

# Thimblefuls

I have done a thorough search of all my thimble books and the internet and I was surprised to find how little information there is on thimblefuls. There are two photos in one of McConnel's thimbles books, which confirm my findings that the Thimble Society of London has rarely had any of these for sale. There are no examples in the book on Settmacher in Austria, but there is record of a German advertising thimbleful, made by Gabler. Where there are brief mentions in the literature, I have included the photos. Johnson lists them under 'Novelties and Oddities'. The exception to scant information is Holmes who has an entire chapter entitled 'Just a Thimbleful', which lends credence to collecting them. Gausson maintains that thimblefuls are collected with sewing accessories because of their thimble shape.

As early as 1617 the thimbleful was accepted as an indication of measure. From then on there is a clear association of thimble shapes and drinking measures. The internet is peppered with references to 'Just a Thimbleful' but rather as a figure of speech, indicating a small amount.

Spirit or tot measures have been made in the shape of thimbles since Victorian times as popular novelties. They are known by a variety of names: shot glasses, jiggers, stirrup cups and thimble cups. They replicate thimbles, down to the indentations and when placed with the open side up, the height measures, on average, 50mm. The base should be flat or able to stand on its own without wobbling. Some have indented bases, others are smooth. The traditional measure for a spirit measure is one ounce (1oz). Some have this measurement lettered on the base of the thimbleful. Thimblefuls can have a metal or enamelled badge applied for various events, tourist attractions or towns. Some of the Scottish thimblefuls are thistle-shaped; others are stemmed like a traditional goblet-shape (many of these are not marked as thimblefuls).



AMERICAN JIGGERS

Thimblefuls are made of glass, brass, aluminium, china or porcelain, copper, chromium or chromed metal, nickel silver, silver-plate, silver, pewter, plastic, wood and gold. In fact, they "come in any material you can pour drinks out of".

The lettering varies considerably; from **Thimble Full** (usually over two lines) - **Thimbleful - Just a Thimbleful - Just a Thimble Full** (most common form) - **Only a Thimbleful** or **Only a Thimble Full** (this appears to be American terminology) - **A Stitch in Time Saves Nine** - the four Scottish forms **A Wee Drappie - For Auld Lang Syne - A Wee Deoch and Doris - A Wee Deoch and Dorius** - and a newly discovered terms of **Just a Swallow** - all lettered across the top of the thimble when the thimbles are placed on the apex, with the open end upwards. The German lettering is **Nur ein Fingerhut Voll**. In my opinion, the lettering is what makes a thimbleful. Without it, does it just become a spirit measure or jigger? and therefore outside the scope of this thimble topic. I have tried not to include any thimblefuls in shape when there is no lettering to indicate them as such.

Some would have been handmade. The rims are not commonly rolled, but examples exist with rolled rims. Most have the indentations going under across the base, a few are smooth.

In 1970, Cartier initiated a 'Gold Thimble' award for outstanding fashion designers. It is about 76mm tall and made of silver gilt.

Johnson has a good selection of thimblefuls, showing the variety available, in both material, height and style.

I have not included large-sized china thimbles that usually stand on their open side, with no lettering of 'Thimblefuls'. The exception is the crested china thimbles that Edwin Holmes included in his chapter on Thimblefuls.

It is interesting to find that some thimblefuls have their own thimble cases. They would be particularly useful for the fragile glass thimblefuls. It was rare to find one with a case but they are becoming available now thru ebay. The cases are made of cardboard or leather. The shapes vary from cylindrical boxes or those that are fitted to the thimble shape and that open sideways. I have included photos of the thimbleful containers where possible.



**L-R:** PEWTER WITH A THICK ROLLED-BACK RIM; SILVER-PLATED; NICKEL WITH ENAMELLED SOUVENIR PLAQUE; GREEN GLASS; PEWTER; ANOTHER SOUVENIR; SILVER-PLATED; BLACKBERRY AND CREAM SLAG GLASS





## Metal thimblefuls

The largest group of thimblefuls is those made of metal. It is difficult to accurately describe the metals, and they are included in this section if they are not made of silver or pewter.

**Charles Iles**, and later **Iles & Gomms** of Birmingham, would have made the most commonly found thimblefuls - those made of cupro-nickel, chromed metal or silver-plated brass. Over time the some of the silver-plate has worn off, leaving the brass showing.

Iles, who had been producing thimbles since the 1860s, were the world's biggest producers of functional thimbles in the twentieth century until they ceased production in 1990.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|    |  |  |   |
| COPPER, 1984  | CHROMIUM-PLATED   | SILVER-PLATED BRASS   |   |
|    |  |   |  |
| <p><u>A WEE DEOCH-AN-DORIS</u><br/>         ----- CHARLES ILES -----<br/>         44mm<br/>         ----- JUST A THIMBLE FULL -----<br/>         ----- A WEE DEOCH-AN-DORIS -----</p> |   |   |   |

Charles Iles registered his design for silver-plated brass thimblefuls with the R<sup>D</sup>707065 and the lettering is 'Just a Thimble Full'. He registered the design on 17 July 1924. The registered design included a crest attached to the side. The copyright was extended for four five-year periods and expired in July 1939, which attests to a popular design. Their production ceased in 1970. Was it coincidental that Iles made thimblefuls with enamelled badges for the British Empire Exhibition in the same year of 1924?



CHARLES ILES  
WITH A GLASS INSIDE

So if you have any metal thimblefuls where the words 'thimble' and 'full' are separate, with no rolled rim, the band that contains these words being half of the total height of 44mm, and the indentations going from there right under the thimble, you have got an Iles-made thimbleful. It is a bonus when the RD No is on the thimble as well.



As can be seen, the enamelled crests that are applied to Iles thimblefuls are very varied in shape and design. I know this list is endless, but it would be great to have it as complete as possible. Do you know of any other crests to add to the list of **100** below?

It is interesting to note that they seem exclusively made for countries of the British Commonwealth. The following list are of Iles thimblefuls with an enamelled crest made for the tourist market or as a commemorative.

I have listed the lettering from the top as it appears on the badge and whether the Registration number appears on the thimbleful.

It's wonderful to find a date as part of the crest – commissioned from Charles Iles/Iles & Gomms. These dates currently include

**1925 – 1929 – 1937 – 1938 – 1940**

Others of this type:

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|    |    |    |    |    |
| ABERDEEN  | ABERYSTWYTH +RD No  | ANTIQUA LEEWARD ISLANDS   | AYR +RD No   | BALLATER +RD No   |
|    |    |    |    |    |
| BALMORAL CASTLE   | BANFF +RD No  | BARRY ISLAND  | BEANNCHOR  | BETTYHILLS +RD No   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| BERMUDA +RD No  | BON ACCORD ABERDEEN (Canada)  | BRIGHTON +RD No   | BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION 1925   | BRORA   |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| CANADA +RD No   | CARDIFF   | CENTRAL AFRICAN RHODES CENTENARY EXHIBITION 1953                                    | CHATHAM NAVY WEEK +RD No   | CHESTER +RD No  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| CORNISH PISKEY+RD No  | CORONATION 1937 +RD No<br>(RED CROWNED KING GEORGE VI AND QUEEN ELIZABETH)          | CORONET PEAK QUEENSTOWN NZ  | COWES +RD No   | CRIEFF  |

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|     |     |     |     |     |
| DOUGLAS   | DUNDEE +RD No   | DURBAN +RD No   | EAST LONDON<br>(SOUTH AFRICA)  | EDINBURGH<br>(A WEE DEOCH-AN-DORIS)   |
|    |    |    |    |    |
| EDINBURGH +RD No  | EMPIRE EXHIBITION<br>GLASGOW 1938   | EMPIRE EXHIBITION<br>SCOTLAND 1938  | EMPIRE EXHIBITION<br>SCOTLAND 1938 +RD No  | FELIXSTOWE +RD No   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| FIAT OAMURA N.Z   | FIDE ET FORTITUDE<br>+RD No   | FRAE BONNIE SCOTLAND<br>(+ colourway)   | H.M. SUBMARINES  | H.M.S FURIOUS - i<br>+RD No   |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| H.M.S FURIOUS - ii  | H.M.S. RODNEY +RD No  | H.M.S. ROYAL<br>SOVEREIGN +RD No  | HOBART TASMANIA  | ISLE OF MAN   |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| ISLE OF MAN SOUVENIR  | JAMAICA   | JEDBURGH  | JENNY JONES  | JERSEY +RD No   |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| JERSEY  | JOHN O GROATS +RD No  | JOHN O GROATS   | KILLARNEY  | KIMBERLEY   |

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|     |     |     |     |               |
| KIRKWALL  | KYLE OF LOCHALSH  | LAKE WANAKA PEMBROKE<br>NZ +RD No   | LANDS END<br>LONSHIPS LIGHTHOUSE<br>NZ +RD No  | LAUTOKA FIJI. RERE<br>VAKANA KALOUKA DOKA<br>NATUI  |
|    |    |    |    |              |
| LET GLASGOW FLOURISH<br>+RD No<br>(+ colourway)                                     | LONDON - i  | LONDON - ii   | LOVELY LILLESBALL +RD<br>No  | MELBOURNE - i   |
|   |   |   |   |             |
| MELBOURNE - ii  | MILLFORD SCOTLAND   | MONTREAL +RD No   | NEWRY +RD No   | NORTH EAST COAST<br>EXHIBITION <b>MAY OCT</b><br><b>1929</b> +RD No<br>Prince of Wales feathers |
|  |  |  |  |            |
| OXFORD +RD No   | PERTH (Scotland)  | PIETERSMARITZBURG<br>UMGUNGUNHLOVU  | PLYMOUTH NAVY WEEK   | POLPERRO CORNWALL   |
|  |  |  |  |            |
| PORT MORESBY PAPUA<br>+RD No  | PORTCAWL +RD No   | SANDOWN +RD No  | PORTREE +RD No   | RIVERTON N.Z. +RD No  |
|  |  |  |  |            |
| ROTORUA N.Z.<br>ROTORUA NZ TIKI red<br>also: Geyser                                 | SCARBOROUGH   | SHEFFIELD   | SOUTHAMPTON  | SOUTHPORT +RD No  |

|  |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|
|    |    |    |    |    |
| SOUTHSEA   | STRATFORD-ON-AVON  | STRATHPEFFER<br>+RD No   | TABLE MOUNTAIN<br>CABLEWAY S.A +RD No   | THE ANGLER'S<br>ELDORADO RUSSELL BAY<br>OF ISLANDS NZ                                |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| THE NEW ZEALAND<br>CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION<br><b>1840-1940</b>                       | THE PLAYGROUND OF<br>NEW ZEALAND THE<br>CHATEAU TONGARIRO                          | TINTERN ABBEY +RD No   | TOLL BAR GRETNA GREEN<br>+RD No   | TOMINTOUL  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| TORONTO  | TOWN OF GOOLWA<br>INCORPORATED AD<br>MDCCCLXXII +RD No                             | TRINIDAD   | UMTALI  | WESTON-SUPER MARE<br>+RD No  |

#### List of similar thimblefuls that still need photos

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| ADELAIDE              | NEW NORFOLK TASMANIA   |
| BAKEWELL (Derbyshire) | PORT ELIZABETH         |
| FORT WILLIAM          | PRESTWICK              |
| GUNDAGAI              | SOUTHERN RHODESIA      |
| H.M.S. HERMES         | TAMWORTH               |
| H.M.S. REVENGE +RD No | THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP |
| INVERNESS             | TREGARON WALES         |
| LLANGOLLEN            | UMTALI                 |
| OBAN                  | VICTORIA FALLS         |
| PALMERSTON NORTH      | WINDSOR                |



One of the great joys for me with all the topics in my Learn More About Thimbles topics, is receiving information on the most wonderful finds that collectors share with me and then in turn with you.

