Cable bordered sterling silver thimbles

annular – Atlantic cable – galerie – pierced – scallop – Vandyked

Most long-term thimble collectors would be aware of the Atlantic cable thimble – it bears repeating how this thimble design got its name

'In 1866 a thimble was used to make a miniature battery with the power of a modern wristwatch battery to produce power to send the first message thru the newly completed Atlantic Cable which had laid on the bottom of the ocean.

It stretched from Newfoundland to the Irish coast It terminated on the land owned by the Knight of Kerry

The battery was created by putting a few drops of acid and zinc into a silver thimble that belonged to Miss Emily Fitzgerald, the daughter of the Knight of Kerry. Her thimble is housed in the London Museum of Science

The design on her thimble has become known as the Atlantic Cable

I feel as if I'm getting into deep water as the majority of thimbles in this topic were made in the mid to late 19th century. I have no experience in dating thimbles from before the 1880s. Where I have included a decade, it comes from the sellers with this type of knowledge

This topic looks at the various border designs of thimbles that emerged in the 19th century following the popularity of this distinctive design. That was the era where thimbles weren't assayed, so the makers have disappeared into the mist of time. It was only in 1884 when the law in England changed, and thimbles had to be assayed which gives a date and then hallmarked with the maker's initials



cross-section of thimbles with borders

There are a few clues to date British thimbles, and the height is a dead giveaway: they are taller than their 20th century counterparts. Another clue is a narrow band of feathery patterning which is known as wrigglework

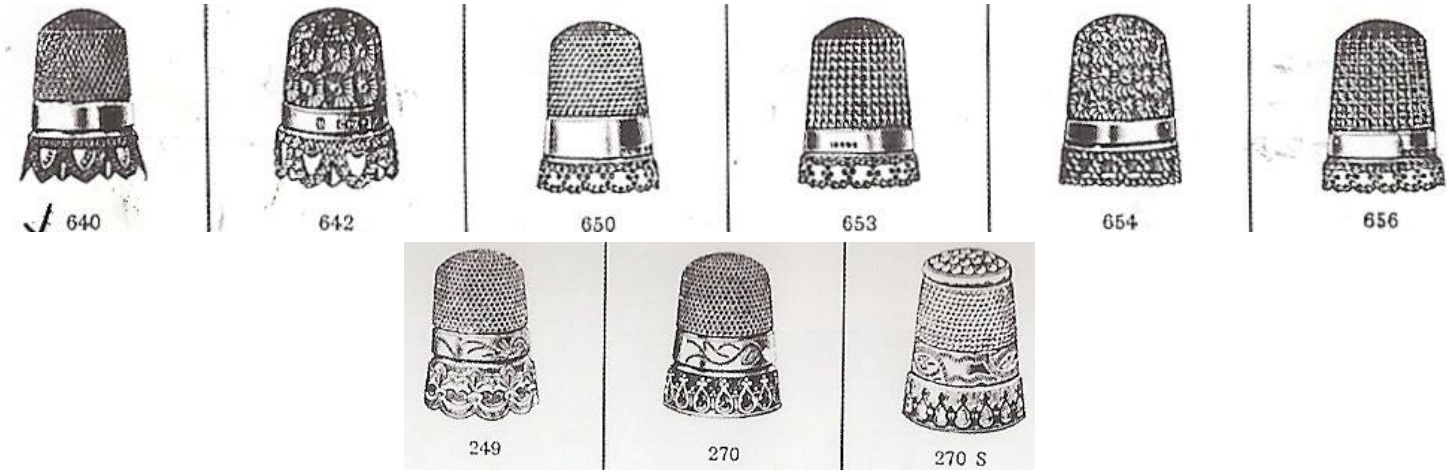
And the different borders aren't confined to Britain or an era – it showcases the different designs that existed or followed the Atlantic cable thimble design over the centuries

Where do some names of the names used below come from?

The Charles Horner catalogue 1900 uses annular and Vandyked, two terms for their pierced borders.

