

Tools, Skill & Identity: The Work of Birmingham's Manufacturing Jewellers,
1940-1960

Submitted for the Degree of
PhD / V&A/RCA History of Design / School of Arts & Humanities / Doctor of Philosophy
At the Royal College of Art

2024

Georgina Sara Izzard

Word Count: 79,828

© Georgina Izzard [2024 (PhD)]

This thesis is copyright material and no quotation from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

Abstract

In Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, jewellers, silversmiths and members of the allied trades have for centuries clustered skills, materials and demand in this industrial district. The Second World War disrupted these established relationships and routines, as jewellers utilised their tacit knowledge of small metalwork to adapt to production for the Armed Forces. This research project engages with debates in design history and anthropology that link skill and identity to investigate the enduring impact of this change in production on jewellers' concepts of occupational identity in the 1940s and 1950s, when restrictions on gold made much of their work impossible, and even illegal.

This research takes a material focus, particularly following gold alloys (carats), to trace the impacts of these restrictions. Trade members instead worked through loopholes to turn to the jewellery 'black market' to maintain their skills, an option made available through the trade's traditions of independent workshop spaces, tool ownership and discretion. Analysis of employee accident records, wages books, job adverts and new oral histories of trade members reinstates craftspeople to a production history that has previously focused only on industry leaders and managers.

By concentrating instead on workers' experiences, this research reclaims the terms 'flexibility' and 'adaptation' from ontologies of efficiency and uses them to appreciate jewellers' discretion in choosing how and with whom they worked in their occupational community. I carefully engage with these jewellers' occupational legacies by recognising and utilising my position within the trade to work with the industry's enduring principle of discretion – a knowing from within that traverses the time between the 1940s and the present. The trade structure is thus both methodology and conclusion: jewellers created and sustained their identity through their trade network and their material interactions, and these material interactions help us today to connect with their occupational legacies. Through this principle of proximity, this research proves the possibility and benefit of considering concepts of identity in the past and across a varied trade.

Declaration

This thesis represents partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Royal College of Art. I confirm that the work presented here is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Contents

Page

vi	List of Tables
vii	List of Illustrations
xvi	List of Accompanying Material
xvii	Acknowledgements
xviii	List of Definitions
1	Introduction
4	Review of Literature
11	Theoretical Approaches
22	Methodology
29	Discretion: Tact and Trust
30	Tools, Skill & Identity
33	Chapter One: Discretion: Evaluating new sources to better recognise workers in the trade
35	Welcome to the Jewellery Quarter
37	The Jewellers' Association
46	The Trade
55	The Employees, the Employers, the Self-Employed and the Outworkers
63	Routes into the Trade
74	Proximity and Clustering
83	Returning to the Quarter
86	Conclusion
88	Chapter Two: Reputation and Responsibility: Understanding the impact on occupational identity of working through restrictions, loopholes and the black market
90	Austerity
93	Alloys
93	Limitation of Supplies Order, 1940
97	Exports
102	Utility
113	The Jewellers and the Black Market
114	Wedding Rings: the full circle

120	Purchase Tax
125	Working Through Loopholes
135	Reputation
141	Conclusion
143	Chapter Three: Going Inside: Building an appreciation of the risk, repetition and skill inherent in the industrial-craft processes of jewellery factories
145	Risk and the Employees' Accident Cards
149	The Value of Accidents
165	Risk
166	Presswork
173	Learning the Press
175	Repetition
182	Blame and Responsibility
186	Fit for Purpose
189	Conclusion
191	Chapter Four: Identity: Recognising what it meant to invoke a shared and enduring occupational identity in the jewellery industry
193	Identity
198	Roots and Routes
213	Essential Luxury
224	Vocation
230	Conclusion
232	Conclusion
236	Identity
237	Research Contributions and Opportunities
239	Coda – My Research Journey
241	Appendix A – Interview Transcripts
-	(p. 242) Interview with Paul Podolsky at his home, Finchley, London, 9 November 2017
-	(p. 250) Interview with Paul Podolsky at his home, Finchley, London, 12 December 2017
-	(p. 255) Letter from Paul Podolsky to Georgina Izzard: follow up from interview and comments on MA dissertation, 13 December 2017
-	(p. 256) Interview with Linda and Tony Hackett at their home, Witton, Birmingham, with Cornelli Sullivan, 26 July 2021

- (p. 262) Interview with Bernard Hussey at his workshop in the Jewellery Quarter, with
Cornellius Sullivan, 23 June 2022
- 265 Appendix B – Table of Workers’ Occupations and Gender from Employee Accident Cards**
- 275 Appendix C – Consent Forms**
 - (p. 275) Consent form from this research project
 - (p. 279) Consent form from MA research project
- 281 List of References**
- 293 Bibliography**
- 302 Submission Detail

List of Tables

Chapter One: Discretion

- 70 Table 1.1 The 11 instances of shared surnames and addresses of the workers detailed in the Employee Accident Cards (1942-46) in the BJA archive.
- ‘Employee Accident Cards’, 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601

Chapter Three: Going Inside

- 153 Table 3.1 An overview of the BJA’s Workmen’s Compensation Insurance scheme, with data compiled from BJA Annual Reports and the Employee Accident Cards.
- Birmingham Jewellers’ and Silversmiths’ Association, *Annual Reports and Year Books 1938-1949*, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS1646/269 and MS1646/270; ‘Employee Accident Cards’, 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601
- 155 Table 3.2 A table detailing the number of factory workers in the jewellery and allied trades between 1941 and 1946. Reproduced from a table in *The British Jeweller* - ‘Factory workers, part-timers counted as half timers.’
- ‘Board of Trade Compliments Jewellery Industry’, *The British Jeweller*, September 1946, p. 27
- 157 Table 3.3 The five occupations with the most recorded accidents amongst the employee accident cards, split by the workers’ genders.
- ‘Employee Accident Cards’, 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601
- 162 Table 3.4 A summary of the 50 accident cards that detailed workers with the lowest weekly wage and the 50 accident cards that detailed workers with the highest weekly wage; these workers are further divided by gender, age and occupation type.
- ‘Employee Accident Cards’, 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601

List of Illustrations

Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders of material reproduced in this thesis. Any copyright holders I have been unable to reach or to whom inaccurate acknowledgement has been made are encouraged to contact me at georgina.izzard@network.rca.ac.uk

Introduction

- 4 Figure i.1 A photograph of an aerial view of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, showing Albion Street Fire Station and lines of workshops in the top right, and Camden Street in the foreground. Date and photographer unknown, circa 1940.

Photographer unknown, *Aerial View of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/272

<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f272>> [accessed 10 December 2023]

Chapter One: Discretion

- 34 Figure 1.1 An extract of a map of Birmingham, dated 1935. The jewellers clustered their workshops in the Hockley area, here marked by city ward 'St Paul's', northwest of the city centre, here 'Market Hall'.

Plan of City of Birmingham. Scale, Three and a Quarter Inches to a Mile. (Index to Streets, Etc. Pp.16) (1935), British Library Maps 5545.(26.)

- 41 Figure 1.2 A photograph of an opening page of the booklet *Arms and The Jeweller*, published in 1946 by the Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, showing portrait photographs of its Executive and Special Committees.

Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Arms & the Jeweller: Recording the Work of the British Jewellers in the War of 1939-1945* (Birmingham: Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1946), Imperial War Museum, 64(41).72/5 90/2279

- 43 Figure 1.3 A photograph of the attendees of the 1948 BJA annual banquet, with the caption, 'A general view of the Grosvenor Room at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham when the British Jewellers' Association banquet was held on March 13.'

Photographer unknown, 'Sir Patrick Champions the Trade: Reply to Mr. Herbert Morrison at 47th Annual Banquet of B.J.A.', *The British Jeweller*, April 1948, pp. 64–67 (p. 67)

- 44 Figure 1.4 A photograph of the attendees of the 1949 BJA annual banquet, with the caption, 'A general view of the banquet.'
- Photographer unknown, 'Mr. Wilson Praises Industry's Export Record in Speech at B.J.A. Banquet: Many Distinguished Guests at 48th Function in Birmingham.', *The British Jeweller*, March 1949, pp. 78–80 (p. 80)
- 44 Figure 1.5. A photograph of past and present employees of manufacturing jewellers Payton Pepper and Sons before their day trip to Weston-Super-Mare to celebrate the firm's centenary on 18 June 1949.
- Photographer unknown, 'Centenary Celebration', *The British Jeweller*, August 1949, p. 67
- 51 Figure 1.6 A photograph of a table in the *BJA Annual Report 1948* detailing the geographical location and production type of BJA members in 1948, titled 'Analysis of B.J.A. Membership by Trade Sections'.
- Birmingham Jewellers' Association, *Annual Report 1948 and Year Book 1949* (Birmingham: The British Joint Association of Goldsmiths, Silversmiths, Horological and Kindred Trades, 1949), p. 43, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/270
- 53 Figure 1.7. A reproduced map of *Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, date unknown, circa late 1930s, with green markings representing the location of jewellery and allied trades firms across the city.
- Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area; Author's markings, 2023
- 54 Figure 1.8. An extract of a reproduced map of *Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, date unknown, circa late 1930s, with green markings representing the location of jewellery and allied trades firms across the city and showing the clustering of firms in the Jewellery Quarter.
- Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area; Author's markings, 2023
- 67 Figure 1.9. A reproduced map of *Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, date unknown, circa late 1935, with blue markings representing the location of jewellers' home addresses from the employee accident cards in the BJA archive.
- Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area; 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601; Author's markings, 2023

- 68 Figure 1.10 An extract of a reproduced map of *Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, date unknown, circa late 1930s, with green markings representing the location of jewellery and allied trades firms across the city and blue markings representing the location of jewellers' homes.
- Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area; Author's markings, 2023
- 79 Figure 1.11 A scanned photograph by Phyllis Nicklin, titled '110-112, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham', showing the terraced workshops of Vyse Street in 1967.
- Phyllis Nicklin, *110-112, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham*, 1967 [Image] (Unpublished) <<http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/332/>> [accessed 7 January 2024]
- Copyright and database rights in this material belong to Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) West Midlands and the University of Birmingham. The photographic image is available to download and redistribute for non-commercial purposes. © MLA West Midlands and the University of Birmingham, all rights reserved.
- 80 Figure 1.12 A scanned photograph by Phyllis Nicklin, titled 'Typical Workshops, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter', showing the signs of workshops B Manning, F Graves, Birmingham Stone Cutting Ltd, F Britton Ltd, and A Clifton & Sons Stampings in 1968.
- Phyllis Nicklin, *Typical workshops, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham*, 1968 [Image] (Unpublished) <<http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/331/>> [accessed 7 January 2024]
- Copyright and database rights in this material belong to Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) West Midlands and the University of Birmingham. The photographic image is available to download and redistribute for non-commercial purposes. © MLA West Midlands and the University of Birmingham, all rights reserved.
- 84 Figure 1.13 A photograph of the Machine Shop at Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham, 1948.
- Photographer unknown, *Machine shop at the Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham 1948*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Car Manufacture, WPS/WK/B11/AX/5377 <<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fAX%2f5377>> [accessed 7 January 2024]
- 85 Figure 1.14 A photograph of the Engine Shop, likely at Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham, 1948.
- Photographer unknown, *Engine shop probably in Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham 1948*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Car Manufacture, WPS/WK/B11/AX/5378 <<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fAX%2f5378>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Chapter Two: Reputation and Responsibility

- 92 Figure 2.1 A photograph of a queue of people waiting to collect their ration on an industrial street in Birmingham, circa 1950.
- Photographer unknown, *Ration queue in an unidentified Birmingham street, Central Birmingham*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of the End of Rationing 1953, WPS/WK/B11/BA/5610
<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBA%2f5610>> [accessed 7 January 2024]
- 96 Figure 2.2 An advertisement for palladium in *The British Jeweller*, showing an adaptable necklace and clips set of palladium, sapphires and diamonds by E Silver & Co, 1948.
- ‘For the Newer Jewellery – Palladium’, *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, 58
- 99 Figure 2.3 An advertisement or catalogue page illustrating the fashion jewellery manufactured by the firm T Winkles & Co, likely from the early twentieth century.
- ‘Gilt and White Metal Chains’, T Winkles & Co, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, File of Correspondence, 1942-1944, MS 1610/29
- 101 Figure 2.4 A graph showing incoming and outgoing money for the firm T Winkles & Co in the accounting years 1946 to 1957.
- Data from: ‘Statement of Accounts for Mr. W. H. Winkles Trading as T. Winkles and H. Ashworth & Co. Gilt & Jet Jewellery Manufacturers’, 1946, T Winkles & Co., Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, Statement of Accounts, includes 1946-1957, MS 1610/23
- 105 Figure 2.5 A photograph of a gold wedding ring with Utility mark, made and retailed by Hathaway & Muddiman, Birmingham, 1944/1951, and now in the V&A collection.
- Hathaway & Muddiman, ‘Gold Wedding Ring with Utility Mark’, 1944, V&A, M.17-2016
<<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1364100/ring-hathaway-muddiman/ring-hathaway--muddiman/>> [accessed 7 January 2024]
- 107 Figure 2.6 An advertisement in February 1942’s edition of *The British Jeweller* from wedding ring manufacturer Samuel Hope Limited that lightly mocks the government’s changeable rules about wedding rings.
- Samuel Hope Limited, ‘S.O.S. Britain’s Brides’, *The British Jeweller*, February 1942, p. 25
- 110 Figure 2.7 A cartoon illustration by Geoff Allen, titled “‘And this, sir, is our latest austerity line: A combination engagement-wedding-teething ring!’”, reproduced in *The British Jeweller*, August 1948.
- Geoff Allen, ‘And This, Sir, Is Our Latest Austerity Line: A Combination Engagement-Wedding-Teething Ring!’, *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, p. 65

- 112 Figure 2.8 A photograph of a page of *The British Jeweller* from June 1944 showing W Stewart Turner's reproduction of a cartoon from *Punch* that depicting a jeweller stealing a woman's string of pearls.

'Reproduced by permission of the proprietors of *Punch*', *The British Jeweller*, June 1944, p. 10.
Author's own photograph
- 113 Figure 2.9 A cartoon illustration by W Stewart Turner, titled 'Once upon a time three jewellers went to Paradise', printed in *The British Jeweller*, June 1943.

W Stewart Turner, 'Once upon a Time Three Jewellers Went to Paradise', *The British Jeweller*, June 1943, p. 13
- 124 Figure 2.10 An advertisement from jeweller A W Crosbee & Sons in November 1942's *The British Jeweller* urging clients to support the trade (and them) by continuing to work.

A W Crosbee & Sons Ltd, 'Hang On!', *The British Jeweller*, November 1942, back cover
- 127 Figure 2.11 A photograph by Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen of a jeweller of the Birmingham firm Eaton & Wrighton working at their bench with many tools, circa 1950.

Reproduced with the kind permission of the Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen. © The Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen, all rights reserved.

Eaton & Wrighton, Photos of staff at work c.1950, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 4172/2/2/1
- 127 Figure 2.12 A photograph by Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen of a jeweller setting a stone in a jewel, surrounded by tools, at the firm of Eaton & Wrighton, circa 1950.

Reproduced with the kind permission of the Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen. © The Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen, all rights reserved.

Eaton & Wrighton, Photos of staff at work c.1950, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 4172/2/2/1
- 128 Figure 2.13 A photograph of a jeweller making rings using the many hand tools with round wooden handles on their bench, circa 1950.

Photographer unknown, 'Birmingham industrial workers. Photographed c1950s. Jeweller making rings', Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of industry and industrial workers, WPS/WK/B11/BU/7115
<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBU%2f7115>> [accessed 7 January 2024]
- 129 Figure 2.14 A photograph of a graver tool with a worn thumb impression revealing its patterns of use. Part of a collection of engraving tools donated by a jeweller from Erdington, Birmingham, now housed at the Birmingham Museum Collections Centre.

Author's own photograph, 2021. Jeweller's engraving tool, part of a set, Science & Industry Collection, Birmingham Museum Collections Centre, 1969.S.2311.30

- 129 Figure 2.15 A photograph of a jeweller's burnishing tool that has a worn, curved space for a finger to rest, which indicates how its owner held it. Donated by F C Davis to the city's Science & Industry Collection, housed at the Birmingham Museum Collections Centre.
- Author's own photograph, 2021. Set of 11 Burnishing tools, Science & Industry Collection, Birmingham Museum Collections Centre, 1963.S.1765.1-11
- 130 Figure 2.16 A photograph of two of Cornelius Sullivan's flat-hammering mallets, showing etched ownership symbols on their handles.
- Author's own photograph, 2022. Cornelius Sullivan, personal collection
- 133 Figure 2.17 A photograph of people queuing for coke along the street outside Windsor Street Gas Works, Birmingham, on 2 February 1951 during the fuel shortage.
- Photographer unknown, 'Queue for coke at Windsor Street Gas Works, Birmingham. Photographed on 2 February 1951 during fuel shortage', Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs at the End of Rationing, WPS/WK/B11/BA/5599
<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBA%2f5599>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Chapter Three: Going Inside

- 146 Figure 3.1 A photograph of one of the bundles of accident cards divided to show the front of a 1943 accident card for Mrs Minnie Harrison and the reverse of the 1943 accident card for Edna Abbott.
- British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601
- 160 Figure 3.2 A scatter graph that plots the average weekly wage (in pence) of workers in relation to their age at the time of their accident.
- Data from: British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601
- 164 Figure 3.3. A bar graph of male and female workers' compensation amounts sorted by pound interval (under £10), £5 intervals (£10-100) and £100 intervals (£100+).
- Data from: British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601

- 164 Figure 3.4 A bar graph of male and female workers' compensation amounts relative to their gender. The count of claims in each interval was taken as a percentage of the total number of claims for that gender (women 524; men 379) to assess the distribution of compensation amounts between genders. Sorted by pound interval (under £10), £5 intervals (£10-100) and £100 intervals (£100+).
- Data from: British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601
- 167 Figure 3.5 Two photographs of a small hand press, viewed from the front and in profile, respectively, left in the Birmingham premises of a former jewellery workshop.
- Author's own photographs, 2021
- 168 Figure 3.6 Two photographs of a cat motif blanking tool for a hand press. The top 'male' part of the tool fits precisely into the bottom 'female' part of the tool and so presses the cat motif, which would drop below the tool to be collected by the operator.
- Author's own photographs, 2022. Tool from private collection
- 170 Figure 3.7 A photograph of the line of large hand presses at Coffinworks Museum, formerly Newman Brothers workshop, Birmingham.
- Author's own photograph, 2021
- 171 Figure 3.8 An image of a photograph and caption from the Jewellery & Silverware Working Party's report, 1946. The photograph shows a woman operating the lever of a large power press used for shaping metal by pressure. The tooling in the press appears to be for a bowl-shaped item or component.
- Board of Trade, *Working Party Reports Jewellery and Silverware* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1946)
<<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069180571&view=1up&seq=18>>
[accessed 31 July 2020]
- 171 Figure 3.9 An image of a photograph and caption from the Jewellery & Silverware Working Party's report, 1946. The photograph shows a woman moving the safety guard down whilst working at a smaller power press.
- Board of Trade, *Working Party Reports Jewellery and Silverware* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1946)
<<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069180571&view=1up&seq=18>>
[accessed 31 July 2020]
- 172 Figure 3.10. A photograph of a woman blanking out circles on a big press used in an advert for W.A.P. Watson Ltd's 'Exquisite' fashion jewellery in *The British Jeweller*, June 1946.
- W A P Watson, 'Fashion Jewellery Now in Production Again', *The British Jeweller*, June 1946, p. 16

- 175 Figure 3.11 A line graph plotting the number of injured pressworkers against their age at the time of their accident.
- Data from: British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601
- 178 Figure 3.12 A pie chart showing the distribution of pressworkers' injuries by body part. Injuries to the right side of their bodies are grouped on the right of the chart; injuries to the left side of their bodies are grouped on the left of the chart.
- Data from: British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601
- 180 Figure 3.13 A photograph of a battery of drop stamps at a workshop in Spring Hill, the northwestern edge of the Jewellery Quarter. The central stamp is the only one with its hammer still suspended.
- Author's own photograph, 2021
- 181 Figure 3.14 A photograph of the central drop stamp at a workshop in Spring Hill, Birmingham. The hammer is supported by the broken prop handle on the left side of the frame.
- Author's own photograph, 2021
- 181 Figure 3.15. A photograph of the base of a drop stamp at a workshop in Spring Hill, Birmingham. The prop handle is visible on the left side of the frame, and on the other stamp to the right. The four poppet screws secured the die with its motif below the hammer.
- Author's own photograph, 2021

Chapter Four: Identity

- 208 Figure 4.1 A photograph of the cafeteria, downstairs at the Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, circa 1950.
- Reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham
- Birmingham City Council City Information Department, 'The Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, Hockley, Birmingham', Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/279
- <<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f279>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

- 208 Figure 4.2 A photograph of the managers' restaurant, upstairs at the Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, circa 1950.
- Reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham
- Birmingham City Council City Information Department, 'The Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, Hockley, Birmingham', Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/280
<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f280>> [accessed 7 January 2024]
- 215 Figure 4.3 A cartoon illustration published in December 1947's edition of *The British Jeweller*, titled 'With acknowledgements to the "Evening Standard"', depicting a thief breaking into a greengrocer's using a brick and emerging with a sack of potatoes, instead of breaking into the jeweller's next door.
- 'With Acknowledgements to the "Evening Standard"', *The British Jeweller*, December 1947, p. 65
- 223 Figure 4.4. A photograph of the listings pages of the *Birmingham Mail* on 13 April 1954; the listings included vacancies in jewellery workshops. The dense text is hard to navigate, but the reader soon learns to skip to the relevant section.
- The Birmingham Mail*, 13 April 1954, 7:30 edition, pp. 4B-5B

List of Accompanying Material

Appendix A – Interview Transcripts

- Interview with Paul Podolsky at his home, Finchley, London, 9 November 2017
- Interview with Paul Podolsky at his home, Finchley, London, 12 December 2017
- Letter from Paul Podolsky to Georgina Izzard: follow up from interview and comments on MA dissertation, 13 December 2017
- Interview with Linda and Tony Hackett at their home, Witton, Birmingham, with Cornellius Sullivan, 26 July 2021
- Interview with Bernard Hussey at his workshop in the Jewellery Quarter, with Cornellius Sullivan, 23 June 2022

Appendix B – Table of Workers' Occupations and Gender from Employee Accident Cards

'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601

Appendix C – Consent Forms

- Consent form for this research project
- Consent form from MA research project

Acknowledgements

This research rested on the combined wisdom and generosity of the jewellers, silversmiths and allied trade members of the Jewellery Quarter. I am grateful to them for sharing their time and knowledge and for making me feel welcome.

Thank you to the London Arts & Humanities Partnership and the Arts & Humanities Research Council. This project was made possible by their funding and support.

Thank you to my supportive and always encouraging supervisors: Jonathan Boyd, Dr Spike Sweeting and Dr Sarah Teasley. They pushed me to think more materially, write more confidently, and present my ideas with conviction.

I was lucky to work with talented and kind members of the trade that welcomed me into their workshops and homes. Thank you for trusting me. Cornellius Sullivan and the late Paul Podolsky were exceptionally generous to allow me insight to their worlds and I was buoyed by their enthusiasm for my research. The many long walks with Cornellius around Birmingham are the background to every aspect of this thesis. Thank you also to Bernard Hussey, Linda Hackett and Tony Hackett for sharing their stories and hospitality.

Many people around the Quarter followed me through this research and their conversations and friendship have been invaluable. Thank you to the Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage team: Dennis Cluley, Luke Crane, Kate O'Connor and Josie Wall; Roseanna Davey and the team at The Hive; Paul Toomes in Spring Hill; and Rob Turley.

Thank you to the helpful and patient teams at archives and libraries, including the Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, Library of Birmingham, particularly Paul Taylor and the Archives & Heritage team; Felicity McWilliams at Birmingham Museums Collection Centre; Eleni Bide, Sophia Tobin and Deborah Roberts at the Goldsmiths' Company Library for their encouragement and last-minute searches; Jeremy from the Science Reference Team at the British Library; Martin Sanders at the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick; the team at the National Art Library; and the Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen. Thank you to the Goldsmiths' Company History Group for hosting me and feedbacking on ideas that became chapter two.

I was kept motivated and inspired by my RCA research group peers. Thank you to everyone from Correspondence Research Group, hosted by Rebecca Fortnum and Gemma Blackshaw; CARE Research Group, with Gemma Blackshaw; and Material Engagements Research Group, with Jonathan Boyd and Steve Brown; plus Peter Oakley. Being a PhD student in the School of Arts & Humanities at the RCA and in History of Design at the V&A has meant that I have been surrounded by wonderfully talented friends from such a range of practices and I am very grateful to have had them close. Katie Irani, thank you for being a constant support and such a great PhD buddy! Thank you, also, to the organisational skills and warmth of Murray Anderson, formerly RCA, and Andrew Hulse, formerly V&A.

Thank you to my family and friends; to my parents, sisters, Louise and Raoul for their unending support; to Charlie Spurrier for investing so much time and enthusiasm into this research along the way with me and especially for his patience with map conundrums; to Joanna Hardy for being such a friend and mentor; and to my colleagues at the Goldsmiths' Company for putting up with my tiredness during these closing stages!

List of Definitions

BJA - British Joint Association of Goldsmiths, Silversmiths, Horological and Kindred Trades, also known as British Jewellers' Association, a national trade association that represented manufacturing jewellers, silversmiths and members of the allied trades.

BJSA - Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, a Birmingham-based trade association that represented manufacturing jewellers, silversmiths and members of the allied trades in the Midlands.

NAG/NAJ – National Association of Goldsmiths, later the National Association of Jewellers, a trade body that represents retail jewellers.

NUGSAT - National Union of Gold, Silver and Allied Trades, a trade union that represented workers in the jewellery, silver and allied trades.

PT – Purchase Tax, a tax applied to new luxury goods in the UK from 1940 to 1973, when it was replaced by VAT

V&A – Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

VAT – Value-added tax, introduced in the UK in 1973

Introduction

At the start of the Second World War, manufacturing jewellers in Birmingham adapted their fine metalwork skills to work on contracts for the armed forces in Britain's rearmament campaign. For centuries, Birmingham has been home to the largest jewellery production centre in the UK, and in the mid twentieth century was one of the largest in the world, both in terms of the number of people working in the industry and the volume of work produced. Within the city, it was also the biggest industrial employer of young people, the generation that carried the trade through the 1940s and 1950s. The Birmingham trade's productive power derived from its clustering of jewellers, their skills and tacit knowledge, materials and tools in the same geographical location: the Jewellery Quarter. The overlapping physical and social boundaries of the trade grounded workers in their occupational community, which they relied on and strengthened during the restrictions on their industry in the 1940s and 1950s. This generation of craftspeople worked with and around these restrictions to continue jewellery production and ensured that there was still a trade for future generations to turn to. Existing histories of the trade have excluded these workers and their skills. Whilst economic historians and sociologists have focused on trade leaders, and architectural historians on the workshops of the Jewellery Quarter, an approach that prioritises the materials, manufacturing processes and tacit knowledge of this trade has been missing. The design historical approach of this project focuses on these craftspeople and how they reinforced their occupational identity through their material and social community at a time of disruption to their established ways of working. This project sits within a growing field of industrial craft research.

During the 1940s jewellers were largely not making jewellery. They navigated government restrictions on metal, energy and labour use to keep their trade alive for their hopeful return to full production.¹ The jewellers framed their war work in terms of skill, as the Ministry of Supply had recruited them for their detailed metalworking skills, and this new work kept these skills alive, ready for renewed jewellery production. Jeweller Paul Podolsky, who worked in his father's London workshop at the beginning of the war and who went on to take over a long-running Birmingham workshop, described how 'all those [governmental and Armed Forces] bodies came to see us with various jobs they wanted done and all these jobs of course were very small bits and pieces that they considered required the

¹ I discussed the initial move to war work and the implications of the reserved occupation status for jewellers in my MA research.

Georgina Izzard, 'Back to the Bench? Understanding the British Manufacturing Jewellers' Transfer to Rearmament and Munitions Production in the Second World War' (unpublished MA Dissertation, V&A/Royal College of Art, 2018).

skill and people who were used to handling small articles'.² Paul's almost-nonchalant description of the organisations that approached them with war work contracts made it sound like these contracts were like any other production his workshop took on and, to some extent, this is a useful characterisation of how the trade adapted to this new work. From making earrings, locket and rings in precious and plated base metals, jewellers repurposed their presses, lathes and drop stamps to make '2" H.E. Mortar Body Pressings at a rate of 30,000 per month', 'Gasmask Components, Primer Parts, Surgical Wound Clips, Bomb Arming Wires, Screw Sockets, Potentiometer Resistances, Pocket Compasses, Ball Races, Wireless Valve parts, Gravity Conveyor parts, components for Incendiary Bomb Clusters, including special steel Straps 5ft. long, Fuse Caps, Electrical Contacts, Letter Filing appliances, Rivets and numerous other parts for Electrical and Radio-location work'.³ The scale of their war work was vastly different from the bespoke and batch production of jewellery, and it required more machinery and new tooling, made specially for each job. Toolmakers and machine operators became vital and remained so, as jewellery production continued to make use of these additional machines after the completion of war contracts.

In 1942, the government designated being a jeweller as a reserved occupation for war work, such was the need for jewellers' specialised metalwork skills. Trade members still in the workshops, including female workers, older men and young men that had not been conscripted, were now not allowed to be called up for front-line work. Although this recognition came too late for many small businesses that had not been eligible for or had not secured war contracts, this new, relative security ensured that jewellers still working together would remain together. At the same time, the industry's trade association, the Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, and the government's Board of Trade helped the industry to believe that the immediate future of the trade was their responsibility. Government involvement with the trade did not end with the war; the jewellery and silver industry was one of six British production industries, alongside cotton, pottery, hosiery, furniture and boot and shoe making, to be scrutinised by the government's working parties with the aim of increasing production efficiency and modernising these useful trades. This intervention attested to the trade's long-held prestige, gained in part from the use of precious metals, the financial value of its goods, and the relative mystery and intrigue of the skills of gold and silversmithing.

These changes were not contained within the length of the war; contracts for the ministries extended long after peace was declared in Europe on 8 May 1945 and after the formal end of the war on 2

² Paul Podolsky, Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second, 2017.

³ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Arms & the Jeweller: Recording the Work of the British Jewellers in the War of 1939-1945* (Birmingham: Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1946), p. 23, 28, 34, Imperial War Museum, 64(41).72/5 90/2279.

September 1945. In the workshops, restrictions on the use of gold for the British market continued, and jewellers could only apply for metal supplies to make items for export in a bid to rebuild British reserves of foreign currencies and to repay our war debts. The rationing that everyone had tolerated during the war was a burden for another eight years, food rationing in Birmingham only ending in 1953. As Birmingham resident Brenda Bullock considered in her memoir of her childhood, 'I don't suppose the adults noticed much difference, actually, since rationing, shortages and the general misery lasted for several years after the war'.⁴ Though a sense of hope for life after the war distinguished the wartime period from the post-war period, the day-to-day experience of work and feeding your family changed relatively little between the early 1940s and the late 1940s. This research thus refers to the period by dates, rather than by international events, to better consider the lived experience of jewellers working at this time and to reassess the impact of these production changes on the jewellery trade.

The war did not displace the workers of the Jewellery Quarter, and their clustering of skills, materials and experience remained rooted in their geographical clustering in the Quarter. Figure i.1 is an aerial view photograph of the south-west edge of the Jewellery Quarter likely taken during the mid-twentieth century and showing Albion Street, Tenby Street, Pope Street and Camden Street as they were for the jewellers of the 1940s and 1950s; to the top right corner of the photo, the long buildings with lines of large windows reveal the many parallel workshop, or 'shopping', areas that hid behind the Georgian and Victorian street frontages.⁵ Lines of identical back-to-back houses, well known across the Midlands, run diagonally across the photo and impress how the factories and workshops of the Jewellery Quarter blended into local residential areas, and many jewellers lived and worked in the wider Hockley area that is home to the Quarter. Though bombed heavily in 1941, the Quarter remained physically the same until the first – and in the end the only – major redevelopment scheme in the 1960s, which marks the end of this project's research period. By remaining physically and socially an occupational community in the face of great change, the jewellers' work offered the chance to consider the mechanisms a community employs to uphold its identity. This research considers how these years of different production with different materials impacted jewellers' experiences of being in the workshop and what it meant to identify as a jeweller in this period, especially in a trade that was so geographically, socially and materially connected in the Jewellery Quarter.

⁴ Brenda Bullock, *A Pocket With A Hole: A Birmingham Childhood of the 1940s and 1950s* (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 1996), p. 22.

⁵ *Aerial View of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/272
<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f272>> [accessed 10 December 2023].



Figure i.1: A photograph of an aerial view of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, showing Albion Street Fire Station and lines of workshops in the top right, and Camden Street in the foreground. Date and photographer unknown, circa 1940.

Photographer unknown, *Aerial View of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/272

<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f272>> [accessed 10 December 2023]

Review of Literature

This research stemmed from recognition that a generation of Birmingham's jewellers had been left out of histories of the trade. This pattern is evident both in broad jewellery histories and more focused histories of production in Birmingham. Writers of both types of histories largely ignored the role of individual jewellers in specialised production processes and instead focused on jewellery design and the management of the industry. This review begins by highlighting these patterns in the existing literature. A historiographical approach to these trade histories is complemented by a review of

theoretical works about key themes raised by the trade histories, particularly the clustering of people, knowledge and materials, and the impact of wartime restrictions on this clustered community. The work of sociologists, economists and philosophers in adjacent fields provided useful conceptual apparatus for considering jewellers' work in the mid-twentieth century, including concepts of skill, deskilling and flexible specialisation within manufacture. Together, the gaps in trade history and their alignment with broader theories about production prove that new research into jewellers' production during the restrictions of the 1940s and 1950s is uniquely positioned to understand craftspeople's sentiments towards their sense of occupational identity.

Gaps in craft and jewellery histories first intimated the importance of this research project. Design and craft historian Tanya Harrod's generalisation of mid-twentieth century manufacturing echoed approaches by jewellery historians. In her overview of twentieth-century British craft, Harrod summarised: 'Post-war shortages, the fact that quality manufactured goods were earmarked for export well into the 1950s and the unadventurousness of British manufacturing created a design vacuum in the late 1940s and early 1950s.'⁶ Harrod's references to shortages and export needs revealed the factors outside of makers' control that affected production at the time, but she listed these factors only to contribute to her assessment of the 'design vacuum'. General jewellery historians largely adopted a similar approach. Alba Cappellieri, Jewellery and Accessories Design tutor and Professor at the School of Design of the Politecnico of Milan, mentioned neither of the two World Wars, nor their immediate aftermaths in her *Jewellery of the 20th Century: From Art Nouveau to Contemporary Design*; and her focus on European and North American bespoke 'high' jewellery design included little discussion of manufacturing.⁷ In this book, Cappellieri followed many other jewellery specialists by writing for an intended readership of museum visitors and interested jewellery consumers, who were taught to separate the high jewellery in museum collections from the jewellery they personally owned – the type of jewellery that sustains most of the industry's production.⁸ In contrast to bespoke jewels, manufacturers of fine and fashion jewellery work on a batch-to-mass scale, and so occupy different positions in design and manufacturing networks. Many broad jewellery histories have not focused on the differences between these positions and have, instead, given

⁶ Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (Yale University Press, 1999), p. 250.

⁷ Alba Cappellieri, *Twentieth-century Jewellery: From Art Nouveau to Contemporary Design in Europe and the United States* (Milan: Skira, 2010).

⁸ Design historian Judy Attfield warned against this blinding focus on the 'designed' object in her 2000 book *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life*, in which she called for scholarly interest in material culture other than those objects we have raised as pinnacles of design. This research project responds to Attfield's call by turning attention to the jewels we wear every day, and to the lives of their makers, to build more nuanced manufacturing histories.

Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life* (Berg, 2000).

overviews of design changes that combine the roles of designer and maker in one jeweller identity without referencing the interlinked nature of jewellery production in a centre like Birmingham.

Whilst commentary on the links between designers and manufacturers of jewellery is often found only in specialist histories, jewellery historians have focused on the links between designers and consumers in the 1940s and 1950s. Caroline Pullée and Peter Hinks both drew a connection between the lightness of 1940s' and 1950s' jewellery designs and a need for utility and austerity in material use and consumption. Pullée united the interrelated concerns of the jeweller and their public in her description of designs for jewels in the 1940s.

The chunkiness of forties work is indicative of the desire at this period to exude wealth despite the fact that most people did not have the financial resources to buy fine jewellery. In consequence limited quantities of gold would be carefully wrought in order to give the illusion of being larger than they really were.⁹

Pullée identified a link between jewellery design, (lack of) materials, and consumption, but did not delineate between the craftsman that designed the jewels and the craftsman that wrought the gold. Her approach is like that of Hinks, who also linked metal shortages to changes in jewellery design.

Before the war the jeweller tended to block in his designs with solid gold and platinum and massed pavé-set gems, now he began to pencil them in with an outline of wire, either plain or twisted [... And] in the botanical designs which had become so popular for lapel brooches, leaf and petal had been reduced to a fragile autumnal skeleton lightly touched in with corded wire.¹⁰

In his characterisation of the jeweller, Hinks gave a singular description, implying that one person had control and authorship of the entire process. Both Hinks and Pullée contributed to the notion of an overall 'jeweller' identity, which is unhelpful for understanding and valuing the many skills and craftspeople required in the different stages of production. However, their identification of differences in gold use due to material restrictions has raised subsequent questions about the effect of war on work, particularly material interactions and therefore skill, for jewellers in the 1940s.

Specialist histories of Birmingham have better identified the manufacturing jewellers and their role in the industry, but the almost-universal use of the same top-down sources has reduced recognition of the trade's complexity. In the impressive *Jewellery Making in Birmingham, 1750-1995*, historian Shena Mason drew on her extensive analysis of written content in the archive of the Birmingham-based British Jewellers' Association (BJA) and their trade journal *The British Jeweller* to describe the

⁹ Caroline Pullée, *Twentieth Century Jewellery* (The Apple Press, 1990), p. 57.

¹⁰ Peter Hinks, *Twentieth Century British Jewellery, 1900-1980* (Faber and Faber, 1983), pp. 113–14.

Birmingham jewellery industry. These association sources pushed her attention to businesses more than individuals, as demonstrated in her generalisation of suppliers' fear of losing export markets to American producers if they did not resume and increase jewellery manufacture after the war:

In this respect it [the Birmingham trade] had learned something from its war work. The technical experience gained and the improvements in machinery which had been prompted by the war effort meant that the trade was technically able to tackle mass production; and if it could marry that technical know-how to appropriate design and produce the right goods at the right price, then it would be in a far stronger position.¹¹

Mason could have further used the insight to personal experience and opinions she had gained from conducting interviews with members of the trade to interrogate the 'top-down' view of the industry she had gleaned from the minutes of the BJA's meetings. Statements about the trade making the most of its wartime experiences could have then acknowledged individual roles in this transfer of skill.

Despite researching and writing in the 1990s, Shena Mason's approach to telling the history of the jewellery trade resembled earlier histories of the city that had, as renowned Birmingham historian Carl Chinn described, focused on 'prominent political or manufacturing personalities [...] so that the voices of the common people were lost and what little was written about them comes through the prism of middle-class outlooks'.¹² Chinn, former Professor of Community History at the University of Birmingham, outlined trends in social histories of Birmingham in the first chapter of *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, a 2016 volume of new Birmingham histories co-edited with Malcolm Dick, Director of the Centre for West Midlands History at the University of Birmingham. Chinn identified a rise in 'bottom-up' histories from the 1960s and 1970s, which, by the early 1980s, had become 'an outpouring of working-class life stories by women as well as men', coupled with a more inclusive approach to collecting in the city's libraries – indeed, the relatively extensive local history section in the Library of Birmingham was very important to this research project.¹³ This growth in working-class

¹¹ Shena Mason, *Jewellery Making in Birmingham, 1750-1995* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1998), p. 142. See also Shelley Nott's history of the Birmingham-based British Jewellers' Association (BJA), commissioned by them to celebrate their centenary in 1987. Nott presents a detailed view of the trade in Birmingham that does not solely spotlight designers, but her account is understandably heavily aligned with the perspective of the trade association. Her analysis of the Association's support for the trade in the post-war environment is built upon internal research and related government papers. Her approach does little to bring forward our understanding of maker experiences in this period. Though Nott's history highlights many of the effects of industry-wide concerns, like levels of government-imposed Purchase Tax and post-war material restrictions, we can readdress these concerns to ask how they affected individual makers.

Shelley N. Nott, *The British Jewellers' Association 1887-1987: 100 Years of Service* (Birmingham: British Jewellers' Association, 1987).

¹² Carl Chinn, 'The Peoples of Birmingham', in *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 9–50 (p. 45).

¹³ Chinn, p. 45.

life stories may have stemmed from Birmingham's reassessment of itself as an increasingly multi-cultural city from the 1950s in an attempt to understand other periods of great social change; or these stories of working life were a form of reminiscing about industries in decline, as the city grappled with losing its status as 'workshop of the world'.

To the east of the Jewellery Quarter, the Gun Quarter was home to one such 'declining' industry during this outpouring of occupational histories. Helen White and Roger Trudgeon's 1983 analysis of their oral history project with gunmakers in the Gun Quarter is an example of this conventional 'industrial decline' narrative. Through gunmakers' recollections, they pointed to the competitive and individualistic nature of the industry due to its insular family-based structure, which they said had contributed to the industry's decline.¹⁴ White and Trudgeon's use of oral histories gave space for emotions about work changes, but they themselves questioned the significance of the opinions they collected in relation to other evidence gathered in their broader City Museum project, of which this oral history recording had been a part.¹⁵ White and Trudgeon's doubt about the benefit of the stories they had collected undermines their important work, but likely built on fears about the purpose of this project that had been prompted by West Midlands County Council following the partial demolition and renovation of workshops in the Gun Quarter.¹⁶ With much development happening in the Jewellery Quarter, this example of a similar project from the gun industry serves as a reminder to problematise research sources and motivations and to be aware of bending towards a nostalgia for occupations perceived to be lost.

In light of massive infrastructure changes in Birmingham during the second half of the twentieth century, including the demolition of many manufacturing and residential areas to make way for new ring roads and flyovers, it is unsurprising that the jewellery trade has also been subject to projects that have stressed the Quarter's decline, especially projects rooted in the 1980s concern for the 'creative destruction' of British and American manufacturing industries.¹⁷ Maureen Padfield, a sociologist now researching interviewing methodologies, produced a long history of the Jewellery Quarter in her PhD

See also: Anthony Sutcliffe and Roger Smith, *Birmingham 1939-1970* (London: Oxford University Press for Birmingham City Council, 1974), III; Chris Upton, *A History of Birmingham* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1993); Julie Phillips, *Birmingham at War 1939-45 (Towns & Cities in World War Two)* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2018).

¹⁴ Helen White and Roger Trudgeon, 'Birmingham's Gun Quarter: A Skilled Trade in Decline', *Oral History, Oral History & Labour History*, 11.2 (1983), pp. 69–83.

¹⁵ White and Trudgeon, p. 81.

¹⁶ The authors revealed the background of the project in the footnotes of this article. White and Trudgeon, p. 69.

¹⁷ 'Creative destruction' was coined in 1942 by the economist Joseph Schumpeter, and adapted from Marx, to describe a business cycle mechanism in which new products and processes constantly replace outdated systems and products.

thesis, submitted in 1990, but she too framed it in a narrative of decline, as her project was dominated by fears of more scheduled demolition in the Quarter.¹⁸ Yet, Padfield utilised her sociological training to bring forth the people in her assessment through interviews and time spent in the Quarter, alongside extensive historical contextual research and statistical analysis of numbers of firms and geographic clustering. She distanced her work from labour and economic historians' identification of the Quarter as an 'industrial district' to then convincingly argue that its workers were part of an established 'occupational community' in which 'certain occupations were observed to generate identification with work by the worker and to influence life outside of work in such a way that work took on a communal aspect'.¹⁹ Padfield's identification of an occupational community in the late 1980s importantly emphasised jewellers' identities as colleagues, homeowners/tenants, parents and children; a focus on these relationships speaks more to jewellers' identities than to narratives of decline, as are dominant in discussions of industrial districts. Though Padfield designated a chapter of her thesis to the study of women's work in the Quarter, she built her assessment of women's positions and skill levels in the 1940s and 1950s only on a structural analysis of rates of pay for male and female workers, which sidelined the individual experiences that would have better contextualised the gendering of roles and skills.²⁰ As a sociologist, Padfield understandably only turned to jewellery making processes in a two-page summary; yet, as a result, there is a need for research that delves deeper into how jewellers' tacit knowledge, their community, and their reputation within it, impacted

¹⁸ Maureen Padfield, 'Out in the Trade: The Occupational Community of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter' (unpublished PhD, University of Warwick, 1990) <<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/34821/>> [accessed 16 April 2020].

¹⁹ Padfield, p. 1.

Padfield never gives a more succinct definition of 'occupational community', but she builds her interpretation throughout the thesis. John Van Maanen and Stephen R. Barley gave their definition for occupational community in 1984; it is a succinct version of Padfield's:

'Defines an occupational community as a group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; whose identity is drawn from the work; who share a set of values, norms, and perspectives that apply to but extend beyond the work-related matters; and whose social relationships meld work and leisure.' John Van Maanen, 'Identity Work and Control in Occupational Communities', in *Organizational Control*, ed. by Sim B Sitkin, Laura B Cardinal, and Katinka M Bijlsma-Frankema (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 111–66 (p. 287).

²⁰ Padfield highlighted that women have always been an important part of the community, but historically either occupying predominantly low-skilled roles or were the owners of workshops. Men are thus categorised as being the 'skilled' workers even into the post-war period, when Padfield suggested women were in some 'skilled' roles.

Padfield.

For further writing on women and technology, see:

Cynthia Cockburn, *The Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men, and Technical Know-How* (London: Pluto Press, 1985); Vivian Lin, 'Women Electronics Workers in Southeast Asia: The Emergence of a Working Class', in *Global Restructuring and Territorial Development*, ed. by Jeffrey Henderson and Manuel Castells (London: Sage, 1987), pp. 112–35; Jan Sinclair-Jones, 'Women and Technology: Problem of Technological Unemployment or Deskillling', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31.16/17 (1996), WS31–34; Cynthia Cockburn, 'On The Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men, and Technical Know-How', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 37.1 & 2 (2009), 269–73.

how they navigated changes in production. Though hers was not an overtly historical project, Padfield worked with a community with firsthand memories of WWII; a design historical approach to these memories would have revealed important understanding of what it meant to work in the trade at a time when occupational identity was tested and stretched to its limits.

More recently, economic historian Francesca Carnevali turned attention to manufacturing processes and specialisations of role and skill in her 2003 article on batch and mass manufacturing in twentieth-century Birmingham.²¹ In response to her judgement that existing narratives of industrial districts had left out small businesses, she outlined that, 'small workshops possess the craft, the specialist knowledge that the larger firms use to produce a range of goods that combine the qualities of mass and batch production.'²² This arrangement suggested an ongoing differentiation of skills within the Birmingham jewellery district, with all parties controlling and cultivating specialist knowledge. Carnevali argued that workshop managers in the postwar period made a 'strategic choice' to make more affordable jewellery using different and mechanised production methods in reaction to Purchase Tax, imposed to help reduce the nation's war debt, and labour costs in the industry. Carnevali identified workshop leaders' established reliance on 'a variable combination of craft skills and machinery' to achieve both speciality and mass production when needed.²³ This production change, she added, 'seems to imply a profound change of identity for many of Birmingham's jewelers[sic]'.²⁴ Despite alluding to this 'profound change of identity', Carnevali did not pursue this line of enquiry. By analysing articles from trade journals – the same as used by Shena Mason – and interviews with business directors, Carnevali focused only on connections at the inter-workshop level and did not get closer to establishing how jewellers built and used their specialist knowledge and their reputation amongst their peers within workshops. Carnevali contributed valuable reassessments of work in the

²¹ Francesca Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities: Jewellery Making in Birmingham between Mass-Production and Speciality', *Enterprise and Society*, 4.2 (2003), 272–98 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/es/khg003>>.

Carnevali began her academic career by addressing the economic history of banks and small businesses in Italy and Britain, before turning to consider production flexibility and specialisation in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter whilst in position at the University of Birmingham. Carnevali passed away at the peak of her writing about the Quarter; it would have been exciting to see which further routes she took.

Francesca Carnevali, 'Did They Have It So Good? Small Firms and British Monetary Policy in the 1950s', *Journal of Industrial History*, 5.1 (2002), 15–34; Francesca Carnevali, *Europe's Advantage: Banks and Small Firms in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy since 1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Francesca Carnevali, "'Malefactors and Honourable Men": The Making of Commercial Honesty in Nineteenth-Century Birmingham', in *Industrial Clusters and Regional Business Networks in England, 1750-1970*, ed. by J F Wilson and A Popp (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 192–207; Francesca Carnevali, "'Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers": Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham', *The Economic History Review*, 57.3 (2004), 533–50; Francesca Carnevali, 'Luxury for the Masses, Jewellery and Jewellers in London and Birmingham in the 19th Century', *Entreprises et Histoire*, 46 (2007), 56–70.

²² Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities', p. 274.

²³ Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities', p. 277.

²⁴ Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities', p. 284.

twentieth-century Jewellery Quarter that prioritised small businesses and introduced jewellers' work into broader discussions of business and economic theory, but she also revealed the scope for other material- and skill-focused enquiries to further shape understanding of jewellers' production and identity changes.

Theoretical approaches

The historiographical review of existing studies of the jewellery trade in Birmingham revealed themes that warrant further research, particularly discussions of skill and tooling. Situating these themes in their broader theoretical context is vital for grounding this research project. The first half of the twentieth century saw drastic changes in labour, hastened by war. These changes, coupled with new materials and new machinery, prompted discussion of the boundaries of craft, art and design. Understanding these parameters is important when considering the work of the jewellery trade, especially in Birmingham – known for its range of production – as jewellers straddled craft and industrial production.

Writing contemporaneously to the jewellers' work in the 1940s, Italian architect and renowned designer Ettore Sottsass both warned and reassured about the impact of technological change on craft.

So many human activities have disappeared. [...] Craft as tradition can also disappear - more or less quickly and more or less radically - but it is important to get used to the idea that kinds of craft *must* disappear, because so many things made by craftsmen can be made by machine more beautifully, better and cheaper.²⁵

This sense of the inevitability of craft's disappearance influenced later research into industries considered at risk.

In turn, thinking turned to the knowledge rooted in craft actions, rather than the actions themselves; in this way, everything is crafted and everyone craftspeople. In his 1966 extended essay on tacit knowledge, physical chemist-turned-philosopher Michael Polanyi emphasised that '*we can know more than we can tell* [his emphasis]' – knowledge is more than just that which we can put into words.²⁶

²⁵ Ettore Sottsass, 'Le Vie Dell'artigiano', trans. by Christine Donougher [2018], *Il Politecnico: Rivista Di Cultura Contemporanea*, 38 (1946), 22–25.

²⁶ Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009 [1966]), p. 4.

In the thirty years following Polanyi's first publication of *The Tacit Dimension*, philosophers, sociologists and educationalists further developed their theories of tacit knowledge.

Polyani had previously termed these unexplainable aspects of tacit knowledge ‘logically unspecifiable’.²⁷ Craftspeople built tacit knowledge of their tools and materials through interactions with their bodies; for Polanyi, our body is ‘the only thing in the world which we normally never experience as an object’, a tool for which we do not have the language to describe or ability to transfer to others.²⁸ Political philosopher Michael Oakeshott shared a similar concept of tacit, or practical, knowledge. Writing in the same year as Polanyi delivered his Terry Lectures outlining tacit knowledge, Oakeshott emphasised a learning through doing:

[...] practical knowledge can neither be taught nor learned, but only imparted and acquired. It exists only in practice, and the only way to acquire it is by apprenticeship to a master, not because a master can teach it (he cannot) but because it can be acquired only by continuous contact with someone who is perpetually practising it.²⁹

Tacit knowledge can only be gained through repeated imitation, through being socialised within work. This mystery of skill- and material-based knowledge simultaneously keeps craft safe, because tacit knowledge can never be replicated by technology, but also at risk, because tacit knowledge cannot be recorded and can instead be replaced by alternative methods.

The 1960s concern for the loss of craftsmanship was encapsulated in the artist Anni Albers’ lament that ‘we certainly have grown increasingly insensitive in our perception of touch, the tactile sense’.³⁰ This feeling of losing our tactile sensibilities was paired with a drive to control other aspects of production and making. Psychologist James J Gibson termed our recognition of a tool’s possible uses its ‘affordances’ – how they allow us to adapt or use them.³¹ Affordance is a useful term for remembering that, as philosopher and anthropologist Bruno Latour later posited, non-human actors play a role as equally important as human actors.³² Yet, Gibson’s development of affordance in the midst of a battle for craftsmanship must be seen not only as applying to tools and machines, but also to us and our

²⁷ Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 53.

²⁸ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, p. 15.

²⁹ Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press, 1991 [1962]), quoted by Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 227.

³⁰ Anni Albers, *On Weaving* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017 [1965]), reprinted in *Craft*, ed. by Tanya Harrod, *Documents of Contemporary Art* (London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2018), p. 27.

³¹ James J Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966); James J Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979). See also: W. Blattner, *Heidegger’s Being and Time: A Reader’s Guide* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006).

³² Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

understanding of what we can do; affordance is based in our reappraisal of the limits of our capabilities.

Theories about capability and knowledge from this period were connected to a sense of inevitability about the loss of craftsmanship. Designer and writer, and then Professor of Furniture Design at the RCA, David Pye wrote his 1968 manifesto *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* within this malaise about moves to mass production.³³ Here, he proposed that there are two types of making: ‘the workmanship of risk’ and ‘the workmanship of certainty’. The workmanship of risk he applied to any making ‘in which the quality of the result is not predetermined, but depends on the judgement, dexterity and care which the maker exercises as he works’; whilst the workmanship of certainty applied to making in which ‘the quality of the result is exactly predetermined before a single saleable thing is made’.³⁴ Though Pye applied the workmanship of risk to handmade work and certainty to mass-produced work, he clarified that the two terms were not rooted in this duality and that craft-based industries often involved hybrid forms, embodying some risk and some certainty.³⁵ Pye’s theories may have grown from a fear of the deskilling of manufacturing roles by machinery and the development of computers, but he built into them the scope for both risk and certainty to be identified in all types of manufacturing: both include repetition and the habitual, to the point that even the care Pye included in the workmanship of risk ‘may well become habitual and unconscious’.³⁶ Repetition unites all types of manufacturing, and so is a more useful conceptual tool for considering skill accrual and retention.

The architectural critic Reyner Banham provided an antithesis to Pye’s link between certainty and precision in machine production in his debunking of ‘the myth of the “precision” of machinery’.³⁷ Speaking at the V&A five years after the publication of Pye’s *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, and to coincide with the exhibition *The Craftsman’s Art* by the newly formed Crafts Advisory Committee, later Crafts Council, Banham reflected on his time working with capstan and turret lathes – much like the jewellers in their war work – and their in-built tolerances.

[M]achines cannot sustain their own precision. Machines wear out, this is well known, and in the process of wearing out they become less accurate. So, thinking back to my time working on capstan lathes and turret lathes, a highly repetitive process, producing theoretically identical products, I recall that the only way that they could be kept identical was by taking out tools at regular intervals and going over to the

³³ David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* (Cambridge University Press, 1968).

³⁴ Pye, p. 4.

³⁵ Pye, p. 6.

³⁶ Pye, p. 4.

³⁷ Reyner Banham, ‘Sparks from the Plastic Anvil: The Craftsman in Technology’, *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 1.1 (2008), 137–41, reprinted in Harrod, *Craft*, p. 109.

grinder's bench and getting them to reset the tools – a manual job, a craftsman job. [...] [Machines] shed their accuracy with time, and furthermore, they must not be made all accurate in the first place.³⁸

If machines were made so exactly to produce precision, Banham continued, they would get jammed or wear out very quickly; machines therefore need tolerance, to not be made to exact accuracy but close enough to function with some assistance and maintenance so that a productive average between efficiency and accuracy is achieved.³⁹ Banham's myth of precision sat at the key position between Pye's risk and certainty, a position that is more useful conceptually than the extremes occupied by Pye. Banham's recollection of the skill involved in noticing tooling issues promptly and in the mending and resetting of tools was an antidote to the fears of skill loss that pervaded other contemporaneous writing.

This preoccupation with skill loss amongst the arts and crafts writing of the 1960s and 1970s took a more explicit form in the work of labour historians. Two years after Banham's focus on enduring craft skills in mass production, political economist Harry Braverman introduced his concept of 'deskilling' in his much-cited monograph *Labor and Monopoly Capital*.⁴⁰ He posited that 'deskilling' occurred when a firm's management implemented production changes to take control of knowledge away from workers. This process could be implemented in firms that had already separated management from its craftspeople: craftspeople controlled the processes of making, and management controlled the general orders and discipline. He framed these labour changes as a divide in the skills of the craftworker, who he characterised as a 'master of a body of traditional knowledge', which includes the 'concepts and the physical dexterities of the specialty'.⁴¹ Braverman's theory of deskilling rested heavily on a Marxist interpretation of capital production, a mid-nineteenth-century approach reflecting on the legacies of the industrial revolution that had only gained popular traction in economic theory after the 1960s, and then more so in Britain than elsewhere. In *Capital*, first published in 1854, Marx described how in efficient production workers became specialised in one role and therefore were deskilled at the same time: 'The one-sidedness and even the deficiencies of the specialised individual worker become perfections when he is part of the collective worker [...] manufacture

³⁸ Banham in Harrod, *Craft*, p. 109.

³⁹ Banham in Harrod, *Craft*, p. 110.

⁴⁰ Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

Carl J. Cuneo, in his review of Stephen Wood's critique of Braverman, refers to Braverman's work as 'path breaking'. Despite facing criticism, Braverman's theory of deskilling deserves the title of 'path breaking' because through its dissemination he has stimulated a broad discussion of the concept of skill, especially, but not only, in regard to technological changes.

Carl J Cuneo, 'Review: The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process by Stephen Wood', *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*, 9.4 (1984), 479–82 (p. 479).

⁴¹ Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*).

creates a class of so-called unskilled labourers'.⁴² Braverman sided with Marxism's focus on managing capital in all its forms: economic, social and knowledge. For Braverman, Marx's theories about the accrual of surplus labour in production systems complemented the principles of scientific management, a Taylorist approach to managing workers and equipment to synthesise production. In the early 1970s, whilst America was in financial recession, the concept of deskilling took hold.

Braverman quickly amassed critics of deskilling.⁴³ Much of the deskilling debate sits in the 1980s, a time when computers in the workplace had a significant effect on role delineations, and a larger movement to deindustrialise Britain and North America took formerly key production industries, like textiles, ceramics, steel and even jewellery on a smaller scale, and outsourced jobs to overseas competitors. The social effects of these changes became a sticking point for Braverman's critics. In his attack of deskilling, Tony Elger criticised Braverman's focus on managerial evidence that prioritised the financial value of work and skill, and Elger refuted that capital's impulse was always to deskill; instead, he posited that a historical assessment of labour transformation framed changes as being the result of assessments of 'valorisation and accumulation', valuing certain skills and accumulating them to the disadvantage of other skills.⁴⁴ This more positive assessment gave space to the workers, their skills and their resistance in mediating the impact of technology, all of which Braverman painted as having been forcefully removed in deskilling's transfer of power from workers to management. Labour historian Paul Thompson also criticised deskilling's redistribution of control and the inference that it withdraws power from workers.⁴⁵ Workers could, instead, develop power in other aspects of their work through these process changes. Whilst we must be wary of inferring power systems in past manufacturing communities, Elger's and Thompson's recognition of workers' power is crucial in building a more balanced understanding of production changes and their impact on skill-based identities.

Skill, too, must be recognised as a social construct. Labour historian Veronica Beechey set out her three complementary meanings of skill in her response to the 'deskilling' debate: skill was 'a set of complex "objective" competencies'; 'control of the labour process'; and 'a recognised occupational

⁴² Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. by Ben Fowkes and David Fernbach (London: Penguin, 1990), I, reprinted in Harrod, *Craft*, p. 102.

Joan Sangster briefly discusses the academic following of Marxism in relation to women's histories in the late twentieth century.

Joan Sangster, 'Gendering Labour History Across Borders', *Labour History Review*, Fifty Years of Labour History, 75.2 (2010), 143–61 (p. 145).

⁴³ For multiple essays critiquing Braverman, see: *The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process*, ed. by Stephen Wood (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1982).

⁴⁴ Tony Elger, 'Valorisation and "Deskilling": A Critique of Braverman', *Capital & Class*, 3.1 (1979), pp. 58–99.

⁴⁵ Paul Thompson, *The Nature of Work: An Introduction to Debates on the Labour Process* (The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1983).

status'.⁴⁶ Beechey's combination highlighted that skill is a social construct that is relative to the idea of being 'semi-skilled' or 'unskilled'; it is constructed to be measurable and therefore controllable. Deskilling debates hinged on the idea of skill being measurable. Sociologist Thomas DiPrete, for example, disagreed with deskilling and presented 'status redefinition' as an alternative theory.⁴⁷ DiPrete suggested the terms 'upgrading' and 'degrading' to focus on an individual's overall change in skill levels, rather than deskilling's comparison of the skills linked to a general occupation at two moments in time. This difference in approach, he suggested, is linked to the data each study uses: writers that have worked with the deskilling narrative used predominantly aggregate studies to focus on changes to an occupation, whilst writers that adopted the upgrading narrative used predominantly case studies to focus on changes to roles within an individual's career. Sociologists Roger Penn and Hilda Scattergood's study of divisions of labour amongst one generation of workers in three British paper mills between 1970 and 1985 was an example of assessing individuals' skill changes using case studies.⁴⁸ They posited that roles were shaped and understood based on 'the identity of "skill"', as workers reinforced these skill-based identities through 'norms and practices' in the workplace.⁴⁹ The introduction of computers in the mills they studied did not stop the skilled 'machinemen' 'following' their work along its production through the machines, checking quality and process: 'while computerised machines are running smoothly, it might appear as if jobs have been deskilled, once they start to go wrong, swift action is required which presupposes a wide knowledge of how the automated processes actually work'.⁵⁰ Like Reyner Banham's recollection of lathe work, they argued that a 'skilled' worker operated a fully automated machine and they emphasised the role of maintenance in skill-based identities.⁵¹ Penn and Scattergood highlighted that for the generation bringing in machinery changes, there was no 'before' and 'after', but a series of experiences, a concept that is important for understanding the generation of jewellers that navigated to and from war work. The distinction between management theories of skill, as employed in deskilling and redefinition theories, and individual craftspeople's embodiment of skill, as referred to in theories of tacit knowledge, divides historical interpretations of skill. The skill we refer to when we speak of

⁴⁶ Veronica Beechey, 'The Sexual Division of Labour and the Labour Process', in *The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process*, ed. by Stephen Wood (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1982).

⁴⁷ Thomas A DiPrete, 'The Upgrading and Downgrading of Occupations: Status Redefinition vs. Deskilling as Alternative Theories of Change', *Social Forces*, 66.3 (1988), 725–46.

DiPrete built upon fellow management sociologist Kenneth Spenner's comparison of levels of study in researching deskilling and upgrading theories.

Kenneth I Spenner, 'Deciphering Prometheus: Temporal Change in the Skill Level of Work', *American Sociological Review*, 48 (1983), 824–37.

⁴⁸ Roger Penn and Hilda Scattergood, 'Deskilling or Enskilling? An Empirical Investigation of Recent Theories of the Labour Process', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 36.4 (1985), pp. 611–30.

⁴⁹ Penn and Scattergood, p. 614.

⁵⁰ Penn and Scattergood, p. 623.

⁵¹ Penn and Scattergood, p. 621.

craftspeople's skills is the careful application of tacit knowledge, Polanyi's 'logically unspecifiable' knowledge and Paul Thompson's 'specific dexterities', or 'tricks of the trade' learnt through imitation.⁵² We must differentiate between the measurable ideas of skill used in management and the immeasurable ideas of skill used in craftsmanship.

Alongside the deskilling debate of the 1980s, and the industrial crisis in western Europe and the United States, other labour historians turned to historical alternatives to mass production to understand contemporary production changes. Leading business theorists Charles Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin argued that mass production was never an inevitability and instead identified instances of 'flexible specialisation' that allowed businesses in nineteenth-century western Europe to react to changes in materials, products and consumption trends; in particular, managers of workshops and factories changed their production lines to specialise when required, for instance with large or batch orders or to respond to market changes.⁵³ This flexible specialisation rested on skilled labour that could operate general purpose machinery, a combination that could be flexibly employed for different products. Sabel and Zeitlin opened their 1985 article by contextualising their historical studies in the contemporary practice of what they identified as 'the flexible use of multi-purpose or universal machines and skilled labour to make an ever-changing assortment of semi-customized products: a system that reverses the principles of mass production'.⁵⁴ In the wake of deskilling fears, Sabel and Zeitlin reassured that the value of skills endure and would be increasingly valued as the economic benefits of mass production began to wane.⁵⁵

In her studies of the history of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, Francesca Carnevali lent on Sabel and Zeitlin's theory of flexible specialisation to argue for jewellers' flexibility in their navigation of competition and changing material availability in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵⁶ Yet, Carnevali astutely recognised that jewellers flexibly made changes to staffing as well as changes to machinery, utilising the trade-based outworking system of independent firms and workers to manage peaks in production. Her recognition of social changes followed historian Maxine Berg's

⁵² Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, p. 53; Thompson, p. 108.

⁵³ Charles F. Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin, 'Historical Alternatives to Mass-Production: Politics, Markets and Technology in Nineteenth-Century Industrialisation', *Past & Present*, 108 (1985), pp. 133–46; *World of Possibilities: Flexibility and Mass Production in Western Industrialization*, ed. by Charles F. Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁵⁴ Sabel and Zeitlin, 'Historical Alternatives to Mass-Production: Politics, Markets and Technology in Nineteenth-Century Industrialisation', p. 133.

⁵⁵ However, Zeitlin did use aggregate studies in establishing his idea of flexibility, as was common in establishing arguments for deskilling. Using other forms of data, like case studies, may have increased focus on individual experiences of role change.

⁵⁶ Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities'.

refutation of a sequential process of industrialisation that concentrated on changes to machinery.⁵⁷ Carnevali also followed Zeitlin's focus on 'industrial districts' to describe the Jewellery Quarter, an idea based on economist Alfred Marshall's 'Marshallian Agglomeration Economies' in which firms relied on a local pool of labour, the local exchange of knowledge and local supply networks.⁵⁸ Zeitlin problematised what he saw as a lack of industrial districts in the UK since the 1970s, which he measured by comparing the changes in manufacturing output and number of employees of the 100 largest firms and firms with fewer than 100 employees between 1948 and 1970.⁵⁹ He postulated that industrial districts declined through a combination of firms choosing to merge rather than grow internally, creating national groups and waning links at the local level; the failed imposition of statutory development councils by the postwar Labour governments; and government policies that encouraged businesses to build new plant away from existing industrial areas. The jewellers of the 1940s and 1950s were therefore of the pivotal generation enacting and living through what Zeitlin believed to be the downfall of industrial districts like the Jewellery Quarter, though Carnevali warned that '[t]his history of decline might also have become part of a conventional industrial narrative'.⁶⁰ The jewellers' story is an important one to bring lived experience into questioning narratives of decline. In this vein, Carnevali rightfully suggested that the Jewellery Quarter required a correspondingly 'flexible narrative' to describe its history, a term she adopted from business theorist Philip Scranton.⁶¹

Just as attacks were felt on craft in the mid-twentieth century, the strength of the deskilling debate and the increase in computerised methods of manufacture triggered a response from craft theorists at the turn of the twenty-first century. Design and craft historian (and previous head of the V&A/RCA History of Design programme) Glenn Adamson turned to art theorist John Roberts's reframing of the interrelationship of skill, deskilling and reskilling. In his labour-theory re-assessment of modern art production, Roberts asserted that the so-called 'absence of discernible skill' in contemporary art is an unjust but useful characterisation of the art-making process because it reveals the productive potential of deskilling: artists can and have always collaborated with additional makers and materials, removing the need for specific skills and adding new skills.⁶² Adamson reflected on Roberts'

⁵⁷ Maxine Berg, 'Small Producer Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century England', *Business History*, 35 (1993), pp. 17–39.

⁵⁸ Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (Macmillan, 1890); Jonathan Zeitlin, 'Why Are There No Industrial Districts in the United Kingdom?', in *Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises*, ed. by Arnaldo Bagnasco and Charles F. Sabel, Social Change in Western Europe (Pinter, 1995), pp. 98–114; Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities'.

⁵⁹ Zeitlin, p. 103.

⁶⁰ Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities', p. 296.

⁶¹ Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities', p. 297; Philip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁶² John Roberts, 'Art after Deskilling', *Historical Materialism*, 18 (2010), 77–96 (p. 77).

skill/deskilling/reskilling 'triangle' in his own assessment of displaced production and distributed authorship in art and craft – an interesting parallel to jewellery making on an industrial-craft level in which outward-facing authorship is fixed despite frequent moving and replacement of craftspeople and their skills.⁶³ In Adamson's work and in all craft literature, skill is central but the terms used to describe it, including deskilling and reskilling, carry meanings specific to contemporaneous debate. For instance, prominent anthropologists Trevor Marchand and Tim Ingold both researched the role of craft in identity building, and the titles of their resultant books revealed trends in terminology that refocused on tacit knowledge and skill: Ingold's 2000 publication of *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* was revised in 2011 and 2021, with a new preface each time in which Ingold reflected on his positionality and the changed approach to involving his own position and perception in academic writing; Marchand's *Making Knowledge: Explorations of the Indissoluble Relation Between Mind, Body and Environment*, published in 2010 as a Special Issue and as a book in 2011; Ingold's 2013 *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*; and Marchand's 2016 edited compilation *Craftwork as Problem Solving: Ethnographic Studies of Design and Making*.⁶⁴ All titles stressed that the tacit knowledge involved in making and craftwork helps us situate ourselves in our environment. Like other craft writers, Marchand and Ingold's prolific turn to work about craft can be seen as a direct reaction to changes in the value assigned to craft skills, particularly evident in the successive removal of support for practical education in British schools and universities, and more recently to drives to understand our material world and our place within it in the face of devastating climate change.

These pressures have inspired new ways of working across disciplines to think about skills and tools. Chris Baber, from the University of Birmingham's School of Engineering, collaborated with Tony Chemero, of the University of Cincinnati's Philosophy and Psychology department, and Jamie Hall, a metalworker based in Birmingham to argue that tools mediate jewellers' activity through a process of mutual co-construction: designs dictate tool use and tools shape designs during making.⁶⁵ Though

See also: John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art after the Readymade* (London: Verso, 2007).

⁶³ Glenn Adamson, 'The Ties That Bind', 2017 <<https://www.glennadamson.com/work/2017/8/2/the-ties-that-bind>> [accessed 11 May 2024].

⁶⁴ Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (Routledge, 2022); *Making Knowledge: Explorations of the Indissoluble Relation Between Mind, Body and Environment*, ed. by Trevor H. J. Marchand (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rcauk/detail.action?docID=819338>> [accessed 3 July 2020]; Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Routledge, 2013); *Craftwork as Problem Solving: Ethnographic Studies of Design and Making*, ed. by Trevor H. J. Marchand (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2016) <<https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9781472442932>> [accessed 3 July 2020].

⁶⁵ Chris Baber, Tony Chemero, and Jamie Hall, 'What the Jeweller's Hand Tells the Jeweller's Brain: Tool Use, Creativity and Embodied Cognition', *Philosophy and Technology*, 32 (2017), pp. 283–302.

they focused more on creativity in terms of the design of jewellery forms, jewellers' creativity lies also in their decision to use a certain tool based on their understanding of its possible uses and how they can manipulate these uses – its affordances. Cognitive archaeologist Lambros Malafouris also worked with makers, in this case ceramicists, to consider how their use of tools and clay could inform our attempts to study makers in the past.⁶⁶ His Material Engagement Theory ties archaeology's focus on material culture and object analysis to the restaging of manufacturing processes, as advocated for by Marchand and Ingold, and much like the research of historian of science Pamela H Smith in her *Making & Knowing Project* and the V&A's *Encounters on the Shop Floor* project.⁶⁷ Birmingham-based horologist Rebecca Struthers expertly emphasised the knowledge that can be linked through contemporary practice-based research of manufacturing processes and of historical craftspeople in her 2023 book *Hands of Time: A Watchmaker's History of Time*.⁶⁸ Similarly, the RCA's Reader in Material Culture, and former chemist, Peter Oakley has called for the examination of materials today to understand how they have developed and been assigned their own identities in both historical and contemporary settings, which can reveal the complexity of networks in which these materials have acted. His particular focus on the identity of gold through processes of refining, making and use worked to understand the industry from within – a valuable alternative viewpoint for this research project.⁶⁹ Together, these recent cross-disciplinary ways of working through craft and industrial craft stress the value of materials, tools and tacit knowledge in connecting us to makers of the past; sometimes, they are the only evidence with which we can directly engage.

Finding jewellers' place between craft and industry has never been timelier. With historians subverting traditional narratives and working across disciplines with craftworkers, artists and engineers, and craft and design theorists doing the same, the once tautological phrase 'industrial craftsmanship' has found new meaning. In her 2019 article about the work of Australian engineering pattern-makers in the *Journal of Design History* and resultant 2021 book *Industrial Craft in Australia*, oral historian and design researcher at the University of Technology Sydney Jesse Adams Stein reframed industrial designer John Heskett's phrase 'industrial craftsmanship', which he had coined in 1981 to describe one phase

⁶⁶ Lambros Malafouris, 'Mind and Material Engagement', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 18 (2018), pp. 1–17.

⁶⁷ Don Ihde and Lambros Malafouris, 'Homo Faber Revisited: Postphenomenology and Material Engagement Theory', *Philosophy and Technology*, 32 (2019), pp. 195–214; Pamela H Smith, 'Vermilion, Mercury, Blood, and Lizards: Matter and Meaning in Metalworking', in *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory*, ed. by Ursula Klein and E C Spray (The University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 29–49; *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge*, ed. by Pamela H Smith, Amy Meyers, and Harold Cook (University of Chicago Press, 2017).

⁶⁸ Rebecca Struthers, *Hands of Time: A Watchmaker's History of Time* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2023).

⁶⁹ Peter Oakley, 'Introducing Fairtrade and Fairmined Gold: An Attempt to Reconfigure the Social Identity of a Substance', in *The Social Life of Materials: Studies in Materials and Society*, ed. by Adam Drazin and Suzanne Kuechler (Routledge, 2020), pp. 155–74.

of many between craft and industry.⁷⁰ Like art historian Ezra Shales in his 2017 *The Shape of Craft*, Stein called for design researchers to recognise production that lies between the common definitions of craft and industry, and particularly the impact of workers not typically considered ‘designers’ on the design of an item, an input that rests largely on her identification of the importance of patternmakers’ tacit knowledge.⁷¹ Though Stein continued to describe the patternmakers’ work in terms of design rather than craft processes, she importantly identified that in ‘real life’ the ‘disciplinary boundaries of what constitutes “design”, “craft” and “engineering” seem to recede’, as she identified patternmaking as a ‘cohesion of manual craft, tacit knowledge, intellectual understanding and aesthetic consideration’.⁷² Shales, too, referred to the anonymous crafters of factory production lines that still demonstrate mastery of their skills and craft despite the mass-manufactured nature of their work obscuring their craft. The jewellers’ work was no different and so ‘industrial craft’ offers a productive space for considering occupational legacies. Understanding these legacies connects this research to a broader drive to reconfigure the definition of ‘maker’ within an expanded remit of craft and the creative industries in response to the craft involved in ‘hacker culture’ that has spread from the computer clubs of the 1960s and 1970s to the user-generated sites of Web 2.0, as design historian Catharine Rossi put it in Leah Armstrong and Felice McDowell’s edited anthology *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries*.⁷³ With a broadening sense of what constitutes industrial craft, understanding occupational identity becomes important to both makers in the past and their colleagues today.

Jewellers present an enduring alternative to theories of mass production; their swift production change using established trade processes to make millions of new items for the Armed Forces is a case in point. This critical industry change is part of an under-researched period in the history of the Quarter and in jewellery history generally. General jewellery histories have ignored Birmingham production and the wartime changes to the industry and to jewellers’ work; whilst more specialist histories of the Jewellery Quarter have highlighted the importance of this period in the development of the trade but

⁷⁰ Jesse Adams Stein, ‘Hidden Between Craft and Industry: Engineering Patternmakers’ Design Knowledge’, *Journal of Design History*, 32.3 (2019), pp. 280–303; Clive Dilnot and Lilián Sánchez-Moreno, ‘John Heskett’s Industrial Design: An Interview at Middlesex Polytechnic, 1981. Part Two: The Emergence of the Role of the Design and the Designer in the Industrial Economy’, *Design Issues*, 35.2 (2019), pp. 46–59; Jesse Adams Stein, *Industrial Craft in Australia: Oral Histories of Creativity & Survival*, Palgrave Studies in Oral History (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

⁷¹ Ezra Shales, *The Shape of Craft* (Reaktion Books, 2018).

⁷² Stein, p. 282, p.293.

⁷³ Catharine Rossi, ‘The Maker 2.0: A Craft-Based Approach to Understanding a New Creative Identity’, in *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries*, ed. by Leah Armstrong and Felice McDowell (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), pp. 181–201 (p. 183).

failed to capture the complexity of the division of work because they have utilised the same collection of sources that were created by and for industry leaders. Yet, as Francesca Carnevali noted, this change in production correspondingly ‘seems to imply a profound change of identity for many of Birmingham’s jewelers[sic]’; this identity change is an important aspect of work and occupational legacy that does not feature in existing histories, despite the 1940s and 1950s generation being able to discuss their occupational identity more overtly in the face of wartime changes. At this time, conscription, war production and loss of wage-earning family members stretched individuals’ concepts of their occupational identity; this period is uniquely positioned to think of occupational identity in relation to long debates about deskilling and the accrual of skills, flexible specialisation, and tacit knowledge, particularly at the intersection of industrial craft.

The gap in existing histories of Birmingham’s jewellery industry centres on workers’ experience of enacting these production changes in the 1940s and 1950s and the impact they had on their sense of being a jeweller, especially as they were no longer making jewellery and had limited access to precious metals. The initial research question for this project thus became: ‘what did it mean to identify as a jeweller in Birmingham in the 1940s and 1950s?’ This broad question gave equal space to considering individual experiences and patterns of experience across the trade, aspects of occupational history that are not present in existing histories. Grounding this research in the mid-twentieth century focused attention on how crisis management can sometimes reveal underlying organisational structures more clearly than in periods of ‘normal’ life. A more nuanced version of the research question reflected this opportunity: ‘how does the turmoil of the 1940s and 1950s allow us to see production and occupational identity differently?’ Understanding how these craftspeople identified themselves throughout this period creates a more detailed picture of mid-century manufacturing in Birmingham, whilst also contributing a new focus on the occupational legacies of industrial craftworkers in the UK. A design-historical reassessment of these themes offered a new interpretation of work in the 1940s and 1950s.

Methodology

In the existing literature about British manufacturing in the mid-twentieth century, writers made clear that the Second World War affected people, materials and technology in workshops. As a period of technological and social change, it would have been tempting to follow these changes and align the jewellers’ experiences with theories of deskilling. This research project instead followed more empathetic ways to consider skill accrual, transfer and resilience and their impact on occupational identity. The initial research question – ‘what did it mean to identify as a jeweller in this period?’ – put

personal experience at the core of understanding occupational identity and occupational legacy and highlighted the usefulness of primary sources like oral histories, memoirs and interviews. A more nuanced and pressing iteration of this research question recognised that the jewellers worked amongst broader societal and economic change: ‘how does the turmoil of the 1940s and 1950s allow us to see production and occupational identity differently?’ The wartime manufacturing changes and the increased government attention on the trade makes this period unique for its discussions of identity, as occupational identity had never before been so openly questioned and formulated. With this route of enquiry, this research built a methodology for considering occupational identity in the past that incorporated respect and discretion.

The research question’s two iterations raised additional questions about the nature of the trade that this research needed to address in order to respond to the gaps in existing histories. To build a picture of the trade in 1940s and 1950s Birmingham, I sought primary sources and other resources that would address the size and demography of the trade; schooling and trade-based educational training; the role of family and gender in access to work; traditional employment patterns and mobility within and out of the trade; organisational structures within firms and wartime changes that impacted these structures; attitudes to technology and the people operating that technology; and concepts of skill. Archival data collection from individual business records, but also, and overwhelmingly, the extensive archive of the Birmingham Jewellers’ and Silversmiths’ Association (BJSA), later known as the Birmingham/British Jewellers’ Association (BJA) yielded much useful contextual information.⁷⁴ Other researchers, including Shena Mason and Francesca Carnevali, have also relied upon these easily accessible and comprehensive records as they detail the trade association’s involvement and assessment of manufacturing situations in the twentieth century. Their reliance on these records have resulted in histories of trade leaders’ experiences at the expense of workers’ points of view – a history from above. Indeed, the editor of the association’s journal, *The British Jeweller*, reported that in this time of increased external input from the ministries, even the government’s working party appointed to assess the productivity of the trade had realised that the jewellery and allied trades industry would “not be an easy industry to organise entirely from above”.⁷⁵ This assessment derived in large part from the many small businesses and independent jewellers that slipped through bureaucratic loopholes. Finding these businesses and their workers has been crucial for this research project to

⁷⁴ A more comprehensive introduction to the BJSA is in the first chapter of this thesis. The BJSA archive is found at the Wolfson Centre for Archival Research using the reference MS 1646.

See also: Nott.

⁷⁵ W H Leese, ‘The Writing On The Wall’, *The British Jeweller*, March 1947, 51–53 (p. 52).

build a more representative view of the trade and to consider occupational identity across such a large, yet very connected, trade.

The association's records must be complemented by additional sources to yield a more nuanced picture of work in the 1940s and 1950s. A set of 1,217 employee accident cards detailing the workplace injuries of workers in businesses across the jewellery and allied trades between 1942 and 1946 (before the establishment of the National Health Service) has been instrumental in understanding individual situations and industry-wide patterns in manufacturing processes and injuries that speak to the workers' tacit knowledge and workshop practices. As the clerical records of a compensation scheme, the cards detail workers' names, home addresses, ages, employers, work roles and injuries; even knowing their names makes these workers' histories more tangible. Finding the names of historical actors that have been left out by other historical research methods has been a focus for proponents of microhistory, the telling of individual biographical histories that also reflect the context that the individual lived in. Arlette Farge, the celebrated historian of *mentalités* (or 'worldviews'), turned to court records from eighteenth-century Paris to piece together detailed personal histories of its working-class communities; she later reflected on encountering these records and engaging with the people whose transcripts they record in her 1989 methodological text *Le Goût de l'archive*, a sensual description of interacting with bundles of paper and the people detailed within.⁷⁶ Unwrapping the accident cards produced a response similar to that of Farge's sense of feeling 'immersed in something vast, oceanic', a total immersion in these people's lives that commands respect.⁷⁷ In the introduction to his co-edited collection of microhistory studies, Edward Muir referred to the historian's search for the 'exceptional document' that could be 'much more revealing than a multitude of stereotypical sources'; in this research, the accident cards were the exceptional document that dwarfed the value of the BJSa committees' minutes.⁷⁸

With such focus on individuals, microhistory must answer questions about the representativeness of its sources and conclusions as it has a complex relationship with the telling of broader histories; it 'raises questions about selectivity and significance', as Muir challenged in his introduction to *Microhistory & The Lost Peoples of Europe*.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Arlette Farge, *Délinquance et Criminalité: Le Vol Alimentaire à Paris Au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1974), based on her earlier PhD thesis. For Farge's reflection on conducting microhistory and experiences of being in the archive, see: Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, trans. by Thomas Scott-Railton (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

⁷⁷ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Muir, xvi.

