British registered design numbers (RD) thimbles

I hadn't planned to field a topic where there is a published book on the subject. This topic extends the book *British registered design thimbles* by Norma Spicer and Diane Pelham Burn in 2003. This has been brought about a few thimble designs, which they had not previously been recorded.
The 19th century (from 1850) was the most innovative era in thimble design. To protect these new designs the maker could register his new design. This registered number granted was then stamped on the band.

I thought I had sorted out the difference between a registered design on thimbles and a patented design. The latter protects the new use or type of thimble being patented.
Charles Horner used both ways of protecting his Dorcas thimbles. Patent No. 8954 of 1884, patented his improved thimble, which was to produce a steel-cored sterling silver thimble. These thimbles were marked PAT. or PATENT. Once he began to register new designs for his Dorcas and sterling silver thimbles, the R^D No. would be added as well.

I have lettered the date in blue when the registered number is included on the band. This shows the period when they were lettered.

I have included an unknown registration number at the end, in the hope that someone knows it.

The topic concludes with thimble holders with registered design numbers.

Many of these thimbles feature throughout the topics.

THIMBLES

Tho some of the photos don't show the RD No they all are part of the registered design. Some may have been made later, or I don't have a view of the R^D No. I have included as many relevant photos, to try and show their rarity – or not.

R^D73626

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Horner
Registration date: 11 May 1887
R^D73624 was the actual registration number but Horner only ever used the incorrect number as above
The presence of the R^D No enabled us to identify Horner at the maker of the sterling examples with other sponsors marks. Part of the thimble has his diamond design

 PAT.6 early Dorcas	 Charles Horner 1896	 Charles Horner 1897
 Charles Horner 1898 silver-gilt	 Charles Horner 1899	 Charles Horner 1899 9ct



Charles Horner
1890



H J Cooper & Co Ltd (HJC)
1896



Deakin & Francis Ltd (D&F)
1898



Robert Pringle
1900



Tandy & Sons (T&S)
1899



John Thompson & Sons (JT&S)
1900



William Harrison Walker (WHW)
1896

R^{D}73871

Registration holder and thimble maker: Alfred Taylor
Registration date: 26 November 1850



brief description of new design: Great Exhibition of All Nations (Crystal Palace) 1851





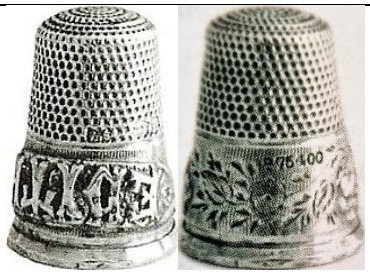






R^{D}75400

Registration holder and thimble maker: David & Lionel Spiers (manufacturing jewellers) (DLS or LS)
Registration date: 14 June 1887
brief description of new design: Girls' names
other names: Alice – Anne – Clara – Jane – Maude – Sarah

		
EDITH 1896	LUCY 1887	KATE yes

R^{D}86699

Registration holder and thimble maker: Alfred Taylor
Registration date: 26 November 1850



brief description of new design: Sydenham Crystal Palace 1862
thimbles not hallmarked, no maker's mark, no R^{D} No - some only bearing the diamond registration mark



diamond registration mark





R^D 103216

Registration holder: Samuel John Boosey
thimble maker: James Fenton
Registration date: 7 July 1888
brief description of new design: Gripper



1887
usually their design has a wrigglework band, this is plain
pre-registration



1888



1888



1891



1892



1893



1898



1901



child's
metal
inscribed Anne's



yes



yes



yes

R^{D}108544
Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 20 September 1888
brief description of new design: panelled band



base metal

REG.112123
Registration holder: Alfred Constantine & William Henry Floyd (manufacturing jewellers)
Thimble maker: Charles Horner
Registration date: 29 October 1888
brief description of new design: cross-type indentations
There is no indication why the form REG. was used instead of R^{D}
The presence of the R^{D} No enabled us to identify Horner at the maker of the sterling examples with other sponsors marks
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn



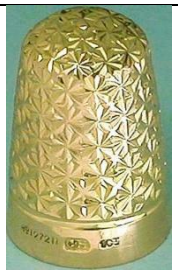
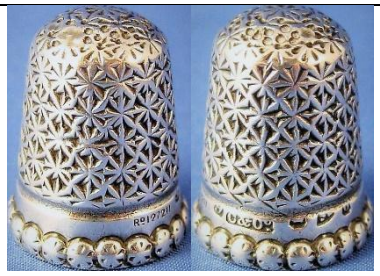