The latest is this Charles Iles thimbleful box, which he patented as early as 1898!! The cardboard thimbleful box is lettered diagonally with Just a Thimble Full, with the registration number Rd.315477 lettered alongside. The date has been confirmed as 8th March 1898, registered by Charles Edward Iles!!



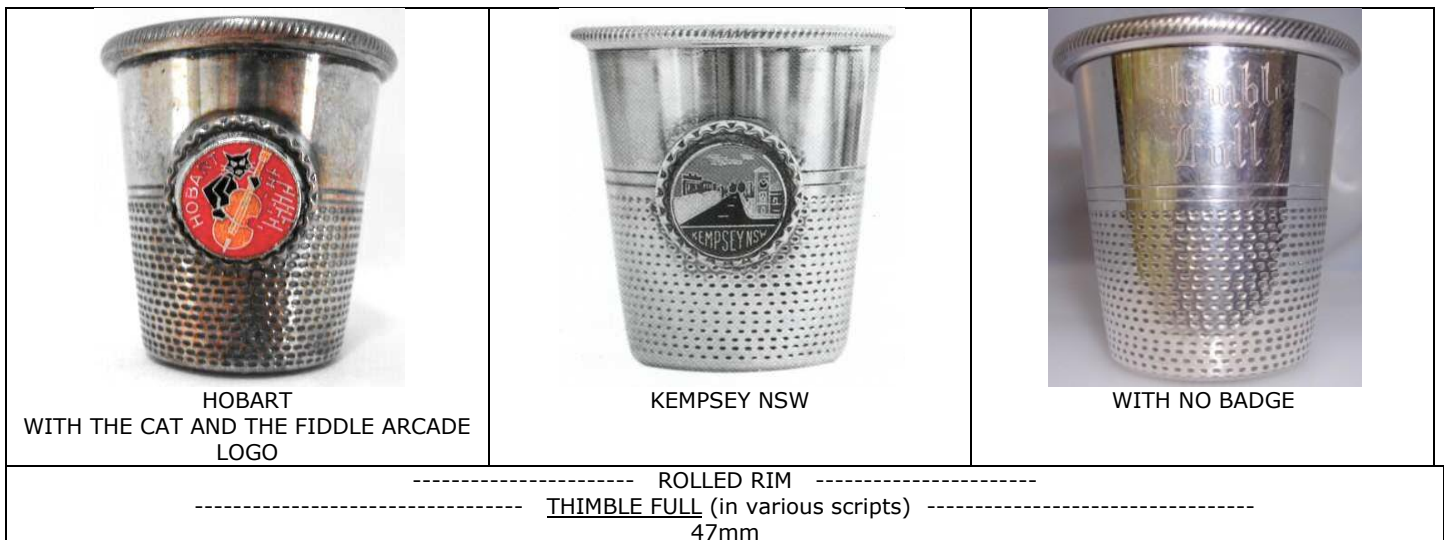
"JUST A THIMBLE FULL" Rd. 315477  
THIMBLEFUL BOX  
CHARLES EDWARD ILES, 1898

These thimblefuls with rolled rims, sometimes a beaded band below the rolled rim and round metal with enamelled badges applied, are for a range of Australian cities and towns.

The indentations are dash-like and the bases are indented. Are they Australian made?

Some have an additional decorative surround to the badge.

They were available in shops in Australia in the 1950s. The word 'Thimble Full' or 'A Thimble Full' may be written, one word under the other, on some of these examples. The lettering also differs on some examples, from cursive to gothic. The shapes of the badges are the same as those produced for teaspoons in Australia. The badges for those were made by **Stokes** of Ringwood, Victoria.



Others of this type:  
 those with cursive lettering have a rim of beading below the rim – made in different eras?

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|  <p>ADELAIDE<br/>GOTHIC SCRIPT</p>             |  <p>ALICE SPRINGS N.T.<br/>GOTHIC SCRIPT</p>                    |  <p>CANBERRA A.C.T<br/>CURSIVE LETTERING<br/>BEADING UNDER RIM</p>            |  <p>CASINO<br/>CAPITALS LETTERING<br/>BEADING UNDER RIM</p>                |
|  <p>GLENELG SA<br/>GOTHIC SCRIPT</p>           |  <p>KOSCIUSKO<br/>CAPITALS LETTERING</p>                        |  <p>LAUNCESTON TAS</p>  |  <p>LIGHTS STATUE ADELAIDE<br/>CURSIVE LETTERING<br/>BEADING UNDER RIM</p> |
|  <p>NORFOLK ISLAND<br/>CAPITALS LETTERING</p> |  <p>ORANGE NSW<br/>CURSIVE LETTERING<br/>BEADING UNDER RIM</p> |  <p>THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER<br/>CURSIVE LETTERING<br/>BEADING UNDER RIM</p> |  <p>ZEEHAN MUSEUM TASMANIA<br/>GOTHIC LETTERING</p>                       |

List of similar thimblefuls that still need photos  
 DARWIN N.T.

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This group of thimblefuls are different enough not to be made by Charles Iles or Iles & Gomms. The lettered band is much narrower, the dimpling is different, and the indentations go right under the base; only the lettering around the thimbleful is identical to that used by Iles. They mainly have a **small hole** near the lip of the thimbleful - was this to prevent to thimble from overflowing if used as a spirit measure? But the lettering is identical to the Iles thimblefuls? Was this just a later version? One or two of these examples also have a slightly flared rim, the plain band is nearly as wide as an Iles' thimbleful and they don't have a 'hole' near the rim, whereas most of the other examples are quite straight-sided right to the rim. They have a cross-hatched type of indentation.

Seven of the eight illustrated are for places in Australia!

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  <p>GREAT BARRIER REEF<br/>HERON ISLAND</p> |  <p>JUST A THIMBLE FULL<br/>LERWICK</p> |  <p>PERTH</p>                               |
|  <p>RAILWAY STATION<br/>TOWNSVILLE QLD</p> |  <p>SHEFFIELD</p>                      |  <p>THE HARBOUR BRIDGE SYDNEY N. S. W.</p> |
|  <p>THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP</p>            |  <p>TOWN HALL MARYBOROUGH QLD.</p>    |  <p>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</p>                 |
| <p>-----<br/> <u>JUST A THIMBLE FULL</u><br/> 40-43mm<br/> -----</p>   |  |  |

Is it just a coincidence that most of this group of thimblefuls depict New Zealand scenes?

|  |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
|   |  |     |  |  |
| ADVANCE TAURANGA NZ<br>FLARED RIM  | DUNEDIN N.Z.  | FOX GLACIER HOTEL N.Z.<br>THE MAJESTIC FOX   | MAORI WARRIOR<br>ROTORUA NZ  | MOUNT RUAPEHU N Z<br>SMOOTH BASE + HOLE   |
|   |  |     |  |  |
| NYASALAND + HOLE   | PEACEFUL LAKE WANAKA<br>NEW ZEALAND<br>FLARED RIM                                 | POLPERRO + HOLE  | ROTORUA N.Z.   | RUSSELL BAY OF<br>ISLANDS N.Z.<br>SMOOTH BASE + HOLE                                |
|  |   |  |  |   |
| THE HERMITAGE MT COOK<br>b&w photo   |   | WELLINGTON N.Z. + HOLE   |  |   |

List of similar thimblefuls that still need photos

THE FAMOUS KARAPITI BLOWHOLE WONDERFUL WAIRAKEI NZ  
WORLD FAMOUS GLOW WORM GROTTO WIATOMO CAVES NZ

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Another batch of thimblefuls are those that don't match any of the above and some have fluted patterning at the opening. There is no uniformity about the size and shape of the metal or enamelled fixture. Type C and Type D have identical lettering to the earlier Iles thimblefuls - are they just later versions? Type A and B have Gothic lettering.



TYPE A  
PAUL REVERE HOUSE, BOSTON MASS  
(USA)  
ONLY A THIMBLEFUL  
FLUTED OPENING SMOOTH BASE  
40-52mm



TYPE B  
DAYTONA BEACH  
ONLY A THIMBLE FULL  
ROLLED RIM SMOOTH BASE  
40mm



TYPE C  
BERMUDA  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
'PINCHED' RIM



Type D  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
1000 ISLANDS NY  
INSET ENAMELLED BADGE

Other placenames like Type A



ATLANTIC CITY NEW JERSEY



BE AUVOIR HOME OF JEFFERSON DAVIS  
MISSISSIPPI



BROADMOOR HOTEL COLORADO



CHEYENNE WYOMING  
(possibly brass or it is just a  
poor photo?)



GRAND CANYON NATIONAL  
PARK



QUEEN ELIZABETH 2



SS ORIANA



THE BEEHIVE STATE UTAH  
COPPER

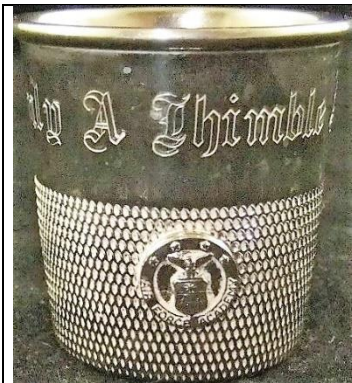


UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

List of similar thimblefuls to Type A that still need photos

ISLAND PRINCESS  
MACKINAC ISLAND

Other placenames like Type B



AIR FORCE ACADEMY



CAPE COD



CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL  
PARK NM



DAYTONA BEACH



GOVERNORS PALACE  
WILLIAMSBURG VA



HANNIBAL mo BOYHOOD HOME  
OF MARK TWAIN



HAWAII  
50<sup>TH</sup> STATE



HEMINGWAY HOME KEY WEST



HIGHEST BRIDGE IN THE  
WORLD ROYAL GORGE COLO



MARINE LANDS FLORIDA



MONTICELLO HOME OF THOMAS  
JEFFERSON



NATURAL BRIDGE VIRGINIA



NEW ORLEANS LOUISIANA



OREGON CAVES OREGON



PINE TREE STATE MAINE



SS ORIANA



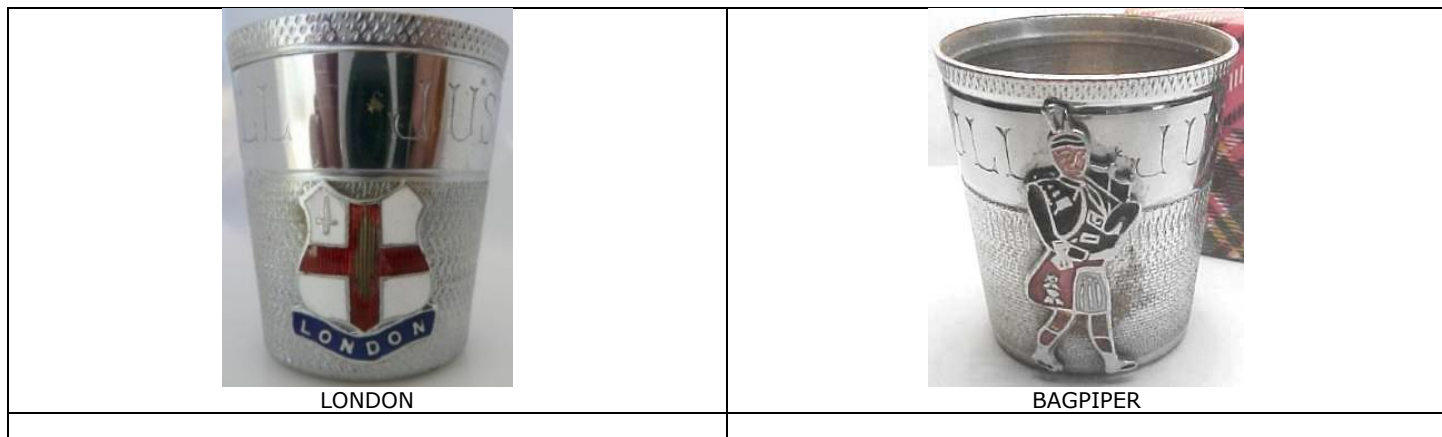
List of similar Type B thimblefuls that still need photos

XII OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES LAKE PLACID 1980  
 BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK  
 CADILLAC MT BAR HARBOR ME  
 CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE TUNNEL SEA GULL FISHING PIER  
 CHINCOTEAGUE VA  
 EOAVILLE RR. SO. CARVER, MASS  
 GINGERBREAD CASTLE HAMBURG N.J  
 HENRY FORD MUSEUM



LAKE CHAMPLAIN  
 LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE SS MT WASHINGTON IL  
 NEW MEXICO  
 OLD FORGE NY  
 PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE TEXAS  
 PHILADELPHIA PA LIBERTY BELL  
 ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK  
 SEA LION CAVES  
 SINGING TOWER FLORIDA  
 SS BOHEMME  
 ST AUGUSTINE FLA  
 STATE OF PENNSYLVANNIA  
 SUN VALLEY  
 TERRITORY OF HAWAII  
 UNITED STATES AIRFORCE  
 WASHINGTON'S HDQTS.1782-1783 NEWBURGH NY  
 THE WATER TOWER CHICAGO  
 WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS WEST VA

Others like Type C



Other silver-plated thimblefuls are made by 'P.H.V.' or 'P.H.V & Co'. This is the Birmingham maker P J VOGEL. They are made in England and are marked 'Just a Thimbleful'. They measure 37mm (1oz) and 52mm (1.5oz) and there is even one for 2oz. The base is smooth. Sterling silver examples by this maker have been identified.



