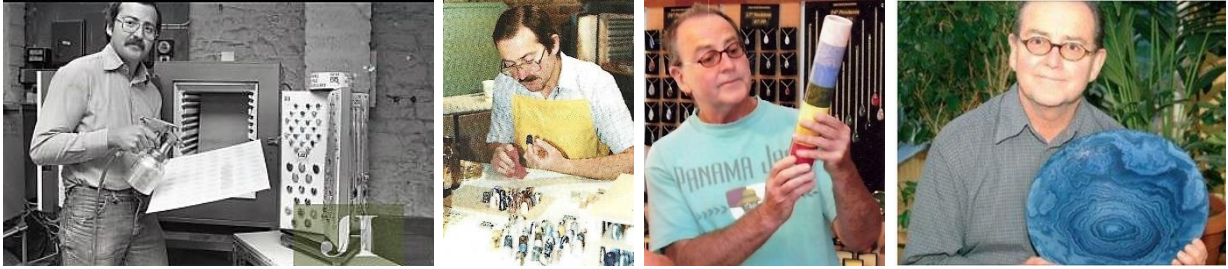


# Tony Bouchet's agateware thimbles (Jersey)

## 1984-2007

It was a suggestion from a Dutch collector that finally prompted me to look at this amazing thimble maker. I had just avoided the topic because I knew of his huge output of agateware thimbles ever since I started collecting thimbles.

In 2007 Vilma Buck and I were visiting Jersey. There we met local thimble collector, Jan Neville. Jan had secured a visit for us to St Ouen, the home of the Agateware Bouchet Pottery. I had only met one thimble maker before. Tony Bouchet is one of the world's true gentlemen and we spent a couple of pleasurable hours with him.



Bouchet in his workshop – Bouchet 1988 - Bouchet 2007 with his latest technique in segmenting colours in vases  
Bouchet 2011



inside the store - Vilma and Sue with Tony - Sue, Jan and Vilma outside the shop

Bouchet's father started their pottery business in 1960. Tony worked alongside him in 1965 where he was producing simple agateware pieces. Over the next twenty years he discovered a new technique of making agateware. What was he trying to create? Agateware, said to be extremely difficult to make, is a form of pottery that mixes clays and oxides to produce a marbled agate effect.

His special technique is the reproduction of natural agate stone, achieved by marbling white clay with metal oxides. The clay then rests for one year (what patience). His colours had been formulated and mixed - the mixing process alone required over 2,000 experiments.

Agateware was first made in 1730 by Wedgwood and Spode and discontinued in 1780. It's secrets were long forgotten and had never been attempted successfully until Bouchet conquered Holy Grail of agateware pottery.

It takes three firings to make an agateware thimble and for the final firing circles of 22ct gold are applied by hand. The thimble is then polished giving us the glossy, smooth finish of the thimbles we now associate with the name of Bouchet. By 1984 Tony Bouchet agateware thimbles were ready for the thimble world,

Why did Bouchet choose thimbles to show off his new agateware?



Tony kept a broken piece of agateware to demonstrate how the colours are all thru his pottery.

As all modern thimble makers in the UK Bouchet turned to TTG to market his thimbles, which they did very successfully over the period of agateware thimbles. Where known, the catalogue date is supplied. Initially Bouchet's thimbles were supplied with a TTG certificate. Soon afterwards these were supplied by Bouchet. I cannot find any Bouchet thimbles for sale thru TTG after November 1999. Earlier TTG catalogue entries states "and from Tony's own shop."

### APEXES

All thimbles have two lines painted at the rim and have a gold line at the rim of the apex.



three types of apexes in Bouchet thimbles



first has a flat indented apex



second has a domed apex with a single gold circle  
third has a domed apex with three concentric gold circles

### SHAPES

size of the third shape is 300x200mm.



original shape of Bouchet thimbles - squatter than the later ones



first - second - third  
the second shape has a slightly domed apex  
the third has a more domed apex



don't go looking for these ridged thimbles. They are prototypes and never went into production



NAMED COLOURS

Bouchet named about half of his marbled coloured thimbles: found on certificates and TTG catalogues.

