

MINTING GOLD SOVEREIGNS:

In this case, all that glitters is gold - 22 carat gold, being cast at the Royal Mint into real sovereigns. At thirteen hundred degrees Centigrade, it pours like tea - but it soon sets into solid bars, which are assayed for correct composition before being stamped with the mint's mark.

Before your mouth starts watering, we'd better tell you that this beautiful gold will never find its way into your pocket - nor anybody' else's. The Mint is striking a million pounds' worth of these sovereigns, but they're not going into circulation. They'll all to be put away as part of the nation's gold reserve.

You may ask - why bother to make them at all? The answer is - just for practice. Coining gold is a special technique, and as the old craftsmen retire, the new boys have to learn - so they run off a million every now and then, just to keep their hand in!