

THE RETAIL JEWELLER'S GUIDE 5th edition

By Kenneth Blakemore, 412 pp., illus., publ. by Butterworths, Great Britain, 1988. US\$49.95*

Blakemore's book is intended to acquaint the reader with most aspects of the retail jewelry business. Ten chapters cover the basics for precious metals, gemstones, antique jewelry and silverware, hallmarks, modern jewelry making, silversmithing, and horology both past and present. For this fifth edition, two new chapters—on glassware and pottery—have been added, prompted by the giftware departments now in many jewelry stores. Blakemore has also added updated information on hallmarking in Holland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom to reflect recent changes in legislation. The last 50 pages provide six glossaries relating to jewelry, gemology, horology, and giftware, along with five appendices that cover such topics as "Exemptions from Hallmarking" and "Touchstone Testing in the Workshop." The book is well structured and generally informative, but it is somewhat out of balance. Where some of the sections are covered in depth (antique silverware, jewelry from the Renaissance through the 19th century), others (gemology, 20th century jewelry) are given only superficial treatment.

In his preface to this new edition, Blakemore states that he has updated the gemology chapter to cover new developments in the field. However, the section on synthetics is already out of date in that no mention is made of either the Russian hydrothermal synthetic emeralds or the Sumitomo synthetic diamonds, both of which were discussed in the literature before this edition went to print. He also states that in 1974 a parcel of blue topaz faded completely, although the current literature agrees that the color of treated blue topaz is stable unless heated to 500°C.

BOOK REVIEWS

Elise B. Misiowski and
Loretta B. Loeb, Editors

Blakemore could also have taken the time to update his section on diamond grading. Only the CIBJO categories for color and clarity are listed, while GIA, AGS, and ScanDN grading systems are represented by vague and, in GIA's case, incorrect descriptions. It would have been clearer and more equitable if the author had simply printed a chart comparing all four systems.

This book contains a lot of useful information. Unfortunately, its uneven character undermines confidence in the book as a whole. However, the reader should keep in mind that, as the title states, this is simply a guide for retail jewelers and not the last word on the subject.

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ARTISTS' JEWELLERY: PRE-RAPHAELITE TO ARTS AND CRAFTS

By Charlotte Gere and Geoffrey C. Munn, 244 pp., illus., publ. by The Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K., 1989. US\$69.50*

This book was produced as a pendant to a splendid exhibition mounted in London by the firm of Watski, and was sold to persons attending the show and a number of charity evenings with Royalty present. A more recent exhibition was also held in

New York at the Fifth Avenue shop of Asprey & Co.

The book deals somewhat unevenly with an interesting and sadly neglected period in jewelry history. Beginning in 1848 with the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood—a group of artists whose designs related directly to their romantic private lives—it carries through to the end of the 19th century and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Insofar as their jewelry designs were concerned, the artists of this period were most interested in symbolism, romantic associations, and secret meanings. It was a fascinating era of passion and intrigue, and perhaps this book will stimulate additional scholarly consideration.

The authors have made a judicious selection of spectacular jewelry with many original design renderings, paintings, and photographs of the period to place the jewels in their proper socio-historical perspective. The illustrations are both numerous and handsome, there is a useful index, and the book feels comfortable in the hand. The graphics, in fact, carry the day. The authors, although respected and frequently published authorities in the field, have a writing style that often obscures, rather than clarifies, the subject. A tremendous amount of research was obviously undertaken, but it is ponderously presented. The bewildering text contains sentences that run to almost a hundred words, leaving the reader exhausted and unsatisfied. Perhaps the fault lies more with the editors than with the writers, but even with all its virtues the book somehow fails to live up to the excitement and charm of the subject.

NEIL LETSON
New York, NY

**This book is available for purchase at the GIA Bookstore, 1660 Stewart Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404. Telephone: (800) 421-7250, ext. 282.*