



BOARD OF TRADE

FINAL REPORT  
on the  
CENSUS OF PRODUCTION  
FOR 1948

Volume 5

Trade K

Precious Metals Refining

*Presented by the Board of Trade to Parliament  
in pursuance of the Statistics of Trade Act, 1947  
(10 & 11 Geo. 6, Ch. 39, Sec. 7).*

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 In interpreting the data in the following tables, it is essential to bear in mind not only the qualifications mentioned in this report but also the general explanations and qualifications contained in the separate booklet published in this series by H.M. Stationery Office entitled "Final Reports of the Census of Production for 1948: Introductory Notes", price 2s 0d. NET

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\* Not applicable to this trade

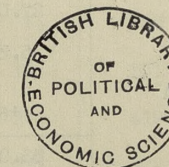
PRECIOUS METALS REFINING TRADE

THIS REPORT on the Precious Metals Refining Trade relates to establishments engaged wholly or mainly in the smelting, refining, etc., of gold, silver, platinum and other precious metals. Those whose chief business is the production of finished goods of precious metals are dealt with in the reports on the Jewellery and Plate Trade and the Watch and Clock Trade.

This trade together with the Jewellery and Plate Trade corresponds to minimum list heading 102 in the Standard Industrial Classification.

Establishments engaged solely in the refining of precious metals were not covered by the 1937 Inquiry; Table 1 therefore gives, as well as the full totals for 1935, figures for that year relating to the sections of the trade included in the 1937 Inquiry.

Any establishments in Northern Ireland are excluded in 1948; no production was recorded there in this trade for 1937 or 1935.



## PRECIOUS METALS REFINING TRADE

## Summary

## Larger establishments

TABLE 1

	All sections of the trade	Sections of the trade covered by the 1937 Inquiry		All sections of the trade
	1948	1937	1935	1935
Gross output (production)	£'000 33,062	£'000 23,602	£'000 29,661	£'000 31,182
Cost of materials and fuel used	29,442	22,655	28,961	30,129
Payment for work done on materials given out	8	5	3	26
Net output	3,612	942	697	1,027
Wages and salaries of persons employed	1,758 No.	.. No.	.. No.	.. No.
Average number of persons employed (a)	4,631(b)	2,327	2,057	2,367
Net output per person employed (a)	£ 780	£ 405	£ 339	£ 434
Stocks at end of year	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Finished products and work in progress	5,099	..	..	..
Materials and fuel	2,150 No.	.. No.	.. No.	.. No.
Number of establishments	31	..	..	23

(a) Excluding outworkers.

(b) For the total number of persons employed in this trade see Table 3.

The values of gross output and of materials and fuel used are derived in the following way:-

	All sections of the trade	Sections of the trade covered by the 1937 Inquiry		All sections of the trade
	1948	1937	1935	1935
Output of firms in this trade	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total value of sales (1948) or production (1937 and 1935)				
Principal products (see Table 8)	27,078	23,489	29,611	31,118
Other output (see Table 10)	5,338	113	50	64
Adjustment for changes in stocks and work in progress (see Table 14)	+648			
	33,064	} 23,602	} 29,661	} 31,182
Less payment for transport by other firms	2			
Gross output (production)	33,062	23,602	29,661	31,182
Materials and fuel used by firms in this trade				
Purchases (see Table 13)	29,183	} 22,655	} 28,961	} 30,129
Adjustment for changes in stocks (see Table 14)	+259			
Materials and fuel used	29,442	22,655	28,961	30,129

## Summary, 1948

## Small firms in Great Britain

TABLE 2

Number of returns	18
Average number of persons employed (a)	
Males	85
Females	22
Total	107

(a) Including working proprietors.

## Estimated average employment, 1948

## All firms in Great Britain

TABLE 3

As returned by firms	
Employing on average more than ten persons (a)	4,631
Employing on average ten persons or less (b)	107
Average employment in all firms	4,738

(a) See Tables 1 and 15.

(b) See Table 2.

