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

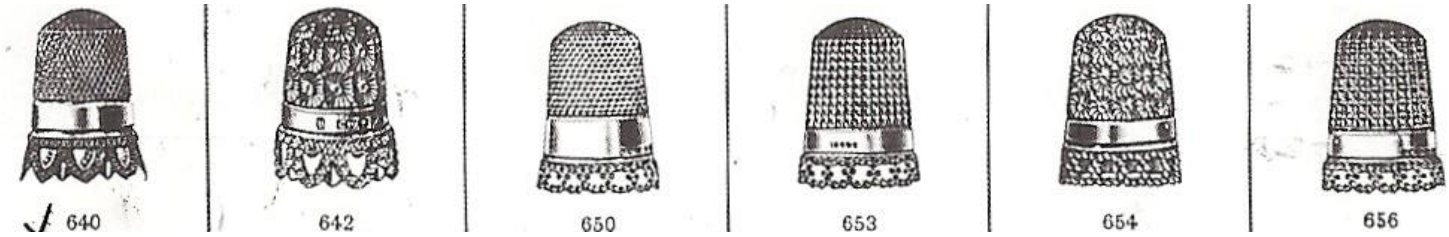
This topic looks at the various border designs of thimbles that emerged in the 19th century following the popularity of this distinctive design. That was the era where thimbles weren't assayed, so the makers have disappeared into the mist of time. It was only in 1884 when the law in England changed,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

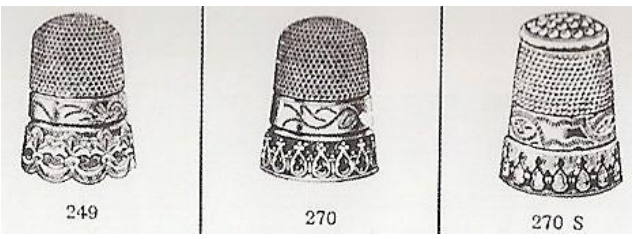
cross-section of thimbles with borders

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



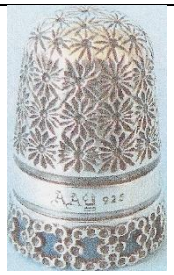


Horner catalogue 1900

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

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

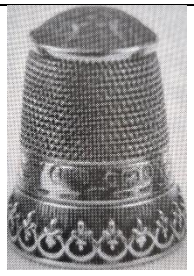
George Unite
gold

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

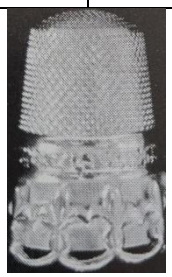
HH
Germany
830

J Cook

James Fenton

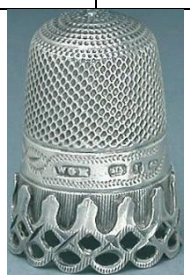
H Feau
France

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

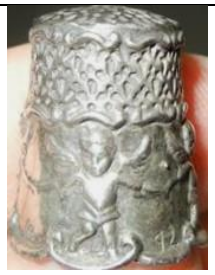
Eleanor Brand
USA

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

Ketcham & McDougall
USA

Monika Falk
Germany
Raj Kutch replica 1978

N St J Paint & Sons
Guernsey

Philip Antrobus
1891

Ray Haydon
NZ

Roberto Alba
Italy

Samuel Foskett
1895

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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