

# HF thimble makers: sterling silver thimbles made by Henry Foskett – Henry Fidkin – Henry Fowler

When I began collecting thimbles in 1984, there were only thimble reference books as a resource for all thimble queries. We joined as many clubs and societies to access their newsletters or magazines, to keep abreast of the latest thimble information.

Since the advent of all things electronic, current thimble collectors have infinite resources to find any thimble information they require.

This topic would have been more useful in the 1980s when thimble collectors confused the three British sterling silver thimble makers with the identical maker's HF initials – almost using the names interchangeably. Errors still creep in through ignorance when offering any of these HF thimbles for second hand sale.

Many of these thimble designs will be familiar to you from sterling silver thimbles from this era, but that is how the industry worked. Look especially at thimbles with blackberries.

None of these thimble silversmiths were prolific. They made their own thimbles, which wasn't always the case in those late Victorian-early 20<sup>th</sup> century times. Three Henry's and here are their thimbles: please share photos of yours to include.

## Henry Foskett – London (1864-1886)

Henry Foskett was born in Iver, Buckinghamshire and baptised in April 1812. He was the son of Samuel and Mary Foskett. He married Eliza Ellen and lived at 32 Great Sutton Street, Clerkenwell in London 1871 with his wife and nephew, Samuel. He still lived there in 1881 and died in December 1885.

In 1862 Henry began working with existing thimble makers (Thomas Hastings) who had been thimble makers since the early 1820s. They were based at 31 Great Sutton Street in Clerkenwell, London.

Henry Foskett registered his mark with the London Assay Office on 2 April 1864, which lapsed in 1886, after his death. His entry listed him as "small worker".

Henry's maker's mark is H F within a rectangle. This mark is not currently listed at the London Assay Office.

[Silver Makers Marks](#)



HENRY FOSKETT

Samuel Foskett Henry's nephew, became a thimble maker, following in his uncle's footsteps.

Most of Henry Foskett's thimbles recorded here are hallmarked. This is very rare as his thimbles were made during the period where thimbles in Britain did not have to be hallmarked (1884).

None of his thimbles have size marks, as these were only found on thimbles from the 1890s.



patterned band  
blank shield cartouche



1875  
Sovereign's Head (duty mark)  
engraved *Emily Church* in long  
narrow cartouche



1879  
Sovereign's Head (duty mark)



1881  
taller Victorian shape with band with zig-zag  
patterning



1882  
taller Victorian shape with wide band with light  
diamond pattern



1882  
this band of patterned roses became of of the signature designs for Samuel Foskett (1893-)  
patterned rim  
large blank cartouche with well-defined wavy edges

## Henry Fidkin – Birmingham (1918-1921)

Henry Fidkin mark's was registered at the Birmingham Assay Office in January 1919. He was registered as a thimble maker. His workshop was located at 51 Hockley Hill in Birmingham.

Not many of his thimbles are recorded and they have hallmarks between 1918-1921. His thimbles have a distinctive way of lettering his thimble sizes – to the right of the hallmarks – in a distinctive circle. Those sighted are size 3-9 with the smaller the size number the bigger the diameter.



his thimbles also bear bands of enamelling.

Fidkin's maker's mark is within a long diamond-shaped lozenge.



HENRY FIDKIN

As a silversmith, Fidfin also made thimbles for other sponsors, bearing the same sizing

 <p style="text-align: center;">1918 size 6 daisies</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1918 size 6 daisies</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1918 size 8 vertical panels of blackberries with daisies</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">1918 size 4 band of blackberries above wide plain band daisies top</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1918 size 6 daisies apex – diamond top half – daisies band</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1918 size 5 vertical bands of blackberries and leaves</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">1918 size 6 "PETER PAN REG<sup>D</sup>" vertical alternating panels of blackberries and diamond patterning</p>		 <p style="text-align: center;">1919 size 6 double band of diamond patterning</p>



1919/1920 size 5, 6  
daisies



1919 size 5  
two rows of circles



1919/1921 size 5, 9, 4  
diamond shapes within diamond  
diamond pattern top half



1919 size 6  
band of blue enamelling



1919 size 7  
blackberry flowers



1919 size 8  
band of moons and stars with  
diamond patterning above



1920 size 5  
blackberries all over



1920 size 6  
band of green enamelling



1920 size 4  
vertical alternating panels of blackberries  
and diamond patterning



1920  
two bands of daisies  
is the stone apex original?