Constantine & Floyd (C^{E}&F^{D})
Chester 1888 – 1889

R^{D}120715
Registration holder: Clement Richard Hall
Registration date: 2 March 1889
brief description of new design: teardrop indentations


brass thimble

R^{D}127211

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Horner
Registration date: 18 June 1889
brief description of new design: Louise pattern
The presence of the R^{D} No enabled us to identify Horner as the maker of the sterling examples with other sponsors marks. Part of the thimble has his Louise design

<table>
<tr>
<td>
PAT.6 – PAT.11
early Dorcas</td>
<td>
PATENT 4
early Dorcas</td>
<td>
Charles Horner
1911</td>
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<tr>
<td>
Charles Horner
1890s</td>
<td>
Charles Horner
1908</td>
<td>
Charles Horner
1897</td>
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<tr>
<td>
Charles Horner
1897
9ct</td>
<td>
Charles Horner
9ct</td>
<td>
Charles Horner
9ct</td>
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<td>
Carrington & Co (C&Co)
1897</td>
<td>
Turner Bros (TB^{S})
1894</td>
<td>
William Harrison Walker (WHW)
1897</td>
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<tr>
<td colspan="3">
Henry Williamson Ltd (HWL^{D})
1898</td>
</tr>
</table>

R^{D}139132

Registration holder: George Henry Griffith
Registration date: 26 March 1861
Brief description of new design: International Exhibition 1862



R^{D}143397

Registration holder: George Cartwright & Horace Woodward
Registration date:29 September 1861



brief description of new design: International Exhibition 1862
thimbles not hallmarked, no maker's mark, no R^{D} No - some only bearing the diamond registration mark



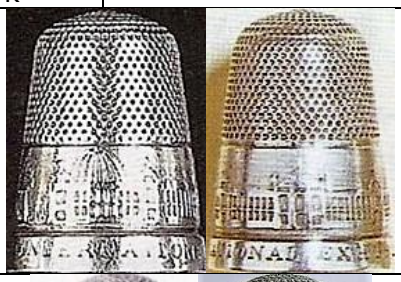
diamond registration mark

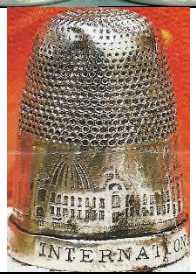


diamond registration mark











RD171258

Registration holder and thimble maker: Henry Griffith
Registration date: 12 May 1891
brief description of new design: daisy pattern



1892



1902

RD171259

Registration holder and thimble maker: Henry Griffith (HG&S, HG&SLtd)
Registration date: 12 May 1891
brief description of new design: daisy and blocks design, known as his Dorothy


Henry Griffith & Son Ltd
Birmingham 1900 #16


Henry Griffith & Son
Chester 1902 #14


Henry Griffith & Son Ltd
Chester 1902 #15


Alfred Bromet & Co (AB&Co)
Chester 1900 #14

R^D173502

Registration holder and thimble maker: Bent and Parker (B&P)
Registration date: August 1893
brief description of new design: girls' names
originally PP14988 – pre-registration number
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn



1893



EDITH
PP14988



MAGGIE
PP14988



POLLY
PP14988

R^D178362

Registration holder and thimble maker: James Swann
Registration date: 11 September 1891
brief description of new design: diamond Gripper



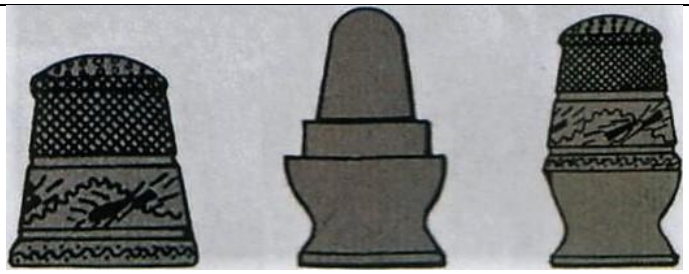
yes



1891

R^D201557

Registration holder: Frederick Keller (druggist's assistant)
Registration date: 28 October 1892
brief description of new design: thimble over a base



this illustration features in the Spicer and Pelham Burn book – it is the only image we have

R^{D}202312

Registration holder: Alan Edward Elkington
thimble maker: James Fenton
Registration date: 9 November 1892
brief description of new design: multi-stone Scottish pebbles band



yes



1892
hallmarked in apex
variety of band patterns behind the stones



salt cellar

R^{D}202533

Registration holder Alan Edward Elkington
thimble maker: James Fenton
Registration date: 14 November 1892
Brief description of new design: shamrock and harp band



