

# Philip Antrobus 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.

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 {d}**  
 the rich patterning of thistles  
 continues over the apex  
 photo: Wynneth Mullins



**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  
 photo: Celia & Kevin Barrington



**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

photo: eBay oliver19810

### 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!!

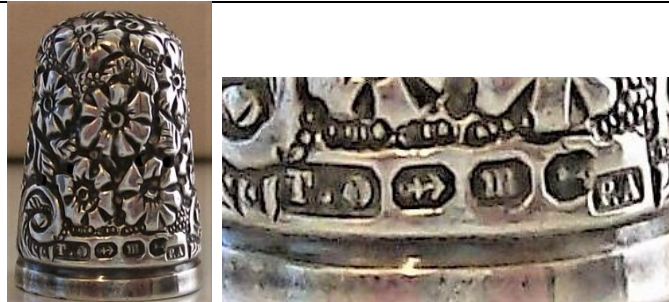
The design is identical to that above for Antrobus in 1886. That thimble has a single maker's mark for PA on the left.

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 *The Thimble Society of London* summer 1999. p16

## 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.

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