



BRITISH HALLMARKS



**The Assay Office
Newhall Street
Birmingham, 3
England**

Birmingham, the geographical centre of England and the very heart of Britain's jewellery industry, possesses the biggest and busiest Assay Office in the world. Into this Office and into the hands of Assay-Master Hamil Westwood arrives a regular flow of letters from all parts of the world—letters which ask for information about the origin of hallmarks found on articles of gold and silver.

To enable you to check for yourself the authenticity of the hallmarks on gold and silver wares you buy or have inherited or otherwise acquired, this booklet is offered as a guide and safeguard.

But in case of doubt, and for any further information about British hallmarked gold or silver articles write to the Assay-Master at the above address.

In Britain the hallmarking of gold and silver articles is one of the most important forms of consumer protection that exists today.

A Hallmark is a certification mark struck on an article of gold or silver after it has been officially tested for fineness or quality. Four qualities of gold (9 carat, 14 carat, 18 carat and 22 carat) are thus marked and two qualities of silver (Sterling and Britannia).

666 years ago, in the year 1300, the system of hallmarking was instituted in England by an Act of Parliament. Today the British Hallmark still stands as a symbol of integrity and is so accepted in every part of the world.

A Hallmark consists of four symbols or marks and opposite you will see illustrations of these. Memorise these marks or take this booklet with you when you go shopping.

A COMPLETE HALLMARK LOOKS LIKE THIS



Maker's Mark



Standard Mark



Assay
Office
Mark



Date
Letter

WHAT THE MARKS MEAN

THE QUALITY OR STANDARD MARK FOR GOLD

This certifies the quality of the gold as required by law. Some British makers have a practice of using more precious metal than is indicated by the Mark to ensure that the article will not fail to pass the tests.

Gold is alloyed with other metals such as copper, silver or nickel to toughen and strengthen it. Gold can be of various shades of colour:—yellow, red, brown, and even white or green according to the metals mixed or alloyed with it.

A Gold Carat is not a weight, it is a proportion. One carat is one twentyfourth ($1/24$). Thus 22 carat gold is made up of 22 parts of gold and 2 of alloy. 18 carat gold has 18 parts of gold and 6 of alloy. 14 carat gold has 14 parts of gold and 10 of alloy. 9 carat gold has 9 parts of gold and 15 of alloy.

In 1300 in the reign of Edward 1st when hall-marking began gold articles had to be of 19 carat gold quality. In 1477 this was changed to 18 carat. In 1575 the quality was raised to 22 carat and this standard has remained ever since. 18 carat was re-introduced as an additional standard in 1798 and in 1854 three additional qualities 15 carat, 12 carat and 9 carat were legalised. The next and last change was in 1932 when the 15 carat and 12 carat standards were dropped and 14 carat was substituted for them.



22 CARAT



18 CARAT



14 CARAT



9 CARAT



THE QUALITY MARK FOR STERLING SILVER

The Lion Passant is the ancient and well-known quality mark for Sterling Silver at all English Assay Offices. It has been struck on English silverware since 1544. In Scotland the equivalent mark used by the Edinburgh Assay Office is the Thistle. This symbol was adopted in 1759. Sterling silver contains 92.5% silver and 7.5% alloy.



THE QUALITY MARK FOR BRITANNIA SILVER

In 1696 so much coin was being converted into silverware that the trade of the country began to be disrupted. The coinage was of course of sterling quality. Accordingly an Act of Parliament was passed which raised the standard of silver articles from 92.5% (Sterling) to 95.84% (Britannia) and this effectively checked the melting of silver coin.

The symbol for this higher standard of silver was and still is the figure of Britannia similar to the one used on Victorian pennies. In 1720 the Sterling standard was restored but the Britannia standard continued and is still occasionally used for making silver articles.



Birmingham



Edinburgh

London
Sterling
silver
& goldSheffield
silverLondon
Britannia
silverSheffield
gold

THE ASSAY OFFICE MARK

Also known as the Town Mark, it identifies the Assay Office at which the testing (or assaying) and hallmarking were done. There are now four Assay Offices in Great Britain at Birmingham, London, Sheffield and Edinburgh.

At one time there were Assay Offices also at Chester, Glasgow, York, Newcastle, Bristol, Exeter and Norwich.



1966-67
(Birmingham)

THE DATE LETTER

A letter of the alphabet denotes the year in which the article was hallmarked. The letter is changed annually and in combination with a series of shields in different designs can be readily identified.

A table of date letters from 1773 for each Assay Office is given at the end of this book.