⁷⁹ Muir, p. xiii.

*What can the few tell about the many, especially when the process of selection is neither random nor statistically rigorous? And how can historians concerned with trifles avoid producing trivial history?*⁸⁰

Though Muir raised an important point about representativeness, the same critique should be applied to all histories. Whilst this research project is not a microhistory because it has sought to understand occupational identity across a generation of craftspeople, rather than the complete life stories of so few, the representativeness of its conclusions is still a critical factor. The employees' accident cards presented the opportunity to combine some statistical analysis with individuals' stories – achieving both breadth and depth of analysis – to assess patterns of experiences across the jewellery trade. Combining multiple types of primary source, from business records and accident cards, to interviews with jewellers and object analysis of their tools, ensured that this research built an understanding of occupational identity that was both challenged and reinforced by the information drawn from them. Using a mix of research methods is common practice amongst design historians, and it helps move closer to a level of representativeness that yields useful and reliable conclusions.⁸¹

Conducting new oral histories and interviews with jewellers, and interrogating existing recordings and transcripts, provided more personal and nuanced insights that prioritised emotions and experience. Though both the accident cards and interviews yield intimate stories, the unstructured oral history interview is not limited by the bureaucracy of the compensation scheme's form-filling and moves us closer to distinguishing workers' motivations and intentions for being part of the trade. Interviews with jewellers today provided an important link to the craftspeople of the 1940s and 1950s because the sharing of memories mirrors the sharing of stories within the trade that socialise jewellers from within the workshop. Jewellers' repeated references to proximity and reputation within the trade pointed to the importance they gave to their occupational community. Amongst all workers, whether during interviews with me or with another project, there was a clear ease in discussing their work, and most demonstrated an understanding of production roles beyond their own. In light of this community and shared skill-based knowledge, jewellers' reminiscences in interviews not only referred to their own experiences but also incorporate their interpretation and recollection of their colleagues' experiences, making interviews an important evidence source.

Jewellers' tools provided another intimate connection to jewellers today and in the 1940s and 1950s. With finger-worn grooves and ownership symbols, tools still inherently prioritise their owners'

⁸⁰ Muir, p. xiii.

⁸¹ For example, in her study of Australia's patternmakers, Jesse Adams Stein ran oral history interviews and also consulted governmental rulings that affected their work; the patterns they designed; the materials they worked with to make the patterns; as well as their knowledge of the wood and metal that the users of their patterns would be making with. Stein, 'Hidden Between Craft and Industry: Engineering Patternmakers' Design Knowledge'.

experiences of making and being in the workshop.⁸² Being with these tools and talking to interviewees about their own tools helped me to build an understanding of the techniques employed for particular roles and, in turn, how jewellers used these techniques in different ways to respond to the changing production and trade restrictions of the 1940s and 1950s. Visiting workshops with larger machinery and tooling used in batch and mass manufacturing pushed this research project to consider the varied 'class' of work produced in Birmingham, from fashion/costume jewellery to bespoke fine jewellery, plus other small metalwork items. Seeing the machinery in situ reinforced the importance of spatial arrangements in workshops; the layout of machinery and jewellers' benches followed and reinforced the division of tasks – and workers – amongst different skillsets and product types. During the war, certain skillsets were in more demand in the workshop, whilst others could be utilised at home to evade restrictions; tool knowledge, ownership and skills directly impacted the opportunities open to jewellers at this time, and analysis of the tools today revealed and confirmed these divides. Likewise, understanding the workability of precious metals in relation to the base metals copper, brass and steel made clear the challenges faced by jewellers when the government denied access to precious metals. Object analysis, a valued research method amongst design historians, can help bridge the time between craftspeople in the past and research today.

Working in the British jewellery trade and living in Birmingham was a crucial aspect of my positionality in relation to this research project, but I am not a maker. Anthropologists Trevor Marchand and Tim Ingold have both advocated partaking in manufacturing processes with makers, and the sharing of knowledge this involves, to understand these makers.⁸³ They implied that it is only by working within the community that one can understand the knowledge (skills), expectations and meanings that constitute and influence the actions of the community. Taken literally, their assertion implies the impossibility, and the futility, of historical research into making; yet Ingold argued for anthropology's close connection to archaeology, a discipline rooted in prehistory and even greater time separation from the researchers and the researched. To counter Ingold and Marchand, both design history and archaeology champion ways of becoming alert to making processes and material considerations other than prioritising partaking in acts of making. Importantly, design historians, like archaeologists, are object and process oriented; we use archival research, interviews and object analysis to excavate the context surrounding our research subjects. These research methods are no less sensorial than making

⁸² Design historian Grace Lees-Maffei is currently working on the role of the hand in design historical methodologies, with more work forthcoming. See:

Grace Lees-Maffei, 'Knowing Hands: Using Tactile Research Methods in Researching and Writing the History of Design', in *Historical Research, Creative Writing, and the Past*, ed. by Kevin A Morrison and Pälvi Rantala (Routledge, 2023).

⁸³ Marchand, *Craftwork as Problem Solving: Ethnographic Studies of Design and Making*; Marchand, *Making Knowledge*; Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*.

and are equally productive at connecting with past communities; their success redefines the 'archive' of sources for future research.

My position as a gemmologist and jewellery specialist allowed me to connect with the trade experience. My basic experience of jewellery making helped me to understand the value of sources other than those used in existing histories of the jewellery industry, and I sat on a useful fence between being an accepted trade member and an academic outsider – jewellers described working with metals in their own trade terms because they knew I had some experience, but they still took the time to explain the implications of what they were saying.⁸⁴ Given the importance of proximity that jewellers stressed in their testimonies and the impact place has on identity, it felt important to be living and working in Birmingham and spending considerable time walking the same Jewellery Quarter streets, an activity that became even more vital during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Though I often turned to my own understanding of the Jewellery Quarter and manufacturing processes, this project did not use my positionality to directly align with autoethnographical or autotheoretical methodologies. Proponents of both autoethnography, and its more recently developed cousin autotheory, recognise their position and unique opportunity to relate the stories of their community. Both disciplines stem from twentieth-century debates in anthropology about the role of the researcher and the self in studies of others, largely driven by feminist writers, and posit that the self cannot and should never be abstracted.⁸⁵ Lauren Fournier, in her 2021 book *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism*, refers to autotheory as a 'performative ethnography' that reveals and works with 'the tenuousness of maintaining illusory separations between art and life, theory and practice, work and the self, research and motivation' to 'make space for new ways of theorizing and understanding'.⁸⁶ Fournier's reference to a causal link between research and motivation is true of this research project because of my background in the trade, and I have used and

⁸⁴ My positionality to my research aligned somewhat with the experience Sven Lingqvist advocated for in his influential *Dig Where You Stand*, published 1978 and in English in 2023. He encouraged workers to research their own companies so that they could feel empowered to help bring about change; whilst this research was not positioned to bring about such aims, his research manifesto stressed that it is often from within an industry that we can recognise dominant patterns of power within existing histories and break away from them in new histories. It is a useful reminder for challenging established sources and research routes. Sven Lindqvist, *Dig Where You Stand: How to Research a Job*, ed. by Andrew Flinn and Rosen Astrid von, trans. by Ann Henning Jocelyn (Repeater Books, 2023).

⁸⁵ For an overview, see: Tony E Adams, Stacy Holman, and Carolyn Ellis, *Autoethnography* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁸⁶ Lauren Fournier, *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2021), pp. 2–3.

For examples of autotheory, particularly Stepanova's weaving of art and family history, see: Maria Stepanova, *In Memory of Memory*, trans. by Sasha Dugdale (New York: New Directions Paperback, 2021); Anne Boyer, *The Undying: Pain, Vulnerability, Mortality, Medicine, Art, Time, Dreams, Data, Exhaustion, Cancer and Care* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019).

problematised my positionality in my selection of research methods and analysis of sources, and in determining the overall benefit of this research for the trade as well as for design history. Yet, the historical focus of this project distinguishes it from autoethnography and autotheory because I am so separate from my research subjects.

Saidiya Hartman, essayist and cultural historian of enslaved people and their families, presented a constructive and creative methodology between autotheory and history in her 2019 book *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* about the lives of young, independent black women in Philadelphia and New York in the early twentieth century.⁸⁷ In her opening ‘Note on Method’, she outlined her research and writing methodology:

I employ a mode of close narration, a style which places the voice of narrator and character in inseparable relation, so that the vision, language, and rhythms of the wayward shape and arrange the text [...] This story is told from inside the circle [...] I have pressed at the limits of the case file and the document, speculated about what might have been, imagined the things whispered in dark bedrooms [...].⁸⁸

Hartman’s work is fictioning with care. Like Hartman, I too pressed at the limits of my sources to piece together jewellers’ interactions and acted as narrator ‘from inside the circle’; but, unlike Hartman, this research has not employed the same close narration to blur the line between me as narrator and as character. My positionality allowed me to act as narrator – still an important character – and acknowledge that I am usefully separated from the jewellers of the 1940s and 1950s; I work with a knowing from within that helps traverse this time through *careful* engagement with the jewellers’ system.⁸⁹

Knowing from within supposes a level of care for the legacies of my research subjects; but ‘care’ is a loaded methodology, as philosopher Maria Puig de la Bellacasa problematises in her analysis of care-based research methodologies *Matters of Care*.⁹⁰ Puig de la Bellacasa attempted to follow an ‘ambivalent’ approach to understanding the limits of care because she acknowledged that ‘care, caring, carer’ are ‘burdened words’.⁹¹ This burden has afforded the modes of our care with too much

⁸⁷ Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women and Queer Radicals* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2021 [2019]).

⁸⁸ Hartman, pp. xv-xvi.

⁸⁹ I coined ‘knowing from within’ as a more broadly encompassing phrase, to account for differences in time, than Ingold’s ‘knowing from the inside’ and Hartman’s ‘from inside the circle’.

Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, p. 5.

⁹⁰ Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

⁹¹ Puig de la Bellacasa, p. 1.

importance and I distance my act of sharing histories from notions of caregiving for the occupational legacies of trade members – it would be too bold of me to think that they *need* me to give them care.

Instead, I have worked with the notion of discretion as an interpretative strategy. Discretion is one of multiple homonyms called upon, played with and tested throughout this thesis, including ‘conviction’, ‘routes’ and ‘roots’. ‘Homonym’ is the collective and cross-over term for ‘homophones’, words that are pronounced the same but have different meanings, and ‘homographs’, words that are spelt the same but have different meanings. The philosopher Derrida liked homonyms for their scope (and created a new one: ‘différance’ to pair with ‘difference’); they leave space for interpretation, a productive ‘apprehension’ of meaning.⁹²

Discretion: Tact and Trust

This space for interpretation makes discretion pertinent for this investigation. Discretion is a homograph derived from the homophones ‘discreet’, meaning a quality of not revealing (secrets, knowledge, etc.), and ‘discrete’, meaning distinct, individual not continuous. As is argued throughout this thesis, the jewellers valued both types of discretion. Their discretion took the form of choosing which jobs to take based on the trade’s embedded trust mechanisms; valuing reputation in the development of relationships with suppliers and workshops; understanding tools and materials to select those that would help them best navigate austerity restrictions; and the sharing or withholding of tacit knowledge. The trade’s respect for discretion has endured; I have been socialised within it.

Discretion is also part of the historian’s role. We choose the sources we interrogate as well as the questions we ask of them. This recognition of who we cover and who we leave out is an essential part of any research and speaks to the ideas of representation and representativeness that are at the heart of historical research. In multiple instances throughout this research, it has been the situations that were never meant to make the historical record that have been the most illuminating – Edward Muir’s ‘normal exceptions’.⁹³ My research of black-market dealings and employee accidents has reintroduced

⁹² Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 4 <<https://web.stanford.edu/class/history34q/readings/Derrida/Différance.html>> [accessed 5 March 2023].

⁹³ Muir built the phrase ‘normal exceptions’ for rare sources that give us an insight to daily lives based on similar terms shared by early proponent of Italian microhistory Edoardo Grendi, and later picked up on by fellow Italian microhistorians Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni. Grendi deemed historical rule breaking as ‘exceptional’ behaviour; whilst Ginzburg and Poni argued that it was political and/or ecclesiastical authorities that dictated these behaviours to be exceptional when they would have been normal amongst their own social milieu, much like the grey-to-black market dealings of the jewellers that were judged on their moral connections more than their legal implications. Muir, p.xvi.

new figures into the history of the trade; without their injuries or bending of restrictions by working through loopholes, the trade's bureaucratic system would have continued to not prioritise these workers. When working with the accident cards, discretion took both forms: the workers are now part of a large data set, but they are discrete individuals; and discreet because these workers' lives and injuries required sensitivity. Discretion also demands responsibility; recognising the sources used, who they prioritised and the lives they revealed, was an important part of research that mirrored the tact and trust the jewellers valued. Acknowledging the discretion of the trade and of research brings explicit focus on the nuances and trade insights that my positions as a design historian and jewellery specialist afford.

Tools, Skill & Identity

The design historical perspective of this research gives texture to a discussion of work, skill and identity that is often flattened by the economic approach to industrial districts and the sociological approach to occupational community. The first three chapters of this thesis reintegrate this texture by concentrating on the workers, their materials, and their manufacturing processes, respectively, and the changes the trade enacted across all three categories in the 1940s and 1950s.

Chapter one, Discretion, begins with a short introduction to the history of the Jewellery Quarter to contextualise discussion of the trade in the mid-twentieth century. The work of the Birmingham Jewellers' Association and its closed group of committee members, who have been of such focus in existing histories of the Quarter, is compared to the experiences of the thousands of individual workers that made up the trade and who enacted the wartime changes. With many members of the trade working as largely self-employed outworkers, this project has turned away from bureaucratic sources that hide the presence of these jewellers in the archive. Instead, relics of the physical and social clustering of jewellers and allied tradespeople in the Quarter provided richer insight to daily manufacturing and socialisation processes that embedded jewellers within their community and that continued to do so throughout the changes of the 1940s and 1950s. This chapter thus establishes the concept of discretion, both as a tool the jewellers used to assess and reinforce their relationships within the trade and as a strategy for interpreting evidence of their experiences still available today.

The second chapter, Reputation & Responsibility, investigates how jewellers used their discretion to navigate restrictions on precious metal use and to continue jewellery production whenever possible. This work was grounded in personal interpretations of austerity that made exploiting legal and material loopholes seem appropriate as well as viable. Jewellers used their trade and tacit knowledge

to work through these loopholes to different degrees; following their materials and tools, this project has worked with the notion of the 'loophole' to identify and understand these makers that intentionally slipped through the system to remain in work. By taking a careful and discreet approach to black-market dealings, this research appreciated the difficulty of working with rules that made your livelihood illegal from one day to the next. By extension, this chapter is built on the recognition of my responsibility to fairly depict the jewellers' occupational legacies and the reputation of the trade.

Having focused in the first two chapters on the self-employed and smaller workshops that have been harder to find in the bureaucracy of the trade, the third chapter, *Going Inside*, turns to another overlooked group of trade members: the employed workers 'inside' larger factories. As it was customary to move between employment and self-employment to cope with quieter and busier times for the industry, 'going inside' is a trade term for moving into employment from outworking, or working 'outside'. These larger employers were more easily watched by ministry inspectors and so had less scope to work through loopholes; with their use of presses, lathes and stamps to create fashion jewellery on a batch-to-mass-production scale, they made new tooling to fit these machines and adapted more readily to war work. Despite being the largest employer of workers in the trade, the fashion jewellery industry has been overlooked in existing histories in favour of the esteemed goldsmithing side of the trade because of entrenched hierarchies of design and quality. This chapter turns to other routes to prioritise these workers, particularly using a set of clerical cards from the Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association's Workmen's Compensation Scheme that detail 1,217 workplace accidents sustained by employees in the industry between 1942 and 1946. These cards introduce us to individual workers and highlight patterns within the trade, particularly the role of women in presswork. Through these patterns and individual stories, this chapter assesses the value of risk to argue for the importance of repetitive work in the accrual of tacit knowledge and skill in mechanised production. As Jesse Adams Stein called for, *Going Inside* addresses the skill inherent in industrial craft that blurs the lines between traditional notions of craft and larger scales of production.

These first three chapters investigate what it meant to work in the trade during a period of great change and stress by following workers, their materials, tools and tacit knowledge. The fourth chapter, *Identity*, brings together these new ways of understanding light metalwork production in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter in the 1940s and 1950s and specifically draws on instances highlighted in the first three chapters of jewellers invoking their identity, which were more common and crucial during times of stress. 'Identity' assesses the social characteristics, materials and manufacturing skills that are tied up with these invocations. The chapter circles back to the use of the homonym as theoretical tool, drawing on sociologist Stuart Hall's similar focus on 'routes' and 'roots' to consider identity building. The enduring impacts of wartime production and austerity shaped a

trade that, although not displaced, had morphed its understandings of what it meant to identify as a jeweller when production was not based on jewellery, precious metals were largely unavailable and when greater emphasis was put on external assessments of efficiency and the usefulness of jewellers. The oxymoron 'essential luxury', a phrase used contemporaneously by the trade, provides a productive space for considering how the jewellers considered themselves and their work at this time.

Overall, this thesis proves the use of thinking about identity on an individual level to piece together the outline of occupational identity on a community level. For Birmingham's jewellers, their distinctions between trade and non-trade were always made in sight of this occupational community and they built their individual identity within its parameters. Considering what it meant to be part of the trade at a time when the trade itself was hard to distinguish amidst war work and austerity strengthened jewellers' invocations of their identity. This historical lens affords greater texture to discussions of identity. Unlike economic histories or sociological studies, design history's focus on material assessments and respect for tacit knowledge prioritises the craft so inherent in the occupational identity of craftworkers. It is this concept of their craft identity that the jewellers continually invoked whilst they were so separated from the normal make up of their trade.

Discretion

Evaluating new sources to better recognise workers in the trade

In work on the jewellery trade in Birmingham, the jeweller is distinctly lacking. Existing histories of the Jewellery Quarter drew upon the most easily accessible sources, particularly the records of the Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association (BJSA), later known as the British Jewellers' Association (BJA); these sources recorded the work of business leaders at a time when they had little control over what would happen next to the trade. This first chapter introduces other sources to better understand trade members and their routes to the trade at a time when war had disrupted traditional ways of joining and working in the jewellery, silver and allied trades.

Bureaucratic and by extension archival practices have largely excluded an important section of the trade: the outworkers. Often self-employed, which makes them difficult to find in the archive, the outworkers are a tradition of the trade's system because they could react quicker to the 'boom-and-bust' nature of the trade. Jewellers appreciated the benefits of outworking because they had learnt from the examples of their family members and colleagues. Tracing these outworkers required a different way of working with the trade, one that utilised the physical and social clustering of jewellers and allied tradespeople in the Jewellery Quarter. The jewellers' shared workshop addresses and the name plaques outside their doors mapped their community and how they created it. The spatial clustering of many workshops in the converted houses of the Quarter mimicked the familial structures of most businesses and ensured that workers were embedded spatially and socially in the trade, often even before they officially joined it. This clustering of businesses prompted the sharing of roles, skills, materials and news, in which reputation was crucial and discretion vital.

This chapter builds the concept of discretion, both as a stance the jewellers took and as a means of asking questions of sources and of the trade. Discussion begins with a brief introduction to the history of the jewellery trade to then establish a new and important focus on workers, rather than managers, which grounds the rest of this thesis. Problematizing our contemporary dichotomy of employment and self-employment helps reassess the important work of outworkers, who purposefully blurred the boundaries of employment to continue their careers. The chapter then considers how routes to the trade made these traditional employment structures seem achievable and desirable. These routes included family connections, metalwork's well-known position within Birmingham's industries, and proximity to the Jewellery Quarter. A design historical approach to jewellers' sensorial interaction with place emphasises the value they placed on their physical and social proximity to each other and sheds light on why jewellers returned to their work in the Quarter after war work. This chapter posits that

recognising jewellers' discretion helps us understand how they navigated what it meant to be a jeweller when they could not make jewellery.



Figure 1.1. An extract of a map of Birmingham, dated 1935. The jewellers clustered their workshops in the Hockley area, here marked by electoral area as 'St Paul's', northwest of the city centre, here 'Market Hall'.

Plan of City of Birmingham. Scale, Three and a Quarter Inches to a Mile. (Index to Streets, Etc. Pp.16) (1935), British Library Maps 5545.(26.)

Welcome to the Jewellery Quarter

The jewellery industry has forged its place in Birmingham over centuries, but rapid expansion of the trade in the late nineteenth century coincided with Birmingham's elevation to a city in 1889.¹ For a century already, Birmingham had been known as the 'city of a thousand trades', a moniker attributed to its dense and varied network of industrial trades by parliamentarian Edmund Burke in the late eighteenth century.² Birmingham's strong industrial presence in both Britain and Europe developed in part because of its freedom from the guilds that controlled trade in the City of London and the absence of corporations and urban government, and in part from having an economy that was not based on a single trade, like cotton for Manchester and steel for Sheffield.³ Birmingham's jewellery trade grew from a broader metalworking trade to become a distinct industry in the eighteenth century, close to the industry we recognise today. The 1777 Pearson and Rollason business *Directory* listed 35 jewellers, four ring makers, 16 watch chain makers, and one tool-making company for jewellers, but this distinct jewellery group was scattered across Birmingham's urban area.⁴ By the mid-nineteenth century, after a short lull in growth, Birmingham's jewellery trade was thriving; the 1854 legislation allowing lower gold alloy standards, coupled with the discovery of gold in Australia and California, legitimised the trade for more reasonably-priced jewellery as the trend for personal adornment increased with Queen Victoria's jewellery patronage.⁵ Jewellers and allied metalworking trades clustered in Hockley, an area north of the urban centre, where they adapted houses into both living and working spaces and built further workshops in gardens; this area became the Jewellery Quarter, in the electoral ward of St Paul's, as seen to the north of Birmingham's central Market Hall area on the map from 1935 in figure 1.1. This boom in jewellery production and consumption made the trade the prime target of opportunism. Whilst the trustworthiness of firms would be judged by the quality of their wares, which were in turn a reflection of their relationships with suppliers and finishers in the Quarter, the absence of a guild system or overall trade body meant that firms could bypass regulations on assaying their precious metal goods without recourse to punitive measures.⁶

¹ *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016).

² Malcolm Dick, 'The City of a Thousand Trades, 1700-1945', in *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 125–58 (p. 125, 128).

³ Malcolm Dick, Director of the Centre for West Midlands History, provided an important overview of Birmingham's growth as an industrial city:

Malcolm Dick, 'The City of a Thousand Trades, 1700-1945', in *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 125–58 (p. 125).

⁴ Carl Chinn, 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', *West Midlands History*, 2016, pp. 1–15 (p. 3).

⁵ Chinn, 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', p. 8.

⁶ Francesca Carnevali, "'Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers": Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham', *The Economic History Review*, 57.3 (2004), 533–50 (p. 539).

Whilst demand was high, firms could open and close as needed to make the most of opportunities. In reaction to this behaviour, other firms sought twice, and failed, to form a trade alliance, but the depression of the 1880s brought 80 members of the trade together in their struggles against the sudden drop in value of their goods; by the end of 1887 they had established the Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, a trade association that commented on and supported trade activities for the next 100 years.⁷

Birmingham's jewellery trade began the twentieth century as the city's largest industry – with close to 20,000 employees listed in the 1881 census returns and about 37,000 by 1914 across the allied trades – but its nature as a 'boom and bust' industry closely tied to Britain's economic position and the colossal development of other manufacturing industries in the Midlands contributed to the fall of the Jewellery Quarter's position in Birmingham's manufacturing life.⁸ Within the trade, the introduction of gas engines around the turn of the twentieth century allowed firms already producing on batch scales to unite multiple processes, including stamping, rolling, wire drawing and polishing, under one roof and move towards mass production; differences in production scales amongst firms in the quarter started to have a greater effect on the differentiation of jewellers' individual roles.⁹ However, the First World War, during which time the jewellers transferred to war work, reduced the number of employees in the trade to 20,000, including women and girls, and the trade continued at this slower pace into the depression of the 1930s.¹⁰ The mid-1930s' growth of the automobile and aircraft motor manufacturing industry in the Midlands brought relative prosperity to Birmingham, which began slum clearance, and its neighbour Coventry; the motor industry could have drawn many jewellers to its bright factories and higher wages had the jewellery industry not experienced a simultaneous upturn, which was likely driven by the recapturing of home markets previously lost to European competitors that were currently feeling the effects of the worsening political situation.¹¹ During and after the Second World War, the motor industry became the Midlands biggest group of employers; in the 1950s, the UK was the largest exporter of cars in the world and the second largest manufacturer after the United States, a position that had dropped to twelfth by 2008.¹² The Midlands' manufacturing power made the area a target for bombing during the war and the Jewellery Quarter,

⁷ Carnevali, p. 541.

⁸ Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities: Jewellery Making in Birmingham between Mass-Production and Speciality', *Enterprise and Society*, 4.2 (2003), 272–98, p. 276; Chinn, 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', p. 13.

⁹ Chinn, 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', p. 12.

¹⁰ Chinn, 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', p. 14.

¹¹ Chinn, 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', p. 14.

¹² Peter N C Cooke, *The United Kingdom Automotive Industries: Status, Economic Recovery and Expectations, a Report for the SMMT. Executive Summary* (The University of Buckingham, 2008), pp. 1–16 (p. 3).

which was still both a residential and commercial area, faced its worst night of the Blitz in April 1941.¹³ The BJSA immediately began grand redevelopment plans that even proposed moving the jewellers to a custom-built factory system on former farmland. Despite, and likely because of, government involvement in post-war strategy focused on improving efficiency and working conditions in the Quarter, work only began in the 1960s on clearing workshops considered dilapidated.¹⁴ At the same time, the strengthening of international markets pushed Birmingham's jewellers to become more international in their outlook and they faced corresponding competition from jewellers overseas.¹⁵ By the 1980s, the effects of this competition, coupled with high rents and economic downturn, pushed many jewellers to leave the Quarter; their ground-floor workshops were refitted as retail jewellers, which supported to some extent the manufacturing trade they had relegated upstairs as rings always need resizing and jewellery repairing.

The Jewellers' Association

Much of our knowledge of the Jewellery Quarter's industrial heritage stems from the records of the jeweller's trade association, now held at the Wolfson Centre for Archival Research in the Library of Birmingham. The BJSA's founding members sought to unite disparate factions within the Birmingham industry in the late nineteenth century to, as economic historian Francesca Carnevali argued, collectively control price cutting and opportunistic profiteering.¹⁶ By the mid twentieth century, the Association had much loftier ambitions and merged with the Scottish Wholesale Jewellers' Association and established a London branch to run alongside its Birmingham operation, which was hereafter known as the Midlands branch.¹⁷ In 1946, the Council changed the Association's name to the British Joint Association of Goldsmiths, Silversmiths, Horological and Kindred Trades, to make use of the shorter acronym 'BJA' and, in common parlance, the name 'Jewellers' Association', before additional mergers with London-based associations in 1947. The timing of these mergers reflected the BJA Executive Council's desire for the trade to have central representation at a time when the industry felt bullied by the Government's commands. The association's detailed minutes of its meetings and issues of its publication, *The British Jeweller*, have proved a useful and, on the surface, thorough source for

¹³ Kathleen Dayus, *The Girl from Hockley: Growing up in Working-Class Birmingham* (Little, Brown, 2006), p. 359.

¹⁴ Shena Mason, *Jewellery Making in Birmingham, 1750-1995* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1998), p. 152.

¹⁵ Mason, p. 153.

¹⁶ Carnevali, "'Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers": Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham'.

¹⁷ See Shelley Nott's comprehensive history of the Association for its earlier years. Written to commemorate their centenary, the book is a homage to the Association and focuses mainly on industry leaders. Shelley N. Nott, *The British Jewellers' Association 1887-1987: 100 Years of Service* (Birmingham: British Jewellers' Association, 1987).

historians of the trade, as all existing histories have drawn extensively on these records, particularly Shena Mason's *Jewellery Making in Birmingham, 1750-1995*.¹⁸ However, the survival of, and subsequent reliance on, these records have distorted our interpretation of the trade in the 1940s and 1950s.

During the 1940s, firms continued to pay subscriptions for BJA membership and new members joined, which confirmed jewellers and allied tradespeople's belief in the importance of their BJA membership despite war restrictions greatly hindering jewellery production. In fact, the association entered the Second World War with 451 members in 1939 and, by 1946, had tripled in number to a membership of 1339.¹⁹ Part of this immense growth reflected the relatively sudden joining of many London-based firms as the association began its campaign to be regarded as a national body; yet, the annual members lists published in each BJA Year Book confirmed that many Birmingham firms chose to continue their membership too. In comparison to the BJA's growth and large representation of the trade, the trade union National Union of Gold, Silver and Allied Trades (NUGSAT), based in Sheffield, had remarkably few members in the mid twentieth century. NUGSAT's fewer than 100 members during the 1940s points to a lack of support for the union from the trade.²⁰ Tony Hackett, a former employee at metal stamping workshop Frank Clissold's from the early 1960s, hinted at NUGSAT's relatively unknown status amongst trade members in a discussion for this project with his wife, Linda, who worked in the larger metals trade in Birmingham:

Linda Were the unions quite strong?

Tony What unions? The unions were quite strong then, but they never affected Frank Clissold's.

LH Was that because it was a small place?

TH I don't know. I mean, I'm a union person, I believe in unions. But I was like 16 then, 16, 17.²¹

¹⁸ Mason.

¹⁹ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Year Book 1939*, 1939, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/269; Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Annual Report 1945 and Year Book 1946*, 1946, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/270.

²⁰ NUGSAT's archive is held by the University of Warwick's The Modern Records Centre and covers the union's years between 1921 and 1985, which only occupy one box; its small extent reflects its limited influence in the trade during the mid-twentieth century. Its influence grew decades later when it represented employees of jewellery factory Albury Brothers versus their employer in a landmark case that has since become case law. 'National Union of Gold, Silver and Allied Trades', 1921, The Modern Records Centre, the University of Warwick, MSS.101 <<https://mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/records/GSV>>.

²¹ Tony Hackett, Linda Hackett, and Cornelli Sullivan, Interview with Tony and Linda Hackett and Cornelli Sullivan, 2021.

Tony's dismissal of union work in the jewellery trade, despite the much wider membership and mobilisation of trade unions from 1940 onwards in Britain, confirmed NUGSAT's small reach amongst workers at a time when the BJA's fortunes were the opposite. Yet, crucially, NUGSAT and the BJA served different members of the trade: NUGSAT represented the workers, whilst BJA membership applied to businesses and therefore targeted business leaders. The growth of the BJA during the 1940s must be understood as a movement amongst business owners and managers of firms in the Jewellery Quarter, rather than a reflection of workers' wishes.

The BJA executive did not hide to trade members and readers of *The British Jeweller* that it was the same few people that repeatedly sat on the association's Executive Council and trade section committees and selected content considered noteworthy for the trade to read. *The British Jeweller* is an important source of information about the trade in Birmingham and one that many historians of the Jewellery Quarter, particularly Shena Mason in her history of jewellery making in Birmingham, have turned to; yet, its articles and the minutes of its editorial committee reveal that the committee understood its readership to be employers, not employees.²² Despite reducing the size and typeface of *The British Jeweller* to secure enough rationed paper to print monthly throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the committee discussed a lack of content in their meeting on Monday 8 February 1943.²³ Miss Morgan, the minutes taker, recorded that, 'Concerning the general contents of future issues, it was pointed out that this necessarily would be rather different than in the past, since there was little or nothing of trade interest to write about, owing to restrictions and regulations.'²⁴ The committee's concern pointed to the journal's readership of paid Association members: employers with needs for the Association to protect, rather than individual craftspeople, whose work to continue the trade by undertaking repairs they overlooked. Instead, a year later in their committee meeting on Monday 11 December 1944, Turner introduced his idea of a commemorative, and promotional, 'Supplement to the Journal' to record the work of the trade and the Association in the war effort.²⁵ Published by the

²² Mason, *Jewellery Making in Birmingham*.

²³ More detailed discussion of the committee's physical changes to *The British Jeweller* during the Second World War and its desired impact on readers can be found in my MA thesis.

Georgina Izzard, 'Back to the Bench? Understanding the British Manufacturing Jewellers' Transfer to Rearmament and Munitions Production in the Second World War' (unpublished MA Dissertation, V&A/Royal College of Art, 2018).

²⁴ British Jewellery and Giftware Federation, *The British Jeweller Editorial Board Minutes*, Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, MS1646/63, p.295.

²⁵ British Jewellery and Giftware Federation, *The British Jeweller Editorial Board Minutes*, MS1646/63, p.326. See also the opening text of the printed booklet for Turner's rather flowery description of their war work, as detailed in my previous research.

W. Stewart Turner, 'Foreword', *Arms and The Jeweller* (Birmingham: Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1946), p.3-4.

Izzard.

BJSA in 1946, *Arms And The Jeweller* gave space to business owners and Association leaders. In a surprising use of rationed paper, the editorial team showcased the photographs of the wartime Executive Committee members in the opening pages, as seen in Figure 1.2.²⁶ The blue scrolls around the 16 men's portraits, including that of Turner, subtly nodded to their chronicling of themselves into history.²⁷ In minuted discussions about the format, the editorial committee marked this page as essential and, in the opinion of Mr T L Mott, director of prominent large butterfly-wing and fashion jewellery firm Thomas L Mott Ltd and who appeared in these portraits, the page was enough to 'uphold the dignity of the Association' over individual firms' accounts, which 'would not in his view reflect prestige but quite the reverse'.²⁸ Mott was concerned that the pages would be in bad taste, as firms paid for the space as advertisements, but it is these accounts that provide the most empathetic, sensory and important insight in the booklet to the reality of daily war work. Ring maker E J Clewley's account in *Arms And The Jeweller*, for example, impressed that its employees' production included '7 million Gasmask Components, 4 million Bomb Arming Wires, and 16 million Surgical Wound Clips, and 23 million Primer Plugs', a colossal scale of production that could only have been facilitated by a group of workers familiar with their machines and tools.²⁹ The committee's focus on the association leaders above individual workers belied the deep-rooted sense of hierarchy within the industry. The executive members' 16 names recurred throughout the attendee lists from association meetings, and whilst they had enthusiasm and commitment for the trade, their large presence in the archive has detracted attention from other members of the community.

²⁶ The committee distributed the 8000 copies of this booklet to BJA members and members of the National Association of Goldsmiths (a trade association representing retail jewellers), with the largest proportion allotted for export to supportive markets around the world and only the remainder for sundry distribution around the Birmingham trade.

British Jewellery and Giftware Federation, *The British Jeweller Editorial Board Minutes*, MS1646/63, p.326, 333 and 344.

²⁷ I assessed the design and content of this booklet in greater detail in my MA thesis. Izzard.

²⁸ British Jewellery and Giftware Federation, *The British Jeweller Editorial Board Minutes*, MS1646/63, p.333.

²⁹ E. J. Clewley & Co., Ltd., 'Diamond Rings to Multiple Munitions', *Arms and The Jeweller* (Birmingham: Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1946), p.34.



Figure 1.2. A photograph of one of the opening pages of the booklet *Arms and The Jeweller*, published in 1946 by the Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association. Note the acting editor of *The British Jeweller*, Mr. W. S. Turner on the right side of the third row.

Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Arms & the Jeweller: Recording the Work of the British Jewellers in the War of 1939-1945* (Birmingham: Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1946), Imperial War Museum, 64(41).72/5 90/2279

BJA members recognised their association's limited outlook at the time, views that were, ironically, reported in its trade journal *The British Jeweller*. In a letter published in December 1944's edition of *The British Jeweller*, member G A Rogers alluded to the rest of the trade's sustained disdain for the BJA's executive structure, which had been thrown into relief again during debate about the association's proposed Code of Fair Trading for the industry.

We shall still have the old cry that the association is no good, but let me point out the association does not consist of only President, Secretary and committees, but nearly 1,000 members; the association is what the members make it; therefore if all of us are not prepared to endeavour to make the association into a first-class organisation then it is the members' fault.³⁰

Rogers' reference to members' 'old cry' about the poor efficacy of the association made clear the general and sustained low approval of the BJA, despite its high membership numbers. Their mention also of the separation of committee roles from the members suggested that it was common for most members to have very little input in the executive decisions of the association. *The British Jeweller* editorial team had already condemned this stance from members as apathetic in the journal's opening article two years earlier in September 1942:

It will be recalled that the Association sent circulars to every member requesting particulars of their labour for the purpose of negotiating on the best possible lines with the Ministry of Labour. The apathy demonstrated by the lack of replies to this circular can only be deplored.³¹

The writers behind the official output of the association made clear a trade division between the few members willing to take on committee roles and the rest of the membership. Remembering this division is crucial in interpreting the official record, as all committee minutes and *The British Jeweller* articles are products of this small section of the trade.

If most members were apathetic, their employees must have felt even more distant from the work of the association's committees and council. The group photographs from the association's annual banquet highlighted this main split between employers and employees. Published in the following month's edition of *The British Jeweller* along with a transcript of the president's and guest of honour's speeches, the black-and-white photographs captured a sea of bodies sitting at long tables in 1948 and 1949 (see figures 1.3 and 1.4).³² The wives of the Executive Council's leaders and their guests are the noticeable exception to the wholly male attendance, starkly obvious by the rows of black bowties and white-tie waistcoats – so the Jobbing Jewellers' Trade Section's call in March 1946 for female members to be able to attend the dinner obviously went unheeded.³³ The gender split and attire of the members

³⁰ G A Rogers, 'Fair Trading', *The British Jeweller*, December 1944, 30–31 (p. 30).

³¹ 'Birmingham Association's Great Effort: A Long Struggle for the Preservation of the Trade', *The British Jeweller*, September 1942, 9–10 (p. 9).

³² 'Sir Patrick Champions the Trade: Reply to Mr. Herbert Morrison at 47th Annual Banquet of B.J.A.', *The British Jeweller*, April 1948, pp. 64–67; 'Mr. Wilson Praises Industry's Export Record in Speech at B.J.A. Banquet: Many Distinguished Guests at 48th Function in Birmingham.', *The British Jeweller*, March 1949, pp. 78–80.

³³ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Jobbing Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Jan 1944 - Mar 48: Jobbers Second Annual General Meeting 13 March 1946', 1946, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/120.

in these photographs reinforced that participation in association affairs was largely the domain of the male business owners and managers of the Jewellery Quarter. Whereas another photograph featured in *The British Jeweller* gave a more representative image of the people that made up the Quarter. The black-and-white photograph in Figure 1.5 was taken of the past and present employees of large jewellers Payton Pepper & Sons Ltd outside their workshops before departing for a day trip to Weston-Super-Mare to celebrate the firm's centenary in June 1949 (only a few months after the banquet seen in Figure 1.4). A row of women, arms linked, stood and sat in the foreground of the photo in front of their other colleagues, all of whom were dressed in smart tea dresses, heeled shoes, lounge suits and coats. These colleagues better represent the jewellers that navigated war work and restrictions in the 1940s and 1950s. Women had long had a central role in Birmingham's industries, whether as workers or business owners, particularly working in light metalwork and food processing.³⁴ Contrasting the people in this photograph and the two banquet photographs tells us much about the organisation of the trade and tempers our expectations of what we can learn about it from the dominant print sources chronicling the association's work.

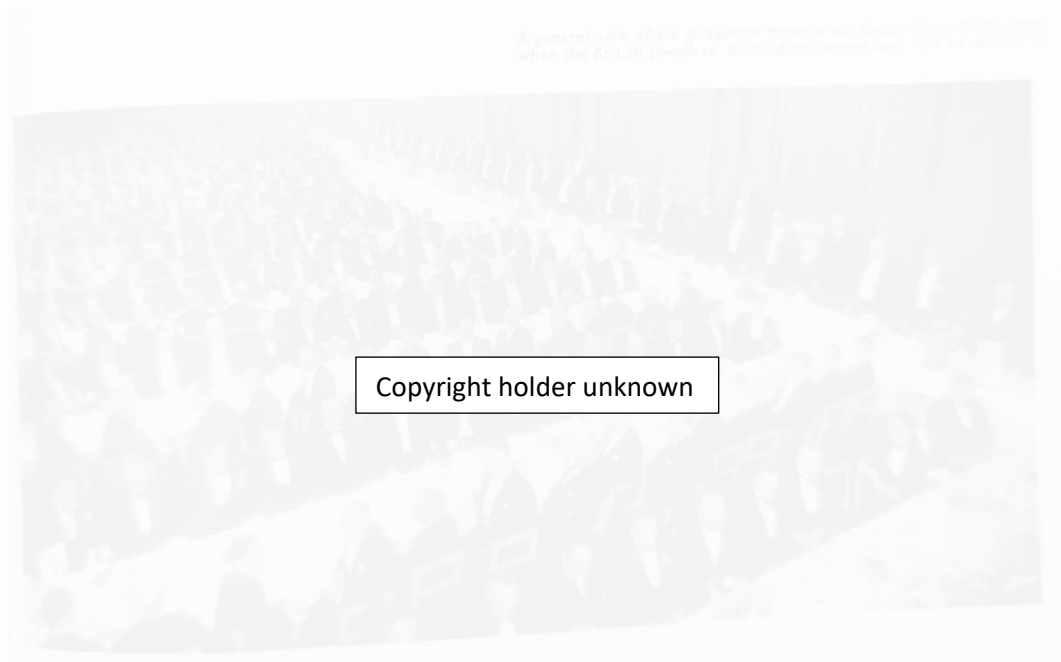


Figure 1.3. A photograph of the attendees of the 1948 BJA annual banquet, with the caption, 'A general view of the Grosvenor Room at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham when the British Jewellers' Association banquet was held on March 13.'

Photographer unknown, 'Sir Patrick Champions the Trade: Reply to Mr. Herbert Morrison at 47th Annual Banquet of B.J.A.', *The British Jeweller*, April 1948, pp. 64–67 (p. 67).

³⁴ Malcolm Dick, 'The City of a Thousand Trades, 1700-1945', in *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 125–58 (p. 144).

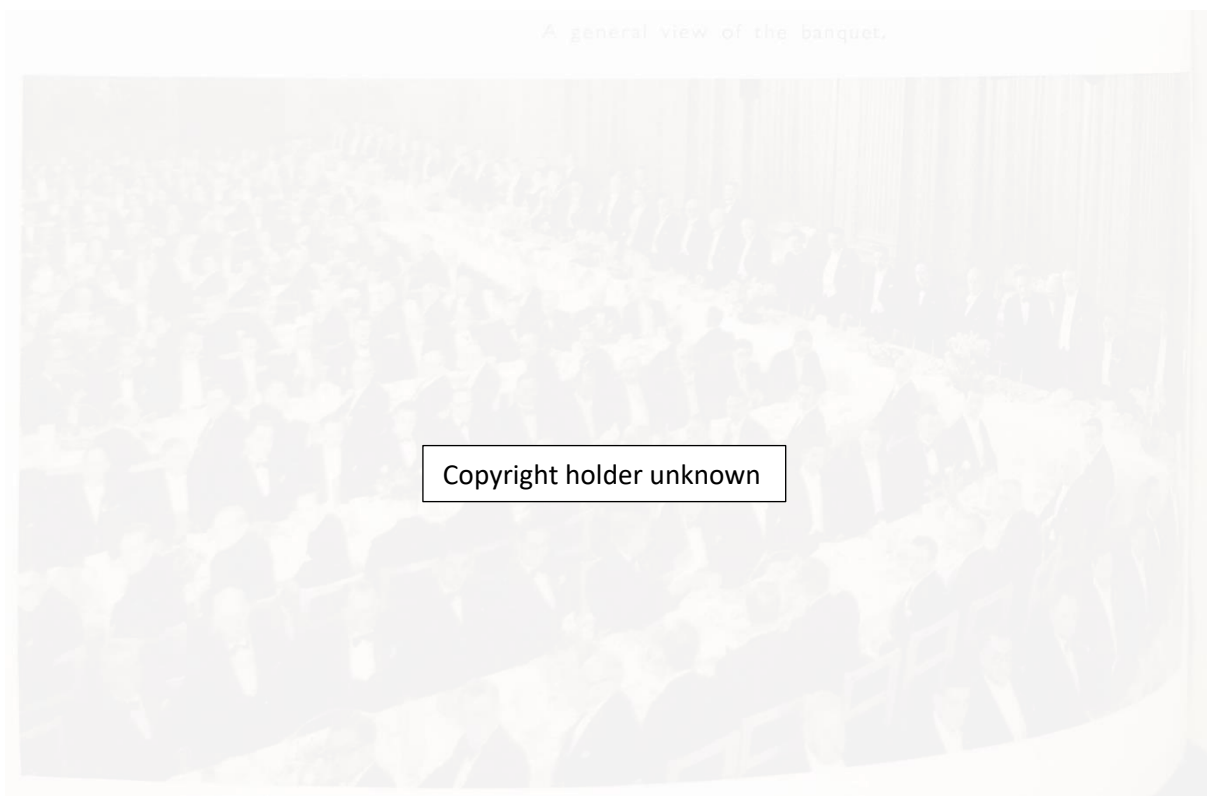


Figure 1.4. A photograph of the attendees of the 1949 BJA annual banquet, including guest speaker Harold Wilson, Board of Trade president, with the caption, 'A general view of the banquet.'

Photographer unknown, 'Mr. Wilson Praises Industry's Export Record in Speech at B.J.A. Banquet: Many Distinguished Guests at 48th Function in Birmingham.', *The British Jeweller*, March 1949, pp. 78–80 (p. 80).



Figure 1.5. A photograph of past and present employees of manufacturing jewellers Payton Pepper and Sons before their day trip to Weston-Super-Mare to celebrate the firm's centenary on 18 June 1949.

Photographer unknown, 'Centenary Celebration', *The British Jeweller*, August 1949, p. 67.

This assessment of the BJA and its work is not a blanket criticism; they promoted many successful initiatives, particularly during this wartime period, and took on the responsibility of organising an important insurance scheme for workers, as detailed in the third chapter of this thesis. Indeed, workshop owner Paul Podolsky attested to the personal benefits of being in the association when discussing its work in an interview for this research.

Quite frankly, I was enjoying it. I found it very interesting and it was also a social thing. The people I mixed with, they were not only colleagues, they were friends and we got on very well. [...] That's how my name got figured a lot on these committees, but I was only on them because I wanted to be, not because I had to be. I enjoyed the work, I enjoyed the subjects they got involved with [...].³⁵

As a jeweller and manager, and later owner of his father's firm E Podolsky in London and the firm of S Blanckensee & Son in Birmingham, Paul was a prime candidate to sit on the BJA committees, and evidently enjoyed it too, but as a champion of apprenticeships and training in his later career, Paul keenly felt the absence of the working population in trade association work:

The parts played by the Goldsmiths' Company [the City of London-based Livery Company] and the trade associations were of considerable value in ensuring an adequate supply of labour and skills for the war effort. / However the number of [Goldsmiths' Company] Freemen and trade association members is limited, there being a far greater number of uncommitted craftspeople in the trade.³⁶

Paul touched on the lynchpin of the industry: the 'uncommitted' tradespeople, be they employees or self-employed small business owners, that were not officially part of the trade associations, but that were supposed to be the guiding influence and recipients of the associations' work.

By acknowledging the exclusivity of the editorial committee – formed entirely of business leaders who could afford to meet at 11.30am on weekdays rather than be at work – we recognise the pervasiveness of this small group's influence across the archive and secondary literature. That is not to say that the members of this exclusive trade group had no interest in the prosperity of the rest of the trade. The interconnected nature of the British jewellery industry, and particularly of those businesses in Birmingham, incentivised BJA members to stand largely united in their approach to government procedures outside the jewellery trade in the 1940s and 1950s.

³⁵ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second', Appendix A.

³⁶ Paul Podolsky, 'Letter from Paul Podolsky to Georgina Izzard: Comments on Dissertation 13.12.17', 13 December 2017, Appendix A.

The Trade

As the most prevalent sources give us only a narrow view of the trade – one dictated largely by the same small group of male business leaders – turning to other sources, including interviews and memoirs, builds a broader view that brings the work of Birmingham’s jewellers to the fore. This reappraisal begins by assessing the true extent of the trade, as far as this is possible. Recalculating the number of workers in the Jewellery Quarter, and in relation to Birmingham’s overall working population, is a step towards understanding the influence of the trade within and beyond its geographical, social and material borders.

The scale of Birmingham’s jewellery industry was revealed in census return data for 1931 and 1951. This data not only gave an indication of the number of workers involved in the trade, it also specified a classification of divisions in these roles that revealed a clustering of specialised workers and processes. Though these divisions had been created and enforced externally by the census writers, they reflected material-based splits that are still useful for considering what it meant to be a jeweller at this time. In the 1931 census return, Birmingham’s total working population (aged 14 and above and excluding those retired, unoccupied and out of work) was 444,981, of which a third (165,435) listed themselves as engaged in the ‘Manufacture of metals, machines, implements, conveyances, jewellery, watches’ – it is a sign of the trade’s importance within the city that ‘jewellery’ is one of the named inclusions within this category.³⁷ However, within that number a much smaller number of workers listed themselves as working particularly with precious metals: 8096 men and 4457 women, and an even smaller number as goldsmiths and gem setters (1907 and 458, respectively).³⁸ Birmingham’s combined 2365 male and female goldsmiths and gem setters represented nearly half of England’s total number of goldsmiths and gem setters (5251), which reflected the clustering of jewellers in Birmingham.³⁹ Twenty years later, in the returns of the 1951 census, precious metal workers continued to differentiate themselves from the rest of Birmingham’s metal work; however, a comparison of the category of ‘precious metals’ workers between the 1931 and 1951 censuses reveals a clear change in the make-up of the trade. In 1931, 12,553 workers recorded themselves as working

³⁷ ‘Vision of Britain | 1931 Census: Industry | Table 2’

<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/table/EW1931IND_M2?u_id=10101001&show=DB> [accessed 31 March 2021].

Malcolm Dick, also using Vision of Britain data, suggested Birmingham’s total population in the early 1940s was over one million.

Malcolm Dick, ‘The City of a Thousand Trades, 1700-1945’, p.125.

³⁸ ‘GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Birmingham MB/CB through Time | Industry Statistics | Persons of Working Age by Sex and 1931 Occupational Order, *A Vision of Britain through Time*.’

<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10101001/cube/OCC_ORD1931> [accessed 18 April 2021].

³⁹ ‘Vision of Britain | 1931 Census: Occupations | Table 16’

<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/table/EW1931OCC_M16> [accessed 18 April 2021].

with precious metals (8096 men and 4457 women); yet, in 1951, only 4,291 workers recorded themselves as working with precious metals (2592 men and 1699 women).⁴⁰ This two-thirds reduction in the number of workers identifying as working with precious metals points to a significant change within the industry, its roles and the identities of jewellers during this war period.

The 'precious metal' jewellers were just one section of the trade; imitation/fashion jewellery, made of plated brass, copper and other base metals, was also a key aspect of the trade and its creators formed a significant proportion of the metal workers' section of the working population. In an article about a lack of supplies for the trade in *The British Jeweller's* August 1945 edition, the acting editor and former BJA president Mr W Stewart Turner wrote that in 1939, 'There were 38,000 insured persons engaged in the Birmingham jewellery and allied trades', a much higher figure than the 12,553 precious metals workers in 1931.⁴¹ This whole-trade figure, which still likely did not include 'uninsured' casual workers, prompts a reassessment the trade's reach across Birmingham's working population. Now, of the 165,435 metalworkers, 23 per cent worked in the jewellery and allied trades, equal to 8.5 per cent of the city's total working population. These high proportions demonstrate, in basic terms, the considerable people power of the extended jewellery industry.

Between these two censuses, the Second World War brought the need for the jewellers' work both on the front line and in the workshop; workshop managers from the jewellery and allied trades had little choice but to turn over their 38,000 workers, machines and tools to war work for the best part of six years. Phillada Ballard's *A City at War: Birmingham 1939-1945*, written to accompany an exhibition of the same name at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in 1985, detailed Birmingham's approach to munitions work for the armed forces in the early 1940s and is useful for contextualising the jewellers' approach to war work. Ballard outlined the early 1940s recruitment drives in Birmingham that stemmed from a shortage of labour early in the war; factories offered part-time work to women caring for children and the number of women in munitions work increased by 150 per cent from 1939 to September 1942 – the same year that being a jeweller became a reserved occupation – whilst overall employment had increased by 65 per cent.⁴² Much of this labour came from within Birmingham, but people also joined the city's workforce from Tyneside, South Wales, Scotland and Ireland through recruitment and labour redirection across the country.⁴³ A staggering 47

⁴⁰ 'Vision of Britain | 1951 Census: Industry | Table 2'

<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/table/EW1951IND_M2?u_id=10101001&show=DB> [accessed 31 March 2021].

⁴¹ W Stewart Turner, 'The Stranglehold', *The British Jeweller*, August 1945, pp. 9–11 (p. 9).

⁴² Phillada Ballard, *A City at War: Birmingham 1939-1945* (Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1985), p. 12.

⁴³ Ballard, p. 12.

per cent of Birmingham's population of more than 1 million people was at work by the end of 1944, more than any other similarly large British city, and an estimated 400,000 people worked in munitions, equal almost to the total working population from 1931's census (444,981).⁴⁴ Jeweller Paul Podolsky corroborated this move of people in his stories about members of his father's workshop in London being called up for military service and the women introduced to them through labour redirection. He detailed that they employed 35 craftspeople before the war; then five on jewellery production – 'they were all elderly, yes' – plus 25 to 30 people on war work during the war; and 15 craftspeople afterwards, nine or 10 of whom had returned from active service.⁴⁵ Returning members of the working population were joined by new migrants, including many of whom had been displaced by conflict in Poland, and Jamaicans, Indians and Pakistanis that had fought for the British Army; during the 1940s and 1950s, however, the number of migrants remained low in relation to Birmingham's overall population as, by 1951, still 71 per cent of people in the city had been born within Warwickshire.⁴⁶ New workers in jewellery workshops were likely then to have still come to the trade with knowledge of friends or family members that had worked in the industry.

In 1946 the government commissioned a report on the state of the British jewellery and silverware industry that included further statistical analysis of the Birmingham trade. Government ministers at the Board of Trade and Ministry of Supply, the two key Government departments whose work most affected the jewellers in this period, were not unaware of the jewellery trade's input for war work, nor of the BJA's concern for the trade's post-war 'reconstruction' plans, detailed optimistically in *The British Jeweller*. In March 1946, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, appointed a team to the Working Party for Jewellery & Silverware, one of the several working parties Cripps established in 1945 and 1946 to, as he explained to fellow MPs in Parliament on 15 October 1945, inquire 'into the efficiency of our industries', particularly those industries deemed important in rebuilding Britain's export trade to bolster the economy and reduce war debt.⁴⁷ Working concurrently with other reports on living and employment conditions, health, and personal savings, the working parties were part of the beginning of broader sweeps of nationalisation that took control of production industries. The

⁴⁴ Ballard, p. 12.

⁴⁵ Paul Podolsky, Interview with Paul Podolsky, First, 2017 – Appendix A.

⁴⁶ Carl Chinn gave a useful overview of demographic changes in Birmingham and drew on the earlier work of A Sutcliffe and R R Smith.

Chinn, 'The Peoples of Birmingham', pp. 17–38; Sutcliffe and Smith, III, pp. 202–3.

⁴⁷ The other industries in the first phase were: cotton, pottery, hosiery, furniture and boot and shoe industries. Sir Stafford Cripps, 'Industrial Organisation (Tripartite Working Parties)', *Hansard*, HC Deb 15 October 1945, Vol. 414, cc692-6 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1945/oct/15/industrial-organisation-tripartite#S5CV0414P0_19451015_HOC_233> [accessed 4.3.21]; Board of Trade, *Working Party Reports Jewellery and Silverware* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1946) <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069180571&view=1up&seq=18>> [accessed 31 July 2020], p.iii.

Jewellery & Silverware working party's report, published in late 1946 and sold at the price of 3 shillings, included at the front of the booklet a list of members of the working party, which revealed some familiar names: Mr S Dawson Collins, Mr Ivan Shortt and Mr J B Hassett, the three Birmingham trade representatives, were all business leaders featured on the opening scrolled photograph page of *Arms and The Jeweller*, as seen in Figure 1.2. As executive members of the BJA, *The British Jeweller* editorial committee, and the Working Party, these three men and their associates formed a tight group that has largely dictated our view of the Birmingham industry today.

However, the biased, or unrepresentative, nature of the working parties was somewhat recognised at the time, and today their efforts, including that of the Jewellery & Silverware Working Party, are largely obscure because of disagreement amongst contemporary policy makers about how the parties were run and how their recommendations should be implemented.⁴⁸ Indeed, Harold Roberts, the Conservative MP for Handsworth, the constituency immediately north of the Jewellery Quarter and home to many of the Quarter's workers, questioned the benefit of the working parties in the parliamentary debate surrounding Cripps's Industrial Organisation Bill on 13 February 1947, which proposed implementing the working parties' suggestions for improving the efficiency of these first seven industries and for further close involvement of officials from the Board of Trade in private companies' business.

I am not aware that they [the working parties] have been of service to industry, although, naturally many people who serve on them have a belief that they do serve some purpose. [...]

Does it never occur to people who want to plan and improve our industry, that the backbone of it is the rather unscientific, uncosted small manufacturer, who does not reduce his costing to a level which a skilled cost accountant would approve, and who does not evoke efficiency experts, but, strange to say,

⁴⁸ The Cotton Industry Working Party is an exception, as details of its work have been archived and used by historians and economists of production and industrial organisation in their discussions of mid-twentieth century industry developments in Lancashire. The findings of the Cotton Industry Working Party have been saved by the Archive of the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners and Twiners. This collection is a rare insight to the work of the Working Party.

Working Party (Cripps), 1945-1947. Archive of the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners and Twiners. University of Manchester Library. GB 133 ACS/6/6/8.

For secondary literature on the Cotton Working Party, see particularly:

John Singleton, 'Planning for Cotton, 1945-1951', *The Economic History Review*, 43.1 (1990), pp.62-78 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2596513>>.

Economist John Singleton, in particular, drew on the report of the working party for cotton in his PhD thesis and in later articles on the British cotton industry in the 1940s, but, as he explained, he gave 'particular emphasis to government policy and planning at the industry level' and, perhaps unsurprisingly for an economist, the most individual level he looked to was that of 'cotton masters' views of the industry's prospects'. Singleton, p. 62.

is very often able to treat his workmen well, to supply goods at a price which gives a headache to the combines, and, I regret to say, can trade at a profit and, when he dies, leaves a substantial fortune?⁴⁹

Roberts raised two important points about both the working parties and small manufacturers: the working parties often served individuals more than their trade; and that the small manufacturer, who Roberts believed held the key to understanding opportunities for development in the industry, often did not plan in the same way policy makers wanted them to. This second point about small manufacturers' records also implied that their record-keeping style did not align with 'higher' industry procedures and could obscure their presence in the historical record.

Despite much of the working party's advice failing to stick within the industry, the party's research amongst the Birmingham trade in 1946 is another useful point of comparison with the census returns and BJA assessments of the trade. In its report, the party counted 191 firms employing about 1,000 people in the manufacture of 'real' jewellery, an average of 5 employees per firm, and 109 firms employing 4,000-5,000 people in the manufacture of 'imitation' jewellery in Birmingham, an average of 37-46 employees per firm, though they specified that some firms manufactured both types of jewellery.⁵⁰ They clarified that by 'real', they referred to jewellery of precious metals and set with gemstones; whilst 'imitation' referred to plated base-metal jewellery set with paste (glass imitation gemstones). The party's count of 6,000 people in the jewellery trade is lower than the tens of thousands insured in the industry in 1939 but could have reflected the ongoing loss of employees to larger munitions factories and a more selective exclusion of allied tradespeople. Small firms, with fewer than 10 employees, dominated the production of 'real' jewellery. Small firms totalled 63.6 per cent of all the jewellery manufacturing businesses, both real and imitation. Even large jewellery firms were much smaller than other 'small' firms in Birmingham. Malcolm Dick referenced Eric Hopkins' assessment that small businesses accounted for the majority of firms in Birmingham in 1939, but capped 'small' at 100 workers.⁵¹

BJA membership figures from two years later, in 1948, also attested to the relatively small size of most businesses. The BJA Annual Report provided members with a tabled breakdown of their peers by manufacturing category and UK location, as shown in the photograph in figure 1.6. Whilst most businesses likely worked across multiple categories, we get a good sense of Birmingham's number of jewellery members by adding the categories of 'Manufacturing Goldsmiths' (247), 'Fancy Jewellery

⁴⁹ Harold Roberts, MP, 'Industrial Organisation Bill', *Hansard*, HC Deb 13 February 1947, Vol. 433, cc547-663, 595-597 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1947/feb/13/industrial-organisation-bill#column_547> [accessed 10.6.20].

⁵⁰ Board of Trade, p. 9.

⁵¹ Eric Hopkins, *Birmingham: The Making of the Second City 1850-1939* (Tempus, 2001); Dick, p. 149.

Manufacturers' (140), 'Medallists & Masonic Jewellers' (36) and 'Jobbing Jewellers' (98), which equalled 521 firms of a total 1,256 Birmingham members.⁵² The bottom of the table noted the 'Total Employees Covered by the Membership' for Birmingham as 18,092, which accounted for employees across the allied trades; these 18,092 employees divided across the 1,256 firms, averaged 14 employees per firm. If large firms were considered to have upwards of 30 employees, the average of 14 again indicated that even in 1948, when most able soldiers would have returned to work and labour had been redirected back from munitions, most businesses had few employees and were relatively small. The high proportion of small firms pointed to an industry in which being self-employed or the owner of a small workshop was common, which implies that the make-up of the trade, both socially and materially, supported individual endeavours and specialisms.

**ANALYSIS OF B.J.A. MEMBERSHIP
BY TRADE SECTIONS**

TRADE SECTIONS	Number of Members				TOTAL
	B'HAM	LONDON	N'THERN	SCOTTISH	
Manufacturing Goldsmiths ...	247	158	13	6	424
Silver & E.P. Manufacturers ...	192	65	11	1	269
Fancy Jewellery Manufacturers ...	140	86	15	2	243
Wholesalers ...	139	285	83	44	551
Horological Dealers ...	49	161	59	31	300
Horological Material Dealers ...	33	66	44	17	160
Horological Accessories Mfrs. ...	1	14	—	—	15
Mechanical Lighter Manufacturers	7	24	1	1	33
Platers & Gilders ...	62	66	7	5	140
Case Makers ...	24	21	4	—	49
Diesinkers, Stampers & Piercers	74	28	10	4	116
Stone Dealers ...	22	105	8	5	140
Medallists & Masonic Jewellers ...	36	11	3	2	52
Jobbing Jewellers ...	98	26	9	6	139
Engravers, Engine Turners and Enamellers ...	64	15	1	2	82
Diamond Cutters ...	—	37	—	—	37
Fancy Goods Dealers and Manu- facturers ...	50	94	37	9	190
General ...	18	51	5	2	76
Total Employees Covered by the Membership :					
Birmingham, 18,092 ; London, 12,897 ; Northern, 1,425 ; Scottish, 546 ;					
TOTAL 32,960					

Figure 1.6. A photograph of a table in the BJA *Annual Report 1948* detailing the geographical location and production type of BJA members in 1948, titled 'Analysis of B.J.A. Membership by Trade Sections'.

Birmingham Jewellers' Association, *Annual Report 1948 and Year Book 1949* (Birmingham: The British Joint Association of Goldsmiths, Silversmiths, Horological and Kindred Trades, 1949), p. 43, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/270

⁵² Birmingham Jewellers' Association, *Annual Report 1948 and Year Book 1949* (The British Joint Association of Goldsmiths, Silversmiths, Horological and Kindred Trades, 1949), p. 43, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/270.

The proliferation of small businesses across the trade was such an intrinsic characteristic of the industry that we can assume that the 300 jewellery firms counted by the working party and the 521 (or 1256) firms of the BJA membership were low estimates of the true number of firms. As economic historian Francesca Carnevali argued in her assessment of Birmingham's nineteenth-century jewellery and silver trades, some trade members opportunistically opened and closed businesses to ride broader market trends.⁵³ The jewellery and silverware manufacturing industries allowed and propagated this behaviour, she contended, because of their webs of small businesses; their prioritising of hand skills; and the absence of a regulatory guild system, like in the City of London. However, none of these characteristics of the trade established overnight; they all required an investment in skill built up cumulatively. To properly recognise and give weight to the small businesses that dominated this industry, I have amassed my own list of 951 businesses that operated for some or all of the period from 1940 to 1960. Recorded in a spreadsheet, my list details the name and address of each business, and, where possible, the nature of the business, whether manufacturing jewellery, silver or fashion goods, or acting as a trade wholesaler or supplier, plus where I found them mentioned through the course of my research. Plotting the list of firms' addresses on a map of Birmingham from the late 1930s, before most of the city's significant road reconfigurations in the 1960s, highlights the clustering of firms in the Jewellery Quarter. Each green dot on the map in figure 1.7 marks the location of one business – though some businesses moved between addresses, for which I plotted all known addresses – but each point is also the nexus of a myriad of relationships connecting people, their knowledge, skills and materials. Figure 1.8 shows a smaller area of the same map to more closely reveal the clustering of businesses in the Jewellery Quarter. The many relationships plotted in this map are the focus of the rest of this chapter's discussion, including the meaning of being employed/self-employed, family connections in the trade, the movement of materials and businesses and the sharing of knowledge. Understanding these connections and how individuals occupied and manifested them in their day-to-day work begins to answer the question of what it meant to identify as a jeweller in Birmingham in the 1940s and 1950s.

⁵³ Carnevali, "Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers": Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham', pp. 538–39.

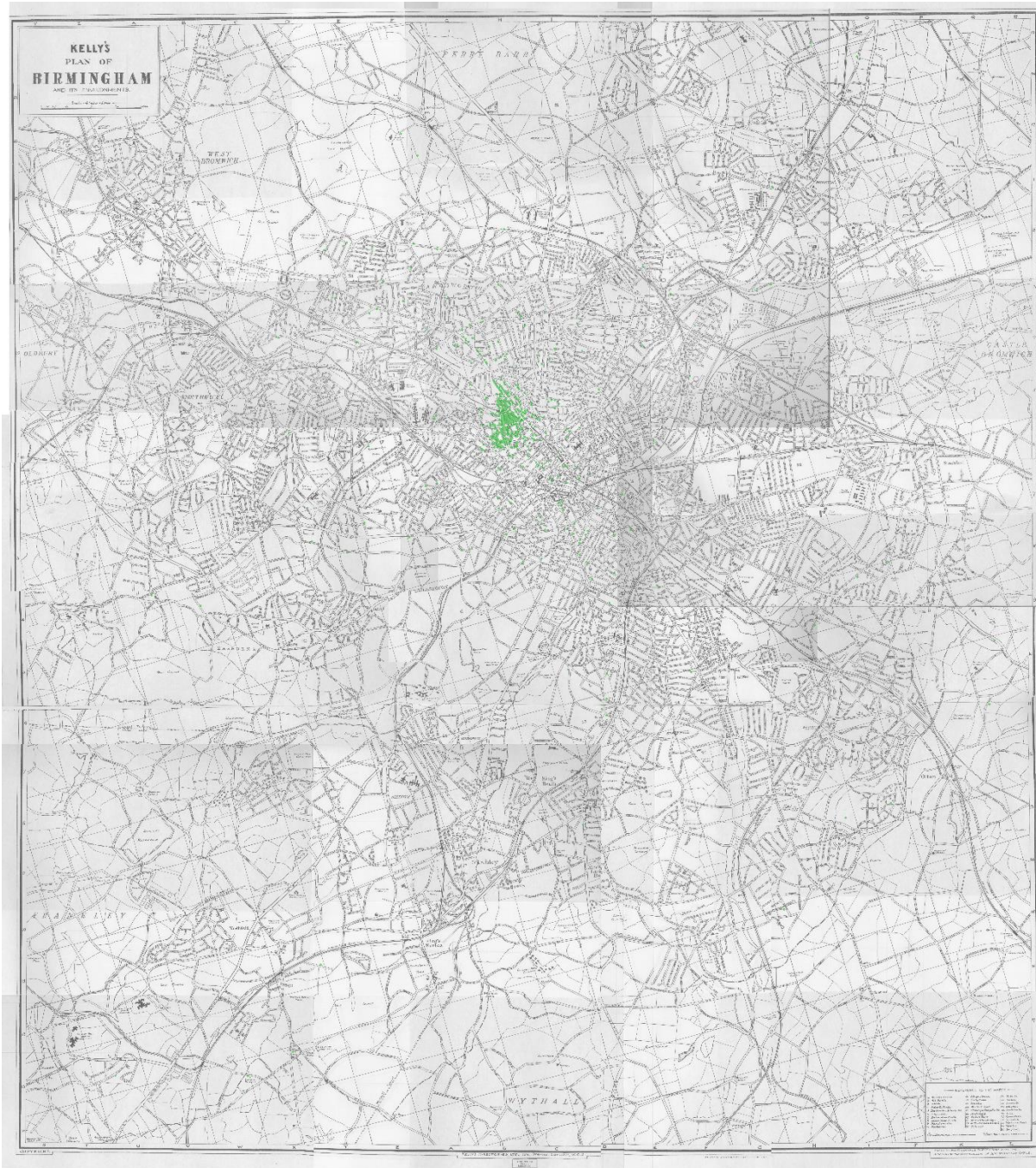


Figure 1.7. A reproduced map of *Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environs*, date unknown, circa 1935, with green markings representing the location of jewellery and allied trades firms across the city.

Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environs, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area, Author's markings, 2023



Figure 1.8. An extract of a reproduced map of *Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environs*, date unknown, circa 1935, with green markings representing the location of jewellery and allied trades firms across the city and showing the clustering of firms in the Jewellery Quarter.

Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environs, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area, Author's markings, 2023

The Employees, the Employers, the Self-Employed and the Outworkers

The high density of small jewellery, silver and allied trades businesses clustered in the Jewellery Quarter pointed to the trade's complex employment system. Whilst we could characterise the trade as having operated systems of employment and self-employment, our contemporary concept of a clear divide between being employed and self-employed is too stark for the jewellers' world of the 1940s and 1950s. Jeweller Dennis Owens (born 1919) related his take on being self-employed in the trade in his oral history interview with Millennibrum, a library project that reached out to members of the Birmingham community to celebrate their shared history at the millennium:

Dennis Owens [...] it's one of those trades, where being self-employed and one-man businesses, you can carry on until they carry you out foot first... feet first, you know.

Interviewer Has it been quite hard being self-employed?

DO Not really, no no, there's always some business, the nice thing about this jewellery business is there's always repairs and there's always something you could do, you know, and if you're well known or if you've got a good character, you can always find some work.⁵⁴

Dennis revealed key characteristics of being self-employed in the jewellery industry: people worked for themselves or in very small businesses, and they also worked for a significant proportion of their life – sometimes their whole adult life – helped, in part, by a constant stream of work that relied on individuals having the prerequisite skills and good reputation to make them the right fit for the job. Despite assuring the interviewer of the ease of being self-employed in the jewellery industry, Dennis also frequently referred to the jewellery trade as a 'boom and bust' industry and outlined in his own career trajectory that being self-employed was not always the easiest nor the most appropriate route. Instead, Dennis moved between carrying out repairs at jewellers P F Jackson, to Cartwright's, and to Steele & Dolphin, all in the space of five years from 1934 to 1939; then he operated Peterman automatic lathes for munition production at Braston Parts until 1945, when he became a jeweller for manufacturing duo Sam Chandler and Gerry Morgan, who he met at Braston; by the early 1950s, 'things were a little bit difficult' and Dennis took over running the business from Chandler and Morgan, until he was offered a job in 1955 as a travelling jewellery salesperson for firm William Dickens. He returned to the Jewellery Quarter to set up his own workshop at 27 Hylton Street with business partner Roy in 1967, all the while acting as temporary landlord for 11 pubs after a childhood spent in

⁵⁴ Dennis Owens, OWENS Dennis, 2000, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 2255/2/88, transcript, p. xi.

the pubs his father managed.⁵⁵ By 2000, when Dennis shared these stories, aged 80, he still rented the same workshop at Hylton Street, but had gone from employing nine craftspeople and occupying the whole ground floor to working on his own and sharing the building. Dennis moved relatively frequently between roles and employment states and, critically, his transfer between employment, self-employment and back again was not linear. Trade members did not always identify themselves using the categories of 'employed' and 'self-employed'. It is important to consider how the 'boom and bust' nature of the industry impacted jewellers' search for work during this period of change without imposing today's attitudes to static employment statuses.

Considering other frameworks for employment is particularly important when trying to understand the trade's outworking system. The working party clarified in its report that, 'In addition [to the small firms] there are a considerable number of outworkers, some of whom employ one or two hired workers apiece, others of whom group together and work in partnership.'⁵⁶ The report did not probe the implications of these unaccounted outworking businesses that were masked by other small businesses, but this sentence highlighted that characterising a trade solely by its number of firms introduced a systemic exclusion of all businesses and individuals that did not fall within these criteria. Moreover, the combination of employing one or two people and working in partnership highlighted the employment complexity of the outworking system. The definition of the outworker was complex because the term was relational: it implied a division of tasks between individuals or small groups of individuals, a relationship in which one party was the commissioning party and the other the party undertaking the work – the outworker – but the parties may have swapped roles in their additional relationships with other craftspeople. The outworker is important because they represented a group of largely independent craftspeople that are excluded from existing narratives about the skilled craftsman because they are harder to find.

The working party's report focused briefly on the outworker and gave a two-part definition for the term. Its first definition of the outworker related more closely to the specialised, independent worker it referenced in the introduction to the report.

It frequently happens that manufacturing firms, either as a general rule or occasionally at busy periods, give out one or more processes, for instance engraving, in whole or in part to independent craftsmen who offer their services, working on their own, for one particular process, and in due course received the articles back for completion at their own factory. These independent craftsmen, whether operating individually or in small firms, are sometimes referred to as outworkers. But it is not with them that we are concerned in this section. They are in business on their own because many jewellery and silverware

⁵⁵ Owens, pp. viii-x.

⁵⁶ Board of Trade, p. 9.

manufacturers find it more convenient and more commercially profitable to send out work on the process in question than to employ a craftsman to perform it full-time on their own premises.⁵⁷

The working party's disinterest in the independent, specialised outworker bolstered this group's exclusion from some governmental records and from future policy areas.

Instead, the report writers differentiated this concept of the skilled outworker from their second definition of 'outworker'. They explained that the other type of outworker operated in a system where 'workers take away work from a manufacturer and return it after performing some process or processes which might as well, and often do in fact, form part of the processing which is ordinarily done on the premises of the factory itself.'⁵⁸ They described much, though not all of this work, as being 'simple and comparatively unskilled', in contrast to the specialised outworker that completed a process that the commissioning firm could not.⁵⁹ Jeweller Bernard Hussey recounted how his sister-in-law undertook this type of outwork and referred to it as her 'homework':

[A]s well as having the people inside, they [Perks Pearce & Thompson] used to farm what they called the easy stuff out, like making the bows and things like that. And even putting the earrings on the cards finished, they used to send that out; my brother's wife used to do it. So, she called it her homework; she'd have all these cards, all these earrings and little pads and she'd have to sew them on, used to sew them on to the pads: pair of creoles, put a 9-carat hallmark sticker on them and put them in a box, you know, packaged. And that was called homework then, they called it homework, and she used to get paid to do that.⁶⁰

Bernard's sister-in-law was an example of an outworker directly employed by the company giving the work. She turned to Perks Pearce & Thompson because both her husband and brother-in-law worked there full time (or 'inside', as Bernard put it and as is the focus of the third chapter of this thesis); her outwork of fixing small hoop earrings onto cards demonstrated how multiple family members often worked in the trade and made much of their connections. The outworkers called in to perform these 'unskilled' jobs were on manufacturers' 'lists' to be instructed with work when needed, 'as a kind of labour cushion'.⁶¹ The idea of a group of workers that cushioned a production line when necessary points to the precarity of employment in the jewellery industry. For Bernard's sister-in-law, her 'homework' likely provided a welcome addition to the family's weekly income, but one that was

⁵⁷ Board of Trade, p. 51.

⁵⁸ Board of Trade, p. 52.

⁵⁹ Board of Trade, p. 52.

⁶⁰ Bernard Hussey, Interview with Bernard Hussey, 2022.

⁶¹ Board of Trade, p. 52.

unlikely to have been reliable, give the precarious nature of outworking and the 'boom and bust' nature of the trade.

Understanding the proportion of outworkers in the trade in the 1940s and 1950s is complicated, but their importance is clear. The working party pointed to old – and, in one case, incorrect – Census of Production data, which placed outworkers as four per cent of the total industry population in 1924 and 2 per cent in 1935 (with a ratio of 4:1 for male and female outworkers, respectively), to argue that 'in a comparatively short time this class of employee may disappear' because of changing labour laws and concerns about home-working conditions.⁶² However, the party acknowledged that the numbers could mislead:

But our enquiries suggest that in the jewellery and silversmithing trade the outworker system may still be operating on a not inconsiderable scale. [...] 15 to 50 outworkers for a firm with 150 to 200 internal workers may well be representative [...], and it may be that workers who from time to time operate as outworkers may equal in numbers from 10 to 20% of the total labour force in the trade. If so they represent an important factor in the labour situation.⁶³

Outworkers totalling 10 to 20 per cent of the labour force was a considerable proportion, especially in comparison to the four to two per cent the party had first suggested. They attributed this discrepancy to the 'outworker' being a 'type of worker whose designation is a vague and ill-defined one', protected and exaggerated by the tradition of the role in the trade.⁶⁴ Though the definition of outworking may be complex, its tradition within the jewellery industry confirmed its importance. Considering outworking jewellers as either self-employed, as in the first definition of outworker, or as a part-time employee, as in the second definition, clouds the network of relationships and materials that were embedded within outworking.

Job adverts in *The Birmingham Mail*, one of the city's newspapers with the largest circulation, revealed that the moved from employment to outworking, and vice versa, was relatively common. Adverts in consecutive editions in April 1945, likely from the same firm, appealed for a 'Silversmith experd. [experienced] Cigarette cases Manufacturing jewellers would help right man commence on own account as outworker' and an 'Experienced Sand Polisher all types of silverware and jewellery

⁶² The working party tabulated the outworker figures from the Censuses of Production in its report. For 1924's data, the writers tabled 884 male and 246 female outworkers, from 29,807 'Total Workers in the Industry'; the total outworker count is listed as 1090, but should be 1130. Their decrease added to their argument that the outworker was close to trade extinction.

Board of Trade, p. 52-3.

⁶³ Board of Trade, p. 52.

⁶⁴ Board of Trade, p. 52.

Manufacturing jewellers would help right man commence on own account as outworker'.⁶⁵ By offering help to the worker that wanted to begin outworking, this firm indicated the desirability of working independently in the jewellery and allied trades. Individual stories confirmed this attraction, and also that outworking appealed to both the individual and their former employer. From a family of silver polishers, Kenneth Chaplain (born 1937) shared the story of his parents' business E L Chaplain & Co as part of the Jewellery Quarter's People's Archive, in which he detailed that his parents' employer encouraged them to become outworkers instead.

[T]hey worked for a company called E J Clewley, a company of about 200 people, which was quite a large company in the Jewellery Quarter [...] And I would say they were probably the main makers of watch bracelets in England.

[...] The boss of E J Clewley was a man called Carl, Carl [Bishton], a very, very nice person, and he asked my mum and dad if they would like to actually become outworkers, because in the Jewellery Quarter, the Jewellery Quarter in those days was a lot of outworkers, where you worked for yourself. And these large companies, or small companies and medium companies, used to actually give you work to do.

[...] My father's first building was in Hylton Street [number 11], which was made up then of box makers, a company called Pellow, which used to make gold locket, crosses and things like that, which we used to polish for them and also gild. [...] and my father started to expand a little bit and he actually went into gilding, which is actually silver plating, sorry, gold plating. And one of the main things my father used to do was actually gold plate watch bracelets, thousands of them, because father, if I can choose to say something about my father, my father was a very good tradesman, and my mother was as well.⁶⁶

From the high professional esteem in which Kenneth held both his parents and Carl Bishton, it is clear he considered his parents' move to become outworkers for E J Clewley a positive change, especially as they expanded from polishing into gilding and secured big jobs. As 'very good' tradespeople they had business acumen and commitment, discretion that built through years of trade knowledge and experience.

Workers sometimes chose to return to in-house work, and their discretion helped them to ride the 'boom and bust' times in the trade. Dennis Owens reflected on moving between firms and how his

⁶⁵ 'SILVERSMITH experd. Cigarette cases Manufacturing jewellers would help right man commence on own account as outworker - 878 R Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 24 April 1945, p. 4.

'EXPERIENCED Sand Polisher all types of silverware and jewellery Manufacturing jewellers would help right man commence on own account as outworker - 879 R Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 25 April 1945, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Kenneth Chaplain, People's Archive: Kenneth Chaplain, Director, E L Chaplain & Co. on Frederick Street, 2018, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive <<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/kenneth-chaplain/>> [accessed 30 January 2023].

skills as a jobbing jeweller, either used in house or as an outworker, allowed him and others in the trade to have discretion for the jobs they took on and to be able find jobs relatively easily.

I went from Jackson's to a place called Cartwrights and another place called Steele's making various things because it's always been a boom and bust industry and although we weren't sort of laid off completely, we went on very short time after Christmas, things got very tight and things like that and in the end, as I said, I really wasn't too worried about the money. My father used to be very anxious that I was working but I could change from one job to another. And I did a lot of jobs.⁶⁷

Whilst Dennis had the benefit of hindsight, his father's concern pointed to his own knowledge of the boom-and-bust nature of the trade, having worked in the jewellery trade too. During periods of lower demand, gaining a favourable reputation for your skills was key.

The restrictions of the 1940s left jobbing jewellers in a particularly strong position in relation to their other specialist colleagues. The jobbing jeweller, or 'jobber', undertakes tasks across a range of processes, like resizing rings, repairing broken elements of a jewel, replacing or straightening bent brooch pins, and sometimes setting gemstones when the job did not warrant the services of a specialist setter. A jobbing jeweller may also be an in-house jeweller in a larger retail jeweller that needs someone to quickly undertake a range of jobs on demand.⁶⁸ In his description of his training as a jobbing jeweller, Dennis Owens described the industry's need for the role as being because, 'in this industry there's an awful lot of repairs, practically every diamond ring that's sold needs sizing to some extent, you know and chains; rings need new stones and settings. [... P F Jackson's] dealt with hundreds of retailers who sent in repairs every week'.⁶⁹ In the 1940s and 1950s, the role of the jobbing jeweller took on increased importance as the Board of Trade restricted new jewellery production to international markets, so repairs became the only legitimate form of jewellery work for the home trade. In the early years of these restrictions, the jobbing jewellers in Birmingham grouped together to petition for their own trade sectional committee in the BJA, despite waning jewellery production.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Owens.

⁶⁸ The term is still used today. A Google search of 'jobbing jeweller' on 6 March 2021 returned results for job adverts for jobbing jewellers on benchpeg.com, a website that supports manufacturing jewellers with news and classified advertisements. For instance, David Mellor Family Jewellers based in Totton Southampton list an advert for a 'full-time Goldsmith/Jobbing Jeweller [...]. Our workshop undertakes all aspects of jewellery repair from ring sizing and chain repairs to full restoration work. All of which we would expect to be completed to the highest standard, whilst working efficiently to tight deadlines. [...] the successful candidate will be au fait with traditional manufacturing methods. [...] An 'improver' might be considered but with a minimum 3 years' bench experience.'

'Jobbing Jeweller', *Benchpeg*, 2018 <https://benchpeg.com/jobs/goldsmith/-/jobbing-jeweller-david-mellor-family-jewellers-totton-southampton> [accessed 6.3.2021].

