

Thimble Collectors Club Certificates

Abbey China <--> Aynsley

Thimble Collectors Club

The Butterfly ABBEY CHINA, England

There is nothing in all of nature that is more fragile and brilliantly hued than a butterfly's wing – and nor, perhaps, is there any phenomenon more startling than the transformation of a chrysalis into one of Earth's loveliest creatures. The fascination of watching a butterfly spread its wings to the sunshine for the first time is one that grips us all, young and old. Names such as Scarlet Admiral and Peacock testify to the charm they exert, for no mundane title would be good enough for these glorious beauties. The sight of butterflies dancing from flower to flower is part of our summers, and it is a delight indeed to watch them embellishing gardens and meadows like living jewels, touching the dullest day with enchantment.

This beautifully decorated thimble comes from Abbey China, a young porcelain house situated near Evesham, in the green heart of England. Founded in 1992, it employs a small team of fine craftsmen whose talents are gaining it an early reputation for the high quality of its wares.

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The Minstrel ACCORN FINE CHINA, Wales

A vast and lofty medieval hall is the unusual setting for the splendid scene on our Minstrel thimble. The banquet is over, and the host and his guests are settling back to enjoy the entertainment put on in their honour. The musicians begin their song – and are immediately interrupted by a figure in full motley, cap and bells, running in with his own song, a joke and a chuckle – the jester! After he has had his turn, the music begins again, and this time the minstrels, on lute, small shawm and drum, with a stringer at the back, are allowed to finish their performance. Their music might seem strangely unpolished to our unaccustomed ears; but, echoing around the great hall, it must have had a magical effect.

This thimble has been designed and made for us by Accorn Fine China, a small family business based in Wales. Accorn makes thimbles and a range of other attractive gift and collectors' items in bone china, and is rapidly making its mark as a producer of high-quality wares.

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Thimble Collectors Club

"Blackberry Bush" Thimble

AFAN VALLEY

POTTERY
MADE IN WALES

AFAN VALLEY POTTERY - Wales

Amid the tangled web of thorny vines, blackberries begin to ripen — welcoming joyful groups of children to come along and pick the delicious fruits. A colorfully vibrant design decorates this handsomely-shaped bone china thimble, the first ever crafted by the skilled artisans of Afan Valley Pottery.

Located in the Afan (pronounced Avan) Valley which runs approximately 15 miles from Abergwynfi to Port Talbot in Southern Wales, Afan Valley Pottery is one of the many new potteries which have sprung up in this area. For decades, the entire valley was devoted to coal mining, and the destructive mining processes took their toll on the land. By the late 1950's, however, most of the mines had been exhausted, and the entire industry shut down within a few years. The entire valley has since made a remarkable comeback due in large part to the exhaustive landscaping undertaken by the proud residents of the valley.

Celebrating the rebirth of the area, Afan Valley Pottery proudly decorates its wares with natural designs taken from the surrounding foliage and wildlife. This "Blackberry Bush" thimble, a fine example of the bold designs favored by the pottery, has been exclusively created for the enjoyment of Thimble Collectors Club members.

Peaches AFAN VALLEY POTTERY, Wales

ARRIVING in the market place just as the best strawberries are about to disappear, the soft, luscious peach is welcomed as the next favourite summer fruit. The English have to work hard for a native peach — training fan-shaped trees against south or west-facing walls, protecting them from frosts and willing the sun to shine, to ripen the fruit and sweeten the juice. But a perfect peach is a joy to see. Not for nothing are our prettiest girls said to have a 'peaches and cream' complexion! And the word is used to describe almost anything that is especially fine and pleasing. This 'peach' of a thimble shows fruits so delicious that we feel we could pick and eat them now.

The Afan (pronounced Avan) river runs from Abergwynfi to Port Talbot, a distance of approximately fifteen miles, in south-west Wales. Once an area devoted to coal mining, the Afan valley has in recent years been landscaped and planted with trees to return it to its original natural beauty, and now attracts many visitors. Many traditional craftsmen, including potters, have settled to work in the delightful rural setting of the valley. Afan Valley Pottery is in the upper Afan Valley, and produces gift ware and souvenirs of the most enticing kind.

