

Royal Albert bone china thimbles

I have often been asked to do a thimble topic on Royal Albert bone china thimbles. There are a couple of reasons why it has taken me so long to research this topic. Firstly, I didn't think I owned enough Royal Albert thimbles to undertake this subject! I was wrong - there is a very small selection of them!!

There is very little available information about English Royal Albert bone china and their production of thimbles. According to the accompanying leaflets for the TCC thimbles, the company was founded in 1896 by Thomas Wild, in Longton, in the English Potteries. They became part of the Royal Doulton group in 1964. The part of the name 'Albert' is named from Albert, the Prince who was to become George VI. Royal Albert was part of the Wedgwood group. It was sad news indeed to read that in the first week of 2009 the Waterford-Wedgwood group was placed into liquidation. This group included Royal Doulton, Royal Albert and Rosenthal. So much by all these brands is already being made offshore.

In the 1980s thimbles were produced by Royal Albert. They are identical in shape to those made by Royal Doulton in the 1980s: the same thimble moulds were used. They are taller than most other English bone china thimbles and the apex is flat - but once one knows these characteristics, their shape is quite distinctive. It is only in recent times that a smaller thimble, with a more rounded apex, has appeared and this is only found for the Old Country Roses design! Some of these smaller thimbles were made in England and some in Indonesia - see the range of backstamps - to unravel all this!

I don't know whether Royal Albert were still producing thimbles when the liquidation was announced in January 2009. Old Country Roses may have been the only thimbles still in production. There is a word of caution on the manufacture of Royal Albert tho - Royal Albert has been manufactured in Indonesia since 2002 - look for the items marked 'Made in England' to be sure you are getting some of the original RA thimbles!! In 2011 Royal Albert thimbles have begun to appear with a 1962 backstamp - they are made in China, so they do not have the lettering 'Made in England'.

The most famous and widely available design of Royal Albert dinner services and tea sets is Old Country Roses - it was also issued later thru Thimble Collectors Club. The design was first introduced as a pattern on general items by RA - in 1962 - created by Harold Holdcraft.

This brings me to my second reluctance to looking into Royal Albert thimbles - I knew I'd be entering a minefield as Royal Albert have a HUGE range of backstamps - with different ones used on identical thimbles!! I have attempted to tackle this, but I know I have only just touched on the Royal Albert backstamp "problem" for thimble collectors. I know from some of my other topics that many collectors take great note of differences amongst backstamps - and I hope you'll be the first to share your knowledge if you own a specific thimble, where I haven't illustrated the backstamp.

I have thus tackled this topic slightly differently from my other topics. I have tried to include all the differing backstamps at the beginning and referenced this to as many of the thimbles that I am able. Not only do the backstamp colours change, the script changes and sometimes the lettering 'bone china' is missing. The backstamp can include "England" or "Made in England"; some have neither. Does it matter? I have supplied them for those who do care! Please let me know of others I have missed.

For a change, as this is a small topic and space allows, I would like to be able to share the verso side of each thimble [except where both sides are identical - and this will be included in the description].

This way no-one can be fooled into buying the same thimble from different views!!

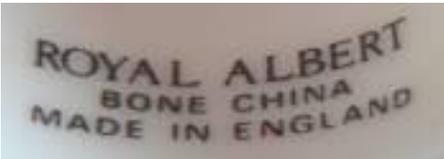
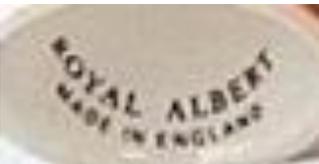
Please share photos of the backs of thimbles where they are missing - many thanks!

I understand that one of the problems with the naming of Royal Albert thimbles is that those made for the English market, are unnamed in the thimbles but those made for the overseas' markets, the designs are named in the thimbles. Do you know if this is correct? This may probably be the answer as to why there are so many differing RA backstamps?

Royal Albert didn't issue many commemoratives: with the last issue known being made in 1986! The *Wind in the Willows* is the only **set** that is dated - the date forms part of the backstamp.

Their greatest output are sets of thimbles and again following from the popularity of their tea services, the *Flowers of the Month* set of twelve was widely collected. This set has the month lettered above the flowers. There is a second less well-known *Flowers of the Month* set, where the month is named below the flower. A more recent set of twelve floral designs has familiar but not identical designs from earlier issues. They are not marked with the names inside the thimbles.

