

SUMMER 2008

BIRMINGHAM SILVER



A CELEBRATION OF STYLE

The continuing skill, imagination and creativity of Birmingham Silversmiths was demonstrated recently when over 150 invited guests visited The Birmingham Assay Office to enjoy the "A Celebration of Birmingham Silver."

The exhibition marked the first ever British Silver Week and embraced old and new. Seven contemporary silversmiths displayed an eclectic range of pieces which included delicate bamboo style hanging vases, elegant tableware, impressive wine coolers and even hallmarked silver dog bowls.

Alongside this The Birmingham Assay Office took the unusual step of opening up its own extensive private silver collection, which includes magnificent 18th Century pieces made at the Soho Manufactory of its founder Matthew Boulton.



Bamboo Vase and Candlestick by Andrew MacGowan

The display of silver, amidst the grandeur of the Victorian building told a 235 year long story of craftsmanship, talent, entrepreneurial spirit and sheer hard work.

Kay Alexander, Chairman of The Birmingham Assay Office was there and welcomed guests enthusiastically. "We have so much to be proud of. It is wonderful to share our passion and commitment for our business and remind people that British silversmiths are still the best in the world." she said.

British Silver Week is in its first year and Director Gordon Hamme is very upbeat about the response. "We have been overwhelmed by enthusiasm" he said. "The event at The Birmingham Assay Office has achieved exactly what we set out to do. It has raised the profile of British Silversmiths and exposed their skilful work to many more people."

BOULTON SILVER COMMISSION

The Birmingham Assay Office are commissioning a piece of silverware to mark the Bicentenary of Matthew Boulton's death in 2009. The Wardens are looking for a contemporary piece with WOW! factor in Boulton's honour.

The design brief for the Commission is wide, leaving the contenders to use their own imagination and creativity. However, the piece must be useful, not just ornamental, and contain some relevant link to Matthew Boulton.

Seven talented local silversmiths have been selected, all recently graduated from the Birmingham City University School of Jewellery. The commission offers a great opportunity for a relatively unknown local silversmith to demonstrate their skill and help to

establish their careers. The commissioned piece will be displayed at Spring Fair 2009 and then at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter.

The selected silversmiths attended a detailed briefing at The Birmingham Assay Office which included information about its history, the current operation and also some helpful advice from silversmith and Guardian, Martyn Pugh.



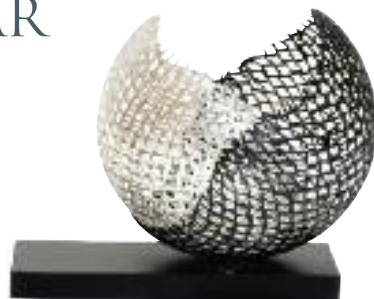
Dr Sally Baggott and Martyn Pugh with silversmiths during the commission briefing.

SILVER:WEAR

The RBSA Craft Gallery has been promoting the very best of British craft since the opening of its new Gallery in the heart of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter in 2000.

To coincide with the first British Silver Week, and The Birmingham Assay Office's unique exhibition 'A Celebration of Birmingham Silver', the RBSA held a Craft exhibition 'Silver:Wear' to highlight excellence and innovation in contemporary silver design.

'Silver:Wear' provided a dazzling showcase of distinctive silver jewellery and silverware from some of the country's leading designer makers. Inspirational, collectable work was exhibited from a diverse range of cutting edge contemporary crafts people. Quality and imaginative creations, including exquisite one-offs and affordable contemporary jewellery were housed in one remarkable exhibition.



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HALLMARKING

BLUE BOOK FOR PRECIOUS METALS

A CIBJO Blue Book for Precious Metal Jewellery, Flatware and Hollow-ware has been approved by CIBJO, The World Jewellery Confederation at its Annual Congress in Dubai.

There is now a definitive, globally recognised reference standard covering Precious Metal alloys, finenesses, weights, colours, tolerances, solders, coatings/plating and marking. The Blue Book is designed to give the public and trade throughout the world complete transparency in relation to buying precious metal articles, to ensure consumer confidence and promote best practice. The new



standard joins those already established by CIBJO for gemstones, diamonds and pearls.

The requirements are in step with those adopted by the eighteen states who are signatories to the International Convention.



In many cases, the standard will be higher than that required by national law but national legislation will always take precedence and there is no obligation to comply.

The Blue Book has been produced by the Precious Metals Commission, a multi national

working group led by President, Michael Allchin, Chief Executive of The Birmingham Assay Office. Michael is assisted by three Vice Presidents; silver manufacturer Gianni Cacchione, James Courage of Platinum Guild International and Phillip Olden of the World Gold Council. He believes the new standard will be very beneficial. "This is another important achievement for CIBJO" says Michael. "It will assist in harmonising world trade and prove enormously helpful to the global precious metal industry".