⁶⁹ Owens, p. viii.

⁷⁰ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Annual Report 1943 and Year Book 1944*, 1943, p. 6, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/269.

By pursuing their own representation at a time when their role had gained a new importance in the trade, they reified their occupational identity on a bureaucratic as well as social level and made them formally recognisable in the archive. Yet interest in the committee's work never built. Of the 50 letters the committee sent to jobbing jewellers about a proposed 'Schedule of Prices' for all jobbing jewellers and their clients to work from, only 12 returned with responses.⁷¹ The short list of gold and silver repairs did not reflect the broad work jobbing jewellers undertook during this period – as detailed in the second chapter of this thesis – and so their lack of support for the list was unsurprising. At the second AGM of the Jobbing Jewellers Trade Section in March 1946, the five members present suggested that the lack of other attendees and their disinterest over the past year 'was not surprising bearing in mind the many pre-occupations of jobbing jewellers who had been swamped with work and many extraneous matters arising from Government Orders etc.'⁷² Even by the next AGM in 1947, enquiries from new customers seeking jobbing jewellers could not be answered as 'it had been extremely difficult to find even one member ready to accept a new customer.'⁷³ With such demand for their skills, jobbing jewellers used the outworking system to their advantage as they had the discretion to accept or turn down jobs based on the task, its cost, their workload, or the client. As a result of their varied skills and their reputation, the jobbing jewellers did not need a formal Trade Section committee to bolster their identity.

When firms began to wind down their war contracts but still had workers missing to conscription, hiring new workers was necessary to rejuvenate jewellery production and the demand was great enough that firms offered in- and outwork so that they could access the skills they needed. In job adverts from 1945, one advertiser sought 'Jewellers female for gold links part or full time Also gem ring maker in or out work'; whilst another posted 'Jewellery Setters Wtd. [wanted] Work in or out used to Paste & Marcasite gds. [goods]'.⁷⁴ For the workers, this demand could work in their favour, as they balanced their needs and desires for work. Rod Mossop (born 1950), a senior master model maker and diamond brooch maker at fine jewellery workshop Alabaster & Wilson, reflected on former

⁷¹ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Jobbing Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Jan 1944 - Mar 48: Third Meeting 7 September 1944', 1944, MS 1646/120.

⁷² Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Jobbers Second Annual General Meeting 13 March 1946'.

⁷³ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Jobbing Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Jan 1944 - Mar 48: Third Annual General Meeting 4 March 1947'.

⁷⁴ 'JEWELLERS female for gold links part or full time Also gem ring maker in or out work - 587 T Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 4 October 1945, p. 4.

'JEWELLERY Setters Wtd. Work in or out used to Paste & Marcasite gds. - 119 G Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 15 October 1945, p. 4.

colleagues and their patterns of movement through the trade in his oral history for the People's Archive.

There was Tommy Poyner, who was a setter, he was a really good setter, Tommy, and he'd had his own firm and they negotiated for him to work there. A good lad.

[...] There was Dolly, a lady who was doing the polishing, she was really good. We hadn't got ultrasonic cleaning baths there, or plating, or anything. But polishers tended to be transient, we had lots of polishers. [...] The last one we've had, just, Pat, he stuck it out. I think Pat's done about 18 years now, which is a record for a polisher at our place.⁷⁵

Rod's praise for his colleagues Tommy, Dolly and Pat suggests that moving in and out of the outworking system had little effect on individuals' reputations as craftspeople. Moreover, Tommy's story of being persuaded to leave his own workshop to join Alabaster & Wilson dispels the notion that moves back to employment must have been led by outworkers hitting a 'bust' period and seeking the stability of employment, though this decision must have been the reality for some outworkers, as in any trade. That polishers like Dolly remained transient, whether working in or out of a workshop, suggested that their occupational identity was fixed by their skills and type of work, rather than by employment status; polishers specialised in polishing either silver or jewellery, but were unlikely to have specialised any further than these two top-level categories as they could turn their hand to almost anything within their chosen category, and likely moved frequently so as not to become bored with the items or people that they worked with. Through their trade knowledge and discretion, workers understood when to work in-house – 'inside' – and out.

The working party recognised, yet still undervalued, outworking as a crucial tenet of the trade in the Jewellery Quarter. Today's notions of employment and self-employment carry expectations about relationships between employers and employees, and between a jeweller and their own business, that distract from understanding outworkers' patterns of operating within the trade system. Jewellers of all specialisms could oscillate within the outworking system as its boundaries were not static nor impenetrable; they used their discretion to take on jobs when they wanted and needed to. Firms took a similar approach to hiring workers, offering jobs as employed work or outwork. As silversmith

⁷⁵ Rod Mossop, People's Archive: Rod Mossop, Senior master model and diamond brooch maker, Alabaster & Wilson on Legge Lane, 2019, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive <<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/rod-mossop/>> [accessed 30 January 2023].

Cornellius Sullivan put it, 'I basically did anything that I wanted to do, basically, to stay in work and maximise by earnings. So, there's an awful lot of stuff in the trade.'⁷⁶

Routes into the Trade

Outworking was a viable and sustainable option for jewellers because of its tradition within the trade; jewellers knew that it was feasible to move between outworking and working inside, or to combine both, because they had seen generations of craftspeople do it before them. Dennis Owens highlighted the importance of established connections for gaining entry to the trade. Dennis explained his route into the trade, having left school aged 15, in 1934, and having been introduced to jewellery work by his father, who made spectacles, repaired jewellery and ran a string of pubs – 'My father would never have let me be idle'⁷⁷

DO I don't think I knew exactly what I wanted to do, but I think I was always fascinated by diamonds and gold [...]

Interviewer How did you come to choose jewellery?

DO Because I'd seen jewellery being made and of course a lot of jewellers used to... it's not far from the Jewellery Quarter the pub, and I had friends jewellers as well, even from school, they were... a lot of them ⁷⁸

Dennis suggested a few important trends amongst jewellers' decisions to join the trade: joining straight from school was common; many had a connection to the industry through friends or family; living a close distance to the Quarter impacted who you met and your knowledge of the area; and, importantly, a respect and fascination for the jewellers' materials contributed to a desire to be part of the trade. Understanding jewellers' routes into the trade at a time when labour redirection disrupted normal life is important for considering how the Second World War and its aftermath affected a generation of craftspeople and the trade they invested in. Despite the government's and trade association's concerns about inexperienced young workers joining the trade having only known war work and active service, wartime production and changes to the route of entering the trade did not

⁷⁶ Cornellius Sullivan, People's Archive: Cornellius Sullivan, Various roles, Barker Ellis, W J Bakers and J W Evans, 2019, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive <<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/cornellius-sullivan/>> [accessed 30 January 2023].

⁷⁷ Owens, transcript p. ix.

⁷⁸ Owens, transcript p. ix.

greatly affect the deep-rooted familial connections and professional and social networks of the industry that helped young workers like Dennis feel at home within the trade.⁷⁹

As the censuses of production indicated, a considerable portion of Birmingham's working population worked in the city's metalworking trades. A 1950 study of the national Youth Service scheme recorded Birmingham's metal industry as employing 'over 37 per cent of the industrial working population of the city – the comparable figure for the country as a whole being 11 per cent'.⁸⁰ Of the 78,729 young people (aged under 20), 25 per cent worked in the production of 'miscellaneous metal goods', 12,490 girls outnumbering the 7,033 boys.⁸¹ As a result, almost everyone had a connection to metalwork and at least some knowledge of the types of manufacturing distributed around Birmingham's north and east conurbation. The local history section of the Library of Birmingham includes autobiographies and memoirs of Birmingham residents, who generally wrote to reflect on the changes they noticed in their local areas; the writers of every available book in this section of the library commented on their connection to the metal trades, whether through family, friends, or themselves. Gary Smith (born 1943) wrote about his childhood in Winson Green, just northwest of Hockley and the Jewellery Quarter, and he described both familial and friendship relationships with trade members during his introduction to his work in the trade:

Dad worked at the Birmid up Smethwick. Mom worked at Nettlefolds as a Press Operator. [...] Metal bashing was the main industry in the area. Around the corner from Avery's was a multitude of large and small factories leading towards Smethwick and probably the largest factory was the Birmid. My Dad worked there until the end of the war. He was an aluminium moulder [...].⁸²

[...] My aunts worked at Settern and Derwards [manufacturers of stationery equipment] in Benson Road and I got to know a lad whose mother worked with the girls. He worked part time in the Jewellery Quarter. His name was Colin Muddiford I wonder if he eventually worked in the trade? We worked for a jewellers in Vyse Street, they mostly worked in marcasite rings and brooches, for around 12/- a week. It was handy working in that area as you could catch the 96 bus around the corner from the school and be in the quarter by half past four. This would have been around 1957 and I found another job in

⁷⁹ Albert Carter, silversmith Her Majesty Queen Mary and chairman of the BJA's Art and Technical Committee, contributed an article to *The British Jeweller* in 1943 about post-war training at the School of Jewellery in which he warned that 'there will be a large number of youths who have been engaged on repetition machine operations during the war. These youths have had no training that will fit them for peace-time industry'. Albert Carter, 'Post War Training', *British Jeweller*, October 1943, 9–10 (p. 9).

⁸⁰ Bryan H Reed, *Eighty Thousand Adolescents: A Study of Young People in the City of Birmingham by the Staff and Students of Westhill Training College* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1950), p. 12.

⁸¹ Reed, p. 12.

⁸² Gary Smith, *Winson Green: My World* (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 1997), pp. 2–7.

Northampton Street off Hall Street for a firm of enamellers called Collins's for another three shillings a week.⁸³

Gary introduced his family by first describing his parents' occupations and he frequently referred to his father's occupational change from moulding aluminium to working in the maintenance department at the *Birmingham Evening Mail* offices. Their jobs played a role in his outward perception of his parents, which demonstrated the prominence work played in Gary's concept of identity.⁸⁴ Through his parents and his aunts, and later also his wife's father who 'was a sheet metal roller', Gary learnt about the larger and heavier 'metal bashing' side of the industry and, through his friend Colin, he learnt about the lighter work of the Jewellery Quarter, though press operators, like his mother, not only worked in the heavy industry but also dominated the light work of fashion jewellery, as discussed in the third chapter of this thesis.⁸⁵ Other memoirs featured similar stories of family members in roles across the Birmingham metal industries, which made jewellery production a known option for younger family members.⁸⁶ Despite working there as a boy, Gary did not consider himself part of the trade at the time, as intimated in his questioning of whether Colin Muddiford 'eventually worked in the trade'; by still being at school whilst working in the Quarter, Gary did not consider his work to yet be his occupation, nor a fixed part of his identity. Though boundaries of the trade were flexible and porous, Gary's self-designation of being outside the trade intimated that amongst Birmingham's wider population there was a strong sense of what it meant to be part of the jewellery and silver trade.

Gary also hinted that the lure of the Jewellery Quarter to his 14-year-old self was partly due to its accessibility, only needing one bus from near his school to reach the Quarter. Many jewellers did not have a long commute to work, living close to the Quarter, especially before the bombing that destroyed residential areas around Camden Drive in the Jewellery Quarter in the 1941. The 1217 employee accident cards that form the basis of the third chapter of this thesis detail workers across firms in the Jewellery Quarter and their home addresses between 1942 and 1946 as part of their compensation claims processed by the BJA's insurance scheme.⁸⁷ Plotting their addresses on the same

⁸³ Smith, pp. 42–43.

⁸⁴ Smith, p. 8.

⁸⁵ Smith, p. 50.

⁸⁶ Tom Golding wrote his mother's memoir: Rose Golding was a guillotine worker at Premier Umbrella (Cox and Holland's), 'cutting rolls of metal into small shapes for the many presses'. 'I believe at one time five members of the family worked there together.' She also worked with a school friend, Lily Hewson, at some of the factories.

Tom Golding, *96 Years a Brummie, 1889-1986* (Birmingham: Tom Golding, 1986), p. 23, 26.

See also: Brenda Bullock, *A Pocket With A Hole: A Birmingham Childhood of the 1940s and 1950s* (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 1996); Kathleen Dayus, *The Girl from Hockley: Growing up in Working-Class Birmingham* (Little, Brown, 2006).

⁸⁷ 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601.

map used for the business addresses (see figure 1.9) confirmed a clustering of jewellers' homes in the areas of Hockley, Ladywood to the west of the Quarter, Handsworth to the north, and Lozells to the northeast, as jewellers had indicated in interviews. Figure 1.10 shows a closer view of this cluster (blue markings) and includes the green markings of the businesses; the grouping of home addresses hugs the northwestern side of the Jewellery Quarter, and back-to-back houses densely occupied this Spring Hill area in the mid-twentieth century. Workers living in the south of the city, or West Bromwich to the northwest, or in the new estates in Perry Barr and Kingstanding to the north would have needed transport, but nearer workers could walk to the Quarter and were aware of the trade situated next to them. This proximity persuaded workers like Gary Smith and jeweller Kathleen Dayus, who grew up in Camden Drive, to search there for work first. For women working in the industry during the 1940s and juggling childcare, working close to home was an additional incentive to join the trade.



Figure 1.9. A reproduced map of *Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environs*, date unknown, circa 1935, with blue markings representing the location of jewellers' home addresses from the employee accident cards in the BJA archive.

Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environs, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area; 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601; Author's markings, 2023

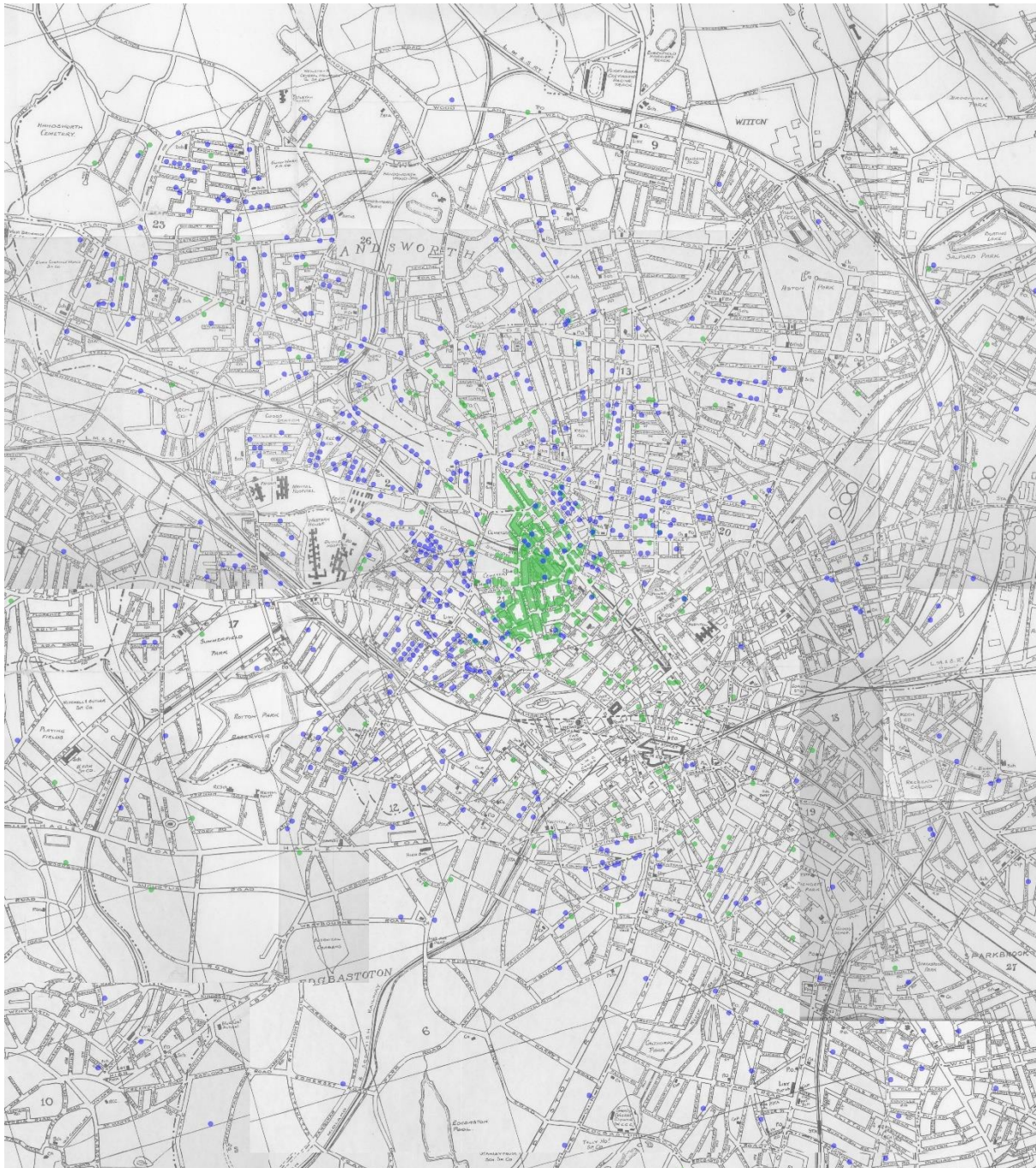


Figure 1.10. An extract of a reproduced map of *Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments*, date unknown, circa late 1935, with green markings representing the location of jewellery and allied trades firms across the city and blue markings representing the location of jewellers' homes.

Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area; Author's markings, 2023

Most jewellers referenced family in their oral history stories of their routes into the trade. Rod Mossop, model and diamond brooch maker at Alabaster & Wilson, revealed in his oral history recording that both his aunt and his great uncle worked in the trade.⁸⁸ For Kenneth Chaplain, taking on his parents' workshop, E L Chaplain & Co, not only meant following in their footsteps, but also in the footsteps of three of his four grandparents, plus all his grandfather's brothers, who 'worked at polishing in the Jewellery Quarter'.⁸⁹ Kenneth also saw his father's transition between jobs and the establishment of their own polishing business: 'Well he actually had various jobs in the Jewellery Quarter, for instance, during the war he was actually a tool setter working for Lucas's [a motor industry manufacturer with multiple factories around Hockley], which is in the Jewellery Quarter'.⁹⁰ Tool setting – fitting custom-made tool components onto stamps and presses – required different knowledge and skills from Kenneth's father's polishing skills; his time engaged in war work is another example of how jewellers adapted to take on different jobs when needed. Just as he did, Kenneth's sons, Martin and Grant, followed him into the trade. Similarly, jeweller Bernard Hussey left school and joined his brother at the workshop he was employed by.⁹¹ Indeed, the majority of firms in the Quarter were named after one person – intimating that the firm was initially established by a jeweller becoming independent – and many of these firms had an additional 'Brothers' or '& Sons' at the end of their name, which suggested a family connection and a leading route into the trade.

Multiple shared surnames amongst the accident cards' 1096 individuals also pointed to a strong familial connection between workers in the trade. 151 repeated surnames belonged to 448 individuals working in the trade. Whilst some of these repetitions were due to common surnames, like Green (11 people), Jones (16 people) and Smith (17 people), other repetitions were likely due to shared ancestry. In 11 cases of shared surnames, the individuals were listed as living at the same address too, which more certainly pointed to their familial connection. Table 1.1 details the workers, their shared addresses, their place of work, their ages and their likely relation to each other.

⁸⁸ Mossop.

⁸⁹ Kenneth Chaplain.

⁹⁰ Kenneth Chaplain.

⁹¹ Hussey.

Table 1.1. The 11 instances of shared surnames and addresses of the workers detailed in the Employee Accident Cards (1942-46) in the BJA archive.

Name	Address	Place of Work	Age	Likely connections
Violet Chapman	186 Putney Road, Handsworth	Buncher & Haseler	18 (1942)	Siblings
Rose Doreen Chapman			15 (1942)	
John William Dean	138 Shakespeare Crescent, Harden, Nr. Walsall	Elkington & Co	58 (1943)	Parent and child
George Dean			28 (1946)	
Horace Ambrose Humphries	No. 3, 140 Hockley Street	Elkington & Co	17 (1942)	Siblings
Leah Humphries			16 (1943)	
Joseph Jayes	229 Park Road, Hockley	Barker Bros. (Munitions)	57 (1945)	Parent and child
Elizabeth Jayes		A S Cartwright Ltd	31 (1944)	
Harold Nunn	20 Wyken Avenue, Coventry	Rotherham & Sons Ltd	Not listed	
Arthur Nunn			19 (1942)	
Gwendoline Paul	96/4 King Edwards Road	Elkington & Co	20 (1942)	Siblings
Iris Edna Paul			16 (1942)	
Mary Quinn	11 Bailey Street, West Bromwich	J G Beddoes Ltd	14 (1945)	Twins
Sheila Quinn			14 (1945)	
Hilda Smallbones	54 Westminster Road, Perry Barr	George Edmonds Ltd	16 (1942)	Siblings
Irene Smallbones			15 (1942)	
Madge Wallace	15 Ellen Street, Brookfields	C J Adie & Nephew Ltd	22 (1942)	Siblings
Mary E Wallace			14 (1942)	
Rose Wilkes	9 Gladstone Street, West Bromwich	E & J Leek Ltd	39 (1943)	Parent and child
F A Wilkes			18 (1942)	
Mrs Harriett Winkles	76 Camden Street	Buncher & Haseler	49 (1943)	Parent and child
Beatrice Mary Winkles			20 (1943)	

Data from: British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601

The 11 pairs of family members in Table 1.1 give an insight to the tradition of familial hiring in the jewellery and allied trades. In all but one case, the family members worked for the same firm, which implied that employed family members learnt of vacancies and shared them with siblings, children, cousins and parents, as well as putting in a good word about them to their bosses.

Jewellers around the trade confirmed this pattern of familial hiring even when it wasn't their own family business. In conversation between silversmith Cornelius Sullivan, drop-stamper Tony Hackett and his wife, Linda Hackett, who worked in the wider metals trade, the three outlined that it was common for family members to persuade each other to join them when they needed a job:

- Linda [Y]ears ago, say, if Con [Cornellius] worked there and Con had a brother, which he has, his brothers would work there, wouldn't they?
- Cornellius Yes.
- Linda It was common for all the family to work at the same company.
- Tony If your dad worked somewhere, you'd say, 'oh, can you get us in there?', and then your brother or your sisters would do the same thing. Factories then, or businesses then, were run by like community family.⁹²

Their description of businesses operating like 'community family' aligned somewhat with sociologist Maureen Padfield's description of the trade as an 'occupational community', but the family aspect of the trade was crucial.⁹³ Jeweller Bernard Hussey also pointed to familial connections as being the obvious route into the trade for him:

I hadn't got a job when I left school, I was 15, and my brother said to me, "I'll get you a job at our place, come there for a few weeks, and then if you find something else to do", he said, "go and do it". And I've been in the jewellery trade ever since, so... I hadn't got a clue, but I've stuck at it. [...] I did the apprenticeship and my brother was teaching me, but there was my brother, who was obviously my boss at the time, and then there was another lad and me, who were his apprentices.⁹⁴

Bernard's story about his apprenticeship under his brother's guidance reinforced the blurred lines of what it meant to be employed in the jewellery trade – Bernard worked for the workshop, but his

⁹² Hackett, Hackett, and Sullivan.

⁹³ See the literature review in the introduction of this thesis for an overview of Padfield's classification of the occupational community in the trade.

Maureen Padfield, 'Out in the Trade: The Occupational Community of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter' (unpublished PhD, University of Warwick, 1990) <<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/34821/>> [accessed 16 April 2020].

⁹⁴ Hussey.

interactions with the firm went through his brother, as his teacher and manager. His brother's offer to try working with him for three weeks whilst considering other jobs suggested that following family into the trade was both a given option and a back-up plan. This implicit acceptance that there would always be work for them in the trade proved that jewellers believed in the trade's continuity through families and that they would be naturally suited for the trade, or that there were enough roles within it to find the right one for them. As family frequently worked together as employees of the same firms, a move to outwork as a family business would have brought little difference to the patterns of day-to-day work between parents, children, brothers and sisters. The jewellers thus perpetuated the trade system, including outworking, by relying on a labour supply from families.

Without a familial connection to the trade, young people considering a career in the jewellery production sometimes met hostility from their families. Gary Smith, the schoolboy that followed his friend Colin to the Jewellery Quarter on the 96 bus after school, considered finding a permanent role in the trade after his afternoon job at enamellers Collins's, but was met with little approval from his mother.

I was about to leave school at that time and was looking for a job, I didn't fancy working at Collins's though. I was quite good at art at school so I fancied something artistic. I heard of a job going in Hall Street at a silver engravers. I had an interview and the owner was pleased with my work so he offered me the job as an apprentice in silver engraving. I asked what my wages would be, because our Mom had told me to, and it would be 30/- (£1.50) and pay my own stamp which was 2/6, this would be a six year apprenticeship. I then went home and told Mom what I had been offered, she didn't want to know. She said my brother brought that home years before and I had to get a job that paid better. Mom said the Co-Op Bakery at Messenger Road in Smethwick wanted bread lads, she must have found this out from our baker and told me to apply for a job. There was no argument, I had got to bring home more money! [...]. I do regret not having the opportunity to be a silversmith.⁹⁵

Gary's mother had a clear and strong reaction to the low wages of his proposed silver engraving apprenticeship. The long training period and traditions of guardianship implicit within an apprenticeship allowed wages for apprentices to be much lower than that of entry-level jobs. Masters were responsible for their apprentices' development, including sending them to the Vittoria Street School of Jewellery & Silversmithing one day a week for art and design lessons. Though Gary's family were engaged in the wider metals trade, they had no connection to the jewellery trade and so likely had less knowledge of how Gary would progress, both in skills and in pay, after the six years of this lower apprenticeship wage. Had they been part of the trade's 'community family', his mother's

⁹⁵ Smith, pp. 42–44.

reaction may have been different. Gary's experience of wanting to work in the trade, but being pulled back from it, is a useful comparison with the routes into the trade of jewellers like Bernard Hussey, whose family connection meant that an apprenticeship was the obvious choice when he did not know what else he wanted to pursue. Their stories reinforced the influence of the familial traditions within the trade for generating and regenerating the occupational community, as well as shaping individuals' occupational identities.

Gary's story of hearing about a job available round the corner from his current part-time role stressed the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations for jobs and the discretion jewellers operated with when recruiting. Linda Hackett described the system simply as, 'Well, it was word of mouth, wasn't it, you know?'⁹⁶ These verbal testimonials worked in two directions: jewellers passed round news of available jobs, but also verbally recommended themselves or others to individuals and firms that might be interested in their skills. Sometimes, their reputation preceded them, as Cornellius Sullivan revealed happened to him when he approached the workshop W J Baker's for a new flat-hammering (very precise hammering to remove dents from items) role: 'I rang up Johnny Baker and he said, "We know about you, don't worry about interview, just start on Monday."' ⁹⁷ The geographical and social clustering of skilled people in the Jewellery Quarter meant that in many cases, like that of Cornellius, your name and your skills were known beyond your workshop and beyond your group of work friends at the pub. Reputation was critical.

When jewellers moved to work for the armed forces, their skills and reputation, and thus identity, did not diminish. Dennis Owens, for example, spoke about how his war work using the automatic screw-making lathes at Braston Parts brought him into contact with a new colleague that was also a jeweller, who could see his skills and then found Dennis a job.

[W]hilst I was at this company I met... I worked with another man named Gerry Morgan who was... he was quite a good jeweller, he was a brilliant jeweller in fact, and of course he was working with me and he introduced me to a person in Warstone Lane, Sam Chandler, who was actually operating during the war... he was doing jewellery and doing repairs and things and they formed a partnership, Sam and Gerry, and they asked me if I'd go and work for them... 1945 and so I went there in 1945. ⁹⁸

Though Dennis moved to a new firm, Braston Parts, for his war work, he worked there with fellow jewellers Gerry and Tom because of their reserved-occupation status and their skills that made them

⁹⁶ Hackett, Hackett, and Sullivan.

⁹⁷ Sullivan.

⁹⁸ Owens, p. ix.

suitable for these roles. Jewellers still worked together and maintained the skill- and trust-based relationships on which the jewellery industry was grounded. This proximity made them aware of what each other was working on and ensured continuity in both their career and relationships. In the same way that jobs had always spread through word of mouth, Gerry approached Dennis to work for his partnership, and Dennis respected Gerry for being a 'brilliant jeweller'. Linked together by proximity, trade knowledge, reputation and discretion, each was equally aware of their individual, but shared, identity of being a 'jeweller' in this period, even – and especially – when they made very little jewellery.

Proximity and Clustering

The proximity of jewellers, their skills, materials and sense of identity, is encapsulated in the district's name: the Jewellery Quarter. Whilst other allied-trade members knew the area as Hockley, jewellers had long called the area the Jewellery Quarter because of the clustering of jewellery-related businesses. Acknowledgement of the jewellers' social and geographical clustering is not new, all historians of the Jewellery Quarter, and particularly prominent Birmingham historian Carl Chinn, have attached significant weight to the tight-knit social and physical arrangement of the industry; however, none has questioned the impact of the 1940s armed forces' recruitment drives on this microcosm.⁹⁹

In other instances of business clustering, economists and historians have built the concept of the industrial district to characterise the social and geographical grouping of skills, materials, labour and relationships, and the opportunity for specialisation that this grouping affords. Historian and sociologist of governance Jonathan Zeitlin considered industrial districts around Victorian-Edwardian economist Alfred Marshall's definition of Marshallian Agglomeration Economies in which a pool of labour, knowledge and supplies gathered in one area for the mutual benefit of involved parties.¹⁰⁰ The industrial district is predicated on interlinked firms and the specialisation (either in skills, supplies or

⁹⁹ Chinn's introduction to the history of the Jewellery Quarter gives a holistic, but not detailed, view of the trade, though he does point to decreases in unemployment before the war.

Carl Chinn, 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', *West Midlands History*, 2016, pp. 1–15, p. 14.

¹⁰⁰ Zeitlin is one of the most referenced writers on industrial districts. He developed the phrase 'industrial district' from Marshall's agglomeration economies. See, in particular:

Jonathan Zeitlin, 'Why Are There No Industrial Districts in the United Kingdom?', in *Small and Medium-Size Enterprises*, ed. by Arnaldo Bagnasco and Charles F. Sabel, Social Change in Western Europe (London: Pinter, 1995).

Also: Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (London: Macmillan, 1890).

Alfred Marshall characterised Marshallian Agglomeration Economies (MAE) as distinct geographic and social areas that have three main attributes: a local pool of skilled labour, connected local suppliers and a pool of local, specialist knowledge.

processes) that these links allow to flourish in the contained scope of the district. The Jewellery & Silverware Working Party's report characterised specialisation in a particular type of production or skillset as essential for small firms and individuals to find their place within the system and financially succeed.

The value to the industry of some of the small firms is high; they often perform specialised processes which it would not be economical for a larger manufacturer to perform for himself as part of a balanced production. [...]

Most of the jewellers in Birmingham attach a high value to the concentration of the industry in the jewellery quarter, though there are now signs that some of the larger firms are feeling the attraction of towns not too far from Birmingham where the supply of unskilled and semi-skilled labour is easier.¹⁰¹

The members of the working party identified trade members' financial attachment to the specialised nature of the trade, especially in their introduction of firms' search for skill levels outside of the Quarter, but the jewellers' recognition of the 'high value' of the specialised trade pointed to the social importance of independent, but connected, work for their sense of identity.

Jeweller Paul Podolsky, predominantly based in London but with a firm in Birmingham, described his impression of the Jewellery Quarter trade.

You could walk down Vyse Street or Warstone Lane in Birmingham and every building had its own little workshop or wholesaler doing his own thing in there. They were mainly individuals, a few employed people as well, and they were highly specialist. I mean, I used to get a Birmingham salesman who made certain things, used to come in and claim proudly that he was a penny cheaper per piece than his nearest rival. We're talking about old pennies, not new ones.¹⁰²

Despite being a relative outsider, Paul still highlighted the specialist nature of individual firms in the Jewellery Quarter. His description of the salesman being proud of his competitive rates was an example of the economic benefit of specialisation. Over years, firms chose to make one particular item or one type of manufacturing, like chain making, and they refined their processes to reduce their production costs and maximise profits. With their neighbours as their closest competition, firms were spurred on to specialise to be different. Birmingham's greater mix of fine and fashion jewellery manufacturing than in London also shaped its reputation for working to more competitive prices.¹⁰³

The clustering of small, specialist firms in the Jewellery Quarter made the outworking system cost and

¹⁰¹ Board of Trade, p. 9.

¹⁰² Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

¹⁰³ The phrase 'Brummagem' was coined to refer to an item manufactured in Birmingham (Brum) that was considered to be substandard – a Brumm-a-gem. Chinn and Dick.

time effective. Through this system, jewellers navigated the relatively fluid horizontal and vertical structures of job processes and trade relations, and also shared information about character as part of a business and personal protection strategy for surviving in the industry.

The economic focus of the term 'industrial district' masks the human aspect of clustering, particularly feelings of pride, like Paul Podolsky referred to, that impacted jewellers' sense of identity. Maureen Padfield's sociological term 'occupational community' went further in recognising the social basis of clustering, and a design historical approach adds another dimension by prioritising the material basis of an industry built on craftspeople's manipulation of a very specific group of metals. Martin Chaplain (born 1964) of family plating firm E L Chaplain & Co and son of Kenneth Chaplain, referred to the trade as a 'web': 'there were lots and lots of different people doing their own little bits of trading, really. Part of the web; casters, stampers, setters, polishers, platers, finishers, you know?'¹⁰⁴ As the individuals that built this web are difficult to locate in the archive, we can turn to the web itself to trace their input, which exists today as the buildings in the Jewellery Quarter, their workshop layouts, locked doors, winding staircases and name plaques, as well as their social places, including the pubs they gathered in to share news of vacancies and new projects.

Though the BJA and the working party had grand plans for the regeneration of the Jewellery Quarter, they luckily got little further than the first demolition stage in the early 1960s – an action that helped demarcate the chronological scope of this research project – and much of the Jewellery Quarter of the 1940s and 1950s remains today. John Cattell, a buildings historian and current National Head of Research for Historic England, conducted a major architectural study of the Quarter with Sheila Ely and Barry Jones for English Heritage in 2000, in which they mapped and recorded the construction methods, alterations and uses of many workshops and factory buildings.¹⁰⁵ Cattell drew on this study in a later article in which he outlined the architectural history of the Quarter and the corresponding development of the trade in Birmingham; this introduction to the spatial character of the trade included an outline of how particular machinery had its own place in these workshops, like drop stamps housed on ground floors because they needed to be securely installed to absorb the weight and force of their hammers.¹⁰⁶ Though he called for the idea of the 'workshop' to be interpreted as broadly as possible to allow for the blurred boundary between workshop and factory, he still divided

¹⁰⁴ Martin Chaplain, People's Archive: Martin Chaplain, Jeweller, E L Chaplain & Co. on Frederick Street, 2018, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive <<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/martin-chaplain/>> [accessed 4 February 2023].

¹⁰⁵ John Cattell, Sheila Ely, and Barry Jones, *The Birmingham Jewellery Quarter: An Architectural Survey of the Manufactories* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2002).

¹⁰⁶ John Cattell, 'The Workshops of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', in *The Vernacular Workshop: From Craft to Industry, 1400-1900*, ed. by P S Barnwell, Marilyn Palmer, and Malcolm Airs (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2004), pp. 150–65 (p. 165).

jewellery manufacture into two delineated categories: ‘those that are essentially bench-based crafts’ and ‘those that utilise manually-operated or powered machinery’; this division broadly reflects the difference in jewellers’ manufacturing processes and skills, but does not acknowledge the people within these processes and that many straddled both types of manufacturing.¹⁰⁷ Cattell’s work built an important record of trends in workshop layout and use, but his descriptions of machinery placement were devoid of the people that installed and used them.

It is important to consider the workshop as both a physical and social space. Industrial archaeologist Marilyn Palmer pointed to this physical and social character of the workshop in her chapter within *The Vernacular Workshop: From Craft to Industry, 1400-1900*, jointly edited by herself, P. S. Barnwell and Malcom Airs. She categorised the workshop as both ‘a distinctive type of building’ and ‘a particular form of industrial organisation’.¹⁰⁸ The merging of this dual character of the workshop was evident to anyone that visited the Jewellery Quarter, including ‘Astragal’, the writer of the long-running sardonic column for *Architect’s Journal* that visited in 1945.¹⁰⁹ Their scathing appraisal of the warren of workshops they discovered was co-opted by the editorial team of *The British Jeweller* to accompany its launch of its grand demolition and rebuilding plans for the Quarter.

[T]his part of the city looks very much as it did before the war – drab, dull, dirty and depressing; so ugly that it has a certain macabre fascination for the visitor who knows its bye-ways and back alleys. That things of beauty can be designed and made in such surrounds is incredible – but true.

It would be only a slight exaggeration to call the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter an industrial slum. Centred about an undersized and over-ornate memorial, the Chamberlain Clock, its mean streets are linked with what, at first glance, seem to be rather neglected dwelling-houses – some in rows, some in suburban dignity of semi-detachment. If however, you look closely at one of these houses, you will find its front door festooned by anything up to half-a-dozen name-plates proclaiming that within its narrow limits are the headquarters of an equal number of manufacturing jewellers or silversmiths.

If curiosity lures you in and you attempt to call on any of these firms, you will find, nine times out of ten, that you climb one or more flights of bare wooden stairs only to be confronted on the landing by a closed door, in which is a trapdoor, also closed. You ring a bell and nothing happens. You wait several minutes and then ring again. There is a shuffling of feet, the trapdoor slides back a few inches, and you are greeted

¹⁰⁷ Cattell, p. 159.

¹⁰⁸ Marilyn Palmer, ‘The Workshop: Type of Building or Method of Work?’, in *The Vernacular Workshop: From Craft to Industry, 1400-1900*, ed. by P S Barnwell, Marilyn Palmer, and Malcolm Airs (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2004), pp. 1–16, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ The writer signed off their article under the pseudonym ‘ASTRAGAL’ and the Astragal column is still running in *Architect’s Journal* today.

‘Rebuilding The Jewellery District: As Others See Us!’, *The British Jeweller*, April 1945, 35.

by a face on which is marked a deep distrust of all strangers. Unless you pass yourself off as a buyer, you will need a lot of personality to get you any further.

All honour is due to the minority who, amidst this squalor and suspicion, retain a spirit of enterprise and sometimes even a sense of beauty.¹¹⁰

This description of the Jewellery Quarter, though disparaging and exaggerated, gave a much more peopled insight to the trade in the mid-1940s. Trade members' descriptions were not dissimilar; in response to the BJA's call for information in 1942 about firms' numbers of employees and lengths of workshop leases in preparation for their rebuilding plans, the directors of Hussey, Dawson & Co and Ward Brothers Ltd both added a note in their returns about the Quarter's squalor. Whilst Ward Brothers' director professed 'we are very tired of our present "rabbit warren" premises', J K Hussey lamented:

If only the writer could think that Birmingham was going to get a Jewellers Quarter worthy of the City; and not go up dark stairs where one nearly breaks his neck – also seeing rooms that we should think have not been whitewashed for years, and they still have a fish-tail burner instead of electric light.¹¹¹

Hussey's description of the stairs foreshadowed Astragal's experience of visiting the Quarter. The scene painted in these three descriptions is one of a close-knit community of makers concerned more with what they were making than what their premises looked like, tightly packed in hurriedly converted houses, and hidden to non-trade visitors behind both physical and social façades.

University of Birmingham geography tutor Phyllis Nicklin captured these workshop façades in her photographs of the Jewellery Quarter, taken as part of her personal project documenting Birmingham's urban centre and topography in the 1950s and 1960s. Figures 1.11 and 1.12 are reproduced photographs from her collection that have captured the red-brick terraces of Vyse Street, the main artery of workshops in the Quarter and later partially demolished. Beside each front door and below window lintels with peeled paintwork the faded name plates announced the workshops inside: C Lucas & Sons, Ring Manufacturers; B Manning, Toolmaking Pressing; F Graves, Manufacturing Jeweller; Birmingham Stone Cutting Ltd; F Britton Ltd, Finishers of Best Gold and Platinum Jewellery; The Feature Ring Co; and A Clifton & Sons Stampings. These few-word descriptions did little to inform non-trade visitors to the Jewellery Quarter because members of the public had no reason to visit; it was purely a working district. These signs reinforced trade connections and a sense of occupational

¹¹⁰ 'Rebuilding The Jewellery District: As Others See Us!'

¹¹¹ Ward Brothers Ltd to Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Post War Reconstruction', 8 December 1942, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/506; J K Hussey to Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Post-War Reconstruction Plans', 19 January 1943, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/506.

community amongst the people that understood them. Walking around the Quarter and understanding these signs socialised jewellers within their trade so that they felt confident enough to approach these uninviting entrances with conviction.



Figure 1.11. A scanned photograph by Phyllis Nicklin, titled '110-112, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham', showing the terraced workshops of Vyse Street in 1967.

Phyllis Nicklin, *110-112, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, 1967* [Image] (Unpublished) <<http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/332/>> [accessed 7 January 2024]. © MLA West Midlands and the University of Birmingham, all rights reserved.



Figure 1.12. A scanned photograph by Phyllis Nicklin, titled 'Typical Workshops, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter', showing the signs of workshops B Manning, F Graves, Birmingham Stone Cutting Ltd, F Britton Ltd, and A Clifton & Sons Stampings in 1968.

Phyllis Nicklin (1968) *Typical workshops, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, 1968* [Image] (Unpublished) <<http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/331/>> [accessed 7 January 2024]. © MLA West Midlands and the University of Birmingham, all rights reserved.

In his memoir, Birmingham resident Gary Smith recalled how jewellers had adapted these buildings when he worked at enamelling workshop Collins's as a teenager.

Anybody that worked in the quarter before it was re-developed would know what I am saying. They were all old premises enlarged and altered to accommodate whatever trade that were being produced there. This was no different at Collins's. It never ceased to amaze me how much work was turned out in such a confined space. [...] Even in such cramped conditions everybody seemed happy enough.¹¹²

Having lived through the redevelopments of the Quarter in the 1960s and 1970s (though they were much more limited than the BJA had planned), Gary wrote with some nostalgia for the cramped conditions of the past, despite describing how dirty and small they were. However, when assessing the city's redevelopment and slum clearances in the 1950s and 1960s, Carl Chinn emphasised that the

¹¹² Smith, p. 43.

nostalgia often invoked about the redevelopment 'is a great deceiver' as the conditions really were very poor.¹¹³ Gary's appeal to readers that worked in the Jewellery Quarter called upon shared memories of being in the workshop during the 1940s and 1950s and a tacit knowledge of this warren of workshops.

Phyllis Nicklin's photographs of the Vyse Street workshops with their many name plates reinforced that many jewellers shared their buildings. Business addresses featured in trade publications also revealed who worked where and functioned as a paper version of the name plates outside each front door. Collecting these names and addresses together formed a list of 951 firms in the jewellery and allied trades in Birmingham, though there were likely to have been more. Of the 951 firms, 300 shared their address with at least one other firm. These shared addresses and the layout of the terraces help to identify the self-employed and small businesses of the trade that could work with restricted space. With the trade largely operating from relatively small converted residential buildings, sharing these spaces left jewellers working in former bedrooms and living rooms. Jeweller Dennis Owens, for example, jovially exclaimed, 'I'll take you upstairs in a moment and introduce you to the greatest setter in the world and I've known him for years and years and years'.¹¹⁴ Dennis's connection to his colleague and friend upstairs demonstrated that the trade and its working arrangements mimicked familial attitudes. The former residential use of their buildings spatially socialised the jewellers within this familial network of skills and knowledge.

Trade members could be clever in their hunt for workshop space, whether trying to get an acceptable rent price or to work next to useful colleagues. Silversmith Cornelius Sullivan explained that 'You'd also share sometimes, if someone... if you were, say, a silversmith, you might move in with a metal spinner and that's how you used special machines [...] So, you might move in with him to save on costs as well, and it can be very very useful as well'.¹¹⁵ By sharing a workshop space, jewellers placed their trust in the person they worked with, especially with precious metals and expensive tooling. In his architectural description, John Cattell posited that the grouping of firms 'resulted in a sense of collective security, particularly important in an area dealing in the use of precious metals and gems'.¹¹⁶ Cattell's reference to this 'collective security' derived from jewellers' discretion as they valued relationships in which all parties were discreet with their knowledge of each other's business, which fostered a sense of security and trust. The workshop building with its many occupants was a

¹¹³ Carl Chinn, *Homes for People: Council Housing and Urban Renewal in Birmingham, 1849-1999* (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 1999), p. 108.

¹¹⁴ Owens, transcript p. xi.

¹¹⁵ Sullivan.

¹¹⁶ Cattell, p. 159.

See also Cattell, Ely, and Jones.

microcosm of the wider Jewellery Quarter's occupational community, which the jewellers built around their proximity and discretion.

The familial spatial layout of the trade reflected the familial route many jewellers had taken to join the trade. From a young age, members of jewellery families became embedded spatially and socially within the trade. Walks around the Quarter, with its distinct clustering of workshops, wrapped young members of trade families in the physical and social world of metalwork. Diamond brooch maker Rod Mossop referenced childhood trips to the Quarter with family multiple times during his interview for the Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage's People's Archive, such was the impact on his younger and impressionable self.

My earliest memories of the Quarter is that my aunt was in the jewellery trade and I used to go in as a kid on the bus from about '55 onwards, which was... well, it was a trip out on two buses and it was fascinating. And I used to get to go out round the trade to see the outworkers. All the streets there were still cobbled then. [...]

So, I used to go to visit Victor Barry's, that's 16 Vyse Street, I think it's Classic Diamonds now. And that was fascinating, they'd got their own strong room in there and I used to go up to the workshop and watch the chaps working, and then I can even remember going out to some of the outworkers which was in houses then. The whole one side of Vyse Street that they knocked down to build the Big Peg and the carpark monstrosity, was beautiful villa houses, the same brickwork as the Rose Villa Pub, really nice. And even then as a kid, I was thinking, why are you knocking this down and putting that up? [...]

And I've abiding memories of this chap gilding in an enamel bowl, with a blue edge round and ___ the old stuff, gilding off sovereigns as the anodes. Fascinating. And then you go to the engravers and it was just great, they'd have a flame flickering, the flame would be flickering over all these cufflinks and things, and you just think, this is pretty darn good this is, I fancy it.

Nostalgia may have tinted some of Rod's memories, particularly in reaction to the Vyse Street redevelopment, but being in the Quarter as a child heavily influenced his later choice to join the trade. The discreet nature of the trade, hidden behind doors and at nondescript and decrepit houses, instilled a sense of belonging amongst the people that understood it and so had the power to lure potential members that wanted to be part of this community.

The workshop community made and encapsulated within the terraced buildings of the Jewellery Quarter also extended to informal spaces within the Quarter. In these spaces, the already porous horizontal and vertical structures of the trade became even more permeable and so supported independent jewellers' hunt for work. Hailing from a family of publicans, Dennis Owens spoke extensively about his own work at various pubs and explained that your proximity to other jewellers

and your reputation followed you to the pubs and cafes of the Quarter.

DO There were lots of little cafes, I'm remembering now, some things I should have told you... a lot of little cafes and little pubs of course, it's such a close-knit area, a close-knit community, everybody knows everyone else and if you got to the pub now, I'm sure we'd know three or four people that were there.

Interviewer Which pub?

DO The Jeweller's Arms, on the corner there, opposite The Gates. [...]

When I first came in 1945, it was a bustling area especially around the clock and the little pub, The Rose Villa.¹¹⁷

His description of the trade as a close-knit community that socialised and worked together, including working whilst socialising by exchanging envelopes of stones or jewellery to your drinking partner, reinforced that jewellers' identities grew from their work and their connections, and were not limited to the workshop.

Returning to the Quarter

Trade members keenly felt their colleagues' absence during the 1940s and readers of *The British Jeweller* were reminded of the people missing from their workshops and homes by news within its pages of military promotions, deaths and missing-in-action reports. *The British Jeweller's* editorial committee's repeated call to employers to welcome back all returning staff from active combat or from war work in larger factories came with the presupposition that jewellers wanted to return to the industry. In her history of jewellery making in Birmingham, Shena Mason interviewed fashion jewellery workshop owner Jack Mott, who recalled workers wanting to get back to their benches after years away, including Jack's foreman, who came back from the aircraft factory at Tyburn Road despite his wage packet there being three times what Jack could offer.¹¹⁸ It was not only a pay increase that these factories offered, they also presented very different working conditions from the workshops of the Jewellery Quarter. In the collections of the Warwickshire Photographic Survey, two photos of motor workshops are labelled as 'Machine shop at the Tyburn Motor Works, Birmingham' and 'Engine shop probably in Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham', both dated 1948; they show the factory of Jack's

¹¹⁷ Owens, p. xii.

¹¹⁸ Mason, p. 141.

foreman, shortly after he left.¹¹⁹ These photos, reproduced in figures 1.13 and 1.14, show large production rooms, bright with light from big windows and glazed roofs; operators stand in lines, arranged around the machines they are working with. The image of the machine shop appears to show operators using lathes, whilst the workers in the engine shop are stationed along a conveyor belt or production line of engine parts. These large shops contrasted starkly to the spaces within the terraced buildings of Phyllis Nicklin's photographs of the Jewellery Quarter.

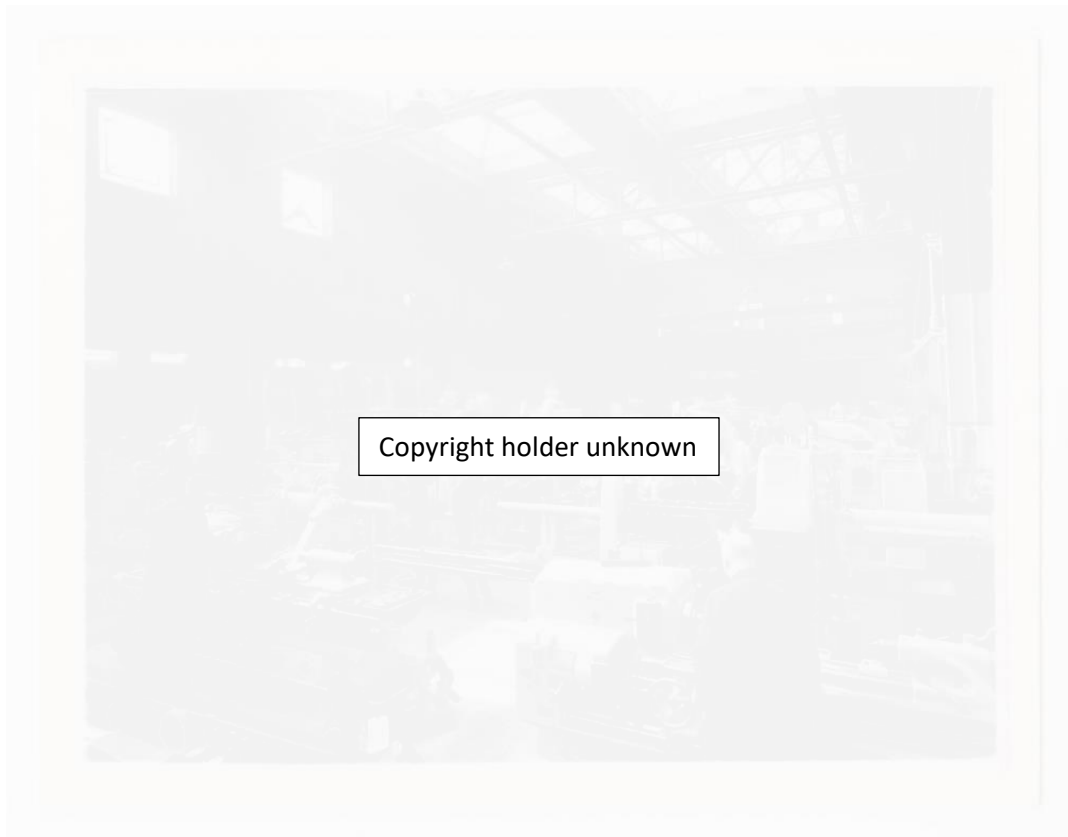


Figure 1.13. A photograph of the Machine Shop at Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham, 1948.

Photographer unknown, *Machine shop at the Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham 1948*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Car Manufacture, WPS/WK/B11/AX/5377

<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fAX%2f5377>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

¹¹⁹ *Machine Shop at the Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham, 1948*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Car Manufacture (1930, 1948, 1965), WPS/WK/B11/AX/5377 <<http://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fAX%2f5377>> [accessed 16 March 2021]; *Engine Shop Probably in Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham, 1948*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Car Manufacture (1930, 1948, 1965), WPS/WK/B11/AX/5378 <<http://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fAX%2f5378>> [accessed 16 March 2021].



Figure 1.14. A photograph of the Engine Shop, likely at Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham, 1948.

Photographer unknown, *Engine shop probably in Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham 1948*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Car Manufacture, WPS/WK/B11/AX/5378
<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fAX%2f5378> [accessed 7 January 2024]

In the late 1930s, these modern working conditions had done little to sway jewellers as the jewellery trade had also benefitted from the upturn in Birmingham's fortunes that had seen the growth of the Midlands motor industry and redevelopment in the city, as well as the downturn in the fortunes of European jewellery competitors that were starting to feel the effects of growing political instability. However, by the mid 1940s, a nation-wide labour shortage made all industries keen to offer tempting opportunities. In the opening article of *The British Jeweller's* November 1946's edition, editor Mr Leese warned jewellery employers that, 'All over the factory areas of the Midlands today you can see large notices carrying appeals for workers, offering higher wages, better conditions, canteen facilities, "music while you work", a five-day week and any other inducement which employers are capable of offering'.¹²⁰ In reaction, larger jewellery factories that had facilities to rival these other industries also flaunted them, as demonstrated in an advert for Bloxidge Brothers fashion jewellers: 'SOLDERERS

¹²⁰ W H Leese, 'Is This a Time for Exhibitions?', *The British Jeweller*, November 1946, 35–37 (p. 36).

Women experd. [experienced] to hard soldering metal jewellery also Learners good wages modern factory'.¹²¹ Losing craftspeople to other industries left employers with the compound impact of losing years of experience, having to train new staff, and having to compete with job benefits offered by other companies. Yet, the story of Jack's foreman returning confirms that roles in the trade were enough to tempt jewellers back to the workshop. They returned for the work they knew, the occupational community around them, their familial connections to the trade and the short commute to the workshop; they valued their tacit knowledge of the trade and the reputation they had built within it. Their sustained connection to the trade even when separated from it fed the idea of their work being a vocation. The jewellers' relationship between thinking of their work as a job or vocation impacted their sense of identity. The final chapter of this thesis considers this impact.

Conclusion

The jewellers of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter in the 1940s supported their industry through the Second World War, but their work was little acknowledged in the official communications of the industry, *The British Jeweller* and the report of the Working Party of Jewellery & Silverware. The writers of these outputs spoke on behalf of and to business leaders, a small group relative to the number of workers within the trade. As a result, I have argued for a balanced reassessment of these sources to redress our understanding of *who* was at work in the Quarter in the 1940s and 1950s. Moving away from these sources is not to delegitimise the opinions or experiences of the employers that worked hard to support the industry; instead, it is a recognition of other equally important members of the industry and a move towards integrating these previously split histories.

The layout of the Quarter and the workshop stressed the important role of proximity on the passage of goods and the links between jewellers that this clustering maintained. The content of oral histories pointed more explicitly to the social, particularly reputational, benefits of workshop proximity. The independent jeweller used their discretion to decide when to flexibly specialise in the jobs they undertook, the space they worked in and the colleagues they turned to. Dennis's assurance that there was always work to do was predicated on the understanding that jewellers utilised the proximity of the trade to find jobs, which they could turn to at short notice because of established patterns of tool ownership and a broad skillset, which helped them weather the trade's changes in fortune.

This chapter identified the crucial role of outworkers in maintaining the trade through periods characterised by big changes in production. Outworkers operated with the discretion to accept jobs

¹²¹ 'SOLDERERS Women experd. To hard soldering metal jewellery also Learners good wages modern factory - Bloxidge Bros. Ltd. Holliday Rd. Handsworth', *The Birmingham Mail*, 4 October 1945, p. 4.

and maintain relationships of trust. The transient nature of their work was at odds with the newly elected Labour government's push for greater organisation of industries to increase production and efficiency – the jewellery industry being one of their selected industries to watch. These 'top-down' sources are useful for considering how the broader political context impacted the day-to-day lives of these independent jewellers, despite having to turn to other sources to learn of their experiences.

Broadening our understanding of the jewellers that worked in the Quarter at this time restores a generation of craftspeople to the narrative of Birmingham's mid-twentieth century production history. The jewellers' valued discretion and this chapter has focused on instances when they invoked their discretion to find jobs and move through the trade, whether they relied on familial relationships, their reputation, their tacit knowledge of their craft and confidence to change between in- and outwork, or their proximity to their peers.

Reputation and Responsibility

Understanding the impact on occupational identity of working through restrictions, loopholes and the black market

The task of the Government is clearly to direct all usable labour, material and plant from non-essential production to work directly contributing to the national need and also to restrict public spending by reducing the quantity of goods available. In pursuit of this laudable end it has relieved the jewellery trade of all eligible workers, put a partial embargo on gold articles, introduced a purchase tax of two-thirds of the wholesale price on our products and has limited supplies to a quarter of their pre-war value. [...] Some workers have protested that they are unfitted for other work or not prepared to take it because their circumstances place them beyond the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour. They have then been told that the officials would be satisfied if they merely went home and remained unemployed, rather than that they should return to this trade.¹

W H Leese, Editor of *The British Jeweller*, writing to the jewellers in June 1942's edition.

W H Leese, the editor of the trade journal *The British Jeweller*, was no stranger to an impassioned opinion piece, but in his reaction to the state of the trade in 1942, as quoted at the opening of this chapter, he could have gone further to attack the extensive restrictions the British jewellery trade was placed under. Yet, jewellers across the industry turned back to jewellery manufacture whenever they could, despite completing their war production contracts. In their efforts to continue their trade, they navigated social, economic and material restrictions that included the Board of Trade's ban on new gold jewellery for the home market and the imposition of the Utility Scheme for wedding rings, and a Purchase Tax on luxury goods. This chapter looks to how Birmingham's jewellers worked with and against these restrictions. They relied on their established connections and ways of working in the industry and, reciprocally, their efforts maintained the trade through the challenging manufacturing landscape of the 1940s and 1950s.

In their day-to-day personal and occupational experiences, the jewellers configured their own interpretations of austerity, and this chapter begins with an overview of the austerity measures families faced in Birmingham. By focusing on materials, particularly alloys of gold, this chapter traces the effect of material restrictions on the jewellers and their work; different finenesses (carats) of gold

¹ W H Leese, 'Is the Trade to Be Closed?', *The British Jeweller*, June 1942, 9–10 (p. 9).

have distinct physical and social characteristics, identities that were not lost on the jewellers and that affected them as much as the jewellery they made.

The jewellers recognised the opportunities offered by the combination of the restrictions and high consumer demand for jewellery in the late 1940s, with many exploiting legal and material loopholes in the new rules. This chapter works with the notion of the 'loophole' to identify and understand the people, work and materials that consciously and unconsciously slipped through the system in their attempts to remain in work. Existing trade histories, like that of jewellery historian Shena Mason, followed obvious printed sources in their assessment of the restrictions, and therefore took official rule abidance for granted and missed the importance of the established material and social 'rules' of the industry.² This chapter turns to materials, tools and jewellers' oral histories to understand the patterns of the trade that created and made these loopholes viable. Through these loopholes, jewellers maintained a strong black market for jewellery; however, this research has purposefully taken an open and careful view of black-market dealing to consider the mechanisms, rationale and implications of jewellers' actions. In doing so, this research follows social and economic historian Mark Roodhouse's delineation in his book *Black Market Britain* of a black-to-grey market, which had permeable, subjective boundaries demarcated by individuals' moral standpoints towards their idea of what constituted a fair share.³ Mark Roodhouse focused predominantly on day-to-day consumption amongst families during the 1940s and 1950s austerity period; but the jewellers experienced austerity from multiple angles – at home and at work – and so this chapter considers how they navigated regulations and expectations for consumption and production.

This *careful* consideration of jewellers' decisions was impelled by my own connection to the trade and a feeling of responsibility for the occupational legacies of my historical subjects. Jeweller Paul Podolsky impressed upon me both the importance of acknowledging the trade's black market and of approaching its legacy sensibly.

I don't know how you're going to write that because you're going to have to be very careful.⁴

[Introducing Purchase Tax] This is where I would urge you to consider very carefully what you write in your final analysis. [...] we did not want a public scandal. Therefore, when you are writing it up, I hope you will not sensationalise the black market. You have to report it because it existed, I think you will agree there, but play it down a little bit if you can, because it was a nasty blur on the good name of the trade and it didn't really get cured until Purchase Tax ended and VAT took over, which was a tax

² Mason.

³ Mark Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁴ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

everybody could live with. [...] So, those are the facts. It has to be presented in a way that will not discredit the trade, if you can do it that way.⁵

Paul appealed for protection of the trade's reputation and, where justified, this chapter extends that protection to the occupational legacies of individual jewellers; it considers how their needs and concepts of their own identity shaped the jewellery trade in the 1940s and 1950s.

Having existed in the shadows, the black market is difficult to research; this project has therefore approached it tangentially by following alloys, tools and tacit knowledge – loopholes in the historical record – to encounter jewellers' experiences of the trade. Discussion first turns to alloys, and how we can use them to understand the effect of material restrictions, before turning to the loopholes jewellers worked through and their concepts of occupational reputation. Working through loopholes was an established way of manufacturing and conducting business in the Jewellery Quarter; the jewellers' network of trust ensured that deals – whether white, grey or black – could still be made. 'Off the book' cash dealings, trust and tacit knowledge of the manufacturing system, including traditions of tool ownership, were technologies employed by jewellers to bring money home to their families and maintain their occupational identity and the trade at a time when working 'by the book' put jobs and skills at risk.

Austerity

Historians, economists and sociologists, as well as families across the country, have characterised the post-Second World War years in Britain as times of austerity. In their respective books *Austerity Britain* and *Austerity in Britain*, David Kynaston and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska focused on the everyday effects of the government-imposed restrictions on food, clothing and housing for British residents.⁶ These two works covered different time periods: Kynaston's *Austerity Britain* included the first two books of his longer project considering life in Britain from 1945 to 1979; whereas, Zweiniger-Bargielowska extended her view of austerity back to the start of the war in 1939.⁷ To put these dates into context, black-out regulations rolled out nationally on 1 September 1939, two days before the declaration of war, and the government initiated food rationing on 8 January 1940.⁸ The difference between Zweiniger-Bargielowska's and Kynaston's date ranges points to an important difference in

⁵ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second'.

⁶ David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain: 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007); Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Control, and Consumption, 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁷ Kynaston, p. vii.

⁸ Ballard, p. 15.

these academics' definitions of austerity, and it is a difference that mirrored British attitudes towards rationing: people considered restrictions on products, services and actions during the war as part of their duty towards the war effort, whilst restrictions after the war were considered poorly justified burdens imposed from above. Given this attitude change towards restrictions, this project follows Zweiniger-Bargielowska's lead and considers the enduring nature of restrictions targeting the British jewellery industry during the 1940s and the 1950s, both during the years of active conflict and the years of active rebuilding. As Birmingham resident Brenda Bullock described in her autobiography of her childhood in the 1940s 'the aftermath of the war came as something of an anti-climax' because life little changed after the street parties of VE day had been cleared away.⁹ In Birmingham, as in other British metropolitan areas, queues for goods at the butcher's, greengrocer's and coal yard continued to consume pavements and time, as illustrated in a photograph (see figure 2.1) in the Warwickshire Photographic Survey's collection that captured the hundreds of faces of adults and children waiting in line on a street in Birmingham to receive their ration.¹⁰ With the staggered ending of restrictions on foodstuffs in 1953, Birmingham residents experienced the loosening of a 13-year control. Considering the ongoing nature of these material, economic and social restrictions is important for understanding jewellers' experiences of work and life during these years.

⁹ Bullock, p. 9.

¹⁰ *Ration Queue in Unidentified Birmingham Street*, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, End of Rationing (1953), WPS/WK/B11/BA/5610.



Figure 2.1. A photograph of a queue of people waiting to collect their ration on an industrial street in Birmingham, circa 1950.

Photographer unknown, *Ration queue in an unidentified Birmingham street, Central Birmingham, Warwickshire* Photographic Survey, Photographs of the End of Rationing 1953, WPS/WK/B11/BA/5610
<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBA%2f5610>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Alloys

Rationing and restrictions hit the workshop too. Jewellers trained in working with precious metals adapted their skills to work with steel, tin and brass in the production of military equipment, and the jewellery production that did continue faced restrictions on the type and quantity of materials available. As every metal (and the different alloys of each metal) has its own physical and social characteristics, the jewellers' experiences changed with these material changes. Anthropologist and co-lead of the Royal College of Art's *Material Engagements Research Cluster* Peter Oakley has extensively studied gold from a material and social perspective. In his chapter introducing new interpretations of Fairtrade and Fairmined gold in Adam Drazin and Suzanne Kuechler's *The Social Life of Materials: Studies in Materials and Society*, Oakley issued a call to researchers within the social sciences to consider how materials are regarded within social spheres and the role of networks in the building of these material and social spheres.¹¹ In taking up this call, this chapter unpacks the material, social and symbolic identities of metals, particularly at a time when these metals were unavailable or were only available through specific, purposefully hidden or inaccessible routes within networks of trust – the loopholes. This section traces metals through this web of restrictions to explore the importance of established material and social 'rules' of the industry. Understanding these trade rules, rather than just the government restrictions, adds to our understanding of how jewellers carried out their work and what it meant to them to continue manufacturing.

Limitation of Supplies Order, 1940

In late 1940, as hopes for a resolution to the war turned to plans for rearmament, the government enacted the Limitation of Supplies Order. This order restricted the use of specific materials for specific manufacturing jobs; for the jewellers, restrictions applied to non-ferrous metals like gold, silver, nickel, copper and brass. By reducing the supplies available to firms, the order aimed to ensure that materials were available for war work or export, which would bring in much needed international currency, especially US dollars, to help pay Britain's quickly amassing war debts. However, for firms attempting to continue their war work and their own production, less supply meant fewer finished products. Jeweller Paul Podolosky recounted in his oral history a simpler description of the order's implications for jewellers:

¹¹ Oakley, 'Introducing Fairtrade and Fairmined Gold: An Attempt to Reconfigure the Social Identity of a Substance', p. 170.

[W]e had the Limitation Order, so we had a few older craftsmen who continued doing their job and then we had to convert a lot of our workshop into instrument production.

All it did was say that if you did a hundred pieces the year before, you could only do seventy-five now, or something like that.¹²

In reality, most firms could not exceed a quarter of their earlier turnover.¹³ The established Vyse Street firm of Nathan Bros., which manufactured sleeve links, studs and the 'Marval' marcasite-set jewellery range, appealed to its customers for understanding in its advert in the January 1941 edition of *The British Jeweller*.

The new Limitation of Supplies Order has caused us to disappoint many customers, as our quota enables us to meet only a small proportion of the orders we receive. [...] We know they will understand that if we refuse an order it is no fault of ours; that it is not because we would not, but because we cannot.¹⁴

Like other firms, Nathan Bros. chose to fill its whole-page advert with text because it no longer had products to feature, for which its writer denounced the firm's responsibility. Both Paul's and Nathan Bros.' descriptions of the order stressed that it impacted their outputs, which exemplified the government's approach to impact products rather than understand processes.

By January 1943, the Non-Ferrous Metal Controller had cancelled manufacturing licences issued to firms that had remaining stocks of processed metals, so now even the partly finished goods the firms already owned were unavailable to them and the limited workers they had employed on jewellery work – mainly older employees not forced to be on war work – faced being stripped of their employment. Leese reflected in January 1943's edition of *The British Jeweller* on the material meanings of this rule when he wrote, 'It is hard to see a useful purpose in this edict, for the stocks will present great difficulty if an attempt is made to utilise them in any other way. Copper, nickel and brass are mixed with rolled gold, steel and solder and are all in tiny units of jewellery and parts of other articles.'¹⁵ Leese highlighted the alloyed nature of most jewellery metals and products. Alloying two or more metals together in specific ratios allows the processor of the metals to prioritise the properties of each constituent metal they wish to retain in the alloy; gold is prized for its colour, rich metallic lustre and chemically inert nature, but it is expensive and soft, so it is alloyed with silver, copper, zinc, platinum and other metals for use in jewellery to reduce the alloy's cost and to make it more durable. As Leese pointed out, alloying consumes a considerable amount of energy, time,

¹² Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

¹³ W H Leese, 'Our Common Burden', *The British Jeweller*, August 1941, pp. 34–35.

¹⁴ Nathan Bros., "'A Member of the Nathan Family" Advert', *The British Jeweller*, January 1941, p. 12.

¹⁵ W H Leese, 'In Our Opinion', *The British Jeweller*, January 1943, 9–10 (p. 9).

money, labour and skill and so using these alloys intended for jewellery production, both fine and fashion jewellery, for other purposes was likely to have been more hassle than they were worth and, most importantly, deprived the industry both of stocks and work.

Though the need for manufacturing licences was partially removed two years later under the Miscellaneous Goods (Prohibition of Manufacture & Supply) (No. 7) Order 1945, the to-and-fro nature of the restrictions gave jewellery firms little stability. This incarnation of the order allowed firms to manufacture and supply goods up to a total value of £1,800 every six months, cycling between October and April, without needing to apply for a licence; however, it did not allow for, or usher in, any release of materials or labour.¹⁶ Silver, for instance, had been entering the UK from America, but only as part of the two nations' Lend-Lease Programme that sought to protect America from becoming the war's frontline by lending munitions, materials and supplies to the Allied countries in return for the leases of military bases in their countries, the minutiae of which prohibited any leftover silver from being siphoned towards the jewellery industry.¹⁷ In contrast, London-based firm Baker Platinum capitalised on the shortage of gold and silver by frequently advertising its stocks of palladium, a member of the platinum group of metals, to readers of *The British Jeweller*, which ran a feature on this 'new' metal in August 1948. The page, which may have been sponsored by Baker Platinum, included reference to the physical and financial benefits of a new palladium alloy alongside a photograph of a diamond- and sapphire-set palladium jewellery set (see figure 2.2).

Palladium, the precious metal which the trade is popularising to counteract the gold shortage, is being used increasingly in new jewellery. The modern palladium alloy is lighter than platinum and less than half the price and the old problem of discolouration has been overcome.¹⁸

This feature branded palladium as new, with novel characteristics ready for jewellers to exploit; in doing so, it confirmed the importance of considering alloys as both material and social creations – the product of two or more metals, research, heavy labour, marketing and demand. Printed in 1948, the feature and its reference to the gold shortage highlighted the ongoing nature of material restrictions after the war.

¹⁶ W Stewart Turner, 'A Ray of Light', *The British Jeweller*, November 1945, 9–11 (p. 9).


¹⁷ Information published in *The British Jeweller* with the note that it was taken from an article in *The Birmingham Post* that was deemed relevant to the trade.

'Shortage of Silver: Export Business Held Up, Trade Approaches Government', *The British Jeweller*, May 1945, 12.

¹⁸ 'For the Newer Jewellery - Palladium', *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, 58.

FOR THE NEWER JEWELLERY—PALLADIUM

Palladium, the precious metal which the trade is popularising to counteract the gold shortage, is being used increasingly in the new jewellery. The modern palladium alloy is lighter than platinum and less than half the price and the old problem of discolouration has been overcome.



PALLADIUM IS USED WITH DIAMONDS AND SAPPHIRES IN THIS FINE SUITE OF JEWELLERY BY E. SILVER & CO., OF LONDON. IT CONSISTS OF A NECKLACE, BROOCH, A PAIR OF CLIPS AND A PAIR OF EAR-CLIPS.

Figure 2.2. An advertisement for palladium in *The British Jeweller*, showing an adaptable necklace and clips set of palladium, sapphires and diamonds by E Silver & Co, 1948.

'For the Newer Jewellery – Palladium', *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, p. 58.

Exports

The government's preferred method for jewellers to increase their quota of metals and gemstones was for them to produce jewellery for the export market, rather than the home market. A strong record of export production might then open the door to an increased materials quota for home production. Whilst the home trade was restricted to using only 9-carat gold, as opposed to the preferred 18-carat gold for fine jewellery, jewels destined for export could be made of 18-carat gold. Paul Podolsky recounted how jewellers were unenthused about the prospect of focusing almost entirely on export production: 'we were only allowed to use 9-carat gold. [...] We were allowed to use 18-carat if the thing was destined for export, but in wartime, what export would you expect to do?'¹⁹ The delineation of specific alloys, or finenesses, of gold for different markets indicated that to understand gold's identity we must consider that of gold's alloys.

Paul's disparaging reaction to making for export suggested that his father's firm had little faith in the official system. The case of one firm highlighted the risk jewellers took in abiding by the export rules. The family firm of T Winkles of 29 Vittoria Street manufactured fine and fashion jewellery, including jet and marcasite jewels and gold-plated chain, as illustrated in an advert of T Winkles stock likely from earlier in the twentieth century, in figure 2.3. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the firm struggled to engage export markets, which corresponded with a drastic reduction in staff numbers and a decrease in profits. In letters to customers, lawyers and accountants, the then owner William Henry Winkles Jnr explained that he was jumping through every official hoop to try to get a licence to use the metal supplies they had left in stock. An invoice dated 1 September 1942 in the T Winkles & Co. archive, held at the Wolfson Centre in the Library of Birmingham, detailed that the firm's solicitor, Dennis F Cave, visited Winkles to learn about the metal watch and key chains the firm manufactured so that he was armed with information to lobby the Board of Trade for a licence on Winkles' behalf.²⁰ An additional letter from the Plymouth-based wholesale stationers Sellicks to Messrs T Winkles on the 24 August 1943 contained a signed statement testifying that 'the WHOLE OF THE SUPPLIES OF KEY CHAINS MADE BY YOU TO US are solely and entirely used in connections with our Contracts on Board His Majesty's Ships and Naval Establishments. As Bookstall Contractors to His Majesty's Ships and Establishments, KEY CHAINS are one of the essential articles on our contract list and each man is expected to purchase one when joining. [their emphasis]'²¹ This statement was accompanied by a letter directly from Sellicks

¹⁹ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second'.

²⁰ 'Invoice from Dennis F Cave to T Winkles.', 1942, T Winkles & Co., File of correspondence, 1912-1944 (concerning licences to continue manufacture of jewellery etc. during WWII), MS 1610/29.

²¹ 'Letter from Smerdon, Sellicks to Messrs. T Winkles', 24 August 1943, T Winkles & Co., File of correspondence, 1912-1944 (concerning licences to continue manufacture of jewellery etc. during WWII), MS 1610/29.

to Mr Winkles, urging him that, 'If you think the enclosed letter will help matters you are VERY welcome to use it.'²² By issuing a statement in support of the importance of T Winkles' key chain production – items likely similar to the chains featured in the T Winkles' advertising page in figure 2.3 – Sellicks demonstrated the possible strength of relationships between manufacturers and wholesalers. The paper licences in the same bundle of correspondence proved that these intercessions on T Winkles' behalf were successful. The collaborative nature of their correspondence demonstrated how established trade networks could be readied and capitulated on in this new wartime production system.

²² 'Letter from Smerdon, Sellicks to Messrs. T Winkles'.

Gilt and White Metal Chains.

**LADIES' METAL BELTS, Large Variety, all Untarnishable.
ALSO CLASPS, BUCKLES, Etc.**

3387. 3417.

Splendid Assortment. Finest Quality E.P.N.S. Hand Engraved Soldered Links,
Highly Polished and Finished Back and Front.

SPECIALITY: Curb and Fancy Chains, made to Customer's own patterns, size, & weight, to suit all markets.

PLATED GUARDS.

1224.
Bolt Ring or Swivel.

4134.
Snake Pattern. Round or Hexagon, Brightly Gilt, Bolt Ring or Swivel.

4092.
Gilt, with Bolt Ring (4 Beads). Assorted Colour Beads.

4543.
Gilt Necklet, each on Card, one doz. in box.

REGD. TRADE MARK
"CALWYN"
T. WINKLES
TRADE MARK
RECHERCHÉ
REGISTERED IN GREAT BRITAIN
4616.
Gilt Curb Bracelet, each on Card, one doz. in box.
THE ORIGINAL MAKE

**LADIES' ALBERTS, Large Variety.
Gilt or White.**

PLATED GUARDS.

2062.
Bright Plated.

1303.
Gilt, full length.

3936.
Pearl or Turquoise Beads, (4).

4658
Paste or Pearl Cross.
Gilt Necklet, each on Card, one doz. in box.

BLACK BROOCHES, Secure Pins.

Large Variety of Patterns. Attractive Cards and Boxes.

3076. 4379. 2909. 2904.
3091. 3009. 4004. 4252.

Wholesale Houses and Merchants only supplied.

Being the actual Maker of Machine-made Chain, Buyers will do well to obtain my Prices for Finished Articles or Chain in the rough.

Figure 2.3. An advertisement or catalogue page illustrating the fashion jewellery manufactured by the firm T Winkles & Co, likely from the early twentieth century. Many items are listed as being sold by the dozen, a scale that indicates the mass manufacturing nature of the firm.

'Gilt and White Metal Chains', T Winkles & Co, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, File of Correspondence, 1942-1944, MS 1610/29

Restrictions on material stocks and the requirement to export hit the fortunes of T Winkles & Co. in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Winkles' accountant, Walter H Lancaster, prepared the firm's balance sheets at the end of each financial year, and recurring income and outgoings made visible downward patterns in the firm's financial trajectory.²³ Figure 2.4 shows a graph compiled from the accounts data of 1946 to 1957, including the half year of trading in 1957 before William Winkles wound down the firm. The first column (orange) shows the financial valuation of the company's machinery each year, which depreciated by five per cent per annum; the second and third columns (blue) show the money paid out for purchases, likely materials and other production necessities, and the money paid for employees' wages; the two fourth and fifth columns (green) show the money achieved in sales and the overall net profit. Payments for rent, repair of machinery, trade expenses and travelling expenses varied little over these years. The graph shows a general trend of improvement in the total value of sales and net profit at the end of the war, likely in line with the completion of enduring war contracts, before a steady descent between the years ending 1948 and 1954. The balance sheets show that T Winkles & Co. did not invest in new machinery during these years, as the value of the machinery reduced in line with the existing stock's depreciation only. Whilst not investing in machinery, the firm did seem to invest in staff, as the total spent on wages increased significantly in the year ending 1947 and remained above £500 a year until 1953, when it then reduced every year. Comparison of these dates to the firm's wages book gives a more peopled impression of day-to-day work at the business. The first page of the wages book, dated January 1918, lists the names and wages of 34 employees over 4 weeks and another 9 names at the bottom of the page that may have been outworkers for those weeks; however, by the early 1940s, twenty years later, only two names appear each week – B Shingles and M Isabella Shingles – with 16 weeks of recorded wages fitting on a single page.²⁴ In the week of 7 June 1946, William Henry Winkles Jnr returned to the workshop, having worked up to and including the week of 13 July 1940; given that he joined the family firm in the 1920s, likely as a teenager or young man, his age and absence suggest that he would have been conscripted into the armed forces before jewellery became a reserved occupation in 1942, despite him being a business owner undertaking war contracts. His return corresponds to the doubling of the amount paid in wages during the year 1946-7, as he earned £4.15.0 a week compared to B and Isabella Shingles with £2.9.1 each. Similarly, the year ending 1953, when the wages dropped under £500, corresponded to B Shingles leaving the wages book in the week of 11 January 1952; Isabella Shingles left permanently in December 1953 and her absence was reflected in the 1954 decrease in wages paid. Though the

²³ Walter H Lancaster, 'Statement of Accounts for Mr. W. H. Winkles Trading as T. Winkles and H. Ashworth & Co. Gilt & Jet Jewellery Manufacturers', 1946, T Winkles & Co., Statement of Accounts, includes 1946-1957, MS 1610/23.

²⁴ 'Wages Book', 1918, T Winkles & Co., Wages Book, 1918-1957, MS 1610/20.

decrease in wages and number of staff could have suggested an increased efficiency in production or a greater buying in of part-finished goods, the reducing value of sales and net profit suggested a more sombre reason for the depopulated pages of the wages book. A letter from Winkles' accountant Walter Lancaster confirmed that the ongoing export rules had restricted the firm's production and trade. On the 6 March 1954, Lancaster sent William Winkles the accounts for the year ending 1954 – the lowest year for purchases, sales and profit – with the note, 'We are sorry that you are having such a difficult time, and trust that some of the Colonial markets will rescind their restrictions so that you can re-open with some of your old customers.'²⁵ Lancaster's decision to include this expression of sympathy brings to the fore the people involved in the difficult navigation of 1940s and 1950s jewellery production. Knowing their names gives weight to the social, material and financial impact of the Board of Trade's restrictions on the jewellery trade.



Figure 2.4. A graph showing incoming and outgoing money for the firm T Winkles & Co in the accounting years 1946 to 1957.

Data from: 'Statement of Accounts for Mr. W. H. Winkles Trading as T. Winkles and H. Ashworth & Co. Gilt & Jet Jewellery Manufacturers', 1946, T Winkles & Co., Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, Statement of Accounts, includes 1946-1957, MS 1610/23

²⁵ Walter H Lancaster, 'To Mr W H Winkles with Statement of Accounts for Mr. W. H. Winkles Trading as T. Winkles and H. Ashworth & Co. Gilt & Jet Jewellery Manufacturers', 6 March 1954, T Winkles & Co., Statement of Accounts, includes 1946-1957, MS 1610/23.

T Winkles & Co.'s situation is representative of experiences across the trade in the 1950s. Jeweller Dennis Owens explained that the 1950s was a difficult period for manufacturers as many firms did not have enough capital to buy materials nor work to fill the day.

[...] in the 50s things were a little bit difficult and I never had enough... really, I never had enough capital because you need enormous capital and diamond rings especially [...]

I forgot to tell you that in the 50s before I went to... before I went to William Griffiths [around 1955], trade went very very quiet and I had eleven pubs to manage [...] I used to look after my father's pub when he was on holiday and although I was still working here [in the Jewellery Quarter] and he volunteered me as a relief manager and in those days, things were a little bit tight [...] I used to go and open the pub in the morning and close it at two o'clock in the afternoon, dash down here and do... all the work available and then go back and open the pub at night at six o'clock and it was hard work.²⁶

Dennis pointed to financial reasons for a trade-wide slowdown, rather than reasons particular to him, and his timeframe aligns both with the dip in T Winkles & Co.'s fortune and continued and unpredictable changes to material supplies and export regulations. Additionally, Birmingham's ongoing rationing scheme until 1953 meant that shortages reached all city residents.

Utility

Gold's importance as a non-ferrous metal led to a battle between the Ministry of Supply and the British jewellers because its non-corrosive properties made it desirable both for circuit boards and rings. To requisition gold for the armed forces, the government banned the use of any gold alloy other than 9 carats. Then, in August 1947, the new Supplies and Services Bill removed the existing gold 'float' that had allowed manufacturers to claim an additional 50 per cent of gold on top of their export allowance so that they could cater to the home trade, so long as jewellery produced with this extra allowance was of a maximum of 9 carats in fineness. *The British Jeweller* editor Leese penned an enthusiastic opening article to the August 1947 edition in reaction to the amended bill in which he explained that unemployment must surely follow as the trade would have to rely instead on the insufficient supply of gold from 'old-gold dealers and other channels', created by a loophole in the law that allowed customers to trade in their old gold jewellery for the same weight of gold to be used in a new jewel.²⁷ The material that had always been considered luxury was, paradoxically, now also essential.

²⁶ Owens.

²⁷ W H Leese, 'GOLD - A Disastrous Order', *The British Jeweller*, September 1947, 51–52 (p. 51).