P.H.VOGEL

P.H.VOGEL&CO

SILVER-PLATED

----- JUST A THIMBLEFUL -----





5

P.H.VOGEL  
SILVER-PLATED with COPPER  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
1.5oz

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Another maker's mark on silver-plated thimblefuls is 'I.F.S.' with 'LTD' vertical. Above this is a closed fist with a hammer-type instrument. They are marked 'Just a Thimbleful'. They measure 52mm (1 1/2 oz, which is marked on the base) and the base is smooth; the rim is rolled. It is very similar in shape to those made by 'P.H.V.'



SILVER PLATE  
I.F.S. LTD  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
1.5oz



I.F.S. LTD MARK  
CLOSED FIST WITH A HAMMER-TYPE INSTRUMENT

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The one thimbleful that I covet belonged to my sister in Melbourne. She found it as a gift for Mum about 35 years ago. It is huge and it was an appropriate gift for our mother, as she always only wanted a 'thimbleful' of sherry. It is silver-plated and now fits in nicely with the rest of my collection!! It's made by 'William Hutton & Sons' and silver-plated. The indentations are continued under the base, leaving a smooth circle for the maker's mark. This very large thimbleful will hold a pint!!



SILVER PLATE  
WMH&S  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
L: 125mm - 105 mm wide  
R: USUAL-SIZED THIMBLEFUL BY HUTTON



WILLIAM HUTTON & SONS MARK  
WITH CROSSED SWORDS



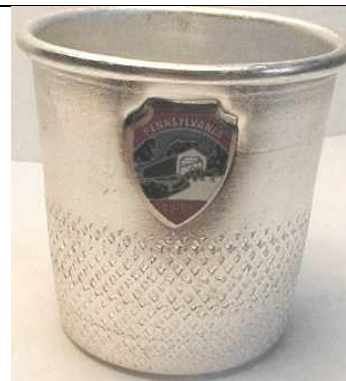
There are a few thimblefuls made of aluminium, but they are in the minority. The examples have smooth bases.



Type A  
ALUMINIUM  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
BRIGHT-CUT THISTLE  
45mm



Type B  
ALUMINIUM  
A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE  
100mm



Type C  
ALUMINIUM  
PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH  
ONLY A THIMBLE FULL  
PAPER LABEL AND CROSS-HATCHED  
INDENTATIONS

Other placenames similar to Type C (slightly different indentations)



List of similar Type C thimblefuls that still need photos  
CEDAR POINT OHIO

This aluminium thimbleful is unusual as it has a screw-top lid. Was the lid used to carry the illicit grog during the Prohibition days of the 1920s in the USA? There is lettering on the lid: 'A Thimble Full'. It is also an advertising thimbleful for 'BUCKLEY'S 418 GAY ST. BALTO MD' which is lettered around the band. This is a bar in Baltimore Maryland.



ALUMINIUM  
"BUCKLEY'S 418 GAY ST. BALTO MD"  
A THIMBLE FULL  
50mm

This aluminium thimbleful has diagonal lines patterning. The thimble is lettered 'Just a Thimbleful'.



ALUMINIUM  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 WITH DIAGONAL LINES  
 53mm

This is an unusual aluminium advertising US thimbleful, as it has a brass inscription – I am not sure where this is lettered – it is a commemorative thimbleful, tho not actually dated. "26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tonawandas (place in New York) Aerie 1411 ...". Cursive lettering of 'Just a thimble full'.



JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 LETTERED IN CURSIVE



BRASS INSCRIPTION

Is this aluminium advertising thimbleful made by the same US manufacturer, to the above one?



ALUMINIUM  
 "MO-KAN MORTICIANS' SUPPLY CO K.C. Mo 4308 E. 15 ST. BE 4805"  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 44mm

Isn't this such a cutie? Not unlike a jelly-mould in design with its fluted body. The lettering is 'Just a Thimble Full' which is lettered in a dotted-stippled way.



JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
53mm

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A rarer copper thimbleful of high quality and a thick rolled rim comes from the US. There is no metal badge applied, but the place name is included as 'Niagara Falls Canada Just a Thimble Full'. This was created for E.S.T.C (Empire State Thimble Club) in September 1987.



Another copper thimbleful has the Scottish 'A Wee Deoch-an-Doris' as a thimble whisky measure. Long indents.



COPPER  
A WEE DEOCH-AN-DORIS  
40mm

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Another copper thimbleful 'Just a Thimble Full'. Very sloping sides. No maker's marks.



COPPER  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL

---

Another copper thimbleful 'Only a Thimble Full'. The wide opening seems almost big as the depth?  
No maker's marks.



COPPER  
ONLY A THIMBLE FULL

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This brass thimbleful has beading below the rim and the indentations are different in that they are diamond-shaped.



BRASS  
ONLY A THIMBLE FULL  
49mm

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This brass collapsible thimbleful is in **two parts**. There are no markings as to origin or maker. It is in its own thimble box and only the box is lettered 'Just a Thimble Full' on the lid.



BRASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
LETTERED ON ROUND CARDBOARD THIMBLE BOX  
EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY - PROBABLY BRITISH

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This brass collapsible thimbleful is in **three parts**. There are no markings as to origin or maker. It is in its own thimble box and only the box is lettered 'Just a Thimble Full' on the lid.



BRASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
LETTERED ON THE ROUND CARDBOARD THIMBLE BOX  
EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY - PROBABLY BRITISH  
60mm

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It is uncommon to find a silver-plated thimble with its own leather fitted case. It is velvet-lined.  
The thimbleful has no marks or lettering.



SILVER-PLATED  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
ONLY THE LEATHER CASE HAS LETTERING  
THIMBLE: 50mm

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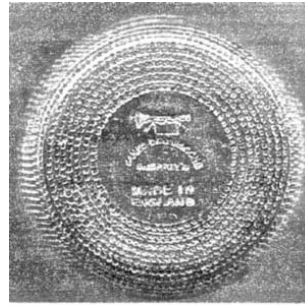
This is a similar large thimble to that above - housed in a leatherette case with 'Just a Thimbleful' lettered on the top of the case. There are no marks on the silver-plated thimble.



SILVER-PLATED  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
ONLY THE LEATHER CASE HAS LETTERING

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Silver-plated thimblefuls were made by James Dixon & Sons, in Sheffield, England. The maker's mark is lettered on the base, with a bugle. 70mm (that's big). This size is said to be a 'dramme measure'.



SILVER-PLATED  
JAMES DIXON & SONS - SHEFFIELD  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
THIMBLE: 70mm

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This metal thimbleful was made in Hong Kong. It is fun to see the original packaging: marked 'Jigger'. The thimble is lettered 'Only a Thimble Full'.



METAL  
HONG KONG  
ONLY A THIMBLE FULL

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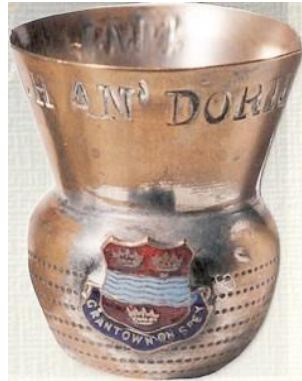
This silver metal thimbleful is almost as wide as it is tall. The lettering 'Just a Thimbleful' is lettered to read correctly when the open end is down. The surface is very stippled. Good weight.



METAL  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
36mm

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This little treasure is a silver metal thimbleful with the lettering 'A Wee Deoch an Doris' on a thistle-shaped thimbleful. The enamelled crest is for Grantown on Spey, a place in Scotland - completing the Scottish-themed thimbleful.



METAL  
A WEE DEOCH AN DORIS  
GRANTOWN ON SPEY  
THISTLE-SHAPED

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The lettering on this thimbleful is a first!! 'Just a Swallow' - how many interesting slogans can there still be? Some glass spirit measures also include a swallow decaled onto the surface, but they are not classed as thimblefuls.



METAL  
JUST A SWALLOW

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It would seem that thimblefuls have been prized rather than used as more of the original cases find their way onto the market, happily with the thimbleful inside. This example is gilded inside and has no other marks, other than the raised lettering 'Just a thimbleful' - there is a blank cartouche for engraving a name. Isn't this such a gorgeous sturdy little case?



SILVER-PLATED METAL  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL

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Here the thimble holder almost takes precedence over the thimbleful!! These bear holders usually were made in Germany.



SILVER-PLATED METAL  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL

This thimbleful is lettered 'upside down' - the lettering can be read when the open end is down! It is lettered 'Just a Thimbleful' with a Maltese cross mark.



SILVER-PLATED METAL  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
62mm



An interesting new thimbleful (in 2014) is marked on the base Klepa Arts Japan with a 2oz sizing. The rim is rolled and the indentations are closer to the opening than other examples with enamelled badges.



SILVER-PLATED METAL  
KAPOK TREE ON ENAMELLED BADGE  
KLEPA ARTS JAPAN  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
2oz



This group is one of the sized thimbleful sets - and there are 4 sizes illustrated here: 5oz - 2oz - 1.5oz - 1oz, which are lettered on the relevant bases, together with the maker's name - Raimond. The lettering is 'Just a Thimbleful'. No other marks. Country of origin unknown.



SILVER-PLATED METAL  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
RAIMOND

This thimbleful has a delightful play on the Scottish slogan of 'A Wee Deoch and Doris' - this reads a playful 'A Wee Deoch an Dorius Doruis'!! Who was Dorius/Doruis? Maybe it is just a mis-spelling - or all variants of the name 'Doris'?? Like other thimblefuls with this Scottish saying, the shape is that of a thistle.



SILVER METAL  
A WEE DEOCH AN DORUIS / DORUIS  
IN SHAPE OF THISTLE  
45mm

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Nothing further is known about this thimbleful - note the central lines on the body.



The unusual feature about this thimbleful is the gilt colouring over the top part of the thimbleful. There are no maker's marks. There is a monogram of 'DS' in the cartouche. The raised lettering is 'Just a Thimbleful' over striated bands



JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
GILDED UPPER BAND

I am quite fascinated by the range of holders or cases for thimblefuls - with a few more appearing on the market. The thimbleful has no lettering or marks, with bands of concentric dots or indents - with 'Just a Thimble Full' lettered on the top of the red thimble case, which opens like a book, down the centre.



JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
ONLY THE LEATHER CASE HAS LETTERING

What a unique find: enamelled thimblefuls. Made in England, these are handpainted by Graham Payne Studios Worcester, with a trout, and a pheasant. Signed 'Graham Payne Studios 83 Worcester'. Strangely these thimblefuls are painted in the upside down position, which negates the purpose of measuring a tot of spirits. Lettering is 'Just a Thimblefull' in cursive.

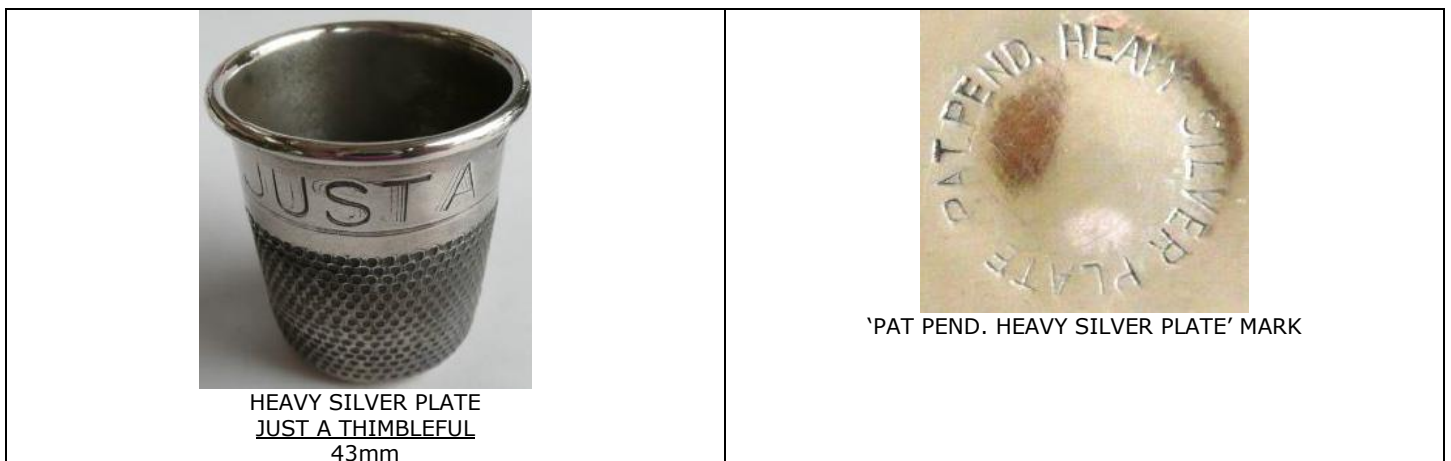


This thimbleful has unusual attachments in the form of metal shields – one on each side. 'Just a Thimbleful' is lettered on one side and 'A present for Fort William'. I presume this is in Scotland? No other marks.



JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
A PRESENT FROM FORT WILLIAM

This 'heavy silver-plate' thimbleful has the US marking 'Pat Pend' lettered on the base. No other details are known.



This metal thimbleful has two bands of stylised flowers resembling daisies. It is in its own thimble box and there are no markings as to origin or maker. Lettered 'Just a Thimble Full'



METAL  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
TWO BANDS OF FLOWERS  
HOUSED IN THIMBLE CASE

With very indistinctive photos to go on, this thistle-shaped thimbleful is lettered "A Wee Drappie". There are a couple of unknown marks on the base, where the copper is beginning to show through. One of the marks may be a monarch's head. No other details are known. The stem is longer than most other thistle-shaped thimblefuls.



SILVER-PLATED  
A WEE DRAPPIE  
50mm



UNKNOWN MARKS - ONE COULD BE A MONARCH'S HEAD?



This silver metal thimble has a set of cross indentations. 'Just a Thimble Full' in small lettering on paler strip of silver metal. © CERA symbol is lettered with a tower symbol on rim. Unknown country of origin.



JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
© CERA



This silver metal thimbleful has ornate patterning. There is a similar design featured in the sterling silver section. It has the ornate patterning at the top, with the lettering below.



JUST A THIMBLEFULL  
LETTERED BELOW THE ORNATE BAND  
60MM

Here is another case for a thimbleful. The thimbleful has no lettering or marks. There is ornate patterning below the rim. 'Just a Thimbleful' is lettered on the top of the leatherette case.



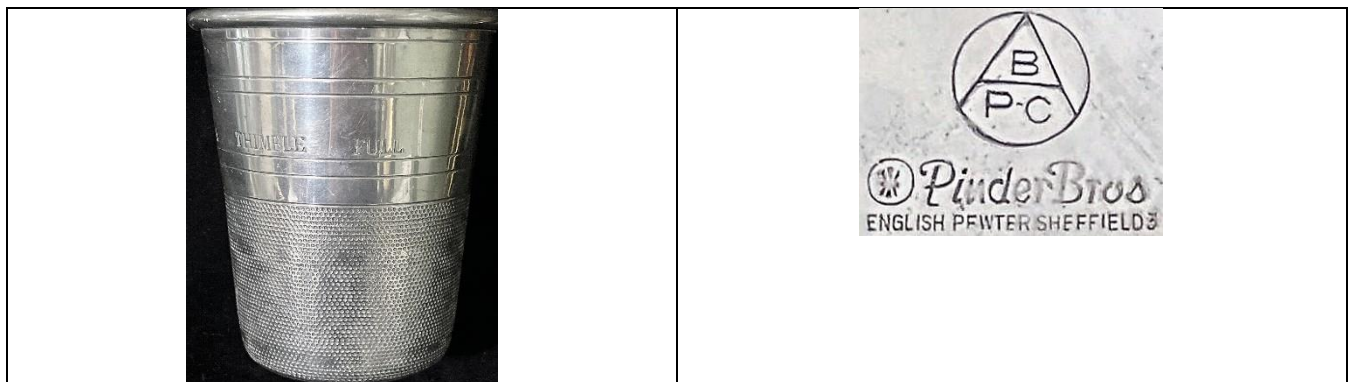
JUST A THIMBLEFULL  
ONLY LETTERED ON THE LEATHERETTE CASE

I haven't recorded this set of thimblefuls before. The surfaces are stippled with rolled rims. There is a floral symbol between the lettering 'Just a Thimbleful'. There is no indication of their capacity. No other marks.



JUST A THIMBLEFUL

This pewter thimbleful is made by Pinder Bros of Sheffield. The lettering is Just a Thimble Full. There is an extra mark of ABPC, which stands for Association of British Pewter Craftsmen.



JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 PINDER BROS  
 ENGLISH PEWTER SHEFFIELD 3  
 EXTRA MARK: ABPC  
 5 ins

These three thimblefuls is made by EPC of Japan. The lettering is Just a Thimbleful. There is an extra mark of The Broadway. The three sizes are for 1oz, 1 1/2oz and 2oz. They are silver-plated



JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
EPB  
The BROADWAY  
1OZ, 1 1/2 OZ, 2OZ

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## Wooden thimblefuls

Robert Herron of Tasmania's thimblefuls are of Huon pine with cursive 'Just a Thimbleful' pyrographed onto the thimbles. Doug Birrell of Melbourne has also produced wooden thimblefuls in various timbers with 'Just a Thimble-Full' pyrographed. Herron's base is flat, Birrell has skilfully rounded his but there is no movement.



ROBERT HERRON  
*Just a Thimbleful* CURSIVE LETTERING



DOUG BIRRELL  
JUST A THIMBLE-FULL

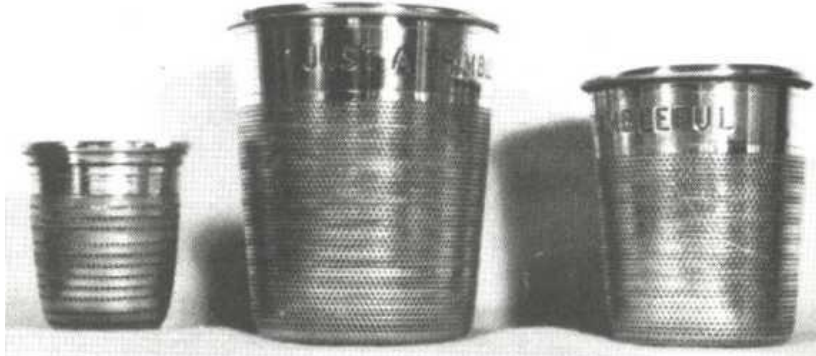
## Silver and gold thimblefuls

in alphabetical order by silversmith

There is an enormous range of hallmark dates – from the mid 1800s right up to the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – a long period for these thimblefuls to be made and remain popular.

Because of their size and weight British thimblefuls would have to be assayed in the pre-1884 era when all sterling silver thimbles required assaying. We can identify the makers of these Victorian silver thimblefuls. There are several examples with blue enamelled lettering. Were they produced by one maker who then registered another maker's marks to be placed on the thimbles?

You may spot six of the thimblefuls featured have a **Maltese cross** as part of the lettering band – some blue enamelled. I don't know of the significance of this cross. Do you?



19TH CENTURY SILVER, AND A SILVER-PLATED ONE BY ASPREY'S OF LONDON

Sterling silver from Taxco in Mexico. They are marked '925'. The indentations are handmade and situated quite low down. The thimblefuls have the maker's mark for Rakhu Alecre on the base. The lettering is 'Thimble Full'.



TAXCO MEXICO STERLING SILVER  
THIMBLE FULL



This is a 1902 London hallmarked 'Just a Thimbleful' (that is my guess as this is the only photo I have) made by Charles Boyton. There is a small, stylised rosette above the assay marks. Is this significant? There are no other distinguishing features. There is cross-hatching for the indentations



CHARLES BOYTON (CB) LONDON 1902/1904  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL

Sterling silver from the USA, made by BBL. The example at left has monogram AED on the verso. There is a band of beading near the rim.



AMERICAN STERLING SILVER  
ONLY A THIMBLEFUL  
BEADED RIM



AMERICAN STERLING SILVER  
BBL  
ONLY A THIMBLE FULL  
BEADED RIM

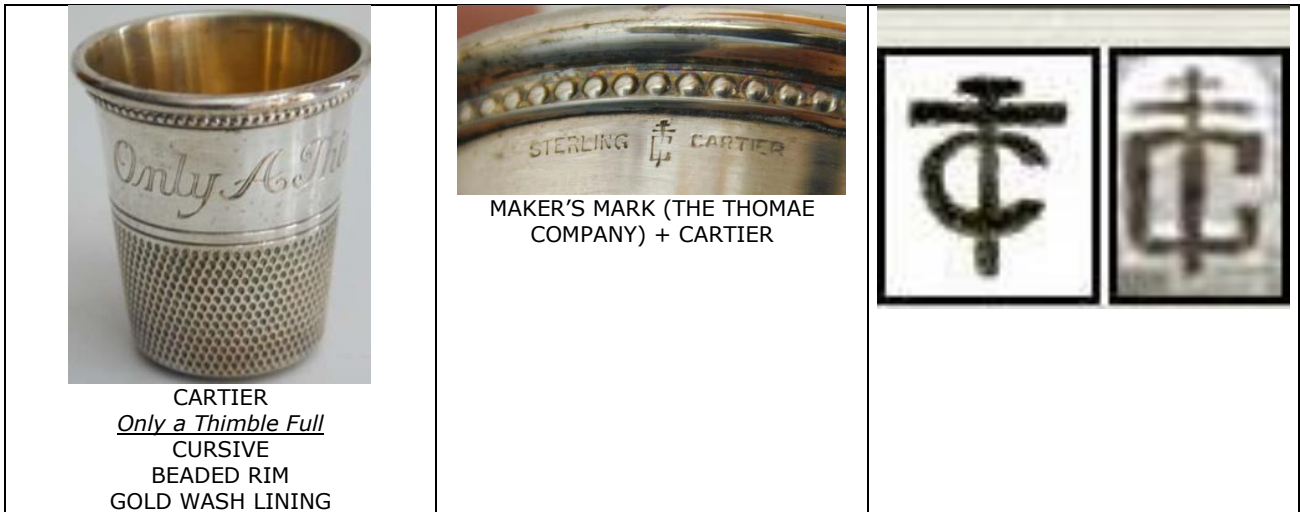


AMERICAN STERLING SILVER  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
BEADED RIM  
'VALLEY FORGE KENNEL CLUB'  
LETTERED ON VERSO

This is an American sterling silver thimbleful made for Cartier for sale in their stores. It is marked on the open end with 'Sterling' the maker's mark and 'Cartier', below a beaded rim. The maker of this Cartier thimbleful is The Thomae Company and their maker's mark is the one appearing on this example.

