The mark of industry inspiration & information

Winter 2023

THE Jeweller

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AMAZING SPACES

New luxe store refurbs

NEW MALE ORDER

Bling for the boys

SHOW TIME

Dispatches from the trade fairs

The National Association of Jewellers

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The National Association of Jewellers

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FROM

The Editor



I love it when a plan comes together – or to be more precise, I love it when I have a strong feeling for a magazine feature – and then it actually works out. I love it when I decide (occasionally on a whim) something is a trend worth following up... and it turns out to be true! It's like wish fulfilment, but with – I'd like to think – a degree of wisdom thrown in. I'm still pushing for tiaras to be an all-day, everyday thing, but in the meantime, I'm very happy my feeling for the growing strength of men's jewellery is on the nose.



What I'm less sure about is whether it's OK to say 'men's jewellery' – the phrase can elicit a sharp intake of breath and disapproving frowns from some quarters. But to make it clear – all people can wear all jewellery. However, it's perfectly OK for some brands and designers to focus their creative attention on pieces that appeal to men, in particular those less likely to care for delicate florals and pastels. What's exciting, though, is the growing number of men flexing their aesthetic muscles and wearing traditionally female jewellery – like pearls and diamonds. I love it. Turn to page 24 to see how much.

My feeling for this category was confirmed not by Harry Styles and Instagram alone, but by attending the three UK trade shows this autumn. The Jewellery Festival, Jewellery Show and the CMJ's Autumn Trade Event were all rich sources of market trend inspiration – the other hot topic being the what? who? how much? and should-we? of laboratory grown diamonds. We'll probably never reach a consensus, but attendance at panel discussions on the subject prove the desire for discussion and knowledge is strong. For reports on all three shows, see pages 18, 28 and 34.

Walking the – very fancy – aisles of Goldsmiths' Fair (think plush carpets, chandeliers, gold-leaf ceiling) is, for me, less about trend-spotting and more about pretend shopping. I take my best ballpoint and most discreet notebook and make like the other visitors, pretend to be a potential client looking for her next beautiful self-purchase or gift. I've spent thousands, I've tested the tolerance of several talented designer makers and my report on this year's Fair is rather self-indulgent. Sorry, not sorry! (See page 40 for my virtual haul.)

It's not all about me, though. In this issue are industry insights that John Henn gathered at the CIBJO Congress in India (page 36). We also introduce you to three businesses that recently joined the NAJ... welcome to Armitage Tools, Aril Jewels and Lustre & Love (page 54). We take a look at just a few swish jewellery store refurbishments (page 44), and on page 62, we discover why Peter Wong of Wongs Jewellers in Liverpool became a JBN member. His affirmation should prompt those curious to learn more about the network's activities, as should facilitator Michael Donaldson's invaluable business improvement book, reviewed on page 63.

While you're doing that, I'm just off to polish one of my tiaras, ready for The Benevolent Society Ball.

Have a fun and prosperous festive season everyone!



Belinda Morris, Editor

The National Association of Jewellers

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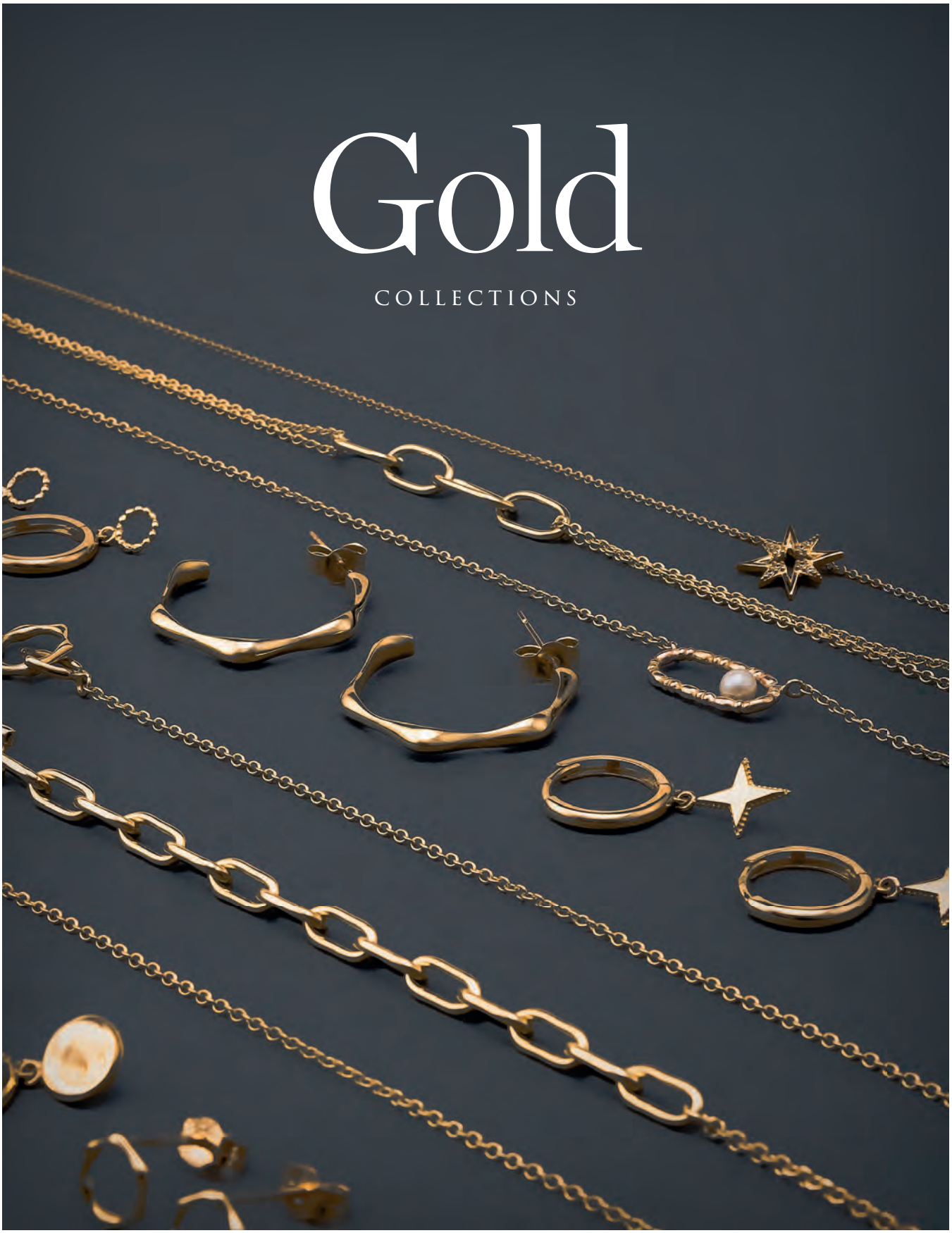
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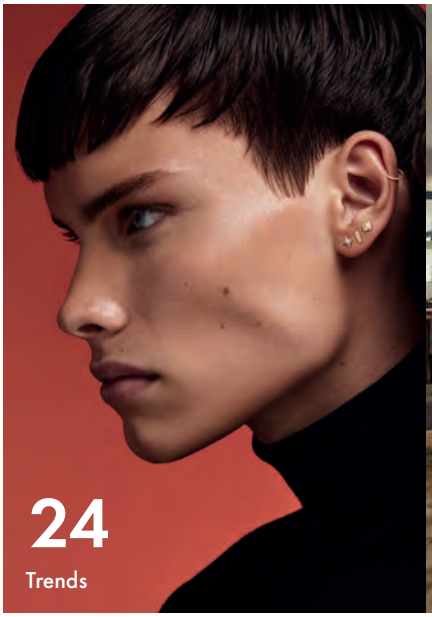
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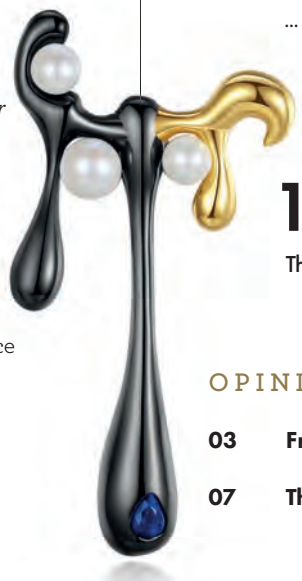
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Chair's Foreword



Congratulations! We've made it to the end of another eventful year. This one threw up more difficulties than were welcome or warranted. Still, it's a testament to the professionalism and tenacity of our members that you continue to meet these challenges head-on, with the NAJ by your side, of course.

However, I don't want my last chair's foreword of the year to be all doom and gloom – I want to look forward to what the NAJ will continue to do for you.

Representation

The NAJ is constantly evolving, adapting to the needs of the trade and changing with the new faces and opinions that make up the Association's National Committee and numerous supporting groups. As the trade association to the UK's jewellery industry, we need to be the voice of the trade. This means providing representation, building influence and momentum with government and trade networks to ensure we're heard and understood as an industry (discover more about how we do this on page 56).

Meaningful representation is only possible if we are also representative as an organisation. This means ensuring our National Committee and supporting groups reflect our members. The success of the NAJ, and by association the trade, depends on people giving their time and expertise to make a difference and improve an industry we all love.

We will issue an invitation to all members for upcoming National Committee places, with formal elections at the 2024 NAJ AGM in June. As someone who has been involved with the Association for nine years, I've found the experience thoroughly rewarding. Being able to shape and influence the industry and work with inspiring, creative and hardworking people from all trade sectors and walks of life has been a career highlight.

Supporting a drive for greater representation across our groups and committees, the NAJ will also establish a designer-craft forum, working with designer communities and collectives to better represent the group's needs. Please ensure you sign up to our mailing list to hear developments in this area.

Professional standards

Those who regularly read my chair's foreword know I often talk about the Association's strategy of shaping professional excellence in the trade. A central pillar of this strategy is educating our members on their legal responsibilities, so they remain compliant.

In 2023, the NAJ has produced a series of industry-specific codes of practice. Working with Trading Standards and other specialist bodies, we are building a valuable library of accessible documents, so you can better understand your legal responsibilities.

The most recent code of practice covers anti-money laundering responsibilities as a high-value dealer (HVD). Given the nature of our luxury trade, many of our members are likely to fall into the HVD category, so understanding legal obligations is crucial.

The NAJ's compliance and policy manager, Katie Gillespie, is developing further codes of practice for publication next year, including gemstone disclosure, greenwashing and hallmarking (*The Jeweller* will share more information in due course). In the meantime, you can access all current codes of practice in your dedicated members area (naj.co.uk/members-area).

Education

As a fellow of the Institute of Registered Valuers, I have an enthusiasm for training and education. Professional development and review are at the heart of the Institute and why trade, public and insurance companies trust its members to deliver accurate and honest appraisals.

Education is also of the utmost importance to the NAJ. In November 2022, the Association was granted end-point assessment accreditation for apprenticeships, opening new routes to train staff in both retail and manufacturing. The first cohorts are now progressing through these apprenticeships, with the initial group of jewellery retail apprenticeships and jewellery manufacturing apprenticeships assessed next year.

On page 57, you'll learn more about our new careers website, designed to attract people into the trade. As part of this launch, we're also building an approved training register that recognises industry-relevant training that is high quality in design and delivery.

Membership benefits and services

As your trade association, the NAJ and those on the National Committee are always available to listen to your business challenges. To best reflect your needs and make meaningful change for our members, it's important we hear from you about the obstacles and difficulties your business faces. Likewise, Team NAJ is always interested in learning more about the member benefits you're using and the benefits you'd like.

Wrapping up 2023, I'd like to dedicate my closing remarks to Chris Sellors, whom we tragically lost in September.

Having known Chris both professionally and personally, I remember him as a beacon of warmth and kindness. His unwavering support and assistance touched many in our industry. His guidance was invaluable to me during my early days, and I know many share that experience. Beyond his successes, Chris's passion, determination and vision were instrumental in realising his dream of the CW Sellors Carsington Centre. While his absence is deeply felt, we'll continue to honour and celebrate his legacy. I invite you to delve further into Chris's remarkable journey and contributions on page 8.

Wishing you a happy and prosperous new year. See you in 2024!



Heather Callaway, NAJ Chair

To learn more about the NAJ's governance, structure and volunteers, visit **naj.co.uk/about**

Chris Sellors – A British Gem

On Sunday 8th October, family, friends and industry colleagues gathered at Carsington, Derbyshire, to mark the very sad passing of Chris Sellors, founder of family jewellers CW Sellors. It was the perfect place to celebrate his life.



Chris Sellors at Carsington

Chris's business journey started with a love of Derbyshire and a passion to make his own jewellery, using the locally sourced Blue John gemstone. His hobby – making jewellery from a workshop in his parents' garage – travelled alongside his study at Chesterfield College for a City & Guilds Silversmith and Goldsmith qualification.

Inspired by the beautiful British gemstone and by locals' belief in his early designs, Chris, at age 21, established CW Sellors Fine Jewellery. He opened his first boutique, Blue John Gallery, in Bakewell in 1985.

One of Chris's first retail stockists – Chatsworth House – was instrumental in his progression. The support of Her Grace the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire was of great importance to Chris, and they established a lasting friendship. The dowager helped with the official opening of his purpose-built jewellery workshop and retail boutique in Ashbourne in 1989. Additional boutiques across the area soon followed.

Alongside the growing retail arm, Chris and his sales team built a strong network of independent jewellery retailer stockists for CW Sellors' wide range of handcrafted gemstone jewellery. Quality of product and customer service were crucial in establishing these trade relationships.

In 1999, Chris took his vision of promoting British gemstones to Whitby and acquired W Hamond – the Original Whitby Jet Shop. At the foot of the Whitby Abbey Steps, it brought worldwide attention to the history, heritage and beauty of Whitby Jet. In addition to UK trade events, Chris, for many years, took his British gemstone jewellery to the world's largest gathering of gemstone shows in Tucson, Arizona, to build new business partnerships.

The profile and appeal of British gemstones hit new heights in 2019 when Chris collaborated with Fabergé to use Blue John for a new jewellery and objet collection to celebrate 40 years in business. A year later, the Whitby Jet Fabergé collection marked the 160th anniversary of W Hamond.



CW Sellors' Fabergé collaboration

A second W Hamond boutique opened in York in 2007, and in 2018 Chris opened the Museum of Whitby Jet. Further boutiques followed in Whitby, and the business has continued to grow, with store extensions and new boutiques opening across Derbyshire and Shropshire, bringing the total retail outlets today to 17.

In 2002, Chris became an early advocate of online sales – he was one of the first independent jewellers to step into this largely unknown area. Things accelerated when Chris acquired leading e-commerce watch specialists Jura Watches, developing a specialist luxury watch division to run alongside the CW Sellors brand.

Chris formulated the ultimate vision for his business and the wider UK jewellery industry in 2007: a national home for British jewellery manufacturing and design, an inspirational space to develop and showcase industry talent. Following a great deal of hard work, planning and local conversation, it was with huge pride Chris finally saw the early development of CW Sellors Carsington taking shape over the past 12 months. With the exterior build near completion, he turned his attention to the interior – some fantastic feature elements he'd been closely working on were put in place.

Ensuring this important project would be completed and successful, Chris built a strong, capable team to continue his vision. CW Sellors Carsington, due to open next spring, will provide a unique visitor destination for the public and industry. Chris planned every part of the building, from the opportunity to learn about jewellery manufacturing, design and gemstones to jewellery and watch retail, special events and hospitality areas.

In recent years, Chris was involved with the NAJ and the British Hallmarking Council (BHC) – he was appointed NAJ vice chair in 2018, then a council member of the BHC in 2020. Gary Wroe, NAJ president, said: "Chris gave many years of support to the NAJ and other trade groups, all in the interests of the betterment of our industry. His passion for knowledge, professionalism and commercial success set him apart, and what he has built and has influenced is to be applauded. Many of us knew Chris, and many more will come to realise what a forward thinking, hardworking and thoughtful human being he was."

Illustrating his desire to communicate hallmarking values, Chris helped develop the HALO award (Hallmarking Awareness and Learning Online) with the BHC. Noel Hunter, BHC chair, said: "Chris provided valuable insights to the BHC. He leaves a lasting legacy as the inspiration and driving force behind the HALO award. He will be sadly missed by his BHC colleagues."

At every opportunity, Chris ensured CW Sellors' customers could be informed and educated on hallmarking. He took this opportunity further in the Carsington building's fabric, commissioning a gold leaf feature hallmark for the wall at the building's entrance.

But, first and foremost, Chris was a family man. His energy and drive for all he achieved was inspired by his children. He saw them not only come into the business but flourish in their roles within it. CW Sellors is in safe hands.

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For over 200 years, the Benevolent Society of Watch and Clock Makers has offered financial help to anyone who works or has worked where clocks and watches are sold, serviced or repaired in the jewellery industry. Surviving partners of those who worked in the horological jewellery trade are also eligible.

Difficult times can affect us all, and illness, redundancy, age and the rising cost of living can be overwhelming. In today's challenging world, the Society is working to ensure members of the wider trade are aware they may be eligible for financial help. The society can offer short-term assistance or ongoing payments, depending on the needs of the individual.

Making an application is very straightforward, with paperwork kept to a minimum. Applicants simply need to visit the website, call or email to get the secretary to send a form. We treat all applications with utmost confidentiality, and a committee of experienced trustees committed to helping people in the trade in need of financial support reviews each application.

Approved applicants receive quarterly payments, and beneficiaries really appreciate the friendly, approachable nature of the society and look with expectation for their quarterly letters. Two centuries on, and having helped many thousands of trade members, the society still strives to spread the news: it is here to help.

If you or someone you know needs help, please remember the name: **National Benevolent Society of Watch & Clock Makers**

Find out more at
www.nbswcm.org

Contact our secretary
020 8288 9559 or sec@nbswcm.org

(Registered Charity No:206750)

On the up

As 2024 looms large on the horizon, we look back at another eventful year in the NAJ.

There's no ignoring the challenges 2023 presented our members, the trade and the whole of the UK. Although some of these difficulties have eased in recent months, business continues to be tough for many of our members. Therefore, we are both grateful and heartened by the NAJ's strong numbers for the year, demonstrating that the members value what we do and our commitment to providing support and a voice for the trade.