## Analysis by size, 1948

## Larger establishments in Great Britain

TABLE 4

Average number employed	Establishments	Gross output	Net output	Persons employed	Remuneration			Net output per person employed
					Wages	Salaries	Total	
	No.	£'000	£'000	No.	£'000	£'000	£'000	£
11-24	5	614	74	89	20	16	35	826
25-49	8	1,671	191	301	61	38	99	636
50-99	6	2,418	370	419	83	74	157	884
100 and over	12	28,358	2,977	3,822	895	571	1,466	779
Total	31	33,062	3,612	4,631	1,059	699	1,758	780

Analysis by standard region, 1948

Larger establishments in Great Britain

TABLE 5

Region	Establishments	Gross output	Net output		Persons employed	Remuneration		
			Value	Percentage of total		Wages	Salaries	Total
England	No.	£'000	£'000		No.	£'000	£'000	£'000
London and South Eastern	13	25,813	2,835	78.5	3,514	825	550	1,375
Midland	9	3,321	341	9.4	476	99	67	165
Other	9	3,928	436	12.1	641	135	82	217
Great Britain (a)	31	33,062	3,612	100.0	4,631	1,059	699	1,758

(a) There were no larger establishments in Wales or Scotland in the register for this trade.

TABLE 6 - Analysis according to specialisation within the trade, 1948

Larger establishments in Great Britain

No specialisation within this trade was distinguished.

Total make of intermediate products

Larger establishments

TABLE 7

	1948		1935
	Quantity	Entries	Quantity
	Th. ozs. troy	No.	Th. ozs. troy
Gold, refined in bars, etc.	3,315.6	8	6,219.6
Gold, partly refined in bars, etc.	618.9	..	(a)
Platinum, refined in grain, ingot, bar or powder	236.4	6	186.2
Silver, refined	31,007.7(b)	8	189,060.5(b)

(a) Not recorded.

(b) Including output of establishments classified to other trades. Owing to the risk of disclosure of information relating to individual firms the quantity so included for 1948 cannot be given; for 1935 the amount was 6,586,300 ozs.

Sales (or production) of the principal products of the trade, including sales (or production) of these products by establishments classified to other trades

Larger establishments

TABLE 8

	1948 Sales			1937 Production (a)		1935 Production	
	Quantity	Value	Entries	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Gold	Million leaves	£'000	No.	Million leaves	£'000	Million leaves	£'000
Gold leaf, in leaves	14.7	124	..	26.2	119	25.6	114
	Th.ozs. troy			Th.ozs. troy		Th.ozs. troy	
Refined in bars, etc.	1,001.0	8,856	7				
Gold sheet (b)	571.0	3,047	..	2,730.4	18,142	2,797.5	19,099
				..	57	..	34
Manufactures of gold, not elsewhere specified (c)	543.6	2,224	7				
Platinum, including alloys and manufactures (c)	240.0	4,857	6	103.8	907	208.1	1,341
Silver							
Refined	11,745.6	2,341	8	32,390.3	2,871	83,334.6	8,215
Silver sheet (b)	3,092.5	572	6				
Other manufactures of silver (c)	11,304.1	2,326	12	8,266.8	876	6,558.9	871
	..	189					
Palladium, iridium, rhodium, osmium and ruthenium, and alloys thereof other than platinum alloys	224.6	1,808	6				
Gold, partly refined in bars, etc.	17.5	150	..	..	747	..	1,146
Other precious metals (including rolled gold) and other partly refined metals	3,262.3	778	..				
	..	17					

TABLE 8 (contd.)

	1948 Sales			1937 Production (a)		1935 Production	
	Quantity	Value	Entries	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
	Th. tons	£'000	No.	Th. tons	£'000	Th. tons	£'000
Concentrates, metallic residues, wastes, etc.	0.4 ..	10 1	6	0.1	17	1.4	263
Work done for the trade or on commission (d)							
Refining of gold		29	..	60	357		
Refining of silver		137	5				
Other		63	8				
Total		27,509	..		23,796		31,440
Less sales (or production) in other trades (see Table 9)		431	..		307		322
Total principal products of this trade sold or made by establishments in the trade		27,078	14		23,489		31,118

(a) Establishments not covered by the 1937 Inquiry recorded the following output for 1935:-

	Th. ozs. troy	£'000
Gold, refined, and manufactures of gold (other than gold leaf, in leaves)	12.1	81
Platinum, including alloys and manufactures	105.6	649
Silver, refined	623.6	72
Precious metals other than gold, platinum and silver, including rolled gold and partly refined metals	..	401
	Th. tons	
Concentrates, metallic residues, wastes, etc.	0.3	80
Work done for the trade		224

(b) So far as recorded separately.

(c) Excluding plate, jewellery, watches, etc., for which see the Jewellery and Plate Trade, (Volume 5, Trade J) and the Watch and Clock Trade (Volume 5, Trade I).

(d) Amount charged in 1948 and amount received in 1937 and 1935.

