

Gems & Jewellery

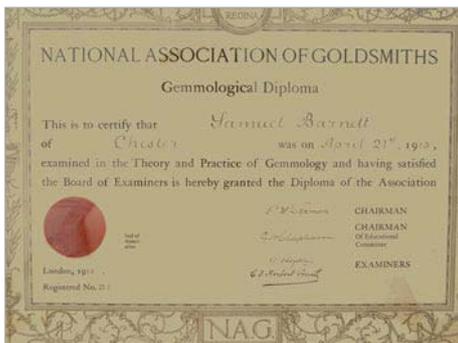
The Gemmological Association of Great Britain

Gems & Jewellery in The Jeweller magazine

An introduction by James Riley of the
Gemmological Association of Great Britain (Gem-A)

Readers of *The Jeweller* may be a little surprised to be both reading an article by me but also to see some pages from Gem-A's *Gems & Jewellery (G&J)* in your magazine. As has been mentioned in the news pages, this is the start of a joint operation between our two organisations reflecting our mutual history and future cooperation. For those of you who are retailers and are not familiar with *G&J*, I hope you will find it both informative and useful as it combines history with relevant gem information on things happening now. If you want to know the latest on glass-filled rubies or synthetic diamonds – and you should with the public becoming more familiar with them – or if you haven't come across cobalt glass-filled sapphire, we will have the low-down!

The new year represents a landmark for the NAG and Gem-A as it is the 100th anniversary of the first gemmological exams. Diploma number 1 (shown below) awarded to Samuel Barnett hangs in



Michael Hoare's office. It is also the 50th anniversary of the Diamond Diploma – one of the first group to take the course was past NAG chairman and president Richard Peplow. I mention these anniversaries because they are not just part of Gem-A's history but also that of the NAG and it is only right that they should be celebrated together. I hope many of you will be able to join us at the Gem-A anniversary conference at Goldsmiths' Hall in November.

In the following few pages you will find a taster of the sort of articles that appear in *G&J*. Amongst these is a review of the 60th anniversary conference of the Midlands Branch of Gem-A. Brainchild of NAG stalwart and chairman Norman Harper, it is a true survivor at a local level, much like the NAG Yorkshire section. These local branches deserve all the encouragement they can get and if you have one near you, do support it.

There is also a report on the upcoming Tucson Gem Shows, regarded as being the finest in the world. Helen Serras-Herman advises on the must-sees, and dos and don'ts, at this remarkable event. Much of the information is relevant to the Rock and Gem Fair here in the UK and there are some pointers for those of you involved in buying loose gems or gem-set jewellery.

This sort of sums up what Gem-A is about... It exists to promote gemmological knowledge specific to the jewellery trade. It is there to help you if you are a sole trader through to a multiple retailer,



gem hobbyist through to international trader. There are numerous courses available (see page 48) which complement rather than compete with the NAG education programme, with special rates on some courses for NAG members. Shortly our new Gem Basics course will be available through the NAG as a stepping stone between Jet 2 and the Gem-A Foundation course. It could be a stepping stone all the way to our Diploma which recently was granted Level 6 status by Ofqual (equivalent to an undergraduate degree). These courses are not only available in London but also in Birmingham. In addition, we can offer a bespoke service, tailoring a course to your particular needs.

In the meantime, I wish you all a most prosperous 2013.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Hoare'.



Gem-A
THE GEMMOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
OF GREAT BRITAIN

Shows and Exhibitions

Tucson Gem Shows 2013

The Tucson gem shows are the largest and most important gem shows in the world. Anyone who is anyone makes the annual pilgrimage to find the most obscure stones priced from a few cents to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Here Helen Serras-Herman MFA FGA offers a guide of dos and don'ts and what you might see. If you're not going this year, it might whet your appetite for 2014.

