
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1998 No. 1764

COINAGE

The Trial of the Pyx Order 1998

Made - - - - 21st July 1998

Coming into force - - 22nd July 1998

Her Majesty, in pursuance of section 8(2) and (3) of the Coinage Act 1971⁽¹⁾ and of all other powers enabling Her in that behalf, is pleased, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:—

Citation and commencement

1. This Order may be cited as the Trial of the Pyx Order 1998, and shall come into force on 22nd July 1998.

Interpretation

2.—(1) In this Order—

“bimetallic coin” means a coin with joined inner and outer sections, one section being made of cupro-nickel and the other of nickel-brass;

“coins ready for issue” means current coins which are held by the Royal Mint for the purpose of being put into circulation or have been issued to banks for that purpose, and includes silver Maundy coins;

“gold-plated silver coin” means a silver coin plated wholly or partly with gold;

“the Goldsmiths’ Company” means the Wardens and Commonalty of the Mystery of Goldsmiths in the City of London; and

“Maundy coins” means coins of the Queen’s Maundy money.

(2) Any reference in this Order to the permitted variation from the standard weight, fineness, composition or diameter shall be construed as a reference to such variation from the standard weight, fineness, composition or diameter as is allowed by the Coinage Act 1971 or any proclamation made, or having effect as if made, under that Act.

Coins to be set apart by the Mint for trial

3.—(1) The Deputy Master of the Mint shall with a view to the trial of the pyx cause to be selected at random and set apart—

(1) 1971 c. 24.

- (a) one coin out of every 2,000 gold coins of each type ready for issue;
 - (b) one coin out of every 150 silver Maundy coins ready for issue;
 - (c) one coin out of every 3,000 silver coins (not being Maundy coins) ready for issue;
 - (d) one coin out of every 3,000 gold-plated silver coins ready for issue;
 - (e) (i) one coin out of every 5,000 cupro-nickel coins of a denomination of more than ten pence ready for issue; and
 - (ii) one coin out of every 20,000 cupro-nickel coins of a denomination of ten pence or less ready for issue;
- provided that where in any year the total number of cupro-nickel coins subject to trial is less than 250 million, one coin out of every 5,000 such cupro-nickel coins shall be selected at random and set aside, irrespective of the denomination of those coins;
- (f) one coin out of every 5,000 nickel-brass coins ready for issue; and
 - (g) one coin out of every 5,000 bimetallic coins ready for issue.

Provided always that the Deputy Master of the Mint shall ensure that of the coins ready for issue not less than ten coins of each denomination, other than silver Maundy coins, and, in the case of silver Maundy coins, not less than ten such coins, shall be selected at random and set apart, irrespective of the number of such coins that are ready for issue.

(2) The gold coins, silver Maundy coins, other silver coins, gold-plated silver coins, cupro-nickel coins, nickel-brass coins and bimetallic coins so set apart shall be kept separately in such number of packets as may be convenient, and the said packets shall be sealed up at the Mint before being taken to the trial.

Preliminary arrangements for the trial

4.—(1) The Treasury shall, whenever it appears to them to be proper and convenient, but at least once in every year in which coins have been issued from the Mint, by warrant appoint a time and place for holding a trial of the pyx.

(2) Such warrant shall be in the form set out in Schedule 1 to this Order, and shall be delivered to and received by the Queen's Remembrancer.

(3) The trial shall be held at Goldsmiths' Hall in the City of London or, if from any cause it cannot be held there, at such other convenient place in the City of London as the Treasury shall appoint.

(4) Notice in writing of the time and place of the trial shall be given by the Treasury to the proper officers of the Department of Trade and Industry requiring them to produce at the time and place specified the standard trial plates and standard weights and all other things in their possession usually produced at the trial of the pyx.

(5) Notice in writing of the time and place of the trial shall be given by the Treasury to the Deputy Master of the Mint and to any other person whose presence at the trial shall be thought necessary.

(6) The Treasury shall, at a convenient time before the day appointed for the trial, make a precept or request in writing addressed to the Prime Warden and Wardens of the Goldsmiths' Company informing them of the time appointed for the trial and requesting them to summon a jury of not less than six competent freemen of the Goldsmiths' Company or other competent persons to act as jurymen at the trial.

Conduct of the trial

5.—(1) The Queen's Remembrancer shall preside at the trial and shall administer to the jury an oath in the form set out in Schedule 2 to this Order with such omissions and modifications as he thinks fit having regard to the coins set apart by the Mint for the trial.

