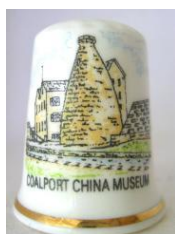


# Coalport bone china thimbles



I have always been attracted to good quality English china and Coalport bone china thimbles are no exception. Like Caverswall thimbles, they have a very identifiable with their distinctive shape. Coalport thimbles have domed apexes with 'strong indentations' and rarely have gold-painted rims. The rim is flared, and the china is slightly chunky, not being made of fine bone china. I am sure you too will recognise a Coalport thimble by its shape once you have looked at this page!

Coalport China was founded in 1795 by John Rose and Edward Blakeway, tho the 1750 date appears as part of their backstamp. The Coalport China Museum in Ironbridge is the site of the Coalport Pottery at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire. The works was moved to Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire, known as The Potteries, in 1926. Coalport joined the Wedgwood Group in 1967 and operated out of the Wedgwood site at Barlaston, where they had their own manufacturing unit and their own range of backstamps. With the liquidation of Waterford/Wedgwood in January 2009, I have no idea what will happen to the production of Coalport china.



A tourism thimble showing the Coalport Museum

According to John von Hoelle, Coalport made thimbles during the nineteenth century but they were not marked. Bridget McConnel of the *Thimble Society* has identified the following nineteenth century handpainted thimbles as Coalport from the painting style. The earliest modern collectable thimbles date from 1978, which coincides with the start of modern thimble collecting. They were not a prolific thimble producer and thimbles are no longer being made. Well that is until 2007, when a much thinner bone china thimble was used than previously and their gorgeously applied flowers, are being made.



19th C handpainted thimbles attributed to Coalport



Confusion has arisen over the years over the naming of Coalport thimble designs. Like other china thimble manufacturers, Coalport would have used the pattern names from their product range. Many of the thimbles are named inside, but when not, the names often are lettered on the Coalport cardboard thimble boxes. It is always useful to refer to catalogues when Coalport thimbles were in production. I have tried to include examples of the names lettered inside the thimbles for each theme - and photos of the verso where appropriate and helpful (on ebay some thimbles only show one view, and this can cause confusion).

I love the font Coalport have used in their lettering inside their thimbles - strong and bold and simple!

Coalport have included thimbles in their range with finely handmade, applied handpainted flowers and the series known as "Flora Britanniae Collection", is a good example of this. Being handmade, there will always be variations in these delicate flowers. It's difficult to find out how many are in this set, as to me, the five illustrated isn't a definitive number in terms of Coalport thimble set numbers.

There is a large series illustrating the flowers for the 50 American states - with a state flower applied to each, and the state's name on the verso. I have now found photos for 40 of the 50-thimble set. Please help with the missing thimbles.







In 2016 (12 years after I put his topic up for collectors), a similar set of provincial flowers for **Canada** has emerged complementing the US state flowers set. If you have more of this set, please share.

I have received a few Coalport thimble emails recently. They relate to the placement of the decals - on the flower patterns in particular. Some of you have Coalport examples where the flowers are not in the same place or they are featured upside down. Thimble decals are small, and they may have inadvertently been placed in the wrong position at the time of manufacture. I don't believe it lessens them in any way. Do you agree? Maybe the ones I have in my collection or in the photos may be on the wrong way - who is to know for sure? The patterns that have been questioned are :- Chintz Rose and Samarkand etc.

Again in 2016, my attention has been drawn to the different Coalport thimble backstamps. The most commonly found is the royal blue larger stamp. Compare the backstamps in your Coalport thimbles and you may be surprised to find there are some smaller turquoise backstamps and even a gold backstamp for one of their commemorative thimbles! This is the challenge for me - to share these observations that have been drawn to my attention.

I understand there is a set of seven thimbles for the Days of the Week - Monday's Child ... etc  
Do you know this set and have photos to share, please?

