

AUTUMN 2007

INTERNATIONAL JEWELLERY LONDON 2007

## ETHICAL ISSUES



AN INTERNATIONAL DEBATE

**I**nternational delegates joined international panellists for the first IJL Great Debate at the Earls Court exhibition. Chairman Michael Allchin, Chief Executive of The Birmingham Assay Office, welcomed representatives from organisations around the world to debate the jewellery industry's response to the ethical, social and humanitarian issues which are confronting the trade.



Michael Allchin and Catherine Sproule of the Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices put the debate in context, detailing the industry's response so far to issues such as Dirty Gold and Conflict and Illicit diamonds and highlighting how the meagre livelihoods of many millions of people rely on the spend of the Western jewellery consumer. The moves being made by the major mining company, Anglo Gold Ashanti were presented and then Indonesian Minister Counsellor, Dewa Made Sastrawan explained the objectives of the Indonesian Government in supporting the development of a jewellery industry of small artisanal enterprises which would offer



sustainable employment via exports. Ethical jeweller Greg Valerio presented his slant on the situation, and Annie Dunnebacke from Global Witness explained the issues her organisation still has with conflict diamonds in Africa. The 80 plus delegates represented a wide array of organisations from Trade Associations to Government departments, and from sole traders to large businesses. The debate focussed initially on the practicalities of "traceable gold" and possible sources of ethical silver, and even ventured as far as mining rights in the Arctic!

There was an overwhelming feeling that the jewellery industry must address ethical issues; several leading industry figures such as Martin Rapaport and Richard Peplow, a member of CIBJO's Presidential Council, spoke of the work already being done and the importance of continuing to create sustainable employment. The situation was clearly summed up by Willie Hamilton, Chairman of the Company of Master Jewellers who has had a long career in the grocery industry. He perceives the jewellery industry to be exactly where the food industry was ten years ago, facing what seems an impossible task. He warned jewellers they must confront and address these issues before they seriously damaged the industry.

Summing up, Michael Allchin said: "The diverse audience representing organisations from around the world have made this into an unprecedented event in the UK. Our objective was to inform and provoke thoughts and action – I feel we have achieved that today and it has been very worthwhile".

### ETHICAL JEWELLERS

NEW RETAILERS JOIN THE INDUSTRY



The Great Debate was attended by representatives from a rapidly growing new sector of the industry – ethical jewellers.

Panellist Greg Valerio of Cred Jewellery is the most high profile of these, but it is apparent he has been joined by several others. These traders are not primarily jewellers, they are individuals who deliberately set out to create a business which can benefit subsistence communities, create employment and encourage fair trading conditions.

Businesses such as The Tiny Difference Company, an enterprise run by ex-broadcaster Christian Richardson, believe in "fair trade, fair pay and a fair chance at life." They aim to make a difference to people's lives by offering a route to export for small enterprises in the Third World. They have chosen to deliver these objectives through jewellery. These businesses have created a niche marketing position of their own in the retail and wholesale jewellery sector.

For a more detailed synopsis of the IJL Great Debate please visit [www.theassayoffice.co.uk](http://www.theassayoffice.co.uk).

### CHAMPAGNE FOR OUR WINNERS

The winners of the Champagne in the daily draw on the AnchorCert and SafeGuard stand at IJL were

**Sun:** Nicola Meekhums  
T.H. Baker Horsham

**Mon:** Alul Gondaliya  
AHL Diamonds

**Tues:** Josephine Tyrrell  
Bonds the Jewellers, Northampton

**Wed:** Ian Hall – Lasting  
Impressions, Bovey Tracey

Thank you to all of you who visited the stand and entered the Free Prize Draw.

### AN UPWARD TREND

Hallmarking volumes for the four UK Assay Office have turned the corner at last, and after over two years of decline, which bottomed out in April 2007, the third quarter of the year showed a far more encouraging picture.

Silver made the most significant increase, up by 511,373 articles, a 26.8% increase on the same period last year. 18ct Gold and Platinum were also strong (16,904 articles, 3.8% and 11,437 articles, 15.6% up respectively). Full details of the figures can be found on the back page. ■

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# HALLMARKING

## HALLMARKING PROCESSES RE-ORGANISED

**T**he Birmingham Assay Office is responsible for handling over 10 million articles of precious metal every year. Our primary objective is to provide our hallmarking customers with a fast and efficient hallmarking service, and we have recently reviewed some of our processes which has led to improved service levels for our customers.



Kathy McMillen

Our aim is to consolidate most production onto one floor within our Newhall Street site. We now have 4 x-ray fluorescence testing instruments located on the hallmarking floor so articles can be tested to determine the

precious metal content and, if passed, are immediately moved across to the marking department for the hallmarks to be applied. This has had a positive impact on our service levels.

