

# the **thimble** society

Volume 10, Issue 4

Spring 2009





## Front Cover

1. 'Queen Victoria in commemoration of the diam 1837-1897 ond jubilee.'  
Reg 295202. With profile of the Queen and royal flowers. Plain dimpled top. £360
2. Ditto Queen Victoria diamond jubilee but different daisy top.  
Both jubilee thimbles in good condition. £375

## Inside front cover

### Indian silver thimble and others

3. Silver tiny French mark, pretty gothic arched border, c.1880. £58
4. Striking applied strap work border, sil. J.F. B'ham 1897. £68
5. Excellent clear pattern, silver, Indian c.1880. Scalloped rim. £200
6. Carnelian stone top, English, silver, no hll mk prob c.1880. £39

James Fenton made adventurous designs such as the bicycle. The first James Fenton lived from 1807-1886. [see Norma Spicer's booklet] His mark was registered at B'ham assay office in 1852, Sheffield in 1854. and Chester in 1913. The name James Fenton was used until the business closed in 1930.

*Dear Bees,*

I have recently purchased a thimble. It is tiny, 14mm high. It has the word 'Liberty' in raised capital letters around the thimble. Between the beginning and end of the word there is a design which looks like a set of islands? Sorts of geographical shapes, they are a little worn so it is hard to see what they represent. Any help welcome.

*Helen Kehoe*

**Regular procedures:** Members will be sent reminders with the winter issue when subscriptions are due. Please pay within **6 weeks** else your name is cancelled on the computer. All subscriptions are due January 1st each year, **£19** (UK), **£21** (Europe) and **£23** (rest of the world). Spring Magazine March 1st, Summer Magazine July 1st, and Winter Magazine November 1st.

**Posting:** UK: We recommend 'Special Delivery' for goods valued at over £50. Rates for UK 'Special Delivery' items are £3.85 plus £2 for p&p, in total £5.85. This rate insures goods valued up to £500. Europe and Rest of the World: We recommend 'International signed for' and insurance for goods valued over £50. We cannot be held responsible for loss of goods which are uninsured. All items in the magazine are described in good faith and we cannot be held responsible for errors. Minimum order £12.

We would be grateful if members paying in euros would calculate at the current rate when actually paying and also add the equivalent of £3 to cover bank charges. Credit cards are easier. Please do not pay in Sterling on a USA Dollar bank account as we pay double charges.

We cannot reply to our members in the UK wanting advice etc., unless a stamped addressed envelope is included as our postage costs are getting so high. It also saves so much time. We cannot hold a thimble or post one off unless the full price is paid within one week. If members wish to return a thimble, please do so within two weeks, money refunded if thimble not satisfactory.

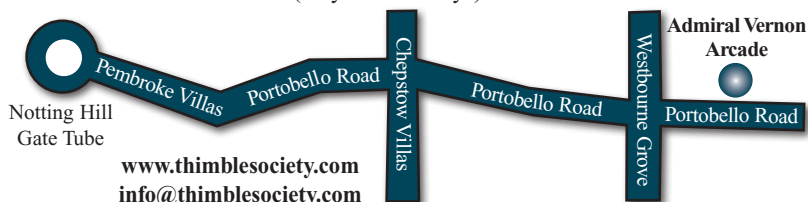
## TELEPHONE ORDERS AND POSTAL MAILING ADDRESS ▼

Tel and Fax (anytime): +44 (0)20 7419 9562. Thimble Society, 1 Cathcart Street, London NW5 3BL

## RETAIL SHOP ADDRESS ▼

THE THIMBLE SOCIETY, 72 The Admiral Vernon Arcade, 141-147 Portobello Road  
London W11 2DY. Mobile (only on Saturdays) 07941 455 259.

Open Fridays  
10-1pm  
by  
appointment  
Saturdays  
7am  
to 3pm





*Dear Members,*

At last the Spring has come, after a very cold winter. Let us hope it brings more cheerful times. The credit crunch has given many members a difficult time, especially those facing unemployment. It has been hard to judge how the Antiques world has been affected. Attending a sale at Christie's of South Kensington, it was as though the credit crunch and the recession didn't exist. Items, including several lots of sewing tools, went for four times their estimates in some cases. We expected foreign buyers to take advantage of the weak pound, but many of the bidders were British. It was extraordinary to see a mixed lot of run of the mill, rather tired sewing tools going for £1,600 plus premium and VAT adding approx £550 on top of the hammer price.