For the jewellers working with gold, the restrictions on the metal had different effects on their day-to-day work and their concepts of it: some only worked with 9-carat gold or gold-plated base metals, and so noticed less of a change, whilst others worked almost exclusively on 'fine' jewellery of 18-carat gold. In the recent Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage oral history project, Les Curtis, a technician at the Birmingham School of Jewellery in Vittoria Street, elaborated on the impact of gold finenesses.

9-carat is the bottom end of the jewellery market, it's nine parts out of 24 gold. If you went into Marks and Spencer and you bought a woollen sweater, and you found it was only nine parts wool and the rest was something else, you'd take it back. Well, 9-carat jewellery is the bottom end.²⁸

9-carat gold is 375 parts gold out of 1000, or 37.5 per cent. Les's relatable analogy introduced the hierarchy of gold alloys explicit in the fineness system: 9-carat gold is the lowest fineness allowed to be sold as gold in the UK, with 18-carat gold at 750 parts gold out of 1000 and 22-carat gold at 916 parts. In her comprehensive chronology of jewellery making in Birmingham, historian Shena Mason used figures from Birmingham's Assay Office to summarise trends in alloy use over time: 'By the 1930s nine carat was the standard most used for much of Birmingham's gold jewellery output, with 18 carat used for fine gem rings, especially engagement rings, and 22 carat considered the proper standard for wedding rings.'²⁹ In this general assessment, Mason referenced the gold hierarchy, but she also implied that this hierarchy encompassed specific jewellery types and was understood by jewellers and the buying public.

As 9-carat gold was used for most lower-priced jewellery and 18-carat for higher, the fineness/alloy of the gold was inextricably linked to jewellers' tasks, production processes and tacit knowledge. Jeweller Paul Podolsky spoke of his father's craftspeople's annoyance at working with lower fineness gold than they were used to:

They were doing a bit of work for export, in 18-carat, but then again they were adapting themselves to cheaper work in 9-carat gold, just to keep the workmen busy, and doing repair work. Now, the workmen weren't very happy with that, the craftsmen wanted to do better quality work.³⁰

Paul pointed to the financial value of 'quality' work as the reason the craftspeople were not enjoying their adaptation to working with 9-carat gold, but their reaction also stemmed from the feel of working with 9-carat rather than 18-carat gold. Gold is renowned for its softness and workability, but lower finenesses have more copper, silver and base metals than gold, a balance that makes 9-carat

²⁸ Les Curtis, People's Archive: Les Curtis, Silversmith, Senior Lecturer at the School of Jewellery on Vittoria Street, 2019, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive <<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/les-curtis/>> [accessed 30 January 2023].

²⁹ Mason, p. 127.

³⁰ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second'.

gold harder to work with. The workers in Paul's workshop did not just miss working on 'quality' pieces, they also missed being able to rely on their tacit knowledge and tools that they had built around working with 18-carat gold. Gold fineness and its implications for a hierarchy of quality and tacit knowledge was therefore a pivotal part of jewellers' identity formation.

Wedding rings, of a proscribed shape and weight and made of 9-carat gold, were the only permitted production of new jewellery in the 1940s and 1950s. The Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, with some of the London-based trade associations, had collaborated with the Church of England to lobby the government for the allowance of at least enough gold to cater for the wedding ring trade, as they argued that the creation of wedding rings was necessary to boost the morale of the public getting married, many of whom were young couples separated by military conscription, and of the jewellers, who sought any legitimate work to keep their business in front of customers and trade relations. The resultant Utility wedding ring was part of the wider Utility Scheme, which effectively rationed non-perishable items including clothing, shoes, household furniture and wedding rings. Brenda Bullock impressed the pervasiveness of the Utility Scheme and its effect on attitudes towards items normally revelled in as ways to adorn and express individuality: 'What clothes were available were generally drab, all the material bearing the familiar "Utility" label.'³¹ The familiarity of the Utility label that Brenda referenced attested to the success and severity of the restrictions. The restrictions on wedding rings were no different; *The British Jeweller's* editorial team issued a reminder to readers in August 1945 of the rules, which serves today as a useful explanation.

Under the Prohibition of Manufacture and Supply Orders, the only wedding rings permitted to be manufactured and supplied are the 9ct. gold Standard Wedding Rings of 2dwt., and under the Price Control Orders the maximum prices at which these rings can be sold are 10s. 0d. from manufacturer to wholesaler, 11s. 3d. from manufacturer or wholesaler to the retailer, and 18s. 6d. from retailer to the public, plus purchase tax. These prices were fixed in May 1943, and were such as allowed only a bare margin of profit; since then costs have risen, in particular hall-marking charges and increased labour rates.³²

Just as the price increase of utility wedding rings that *The British Jeweller* team called for did not materialise until February 1948 – when they increased to the public at a retail price of 18s. 11d. per ring, plus 125 per cent purchase tax – the design of the rings did not change either.³³ Figure 2.5 shows the utility wedding ring in the V&A's collection; it has a band width of three millimetres and its curved

³¹ Bullock, p. 13.

³² 'Standard Wedding Rings and Price of Gold: Efforts of the B.J.A. to Obtain Price Revision', *The British Jeweller*, August 1945, 11 (p. 11).

³³ 'Wedding Rings Dearer', *The British Jeweller*, February 1948, p. 63.

profile with a straight interior is known as a 'D-shaped' band, to reflect the straight and curved sides of the capital D.³⁴ In its classic shape, without patterns, it conformed to the government's order for plain design. These utility rings could only be sold with a complete hallmark and this example bears the hallmarks for manufacturers Hathaway & Muddiman (based in Great Hampton Street), Birmingham, 9-carat gold and the date letter 'B' of 1951.³⁵ The line of standard hallmarks is visible in figure 8; the mark stamped furthest to the right, and separated slightly from the other marks, is the Utility Mark. Similar to the CC41 utility mark applied to furniture, clothing and shoes, the Utility Mark in wedding rings depicts two circles, each minus a curved section (in this photo of the V&A ring, the two crescents together resemble an 'O' or '()'). Though this mark was not visible when the ring was worn, the wearer and their family and friends knew that it was a Utility band. Its place in the V&A's collection is a reminder of these restrictive design principles and agenda during the 1940s that bound all wedding ring manufacturers, retailers and wearers.



Figure 2.5. A photograph of a gold wedding ring with Utility mark, made and retailed by Hathaway & Muddiman, Birmingham, 1944/1951, and now in the V&A collection.

Hathaway & Muddiman, 'Gold Wedding Ring with Utility Mark', 1944, V&A, M.17-2016

<<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1364100/ring-hathaway-muddiman/ring-hathaway--muddiman/>>

[accessed 7 January 2024]

³⁴ This ring was gifted to the V&A by David Callaghan and was accessioned into the permanent collection in 2016.

Hathaway & Muddiman, 'Gold Wedding Ring with Utility Mark, Made and Retailed by Hathaway & Muddiman, Birmingham, 1944', 1944, V&A, M.17-2016.

³⁵ The V&A has listed the date of this ring's hallmark as 1944, but I contest that its 'B' date letter denoted Birmingham Assay Office's year 1951-2. Until 1975, each British Assay Office used its own series of alphabets, with each letter corresponding to a one-year period. The discrepancy between the V&A's date and my date for this ring's assaying is likely to have occurred by the V&A following another Assay Office's date series, likely Sheffield, which used a 'B' for 1944. In the Birmingham series, a curled and italic 'B' in a Utility ring can only align with July-June 1951-2.

Despite their plain design and uniformity in specifications, manufacturing these Utility wedding rings was less standardised. With regularly changing methods of metal allocation and procurement, manufacturers were left to decide the best route for their firm. In March 1948's edition of *The British Jeweller*, an article announced the Bank of England's new scheme for the release of 9-carat gold, which included the Bank distributing the gold directly to larger manufacturers, but to smaller manufacturers via bullion dealers. The writer drew attention to the agreement between the BJA and the government's authorities that manufacturers would be entitled to the amount of gold needed to make 'approximately the same number of wedding rings as last year', which is unlikely to have given manufacturers the assurance of stocks that they required given the withdrawal of the gold float in 1947.³⁶ A later article, published in August 1948's edition, detailed that the smaller manufacturers seeking an allocation of gold wire – a partly pre-finished form of gold bullion that allowed manufacturers to draw the wire into the desired D-shape for a ring – for wedding ring manufacture in the three months beginning 1 October needed to write to the British Jewellers' Association with 'the quantity of wedding rings produced for the home trade in 1947, the weight of 9 carat gold wire received for that purpose in 1947, and the name and address of the bullion dealer from whom the gold will be purchased'.³⁷ The level of detail required to buy gold in the 1940s contrasted sharply to the detail required before the war. Where manufacturers had been able to buy gold of whatever fineness and quantity they needed, they were now forced to work with intermediaries if they wanted to follow the law. Yet, those firms that stuck with the vagaries of gold allocations and continued to produce Utility wedding rings ensured that a small proportion of their staff continued with jewellery production, whilst other members executed their required war contracts production; navigating these restrictions and buying gold from your existing bullion partners kept staff in work.

After gaining their gold, companies did their best within the parameters of the Utility design to promote the Utility wedding ring to retailers. Vyse Street-based manufacturer Samuel Hope appealed to its trade partners' understanding and sense of humour at the onset of the new restrictions on wedding rings in 1942 by using its advertising strip in February 1942's *The British Jeweller* to proclaim in capital letters that 'SH will supply as many wedding rings as permitted of whatever quality or metal that is permitted and will continue to do so as long as permitted' (see Figure 2.6).³⁸ The writer of the advert inferred the firm's annoyance at the unknown restrictions due to affect the trade – little did they know just how changeable these restrictions would become. While Samuel Hope openly towed

³⁶ 'Gold for Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, March 1948, p. 70.

³⁷ 'Gold Wire For Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, p. 71.

³⁸ Samuel Hope Limited, 'S.O.S. Britain's Brides', *The British Jeweller*, February 1942, p. 25.

the party line in its production, its light mocking of the changes pointed to an underlying derision of rules enforced from above and a resistance among even the law-abiding members of the trade.



Figure 2.6. An advertisement in February 1942's edition of *The British Jeweller* from wedding ring manufacturer Samuel Hope Limited that lightly mocks the government's changeable rules about wedding rings.

Samuel Hope Limited, 'S.O.S. Britain's Brides', *The British Jeweller*, February 1942, p. 25

Members of the public also took issue with the restriction on wedding rings, which did little to bolster manufacturers' support for the rules. *The British Jeweller* printed a story about the Utility ring from another publication, quoted as 'A Newspaper Comments', in May 1946's edition.

'Modern brides offered the clumsy circlet' want something better and more attractive. 'The utility ring must be two-pennyweight, and must conform to the D-shape which is the design authorised by the Board of Trade. Most brides-to-be dislike it very much, and can hardly be blamed. It is clumsy, ugly, and far

from being an adornment. Most women want a wedding ring which will harmonise with an engagement ring. The utility gold wedding ring definitely does not.³⁹

As the Utility ring continued into the late 1940s, so too did women's disdain for the lack of choice. Though the Jewellers' Association and the Church had argued for the moral and religious implications of the wedding ring, this article reminded readers that jewellery is always a method of adornment. The standard D-shape of the Utility band is hard to conceive of as 'clumsy', so the description of it as 'ugly' reveals the much greater implication that brides considered their Utility band as ugly because it was so obviously part of the restrictions of the time and a symbol of their inability to exercise their choice over something they were to wear every day. Representing the 'average woman' ('married during the war, with one child, and an income of £400 to £500 a year'), Pauline Lloyd wrote an article for *The British Jeweller* in 1944 in which she outlined her 'Post-War Jewellery Plan' for the peace years and began with her expectations of engagement and wedding rings.⁴⁰

A girl's engagement ring is a precious possession and as, like the wedding ring, it is for keeps, deserves to be a good one. Diamond rings are the most popular, but whether diamonds or some other stones are chosen, she wants to be proud of the ring through the years.

Like many thousands of others, being married in war time, my fiancé and I decided to leave over the question of an engagement ring until more peaceful times, when, as we hope, the jewellers' windows will display trays of dazzling gemmed rings. My wedding ring, utility through necessity, we hope also to replace by a post-war one.⁴¹

Whether Pauline was real or not, her comparatively high income and spending power suggested that her jewellery plans were a useful indication of moderately aspirational consumer trends. Pauline's consideration of her Utility wedding ring as impermanent contrasted with gold's traditional image of permanence and implied that the combination of the ring's D-shaped design and its 9-carat fineness equalled inferiority to rings of higher finenesses and patterned designs. Pauline linked preciousness and pride, a link that had direct implications on the jewellers' work, both in their use of different gold alloys and in their concepts of their identity based on the materials and jewels they worked with. In

³⁹ 'Better Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, May 1946, p. 31.

⁴⁰ Pauline Lloyd, 'My Post-War Jewellery Plan', *The British Jeweller*, July 1944, p. 17

This income put her weekly wages at £7 14s to £9 12s, compared to the average £6 4s for a man and £3 4s for a woman in full-time manual employment in Britain in 1944.

History of Wages Data: Information from the Annual Abstract of Statistics (1886-1968), New Earnings Survey (1970-1996), and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (1997-) (Office for National Statistics, 2016)

<<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/dhocs/006301newearningsurveyneetimeseriesofgrossweeklyearningsfrom1938to2016/000813.xls>> [accessed 16 April 2021].

⁴¹ Lloyd.

her memoir, Rose Golding recalled to her son the pain of pawning a wedding ring and the embarrassment of wearing anything other than gold.

Faced with parting of the ring, it was possible to buy for a few pence, a brass imitation ring which, when polished up, didn't look too bad. Rolled gold rings were available, but dearer of course. / Women factory workers always protected their rings with strips of rag, and kept them covered when washing clothes and chores at home. So if you had on a brass ring the policy was to keep it covered up as much as possible. If you didn't you ran the risk of showing the tell-tale green stain on your finger; giving the game away!⁴²

Rose and her friends were proud of their gold wedding rings and believed that their colleagues, friends and family would be able to spot a brass imitation. Rose and Pauline's reverence of higher-carat gold, and the connotations it carried for their standard of living, reinforced the vital position gold jewellery played in British life. Taking note of very public accounts of jewellery wearers' consumption of jewels, particularly the Utility wedding ring, builds a more holistic understanding of how jewellers conceived of their work.

Throughout this period of material and labour shortages, Birmingham business owner and long-standing BJA committee member W Stewart Turner produced caricatures for *The British Jeweller* and reproduced relevant cartoons from other journals and newspapers to reinforce the trade's situation through humour. A caricature by Geoff Allen, reproduced in August 1948's *The British Jeweller*, hinged on the reader's understanding of the shortage of jewellery for the home market and the dissatisfaction of women like Pauline Lloyd with their Utility wedding rings. Figure 2.7 shows the cartoon inset on the page; Allen's drawing depicts a jeweller presenting a plain band ring to a shocked-looking couple and their reaction is contextualised with the caption: "And this, sir, is our latest austerity line: A combination engagement-wedding-teething ring!"⁴³ The caricature's joke that a plain band had become the sole option for all jewellery needs – and that you could have only one – was close to reality for manufacturers and consumers. Although they depicted exaggerated characters and situations, these drawings provided an easier way to access emotions amongst the industry because their melodrama thinly veiled real concerns. Communication researchers Sarah Tracy, Karen Myers and Clifton Scott argued that employees working in difficult situations used humour as 'a sensemaking vehicle' to produce and reproduce preferred interpretations of work.⁴⁴ In their study of prison guards, firefighters and emergency call takers in the USA, they found humour to be a collaborative and

⁴² Golding, p. 70.

⁴³ Geoff Allen, 'And This, Sir, Is Our Latest Austerity Line: A Combination Engagement-Wedding-Teething Ring!', *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, p. 65.

⁴⁴ Sarah J Tracy, Karen K Myers, and Clifton W Scott, 'Cracking Jokes and Crafting Selves: Sensemaking and Identity Management Among Human Service Workers', *Communication Monographs*, 73.3 (2006), 283–308 (p. 283).

constant organising process that socialised newcomers.⁴⁵ For the jewellers, humour was a way of channelling concerns about their industry and recognising that everyone was in the same situation. By understanding Turner's jibes, readers of *The British Jeweller* felt a part of their trade and reconfirmed their occupational identity.

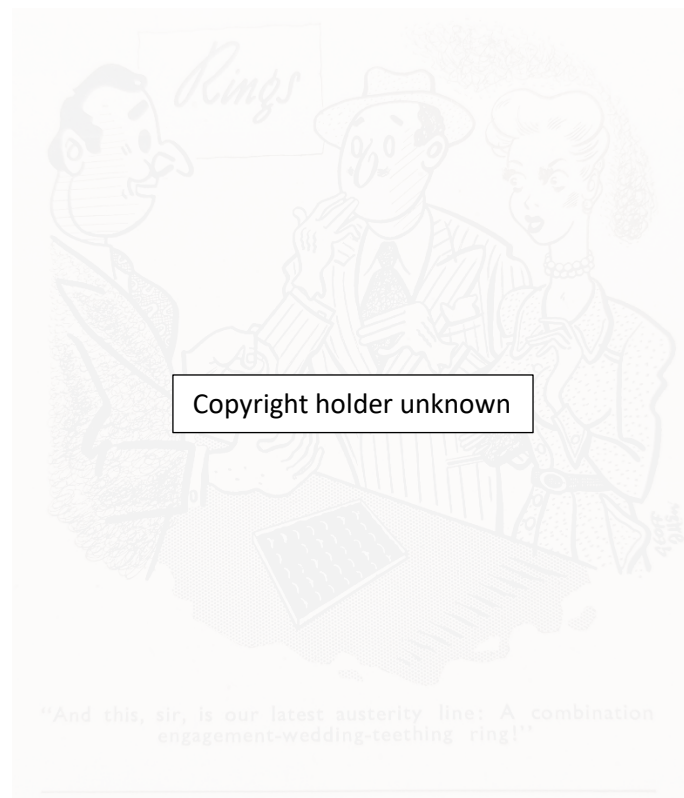


Figure 2.7. A cartoon illustration by Geoff Allen, titled ““And this, sir, is our latest austerity line: A combination engagement-wedding-teething ring!””, reproduced in *The British Jeweller*, August 1948.

Geoff Allen, ‘And This, Sir, Is Our Latest Austerity Line: A Combination Engagement-Wedding-Teething Ring!’, *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, p. 65

Shortages in materials and options for jewellers prompted Turner to recognise the trade's tactics to continue their work. To accompany an article about thefts in the June 1944 edition of *The British Jeweller*, Turner reproduced a cartoon from *Punch* that depicted a hand reaching through smashed glass from the inside of a jeweller's shop to snatch the pearl necklace of a passer-by (see figure 2.8).⁴⁶ Though the cartoon was in jest, the implication that the shortages were so acute that retail jewellers would steal jewellery back for the trade was not as far-fetched as the readers of *Punch* may have

⁴⁵ Tracy, Myers, and Scott.

⁴⁶ W Stewart Turner, ‘Rogues’ Gallery’, *The British Jeweller*, June 1944, 9–10.

presumed – one of Turner’s own cartoons made the same joke. Figure 2.9 shows a page from *The British Jeweller* that features a diptych of ink drawings; in the first scene, ornate gates with a lintel reading ‘Paradise’ are guarded by St Peter, who speaks to three men, whilst the second scene shows the same steps, but no gates and no men, and an alarmed St Peter waving his key. The caption revealed Turner’s joke about jewellers’ underhand tactics: ‘Once upon a time three jewellers went to Paradise. Outside the gates St. Peter said: “Wait, I must look up your records.” On his return the jewellers had disappeared – and the golden gates! (Usual editorial disclaimer: There is no reference to any particular jeweller, dead or alive.)’⁴⁷ Though Turner issued his disclaimer, the procurement of gold through illegitimate means was a known occurrence within the jewellery industry. Like the other cartoons, this cartoon’s humour belied very real ways of working and suggests that humour was one way of addressing these issues without officially admitting knowledge of them; humorous drawings, then, were a loophole in the strict and traditional print culture of this period.

⁴⁷ W Stewart Turner, ‘Once upon a Time Three Jewellers Went to Paradise’, *The British Jeweller*, June 1943, p. 13.

the ceiling at Brook Street, London, W., and stole £1,500 worth of watches and jewellery.

£700. A Glasgow firm of jewellers were robbed by confidence tricksters of £700 worth of goods, last September. In this case, two well dressed strangers called at a shop and asked to see "something in diamonds," and chose a ring which they left to be enlarged. After they had gone a pearl necklet, a platinum brooch, a diamond ring, and three pairs of ear-rings were missing. This couple must have experienced an appreciation of the "long arm of the law," when they were arrested at Torquay, seeing that that place is quite a little distance from Glasgow. The gentleman was sent away to a less salubrious resort for twelve months, where he will not be able to enjoy the delightful companionship of his "wife," who was sentenced to 60 days.

Amongst the more orderly and standard type of scamps are those that smashed a plate glass window at night and stole a variety of goods from the Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' premises in Regent Street.

All these and many more happened during the last six months.

These nefarious people, who menace our civilised lives, are artful, plausible, and obviously extremely clever and pit their ability against the forces of law and order; but in the long run they usually come a cropper. Insurance premiums are compiled according to the risks involved and the trade has to pay for the losses, so that the need for far greater care and vigilance is necessary. There is room for ingenuity in the design of better window protection which whilst giving greater security, would not be detrimental to the appearance of the articles displayed. Diamond and gold goods, having a great value in a small compass, offer the criminal easy facilities for a quick getaway, but obviously these offences would not be so numerous if it were not for the channels through which they are able to dispose of the proceeds. Greater care should be exercised in buying goods from strangers than appears to have been used in some cases. There is, of course, a difficulty in distinguishing second-hand jewellery from new—especially when that offered is modern in style—but if proof of ownership was demanded it would make the disposal much more difficult.



Reproduced by permission of the proprietors of "Punch."

**Purchase Tax :
Interesting Retail Price Agreement**

The Greeting Card and Calendar Association have agreed with the Central Price Regulation Committee upon retail prices including tax (which is 100%) and have sent out to the trade a schedule of prices at which cards and calendars are to be sold to the public. This secures uniformity and safeguards the interests of all retailers.

* * *

"Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm."—Publius Syrus.

DIAMOND SIZE CHART	2ct.	1½ct.	1¼ct.	1ct.	¾ct.	½ct.	¼ct.	⅓ct.	⅕ct.	⅙ct.
The white spaces give the approximate sizes of stones weighing from ¼th to 2 carats.										
	2.00	1.50	1.25	1.00	.75	.50	.25	.12	.06	.03

Figure 2.8. A photograph of a page of *The British Jeweller* from June 1944 showing W Stewart Turner's reproduction of a cartoon from *Punch* that depicting a jeweller stealing a woman's string of pearls.

'Reproduced by permission of the proprietors of *Punch*', *The British Jeweller*, June 1944, p. 10.

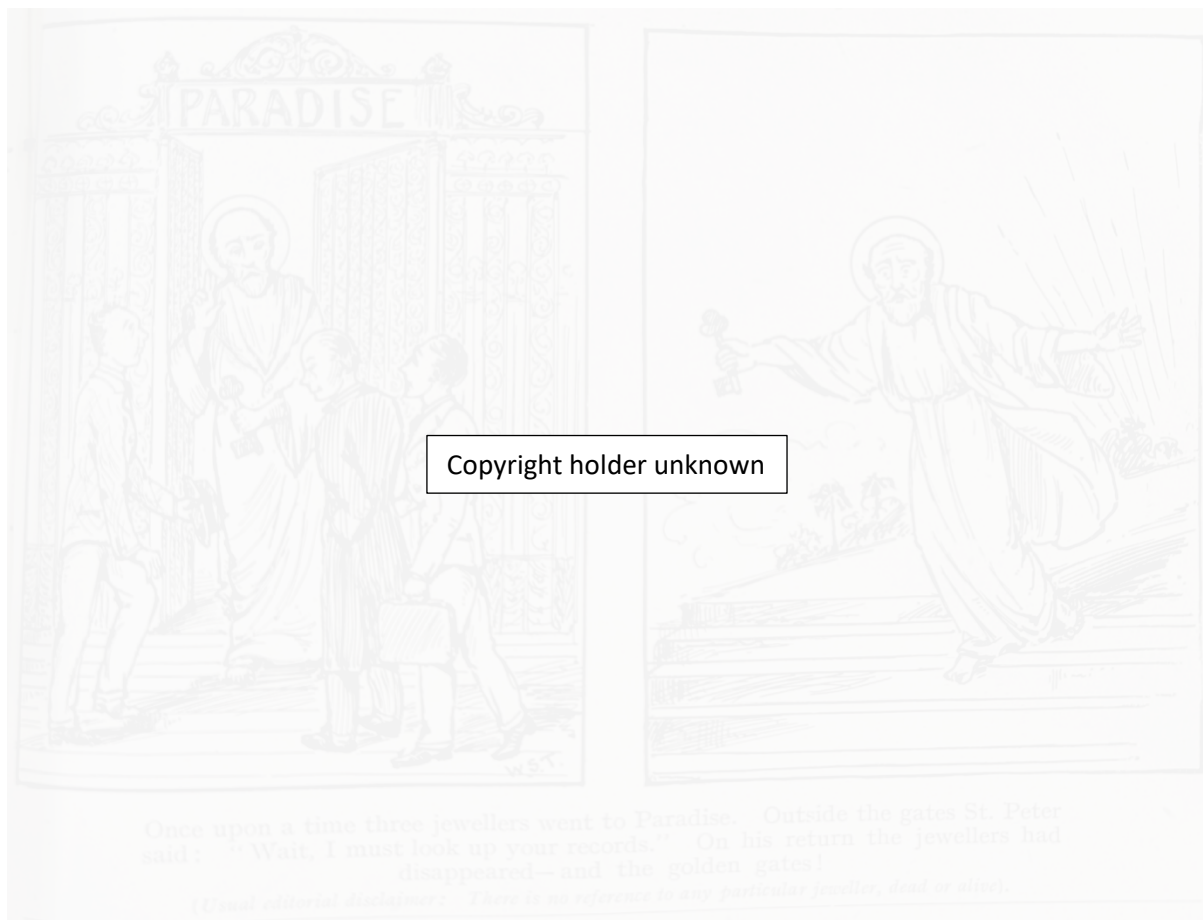


Figure 2.9. A cartoon illustration by W Stewart Turner, titled 'Once upon a time three jewellers went to Paradise', printed in *The British Jeweller*, June 1943.

W Stewart Turner, 'Once upon a Time Three Jewellers Went to Paradise', *The British Jeweller*, June 1943, p. 13.

The Jewellers and the Black Market

As the caricatures of jewellers hinted, within this system of changing regulations the jewellers found ways to make the rules work for them. They exploited loopholes in regulations to continue their work, or at least adapted their processes to a lesser extent than the new rules dictated. Trade members referred to much of this work as contributions towards Britain's austerity-driven black market. However, as Mark Roodhouse convincingly argued in *Black Market Britain*, the black market was more realistically a collection of deals that people judged to range in severity, from those considered 'light grey' to 'black', depending on each deal's moral implications for denying others a fair share.⁴⁸ For jewellers, the changing rules meant that sometimes they already owned their share, but they were

⁴⁸ Roodhouse, p. 6.

now not entitled to use it. Leese therefore referred to jewellers' move to the black market as an inevitability when he described the effects of a new export ruling that removed the use of imported paste stones from the home market, and that he considered would prompt manufacturers to circumvent the export rule in a bid to sell their fashion jewellery to the home market via the black market.

Another effect of the restriction is, as inevitably happens in these cases, a steady percolation of paste-set jewellery into the black market. Some of the supplies still available were of course produced legitimately, either from old stocks or from last year's quotas, which were issued in the proportion of 75 per cent for export and 25 per cent for home trade. But these stocks are quickly diminishing and it cannot be long before legal supplies to the home trade must cease completely.⁴⁹

This new order, like many others, changed the identity of the imitation stones some jewellers still had in stock: they turned from legitimate to illegitimate. In the same way, manufacturers worked both legitimately and illegitimately by producing for export as required *and* by concurrently leaking a proportion of goods onto the black market that fed home demand. This change in official identity had the power to significantly impact the jewellers' working practices if caught, whilst also having very little long-term impact on their concepts of identity as they continued manufacturing. This section looks to these instances of evasion, loophole exploitation and black-market profiteering to consider how jewellery making changed and its impact on individual manufacturers. Following loopholes focuses attention on the independent jewellers and small workshops that could more easily work 'off the book' and that constituted the majority of the trade.

Wedding Rings: The full circle

As demand for non-Utility wedding rings grew, so did some jewellers' inventiveness for creating or dealing in other options. Rings made abroad and imported; rings made with other metals and sold as gold; second-hand rings that avoided the restrictions on new manufacturing; and new rings sold as second-hand all became viable options for generating business. In the Correspondence pages of *The British Jeweller*, 'A Manufacturer' penned an anonymous letter in January 1943 to express their concern for the multiple ways other manufacturers and dealers exploited the system.

There is a point concerning wedding ring sales with which I have no doubt you are familiar. Dublin hall-marked rings are, I believe, appearing through subterranean channels, and we also hear of "22 carat rings with metal core" being sold for as much as £5 each. I had one in my hands recently for which £5

⁴⁹ W H Leese, 'This Restriction Is Killing Our Export Trade', *The British Jeweller*, July 1947, p. 52.

10s. was paid in London, and the article was actually no better than rolled gold. It had been bought by a soldier passing through London on his way home on leave to get married. His girl then refused to accept the ring because it was not hall-marked [...] Another point to which I would draw your attention is that in some of the North Country pawnbrokers' auction rooms second-hand 22-carat wedding rings are now bringing as much as £2 per dwt. under the hammer.⁵⁰

This story of the refused metal-core wedding ring, and the unfortunate soldier that got duped into buying it, confirmed that the public understood the value of the hallmark as a form of consumer protection. His fiancée's rejection of the ring on the grounds of it being unhallmarked echoed Pauline Lloyd's assessment of brides' pride in the preciousness of their jewels. Rolled gold is a common material made from a sheet of base metal, like copper, brass or sometimes silver, fused to a surface of higher-carat gold. This process creates a thicker layer of precious metal than on plated items, and makes the base core harder to detect, whilst maintaining a lower cost for the manufacturer, and for the end consumer in legitimate sales, than items of gold alloy. Rolled gold becomes an issue for the consumer when they are unaware that this metal is what they are buying, as in the soldier's case. The multiple references in this manufacturer's letter to 22-carat gold and the high prices it was then achieving reflected the pervasiveness of the gold hierarchy.

With access to 'new' gold restricted, jewellers wanting to tap into the demand for non-Utility wedding rings had to exploit other methods of procuring gold. In his oral history, Dennis Owens painted a vivid picture of manufacturers' and dealers' exchanges on the streets of the Jewellery Quarter in the 'five or six years' after the war, when 'all the shops were starving for goods, so it was a real boom time' for jewellers:

People used to deal on street corners and in pubs and cafes because we couldn't buy gold from the bullion dealer, or we could only have fresh gold for old gold that was brought in, it threw up a lot of characters who used to go, they used to say it was 'on the knocker'. They used to go around all the houses in the area asking for... if they had any old gold to sell, and you could trade this in at the bullion dealers for new gold and there were [...] quite a few characters on the verge of being dishonest [...] sometimes they'd have a bonanza you know, because before the war, men had worn pocket watches with great chains and [...] they'd give about, in those days, about £2.50 or £3.00 for an ounce of gold and sometimes it was 18 carat or even 22 carat, which meant more than 100 per cent profit. [...] when I first came in 1945, it was a bustling area especially around the clock and the little pub, the Rose Villa. People were surreptitiously exchanging little packets of gold, stones and diamonds, and you could almost sell anything in those days because the shops needed restocking after the war, and sovereigns, everyone was looking for sovereigns. You could make a wedding ring out of a sovereign.

⁵⁰ A Manufacturer, 'Wedding Ring Shortage', *The British Jeweller*, January 1943, 10.

[Interviewer] Did you do that?

Oh, yes, often, you could melt a sovereign. A sovereign is five penny weights, 22 carats, melt it into a bar, turn it up and make it into a wedding ring. Of course, you couldn't buy a 22-carat wedding ring and you couldn't get them hallmarked, but we used to stamp 22 carats on.⁵¹

Dennis's stream of memories about the methods of procuring gold in the late 1940s reflected the many routes available to jewellers. His matter-of-fact intonation in the recording and his nonchalant reply to the interviewer's question about melting gold sovereigns suggested that Dennis was unfazed by certain methods of procurement and production in the trade; yet he distinguished himself from the 'characters' that went round 'on the knocker'. Capitalising on people's need for cash by buying their gold at half the price that you could sell it on for was Dennis's idea of being 'on the verge of being dishonest'; whereas, his action of making and selling a wedding ring in 22-carat gold, against the Board of Trade's 9-carat and 2 penny weight restriction, was not dishonest because he stamped the ring '22ct', thereby deceiving neither the retailer nor consumer. Dennis's judgement of dishonesty aligned with Mark Roodhouse's argument that everyday Britons considered the moral implications of their austerity rule-breaking behaviour: they, like Dennis, judged their own transgressions in relation to acts they considered to be worse because they deprived others of their 'fair share', like cornering someone on their doorstep and profiting unnecessarily highly from their gold. Though Dennis went against the Board of Trade's ruling, he did not break hallmarking laws; instead, he exploited a loophole in the ruling that forbade any new items other than 9-carat gold wedding rings to be assayed and hallmarked, so leaving open the option of stamping the fineness of other gold alloys on new items yourself. Dennis used his tacit knowledge of jewellery making to melt and re-form gold sovereigns into desirable 22-carat gold wedding rings, stamped with their fineness so that he could feel reassured in the knowledge that his rings were truly of 22 carat, unlike the gold-core ring the unfortunate soldier purchased.

The Board of Trade's ruling that only 9-carat gold could be hallmarked effectively closed the Assay Office to legitimate manufacturers like Dennis Owens. As jewellers had to be discreet about their use of other alloys and could not rely on them being hallmarked, their existing trade connections became even more important for knowing who to trust to source gold from. The headline 'GOLD – BE CAREFUL' in August 1946's *The British Jeweller* accompanied a warning about lower standards of old gold in circulation and that retailers 'should satisfy themselves that they are authentic products of reputable firms'.⁵² Reputation became even more crucial, especially when the writers of *The British Jeweller* were quick to identify and blame rulebreakers. In August 1944, Turner and the editorial team ran an

⁵¹ Owens.

⁵² 'GOLD - BE CAREFUL', *The British Jeweller*, August 1946, p. 34.

article entitled 'False Hall Marks on Metal Wedding Rings' in which they picked on the offending behaviour of 23-year-old Frederick Tudor, 'toolmaker', from Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester, as a warning to others thinking of using their skills to the same ends.

It was stated that [the] accused copied a genuine gold wedding ring and made a die of the hall mark. From strips of base metal he made plain rings, plated them with gold of infinitesimal thickness and impressed them with the hall mark. These rings were pawned at £1 to £1 10s. each. The assay office said the rings bore an excellent copy of the hall marks. The police found various apparatus at Tudor's home. He was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.⁵³

The writer described Frederick Tudor as a toolmaker and linked his skills in this role to his creation of a die to recreate the hallmark. That the police found the required tooling at his house showed that many jewellers could adapt their work to their specific needs or opportunities in this period; they had the tacit knowledge to work with available metals, adapt or make new tooling, set up home workshops and subvert the regulatory systems. The Assay Office's statement about the high quality of the forged hallmarks testified to Frederick's skill. His sentencing, however, served as a warning to those jewellers confident enough to recreate the hallmark, an offence that carried the possibility of penal servitude of up to 14 years.

Producing forged or transposed marks – taking a legitimate hallmark from an item and soldering it onto another – was a skill most jewellers had, as Dennis Owens also demonstrated in his admission of stamping '22ct' into rings, and due to the piecemeal nature of jewellery production and distribution, they could often separate themselves enough from the exchange/sale of the item to avoid the punishment. In research focused on the idea of gold's value, Peter Oakley turned to the hallmark as 'a guarantee of the gold content' of an item and testified to its power: 'the hallmarking system facilitates both the commodification and destruction of gold jewelry [sic]' because 'it increases the liquidity of gold jewelry in general and the fluidity of every jewelry collection in the United Kingdom'.⁵⁴ Through its 700-year history in Britain, Oakley portrayed the hallmark as a liquefier of the monetary wealth invested in gold: with a hallmark, gold can be sold as gold at a value linked to international gold prices and jewellery collections can easily be distributed with each party trusting the metal make-up of the items. Fake hallmarks fall into this liquefying category too because their success relies on belief in legitimate hallmarks. Whilst Oakley recognised the enduring power of the belief in a hallmark's precision and infallibility, the laws dictating hallmarking requirements in the UK have frequently changed. Although a hallmark is now necessary for gold, silver, platinum and palladium items over

⁵³ 'False Hall Marks on Metal Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, August 1944, 37.

⁵⁴ Peter Oakley, 'Is Gold Jewelry Money?', *Social Analysis*, 61.4 (2017), 17–30 (p. 26).

certain weights and produced after 1975 to be sold as their respective metals rather than ‘yellow’ or ‘white metal’, not all new items have needed a hallmark to be saleable as a precious metal. Today, jewellery made before 1975 does not require a hallmark to be sold as gold, silver, platinum or palladium (if the retailer believes it to be precious metal) and this rule was partly created in recognition of jewellery from the mid-twentieth century that could not be hallmarked as it was not of 9-carat gold.⁵⁵ These changes in British hallmarking laws highlight the inconsistency with which hallmarks have been applied, and that the absence of hallmarks does not guarantee that an item is fraudulent.

Considering these specifics of hallmarking regulations, we must be careful not to over interpret hallmarking data. In her overview of the trade, Shena Mason focused on Birmingham Assay Office figures that showed ‘a 77.7 per cent leap in gold hallmarked [...] in the year ending 30 June 1946. Silver fared even better, with [...] an increase of 111.9 per cent’.⁵⁶ A year later, the total weight of gold assayed in the year ending 30 June 1947 had again risen, this time by 73.54 per cent; the silver weight had increased by 49.1 per cent.⁵⁷ When presenting these figures to the reader, Mason attributed the rises in hallmarking to the ‘easing of quotas’ and the end-of-war ‘jubilation’ that ‘saw hoarded old gold “liberated” and recycled’.⁵⁸ Whilst the total weight of precious metal hallmarked rose year on year, these figures did not indicate whether more items were hallmarked each year, or whether the increase simply reflected the creation of heavier items. As reserves of gold were increasingly released for 18-carat export use in these years, the increase of weight may correspond to an increase in the use of 18-carat gold, as it is heavier than the equivalent volume of 9-carat gold (at a ratio of 1:0.69), but not of an increase of items for the restricted home trade. These hallmarking figures gave little confirmation of the ‘easing of quotas’ nor the liberation of old gold, though both occurred to some extent, as they gave no insight as to how they related to jewellers’ production. Consideration of hallmarks as consistent should be reframed as changeable; how and why they change, and who pushes these changes, are more insightful questions.

Hallmarking figures were also not representative of the trade because many items fell through loopholes that allowed them to escape the need for hallmarks. These legal loopholes in the assaying system meant manufacturers could continue to produce and sell their work, an aspect of the trade that the Board of Trade did not encourage, but inadvertently protected. When explaining the black-market manufacturing of new jewellery, Paul Podolsky described their quality levels as, ‘I can’t say

⁵⁵ ‘Hallmarking Act 1973’ (Statute Law Database)

<<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1973/43/schedule/1>> [accessed 4 January 2024].

⁵⁶ Mason, p. 140.

⁵⁷ Mason, p. 143.

⁵⁸ Mason, p. 140, 143.

that the quality would have been hallmarking standard because you couldn't hallmark them.'⁵⁹ Here, Paul referred to the restrictions that discouraged production of items other than that of 9-carat gold wedding rings. The September 1944 edition of *The British Jeweller* included a statement addressed to all jewellers 'as there appears to be some doubt about the requirements of the assay laws regarding wedding rings'; whilst 'all gold wedding rings of any quality must be hallmarked, [...] This regulation does not apply to signet rings or other fancy rings'.⁶⁰ Whilst the changeable nature of the restrictions validated jewellers' hallmarking mistakes, the suggestion of doubt also inferred that some manufacturers flouted the rules. Officials intended the combination of small amounts of allocated gold and consumers' respect for the hallmark to discourage manufacturers from making other rings that were not eligible for hallmarking at this time, but their exemption of these goods from hallmarking instead made it easier for jewellers to manufacture them in any gold they could obtain and, as Paul recounted, to standards lower than they may have worked to if they had had to pay for assaying, safe in the knowledge that retail jewellers' shops were starved of goods and consumer demand was great. As all other goods had to go unhallmarked, they avoided the established route through which their quality would have been questioned; in this way, the jewellers exploited a loophole in the restrictions so that they could continue their work.

By closing this smallware assaying loophole three years later, the government and the Birmingham Assay Office recognised the loophole's past benefit for the trade. The Assay Office released an issue notice on 15 October 1947 to inform the trade that all gold and silver items must be hallmarked, particularly pointing to the smallware that had previously slipped through the loophole, including 'gold charms, crosses, medallions and similar small fancy ornaments [that] have been sold extensively by some manufacturers and dealers, without having been brought to an Assay Office'.⁶¹ The small size of these articles often corresponded to a low weight, which, as Mason showed in her analysis of assaying by mass, has been the traditional way of determining an item's viability and/or liability for hallmarking. A year later, in a December 1948 opinion article entitled 'Hallmarking Revision is an Urgent Need', Leese argued that the 200-year old hallmarking law was outdated because it referred to old products and ambiguous rules that had been open to Assay Masters' interpretation and, therefore, applied inconsistently to low-weight items.⁶² As a result, it had become 'general practice in the trade for very many years to stamp such articles "9ct"', 'as they were by long custom regarded as exempt.'⁶³ By

⁵⁹ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First' – Appendix A.

⁶⁰ 'Hallmarking Of Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, October 1944, p. 19.

⁶¹ 'Hallmarking of Gold Articles: Assay Office Statement on Liability', *The British Jeweller*, November 1947, p. 67.

⁶² W H Leese, 'Hallmarking Revision Is An Urgent Need', *The British Jeweller*, December 1948, pp. 51–53.

⁶³ Leese, 'Hallmarking Revision Is An Urgent Need', p. 52.

stamping goods themselves, jewellers could work through this hallmarking loophole, which was advantageous in the restrictions years of the 1940s, and was an easy operation. Additionally, as referenced in another Assay Office warning released in early 1948, goods with significant decorative finishing escaped the need for assaying and hallmarking because stamping the marks would impact the item's design.⁶⁴ Leese also referred to the Assay Office's practice of refusing to mark 9-carat items under 0.008 of an inch in thickness and its inconsistent discretion in this regard after seeing two bracelets with damaged articulation and finish because of the visible punch marks pressed through from the reverse of the bracelet links and the force with which they had been applied.⁶⁵ The inconsistency with which the Assay Office applied the rules (and the physical marks) at the time gave jewellers more reason to avoid the assaying process where possible. Despite the close of the large hallmarking loophole, the continued exemption of finely detailed and thin goods from hallmarking requirements provided additional loopholes for the trade to work through as needed. Whilst the hallmarking process remained constant, the methods and instances in which Assay Masters applied it changed frequently in the 1940s and into the 1950s; these changes, encouraged by the Board of Trade, did not impact the reliability of the hallmark in consumers' estimation, but greatly impacted its reliability for jewellers, who instead managed their output consistency themselves by exploiting loopholes.

Purchase Tax

Confusion about changing laws affecting the manufacture of precious metal goods allowed makers to knowingly and unknowingly exploit loopholes. With most 'by the book' manufacturing centred on export work, the home trade offered few legitimate opportunities to manufacture and make money from jewellers' work. The government's imposition of the luxury Purchase Tax in October 1940 aimed to reduce both the wastage of materials during the war and demand from British consumers and compounded the difficulties the jewellers faced with restrictions on metal.⁶⁶ Purchase Tax, unlike today's Value Added Tax (VAT, the descendant of Purchase Tax), was designed to be charged to wholesalers at the point that goods were sold to retailers rather than to consumers. Whilst this arrangement still resulted in higher prices for goods, it also created extra administrative work for manufacturers, who had to pay Purchase Tax on the work they had carried out that was ready for sale

⁶⁴ 'Gold Charms: Hall Marking Warning', *The British Jeweller*, January 1948, p. 71.

⁶⁵ Leese, 'Hallmarking Revision Is An Urgent Need', p. 52.

⁶⁶ Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir John Simon first introduced his proposed Purchase Tax to the House of Commons on 23 April 1940 as a form of 'sales tax' designed to bring in 'substantial additional revenue'. Sir John Simon, 'Purchase Tax', *Hansard*, House of Commons Debate, 23 April 1940, vol 360, cc74-86.

to retailers but not on the goods that required more manufacturing processes to be carried out by other firms. For the jewellery industry, which relied heavily on outworkers and the job specialisation of the manufacturing community, every item presented a different Purchase Tax arrangement. As Paul Podolsky recalled, 'if you were a manufacturer, you charged Purchase Tax on an invoice to a retailer; whether you were paid or not, you still had to pay' – and Customs and Excise officers 'were very strict on collecting tax'.⁶⁷ If a retailer took items on a sale-or-return basis only, manufacturers could be left having paid Purchase Tax to Customs and Excise without having received the necessary funds from the retailer. When Purchase Tax 'started off as 33 and one third per cent to groans of anguish, until it became 100 per cent to groans of agony', it is easy to see why Paul and other manufacturers were concerned about the point at which the tax was levied.⁶⁸ Then, in December 1947's *The British Jeweller*, Leese recounted the trade's sense of 'wry relief' that the government's recent interim budget had only increased Purchase Tax again by 25 per cent, not the expected 50 per cent, after it had already caused a 'partial paralysis of some branches of the trade' due to its 'many evil effects'.⁶⁹ Though Purchase Tax dropped back from a levy of 125 per cent to 100 per cent of an item's value in 1948, it remained at this level for jewellery until it was replaced by VAT in the 1970s.

Much like the restrictions on metal supplies, the Board of Trade frequently reassessed the list of items liable for Purchase Tax as well as the manufacturers that needed to pay it, a system that left jewellers confused and again at risk of rule breaking. Whilst the writers of *The British Jeweller* were able to poke fun at the Board of Trade's indecision, penning headlines like 'Hairslides are Jewellery and Affected by PT Muddle' and retorting that '[o]wing to the pressure of Parliamentary time,' Parliament had dropped its proposed withdrawal of the £500 Exemption Limit that exempted small manufacturers from having to pay the tax if they did not sell more than £500-worth of goods per year, the jewellers were left with the decision of whether to stick to the rules, manipulate them, or both.⁷⁰ Paul Podolsky's family company, as a relatively large firm that could not act unnoticed, chose to adapt their workshop to make cheaper goods to stick to the Purchase Tax rules.

⁶⁷ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'

⁶⁸ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'

⁶⁹ W H Leese, 'Another Blow to Our Home Trade', *The British Jeweller*, December 1947, 56.

⁷⁰ 'Hairslides Are Jewellery and Affected by PT Muddle', *The British Jeweller*, September 1948, p. 73; 'Purchase Tax: Withdrawal of the £500 Exemption Limit', *The British Jeweller*, July 1945, p. 21.

Purchase Tax-related headlines from copies of *The British Jeweller* between 1942 and 1949 alone demonstrate the back-and-forth nature of Purchase Tax policy and its effect on the jewellers:

'What a Business!', August 1942; 'Purchase Tax: Withdrawal of the £500 Exemption Limit', July 1945, which reported that Parliament had dropped its proposed changes because it did not have time to discuss them before the dissolution of Parliament; 'Changes in the Purchase Tax', June 1946; 'Re-made [sic] Jewellery Concession: Trade Deputation's Success', July 1946; 'The Black Market, The Budget and The Crisis', April 1947; 'Another Blow to Our Home Trade', December 1947; 'Hairslides Are Jewellery and Affected by PT Muddle', September 1948; 'Purchase Tax Changes and Definitions', August 1949.

Well, we had Purchase Tax, it was the bane of our lives. Everything had to revolve on how you could do things cheap enough so that Purchase Tax, although it was 100 per cent, wouldn't drive it out of the market. And that was it, you know, we did what we could in quantity as cheaply as we could [...] We had to change our workshops around. There was a small section for handmade work. There was a larger area where production work went on and where we employed people, not because they were skilled, but because they were capable of doing simple jobs in repetition. [...] Bigger workshops didn't do it [break the rules] because they had reputations. [...] My father couldn't, or wouldn't rather, I would say, and there were other people who remained on the level.'⁷¹

By drawing a direct link between Purchase Tax and his company's move to cheaper goods, Paul emphasised the power of this tax on the jewellery trade across the country. Dennis Owens corroborated the selling power of cheaper goods in his description of jewellers' shops being 'starving for goods' after six years of very little jewellery production during the war.⁷² The country's desire for goods created demand and opportunities for smaller workshops that could subvert the system and continue producing. These smaller units, though the most at risk from the effects of Purchase Tax and small reserves of materials and money, also had the most potential and power to work around the changes as they had little overhead charges and, with many being self-employed, could accept variable profit levels between jobs.

Smaller, more flexible businesses could also more easily pivot their work to exploit a very apparent loophole in the Purchase Tax regulations. As Paul phrased it, 'what the government didn't do, surprisingly, was put a tax on second-hand goods', so second-hand jewellery, plus repairs to existing jewellery, could be sold without doubling its price because its sale did not involve the use of materials and labour that the government wished to be engaged on war and export work.⁷³ In this 'boom time' of retail demand, manufacturers could make the most of the opportunities to deal if they were willing to work through the second-hand loophole, which Paul testified to.⁷⁴

[There was] no tax on second-hand goods so immediately a few rogue workshops started producing second-hand goods as fast as they could turn them out. They had problems, they couldn't get materials, not easily, and, erm, so they, erm, used to melt down lovely Victorian jewellery, beautiful stuff, it's criminal. [...] Not only gold, but platinum'.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

⁷² Owens.

⁷³ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

⁷⁴ Owens.

⁷⁵ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

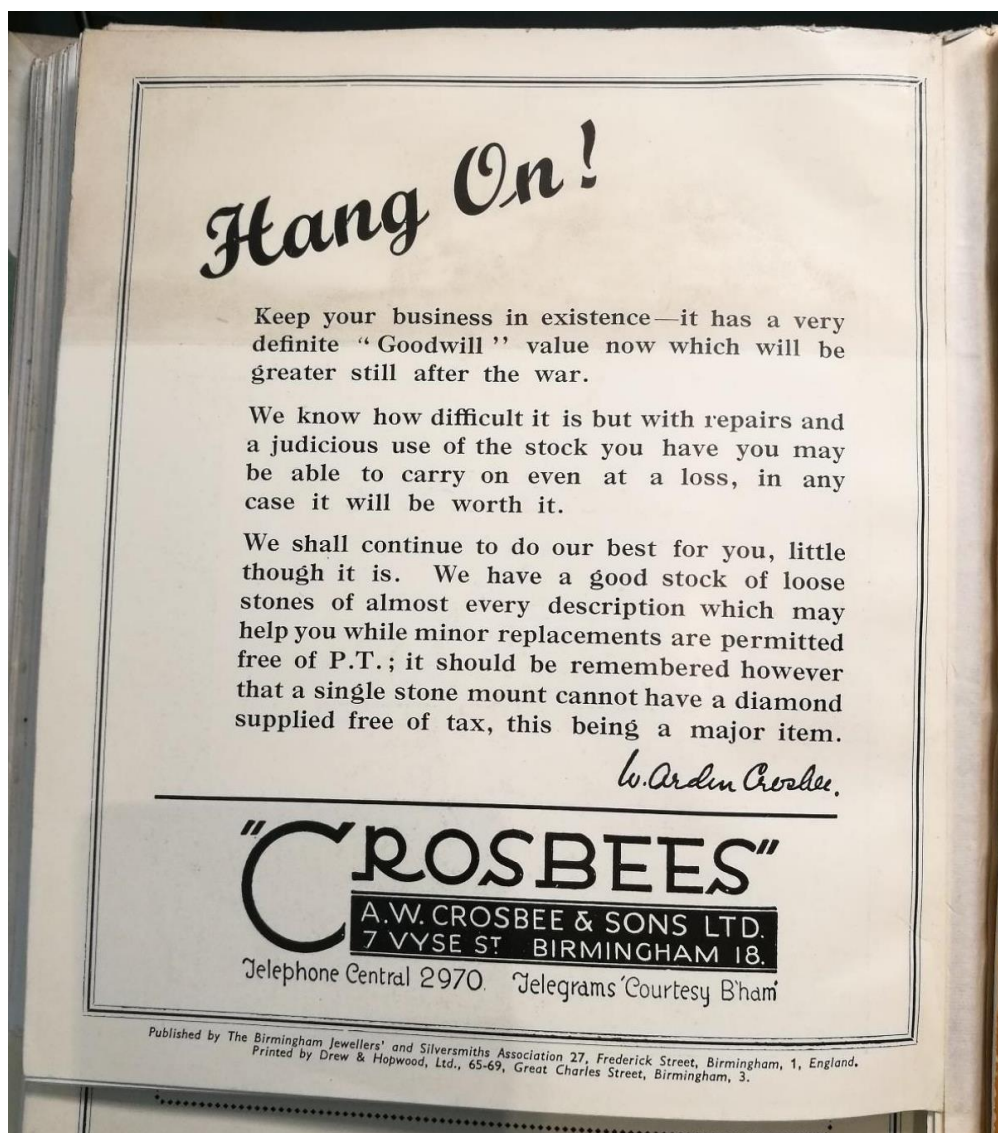
In his condemnation of melting 'lovely Victorian jewellery', Paul intimated a different moral standpoint from melting coins. He directed his condemnation more towards the destruction of old jewellery than the exploitation of the second-hand loophole, which suggested that he subscribed to a moral ranking of austerity misdemeanours, like that proposed by Roodhouse.

There was such a fine divide between legitimate and rule-breaking jewels that judging a jewellers' attempts at making a profit was complex. Jewellery manufacturers' Crosbees' advert (Figure 2.10) on the reverse of the November 1942 edition of *The British Jeweller* demonstrated the confusing nuances of the repair work exemption. A message of support to trade partners from W Arden Crosbee read:

We have a good stock of loose stones of almost every description which may help you while minor replacements are permitted free of P.T.; it should be remembered however that a single stone mount cannot have a diamond supplied free of tax, this being a major item.⁷⁶

A diamond of any size could be purchased for a repair, but if a jeweller tried to set the same diamond into a ring that was designed to only have one stone as its focal point, the same diamond counted as a new item and not a repair. Crosbees' advert suggested that if a manufacturer was willing to exploit the repair loophole, there were suppliers willing to sell to you.

⁷⁶ Crosbees, 'Hang On!', *The British Jeweller*, November 1942, p. back cover.



Hang On!

Keep your business in existence—it has a very definite “Goodwill” value now which will be greater still after the war.

We know how difficult it is but with repairs and a judicious use of the stock you have you may be able to carry on even at a loss, in any case it will be worth it.

We shall continue to do our best for you, little though it is. We have a good stock of loose stones of almost every description which may help you while minor replacements are permitted free of P.T.; it should be remembered however that a single stone mount cannot have a diamond supplied free of tax, this being a major item.

W. Arden Crosbee.

"CROSBEES"
A.W. CROSBEE & SONS LTD.
7 VYSE ST BIRMINGHAM 18.
 Telephone Central 2970. Telegrams 'Courtesy B'ham'

Published by The Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths Association 27, Frederick Street, Birmingham, 1, England.
 Printed by Drew & Hopwood, Ltd., 65-69, Great Charles Street, Birmingham, 3.

Figure 2.10. An advertisement from jeweller A W Crosbee & Sons in November 1942's *The British Jeweller* urging clients to support the trade (and them) by continuing to work.

A W Crosbee & Sons Ltd, 'Hang On!', *The British Jeweller*, November 1942, back cover.

This new 'second-hand' jewellery did not need to hide its identity, despite having to create stories to work with the system; as Paul put it, 'it looked brand new and it was'.⁷⁷ The main opportunity, and difficulty for those enforcing the rule, in verifying an item to be second-hand was that 'second-hand' did not have an age limit, nor a set appearance: recently made jewellery and antique jewellery can be second-hand as long as they have changed hands. As Paul explained, it was relatively easy for manufacturers to attach stories to their jewels to change their identity.

⁷⁷ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

[Y]ou had all sorts of methods of legitimising this illegal manufacture, for example, inheritance. You know, 'this is from my Aunt Fanny, she never wore it so it's brand new, blah blah'. Or else, a lady of the night would go into a retailer jeweller's, whom she knew, and make an arrangement to get a commission on signing that she had received this from an admirer and sold it to the shop, free of Purchase Tax.⁷⁸

Though the person weaving these stories had to be willing to lie to the dealer or retailer, the manufacturing processes and the finished goods were no different from the manufacturing processes and outcomes of legal production. This exploitation required no change in manufacturing, and at a time of relentless change, it offered jewellers a constant way of working.

Working through loopholes

Following the jewellers' exploitation of loopholes gives insight to the ways they conducted business in the 1940s and 1950s – in a way, this research works through these loopholes again. Though the jewellery black market was framed by industry leaders as being a product of the material, financial and social restrictions of the time, the existing trade system had always enabled it to be an option. The Birmingham trade's conglomeration of small businesses and self-employed craftspeople introduced in chapter one was key to jewellers' work in the black market. The jobbing and outworking systems allowed people to choose jobs and they could apply the same process of discretion to illegitimate work as to legitimate. As this section will trace, they already had the tools, tacit knowledge, workspaces and openness to cash to make working through these loopholes a continuation of their existing work practices. Choosing to work through loopholes gave self-employed jewellers the opportunity to retain their skills and their occupational community.

Whilst larger companies like Paul's father's firm acquired new machinery to undertake their war contracts and adapted their processes and products to maximise profits, smaller companies could work relatively unnoticed because they chose to produce jewellery that required only hand tools and light machinery.⁷⁹ Traditions of personal tool ownership in the trade gave jewellers an independence to carry out work on their terms. Most tools for hand making jewellery are small and can be kept close at hand on the jeweller's bench. The photographs shown in figures 2.11, 2.12 and 2.13 have captured jewellers working on items at their benches; the first two form part of the jewellery firm Eaton & Wrighton's company records held in the Library of Birmingham and the third is part of the expanded Warwickshire Photographic Survey collection and has been captioned as 'Photographed c1950s.

⁷⁸ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

⁷⁹ I discussed how firms acquired and learnt to use new tools and machinery, and the corresponding changes in the use of space in the workshop, in my MA dissertation. Izzard.

Jeweller making rings.’⁸⁰ A myriad of files and burrs rested on the bench in front of each jeweller, who knew the particular effect of every tool. As workshops have closed in the Quarter, firms have donated the contents of their workshop to the Birmingham Museums Trust, which runs the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter in what was the Smith & Pepper workshop at 77 and 78 Vyse Street. The Trust’s Collection Centre now holds a vast array of tools, each individually tagged, wrapped in tissue and stored. When holding these tools, as shown in photographs in figures 2.14 and 2.15, your hand fits into comfortable grooves, worn through continued use over time, and it is easy to feel how a lifetime’s work built a connection between a craftsman’s tools and their tacit knowledge. Silversmith Cornellius Sullivan introduced two of his wooden mallets that he used in his flat-hammering work and the etched grooves in the handles, visible as crosses in the photograph of the two mallets in figure 2.16. He explained that as each worker makes, works with, and mends their own tools, they etch them with their own mark to allow for easy identification in the workshop and to discourage others from using tools that are not their own.

I worked with some tools, that passed on to me, and the guy had had them off someone else and you could just see where their hand had worn into it, the imprints, and you could see the different owners’ marks on the tool. Because if a hammer went missing, you could say, ‘where’s my hammer gone?’ You go to the guys, say, ‘Have you got my hammer?’ ‘Don’t think so’. Turn it over: ‘that’s my hammer, don’t take stuff off my bench.’⁸¹

As Cornellius explained, the larger mallet shows different patterns of etched horizontal lines on its handle as you rotate it in your hands; both mallets bear a cross of intersecting lines – Cornellius’s mark. Jeweller Rod Mossop also remembered being gifted his late colleague Tommy Evans’ tools by Mrs Evans: ‘I’ve got them, and I still use them today’.⁸² These patterns of lifetime hand-tool ownership enabled jewellers to move between workshops and jobs more easily and to take on outwork; by

⁸⁰ The Warwickshire Photographic Survey began as the project of group of Victorian, predominantly male, amateur photographers in which they sought to objectively document the county before and as they perceived it change through growing industrialisation. Members annually submitted photographs for accession to the Birmingham library and in the mid-twentieth century started to also accept photographs taken by other parties, like newspapers, but that featured aspects of Warwickshire life. As such, the later photographs feature more people, places of work and urban street scenes than the earlier photographs, which were largely of pastoral scenes that made up much of Victorian Warwickshire.

Birmingham Industrial Workers: Photographed c.1950s, Jeweller Making Rings, Central Birmingham, c.1950s, Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Industrial Workers Photos, WPS/WK/B11/BU/7115
<<http://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBU%2f6919>>.

Photographs of Staff at Work, c.1950, Eaton & Wrighton, MS 4172/2/2/1.

⁸¹ Hackett, Hackett, and Sullivan.

⁸² Mossop.

owning their own tools, jewellers were able to set up at home whilst or after their workshops completed their war contracts.



Figure 2.11. A photograph by Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen of a jeweller of the Birmingham firm Eaton & Wrighton working at their bench with many tools, circa 1950.

Eaton & Wrighton, Photos of staff at work c.1950, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 4172/2/2/1. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen. © The Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen, all rights reserved.

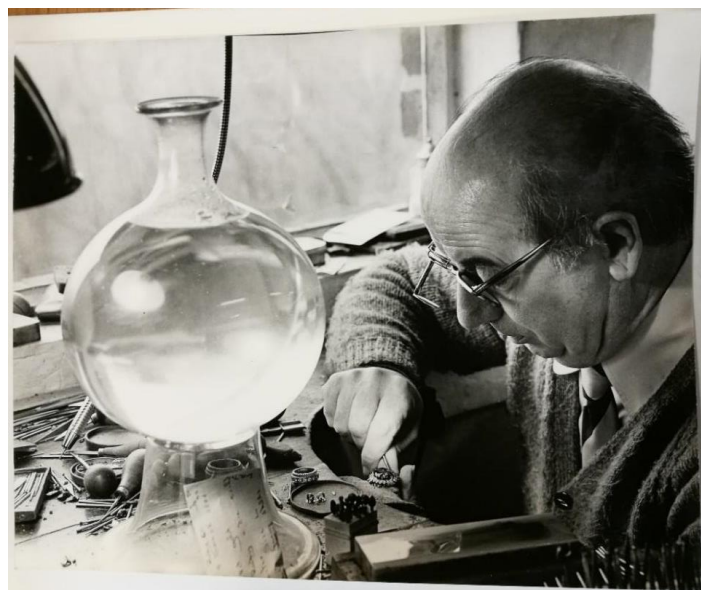


Figure 2.12. A photograph by Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen of a jeweller setting a stone in a jewel, surrounded by tools, at the firm of Eaton & Wrighton, circa 1950.

Eaton & Wrighton, Photos of staff at work c.1950, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 4172/2/2/1. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen. © The Estate of Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen, all rights reserved.

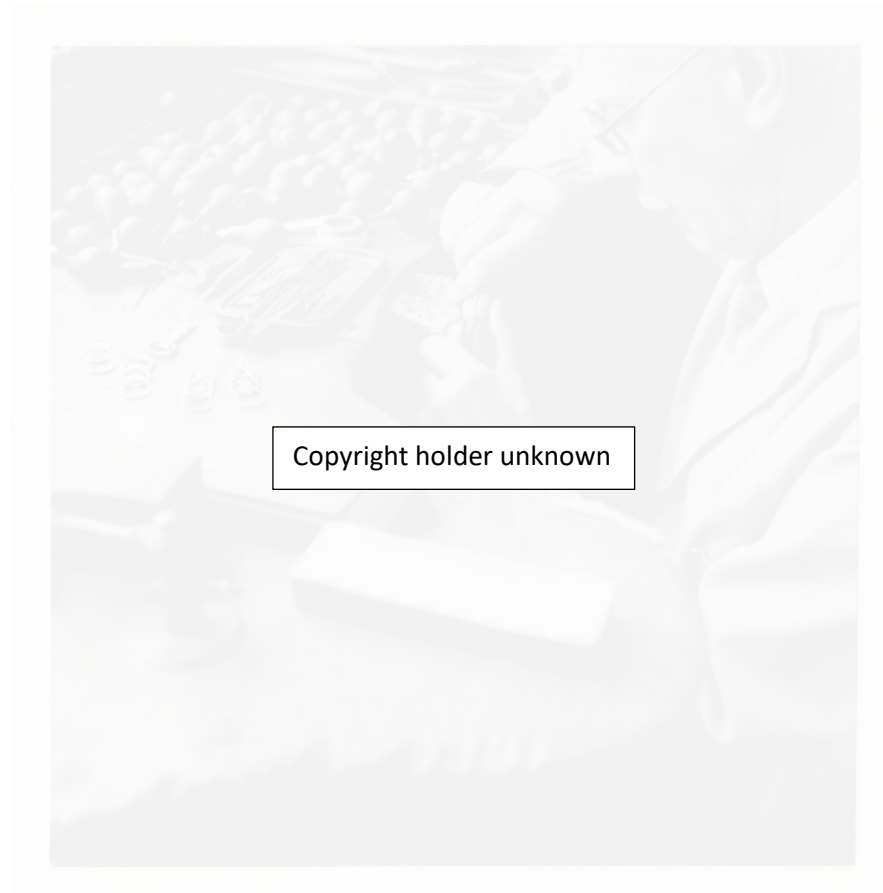


Figure 2.13. A photograph of a jeweller making rings using the many hand tools with round wooden handles on their bench, circa 1950.

Photographer unknown, 'Birmingham industrial workers. Photographed c1950s. Jeweller making rings', Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of industry and industrial workers, WPS/WK/B11/BU/7115 <<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBU%2f7115>> [accessed 7 January 2024]



Figure 2.14. A photograph of a graver tool with a worn thumb impression revealing its patterns of use. Part of a collection of engraving tools donated by a jeweller from Erdington, Birmingham, now housed at the Birmingham Museum Collections Centre.

Author's own photo, 2021. Jeweller's engraving tool, part of a set, Science & Industry Collection, Birmingham Museum Collections Centre, 1969.S.2311.30



Figure 2.15. A photograph of a jeweller's burnishing tool that has a worn, curved space for a finger to rest, which indicates how its owner held it. Donated by F C Davis to the city's Science & Industry Collection, housed at the Birmingham Museum Collections Centre.

Author's own photo, 2021. Set of 11 Burnishing tools, Science & Industry Collection, Birmingham Museum Collections Centre, 1963.S.1765.1-11



Figure 2.16. A photograph of two of Cornelius Sullivan's flat-hammering mallets, showing etched ownership symbols on their handles.

Author's own photo, 2022. Cornelius Sullivan, personal collection.

Independent jewellers could, therefore, slip more easily through the heavy restrictions by using the trade's established patterns of tool ownership. As *The British Jeweller* editor Leese wrote in an article entitled 'The Black Market, The Budget And The Crisis' in April 1947, jewellers' predominant use of hand tools, as opposed to larger machinery (in size, cost and energy use), allowed them to engage with the black market.

This [illegal/underhand] trade is largely in gold and diamond jewellery, because it offers the greatest rewards, can be manufactured without much apparatus and is not bulky enough to be conspicuous. Skilled men are continually leaving their employers to work independently in their own homes and reap this harvest.⁸³

Though Leese made a direct link between the inconspicuousness of hand tools and jewellers' engagement with the black market, it was also the trade's tradition of tool ownership that encouraged and enabled the jewellers to take these portable tools home and work discreetly on other jobs.

If a jeweller established a new workshop in this period and required machine tools, the Government provided a stream of machinery advertised straight to them. In its May, July and August 1947's editions, *The British Jeweller* published adverts 'Issued by the Ministry of Supply' offering 'More than 1,500 different types' of 'Government Surplus machine tools available NOW at attractive prices' from disposal centres, open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm, one of which was located on Great Charles Street at the southern boundary of the Jewellery Quarter.⁸⁴ These tools were left over from wartime manufacturing contracts at the government's shadow factories. Targeting the jewellers suggested that the tools available were suitable for jewellery manufacturing, though likely medium to heavy manufacturing. The availability of additional tooling, combined with traditions of hand tool ownership, made setting up your own workshop during this period achievable.

Hand tools also required no additional energy to operate. During the fuel shortages of the late 1940s and early 1950s, this characteristic gave independent jewellers working from home or small workshops an advantage in continuing production over their peers who worked in larger workshops and factories. Across Birmingham, homes and places of work ran low on coal supplies and the city's MPs repeatedly raised the issue in Parliament; Brenda Bullock recalled pushing a pram to a fuel depot in search of coal, an action replicated in 1951 by the crowd queuing for coke at Windsor Street Gas Works, a few streets east of the Jewellery Quarter, in the photograph shown in figure 2.17.⁸⁵ The

⁸³ W H Leese, 'The Black Market, The Budget And The Crisis', *The British Jeweller*, April 1947, 49–50 (p. 49).

⁸⁴ Ministry of Supply, 'Machine Tools Available Now! More than 1,500 Different Types', *The British Jeweller*, May 1947.

⁸⁵ The Labour MP for Ladywood, including Hockley, Victor Yates addressed his constituents' lack of coal in debates on 20 November 1950, 19 February 1951, 5 March 1951, 19 March 1951 and 14 July 1952.

shortages and harsh winter of 1946-7 particularly hit larger manufacturers in the Quarter, who were faced with the effort of again arguing for the essential nature of their business, but to little avail as a city-wide energy rationing scheme ran through 1947. In October 1947's edition of *The British Jeweller*, Leese outlined the current arrangements under which Wednesday was a 'powerless' day in the Jewellery Quarter, as each area of Birmingham took it in turns to switch off their largest energy-consuming activities; he highlighted metal finishers (undertaking plating work) as 'likely to be most affected, as the loss of heat in mid-week will be a severe handicap' because reheating the polishing vats twice in one week – on Monday and Thursday – took time and energy that reduced profits.⁸⁶ Though larger firms' breaches of this powerless day were more obvious, Leese added that '[m]any of the smaller jewellery firms will not be greatly inconvenienced by the scheme' anyway because they required so little electricity.⁸⁷ Home or small workshop manufacturing, whether for the black market or not, was easier for jewellers to continue around the impact of the shortages.

Hansard.

Bullock, pp. 14–15.

⁸⁶ W H Leese, 'Wednesday A "Powerless" Day In Birmingham Jewellery Quarter', *The British Jeweller*, October 1947, p. 58.

⁸⁷ Leese, 'Wednesday A "Powerless" Day In Birmingham Jewellery Quarter'.



Figure 2.17. A photograph of people queuing for coke along the street outside Windsor Street Gas Works, Birmingham, on 2 February 1951 during the fuel shortage.

Photographer unknown, 'Queue for coke at Windsor Street Gas Works, Birmingham. Photographed on 2 February 1951 during fuel shortage', Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs at the End of Rationing, WPS/WK/B11/BA/5599

<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBA%2f5599> [accessed 7 January 2024]

The home-workshop was not a new concept in the trade. As chapter one introduced, many of the Quarter's workshops occupied formerly residential buildings, and John Cattell, joint lead of the English Heritage architectural survey of the Jewellery Quarter, stressed the enduring close proximity of the

domestic and industrial in Hockley.⁸⁸ However, in this period of restrictions the home-workshop took on a level of privacy and discretion separate from the architectural and social layout of the workshop. Leese highlighted the benefit of privacy in his April 1947 opinion piece on the effects of Purchase Tax on the black market as he characterised 'established firms' as being 'continually victimised to the advantage of innumerable little mushroom businesses which operate illegally from private houses'.⁸⁹ His reference to private houses left the impression that the leaders of these illegal businesses were isolated from the craftspeople of the workshops of the Quarter and the readers of *The British Jeweller*; yet many jobbing jewellers registered using home addresses when they became members of the BJA and could have been working from them. This sense of private business aligns with the jewellers' trait of acting with discretion. Whilst Cattell proposed that Birmingham's jewellers in the nineteenth century weathered economic downturn because they did not require such machinery as would tie up large amounts of capital, in the mid-twentieth century their combination of discretion, the home-workshop with their collection of hand tools, and tacit knowledge allowed members of the trade to weather the restrictions by engaging with the black market.⁹⁰

Alongside their manipulation of patterns of tool and space ownership, the jewellers also relied on the trade's established relationship with cash to facilitate their business dealings in the 1940s and 1950s. The 'by-the-book' system of credit and invoicing legitimised sole-traders and enterprises in the eyes of the state. In contrast, working 'off the book', through unrecorded cash transactions, legitimised them in the eyes of their colleagues because it required an element of risk and was recognition of trust. Firms were not required to pay Purchase Tax on their first £500 of their total value of sold goods, an upper limit that was designed to protect smaller businesses, so for firms with production levels that hovered around this £500 limit, dealing in cash was a convenient loophole to ensure that profit was not consumed by paying Purchase Tax. Additionally, as Leese drew attention to in his article on the black market, 'since their transactions are for cash and are not recorded, they do not pay income tax either'.⁹¹ Paul Podolsky also described how 'smaller workshops of one or two craftsmen produced illicit jewellery with no record and sold it for cash'.⁹² Cash dealings were not limited to small businesses, but it was understandably harder for larger firms with designated administrative and financial teams and carefully maintained stock inventories to keep these deals within trusted circles. Working with cash was part of the discretion individuals jewellers and small businesses could maintain; cash deals for small jobs blurred the lines of respect and reputation within the trade – a job

⁸⁸ Cattell, p. 150.

⁸⁹ Leese, 'The Black Market, The Budget And The Crisis', p. 49.

⁹⁰ Cattell, p. 159.

⁹¹ Leese, 'The Black Market, The Budget And The Crisis', p. 49.

⁹² Podolsky, 'Letter from Paul Podolsky to Georgina Izzard: Comments on Dissertation 13.12.17'.

could be described as a 'personal job' if questioned by peers – and these deals reinforced again the notion of the grey market of the 1940s and 1950s. Cash was therefore an accepted, and sometimes encouraged, loophole to pursue for personal and professional gains and contributed to community building within the Jewellery Quarter.

By controlling the combination of workspace, knowledge and discretion, black-market jewellers were flexible and innovative. Governance scholar Jonathan Zeitlin pursued the notion of flexibility in relation to industrial districts and compared his definition of an industrial district to Victorian economist Alfred Marshall's Marshallian Agglomeration Economies (MAE), as introduced in the literature review of this thesis. Zeitlin argued for economically stagnant or declining districts to still be considered an industrial district, a point that he believed Marshall's MAE did not allow for as the concept prioritised districts that were 'innovative, flexible, consensual or otherwise successful'; however, in arguing such, Zeitlin continued to group innovation and flexibility with economic success.⁹³ His theories of flexibility concentrated on changes to production through machinery; whereas firms in the Jewellery Quarter relied on a buffer of labour through the outworking system. These two routes still prioritised economic success, whilst individuals in the trade balanced their own ideas of success by working through loopholes to continue in their trade. They operated with both technological and social flexibility and innovation – whether working with different finenesses of gold and hand tools at home or accepting cash – to navigate the trade's overall economic decline.

Reputation

Off-the-book deals and exploited loopholes were not hidden amongst the trade; Paul's and Dennis's testimonies both conveyed that this way of working was publicly secretive, carried out on street corners and in pubs. Reputation was important in such a connected trade. Whilst BJA members and its executive tried to implement a trade-wide Code of Fair Trading and the Assay Office punished offending manufacturers with the issuing of public apology notices, the real markers of reputation were the names peers and colleagues gave each other. This section looks to the trade's employment of these social tools in its attempts to build trust and cooperation.

The trade leaders of the BJA considered the war's disruption of their trade as a point of reset for the behaviour and reputation of its members. In the autumn of 1943, the BJA started preparations for a Code of Fair Trading.⁹⁴ In a meeting point titled 'Post-war distribution of the wares of this industry', Mr Frank Burnett posed to the Manufacturers of Fancy Jewellery and the four chairs of the

⁹³ Zeitlin, p. 100.

⁹⁴ The Code was first mentioned in the 'President's Letter', *The British Jeweller*, October 1943, p. 8.

Wholesalers area sections that they should ‘strive for a clean atmosphere’, ‘bearing in mind the elimination of past evils’.⁹⁵ This plan echoed the formation of the Association in the late nineteenth century, which economic historian Francesca Carnevali posited was designed to counteract ‘commercial fraud or reckless trading’ and ‘dishonest and nefarious dealing’ amongst ‘jewellers, bullion dealers and even publicans’.⁹⁶ The proposed Code of Fair Trading created a list of standard trade descriptions for goods and their advertisements; a list of price margins for particular jobs carried out by manufacturers and by the jobbing jewellers; and settlement terms limiting cash discount to 2.5 per cent for settling accounts in the first month following delivery of the work.⁹⁷ In its initial outline of the Code in January 1944, the Association specified that members would be invited to sign an agreement promising their compliance with the Code, their names then entering a ‘reference book of fair traders’. The Wholesale Jewellers Trade Section called for an additional ‘stop list’ of wholesalers that either chose not to sign the Code or who broke its agreement.⁹⁸ Similar responses filled the Letters pages of *The British Jeweller*. S Greenough agreed that the problem was the people that did not engage with the Code:

The trouble with all these grand efforts such as the Code, is that the people who want such things are the people who “play fair” in their business transactions.[...] If there are people who need this type of restraint – (and there are some!) and they do not ‘join up’ – a black list should be available, and members should **not** deal with them whatever the inducements– but again, that’s probably asking too much of human nature.⁹⁹

Greenough’s call for a ‘blacklist’ of colleagues that did not play fairly would have punished those trade members that had chosen not to engage with the Association. The effect of these additional lists would have been to further divide the trade between those individuals that were BJSA members and those who were not, keeping networks largely unchanged but denoting one side as legitimate and the

⁹⁵ Birmingham Jewellers’ and Silversmiths’ Association, ‘Wholesale Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Meeting of Manufacturers of Fancy Jewellery Etc. to Meet the Four Chairmen of the Wholesalers Area Sections, 3 July 1944’, 1944, p. 6, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/191.

⁹⁶ Francesca Carnevali, “‘Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers’”: Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham’, *The Economic History Review*, 57.3 (2004), 533–50 (p. 542, 546).

⁹⁷ ‘President’s Letter’.

⁹⁸ Birmingham Jewellers’ and Silversmiths’ Association, ‘B.J.A. Code of Fair Trading’, *The British Jeweller*, January 1944, 13–15 (p. 13); Birmingham Jewellers’ and Silversmiths’ Association, ‘Wholesale Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Meeting 31 July 1944’, 1944, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/191.

⁹⁹ S Greenough, ‘Fair Trading’, *The British Jeweller*, January 1945, 41.

other as illegitimate. Despite criticism, the BJA published the 'Code of Trading' in January 1946, but the mention of fairness had disappeared.¹⁰⁰

The Code lacked wider trade backing because established systems of confronting poor behaviour rendered a new system unnecessary. When in conversation with Linda and Tony Hackett, silversmith Cornelius Sullivan spoke of the practice of late payment that the Code wanted to counteract.

Another thing you get, that happens in all trades, like the jewellery trade, you get people who go round, or deliberately pay as late as possible. [...] So, what you'd do, you'd say, 'do you know so and so?' 'Yep'. 'He's done it to me,' so he'd say, 'he's doing work for me at the moment. He's done that to me in the past'. So, you'd say, 'why don't we agree, when he catches up to you and pays you, when he comes to you and say "I'm not going to do this order until you pay me what you owe me. When you pay me what you owe me", I'll say, "right, clear off, I'm not giving you no more work."' He then goes back to the previous guy: 'clear off, I'm not giving more work to you.' So, you had this sort of network.¹⁰¹

The network Cornelius outlined proved that the Code was unnecessary and why it was met with such disdain: trade members already had their own ways of dealing with repeat offenders. Cornelius's story revealed the importance of reputation and how easily it could spread amongst the trade.

Trade members were quick to popularise terms to describe the reputations of others. Turner published his 'Rogues Gallery' of thieves in the Jewellery Quarter, and Dennis Owens referred to the 'very strange' 'Runyonesque characters' that he believed Purchase Tax had brought into the trade through its popularising of the second-hand market.¹⁰² By 'Runyonesque', Dennis alluded to the characters of writer Alfred Damon Runyon that were based on Prohibition-era Brooklyn or Midtown Manhattan gamblers and gangsters, and so characterised these Runyonesque jewellers as willing to take a risk. Leese also alluded to the believed risk-taking nature of accused black-market dealers that could work around highly inflated gold prices when he referred to them as 'speculative spivs' in contrast to 'legitimate business'.¹⁰³ Mark Roodhouse described the 'spiv' as 'young working-class men in smart suits' that represented the retail end of criminal networks; he argued that they had become so set upon by the police that the spiv became the 'working class anti-hero' in the face of ongoing restrictions that lacked public confidence and support in the years after the war.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, a decade later, the spiv character had become a lovable source of amusement for getting themselves into

¹⁰⁰ 'Code of Trading', *The British Jeweller*, June 1946, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ Hackett, Hackett, and Sullivan.

¹⁰² Turner, 'Rogues' Gallery'; Owens.

¹⁰³ W H Leese, 'The Trade and the Crisis', *The British Jeweller*, October 1947, 49–51 (p. 50).

¹⁰⁴ Roodhouse, p. 110, 158 and 194.

scrapes.¹⁰⁵ Whilst the warmth later shown to the ‘spiv’ was an indicator of the public’s sense of a reasonable grey market, some jewellers were not afraid to call out in more extreme terms the unfairness they perceived. Gerald J Scott, of wholesalers Adolph Scott Ltd on Great Hampton Street, bemoaned the ‘parasites’ that were the new wholesalers that distributed goods from ‘less reputable’ manufacturers through ‘all sorts of methods from the black market through the dark grey to the dirty white’.¹⁰⁶ Gerald recognised the multiple actors that engaged with these ‘parasites’ and so acknowledged the trust-based connections that black-market trade rested upon. The range of descriptions applied to members of the trade reflected how their peers ranked the severity of their actions.

In the same way, trade members categorised themselves as reputable and respectable: ‘Those of us who were respectable, carried on being respectable’, as Paul Podolsky put it, though he did not specify where he drew the line of being ‘respectable’.¹⁰⁷ Like ‘discretion’, ‘conviction’ is a homonym with a useful dual meaning: it means both being found guilty of a crime or wrongdoing, and a strong belief in the route an individual pursues. Both meanings were important in the development of the trade as it was built on reputation that stemmed from both types of conviction. Carnevali wrote of the trade’s difficulty of convicting nineteenth-century receivers of stolen property, and so argued that the lack of convictions ‘shows the failure of any invisible, social mechanism in eliminating dishonest behaviour, despite the existence of all those factors that should have encouraged embeddedness, such as proximity and the regular repetition of transactions’.¹⁰⁸ Whilst Carnevali looked to the trade’s proximity as a way to prevent dishonest behaviour, in the twentieth century it was this proximity, trust and discretion that enabled the black market. When officials imposed changes so frequently, jewellers relied on their conviction that they were not denying anyone else their fair share.

Jewellers that were caught explicitly rule breaking, as opposed to working through loopholes, faced conviction. Paul recalled Customs and Excise officials being particularly strict about the enforcement of Purchase Tax, which was ‘very tight and not a sympathetic tax at all [...] if you didn’t pay up, you were prosecuted, simple as that’.¹⁰⁹ It may not have been a coincidence that the Birmingham City Police Force C division was based in Kenyon Street, in the middle of the Jewellery Quarter, until the

¹⁰⁵ David Hughes, ‘The Spivs’, in *Age of Austerity 1945-51*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp. 86–105.