Every February the world's most respected researchers, gemmologists, authors, artists, miners and trade companies from all over the world come together in Tucson for the gem shows, the annual conferences of the industry's associations and for lecture presentations. Tucson is located in scenic southern Arizona, at the northern part of the Sonora desert, completely surrounded by mountains.

For the veteran Tucson gem show buyers — those who have been attending these shows for many years and have their routes and dealer relationships established — many of the following points are part of their daily routine. Their past visits have trained them how to allocate time and money throughout their annual trek to the world's biggest gem, jewellery, mineral and fossil show. They may add a new experience or tweak their itinerary, but they know what to expect and come prepared. The experience is most enjoyable but for first-time attendees it can be truly overwhelming.



Pearls and beads are piled up high on the tables at many shows. If you are buying one item, one stone or one strand, cherry-picking from a pile of rough, or high-grading gemstones, expect to pay list price.

The 2013 shows will run from Friday 1 to Sunday 17 February and there will be about 40 show venues held all over the city. Two shows take place at the Convention Center within two consecutive weeks, while others fill huge tents. Many shows take place at hotels, packing exhibition halls, ballrooms, courtyards, and ground floor hotel rooms with their immediate outside patio spaces. Some venues are local rock shops and galleries, while even vacant lot spaces fill up with vendors. A few shows are thematic, such as bead or mineral shows; others are known for good lapidary rough materials or cut gemstones, and many shows have a wide variety. Some shows are outside where dust covers everything, and when it rains the 'rivers' run through the tents, and there are puddles and mud everywhere.

But, when the sun is out, it is most enjoyable to stroll through the aisles or sit and take a break.

There are a number of shows that span the entire two weeks, including the very first weekend before the main wholesale shows open, known as the 'jump start' shows. A core of wholesale shows exhibit almost concurrently during the first week. The American Gem Trade Association AGTA GemFair™ with about 300 participating exhibitors will be held at the Tucson Convention Center from Tuesday 5 to Sunday 10 February. It is the world's premier collection of high-end gems and luxury jewellery.

The Gem & Jewelry Exchange (GJX) sets up two large fully carpeted and climate-controlled tents with over 700 booths across from the Convention Center.



The Tucson Convention Center, located in the heart of downtown, is the centre of the Tucson gems shows, with two venues held there back-to-back.

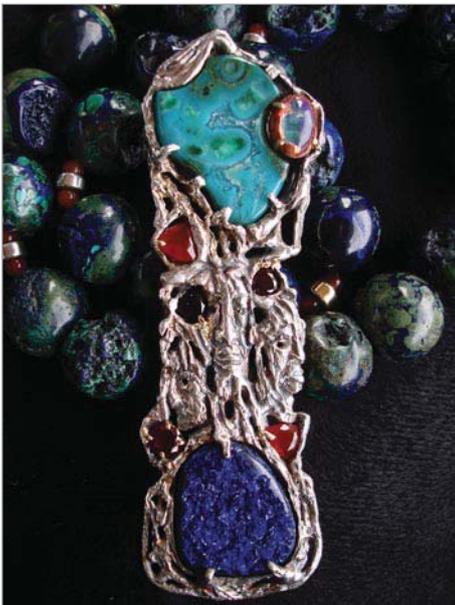
Shows and Exhibitions

The show is well known for lapidary rough, opals, high-end gems and jewellery. The Intergem/GLDA show is located at the beautiful Marriott Star Pass Resort, six miles west of the Convention Center at the picturesque foothills of the Tucson Mountains. The Gem & Lapidary Wholesalers (GL&W) show is held at the Holiday Inn/Holidome and at Gem Mall show on the south side of town. Another popular 'jump start' show is JOGS Gem & Jewelry, held at the Tucson Expo Center. There is something for everyone at these shows: rough gem materials, slabs, cabs, beads, pearls, jewellery findings and finished jewellery.