### Coalport thimble backstamps

		
<p>traditional big royal blue backstamp</p>	<p>smaller turquoise backstamp</p>	<p>gold backstamp</p>
		
<p>black backstamp for Paddington set</p>	<p>L big - R small</p>	
		
<p>does anyone know what the "S" stands for? It appears in the non-traditional shaped thimbles</p>		



## Bird thimbles

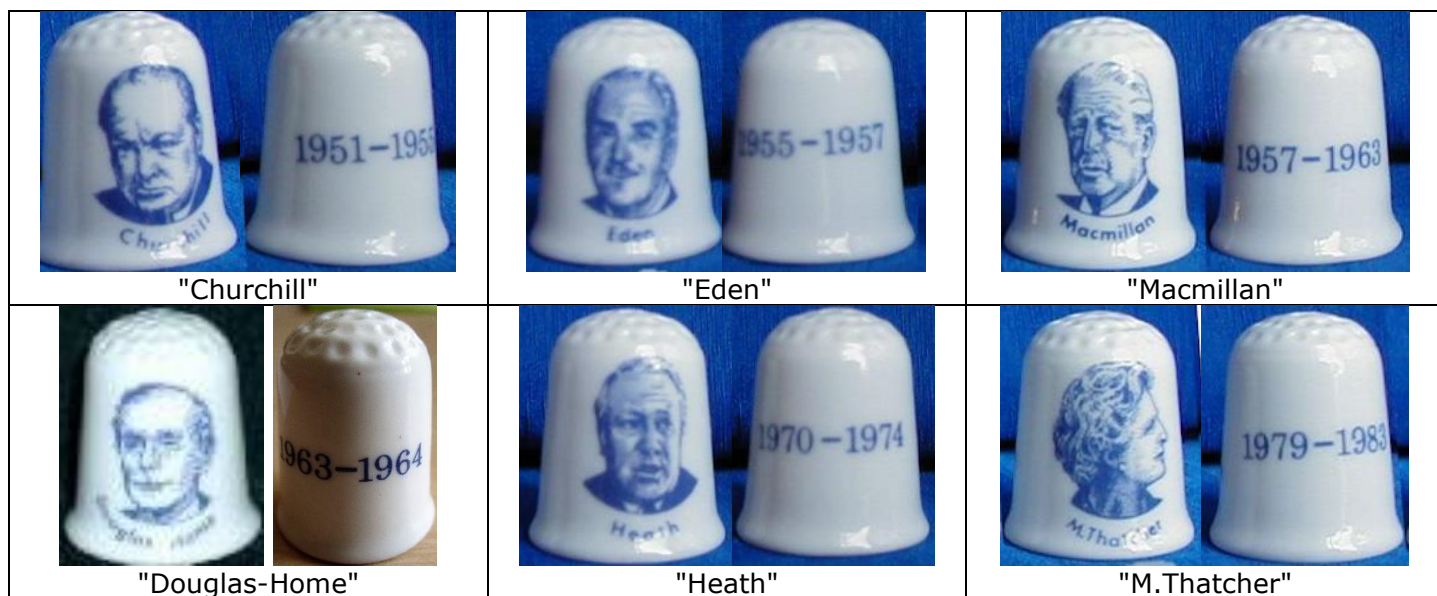
set of six



## British prime ministers

set of six

set has the large blue Coalport backstamp



## Butterfly thimbles

set of six

set has the smaller turquoise backstamp



butterflies set



# Castle thimbles

set of six  
scene continues around the thimble



Alnwick Castle  
smaller turquoise backstamp



Caernarvon Castle



Harlech Castle



"Herstmonceux"  
Castle



Kidwelly Castle



"Pembroke"



