

WINTER 2008/09

SPRING FAIR 09 INTERNATIONAL THE JEWELLERY SHOW
AT SPRING FAIR INTERNATIONAL

IT'S A SPRING AFFAIR AND WE'VE GOT SOMETHING NEW...

INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

In difficult trading times it is tempting to ignore the past and the future and focus solely on a short term plan for survival. There is no doubt that 2009 is going to be challenging and The Birmingham Assay Office has already been hit hard by the drop in hallmarking numbers.

The Birmingham Assay Office sees a need to remain upbeat about the long term future of the UK jewellery industry, to promote its heritage to remind people of its importance, and to invest in its future.



Shona Marsh
with Curator
Dr. Sally Baggott



Elements of the new Candelabrum. See the whole piece in its full glory at the Jewellery Show, Spring Fair, NEC, Birmingham 1-5th February 2009 on Stand A19 Hall 17

The Birmingham Assay Office is supporting two major projects in 2009 to raise awareness of the long established skills within Birmingham's Jewellery and Silversmithing industry and to help to maintain them.

Matthew Boulton won his campaign for an Assay Office in Birmingham in 1773 and this was the catalyst which led to the development of the Jewellery Quarter.

The Bicentenary of Boulton's death in 2009 is an opportunity to underline the continuing importance of the UK Hallmark and to celebrate the pool of talent that still exists in the Jewellery Quarter today.

To showcase this, The Birmingham Assay Office has commissioned a piece of silver by local silversmith Shona Marsh. Her elegant candelabrum, inspired by Boulton's designs and techniques, has been made in classic Jewellery Quarter style, with components sourced from specialist casters and polishers, using a range of traditional skills and 21st century technology.



The Candelabrum will be unveiled at Spring Fair 2009 and subsequently displayed at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter.

The Birmingham Assay Office is also supporting the redevelopment of the Jewellery Studio at the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) which is currently being rebuilt. The MAC has been an important training ground and has been instrumental in introducing many new craftsmen to the industry.

The Birmingham Assay Office believes it is important to maintain this facility to offer opportunities to future jewellery designers/makers and to educate the public about our rich history of craftsmanship and the importance of hallmarking. ■

FIGHTING FOR THE HALLMARK – AGAIN

In the current climate of reduced consumer spending, volatile metal prices and increasing overseas competition in a declining market, the UK Hallmark is more important than ever. The independent hallmark ensures that everyone competes on a level playing field, thereby protecting the trade and the consumer.

There have been numerous threats to UK Hallmarking from the EU, the latest of which was in 2008 when the 'Mutual Recognition Regulation' threatened the automatic 'harmonisation' of regulations.

However, after a long battle by the Assay Offices, the British Hallmarking Council, the Government and our MEPs, hallmarking was finally excluded from this regulation.

The latest concern is the recently adopted 'Services Directive' which will be implemented into UK law by the end of 2009. If hallmarking falls within the scope of this directive,

hallmarking service providers will be able to operate in other EU countries.

This means that any EU Member State could enter the UK as a 'cross-border service provider' and start hallmarking without reference to, and outside the control of, the UK authorities. An EU State could even start hallmarking in a country with no domestic hallmarking legislation and no legal enforcement of hallmarking practices. This could open up huge opportunities for counterfeiting.

The Birmingham Assay Office Assay Master Michael Allchin and Chairman Kay Alexander have already put a huge amount of effort into fighting the Directive including taking Counsel's legal opinion which confirmed the view that hallmarking should be out-of-scope of the Services Directive. The final verdict from the UK Government is still awaited and The Birmingham Assay Office will continue to campaign on this important issue for the UK Jewellery trade. ■



ANCHOR FAN

Spotted recently - one of the many thousands of avid "Anchor" readers at the recent Centrepiece selling exhibition at the ICC Birmingham.

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE
3

ANCHORCERT

The Diamond Guide & Gemstone Index



PAGE
7

HISTORY & HERITAGE

Matthew Boulton 2009



PAGE
8

INDUSTRY NEWS

The Birmingham Assay Office joins the Giftware Association



HALLMARKING

PALLADIUM HALLMARK IS ON THE WAY.....

By the time this edition of *The Anchor* hits your desk, the final part of the consultation process to amend The Hallmarking Act to include Palladium as a 'hallmarkable' metal will be complete.

If the consultation process is successful, The Hallmarking Act is expected to change on April 6, 2009 when manufacturers, importers and retailers of Palladium jewellery will be able to submit their Palladium articles for hallmarking. The consultation document, issued by the National Weights and Measures Laboratory, recommends that a transition period follows the date of the change during which the hallmarking of Palladium will be voluntary.

It will then become obligatory from January 1, 2010.

There are expected to be three standards of fineness for Palladium; 500, 950 and 999 with an exemption weight of 1 gram (the same as gold).

The UK Assay Offices are also recommending that a 'Traditional' mark is adopted for Palladium, the design of which is currently under discussion. This will be an additional optional mark over and above the three compulsory symbols of the UK Hallmark. The arrival of a Hallmark for Palladium, coupled with the changes to the Hallmarking Act in 2007 to allow mixed metal articles to be hallmarked, presents new opportunities for the UK jewellery industry.

PALLADIUM; SOME FACTS....

