

A Brief History of Johnson Matthey



Percival Norton Johnson FRS



George Matthey FRS

PERCIVAL NORTON JOHNSON FOUNDED HIS GOLD ASSAYING BUSINESS ON 1ST JANUARY 1817.

He also married on the same day! In 1822 he moved his business to number 79 Hatton Garden, the centre of London's jewellery district. Having been apprenticed to Johnson in 1838, George Matthey became a partner in the business in 1851 which was renamed Johnson & Matthey. Johnson & Matthey had established a reputation for the accuracy of its assays and the honesty and integrity with which it conducted business and in 1852 the company was appointed as official assayers and refiners to the Bank of England.

Following Percival Norton Johnson's retirement in 1860 George Matthey was joined in partnership by John Scudamore Sellon, the nephew of Johnson's wife Lydia, however the Johnson name was maintained and the business became Johnson Matthey & Co. George Matthey, John Scudamore Sellon and Edward Matthey, George's younger brother, ran the company throughout the remaining four decades of the 19th century and indeed up to the time of the First World War. Over this time the business grew as a world leading refiner and manufacturer of precious metal products and chemicals. Johnson Matthey carried out pioneering work in the refining and manufacturing of platinum and the other platinum group metals and played a key role in the development of their industrial applications. George Matthey was created a Chevalier in the Legion d'Honneur by the French government for his work in the field of platinum fabrications.

Johnson Matthey became a limited company in 1891 and its ordinary shares were first listed on the London Stock Exchange in 1942.

While Johnson Matthey now has its headquarters in Royston, Hertfordshire, its City Office and Registered Office is at 40-42 Hatton Garden opposite the site where Percival Norton Johnson established the business in 1822 and where Johnson Matthey continued to refine and manufacture precious metal products until the late 1950s.

Johnson and Matthey's legacy lives on in today's company: a world leader in platinum group metals which have exceptional catalytic properties. Our catalysts play a central role in reducing harmful emissions and are at the heart of new technologies to support the transition to a low carbon world.