

# Highland China thimbles

## Scotland

In early September 2022 our attention has been quietly focussed on Scotland. Some of my favourite thimbles come from Scotland – the land of my paternal grandfather.

The Highland China thimble included in the Thimble Collectors Club thimbles issue has an accompanying certificate. This establishes that Highland China thimbles come from Kingussie, on the River Spey in the Scottish Highlands. Hence the name chosen for their thimbles.

Their earliest thimble I can find is for 1977 issued for Queen Elizabeth's silver jubilee. Highland China was included in the 1985 Hallmarked Thimbles of the World's Great Porcelain Houses set of 50 thimbles, issued by Thimble Collectors Club (TCC). This is the set where the backstamp (usually featured inside the thimble) becomes the outer design.

There are Highland China Christmas thimbles and regular Scottish tourism thimbles for places (including castles and palaces) in the Highlands.

Royal family commemoratives are all in monochrome blue and form part of the output of this Scottish thimble manufacturer.

I have found no Highland China thimbles made later than 1985. Do you have a HC thimble made later than this?

Let me sketch my description of a Highland China thimble.

The main feature is the apex, which has well-defined, widely spaced indentations, which number fourteen.

Most of the thimbles featured below have this distinctive patterning of indents.

Those that have later, regular indentations have a more domed apex than the original HC thimbles.



Highland China indentations in pattern of 14 indents with a flattish apex

The designs are simple but that is their appeal: the designs have been praised by the Design Centre.

This places Highland China at the centre of modern Scottish thimble designs of the 1980s.

There is a touch of naivety and a sense of whimsy in some of the designs. See East Neuk houses thimbles with their earthy Scottish hues.

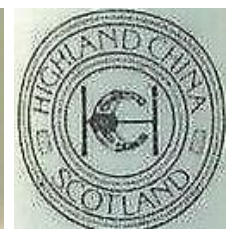
The designs reflect the colours of the Scottish landscape – the muted blue, green, heather pink or brown. Their thimble shape is wide at the base: 22mm. This is their original shape – the later thimbles seem more traditional in shape, so probably bought in bulk, for their decals and backstamps to be added.

When there is a gold handpainted rim, it is thicker than usual.

The original backstamp has an H over a C. The C has a Celtic patterning. This design is based on the Hunterston Brooch, which is housed in the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh.

FINE BONE CHINA and SCOTLAND lettering are included, completing the square backstamp. The later backstamps are similar but simplified.

Both backstamps are of a greenish yellow colour. The post 1985 backstamp is pale grey and the same as that created for the Hallmarked set, using the Celtic C.



L: original backstamp – Hunterston Brooch – simplified greenish backstamp – post-1985 pale grey backstamp

The thimble boxes are a deep brown with the same original backstamp in gold.



Highland China thimble box

Other Scottish thimble topics:

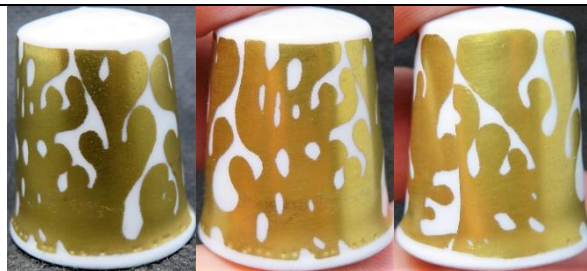
Carol Edwards of Coll Pottery and Horizon China thimbles

Innes Mitchell pyrographed wooden thimbles

Scotland's wooden thimbles

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### Highland China thimbles



art deco – gold  
with an earlier configuration of apex indents



'Balmoral Castle'



Celtic - green



Celtic - red



Celtic rose



'Noel 1980' (Christmas)  
blues & greens



'Noel 1980' (Christmas)  
blues



(Christmas) 1980



(Christmas) 1981



(Christmas) 1982



(Christmas) 1982

**OR**

Charles and Diana 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary



'Eilean Donan Perth'



East Neuk houses

I have seen this thimble offered for sale as handpainted - it is not



Queen Elizabeth 1977 Silver Jubilee  
no backstamp  
with an earlier configuration of apex indents



'Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother' 80<sup>th</sup> birthday 1980



flowers - orange  
same decal on both sides



flowers - pink with butterfly



flowers - red with butterfly





Hallmarked Thimbles of the World's Porcelain Houses (set of 50) showing variations in design and shape



heather



heather and bluebells



heather and sun landscape



'H.R.H Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer engagement' Ich Dien February 24 1981



'H.R.H Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer' wedding Ich Dien 29th July 1981



'H.R.H Diana Princess of Wales 21st' birthday July 1st 1982



H.R.H Prince William of Wales 21st June 1982 with daffodils at each side



Loch Ness Monster  
with an earlier configuration of apex  
indents  
grey backstamp



mistletoe



'New Year 1981'  
with doves



pine cone



'Scone Palace Perth'



seasons: autumn



seasons: spring



seasons: summer



seasons: winter



Stag  
Thimble Collectors Club



'Stirling Castle'  
with an earlier configuration of apex indents  
grey backstamp



sun with Scottish landscape  
blue with black



sun with Scottish landscape  
green with green  
first offered for sale by The Thimble Guild in  
March 1983





thistle  
with an earlier configuration of apex indents  
grey backstamp



thistles



thistles



wild rose  
with an earlier configuration of apex indents



'Year of the Mariner 1982'  
British Sailors Society est. 1818 Scotland

### Other Highland China products



vase

## **Contributors**

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This listing of Highland China 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](mailto:thimbleselect@bigpond.com) TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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