We are also investing in further laser hallmarking equipment, again with the objective of providing a quick and efficient service.

As part of our on-going commitment to customer service, Kathy McMillen has recently taken on a new role within The Birmingham Assay Office as Production and Customer Services Co-Ordinator. Kathy has a wealth of experience, having worked at The Assay Office for over 30 years and her new responsibilities include acting as a point of contact for our hallmarking customers on a day-to-day basis and dealing with customer queries.

She is responsible for overseeing production and ensuring that parcels submitted for hallmarking are processed through the business quickly and efficiently. In summary, her objective is to ensure that we provide our hallmarking customers with the highest possible level of service.

If there is anything which Kathy can help you with now, or in the future, please do not hesitate to contact her on: 0121 262 1018  
Email: kathy.mcmillen@theassayoffice.co.uk ■

## ANNUAL BURSARIES FOR MA JEWELLERY & SILVERSMITHING STUDENTS

**Two MA students at The Birmingham School of Jewellery, Jonathan Olliffe and Sally Collins, have been successful in securing The Birmingham Assay Office Annual Bursaries.**



Jonathan Olliffe at his workbench

Jonathan and Sally, both studying an MA in Jewellery and Silversmithing at the School were amongst several students who applied for the bursaries which are awarded on an annual basis by The Birmingham Assay Office.

Each student will receive £5,000 to help support their course fees and other material during their studies.

Jonathan said "Having just been awarded a first class honours degree, I have now moved on to my MA studies when I hope to achieve a further understanding of my work, and to push the boundaries in silversmithing. I wish to continue to design and make contemporary fine metal work to a technically and aesthetically high standard, and without the bursary this would not have been possible."



Sally Collins

Sally Collins said: "Having achieved a first class honours in Silversmithing and Jewellery in 2006, I decided I wanted to apply for a place on the MA course at the School of Jewellery. As well as being attracted to the course for its content, philosophies and approach to jewellery and metalwork, I was really interested in coming to Birmingham because of its rich history and association with the jewellery trade. The bursary will be an enormous help." ■

## SUPPORT FOR 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF CENTREPIECE



The Birmingham Assay Office is delighted to be sponsoring Centrepiece 2007 in this, its 10th anniversary year. To mark the occasion, Centrepiece has invited twelve young, up and coming designers to join them at their annual exhibition.

These designers will be exhibiting for the first time at the Town Hall, Birmingham, in addition to their annual residency at Symphony Hall from 16th November through to 23rd December. From delicate jewellery in precious metals to funky fashion pieces or ecclesiastically inspired perfume burners for the home, the Centrepiece 10th anniversary exhibition is a fantastic opportunity to buy original work directly from the designers; a Christmas shopping haven where you can even commission your own pieces for special gifts or just give in to plain self-indulgence whilst supporting British designers. ■

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**Contemporary jewellery designer makers and silversmiths based in Birmingham whose work sells nationally and internationally will be coming together to celebrate their 10th anniversary with a dual site exhibition.**

Centrepiece was formed in 1997 by a group of mainly self-employed designer-makers working in the Jewellery Quarter, as part of the revitalisation of the district. The group's aims were to provide a platform for their combined talent and creativity and to showcase their work to a wider audience.

## PRECIOUS METAL CLAY

**Since it was launched on the UK Market back in 1995, Mitsubishi Materials Corporation's Precious Metal Clay (PMC) has attracted the attention of craft jewellers and amateur hobbyists alike. With PMC it is now possible to sculpt, carve and mould Fine Silver with Precious Metal Clay.**

The clay can be manipulated like plasticine, carved, folded like paper origami or moulded

like the potter's clay to virtually any shape. The PMC clay consists of precious metal powders in an organic non toxic binder and water. During firing the binder and water burns off, the silver particles fuse together and form a solid dense metal. The result is a piece of fine silver that can be hallmarked as 999. PMC is also available in 22ct yellow gold.

Helen O'Neill of The Precious Metal Clay Studio, the largest supplier of Precious Metal Clay in the UK,

visited The Birmingham Assay Office recently to give a hands on demonstration of the material. Pictured here are some examples of the work created by members of staff who attended the session to learn more about the application of PMC in jewellery making. ■





## “DIAMOND REPORTS ARE WORTH THE PAPER THEY ARE PRINTED ON”

**D**elegates at the National Association of Goldsmiths' (NAG) Registered Valuers' Conference 2007 gathered in September to debate the motion "In the opinion of NAG Valuers diamond reports are not worth the paper they are printed on."

