

SUMMER 2007

POSITIVE SIGNS THAT VOLUMES ARE STEADYING

It seems that the long-term decline in the number of items hallmarked in the UK may have bottomed out. The dramatic reduction in volumes, mainly in 9ct Gold has seen hallmarking numbers drop by over 10 million units, from 35 million in 2003 to less than 25 million in 2006. Year on year monthly comparisons showed a decline every month from January 2005 to February 2007, twenty six consecutive months, during many of which the decrease was in double figures. However, at last there has been a small upturn, for three consecutive months, and there are definitely positive vibes from the trade.

The Quarterly figures to the end of June (found on the back cover) show that 9ct gold is still suffering but 18ct gold and platinum are up (see



back page), and silver seems to be making a significant comeback. These figures are borne out by comments from several of our customers. The upmarket jewellers have described their market as "buoyant", and there is a general air of optimism which has been lacking for some time.

The long-term decline of the 9 ct market is quite astounding and retailers, importers and manufacturers have an ongoing challenge to try to rejuvenate or replace it. Driven by higher gold prices, resulting in lower perceived value, and

fashion trends towards silver and costume jewellery, the number of 9ct gold articles hallmarked by the four UK Assay Offices has dropped from 27 million in 2001 to 16.6m in 2006, and to date shows no sign of recovery.

Despite this decline, the UK market for gold jewellery still remains a significant one with more gold jewellery sold in the UK alone than was sold in France & Germany put together in 2006, helped by the growing demand for 18ct. A critical assessment of the value of fine gold in gold jewellery hallmarked in the UK shows that in 2001, 18ct represented less than 14% of the total gold value while by 2006 that figure had climbed to nearly 25%. The "flight to quality" reported by the Grocery trade who are all majoring on premium brands seems to be influencing jewellery consumers too.

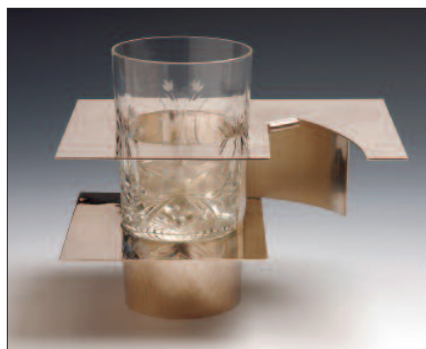


SILVER CONNECTIONS

CONNECT, an event hosted by The Association of British Designer Silversmiths (ABDS) was held at Aston University, Birmingham on the 6th and 7th July 2007.

It brought together designers and manufacturers to examine ways in which design, new technology and traditional manufacture can combine to provide a competitive edge in the international market. Featured speakers included Matteo Alessi, of the Italian design dynasty, Tory Dunn, Michael McCrory and Nick Munro.

The Birmingham Assay Office exhibited at CONNECT and is one of the sponsors of the CONNECT COLLECTION, an exhibition of new works – made using the new sterling silver alloy 'Brilliante' – by over 40 ABDS members, which will tour the UK and overseas for the next two years.



A MUST FOR YOUR COFFEE TABLE

A new Corporate Brochure is now available which details all the services provided by The Birmingham Assay Office to the Trade and Consumers alike.



The brochure gives an overview of The Birmingham Assay Office's heritage, its hallmarking services and the wide ranging work of The Laboratory, from testing and analysis, to research into precious and non-precious metal applications. The work of AnchorCert Independent Diamond and Gemstone Certification, and SafeGuard, the UK's premier independent Jewellery Valuation Service is also explained. You can find out more about the organised Silver Visits to view the superb Silver Collection and Library too.

To request a copy please call the Sales & Marketing Department on 0121 262 1050 or email: gem@theassayoffice.co.uk

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HALLMARKING

SUB-OFFICE OPENS AT QVC

The Birmingham Assay Office is always keen to respond to the changing demands of the market and improve customer service. The latest advance is the opening of a "sub-Office" hallmarking facility for QVC, within the shopping channel's Customer Operations and Distribution Centre at Knowsley, Merseyside.

A sub-Office is effectively an extension of the premises of an Assay Office to other premises, typically within a manufacturer's or importer's premises. There are obvious benefits for large operations, and this is the sixth "sub-office" facility for customers of The Birmingham Assay Office, since the concept was authorised by the British Hallmarking Council in 2002.

The sub-Office at QVC is located within a new phase of the company's state of the art distribution centre and is fully equipped to carry out the assaying and hallmarking of precious metal articles sold by QVC.

The facility, which is a satellite of the Central Office in Birmingham, is staffed by employees of The Birmingham Assay Office and pictured here are Jayne Siner and Helen Bird, two members of our new team recruited to manage our operation.