*Bridget and Annie*

Maybe people prefer to have something in their hands rather than watch their money disappear as interest rates reach zero in the banks; antique jewellery, silver and gold have all been selling well. Early English furniture seems to have found favour, although heavy Victoriana has not. But how the major antiques fairs will be affected in 2009 is not known. Expenses are now so high that, if sales are not healthy, then dealers risk to lose money, time and tempers!

This Spring magazine is stocked from three private collections. Some thimbles are rare and have not been on the market for some time. This is another difficulty, finding enough good quality items to satisfy collectors. We only get collections to sell when families express no interest in continuing a collection. Understandably, many daughters want to hang on to their mother's little passion. I spent a lovely winter's afternoon with a good friend, playing with her beautiful collection. We had endless tea and delicious cake whilst gazing at her choice items. So much exquisite workmanship. She, in turn, liked my new book, recommended with details in the last issue, 'Ouvrages de dames.' Excellent illustrations of thimble and sewing tool catalogues from France in the 1900s. Books will stop you making mistakes and the extra knowledge gained help you find the bargain.

*Bridget*

*Dear Bees,*

the article on Derbyshire and Renishaw was brilliant. I live not far away from this area, in the south of Sheffield. Owing to my arthritis I am rather immobile at present. Thank you

*Ethel Prince*

**BINDERS ARE NOW AVAILABLE  
AT A REDUCED PRICE OF £12 EACH PLUS P&P WHILE STOCKS LAST**

**Videos** – The first video is on the history of thimbles and how to photograph small objects. The second video is on sewing tools, chatelaines and wares such as tartan, mauchlin, madras and sewing boxes. Each video is £12 plus p&p. (UK, £2, Europe £2.50, ROW £3.) We can supply the USA video line system [NTSC] for any members who require it.

V.G. Cond = Very Good Condition

Slight A.F. = Slightly Imperfect

Mint = no wear

Circle (c.) = around

Hll. mkd. = Hall Mark

T.M. = Trade Mark

Ct = Carat

Kt = Carat

B'ham = Birmingham

Ches = Chester

Cont. = Continental

Lon = London

## Asser and Sherwin Brass Needle Cases

The firm of Asser and Sherwin was started in about 1860 by my great great grandfather Charles Sheppard Sherwin and his cousin James Asser. The firm is initially described as dressing case, travelling bag and bagatelle board manufacturers, but later sold sports and games equipment (archery, croquet, chess, cricket and tennis), and 'elegancies' for ladies and gentlemen.

Their first shop was at 81 Strand, London, and the census for 1861 shows James Asser living there with his wife Frances, their 6 month old son, also James, his widowed mother Mary Ann Asser nee Sherwin and a servant Mary Ann Williams.

The Times of 24 July 1860 advertised:

ASSER and SHERWIN'S THREE – GUINEA MOROCCO TRAVELLING BAG for ladies and gentlemen, complete, with every requisite for the toilet. – 81 Strand, London

On 17 December 1863 The Times announced:

Mr Sherwin has returned from Paris with a choice collection of ELEGANCIES for PRESENTS, from 2s. to £30 each. – 81, The Strand, London

In 1864 Charles Sheppard Sherwin married Jane Mellish, a widow and sister of Frances Asser. Charles describes himself on the Marriage Certificate as a cutler.

Business must have been doing well because in 1865 a second shop was opened at 69 Oxford Street.

Between 1865 and 1868 Charles and Jane had three children, Florence, Percy and Herbert (my great great grandfather). James and Frances had two further children, Ernest and George.

The 1871 census finds the two families (and their four servants) living next door to each other in an elegant terrace at numbers 39 and 40 Colebrook Row, Islington.

However, in 1872 Charles died at the age of 39 of tuberculosis, and soon afterwards, in 1874 the Oxford Street shop was closed, although the Strand premises soon became 80-81 Strand. In 1877 the building was described as:

'the newly erected, very substantial and imposing pile of buildings, Nos 80 and 81 Strand, occupying one of the best positions in this leading thoroughfare, now tenanted by Messrs. Asser and Sherwin, the well known dressing case makers'.

By about 1881 the Strand shop was closed and for a short time the business continued at 23 Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, before disappearing.

James Asser continued in business, founding the successful Jermyn Street shirt makers Turnbull and Asser in 1885. He died at the age of 88 in 1924.