PRECIOUS METAL CLAY CONFERENCE



L-R : Lin Moran, Helen O'Neill & Julie Burns

Missenden Abbey in Buckinghamshire played host to the first Precious Metal Clay Conference over the weekend of 24th and 25th May.

Over 50 delegates attended the Conference and The Birmingham Assay Office was pleased to exhibit at the event providing delegates with practical help and advice on Hallmarking as well as a hands-on demonstration of hallmarking by Julie Burns, Supervisor in the Silver hand marking section at The Birmingham Assay Office.

Julie was joined by Lin Moran, Registration Co-ordinator, who said "Precious Metal Clay is becoming more widely used in jewellery production so the Conference provided The Birmingham Assay Office with a valuable forum to network with a number of designer makers using the material to produce jewellery".

Helen O'Neill, Managing Director of The PMC Studio said, "the Conference was a great success and we were delighted to receive the support of The Birmingham Assay Office who were present to talk to delegates and answer their questions about the hallmarking process".

PALLADIUM - MAKING ITS MARK

The interest in Palladium both within the jewellery trade and amongst consumers has continued to grow over recent months and it is hoped that by April 2009, the Hallmarking Act will be amended to incorporate Palladium as a hallmarkable metal. It is expected that, as with Platinum, the de facto standard is likely to be 950.

The Department of Trade and Industry's consultation process with the industry is ongoing and a Risk Impact Assessment is currently being carried out to determine and measure the impact that hallmarking Palladium will have within the UK jewellery market.

With soaring Platinum and gold prices and a continuing demand for fine white jewellery, palladium is seen by many as an attractive new opportunity.

It bridges the price between silver and 18ct white gold, but has the advantage of being a natural white metal that does not tarnish and needs no Rhodium plating.

Gary Williams, Sales Director at Brown and Newirth, suppliers of a wide range of hand made wedding rings said "Palladium provides a new opportunity for the jewellery trade.



The demand we have seen for Palladium wedding rings has grown significantly without cannibalising our Platinum sales. The re-assurance of a UK hallmark will give the consumer added protection and confidence when purchasing palladium jewellery so we await a positive outcome to the DTI's consultation".

GOLDEN MEMORY OF A CRICKET MATCH

This Gold Pin Tray has been laser hallmarked by The Birmingham Assay Office with the Lord's Taverners logo. The pin tray was presented as a gift to sponsors at a Celebrity Charity Cricket Match on 29th June.

The cricket match and auction raised funds for The Lord's Taverners, a Charity, founded in and based upon cricket, that helps young people,



particularly those with social, environmental, physical or learning disadvantages, to enjoy cricket and other sporting and leisure activities.

Another example of the uses the state of the art laser marking facilities are put to at The Birmingham Assay Office.



ESTABLISHING INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

The demand for Diamond Certification has been growing increasingly in recent years, driven by consumers demanding to know more and retailers wishing to differentiate their product and add value.

The huge leap in online sales, where the customer is seeking additional guarantees to replace the reassurance of a well established High Street name has also been a factor. And of course the influx of treated, enhanced and even synthetic stones has been crucial.



Increased demand has spawned new diamond certification brands throughout the world and there is now a huge choice of certificates on offer. Competition is healthy but in this case also confusing, as individual laboratories work to their own standards and procedures.

Recently there have been a number of responses from different organisations who are aware of increasing consumer dissatisfaction with inconsistent grades and recognize the need to respond before diamond certification loses all credibility. As a completely independent organisation, AnchorCert strongly believes in the

need for certificates to offer comparable grades and is currently involved in four projects with this objective.

AnchorCert is part of a new initiative launched by The Accredited Gemologists Association in America, that will attempt to establish clearly defined technical guidelines for colour grading and develop systems to ensure compliance among labs claiming to adhere to established standards.

AnchorCert is also cooperating in two interlab comparison projects. One with Tiffany in the USA to assist them in achieving ISO 17025 accreditation for their diamond grading and the other with GCAL in New York to determine the consistency of grading between the two services.

And recently the Jewellery and Watches Committee of BSI invited AnchorCert to contribute to a CEN workshop relating to Consumer confidence and terminology in the diamond industry.

Michael Allchin welcomes the projects. "Diamond certification needs proper international technical standards in order to provide comparable, meaningful reports" he says.



