set by silver numerals and idices.



The Connoisseur's Guide to Fine Timepieces

By the European Watch Company **£150, Assouline**

A must – surely – for all timepiece collectors and afficionados, this weighty hardcover tome, snug in its luxury slipcase, should grace all fine watch emporiums. It's a testament to the passion and expertise that has defined Boston US-based European Watch Co. – helmed by father-and-son team Albert and Joshua Ganjei – since its inception in 1993. It has stories of more than 150 of the rarest and most exceptional watches, each meticulously crafted to withstand the test of time.

The vast range of models featured includes elegant classics, technical marvels, mythical limited editions, avant-garde styles and rare vintage finds, plus timeless treasures from independent makers and venerable houses. It explores some of the most sought-after models by the likes of Patek Philippe, Audemars Piguet, A Lange & Sohne, Rolex and Cartier. And alongside large glossy images are the what and the why of each piece, as well as forensically detailed close ups and inspirational images.

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Heulwen Lewis Bespoke

Harpenden-based Sarah Heulwen-Lewis talks to Belinda Morris about her jewellery journey.



When did you realise your future was in jewellery?

Designing and making has been an integral part of me since I was tiny – I spent hours beading new necklaces from my nanna's broken jewellery. My love for jewellery flourished when I started my foundation course at Hereford Art College.

Describe your training

When I started my BA at North Wales School of Art, I trained on the bench – from hand piercing to setting, enamelling, resin and more. This wonderful course allowed me to experiment and learn vital skills. During my master's at London College of Fashion, the skills came together, and it pushed me to the limit. The fabrication had to be to the highest standard, with an exceptional design concept. My love for bespoke blossomed; the course focused on creating timeless art/fashion, well away from fast fashion.

In my first job, with Arabel Lebrusan, I discovered CAD. I taught myself the basics, took a three-day course and got a job with CAD guru Jack Meyer. Six months later, I joined Weston Beamor's workshop – an amazing, cherished experience. I worked alongside the best setters/mounters in the country. Being in the trade helped hone my bench skills/knowledge, but needing to go back to designing, I finally found the confidence to start Heulwen Lewis Bespoke in 2017.

Did working with Arabel inspire sustainability goals?

Sustainability was part of my educational journey. Working with Arabel did, of course, further my love for sustainability – her devotion, ethics, knowledge and expertise were inspirational. I started to grasp what 'ethical' actually meant; there's SO much to it. It can make such a difference, not just to carbon footprint, but in the sentiment each piece carries.

How challenging is it to work sustainably?

When I started Heulwen Lewis Bespoke, it was tricky to design very complex items using clients' own metals. It used to be quite a painful process; I wanted the high-end look but finding a workshop to do own-casts was near impossible, so I had to alter accordingly.

However, since Covid, the love for upcycling has risen, workshops are moving with the changes and it's becoming easier to use clients' own gold in design styles. Sustainability has and will become bigger and bigger. People want to know the source of their gems, diamonds and gold and how they can contribute to making their bespoke item sustainable.

Over the last three years, remodelling commissions have soared to 80-90 per cent. It's the ultimate route in sustainable sourcing – and each piece tells a story. It's also a way of creating high-end jewellery for less, so my clients massively favour it.

When designing, I source diamonds/gemstones from reputable companies that can tell me the stones' origin. Gold, silver and platinum are recycled, whether from the client or by the workshop, and for client pieces, I solely use UK manufacturers.

How important is the bridal market for you?

While remodelling showcases what I can do, I adore bridal! Since starting, I've designed a lot of bridal, but my personal work doesn't show a great portfolio of choice – I don't want to advertise off the shelf styles. I'd love to create a collection in the next year that focuses more on engagement and wedding rings, maybe even bigger pieces, like tiaras. I have some lovely ideas, but being self-employed with no investor means I have to make difficult financial choices about what to concentrate on.

I love your bridal button idea – how did that come about?

I've had the idea for SO long. Wedding buttons are generally fairly basic – a forgotten detail. They could be so much more, a lovely personal special feature. In December 2022, I spoke with wedding dress designer Lisa Lyons, who explained sizes and proportions to ensure the buttons would work both practically and aesthetically.

After the big day, the buttons can be forever pieces, so making components for them to sit on was crucial. They also need to be easy for clients to take off and put on. They're a modern replacement for what might have been a brooch or other heirloom piece gifted as a bride's something old. Now we can create something new to be passed on, and depending on the button, it could also be something blue.

Why is being an NAJ member important to you?

I became a member a couple of years ago. It's amazing being a part of a network of jewellers, all supporting each other. Everyone is very helpful; I've had many chats with CEO Ben Massey, who's always incredibly supportive.

At my first NAJ Summit, I met Gaynor Haylett-Mustafa – she was so friendly, and we instantly bonded. She now independently values my jewellery pieces and is a vital part of my business, as well as a friend. Being a member makes me feel part of a team – it can be a little lonely running your own business sometimes.

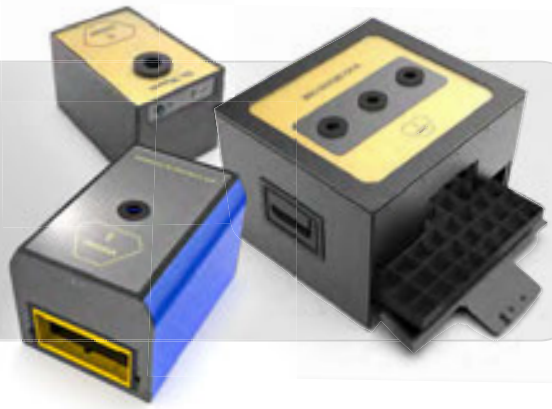


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In the latest instalment of Better Business, we arm you with knowledge and tools to help your business in e-commerce, responsible practices and social media marketing.

Seasoned consultant Sally Leonard addresses a common business challenge – managing content across various social media platforms. Are you investing time and resources in unnecessary channels while your target audience is elsewhere? It could be a costly mistake.

Sustainability expert Victoria Waugh offers a comprehensive toolkit to assist jewellers in adopting sustainable practices. And Jackson Howell from Riselabs shares best practice for optimising your e-commerce website.

If you are an NAJ member, you can get more Better Business advice on our website,

naj.co.uk/Member-Area/Better-Business (login required)

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Member Benefits: Staff, Shows and Standards



Whether you need help recruiting new staff, reaching new customers at the UK's biggest dedicated jewellery trade show or learning about essential business regulations, the NAJ offers targeted benefits for your business.