THE MAKER'S MARK

All makers of gold and silver articles in Great Britain are obliged to register their mark at an Assay Office. This mark must consist of the initials of the maker of the piece or of the firm responsible for causing it to be made.

It is thus possible to identify the maker of any particular piece by referring to the register at the appropriate Assay Office.

GOLD AND SILVER ARTICLES IMPORTED INTO GREAT BRITAIN

These have the following Assay Office Marks:—



Birmingham



London



Sheffield



Edinburgh

and the following quality Marks:—

GOLD



SILVER



EXAMPLES OF CURRENT HALLMARKS AND THE STORIES THEY TELL

Sterling Silver made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Birmingham during the year 1966/67



Sterling Silver made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Sheffield during the year 1966/67



Sterling Silver made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in London during the year 1965/66



Britannia Silver made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Birmingham during the year 1966/67



Britannia Silver made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in London during the year 1965/66



9 carat gold made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Birmingham during the year 1966/67



14 carat gold made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Birmingham during the year 1965/67



18 carat gold made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Birmingham during the year 1966/67



22 carat gold made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Birmingham during the year 1966/67



9 carat gold made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Edinburgh during the year 1965/66



18 carat gold made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in London during the year 1965/66



22 carat gold made in United Kingdom by XYZ and marked in Sheffield during the year 1966/67



Birmingham

A 1773 - 4
 B 1774 - 5
 C 1775 - 6
 D 1776 - 7
 E 1777 - 8
 F 1778 - 9
 G 1779 - 0
 H 1780 - 1
 I 1781 - 2
 K 1782 - 3
 L 1783 - 4
 M 1784 - 5
 N 1785 - 6
 O 1786 - 7
 P 1787 - 8
 Q 1788 - 9
 R 1789 - 0
 S 1790 - 1
 T 1791 - 2
 U 1792 - 3
 V 1793 - 4
 W 1794 - 5
 X 1795 - 6
 Y 1796 - 7
 Z 1797 - 8
 a 1798 - 9
 b 1799 - 0
 c 1800 - 1
 d 1801 - 2
 e 1802 - 3
 f 1803 - 4
 g 1804 - 5
 h 1805 - 6

i 1806 - 7
 j 1807 - 8
 k 1808 - 9
 l 1809 - 0
 m 1810 - 1
 n 1811 - 2
 o 1812 - 3
 p 1813 - 4
 q 1814 - 5
 r 1815 - 6
 s 1816 - 7
 t 1817 - 8
 u 1818 - 9
 v 1819 - 0
 w 1820 - 1
 x 1821 - 2
 y 1822 - 3
 z 1823 - 4
 a 1824 - 5
 b 1825 - 6
 c 1826 - 7
 d 1827 - 8
 e 1828 - 9
 f 1829 - 0
 g 1830 - 1
 h 1831 - 2
 i 1832 - 3
 k 1833 - 4
 l 1834 - 5
 m 1835 - 6
 n 1836 - 7
 o 1837 - 8
 p 1838 - 9

q 1839 - 0
 r 1840 - 1
 s 1841 - 2
 t 1842 - 3
 u 1843 - 4
 v 1844 - 5
 w 1845 - 6
 x 1846 - 7
 y 1847 - 8
 z 1848 - 9
 A 1849 - 0
 B 1850 - 1
 C 1851 - 2
 D 1852 - 3
 E 1853 - 4
 F 1854 - 5
 G 1855 - 6
 H 1856 - 7
 I 1857 - 8
 J 1858 - 9
 K 1859 - 0
 L 1860 - 1
 M 1861 - 2
 N 1862 - 3
 O 1863 - 4
 P 1864 - 5
 Q 1865 - 6
 R 1866 - 7
 S 1867 - 8
 T 1868 - 9
 U 1869 - 0
 V 1870 - 1
 W 1871 - 2

