

## SHARING THE SECRETS.

### Graham Scarr

Picture the scene. In my hand is a large piece of dream rough, the sort that must have cut those fancy bits in the museum. This is going to be the definitive cut. In my mind's eye I can see the ideal shape which will fit in between all those nasty looking cracks and blemishes. The angles will fit perfectly. This will be the big one, the triumph of everything that I have done up to now. I carefully cut a flat, reach for the dop wax, ...insert into the machine. This is it! ... Break facets? Girdle first? Who cares, just cut...

Now, there are people who do and people who don't, and I didn't! Preform, in this case that is. Maybe I should have and I know I read about it somewhere, but I can't remember where that was or what they said about it. I like cutting rough straight from the, er...rough. I get a buzz out of watching how each facet slices into the stone. The excitement of wondering whether this or that particular tier is going to be the one to finally get rid of that one rather annoying crack.

Well, it seems that I can't get rid of it that way. Perhaps I should have dopped it slightly to one side. If I cut the girdle line any lower there won't be enough left for a decent crown. If I reduce the girdle width and recut the pavilion it won't fit into that solid gold mount that I have already had specially made for this stone. There is no going back now. Anyway, if I change those angles by a couple of degrees, fiddling with the stars later won't be that much of a problem, will it?

Rapidly consulting the all knowing textbook that could tell me everything that I want to know if I only knew where to look is not much help either. There are so many useful little tips out there that everyone discovers from time to time, that it seems impossible to catalogue them all in a neat order. Remember that "eureka" moment when you discovered how to do something that had been puzzling you for some time, and then wondered why no one else had thought of it before. Well they probably had, but once sorted they moved onto other things, it became second nature and the secret remained with them until you rediscovered it.

...Okay, I have re-cut those angles by a couple of degrees and the new facet just takes the last of the crack out. I had to adjust the indexing on that tier above but everything is looking good, home and dry and into the pre-polish. All of a sudden the doorbell rings. Off the lap with the stone, off with the motor, off with the water, off with the light as I set about attending to those more mundane matters of life...

I return half an hour later, but it might as well have been three months because I cannot for the life of me remember what that change of indexing was all about. And, did I add two degrees or take them off? I didn't write it down at the time so I can't tell you how I sorted it out.

It doesn't matter if you have been faceting for three days or thirty years, when you discover something, no matter how seemingly trivial, profound or complicated, write it down and then tell the rest of us. Chances are that odd looking gadget, that little snippet of something that 'everyone' must know about already, is just the sort of thing that someone else wants to know about at that moment.

I trust that you realize that this little piece is not about my stone. There are hundreds of years worth of faceting experience in the Guild, and each person approaches the subject in a slightly different way - different machines, different materials, different outlook etc. If you have found a solution to something, keep that knowledge flowing and send something in. Who knows, your contribution could become immortalised as standard practice - the way we all do it in the future. END