DIAMOND BREAKS RECORD FOR FELLOWS

Specialist Auctioneers **Fellows & Sons in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter** sold their most expensive piece of jewellery in April when an AnchorCert certified diamond and white gold pendant went to an anonymous bidder for **£45,000**. The pendant was set with a **10 carat heart shaped, VS2 J diamond, certified by an AnchorCert Full Report, and two smaller diamonds.**



Initially estimated at £25,000 to £30,000 lively competition pushed the sale price to record levels, with two main bidders at the auction and another bidding by telephone.

Stephen Whittaker, (above) managing partner at Fellows & Sons, said: "This pendant has an exquisite heart shaped diamond and proved to be really popular, which made it our most expensive single item of jewellery sold this year".



SCIENTIFIC MEASUREMENT & EXPERT JUDGEMENT

AnchorCert is consolidating all its resources into Birmingham to create an internationally recognised centre of excellence in the UK with improved efficiency and higher levels of quality and service.

AnchorCert's Birmingham facility, within The Assay Office building, will now house its entire battery of sophisticated high tech instruments. Highly qualified gemmologists will be able to test diamonds on the appropriate equipment very quickly. With the



increasing number of treated and synthetic stones on the market this is extremely important. AnchorCert Operations Director, Carla Goodfellow is delighted. "Modern Diamond Grading is all about expertise coupled with sophisticated technical equipment" says Carla.



results. We often have to test a stone on three or four pieces of equipment, and it makes sense to have everything in Birmingham."

Michael Allchin, Chief Executive of AnchorCert, says "AnchorCert is creating an internationally recognised Centre of Excellence specialising in diamonds, and has invested heavily to ensure it delivers. Highly qualified, experienced and well trained gemmologists use results from state of the art equipment which includes a Raman spectroscope, FTIR (Infra Red spectroscope) and UV-Vis-NIR (spectroscope) amongst other equipment, to ensure any treatments or synthetics are identified. The UK needs this kind of facility so that diamonds don't have to be sent abroad, and results can be back with customers within a week."

"Scientific measurement is more and more important, combined with expert personal judgement to interpret the

CHOCOLATE IS FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH!

AnchorCert is seeing an increasing number of brown diamonds as designers look for something different. The new trend is proof that good marketing plus authentication by a reputable Diamond Certification body can add significant value to a product.

By mixing browns with other shades and with white diamonds, jewellery designers are exploiting this new opportunity, successfully creating unusual pieces which offer good perceived value for money.

Anu Manchanda, Senior Gemmologist for AnchorCert says "Its all a matter of taste. What I would look for in a brown diamond would be a good brilliance, lots of fire and good clarity. The depth of colour and the hue are important too of course; a deep but pleasant chocolate colour would be my personal favourite."

AnchorCert use sophisticated equipment to thoroughly assess these unusual stones including the



Raman Spectrophotometer. This reveals whether the colour is natural or if any treatment has been used which could potentially improve the colour and therefore increase the value, a practice which is perfectly acceptable, as long as it is disclosed to the customer.



LOOKING FORWARD TO NAG LOUGHBOROUGH

Experts from The Birmingham Assay Office will once again be participating in the NAG Valuers Conference in Loughborough this September.

Dr Sally Baggott, Curator, together with specialist Silver Valuer Craig O'Donnell will be staging a series of workshops looking at silver pieces from the Arts & Crafts movement, focussing specifically on the work of the Birmingham Guild of Handicrafts, A. Edward Jones and Arthur & Georgie Gaskin.

These two experts are passionate about the subject and form an impressive double act. The workshops promise to be extremely entertaining and informative.

Chief Executive, Michael Allchin will also be attending and has been invited to participate in this year's Debate to give his perspective on



Left to right: Michael Allchin, Craig O'Donnell & Sally Baggott

online retailing. Other valuers and delegates from The Birmingham Assay Office will be at the Conference throughout the weekend.

Operations Director of SafeGuard & AnchorCert, Carla Goodfellow is looking forward to the event. "Last year was my first conference and I was very impressed by the depth and breadth of knowledge which the experts there were able to share" said Carla. "It is an intensive weekend of education, exchanging views and socialising and a very worthwhile one. I would definitely encourage valuers to attend."



Above: A. E Jones Dish

TV DEBUT

The innovative SafeGuard Jewellery Assessment report made its TV debut recently when 'Ideal World' featured a range of diamond products which had been examined by SafeGuard.

The report offers an independent assessment of the item covering precious metal and gemstone quality. 'Ideal



World' were very

enthusiastic about the product and invited SafeGuard Account Manager

Marie Chalmers, to explain to their viewers the benefits and reassurance offered by the report.

Marie had worked closely with the supplier and Ideal World to develop the product and was happy to take a brief break from maternity leave to appear on the show.