X 1872 - 3
 Y 1873 - 4
 Z 1874 - 5
 a 1875 - 6
 b 1876 - 7
 c 1877 - 8
 d 1878 - 9
 e 1879 - 0
 f 1880 - 1
 g 1881 - 2
 h 1882 - 3
 i 1883 - 4
 k 1884 - 5
 l 1885 - 6
 m 1886 - 7
 n 1887 - 8
 o 1888 - 9
 p 1889 - 0
 q 1890 - 1
 r 1891 - 2
 s 1892 - 3
 t 1893 - 4
 u 1894 - 5
 v 1895 - 6
 w 1896 - 7
 x 1897 - 8
 y 1898 - 9
 z 1899 - 0
 a 1900 - 1
 b 1901 - 2
 c 1902 - 3
 d 1903 - 4
 e 1904 - 5

f 1905 - 6
 g 1906 - 7
 h 1907 - 8
 i 1908 - 9
 k 1909 - 0
 l 1910 - 1
 m 1911 - 2
 n 1912 - 3
 o 1913 - 4
 p 1914 - 5
 q 1915 - 6
 r 1916 - 7
 s 1917 - 8
 t 1918 - 9
 u 1919 - 0
 v 1920 - 1
 w 1921 - 2
 x 1922 - 3
 y 1923 - 4
 z 1924 - 5
 A 1925 - 6
 B 1926 - 7
 C 1927 - 8
 D 1928 - 9
 E 1929 - 0
 F 1930 - 1
 G 1931 - 2
 H 1932 - 3
 I 1933 - 4
 K 1934 - 5
 L 1935 - 6
 M 1936 - 7
 N 1937 - 8

DATE

O 1938 - 9
 P 1939 - 0
 Q 1940 - 1
 R 1941 - 2
 S 1942 - 3
 T 1943 - 4
 U 1944 - 5
 V 1945 - 6
 W 1946 - 7
 X 1947 - 8
 Y 1948 - 9
 Z 1949 - 0
 A 1950 - 1
 B 1951 - 2
 C 1952 - 3
 D 1953 - 4
 E 1954 - 5
 F 1955 - 6
 G 1956 - 7
 H 1957 - 8
 I 1958 - 9
 K 1959 - 60
 L 1960 - 1
 M 1961 - 2
 N 1962 - 3
 O 1963 - 4
 P 1964 - 5
 Q 1965 - 6
 R 1966 - 7

London

u 1774 - 5
 v 1775 - 6
 a 1776 - 7
 b 1777 - 8
 c 1778 - 9
 d 1779 - 0
 e 1780 - 1
 f 1781 - 2
 g 1782 - 3
 h 1783 - 4
 i 1784 - 5
 k 1785 - 6
 l 1786 - 7
 m 1787 - 8
 n 1788 - 9
 o 1789 - 0
 p 1790 - 1
 q 1791 - 2
 r 1792 - 3
 s 1793 - 4
 t 1794 - 5
 u 1795 - 6
 A 1796 - 7
 B 1797 - 8
 C 1798 - 9
 D 1799 - 0
 E 1800 - 1
 F 1801 - 2
 G 1802 - 3
 H 1803 - 4
 I 1804 - 5
 K 1805 - 6
 L 1806 - 7

M 1807 - 8
 N 1808 - 9
 O 1809 - 0
 P 1810 - 1
 Q 1811 - 2
 R 1812 - 3
 S 1813 - 4
 T 1814 - 5
 U 1815 - 6
 a 1816 - 7
 b 1817 - 8
 c 1818 - 9
 d 1819 - 0
 e 1820 - 1
 f 1821 - 2
 g 1822 - 3
 h 1823 - 4
 i 1824 - 5
 k 1825 - 6
 l 1826 - 7
 m 1827 - 8
 n 1828 - 9
 o 1829 - 0
 p 1830 - 1
 q 1831 - 2
 r 1832 - 3
 s 1833 - 4
 t 1834 - 5
 u 1835 - 6
 v 1836 - 7
 w 1837 - 8
 x 1838 - 9
 y 1839 - 0

e 1840 - 1
 f 1841 - 2
 g 1842 - 3
 h 1843 - 4
 i 1844 - 5
 k 1845 - 6
 l 1846 - 7
 m 1847 - 8
 n 1848 - 9
 o 1849 - 0
 p 1850 - 1
 q 1851 - 2
 r 1852 - 3
 s 1853 - 4
 t 1854 - 5
 u 1855 - 6
 v 1856 - 7
 w 1857 - 8
 x 1858 - 9
 y 1859 - 0
 z 1860 - 1
 A 1861 - 2
 B 1862 - 3
 C 1863 - 4
 D 1864 - 5
 E 1865 - 6
 F 1866 - 7
 G 1867 - 8
 H 1868 - 9
 I 1869 - 0
 K 1870 - 1
 L 1871 - 2
 M 1872 - 3

