

Valuers' Conference

Event Guide 2025

Headline Sponsor
Bonhams

7-8 June

Edgbaston Park Hotel



Bonhams

AUCTIONEERS SINCE 1793

Fine Jewellery

+44 20 7468 8286
kate.flitcroft@bonhams.com
bonhams.com

Welcome

Join us on 7th and 8th June 2025 at the Edgbaston Park Hotel, Birmingham, for the Valuers' Conference, hosted by the Institute of Registered Valuers (IRV).

This standalone event, proudly sponsored by Bonhams, offers a welcoming environment for professionals and enthusiasts in jewellery valuation and gemmology.



Welcome changes

The 36th Valuers' Conference returns as a standalone event for the first time in four years. It is not the only change for 2025, with a brand new venue, perfect for both lecture-based and practical education, and refinements across both days.

This year, following valuable feedback from delegates, we have expanded all workshop and masterclass sessions to 90-minutes with welcome comfort breaks included after each session. This gives attendees more time for hands-on learning and to deep dive into our wide-range of subjects.

The valuers' gala dinner on Saturday evening also makes a welcome return and gives delegates a chance to get dressed up, mingle and celebrate the winner of this year's David Wilkins Award.

New Faces

As we set our sights on the future, we are particularly passionate about welcoming new faces to the Valuers' Conference.

This event is an opportunity to shape professional excellence in jewellery businesses and their people, both nationally and internationally. Whether new to the Conference or new to jewellery valuation, there will be plenty to experience at this year's event with fascinating talks and knowledge-enhancing workshops.

We urge all attendees to plan their visit, let others know they are attending, and prepare to enjoy all that the Valuers' Conference has to offer. With industry-leading speakers and exciting refinements in store, this year's event is not to be missed!

We look forward to welcoming you.



Heather Callaway
IRV Chair

It's good to get together

The 36th Valuers' Conference

Get ready for a high-energy and stimulating event! The Conference is a friendly and welcoming affair that offers an exciting mix of rigorous business sessions and practical hands-on workshops. Attendees work hard to fully benefit from all that's on offer, and with each passing year, we welcome back familiar faces and many new ones.

The programme is designed to broaden the knowledge and expertise of attendees, whether they are a valuer or not. On Saturday, we kick off with main presentations that will captivate and inspire you. Then, on Sunday, we jump into practical, lecture-based workshops and masterclasses that provide a deep dive into a variety of topics.

Come ready to learn, network, and have a great time as you learn from expert speakers and fellow guests. The Valuers' Conference remains the place to be if you want to stay at the forefront of your industry and take your expertise to the next level.

PRICING	
NAJ/IRV Member	
Two Day Ticket	£390 +VAT
One Day Ticket	£255 +VAT
Non-Member	
Two Day Ticket	£440 +VAT
One Day Ticket	£295 +VAT



"The variety of workshops and masterclasses means that everyone can benefit from attending, from Valuers to Retailers, and the relaxed and informal learning environment makes it easy for novices to begin their studies without being overwhelmed.

"I believe that in today's market, both independent and high street retailers cannot afford to have untrained and inexperienced staff, and the Valuers' Conference is a perfect place to improve your knowledge and skills."

Jules Proctor | Biagio Jewellers



The Venue

Edgbaston Park Hotel and Conference Centre is a contemporary hotel in Birmingham, nestled in leafy Edgbaston. Owned by the University of Birmingham, it offers a peaceful retreat and first-class conference and event facilities just two miles from Birmingham city centre.

The venue boasts free ultra-fast Wi-Fi, plus complimentary onsite car parking for guests. Even better, the hotel is outside Birmingham's chargeable Clean Air Zone, so you haven't got to worry about incurring any additional fees when attending.

With state-of-the-art conference facilities, all easily accessible, Edgbaston Park Hotel will prove a great new home for the Valuers' Conference.

Special delegtate rate

We have secured a special delegate rate for accommodation on the Saturday night, making staying on-site affordable and a great opportunity to continue the networking long into the evening.

Where is the nearest train station?

University train station is 0.6 miles from the hotel which is around a 14-minute walk. From there, you can reach Birmingham New Street train station in the city centre in just seven minutes.

Where is the nearest bus stop?

The nearest bus stop is right outside the main street entrance to the hotel. You can catch the X21 and X22 buses heading toward Birmingham or Bartley Green in the opposite direction.

Where is the nearest airport?

The closest airport is Birmingham International, which is approximately 9 miles away.

Get the most out of the Conference

ID Badges

Each attendee will have a lanyard and badge, and we ask that you wear it at all times so you can get access to the correct conference rooms.

The badge includes your name, business and whether you are a valuer, retailer, designer, supplier or student.

The NAJ team will be on hand across the two days to help direct people to the correct locations and answer any questions you may have.



Photos

A photographer will be taking photos during the events – lots of them! They will be popping into many of the sessions at the Valuers' Conference and during our social events.