1902
stone tops - Connemara marble right

R^{D}206738

Registration holder Alan Edward Elkington
thimble maker: James Fenton
Registration date: 23 November 1892
Brief description of new design: salt cellar
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn – not used for sewing



James Fenton
1892

R^{D}210799

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Horner
Registration date: 18 April 1893
brief description of new design: shell design
The presence of the R^{D} No enabled us to identify Horner at the maker of the sterling examples with other sponsors marks. Part of the thimble has his shell design



PAT.8
early Dorcas



Charles Horner
1897



Charles Horner
1901
9ct



Charles Horner
1915

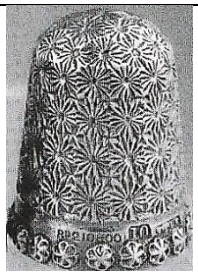
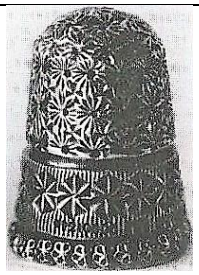


John Thompson & Sons (JT&S)
1893

R^{D}210800

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Horner
Registration date: 18 April 1893
brief description of new design: Princess May design
The presence of the R^{D} No enabled us to identify Horner at the maker of the sterling examples with other sponsors marks. Part of the thimble has his Princess May design

 PAT.8 early Dorcas	 Charles Horner 1894	 Charles Horner 1896
 Charles Horner 1898	 Charles Horner 1898	 Charles Horner 1900 9ct
 Alfred Bromet & Co (AB&C^{o}) 1893	 Alfred Bromet & Co (AB&C^{o}) 1896	 Carrington & Co (C&C^{o}) 1900
 Constantine & Floyd (C^{E}&F^{D}) 1897	 Deakin & Francis Ltd (D&F) 1898	 Walter & George Matthews (WGM) 1893
 Isaac Silverstone & Co (IS&C^{o}) 1897	 JL&Co	 John Thompson & Son (JT&S) 1895 1898

 John Thompson & Son (JT&S) 1892	 W Wilkinson Ltd (WWLtd)	 (WEHW)

R^{D}212114
Registration holder Alan Edward Elkington
thimble maker: James Fenton
Registration date: 13 May 1893
brief description of new design: holly leaves band


1893
with enamelling

R^{D}222443
Registration holder: Hermann Poths & Co (merchants)
thimble maker: John William Kirwin
Registration date: 16 November 1893
brief description of new design: Scottish thistle shape

 1893	 1893	 1893 9ct gold

R^D227060

Registration holder: Turnbull Bros (jewellers)
Thimble Maker: Charles Horner
Registration date: 2 February 1894
brief description of new design: bell-shape
all assayed in Chester



yes



yes



yes



yes







yes

R^D230818

Registration holder and thimble maker: Saunders & Shepherd
Registration date: 17 April 1894
brief description of new design: glass Just a Thimble Full
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn – not used for sewing



R: silver rim by CS FS 1894
yes

RD265923

Registration holder and thimble maker: Samuel Foskett
Registration date: 19 September 1895
brief description of new design: panelled, facetted, diamond shapes with daisy at each intersection



1892



Robert Pringle (RP)
1901

RD272185

Registration holder: Thomas E Peckett (manufacturer and merchant)
thimble maker: James Swann
Registration date: 6 March 1896
brief description of new design: rebus slogan for 'stick to me'
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn



1911



yes



R^{D}280564
Registration holder Alan Edward Elkington
thimble maker: James Fenton
Registration date: 31 July 1896
brief description of new design: bicycle design



apex with wheel in centre
the tyres are different on each thimble – there are birds hidden amongst the blackberries on the verso
there are even different versions – ladies and gents with the crossbar on the gent's bicycles



1896 #8



1896



1898
gent's bicycle



1896 #10
gent's bicyle
handlebars face left



1901 #10



1896 $10
gent's bicycle
handlebars face left

R^D281980

Registration holder Alan Edward Elkington
thimble maker: James Fenton
Registration date: 24 August 1896
brief description of new design: moon and stars band