BRITISH JEWELLERY UNDER VALUED

A study by Halifax Home Insurance, published in May, revealed huge potential for Jewellers to sell more jewellery, watch and silverware valuations. Research figures showed that the British public own £52 billion worth of jewellery and much of it is not insured. 35% of people had never had their collection valued, and a further 10% had not had a jewellery valuation in the past 10 years.

One extraordinary statistic was that 28% of the people who had valuations had not passed the information on to their insurers.

Experts from the Halifax inevitably expressed concern that their policyholders were under insured when it came to their jewellery. The figures show that £8.6 billion worth of jewellery is worn every day, by its 34 million owners, exposing it to the risk of loss or damage. However the more frightening statistic is the £43 billion worth which is unworn, and may be vulnerable to burglary.

These figures show how many people could lose out significantly if they do not provide their insurer with a valuation and

demonstrate that there is a real opportunity for jewellers to sell more valuations.

Marion Wilson, Sales & Marketing Director, says "There is great scope for more valuation business. The response we get to Jewellery Valuation Events around the country demonstrates that people respond well when they are prompted about the need to have their jewellery valued. But it is not just about Event Days. The SafeGuard service is available throughout the year with only an eight day turnaround so there is always an opportunity for retailers to sell jewellery, watch or silverware valuations."



LONDON JEWELLERY WEEK:

SAFE GUARD AT CANARY WHARF

The Birmingham Assay Office celebrated the first Coutts London Jewellery Week with a successful educational event at Goldsmiths' Canary Wharf store.

The day was all about consumer information, advice and education, provided completely free of charge by SafeGuard. Customers were invited to bring in any watches or items of jewellery or silver which they wanted to learn more about, whether in terms of their provenance, their value or their manufacture.

Senior SafeGuard Valuer Phil Withington was on hand to explain the information provided by the Hallmark, the qualities of gemstones and diamonds and the skill and craftsmanship involved in the production of each piece. Customers were also advised of the best way to care for their jewellery.

It was a busy day for Phil and SafeGuard Marketing Co-ordinator Kelly Fisher and they both really enjoyed it. "This was a really good event" said Phil. "The Goldsmiths' staff gave us their full support and the customers loved it. Many people have things they have inherited or have been given and want to know more about them. The free consultation and information session was much appreciated and several customers asked for a full valuation as a result."

Store Manager Steven Summers was equally enthusiastic. "Our customers really enjoyed our

London Jewellery Week event and appreciated being able to talk to such an expert face to face," he said. "People brought along things they had had for a long time and knew nothing about and we had a couple of instances where they were extremely surprised to find out how much items were worth. One lady produced a loose stone, which she had found some time ago, it turned out to be a Princess Cut Diamond which Phil estimated to be worth around £9,000."



Left: Phil Withington with a client during London Jewellery Week

Above: Goldsmith Store at Canary Wharf



THE LABORATORY



LEAD TESTING THE METHOD MATTERS

Checking for safe levels of lead, particularly in items intended for use by children is a hot topic and The Laboratory has tested thousands of samples for lead content.

There is still no recognised limit for lead content in either childrens' or adult jewellery in EU legislation and most customers are following the regulations laid down in American and Canadian legislation which permit a maximum of 600 parts per million lead. Canadian Legislation states that the lead leachable value should be below 90 mg/kg, whereas the American Legislation which follows a different method states a limit of 175 micrograms.

However, there appears to be confusion over the best test method to use and The Laboratory is concerned that some tests are being conducted in other labs using inappropriate methods that do not fully digest the samples, for example 3050B, a process which was developed for environmental purposes to analyse soil and sludge. This process will have limited accuracy when applied to jewellery depending upon the make up of the jewellery item, particularly if several additional steps are required. The famous Californian Court Judgement on the exposure of lead does indeed refer to method USEPA 3050B or 3051 for non metallic items, but, it also states that it is unsuitable for Glass, Ceramic and



Crystal based components which are readily present in costume jewellery.

The Laboratory has adopted a method based on tests developed by the American Consumer Products Safety Commission and the agency Health Canada which is quicker, more straightforward and more accurate for metallic components. Technical Director Dippal Manchanda has total confidence in this method.

"Method 3050B involves so many steps depending upon the matrix of the item that accuracy is inevitably lost on the way" says Dippal. "The Laboratory's method is far more suited to analysing non metallic substances such as costume jewellery components. It is difficult to test glass and silica based components for lead content using 3050B and we have developed and are using a method which is far more satisfactory. Lead ingestion can be very harmful and it is crucial to use the correct test to achieve the most accurate answer available and this is more important when a component marginally meets or exceeds the specified limits."

