



## ASSAY OFFICE UPDATE FROM 2015



### OVERVIEW ON HALLMARKING AND THE HALLMARKING MARKET

2015 has seen the Hallmarking market hit an upper limit of around 10.5 million items and remain at that level throughout the year. It would seem that the growth seen through late 2013 and 2014 has come to an end.

The impact on UK Hallmarking of items marked in other countries and bearing a convention mark, or a national mark permitted under EU regulations, cannot be easily quantified, but it can be estimated to be at least circa 5 to 10% of the total UK market.

At the same time, the gold price remains at some distance from its recent highs and this is reflected in the continued strong performance of 9ct gold, which this year accounts for 70% of all gold Hallmarked and 34% of the total items marked to date.

"This dominance of 9ct gold is echoed in the continuing growth and record numbers being processed by our Heathrow sub-office," comments Dr Robert Organ, Deputy Warden and Director of the Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office.

### NEW SUB-OFFICE GRAFF

The Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office has opened its first hallmarking facility located within a retail jeweller. The in-house assay office, which opened in November 2015, is located within a purpose built facility at Graff's London workshop and has its own dedicated member of Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office staff.

The facility will not only enable each diamond or gemstone jewel to receive the highest quality hallmarking, but it will also contribute to improvements in production efficiency by shortening the supply chain. In addition, skilled staff and specialist equipment will ensure excellence in service whilst maintaining discretion and privacy.

All Graff pieces will carry the sponsor's mark, metal fineness mark, town mark and Common Control mark. This 'Convention Mark' is recognised by all member countries in the International Convention (19 European countries), safeguarding the Company's cross-border trade.

"Opening our first Hallmarking facility within the manufacturing premises of a UK retail organisation is a very special occasion. We are thrilled to be partnering with Graff, a British company at the pinnacle of the luxury jewellery industry. The sub-office is equipped with state-of-the art assaying and laser hallmarking systems to best suit and align with their outstanding jewellery design and manufacturing processes." said Dr Robert Organ, Deputy Warden and Director of the Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office.

Raymond Graff, Director of Production at Graff, commented: "We have one of the most



## INDUSTRY UPDATES

prestigious fine jewellery workshops in Europe, through passion we create perfection. Having access to an on-site assay office will improve our processes and, in addition to our vertical integration, provide us with the flexibility and accuracy we need to continue pushing boundaries and growing our business."

Graff continued: "Over the years we have handled the world's most fabulous and treasured gemstones, it has been said that more important gem quality diamonds have passed through the House than any other. We are delighted to be the first jeweller to have an on-site assay office and to partner with The Goldsmiths' Company to combine our expertise and exemplary mark of quality."

### NEW PRODUCTION MANAGER

Michael Cassidy joined the Assay Office in September as Production Manager. He has been spending his time getting to know our processes and talking to our customers with the aim of improving productivity and turnaround times.

Michael previously worked as Factory Manager for a print firm and is used to the demands of a busy environment like the Assay Office.

### APPRENTICE UPDATE

Assay Office apprentice, Candice Devine, who joined us four years ago, has just achieved her City & Guilds Level Two.

As well as keeping a work diary of her time training with Dave Merry, attending classes at The Goldsmiths' Centre, and working in both our main office and satellite office at Greville Street, Candice had to complete various skills-related projects in the trade in design, silversmithing, engraving, enamelling, chasing and jewellery.

Candice is now planning to complete her Level Four before she finishes her apprenticeship in March 2016. At the same time, she is working on the Masterpiece that will be presented to the Wardens of the Company at her Freedom Ceremony. This very special project uses her hand- and laser-engraving skills, as well as her silversmithing experience and promises to be an incredible piece of work.

At the same time, Ryan Grant, was among nine young people to be bound to a Master in 2015 under the world-renowned Goldsmiths' Company Apprenticeship Scheme, which has been running since 1334.

Ryan, who has completed the first year of his four-year apprenticeship, was bound to Dave Merry and will work in all departments, learning the trade, as well as attending classes at The Goldsmiths' Centre on day-release. He follows in the footsteps of Candice and his brother Robert, a specialist hand-marker, and at the end of his apprenticeship will become an Assay Office Technician.