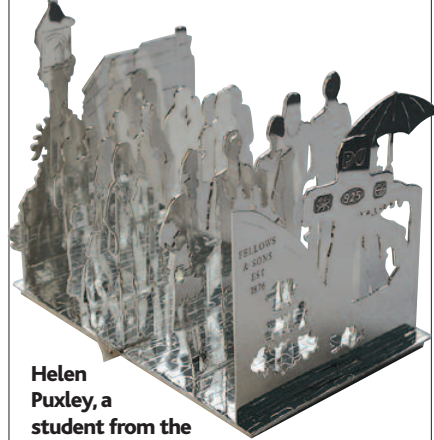


Jayne and Helen will be joined by a third colleague, Helen Andrews on 9th July. A warm welcome is extended to all three members of our Hallmarking team!

QVC UK reported net sales of £331 million in 2006 (an increase of 8.4% on the previous year) and is part of a \$7 billion global business which reaches over 160 million homes worldwide. The company offers a wide variety of brand name products within its categories of apparel and beauty, jewellery, home innovation and home style. QVC UK broadcasts from Marco Polo House in London, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with 17 hours of live programming each day.

Judy Deuchar, Director of Merchandising said: "QVC shares the same values and ideals as The Birmingham Assay Office and we are proud to have this new facility at our Knowsley Distribution Centre. It will improve the efficiency of our operation and help us to offer a faster service to our customers." ■

HELEN IS THE 'TOAST' AT SILVER DESIGN COMPETITION



Helen Puxley, a student from the Birmingham School of Jewellery was selected as the winner of Fellows & Sons' Silver Design Competition (Student Category) for her creative toast rack.

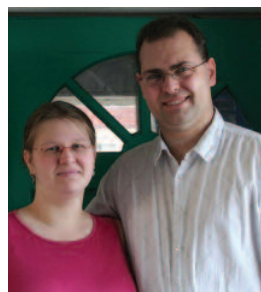
Her imaginative work, comprising silhouettes of people shopping in the Jewellery Quarter, was inspired by the 130th year anniversary theme and the significance of the area's history.

The toast rack, pictured here, is now complete and is currently on display at the School of Jewellery as part of its Summer exhibition of students work.

4TH GENERATION SILVERWARE MANUFACTURER CELEBRATES AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE!

C Robathan & Sons, the Birmingham based silverware manufacturer, has plenty to celebrate as they reach an important anniversary in 2008 – 90 years in business!

Established in 1918, the company was founded by Charles Robathan in a small garden shed. Since then, the company has been proudly passed down four generations from father to son.



Current Managing Director, Craig Robathan & his wife Tracey.

The product range also includes condiment spoons, butter knives, child sets, decanter labels and cufflinks.

Managing Director, Craig Robathan said.

The company, which operates from premises on the fringe of the Jewellery Quarter, manufactures a wide range of sterling silver souvenir spoons for all occasions. The product range also includes

"The business has had a long association with Birmingham and has been manufacturing articles in silver and plateware for nine decades in this City. We pride ourselves on offering a high quality and well designed product range at competitive prices."

C Robathan has recently been commissioned by The Birmingham Assay Office to produce a limited edition collection of silver spoons.

The Birmingham Assay Office registers show that John Benjamin Robathan was the first in the family to register his mark on 11th January 1871.

Followed by Thomas Robathan, who also registered his mark on 24th February 1871 and then, on 16th November 1877, by John Charles Robathan.

Last but not least came Charles Robathan, great grandfather of Craig Robathan. Charles' trade is recorded as spoon and fork maker. He registered his mark on 13th September 1926, and then again on 22nd December 1936. The records also contain a letter from William Robathan, a partner, asking if the signature of his brother R.O. Robathan can be accepted by The Birmingham Assay Office as authorisation. The letter, dated

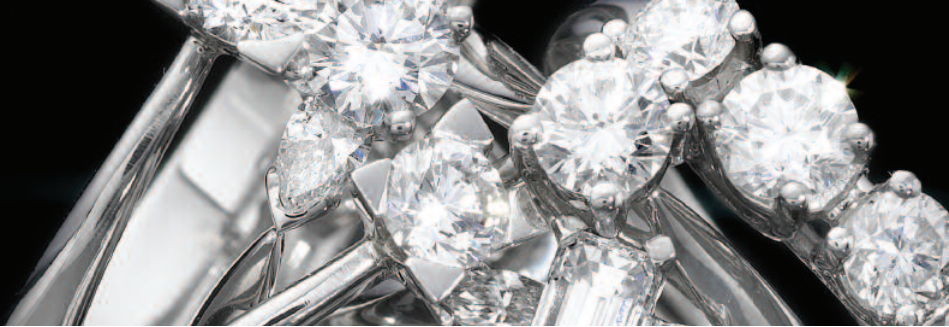
4th March 1958, is written in a beautiful, even hand on the decorative letterhead shown. ■



MIXED METAL HALLMARKING

Changes to the Hallmarking Act which came into force on April 6th 2007 to allow articles made of mixed precious metals, as well as mixed precious and non precious metals, have created new and exciting opportunities for the Jewellery trade.

