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EDITORIAL

## One of nature's building blocks

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I am currently reading an excellent book written by John Emsley called *Nature's Building Blocks*, published by Oxford University Press. One might imagine that this book, an A–Z guide to the elements, would be rather uninspiring. In fact, it is an absolute treasure trove of information presented in a refreshingly readable format. If you ever wanted to know what a particular element is used for, or where it is found in the world, then this is the book to buy. As one of the reviewers of the book says ‘one can open it at any time and read for sheer delight.’ I wholeheartedly agree with that sentiment.

Of course, as one of the elements of the periodic table, gold occupies a few pages of the book and I can vouch for the accuracy of the author's writing in this section on gold. He succinctly describes many of the emerging uses for the metal including ones that readers of *Gold Bulletin* will be familiar with, such as nanotechnology and catalysis amongst others. Dr. Emsley also highlights where, if any, each element has a role in medicine, in history, in food, in war and other major social and practical settings. Gold's important and growing role in medicine is well recognised by Dr. Emsley, which is heartening to see.

The only point I have to disagree with is his statement, ‘...there is even the possibility that gold will become part of catalytic convertors...’ That ‘possibility’ became a reality earlier this year when US-based company Nanostellar confirmed the first commercial use of gold in diesel oxidation catalysts on European vehicles. However, it would be churlish to make too much of this point given that the book was almost certainly at the printing presses when this development occurred.

If I have peaked your curiosity about the book, I thoroughly recommend you buy it. Then turn to page 202, the start of the chapter on gold. You are bound to learn something new about our favourite *building block*...

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