Horner's term Galerie has a different interpretation today (see Lawson p106 and other thimble literature)

The terms pierced and scalloped are self-explanatory



Horner catalogue 1900

I hope this topic encourages you to look at the finer details of your sterling thimbles

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annular borders

these borders have squared openings
no other antique thimble maker copied this design other than those Horner made on commission



AA
Asian replica
2010s



Charles Horner
these borders feature on CH's well-known designs
rarer than their Vandyked borders
1901-1908



Constantine & Floyd
made by Horner

Atlantic cable

this border has a squared rim culminating in a fleur-de-lis
makers of these thimbles between 1860s-1870s are lost in time tho they were probably made by the same maker, including the one used by Emily Fitzgerald
these are all British-made thimbles
some cable thimbles are also pierced – see pierced



unknown makers
with range of wrigglework bands



A Scott
1884



Charles Horner
1887-1897



Charles May
1893-1897



Deakin & Francis
1898



George Unite
1880



Hilliard & Thomason



J Collins
1881



J Cook
1876-1891



J Culver
1886



James Fenton
1891-1898



James Swann & Sons



S Blankensee & Son
silver gilt
1888



Walter & George Myers



William H Manton

galeried borders

these borders are created using applied galerie wire
the antique thimbles are all British made



unknown makers
with range of wrigglework bands
including 9ct or 15ct gold



Ari R Norman
1989-1999



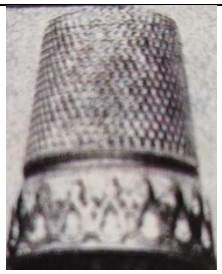
Constantine & Floyd
1888-1893



Charles Horner
1898



Charles May
1890-1901



Gabler



George Unite
gold



Hilliard & Thomason
1887



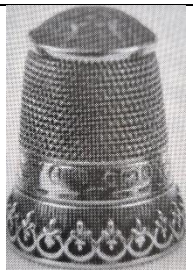
Henry Swann
1895



Charles Iles
nickel silver



James Fenton
1881-1901
9ct gold



James Swann



John Willian Kirwan
9ct gold
1899



Robert Pringle
1901
his stone-topped thimbles are galeried



Sydney Oats
Australia
2010s



Yaacov Yemini
Israel
1970s-2000s

pierced rims



unknown British makers



H Feau
France



HH
Germany
830



J Cook



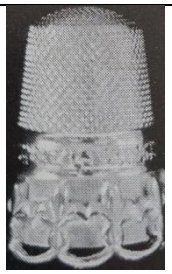
James Fenton



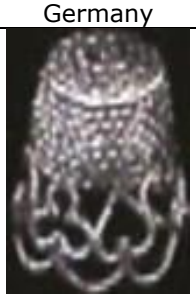
Julius Wengert
Germany



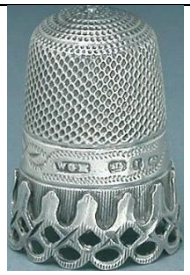
Simons
USA



Swann Thimbles



T J Lane
USA



Walter & George Myers
1891



WJ CI

scalloped rims
this is the largest with most varied designs



unknown British makers
sterling silver, 9ct gold and silver gilt
1840s-1880s



unknown French makers



unknown German makers



unknown Indian Raj Kutch makers



unknown Mexican makers
alpaca



unknown New Zealand maker



unknown Persian maker



unknown Spanish makers



unknown makers



AG
Spain



BHW
1911



Carter Gough & Co
USA



Charles Hirth
1896



Charles Horner



Charles May
1861



Eleanor Brand
USA



Edward Webb
1881



Gabler
Germany

George Unite



Goldsmith Stern & Co
USA



HB



Henry Griffith
1858



IC
1898



J A Henckels
Germany



Jan Larson
USA



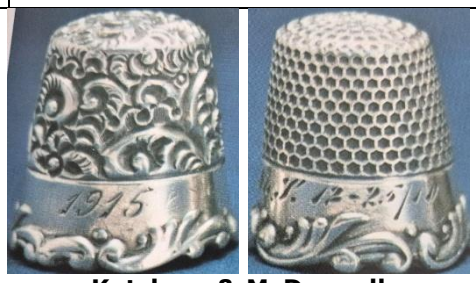
James Fenton
1895



Joe Turner
USA
1990



Julius Wengert
Germany



Ketcham & McDougall
USA



Monika Falk
Germany
Raj Kutch replica 1978



N St J Paint & Sons
Guernsey



Pierre Lenain
France



Philip Antrobus
1891



Ray Haydon
NZ



Roberto Alba
Italy



Samuel Foskett
1895



Settmacher
Austria



Simons
USA



Thimble Collectors Guild
Scotland



Thorvald Greif
Germany



Tommie Jane Lane
USA



Waite Thresher
USA



Walter & George Myers

Vandyked borders

these borders have heart-shaped openings
no other maker copied this design other than those Horner made on commission



Charles Horner
these borders feature on CH's well-known designs
1890-1914



Saunders & Shepherd
1899

References

Tom Lawson *Charles Horner of Halifax* 2003
Bridget McConnell *The story of the thimble*. 1997
Gay Ann Rogers *American silver thimbles.* 1989

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This listing of Cable borders on sterling silver thimbles 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.

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September 2026