*by Richard Sherwin*

**Nearly all the thimbles in this magazine are from private collections.  
We will sell members thimbles at a price agreed between both parties,  
for a commission of 30%.**



**English brass and silver plate commemoratives**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 7. 'Silver jubilee King George V 1910-1935 Queen Mary' and profiles. Sil plate. | £85 |
| 8. Brass, 'Silver jubilee King George V' a crown '1910-1935 Queen Mary.         | £85 |
| 9. 'Victoria [a crown] Jubilee. Silver plate.                                   | £85 |
| 10. Plate. 'Coronation Edward VII' two profiles '1902 Alexandra'.               | £85 |

Note the interesting difference on the first thimble where the Royal profiles are between the legend. On the brass version there is a crown instead of the profiles. The original silver plate may have worn off the brass version.



**Dorcas and Dreema**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 11. Marked 'Rd 73626. Pat 6' Clear waffle pattern on this early Dorcas. | £30 |
| 12. Marked 'Pat 10' crisp all over daisy pattern on this early Dorcas.  | £30 |
| 13. Marked 'Pat 11' ditto crisp all over daisy, early Dorcas.           | £30 |
| 14. 'HG&S 16 Dreema' charming double pattern.                           | £38 |

Delightful to see Dorcas and Dreema patterns in such sharp condition. Later on in the mag you will see a Dorcas with the whole word, not the usual abbreviation of 'pat.'



### Enamel on silver

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 15. Mkd 925 in apex. Silver. Yellow enamel, yellow glass top, prob German c.1930. | £85  |
| 16. Enamel roses on silver, hll mkd JS&S B'ham 1971.                              | £120 |
| 17. Silver, rose enamel. Inside apex mkd 'sterling 6,' USA c.1900.                | £130 |
| 18. Turquoise blue enamel on silver gilt. Apex 'Norway' and prob D.A. . c.1950.   | £95  |

Enamel thimbles are still strong favourites because of their fragility. When you find one in good condition it is a bonus. The D.A. probably stands for David Anderson of Norway. Enamels are particularly popular in Japan where they have a great heritage of their own in enamelling.



### Enamel on silver and porcelain

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 19. 1980's hand painted, signed [made for the Thimble Society] Woodpecker.        | £35  |
| 20. Enamel roses on silver, hll mkd B'ham 1916. Reverse has a rosebud.            | £160 |
| 21. Delicate prob Worcester porcelain c.1890. Alternate roses and pansies.        | £140 |
| 22. Marked 'Norway sterling. D.A.' White enamel with roses on silver gilt.c.1950. | £120 |

The initials D.A. inside the apex of the enamel thimbles stand for David Anderson, the famous jewellery and thimble maker. His main shop was in Oslo, with various other outlets. His rare early thimbles feature reindeer, fjords and Scandinavian scenes.

**PLEASE SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.**

**The post is not always reliable. We will send you one hard copy and one email copy.  
Then all members get the magazine at the same time, even if you live abroad.  
You can order with the knowledge that you won't miss out.**





**Enamel on silver**

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 23. Blue enamel border with roses and leaves. Gabler six petal top, c.1900.       | £135 |
| 24. Mkd in apex 'Simons, sterling' USA c.1920. Pretty roses and leaves in enamel. | £135 |
| 25. Handsome wide enamel border of big roses on blue enamel, carnelian top.925.   | £180 |
| 26. Mkd Sterling in apex. Delicate enamel border of roses and leaves, c.1900.     | £135 |

All in excellent condition, these pretty enamel on silver come from Europe, probably Germany, and America. You do not come across French enamel thimbles of the above type. The French mainly use enamel inlay on gold thimbles. 925 denotes the item is of sterling quality.



**Turquoise and corals**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 27. Mexican c.1950, good quality silver set with turquoise.                       | £40 |
| 28. Alternate turquoise and amethyst in silver, prob Italian c.1890. stamped 800. | £90 |
| 29. Corals around this silver prob.800. poss. Italian, c.1890.                    | £85 |
| 30. Ditto above, set with turquoise, prob 800 silver, c.1890.                     | £80 |

Charming stone set skirts, many are stamped 800 within the dimpling. It is difficult to tell those made in Italy from those made in Germany, except when they have the six petal flower top synonymous with Gabler. 800 is a lower grade silver.