¹⁰⁶ Gerald J Scott, ‘Expensive Middle-Men’, *The British Jeweller*, August 1947, pp. 74–75 (p. 75).

¹⁰⁷ Podolsky, ‘Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second’.

¹⁰⁸ Carnevali, ‘“Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers”’: Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham’, p. 546.

¹⁰⁹ Podolsky, ‘Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second’.

1970s.¹¹⁰ For offences that broke hallmarking laws, jewellers' convictions forced them to make a public apology that was printed in newspapers and trade journals including *The British Jeweller*. These notices generally took the same form each time of a boxed list of illegal activities with a bold title reading 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham' and finished with the line 'And I hereby consent to your publishing this Apology in such newspapers or other periodicals as you think fit', and so were easily spotted. Published in May 1944, the Wolverhampton firm of David B Miller apologised for importing unhallmarked 22-carat rings from Dublin; in November 1945, Sydney G Hunt, a Birmingham-based dealer and pawnbroker apologised for selling rings as 22-carat gold that were neither hallmarked nor actually of 22-carat gold; and in September 1947, J Harris of the Silver and Goldware Company Limited, based in Manchester, apologised for selling rings hallmarked in Dublin but not in the UK, stamped but unhallmarked '18c'- and '22ct'- rings, a '15c'-stamped ring that was of a standard less than 15 carats, and unhallmarked silver cigarette cases.¹¹¹ These apology notices were all from retailers, as having these illegitimate wares in their shops left them open to more scrutiny than manufacturing jewellers, but they gave an insight to the work manufacturing jewellers carried out for their clients. For example, William A Muir's apology notice dated May 1949 detailed that he was caught attempting to sell 11 illegitimate wedding rings: one with no mark, seven marked but with no British hallmark, one with a London hallmark but 'with the makers mark obliterated by filling with solder', and two with 'transposed marks'; 'several of these rings were below the advertised quality'.¹¹² Removing hallmarks from other gold items and transposing them onto new rings took effort and skill. These apology notices were tools additional to traditional law enforcement convictions; they relied on embarrassment to damage reputation and thereby deter others from committing similar offences. *The British Jeweller* editorial team also included articles about cases where the police had made an example of the defendant; H E Tremlett, for instance, was handed a heavy sentence of 'three months' hard labour' for trying to sell signet rings made of base metal but stamped '18 ct'.¹¹³ Given the embedded trust within the network of manufacturers, dealers and retailers, the notices were unnecessary as trade members already knew who to turn to for certain work, whether that work was in line with the law or not.

¹¹⁰ Ted Rudge and John Houghton, *Around Hockley: Through Time* (Chalford: Amberley Publishing Plc, 2010), p. 17.

¹¹¹ David B Miller, 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham', *The British Jeweller*, May 1944, p. 21; Sydney G Hunt, 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham', *The British Jeweller*, November 1945, p. 31; J Harris, 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham', *The British Jeweller*, September 1947, p. 73.

¹¹² William A Muir, 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham', *The British Jeweller*, July 1949, p. 88.

¹¹³ Gerald Carr, 'In Town This Month', *The British Jeweller*, June 1945, pp. 37–38.

Conviction of trade offenders should have helped build trust in the judicial system and its management of a fair trade, but jewellers knew that much illegal work went unprosecuted. As a result, they built trust in their own judgements, each other and the traditional workings of the trade. Carnevali recognised the important role of trust in the trade during the formation of the Association in the late-nineteenth century, referring to trust as a 'valuable asset which provided access to information and reduced transaction costs' that was 'engineered by entrepreneurial individuals'.¹¹⁴ However, Carnevali argued that trust was not enough to hold the jewellery trade in Birmingham together because people still subverted this trust when they deceived clients; instead, she posited that it was the Association's governance that held the trade together because it acted as an 'interface between the firms and the market'.¹¹⁵ Carnevali's assessment of the nineteenth-century trade does not hold for the mid twentieth-century trade. As I established in the first chapter, there was a disconnect between the Association and all the individual workers in the trade, and even between it and its members at some points. In this time of increased regulatory change, individuals continued the trade through any route, whilst the BJA could only lobby the government for rarely won concessions. Carnevali also linked trust to legitimate work, but all work required an element of trust. Leese stated the obvious about this relationship in April 1947: 'in each of these black market deals at least three people are usually involved: the outworker who makes the jewellery, the wholesaler he supplies, and the retailer who finally sells it to the public.'¹¹⁶ Though Leese intended to highlight the embeddedness of black-market deals in the trade structure, he proved that they were no different from any other kind of deal. Carnevali referred to this system as trade members exercising 'strategic choice' to cooperate, and Paul Podolosky outlined the choice of whether to report on trade partners' actions.¹¹⁷

[T]hose of us who were more concerned with the trade's good name, we were in a dilemma; we knew many of the people who were doing this sort of thing, we didn't want to start a clean-up campaign because we had enough problems already without this sort of thing going on. [...] So, in the end, of course, we... to a certain extent, we looked the other way.¹¹⁸

Paul's decision to look the other way from illicit dealings captures the dual sense of discretion: he had the choice whether to reveal these actions, and he decided to be discreet and not disclose what he knew. His concern was less for individuals' reputation, but more for the trade's reputation and his own

¹¹⁴ Carnevali, "Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers": Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham', p. 543.

¹¹⁵ Carnevali, "Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers": Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham', p. 548.

¹¹⁶ Leese, 'The Black Market, The Budget And The Crisis', p. 49.

¹¹⁷ Carnevali, "Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers": Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham', p. 533.

¹¹⁸ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second'.

time. The blurred lines between white, grey and black dealings meant it was easier for firms like that of Paul's father to cooperate than report someone and navigate the minefield of moral and legal unknowns. The black market existed because of this network of actors willing to trust each other and cooperate, whether that meant engaging in deals or turning a blind eye to them. Discretion was the 'strategic choice' Carnevali described.

Conclusion

In an article about recruiting youth and improving working conditions, Reverend R S O Stevens the vicar of St Paul's, known as the Jeweller's church, summed up well the importance and constant invocation of reputation and responsibility amongst the trade.

You do so much trading amongst yourselves because of the sub-divisions of the trade, that by the time an article reaches the customer, several different firms have co-operated in its manufacture. Because of this, each firm depends to some extent on the good faith and prestige of every other. You have therefore, a great responsibility to each other.¹¹⁹

Stevens' reference to jewellers' responsibility to protect each other's prestige also encapsulated the responsibility of this research project to present a fair characterisation of the trade. As a result, this chapter has sensitively questioned the decisions jewellers took to navigate the restrictions of the 1940s and 1950s and how their use of discretion impacted their sense of identity. Rules and uncertainty about rules drove manufacturers to work with discretion: they chose jobs carefully and revealed their work to select trade partners.

This chapter began by introducing the changes to laws that affected metalwork. To prioritise jewellers' experiences of these changes, this first section followed different metals and different alloys of gold. A material approach to the Limitation of Supplies Order, the export orders and the Utility Scheme highlighted that jewellers identified themselves and their work in relation to the metals they worked with; disruption of this work pushed jewellers to decide whether to work through loopholes to continue with the production they knew, or to adapt. The public's recognition of a hierarchy of materials and finenesses of gold added pressure to jewellers' choices, as demand for restricted jewellery increased.

Black-market deals were just one route to survive the trade and navigating the changing regulations and restrictions left many jewellers balanced on the line between legitimate and illegitimate work. The dichotomy of legitimacy and illegitimacy enforced by the judicial system did not map onto the

¹¹⁹ Rev. R S O Stevens, 'The Church and the Trade', *The British Jeweller*, June 1946, 9–10 (p. 10).

daily decisions trade members made about which jobs to take on and who to work with. They adapted to the restrictions on metals, labour and production totals, some pursuing 'legitimate' deals, some working through loopholes, some evading rules; manufacturing and trading formed a spectrum rather than a dichotomy. Jewellers used the established trade structure to work with the tools they knew and the people they trusted. They relied on this structure to spread news of their reputation; they placed their conviction in this system over the judicial system. Through the technologies of tacit knowledge and trust, jewellers established a white-to-grey-to-black market to sustain their jobs and their occupational identity. Despite the imposition of change in the trade, ways of working changed very little. Looking for the loopholes, therefore, did not dramatise the situation, but gave texture to the working lives of the people in the trade.

Going Inside

Building an appreciation of the risk, repetition and skill inherent in the industrial-craft processes of jewellery factories

Whilst the smaller businesses of Birmingham's jewellery trade capitalised on their enduring methods of tool, material and space use to work through legal and social loopholes, larger firms within the trade maintained their production through established manufacturing processes. Workers in larger 'factories' – though they were still small in comparison to factories in other industries – undertook presswork, stamping and assembly to make much of the fashion jewellery for sale in Britain. Though many jewellers specialised in particular manufacturing processes, the previous two chapters have shown that in times of volatility members of the trade were accustomed to moving between the self-employed outworking system and employment, and vice versa. To 'go back inside', or 'indoors', is a trade term for leaving self-employment and taking on employed work again. Jeweller Bernard Hussey demonstrated the term when he referred to his former employer Perks Pearce & Thompson's undertaking of hollow work, which was a specialised skill, through a mix of both types of employment: 'as well as having the people inside, they used to farm what they called the easy stuff out, like making the bows and things like that'.¹ Similarly, in their job adverts in *The Birmingham Mail*, firms appealed for 'in or outwork'; the firm of Smith, Ewen & Stylic posted 'JEWELLER'S Engraver Wanted, general work, not heraldic; inside or outwork.'² This chapter focuses on the day-to-day work of jewellers working 'inside' to argue for the importance of repetition in the accrual of tacit knowledge and skill.

The employed workforce contributed the majority of the industry's output, both in numbers and in production power, and nearly all of the production of popular and fashion jewellery. As the Jewellery and Silverware Working Party outlined in its 1946 report, introduced in the first chapter of this thesis, the 'larger' firms of the industry dominated employment. Of the 300 firms the party counted in its assessment of the Birmingham trade, it described one third (109 firms) of this total number as 'imitation jewellery' producers that employed four fifths (4,000-5,000 people) of the total number of employed people in the trade.³ Existing trade histories have predominantly investigated the work of fine jewellery workshops, with little attention given to the work of these larger workshops and factories in the Jewellery Quarter, and no attention to the occupational experiences of the employees in these larger businesses. This lack likely stemmed from a combination of factors that influenced how

¹ Hussey.

² 'JEWELLER'S Engraver Wanted, general work, not heraldic; inside or outwork. - Smith, Ewen, Stylic, 42, Frederick St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 18 April 1940, p. 3.

³ Board of Trade, p. 9.

this industrial knowledge has been valued, including the relatively low financial value of the metals and gemstones used in larger workshops; the batch-to-mass production scale the workshops manufactured to, and a corresponding belief that the design of fashion jewellery was less important because it was not bespoke; and the belief that the repetitive work required in this production was less interesting or deserving of particular focus. Graham Hughes, the Goldsmiths' Company Art Director, wrote contemporaneously about fashion jewellery's distraction to 'proper' design in *Modern Jewelry: An International Survey, 1890-1963*.

Costume and fashion jewelry - mass-produced work of no intrinsic value - I have excluded. It is too ephemeral, too cheap, too slick. Often pretty but seldom serious, it is intended to be worn and discarded, not worn and treasured; it seldom bears close study because economic requirements make it shoddy. True, it has led vast numbers of people to wear jewels who would otherwise go unadorned: stamped out by the latest machinery, anodised or vacuum plated by the latest chemical process, costume jewelry is a huge communal asset. But as yet it's not a leading art force.⁴

Hughes alluded to the benefits of popular jewellery but scrutinised its manufacturing standards and designs, which reinforced the hierarchical divide between 'designed' high and art jewellery and the repetitive fine and fashion jewellery. His approach contributed to the establishment of the Design and Research Centre at Goldsmiths' Hall and the passing of the Jewellery and Silverware Development Council Order 1948 by parliament, created to 'reintroduce' design to the trade.⁵ Later histories of the trade focused on these two institutions, neither of which took off, rather than the jewellers engaged in production. Hughes recognised the huge production value popular jewellery carried for the British jewellery industry, particularly in Birmingham, but his assessment of its creations as discardable

⁴ Graham Hughes, *Modern Jewelry: An International Survey, 1890-1963* (London: Studio Books London, 1963), p. 5.

⁵ On the recommendation of the Jewellery and Silverware Working Party, parliament approved the Board of Trade's creation of the Jewellery and Silverware Development Council, to be in operation from 1 January 1949, following the earlier Furniture Industry Development Council Order. The jewellery and silverware Order allowed for the Council to receive £25,000 every year from the industry – drawn straight from manufacturers – to fund its operational costs. Like the Working Party and many other trade organisations, the same roster of gentlemen took up the 12 member positions: one each to represent the 'four main sections of the industry' – fine jewellery employers, imitation jewellery employers, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' employers, and electro-plate manufacturers; four to represent the interests of the workers – two of whom led trade associations; 3 independent, though two of them worked in the trade; and one with specialist knowledge of the marketing and distribution of jewellery.

'Parliament Approves Draft Order For The Trade's Development Council', *The British Jeweller*, January 1949, 68–71.

Graham Hughes, *Modern Jewelry: An International Survey, 1890-1963*; George Ravensworth Hughes, *The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths as Patrons of Their Craft, 1919-53* (London: The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, 1965).

undermined the skill of the stampers, pressworkers and toolmakers that built up skilled careers in manufacturing fashion jewellery.

In this chapter, I contest the inference that repetitive work of low economic value resulted in histories of low interest. The repetition involved in mechanised and mass production contributes to the accrual of tacit knowledge, just as in craft production, and reinforces the importance of projects about industrial craft. Five bundles of printed injury compensation cards from 1942 to 1946 in the BJA archive revealed the power of repetition and tacit knowledge: when repetition was not respected, accidents occurred in the workplace and the 'normal' working order of the workshop was disturbed.⁶ This chapter works with these cards on two levels: as insight to the stories of injured individuals that revealed the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of making practices, and as discrete instances that together highlighted patterns amongst the trade community. Working with these cards required discretion because interpreting the personal information needed a sensitivity and respect, plus trade knowledge to contextualise these stories and recognise extreme cases. Following an introduction to the cards and the insurance scheme they supported, this chapter considers how workers and business leaders differently valued the risk of work. Different assessments of risk led to different valuations of workers' experience and skill. The cards particularly emphasised the industry's pressworkers, a traditionally female role, so discussion considers the intersection of gender, experience, risk and value. The repetitive nature of presswork was emphasised when things went 'wrong' in the workshop, and so the accident cards also gave insight to the trade's expectations and understandings for 'normal' practice. Individual cases are supplemented with comparisons and references from interviews, oral histories, autobiographies, trade adverts and analysis of tools and equipment. This chapter considers how workers valued their skill and how this value was part of their occupational identity.

Risk and the Employees' Accident Cards

The five bundles in the BJA archive contain 1,217 cards, each detailing an accident endured by an employee of a light metalwork firm that had paid into the BJA's specialist insurance scheme. Figure 3.1 is a photograph of the front of Mrs Minnie Harrison's employee accident card and the reverse of Edna Abbott's card; using the printed headings as a guide, a member of clerical staff recorded Minnie's employer and home address; the date and time of her accident; the nature and cause of the accident, her age and role at the time as well as her average weekly pay; how long she was away from work; and how much she received in compensation based on her average weekly wage. The cards'

⁶ 'Employee Accident Cards'.

uniformity made them an important source for identifying patterns occurring within the trade; whilst the personal details recorded on them provided insight to the lives of a generation of craftspeople. This large survey of the workforce sheds light on the division of roles and their links to hierarchies of skill and pay, as well as the effect of key identity characteristics, like gender and age. It also prompted consideration of concepts of risk in the trade and the social and financial value of tacit knowledge.

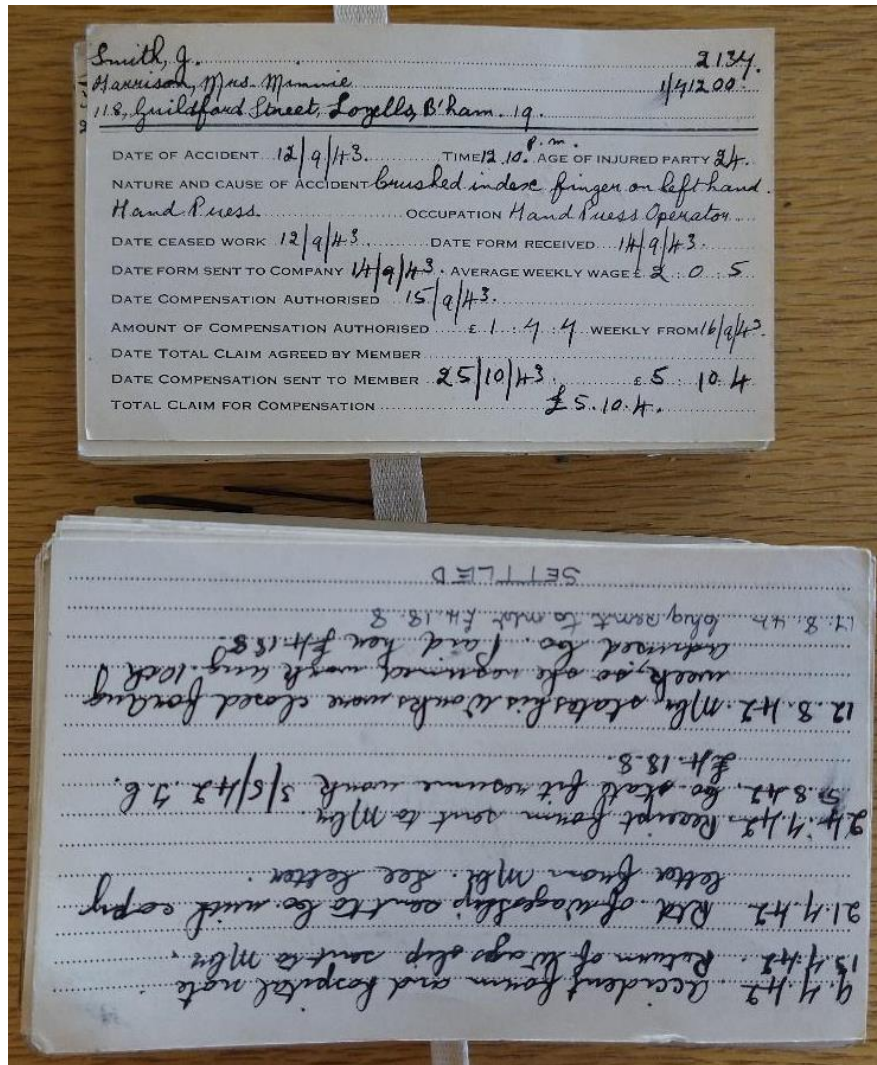


Figure 3.1. A photograph of one of the bundles of accident cards divided to show the front of a 1943 accident card for Mrs Minnie Harrison and the reverse of the 1943 accident card for Edna Abbott.

British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601

Histories of workplace accidents are part of a growing field of cross-disciplinary occupational health studies in the medical humanities that straddle history, politics, medicine, law and sociology. John

Witt, a professor of law, argued in his 2011 review of Jamie L Bronstein's *Caught in the Machinery: Workplace Accidents and Injured Workers in Nineteenth-Century Britain* that the routinisation of accidents has established a new vocabulary over the last century for understanding relations between employers, employees and the state and what each party was entitled to.⁷ The rise of the social state had prompted an increased stress on public responsibility through the 1920s; within the workshop, the introduction of compensation acts like the Workmen's Compensation Act forced employers and employees to jointly consider their related risks and responsibilities.⁸ Co-founder of the Risk, Policy and Law Research Group at Sheffield's Centre for Medical Humanities Julia Moses contended in her recent book on European workplace accidents and social state building that, through their introduction, these new compensation laws confirmed that some occupations had an inherent risk that employees could not always be aware of and did not consent to; occupational accidents then, as Moses put it, 'were not the result of individual misfortunes, incompetence or negligence: they resulted from foreseeable risks'.⁹ Metalwork carries many foreseeable risks; amongst the accident cards, patterns of injuries in specific roles spoke to inherent risks involved in particular manufacturing processes. This risk affected how trade members perceived themselves and others that worked in those roles.

Concepts of risk may not have been the same across the industry, and particularly between genders. Occupational health historian Barbara Harrison considered industrial and domestic roles in the earlier period of 1880 to 1914 and concluded that women were excluded from some roles because of a concept placed upon them that they were more susceptible to injury when undertaking 'dangerous' jobs.¹⁰ The Victorians' development of a 'sexual science' in the late nineteenth century led to an increased interrogation of differences between genders and, in turn, their appropriate capabilities; jobs considered dangerous were even more dangerous for women.¹¹ Even before the wide conscription of men into the Army in the First and Second World Wars, and the vacancies they left in the workplace, women had forged their place in the popular jewellery industry. In an introductory booklet to the Jewellery Quarter, Carl Chinn compared the industry's population in different years, with the *Birmingham Daily Post* suggesting 37,000 people worked in the jewellery and horological

⁷ John Fabian Witt, 'Review: Caught in the Machinery: Workplace Accidents and Injured Workers in Nineteenth-Century Britain by Jamie L Bronstein', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 62.2 (2011), 371–72 (p. 372).

⁸ See Julia Moses, *The First Modern Risk: Workplace Accidents and the Origins of European Social States* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 6.

⁹ Moses, p. 19.

¹⁰ Barbara Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades': Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996).

¹¹ Barbara Harrison, 'Review: Women's Bodies and Dangerous Trades in England 1880-1914 by Carolyn Malone', *American Historical Review*, 110.1 (2005), 224–25 (p. 225).

trades in 1914, of which 15,500 were women, which Chinn attributed to ‘the increased mechanisation of the industry and the growth of small factories’, like those that appear in the accident cards.¹² Though the overall population of the trade reduced by nearly half by the Second World War, women and girls retained their established place in the industry. In her review of Harrison’s *Not Only the Dangerous Trades*, health and wellbeing researcher Norma Daykin attested that many British employers dominated the occupational health rhetoric about workers’ capabilities and risks by problematising the worker and not the process.¹³ The continued influence of employers on our conception of occupational health responsibilities prompted an influx of publications about women’s representation in occupational health in the 1990s and early 2000s, in line with concurrent efforts to understand and reconstruct masculinities.¹⁴ The accident cards provide a way of assessing the prevalence of a gendered division of roles and risk and its impact on the types of injuries workers sustained.

Occupational risk is a growing area of research in histories of Birmingham’s healthcare. Jonathan Reinartz, Professor of the History of Medicine at the University of Birmingham, commented in his overview of the history of medicine in the city that existing studies focused on institutional prestige projects in medicine rather than the city’s healthcare offering.¹⁵ In this research space, he organised a conference on Midlands medicine; the regional focus was key as he contended Birmingham’s medical resources and knowledge had developed alongside its people and specific industries.¹⁶ This “‘principle of specificity’” had manifested in Birmingham’s voluntary hospitals offering one of the first pre-payment schemes for industrial workers because of their industry-related illnesses.¹⁷ At this conference, occupational health historian Anne Spurgeon reinforced the importance of place in our

¹² Carl Chinn, ‘An Industrial Hive: Birmingham’s Jewellery Quarter’, p. 13.

¹³ Norma Daykin, ‘Review: Not Only the “Dangerous Trades”: Women’s Work and Health in Britain 1880-1914 by Barbara Harrison’, *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 20.2 (1998), 259–61.

¹⁴ For examples of publications from occupational health theorists in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, see: *Women’s Health at Work*, ed. by Åsa Kilbom, Karen Messing, and Carina Bildt Thorbjörnsson (Solna: Arbetslivsinstitutet - National Institute for Working Life, 1998); Victoria Robinson, ‘Review: Masculinities at Work’, *Work, Employment and Society*, 12.2 (1998), 379–81; Jamie L Bronstein, *Caught in the Machinery: Workplace Accidents and Injured Workers in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Harrison, *Not Only the ‘Dangerous Trades’: Women’s Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914*; Carolyn Malone, *Women’s Bodies and Dangerous Trades in England, 1880-1914* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Jonathan Reinartz, ‘Industry and Illness: Investing in Health and Medical Provision’, in *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 239–60.

¹⁶ Jonathan Reinartz, ‘Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950: Introduction’, in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950*, ed. by Jonathan Reinartz (Midland History Occasional Publications, 2007), pp. 1–11 (p. 3).

¹⁷ Martin Gorsky, John Mohan, and Tim Willis, ‘A “Splendid Spirit of Co-Operation”: Hospital Contributory Schemes in Birmingham Before the National Health Service’, in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950*, ed. by Jonathan Reinartz (Birmingham: Midland History Occasional Publications, 2007), pp. 167–91.

framing of industrial health by presenting how the approach of nineteenth-century needlepointers in Redditch to grinders' disease was distinct from that of fellow grinders in Sheffield.¹⁸ The Redditch needlepointers' disdain for inventions and changes to processes that could reduce the negative effects of their work suggested a fear of deskilling and the associated loss of income. Consequently, Spurgeon disputed the historiographic trend of blaming employers for slow improvements to occupational health risks.¹⁹ Spurgeon's warning is a useful reminder that jewellers may have responded unexpectedly to occupational health risks due to the insecurity of the 1940s and 1950s.

Histories of occupational health have pointed to the importance of identity in workers' assessments of occupational risk. This chapter builds on these histories by using the information in the accident cards to answer the questions of 'how did identity characteristics, including age and gender, impact the roles workers were expected to undertake and the extent to which the categorisation of workers by role was fixed?' and 'to what extent were workers aware of foreseeable risks in their work; who managed these risks and how was blame apportioned?' This research looked for patterns between roles, average pay, gender, age, type of injury and compensation amounts to consider how trade members afforded different types of value to their work and to themselves.

The Value of Accidents

Insurance companies turn to a financial assessment and valuation of risk. The cards were a clerical stage in facilitating compensation payouts to firms that were members of an insurance scheme overseen by the BJA. The scheme was designed to help member firms afford the cost of compensation when their employees suffered an accident at work. The BJA president and secretary updated members about this scheme in its Year Book for 1939, detailing that the Workmen's Compensation and Stock Insurances had been 'designed especially for the Jewellery Trade at exceptionally low rates' through the Midland Employers' Mutual Assurance Ltd for more than 20 years.²⁰ Upon an accident occurring in the workplace, members were expected to 'immediately notify the Secretary, on forms which can be had on application, of any accident, however slight, in case of any claim which might

¹⁸ Anne Spurgeon, 'Making a Point: Lung Disease Amongst Needlemakers in Nineteenth-Century Redditch', in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950*, ed. by Jonathan Reinartz (Midland History Occasional Publications, 2007), pp. 134–51.

¹⁹ Spurgeon, p. 136.

²⁰ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Annual Report 1938 and Year Book 1939* (Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1939), pp. 35–36, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/269.

Like other industries, the BJA members participating in the insurance scheme were covered against risks by The Fatal Accidents Act, 1846, The Employers' Liability Act, 1880, The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1925, and at Common Law.

subsequently arise, and must not admit liability or pay any compensation until authorised to do so'.²¹ These forms were likely the basis for the accident cards, which had printed headings to organise the desired information and have been filled in by hand by three or four members of clerical staff, judging by the different handwriting. These staff members liaised with the firms and the Midland Employers' Mutual Assurance and recorded the main points of communication on the reverse of each card.

In the years preceding the establishment of the National Health Service – written into law in 1946 and launched in July 1948 – individuals were expected to pay for their own medical treatment. Employers and trade unions recognised that some workers were unable to afford full treatment and could, as a result, miss work due to ongoing ill health, which impacted their family and its income and the employer's workflow.²² Birmingham's workers were more fortunate than others, as the city's employers had been the first to subscribe to voluntary hospitals on their workers' behalf and the city opened a separate accident hospital in 1941.²³ Nationally, the Labour party and unions lobbied for financial and medical compensation to be obligatory for workers in certain professions, particularly mining; the Workmen's Compensation Act was passed in parliament in 1923. The later amendment The Workmen's Compensation (Supplementary Allowance) Bill, 1940 increased compensation but critics railed against its inequalities, including that it made a distinction between male and female workers and that it fixed the upper age of dependent children at 15 despite whether they were in full-time education; the passed bill appears in the cards as 'W.C.(S.A.)', but only on the cards of male employees.²⁴ The real-life impact of successive amendments to this act can be seen in the 1942-46 accident cards: in the case of 46-year-old toolmaker Charles Victor King, of 60 Millfield Road, Handsworth, his strained back muscles from handling a billet (a solid bar) of steel required just longer than a month away from work at popular jeweller E J Clewley & Co to heal; his card detailed that his WC(SA) form was sent to the Company complete with the information that he had a wife and three children, dependents that raised his compensation amount to £2.15.0 weekly – one of the highest weekly payments across the cards, the typical weekly compensation being £1.15.0. Other cards that feature information about the WC(SA) form also refer to '15/- (SA)', or 15 shillings in Supplementary Allowance, and this additional amount is common across male employees.²⁵ The accident cards

²¹ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Annual Report 1938 and Year Book 1939*, p. 36.

²² UK Parliament, 'Workplace Compensation' <<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/tradeindustry/industrycommunity/case-study-so-davies-and-workplace-compensation/workplace-compensation-legislation/>> [accessed 2 October 2022].

²³ Gorsky, Mohan, and Willis; Reinartz, 'Industry and Illness: Investing in Health and Medical Provision', p. 245.

²⁴ The Bill was passed and applied retrospectively to 1924.

UK Parliament.

²⁵ See, for example, Edwin Allbutt, injured on the 1 January 1933 at flatware and electroplaters Elkington & Co: 'WC(SA) form. 6 Jan £2.5.0 a week includes 15/- S.A.' 'Employee Accident Cards'.

include injuries that occurred up to the end of 1946 (with one from 1947); whilst the insurance scheme continued beyond 1946, this end date may have marked a shift in administrative practices away from the format of these cards, or it could have aligned with a change to the scheme in relation to the passing of the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act, 1946. The new Labour government successfully campaigned for state insurance, a compulsory insurance for all employees with insurance payments made by the state, rather than by individual employers. With the NHS also voted into law in the same year, healthcare and particularly health in the workplace was revolutionised. The greater and easier access to medical care these changes ushered in likely affected the recording rate of injuries in the workplace: workers' could access medicine through their own doctors, rather than the Company doctor, without fear of treatment using all their weekly wages and their wounds were less likely to turn septic – many of the cuts and scrapes detailed in the cards initially went untreated, turned septic, and required the individuals to have more treatment and spend longer away from work.

Insurance to afford these compensation claims for medical fees, loss of earnings and loss of production time was in the interest of both employers and employees. The BJA's *Annual Reports* included the number of firms that paid into the scheme and the wages insured for each year, as well as the number of accidents and the amount paid out in compensation.²⁶ These figures, noted in table 3.1, provide useful contextual information for the index cards, especially when combined with data from the cards. The grey columns in table 3.1 denote the data published annually by the BJA; the blue columns denote the data from the accident cards; and the white columns contain calculated comparisons. From 1946, the BJA chose only to publish the wages insured rather than the number of policies taken out, but the sudden growth in insured wages in 1947 aligned with the Association's influx of members from around the country when it became a national organisation. Between 254 and 308 firms each year insured from 1939 to 1945 the combined total wages of £11,322,245 and paid an average premium of 0.28 per cent of these wages to insure their work. The scheme paid out £6,832 less compensation than it received from member payments during these years, which may have gone towards running costs and profit for the insurance company. The BJA's figures included the number of accidents per year, though it is unclear whether the figures referred to the date the employee sustained the injury, the date they filed a claim, or the date their claim was settled and compensation paid. Splitting the accident cards both by the year of accident and the year each case was settled gave comparable figures to the BJA's number of accidents per year for 1942 to 1946: the cards represented on average 96.2 per cent of the

²⁶ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Annual Reports and Year Books 1938-1949*, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS1646/269 and MS1646/270.

BJA's accidents per year by date of accident and 91.8 per cent by date of settlement. This correlation suggested that the cards were representative of the total accidents covered by the scheme.²⁷

²⁷ There were likely many more accidents in the trade, but only those that interrupted an employee's work and required a compensation claim made it into this record.

Table 3.1. An overview of the BJA's Workmen's Compensation Insurance scheme, with data compiled from BJA *Annual Reports* and the Employee Accident Cards.

Grey columns denote data published annually by BJA in its *Annual Reports*, 1939-1948; blue columns denote data from the employee accident cards; white columns denote calculations based on the data from the *Annual Reports* and accident cards.

Year	Number of policies taken out by member firms	Number of firms registering an accident/ settling a compensation claim (Accident cards)	Total wages insured (£)	Total premiums paid by member firms (£)	Premiums paid as percentage of wages (%)	Total compensation paid to member firms (£)	Number of accidents (BJA Annual Review)	Number of accidents (Accident cards – date of accident)	Accident cards as percentage of BJA's recorded accidents (%)	Number of compensation claims settled (Accident cards – cases settled)	Compensation claims settled as percentage of BJA's recorded accidents (%)
1939	285	-	1,692,559	3,944	0.23	3,858	397	-	-	-	-
1940	286	1	1,475,914	3,792	0.26	2,553	314	1	-	-	-
1941	308	4/3	1,497,874	3,931	0.26	1,848	286	11	-	7	-
1942	275	64/59	1,459,088	4,284	0.29	3,185	301	294	97.67	259	86.05
1943	263	65/69	1,615,807	4,860	0.30	3,320	293	286	97.61	287	97.95
1944	269	57/55	1,828,010	5,785	0.32	6,407	238	249	104.62	264	110.92
1945	254	59/58	1,752,993	4,877	0.28	3,470	238	202	84.87	172	72.27
1946	-	58/59	1,944,254	-	-	-	-	171	-	205	-
1947	-	1/19	2,458,067	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	-
1948	-		2,887,203	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Annual Reports and Year Books 1938-1949*, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS1646/269 and MS1646/270; 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 60

The BJA's number of accidents recorded each year in comparison to the number of policies taken out gave an average of 1.06 accidents per policy, but this figure presents a blanket view of the trade and the level of risk involved in production. Comparison of the number of policies taken out with the number of firms listed in the accident cards showed a very different representation of the risk of accidents. An average of 60.3 firms made an accident claim each year between 1942 and 1946, making on average 3.95 claims each per year – nearly four times the number of accidents per policy suggested by the BJA data. With an average of 265.23 policies taken out every year between 1942 and 1945 and an average of 60.75 firms claiming each year during this time, the data showed that fewer than one quarter of firms (22.90 per cent) claimed for an accident. The discrepancy between the number of firms that took out policies and the number of firms that made claims indicated that some areas of the trade carried more risk and were more prone to inflicting injury. The names of the companies that made claims revealed that many are large firms that undertook batch or mass production of jewellery, silverware and other light metalwork, like Barker Bros Silversmiths, Buncher & Haseler, Elkington & Co. and Hassett & Harper. Many of the small jewellery and silver workshops that mostly undertook bespoke or batch work appeared only once or twice amongst the accident cards, including A W Crosbee & Sons, Deakin & Francis and Payton, Pepper & Son. The initial figures therefore suggested that studying the cards for details about roles and manufacturing processes would be an important enquiry to understand risk and the impact of specialised production on workers across the trade.

As the accident cards mainly reflected work in larger businesses, comparing the cards' data to industry statistics gave another indication of the representativeness of the accident cards. In September 1946, *The British Jeweller* editorial team published figures for the number of factory workers in the jewellery and allied trades between 1941 and 1946, as shown in table 3.2.²⁸ The figures indicated an initial drop in the number of workers in the early years of WWII, followed by a marked increase by 1945 and 1946. The article listed 8,559 workers in the trade in March 1946, which included part-time workers, counted as 'half timers' (likely because the Board of Trade was more concerned with overall productive capacity than individuals), that could have increased the number of individuals engaged in the mass production side of the trade to approximately 10,000 people.²⁹ With 1,217 accidents across a working population of 10,000 people (though smaller workshops would have added to the total number of workers insured), the accident cards reflected the experiences of approximately 10 per cent of the trade. This insight includes considerably more individuals than other sources and surveys of the trade.

²⁸ 'Board of Trade Compliments Jewellery Industry', *The British Jeweller*, September 1946, p. 27.

²⁹ 'Board of Trade Compliments Jewellery Industry'.

Table 3.2. A table detailing the number of factory workers in the jewellery and allied trades between 1941 and 1946. Reproduced from a table in *The British Jeweller* - 'Factory workers, part-timers counted as half timers.'

Month	February	February	September	September	December	March
Year	1941	1942	1942	1945	1945	1946
Total number of workers	5,852	3,736	1,920	5,120	6,471	8,559

'Board of Trade Compliments Jewellery Industry', *The British Jeweller*, September 1946, p. 27.

Transcription of each accident card into a spreadsheet allowed comparison of the data and revealed patterns of experience amongst the accidents. Transcription followed the fields already specified on the cards: firm, surname, first name, address, date of accident, time of accident, age of injured party, nature and cause of accident, occupation, date ceased work, 'fit' date, date returned to work, date compensation authorised, date compensation sent to member, employee average weekly wage, total claim amount, weekly compensation, and any notes on the reverse of the card. The form of some of this data needed interpreting so that it could be sortable; for instance, gender was presumed by traditions of male/female names, details of a title (Miss/Mrs being the most common title specified on the cards), and/or mention of a pronoun in the description of the accident and compensation.³⁰ Additional columns of sortable data included gender, body part affected by injury, and weekly pay converted into pence, which was easier to compare than the original data in pounds, shillings and pence. The selected data highlighted the identity characteristics that the employers and insurance scheme considered the most important for categorising workers and so helped assess how identity characteristics impacted the expectation that workers would undertake particular roles.

Comparing names and home addresses revealed that some people had more than one injury whilst at work between 1942 and 1946: the 1,217 accidents were sustained by 1078 people across 110 firms. 106 people had multiple accidents between 1942 and 1946; they sustained an average of 2.31 injuries each, compared to the overall average of 1.13 accidents. It is likely that most workers did not have to make a claim at all and are absent from the archive. Accidents were exceptional for individuals, but relatively normal in workshops, as on average, workers at each of the 110 firms experienced 11 colleagues become injured during this time, maybe someone in the same press shop as them, sat next to them at the bench or operating the drop stamp in the same battery as theirs. The cards show how

³⁰ Assuming gender is a problematic simplification of the data available as we have no confirmation of the individuals' own specification of their gender. However, 1940s' understandings of gender identification were much more rooted in a binary view and we can therefore assume that workers' outwardly performed genders aligned with their names and pronouns.

normalised accidents became in the industry, especially when condensed into the salient details for insurance purposes.

Splitting the data by gender and age made clear women's work in the trade. Women sustained 640 accidents, equal to 52.6 per cent of the total number of accidents, whilst the number of injuries encountered by men was lower at 483 accidents (39.7 per cent); 94 accidents occurred to people with no listed gender (7.7 per cent). This higher number of women sustaining injuries related both to the nature of the work they carried out and that they formed a large proportion of the workforce in the popular jewellery and light industry workshops, especially during the Second World War before being a jeweller became a reserved occupation for young men. Moreover, the workers' average age at the time of injury – 29 years old for women and 38 for men – suggested that younger women undertook roles that were more likely to lead to injury.

The 'occupation' detail listed on the cards is important for understanding the roles different individuals undertook, and for comparing the occupations to the injury descriptions to understand how roles linked to physical movements and the tacit knowledge behind them. Although the clerks often used slightly different terms to describe similar roles, like 'press operator', 'press work', 'pressworker' and 'hand press operator', grouping the roles into operation-based categories revealed a significant gendering of occupations. Appendix B lists the occupations, as recorded by the clerks, in their operation-based categories and with the individuals' genders in the following columns. The five occupations with the greatest number of accidents regardless of gender were presswork, hand press work, toolmaking, labouring and stamping, as seen in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. The five occupations with the most recorded accidents amongst the employee accident cards, split by the workers' genders.

Occupation Group	Number of accidents sustained by women	Number of accidents sustained by men	Number of accidents sustained by workers of unknown gender	Total number of accidents sustained
Presswork	235	5	21	261
Hand press work	118	4	0	122
Toolmaking	2	63	5	70
Labouring	0	54	3	57
Stamping	7	45	3	55
Totals	362	171	32	565

'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601

The five occupations with the most recorded accidents accounted for nearly half of the total number of accidents in the cards (565 of 1,217); yet presswork, both by hand and by power press, dominated the occupations of women and was almost solely a female occupation. The five most recurrent occupations for women amongst the accident cards included three groups related to presswork: presswork, hand press work and power press work, plus capstan operator and assembler. Grouping all women's cards with presswork-related occupations totalled 375 accidents, 58 per cent of all accidents encountered by women, in comparison to presswork accounting for just 4 per cent of all accidents encountered by men. This predominance of one occupation is not mirrored in the accidents sustained by men, whose five most common occupations ranged in their totals by only 43 accidents, from toolmaking with 63 accidents to spinning with 20 accidents. Instead, men worked a broader range of roles, or at least were injured through a broader range of roles. The split of occupations by gender points to the importance of role in shaping workplace identities. Women's significant place in the industry has long been side-lined due to their connection with the manufacture of popular jewellery rather than bespoke jewellery; a focus on presswork brings these workers, the processes they carried out, the tacit knowledge they established and the jewellery they created back into focus. Introducing average weekly pay into the comparison revealed further splits by role, age and gender. Of the 1,217 cards, 911 included the worker's average weekly pay, ranging from Charles Victor King, a

46-year-old toolmaker at jewellery workshop E J Clewley, earning £12.13.9, to F John Minett, a 14-year-old workshop boy at S Groves & Co, earning £0.14.10 per week. The average weekly pay across the 911 cards was 923d (pence), or £3.16.11 $\frac{1}{4}$, which indicated that Charles King's high pay was a relative outlier in terms of the rest of the injured employees' pay. Many of the 306 cards with no average weekly pay have hourly wages listed instead because the employee worked part time. Of the 306 cards, 177 were for women, 96 for men and 31 unknown; the higher proportion of women with no weekly pay listed suggested that part-time work was more common for women than men, which may have fitted around caring responsibilities, combined with a need to work after many male family members had been conscripted.

To focus on Birmingham businesses and the experience of workers in this occupational community, the 159 cards of employees from the seven non-Birmingham firms were removed, though they usefully confirmed that patterns of role distribution were not unique to Birmingham.³¹ The gender split amongst the Birmingham cards mirrored the overall split, with the 1058 Birmingham cards including injuries from 566 women, 423 men and 69 people of unknown gender; the average weekly pay of the 770 Birmingham cards that included a figure was 912.90d, or £3.16.1, which was similar to the overall average of 923d, £3.16.11 $\frac{1}{4}$. In Birmingham, the average weekly pay for female metalworkers was 629.12d and 1241.70d for male workers. This contrast in average pay aligned with the clear gendering of production roles and suggested that gender limited the roles workers were expected to undertake and, in turn, the pay they expected to achieve.

Age too, affected earning power and revealed how experience was valued in the trade. Figure 3.2 is a scatter graph that plotted employees' average weekly wage in relation to their age. The three colours of the points denote the employees' gender: women in orange, men in yellow and people of unknown gender in green. The clustering of points in the lower left corner of the graph represents the large number of young people that worked in the trade and earned relatively little in comparison with their older colleagues. There was not, however, a direct correlation between age and earning power. The graph shows that full-time employees in all age groups earned less than 1000d (£4.3.4) per week. The highest weekly earners were largely between their late 20s and late 50s, with one outlier – 18-year-old filer David Bridges, earning 2451d (£10.4.3) per week. With many employees starting work at 14,

³¹ Of these seven firms, three were based in the Midlands and it is unsurprising that they too signed up to the BJA's insurance scheme. The inclusion of the London-based firms reflected the start of the BJA's move to national trade coverage. It was unnecessary to include these cards them in more focused discussion of work in Birmingham and there was not enough of them to allow extensive comparison.

Gills Cables Ltd, Lichfield/Tamworth; Henry Griffith & Sons, Leamington Spa; J Nixon & Sons, London; Nixons Platers & Enamellers Ltd, London; Rotherham & Sons Ltd, Coventry; Trico Plating Co, London; H H Wilson, Wembley

David could have been at work for four years already, building experience that may have contributed to his high wage. For women, age seemingly had only a small effect on wages; the orange points on the graph are grouped in a distinct band running below the 1000d line and their trendline grows at a much smaller angle than the men's trendline. Female higher earners were in their mid 20s to mid 40s, a slightly lower age range than the highest earning men. Amongst all employees, regardless of gender, there was a small expectation of wage increase in line with age but there was also a capping of women's wages, regardless of age and experience.

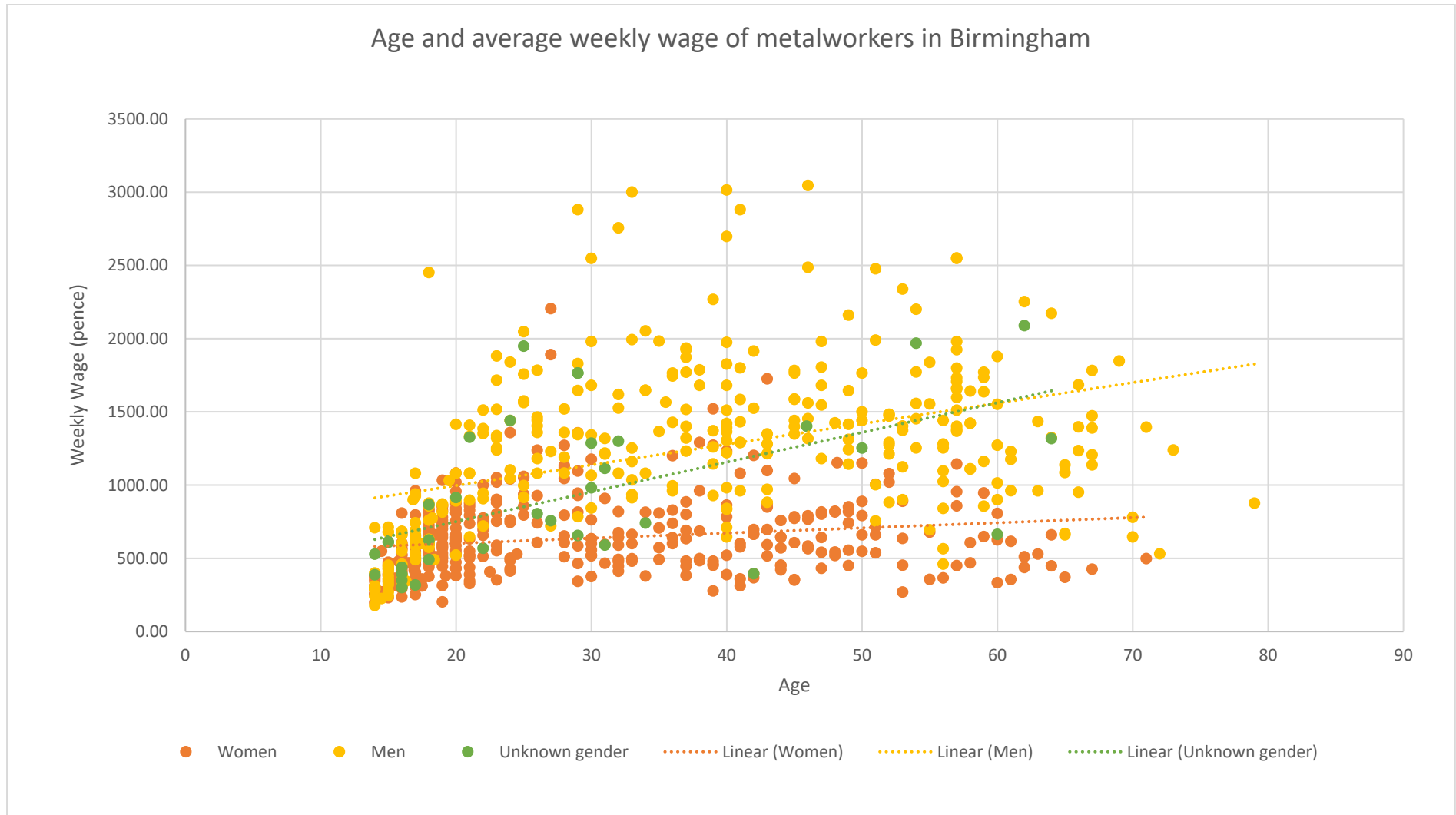


Figure 3.2. A scatter graph that plots the average weekly wage (in pence) of workers in relation to their age at the time of their accident.

British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601

The gender pay gap aligned with the gendering of occupations. Comparison of the 50 injured employees with the lowest weekly wage and the 50 injured employees with the highest weekly wage emphasised the patterns between gender, age, occupation and pay. The data from these 100 injuries are summarised in table 3.4, which groups the workers by gender, age group, occupation and average weekly pay. As already indicated in the scatter graph in figure 3.2, the 50 injuries with the lowest weekly wage were largely sustained by people under the age of 20, whilst the age of the highest earners was more varied. The range in pay was comparatively much smaller amongst the 50 lowest earners than the 50 highest earners: the lowest from £0.14.10 to £1.8.6, a range of 164d, and the highest from £7.10.5 to £12.13.9, a range of 1,240d. This difference between the highest and the lowest earners mirrors the clustering of points above the horizontal axis of the scatter graph and meant that workers would have recognised the relative rarity of achieving high wages in their industry. Table 3.4 also confirms the predominance of female workers in the lower pay brackets, with 32 of the 50 injuries sustained by women and 14 sustained by men, and the predominance of male workers in higher pay brackets, with 44 of the 50 injuries sustained by men and 2 by women. Interestingly, the two female injuries were sustained by the same person, welder Violet Robertson, six months apart. The proportion of women in the lower wage category and men in the higher wage category did not match the cards' overall split of injured male and female workers in Birmingham, which was 53.50 per cent female and 39.98 per cent male. The lower wage category was 64 per cent female and 28 per cent male; whilst the higher wage category was 2.04 per cent female and 89.80 per cent male. The proportion of male and female workers strongly reinforced the existence of a gender pay gap. This gap is also evident in the occupations that occurred most frequently in the 100 injuries, with presswork again dominating the female work of the lowest 50 wages. Both low and high wages groups included a range of occupations, with 18 different groups of roles amongst the lowest earners and 22 groups amongst the highest; repeated groups for each wage group have been included in table 3.4 for comparison. Whilst it was unsurprising that assistant and learner/apprentice jobs featured in the lower wages group and foreman jobs featured in the higher wages group, the rigidity of the pay and gender split of presswork and toolmaking confirmed that there were gendered expectations about roles workers could take on and how they could progress through them in terms of experience and pay. Concepts of skill were categorised financially in pay and bounded by gender.

Table 3.4. A summary of the 50 accident cards that detailed workers with the lowest weekly wage and the 50 accident cards that detailed workers with the highest weekly wage; these workers are further divided by gender, age and occupation type.

	50 injuries with the lowest weekly wage				50 injuries with the highest weekly wage			
	Women	Men	Unknown gender	Total	Women	Men	Unknown gender	Total
Age								
14-19	22	13	3	38	-	1	-	1
20-29	2	-	-	2	2	5	1	8
30-39	1	-	-	1	-	11	-	11
40-49	1	-	-	1	-	11	-	11
50-59	1	-	-	1	-	9	1	10
60+	1	-	-	1	-	4	1	5
Unspecified	4	1	1	6	-	3	1	4
Total	32	14	4	50	2	44	4	50
Weekly pay (d)								
Lowest	198	178	300		1890	1805	1806	
Highest	342	341	320		2204	3045	2088	
Average	288.88	283.96	309.5	289.15	2047	2197	1953	2171
Occupation count & Weekly pay (d) + average								
Presswork	20	-	-	20	-	1	-	1
	294.80			294.80		2548		2548
Stamping	2	1	-	3	-	6	-	6
	256	336		282.67		2072		2072
Learning toolmaking	-	4	-	4	-	-	-	-
		310.50		310.50				
Workshop assistant	2	4	-	6	-	-	-	-
	305.50	262.25		276.67				
Foreman/Superintendent	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5
						2372		2372
Sheet metal worker	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
						1995		1995
Toolmaking	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	8
						2387		2387
Filing	-	-	1	1	-	3	-	3
			301	301		2396		2396

'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, MS 1646/566 and 601

Comparing the compensation received to the gender pay gap provides a different way of valuing skill. Of the 1058 injuries recorded for Birmingham, 966 resulted in a compensation claim, whilst 64 were no claims and 28 were blank. Sorting the claims into groups of £5 intervals revealed that 54.34 per cent (575) of claims resulted in payments between zero and £4.19.11; 16.92 per cent (179) between £5.0.0 and £9.19.11; and 8.79 (93) per cent between £10.0.0 and £14.19.11, with the next intervals each holding less than 5 per cent of claims. To better understand the large grouping of claims in the lower intervals, claims under £10 were further split into £1 intervals. Figure 3.3 is a bar graph showing the compensation claims grouped into pound intervals from less than £1 to £9.19.11 and £5 intervals from £10 to £99.19.11, plus £100 intervals for the few claims above £100. The orange bars represent female employees' claims, the yellow bars the male employees' claims, and the green bars the claims of workers of unknown gender. Amongst both men and women, most claims totalled between £1 and £2.19.11 (the modal average), but the peaks of the graph show that the interval with the most claims for men was £1-1.19.11, whilst the interval with the most claims for women was £2-2.19.11. The same pattern is more explicitly revealed when we consider each interval in relation to the total number of each gender, as shown in figure 3.4. With the compensation claims of 524 women and 379 men, taking each interval count as a percentage of the total count of its respective gender (524 = 100% and 379 = 100%) made possible comparison of the compensation distribution between genders. In the less-than-£10 range of compensation totals, women were more likely to receive a greater compensation total than men, despite generally earning less and therefore taking longer to accrue as much compensation as men; whilst in the range of claims greater than £10, men were more likely to receive a greater compensation total than women. Given the rigid division of roles between male and female workers, this compensation pattern suggests that women's roles like presswork, although they paid less generally, resulted in worse smaller accidents that required more time in recovery and a greater loss of earnings to recompense. Men's roles, in contrast, resulted in injuries at each extreme: either relatively quick to recover from and less to recompense, or much longer to recover and more expensive to recompense. This split aligned with male employees on lower wages undertaking training or assistance roles of relatively low risk, and male employees on higher wages undertaking complex toolmaking roles or heavy labour roles, like stamping. Following the risk and compensation levels tied to roles gives a different view from the wage data of how the trade valued skill and experience.

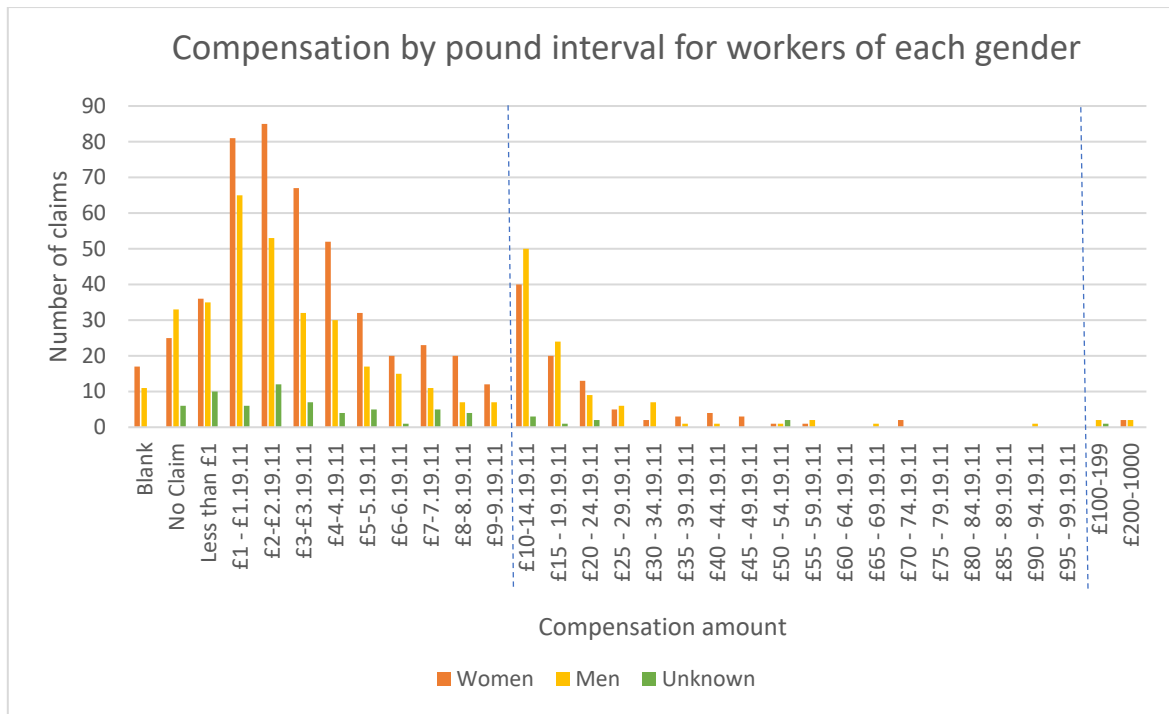


Figure 3.3. A bar graph of male and female workers' compensation amounts sorted by pound interval (under £10), £5 intervals (£10-100) and £100 intervals (£100+).

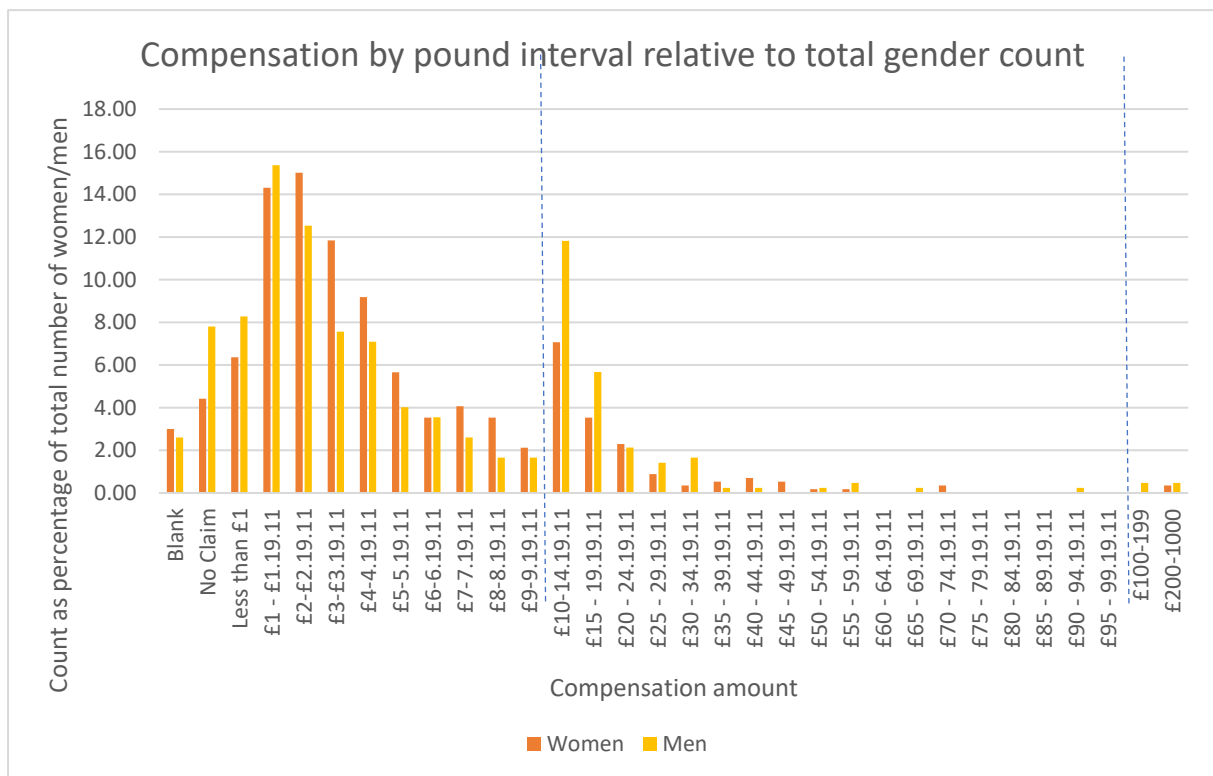


Figure 3.4. A bar graph of male and female workers' compensation amounts relative to their gender. The count of claims in each interval was taken as a percentage of the total number of claims for that gender (women 524; men 379) to assess the distribution of compensation amounts between genders. Sorted by pound interval (under £10), £5 intervals (£10-100) and £100 intervals (£100+).

Risk

A quantitative assessment of the accident cards data revealed patterns across the industry. The dominance of repeated mechanical manufacturing processes like presswork and lathe operation in the list of occupations proved that these roles carried the most likely risk of injury and brought a different group of workers into focus. In contrast, the 'nature and cause of accident' field on the cards required a different type of analysis: a discretionary assessment of individual incidents. The stories of these incidents were interpreted through comparison with stories from other sources, including oral histories and tool analysis. This approach helps us to answer this chapter's other research questions: to what extent were workers aware of foreseeable risks in their work; how were risks managed and blame apportioned? Working closely with the names and details of workers from the complete 1,217 workplace accidents prioritises individual experiences of jewellery and war production. This section turns to these experiences to investigate workers' knowledge of risks in their roles and the effect this knowledge had on their assessment of their work and themselves.

The division between workers' tacit knowledge and trade leaders' management knowledge determined different definitions of risk and responsibility. The insurance scheme followed managers' split of the trade into production types. The *BJA Year Book 1939* outlined the amount employers had to pay to insure particular workers:

1/6 per cent on the wages roll for Office Clerks, Factors' Warehouse Staffs (but not people associated with the workshop)

3/- per cent on the wages roll for all Employees, as above, engaged in the genuine Gold Jewellery Trade

4/- per cent on the wages roll for all Employees, as above, engaged in the genuine Silver and Electroplate, Imitation Jewellery, Out-platers' and Gilders' Trades.

9/- per cent on the wages roll for Jewel Case Makers, including Machinists (as a separate Trade)

20/- per cent on the wages roll for Diesinkers, Stampers and Piercers (as a separate Trade)

Work not classified under any of the above headings is subject to rates fixed on survey of the risk.³²

These figures were trade leaders' assessment of the financial value of the risk workers put themselves at daily. They are divided roughly by production and product types, with goldsmithing considered less risky than silversmithing and the making of imitation/fashion jewellery; indeed, small jewellery workshops making bespoke or batch amounts of gold jewellery featured rarely in the accident cards. By extension, they divided risk value by manufacturing process, as presswork, stamping and

³² Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, *Annual Report 1938 and Year Book 1939*, p. 36.

toolmaking all contributed to the production of silverware and popular jewellery on batch and mass scales; these are the occupations that feature most frequently in the accident cards. The jump in premium from the 3/- per cent for gold jewellers and 4/- per cent for presswork and toolmaking to the 20/- per cent for stampers indicated that the insurers recognised that roles like presswork carried frequent small risks, more so than gold work, but that stamping carried infrequent large risks – severe injuries that would take months to recover from. As Julia Moses argued in relation to the introduction of compensation laws, these risk values are confirmation that occupational injuries resulted from foreseeable risks related to roles, not from ‘individual misfortunes, incompetence or negligence’.³³ Though workers may not have known the risk they put themselves at when they entered the trade, their managers understood the skill and experience workers required to keep injuries at bay.

Presswork

Understanding the mechanism and tacit knowledge required to operate a press helps to re-assess the value of risk from the workers’ perspectives. Power presses and hand presses, also known as fly presses, work on the principle of pressing metal into a hardened steel die or through shaped punches and jigs to shear it. The pressworker works with the toolmaker and tool setter to ‘tool up’ the press so that it can be used in the production of different designs. Figure 3.5 shows two photographs of a small hand press, as viewed from the front and the side, respectively, still in situ at a former jewellery workshop in Birmingham. The cast-iron frame, which is fixed to the bench, supports a large screw thread at its centre to which the tool setter would fix the male, or top, part of the tool, with the female, or bottom, part attached to the base of the press; figure 3.6 shows two photographs of the male and female parts of a tool to blank a cat motif. The operator twists down the screw by swinging the long downward-pointing handle in a clockwise direction; this movement generates the force required to press the design into the sheet metal. Once released, the press twists the screw thread back up, crashing with a jolt into its top position; in time, an experienced press worker catches the handle before it hits the top to minimise jolts, noise and the waiting time between presses. The upward-pointing tapered handle could also support a solid metal ball to add to the handle’s momentum as it swung round; the pressworker would assess whether to add or remove the ball from their press based on the type and thickness of metal and the job she was undertaking. Missing the handle as it spun back round was perilous, as 35-year-old Dorothy Jenny Bond discovered on 29 June 1943 at jewellery workshop Joseph Fray Ltd. Her accident card details that she sustained ‘Abrasions & bruises to right

³³ Moses, p. 19.

cheekbone & fractured', with the cause listed as 'Press handle'.³⁴ Despite her broken cheekbone, Dorothy continued working and so did not receive any compensation. Former drop stamper Tony Hackett remembered the damage a press handle did to his aunt's face in the 1940s: 'My aunt Leah, she was hit in the side of the head by one of those balls. [...] it did a right mess of her face'.³⁵ Dorothy's and Leah's injuries suggest there could have been many other injuries from presswork that went unreported because the workers continued working.



Figure 3.5: Two photographs of a small hand press, viewed from the front and in profile, respectively, left in the Birmingham premises of a former jewellery workshop.

Author's own photos, 2021.

³⁴ Dorothy Jenny Bond, 35, of 90 Gibson Road, Handsworth, at Joseph Fray Ltd on 29 June 43 at 09:00 – 'Abrasions & bruises to right cheek bone & fractured. Press handle' – pressworker, still working, no compensation

³⁵ Hackett, Hackett, and Sullivan.

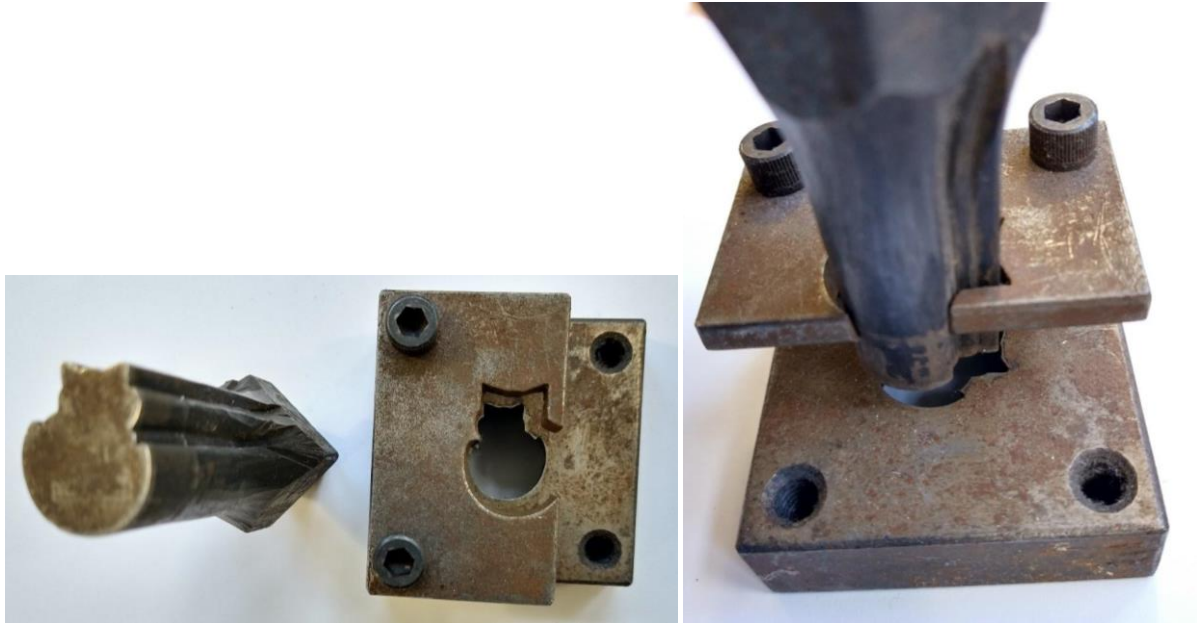


Figure 3.6. Two photographs of a cat motif blanking tool for a hand press. The top 'male' part of the tool fits precisely into the bottom 'female' part of the tool and so presses the cat motif, which would drop below the tool to be collected by the operator.

Author's own photos, 2022. Tool from private collection.

Larger hand presses operated in the same way but could undertake heavier gauge work. Figure 3.7 is a photograph of the line of large hand presses at the workshop of the Newman Brothers, now the Coffinworks Museum on the outskirts of the Jewellery Quarter, that made coffin furniture, including metal handles, plaques and aesthetic details. The presses are fixed onto benches opposite the battery of drop stamps. The combination of stamping and presswork was a common route for an item to progress through production, and workshops were arranged accordingly to allow for the smooth flow of parts through the production system and through the building.³⁶ Some of the largest firms invested in electrically powered presses from the 1920s, if they had sufficient work and capital to afford them.³⁷ These presses were significantly larger than the hand presses. Figures 3.8 and 3.9 are images of photographs and their captions in the Working Party's 1946 report that show women operating power presses; figure 3.8 shows a heavy press with a woman pulling a lever to make the pistons lower the press force, whilst figure 3.9 shows a woman closing the fenced guard of a smaller press, accompanied

³⁶ Architectural historian John Cattell oversaw a survey commissioned by English Heritage of the Jewellery Quarter's architecture in 2000; in a subsequent article he described the division of heavier processes, including stamping, which were set up on the ground floor, and the lighter processes, 'such as jewellery making, pressing, burnishing, and the assembly of finished items, on the upper floors'. Cattell, p. 164.

³⁷ Cattell, p. 161.

by the caption 'Light power press, replacing the older type of hand-press'.³⁸ Power presses could be so forceful that their sound and vibrations filled many industrial areas of the city. In his important research on housing developments in modern Birmingham, renowned Midlands historian Carl Chinn consulted residents about domestic experiences; in her interview, Irene Brown recalled living next to a press shop in her first home after marrying in 1948:

[W]e had a factory next door and it used to go like the clappers. You could hear the power presses banging all day long and at night we used to have to put a cushion underneath the China Cabinet, and open it very carefully and let the glassware fall out onto... because everything had jogged forward. We used to keep a hand broom and a shovel on the landing, because when the power presses went the plaster used to fall off the walls, and we used to sweep that up.³⁹

Irene's memories of the power presses shaking her house emphasised the force of the machines. Their size, cost and force made power presses less common in the Quarter, though fashion jewellery firm W.A.P. Watson, based on Great Hampton Street to the northeast of the Quarter, included a photograph of a woman blanking circles from sheet metal on a large press in its advert for the restarted production of its 'Exquisite' range of jewellery for export, see figure 3.10.⁴⁰ The cards detailed that 35 accidents occurred to workers specifically operating power presses, whilst a much higher 122 accidents occurred to workers specifically operating hand presses; the 235 accidents occurring to workers who were listed as operating nondescript presses are therefore likely to have hurt themselves whilst operating hand presses. The lower number of accidents referencing power presses likely reflected the lower use of power presses and also their increased safety features, as power presses had guards that had to be lowered around the work before the press would function.

³⁸ Board of Trade.

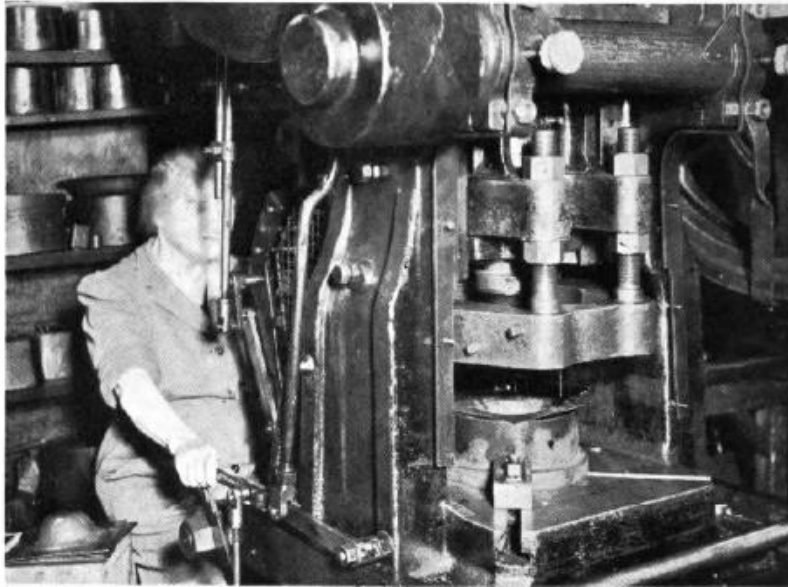
³⁹ Chinn, *Homes for People: Council Housing and Urban Renewal in Birmingham, 1849-1999*, p. 174.

⁴⁰ W A P Watson, 'Fashion Jewellery Now in Production Again', *The British Jeweller*, June 1946, p. 16.



Figure 3.7. A photograph of the line of large hand presses at Coffinworks Museum, formerly Newman Brothers workshop, Birmingham.

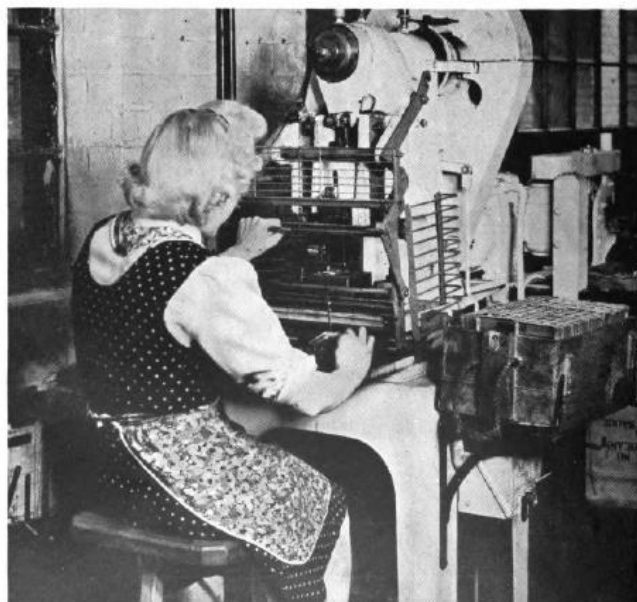
Author's own photo, 2021.



POWER PRESS. SHAPING BY PRESSURE

Figure 3.8. An image of a photograph and caption from the Jewellery & Silverware Working Party's report, 1946. The photograph shows a woman operating the lever of a large power press used for shaping metal by pressure. The tooling in the press appears to be for a bowl-shaped item or component.

Board of Trade, *Working Party Reports Jewellery and Silverware* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1946)
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069180571&view=1up&seq=18> [accessed 31 July 2020]



LIGHT POWER PRESS, REPLACING THE OLDER TYPE OF HAND-FLY PRESS

Figure 3.9. An image of a photograph and caption from the Jewellery & Silverware Working Party's report, 1946. The photograph shows a woman moving the safety guard down whilst working at a smaller power press.

Board of Trade, *Working Party Reports Jewellery and Silverware* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1946)
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069180571&view=1up&seq=18> [accessed 31 July 2020]



Figure 3.10. A photograph of a woman blanking out circles on a big press used in an advert for W.A.P. Watson Ltd's 'Exquisite' fashion jewellery in *The British Jeweller*, June 1946.

W A P Watson, 'Fashion Jewellery Now in Production Again', *The British Jeweller*, June 1946, p. 16

Members of the Jewellery & Silverware Working Party criticised the predominance of hand presses in the Quarter because they believed that increased use of power presses would improve efficiency and productivity in the industry. In their description of power presses, they highlighted characteristics of the process and outcomes of presswork generally:

A power press is normally tooled up by skilled tool-setters, but in actual operation may call for little skill beyond the ability to put the blank in the right place and pull a lever. The safety arrangements incorporated in the press can be entirely effective, and even large power presses can be worked by a relatively unskilled woman worker. In other words the quality of the work done by the press is determined by the quality of the tool, that is by the skill of the toolmaker, and by nothing else.⁴¹

In some cases, instead of operations being done in several hand presses in series, one [power press] machine is tooled up to perform many operations. The presses are largely worked by female labour, the necessary degree of skill being able to be picked up in a comparatively short time; but the services of highly skilled tool designers and tool makers are indispensable. In the main centres of production the

⁴¹ Board of Trade, p.15.

girls employed seem to easily take to machine work. As far as we could judge their rate of work seemed to be good [...].⁴²

The party made it clear that their recognition of good work lay with the toolmakers rather than the pressworkers. In their argument, they stressed a link between skill, process and gender, as well learning time, work rates, and safety; however, the tools only worked when operated confidently and competently by the pressworkers. The report is a useful starting point for evaluating contemporary beliefs about presswork and comparing them to the lived experience of the press workers detailed in the accident cards.

Learning the press

For employees working with the hand press, there was no guard to protect fingers as the press came down; to create a good pressing and to keep your fingers intact required experience. The Working Party suggested in its report that learning how to operate a press could be achieved in a 'comparatively short time' and workers 'take easily' to it; yet four accident cards from employees of jewellery firm W H Collins & Co Ltd at their Excelda Works on Rookery Road, Handsworth, specifically attributed the employees' presswork accidents to 'inexperience'.⁴³ On 5 April 1942 at 4:30pm, Mrs Sarah Thomas caught both of her index fingers in the press she was operating; the clerk listed the cause of the accident as: 'Not known unless want of previous experience', and balanced this assessment with the note that Sarah was a part-time worker and also a bus conductress, details that were presumably meant to corroborate her inexperience with a press.⁴⁴ The next year, over the course of 12 days between the 29 April and 10 May, Lily Mellington, Violet Haynes and Marjorie Pagan split their right-hand fingers and thumbs through 'inexperience' and 'lack of experience'. Like Sarah, Violet was listed as a part-time worker, whilst both Lily and Marjorie were 14 years old at the time of their accidents, with Lily described as a 'Girl straight from school'.⁴⁵ Injuries from inexperience suggested that learning

⁴² Board of Trade, p.17.

⁴³ Board of Trade, p.17; 'Employee Accident Cards'.

⁴⁴ Mrs Sarah Thomas, of 85 Alfred Road, Handsworth, at W H Collins & Co Ltd on 5 April 1942 at 16:30 – 'Index fingers of both hands caught in press. Not known unless want of previous experience' – Bus conductress, part-timer, stopped 5 April, no return date. Average £0.10.75, packer? Compensation £3.2.8, paid 9 June 1943.

⁴⁵ Lily Mellington/Wellington, 14, of 184 Westbourne Road, at W H Collins & Co Ltd on 29 April 1943 4pm – 'Split finger & thumb RH – inexperience' – stopped 29 April, returned 21 May 43, money paid 21 October 1943, £2.9.2 – 'Girl straight from school. ___ [Flat?] rate 5 1/4 pr hr 47 hr week could apply'.

Violet Haynes, of 92 Rookery Road, B21, at W H Collins & Co Ltd on 3 May 1943, at 15:30 – 'Split thumb nail RH – inexperience' – pressworker (part time), claim £3.4.2. stopped on 3 May, back 31 May. Comp paid on 25 Jun 43.

how to use the press was not instant and that experienced pressworkers brought their tacit knowledge and presswork skills to each job.

Though Lily and Marjorie were of the youngest employable age in the early 1940s, their youth was not rare amongst injured pressworkers. Figure 3.11 is a line graph showing the distribution of pressworkers' injuries by their age; the peak at age 18 reflected a weighting towards accidents occurring to young pressworkers. Of the 424 accidents attributed to presswork amongst the cards (including those cards where the 'Occupation' field was left blank but the 'Nature and Cause' field detailed an accident connected to presswork), 178 accidents (42 per cent) occurred to workers aged 21 and under, and the median age of injury amongst pressworkers was 19.5. Though youth and part-time work may have led to the inexperience that caused injury through presswork, many of the 19-year-old workers were likely to have been using the press for three to five years, depending on when they joined the industry, and would have been highly experienced. The predominance of young, injured pressworkers was therefore less likely to have mapped onto inexperience and instead reflected the sheer number of young women that the jewellery and allied trades rested upon, especially whilst young men were conscripted and families needed additional incomes. Part-time workers like Sarah and Violet may have also turned to presswork in firms that allowed them to fit their shifts around other jobs and responsibilities. Whilst less time working with a press could lead to injury, the predominance of other causes listed on the cards and the higher average pay of some injured pressworkers proved that even great experience could not rule out accidents.

Marjorie Pagan, of 2 Alexander Avenue, Handsworth, at W H Collins & Co Ltd on 10 May 1943 – 'Right index finger caught in press. Presumably lack of experience' – pressworker, £1.8.7. Stopped 13 May, returned 20 May. Compensation £0.8.3, agreed 24 May 1943, paid 25 June 1943.

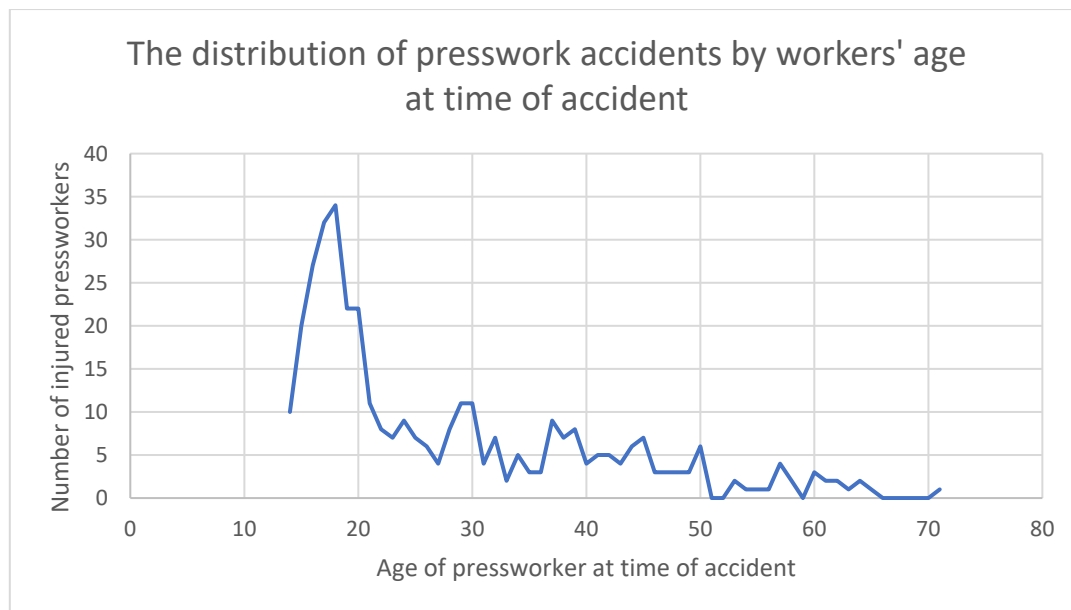


Figure 3.11. A line graph plotting the number of injured pressworkers against their age at the time of their accident.