More gem shows are held in hotels along Interstate I-10, or the 'strip' as it is known. They are open for wholesale buyers, but the public walks through. There are additional mineral and fossil oriented shows, bead shows, the Tucson Showplace, as well as the ever-growing Rock Show at Kino Sports Complex (formerly the Tucson Electric Park Show), free and open to the public.



Helen Serras-Herman with AM geodes. Large amethyst cathedral geodes from Brazil are popular items that attract a lot of attention from buyers.



'Desert Pantheon' necklace by the author who says: "Gems and jewellery 'made-in America' are recently enjoying a newly-found favouritism. My 'Desert Pantheon' necklace celebrates the Arizona gems — gem silica, drusy azurite, chrome pyrope 'anthill' garnets and azurite-malachite as well as fire opals from Mexico.

The Tucson Gem & Mineral Society (TGMS) will sponsor its 59th Annual Tucson Gem & Mineral Show™ (or the Main Event show as it is known) from Thursday 14 to Sunday 17 February. This was the original show that started it all back in the 1950s, as a modest venue, but the mild desert climate made it almost an instant success with people flocking in from other parts of the country and the world wanting to get out of the cold and the snow. The TGMS show is held at the Tucson Convention Center and is open to the public with an admission ticket. About 250 retail dealers and fabulous displays from museums world-wide and individuals fill the halls. These guest exhibit cases are one of the strong features of this show setting it apart from other shows. Every year when I display a guest exhibit case, it amazes me how the public lines up in front of these cases to admire it all. The 2013 show theme is Fluorite — Colors of the Rainbow and some breath-taking specimens will be on display.

Twenty tips to get the most from the shows

Now that you have a better understanding of the depth and timeline of the shows, let's talk about what is important to know that will help you navigate the shows:

- Pick up copies of the show guides or go online for the Tucson Show Guide at www.jewelryshowguide.com, or a Tucson EZ-Guide at www.xpopress.com, and map your route for the shows. Make a plan and take it easy. It is virtually impossible to see everything.



Tables full of quartz crystals for every dollar amount wait for buyers.