The new regulations will give consumers more accurate descriptions of the articles they are purchasing, as well as providing designers with wider opportunities to be creative in the use of mixed precious and non precious metals.



SPOTLIGHT ON ANCHORCERT LONDON

The AnchorCert Gemmological Office in London's Hatton Garden is going from strength to strength under the leadership of Director Eric Emms. Three years after Eric's business, the London Precious Stone Laboratory, was acquired by The Birmingham Assay Office it has widened its scope of services and also its appeal.

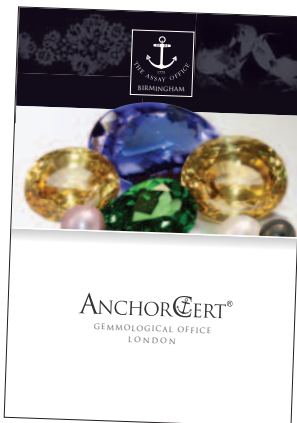
AnchorCert London has expertise in the identification of diamonds, coloured stones and pearls. The AnchorCert services range from comprehensive full reports and stone identification to verbal reports and the very popular AnchorCert mini reports. The Office has a well established customer base, including many top Bond Street jewellers and well-known auction houses, who require full reports, appropriate to large and expensive loose stones. Many new customers are now discovering the benefits of AnchorCert mini reports. These are available for loose or mounted stones and are proving an excellent selling tool for retailers and wholesalers who are simply looking for confirmation of the quality colour, and authenticity of both natural and synthetic diamonds.

In response to demand from customers, the latest service available is Tanzanite Grading. Tanzanite is growing in popularity, and the celebrity magazines have already featured many stars wearing beautiful Tanzanite and diamond

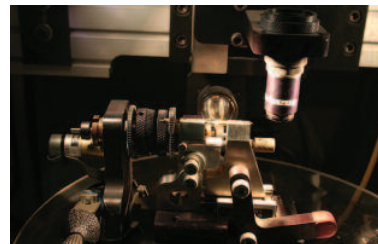
pieces. The AnchorCert Tanzanite system is very simple but provides clear demarcation between those 'AAAA' stones with a rare and breathtaking intensity, and those which are of a more average colour. The mini report grades colour and clarity, based on the GIA coloured stone clarity scale, and is already proving popular with retailers. Ernest Jones' new AnchorCert certified Tanzanite range, available in selected stores, has started well, and more established Tanzanite customers are reporting excellent sales.

AnchorCert London has also launched an Express Service for those reports which simply won't wait because a major sale depends upon them. Subject to capacity, reports can be produced the next day, for a premium charge. Well worth it to secure that big one off sale!

A new brochure detailing all the services from AnchorCert London is now available. Call 0207 404 4202 or e mail gem@theassayoffice.co.uk to receive your copy. ■



LASERING OF ROUGH DIAMONDS



The Diamond Laser inscription service at The Birmingham Assay Office was put to a new use last month when a customer asked if it had the capability to laser rough diamonds to assist stock control and identification.

It was not something that had been tried before and our team were inevitably a little apprehensive! However, the quality of lasering on the first batch of samples exceeded all expectations and further batches are expected. ■



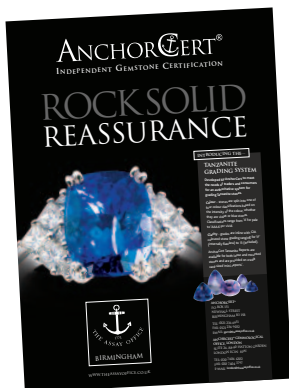
NEW ANCHORCERT ADVERTS IT'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO BE AN ANCHORCERT RETAILER

AnchorCert has unveiled two new adverts which will be rolled out in selected trade and consumer magazines as well as being integrated into email and direct marketing campaigns. With all this high-profile support there really has never been a better time to be an AnchorCert Retailer.

The second advert highlights the benefits of the Diamond Laser Inscription service. Certificate numbers or "Secret Messages" can be inscribed unobtrusively on a diamond, again providing additional reassurance to customers and extra revenue to the jeweller.

If you would like more information about AnchorCert Tanzanite Certification Services, Diamond Laser Inscription Services and AnchorCert Independent Diamond and Gemstone Certification Services please contact Sophie Whitehouse on 0121 262 1010 or email gem@theassayoffice.co.uk

Coming soon – an updated and enhanced AnchorCert website. More information will be available in the September, IJL special edition of The Anchor. ■



The first advert features the AnchorCert Tanzanite Grading system which has proved hugely popular with both existing and new customers. The certification system is straightforward and easy to explain, providing additional reassurance to customers and extra revenue to the jeweller.



ERIC TALKS TANZANITE



Following the launch of the new Tanzanite Grading system earlier

this year, Eric Emms will be delivering seminars on Tanzanite at International Jewellery London and also at the NAG Registered Valuers Conference, both in September.

