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- CAM pre-form** A partially faceted gem whose outline has been created using the CAM technique. See Chapter 17.3.
- Canada balsam** Along with cedarwood oil, Canada balsam is the traditional optical agent for filling fractures in emerald and other gemstones. It is a turpentine based on the resin of the balsam fir tree. See Chapter 13.2. See also optical agent.
- carat** One fifth of a gram. Not to be confused with the measure of the purity of gold, which can be spelled carat or karat (see page 9).
- cat's-eye** The optical effect, seen in tiger's eye and other gemstones, arising from light scattering from randomly oriented fibrous inclusions. Formally known as chatoyancy. See Chapter 12.7.3.
- cedarwood oil** A traditional optical agent for filling fractures in emerald. Usually distilled from juniper and cypress trees, not cedar. See Chapter 13.2. See also Canada balsam and optical agent.
- cerium oxide** Popular metal oxide polishing agent. See Chapter 4.12.1.
- ceramic lap** An extremely hard type of polishing lap used with diamond bort. Ceramic laps produces the flattest facets and the sharpest meet points, but they can be a challenge to use. See Chapters 3.3.1 and 8.14.4.
- charge** (verb) To load a lap with abrasive or polishing agent. (noun) The act of doing so, or the current load of abrasive, as in "the current charge of diamond is wearing out." See Chapters 3.2.2 and 8.14.
- chatoyancy** see cat's-eye
- cheater** A mechanism for adjusting the rotation of the quill slightly in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction. These adjustments are usually smaller than one setting of the index wheel. Hence, the cheater is also known as the index splitter. See Chapter 2.2.1.
- chemical polishing** The finest yet least well understood polishing process. Chemical polishing produces the final, perfect surface finish through a combination of mechanical and chemical action. See Chapter 8.11.
- chemical vapour deposition (CVD)** A method for synthesizing gemstones by condensing material directly from a vapour to the solid state. Currently used only with diamond. CVD produces relatively small but high quality diamonds. See Chapter 6.6.2.
- CHIA** An mnemonic acronym to remember items to check before cutting a facet. Stands for "Cheater, Height, Index, Angle." See Chapter 8.9.2.
- chromophore** Mineralogical name for the atoms that produce the colour in gemstones. These are usually trace impurity atoms, such as chromium which makes ruby red. See Chapter 12.3.2.
- chrysoberyl** A beryllium aluminum oxide gem material. Although usually yellow or golden-green, the rare and highly prized alexandrite type exhibits a green to purple-red colour change. See Chapter 14.1.