British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601

Repetition

Presswork precludes repetition: creating and using a press tool was only economically beneficial when that tool was used hundreds or thousands of times to make many of the same or similar items, and so a pressworker must have operated the press fitted with this tool hundreds of times – and some operations may have taken two or three presses to press the design to an adequate standard. The work was repetitive. Through time spent using the press, workers established techniques for catching the handle as it wound its way back up, swapping blanks in the seconds between the press falling again. Repetition thus increased efficiency, which Time and Motion inspectors monitored closely, and, undoubtedly, a sense of work achievement – a recognition of the benefits of their developed tacit knowledge.⁴⁶

Though presswork's repetitive nature is likely to have partly led to its workers' omission from the historical record – stemming from belief in a link between repetition and boredom – a disrespect for

⁴⁶ Cornelli Sullivan mentioned Time and Motion inspectors visited his workshop periodically with their stopwatches to watch and record the amount of time it took for workers to complete a particular job. This time would be multiplied by the number of items to produce and used in the calculations of workers' hours and production contracts with clients. 22 'inspectors' are listed in the accident cards; given that these inspectors were unlikely to have been hands-on with production, this relatively high number of injuries suggests that the number of inspectors across the industry and from the Armed Forces' contracts during the war must have been great.

repetition led to significant injury for the pressworkers. When workers did not respect the repetition inherent in presswork, either through over-confidence or distraction, the press presented a heavy reminder of its presence. Both 17-year-old Iris Lucy Dobbins and 18 ½ -year-old Sheila Jean Hazlehurst hurt the index finger of their left hands whilst operating presses, and both their firms attributed their injuries to 'Inattention'.⁴⁷ From their injuries, we can infer that both Iris and Sheila operated the press with their right hand swinging the handle and their left hand moving the blanks; as they reached to knock away the pressing and replace it with another piece of sheet, they did not remove their hand in time to avoid the tooling they were swinging back down with the handle. Whilst Sheila's finger healed in 18 days, Iris's finger turned septic and took a week longer to heal; their confidence may have taken longer to restore. A lack of confidence caused Edna May Cadwallander's injury on 22 June 1942 at Rotherham & Sons Ltd, a light engineering firm in Leamington Spa covered by the BJA accident cards: as a driller, Edna had pierced her nail with the drill, which had led to sepsis; she was 'rather nervous after this and ran drill thru' 1 F.L.H. 2 F.L.H. [through her first and second fingers of her left hand]'.⁴⁸ Though Edna was not a pressworker, her nerves about returning to the machinery she knew were unsurprising. Her story generates sympathy and makes it easy to infer the emotional recovery Lucy and Sheila must have gone through upon their return to the press. Repetition was therefore key for successful work and respect for it is key today for us to unlock workers' experiences.

The repetition of presswork was mirrored in the repeated injuries to pressworkers' left hands. Figure 3.12 is a chart showing the distribution of pressworkers' injuries across their bodies; injuries to the right side of their bodies are grouped on the right side of the chart and injuries to their left side on the left. The large green segment on the left represents pressworkers' 201 injuries to their left hands, nearly half of the total number of pressworkers' injuries, whilst the large blue segment on the right represents the 105 injuries to their right hands. This distribution aligned with most workers using the press handle with their right hand. Though this group of common injuries related to workers' very individual experiences, their shared experience of work and injury marked the pressworkers as a

⁴⁷ Sheila Jean Hazlehurst, 18 ½, of 35 Smith Street, Hockley, at Henry Owen & Sons Ltd on 3 September 1943 at 16:30 – 'Crushed end of 1st finger left hand. Inattention' – hand press operator, average £2.15.0. Stopped 3 Sep, back 21 Sep. Comp £3.4.2

Iris Lucy Dobbins, 17, of no 4, 25 Sheepcote Street, at E J Clewley & Co on 9 November 1945 at 08:20 – 'Septic index finger left hand. Inattention.' – Press work, £1.18.4. Stopped 9 Nov, back 3 Dec, £3.12.3 comp.

⁴⁸ Edna May Cadwallander, 21, of 3 Union Walk/Road, Leamington Spa, at Rotherham & Sons Ltd on 22 June 1942 – 'Pierced nail following sepsis, rather nervous after this and ran dull chuck? Ran drill thru' 1 F.L.H. 2 F.L.H.' – driller. Stopped 27 July 42, returned Aug 42, comp £5.16.8. – 1.15.0 weekly. 29/7/42 Co state Inspector visited employee on 24th July. Resumed light work on 27/7/42. Gets sepsis again the next year in RH because switch was stiff and greasy and she must have still had her hand in the way when it turned on.

distinct part of the occupational community. Indeed, in Tom Golding's biography of his mother, Rose Golding, he recounted through her eyes an incident with a foot-operated treadle press and her left thumb whilst she was a teenager, and a later similar injury her husband, a silver and gold finisher for J B Round & Co, sustained, and how she related these incidents to the injuries of her peers. Though Rose worked in the early twentieth century, a few decades earlier than the workers of the accident cards, they were connected by their tacit knowledge of work and their injuries.

[O]ne fateful Monday morning I suffered an accident on a press which marked me for life. The presses were serviced and oiled at the week-ends and I prepared to start my operation on the soup ladles. I placed the first blank on the tool bed, pressed the treadle and the tool came back down to complete the operation. As I used my stick to remove the formed metal, the tool came down again trapping the end of my left thumb and the end of the stick.

After receiving first aid I was taken to the Accident Hospital in the firm's van. The doctors spent some time stitching and dressing the wound with assurance that it would be alright in a few weeks. I was certain in my own mind that the accident was not my fault. The pain and throbbing was terrible but it was no use crying. When I returned from the hospital to the firm, the boss Mr. Arter, called me into the office to ask me how it happened. He maintained there was no way the tool could move unless the treadle was used. I was in no condition to argue. It had happened at that was that. He told me how sorry he was that I had been injured, then said I could come in and do odd jobs, making tea, "cobbing up", and errands. My normal wages would be paid until my hand was better, then I could go back on my old operations. [...] "Now I want you to get that hand better and promise me you will be more careful in future." Two months were to pass with several visits to the hospital before I could use my hand normally again. Eventually I resumed work on my old operations and my compensated finery [paid for with a sovereign Mr Arter had given Rose after the accident] lasted for a while, but I was left with a shortened thumb and a peculiar nail to this day.⁴⁹

Rose's story of Mr Arter rebuking her account of events revealed the level of scrutiny management applied to workers' accidents and the up-hill battle workers may have taken on to receive their compensation (though the later Workman's Compensation Act that affected the pressworkers of the accident cards may have gone some way to relieving this pressure). Mr Arter's insistence that Rose was at fault was an example of the way employers problematised the worker and not the process, a practice that health and wellbeing researcher Norma Daykin identified as being common across the rest of the twentieth century.⁵⁰ Tom continued Rose's story with her husband's injury:

⁴⁹ Golding, p. 25-6.

⁵⁰ Norma Daykin, 'Review: Not Only the "Dangerous Trades": Women's Work and Health in Britain 1880-1914 by Barbara Harrison', *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 20.2 (1998), pp. 259-61.

He was just finishing a silver bedstead frame ordered by a wealthy foreigner, assisted by a workmate, when it happened. The frame slipped and my husband's hand hit the [rotating polishing] mop, severing half the index finger on his left hand. As in my own case, this injury took a long time to heal and enable his left hand to be used normally again. It may seem strange today that a married couple could sustain similar injuries and the odds against this happening would be tremendous. But at this time accidents at work were commonplace. [...] In fact it was generally accepted that, unless you had some accident at work and could show it, then you hadn't learned your trade!⁵¹

Rose linked her and her husband's accidents to a workplace rite of passage, a masochistic pride in their experience proven by a 'shortened thumb and a peculiar nail'. Without the physical and mental scars of accidents, Rose implied that a worker's tacit knowledge and identity within the trade could be called into question.

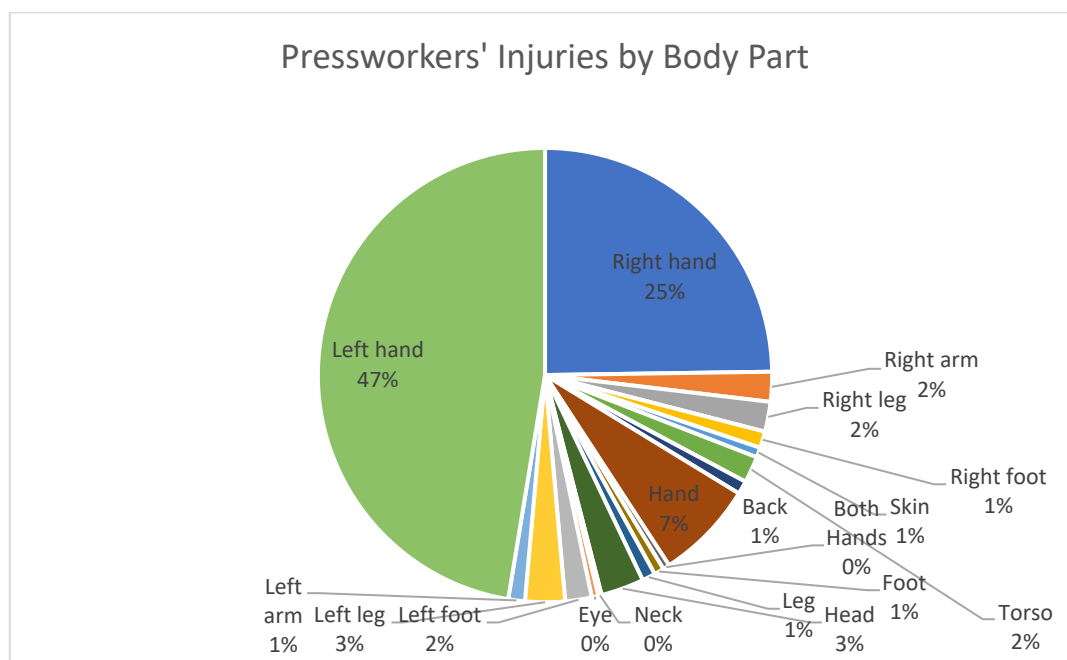


Figure 3.12. A pie chart showing the distribution of pressworkers' injuries by body part. Injuries to the right side of their bodies are grouped on the right of the chart; injuries to the left side of their bodies are grouped on the left of the chart.

British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601

Workers therefore had little choice but to learn the risks inherent to their roles, a trade knowledge that was built up and maintained through repetition. In taking on the risks, workers also devised tactics

⁵¹ Golding, p. 36-7.

to avoid risk and learnt from colleagues how to use repetition to their advantage. For stampers, typically men because of the labour involved, they learnt to work 'off the prop' when stamping designs into thin sheet metal; this technique was efficient and used less of their energy but, like all stamping was dangerous. Figure 3.13 is a photograph of a battery of drop stamps at a workshop in Spring Hill, the northwestern edge of the Jewellery Quarter; figures 3.14 and 3.15 are photographs of the central stamps, one with its hammer and force still in place suspended from the frame of the stamp and above the anvil and poppets (side clamps) of the base, and with their prop handles on the left side of each frame. To prepare the stamp for work, a stamper placed a hardened-steel die with the desired design recessed into it between the four poppets and tightened it in place using the poppet screws. They could then take the required size of sheet metal and place it on top of the die, remove the drop stamp from its prop (the handle to the left side of the frame) and release the force of the hammer onto the metal to leave the imprint of the motif. The dangerous part for the stamper was reaching under the hammer to remove the stamped square. Stampers developed a system of letting the hammer 'bounce' up after it hit the die and securing it quickly with the prop, whilst removing the stamped motif and placing in a new blank, then dislodging the prop and letting the hammer fall again; this process is known as 'working off the prop'. Cornelliuss Sullivan described the process and the risks involved with stamping:

When you do holloware stamping, you take it off the prop, and that's the lever that holds the hammer up when you're not using it, and we call that off the prop working, you only drop it from that height. When you do badges, you drop the hammer from the maximum height, and that's like shotguns going off all the time. You can damage your hearing. [Later] We were given special exemption by the Health and Safety Executive because these machines were dying out anyway. Believe it or not, if you wear ear protection it can be more dangerous, you need to listen to everything that's happening to the machine. Any change in the sounds means that there's something that's come loose. So, they gave us the ear protectors but left it up to us whether to wear them or not. I never wore them myself because it sounded like you were underwater, and you couldn't hear what was going on.⁵²

Working off the prop required exact timing and experience to get right, but once learnt it was a safe system. Cornelliuss, however, pointed to stamping's inherent danger: long-term damage to hearing due to sustained proximity to the stamps' loud bangs, coupled with the understanding amongst stampers that they must listen carefully to the stamp for any sounds that warned them of an issue. This knowledge of their tooling is part of the stampers' tacit knowledge; it enabled them to be skilled at their work and prevent serious short-term injuries. Pressworkers, too, recognised misaligned tools because they left the metal motifs with 'overstruck' blurred edges that should have been shorn

⁵² Cornelliuss Sullivan, People's Archive.

cleanly. A thin washer could be added to the screw thread of the top tool to make it rotate a fraction less, bringing the top and bottom tools either more or less in line, depending on the direction needed. Workers could also feel when a tool was overused because its once-sharp edges had become lightly rounded. By undertaking operations many times, workers learnt to feel and hear when their machines were working well and when they were not. This tacit knowledge helped them to manage the risks of their roles and they used this knowledge to communicate with colleagues in the tool shop to rectify an issue before it became serious. They had adapted themselves to the repetition and so built an understanding of risk.



Figure 3.13. A photograph of a battery of drop stamps at a workshop in Spring Hill, the northwestern edge of the Jewellery Quarter. The central stamp is the only one with its hammer still suspended.

Author's own photograph, 2021.



Figure 3.14. A photograph of the central drop stamp at a workshop in Spring Hill, Birmingham. The hammer is supported by the broken prop handle on the left side of the frame.

Author's own photograph, 2021.



Figure 3.15. A photograph of the base of a drop stamp at a workshop in Spring Hill, Birmingham. The prop handle is visible on the left side of the frame, and on the other stamp to the right. The four poppet screws secured the die with its motif below the hammer.

Author's own photograph, 2021.

Blame and Responsibility

Both repetition and accidental breaks in repetition contributed to workers' tacit knowledge of their craft, but trade leaders weaponised the unexplainable nature of tacit knowledge to place blame and responsibility for risks on the workers. As occupational health historian Barbara Harrison had noted in her study of 'dangerous' roles between 1880 and 1914, roles were gendered based on Victorian ideas of strength and women's susceptibility to injury: heavy stamping for men and lighter presswork for women.⁵³ Following Harrison's argument, if employers had already restricted women to roles considered safe enough for them, these employers then protested that any subsequent injuries through the course of these 'safer' roles were the result of women's non-compliance and apathy.⁵⁴ The accident cards detailing Lucy Dobbins' and Sheila Hazlehurst's injuries due to 'inattention' during presswork are examples of this blame game playing on into the 1940s, rather than a recognition of the part repetition played in their roles and injuries. Despite accepting liability by paying compensation, employers still apportioned blame. When 67-year-old John Miller, a labourer for Elkington & Co Ltd, cut the base of his right-hand index finger when the finger came 'in contact with saw whilst in motion', the note 'action contrary to works orders' was added in brackets to his accident card.⁵⁵ All the cards reference both the physical injury and the description of how it happened; the inclusion of this description demonstrated how firms' attempts to distance themselves from responsibility for injuries was a process built into the system.

Sometimes the insurer's attempts to minimise their clients' responsibility – and so pay out less money – did not work. Leonard Thurman, a young stamper two months away from his 17th birthday, suffered 'Crushed fingers L[eft] H[and]' on 26 January 1944 at jewellers and medallists Turner & Simpson Ltd; after he 'lost 2 fingers', he could only undertake 'casual labour', an assessment refuted by the insurance company that offered a settlement of £175 and advised that Leonard was 'capable of doing pre-accident work but should get medical advice'. When the case went to the courts, a registrar recognised the impact of the injury to Leonard's left hand because he was lefthanded, and so recommended instead a settlement at £300 to £350, to be agreed by Leonard and his father. In the

⁵³ Barbara Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades': Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914* (Taylor & Francis, 1996).

⁵⁴ Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades': Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914*.

⁵⁵ John Miller, 67, of 39 E Great Brook Street, at Elkington & Co Ltd on 21 January 1945 at 15:30 – 'Cut base of index finger right hand. Finger came in contact with saw whilst in motion (action contrary to works orders).' – Labourer, £5.0.6. Stopped 21 Jan, back 12 Apr 45, comp £20.2.6 + £14.5.10 – 'Ceased work again 12/5/45. Reinstate payment of comp from and including May 14 35/- week, from May 24 £2 a week including 10/- SA. 13 weeks. £14.5.10.

end, the company paid out £275.⁵⁶ Leonard's case demonstrated the very real, if surreal, financial value placed on workers' hands and the skills imbued within them.

The payment scheme prioritised the most visible injuries. Legal historian Julia Moses argued in her 2018 work *The First Modern Risk: Workplace Accidents and the Origins of European Social States* that early compensation laws discriminatorily characterised workplace risks through their 'most visible' implications, like the hand injuries pressworkers endured, rather than those that were harder for external parties to see, like 'repetitive strain injuries and industrial diseases encountered by women working in textiles and light manufacturing' – female pressworkers could be included too.⁵⁷ As a result, embryonic social states only began to properly take shape when laws like the Workmen's Compensation Act and its successive amendments, particularly the 1943 amendment, started to recognise the long-term impact on health and identity of the repetition that was fundamental to the experience of much manufacturing work. Moses's identification of the change in the legal recognition of accidents, between those injuries that were more or less visible, aligns with the jewellery industry's move to focus on workers' fatigue and the long-term effects on production in the mid 1940s. The Working Party criticised the industry as a whole for the way it dealt with fatigue in its 1946 report, as they had identified 'a good deal of unnecessary industrial fatigue in a great many workshops, which is good neither for the individual worker nor the efficiency and morale of the industry. This applies especially but not exclusively to the women workers.'⁵⁸ The party singled out female workers because they formed the largest part of the trade engaged in repetitive work; it is also telling of the huge role these women played in the financial success of the industry, as picked out by the party in its reference to efficiency. Its assessment of workers' fatigue levels as 'unnecessary' signalled to the trade readers that lower levels of fatigue were normal and 'necessary' in efficient production. Historian of modern Europe Anson Rabinbach has argued that European and North American societies in the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries conceived of the body as a motor that could be improved to become more efficient, forming a language that became a powerful lens for assessing society.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Leonard Thurman, 16 5/6, of 26 King Edwards Road, Ladywood, at Turner & Simpson Ltd, on 26 January 1944 – 'Crushed fingers LH' – cold stamper, £3.15.0. Stopped 26 Jan, back 3 Mar, £275.0.0 + £9.0.10 – '3/3/44 Mbr says lost 2 fingers, finding suitable job for him at rate of £2.10.0 a week. Co advised, now require to know number of hours a week working. Partial compensation being advised later. Started work again today 3/3/44 (Casual Labour). 29/11/44 Cheque £9.0.10 sent to Mbr. Settled. 25/4/44 Co says £175 settlement. Co says capable of doing pre-accident work but should get medical advice. Advised Mbr of this. 5/7/44 Mbr says agrees £175. Co advised. 14/7/44 Co send agreement for completion by father and employee. Court document and WCA. 21/8/44 Registrar said as boy was left-handed & injury to left hand, thought £300-350. Total payment £275.

⁵⁷ Julia Moses, *The First Modern Risk*, p. 17.

⁵⁸ Board of Trade, p. 50.

⁵⁹ Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

Proponents of this 'science of work' saw fatigue as its main threat; a line the Working Party followed in its report.⁶⁰

There is little sign of the application in this industry of principles which have been established by scientific study and are generally accepted elsewhere. In many places, for instance, where a seat is provided for a woman worker at a machine, she seems in practice either not to use it at all or to use it for a short period at much longer intervals than general principles would suggest to be right and economical. This is no doubt due to established workshop customs; there seems to be no attempt to encourage and help individual workers to find out for themselves by trial and error what is most convenient and least fatiguing. Naturally, working in a shop under the eyes of more experienced workers, few newcomers show much enterprise in this matter themselves. [...] it is certainly easy for the untrained worker to get into habits which do not suit his own build and physical aptitudes [...] The newcomer picks things up for himself by looking at his neighbour, and where everything is a mystery may easily, unless he has unusual self-confidence and very unusual analytic ability, copy idiosyncrasies in a fellow worker, which do nothing but increase his own difficulties and fatigue.⁶¹

The Working Party recognised workers' fatigue as a problem because it affected output efficiency, a stance that gives credence to Rabinbach's characterisation of contemporary manufacturing's concept of the body as a motor. Here, the report writers suggested that using the provided stools for intervals closer to the theorised 'general principles' could help workers at machines to lessen fatigue, but they did not consider that the workers consolidated these workshop standing practices because stools were set to one height that did not match their needs, or that they needed to frequently move around their machines. Increased movement around presses may have also minimised accidents. There must have been a fine balance between the physical fatigue of standing up all day and the mental fatigue of repetitive work; it is not far-fetched to conceive of standing as having been a method for workers to stay more alert and make it less likely that they injure themselves. This tacit knowledge of being in the workshop was highlighted by the Working Party, which criticised the social politics of workshop tacit knowledge instead of identifying aspects of work that trade leaders could change. They problematised the worker rather than the process, as Norma Daykin noted was a trend in twentieth century occupational health rhetoric.⁶² Though it is unsurprising that the Working Party members centred on production efficiency, as trade supervisors they should have also considered the long-term health impacts, like fatigue, that they saw their workers endure; their reaction instead highlighted the

⁶⁰ Donald Reid's summary of Anson Rabinbach's analysis.

Donald Reid, 'Review: The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity by Anson Rabinbach', *The Journal of Modern History*, 65.3 (1993), 594–95.

⁶¹ Board of Trade, p. 50.

⁶² Daykin.

split between trade leaders and workers and particularly the little value leaders gave to workshop knowledge when it did not suit their aims.

The Working Party's dismissal of workshop tacit knowledge revealed trade leaders' non-prioritisation of workers' experiences. Its example of fatigue and reference to workers' unsuitable 'habits' was an identification of workers' tacit knowledge, or trade knowledge. In repetition work, being singled out as working faster or slower than your colleagues could land the whole shop in difficulty and was an impact of not yet knowing the patterns of workshop life. Enameller Kathleen Dayus wrote about her early experiences of work in the trade and how she too quickly picked up the process of blanking brass discs for the liking of her new colleagues, who 'were giving me black looks but I had no idea why'.⁶³

Apparently they were on piecework, although I hadn't realised this, and I had one of the best jobs. / [...] during the morning the forewoman came over to me where I was pressing the brass buttons and offered to put me on piecework like the others, although I hadn't been there as long as you normally had to have been for this to happen. [...] I ignored them [her laughing colleagues] and set to it as hard as I could; so hard that by the end of the week my fingers were bleeding from many cuts I had from the sharp brass discs. The others tried to compete, I suppose they still resented me, but I worked even harder. [...] / The following week the pace began to tell and I had to slow down because I felt tired and lifeless [...] I was in more trouble at work as well. The women crowded round me, jostling me and shouting, making all kinds of threats. I had no idea why until Minnie told me that the piece rates were being cut and it was my fault.⁶⁴

Managing expected workloads was a balance between fatigue, relationships with your colleagues and safe working. Working too quickly could lead to accidents, as 17-year-old stamper Philip David Flint reportedly discovered on 10 January 1944 at Turner & Simpson Ltd when he lacerated the palm of his left hand 'due to overhaste on part of operator'; or speed could annoy colleagues expected to produce at the same pace.⁶⁵ Through repetition, workers developed an understanding, or tacit knowledge, of ways of being in the workshop. By proportioning blame on this trade knowledge of being in the workshop, the Working Party members moved accountability from trade leaders and put it solely on individual workers.

⁶³ Dayus, p. 243.

⁶⁴ Dayus, pp. 243–45.

⁶⁵ Philip David Flint, 17, of 70 Anderton Street, Ladywood, B18, at Turner & Simpson Ltd, on 10 January 1944 at 14:50 – 'Laceration of palm of left hand. Due to overhaste on part of operator' – stamper, £3.1.10. Stopped 10 Jan, back 1 Mar, £12.10.10 – '5% paid for immediate benefits. Resumed light work. Co asks if any loss of wages. £18.13.10 Mbr says paid to him. TC £12.10.10.

Fit for Purpose

Though workers received the blame for their accidents, the system for compensation and treatment left them with little agency for managing their injuries. The clerks wrote on many of the employees' accident cards that they had been 'declared "fit"' by the 'Company Doctor', often with the date of declaration noted; the workers' return to work was typically the day after the date they were 'fit'. The mention of being fit was always written in speech marks as "fit", maybe a small nod from the clerks to fitness being a subjective concept. For the insurers, a worker becoming well enough to return to work stopped compensation payments and, by extension, stopped everyone else having to pay socially and financially for one person's compensation because, as Moses put it, 'accident compensation laws redistributed the chance and effect of individual risks systematically to a wider community'.⁶⁶ For the workers, being 'declared "fit"' forced their return to the workshop. Additional notes on the accident cards gave insights to individual approaches to the concept of being 'fit'. For 22-year-old Helen Joan Statham, a hand press operator at Turner & Simpson Ltd, her pierced nail on her left index finger turned septic and she stopped work on the 13 November 1946; her card details that on the 3 December her firm received a 'Hospital note saying "fit" for work but not yet rtrnd [returned] owing to illness, not connected with accident'.⁶⁷ In Helen's case, she was considered fit in relation to her accident, but still not actually fit enough to work; the mention of her illness paints a picture of workshop life and expectations surrounding attendance. Similarly, 27-year-old Evelyn Conway, a pressworker for fashion jewellers W A P Watson Ltd, crushed the top of her left-hand fourth finger by catching it under the press on the 27 February 1946; she stopped work on the same day and was declared fit a month later on the 1 April, but had 'not resumed on 1/4/46 as advised as husband on demob leave'. Evelyn returned to her press a week later on 8 April 1946.⁶⁸ Like Helen, Evelyn did not return when she was 'fit'; instead, she stayed at home to be with her husband, who had returned from his Armed Forces posting. Though Evelyn's absence was not related to her physical ability to work, it reminds us of the emotional wellbeing of workers, especially female pressworkers with husbands fighting, that was not often captured or valued by the insurance system. Both their continued absences after becoming 'fit' show what little control the workers had in deviating from the doctor's 'fit' date.

⁶⁶ Moses, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Helen Joan Statham, 22, of 36 Graham Street, at Turner & Simpson Ltd, on 13 Nov 1946 at 11:00 – 'Index finger of left hand, nail pierced, turned septic.' – press operator (hand), £3.2.6. Stopped 13 Nov, back 4 Dec, £3.10.0 – 'Extra 5% paid. 3/12/46 Mbr says blank & short weeks holiday taken when husband was demobbed. Hospital note saying "fit" for work but not yet rtrnd owing to illness, not connected with accident.

⁶⁸ Evelyn Conway, 27, at W A P Watson Ltd on 27 February 1946 at 17:30 – 'Crushed top of 4th finger, left hand. Catching finger under press.' – Pressworker. Stopped 27 Feb, back 8 March. 'Res "fit" 1/4/46. Not resumed on 1/4/46 as advised as husband on demob leave. Co advised.

Despite having little control over when the insurer's doctor considered them to be fit, workers were expected to source these 'fit' notes themselves. Florence Donnelly, a hand pressworker for Morton & Crowder Ltd, pinched the first finger of her left hand and tore the nail 'severely' on the 5 November 1945; she stopped work that day and the card details that she was confirmed 'fit' on 3 December. Something must have gone wrong in the next three intervening days – presumably Florence did not return to work – as on the 6 December a note is added to the card: 'Co say sending her to Dr again, but she should have had note herself from surgery stating she was "fit" 3/12/45. Phoned Mbr [member: Morton & Crowder Ltd]'.⁶⁹ It seems that Florence was never given, or chose to ignore, the note from her original doctor's appointment; perhaps she did not feel fit enough to return. Whereas, 53-year-old Mrs Nellie Hancox, a sprayer at fancy metal goods manufacturers David Hollander & Sons, was 'Anxious to resume pre-accident work but dermatologist does not advise' in late September 1944 after being diagnosed with the skin condition dermatitis in mid-May of that year. Nellie's condition was believed to have been 'caused by cleaning spirits used for work' and the insurer enquired with David Hollander & Sons about what other work Nellie could do. With apparently no other work available, the insurance company suggested 'giving old job a trial but at slightest sign of recurrence of trouble cease work at once'. In early October her employer decided to wait for a job in another department to become available and her compensation was given a maximum end date of 14 December 1944.⁷⁰ It is unclear whether Nellie was able to return to work, but the pressure of maintaining an income and a sense of missing the independence that work can bring must have weighed heavily on her. Nellie's intervention in her compensation claim, coupled with Florence's need to find her 'fit' note, demonstrated that workers took control of their recoveries but had little control over when they were considered 'fit'. Ironically, workshop risks should have been the responsibility of the firm but the system placed responsibility for risks on the workers, and recovery should have been left to workers but was taken on by the system.

⁶⁹ Florence Donnelly, 29, of no 4, 172 Hospital Street, B19, at Morton & Crowder Ltd on 5 Nov 1945 at 14:45 – '1st finger, left hand, pinched & nail torn severely.' – hand press, £1.8.6. Stopped 5 Nov 45, £4.18.8 comp. – '5% paid. 5/12/45 Co say "fit" 3/12/45 TC £4.18.8 6/12/45 Co say sending her to Dr again, but she should have had note herself from surgery stating she was "fit" 3/12/45. Phoned Mbr.

⁷⁰ Mrs Nellie Hancox, 53, of 361 Reddings Lane, Hall Green, at David Hollander & Sons, on 12/5/44 first reported – 'Dermatitis. Thinks caused by cleaning spirits used for work.' – sprayer, £1.17.8 average. Stopped 12 May, no return date. Comp £44.10.4, paid 30 Dec 44. – '5% paid for immediate benefits. W.C. Act 1925 sent to Co. 12/8/44 Comp to £1.9.0. 28/9/44 Anxious to resume pre-accident work but dermatologist does not advise. Co asks for description of work they can offer. 2/10/44 Mbr says nothing else to put person on. Co advised. 4/10/44 Co suggest giving old job a trial but at slightest sign of recurrence of trouble cease work at once. Co ask to be advised what transpires. 6/10/44 Mbr says advising employee as soon as a job in another Dept comes along. No further comp to be paid after 14/12/44.

The amended Workmen's Compensation Act, 1943 recognised the impact of work in the build-up of long-term health issues, but the specifics of this ruling left many workers ineligible for compensation.⁷¹ Occupational health historian Tim Carter studied the recognition and then declassification of 'brass poisoning' as an industrial disease in early twentieth-century Birmingham.⁷² Physicians and scientists had recognised a pattern of illness amongst brass workers, but their surveys could not pinpoint its cause nor consistent effects and so it did not qualify for the new list of workplace industrial diseases drawn up in 1906 in time for the next iteration of the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1907. On paper, brass poisoning 'died out'.⁷³ To police this new allowance of industrial diseases, the Factory Inspectorate was strict in its assessment of any illness that could have instead been induced by lifestyle and that could not be tied solely to industrial work.⁷⁴ Dermatitis amongst the jewellers was one of these difficult diseases that was hard to ascribe purely to work. It is triggered by skin contact with an irritant or an immune reaction to an allergen; the red rash and irritated skin symptoms generally reduce when contact is removed, which made dermatitis easier to connect to work but required allowances to their role, like Nellie's case.⁷⁵ The cards' inclusion of five cases of dermatitis as a workplace accident in 1941 and 1942 show that the BJA's insurers recognised it as an 'industrial disease' and worthy of compensation for metalworkers before 1943, but the remaining 20 cases from 1943 to 1946 suggest that it was taken more seriously after its legal recognition in the amendment to the Act. Despite its recognition, employees with dermatitis had to obtain a Certificate under Section 43(1) from the Certifying Surgeon to support their case, with one card specifying that Mrs Betty Mary Mason 'must obtain at own expense a cert from certifying surgeon obtaining medical report', and Edith Flavelle and V L Harvey had to provide the names and addresses of previous employers over the last 12 months to look for similar triggers.⁷⁶ The system did not make it easy to claim compensation for long-term illnesses brought on by work. The 1943 act also based compensation for the loss of limbs on individual's earning power, which disadvantaged younger workers yet to gain high experience and

⁷¹ UK Parliament, 'Workplace Compensation' <<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/tradeindustry/industrycommunity/case-study-so-davies-and-workplace-compensation/workplace-compensation-legislation/>> [accessed 2 October 2022].

⁷² Tim Carter, "'Brass Poisoning' in Birmingham: The Rise and Fall of a Syndrome, 1860-1910", in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950*, ed. by Jonathan Reinarz (Midland History Occasional Publications, 2007), pp. 152-66.

⁷³ Tim Carter, p. 165.

⁷⁴ Tim Carter, p. 166.

⁷⁵ 'Contact Dermatitis', *Nhs.Uk*, 2017 <<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contact-dermatitis/>> [accessed 31 December 2023].

⁷⁶ Mrs Betty Mary Mason, 30, of 54 Gibson Square, London, N1, at Nixons Platers & Enamellers in 1944 - 'Dermatitis.' - Wiring up for plating
Edith Flavelle, 28, of 66 Grantham Road, Sparkbrook, at Roanoid Plastics Ltd in 1945 - 'Dermatitis on arms and hands.' - Plastic moulder
V L Harvey, 24, at Trico Plating Co in 1946 - 'Dermatitis' - Viewer

command high wages, rather than being based on the injury itself and the ongoing issues caused by that injury. With all of the workers with dermatitis moved to other roles and the workers that lost limbs often unable to continue, occupational injuries separated workers from the roles and colleagues they knew and altered their connection to their work.

Conclusion

Whilst the first and second chapters of this thesis focused largely on the self-employed jewellers and workers in smaller workshops, they also recognised that individuals chose to move when needed between working inside and outworking. This chapter has turned to the experience of being inside, or indoors, in these larger workshops and factories. Other trade histories have not pursued this side of the trade, likely due in part to a lack of respect for fashion jewellery's place in the industry. Histories have therefore evaded the input of thousands of workers and not given weight to their experiences of the trade. Engaging with these pressworkers, stampers, labourers, toolmakers, administrative staff and others through their employee accident cards provided a privileged insight to their lives.

The beginning of this chapter looked for trade patterns through the cards and revealed a gender divide in the roles workers took on, the pay they received and the risk they endured. The BJA's compensation scheme to some extent benefitted women, as amongst claims worth under £10 they received larger payouts despite earning less than men. Women undertook presswork, which had a pay cap, and accidents from this work often affected their hands, leaving the women with no options for undertaking other work whilst they healed. Their higher compensation reflected the severity of their accidents, both in terms of physical injury and loss of earnings. The second part of this chapter contextualised this new trade insight by comparing it to individuals' stories to gain a more holistic understanding of how workers conceived of their value. By highlighting individual workers' cases and making comparisons with the experiences of their peers, this chapter has demonstrated the benefit of working with these accident cards on multiple levels. This approach built a route towards understanding identity across an industry. It has also contributed a new example to the history of Birmingham's healthcare, one that prioritised the city's workers rather than prestige projects, as Jonathan Reinartz called for.⁷⁷

Their experiences of work have underlined the importance of reassessing the role of repetition. Instead of decrying presswork and other processes that required repetitive movements from the workers as dull or insignificant, we must respect the repetition and afford it its part in building tacit

⁷⁷ Jonathan Reinartz, 'Industry and Illness: Investing in Health and Medical Provision', p. 257.

knowledge. Accidents happened when workers took what they had learned from repetition for granted. Workers' acceptance that they had to sustain an injury to know their trade was a reaction to managers hiding behind foreseeable risks and making their workers feel like they should accept responsibility – like accidents attributed to workers' non-compliance and apathy. Workers had therefore learnt to respect repetition because workshop risks were not lessened by their employers. As a result, we can continue to agree with both Julia Moses and Barbara Harrison that particular processes in the industry carried inherent risks and the ongoing gendering of roles connected the risks of specific processes with specific roles. Workers understood their role and its risks by learning from their more experienced peers. Rationalising their injuries by comparing them to a rite of passage socialised the workers within their occupational community and was another tenet of their tacit knowledge that built their occupational identity.

Identity

Recognising what it meant to invoke a shared and enduring occupational identity in the jewellery industry

This final chapter has a different pace from its three preceding chapters. The first chapters introduced new sources in the history of the Jewellery Quarter to establish patterns in how jewellers approached their work and their trade in the 1940s and 1950s. This final chapter ties together these patterns and particularly focuses on instances when jewellers' invocation of their identity came to the fore. Often, these instances highlighted the intersection of identity characteristics, like the combination of gender, age, generation, family, location, tacit knowledge, work position, role and trade hierarchy. This chapter goes back to the root of this research: what did it mean to identify as a jeweller in this period?

This research considers social identity amongst people, rather than the wider identity of forms and meanings. The beginning of this chapter turns to concepts of identity in philosophy, social psychology and sociology that relate to the conclusions of the preceding chapters. Philosophers of the twentieth century, like Martin Heidegger, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida, amongst others, turned to 'difference' instead of identity to recognise the more basic and positive elements of entities rather than just those elements that are spotlighted when comparing multiple entities. Theories from sociology and anthropology provide useful interpretation of philosophy's ideas of identity formation. A sociological emphasis on identity stresses the benefit of comparisons because they reveal the features individuals have chosen to compare at a specific time. This chapter questions the aspects of themselves and others that the jewellers chose to compare in their identifications of the trade and how they reformulated these comparisons during the war work and restrictions of the 1940s and 1950s. Discussion particularly turns to the writing on identity of sociologist Stuart Hall, who was also a resident of Birmingham and the celebrated president of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. Hall believed that identity is a process, one in which we draw on our material and symbolic resources within historical and institutional sites to make identifications that are specific to a place and time; as such, he emphasised the 'becoming' inherent in identity as opposed to the 'Being' in difference. It is important then to recognise the specific boundaries jewellers drew and redrew around their concept of 'trade' during the 1940s and 1950s as societal and occupational changes rerouted their identity processes.

Hall called on the psychoanalytical term 'suture', or an intersection, to theorise that identities are the meeting point between discourses and practices.¹ This chapter follows the intertwining of social, personal and professional identities by recognising these sutures in the jewellers' work, workshops and in the Quarter. Following an introduction to Hall's theory of identifications, the chapter has three main sections: Roots and Routes, Essential Luxury and Vocation. Roots and Routes builds on Hall's use of these homophones to stress the paths and processes of identity building – this thesis is part of a lineage of homonym use, from Derrida to Hall. The first chapter, Discretion, demonstrated the importance jewellers placed on their routes into the trade, which often included their familial roots; this chapter further problematises the enduring effects of the war on traditional routes to the industry and the distinctions the trade made between the identities of new and experienced workers. The physical and social proximity of these workers in the Jewellery Quarter remained through this period of different production and helped them to sediment boundaries and markers of their occupational community so that their alignment remained strong even and especially when members moved to home workshops or war work. Their work itself was spatially mediated through interactions with materials, tools and repetitive physical movements that built tacit knowledge of their trade, whilst they reinforced the social aspect of this tacit knowledge through visiting social spaces like pubs, cafes and canteens. The spaces of the Jewellery Quarter, whether primarily for work or socialising, continued to act as a symbolic boundary of tacit knowledge and group identity. An identification of being 'trade' or 'non-trade' was always made in sight of this occupational community that linked trade members materially, socially and spatially.

Essential Luxury uses this oxymoron applied to the jewellers' work in the 1940s – and by extension to them – to focus on jewellers' sense of value in this period. Traditional hierarchies of materials and roles in the industry classified the jewellers and their work, which contextualises their reactions to the material restrictions of the time. This section also questions why business theory roots flexibility in economic success, as the jewellers successfully navigated restrictions by being flexible and adapting to work through loopholes to sustain their work, buoyed by their belief in the trade's 'boom and bust' nature rather than immediate economic success.

The reassurance the jewellers took in the cyclical nature of their trade fed their framing of their work as vocation. The final section Vocation considers the many instances when jewellers referred to their

¹ Working from a Lacanian perspective, Jacques-Alain Miller first proposed 'suture' as a term within psychoanalysis, from where film theorists carried the term into cinema studies. Stuart Hall referenced the further work of Stephen Heath, who worked through Miller's 'suture' in his *Notes on Suture* (1977/8) and in his 1981 *Questions of Cinema*. Stuart Hall, 'Introduction: Who Needs "Identity"?', in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1996), pp. 1–17 (pp. 5-6).

work as more than a job, as well as what it meant to work through wartime. The concept of vocation gives weight to their tacit knowledge of ways of 'becoming' in the workshop and in their occupational community. They valued the discretion, trust, conviction, repetition and risk they encountered in and applied to their work experiences, and it shaped their identifications of themselves and their colleagues. The trade still holds this generation of craftspeople in high esteem, and their memories of them reveal aspects of occupational identity that continue to resonate today.

Identity

We build our identities in relation to others. Whilst early psychology began with a focus on the self, or ego, since the mid-twentieth century, proponents of social psychology have followed sociology's opposition of this individualism and progressed concepts of identity that recognise that human behaviour is embedded within structured social situations.² In the 1970s, influential social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner pioneered social identity theory, in which they proposed that our 'social identity' is fed by group membership because we self-categorise based on groups we interact with and that we consider to be different from ourselves. In his extensive writing on social identity theory, Tajfel described social identity as 'that *part* of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership'.³ Tajfel's reference to 'their knowledge of their membership' implied that for individuals to know that they are part of a group, they have to be recognised by that group; our recognition of our group membership is an iterative process stimulated by the context around us. Considering the instances in which jewellers invoked their trade involvement reveals how they and why they valued this group membership.

The recognition of difference and equivalence inherent in identity has been at the centre of a century of debate within philosophy – Stuart Hall built his theory of identification within, and in relation to, this debate. Many identity theorists built upon phenomenological philosopher Martin Heidegger's 1927 concept of 'Being-in-the-world', in which the self dwells in familiarity; because we inhabit our familiarity, we cannot notice it and could only properly encounter it from the outside, which is

² Muzafer Sherif, 'Introduction', in *Social Psychology at the Crossroads*, ed. by John H Rohrer and Muzafer Sherif (New York: Harper, 1951), pp. 1–28 (p. 1).

Though many sociologists and anthropologists have distanced themselves from social psychology's overly structuralist description of the collective, few contest that identity is socially created. The fixed sense of self, a primordialist approach that rooted self and belonging in ideas of shared ancestry and biological characteristics, has long since been relegated.

³ Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 255.

therefore impossible.⁴ However, disruptions break this boundary and give insight to ourselves through sameness and difference from other beings (people, objects, substances); these disruptions can therefore be productive.⁵ Fellow philosopher Gilles Deleuze referred to this disruption – when our familiar becomes unfamiliar – as an ‘encounter’ in his 1968 *Difference and Repetition*.⁶ When we think of these ruptures as moments of identity building, they include recognition of difference and sameness, an act that Deleuze stressed is not about negation but affirmation. Deleuze built a philosophy of difference, rather than identity, because he argued that difference does not exist only in the comparison of two entities, it is more fundamental: the features we choose to compare are never concrete and there are many more features we could have selected. Difference is not secondary to identity, he stressed; it comes before identity.⁷ The features we focus on in a particular moment structure our explanations, or identifications, of the entities. Following identity rather than its root, difference, focuses us on how, why, and when we recognise and choose to react to specific differences over others. Sociologist and cultural theorist Stuart Hall worked with this sense of identity as a productive affirmation of difference.⁸ He turned to the term ‘identification’ to refer to the individual acts of comparison routed in a specific time and place. Identity is, therefore, a process and he argued for the recognition of a ‘discursive approach [that] sees identification as a construction, a process never completed – always “in process”’, thereby acknowledging the social basis of identity building

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time [Sein Und Zeit]*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Blackwell, 1962).

For Heidegger, the capitalised ‘Being’ distinguished the verb to be, a dwelling in time; whilst the lower-case ‘being’ referred to the noun that collectively describes all living things, objects and substances.

⁵ Heidegger presented the productive nature of these ruptures in one of his three modes of Being (or existing): readiness-to-hand, and its interlocuter un-readiness-to hand. Readiness-to-hand is our practical relation to another being when we no longer recognise them as objects or beings themselves and only as their function, like we do with tools; when tools wear, break or do not function as we expect them to, they attract our attention as beings again – their conspicuousness makes them un-ready-to-hand. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger identified three modes of Being: presence-at-hand (of objects and substances), readiness-to-hand (of equipment) and existence (‘Dasein’, the mode of being of people, animals, life).

Heidegger, p. 103.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition (Différence et Répétition)*, trans. by Paul Patton (Columbia University Press (Presses Universitaires de France), 1994).

⁷ These differences can be repeated, and the act of repetition also does not include comparison; rather than creating second, third and fourth versions, repetition creates the same entity afresh – a repetition, not a resemblance. This philosophical repetition is abstracted from the repetition workers enacted in production, but it stresses the difference inherent in every act and the redoing of these acts that is inherent in becoming, like the role of the repetition of processes and tacit knowledge in the building of workers’ sense of value. See: Daniela Angelucci, ‘Repetition’, *Deleuze Studies*, 8.3 (2014), pp. 375–82 (p. 375).

⁸ Stuart Hall, ‘Introduction: Who Needs “Identity”?’’, pp. 1–17.

In his discussion of the role of difference in identity building, Stuart Hall also referenced Jacques Derrida, who wrote about ‘différance’, the homophone of ‘difference’, and the opportunities that can lie in the unknown between the two spellings when either/both is pronounced aloud.

Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 4 <<https://web.stanford.edu/class/history34q/readings/Derrida/Différance.html>> [accessed 5 March 2023].

through discourse.⁹ Hall's reference to discourse built upon linguistics' Discourse Analysis. Language theorist James Gee developed the idea of discourses as 'ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes'.¹⁰ He posited that through learning we become integrated in certain social or professional fields because we have begun not only to know about the discourse in which we are involved, but to also know from within the discourse, much like Polanyi's notion of tacit knowledge being a dwelling in knowledge.¹¹ Hall emphasised the conversational nature of discourses and that our identifications are constructed at the intersection or 'suture' – a psychoanalytical term – of multiple discourses and practices; they are thus always the recognition of the position we have assumed in a particular context.¹² For the jewellers, their discourses had both material and social subjects: their metals, tools, workshops and colleagues. They relied on their established discourses during the 1940s and 1950s and, though they adapted and developed new discourses in relation to the restrictions on the trade, they expected new members of the workshop to learn the established discourses quickly and fit in. Difference must be affirmed, and it adds layers to our sense of identity.

More than being in the world, Hall emphasised that he saw identification as a 'process of becoming, rather than being'; identification is not, then, solely the lived amalgamation of our histories, it is the ongoing recognition and enacted understanding of these histories, languages and cultures.¹³ Hall's distinction between 'being' and 'becoming' thus incorporated, and gave importance to, the reflexive process – even and most often subconsciously undertaken – of considering how every interaction we have forces us to reconsider or reaffirm our understanding of ourselves. Identifications, then, are never fixed, and Hall shared this approach to the identity process with feminist theorist Judith Butler, who wrote three years before Hall, in 1993, that identifications are 'incessantly reconstituted' and, as a result, also 'constantly marshalled, consolidated, retrenched, contested and, on occasion, compelled to give way'.¹⁴ As jewellers undertook war work, their peers conscripted and sent to the front line and their materials limited, they also – to borrow from Butler – 'marshalled, consolidated, retrenched and

⁹ Stuart Hall, 'Introduction: Who Needs "Identity"?', p. 2.

¹⁰ James Paul Gee, 'Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction', *Journal of Education*, 171.1 (1989), pp. 5–17 (pp. 6–7).

¹¹ Gee, p. 6; Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

¹² Hall, p. 6.

Working from a Lacanian perspective, Jacques-Alain Miller first proposed 'suture' as a term within psychoanalysis, from where film theorists carried the term into cinema studies. Stuart Hall referenced the further work of Stephen Heath, who worked through Miller's 'suture' in his *Notes on Suture* (1977/8) and in his 1981 *Questions of Cinema*.

Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (London: Red Globe Press), p. 76.

¹³ Hall, p. 4.

¹⁴ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), p. 105.

contested' identifications of themselves and their colleagues. The question remains, though, with these changes in the trade, did these jewellers ever feel that their identification as a jeweller was 'compelled to give way'?

In attempting to answer this question, we must consider ways of understanding jewellers' appraisal of identifications in their building of identity. In his outline of identification, Hall specified that we turn to the 'resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming'.¹⁵ We should expand Hall's cultural resources to include material culture and technology, crucial elements in the jewellers' framework of becoming. These resources help us form representations of ourselves, but these representations are 'produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices' – we call on different resources in different contexts based on the discourses we are part of.¹⁶ Work was such an emphasised component of life in the 1940s – partly due to the overriding national rhetoric of 'doing your bit' to help the country through war and austerity – that work undoubtedly became one of the multiple sites and discourses in identity appraisal. Indeed, Everett Hughes, an often-referenced theorist amongst organisational identity studies, wrote in 1951 that work was axiomatic to identity: 'a man's work is one of the more important parts of his social identity, of his self, indeed of his fate, in the one life he has to live'.¹⁷ We should now take a more nuanced approach to the link between work and identity, as work is not universally axiomatic to our sense of self and it likely neither was for everyone in the 1940s and 1950s, but Hughes reflected the contemporary approach to both work and identity. From Hughes, the discipline of organisational identity has continued to argue that work has been, if not quite axiomatic, at least critical to our identifications.¹⁸ John Van Maanen argued in 2010, for instance, that work is a 'natural locale' for the study of identity because we spend so much of our adult life in work.¹⁹ Given that the accident cards described the youngest workers as being 14 years old, like Lily Mellington who was a 'girl straight from school', your working life also began much earlier in the 1940s than today. Van Maanen theorised that

¹⁵ Hall, p. 4.

¹⁶ Hall, p. 4.

¹⁷ Muzafer Sherif also quoted this line from Hughes in the introduction to the edited book in which Hughes's chapter appeared.

Sherif, p. 23; Everett C Hughes, 'Work and the Self', in *Social Psychology at the Crossroads*, ed. by John H Rohrer and Muzafer Sherif (New York: Harper, 1951).

See also: Everett C Hughes, *Men and Their Work* (Glencoe Ill Free Press, 1958).

¹⁸ See, for example, Barbara Czarniawska, who argued that organisation is the narrative in our identities, plus Miriam Erez and P Christopher Earley.

Barbara Czarniawska, *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); Miriam Erez and P Christopher Earley, *Culture, Self-Identity, and Work* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹⁹ John Van Maanen, 'Identity Work and Control in Occupational Communities', in *Organizational Control*, ed. by Sim B Sitkin, Laura B Cardinal, and Katinka M Bijlsma-Frankema (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 111–66 (p. 111).

the ways work bestows meaning on the self fall into two types: historical and institutional processes that have built over time to create a relatively stable ordering of occupational status by prestige; and ways that emerge from day-to-day work, and so relate much more to the individual.²⁰ Van Maanen recognised the ordering of occupational status on a much broader societal level where longstanding ideas of traditional occupations perpetuate; applying the idea of occupational status within an occupation, like the hierarchy of skill in workshops from apprentice to skilled foreman, is only useful when we recognise the role of the individual, as a group member of a trade, in building and reinforcing this order. Here, Hall's stress on the role of identifications is important as it recognises the power a worker has in taking their day-to-day experiences and specialised expertise (or resources) and using them to reinforce or subvert the historical and institutional processes. This careful and considered, albeit sometimes subconscious, invocation of resources, contexts and discourses is an act of discretion in our identity building.

In turn, considering experiences and skill as 'resources' provides the historian with a useful way into studying identity, as historians are accustomed to recognising historical and institutional sites, identifying potential sources and acting with discretion in their interpretation. If the jewellers drew upon their historical, linguistic and cultural resources in their identity building within the trade of the 1940s and 1950s Jewellery Quarter, we, too, can look for these resources. When jeweller Martin Chaplain spoke of 'the web' of trade members – 'casters, stampers, setters, polishers, platers, finishers, you know?' – he implicitly spoke also of the web of resources: the jewellers' material and social networks at the core of their experiences and identities.²¹ This web of the 1940s and 1950s Jewellery Quarter came with its rules of the trade: routes to access restricted metals purposefully hidden within networks of trust; familial relations, whether created through shared blood or shared time, that were mimicked in the formerly-domestic workshop buildings; and the tacit knowledge that told you how to make and behave in the workshop. By recognising these resources, jewellers sustained them, either as important components of the trade structure today, or as references and memories recorded in interviews, memoirs and trade publications. Their importance has both ensured their survival in the historical record and, reciprocally, reinforced their value for efforts to understand the jewellers' world of the 1940s and 1950s.

Hall's concept of using the resources of history, language and culture in identity construction is an exciting provocation for the design historian as well as a useful tool, as there is no limit to the type or form these resources and discourses can take. Materials, objects and systems of knowledge – the tools

²⁰ Van Maanen.

²¹ Martin Chaplain.

of design historians – fall within the scope of these resources. Indeed, Hall particularly referred to the ‘material and symbolic resources required to sustain it [identity]’, to which we can include tacit knowledge.²² By learning material and social ways of ‘becoming’ in the workshop, jewellers constructed a tacit knowledge of their trade, akin to a practice constituted by ‘structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*’, as theorist Pierre Bourdieu put forward.²³ In their construction of knowledge and identity, the jewellers learnt their trade, or tacit knowledge, through weeks to years spent repeating specific manufacturing steps surrounded by colleagues. As Bernard Hussey spent his first three weeks in the trade making hundreds of loops of metal to top lockets, learning particular processes structured jewellers’ tacit knowledge of the craft; they learnt both how to make something and how to take orders from their foreman. The learning process structured your knowledge and structured the trade through experience and skill. Though jewellers made very different items during the 1940s, their making processes, including the making of the workshop social system, remained largely the same.

This research project’s focus on habitus and the experience of work is shared by researchers of organisational identity, who have taken a social-constructionist approach to argue that workers actively shape the tasks and social relationships that make up their job.²⁴ Jewellers’ ongoing reshaping of work tasks and relationships mirrored their ongoing building and reappraisal of identity. Their physical production of work – the repeated reshaping of malleable metal – was an implicit metaphor for their social construction of identity. Following the material and symbolic resources they turned to in the creation of their habitus in turn brings us closer to understanding their experience of work and their concepts of identity.

Roots and Routes

Identity, as a process of becoming, is more concerned with how we understand re-presentations of ourselves than how we present ourselves. Stuart Hall reiterated that identities are ‘constituted within, not outside representation’: they are the enmeshing of how we understand others to have represented us and how we choose to represent ourselves in response – part of the discourse Hall

²² Hall, p. 2.

²³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 52.

²⁴ Wrzesniewski and Dutton outlined a theory of social constructionism in relation to work experience in their introduction to organisational research. Organisations are intrinsically linked to occupational identity and, therefore, is an important focus in this project.

Amy Wrzesniewski and Jane E Dutton, ‘Crafting a Job: Revisioning Employees as Active Crafters of Their Work’, *The Academy of Management Review*, 26.2 (2001), 179–201.

attested to.²⁵ As a result, Hall turned to the homophones 'root' and 'route' to explain his believed impact of representation: the process of self-identification, of building identity, is 'not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our "routes"'.²⁶ Whilst Hall's concept of 'return to roots' could include both biological ancestry as well as socially built familial ties, he crucially rejected this idea of solely looking back in identity formation; instead, with his 'coming-to-terms-with our "routes"', he emphasised that it is our reaction to our decisions and experiences through life, which could include looking back, that we build aspects of our identity on. Just as the differentiation between the homophones 'discrete' and 'discreet' has been a useful conceptual tool in the building of discretion as a methodology to understand the jewellers' experiences, the differentiation between 'roots' and 'routes' is a valuable reminder to question established notions about the trade, particularly related to the role of family. Family, or roots, is a traditional focus in histories of the Jewellery Quarter, but one that should be problematised to understand the force of familial power in jewellers' identity formation in the 1940s and 1950s. Turning to jewellers' reactions to their routes into and through the trade, which we can trace through their material and social experiences, we can assess the role of family and of other powerful 'resources' in the jewellers' representations of themselves.

From B H Britton & Sons to Ward Brothers, the names of Jewellery Quarter firms point to the familial basis of the trade. Though the names may have referred to sibling or parent-and-child relationships from previous generations, the jewellers of the 1940s and 1950s were surrounded by reminders of the trade's familial roots; it would be easy, then, to follow their 'roots' in our assessments of the importance of family in the trade, but considering trade members' 'routes' instead pushes us to assess how they chose to engage with their roots and their impact on their sense of occupational identity. As historian Carl Chinn emphasised in his short text about the Jewellery Quarter, in mid-nineteenth-century Birmingham, jewellery making was one of the four main trades in the city; the large number of people engaged in this dominant trade meant that it was common for many proceeding generations to have had jewellers in the family and as neighbours, especially at a time when it was customary for your family to live nearby as neighbours.²⁷ Indeed, the marked map in the first chapter of this thesis (figure 1.10) revealed the domestic clustering of trade members as well as their occupational clustering. The 11 pairs of shared surnames and addresses of workers covered by the accident cards confirmed that parents, children and siblings worked in the trade together; 10 of these familial pairs

²⁵ Hall, p. 4.

²⁶ Hall.

²⁷ Brenda Bullock wrote of her memories of her aunts and grandparents all living in the same cul-de-sac as her and her parents. During the war, she recalled running between the houses, as the women helped each other with childcare.
Bullock.

worked for the same company as each other, which implied that employed family members learnt of vacancies and shared them with siblings, children, cousins and parents, as well as putting in a positive word about their family member to their employer. Of the 21 workers with known ages in these pairs, over half (14 workers) were aged 20 or under when injured; the young age of trade members in these workshops during the early 1940s revealed that in times of job uncertainty, the trade still provided work options that followed familial ties. As jewellers believed in the trade's continuity through families, they carried with them an implicit acknowledgement that there would always be work for them because they were from, as Martin Chaplain put it, a 'jewellery family'.²⁸ In 1950, the production of 'miscellaneous metal goods' was the largest employer of both the city's male and female youth, employing 25 per cent of under-20-year-olds.²⁹ As part of this broader metalwork industry, the jewellery trade was still an obvious and open route for the city's young workers.

Familial routes into the trade recur in jewellers' testimonies. Kenneth Chaplain listed the members of his family that had been part of the trade: his parents, who established their own plating firm, three grandparents and all his great uncles on one side, plus his two children, Martin and Grant.³⁰ Similarly, Rod Mossop, who made diamond brooches for Alabaster & Wilson, was also the third generation of his family to be in the trade; however, he proceeded from his aunt and great uncle, rather than through a parental connection.³¹ Though the pressure of inheriting a family business may have been felt more strongly by the children of the current holders than by their nieces and nephews, it would be reductive to say that Rod took more of an active decision to join the trade after his aunt and great uncle than Kenneth did by following his parents; both had close family members who told them about their work and took them to the Jewellery Quarter. Trade members recounted a sense of being able to get jobs for family members, as Linda and Tony Hackett confirmed, but, in turn, felt responsible for the standard of their relation's work output, like Bernard's brother taking on Bernard as an apprentice.³² Working with your family thus blurred the lines of what it meant to be employed in the jewellery trade and made self-employed outworking in small familial groups seem a viable and relatively simple extension of their existing day-to-day work structure. By referring to their families repeatedly in interviews and memoirs, jewellers have shown that they continually chose their roots as routes in their process of becoming.

²⁸ Martin Chaplain.

²⁹ The report distinguished miscellaneous metal goods production, which would have included jewellery production, from metal manufacturers generally. Reed, p. 12.

³⁰ Kenneth Chaplain.

³¹ Mossop.

³² Hackett, Hackett, and Sullivan; Hussey.

The Second World War disrupted these routes, as military conscription and war work separated families from each other and their occupations and routines. Despite making different items for the armed forces, the remaining jewellers, however, continued to pursue many of their routes to maintain their occupational identities. Dennis Owens, for example, met his future jewellery colleagues when they noticed his skills whilst working alongside one another using automatic screw-making lathes at Braston Parts.³³ Neither had been conscripted for active combat because their metalwork skills were so desirable for the war effort, and they had been grouped together in this alternative production through which they maintained the skill- and trust-based relationships on which the jewellery industry was based – the traditional practice of job opportunities spreading through word of mouth continued. Despite and even because of not making jewellery other than repair work, they remained loyal to a trade that, at the time, did not really exist.

Their loyalty to their trade bolstered jewellers' concepts of their identity. They strengthened and reified their idea of what it meant to be a jeweller in the 1940s and 1950s because trade members relied on the longstanding distinctions they created between trade and non-trade individuals. Judith Butler characterised the effect of difference on identifications and the power of group inclusion:

[I]dentifications belong to the imaginary; they are phantasmatic efforts of alignment, loyalty, ambiguous and cross-corporeal cohabitation; they unsettle the 'I'; they are the sedimentation of the 'we' in the constitution of any 'I', the structuring presence of alterity in the very formulation of the 'I'.³⁴

The imaginary nature of identifications, Butler argued, makes them all the more important to study because they reveal the group mentality behind these efforts of alignment. In identity's process of becoming, the sense of 'we', or 'us' and 'them', is constantly built upon, condensed or sedimented over time through reinforced ideas of difference – though a productive difference of affirmation. To be loyal to a group and to an identification of commonality amongst the group is to create difference and exclusion. Diversity scholar Paul James argued that 'negotiating ontological difference is foundational to what it means to be human', so efforts of alignment and loyalty are the unavoidable process we engage in when making identifications of ourselves and others.³⁵ These jewellers inevitably engaged in group comparisons that produced difference and exclusion in the workshop because their identifications were shaped and reinforced in the social and material discourse of the workshop. Paul Podolsky explained that, in the wake of the early conscription of young male colleagues from workshops, the Ministry of Labour redirected new workers, many of them female, towards workshops

³³ Owens.

³⁴ Butler, p. 105.

³⁵ Paul James, 'Despite the Terrors of Typologies: The Importance of Understanding Categories of Difference and Identity', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 17.2 (2015), 174–95 (p. 174).

that could undertake useful production. Paul recalled that he was put in charge of ten women through labour redirection, who 'were good workers, all of them', but '[t]hey came from anywhere, they weren't in the trade'.³⁶ By specifying that these new workers were not from the trade, despite there being no opportunity to be engaged on trade work at the time anyway, Paul revealed a deep-set distinction between workers in jewellery workshops during the early 1940s: those that had experience of the trade and those that did not. Paul's story also highlighted one of the many instances when trade identity and gender identity intersected. Though women had long made up a large proportion of the fashion jewellery workforce in the trade, their increased presence in smaller workshops through war work highlighted gender more than before.

The need to have multiple jobs to make up for absent family members at this time drew some workers' gender and trade identities into greater contrast. The employee accident cards detailed that many female workers juggled multiple jobs with the effect of further separating the existing jewellers from their new colleagues. Mrs Sarah Thomas, who caught both of her index fingers in a press in 1943, worked part-time on a press and part-time as a bus conductress. Her proscribed diagnosis of being in 'want of previous experience' implied that she was a new recruit to presswork at the W H Collins & Co Ltd workshop and we can infer that she had sought a job in the Jewellery Quarter to complement her work on the buses, potentially to provide a greater income for her family. Like Paul, Sarah's colleagues may have branded her as being not from the trade and themselves as 'trade'. Having 'trade' and 'non-trade workers' undertaking the same tasks in war work allowed workers to distinguish themselves by their existing skills and previous experience of workshop life; in smaller workshops, this comparison of expertise also ran along the gender divide. United by being 'trade', despite this identification incorporating a range of skills and processes, existing trade members like Dennis and Paul demonstrated a stronger sense of occupational identity when they were not undertaking their normal jewellery work and were surrounded by new, 'non-trade' makers. That they were carrying out only limited jewellery production at this time pointed to the speculative nature of identifying as a jeweller, but, in turn, also to its sustained importance in workshop hierarchies and attitudes, which affected day-to-day experience of work in the Jewellery Quarter in the 1940s. Through their war work, existing jewellers continued to be linked by proximity, trade knowledge, reputation and discretion, especially because they contrasted their knowledge to that of their new colleagues; each was equally aware of their individual, but shared, identity of being a jeweller in this period and suggests that they shared a desire to escape 'back' to non-war-based identities. This enduring sense of being a jeweller suggested

³⁶ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

that they recognised the value of their trade system when everything else was changing and chose to continue it; to borrow from Hall: they came to terms with their routes and pursued them.

The differentiation between trade and non-trade was also reflected in the intersection of identity and age cohort. Cultural theorist Raymond Williams noted a rapid change in vocabulary meaning and usage during the Second World War, which became the impetus for his book *Keywords*, 'a record of an enquiry into a vocabulary'.³⁷ He framed this linguistic development in the contrast he saw between the generation of people that had remained in the UK during the war with those that had been overseas, which implicitly contrasted the youth that had worked through the war and those that had been too young. Williams pointed to a shortening of generational spans, which leaders of the jewellery industry had worried would manifest in a divide amongst workers by age and experience. Silversmith to HM Queen Mary, Albert Carter warned in 1943 that 'there will be a large number of youths who have been engaged on repetition machine operations during the war. These youths have had no training that will fit them for peace-time industry'.³⁸ Yet, the ongoing restrictions meant that this 'peace-time industry' had no definitive starting point and workers were absorbed into the trade following established social patterns that valued knowledge of being and becoming in the workshop as much as technical knowledge.

As the process of becoming involves the concomitant acts of comparison and exclusion, identity formation also creates boundaries, and continues to do so through constant reassessment. Hall referred to this group-based 'discursive work' as 'the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries'.³⁹ Jewellers marked their boundaries by recognising each other's skill and material knowledge. Their boundaries, albeit movable and porous, delineated their occupational community. Though the occupational community of the Jewellery Quarter had primarily social and material foundations, its well-known geographical boundaries reified its symbolic boundaries. The spatial implications of the Jewellery Quarter had a profound effect on its workers' sense of occupational identity and their ability to identify fellow trade members. In their 2012 thesis, Kang Sun argued for the importance of space in the formation of class identity amongst workers at an electronic parts factory in Shenzhen, China; the workers' daily spatially mediated activities, including living in dormitories, operated as material forms of the social production of identity.⁴⁰ A similar focus on the daily patterns and experiences of

³⁷ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Second (Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 15.

³⁸ Albert Carter, p. 9.

³⁹ Hall, p. 3.

⁴⁰ Kang Sun, 'Manufacturing Identity: Peasant Workers' Spatial Production in China' (Bowling Green State University, 2012) <<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1086351689?accountid=28521&pq-origsite=summon>> [accessed 26 February 2023].

work in the Jewellery Quarter reveals how much of it was mediated by space; indeed, spatial elements of the Quarter were often jewellers' first takeaways from interactions with the trade. Rod Mossop and Kenneth Chaplain, both from 'jewellery families', recalled being taken on walks round the Quarter as young children and so were socialised in this distinct clustering of workshops. Likewise, Dennis Owens and Bernard Hussey spoke of not knowing what they wanted to do as a career, but were persuaded by their father and brother, respectively, to try the jewellery trade, having been around the Quarter during their youth with friends and family members already embedded in the trade.⁴¹ On these walks, they climbed the stairs of former houses to reach landings with doors leading to separate workshops, but home to tenant workers united by shared jobs in which they carried out different tasks each – like Dennis and his 'greatest setter in the world' upstairs.⁴² Just like bedrooms in a familial home, the jewellers occupied shared addresses across the Quarter and continued to inhabit the side-by-side working conditions and relationships that mimicked those of the familial home. The residential areas of Ladywood and Spring Hill to the west and Handsworth to the north, plus the developing heavier industrial area of New Town to the east, did not have the same full conversion from domestic to commercial premises and thus differentiated the light industry of the Jewellery Quarter by building use and geography. These worlds were their historical and institutional sites of discourse. Young members of trade families were wrapped in this physical and social world of metalwork, and they chose to call on its resources in their shaping of their identities in the workshop. We know from Paul's designation of new wartime workers as 'non-trade' even within jewellery workshops that long-time trade members particularly invoked their physical and social experience of working in this occupational community when identifying themselves and other workers during war work. The Jewellery Quarter thus became the physical manifestation of the boundary of tacit knowledge, or the experience of being 'trade' – the 'we' of occupational community.

Though the trade's occupational community had grown around the geographical centring of the Jewellery Quarter as an industrial district, as Maureen Padfield so comprehensively described in her 1990 thesis, the social elements of their occupational community remained strong, if not stronger during the 1940s and 1950s. The idea of occupational community was a popular site of sociological and business research in the late 1950s and into the 1960s. In the second volume of the journal *The Sociological Quarterly*, published in 1961, Joel E Gerstl presented his research on the determinants of occupational community, which he proposed reflected 'the pervasiveness of occupational

⁴¹ Owens; Hussey.

⁴² Owens.

identification in the convergence of informal friendship patterns and colleague relationships'.⁴³ Here, Gerstl stressed the social aspect of a strong occupational identification that grouped colleagues together and promoted friendship as well as shared work experiences, but he did not attach weight to the role of a shared geographical location in the making of occupational community. Gerstl instead followed definitions of community that prioritised the social, and he particularly quoted Don Martindale's 1960 definition of community as, "not a term for an area where people live but for a kind of integrated system of social life in which geographical area is secondary or irrelevant".⁴⁴ Gerstl followed Martindale's dismissal of geography in his characterisation of occupational community in his three case studies, but did concede that 'A primary determinant of occupational community is that of sheer opportunity', often occasioned by being in the same place, though he also specified that its influence should not be exaggerated.⁴⁵ As some jewellers moved away, or were pushed from renting in the Quarter by prohibitive manufacturing restrictions, we could follow Gerstl's emphasis on the social foundation of community to characterise the continuation of the trade's occupational community as a purely social endeavour during a time when they could only limitedly pursue their trade; however, this social approach ignores the enduring cumulative effect of geographical clustering, which was hugely important for the trade as it enabled the reciprocal clustering of materials, skills and discretion.

Centuries of geographical clustering had formed an industrial district in which the trade's occupational community was so embedded that it could withstand some of its members' geographical move to home workshops during the period of restrictions. Jewellers making fine jewellery or undertaking light production processes as outwork for fashion jewellery could move home to continue making because they did not require large machinery, nor many power tools, and traditional patterns of tool ownership meant that they already owned most of the tools they used regularly. They could then continue to undertake repairs outside of their war work and avoided the electricity restrictions hitting businesses in the Jewellery Quarter on its weekly 'powerless day'. This homework operated as an extension of the traditional outworking system, which was based on the discretion and trust within jewellers' strong relationships. Though working from home geographically drew jewellers away from their community at a time of stress upon the identification of 'trade', they undertook this move because of the benefits it afforded them and were supported in this decision by their peers' strong invocation of their occupational community.

⁴³ Joel E Gerstl, 'Determinants of Occupational Community in High Status Occupations', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 2.1 (1961), 37–48 (p. 38) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1961.tb01483.x>>.

⁴⁴ Don Martindale, *American Social Structure* (1960), in Gerstl, p. 38.

⁴⁵ Gerstl, p. 39.

To understand these reappraised boundaries of 'trade', workers relied heavily on spaces within the Jewellery Quarter to mediate social interactions and reinforce group membership. They reinforced their group membership through socialising together in socially prescribed settings, including the local pubs and cafés, the civic restaurant and works' canteens. Having a canteen as a designated social space was a selling point for factories; Watson's, a fashion jewellery factory on Great Hampton Street, advertised in *The Birmingham Mail* in October 1945 for solderers and 'girls to learn', citing 'good wages canteen 5-day wk [week]' to lure workers back to jewellery manufacturing.⁴⁶ Just as work practices differentiated the workers of the stamping shop from the press room and the plating shop, designated social spaces within workshops and factories spatially and socially separated the workers from the office staff. Tony Hackett recalled his works' canteen:

Where the office workers went, there was tables, chairs, knives and forks, glasses, so they had. You were just a worker... I don't class myself as being better than anyone else, but you used to go in our canteen and it was terrible. Just, as I say, benches, stools to sit on – went to the office staff canteen, it was all lovely and clean – well, it wasn't... I shouldn't say it was dirty, but it wasn't like the one for the office staff.⁴⁷

The differences Tony remembered between the 'loveliness' of the office staff canteen and the 'terribleness' of the workers' canteen still generated a strong reaction from him. Whilst large factories, like Tony Hackett's, were required to have their own canteen, workers at smaller workshops were encouraged to visit their local British Restaurant, like the one on Frederick Street, 100 metres away from the Chamberlain Clock. The government established 'British Restaurants', sometimes by taking over existing private restaurants, as part of an initiative to counteract the harsh effects of ongoing food rationing by offering subsidised, cheap meals.⁴⁸ Civic restaurants were never far away as, by 1945, Birmingham had 59 British Restaurants.⁴⁹ Photographs of the Frederick Street civic restaurant that opened in 1950 suggest that it followed the same designation of space as Tony's work canteen. Figure 4.1 is a photograph of the ground-floor cafeteria, with its wooden floor and padded metal chairs, its tables laid only with an ashtray (though a piano sits at the back of the room); figure 4.2 is a photograph of the upstairs carpeted and floral-wallpapered managers' room, with tables laid with tablecloths, napkins and cutlery, awaiting the waitress service. Just like the work's canteen, the layout and furnishings of the civic restaurant's floors reinforced the separate grouping of workers and managers. Even for those workers that wanted and could afford to pay for the restaurant service

⁴⁶ 'JEWELLERY Solderers & Girls to learn good wages canteen 5-day wk. - Watson's 10 Gt. Hampton St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 30 October 1945, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Hackett, Hackett, and Sullivan.

⁴⁸ Ballard, p. 16.

⁴⁹ Ballard, p. 16.

upstairs, the grubbiness of their clothes at lunchtime and the sense of being an outsider likely pushed them back downstairs.

Pubs, too, as Dennis Owens recounted, drew workers together in friendship groups. Choosing to socialise together was a key determinant of the trade being an occupational community.

There were lots of little cafes... I'm remembering now, some things I should have told you... a lot of little cafes and little pubs of course, it's such a close-knit area, a close-knit community, everybody knows everyone else and if you got to the pub now, I'm sure we'd know three or four people that were there.⁵⁰

By remembering that he 'should' talk about the role of pubs, Dennis proved the importance of social spaces to his feeling of community membership. Still today, different social groups within the trade meet every day at different pubs in the Jewellery Quarter. This established understanding of spaces around the Quarter offered jewellers access to group membership if they invested time there. New social spaces, like the restaurant, followed the ingrained social patterns of the trade. These spaces mediated social interactions and helped jewellers build and reinforce their occupational identity through feeling part of the trade group when they had been dispersed by war work.

⁵⁰ Owens.



Figure 4.1. A photograph of the cafeteria, downstairs at the Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, circa 1950.

Birmingham City Council City Information Department, 'The Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, Hockley, Birmingham', Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/279
<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f279>> [accessed 7 January 2024]. Reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham.



Figure 4.2. A photograph of the managers' restaurant, upstairs at the Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, circa 1950.

Birmingham City Council City Information Department, 'The Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, Hockley, Birmingham', Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/280
<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f280>> [accessed 7 January 2024]. Reproduced with the permission of the Library of Birmingham.

Whilst changes to the workshop pushed trade members to draw more heavily on the social aspects of their occupational community, they continued to come back to the Jewellery Quarter. Their attempts to remain in the area testify to the importance they placed on their industrial district and occupational community. Despite difficult times in the trade's 'boom-and-bust' cycle, independent craftspeople and outworkers chased affordable rents to stay in the Quarter, even if it meant poor working conditions in buildings that leaked and froze inside during the winter. Not only did many choose to stay in the Quarter, they also chose to stay in the trade, when well-paid work in brighter, warmer factories beckoned. In her comprehensive history of jewellery making in Birmingham, Shena Mason recounted the stories of Jack Mott, the owner of fashion jewellery brand T L Mott Ltd, who recalled that his foreman had come back from war work at Tyburn Road aircraft factory, despite it offering higher pay.⁵¹ Increased pay was an attractive offer at a time when Birmingham MPs complained about high accommodation rents of 50-55 shillings per week, compared to the jewellers' average weekly income from the accident cards of £3.16.1, or 76 shillings.⁵² Mott attributed his foreman's return to wanting to get back to their jewellery benches, a reason that, on the surface, pointed to their love for their job; yet, jewellers' built their concept of identity on more than the practicalities of their work, and there were likely additional factors that drove their decision to return. Tyburn Road, for instance, is an area of large warehouses, including the famous Fort Dunlop, five miles east from the Jewellery Quarter; though many bus routes carried the tens of thousands of workers to the site, its location in Erdington made commute times much longer and likely more expensive for jewellers that lived in proximity to Hockley. For the 'jewellery families' that had remained in the Hockley area, working so far away also divided them from their occupational community and potentially from the skills and tacit knowledge they had built over their careers.

The spatial resources the jewellers drew upon in their identifications were not limited to the architecture or geographical location of the Jewellery Quarter, spatially mediated activities within workshops also shaped their experience of work and jewellers valued their proximity. For the thousand women engaged on presswork, sitting in front of the same equipment, in line with your colleagues at their presses in the press shop, and repeating the same movements to operate the press was a repetitive activity. The employee accident cards analysed in the third chapter of this thesis clearly demonstrated that women dominated presswork, one of the main roles in the jewellery industry of the mid-twentieth century but one with little previous investigation of its women-led dominance; 58 per cent of accidents encountered by women related to presswork, compared to only

⁵¹ Mason, p. 141.

⁵² Victor Yates, MP, 'Transferred Workers (Accommodation, Midlands)', *Hansard*, HC Deb 10 April 1951, Vol. 486, c. 798, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1951/apr/10/transferred-workers-accommodation#column_798 [accessed 22 June 2020].

4 per cent amongst men.⁵³ Gender was a key concept in shaping workplace identities because it held so much influence over the roles a worker would perform in the 1940s. Workers aged 21 and under sustained 42 per cent of presswork accidents, but their young age did not correlate with inexperience, as workers could have been using the press for seven years by this age; instead, their youth proved that the trade rested on young women, especially whilst young men were conscripted and families needed additional income. As a result, women mastered the repetitive nature of presswork.

Repetitive work is a skill and recognising it as such gives due credit to the difficulty of safely and precisely repeating the same process hundreds of times, as was required in the making of fashion jewellery. Pressworkers built an understanding of the feel, sight and sound of a precise pressing and knew when to readjust tools to prevent injury and a less neat pressing. Recognising the skill involved in repetitive work moves this analysis away from traditional ontologies that identified workplace changes in terms of efficiency. The Jewellery & Silverware Working Party, for instance, commented in its 1946 report that female workers' fatigue was not good for the efficiency nor the morale of the industry. To combat fatigue, it suggested that women should use their chairs more, though the party recognised that many women were not inclined to do so as this action would go against the social rules of their workshop.⁵⁴ Whilst fatigue was undoubtedly likely for pressworkers standing all day at their machines, the Working Party's solution of encouraging chair use was firmly rooted in breaking workshop cycles of inefficiency; as such, the party disregarded the pressworkers' tacit knowledge of undertaking the work: stools were likely to have been set at one fixed height that will have suited a minority of women, and standing may have kept pressworkers more alert to inconsistencies with their press when carrying out their repetitive tasks. The Working Party's reaction to repetition is one example of how little value was given to workshop knowledge when it did not suit managers' or other groups' aims; it was also an act of apportioning blame and accountability to workers instead of management. Moreover, as historians and writers about the jewellery industry have turned to the same sources, including the Working Party's report, the non-prioritisation of workers' experiences has continued through discourses to today. Repetition was a spatially and materially mediated activity that dominated women's experience of work and their identification of what it meant to be a pressworker. Giving weight to the proximity of the working environment in our understanding of the symbolic boundaries of workers' tacit knowledge moves us closer to understanding how and why jewellers invoked their identity in this period. For pressworkers, their physical closeness at work corresponded to a similar social closeness that bolstered camaraderie and community.

⁵³ 'Employee Accident Cards'.

⁵⁴ Board of Trade, p. 50.

Although the Working Party did not recognise the pressworkers' tacit knowledge of their craft, by suggesting that workers followed their colleagues' example, it did recognise the social expectations of proximity in the workshop. These ways of becoming in the workshop were an important social form of tacit knowledge that applied just as much to the way workers followed their colleagues in carrying out their tasks as it did to the way they joined social interactions at work. Like in all workplaces, not fitting in could lead to isolation or even bullying, as two accidents at the silversmithing and electroplating firm Elkington & Co Ltd revealed. For 15-year-old Leonard Robinson either play or malice led to a cut on his left elbow that required three stitches as 'A fellow worker threw a piece of slate at Robinson deliberately cutting his elbow'.⁵⁵ For 22-year-old press and saw worker Olive F Bodenham, workplace jostling or bullying left her with a bruised spine after a 'Fellow workman deliberately picked up Bodenham & dropped her on floor'.⁵⁶ After investigation, neither case was eligible for compensation despite the accidents occurring as a result of navigating workplace customs. Though these cases were isolated and exceptional incidents amongst the accident cards, silversmith Cornellius Sullivan recounted stories of workplace practical jokes and attributed this behaviour to the closeness of the trade community – in many instances, your colleagues were also your friends.

[...] when I started and the guys were training me, it was incredibly strict back then [...] they carried on that seriousness with my training, and anyway, I broke my cup and they used to give you another cup, the company did, and they said, 'we're going to stop that now, we can't keep supplying cups'. Anyway, 'this is your last cup'. And the foreman said to me: 'I say, what've you got there, son?' I said, 'cup'. He said, 'no no, you can't have that', he said, 'you can't have a handle on your cup till you're qualified', and he came over and broke the handle off my cup! The next time I got a cup I just kept going about waiting for the handle to come off. They were exaggerating the training they had, how strict it was, tricks like that. And then I broke my cup again and I said to Ron, 'can I get another?' And he said 'no, no, I've told you, you've got to bring your own cups in'. A bit later on, he said, 'I found one in the maintenance shed' and it was still in the tissue and it was one of the aluminium cups, enamelled cups... you'd have industrial cups... And I went to have my break, I sat down, I thought, where's my tea gone? They'd put my cup in the vice and crushed it [...] With my tea still in it, all the tea was dripping out, and you could hear the enamel go dink dink dink.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Leonard Robinson, 15, of no 6, 442 New John Street, at Elkington & Co Ltd on 30 June 1942, 18:30 – 'Cut left elbow. A fellow worker threw a piece of slate at Robinson deliberately cutting his elbow. 3 stitches at hospital.' – average wage £1.15.7, no claim in this case.

⁵⁶ Olive F Bodenham, 22, of no 3, 19 Tenby Street, at Elkington & Co Ltd on 12 February 1945, 08:45 – 'Bruised spine. Fellow workman deliberately picked up Bodenham & dropped her on floor.' – press and saw worker, £3.1.5. Stopped 12 Feb, back around 22 Feb, no claim. – 'Co say have now investigated the case and cannot accept liability as accident did not arise out of and in course of her employment'.

⁵⁷ Tony Hackett, Linda Hackett, and Cornellius Sullivan, Interview with Tony and Linda Hackett and Cornellius Sullivan, 2021.

Cornellius laughed today when recalling the fates of his multiple cups (his team attacked another cup by drilling a hole in its base so that it could be nailed to his bench, then refilled with tea to complete the deception), but these stories suggest that experienced workers expected new workers to share in the same rites of passage as them, and new workers held their colleagues' experience in high esteem. Learning ways of becoming in the workshop was an important part of jewellers' tacit knowledge.

Just as Cornellius attributed practical jokes to making new team members understand the 'strictness' of the training that experienced members had been through, he acknowledged that not everyone was keen to explicitly share their 'ticks of the trade' with junior colleagues. Cornellius and jeweller Bernard Hussey both remembered the hostility new colleagues faced from more experienced shop members, who considered their work to be at risk if they shared their trade knowledge. Bernard referred to how lucky he was to be trained by his brother and therefore avoid this sense of competition over knowledge.

When I was learning, I was very fortunate because my brother trained me, my brother trained me. But all the other apprentices, all the people that were training them let them get to a certain level and then they'd stop, because they were frightened of those people taking their jobs off them, if they'd progressed any more. They were frightened of those people taking their jobs off them, the younger people, so they used to... a limited... probably teach them 90 per cent and all the little tricks of the trade they used to learn, or they knew, they wouldn't teach; they wouldn't teach their apprentices.⁵⁸

Although tricks of the trade, or tacit knowledge, are inherently 'unspecifiable' and so hard to share, Bernard's matter-of-fact description of craftspeople withholding some of their tricks pointed to how common he believed this behaviour to be and that there was more they could have taught their apprentices.⁵⁹ In response to Bernard's story, Cornellius echoed with his own, similar story:

Cornellius	When I started, they said, 'We're not doing that now, but if you're quiet, go into other departments and watch the guys working'. I think I told you this. And I was watching, I think it was a polisher, and, erm... he was older than me – I found out later on he had children as well. Always remember this: I was watching him, inching up nice and quiet, and without looking up, he said, 'You won't learn nothing watching me. Fuck off.'
Bernard	Did he?
CS	Yeh. I'd only been in the factory about three weeks.
BH	That's what they were like. Some of the people, I'm telling you.