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Mandarin Ducks AKEMI, Japan

One of the most delightful sights of spring is a mother duck marshalling her brood across a busy pond. At her command they fall into line behind her and with their jerky, bobbing movements they might almost be a row of clockwork toys. Only a few days out of their eggs, the little ducklings are able to dive for food, their oversized webbed feet driving them strongly into the depths before they fizz up to the surface again like champagne corks.

This charming thimble has been produced exclusively for the Thimble Collectors Club by Akemi of Japan. Established in 1940 in Mizunami City, the company was formerly known as Sue-Ceramics. 'Akemi' was the name of the owner's beloved daughter and, when she married, so much was she missed that the factory was renamed after her.

Stephen Lings, who painted this captivating scene, is a well-known natural history artist who has spent much time at Slimbridge – home of the Wildfowl Trust – studying waterbirds, and his love of them is evident in this typical example of his delicate work. Together, Stephen Lings and Akemi have created an exquisite thimble which will bring lasting pleasure to collectors.

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Mandarin Duck Thimble



AKEMI PORCELAIN - Japan

The colorful, crested Mandarin duck — or "Oshidori," as it is known in Japan — provides a delightful decorative motif for this porcelain thimble from Akemi. The design was reproduced from a painting by well-known nature artist, Stephen Lings, and was commissioned especially for this thimble.

Established in the city of Mizunami in 1940, this outstanding porcelain house bears the name of its founder's daughter, Akemi. For nearly a half-century, the firm has brought the distinctive and personal touch of its founder to a wide range of high-quality porcelain wares. Fine craftsmanship and decorative motifs imbued with special meaning in the Japanese culture give both beauty and unique appeal to Akemi's products. Like the Mandarin duck, which represents marital harmony and happiness, many of Akemi's designs reflect the traditional values of Japan.

Available exclusively from The Thimble Collectors Club, the Akemi "Oshidori" Thimble will be a charming and unusual addition to any collection.

Thimble Collectors Club

Floral Fantasy ALBANY, England

To the discerning collector of fine porcelain pieces, this exclusive Albany thimble displays not only colourful contemporary artistry, but also a quality of design that sets it apart from the work of other manufacturers.

The Albany Fine China Company is, by general standards at least, a relatively new name in quality porcelain. They attribute their sudden rise to fame to a perfect combination of modern craft skills and a highly developed understanding of art and design.

Always striving for perfection in whatever they produce, Albany China products, both modern and traditional, attract much acclaim from not only those directly involved in their production, but from collectors worldwide who appreciate the excellence of the craftsmanship involved.

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Flower Garland ALTENKUNSTADT, Germany

Blue, red, yellow, violet, softest pink and light, fresh green – all the colours of a summer garden are vividly represented in this attractive new thimble. With its lush garland of flowers, it brings to mind the decorations for a country wedding – one can imagine a sunny little church bedecked with such fragrant garlands, the organ music soaring, the bride and groom, happy as they walk down the aisle as man and wife. One can almost hear the laughing children, no longer having to be on their best behaviour, and the crowd of cheerfully chatting relations and well-wishers in their finery. Even the thimble's rim is beautifully fashioned with scallops – just like the hem of the prettiest, pure white wedding dress.

The Altenkunstadt porcelain house, which brings us this charming floral thimble, will soon be celebrating its fiftieth birthday – which is still young in terms of European ceramics companies. From a small building situated in the Oberfranken region of the Bavarian hills, the Altenkunstadt artists produce a range of beautiful wall plaques and many other gift items. They take great pride in their special skills of exquisite, colourful and elaborate decoration, and justly deserve their excellent reputation for craftsmanship.

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Flower Bouquet Thimble



ALTENKUNSTADT PORZELLAN - West Germany

A garland of multi-colored flowers, a scalloped rim and an interesting use of both bisque and glazed porcelain have been combined to create this beautiful and unusual thimble from Altenkunstadt Porzellan.

Founded in 1933, this outstanding firm took its name from the small Bavarian town in which it is located. While other German porcelain houses were emphasizing form and shape by producing plain white wares – Altenkunstadt concentrated on reviving the naturalistic and colorful floral motifs identified with 17th-century Bavarian artisans. Today, these delicate blossoms are painted in lovely shades of mulberry, blue-violet and rose-pink on the custom-produced gift items and decorative wares which are Altenkunstadt's speciality.

