

SUMMER 2009

## CRACKDOWN BY TRADING STANDARDS

**V**isits by Birmingham Trading Standards Officers to retail jewellers in March resulted in a spate of enquiries being received by The Birmingham Assay Office as jewellers were reminded of their obligation to ensure that all precious metal articles are hallmarked and Dealers Notices are displayed in-store.

The Birmingham Assay Office co-operated with the project by offering help and advice to retail jewellers and by distributing leaflets warning of the crackdown to the local trade, resulting in several new customer registrations.

Despite these efforts, follow up calls by Trading Standards in June revealed that not all retailers had responded and hundreds of items were seized and delivered to The Birmingham Assay Office for checking and subsequent hallmarking - if they proved to be of the correct fineness. This project is ongoing and more articles are expected.

Consumer enquiries about the quality of jewellery are on the increase and, while the vast majority of traders in the jewellery business are totally honest, a number of fraudulent sales have been investigated. Heavy gold plating over base metals is always difficult to spot without sophisticated equipment and The Laboratory has been involved in several cases where a plated article has been mis-sold as 18ct or 22ct gold.

Michael Allchin, Chief Executive and Assay Master said: "We are very pleased with the action taken



by our local TSO's. The jewellery trade is having a very difficult time at the moment and consumer confidence is crucial to its survival.

"As precious metal prices rise, the money that could be made from under-carating is significant and it is even more vital that the UK hallmarking legislation is properly enforced."

Birmingham also led another successful campaign recently to ensure that an advertisement by the "Tru Diamonds" brand for Cubic Zirconia or "CZ" was reworded, because it was felt that the original promotion was extremely misleading in the way it compared diamond and CZ prices.

## THE GREAT DEBATE 2009



Following the success of the Great Debate during the last two years, The Birmingham Assay Office will once again be staging the event at the International London Jewellery Show, in partnership with Reed Exhibitions.



Previous debates on important ethical issues for the trade have proved worthwhile and entertaining and have concluded that the jewellery trade should be more ethically responsible.

Now the question is how to achieve this goal. Building on previous discussions, this year's theme is "Working together to deliver an ethically responsible supply chain". The event will take the form of a "round the table" discussion, giving all those present an opportunity to have their say. Potential participants are encouraged to attend to exchange views and share experiences and problems. The event takes place at 4.30pm on Monday, September 7 at Earls Court 2. Places are very limited so if you would like to participate, please contact [gem@theassayoffice](mailto:gem@theassayoffice) to book your place.

## FURTHER DELAYS TO PALLADIUM HALLMARK

The Palladium legislation is still awaiting ratification by Parliament and the frustration continues at all levels of the UK jewellery supply chain.



There are already tens of thousands of pieces of un-hallmarked Palladium on the market in the UK and many companies are in limbo, unwilling to commit to volumes of Palladium articles which would subsequently have to be recalled for hallmarking.

The British Hallmarking Council and the Assay

Offices are pressuring the Government to push the legislation through but there is still no certainty that the required amendments to the Hallmarking Act will be approved before the end of the summer recess.



The delay is due to a technical glitch in the drafting of the amendment as opposed to any opposition to its content. A possible date for the introduction of voluntary hallmarking for Palladium is now August 23, but this is still provisional. It is expected that the mark will become compulsory in January 2010 but until the legislation goes through The Assay Offices cannot strike the mark.

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# HALLMARKING

## BRITISH SILVER WEEK 2009

**B**ritish Silver Week 2009 was launched at Goldsmiths Hall on June 2 with a private view for Patrons and Sponsors of the work of over 100 participating silversmiths.

British Silver Week 09 aims to promote contemporary British silversmithing to an even wider audience at over 20 events in galleries and specialist shops across the UK.

In addition, there will be a major, month long, British Silver Week exhibition at Chatsworth House, home of silver collector and connoisseur, the Duke of Devonshire.

The exhibition tells the story of British silversmithing since the 1950s and includes sample pieces from the Pearson Collection, one of Britain's largest private collections of modern silver. The centrepiece will be individual signature pieces by 12 of the UK's finest contemporary silversmiths, and the show will also feature the Pangolin collection of fine art sculptures in silver, which demonstrate how far silversmithing has progressed.