⁵⁸ Hussey.

⁵⁹ Polanyi referred to tacit knowledge as 'logically unspecifiable'. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*.

CS And they don't want you watching them; you won't learn anything.⁶⁰

Though both considered these memories now as amusing stories to share with trade friends, both were adamant in their characterisation of workshop social rules that dictated workers' material interactions and their accrual of tacit knowledge. Their colleagues' reactions to sharing their knowledge belied a sense of being threatened in their roles, likely because of the trade's 'boom and bust' nature and job volatility. Skilled workers therefore believed that their reputation, and thus their job and occupational identity, rested on their hard-won tacit knowledge. This enduring trade practice of being antagonistically discreet about tacit knowledge socialised the next generation of workers within this way of becoming in the workshop. As jewellers have long recognised an instability in their roles, the 1940s were no different and war changes to the workshop brought with them a greater sense of the unknown regarding future jobs. New colleagues brought more threats to the remaining jewellers' roles and instances of the bullying of younger workers, like Leonard and Olive, may have increased. Just as their colleagues before, the new war-work workers must have quickly learnt ways of working in the workshops, a social form of tacit knowledge that was just as important as their material knowledge.

Jewellers recognised workshop members that had the most experience and were protective of their hard-earned skills; jewellers like Dennis Owens, his colleagues Gerry Morgan and Tom McCann, and Jack Mott's foreman likely returned in part because they enjoyed the recognition from colleagues that they were skilled. This trade-backed concept of skilled identity, coupled with a strong occupational community and a shorter commute to work, evidently persuaded these jewellers to forgo higher pay and brighter conditions to return to the workshop.

Essential Luxury

Whilst many workers likely accepted the appealing opportunities on offer at their war work factories, the jewellers that chose to continue manufacturing jewellery, or returned to their workshop after their war contracts, had to legitimise their choice. The jewellery and silver industries are luxury trades and, as such, are not used to being considered essential. However, during the 1940s and into the 1950s, the concepts of 'luxury' and 'essential' both changed, and 'essential versus luxury' was a false, but prevalent, dichotomy.⁶¹ Amid rationing, cartoons like that published in the *Evening Standard*, and

⁶⁰ Hussey.

⁶¹ The Welsh Marxist academic Raymond Williams noted a rapid change in vocabulary meaning and usage during the Second World War, which became the impetus for his book *Keywords*, 'a record of an enquiry into a vocabulary'. His framing of this development contrasted the generation of people that had remained in the UK

reproduced in *The British Jeweller* in December 1947 (see figure 4.3), mocked the inflated value of food by depicting a thief stealing from the greengrocer's, not its neighbour the jeweller's; the reader presumably recognised the new ideas of luxury at the time.⁶² Whilst jewellery became even more of a luxury – especially for the British market that could only legitimately buy 9-carat gold wedding rings – it became essential for the British export trade. The government and trade leaders framed their expectations of the jewellers' efforts in monetary terms: at the BJA banquet in April 1947, guest of honour Mr Belcher, who was deputising for head of the Board of Trade Sir Stafford Cripps, said that he appreciated that the trade had increased its export value from £1 million in 1938 to £3 million in 1946; and in 1947, Britain exported £3.5 million of jewellery, which 'more than paid for a year's import of our staple foods', according to later National Association of Jewellers president Mona Curran in a promotional feature about the British industry.⁶³ This export 'success' meant little to the jewellers on a daily basis, as despite jewellery being essential for export, the Birmingham Trades Council still considered it inessential. In the same April 1947 article that printed Mr Belcher's praise for the trade, the writer, presumably Mr Leese, detailed in contrast that the *Birmingham Post* had a report from a Trades Council delegate in which they withdrew support for the fashion jewellery trade: "until the needs of priority jobs, such as the manufacture of generating plant, had been met, no power should be supplied to the manufacturers of cheap jewellery". The writer of *The British Jeweller* article thus retorted:

[W]hile the bulk of our productions are no further removed from sheer necessities than a vast number of other British manufactures, the jewellery trade, a dog with an odious name, has always taken the first frontal attack whenever there has been any question of restricting labour or supplies.⁶⁴

These attacks on the trade were frequent and often contradictory, as the second chapter of this thesis detailed; trade members were thus left split over how the country saw their position: their skills were essential, as shown by their designation as an essential industry in 1942, and they significantly contributed to British export targets, but their traditional work was unnecessary at home. Despite multiple attacks on the trade, jewellers that did continue production were essential in more ways than

during the war and those that had been overseas; the shortening of generational gaps is an important idea for considering workers' experiences in the Jewellery Quarter.

Williams, p. 15.

⁶² 'With Acknowledgements to the "Evening Standard"'.

⁶³ 'Our Growing Importance', *The British Jeweller*, April 1947, p. 50; *British Jewellery*, ed. by Mona Curran (London: Clerke & Cockeran in collaboration with British Jewellers' Association and National Jewellers' Association, 1950).

⁶⁴ 'Our Growing Importance'.

one: they supported their country, the trade, their families and their own sense of occupational identity and self-esteem.



Figure 4.3. A cartoon illustration published in December 1947's edition of *The British Jeweller*, titled 'With acknowledgements to the "Evening Standard"', depicting a thief breaking into a greengrocer's using a brick and emerging with a sack of potatoes, instead of breaking into the jeweller's next door.

'With Acknowledgements to the "Evening Standard"', *The British Jeweller*, December 1947, p. 65.

Considering jewellers' efforts in terms of export value gives a particular external view of trade identity; it is a view that, again, privileges ontologies founded in concepts of efficiency. When Sir Stafford Cripps appointed a team to the Working Party for Jewellery & Silverware in March 1946, he had picked the trade because it was an important industry for export and, as he told fellow MPs, he wanted to look 'into the efficiency of our industries'.⁶⁵ In their report, the Working Party wove this rhetoric of efficiency through its recommendations for the trade, like its suggestion that female workers should use their chairs more to avoid fatigue. The same rhetoric pervaded much of *The British Jeweller's* editorial content; Mr Turner, a business manager and stand-in editor whilst Leese served his conscription, penned an article in the March 1943 edition calling for men and women 'to discard old-fashioned, fixed ideas, habits and complexes, and by making their minds flexible and receptive, give

⁶⁵ Sir Stafford Cripps, 'Industrial Organisation (Tripartite Working Parties)', *Hansard*, HC Deb 15 October 1945, Vol. 414, cc692-6 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1945/oct/15/industrial-organisation-tripartite#S5CV0414P0_19451015_HOC_233> [accessed 4 March 2021].

some real, valuable contribution to the war effort'.⁶⁶ At a time when everyone was three years into 'doing their bit', Turner's words were patronising. Half a century later, policy and governance theorist Jonathan Zeitlin turned to consider flexibility in relation to the existence, or lack, of industrial districts.⁶⁷ He argued that industrial districts needed to be flexible to succeed, though they could still exist without being successful; his line of argument precluded that 'unsuccessful', or just not successful, industrial districts were not flexible. If 'success' meant economic success, then the Jewellery Quarter likely oscillated between being successful and unsuccessful during the 1940s and 1950s; however, its workers and businesses were always flexible during this period, indeed, it is in their nature given then trade's boom-and-bust tendency. Maureen Padfield, in her assessment of the trade's occupational community, suggested that market fluctuations, access to materials and jewellery fashions have all 'imposed a consistent need for flexibility and adaptability within the industry' and this flexibility and adaptation were necessary to sustain manufacture.⁶⁸ By tying flexibility and adaptation to sustaining manufacture, Padfield went some way towards taking a view that did not focus solely on economic impact; though, obviously, manufacture was tied to income. Padfield compared the Jewellery Quarter to the 'flexible systems' outlined by Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, collaborators of Jonathan Zeitlin, to emphasise that flexibility stemmed from 'a combination of craft practices and use of developing technology, an interdependence which leads to the need to balance cooperation and competition, and a shared geographical location with supporting institutions'.⁶⁹ The interdependence of craft skills, tools, cooperation and competition appealed to Padfield because it aligned with the idea of the Jewellery Quarter having an occupational community, though she provided few examples from the jewellers' work. With an idea of flexibility so rooted in the concept of capitalist success, it is hard to see the jewellers' work of the 1940s fitting this definition, yet they were undoubtedly flexible in their approach.

By reclaiming the terms 'flexibility' and 'adaptation' from capitalist ontologies that have prioritised efficiency, we give proper consequence to the changes the jewellers made to their ways of working in the 1940s and 1950s. Management and occupation researchers Amy Wrzesniewski and Jane Dutton adopted a social constructionist approach to job adaptation by referring to individuals' scope to become 'job crafters'.⁷⁰ In this theory, they posited that no job is ever fully bounded, nor work identities predetermined by a particular role; instead, individuals 'craft' their job by taking

⁶⁶ W Stewart Turner, 'Be Younger!', *The British Jeweller*, March 1943, 9–10 (p. 10).

⁶⁷ Zeitlin.

⁶⁸ Maureen Padfield, 'Out in the Trade: The Occupational Community of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter'.

⁶⁹ Padfield, p. 28; Michael J Piore and Charles F. Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

⁷⁰ Wrzesniewski and Dutton, p. 179.

opportunities and working with colleagues to constantly reassess the boundaries of their role. However, they noted constraints, including organisational values and occupational status, that can affect workers' ability to craft their job and that in its iterative process there may be times when motivation and opportunity for crafting dwindle.⁷¹ Though rather idealistic and more suitable for describing employees' routes through work than those of the self-employed, their idea of job crafting is akin to the jewellers' discretion argued for in this thesis. The trade's embedded outworking system made working for yourself less daunting than in other industries and workers could always move between outwork and working indoors; they could be opportunistic and pivoted quickly to make the most of loopholes in the restrictions of the time. As Cornellius Sullivan put it, 'I basically did anything that I wanted to do, basically, to stay in work and maximise my earnings. So, there's an awful lot of stuff in the trade.'⁷² The idea of job crafting does not go far enough to recognise the calculated risks that trade members like Cornellius took based on their trade knowledge; discretion, alternatively, respects both the trade system and the jewellers' independence, whether employed or self-employed.

The jobbing jewellers introduced in the first chapter of this thesis had always been flexible in their work because they operated with discretion: they decided which jobs to take, when, from whom and for how much; they understood which skills they needed to draw on and when to approach a colleague that specialised in a particular process. We know from the minutes of their newly formed BJA trade section that their work could be 'haphazard and underpaid, in spite of its clever Artisans', according to their chair, Mr Suter, so that, in 1946, they became 'swamped with work'.⁷³ Without diminishing the issues the jobbers faced with erratic workloads, their ability to ride the peaks and troughs of the trade came from their myriad jewellery making skills and their discretion. During the years of restrictions, some jobbers swapped to working from home and accepting cash. Austerity framed this use of a loophole as a step towards the 'grey market' because it may not have been 'fair' behaviour, but within the trade it was an accepted and sometimes encouraged act of trust that reinforced the friendship relationships on which the trade's occupational community rested. With material restrictions and no legitimate home market, the jewellery trade appeared stagnant to some observers, but with the flexibility of individuals, like the jobbing jewellers, the trade was afloat for those jewellers that wanted it to be.

By recognising how individuals kept the jewellery trade going, it could be said that we have taken a 'bottom-up' perspective that considers the efforts and opinions of those at the base of the traditional

⁷¹ Wrzesniewski and Dutton, pp. 194–95.

⁷² Sullivan.

⁷³ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Jobbing Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Jan 1944 - Mar 48: First Meeting 19 January 1944'; 'Jobbers Second Annual General Meeting 13 March 1946'.

business-based hierarchy of the system. Yet this approach does not recognise that the trade did not follow this business-based hierarchy as the rate of self-employment, or outworking, was so high. In the BJA's membership figures for 1948, the average number of employees per member firm from across the jewellery and allied trades was only 14, which emphasised the small nature of firms even without the inclusion of the great number of unattached outworkers, who were unlikely to have all taken individual BJA membership (and so missed by this average). Many more craftspeople ran their own businesses, as is evident in the number of businesses that bore people's names as business names, and craftspeople valued that level of independence and the flexibility to move relatively easily from being employed to self-employed to employed again, as needed. It is important then to see flexibility on an individual scale as a personal decision to survive and remain in the trade in which workers had built their occupational identity, rather than purely through a lens of fulfilling government export orders.

This adaptation to the swings of the trade was particularly evident in the years surrounding the Second World War, when jewellers adapted their skills to engineering work and different jewellery production. Some jewellers also adapted away from the government's ideals by undertaking black-market deals to keep their work going and to use remaining stock. The editor of *The British Jeweller*, Leese, dutifully reported the litany of government restrictions to material access and also highlighted the conundrum jewellers had been backed into. For glass paste used as gemstone imitations in fashion jewellery, for example, Leese described in 1947 that workshops had made some 'legitimate' stock using the previous year's 25 per cent quota of paste for the home market, but that since this quota had now been banned, any new stock must have used the paste supply intended only for exported jewellery and had therefore come from the black market.⁷⁴ Leese wrote with an acceptance of the inevitability of this black-market trading and a cynicism towards the continually changing restrictions because they changed a jeweller's work from legitimate to illegitimate from one day to the next. For the larger workshops that made fashion jewellery, the change in official identity of paste-set jewellery made no difference to the work of the stampers, pressworkers and assemblers that made these items, but caused an administrative headache for the office staff. Amongst smaller businesses, these official changes caused even more of a nuisance, but they could also more easily adapt to the relationships and ways of dealing in the black market because they could react quicker and were more likely to be able to evade suspicion. As manufacturing processes stayed the same, the changing laws had little impact on jewellers' enduring concepts of occupational identity, but they posed a challenge to

⁷⁴ Leese, 'This Restriction Is Killing Our Export Trade', p. 52.

jewellers' discretion – when you could almost unknowingly be carrying on illegal work, it was down to individuals to decide if they wanted to stop.

Communication theorists Sarah Tracy and Clifton Scott have written about how 'crafting a positive sense of self at work is more challenging when one's work is considered "dirty" by societal standards', particularly focusing on law enforcement officers in the USA.⁷⁵ Though jewellery manufacturing was far from being considered dirty or unrespectable, most jewellers likely engaged in Tracy and Scott's notion of 'taint management' when they navigated questions of their work's appropriateness and legality amidst the restrictions. Dennis Owens decried the people that went 'on the knocker' to cheat people into low prices for their old gold, whilst he melted sovereigns to make wedding rings, thereby morally ranking the two approaches to make himself feel better about his grey-market activities.⁷⁶ Crafting this more positive sense of self was part of jewellers' adaptation to the restrictions and aligned with much of the nation's reappraisal of austerity rules around ideas of fairness. Jewellers adapting to the black market – though it took very little actual manufacturing adaptation – did not fit with government notions of efficiency and success, yet the jewellers were successful at continuing their work. Black/grey-market dealings were, therefore, an important proof of the need to reclaim the terms 'flexibility' and 'adaptation' from our contemporary ontologies of efficiency so that we can better understand how work impacted occupational identity.

Additionally, like 'flexibility', jewellers used the term 'adaptation' themselves to take ownership of the changes they enacted. Away from links of efficiency, 'adaptation' is therefore an important term to continue to use to correctly apportion agency. Paul Podolsky described how his father led their workshop to adapt to the effect Purchase Tax had on their prices.

Unfortunately, with 100 per cent Purchase Tax, there just wasn't that amount of work going around. You either had to get out of the trade and do something else or adapt. So, we adapted; we went in for cheaper work, whilst retaining our core of custom-made quality work.⁷⁷

Though the Podolskys' move to cheaper work was rooted in financial considerations, it is important to recognise the impact these material and processual changes had on their craftspeople. In fact, Paul specified that their workers were not pleased with changing to work that was, for them, of a lower quality.

⁷⁵ Sarah J Tracy and Clifton W Scott, 'Sexuality, Masculinity and Taint Management among Firefighters and Correctional Officers: Getting down and Dirty with "America's Heroes" and the "Scum of Law Enforcement"', *Management Communication Quarterly*, 20 (2006), 6–38.

⁷⁶ Owens.

⁷⁷ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second'.

They were doing a bit of work for export, in 18-carat, but then again they were adapting themselves to cheaper work in 9-carat gold, just to keep the workmen busy, and doing repair work. Now, the workmen weren't very happy with that, the craftsmen wanted to do better quality work.⁷⁸

The craftspeople's dissatisfaction at working with 9-carat gold demonstrated how the class of a worker had become materially constrained by the hierarchy inherent in the gold finenesses. Much like how ring makers were restricted to only making 9-carat gold wedding rings when previously they had worked with 22-carat gold, accepted standards before the war meant that gold fineness had become inextricably linked to tasks, production processes and tacit knowledge, and so impacted identification amongst workers. The same link between fineness and pride manifested in wearers' opinions of their jewels. Pauline Lloyd, the speculative jewellery buyer in *The British Jeweller*, described her future engagement ring as 'deserves to be a good one', whilst her 9-carat gold wedding ring, 'utility through necessity, we hope to replace by a post-war one'.⁷⁹ Pauline's link between pride and preciousness proved the pervasiveness of the gold hierarchy, which extended to those that made it as well as to those that wore it.

The hierarchy of jewellery has especially impacted Birmingham workers and, in turn, histories of Birmingham industry because the city has long been characterised by what its manufacturers made. The factories and workshops of Birmingham, known as the 'workshop of the world' and a 'city of a thousand trades', created the whole range of products, from high to low quality, for all markets.⁸⁰ This broad range of quality, plus the free nature of trade in Birmingham compared to the livery company system in the City of London, led many to characterise Birmingham by its lower quality products and by behaviour associated with 'chasing the money', as Cornellius put it, rather than quality; Birmingham's wares, especially from the jewellery and light metal trades, were then named 'Brummagem' – 'people would say you've got a Brummie gem there, which means that it isn't good'.⁸¹ Paul Podolsky, whose father's London-based business took over a Birmingham-based business in the 1940s, recalled that 'a Birmingham salesman who made certain things, used to come in and claim proudly that he was a penny cheaper per piece than his nearest rival' in '1948, -9, -50, that sort of period'.⁸² Being a penny cheaper was no mean feat and Birmingham's manufacturers

⁷⁸ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, Second'.

⁷⁹ Lloyd.

⁸⁰ Chinn and Dick.

⁸¹ Sullivan.

The phrase 'Brummagem' captured sentiments of Birmingham's lower quality wares: Birmingham manufacturers reputedly flocked to the early nineteenth-century tin toy trade and made low-quality toys, which gained the moniker 'Brummagem', or 'Brummie gem'.

See Chinn, 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', p. 11.

⁸² Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

sought to maintain their affordable and specialised reputation even during these years of restrictions and sales quotas.

Against the backdrop of this reputation, the Jewellery Quarter added its manufacture of fashion jewellery, which the London trade comparatively avoided; its base metals and paste added a bottom level to the hierarchy of materials and thus also further materially constrained ideas about the class of workers. In an open letter from BJA president and business owner A H Bishton to the government asking for the removal of Purchase Tax from jewellery, Bishton outlined the real makeup of the trade:

Much fine work is of course devoted to costly stones and precious metals, but it represents a very small part of our total output. We work in the main for the man in the street, and of course his wife and daughter. What of the cheap engagement ring that every young couple must invest in; what of the nine-carat gold signet ring beloved of the working man and woman; of the costume jewellery we make in metal and imitation stones[?]⁸³

Bishton described the breadth of the trade, and his comments confirm the need for jewellery histories that prioritise not only the bespoke, high or art jewellery we see in public collections and that has dominated historians' efforts. Indeed, the art director of the Goldsmiths' Company, Graham Hughes, excluded fashion jewellery from his 1963 review of 'Modern Jewelry' because he deemed it 'too ephemeral, too cheap, too slick [...] True, it has led vast numbers of people to wear jewels who would otherwise go unadorned: stamped out by the latest machinery, anodised or vacuum plated by the latest chemical process, costume jewelry is a huge communal asset. But as yet it's not a leading art force'.⁸⁴ Here, Hughes encapsulated the trade's issue with fashion jewellery: its popularity brought jewellery trends to the masses and so employed thousands of people and contributed to innovative uses of technology – particularly the move to centrifugal casting in the late 1940s that revolutionised the manufacture of fashion and fine jewellery – but its base materials and batch-production processes contrasted greatly from the manufacture of fine jewellery, or so he believed. Yet, the craftspeople of the Jewellery Quarter had long known that divisions between fine and fashion jewellery were less rigid and many processes, like presswork for example, could be used in the production of many different articles. The category of work was thus of greater concern to business leaders and commentators than the workers.

Instead of distinguishing only between fine and fashion jewellery, the workers differentiated between 'class' of work, which was in part linked to metal type. The *Birmingham Mail*, a newspaper with two

⁸³ A H Bishton, 'Take off the Purchase Tax: An Open Letter to Mr Dalton', *The British Jeweller*, September 1946, pp. 26–27.

⁸⁴ Graham Hughes, p. 5.

print runs a day and one of the largest circulations in Birmingham, filled most of its pages with listings of items for sale and job adverts, including those seeking jewellery manufacturers. With each advert listing the industry it related to as its first word, the polisher, toolmaker or jobbing jeweller that wanted to find the section most appropriate to them could quickly scan through the dense pages of text to check that day's adverts. To the uninitiated, the pages are impenetrable, as shown in figure 4.4, but for those readers searching for the third or fourth day for a job, they quickly become clear, though still unwieldy given their huge physical spread. Hunting for the adverts beginning 'JEWELLER' or 'JEWELLERY', the reader would then hope to find a job relevant to their skills. Whilst it seemed ordinary to find adverts that called for highly skilled and experienced workers, like a 'First-class Polisher (Woman)', the idea of class was more intriguing when the advertising company described the class of their product.⁸⁵ Some adverts reveal that the trade linked materials with class of work, following the precious metals hierarchy: one advertiser called for a 'Mounter for cheap 9ct. Cameo rings; outwork considered', and firm A Arrowsmith & Co for 'Diamond Ring Mounters wtd. used to best platinum work'; another for 'Men Reqd. for high-class gold signets'.⁸⁶ For one firm to refer to its 9-carat gold cameo rings as 'cheap' is perhaps surprising to a non-trade reader, but trade readers were accustomed to the large fashion jewellery section of the trade. However, other adverts reveal further nuances in this division of work classes. The Ginder workshop called for 'Diamond Ring Mounters, used to medium-class work'; Coton and Smith wanted a 'Polisher for good-class diamond rings'; and Taylor, Eadie & Co a 'Mounter Required for best-class silver brooches, rings, etc'.⁸⁷ That a product could be medium, good or best class is perhaps unsurprising when production in the Jewellery Quarter was known to extend across the quality range, but the advertisers revealed that class of work was not always tied to fineness of material; a ring to be set with diamonds, typically used for fine jewellery, could be medium class, whilst silver, which was less expensive than gold, could be used for best-class brooches and rings. A jewel's class, then, was determined by the material *and* the standard to which the jewel was designed and made, and likely also by extension to the end price point. Advertisers that specified the class of work they wanted undertaken therefore appealed to workers to recognise the class of work in which they were skilled. This embedded ranking of skill was tied inextricably to

⁸⁵ 'JEWELLERS. - First-class Polisher (Woman) Required, for gold signets, links, wedding rings, etc.; good wages, plus war bonus. - Apply, Albion Chain Co., 39, Albion St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 3 April 1940, p. 3.

⁸⁶ 'JEWELLERS. - Mounter for cheap 9ct. Cameo rings; outwork considered. - 144 K, Mail.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 20 April 1940, p. 3.; 'JEWELLERS Diamond Ring Mounters wtd. used to best platinum work - App. by letter A. Arrowsmith & Co. 60 Albion St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 29 April 1940, p.3.; 'JEWELLERS Men Reqd. for high-class gold signets - 591 X Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 3 October 1944, p. 2.

⁸⁷ 'JEWELLERS. - Diamond Ring Mounters, used to medium-class work; full time and good wages. - Ginder, 39, Vyse St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 17 April 1940, p. 3.; 'JEWELLERS. - Polisher for good-class diamond rings; afternoons only suit married woman. - Coton and Smith, 59, Tenby St. North.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 1 April 1940, p. 3.; 'JEWELLERS' Mounter Required for best-class silver brooches, rings, etc.; permanency. - Taylor, Eadie, 141, Hockley Hill.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 3 April 1940, p. 3.

worker's sense of occupational identity because the class of items they made reciprocally reinforced their class as a craftsperson. The embeddedness of class of work likens the system to Van Maanen's idea of historical and institutional processes 'that draw on a relatively stable, categorical ordering of occupational status' and Hall's material resources that we use to make and understand identifications of ourselves and others.⁸⁸ Class, and its multiple social connotations, categorised the jewellers' tacit knowledge implicit within it and thus had the potential to affect trade relations and jewellers' sense of self-esteem. As a result, like Paul remarked about his colleagues, not being able to work on 'their' class of jewellery during the 1940s and 1950s impinged on craftspeople's enjoyment of their work and their sense of reputation.

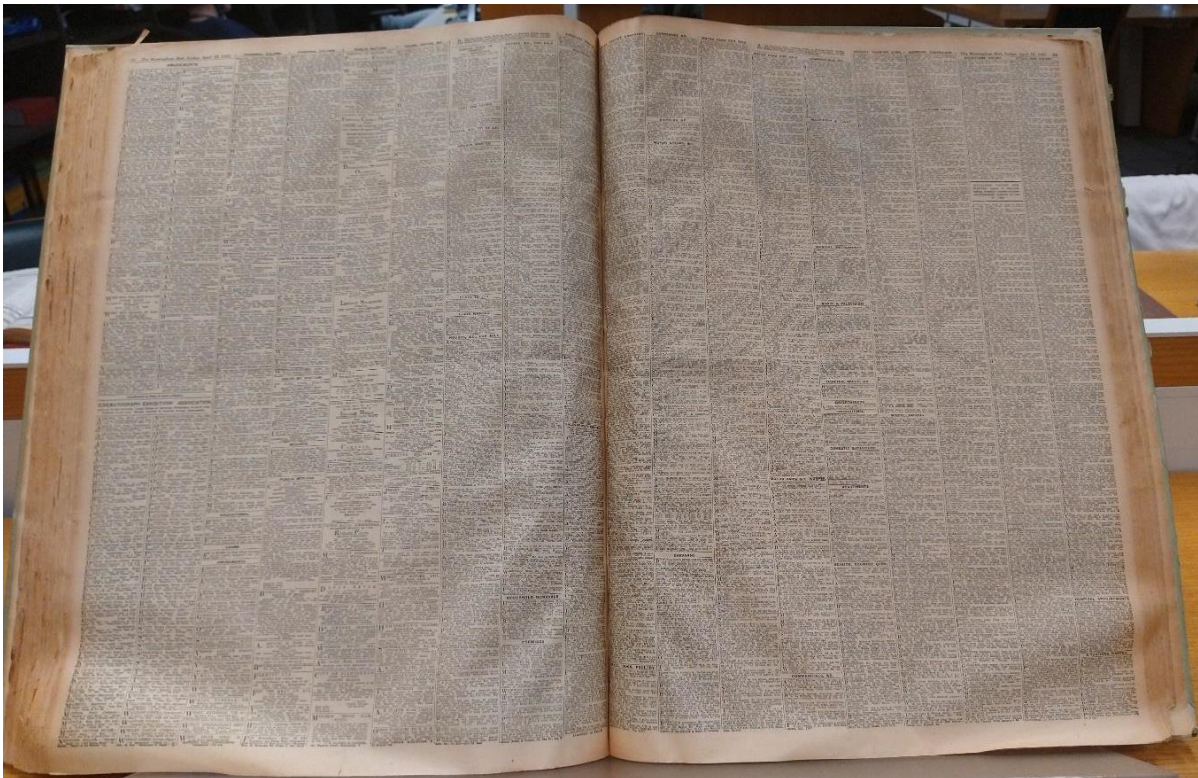


Figure 4.4. A photograph of the listings pages of the *Birmingham Mail* on 13 April 1954; the listings included vacancies in jewellery workshops. The dense text is hard to navigate, but the reader soon learns to skip to the relevant section.

The Birmingham Mail, 13 April 1954, 7:30 edition, pp. 4B-5B.

⁸⁸ Van Maanen, p. 111; Hall.

Van Maanen also directed readers to the work of Hauser and Warren (1997), in which they suggested that this ordering of status creates a shell/vessel that people work in and that constrains the scope of concepts of that work.

Vocation

Referring to categories of work and skill in terms of ‘class’ – a term laden with broader social meaning – implied a rigidity to work classification in a trade that was known for valuing tradition and its familial structure. Though the trade enacted many official changes during the Second World War and many jewellers left or were diverted from the industry, many also stayed or returned. As group membership is a process, an individual’s sense of their connection to the group can wane as much as it can build, and the war likely brought moments, or even years, of disconnect from their trade for most trade members. Moreover, every worker sustained and called upon many group memberships, so that some were more salient than others at different times. For some workers, their experience of the trade may not have been a group membership that they drew on heavily to shape their identifications of themselves; they may have recognised themselves to be part of other groups that they more closely identified with, like friendship groups external to the trade, clubs, religious groups and family. For other members of the trade though, their trade membership became pivotal in their identification of themselves, so that their work became a vocation. These jewellers relied on that sense of vocation and belonging to the trade to sustain their occupational community whilst working on war contracts. Whilst their tacit knowledge remained, which included their discretion, their occupational identity was never totally lost, and they invoked it when in each other’s company.

We get a sense of jewellers’ dedication to their work and their occupational community through the myriad of references to ‘the trade’. Throughout this research, I have used the identity ‘the trade’ as liberally as the jewellers did themselves, and this frequent reference is telling in itself – ‘the trade’ becomes whatever it needs to be for the person using it: a group of businesses, a group of families, a geographical and social clustering, a signifier of the route someone has taken to enter their job, a grouping of tacit knowledge of metalwork skills and ways of being in a workshop. Like all group identities, it is a way of distinguishing those to whom you are similar and those to whom you are not, in any given situation.

Jewellers’ spoke of their trade highly, which is a sign of the strength of their ongoing identification. Job advertisers, accustomed to putting a positive spin on their vacancies, anxiously evoked the virtue and value of the trade to boys and girls leaving school in the 1940s in a bid to strengthen a trade that continued to be hit by labour redirection and the loss of many young trade men: ‘TAYLOR, EADIE & CO., LTD., JEWELLERS 141, HOCKLEY HILL REQUIRE MOUNTERS SETTERS POLISHERS (Female) BOYS

AND GIRLS (an excellent opportunity to learn a good trade) - GOOD WAGES AND BONUS'.⁸⁹ For jewellery making to be considered 'a good trade', Taylor, Eadie & Co distinguished it from other less 'good' opportunities, presumably jobs that did not come with the same route into what could be a lifelong occupation. Indeed, longstanding trade members all referred to the possibility of working in the trade forever, for as long as they wanted to or could. When asked if he would retire, jeweller Patrick Lambert replied:

Jewellers don't retire. Jewellers don't retire. You die at the bench, because, for a start off, as I say, it's not a well-paid job so you've never got a decent pension, I don't think there's any jeweller that's been a worker that's actually had a decent pension that they can retire on. So, you end up semi-retired, really, you'll end up working... apart from anything else, I like doing what I'm doing, I enjoy it. [...] some of the work is a real pleasure to do. And yes, when you see how much people enjoy it as well, you get pleasure from the fact [...] And it is nice to see that work being appreciated. So, yes. I don't think I'd retire fully.⁹⁰

Patrick's love for his occupation was evident in his description of the pleasure his work brought him, though he also spoke of the reality of the situation in that many jewellers remained in the trade partly because, financially, they had to. Dennis Owens had described the situation as, 'it's one of those trades, where being self-employed and one-man businesses, you can carry on until they carry you out foot first... feet first, you know?' – and, indeed, Dennis proudly stated that he was nearly 81.⁹¹ Though Dennis referred to being self-employed, and inferred that it brought flexibility, he did not clarify whether it had been a help or a hindrance financially; regardless, he was enthusiastic about remaining in the trade despite having well surpassed the national retirement age. Patrick's colleague Rod Mossop similarly recalled how 'Tommy Smith, old chap up the top end of the workshop, he had been one of the big boys, but his eyes had gone, the poor old chap [...] he soldiered on a long while'.⁹² Tommy Smith had continued working until he could not any longer, presumably sustained partly by his skills and love for the work and partly by a financial need to work. In every case, jewellers that had spent their life in the trade still spoke highly of it, even though they recognised that pursuing other careers may have earned them more money. By not seeing an end to their work – and still being relatively pleased about that prospect – these jewellers encapsulated what it meant to have vocation.

⁸⁹ 'TAYLOR, EADIE & CO., LTD., JEWELLERS 141, HOCKLEY HILL REQUIRE MOUNTERS SETTERS POLISHERS (Female) BOYS AND GIRLS (an excellent opportunity to learn a good trade) - GOOD WAGES AND BONUS', *The Birmingham Mail*, 27 April 1940, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Patrick Lambert, People's Archive: Patrick Lambert, Jewellery Polisher, Mounter and Enameller, Alabaster & Wilson on Legge Lane, 2018, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive <<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/patrick-lambert/>> [accessed 26 March 2023].

⁹¹ Owens.

⁹² Mossop.

Staying in the trade also applied to employed workers, like those honoured during the centenary celebrations of diamond ring firm William Griffith and Sons. February 1956's edition of *The British Jeweller* reported that 19 employees had been with the firm for 25 years or more each, with a combined service of 681 years, and three employees had worked for the firm for more than 40 years each: Mr E Morton, 44 years, Mr H Saveker, 44 years, and Mr A J Walker, 41 years.⁹³ Four pages later, the editor commented on a report by the Nuffield Foundation about the ages of workers that 'survived' working in different industries using census reports from 1921, 1931 and 1951. In answer to the report's question "'At what ages are men compelled by reason of their age alone, to quit the occupations in which they have spent their working lives?'" , the Foundation reported that workers in the watchmaking and precious metal and musical instruments industries 'had the highest survival rate of 75 to 85 per cent. compared with 5 to 15 per cent. among coal-face workers and railway signalmen'.⁹⁴ The headline statistics of this report suggested that roles that required greater manual exertion led to earlier changes of work or retirement; whereas the jewellery industry was characterised by 'light' work that could be continued for as long as a jeweller's eyes and hands permitted. The possible length of careers in the jewellery trade added to their possibility of becoming a vocation.

Jewellers' tacit knowledge rested in their bodies. Workers returning to the trade from war faced additional considerations about rejoining depending on the trauma they brought with them. Anthropologist Trevor Marchand related bodily changes and craftspeople's decisions about 'how to continue working when confronted with limitations or failure of their body caused by injury, illness, or ageing' to craftwork as problem solving.⁹⁵ Considering their work as problem solving belittles the jewellers' situation in the 1940s and 1950s, the extremity of which the trade felt at the time. The editorial committee of *The British Jeweller* published articles about disability and the rehabilitation of workers in back-to-back editions from June to October 1944, aligned with the introduction of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 on 1 March, but before the industry understood the numbers of disabled jewellers wishing and able to return.⁹⁶ In the August edition, Mr Turner included an article subtitled 'Published by request of the British Legion', in which the writer described what

⁹³ 'Centenary Celebration', *The British Jeweller*, August 1949, p. 67.

⁹⁴ 'Watchmakers And Jewellers Stay Longest At Their Jobs', *The British Jeweller*, February 1956, p. 110D.

⁹⁵ Trevor H. J. Marchand, 'Introduction: Craftwork as Problem Solving', in *Craftwork as Problem Solving: Ethnographic Studies of Design and Making* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2016), pp. 1–30 (p. 2).

⁹⁶ 'Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944', *Legislation.Gov.Uk* (Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament) <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/7-8/10/enacted>> [accessed 15 March 2021]; British Legion, 'Plan for the Homecoming', *The British Jeweller*, August 1944, 11; 'Rehabilitation of the Disabled', *The British Jeweller*, December 1944, pp. 9–10.

employers could expect when their employees returned and acknowledged the wariness employers may have had about making changes that would affect their business.

Profound psychological changes will be manifest – born of the stern demands of human conflict at its bitterest; artificial limbs, missing thumbs and fingers; facial disfigurement, deafness and minor paralysis – all will bear some signs of sacrifices made willingly and ungrudgingly in defence of their country, their homes and their loved ones.⁹⁷

Both mental and physical effects of war brought difficulty to the individuals affected and their employers. For the owners of small firms employing one or two jewellers, accepting disabled workers may have been a gamble within a trade struggling under government-imposed restrictions. Turner's inclusion of this British Legion article revealed the emphasis placed on individuals and firms to take responsibility for the post-war training of both youth and disabled returning workers, rather than responsibility being placed with the government, though the Ministry of Labour did run exhibitions in Birmingham to show how machine tools could be adapted for different limb movements.⁹⁸ Adapting work and workshops for outworkers would have been particularly difficult and unsupported. The BJA's Jobbing Jewellers trade sectional committee appealed to its members for their opinion on the types of injuries that would still allow for jewellers to undertake jobbing work. At their third meeting, on 7 September 1944, the committee reviewed members' responses to the Ministry of Labour's questionnaire about physical capabilities. In answer to a question about 'general standards of suitability' to jobbing work, they answered: 'Full use of both hands and normal eye-sight'.⁹⁹ Their categorisation of a jeweller's necessary abilities aligned with trade members' descriptions of continuing their work in the trade until either their eyes or hands gave up. Many fewer articles about disabled returnees featured in editions of *The British Jeweller* after 1944, likely because the trade was left to manage adaptation itself. If work was their vocation, adapting to new ways of working using the trade's ingrained flexibility was a necessity.

The trade association also recognised that many members considered their work a vocation, and that, as their way of life, the trade had a responsibility to its members. Established in 1938, the BJA Benevolent Fund existed to support 'aged employers or employers who had fallen on evil times', and its committee was relatively strict about supporting business leaders rather than employees. Whilst some employees, who 'were not within the scope of the Fund', received only 'ex gratia' goodwill payments, the committee members looked kindly on Mr John C Sanders, aged 82 in 1944, who had

⁹⁷ British Legion, 'Plan for the Homecoming', *The British Jeweller*, August 1944, 11.

⁹⁸ 'Rehabilitation of the Disabled', *The British Jeweller*, December 1944, pp. 9–10.

⁹⁹ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Jobbing Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Jan 1944 - Mar 48: Third Meeting 7 September 1944'.

run his own business on Vyse Street for 62 years, but who had lost his workpeople, presumably to war work, and was continuing to rent his 'small workshop, which he considered it necessary to keep, because he was in lodgings and had nowhere else to spend his time during the day'.¹⁰⁰ For John, his workshop had become his refuge even if he was no longer manufacturing, such was the strength of his connection and reliance on the trade. John was one of few beneficiaries of the benevolent fund and so he became an example in the historical record of how jewellery identity endured through life, but, in the eyes of the BJSA committee members, it only endured for certain, leading members of the trade – we think, again, of all the injured young pressworkers that did not receive the same recognition but that were just as much a part of the trade. Like the employee accidents and the black-market convictions and apology notices, the benevolent fund applications provide an unusual and intimate view of jeweller's lives because something had gone 'wrong'.

By following the instances of things going 'wrong' in the workers' lives, as detailed in the benevolent fund applications, accident cards and black-market convictions, this research has sought to understand the role of work experiences as part of jewellers' occupational identifications, which were part of their much broader concepts of identity. These workers lived through a war, when work took on a national role on top of as the importance it already held within the family. It is therefore important to consider what it meant to work at this time because, as Paul Podolsky expressed, 'We had to worry about being bombed; we had to worry about food. You know, the usual worries; we all worried as individuals'.¹⁰¹ Birmingham particularly endured much wartime devastation; 2,241 residents were killed in the Blitz, including enameller Kathleen Dayus's mother and sister when her family home on the western side of the Jewellery Quarter was directly hit, whilst a further 6,692 residents were injured.¹⁰² During the months of air raids, Brummie Brenda Bullock recalled the relief of her adult family members on nights when the siren did not sound, 'because it gave them the rare chance of a good night's sleep before their long working day'; now, rather than her family living on just her father's income, her mother, aunts and grandmother also worked – her grandmother in a pen nib factory in the Jewellery Quarter.¹⁰³ In the densely populated residential areas of the city centre, home to many of the trade's workers, the bombing was catastrophic: 103,919 homes were destroyed or damaged, their residents rehomed in 517 houses that the council had converted into 1057 flats,

¹⁰⁰ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Benevolent Fund Committee, 1938-49: Minutes 13 December 1944', 1944, p. 23, The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/191.

¹⁰¹ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

¹⁰² Phillada Ballard, *A City at War: Birmingham 1939-1945* (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1985), p. 5; Dayus, p. 359.

¹⁰³ Bullock, p. 17.

plus hostels and repaired houses.¹⁰⁴ The waiting list for homes still reached 65,000 names in June 1948.¹⁰⁵ This dearth of suitable housing, and the ongoing food rationing in Birmingham (until 1953), dragged on the effects of war into the next decade. Stable work, like producing jewellery for government-mandated export, was, therefore, necessary and sought after.

Living through the Second World War imbued this generation of workers with a reputation of being tough amongst their later family members and colleagues. Les Curtis, senior lecturer at the School of Jewellery, described his colleague Harry Brown as being a 'fabulous guy'.

Harry was full of stories, and he'd survived the lean times after the war by doing various things, he said he used to solder the brackets onto RAC badges for a farthing each. Stories like that really brought things home to roost, because you think how hard a living it was. And, of course, he'd got a wife and children and a house to support.¹⁰⁶

Les's praise for Harry and his stories demonstrated the enduring impact work during the 1940s and 1950s had on craftspeople's identifications of colleagues that had worked through this period. However, their reputation of being tough did not always come from a positive angle. When Paul Podolsky spoke of later changes to the apprenticeship system, he associated the poor behaviour he noticed then with the trade members he had looked down on in the 1940s for melting 'lovely Victorian jewellery, beautiful stuff' to evade restrictions on gold supplies, an act he decried as 'criminal'.

In fact, there was quite a scandal in the trade about the exploitation of apprentices. [...] [T]here were certain employers, probably the old black-market profiteers, who promised apprentices to learn the trade and simply used them to clean up castings, which doesn't require much skill.¹⁰⁷

Like other members of the trade, Paul firmly categorised these 'profiteers' as being on the very edge of the trade, or even outside of the trade, as they were unworthy of this recognition by, or membership of, the occupational community. Even 80 years ago, *The British Jeweller* editorial team branded them as 'rogues'; the chair of the Jobbing Jewellers' trade section, Mr Suter, called them 'undesirables'; and the BJSA's Code of Fair Trading was intended to have a 'Stop list' of people to avoid working with.¹⁰⁸ That both good and bad aspects of workers' identities endured through the trade in stories and memories proves the strength of their identifications. In turn, the strength of these

¹⁰⁴ Chinn, *Homes for People: Council Housing and Urban Renewal in Birmingham, 1849-1999*, p. 78.

¹⁰⁵ Chinn, *Homes for People: Council Housing and Urban Renewal in Birmingham, 1849-1999*, p. 88.

¹⁰⁶ Curtis.

¹⁰⁷ Podolsky, 'Interview with Paul Podolsky, First'.

¹⁰⁸ Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Jobbing Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Jan 1944 - Mar 48: Meeting 20 April 1945', MS 1646/120.

identifications reinforces the importance of considering how jewellers identified themselves and others having worked through the mid-twentieth century.

When trade members looked back and created these contemporary identifications of their colleagues based on their past work, they sedimented memories of what it meant to have worked in the trade during the changes of the 1940s and 1950s. Judith Butler referred to the 'efforts of alignment, loyalty' in her notion of how the group is consolidated through identifications; these efforts of loyalty, much like Les Curtis' praise for his colleague, 'are the sedimentation of the "we"'.¹⁰⁹ These memories passed down in workshop history and recalled in oral history interviews further sediment trade identity. Everett Hughes warned that individuals' concepts of work identity carry 'value-loading', and so must be scrutinised to be able to compare work situations, but noticing when and how individuals place value on certain aspects of their experience is illuminating.¹¹⁰ Jewellers repeatedly invoked their experience of being wrapped in the material and social world of metalwork in their oral history recordings and memoirs. By recognising and revering their material world, they professed the value of their tacit knowledge. These later acts of reappraisal further sedimented their idea of their trade identity. For example, Gary Smith, who worked in an enamelling workshop after school, called on colleagues' shared memories in his description of the workshops: 'Anybody that worked in the quarter before it was re-developed would know what I am saying. [...] Even in such cramped conditions everybody seemed happy enough.'¹¹¹ Gary's memory of a sense of community amongst the dilapidated buildings of the Jewellery Quarter seemed tinged with nostalgia. Nostalgia brings with it a wariness of the value-loading Hughes wrote of and also of distorted memory. Yet, nostalgia is another resource that the jewellers have traded on, sharing stories and material knowledge in the workshop and in the pub; it is a resource that is as much a part of their identification process as their original experiences – a route in the constant process of becoming.

Conclusion

Members of the jewellery trade have long placed great emphasis on 'the trade' and what it means to be a part of it; in fact, it is their strong sense of trade membership that makes it possible to begin to consider what it meant to identify as a jeweller. The jewellers' sense of identity was inherently always developing through this period of change – a process of becoming, as Stuart Hall put it – so that they relied on different material and symbolic resources to route their identifications of their work,

¹⁰⁹ Butler, p. 105.

¹¹⁰ Everett C Hughes, 'Work and the Self'.

¹¹¹ Smith, p. 43.

themselves and each other. These resources included memories, experiences, tacit knowledge, relationships and trust. Like in their work, jewellers operated with discretion, exercising careful, sometimes subconscious, choices about how they related to their colleagues and the identifications they made as a result.

Though jewellers' memories of entering the trade through family legacy seemed to stress the social dimension of their routes, material interactions are at the heart of these social relationships. Without the gold, silver, steel, brass and copper, and the 'cheap', 'medium', 'good' and 'best' class of their work with these materials, their trade identities would not have existed. Jewellers established their loyalty to their trade identity through materials and aligned themselves with colleagues that shared similar ways of becoming in the workshop. The workshop has always been a mediator of space, shaping the processes carried out and the relationships built within it. Identifications of roles and skill levels were rooted/routed in the tacit knowledge shaped by the workshop. Changes in the 1940s and 1950s to the organisation of the workshop threatened to disrupt these identification routes and so trade members protected them by continuing workshop interactions outside of the workshop; jewellers found other sources of gold and used their tools to work from home, and they continued to meet across their war work and in the pubs. In the case of Dennis Owens, despite the interviewer asking questions from the Library's prescribed list (including hobbies and immigration in Birmingham), Dennis repeatedly wove his work as a jeweller into his responses. His integration of work into his life framed his career as a vocation. The workshop, and the Jewellery Quarter by extension, was thus a symbolic boundary as much as it was a spatial and geographic boundary.

The jewellers adapted their skills and flexibly navigated the restrictions on materials and labour, not in the ways the Working Party may have hoped, but in ways that ensured their continued link to their trade. In the face of the manufacturing and organisational changes that threatened to ruin the industry, workers pushed back against the national sense of efficiency and instead worked flexibly for their survival. They pursued individual aims to feed their families, but still chose to be recognised as part of the trade and its occupational community because they acted with discretion to continue to help each other. Each was equally aware of their individual, but shared, identity of being a jeweller in this period, even, and especially, when they made very little jewellery.

Conclusion

In the early 1940s the jewellers of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, the UK's largest jewellery production centre, adapted their skills to produce items for Britain's rearmament during the Second World War. Like their counterparts around the country, the jewellers navigated new taxes, export orders and restrictions on materials, energy and labour. They lived through war as well as changes that threatened to ruin their industry. Businesses closed under the pressure; others amalgamated through the government's Concentration of Industry orders; and most swapped entirely to war contracts. A small group of exempt workers continued jewellery production by making jewellery for export and 9-carat gold wedding rings for an eager home market. Through their trade knowledge and their occupational community, jewellers found ways to stay in business in spite of these restrictions. They used their discretion to understand how best to utilise the clustering of people, skills, materials and equipment in the Jewellery Quarter so that they could work through loopholes in the restrictions. In the face of these changes, trade members continued to rely on their trade identity. They redrew the external boundaries of what it meant to be 'trade' through the new ways of working and the new people in the workshops. This generation still makes its mark on the trade: they are invoked today by their successors to help understand and become reconciled to the 'boom and bust' nature of the trade; and their legacies endure.

Giving space to these workers' histories goes some way to reset the balance in jewellery history, as general jewellery histories have largely ignored Birmingham production and the wartime changes, and specialist histories have overlooked workers in favour of business owners. Whilst Shena Mason provided a useful overview of the trade from 1750 to 1950, more focused studies from economic historian Francesca Carnevali and sociologist Maureen Padfield debated whether to categorise the Jewellery Quarter as an industrial district or an occupational community, respectively, neither of which followed the materials and tacit knowledge that are foundational to the trade.¹ By focusing instead on the experiences of employed workers and the self-employed outworkers, this project sought to understand what it meant to identify as a jeweller in the 1940s and 1950s. The pressures on the trade made this period useful for researching occupational identity because, as sociologist Stuart Hall posited, we make identifications of ourselves and others that continually recognise and reconfigure the boundaries of our identity, particularly when those boundaries are challenged; under pressure, the jewellers reassessed and reified the boundary of what it meant to be 'trade'.² Researching

¹ Mason; Carnevali, 'Golden Opportunities'; Padfield.

² Hall, p. 4.

concepts of identity brought a different layer to other studies of industrial flexibility and adaptation, as these studies had focused more on managerial mechanisms implemented on machinery than the workers that adapted to these changes. To focus on workers' experiences, this project fused together the previously divided ways of discussing skill: the measurable ideas of skill used in management theories (like deskilling) and the immeasurable ideas of skills used in craftsmanship (like tacit knowledge). The Jewellery Quarter presented a generation of workers with whom we could consider the form and scale of alternative modes of flexibility and its impact on individuals, particularly because the number of changes in the industry, as in all others, were more heavily documented in this period.

This research used 'discretion', or a knowing from within the trade, as an interpretative strategy. Following a lineage of homonym use from Jacques Derrida to Stuart Hall, discretion's double definition allowed for a productive 'apprehension of meaning' in two ways: firstly, jewellers used their trade knowledge, or discretion, when they exercised their discrete choice about which jobs to take on and who to work with, and valued colleagues being discreet when they worked 'off the book'; secondly, I worked with discretion to make discrete this generation of craftspeople and followed the trade's principle of being discreet to carefully and responsibly interpret the jewellers' approach to work in the 1940s and 1950s.³ Existing histories of the trade in Birmingham rested on the sources most accessible in the archive, but these prioritised and skewed representation towards business owners, and failed to capture the complexity of the division of work. To overcome this access bias and make visible the workers that created and recreated their occupational community, I conducted research with discretion to recognise spatial and material sources, including jewellers' tools and the layout of workshops in the Jewellery Quarter, alongside more traditional but unused archival sources like the accident cards that give a more experiential insight to the jewellers' work. Jewellers' oral histories yielded detailed accounts of their experiences and emotions working in this industry. The strong sense of community within the trade manifested in jewellers' stories, which interwove the stories of their family, friends and colleagues; as a result, very individual accounts also brought other colleagues' experiences closer. By living and working in the Jewellery Quarter, I could situate these stories and understand the layout of workshops, which emphasised the importance of jewellers' references to physical and social clustering. My positionality as a trade member helped me to contextualise references and initiate conversations; it allowed for a knowing from within the trade that has been essential to understanding the mechanism of discretion. This cross-disciplinary way of working followed industrial craft and archaeology to stress the value of materials, tools and tacit knowledge in connecting us to makers of the past.

³ Derrida.

The three first chapters of this thesis established how the trade worked with discretion to reinforce its enduring structure, their reputations and ownership of tacit knowledge. The first chapter, 'Discretion', focused on the people in the trade; the second, 'Reputation & Responsibility', on their material interactions; and the third, 'Going Inside', on their mastery of manufacturing processes. The final chapter, 'Identity', drew on the conclusions from these three chapters to piece together a sense of what it meant to identify as a jeweller in this period and about how the trade structure helps to understand how workers configured identity on a trade level.

'Discretion' broke from existing histories that focused only on trade leaders to consider the experiences and occupational identities of employed and self-employed jewellers in the 1940s and 1950s. This first chapter recognised how they lived and worked within their system, which revealed the emphasis they placed on their physical and social proximity in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. This clustering of jewellers, silversmiths and allied trades in the Quarter continues today and so there remain traces of earlier generations. A social assessment of the spaces they occupied together reinforced the positive references they made to proximity in oral histories and interviews. Recognising the value jewellers afforded to controlling their proximity to each other was key to reaching more of their stories. The social and physical nature of their proximity was vital in their maintenance of the established production routes and trusting relationships that combined to shape their reputation. They operated with discretion when undertaking their work, calling on certain relationships when needed. They valued the trade's flexibility to be able to move between employment and self-employment to cope with the 'boom and bust' nature of the trade; this was a systemic flexibility rooted in centuries of workers' independence and proactivity rather than in managers' redistribution of machinery, as typically stressed by economic historians for other industries. Their discretion helped them interpret the external input from the government's Board of Trade and Working Party because smaller businesses knew how to work round their rulings.

The Board of Trade's orders restricted the jewellers' output and so the trade utilised its flexibility to adapt to the changing situation. 'Reputation and Responsibility' assessed how the jewellers adapted their skills and flexibly navigated the restrictions on material and labour. The routes they took may not have been those the Working Party had hoped for, but they demonstrated their adept handling of the internal mechanisms of the trade. The changing regulations and restrictions left many jewellers balanced on the line between legitimate and illegitimate work in the eyes of the state; this chapter therefore sensitively questioned the role and extent of the jewellery black market of the 1940s and 1950s. In particular, the legal dichotomy of legitimacy and illegitimacy did not map directly onto trade members' feelings, who instead saw their manufacturing and trading at this time as being on a spectrum of morality, rather than a dichotomy. Their nuanced approach was evident in their

testimonies, which provided an important balance to the assessments of right and wrong that the writers of *The British Jeweller* espoused through their publication of court proceedings against trade members convicted of Purchase Tax evasion and formal apologies for hallmarking infringements. These instances of jewellers being caught revealed how some trade members broke rules whilst others exploited loopholes in the new laws. These loopholes were made evident to them because of their knowledge of materials and processes, particularly the tools they knew, people they trusted to look the other way, their acceptance of cash to work 'off the book', and their tacit knowledge of working with different gold finenesses. The material focus of these loopholes took us to the root of jewellers' methods of dealing with the changes: technologies of tacit knowledge and trust. Choices to be involved or look the other way impacted jewellers' sense of identity and the overall sense of a trade identity. Yet, black-market deals were just one route to survive in the trade at this time as, despite all the change, ways of working in the trade had changed very little and the jewellers still worked with the people and tools they knew. Looking for loopholes therefore does not dramatise the situation but gives texture to the working lives of people in the trade that tried to sustain their jobs and their occupational identity.

Whilst the first two chapters of this thesis attended to the self-employed jewellers and workers in small businesses, the trade's flexibility manifested in individuals as the choice of employment or self-employment, between working inside and outworking. The third chapter 'Going Inside' recognised the thousands of workers that chose the relative security of employment during the early 1940s. No other trade histories have focused on the workers inside these larger workshops and factories due to an entrenched hierarchy of fashion jewellery and fine jewellery, plus a difficulty of finding individuals amongst this number of employees. Engaging with pressworkers, stampers, labourers, toolmakers and administrative staff through their employee accident cards has provided a privileged insight to their lives. The details recorded on each card highlighted individual workers' cases; whilst the patterns seen across the cards prompted and facilitated comparisons with the experiences of their peers – everyone in the trade had a story related to an accident. This approach built a route towards understanding identity across an industry. Their experiences of work underlined the importance of assessing the role of repetition in day-to-day practices, rather than decrying presswork and other processes that required repetitive movements as dull, unskilled or insignificant. Just as the workers respected the repetition of their roles to avoid accidental injuries, we must also afford repetition its part in building tacit knowledge. The frequency of accidents buttressed workers' belief that they had to sustain an injury to know their trade. However, their acceptance of fault or blame was a cruel result of their managers hiding behind accusations of workers' non-compliance or apathy, when, in fact, many manufacturing processes like presswork and stamping came with foreseeable risks that businesses did

not manage appropriately. Risky work, coupled with the repetitive nature of these manufacturing processes that heightened the risk, contributed to workers building an aspect of their tacit knowledge and occupational identity through accidents.

Identity

The first three chapters of this thesis demonstrated that members of the jewellery trade have emphasised the notion of 'the trade' and what it meant to be part of it. It is their strong sense of trade membership that has made it possible to consider what it meant to identify as a jeweller. The final chapter of this thesis turned to the examples of jewellers' 'trade' invocation from the previous chapters to test the boundaries of their identification. As cultural theorist Stuart Hall put it, making these identifications is a process of becoming, a repeated creation and recognition of the boundaries of group membership.⁴ Hall's theory contributed an appropriate and productive way of thinking about identity because he prioritised the value of group identity; he, too, used homonyms – a leitmotif throughout this thesis – to play with the space we give to multiple meanings. As such, we 'route' rather than 'root' our identifications through different material and symbolic resources, including experience, relationships, trust and the tacit knowledge of materials, tools and making processes. For the jewellers, their identification of themselves and others as trade members was based on material knowledge and the workshop, as a mediator of space that shaped processes and relationships. Identifications of roles and skill levels were routed through the tacit knowledge of the workshop. As these identifications were of their time, the 1940s and 1950s changes to the organisation of the workshop threatened to disrupt these identification routes; yet trade members protected them by continuing interactions outside of the workshop. They found other sources of gold and used their tools to work from home; they continued to meet across their war work and in the pubs of the Jewellery Quarter. As before, jewellers operated with discretion, exercising careful, sometimes subconscious, judgements about how they related to their colleagues. Many framed their careers as their vocation despite significant changes to their day-to-day work at this time. By remaining in their workshops and in the Jewellery Quarter during the 1940s and 1950s, the workshop – and Jewellery Quarter by extension – was a symbolic boundary of their identity as much as it was a clear spatial and geographic boundary.

Identifying as a jeweller in this period carried many stable identifications deeply rooted in the trade, as well as ones specific to the time and the situation the jewellers worked in. Despite a dearth of

⁴ Hall, p. 4.

precious metals, the trade's connection to luxury ensured the enduring prestige of the role of the jeweller. The government told them that the items of adornment they made were 'essential luxuries', but only when destined for export, whilst their adaptable skills made them essential for war work too. Their specialised roles blanking, stamping, pressing, soldering, mounting and more included the knowledge of how their role fitted into the production stages of an item, even if they did not know what the finished product might be; this pattern continued in war work, with a greater discretion about what their work contributed to. Much work entailed repetitive actions, which built huge tacit knowledge, and they took pride from their ability to repeatedly make with precision. This skill and their discretion built their reputation, and we must be careful today to not quickly judge the favourability of these reputations based on our external opinions of working through loopholes. Their reputation rested on connections in the trade, some of them familial, and was reinforced by the trade's prominence in Birmingham, with most residents related to or knowing someone in light metalwork. The industry was therefore not as 'niche' as we may consider it today, and joining the trade was a decision made simpler by the connections everyone had to previous generations of metalworkers. The continued clustering of the trade in the Jewellery Quarter, escaping displacement even during the war and later redevelopment, reinforced the identity of the trade both externally in Birmingham and internally for trade members on war work. Jewellers valued their proximity in the Jewellery Quarter for security and familiarity; they were buoyed by their belief that whilst the Jewellery Quarter existed, they would have somewhere to work and their skill would be valued. Their belief in the 'boom and bust' nature of the trade, and their use of it to reconcile themselves in difficult times, pointed to a shared pessimism and optimism – a career lived in extremes. This mix of pessimism and optimism is still shared amongst the trade today – 'you can always find some work', reassured Dennis Owens.⁵

Research Contributions and Opportunities

This research reclaimed the terms 'repetition', 'adaptation' and 'flexibility' from ontologies that stress the importance of innovation as the primary mechanism for economic growth, and therefore neglect workers' implementation of these ways of working for survival. This focus on manufacturing adaptation counters the traditional design-focused narrative of jewellery histories of this period. The jewellers respected the repetition and risk inherent in their work because they understood the importance of repetitive work in the accrual of tacit knowledge and skill, or, simply, ways of being in the workshop. Repetition's productive nature has been overlooked in production histories and

⁵ Dennis Owens, MS 2255/2/88.

theories that have sidelined industries built on repetitive work. This project acknowledged individual jewellers' work and recognised the ways they adapted and were technologically and socially flexible in their production during the 1940s and 1950s, without necessarily innovating on a grand scale; instead, they turned to their tacit knowledge of working in the trade to benefit from moving between outworking and working inside; sourcing and making with different gold finenesses and their own tool collections; dealing in cash and identifying regulatory loopholes; and choosing to collaborate with the fellow trade members they trusted. The trade's systemic flexibility was thus rooted in the workers' independence and proactiveness, rather than managers' redistribution of machinery or staff. These ways of working contributed to an alternative basis of capitalist organisation, one that prioritised individual definitions of success, efficiency and fitness to work, and that contrasted greatly to the Working Party's proposed route for the industry. Repetition, as a conceptual tool, encapsulates and champions these individual definitions of what it means to do a job well.

The jewellers' continued flexibility in response to the changes of the 1940s and 1950s sustained the distinctive character of their occupational community and the Jewellery Quarter. Such enduring, flexible structures provide interesting comparisons to other heritage crafts in the UK including, in the same region, Black Country metalworkers and chain makers, Birmingham's pen makers and Coventry's ribbon makers.⁶ A similar focus on discretion, skill and risk in industrial craft manufacturing offers a framework for relating jewellers' experiences in the mid-twentieth century to the experiences of workers in the five other industries selected by the government for scrutiny by the working parties: cotton, pottery, hosiery, furniture and boot and shoe. Valuing repetition as a conceptual tool would bring a new angle to the histories of these industries, as well as to the growing field of industrial craft research.

Working with the accident cards gave a new and privileged insight to individual experiences and the cards offer greater scope for future research into occupational healthcare within craft and light engineering industries, including the intersection of community-based healthcare and the birth of the NHS. The cards also provide the opportunity to craft a more feminist history of pressworkers that builds on this initial work on identity, potentially using feminist autotheory routes to further explore my role as researcher and trade member. Additionally, the site- and family-specific nature of this project makes collaborating with local history groups for future research and dissemination an exciting option. Though it was beyond the scope of this project to engage with a broader discussion of the role of heritage research, it could prove fruitful particularly in Birmingham and in the protected

⁶ See: Simon Briercliffe, *Forging Ahead: Austerity to Prosperity in the Black Country 1945-1968* (History West Midlands, 2021); *Smell, Memory, and Literature in the Black Country*, ed. by Sebastian Groes and R. M. Francis (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

conservation area of the Jewellery Quarter, which, like the rest of the city, has many redevelopment sites that draw on their industrial history to add background to their next chapter.

This research reinstated craftspeople to their production history by including previously untold narratives, thereby shaping a more inclusive and representative picture of the trade in the 1940s and 1950s for the Jewellery Quarter today. These workers pursued individual aims to continue their businesses and feed their families, but still chose to be recognised as part of the trade and its occupational community by acting with discretion, or knowing from within the trade, to sustain trade connections – this discretion and trade-based knowledge was also pivotal in conducting this research. Each was aware of their individual, but shared, identity of being a jeweller in this period, even and especially when they made very little jewellery. This occupational identity has endured; today's craftspeople still look to the generation that sustained the jewellery, silver and allied trades industry through the Second World War and the restrictions that lingered after, and so their legacy continues.

Coda – My research journey

Conducting this research has been a privilege. It has immersed me in another city and in new professional networks. Originally, I had intended to continue the comparison of jewellery production in London and Birmingham that I began with my MA research on jewellers' adaptation to war work; yet, it soon became clear that the physical and social clustering in the Jewellery Quarter was so intrinsic to jewellers' concepts of identity that a comparison of locations was inappropriate – London's trade is disparate, split between Hatton Garden and the West End (including Bond Street and Soho). In the Jewellery Quarter, all types of jewellery production enmesh, from bespoke fine jewellery to fashion jewellery, sharing buildings and suppliers. This breadth of production was important to me because divisions and classifications of product type within the trade were less prominent to the workers that carried out similar processes regardless of the finished item, especially so in a period when material choices were compromised. Instead of following finished items of jewellery, I followed processes and people. As a result, I was a student of the Victoria and Albert Museum that only referenced one collection item: the Utility wedding ring. This distancing from collection items was partly an active choice to break from jewellery histories (and collecting principles) that focus only on fine and high jewellery; instead, I am proud that this thesis details the manufacture of wedding rings and signet rings, fashion jewellery and everyday jewellery not typically collected by museums.

By focusing on the range of production, I became familiar with the medium-to-large scale industry that still exists in the UK today, and that is concentrated in the Jewellery Quarter. Walking around the

Quarter with colleagues and friends, particularly Cornelius Sullivan, helped me to see the wealth of knowledge that I could gain from using a different combination of sources, particularly spatial and social explorations of the Quarter (and was a positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic). What I became acquainted with was a trade that has continued to be very much connected and individual. Highlighting and interpreting past trade members' work, which was sometimes illegal work, was part of my responsibility as a researcher both in the trade and in an academic institution; I therefore operated my own discretion to respect the occupational legacies of individuals by contextualising their actions in their material and social spheres – and not just in legal spheres. There is still much to explore and I am grateful for the opportunity this research affords me to hear so many stories.

Appendix A – Interview Transcripts

All transcripts have been abridged for this thesis. Quotations used in the main body of this thesis are marked in **bold**; the conversation around them has been provided for context.

The early interviews with Paul Podolsky were conducted during my MA research, but Paul consented for the recordings and transcripts to be used in future research projects.

List of Transcripts:

- Interview with Paul Podolsky at his home, Finchley, London, 9 November 2017
- Interview with Paul Podolsky at his home, Finchley, London, 12 December 2017
- Letter from Paul Podolsky to Georgina Izzard: follow up from interview and comments on MA dissertation, 13 December 2017
- Interview with Linda and Tony Hackett at their home, Witton, Birmingham, with Cornelius Sullivan, 26 July 2021
- Interview with Bernard Hussey at his workshop in the Jewellery Quarter, with Cornelius Sullivan, 23 June 2022

Interview with Paul Podolsky at his home, Finchley, London

9 November 2017

Present:

Paul Podolsky

Georgina Izzard

[...]

PP This was in 1940 and [pause] oh yes, Churchill was more business-like. What he did immediately with the government was to impose what they called a limitation of supplies order.

GI Okay.

PP Ever heard that expression?

GI Yes, I have heard it.

PP Well, all it did was say that if you did a hundred pieces the year before, you could only do seventy-five now, or something like that. The facts I don't know, but you can look them up.

GI I can look that up. And that affected you?

PP Soon after that came Purchase Tax.

GI Yes.

PP Which started off as 33 and one third per cent to groans of anguish, until it became 100 per cent to groans of agony. And the purchase tax had to be levied on the manufacturing cost, on new goods. The idea being to divert from luxury production to war production. However, what the Government didn't do, surprisingly, was put a tax on second-hand goods.

GI Yes. Could you tell me more about the second-hand trade?

PP I can tell you quite a lot about it. No tax on second-hand goods so immediately a few rogue workshops started producing second-hand goods as fast as they could turn them out. They had problems, they couldn't get materials, not easily, and, erm, so they, erm, used to melt down **lovely Victorian jewellery, beautiful stuff, it's criminal.**

GI Yes.

PP You know, today, it would be valuable. They melted it down to use the gold to make black market jewellery.

GI And was that to get the gold, or was that because the gold was of a certain alloy to make it look old?

PP No, it looked brand new and it was.

- GI Yes.
- PP Not only gold, but platinum. You know, you couldn't get the things easily.
- GI So it was to source the metal?
- PP That's why they trade in, shall we say, underground refining. And I am afraid it is to the disgrace of Hatton Garden, it was pretty widespread. **Bigger workshops didn't do it because they had reputations.**
- GI Yes.
- PP **My father couldn't, or wouldn't rather, I would say, and there were other people who remained on the level.**
- GI Yes.
- PP But, of course, everything was done for cash, so you had dealers in Hatton Garden with pockets stuffed full of notes. Erm, and you had all sorts of methods of legitimising this illegal manufacturer; for example, inheritance. You know, 'this is from my Aunt Fanny, she never wore it so it's brand new, blah blah'. Or else, a lady of the night would go into a retailer jeweller's, whom she knew, and make an arrangement to get a commission on signing that she had received this from an admirer and sold it to the shop, free of Purchase Tax.
- GI Ah, so that is how they made new pieces, but passed them off as old?
- PP Well, there were new pieces, that are probably still around today, some of them. Erm, **I can't say that the quality would have been hallmarking standard, because you couldn't hallmark them.**
- GI Okay.
- PP And the work, if they were good craftsmen, the work was okay. At least they looked good enough for the people that would buy them. And, as you know, I just said, a lot of cash floating around, which people didn't trust anymore. You needed cash and we did maintain our cash levels quite well during the war, but you needed cash and therefore, you know, there was enough of it around to finance the black market. But I think it's a blot on the reputation of the trade that there was so much of it.
- GI Widespread.
- PP **I don't know how you're going to write that because you're going to have to be very careful.**
- GI Yes, I know, I will think about that.
- PP I don't know what information Eleni will have at the [Goldsmiths'] Hall.
- GI Well, from conversations I've had, it's something that most people know about, but it's never been formally written down.
- PP Well, I saw it first-hand. So, as far the war was concerned, that was the situation. The only thing that really happened was public taste. We started getting these continental ideas; there's a lot more jewellery made in gold than in platinum; and...

- GI And was that taste, or material aspects?
- PP Design changed.
- GI Design changed.
- PP Art Deco was on the way out; Victorian was still considered passé and not wanted, but the new designs were mainly floral or, erm, scrolls and abstract shapes that were put together in some form of symmetry. Some of it was very attractive. You were allowed, oh yes, there was a ban on any gold jewellery over the quality of 9ct.
- GI Yes. How did that affect the work during the war?
- PP Well, if you were doing legitimate work in gold, you could only do it in 9ct, including wedding rings.
- GI Yes.
- PP They had a utility wedding ring, yeah they did.
- GI [Laughs]. I have read about them.
- PP Standard weight, you know, that sort of thing.
- GI So, in the early years of the war, was jewellery production continuing, but just in 9ct gold?
- PP It continued for a while, after the war, I don't know at what time, what date rather, the ban was lifted, probably around the early 1950s, something like that. Well, of course, the big day was when Purchase Tax gave way to VAT.
- GI Big change.
- PP Oh yes. The Customs and Excise **were very strict on collecting tax** and since, **if you were a manufacturer, you charged Purchase Tax on an invoice to a retailer, whether you were paid or not, you still had to pay** the Inland Revenue...
- GI Okay.
- PP ... what you had declared for Purchase Tax and if you didn't pay they were rather tough on you.
- GI Right. And how, for most workshops, at the beginning of the war, could they continue with jewellery production, or did most decide to swap?
- PP Well, I can only quote my father's workshop.
- GI Yes.
- PP Er, yes, we had the Limitation Order, so we had a few older craftsmen who continued doing their job and then we had to convert a lot of our workshop into instrument production. We did things like fuses, shell fuses, which were mainly made of copper, but they had to have iridium platinum wire soldered to make the contact between two poles.
- GI Okay.

- PP And this was delicate work and the Ministry of Aircraft Production, the Admiralty and Woolwich Arsenal, they all wanted different work of that type done. So not only the fuses, but oxygen apparatus and that sort of thing.
- GI Yes.
- PP So I found myself suddenly taken off the bench where I was learning to make jewellery. I don't know, I was only about sixteen when the war broke out and I was put in charge of ten women.
- GI Really?
- PP Yes. They were very nice women; they treated me well, but they did take the mickey. You know, 19-year-old lad in charge of them, but at least I knew my trade. And they **were good workers, all of them.**
- GI What was their background?
- PP All mixed.
- GI Okay.
- PP **They came from anywhere, they weren't in the trade.**
- GI Weren't in the trade?
- PP A lot of them were directed to us; oh yes, there was labour direction.
- GI Oh, yes.
- PP You know, if they signed on as unemployed, they were told 'go to the Podolsky workshop, there's a vacancy there, they'll take you on'. That sort of thing. Erm, so this continued until I went in the Army at 21 and I was away three years. The war was over by then. I went into the Army in 1944, war ended in '45, still away for a while, but when I came back is another story. But by the time I came back, the trade had already undergone a change. The styles had changed; people would not pay 100 per cent Purchase Tax, that's why the black market thrived.
- GI They wouldn't pay?
- PP Yes. And so, you know, the situation was very fluid. Erm, you had a lot of big workshops, particularly in Birmingham and Sheffield, where they switched to engineering as opposed to making silver or stampings for silver plate. And they stuck to engineering for the motor car trade.
- GI Stayed with engineering?
- PP Mm. But in London, the big workshops survived for a while. We had to switch from hand-made, although we still did hand-made stuff, we had to switch to production. Our wartime machine tools were very useful; instead of the hand presses, we had automatic presses; we had furnaces which annealed very quickly and efficiently; we had things called tack-welders. All sorts of production techniques.
- GI Where did you... Where and how did you get these machines during the war?

- PP Through the... well, we had to get them hook or crook. The Government helped.
- GI Okay.
- PP They could direct a workshop that wasn't using a machine to hand it over to another workshop that wanted it.
- GI Did you have to pay for them?
- PP Erm, I really don't know. Erm, I wasn't on the financial side of the business, not at that age.
- [...]
- GI Yes. Could you tell me a bit more about the skills that you think, sort of, changed or stayed the same, erm, before the war and then during war, erm, munitions production.
- PP Well, you got a new balance of people in the workshop.
- GI Okay.
- PP As the older craftsmen retired, or died, and as the emphasis on the trade came to cheaper goods, so you had more people from outside the trade coming in to do simple jobs like operating a press or, you know, cleaning up castings. **In fact, there was quite a scandal in the trade about the exploitation of apprentices.** Now, the apprenticeship system is a wonderful idea and it trains very very good craftspeople, as you know probably.
- GI Mhm, yes.
- PP **But, there were certain employers, probably the old black market profiteers, who promised apprentices to learn the trade and simply used them to clean up castings, which doesn't require much skill.**
- GI Yes.
- PP You know, all you have to do is cut off the sprue, file it up, no skill required worth talking about. And that became a scandal. The union made representations about that. Quite rightly.
- GI Good.
- PP Quite rightly, I agreed with them. So that was put right. We were limited to the number of apprentices we could take on.
- GI Roughly when did that happen?
- PP It started happening in the 1950s.
- GI Okay.
- PP After casting took off. I think if you go to the middle to late 50s, that is when it really was at its pitch.
- [...]
- GI No, I know it, Albion House. Sorry, just to clarify, so you had... your father had about 35 people working before the war.

- PP Yes.
- GI And then, then some left to fight?
- PP Some left, some emigrated, some decided to get out of the trade altogether.
- GI Okay. So, during the war, how many people were employed, roughly?
- PP On jewellery, probably about five. And another, oh, 25 or 30 people on war production.
- GI Wow. And so, the ones on jewellery, after a while they were mainly just... were they mainly making wedding rings?
- PP **They were all elderly, yes.**
- GI Oh.
- PP And then after the war, we had a few of the younger ones come back again.
- GI Was it only people over a certain age that were allowed to continue making jewellery?
- PP Was it what?
- GI I heard somewhere, jewellers had to be over 65 to make jewellery?
- PP Never heard of that.
- GI No? A person just mentioned it...
- PP No, you can be any age.
- GI Any age, okay. And then you had... 15 came back from fighting? Roughly. Or was that how many people in the workshop?
- PP **There were 15 in the workshop, about nine or ten of them came back from service.**
- GI Oh, wow. And when you're saying 15 in the workshop, is that 15 craftspeople, or is that office staff as well?
- PP They're all craftspeople.
- GI All craftspeople, so then, maybe a few office staff.
- PP Then, of course, we gradually changed over.
- GI Great. No, that's really useful. It helps me... I want to be able to build up a picture of what it was like for the individual people who were involved in this total change of the industry. Rather than just looking at it really top-down, using policy records and things like that. It's much more interesting.
- PP Well, we all had our problems. We had problems with getting to and from work; public transport was a bit dodgy.
- GI [Laughs] Yes.

PP **We had to worry about being bombed; we had to worry about food. You know, the usual worries; we all worried as individuals.**

GI Yes.

PP But we all had much the same sort of problems.

[...]

GI And, during the war, did you... for someone in the trade, what did you think the outlook would be post-war? What did you think might happen to the jewellery industry?

PP Well, we all dreamed of it. Happy days would come again, we hoped. And, I suppose, to some extent they did, course they did. Without the shadow of war and the restrictions, we were free to do our own thing.

GI Did you... before the war had ended, but you were thinking about the future, did you think it would be very different and changed, with different clients, or was it...?

PP **Well, we had Purchase Tax, it was the bane of our lives. Everything had to revolve on how you could do things cheap enough so that Purchase Tax, although it was 100 per cent, wouldn't drive it out of the market. And that was it, you know, we did what we could in quantity as cheaply as we could.**

GI So it was always the plan... Did you plan for what might happen after the war?

PP Well, we dreamed about what might happen.

GI Okay.

PP Yes. Let's get this war out of the way, have some peace and... But there were difficulties, obviously, after the war.

GI Yes, I can imagine.

PP Economic mainly. The country was poor, we had a big deficit to make up. The Americans were helping the Germans; they didn't want a repeat of what happened after the first war, which was a direct cause of the second war, Germany going broke.

GI Yes.

PP You know, so the Americans made sure the Germans were able to survive, at least the West Germans. And, well, their gallant allies, like us, we all had to fend for ourselves for the main part. We couldn't rely on the Americans completely and I'm glad we didn't really.

GI Yes. As an individual workshop, how did the... how did the change-over post-war, erm, how did it happen? In, sort of, production, finances, employment?

PP Well, we weren't sure... **we had to change our workshops around. There was a small section for handmade work. There was a larger area where production work went on and where we employed people, not because they were skilled, but because they were capable of doing simple jobs in repetition.**

GI And, did you do that because the market change?

PP Did I what?

GI Had production changed because the market had changed? As in, you mentioned before about the influx of cheaper goods changing...

PP Well, yes, erm. Our pattern of trade changed anyway. Whereas my father used to supply exclusively to the better West End and provincial shops, we did a deal with a Birmingham firm that gave up making jewellery, so we suddenly found ourselves with nearly 1000 retail customers.

[...]

GI We've been speaking a lot about London firms and Birmingham firms, as the two big production centres. Do you feel that, erm, sort of before, during and after the war, what were the main differences between the two?

PP **You could walk down Vyse Street or Warstone Lane in Birmingham and every building had its own little workshop or wholesaler doing his own thing in there. They were mainly individuals, a few employed people as well, and they were highly specialist. I mean, I used to get a Birmingham salesman who made certain things, used to come in and claim proudly that he was a penny cheaper per piece than his nearest rival. We're talking about old pennies, not new ones.**

GI Mm, yes, that's a fair amount. And when was that?

PP 1948/9/50, that sort of period.

GI So post?

PP Immediately post-war. I've always admired the Birmingham crowd, they're a good lot.

Interview with Paul Podolsky at his home, Finchley, London

12 December 2017

Present:

Paul Podolsky

Georgina Izzard

[...]

GI Erm, so, first question, erm, when you were, erm, taking on war contracts to make, erm, various different articles in the workshop, do you know if there were any external parties that helped you find these contracts, or was it your company doing everything?

PP It was my father's company.

GI Yes.

PP Erm, I don't know who approached him, but obviously, erm, the probably the trade association and the Board of Trade collaborated to tell to disclose what workshop capacity was available and the skill of the various people employed and so we were approached by the Ministry of Aircraft Production, the Admiralty.

GI So multiple, multiple different people approached

PP Yes, the various different war departments, Woolwich Arsenal, **all those bodies came to see us with various jobs they wanted done and all these jobs of course were very small bits and pieces that they considered required the skill and people who were used to handling small articles.**

GI Great. Erm. And do you, how much input did they give?

PP How much what?

GI Input did they give to how you should make them?

PP Erm. The input was mostly highly critical.

GI [Laugh]

PP In so far as the standards were very exacting. We had to be exact for the most part within two thousandths part of an inch.

GI Wow.

PP Which was very tight. Engineering standard of accuracy which we as jewellers had never even bothered with, it was just if it looked right it was alright.

[...]

PP Well, we were bombed in March or April 1940, just when the bombing started. Our building was not destroyed but wrecked, we couldn't work in it; so, we had to move to new workshops in Hatton Garden. We settled down there and it was about the end of 1940 that the various ministries became interested in our ability to do things.

GI That, I presume, almost coincided with an increase in the number of restrictions on the jewellery trade.

PP Well, the Limitation of Supplies Order and Purchase Tax were the principal ones. Also, the fact that **we were only allowed to use 9-carat gold.**

GI Yes, it's interesting seeing the... I've been looking at some adverts for jewellery and seeing how, before, there's a lot of choice and then suddenly, 9-carat.

PP 9-carat. **We were allowed to use 18-carat if the thing was destined for export, but in wartime, what export would you expect to do?**

GI Exactly. Also, I read about something called War Risks Insurance.

PP Yes, that was compulsory, we had to have it. Small contribution, but anyway, we had it. The sort of insurance you never wanted to have to claim for. Obviously.

[...]

GI I think we're almost at the end of my list, because some of them you have inadvertently covered anyway, which is good. I wrote rather openly and not very well: were there pressures on the jeweller?

PP Pressures?

GI Obviously there were to produce things.

PP There were pressures on the trade, which I could enlarge on quite a lot. **This is where I would urge you to consider very carefully what you write in your final analysis.** I told you earlier that because of Purchase Tax there was a black market from various craftsmen who set up on their own, because, instead of being employed for a wage every week, they were freeloaders charging more to make illegal second-hand, so-called, jewellery. And, I'm ashamed to say, that the black-market trade was quite rampant in Hatton Garden, and probably in Birmingham as well, people working for cash, not rendering invoices, not disclosing what they did. So, a lot of loose cash was flowing around and, of course, the respectable traders didn't do it. The trade association was very worried about it; the good name of the trade was in trouble and we didn't want that good name to be lost, but these black marketeers, if they... if only the authorities had more resources to prosecute, it would have been a national scandal. The only thing that stopped that was the enormous news interest that the war was, as opposed to the small trade having a black market. But it existed and those of us who were more concerned with the trade's good name, we were in a dilemma; we knew many of the people who were doing this

sort of thing, we didn't want to start a clean-up campaign because we had enough problems already without this sort of thing going on. But, of course, the customs and excise, didn't have the resources to prosecute or to follow up cases to the point of prosecution. Some people got caught and they got fined and put in prison, but the sentences were very light, considering. So, in the end, of course, we... to a certain extent, we looked the other way. **Those of us who were respectable, carried on being respectable** and those that were doing the cash trade carried on doing it, till either they had such a big stash of cash that they could afford big houses and all the riches that ready cash could buy them. But **we did not want a public scandal. Therefore, when you are writing it up, I hope you will not sensationalise the black market. You have to report it because it existed, I think you will agree there, but play it down a little bit if you can, because it was a nasty blur on the good name of the trade and it didn't really get cured until Purchase Tax ended and VAT took over, which was a tax everybody could live with.** The administration of Purchase Tax was very tight and not a sympathetic tax at all. VAT was much more easily lived with. You had certain terms of paying up your whack; with Purchase Tax, if you didn't pay up, you were prosecuted, simple as that. The customs were very tight on it; they probably had orders from above to be like that, no nonsense on it. But, of course, they had this loophole of second-hand jewellery being exempt. It wasn't until that exemption was abolished that...

