



“Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without” Confucius

In the last two issues of 4 Locals I have been talking about Diamonds and introduced the idea that there are four or even five important aspects to consider. These are the 4 or 5 Cs and last time I talked about **Cut**.

This month’s challenge is to give you a small amount of information on another of the “C’s” that is so important when choosing a Diamond; **Clarity**

So, what is Clarity?

Clarity is a term used to describe the absence or presence of “inclusions” in or on the surface of a diamond or other gemstones. These “inclusions”, or “birthmarks of nature”, are the fingerprints that make every diamond quite unique.

Diamonds that are absolutely clear are the most sought after and therefore the most expensive. For example, a flawless diamond which has no inclusions has top “clarity”. But many diamonds have inclusions – scratches, trace minerals or other tiny characteristics that can detract from the

pure beauty of the diamond and will interfere with light passing through the stone. These inclusions are a barrier to the fire and brilliance that comes from within the diamond. In fact the word “pique” from the French for pricked, is used to describe stones with more visible inclusions.

When it comes to assessing a diamond’s value, Clarity is probably the most difficult characteristics to agree upon, even though Clarity grading is carried out according to the precise methods, the most internationally recognized of which is that introduced by Gemmological Institute of America.

When looking at the internal characteristics of diamonds, the standard tool is a chromatic lens or loupe with a ten times magnification, as this magnification is the internationally accepted standard used when grading diamonds.

Some of our customers who like to know their diamonds have purchased such loupes which we in AA Thornton usually have in stock. The prices can be quite reasonable for a modest Loupe, so don’t be put off as we will also be quite happy to show you how to use it.

After time you may notice that your diamond jewellery looks dull and you feel it has lost its sparkle. Is it that your diamonds are of a lower clarity? Quite possibly not. If dirt collects at the back of a setting it will interfere with the light passing through the diamond just like having a dirty window in your home. Like your windows, your jewellery needs to be cleaned.



Handy Tips to help you clean your jewellery at home:

The top of the stone can be easily wiped clean with a soft cloth, but the back of the setting collects dirt as makeup, grease and oil easily stick to the back of diamonds. There are also three different ways you can wash away the “film” that accumulates on diamonds.

The detergent bath

Some customers mention that they use gin to clean their jewellery, but

I wouldn’t use my “Bombay Sapphire” for that! A mild detergent will do just as well. Put some detergent in a small bowl of warm (not hot) water and with a small brush or toothpick gently clean the jewellery. Transfer to a wire strainer and rinse thoroughly under warm running water with the washing bowl underneath. You don’t want the jewellery disappearing down the plughole! Dry on paper towel.

The cold water soak

Make half and half solution of cold water and household ammonia. Soak the diamond for 30 minutes then lift out gently. Again brush and gently tap around the setting then swish in the solution and drain on a paper towel. No rinse is needed.

The quick dip method

You can buy a liquid jewellery cleaner kit and follow instructions that come with it. We have a selection of jewellery and silver cleaners in stock at AA Thornton in the High Street, Kettering.

If you are unsure whether your item of jewellery is safe to clean, remember your jeweller is here to help and advise. Indeed it is a good idea from time to time to take your jewellery for a professional clean and check up. A “check up” should include a thorough inspection, including the settings, to ensure that the stones have not been knocked or become loose.

In AA Thornton in Kettering we have our own on sight workshop where our goldsmith can quickly assess your jewellery. We often see stones held in their settings by dirt and when we clean the ring we may find that the stone has fallen out and needs some attention. It is certainly worth the peace of mind knowing that your jewellery has been professionally cleaned, polished and settings checked.



In next months issue I shall be taking a look at “colour”, another important factor that determines the value of a diamond, and will also see if I can come up with some more handy tips for caring for your jewellery.