Most of the early catalogues were in black and white.

Tony's thimbles are not named anywhere on the thimble.

Tho sold thru TTG, Bouchet thimbles were always available in Jersey at the Agateware shop.

Other Bouchet's colour names were as follows (no colour photos available):

- Bloodstone (October 1985) - Coral Agate (June 1984) - Dawn Agate (May 1985) - Emerald Agate (May 1984) - New Green (November 1984) - Red Brown (March 1985) - Shepherd's Delight (December 1985) - Yellow Agate (December 1984)



Rainbow 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2007 - Bouchet certificate

<p>Amber Delight</p>	<p>Black &amp; White Agate (thimble shows as blue, but it's definitely black) TTG January 1985</p>	<p>Blue Agate TTG January 1985</p>
<p>Brown Agate TTG October 1984</p>	<p>Chestnut Sky</p>	<p>Coral Lagoon</p>
<p>Coral Sea</p>	<p>Cosmopolitan TTG March 1988</p>	<p>Fantasea</p>
<p>Josiah Tribute</p>	<p>Lavender Morning</p>	<p>Lavenders Green</p>
<p>Lemon and Lime Time</p>	<p>Lemon Dream</p>	<p>Lilac Agate TTG September 1984</p>

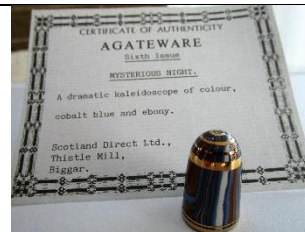




Lilac and White Agate



Mint Chocolate



Mysterious Night



Oasis  
TTG June 1985



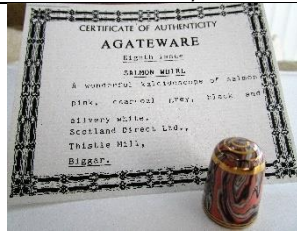
Over the Rainbow  
using all seven colours of the rainbow  
TTG March 1987  
Feldmann 16/1991



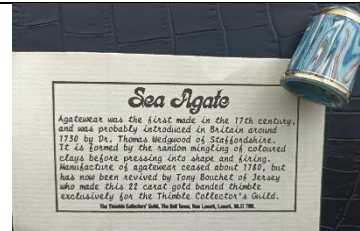
Peppermint Delight



Rainbow



Salmon Whirl



Sea Agate  
TTG August 1984



Silvery Primrose  
mark 3



Sky Sienna



Spring Mosaic



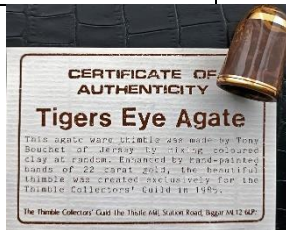
Summer Mist



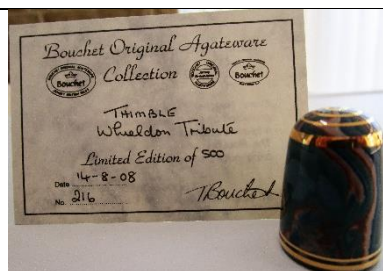
Sun  
TTG July 1985



3  
Tangerine Twirl



Tigers Eye Agate  
TTG September 1985



Whieldon Tribute



Winter Sunset

## MARKS

This section shows the progression of the Bouchet marks. The dates are from the article by Mary Craft. It would be interesting to know whether Bouchet bone china and agateware thimbles were differently priced.