GI When was that?

PP Oh, it wasn't abolished till after the war and it was really fast because the abolition was announced, those of us who were responsible traders were very happy that it had been abolished, but there were people who weren't even members of the trade association who flocked to the meeting of the trade association to protest about the abolition of this second-hand clause. They weren't even in the trade association and they wanted the trade association to do something about it for them, which, of course, we would not do. We agreed with the government decision.

GI It's very telling, their behaviour.

PP **So, those are the facts. It has to be presented in a way that will not discredit the trade, if you can do it that way.**

GI I am effectively part of the trade, so it's not in my interest!

PP Well, if you were a writer from, shall we say *The Sun* newspaper, you could make a big story out of that. You could exaggerate it beyond belief, couldn't you.

[...]

GI Just whilst you were talking then, about trade associations, how connected was your father's company, and then later your company, with trade associations? I know that you were then on various committees and boards...

PP Yes, my father was always involved with a trade association, although he never chaired one, he was always a loyal member, if you like. I've told you the story about when the junior council was formed, so you've got that already. So, I got more involved in my time.

GI Reeled in.

PP Yes.

GI You did a lot. You've done so many things for the trade. Whenever you read all the different committees that you've sat on, it's a long list.

PP **Quite frankly, I was enjoying it. I found it very interesting and it was also a social thing. The people I mixed with, they were not only colleagues, they were friends and we got on very well,** so yes... Then I found myself involved with education and training more than anything else. That's what David Beasley came to see me about, my association with Grant MacDonald. Do you know him? A former Prime Warden. When I met him, he was a student at the Central and was being transferred to Sir John Cass College, which became London Guildhall University and then London Metropolitan. So, that's how I got involved. Well, when David came to see me, he reminded me of a few things Grant had told him, you know, my God, 'yes, I did all that' and Grant remembered it. **That's how my name got figured a lot on these committees, but I was only on them because I wanted to be, not because I had to be. I enjoyed the work, I enjoyed the subjects they got involved with,** security... we had a design group, when I was President of the British Jewellery and Giftware Association. I think I was quite enterprising because I made the Goldsmiths' Company Freedom of our Association and the City of Basel.

GI Basel? Oh.

PP Oh, yes, we had representatives from Basel come to attend a nice dinner at Goldsmiths' Hall. We did all these things. That was during my presidency. I very much enjoyed it. I was accused of making too many people Freedom of the Association, but I said, 'well, if they deserve it then they can have it, why deny it? Give it to them whilst they're still able to enjoy it.' And that's what I did. I had quite a good year. I wasn't complaining. And I got my wife involved with it as well; she was a great hit.

[...]

GI How did the end of the war affect your... you were away, so you might not know this...

PP I was actually in Norway when the war ended, so I didn't see it close-hand. It was about four months before I was back in England, just for a couple of weeks only. I saw that the workshop was back in jewellery again, a smaller workshop, making jewellery.

GI What year is this? Did you say this is just before the end of the war? That you came back?

PP I came home in 1945, after my stay in Norway, and I was home for about two or three weeks before I had to go back to go to Germany. I was only able to visit the workshop on a few occasions, I saw the sort of work they were doing. **They were doing a bit of work for export,**

in 18-carat, but then again they were adapting themselves to cheaper work in 9-carat gold, just to keep the workmen busy, and doing repair work. Now, the workmen weren't very happy with that, the craftsmen wanted to do better quality work. Unfortunately, with 100 per cent Purchase Tax, there just wasn't that amount of work going around. You either had to get out of the trade and do something else or adapt. So, we adapted; we went in for cheaper work, whilst retaining our core of custom-made quality work.

GI So, after the war ended, were the workers who had been making all the things for the war contracts, were they keen to get back to...?

PP Couldn't get back quick enough!

GI Okay! I don't blame them.

Letter from Paul Podolsky to Georgina Izzard: follow up from interview and comments on MA dissertation

13 December 2017

Georgina Izzard. Comments on
dissertation. 15.12.17.

My recollection of Backes & Stauris is that their principal function was as Diamond Merchants. They may have also traded in Jewellery, but were better known for their diamond business.

The parts played by the Goldsmiths' Company and the trade associations were of considerable value in ensuring an adequate supply of labour and skills for the war effort.

However the number of freemen and trade association members is limited, there being a far greater number of uncommitted crafts people in the trade. One can also assume that the recognised organisations were the first choice of any warwork required.

It was inevitable that rival committees were formed and one must speculate on the amount of time wasted in futile argument. The government sponsored dissection of labour rules did much to short circuit delay. Labour, skilled or otherwise could be ordered to leave one occupation for another, even in another company. The warwork was supervised by inspectors from the ministry of aircraft production, the Admiralty and Woolwich Arsenal, among others. These inspectors were answerable to government, even if they were paid by the firm under contract. Standards were high and rejection of work not attaining the right degree of excellence was rife.

Most workshops of any consequence would be almost fully employed on the war contracts. Older crafts men, some beyond retirement age continued with Jewellery and silver work, mostly repairs. Some smaller workshops of one or two crafts men produced illicit Jewellery with no record on a respectable trade. This caused a lot of anxiety as bona fide companies hesitated between reporting offenders or losing the other way. Since the war was the dominant news item, the scandal of the time was not widely reported. Some offenders were convicted, fined and imprisoned, but the revenue of the law were too limited to ensure more success.

Interview with Linda and Tony Hackett at their home, Witton, Birmingham, with Cornelius Sullivan

26 July 2021

Present:

Linda Hackett

Tony Hackett

Cornelius Sullivan

Georgina Izzard

(Son came into the room briefly; his speech redacted)

[...]

[0:03:30]

TH Chap called Bill used to do all the stamping and he was brilliant. He left and for about 12 months they had other people there, but they couldn't do what he did. [...] The frames were made by hand press.

LH They used to have them big presses, didn't they? They swung round, didn't they? The ladies used to work those.

[0:04:00] TH **My aunt Leah, she was hit in the side of the head by one of those balls.** Well, it was about... well it was about, it was about, probably about, I'd be about 7 or 8 when she was hit with one of these and it, **it did a right mess of her face** and it... I don't know if it worked the cancer up, but she had cancer develop on the side of her neck and it was terrible. And unfortunately, she died, well something gets us, she died with the cancer in 1952, I think it was. '52, '53. But she had this big lump come out here, nasty.

CS Did she talk about other accidents there? Or did you see any? People losing fingers while you were there?

TH People losing what?

CS People losing fingers, industrial injury?

TH Oh yeah, I didn't see anyone lose a finger, but yeah, people... accidents did happen. They did have the safe guards then. [...] I can't remember anybody actually lose part of the body, you know, a finger...

CS Just like bad cuts and things like...?

TH Oh yeah, you get cuts, you get cuts galore. Falling down the stairs because I...

GI You mentioned you worked with the acid for plating. What was that like?

TH Stinky.

[...]

[0:10:00]

LH What was it like at work? What were the gaffers like?

TH The people you worked with were nice... I can't think of... There was a, the name... Cyril... They used to stamp the handles out, then they had someone spin them round and clean them up.

[Go upstairs, lady put solder on them, put them together on a tray. Cyril soldered them together. Then wired and come downstairs for plating. Copper and brass. Bit of steel. Did a bit in silver, [0:11:06] top floor had silver. You daren't go in there unaccompanied. Go in very thin and come out quite big. Polishers.]

LH **Were the unions quite strong?**

TH **What unions? The unions were quite strong then but they never affected Frank Clissold's.**

LH **Was that because it was a small place?**

TH **I don't know. I mean, I'm a union person, I believe in unions. But I was like 16 then, 16, 17.**

GI What were the managers like?

TH The foreman was a man called... we used to go up the Albion together. [he lived in Halesowen] Jimmy Baker was the foreman.

[...]

[0:30:00]

LH Back then, you could leave your job Friday and get another job and back into work Monday, every week.

TH Well, you could, back on the morning, get another job in the afternoon

LH I mean, a lot of our industry is gone in Birmingham, but at one time it was really buzzing.

GI How would most people find the jobs to change to? [0:30:48]

LH The jobs have changed, haven't they?

GI And then, if you were wanting to find a new job, say on Friday, how was the best way to find a job then?

[REDACTED]

LH In the pub?

[REDACTED]

[dialogue about son being a builder]

LH **Well, it was word of mouth, wasn't it, you know?**

CS Well, a lot of times, you've got the women insisting that they would... Like if you were going on holiday and you were an office cleaner, you got your sister to do it, so you keep it in the family.

LH That's what they do at the care home next door. They all cover for each other.

[talk about the care home]

[...]

[1:11:04]

CS You literally couldn't... I remember... it was a bit ____, it would be classed as chauvinistic now: you would, like, move the typewriters for the women in the offices because they were classed as heavy, but they're not heavy, and then, one day, union man said to me, 'Where you going with that?' 'I'm taking it to the other office, to the other girl'. And he said, 'We've got labourers for that', he said, 'leave it on the floor there and we'll get the labourer to do it, that's his job'. You know... But by the 80s, the labourers were gone and women had more equal pay and they said you'll have to start moving the typewriters yourselves, they're not that heavy.

[1:11:38]

LH And there was usually a canteen in a lot of the works. Did you have a canteen?

CS [Mumbles]

GI What was that like?

LH It was usually good. Nice.

TH Wetherseals[?], who worked with my dad, there wasn't a bloke at the factory, just a bench and stools, you made the best of it. **Where the office workers went, there was tables, chairs, knives and forks, glasses, so they had... You were just a worker... I don't class myself as being better than anyone else, but you used to go in our canteen and it was terrible. Just, as I say, benches, stools to sit on. Went to the office staff canteen, it was all lovely and clean; well, it wasn't... I shouldn't say it was dirty, but it wasn't like the one for the office staff.**

[Talking about toilets not a bucket. Health and safety gone berserk. Cornelliuss talking about finding a bucket with a toilet seat in the catacombs.]

[...]

[2:12:00]

LH People just used to... it used to be like a handshake's a deal, wasn't it?

CS Yes.

LH And then if the other guy didn't pay you and you'd done all that work for him and you wasn't paid, it like spirals out of control, doesn't it?

CS **Another thing you get, that happens in all trades, like the jewellery trade, you get people who go round, or deliberately pay as late as possible.**

LH and TH That's right.

CS Using someone else in the meantime, so they're basically using someone else's overheads to make your overheads better. **So what you'd do, you'd say, 'do you know so and so?' 'Yep'. 'He's done it to me,' so he'd say, 'he's doing work for me at the moment'. 'He's done that to me in the past'. So, you'd say, why don't we agree, when he catches up to you and pays you, when he comes to you and say I'm not going to do this order until you pay me what you owe me. When you pay me what you owe me, I'll say, right, clear off, I'm not giving you no more work. He then goes back to the previous guy, clear off, I'm not giving more work to you. So you had this sort of network.** By the 80s, things got nasty and you had to clear that kind of work by...

LH We had a small shop, a small greengrocer shop

[someone owed them £500. Go to the bank and say someone owed you money and they say that's nothing, it will cost you more to go to small claims court. TH clocked him on the road once and followed him to where he lived and when I got to the house he was penniless. The house wasn't nice. So I just said forget it.]

[...]

[2:45:00]

GI Did you ever have to repair things or replat things?

TH Not really, no. I replaced... they only thing handy about me is I live in this house, I'm not handy at all, the only thing about me is that I live here. On the same instance, I always say to Linda, when you are doing jobs, it's nice to have the tools to do it, you know, you need the tools and I haven't got the tools, have I?

LH No.

CS Then, in a lot of industries, the tools got passed down, didn't they?

LH and TH Oh yeah.

CS **I worked with some tools, that passed on to me, and the guy had had them off someone else and you could just see where their hand had worn into it, the imprints, and you could see the different owners' marks on the tool. Because if a hammer went missing, you could say, 'where's my hammer gone?' You go to the guys, say, 'Have you got my hammer?' 'Don't think so'. Turn it over: 'that's my hammer, don't take stuff off my bench.'**

TH Yeah.

CS And, you know, some of my stuff's 100 years old and it's been passed down to me.

LH Well, they used to make the tools themselves, didn't they.

CS Well, that's part of the training, make it all yourself, the tools and some of the very early craftsmen had to make their own silver themselves. Make everything from scratch, start from the beginning.

[...]

[2:57:00]

GI Were you encouraged to talk about family? Did they... because you say they put events on for children, so how much would your foremen, the managers know about everybody's families?

[2:57:29] LH Quite a bit, I would say, because **years ago, say, if Con worked there and Con had a brother, which he has, his brothers would work there, wouldn't they?**

CS Yes.

LH **It was common for all the family to work at the same company.**

TH **If your dad worked somewhere, you'd say, 'oh, can you get us in there', and then your brother or your sisters would do the same thing. Factories then, or businesses then, were run by like community family...**

CS I also remember, things that surprised me with the older guys, because they're serious, they're working away... and I went down to this guy, he had... he was getting elderly and his work wasn't as good... anyway, I went down to take some work, it was called the finishing shop, so he gets something like the last plated item, goes to the warehouse with an inspector from our boss, he'd then send it over to the polisher, who was a finisher, who gets a nice shine on it, send it back over to the foreman, who has a quick check and wraps it up. Anyway, this guy, forget his name now, something like Albert, he used to call me Colin, and in the end I stopped correcting him and Alan said: 'his name's not Colin'. Yeah, I went down the one day and he wasn't there and Alan Cooper was picking his work up and tidying it up, 'cause he's getting old and wasn't as good and he thought they might make him redundant because redundancy was coming in. So that was a nice gesture: he was, like, putting the guy's work right when he was off to the toilet or having a cigarette and wasn't telling him. So I thought that was a nice thing he did.

LH Yeah, that is nice, a nice thing to do, that.

[...]

[3:03:38]

GI Was there a lot of gossiping when at work?

TH Was there what?

GI Gossiping?

[Laughs]

TH Well, you could talk to somebody and five minutes later they'd be over there talking about you.

[All laugh]

CS Blokes used to play tricks on each other, quite comedic. I remember we had a toolroom then, toolmakers are very skilled guys, aren't they?

LH Mmm.

CS The one toolroom we had never did anything, it was like a museum, but it was immaculately clean, the cleanest toolroom I've ever known. It had plants around, like potted plants, pictures up. The manager came round and said it's not doing anything, it's like being at home, more or less. Well, we have to keep up for a bit. And what they did **to Don ___**, a very serious guy, you know on the lathe they have a chuck key? Well, on the lathe you have a big chuck key, didn't you? Well, they used to put oil in the dots, so you come in in the morning, you put the lathe on and shhhhh, straight in down the middle of you, oil all over you, and of course it would go up the roof as well. [Laughs all round]. And, I can remember... **when I started and the guys were training me, it was incredibly strict back then**, they had memory[?] bowler hats on back then, the Barker brothers, and they were incredibly... no talking if there was training on and all this kind of stuff. And, **they carried on that seriousness with my training, and anyway, I broke my cup and they used to give you another cup, the company did, and they said, 'we're going to stop that now, we can't keep supplying cups'. Anyway, 'this is your last cup'. And the foreman said to me: 'I say, what've you got there, son?' I said, 'cup'. He said, 'no no, you can't have that', he said, 'you can't have a handle on your cup till you're qualified', and he came over and broke the handle off my cup! The next time I got a cup I just kept going about waiting for the handle to come off [mumbled] They were exaggerating the training they had, how strict it was, tricks like that. And then I broke my cup again and I said to Ron, 'can I get another?' And he said 'no, no, I've told you, you've got to bring your own cups in'. A bit later on, he said, 'I found one in the maintenance shed' and it was still in the tissue and it was one of the aluminium cups, enamelled cups... you'd have industrial cups... And I went to have my break, I sat down, I thought, where's my tea gone? They'd put my cup in the vice and crushed it.**

[3:06:22] TH Had they?

CS **With my tea still in it, all the tea was dripping out, and you could hear the enamel go dink dink dink.**

[laughing]

GI Because they couldn't break the handle off that one, they had to do something else instead!

CS So, I was out and... I brought another cup in the next day. A few weeks later, I was out somewhere and I saw reproduction versions of those cups, so I bought one into work, they were like 'oh, you've got one of them back'. Sat down again, had my sandwich, I went... they'd nailed the cup to the bench! Yep, because the metal cup, they'd drained the tea out, drilled a hole in it, put a nail in, got a pipe and hammered it in. If you hammer hard enough it stops the tea leaking out. So, I'd had my sandwich and went [bang bang], couldn't get my cup to... they'd nailed it. So instead of giving in, I was going [slurp slurp – acting out leaning over the mug and drinking from the top]. So, all those sort of tricks they were playing on each other.

[...]

Interview with Bernard Hussey at his workshop in the Jewellery Quarter

23 June 2022

Present:

Bernard Hussey

Cornellius Sullivan

Georgina Izzard

[...]

[02:36]

GI I'd like to talk about being self-employed in the trade at some point. But, erm, what about your brother's work made you think, ah, I'll do that too?

BH Well, the reason I got into jewellery was, at the time I left school, you could get a job anywhere then: gas fitter, electrician, plumber, bus... well, not bus driver, but anything, anything at all, milkman, anything you wanted to do you could get a job just like that [clicks fingers]. And I **hadn't got a job when I left school, I was 15, and my brother said to me, "I'll get you a job at our place, come there for a few weeks, and then if you find something else to do", he said, "go and do it". And I've been in the jewellery trade ever since, so... I hadn't got a clue, but I've stuck at it.**

GI At any point in the beginning did you think about changing?

BH The first three weeks, after the second week of filing those little rings, I thought, this is not for me [laughs], this is not for me; I was going cross-eyed with these rings! Give more a go and then do that again [mumbles]... Then on the third week, I said to my brother, "look, I'm not doing any more of these." He said, "have you learnt anything?" I said, "Yeah, that they're boring." I said, "they're little." He said, "Well, you've learnt to use pliers and file flat." He said, "That's what I wanted to teach you." He said, "Now you're on to the next stage then". So, the next stage was soldering the damn things – not straight away, because I started doing... practising on base metal, brass and things like that, in case I melted anything. And then I had three weeks of that. And it was just a process you had to go through, six-year apprenticeship it was, so, you know...

GI Did you do that through your brother?

BH **I did the apprenticeship and my brother was teaching me, but there was my brother, who was obviously my boss at the time, and then there was another lad and me, who were his apprentices.**

[...]

[40:54]

GI That, that sort of open mind, the attitude, how common do you think that is amongst the trade, but also when you were learning?

BH **When I was learning, I was very fortunate because my brother trained me, my brother trained me. But all the other apprentices, all the people that were training them let them get to a certain level and then they'd stop, because they were frightened of those people taking their jobs off them. If they'd progressed any more, they were frightened of those people taking their jobs off them, the younger people, so they used to... a limited... probably teach them 90 per cent and all the little tricks of the trade they used learn, or they knew, they wouldn't teach; they wouldn't teach their apprentices.**

GI Is that what you found?

BH Yeah.

CS When I started, err... I'm the same with you, you could go in, it was a big factory, where we were trained, you could do 2 weeks in each department.

BH I was... I... I did the apprenticeship 5 days a week, but I also went to night school twice a week, in Birmingham, at the Jewellery School. I used to go there twice a week.

CS **When I started, they said, 'We're not doing that now, but if you're quiet, go into other departments and watch the guys working'. I think I told you this. And I was watching, I think it was a polisher, and, erm... he was older than me – I found out later on he had children as well. Always remember this: I was watching him, inching up nice and quiet, and without looking up, he said, 'You won't learn nothing watching me. Fuck off.'**

BH Did he?

CS Yeh. I'd only been in the factory about three weeks.

BH That's what they were like. Some of the people, I'm telling you.

CS **And they don't want you watching them; you won't learn anything.**

[...]

[43:44]

CS Did you ever get that thing... we had it in the silver trade, which is bigger products... when a company gets a big order and they spread it out round the trade. You had that?

BH Well, Perks Pearce & Thompson I don't know; they had lots of big orders, loads of them. There was not many people who could do hollow work, but those who could, **as well as having the people inside, they used to farm what they called the easy stuff out, like making the bows and things like that. And even putting the earrings on the cards finished, they used to send that out; my brother's wife used to do it. So, she called it her homework; she'd have all these cards, all these earrings and little pads and she'd have to sew them on, used to sew them on to the pads: pair of creoles, put a 9-carat hallmark sticker on them and put them in a box, you know, packaged. [44:37] And that was called homework then, they called it homework, and she used to get paid to do that.** And er, things like that that don't happen any more, very rarely.

[44:50] GI You mention that there was obviously a female polisher and then your sister-in-law working, what was the gender divide like?

BH Well, when I was at Perks, Pearce & Thompson's, when I got there it was a row of benches in a straight line; there was eight benches, jewellers' benches. The stamper was downstairs on the ground floor, because we were two floors up; you couldn't have a stamper upstairs as it would go straight through the ceiling and floor. That was a concrete floor, had to have a concrete base, as Cornellius knows. When I went to Perks, Pearce & Thompson's, I walked through the door on my first day and there was Jack Maddox, who'd got the first seat, who was going to train me, then I was next to him, and then there was a woman named Dot, an elderly woman, to me in them days, I mean she was probably 50, but I was only 25, something like that, so to me she was an elderly woman; and then there were two young girls, one named Margaret, one named Marian, who were also working at the bench. So they had three girls at the bench, jewellers, err, five lads, me included, and the one polisher and the stamper. And then they'd got the office girl downstairs and they sent outwork out for things, like packing and things like that, that's when they'd send it all out, packing. Also, if we couldn't cope with the work, they'd send it out, see if they could get anyone to do it; you couldn't get many people to make it, it was a trade on its own, hollow work. But yeah, there were ladies there, and fellas, really. I don't know why people say they're not as good as men; I mean, some of the physical jobs, probably not. Stamping, that's a physical job, the drop stamps, I know that they're power assisted, but it's still a bloody, you know, heavy job, you're still using you... you've got your foot in the rope, bring it up like that and you let it go and then as it bounces back, put the lock under it, you know. You've got to be quick, you've got to be quick, you know, because once it bounces back up, you've got to shove underneath it to stop it coming down, drop your next piece in, lift the lock, bang then bounce... You've got to be quick, you can't mess about because if you put your fingers under it and it's coming down, you know... It's a skill on its own. I never saw any women doing drop stamping, to be honest, never ever. Mainly... there's a lot of polishers, mainly all the polishers were women, don't know why, but at one time they were. At Britton's, we never had no women jewellers, they worked on the presses, they were all skilled people, all skilled people, don't get me wrong, but they worked on the presses, polishing and what they call the stripping and gilding, we used to call her Hilda the Gilder. [All laugh] Her name was Hilda, we used to call her Hilda the Gilder. And er, but yeah, the women used to do all the, mainly the presswork and things like polishing...

[...]

Appendix B – Table of Occupations and Gender, Employee Accident Cards

A table showing the occupations as listed by the clerks on the accident cards, with my later groupings of occupational categories based on similarities of terms and my trade knowledge. The additional columns detail the number of female and male employees and the employees with no listed gender that sustained accidents in these occupations. The final column totals the number of accidents for each occupation and each occupational category, with the overall totals listed at the bottom.

British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, 'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 1646/566 and 601

Occupation and Gender

Count of Firm	Count of Firm			Grand Total
	F	M	(blank)	
Stamper	7	45	3	55
[Power stamp]	1			1
Button stamper		1		1
Cold Stamper		1		1
Foreman stamper		1		1
Hot Stamper		2		2
Light stamper		1		1
Spoon & Fork stamper		1		1
Spoon stamper		1		1
Stamper	6	37	3	46
Assembler	22	6	1	29
___ Assembles	1			1
Aircraft fitter assembler		1		1
Assembler	13	2	1	16
Assembler & Press Operator	1			1
Assembling	2	1		3
Cable assembler	1	2		3
Compass assembler & press worker	1			1
Pencil assembler, formerly pressworker	1			1
Rivet assembler	2			2
Inspector	18	3	1	22
A T D Inspector[?]	1			1
AIP Inspection	1			1
Checker	2			2

Examiner	2			2
Inspecting	1			1
Inspection	1			1
Inspector	4			4
Superintendent		1		1
Timekeeper		1		1
Time-keeper & Millwright		1		1
Viewer	3		1	4
Viewer of Parachute Parts	1			1
Viewing & checking	1			1
Warehouse inspector	1			1
Muffler		5	1	6
Annealler on muffles		1		1
Muffle worker		1		1
Muffler		3	1	4
Anodiser		2		2
Anodiser		1		1
Anodising		1		1
Apprentice		1		1
Apprentice		1		1
Tool Team	2	63	5	70
Apprentice toolmaker		3		3
Learner in toolmaking		1		1
Learning tool making		1		1
Learning Toolmaker		1		1
Tool & Gauge maker		1		1
Tool maker		4		4
Tool room trainer		1		1
Tool setter		1		1
Toolmaker		37	3	40
Toolmaker & machine tool operator		1		1
Toolmaker & Setter		1	1	2
Toolmaker & Toolsetting diesinker		1		1
Toolmaker foreman			1	1
Toolmaker Improver	1	1		2
Toolmaking		2		2
Toolroom Improver	1			1
Toolroom learner		1		1
Toolsetter		3		3
Toolsetter & Maker		1		1
Trained toolmaker		1		1
Trainee tool setter		1		1
General Duties	2	4		6
Assistant	1			1
General Duties (Jr)		1		1
General helper in dept	1			1
General work		1		1
Shop boy		2		2

Plating Team	12	6	2	20
Assistant in plating shop	2			2
Assistant plating shop	1			1
Cadmium Plater	1			1
Nickel plater	1			1
Plater	2	5	2	9
Plater scratchbrusher	1			1
Plater trainee		1		1
Platers assistant	2			2
Plating Shop Hand	1			1
Warming up nickel plated work	1			1
Attendant (Conlin?)	1			1
Attendant (Conlin?)	1			1
Auto operator	1	6	1	8
Auto feeder		3		3
Auto hand		1		1
Auto operator	1			1
Auto-operator			1	1
Feeder		1		1
Outs feeder?		1		1
Setter		8		8
Auto setter		1		1
Setter		6		6
Setter operator		1		1
Bench Machine Operator	6			6
B/Machine operator	1			1
Bench hand	1			1
Bench machine operator	1			1
Bench Op	1			1
Bench Operator	2			2
Presswork	235	5	21	261
Blank (Presswork)	1			1
General Press Shop Boy		1		1
Light Press Worker	1			1
Munitions press operator		1		1
Press	2		1	3
Press & Saw worker	1			1
Press hand	9		4	13
Press operator	44	2	1	47
Press operator & assembler	1			1
Press operator (hand)	2			2
Press work	6			6
Press work driller	1			1
Press worker	91		10	101
Press Worker & Driller	2			2
Press worker (part time)	8		2	10
Presshand	1		1	2
Presswork	1			1

Presswork op	1			1
Pressworker	52	1	2	55
Pressworker (hand)	1			1
Pressworker (p t)	1			1
Pressworker (part time)	6			6
Pressworker (part-time)	2			2
Wartime pressworker	1			1
Boiler		1	2	3
Boiler stoker			1	1
Boilerman			1	1
Boiling Machine Operator & Setter	1			1
Labourer	54	3		57
Brick layer	1			1
Labourer	49	3		52
Labourer & Cement mixer	1			1
Labourer & machinist	1			1
Labourer bricklayer	1			1
M/C labourer	1			1
Brush Filling	2	1		3
Brush Filler	1			1
Brush filling hand	1			1
Brush plugging	1			1
Burnisher	1			1
Burnisher	1			1
Bus Conductress (part-timer)	1			1
Bus Conductress (part-timer)	1			1
Spinner	20	2		22
Button spinner			1	1
Metal spinner	6			6
Silver spinner	1			1
Spinner	9	1		10
Spinner & Asst. Metal Stores	1			1
Spinner & Metal Stores	1			1
Spinner (metal)	1			1
Spinner munitions	1			1
Cable looper/looper	1			1
Cable looper?	1			1
Canteen	6			6
Canteen	1			1
Canteen assistant	3			3
Canteen help	1			1
Helping in canteen at time of accident	1			1
Capstan Lathe Team	28	15	3	46
Capstan	3			3
Capstan hand	8	1	1	10
Capstan hand lathe	1			1
Capstan lathe	1			1
Capstan lathe operator	1			1

Capstan operator	12	10	2	24
Capstan setter		1		1
Capstan tool setter		2		2
Capstan worker	2	1		3
Cardboard worker		1		1
Cardboard worker		1		1
Cases	1	1		2
Case liner	1			1
Case maker (munitions)		1		1
Lathe Worker	8	10	2	20
Centre lathe turner		1		1
Jeweller Lathe	1			1
Lathe and Band Hand		1		1
Lathe operator	5	5		10
Lathe Turner		1		1
Lathe worker	2			2
Turner		2	2	4
Chargehand		2		2
Chargehand		2		2
Chaser		1		1
Chaser		1		1
Cleaner	5	1		6
Cleaner	3	1		4
Cleaning work	1			1
Office cleaner and canteen	1			1
Office	2	1	1	4
Clerk	2		1	3
Office boy		1		1
Coppersmith		2	1	3
Copper smith		1	1	2
Coppersmith		1		1
Hand Press Team	118	4		122
Crank press operator		3		3
Hand press	13			13
Hand press operator	40	1		41
Hand press shop	1			1
Hand press worker	62			62
Hand press. Shop girl	1			1
Working on press (hand)	1			1
Roller		2		2
Cross Roller		1		1
Cu__ Roller		1		1
Grinder	4	7	3	14
Cutler grinder	1			1
Grinder	2	4	1	7
Grinding		1		1
Universal Grinder			1	1
Metal grinder			1	1

Sheet metal grinder & polisher		1		1
Surface grinder	1			1
Universal grinder		1		1
Warehouse Team	7	8	2	17
Cutlery warehouse man		1		1
Metal scorekeeper		1		1
Metal storekeeper		1		1
Metal storeman		1		1
Metal warehouse		1		1
Storekeeper		1	2	3
Storeman		1		1
Warehouse	2			2
Warehouse forewoman	1			1
Warehouse girl	1			1
Warehouse hand	2			2
Warehouse worker	1			1
Warehouseman		1		1
Cutter		2		2
Cutter		2		2
Diecasting shop	1			1
Diecasting shop	1			1
Dipper	1	9		10
Dipper	1	7		8
Dipper Labourer		1		1
Dipping		1		1
Draughtsman		1		1
Draughtsman		1		1
Driller	15	4	2	21
Driller	14	4	1	19
Drilling			1	1
Drilling machine operator	1			1
Scratchbrusher	6			6
Drying & Scratchbrushing	1			1
Scratch brusher	2			2
Scratch brushing	2			2
Scratchbrusher	1			1
Finisher	8	1	1	10
Electro plate & silver finisher	1			1
Finisher	2	1		3
Finisher (Polishing Shop)	1			1
Finishing	1			1
Holloware finisher	1			1
Metal finishing			1	1
Pewter finisher	1			1
Spoon and fork finisher	1			1
Filer		11	3	14
Emery bobber		1		1
Filer		9	1	10

Filing			1	1
Hammerer & filer	1			1
Spoon Filer			1	1
Enameller	3	2		5
Enameller	3			3
Enameller's assistant		1		1
Foreman enameller		1		1
Engineer		4	1	5
Engineer		2		2
Engineer & porter etc.		2		2
Engineering			1	1
Engraver		1	1	2
Engraver			1	1
Engraver and Warehouseman		1		1
Fitter		4		4
Fitter		2		2
Fitters Labourer		1		1
Fitters mate		1		1
Foremen		5		5
Foreman		2		2
Foreman aircraft components		1		1
Foreman Medallist etc.		1		1
Manager		1		1
Moulder	1	9	2	12
Foreman moulder		1		1
Moulder		3		3
Moulder (plastic)		1		1
Moulder (plastic). Boiler attendant			1	1
Plastic moulder	1	4	1	6
Welder	7	2		9
Foreman Welding & Assembly		1		1
Spot welder	2			2
Welder	4	1		5
Welder/ Hand press hand	1			1
Furnace Operator		3		3
Furnace man		2		2
Furnace operator		1		1
Gauge Maker		5	1	6
Gauge maker		4		4
Gauge maker Improver			1	1
Gauge making		1		1
Maintenance		9	1	10
General maintenance electrical steam etc		1		1
Maintenance		4		4
Maintenance Eng.			1	1
Maintenance engineer		1		1
Maintenance fitter		1		1
Maintenance foreman		1		1

Maintenance hand		1		1
Gilder	1	1		2
Gilder		1		1
Gilders assistant	1			1
Gold Chain Linker	1			1
Gold Chain Linker	1			1
Mopper		1	1	2
Grease mopper			1	1
Mopper		1		1
Power Press Worker	22	11	2	35
Hand power press worker			1	1
Power press		1		1
Power press operator	15	5		20
Power press setter		1		1
Power press setter & operator		1		1
Power press shop		1		1
Power Press Tool Setter		1		1
Power press worker	5	1	1	7
Power presswork	1			1
Power-press operator	1			1
Heat tester		1		1
Heat tester		1		1
Mounter	1	1	4	6
Improver ring maker			1	1
Jeweller		1		1
Mounter			1	1
Ring maker			1	1
Ring mounter			1	1
Trainee mounter	1			1
Driver		2		2
Lorry driver		1		1
Van Driver		1		1
Machine Workers	19	6	4	29
M/c hand	1			1
M/c Op	1			1
M/C operator	1			1
M/C Tool Setter		1		1
Machine	1			1
Machine hand	4		1	5
Machine operator	6			6
Machine operator (hydraulic)			1	1
Machine opertator	1		1	2
Machine stitcher	1			1
Machine tool		2		2
Machine tool fitter		1		1
Machine worker		2		2
Machinist	3		1	4
Maker Up		3		3

Maker up		2		2
Maker up (Metal worker)		1		1
Saw Operator	5	4		9
Metal sawpiercer	1			1
Saw Hand	2			2
Saw mill		1		1
Saw Operator		1		1
Sawing brass rod ready for hot stamping		1		1
Sawing brass rods into billets for stamping	1			1
Small tube cutting (saw)	1			1
Watchman & Billet saw operator		1		1
Metal Worker	3	16	1	20
Metal worker & painting metal work		1		1
Sheet Metal Work		1		1
Sheet metal work munitions		2		2
Sheet metal worker	3	12	1	16
Miller	7	4	1	12
Miller	2		1	3
Milling	3	1		4
Milling Operator	2	1		3
Millwright		2		2
Munitions	2	8		10
Munitions	2	8		10
Blank	18	13	9	40
None	1			1
(blank)	17	13	9	39
Oiler	1			1
Oiler	1			1
Packer	1	4		5
Packer		4		4
Packer & Assembler	1			1
Sprayer	5	1		6
Paint sprayer		1		1
Sprayer	3			3
Spraying	2			2
Parkeriser	2	1		3
Parkeriser	2			2
Parkerizers		1		1
Pickler		1		1
Pickler		1		1
Polisher	10	29	5	44
Brush polishing (part-time worker)	1			1
Foreman polisher		1		1
Jewellery Polisher	1			1
Metal polisher	1	2		3
Metal polisher GF			1	1
Metal Polishing		1		1
Polisher	3	21	3	27

Polisher & finisher	1			1
Polisher (Barrel)		1		1
Polishing			1	1
Sand Polisher		1		1
Silver polisher	1			1
Spoon and fork polisher		1		1
Spoon polisher	2			2
Trainee polisher		1		1
Porter	1			1
Porter		1		1
Ranter operator	1			1
Ranter operator		1		1
Scanner	1			1
Scanner		1		1
Shaper	2			2
Shaper		2		2
Silversmith	4			4
Silversmith		3		3
Silversmith now on aircraft		1		1
Solderer	3	2		5
Solderer		3	2	5
Sorting shells	1			1
Sorting shells		1		1
Strander		1		1
Strander		1		1
Swarf separator		1		1
Swarf separator		1		1
Welfare officer	1			1
Welfare officer		1		1
Wirer	4		1	5
Wirer up		1		1
Wiring		1	1	2
Wiring up for plating		1		1
Wiring Up Scratchbrushing		1		1
Woodwork Team		7		7
Wood Machinist		3		3
Wood Turner		1		1
Woodwork finisher		1		1
Woodworking machinist		2		2
Grand Total	640	483	94	1217

Appendix C – Consent Forms

An example of the consent form signed by all interview participants of this project:



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

(one copy of this form should be given to the participant and one retained by the researcher)

Working Title: Tools, Skill & Identity: The Work of Birmingham's Manufacturing Jewellers, 1940-1960

For further information

Supervisor:

Jonathan Boyd, jonathan.boyd@rca.ac.uk

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by myself, Georgina Izzard, from the V&A/RCA History of Design programme run jointly between the School of Arts & Humanities at the Royal College of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum, as part of my PhD research. The project is externally sponsored by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) through the London Arts & Humanities Partnership (LAHP). Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate.

- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The research project explores the work of manufacturing jewellers in Birmingham during the mid-twentieth century. In the research I examine and analyse tools, materials and jewellery from the period and conduct oral histories with makers and members of the jewellery industry to ask questions about how jewellers responded to production in the 1940s and 1940s (Second World War and after). The project aims to add to scholarly, industry and public understanding of twentieth-century jewellery manufacture, as well as to broader histories of British production and technology, with an emphasis on the concept of the 'skilled' craftsman.

- **PARTICIPATION**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

Give your name and/or professional background, which will be documented with any information you provide in relation to the project's topic. By signing this consent form, you agree to your name and/or professional background being used in the final output of this and subsequent research projects.

Provide contact details, which may include your phone number, email address and/or postal address, for me to reach you. All personal contact information collected will be confidential.

Partake in a discussion about the project's topic and time period at a location decided between us both (this location may be your home or workplace, if appropriate and selected by you). Discussed details that are relevant to the research may be used in the final text of this project. The discussion may be recorded as an audio file. If an audio recording is made, the discussion will be transcribed. The transcription of the discussion may include identifying information relating to your profession.

If appropriate and agreed to, the discussion may be conducted outside and/or whilst walking in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, Hockley to focus on memories of work in the area.

If I am visiting your place of work, I may take photographs, with your permission, of notable workspaces and tools. If we discuss a process that you offer to demonstrate to me, I may take a video recording, with your permission, of this demonstration. Images and videos that may allow you to be identified will only be used with your express permission.

Your participation may involve one or more discussions, depending on the topics covered and the length of time available for discussion. Each discussion may last for an hour or more, depending on your availability.

Information supplied in the discussion(s), and photographs I take, may be used in the final text and other outputs of this project, as well as other related projects in the future.

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

In our discussion(s), we will focus on aspects relating to your occupational experiences and other topics that arise because of this focus. If these topics cause you or I distress, we can pause the discussion, change the topic or terminate the discussion.

If we are discussing manufacturing processes, I will only view these processes in action at your suggestion. Before entering your workplace and before viewing manufacturing processes, I will ask you to explain to me any workplace safety rules in place to ensure both of our safeties.

If we are conducting the discussion outside, I will confirm the meeting with you on the proposed morning, having considered the weather; we will rearrange the meeting if needed. When walking, we will use pavements, designated walkways, and pedestrian crossings to avoid road-related risks. We will walk at a slow pace and can take regular breaks.

In the event of physical and/or mental injury resulting from participation in this research project, the Royal College of Art does not provide any medical, hospitalisation or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the Royal College of Art provide any medical treatment or

compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

As a participant of this project, your input will be recorded and referenced appropriately in the final text and any additional outputs in which your memories/experiences are drawn upon. You will receive a copy of the PhD thesis for your records.

This research shines a light on the occupational identities of workers in Hockley, Birmingham in the 1940s and 1950s; it adds their names and their efforts to the record of Britain's manufacturing history, as well as to jewellery history more broadly.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information, other than your name, that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storage of data on password-coded devices; only I have access to these devices. All information gathered will be stored securely in compliance with GDPR 2018.

Audio recordings of discussions will be held by me, unless you request or give express permission for them to be shared with an institution (e.g. an archive). Transcripts of these recordings and video recordings of manufacturing processes will be used for educational purposes in this research project and in subsequent projects with the permission you give in this consent form. If videos make you clearly identifiable, I will share the videos with you before they are seen by external parties.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time up to the point of publication without consequence or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study.

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

The Royal College of Art Research Ethics Committee has reviewed my request to conduct this project. If you have any concerns about your rights in this study, please contact them at ethics@rca.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest.

Yours sincerely,

Georgina Izzard
PhD Candidate
V&A/RCA PhD in History of Design
School of Arts & Humanities, Royal College of Art

PARTICIPANT CONSENT:

I (*please print*) have read the information above and all queries have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to voluntarily participate in this research and give my consent freely. I understand that I can withdraw my participation from the project up to the point of publication, without penalty, and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I understand that all information gathered will be stored securely, and my opinions will be accurately represented. Any data in which I can be clearly identified will be used in the public domain only with my consent.

Participant Signature.....

Researcher Signature.....

Date:

Complaints Procedure:

This project follows the guidelines laid out by the Royal College of Art Research Ethics Policy.

If you have any questions, please speak with the researcher. If you have any concerns or a complaint about the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the RCA Research Ethics Committee by emailing ethics@rca.ac.uk or by sending a letter addressed to:

The Research Ethics Committee
Royal College of Art
Kensington Gore
London
SW7 2EU

An example of the consent form signed by participants of my MA research:



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art and Design

For further information
Supervisor: Dr. Sarah Teasley
soah@rca.ac.uk

24th January 2018

The Jeweller in the Wartime Workshops (Working Title)
Consent Form

I (*please print*).....have read the information on the research project *The Jeweller in the Wartime Workshops (working title)* which is to be conducted by Georgina Izzard from the Royal College of Art, and all queries have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to voluntarily participate in this research and give my consent freely. I understand that the project will be conducted in accordance with the Information Sheet, a copy of which I have retained.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty, and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I consent to:

- Be interviewed
- Give personal information if required
- My name being used in the dissertation if required
- Any recordings and information provided to be used in future projects

I understand that all information gathered from the interview will be stored securely and may be used in the dissertation which results from this project and possible future publications. Any images in which I can be clearly identified will be used in the public domain only with my consent.

Print Name:.....

Signature.....

Date:



For further information
Supervisor: Dr. Sarah Teasley
soah@rca.ac.uk
Royal College of Art,
Kensington Gore,
Kensington,
London,
SW7 2EU

24th January 2018

The Jeweller in the Wartime Workshops (Working title)
Information Sheet

Dear Potential Participant,

I am Georgina Izzard, a student of the V&A/RCA MA History of Design Programme. As part of my studies, I am conducting a research project entitled *The Jeweller in the Wartime Workshops (working title)*. You are invited to take part in this research project which explores the role of the jeweller in the Second World War, particularly focusing on those craftspeople employed in the making of munitions. Research will concentrate on the skills and tools of the jeweller and how whether these were transformed or adapted to this new wartime work. I also plan to consider the role of memory in how these wartime experiences have been spoken and written about over time. You are invited to participate in this research.

If you consent to participate, this will involve

- Taking part in an interview which may involve the sharing of personal information

You have been specifically contacted because your name was suggested by Joanna Hardy.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. All information collected will be confidential.

If you have any concerns or would like to know the outcome of this project, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Sarah Teasley, at the above address.

Thank you for your interest,

Georgina Izzard

List of References

Organised alphabetically by type of source and archive

Company Archives

Eaton & Wrighton

Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, Library of Birmingham – MS 4172

Willoughby 'Gus' Gullachsen, Photos of staff at work c.1950, MS 4172/2/2/1

Hathaway & Muddiman

Victoria and Albert Museum

'Gold Wedding Ring with Utility Mark', 1944, V&A, M.17-2016

<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1364100/ring-hathaway-muddiman/ring-hathaway--muddiman/> [accessed 7 January 2024]

T Winkles & Co

Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, Library of Birmingham – MS 1610

Wages Book, 1918-1957, MS 1610/20

Statement of Accounts, includes 1946-1957, MS 1610/23

File of Correspondence, 1942-1944, MS 1610/29

Government Acts and Reports

Board of Trade, *Working Party Reports Jewellery and Silverware* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1946) <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069180571&view=1up&seq=18>> [accessed 31 July 2020]

Cripps, Sir Stafford, 'Industrial Organisation (Tripartite Working Parties)', *Hansard*, HC Deb 15 October 1945, Vol. 414, cc692-6 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1945/oct/15/industrial-organisation-tripartite#S5CV0414P0_19451015_HOC_233> [accessed 4.3.21]

Working Party (Cripps), 1945-1947. Archive of the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners and Twiners. University of Manchester Library. GB 133 ACS/6/6/8

'Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944', *Legislation.Gov.Uk* (Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament) <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/7-8/10/enacted>> [accessed 15 March 2021]

'Hallmarking Act 1973' (Statute Law Database)
<<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1973/43/schedule/1>> [accessed 4 January 2024]

Roberts, Harold, MP, 'Industrial Organisation Bill', *Hansard*, HC Deb 13 February 1947, Vol. 433, cc547-663, 595-597 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1947/feb/13/industrial-organisation-bill#column_547> [accessed 10.6.20]

Simon, Sir John, 'Purchase Tax', *Hansard*, House of Commons Debate, 23 April 1940, vol 360, cc74-86

'Workplace Compensation' <<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/tradeindustry/industrycommunity/case-study-so-davies-and-workplace-compensation/workplace-compensation-legislation/>> [accessed 2 October 2022]

Yates, Victor, MP, 'Transferred Workers (Accommodation, Midlands)', *Hansard*, HC Deb 10 April 1951, Vol. 486, c. 798, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1951/apr/10/transferred-workers-accommodation#column_798 [accessed 22 June 2020]

Institutions

Imperial War Museum

Arms & the Jeweller: Recording the Work of the British Jewellers in the War of 1939-1945 (Birmingham: Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1946), Imperial War Museum, 64(41).72/5 90/2279

E. J. Clewley & Co., Ltd., 'Diamond Rings to Multiple Munitions', *Arms and The Jeweller* (Birmingham: Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1946), p.34

Turner, W Stewart, 'Foreword', *Arms and The Jeweller* (Birmingham: Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association, 1946), p.3-4

Interviews

Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive interview transcripts kindly shared by Townscape Heritage team

Chaplain, Kenneth, People's Archive: Kenneth Chaplain, Director, E L Chaplain & Co. on Frederick Street, 2018, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive
<<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/kenneth-chaplain/>> [accessed 30 January 2023]

Chaplain, Martin, People's Archive: Martin Chaplain, Jeweller, E L Chaplain & Co. on Frederick Street, 2018, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive
<<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/martin-chaplain/>> [accessed 4 February 2023]

Curtis, Les, People's Archive: Les Curtis, Silversmith, Senior Lecturer at the School of Jewellery on Vittoria Street, 2019, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive
<<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/les-curtis/>> [accessed 30 January 2023]

Hackett, Tony, Linda Hackett, and Cornelius Sullivan, 2021 – Appendix A

Hussey, Bernard, 2022 – Appendix A

Lambert, Patrick, People's Archive: Patrick Lambert, Jewellery Polisher, Mounter and Enameller, Alabaster & Wilson on Legge Lane, 2018, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive
<<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/patrick-lambert/>> [accessed 26 March 2023]

Mossop, Rod, People's Archive: Rod Mossop, Senior master model and diamond brooch maker, Alabaster & Wilson on Legge Lane, 2019, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive
<<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/rod-mossop/>> [accessed 30 January 2023]

Owens, Dennis, 2000, Wolfson Centre, Library of Birmingham, MS 2255/2/88

Podolsky, First Interview, 2017 – Appendix A

Podolsky, Second Interview, 2017 – Appendix A

Podolsky, Letter following Interview, 2017 – Appendix A

Sullivan, Cornelius, People's Archive: Cornelius Sullivan, Various roles, Barker Ellis, W J Bakers and J W Evans, 2019, Jewellery Quarter Townscape Heritage People's Archive
<<https://th.jewelleryquarter.net/peoples-archive/cornelius-sullivan/>> [accessed 30 January 2023]

Maps

Kelly's Plan of Birmingham and its Environments, date unknown, circa 1935, Library of Birmingham, Heritage Research Area

Plan of City of Birmingham. Scale, Three and a Quarter Inches to a Mile. (Index to Streets, Etc. Pp.16) (1935), British Library Maps 5545.(26.)

Memoirs

Bullock, Brenda, *A Pocket With A Hole: A Birmingham Childhood of the 1940s and 1950s* (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 1996)

Dayus, Kathleen, *The Girl from Hockley: Growing up in Working-Class Birmingham* (Little, Brown, 2006)

Golding, Tom, *96 Years a Brummie, 1889-1986* (Birmingham: Tom Golding, 1986),

Smith, Gary, *Winson Green: My World* (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 1997)

Organisations

Birmingham Jewellers' & Silversmiths' Association/British Jewellers' Association

The British Jewellery & Giftware Federation, Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, Library of Birmingham – MS 1646

The British Jeweller Editorial Board Minutes, MS 1646/63

Jobbing Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, Jan 1944 - Mar 48, MS 1646/120

- First Meeting 19 January 1944
- Third Meeting 7 September 1944
- Meeting 20 April 1945
- Second Annual General Meeting 13 March 1946
- Third Annual General Meeting 4 March 1947

Benevolent Fund Committee, 1938-49, MS 1646/191

- Minutes 13 December 1944

Wholesale Jewellers Trade Sectional Committee Minutes, MS 1646/191

- Meeting of Manufacturers of Fancy Jewellery Etc. to Meet the Four Chairmen of the Wholesalers Area Sections, 3 July 1944
- Meeting 31 July 1944

Annual Reports and Year Books

- *Annual Report 1938 and Year Book 1939*, MS 1646/269
- *Annual Report 1939 and Year Book 1940*, MS 1646/269
- *Annual Report 1940 and Year Book 1941*, MS 1646/269
- *Annual Report 1941 and Year Book 1942*, MS 1646/269
- *Annual Report 1942 and Year Book 1943*, MS 1646/269
- *Annual Report 1943 and Year Book 1944*, MS 1646/269
- *Annual Report 1944 and Year Book 1945*, MS 1646/269
- *Annual Report 1945 and Year Book 1946*, MS 1646/270
- *Annual Report 1948 and Year Book 1949* MS 1646/270

Hussey, J K. Letter to Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Post-War Reconstruction Plans', 19 January 1943, MS 1646/506

Ward Brothers Ltd. Letter to Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association, 'Post War Reconstruction', 8 December 1942, MS 1646/506

'Employee Accident Cards', 1942-46, MS 1646/566 and MS 1646/601

National Union of Gold, Silver & Allied Trades (NUGSAT)

The Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick – MSS.101

Photographic Archives

Phyllis Nicklin Photographic Archive, Chrysalis Project, University of Birmingham

Phyllis Nicklin, *110-112, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham*, 1967 [Image] (Unpublished) <<http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/332/>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Phyllis Nicklin, *Typical workshops, Vyse Street, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham*, 1968 [Image] (Unpublished) <<http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/331/>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Warwickshire Photographic Survey, Wolfson Centre for Archival Research, Library of Birmingham

Photos available on a CD to view on computers at the Wolfson Centre

Birmingham City Council City Information Department, 'The Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, Hockley, Birmingham', Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/279 <<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f279>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Birmingham City Council City Information Department, 'The Vittoria Civic Restaurant, Frederick Street, Hockley, Birmingham', Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/280 <<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f280>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Photographer unknown, *Aerial View of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter*, Photographs of Hockley, WPS/WK/H10/272 <<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fH10%2f272>> [accessed 10 December 2023]

Photographer unknown, *Machine shop at the Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham 1948*, Photographs of Car Manufacture, WPS/WK/B11/AX/5377 <<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fAX%2f5377>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Photographer unknown, *Engine shop probably in Tyburn Road Motor Works, Birmingham 1948*, Photographs of Car Manufacture, WPS/WK/B11/AX/5378

<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fAX%2f5378>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Photographer unknown, *Ration queue in an unidentified Birmingham street, Central Birmingham*, Photographs of the End of Rationing 1953, WPS/WK/B11/BA/5610

<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBA%2f5610>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Photographer unknown, 'Birmingham industrial workers. Photographed c1950s. Jeweller making rings', Photographs of industry and industrial workers, WPS/WK/B11/BU/7115

<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBU%2f7115>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Photographer unknown, 'Queue for coke at Windsor Street Gas Works, Birmingham. Photographed on 2 February 1951 during fuel shortage', Photographs at the End of Rationing, WPS/WK/B11/BA/5599

<<https://calmview.birmingham.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WPS%2fWK%2fB11%2fBA%2f5599>> [accessed 7 January 2024]

Workshop Photographs

Author's own, at:

Coffinworks Museum, Birmingham

Spring Hill, Birmingham

Print Sources

Curran, Mona, ed. *British Jewellery* (London: Clerke & Cockeran in collaboration with British Jewellers' Association and National Jewellers' Association, 1950)

Hughes, George Ravensworth, *The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths as Patrons of Their Craft, 1919-53* (London: The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, 1965)

Hughes, Graham, *Modern Jewelry: An International Survey, 1890-1963* (London: Studio Books London, 1963)

Reed, Bryan H, *Eighty Thousand Adolescents: A Study of Young People in the City of Birmingham by the Staff and Students of Westhill Training College* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1950)

***The Birmingham Mail* (chronologically)**

Access: British Library, News Room

- 'JEWELLERS. - Polisher for good-class diamond rings; afternoons only suit married woman. - Coton and Smith, 59, Tenby St. North.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 1 April 1940, p. 3
- 'JEWELLERS. - First-class Polisher (Woman) Required, for gold signets, links, wedding rings, etc.; good wages, plus war bonus. - Apply, Albion Chain Co., 39, Albion St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 3 April 1940, p. 3
- 'JEWELLERS' Mounter Required for best-class silver brooches, rings, etc.; permanency. - Taylor, Eadie, 141, Hockley Hill.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 3 April 1940, p. 3
- 'JEWELLERS. - Diamond Ring Mounters, used to medium-class work; full time and good wages. - Ginder, 39, Vyse St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 17 April 1940, p. 3
- 'JEWELLER'S Engraver Wanted, general work, not heraldic; inside or outwork. - Smith, Ewen, Stylic, 42, Frederick St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 18 April 1940, p. 3
- 'JEWELLERS. - Mounter for cheap 9ct. Cameo rings; outwork considered. - 144 K, Mail.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 20 April 1940, p. 3
- 'TAYLOR, EADIE & CO., LTD., JEWELLERS 141, HOCKLEY HILL REQUIRE MOUNTERS SETTERS POLISHERS (Female) BOYS AND GIRLS (an excellent opportunity to learn a good trade) - GOOD WAGES AND BONUS', *The Birmingham Mail*, 27 April 1940, p. 1
- 'JEWELLERS Diamond Ring Mounters wtd. used to best platinum work - App. by letter A. Arrowsmith & Co. 60 Albion St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 29 April 1940, p.3
- 'JEWELLERS Men Reqd. for high-class gold signets - 591 X Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 3 October 1944, p. 2
- 'EXPERIENCED Sand Polisher all types of silverware and jewellery Manufacturing jewellers would help right man commence on own account as outworker - 879 R Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 25 April 1945, p. 2
- 'SILVERSMITH experd. Cigarette cases Manufacturing jewellers would help right man commence on own account as outworker - 878 R Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 24 April 1945, p. 4
- 'JEWELLERS female for gold links part or full time Also gem ring maker in or out work - 587 T Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 4 October 1945, p. 4
- 'SOLDERERS Women experd. To hard soldering metal jewellery also Learners good wages modern factory - Bloxidge Bros. Ltd. Holliday Rd. Handsworth', *The Birmingham Mail*, 4 October 1945, p. 4
- 'JEWELLERY Setters Wtd. Work in or out used to Paste & Marcasite gds. - 119 G Mail', *The Birmingham Mail*, 15 October 1945, p. 4
- 'JEWELLERY Solderers & Girls to learn good wages canteen 5-day wk. - Watson's 10 Gt. Hampton St.', *The Birmingham Mail*, 30 October 1945, p. 2
- The Birmingham Mail*, 13 April 1954, 7:30 edition, pp. 4B-5B

The British Jeweller (chronologically)

Access: Library of Birmingham, second floor; British Library

Nathan Bros., "'A Member of the Nathan Family" Advert', *The British Jeweller*, January 1941, p. 12

Leese, W H, 'Our Common Burden', *The British Jeweller*, August 1941, pp. 34–35.

Samuel Hope Limited, 'S.O.S. Britain's Brides', *The British Jeweller*, February 1942, p. 25

Leese, W H, 'Is the Trade to Be Closed?', *The British Jeweller*, June 1942, pp. 9–10

'What a Business!', August 1942

'Birmingham Association's Great Effort: A Long Struggle for the Preservation of the Trade', *The British Jeweller*, September 1942, pp. 9–10

A W Crosbee & Sons Ltd, 'Hang On!', *The British Jeweller*, November 1942, back cover

Leese, W H, 'In Our Opinion', *The British Jeweller*, January 1943, pp. 9–10

A Manufacturer, 'Wedding Ring Shortage', *The British Jeweller*, January 1943, p. 10

Turner, W Stewart, 'Be Younger!', *The British Jeweller*, March 1943, 9–10

Turner, W Stewart, 'Once upon a Time Three Jewellers Went to Paradise', *The British Jeweller*, June 1943, p. 13

'President's Letter', *The British Jeweller*, October 1943, p. 8

Carter, Albert, 'Post War Training', *British Jeweller*, October 1943, pp. 9–10

'B.J.A. Code of Fair Trading', *The British Jeweller*, January 1944, 13–15

Miller, David B, 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham', *The British Jeweller*, May 1944, p. 21

Turner, W Stewart, 'Rogues' Gallery', *The British Jeweller*, June 1944, pp. 9–10

'Reproduced by permission of the proprietors of *Punch*', *The British Jeweller*, June 1944, p. 10

Lloyd, Pauline, 'My Post-War Jewellery Plan', *The British Jeweller*, July 1944, p. 17

British Legion, 'Plan for the Homecoming', *The British Jeweller*, August 1944, p. 11

'False Hall Marks on Metal Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, August 1944, p. 37

'Hallmarking Of Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, October 1944, p. 19

'Rehabilitation of the Disabled', *The British Jeweller*, December 1944, pp. 9–10

Rogers, G A, 'Fair Trading', *The British Jeweller*, December 1944, pp. 30–31

Greenough, S, 'Fair Trading', *The British Jeweller*, January 1945, 41

'Rebuilding The Jewellery District: As Others See Us!', *The British Jeweller*, April 1945, p. 35

- 'Shortage of Silver: Export Business Held Up, Trade Approaches Government', *The British Jeweller*, May 1945, p. 12
- Carr, Gerald, 'In Town This Month', *The British Jeweller*, June 1945, pp. 37–38
- 'Purchase Tax: Withdrawal of the £500 Exemption Limit', *The British Jeweller*, July 1945, p. 21
- Turner, W Stewart, 'The Stranglehold', *The British Jeweller*, August 1945, pp. 9–11
- 'Standard Wedding Rings and Price of Gold: Efforts of the B.J.A. to Obtain Price Revision', *The British Jeweller*, August 1945, p. 11
- Turner, W Stewart, 'A Ray of Light', *The British Jeweller*, November 1945, pp. 9–11
- Hunt, Sydney G, 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham', *The British Jeweller*, November 1945, p. 31
- 'Better Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, May 1946, p. 31
- Stevens, Rev. R S O, 'The Church and the Trade', *The British Jeweller*, June 1946, 9–10
- 'Code of Trading', *The British Jeweller*, June 1946, p. 15
- W A P Watson, 'Fashion Jewellery Now in Production Again', *The British Jeweller*, June 1946, p. 16
- 'Changes in the Purchase Tax', June 1946
- 'Re-made [sic] Jewellery Concession: Trade Deputation's Success', July 1946
- 'GOLD - BE CAREFUL', *The British Jeweller*, August 1946, p. 34
- Bishton, A H, 'Take off the Purchase Tax: An Open Letter to Mr Dalton', *The British Jeweller*, September 1946, pp. 26–27
- 'Board of Trade Compliments Jewellery Industry', *The British Jeweller*, September 1946, p. 27
- Leese, W H, 'Is This a Time for Exhibitions?', *The British Jeweller*, November 1946, pp. 35–37
- Leese, W H, 'The Writing On The Wall', *The British Jeweller*, March 1947, pp. 51–53
- Leese, W H, 'The Black Market, The Budget And The Crisis', *The British Jeweller*, April 1947, pp. 49–50
- 'Our Growing Importance', *The British Jeweller*, April 1947, p. 50
- Ministry of Supply, 'Machine Tools Available Now! More than 1,500 Different Types', *The British Jeweller*, May 1947
- Leese, W H, 'This Restriction Is Killing Our Export Trade', *The British Jeweller*, July 1947, p. 52
- Scott, Gerald J, 'Expensive Middle-Men', *The British Jeweller*, August 1947, pp. 74–75
- Leese, W H, 'GOLD - A Disastrous Order', *The British Jeweller*, September 1947, pp. 51–52
- Harris, J, 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham', *The British Jeweller*, September 1947, p. 73

- W H Leese, 'The Trade and the Crisis', *The British Jeweller*, October 1947, 49–51
- Leese, W H, 'Wednesday A "Powerless" Day In Birmingham Jewellery Quarter', *The British Jeweller*, October 1947, p. 58
- 'Hallmarking of Gold Articles: Assay Office Statement on Liability', *The British Jeweller*, November 1947, p. 67
- Leese, W H, 'Another Blow to Our Home Trade', *The British Jeweller*, December 1947, p. 56.
- 'With Acknowledgements to the "Evening Standard"', *The British Jeweller*, December 1947, p. 65
- 'Gold Charms: Hall Marking Warning', *The British Jeweller*, January 1948, p. 71
- 'Wedding Rings Dearer', *The British Jeweller*, February 1948, p. 63
- 'Gold for Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, March 1948, p. 70
- 'Sir Patrick Champions the Trade: Reply to Mr. Herbert Morrison at 47th Annual Banquet of B.J.A.', *The British Jeweller*, April 1948, pp. 64–67
- 'For the Newer Jewellery – Palladium', *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, p. 58.
- Allen, Geoff 'And This, Sir, Is Our Latest Austerity Line: A Combination Engagement-Wedding-Teething Ring!', *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, p. 65
- 'Gold Wire For Wedding Rings', *The British Jeweller*, August 1948, p. 71
- 'Hairslides Are Jewellery and Affected by PT Muddle', *The British Jeweller*, September 1948, p. 73
- Leese, W H, 'Hallmarking Revision Is An Urgent Need', *The British Jeweller*, December 1948, pp. 51–53
- 'Parliament Approves Draft Order For The Trade's Development Council', *The British Jeweller*, January 1949, pp. 68–71
- 'Mr. Wilson Praises Industry's Export Record in Speech at B.J.A. Banquet: Many Distinguished Guests at 48th Function in Birmingham.', *The British Jeweller*, March 1949, pp. 78–80
- Muir, William A, 'To The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate in Birmingham', *The British Jeweller*, July 1949, p. 88
- 'Centenary Celebration', *The British Jeweller*, August 1949, p. 67
- 'Purchase Tax Changes and Definitions', August 1949
- 'Watchmakers And Jewellers Stay Longest At Their Jobs', *The British Jeweller*, February 1956, p. 110D

Tools

Birmingham Museums Collections Centre

Jeweller's engraving tool, part of a set, Science & Industry Collection, Birmingham Museum Collections Centre, 1969.S.2311.30

Set of 11 Burnishing tools, Science & Industry Collection, Birmingham Museum Collections Centre, 1963.S.1765.1-11

Cornellius Sullivan, personal collection

'Cat' press tool

Flat-hammering mallets

Vision of Britain

'GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Birmingham MB/CB through Time | Industry Statistics | Persons of Working Age by Sex and 1931 Occupational Order, *A Vision of Britain through Time.*'
<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10101001/cube/OCC_ORD1931> [accessed 18 April 2021].

'Vision of Britain | 1931 Census: Industry | Table 2'
<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/table/EW1931IND_M2?u_id=10101001&show=DB>
[accessed 31 March 2021]

'Vision of Britain | 1931 Census: Occupations | Table 16'
<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/table/EW1931OCC_M16> [accessed 18 April 2021].

'Vision of Britain | 1951 Census: Industry | Table 2'
<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/table/EW1951IND_M2?u_id=10101001&show=DB>
[accessed 31 March 2021].

Additional Sources

'Contact Dermatitis', *Nhs.Uk*, 2017 <<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/contact-dermatitis/>> [accessed 31 December 2023]

History of Wages Data: Information from the Annual Abstract of Statistics (1886-1968), New Earnings Survey (1970-1996), and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (1997-) (Office for National Statistics, 2016)
<<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkin>

ghours/adhocs/006301newearningsurveyneetimeseriesofgrossweeklyearningsfrom1938to2016/000813.xls> [accessed 16 April 2021]

'Jobbing Jeweller', *Benchpeg*, 2018 <https://benchpeg.com/jobs/goldsmith-/-jobbing-jeweller-david-mellor-family-jewellers-totton-southampton> [accessed 6.3.2021]

Bibliography

- Adams, Tony E, Stacy Holman, and Carolyn Ellis, *Autoethnography* (Oxford University Press, 2014)
- Adamson, Glenn, ed., *The Craft Reader* (Berg, 2010)
- , 'The Ties That Bind', 2017 <<https://www.glennadamson.com/work/2017/8/2/the-ties-that-bind>> [accessed 11 May 2024]
- Albers, Anni, *On Weaving* (Princeton University Press, 2017)
- Angelucci, Daniela, 'Repetition', *Deleuze Studies*, 8.3 (2014), pp. 375–82
- Armstrong, Leah, and Felice McDowell, eds., *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018)
- Attfield, Judy, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life* (Berg, 2000)
- Baber, Chris, Tony Chemero, and Jamie Hall, 'What the Jeweller's Hand Tells the Jeweller's Brain: Tool Use, Creativity and Embodied Cognition', *Philosophy and Technology*, 32 (2017), pp. 283–302
- Ballard, Phillada, *A City at War: Birmingham 1939-1945* (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1985)
- Banham, Reyner, 'Sparks from the Plastic Anvil: The Craftsman in Technology', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 1.1 (2008), pp. 137–41
- Beechey, Veronica, 'The Sexual Division of Labour and the Labour Process', in *The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process*, ed. by Stephen Wood (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1982)
- Berg, Maxine, 'Small Producer Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century England', *Business History*, 35 (1993), pp. 17–39
- Blattner, W., *Heidegger's Being and Time: A Reader's Guide* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006)
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990)
- Boyer, Anne, *The Undying: Pain, Vulnerability, Mortality, Medicine, Art, Time, Dreams, Data, Exhaustion, Cancer and Care* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019)
- Braverman, Harry, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (Monthly Review Press, 1974)
- Briercliffe, Simon, *Forging Ahead: Austerity to Prosperity in the Black Country 1945-1968* (History West Midlands, 2021)

- Bronstein, Jamie L, *Caught in the Machinery: Workplace Accidents and Injured Workers in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008)
- Butler, Judith, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993)
- Cappallieri, Alba, *Twentieth-Century Jewellery: From Art Nouveau to Contemporary Design in Europe and the United States* (Milan: Skira, 2010)
- Carnevali, Francesca, "'Crooks, Thieves, and Receivers": Transaction Costs in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Birmingham', *The Economic History Review*, 57.3 (2004), pp. 533–50
- , 'Did They Have It So Good? Small Firms and British Monetary Policy in the 1950s', *Journal of Industrial History*, 5.1 (2002), pp. 15–34
- , *Europe's Advantage: Banks and Small Firms in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy since 1918* (Oxford University Press, 2005)
- , 'Golden Opportunities: Jewellery Making in Birmingham between Mass-Production and Speciality', *Enterprise and Society*, 4.2 (2003), pp. 272–98, doi:10.1093/es/khg003
- , 'Luxury for the Masses, Jewellery and Jewellers in London and Birmingham in the 19th Century', *Entreprises et Histoire*, 46 (2007), pp. 56–70
- , "'Malefactors and Honourable Men": The Making of Commercial Honesty in Nineteenth-Century Birmingham', in *Industrial Clusters and Regional Business Networks in England, 1750-1970*, ed. by J F Wilson and A Popp (2003), pp. 192–207
- Carter, Tim, "'Brass Poisoning" in Birmingham: The Rise and Fall of a Syndrome, 1860-1910', in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950*, ed. by Jonathan Reinartz (Midland History Occasional Publications, 2007), pp. 152–66
- Cattell, John, Sheila Ely, and Barry Jones, *The Birmingham Jewellery Quarter: An Architectural Survey of the Manufactories* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2002)
- , 'The Workshops of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', in *The Vernacular Workshop: From Craft to Industry, 1400-1900*, ed. by P S Barnwell, Marilyn Palmer, and Malcolm Airs (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2004), pp. 150–65
- Chinn, Carl, *Homes for People: Council Housing and Urban Renewal in Birmingham, 1849-1999* (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 1999)
- , 'An Industrial Hive: Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', *West Midlands History*, 2016, pp. 1–15
- , 'The Peoples of Birmingham', in *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 9–50
- Cockburn, Cynthia, 'On The Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men, and Technical Know-How', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 37.1 & 2 (2009), pp. 269–73
- , *The Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men, and Technical Know-How* (Pluto Press, 1985)

- Cuneo, Carl J, 'Review: The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process by Stephen Wood', *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*, 9.4 (1984), pp. 479–82
- Czarniawska, Barbara, *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997)
- Daykin, Norma, 'Review: Not Only the "Dangerous Trades": Women's Work and Health in Britain 1880-1914 by Barbara Harrison', *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 20.2 (1998), pp. 259–61
- Dayus, Kathleen, *The Girl from Hockley: Growing up in Working-Class Birmingham* (Little, Brown, 2006)
- Deleuze, Gilles, *Difference and Repetition (Différence et Répétition)*, trans. by Paul Patton (Columbia University Press (Presses Universitaires de France), 1994)
- Derrida, Jacques, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (University of Chicago Press, 1982) <<https://web.stanford.edu/class/history34q/readings/Derrida/Difference.html>> [accessed 5 March 2023]
- Dick, Malcolm, 'The City of a Thousand Trades, 1700-1945', in *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World* (Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 125–58
- Dilnot, Clive, and Lilián Sánchez-Moreno, 'John Heskett's Industrial Design: An Interview at Middlesex Polytechnic, 1981. Part Two: The Emergence of the Role of the Design and the Designer in the Industrial Economy', *Design Issues*, 35.2 (2019), pp. 46–59
- DiPrete, Thomas A, 'The Upgrading and Downgrading of Occupations: Status Redefinition vs. Deskilling as Alternative Theories of Change', *Social Forces*, 66.3 (1988), pp. 725–46
- Elger, Tony, 'Valorisation and "Deskilling": A Critique of Braverman', *Capital & Class*, 3.1 (1979), pp. 58–99
- Erez, Miriam, and P Christopher Earley, *Culture, Self-Identity, and Work* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)
- Farge, Arlette, *Délinquance et Criminalité: Le Vol Alimentaire à Paris Au XVIIIe Siècle* (Plon, 1974)
- , *The Allure of the Archives*, trans. by Thomas Scott-Railton (Yale University Press, 2013)
- Fournier, Lauren, *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism* (The MIT Press, 2021)
- Gee, James Paul, 'Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction', *Journal of Education*, 171.1 (1989), pp. 5–17
- Gerstl, Joel E, 'Determinants of Occupational Community in High Status Occupations', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 2.1 (1961), 37–48 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1961.tb01483.x>>
- Gibson, James J, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Houghton Mifflin, 1979)
- , *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (Allen and Unwin, 1966)

- Gorsky, Martin, John Mohan, and Tim Willis, 'A "Splendid Spirit of Co-Operation": Hospital Contributory Schemes in Birmingham Before the National Health Service', in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950*, ed. by Jonathan Reinarz (Midland History Occasional Publications, 2007), pp. 167–91
- Groes, Sebastian, and R. M. Francis, eds., *Smell, Memory, and Literature in the Black Country* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021)
- Hall, Stuart, 'Introduction: Who Needs "Identity"?', in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (SAGE Publications Ltd, 1996), pp. 1–17
- Harrison, Barbara, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades': Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880-1914* (Taylor & Francis, 1996)
- , 'Review: Women's Bodies and Dangerous Trades in England 1880-1914 by Carolyn Malone', *American Historical Review*, 110.1 (2005), 224–25
- Harrod, Tanya, ed., *Craft*, Documents of Contemporary Art (Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2018)
- , *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (Yale University Press, 1999)
- Hartman, Saidiya, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women and Queer Radicals* (Serpent's Tail, 2021)
- Heath, Stephen, *Questions of Cinema* (Red Globe Press, 1981)
- Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time [Sein Und Zeit]*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Blackwell, 1962)
- Hinks, Peter, *Twentieth Century British Jewellery, 1900-1980* (Faber and Faber, 1983)
- Hopkins, Eric, *Birmingham: The Making of the Second City 1850-1939* (Tempus, 2001)
- Hughes, David, 'The Spivs', in *Age of Austerity 1945-51*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp. 86–105
- Hughes, Everett C, *Men and Their Work* (Glencoe III Free Press, 1958)
- , 'Work and the Self', in *Social Psychology at the Crossroads*, ed. by John H Rohrer and Muzafer Sherif (New York: Harper, 1951)
- Idhe, Don, and Lambros Malafouris, 'Homo Faber Revisited: Postphenomenology and Material Engagement Theory', *Philosophy and Technology*, 32 (2019), pp. 195–214
- Ingold, Tim, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Routledge, 2013)
- , *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (Routledge, 2022)
- Izzard, Georgina, 'Back to the Bench? Understanding the British Manufacturing Jewellers' Transfer to Rearmament and Munitions Production in the Second World War' (unpublished MA Dissertation, V&A/Royal College of Art, 2018)

- James, Paul, 'Despite the Terrors of Typologies: The Importance of Understanding Categories of Difference and Identity', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 17.2 (2015), 174–95
- Kilbom, Åsa, Karen Messing, and Carina Bildt Thorbjörnsson, eds., *Women's Health at Work* (Solna: Arbetslivsinstitutet - National Institute for Working Life, 1998)
- Kynaston, David, *Austerity Britain: 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007)
- Latour, Bruno, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2005)
- Lees-Maffei, Grace, 'Knowing Hands: Using Tactile Research Methods in Researching and Writing the History of Design', in *Historical Research, Creative Writing, and the Past*, ed. by Kevin A Morrison and Pälvi Rantala (Routledge, 2023)
- Lin, Vivian, 'Women Electronics Workers in Southeast Asia: The Emergence of a Working Class', in *Global Restructuring and Territorial Development*, ed. by Jeffrey Henderson and Manuel Castells (Sage, 1987), pp. 112–35
- Lindqvist, Sven, *Dig Where You Stand: How to Research a Job*, ed. by Andrew Flinn and Rosen Astrid von, trans. by Ann Henning Jocelyn (Repeater Books, 2023)
- Malafouris, Lambros, 'Mind and Material Engagement', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 18 (2018), pp. 1–17
- Malone, Carolyn, *Women's Bodies and Dangerous Trades in England, 1880-1914* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2003)
- Marchand, Trevor H. J., ed., *Craftwork as Problem Solving: Ethnographic Studies of Design and Making* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2016)
<<https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9781472442932>> [accessed 3 July 2020]
- , 'Introduction: Craftwork as Problem Solving', in *Craftwork as Problem Solving: Ethnographic Studies of Design and Making* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2016), pp. 1–30
- , ed., *Making Knowledge: Explorations of the Indissoluble Relation Between Mind, Body and Environment* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011)
<<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rcauk/detail.action?docID=819338>> [accessed 3 July 2020]
- Marshall, Alfred, *Principles of Economics* (Macmillan, 1890)
- Marx, Karl, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. by Ben Fowkes and David Fernbach (Penguin, 1990), I
- Mason, Shena, *Jewellery Making in Birmingham, 1750-1995* (Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1998)
- Moses, Julia, *The First Modern Risk: Workplace Accidents and the Origins of European Social States* (Cambridge University Press, 2018)
- Muir, Edward, 'Introduction: Observing Trifles', in *Microhistory & the Lost Peoples of Europe*, ed. by Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (The John Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. vii–xxx

- Nott, Shelley N., *The British Jewellers' Association 1887-1987: 100 Years of Service* (British Jewellers' Association, 1987)
- Oakeshott, Michael, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Liberty Press, 1991)
- Oakley, Peter, 'Introducing Fairtrade and Fairmined Gold: An Attempt to Reconfigure the Social Identity of a Substance', in *The Social Life of Materials: Studies in Materials and Society*, ed. by Adam Drazin and Suzanne Kuechler (Routledge, 2020), pp. 155–74
- , 'Is Gold Jewelry Money?', *Social Analysis*, 61.4 (2017), 17–30
- Padfield, Maureen, 'Out in the Trade: The Occupational Community of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter' (unpublished PhD, University of Warwick, 1990) <<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/34821/>> [accessed 16 April 2020]
- Palmer, Marilyn, 'The Workshop: Type of Building or Method of Work?', in *The Vernacular Workshop: From Craft to Industry, 1400-1900*, ed. by P S Barnwell, Marilyn Palmer, and Malcolm Airs (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2004), pp. 1–16
- Penn, Roger, and Hilda Scattergood, 'Deskilling or Enskilling? An Empirical Investigation of Recent Theories of the Labour Process', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 36.4 (1985), pp. 611–30
- Phillips, Julie, *Birmingham at War 1939-45 (Towns & Cities in World War Two)* (Pen & Sword Military, 2018)
- Piore, Michael J, and Charles F. Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 1984)
- Polanyi, Michael, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 1958)
- , *The Tacit Dimension* (The University of Chicago Press, 2009)
- Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017)
- Pullée, Caroline, *Twentieth Century Jewellery* (The Apple Press, 1990)
- Pye, David, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* (Cambridge University Press, 1968)
- Rabinbach, Anson, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1990)
- Reid, Donald, 'Review: The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity by Anson Rabinbach', *The Journal of Modern History*, 65.3 (1993), 594–95
- Reinarz, Jonathan, 'Industry and Illness: Investing in Health and Medical Provision', in *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 239–60
- , 'Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950: Introduction', in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950*, ed. by Jonathan Reinarz (Midland History Occasional Publications, 2007), pp. 1–11

- Roberts, John, 'Art after Deskilling', *Historical Materialism*, 18 (2010), pp. 77–96
- , *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art after the Readymade* (Verso, 2007)
- Robinson, Victoria, 'Review: Masculinities at Work', *Work, Employment and Society*, 12.2 (1998), 379–81
- Roodhouse, Mark, *Black Market Britain 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Rossi, Catharine, 'The Maker 2.0: A Craft-Based Approach to Understanding a New Creative Identity', in *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries*, ed. by Leah Armstrong and Felice McDowell (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), pp. 181–201
- Rudge, Ted, and John Houghton, *Around Hockley: Through Time* (Chalford: Amberley Publishing Plc, 2010)
- Sabel, Charles F., and Jonathan Zeitlin, 'Historical Alternatives to Mass-Production: Politics, Markets and Technology in Nineteenth-Century Industrialisation', *Past & Present*, 108 (1985), pp. 133–46
- , eds., *World of Possibilities: Flexibility and Mass Production in Western Industrialization* (Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Sangster, Joan, 'Gendering Labour History Across Borders', *Labour History Review*, Fifty Years of Labour History, 75.2 (2010), pp. 143–61
- Scranton, Philip, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton University Press, 1997)
- Sherif, Muzafer, 'Introduction', in *Social Psychology at the Crossroads*, ed. by John H Rohrer and Muzafer Sherif (New York: Harper, 1951), pp. 1–28
- Shales, Ezra, *The Shape of Craft* (Reaktion Books, 2018)
- Sinclair-Jones, Jan, 'Women and Technology: Problem of Technological Unemployment or Deskilling', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31.16/17 (1996), pp. WS31–34
- Smith, Pamela H, 'Vermilion, Mercury, Blood, and Lizards: Matter and Meaning in Metalworking', in *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory*, ed. by Ursula Klein and E C Spray (The University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 29–49
- Smith, Pamela H, Amy Meyers, and Harold Cook, eds., *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge* (University of Chicago Press, 2017)
- Sottsass, Ettore, 'Le Vie Dell'artigiano', trans. by Christine Donougher, *Il Politecnico: Rivista Di Cultura Contemporanea*, 38 (1946), pp. 22–25
- Spenner, Kenneth I, 'Deciphering Prometheus: Temporal Change in the Skill Level of Work', *American Sociological Review*, 48 (1983), pp. 824–37
- Spurgeon, Anne, 'Making a Point: Lung Disease Amongst Needlemakers in Nineteenth-Century Redditch', in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands, 1750-1950*, ed. by Jonathan Reinarz (Midland History Occasional Publications, 2007), pp. 134–51

- Stein, Jesse Adams, 'Hidden Between Craft and Industry: Engineering Patternmakers' Design Knowledge', *Journal of Design History*, 32.3 (2019), pp. 280–303
- , *Industrial Craft in Australia: Oral Histories of Creativity & Survival*, Palgrave Studies in Oral History (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021)
- Stepanova, Maria, *In Memory of Memory*, trans. by Sasha Dugdale (New Directions Paperback, 2021)
- Struthers, Rebecca, *Hands of Time: A Watchmaker's History of Time* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2023)
- Sun, Kang, 'Manufacturing Identity: Peasant Workers' Spatial Production in China' (Bowling Green State University, 2012)
<<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1086351689?accountid=28521&pq-origsite=summon>> [accessed 26 February 2023]
- Sutcliffe, Anthony, and Roger Smith, *Birmingham 1939-1970* (Oxford University Press for Birmingham City Council, 1974), III
- Tajfel, Henri, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)
- , ed., *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)
- Thompson, Paul, *The Nature of Work: An Introduction to Debates on the Labour Process* (The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1983)
- Tracy, Sarah J, Karen K Myers, and Clifton W Scott, 'Cracking Jokes and Crafting Selves: Sensemaking and Identity Management Among Human Service Workers', *Communication Monographs*, 73.3 (2006), pp. 283–308
- Tracy, Sarah J, and Clifton W Scott, 'Sexuality, Masculinity and Taint Management among Firefighters and Correctional Officers: Getting down and Dirty with "America's Heroes" and the "Scum of Law Enforcement"', *Management Communication Quarterly*, 20 (2006), 6–38
- Upton, Chris, *A History of Birmingham* (Phillimore, 1993)
- Van Maanen, John, 'Identity Work and Control in Occupational Communities', in *Organizational Control*, ed. by Sim B Sitkin, Laura B Cardinal, and Katinka M Bijlsma-Frankema (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 111–66
- White, Helen, and Roger Trudgeon, 'Birmingham's Gun Quarter: A Skilled Trade in Decline', *Oral History*, Oral History & Labour History, 11.2 (1983), pp. 69–83
- Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Second (Oxford University Press, 1976)
- Witt, John Fabian, 'Review: Caught in the Machinery: Workplace Accidents and Injured Workers in Nineteenth-Century Britain by Jamie L Bronstein', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 62.2 (2011), 371–72
- Wood, Stephen, ed., *The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process* (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1982)

- Wrzesniewski, Amy, and Jane E Dutton, 'Crafting a Job: Revisioning Employees as Active Crafters of Their Work', *The Academy of Management Review*, 26.2 (2001), 179–201
- Zeitlin, Jonathan, 'Why Are There No Industrial Districts in the United Kingdom?', in *Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises*, ed. by Arnaldo Bagnasco and Charles F. Sabel, Social Change in Western Europe (Pinter, 1995), pp. 98–114
- Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Control, and Consumption, 1939-1955* (Oxford University Press, 2000)

This submission consists of a thesis.