

Marks and Meanings

Decoding inscriptions on artefacts



Further reading and websites

Patents

Esp@cenet patents database (covers c.1890s onwards for UK patents)
<http://gb.espacenet.com/>

History of patents
<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-about/p-what-is/p-history.htm>

Old patent numbers
<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-about/p-what-is/p-oldnumbers.htm>

National Archives guide to researching pre-1853 patents
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/rdleaflet.asp?sLeafletID=77>

Patent Information Centres in the UK
<http://www.epo.org/patents/patent-information/patlib/directory/unitedkingdom.html>

US Patent and Trademark Office Databases
<http://patft.uspto.gov/>

Review of Esp@cenet including details of coverage and tips for advanced searches
<http://www.istl.org/06-summer/electronic3.html>

Esp@cenet Assistant (e-learning module)
<http://www.european-patent-office.org/wbt/espacenet/>

Esp@cenet user forum
<http://forums.epo.org/espacenet/>

Registered Designs

National Archives guide to researching Registered Designs and Trademarks
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/ExternalRequest.asp?RequestReference=ri2207>

National Archives guide to researching Diamond Marks
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/ExternalRequest.asp?RequestReference=ri2208>

Design Registers: online exhibition from the National Archives featuring 300 Victorian ceramic designs and other curiosities
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/designregisters/>

Hallmarks










Database of Early Silver Hallmarks (1753 to 1858) registered with the Birmingham Assay Office (covers Birmingham marks only)

<http://www.theassayoffice.uk.com/esh/>

Table of Birmingham date letters 1773 to 2009

http://www.theassayoffice.co.uk/date_letters.html

There are many books on hallmarks; the important thing is to check that they have good reproductions of the marks as there are traps for the unwary. The serifs on letters are not always reproduced accurately. An easy way to check is to look at the year letter for Birmingham hallmarks of 1885. There should be a small pip on the left hand side of the letter 'l':

BIRMINGHAM												
												
1849	A	”		1867	S	”		1883	i	”		
1850	B	”		1868	T	”		1884	k	”		
1851	C	”		1869	U	”		1885	l	”		
1852	D	”		1870	V	”		1886	m	”		
1853	E	”		1871	W	”		1887	n	”		
1854	F	”		1872	X	”		1888	o	”		

Some examples of reliable books on hallmarks:

- Frederick Bradbury, *Bradbury's book of hallmarks*, multiple editions 1975-2004
- ed. Ian Pickford, *Jackson's Hallmarks*, 1991
- T.R. Poole, *Identifying Antique British Silver*, 1988