**Niello on silver**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 31. Delicate twining frieze, clear mk on rim Kokoshnik head facing right. 875. | £180 |
| 32. Berries and leaves, Kokoshnik head facing right, 875 in niello pattern.    | £120 |
| 33. Leaf and flower garland, mk on rim with a star and 875. then initials.     | £120 |
| 34. Marsh Arab from Iraq c.1920. Palm trees and boats on water.                | £90  |

Look for marks on the rim if you think you have a Russian thimble. They are nearly always marked, either with head facing left and '74 dating it to pre-revolution. Head facing right with '85 for post revolution.

**Please make sure we have the last three digits on the reverse of your credit card. When you are ordering or paying your sub we need the card number, the current expiry date and the last three digits on the reverse of your card. We cannot process your orders without this as we have been issued with new high security PDQs. [Pretty Damn Quick machines!]**



**French and German silver late 19th century**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 35. Gorgeous deep border of Art Nouveau tulips, French [tiny mk in dimples].    | £95 |
| 36. Beautiful border of Art Nouveau marguerites, French [ditto above].          | £80 |
| 37. Gabler top, unusual design of a sunset flanked by birds and foliage c.1890. | £75 |
| 38. Unusual Gabler with pairs of delightful birds on twigs around the border.   | £90 |

I have not seen the above designs of the sunset or the pairs of birds perching on branches. The French thimble showing tulips is in the catalogue for the Paris shop Bon Marche c.1902.



**Silver Stone tops and other**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 39. Gabler top, charming border of flowers. Mkd in dimples 'Germany Sterling.' | £45  |
| 40. Lovely mistletoe border, mauve stone top, French c.1890.                   | £120 |
| 41. Wonderful dragons either side of shield. Mauve stone top. Scandinavian.    | £80  |
| 42. Well engraved 'Garmisch', a town in Germany. A mauve stone top, c.1890.    | £65  |

Dragons are a Scandinavian motive, they are probably sea dragons. The Japanese also favour dragons, often clasping a pearl. Maybe because both countries have a lot of coastline. Chinese dragons appear in land based designs.



**Bog Oak and others**

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 43. Horn thimble, hand carved. European, c.1910.                            | £45  |
| 44. Gutta Purcha finely made, European c.1900.                              | £40  |
| 45. Bog oak, carved 'ATORA' elegant hatched sides, Irish c.1890.            | £150 |
| 46. Medieval, European, acorn cap c.1250/1300. Tiny suspension hole in top. | £95  |

The Gutta Purcha thimble is interesting. It is very light but very strong. The Gutta-Purcha is a tropical tree producing a whitish rubber substance. When it dries, items can be carved from it.



### Children's silver and others

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 47. 'James Walker the London Jeweller' by HGS B'ham 1924.            | £38 |
| 48. Silver, steel top [little rust] finely engraved. English c.1820. | £75 |
| 49. Silver, mkd sterling by HG&S. Pretty engraved border.            | £35 |
| 50. Tiny, doll's size. Hll mkd WH Ches. 1913.                        | £35 |
| 51. Greek key pattern border. Tiny French mark.                      | £39 |

The lovely steel top child's silver thimble has a tiny bit of rust that has caused pitting. You can buy an emery pencil or try using a fine emery nail file to remove rust.



### Silver Thailand thimbles c.1940/50. All priced at £48 each

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 52. Dancing monkey on front, dancing figure on reverse, Buddha on the top.  | £48 |
| 53. Different dancing figures front and back. Same top as above.            | £48 |
| 54. Dancing figure with fans, reverse a different dancing figure. Same top. | £48 |
| 55. Dancing figure with fans, reverse a different dancing figure. Same top. | £48 |

Thailand has been famous for making very good quality, well designed silver thimbles. It is interesting to see an entire collection showing all the variations of patterns.



### Silver Thailand thimbles continued

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 56. Mermaid figure, on reverse a dancing monkey. Same top.       | £50 |
| 57. Dancing figure with wings, reverse dancing figure. Same top. | £48 |
| 58. Mermaid figure, reverse a dancing monkey. Same top.          | £50 |
| 59. Fan dancer, on reverse a dancing monkey. Same top.           | £48 |

It would be good to find out more about the figures portrayed on the thimbles. Unfortunately, we do not have 'our member in Thailand'. If any one knows more, please write in.



### Peep or Stanhope thimble and others

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 60. Elegant raised flower and swag border, French c.1890.   | £79  |
| 61. Brass peep showing 'Memories of Monmouth' with six miniature views or 'Peeps.'<br>'Made in France' printed at the end of the views. C.1880. | £320 |
| 62. Scandinavian, lovely engraved silver, carnelian top. Initials AJ in shield.   | £50  |
| 63. Norwegian silver blue and white enamel good cond. Moonstone top, c 1890.  | £230 |

'Peeps' or 'Stanhopes' as they are known in America are very rare. The tiny hole at the top has the magnified views printed between pieces of glass. Antique peeps view from the inside, modern copies in brass or pewter view from the outside. See the 'Stanhopes' booklet by Derek Jull.