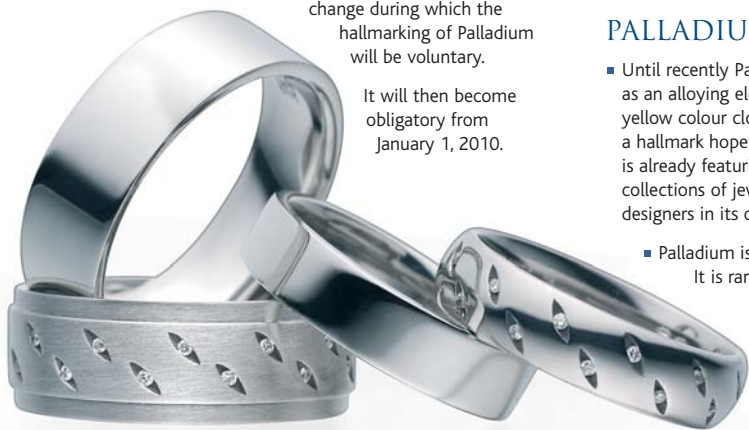
- Until recently Palladium was used in jewellery only as an alloying element, to bleach gold's natural yellow colour closer to that of platinum. Now with a hallmark hopefully on the way, this "new" metal is already featuring highly in the ranges and collections of jewellery manufacturers and designers in its own right.

- Palladium is a member of the Platinum group. It is rarer than both silver and gold.

- Until now, white gold has been the only lower-price alternative to platinum. The compromise has meant using a material which had to be rhodium plated to achieve a satisfactory colour, and was prone to wear – clearly unacceptable in a luxury piece. Palladium is the perfect alternative to white gold.

- The Palladium alloys developed for jewellers are malleable, durable and have a bright white, natural colour that doesn't tarnish.

- When polished, the metal has an innate lustre that needs no rhodium plating. Its low density enables jewellery designers to create currently in-vogue larger designs. ■



bies
passionate jewellery

IN-HOUSE PUNCH AND TOOL MAKING

One of the unique facilities available at The Birmingham Assay Office and not found in any other UK Assay Office is the in house Punch and Tool Making department located on the Newhall Street premises and staffed by highly qualified and experienced engineers. This provides customers with a personal, bespoke, rapid service of the highest quality.



Ian Hodges and his team

The Toolroom staff are responsible for producing the highest quality punches and support tools which are essential for striking a perfect hallmark. Every year, over 1300 hallmarking punches are manufactured in the Toolroom using state of the art design and punch cutting equipment.

Continuous investment has been made in toolroom equipment. For example, a new 3D-laser cutting machine has been ordered and is due for delivery in 2009, adding the latest technology to the Toolroom facilities.

Ian Hodges, Engineering Manager, said: "The quality of the punches we produce are to the highest standards and we regularly receive enquiries from Assay Offices all over the World, sourcing punch making services.

"Having our own dedicated Toolroom means that when punches need to be replaced, or new support tools made, we can meet the demand quickly, without having to outsource the work." ■



Lin Moran and Julie Burns from The Birmingham Assay Office with Helen O'Neill MD of The Precious Metal Clay Company

PRECIOUS METAL CLAY CONFERENCE 2009

Following the success of last year's Precious Metal Clay Conference, The Birmingham Assay Office has been invited to take part again in 2009 - this time by giving a presentation on Hallmarking.

In addition The Birmingham Assay Office will be demonstrating Hallmarking Techniques to delegates attending the event, which takes place on Friday May 22, 2009 at Missenden Abbey, Buckinghamshire. Marie Brennan, Business Relations Manager, said: "We are delighted to be taking part in the PMC Conference again in 2009. We have seen an increase in the number of pieces made from precious metal clay being submitted for hallmarking so we are pleased to be working in partnership with the Precious Metal Clay Studio in this way." ■

LOVE IS IN THE AIR...

Geoff Field, Chief Executive of the British Jewellers' Association and his fiancée Maggie Nichols, Managing Director of Suttons Tools, visited The Birmingham Assay Office recently to 'oversee' the testing and hallmarking of Maggie's engagement ring.

Geoff and Maggie are pictured here with Hallmarking Supervisor Rose Nightingale who, with meticulous care and attention, is applying a hallmark to the ring which was designed and made by Martin Gotrel in Chipping Campden. As reported in the last edition of *The Anchor*, Geoff and Maggie are due to tie the knot in the Spring of 2009. ■



TRADING STANDARDS SHOP WINDOW



The Consumer Centre in Birmingham City Centre provided a superb shop window to showcase the importance of the work of The Birmingham Assay Office.

Birmingham Trading Standards recognises the importance of educating consumers to help them make a considered decision when purchasing precious metal jewellery, watches and silverware. The displays showed the role of the hallmark as a form of consumer protection as well as explaining the compulsory and optional hallmarks that can be found on gold, silver and platinum pieces. Birmingham Trading Standards and The Birmingham Assay Office have agreed to repeat the exercise again in 2009. ■



ANCHORCERT SUPPORTS THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE GEM-A

In 2008 the Gemmological Association of Great Britain, Gem-A, celebrated 100 years of gemmological education. The Gemmologists and Diamond Graders at AnchorCert have all studied with and are members of the Gem-A and Senior Gemmologist Anu Manchanda is now a tutor for Gem-A.

Several other members of staff at The Birmingham Assay Office and associate company SafeGuard Independent Jewellery Valuation Service are also members of Gem-A, all holding a range of gemmological qualifications.

The Birmingham Assay Office and AnchorCert support both the Midlands and Scottish Branches of Gem-A. For several years staff have attended conferences arranged by these branches and have provided conference materials and speakers.