## Sales (or production) of principal products of the trade by establishments classified to other trades

## Larger establishments

TABLE 9

	1948 Sales			1937 Production		1935 Production	
	Quantity	Value	Entries	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
	Th. ozs. troy	£'000	No.	Th. ozs. troy	£'000	Th. ozs. troy	£'000
Gold, refined, and manufactures of gold	-	-	-	1.2	8	-	-
Silver							
Refined	1,857.3 ..	420 11	..	3,236.3	295	2,197.9	284
Manufactures of silver						199.6	25
Work done for the trade					4(a)		13(a)
Total		431	..		307		322

(a) Amount received.

## Sales (or production) in the trade of other than principal products

## Larger establishments

TABLE 10

	1948 Sales		1937 Production	1935 Production
	Quantity	Value	Value	Value
	Th. tons	£'000	£'000	£'000
Copper and manufactures thereof	1.5	275	24	15
Brass and manufactures thereof	4.1	514	53	24
Nickel and nickel alloys (other than nickel silver) and manufactures thereof	0.8	178		
Other non-ferrous metals and manufactures thereof	..	66		
Chemical manufactures	..	1,269	36	25
Other goods	..	3,015		
Work done	..	22(a)		
Total		5,332	113	64

(a) Amount charged.

## Analysis of sales, 1948

## Larger establishments in Great Britain

TABLE 11

	Sales	Percentage of total sales
	£'000	
Sales to independent buyers		
Exports invoiced directly overseas and exports invoiced to Crown Agents and purchasing houses in this country of individual firms and governments abroad	4,629	14.4
Manufacturers, repairers, builders, mines, public utilities, and transport and other productive undertakings	20,433	63.5
Wholesalers, merchants and other agents for resale	1,733 (a)	5.4
Retailers, including multiple shops, caterers and N.A.A.F.I., for resale	1	-
Sales to other independent buyers and sales (or transfers) to other organisations under the same control	5,371	16.7
Total	32,166	100.0

(a) Of this total £1,281,000 was recorded as divided between £1,179,000 for export and £102,000 for other sales.

## Production, exports, and imports of certain principal products (a)

Exports and imports of refined gold and silver do not bear any relation to the quantities produced at refineries in this country. Particulars relating to other precious metals and to gold leaf are given below.

TABLE 12

	Production (b)	Exports	Retained imports
Gold leaf, in leaves	Million leaves	Million leaves	Million leaves
	1948 14.7 (c)	3.3	1.3
	1937 26.2 (d)	0.1	25.9
Platinum in grain, ingot, bar or powder	Th. ozs. troy	Th. ozs. troy	Th. ozs. troy
	1948 236.4	57.5	2.9
	1935 186.2	18.4	110.5
Palladium, iridium, rhodium, osmium and ruthenium, and alloys thereof other than platinum alloys (1948)	224.6 (c)	111.5	(e)

(a) Figures of sales (or production) refer only to larger establishments in the relevant years. All recorded exports from and imports into the United Kingdom are given in the table. The figures, therefore, are not strictly comparable.

(b) Including sales (or production) by establishments classified to other trades.

(c) Sales.

(d) Production for sale.

(e) Re-exports in excess of imports.

## Purchased materials and fuel

## Larger establishments

TABLE 13

	1948		1937		1935	
	Materials and fuel purchased		Usage of purchased materials and fuel			
	Quantity	Cost	Quantity	Cost	Quantity	Cost
	Th. ozs. troy	£'000		£'000		£'000
Materials						
Partly refined gold in bars, etc.	478.0	3,915				
Packing materials	..	27	..	22,609	..	30,074 (a)
All other purchased materials	..	25,053				
Fuel and electricity	Th. tons		Th. tons		Th. tons	
Coal	8.4	26	8.3	10	10.4	12
Coke	3.1	15	..	(b)	2.9	5
Electricity purchased	Th. B.T.U. (kW.hrs.)		Th. B.T.U. (kW.hrs.)		Th. B.T.U. (kW.hrs.)	
From public supply	11,265	56	5,129	16	6,235	22
From other sources	-	-				
Electricity obtained from other works under the same ownership	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motor spirit (petrol) and deriv. fuel	Th. galls.					
Used for road vehicles	29	3				
Used for other power purposes	-	-	..	(b)	..	(b)

TABLE 13 (contd.)