Example of work by  
Clare Pardoe

Example of work by  
Theresa Nguyen



The Birmingham Assay Office is pleased to support British Silver Week again this year by sponsoring the participation of three talented silversmiths - Shona Marsh, Theresa Nguyen and Clare Pardo.

Clare Pardoe and Becca Williams, both Birmingham Silversmiths, also took part in a 'Meet the Silversmiths' event at the RBSA Gallery on June 13 when they gave talks about various aspects of silversmithing. For full details about British Silver Week visit [www.britishsilverweek.co.uk](http://www.britishsilverweek.co.uk)

**BRITISH SILVER WEEK 2009**

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL OF JEWELLERY

### SIMON PATTISON

The Birmingham Assay Office's current MA student, Simon Pattison recently became the first winner of the National FREVD Open Design Competition. Another design by Simon took third place. FREVD Ltd is a design house established in 1986 to produce objects of the highest quality for use in the home.



Both successful designs will be put into production, with Simon receiving a royalty from each item sold. The winning entries are a set of candlesticks and tumbler bowls which Simon has been developing as part of his MA course.

## SHOWCASE

*Helen Hulston*  
CONTEMPORARY JEWELLERY AND GIFTWARE

Students from the Design for Industry Course at the School of Jewellery recently showcased their latest creations at Helen Hulston, an independent jewellery outlet in Birmingham's Great Western Arcade.



This latest collection of work has been created using laser technology, which offers designers exciting new opportunities. The students used the laser marking facilities at The Birmingham Assay Office to create pattern within their pieces of jewellery.

## CELEBRATING BIRMINGHAM'S GEM

Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter Festival took place on Saturday, July 4th when 'Matthew Boulton' was once again seen walking round St Paul's Square.

The festival included a Jewellers Market in St Paul's Square - where staff from The Birmingham Assay Office manned a stall selling small Sterling silver gift items - a '24 Carrot' Farmers Market, and live music, ranging from Jazz to Classical, throughout the day.

Smooth Radio sponsored a Matthew Boulton-themed treasure hunt, with a £1000 prize on offer, and the Museums and Galleries in the area all ran events.



Matthew Boulton with Marion Wilson, Toni Collins and Sophie Whitehouse

## SPOTLIGHT

JN  
JAMES NEWMAN

INDEPENDENT  
CONTEMPORARY JEWELLER

James Newman is one of the UK's leading contemporary jewellery designers and his collections are exhibited throughout the UK at design-led shops and galleries. All his designs are original and the materials used are ethically sourced.

A graduate of the Birmingham School of Jewellery, he is renowned for innovative design, attention to detail and superior craftsmanship. All his jewellery is designed and hand-made at his Birmingham workshop, and James is proud to have built a highly skilled team of craftsmen who contribute their expertise to ensure that all work is made to the highest of standards.

Such is his success that James has recently been commissioned by a leading Milan Fashion House to design and produce a range of jewellery, further building his reputation within Europe as well as the UK.

His current collection can be viewed at his impressive gallery and adjoining workshop located in Vyse Street in the heart of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.



## SPECIAL AWARD WINNER

The Birmingham Assay Office was pleased to sponsor a Special Award again this year at the School of Jewellery's Annual Prize Giving Ceremony to Students. The Award was presented to Sinade Prosser, a BA student who exhibited a range of beautifully designed work including a necklet, pendant and ring. Sinade says her aim is to combine creativity with commercial awareness and to promote good design through fashionable, functional and aesthetic pieces.



## BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN THE DIAMOND MARKET

**M**aintaining confidence and trust in diamond products is particularly important in the current economic climate, but the prevalence of synthetic and treated stones makes this more of a challenge than ever.

Synthetic diamonds have the same chemical composition as natural diamonds but are created by high-tech equipment rather than by nature. Synthetic stones and those that have been enhanced by treatments are perfectly legitimate, but customers should be told exactly what they are buying and pay the appropriate price.

The internationally recognised CIBJO Diamond 'Blue Book' sets out which treatments must be disclosed. However, reaching agreement on the terminology to be used with regard to synthetic diamonds is proving more difficult.