Pictured (above right) at the recent Gemmological Association Centenary Dinner are Carla Goodfellow, AnchorCert Director, Anu Manchanda Senior Gemmologist and Kitiya Andrews, AnchorCert Gemmologist.



Also pictured are the speakers from the Midlands Gemmologists one day conference held in Birmingham on November 30, which AnchorCert supported. As part of the Conference Vanessa Paterson, SafeGuard Valuer, gave a very well received talk on Amber.

Left-Right: Doug Garrod, Vanessa Paterson, Dr Henry Hänni, Alan Jobbins, Gwyn Green, Shera Mason and Paul Phillips.



The Birmingham Assay Office is also proud to sponsor the publication of Midlands Focus the quarterly magazine produced by Gwyn Green for all the Midlands Branch members of Gem-A.

ANCHORCERT - THE DIAMOND GUIDE

AnchorCert has produced a comprehensive "Diamond Guide and Gemstone Index" as a useful reference for jewellers. The pocket size publication includes a huge quantity of information about diamonds including sieve sizes, facet diagrams for the most popular cuts and guidance as to cut quality as well as clarity and colour charts. Although focussing on diamonds, the Guide also includes a glossary of birthstones and gemstones.

Free copies will be available from The Birmingham Assay Office stand at Spring Fair, NEC Birmingham, 1-5th February - Hall 17 Stand A19 or AnchorCert customers can email gem@theassayoffice.co.uk to request a free copy by post.



SYNTHETIC AND TREATMENTS IDENTIFIED

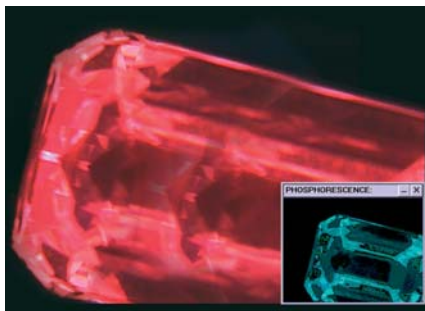
The investment made by The Birmingham Assay Office in high tech Diamond Certification equipment and staff training is proving its worth.

In just one week AnchorCert gemmologists identified both a synthetic diamond created by Chemical Vapour Deposition (CVD) and a High Pressure, High Temperature (HPHT) treated Type II stone. Both stones weighed over a carat and were submitted as natural and untreated diamonds.

Senior Gemmologist Anu Manchanda explained: "We had our suspicions about the CVD stone and once we put it on the Diamond View we could clearly see that the fluorescence and the phosphorescence was diagnostic for a CVD grown diamond. Further testing carried out on FTIR, Raman and UV-Vis spectroscopes supported the findings."

The HPHT stone was automatically subjected to further testing as it was a Type Ila Diamond. Visual observation of the stone was carried out and the inclusions indicated there could be some problem. Results obtained from the photoluminescence spectrum on the Raman Spectroscope confirmed that the stone had been subjected to HPHT treatment.

AnchorCert has also seen more cobalt treated tanzanites, more diamonds that have been subjected to the latest KM lasering technique to improve their clarity and three different instances of customers buying "tanzanites"



abroad, which were then identified as Cubic Zirconias (CZ).

There is definitely a need for all those in the jewellery trade to be increasingly vigilant to ensure they are getting what they pay for.

The correct identification of these stones makes a significant difference to their value. AnchorCert is the only UK Diamond and Gemstone facility that has the equipment and the expertise to identify these stones".

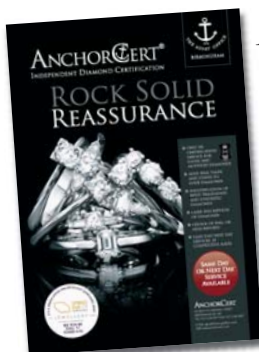
AnchorCert expertise, advanced equipment and UK Certification, is a powerful commercial combination - providing the trade and the buying public with the reassurance they need to make a considered purchase. For more information call AnchorCert on 0871 423 7922 or email gem@theassayoffice.co.uk

NEW DIAMOND REPORT SERVICE COMING SOON!

Spring Fair sees the launch of a new service from AnchorCert, the Diamond and Gemstone Short Report.

Initially, this service will cover loose diamonds and has been developed to offer a halfway house for those customers who want more detail than can be offered on an AnchorCert

Mini Report but do not want a Full Report. Like a Mini Report, the AS Diamond Short Report will detail colour, clarity, shape, weight and measurements. In addition it will also include fluorescence, plus a cut grade for round brilliants and princess cuts. The service is UKAS accredited as a guarantee of competence. The Short Report will start at £32.50 for a stone up to one carat and be £32.50 per carat thereafter. Sample reports will be available from late January 2009.



ANCHORCERT EXPRESS SERVICE IN DEMAND

In the current climate of caution and buying to order, the AnchorCert Diamond Certification express services came into their own in the build-up to Christmas.

Many retailers used the AnchorCert Same Day or Next Day service to clinch late pre-Christmas sales.

All divisions of The Birmingham Assay Office stayed open right up until early afternoon on Christmas Eve and AnchorCert diamond graders did some real last minute "Same Day" certification.

Operations Director Carla Goodfellow said: "We understand how crucial every sale is, particularly at the minute, and want to help our customers. Everything is always urgent at Christmas but this year cautious buying plus the disruption at Bangkok airport has made deliveries later than ever and we have had to provide a really fast service to meet our customers' needs."