PEOPLE POWER

Despite the many challenges confronting businesses, there are some evergreen issues companies contend with, no matter the economic or political climate. One such challenge is staffing, both recruiting and retaining.

Every business faces the challenge of finding the perfect staff. In the NAJ, members have access to discounted rates on JET programmes, which are widely recognised in the industry for their effectiveness in training and staff retention (see more about our new JET Management and Leadership qualification on page 60). The NAJ also provides a valuable yet lesser-known resource: the vacancies page on its website.

This platform is a direct avenue for businesses to connect with potential employees. As a member of the NAJ, you can submit job listings for free, enabling your organisation to effectively promote open positions to your ideal audience. We share these listings once a month in the Loupe, our popular email newsletter, which is read by members and the wider trade community. This additional exposure enhances the likelihood of reaching the ideal candidate for your staffing needs.

Share your job vacancies with us, completely free: naj.co.uk/submit-a-job



SHOW ME, SHOW ME

The Jewellery Show is only a matter of days away (check out the preview on page 14). In its new home of Olympia, London, it promises to be the UK jewellery destination this autumn.

September is always a busy month, with buying group events and larger industry-wide shows. If you're a supplier, making sure you are visible while getting value for money is crucial. For an industry like the jewellery sector, these in-person events are even more vital – they're how buyers get hands on with the latest products. For this reason, we are delighted to confirm a multi-year partnership with the Jewellery Show and the continued discount for NAJ members exhibiting at the show.

As the Jewellery Show grows in size and ambition, it is important for the NAJ to support the trade through discounted stand presence and being onsite and available to members and non-members.

We're excited to see what this year's show brings and look forward to revealing more about our comprehensive partnership.

Visit us at stand L54 from September 1st.

JUST IN REACH

Ensuring legal compliance is something we take very seriously at the NAJ; it is why we invest in our codes of practice, after all. With so many regulations affecting the jewellery trade, it can take time to stay informed of obligations. This is particularly true for more technical regulations, such as REACH (Regulation, Evaluation, Authorisation of Chemicals).

Thankfully, the Birmingham Assay Office provides accessible and engaging online courses. Even better, as an NAJ member, you are eligible for a 15 per cent discount on the course booking.

The course gives jewellery buyers, technical personnel, quality assurance teams, consultants, and internal auditors essential insights into the key regulations impacting jewellery and consumer products.

You'll also learn about other essential regulations and best practices to ensure compliance and safety in the jewellery industry. With practical insights and comprehensive coverage, this course is perfect for anyone looking to mitigate risks and uphold regulatory standards

If you are an NAJ member, you have an exclusive discount using the code NAJ15. The next course is on November 19th. Scan the QR code for further information

Dos and Don'ts for e-commerce



Building, engaging and optimising your online store with Jackson Howell from Riselabs.

The allure of the digital marketplace is undeniable, and for jewellery retailers, embracing e-commerce is not just an option but a necessity. As customer shopping habits evolve, an online presence offers unmatched opportunities to expand your reach and enhance your brand's visibility.

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

Do **maintain brand consistency:** Use consistent language and colour schemes across all platforms, strengthening brand recognition and ensuring your business is immediately identifiable on social media or your main website.

Do **implement responsive design**: Ensure your website is responsive across all devices to enhance user experience and caters to the increasing mobile shopper base.

Don't **overcomplicate design:** Avoid cluttering your website with excessive design elements. A clean, elegant layout allows your products to stand out and makes navigation more accessible to your customers.

Don't **neglect SEO:** Don't underestimate the power of search engine optimisation. Use relevant keywords and structured data to improve visibility and attract more visitors to your site.

ENHANCING USER EXPERIENCE

Do **use high-quality visuals:** Employ high-resolution images and detailed videos to capture the details of your jewellery. Consider integrating virtual sizing tools to help customers visualise the items, enhancing the online shopping experience.

Do **streamline inventory management**: Use efficient inventory management systems to update stock levels in real time, ensuring customers see what's available, preventing frustration and improving satisfaction.

Don't **overlook mobile users:** Don't design your website only for desktop users. Ensure mobile users have an equally smooth experience, with optimised layouts and quick load times.

Don't **ignore user feedback:** Avoid disregarding customer feedback about the user experience. Regularly solicit input through surveys or feedback forms and use this information to make continuous improvements.

MOBILE OPTIMISATION

Do **ensure responsiveness:** Make sure your website is responsive on all devices. This ensures your site is easy to navigate and visually appealing on any screen. A mobile-friendly site is crucial as more customers shop via smartphones and tablets.

Do **optimise for speed:** Prioritise quick loading times. Optimise images and use caching to enhance performance. Mobile users often have less patience for slow-loading pages, which can lead to increased bounce rates.

Don't **ignore testing:** Don't skip thorough testing across mobile devices. Regular testing helps identify and fix issues with display or functionality that could alienate mobile users.

Don't **overload with content:** Avoid cluttering the mobile view with excessive content. Keep it simple and user friendly; too much information can overwhelm users and detract from the main messages or calls to action.

CONVERSION STRATEGIES

Do **place strategic CTAs**: Position call-to-action buttons that naturally catch the eye and encourage users to take the next step. Ensure these CTAs are compelling and clear, driving users smoothly from browsing to purchasing.

Do **simplify the checkout process:** Streamline the checkout to minimise steps and reduce cart abandonment. Use trusted payment gateways to ensure a smooth transaction process.

Don't **overcomplicate choices:** Avoid offering too many options at checkout, which can lead to decision fatigue and abandoned carts. Keep choices simple and direct to facilitate a quick and decisive buying process.

Don't **neglect cart recovery strategies:** Don't miss out on opportunities to recover abandoned carts. Implement follow-up emails and reminders that entice customers to return and complete their purchases.

TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

Do **use secure payment gateways:** Implement trusted payment solutions, like Stripe and GoCardless, to ensure secure transactions. Prominently displaying security badges builds further trust.

Do **clearly state policies:** Articulate your shipping and returns policies transparently. Make them easily accessible on crucial pages, such as FAQs, checkout and product descriptions, to set clear customer expectations.