ANSWERS FOR TRADING STANDARDS

Representatives from The Birmingham Assay Office enjoyed some sea air and plenty of lively company when they attended the Trading Standards Institute Annual Conference and Exhibition in Bournemouth in June.



The three day event attracted over 3000 visitors from throughout the UK including Trading Standards professionals, senior decision makers from local and central Government and representatives of business and consumer organisations.

The Birmingham Assay Office exhibition stand offered information about the full range of hallmarking, precious metal and jewellery assessment services. The Quick Nickel Test offered by The Laboratory was a major point of interest.

"Trading Standards have restricted budgets and a potentially endless list of projects" said Marion Wilson, Sales & Marketing Director (pictured left). "They find it very helpful to be able to test items for nickel more cheaply and quickly and, as a result, we had a great response this year.

"In addition to nickel, media coverage about lead levels, gold prices, Palladium jewellery and synthetic or treated gemstones has created a lot of consumer concern and this was an excellent opportunity for Trading Standards Officers to find the answers to the many questions they are asked."

AUTUMN FAIR

The Laboratory now offers a wide range of tests for the Fashion and Costume Jewellery Industry and will be exhibiting at Autumn Fair for the first time this year.

Representatives from The Laboratory will be on hand to explain the services available which include nickel and lead testing, plating thickness analysis, and susceptibility to tarnishing amongst others.

Account Manager for The Laboratory, Tim Smith (shown right) is very positive. "This will be a great



opportunity to meet more of our customers, face to face and really understand what they want from us" he said. You will find The Laboratory in Hall 4 on Stand H18

In this copy of The Anchor you will find an Autumn Fair Visitor Ticket that you can use to register for free admittance.



UKAS ACCREDITATION CONFIRMED

Following a surveillance visit earlier in the year UKAS have confirmed that The Laboratory continues to comply with the standards required to meet accreditation to UKAS 17025.

This standard certifies the competence of testing and calibration laboratories and provides assurance that strictly controlled procedures are followed. The Laboratory currently has 33 methods accredited to UKAS 17025.



LAB NOTES

The Laboratory at The Birmingham Assay Office has expanded rapidly and widened its range of specialist services for the Precious Metal industry and the Jewellery trade.

This issue of the Anchor includes an insert of the Lab Notes Newsletter which offers a much wider view of the many services and sectors The Laboratory is involved in.

Several of the tests on offer are a direct result of customers asking questions for which there were previously no answers. Technical Director Dippal Manchanda and his team have responded by carrying out extensive research in order to develop the correct methods to answer these demands.

Tests for susceptibility to tarnishing, the quick nickel test and white gold colour measurement are classic examples of these and they are all explained in detail in the Newsletter.



MEET THE TEAM



JULIE BURNS - SILVER SECTION SUPERVISOR

Julie Burn's career in hallmarking already spans 31 years - and she is still going strong!

In 1977, at the tender age of 16, Julie - now one of our most experienced Silver Hand Markers - joined The Birmingham Assay Office. Prompted by her late father - a successful bangle manufacturer based in the heart of the Jewellery Quarter - Julie attended for interview at the Office, clearly impressed the Works Manager, and got the job.



Her dedication and commitment to her job has seen her progress within the Marking Department and she is now Supervisor of the Silver section.

In 1989, Julie was delighted to be selected to take part in a Young

Workers Exchange Programme, enabling her to spend three weeks at an Assay Office in Holland, providing a fascinating insight into the hallmarking processes and techniques used by the Dutch.

The interesting range of objects which are presented for hallmarking never fails to interest Julie - for example castings from Pangolin Editions, a leading sculpture foundry that casts for artists such as Damien Hirst. (More about Pangolin Editions in the next edition of The Anchor).

Julie, who is married to Allan Burns, a member of The Birmingham Assay Office's maintenance team, said: "I have seen many changes within the Assay Office and the Jewellery trade over the last 31 years. I take pride in my job and love every minute of it. Every day presents a new challenge and unusual pieces for hallmarking, and that's what makes the job interesting".

INTRODUCING THE NEW HALLMARKING OPERATIONS MANAGER

We are delighted to report the recent promotion of Kathy McMillen to the role of Operations Manager within the Hallmarking division of The Birmingham Assay Office.

Kathy, who many of our customers will know from either face to face contact over our trade counter or by telephone, joined The Birmingham Assay Office 36 years ago. Last year she took on the role of Production and Customer Services Co-Ordinator and now, as Operations Manager, assumes full responsibility for overseeing hallmarking production throughout the Central Assay Office and our Sub Offices.



"I am delighted to have been given this role and I look forward to it with lots of enthusiasm," said Kathy. "I am passionate about hallmarking as I have lived and breathed it for 36 years!"