MARIE IS BACK

Account Manager Marie Chalmers has been welcomed back from Maternity leave after the safe arrival of baby Johnny in February. Marie will be working on a part time basis, mainly promoting the AnchorCert Diamond Certification Service but also introducing customers to the other services available from The Birmingham Assay Office such as SafeGuard Jewellery Valuations and Hallmarking. Marie will be on The Birmingham Assay Office stand, Hall 17, Stand A19 at the Spring Fair, so please do come and say hello.



STOP PRESS: AnchorCert Independent Diamond Certification Laboratory is now listed on RapNet, "The" Diamond Reference site at www.diamonds.net
"RapNet® is the exclusive diamond trading network for qualified members of the international diamond trade."





JEWELLERY ASSESSMENT BOOSTS SALES



The new SafeGuard Independent Jewellery Assessment Report proved a useful tool in helping to boost sales in the run-up to Christmas.

Several major retailers used the Report to add credibility to products such as Cultured Pearls and multiple stone pieces. The Report is also proving to be useful to pawnbrokers who find that authentication from an independent expert added to the retailer's own good reputation, gives the consumer total confidence in what they are buying.

The Report offers a full description and picture of a piece, verifying both the gemstones and the precious metals content and giving the retailer the opportunity to use it as a guarantee of minimum quality.

SafeGuard received excellent feedback and repeat orders from all the retailers who used the service, including specialist High Street jeweller Ernest Jones, and TV Shopping Channels such as QVC and The Jewellery Channel. ■

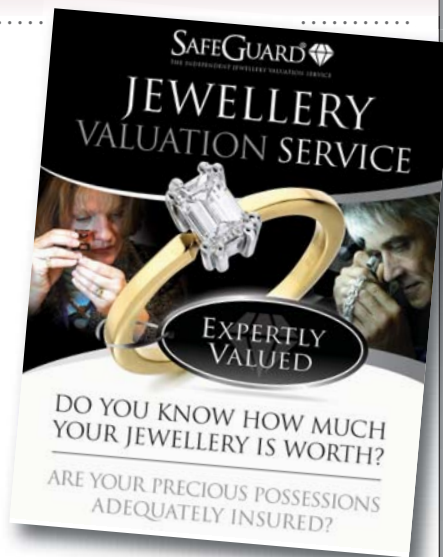
SAFEGUARD YOUR VALUABLES – DON'T UNDER INSURE

Many retailers are finding that, despite the retail slowdown, the demand for Jewellery and Watch Valuations has grown during the past twelve months. Volatile precious metal prices and the rising price of large diamonds have encouraged people to seek valuations for their fine jewellery and watches and SafeGuard's regular valuation service and in-store Event Days have been busier than ever.

Some of the increase has been driven by insurance companies. Alarmed by the prospect of claimants finding it impossible to replace items for the insured sum, major insurers have been advising their policyholders to check that their valuables have a current valuation.

Marsh, one of the world's leading insurance brokers and risk advisers, has been warning of the risk of under-insurance during a period of spiralling prices. Sara Dunn, Client Executive at Marsh explained: "It is the responsibility of the policyholder, not the insurer, to ensure that their sums insured adequately represent the cost of replacing items. While the sum insured for specified items will increase in line with inflation, it does not necessarily mean that it will keep pace with increases in the jewellery market."

Major insurers are all recommending frequent review of existing valuations. Carla Goodfellow, Operations Director for SafeGuard said:



"There is an excellent opportunity for retailers to use the SafeGuard Valuation service to attract customers and create profitable turnover with no stock investment. There is no fee to join the SafeGuard network so they have nothing to lose and plenty to gain in offering the service". For more information call SafeGuard on 0871 423 7922 or email safeguard@theassayoffice.co.uk ■

NEW WATCH AUTHENTICATION SERVICE LAUNCHED

Following a successful theme of listening to customers and reacting to their requirements, SafeGuard will launch the new "Watch Authentication" report at Spring Fair 2009.

The need for such a service to support SafeGuard watch valuations has become apparent over the past year. SafeGuard Operations Director Carla Goodfellow said: "There is increasing concern that some of the watches submitted for valuation are not what they purport to be. Some are sophisticated fakes, others have been assembled from genuine branded watch parts but have been modified or rebuilt. Before we can value a watch we obviously need to know exactly what we are looking at. This will involve removing the back, checking serial numbers and then properly resealing the watch. The new Watch Authentication Service does exactly that and we expect it to be very popular." The Watch Authentication Service is available separately or as an additional service along with the independent SafeGuard Valuation. Samples of the new Watch Authentication Report will be available on The Birmingham Assay Office Stand, A19, Hall 17 or from gem@theassayoffice.co.uk.



NEW LOOK VALUATION PORTFOLIO

SafeGuard will be unveiling an updated version of its upmarket 'Jewellery and Watch Valuation Portfolio' at The Jewellery Show, Spring Fair, NEC, February 1 – 5, 2009.



The Valuation Portfolio, originally launched three years ago to provide a more prestigious alternative to the standard SafeGuard valuation, was designed for higher priced jewellery and watch items.

It provides a more comprehensive description of each item, larger photographs and detailed reference information including Diamond Characteristic charts and a guide to Hallmarks. The demand for the service has grown steadily and SafeGuard has now brought the Valuation Portfolio up-to-date, with a more contemporary, but still prestigious look.