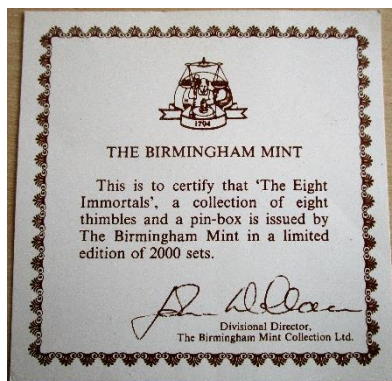
## Chinese Tao Eight Immortal thimbles

set of eight

name only on box, not lettered inside the thimbles

set was issued by the Birmingham Mint Collection Limited

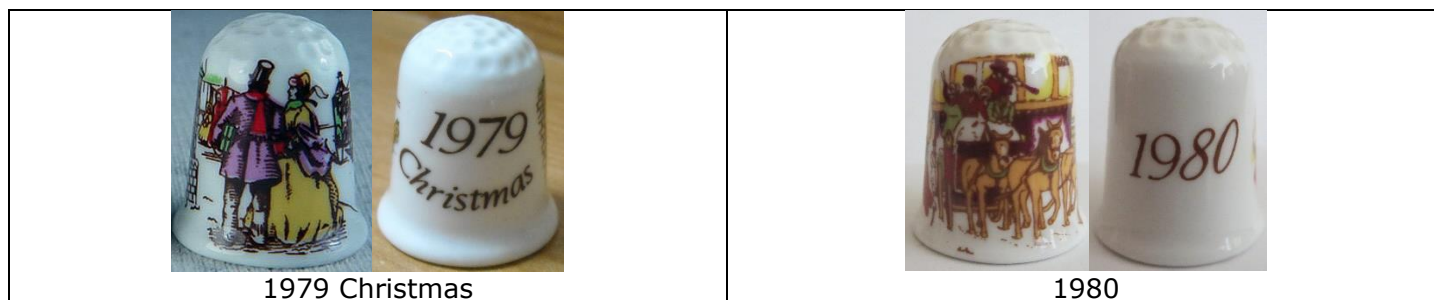
set limited to 2000



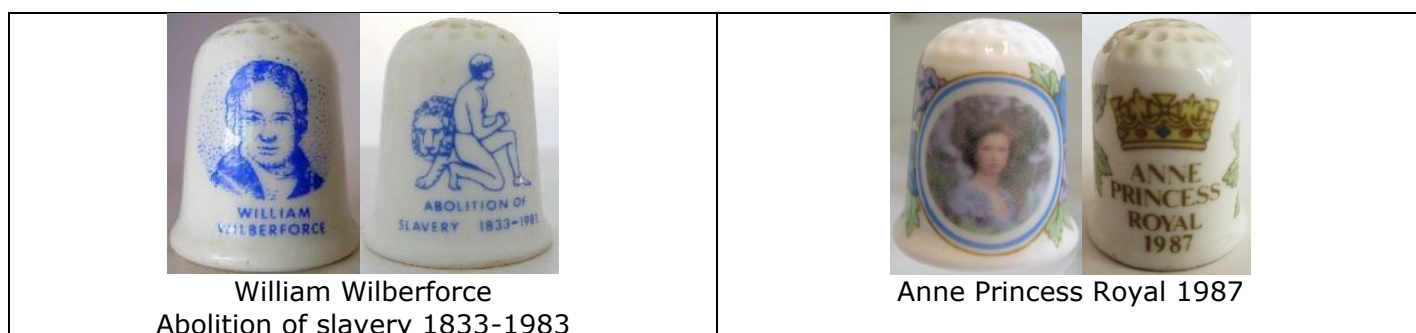
"Chinese Tao Immortals" set on a Coalport plinth trinket box in centre



## Christmas thimbles



## Commemorative thimbles



## Dog thimbles

set of six  
full body with dog's head on the verso





## Flower thimbles



"Albany Flowers"  
Thimble Collectors Club



"Allegro"  
name only on box



"Bindweed"  
name only on box



Birbeck Rose  
same decal on two sides  
the thimble name is lettered differently from other  
Coalport thimbles