As well as overseeing the day to day running of the hallmarking division, Kathy will also be reviewing our processes over the coming months to ensure that the systems we have in place enable us to give our customers the quickest and most efficient service possible.

If anyone wishes to contact Kathy, her direct telephone number is 0121 262 1018 or email; kathy.mcmillen@theassayoffice.co.uk

SPONSORED CHALLENGE WALK

For 2008, The Birmingham Assay Office staff took up a sponsored walking challenge in a bid to raise money for Macmillan Nurses and the Make A Wish Foundation.

The walk followed the coastal path covering a distance of just over 26 miles from Lynmouth Harbour to Combe Martin and then on to Morteheo and Woolacombe.

This year saw several additions to the enthusiastic walking group and it is hoped that the final total raised by everyone will be the biggest ever.

The Group included: Michael Allchin, Michelle Tart, Sarah Delany, Matt Turner, Nicole Ruscoe, Toni Collins, Liz Brogan, Andy Left, Lin Moran, Pam Bannister, Bev Pearce, Karen Kempson, Anna Machin, Gareth Griffiths, Jacqui Eady, Debbie Tillison, Jimmy Martin, Sandra Scott, Lynn Lowe, Terry Billington, John Knowles and Mark Malin.

Special Thanks go, as ever, 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 to 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, PO Box 151, Newhall Street, Birmingham, B3 1SB.

Thank you for your support.



RACE FOR YOUR LIFE

On Saturday, July 12 the ladies of The Birmingham Assay Office - including both present and past members of staff - will once again take part in the 5km Race For Life event at Sutton Park, Birmingham.

This year some 4,000 women will run, jog or walk the course to help more people survive



cancer. Amongst those taking part from the Office are: Sophie Whitehouse, Toni Collins, Debbie Tillison, Pam Bannister, Karen Kempson, Dave Logans wife and daughters, and former staff member Margaret Middleton.

If you would like to make a donation directly to Race For Life by cheque please make it payable to Cancer Research UK and send it to Race for Life, PO Box 442, Northampton, NN3 6UU - or call the Race For Life hotline on 0871 641 2282.

www.cancerresearchuk.org



TOP TED LEADS THE FIELD

The Birmingham Assay Office is entering a team of finely honed athletes with all the footballing skills of the samba loving Brazilians into the BJGF Annual 5-A-Side Football Tournament which takes place on Saturday 12th July at Goals Soccer Centre in Birmingham.

Captain and heart of the defence "Top Ted" praised the new competition format and the new venue.

The Birmingham Assay Office Team comprises: Top Ted (Captain), Alex Gribble (Vice Captain), Matthew Turner, Steven Franklin, Andy Legg, Luke Abbey, Gareth Griffiths, Liam Powell and Fletch.

All proceeds from the competition go to the BJGF Benevolent Society.



HISTORY & HERITAGE



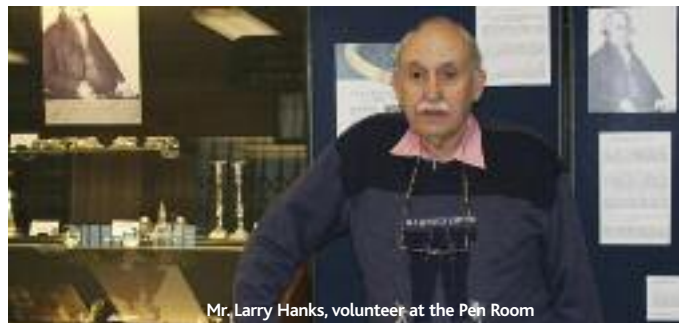
THE COLLECTION GOES ON TOUR

The Birmingham Assay Office has been pleased to work in partnership with the Pen Room on an exhibition that charts the history of The Birmingham Assay Office and Birmingham Silver. The exhibition provided a rare opportunity to see pieces from The Birmingham Assay Office Silver Collection, and it ran at the Pen Room from May 1 to June 30.

The Birmingham Assay Office Silver Collection houses many fine examples of Birmingham Silver,

and on display at the Pen Room were objects from the Collection that showcased the enormous wealth of talent possessed by the city's silversmiths including a snuff box and a card case by Nathaniel Mills, candlesticks by A. Edward Jones, pieces by Elkington, Mason and Co. and, last but not least, work by Matthew Boulton.

Boulton is especially significant as it was largely due to his efforts that The Birmingham Assay Office was established in 1773 and the exhibition also told the



Mr. Larry Hanks, volunteer at the Pen Room

story of more than 235 years of history at The Birmingham Assay Office .