Each valuation document will now feature multiple photographs of the item, enabling the valuer to capture any important distinguishing features. The new portfolio has been created with watches in mind too. As its name suggests, it is intended that the Valuation Portfolio becomes a complete record of a collection of watches or fine jewellery as



subsequent valuations can be added afterwards making it an attractive option for collectors. The Valuation Portfolio will be on display on stand A19, Hall 17 at The Jewellery Show, Spring Fair. Visit SafeGuard and give us your feedback. For more information call 0871 423 7922 or email safeguard@theassayoffice.co.uk ■

THE LABORATORY



FLAMMABILITY TEST NOW AVAILABLE

The Laboratory has been carrying out an increasing amount of testing to BS EN 71-3: 1995, a standard that places restrictions on the migration rate of eight potentially toxic elements; Arsenic, Mercury, Selenium, Chromium, Antimony, Cadmium, Lead and Barium.

Compliance with EN 71 is a legal requirement to ensure the safety of toys but in the absence of any specific legislation for fine or costume jewellery many customers

are using EN 71-3 to ensure that costume jewellery, hair accessories and other products, particularly those attractive to children, are safe.

These products also need testing for other properties covered by EN 71 such as Physical and Mechanical properties and Flammability and many customers are looking to have all testing carried out together.

In response to this demand The Laboratory has invested in the necessary equipment and developed the knowledge to carry out EN71 -2 which tests for flammability (BS EN 71: Part 2 : 2006 + A1: 2007 - Flammability). The standard specifies the categories of flammable materials that are prohibited in all toys plus the requirements concerning flammability of certain toys when subjected to a small source of ignition.

The test is carried out under carefully controlled conditions in a flammability chamber and measures the 'ignitability' and 'flame spread time' after an article has been subjected to a small source of ignition. The whole process is recorded on video and this is saved as physical evidence of the reported result.

This test has many applications, particularly for children's toys, clothing and upholstery materials. It is now available from The Laboratory with a turn round time of only four days and is expected to be UKAS-accredited by mid January.

Technical Director Dippal Manchanda said: "We want to offer our customers the best service possible and I am pleased to announce that we will soon be offering EN71 part 1 as well. Compliance with legal safety requirements is essential, especially in the case of children's products, and the reassurance of a report from The Birmingham Assay Office gives everyone peace of mind."

For more information please call tel: 0121 262 1036 or email testing@theassayoffice.co.uk



MOBILE PHONE DERMATITIS NICKEL MAY BE THE CAUSE

The Laboratory at The Birmingham Assay Office has carried out nickel release testing for a leading mobile phone brand for many years. More samples are expected from new customers after a Press Release from the British Association of Dermatologists identified a new phenomenon - "mobile phone dermatitis". Several cases have been reported.

Dr Graham Lowe, from the British Association of Dermatologists, said: "The allergy results from frequent skin contact with nickel-containing objects. Prolonged or repetitive contact with a nickel-containing phone is more likely to cause a skin reaction in those who are allergic. If you have had a previous reaction to a nickel-coated belt-buckle or jewellery, for example, you are at greater risk of reacting to metal phones.

"In mobile phone dermatitis, the rash would typically occur on the cheek or ear, depending on where the metal part of the phone comes into contact with the skin.

In theory it could even occur on the fingers if you spend a lot of time texting on metal menu buttons."



A study carried out in the United States found that out of 22 handsets ten contained "free nickel" which could cause an allergic reaction.

The report underlines the importance of nickel release testing. The most common cause of nickel sensitization is from a body piercing and suppliers have a responsibility to make sure the piercing post assembly complies with the UK Nickel regulations. The legislation is there for good reason. Once an individual is sensitized, the condition is permanent and they will experience allergic reactions from contact with many everyday items including coins, cutlery, scissors and possibly their mobile phone.

For more information, please call tel: 0121 262 1036 or email testing@theassayoffice.co.uk

INCREASED DEMAND FOR PACKAGING TESTING

The Laboratory at The Birmingham Assay Office pioneered testing for the susceptibility of packaging materials to influence tarnishing.

The tests are based on international standards and have been developed specifically for the jewellery and precious metal trade. Jewellery can be tested for its susceptibility to tarnishing and packaging for its tendency to accelerate tarnishing. These unique tests have already helped many importers identify problem components, usually a sulphur-containing glue, in an item of packaging which could cause a whole consignment of silver to tarnish while in transit.

In a new development, The Laboratory is receiving both packaging and the precious metal articles it is designed to hold to test for susceptibility to tarnishing.

Packaging suppliers with no connection to the jewellery industry are also submitting products with metallic decoration for testing. Special edition (empty) bottles of alcohol, expensive fragrance bottles, even decorative tiles with a thin film of gold have all been tested recently.



"It's all about the Consumer's expectations and satisfaction," says Tim Smith, Sales Manager for The Laboratory. "Many people collect these upmarket products and they expect them to sit on the shelf for years without deteriorating. The tests that The Laboratory offers establish whether they will do just that."

For more information please call 0121 262 1036 or email testing@theassayoffice.co.uk

IAN COMPLETES 25 YEARS SERVICE

Ian Bayley, a Chartered Scientist and Member of the Royal Society of Chemistry, has completed 25 years service with the Laboratory.

He joined in 1983 as a Laboratory Technician, moving on to Chief Chemist, Technical Services Manager. He is currently Senior Analyst and Quality Manager.

