

Carol Edwards of Coll Pottery and Horizon China thimbles

Staying with Scottish thimbles in this contemplative month of September 2022, I would like to introduce these two thimble makers: both from the Isle of Lewis in the outer Hebrides. By serendipity my paternal grandfather was born on Lewis in the 1860s, so there is double interest for me: thimbles and the Hebrides.

Their output is smaller than that of the other Scottish thimble makers.

For other Scottish thimble topics see:

Highland China thimbles
Innes Mitchell pyrographed wooden thimbles (Scotland)
Nenthorn Studios thimbles (Scotland) 1985-1986
Scottish wooden thimbles

Carol Edwards thimbles

Edwards' thimbles were made on the Isle of Lewis, in the outer Hebrides in northern Scotland. The pottery studio was situated at Coll.



Coll Pottery, Back, Lewis

Their thimbles were offered for sale in The Thimble Guild's catalogues from December 1988 and from then until the late 1990s alternating between the use of the maker's name of Carol Edwards or Coll Pottery. You are fortunate indeed if your thimble includes the maker's signature as they seem to appear in only about a quarter of the Carol's thimbles.

I have never encountered any thimbles with the mark of Coll Pottery or the other name associated with these thimbles: Hebridean.



CEE mark for Carol Edwards

Carol Edwards of Coll Pottery thimbles have swirling Hebridean scenes. Was her brand name Coll Pottery or Hebridean Pottery – both of which existed during the period that Edwards produced thimbles? Neither of those names appear on or in her thimbles. More questions than answers.

The landscapes of Lewis inspired the swirling scenes of this remote lonely isle for Carol's thimbles – the seas, with sea mists; the mountains, rocks and green swathes of the moors; the skies, inspiring an effect for Carol of the natural world all around her – creating thimbles in earth colours of blue, orange, pink, brown, green and yellow. The thimbles' glossy finish enhances their colour.

The different clays marl together creating the mood of the landscape around the thimble. The insides are of a white clay colour. The shape is a straight-sided thimble.

Being made by hand in the way they are created, no two thimbles are the same.

The indents are distinctive: grouped in a pattern of nineteen indents.



apex with 19 indentations with a flattish apex

Maybe your Carol Edwards thimbles have a Scottish placename lettered on one side of the thimble?
These are listed at the end of Edwards' thimbles.

From 2008 in The Thimble Guild catalogues there seems to be a different artist or potter creating Coll Pottery thimbles – the colours are not layered or swirled: created rather in one matt colour.
Named as made by Broad Bay Ceramics – these are listed after the Edwards thimbles.

I have grouped the Edwards thimbles by the colour of the apex: colour choice is quite subjective.



various blue apexes



blue - dark



blue - medium



blue - pale



various brown apexes



brown - dark



brown – medium



brown – pale



various green apexes



green – dark



green – medium



green – pale



lilac - dark



lilac - pale



mauve



ochre



orange



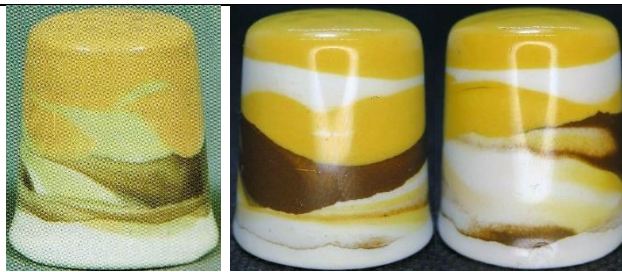
pink - dark



pink - pale



purple



yellow

Carol Edwards thimbles with Scottish placenames

There are two scripts – block capitals and cursive



COLL



STORNOWAY



Tyndrum



Ullapool



Drumbeg

Other Coll Pottery products



1979 figurine

Hebridean Pottery products

To cloud the issue, there are many products other than thimbles with a Hebridean Pottery mark and 'Fear an eich Isle of Lewis' mark.

The potters are Bill and his wife and these products were produced before 1997.
The marled patterning is very similar to Carol's work.