Eric will cover the positive identification of Tanzanite and its characteristics, and then explain the AnchorCert Grading system in more detail.

Account Manager, Marie Chalmers who visits AnchorCert customers throughout the country expects the events to be extremely popular. "There is a lot of interest in Tanzanite in general and in how our new grading system works", said Marie. "I am sure many people will want to hear Eric's expert opinion and advice for identifying Tanzanite."

For more details of either seminar please email gem@theassayoffice.co.uk





TRAINING DAY FOR F HINDS

As part of an ongoing drive to gain more benefits from the SafeGuard Valuation Service, F Hinds asked The Birmingham Assay Office to host a SafeGuard Training day to give key store managers a better understanding of the SafeGuard process. Eleven store managers attended, along with five representatives from Head Office including those involved with Retail Operations and Training.

Delegates were given the background to all of the services available from The Birmingham Assay Office and then split into smaller groups to be taken on a guided tour of the operation, including hallmarking, AnchorCert Diamond Certification and SafeGuard Valuations.

F.HINDS

JEWELLERS SINCE 1856


In the afternoon, Peter Troth (shown right), Operations Manager led an F.Hinds' training session to encourage staff to develop opportunities to sell valuations, and to sell them more confidently.

The day was extremely successful and delegates were enthusiastic about what they had seen and discussed. Peter Troth felt that the effort in organising the event and the time taken out of store was very worthwhile. "Certainly the reaction from those attending was extremely positive" said Peter. "Now we have to follow up to ensure that Managers implement what they learned so it has maximum impact on sales." ■



WORKSHOPS FROM DR SALLY BAGGOTT AND MR ERIC EMMS AT NAG VALUERS & RETAILERS CONFERENCE, LOUGHBOROUGH

Small silverware, more commonly referred to as 'toys', is extremely popular amongst dealers and collectors alike, and The Birmingham Assay Office has amassed an extensive collection of toys, manufactured, assayed and hallmarked in Birmingham. From snuff boxes to vinaigrettes, and from card cases to caddy spoons, these small but valuable objects demonstrate the unrivalled skill of the Birmingham Toymakers.


Dr Sally Baggott, Curator at The Birmingham Assay Office, will run a workshop at the forthcoming



Dr Sally Baggott



Craig O'Donnell

NAG conference in Loughborough entitled 'Birmingham Toys - Small Silverware from The Birmingham Assay Office Silver Collection.' This hands-on workshop will provide an invaluable opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of Birmingham toys and historic Birmingham hallmarks. SafeGuard Valuer, Craig O'Donnell will also be there to share his expertise in valuing silver, Sally will open each session with a short talk on the toymakers and their trade in 18th and 19th century Birmingham.



Eric Emms

Eric Emms, will also be giving a presentation at this year's conference. Eric is the Director of the AnchorCert Gemmological Office, London, the UK market leader in diamond grading, gem testing and natural pearl identification services. Eric is well-known in the diamond and precious stone industry. His articles are published regularly in UK jewellery magazines and he continues to teach practical diamond grading skills in London. Eric's presentation will look at tanzanite, the so-called 'Gem of the Twentieth Century'. Its gemmology will be reviewed, and AnchorCert's method of grading tanzanite will be demonstrated. ■

PERSONAL JEWELLERY VALUATIONS
YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSIONS VALUED BY A LEADING EXPERT IN THE PRIVACY OF YOUR OWN HOME



SAFE GUARD 
THE INDEPENDENT JEWELLERY VALUATION SERVICE

PERSONAL JEWELLERY VALUATIONS SERVICE EXPANDED

For some while SafeGuard has offered personal home valuations to clients who have sizeable amounts of jewellery or other precious possessions that require photographing, describing and monetary values attributed to them. This discreet service is much appreciated by those not wishing to either take their possessions into a retailer or send them into SafeGuard for reasons of security and lack of time.


As demand is growing, an explanatory leaflet has now been produced to give details about the service. To request a copy of the leaflet, for further information or to book an appointment please call the SafeGuard team on 0121 236 2122 or email safeguard@theassayoffice.co.uk

NEW SAFE GUARD LEAFLET

In response to customer demand a new SafeGuard leaflet has been developed for those retailers who do not wish to turn a potential jewellery valuation customer away, but who do not want to handle the valuation themselves. The leaflet gives clear instructions to allow members of the public to send their jewellery into SafeGuard direct.

Retailers can either give the form to the customer and leave them to do it all themselves, or alternatively ask the customer to complete the form, pay the jeweller, who will then despatch the parcel, and leave the rest to SafeGuard. If required the valuation documents and the jewellery could then be returned direct to the customer, simplifying the administration process.