(2) If at any time the Queen's Remembrancer, from illness or any other good cause, is unable to attend the trial, his place shall be taken by one of the other Masters of the Queen's Bench Division of the Supreme Court, who shall perform all his functions under this Order in his stead.

(3) The Queen's Remembrancer may adjourn the trial from time to time and from place to place.

Checking of number of coins set apart

6. The jury shall ascertain the number of coins in each packet produced to them, and whether it corresponds with the number which the officers of the Mint represent the packet to contain.

Trial of gold coins

7. The jury shall take out from each packet of gold coins of each type as many coins as they think necessary for the purposes of the trial of the gold coins, and—

- (a) shall weigh in bulk the coins taken out so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight;
- (b) after weighing the coins, shall group them by type and melt all the coins weighed into separate ingots for each type of gold coin and assay each ingot, comparing it with the standard trial plate of gold, so as to ascertain whether the metal of each ingot is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard fineness;
- (c) shall weigh in bulk the residue of the coins remaining in the packets of gold coins so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight; and
- (d) after weighing the residue of the coins, shall take out of the residue as many coins as they think fit and weigh and assay them separately.

Trial of silver Maundy coins

8. For the purpose of the trial of the silver Maundy coins, the jury shall take out all the coins from the packets of silver Maundy coins, and—

- (a) shall weigh the coins in bulk so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight; and
- (b) shall assay such number of coins as they think fit, comparing them with the standard trial plate of silver, so as to ascertain whether the metal of the coins is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard fineness.

Trial of silver coins other than Maundy coins

9.—(1) For the purpose of the trial of the silver coins other than Maundy coins, the jury shall ascertain—

- (a) whether or not the coins of each denomination contained in the packets of such silver coins weigh more than one kilogram; and
 - (b) whether or not all the coins contained in the packets weigh more than 500 grams.
- (2) If the coins of any denomination weigh in all more than one kilogram—
- (a) the jury shall take out from each packet of silver coins other than Maundy coins as many coins of that denomination as they think fit, and—
 - (i) shall group the coins so taken out into lots weighing not less than 980 grams nor more than one kilogram each; and

- (ii) shall weigh each lot in bulk so as to ascertain whether the coins in that lot are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight; and
 - (b) the jury shall weigh in bulk the residue of the coins remaining in the packets, being coins of denominations to which this paragraph applies, so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight.
- (3) If the coins of any denomination weigh in all not more than one kilogram, the jury shall take out all the coins of that denomination and weigh them in bulk so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight.
- (4) If the coins contained in the packets of silver coins other than Maundy coins weigh in all more than 500 grams, the jury shall assay such number of coins as they think fit, not weighing less in all than 500 grams.
- (5) If the coins contained in such packets weigh in all not more than 500 grams, the jury shall assay all the coins.
- (6) In assaying the coins, the jury shall compare them with the standard trial plate of silver so as to ascertain whether the metal of the coins is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard fineness.

Trial of gold-plated silver coins

- 10.**—(1) For the purpose of the trial of the gold-plated silver coins, the jury shall follow the procedure for silver coins set out in paragraphs (1) to (5) of article 9 above.
- (2) In assaying the coins, the jury shall—
- (a) compare the metal of the coins other than the gold-plating with the standard trial plate of silver so as to ascertain whether the metal is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard fineness; and
 - (b) ascertain whether the gold-plating is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight.

Trial of cupro-nickel coins

- 11.**—(1) For the purpose of the trial of the cupro-nickel coins, the jury shall ascertain—
- (a) whether or not the coins of each denomination contained in the packets of cupro-nickel coins weigh more than one kilogram; and
 - (b) whether or not all the coins contained in the packets weigh more than 500 grams.
- (2) If the coins of any denomination weigh in all more than one kilogram—
- (a) the jury shall take out from each packet of cupro-nickel coins as many coins of that denomination as they think fit, and—
 - (i) shall group the coins so taken out into lots weighing not less than 980 grams nor more than one kilogram each; and
 - (ii) shall weigh each lot in bulk so as to ascertain whether the coins in that lot are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight; and
 - (b) the jury shall weigh in bulk the residue of the coins remaining in the packets, being coins of denominations to which this paragraph applies, so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight.
- (3) If the coins of any denomination weigh in all not more than one kilogram, the jury shall take out all the coins of that denomination and weigh them in bulk so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight.