The exceptionally white porcelain and superb artistry which distinguish Altenkunstadt's products are exemplified by the "Flower Bouquet Thimble." It is available exclusively from The Thimble Collectors Club.

Elephants AMMONITE STUDIO, Wales

The vast savannah landscapes of Africa are home to the great African elephant, monarch of all he surveys. Here we see a handsome specimen, in full tusk, with a calf behind him, stepping majestically down to the watering hole for his daily drink and shower bath. Contrary to what one might expect, the elephant is a gentle giant, and a careful walker, unwilling to crush even the tiniest of animals beneath his enormous feet. A strict vegetarian, he seeks only enough green leaves to keep him healthy, but, with his great bulk, in some animals reaching as much as eight tonnes in weight, he might need several small trees to satisfy his appetite.

This dramatic thimble has been made for us by Ammonite Studio, a small Welsh pottery company in the Vale of Glamorgan, just two miles from the heritage coast. The cliffs in the area are subject to constant erosion and collapse, and a great many ammonite fossils are often discovered there – hence the name of the pottery. The studio, situated near an area of great beauty, uses artists with a particular interest in the subject of wildlife.

The Fruit Basket ANNA-PERENNA, Germany

What could be more evocative of late summer than this luscious cornucopia of fruits? A rich harvest of apples and pears, plums and gooseberries, cherries and currants, displayed in a glorious medley and interspersed with flowers and foliage, tumbles over our latest thimble from Anna-Perenna Porcelain. With its mellow colouring, this thimble would make a highly attractive – and mouth-watering! – addition to any collection.

Anna-Perenna Porcelain was founded twenty-one years ago in northern Bavaria, Germany, by Mr Klaus D. Vogt, the former president of the well-known house of Rosenthal Porcelain in the United States and Canada. Anna-Perenna is known and respected throughout Europe for its innovative and demanding technological advances in the manufacture of fine porcelain and its artistic decoration. It specialises in the production of limited edition collector's items, such as plates, bells, cups and saucers, and thimbles. The high-quality work of Anna-Perenna's team of dedicated craftsmen is displayed in many museums, and is to be found in collections around the world.

Thimble Collectors Club

Gold Band Thimble

»**AOFI**«
Porzellan

AOFI — West Germany

A dazzling band of pure 24kt gold in an intricate and fascinating pattern decorates this breathtaking thimble from AOFI of West Germany. Featuring both burnished and highly polished finishes, the rich gold contrasts dramatically with the snowy white porcelain.

Anton and Oskar Fisher founded the firm which bears their initials for the sole purpose of preserving the techniques of applying encrusted gold ornamentations on porcelain. Admired since ancient times, the lavish and ornate embellishment of ceramic wares with precious gold was prevalent on the porcelain of China's Ming and Ch'ing dynasties . . . on Japan's renowned "Imari" wares . . . and on European porcelain of the mid-19th century Baroque period. Also, gold-encrusted porcelain has always been highly coveted in Persia and the Middle East, where AOFI currently boasts a large clientele.

The meticulously detailed artisanship, combined with the gleaming aura of 24kt gold, makes this thimble a spectacular addition to your collection. The AOFI "Gold Band Thimble" is available exclusively from the Thimble Collectors Club.

Thimble Collectors Club

Aegean Summer APOLLON, Greece

Greece must surely be one of the most fascinating countries in Europe, bearing the traces of her illustrious past when she was home to one of the world's great civilisations. Such monuments as the Parthenon, the Temple of Athena and the great amphitheatres still remain to fill us with awe at the breathtaking achievements of over 2000 years ago, while the beauty of the landscape and the blue Aegean Sea is eternal. The rocky hills, studded with cypress and olive trees, have changed little over the centuries, tended by country folk who live in harmony with the land. Traditions remain strong here, and at festival time the people don their distinctive national dress and sing and dance to the music of the bouzouki.

The Apollon company was founded in the nineteenth century in the biggest town on the island of Rhodes, Archangelos, which has a proud history as the site of ceramic kilns since ancient times. Apollon is currently enjoying a period of rapid growth, and its vases, plates and decorative items are eagerly sought after by collectors all over the world.