In 2023, the NAJ solidified strong growth from the previous year, welcoming more new members, more students and more engagement. We also continued to push onwards with our strategy, helping shape our members' professional excellence.

Read on for the numbers that matter and the views of Team NAJ.

1. Strength in numbers

Membership continued delivering healthy recruitment numbers throughout 2023, with 136 new members joining the Association. Both the retailer and designer categories saw the most growth, with 14 per cent and 19 per cent increases in each compared to last year.

The Institute of Registered Valuers (IRV) was bolstered by four new members. Following a rigorous professional review process, three exceptional members of the IRV were also promoted to fellow status. Preserving standards in the IRV is crucial, and the professional review process is an essential part of that.

Our Created in the UK scheme continues to grow in prominence, with 21 new members joining the programme from a broad mix of British manufacturers, designer-makers and retailers. With a robust audit process, we can now process more members interested in joining the scheme as we continue to champion the skills, talent and craftsmanship of British design and manufacturing.

In 2023, we refined and broadened our member benefits, ensuring they provide the best support. This included welcoming new partners, including Halo Financial and Creditsafe, providing foreign exchange solutions and credit and AML checks. These benefits give our members peace of mind and save them money.

"Despite the difficulties many members have faced this year, retention and recruitment remained strong, demonstrating a need for the NAJ's support and services. We are constantly exploring ways to improve and provide greater value to our members. This year, we have increased our influence on the national and international scene (see more on this on page 56). Whether working directly or collaborating with industry bodies, the NAJ will continue to push for the trade throughout 2024 and beyond."

Ben Massey Chief Executive Officer



136
NEW MEMBERS



21
NEW CREATED IN THE UK MEMBERS
+45% INCREASE

2. Setting the standards

Supporting our strategy of shaping professional excellence, we published three more documents in our series of accessible and actionable codes of practice, including an updated guide on diamond terminology, a document on returns, refunds and cancellations and, most recently, a code on anti-money laundering responsibilities for high-value dealers. More codes will follow in 2024, including gemstone disclosure, greenwashing and hallmarking. All current codes of practice are available for download in your members area (naj.co.uk/members-area).

Our NAJ Resolve service settled 123 complaints between members and customers, helping reduce the stress and time of tricky disputes. This represented a 12 per cent increase on last year.

"Lost stones continue to be the number one cause for dispute resolution. Aftercare is a vital element to ensure a customer remains happy long after they have left your store. Educating consumers to look after their jewellery (often with great sentimental importance to the buyer) will help provide realistic expectations and avoid costly and time-consuming complaints as you attempt to rectify issues."

Katie Gillespie Compliance & Policy Manager



3
NEW CODES OF PRACTICE



123
RESOLVED COMPLAINT MEDIATION CASES

3. Education, education, education

The NAJ's education team had another stellar year, enrolling an impressive 621 students on exceptional JET courses. The highly valuable JET programme caters for all levels and needs, from quickly training part-time staff on the basics to equipping store managers with the tools to excel in a challenging role.

At the end of 2022, the NAJ was approved as an end-point assessment organisation through its parent body, the British Allied Trades Federation. This opens new pathways for the jewellery trade to recruit and train apprentices in specialist areas and reduces the skills gap shortage. This year, seven apprentices across jewellery retail and manufacturing have begun their jewellery journeys and we will formally assess them in 2024. With challenges in retention and recruitment, this is a vital step in combating the talent drain in the industry.

"It is reassuring to see so many of our members investing in education and training. Investing in people is crucial to a successful business, particularly during challenging periods.

"Looking ahead, we have several projects in development to help members and the trade, from a newly improved learning management system, to help make our JET courses even better, to the development of a dedicated careers website to attract even more people into our wonderful trade."

Marie Garnett Head of Education



15 APPRENTICES ENROLLED

621 JET STUDENTS ENROLLED



+17% SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

42K



52 NEWSLETTERS SHARED

4. Amplify and optimise

Investing in our member directories continues to pay dividends with exceptional growth over the past 12 months for both our Find a Jeweller and Find a Valuer directories. The Find a Jeweller directory received a 100 per cent increase in visitor views compared to this time last year. The Find a Valuer had a structural overhaul at the start of the year and continues its impressive reach, with a 58 per cent annual increase in views.

With more people than ever turning to the NAJ website to find jewellery businesses they can trust, it is important to keep your profile up to date with current business details and photography to showcase your products and services. It is a valuable and often underused shop window for your business – don't miss out on potential customers.

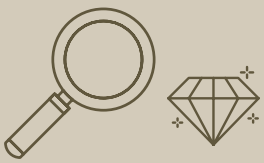
We are committed to enhancing our social media channels and giving our members a greater voice. In 2023, we saw a 17 per cent increase in social media followers, with steady growth in engagement and impressions across our four primary channels. We also shared more member stories than ever before and highlighted their exceptional jewellery and products. If you are a member with an interesting story to share, the NAJ would love to hear from you.

In 2024, we will make further refinements to both our email newsletter and *The Jeweller* magazine. We look forward to sharing these enhancements in January.

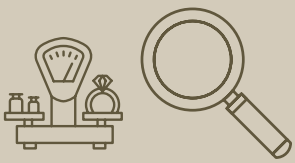
Improvements continue beyond our digital and print channels. We are excited to announce next year's developments to our flagship in-person events, with the NAJ Summit and NAJ Awards to become standalone events to provide even better experiences. Mark the dates in your diaries: June 23rd to 24th for the NAJ Summit and October 10th for the NAJ Awards. More news on both events follows in the new year.

"2023 was a year of refining and diversifying the Association's communications and channels. We have increased the frequency of communications and reached more people through digital, print and in-person events. This has been a concerted effort to improve the NAJ's profile and amplify our members' voices and messages."

Adam Cook Marketing Manager



100% INCREASE FIND A JEWELLER VIEWS



58% INCREASE FIND A VALUER VIEWS

5. And finally...

In 2023, the NAJ received three industry awards, recognising the hard work of its individuals and the team.

In February, the NAJ won Best Association and Supplier Partnership with TH March at the Trade Association Forum Awards for our SaferGems initiative. SaferGems has become an invaluable tool for our retail, supplier and valuer members and continues to grow in importance and effectiveness. Beating other membership organisations shows the value of SaferGems and the partnerships we continue to develop.

Finally, Marie Garnett, the NAJ's head of education, featured in the Women in Trade Association's annual Powerlist, and *Retail Jeweller* recognised our education officer, Chloe Thorn, on its Rising Star list. We congratulate both on their accolades, a deserved recognition for their tireless work.



3 AWARDS

How do I...

Update my Find a Jeweller page?
visit, naj.co.uk/members-area

Submit a job post or press release?
email, media@naj.co.uk

Learn more about JET courses?
visit, naj.co.uk/careers-education

Discover more about member benefits? visit, naj.co.uk/benefits

UK Jewellery Awards '23... the winners!

The celebrations may be over, but it's never too late to give praise where it's due – our heartfelt congratulations to all these deserving individuals and businesses.

In association with the Betts Group and supported by the NAJ, the Retail Jeweller UK Jewellery Awards took place at the Hilton London Metropole on 6th September. In 20 categories, we saw the skill, determination and entrepreneurial spirit so clearly alive and well in the jewellery and watch sector.

The evening also raised £5,535 for the NAJ's chosen charity, The Benevolent Society, so it was completely fitting that this year's award for Outstanding Contribution to the Industry went to NAJ past president David Doyle.

In December 2022, David retired as vice president of The Benevolent Society, a role he has committed to – with passion – for over 14 years. As Ruth Faulkner, managing editor of Retail Jeweller, introduced him, she outlined the many other key positions David has held in the industry alongside his own successful import and wholesale jewellery business of 37 years. A very worthy and popular recipient.



Jan and David Doyle



The NAJ team



Lia Lam, Emerging Jewellery Designer winner

And here are the other 19 award winners we celebrated that evening:

Retail Team of the Year
Warrenders

Bespoke Jewellery Retailer
Mark Lloyd Master Goldsmith, with Baroque Bespoke Jewellery Highly Commended

Employer of the year
Hockley Mint, with Beaverbrooks Highly Commended

Jewellery/Watch Supplier
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The premier eCommerce fulfilment provider.



Below - Wongs, Right - F Hinds





Service Supplier
The Jewellers Academy

Omni channel Retailer
Diamond Heaven

Jewellery Retailer – five stores or fewer
The Alkemistry, with Anja Potze Highly Commended

Marketing/Social Media Campaign or Collaboration
Wongs Jewellers (Take Me To Wongs), with Forum Jewellers (Fab at Forty) Highly Commended

Jewellery Retailer – six stores or more
F Hinds, with Beaverbrooks Highly Commended

Store Design
Rox Battersea Power Station

Emerging Jewellery Designer
Lia Lam

Bridal Jewellery Retailer
Queensmith

Emerging Jewellery/ Watch Brand
MISSA & KISSA

Commercial Jewellery Designer
Sif Jakobs

Ethical/Sustainable Business and Jewellery Brand
Malgorzata Mozolewska, Mocielli

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Seiko

Above - Warrenders



Above - Raw Pearls



Above - Hockley Mint



Far Left - Mark Lloyd,
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Positive vibes at Jewellery Show '23

Given the successful inaugural '22 show, hopes were cautiously high for September's follow-up event at ExCel, London. The general consensus? An upbeat buzz, says Belinda Morris.

If we can measure success by how infrequently the NAJ team members sat down, we can report productive busyness – our stand was thronging with visitors all day, both days. Situated as we were near the theatre, we can also confirm there was standing room only for almost all the frequent panel sessions (no prizes for guessing that Laboratory Grown Diamond Outlook and Trends was one of the best attended).

Moderated by jewellery journalist David Brough, with Gem Academy's Julia Griffith explaining the shared properties of and differences between natural and laboratory grown diamonds (and the correct nomenclature), the conversation revolved around the market for the latter. Rocketing supply, falling prices, sustainability claims and where laboratory created diamonds will sit in a retail jewellery business all came under discussion between Himanshu Shah (Andre Michael), Dinesh Parekh (Just Diamonds) and Paras Shah (exhibitor Bhanderi, laboratory grown diamonds).

Whether natural or laboratory grown, diamonds were well represented at the show, which also introduced a number of brands, manufacturers and designers relatively new to the UK market or, at least, unfamiliar to many visitors.

Showing again this year was Italian designer earring brand **Inbilico**, which has extended its collection of 18ct gold diamond pieces (using recycled materials) to include laboratory created diamonds set with silver and black enamel, as well as white 18ct gold. Wearable, delicate… yet dramatically different.

Finland-based, fourth-generation jewellery manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer **Bulevardi** was one new exhibitor. Produced in Turkey, its









Coeur de Lion



Ti Sento



Sif Jakobs



Tvrrini

natural diamond jewellery is set in 18ct and 9ct gold, with fancy cuts and illusions a speciality.

"The Jewellery Show played a crucial role for Bulevardi in connecting with new clients based in the UK," explains Emir Bakistanli, managing partner. "The stars of the show that gained the most interest were the fancy-cut models and the special flip-lock systems we have on our earrings and bracelets."

Judging by the crowds around the gleaming **Aurosmith** stand, the show was also a success for the London-based business offering heavy 9ct and 14ct gold jewellery for men, with all styles of on-trend chains, bracelets and rings being a speciality, along with women's fine jewellery, including diamond set pieces.

Exhibiting for the second year – this time with a bumper stand – was 9ct and 14ct gold body jewellery brand **Tish Lyon**. Offering an extensive range (including new floating belly button pieces), founder Natasha Lyon's aim was to help independent jewellers to grow their piercing knowledge. The brand's ear curations and diagrams naming the different ear parts are particularly helpful. ›



Aurosmith team

Chains, link details and hoops of all varieties and sizes were unmissable at the show (for example, **Lucy Quartermaine's** silver and gold Horseshoe Tri Pendant and hoops that attach to hoops), but running a close second were pearls (chains and pearls together... tick, tick).

Every taste and market was catered for: there were fringed lariat styles and huge baroque pearl necklaces with gold and diamond links at **La Perle Blanche**; coloured pearls selling like hot cakes at **London Pearl**; white pearls nestling in gold and rhodium plated drip earrings at **Georgia Wang**; Tahitian pearls (along with rubies and sapphires) on fine silver chains offering affordable luxury at **Tvrrini** and pretty pendant and earring sets featuring coloured CZ stones among **Lido Pearl's** new pieces – and these jostled for space with a range of men's pearls. **DKM** showcased silver bead and pearl pieces – it's definitely a thing (see page 24 for more on this). ›


Georgia Wang

DKM


Lucy Quartermaine

London Pearl


La Perle Blanche

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RISELABS

1. Supply Chain Hurdles: Streamlining the supply chain can lead to faster delivery times, lower costs, and reduced errors, enhancing customer satisfaction.

2. Authenticity Assurance: Ensuring jewellery authenticity can build trust with customers, safeguard your brand reputation, and increase sales.

3. Costly Operations: Optimising operations can increase profitability, freeing up resources for growth and innovation.

4. Trend Adaptation: Staying up-to-date with customer preferences can boost sales and keep your brand relevant and exciting.

4. Unique and Personal Touch: Offering customisation options can attract a loyal customer base seeking personalised jewellery, leading to increased sales.

6. Ethical and Earth-Friendly Sourcing: Embracing ethical and sustainable practices can attract environmentally-conscious customers, enhancing your brand's image.

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7. Inventory Balancing: [illegible] management can reduce costs and minimise waste, ultimately improving your bottom line.

8. Going Online: A solid online presence can expand your customer reach, boost sales, and offer convenient shopping.

9. Customer Connection: Building strong customer relationships can lead to repeat business, positive word-of-mouth, and increased brand loyalty.

10. Staying on the Right Side of the Law: Complying with regulations can protect your business from legal issues and maintain your reputation as responsible and trustworthy.

Sarah Alexander Jewellery had "an amazing show," the stand busy on both days with existing partners and many new accounts set up. "The gold trend is continuing this season, with big hitters being chunky gold chain bracelets and earrings," says Sarah. "Stores loved the new collection and ordered plenty of layering sets as well as pieces that have multi-way wear potential, like huggies with removable gemstone charms, which can also be worn on a chain as a pendant."

On the show's new design-focussed podium area, **Ifos** exemplified the ongoing strength of coloured stones jewellery. Its designed in the UK, Handcrafted in Greece collection offered understated luxury using a combination of natural gemstones, such as green agate, lapis, opal and mother-of-pearl, mixed metals and doublets and triplets.

Unusual one-off stones in unusual settings are central at **RE Morrish**, which was gaining attention with beautiful emerald doublets.

Unique & Co's women's collection offered a particularly strong line of natural gemstones including lapis, peridot, blue topaz and citrine.

Attracting attention on the NAJ stand was **Considered Jewellery**, the launch collection founded by Victoria Waugh and Bea Shinh. A great example of the NAJ's Created in the UK initiative, the brand was developed to be traceable and sustainable, using recycled materials. The first range is based on an all over repeat of the trademarked logo (four letter Cs) and uses recycled silver, plated in Fairmined gold and silver. The reclaimed silver castings and assembly are completed in Hatton Garden and the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter.

P.S., The largely positive mood in the hall was also boosted by the news that next year's Jewellery Show will be at the popular Olympia London venue (1st and 2nd September, 2024).



Unique & Co Women

Sarah Alexander



Stackers



Considered Jewellery

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(New) Male Order

Men's jewellery... can we say that? Masculine jewellery... still potentially offensive with its binary inference? Whatever the descriptor, jewellery designed with men in mind is a strong – and growing – category, as Belinda Morris discovers.

There's nothing revolutionary about men wearing jewellery, but as a trend, a thing, it's waxed and waned over the past decade or so. Wristwear in arguably 'non-girly' materials, like leather, stainless steel and titanium, is now ubiquitous at all levels of the market, as are rings. Today, though, we're seeing a shift as styles and materials traditionally associated with women's jewellery – pearls, diamonds, drop earrings, coloured stones, chokers, ropes, brooches – are being worn by men. Hurrah!

So, who (or what) can we thank for this new spirit of awareness and acceptance? "There's no question that Harry Styles kicked off the pearl necklace phenomenon, but David Beckham and his jewellery style, and icons from the music world, from Elton John to Jay Z, are also a big influence," says Robert Tateossian of **Tateossian London**.

"Shawn Mendes, Brooklyn Peltz Beckham and Maluma also have a strong liking for jewellery and showcase their pieces as part of their own unique styles," adds Noel Samra of **Noel Fine Jewellery**.

"The popularity of men's jewellery has surely been pushed by style icons such as Pharrell Williams, Johnny Depp and Cristiano Ronaldo," says Lukas Stöcker of German brand **Nana Kay**, whose Steelwear collection is marketed to men.

"I believe the success of men's jewellery can be attributed to multiple factors: evolving fashion trends, increased availability, the influence of social media and celebrities and cultural shifts, such as the blurring of gender codes," says **Thomas Sabo**. "With individuality and self-expression being widely celebrated, nowadays men have more freedom and a new confidence in expressing their style with accessories." The eponymous German brand is ready for this – it's unisex Rebel at Heart collection has existed for 40-plus years.



Lido Pearls



Thomas Sabo, Rebel Heart



DKM



NanaKay, Steelwear



Zed@Wedds&Co



Gecko, Fred Bennett

ARO Pearls

Giovanni Raspini

DIAMONDS & PEARLS

Lorraine Thomas of **Lido Pearls** is sure pearls on men is a growing trend. "Boys on Love Island, Harry Styles, even Rod Stewart...," she cites while showing me her collection of pearl necklaces created specifically for men – longer lengths, stronger colours, such as browns, wine and gold and bolt ring clasps. "It's funny, after 20-odd years of Lido Pearls, I never thought I'd be introducing men's pearls, but I'm so excited about the collection and although it may take a while for jewellers to commit money [to them], the appetite is there." Five posters adorn Lido's Jewellery Show stand; all feature a pearl-wearing male model. I introduce her to wax carver and artist-craftsman Russell Lownsbrough FIPG, who's wearing three strands of pearls at his throat, and is in the market for more.

"I love the subversive contradiction of the same pearl necklace making her look prim but him look edgy," says **Daniel Kennedy Martin of DKM**. "I've designed my own pearl necklace for men, mixing them with dash and slash metal beads to spell out words in Morse code. It's a stealth way to add sentiment to the piece – initials, thoughts on love, swear words. Men look great in pearls, and I don't think that trend is going away anytime soon."

