

a black variety. The size of cut gems is limited due to the crystal form, which has the very unusual property of having two hardnesses, 7 in one direction and 4 in the other, causing problems when faceting.



Kyanite crystal. (Photo: KW)

ANGLESITE

This stone's appeal is that it is one of the few gems to emanate from the UK. It is named after the island of Anglesey, off the north coast of Wales, where it was originally found in the lead mines. In the early 19th century



Anglesite. (Photo: AH)

it occurred in an abundance of small yellow crystals but is now no longer found. However, this stone has also been found in other parts of the UK – Cornwall, Devon, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Channel Islands, Ireland and Scotland. Further afield, it has also been discovered in Namibia, Australia, Mexico, Morocco, the USA and Switzerland.

It occurs in a variety of colours: blue, green, yellow, brown, grey and colourless. It has an amazing adamantine (diamond-like) lustre. Now for the bad news: it is very soft, only 2.5-3 on the Mohs scale. Being a lead mineral it is surprisingly heavy for its size and is brittle. Anglesite is extremely difficult to facet and is mainly cut for collectors.

APATITE

Occurs in yellow, green, blue, violet and transparent colourless varieties. With a hardness of only 5 on the Mohs scale it is vulnerable to damage unless set considerably. It can be very attractive, and has a vitreous lustre. Its name comes from the Greek



Neon blue Apatite. (Photo: ATG/LAB)

meaning 'cheat' as it is regularly confused with other stones such as topaz and tourmaline. The pale green variety from Spain is called 'Asparagus Stone'. A cat's-eye variety is also known. A popular variety, recently introduced, is neon blue apatite. The stone has also been synthesised.

It is particularly sensitive to heat and also to acids and chemicals. To improve wearability, diamond-coated stones are now available with a surface hardness of 9-9.5.

Apatite is found in several sites around the world: Burma (Myanmar), Brazil, India, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Mexico, Norway, South Africa and the USA.