1890s


1899


1901


1905 #12


1906 #8


1910 #11


1910 #10


Olney Amsden (OA)
1901

R^D295282

Registration holder and maker: Hamilton & Inches (goldsmiths)
thimble maker: Deakin & Francis Ltd
Registration date: 3 March 1897
Brief description of new design: Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee


yes


yes





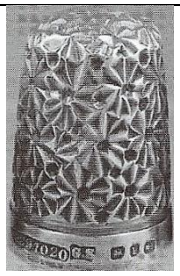




 DJE yes	 Hamilton and Inches (H&I) 18ct unassayed

R^{D}297020

Registration holder and thimble maker: Henry Fowler
Registration date: 7 April 1897
brief description of new design: bright-cut design
Part of the thimble has his bright-cut design

 1901	 Constantine & Floyd (C^{E}&F^{D}) 1899	 George Goodman (GG)
 George Snook & Co (GS) 1897	 George Snook & Co (GS) 1898	 William James Holden (WJH) 1900

R^{D}310734

brief description of new design: miniature chatelaine
Registration date: 1897
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn – not used for sewing



this R^{D} is lettered on the penknife. Four chains with four pendants with a thimble, penknife, scissors and spoon

R^{D}315477

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 8 March 1898
brief description of new design: Just a Thimble Full
brass thimble
see also R^{D}707065
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn – not used for sewing



this R^{D} is lettered only on the thimble box

R^{D}350760

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 16 December 1899



brass thimble
R^{D} not lettered on thimble

R^{D}350761

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 16 December 1899



brass thimble

R^{D}356736

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 2 May 1900



brass thimble

R^{D}356898

Registration holder: Frederic Griffith
thimble maker: Henry Griffith & Son Ltd
Registration date: 5 May 1900
brief description of new design: Empire design band



1899
Australia – Canada – England – India – Natal- New Zealand - Tasmania



1899



Alfred Bromet & Co (AB&C°)
1899 - 1900

R^{D}426659

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Horner
Registration date: 14 February 1904
Brief description of new design: Louise with interlocking indents



PAT.7
early Dorcas



PAT.11
early Dorcas



Charles Horner
1923



Henry Williamson Ltd (HWL^{D})
1906



Sydney & Co(S&Co)
1911

R^D429537

Registration holder and thimble maker: Charles Horner
Registration date: 25 March 1904
brief description of new design: Hardwood
narrow band of shallow diamond band



1903



1908



1908
ASH B^R



1911
WHEATLEY

R^D707065

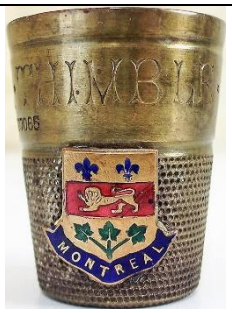
Registration holder: Charles Iles
Registration date: 17 July 1925
brief description of new design: Just a Thimble Full
see also R^D315477



yes



DURBAN
nickel silver



MONTREAL
brass

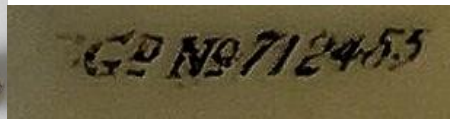
REG. No.711917
Registration holder: Jeremiah Williams
Registration date: 24 March 1925
brief description of new design: hexagonal thimble
like the earlier example there is no explanation why this REG, No. is used instead of the usual R^D
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn



brass thimble

R^D712455
Registration holder and maker: Arcadian China
Registration date: 1925
brief description of new design: large china thimble
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn





British Empire Exhibition 1925 Wembley

Unknown RD No
Registration holder and maker: Horace Woodward
Registration date: 1888



diamond registered number
brief description of new design: pepper shaker
not featured in Spicer and Pelham Burn



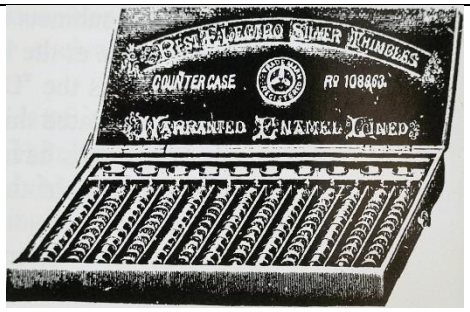
Horace Woodward & Co (HW&C^O)

THIMBLE HOLDERS

The plush or velour coverings Iles uses velvet in his registration application papers) were not meant to last and some have survived for 120 years in reasonable condition.