The subject was a major point of discussion at the recent CIBJO congress in Istanbul where CIBJO confirmed that it considers 'synthetic' the most appropriate terminology. However, in June the International Diamond Council (IDC) declared that, under its recently updated rules, vendors can choose between the terms 'laboratory-created', 'laboratory-grown' and 'synthetic' to describe a diamond which is not natural. Doubtless, the debate will run and run.



Whatever nomenclature is finally agreed, the important factor is that the synthetic and treated stones are identified and openly declared. Transparency is key to maintaining a stable market.

AnchorCert offers the high-tech facilities, the expertise and the competence to identify synthetic and treated stones. AnchorCert reports clearly state when a stone is not natural, but still provide a grading for colour and clarity, enabling customers to understand exactly what they are paying for.



## MORE DEMAND FOR DIAMOND TRAINING

There is increasing pressure for retail jewellery staff to capture every potential sale and to 'sell up' wherever possible. This requires experience, knowledge and, most of all, the confidence to reassure the customer that they are making a good choice.

Although there is a huge selection of diamond jewellery available on the internet, many customers still prefer to go into a store because they need personal advice and guidance in making their choice.

If staff are to provide this guidance, training is increasingly important and AnchorCert regularly receives requests for diamond training from retailers and, as a result now offers a range of courses.

The most popular course is designed to help sales staff appreciate the benefits a diamond certificate

gives to a stone or piece of jewellery. Several retailers have already proved the value of this course in terms of increased sales.

AnchorCert has also been asked to provide training for those working in the quality assurance sector of the industry. This course provides experienced operators with a deeper knowledge of what to look for when assessing an item for quality.

For more information about any training courses please contact [gem@theassayoffice.co.uk](mailto:gem@theassayoffice.co.uk).



## TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT THE ANCHORCERT WEBSITE

The website for the AnchorCert Independent Diamond and Gemstone Certification service has been refreshed. Developed to help both consumers looking for general gemstone information and retailers wishing to use the UKAS accredited Certification service the site now contains an expanded range of reports.

In just a few clicks you can find exactly what you are looking for, and you can now have the specific information in which you are interested emailed directly to you.

You can also watch a clip of Senior Gemmologist, Anu Manchanda, giving a brief explanation of the '4 C's' which should be understood by anyone thinking of making a diamond purchase.

[www.anchorcert.co.uk](http://www.anchorcert.co.uk)



Bonhams <sup>1793</sup>

## ANCHORCERT AND THE BELLE EPOQUE PENDANT

A beautiful, AnchorCert certified, Belle Epoque pearl and diamond pendant, circa 1905, was sold at a recent Bonhams Fine Jewellery Sale for £57,600. Bonhams were delighted with the result.

The AnchorCert Certificate stated that the pear shaped diamond was "J Colour, VS2 Clarity and a type IIA, untreated stone". An additional AnchorCert Report stated that both the pearls were found to be natural, with no evidence of treatment.

The independent verification and certification of fine jewellery items by AnchorCert is proving its worth commercially. It provides reassurance to purchasers of the quality of the items being sold at auction, helping to achieve the higher end of the price guide.

AnchorCert is the only UK based laboratory to be UKAS accredited to ISO 17025. The service is available for both loose and mounted diamonds. As a UK-based laboratory, the services can be provided in a very timely and cost effective manner.

For more information please call Tel: 0871 423 7922 or email: [gem@theassayoffice.co.uk](mailto:gem@theassayoffice.co.uk)



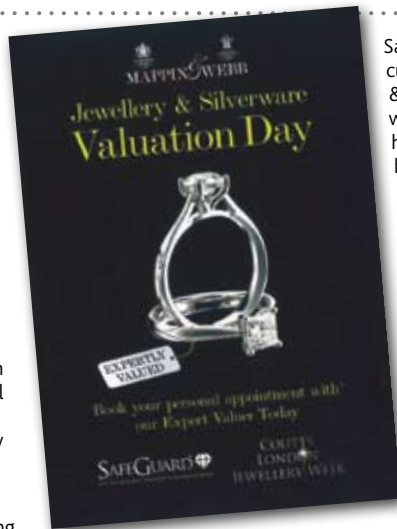


## SAFE GUARD AT COUTTS LONDON JEWELLERY WEEK

**S**afeGuard was amongst the many jewellery businesses that celebrated the rich variety of talent the industry has to offer during the Coutts London Jewellery Week.