 <p><b>1a.</b>          Lettered on the outside in gold <u>Channel Island Jewellery Jersey C.I.</u> is lettered in outside ring - <u>Made in Jersey</u> in the centre this was the name used by Tony's father  <b>1984</b></p>	 <p><b>1b.</b>          Identical marks in black - on the inside</p>
 <p><b>2a.</b></p>	 <p><b>2b.</b></p>
<p><b>2a.</b>  <u>Bouchet Original Agateware</u> lettered in outside ring <u>Made in Jersey</u> in centre identical marks but <u>Made in Jersey</u> between lines in centre          L: <b>1985</b> only</p>	 <p><b>3.</b>  <u>Bouchet Original Agateware</u> lettered in outside ring <u>Jersey British Isles</u> in centre  <b>1986</b> only</p>
 <p><b>4.</b>  <u>Bouchet bone china</u> <u>Jersey British Isles</u> lettered in outside ring <u>Bouchet</u> with crown in centre</p>	 <p><b>5.</b>  <u>Bouchet Original Agateware</u> <u>Jersey British Isles</u> lettered in outside ring, <u>Bouchet</u> with crown in centre  <b>1987-</b></p>
 <p><b>6.</b>  <u>Bouchet</u> with crown - simplified</p>	

## ANOMALIES

We may never know the why and wherefores of these thimbles - recorded here for posterity and answers.

 <p>signed <b>CS</b> in gold          there is no image          shorter shape</p>	 <p>no gold circles on apex</p>
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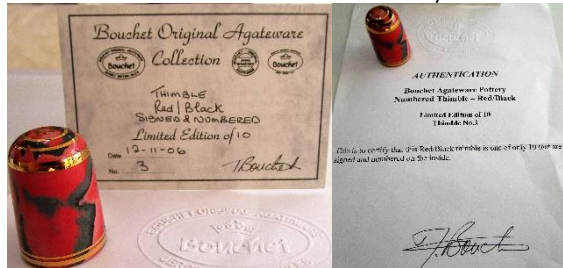
OTHER



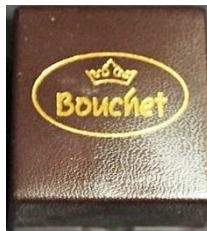
crazing may be found on the agateware surface due to their age



wall thickness varies between the first and second/third timeline of thimbles



only **10** produced with an additional embossed certificate of authenticity signed and numbered on the inside



Bouchet thimble box

CERTIFICATES

*Bouchet Original Agateware Certificate of Authenticity*

Every Bouchet Original Agateware piece is protected by this Guarantee of Authenticity, it is a treasure of British Art and Craftmanship. The Bouchet family hope that this piece will bring much pleasure to the collector.

J. BOUCHET LTD., ST. OUEN, JERSEY JE3 2HW, CHANNEL ISLANDS.



Bouchet certificates (both sides) leaflet and label 'Agateware Original Bouchet Made in Jersey'.

R: certificate shows some of the Bouchet marks as well as Bouchet's signature two at left bottom give details of the history of agateware – colour brochures available around Jersey

I have observed that the certificate's issue date often doesn't match the date of the occasion. They were possibly only dated by the Agateware shop when they were sold?

Talking to the BBC in March 2011 Bouchet advised that "The workshop is now closed and Mr Bouchet has destroyed all his recipes, records, moulds, clay and special equipment. He said that by doing so would give someone else the chance to discover what he knows for themselves.

Sir John Wedgwood came to Jersey to meet him and said after 300 years of trying, even the Wedgwood potters could not make it.

The Wedgwood family now collects Mr Bouchet's creations".

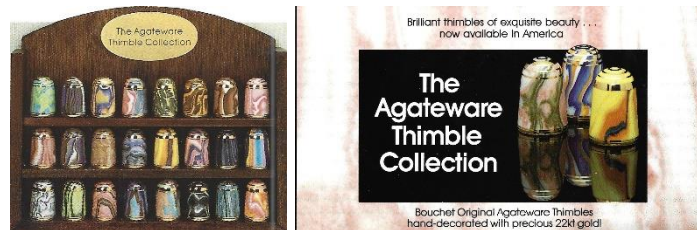
Bouchet had revealed as much over lunch in 2007 but it was a very sad day for collectors to realise there would be no-one taking over his legacy of making agateware thimbles.

I have used a date order for listing the Bouchet thimbles, where appropriate.