S 1873 - 4
 T 1874 - 5
 U 1875 - 6
 V 1876 - 7
 W 1877 - 8
 X 1878 - 9
 Y 1879 - 0
 Z 1880 - 1
 A 1881 - 2
 B 1882 - 3
 C 1883 - 4
 D 1884 - 5
 E 1885 - 6
 F 1886 - 7
 G 1887 - 8
 H 1888 - 9
 I 1889 - 0
 K 1890 - 1
 L 1891 - 2
 M 1892 - 3
 N 1893 - 4
 O 1894 - 5
 P 1895 - 6
 Q 1896 - 7
 R 1897 - 8
 S 1898 - 9
 T 1899 - 0
 U 1900 - 1
 V 1901 - 2
 W 1902 - 3
 X 1903 - 4
 Y 1904 - 5
 Z 1905 - 6

L 1906 - 7
 M 1907 - 8
 N 1908 - 9
 O 1909 - 0
 P 1910 - 1
 Q 1911 - 2
 R 1912 - 3
 S 1913 - 4
 T 1914 - 5
 U 1915 - 6
 V 1916 - 7
 W 1917 - 8
 X 1918 - 9
 Y 1919 - 0
 Z 1920 - 1
 A 1921 - 2
 B 1922 - 3
 C 1923 - 4
 D 1924 - 5
 E 1925 - 6
 F 1926 - 7
 G 1927 - 8
 H 1928 - 9
 I 1929 - 0
 K 1930 - 1
 L 1931 - 2
 M 1932 - 3
 N 1933 - 4
 O 1934 - 5
 P 1935 - 6
 Q 1936 - 7
 R 1937 - 8
 S 1938 - 9

D 1939 - 0
 E 1940 - 1
 F 1941 - 2
 G 1942 - 3
 H 1943 - 4
 I 1944 - 5
 K 1945 - 6
 L 1946 - 7
 M 1947 - 8
 N 1948 - 9
 O 1949 - 0
 P 1950 - 1
 Q 1951 - 2
 R 1952 - 3
 S 1953 - 4
 T 1954 - 5
 U 1955 - 6
 V 1956 - 7
 W 1957 - 8
 X 1958 - 9
 Y 1959 - 60
 Z 1960 - 1
 A 1961 - 2
 B 1962 - 3
 C 1963 - 4
 D 1964 - 5
 E 1965 - 6

LETTERS

W	1773-4
X	1774-5
Y	1775-6
Z	1776-7
A	1777-8
B	1778-9
C	1779-0
D	1780-1
E	1781-2
F	1782-3
G	1783-4
H	1784-5
I	1785-6
J	1786-7
K	1787-8
L	1788-9
M	1789-0
N	1790-1
O	1791-2
P	1792-3
Q	1793-4
R	1794-5
S	1795-6
T	1796-7
U	1797-8
V	1798-9
W	1800-1
X	1801-2
Y	1802-3
Z	1803-4
A	1804-5
B	1805-6

a	1806-7
b	1807-8
c	1808-9
d	1809-0
e	1810-1
f	1811-2
g	1812-3
h	1813-4
i	1814-5
j	1815-6
k	1816-7
l	1817-8
m	1818-9
n	1819-0
o	1820-1
p	1821-2
q	1822-3
r	1823-4
s	1824-5
t	1825-6
u	1826-7
v	1827-8
w	1828-9
x	1829-0
y	1830-1
z	1831-2
a	1832-3
b	1833-4
c	1834-5
d	1835-6
e	1836-7
f	1837-8
g	1838-9

h	1839-0
i	1840-1
k	1841-2
l	1842-3
m	1843-4
n	1844-5
o	1845-6
p	1846-7
q	1847-8
r	1848-9
s	1849-0
t	1850-1
u	1851-2
v	1852-3
w	1853-4
x	1854-5
y	1855-6
z	1856-7
a	1857-8
b	1858-9
c	1859-0
d	1860-1
e	1861-2
f	1862-3
g	1863-4
h	1864-5
i	1865-6
k	1866-7
l	1867-8
m	1868-9
n	1869-0
o	1870-1
p	1871-2

q	1872-3
r	1873-4
s	1874-5
t	1875-6
u	1876-7
v	1877-8
w	1878-9
x	1879-0
y	1880-1
z	1881-2
a	1882-3
b	1883-4
c	1884-5
d	1885-6
e	1886-7
f	1887-8
g	1888-9
h	1889-0
i	1890-1
k	1891-2
l	1892-3
m	1893-4
n	1894-5
o	1895-6
p	1896-7
q	1897-8
r	1898-9
s	1899-0
t	1900-1
u	1901-2
v	1902-3
w	1903-4
x	1904-5

