



Fordite 'gems'. (Photo: ATG/LAB)

A SELECTION OF MINOR GEMSTONES

The term 'minor' does not reflect the monetary value of these stones but, rather, their rarity as regards their use in jewellery: most can be classed as 'collectors' stones'. However, in the present climate of introducing new gems to the public, it is possible that they may occasionally be offered over the internet or the TV shopping channels.

AMBLYGONITE (H.5.5-6) – a comparatively new gem to enter the market place. Its rather strange name comes from the Greek meaning 'blunt angles'. Its major source is Brazil, where amblygonite occurs as a bright yellow/green, but other sources are reported to produce blue, pink, purple and colourless stones.

It is not very hard and is somewhat fragile so handling and setting should be approached with care. Ultra-sonic cleaning should be avoided, and it is also affected by certain acids and chemicals.

It is relatively inexpensive. Sizes available are from 40 pts to 3 cts plus.

BARYTE (H.3-3.5) – a very soft stone found in a variety of colours. Cut for collectors only.

BERYLLONITE (H.5.5) – an unimpressive, soft, colourless stone for collectors only.

BRAZILIANITE (H.5.5) – a rare pretty gem cut mainly for collectors due to its fragility. It derives its name from Brazil, where it was found. Yellow to yellowish green with a vitreous lustre.

CASSITERITE (H.6) – an ore of tin found in Cornwall (England) and Bolivia. The reddish-brown transparent crystals are rare. It has an adamantine lustre and a high density. Cut only for collectors.

CAYMANITE (H.5) – only found in the Cayman Islands, it occurs in shades of brown and yellow. It is an opaque banded stone from the dolomite group and usually cabochon cut. A popular souvenir for the tourists.