After a lively Champagne Launch from the dizzying heights of London's Millbank Tower, the week included workshops, seminars, and open studio days throughout central London, and finished with a weekend event involving many Hatton Garden businesses.

TV slots provided by QVC supported the event by profiling some talented young designers and demonstrating the high standard of creativity and workmanship which the UK still has to offer.



SafeGuard ran two successful customer events at Mappin & Webb Regent Street, where customers not only had their jewellery valued but also learned a lot about its provenance and hallmarks from Senior Valuer Craig O'Donnell.

"These were Safeguard events with a difference," said Craig. "It was great to be able to spend extra time chatting to customers and discussing some of the more unusual pieces of jewellery at length."

"All the customers seemed to enjoy the experience and the Mappin & Webb staff worked hard to make the whole day a really good experience for their customers."



Craig O'Donnell with visitors to the event.

## NAG AT THE ASSAY OFFICE

The Birmingham Assay Office was delighted to host a meeting of the NAG Valuers Committee recently. For many committee members it was their first visit to the Office and they took the opportunity to tour all four divisions of the operation after the meeting.

"We were dazzled by the sophistication of the Assay process" said NAG vice chairman David Callaghan. The group was also very impressed with the SafeGuard valuation process and with AnchorCert's gem testing laboratory and equipment.

The Birmingham Assay Office is pleased to support the new Institute of Registered Valuers and is already planning workshops and a major presentation for the Annual Loughborough Conference in September.



The National Association of Goldsmiths  
Representing Jewellery Retailers since 1894

## IN HOUSE VALUATIONS PROVING POPULAR

Following increased demand from customers who want to have their items valued 'on the spot' without having to part with them for even a short time, SafeGuard is now running Jewellery Valuation Days at The Birmingham Assay Office on a regular, monthly basis.

This premium service enables customers to enjoy an exclusive, face to face session with the valuer in the "Wardens Sitting Room" – fondly known as the "Orient Express" - at the Victorian building on Newhall Street, Birmingham.

Once valuations are completed, the documents are prepared and are ready to collect within an hour and the service is beginning to attract people from further afield as word spreads.



Kelly Fisher, the SafeGuard Marketing Coordinator who hosts the events, is delighted with the response so far. "Customers love the whole service," she said. "After their items have been valued they can wander round the Jewellery Quarter, the City Centre or one of the Boulton 2009 exhibitions and when they come back their valuation documents are all ready. People are making a day out of it and bringing their friends and partners with them."

Event days are strictly by appointment only. Forthcoming dates are July 27, August 24, September 28 and October 26. Please call 0871 423 7922 or visit [www.safeguardvaluations.com](http://www.safeguardvaluations.com) for more information.

## HOULDEN GROUP BUYING MEETING

Following an initial brief appearance at the Scottish Gemmological Conference in May, the SafeGuard and AnchorCert "Roadshow" made its full debut at a Houlden Group Buying meeting in June.

Sales and Marketing Director Marion Wilson said the event provided an ideal opportunity to meet existing customers and their colleagues face to face.

"It provided a perfect platform to talk about our services," said Marion. "On a day to day basis people have little time to spare. At the Buying Event the whole atmosphere is more relaxed and attendees have time to chat and provide the feedback we need to help us improve our services to them."



# THE LABORATORY



## THE OLD GOLD RUSH GATHERS PACE

**T**he high price of gold continues to drive consumers to sell their scrap precious metal with the result that worldwide more gold was scrapped in the first quarter of 2009 than was made into jewellery.

Jewellers and pawnbrokers who buy gold from their customers need to turn it into cash, and the newly upgraded melting facility in The Laboratory is proving extremely popular for these traders.

The service, which offers all the reassurance and integrity expected from The Birmingham Assay Office, provides melting and assaying of clean scrap, lemls and sweeps containing gold, silver, platinum and palladium. There is a steady flow of scrap gold being turned into bars on a daily basis.

Account Manager Tim Smith said "As usual we want our service to be to the highest standard possible, and our new induction furnaces provide a rapid, efficient melting process. We also take dip samples for assay from the core of the molten metal while it is still in the furnace to ensure we obtain a homogenous sample.