His aptitude for processes and systems has meant that he has also been closely involved with the Business Management Systems for The Birmingham Assay Office and its satellite operations around the country

Ian is a long-serving member of the Nickel Working Group, having been involved in the initial trials of test methods which are now required by European legislation and is currently working with other international representatives to revise these procedures. He is also a member of the UK BSI committee tasked with keeping jewellery standards up-to-date and relevant to today's needs. His knowledge of all issues

relating to the Nickel legislation is extensive and he worked on the production of the Nickel Standard, and the UK Nickel Testing Policy which was developed in conjunction with LACORS and other interested parties.

He is also actively involved in expanding The Laboratory's portfolio of tests so that it continues to offer a comprehensive range of testing procedures in line with the increasing and exacting requirements of The Laboratory's ever expanding customer base. Over the past 25 years Ian has seen many changes, including a move towards largely non-destructive, computer controlled equipment, such as XRF, replacing established traditional furnace based methods.

When away from his exacting work Ian and his family enjoy several leisure pursuits including cycling, gardening and running - Ian has participated in The London Marathon. He has a very dry sense of humour and it is always a pleasure to work on projects with him as he will keep you laughing and smiling all day.



MEET THE TEAM



HARD WORK RAISING MONEY FOR CHARITY – AND HAVING FUN

The Staff at The Birmingham Assay Office have all been working hard raising money for various charities – as well as having fun and bringing a smile to the faces of customers and visitors to the office. We would like to thank everyone for their very generous support. Many hundreds of pounds have been raised during the course of 2008. Below is just a selection of some of the recent events that have taken place.

THE PYJAMA GAMES...



To raise money for Children in Need staff came to work in their pyjamas....



Liam Powell & Darren Chauhan lend a helping hand



L-R: Marisa Grice, Sanita Varma, Loretta Lloyd, Geoff Coles, Sheila Bagley, Jacky Eady, Mary McShane, Nicole Ruscoe, Sarah Delaney (see Geoff's heartfelt plea on the front of his T-Shirt – 'Wanted More Women')

GIFTS FOR THE SALVATION ARMY

Sophie Whitehouse and Olivia Turner from the Sales and Marketing Dept represented The Birmingham Assay Office and handed over a selection of food supplies to the local Salvation Army Hostel in Birmingham City Centre. ■



Olivia Turner, Sophie Whitehouse (front left)

THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY BALL

Staff from The Birmingham Assay Office, SafeGuard Jewellery Valuation Service, AnchorCert Diamond Certification Service and The Laboratory attended the BJGFF Benevolent Society Ball and helped to raise much needed funds for those who have worked in the jewellery and giftware trades but now find themselves in financial difficulty. ■



L-R Carla Goodfellow, Marion Wilson, Dippal Manchanda, Anu Manchanda, Kathy McMillen, Mark Malin, Dave Logan, Marie Brennan, June Russell.

THINKING PINK



What a fabulous turnout. The Breast Cancer Campaign is one that is very dear to the staff in the office. The sight of so many people dressed head to toe in PINK was truly wonderful to behold.

FAREWELL TO TOP TED

The Birmingham Assay Office Bear, Top Ted, has been won in a Name The Bear Competition by Sanita Varma from the Preparation Department "Benjamin" Bear will be missed by all the staff who have grown very fond of him.

Marisa Grice and Margaret Owen presided over the prize draw



Top Ted has deputised for The Assay Master during his summer holidays, he has tried his hand at hand marking, captained the Assay Office Football team and finally turned his talents to the art of jewellery valuations as a trainee valuer with SafeGuard.

He has also helped raise over £300 for the BJGFF Benevolent Society - a charity which supports disadvantaged people who worked in the jewellery and giftware industries. Many thanks to Paul from Lois Jewellery who donated £20 to the fund and to everyone else who participated and help to raise money for this worthwhile cause. ■

HO, HO, HO !!

Also to raise funds for Children In Need, staff took part in the Three-legged Santa race in the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter that was organised by staff from the Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership.

L-R Sarah Delaney and Nicole Ruscoe (Accounts) Clair Bishop and Liam Powell (SafeGuard Jewellery Valuation Service).



HISTORY & HERITAGE



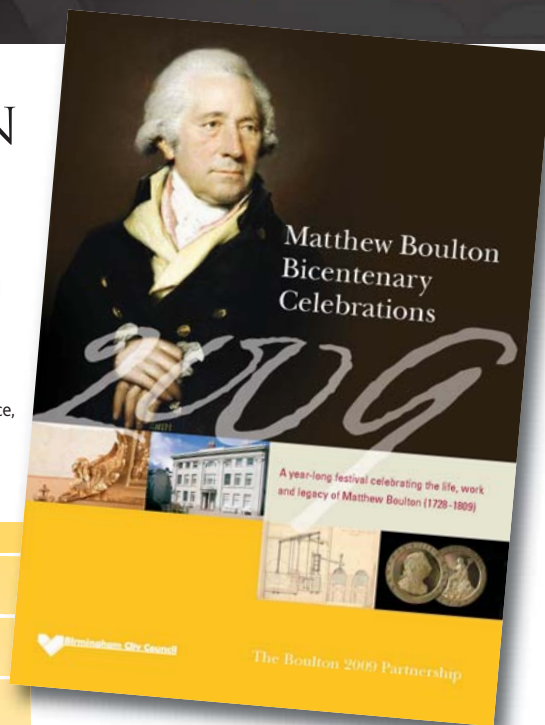
MORE SUPPORT FOR BOULTON BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Plans for the celebrations to mark the bicentenary of Matthew Boulton's death in 2009 are now gathering pace, and there is excellent news regarding the funding for events next year.

