

George Unite (GU) sterling silver thimbles and needlework tools

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.

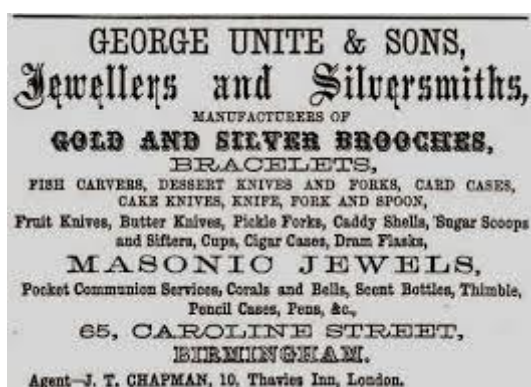
The first recorded hallmark date for one of this thimble maker's thimbles is 1872. There may be many more un-hallmarked Unite thimbles around - they just didn't have to be hallmarked by law in England before 1884 - but we will never be able to identify them.

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.



George Unite's maker's mark



George Unite & Sons Jewellers and Silversmiths advertisement
which mentions 'thimble'

Unite thimbles George



1872



1876

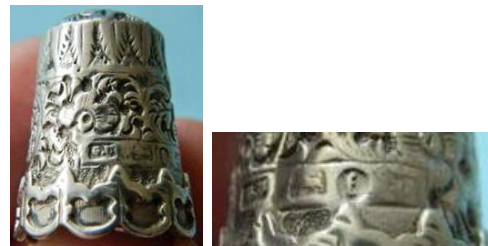
Just a Thimbleful
applied lettering

R: bears a shield with two monograms separated by 'From'



1877

gold
such a pretty band



1880

richly embossed all over
including the apex
scalloped rim



1882

faceted rim
wriggle-work band



1883

Just a Thimbleful



1884

faceted rim
wriggle-work band



1890 (

Just a Thimbleful
with blue enamel lettering



1894

ornately chased with highly patterned apex with figures in cameos



1894

wriggle-work band



1896

blackberries



1897

with Lizzie engraved on the band



1896/1897

wriggle-work band
R: faceted rim



1897

blackberries band



1898

wriggle-work band
faceted rim



1899

with angels



1900

blackberries



1900



1900



1901



1901

vertical daisy and blackberries panels



1901
richly patterned floral band



1901



1903
blackberries
size 8



1904



1913



1925
9ct gold
faceted rim
size 6



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



1930



wriggle-work band



lovely ornate band
with blank cartouche
marked for 9ct carat gold
but date letter is illegible



wriggle-work band
faceted rim



scenic thimble for Windsor Castle



scenic thimble in silver-gilt
showing a train on a bridge



1880s

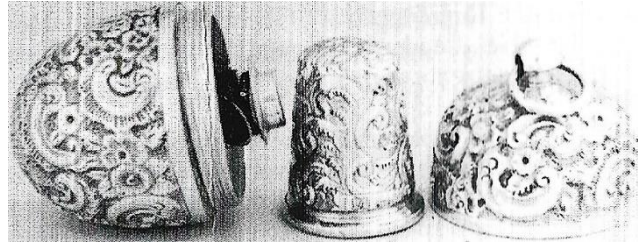
floral scalloped rim with upper scallops
Victoria's head is part of the obscured hallmark



gold

galleried band and dainty floral band

George Unite needlework tools



1875

egg-shaped sewing kit in repousse, with suspension loop
contains a combined needleholder and cotton spool
thimble is not marked



1876

smooth egg-shaped spool holder
with suspension chain
for a chatelaine



1888

heavily chased egg-shaped thimble holder with
suspension chain for a chatelaine
daisies on the lid match some of his thimbles



1888

silver-gilt thimble case with suspension loop for a
chatelaine



1892

scissors sheath



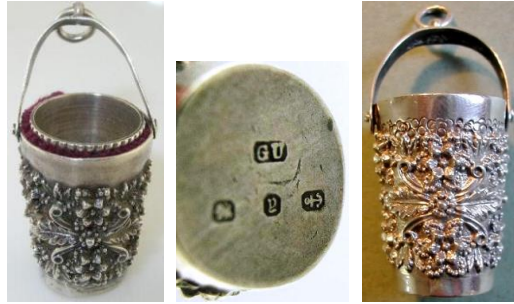
1894

thimble holder bucket
with suspension loop for a chatelaine



1894

heavily chased egg-shaped thimble holder with suspension chain for a chatelaine with heavy knob on lid and end



1898/1899

highly chased thimble holder bucket with suspension loop for a chatelaine
L: showing velvet lining



1898

5 chain chatelaine
no attachments



1899

chased egg-shaped thimble holder with suspension chain for a chatelaine



1899

4-5 chain chatelaine



1901

heavily chased egg-shaped thimble holder with suspension chain for a chatelaine
solid smooth knob on lid



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

Contributors

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This listing of George Unite silver thimbles and sewing tools 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 TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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