(4) If the coins contained in the packets of cupro-nickel coins weigh in all more than 500 grams, the jury shall assay such number of coins as they think fit, not weighing less in all than 500 grams.

(5) If the coins contained in such packets weigh in all not more than 500 grams, the jury shall assay all the coins.

(6) In assaying the coins, the jury shall compare them with the standard trial plates of copper and nickel so as to ascertain whether the metal of the coins is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard composition.

(7) If the number of coins of any denomination contained in the packets of cupro-nickel coins is more than ten, the jury shall measure the diameter of not less than ten, and not more than twenty, coins of that denomination.

(8) If the number of coins of any denomination contained in such packets is not more than ten, the jury shall measure the diameter of all the coins of that denomination.

(9) In measuring the diameter of the coins of any denomination, the jury shall ascertain whether the average diameter of the coins of that denomination is within the permitted variation from the standard diameter.

Trial of nickel-brass coins

12.—(1) For the purpose of the trial of the nickel-brass coins, the jury shall ascertain—

- (a) whether or not the coins of each denomination contained in the packets of nickel-brass coins weigh more than one kilogram; and
- (b) whether or not all the coins contained in the packets weigh more than 500 grams.

(2) If the coins of any denomination weigh in all more than one kilogram—

- (a) the jury shall take out from each packet of nickel-brass coins as many coins of that denomination as they think fit, and—
 - (i) shall group the coins so taken out into lots weighing not less than 980 grams nor more than one kilogram each; and
 - (ii) shall weigh each lot in bulk so as to ascertain whether the coins in that lot are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight; and
- (b) the jury shall weigh in bulk the residue of the coins remaining in the packets, being coins of denominations to which this paragraph applies, so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight.

(3) If the coins of any denomination weigh in all not more than one kilogram, the jury shall take out all the coins of that denomination and weigh them in bulk so as to ascertain whether they are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight.

(4) If the coins contained in the packets of nickel-brass coins weigh in all more than 500 grams, the jury shall assay such number of coins as they think fit, not weighing less in all than 500 grams.

(5) If the coins contained in such packets weigh in all not more than 500 grams, the jury shall assay all the coins.

(6) In assaying the coins, the jury shall compare them with the standard trial plates of copper, nickel and zinc so as to ascertain whether the metal of the coins is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard composition.

(7) If the number of coins of any denomination contained in the packets of nickel-brass coins is more than ten, the jury shall measure the diameter of not less than ten, and not more than twenty, coins of that denomination.

(8) If the number of coins of any denomination contained in such packets is not more than ten, the jury shall measure the diameter of all the coins of that denomination.

(9) In measuring the diameter of the coins of any denomination, the jury shall ascertain whether the average diameter of the coins of that denomination is within the permitted variation from the standard diameter.

Trial of bimetallic coins

13.—(1) For the purposes of the trial of the bimetallic coins, the jury shall follow the procedure for nickel-brass coins set out in paragraphs (1) to (5) and (7) to (9) of article 12 above.

(2) In assaying the coins, the jury shall—

- (a) compare the cupro-nickel sections of the coins with the standard trial plates of copper and nickel so as to ascertain whether the metal of the coins is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard composition; and
- (b) compare the nickel-brass sections of the coins with the standard trial plates of copper, nickel and zinc so as to ascertain whether the metal of the coins is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard composition.

Findings of the jury

14.—(1) The jury shall by their verdict find—

- (a) whether the metal of the ingot for each type of gold coin is within the permitted variation from the standard fineness;
- (b) whether each group of gold coins weighed in bulk is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight;
- (c) whether each of the gold coins separately weighed and assayed is within the permitted variations from the standard weight and fineness;
- (d) whether the silver Maundy coins weighed and the silver Maundy coins assayed are on the whole respectively within the permitted variations from the standard weight and fineness;
- (e) whether each group of silver coins other than Maundy coins which has been weighed in bulk is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight;
- (f) whether such of the silver coins other than Maundy coins as have been assayed are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard fineness;
- (g) whether each group of gold-plated silver coins which has been weighed in bulk is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight;
- (h) whether such of the gold-plated silver coins as have been assayed are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard fineness and, in relation to the gold-plating, within the permitted variation from the standard weight;
- (i) whether each group of cupro-nickel coins weighed in bulk is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight;
- (j) whether the cupro-nickel coins assayed are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard composition;
- (k) whether the average diameter of the cupro-nickel coins measured is within the permitted variation from the standard diameter;
- (l) whether each group of nickel-brass coins weighed in bulk is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight;
- (m) whether the nickel-brass coins assayed are on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard composition;