The motion was proposed by David Callaghan, who has served the Gemmological Association and the NAG for many years, and supported by James Riley, manager of Backes and Strauss UK. Both speakers bemoaned the recent growth in diamond and coloured stone certification. They highlighted the temptation for ill-informed staff to use Gemstone reports as a marketing tool and only take note of colour and clarity, overlooking the rest of the information which also significantly affects the quality, appeal and value of the stone.

James Riley portrayed grading reports as a misleading weapon with which customers try to "bludgeon Sales staff".



Eric Emms

He highlighted the danger that the consumer looks at the 4 C's on two reports and believes he is comparing absolutely like with like whereas this is not necessarily the case at all, particularly in view of the different grading standards applied by certification bodies.

Eric Emms, Director of AnchorCert Gemmological Office London, responded roundly, supported by Brian Dunn. They argued that a Gemstone Report does have value, as the opinion of an independent

third party. It attests as to the identity of the diamond and any relevant treatments, but should not be treated as a guarantee. The "worth" of the report is all about whose paper it is printed on. Their experience, reputation, expertise and integrity are key to its usefulness.

In the debate from the floor, which followed, it was agreed the need to interpret the information on the report sensibly also applied to valuers who should assess the diamond themselves and use the report as an aid as opposed to a guarantee of quality.

A show of hands demonstrated that every delegate had used a Diamond Report at some time to establish the value of a diamond. The motion was defeated by a large majority.

AnchorCert agrees with the outcome of the Debate - diamond reports from reputable independent certification bodies ARE worth the paper they are written on, but it is crucial that staff are sufficiently well-trained to interpret them intelligently. ■

## NEW FULL ANCHORCERT REPORT

**I**n response to demand from our customers who prefer a more traditional A4 sized Full Report, a new format AnchorCert report has been introduced.

The design incorporates the unique Anchor hologram for security and reports for Diamonds, Coloured Stones and Pearls are available. Coloured Stones and Pearl reports include a photograph of the item and the Diamond report includes a facet diagram and cut grade.

For more information please contact AnchorCert London on 0207 404 202 ■



## WELL DONE KRISH, FGA

**Congratulations to Krishna Powar, AnchorCert Diamond Grader who has recently successfully passed her FGA qualification.**

Krish joined the Assay Office in 1995 having achieved an HND in Jewellery Design and Manufacture at the UCE School of Jewellery. She worked in the Hallmarking Operation for

several years before training in The Laboratory and after gaining her DGA has finally found her niche in AnchorCert. As many readers will know, the FGA is a hard won qualification, and we wish Krish every success with her continued progression and personal development. ■



## TANZANITE - THE GEMSTONE OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

**T**anzanite continues to rise in popularity; recent Trade magazines are full of it, as are the Fashion pages.

It is the fourth most popular coloured gemstone after sapphires, rubies and emeralds. Jewellers, Valuers and consumers all want to know more about Tanzanite, and experts at AnchorCert have been busy educating them.

Eric Emms delivered seminars at both the IJL Exhibition and the NAG Valuers' conference, and a new consumer leaflet has been produced to support the Tanzanite Showcard already available. AnchorCert are now certifying hundreds of stones a week, to help consumers understand the different qualities available.



Tanzanite was only discovered in 1967 and to date only one source has been found, in Northern Tanzania. The gemstones' natural pale colour is greatly enhanced by heat treatment which is an accepted process as the colour change is permanent. Beautiful hues of blue, indigo and violet can be achieved, and one of the most appealing aspects of Tanzanite is that it glows a different colour from each direction, a characteristic known technically as trichroism.

For more information visit [www.AnchorCert.co.uk](http://www.AnchorCert.co.uk) or phone us on 0121 262 1010 to order marketing materials. ■





## THREE INTENSIVE DAYS AT LOUGHBOROUGH

**T**he Birmingham Assay Office, AnchorCert and SafeGuard participated strongly in the 20th NAG Registered Valuers Conference at Loughborough in September.

### NAG VALUERS CONFERENCE

Eric Emms participated in the Seminar programme, as reported on the AnchorCert page, and Dr Sally Baggott and valuer Craig O'Donnell ran a successful workshop about Birmingham Silver "Toys".

For SafeGuard valuers the Conference is an excellent opportunity to catch up with the latest news and to brush up their knowledge of specific subject areas. Workshop sessions this year included Masonic Jewellery, Coloured Stones, Cameos and Intaglios and many other topics. Carla Goodfellow, Operations Manager for SafeGuard and AnchorCert attended the Conference for the first time. "I just had to come and see what it was all about," said Carla.

Several SafeGuard valuers attended the Conference as delegates and The Birmingham Assay Office sponsored the event, providing an exhibition stand offering helpful information about hallmarking and AnchorCert Gemstone Identification services as well as SafeGuard's activities.

For valuers this is an important annual opportunity to gather together for an intensive three days of education, exchange of views and networking.