Copies of the leaflet are available from SafeGuard Tel: 0121 236 2122 or email safeguard@theassayoffice.co.uk



THE LABORATORY



JEWELLERY AND WATCH SUPPLIERS SUBMIT MORE BASE METAL FOR ANALYSIS

The Laboratory at The Birmingham Assay Office is seeing an increasing amount of base metal items arriving for testing and analysis. New legislation affecting watches, clocks and costume jewellery has widened the jewellery and watch industry's requirements for expert services, and many items are now being tested for elements such as lead, mercury and cadmium.

Restriction of Hazardous substances - Demand for testing is driven by two major factors, the first of which is the ROHS directive 2002/95/EC (Restriction of Certain Hazardous substances) in Electrical and Electronic Equipment which came into effect in July 2006. The aim of the directive is to reduce health and environmental risks after the article has been discarded.

The legislation restricts the use of lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium and flame retardants (polybrominated biphenyl and polybrominated biphenyl ether) in electrical equipment. The directive specifically lists groups of products which have to comply and watches and clocks are included in the category of small household appliances. All components of a watch, excluding batteries which fall under different regulations, are subject to ROHS.

The Laboratory is now providing reassurance to many customers by testing the lead, mercury, chrome VI, cadmium and flame retardant content of articles to confirm that they comply to ROHS.

Lead testing - Lead has been recognised as being toxic even at very low levels, and its use in any item is covered by UK legislation.

Despite this between 40 and 50 cases of lead poisoning are still reported every year in the UK.

Lead is particularly dangerous because it accumulates in the body. Regular exposure can badly damage the intellectual and behavioural development of infants and young children. Although there is no specific legislation regarding the use of lead in jewellery or watches in the UK, all members of the industry have a duty to ensure that their products are safe.

The Birmingham Assay Office carries out analysis on lead content and lead migration of leachable lead, especially in relation to children's jewellery and watches. The test is very quick with results available within three days - and at a low price, well worth the peace of mind it offers to customers.



THE BIRMINGHAM ASSAY OFFICE AT SANTA FE SYMPOSIUM

The annual Santa Fe Symposium brings together the world's leading experts in jewellery manufacturing and analysis. Held in Albuquerque, New Mexico the objective of the latest Symposium was to provide a forum for experts to exchange knowledge and share relevant research from a range of disciplines such as metallurgy, physics, chemistry and production engineering.



This year twenty-six scientific papers on a variety of precious metal related subjects, including tarnish resistance of sterling silver alloys, investment casting, nickel release testing, platinum and palladium casting, jewellery and health, were presented by well-known experts. The Symposium attracted international delegates representing all facets of the precious metals industry.

Dippal Manchanda, Technical Director of The Birmingham Assay Office, was invited to present for the first time and his research paper on Nickel release was very well-received. Dippal was also a major contributor to the various discussions on tarnishing, having developed what is now a recognized method for identifying susceptibility to tarnishing.

Dippal also recently attended the 31st International Precious Metals Institute (IPMI) Conference in Miami where he was able to debate technical issues with delegates including representatives from international producers, refiners, fabricators, scientists, and the general precious metals community. The 31st Conference was marked by outstanding attendance and a strong international presence.

A GUIDE TO PLATINUM TESTING TECHNIQUES

In 1975, under legislation brought about by the Hallmarking Act 1973, platinum was first required to be tested and hallmarked. Since then the popularity of platinum has continued to increase, and in 2006 the Assay Offices of the UK assayed and marked 315,790 platinum articles.

A process called Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectrometry - 'ICP-OES' - is used to test platinum. However, when the hallmarking of platinum first became a legal requirement, The Laboratory at The Birmingham Assay Office used a method known as Atomic Absorption Spectrometry or 'AAS'.

In both cases, a small sample of platinum is removed for analysis, accurately weighed and transferred to a flask. The sample is then dissolved in Aqua Regia, a mixture of 75% concentrated hydrochloric acid and 25% concentrated nitric acid. This solution is diluted and passed through the plasma of the ICP spectrometer which is produced from the gas, argon. The plasma reaches temperatures of up to 10,000°C which is sufficient to transform the elements present into a gaseous atomic state, when atoms and ions in an excited state release energy and emit radiation at a characteristic wavelength for each element. This radiation is analysed by the spectrometer, and from the intensity, the platinum content of the solution is calculated.



From this measurement, the amount of platinum in parts per thousand can be calculated, giving the fineness of the original article.

Atomic Absorption Spectrometry only has the capability to detect one element at a time in a sample while ICP-OES can detect several. It is therefore, much more suited to the wide range of analysis carried out by The Laboratory.



Four standards of platinum are legally recognised in the UK; these are 999, 950, 900 and 850. The symbols in the illustration are compulsory parts of a platinum hallmark. The traditional, optional orb symbol can be added to the 999 and 950 standards, and a date letter, if required, can be added to all four platinum standards.

MEET THE TEAM



FRONT OF HOUSE

Many of our customers will have regular contact with Margaret Owen, Marisa Grice and Eve Madden.



