

'An Account of the Mint in the Tower of London'.

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An Account of the Mint in the Tower of London.

The Mint or Change is by the Charter thereof a Corporation consisting of the Warden, the Workers the Moneyers & the other Ministers. It may buy & sell, sue & be sued, & tis free from Taxes, arrests & servitude in forreign offices & imployments unless where the Charter is over-ruled by Act of Parliament.

The Warden or Keeper of the Changes is by the Charter a Magistrate appointed to do right & justice among the Workers, Moneyers & other Ministers in all their complaints & differences except in causes of freehold & causes relating to the crown & may call a Court. And hence it is that the Mints are free from arrests. Standing Orders are made by him the Master & Controller (as a Court or Board) or by any two of them whereof he to be one. Hence Letters from the Treasury are directed to them & sometimes to them by name & to the rest of the Officers in generall. In some things (as about the buildings & assays &c) the Assaymaster may be also called to the consult. For the Warden pays the Charges of necessary repairs first avouched by the Master Controller & Assaymaster or any two of them whereof the Master to be one. He supervises the whole process of the Coynage & pays the charges thereof & the salaries of the Officers except the Masters salary & wages & such salaries & wages as are appointed to be paid by the Master all which were received of the King & paid to the Officers & Workmen by the Warden before the enacting of the coynage duty, but now the Master retains out of that duty what the Warden should otherwise pay to him. With the consent of the General of the Mint of Scotland the Warden makes the standard weights of England & Scotland. He keeps an Indented trial piece to examin the assays by as oft as he shall think convenient, & the Master keeps another to make the moneys by. He is of late impowered to demand & receive the forfeited estates of abusers of the coyn for defraying the charges of them that prosecute.

The Workers are the Master & his Assaymaster & Melter & Refiner with their Assistants Clerks & Vnderworkmen. The Master upon new occasions of coynage contracts with the King by Indenture & according to the Indenture by the assistance of his aforesaid servants receives, melts, refines, assays, rates & standards the gold & silver to be coyned, sets it out to the Potts runns it into standard barrs, delivers those barrs by weight to the Moneyers & after coynage receives it from them & delivers it to the Importer by weight, & by his Clerks enters the accounts thereof in Day-books, Leger-books, Melting books, Pott-books & books of Debtor & Creditor.

The Moneyers draw, cut out, size, blanch, edge & coyne <2v> those Barrs into moneys & return the moneys scissel & brokage back to the Master by weight. They may not pay or distribute any moneys unassayd upon pain of forfeiting their franchises & bodies to prison. They take apprentices & form themselves into a company by electing one their number to be their Provost. They live in the Country & are bound to attend & do their work whenever summoned by the Warden Master or Controller upon pain of losing their Franchises & bodies to prison. They are to work in such tasks & so many hours every day (sundays only excepted) as shall be appointed by the Master & for wilfull neglect or refusall the Warden Master & Controller (that is the

Court) may expell or otherwise punish them (or any other workmen) as shall seem meet for their Majesties service, & by the same power (as in all other Corporations) may grant freedom to new Moneyers.

The other Ministers are the Controller, Kings Assaymaster Surveyor of the Meltings, Weigher & Teller, King's Clerk, Clerk of the Irons &c. These are standing Officers with set salaries to cheque the Moneyers & Workers & see that they do their duty in working & coyning the gold & silver: the Workers & Moneyers (except the Master since the reign of Charles II) are not standing Officers nor have salaries but as workmen receive wages after a certain rate in the pound weight for all the gold & silver they work & coyne.

The Controller is in behalf of the King a cheque upon the Master in his accounts & upon the Assaymasters in their assays. He makes a Controllment Roll upon oath every year of all the bullion molten with its allay & of all the moneys coyned monthly & supervises the whole coynage, & with the Warden & Master locks up the bullion & new coyned moneys & the Pix & Coynage duty: in doing which the Warden & Controller are a guard upon the Masters bullion & rent moneys & Pix & the Master & Controller are a guard upon the Coynage duty to be issued out by the Warden according to ancient custome

The Assaymaster is in behalf of the King a cheque upon the Master for his assays & keeps a book of all the gold & silver as to quantity & fineness & of all the Pot-assays. He & the Warden & Controller or any two of them chuse the ingot for the Pot assay; & when the money is coyned he tries it both in weight & fineness before the Warden (who then chuses out the assay-pieces & pix) & the Master & Controller, & if it prove without remedy the Master bears the loss of remelting it. When the Importer & Master disagree about the price of bullion the Assaymaster in the presence of the Warden Master & Controller assays the same & the Master then receives it & stands charged with it according to the report of the Assaymaster who is a sworn officer. The assay may be made by the Wardens Indented triall piece.

The Surveyor of the meltings is in behalf of the King a cheque upon the Melter to see that the gold & silver & its allay & nothing else be put into the Melting pott. Whenever the Pot is opened he watches that nothing unfit be put into it & when it is laded out he sees that the ingot for the Pott-assay be duly taken & carried to the Assay-office. He keeps a book of all the gold & silver molten & of the allay put into it.

The Weigher & Teller weighs all the gold & silver brought into the Office of Receipt either before or after coynage & when tis requisite he tells it there. He weighs the silver moneys by Journeys of 60 pound weight & the gold by journey of 15

The Kings Clerk registers the papers which pass between the Treasury & the Mint. Also he & the Warden & Controller (by their Clerks) or two of them, in behalf of the King rate & standard all the gold & silver brought into the Mint & examin the Pots set out by the Master, & enter these accounts in Day-books, Leger-books & Melting books.

The Clerk of the Irons is at present the same person with the Surveyor of the meltings. He keeps an account of all the Dyes made & hardened by the Smith & when they are worn out sees them defaced in the presence of the Warden Master & Controller. He now keeps an account of all the Dyes that are sunck & for that end has one of the keys to the great Press & to the box of Puncheons.

There are also two Auditors who yearly examin & allow the accounts of the Warden & Master & the Controllment Roll a Clerk of the papers who may register Orders, Contracts, Patents Deputations, Controllment Rolls, Accounts audited &c a Porter who removes the Ingots of gold & silver from Office to Office; & an Engraver, two Engineers & a Smith who make & repair the Puncheons, Dyes, Engins & other iron work & are immediately under the Master.

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The Warden Master & Controller or any of them as often as need shall require may take up at his Majesties price Gravers Smiths Workmen & Labourers & other necessities for making the irons and moneys & doing all manner of business & therein all Mayors, Sheriffs Bayliffs & other Officers are commanded to assist the said Officers of the Mint.