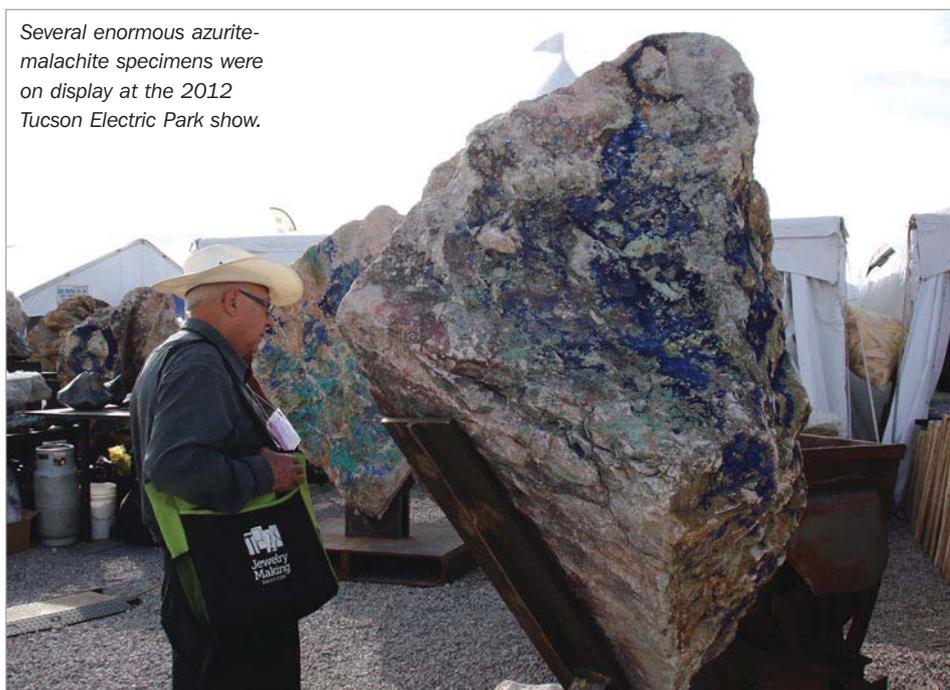
Shows and Exhibitions

- Sometimes it is convenient to park your own car in one location and walk or use the shuttles to go around the shows. Other times, in spite of its cost, it is truly handy to have the car nearby, especially when you are carrying heavy packages. Park at the show venues very early in the morning or later in the day when buyers start leaving. If you rely on the shuttles, try to leave the shows at least one hour before closing time, as the shuttle queues can get really long.
 - Pre-register online to all wholesale shows that require a trade licence, and you will receive your badge(s) in the mail or by e-mail. That will truly save you a lot of time and energy from standing in long queues.
 - Bring along several copies of your Business Licence or Tax ID Certificate, and make sure you also have your driver's licence, passport or other photo ID.
 - Bring along many business cards. They are part of your credentials.
 - Bring money in different forms, such as credit cards, cash, business cheques or traveller's cheques,
- as you may encounter different demands and deals.
- Is it wholesale or retail? Please keep in mind that, if you are buying one item, one stone or one strand, cherry-picking from a pile of rough or high-grading gemstones, expect to pay list price. The best way of reducing the price is by buying quantity, which means many items, many pounds of rough, a whole parcel of stones, many flats of minerals, or the entire hank of bead strands.
 - What is probably the most important tip is to keep detailed notes — which show, what item, what price, which dealer, what booth number, what day. At the end of the day or after a few days, it all becomes a blur.
 - Probably the biggest dilemma you will come across is whether to buy it now or later, or not at all. Here, of course, is where experience comes in, knowing the value of the items. For small purchases that may not be worth the effort to return, go ahead and buy them when you find them. But for larger purchases the best practice is to go around comparing quality and prices while



You can find great decorative furniture pieces like this wooden side table with polished slabs of mookaite (or mooka jasper) from Australia.

Several enormous azurite-malachite specimens were on display at the 2012 Tucson Electric Park show.



taking good notes. That of course has the risk that when you come back your item it is not there anymore. But don't panic, as long as you have money in your pocket there is always another good deal out there!

- Carry tools that you may need, such as a loupe, flashlight, tweezers, black light, books and extra tote bags for those unexpected heavy purchases.
- Have your camera on hand, but please, always be courteous and ask for permission before you take a photo of booths, merchandise or vendors. Some shows completely forbid photography.
- Wear comfortable shoes, hat and sunscreen for outdoor shows, and carry water as you can get tired and dehydrated very easy.
- Don't be afraid to ask the dealers questions about the materials, their origin and treatments. The vendor will usually have an answer for you.
- A very important element of the Tucson gem shows is the educational side. Classes are offered for a fee on

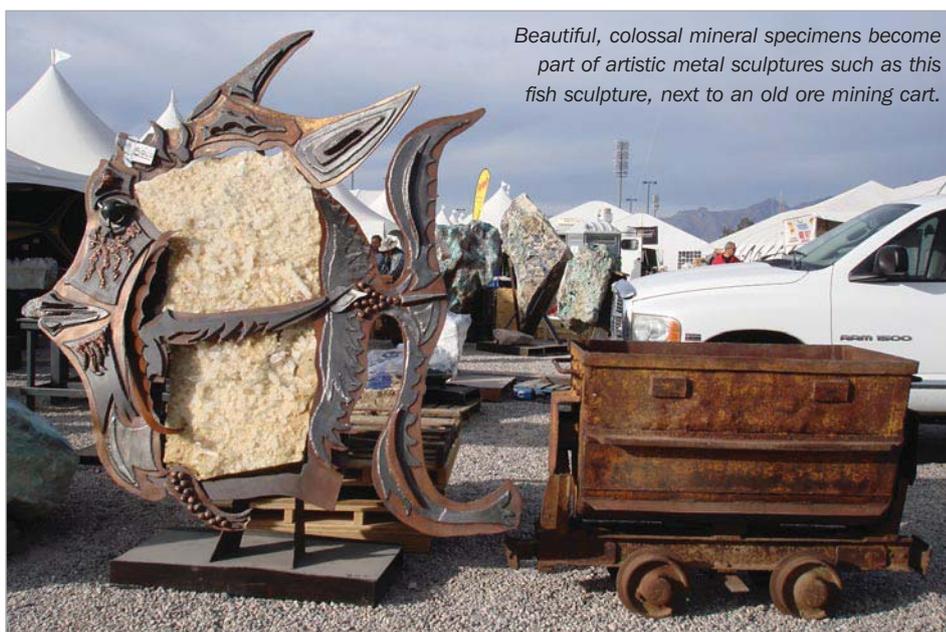
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jewellery-making, beading or gemmology, while there are many free lectures on gems, mining, treatments, photography, etc.

