

FOR RELEASE: Exhibition - Nelson's Chelengk and Silver at Goldsmiths' Hall



*Vice-Admiral Horatio, Viscount Nelson's Chelengk replica.
By Philip Denyer, 2017*

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Admiral Lord Nelson's iconic Chelengk jewel will be on display at Goldsmiths' Hall 12–22 March (Monday – Thursday) alongside an exhibition of Nelson's magnificent Battle of the Nile service of silver, many pieces of which are reunited for the first time since Nelson's death in 1805. The Goldsmiths' Company is pleased to present a newly created replica of one of the UK's most iconic jewels, Nelson's Chelengk. This exclusive exhibition will be open for two weeks before the Chelengk returns to its home at the Royal Navy Museum in Portsmouth.

Recreated 66 years after the original was stolen from the National Maritime Museum, Nelson's Chelengk is a plume of more than 300 diamonds with a unique rotating central feature surrounded by exquisite enamelled flowers.

Presented to Nelson by Sultan Selim III of Turkey, the gift was in recognition of Nelson's daring 1798 defeat of the French fleet off the coast of Egypt which was still under control of the vast Ottoman Empire. At the time, a 'chelengk' was a type of military medal highly prized across the Ottoman world. As the first such decoration ever presented by the sultan to a non-Muslim, Nelson's Chelengk was hugely significant.

Crowned by 13 diamond sprigs representing the number of ships sunk by Nelson during the historic battle, the Chelengk was one of Nelson's most cherished possessions which he wore prominently displayed on his bicorne hat like a traditional turban ornament. The Chelengk was later included in

NOTES TO EDITORS

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Nelson's coat of arms.

The replica of the Chelengk has been created by master goldsmith Philip Denyer at his Soho workshop in London using period rediscovered drawings of Nelson's original jewel. Denyer also used antique stones cut during the same period as the Chelengk, and employed traditional techniques eschewing more modern technologies that would typically be relied upon by many of today's working goldsmiths. The iconic jewel was recreated faithfully as possible and the results are stunning.



In addition to the Chelengk, the exhibition includes a selection of Nelson's silver 'Nile Service' presented by Lloyds of London in 1801, designed and made by prominent silversmith Paul Storr who incorporated representations of the Chelengk into the design of many of the pieces. This exhibition re-unites over twenty pieces from the service for the first time since the service was split up following the death of Nelson in 1805, alongside an original estimate and bill of sale for the Nile Service. The Chelengk is displayed on a replica of Nelson's bicorne hat made to his personal specifications in the archives of Lock & Co. of St James's.



After being passed down through generations, the original (but modified) Chelengk was purchased for the nation by the heiress Lady Barclay and ultimately displayed at the National Maritime Museum before it was stolen, broken down and sold off in pieces never to be seen again.



The historian Martyn Downer, whose new book *Nelson's Lost Jewel* exposes the remarkable history of the Chelengk, describes it as "one of the most historic, bizarre and instantly recognisable jewels in British history" – so intimately connected with Nelson's image that it was even included on Nelson's statue atop the towering column in Trafalgar Square.



The exhibition continues at Goldsmiths' Hall

Monday 12 – Thursday 22 March.

Monday - Thursday

10am - 4pm

(12 and 13 March: early closure at 2pm)

ADMISSION FREE

The Goldsmiths' Company

The Goldsmiths' Company, one of the major City Livery Companies, received its first Royal Charter in 1327. Today the purpose of the Goldsmiths' Company is to contribute to British national life by supporting its related crafts, industry and trade and through wider charitable and educational activity.

The Company's Assay Office has been responsible for testing the quality of precious metals for over 700 years. 2012 saw the opening of the Goldsmiths' Centre in Clerkenwell, a state-of-the-art facility comprised of workshops, training and exhibition space, and conference facilities.

The Company supports over 300 charitable causes and educational projects through its official Charity. The Goldsmiths' Company's collection of silver is one of the largest of its kind in the UK, with pieces dating from 1350 to present day. The Company is the principal patron of UK contemporary jewellers and silversmiths, continuing to play an important role in support of the craft by funding apprenticeships, assisting with the technical training of aspiring designer-makers, and commissioning new work.

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