

HF thimble makers: sterling silver thimbles made by Henry Foscett – Henry Fidkin – Henry Fowler

When I began collecting thimbles in 1984, there were only thimble reference books as a resource for all thimble queries. We joined as many clubs and societies to access their newsletters or magazines, to keep abreast of the latest thimble information.

Since the advent of all things electronic, current thimble collectors have infinite resources to find any thimble information they require.

This topic would have been more useful in the 1980s when thimble collectors confused the three British sterling silver thimble makers with the identical maker's HF initials – almost using the names interchangeably. Errors still creep in through ignorance when offering any of these HF thimbles for second hand sale.

Many of these thimble designs will be familiar to you from sterling silver thimbles from this era, but that is how the industry worked. Look especially at thimbles with blackberries.

None of these thimble silversmiths were prolific. They made their own thimbles, which wasn't always the case in those late Victorian-early 20th century times. Three Henry's and here are their thimbles: please share photos of yours to include.

Henry Foscett – London (1864-1886)

Henry Foscett was born in Iver, Buckinghamshire and baptised in April 1812. He was the son of Samuel and Mary Foscett. He married Eliza Ellen and lived at 32 Great Sutton Street, Clerkenwell in London 1871 with his wife and nephew, Samuel. He still lived there in 1881 and died in December 1885.

In 1862 Henry began working with existing thimble makers (Thomas Hastings) who had been thimble makers since the early 1820s. They were based at 31 Great Sutton Street in Clerkenwell, London.

Henry Foscett registered his mark with the London Assay Office on 2 April 1864, which lapsed in 1886, after his death. His entry listed him as "small worker".

Henry's maker's mark is H F within a rectangle. This mark is not currently listed at the London Assay Office.

[Silver Makers Marks](#)



HENRY FOSKETT

Samuel Foscett Henry's nephew, became a thimble maker, following in his uncle's footsteps.

Most of Henry Foscett's thimbles recorded here are hallmarked. This is very rare as his thimbles were made during the period where thimbles in Britain did not have to be hallmarked (1884). None of his thimbles have size marks, as these were only found on thimbles from the 1890s.



patterned band
blank shield cartouche



1875
Sovereign's Head (duty mark)
engraved *Emily Church* in long
narrow cartouche



1879
Sovereign's Head (duty mark)



1881
taller Victorian shape with band with zig-zag
patterning



1882
taller Victorian shape with wide band with light
diamond pattern



1882
this band of patterned roses became of of the signature designs for Samuel Foskett (1893-)
patterned rim
large blank cartouche with well-defined wavy edges

Henry Fidkin – Birmingham (1918-1921)

Henry Fidkin mark's was registered at the Birmingham Assay Office in January 1919. He was registered as a thimble maker. His workshop was located at 51 Hockley Hill in Birmingham.

Not many of his thimbles are recorded and they have hallmarks between 1918-1921.

His thimbles have a distinctive way of lettering his thimble sizes – to the right of the hallmarks – in a distinctive circle. Those sighted are size 3-9 with the smaller the size number the bigger the diameter.



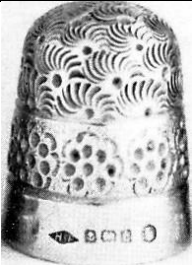





his thimbles also bear bands of enamelling.

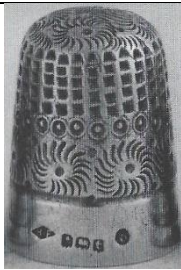
Fidkin's maker's mark is within a long diamond-shaped lozenge.



HENRY FIDKIN

As a silversmith, Fidfin also made thimbles for other sponsors, bearing the same sizing

 <p>1918 band of blackberries below daisies</p>	 <p>1918 size 4 band of blackberries above wide plain band daisies top</p>	 <p>1918 size 5 vertical bands of blackberries and leaves</p>
 <p>1918 size 6 daisies</p>	 <p>1918 size 6 daisies</p>	 <p>1918 size 6 <u>"PETER PAN REGD"</u> vertical alternating panels of blackberries and diamond patterning</p>



1918 size 6
daisies apex – diamond top
half – daisies band



1918 size 8
vertical panels of blackberries with
daisies



1919 size 3
daisies



1919 1920 size 5, 6
daisies



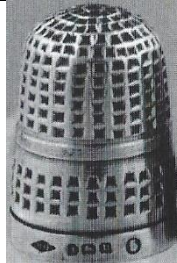
1919 size 5
two rows of circles



1919 1921 size 5, 9, 4
diamond shapes within
diamond
diamond pattern top half



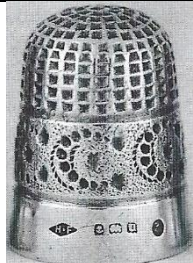
1919 size 6
band of blue enamelling



1919 size 6
double band of diamond patterning



1919 size 7
blackberry flowers



1919 size 8
band of moons and stars
with diamond patterning
above



1920 size 4
vertical alternating panels of
blackberries and diamond patterning



1920
two bands of daisies
is the stone apex original?