### USA silver scenic and others

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 64. Marked 'sterling' in the cartouche, engraved scene of houses, church, mountains. | £38 |
| 65. Little child's, pretty border, probably German or Dutch c.1900.                  | £30 |
| 66. Pretty little silver, with engraved border, English c.1890.                      | £38 |
| 67. Gabler top, handsome raised border of leaves.                                    | £38 |

I have been told that Auto Col [I think!] cleans thimbles well. It is normally found in car repair shops and used to clean chrome. Look carefully at the instructions and do not use on fine thimbles.



### Metal advertising and others

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 68. Brass 'Mazawatee Tea.' English advertising, c.1900.               | £25 |
| 69. Aluminium 'Use CWS Congress soap.' With side threader. C.1920s.   | £20 |
| 70. 'Drink Lyon's Green Label Tea.' Green band on aluminium, c.1920s. | £18 |
| 71. 'Equity Shoes.' Metal advertising, c.1920s.                       | £12 |

The threader is interesting and complete. It is a thin wire loop, you put your thread through it, then pull the wire loop with thread through the eye of your needle.

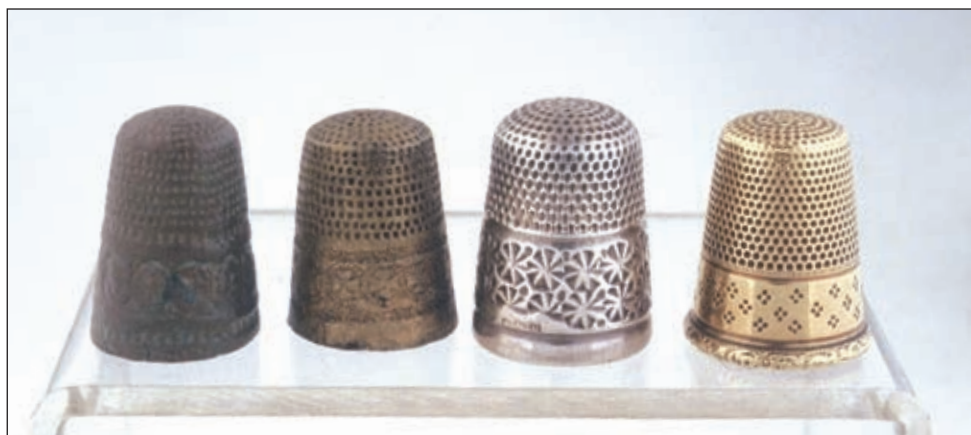
Please check with us that we have your current expiry date on your card. We may have permission to take your sub but cannot do so. If you have not paid, this will be your last magazine.



**Plastic and others.**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 72. Spode commemorating the birth 'HRH Prince William of Wales' 4th Aug.1982.          | £45. |
| 73. Plastic. Painted with 'forget me not.' Very clear cond. Birds and flowers, c.1920. | £45  |
| 74. Plastic, painted with blue border then flowers, English c.1920s.                   | £35  |
| 75. Hard stone carved thimble, c.1980.   | £35  |

It is a long time since we have had a plastic 'forget me not' thimble in such good condition. Usually, the printed picture has worn off through time and use. The date of 4th August 1982 is printed inside the Spode thimble.



**Nuremberg brass and others**

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 76. Brass Nuremberg, mid 16th century. Unclear border.                              | £60  |
| 77. Brass Nuremberg, mid 16th cen. Very interesting border of crosses and roundels. | £150 |
| 78. Silver by HG&S, hll mk worn, daisy border.                                      | £25  |
| 79. 18ct gold, French tiny mark in start of dimples. Classic dots pattern, c 1890.  | £150 |

Some of the excavated Nuremberg thimbles have a sheen on them, it depends if they have been dug up in a field or in water. The typical Nuremberg brass is very thin, you wonder how they survived.