For other pottery topics see  
Boscastle Pottery thimbles  
Peter Blanshard of York Pottery thimbles  
Poole Pottery thimbles

## Colours of thimbles

Bouchet created a total of fifty thimble colours. Colours can be also seen on the inside of the marbled thimbles. The agateware colours tend to get bolder and brighter over the years.



set of 24 Bouchet thimbles for US market, with leaflet 1988, Thimble Collectors Club (TCC)

The following show some of the huge range of the colours that were created over the years: no two are the same.



blue



browns





black



dark range



dark blues



salmon pink dark greens



greens



pale range



pink-greys



pinks



pink-yellows



burnt orange



three colours



yummy bright colours



## Christmas thimbles 1985-2000

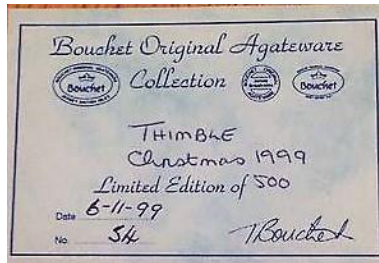
Gold lettering is fairly standard from 1987: the year lettered below the word Christmas. That lettering is enclosed within an oval ring.

For the 1996-1999 thimbles the oval is gold painted. The last issue, 2000 has huge lettering marking the millennium (similar to Bouchet's other millennium thimbles).

I'll include more than one image if the colours seem different.

Most issued by TTG in November each year until 1997.

Usually limited to **500**.



1999 Christmas Bouchet certificate

 <p style="text-align: center;">1985</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1986 His only Christmas thimble with a tree on verso</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1987 two colourways</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1988 mark <b>5</b></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">1989 limited to <b>1000</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1990 limited to <b>1000</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1991</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1992 L: limited to <b>700</b></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">1993 L: limited to <b>700</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1994</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1995</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1996</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">1997</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1998 limited to <b>400</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1999</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">2000 limited to <b>2000</b></p>

## Commemorative thimbles 1985-2005

Commemorative thimbles must always have a date. Christmas and British royal family dated thimbles are listed separately.

The Channel Isles were the only part of Great Britain to be invaded by Germany during World War II. It is only fitting that Bouchet incorporated so many thimbles commemorating the anniversaries of the liberation of Jersey.

Limited to **500** unless specified.



2000 Millennium Collection Bouchet certificate  
1999

 <p>1985 JERSEY JERSEY LIBERATION ANNIVERSARY 1945-1985 two flags and chains mark <b>1b</b></p>	 <p>1986 Jersey 1986</p>	 <p>1987 THIMBLE COLLECTORS GUILD thimble</p>
 <p>H.M. QUEEN VICTORIA 150 ANNIVERSARY JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> 1837- 1987 TTG Jun 1988</p>	 <p>1987 PRINSES MARGRIET - MR PIETER VAN VOLLENHOVEN 10 JANUARI 1967 in orange and blues of Dutch royal family Kay Sullivan March 1987</p>	 <p>1988 DUBLIN MILLENNIUM 988-1988 coat-of-arms Irish pale green on verso TTG March 1988 mark <b>5</b></p>





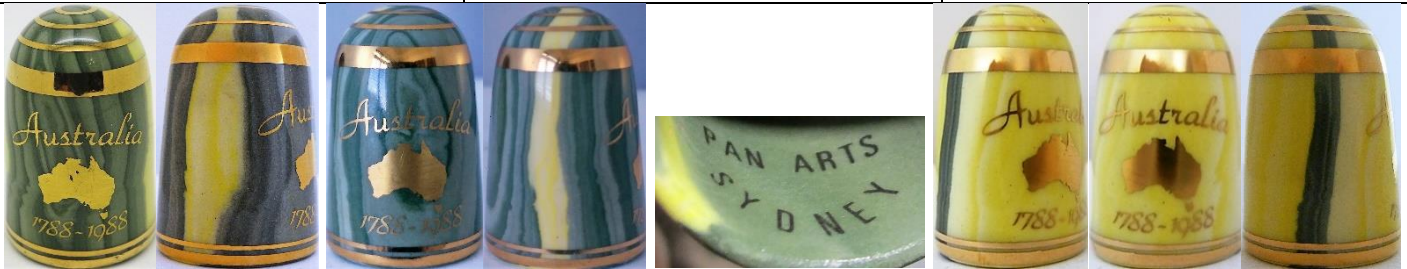
1988  
THIMBLE COLLECTORS GUILD 1988  
Thimble  
TTG August 1988