Margaret and Marisa, pictured here, are responsible for progress chasing the status of parcels on behalf of our hallmarking customers. Customers who deliver product into the Trade

Counter in Newhall Street will be familiar with their faces! Margaret and Marisa have been with The Birmingham Assay Office for 30 years and 18 years respectively and are here to assist customers with progress and other enquiries. They can be reached directly on 0121 236 3172



Eve Madden pictured on the left is the Receptionist at The Birmingham Assay Office and is the familiar voice at the end of the phone. Eve has worked at The Birmingham Assay Office for 29 years and is responsible for directing your calls to the appropriate department.

THE BIRMINGHAM ASSAY OFFICE SPONSORED WALK

Every year a hardy group of Birmingham Assay Office staff take up a walking challenge on behalf of two local charities. The beneficiaries for 2007 are Barnados Children's Charity and The Foundation For Conductive Education. The walkers followed the Thames path covering a distance of 23 miles starting at 'The Source' in Cirencester and finishing in Lechlade. The Group was made up of Michael Allchin, Michelle Tart, Sue Golding, Matt Turner, Sarah Delany, Toni Collins, Liz Brogan, Andy Left, Lin Moran, Sheila Bagley, Pam Bannister, Penny Parkes, Bev Pearce, Karen Kempson, Hanna Machin, Gareth Griffiths, and Nick Talbot. Special Thanks go to Mark Malin for driving the mini bus throughout the weekend, providing welcome refreshments at rest stops, and acting as official photographer. If you would like the support the efforts made



by the staff and send in a donation, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Send donations for the attention of Michelle Tart at The Birmingham Assay Office (address on the back page). Thank you for your support.

ON THE ROAD TO BATH

On Saturday 30th June a deluxe coach full of staff, family and friends left big city life behind for the day and spent a wonderful time discovering the delights of Bath.

Whilst some of the party chose to spend the day learning about the illustrious history of Bath, taking in the Regency architecture, the famous Roman baths and sampling the water, others preferred to shop 'til they dropped or even to head to the nearest inviting watering hole and spend the afternoon socialising with their friends, family and work colleagues.

On the way back the coach made a detour to Cheddar Gorge and eventually everyone



arrived back late that evening in Birmingham, tired but happy.



KEEPING ABREAST OF EVENTS...

Liz Brogan from Sampling and Michelle Tart from The Laboratory, took part in the recent Playtex MoonWalk 2007 in Hyde Park. This unique power walking marathon (26.2 miles) took place at night and the girls (pictured here) wore their decorated bras and walked to raise awareness and money for breast cancer.



The staff of The Birmingham Assay Office also donated bras and sellotaped money into the cups. They have also collected loose change from staff, customers and friends of The Birmingham Assay Office. To date the girls have raised over £600. If you would like to make a donation this would be gratefully received.

RACE FOR YOUR LIFE



Birmingham City and Aston Villa football fans alike amongst the female staff from The Birmingham Assay Office will put aside their local rivalries for a couple of hours and join together to participate in the Race For Life in aid of Cancer Research. The 5km race through Sutton Park, Birmingham, will take place on Sunday 15th July. An update on the money raised will appear in the next issue of The Anchor.

GOING SMOKE FREE

As a result of the Government ban on smoking in public from 1st July, The Birmingham Assay Office has adopted a policy to protect all employees and visitors to its premises from exposure to secondhand smoke. So, from 1st July our workplace will become entirely smokefree.

And we can report that some members of staff have already taken up the challenge of 'quitting' in time for the implementation of the new Law!

HISTORY & HERITAGE



ANTIQUES FOR EVERYONE

In April, The Birmingham Assay Office was pleased to provide the main feature at the *Antiques for Everyone* event show at the NEC. Entitled 'A Celebration of Silver', the exhibition gave visitors a rare opportunity to see pieces from The Birmingham Assay Office Silver Collection. It generated so much interest that on the opening day there was an unprecedented number of visitors who patiently queued outside.

SafeGuard Valuer, Craig O'Donnell and Curator, Dr. Sally Baggott reported that many visitors said they had come specifically to see 'A Celebration of Silver' and to appreciate the work of Birmingham's silversmiths both past and present.

Via a series of five cases, containing objects from the Office's Silver Collection, 'A Celebration of Silver'

told the remarkable story of the history of hallmarking in Birmingham. These included a case of 'toys' – small items of personal use, such as vinaigrettes, snuff boxes, shoe buckles – for which Birmingham was famous in the 18th and early 19th centuries. In a second case, rare pieces from Matthew Boulton's Soho manufactory were displayed, including eye-catching candlesticks and an epergne – a wonderful creation used as a centrepiece for grand dining tables to hold sweetmeats or fruit.