**Decorative silver borders and others**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 80. Decorative applied border of leaves and berries. Silver, English, unmarked. | £35 |
| 81. Excellent applied border of thistles and leaves. Hll mk too worn to read.   | £38 |
| 82. Charming Gabler, with classic pattern of dots, cir 1900.                    | £35 |
| 83. Elegant striped Onyx top on this silver, hll mkd JS B'ham 1936.             | £48 |

The striped onyx stone top is unusual, the carnelian is probably the most usual. I love the moss agate tops but they seem hard to find in good condition. The amethyst is probably the prettiest, but difficult to tell from mauve glass.



**17th century silver and others**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 84. Excellent hatched Cromwellian silver thimble. You can hear the Civil War raging as you look at this Roundhead design. Mid 17th century, very good condition. | £480 |
| 85. End of the 17th century. By now we have entered a peaceful time reflected in the refined thimble. Delicate flower engraved border, very good condition.      | £450 |
| 86. Late 18th early 19th century silver poss. Dutch. Good condition, elegant shape.  | £130 |
| 87. Silver with steel top. Poss. Mexican or South American c.1820.   | £80  |

It is exciting to see 17th century silver thimbles, and in good condition allowing for their age. They have come from a private collection, as has the rest of the magazine.



**Silver with Moss Agate top and others**

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 88. Rich engraved border, hll mkd CM [Charles May] B'ham 1901.                 | £35 |
| 89. 'Thimble Society of London 1982' JS&S with matching hll mk. Moss agate top | £38 |
| 90. Rich raised border of roses by CMB'ham 1889.                               | £48 |
| 91. Bright cut rim, delicate engraved border hll mkd B'ham 1912.               | £30 |

It is interesting to see thimbles that we had made in a limited edition of approx 60, to commemorate the first year of the society. We started in the winter of 1981. We have been going strong now for 28 years, who would have believed it.



**Deep border enamel and others**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 92. USA silver, egg and dart border marked 'sterling 12 pat May 31'98. [for 1898.] | £35  |
| 93. Sparkly bright cut engraving hll mkd B'ham 1901, pink/clear stone top.         | £45  |
| 94. Excellent deep border enamel on silver showing roses and leaves Gabler top.    | £200 |
| 95. Maiden size silver USA puritan style pattern.                                  | £25  |

It is hard to identify some of the hardstones used in thimble tops. This one could be a crystal or a pale agate, hard to tell.





**Gold and others**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 96. Sweet little child's with central shield, Gabler top.                    | £35  |
| 97. Unusual border of clear raised grapes and leaves on this Gabler thimble. | £45  |
| 98. Rare border of cranes paddling in the reeds, possibly German.            | £48  |
| 99. Smart 18ct French [tiny mk] gold. Clear chevron engraved border c 1890.  | £180 |

French gold thimbles are always 18ct or over. They do not consider a lesser carat as gold. We recognise 9, 14 and 15ct as gold.



**Steel top and others**

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 100. Silver with steel top. Possibly Scandinavian c.1880. charming engraving. | £38  |
| 101. Small child's silver. Hill mkd b'ham 1897.                               | £30  |
| 102. Interesting reeded border on this child's silver. Possibly foreign.      | £30  |
| 103. Elegant French [tiny mk] 18ct gold, classic dots border c.1890.          | £180 |

Some of these French gold classic thimbles are the same as the ones found in sets. I keep a couple in my bits box because sometimes you find a lovely set but with a missing thimble. Satisfying to have the very one to hand.

### Collecting in Cornwall by Valerie Hadley.

I am writing to you from my house on top of a wild cliff on the Lizard in Cornwall to tell you something about the life down here.

We stumbled upon this farm back in 1964 and fell in love with it, built ourselves a new house, set about building up a good pedigree herd of Fresian cows – a completely new venture.

One of the most amusing – and difficult – things we had to do was to give a cow with a bad cough a eucalyptus inhale. It cured her. After five years we had enough, so we sold the herd and set about making a garden out of the wilderness. I now have a series of little gardens, within the big garden and pre-historic walls run through it. We discovered a bronze age roundhouse in one of the fields. My husband Peter set up a little museum in one of the barns. I open the garden and museum for charity, it is the oldest site in Cornwall having been dated at 5000 B.C.

I started collecting thimbles in 1970 when a dear friend left me her Worcester ones. I have all the magazines from the very first, I am 90 so perhaps in every sense your oldest collector ? If any of you are having a holiday on the Lizard, do drop in and see me – phone first – 01326-280468. Happy thimbling to you all, Valerie.

