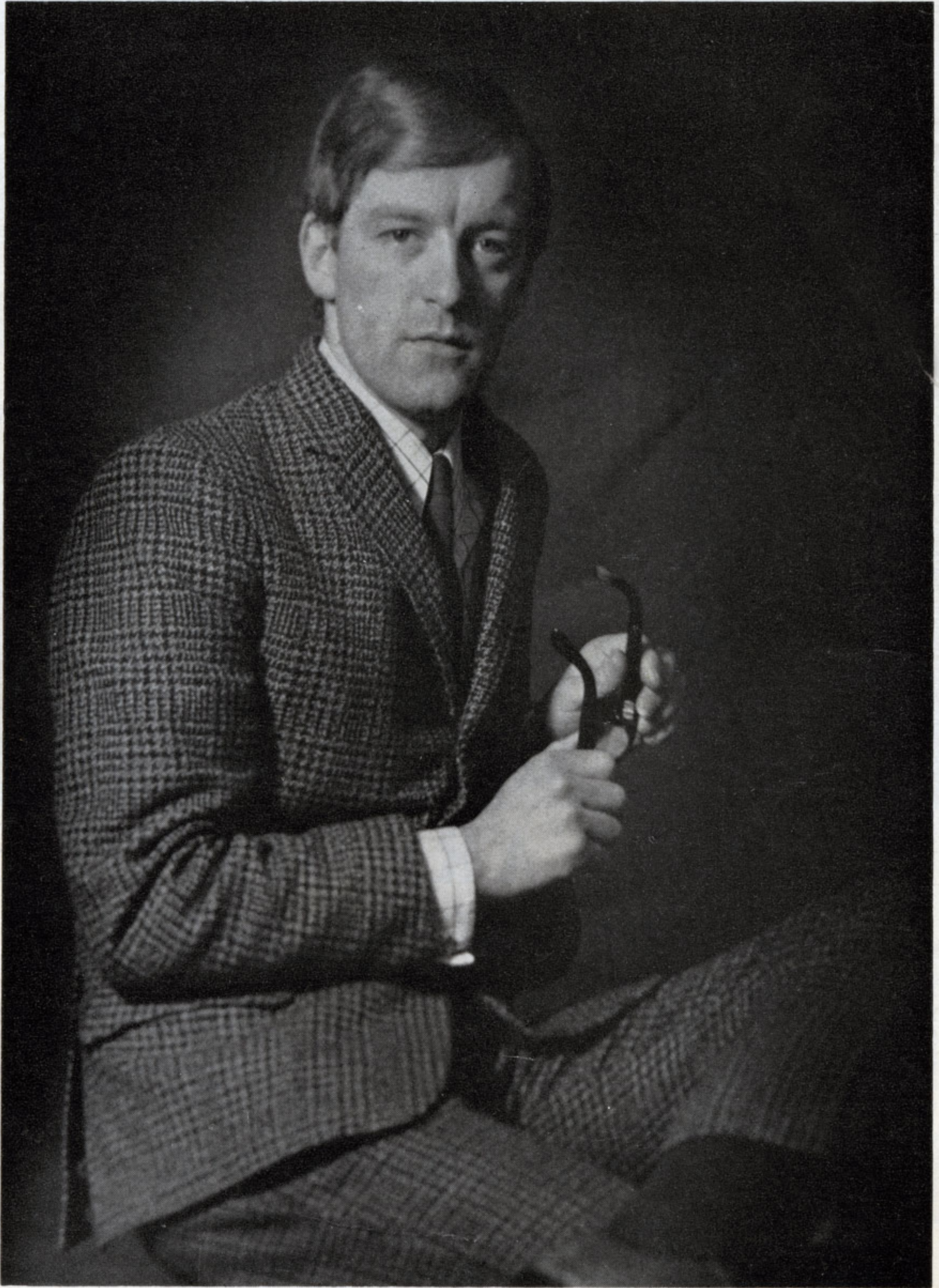


WATFORD'S MR. GOLDFINGER— HE TURNED BRASS INTO GOLD!



Jewellery designer Frank Lambert. Photo by T. H. Greville.

BY RONALD GRIBBLE

WITH
CLIFFORD FELTHAM



Francis Lambert with some of his jewellery designs in his Watford workshop.

Mini-age jewellery started in bedroom

SINCE he started making pieces of jewellery in the bedroom of his West Watford home Francis Lambert has seen his fortunes soar towards £100,000 a year turnover.

Sixteen men work for him at New Hertford House, St Albans Road, Watford. They make a range of watch bracelets, cuff links, wedding rings, brooches, designed for the "mini age."

Francis Lambert is only 25 and probably owes his success to his flair for design as well as his ingenuity as a businessman. He has formed a three-pronged partnership with Roy Goldsmith, 38, who handles exports, and Peter Mitchell, 26, works manager.

Lambert looks more like a keen apprentice than the boss. He talks with his feet on the secretary's desk. He wears a roll-neck jumper, dirty dust coat, and corduroy trousers, and says his ambition is still to be rich.

But he gets a kick out of recalling the time his father-in-law gave him £200 to get started. He set up a workshop in his bedroom and in a month the

money had gone. But the business was already ticking.

Now exports are 16 per cent of total turnover.