	1948		1937		1935	
	Materials and fuel purchased		Usage of purchased materials and fuel			
	Quantity	Cost	Quantity	Cost	Quantity	Cost
	Th. galls.	£'000	Th. galls.	£'000	Th. galls.	£'000
Fuel and electricity (contd.)						
Other oil fuel (including creosote/pitch mixtures)	1,608	61	341	6(c)	1,026	16(c)
Gas purchased	Th. therms					
From public supply	656	28	..	14	..	(b)
From other sources	-	-				
Gas obtained from other works under the same ownership	-	-				
All other purchased fuel	..	-				
Total		29,183		22,655		30,129

(a) Including some unclassified fuel and electricity.

(b) Not recorded separately.

(c) Described as "Heavy fuel oil".

## Stocks of finished products and work in progress and stocks of materials and fuel, 1948

## Larger establishments in Great Britain

TABLE 14

	At beginning of year		At end of year	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
	Th. ozs. troy	£'000	Th. ozs. troy	£'000
Finished products				
Gold, refined	43.9	379	44.7	386
Other finished products	..	2,305	..	2,985
Work in progress		1,766		1,727
Total finished products and work in progress		4,451		5,099
Materials and fuel				
Gold, unrefined in dust or amalgam	67.5	572	68.0	577
Silver, unrefined	2,987.8	527	1,732.0	294
Other descriptions of materials and fuel	..	1,311	..	1,280
Total materials and fuel		2,409		2,150

## Employment and remuneration (a)

## Larger establishments

TABLE 15

	Average number of operatives			Administrative, technical and clerical employees (b)			Total					
	All sections of the trade	Sections of the trade covered by the 1937 Inquiry	All sections of the trade	All sections of the trade	Sections of the trade covered by the 1937 Inquiry	All sections of the trade	All sections of the trade	Sections of the trade covered by the 1937 Inquiry	All sections of the trade			
	1948	1937	1935	1935	1948	1937	1935	1935	1948	1937	1935	1935
Males												
Under 18	122	214	149	156	15	12	2	2	137	226	151	158
All ages	2,579	1,453	1,329	1,583	778	373	315	364	3,357	1,826	1,644	1,947
Females												
Under 18	80	124	92	92	41	11	1	1	121	135	93	93
All ages	886	360	307	310	386	141	106	110	1,272	501	413	420
Total												
Under 18	202	338	241	248	56	23	3	3	258	361	244	251
All ages	3,465	1,813	1,636	1,893	1,164(c)	514	421	474	4,629(c)(d)(e)	2,327	2,057	2,367
Total remuneration	£'000	..	..	..	£'000	699	..	..	£'000	1,758	..	..

(a) Excluded employees. The following numbers were employed at establishments in this trade but are not included in the table or in any other report (e.g.: employees in a separate selling or transport organisation for which separate accounts are kept):-

Canteen workers } 10 males, 96 females  
Other workers }

(b) Number at September 25, 1948, October 16, 1937, and October 12, 1935.

(c) There were, in addition, 2 male working proprietors in 1948. Working proprietors are included in the 1937 and 1935 figures.

(d) The employers' share of contributions to all National Insurance Schemes payable during the year in respect of these workers amounted to £38,000.

(e) The following persons (included in this total) were employed on special work by establishments employing 100 or more persons:-

	Operatives	Administrative, technical and clerical employees
Transport of goods outside the premises	33	
Maintenance and repair of firms' buildings, but not plant	129	
Research work not directly connected with current production however charged	-	(*)

(\*) Owing to the risk of disclosure of information relating to individual firms, this figure cannot be given.

In addition to the employees in the above table the firms in this trade employed 1 male and 35 female outworkers in 1948, the amount paid to them being £3,000. Similar information is not available for 1937 and 1935.

Wages and salaries paid, 1948 (a)  
Larger establishments in Great Britain

TABLE 16

	Amount paid by all establishments	Establishments making returns for the calendar year					Year
		Amount paid	Percentage of annual remuneration paid in				
			First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	
	£'000	£'000					
Wages and salaries of							
Operatives	1,059	179	26.7	25.7	23.5	24.0	100.0
Administrative, technical and clerical employees	699	155	24.1	24.3	23.9	27.7	100.0
Total	1,758	334	25.5	25.0	23.7	25.7	100.0

(a) Including bonus and commission payments.

TABLE 17 - Payments for work done on materials given out, 1948

## Larger establishments in Great Britain

The total amount paid for work done on materials given out was £8,000.