"The team always come back full of what they have learned, other valuers' views on hot topics and lots of gossip; it is definitely a highlight of the year and a very worthwhile event for us." ■

The social side of the Conference is legendary and crucial; many valuers work independently and really appreciate the camaraderie and stimulation of meeting so many like minded, and very knowledgeable people.



## THE LAW SOCIETY REGALIA VALUED

SafeGuard Valuers were privileged to be asked to value the Chain of Office and other regalia of the Birmingham Law Society.



The G. J. Johnson Memorial Chain arrived in its original case with an explanatory text detailing its provenance: "The work of fashioning the chain and badge were entrusted to Mr A.J. Gaskin, the Head Master of the Jewellers' School of Art, and to his wife, Mrs Gaskin. The chain is constructed of hollow box shaped links, alternating transversely with fiddle shaped links, forty-two in number.

into the design on the slightly domed discs in the centre of each main link."

Made by W.H. Blackband in 1912, the 18ct gold chain weighs 123 grams and the enamelled 18ct gold pendant, or Badge of Office, which may be worn with or without the chain, a further 59 grams. ■



The monograms of the Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Secretaries of the Society from its foundation in 1818, are woven

### SAFE GUARD AT THE NPA CONFERENCE

SafeGuard and The Birmingham Assay Office will be sponsoring and attending the National Pawnbrokers Association Conference for the first time this year. Representatives will man an exhibition stand to supply delegates with information about SafeGuard Valuations, AnchorCert Gemstone Certification, Hallmarking and the Precious Metals services offered by The Laboratory.

Business Relations Manager for The Assay Office, Marie Brennan is looking forward to the event. "Pawnbrokers are regular users of all our services but it is difficult to keep in touch with them all," she said. "We work with the large groups such as Harvey and Thompson and Herbert Brown through their Head Offices but there are many individual traders and managers whom we have never met. It will be great to get their feedback on our services, chat to them face to face and find out the latest news from their sector of the industry."

## PETER JACKSON JOINS THE SAFE GUARD NETWORK

**S**afeGuard is pleased to add the Peter Jackson group to its regular clientele. Their valuation business will be looked after by local valuer Georgina Deer who works in the Greater Manchester area.

Peter Jackson celebrate their 25th year in 2007 and the overwhelming enthusiasm, professionalism and positive attitude demonstrated by their whole team suggests they will be marking many more anniversaries. Stores are contemporary but have not lost that reassuring traditional feel and their success is such that this year they were nominated for three UK Retail Jeweller Awards – Best Store Design, Retail Employer of the Year, and Store Manager of the Year. The latter award was won by Sharon Bibby from the Blackburn store, a very deserving winner.

Director David Anderson believes that investment in training is crucial to the group's



Sharon Bibby, Store Manager of the Year.

continuing success. SafeGuard Sales Manager, Marie Chalmers has already visited all stores to give staff in depth training so that they can sell SafeGuard valuations confidently and gain the maximum benefit from the new service which both companies believe has big potential. ■

# THE LABORATORY



## LEAD PUBLICITY CAUSING ALARM

**F**ollowing sensational newspaper headlines, the current rush of publicity about high levels of lead in toys and the withdrawal of large volumes of products has caused alarm amongst jewellers and a flood of enquiries and questions to The Laboratory.

These questions are very difficult to answer as there is no clear legislation specific to childrens' jewellery or adult jewellery in the UK. Experts in The Laboratory at The Birmingham Assay Office have researched the area fully in order to establish the facts.

Suppliers and retailers have difficult decisions to make, and it is important that these are made in a considered and informed way and not by a panic reaction. The Laboratory is offering tests for Lead content, using the highly accurate ICP-OES and Lead migration using the methods required by BS EN 71-3: 1995. As an independent test house, The Laboratory is trying to help customers as much as possible, but is not able to provide all of the answers to the legal questions which are arising. The established facts are presented here for easy reference. More detailed information is available on [www.theassayoffice.co.uk](http://www.theassayoffice.co.uk).

### QUICK NICKEL TEST WIDELY ACCEPTED BY MAJOR BRANDS

**The Laboratory's unique "Quick Nickel Test" developed by Technical Director Dippal Manchanda and his team has now been available for over a year.**

Hundreds of thousands of samples have been tested and the data and method has been demonstrated to many direct customers, major retailers and Trading Standards Officers. Some of the biggest names on the UK High Street are now recommending their suppliers to have all their product tested by this UKAS accredited method as it is a quick, cheap and accurate method of indicating whether a component is likely to comply to the EU Nickel Directive.