1920 size 5
blackberries all over



1920 size 6
band of green enamelling



1921
band of blackberries above wide
plain band



1921 size 6
daisies on top half
single band of daisies on stippling



CU 1918 size 6
"PETER PAN REG^D"



CU 1918
"PETER PAN REG^D"



CU 1918 size 6
"PETER PAN REG^D"

Holmes in his *Thimble Notes and Queries* winter 1991: "Usher was a silversmith in Leicester and coincidentally there was an underwear manufacturer in Leicester using the Peter Pan trade name, owned by R Rowley & Son."



1919 size 6
SJL&Co



1919 size 6
WJM&Co



1919 size 3
WJM&Co



1919 size 6
WJM&Co



1920 size 3
WJM&Co

made by Henry Fidkin for other sponsors

Henry Fowler Birmingham (1896-1916)

Fowler registered his maker's mark in Birmingham in March 1896. The last assayed thimble recorded for this HF is 1916.

His mark consist of two separated H and F marks. I haven't seen any size marks on Fowler thimbles.



HENRY FOWLER

On 7 April 1897 Fowler registered a thimble design: R^D297020.



This RD number has been seen on other thimbles in this era: for George Goodman (GG)(1880-1916)
George Smallwood (GS)(1894-1907) – Alfred Constantine & Floyd (C^E&F^D)(1899)
William James Holmes (WJH)(1900).

What design was Fowler registering? I can find no record of this. Looking at the thimbles that bear this registered number (RD), they have very deeply struck daisies patterns – allowing a firmer grip for the person using the thimble to sew? From when he registered the new design most of Fowler's thimbles are very strongly delineated.



1896



1896

blackberries at top - Greek key band with dotted rim



1896
daisies



1896

wide band of acanthus
blank cartouche



1896
composite patterning with
daisies apex - strong diamond
pattern circles row - band of
daisies



1896
band of wrigglework
faceted rim



1896
daisies with deep centres



1896



1897
narrow band of wriggle work
faceted rim



1897
daisies with deep centres



1897
blackberries



1898



1898
narrow band of daisies diamond
pattern apex



1898
band of acanthus
large blank cartouche



1898
R^D297020
strong daisies with daisies
over striations band



1898 1903 1904
wide band of blackberries
design



1898
daisies with dots at corners
faceted rim



1899
band with fancy daisies design
monogram in cartouche



1899
blackberries and leaves with
berries on apex



1899 1900
diamond top half with band of daisies over
stippling surface
blank carouche



1899
strong diamond
pattern



1899
RD297020
blackberries and leaves with
berries on apex



1900
daisies



1900
band of wrigglework
strong diamond pattern including
apex



1900
wide band of wrigglework



1900 1904 1905
blackberries all over



1901
RD297020
band of acanthus
large blank cartouche



1901
RD297020
band of diamond pattern
strong daisies top half



1901 1904
blackberries with leaves berries on apex



1901
band of wrigglework



1902
vertical lines of daisies



1902 1904 1906
diamond shapes within diamond
band



1902
diamond shapes within diamond
band
diamond pattern top half



1902
diamond pattern with dotted row
between



1903
daisies with deep centres



1902
diamond shapes within diamond
band
over dotted surface



1903
composite patterning with band
of daisies - circles row diamond
pattern - daisies apex



1903
composite patterning with most unusual row of 'swirling' chased daisies – different from traditional
daisies on apex



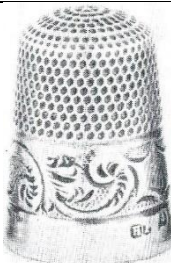
1903
clumps of blackberries with
leaves - berries on apex



1903
diamond shapes within diamond
over patterned surface



1903
daisies



1904
acanthus band



1904 1905 1907 1909
all over 'cushion' pattern



1904 1905
band of diamond pattern strong
daisies top



1905
band of daisies over stippled
patterning above daisies



1905
vertical alternating panels of
daisies and diamond pattern



1905
blackberries with leaves, berries
on apex

 <p>1906 1907 diamond pattern with dots</p>	 <p>1907 rows of blackberries</p>	 <p>1907 wrigglework</p>
 <p>1914 blackberries and leaves</p>	 <p>1916 diamond</p>	 <p>date letter illegible as stamped in edge of blank cartouche band of beaten patterning</p>
 <p>1899 C^EF^D size 8 <u>R^D297020</u></p>	 <p>1904 GG size 4 <u>R^D297020</u></p>	 <p>1897/1898 GS <u>R^D297020</u></p>
 <p>1900 WJH <u>RD297020</u></p> <p>made by Henry Fowler for other sponsors</p>		

References

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Magdalena and William Isbister *One thimble – five incarnations*. TCI Bulletin fall 2017
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This listing of HF thimble makers 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.

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June 2022