## Payments for certain services, 1948

## Larger establishments in Great Britain

TABLE 18

	Amount paid
	£'000
Repair and maintenance	
Of buildings	35
Of plant, machinery and vehicles	42
Hire of plant, machinery and vehicles	5
Advertising and market research	
Advertising in newspapers, magazines and periodicals	7
Other advertising services (poster display, despatch of circulars, etc.) and market research	4
Unclassified	15
Payments made for research work	
To research associations	-
To universities, institutions, academic bodies and similar agencies	5
To other commercial concerns	
Postage, telephone, telegrams and cables	26
Commercial insurance premiums	24
Rates (excluding water rates) payable in the year	11

## Plant, machinery and vehicles acquired and disposed of, 1948

## Larger establishments in Great Britain

TABLE 19

	Acquisitions		Disposals
	New	Second-hand	
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Plant and machinery	192	4	4
Vehicles	9	2	5
Total	201	6	9

## Capital expenditure on building work and changes in occupation of building and land, 1948

## Larger establishments in Great Britain

TABLE 20

	£'000	£'000
1. Capital expenditure on building work (a)		130
2. Existing buildings and land (b)		
(1) Capital cost of freeholds bought	-	
Estimated capital value of		
(11) Rented property newly occupied in the year (c)	14	
(111) Leasehold buildings and land newly occupied in the year	45	
Total of heading 2		59
Total of headings 1 and 2		189
3. Existing buildings and land relinquished (d)		
(1) Selling value of freeholds sold	-	
(11) Estimated value of other properties relinquished	50	
Total of heading 3		50
4. Headings 1 and 2 less heading 3		139

(a) Excluding site value, which, where appropriate, is included in heading 2(1).

(b) The figures do not reflect changes in ownership of previously occupied land and buildings.

(c) Property which is occupied under an agreement for the payment of rent without the purchase of a lease or the payment of a premium.

(d) Including property destroyed or abandoned.



## PRECIOUS METALS REFINING TRADE

1948

Note - There were no establishments in Wales and no larger establishments in Scotland in the register for this trade.

TABLE 21 - Summary: Larger establishments

See Table 1.

TABLE 22 - Summary: Small firms

See Table 2.

Owing to the risk of disclosure of information relating to individual firms separate particulars for England and Scotland cannot be given.

Sales in the trade  
Larger establishments

TABLE 23

	England (a)	
	Quantity	Value
	Million leaves	£'000
Principal products		
Gold		
Gold leaf, in leaves	14.7	124
Refined in bars, etc.	Th. ozs. troy 1,001.0	8,856
Gold sheet (b)	571.0	3,047
Manufactures of gold, not elsewhere specified	543.6	2,224
Platinum, including alloys and manufactures	240.0	4,857
Silver		
Silver sheet (b)	3,092.5	572
Refined, and other manufactures of silver	21,192.5 ..	4,247 159
Palladium, iridium, rhodium, osmium and ruthenium, and alloys, thereof other than platinum alloys	224.6	1,808
Gold, partly refined in bars, etc.	17.5	150
Other precious metals (including rolled gold) and other partly refined metals	3,262.3 ..	778 17
Concentrates, metallic residues, wastes, etc.	Th. tons 0.4 ..	10 1
Work done for the trade or on commission		
Refining of gold		29(c)
Refining of silver		137(c)
Other		83(c)
Total principal products		27,078

TABLE 23 (contd.)

	England (a)	
	Quantity	Value
Other output	Th. tons	£'000
Copper and manufactures thereof	1.5	275
Brass and manufactures thereof	4.1	514
Nickel and nickel alloys (other than nickel silver) and manufactures thereof	0.8	178
Other non-ferrous metals and manufactures thereof	..	66
Chemical manufactures	..	1,269
Other goods	..	3,015
Work done		22(c)
Total		32,416

(a) There were no larger establishments in Wales or Scotland in the register for this trade.  
(b) So far as recorded separately.  
(c) Amount charged.

TABLE 24 - Purchased materials and fuel: Larger establishments

See Table 13.

TABLE 25 - Employment and remuneration: Larger establishments

See Table 15.

Monthly index of employment of operatives: Larger establishments  
(average employment in 1948 = 100)

TABLE 26

Month	Monthly index (a)	Month	Monthly index (a)
	England (b)		England (b)
1948		1948	
January	104.7	August	96.2
February	105.8	September	96.2
March	104.3	October	95.7
April	103.6	November	95.7
May	102.4	December	94.2
June	101.1	Percentage employment in this trade covered by the index	
July	99.4		15.4

(a) The index numbers are calculated from the number of operatives employed for one week in each month returned by larger establishments that made returns for the calendar year 1948.

(b) There were no larger establishments in Wales or Scotland in the register for this trade.

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