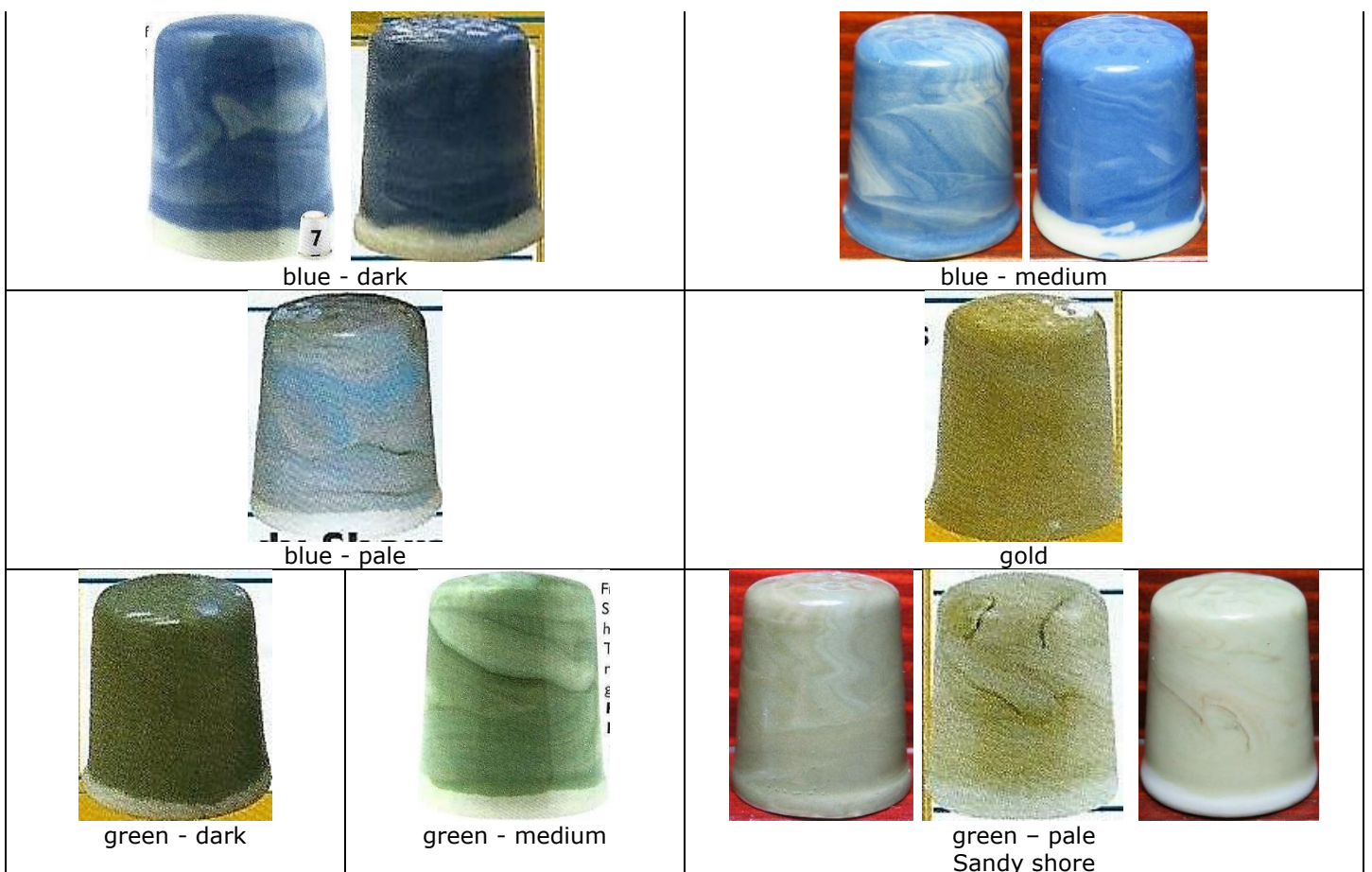


Broad Bay Ceramics

Still based on the Isle of Lewis the pottery in Coll, Broad Bay Ceramics produced these new thimbles with a finish that is reminiscent of Edwards' thimbles.

The thimbles have the same shape, tho the colours are of a mottled monochrome, still with Hebridean hues. There is no presence of white as featured in the Edwards thimbles' swirling colours.

These thimbles were listed in The Thimble Guild's 2008 catalogues. According to TTG the pottery closed by 2010.





lilac



mocha



pink - dark



pink - pale



sand
Sandy shore



yellow



Beauty of the Isles

Horizon China thimbles

including some Touchstone Pottery

These thimbles are handmade of an unglazed matt or biscuit porcelain. The Celtic symbol or motif is in monochrome brown or black on a slightly speckled cream ground and one blue motif.

The Celtic art is drawn from the Irish finely illuminated manuscripts Book of Durrow, the Book of Kells and Lindisfarne gospels.

I notice that the indentations on the apex are pronounced and set in a slightly recessed apex. They were first offered for sale in The Thimble Guild catalogues in April 1990. I have found **18** thimbles with their different designs of Celtic art.

Horizon China thimbles are straight-sided giving them a squat shape

It came as a shock when browsing thru my collection in 2025 to find that some of these thimbles were NOT made by Horizon.

They are made in Antigonish, Nova Scotia by Touchstone Pottery. See below, where I have moved them for safekeeping but still recorded here.





Touchstone Pottery thimbles - Canada

The Celtic designs that were previously thought to be made by Horizon Pottery, where the design is in the shape of a square. They are made by Don Davenport and Jim Murray of Touchstone Pottery.

The same type of white pottery is used by both potteries – neither have any maker's marks tho the Touchstone thimbles do have an accompanying blurb. In names each of the designs. Additionally the Canadian thimbles have a pronounced rim. The images are more detailed,



similar to one of Horizon Pottery's designs

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This listing of Carol Edwards of Coll Pottery and Horizon China thimbles does not purport to be complete or accurate
in all aspects.

Rather it invites comment and contribution to add to our knowledge. My thanks to the contributors.

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