"The Laboratory has no vested interest in the value of the metal and after assaying we provide independent, UKAS accredited Assay Reports. These are recognised internationally and will ensure a straightforward and transparent sale of the bar.



"All residues (slag/spillage etc.) and assay samples are returned to the customer, meaning they get, literally, every gram of their gold back."

## DIPPAL MANCHANDA FRSC



Technical Director Dippal Manchanda has been awarded the honour of becoming a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC).

The RSC is the highly respected professional body for chemical scientists. It aims to establish and maintain high standards of competence and professional practice, and members are required to meet rigorous ethical and professional behaviour requirements.

In order to become a Fellow, a Chemist must have at least five years experience in a position of authority, directing other professional chemists and making a real contribution to Chemical Science.

Many congratulations to Dippal, whose many successful research projects and innovative developments make this a well-deserved award. The only problem is that he now needs some bigger business cards – to make room for *Dippal Manchanda BSc MSc CSci CChem FRSC*.

## UPDATE ON LEAD

Lead still remains a hot topic, and The Laboratory has analysed many samples of jewellery, toys, and hair accessories recently.

There has been a resurgence in interest in lead in anticipation of a change to the American legislation. In August 2009 the regulations laid down by the US Consumer Protection Safety Commission (CPSC) will change, restricting lead content in children's products to 300ppm (parts per million) in any accessible part, instead of the current 600ppm.

After the change, any children's product that contains more than the new limit will be treated in the USA as a banned hazardous substance.

In the absence of any specific EU or UK lead regulations, except in the case of toys, the new US regulation will impact on the UK too. Although it is not legally enforceable in the UK, the US standard could be considered a reasonable

guide for lead content when establishing whether an article complies with the UK's General Product Safety Requirements. The amendment has implications for analysis too, as this level of accuracy can only be determined using a full reference method such as ICP.



Many customers continue to use the EN71-3 standard which tests for the release rather than the content of seven toxic elements. Compliance with EN71-3 is an EU requirement for toys, but many other products are tested by this method which ensures that if an item is sucked, chewed, or swallowed it will not release harmful levels of dangerous lead into the body.

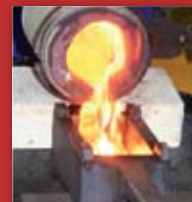
## THE MELTING PROCESS

Upon receipt precious material is carefully weighed using calibrated balances accurate to 0.1 gram. All information is carefully recorded.

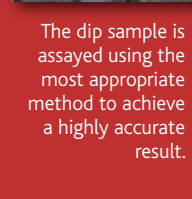


Scrap is melted in an induction furnace and sampled in a molten condition using vacuum sealed glass tubes.

Two samples are taken - one for assay and another for future reference if required.



The molten metal is poured into a mould and cooled rapidly to prevent segregation.



The dip sample is assayed using the most appropriate method to achieve a highly accurate result.

Assay results are presented on a certificate from The Laboratory at The Birmingham Assay Office.

The bar is weighed to complete the process and the unique Assay Certificate number is stamped on the bar.

## AT THE SEASIDE WITH TRADING STANDARDS

The Trading Standards Institute held its Annual Conference in Brighton, a favourite venue for organisers and delegates, in June.



Assay Master Michael Allchin attended the conference as a delegate while Marketing Director Marion Wilson attended the finals of the Consumer Challenge Quiz, organised for the eleventh year by Birmingham City Council. The Quiz gives children with special needs a great opportunity to increase their confidence and independence and The Birmingham Assay Office were happy to sponsor this event once again.

The conference is a wonderful occasion to meet Trading Standards Officers from all over the UK in relaxed surroundings to discuss all the topical issues.



# MEET THE TEAM



## MATTHEW BOULTON DAY STAFF BECOME A BIRMINGHAM TOURIST ATTRACTION

**S**taff from The Birmingham Assay Office became a city centre tourist attraction when, dressed in 18th Century fashions, they celebrated the life, work and legacy of Matthew Boulton, the greatest industrial pioneer of the 18th century.

The occasion was *Matthew Boulton Day* which took place in front of The Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery in the city centre at the end of May.

Matthew Boulton, a true gentleman of Birmingham, was responsible, amongst a great many things, for the establishment of The Birmingham Assay Office and, of all the enterprises with which Boulton was involved, the Assay Office is the only one that still survives today.

