



Ask Goldsmith

Stephen Goldsmith has over 40 years' experience cleaning some of the world's finest jewellery, and RJ readers were recently given the chance to tweet their questions to him. Here is what he had to say

With a CV that includes names such as Asprey, Garrard, Theo Fennell, the English Premier

League and The Royal Mint, no one can argue with Stephen Goldsmith's pedigree when it comes to ensuring that some of the world's finest jewellery and precious metals are kept in pristine condition.

An ambassador for the Institute of Professional Goldsmiths and a tutor for the School of Jewellery at Birmingham City University, Goldsmith can recount more facts about cleaning precious metals than most would ever profess to know.

Goldsmith began his craft at the Rochester College of Art (now University for the Creative Arts), in 1971 and went on to become a Master Polisher. In his 42-year career, he has worked for a whole host of clients, from renowned fine jewellery brands through to eminent patrons including the Royal Household, The Royal Society and the Ministry of Defence.

He has also been responsible for



maintaining the mirror shine on some of the world's best-known major sporting trophies, including the Davis, Heineken, Wimbledon and Dubai World cups, and the Premier League, World Snooker, World Cricket and Masters trophies. In

As well as being a Master Polisher, Goldsmith is also a tutor

fact, he can often still be seen polishing the Premier League Cup on Sky sports.

Other notable pieces of metalware that have been entrusted to Goldsmith's skills include the Brit Awards and Pride of Britain Awards, the chalice of Cardinal John Henry Newman - which was used by Pope Benedict XVI during his 2010 visit to the UK - and the ceremonial mace that rests in the House of Commons.

Goldsmith is a Freeman of The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths and was granted the Freedom of the City of London in 1975; he is also a Fellow of the Institute of Professional Goldsmiths. He has won The Goldsmith's Company Award twice and has served as a judge for the past few years on behalf of the Crafts Council Awards.

For the first time, and as part of *Retail Jeweller's* annual precious metals issue, we asked our readers to tweet their questions on jewellery cleaning for Goldsmith. Overleaf are the top questions tweeted using the hashtag #AskStephenGoldsmith, and the answers from the man himself



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PRECIOUS METALS JEWELLERY CLEANING

Any tips for keeping jewellery clean on the shopfloor without fully re-polishing it?

I am not sure if there is a quick fix for this painful exercise. The best advice is to keep on top of it and use an ultrasonic cleaner on a selection of your stock at a time. If the pieces are kept in sealed cabinets then you can use 3M Anti-Tarnish strips.

What are your favourite tools for those really tricky to reach recessed surfaces?

I use goat's hair white brushes either on a wheel or for the pendant motor. There are pencil ones which are really gentle but I find firm ones really useful for cleaning pavé diamonds and I use these with rouge and Vienna lime.

Is it ok to use silver dips to clean tarnish from silver?

I don't recommend silver dips. It is a quick fix to freshen up a new piece of silver but the tarnish soon returns with a vengeance under store lighting. Silver dips will also ruin antique pieces and will remove the natural patina.

Do you have any tips for polishing platinum when it has a solder joint?

The best technique is to use small tools. I benefit from the luxury of having a two-speed motor so I can slow it down but most people don't have this. I would also advise that you use mops that are less than 10cm and that are especially created for platinum polishing.

What is the best temperature and time to set the ultrasonic cleaner for?

It all depends on what you are cleaning. If your jewellery has large stones and is safe to put in the ultrasonic cleaner then 50°C to 60°C is sufficient. If it is a silver object with no stones then you can set the temperature slightly higher.

Remember, be very careful not to put your fingers in the liquid while the machine is vibrating as it will give you arthritis in later life. The ultrasonic can also etch silver if the item is left in there too long, so if it is a silver item I wouldn't recommend any longer than five minutes. All composition should drop off in seconds anyway.



Lots of my designs have nooks and crannies that get polishing compound in. What's the best tip for removing this?

I polish all back holes before the stones are set so they are easier to clean and I use either soft goat's hair pencil brushes or a soft toothbrush to encourage the polishing compound to come out. I also clean at least twice, especially before finishing, so if there are any slight marks, they can be removed afterwards.

Where is the best place, in your opinion, to sell lemel without being cheated?

Lemel is a trade term for the small shavings of precious metal that are left from filing and sawing techniques used in the manufacture of jewellery. You have to really take a company's word for what actually comes out of your lemel, but I understand this can be a concern.

Presman Mastermelt offer a service to their customers where they can watch their

lemel being melted and then immediately place the melted button into the X-ray machine, which gives the customer a rough on-the-spot assay. This means the customer has a rough idea of what assay to expect and is safe in the knowledge that the process is as transparent as it can be.

How do you keep your hands clean?

Prevention is far better than cure so I use O'Keeffe's Working Hands moisturising cream to ensure my hands stay moisturised. If I didn't moisturise properly my fingers would be so cracked that I would never be able to get them clean.

What is the one object that you would dearly love to polish?

I have been lucky enough to polish some of the best creations made by the world's finest craftsmen and so this is a hard question to answer. However, having just returned from Russia, I think the Fabergé Coronation Egg from 1897 would have to be the ultimate object for me. All the eggs were very whimsical and, in that sense, much like a lot of Theo Fennell's creations to day.

You are the ambassador to the Institute of Professional Goldsmiths (IPG) – who are they?

The IPG is an organisation that promotes and supports craftspeople of the highest calibre, who produce only the finest workmanship. We also nurture up-and-coming young craftsmen, so they are able to become Fellows in the future. ✨

To keep up to date with latest jewellery cleaning information, follow Stephen Goldsmith on Twitter [@goldpolisher](#)

Goldsmith, who has been in the business for 42 years, at work cleaning various pieces; (centre) one of the pieces he has been responsible for polishing