1921  
band of blackberries above wide  
plain band



1921 size 6  
daisies on top half  
single band of daisies on  
stippling



**CU 1918 size 6**  
**"PETER PAN REGD"**



**CU 1918**  
**"PETER PAN REGD"**



**CU 1918 size 6**  
**"PETER PAN REGD"**

Holmes in his *Thimble Notes and Queries* winter 1991: "Usher was a silversmith in Leicester and coincidentally there was an underwear manufacturer in Leicester using the Peter Pan trade name, owned by R Rowley & Son."



**1919 size 6**  
**SJL&Co**



**1919 size 6**  
**WJM&Co**



**1919 size 6**  
**WJM&Co**



**1919 size 3**  
**WJM&Co**



**1920 size 3**  
**WJM&Co**

made by Henry Fidkin for other sponsors

## Henry Fowler Birmingham (1896-1914)

Fowler registered his maker's mark in Birmingham in March 1896. The last assayed thimble recorded for this HF is 1914.

His mark consist of two separated H and F marks. I haven't seen any size marks on Fowler thimbles.



HENRY FOWLER

On 7 April 1897 Fowler registered a thimble design: R<sup>D</sup>297020.



This RD number has been seen on other thimbles in this era: for George Goodman (GG)(1880-1916)  
George Snook & Co (GS)(1897-1898, 1907) – Alfred Constantine & Floyd (C<sup>E</sup>&F<sup>D</sup>)(1899)  
William James Holmes (WJH)(1900).

What design was Fowler registering? I can find no record of this. Looking at the thimbles that bear this registered number (RD), they have very deeply struck daisies patterns – allowing a firmer grip for the person using the thimble to sew? From when he registered the new design most of Fowler's thimbles are very strongly delineated.

 1896	 1896 blackberries at top – Greek key band with dotted rim	
 1896 daisies	 1898	 1898 narrow band of daisies diamond pattern top
 1898 band of acanthus large blank cartouche	 1898 R <sup>D</sup> 297020 strong daisies with daisies over striations band	 1898/1904 wide band of daisies design



1899  
band with fancy daisies design  
monogram in cartouche



1899  
blackberries and leaves with  
berries on apex



1899  
RD297020  
blackberries and leaves with  
berries on apex



1899  
strong diamond pattern



1899/1900  
diamond pattern with band of  
daisies



1900  
band of wrigglework



1900  
band of wrigglework  
strong diamond pattern top



1900/1904/1905  
blackberries all over



1901  
R<sup>D</sup>297020  
band of diamond pattern  
strong daisies top



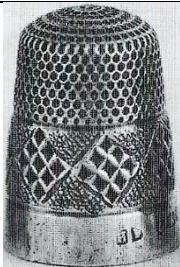
1901  
R<sup>D</sup>297020  
band of acanthus  
large blank cartouche



1901  
band of  
wrigglework



1901/1904  
blackberries with leaves, berries on apex



1902/1904/1906  
diamond shapes within diamond  
band



1902  
diamond shapes within diamond  
band  
diamond pattern top half



1902  
diamond pattern with dotted row  
between



1903  
daisies with deep centres



1903  
band of daisies, circles row diamond pattern top



1903  
composite patterning with most unusual row of 'swirling' chased daisies – different from traditional daisies on apex



1903  
clumps of blackberries with leaves, berries on apex



1904/1907/1909  
all over 'cushion' pattern



1904  
acanthus band



1904/1905  
band of diamond pattern strong daisies top



1905  
vertical alternating panels of daisies and diamond pattern



1905  
blackberries with leaves, berries on apex



1905  
band of daisies over stippled patterning above daisies



1905  
diamond shapes within diamond



1906/1907  
diamond pattern with dots





1907  
rows of blackberries



1914  
blackberries and leaves



date letter illegible as  
stamped in edge of blank  
cartouche  
band of beaten patterning



1899  
**C<sup>E</sup>F<sup>D</sup>** size 8  
RD297020



1904  
**GG** size 4  
RD297020



1897/1898  
**GS**  
RD297020



1900  
**WJH**  
RD297020

made by Henry Fowler for other sponsors

## References

- Edwin Holmes *Thimble Notes & Queries*. 1991  
 Magdalena and William Isbister *One thimble – five incarnations*. TCI Bulletin fall 2017  
 Norma Spicer & Diane Pelham Burn *British registered design thimbles*. 2003

## Contributors

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This listing of HF thimble makers 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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