The lettering is in cursive 'Only a Thimble Full'. The base is stippled with the same pattern as the body of the thimbleful with a gold wash inner lining.

see also: [PEWTER THIMBLES - TIFFANY & CO](#) - [CHARLES THOMAE & SONS](#)



This is a 1977 Birmingham hallmarked 'Just a Thimbleful' made by J B Chatterley & Sons Ltd. There are no other distinguishing features.



J A CHATTERLEY (JBC&S<sup>LD</sup>) BIRMINGHAM 1976/1977  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL

This is an 1895 Chester hallmarked 'Just a Thimble full' made by Colen Hewer Cheshire. There are two bands of vertical striations and the indentations on the lower half are diamond shaped. The third example has raised lettering - in the same position as the other thimblefuls.



COLEN HEWER CHESHIRE (CC) CHESTER 1895/1898/1904  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
FLAT RIM

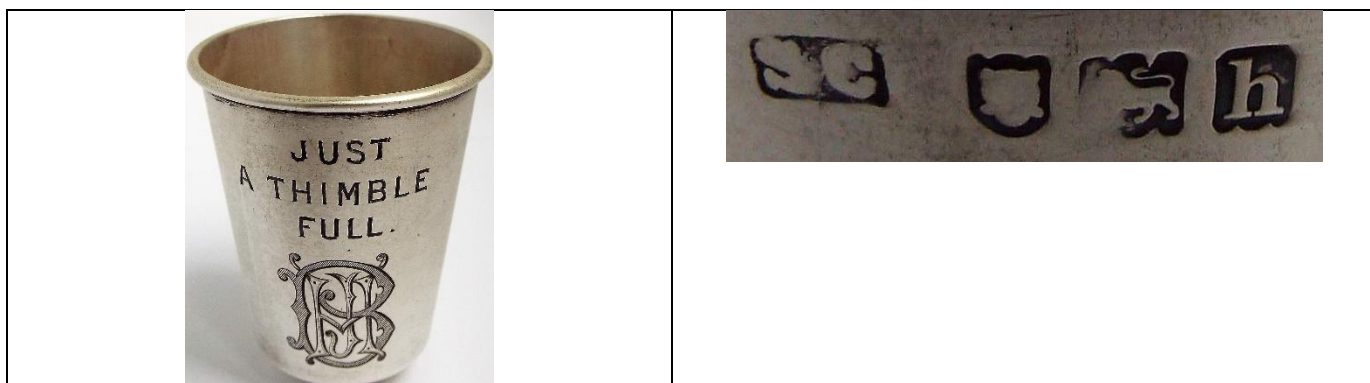


This is a British sterling silver thimbleful made by William James Dingley. It is marked on the open end with the British hallmarks for Birmingham 1903. The lettering is read when the thimbleful is standing on its open end. 'Just a Thimbleful' in blue enamelling with a Maltese cross. The indentations are diamond-shaped and the narrower apex is more defined than most.



WILLIAM JAMES DINGLEY (WJD) BIRMINGHAM 1903  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
LETTERED IN BLUE ENAMELLING  
LETTERING TO BE READ WHEN STANDING ON OPEN END  
1.5oz - 63.5mm  
[see also: BHJ \(1876\) - HW \(1875\)](#)

This is a British sterling silver thimbleful made by Stuart Clifford. The British hallmarks for London 1903. The lettering is 'Just a Thimble Full' over three lines. The sides have no indentations and this one had an ornate monogram.



STUART CLIFFORD (SC) LONDON 1903  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
LETTERED OVER THREE LINES  
NO INDENTATIONS

Norma Spicer, in her booklet on James Fenton, mentions a 'tot measure', which could be given as a gift or souvenir. "As they only hold three teaspoonsful, any Scotsman given a 'wee dram' in one of these would have every right to feel deprived". The one shown is stemmed, in a goblet-shape, of sterling silver and hallmarked for 1898 with 'For Auld Lang Syne' around the top.

The second example from James Fenton is also stemmed hallmarked for Birmingham - coincidentally? - also 1892 and the stippled lettering is 'Just a Thimble Full'.

I have included an example - for completeness where there is no lettering - by William Hutton & Sons and Fenton

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  <p data-bbox="296 880 576 931">JAMES FENTON (JF) 1898<br/>FOR AULD LANG SYNE</p>  |  <p data-bbox="908 880 1409 954">JAMES FENTON (JF) BIRMINGHAM 1892/1906<br/>JUST A THIMBLE FULL<br/>STIPPLED LETTERING</p> |
|  <p data-bbox="118 1339 756 1382">WILLIAM HUTTON &amp; SONS (WMH&amp;S), SHEFFIELD 1893 (a)<br/>NO THIMBLEFUL LETTERING</p> |  <p data-bbox="919 1339 1398 1382">JAMES FENTON (JF), BIRMINGHAM 1892 (s)<br/>NO THIMBLEFUL LETTERING</p>                |

Sterling silver by Henry Charles Freeman of London. Lettered 'Just a Thimbleful' upside down ie to be read when standing on the open end

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  <p data-bbox="105 1933 727 2007">H C FREEMAN<br/>JUST A THIMBLEFUL<br/>LETTERING TO BE READ WHEN STANDING ON OPEN END</p> |  <p data-bbox="1082 1780 1198 1800">HCF MARK</p> |
|---|--|

Sterling silver by Israel Freeman & Co, London. Lettered 'Just a Thimbleful'. The body has cross-hatched indentations. Capacity is either 1oz or 1½oz.



ISRAEL FREEMAN & SON  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
L: 1oz - R: 1½OZ



IFS MARK

Sterling silver from Birmingham by Hilliard & Thomason. Raised lettering 'Just a Thimble Full' with a thistle.



HILLIARD & THOMASON (H&T) BIRMINGHAM  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
APPLIED THISTLE IN A SHIELD

The ultimate thimbleful to own would be that made by Charles Horner. In his sales catalogue this sterling silver thimble is named as a 'whiskey measure'. It looks taller than other thimblefuls.

Known hallmark dates are from the 1910 and 1950s. The lettering is 'Just a Thimbleful'.

Recently other examples have emerged, hallmarked Chester, 1947 and 1948.

Contrary to the advertisement for Horner thimblefuls, most are lettered 'Just a Thimbleful' - the ad shows that it ends with "-full". The indents continue under the thimbleful.



CHARLES HORNER (CH) CHESTER 1947/1948/1952  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 GGOLD WASH,LINING  
 BEADING BELOW PLAIN BAND  
 51mm



HORNER CATALOGUE



CHARLES HORNER (CH) CHESTER 1930  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 GOLD WASH LINING  
 BEADING BELOW PLAIN BAND  
 54mm (TALLER)



CHARLES HORNER (CH) CHESTER 1906/1910  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 LETTERING TO BE READ WHEN STANDING ON OPEN END  
 GOLD WASH LINING  
 LETTERING SLIGHTLY BLURRED ON 1906 EXAMPLE  
 50mm



CHARLES HORNER (CH) CHESTER 1904  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 COPPERPLATE LETTERING  
 TO BE READ WHEN STANDING ON OPEN END

Sterling silver by FH for Francis Howard Ltd, of Trafalgar Street, Sheffield. There is no thimbleful lettering. There is a set of British hallmarks on the base for Sheffield 1977.



FRANCIS HOWARD LTD (FH) SHEFFIELD 1977



BRITISH ASSAY MARKS ON BASE WITH  
 SHEFFIELD 1977 JUBILEE MARKS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

The thimble on the right has markings for K & Co. There are additional marks with 'E.P' for electroplated silver (?), and a crossed keys maker's mark. The thimbleful is larger than usual. The lettering is 'Just a thimbleful' with a Maltese cross mark.

On the right this thimbleful is more ornate than usual with additional decoration around the rim. The lettering is in a narrow band flanked by a row each of striations. This is a modern thimbleful made by KMS for K M SILVER, hallmarked for Birmingham, 1997. The lettering is 'Just a Thimbleful'. Gold wash lining.



(K&CO)  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 60mm



K M SILVER (KMS) BIRMINGHAM 1997  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 FLAT PATTERNED RIM  
 GOLD WASH LINING

Birmingham makers William and George Matthews (WGM) marked their thimblefuls in raised lettering over striations. The indentations are diamond-shaped.



WILLIAM & GEORGE MATTHEWS BIRMINGHAM 1876  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL

These sterling silver thimblefuls are made in Mexico ('Hecto en Mexico' lettered on the base). Marked with both '925' and 'Sterling'. The maker's mark is 20 in an eagle-shape for the maker 'Plat-Mex S.A.' one of the largest Mexico City manufacturers: Empresa Plat-Mex-SA. (see following thimbleful). This mark was used between 1948 and 1955 (Rogers). This thimbleful is lettered 'Thimble - Full' with a zigzag-type font. The indentations are replaced by a brushed surface - with very sloping sides. The base is smooth. The example at right has wide-spaced indentations with the mark at R below (no 20).



PLAT-MEX-S.A.  
THIMBLE - FULL  
44mm



PLAT-MEX S.A./PLAT.MEX.SA  
HECHO EN MEXICO  
20 IN AN EAGLE-SHAPED MARK  
925 STERLING



EMP-PLAT-MEX S.A.  
TIMBLE - FULL [sic]  
 'ME-15' IN A RECTANGULAR LOZENGE  
 925 STERLING



UNKNOWN INITIALS AT CENTRE OF MARK: ADL  
 HECHO EN MEXICO  
 EAGLE-SHAPED MARK  
 HANDMADE INDENTATIONS  
 925 STERLING

This sterling thimble is lettered with The Mauser Mfg. Co on the base but there is no country of manufacture. A Google search reveals this to be a US-based company at the end of the 19th C. The lettering is in an unusual script (see [Towle](#) thimbleful for identical lettering) 'Just a Thimble Full'. There is additional lettering on the rim 'Sterling 7760' with an unknown maker's mark between. There is a gold wash inside.

The examples have been personalised - the right has the most marvellous monogram - or the owner's name lettered on the base



THE MAUSER MFG. CO.  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 GOLD WASH LINING  
 WITH MONOGRAM ON EXAMPLE AT R 44mm



THE MAUSER MFG. CO.  
STERLING 7760  
+ MAKER'S MARK

Henry Muhr's Sons were one of the smaller thimble makers in the United States during the late 1800s. It is another example of a thimble being made to stand on its open end. The indentations are stippled with the lettering 'Just a Thimble Full'.



HENRY MUHR'S SONS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
50mm

LETTERING TO BE READ WHEN STANDING ON OPEN END

These sterling thimbles are made by a British silversmith who manufactured thimbles between the 1960s and 1990s – S J Rose - hallmarked for Birmingham, 1972 and 1992. The bases are smooth with a gold wash inside. They are different in that the lower surfaces are interestingly stippled.