A selection of 19th century pieces by some of the most well-known silver manufacturers, including Elkington, demonstrated how the city's silver industry gradually became industrialised. Next to this, however, pieces from the early 20th century showed how the processes of industrialisation were resisted by silversmiths working within the Arts and Crafts movement, such as A. E. Jones and the Birmingham Guild. The stunning Liberty silver standing cup, which was made in Birmingham by William Haseler, was the star piece of the Art &



Crafts case. Finally, bringing the marriage of Birmingham and silver up to date, was the case of contemporary silverware which featured a 21st-century large silver vase designed by Birmingham Assay Office Chief Executive Michael Allchin and made by Regent Silversmiths, and a beautiful silver jug designed by contemporary Birmingham silversmith, Martyn Pugh who is also the Chairman of the British Jewellers' Association.

Visitors were equally interested to learn about the history of The Birmingham Assay Office and the hallmark which is still vital in protecting the consumer and the trade.

Opportunities to see pieces from the Silver Collection on public display do not come along very often, but recognised groups are welcome to visit us at The Birmingham Assay Office by prior arrangement (charges do apply). Dr Baggott is also available to give talks to groups and societies on a range of subjects. For more information please email: info@theassayoffice.co.uk or telephone: 0121 236 6951.



THE WEB SOLVES A MYSTERY

Thanks to the internet, a piece in The Birmingham Assay Office Collection has gained the most brilliant provenance.

Featured in *The Anchor* in 2003, the piece is a mourning brooch, made of 18ct gold, pearls, enamel and a lock of human hair and inscribed on the reverse 'Isaac Teesdale. Died 8th November 1870'.

Curator, Dr. Sally Baggott was extremely surprised earlier this year when she received an email from Russell and Audrey Bowen in Australia, who are relatives of Isaac Teesdale. A search on the internet for his name returned our website because the issue of *The Anchor* in which the brooch featured is still accessible.

Audrey and Russell have been researching their family tree for some time, and have a wealth of information on Isaac Teesdale. A wealthy

landowner, he was baptised on 18th July 1816. By 1841, the census shows that he was occupying and managing a sizeable farmhouse and some 120 acres of land for his father. He married Sarah Ann Webster in 1845 and they went on to have six daughters. Isaac died at the age of 54 in 1870 and his last surviving daughter, Kate Lowe Reeve, died in 1947. The brooch was sold by her estate to The Birmingham Assay Office.

"It is a rare thing to be presented with such a comprehensive provenance for an object in the collection," said Sally.

Recently, the story has taken an even more unexpected turn. In May, Russell and Audrey contacted Sally again to tell her that the descendents of Ada, Isaac's oldest daughter, have another brooch, almost identical in design, and bearing the exact same inscription. It seems that all six of Isaac's daughters may have received similar brooches in memory of their father, but as yet, no others have surfaced. ■



HERITAGE FORUM LEAFLET

Included with your copy of *The Anchor* is information about Birmingham's magnificent heritage from the Heritage Forum. The Birmingham Heritage Forum is a voluntary association of public and private groups and individuals interested in the heritage of Birmingham and its surroundings. A considerable number of heritage sites and providers play an active part in the Forum which seeks to promote

the diverse history and heritage of our wonderful city. The poster provides details of heritage sites in and around Birmingham that are certain to be of interest to local people and visitors to Birmingham.

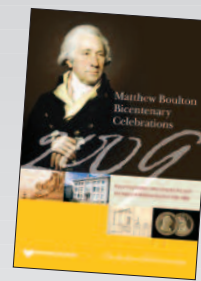
www.birminghamheritage.org.uk



FUNDING SUCCESS FOR BOULTON 2009

A bid for Arts and Humanities Research Council funding to host collaborative workshops on Matthew Boulton in the run-up to the bicentenary of his death in 2009 has been successful.

Congratulations to Dr. Paul Spencer-Longhurst, Senior Curator at the Barber Institute of Fine Art and Dr. Richard Clay, Lecturer in History of Art, University of Birmingham, and to all the organisations who worked collectively across the city to make this happen. The idea of the workshops is to explore Boulton's historical significance and facilitate communication between partner organisations and across institutions.



The Birmingham Assay Office was quick to realise the potential of these workshops and signed up as partner early on in the application process. In total, six workshops are planned, and people working on Boulton from the UK and further afield will be invited to attend. Each workshop will address a different aspect of Boulton's life and work, and The Birmingham Assay Office is thrilled to be hosting a workshop on Boulton's silver and ormolu work, in October this year with Sir Nicholas Goodison as guest speaker, author of *Matthew Boulton: Ormolu* (2002). Sir Nicholas is widely acknowledged to be an expert in this area.

We will shortly post more information about the bicentenary, on our website at www.theassayoffice.co.uk

INDUSTRY NEWS

THE GREAT DEBATE



The Birmingham Assay Office will be chairing a new event at International Jewellery London on 5th September 2007.

"The IJL Great Debate" will examine the view that 'A brand without values has no value at all'. Threats and opportunities arising from ethical issues for the jewellery trade will be discussed.