So how about diamonds? This season I've seen desirable black diamond bracelets for men at **Loop** (by German brand **Silhouette**) and **Ferretti** – some with white diamonds mixed in. "Since the launch of **Zedd** 18 months ago, we've seen continuous growth in our exclusive designs that incorporate black zirconium with precious metals and diamonds. They were originally a bridal offer, but we're also seeing self-purchases from men looking for a precious fashion ring," says founder Paul Platnauer. "They're being adventurous in the designs for self-purchases or as gifts – our collection of black diamonds is particularly strong."

"In the last 20 years, we've noticed a shift in men's jewellery fashions," says **Deakin & Francis** PR manager Abigail Jackson. "When Henry Deakin joined D&F in the early 2000s, diamonds weren't widely considered a part of men's jewellery. However, they've become an integral element to many D&F pieces today, for instance our 18ct yellow gold Skull Cufflinks with Popping Diamond Eyes."

"Both men and women express an interest in diamonds – black, white, champagne... whether as tennis bracelets or as diamond ID macrame bracelets," explains Tateossian. "Designs are similar, but size depends on whether the piece sits on a man's or woman's wrist."

Fourteen bracelets, three necklaces and seven rings form **Giovanni Raspini's** 2023 men's collection: the focus is on micro-beads and the introduction of new natural hard gemstones. Small burnished or hammered silver elements alternate with stones like onyx, haematite, green jasper, graphite and obsidian.

Lukas Stöcker sees men becoming braver and more adventurous in their jewellery choices. "More creative surfaces, materials and colour combinations are becoming popular. Before, the more minimalistic styles were in higher demand. I guess the more popular jewellery becomes for men, the more creative the designs can be," he says. "Interestingly, we're now observing more women keen to wear bolder, thicker and heavier items – traditionally more masculine pieces – and becoming Steelwear customers."





Deakin & Francis



Loop by Silhouette



Saboteur, FinePiercing

Tateossian

Unique & Co

Noel

Dower & Hall

Midhaven

JEWELLERY FOR ANYONE?

Which brings us to the question of gender fluidity. "We're primarily a men's brand – we all need to have a niche and focus," says Tateossian. "Usually, I'll design a collection for men and a separate collection for women. If I feel a design is gender neutral, I'll make the product available in multiple sizes."

"I'm thinking particularly for men when I'm designing because it's a different shape of canvas with different angles, different cross sections and on a completely different scale," says Kennedy Martin. "The intention is different too, my pieces are meant to embolden, elevate and amplify presence. I want them to feel chunky, solid and hard wearing, not pretty, ornate and delicate. However, I refer to them as 'menswear' rather than 'men's,' which implies attitude rather than prescribed gender. My work is for anybody that wants it."

"I design jewellery for the rebellious spirit; anybody who is unafraid of making a statement with their unique sense of style," adds Samra. "I do envision the needs and preferences of men in my designs and feel there's a lack of identity in men's fine jewellery. I design for anyone who appreciates fine artistry and craftsmanship. Men have come a long way in expressing themselves through fine jewellery. They now really appreciate the finer details, materials and gemstones, like onyx, malachite and lapis lazuli. They express an openness to experimenting with non-traditional designs."

Summing up, Kennedy Martin offers: "Men's fashion has always been homogenous, often literally uniform. Jewellery is a way for a man to individualise his look when almost everyone else in the room is also wearing a white t-shirt and jeans. I'm just starting out, so much of what I'm putting out is a test. I don't know yet if there's an appetite for men's fine jewellery beyond fashion pieces. Do they care if they're really good pearls with great lustre and uniform roundness? That 18ct looks and feels different to 14ct? Is there an opportunity to invoke the connoisseurship for fine timepieces to handmade, high-quality fine jewellery? If there is, I'd like to be doing it."

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Hayes & Lake

Belinda Morris reports on insights and information gathered at September's UK Jewellery Festival '23, held at the Hilton London Metropole.

Headlining at the Jewellery Festival

In contrast to the fickle field of fashion, the jewellery world has a rather considered approach to new directions. Trends rarely leap out at visitors the moment they cross the threshold of a jewellery trade show – or at least not immediately. But, bit by bit, they can creep up on you; a growing 'thing' will emerge.

It will come as little surprise that at the Jewellery Festival, that 'thing' was laboratory-grown diamonds – which hereon in I will refer to as LGDs, for the sake of brevity, because I'll mention them a lot. They're no longer new to the market, of course, but what I really noticed this time is how prevalent they are, how accepted, how demanded. Which isn't to say question marks don't hover over them, they do, but their allure is almost irresistible (there will always be detractors).

One aspect of LGDs – raised under the banner of 'more or less ethical than natural diamonds?' – is sustainability. With thousands of manufacturers of LGDs globally, it's quite a task to source those with ethical credentials. It's noteworthy then that diamond trading platform **Diamnet** is working on a solution: it has added a column to its stock lists that allows manufacturers to state they have sustainability accreditation from an outside agency, such as SEDEX/SMETA. Diamnet verifies each claim, and the site now has growing stock for those seeking this reassurance.

Lustre & Love

Clioro



Loop by Silhouette



Mark Milton

IBB London



Quinn

Chlobo

Laurel Jewellery

PREVAILING TRENDS

Not as ubiquitous as LGDs, but prevalent enough to be a thing, was jewellery for men. Or, if you prefer, gender neutral jewellery, or, perhaps, jewellery that women would happily wear, even if it's created for larger wrists and necks and has a rather more traditionally masculine aesthetic. Chunkier chains, black pearls, black diamonds, black rhodium plating, titanium... all fall into this category. Market them as you wish.

In various forms, this category appeared on Clioro (chains); Loop by Silhouette (black and white diamond stretchy bangles); Zedd (precious metal wedding rings with black diamonds; Unique (new zirconium rings and chunkier chain neckwear); Ferretti (upscaled black diamond spring tennis bracelets) and Chloe (tough-luxe coloured gemstone bead bracelets), to name a few.



PD Paola

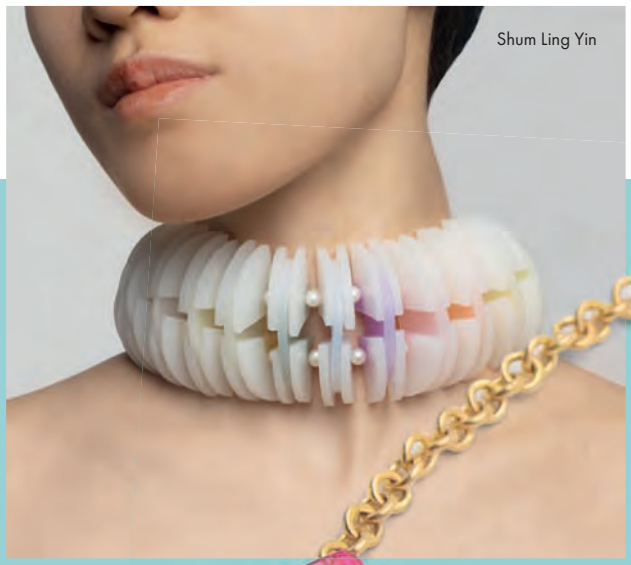
The chain trend shows little sign of abating, with every variation on the theme, and chunky, distinctively different links catching the most attention. While silver jewellery is making a comeback (has it ever been away?), across the categories, many exhibitors noted growth in yellow gold (9ct, 14ct and 18ct), with some brands (such as Lustre & Love) offering recycled gold.

Bespoke jeweller Emma Hedley, now launching to the trade, showed organic feel, recycled 18ct gold pieces set with ethically sourced 'sea foam' tourmaline and sapphire... accompanied by certificates giving information on the stones and explaining how the supply chain works.



Emma Hedley

On the subject of chain, one perpetually busy stand was Goodman Bros, where a steady stream of visitors eager for a permanent chain bracelet to be lasered in place enthusiastically trialled the Perma Jewel system.



Shum Ling Yin

BRIGHT NEW GEMS

Also receiving plenty of attention were the successful MA and BA graduates of the Bright New Gems competition, who showcased their work to the jewellery industry. The winning entries impressed visitors with their ingenuity and refreshing approach to the brief. Each had a totally unique design signature, and all showed potential commercial viability.



Isabella Bedlington

Judge and BNG sponsor Susi Smither, founder of The Rock Hound, East London's gemmologist jeweller, and the Fair Luxury collective said, "It's always my favourite part of the judging process when we have the opportunity to meet each graduate jeweller and a chance to see their pieces for real. Congratulations to this year's worthy winners!"



Campbell Hadden



Panel discussion on the longevity of laboratory grown diamonds

LISTEN AND LEARN

The show's seminar programme took into account the trade's thirst for laboratory-grown diamonds knowledge – a panel discussion entitled **"the longevity of laboratory-grown diamonds"** homed in on the recent decline in price of the stones, which has prompted some to ask 'are they are worth stocking?' Might they be entering the realm of fashion rather than fine jewellery? The panel's short answers to these questions were 'yes' and 'no', respectively.

The panel included **David Sutton, CEO Nivoda; Stuart Stanley**, owner **Ring Jewellers; Nicolay Piriankov, CEO Taylor & Hart** and Jamie **Amelia Patel**, founder **The Diamond Lab**, and on the whole the consensus was positive.

"People are buying for different reasons," said Stanley. "We sell both and with laboratory-grown diamonds, they are buying a larger stone for the same budget – it's not about saving a few pounds. We're helping customers get what they want."

As for laboratory-grown diamonds affecting sales of natural diamonds, "it's a concern, but we're currently seeing a small resurgence of natural diamonds," said Piriankov. "There needs to be a big price gap for people to come down on one side or the other. We're in a relatively healthy situation," he added.

Patel's high net worth customers buy her laboratory-grown diamond jewellery not to save money but to have large, beautiful stones. "We're selling mostly three carat and above – they're looking for beautiful stones alongside a craftsmanship and a luxury service."

The big discussion about ethics appeared too. "Yes, laboratory-grown diamonds do take away the support of countries in Africa; we should be mindful of the impact this has on mining communities," conceded Sutton. "But laboratory-grown diamonds are cut and polished in India, employing thousands." The debate's not over, but ultimately, it's up to jewellery retailers whether they dip their toe in the laboratory-grown diamonds market, and those teetering on the water's edge should know many are happily bobbing about up to their necks! It's about choice.

Billed as **'disrupting the jewellery market,'** *Retail Jeweller's* acting editor Sarah Jordan was in conversation with **Sach Kukadia**, co-founder of 7879. Launched in 2022, the brand offers 24ct gold and platinum jewellery with prices based on the weight of a piece, driven by real-time bullion markets. "We wanted to give people purity at a transparent price," he explained of the online business, which reported a 977 per cent increase in sales in its first 12 months. 7879 will also buy back: "our products – which are unadorned, quite plain – are reusable, creating a circular market."

In a frank interview, Kukadia revealed many aspects of his business: "buying pure metal jewellery isn't new; selling back isn't new... but our technology is new," he explained. And "45 per cent of our revenue is repeat customers, we under-promise and over-deliver."

Crucially, "we need to increase our online conversion – and understand online behaviour."

What has he learned so far? "I don't need to know and understand everything: I was trying to do everything myself. I also know hiring and firing is difficult and that I shouldn't employ friends!"



Sach Kukadia



David Doyle's fundraising events for children's hospital

David Doyle has worn many hats. The managing director of his own jewellery manufacturing, importing and wholesaling business, he is a past president of the NAJ and has recently stepped down as vice president of his beloved Benevolent Society. He's also an inveterate, tireless raiser of funds.

While he has passed the responsibility of the annual Benevolent Society Ball to Hockley Mint's Gary Wroe, David has not given up fundraising. And he certainly knows a thing or two about organising a big bash.

Last year, David was diagnosed with terminal cancer, but it is children with cancer who are the focus of his attention. On 20th April 2024, a sold-out charity ball will raise funds for the cancer wards at Birmingham Children's Hospital, the UK's leading specialist paediatric centre, a world leader in some of the most advanced treatments, complex surgical procedures and cutting-edge research and development.

For friends and colleagues unable to buy a ticket for the ball, David is offering other opportunities to donate to this worthwhile cause. On 18th January, from 6pm, David will be in conversation with jewellery journalist and author Rachael Taylor at the Birmingham Assay Office. A second interview will take place on Monday 5th February 2024, at the Goldsmiths' Centre, London – the evening sponsored by Mastermelts, with thanks to Gary Williams. Both interviews promise to be insightful and inspiring.

Rachael Taylor says: "I am beyond honoured David would trust me to help tell his story at this important moment in his life. David has a long and enviable career in the jewellery industry for us to reflect upon, and this promises to be a no-holds-barred conversation that will give a raw and honest account of his time in the trade. Much of David's work has been underpinned by philanthropic interests, and we will also talk about this and how he plans for his charitable work to evolve and develop into a legacy as he adjusts to life with terminal cancer. For anyone who David has crossed paths with in his professional life, and for those who aspire to follow in his footsteps, this will be an unmissable and unrepeatable pair of events."

Details of tickets for the London and Birmingham interviews, and to make donations to Birmingham Children's Hospital will be posted online shortly.

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Amore

Despite the unfortunate and abrupt early closure of the Autumn Event because of a security breach, supplier members reported satisfactorily brisk business.

CMJ Autumn Event 2023

The Sunday of a two-day trade show is traditionally busy, but naturally there were many CMJ retail members who had arranged to visit – or return – on Monday. Frustration and disappointment from both sides was an inevitability... alongside resignation and understanding – there was no choice but to halt the event. ›

Ntinga



Gemex

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BROWN & NEWIRTH

Gareth Thomas, sales and marketing director

"Sunday was very good for us. We spoke to some quality retailers who we're close with but, and more importantly, could reconnect with some we'd drifted from. Laboratory grown continues to be a success. We've found a particular demand in multi-stone designs and launched an extension to our Created® Collection with Starlight – multi-diamond drop earrings and pendants and matching line bracelets. These new designs were incredibly popular along with toi et moi coloured diamond and crossover rings.

"For our core ranges, we've worked hard to be as competitive as possible in challenging market conditions, and the event was an important opportunity for us to share this message. We've realigned our engagement ring pricing policy to become more competitive and now offer all our lines in mined or laboratory-created diamond options. Our new engagement ring lines with decorated bridges and delicate bands proved very popular, and we extended our popular collection of seven- and nine-stone diamond eternity rings featuring claw-set oval and emerald cut diamonds."

GEORGINI

Mark Faulkner, master agent England, Scotland and Wales

The well-established Australian brand was invited as a guest supplier. Georgini offers a wide range of classic and trend-setting rings, earrings, necklaces and bracelets crafted in sterling silver and plated in either rhodium or 18ct gold.

"The reaction was very encouraging, and we have our first accounts signed up, but obviously losing one day cost us more in the short term. We connected with a significant number of buyers, which was quite encouraging, given the circumstances. Most buyers showed considerable enthusiasm for our core collections, particularly appreciating the brand's premium quality. This, when coupled with our exceptional designs and strong visual support, appeared to strike a chord; the high margin offered by Georgini was of particular interest."

AMORE

Barry Mislin, founder and designer

"With the diverse nature of the gold collection, we're selling everything from plain gold earrings to expensive 18ct gold diamond pieces. We're recognised as a core supplier of gold jewellery, offering a comprehensive choice, allowing retailers to create bespoke pieces by ordering in 9/18ct, yellow, white and rose and coloured stone combinations. With designing done in-house, we can continue to produce current modern pieces that offer retailers unique collections that sell quickly.

"Amore Argento – love silver – is booming, we're opening new accounts and concentrating on existing shops by offering lovely new designs, all with cz and natural gemstones, such as sapphire, ruby and emerald, pink sapphire and tanzanite."

HAYES & LAKE

Howard Levine, managing director

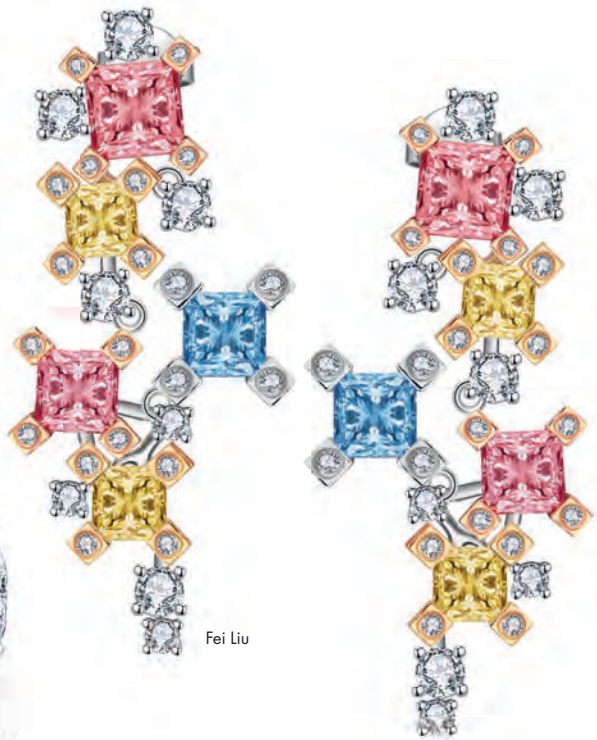
"Sunday was pretty good, and it really did feel we were breaking through and more retailers were ready to take the plunge. The laboratory grown coloured gemstones were a big draw, and we did well with them – with all colours being very popular."



Tivon



Brown & Newirth



Fei Liu

NTINGA

Stephanie Lee, director

"On Sunday, we saw a handful of customers, but we felt many retailers wanted to look around and return on Monday to place orders. So, we tried to catch up with customers in their own stores over the following weeks. Those we did see were very interested in the Bubble Charm collection, now with lots of additional charms – our new double row gemstone clusters and matching pendants. A new range of oval sapphire and diamond set rings, originally released over 20 years ago, is back with a range of size ovals and across and down the finger – a beautiful take on a classic design.

"We also launched our new B2B website, showcasing most of our running line collections, which customers were pleased to sign up to and use for helpful reordering, references and images of all the products."