Tim Smith Account Manager for The Laboratory is not surprised at the response. "This test has so many benefits for our customers" says Tim. "Everyone we demonstrate it to is impressed by its scientific basis and the huge amount of research data which we have amassed. We are continually refining the method to make it even more accurate and to reduce the number of items which have to be referred for a full test to BS:EN 1811. The fact that it is quicker and less expensive than EN 1811, with results in three days and prices from £25.00 is a huge bonus and we expect Quick Nickel to continue to gain popularity."

## LEAD BRIEF FACTS

### PRECIOUS METAL JEWELLERY

- Precious Metal items are unlikely to contain any lead as it would cause the items to fracture.
- Enamel etc used for decorations is lead free as it poses serious problems during refining.

### FASHION/COSTUME JEWELLERY

- Costume jewellery is at greater risk of containing lead.

### POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF LEAD INGESTION:

- Lead accumulates in the body.
- Regular exposure to even low levels may damage intellectual and behavioural development.
- Infants and young children are particularly susceptible.

### CURRENT LEGISLATION - UK:

- There is no specific legislation regarding the use of lead in adult or children's jewellery in the UK.
- Items therefore fall under the General Product Safety Regulations 2005/1803 enforced by the Consumer Protection Act 1987.
- Only "safe" products should be placed on the market.
- For a product to be "safe" it must not present any risk, or only the minimum risks compatible with the product's use, under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use.



### WHAT LEVEL OF LEAD CONTENT OR RELEASE COULD BE CONSIDERED "SAFE"?

Existing Regulations include the following limits:

- **USA:** Children's Jewellery Regulations – 2005 (Interim Enforcement Order dt. February 3, 2005) Children's jewellery must not contain more than 0.06% (600ppm) lead.
- **EUROPE:** BS EN 71-3:1995 – Safety of toys (Part 3: Migration of certain elements). Limit 90 mg/Kg (equivalent to 0.009%, or 90ppm) leachable lead in each component.
- **CANADA:** Canadian Regulations 2005 – ("Children's Jewellery Regulations," effective May 10, 2005) - Limit 600mg/Kg (equivalent to 0.06%, or 600ppm) total lead and 90 mg/Kg (0.009%, 90ppm) leachable lead.

### LEAD TESTING - THE OPTIONS

- BS EN 71-3 determines the amount of lead released and identifies seven other toxic elements. This is the preferable option for items which children are likely to suck or chew and therefore possibly swallow and ingest, this test is only applicable to the ingestion of the item or any of its components.
- A brand new plated costume jewellery item with a very high lead content in the base material may pass EN71-3. However, scratching during wear may damage the plating, exposing the base metal. Some manufacturers and retailers are therefore requesting a wear test before testing to EN71-3.
- A lead content test would confirm whether articles are "lead free". ■

## TESTING TO BS EN 71-3: 1995

**The Laboratory is testing an increasing number of articles to BS EN 71-3: 1995. The standard was specifically created for the testing of toys, but in the absence of other legislation or standards, some companies are choosing to test other items such as children's jewellery to the same standard to ensure they are "safe" particularly with regard to lead.**

The test is designed to protect children from harmful elements which they might ingest during the natural, instinctive process of sucking or chewing objects. Instead of just measuring the content of the potentially dangerous element as a percentage, the test simulates the action of digestive acid and establishes the level of migration of toxic elements with results reported for each individual component in parts per million (PPM).

BS EN 71-3: 1995 requires all decorative and protective coatings such as paints, varnishes, lacquers, printing inks and similar coatings to be removed from the article by scraping with

a sharp blade or similar and then to be tested as a separate component.

The test quantifies the migration of eight potentially toxic elements; arsenic, mercury, selenium, chromium, antimony, cadmium, barium and lead and each element has a different permitted level. It is important to check all elements as specific control of one may otherwise lead to substitution with another. As an example, since the prohibition of lead in the USA many instances have been reported where cadmium has been used as an alternative – and may be considered even more harmful. ■



# MEET THE TEAM



## ASSESSING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

**C**limate change and global warming has never been so much in the media and in the public's mind. Every business has a legal responsibility for the impact it has on the environment. The Birmingham Assay Office has been assessing its carbon footprint and here our Engineering and Facilities Manager, Ian Hodges, tells The Anchor about some of the measures being taken to improve and control it.....

Ian reports that the introduction of non-destructive sampling using x-ray fluorescence testing instruments has resulted in around 90% of our assaying being done this way. We now have 14 of these instruments and this has not only reduced the demand for expensive energy consuming fires but also reduces the amount of lead that we use which has an impact on the environment.



We have designed and built an induction furnace which heats from ambient temperature to 1100 degrees centigrade in 16 minutes. As a result, our furnaces no longer have to run all day. We simply switch the furnace on when it is needed.