*Thank you for such an interesting letter, and kind invitation. You are a veteran member but our oldest is 104. Thimbling seems to keep you young.*

I apologise again for the cancellation of the last meeting. To try and make up for it, I am proposing a lunch at the hotel in Bayswater where we held our one day meetings. This will definitely not be cancelled, even if it is just Annie and I. I am thinking of a Sunday lunch in early June at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel Bayswater Rd. Each member will pay for themselves as they consume. I will ask for a sit down set menu in the dining room, with two choices. If there are enough of us, we can take coffee in the lounge together. I already have about four interested members. Bring thimbles along you want to discuss, swap or sell. Please write in if you are interested, especially if you have any suggestions.



#### Silver 'Souvenir' and others

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 104. 'Souvenir' in raised letters on this German item c.1880.        | £38  |
| 105. Similar pattern of scrolls and berries but a different shape.   | £35  |
| 106. Silver, pretty border of leaves and berries, poss Dutch c.1910. | £35  |
| 107. Elegant gold [18ct] French c.1890, nice chevron border.         | £180 |

The French like their gold thimbles. My mother used to say either French husbands were more generous or more guilty than their British counterparts. I have to add that she spoke from experience as my father was French.



**Fine Russian Niello and others**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 108. Fine Russian 19th cen. Niello 'Kabka.' A Russian town. Mkd KC '84. Which makes this a pre-revolution example of a souvenir thimble. | £230 |
| 109. Gabler top, showing the sewing women, [or happy family] a little worn.  | £150 |
| 110. Tiny child's silver or dolls, hll mk worn. C.1900.  | £30  |
| 111. Hll mkd B'ham 1897 cable style silver.  | £58  |

It is nice to see a pre-revolutionary Russian thimble. There are not many left. At the moment anything Russian sells well. Russians are more affluent so they are coming over here to buy back their heritage.



**Royal Spa and others**

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 112. 'Royal Spa' by Henry Griffiths and son B'ham 1920.            | £38 |
| 113. Prob. Scandinavian, mkd in apex 'Sterling' c.1920.            | £28 |
| 114. Delightful child's silver with fine engraving English c.1830. | £38 |
| 115. Silver, unknown origin.                                       | £25 |

It is very difficult to guess where a thimble has come from when the style is unrecognisable and there are no marks. Sometimes it is better to say 'unknown' and hope a member might throw some light on it.



### Coral skirt and others

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 116. Pretty silver flower border set with coral porcelain, prob 20th cen. Foreign. | £35 |
| 117. French [tiny mark] with a fleur-de-lys style border, c.1890.                  | £38 |
| 118. Pretty 'Dreema' by HG&S.  | £33 |
| 119. Fit for hard sewing, 'Dorcas' by CH. Star pattern.                            | £30 |

The Dorcas and Dreema thimbles are perfect for members who sew, especially if you work in the clothes trade. We have tailors and designers coming to our shop to buy their thimbles. They take a long time, seeing that they fit properly.



### Turquoise Mexican and others

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 120. Mexican silver c.1950 set with turquoise [probably porcelain].                 | £35 |
| 121. Silver 'The Thimble Society of London 1983' with enamel City of London shield. | £38 |
| 122. Unmarked silver Niello, possibly of middle east provenance, c.1950.            | £25 |
| 123. Poss Mexican, silver with enamel cloisonné, c.1950.                            | £28 |

When you see 'turquoise stones or probably porcelain' it makes no difference to the price which they are. Turquoise are very cheap, especially the small ones. During the 19th century they were immensely popular set in gold jewellery, but they discoloured being porous, so porcelain was used instead.





**Silver sewing ring with hares and others**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 124. Silver sewing ring, or tailors ring, American c.1890-Puritan design.        | £32  |
| 125. Hares coursing around the silver rim. Dutch c.1790, design shows some wear. | £150 |
| 126. Silver with steel top, delightful engraving English c.1830.                 | £80  |
| 127. Ditto steel top shows a little pitting and rust.                            | £55  |

It is difficult to assess acceptable damage. What is right for one customer is not for the next. We try to describe items correctly, but if you don't agree with the description you can send items back for a refund within two weeks.



**Silver with stone tops**

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 128. Silver with pretty flower border, light green stone top, tiny mk on rim.  | £45 |
| 129. English, silver, no mk, moonstone top..                                   | £32 |
| 130. Blue porcelain top on this foreign silver c.1930.                         | £25 |
| 131. Pretty mauve stone top, daisy and leaf border, tiny mk in dimples c 1910. | £35 |



# The Bee-Line



*Dear Bees,*

I think a reunion lunch would be a nice idea – if I am over for a visit, perhaps I could come.