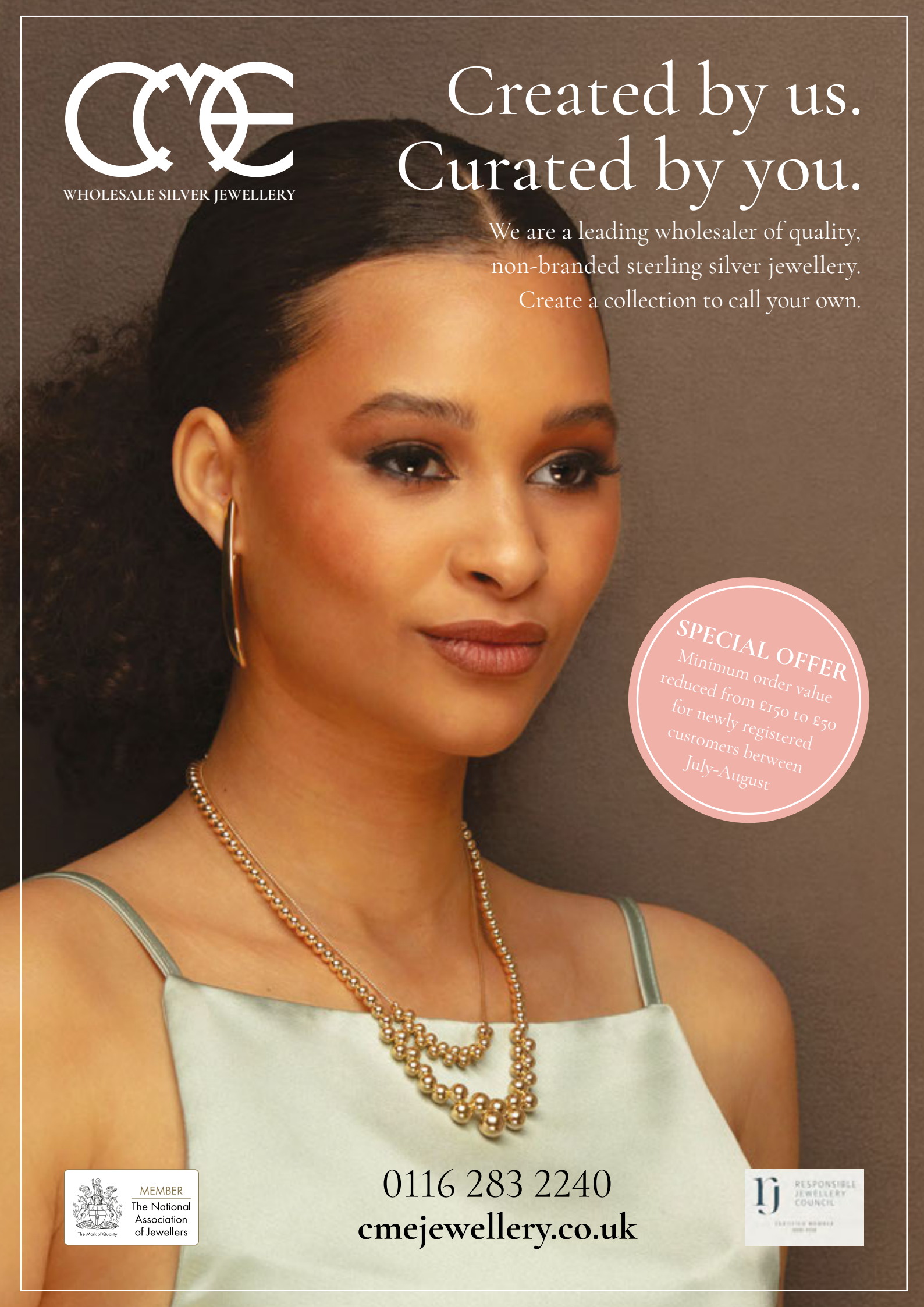
Don't **neglect data protection:** Avoid using unsecured payment systems and ensure your website complies with GDPR to protect customer information.

Don't **hide important information:** Do not obscure or make it difficult to find essential information like shipping costs, return procedures or customer service contacts. Lack of visibility can erode trust and discourage purchases.

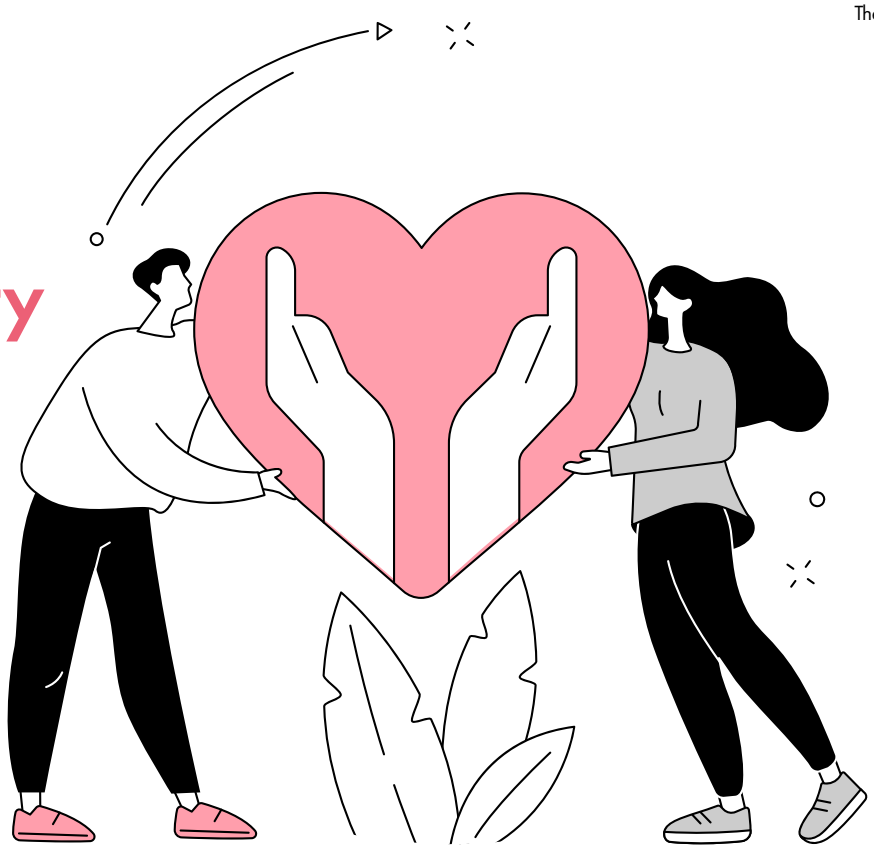
Embracing these dos and don'ts will streamline your jewellery e-commerce operations, enhance customer satisfaction and boost sales.

Remember, the key to successful online retailing is in maintaining a customer-focused approach, consistently optimising your strategies and staying adaptable to change. By implementing these best practices, your online store will shine as brightly as your jewellery.

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The Sustainability Toolkit



However big your business, making sure it is sustainable and responsible is crucial. Sustainability consultant **Victoria Waugh** shares some handy tools.