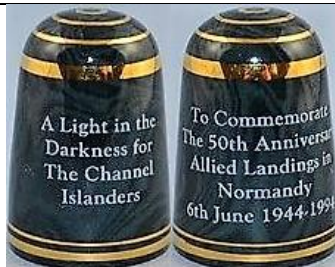
1989  
THE THIMBLE GUILD 1989  
thimble  
limited to **1000**  
TTG March 1989



1990  
GERMAN OCCUPATION 1940-1945  
TO COMMEMORATE THE 50th  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCCUPATION  
OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS 1st July  
1940-1990  
TTG June 1990



1988  
Australia 1788-1988  
Australian Bicentenary  
L: green and yellow for Australian colours  
commissioned by Pan Arts in Sydney in 1987  
some thimbles contain backstamp 'Pan Arts Sydney' as well as Bouchet mark  
limited to **1000**  
R: yellow and green  
limited to **1788**  
TTG December 1987  
mark **5**



1994  
A Light in the Darkness for the Channel Islanders  
To Commemorate The 50th Anniversary Allied Landings  
in Normandy 6th June 1944-1994  
mark **5**  
TTG June 1994



1995  
50  
To Commemorate 50th Anniversary Jersey Liberation  
9th May 1945-1995  
The Liberation sculpture St Heliers – unveiled in May  
1995 - flag waving islanders  
limited to **750**  
mark **5**  
TTG May 1995



1995  
VE  
To Commemorate 50th Anniversary  
Victory in Europe 1945-1995  
TTG April 1995



1995  
VJ  
To Commemorate 50th Anniversary  
Victory over Japan 14<sup>th</sup> August  
1945-1995  
TTG August 1995



1999  
TOTAL ECLIPSE 11.8.99  
no circles on apex, signifying  
darkness



2000  
NEW YEAR



2000  
MILLENNIUM 2000 COLLECTION  
green - blue  
limited to **6000**  
TTG November 1999



2005  
60  
JERSEY LIBERATION 1945-2005  
mark **5**



2005  
60  
VICTORY IN EUROPE 1945-2005



2006  
ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL 1806-1859  
commemorating bicentenary 1806-2006

### Planets thimbles

The planet's name is lettered along the bottom rim in black between 22ct gold concentric rings.

Moon was additional to the set.

Limited to **950** sets.

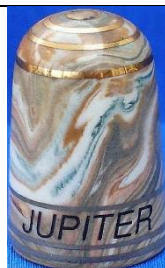
Set supplied with a black pottery plinth.



TTG December 1991



EARTH



JUPITER



MARS



MERCURY



NEPTUNE



PLUTO



SATURN



SUN





URANUS



VENUS

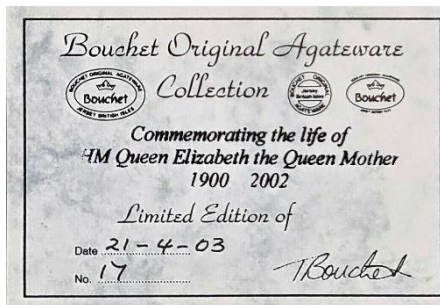


MOON

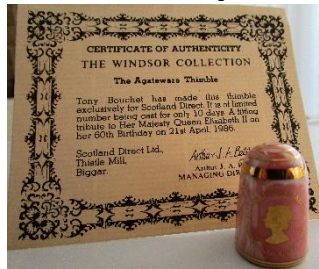
lettered in gold  
no concentric circles with apex left  
white representing full moon

### Royal family thimbles 1986-2007

For the royals Bouchet used the same gilt head for each anniversary. Usually limited to **500** unless specified.