The Birmingham Assay Office staff, dressed in 18th Century costumes, became quite a tourist attraction. Families vied to have their photo taken with such charming ladies...

The curator of the Birmingham Assay Office, Sally Baggott, also held fun family workshops during the day explaining the history and the importance of Hallmarking. Matthew Boulton and his partner James Watt also put in an appearance.....

Staff who dressed for the event included Sophie Whitehouse, Sally Baggott, Olivia Turner and Penny J. Parkes.



## 50 YEARS COMBINED SERVICE



Julie Burns and Anne McNaughton

Two members of The Birmingham Assay Office team have recently completed 25 years service each.

Hallmarking Supervisor Julie Burns reached her quarter of a Century milestone on April 9, followed closely by Sampling Department Supervisor Anne McNaughton, who completed her 25 years on April 30.

Julie and Anne are dedicated and committed members of the team and warmest congratulations are extended to them both on reaching their combined 'silver anniversary' with The Birmingham Assay Office.

## ASSAY OFFICE 'ATHLETES' TO SUPPORT CHARITIES

July will be a big month for the finely-honed athletes of The Birmingham Assay Office when they will don running shoes and football boots to aid charitable causes.

Female staff members, both past and present, will line up for the 5 km 'Race for Life' at Sutton Park to help raise much needed funds for the fight against cancer.

Participants will include Sophie Whitehouse, Olivia Turner, Tina Watts, Pam Bannister and daughter, Karen Kempson, Sandra Scott, Toni Collins, Jacqui Eady and Mary McShane. Dave Logan's wife and daughters will also take part.

Another finely-honed team from The Birmingham Assay Office, cheered on by a group of glamorous WAGS, will also take part in the annual BJGF 5-a-side soccer tournament at the Goals Soccer Centre in Birmingham. The team, which has skills to rival those of the three local PREMIERSHIP sides (Birmingham City, Aston Villa and Wolverhampton Wanderers), will include Dan Perdue, Luke Abbey, Chris Bickley, Walter Fletcher and Alex Gribble.

## GREEN FINGERS AT ST PAULS

Green fingered volunteers from The Birmingham Assay Office, under the watchful supervision of experienced gardeners from Birmingham City Council, recently gave up their own time to plant up the wonderful containers which line St Paul's Churchyard in St Paul's Square.

The planting - some in the form of the world-famous Anchor symbol, Hallmark of The Birmingham Assay Office - should have developed in good time for the 'In Bloom' judging in July.

The volunteers from The Birmingham Assay Office included Olivia Turner, Sophie Whitehouse, Penny J. Parkes, Debbie Tillison, Toni Collins, Tim Smith, Michael Evans, Ian Hodges and Ian Bayley.

Please come down to St Pauls Square, in the jewellery quarter to admire their handiwork in full bloom.



# HISTORY & HERITAGE



## BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS BOULTON TO BE FETED ON THE 'FIFTY'

To mark his bicentenary celebrations, images of Matthew Boulton and James Watt, his partner in the steam engine business, are to be featured on a new £50 note.

The bicentenary celebrations actually got underway in style on May 7 with the private view of the exhibition *Matthew Boulton and The Art*



*of Making Money* which is being staged at the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham.

The exhibition, which explores how Matthew Boulton briefly made Birmingham the art capital of the world by minting millions of coins, medals and tokens at the Soho Mint, contains over 100 objects on loan from The Birmingham Assay Office Collections. It will run until May 2010.

This was followed, on May 29, with the private view of another exhibition - *Matthew Boulton: Selling What All The World Desires* - which is being staged in the Gas Hall at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. Special Guest was Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England, and to prolonged applause and loud cheers, he announced that the new £50 note will feature the images of Boulton and James Watt against a backdrop of Boulton's Soho Manufactory.

The official opening of this exhibition was marked the following day with celebrations in Chamberlain Square when staff from The Birmingham Assay Office dressed in the fashions

of 1773, the year when, due to Boulton's efforts, the Assay Office first opened its doors.

Although dressed in 18th century costume, the staff were on hand to promote the services the Assay Office provides in the 21st century, and Dr. Sally Baggott, the Curator at The Birmingham Assay Office, underscored this with a family workshop on Hallmarking. The free entry exhibition will run until September 27.