FEI LIU

"Our main showcase was the new project with Colormond. For this collaboration, I designed three mini collections of fancy colour and fancy cut laboratory grown diamonds: Criss Cross, Aurora and Clarice. I designed the collections so women from all walks of life can experience the luxury of owning a diamond.

"The Colormond collection was met with an extremely positive response from retail partners, all placing orders for the collection. If Monday had gone ahead, we could have tripled our orders. Nevertheless, it reaffirmed our belief in the quality and innovation behind this collection."

TIVON

Ariel Tivon, head of design, sales and product development

"I'm particularly proud of the Legacy Ring – crafted in platinum and 18ct rose gold, set with a combination of superb cadillac-cut and brilliant-cut diamonds. This ultra-investment ring is set with an ultra-clear and fiery super-rare 3.50ct Madagascan padparadscha sapphire."

GEMEX

Lee Ruben, managing director/owner

"Thankfully, we had a very good Sunday, with lots of business done. In particular, we promoted our diamond oyster-set halo rings as well as high quality sapphire, ruby, emerald and yellow diamond rings."

ANDRE MICHAEL

Himanshu Shah, director

"We had a strong Sunday, and the general mood was positive. Retailers looked, appointments arranged and accounts opened, which was good. We received some interest in Greenland rubies; customers liked the designs based on the cabochon. Pink ruby was also in demand, most likely due to the *Barbie* movie."

MARK MILTON

Mark Milton

"We have fantastic new lines this autumn – one of our mottos is: 'when business gets challenging, spoil the customers for choice.' Our emphasis this year has been on the beautiful quality of finish in 9ct and 18ct gold and on natural diamonds and gemstones. We believe the top of the market may be limited this year, so we have lots to offer in the middle price ranges – an area of strong growth for us.

"We had plenty of interest from existing customers and new contacts. Our displays filled with colourful new options, all with our clear design conscious handwriting, were showstoppers and we were busy all day. It certainly was a setback to lose the second day – we have, however, upped our efforts on the road, and those we missed received a visit to see the full collection before the end of the season."



Georgini



Hockley Mint

Curteis

River Mounts



Notes from the CIBJO Congress '23

Our man in Jaipur, John Henn, reports on October's three-day World Jewellery Confederation Congress.

Taking a flight from Heathrow to Delhi, then on to Jaipur for the three-day 2023 CIBJO Congress, NAJ CEO Ben Massey and I quickly discover the world's largest democracy moves at a gentle speed. On the last leg of the journey, we start to settle into the rhythm of our host country.

Here are my personal highlights of the Congress – both economic and social.

Some facts: India is a country of 1.4 billion people; five million of them are software engineers, and 4.6 million, jewellery industry workers. Worldwide, 14 out of 15 diamonds cut are cut in India, and the new Surat diamond building is the world's largest office building – a staggering 7.1m square feet, with 4,000 offices.

CIBJO's president, Gaetano Cavalieri, confirmed "CIBJO is not a political body. Our obligation is to protect the interest of all our members, regardless of size, where they are located geographically and in what parts of the chain of distribution they operate." His calls for greater communication, education and representation are nothing new, but every presentation, even those given by government ministers, included them. Other luxury categories are chipping away at our market share, and we need to make ours even more ethically attractive.

Some clear simplifications reiterated were: "Responsible sourcing also means 'do no harm,' and 'ethical' also means 'be kind and good to your employees'" (this from the president of the World Diamond Council). We heard about future legislation to remove the practice of greenwashing, often used to imply that brands conform with the Sustainable Development Goals, but on close inspection, fall pitifully short.

We heard from the Natural Diamond Council (NDC), which has real money to support generic diamond advertising in the UK and around the world. It's funded by the mining companies and has, to some extent, picked up where De Beers left off many years ago.

The watch industry has finally come in from the cold – CIBJO now has representation from the Swatch Group, Cartier and Kering. Their new Watch and Jewellery Initiative 2030 refers, in principle, to 10 of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with particular reference to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Thanks to the unbelievable energy of Cavalieri, our industry is coming together in an unprecedented way, to the benefit of the consumer.

Later, in the grounds of a beautiful palace, Ben and I talk to a youngish, well-turned-out Hong Kong-based retailer. His business has 7,500 branches, is privately owned and employs 40,000 staff. He uses the NDC to co-fund a lot of advertising. He says that, since Covid, there's a great deal of live selling in China. This market, across all sectors in China, grew to $168bn in 2021 and is likely to become $300bn by 2025. Not driven by influencers, this market wants honesty and integrity from its platforms – it's more about social guarantees than glamorous individuals.

The US is already in the market, as is Australia, and we have one too. If you have a young enthusiastic staff member interested in the wellbeing of the British jewellery industry, ask them to contact the NAJ and we'll put them in touch with one such seller. She has 30,000-plus followers who tune in for a four-hour sales marathon. While some are insomniacs or just lonely, most buy real stone beads for under £10 to create jewellery – and they buy by the container load. The initial rewards are thin, but once you have traction, the world's your oyster.

During a moment of calm, we visit a jewellery-making factory, one of the largest companies in Jaipur. The extremely personable owner, Ashock, speaks seven languages. In his showroom, we view hundreds of items, from classical Rajasthani 22ct gold bangles, enamelled in custom patterns, for $1000s, to simple silver gilt earrings for just a few dollars. He supplies 75 brands globally... but not in Europe. He employs 800 staff (all seem content), has the same battles with his city council as we do and the same utility costs. Somehow, though, no-one is stressed.

To conclude with some emerging details: since Covid, global hunger has gone back seven years; the ChatGPT systems in Iowa have used 1.7m gallons of water – roughly one litre per use – since starting up; 'legal' is what you are allowed to do, 'ethical' is what you should do; there are multiple self-help IT courses at academy.hubspot.com; for everything else, including the Blue Books, visit cibjo.org.

Finally: there are 28 states in India, each with its own language, foods and traditions. An Indian client in the UK describes his home as an orchestra of many parts, none of whom really understand each other, but with a conductor who does. There's a real sense that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the right conductor, and India is optimistic in a way it hasn't felt since Gandhi. To abridge the great man's quote: be the change you wish to see in the world.

Top: The Rambagh Palace, once home to Mountbatten when he was Viceroy of India. Above: Raluca Anghel, Natural Diamond Council; Ben Massey NAJ; Marie Chalmers, Chalmers Gems and John Henn at the Congress.


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David Wilkins Trophy Winner



At this year's Valuers Conference, held during the NAJ Summit, Susan Pennington FIRV, FGA, DGA FNAJ, PJValDip, was the recipient of the 2023 David Wilkins Trophy.

"I was so surprised when I received a phone call to say I had won the David Wilkins Award – I was totally overcome and had tears in my eyes!" Susan told us. "Valuing is a wonderful profession; it's one I love and enjoy more with each passing decade. Ours is such a warm, interesting and wonderful community, with members always ready to help each other. To receive this award has been a real highlight, for which I thank everyone who made it possible. Saying it is an honour sounds like a cliche, but really, there is no other word to express the feeling."

Susan has always loved jewellery. As a youngster, she managed her parents' saddlery store and, as part of the range, they sold small jewellery items, such as stock pins. "Often, we were asked for further gifts for horse lovers, and as the jewellery wholesalers are quite close to the leather goods wholesalers in Birmingham, it was easy for me to develop an equestrian themed jewellery section in silver, gold and gem set. I continued to be involved in the jewellery trade on and off over the years."

This beginning led to a deeper interest in gemmology, and Susan joined Gem A in the late 1990s (then called Gemmological Association and Gem Testing Laboratory). After becoming an FGA and DGA, she established her independent valuation business in 2003, part time at first, operating alongside her existing business.

Most Susan's work involves producing valuations for insurance, but also probate, family division etc. "I have found offering private while-you-wait valuations in my office, dealing directly with the client, is very popular. The benefits of being an IRV are immense," she says, "firstly for my development – getting to IRV standard in the first place! But then being encouraged to follow a path of CPD. Attending the many workshops either at the Conference/Summit or more recently online, my knowledge and expertise has grown. IRVs also benefit from being part of a group of people who are so generous with their knowledge. I have been a CAT tutor since 2013, and I really enjoy working with the new talent entering our profession." Susan is also a member of the Professional Review Panel, assessing the work of new applicants and undertaking the routine reviews submitted by IRVs.

> "I would say to someone wishing to become a valuer that although the road appears long, it is well worth it, and you will meet lifelong friends along the way.
>
> **Susan Pennington FIRV, FGA, DGA FNAJ, PJValDip**

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 widely known and respected both for his outstanding personal qualities and great expertise. More than any other individual, David sought to encourage high standards of conduct and professionalism in valuations. The award he sponsored remains as his legacy in promoting the aims for which he strove.

The NAJ's National Committee may award the David Wilkins Trophy if an IRV has demonstrated outstanding skill, dedication or service in jewellery appraisal and valuation.

While there is no official list of criteria, nominees will exemplify several key attributes, from consistently producing valuations of exceptional standard to giving help and guidance to colleagues or members of the public.

The award was first presented in 1994 in memory of the late David Wilkins who was instrumental in setting up the Institute's predecessor, the NAG Registered Valuer Scheme, and comprises an Elizabethan-style silver dish inscribed with the winner's name, who retains it for the year. The award also has a £100 gift token to spend with the Gem-A to supplement the winner's personal reference library and/or add to the equipment they use.

The Institute of Registered Valuers

Discover te route to becoming a registered valuer with the IRV, the UK's leading authority of jewellery, watch and silverware appraisers.

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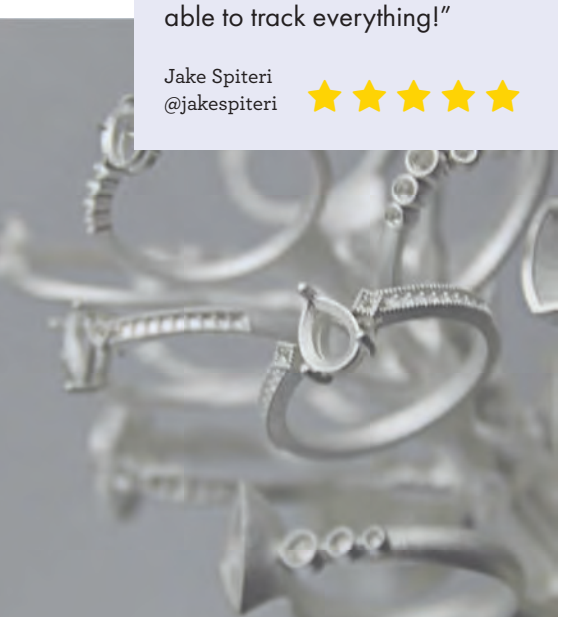
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Jake Spiteri
@jakespiteri



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LIA LAM

Before discovering the inspiration behind a piece of jewellery, your imagination draws its own conclusions. My attention was caught by Lia's dramatic bangle set with two gemstone cabochons. A division sign... or maybe a percentage symbol? What and why? As it turns out, it's the latter – a playful, witty motif reminding the wearer to go all-in on life and pursue dreams with Lia's 100% bangle. It follows her earlier 100% ring – a modern take on the *toi et moi* style.



Darren Sherwood



Ingo Henn

GOLDSMITH'S FAIR '23

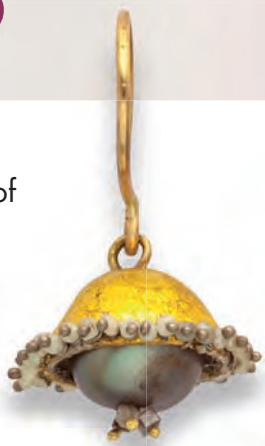
Two weeks showcasing the best of the best – each week a different assembly of talented designer makers. I had the chance to visit during week two and these are a few of my favourite things...

DARREN SHERWOOD

I was ready to spirit these gorgeous earrings out of the display case the moment goldsmith Darren turned his back. When I'm not being lured by shades of green, I'm a pushover for pink, particularly the deep glowing pink of these pear-shape rubellites (22.72 total carat weight). Enveloped in a sensuous curve of graduated tourmalines and rubellites and punctuated with morganites, the vibe (for me) is India's paisley pattern – which just adds to its appeal.

INGO HENN

I love coloured gemstones, so I'm always drawn to Ingo Henn at the Fair. The jeweller, master goldsmith and gemmologist always astonishes with his bespoke works of art. Recently, they've taken on new dimensions – central to a number of pieces are miniature carvings (created by Idar-Oberstein lapidaries) in white gold. This Butterfly Koi, captured in its diamond set cage, rises up from the glowing faceted yellow beryl. Diamond air bubbles escape from its mouth and travel along the necklace's chain. Mesmerising.







ROMILLY SAUMAREZ-SMITH

Choosing just one piece from Romilly's intricate and organic, mystical collection is impossible – I've broken my own rule and selected two. Each offers miniscule detail, but with slightly different vibes. The 24ct gold foil-on-silver bell-shaped earrings – with seed pearl trim – hold Tahitian pearls with accents of square diamond beads. The Sea Urchin brooch of tiny sea urchin spines is attached with diamond beads or tiny seed pearls. Nestled between them is gold shingle, rubies and antique pearls. Sea-shore treasure.



LOUISE O'NEILL

I love green stones – any green stones. So my eye immediately landed upon Louise O'Neill's beautiful riviere necklace in multiple verdant hues. The uneven chips of threaded tourmaline have random shards of yellow and white gold, which can flip over to reveal one or other colour, changing the mood of the piece as the wearer desires. Clever.



MARIA FRANTZI

I always make a beeline for Maria Frantzi's booth – the designer-maker's passion for coloured gemstones is evident from several paces. It's an irresistible lure, particularly as she is drawn to unusual, striking stones, many cut to her own requirement and some used in their natural state. The sphene in the centre of this flower-inspired, 18ct recycled gold ring has an encompassing circle of tanzanites on irregular stamens.



SHAKTI ELLENWOOD

Some jewellery calls for closer inspection – and a conversation with the creator – to appreciate the detail and possible symbolism. Once named, this handcrafted 18ct Fairtrade gold piece – Lilith the Vulva Ring – has particular intrigue, even mysticism. Besides personifying female empowerment and sexual energy, the mythical Lilith also symbolises the struggles with body shame and inequality imposed on women over millennia. The central ruby represents life-giving blood, while the traceable diamonds are lost infants, now stars in the sky. It's also a very pretty ring.



TOMASZ DONOCIK

When I think of Tomasz's work what first comes to mind are angular, architectural pieces with shots of strong colours, often with accents of black. I was immediately struck therefore by these far more organic, delicate King Leaf drop earrings in 18ct gold, set with diamonds. The articulation of the five graduated pieces brings a feminine fluidity and also allows each of the five leaves to be viewed from the side as well as the front. Tactile as well as beautiful.



CORRINNE EIRA EVANS

Inspired by the ruggedly beautiful Dartmoor landscape, Devon-based Corrinne creates tactile chainmail pieces, the handmade links in SMO 18ct gold, recycled silver, platinum and titanium, woven to form a fabric of slinky metal. I love the way broad made-to-order rings hug the finger, and fluid bracelets drape around the wrist. I love the use of salt and pepper diamonds. Seen here is the Wild Grasses bracelet in recycled silver, recycled 18ct yellow gold and titanium.

Clarity & Success Software

As Clarity & Success Software celebrates its 20th anniversary, managing director Karen Russell talks to Belinda Morris about its beginnings, development and future.

Tell me a little about the history of Clarity & Success Software, specifically in the UK office.

My dad had retired from his position as MD of a rivets and fastenings firm. Around the same time, his boss in the Germany office, Klaus Henkel – a family friend – died suddenly. Although Dad had retired, he maintained contact with Klaus's family, who considered him their English papa. Klaus's son, Florian, especially looked to Dad for advice.

When Florian wanted to take to the UK his jewellers' stock management and POS software business, which he'd launched in 1966, he looked to Dad for help. Dad was keen to get involved and asked if I'd consider joining him and Florian. As a single parent with two small children, the idea of leaving my secure job as branch manager for NatWest in a small market town felt like an enormous gamble. But we agreed he would launch the product at the NEC in February 2003 to see if it would be worth the risk.

Dad, Florian and the sales manager attended the launch, with technical support from Pete and Tom Hulme, who ran a local IT company. The show was a huge success – enough orders came in on the stand for us to decide it was worth me leaving NatWest. I joined Dad on 7th April 2003. Our first customers stretched the length of the UK, from Yarm to Southall – it was amazing to see jewellers taking a risk on a start-up.



Above: The team at Clarity & Success

What did you bring to the business?

My expertise was finance, administration, customer service and organisation. Dad had experience in management, sales and marketing. Together, we made a great team, with Dad at the helm until 2006 – then we switched roles, and I became MD.

I'd joined NatWest after my A levels in 1986, starting as an office junior and moving through the grades until I was branch manager at the Newport Shropshire branch.

How easy was taking your career in a new direction and learning about the jewellery industry? Did you make any changes when you joined?

Since Dad and I started within weeks of each other, the business was still in its infancy, so I introduced proper administration and filing processes when I arrived. It was a great challenge, and combining the technical and rather geeky aspect of a digital software solution with the bling and beauty of jewellery was fascinating.

Day by day, we went through the software, teaching ourselves and creating guides for customers as we went along. Our earliest customers were fantastic advisors – we often called them to discuss how best to use the system and how to improve it to suit their requirements.

How has the business grown in terms of customers, product development, etc.?

The most significant growth came with Pandora. In Germany, we had worked with the original Pandora owner when he opened the first Pandora stand-alone store in Hamburg. We assisted with article structure, barcodes, product hierarchy, article bases and electronic article bases, and the brand grew beyond all expectations. Its success was beyond even the great results we'd had



"My expertise was finance, administration, customer service and organisation. Dad had experience in management, sales and marketing. Together, we made a great team, with Dad at the helm until 2006 – then we switched roles, and I became MD.

Karen Russell, Managing Director, Clarity & Success Software

with Swatch, Swarovski and Thomas Sabo. Soon, 1,400-plus Pandora concept stores in 28 countries were working on Clarity & Success – in multiple languages, currencies, fiscal regulations and a centralised statistical analysis tool installed at Pandora head offices in the UK, Germany, Denmark and Poland.