Activity by non-governmental agencies such as Global Witness, CAFOD and Earthworks have brought ethical, social and humanitarian issues within the jewellery and precious stone industry to the attention of its members and also to its customers.

The challenges presented by issues such as 'Conflict' or 'Illicit' Diamonds and 'Dirty' Gold are clearly a threat to consumer confidence, but have also strongly highlighted the dependency of under-developed countries on the Western jewellery industry. Jewellery buyers are literally keeping millions of people alive in Africa, India and elsewhere.

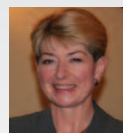
Brief presentations from key panellists will give a balanced view of the situation and then attendees will be invited to debate the threats and opportunities these matters present and provoke suggestions as to how the industry should respond. More details will be available in August on www.theassayoffice.co.uk and www.jewellerylondon.com

TEN YEARS OF NEW DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

Innovative products, cutting edge technology, renowned international designers and trend predictors all came together on 4th & 5th July at the University of Central England in Birmingham's School of Jewellery, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the region's Jewellery Industry Innovation Centre (JIIC).

The two day event featured a technical exhibition, showcasing the UK's main suppliers of 3D design software, rapid prototyping, laser marking and welding, rapid manufacturing and CAD.

There was also an exhibition of products manufactured by companies after receiving product development assistance from the JIIC.



On the first evening a private view, hosted by Kay Alexander, Chairman of The Birmingham Assay Office was held for invited guests.

The highlight on the second day was a well-received and informative Trend Prediction 2008 seminar.

The two day programme also included a series of seminars on design for technology with internationally renowned specialist speakers.

TRADING STANDARDS CONFERENCE, MANCHESTER 2007

The Birmingham Assay Office attended the Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards Conference and Exhibition which was held in Manchester this year.

Many delegates visited the stand to clarify the latest changes to the Hallmarking Act and find out more about the services which The Birmingham Assay Office can provide to Trading Standards Officers.

Marion Wilson, Marketing Director, attended the event and considered it very worthwhile. "As an Assay Office we are dependent upon Trading Standards Officers to enforce the hallmarking

legislation and ensure that jewellers are competing on a level playing field," she said. "The predominance of the Anti Counterfeiting Group at the exhibition speaks volumes about the level of cheating and huge influx of counterfeit branded products to which the consumer can fall prey. We need to do everything we can to prevent this happening in the jewellery trade."



A STRONG & UPBEAT YEAR FOR BJGF

A strong and stable financial year, the opportunity to meet and influence key members in the House of Lords and House of Commons and a 'brilliant export department' that has flown in the face of reduced government funding with additional export events, were just three of the outstanding

achievements detailed at an upbeat 121st British Jewellery & Giftware Finishing Federation Annual General Meeting.

Addressing key industry decision makers, President of the BJGF Federation Linda Evans said: "The board has been exemplary in its support,

commitment and hard work. The finance committee has given the BJGF financial stability and the work being done by export in the fight for our recognition in the global market has been outstanding."



▲ Linda Evans, President of the BJGF

HALLMARKING FIGURES - GOOD NEWS AT LAST!

The long term downward trend in hallmarking volumes finally halted in the Quarter ending June 2007, with overall numbers showing a healthy increase of 8.3% on the same period in 2006. Most of the upturn came from silver where there was a significant increase in articles hallmarked during the second quarter -

1,957,015 - up 26.97% on the same period in 2006. This increase is partly due to a major new product launch in June.

The number of gold articles hallmarked across all four UK Assay Offices in the second quarter was 3,224,766, down 0.63% on the same period last

year. The volume market of 9ct gold is down by 2.77% whereas 18ct continued to grow, up 5.02% on last year.

Platinum articles hallmarked in the quarter totalled 90,649, an increase 10.35% on last year."

Work dealt with by the Assay Offices of Great Britain, for the Quarter April to June 07	GOLD							SILVER					PLATINUM				
	999	990	916 22 carat	750 18 carat	585 14 carat	375 9 carat	TOTAL	800	925 Sterling	958 Britannia	999	TOTAL	850	900	950	999	TOTAL
NUMBER OF ARTICLES	748 364.6%	21 100%	145,823 35.6%	450,756 5%	29,979 -19%	2,597,439 -2.8%	3,224,766 -0.6%	65 -53.2%	1,954,523 27%	929 -20.9%	1,498 62.8%	1,957,015 27%	2 -33.3%	203 -99.3%	90,433 79.8%	11 -35.2%	90,649 10.3%
WEIGHT OF ARTICLES Gold & Platinum (g) Silver (kg)	9,004 36.4%	416 100%	1,303,150 26.8%	2,851,564 12.4%	175,803 -28.1%	9,979,828 -3.1%	14,319,765 1.4%	2 -75%	36,779 30.2%	95 -23.4%	375 368.7%	37,251 30.9%	8 -42.8%	2,435 138%	823,937 12%	143 -12.3%	826,523 12.2%