Lighting throughout the building has been changed to low energy or more efficient versions, and we have designed and built a new control system that measures and controls the heat in the building. This reduced our gas consumption

by around 50% last year.

The introduction of capacitors spaced around the building has improved our energy efficiency by 8% by improving our power factor correction figure.

Our central heating boilers which currently have an efficiency rate of 45% are being replaced with 95% efficiency boilers.

We have a compactor for our waste disposal which has reduced the amount of general waste that goes to landfill.

These are just some examples of how The Birmingham Assay Office is being environmentally responsible, and we will be continually reviewing and measuring the carbon footprint of our business in the future.



Ian Hodges

## ASSAY OFFICE CHALLENGE WALK..



**T**he annual Birmingham Assay Office Challenge Walk this year took place over the weekend of 16th/17th June.

The seventeen strong team walked from the source of the River Thames at Cirencester, following the Thames path to Lechlade, a distance of no less than 23 miles.

The team achieved this in 10 hours and raised £1766 for charity. This was divided equally between the Foundation for Conductive Education and Barnardos Children's Charity.

## MEET THE CURATOR

**S**ally Baggott began her working life as a Chemical Analyst, at Severn Trent Laboratories, at Tame House, right across the road from The Birmingham Assay Office! In 1996, she decided on a change of career, and studied English Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, and late nineteenth-century literature for her Ph.D. Before Sally joined The Birmingham Assay Office in 2005, she worked at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter and Thinktank at Millennium Point.

Her connections with the Jewellery Quarter go back way before 2005, though. Her mother's family actually came from Handsworth and had their businesses in the Quarter. Her grandmother grew up in the Quarter as her parents ran public houses there. Her grandmother's two brothers trained as diamond setters and her mother's father was a silversmith. While still at school, Sally was persuaded to go to silversmithing classes at the local night-school. "I often think that my fascination with jewellery and the Quarter may well have begun around that time," said Sally.

As Curator, Sally takes care of our extensive silver collection and the Library. She conducts tours of the collections for visitors, and deals with

enquiries about historic hallmarks. Her remit also includes promoting our history and heritage and increasing awareness of Hallmarking. She is responsible for forging partnerships with the heritage and local communities, working with institutions such as Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, the University of Birmingham, Soho House and the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter. Sally represents The Birmingham Assay Office in the several partnerships that are involved in planning the celebrations of the bicentenary of Matthew Boulton's death in 2009, and she has recently been elected a director of the Jewellery Quarter Association.

"I am fortunate in that I have a very interesting job. One day I might be giving a guided tour of the collections to visitors, the next I might be giving a research paper on Matthew Boulton and Birmingham toys; no two days are ever the same. I am immensely proud to be the Curator at The Birmingham Assay Office, the only remaining enterprise with which Boulton was involved, and it is a privilege to be responsible for educating the people of Birmingham and beyond about our fascinating history."

Sally spends her spare time indulging her interests in the history of Birmingham and particularly the Jewellery Quarter, and her passion for silver. Sally is also a keen gardener.

She has two sons, Aaron and Thomas, and a four-year-old grand-daughter, Matilda-Jayne.



wear it pink.



with Breast Cancer Campaign

## WE'RE WEARING IT PINK!!

Staff at the Assay Office will be supporting the "Look who's wearing it pink day" in aid of the Breast Cancer Campaign in October.

A fund raising event that includes pink cakes, pink clothes and even pink hair is in the planning stages for this worthwhile cause.

# HISTORY & HERITAGE



## TOYS 'R' US AT THE NAG CONFERENCE

**T**he Birmingham Assay Office was proud to support the recent NAG Registered Valuers and Jewellers Conference at Loughborough University in September. Dr. Sally Baggott, Curator at The Birmingham Assay Office ran a successful workshop entitled 'Birmingham Toys: Small Silverware from The Birmingham Assay Office Collection'. Assisted by expert SafeGuard valuer, Craig O'Donnell, Sally's sessions included the opportunity for delegates to get hands-on experience of toys and their historic Birmingham hallmarks.

Sally explained: "When we talk of toys, we do not mean children's toys, but small items of personal use that were popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, such as caddy spoons, snuff boxes, vinaigrettes and card cases. Birmingham was famous for them during the period, and our collection holds



Craig (holding toy) at the workshop

many very beautiful examples in silver, all bearing the Birmingham hallmark. These are extremely popular with collectors, and the workshops were clearly useful to those who attended."

During the workshops, Sally gave an overview of the historical context of toys and talked through the pieces from the collection that were on display. Craig covered the range of designs available, their wide range of values and tips for spotting a fake.