S J ROSE (SJR) BIRMINGHAM 1972/1992 – R: LETTERING IS INVERTED JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
57mm



This German thimbleful with 'Nur Ein Fingerhut Voll' has the maker's marks of FS for Franz Scheurle of Schwäbisch-Gmünd with the '.925' mark. The maker's mark is the sickle moon with a crown.



FRANZ SCHEURLE  
NUR EIN FINGERHUT VOLL  
.925 SILVER



FS mark

Simons of Philadelphia have made thimblefuls in both sterling silver and gold. The thimblefuls have the Simons sterling silver mark on the inside base of the thimble. The base is indented or knurled. They are shorter than usual. The lettering is ornate. Simons also produced a **14-carat gold** jigger.



SIMONS  
ONLY A THIMBLE FULL  
40mm



German thimblefuls are not common, and this example has the maker's marks of Soergel und Stollmeyer, of Schwäbisch-Gmünd with the '.835' mark for German silver. The maker's mark is the 'S' in a triangle, but this is not always present. They closed in the 1960s. The lettering is Nur Ein Fingerhut Voll.

The second example has no thimbleful lettering but is similar to the example that does. This thimble is inscribed for a christening.



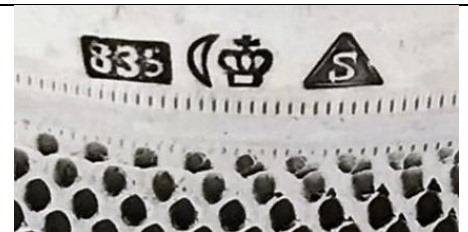
SOERTEL UND STOLLMAYER  
NUR EIN FINGERHUT VOLL  
 .835 SILVER



SOERTEL UND STOLLMAYER  
 .835 SILVER



inscribed Bettina zur Taufe  
26.8.1961  
 FOR CHRISTENING



SICKLE AND CROWN MARK

Made by James Swann & Son, the example on the left is marked with the Jubilee hallmarks of 1977. The lettering is 'Just a Thimbleful'; they are taller than average and there are indentations on the base.

Another thimbleful by James Swann & Son is featured in lower photos. It seems to have been a special commission for a 25th anniversary, with the personalised engraving on the verso. The main lettering is 'To God and his Angel' 'Try this for Size' with 'Just a Thimble full' in the intervening space. It is hallmarked for Birmingham in 1976.



JAMES SWANN & SON (JS&S) BIRMINGHAM 1976/SHEFFIELD 1977  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 54mm



JAMES SWANN & SON (JS&S) BIRMINGHAM 1976  
TO GOD AND HIS ANGEL  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
TRY THIS FOR SIZE  
 FLAT RIM

James Swann & Sons made these 9ct gold thimblefuls.



JAMES SWANN & SON (JS&S) BIRMINGHAM 1968/1989  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL

top: ROLLED – bottom: RIM FLAT RIM

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This thimbleful is American, made by Charles Thomae & Sons with cursive lettering for 'Only a Thimble Full'.

[see also: CARTIER – TIFFANY & CO](#)



AMERICAN STERLING SILVER  
CHARLES THOMAE & SONS  
Only a Thimble Full  
BEADED RIM  
GOLD WASH LINING

---

This thimbleful is American, made by Tiffany & Co with cursive lettering for 'Only a Thimble Full'.  
[see also: CARTIER - CHARLES THOMAE & SONS](#)



AMERICAN STERLING SILVER  
TIFFANY & CO  
*Only a Thimble Full*  
BEADED RIM  
GOLD WASH LINING

---

This is another example of a Victorian sterling silver thimbleful. The assay marks are for Birmingham 1876 with the maker's mark of IT, and the raised or applied lettering of 'Just a Thimbleful', with a lovely raised blank cartouche. Note the beading at the rim which has been noted on other Victorian thimblefuls.



(IT) BIRMINGHAM, 1876  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL RAISED LETTERING

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These sterling silver thimblefuls are made by Towle. They also made pewter thimblefuls. These are stamped 'TOWLE Sterling' and lettered 'Just a Thimbleful/Just a Thimble Full' in cursive – some in uppercase; unusual lettering (see [Mauser](#) for identical lettering). Some examples carry additional marks on the base '925' with a stock number of '82'.



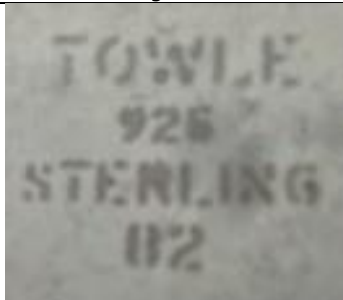
TOWLE STERLING SILVER  
*Just a thimbleful* CURSIVE  
50mm



TOWLE STERLING SILVER  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
THIS EXAMPLE IS ENGRAVED WITH DATE '1909'  
IN CIRCULAR CASE  
49-50mm



TOWLE STERLING SILVER  
*Just a thimble full* CURSIVE  
THIS EXAMPLE IS ENGRAVED WITH OWNER'S INITIALS 'G.D. IV' WITH DATE 'AUGUST 16, 1959'  
31 grams



This is another example of a Victorian sterling silver thimbleful. The assay marks are for Birmingham 1883 with the maker's mark of V&S, for Vaughton & Sons of Birmingham. The raised or applied lettering of 'Just a Thimble full', with a lovely raised blank cartouche.



(V&S) BIRMINGHAM, 1883  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL RAISED LETTERING, CARTOUCHE  
 MARKS STAMPED UPSIDE DOWN

P J VOGEL & Co's thimblefuls are only usually made in silver-plate. This one is hallmarked for Birmingham 1964, and like their metal thimbles, they are sized. This is a 1oz size. The lettering is 'Just a Thimbleful'.



P H VOGEL & CO (PHV&CO) BIRMINGHAM 1964  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL



P H VOGEL & CO (PHV&CO) BIRMINGHAM HALLMARKS



P H VOGEL & CO (PHV&CO) BIRMINGHAM 1972  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 ASSAY MARKS ON BASE  
1.5oz

A rare sterling thimbleful is hallmarked for 1876 and made by George Unite. The 'Just a Thimbleful' lettering is well raised on a finely striated band. It is gilded inside and hallmarked in Birmingham. There is a blank shield cartouche. The base is indented and quite concave.

One Unite thimbleful example has the same shield as the one below left, with a bow and arrow, a quiver and two birds and 'Da Dio Cerco Aiuto' roughly translated as 'From God seek help'.

A similar to the George Unite on the left, this sterling silver thimble on the right is unmarked. 'Just a Thimbleful' with applied lettering is well raised on a finely striated band. It is gilded inside. There is a blank shield.

The centre Thimbleful has blue enamelled lettering and a blue Maltese cross, with hallmarks for George Unite Birmingham 1890.



GEORGE UNITE (GU) BIRMINGHAM 1876  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 RAISED LETTERING  
 R; WITH MONOGRAMS 'FROM'  
 56mm



JUST A THIMBLEFUL RAISED LETTERING  
 NO MAKER'S MARKS  
 1879



GEORGE UNITE (GU) BIRMINGHAM 1890  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 WITH BLUE ENAMELLED LETTERING  
 FLAT RIM  
 56mm



GEORGE UNITE (GU) BIRMINGHAM 1893  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 STIPPLED LETTERING



Sterling silver from Taxco, Mexico. They are marked 'Sterling silver'. The shape of the thimbleful is squarish with square handmade indentations. The thimblefuls have the maker's mark of Uxmal on the base. The lettering is 'Just a Thimbleful' and there is a size mark of 1½.



Webster, thimble silversmiths from the USA, also made sterling thimblefuls. Theirs have the maker's mark on the base and are gilded on the inside. The ornate lettering is 'Only a Thimble Full'. The indentations are markedly different from other sterling thimblefuls, having a beaten or stippled surface. Other examples show a different maker's mark and the thimbleful is strongly indented.



Truly a little gem, this thimbleful is different in two aspects: it stands on its open end and has blue enamelled lettering.

Made by Henry Williamson, hallmarked in London in 1875, with the lettering 'Just a Thimbleful'.

The thimble on the right is a later thimbleful from Henry Williamson & Co - hallmarked in Birmingham 1911. It is as desirable, because of its thistle-shape. Lettered with 'A Wee Drappie'.

The final example by HW has blue enamelled lettering with a Maltese cross and lettered 'Just a Thimbleful', hallmarked in London in 1875. The inside is gilded.



HENRY WILLIAMSON (HW) LONDON 1875  
 BLUE ENAMELLED LETTERING  
JUST A THIMBLEFULL  
 LETTERING TO BE READ WHEN STANDING ON OPEN  
 END  
[see also: BHJ \(1876\) – WJD \(1903\)](#)



HENRY WILLIAMSON LTD (HW) BIRMINGHAM 1911  
A WEE DRAPPIE  
 IN THE SHAPE OF THISTLE



HENRY WILLIAMSON (HW) LONDON 1875  
 BLUE ENAMELLED LETTERING WITH MALTESE CROSS  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL

Thimblefuls were sometimes sold in a designated case. This of red leather, with the top half lifting off the case.



BRITISH  
 1930-1940  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL

This Dublin assayed Irish thimbleful is dated to 1970. Gold wash inner lining but no apparent thimbleful lettering?



DUBLIN 1970  
GOLD WASH LINING  
FLAT RIM

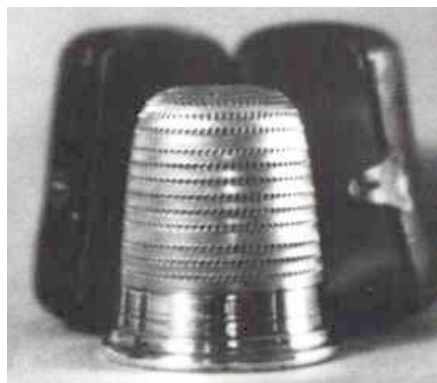
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NOVELTY COMPENDIUM  
JUST A THIMBLEFULL  
BLUE ENAMELLING LETTERING ON SILVER

---

According to Dreesman, "Sometimes the prude phrasing of the shot glass was not put on the drinking thimble itself but on its covering, as on the leather etui of this sterling 'Thimble Full' ".



STERLING  
THIMBLE FULL

---

Tho I have no evidence of hallmarks, this silver thimbleful has finely milled indentations. The lettering 'Just a Thimble Full' is followed by an interesting SYMBOL. Does anyone recognise this mark?



SILVER  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
FLAT RIM

---

The distinctive 'T' (longer downstrokes on the horizontal) on the word thimble, makes this silver thimbleful as different. There are indentations right across the base and the indents on the body are well-formed. Marked 'Sterling 651'. Country of origin unknown.



STERLING SILVER 651  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL

---

This British thimbleful is made by B H Joseph (BHJ) in Birmingham in 1876. Lettered in blue enamelling 'Just a Thimbleful' with a Maltese cross in blue enamelling, finely indented in diamond shapes. The lettering is at the open end of the thimble. Additionally inscribed in Gothic script: 'Walter Fergus Esquire, Largs 19 Jan. 1877'. Housed in a leather fitted case.



B H JOSEPH (BHJ) BIRMINGHAM 1876  
 BLUE ENAMELLED LETTERING WITH MALTESE CROSS  
JUST A THIMBLEFULL  
 LETTERING TO BE READ WHEN STANDING ON OPEN END  
[see also: HW \(1875\) - WJD \(1903\)](#)

This thimbleful has one of the widest plain borders I have seen on thimblefuls. There is a rim of beading under the rim. Made in the USA, as the lettering is 'Only a Thimbleful'



ONLY A THIMBLEFUL

This is an unusual thimble in many aspects. I would presume it was made as a 'one-off' gift. Firstly there is the actual Gothic lettering: 'Just a Thimble Full **Old Man**'. This extra moniker makes one think of a gift – a gift from mates to a fellow drinking-friend.

Are there military connotations?