Understanding the social and environmental impact of your jewellery business is vital, as consumers and legislators demand greater transparency. However, navigating this complex landscape can be overwhelming, with each path presenting its own challenges and opportunities. If you need support setting a clear strategy for your business and prioritising your efforts, try these tools:

FOR BIGGER BUSINESSES OR THOSE WHO WANT TO DIG IN DEEP:

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Compass

You have likely heard of the United Nations SDGs but may not have considered them for your business. The SDG Compass helps you do just that.

The SDGs define 17 priorities all businesses should work towards by 2030, covering poverty, climate change and gender equality. The Compass walks you through five steps to explore your value chain (looking at raw materials, suppliers, shipping and company operations) and sets targets to improve. Rather than working on all aspects of your business, it encourages you to focus on specific goals with the most impact. For jewellery businesses, this is often about responsible sourcing and consumption (Goal 12).

www.sdgcompass.org

Doughnut Mapping

Sadly, we are not talking jammy doughnuts, but Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economics model, a great tool for assessing the pros and cons of your business and prompt ambitious change. The Doughnut comprises two concentric rings: the social foundation and the ecological ceiling. Between these rings is a doughnut-shaped space in which we are encouraged to position our business activities, so it, and the world around it, can flourish.

Doughnut Mapping is a starting point for analysing how well a business contributes to social issues, such as gender equality, education or social equity. It identifies negative impact on the environment through carbon emissions, waste or chemical use. The results encourage us to move away from focusing on continuous financial growth and turn our attention to the wider benefits we can generate by doing business differently.

www.doughnuteconomics.org

FOR SMALLER BUSINESSES AND THOSE JUST STARTING OUT:

Small Business Sustainability Toolkit

Grab yourself a cup of tea and plough through the Responsible Jewellery Council's toolkit for small businesses. The Tools and Resources section provides a handy checklist to work through and templates for any missing policies and procedures. There is a separate guide specifically for retailers.

www.responsiblejewellery.com/resources/toolkits-and-templates/

Sustainable Development Goals Action Guide

If you are keen to support the Sustainable Development Goals but don't have the resources to complete the Compass analysis, try V&V's SDG Action Guide. It has whole a host of ideas for supporting the Goals, brought to life with examples from other brands.

www.vvcollective.com/resources

Stay connected

One of the best ways to improve and find focus is peer-to-peer learning. Join communities like Fair Luxury and Ethical Metalsmiths to benefit from free resources and workshops and to share knowledge with likeminded businesses.

www.fairluxury.co.uk

www.ethicalmetalsmiths.org

Final thoughts

Your social and environmental strategy constantly evolve. Trying to make it perfect from the beginning may hold you back. Instead, focus on where you can have the most impact and just get started.



PS: Don't forget to use the NAJ's Better Business Health Check. The sustainability section of this online questionnaire takes you through topics that identify where you can make improvements.

Victoria Waugh is a freelance sustainability consultant helping jewellery businesses improve their social and environmental impact and meet certification requirements, such as B Corporation, RJC and Positive Luxury.

She is also co-founder of Considered Jewellery, a consultancy supporting brands to design and manufacture jewellery through responsible supply chains.

www.vvcollective.com
www.consideredjewellery.com/ourservices

The Social Media Trap

Jewellery consultant Sally Leonard explores the love–hate relationship many of us have with social media and the need to be everywhere 24/7

When I work with my clients, the conversation inevitably comes around to social media.

A lot of them tell me they hate it, they feel fake or uncomfortable, they don't know what content they should and shouldn't share. They're unsure which platforms to be on, what hashtags to use, how often to post, video vs still, story vs reel, what time of day to post, what day of the week to post... the list goes on and on.

Many feel pressured to have thousands of followers and high engagement rates on social media. Instead of seeing it as a tool to promote their business, share inspiration and connect with likeminded people and customers, many jewellers feel they're failing if they don't achieve these results.

The truth is they're not failing – they're simply being told to do too much.

Realistically, you don't need to be on everything, and unless you have a dedicated social media team with a person per platform, it's not worth stretching yourself. You're better off concentrating on the platforms where your customers are.

It pays to do the research, so you understand what platform is good for your users and what content performs best. For example, Pinterest is great for attracting actively shopping clients. In contrast, Instagram is a good place to talk about your process, inspiration and product.

A CONTENT CREATOR WHO MAKES VS. A MAKER WHO CREATES CONTENT

Most makers are not content creators; you are makers who create content, showing your products and your inspiration. It's important to remember the difference – one is a full-time job, and the other is a necessary part of promoting your brand. Yes, an active social account is important, but it's not the primary function of your business.

Those fantastic engagement results content creators achieve as the ultimate pinnacle of success, but for most, that business model is neither achievable nor desirable. Most want to make and sell products to more people, without spending every hour on social media. Be wary of those who tell you this level of content is what you need to produce – they either don't understand your business model, or they're selling you something.

I'm a big fan of researching competitors and customers. But they need to be the right competitors and customers. A young brand selling lower-value products entirely through socials is a different beast from a fine jewellery company looking to increase market share in wedding and engagement. There are plenty of businesses turning over significant sums with minimum online presence, so it's key to understand where you sit and what you are trying to achieve when determining your social strategy.

Above all, it's vital to remember: social media is meant to be social. When I look at a brand online, I don't want just to see picture after picture of product. It doesn't matter how pretty it is if it tells me nothing about the brand's values or motivation. It makes every post feel like a sell. And I don't like being sold to – nor does anyone else.

I like to be engaged in a brand's content, with something that tells me more about the people behind it – especially if it's a small business. And I don't mean what hot drink they had that morning (#entrepreneurlife!), I mean what they love about their work, the processes they are proud of and what inspires them to create the wonderful pieces they sell.

In all my years of working with small brands – particularly jewellers – I'm endlessly fascinated by the unique view each and every one has of the world and the creativity this leads to. This is what I love to see on socials, and so do others, including your target customer.

Most importantly, be kind to yourself and think about what's best for you, your business and your customer. Social media marketing can be rewarding if you focus on what you need to do and just use your voice.



ABOUT THE WRITER

Sally Leonard has been a consultant to the jewellery industry for nearly 20 years, specialising in small jewellery businesses across the UK. For questions and more information on her experience and workshops, visit **www.pendeloque.consulting** or email **sally@pendeloque.consulting**











Support and Encouragement when it's Needed

It's not only our traditional way of selling that's suffering, but what we sell is also suffering, says JET Business Network facilitator Michael Donaldson.

For those who know little about the Jet Business Network (JBN), here's a quick overview.