This gave us the financial stability to invest heavily in developing our new software – Evolution – which is everything we loved about our existing product in an up-to-date language, giving many more possibilities and future-proofing our solution.

Describe the acquisition of Bransom – what led to it? And how did it affect your product portfolio and customer base?

Our German office acquired another software company, one which specialises in stock management and POS for florists and garden centres. My task was to find similar companies in the UK, and I came across a business for sale, Bransom, which sounded just right for us. I met with the owner, Chris Garland, to discuss the way forward.

Chris knew he had enjoyed market share for many years as he had a fantastic solution, but it was dated and required a complete rewrite. The financial and time investment was unachievable, so his best option was to sell.

Buying Bransom effectively more than doubled our customer base, even though we lost some of Bransom's customers when they lost their chosen solution.

How has the staff grown over the past few years? Who is in your management team?

The staff at both Clarity and Bransom has grown and reduced organically as time and business changes dictate. Actually, and rather sadly, these days so much of the business is automated that large teams are no longer necessary, and outsourcing can be the better option. We have a great core team, many of whom have been with us for years.

As part of our 20-year anniversary, we've interviewed staff and will share their thoughts on social media over the coming weeks, so our customers can put a face to a name and learn a little more about the people they deal with.

What future opportunities can we talk about?

We're always working on our main software, and we also acquired a pawnbroking customer base as part of Bransom – it's a steadfast market provider, but it has aged, so we're bringing it into the Clarity & Success software. Our Bransom expert colleagues have supported this area of the industry so well over the years, so we are well underway with bringing it into the software.

We're also members of The National Pawnbrokers Association which is incredibly supportive, and our pawnbroking customers have been generous with their advice and expertise. It is a new challenge and very interesting – as we have all seen from recent television coverage.

Do you have any plans for celebrating your anniversary?

I had so many plans for both the business and my own 20th anniversary. Unfortunately, and as good old-fashioned sod's law dictates, in February I was unwell and spent my anniversary in hospital. Since then, treatment and management of the condition have made it very difficult to visit customers who have been with us since the first year and have all the fun I had planned. I hope I will be able to do it soon. We had a BBQ recently, just to mark the occasion before it passed entirely. I could celebrate 21 years instead!

When I left the bank after almost 18 years, I could not imagine working in one environment for that length of time again, but here I am, surpassing that – and still going!

CLARITY & SUCCESS



A snapshot of a few recent store openings and refurbishments, plus visual merchandising insights from their design teams.

Scrubbing up beautifully

Mark Hollis, Parify Retail Design:
G Tydeman Jewellers, Stowmarket

"G Tydeman Jewellers gave us a little brief for their store interior. They wanted a small area to sit with customers and talk through bespoke projects, or simply look closer at the jewellery and watch collections. The seating could also welcome customers to wait in comfort for their jewellery/watch repairs. G Tydeman also wanted to brand the area with a new contemporary logo.



G Tydeman Jewellers (Parify)

This type of feature would benefit customers in retail stores both big and small and cost significantly less than a complete store re-fit. We looked at different locations within the store and arranged the primary elements – sofa, chairs, table, etc. – into the best way available. The luxurious material palette features walnut, white granite, brushed gold laminate and plush velvet.

In the store's target area, we refreshed the white walls and part of the ceiling with fluted walnut panels, adding a slim-line stainless steel framed wall mirror, lined parallel with the granite table surface. Either side of the table are two chairs and a comfortable grey velvet mini sofa. And signs on the back wall finished the area."

Above: Lanes Jewellers, (Nason Foster). Below: JRC Fine Jewellery (Axiom)



Harry Clarke, Axiom Design:
JRC Jewellery, Cowbridge

"JRC Jewellery [a new NAJ member] is a long-established family business in Cowbridge with a loyal customer base. Having outgrown the original premises, the business found a new opportunity on the high street. Our challenge was to bring the brand experience into the 2020s, while building on the existing story, to carry some design elements through to the new site while delivering a fresh and exciting boutique.

Today, a sophisticated palette of heritage colours in a matte finish has complementing white marble and gold touches. In a building with a protected facade, the only natural light comes from the front of the store, placing heavy emphasis on the lighting design. The ambient light through the recessed spots is warm and soft, gently inviting the customer further into the 16m-long store.

To delineate areas, such as fine diamonds, there's a change in cabinetry colour, with distinct merchandising zones running through to the Brown & Newirth boutique at the rear of the store. Lighting plays a key role in the cabinetry: modern in form with traditional beading details and characterful internal cladding. Metalwork throughout the store is gold, running from door furniture to lighting features and planters. The new store concept has elevated and future-proofed the JRC Jewellery brand with a timeless elegance."

Nason Foster:
Lanes Jewellers, Holt

"We refurbished Lanes Jewellers existing store in 2013, and they now needed to extend the sales area to adjacent premises. They wanted to marry the existing and new sales areas. The shop has a relaxed and comfortable feel, with the browsing area in the original store and a private aspirational area in the extension. Security – a key factor in the scheme – was concealed within the aesthetics of the modern look and finishes. We re-used some of the original display cases and created new units to match."

"The extra space and privacy have transformed customer service and satisfaction. The overall finish on the fit out has surpassed our expectations, and I've run out of times customers have said it feels like they're sitting in Bond Street."
Michael Lane.



Above and right:
H.L. Brown Doncaster (Nason Foster)



Above: Michael Jones Jewellers, Gosvenor Centre, Northampton (Nason Foster)



Nason Foster:
Michael Jones Jewellers, Northampton

"We've worked with Michael Jones Jewellers for many years and were excited to be part of the project to extend its Grosvenor Centre store, more than doubling its sales area. The look is fresh and neutral, with a new opening between the two stores, unifying the spaces, leading to a large open-plan area with a feature ceiling and private sales sections. Our client has incorporated several additional brands and plenty of consultation desks to accommodate the increase in footfall. We also created a new mezzanine-level boardroom, VIP room and new staff facilities."

Nason Foster:
HL Brown Jewellers, Doncaster

"A local favourite and established store, HL Brown Jewellers wanted a refurbishment. Already having a charming interior, it was a challenge to improve, but with modern finishes and additional display units, we uplifted the sales area. New display counters, consultation desks, feature pendant lighting and a private lounge offer a different shopping experience. New display shelving and lighting in the windows focus attention on specific displays and products. This very satisfying transformation uses as much of the original interior as possible, introducing modern finishes and creating dedicated areas of interest."

Visual Merchandising Insights



Berry's, York (Innovare)

Rebecca Sharman, Innovare

"We work with successful luxury jewellery and watch retailers across the UK who're thriving both online and on the high street. While a digital presence is key for them today, it's the physical store space that really matters to their customers. The combination of expert knowledge and high-quality service should be supported by a comfortable, luxurious environment – indulgent spaces that mirror the products – especially since purchases frequently take hours, over several visits.

In recent years, more and more jewellery and watch retailers have realised that elevating the instore experience for their customers can have an immediate positive impact on their bottom lines – so we design solutions that target increased profits for our clients.

Brand reviews help us to understand what makes a particular retailer unique in their sector. Building brand narratives will more deeply engage existing customers and attract new ones; it's as vital instore as it is across PR, marketing and communications. Today's multi-channel phygital retail world means all customer touchpoints must be unified and consistent.

We pin down potential customer journey patterns, from the shopfront throughout the store, to understand their physical journeys. Space planning helps us create nuanced zones that support instore service and sales."

Jo Coleman, Nason Foster

"There's a rise in the number of jewellers expanding their stores into adjacent premises. This is sometimes instigated by watch brands that require more space, but it encourages the business to use the space to expand their jewellery departments and create aspirational areas. The current interior trend has a leaning towards '70s curves – but thankfully not the colours. Where there's colour, the preference is for monochromatic interiors, balancing one colour throughout with highlights of depth and texture to create interest."

Harry Clarke, Axiom Design

"The recent trend for less-is-more continues through interiors and merchandising. Giving space for products to shine with luxe POS fabrics immediately elevates the product and the brand."

Celebrate! The winners of the PJ Awards 2023

Over 250 of the jewellery industry's leading talent gathered in London's De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms on 20th September, to acknowledge and salute all the great achievements of the previous nine months.



Professional Jeweller editor Rebecca Butler joined the magazine's commercial manager, Anne-Marie Judge, on stage to host the event and hand out trophies to all winners across the 17 categories. The Awards´ headline sponsor was eBay, with Curteis, NB Diamonds, the Jewellery Show, The Betts Group, WOLF and TI SENTO as category sponsors. The NAJ and Jewel Ads were supporting partners.

And the winners are:

Independent Fashion Jewellery Retailer of the year: JESSOP JEWELLERS <

Finalists: The Alkemistry, Astley Clarke, Mococo, PD Paola



Jewellery Team of the year: BERRY'S JEWELLERS >

Finalists: Austen & Blake – Manchester, Crown Jewellers of Harrogate, Daniel Christopher Jewellery, Lily Arkwright, 77 Diamonds





Multiple Luxury Jewellery Retailer of the year: BERRY'S JEWELLERS <

Finalists: Beaverbrooks, Boodles, Chisholm Hunter, C W Sellors, Goldsmiths

Lifetime Achievement Award: THE LATE CHRIS SELLORS, CW SELLORS >



Retail Leader of the year: KAY BRADLEY, BRADLEY'S JEWELLERS YORK <

Finalists: Anna Blackburn – Beaverbrooks, Craig Bolton – Watches of Switzerland, Neil Old – Signet Jewelers, Rasmus Brix – Pandora, Simon Oxby – Berry's Jewellers



CSR Jewellery Retailer of the year: MAPPIN & WEBB

Finalists: Ingle & Rhode, La Maison Couture, Lebrusan Studio, Monica Vinader, 7879



Digital Innovator of the year: 77 DIAMONDS

Finalists: Austen & Blake, Carat* London & Gentle Diamonds, River Mounts, Taylor & Hart, Wongs Jewellers

Jewellery Industry Supplier of the year: RIVER MOUNTS

Finalists: Curteis, Domino Jewellery, Gecko Jewellery, NB Diamonds, Nivoda



Multiple Fashion Jewellery Retailer of the year: ALLUM & SIDAWAY

Finalists: Ernest Jones, F Hinds, H Samuel, John Lewis



Best New Store or Store Refurbishment of the year: FINNIES THE JEWELLER, ABERDEEN

Finalists: Goldsmiths – Cabot Circus, Bristol, Harriet Kelsall Bespoke Jewellery – St Albans, Rox – Battersea, Theo Fennell – Chelsea Barracks, Watches of Switzerland – Battersea

Independent Fine Jewellery Retailer of the year: BRADLEY'S JEWELLERS YORK

Finalists: David M Robinson, Frost of London, Hamilton & Inches, Laings Jewellers, Robert Bicknell Fine Jewellery

Branded Jewellery Boutique of the year: THOMAS SABO

Finalists: Astrid & Miyu, Monica Vinader, Ora Pearls, Pandora, Robinson Pelham

Fine Jewellery Brand of the year: MESSIKA

Finalists: Birks, Fabergé, Fope, Matilde Jewellery, Shaun Leane

Emerging Jewellery Brand of the year: LIA LAM

Finalists: EDXÚ, Flinn & Steel, Loev Jewellery, 7879, 886 by The Royal Mint

CSR Jewellery Supplier of the year: WOLF

Finalists: The Betts Group, Bring Diamonds, Hockley Mint, Pollards & Talbots, Vrai

Fashion Jewellery Brand of the year: SWAROVSKI

Finalists: Coeur de Lion, Hot Diamonds, Sif Jakobs Jewellery, Thomas Sabo, Ti Sento

Jewellery Designer of the year: STEPHEN WEBSTER

Right on time

A selection of horological releases for Autumn/Winter '23.



MEISTERSINGER

Launched in 2021 with a white moon, the second version of the Stratoscope moon phase watch in a 43mm case features a golden moon and matching golden hour markers. As with the white moon, the golden moon, along with the needle-shaped hands, numerals and hour markers, illuminates in the dark. The watch is powered by the MeisterSinger moon phase module MSLuna, (based on the Swiss-made Sellita SW220 automatic movement). In theory, once correctly set, the lunar phase indicator requires little more than a minor correction every 122 years.



DOXA

In 1967, DOXA launched the revolutionary SUB concept, the first truly mainstream professional diving watch. Following the orange of the inaugural SUB 300, the camo version and the bright colours that followed and the recently launched vintage patina of the SUB 300T Clive Cussler, here's the SUB 300β Sharkhunter. Slimmer, with a lower bezel height. And in black and gold, it is adapted for urban life.



BULOVA

A revived and revamped style from 1973, the Bulova Jet Star epitomises the spirit of that decade, fusing classic elegance with cutting-edge technology. The vintage-inspired style of the model borrows design elements – hands, markers and bracelets – from the original and combines them with proprietary Bulova Manufacture movements, ensuring extreme accuracy.



PININFARINA

Senso is the first hybrid smartwatch collection from Pininfarina under the brand licensing agreement between Pininfarina and smartwatch technology pioneers Globics Technology. Using SUS 316 stainless steel and sapphire crystal glass, the watch is water resistant to 5ATM standards. Plus, it can track vital signs for up to a month on a 60-minute charge, and its state-of-the-art sensors enable users to manage their lives, tracking health and sleep, training and texts.



MAURICE LACROIX

In 2021, Maurice Lacroix introduced the inaugural AIKON #tide. The urban-themed watch uses ocean-bound upcycled plastic – it takes 17 bottles to make one AIKON #tide and its user-friendly packaging. In its role as official timekeeper of beach volleyball tournament King of the Court (KOTC), the brand has unveiled AIKON #tide KOTC in black with golden accents. The hour and minute hands, and the indexes are coated in white Super-LumiNova®.



TUDOR

The new Pelagos FXD pays tribute to decades of Tudor watches on the wrists of US Navy divers. The watch features a 42mm satin brushed titanium case with fixed strap bars, a high-performance Manufacture Calibre and a unidirectional elapsed-time rotating bezel – it's a truly modern military submariner. Visually, it's most in line with a late '60s-era Tudor Oyster Prince Submariner.



FESTINA

A brand synonymous with sport and active watches, Festina presents a new collection of Divers Watches, with 20ATM water resistance, screw-down crown and high-quality materials: 316L surgical stainless steel, sapphire crystal and premium silicone straps. Ranging from 45mm to 46.3mm, the models feature dials and straps in a variety of colours.



ORIENT

Orient has added three new Orient Mako Diver design models (not ISO standard divers' watches) with chronograph functions to its sports collection. These first casual-style chronographs are solar powered. The models feature a uni-directional rotating bezel with six grooves common to the series, plus a metal dial with a fine lustre finish, available in blue, black or white.



JAEGER-LECOULTRE

Jaeger-LeCoultre presents three new high jewellery watches that blend exceptional gem-setting with the signature Calibre 101. Each offers a distinctive expression of femininity as well as an entirely new design. The 101 Secrets has almost 27 carats of diamonds and the rivière-style bracelet features a mechanism that enables the wearer to reveal the dial only when she wishes. Art Deco inspires the sweeping curves and strong lines of the 101 Bangle (in rose or white gold).





CITIZEN

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the brand's first atomic timekeeping watch, Citizen has launched three models, which debut the world's first fully analogue moon-phase function for light-powered watches. Tsuki-yomi A-T (honouring the ancient Japanese moon god) features a new atomic timekeeping Eco-Drive 2 Cal. movement that provides ±15 seconds accuracy per month, revolutionary proprietary Super Titanium™ 3 material and moon-pattern dials in three colours.

G SHOCK

Casio G-SHOCK delivers ultimate toughness in this hybrid timepiece of metal and bio-resin materials for tough environments. Its durability and utility, combined with a sophisticated exterior, gives it an appeal for outdoor adventurers and urbanites alike. The timepiece boasts Smartphone linked radio control, tough solar, location indicator, mission log function, as well as triple sensor, altimeter, digital compass, barometer, thermometer, super illumination display screen and more.



OLIVIA BURTON

The Grosvenor Collection is a new collection of six watches inspired by London's streets, squares and iconic architecture. These latest additions to Olivia Burton's Classics collection have gently rounded corners and are available in silver, gold and carnation gold. The bracelet-strap watches feature a sunray dial with crystals framing the North Star detail; the mesh-strap, a sunray dial with crystal markers.



VACHERON CONSTANTIN

Vacheron Constantin has expanded its Traditionnelle collection with two models featuring a green sunburst dial highlighted by a pink gold case. A 33mm diamond-set model and a 38mm model feature manual-winding, in-house calibres with 65-hour (44mm) and 42-hour (33mm) power reserves visible through the sapphire case back.



A LANGE & SOHNE

Revolving around its eponymous complication, the Lange 1 Perpetual Calendar, introduced two years ago, represents the highest standards in precision, design and originality. The new 41.9mm model version, with its 950-platinum case features a black dial, with the month ring providing the framework for all the displays. All calendar indications switch instantaneously to produce unambiguous readings. They can be advanced collectively or separately and once set correctly, the mechanism will accurately display the turn of the month until 2100.



PANERAI

Rooted in design and timepiece innovation, the new Luminor Due Prada Re-Nylon collaboration by Panerai and Prada marks the coming together of two Italian names, fusing aesthetics to create a stylish, functional accessory. Luminor Due's slim, light and sleek proportions are matched with exclusive straps crafted from Prada Re-Nylon material, a regenerated nylon fabric. The straps are available in iron grey and navy blue for the 42 mm case and in alabaster pink and cornflower grey for the 38mm case.

ARCANAUT

Established in 2018, Arcanaut is a pan-Scandinavian watch brand that fuses ascetic and sculptural case designs with unusual dial materials, with an emphasis on original, high-concept design, artisanal execution and traditional horology. The simple aesthetics and ergonomics are in the fully integrated and motionless square crown design, which protects the movement, heightens wearing comfort and gives the case design its distinctly sleek look. Seen here is a model from the new D'Arc Matter Colours Collection.