- (n) whether the average diameter of the nickel-brass coins measured is within the permitted variation from the standard diameter;
 - (o) whether each group of bimetallic coins weighed in bulk is on the whole within the permitted variation from the standard weight;
 - (p) whether the bimetallic coins assayed are on the whole within the permitted variations from the standard compositions in relation to their inner and outer sections; and
 - (q) whether the average diameter of the bimetallic coins measured is within the permitted variation from the standard diameter.
- (2) If the jury find that in any case there is any variation from the standard weight, fineness, composition or diameter, they shall specify in their verdict the amount of the variation.

Verdict

15.—(1) The verdict of the jury shall be in writing and signed by each of the jurymen and shall be handed to the Queen’s Remembrancer, who shall authenticate it with his signature, deposit it with the records of his office and deliver a copy of it to the Treasury. The Queen’s Remembrancer shall direct that the verdict, or those parts of the verdict which he considers appropriate, shall be read aloud in his presence.

(2) The Treasury shall deliver one copy of the verdict to the proper officers of the Department of Trade and Industry and another copy to the Deputy Master of the Mint and shall cause the verdict to be published in the London Gazette.

Revocation

16. The Orders specified in Schedule 3 to this Order are hereby revoked.

N H Nicholls
Clerk of the Privy Council

SCHEDULE 1

Article 4(2)

FORM OF WARRANT APPOINTING TIME AND PLACE OF TRIAL

We, the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, hereby appoint that, in accordance with section 8 of the Coinage Act 1971, a trial of the pyx shall take place on at o'clock in the noon at [Goldsmiths' Hall] in the City of London, and let a jury be summoned for the said trial, and let all proper parties have notice accordingly.

Two of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury

[Date]

SCHEDULE 2

Article 5(1)

FORM OF OATH TO BE ADMINISTERED TO THE JURY

You shall well and truly, after your knowledge and discretion, make the assays of these moneys of gold, silver, gold-plated silver, cupro-nickel, nickel-brass and bimetel, and truly report if the said moneys be in weight and fineness or composition according to the standard weights for weighing and testing the coins of the realm, and the standard trial plates of gold, silver, copper, nickel and zinc in the custody of the Secretary of State and used for determining the justness of the gold, silver, gold-plated silver, cupro-nickel, nickel-brass, and bimetallic coinage of the realm, and be in conformity with the Coinage Act 1971 or any proclamation in force in pursuance of that Act; and if the diameter of such of these coins as are of cupro-nickel, nickel-brass and bimetel be in conformity with that Act or any such proclamation as aforesaid; so help you God.

SCHEDULE 3

Article 16

REVOCATIONS

<i>Orders revoked</i>	<i>References</i>
The Trial of the Pyx Order 1975	S.I. 1975/2192
The Trial of the Pyx (Amendment) Order 1978	S.I. 1978/185
The Trial of the Pyx (Amendment) Order 1980	S.I. 1980/1967
The Trial of the Pyx (Amendment) Order 1983	S.I. 1983/612
The Trial of the Pyx (Amendment) Order 1990	S.I. 1990/1201
The Trial of the Pyx (Amendment) Order 1998	S.I. 1998/264

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order consolidates with minor amendments the Trial of the Pyx Order 1975 and five subsequent amendment orders. It contains provisions relating to the proceedings and conduct of the trial of the pyx. The trial is held annually to ascertain that coins issued from the Mint have been coined in accordance with statutory specifications. Apart from typographical amendments, the main changes are:

- (a) the former reference to a denomination of ten pence or less in respect of cupro-nickel coins has been changed, in article 3(1)(e)(i), to a denomination of more than ten pence, to correct an error;
- (b) the former reference to the Department of Prices and Consumer Protection has been updated, in articles 4(4) and 15(2), to refer to the proper officers of the Department of Trade and Industry; and
- (c) the description of types of “moneys” referred to in the form of oath set out in Schedule 2 has been amended to correspond with the description of types of coins referred to in the oath.