The Pen Room at 60 Frederick Street in the Jewellery Quarter is open Monday to Saturday 11.00 - 4.00, Sunday 1.00 - 4.00.

Entry to visitors is free.

MATTHEW BOULTON MAKES AN APPEARANCE

Amongst the 150 visitors to 'A Celebration of Birmingham Silver' at The Birmingham Assay Office on June 10, was a very special guest - Matthew Boulton himself!



In a passionate speech, Mr. Boulton delighted visitors with the story of how he campaigned for the establishment of an Assay Office in Birmingham. Taking his audience back to 1773, he recounted how he had skilfully overcome the objections of the London Goldsmiths Company, made use of friends in high places and persuaded Parliament that the trade in Birmingham needed an Assay Office if it was to prosper.

For 235 years, The Birmingham Assay Office has been providing protection for the consumer and the trade, and Matthew Boulton complimented the organisation on being the only one of his enterprises that still exists today.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE JEWELLERY QUARTER

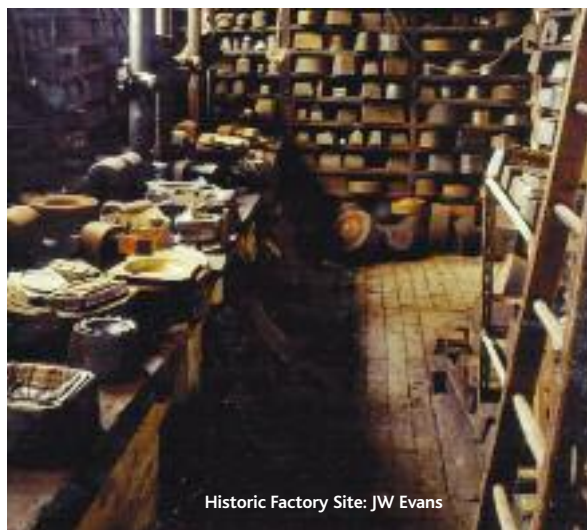
It has been a month of exceptionally good news from Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter!

First came the news that English Heritage had purchased the J.W. Evans factory in Albion Street. The Evans family have owned the premises since the 1880s, and English Heritage describes the factory as 'a rabbit-warren of workshops and store rooms ... a lost world hidden behind the façade of an ordinary Victorian terrace.'

The factory, dating back over more than 100 years will be developed as a heritage site - watch this space for updates.

Then it was announced that the Museum of The Jewellery Quarter had been voted the third best free heritage site in Europe. From comments left by people who had visited the Museum, the travel and tourism website www.tripadvisor.com put the old Smith and Pepper factory in third place above such prestigious sites as Notre Dame in Paris, St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, and even Westminster Abbey!

Finally, many congratulations are due to Brian Jones, the founder of the Pen Room who was



Historic Factory Site: JW Evans

made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Brian, who has done much to preserve and publicise the history of the pen trade in Birmingham, said: "I'm delighted and honoured to receive the MBE. But I should stress that I think it recognises not just my efforts but the work of dozens of volunteers without whom the Pen Room would never have opened".

BOULTON IN PRINT

Next year, to mark the bicentenary of Matthew Boulton's death, Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery are planning a major exhibition at the Gas Hall, to accompany the exhibition, a catalogue is to be published and will include essays on all aspects of Boulton's life and work.

The exhibition organisers at BMAG are pleased to have secured Yale University Press as publishers, and contributors to the catalogue

will include Sir Nicholas Goodison, Professor Ken Quickenden, and Dr. David Symons, who will be curating the main exhibition next year.

Dr. Sally Baggott, Curator at The Birmingham Assay Office has also contributed a chapter on Boulton's role in the establishment of an the Assay Office in 1773. She says: "Boulton is hugely important in the story of The Birmingham Assay Office, and doing the research for this chapter has been fascinating".

A SPECTACULAR HERITAGE

Included with this issue of The Anchor is a leaflet about the city's magnificent heritage from the Birmingham Heritage Forum, a voluntary association of public and private groups & individuals.

The leaflet provides details of heritage sites in and around Birmingham that are certain to be of interest to local people and visitors.



INDUSTRY NEWS

IJL "THE GREAT DEBATE" TRADE MINISTER TO CHAIR ETHICS DEBATE

The Birmingham Assay Office continues to be concerned about ethical, humanitarian and social issues associated with the Jewellery trade and is keen that these be confronted and the challenges met in a transparent way.

In order to increase awareness of the industry's response to these issues The Birmingham Assay Office is once again staging "The Great Debate" at International Jewellery London, in partnership with Reed Exhibitions. The debate will take place on Wednesday morning 3rd September. The motion this year will be "This house believes that the global jewellery industry will deliver an ethically responsible supply chain in line with consumer demand".