Secondly there is ornate patterning below the lettering, which is a deeply engraved band with flowers and acanthus: not encountered before in this thimble topic.

Thirdly the indentations are handmade.

Finally there is a gold wash inner lining. There are no other marks – probably British made?



Just a Thimble Full old Man  
 LETTERED IN GOTHIC SCRIPT  
 GOLD WASH LINING  
 51x41mm -54 grams

This German sterling silver thimbleful has no maker's mark. It has the German name for a thimbleful 'Nur Ein Vingerhut Voll' lettered at the rim. It has a blank cartouche on the rim. A second version has applied lettering. No marks on either thimbleful.



NUR EIN FINGERHUT VOLL  
 FLAT RIM  
 55mm



NUR EIN FINGERHUT VOLL  
 FLAT RIM  
 APPLIED LETTERING  
 55mm

## China thimblefuls

Holmes shows a comprehensive selection of crested china and porcelain thimbles. Most of these thimbles stand on their open end like sewing thimbles. Makers here include those made in the Goss tradition (miniature white porcelain bearing an armorial crest), but thimbles by Goss have never been authenticated \*\*

Arkininstall & Sons in Stoke-on-Trent (1904-1924) with the backstamp for Arcadian (terrestrial globe with A&S) though other marks exist.

Wiltshaw & Robinson (1890-1910, with a swallow and WR) and Locke & Co of Worcester (1900-1904).

Other china brands include Willow Art China (1903-1905), Porcelle, Sussex China, and Swan China made by Charles Ford in Stoke-on-Trent (1900-1904).

All of these crested thimbles are lettered with some wording for a thimbleful.

In May 2008, a **Goss** thimbleful was for sale on ebay. The coat-of-arms is for Braemar, Fife. The lettering, which is across the outer apex, is identical to that that appears as below, inside the unmarked Reading thimble.

The lettering is for 'Just a Thimble-Full'. The Braemar thimbleful is also the same as the Reading thimble in that the crest is on a smooth raised shield.

There is a very clear Goss backstamp inside the thimbleful. So for 75 years it appeared that the Goss factory never made thimbles of any kind - the appearance at this time refutes that!! They can't have been made in any number for this one to have finally surfaced from the 1930s!



BRAEMAR FIFE



Other similar china thimblefuls are for 'Arms of Reading' and 'Buxton'. The lettering 'Just a Thimble-full' is on the inside rim. The coat-of-arms is on a raised smooth shield. There are no other maker's marks.

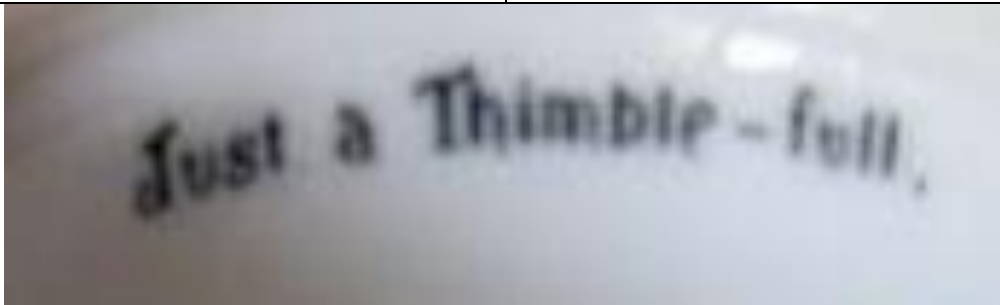
See the blurb above on the recently discovered Goss thimbleful, which is identical to these two china thimblefuls - neither bears a maker's mark - the Braemar one does!  
Are they are Goss-made?



ARMS OF READING



BUXTON



This is quite a recent addition – a new maker Swan China of England. The lettering on the verso is Tak a Thimble Full.



SOUTH QUEENSFERRY  
COAT-OF-ARMS

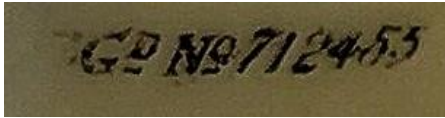




The Arcadian China of Stoke-on-Trent thimblefuls in THIRD AND FOURTH rows have a different lettering: 'Tak a Thimble - Full'  
 It is not lettered around the top of the thimble as is the norm on non-china thimblefuls but printed on the verso.



BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION 1925  
WEMBLEY



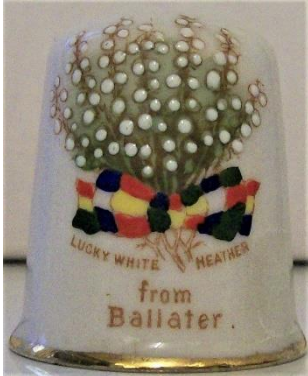
RED<sup>c</sup> N°712453



CITY OF LIVERPOOL



HECKINGTON  
ARKINSTALL



LUCKY WHITE HEATHER FROM BALLATER



RUSSIA  
1914 WAR EDITION



CITY OF BRISTOL



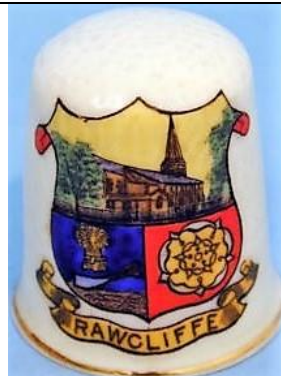
BIRCHINGTON



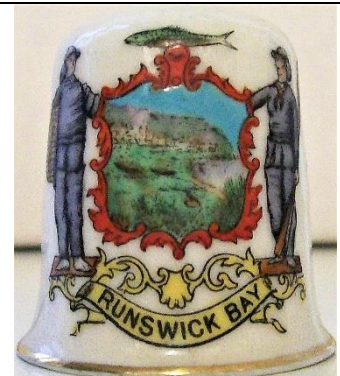
LYMM



MARSKE - ON - SEA



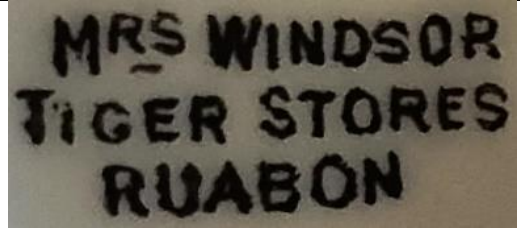
RAWCLIFFE



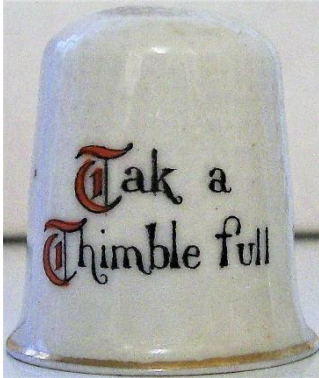
RUNSWICK BAY



WYNNSTAY  
RUABON  
COAT-OF-ARMS



WITH ADDITIONAL LETTERING ON THE INSIDE



VERSO LETTERING FOR ARCADIAN TAK A THIMBLE FULL  
SOME HAVE NO THIMBLEFUL LETTERING



----- ARCADIAN CHINA -----

Other Arcadian (Arkininstall & Sons) place names are  
NEWQUAY - SANDOWN I.W.

---

Edwin Holmes lists the following brands of crested china thimbles, made along the lines of Goss china as 'Arcadian China' and made by the following thimble makers:



THE GREAT WORLD WAR 1914-1918 PEACE NOV 11<sup>TH</sup> 1918  
ARMISTICE NOV 11<sup>TH</sup> 1918 ON VERSO

ARKISTALL & SONS



WILTSHAW & ROBINSON



L: WILTSHAW & ROBINSON - R: CARLTON CHINA  
STOKE-ON-TRENT



CITY OF WORCESTER  
LOCKE & Co



WILLOW ART CHINA  
STOKE-ON-TRENT ENGLAND  
A WEE "DEOCH AN DORIS"  
RICHMOND SURREY  
IN SHAPE OF THISTLE  
WITH TRANSLUCENT CHINA  
'BUBBLED' AROUND THE FATTER PART  
49mm



WILLOW  
ONWARD FLEETWOOD  
COAT-OF-ARMS ON A RAISED SHIELD

There is no uniformity of lettering for the following china thimblefuls: but at least they have that wording.



VICTORIAN WHITE CHINA  
SMOOTH BASE  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL IN GOLD LETTERING  
62mm



three CHINA WITH FLORAL DECALS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL IN GOLD LETTERING  
 54mm

A porcelain thimbleful, decorated on two sides. Different as it has the lettering all on one side, instead of traditionally around the rim. It is made by Enesco.



ENESCO  
 BRITISH CHINA THIMBLEFUL  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL

More recently (1989) Thimble Craft by Shirley, in England, has made grey porcelain thimblefuls - even some for the Dutch market with 'Een Vingerhoed Vol', which measure 37mm.



THIMBLE CRAFT BY SHIRLEY  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 37mm



THIMBLE CRAFT BY SHIRLEY  
EEN VINGERHOED VOL  
 37mm

## Pewter thimblefuls

This traditional-sized thimbleful is of pewter. The rim is flatly rolled, with 'Just a Thimble Full' with indentations going under the base. The base is concave in the centre.

There are Perfection Pewter thimblefuls that have the Gothic lettering 'Thimble Full'. The maker's mark is on the base and they are a large size.

Pewter by Poole - the lettering is 'Just a Thimbleful' in cursive. The maker's marks are on the plain base with the symbol of a candlestick with a snuffer. Some examples have the place of manufacture viz - Taunton, Mass. So, these thimblefuls go against the norm with 'Just ...' not 'Only ...' for these American-made thimblefuls.



JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
FLAT RIM



PERFECTION PEWTER  
Thimble Full  
OVER TWO LINES  
88mm



JUST A THIMBLE FULL



PEWTER BY POOLE  
Just a Thimbleful CURSIVE  
WELL ROLLED RIM

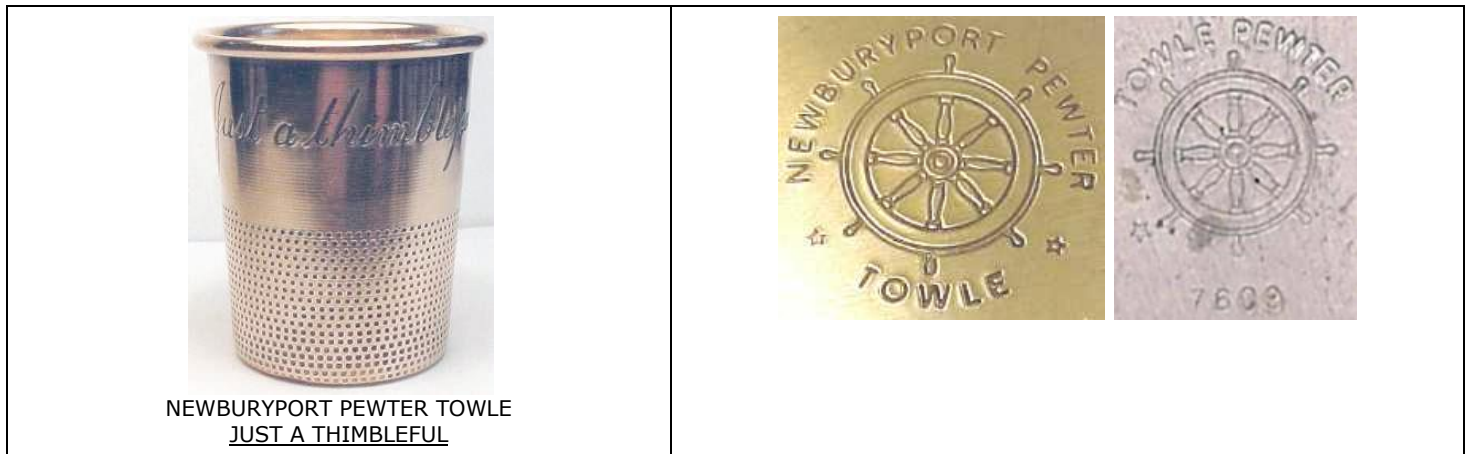


R: DESIGN NO 3205

NewburyPort Pewter Towle, cursive lettering around is 'Just a Thimbleful'. The maker's marks are on the plain base with the symbol of a ship's wheel. Tho these are made of pewter they are brass-coloured.