Thimble Collectors Club

Aegean Summer Thimble



APOLLON - Rhodes, Greece

Thimble Collectors Club

Gold Imari ARITA, Japan

These bright orange-red flowers, lavishly enhanced with 22 carat gold, look truly stunning against the pure white porcelain of this Gold Imari thimble from Arita of Japan. Reflecting over three centuries of Japanese porcelain-making, the brilliant colours and distinctive decorative style can be traced to the craftsmen who constructed porcelain kilns at Arita, on the island of Kyushu, in the early 1600's, and later exported their beautiful wares from the nearby harbour at Imari.

The family of Tetsuo Matsumoto, who established Arita in 1905, have been practising their craft in Japan's major porcelain-making centre since the seventeenth century.

Characteristic of the early wares exported to Europe from Imari, the elaborate and boldly coloured design on this exquisite thimble carries on the decorating traditions handed down from generation to generation of the Matsumoto family.

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For the US certificate see Gold Imari Arita

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Waterlilies ARZBERG, Germany

The beautiful design for this thimble was painted by Liverpool-born artist Jennifer Eachus, who was awarded the prestigious Benson & Hedges Gold Award in 1982. Jennifer has brilliantly captured the atmospheric charm of a garden pool. Delicate waterlilies open their fragrant, many-petalled flowers to the morning sun, lily pads provide shade for passing fish, and a jewel-like dragon fly pauses momentarily before continuing on its way.

The tradition of Bavarian porcelain, which is greatly esteemed for its translucence, whiteness and strength, is among the oldest in the Western world. Indeed, it was in nearby Saxony over two and a half centuries ago that true porcelain was first developed in Europe. Arzberg — both the company and the people who live and work in and around the town — have been famous for their porcelain for generations. Arzberg is one of the pioneers of contemporary chinaware design and has won many international awards.

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Blue Satsuma AVONVALE, Wales

The early porcelain makers of China and Korea jealously guarded the secrets of their trade, and it was not until the sixteenth century, during the Momoyama period, that Japan was able to discover how to make this highly prized ware. Momoyama was the name of the magnificent palace that belonged to the great general Hideyoshi, whose military genius was matched by his interest in the arts. Under his rule Japan embarked on a period of prosperity and peace, when fine palaces and elaborate costumes were the order of the day, inspiring artists and craftsmen to experiment with new ideas and techniques. One of Hideyoshi's generals, having conducted a military campaign in Korea, brought back porcelain makers from that country to enrich Japan's artistic heritage still further. The captured Koreans were established in the province of Satsuma, which gave its name to a type of ware with a warm, creamy ground and lavish decoration.

Our beautifully painted thimble harks back to the days of early Japanese porcelain making. Avonvale, a young porcelain house in South Wales, specializes in ornamental pieces which are hand-painted by skilled craftsmen, and this thimble links the company with a tradition that began centuries ago on the other side of the world.

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Fox Cub AVONVALE, Wales

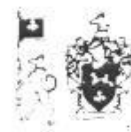
The beautiful British fox is legendary for his cunning. He also has a sharp intelligence, acute hearing and a keen sense of smell. Once a creature of the open countryside, the fox is an increasingly common sight in even our most bustling towns. Suburban life suits him fine. In fact, he is more than happy to take up residence in a derelict building, finding this to be a fine home for his family which requires far less work than digging an earth! At night he comes out to forage for food, prospering on a diet of rats and mice supplemented by the tasty scraps we discard. Their cubs are born in the early Spring and nowadays are just as likely to grow up playing in an overgrown garden as in a remote wood!

Avonvale is a young company which is swiftly building a fine reputation. Its factory in Tondy, South Wales, specialises in handcrafted ornamental pieces which are handpainted by a highly skilled team of artists. With this lovely thimble, Avonvale, in collaboration with artist Adam Hook, have again demonstrated the high quality of workmanship so sought after by discerning collectors.

Thimble Collectors Club

Fox Cub Thimble

Avonvale



Peering over a colorful patch of wildflowers at a meadow's edge, the fox cub's golden-red fur glistens in the morning sunlight. The shy and cunning denizen of the woodlands decorates this delightful bone china thimble from Avonvale, Limited.