Commemorating the Life of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother 1900 – 2002 Bouchet certificate

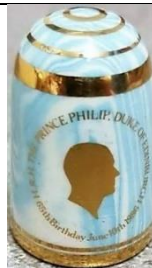


some of the royals may have been sold by TTG as The Windsor Collection



1986

TO COMMEMORATE THE MARRIAGE  
OF PRINCE ANDREW WITH MISS  
SARAH FERGUSON 23rd JULY 1986  
TTG



1986

H.R.H. PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF  
EDUINBURGH 65th Birthday June  
10<sup>th</sup> 1986  
TTG May 1986



1986

H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II 60th  
Birthday April 21st 1986



1987  
TO COMMEMORATE THE RUBY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY H.M. QUEEN ELIAZETH II THE PRINCE PHILIP NOVEMBER 20th 1947-1987 issued with commmerative spoon and bell  
TTG February 1992



1988  
TO COMMEMORATE THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK THE BIRTH OF THEIR FIRST CHILD H.R.H.THE PRINCESS BEATRICE OF YORK 8th August 1988 limited to **2475**  
TTG August 1988



1988  
H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES 40th Birthday November 14th 1988 issued with commemorative silver-plated spoon limited to **5000**  
TTG August 1990



1990  
PRINCESS ROYAL 40th BIRTHDAY 15th August 1990 issued with commemorative silver-plated spoon  
TTG August 1990



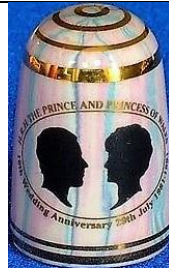
1990  
TO COMMEMORATE THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK THE BIRTH OF THEIR SECOND CHILD H.R.H.THE PRINCESS EUGENIE VICTORIA HELENA OF YORK born 23rd March 1990 limited to **950**



1990  
TO COMMEMORATE THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK THE BIRTH OF THEIR SECOND CHILD H.R.H.THE PRINCESS EUGENIE VICTORIA HELENA OF YORK born 23rd March 1990  
TTG April 1990



1990  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER 90th Birthday 4th August 1990 issued with commemorative silver-plated spoon  
TTG July 1990



1991  
H.R.H. THE PRINCES AND PRINCESS OF WALES 10th Wedding Anniversary 29th July 1981-1991 issued with commemorative silver-plated spoon  
TTG August 1991



1991  
H.R.H THE PRINCESS OF WALES 30th Birthday July 1st 1991



1991  
H.R.H. PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday June 10<sup>th</sup> 1991



1991  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II 65th Birthday April 21st 1991



1992  
H.R.H. PRINCESS ROYAL AND COMMANDER TIMOTHY LAURENCE Ccommemorating Their Wedding 12th November 1992  
TTG January 1993





1992  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II 40th Anniversary of Her Ascension 6th February 1952-1992



1993  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II 40th Anniversary of Her Coronation June 2nd 1953-1993  
pink and blue  
issued with commemorative silver-plated spoon  
TTG May 1993



1995  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER 95th Birthday 4th August 1995



1996  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II 70th Birthday April 21st 1996  
limited to **800**



1996  
H.R.H. PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH 75th Birthday June 10th 1996



1997  
GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY 1947-1997  
limited to **1200**



1998  
H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES 50th Birthday November 14th 1998



1999  
THE MARRIAGE THE PRINCE EDWARD WITH MISS SOPHIE RHYSES-JONES SATURDAY, 19th June 1999



2000  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER 100th BIRTHDAY 4th August 2000  
using her favourite colour of mauve



2000  
H.R.H. PRINCE WILLIAM 18th Birthday 18th June 2000



2002  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER 1900-2002



2002  
QUEEN ELIZABETH II Golden Jubilee 1952-2002



2003  
H.R.H. PRINCE WILLIAM 21st Birthday 21-06-2003



2006  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II 80th Birthday April 21st 2006



only the first **ten** of the run were signed 'T. Bouchet' in gold on the inside



2007  
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II & H.R.H THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH Diamond Wedding Anniversary 20-11-2007



## Jersey tourist thimbles

most of these tourist thimbles were only available on Jersey. Some of the white unmarbled thimbles are made of bone china.