**Ms L Green, USA**

*Dear Bees,*

I was most intrigued to see No. 55, the Russian silver thimble, and the current value. I have one – same kokoshnik facing right 84, engraved very similarly, which I found at Newark in 2003, £30! But with hindsight I was so stupid! The dealer had two of the same. At the time I didn't see the point in having two much the same! I have regretted that decision so much since. I look forward to receiving my order.

**Best wishes  
D. Rennen**

*I always regret what I don't buy!*

*Dear Bees,*

Good luck to you in your new venture in Bakewell – I stayed in the Rutland Arms many years ago. I find Derbyshire and area a lovely part of the country.

**Kind regards  
Mrs. M Bickle**

*Dear Bees,*

I enclose my sub. This is an opportunity to say how very much I have enjoyed receiving the catalogues, and also the very friendly and pleasant contact we have had when enquiring about the thimbles.

**All the best to you for 2009  
Mr & Mrs BL Etchell**

*Dear Bees,*

I enclose my membership fee for 2009. Sorry it is a little late but Christmas somehow got in the way! I am having great fun at the moment re-costing my thimble collection which I began in 1978. Luckily, I have not got too many (312). I am amazed at the prices some have risen by. A few silver ones have gone down and some have remained the same. Sorting out the silver designs takes time as some are very similar in appearance. It is keeping me well occupied!

A happy New Year to you both.

**Sincerely  
Madeleine Hicks**

*It is a good idea to cost your collection for insurance purposes.*

*Dear Bees*

Thank you for suggesting I receive the magazine by email as well as by post. I do love to have the paper copy – I became a member in 1997 and look back over all my copies from time to time, for reference or just for pleasure. But the vagaries of the postal system nowadays do mean I sometimes miss out on a thimble I would particularly like to buy, so an electronic delivery will be very useful.

Since I paid my sub over the phone today, I didn't get to write the letter I had intended to accompany my cheque. So by email instead, may I thank you for another year of enjoyable and informative magazines and for continuing to offer such a wide range of lovely thimbles. It can't be easy nowadays and I do appreciate your hard work.

Best wishes to you and let's hope 2009 isn't as dire financially as everyone seems to be anticipating!

**J. Every**

*Dear Bees,*

In the last magazine you mentioned a store "Au bon marché" that once stocked thimbles. Photographs are of this store taken from a stand-up card among my collections, hope it interests.

**Best wishes  
Mr & Mrs P Brook**





#### **'Infant Welfare Peace 1919' and others**

132. 'Infant Welfare Peace 1919' engraved around the border. By JF B'ham 1918.  
A rare commemorative made just after the end of the 1st World War. £180
133. 'Domestic sew.mach' 'sterling.' Silver. American advertising c.1910. £40
134. 'Forget me Not' on this silver English c.1830. £75
135. 'Forget me Not' ditto above, with engraved band of laurels. £75

'Infant Welfare Peace 1919' was brought out as part of an awareness and fundraising scheme after World War 1. Interesting to see the unusual silver thimble advertising sewing machines, thereby enabling women to make cheaper clothes at home. Which we may all have to do again!

#### **Back cover**

136. Rare James Fenton Reg.202312 Scottish pebbles [agates] c.1892.  
See page 123 of Holmes 'History of Thimbles.' Good condition. £350
137. English silver 17th century, distinctive round dimpling, rope twist border.  
Central cartouch initials 'EH' at the side of cartouche 'ON'. Good condition. £450

**BUYING ADVICE.** Sometimes it is worth while viewing any jewellery sales coming up at your local auction. To my surprise, I have often seen thimbles included in the items. More often gold ones, and if you are very lucky, gold set with stones of some sort. Because thimbles are small, but costly, they are included in jewellery rather than general where they might get lost.

If you are a Northern member, remember we have a showcase in the Rutland Antiques Centre at the back of the Rutland Hotel in the centre of Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1BT. Opening Monday to Saturday 10-5pm and Sunday 11-4pm. Tel 01692-810-468.

There is a coffee shop, or have a Bakewell pudding at the café opposite. It is a beautiful market town in the heart of the Peak district.

Don't forget our website [www.thimblesociety.com](http://www.thimblesociety.com). New items go on about every two weeks. There are so many sewing tools, sets, fitted boxes and other small items that do not get into the magazine because of lack of space and the fact that this is a thimble periodical.



£4.50