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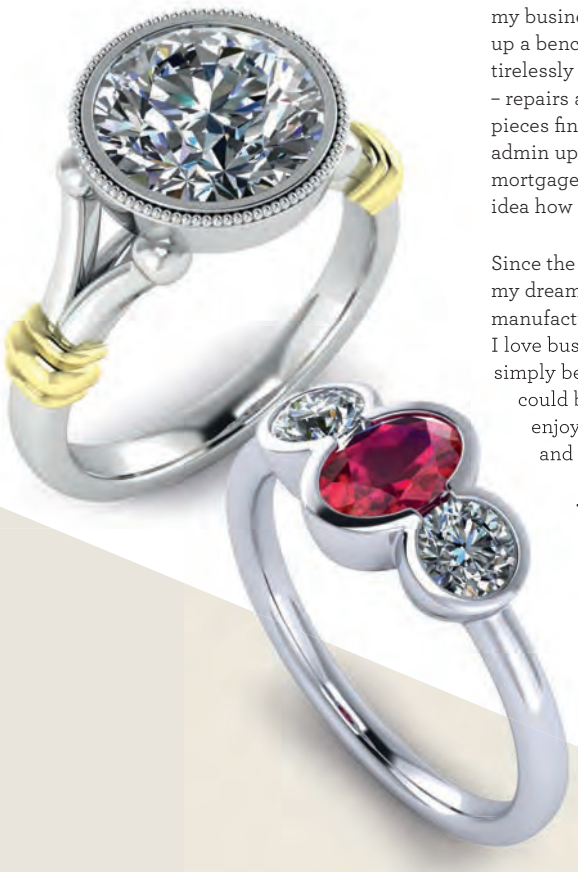
TICK TOCK DEPOT
German Timepieces



Ethan Tate

Introducing Vulcan Jewellery

Belinda Morris talks to founder and director Ethan Tate about his burgeoning jewellery design, manufacturing and repair business and its 360° packages for retailers, designer/makers and bench jewellers.



What drew you to the jewellery industry?

I've always loved the creativity and craftsmanship in creating beautiful pieces of jewellery. When I finished school, I was a trainee bench jeweller for a large jewellery manufacture close to home. There, I found my passion for what I still do today – we work with many retailers and designer-makers, all creating completely different jewellery, which sometimes gives us creative freedom to help them bring their ideas to life.

When did you set up the business and was it always with the same aim?

I started Vulcan Jewellery in December 2019. I'd just moved into my first home – and soon after, the pandemic hit us. I was working with a few retail stores which were doing very well with their online sales, and thanks to them, my business survived the pandemic. I'd set up a bench in my front room and was working tirelessly to ensure everything ran smoothly – repairs and designs completed on time, new pieces finished to a high standard, all the admin up to date and, most importantly, the mortgage was paid. Looking back, I have no idea how I kept up with it all.

Since the very first day of my traineeship, my dream was to build my own jewellery manufacturing business. I love jewellery, and I love business. I have never had a desire to simply be a designer-maker. Although my life could be a little less stressful, I really do enjoy the challenge of running a business and working with my very talented team.

Tell me about your Vulcan team – is everything done in-house, or do you outsource some processes?

Some of our bench jewellers have over 30 years of experience, which is a great way for our apprentices to learn tried and tested techniques. As a proud British manufacturer, we finish everything we make in-house, so we can control the quality of our jewellery and ensure it meets our high standards. CAD, repairs, mounting, setting, polishing and engraving are all done by the small, highly skilled team at Vulcan.

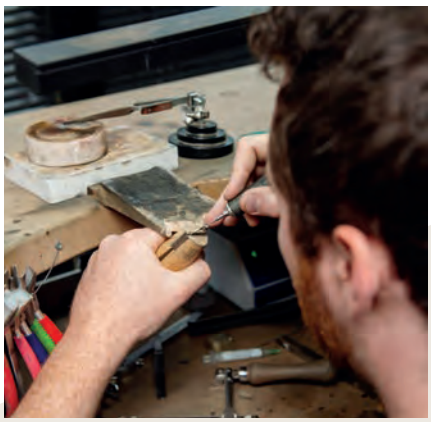
Do you do all the designing or is it down to a team member – or do you outsource?

I started out by doing the designs myself until it was too time-consuming, and I needed to spend my time growing the business. Today, I oversee most of the design projects to ensure there is little to fail when the design goes to manufacture.

We have an in-house team that puts design concepts together based on the customer's request. Once myself or my co-director (and fiancé), Amy Nagy, have approved the design, my team liaises with my designers, who currently work from home. We moved to larger premises this winter and are looking forward to bringing our CAD designers in-house again.

In what way can Vulcan help designer-makers in particular?

Some designer-makers struggle to find manufactures to help them grow – maybe their order quantity is very small, and they don't have a reliable supply chain set up. We've helped transform a few of these businesses by giving them access to everything they need to expand.







One of our customers came to us with some incredible designs, but the finished products were very poor quality. Their items wouldn't cast correctly because the designs weren't conceived accurately for production, and the metal quality was poor. The level of workmanship was unacceptable for a high-end brand trying to get into the UK's big designer department stores. We took on their project two years ago and have since helped them create a new collection and their monthly orders have gone from very few to 250 pieces. We've assisted them with their expansion strategy, and they're now moving into the international market, so we're expecting even more orders per month.

Another example is a very inspiring young lady who got in touch with Vulcan as she wanted to create a new jewellery brand... but with no prior knowledge of jewellery manufacturing. She had sketches of her ideas but no idea of how to bring them to life. Our CAD team created her first range of jewellery, and we manufactured them using our recycled golds and ethically sourced diamonds. She made sales in the first week of launching the brand and now uses our repair service too. We are really excited to watch her company grow even further.

We offer a very streamlined and reliable service so jewellers can grow their business however they wish. We offer lots of free advice to our customers to ensure they're happy with their decisions before they part with any money.

What eco-friendly materials do you work with, and do you only work sustainably?

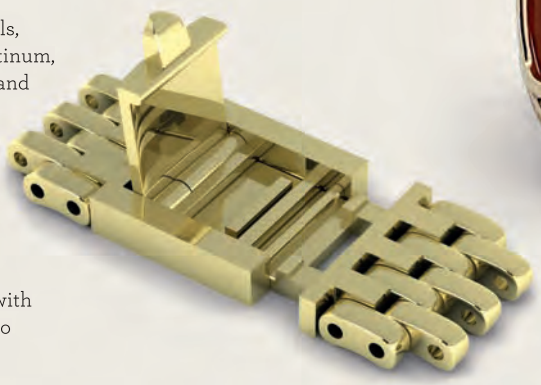
We use a range of eco-friendly materials, including recycled gold, silver and platinum, as well as ethically sourced diamonds and gemstones – and we always will. We ensure our suppliers are ethical, and they have good environmental practices. This principle poses its own challenges, though, as not all suppliers globally are eco-friendly and sustainably driven. Our supply chain is very small, and we only work with suppliers who share our commitment to sustainability.

Describe Vulcan's 360° package. What aspects of your service really make you stand out from the crowd?

There are a few key aspects of our service that really set us apart. Our 360° package ranges from CAD design to repairs, setting, polishing, manufacturing, diamonds and gemstones. Ours is a personable process, so we really get to know our customers. We're committed to working sustainably, by using 100 per cent recycled golds and platinum in our manufacturing and repair work, and we're also working towards lowering our carbon footprint. We strictly manufacture right here in the UK.

We offer a quick turnaround without compromising quality, and our processes – like having our dedicated design team create flawless designs quickly – ensure we stay on top of our deadlines. Our team of experienced jewellers work very efficiently together, and our office staff are quick to answer questions and keep the workshop on point to ensure we complete jobs on time.

On one occasion, we helped one of our customers create 200 pieces in three and a half weeks – in time for an international fashion show. We helped another customer create a shaped-to-fit wedding band in seven days, just in time for their customer's wedding. We're committed to working with our customers to meet their deadlines – we understand time is important. We always do our best to get customer products to them when they need them – and our public reviews confirm this.



How does your gemstones- and diamond-supplying service work?

We stock the popular diamonds and gemstones displayed on our website. Our diamond and gemstone suppliers help us with certain requests and unique cuts. We also offer a colour-matching service, which is really helpful when retail stores need us to repair a ring missing a stone. We can match the colour and clarity of the missing stone as well as carry out the repair work quickly. This saves retail staff the hassle of trying to find the right stone and waiting for a repair quote from a workshop – it can be a long, expensive and sometimes difficult process. Vulcan takes care of it all.

How important is UK-made to the trade, consumers and your customers?

I'm very aware Created in the UK is growing in importance in the industry, and we're registering our business with the NAJ's initiative. We do like to brag that we manufacture here in the UK, and we're proud to create more jobs and support the British economy. The sooner we can make the public aware of the importance of purchasing British-made products, the better. I look forward to proving this over the years to come. A British-made product is a high-quality product, and I'm committed to creating high-quality, sustainable British-made jewellery.



Contact us: **info@vulcanjewellery.com**
Visit us; **www.vulcanjewellery.com**



Bright, Shiny and New

New to us, that is. Introducing three businesses to the NAJ community.

ARIL JEWELS

In St James's, London, Chloë Woodmansterne MA (Hons) FGA DGA and Kayla Rimmon founded fine jewellery and bespoke business Aril Jewels in 2022.

Chloë and Kayla met in 2017 while working in high-end jewellery just off Bond Street. Kindred spirits, they bonded over a shared love for antique jewellery and beautiful gemstones. While at school, Chloë took jewellery-making evening classes, and in her gap year, she gained her Gemmology and Diamond diplomas from Gem-A before studying history at University of Edinburgh. Kayla studied jewellery design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and then art history at Hunter College.

Aril Jewels combines their knowledge of traditional jewellery making in historically inspired pieces for everyday wear. "We felt a production-based gemmologist and jewellery designer was quite the dream team!" says Kayla. "Our passion is creating incredibly special future heirlooms that symbolise life's most precious moments. We were really honoured that, just months into starting the business, we were shortlisted for Emerging Jewellery/Watch brand of the year by *Retail Jeweller*.

"Our team is just us! We do everything except make the pieces. We have wonderful workshops in London which do that for us, and we proudly support these skills remaining in the UK. We recently became a member of the NAJ Created in the UK scheme to promote this, as all of our pieces are made in London."

Currently, most of Aril's work is bespoke, and the aim is for this to grow. "It's so special to design and create a piece of jewellery alongside the client, and we love the process as we get to know our clients better." Kayla creates multiple sketches and renderings while Chloë goes on a gem hunt.

"We always intended to have collections alongside our bespoke work," Kayla says. "They allow us to show off what we can do and help us celebrate our love of antique jewellery, which unfortunately is mostly too delicate to wear every day or can appear outdated. We wanted to create contemporary jewellery that can be worn and loved and eventually passed down to future generations. We're so excited that many of our clients also love the antique details we're bringing back into modern jewellery and incorporate them into their own bespoke pieces."

Aril's collections are historically inspired; the pair looks at antique jewellery, portraits, art, textiles, fashion and colours, as well as motifs and symbolism from each period. Kayla's gold-award winning peridot tiara design (at GCDC 2023 awards) was inspired by Ancient Egyptian beliefs and symbols.

"When designing our debut collections, it was difficult to choose which periods to be inspired by – we're inspired by them all," explains Kayla. "We narrowed it down to three for our first collection: the Elizabeth, Georgiana and Clara collections are named after three amazing, strong women from history. We're currently working on expanding these collections with some bigger showstopping pieces."

Clearly coloured gemstones are key. "We particularly love unusual combinations. Kayla's favourites are alexandrite and malachite, whereas I am obsessed with emeralds and rainbow moonstones," says Chloë. "We source our gemstones from local dealers as much as possible. However, if we can't find a specific stone in London, we will source from abroad."

Aril's typical customer is "someone cultured," who enjoys history and appreciates the quality of a piece made in London using traditional techniques. "Our pieces are not about fashion and fads, but rather pieces that have been properly made to be treasured for a long time."





Left: Chloë and Kayla, Aril Jewels



Strength onyx gold ring



Electra silver statement earrings

LUSTRE & LOVE

Established in 2022 by sisters Debrorah McCann and Kirstie Reeve, and a finalist in the 2023 UK Jewellery Awards, Lustre & Love is a UK-based, luxury demi-fine fashion jewellery brand.

"From a young age, we dreamed of establishing our own jewellery brand and designing unique pieces for wearers to treasure," explains Deborah. Growing up as creatives and passionate about jewellery and design, both sisters pursued careers in the industry. Deborah is an award-winning designer of bespoke bridal accessories and has run her own business since 2007. Kirstie has extensive experience working with jewellery retailers and is an expert in all things digital and design.

"We started Lustre & Love after lots of conversations and time to reflect during the pandemic. It made us even more ambitious to embark on our business journey together. For decades, the same conventional shapes were appearing, and we were frustrated buying these repetitive pieces. We spotted a gap in the market for something new and refreshing," she adds.

Lustre & Love was born. "The sketching began; researching the jewellery market day and night to find our niche and defining our 'why' and what made us different. Our mission was to create unique pieces, pieces that are nowhere else in the jewellery market. Our designs offer customers something refreshing and meaningful. Together, we created our exclusive Lustre & Love signature shape and style.

"We both wear jewellery every day, and our pieces mean something to us, hence deciding to create and design affirmation jewellery with a difference. Our jewellery celebrates the unique power of women. Every piece has a word engraved on the inner side to remind the wearer of her strength and courage. We're proud to be an ethical brand, and sustainability underpins the overall ethos of their business." Lustre & Love's demi-fine jewellery – earrings, rings and necklaces – use recycled metals. Its ethically sourced or laboratory grown hand-cut gemstone pieces arrive with the wearer in eco-friendly packaging.

"We're quite active on social media and love engaging with our online community," Deborah says. "Customers enjoy seeing behind the scenes and finding out what designs are launching next. We aspire to be more than just a jewellery brand; we want to be a positive influence, to change the narrative of how women feel about being their authentic self and feel empowered wearing our jewellery. We're creating an online tribe of positive women who stand together and support each other. So, rather than professional models in our lifestyle photography, we use real women."

Over the next year, Lustre & Love plans to expand its team, design new pieces and increase its retail distribution. "Our vision is to target and secure high-end independent retailers, regional multiples and concessions in department stores – an established agent is assisting us on this journey."





John Armitage

ARMITAGE TOOLS

Family-run business Armitage Tools has been a trusted source of high-quality jewellery tools and supplies to the jewellery industry worldwide for the past 25 years. Its website serves as a global one-stop-shop for jewellers, offering a wide range of products from renowned brands like Komet, Jura Tools, Pepe Tools, Hatho, EVE etc. Armitage customers enjoy a hassle-free shopping experience, able to browse products, view pricing and place orders seamlessly.

"What sets us apart is actively listening to the needs and preferences of jewellers, allowing us to curate the finest quality range of tools on the market," says Hannah Armitage, who has recently joined her father, founder John Armitage, in the business.

John's journey began with hand-delivering jewellery products in London's Hatton Garden and Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. The decision to enter the jewellery sector was fuelled by a profound passion for engineering, craftsmanship and a desire to provide jewellers with the best tools and supplies available. Prior to establishing Armitage Tools, John had a strong background in sales and close friends in the jewellery industry, so he accumulated invaluable experience and insights that have guided the success of the business.

The company's client base is diverse and spans various jewellery sectors, ranging from smaller independent jewellers to world-leading brands. The website extends its services to customers worldwide, so Armitage dispatches tools and supplies to every corner of the globe.

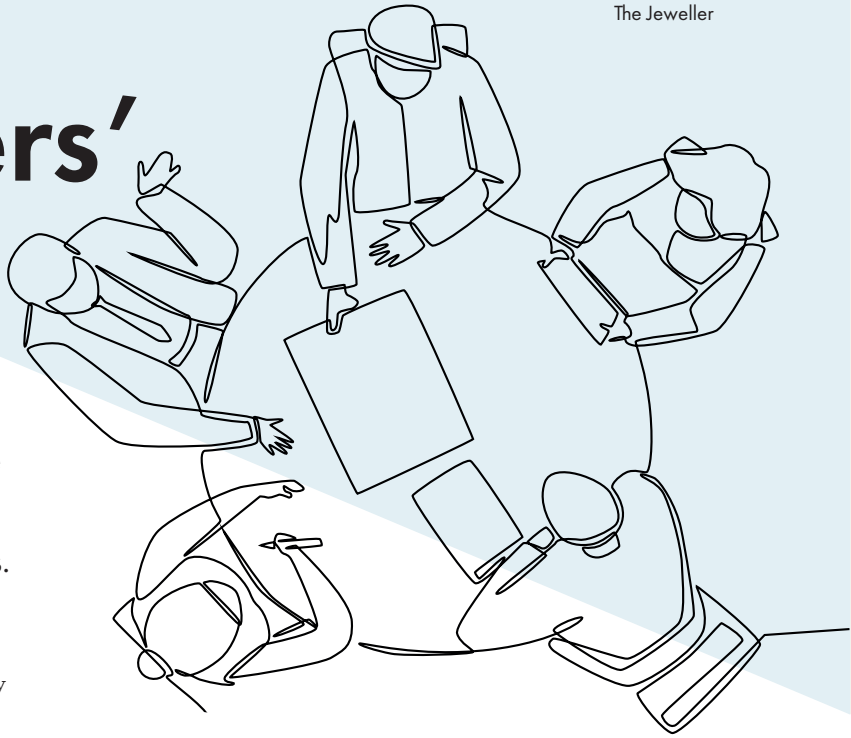
"We've had the honour of collaborating with some of the most prestigious luxury jewellery designers and brands in the industry," explains Hannah."Our unwavering commitment to quality has earned us the trust of names such as Cartier, Boodles, Van Cleef & Arpels, Hockley Mint and G Collins, the late Queen's jeweller. We take great pride in being a reliable partner for these industry leaders."

It tailors its comprehensive services to meet the unique needs of the jewellery industry, ensuring Armitage's customers get only the finest products.

"We're also committed to continuous value addition, actively seeking ways to enhance productivity and efficiency. Our overarching mission is to empower jewellers and artisans, equipping them with the tools and supplies required to confidently pursue their creative and business goals. We recently formed a new partnership with Jura Tools, renowned for its sought-after, innovative and world-leading diamond setting technique."

Armitage doesn't merely supply tools: "We offer a seamless and personalised experience that genuinely adds value to our customers' work," says Hannah. "We have an in-depth understanding of the unique needs of artisans in this industry, and our services are finely tuned to meet those needs. We believe we are not just a source of tools and supplies; we are dedicated partners in the art of craft."