Elizabeth Castle – Jersey Zoo – Jersey cows



certificates showing the different colours issued for Jersey (map)



(coat-of-arms)  
only thimble made in all three shapes



(dodo)  
for Jersey Zoo  
mark **4**



ELIZABETH CASTLE, JERSEY  
mark **4**



GERMAN UNDERGROUND TUNNEL 1942-45 ST  
LAWRENCE JERSEY  
red and black  
mark **3**



Island Jerseys  
white and yellow cows  
mark **4**



Jersey  
(cow's head)  
pale - dark  
mark **1a**



Jersey  
(map with tourist destinations)  
pale - dark cows  
mark **4**



JERSEY  
(map)  
some maps in gold colour  
mark **5**



Jersey Lily - i  
mark **3**



Jersey Lily - ii



Jersey Milk Jug - i  
Yellow on yellow - yellow on white - blue  
mark **5**



Jersey Milk Jug - ii  
s on verso  
TTG December 1986



JERSEY ZOO  
(dodo)  
mark **4**





LILY LANGTRY  
*Jersey Lily* on verso  
TTG June 1988

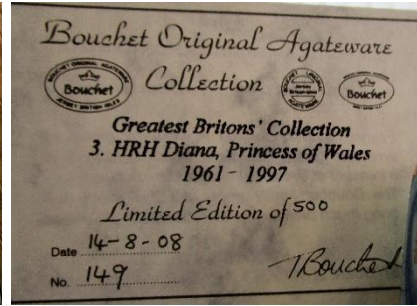


MTN  
Mont Nicholle School  
this is the school in St Brelade which the Bouchet children attended  
bird with one gold-painted wing  
this thimble would never have been sold thru thimble catalogues  
mark **6**

**Other thimbles**



Monarchs of Twentieth Century set, in shades of red, white and blue set supplied with mahogany plinth issued with commemorative silver-plated spoons  
TTG February 1989



Greatest Britons' Collection 3. HRH Diana Princess of Wales 1962-1997 showing different dates of issue



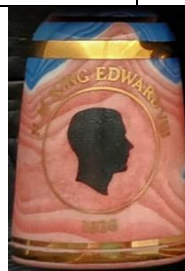
BOUCHET ORIGINAL AGATEWARE JERSEY CHANNEL ISLANDS  
TTG March 1987  
mark 4



HRH DIANA PRINCESS OF WALES 1962-1997  
3 of 3 in Greatest Britons' Collection



H.M. KING EDWARD VII 1901-1910



H.M. KING EDWARD VIII 1936



H.M. KING GEORGE V 1910-1936



H.M. KING GEORGE VI 1936-1952



H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II 1952-



H.M. QUEEN VICTORIA 1837-1901





Harrods  
KNIGHTSBRIDGE



IRISES  
inspired by Van Gogh  
TTG October 1992



ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL  
1806-1859  
1 of 3 Greatest Britons' Collection



SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL  
1874-1965  
2 of 3 Greatest Britons' Collection  
mark 5



SUNFLOWER  
inspired by Van Gogh  
TTG October 1992

### Other Bouchet items



commemorative bell  
TTG February 1992



jewellery  
Channel Island Jewellery



jewellery  
TTG June 1988



pin dish



rose bowl  
Josiah Bouchet



vases – R: segmented



commemorative spoon  
TTG July 1990

## References

- Vilma Buck *My holiday with Sue Gowan. Welsh Thimblers* Oct 2007  
Mary Craft *Bouchet's original agateware thimbles: Christmas thimble set of eleven agateware thimbles by Tony Bouchet 1985-1995.* 2016  
Susan Jean Gowan *Thimbles of Australia.* 1988  
Norma Shattock *Bouchet agateware. TCI Bulletin* spring 2002  
Mave Wiskin *Agateware: Bouchet thimbles* (compiled off his website approx. 2000)

## Contributors

Sally Bailey | Linda Bennett | Pawel Brzyski | Micky Garvey | Lin Heggs | Margaret Hickling | Jan Neville | Jean Rose  
Norma Shattock | Jean Taylor (without whose help this topic would have been a non-starter)  
Krystyna Zagajewska

This listing of Agateware thimbles by Tony Bouchet Jersey 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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**March 2024**