Now in its 19th year, the JBN is a community of independent retail jewellers committed to sharing their knowledge, experience and expertise in a value framework of trust, respect and confidentiality. This enables them to benchmark performance, develop strategic actions, progress professional development and ultimately grow top-line sales and bottom-line profit.

In June, the JBN regional groups gathered in Birmingham for their annual retail congress, now in its 15th year, the theme of which was Think Different – to be Different.

In 2024, consumers continue to shop more online where business rates disadvantage the high street retailers and favour e-tailers, and fewer town centre workers are travelling to their place of work. And then there's the continued consumer growth for purchasing experiences not things – a notion that existed long before the Covid lockdowns super charged it.

Our traditional way of selling is suffering – as is what we sell. The jewellery sector in the last 20 years has seen the price of gold increase by 697 per cent a gram, from £7.45 to £51.92; and the number of precious metal items being hallmarked decreased by 77 per cent. That's 27 million fewer items of jewellery hallmarked in 2023 than in 2003.

Even the ever-dependable category of wedding rings is less dependable, with less than 47 per cent of individuals getting married, according to the 2021 census, and research by Civitas suggests marriage will have all but fizzled out in the next 40 years. Until then, the challenge retailers face is keeping their engagement ring couples, as Brown & Newirth recently shared "80 per cent of engagement ring couples go elsewhere for their wedding rings." In short, some jewellery retailers may be at risk of a declining share in a declining category.

Talking of engagement rings, in May, *The Economist* published an article on De Beers and laboratory grown diamonds: "these brilliant creations are now bulldozing parts of the diamond business and are forecast to account for 20 per cent of the global diamond value this year. Fifty per cent of the 2023 American diamond ring sales contained a laboratory grown stone, AND Pandora's Q1 sales this year of laboratory grown diamonds are up 87 per cent on the same period in 2023."

And it can't have escaped anyone's notice that Swarovski is promoting the future of diamond jewellery with its Created Diamond Collection.

Love them or loathe them – you will need a laboratory grown diamonds strategy.

So, what's a jewellery retailer to do? Answer: think different to become different.

Perhaps the biggest challenge I face with business owners and senior management – aside from time – is the resistance to change (i.e. making it happen). They seek help because they know they need help, but they don't necessarily know where or how to start. They acknowledge the help offered but struggle to make the changes required, whether as leaders, as team players or as individuals, because of their mindset – which is set.

This year's JBN Congress speakers challenged, inspired and provided direction and suggestions on how to break through a set mindset and enable jewellery retailers to think different to become different in digital processes, problem solving, leading people, taxes, self-management and personal priorities.

The JBN is perfectly positioned to support and encourage independent jewellery retailers in the changing world of jewellery retailing, and **when we are not together, we stay together** through our WhatsApp market group, WhatsApp regional groups, newsflash service, online advice forum, business surveys and monthly performance reports.

JBN JET BUSINESS NETWORK

For more information on joining the JBN, visit the NAJ website or call JBN facilitator Michael Donaldson on **07817 305 122**.

The National Association of Jewellers
Shaping the future of jewellery, together.

Coffee? Or business transformation?



Transform your retail business for the price of a daily takeaway coffee with the JET Business Network. Peer-to-peer support, monthly performance reports, regional group meetings, store visits, Q&A forum and much more. Still want that coffee?

JBN JET BUSINESS NETWORK

Contact Michael Donaldson
07817 305 122
michael@thevalueinnovator.co.uk



Security Wise: Parcel Fraud and Theft

TH March advises how to minimise the risk of you or your customers falling victim to package theft.

The world of parcel deliveries has been on an interesting journey since the whirlwind that was Covid-19. Because of social distancing, if no safe place was available or a signature was required, couriers would knock on the door and step back. When the recipient answered, the courier took a photo of the parcel in the open doorway as proof of delivery. However, some couriers were not using this approach and simply leaving items on doorsteps, porches or doorways, which resulted in increased risk of package thefts.

One significant challenge encountered by the parcel industry, both during and since the pandemic, is the rise in parcel fraud and theft through porch piracy, package pilfering, robberies and social engineering.

PORCH PIRACY

Porch piracy is the act of stealing parcels and packages from customers' doorsteps or designated mailboxes, often achieved by criminals trailing delivery vehicles or monitoring tracking numbers. To mitigate the risks associated with porch piracy and minimise shipping expenses:

- Direct deliveries to carrier facilities that offer package storage for convenient recipient pickup
- Disguise the item. Use the largest envelope or packaging to make it more difficult for thieves to pilfer and conceal. It may seem obvious, but never reveal the contents of your package on the outer label
- If customers have a front door that opens on to the street, couriers with a single-delivery policy might leave the parcel on your doorstep they believe is in a perceived safe space
- Recommend your customers choose named-day delivery or collect their package

SOCIAL ENGINEERING FRAUDS

Social engineering is the deceptive manipulation of individuals to obtain confidential information or unauthorised access to parcels, often by posing as customers or delivery services. Such fraudulent activities pose significant risk of financial loss, damage and liability for couriers and clientele.

- Safeguard tracking numbers by restricting access solely to authorised personnel. Exercise caution when responding to emails, calls or messages requesting tracking information
- Implement constraints on your company's carrier accounts to mitigate the likelihood of unauthorised parties rerouting your shipments
- Educate staff on common tactics employed in social engineering scams and encourage them to promptly report any suspicious behaviour
- Always request a signature or photo upon delivery as another level of reassurance for you and your customers that the item(s) arrived safely. This adds greater confidence to the buying process and delivers a better customer experience, which boosts customer loyalty. Improved tracking visibility can go a long way in reducing 'where is my item' enquiries and denial of receipt claims.

Some intended recipients have reported thefts occurring mere minutes after the delivery, indicating a well-coordinated operation by thieves. As couriers rush to deliver packages, they may inadvertently draw the attention of these thieves, who follow them to targeted locations. By implementing these preventive measures, you can significantly reduce the chance of customers falling victim to parcel fraud and theft.

