



10 FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT THE JEWELLERY QUARTER

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MORE THAN A THIRD of all jewellery made in the UK comes from the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham.



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The Jewellery Quarter has the greatest concentration of wholesale and retail jewellery manufacturers in Europe.

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THE NETWORK OF CRAFTMAKERS who lived and worked in the jewellery quarter in the 18th century were nicknamed 'garret masters' or 'small masters'.

What are small masters? The head of the small family-owned jewellery businesses who were able to consistently produce large quantities of work with their hand-powered machinery.

6

IN THE 1830^s, TWO LARGER FACTORIES EMERGED - Joseph Gillott's Victoria Works and Elkington, Mason and Company. The latter developed the electroplating process of adding a layer of silver to the surface of base metals.



MATTHEW BOULTON, owner of the Soho Works, successfully lobbied for an Assay Office in Birmingham and Sheffield. Following a trip to London, where it was reported that Boulton stayed at an inn named The Crown & Anchor Tavern it was decided that Birmingham should take on the anchor hallmark and Sheffield the crown. Nobody really knows how that decision was reached, but many say it was a flip of a coin that sealed the deal.

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THE JEWELLERY TRADE WORKSHOPS of Hockley remain clustered together. This is because the production of one piece of jewellery may involve more than one process, and it made good economic sense for each stage of the production to be done in close proximity to the next.

Curious about the Birmingham back-to-backs? Visit the National Trust's carefully restored houses for a true insight into the life of a jeweller in the 19th century. Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birmingham-back-to-backs for more information.

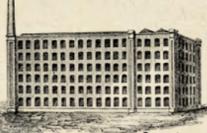
Factors and Middlemen referred to the tradesmen who received the finished product at the very end of the jewellery manufacturing process, or distributed work to the smaller manufacturers.

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THE FIRST KNOWN REFERENCE to jewellery making in Birmingham comes from the 1553 survey of Birmingham, in which Roger Pemberton was named as a 'goldsmith' living and working in the city.

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Workshop of the World



WITH THE EXPANSION OF THE JEWELLERY, toy and metalware trades in Birmingham in the mid-18th century, the area became known as the 'toy shop of Europe' and the 'workshop of the world'.

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AS THE CENTRE OF BIRMINGHAM WAS IN THE GRIPS OF INDUSTRIALISATION, the masters began moving their life and work north towards St. Paul's Square. Here, they built up a residential and industrial area in the 1820^s - what we now know as the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter.

Top 5 Places to visit in the Jewellery Quarter



- ✦ Jewellery Quarter Museum
- ✦ Warstone Cemetery Lodge
- ✦ The Chamberlain Clock
- ✦ The Big Peg
- ✦ Vittoria Street - home to Cooksongold's HQ

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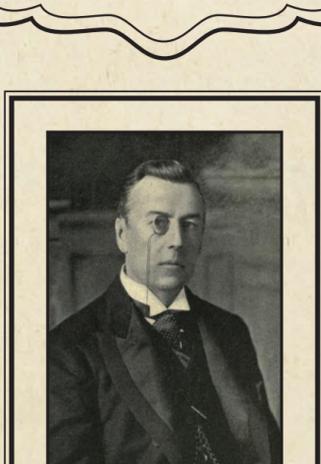
IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY, when the gold rushes of Australia and California were in full swing, 9, 12 and 15 carat gold alloys were introduced to the tradesmen of the Jewellery Quarter.

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THE CLOCK TOWER, located at the junction on Vyse Street, Warstone Lane, and Frederick Street was built in 1903 in honour of Joseph Chamberlain - MP for the area in the late 1900s.

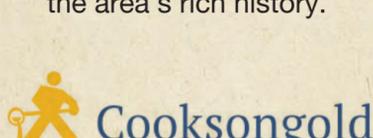
Joseph Chamberlain was an advocate for the jewellery trade. He campaigned to abolish 'Plate Duties' - a tax that all tradesmen were obliged to pay at the time.



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IN THE 1820^s-30^s, houses for small masters and their workers were constructed to the north-west of St. Paul's Square known as back-to-backs. These featured central courts that the houses backed onto - the ideal spot for warehouses of 'factors' and 'middlemen' to collect their goods for sale.

With over 20 years' experience in the jewellery making industry, our trade counters and headquarters are situated on Vittoria Street in the heart of the jewellery quarter - where we continue to be a part of the area's rich history.



Heimerle + Meule Group

Resources:

- <https://jewelleryquarter.net/>
- <https://www.victoria-james.co.uk/history/>
- <https://billdargue.jimdo.com/placenames-gazetteer-a-to-y/places-j/the-jewellery-quarter/>
- <https://jewelleryquarter.net/tag/history/>
- <http://www.jewelleryquarterheritage.net/>
- <https://www.the-quarter.com/jewellery-quarter-history/>
- <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/birmingham-jewellery-quarter/birmingham-jewellery-quarter.pdf/>
- <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/modern/1797389/>
- <https://archive.org/stream/casselluniversa00londiala/page/202/mode/2p>
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Paul_Birmingham_from_south_PP.jpg
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Warstone_Lane_Cemetery_OS_25_inch_1903.jpg
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sisaphus/4544549260>
- <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3973932>
- <https://theassayoffice.co.uk/assay-office-birmingham/the-story-of-assay-office-birmingham>