

Philip Antrobus (PA) sterling silver thimbles

Birmingham England

Have you ever looked closely at the patterning on any sterling silver thimble in your collection, marked with the maker's mark of PA? They have some of the most unusual patterning you will find. The mark belongs to Philip Antrobus who operated as a silversmith from 55 Upper Tower Street in Birmingham. He registered his maker's mark with the Birmingham Assay Office in November 1863, and it was last registered with the BAO in 1891.

Jewellers - Philip Antrobus Ltd of 11 New Bond Street London W1S 3SR - operate today.

On a biographical note, Philip Antrobus is interesting in that he married one of the daughters of the more famous thimble maker - Henry Griffith. The daughter was Ettie Jane - known as Hetty - who was born in 1865.

Queen Elizabeth's engagement ring was made by Philip Antrobus.

The earliest hallmarked thimble that has come to my attention is hallmarked for 1878 and the latest is dated 1898. Do you have any outside this date range? If so, please share.

The decoration is what attracts me - they are highly chased with bold patterning - look at the gorgeous thistle pattern on the 1878 example and the others are more ornate than the run-of-the-mill "daisy" patterning. The lovely patterning is usually continued over onto the apex.

It will be worth your while to seek out this thimble maker - but he was not a prolific thimble maker. Even with so few examples, I feel he is well worth sharing.



Antrobus maker's mark



1878/1881 (d)(g)

the rich patterning of thistles continues over the apex with a single large thistle flower
size 4



1886 (m)

rich patterning of flowers and leaves all round
including apex
over a bubbly background



1886 (m)

fan or shell patterning all over including apex



1886 (m)

wonderfully fine detailing of leaves and
berries between the flowers continuing
over the apex



1890 (q)

large rich acanthus patterning all around



1891 (r)

he also produced thimbles with the same feathery
design band of the late 19th century
galleried rim



1891 (r)

child's

he also produced thimbles with the same feathery
design band of the late 19th century
faceted rim



1896 (w)

with ornate flowers and a fern patterning all over including apex



1896 (w)

with detailed curled fern patterning all over including apex



1898 (y)

an exotic range of plants, with a fern pattern on apex with two bands of flowers around the body – simply superb size 14

ANOMALIES

Just when one imagines we have seen it all, along comes – in 2020 – from the eagle eyes of a collector in Germany – this example – with two maker's marks!!

The design is identical to that above for Antrobus in 1886. That thimble has a single maker's mark for PA on the left.

This example below has an assay mark for Birmingham 1886 as well.

To the left is the maker's mark of TO – to the right there is the PA maker's mark!!

A quick search of the Birmingham Assay Office marks for TO shows a date for an 1886 thimble for Thomas Oakley! My Marks on British silver thimbles topic shows two different dates for TO – 1883 and 1907.

As I study the other Antrobus thimbles above, he always placed his maker's mark in the place where the TO appears on this thimble ...



1886

two maker's marks

References

Celia & Kevin Barrington *Notes on Philip Antrobus thimble maker*. Thimble Society of London summer 1999

Contributors

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This listing of Philip Antrobus thimbles 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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