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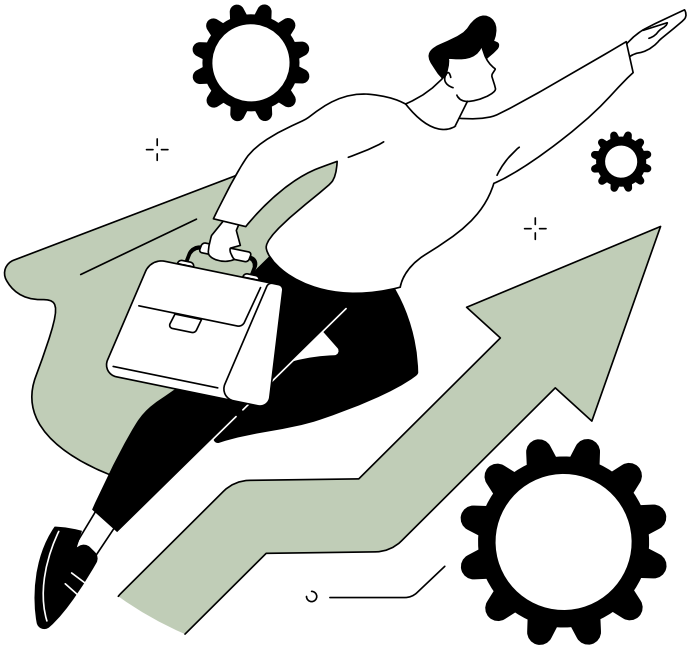
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When you are no longer just one of the team



Mark Corder, the new JET Management and Leadership course facilitator, shares the challenges of moving from team member to manager.

Taking on your first leadership role can be daunting enough, but even more so when you're still in your original team or structure. You've gone from being one of the gang to being their line manager.

Moving to a position where your colleagues – probably friends – are now your responsibility can be quite a challenge. You may not think much will change, but your former peers will see you in a different light as you influence their days, workloads, even their careers.

Be under no illusion that working in a higher rank and senior position with a group of very familiar people is more difficult than taking on a new team. You will have to work hard to gain a new respect and persuade people to work with you and to believe in you.

The last thing you want to do is take the view that you are now superior, the boss, 'your way or the highway', etc. Hopefully, you'll recognise why going down that route is just asking for a rebellion and for your new position to be soon undermined. Rather than throwing your weight around, setting lots of immediate rules and doing things that automatically get people's backs up, try to win them over and confirm that whoever promoted you made a good decision.

The first thing is to promise yourself you will aim to do all the things you value in a good leader, all of the time. Yes, that takes considerable effort, but as people form opinions about your leadership, you want to win over their hearts and minds, so they want to work for you.

Here are a few pointers to help your transition from being one of the team to leading the team:

- **Do not show bias.** Knowing the team already risks favouritism, people you like or dislike. Wipe the slate clean so no one is advantaged or disadvantaged by their previous experiences with you. It will be used against you if you aren't tough on yourself here.
- **Be fair and impartial.** Always listen to both sides before deciding. Don't make judgements on previous experience.
- **Actively listen and respond accordingly.** People know when someone is bored or inattentive.
- **Have empathy.** Consider what it's like in their shoes when your team members need your support.
- **Be trusting.** Let your team make their own decisions and mistakes, so they can learn. People excel when you trust them.
- **Be positive.** Even in challenging times, your team expects you to rise above any negativity, even if you used to get sucked in as part one of the group.
- **Be assertive.** Avoid being aggressive or submissive at all costs – there is rarely a place for either style.
- **Be honest.** If you lie or twist the truth and it comes out, any respect will disappear. People appreciate honesty. It's down to you to deliver bad news if you have to.

You do have one advantage over a person who might be promoted into a new and unfamiliar team – you know all the characters and personalities, including their strengths and weaknesses. This can help you find the right person for the right role quickly or, when you choose, find the right person to develop in a skill or area they may be lacking.

The one thing you cannot afford to do as the new leader of a former team is to remain as everyone's friend. If you do that, the needs of your role will not be met, and you will find yourself explaining to your line manager why things are going wrong. It could mean a short-lived promotion for you. So, keep working at it, remember what it was like to be in their shoes and what you would want from your leader, and commit to being like that.



BE PART OF THE FIRST COHORT

Join the first JET Management and Leadership cohort and get £100 off if you book by 15th of September.

To learn more and register your interest, visit **naj.co.uk/JET-Management-and-Leadership**



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Meet our latest JET Stars

Introducing the four CLARITY & SUCCESS Award winners – the students who submitted outstanding projects in the NAJ's JET1 course.



LOUISE BOWKER, BEAVERBROOKS, MIDDLESBROUGH (February winner)

"I worked for Beaverbrooks in Middlesbrough from February 2022 to October 2023. I love the world of jewellery – it's full of storytelling and history. I also love hearing customer's personal stories. It's always fascinated me how a piece of jewellery can hold so many memories and so much emotion.

While at Beaverbrooks, I worked in different areas of the store, which I loved as I learnt the features and benefits of different types of metals, gemstones, diamonds and watches. I did, however, always have a particular affection for diamond engagement and wedding rings – not much compares to helping people find that one special item they'd wear for the rest of their lives.

Beaverbrooks is passionate about ensuring customers receive the best service possible, so it rewards staff with the chance to take a JET course once they reach a certain level. I heard other members saying how beneficial they found the JET course, so I couldn't wait to begin.

My favourite part of the course was researching my final project and speaking with designer Laura Grisci. I find her inspiring and learnt about how she transformed her drawn designs into very intricate, theatrical pieces of jewellery using her preferred making processes. I also loved putting my personal stamp on how I presented my work, as I would describe myself as a creative person.

The most challenging part was committing my research and thoughts to paper, as I've always struggled with my writing. I hope my award inspires others to know that even if you're not the strongest writer, you can still receive kudos for your creativity, research and passion.

I'd recommend anyone with a passion for jewellery to take JET so you can dive into specific areas. It's a great way to understand how a jewellery item is made, from the beginning of its journey, which I think makes you more eager and capable of sharing information with customers. I also found taking JET opened my eyes to the smaller details in a piece of jewellery, like how and why there are a certain number of claws on a ring, or how the maker adds texture to a metal to enhance appearance. These details can be what makes a customer fall in love with a piece of jewellery.

Since completing my JET1 course, I've moved into costume work for the film and television industry, but it was like being part of a family at Beaverbrooks; everyone supported one another."

JULIA PARKER, PAYNE & SON (March winner)

"After a career in museums, I joined Payne & Son a year and a half ago. I was drawn to working with jewellery and loved the idea of working for a family-run firm with a long history – it was established in 1790 and has been in the same Oxford premises since 1890.

Everyone works across all areas of the business, which makes for a really interesting mix – sales, bespoke, repairs, displays and I also look after our social media. Being involved in all aspects really helped with the JET course, as I'm learning from colleagues all the time – they have such a vast amount of experience to draw on.

The JET courses are available to all employees here, and it's a really good way to get to grips with the basics of the jewellery trade. Coming from a different background, JET helped me build my knowledge. I really enjoyed learning about the different gemstones, and the history behind their discovery and use through the ages. We don't sell watches at Payne & Son, though, so that part of the course was a much steeper learning curve for me.