Burbeck  
same decal on two sides



"Caughley Sprays"  
name only on box



"Chintz Rose"  
R: some have the rose/leaf decal upside down



Common Dog Violet



"Cressage"



Earth Nut Pea



"Golden Allegro"  
name only on box



"Harebells"



Garlands  
two versions  
L: the verso is plain  
R: the garlands sweep around thimble  
backstamps identical



"Jacobean"  
name only on box  
R: some examples have the decal upside down



"June Time"  
name only on box  
see also the non-traditional shape with the same decal



"Ludlow?"  
name only on box



Marsh Marigold



"Ming Rose"  
two versions  
L: has same decal on both sides  
R: a different decal on the verso-this version has the smaller backstamp



Red Champion  
smaller turquoise backstamp



"Pageant"



rose  
same decal on two sides



"Samarkand"  
some examples have the decal upside down



"The Seaside"



shamrock



"Shrewsbury"  
two versions  
L: rose facing left  
R: rose facing right  
with differing decals on verso  
backstamps are identical



"Tulip Tree"  
name only on box





## (applied) flower thimbles

As the flowers are all handmade, there will be many different flowers, especially if they were made over a period of time. Some of the roses have buds applied – some don't. Maybe the latter were made later?  
The applied flowers thimbles have the larger blue Coalport backstamp.



