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In this issue:

Australian cassiterite and chrysoberyl: gem and mineral specimens from the Natural History Museum, London

Riverina emerald deposit revisited

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Report on the International Gemmology Conference, Namibia October 2017

Book reviews

It is also for the inquisitive geologist, 'explorationist', and as I observed earlier – for designers, architects and builders who all will gain from a reading of this professionally written and produced publication.

Mike Featherston and the Stocklmayers have made a valuable contribution to the knowledge of Western Australia's natural resources and to the status of earth science for this region. The editors and other publication specialists are acknowledged for their collective effort in bringing this colourfully illustrated edition about. It is a commendable outcome.

Information Centre <http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/>
GSA Publications. Tel: +61 8 9222 3459

Softcover, colour, 356 pages. Cost \$A55

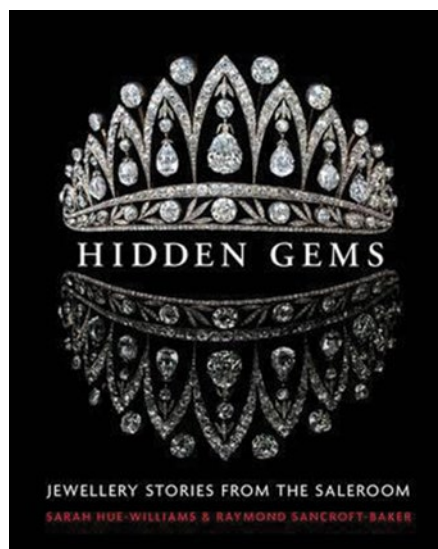
A discount is offered if five or more copies purchased together, the cost being \$A40.

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Colin Sanders BSc(Hons) MSc



Hidden gems. Jewellery stories from the salesroom

Sarah Hue-Williams & Raymond Sancroft-Baker

Walking down Bond Street in London on a recent trip, I was greeted warmly by Colin, the doorman, outside Christie's. Little did I realise at the time, the fascinating stories that were hidden within!

With a foreword by Lord Linley, son of Princess Margaret, this narrative book about the relationships and circumstances that surround the gems is a tribute to Christie's on their 250th anniversary year. It is written by two of Britain's leading jewellery experts – Sarah Hue-Williams, award-winning gemmologist and jewellery historian, and Raymond Sancroft-Baker, former European jewellery director of Christie's. They have given the chapters short titles based on their content and arranged them alphabetically. The forty stories all have some exciting or amusing aspect and are designed to appeal to gem aficionados and lay people alike.

The illustrations are luscious, including the cover picture, of the superb diamond tiara by Carl Fabergé which was largely unworn and in pristine condition – 'a true hidden gem'.

Far from being just a coffee table book, we learn about the intricate process for valuing different gems and jewellery, pricing being as much an art as an empirical science.

Embedded in this book, like pearls in an oyster are interesting facts such as:

- A measure of weight for pearls is known as a grain (4 grains = 0.2g).
- The earliest diamond mines, around 600 BC, where the river gravels found in the ancient Kingdom of Golconda, they produced many of the most famous diamonds ever found including the Koh-i-Noor, the Regent and the Hope.
- 'Artists such as Botticelli, Donatello, Durer and Holbein also trained as goldsmiths'.
- Princess Diana's 12 carat Ceylon sapphire and diamond engagement ring was chosen by her from Garrard's prêt-à-porter range purely because she liked it. Princes William and Harry selected a ring and a Cartier Tank watch as mementoes, and later swapped these with each other. Prince William subsequently gave the ring to Catherine Middleton.
- When Nicholas, Alexandra and their children were assassinated on 17 July 1918, seven kilograms of precious gems were found hidden in their clothing.
- Harry Winston, credited with inventing 'the rock', a single large solitaire in a ring, had no formal education in gemmology or design.
- Copywriter Frances Gerety who worked for a Philadelphia advertising agency had to think of a signature line and the first thing that popped into her head was 'A Diamond is Forever' to be used in an advertising campaign for De Beers.
- The dress circle of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York became known as 'The Diamond Horseshoe'.

- Former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, wore brooches as a secret code, flowers and butterflies for progress, crabs for slowness and insects for bad news.
- A new client thought she was bidding in US dollars not UK pounds!

If I had to choose a favourite chapter, it would be difficult because there really are no low-lights, however, 'Charity begins at home' left a lasting impression. The familiar adage 'death, debt and divorce' can be reasons for people to sell their treasures to auction houses, but in the case of a member of Indian royalty selling a rare Indian *sarpech* (or head feather), set with diamonds, the reason was disaster in the form of an earthquake. The entire proceeds of the sale were donated to help pay for new homes and a hospital for the people of the surrounding villages.

As to the best advice for choosing a piece of jewellery: 'The real test is whether the piece sits comfortably against the skin. It should feel smooth to the touch and be carefully finished. Remember that there is an additional buyer's premium, something that is easy to forget in the heat of the moment.'

This is not just a book of stories, there is also much information about the design periods in the history of jewellery, which you just seem to absorb through osmosis! I heartily recommend this book to you.

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Carol Resnick