The discovery of some social history regarding toys really brought the workshops and the toys to life. Following an original recipe, Craig had made a modern day version of the vinegar solution that was used inside vinaigrettes, to mask unpleasant 18th Century odours. It contained vinegar, nutmeg, clove, lemon and bergamot, to name just some of the ingredients, and most people found it pleasant. However, it was Craig's flamboyant demonstration of the correct etiquette for taking snuff in England in the mid 19th century that really engaged people.

Marion Wilson, Marketing Director felt the workshops were a great success. "The delegates attending the Conference are very knowledgeable people" she said. "We were delighted that so many of them chose Sally's workshops from the wide variety of subjects on offer. We are proud of our expertise and appreciated the opportunity to share it." ■

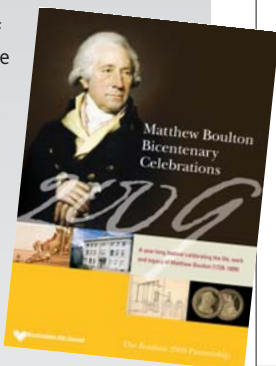


## BOULTON 2009 "CALL FOR PAPERS"

**In addition to a substantial exhibition at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery to commemorate the bicentenary of Matthew Boulton's death, a prestigious international academic conference is to be held in Birmingham in 2009.**

Boulton was a man of very many talents – he manufactured silver, ormolu, coins, medals, steam engines, and was a member of the Lunar Society – so Boulton studies cut across several academic disciplines. In order to attract the range and calibre of appropriate speakers, the University of Birmingham and the University of Central England - the partner institutions - will release a call for papers.

The Birmingham Assay Office is keen to ensure that 2009 is a year to remember for Birmingham itself and visitors to our historic city, and The Office has agreed to sponsor the call for papers. ■



## FIRST BOULTON 2009 WORKSHOP GOES BACK TO HIS ROOTS

**The Birmingham Assay Office is a partner in all of the projects to celebrate the bicentenary of Matthew Boulton's death in 2009 - and rightly so, as it is the only remaining functioning enterprise with which Boulton was involved.**

As part of the preparations for the bicentenary a series of collaborative workshops, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, are being held. These provide a forum where academics from the University of Birmingham, the University of Central England and Museum and Heritage Practitioners from the West Midlands can discuss the opportunities for researching all aspects of Boulton's life and work to ensure that the celebrations in 2009 reach the widest possible audience.

The first of the workshops was held at Soho House, Boulton's own house, on September 26, and the Curator at The Birmingham Assay Office, Dr. Sally Baggott, gave a paper on 'Boulton and Birmingham Toys'. Sally said: "To give this paper in the very place that Matthew Boulton called home, and where the original manufactory stood made it all the more special for me. Toys are an integral part of the Boulton story; they gave him the experience

to become a player on an international stage, and they are what put Birmingham at the centre of global markets in the 18th century."

The next AHRC funded workshop takes place on October 11 at The Birmingham Assay Office when Sir Nicholas Goodison, an expert on Boulton's ormolu work, Professor Ken Quickenden, who has written extensively on Boulton's silver, and Scott Erbes, Senior Curator of the Speed Museum, Chicago, will be the speakers. Sally told us: "The first workshop was an enormous success in terms of meeting the objectives of this project, and we are really looking forward to welcoming such distinguished speakers to The Birmingham Assay Office." ■



Sally Baggott and Richard Clay at Soho House

## BIRMINGHAM SILVER GETS THE BIG-UP DOWN UNDER!

**As a result of a chance meeting, the fame of The Birmingham Assay Office is spreading worldwide. In June, Curator, Dr. Sally Baggott attended a function at the Goldsmiths' Hall in London. There she met Jolyon Warwick James who lectures in Australia on antique silver, and he put Sally in touch with the editor of the Australian Silver Society newsletter, Patrick Street.**

In its next issue, the Australian Silver Society is publishing an article written by Sally and SafeGuard Valuer, Craig O'Donnell, entitled 'Silver with Personality'. "It's great that people in Australia are going to read about some of the pieces from The Birmingham Assay Office collection. I'm thrilled to think that interest in Birmingham silver is a worldwide thing." said Sally. ■

# INDUSTRY NEWS

## KAY ALEXANDER HOSTS CHAIRMAN'S LUNCH

**K**ay Alexander hosted a unique networking event at The Assay Office on 14th September to mark the end of her first year in office as the first Lady Chairman of The Birmingham Assay Office.

This exclusive opportunity was arranged to bring together a selected number of business leaders from within Birmingham's jewellery and silversmithing

trade and key senior figures in the West Midlands including representatives of the City Council, MPs and MEPs.