RD Nº.108863

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 27 June 1888
brief description of new design: wooden counter display unit



pull out drawer at the side
b&w photo

RD Nº.128040

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 27 June 1889
brief description of new design: The Fair Slipper







blue plush





gold plush





purple plush

Rᴰ №.138883

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 1890s
brief description of new design: bellows shaped (Le Soufflet)




purple plush

Rᴰ169666

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 11 January 1892
brief description of new design: book-shaped




blue plush






gold plush



gold plush - largely worn off



red plush – amazing condition – even to remnant of the **bookmark**

R[D]176058

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date:
brief description of new design: The Fairy box



gold plush

R[D]176058

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 11 January 1892
brief description of new design: Pink box, green braid

no photo

no known photo

Rᴰ186098

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 11 January 1892
brief description of new design: book-shaped



leather-bound book



snakeskin

Rᴰ194869

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 1892
brief description of new design: horse hoof-shaped



red plush



tho this is in the shape of a horse hoof, it may not be part of the Rᴰ above

RD200439

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 1892
brief description of new design: heart-shaped



blue plush



red plush



orange plush

RD210332

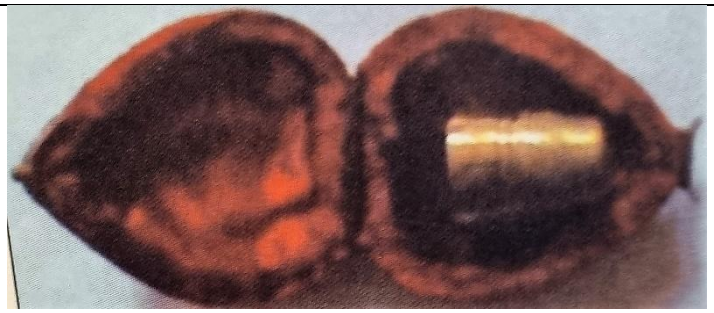
Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 18 April 1893
brief description of new design: cupid-shaped
this case was made to hold the celluloid The Cupid thimble



blue plush
The Cupid Heart case'



blue plush



red plush

R^D291930

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 1902
this is a needle case *The Queen's record reign needle case* showing four monarchs on outer cover



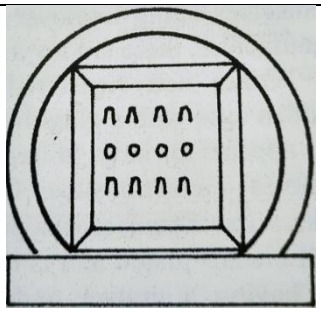
R^D320491

Registration holder and maker: Henry Matthews (HM)
Registration date: June 1898
brief description of new design: lined silver bucket holder



R^D391399

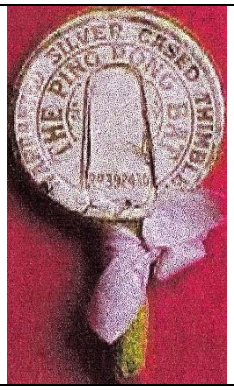
Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 2 January 1897
"*The Queens Record Thimble*" counter display case for shop counters



b&w sketch

RD392430

Registration holder and maker: Charles Iles
Registration date: 1902
brief description of new design: The ping-pong bat



RD430769

Registration holder and maker: Sydney & Co
Registration date: 1904
brief description of new design: coal scuttle shape with cherubs



Birmingham 1906 – also lettered U

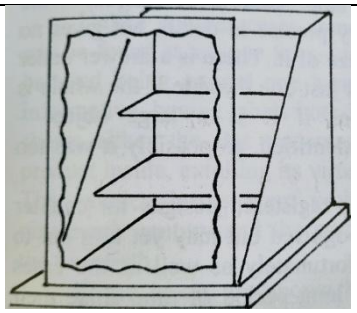


Birmingham 1907 – also lettered V



Birmingham 1907 – also lettered V

Unknown RD number



counter display case – fairy cabinet 1894
b&w sketch

References

Edwin E Holmes *Registered designs*. Thimble Notes and Queries summer 1989
Bridget McConnel *Dating by a lozenge, or by a RD number* Thimble Society of London winter 1992
Norma Spicer *Iles: a family of thimble makers.* 2001
Norma Spicer and Diane Pelham Burn *British registered design thimbles.* 2003

Contributors

This topic would not have been possible without **Ray Nimmo's** photos – he began working on this topic in 2012

Joanna Blackie-Sew Many Bits | Ros Forster | Nicola Kissane | Andrea Lange | Carolyn Meacham-Elegant Arts
Wolf-Dieter Scholz | Jean Taylor | Barbra Wallace | Sandi Wood

This listing of British registered design numbers on 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.

EMAIL thimbleselect@bigpond.com TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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September 2025