On June 6, Sally gave another talk in a particularly significant location - St. Mary's Church, Handsworth, where both Boulton and Watt are buried. "It was a humbling experience," she said. "It made him seem so much more real to me, and made me extremely proud that The Birmingham Assay Office can claim such a great man as its founder."



## SILVER VISITS GO GOLD...AND PLATINUM!

Due to the increasing popularity of The Birmingham Assay Office Silver Visits, an extended range is now being offered under the banners of Gold Visits and Platinum Visits.

During a standard Silver Visit, the history of Hallmarking is explained; visitors hear the fascinating story of how Matthew Boulton overcame opposition from London to establish an Assay Office in Birmingham; and are told what the Birmingham Assay Office does in the 21st century. They also get the opportunity to view the spectacular Silver Collection and the Library.

The new Gold Visit offers everything the popular standard visit has plus a hands-on session with silver objects from the collection. Visitors also receive a free guide to the Silver Collection.

The new Platinum Visit includes all the above plus a bespoke presentation, tailored to meet the specific interests of the group. Subjects range from Matthew Boulton, through the Arts and Crafts Movement to Birmingham Toys.

For further details contact The Birmingham Assay Office Tel: 0871 871 6020  
Email: [silver@theassayoffice.co.uk](mailto:silver@theassayoffice.co.uk)



## BIRMINGHAM'S JEWELLERY QUARTER IS UNIQUE

On June 12th, experts on the Jewellery Quarter met at The Birmingham Assay Office to discuss the bid for World Heritage Site Status. There was a consensus that there is nowhere quite like Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter in the world, and Birmingham City Council will await guidance from Central Government in September before beginning work on the bid for World Heritage Site status.

Watch this space and we will keep you updated...

## THE STORY OF THE JEWELLERY QUARTER

The new galleries at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter were officially opened on April 23, when Assay Master and Chief Executive, Michael Allchin, together with Councillors Ray Hassall and Neville Summerfield, addressed the audience.

The new first-floor galleries are home to a permanent exhibition entitled *The Story of The Jewellery Quarter*. Objects on loan from The Birmingham Assay Office Silver Collection, including a pair of pistols, bearing Hallmarks for 1773, the year the Assay Office opened, and two pairs of candlesticks by Matthew Boulton from 1783 and 1807 are featured in the exhibition.

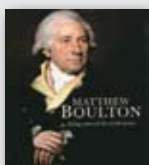
## BIRMINGHAM'S SPECTACULAR HERITAGE

Included with this issue of The Anchor is information about Birmingham's magnificent heritage produced by The Birmingham Heritage Forum, a voluntary association of public and private groups and individuals interested in the heritage of Birmingham and its surroundings. Contact details for each member of the Forum are given on the poster or go to [www.birminghamheritage.org.uk](http://www.birminghamheritage.org.uk)

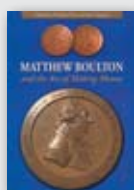


## BOULTON IN PRINT

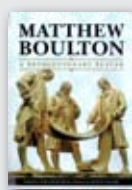
A series of books have been published as part of the Matthew Boulton bicentenary celebrations:



*Matthew Boulton: Selling What All the World Desires*  
Edited by Shena Mason and published by Yale University Press, USA



*Matthew Boulton and the Art of Making Money*  
Edited by Richard Clay and Sue Tungate and published by Brewin Books



*Matthew Boulton: Revolutionary Player*  
Edited by Malcolm Dick and published by Brewin Books



*Boulton Silver and Sheffield Plate*  
Seven Essays by Kenneth Quickenden, published by the Silver Society

These books will be available from The Birmingham Assay Office's online shop, which will be opening shortly. Please go to [www.theassayoffice.co.uk](http://www.theassayoffice.co.uk)



# INDUSTRY NEWS

## VICTORIAN ASSAY OFFICE STAFF MEET THE ROTARIANS

**T**he Birmingham Assay Office participated in the 100th Rotary International Convention, which took place at the NEC, Birmingham in June and brought over 20,000 people from 151 different countries to the city.

Assay Office staff, appropriately attired in Victorian costume, manned a stand in the Victorian-themed 'House of Friendship' at the NEC and promoted, with enormous success, products "Made and Hallmarked" in Birmingham's historic Jewellery Quarter.