Diamonds are such a key part of the jewellery trade, so it's important to have as much information as possible when speaking to customers. I found researching this area really interesting, and learning about the legal aspects of diamond production and sales added a whole new level of knowledge. It's also fascinating to look at famous gems and jewellery through the ages to understand how they have influenced trends.

For my final project, I chose to write about the designer Elsa Tierney. I saw Elsa's work at Forge in Hatton Garden – I loved the sleekness and style of her jewellery. I'm a big fan of Georg Jensen, which we sell at Payne & Son, and Elsa's work has the same classic simplicity. It was fun looking into her inspirations and seeing how they translated into her designs. She has also inspired me to try creating jewellery using the wax carving technique, which she also teaches.

Learning about different gemstones and cuts has been particularly useful, as has studying diamonds. It really helps to be able to talk to knowledgeably to customers about their options.

JET is a great way to increase confidence, especially if you're from a non-jewellery background. I definitely intend to continue studying; there's so much still to learn!"

AAYASHA AHMED, BEAVERBROOKS (April winner)

"I changed career in 2017 after working as a primary school teacher for five years. Still passionate about teaching and learning, I wanted more of a work-life balance, and the opportunity to join Beaverbrooks arose. Super excited at the thought of being part of this established family-run business, I applied for a role at our Birmingham Fort branch. Despite having no experience in jewellery and only some experience in retail, my then-manager saw something in me and had enough faith in me to give me this wonderful opportunity.



Currently working part time, I look after our sterling silver department; a colleague and I are responsible for ensuring accurate merchandising, maintained to the highest standard. In a previous store supervisor role, I was the diamond ambassador for the branch, responsible for the merchandising of diamonds and wedding rings as well as coaching and mentoring for diamond sales in the store.

Several colleagues had mentioned they'd completed the JET course and had thoroughly enjoyed it. I'd started the course previously but could not complete it because of unforeseen circumstances. I was later encouraged to take JET again, by our learning and development lead, Kate Fielding, and my current manager, Lizy Hurford. Beaverbrooks supports all staff to complete the JET course and pays all fees.

Every assignment gave me the opportunity to learn and further develop my passion for jewellery. However, studying precious gemstones in the second assignment was truly fascinating; researching rare and precious gemstones, like rubies, sapphire and padparadscha, gave me further insight and appreciation for these treasures.

The final project was JET's most challenging aspect with multi-faceted topics and research... but I very much enjoyed it. I wrote about Swarovski – the crystals' formation and their performance is truly spectacular. I've always enjoyed wearing and selling their beautiful products, and Swarovski's vision of creating affordable luxury is one we share at Beaverbrooks, which makes it closer to my heart.

Taking JET has allowed me to continue to develop my passion for learning and has deepened my understanding of fine jewellery, precious metals and gemstones. Developing selling skills definitely enhances interactions with our customers, as we explain about the extensive features and benefits of their purchases. I'd love to continue such courses to continuously build on and improve our craft and gain professional qualifications.



ROBYN WHEELER, GALIO (May winner)

"I've worked at Galio in St Albans for two years. After many years working in a high-end department store, tailoring designer items and services to customers, engaging with new forms of creativity was an exciting prospect. I've always had a fascination with the natural world and gemstones – I collected agate slabs, amethyst crystals, tumbled stones and gemmology books. Now I can put all that to use and share it with others to help find the perfect piece.

I work in all areas of the store, which keeps me learning and able to use the jewellery and watch knowledge I've gained during my time here and through JET. But I'm drawn towards our pre-owned section – many of these items have history and design features that aren't seen so much today. I do additional work with our social media, photographing and recalling the pre-owned pieces' technical and aesthetic qualities – all fuelling my thirst for knowledge.

JET explored so many areas of the industry I'm interested in – I knew it would enhance and deepen my understanding of some, while teaching me about many others. The reading material helped to explain the more general knowledge I already had, specifically repair and manufacturing/fabrication processes – essential as we do a lot of repair work. My boss encouraged me to enrol in the course and gave me such confidence; I couldn't be more thankful for this opportunity.

I most enjoyed learning the technical details and specific attributes of the many coloured gemstones and their family groups. It prepared me for sales conversations, especially when more bespoke and creative (re)creations arise. JET's most challenging areas were the specificity of diamonds. Before the course, I was aware of cut shape and very little else. JET illuminated this blurrier area of my understanding, so now I'm far more prepared to discuss and advise the public on diamonds.

I chose designer Leen Heyne for my final project – his work is beautiful and harmonious, with visually bold yet delicate designs, and an attention to colour. The ductility of the rose and grey golds he uses allows him to hand-fabricate forms organically with such skill to subtly surround a diamond of similar colour tone.

I've used all the areas of the course in my day-to-day work. For example, although I don't work on watch repairs, the training material for the model-specific watch workings and features certainly has helped me advise what's best for a 'broken' watch, as well as when selling a new watch in-store.

I want to learn more, which will lead to further study. I hope to have a better skill set for contemporary methods of digital design and bespoke, alongside sketching skills. I also want to delve deeper into antique jewellery styles and skills and hallmarks."

Want to learn how JET qualifications can help your business?

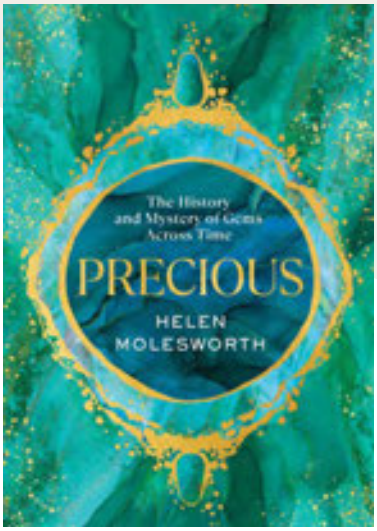
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Gemstone history and Scottish Renaissance jewellery

Two books combining art, science, culture, history and emotion as they uncover gemmological and jewellery stories.



Precious – the history and mystery of gems across time

By Helen Molesworth

£30, Doubleday

This lovely book opens with the author's introduction, setting the scene and opening a world she is clearly passionate about. It's even more engaging because it's so personal – why and how she fell for gemstones. She explains that she's made a life and a 25-year career in gems, not just for the love of them but because the line of work is "almost a perfect synthesis of every subject under the sun... history and politics, archaeology and engineering, geography and geology, chemistry and physics, psychology and romance, fine art and high finance... something for everyone." *Precious* touches on all these subjects.