ROYAL ALBERT BACKSTAMPS

 <p>backstamp 1 black lettering + italics with crown + ®</p>	 <p>backstamp 2 black lettering with crown</p>	 <p>backstamp 3 green lettering with crown</p>	 <p>backstamp 4 pink lettering with no crown</p>
 <p>backstamp 5 green lettering no crown</p>	 <p>backstamp 6 brown lettering + italics no crown</p>	 <p>backstamp 7 black lettering no crown</p>	
 <p>backstamp 8 brief</p>	 <p>backstamp 9 Old Country Roses backstamp 1</p>	 <p>backstamp 10 Old Country Roses backstamp 2 + ™</p>	 <p>backstamp 11 Old Country Roses backstamp 3 Indonesian made</p>
 <p>backstamp 12 example of named flowers</p>	 <p>backstamp 13 different script from # 10</p>	 <p>backstamp 14 © 1987 Wind in the Willows + 'Ltd' used RA name</p>	 <p>backstamp 15 black lettering + ® + © 1990 + 'Ltd' used in RA name</p>
 <p>backstamp 16 special with crown and lettering in brown with floral sprigs</p>	 <p>backstamp 17 special</p>	 <p>backstamp 18 blue lettering</p>	 <p>backstamp 20 multi-coloured different lettering from # 12 and # 13</p>
 <p>backstamp 19 Old Country Roses backstamp 4 - 1962 these thimbles are being produced in China NOW using the 1962 backstamp!!</p>		 <p>backstamp 21 this double stamp is for both Goss and Royal Albert – which one is correct? Maybe even both??</p>	

ROYAL ALBERT THIMBLES



Butterflies
Butterfly Days
1985
backstamp 7



Commemoratives
St Paul's Cathedral
July 29th 1981
marriage of Charles and Diana
backstamp 2



Commemoratives
U.K. Visit 1982 - i
Pope John Paul II
backstamp 6



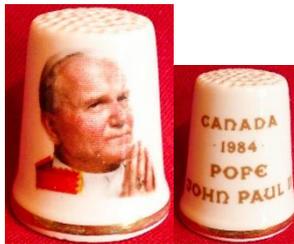
Commemoratives
U.K. visit 1982
Pope John Paul II - ii
backstamp 6



Commemoratives
Firstborn 1982
birth of Prince William
backstamp 6



Commemoratives
International Garden
Festival
Liverpool 1984
backstamp 7



Commemoratives
Canada 1984
Pope John Paul II
backstamp 6



Commemoratives
Westminster Abbey July
23rd 1986
marriage of Andrew and Sarah
1986
backstamp ?



Commemoratives
N.G.F.
Stoke 1986
National Garden Festival
backstamp 7



Flower set of 12
Blue Blossom
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flower set of 12
Celebration
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flower set of 12
Constance
backstamp 1



Flower set of 12
Lady Carlyle
backstamp 1



Flower set of 12
Lady Hamilton
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flower set of 12
Lavender Rose
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flower set of 12
Lydia
backstamp 1



Flower set of 12
Memory Lane
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flower set of 12
Moonlight Rose
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flower set of 12
Old Country Roses
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flower set of 12
Operetta
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flower set of 12
Violets
backstamp 1
identical on both sides



Flowers of the Month 1
January
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
February
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
March
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
April
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
May
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
June
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
July
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
August
backstamp 5 and 8



Flowers of the Month 1
September
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
October
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 1
November
backstamp 4



Flowers of the Month 1
December
backstamp 5



Flowers of the Month 2
January
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
February
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
March
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
April
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
May
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
June
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
July
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
August
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
September
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
October
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
November
backstamp 7



Flowers of the Month 2
December
backstamp 7



Flowers - Provincial Flowers
Alberta Rose
no inner backstamp
one of the Canadian Provincial
flowers



Flowers - Provincial Flowers
Mountain Avens
no inner backstamp
one of the Canadian Provincial
flowers



Flowers - Provincial Flowers
Pitcher Plant
no inner backstamp
one of the Canadian Provincial
flowers



Flowers - Provincial Flowers
Prairie Crocus
no inner backstamp
one of the Canadian Provincial
flowers



Flowers - Provincial Flowers
Prairie Lily
no inner backstamp
one of the Canadian Provincial
flowers



Flowers - Provincial Flowers
Trillium - i
no inner backstamp
one of the Canadian Provincial
flowers