Our Members' Voice



Representing our members' interests is a crucial element of the NAJ's remit as the trade association for the UK jewellery industry. Discover precisely what representation means.

Although something of an overused marketing cliché, there is a lot of truth in the adage that we are stronger together. A collective voice can achieve far more and be much clearer than multiple perspectives. Being able to provide that unifying voice for the jewellery trade is something the NAJ takes very seriously. But what does representing our members' voice look like in practice?

Collaboration

Just as NAJ members have a stronger voice by being a valuable part of the Association, the Association must work collaboratively with like-minded institutions and organisations to influence positive change.

The Association represents the interests of members through participation in roundtables and via sector-specific consortiums and confederations. To provide influence, we must continue to actively take part in these forums.

The NAJ is currently a member of 10 roundtables, representing both internal trade bodies and external groups. These include two government roundtables run by the Department for Business and Trade, dealing with manufacturing consumer goods and the retail of luxury goods.

As we act on behalf of the whole of the UK jewellery industry, it is important we are present across a variety of sector-specific discussions and groups. Numerous challenges are exclusive to particular sectors, so to best understand and impact transformation, we (and, therefore, you) must be involved in these conversations.

Below is an overview of the major groups the NAJ is directly involved with. As you can see, we engage across retail and manufacturing roundtables and broader industry-wide topics such as technical standards.

Representation also extends to the international stage, with the NAJ's membership in the World Jewellery Confederation – CIBJO. The Confederation covers the entire jewellery, gemstone and precious metals sectors, vertically and horizontally. Its members are representative associations and commercial bodies, with CIBJO helping to formalise and set standards and terminology for the global jewellery community. You can read more about our visit to this year's CIBJO Congress in Jaipur on page 36.

Roundtables (representing the jewellery trade externally)

1. Department for Business and Trade Manufacturing of consumer goods
2. Department for Business and Trade Luxury retail
3. Independent Retail Confederation
4. British Retail Consortium (via member representative)
5. British Standards Institute STI/53 – specifications and test methods for jewellery and horology
6. Trade Association Forum Board

Roundtables and memberships (representing members internally)

1. CIBJO – World Jewellery Confederation
2. Responsible Jewellery Council
3. British Allied Trades Federation – affiliated trade association
4. Jewellery Quarter Hub

External working groups

1. British Hallmarking Council – HALO Award
2. Securing Future Skills in jewellery manufacturing
3. UK Jewellery Awards
4. Supporting an accessible Fairtrade scheme
5. Shortage occupation list (skills shortage for targeted migration)
6. T Level: jewellery manufacturer employer representation panel

Partners

Beyond the more formal roundtables and official meetings, the NAJ has a broad network of friends and partners that help support and benefit the trade. From assay offices to buying groups, education providers to trade press, we are engaged across the industry to understand the needs of all in the trade and create change on their behalf.

Below are just some of our partners and collaborators. If we've accidentally missed you from the list, we apologise – please do get in touch.

Friends and Partners

Assay offices: Birmingham, Edinburgh, London and Sheffield

Livery companies: Goldsmiths' Company, Worshipful Company of Pewterers

Buying groups: Company of Master Jewellers, Hallmarking Jewellery Group and Houlden Jewellers of Excellence

Business improvement district: Hatton Garden and Jewellery Quarter BIDs

Trade press and media: *Benchpeg, Jewellery Focus, Jewellery Outlook, Professional Jeweller* and *Retail Jeweller*

Education and training providers: ATHE, British Academy of Jewellery, Gemmological Association of Great Britain, GIA, Goldsmiths' Centre and Ofqual

Other agencies: Heritage Crafts Association, London Diamond Bourse and Natural Diamond Council

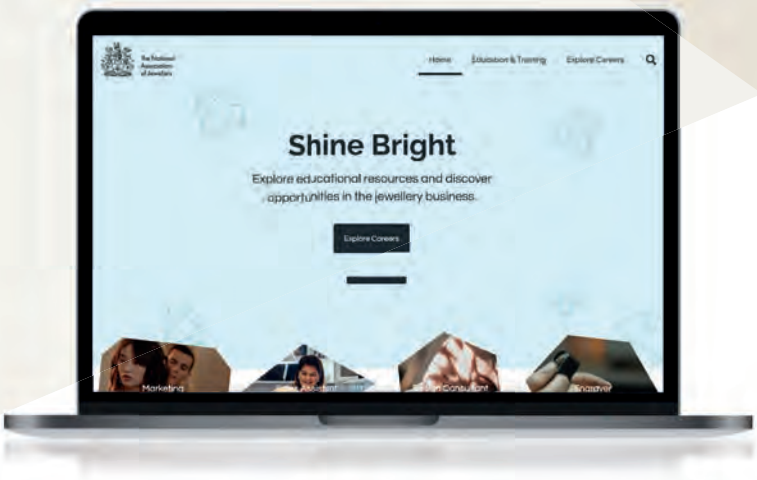
Charitable partnerships: The Benevolent Society, Educational Trust, Silversmiths and Jewellers Charity

Trading Standards: Bucks and Surrey Trading Standards Office

To best understand and represent the needs of our members and trade, we are always interested in fostering new partnerships and collaborations, whether through government-led roundtables or more informal networking groups and communities. We will always go to where our members' voice needs to be heard.

If there is a group we should connect with to further the reach and representation of NAJ members, please let us know.

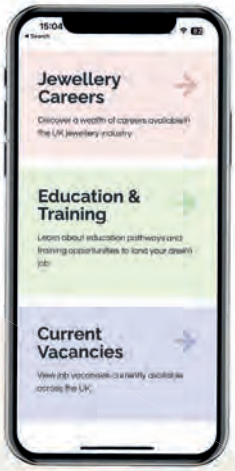
In spring 2024, the NAJ will launch a new careers website to encourage talent into the industry. We reveal more about the site and our aspirations for the venture.



Future-proofing the trade

As the trade association for the whole UK jewellery industry, we are keenly aware of our trade's challenges. Many of these are difficulties exclusive to specific sectors, but some are universal. One universal challenge our member businesses have encountered repeatedly is attracting and retaining talent. Whether you're a retailer wanting to keep your best sales staff or a manufacturer building the next generation of bench workers, there is a common problem: as a trade, we are not filling the skills and talent gaps quickly enough.

The NAJ is attempting to resolve this issue, by lobbying government for greater support and promoting jobs and the broader trade. However, at the start of this year, it was clear we had to do more for the long-term health and prosperity of the industry. We have been hard at work developing a dedicated careers website to attract people into the trade and direct them to the best resources to gain accredited training and find jobs.



Establishing this website will benefit NAJ members and the industry as a whole. To ensure the success of this initiative, we require the support of other trade bodies and businesses. This includes training organisations, skills specialists, and jewellery companies that are looking to hire new staff and want to invest in the future of the trade.

The website fulfils three core functions to attract people into the industry – signposting, training and recruiting.

SIGNPOSTING

The careers database will, over time, provide a comprehensive selection of career options in the jewellery trade. It will deliver a single source for jewellery job roles, from designing and manufacturing to retail and jewellery valuing and everything in between.

The careers directory is in four themed areas:

- In retail
- In the workshop
- In the office
- In craft

This allows visitors to discover complementary careers in specific areas of the jewellery trade, think customer-facing shopfloor roles or careers at the bench.

For each career, there is a dedicated page of key information and useful links to educate and inform individuals about the role responsibilities and the best routes into the profession. Each page also has a brief interview with a current professional who explains their day-to-day activities, what they enjoy about their work and the training they completed.

Over time, this will provide a comprehensive overview of the roles in our industry. However, the website is an ongoing project, and we welcome feedback and case studies from members to ensure these pages are accurate and helpful. If you would like to get involved, please email marketing@naj.co.uk.

TRAINING

A database of potential jewellery careers is only helpful if routes into the trade are clear and accessible. The new website will include education and apprenticeships and potential funding opportunities for each role.

The NAJ wants to continue to provide accessible training, not just with our JET courses but also through our recently approved status as an end-point assessment organisation for apprenticeships. However, supporting training and jewellery skills goes beyond just the NAJ courses and apprenticeships. We understand the importance of also promoting other routes and training providers.

To ensure we recommend only the highest standard of training, we are launching the NAJ Endorsement Scheme alongside the careers website. The scheme enables the NAJ to formally recognise the quality of jewellery industry training offered by other providers or employers. NAJ endorsement recognises industry-relevant training of high quality in its design and delivery.

If you wish to learn more about the NAJ Endorsement Scheme and be considered for inclusion as an education or training provider on the new website, please email education@naj.co.uk for more information.

RECRUITING

Finally, the website will feature a specialised job portal dedicated to the jewellery industry. The portal will provide an extensive list of job opportunities in the industry across all sectors. NAJ members will be able to submit job listings for free, which will be shared across some of our existing social media channels and a new Instagram channel dedicated solely to the careers website.

We are excited by the potential of this new venture. We understand it's just part of a broader approach to attract talent into the trade and fill skills gaps so the UK jewellery industry can thrive. We are always open and available to listen to our members' challenges in recruitment and retention and how we can assist you in combatting these difficulties.

Further information will be announced in due course, but to stay up to date on the development of the careers website and other NAJ news, sign up for our newsletter at **naj.co.uk/mailing-list**

Our latest JET Stars

We happily introduce three winners of the Clarity & Success Award, all students who submitted outstanding coursework on the NAJ's JET1 course.



KERRI MCILROY, LUNN'S, Northern Ireland (May winner)

"I needed a new challenge in my life after moving back to NI from Spain, but I wasn't sure what. I'd jokingly said to my parents: 'Maybe diamonds and gemstones should be my new hobby' – I'd read and researched a lot about them in my spare time. The stars aligned, and shortly after, Lunn's contacted me about a job opportunity. It seemed a perfect fit – never mind a hobby, diamonds could become my career! I joined the team in October 2022 and have been learning ever since.

I'm currently an e-commerce assistant, so I've been able to see many elements of the business, including playing a part in launching our new website and dealing with customers through our online concierge service.

The JET course was mentioned during my interview. At Lunn's, there's a strong passion for developing talent and training our team to the highest standard. Given I'm a bit of a self-confessed geek, the opportunity to learn and grow early in my new career appealed and featured hugely in my decision to join the company. Everyone here enrols in JET, which means Lunn's staff is rich in knowledge; everyone feels motivated and supported in achieving their own certificate or diploma.

I really enjoyed exploring designers and learning about their processes and inspirations. I also found the section on gemstones fascinating. It blows my mind that nature can create such beautiful things!

My gemstone coursework coincided with a project I was working on for our new website, so I could use it as inspiration, and perhaps I put in a little extra effort!

I found the manufacturing element of the course more difficult to wrap my head around. There are so many steps to elaborate on! It definitely gave me a better appreciation for the work of gold- and silversmiths. It's incredible how much jewellery production is still done by hand.

I'm a huge believer in competence is confidence, so having that solid base knowledge, thanks to JET, has been extremely beneficial in dealing with customers, handling queries and creating content online. It makes such a difference to have a full understanding of exactly what I'm writing about!"



ROBERT JONES, LUMBERS, Leicester (June winner)

"I was lucky enough to be introduced (or partially indoctrinated) to the world of luxury jewellery and watches at a very young age. I met Dominic Gomersall, the current custodian of Lumbers Jewellers, before I was 10. Dominic is a close family friend and something of an industry mentor to me. After studying international relations with political science at university, I fully invested in the jewellery industry and joined Lumbers Jewellers in 2015/16 under the guidance of Dominic and his team.

I am a watch specialist at heart. Watches, particularly Breguet, Omega and Tudor, have always been a genuine passion of mine. The JET1 course, however, has allowed me to become more confident in the jewellery department and has broadened my jewellery knowledge horizons. It has been important to me to gain more understanding of the jewellery I sell, and for my confidence to grow while giving the Lumbers' clients the best experience possible. It has helped me to have a better experience too.

I most enjoyed the final project – it gave me a chance to show my knowledge and passion for Tiffany & Co. The most challenging part of the course was gemstones and varieties of beryls – I got my head around them all eventually!

I hope to continue my studies with JET2 next year. Lumbers has always been close to my heart, so I intend to continue my career in the luxury jewellery and watch market here in this store."

"I'm a huge believer in competence is confidence, so having that solid base knowledge, thanks to JET, has been extremely beneficial in dealing with customers, handling queries and creating content online. It makes such a difference to have a full understanding of exactly what I'm writing about!

Kerri McIlroy, Lunn's



STEPHANIE SMITH, HALLMARK, Watches of Switzerland, Leicester (July winner)

"I was so surprised to be put forward for the Clarity & Success Award. I began working for Hallmark on 1st March last year. I started as a claim handler, but after eight months could choose between the repairs or high net worth departments. I decided to accept a repairs consultant position at Aurum House, as I love jewellery.

I started as a repair handler, then moved to the administration side of the business. When you join the repairs team, you are required to take the NAJ's JET1 course – but I nearly missed it because I messed up the form!

In my current role, I assess all items of jewellery before they go to the workshops for repair. I take detailed measurements of any stones and study the hallmarks and any other markings.

I enjoyed every part of the JET1 course – I found it enlightening, and I especially loved the research. Taking the course has helped me daily, especially in identifying gemstones, hallmarks and how an item has been made – whether by cast or hand. In particular, the course has helped me understand (and recognise) poor manufacture and porosity.

I haven't decided whether to do the JET2 course, but I know other members of my team who took JET1 are looking forward to further study."

"I enjoyed every part of the JET1 course – I found it enlightening, and I especially loved the research.

Stephanie Smith, Hallmark, Watches Of Switzerland

"I hope to continue my studies with JET2 next year. Lumbers has always been close to my heart, so I intend to continue my career in the luxury jewellery and watch market here in this store.

Robert Jones, Lumbers

Want to learn how JET qualifications can help your business?

Visit **naj.co.uk/qualifications**

Email **JET@naj.co.uk**

Call **0121 237 1110**

CLARITY & SUCCESS





Above: Ashley Carson (centre) and chair Charles Turner DL, the new Master Cutler in Sheffield Turner, with members of the Executive Committee and partners

Left: The Top Table

Below: Cutlers' Hall

Sheffield Assay Office's Big Birthday Bash!

Founded in 1773 by an Act of Parliament, Sheffield Assay Office is very proud to celebrate its 250th anniversary, with many events taking place across the city.

Celebrations began in May at the Sheffield Botanical Gardens to mark the recent refurbishment of the pavilions and garden fountain. The latter Sheffield Assay Office refurbished over 20 years ago, and to be involved in supporting the recent conservation work leaves a legacy in its 250th year.

On Monday 11th September, there was a special service at Sheffield Cathedral – with beautiful music performed by the Cathedral Choir – to give thanks to the city for being the assay office's home for 250 years.

Later that week, Assay Master Ashley Carson thanked his staff for their hard work and commitment with a trip to Doncaster Races during St Ledger week.

The highlight of the celebratory calendar took place on Wednesday 20th September at an anniversary dinner held at the beautiful, prestigious Cutlers' Hall in Sheffield. This commemorated the actual day the first mark was struck. Ashley and his team were joined by dignitaries and many members of the industry, who celebrated the success of the office and what it stands for today.

Over the following months and into 2024, several exhibitions take place across the city, available for all to visit. At the Millenium Gallery in the Sykes Gallery Metalwork Collection, visitors can see a range of objects and materials chronicling Sheffield Assay Office's long and fascinating history.

Sheffield Assay Office also has an amazing Silver Collection, built up over many years. To commemorate the anniversary, two silversmiths at the office – Collette Bishop and Shinta Nakajima – have created two commissions, spending months on their masterpieces.

Collette's piece, a dish in Britannia Silver and 22ct gold is based around the rose, the Sheffield Assay Office town mark, with features covering elements important to the office and the City of Sheffield.

Shinta's piece comprises 400 silver petals textured and formed by hammering and soldering them to a sphere. Both are fabulous new editions to the collection in the special celebratory year.

Ashley Carson says: "It has been such a proud time for both the office and me, being able to celebrate our history with so many people. Sheffield Assay Office is built on solid foundations, and we are very proud of what the office stands for – History, Integrity and Innovation. We will continue to strive to uphold our beliefs for many more years to come."





From 25th-27th August 2023, the INOVA COLLECTION trade fair celebrated its premiere at its new location in Frankfurt, with over 300 brands and an extensive supporting programme.

INOVA COLLECTION – A STRONG KICK-OFF EVENT

Many exhibitors welcomed the change of location for the INOVA COLLECTION and were delighted with new customer contacts and the high quality of trade visitors. "The move to Frankfurt and a larger exhibition site was the best decision the INOVA COLLECTION has taken," says Frank Heringer, managing director of DiamondGroup. Georg Plum, managing director of M&M Watches, adds: "In my opinion, this fair has become much more mature and professional with the move to Frankfurt. I miss the international nature of the customers a little, but we were very satisfied with the quality of the trade visitors and new customers."

In addition, the networking opportunities and the friendly environment were repeatedly highlighted: "For us, participating in the INOVA COLLECTION trade fair is like a 'family get-together'. Here we meet people we have known for decades and also get to know some potential new customers," says Peter Barth, operations manager at Burger Edelmetalle. Dirk Proksch, sales director at Sternglas, says: "The highlight for me was definitely the atmosphere. You feel part of a 'watch and jewellery family'."

Christoph Paukner, managing director of Palido Fine Jewels, summarises: "I'm pleased that we're now at the new location and congratulate the organiser on the new concept. It would be great if the industry realised that we need one 'must-visit' autumn trade fair in Germany – and what could that be if not the INOVA COLLECTION, which has been doing an excellent job for years."

Max Maus, project manager of the INOVA COLLECTION, sees excellent development opportunities for the trade fair format after the launch in Frankfurt: "We're very proud of what we've achieved so far with the INOVA COLLECTION. The move to the Frankfurt trade fair grounds offers us great potential for growth. With this important milestone, we have created an ideal basis on which to build. Now we need to take the lessons learned from the past few days and develop our joint trade fair brand further as effectively as possible in the interests of the industry."

Martin Weskamp, co-organiser of the INOVA COLLECTION, adds: "With the improved infrastructure and accessibility of the new location, we were able to produce cross-segment growth in the brand portfolio. Even though we would like to see even more international customers among the visitors next year, it was the right step to go to Frankfurt with this format. We are particularly pleased that many exhibitors have accompanied us on this journey from the very beginning and have had our backs. We would like to express our sincere thanks for this support and appreciate the trust placed in us."