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG) has been successful in securing £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the major exhibition on Boulton's life and times at the Gas Hall, and an additional £12,500 from the Paul Mellon Foundation towards the cost of the catalogue and a series of lectures.

Dr. Richard Clay who is curating the exhibition of coins and medals at the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, has successfully attracted £2,500 funding from the Henry Moore Foundation.

Both BMAG and the Barber Institute would be happy to talk to anyone interested in providing sponsorship for their events. Please contact Chris Rice, Head of Heritage Services, BMAG on 0121 303 4039 or Dr. Richard Clay, Lecturer, University of Birmingham on 0121 414 7331.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN 2009

1-5th February	Unveiling of Matthew Boulton Commemorative piece The Birmingham Assay Office Stand, Hall 17 Stand A19, Spring Fair, NEC, Birmingham
28th March	Matthew Boulton Commemorative piece on display at the opening of the new first floor gallery at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter.
8th May	'The Art of Making Money' at the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham. The exhibition will run until 15th May 2010.
30th May	'Matthew Boulton: Selling What All the World Desires' at the Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The exhibition will run until 27th September 2009.
3rd-5th July	'Where Genius and the Arts Preside' Matthew Boulton and the Soho Manufactory 1809-2009. Interdisciplinary academic conference, University of Birmingham
4th July	'Hark! I hear Musick!' Concert of Matthew Boulton's favourite music with readings from the Matthew Boulton Papers at St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

Further events are being worked on and may feature during British Silver Week, 8-12 June 2009 and also later on in the year.

For regular updates of events for 2009 please visit www.matthewboulton2009.org.uk and www.theassayoffice.co.uk

ARTS AND CRAFTS ADDITION TO THE SILVER COLLECTION

This exquisite example of Arts and Crafts Birmingham silver was acquired in September for The Birmingham Assay Office Silver Collection.

Curator Dr. Sally Baggott and SafeGuard Valuer Craig O'Donnell had only just returned from the National Association of Goldsmiths Valuers Conference where they had been leading workshops on the Arts and Crafts movement in Birmingham when Craig spotted this hot water jug in an auction catalogue.

"We couldn't believe it when this fantastic piece came up for auction, and were thrilled to be successful with our bid at auction," said Sally.

The jug bears the Hallmark for Birmingham, 1904, but its significance lies in the fact that it was made by the Birmingham Guild of Handicrafts to a design by Arthur Stansfield Dixon (1856-1929).



Pieces by the Birmingham Guild are rare, and since Dixon was the founder of the Guild this makes the jug all the more special. Dixon was an architect, and he designed the Guild's building which still stands on Great Charles Street in Birmingham. His style is evident in the very simple form and the domed lid of the jug, whilst its hammered finish and the heart-shaped terminals on the handle are typical of the Arts and Crafts movement as a whole.

NADFAS VOLUNTEERS TO KEEP THE SILVER SHINING

The Birmingham Assay Office Silver Collection now holds some 1500 pieces of silver, which is rather more than Curator Dr. Sally Baggott can manage when it comes to keeping it clean!

Now volunteers from the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Society (NADFAS) have stepped in to help. The group have recently finished restoring a trophy at the Gun Proof House in Birmingham, and they have been trained by Sally in the correct methods of conservation and cleaning of silver.

"I am so pleased we have been able to get NADFAS to help us with our conservation," said Sally. "As a national organisation, they do an enormous amount of work to preserve and promote history and heritage."



"Thanks to this group of volunteers, the silver will be in excellent condition for the Boulton bicentenary next year."

HALLMARKING 'DOWN UNDER'

Recently, Kevin Hitchens, Keeper of the Punches at the Gold and Silversmiths Guild of Australia has been in contact with The Birmingham Assay Office. He has written a brief history of

Australian Hallmarking and has been generous enough to share this with the Curator at The Birmingham Assay Office, Dr. Sally Baggott.

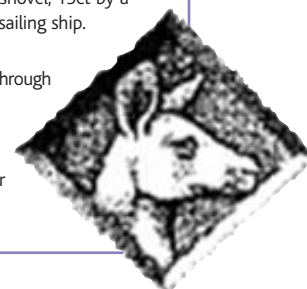


Sally explains: "The history of Hallmarking in Australia is fascinating, and I am grateful to Kevin for adding to our knowledge of Hallmarking in a global historical context.

"What is particularly interesting is that the existence of Hallmarking 'down under' is due to the colonial links with Britain and, of course, to the gold rush of the mid 19th century."

Although the principles of assaying and hallmarking were not adopted unanimously until the 1920s, the Manufacturing Jewellers Association of Victoria was applying standard marks to gold in the 1890s. They used symbols that were significant in contemporary Australian culture: 9ct gold was denoted by a sheaf of wheat, 12ct by a pick and shovel, 15ct by a sheep's fleece and 18ct by a sailing ship.

"It is wonderful to think that through Britain's strong links with Australia in the past, the UK system of Hallmarking has had an influence on the other side of the world," said Sally.



INDUSTRY NEWS

THE GIFTWARE ASSOCIATION...

The Birmingham Assay Office has extended its association with the British Jewellers' Association and the Jewellery Distributors' Association by becoming a full member of sister Trade Association, The Giftware Association.