Established in 1987, Avonvale Limited has already earned a place on the roster of England's most prestigious porcelain houses with its finely crafted ornamental china, including porcelain sculpture of animals and birds, and a special line of miniature English cottages in various architectural styles. Headquartered in Worcester, England, its founder, P.T.V. Palmer, oversees a close-knit team of craftsmen and artists who design and decorate each item with careful attention to even the smallest detail. The firm accepts special commissions and has even produced a bone china model of Nashville's famous Grand Ole Opry.

The outstanding quality of Avonvale Limited's workmanship can be seen in the clearly defined detail of the "Fox Cub Thimble," available exclusively from The Thimble Collectors Club.

Thimble Collectors Club

Canal Boat AYNSLEY, England

Slow and stately, the narrow, flat-bottomed canal boat steers a steady course along the still waters – two dogs on board contentedly survey the peaceful scene. These distinctive boats were once widely used for transporting goods from one place to another, and in the days before mechanisation were often pulled by a heavy horse that plodded along the towpath. Nowadays, they are more frequently used by holidaymakers seeking to escape the hurly-burly of modern life. A lock to be negotiated on the canal gives interest and diversion, but there is plenty of time to admire the traditional, brightly coloured 'barge art' that decorates the sides of the boats, whilst contemplating, one hand steadying the tiller, the slow beauty of the world as it drifts lazily by.

All the care and skill that Aynsley China put into making fine bone china for royalty has gone into the crafting of this enchanting thimble. The company's founder, John Aynsley, became one of Stoke-on-Trent's very first Master Potters some two centuries ago and, since that time, the company has produced fine chinaware through nine reigns of the British royal family.

Thimble Collectors Club

Canal Boat Thimble



AYNSLEY CHINA – Stoke-On-Trent, England

Colorfully decorated houseboat barges, reflected on the mirror-smooth surface of a placid canal, provide a picturesque motif for this lovely bone-china thimble from one of England's oldest and best-known porcelain houses. The meticulously depicted scene – featuring a barge captain's water-loving retriever dogs, a gracefully gliding swan and clusters of cattails along the canal bank – typifies Aynsley's careful attention to detail.

Aynsley China was established by John Aynsley in the famous Staffordshire district of northern England in 1775. The firm's early beer and cider mugs, decorated with colorful scenes reproduced from the founder's own engravings, are displayed at both the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Aynsley's son, followed by his grandson and namesake, guided the firm to its present-day prestigious position. James Aynsley produced handsomely decorated bone-china tea sets for English society during the Victorian era, and John Aynsley II established the firm as a leading world producer of elegant bone-china dinnerware.

Aynsley's long-established tradition of exceptionally decorative motifs is exemplified by the clarity of the colors and the abundance of charming detail that can be seen on the "Canal Boat Thimble." This unique bone-china thimble is available exclusively from the Thimble Collectors Club.

Thimble Collectors Club

AYNSLEY

The Aynsley name has been associated with the manufacture of fine ceramic wares since 1775 and with bone china since around 1860.

Known the world round for beautifully executed dinner and tea services, Aynsley porcelain is sometimes referred to as the "Queen's choice". From more than a dozen patterns submitted to the then Princess Elizabeth on her marriage to the Duke of Edinburgh, she selected an Aynsley dinnerware service. Queen Victoria also chose Aynsley china for use on the Royal Yacht, H.M.S. Osborne.

The highly decorative bird and flowers design on this thimble is typical of Aynsley's unique combination of flair and tradition.

Thimble Collectors Club

Pembroke Bird Thimble



AYNSLEY CHINA – England

The vibrant colors of the "Pembroke Bird" and flowers stunningly contrast with the pure, white bone china on this magnificent thimble from one of England's oldest and best-known porcelain houses.

Aynsley China was established by John Aynsley in the Staffordshire district of northern England in 1775, and has been associated with the manufacture of fine ceramic wares ever since. Some of the firm's earliest works are displayed at both the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Known the world over for its beautiful dinner and tea services, Aynsley China is sometimes referred to as the "Queen's Choice." From more than a dozen patterns submitted to then princess Elizabeth on her marriage to the Duke of Edinburgh, she selected an Aynsley dinnerware service. Queen Victoria also chose Aynsley China for use on the Royal Yacht.

The highly decorative "Pembroke Bird" and flowers design on this fine bone china thimble is typical of Aynsley's unique combination of flair and tradition. Further embellished with two gold bands, it has been made expressly for members of the Thimble Collectors Club.

Thimble not named on certificate