Michael Allchin, Chief Executive and Assay Master up-dated guests on the latest developments in the trade and the continuing importance of Hallmarking. This was followed by an overview of the additional services and support provided by The Birmingham Assay Office for the Jewellery



Kay (right), Marion (left) and Allyson Thomas of T.A. Durant

trade by Marketing Director, Marion Wilson. A fascinating insight into the history of The Assay Office by Curator, Dr Sally Baggott, was followed by an exclusive opportunity to view the Office's unique Silver Collection. ■

## LORD JONES SPEAKS AT AGM

The Birmingham Assay Office was privileged to have Digby, Lord Jones of Birmingham, as a guest speaker at their Annual General Meeting in September.

Lord Jones spoke of his commitment to his new role as Minister of State for Trade and Investment, his desire to include his home City of Birmingham in his title and his pride in being able to "do something" for the country.



Describing Britain as "the most globally engaged country on earth" Lord Jones spoke of the huge amount of investment coming into Britain which he is clearly working hard to increase further.

Reflecting on the Annual Report for The Assay Office, Lord Jones was upbeat. "Value added innovation, branding and good quality are crucial for developed nations to move forward" he said. "The Birmingham Assay Office is clearly demonstrating all of these; I wish you all every success." ■

## VISIT OF CHAMBER CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Jerry Blackett, visited The Birmingham Assay Office recently to see what is involved in the assaying and hallmarking of precious metal articles.

Jerry was delighted to be given a guided tour of the UK's largest Assay Office by Chairman, Kay Alexander and said he said he was "inspired to gain a much better understanding of the role The Birmingham Assay Office plays within the jewellery industry". Kay Alexander said she was "delighted that Jerry was able to find time in his busy schedule to have a look round The Birmingham Assay Office and to gain a deeper understanding of the range of expertise that exists within it." ■



Jerry Blackett trying his hand at hallmarking, under the watchful eye of Julie Burns, hand-marker.

## REVISED PROPOSALS FOR SPECIAL DELIVERY SERVICE

As a result of strong campaigning by the BJA, supported by the Assay Offices of Great Britain, the NAG and T H March, Royal Mail executives have revised their proposals for changes to the Special Delivery Next Day service, which were the subject of a public consultation by PostComm last autumn.

The original proposal to exclude jewellery from the Special Delivery Next Day service provoked tremendous opposition from the trade. Royal Mail's revised proposals now include retention of the existing Special Delivery Next Day with a maximum compensation limit of £500.

The revised proposals also include the introduction of a new Special Delivery High Value service with compensation up to £2,500 and a lower £1,000 compensation option, as well as a range of weight bands to create a greater spread of prices. This is in stark contrast to the originally proposed £8.90 starting point. The proposal meets Royal Mail's objective to offer greater safety for Royal Mail personnel, better security for packages, better tracking and a dedicated compensation team handling jewellery claims. The new proposals will be presented to Postwatch in the near future and a short public consultation phase is expected to follow.

## HALLMARKING FIGURES - AN UPWARD TREND...

**T**he total number of articles hallmarked across the four UK Assay Offices was up 6.3% in the quarter ended 30th September 2007 compared with the corresponding quarter in 2006.

The strongest categories were Sterling silver and Platinum. Sterling silver articles being up 26.8% and Platinum articles up 15.6%. However, the total number of gold articles hallmarked was down 3.7%. The 9ct volume market has continued to suffer in the third quarter with a decline of 5.8%.

However, 14ct and 18ct were up by 26.1% and 3.8% respectively. Commenting on the figures, Chief Executive, Michael Allchin, said: "This is an encouraging trend. 9ct gold is clearly still losing volume, but the increase in silver and higher quality gold more than compensate for it." ■

Work dealt with by the Assay Offices of Great Britain, for the Quarter to September 07	GOLD							SILVER					PLATINUM				
	375 9 carat	585 14 carat	750 18 carat	916 22 carat	990	999	TOTAL	800	925 Sterling	958 Britannia	999	TOTAL	850	900	950	999	TOTAL
NUMBER OF ARTICLES	3,153,339 -5.8%	43,620 26.1%	459,598 3.8%	156,121 16.3%	123 355.6%	117 -14.0%	3,812,918 -3.7%	244 -49.2%	2,418,050 27.0%	1,849 -30.7%	2,039 -44.3%	2,422,182 26.8%	3 0.0%	377 111.8%	84,284 15.4%	62 26.5%	84,726 15.6%
WEIGHT OF ARTICLES Gold & Platinum (g) Silver (Kg)	11,601,952 -6.5%	562,493 163.1%	3,034,955 14.1%	1,441,900 14.7%	364 76.7%	2,858 545.1%	16,644,522 0.6%	155 1450%	40,603 20.0%	156 -20.4%	1,535 379.7%	42,449 23.5%	365 1303.8%	2,524 34.5%	702,097 2.2%	162 -95.7%	705,148 1.8%