- Another educational venue is the Galleria, the entry hall of the Tucson Convention Center, where during both shows, information booths are lined up. Gemmological and appraisers' associations (GIA, Gem-A, NAJA), and the United States Geological Survey (USGS), just to name a few, are eager to give out information and flyers about their organisations. A number of national magazines may give out free copies, or offer special subscription rates. The Galleria is also the best place for networking, meeting fellow artists, lapidaries, authors and gemmologists. There are some very well-known people of the trade walking those aisles, and you may want to meet and talk to them.
- Another key industry present at the Tucson shows is the equipment and tool dealers. All major lapidary companies have tents at the Tucson Electric Park show, including Diamond Pacific, Graves and Crystallite, where you can go and see and even try out some of the lapidary machines. Highly specialized diamond carving tools are also available. Gem testing equipment, scales, display stands and gift packaging items are offered at several shows.

- Buy what you think is reasonable, what you can afford, and what you have to have. Buy some new material, new technology, or new tools. Buy something you don't already have, or some more of what you have and like. Make a list of what you need to replace or replenish, but don't stick to that list! Be open to surprises. Remember, that is why you are attending the shows.
- Sit down often and rest, while jotting down your notes, have a drink or lunch, and you may make some new friends or hear about new materials or bargains.

back to see again and again, the camaraderie with fellow artists, the knowledge gained from a discussion or a lecture, the motivation for creation that you will gain from all the styles, shapes, colours and rocks that you will come across, and the inspiration from the desert landscapes, the rich native cultures, the bold food flavours and the spectacular sunsets. Let all that become the essence of the Tucson gem shows that will make you nostalgic for a return visit.



Beautiful, colossal mineral specimens become part of artistic metal sculptures such as this fish sculpture, next to an old ore mining cart.



Fabulous displays from museums worldwide and individuals fill the halls at the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show™ sponsored by the Tucson Gem & Mineral Society. This was the author's Rhapsody in Blue past exhibit.

- While planning your trip, try making the Tucson gem show the excuse to tour Arizona's copper and gold mines, celebrated national parks and rugged landscapes that made the West famous. Plan a visit to the renowned Arizona Desert Museum in Tucson, the Bisbee Historical Museum, or the Superstition Mountain Museum near Phoenix.
- Above all, even though you are primarily shopping for your business and time and money are limited, remember what is important at the end. It is the friendships that you develop, the dealers that you come

All photos by Helen Serras-Herman and Andrew Herman

Helen Serras-Herman is an award-winning gem sculptor with 30 years of experience in unique gem sculpture and jewellery art. She was inducted in the National Lapidary Hall of Fame in 2003. She is a frequent article contributor to *Rock & Gem Magazine* and will be exhibiting at the AGTA GemFair Booth #1621 in the Gem Hall, and at the Tucson Gem & Mineral (TGMS) show Booth # 1606-1608. See her work at: www.gemartcenter.com

Recent Events

Diamond Jubilee dinner for the Midlands Gem-A

It wasn't just Her Majesty the Queen who celebrated 60 years in 2012. The Midlands branch of Gem-A also celebrated its Diamond Jubilee and marked the occasion with a dinner and conference at the Strathallan Hotel in Birmingham.