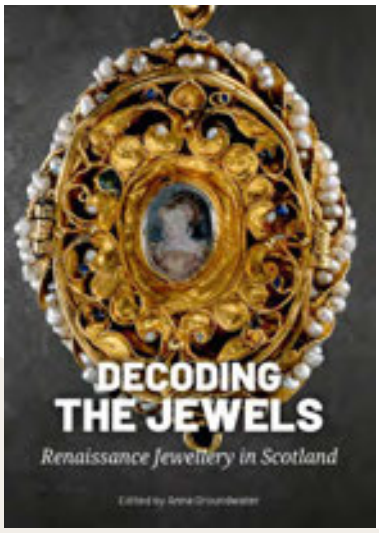
With a chapter devoted to the 10 most important gemstones (emerald, ruby, sapphire, garnet, diamond, coloured diamonds, spinel, pearl, jade and quartz), jewellery historian and gemmologist Helen illustrates this synthesis, merging knowledge and passion as she does so. Her own sight and handling of important and fascinating jewels and stones (such as a huge emerald encasing a timepiece from the Cheapside Hoard) and her often challenging, occasionally dangerous visits to mines (rubies in Mogok, Myanmar, emeralds in Colombia and sapphires in Sri Lanka) add to the rich storytelling. Her insights and personal asides enhance it further.

With each stone, she deep dives into its geology, discovery, history (ancient and modern), myths, legends, quantifiable values and human associations, giving a completely holistic picture and told in a highly readable, digestible manner. Between the science, insightful snippets and emotion leap from the pages. For instance: "the long-held connection between ruby and lifeblood and vitality... a belief that has translated across time and different cultures" or sapphire "a gem that tells a story of love, loss and legacy."



Muzo emerald, Courtesy of Sothebys.

Recommended reading for anyone with a professional or personal love of gemstones.



Decoding the Jewels – Renaissance Jewellery in Scotland

National Museums of Scotland.

Edited by Anna Groundwater

£35, Sidestone Press. shop.nms.ac.uk

Edited by Dr Anna Groundwater, principal curator, Renaissance and Early Modern History, National Museums Scotland, this book was inspired by the acquisition of the Fettercairn Jewel and throws light on it, alongside other pieces in the NMS's important collection of Renaissance jewellery from Scotland. The rare survival of such jewels from this period can, in certain cases, be attributed to their association with Mary Queen of Scots. Thus, *Decoding the Jewels* covers historical context and political conflict as well as aesthetics and craftmanship.

Experts from the key Scottish Collections delve into the making, meaning and function of the pieces featured, and jewellery expert Geoffrey Munn analyses the Fettercairn Jewel – an enamelled locket that held coded messages for its 16th-century owners. His detailed unpicking of the symbolism behind the use of particular gemstones and the enamelled imagery on the reverse (Mercury in a landscape of flora and fauna) leads him to conclude the locket was a love token. Maybe so, maybe not.

That the portrait that would have been inside the locket – which was discovered in a drawer in Fettercairn House in Aberdeenshire in 2017 – is missing, adds to its mystery and is also explored. Whose was it? Was the locket purchased or inherited? The use of gold and enamel dates it to 1570 to 1600, but was it made in Scotland or maybe England or France? Certainly, close links between Scotland and Europe at that time led to the circulation of ideas, skills and labour... which affected jewellery.

More clues emerge in the analysis of the Darnley Jewel, helping to explain who commissioned this locket and why. Evidence points to Lady Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox (a niece of Henry VIII), and the dramatic circumstances that led to the making of the piece, which was eventually bought by Horace Walpole and then Queen Victoria for her private collection.

There's much more to learn and digest about these portable statements of wealth, power and emotion in this well-illustrated book.



Fettercairn Jewel, c.1560-80. Image © National Museums Scotland

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The last word goes to...

Isabel Rhodes

In March, Isabel Rhodes became CEO of the Houlden Group. Now we place her under the Last Word spotlight.

You have worked in several sectors – what drew you to this position?

I heard about the job through a friend; I had never heard of Houlden. I was interested in joining a business with growth potential both for myself and also for the business. And I was excited to learn about a new culture... especially one with such a rich history and heritage – a total of 3,361 years of it among Houlden members! It will be a real privilege to use my skill set here.

I have a passion for jewellery – that it crosses all age demographics and cultures – and I've such an admiration for the dedication, artistry and skills involved. The personal and sentimental aspect of jewellery was also a huge draw (I have my late mother's wedding ring), as was the joy I see in jewellers as they help create memories.

That Houlden's head office is in my home city of Glasgow was a lovely bonus – big ticks!

> We want to invest in education, so we will work in collaboration with others in the sector. Joining the NAJ-hosted, industry-wide round table to discuss trading standards was a great example of this.

How have the first few months shaped up? Has getting to know the jewellery world been an interesting learning curve?

What's immediately apparent is this is such a friendly industry. Everyone has been so welcoming and helpful. It was very important for me to understand the dynamics of the board of extremely committed and passionate people. I did a lot of homework before I joined, and their mission and values are important to me.

With the board and the team, I spent a long time listening, absorbing and reflecting, before pulling the threads together and working with their strengths.

What do you feel you can bring to the Houlden Group? What skills have you brought from previous roles and sectors that transfer to the jewellery industry?

There are quite a few! I have a strong retail leadership and commercial background; I understand, relate to and can support with the challenges it faces. I have experience in strategic planning and can identify business opportunities – I've always been positive about growth.

I use data insights a lot – they're very important – and I feel very strongly about relationship building and networks, about alliances and cohesive collaborative partnerships. As well as commercial negotiation skills, I have strong people skills. Elevating Houlden and its members is about inspiring people.

What aspects of the jewellery industry have surprised you and what challenges do you see it – and Houlden Group members – facing today?

Ethical sourcing and sustainability have been an eye-opener – in everything from waste to social responsibility, I see a great opportunity. Other eye-openers: the passion of jewellery designers, ongoing changes in customer preferences, digital transformation and evolving AI.

The continuing economic situation is obviously challenging, but I see positivity and resilience in the sector.

What are your plans for Houlden?

I will support our existing members (as well as our great suppliers) through the challenges by providing resources and opportunities. Education is very important – we have our training academy – and we want to invest in education, so we will work in collaboration with others in the sector. Joining the NAJ-hosted, industry-wide round table to discuss trading standards was a great example of this.

Meanwhile, we're looking forward to our member event (from the 9th to the 11th September), which has a new name – Leaders in Luxury: The September Showcase.

What three words describe you best – in your view?

Visionary, influential and resilient

What keeps you awake at night?

I have an amazing and supportive husband who helps me to live life for now. But what does keep me awake is wondering whether I am a good enough mother for my 17-year-old daughter. I hope, though, I am a good role model.



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