From their website, I have the following information on Towle. Towle Silversmiths was founded by the Moulton family of Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1690.

They were taken over in 1986 by Syratech Corporation.



NEWBURYPORT PEWTER TOWLE  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL

Feldman of Germany had four sizes of pewter thimbles for sale in the early 1990s. They are made in Sheffield. The lettering is 'Just a Thimble Full'.



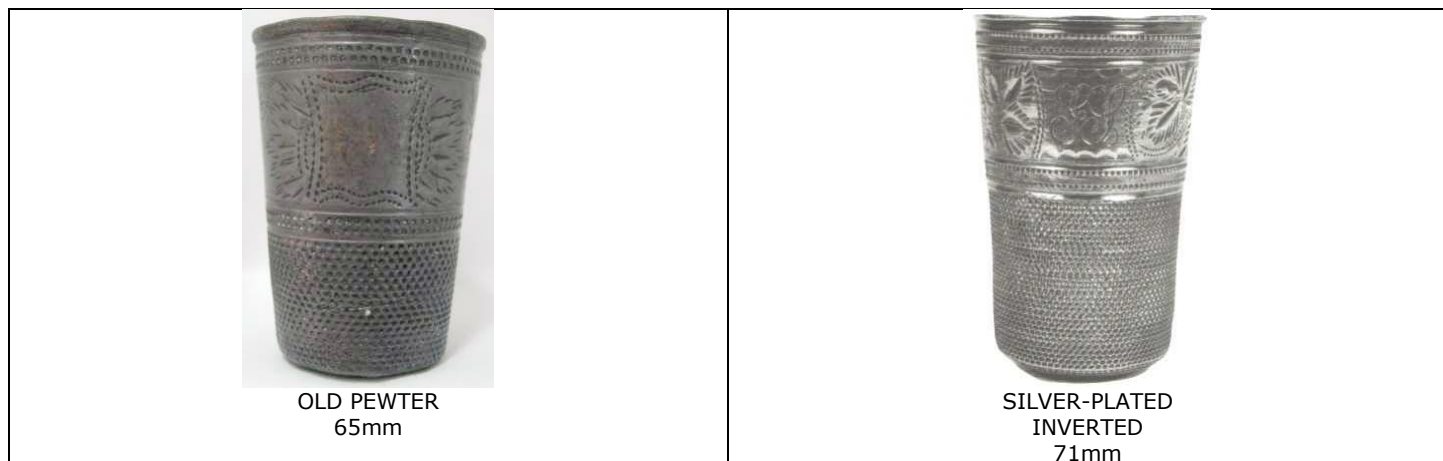
MODERN SHEFFIELD PEWTER THIMBLES IN FOUR SIZES  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL

This English Pewter thimbleful had the maker's marks lettered on the base. Marked there is English Pewter and Made in England, with the maker's initials of T M L in italics. The thimble is squat in shape and lettered 'Just a Thimble Full' over three lines.



T M L  
ENGLISH PEWTER JUST A THIMBLE FULL

The following two thimbles are similar. Both are Victorian, one being of pewter, the other of silver-plate. Neither have any thimbleful lettering. The one on the right is pictured inverted in Holmes. The monogram shows it is meant to be this way up. The bases are indented. Neither have any lettering, so technically can't be called thimblefuls? Do you agree?



Made in England of polished pewter this 2oz thimbleful on the left has 'Just a Thimble Full' engraved on the rim.

The thimbleful in the centre is made by British Nobleman Pewterware and has on the base 'Made by Craftsmen Sheffield England' and lettered 'Just a Thimble Full'. Some seem identical, just with different "makers names"!! The lettering on all of this batch of thimblefuls is narrower than usual

Then there's the example of one of these thimblefuls being altered by the addition of a handle.





These thimblefuls are by William Adams - and also of Sheffield - most of the pewter thimbles seem to originate here - 'Made by a Craftsman' - again lettering associated with this batch of British pewter thimblefuls. The lettering on all of this maker of thimblefuls is narrower than usual, as those above. There are two different maker's marks but the one on the right is double the size of that on the left.



WILLIAM ADAMS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
'MADE BY A CRAFTSMAN IN SHEFFIELD ENGLAND'  
50mm



WILLIAM ADAMS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
'MADE BY A CRAFTSMAN IN SHEFFIELD ENGLAND'  
120mm



WILLIAM ADAMS  
2 MARKS:- MAKER'S NAME LETTERED IN CURSIVE  
+ B OVER P & C  
ALL WITHIN A LARGE 'A'  
INSIDE A CIRCLE FOR ASSOCIATION OF ENGLISH PEWTER  
CRAFTSMAN



FINE ENGLISH PEWTER  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
'MADE BY CRAFTSMAN IN SHEFFIELD ENGLAND'  
HAS BEEN ALTERED BY ADDITION OF HANDLE

Other pewter thimblefuls made in England are (left) this 'Just a Thimble Full' engraved around the band and with a heavy rolled rim. This thimbleful is made by Mastercraft Pewter, Sheffield. It is double the usual height of thimblefuls.

The one in the middle is smaller with Just a Thimble Full, also made in Sheffield. The right-hand thimbleful is Fine English Pewter made for Smyth. It is also a large thimbleful.



This pewter thimbleful is of an unusual shape with differently shaped indentations - in a wavy shape? No other details are available.



JUST A THIMBLE FULL

This lovely old pewter thimbleful is in the shape of a thistle and is lettered 'A Wee Drappie' with stylised floral-type marks and dot-type indentations. The floral markings may be a maker's mark or have a decorative purpose, being placed between word? This example seems to have seen better days, but the lettering is still well defined!

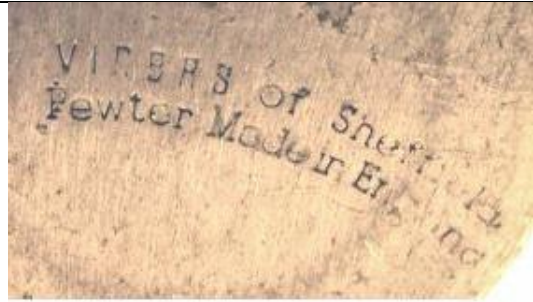


A WEE DRAPPIE

This pewter thimbleful is from Viners of Sheffield and marked 'Just a Thimble Full', with 'Pewter Made in England' lettered on the base.



SILVER METAL  
VINERS OF SHEFFIELD  
PEWTER MADE IN ENGLAND  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
48mm



This pewter thimbleful has no maker's marks. Just a thimble full is lettered around on a plain band.



JUST A THIMBLE FULL LETTERED ON A PLAIN BAND

As well as having sterling silver thimblefuls, Cartier also had pewter thimblefuls. Marked on the base is the lettering Genuine English pewter, with a 4oz mark (that makes this a VERY large thimbleful. . The rest of that size mark is illegible. Made in England is the last of the lettering. Around the band is 'Just a thimble full'.



CARTIER  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL LETTERED ON A WIDE PLAIN BAND



## Glass thimblefuls

Slag glass is the residue from completed items in glassworks where iron is incorporated in the glass. The usual colours are opaque and mottled from purple to deep blues. The rims are usually very thick.

Thimblefuls of slag glass are associated with Sowerby & Co of Gateshead, which used the peacock's head in relief as their makers' mark, made between 1860 and 1880.

Other makers were Greener & Co and George Davidson & Co. The bases are indented.



AMBER GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
AMBER  
66mm



BLUE GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
BLUE  
66mm



SLAG GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
1900-1930  
GREYS



SLAG GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
BROWNS



SLAG GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL



SLAG GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
BLUE



SLAG GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
clear  
65mm



PRESSED GLASS  
 GEORGE DAVIDSON & CO  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 c.1890

These PRESSED glass thimblefuls have knobbed or BERRY indentations.



GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 43mm



BROWN  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL



GEORGE DAVIDSON & CO  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 LIME GREEN



MORGAN - INDIANA USA  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 GILT GLAZE



TWO-COLOURS GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 MAUVE HANDPAINTED NAÏVE-STYLE FLOWERS



MOSER - OHIO USA  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 GREEN

These glass thimblefuls have different indentations.



FROSTED - BROWN - PURPLE  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL  
 PEACOCK SYMBOL ON BASE FOR SOWERBY GLASS, ENGLAND  
 56mm

This clear glass thimbleful is totally unmarked.  
It is the green faux leather case that is lettered with 'A Thimble Full' in cursive.  
Case marked 'Made in Germany' on base.



CLEAR GLASS  
A THIMBLE FULL  
LETTERED ON THE TOP OF CASE

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This glass thimbleful has Bavaria lettered on the base.  
The maroon faux leather case is lettered 'A Thimble Full'



CLEAR GLASS  
A THIMBLE FULL  
LETTERED ON TOP OF THE CASE  
'BAVARIA' LETTERED ON BASE

---

In its original case, this clear ridged glass thimbleful has no lettering - the lettering 'Just a Thimbleful' lettered in cursive on the top of the faux leather case.



CLEAR RIDGED GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
LETTERED ON TOP OF THE CASE

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This is a very interesting thimbleful sold on ebay in 2013. There is an 'R<sup>D</sup>. 230818' lettered, which indicates the registered design issued to Saunders & Shepherd (UK) on 17 April 1894. Lettered 'Just a Thimbleful' and there is a self-patterned daisy-pattern all over.



DAISY-PATTERNED GLASS  
JUST A THIMBLEFUL  
 'R<sup>D</sup>. 230818' LETTERED ON BASE

This pair of glass thimblefuls shows one shadowing the colour of the other. The clear example has measurements on the inner side for '1½oz'. The indentations are decaled. No further details available.



A PAIR OF GLASS DECALED THIMBLES  
JUST A THIMBLE FULL

This glass medicine measuring cup is marked in blue for tablespoon and teaspoon measures. It is accompanied by a red case lettered with 'A Thimble full'. No further details available.



GLASS MEDICINE MEASURE IN BLUE MARKS WITH TABLESPOON AND TEASPOON MEASURES. THE REDCASE IS IN CURSIVE LETTERING.  
A THIMBLE FULL



## Plastic thimblefuls

One has to be careful when purchasing plastic thimblefuls. Unless they are indented to look like thimbles, they could be plastic beakers, dice cups etc.

Known as a barrel set, these four opaque plastic thimblefuls are housed in the brown-coloured plastic beaker. They are marked on the base 'Justa Thimble Full' with an unknown maker's mark of a stylised crown. These are the first of the thimblefuls that I have encountered with the thimbleful lettering on the base.

Different packaging for the same clear plastic thimblefuls is a leatherette tubular zipped case.



CLEAR PLASTIC  
JUSTA THIMBLE FULL  
LETTERED ON BASE WITH STYLISED CROWN SYMBOL  
FOUR THIMBLEFULS IN PLASTIC CONTAINER - BARREL SET



CROWN MARK IS ALSO ON BASE OF BEAKER



PLASTIC  
JUSTA THIMBLE FULL  
LETTERED ON BASE WITH STYLISED CROWN SYMBOL  
TWO THIMBLEFULS IN LEATHERETTE ZIPPER TUBULAR CONTAINER



NAMED ON BASE OF THIMBLEFUL

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Thomas James Wylie

This listing of Thimblefuls 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.

EMAIL [thimbleselect@bigpond.com](mailto:thimbleselect@bigpond.com) TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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