

George Unite (GU) sterling silver thimbles and needlework tools 1850s-1930

Birmingham England

When I completed my topics on Samuel Foskett and Charles May, I thought I'd covered the last of my minor Victorian English thimble silversmiths topics. I don't have a George Unite thimble in my own collection, so I guess he wasn't really on my radar?

George Unite (pronounced without a strong "e" at the end) is one of the earliest "modern" Victorian thimble makers. His maker's marks were registered in 1832 at the Birmingham Assay Office and GU ceased all silver production in 1928, when the firm's name was George Unite & Sons & Lyle Ltd (GUS&L). No thimbles are recorded with this later maker's mark.

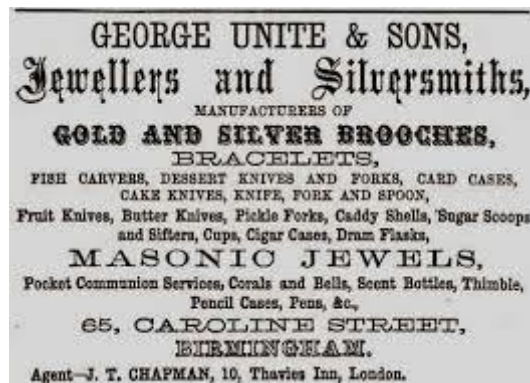
The first recorded hallmark date for one of this thimble maker's thimbles is 1872. There may be many more un-hallmarked Unite thimbles around - they just didn't have to be hallmarked by law in England before 1884 - but we will never be able to identify them.

Thimbles formed a small part of this prolific silversmith's output, but he did make a range of needlework tools - including chatelaines. He produced gold thimbles and silver thimblefuls as well.

I haven't come across a thimble by Unite yet with a size marking. There is an exception every time with the first being recorded for 1903 - no size marks for thimbles after this date - as yet.



maker's mark



George Unite & Sons Jewellers and Silversmiths advertisement
which mentions thimble

George Unite thimbles



1872



1876

Just a Thimbleful

R: shield with two monograms separated by 'From'



1877
gold



1880
scalloped rim



1882
wriggle-work



1883
Just a Thimbleful



1884
faceted rim
wriggle-work



1888



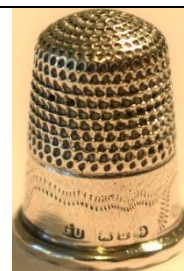
1890
Just a Thimbleful
blue enamelled lettering



1891
chased with highly patterned apex
with figures in cameos



1894
chased with highly patterned apex
with figures in cameos



1894
wriggle-work



1896
blackberries



1896 1897
wriggle-work



1897
blackberries



1897



1898
wriggle-work



1899
angels



1900
blackberries



1900



1901
vertical daisy and blackberry panels



1901



1901
patterned floral band



1901



1903
blackberries
size 8



1904



1913



1925
9ct gold
size 6



1925 1926
9ct gold - 15ct gold
size 9 - size 10



1926
9ct gold



1930



wriggle-work



9ct



wriggle-work



ornate band
9ct carat



Windsor Castle



Lichfield Cathedral
1850s



scenic thimble in silver-gilt
train on a bridge

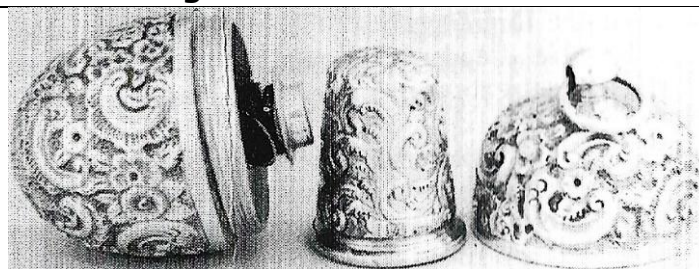


1880s
floral scalloped rim
Victoria's head is part of the obscured hallmark



gold
galleried band

George Unite needlework tools



1875
egg-shaped sewing kit in repousse, contains a combined needleholder and cotton spool



1876
smooth egg-shaped spool holder
with suspension chain



1888
chased egg-shaped thimble holder with suspension chain
daisies on the lid match some of his thimbles



1888

silver-gilt thimble case with suspension loop



1892

scissors sheath



1894

thimble holder bucket



1894

chased egg-shaped thimble holder with suspension chain
knob on lid and base



1898 1899

chased thimble holder bucket
L: showing velvet lining



1898

five chain chatelaine
no attachments



1899

chased egg-shaped thimble holder with suspension chain



1899

4-5 chain chatelaine



1901

chased egg-shaped thimble holder with suspension chain knob on lid



thimble-tape measure combination
acanthus patterning on lid of tape measure

Contributors

Carolyn Meacham-Elegant Arts | William Isbister | Ray Nimmo | Wolf-Dieter Scholz

This listing of George Unite silver thimbles and sewing tools does not purport to be complete or accurate in all aspects.

Rather it invites comments and contributions to add to our knowledge. My thanks to the contributors.

EMAIL thimbleselect@bigpond.com TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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