The Giftware Association represents the UK gift and home industry and has been promoting this sector of the British economy for over 60 years. Marion Wilson, Marketing Director of The Birmingham Assay Office said: "With more gift shops stocking jewellery there is increasing synergy for The Laboratory in particular to

work closely with this important industry sector". A Guide to selling precious metal jewellery has been compiled for members of The Giftware Association along with an article entitled 'Are Your Products As Safe As They Should Be'. The Laboratory can provide a range of product safety tests to ensure that products comply with all current legislation. Copies are available via The Giftware Association. Web: www.ga-uk.org Email: enquiries@ga-uk.org ■



BIRMINGHAM JEWELLERY QUARTER TRIPLE LAUNCH

In November the Jewellery Quarter Regeneration Partnership staged an event at the School of Jewellery to launch three new initiatives, including two consumer-orientated projects to attract more visitors and business to the Jewellery Quarter with the third being a design competition for the "Golden Square".

The new website and an updated directory - "The Platinum Guide" - will promote the area and are expected to improve consumer awareness of the Jewellery Quarter. The "Golden Square" design competition is a project to generate ideas for the redevelopment of the area around the Chamberlain Clock. The Birmingham Assay Office was pleased to support this event and join other local organisations exhibiting at the launch which attracted over 150 people.

Marion Wilson and Marie Brennan with members of the Jewellery Quarter Residents Association



COUTTS LONDON JEWELLERY WEEK 2009

Following the success of the first Coutts London Jewellery Week in 2008 another glitzy event is planned for 8 - 15th June 2009 and The Birmingham Assay Office will be participating once again.

London Jewellery Week is organised by the City Fringe Partnership, with funding from the London Development Agency, and sponsored by Coutts. The event is intended to create public interest and awareness of jewellery at all levels. It is a showcase for new and established talent.



The Birmingham Assay Office will be supporting London Jewellery Week by staging an event in partnership with one of its major retail customers and is proud to join industry colleagues from Bond Street, Hatton Garden, Knightsbridge and beyond to celebrate the talent within the UK jewellery industry. ■

HELP FROM THE BJA...

Enclosed with this edition of *The Anchor* is a leaflet from The British Jewellers' Association.

The BJA has a growing membership and is open to all businesses across the jewellery supply chain. Members enjoy a wide range of services and discounts. For more information about BJA, please refer to the leaflet. It has recently been announced that the BJGFF (of which the BJA and the GA are both part) has joined forces with the British Home Enhancement Trade Association to create one powerful "super federation". Members of both federations will now have a stronger representative voice.



RECOGNITION FROM BIRMINGHAM HOSPITAL SATURDAY FUND

The Birmingham Assay Office was recently presented with a commemorative crystal goblet at an Awards luncheon given by the BHSF in recognition of its long association with the organisation over the last 125 years.

BHSF is a market-leading not-for-profit health insurer which traces its

history back to 1873 when the Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund was first set up to help fund Birmingham hospitals.

Today the BHSF insures 400,000 people, helping with their everyday health costs that do not come free through the NHS.

Michael Allchin, Chief Executive and Assay Master is pictured here receiving the commemorative goblet from Dr Paul Kanas, Chairman of the BHSF.



ECONOMIC CLIMATE HITS HALLMARKING FIGURES

The downturn in the number of articles hallmarked in the four UK Assay Offices continued in the last Quarter of 2008, accelerated by unpredictable precious metal prices and growing economic uncertainty.

In the last Quarter Gold articles were down a massive 42%, Silver 18% and Platinum 20%, representing a reduction of nearly 3 million articles in the period. This left total articles hallmarked during 2008 at 19 million, 6.4 million, (25%) down on last year and the lowest annual total since 1992.

After five years of figures above 30m from 2000 to 2004 this is an extraordinary drop most of which is accounted for by gold, and particularly 9ct gold, while silver has grown its market share and is still performing relatively strongly. ■

Work dealt with by the Assay Offices of Great Britain, for the Quarter October - December 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	2,712,108 -43.6%	29,980 -58.3%	399,913 -32.7%	74,741 -36.0%	33 1550%	214 -22.7%	3,216,989 -42.5%	116 -81.0%	2,572,394 -17.8%	2,487 18.3%	2,324 -34.8%	2,577,321 -17.8%	0 0%	390 42.3%	64,105 -20.5%	392 1206.7%	64,887 -19.8%
WEIGHT OF ARTICLES Gold & Platinum (g) Silver (Kg)	10,055,656 -42.2%	156,688 -64.5%	2,419,205 -33.8%	691,009 -31.8%	1,554 2675%	3,204 -51.6%	13,327,316 -40.8%	6 -45.9%	39,250 -20.1%	223 47.1%	87 -80.1%	39,566 -20.5%	0 0%	2,217 -21.4%	593,224 -16.6%	5,549 2422.3%	600,990 -15.9%

For the Year 2008	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	8,489,577 -36.0%	125,327 -29.9%	1,442,487 -23.6%	379,828 -30.1%	55 -68%	781 -37.4%	10,438,055 -34.2%	717 -35.6%	8,309,513 -9.5%	9,362 78.1%	7,988 -1.1%	8,327,580 -9.4%	57 714.3%	1,198 12.8%	276,930 -18.9%	429 146.6%	278,614 -18.7%
WEIGHT OF ARTICLES Gold & Platinum (g) Silver (Kg)	32,055,117 -34.9%	717,105 -52.4%	9,139,957 -23.1%	3,452,785 -30.3%	4,242 244%	11,440 -49.2%	45,380,646 -32.9%	17 -90.5%	134,016 -14.8%	671 37.5%	823 -66.7%	135,527 -15.5%	280 -27.1%	7,550 -27.9%	2,512,360 -14.0%	5,788 435.9%	2,525,978 -13.9%