This year, the fair included an extensive supporting programme, creating an interactive community event with major topics such as digitalisation, the shortage of skilled workers and sustainability. One show highlight was the Golden Nova award ceremony – 'Jewellery of the Future: Vision 2035'. For the fifth time, young designers, students, apprentices and graduates could apply for the junior award and submit their own meticulously crafted piece of jewellery. The winners received a precious metal account balance of €1,500 from Burger Edelmetalle and vouchers worth €1,200 or €800 respectively from Rudolf Flume Technik and Hesse GmbH & Co. KG.



My JBN

"Give me a reason to join the JET Business Network" is something JBN facilitator Michael Donaldson hears from time to time. We asked one satisfied member, Peter Wong of Wongs Jewellers, to share his reasons.



Peter Wong, Wongs Jewellers

Why I joined the JBN

It was a chance meeting at the IJL Show. I bumped into Michael Donaldson, who a mutual contact had previously mentioned to me. We chatted, and he told me he was now the facilitator of the JBN, a group of jewellery business owners who share ideas and knowledge. He suggested I visit to see what it's all about. (Before that, my only knowledge of the group run by the NAJ – or NAG, as it was then – was under its previous guise, the Executive Development Forum, which sounded far too important and elitist for me!) Keen to develop myself in my role as MD at Wongs, I thought I'd give JBN a try and joined in 2015.

What we do in the JBN

What don't we do?! Four groups meet three times a year, plus there's a national congress. We organise the groups of eight to 10 members by geographic location. No two members are in the same town or city, so the commercial edge gained by being in the JBN is not shared with your competitors.

During each meeting, we cover individual performance reports, member challenges and opportunities, trading polls, staff issues, results of surveys, retail lifecycle, retirement planning, recruitment, salaries... the list is endless.

Every month, members submit a performance report of turnover, GP percentage, stock holding, sales per category, which we collate and recirculate among the membership. We use store numbers instead of names, so the data is anonymous. However, if, for example, someone is selling more online than you, you can reach out to them, via Michael, to find out why. This is entirely at the discretion of each member, keeping a culture in which everyone is comfortable sharing only what they wish.

Members recently voted on which surveys they would most like to see – and it exceeded 30 topics, such as salaries, repair and valuation charges, credit card fees, website costs, marketing expenditure and so on. Each will provide valuable insight, so you can measure your own performance in each area.

Each member can welcome the group to their store(s) for an educational store visit (ESV) with a specific goal in mind – maybe they want to sell more diamond rings, are planning a shop fit or are trying to reach a different customer demographic. Each visit is directed by the member and includes a mystery shop of the local competition, giving the host and visiting members further opportunities to discover what their competition is doing and how they can improve.

Not for the fainthearted, the feedback session following the visit can be brutal, but it is always fair and honest and given with the member's interests uppermost in mind. Feedback is collated and handed to the member for them to digest. During the next meeting, the member informs the group of the changes they made based on the feedback and what improvement it has made to their business. I have yet to see one member who hasn't improved their business following an ESV.

What I get from the JBN

Plenty. Time away from the business, to work on the business, not in the business. A network of trusted associates who face the same business challenges and are more than willing to share ideas. In-depth monthly reports containing key financial data. The opportunity to step beyond my own shop door and gain an edge over my competition. It's not all work and no play; I've enjoyed a round of golf, clay pigeon shooting and the night life of Birmingham, Dundee and York.

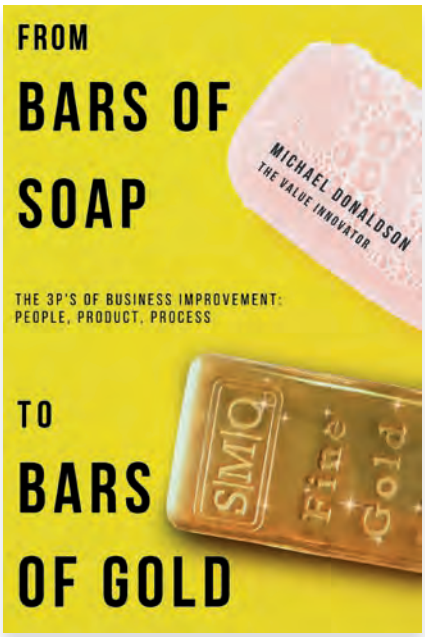
Someone once said to me, 'You don't know what you don't know.' A quick Google search reveals it was Socrates, the Greek philosopher, behind this sentiment. If you're reading this and want to make the right decisions in your business, I would suggest you pick up the phone to the NAJ and find out for yourself what you don't know.

JBN JET BUSINESS NETWORK

For further information
Visit **naj.co.uk/JBN**
Email **michael@thevalueinnovator.co.uk**
Call Michael Donaldson on **07817 305 122**

Michael Donaldson

Invaluable business advice and a celebration of luxury horology.



From Bars of Soap to Bars of Gold
The 3Ps of Business Improvement: People, Product, Process

By Michael Donaldson, The Value Innovator

£16.50, Amazon

Members of the NAJ's JET Business Network (JBN) and regular readers of this magazine (that's all of you, surely?) will be familiar with the wit and wisdom of Mr Michael Donaldson. JBNers, in particular, will have often been grateful for his experience and guiding hand. Now this go-to resource offers an even wider community the opportunity to benefit from his business insights for busy leaders.

Michael has "worked in companies of all shapes, sectors and sizes, with revenues of millions to billions," and he says, "the challenges tended to be the same, just with more or fewer noughts attached." As the book's title suggests, the challenges revolve around "how to improve the performance of your people, the profitability of your products and the productivity of your processes."

He asks the reader not to read *From Bars* from the first to last pages, like a novel, but to take one 'P' at a time, identify what applies to your business, make notes in the margins and implement improvements swiftly. Note that he wrote the 83 chapters over 10 years and, as much has happened during that time – from a credit crunch fallout to a war in Europe – Michael has helpfully added when he wrote each one. Context helps.

As a small taster, (under 'People') chapter one's title is 'What NO really means.' It's about trying to get someone to do something for you. 'Managers and directors should act like owners,' 'Better boss better business' and 'Are you a holiday wimp?' are three more thought-provoking chapters.

Appetite whetted? Here are a few glowing reviews from satisfied readers:

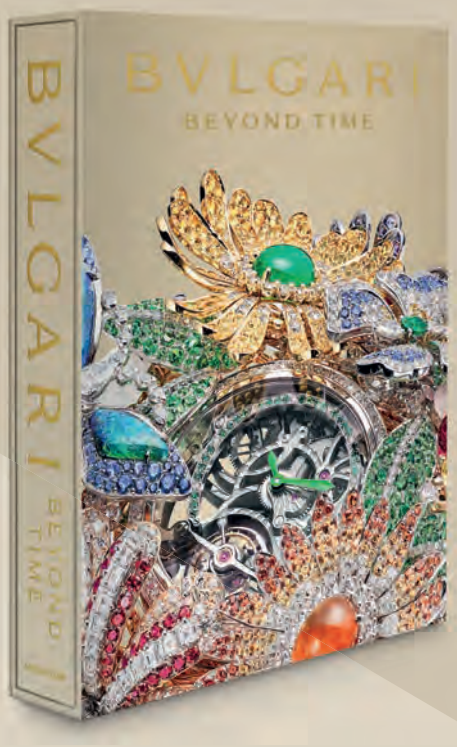
"Michael's conversational and occasionally humorous writing style makes the book an engaging read, perfect for those who find themselves short on time but hungry for actionable advice... wisdom in manageable portions."

"Written in short easy-to-read chapters, [each giving] a different tip and [often] an anecdote of Michael's experience. I particularly liked those chapters that focused on customer or client care and recognised some of the examples of both poor and good service."

"It is now my go-to reference for all kinds of scenarios and situations; some practices, I am already using. It is a true-to-life example of suggestions of what to do."



Michael Donaldson



Bulgari Beyond Time

By John Goldberger, Fabienne Reybaud, Robin Swithinbank and Adam Steel

£195.00. Published by Assouline, assouline.com

With texts written by three luxury watch and/or jewellery experts and one strategic foresight editor (Adam Steel), this beautifully produced, glossy, weighty tome from Assouline's Legends Collection is the definitive account of Bulgari's rich relationship with horology. It offers an expansive perspective that celebrates over a century of Roman-inspired sophistication, exhaustively chronicling the manufacture's Swiss–Italian watchmaking achievements using hundreds of original, arresting images and insightful conversations with the company's key specialists.

It closely explores the past, present and the future of the art of Bulgari's timekeeping by looking at the house's signature watch collections, in particular High-Jewelry, Serpenti, Bvlgari Bvlgari, Octo and Grandes Complications.

Tying the narrative together – both historically and emotionally – are essays by celebrated individuals: Christie's famed jewellery auctioneer Rahul Kadakia on gems; performance-art superstar Marina Abramović speaks serpents; Italian actor, screenwriter and director Alessandro Gassmann reflects on Rome; Olympic gold medallist track-and-field athlete Carl Lewis explains the art of breaking records and conductor Lorenzo Viotti charts the mental soundtrack to complex musical moments.

Reducing the risk of internal theft



TH March
Insurance Since 1887

Internal theft is a major issue for any business, including jewellers. However, there are ways to reduce the risk of internal theft. Speciality jewellery brokers TH March gives the 10 steps jewellers can take.

1. BACKGROUND CHECKS AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENINGS

Conduct background checks and pre-employment screenings on all potential employees. Both can help identify any criminal history or red flags that indicate a potential theft risk.

2. SECURITY MEASURES

Install security cameras and alarms and limit access to high-value items to only trusted and authorised employees. Record who has access to those items. This can deter theft and make it easier to catch any thieves if they do attempt to steal.

3. INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Implement strict inventory management procedures, including regular stock checks and audits to account for all items and ensure there are no discrepancies. This helps identify any missing items and deters employees from stealing.

4. SURVEILLANCE

Install surveillance cameras in key areas of the store, such as the showroom, the stockroom and the electronic point of sale (EPOS), to deter theft and provide evidence if theft occurs. Ensure the recorded picture quality, including the printing of any still photographs, is good enough to assist you and the police in identifying a thief. Your employees knowing they are or can be monitored is a useful deterrent.

5. CASH HANDLING PROCEDURES

Implement strict cash handling procedures, such as requiring two employees to count cash together and keeping cash in a secure location. Avoid keeping excess cash (particularly high value notes) in the till – move it to your safe.

6. ROTATE STAFF

Avoid always scheduling the same colleagues together. This makes it harder for a criminal collusion, when potential thieves team up or cover for one another. Remember, while one employee may look the other way, another staff member may report it.

7. ACCESS RIGHTS

Consider giving employees, assistant managers and senior level managers different levels of access to your key control system. If someone needs to retrieve a higher-end item from the system, require two employees to enter their system credentials, preferably with at least one of those people at a management level.

8. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Provide regular employee training and education on the importance of honesty and the consequences of theft as well as how to report suspicious behaviour. This creates a culture of honesty in the workplace and helps reduce the likelihood of theft.

9. COMMUNICATION

Encourage open communication and create an environment where employees can feel comfortable reporting suspicious behaviour or concerns about theft, without fear of retaliation.

10. EMPLOYEE MONITORING

Monitor employee behaviour for signs of theft, such as unusual transactions or patterns of behaviour and always investigate any discrepancies. There are several legal frameworks to consider if you intend to introduce employee monitoring – you must ensure employees are aware of the monitoring, the extent of the monitoring and how you will use any gathered information.

70 years of Vicenzaoro



The January 2024 edition opens the world golden jewellery calendar with T.GOLD and VO VINTAGE





Vicenza (Italy), 24th October 2023 - **The world jewellery calendar opens in Vicenza, Italy: organized by IEG - Italian Exhibition Group, Vicenzaoro January (VOJ), the international jewellery exhibition which celebrates its 70th anniversary in 2024, will be held from January 19th to 23rd.**

An unmissable opportunity today for the jewellery community, Vicenzaoro is **the longest running B2B event in the sector.** A business, network, training and information platform that is increasingly central to the agenda of the global gold and jewellery industry, capable of representing the entire supply chain thanks to the original format **"The Jewellery Boutique Show".**

Concurrently **T.GOLD** will take place, the international exhibition of **technologies and machinery for goldsmithing**, which is an indispensable showcase of innovation for professional operators and for the entire sector. The **VO Vintage** event also returns, now in its **fifth edition**, which will be held **from 19th to 22d January** and open to the public of enthusiasts and collectors of vintage watches and jewellery.

The largest business hub in europe for the gold and jewellery industry

Vicenzaoro January 2024 will offer buyers from all continents the **largest jewellery, goldsmith and watchmaking business hub in Europe** - among the top three in the world. A complete and selected offer of the best of the **entire supply chain**, with **high-end products and goldsmithing**, the excellence of production from the **Made in Italy** manufacturing districts, and product previews from the **best international players, components, semi-finished products, diamonds, precious and colored stones, packaging** and services such as **visual merchandising, contemporary watchmaking** with distribution. And with **T.Gold** the **technological innovation**s for manufacturing and processing.

Buyers at the centre of the Vicenzaoro experience

Registrations are open for the next Vicenzaoro, which welcomes buyers from every continent with dedicated services to enrich the visiting experience and optimize business opportunities. Among the best travel and hospitality solutions, the **luxury hubs** offer the opportunity to enjoy hotels affiliated in beautiful cities of the land of Venice, with free connections to the exhibition. The online platform **"The Jewellery Golden Cloud"** (also in APP) is dedicated to business matching, intertwining the agendas of exhibitors and operators even before the fair begins. Enriched by the complete catalogue of exhibitors, the interactive plan of the pavilions, streaming of talks with simultaneous translation, and useful functions for parking, moving around the city and enjoying the extraordinary historical, artistic, cultural and food and wine richness of Vicenza and its surroundings. From the aperitif at the tradeshow at the end of the day to the events of **ViOff**, the out-of-show event in the city centre, Vicenzaoro is a unique networking opportunity.

VO VINTAGE: 4 days open to the public

Fine vintage watches and jewellery also return to Vicenza **from Friday January 19th to Monday January 22nd** for VO Vintage. Open to the public in the exclusive space of the foyer on the first floor of the IEG exhibition centre, the **B2C** event, now in its **fifth edition**, has carved out an important space for itself in the calendar of collectors, enthusiasts and watch lovers in search of unique and refined pieces. The best dealers will be present, but also experts and opinion leaders involved in talks, in-depth seminars, training workshops and technical update sessions.

www.vicenzaoro.com/en

The last word goes to...

Brian Hill



A trustee and former chairman of the GC&DC, liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths and industry consultant.

Who has been the biggest influence on your life?

Besides my wife – and her support and encouragement – my former course leader and colleague Robert May had a huge influence on me and my career. I studied under his tutelage, then worked alongside him for 19 years, before taking responsibility for Rochester College's silversmithing, goldsmithing and jewellery course. It was Bob's professionalism and determination to provide meaningful vocational training that moulded me, and it was his teaching by demonstration that set my career pathway.

What led you to follow a career in jewellery and jewellery education... and what keeps you in it?

My mother steered me towards practical subjects that would make me happy, so I took a pre-apprentice course at Rochester College. After four years of full-time study, followed by a short period working in the London jewellery trade, I was encouraged to apply for a teaching position on the very course I studied on.

I taught students many of the traditional making skills that are the bedrock of good practice. Seeing their progress through hands-on demonstration, giving them a chance of making a career in the trade, was very rewarding.

An integral part of the course was to participate in live projects, competitions and work experience. Their successes and resulting confidence were priceless and drove my enjoyment of teaching. My course won the College Trophy in the Goldsmiths' competition for countless years, something we were very proud of.

What three words describe you best.... in your view and according to others?

Motivated, ambitious, patient.

Looking back at your career, what would you do differently if you had your time over?

Very little. I've loved helping others to learn the craft. This aspect of the creative industry is compellingly indulgent, and its community has many great like-minded people. Maybe, if time permitted, I would have harnessed CAD alongside my traditional methods of design practice.

What in your view are the main challenges facing fine jewellery creators (emerging and experienced) right now?

The transitions to integrate the technological changes and advances across the industry offer potential enhancement for jewellery design, production and presentation. Understanding and embracing these where appropriate can be key to being competitive in a constantly developing and challenging market, adding another specialist skill set, giving greater choice and flexibility to running a business.

We've experienced much of this in the Goldsmiths' competition, and of course, the latest on everyone's horizon is AI. Some are understandably concerned about its potential impact on design, manufacture and business. Others will take up the challenge with interest, ambition and determination to improve their quality, efficiency and portfolio of capability and product range.

> For me, there is nothing better than how the Goldsmiths' competition helps and supports all the specialist activities in our industry.

If you could sit down with a cuppa with anyone in our industry, who would it be and what would you talk about?

It would be trailblazer and iconic jewellery designer Stephen Webster, a onetime student of mine. Since the early 70s, he's had a long and illustrious career, making a very significant, successful and positive impact on our industry.

We've worked together over the decades, and I'd love for us to share our stories, beliefs, experiences and opinions from our different and complementary career pathways. We share a mutual respect, and I believe that we both have the best interests of the industry at heart.

What is the value of the GC&DC competitions in your view?

This has always been a high priority for me – the GC&DC competition provides participants with an industry showcase and opportunities that come with success. It helps the industry too – raising standards and personal bars, sharing good practice and helping with the overall health and status of the profession.

The competition is an essential facility and platform to help designers and artisans to raise their game and compete at the highest level. For me, there is nothing better than how the Goldsmiths' competition helps and supports all the specialist activities in our industry.

If not this one, what might your alternative career have been?

I'm a practical person through and through, always at my happiest working in metal and wood. A DIY fanatic, I love making things, so I might have been crafting 3D objects in hard and exotic woods that look so beautiful, and of course, go so well with silverware.

What keeps you awake at night?

Thinking if I've done the day's work as well as possible and to a good standard, and what I need to address the next day to make sure I achieve everything in the best possible way to be satisfied by good practice. I'm a stickler for setting high standards, and I'm not a happy bunny with anything less.

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