In accordance with GDPR, all participants have been asked for permission to be photographed and/or videoed and their responses recorded.

Photographs and/or videos taken by participants at the Conference should be for personal use only. They may not be distributed or published without the permission of those included in the photographs and/or videos.



'Personal use' includes putting pictures and/or videos on social media, provided that the security settings prevent the public from viewing the photographs and/or videos.

NB: Delegates must not photograph and/or video any workshops/presentations without prior consent.

Social Media

We encourage attendees to share their participation at the Valuers' Conference via social media platforms.

Please feel free to tag in the Association (@UKNAJ) where appropriate.

Wifi

The hotel operates a free Wi-Fi service.



Keynote Speakers
Saturday 7th June



Kate Flitcroft

From Estimate to Hammer: Interpreting the Modern Auction Landscape

Co-Head of Jewellery for Bonhams, Kate is also the principal auctioneer for the UK Jewellery department. Before joining Bonhams in 2021, Kate spent ten years at Christie's in London and was then Head of Jewellery and Silver at Lyon & Turnbull in London. As an auctioneer, she has achieved two rare, 100% sold white-glove sales and raised nearly £3 million in charity auctions. Kate is a regular expert on BBC's Antiques Roadshow. In 2016, she won the Anderson Medal for gemmology from the Gemmological Association of Great Britain.



Dr Tehmina Goskar

Valuing Differently: Gems and Jewellery in Public Museums

If a specimen or object is described by an auction house or dealer as 'museum grade', what does that really mean, and how might a museum adding gems and jewellery to its collection view such items? How do public museums acquire gems and jewellery and how do their attitudes and motivations differ from appraisers and valuers operating in the real world. Dr Goskar is currently Research Fellow at the Decolonising Arts Institute at the University of the Arts London and Research Curator at the Museum of Cornish Life.



Dr Aaron Palke

Geographic Origin Determination for Coloured Gemstones

Dr. Palke is the Senior Manager of Coloured Stone Research at GIA. In this role, Dr. Palke leads GIA's research efforts into geographic origin determination for rubies, sapphires, emeralds and other coloured stones as well as improving criteria for identification of treatments for coloured stones.
His talk will lay out the current state of science in geographic origin determination, point out the remaining problematic origin calls, and discuss solutions being researched to resolve these issues.



Adrian Hailwood

Are We Nearly There Yet? Has the Watch Market Bottomed Out, and Where Does it Go Next?

Adrian Hailwood is the founder and Managing Director of The Watch Scholar, a training and educational support service for the pre-owned watch market. His 30+ years' experience has covered high-end retail, traditional and online watch auctions as well as valuing watches and writing for a variety of watch publications. Adrian's presentation will consider the current state of the watch market, the fall in pre-owned prices over the last three years and their impact on valuations.



Jason Williams

Valuing Gemstones in Turbulent Times

The gemstone market is constantly evolving, influenced by a range of factors such as depleted mines and rising demand. While coloured gemstones are enjoying a surge in popularity, this growth is concentrated in specific key areas. In this session, Jason will delve into the key considerations valuers should keep in mind when assessing coloured gemstones.
Jason Williams is a director of G. F Williams, a second-generation gemstone dealer based in Hatton Garden.



Dr Çiğdem Lüle

Value of Colour Through Millennia

Since colour remains to be the most important value factor for gemstone's value, perception of colour seems to be the most arguable concept in the gem trade in the past and now. Dr Lüle will share her observations on colour perception and discuss why our eyes haven't been agreed on colour of gems for millennia.
Dr Lüle is a mineralogist, award-winning research gemmologist, and the Executive Director of the Association of Independent Jewellery Valuers.



Dr Richard Taylor

The "Idols Eye" - How to Value an 80-carat Blue Diamond

In a recent UK High Court case, the "Idols Eye" a historic blue diamond became the subject of commercial litigation. Dr Taylor was instructed in the case as an expert witness and will describe and discuss the issues, principles, and lessons that can be learnt from the case. The presentation will be lively and thought-provoking and give an insight into the issues presented by this contemporary real-life valuation challenge.
Dr Taylor is a recognised industry expert with over 30 years' international experience in jewellery, gemstones, and coins, combining leadership in valuation, research, and consultancy, with a PhD in mineral physics.

Workshops

Sunday 8th June

Barry Sullivan – Updating Manufacturing Techniques

Learn how different casting methods—rubber mould, wax, CAD wax, and handmade—can affect an item's value and how to recognise them in practice.

Barry Sullivan and Mehdi Saadian – Post-Loss Assessment

Explore real case studies and develop practical strategies for conducting accurate post-loss jewellery valuations.



Dr Çiğdem Lüle and Stuart Robertson – Colour Stone Grading and Pricing by Gemworld

Gain hands-on experience grading coloured gemstones using a system similar to the diamond 4Cs, with pricing based on the GemGuide structure.

Dimitri Zlatev (Gemmology Obsession) – Social Media Best Practices

One-to-one sessions offering tailored advice and action plans to strengthen your jewellery brand's social media presence.