Flowers - others
American Beauty
no inner backstamp
1987



Flowers - others
Butterfly Garden
backstamp 16



Flowers - others
Caroline
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Cottage Garden
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Forget-Me-Not
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Highland Thistle
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Jubilee Rose
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Lavender Rose - ii
backstamp 12
R: rose facing downwards



Flowers - others
Lavender Rose - iii
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Moonlight Rose - i
backstamp 18
identical on both sides



Flowers - others
Moonlight Rose - iii
backstamp ?
1987



Flowers - others
Moonlight Rose - iiiii
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
Moss Rose
like backstamp 12



Flowers - others
Old Country Roses - ii
backstamp 10 and 11



Flowers - others
Old Country Roses - iii
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Old Country Roses - iiiii
backstamp 9



Flowers - others
Old Country Roses - v
backstamp 5
1980
Franklin Mint's Thimbles of the
Worlds' Porcelain Houses set [25]
1980



Flowers - others
Old Country Roses - vi
backstamp 19



Flowers - others
Old Country Roses - vii
backstamp 10



Flowers - others
Pansies - violet
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
Pansy - yellow
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
Poinsettia - i
backstamp 13
identical on both sides



Flowers - others
Poinsettia - ii
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Rose - i
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
Rose - ii
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
Rose - iii
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
Rose - iv
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
Royal Highness
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Serenity
backstamp 7
identical on both sides
issued by Thimble Collectors Club
[TCC]



Flowers - others
Sweet Violets - i
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Sweet Violets - ii
backstamp 20



Flowers - others
Tenderness
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
Trillium - i
no inner backstamp



Flowers - others
White rose
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
backstamp 7



Flowers - others
backstamp 15
© 1990
R: upside down version



Flowers - others
backstamp 8



Flowers - others
backstamp 7



Wind in the Willows 1987
Badger
backstamp 14



Wind in the Willows 1987
Mole
backstamp 14



Wind in the Willows 1987
Ratty
backstamp 14



Wind in the Willows 1987
Toad
backstamp 14



Others

Red Squirrels

backstamp 7
issued by the Thimble Collectors
Club [TCC]



Others

Hallmarked Thimbles of the World's Greatest Porcelain Houses [in set of 50]

1985
no backstamp



Others

David Whitehead & Sons

special commission
backstamp 17
identical on both sides



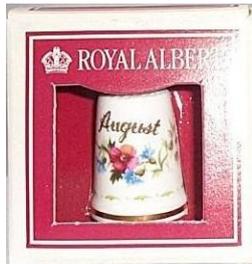
Conundrum!!

Gold-brown rose

What makes the conundrum is that there are two backstamps!
Was this deliberate?

There is the eagle maker's mark for **GOSS** with "GOSS" stamped beneath the eagle
There is an overstamp with another maker's mark
"Royal Albert Bone China England"
backstamp 21

ROYAL ALBERT BOXES



Flowers of the month



Flowers of the month



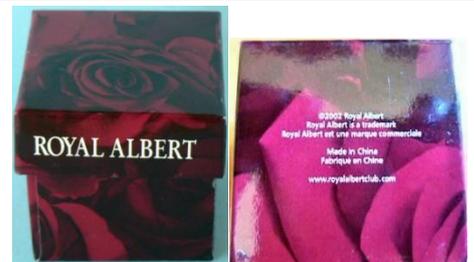
Wind in the Willows



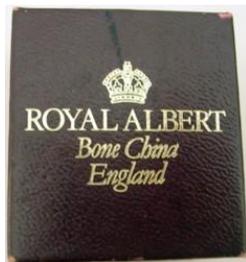
Moss Rose thimble in a floral thimble box



Old Country Roses - iii



Old Country Roses - vi
for thimbles Made in China © 2002



specifically marked floral box for
"Old Country Roses" thimble

Contributors

Linda Bennett | Riky Breedveld | Sue Burt | Pam Chappell | Kaylene Harris | Lydia Hamilton | Linda Heggs
Margaret Hickling | Doreen Lilley-Pricklepin | Maurice O'Reilly | Elaine Pollard | Linda Samaripa | Kellie Schultz
Marina Shcherbatyuk | Karen Stoner | Emily Szmul | Audrey Turner | Hans-Ulrich Vogel | Rosalie Webb
Mave Wiskin

This listing of brass eggs 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

© Sue Gowan
April 2008