Attendees were treated to a cross section of speakers who spoke on subjects that ranged from rock formations in the Auvergne – given by Davina Dryland – to a lifetime in the diamond business, by Evelyne Stern.

Regular attendees at the IRV's Loughborough Conference will be familiar with the excellent repartee of Stephen Whittaker, Alan Hodgkinson and David Callaghan, who all addressed this Gem-A audience. In addition and highly relevant to current practices in the diamond market, was a lecture by former Gem-A president and chairman, Professor Alan Collins, on causes of colour in diamond and how treatments affect the chemical structure and hence the colour. In what is a very technical area Alan simply and concisely explained exactly what was happening in such a way that even the most basic gemmologist could easily understand.

The conference was attended by almost 100 delegates – which for a Sunday in December is highly commendable. Congratulations to Paul Phillips, Georgina Kettle and the committee of the Midlands branch for putting on such a good event.



Midlands branch President Doug Morgan explains gemmology in Black Country speak!

Gem-A Workshops: The Perfect One-day Introduction to Gemmology

These practical one-day workshops will provide you with the perfect introduction to the fascinating world of gemmology and gemstones. No previous gemmological knowledge is necessary and with all equipment provided these workshops are suitable for everyone, from novice upwards. Whichever course you decide upon our tutor-guided practical sessions will enable participants to obtain a good basic understanding of the subject matter and become competent in the use of gemmological equipment.

Fantastic value – one day workshops £100, or £80 for Gem-A, NAG or BJA members

Workshops in London

Understanding Gemstones
Friday 22 February, 10:00 – 16:30

Understanding Diamond Grading
Friday 1 March, 10:00 – 16:30

Understanding Practical Gemmology
Friday 15 March, 10:00 – 16:30

Understanding Diamond Simulants
Friday 22 March, 10:00 – 16:30

For further information visit our website:
<http://www.gem-a.com/news-events/workshops.aspx>

To book directly please email:
events@gem-a.com

Workshops in Birmingham

Understanding practical gemmology
Thursday 21 February, 10:00 – 16:30
BJA Headquarters

Understanding diamond grading
Friday 22 February, 10:00 – 16:30
BJA Headquarters



Gem-A Gemmology and Diamond Courses

Achieve your potential



A strong knowledge of gemstones and diamonds will increase customer confidence and boost your sales. Gain that knowledge by studying with the world's longest established educator in gemmology. Graduates may apply for election to Fellowship or Diamond membership of the Association enabling them to use the initials FGA or DGA after their name.

Open Distance Learning (Access to a computer with an internet connection is essential)

Gemmology Foundation ODL

Commencing 11 March 2013, duration nine months.

Fee: £1,820 (or £2,150 including three-day London practical lab class)

Gemmology Diploma ODL

Commencing 18 March 2013, duration nine months.

Fee: £2,050 (or £2,650 including five-day London practical)

On-Site Learning at Gem-A's London headquarters

Gemmology Foundation

Commencing 11 February 2013, duration four months (evening course, two evenings a week). Fee: £1,600

Gemmology Diploma

Commencing 14 February 2013, duration one year (evening course, two evenings a week). Fee: £2,650

Gemmology Foundation and Diploma

(Special price for booking Foundation and Diploma courses at the same time)

Commencing 11 February 2013, duration 16 months (evening course, two evenings a week). Fee: £4,200

Commencing 1 May 2013, duration eight months (blended learning course). Fee: £6,950

**Full details at www.gem-a.com/education.aspx or call +44 (0)20 7404 3334,
email education@gem-a.com**

Understanding gems



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