Marion Wilson Sales and Marketing Director says "Our concern is twofold. We would like to think we operate within an industry which acts responsibly with regards to ethical, humanitarian and environmental issues.

We are also concerned that jewellers meet increasing consumer demand for evidence that their products have been produced responsibly. If they don't it could be very damaging to the jewellery trade as a whole.



"We are delighted that Digby, Lord Jones of Birmingham, Minister for Trade and Investment has agreed to chair the Debate. His presence demonstrates the importance of these issues and we are guaranteed a lively discussion with Lord Jones in the Chair."

Everyone is welcome to attend but admission is by advance ticket only. To apply for free tickets please email gem@theassayoffice.co.uk or call us on 0121 236 6951.

Inside this edition of The Anchor you will find an IJL Visitor Ticket which you can use to register for free admittance to the IJL show which runs from 31st August to 3rd September, in Earls Court Two. The Birmingham Assay Office will be located on Stand C305 in the Fine Jewellery section.



TRADE DIRECTORY FOR THE JEWELLERY QUARTER

At the end of April the then Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Randal Brew, and a group of invited guests unveiled The Jewellery Quarter Trade Directory during an official visit to The Birmingham Assay Office.



The Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership, working with Advantage West Midlands and The Birmingham Assay Office, compiled the Trade Directory which has already been distributed country-wide to retailers who might need to use the services listed.

Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter still makes an estimated 40 per cent of UK jewellery and is home to Europe's largest School of Jewellery and the World's busiest Assay Office.

Copies of the directory are available free. Email: prim.currie@birmingham.gov.uk

AMANDA BOWLS JUDGES OVER

The Birmingham Assay Office has once again supported the Annual Prize Giving to Students at the Birmingham School of Jewellery.

This year's Birmingham Assay Office Award was presented to Amanda Pullin, who has just graduated from the Higher National Diploma in Jewellery and Silversmithing.

Amanda has gravitated towards silversmithing and this Olive Bowl with Picks table piece is an example of her work. It represents a new direction for Amanda as it begins an exploration into the use of hardwoods in contemporary tableware. Amanda is available for work and can be contacted on: amanda_pullin@yahoo.co.uk



CHARITY CAR WASH PAYS OFF!

The Birmingham Assay Office was delighted to present a cheque to the British Jewellery, Giftware and Finishing Benevolent Society in June to the value of £1062 - raised during the recent Charity Car Wash held in the car park at Newhall Street.

David Simons, Chairman of the Society who is pictured here receiving a cheque on behalf of the Charity from Marie Brennan, Business Relations Manager at The Birmingham Assay Office said: "The generosity of those who supported the Charity Car Wash has been overwhelming. On behalf of the Society, we would like to thank everyone who took part in the event."

STOP PRESS: Sutton Tools are holding a Charity Open Day on Tuesday 12th August and all proceeds will also be donated to The Benevolent

Society. With a sporting theme, customers can challenge Suttons Staff in Olympic Competitions - with the help of a Nintendo Wii. Please support this event and you could even win up to £100 worth of Sutton Tools products.



HALLMARKING FIGURES IN DECLINE

A combination of factors including a drop in consumer spend, high volatile metal prices and current fashion trends resulted in a major decline in hallmarking numbers for the quarter

from April to June 2008, compared with the previous year.

Overall 4.16 million articles were hallmarked by the four UK Assay offices, 21% less than in 2007, an even greater drop than in the first quarter

when the numbers were down by 16%. The hardest hit sector continues to be gold which was down 29% with 9ct showing a decline of 830,000 articles, (32%) and even silver, which has been growing strongly was down by 7.4%.

Work dealt with by the Assay Offices of Great Britain, for the Quarter April - June 08	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	1,764,666 -32.1%	29,061 -3.1%	367,649 -18.4%	113,119 -22.4%	20 -4.8%	221 -70.5%	2,274,736 -29.5%	55 -15.4%	1,809,022 -7.4%	1,911 105.7%	1,930 28.8%	1,812,918 -7.4%	3 50.0%	468 130.5%	74,346 -17.8%	7 -36.4%	74,824 -17.5%
WEIGHT OF ARTICLES Gold & Platinum (g) Silver (kg)	6,787,627 -32.0%	170,915 -2.8%	2,426,427 -14.9%	1,012,622 -22.3%	382 -8.2%	3,377 -62.5%	10,401,350 -27.4%	4 100.0%	29,781 -19.0%	114 22.6%	164 -56.3%	30,063 -19.3%	10 25.0%	3,137 23.7%	674,286 -14.2%	41 -69.4%	677,474 -14.1%