Harriet Kelsall – The Elusive History of the Medici Pearls

Discover the captivating history of the Medici Pearls, now the Hanover Pearls, through the lens of power, intrigue, and storytelling.

Jacqueline Sanders – Step-by-Step Guide to Getting You on the Road as a Jewellery Valuer

A practical guide for aspiring valuers that outlines Jacqueline's proven strategies for successfully launching a valuation career.

Julia Griffith – Diamonds v. Synthetic Diamonds: What's the Difference?

This interactive session will cover identification methods, unique reactions of laboratory-grown diamonds, and practical implications for valuation.

Kate Flitcroft – Auction Estimates in Practice

Review how to value jewellery for auction, compare pricing methods, and apply them to real-world examples.

Kerry Gregory – Testing Mounted Gemstones

Kerry has begged, borrowed, but not stolen(!) a wonderful array of common, rare and unusual gemstones mounted in jewellery for you to improve your skills.



Lisa Levinson - All Things Diamonds!

Join Lisa Levinson, Head of UK for the Natural Diamond Council in an exploration of the importance of valuers and valuations for the natural diamond industry—terminology, diamond verification and verified facts.

Mehdi Saadian – Your Blueprint for a Successful Jewellery Valuation Business

Learn the core strategies needed to launch and grow a professional jewellery valuation practice.

Philip Stephenson – A Step Back in Time: Examining Date and Value of a Selection of Antique Jewellery

Hands-on examination of antique pieces like pietra dura and Georgian paste jewellery, with guidance on dating and valuation.

Rachel Kinsella – Open Market Research at Auction: Insights and Discussion

A practical session on how to conduct efficient auction research, aimed at students and new valuers.

Sammantha Maclachlan – Photomicrography: The Micro World of Gems

Explore the inner world of gemstones using photomicrography, and learn how to use this knowledge in valuations.

Sarah Caldwell Steele – Jet Set Go! A Valuer's Guide to the Dark Stuff

Unpack the complexities of identifying black gemstones—especially Whitby jet—using reliable, low-tech methods suitable for valuers.



Saturday 7th June Timetable

09.00	Registration
09.45	Welcome
10.00	Kate Flitcroft
10.40	Comfort Break
11.00	Dr Aaron Palke
11.40	Dr Tehmina Goskar
12.20	Lunch
13.50	Adrian Hailwood
14.30	Jason Williams
15.10	Comfort Break
15.30	Dr Çiğdem Lüle
16.10	Dr Richard Taylor
16.50	Thanks and Close
19.00	GALA DINNER

Sunday 8th June Timetable

		Room 1 Writer's Suite	Room 2 Writer's Suite	Room 3 Writer's Suite	Room 4 Composer's Suite	Room 5 Composer's Suite	Room 6 Pevsner	Cafe
09.00	**SESSION 1**	Photomicrography: The Micro World of Gems *Sammantha Maclachlan*	Colour Stone Grading and Pricing by Gem-World *Çiğdem Lüle & Stuart Robertson*	Updating Manufacturing Techniques *Barry Sullivan*	Open Market Research at Auction: Insights and Discussion *Rachel Kinsella*	Diamonds vs Synthetic Diamonds *Julia Griffith*	Insurance Q&A *TH March*	Social Media Best Practices *Dimitri Zlatev*
10.30	**Comfort Break**							
10.50	**SESSION 2**	Testing Mounted Gemstones *Kerry Gregory*	Colour Stone Grading and Pricing by Gem-World *Çiğdem Lüle & Stuart Robertson*	Updating Manufacturing Techniques *Barry Sullivan*	Auction Estimates in Practice *Kate Flitcroft*	Diamonds vs Synthetic Diamonds *Julia Griffith*	The Elusive History of the Medici Pearls *Harriet Kelsall*	
12.20	**Lunch**							
13.50	**SESSION 3**	Testing Mounted Gemstones *Kerry Gregory*	A Step Back in Time: Antique Jewellery *Philip Stephenson*	Your Blueprint for a Successful Jewellery Valuation Business *Mehdi Saadian*	Auction Estimates in Practice *Kate Flitcroft*	Jet Set Go! A Valuer's Guide to the Dark Stuff *Sarah Caldwell Steele*	All Things Diamonds! *Lisa Levinson*	Social Media Best Practices *Dimitri Zlatev*
15.20	**Comfort Break**							
15.40	**SESSION 4**	Testing Mounted Gemstones *Kerry Gregory*	A Step Back in Time: Antique Jewellery *Philip Stephenson*	Step-by-Step Guide to Getting You on the Road as a Valuer *Jacqueline Sanders*	Post-Loss Assessment *Mehdi Saadian & Barry Sullivan*	Jet Set Go! A Valuer's Guide to the Dark Stuff *Sarah Caldwell Steele*	Insurance Q&A *TH March*	
17.10	**Close and Thanks**							





The National
Association
of Jewellers

The Institute of
Registered Valuers