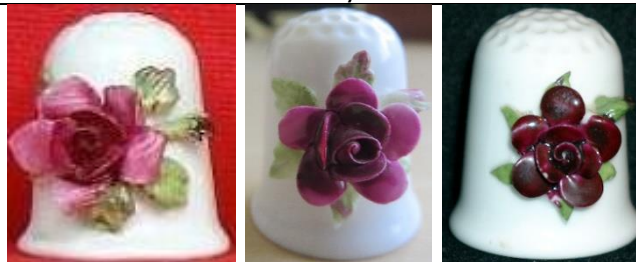
Forget-me-nots



Holly



Roses-1



Roses-2



Roses-3



Roses-4



Roses-5



Roses-6

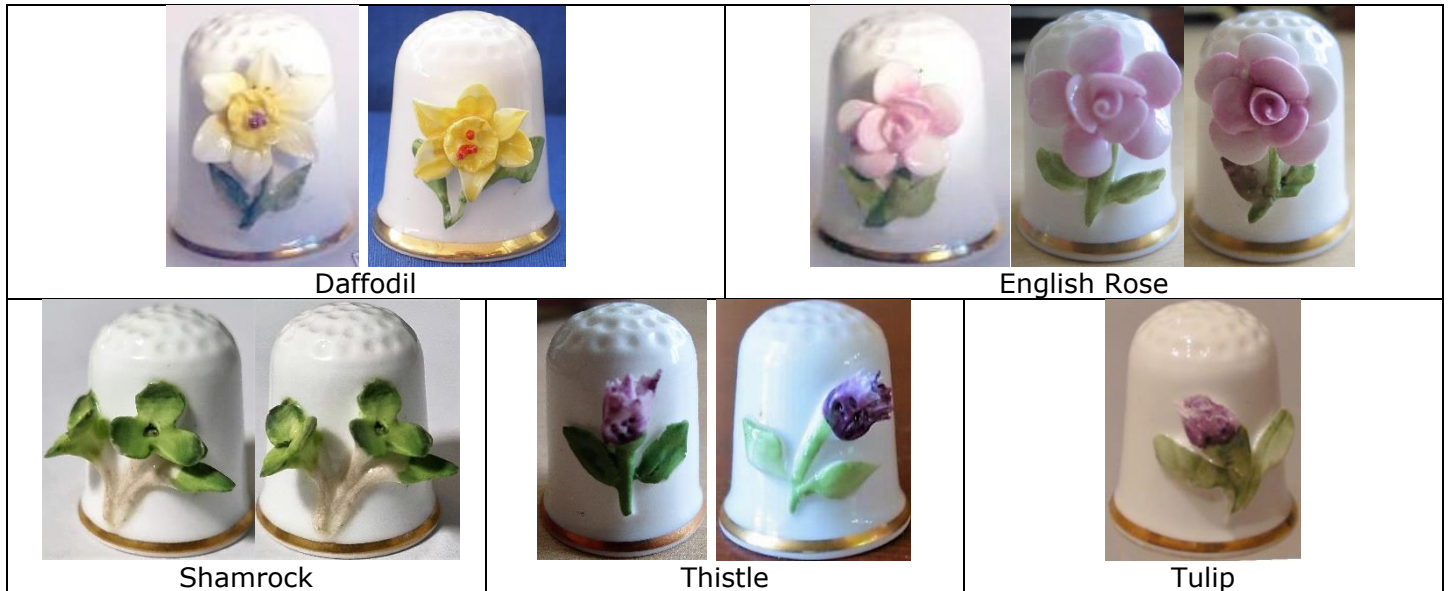


Snowdrop

## (applied) flower thimbles

### Flora Britanniae Collection

As the flowers are all handmade, there will be many different flowers



## (applied) Flower thimbles

### Canada



(applied) Flower thimbles  
USA



Alabama



Alaska



Arizona



Arkansas



California



Colorado



Connecticut



Delaware



Florida



Georgia



Hawaii



Idaho





Illinois

no photo

Indiana



Iowa

no photo

Kansas



Kentucky



Louisiana



Maine

no photo

Maryland

no photo

Massachusetts



Michigan



Minnesota



Mississippi



Missouri



Montana



Nebraska



Nevada



New Hampshire

no photo

New Jersey



New Mexico



New York



North Carolina

no photo

North Dakota



Ohio



Oklahoma



Oregon



Pennsylvania



Rhode Island



South Carolina



South Dakota



Tennessee



Texas



Utah

no photo

Vermont

no photo

Virginia



Washington



West Virginia



no photo

Wisconsin



Wyoming

### Fruit thimbles



"Wenlock Fruit"  
name only on box

### Mother thimbles

1978-1981



## Paddington Bear thimbles

set of six

"© P&Co. 83" lettered in black inside each thimble



## Scenic thimbles



## Willow pattern thimbles



## Zodiac thimbles

set of 12  
gold Coalport backstamp  
large blue Coalport backstamp used on later zodiac issues







Scorpio



Sagittarius



Capricorn

Other designs thimbles



Balloons  
Thimble Collectors Club



Hallmarked Thimbles of the  
World Great Porcelain Houses  
Thimble Collectors Club  
(TCC set of 50)  
1985



Porcelain Houses of the World  
Franklin Mint (set of 25)  
1980

## Non-traditional shape thimbles

2.9cm high and "chunky" walls  
These thimbles have the backstamp with "S"



Hellebores  
"S" Coalport backstamp



June Time



2007  
thinner bone china



Kowloon  
"S" Coalport backstamp



"S" Coalport backstamp



design continues all round  
has the "S" Coalport backstamp



## Thimble boxes

 <p>round cardboard and plastic thimble box short maker's mark</p>	 <p>square Coalport blue cardboard thimble box shortened maker's mark</p>	 <p>square Coalport blue cardboard thimble box with full maker's mark</p>
 <p>rectangular Coalport white cardboard thimble box shortened maker's mark</p>	 <p>rectangular Coalport blue cardboard thimble box shortened maker's mark</p>	 <p>oblong Coalport blue cardboard thimble box commemorating 1981 Royal Wedding shortened maker's mark</p>

### References

Thimble Society of London *catalogues*  
 Coalport figures [www.coalport.co.uk](http://www.coalport.co.uk)  
 Coalport Museum treasures [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk)

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This listing of Coalport thimbles does not purport to be complete or accurate in all aspects.  
 Rather it invites comment and contribution to add to our knowledge. My thanks to the contributors.

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 November 2004