Rotary International is a worldwide organisation of business leaders and professionals that provides humanitarian services, encourages high ethical standards in all vocations, and helps build goodwill and peace in the world. It has more than 1.2million members in 200 different countries.

It was wonderful to have so many people gather in Birmingham during such challenging times. It was a real opportunity to showcase all that the City of Birmingham has to offer and for The Birmingham Assay Office to promote both the Jewellery Quarter and its own internationally renowned expertise in the jewellery and precious metals industries.

The Birmingham Assay Office was also keen to promote its heritage to the Rotarians, as this year marks the Bicentenary of its founder, Matthew Boulton - the most important industrial pioneer

of the 18th century and a celebrated silversmith and encouraged the Rotarians to visit the stunning exhibition "Matthew Boulton: Selling what all the world desires" at the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.



## SUPPORT FOR CENTREPIECE 2009



The Birmingham Assay Office has agreed to sponsor Centrepiece 2009, the selling exhibition which provides the public with a superb opportunity to seek out the perfect gift or individual commission.

The event is to be held in two prestigious locations in Birmingham - Symphony Hall and the Town Hall. It starts with a Private View on Wednesday, November 18 and will run until the end of December.

Centrepiece brings together a group of talented contemporary jewellery designers and silversmiths and provides a platform to showcase the group's combined talent and creativity.

"The support we have received from The Birmingham Assay Office since the conception of Centrepiece 12 years ago is hugely appreciated by the participating designers," said Kathrine Campell-Legg, Centrepiece Co-Ordinator.



## A FULL SET OF AGMS!



It has been the season for Annual General Meetings, and Assay Master Michael Allchin and Sales and Marketing Director Marion Wilson have delivered presentations to

The Giftware Association, the Jewellery Distributors Association and the Company of Master Jewellers Conference.

Representatives of The Birmingham Assay Office have also attended the Annual General Meetings of the National Association of Goldsmiths, the British Jewellers Association, the British Jewellery and Giftware and Finishing Federation and the Responsible Jewellery Council.

In difficult times fellowship and support is even more important and, in the main, these events have been very well-attended. Trade organisations are launching new projects such as the NAG's SafeGems initiative to combat security risks and the Giftware Association announced a significant increase in membership as businesses look for the benefits and advice a trade organisation can offer.

## CIBJO ANNUAL CONGRESS 2009



The Annual CIBJO Congress in Istanbul continued to pursue its overall theme of furthering corporate social responsibility within the jewellery industry, with a view to delivering the eight UN Millennium Development goals.

The Precious Metals Commission agreed to adopt changes to the CIBJO Blue Book with regard to coatings. After intensive work from members of the Precious Metals Working Group, headed by Michael Allchin, the proposed amendments were accepted. The rules now permit manufacturers to use a wider range of coatings and interlayers to achieve new design features and enhanced resistance to wear and tarnishing.

## NO RESPITE IN FALLING MARKET

The downward trend in the number of units submitted for hallmarking to the four UK Assay Offices continued during the quarter ended June 2009. The total number of articles hallmarking

was down by 19% to 3,371,020 articles. The hardest hit category was 9ct gold which has fallen by 38.7% but Silver has remained strong, with the same numbers as last year.

Work dealt with by the Assay Offices of Great Britain, for the Quarter April - June 2009	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	1,080,906 -38.7%	25,876 -11.0%	285,772 -22.3%	98,492 -12.9%	7 -65.0%	289 30.8%	1,491,342 -34.4%	82 49.1%	1,810,161 0.1%	2,057 7.6%	1,949 1.0%	1,814,249 0.1%	6 100%	73 -84.4%	65,306 -12.2%	44 528.6%	65,429 -12.6%
WEIGHT OF ARTICLES Gold & Platinum (g) Silver (kg)	4,173,155 -38.5%	163,820 -4.2%	1,860,557 -23.3%	867,599 -14.3%	156 -59.2%	4,785 41.7%	7,070,072 -32.0%	0 -100%	28,734 -3.5%	139 21.6%	221 34.6%	29,094 -3.2%	34 240%	528 -83.2%	629,621 -6.6%	888 2065.9%	631,071 -6.8%