j	1905-6
k	1906-7
l	1907-8
m	1908-9
n	1909-0
o	1910-1
p	1911-2
q	1912-3
r	1913-4
s	1914-5
t	1915-6
u	1916-7
v	1917-8
w	1918-9
x	1919-0
y	1920-1
z	1921-2
a	1922-3
b	1923-4
c	1924-5
d	1925-6
e	1926-7
f	1927-8
g	1928-9
h	1929-0
i	1930-1
k	1931-2
l	1932-3
m	1933-4
n	1934-5
o	1935-6
p	1936-7
q	1937-8

r	1938-9
s	1939-0
t	1940-1
u	1941-2
v	1942-3
w	1943-4
x	1944-5
y	1945-6
z	1946-7
a	1947-8
b	1948-9
c	1949-0
d	1950-1
e	1951-2
f	1952-3
g	1953-4
h	1954-5
i	1955-6
k	1956-7
l	1957-8
m	1958-9
n	1959-0
o	1960-1
p	1961-2
q	1962-3
r	1963-4
s	1964-5
t	1965-6

Edinburgh

e	1773-4
f	1774-5
g	1775-6
h	1776-7
i	1777-8
j	1778-9
k	1779-0
l	1780-1
m	1781-2
n	1782-3
o	1783-4
p	1784-5
q	1785-6
r	1786-7
s	1787-8
t	1788-9
u	1789-0
v	1790-1
w	1791-2
x	1792-3
y	1793-4
z	1794-5
a	1795-6
b	1796-7
c	1797-8
d	1798-9
e	1799-0
f	1800-1
g	1801-2
h	1802-3
i	1803-4
k	1804-5
l	1805-6

A	1806-7
B	1807-8
C	1808-9
D	1809-0
E	1810-1
F	1811-2
G	1812-3
H	1813-4
I	1814-5
J	1815-6
K	1816-7
L	1817-8
M	1818-9
N	1819-0
O	1820-1
P	1821-2
Q	1822-3
R	1823-4
S	1824-5
T	1825-6
U	1826-7
V	1827-8
W	1828-9
X	1829-0
Y	1830-1
Z	1831-2
A	1832-3
B	1833-4
C	1834-5
D	1835-6
E	1836-7
F	1837-8
G	1838-9

I	1839-0
J	1840-1
K	1841-2
L	1842-3
M	1843-4
N	1844-5
O	1845-6
P	1846-7
Q	1847-8
R	1848-9
S	1849-0
T	1850-1
U	1851-2
V	1852-3
W	1853-4
X	1854-5
Y	1855-6
Z	1856-7
A	1857-8
B	1858-9
C	1859-0
D	1860-1
E	1861-2
F	1862-3
G	1863-4
H	1864-5
I	1865-6
J	1866-7
K	1867-8
L	1868-9
M	1869-0
N	1870-1
O	1871-2

E	1872-3
F	1873-4
G	1874-5
H	1875-6
I	1876-7
J	1877-8
K	1878-9
L	1879-0
M	1880-1
N	1881-2
O	1882-3
P	1883-4
Q	1884-5
R	1885-6
S	1886-7
T	1887-8
U	1888-9
V	1889-0
W	1890-1
X	1891-2
Y	1892-3
Z	1893-4
A	1894-5
B	1895-6
C	1896-7
D	1897-8
E	1898-9
F	1899-0
G	1900-1
H	1901-2
I	1902-3
J	1903-4
K	1904-5

h	1905-6
i	1906-7
j	1907-8
k	1908-9
l	1909-0
m	1910-1
n	1911-2
o	1912-3
p	1913-4
q	1914-5
r	1915-6
s	1916-7
t	1917-8
u	1918-9
v	1919-0
w	1920-1
x	1921-2
y	1922-3
z	1923-4
a	1924-5
b	1925-6
c	1926-7
d	1927-8
e	1928-9
f	1929-0
g	1930-1
h	1931-2
i	1932-3
j	1933-4
k	1934-5
l	1935-6
m	1936-7
n	1937-8

v	1938-9
w	1939-0
x	1940-1
y	1941-2
z	1942-3
a	1943-4
b	1944-5
c	1945-6
d	1946-7
e	1947-8
f	1948-9
g	1949-0
h	1950-1
i	1951-2
k	1952-3
l	1953-4
m	1954-5
n	1955-6
o	1956-7
p	1957-8
q	1958-9
r	1959-0
s	1960-1
t	1961-2
u	1962-3
v	1963-4
w	1964-5
x	1965-6
y	1966-7

Sheffield



BRITISH HALLMARKS