"Selling is not really so hard with stuff like this because it is of such a tremendously high quality," says Roy Goldsmith. The designs are simple, sometimes complex, but always appealing.

"I design most of them when I get home at night. Or I might come back here and finish some off," says Lambert.

He left Victoria Secondary School for Boys in Tolpits Lane, Watford, and became an apprentice in the jewellery trade and then realised he had a talent for design. So he took the plunge into business.

Between two and four hundred watch bracelets are made in a week. London watch houses fit the works and sell them.

The trading year ends in April and from May until several weeks ago last year's turnover of £42,000 had been doubled.

FRANK TAKES PRIDE IN HIS JEWELS

PLATINUM, diamonds and gold intricately woven and moulded into brooches cigarette cases, minute watches and jewel cases; this is the "Arabian Nights" world of 19-years-old Frank Lambert, of Chester-road, Watford.

For Frank is the chief apprentice in a firm of Watford jewellers who are wholesale suppliers to renowned firms like Cartiers, Aspreys and Garrards.

Every article is hand-made whether it be a tiny gold "bauble" containing a miniature watch, or a £3,000 evening bag of pure woven gold, which is fitted with a cigarette case, powder compact and lipstick container in the same metal.

Frank, who comes from a family of builders and decorators, first joined the firm as an apprentice at the age of 15.

Originally he planned to be a

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draughtsman with Wemco's, but he decided to join the jewellery firm instead because the wages were good.

PRIDE

But it is not only the money that attracts Frank. It is the sense of pride he has in a job that allows him some individual achievement, for when he is presented with a design to work from it is left to him to interpret it in his own manner. Then he has to be not only a good craftsman, but something of an artist as well.

"You also need a lot of patience," Frank told me.

It may take as long as two or three weeks to complete one article, and as every part is completed by hand, down to the tiniest stone setting, it can be a very laborious and intricate task. And when one is working with precious metals one cannot afford to make mistakes."

Still, Frank would not now exchange his work for a better-paid one in industry, for in his work as a diamond-mounter he has a chance to be creative and appreciate beautiful things.

Which is not so common in an age of increasing mass production.



Nineteen-years-old Frank Lambert is the Chief Apprentice in a local firm who supply fabulous articles of jewellery to world renowned businesses, like "Asprey's" and "Cartier's." The photo shows Frank repairing a solid gold-woven evening bag.



Pretty 21-year-old Pat Tavener, of Embleton Road, South Oxhey, has a spare-time job some girls would give their right arm for. She models jewellery and is pictured by Greville (above) wearing £1,375 worth of 9 carat gold wedding rings, necklaces and bracelets.

He turned brass into £'s

A JEWEL designer who got his first orders by canvassing dealers with brass samples, flies off to New York tomorrow (Saturday), the youngest company director to exhibit at the Jewellery Trade Centre.

He is 24-year-old Mr. Frank Lambert, a married man, of Clifton Road, Watford, one of three directors of Frank Lambert and Partners, the Watford jewellery manufacturers.

The story of the "Mr. Gold-finger" who turned brass to gold began two years ago in Frank's bedroom, which he used as a workshop.

After a full day's work, Frank would come home in the evening and get down to working on his jewellery designs. He had little money to start with and could not afford to buy gold—so he worked in brass.

Frank found that the finished articles looked just as convincing as the real thing, so, instead of waiting until he could save up enough money to make up the samples in gold, he went canvassing for orders. With his first £200 capital, Frank launched the firm. Today, he has two working partners and a staff of 11.

Frank's partners are Roy Goldsmith (37), sales director, of Arundel Drive, Harrow, and Peter Mitchell (25), administration, a former Watford Grammar School pupil, of Stratford Road, Watford. Like Frank, both men are married—and bursting with ideas.

Break-through

The company is already producing everything from cuff-links to necklaces, and exports 15 per cent of its output to Geneva, the United States,

Ceylon, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. In the last 18 months it has made a turnover of £35,000 and anticipates trebling that amount in 1967.

Says Frank: "In 10 years' time I hope to be a millionaire."

Frank hopes that his trip to America will be the start of a big international break-through. He is going at the invitation of the British Jewellery Trade Centre, backed by the Board of Trade, and will be one of 84 British jewellers at the exhibition.

In the short time it has been going, the firm has already become internationally famous for the "unique" design of its jewellery. One giant Swiss watch firm has just placed contracts for £20,000 worth of gold watch bracelets a year.

'Star' buyers

Stars in the entertainment world go for the originality, too, and

only last week British actor Michael Caine purchased a pair of Frank's hand-finished cuff-links from a Bond Street shop.

The technique that the firm uses to put Frank's designs from paper into practice is "top secret," but the range of jewellery it produces is not confined to the high price bracket.

Says sales director Roy Goldsmith: "We have brought something new into the jewellery trade. Once we get our ideas into mass production, Watford, with its other big jewellery firms, will be another Hatton Garden."

Looking ahead

Frank and his partners are already looking ahead and plan to exhibit at the Milan Trade Fair in April this year. They also contemplate expanding their present floor space and purchasing new machines to meet the demand.



Mr. Frank Lambert tries out a bracelet on secretary June Anne Ledon. Graphic Photo 75208